



Limerick Chamber Submission on the  
Limerick City Greenway (UL to Annacotty)



**Limerick  
Chamber**  
Advancing business together

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## Introduction

Limerick Chamber is the largest business representative body in the Mid-West, with c. 400 member organisations supporting 50,000 jobs across the region.

Firstly, Limerick Chamber would like to thank Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) for the opportunity to submit our views on the Limerick City Greenway (UL to Annacotty) - Public Consultation. Traffic congestion in the areas of Castletroy and Annacotty has been and currently remains a key concern, with these areas containing dense residential areas as well as the University of Limerick and the National Technology Park. Active travel will play a key role in achieving more sustainable ways of travelling, potentially helping relieve the congestion in this area through encouraging this type of travel. Linking the University of Limerick (UL) to a residential and business dense area such as Annacotty and onwards into Limerick City is another positive step in promoting active and sustainable transport methods across Limerick.

Limerick Chamber fully supports initiatives promoting active and sustainable transport such as the UL to Annacotty Greenway scheme. The revised LSMATS draft gives Limerick and the greater Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA) the opportunity to achieve a more sustainable way of commuting, whether that be for work, school or social purposes. This Scheme will help play a role in that process. As well as feedback from our own members, Limerick Chamber received feedback from our own transport forum, which fed into our recent submission on the revised LSMATS draft. Limerick Chamber congratulates Limerick City and County Council on this scheme and looks forward to seeing it progress over the coming months and we will offer support where possible.

**Our submission, which takes into account Limerick Chamber member feedback, looks at both national and international examples of best practice, as well as including recommendations to best support the proposed greenway scheme.**

## National & International Examples

While the push for more sustainable and active methods of travel and transport are welcomed, it is important to look at successful initiatives both nationally and internationally to understand what works, what approach is most appropriate for Limerick and where such initiatives can expand and develop further going forward to continue the momentum that active travel will gain from such projects.

## The Waterford Greenway

The Waterford Greenway was developed on a former railway track and is used regularly by pedestrians and cyclists. The combination of bridges, viaducts and tunnels makes this route an attractive and vibrant option, allowing people to move around for work, school or leisure while enjoying such a scenic route. The proposed UL to Annacotty Greenway will comprise of bridges and castles along the route. Keeping these attractions accessible to the public rather than fencing them off will provide added value to the greenway. Limerick Chamber encourages the LCCC to remain ambitious in using these resources to build a vibrant and attractive route.

## RAVel Network, Belgium

The RAVel network is an autonomous network of routes in Belgium which highlight the characteristics of a successful greenway. This network also includes a set of local, shorter sections. The presence of renovated tunnels, bridges and access points along the route along with the addition of new access points to open the route to new areas is something that should be considered with any greenway scheme in Limerick to promote their use on a daily basis. The continued expansion and upkeep of the routes in the network is a blueprint that Limerick could certainly emulate over a longer term, as our own greenway continues to expand.

## Safety

As part of the LSMATS, there will be a modal shift to get more people using active travel and utilising greenways for both recreational and travel purposes. The comfort of knowing the greenway is safe and efficiently monitored will be key to encouraging people to engage in active and sustainable forms of transport. This will help to engender a more liveable city and county.

Much like the recent amendments to the Canal Bank, adequately resourcing this route with safety measures must also be a priority. Sufficient lighting, along with regular patrolling by members of An Garda Síochána, or potentially volunteers from local residential areas / walking groups to discourage antisocial behaviour should be considered and encouraged for this new greenway to promote regular usage. An item that Limerick Chamber has previously suggested in its submission on the 'Community CCTV Cameras in Public Areas' public consultation is the potential rollout of motorway-style SOS phones. This type of service could provide another level of reassurance to people using the route - these types of communication



devices have also been implemented at the university campus. A recommendation by Limerick Chamber is to address the 'traffic flow' element of the proposed greenway. While pedestrians, runners, and cyclists are expected to use this route frequently, e-scooters and e-bikes have become much more popular in recent times. To keep pedestrians and other path users safe from potential collisions, segregated lanes should be implemented for this route, keeping bicycles, e-scooters and e-bikes separate to those walking or running on the greenway. Safety measures to reduce risk or incidents between pedestrians and people travelling via e-scooter should also be considered. Signage to encourage e-scooter operators to reduce speeds would better help promote the greenway as a safe route.

## **Biodiversity**

The layout of the existing path along the Canal Bank is a unique route that many people use both to commute to work & school, as well as for social and exercise purposes. The new UL to Annacotty Greenway should look to mimic the existing route, avoiding tarmac where possible and creating permeable infrastructure that blends in with surrounds rather than create an obvious silver steel barrier. Limerick Chamber recommends expanding and upgrading existing pathways where possible rather than removing existing green and wild space.

The unique experience of this route and its natural surroundings is one of its most attractive assets. We can see this with the current greenway along the Canal Bank. Including plans to allow any biodiversity to recover from any works carried out on the site will be important in the planning process. Restriction of access to certain areas of the greenway may be necessary initially to allow the route to recover. Further to this, frequent upkeep of the flora along the greenway to ensure a bright and attractive route should accompany this scheme. Limerick Chamber recommends that where possible, greenery remains untouched to encourage biodiversity and wilding.

We ask that Limerick City and County Council continue to work with surrounding businesses and organisations, particularly those in the NTP, in promoting biodiversity / wildlife along the route and on adjoining lands.

## **Appearance & Safety**

Limerick Chamber would like to highlight the importance of waste bins accompanying this greenway. It is also important to acknowledge the need for other effective but minimalist opportunities to reduce littering and dumping of waste into either the river or the shrubbery along the route.

Waste bins should be accompanied by recycling bins along this path to reduce waste and encourage sustainable practice. It is important that these bins are minimalist and cannot be removed by anyone passing by or allowed to spill over by the weather. Another area which should be targeted to help keep the route clean is facilities for dog owners, including bins to dispose of waste and disposable biodegradable bags to encourage the removal of dog waste. Much like regular monitoring of the flora aspect and safety aspect of the greenway, regular upkeep of the route should also be tied into this. The frequent presence of gardeners / security / cleaners could also play a role in deterring anti-social behaviour along the path.

To encourage the use of the greenway and enhance the vibrancy of the route, a section of the greenway could be allocated to the public / schools / garden clubs to plant their own flora through allotments. Allowing the public and garden clubs to use a section would encourage people to visit the greenway which contributing to its vibrancy, while providing a space for school could be an educational opportunity to teach schoolchildren about biodiversity and the importance of taking care of it.

The planned upgrades to the bridge / crossings along the pathway are much welcomed. The tidy appearance is a refreshing upgrade to the narrow paths with overgrown shrubbery. A recommendation that Limerick Chamber has is to paint the railings that accompany these bridges and crossings to blend in with the surroundings, in order to assimilate infrastructure into its surroundings and keep to the natural environment that the path will provide.

To ensure an attractive, vibrant and safe greenway, consideration should also be given to include limitation measures for certain motorised vehicles and other items. There has been a growing concern around the presence of scramblers / dirt bikes around the canal route in recent times. Measures to limit the accessibility of these types of transport should be encouraged to promote a peaceful and safe greenway.

People of all abilities should also be at the core of this proposed greenway. Ensuring that all access points are both wheelchair accessible and that the path is quickly segregated into to 2 lanes to avoid incidents where cyclists and people on e-scooters are trying to swerve around other pathway users must be accounted for.



## **Additional Route Options / Future Developments**

Active and sustainable transport will play a key role in everyday movement going forward. The rollout of the UL to Annacotty Greenway is a much-welcomed development to promote such means of travel. Limerick Chamber encourages the LCCC to be as ambitious as possible with any active transport plans or schemes in order to capture their full potential and Limerick Chamber fully supports such initiatives.

Identifying future potential routes that act as spurs to the current Canal Bank and the UL to Annacotty Greenway should be considered in the plans for this scheme. There is potential to create further active travel linkages in the areas of Castletroy & Annacotty to the City Centre. Limerick Chamber recommends that these future routes are investigated to understand what areas are appropriate to develop further as greenways. One such example could be the Groody river connecting from the Canal Bank to the BallySheedy Roundabout, while being mindful of any potential flooding issues.

Highlighting key points at where such a scheme can be expanded and developed is important to continuing the process of encouraging active and sustainable travel. This greenway will certainly help promote people to travel school or work from the area of Annacotty via bicycle, walking or other forms of sustainable transport. However, a potential extension of this route to the Annacotty Business Park would capture a larger cohort of people who would have the opportunity to travel to work via this greenway if this route reached the 33 businesses located in the business park. Feedback from Limerick Chamber members has shown that employees of businesses in Annacotty Business Park would be inclined to cycle to work if this route was extended to their place of work.

Limerick Chamber also recommends that spurs off into the National Technology Park (NTP) should also be considered for this greenway keeping in mind biodiversity efforts with businesses in the NTP. A large number of businesses will have the opportunity to now use more active and sustainable methods of transport to travel to work, the greenway therefore should ensure that it sufficiently reaches the NTP at multiple points to fully serve those businesses and their employees. Traffic congestion is a significant concern in Castletroy and Annacotty where the NTP is located, the option to travel directly from home to work can aid in alleviating the congestion in both areas. We ask that LCCC continues to work with businesses and

organisations in adjoining lands to fully realise the potential of the greenway while being mindful of existing and future business operations.

To encourage people to use this greenway for commuting as well as recreational purposes, it would be appropriate to include safe bicycle storage at the end of each potential route in areas where there is a large work and education population. As the main form of travelling along the greenway is likely to be via bicycle or e-scooter for those travelling to work, appropriate bicycle facilities should accompany these greenway plans. Small bicycle repair stations could be beneficial along this route for cyclists that run into any issues.

## **Conclusion**

Limerick Chamber welcomes the opportunity to be able to provide input into the UL to Annacotty Greenway public consultation, with many of our members being located within the vicinity of this route. Our submission takes into consideration feedback from our members who will no doubt benefit from this scheme. It is encouraging to see the LCCC to show such ambition in active and sustainable transport, an area which will become much more relevant off the back of the recent revised LSMATS draft. The delivery of schemes and infrastructure such as the UL to Annacotty Greenway will certainly be a positive in promoting active and sustainable practices of travel.



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