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We need your support to make our voice heard again! Please send this email!

Western Rail Trail

22 Jan 2019 —

Some of you may have heard via our facebook page that the campaign wants to drive as many submissions as possible into the North West Regional Assembly regarding the formulation of the new Regional Spatial Economic Strategies. Yes we need submissions. Without people shouting out we will never achieve our greenway.

Could each person who has signed the Kiltimagh Greenway Petition please send the following email to rses@nwra.ie many thanks. Brendan

+++++

Email to rses@nwra.ie

I am concerned that the opportunity to utilise the closed railway from Claremorris to the Bellaghy/Charlestown county border as a greenway until such time as a railway may be possible is not included in the Draft Regional Spatial Economic Strategies currently under review. There is much discussion of the strategic value of long distance strategic greenways on page 214 of the Draft RSES document and some projects are even listed as potential greenway projects, but not the most obvious one, about which the NWRA received many submissions at the pre-planning stage of the RSES process.

The Regional Authority received many submissions asking for the Western Rail Trail on the closed railway from Athenry to Collooney to be included in the draft strategies at the pre-consultation stage, it is strange that this plea from the public has been effectively ignored. **Why is that?**

The closed railway line north of Claremorris is not part of the Western Rail Corridor Review therefore it is difficult to understand the reasoning behind objective 115 on page 233

Objective 115 is focused on the restoration of the railway only all the way from Athenry to Collooney, there is no mention of other options of this public facility. Other options need to be considered. Objective 115 contravenes the National Development Plan which only allows for an independent assessment of the closed railway from Athenry to Claremorris, objective 115 pays no heed to the opportunity to create a long distance greenway along the route.

In Kiltimagh (county Mayo) there is a campaign to have a greenway run alongside the proposed Velo-Rail leisure project which is being planned on the closed railway, and yet there is no mention of using the route for leisure purposes in the RSES, **why is that?** Sligo county council are planning a greenway on the closed route from Collooney to Charlestown, and there are several campaigning groups asking for a greenway on the closed railway in Mayo and Galway and yet no mention of this vital tourism project in the draft RSES? **Why is that?**

In the Issues paper regarding the RSES published in 2018 in item 6.4.1 this was what was stated about the Western Rail Corridor

“The Western Rail Corridor is a long standing preserved corridor, and County Development Plans in Mayo, Sligo & Galway recognise the need to preserve the line, whether for rail (passenger and, or freight), or for an alternative use, such as a Greenway project, or indeed both. The retention and preservation of publicly owned lines should remain a key public priority,”

This issue has been reduced in objective 115 to be no more than what the previous Regional Planning Guidelines said that was to open the railway at all costs. Why is there no longer any space within the draft RSES for the perfectly legitimate idea that the alternative use as a greenway might be considered, which the NWRA highlighted in your own issues paper published before the draft RSES was published and which received resounding support in many submissions the NWRA received. **Why has this idea which emanated from the NWRA been airbrushed out of existence?**

This is totally unacceptable and needs to be redressed.

Objective 115 (a) and (b) needs to be reworded to be more in line with item 6.4.1 in the original issues paper. The objective should include the idea that the route could be used as a greenway until such time as a railway is possible and this will be arranged under a strict licensing arrangement with Irish Rail.

Please take this into consideration for a material change to the draft RSES.

Thank you.

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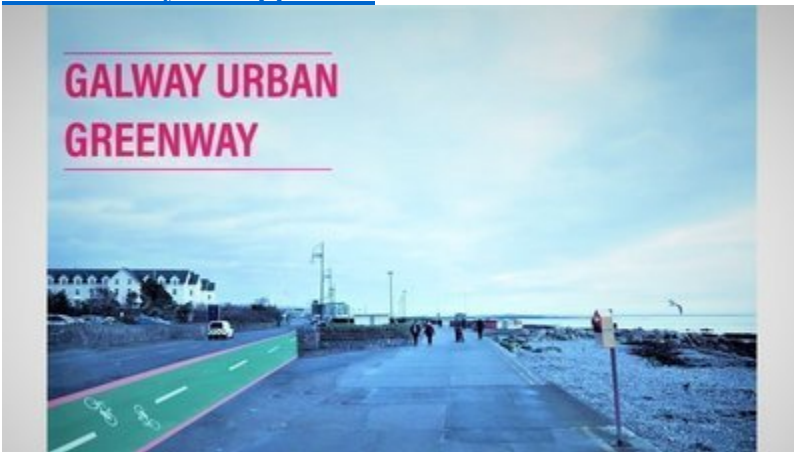


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