

From: [REDACTED]
To: [rSES](#)
Subject: New Message (sent by contact form at Northern and Western Regional Assembly)
Date: Thursday 7 February 2019 08:10:24

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Submission: I wish to make a formal submission to the review of our Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The new draft RSES should include the plans for a greenway on the closed railway from Athenry to Collooney in order to protect the route in public ownership. There are several issues within this idea:

The current rail review only covers the closed railway from Athenry to Claremorris. The RSES cannot presume what the outcome of this report might be and the objectives for this section of the closed railway need a “plan b” to cover the prospect that the rail review may well not endorse or recommend the railway re-opening any time soon, in fact based on most recent statistics the likelihood of a recommendation to re-open this closed railway from Athenry to Claremorris is highly unlikely.

The current rail review does not cover North of Claremorris. Mayo county council and Sligo county have active plans for leisure facilities utilising the closed railway route north of Claremorris already in place. Alternative uses of the closed railway north of Claremorris must be written into the objectives.

The RSES is an economic review of strategies and objectives. A greenway would be a massive boost to tourism along the Atlantic Economic Corridor. Tourism is one of our biggest employers in the West of Ireland. A greenway along this route would be a massive economic boost to the tourism industry in the West and North West.

Finally the review is a spatial review. The National Greenway strategy set out a spatial vision for long distance greenways and first drafts of the national greenway strategy actually included the Western Rail Trail as a project. The idea is already an accepted part of thinking in the Department of Transport.

Democracy is important: Members of the NWRA need to consider the idea as part of the draft RSES and must not be denied the opportunity to debate this idea, it must be included in the final draft RSES presented to members of the NWRA to consider until such time as a railway might be possible on this closed railway route so as part of the democratic process it can at least be considered. Members must not be denied by deals behind closed doors and lobbyists who will try to stop this issue being debated. The voice of the greenway campaign must not be strangled.

Thank you.

Aoife Donoghue [REDACTED]