

Appendix one:

Of Submission on Public Consultation on Greenways in Ireland July 2017-07-09

Appendix One of submission from Western Rail Trail Campaign

Pre budget submission made to Department of Transport Tourism and Sport in October 2015

Pre-budget submission by the Western Rail Trail Campaign for Budget and capital expenditure planning for fiscal year 2016
Submitted October 2016 by Brendan Quinn on behalf of the Western Rail Trail campaign and all declared supporters of the
campaign.

Contact Brendan Quinn: [REDACTED]

Budget 2016 pre-budget submission for the Irish Government budget of October 2015 for the fiscal year 2016.

To: Department of Transport Tourism and Sport and the Department of Finance

October 11th 2015

From: The **Western Rail Trail Campaign**

The **Western Rail Trail (WRT) campaign** is the umbrella name given to a union of community groups in the West of Ireland campaigning for the alignment of the closed railway line from Athenry in county Galway to Collooney in County Sligo to be utilised for the benefit of communities along the route as a greenway (walking and cycling trail) until such time as a railway, if ever, becomes possible. The entire 127 km route is referred to by the campaign groups as the **Western Rail Trail (WRT)**

The WRT greenway reflects government policy in respect of a national cycle network.

The voluntary groups supporting the WRT include: Sligo Greenway Co-Op Ltd., Sligo-Mayo Greenway Campaign, Swinford Vision for the Future, Energise Tuam, Athenry Revival Group and Athenry Tourism. A full list of individuals, businesses and organisations supporting this submission is attached.

The WRT campaign groups, individuals, businesses and organisations signed up to this submission call upon The Department of Transport Tourism and Sport and Department of Finance to support this submission based on the following seven points.

1. The route of the closed railway line from Athenry county Galway to Collooney in County Sligo is a vital state asset which must be protected from loss to the state. Portions north of Claremorris are at imminent risk of being lost to public ownership through adverse possession and need to be protected from squatting.
2. The international best practice for protecting closed railway alignments in public ownership is to utilise the routes as greenways (walking and cycling routes), until such time, if ever, that reopening as a railway is feasible.
3. If converted to Greenway, the route would remain in the ownership of Irish Rail on the strict proviso that if a railway order is ever issued, a railway henceforth would take legal precedence on the route. Irish Rail publically endorses this way of protecting closed railway alignments; most recently in the case of the closed Navan-Kingscourt line in Meath.
4. The route of the WRT would become an integral part of the National Cycle Network – helping fulfil government policy to complete an integrated, fully connected National Cycle Network. Connectivity of a cycling network is critical for tourism.
5. The WRT would fulfil one of the objectives of the 2014 CEDRA report on Ireland’s rural economy. CEDRA identified unused rural pathways and railways as assets with huge capacity for development in rural areas (CEDRA page 68)
6. TEN-T Transport planning strategy formally passed by the EU parliament, November 2013, identified rail and road infrastructure projects to be funded in Europe as far ahead as 2030. The railway line from Athenry to Collooney was not included as a core route in TEN-T European Transport policy . Only core routes included in the TEN-T policy are likely to receive EU structural funding. Utilising the route as a greenway until European TEN-T Transport is reviewed again for the period post 2030 will ensure the route is protected as a potential rail route in the ownership of Irish Rail until 2030.
7. Over 20 million Europeans take cycling holidays each year, few if any of them come to Ireland because we lack the necessary infrastructure. The WRT, creating connectivity between a Dublin-Galway Greenway , a Collooney-Enniskillen greenway, and the Great Western Greenway would provide a critical mass of trails to attract this market segment.

Based on the above, the signatories and supporting organisations of this pre-budget submission request the following:

1. The Department of Transport Tourism and Sport to support feasibility study for a greenway along the route of the closed railway line from Athenry in County Galway to Collooney in County Sligo as a matter of urgency.
2. The study would examine connectivity between the **Western Rail Trail** and the Great Western Greenway in Mayo, the Dublin–Galway greenway at Craughwell/Athenry and the proposed Enniskillen-Sligo Greenway in Sligo. It’s frame of reference would be similar to other such feasibility studies already completed on closed railways in the ownership of Irish Rail, for example the feasibility study on the Navan/Kingscourt railway.

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Contact Brendan Quinn: [REDACTED]

3. The study should include a cost benefit analysis in respect of: rural tourism economics, job creation, health benefits, disabled access, local amenity value, sustainable transport, prevention of pedestrian fatalities, VAT, PRSI and income tax intake and social welfare savings as a result of economic activity associated with the WRT.
4. That if the feasibility study shows a real cost/benefit for the State and the region then funding should be put in place to commence construction of the WRT Greenway during the calendar year 2016, with construction commencing in 2016.

End of Submission. Signatories and information about the supporting groups to this submission and further appendices are attached.

11th October 2015.

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Organisations, businesses, community groups and business people supporting this pre-budget submission are listed in the table below. The Western Rail Trail campaign highlights the following levels of support in the following bullet points:

- Supported by IRISH RAIL USERS GROUP the leading campaign group for the rights of Irish rail users
- Supported by the three chairmen of the Irish Hotels Federation in Galway, Mayo and Sligo, each chairperson has given their personal endorsement of this submission.
- Supported by internet based pressure groups that have support levels on social media totalling over 10,000 people in the West of Ireland.
- Supported by three TDs, two in county Sligo and one from Galway East and several county councillors
- Supported by over 300 people who made submissions on the Mayo county plan 2014-20 that were ignored by Mayo county council.
- Supported by the Sligo Greenway Co-op which has over 400 grassroots members in Sligo, each of whom has purchased a minimum of ten shares in the Sligo Greenway co-op at €1 a share.
- Supported by community groups in Sligo, Mayo and Galway
- Supported by tourist organisations in Sligo and Greenway
- Supported by two Senators in the Senate.
- Supported by business leaders and owners in the West of Ireland, specifically those involved in the tourism and leisure industry

The Western Rail Trail campaign has gained huge popular support in the West of Ireland in the past five years. This is the first pre-budget submission asking for direct action from government in terms of funding and recognition of the campaign.

The time for saying no to the Western Rail Trail and continuing to lead people astray with unfulfilled promises of railways that are not going to be opened up again anytime soon are over.

The Western Rail Trail Campaign and its growing group of supporters want to see action now!

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Group or individual supporting the submission from the Western Rail Trail Campaign	Key contact	Notes about this supporter	Words of support - statements or emails received from person/organisation	Internet links which may be useful to reference
Rail Users Ireland	Mark Gleeson	<p>Rail Users Ireland is Ireland's National Rail Users Organisation. Established in 2003 to campaign for improved services and conditions on Ireland's rail infrastructure. The goals are to promote excellent customer service and the implementation of new rail projects in line with International best practise. The organisation represents the thousands of rail users across the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland.</p>	<p>An email received from Rails Users Ireland in September 2015 stated: Rail Users Ireland considers the proposal to provide a greenway along the alignment of the Western Rail Corridor to be an appropriate and sensible proposal to protect the railway alignment while providing a benefit to the local and wider community.</p> <p>The greenway would ensure the right of way is maintained for future generations and allows for the development of a railway should circumstances change in the future to make such a development viable.</p> <p>The provision of a greenway would reduce the cost of any reopening by ensuring the alignment is kept free of obstruction.</p> <p>Statement ends.</p>	<p>http://www.railusers.ie/</p>

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Sligo Greenway Co-op	Pat McCarrick Acting Chairman	Sligo Greenway Co-operative was established as a community based organisation in February 2015. The Co-op has over 400 members who have each purchased shares in the organisation. The primary aim of the co-op is to work with Sligo county council and other parties to ensure the establishment of a greenway on the route until such time as a railway is possible	Sligo Greenway co-op full endorses the Western Rail Trail Campaign	https://www.facebook.com/SligoGreenway?fref=ts
Sligo Tourism Group	Joe Corcoran Chairman	Sligo Tourism Limited was set up on Fri the 14th of Dec 2012 in Sligo. Sligo tourism Ltd is a not for profit business community company. Its members are drawn from the business community of Sligo involved in tourism service provision	A letter from Sligo Tourism Ltd on 29th September is attached to this submission, the opening statement says "Sligo Tourism Ltd fully supports the establishment of a Greenway from Collooney to Bellaghy with a possible extension in time to the already established network in Mayo and Galway"	
John Perry TD (FG)	John Perry	John Perry TD in the Sligo constituency has given his full support to this pre-budget submission		https://www.facebook.com/john.perry.583671?fref=ts

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Tony McLoughlin TD (FG)	Tony McLoughlin	Tony McLoughlin TD in the Sligo constituency has given his full support to this pre-budget submission	Tony McLoughlin has submitted PQs on this subject to both Minister of Transport Paschal Donohoe and Minister for Rural Regeneration Ann Phelan on this matter. Tony is an avid supporter of the Greenway now railway when we can afford it idea.	https://www.facebook.com/DeputyTonyMcLTD
Colm Keaveny TD (FF)		Colm Keaveny TD in the Galway East constituency has advised the Western Rail Trail Campaign he fully supports the idea of a greenway to protect the route of the railway until such time as a railway is possible	Colm Keaveny TD has told the Western Rail Trail campaign "he will tear the greenway up if funding for a railway is possible, but he fully endorses the idea for the greenway to protect the route until such time as a railway is possible"	https://www.facebook.com/colmkeaveney?fref=ts
Senator Lorraine Higgins	Lorraine Higgins	Senator Lorraine Higgins has been one of the most consistent supporters of the Western Rail Trail project.	Senator Higgins has voiced her support for the greenway from Athenry to Collooney on many occasions in particular on her Facebook page	http://www.lorrainehiggins.ie/newsmedia/2015/09/30/time-for-some-county-councillors-to-get-on-their-b/#.VhprsexVikp

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Senator Feargal Quinn	Feargal Quinn	Senator Feargal Quinn first became aware of the Western Rail Trail campaign when he made a submission on the Mayo County Plan in 2013 along with 300 other members of the public requesting a greenway on the Western Rail Trail section in Mayo.	The 300 submissions asking for a greenway on the Mayo county plan in 2013 were ignored by Mayo County Council planning department. Senator Quinn has asked that his name be added to the supporters of this pre-budget submission	https://www.facebook.com/Feargal-Quinn-92329862409/timeline/
Athenry Revival Group	Sara Walls	Athenry Revival Group is the epitome of a modern pressure group in the digital age. The group formed on Facebook has 2,700 members primarily in the Athenry area which is focussed on supporting projects for the benefit of the Athenry community.	Athenry Revival Group has given its full support to the Western Rail Trail pre-budget submission	https://www.facebook.com/groups/1418869715080933/?fref=ts
Athenry Tourism Group	Margaret Dean	Athenry Tourism group is an internet group on Facebook with 1,474 followers on Facebook. The organisation has endorsed the pre-budget submission for the Western Rail Trail		https://www.facebook.com/AthenryTourism?fref=ts

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Energise Tuam	Alan McGraith	Energise Tuam is community based organisation in Tuam campaigning for a number of community projects one of which is the Tuam Greenway Project which will be part of the Western Rail Trail	Tuam Greenway project part of Energise Tuam has gathered widespread support and petition of over 3,000 people in Tuam who want to see a greenway on this route	https://www.facebook.com/energise.tuam?fref=ts
Tuam Athletic Club		Tuam Athletic Club supports Energise Tuam and the Tuam Greenway Project for a Greenway on the route		http://www.tuamac.com/
Tuam Tidy Towns Group		Tuam is a key town on the route of the Western Rail Trail and local businesses will be key beneficiaries, this fact is recognised by the local Tidy Towns Group		https://www.facebook.com/Tuam-Tidy-Town-544447075642697/timeline/
Tuam Greenway Project	Alan McGraith	Part of Energise Tuam this group has been actively promoting a greenway on the closed railway that runs through Tuam for several years	Tuam Greenway project is widely supported in Tuam and has the support of over 3,000 people in the Tuam area in a petition gathered in 2013; the public group on Facebook has over 450 members.	https://www.facebook.com/groups/213079802087801/?fref=ts
Tuam Cycling Club		Tuam Cycling Club supports Energise Tuam and the Tuam Greenway Project for a Greenway on the route		https://www.facebook.com/Tuam-Cycling-Club-166622450112568/timeline/

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Tubbercurry Tidy Towns	Geraldine Brennan	Tubbercurry is a key town on the route of the Western Rail Trail and businesses will be key beneficiaries, this fact is recognised by the local Tidy Towns Group	On 22nd September Geraldine Brennan of the Tidy Towns group in Tubbercurry emailed the Western Rail Trail and stated: " The Tidy Towns group in Tubbercurry want to endorse the submission proposed by the Western Trail Campaign"	
Swinford Vision for the Future: Swinford Community Action Plan 2013 -2018	Michael Maye Swinford county mayo	"Swinford Vision for the Future" part of Swinford Tidy Towns reflects the views of participants in the Swinford Vision for the Future Survey published in 2012 by Mayo County Council as part of the Mayo County community Forum and Mayo county development board	Swinford Vision for the Future report said this about the closed railway which passes through the town which is in clear support of the Western Rail Trail Outdoor Amenities Swinford will develop its walking and cycling routes incorporating the Ox Mountains and River Moy. Old Railway line will be turned into a cycle path similar to The Greenway in Mulranny. The full area action plan is available in the link provided.	http://swinfordtidytowns.com/publications/

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Cyclist.ie	Mike Mckillen	Cyclist.ie – The Irish Cycling Advocacy Network – is an advocacy, lobby and promotional group for everyday, or utility cyclists, founded in 2008	Cycling.ie represents the views of cyclist in Ireland to improve facilities for cycling.	www.cyclist.ie
Chairman of Irish Hotels Federation Galway Branch	Shay Livingstone	Shay Livingstone, Managing Director of the Connacht Hotel, Galway City and Chairman of the Irish Hotels Federation Galway branch has given his personal endorsement of the pre-budget submission. The Irish Hotels Federation is currently considering the views of the local IHF branches before deciding whether or not to support this pre-budget submission, at the time of writing and making this submission formal endorsement by the IHF was still awaiting a decision. However the chairmen the Galway, Mayo and Sligo Leitrim/North Roscommon branches of the IHF have personally endorsed the submission	<p>Email received from Shay Livingstone on 11th September 2015 "I can confirm that I fully endorse your submission.</p> <p>Wishing you the very best with your endeavours.</p> <p>Yours in Hospitality</p> <p>Shay Livingstone Managing Director The Connacht Hotel Dublin Road, Renmore, Galway City"</p>	www.ihf.ie

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Chairman of Irish Hotels Federation Mayo Branch	Michael Lennon	Michael Lennon is Managing Director of The Westport Woods Hotel and Chairman of the Irish Hotels Federation Mayo Branch has given his personal endorsement of the pre-budget submission	email received from Michael Lennon of Westport Wood hotel on 26th August 2015 "I will gladly add my name to support your submission "	www.ihf.ie
Chairman of Irish Hotels Federation Sligo, Leitrim and North Roscommon Branch	Brian Pierson	Brian Pierson Managing Director of The Diamond Coast Hotel and Chairman of the Irish Hotels Federation Sligo, Leitrim and North Roscommon Branch has given his personal endorsement of the pre-budget submission	In personal discussions with Brendan Quinn author of this submission Brian Pierson of the Diamond Coast hotel said the idea for a Greenway until such time as a railway is possible is a "no brainer" he fully supports the idea and pre-budget submission	www.ihf.ie
Jarlath Gantly - Managing Director of Wild Atlantic Ways	Jarlath Gantly	Jarlath Gantly a prominent Sligo businessman and member of Sligo Greenway Co-operative	Jarlath Gantly has publically stated he could employ more people in his adventure and cycle hire company if the Western Rail Trail was built	
The laundry Basket Business Tubbercurry	Geraldine Brennan	The laundry basket business asked to be added to the individuals and businesses which support this pre-budget submission	This business would benefit from the increase hotel trade and bed nights sold to visitors using the Western Rail Trail	

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Don Durrane - Owner Yeats County Inn Hotel Curry Sligo	Don Durrane	Don Durrane a prominent businessman in south county Sligo has supported the greenway campaign for several years.	Don Durrane has publically stated on national TV on RTE's Ear to the Ground programme that he could employ more people in his hotel if the Western Rail Trail was built.	
"The Mayo 300" - those that made submissions on the mayo county plan 2014-2020	Mayo county council. County plan 2014/20 please view submissions received on the county plan asking for a greenway on the route.	The "Mayo 300" is the unheard voices of the 300 submissions made to Mayo county council in 2012/13 in regard to the most recent Mayo county plan - 2014 - 2020. 84% of all submissions on the county plan asked for a greenway on the route of the closed railway line until such time as a railway might be possible. Mayo county council refused to accept the arguments put forward in these submissions.	The Mayo 300 represent the views of the 300+ submissions (84% of all submissions received) from residents of the west and north west, politicians who made submissions, and from international submissions received from outside Ireland asking for a greenway on the route of the closed railway. It is assumed all 300 of those who made submissions would also support this pre-budget submission.	www.mayococo.ie

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Brody Sweeney of Camile.ie	Brody Sweeney	Brody Sweeney was the founder of O'Briens Sandwich bar chain and has recently launched a new Thai Food takeaway venture on the Irish market. Mr Sweeney has close associations with Sligo with a holiday home in Mullaghmore. As an entrepreneur he has passed on his personal endorsement of the Western Rail Trail Campaign	<p>In reference to the Western Rail Trail pre-budget submission Mr. Brody sent the following mail of support in support on October 2nd 2015:</p> <p>Hi Brendan,</p> <p>Yes I'm supportive and happy to help in any way.</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>Brody Sweeney</p>	www.camile.ie
Galway County Councillor: Shaun Cunniffe (Ind)	Shaun Cunniffe	Shaun Cunniffe Galway Coco has supported the greenway campaign for several years		https://www.facebook.com/cllr.cunniffe?fref=ts
Galway County Councillor: Karey McHugh (Ind)	Karey McHugh	Karey McHugh Galway coco elected for the first time in 2014 is an open supporter of the Western Rail Trail Campaign		https://www.facebook.com/cllrkareymchugh?fref=ts
Galway County Councillor Donagh Killillea (FF)	Donagh Killillea	Donagh Killillea Galway Coco has supported the greenway campaign for several years		https://www.facebook.com/donagh.killillea?fref=ts

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Sligo county council chamber	Sligo coco	<p>In July 2014 Sligo County council supported a motion presented to the Council by cllr Dara Mulvey (FG) to request that the council seek funding for a feasibility study for a greenway along the route of the closed railway line from Collooney to Charlestown - the Sligo section of the Western Rail Trail. The Sligo county plan also refers to the possibility of trying to achieve a greenway alongside the closed railway route in the county plan 2011-2016. On this basis it is assumed Sligo county council are in favour of the arguments contained in this submission</p>	<p>The wording of a motion passed by Sligo County council in July 2014 read: Motion 38 at the ordinary meeting of the council read as follows: "Given that the Minister for Sustainable and public transport Alan Kelly is on record as stating that any extension of The Western Rail corridor will not be considered for ten or even twenty years, and given the alarming level of incursions on the closed rail route in County Sligo, and the Minister's recent statement that he is in favour of protecting old railway routes with greenways, I propose that the Council should write to the Minister seeking funding to support a feasibility study for a greenway to be put in place on/or adjacent to the disused railway line from Collooney to the County border at Bellaghy/Charlestown. The project proposal should include a plan to connect this greenway to Sligo through existing trails in Union Wood, with future expansion onwards to Enniskillen via the proposed Collooney-Enniskillen greenway. This connected infrastructure would also have the potential to connect further south and west to the existing Great Western Greenway, creating a tourism product that would allow the west of Ireland to capitalise on the strong and growing European market for cycling and long-distance walking holidays, as well as providing a superb and safe leisure and commuting facility for all the communities along the route."</p> <p>The support and passing of this motion by Sligo county council shows the clear support that exists for a greenway on the closed railway route from Sligo county council.</p>	<p>http://www.sligococo.ie/YourCouncil/CouncilMinutes/MeetingMainBody,32159,en.html</p>

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Sligo Mayo Greenway Campaign - Facebook	Brendan Quinn	Sligo Mayo Greenway Campaign was established as a "think tank" lobbying group which primarily uses Facebook as its medium for communication. The Facebook page in which the views of supporters of the campaign can be read has over 4,200 followers and likers, debate and posts are placed on the Facebook page every week and the forum is now read by many supporters of the campaign. Using social media the lobbyists Sligo Mayo Greenway Campaign can contact up to 20,000 adults in the West of Ireland on a regular basis.	<p>Sligo Mayo Greenway Campaign fully supports the Western Rail Train.</p> <p>Sligo Mayo Greenway group has received emails of open support for the greenway option on this route from An Taoiseach Enda Kenny when he was leader of the opposition, and from successive ministers of Transport, Leo Varadkar, Alan Kelly, and Paschal Donohoe.</p> <p>Mr. Quinn of the Sligo Mayo greenway campaign says.</p> <p>"I don't think I have seen an idea that has so much consensus agreement as a good idea from national politicians and so little action to put it in place."</p>	https://www.facebook.com/sligomayogreenway?fref=fb

This Submission has been made to the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport, Department of Finance and Department of Public Expenditure prior to the October 2015 budget for the financial planning and expenditure planning for 2016

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