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Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030,
Planning Department,
Clare County Council,
New Road,
Ennis,
Co. Clare.

3rd August 2023

**RE: Submission to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030
Pre-Draft Issues Paper.**

SRA File Ref: 23/002

A Chara,

I refer to your notice of the proposal to commence the preparation of the Draft Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) 2024-2030 and the preparation of the Pre-draft Issues Paper received on 7th July 2023.

The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Issues Paper and make a pre-draft submission.

The new statutory Local Area Plan for Shannon Town and Environs is an important next step in the strategic planning framework for Clare following on from the adoption of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, and recognition of Shannon as the largest metropolitan town in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) as part of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES).

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 1 Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area states:

- a. It is an objective to strengthen the role of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as an international location of scale, a complement to Dublin and a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Southern Region.*

- b. It is an objective to promote the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as a cohesive Metropolitan Area with (i) the City Centre as the primary location at the heart of the Metropolitan Area and Region (ii) compact growth and regeneration of Limerick City Centre and Suburbs, (iii) compact growth and regeneration of Shannon (iv) active land management initiatives to deliver housing and employment locations in a sustainable, infrastructure led manner.*
- c. It is an objective to seek co-ordinated investment and delivery of holistic infrastructure packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and seek further investments to deliver on the Metropolitan Area Goals (see Volume III).*
- d. Any reference to support for all plans, projects, activities and development in the MASP should be considered to refer to 'sustainable development' that shall be subject to appropriate feasibility studies, best practice site/route selection (to consider environmental constraints), environmental assessment including EcIA to support development management and where required, the completion of statutory SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate.*
- e. The MASP seeks to protect, manage and through enhanced ecological connectivity, to improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network in the Region.*

We note and welcome the recognition given to the role of Shannon as a Metropolitan Town in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area in the Issues Paper, as well as its strategic position as a gateway to the West of Ireland, centre of international business, aviation and aerospace, attracting emerging sectors such as Connected Autonomous Vehicles and Lifesciences and its strong synergies with Limerick City. It also recognises the critical role of the International Airport and the Shannon Free Zone not only to the Mid-West but to the country.

The Local Area Plan will play a particularly important role in guiding the growth and development of Shannon Town and Environs. *Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 3 Shannon* states:

- a. The Limerick-Shannon MASP recognises Shannon as a significant regional strength and employment centre. It is an objective to support and promote Shannon as a centre for research and development for autonomous vehicles which will complement Shannon's role as a world leader in aviation, aerospace, engineering, manufacturing and distribution.*
- b. It is an objective to seek investment to deliver a Connected and Autonomous (CAV) R&D testbed and smart infrastructure in Shannon.*
- c. It is an objective to improve and enhance Shannon as an attractive residential location through placemaking and regeneration initiatives.*

Therefore the RSES supports the renewal of Shannon and efforts to improve its living environment. We note the high levels of commuting to Shannon and support the Council in its efforts to grow Shannon as sustainable residential location. We note the Council's commitment to the preparation of a Local Transport Plan for Shannon Town and Environs, and the role of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 (LSMATS) to deliver a high quality, accessible, integrated and more sustainable transport network that

supports the role of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA) as the major growth engine of the Mid-West Region.

The Local Transport Plan will play an important role in promoting sustainable mobility and would encourage the linking of new transport initiatives to the development of Blue and Green Infrastructure. In this regard we would refer you to two key documents we have published on our website which may assist in the development of the draft plan:

- *Our Green Region - a Blue Green Infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions Framework for the Southern Region:* southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/BGC_Framework_web.pdf
- Ten Minute Towns Accessibility & Framework Report: southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/SRA - 10 Minute Town Oct 2020.pdf

Conclusion

The SRA welcomes the public consultation at pre-draft stage for the preparation of a new Local Area Plan for Shannon Town and Environs. Further engagement between the SRA as a key stakeholder in the next phases of developing the Draft Plan is encouraged and the RSES team is available for future consultation and discussion during the plan preparation process.

Mise le meas,



David Kelly

Director, Southern Regional Assembly