



94% of visitors to Waterford Greenway rate it as either excellent or good

Well over 9 out of 10 visitors (94%) to the Waterford Greenway (website: www.visitwaterfordgreenway.com) have rated it as either excellent or good, a comprehensive new report on the spectacular 46km all-weather route shows.

A majority of visitors from outside Waterford (80%) paid for accommodation while in Waterford, and almost one in five visitors stayed four nights or more, the new Waterford Greenway Intercept Survey by multinational engineering design, consulting, construction and management services firm AECOM shows.

The Waterford Greenway is Ireland's longest greenway and the spectacular, 46km off-road cycling and walking trail stretches from the Viking City of Waterford to the picturesque coastal town of Dungarvan. Since it opened in March of this year, 247,545 have used it. 105,639 were on foot. 141,906 were on bikes.

Visitors are invited to travel along Waterford Greenway from the City along the River Suir, by Mount Congreve Gardens, through Kilmacthomas, across eleven bridges, over three impressive viaducts and through a 400m long tunnel; with wonderful views of the Comeragh Mountains, the Copper Coast and Dungarvan Bay.

Waterford City and County Council commissioned the study to understand more about the use and impact of Waterford Greenway. Of the 1,177 Greenway users surveyed, almost two thirds came from within Waterford and only 2% gave addresses in either Northern Ireland or abroad.

Of those interviewed for the report by Amárach Research, a staggering 94% said their overall perception of the Greenway was either excellent or good. Two thirds or 66%, classed the conduct of other Greenway users as either excellent or good. Almost 8 out of 10 rated safety on the trail as either excellent or good.

Asked what people like most about the Greenway, 70% liked the scenery and nature; 51% liked being away from traffic, while more than a third said it was peaceful and quiet. Over one in five were most interested in features such as the Greenway's tunnel and viaducts, while 18% said its outstanding feature was the friendliness of those using it. And 41% of respondents could think of absolutely nothing they disliked about it.

The economic impact the Greenway is having was further demonstrated through the headline statistics which show that 80% of visitors were in paid accommodation, with 41% in hotels at an average cost of just over €100 a night. Dungarvan was the biggest



draw with 45% of visitors choosing to stay there as opposed to 22% in the City and 29% elsewhere in the County.

Of the overnight visitors surveyed, over a third were staying one night, almost a third were staying two nights, 12% were staying three nights in the region while 17% said they were staying four or more nights.

All survey respondents were asked about their spending habits while on the Greenway. Of those who did spend, most were spending an average €28.50, further boosting the local and regional economy.

The Greenway is used most by families and older people, the study also found. Of those surveyed, 47% were aged 45-64; 34% were aged 25-44; 15% were aged 65 plus and just 5% were aged 18-24. More than half of the overall sample use the Greenway with family. 62% who visit on a Sunday did so with family compared to 42% on a weekday.

Almost one in four, or 23% of respondents, were travelling with children, rising to 28% at weekends and of these, 15% were travelling with two or more children. The data shows that 30% of respondents were travelling solo, 17% with friends.

Of those using the Greenway, 53% said their purpose was walking or cycling trips for exercise while 36% said their key purpose was sightseeing or exploring. A staggering 91% of those surveyed said they planned a loop or return journey to the starting point of their cycling or walking trip.

Waterford City and County Council Chief Executive, Michael Walsh, said the survey results were very encouraging. "Developing the Greenway was a significant but a very worthwhile investment that is having a major economic and social impact across our County, not just during the peak tourist months but right throughout the year.

"Waterford is the jewel in the crown along Ireland's Ancient East and the Waterford Greenway has not just drawn visitors into our county but it has helped us all to take stock and appreciate the fantastic natural amenities we have on our doorstep. Again and again visitors I've met along the route comment on the friendliness of locals and the varied landscape that stretches from the City to the mountains and down to the sea. It's breath-taking and we're only delighted to showcase it to the world."

Mayor of Waterford City & County, Cllr. Pat Nugent, said: "It is heartening to see so many local people using our Greenway and particularly to note that 15% of respondents say they use it daily. It's great to see walking, cycling, jogging and other clubs spring up and more people than ever are exercising on it, particularly families.

"It's encouraging to see the Greenway being used by so many people of all ages throughout the week and at weekends. We look forward to its continued success and to welcoming even more visitors to Waterford City and County in 2018 and beyond."



Johnny Brunnock, Trails Officer with Waterford City and County Council said a new “Greenway Community” has evolved since it officially opened earlier this year. “It’s extremely encouraging to see the Greenway being used for so many purposes by so many age groups right throughout the year. People take great pride in it and it has given communities all along the route a completely new lease of life – both in terms of the buzz and excitement that more visitors to the area is creating but also, many locals are getting active, getting out and meeting people along the way. It truly has been a win/win for Waterford and the entire region.”

The report features responses from 1,177 Greenway users at four specific points along the off-road trail in August and October of 2017, some on weekdays, others at weekends.

- For more on Waterford Greenway, log on to www.visitwaterfordgreenway.com

