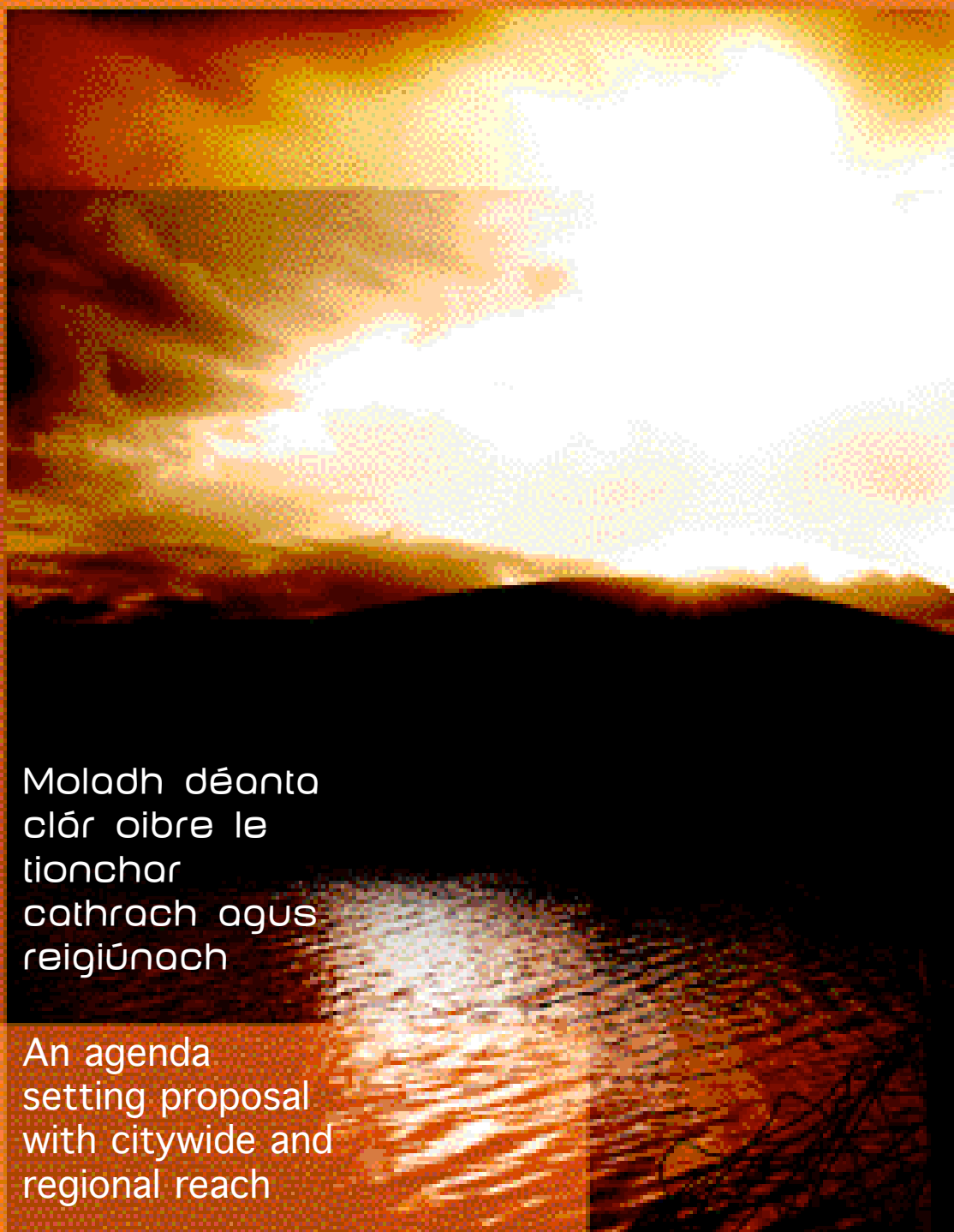


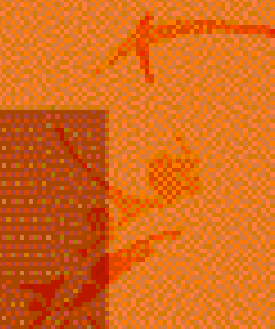
Bealach na Fearsaide

Farset Way

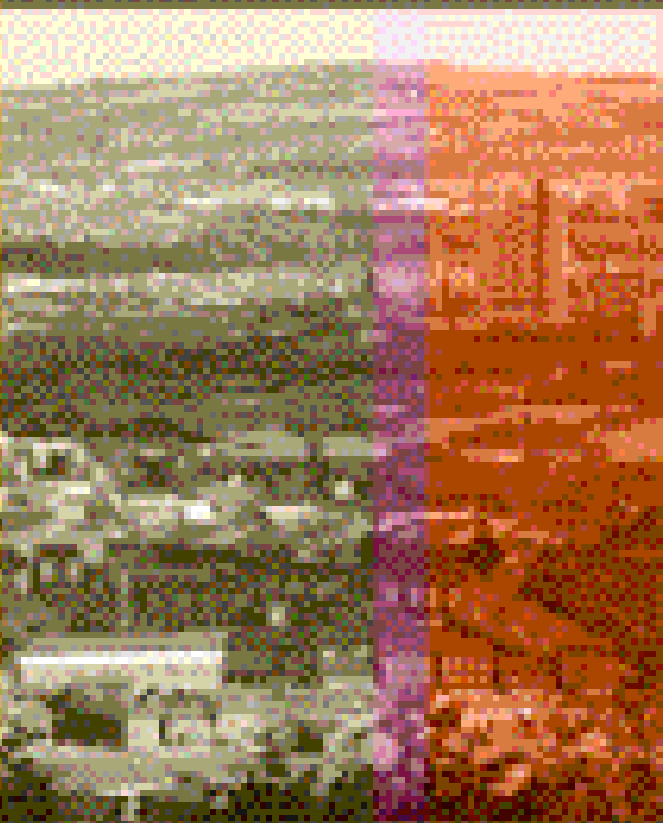


Moladh déanta
clár oibre le
tionchar
cathrach agus
reigiúnach

An agenda
setting proposal
with citywide and
regional reach







“Farset Way is not just another project: it has the potential to be the defining project of this generation, these communities, and these times.”

Peter Hunter

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city street grid. The streets are light gray, and the building footprints are dark gray. A single building, located in the upper-middle section of the grid, is highlighted in a vibrant red color. This building is rectangular and appears to be a multi-story structure. The overall perspective is from directly above, looking down at the city layout.

Tá poitéinseal leis an abhainn
seo ar fad d'fhailleana amach
romhainn – le tionchar áitiúil
agus idirnáisiúnta araon.

The Farset still offers the
potential for future opportunities
– local as well as international
in their scope.

Réamhrá an Chathaoirligh

Bunaítear cathracha móra in áit ina gcásann aibhneacha leis an fharraige le cuanta nádúrtha a dhéanamh – ionaid dídine na ndúile, ionaid foscaidh agus (i bhfoirm uisce úr agus éisc) ionaid chothaithe. Is pointí imeachta iad chomh maith do thurais tradála agus d'eachtra. Agus cothaítear mórgacht na cathrach ag mórgacht a cuid saoránaigh ceannródaíocha – ní amháin leis an tiomántas agus leis an fhuinneamh a bhíos lena gcuid teagmhálacha le dreamanna ón taobh amuigh, ach leis an dóigh ina gcuireann siad sláinte agus beatha a muintir féin chun cinn.

Is ionann, d'fhéadfá a rá, stair Bhéal Feirste agus an stair a bhaineann le craobh-abhainn bheag de chuid an Lagáin ar a dtugtar 'Abhainn na Feirste'. Is ó shamhlaíocht na chéad lonnaitheoirí a thágann ainm Bhéal Feirste, iad sin a lonnigh i mBéal Feirste – nó i mBéal na Fearsaide.

Is é an béal seo, a thiomnaíonn croí agus scamhóga na cathrach, Béal Feirste agus a muintir. Lean Abhainn na Fearsaide ón áit a gcásann sí leis an Lagán ag béal an locha go dtí foinse na habhann sna cnoic os cionn bhóthair na bhFál, ní amháin gurb é seo turas na habhann ach is é turas an daonra é chomh maith. Agus, mar a fheicfidh muid amach anseo, tá poitéinseal leis an abhainn seo ar fad d'fhailleana amach romhainn – le tionchar áitiúil agus idirnáisiúnta araon.

Tony McCusker
An Cheathrú Gaeltachta

Chairman's introduction

Great cities are founded where rivers meet the sea to form natural harbours – havens from the elements, places of shelter and (in the shape of fresh water and fish) sustenance, but also starting-points for journeys of trade and adventure. And the greatness of the city is sustained by the greatness of its leading citizens - not only in the energy and drive with which they reach out to others, but in how they promote the health and well-being of their own townspeople.

The history of Belfast is in many ways the history of a small tributary of the Lagan river called the Farset (Abhainn na Feirste in Irish). The city derives its name from the imagination of its first settlers, who founded it as a ford across the Farset and called it Béal Feirste, The Mouth of the Farset.

It is this mouth that drives the heart and lungs that are Belfast and its people. Follow the Farset from where it joins the Lagan and flows into the Lough to its starting point in the hills above the Falls road and you follow not only the path of the river but the path of its population. And as we shall see, the Farset still offers the potential for future opportunities – local as well as international in their scope.

Tony McCusker
Gaeltacht Quarter



Is feidhmiúil agus is ábhar ceiliúrtha é choincheap Bealach na Fearsaide, ag nochtú na sruthanna follaithe a bhí ina gceangal, lá den tsaoil, idir oibrithe mhonarchan agus mhuilinn de chuid na bhFál, na Seanchille agus Cluain Mhairtín; agus ag baint feidhm as an acmhainn coitianta abhann chun sruthanna nua idirghníomhacha sóisialach agus geilleagair a chothú. Is é an scéal acu é Bealach na Fearsaide agus ardán is ea é le geallúintí a fhorbairt ina áitribh úr don todhchaí, le poitéinseal a fhorbairt ina ghníomhaíochtaí comhlionta.

Farset Way is functional and celebratory, uncovering the buried currents which once connected the mill and factory workers of the Falls, the Shankill and Springmartin and tapping into their common river asset for new streams of social and economic interaction. Farset Way is their story – and their platform for amalgamating promises into premises for the future, potential into activity and fulfilment.



Choincheap nua ghnó

Is é an t-uisce a chothaíonn an bheatha. Uisce a chothaigh an chéad mhuintir sin de chuid Bhéal Feirste ina n-éabhlóid ón sealgaireacht go dtí an fheirmeoireacht. Agus in aois na tionsclaíochta ba é an t-uisce, go deimhín, inneall na hardcháile agus na rathúlachta agus Béal Feirste ina ceannródaí domhanda le tógáil loinge agus le táirgiú línéadaigh. De réir mar a shruthaigh na haibhneacha anuas ó na cnoic os cionn bhóthair na bhFál cheapadh an cumhacht nádúrtha le cainéil agus le haththreorú le cumhacht a thabhairt do na muilté phlúir, línéadaigh agus eile. Tá tábhacht na n-aibhneacha seo, go deimhín, mar chuislí beatha tionsclaíochta na cathrach, léirithe i gcinnlíntí scéala le hAlex Milligan in eagrair de chuid 'The Northern Whig' 1935, faoin teideal "Falls Road 150 Years Ago – Farset and Forth Rivers – An Old Business Concern."

Ba é an nuachtán ceannasach ina lá é 'The Northern Whig' agus tá ainm an nuachtáin go fóill le feiceáil ar fhoirgneamh de chuid na cathrach; cé go bhfuil lá an nuachtáin sin thart anois. Is amhlaidh atá Abhainn na Fearsaide, imithe chomh maith faoi mheáchan agus faoi uailmhianta na cathrach, ach tá sí ag reáchtáil léi, go ciúin, follaithe, faoi shráideanna na cathrach.

Is é atá faoi chaibidil leis an mholadh seo Abhainn na Fearsaide agus a craobh-aibhneacha a nochtadh as an úr – is é sin an abhainn a shaoradh ón chathair agus í a shaoradh mar chuid den chathair. Leagann sé amach plean uailmhianach le muintir na cathrach a chur in athaithne lena mbúnus nádúrtha agus siombalach; agus na hacmhainní seo, atá ag reáchtáil trí cheathrú de chuid na cathrach a chainéalú. Leis an bhainistíocht cheart agus leis an infheistíocht chuí is féidir leis na haibhneacha seo a bheith ina gcumhacht tiomána le haghaidh fáis eacnamaíochta. Bealach na Fearsaide is ainm don choincheap nua ghnó agus tágraíonn sé, ní amháin do chosán fisiciúil ach do radharc éagsúil ar an domhan agus do bhealach le bheith bainteach le tírdhreacha stairiúla agus comhaimseartha, geografacha agus cultúrtha.

A New Business Concern

Water is what sustains life. Water sustained the first peoples of Belfast as they evolved from hunter-gatherers to farmers. And in the Industrial Age, water became – quite literally – the engine of emergent prestige and prosperity, as Belfast became a world name for both its ship-building and its linen. As it flowed down from the hills above the Falls Road, its natural power was channelled and redirected to power the production lines of Flour and Linen Mills, with more to follow. Indeed its significance as one of the twin arteries of the city's industry is reflected in the headlines of a story, by Alex Milligan, in the 1935 edition of the Northern Whig, entitled the "Falls Road 150 Years Ago - Farset and Forth Rivers - An Old Business Concern".

The Northern Whig was once the leading newspaper of its day: its name can still be read on one of the city buildings. But its day is gone. The Farset too seems to have disappeared under the weight of the city's buildings and ambitions: but it continues to run, quietly and invisibly, under the surfaces of its streets.

This document outlines a proposal to make the Farset and its tributaries visible again – to free the river from the city and to free the river in the city. It sets out an ambitious plan to re-acquaint the people of Belfast with its natural and symbolic origins, and to channel those resources as they run through a quarter of the city which, given proper management and investment, can once again be a powerhouse in driving its economic growth. This New Business Concern is called Farset Way – and it refers to a physical path but also to a way of seeing the world, a way of relating to historical and contemporary landscapes, geographical and cultural.

Agus amháil an uile ghuth is le haghaidh comhcheangal le guthanna eile atá sé, le bheith i mbun dialóige, le beart a dhéanamh de bhriathar agus le gnéithe dár saol laethúil a iompú ina rud a mbeadh cuimhne na ndaoine air.

And like all voices, it is there to be joined with others, to engage in dialogue, to turn words into acts and aspects of our everyday lives into something memorable and even monumental.



Comhthéacs an Pholasaí

Suite idir Lár chathair Bhéal Feirste agus Bhaile Andarsan clúdaíonn An Cheathrú Ghaeltachta ceithre bharda de chuid Iarthar Bhéal Feirste. San áireamh seo tá barda na bhFál agus barda na Carraige Báine, tá siad seo ar na trí bharda is mó díothach i dTuaisceart Éireann ar fad. Tarraingníonn an cheathrú ar a buanna traidisiúnta de theanga agus de chultúr le próiseas an athghiniúint uirbeach a thiomaint chun tosaigh. Is foireann de ghuthanna nua sa chathair í an Cheathrú Ghaeltachta agus is láthair é chun an tsamhlaíocht a aistriú ina mhórgníomhartha agus ina tionscnaíochta. Agus amháil an uile ghuth is le haghaidh comhcheangal le guthanna eile atá sé, le bheith i mbun dialóige, le beart a dhéanamh de bhriathar agus le gnéithe dár saol laethúil a iompú ina rud a mbeadh cuimhne na ndaoine air.

Tarraingníonn an Cheathrú Ghaeltachta údaras, ag leibhéal pholasaí, ó Thuarascáil Chomh-Thascfhórsa Bhéal Feirste Thiar/Mhórchéantar na Seanchille. Mhol sé seo go mbeadh tuilleadh forbartha déanta sa Cheathrú Ghaeltachta agus go gcuirfear bord forbartha le chéile leis an fhorbairt seo a choimhead agus a stiúradh. Mar thoradh ar an mholadh aireachta seo rinneadh Clive Dutton, speisialtóir athghiniúna cáiliúil, a choimisiú ag Tionól an Tuaiscirt le smaointe a chur le chéile ar an dóigh is fearr le hacmhainní uathúil cultúrtha an cheantair a uasmhéadú.

Tá sé léirithe aige go bhfuil “...an cheantar seo, ar go leor bhealaí, mar bhuille croí na cathrach cheana féin – Is é an dúshlán, mar sin, cad é mar a chosnaíonn muid, cad é mar a chothaíonn muid agus cad é mar a fhásann muid an seod uathúil cultúrtha seo le go mbeidh se chun tairbhe cách.” Leis an photéinseal seo a fhíorú mhol an t-údar go “...gcuireann an Tionól mionchuideachta athnuachana uirbí ar bun leis na pleananna Gaeltachta a bhainistiú agus a thiomaint.” Faoi bhainistiú chathaoirligh agus bord stiúrtha tiocfaidh an bhallraíocht óna príomhghrúpaí forbartha áitiúil agus náisiúnta, chomh maith le hinchur a bheith ag ionadaithe phobal áitiúil,

Léiríonn Dutton ina thuarascáil an ghá atá le “...intinn atá oscailte agus cur chuige atá airgtheach, misniúil agus, go deimhin, uaillmhianach” agus an tábhacht atá leis “an poitinseal le tionchar dearfach a bhaint amach ar fud an Tuaiscirt, ar oileán na hÉireann agus go hidirnáisiúnta – mar thionscnaíocht rabhcháin, trí thógáil air agus trí chur i bhfeidhm moltaí na Tuarascála Chomh-Thascfhórsa Bhéal Feirste Thiar/Mhórchéantar na Seanchille”.

The Policy context

Lying between Belfast City Centre and Andersontown, the Gaeltacht Quarter stretches across four West Belfast city wards, including the Falls and Whiterock, two of the three most deprived wards in all of Northern Ireland. The Quarter draws on what are its traditional strengths of language and culture to drive forward the process of urban regeneration. Gaeltacht Quarter represents a new set of voices in the city, and is a site for translating imagination into initiative and achievement. And like all voices, it is there to be joined with others, to engage in dialogue, to turn words into acts and aspects of our everyday lives into something memorable and even monumental.

At a policy level the Gaeltacht Quarter draws its authority from the Joint West Belfast/Greater Shankill Task Force Report. It recommended that the Gaeltacht Quarter be developed further and that a Development Board be established to oversee and direct this development. As a result of this ministerial recommendation, Clive Dutton – a distinguished regeneration specialist – was commissioned by the Northern Executive to come up with ideas on how best to maximise the unique cultural resources of the area.

He has pointed out how “In many ways this area is already the heartbeat of the city – the real challenge therefore is how to protect, nurture and grow this unique cultural jewel to the benefit of all peoples.” To realise this potential the author recommended that “the Assembly first establish a mini urban regeneration company to manage and drive forward the Gaeltacht plans.” Governed by a Chair and board of directors the company would draw its membership from key local and national development agencies, while also working closely with local community representatives.

In his report Dutton calls for “open minds and an inventive, and indeed, courageous and ambitious approach” to secure the “potential to achieve positive effect across Northern Ireland, the island of Ireland, and internationally – as a beacon initiative, by building on and implementing the recommendations of the joint West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Forces’ Report”.

Na daoine a chéad lonnadh ag Béal na Fearsaíde,
roghnaigh siad an áit mar gheall, i bpáirt, gur suíomh
dósháraithe idir chnoic móra gleann an Lagáin a bhí ann.

The peoples who first settled Belfast by the mouth of the
Farset did so in part because of its unsurpassable location
between the generous hills of the Lagan Valley.



Áit agus poitéinseal: i dtreo na héiceolaíochta phleanáil uirbí

Na daoine a chéad lonnagh ag Béal na Fearsaide, roghnaigh siad an áit mar gheall, i bpáirt, gur suíomh dósháraithe idir chnoic móra gleann an Lagáin a bhí ann.

In ainneoin na coinníolacha dlútha maireachtála a bhí ina fhothoradh do fhorbairt tionsclaíoch an naoú gcéad déag bhí na daoine go fóill in ann teacht ar bhealach chuig na páirceanna agus chuig na cnoic: Rachadh fíor agus mná, a d'oibrigh sna muillte amach ag siúil ar na bealaí uisce céanna a thug cumhacht do na muillte. Siúlfadh siad, ar lá saor, amach ar na cosáin chuig na páirceanna máguaird le haghaidh siamsaíochta. Leathnaigh amach na teorannacha a bhí leis an chathair san 20ú haois agus leis sin d'athraigh foirm na cathrach.

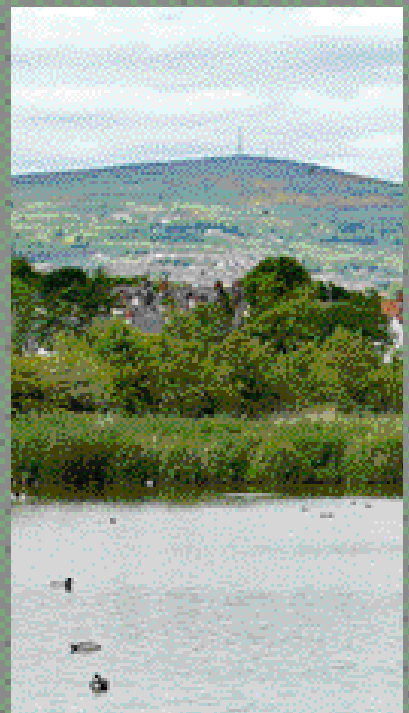
Ní raibh an t-athrú seo chomh suntásach céanna áit ar bith agus a bhí i gceantar bhóthair na bhFál: Léiríonn an Léarscáilíocht Náisiúnta i 1931 mar shampla, cuid mhór tithe sraithe ach chomh maith leis sin tá neart páirceanna agus fánaí glasa at gar go maith do na tithe. Le bunú na heastáit tithíochta ag Baile Uí Mhurchú agus ag Cluain Mhairtín sna 1970í is amhlaidh is faide ar shiúil ó bhóthar na bhFál a d'éirigh na teorainn tuaithe. Mhéadaigh an scáradh seo idir bhaile agus cheantracha tuaithe de réir mar a lean an fhorbairt tionsclaíoch ar aghaidh.

Place and potential: towards an ecology of urban planning

The peoples who first settled Belfast by the mouth of the Farset did so in part because of its unsurpassable location between the generous hills of the Lagan Valley.

Despite the characteristically dense living conditions that were a side-effect of 19th Century industrial development, people still had easy access to the outlying fields and hillsides: on days off, men and women who worked in Mills that were powered by the rivers walked alongside the same waters and out into the adjoining countryside for recreation. In the 20th century, the city's boundaries expanded, and with this and other changes the form of the city altered.

Nowhere was this more evident than around the Falls Road: the 1931 Ordnance Survey Map, for example, shows a great deal of terraced housing but also considerable areas of green fields and slopes within easy walking distance of the terraces. In the 1970s, the establishment of housing estates at Ballymurphy and Springmartin pushed the rural boundaries further away from the Falls Road and further industrial development increased the separation of town and country.



Mar chroí don fhís atá ag Bealach na Fearsaide tá uisce bhealach a bhfuil macalla aige do bhúinchúrsa na Fearsaide agus na craobh-aibhneacha a bhain léi, ag toiseacht ag Coláiste Ollscoil Mhuire: san áit inar uiscigh ár sinsear páirceanna, déanfaidh muidne intinní a uisciú.

At the core of the Farset Way vision is a water channel echoing the original course of the Farset Tributaries and starting from St. Mary's University College: where our ancestors irrigated fields, we will irrigate minds.



Stádas nua agus tarraingteacht

Mar chroí don fhís atá ag Bealach na Fearsaide tá uisce bhealach a bhfuil macalla aige do bhúncúrsa na Fearsaide agus na craobh-aibhneacha a bhain léi, ag toiseacht ag Coláiste Ollscoil Mhuire: san áit inar uiscigh ár sinsear páirceanna, déanfaidh muidne intinní a uisciú. Is é an smaointiu atá ann athcheangal a dhéanamh leis an daonra uirbeach, daoine a bhfuil a saolta fite fuaite leis an teicneolaíocht agus leis an mheicníocht, leis an domhan eiliminteach, le cothromaíocht nua daonna agus nádúrthacht a chruthú agus leis an abhainn a athbhunú mar phointe fócasach sa saol laethúil – leis an foinse arsa fíoruisce seo a dhéanamh ina foinse fuinnimh athnuachana. Athrú as cuimse a bheas ann don tírdhreach seo timpeallacht cois abhann a sholáthar, tabharfaidh sé stádas agus tarraingteacht nua don áit. Bheadh sé úsáideach do réimshe leathan de fhorbairtí eacnamaíocha, le hoifigí, miondíola, só agus tithíocht.

Don déanamh is déine feabhais, leanfaidh an cosán nua-aimseartha seo na seanlíntí teagmhálacha chuig na cnoic agus ar ais, ag oscailt amach le haghaidh dialóige nua idir an bhaile agus na ceantracha tuaithe, idir an oidhreacht agus an nuálaíocht, idir thoir agus thiar agus idir chnoic agus uisce bhealaí. Cuirfidh sé go mór le próifíl na Ceathrún Ghaeltachta ar bhóthar na bhFál agus chomh maith leis sin, déanfaidh sé frámaíocht léirithe a sholáthar don éagsúlacht phobail inspéise, arbh ionann a gcomharsanacht agus cúrsa Bealach na Fearsaide.

Is iad seo na grúpaí pobail céanna a bhí faoi spotsholas mar gheall ar choimhlint na dtrioblóidí, agus atá anois ag iarraidh teacht ar bhealaí lena gcuid traidisiúin agus a gcuid acmhainní arsa, uathúil a chothú agus a léiriú. Faoi scáth an ceannchathair domhanda, mar atá lár Bhéal Feirste sa lá atá inniu ann, tugann Bealach na Fearsaide anáil don bhuille croí agus cuireann sé le fairsing athéirí agus tarraingteacht na cathrach. Bheadh sé ina chomhlánú chomh maith d'fhorbairtí ag tarlú i dtuaisceart, i ndeisceart agus in oirthear na cathrach

New status and attractiveness

At the core of the Farset Way vision is a water channel echoing the original course of the Farset Tributaries and starting from St. Mary's University College: where our ancestors irrigated fields, we will irrigate minds. The idea is to reconnect urban people whose lives are inevitably and necessarily dominated by technology and the mechanical with the elemental world, to create a new balance of the human and the natural, and to re-establish the river as a focal point in daily life – to make this ancient source of fresh water a source of refreshing energy. Providing a waterside environment will utterly transform this landscape, giving it new status and attractiveness, and making it available for mixed use economic development including large scale office, retail, leisure and housing.

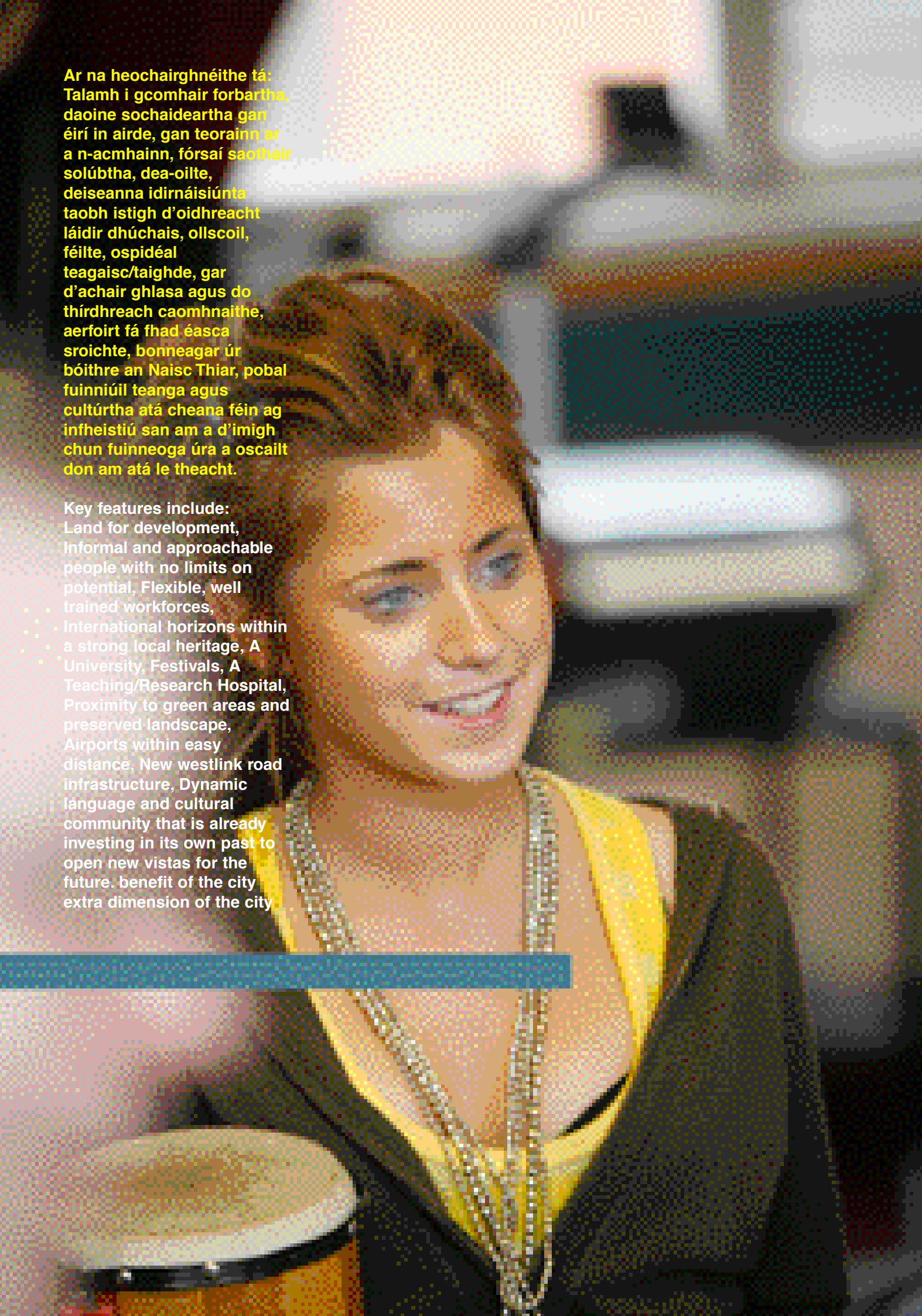
Built to rigorous standards of excellence, this modern pathway will follow the old lines of communication to and with the hills, opening up for new dialogues between town and country, heritage and innovation, east and west, hills and waterways. It will give a vastly improved profile to the Gaeltacht Quarter on the Falls Road whilst also providing an expression framework for the diverse communities of interest whose neighbourhoods comprise its route.

These are the same communities who were in the spotlight of conflict during the troubles but who today are attempting to find new ways of sustaining and expressing their unique and centuries-old traditions and resources. In the light of the globalised metropolis that the centre of Belfast is becoming, Farset Way enables the heartbeat to go on, and to expand the extent of the City's resurgence and attractiveness. It would also complement developments taking place to the North, South and East of the City.



Ar na heochairghnéithe tá:
Talamh i gcomhair forbartha,
daoine sochaideartha gan
éirí in airde, gan teorainn ar
a n-acmhainn, fórsaí saothair
solúbtha, dea-oilte,
deiseanna idirnáisiúnta
taobh istigh d'oidhreacht
láidir dhúchais, ollscoil,
féilte, ospidéal
teagaisc/taighde, gar
d'achair ghlasa agus do
thírdhreach caomhnaithe,
aerfoirt fá fhad éasca
sroichte, bonneagar úr
bóithre an Naisc Thiar, pobal
fuinniúil teanga agus
cultúrtha atá cheana féin ag
infheistiú san am a d'imigh
chun fuinneoga úra a oscailt
don am atá le theacht.

Key features include:
Land for development,
Informal and approachable
people with no limits on
potential, Flexible, well
trained workforces,
International horizons within
a strong local heritage, A
University, Festivals, A
Teaching/Research Hospital,
Proximity to green areas and
preserved landscape,
Airports within easy
distance, New westlink road
infrastructure, Dynamic
language and cultural
community that is already
investing in its own past to
open new vistas for the
future. benefit of the city
extra dimension of the city



Gá agus deis

Paradacs a mach is amach í an Cheathrú Ghaeltachta: ar an láimh amháin, tá istigh ansin dhá cheann de na trí bharda is mó atá faoi mhíbhuntaiste i dTuaisceart na hÉireann, ach ar an láimh eile is suíomh í ag racht ollmhór nuála cultúrtha. Suíomh suntasach infheistíochta í, gar do mhórhionaid thráchtála agus chumarsáide le comhchlaonadh sócmhainní a chuireann deiseanna comhchruinnithe ar fáil do thionscail is airde luach agus eolasbhunaithe.

As snáitheanna beaga cruach a fhitear cáblaí cumhachtacha, agus is chun sochair na na n-acmhainní díchosúla seo a rachadh aontas taobh istigh de phlean forbartha aonair ach aidhmeannach agus sprioc fhoriomlán láidir agus sainmhínithe go soiléir aige. Leoga, tá an cineál sin gníomhaíochta pleanála a d'áitigh Tuarascáil Dutton go láidir ar siúl cheana féin.

Fuair cuideachta theoranta, faoi chathaoirleacht Tony McCusker, iar-státseirbhíseach sinsearach a bhfuil saibhreas thaithí áitiúla agus idirnáisiúta aige, maoiniú tríd an Chiste Forbartha Comhtháite leis seo a thabhairt chun tosaigh. In éineacht leis, meastar roinnt tograí ardtionchair a bheith riachtanach leis an fhuinneamh gluaiseachta a cruthaigh forbairt shuntasach pobail le 25 bliain anuas, a bhuanú agus le tógáil air.

Bunaíodh grúpa straitéise Cheathrú Gaeltachta faoi chathaoirleacht, arís, Tony McCusker atá comhdhéanta de ranna pobail, gnó agus rialtais, leis an riachtanas seo a mhíniú agus a threorú.

Is suntasach a daingníodh a chuid oibre le déanaí nuair a cuimsíodh an Cheathrú Ghaeltachta i gClár Rialtais Thionóil Thuaisceart na hÉireann. Cuidíonn sé seo leis an Cheathrú Ghaeltachta a bhogadh as ailtireacht na haislinge a fhad le sraith dhaingean dúshraitheanna lena cuid pleananna a fheidhmiú, ach ann féin agus uaidh féin ní chruthaíonn sé an fuinneamh gluaiseachta a dhéanfaidh fíor-rud den aisling.

Is é a theastaíonn, tograí suntasacha ina dtarlóidh caidrimh chomhoibritheacha agus chomhthairbheacha fhadtréimhse a sholathróidh luach agus a spreagfaidh gach ceann de na páirtithe le tuilleadh a iarraidh. Ní togra amháin i measc tograí é Slí Feirste: tá d'acmhainn ann bheith ar thogra sainitheach na glúine seo, na bpobal seo, agus na haimsire seo.

Need and opportunity

The Gaeltacht Quarter is an astonishing paradox: on the one hand, it contains two out of the three most disadvantaged wards in Northern Ireland, and yet on the other it is also the site of an enormous outpouring of cultural innovation. This is a significant investment location close to major centres of commerce and communication with a convergence of assets that provide higher value and knowledge based industries with opportunities to cluster.

Powerful cables are woven from smaller threads of steel, and all of these disparate resources would benefit from being unified into a single but ambitious development plan with a strong and clearly defined overall goal. Indeed, the kind of planning activity so strongly urged by the Dutton Report is already underway.

A limited company, chaired by Tony McCusker, a former leading senior civil servant, a man with a wealth of local and international experience, has secured funding through the Integrated Development Fund to take this forward. In parallel, a number of high impact projects are considered essential to sustain and build on the momentum created by significant community development over the last 25 years.

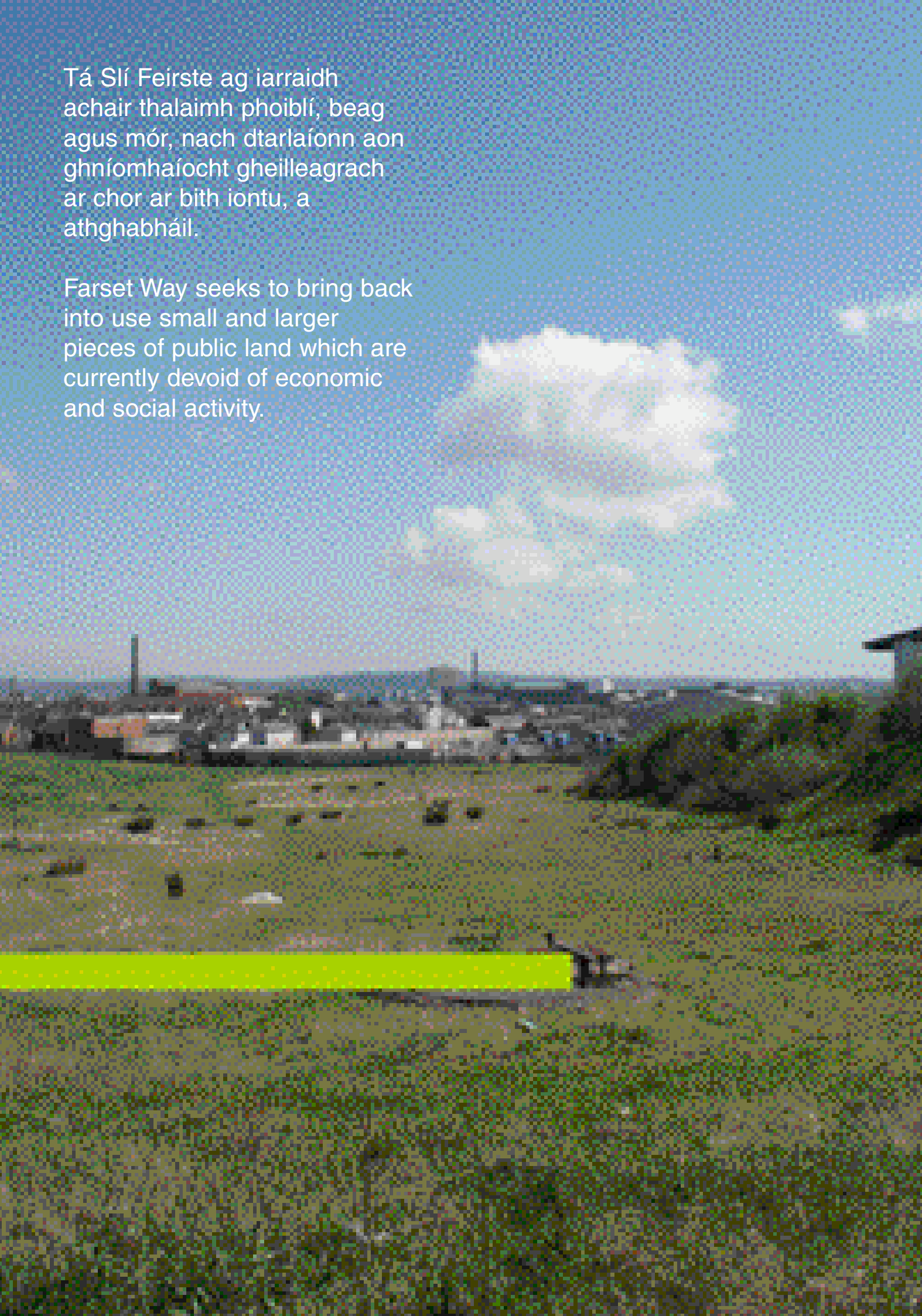
A Gaeltacht Quarter strategy Group also chaired by Tony McCusker and comprising a range of community, business and government departments has been formed to give expression and direction to this need.

Their work has been significantly strengthened by the recent inclusion of the Gaeltacht Quarter in the Northern Ireland Assembly Programme for Government. This helps to move the Gaeltacht Quarter from the architecture of vision to a solid set of foundations for implementing its plans, but it does not in and of itself create the momentum that will raise that vision to a physical reality.

What is needed here are landmark projects which involve co-operative and mutually beneficial long term relationships that deliver value and encourage each of the partners to come back for more. Farset Way is not just another project: it has the potential to be the defining project of this generation, these communities, and these times.

Tá Slí Feirste ag iarraidh
achair thalaimh phoiblí, beag
agus mór, nach dtarlaíonn aon
ghníomhaíocht gheilleagrach
ar chor ar bith iontu, a
athghabháil.

Farset Way seeks to bring back
into use small and larger
pieces of public land which are
currently devoid of economic
and social activity.



Athbheochan faoi threoir bhonneagair

Tá Slí Feirste ag iarraidh achair thalaimh phoiblí, beag agus mór, nach dtarlaíonn aon ghníomhaíocht gheilleagrach ar chor ar bith iontu, a athghabháil. Trí cheangal na fairsinge díomhaoine seo le céannacht agus le cuspóir choincheap Feirste, cruthaímid deis úr idircheangailte athbheochana atá uathúil ina scála agus ina méid. Éileoidh a solathar seo ar dtús, roinnt gné-idirghabhálacha bonneagair, a mbeidh a solathar sin fíor-riachtanach má tá na bacainní ar infheistíocht atá ann fá láthair le sárú. Iarrann an cineál sin cur chuige dreasacht tráchtála a tharaingeoidh an pobal infheistíochta chuige. Tá straitéis i gcomhair forbartha Shlí Feirste bunaithe ar an éileamh ar úsáid chineálacha éagsúla talaimh a spreagadh.

Catalaíoch cruthaithe ar éirigh léi sa phróiseas seo is ea an athbheochan faoi threoir bhonneagair, nuair a dhéanann rialtais “na fóide a bhaint”. Is iontach an méid ar chuir sí ar fáil i gcodanna eile den chathair. Is é a áitíonn tionscnóirí Shlí Feirste go n-úsáidfí an cur chuige ar éirigh chomh maith sin leis in athbheochan Chois Lagáin agus chodanna eile den chathair, in Iarthar na cathrach fosta. Áitíonn siad chomh maith gur chóir an mheadarachth fhioscach a cuireadh i bhfeidhm in acair mar Chois Lagán – is é sin, a áireamh go ngineann punt amháin d’infheistíocht sa bhonneagar fáiltas ceithre phunt ón earnáil phríobháideach – a chur i bhfeidhm fosta le Slí Feirste.

Infrastructure led Regeneration

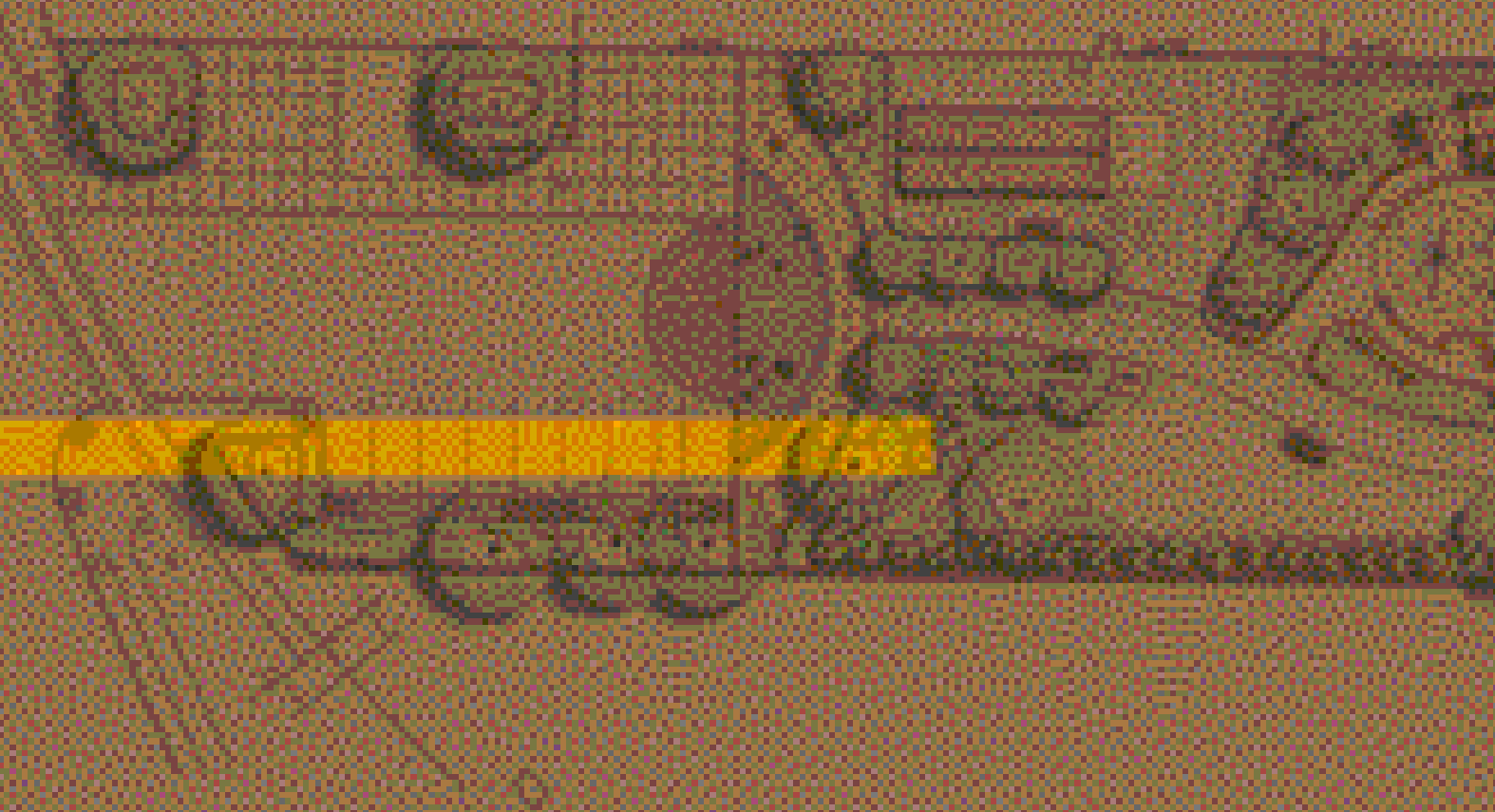
Farset Way seeks to bring back into use small and larger pieces of public land which are currently devoid of economic and social activity. By linking these dormant spaces to the identity and purpose of the Farset concept we create a new and inter-connected regeneration opportunity unique in its scale and proportion. This will initially require a number of key infrastructure interventions, the delivery of which will be crucial if the significant barriers to investment which currently exist can be overcome. Such an approach creates the commercial incentive for the investment community to be involved. The strategy for the development of Farset Way is based on stimulating demand for various types of land use.

Infrastructure led regeneration where governments and their agencies “prepare the ground” is a proven and successful catalyst in this kind of process. It has delivered remarkable returns in other parts of the city. The promoters of Farset Way contend that the same approaches which worked so well in revitalising the Lagganside and large parts of the city’s retail core must also be used to revitalise parts of the West of the City. They also contend that the fiscal metrics which applied to areas like Lagganside – that is to say, calculating that one pound of infrastructure investment from the public purse generates a return of 4 pounds from the private sector – ought also to apply to Farset Way.



gineann díghradú eacnamaíoch
díghradú timpeallachta, a
ghineann díghradú sóisialta.

economic degradation begets
environmental degradation
which begets social degradation



beoga, tarraingteach, sábháilte agus inaimsithe

Beartaíodh go beadh Slí Feirste féintuilleamaíoch go geilleagrach agus tuilleadh: cé go n-éilíonn sé meicníocht dúiseachta, caithfidh sé bheith féintiomántach ina dhiaidh sin. Ní bheartaítear í bheith ina hathrith ar Chois Lagáin nó Salford nó aon tionscnamh eile athbheochana lár cathrach – ach gan amhras, thig a chur i gcomparáid le tograí i gcodanna eile den chathair, den domhan leoga, a mhaifeadh go láidir chomh hinmharthana a bheadh an togra aislingeach seo.

In Oirthear na Cathrach, tá Féarbhealach Pobail Abhainn Choinn ag cruthú páirce líní trí Oirthear Bhéal Feirste, a leanann cúrsa Abhainn Choinn, a nascann spásanna oscailte agus glasa agus a fheabhsaíonn Abhainn Choinn féin. Athnascfaidh an Féarbhealach pobail Oirthear Bhéal Feirste ar bhealaí atá corraitheach agus suntasach agus déanfaidh sé sócmhainn bheo phobail arís d'Abhainn Choinn. Cruthóidh sé fearann páirce atá beoga, tarraingteach, sábháilte agus inaimsithe i gcomhair imeachtaí agus gníomhaíochtaí fóillíochta, áinís agus pobail.

I Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá tugann 'The Bronx River Alliance' agus 'Sustainable South Bronx' guth comhordanáidithe don abhainn agus oibríonn siad i bpáirtnéireacht comhchuí le pasáiste agus le féarbhealach Abhainn na Bronx a aischiú, a chosaint, agus a fheabhsú sa dóigh is go dtig leo a bheith ina achmaínní éiceolaíochta, aeraíochta, eacnamaíoch agus oideachasúil do na pobail ina dtéann an abhainn tríd.

Amhail na Fearsaíde bhí cuid d'Abhainn na Bronx le hathnóchtadh. Bhí tionscnaíocht pobalbhunaithe i gceantar 'Hunts Point' de chuid na Bronx a thug orthu féin mar sprioc "An geiteo a ghlasú". Mar an gcéanna le hIarthar Bhéal Feirste tá na blianta d'fhaillí eacnamaíocha i ndiaidh an cheantar a fhágáil faoi leibhéil arda míbhuntáiste. Mar a dúirt Majora Carter, Stiúrthóir Feidhmeannach de chuid 'Sustainable South Bronx', "gineann díghradú eacnamaíoch díghradú timpeallachta, a ghineann díghradú sóisialta. Más olc agus míofar an cheantar ina chónaíonn tú," a fhiafraíonn sí, "cad é mar is féidir leis sin gan droch thionchar a imirt ort féin?" Ba í an freagair a bhí aici ceangal a chur chun cinn idir an timpeallacht a fheabhsú agus caighdeán na beatha i gcomharsanacht áitiúil a fheabhsú – ag cruthú ceangal idir fhás pearsanta an duine agus fhás na gcraob, an rosáin agus na mbláth. Ba chur chuige simplí, ar nós glanta, cumtha agus cosáin cois abhainn a cheangal, a léirigh bealaí nua féidearachta.

Vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible

Farset Way is intended to be economically self-reliant and more: though it requires a starting mechanism, it has to be self-propelling afterwards. It does not intend to be a re-run of Laganside or Salford or any other inner city regeneration initiative – but there is no doubt that it can usefully be compared with projects in other parts of the city of similar scale and indeed in the world, that strongly suggest just how fully viable this visionary project can be.

In the East of the City, the Connswater Community Greenway is creating a linear park through East Belfast, following the course of the Connswater River, connecting the open and green spaces and remediating the Connswater River itself. The Greenway will reconnect the communities of East Belfast in exciting and meaningful ways and restore the Connswater River as a living community asset. It will create vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible parkland for leisure, recreation and community events and activities.

In the USA the Bronx River Alliance and Sustainable South Bronx provide a coordinated voice for the river and work in harmonious partnership to protect, improve and restore the Bronx River corridor and greenway so that there can be healthy ecological, recreational, educational and economic resources for the communities through which the river flows.

Like the Farset, parts of the Bronx river had to be rediscovered. In the Hunts Point area of the Bronx a community led initiative set itself the target of "greening the ghetto". Like West Belfast years of economic neglect had led to high levels of disadvantage. In the words of Majora Carter, founder and Executive Director of Sustainable South Bronx, "economic degradation begets environmental degradation which begets social degradation. If the area in which you live is bad and ugly," she asked, "how can that not reflect on you?" Her answer was to promote a connection between improving the environment and improving the quality of life in local neighbourhoods – thereby linking personal growth and the growth of trees, shrubbery and flowers. Simple approaches like clearing, creating and connecting waterside paths led to new avenues of possibility.

a bheith mar an lárionad meallta do roinnt sailití tábhachtacha agus
sáinmhínithe i gcóras na cathrach

to become the gravitational centre for a number of important and
defining satellites in the city's system



Pasáiste eolais ghlas

Is tionscadal uailmhianach é Bealach na Fearsaide – agus is féidir an leibhéal stadás atá ag cathair a thomhais, go cruinn, i gcaighdeáin na n-uailmhéine atá ag an chathair agus san ábaltacht atá inti iad sin a thabhairt i dTír. Is tionscadal ollmhór agus iomlán comhtháite é Bealach na Fearsaide atá in inmhe forbairtí ilchineálacha suntasacha a sheachadadh, le soláthar spás oifige, don chéad grad, cóiríocht chónaithe, asraonta miondíola, sárlimistéir aeraíochta agus foirgnimh sainghnéithe. Cosúil leis na forbairtí sa Bhronx tá sé d’aidhm ag Bealach na Fearsaide féidearachtaí fostaíochta ‘Bóna Ghlas’ de luach níos airde a fhorbairt – nó mar a dúirt comhairleoir cathrach ag ócáid oscailte, ar na mallaibh, ag forbairt nua de chuid athnuachan na habhann cháiliúil sin, “...Is é an bunsmaoineamh é, má thógann tú páirc.....leanann infheistíocht ollmhór.” Is rud lárnach é den obair atá amach romhainn teicneolóichtaí úra agus rathúlacht úr a mhealladh chun lonnaíochta san áit. San áireamh orthu seo tá: gabháil carbóin agus stóráil, teicneolaíochtaí maolú anachaine, leictreonaic plaisteacha, greasáin dáilúcháin ísealcharbóin le haghaidh soláthar leictreachais, gléasanna liachta, agus seirbhísí sláinte a sheachadadh tríd an idirlíon agus trí theicneolaíochtaí cosúil leis.

Tá Bealach na Fearsaide ag iarraidh na spásanna cois a chabhsaí a athshainmhíniú mar dhorchla nua le haghaidh eolais ghlais. Tá sé ag iarraidh, ach go háirithe, a bheith mar an lárionad meallta do roinnt saithilítí tábhachtacha agus sáinmhínithe i gcóras na cathrach – ina measc Coláiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire, Otharlann Ríoga Vichteoiria ar bhóthar na bhFál agus Coláiste cathrach Bhéal Feirste ar bhóthar Cluanáí Uachtaraí.

Green knowledge corridor

Farset Way is an ambitious project – and the level of a city’s status can be measured precisely in the quality of the city’s ambitions and on its ability to realise them. Farset Way is a monumental and fully integrated project that has the capacity to deliver significant mixed use development, providing first class office space, residential accommodation, retail outlets, outstanding recreational spaces and signature buildings. Like the developments in the Bronx, Farset Way aims to develop ‘Green Collar’ higher value employment opportunities – for as a city councillor in the Bronx observed at a recent opening of a new development in that famous river’s renewal, “the overwhelming sense is if you build a park....tremendous investment follows.” Attracting future prosperity technologies to locate there is an essential part of the task ahead. These include: carbon capture and storage, disaster mitigation technologies, plastic electronics, low carbon distribution networks for electricity supply, medical devices, and delivering health services through the internet and related technologies.

Farset way seeks to redefine the spaces along its path as a new corridor for green knowledge investment. In particular it seeks to become the gravitational centre for a number of important and defining satellites in the city’s system – among them St Mary’s University College, The Royal Victoria Hospital on the Falls Road and Belfast Metropolitan College on the Upper Springfield Road.





Bealach na Fearsaide - Foinse

Mheall An Fhearsaid lonnaitheoirí go Béal Feirste an chéad uair: thug sé ainm dóibh agus cúis fanacht ann. Ba mhian le Bealach na Fearsaide lonnaíocht agus lonnaitheoirí úra a mhealladh, ag cruthú ní amháin áit sábháilte, sláintiúil agus spreagúil dá muintir le cur fúthu ann, ach áit a bheas ag feidhmiú mar rabhchán d'áiteanna agus pobail ar fud na cruinne. Cuirfidh sé go mór leis an fhorbairt eacnamaíochta agus fhisiceach leanúnach in Iarthar na cathrach, agus meallfaidh sé smaointe agus tionscnaimh úra. Tá rian na seanoidhreacht ar cheantar na Ceathrún Gaeltachta go fóill le gleannta agus aibhneacha eagsúla. Táthar dóchasach go dtig le bealach na fearsaide na sruthanna caidrimh agus trádála a athoscailt, ag spreagadh sraith bealaí líneacha comhlántacha a leanann agus a chaitheann macalla ar na cainéil nádúrtha. Moltar nach dtógtar foirgnimh ar na bealaí seo.

Moltar na bealaí seo a leanas mar roghanna tásca:

Cainéal abhainn Bhaile Uí Mhurchú a athnascadh Cluain an Bhogaidh le Dubhais. Cainéal abhainn Bheara a chruthóidh nasc ón Cheathrú Ghaeltachta tríd Cluain an Bhogaidh go Baile Andarsan agus Gaeltacht Bhóthar Seoighe. Cainéal abhainn an Ghleanna a chruthóidh nasc ón Bhearna Gaothmhar ar Dhubhais tríd Ghleann na Móna agus Bearna go Baile Andarsan. Cainéal an chluanaigh a chruthóidh nasc ó cheantar an chluanaigh le Páirc Dunville go croílár na ceathrún Ghaeltachta.



Farset Way - A Fountainhead

The river Farset attracted the first settlers to Belfast: it gave them a name, and a reason to stay there. Now the Farset Way seeks to attract new kinds of settlement and settlers, and thus become not only a safe, exciting and healthy place for its people to live in, but one that serves as a beacon for other places and communities around the world. It will be an enabler for the continuing physical and economic development of the West of the City, and it will bring with it fresh ideas and initiatives. The Gaeltacht Quarter and its hinterland still carry the imprint and marks of various Glens and rivers. It is hoped that Farset Way can be the key that can unlock these channels of communication and trade, encouraging a complementary series of individual linear pathways which trace, echo and follow these natural channels. No buildings are proposed along these pathways.

The following pathways are proposed as indicative options:

The Ballymurphy River channel which would re-link the Bog Meadows with Divis.
The Owenvarragh/Blackstaff channel which would link the Gaeltacht Quarter by way of the Bog Meadows through to Andersontown and the Shaws Road Gaeltacht.
The Glenowen channel which would link from the Windy Gap on Divis through Glenmona and Bearnagh down to Andersontown.
The Clowney Channel which would connect the Springfield area with Dunville park and the heart of the Gaeltacht Quarter



Tá an fhís seo, agus na bíodh amhras ar bith oraibh, is fíorfhís í seo, tá an fhís seo ár dtabhairt ar ais go dtí an áit a bhí ár mealladh anseo sa chéad dul síos – béal na Fearsaide.

And this vision – for make no mistake, this truly is a vision – returns us to the very spot which brought us here in the first place – the mouth of the Farset.



Ag nasc na cathrach, ag nasc pobal

Tá ionchais eacnamaíochta agus timpeallachta an tionscadail seo ollmhór agus ní beag a mhaitheas siombalach agus cultúrtha. Is cuid thábhachtach den fhiontar seo é an moladh go gcomhoibréodh Bealach na Fearsaíde agus tionscadal Connswater le chéile chun rian íocónach ciúmheacháin a chruthú ag ceiliúradh na háite a dtéann agus a dtagann an dá abhainn isteach sa Lágán. San áit a scarann ballaí buaileann agus tagann uiscí le chéile in áit a nascann an tOirthear an an tIarthar, ag caomhnú a neart indibhidiúil agus á díriú ar threoracha éagsúla. Tá an fhís seo, agus na bódh amhras ar bith oraibh, is fíorfhís í seo, tá an fhís seo ár dtabhairt ar ais go dtí an áit a bhí ár mealladh anseo sa chéad dul síos – béal na Fearsaíde.

Cur i bhFeidhm

Is é scála agus coimpléascacht na dtascanna atá romhainn i gcur i bhfeidhm na físe do Bhealach na Fearsaíde a chuireann práinn iomlán le rannpháirteachas díreach na ngníomhaireachtaí poiblí. Le cúnamh airgeadais tionscnaimh do na riachtanais infrastruchtúr claochlófar cuid mhór den fuíolltalamh go láithreán flúirseach le haghaidh infheistíochta. Samhlaíonn an cur chuige seo go gcinnteofar ranníocaíochtaí ó pháirtithe forbartha le haghaidh tuilleadh costas infrastruchtúir a pointe a dtabharfar ceadanna pleanála indibhidiúla.

Coimisúnaíodh an comhlacht dlí aithnidiúil L'Estrange an Brett na sonraí úinéireachta talaimh ar fud Bhealach na Fearsaíde a aimsiú agus a chruthú. Ina gcéad tuarascáil, fuair siad amach go bunús an talaimh in úinéireacht phoiblí. Le dul chun tosaigh ón phointe seo tá bunú creatlaí cóiméala talaimh de dhíth a úsáidfidh na dóigheanna is tíosaí agus is éifeachtaí le cinntiú go mbeidh riachtanais go léir na scairshealbhóirí cosanta agus curtha chun cinn go cothrom.

Coimisúnaíodh an comhlacht innealtóireachta sibhialta RPS, atá lonnaithe i mBéal Feirste, obair léarscáilithe agus suirbhéireachta a dhéanamh le haghaidh an chuspóra seo.

Le hinmharthacht fhadtéarmach Bhealach na Fearsaíde a chinntiú agus le bearta infheistíochta na n-eagras pobail chomh maith le hionchur pháirtithe feidhmíthe na hearnála poiblí agus príobháidí a stiúradh, tá straitéis feidhmíthe mhion agus chuimsitheach de dhíth – straitéis a chruthaíonn creatlach phraiticiúil agus réasúnaíocht spreagúil chomh maith.

Connecting the City, connecting communities

The economic and environmental potential of this project is massive: its symbolic and cultural value is no less so. An important part of this initiative is therefore the proposal that the Farset Way and the Connswater project would collaborate to create an iconic link in celebration of the point where both rivers enter and merge with the Lagan. Where walls divide, waters meet and unite at a location that brings East and West together, preserving their individual strengths but also channelling them in new directions. And this vision – for make no mistake, this truly is a vision – returns us to the very spot which brought us here in the first place – the mouth of the Farset.

Towards Implementation

The scale and complexity of the tasks which lie ahead in delivering the vision for Farset Way make the direct involvement of public land owners an absolute imperative. Pump priming the initial infrastructure requirements will transform much of this unrealised terrain into a fertile investment location. The approach envisages securing contributions towards further infrastructure costs from development partners at the point at which individual planning permissions are granted.

The prestigious Belfast law firm of Lestrane and Brett have been commissioned to chart and establish land ownership details along the Farset Way. Their initial report has concluded that the majority of the land resides in public ownership. Moving forward from this point requires a land assembly framework to be established which uses the most efficient and effective means of ensuring that all of the stakeholder needs are equally protected and advanced.

The Belfast based Civil Engineering company RPS have been commissioned to undertake initial mapping and survey work for this purpose.

To secure the long term delivery of Farset Way and to guide the investment decisions of grassroots organizations, as well as the input of public and private sector delivery partners, a detailed and comprehensive implementation strategy is required – a strategy that provides both a practical framework as well as a motivational rationale.

Tátal: Ag Athrú Spásanna go hÁiteanna

Is féidir le tionscadal Bhealach na Fearsaíde próisis forbartha pobail, timpeallachta agus eacnamaíochta a stiúradh go rathúil agus go comhuaineach. Bainfidh áitritheoirí agus pobail áitiúla sochar as nuashonrú na gceantar ina bhfuil siad ina bhfuil siad ina gcónaí: osclófar cabhsaí glasa agus gorma idir agus trasna spásanna tíreolaíochta agus cultúrtha. Cruthóidh na limistéir seo ceantair ar féidir le daoine sult as bhaint as agus pairt a ghlacadh sa timpeallacht nádúrtha – ní amháin le haghaidh corpacmhainne, do spraoi, agus do chaitheamh aimsire, ach do thaighde thábhachtach ar an sórt ainmhithe agus flóra atá ann laistigh de theorainneacha na cathrach agus ar an sórt ar féidir rath a bheith orthu anseo. Le hathrú fuíolltalaimh go ceantair leathana glasa agus gorma, beidh áiteanna ar fáil le haghaidh deiseanna eacnamaíochta – go háitiúil i soláthar áiseanna tábhachtacha fóillíochta agus suilt, ina measc, caifé beaga agus bialanna – agus go hidirnáisiúnta i mbogadh gníomhaireachtaí tábhachtacha tráchtála go laithreáin suite cois bealaigh.

Conclusion: Turning Spaces into Places

The Farset Way project can and will catalyze community, environmental and economic development processes successfully and simultaneously. Local residents and communities will benefit from the upgrading of the areas in which they live: green and blue pathways will open up between and across geographical and cultural spaces. These corridors will create places where people can enjoy and take part in the natural environment – not just for fitness, for fun, and for recreation, but for important research into what kinds of fauna and flora exist within the borders of the city and what kinds can thrive here. Turning wasteland into swathes of green and blue will also provide places for economic opportunity – local in the shape of providing important leisure and enjoyment facilities, including small cafes and restaurants – and international in the migration of significant commercial agencies to sites located along the way.





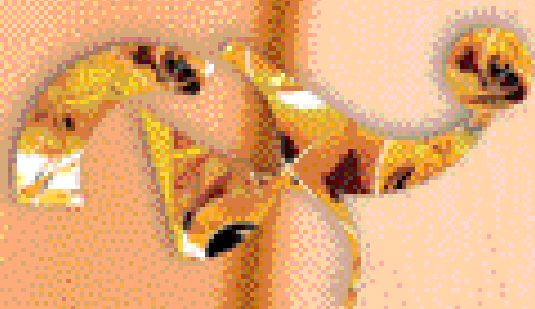
Ballygomartin Road

Blue shading is
indicative of proposed
Farset Way Route

West Circular Road

Springfield Road

St. Mary's University
College on the Falls
Road



an cheathrú gaeilteachta beo

Déan teagmháil le/Contact

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