



Image 1: Reed beds at Hodson Bay.

HODSON BAY WATERFRONT PARK: PROJECT UPDATES FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026

This project is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund.



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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Hodson Bay Waterfront Park is a multidisciplinary project aimed at enhancing the Hodson Bay area into a flagship tourism facility. The project's key objectives include:

- Sustainability - Deliver sustainable tourism that benefits the environment and communities.
- Growth - Grow businesses, visitor numbers, jobs, and the local economy.
- Accessibility - Enable a more inclusive visitor experience for all ages and abilities.
- Alignment - Align with key masterplans and strategies, including the Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020-2030, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and the EU Just Transition.

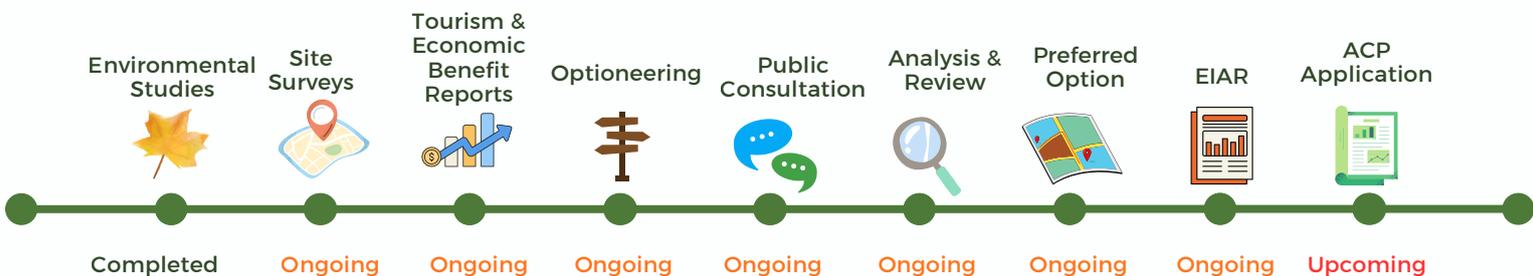
KEY PROJECT ELEMENTS

The key elements of this project include the following:

- Water Sports Pavilion - New building with café, changing rooms and meeting spaces.
- Promenade and Marina Expansion - Lakeside promenade, expanded marina with up to 50 berths, and a new water-based experience.
- Public Realm Enhancements - Plaza, play areas, picnic spots, and event spaces along the waterfront.
- Sustainable Transport Measures - Enhancing active travel infrastructure & connectivity to Hodson Bay to promote walking, cycling and reduce long term car dependency.

These improvements will create a welcoming and lively waterfront destination for the local community and visitors.

PROGRESS TO DATE



Ecological Surveys

Ground-level tree assessments, including checks for Potential Bat Roost features, were carried out in the first week of March across trees within the proposed project site. These assessments involve ecologists walking the site and examining each tree from the ground to see whether it has any natural features such as small holes, cracks in the trunk or peeling bark that bats could use as shelter. Bats are protected species, so identifying any places where they might roost helps ensure that future works avoid disturbing them. If any trees show signs of having suitable roosting features, more detailed surveys may be planned later in the year to confirm whether bats are actually present.

The team is also carrying out wintering bird surveys. Two of these surveys took place in February, with the final two planned for March. These surveys involve ecologists visiting the site and recording all bird species they see or hear. Wintering bird surveys are important because many birds rely on particular areas for feeding and resting during the winter months. Understanding which species are using the site and how frequently helps ensure that any future development plans avoid disrupting key habitats during sensitive seasons. Images 2 and 3 below show bird species observed during surveys at Hodson Bay.

Economic and Tourism Study

The economic and tourism study indicates that demand for the waterfront park is expected to come from a mix of local residents, domestic and international visitors, as well as marina users and boating tourists. The proposed development of a new recreation and leisure destination will help create an opportunity to attract more visitors and enhance the overall experience. Potential revenue generating activities and attractions may include water-based recreation, wellness facilities, community events, and food and beverage offerings.



Image 2: A Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) perched on the marker pole.



Image 3: Two great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*).

PLANS FOR MONTH AHEAD

For the month ahead:

- We are continuing to prepare for a second non-statutory public consultation. During which, we will be presenting the preferred option for the scheme and seeking further feedback from the community before progressing into the next design phase. More information on this event will be shared soon.
- Following this second consultation, all feedback will be brought together to inform the preliminary design on the preferred option, which will then be taken forward to the Environmental Impact Assessment stage to guide the next phase of the waterfront park's development.



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