

Gort Local Transport Plan



GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

Gort Local Transport Plan

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Client/Project owner	Galway County Council
Project	Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031
Study	Gort Local Transport Plan
Date	31/07/2025
Reference number	30087615
Number of pages	82

APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
1	Authors	Ronan Fallon & Diarmuid Bailey	Consultant & Associate	07/03/2023	Draft for Client Review
	Checked by	Diarmuid Bailey	Associate	10/03/2023	
	Approved by	Andrew Archer	Director	10/03/2023	
2	Author	Ronan Fallon & Diarmuid Bailey	Consultant & Associate	15/05/2023	2 nd Version addressing client comments
	Checked by	Diarmuid Bailey	Associate	22/05/2023	
	Approved by	Andrew Archer	Director	22/05/2023	
3	Author	Ben Healy	Consultant	08/12/2024	Final draft for client review – sections 1 to 5
	Checked by	Ronan Fallon	Senior Consultant	09/12/2024	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	13/12/2024	
4	Author	Ben Healy	Consultant	16/12/2024	Final draft for client review – sections 6 to 8
	Checked by	Ronan Fallon	Senior Consultant	16/12/2024	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	17/12/2024	
5	Author	Ben Healy	Consultant	19/12/2024	Final updated draft for client
	Checked by	Ronan Fallon	Senior Consultant	19/12/2024	

APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
	Director	Alison Pickett	Director	20/12/2024	review – sections 1 to 8
6	Author	Ben Healy	Consultant	03/01/2025	Final updated draft following client review
	Checked by	Ronan Fallon	Senior Consultant	03/01/2025	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	07/01/2025	
7	Author	Ben Healy	Consultant	14/03/2025	Updated final draft report following Consultation submissions
	Checked by	Diarmuid Bailey	Associate Director	14/03/2025	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	14/03/2025	
8	Author	Ben Healy	Consultant	26/03/2025	Updated final draft report following final client review
	Checked by	Diarmuid Bailey	Associate Director	26/03/2025	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	27/03/2025	
9	Author	Ronan Fallon	Senior Consultant	08/07/2025	Updated final draft report following submissions on Material Alterations
	Checked by	Alison Pickett	Director	08/07/2025	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	08/07/2025	
10	Author	Ronan Fallon	Senior Consultant	31/07/2025	Updated final report following approval of Material Alterations
	Checked by	Alison Pickett	Director	06/08/2025	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	06/08/2025	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	8
1.1	OVERVIEW OF LTP	8
1.2	STUDY METHODOLOGY	8
1.3	REPORT STRUCTURE	9
2.	POLICY CONTEXT	10
2.1	INTRODUCTION	10
2.2	POLICY REPORT	10
2.3	LOCAL POLICY AND PLANS FOR GORT	12
2.4	SUMMARY	17
3.	BASELINE ASSESSMENT	18
3.1	DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA	18
3.2	DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	22
3.3	ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS & PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS	23
3.4	EXISTING TRAVEL PATTERNS	24
3.5	MODE SHARE	28
3.6	TRIP LENGTH DISTRIBUTION	30
3.7	ACCESS TO EDUCATION (ATOS TOOL)	31
3.8	EXISTING TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES	36
3.9	SWOT ASSESSMENT	45
4.	LTP OBJECTIVES & FUTURE DEMAND FOR TRAVEL	48
4.1	OVERVIEW	48
4.2	DEVELOPING THE OBJECTIVES AND KPIS	48
4.3	FUTURE DEMAND FOR TRAVEL	50
5.	OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT PROCESS	52
5.1	OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT	52
5.2	OPTIONS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	56
5.3	SUMMARY	58

6.	PREFERRED STRATEGY	59
6.1	OVERVIEW	59
6.2	WALKING & CYCLING	59
6.3	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	70
6.4	ROAD & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT OPTIONS	73
6.5	SUPPORTING MEASURES	74
6.6	KPI ASSESSMENT	75
7.	MONITORING STRATEGY & LTP REVIEW	78
8.	SUMMARY	80
8.1	OVERVIEW	80

APPENDIX A – GALWAY POLICY CONTEXT REPORT

APPENDIX B – FULL LIST OF STRATEGY MEASURES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1: Gort LTP Methodology	8
Figure 3-1: Gort Population Density	19
Figure 3-2: Gort Employment Density	20
Figure 3-3: Gort Services & Amenities	21
Figure 3-5: POWSCAR Sector map	26
Figure 3-6: Employment Mode Share	28
Figure 3-7: Education Mode Share	29
Figure 3-8: Education Trip Length Distribution, by Mode [POWSCAR, 2016]	30
Figure 3-9: Access to Primary Schools (Walk)	32
Figure 3-10: Access to Post Primary Schools (Walk)	32
Figure 3-11: Access to Primary Schools (Cycle)	34
Figure 3-12: Access to Post Primary Schools (Cycle)	34
Figure 3-13: Highlighted Sections of Walking Infrastructure in Gort	36
Figure 3-14: Permeability block in Gort (1km walk for 50m crow fly distance)	37
Figure 3-15: Loughrea Road Zebra Crossing	38
Figure 3-16: Junction of Georges Street & Station Road	38
Figure 3-17: Gort Community School, Gort Community Centre and Gaelscoil na bhFilí Car Park Area	39
Figure 3-18: Gort River Walk Route – Recently Upgraded Section	40
Figure 3-19: Gort Bus Network	41
Figure 3-20: Gort Strategic Road Network	43
Figure 3-21: Gort Town Centre Local Road Network	44
Figure 3-22: Church Road Signalised Crossing	45
Figure 4-1: Gort LAP Land Use Zone Map	51
Figure 5-1: Options Assessment Methodology	53
Figure 5-2: Example of a Segregated Cycle Track	53
Figure 5-3: Options Assessment Methodology	56
Figure 6-1: Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – Gort LTP Study Area	62
Figure 6-2: Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – central Gort area	63
Figure 6-4: Gort with Cycle Connects Network Plan and Galway-Athlone Cycleway	65
Figure 6-6: Crowe Street Proposed	67
Figure 6-7: Missing footway along R460 looking towards Tubber Road	68
Figure 6-8: Missing footway at blind bend on Glenbrack Road	68
Figure 6-9: New housing and wide footway on Loughrea Road looking towards Loughrea	69

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1: Background Planning and Policy Documents	10
Table 3-1: Population Age Structure Comparison	22
Table 3-2: Employment Opportunities & Education Attraction Comparison	23
Figure 3-4: Physical and Environmental Constraints	24
Table 3-3: Trip Pattern Summary	25
Table 3-4: Destination Gort Origin Trips	26
Table 3-5: Origin of Gort Destination Trips	26
Table 3-6: Gort Rail Services	40
Table 3-7: Gort Bus Routes	41
Table 3-8: SWOT Assessment of Gort	46
Table 4-1: Gort LTP Objectives and KPIs	49
Table 5-1: Interim MCA Scoring System	58
Table 6-1: Active Travel Terminology	61
Figure 6-3: Market Square Draft Public Realm Proposals, BDP Architects	64
Figure 6-5: Town Centre First Plan for Active Travel Route Connecting Schools and Residential Areas via Queen Street, New Bridge and extended River Walk	66
Figure 6-10: All Ireland Strategic Rail Review – Gort	71
Figure 6-11: Connecting Ireland – Gort	71
Figure 6-12: Proposed additional bus stops (indicative locations only)	72
Figure 6-13: Proposed Road Infrastructure Safeguards – LAP 2025-2031	73
Table 6-2: Preferred Strategy: Accessibility & Social Inclusion Outcomes	75
Table 6-3: Preferred Strategy: Integration Outcomes	76
Table 6-4: Preferred Strategy: Safety & Physical Activity Outcomes	76
Table 6-5: Preferred Strategy: Environment Outcomes	77
Table 6-6: Preferred Strategy: Economy Outcomes	77

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of LTP

Galway County Council (GCC) has prepared a new Transport Study for the county alongside Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for the towns of Ballinasloe, Athenry, Loughrea and Tuam. The Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) has been adopted alongside the Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028).

SYSTRA Ltd (SYSTRA) has been commissioned by the Council to support the development of the GCTPS and the LTPs referenced above. Through this work, SYSTRA has identified a range of sustainable transport measures and options suitable for the context of Galway County relating to the pedestrian, cycle, public transport and road networks. This LTP extends this process to the town of Gort and seeks to determine how the transport needs of the town and its visitors can be met in a manner which reflects overarching national policy and builds upon the wider strategy set out in the GCTPS, as well as the Policy Objectives within the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 (LAP).

1.2 Study Methodology

The methodology for developing the Gort LTP follows guidelines set out in TII/NTA's 'Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes – December 2018'¹, as illustrated in **Figure 1-1**.

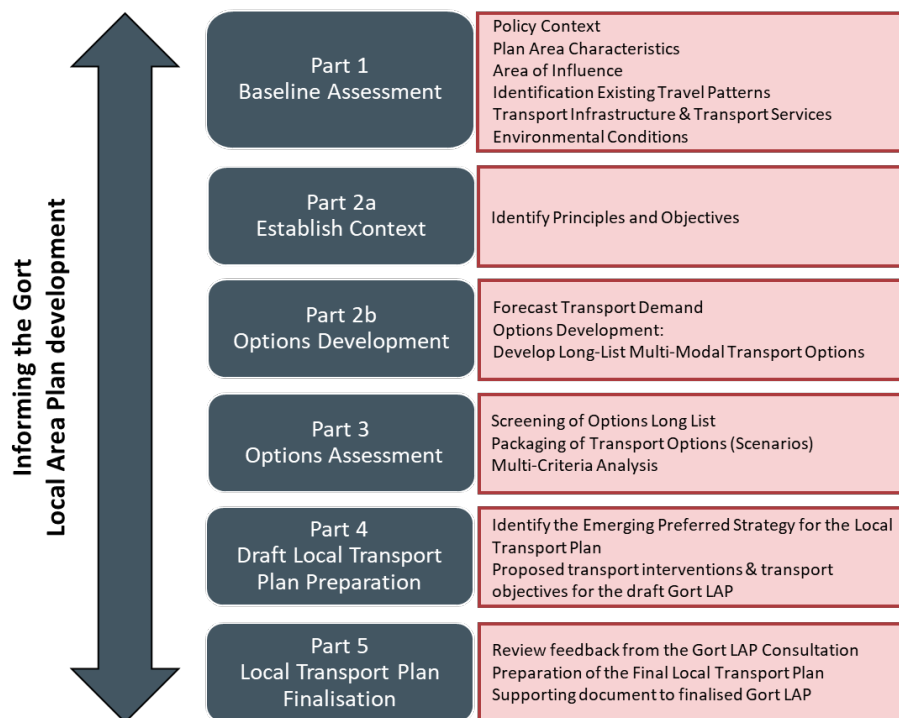


Figure 1-1: Gort LTP Methodology

¹ Source: https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Area_Based_Transport_Assessment_LTP.pdf

This report covers parts 1-4 of the ABTA methodology, and provides an overview of all tasks undertaken to derive the preferred strategy for the Gort Local Transport Plan (LTP). The preferred strategy has fed transport interventions and Policy Objectives into the Gort Local Area Plan (LAP) for public consultation. Feedback from the consultation process will then be used to update and inform the finalised LTP for the Gort study area.

1.3 Report Structure

The Gort LTP report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides an overview of existing local policies, plans and guidelines that are relevant to the study area. Background international, national, regional and county policies, plans and guidance can be found in **Appendix A: Galway Policy Context Report**.
- **Chapter 3** gives an overview of the Baseline Assessment phase of the LTP, including a summary of the area characteristics, existing travel patterns and transport conditions.
- **Chapter 4** examines the objectives for the LTP which have been determined from consideration of policy, transport baseline and demand information.
- **Chapter 5** outlines the process for developing and assessing the long-list of transport options to overcome existing constraints within the study area and assist in achieving the overall study objectives.
- **Chapter 6** sets out recommendations with regard to the combination of transport measures which the LTP will seek to promote and implement (with engagement and assistance from other parties such as the NTA where appropriate).
- **Chapter 7** outlines the monitoring strategy for this LTP.
- **Chapter 8** provides a summary and conclusion to the report.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides an overview of relevant local policies and plans, along with relevant international and national policies, plans and guidance relevant to the Gort Local Transport Plan. The development of the LTP was shaped by and reflects these policies.

2.2 Policy Report

A technical note comprising a policy review of international, national, regional, and county level policies and plans relevant to the studies in the Galway Transport Support Programme has been compiled. This note will be used as a reference for the LTP development. An overview of the policies, plans and guidance documents reviewed for this note is presented in the table below. More detail can be found in **Appendix A: Galway Policy Context Report**.

Table 2-1: Background Planning and Policy Documents

International Policy	
- European Union Green Deal (European Commission, 2020) and Fit For 55 Package (European Commission, 2021) - UN Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (2019)	
National Policy	
- Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF) - National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) - National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland 2021 (NIFTI) - Climate Action Plan 2024 (2024) - All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review (2024) - TII National Roads 2040 Strategy (2023) - TII National Cycle Network and NTA Cycle Connects (ongoing) - NTA Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan (ongoing) - National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) - OECD Redesigning Ireland's Transport Network for Net Zero (2022) - Five Cities Demand Management Study (2021) - Our Journey Towards Vision Zero: Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030 - Irish Rail Strategy 2027 (2021) - National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021 - Sport Ireland Participation Plan 2021 – 2024 (2021) - Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021) - Travelling in a Woman's Shoes (2020) - Transport – Climate Change Sectoral Adaption Plan (2019) - Get Ireland Walking - Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2019 – 2025 (2019) - Healthy Ireland: National Physical Activity Plan (2019)	

National Guidance

- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)² (2019)
- NTA Greening and Nature-based SuDS for Active Travel Schemes (2023)
- NTA Rapid Build Active Travel Facilities (2023)
- Permeability Best Practice Guide (2015)
- Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets
- National Cycle Design Manual (2023)
- Greenways Guidelines & Rural Cycleway Design (Offline and Greenways)
- Traffic Management Guidelines Manual (2019)
- TII/NTA Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes (2018) & ABTA How to Guide, Pilot Methodology (2021)
- Safe to School: An Ideas Document for Safe Access to School (2020)
- NTA Safe Routes to School Design Guide (2022)
- Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)

National Consultations

- Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to the Improved Efficiency of the Transport System in Ireland (2024)

Regional Policy

- Northern & Western Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020-2032 (2020), including the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (GMASP)
- Galway Transport Strategy (2017)
- N6 Galway City Ring Road Project
- Western Rail Corridor Financial and Economic Appraisal (2020)
- JASPERS Project Screening Note: Western Rail Corridor Phase 2/3 (2020)

County & Local Policy and Plans

- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2031
- Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) (2022)
- Galway County Walking & Cycling Strategy (2013)
- County Galway Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024 (2019)
- Galway City and County Age Friendly Programme 2014 – 2019
- Galway County Integration & Diversity Strategy 2013 – 2017
- Gort Local Area Plan 2025 - 2031
- Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan
- Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project Proposals

² Works to national roads in urban areas are required to adhere to TII Publications (Standards) as well as DMURS. The TII Publication 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' (TII Publications DN-GEO-03084) outlines design standards to be applied to national roads and national road junctions. A Design Report is required for works to national roads in accordance with TII Publications DN-GEO-03030 (Design Phase Procedure for Road Safety Improvement Schemes, Urban Renewal Schemes and Local Improvement Schemes).

2.2.1 Active Travel Advice Note: Rapid Build Active Travel Facilities (NTA, 2023)

In response to rising construction costs and the Climate Action Plan (CAP) requirement for 1,000km of new active travel infrastructure to be built by 2025, the NTA issued an Active Travel Advice Note in February 2023 concerning rapid build facilities. This note outlines that cost-effective rapid build construction approaches, including road space reallocation, are now required as initial options to be considered when planning for new active travel infrastructure.

Rapid build active travel facilities are schemes that utilise cost-effective measures to deliver walking and cycling infrastructure quicker than traditional (full build) construction methods. They do not typically involve major construction works such as full road reconstruction or significant changes to drainage systems or relocation of utilities, however they may involve changes to kerb lines and minor drainage works. The works will also be typically within the boundaries of the existing roadway which can simplify the planning process, with positive impacts on project programme and delivery.

Rapid Build Schemes do not necessarily require bollards, although utilising this type of infrastructure to secure road space for walking and cycling can be a useful interim measure. There are design options available for rapid build projects which use robust materials with a quality finish, resulting in schemes that can remain in place over multiple years.

2.3 Local Policy and Plans for Gort

2.3.1 Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Galway County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028 defines Gort as a self-sustaining town with a significant quantum of population growth, 800 people or 27%, allocated to the town. Gort experienced a high level of population growth, 13%, from 2011-2016. The growth strategy for Gort is to consolidate and continue to support expansion of the employment base. In addition, residential development will be facilitated that will support sustainable growth.

The CDP also includes specific policy objectives relating to improving the safety of children at schools, including NNR5: *'Increase the safety of children at school by assessing safe routes to schools for school children and by the installation of traffic management measures. Require School Travel Plans to be submitted with applications by schools or colleges in accordance with actions as set out under Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020'.*

2.3.2 Gort Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031

The Local Area Plan (LAP) for Gort was prepared by Galway County Council, with a report published for consultation in early 2025. The Gort LAP 2025 – 2031 has the following vision:

“Gort is a Self-Sustaining, vibrant, and socially inclusive town with a focus on protecting and enhancing its historical core, natural environment, supporting an educated workforce, and providing a range of supporting services/facilities/amenities. This plan will be delivered through a managed and phase development strategy of appropriately zoned and serviced lands to achieve balanced and sustainable growth for Gort and the immediate environment that it serves.”

The LAP aims to progress Gort’s role as a Self-Sustaining Town as categorised in the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. As part of this, strategic aims have been established within the LAP to ensure Gort’s development harnesses its economic potential in a sustainable manner. Relevant strategic aims to the Local Transport Plan include:

1. Delivery of residential units on appropriately zoned land targeted in the Housing Strategy set out in Chapter 2 of the GCDP 2022 – 2028, encouraging sequential and compact growth in the town.
2. Actively encourage sustainable mobility, including walking and cycling, in accordance with the aspirations of the LTP and support the continued provision of investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure.
3. Support the redevelopment of underutilised buildings within the town centre to accommodate multi-functional community and cultural spaces, to facilitate the growth of remote-working, cultural, creative and community sectors in the town centre.

The Transport and Movement chapter of the LAP will be informed by the Gort LTP upon its completion, in order to ensure continuity between plans and proposals. The LTP has considered the aims of improved sustainable mobility in terms of access to the town and internal movements. The integration of land use planning and the transport network will help to facilitate compact growth of the town and provide greater opportunities for the implementation and utilisation of sustainable transport.

The existing public transport links between the town and Galway City will be maintained and improved and the strategic importance of the M18 motorway to Galway, Limerick and Shannon will be recognised in any proposals. This is in order to:

- Maintain the strategic function, capacity and safety of the national roads network, including planning for future capacity enhancements, in the local plan area.
- Ensure that the existing transport networks in the local area plan area, which have been greatly enhanced, are maintained to a high level to ensure quality levels of service, safety, accessibility and connectivity to transport users.

To support these strategic aims, a number of Policy Objectives relevant to the LTP are outlined in Section 4 of the LAP. These Gort Self Sustaining Town (GSST) Policy Objectives are as follows:

- **GSST 44 Local Transport Plan:** “Support the implementation of the Local Transport Plan as set out in the accompanying LTP document in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.”
- **GSST 45 Transportation Infrastructure:** “Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure. This shall include the reservation of lands to facilitate public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.”
- **GSST 46 Sustainable Transportation:** “Facilitate any Smarter Travel initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the plan area and facilitate sustainable transportation options including public transportation, rail freight, electric vehicles rentals, car clubs, public bike schemes, cycle parking as appropriate.”
- **GSST 47 Pedestrian and Cycle Network:** “Facilitate the improvement of the pedestrian and cycling environment and network so that it is safe and accessible to all, through the provision of the necessary infrastructure. New development shall promote and prioritise walking and cycling, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre, recreational, educational, residential and employment destinations and shall adhere to the principles contained within the national policy document Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and NTA document Permeability: Best Practice Guide.”

- **GSST 48 Pedestrian Crossings:** “Facilitate the provision of pedestrian crossings adjacent to schools and at other appropriate locations within the plan area.”
- **GSST 49 Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA):** “Require all significant development proposals to be accompanied by a Road Safety Audit and Traffic & Transport Assessment carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the TII’s *Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines (PE-PDV-02045) 2014* (including any updated/superseding document) and ‘*Road Safety Audit*’ (GE-STY-01024) December 2017.”
- **GSST 50 Preservation of Routes, Road Upgrades and Infrastructure Provision:** “Prohibit development on lands which are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.”
- **GSST 51 Reservation of Access Points:** “Reserve access points for future development and the development of backlands that may be identified for reservation by the Planning Authority during the plan period, to ensure adequate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to backlands, in order to facilitate efficient development of these lands and to ensure connectivity and accessibility to lands with limited road frontage.”
- **GSST 52 Road Junction Improvements:** “Continue to carry out road junction improvements where improvements to traffic flow and safety can be achieved, subject to normal planning and environment considerations.”
- **GSST 53 Climate Change:** “Support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrated land use and low carbon transportation, and maximise opportunities through development location, form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon emissions.”

2.3.3 Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan

The Gort Town Centre First Plan 2023 sets out the key proposals and implementation strategy to realise the town’s potential and improve the economic vibrancy and liveability of the town. It was developed by the Gort Town Team to provide a locally informed plan for the town’s development that complies with national, regional and local policies and the lived experiences of residents.

The Plan focuses on strategic improvements that can be made to the town centre to improve its viability as a site for economic, community and social activities combatting its predominant use as a vehicle thoroughfare.



An extensive programme of public engagement identified challenges to the town centre developments that included the strong presence of vacant and derelict buildings, a poor pedestrian environment that lacks adequate crossing points, an absence of usable public space and a vehicle centric main street with parking for over 100 vehicles at Market Square. The views and ideas expressed during the engagement phase were reimaged into 10 Themes with detailed proposals and benefits to overcome the challenges identified. Each proposal identified within the plan has been given defined actions, indicative timeframes for completion and the key bodies (alongside the Town Team) that will drive them towards implementation and completion.

2.3.4 Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project Proposals

The Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project proposals were developed by a partnership of BDP, Gort Town Centre First Team and Galway County Council.

Through the completion of parking and traffic surveys and public consultations, a detailed analysis of how Market Square and the town centre was utilised was identified.

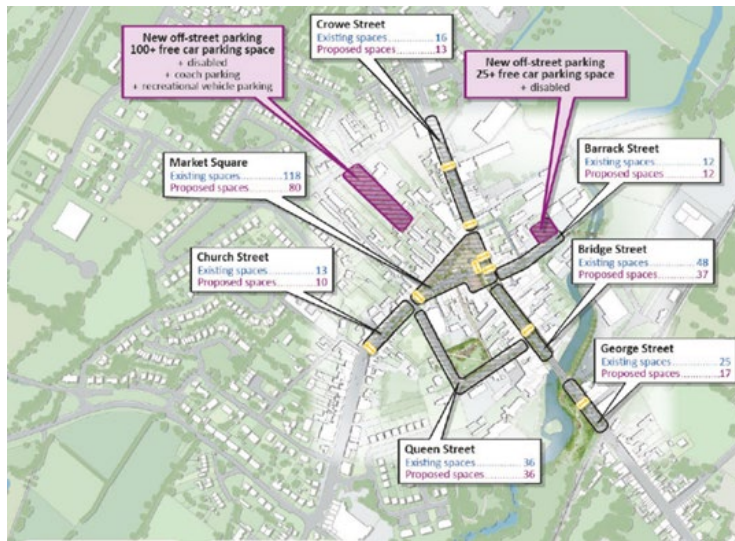
Findings indicated that weekday occupancy of the Market Square's 119 parking spaces did not exceed 77%, while Saturday afternoon was the busiest period with 91% occupancy.



Typically, peak occupancy was between 1200 and 1600hrs, with 70% of vehicles parking within the allocated 2 hour time limit. Private vehicles constitute 90% of parked vehicles throughout the day with 1 – 8 light goods vehicles seen across various time slots. The parking survey highlighted that on-street occupancy in adjoining town centre streets averaged 55% over the same period.

It was identified that the current road layout and parking arrangements at the Market Square do not provide for safe pedestrian and cycle connectivity or adequate space for community events, such as the Friday Market, and was contributing to reduced footfall in the town and a loss of vibrancy.

The public realm design proposals aims to address these issues through alignment with the Town Centre First objectives to create a more liveable and accessible town.



The final proposal for the Market Square allows for an inclusive and flexible community focused space in the functioning heart of the town. This is achieved through the reduction of car parking spaces while making greater provision for age friendly and accessible bays.

The reconfiguration of the car parking and vehicular circulation provides an opportunity for a dedicated coach drop-off point for services such as the Local Link, school buses, and tour coaches.

The loss of parking on Market Square would be remediated through the reconfiguration of parking along streets which demonstrated lower occupancy, such as Church Street, and the construction of new off-street car parks on Barrack Street and Crowe Street. Lowry's Lane could provide direct pedestrian access from the Market Square to the proposed new car park on Crowe Street.

In addition, it is proposed to redistribute parking on the Square across a variety of types including free 15 minute parking bays, dedicated loading bays, coach parking and laybys. Furthermore the secondary car parking area directly opposite Barrack Street, which was the original location of the historic market square, will be enhanced to accommodate covered outdoor events to broaden the variety of community events which could be held in the town centre.

The proposal also includes the redesign of Canon Quinn Park to include all-age play areas, an amphitheatre, and a bandstand. Proposed improvements along Bridge Street would see the carriageway narrowed to facilitate additional spill out space for located premises with parallel parking interjected by parklets and new vegetation.

2.4 Summary

- A technical note comprising a policy review of international, national, regional, and county level policies and plans relevant to the studies in the Galway Transport Support Programme has been compiled and is available in **Appendix A**.
- Gort is classified as a self-sustaining town in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, with a high level of population growth.
- The Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 aims for the town to be a sustainable, self-sufficient, vibrant and socially inclusive key town with development progressing in a way that consolidates around the town centre.
- The proposed Gort Town Centre First Plan and the Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project proposals aim to revitalise the town centre with an emphasis on prioritising accessibility to Market Square and creating an attractive and inclusive public space to increase footfall and facilitate
- Both the County Development Plan and Local Area Plan include policy objectives to promote the use of sustainable transport in place of the private car in the town including the provision of safe active travel infrastructure and facilities, appropriate traffic management, compact growth and improved public transport options and waiting facilities.

3. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The following chapter provides an overview of the Baseline Assessment undertaken for the Gort LTP. The aim of the Baseline Assessment is to gain a clear understanding of the existing spatial characteristics, land uses, transport conditions and constraints relating to the Plan area.

3.1 Description of Study Area

The study area boundary for the Gort LTP was identified in collaboration with Galway County Council. It broadly aligns with the LAP boundary, containing the established town and surrounding areas earmarked for development and buffer zones. A ‘best-fit’ selection of Census Small Areas (CSAs) has been identified to form the study area for the purpose of undertaking baseline analyses of census data (utilising 2016 Census data).

Located approximately 45km to the south east of Galway City, the Gort study area had a population of 3,033 as of 2016 (Census 2016). The previous Census in 2011 put the population at 2,671, representing an increase of 14%. Based on the 2022 Census updates, the population of Gort is 2,870. This is a slight decrease from the 2016 figures due to changes in the CSO boundary for Gort. However, it is noted that the geographic definition of Gort as a settlement changed from the 2016 to the 2022 Census – based on the comparative analysis of settlement size, in real terms, the population of Gort is 3,144 inhabitants based on the settlement boundaries in the 2016 Census. This represents 5.4% population growth in real terms from the 2016 Census.³

Gort hosts 1,428 jobs, benefitting from a well-established road network. The M18 links Gort to the national strategic road network, with onward connections to Galway City, Ballinasloe, Tuam, Athenry, Athlone and Dublin. The town is served by the regional roads R360, R458 and R460 connecting to Loughrea, Oranmore and Ennis. Gort railway station is located south east of the town centre, with services on the Galway-Limerick line.

The town of Gort serves a rural hinterland as a market town and service centre. It serves a particularly large education catchment, with over 1,700 school places in Gort. The main attraction of the town is Market Square and the medieval town core.

3.1.1 Trip Generators & Attractors

To present the concentration of local trip generators and attractors in Gort, maps of the town’s distribution of population and employment density by 2016 Census Small Area have been generated and are shown below in Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2.

The analysis has been derived from Census Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) data along with 2016 Place of Work, School or College - Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR) data. The POWSCAR database includes a range of information on travel patterns for trips to work and school as recorded in the Census⁴. This data was used to identify the total number of destination work trips for each of the Census Small Areas (CSAs) within the Gort LTP study area.

³ [The Plan – Gort Town Centre First Plan](#)

⁴ Further information on POWSCAR is available on the CSO website at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2016reports/powscar/>

3.1.2 Population

The population density for CSAs within the Gort study area (represented as population per square kilometre) are illustrated in **Figure 3-1**. The areas of Gort with the highest population density are located to the west and north west of the town centre, alongside the R458 and R460 corridors.

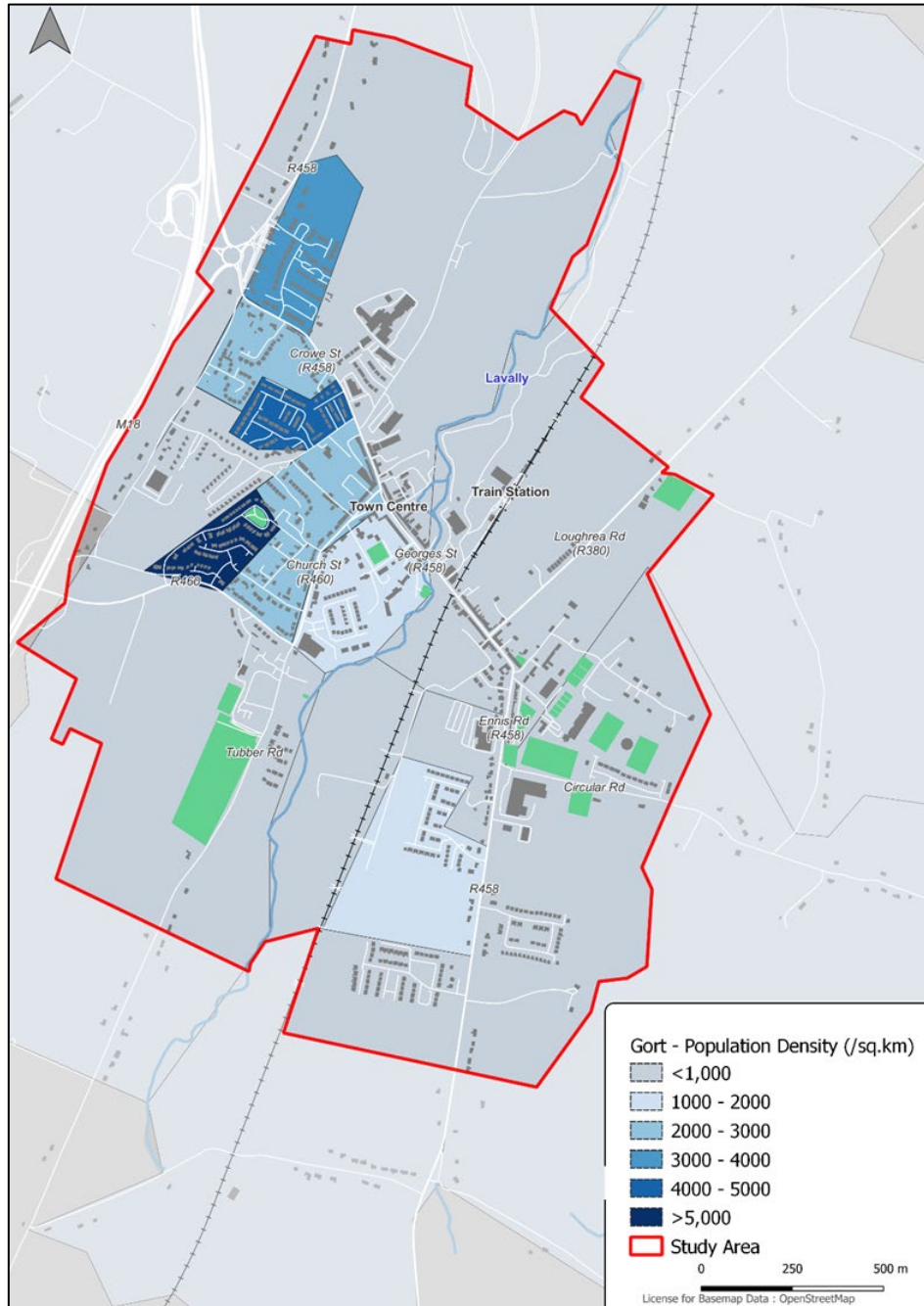


Figure 3-1: Gort Population Density

3.1.3 Employment

The employment density for CSAs within the Gort study area (represented as jobs per square kilometre) is illustrated in **Figure 3-2**. It demonstrates that the town centre is the largest attractor of employment trips within the study area.

Other significant employment sites include the Lidl supermarket immediately north of the town centre and the SuperValu supermarket to the south.

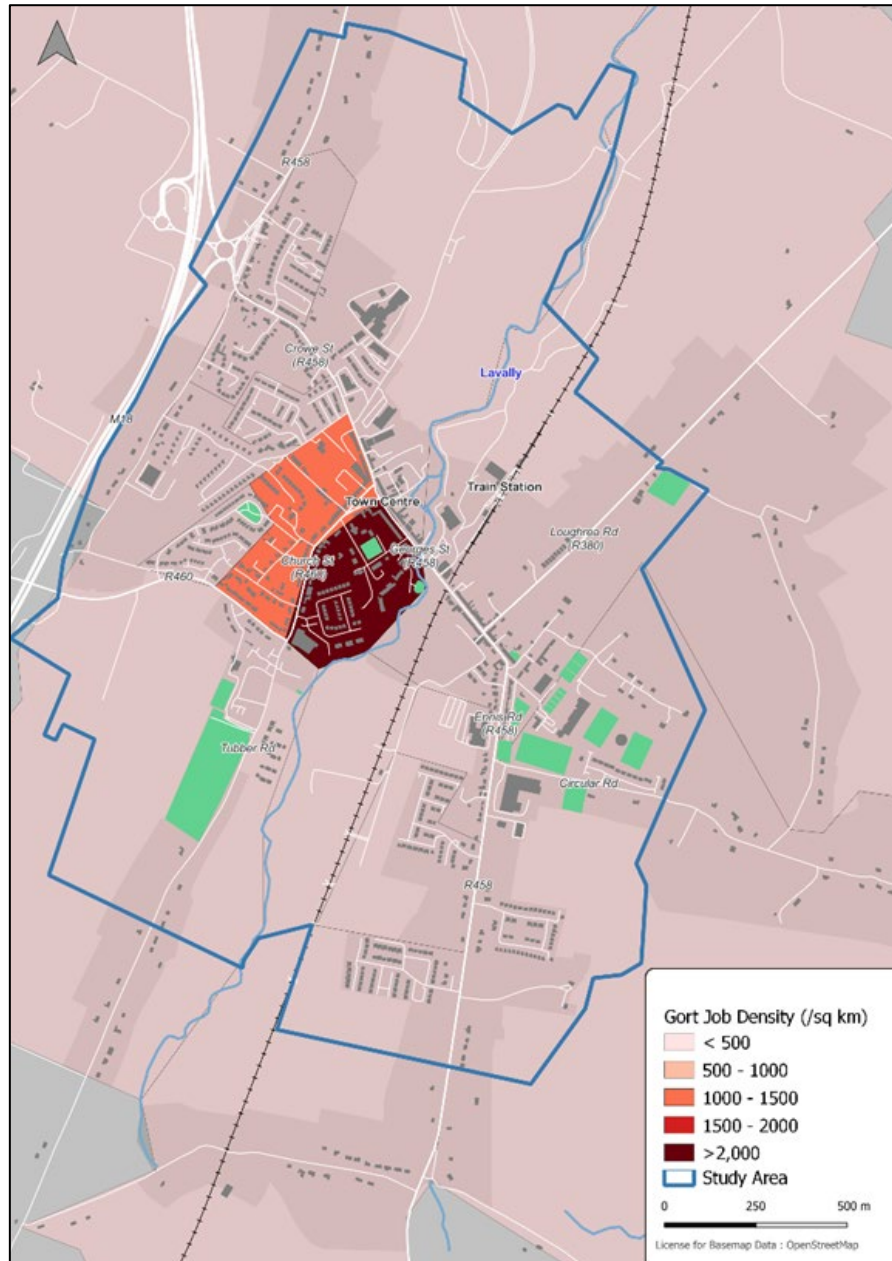


Figure 3-2: Gort Employment Density

3.1.4 Services & Amenities

The location of key services and amenities within Gort are presented in **Figure 3-3**.

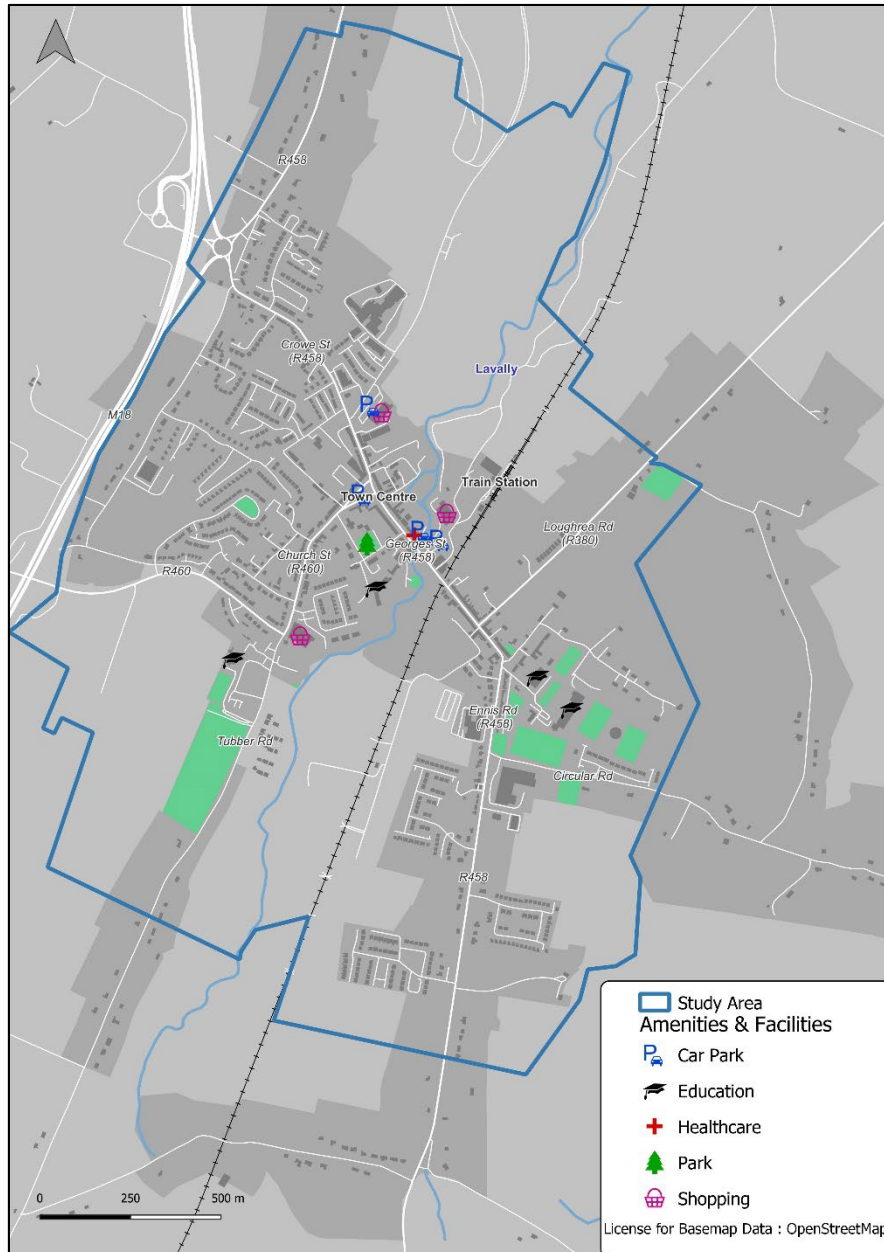


Figure 3-3: Gort Services & Amenities

A concentration of services and amenities within the town centre is noted, including the main retail-oriented streets, library, and St Coleman's Church.

The rail station is located on Station Road to the east of the town centre.

Two primary schools are located within Gort. Gort National School (primary) is located off the Tubber Road to the south west of the town centre. Gaelscoil na bhFilí is located off Ennis Road to the south east of the town centre. The town's only secondary school (Gort Community School, serving approximately 1,000 pupils) is also located off the Ennis Road.

Three supermarkets are located within the study area. Lidl is located off Crowe Street immediately north east of the town centre, Aldi is located off Station Road immediately to the east and Super Valu is located off Church Street to the south. Substantial parking facilities are available at all three facilities for customers.

The main council-operated car park in Gort is located north of Market Square, in the heart of the town centre.

3.2 Demographic Profile

3.2.1 Overview

To better understand the profile of residents in the Gort LTP study area, and their travel patterns, this section presents data extracted from the 2016 Census Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) dataset. It summarises information on the proportion of residents travelling to work and school, as well as high level information on age, gender, and car ownership.

3.2.2 Total Population

As shown in **Table 3-1** below, the Study area has an estimated population of 3,033 according to the 2016 Census⁵. This represents a population growth of 14% compared to the 2011 Census (2,671), which is a higher growth rate than seen nationally (3.8%). The GCDP 2022-2028 targets a population increase of 800 persons for Gort during the plan period.

The age profile of residents in Gort is outlined in **Table 3-1**. The analysis indicates that the Gort LTP study area has a lower proportion of residents over the age of 65 than both the Galway County Area and the national average. Within the study area, 22.9% of the population are under the age of 15, a slightly lower proportion than for Galway County and slightly higher than the national figure.

Table 3-1: Population Age Structure Comparison

LOCATION	POPULATION 2016	0-15	16-64	65+
Gort	3,033	22.9%	64.3%	12.8%
Galway County	179,390	24.0%	61.4%	14.5%
National	4,761,865	22.4%	64.2%	13.4%

3.2.3 Employment & Education

The number of employed people and number of jobs within the study area are outlined in **Table 3-2**. As can be seen below, the number of jobs is higher than the number of employed people, resulting in a Job Attraction/Employed ratio of 0.86. This compares to a ratio of 1.2 for Galway City and 0.5 for the

⁵ As outlined in Section 3.1, the Gort LTP study area broadly aligns with the LAP boundary but has been derived from a 'best-fit' selection of Census Small Areas to facilitate ease of analysis of baseline Census data.

rest of Galway County. The ratio in the study area results in a slight net flow of employed people from the study area for work.

Table 3-2 also outlines the number of education attractions within Gort. With 1,708 students commuting to schools within the study area, compared to 1,428 workers and a study area population of 3,033 it shows the prevalence of school trips entering the area.

Table 3-2: Employment Opportunities & Education Attraction Comparison

LOCATION	EMPLOYED RESIDENTS	JOB ATTRACTION	RATIO	PUPILS / STUDENTS
Gort	1,270	1,085	0.86	1,708
Galway City	34,951	42,062	1.20	25,494
Rest of Galway County	75,116	37,325	0.50	33,068

3.3 Environmental Conditions & Physical Constraints

There are a number of physical constraints to transport in the study area. The major environmental and physical constraint to travel through the study area is the rail line and Gort River which run roughly alongside each other in a north-south direction through the study area. This constraint, which can be seen in the figure below, causes considerable severance for travel east-west with only one main crossing provided on George's Street (with bridges over the river and under the railway line provided). For example, to get from the Tubber Road to the Ennis Road, the only route is through the centre of the town via George's Street.

In terms of topography, which can be a barrier to active travel in particular cycling, the town is generally flat. Some elevation is noted moving east from George's Street into the school campus off Ennis Road. This flat nature of the town therefore is beneficial to active travel.

A review of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland shows that there are a notable number of entries in Gort on the Sites and Monuments Record and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. These are largely concentrated in Market Square, in particular on the west side of the square.

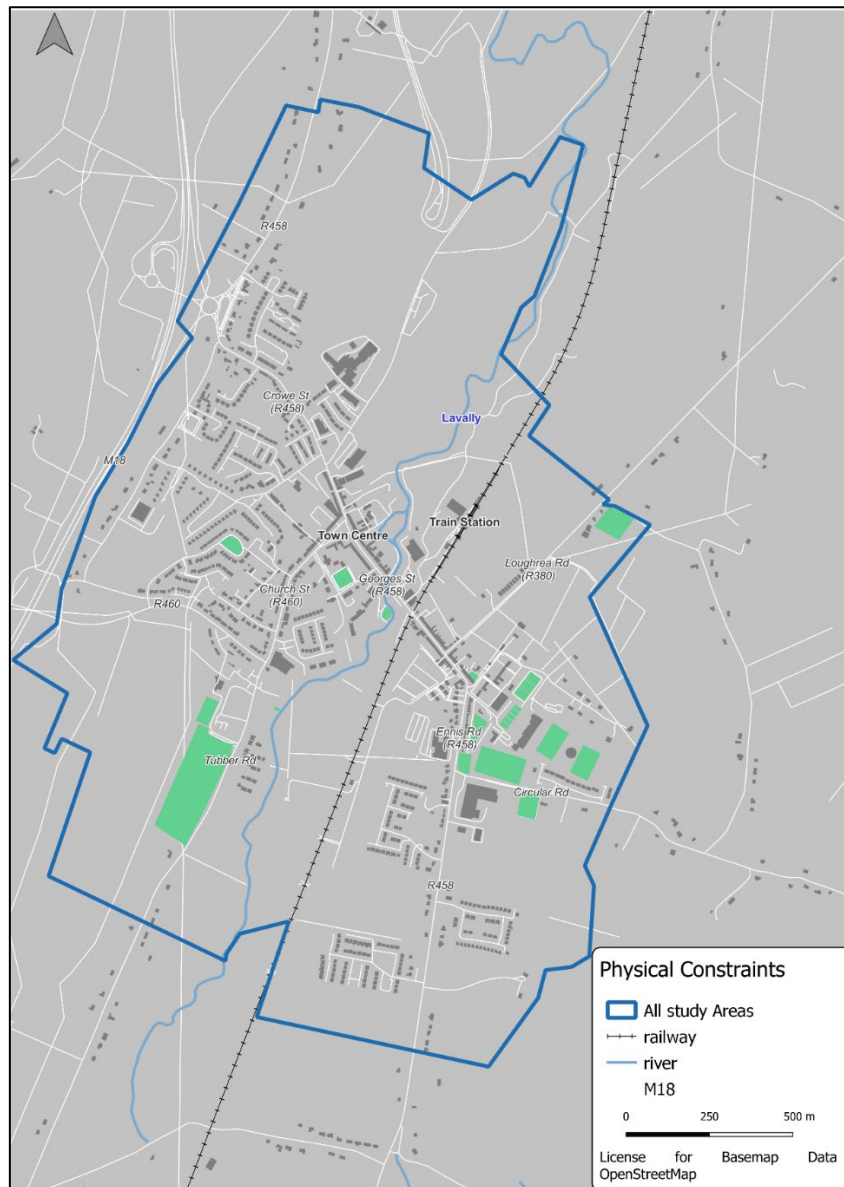


Figure 3-4: Physical and Environmental Constraints

3.4 Existing Travel Patterns

3.4.1 Introduction

The following section provides an overview of existing travel patterns for residents within the study area based on 2016 Census data, focusing on:

- **Trip Distribution Profile:** Identifying the key destinations and desire lines for travel,
- **Mode Share:** Highlights the proportion of trips undertaken by walking, cycling, public transport and car for employment and education purposes.

- **Trip Length Distribution:** Outlining the demand for travel at various distance bands for employment trips. This also includes information on the various modes used for different journey distances.

In order to determine the travel pattern for residents, two main Census data sources were used, namely:

- **Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS):** provides information on population demographics including details on commuting patterns such as mode used, typical journey times and time of departure.
- **Place of Work, School or College – Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR):** includes a range of information on travel patterns for trips to work and school as recorded in the Census.

3.4.2 Trip Distribution Profile

The POWSCAR database was analysed to identify the distribution of employment trips travelling to/from the study area in the AM period. Results are presented in the tables below.

Table 3-3: Trip Pattern Summary

TRIP TYPE	TRIP PURPOSE	NUMBER OF TRIPS
Internal trips within the Study Area	Work	343 (48%)
	School	370 (52%)
	All	713
Inbound trips from outside towards the Study Area	Work	1,186 (70%)
	School	500 (30%)
	All	1,686
Outbound trips from the study area	Work	856 (77%)
	School	256 (23%)
	All	1,112

The table above shows the trip distribution for AM employment trips to and from the study area. 713 trips that do not leave the study area. This represents 39% of all trips originating in the study area, with 61% (1,112 trips) leaving the study area. 1,686 trips are inbound trips from outside the study area.

For more detailed results of the geographic distribution of trips to/from the study area, surrounding areas have been grouped into sectors. Insofar as possible, these sectors have been designed to align with the main transport corridors to/from Gort. For example, trips to/from the “north” and “south” sectors will mainly be along the M18 or Western Rail Corridor.

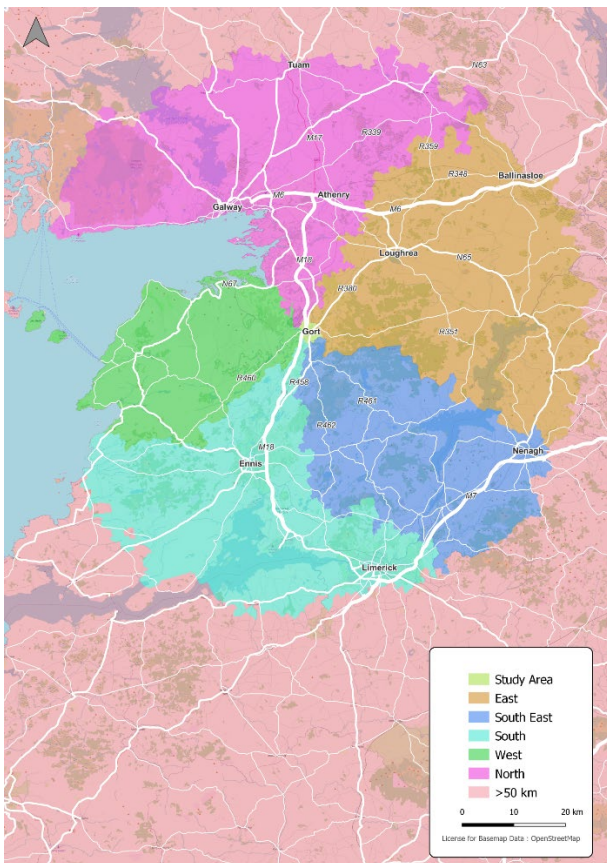


Figure 3-5: POWSCAR Sector map

Table 3-4: Destination Gort Origin Trips

DESTINATION	WORK	EDUCATION	TOTAL	%
Study Area	343	370	713	39%
East	72	28	100	5%
South East	16	14	30	2%
South	132	20	152	8%
West	66	36	102	6%
North	506	126	632	35%
> 50 km	64	32	96	5%
Total	1,199	626	1,825	100%

Table 3-5: Origin of Gort Destination Trips

ORIGIN	WORK	EDUCATION	TOTAL	%
Study Area	343	370	713	30%
East	313	153	466	19%
South East	102	73	175	7%
South	168	40	208	9%
West	162	86	248	10%
North	391	144	535	22%
> 50 km	50	4	54	2%
Total	1,529	870	2,399	100%

Key findings

As can be seen in the tables above, while 39% of combined work/education trips start and end in the study area, this breaks down to 59% of Gort origin education trips and 29% of Gort origin work trips.

Almost 71% of work trips originating in the study area have external destinations. The most significant external destination for trips from the study area is the northern sector, which encompasses Galway City, with 510 work trips and 636 total trips. 43% of work commute trips and 35% of combined work/education trips from the study area are headed north in the direction of Galway City and the surrounding area.

Given that the “south” sector is the third most significant attractor of trips from Gort after internal trips and the “north” sector, the M18 and Western Rail Corridor are clearly the most important travel corridors for work and education trips leaving the study area. All other sectors have relatively small volumes of trips from the study area, between 2%-7% of combined work and education trips.

For trips travelling to the Study Area, the travel patterns are more varied. Internal trips within the Study Area represent 30% of combined work and school related travel to Gort. Roughly equal numbers of trips come from the surrounding east sector (19%), which includes Loughrea and Ballinasloe, and the north sector (22%) which covers Galway City, Athenry and Tuam. These results mean the M18/Western Rail Corridor is of particular importance to inbound trips, in addition to the R380 corridor towards Loughrea.

The remaining sectors share relatively small volumes of trips, similar to outbound trips, with between 7% and 10% of inbound trips originating in the south, south-east and west sectors. Few trips (60) originate more than 50km from Gort.

3.5 Mode Share

SAPS data provides information from the Census on the typical mode of transport used for travelling to work and education. This data was used to identify the proportion of trips originating within the study area which are made by walking, cycling, public transport and car.

3.5.1 Employment Trips

The figure below illustrates the mode share for trips to work originating within the study area by walking, cycling, public transport and car (including drivers, passengers, vans and lorries). It also compares the study area mode share to the Galway County average as a whole, Galway City and nationally.

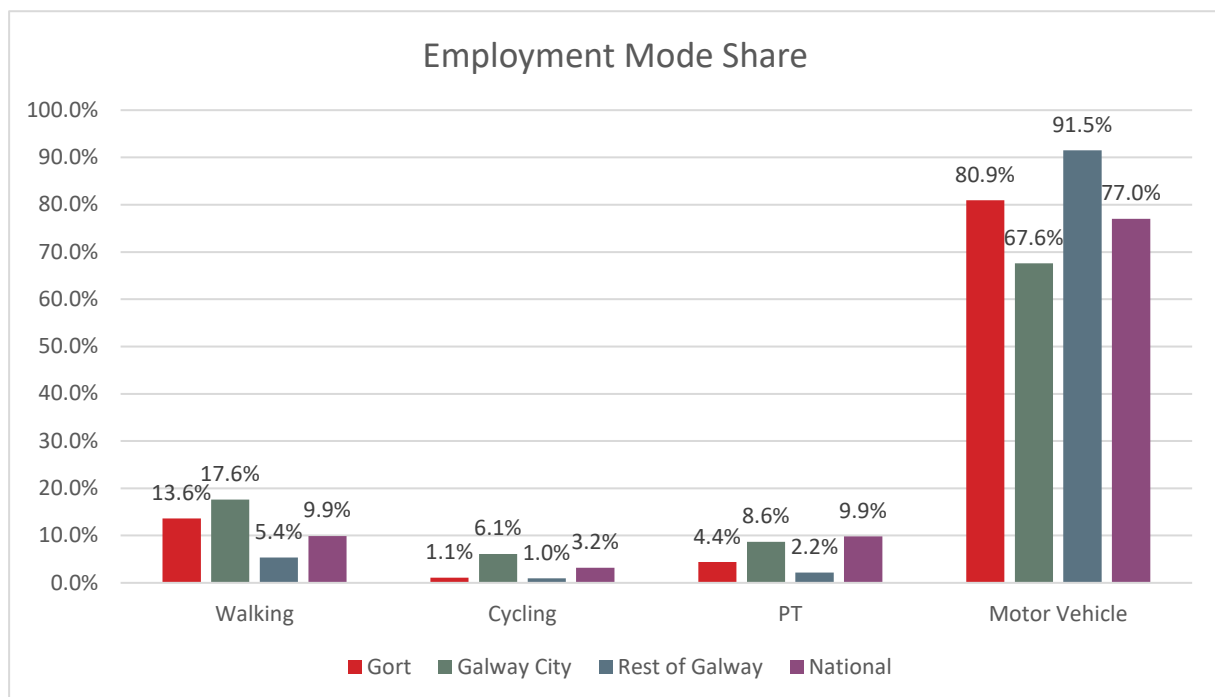


Figure 3-6: Employment Mode Share

Key findings observed from the mode share data for employment trips in the study area include:

- 14.7% of commute trips originating in the study area are undertaken by active modes. Walking trips form the majority of the active mode trips at 13.6% and are higher than the national average of 9.9%. Cycling totals at 1.1%, falling below the national average of 3.2% but in line with the largely rural Galway County area (with Galway city excluded).
- Public transport represents only 4.4% of commute trips from the study area, lower than the national average of 9.9%, but double the County average of 2.2%.
- The private car is the dominant mode of transport for work trips from the study area at 80.9%, higher than the national average of 77.0%. The commute car mode share is however lower than the county average of 91.5%.

3.5.2 Education Trips

Figure 3-7 below illustrates the mode share for trips to education originating within the study area.

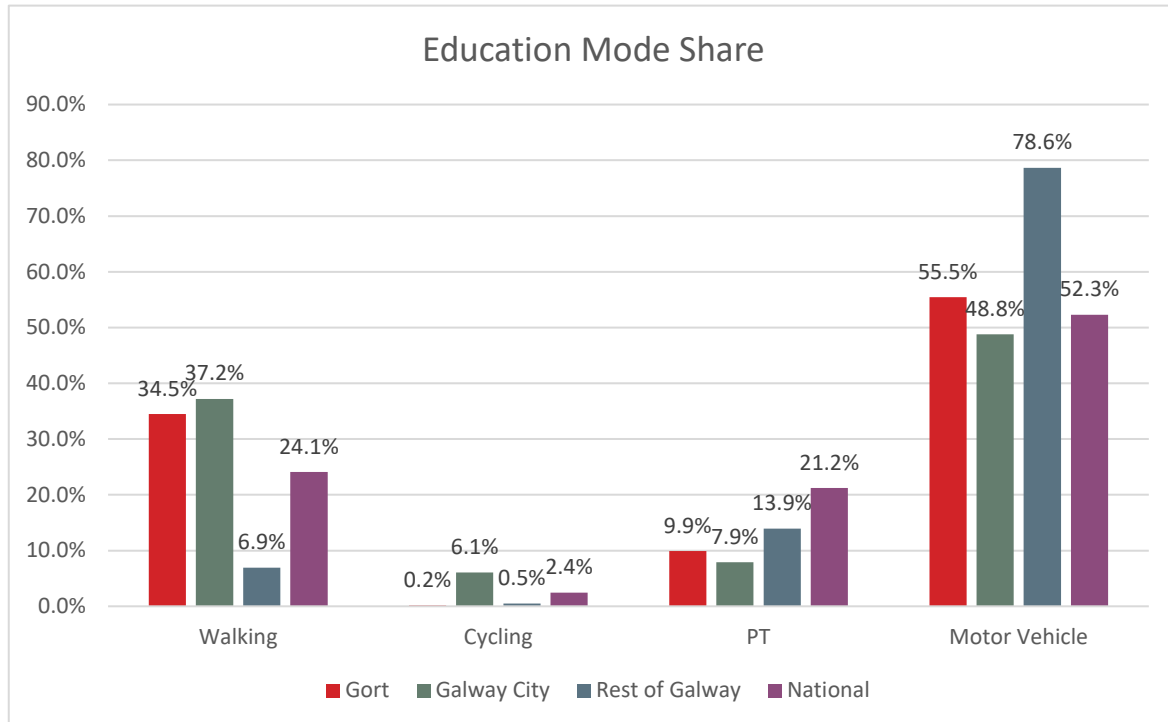


Figure 3-7: Education Mode Share

The key findings from the mode share data for education trips are listed below.

- The overall mode share for walking to education is 34.7%, higher than the national average (26.5%), and significantly higher than the county average of 6.9%.
- The study area cycling mode share of 0.2% is well below the national average of 2.4%, and also below the City and County averages.
- The study area public transport mode share is 9.9%, below that of the county average of 13.9% and national average of 21.2%.
- Overall, the car is still the dominant mode of transport for education-related trips, accounting for 55.5% of all journeys, compared to 52.3% nationally.
- Car trips are predominantly concentrated in areas further from Gort schools. However, there are still a sizeable number of car trips within the study area that are within a reasonable walk or cycle of the destination school.

3.6 Trip Length Distribution

Analysis was undertaken to determine the trip length distribution by mode for education purposes from 2016 POWSCAR data. This was used to establish the typical trip lengths, and modes used, for journeys by residents of the study area and help identify where opportunities might exist to further support a shift away from the private car and onto sustainable modes.

The trip length distribution by mode for all education trips travelling to schools within the study area is outlined in **Figure 3-8**.

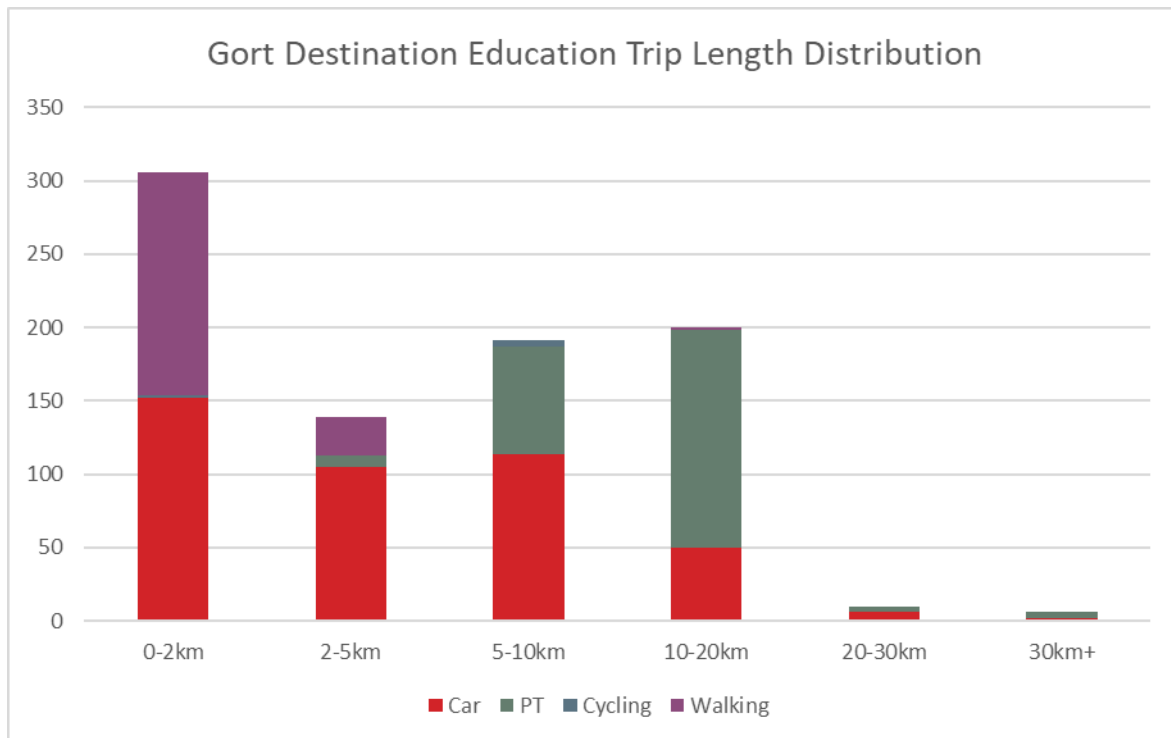


Figure 3-8: Education Trip Length Distribution, by Mode [POWSCAR, 2016]

Key findings:

- Approximately half of the shortest distance (<2km) education trips are made by private car.
- A minimal number of education trips are made by bike, across all distance categories.
- There are a significant number (216) education trips longer than 10km coming to Gort, the majority of which arrive by public transport (72%).
- Over half of the education trips to schools in Gort are shorter than 5km in length.

There is a general association between trip length and mode choice. For example, at shorter distances the average person may be willing to walk or cycle to access goods, services or employment. However, as trip lengths increase, these modes become less attractive.

Similarly, short distance trips by public transport may be unattractive compared to alternative modes as the wait time would be a significant proportion of overall journey time.

In terms of distance, trips can be broken down into:

- Short – generally serviceable by walking or cycling.
- Medium – generally serviceable by cycling (including eBikes), public transport or car.
- Long – generally serviceable by public transport or car.

The significant proportion of education trips in Gort under 10km, and particularly under 5km and 2km, provides an opportunity to shift car trips to active travel given the right package of measures.

For trips over 10km, public transport options may be competitive to the car for certain trips patterns. Insofar as is practicable, a public transport option should be provided for these longer trips for social equity reasons even where journey time competitiveness is challenging.

3.7 Access to Education (ATOS Tool)

3.7.1 Introduction to ATOS

Access to Opportunities and Services (ATOS) is a measure of how easy it is to access key services and employment by walking and cycling. In developing the ATOS tool, the National Transport Authority (NTA) have followed a methodology established by Transport for London and adapted it to make it more suitable for use outside of large metropolitan areas.

The ATOS tool has been run for access to primary and post-primary schools within the study area by walking and cycling. For this analysis, the defined criteria was the ability to access any primary school (at least one) and any post-primary school within a 15 minute walk and 15 minute cycle. The scoring for each grid is then determined by how the travel time compares to the average travel time for all squares that have access to a primary/post-primary school within the specified timeframes.

It should be noted again that the score is calculated based on how travel times to the nearest relevant destinations (for the specific type of service) compared to the average travel time across all locations in the study area. The score is comparative, measuring where accessibility is higher and lower than the mean in the study area, rather than an objective score of the levels of accessibility.

The figures below present the ATOS results for accessibility to schools in Gort by walking, with analysis, first and then cycling.

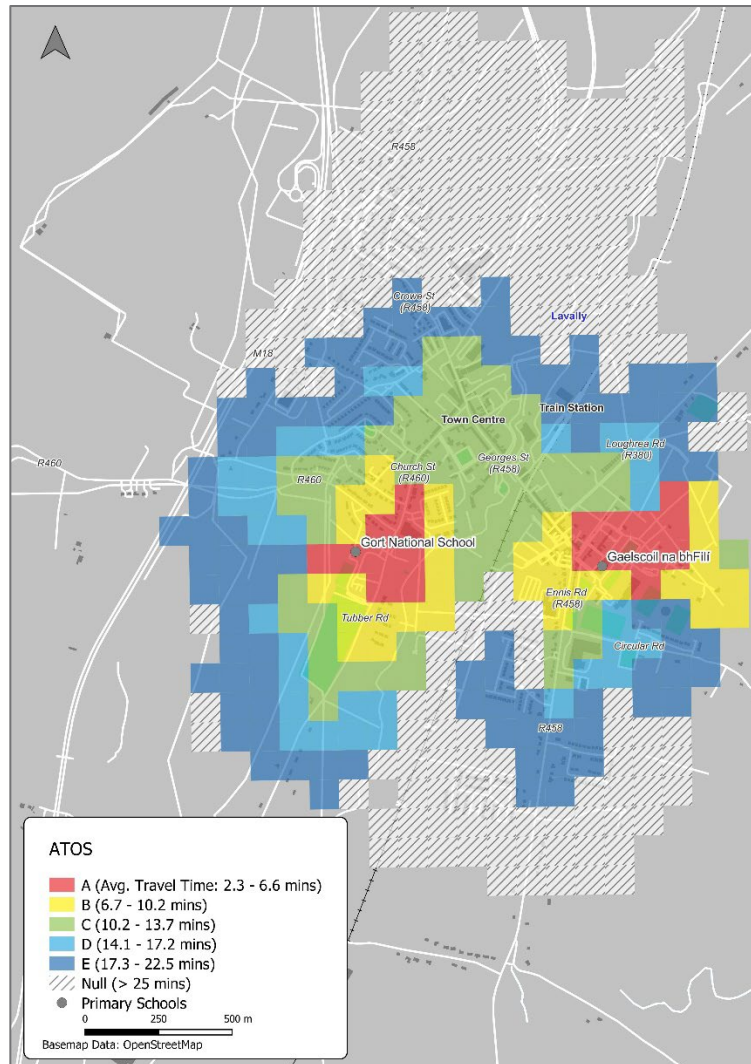


Figure 3-9: Access to Primary Schools (Walk)

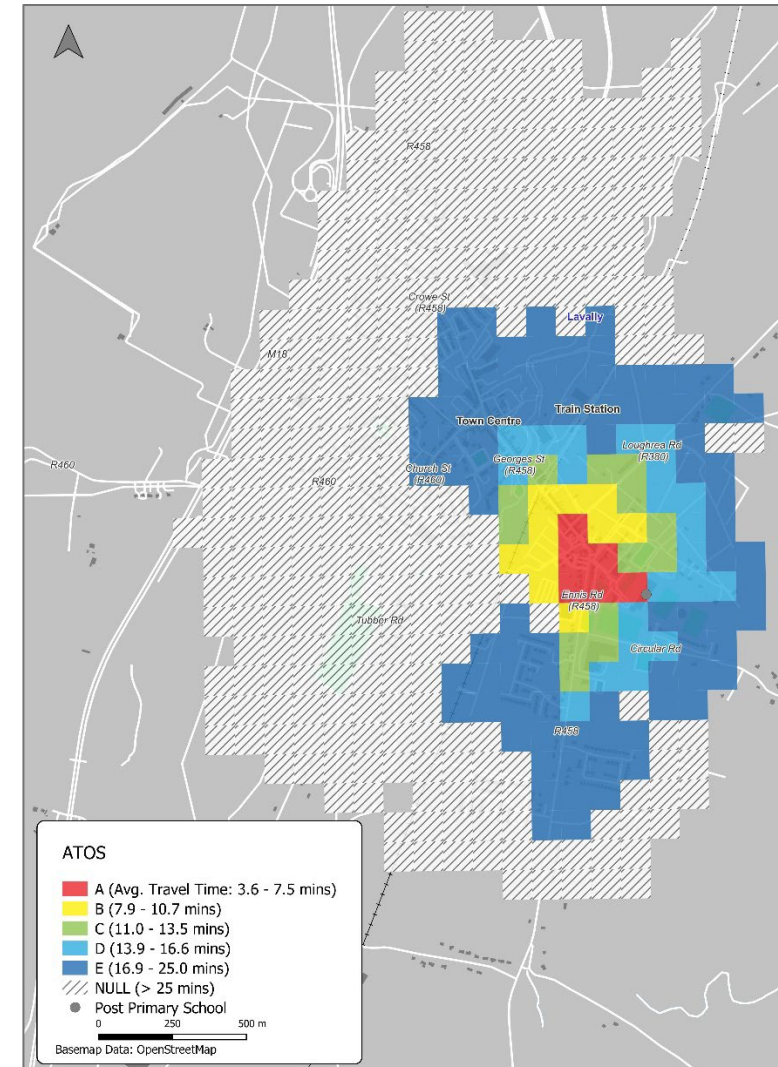


Figure 3-10: Access to Post Primary Schools (Walk)

The ATOS results for walking to school in Gort shows reasonable levels of accessibility in the town centre for both primary and secondary schools. The relatively poor level of permeability between housing estates and main roads is evident however, with a relatively quick transition from areas with A ratings to areas with C, D or E ratings in the vicinity of schools in the study area. For primary schools, the presence of two schools in the town creates good accessibility in the town. The vast majority of residential development in the town is within a 15-minute walk of a primary school (ATOS score or at least E).

For post-primary schools (Gort Community School), housing in the west of the study area are too far from the easterly located school off the Ennis Road to reach in a 15-minute walk. The poor permeability, lack of connections to Rinn Dúin development, Bóthar na hInse and the Loughrea Road reduce the total catchment and area with A, B and C scores.

Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031	30087615
Gort Local Transport Plan	31/07/2025

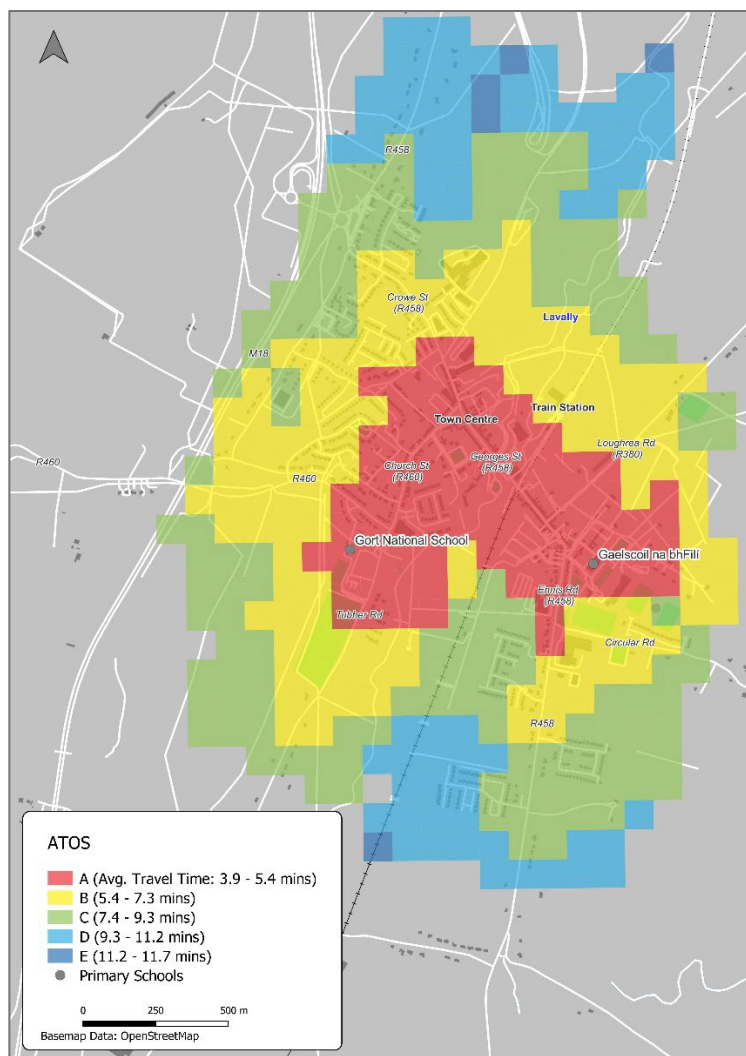


Figure 3-11: Access to Primary Schools (Cycle)

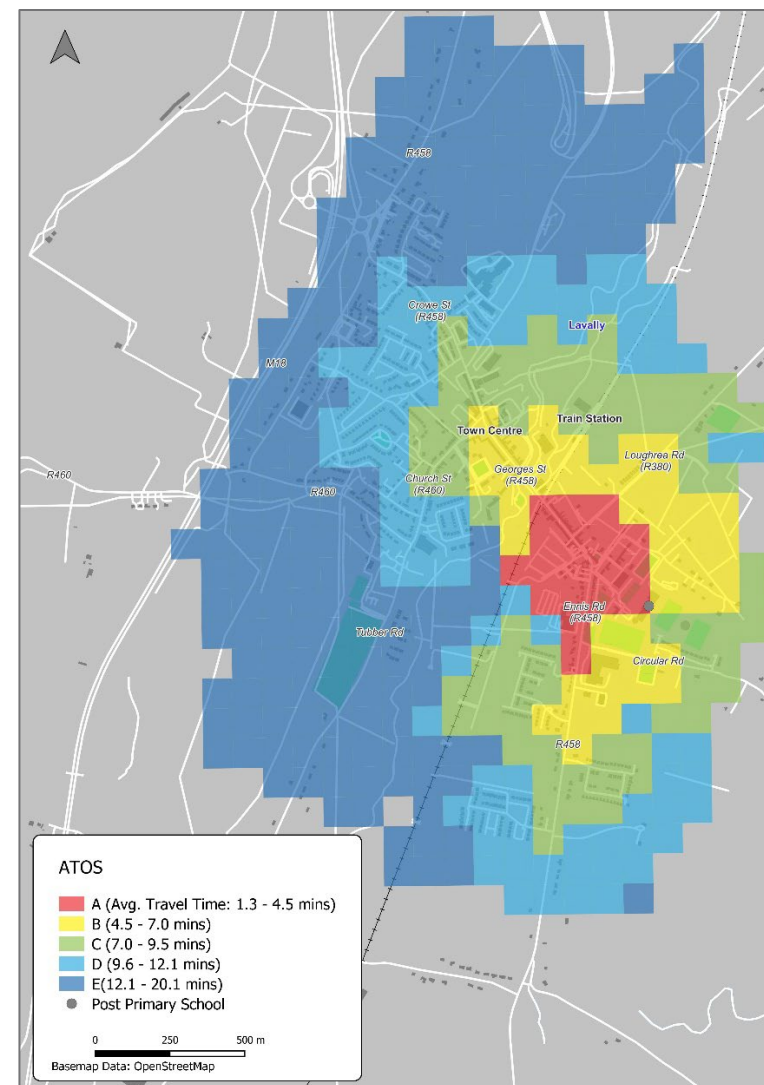


Figure 3-12: Access to Post Primary Schools (Cycle)

The increased distances that can be covered by cycling are evident in the total increase in 15-minute catchment for access to both primary and secondary schools compared to walking, and the much greater area that gets achieves an A-C rating. For access to primary schools, the good coverage provided by the locations of the two national schools is evidenced by nearly the entire study area receiving an A-C score. While the entire study area is within a 15-minute cycle of Gort Community School, there is a comparatively much smaller area with an A-C score. However, the large area with an E score is more sparsely populated than the areas with higher scores. Overall, the town's only secondary school is very accessible by bike to most residential areas in the town

The much higher levels of access by cycling than walking to schools in the study area shows the potential of cycling in Gort to provide great levels of access without the need to drive.

Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031	30087615
Gort Local Transport Plan	31/07/2025

3.8 Existing Transport Infrastructure & Services

3.8.1 Walking Network

An analysis of the walking network in Gort has been undertaken involving both a desktop review and site visit. Key areas, including both strengths and weaknesses are highlighted in Figure 3-13 below.

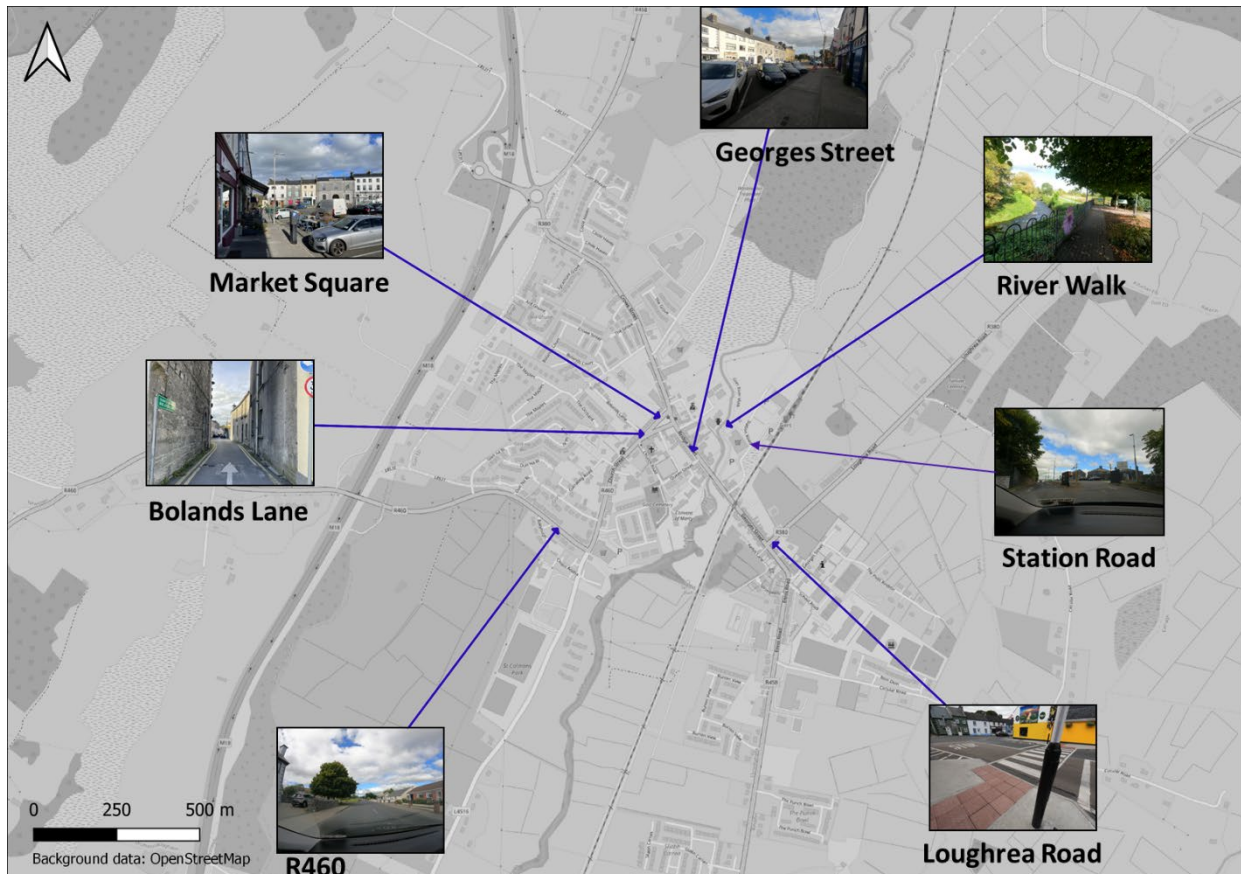


Figure 3-13: Highlighted Sections of Walking Infrastructure in Gort

The quality of pedestrian infrastructure in Gort is varied. The footways on the principal routes in and around the town centre are generally of acceptable width on both sides of the road with the exception of a few key pinch points. At pinch points, car travel is usually prioritised over pedestrian infrastructure, contradicting the modal hierarchy in DMURS.

There are a number of routes where footpaths are narrow or disappear completely, both in the town centre area and in residential neighbourhoods. In the town centre, no footways are present on Bolands Lane and Slipper Street due to the narrow width of both roads. No footways are present on the section of R460 fronted by residential properties between Ballyhugh and Dun Na Ri, nor at a corner of Glenbrack Road from Gort na Rí westwards.

It is noted that the rail line route causes a degree of severance to walking trips to/from the south east residential areas and schools, with Georges Street providing the only paved route across within the town. The footways on Georges Street were observed to be of adequate width on both sides. It is

noted that a small railway underbridge exists approximately 100 metres south of Georges Street, providing a future potential opportunity for additional active travel routes in the future.

Outside of main roads and streets, the residential areas north of the town centre suffer from poor permeability in places, particularly in an east-west direction – see example in **Figure 3-14** below. This can significantly increase walking distances to key services for residents in the town.



Figure 3-14: Permeability block in Gort (1km walk for 50m crow fly distance)

Throughout the study area there are limited formal crossing facilities, with the exception of signalised crossings on each of the three main approaches to Market Square. This results in a low level of service for pedestrians with mobility or visual impairments. It is however noted that a zebra crossing has been recently installed across Loughrea Road, at the junction with Georges Street, shown below.



Figure 3-15: Loughrea Road Zebra Crossing

The pedestrian links between the town centre and train station are considered to be of poor quality, in particular the section of route between the station and Georges Street. A narrow footway is provided on only one side of Station Road, with no crossing facilities present on Georges Street to access Station Road. A section of off-road footway is provided from Station Road to the station, providing a dedicated route for pedestrians to access the rail station. The junction of Georges Street and Station Road is shown in **Figure 3-16** below.



Figure 3-16: Junction of Georges Street & Station Road

The pedestrian links between Georges Street and Gort Community School and Gaelscoil na bhFilí are currently deemed to be of low quality. Railings restrict the width of both footways which ends at the entrance to the school car park, requiring those walking to the site to share the road with vehicles

parking in order to access the entrance. No signage indicating pedestrian priority in the car park was observed.



Figure 3-17: Gort Community School, Gort Community Centre and Gaelscoil na bhFilí Car Park Area

In addition, it is noted that Gort Community School has received planning permission for a large extension and other changes to their grounds (Ref: 24/0005), including improving facilities for pedestrians.

The Gort River Walk is a primarily leisure-oriented pedestrian route following the route of the Gort River. It is noted that the section of route between the Aldi supermarket and Station Road has been recently upgraded, with a high quality footpath provided as shown in **Figure 3-18**.



Figure 3-18: Gort River Walk Route – Recently Upgraded Section

3.8.2 Cycling Network

There is currently no formal cycle route infrastructure in Gort. Existing proposals for cycling infrastructure investment in Gort have been analysed, along with the development of potential new cycling options, during the Options Development and Assessment stages of the LTP.

There are limited cycle parking facilities within Gort. Sheffield stands are provided in the station forecourt area, with some formal cycle parking facilities observed in the town centre (near the Weighhouse).

3.8.3 Public Transport

Rail Network

Gort rail station is located on the Limerick to Athenry rail line providing direct connections to both of these settlements as well as intermediary towns along the line, and onward connections to Galway City and Dublin via Athenry.

The table below outlines the daily services to/from Gort:

Table 3-6: Gort Rail Services

ROUTE	MAX NUMBER OF SERVICES (MONDAY – FRIDAY)	MAX NUMBER OF WEEKEND SERVICES (SATURDAY)
Limerick - Galway	5	5
Galway - Limerick	5	5

The station is located to the east of the town centre, with access via Station Road. A footpath runs directly to the station from Station Road, approximately 70m north east of the junction with Georges Street.

Cycle links to the rail station are considered to be poor, with no dedicated infrastructure, and the front of station treatment aiming to maximise ease of car drop offs and parking. Cycle parking is provided at the station entrance.

Bus Network

The bus services and routes currently operating in Gort are outlined in Figure 3-19. Four routes serve the town, all of which call at a pair of bus stops located on Crowe Street adjacent to Market Square.

Bus Éireann route 51 provides an hourly service in each direction on the Galway City to Cork route, seven days a week, with route 434 providing one additional return service to Galway City on Fridays. Bus Éireann also operates a Friday return service to Scariff.

TFI Local Link route 934 runs three return services a day to Loughrea. This route is complemented by a once-weekly return service to Loughrea on Friday also operated by TFI Local Link. This is a door to door, advance booking service and times vary depending on pick-ups.

The bus routes and frequencies serving Gort are detailed in the table below.

Table 3-7: Gort Bus Routes

ROUTE	OPERATOR	MAX NUMBER OF WEEKDAY SERVICES	MAX NUMBER OF WEEKEND SERVICES
51 (Galway – Limerick - Cork)	Bus Eireann	14	14
349 (Gort – Scariff)	Bus Eireann	1	0
434 (Galway – Gort)	Bus Eireann	1	0
934 (Gort – Loughrea)	TFI Local Link	3	0

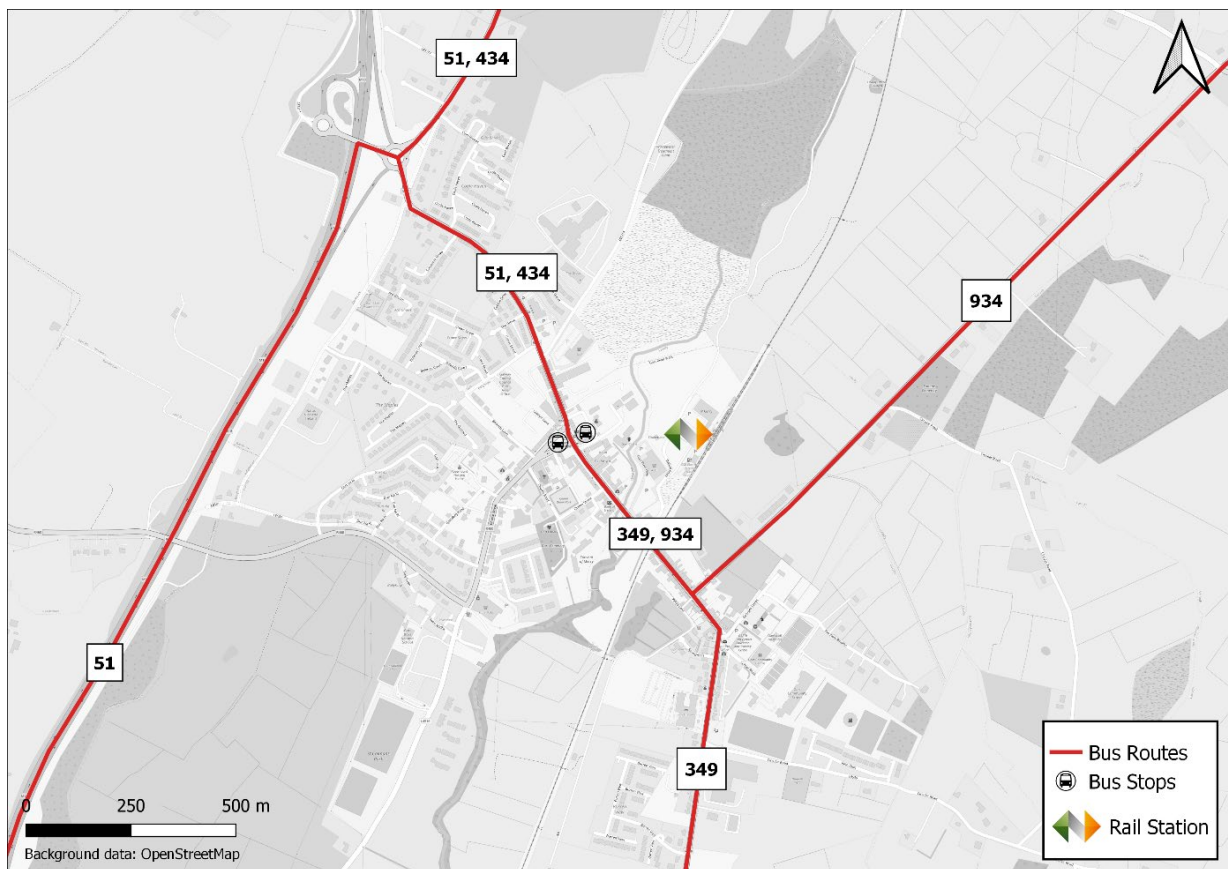


Figure 3-19: Gort Bus Network

Bus lay-bys are present on Crowe Street for both directions. A passenger waiting shelter with an accompanying bench and timetable information is provided for the northbound bus stop, with a flagpole with timetable information present for the southbound bus stop. It is also noted that the NTA has announced ambition to improve bus stop facilities across the country as part of its Bus Stop Enhancement Programme and has indicated support for upgrades to bus stop facilities that meet the requirements of this programme.

The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan⁶ is a major national public transport initiative developed by the National Transport Authority (NTA), with the aim of increasing connectivity, particularly for people living outside our major cities and towns. Consultation on the proposed network took place during 2022, with the feedback currently being assessed by the NTA. For Gort, route 8 is proposed to replace routes 51 and 434, offering a minimum service frequency of 30 minutes between Galway City and Cork, although it is not clear whether this level of service would apply to Gort itself. In addition, route 934 would have a minimum frequency of three return trips per day, similar to the current level of service.

School buses also serve the local educational institutions in Gort. The School Transport Scheme provides transport to and from school for children who live remote from their nearest school. The scheme is operated by Bus Éireann on behalf of the Department of Education.

3.8.4 Road Network

Strategic Road Network

The primary road serving Gort is the M18 which bypasses the town and provides links to Athenry, Ennis and Limerick. The M6/M17/M18 junction lies roughly 25km north of Gort, linking to onward routes to Galway City and Dublin.

Access to the town's local road network from the M18 is via Junction 16 and the R458.

In addition to the M18, three regional roads serve the town. The R458 route was superseded by the M18 and runs north to south between Ennis and Kilcolgan before joining the N67. The R460 connects Gort to Corofin and Miltown Malbay in County Clare to the south west, and the R380 connects Gort to Loughrea to the north east.

⁶ Source : <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/connecting-ireland/proposals/>

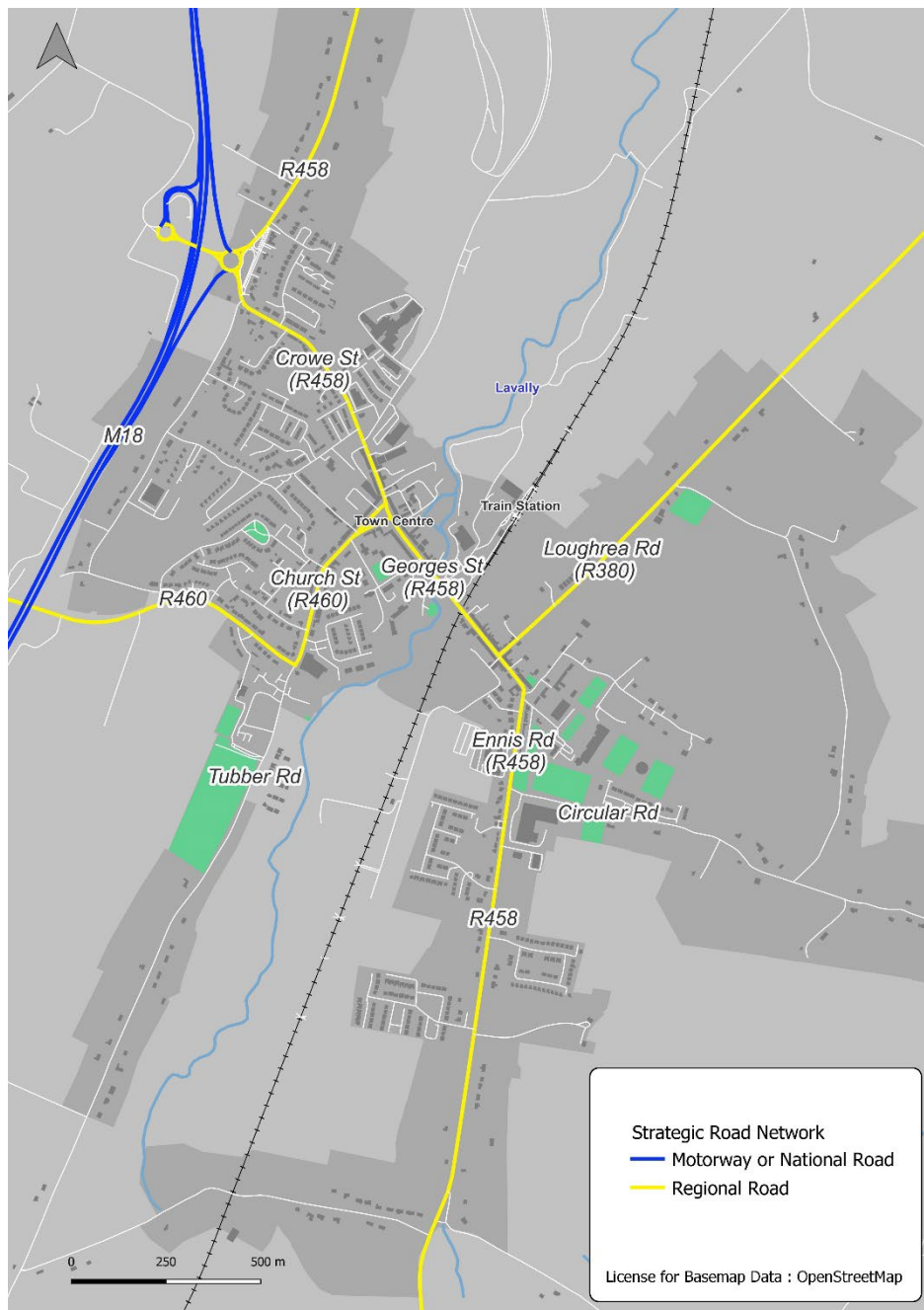


Figure 3-20: Gort Strategic Road Network

Local Road Network

The local road network in Gort is shown in **Figure 3-21** below.



Figure 3-21: Gort Town Centre Local Road Network

The R458 route runs through the centre of Gort on a roughly north west to south east axis and is known as Crowe Street north of Market Square and Bridge Street and Georges Street to the south. In the town centre, the R458 connects with the R460 at Market Square at two priority junctions, forming a triangular shaped space with one-way traffic on two sides in each direction. Much of Market Square is dedicated to vehicle parking.

Signalised pedestrian crossings are located on Crowe Street and Bridge Street, both approximately 60m upstream of the Market Square junctions with Church Street. A further signalised crossing is located on Church Street, approximately 80m south west of market Square, shown in the figure below. Footway build-out, dropped kerbs and tactile paving are included at all of these crossings.



Figure 3-22: Church Road Signalised Crossing

The R380 route is known as Loughrea Road within Gort. The R458 and R380 routes meet at a priority junction south east of the town centre. The minor R380 arm is relatively constrained for this type of road due to the locations of the adjacent buildings impacting sightlines resulting in a road safety issue. A zebra crossing with accompanying footway build-out and tactile paving is located on the R380 arm.

3.9 SWOT Assessment

The findings summarised above from the Baseline Assessment have been used to inform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis for the study area. The results are outlined in Table 3-8 below. This has been used to inform subsequent stages of the LTP, in particular the objectives setting and options development phases.

Table 3-8: SWOT Assessment of Gort

Strengths	Weaknesses
Key Points: ○ Gort is classified as a self-sustaining town in the GCDP 2022-2028. ○ Strategic traffic to Galway, Dublin and Limerick is well served by the nearby M18 and onward connection to the M6. ○ There are relatively frequent public transport services provided to Galway City by bus and train. ○ Gort town centre is the largest attractor of employment trips within the study area. Other key employment areas include the areas to the east and south of the town. ○ Walking distances within the town are fairly short due to a relatively compact urban form. ○ Market Square provides an obvious focal point for the town centre. ○ Public transport services are concentrated into single main corridor through town with good potential connectivity to adjacent residential areas.	Key Points: ○ There is severance caused by the rail line and Gort River, limiting access from south east residential areas to town centre and north/west residential areas. ○ No dedicated provision (on or off-street) for cyclists, with limited public cycle parking available. ○ Market Square is dominated by motor vehicles, with an overwhelming focus on parking. ○ Pedestrian facilities (pavement widths and pedestrian crossings) are poor or lacking at a number of links and key junctions within the town. ○ Car remains the dominant mode of transport, even for shorter distance commute trips. ○ A number of key junctions are unattractive to pedestrians and cyclists due to design prioritising motor vehicles. ○ Public transport represents just 4.4% of commute trips and active travel 14.7%. ○ Pedestrian access to the train station is poor with no crossing at the key junction and a narrow footpath along Station Road.

Opportunities

Key Points:

- Most of the study area is accessible within a 10-minute cycle. The provision of safe and attractive active travel links provides a potential opportunity for modal shift from car.
- Footpaths and crossing points for pedestrians in the town centre could be greatly improved within existing street widths, improving the attractiveness of the town.
- The large number of school places within the study area compared to the study area population shows the large catchment of the town that could potentially be better attracted to shop and spend time in the town through improvements to the urban realm.
- Approximately two fifths of work and education combined trips from Gort remain within the study area, and due to the local nature of these trips, there may be an opportunity to support this demand via active travel.
- The relatively flat topography of the study area would be beneficial for potential trips shifted to active travel.
- The Gort River offers significant potential as an amenity and commuting route with the addition of new access points for the Gort River Walk along with bridge crossings

Threats / Constraints

Key Points:

- There are a very large number of school trips destined for the study area originating within the surrounding rural hinterland. It will be difficult for these trips to be served by active travel.
- The LTP study area is constrained by the physical barriers of the rail line and river which causes severance.
- Car ownership is quite high within the study area with 81% of households owning at least one car, and 32% owning two or more. If this pattern continues for new developments without substantial improvement to provision for alternative modes, it will likely lead to additional vehicular traffic on the road network.
- On-street parking needs appropriate management to ensure that improvements for sustainable modes can be realised.

4. LTP OBJECTIVES & FUTURE DEMAND FOR TRAVEL

4.1 Overview

Part Two of the ABTA process utilised to develop the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Gort focuses on applying the information gathered from the baseline assessment (including the SWOT analysis) to determine the principles and objectives that guide the development of the LTP. The following sections provide an overview of the methodology used to derive the LTP objectives for Gort, along with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used to assess the performance of the strategy options in meeting the study objectives.

4.2 Developing the Objectives and KPIs

The development of the principles and objectives for the Gort LTP have been informed by:

- The opportunities and constraints identified in the Part One Baseline Assessment SWOT Analysis.
- Existing local policies and objectives.
- National level policy guiding the delivery of sustainable development.

In order to ensure a robust assessment of transport options, the objectives were broadly aligned with the key categories outlined in the Department of Transport's Transport Appraisal Framework (TAF) with common themes identified:

- **Accessibility & Social Inclusion:** supporting local accessibility by walking and cycling within Gort for all users.
- **Environmental:** supporting climate change initiatives and a general switch to more sustainable modes of travel.
- **Economic:** supporting the vibrancy and connectivity to Gort Town Centre enhancing its economic competitiveness.
- **Integration:** supporting the integration of land use and transport planning in a manner that can affect significant modal shift to walking, cycling, and public transport.
- **Safety & Physical Activity:** promote walking and cycling, and provide a safe environment for vulnerable users.

Align with CAF
and identify
core themes



Link to relevant
Local and
National Policy



Review SWOT
Analysis



Define
Principles &
Objectives

A detailed review has then been undertaken of Local and National Policy to identify existing objectives under each of the TAF headings and themes outlined above. In particular, strategic outcomes and policies from the GCDP 2022-2028 have been identified to help inform the principles and objectives for the Gort LTP. The SWOT analysis from the Baseline Assessment has also been reviewed to identify specific constraints and issues currently within the study area which should be addressed by the Gort LTP objectives.

Whilst the objectives developed for the LTP focus on the need to improve travel by sustainable modes in Gort, in accordance with DoECLG Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities', an overarching aim in the development of all LTP transport measures is the need to safeguard the strategic function, capacity and safety of the existing national road network in the Plan area.

Performance measurement is used to determine if the full set of recommendations proposed under the Gort LTP achieve the desired outcomes. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) have been identified and were used to measure the performance of the LTP strategies under the various objectives. The objectives and associated KPIs developed for the Gort LTP are outlined in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Gort LTP Objectives and KPIs

HEADING	OBJECTIVE	KPI
Accessibility & Social Inclusion	Support and implement transport measures which reduce car dependency and improve access to local services by sustainable modes	Access to key services (ATOS Analysis)
		Qualitative (Rating scale) access to PT opportunities
Integration	Align and integrate with existing and emerging national, regional, and local planning policy	Compatibility of transport measures with local, regional and national policy - Rating Scale
Safety & Physical Activity	Provide safe access to schools for vulnerable road users and ensure a safe front of school environment	Qualitative assessment of walking and cycling infrastructure to schools - Rating Scale
		Reduction in walking/cycling distances to school sites (GIS/ATOS assessment)
Environment	Contribute to achieving Climate Action Plan targets through the creation of an environment which encourages a modal shift from the private car to more sustainable modes	Anticipated change on sustainable mode shares - rating scale
		Length of additional / improved walk and cycle infrastructure
Economy	Contribute to Gort's economic vitality through improved connectivity and enhanced public realm	Access to Town Centre for each mode - Comparison of change in journey length (can be measured back to Do Min) and quality of route to town centre by mode
		Quality of Town centre streetscape /public realm – Rating Scale
		Deliverability Rating Scale (with consideration to cost, engineering constraints e.g. topography / flooding constraints, third party support/acceptability e.g. does the measure require land acquisition from a single or multiple bodies)

4.3 Future Demand for Travel

In addition to the review of present-day conditions in Gort, the project team has examined the Gort Land Use Zoning Map, as shown in the figure below.

In collaboration with Galway County Council, an assessment of appropriate lands for future potential development has been completed. The existing development patterns in Gort were taken into account during this process.

Access to existing and planned, development sites was taken into consideration when determining the transport options for the LTP.

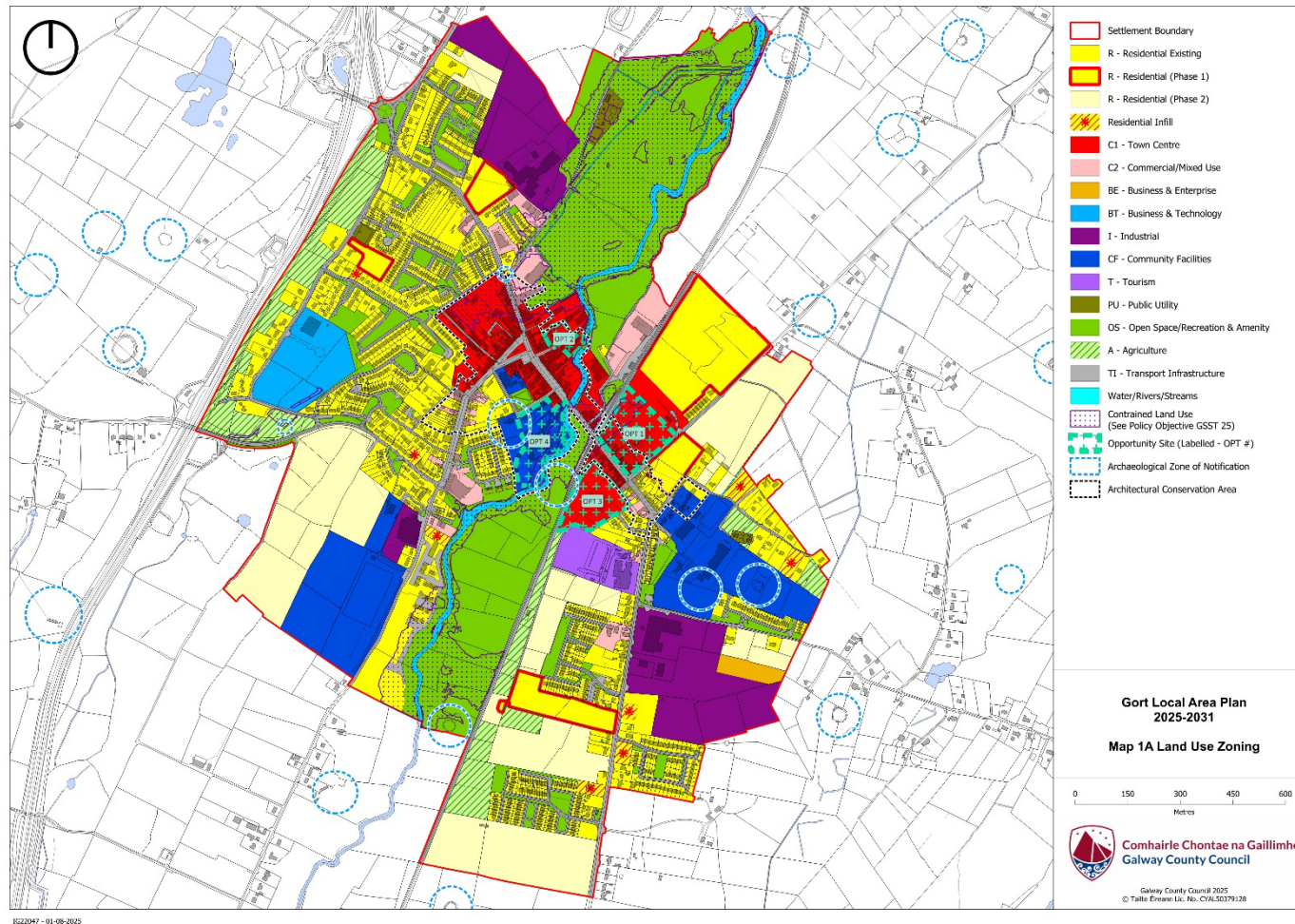


Figure 4-1: Gort LAP Land Use Zone Map

5. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT PROCESS

5.1 Options Development

This section details the option development process and identifies options for assessment. Options are grouped into mode categories for ease of reporting. A full list of the options developed for the appraisal process can be viewed in **Appendix B**.

The proposed NTA Cycle Connects network, GCC's draft public realm enhancement proposals for Market Square, the proposed Gort Town Centre First Plan, and the Galway to Athlone Cycleway have been taken into account as part of the development of the strategy.

The Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project proposals have been taken as a Do Minimum project in consultation with GCC.

All LTP options have been developed in a manner that safeguards the function and safety of the strategic national road network and associated junctions.

All LTP options have been developed taking into account the Gort LAP's objectives and land use zoning strategy.

It is recognised that improvements to infrastructure will be planned and delivered in a different manner to improvements to services. The LTP focuses on infrastructure whilst including consideration of how this can support improvement and expansion of public transport services.

This chapter outlines the longlist of options developed to overcome some of the weaknesses and constraints identified in the baseline assessment and subsequently achieve the defined objectives for the LTP.

The option development process has been informed by the following:

- Data review to identify proposals from wider policy/strategies for the study area.
- Discussions and site visits accompanied by local engineers to review issues identified in the baseline assessment and opportunities for improvement.
- Options workshops with the project team.

The option development process has broadly followed the Department of Transport's National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) modal and intervention hierarchies, shown in the figure below.

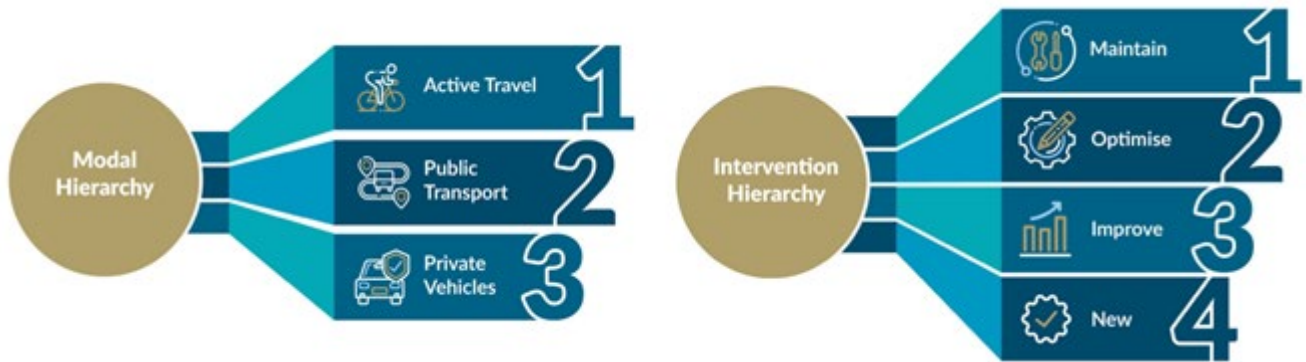


Figure 5-1: Options Assessment Methodology

As such, options for applicable measures were first considered in relation to active modes (walking and cycling), followed by public transport and finally general vehicular traffic. The options were also initially focused on maintaining, optimising and improving existing facilities before considering the construction of new infrastructure.

5.1.1 Active Travel – Walking and Cycling Options

The development of options for the Walking and Cycling Strategy element of the Gort LTP are built on the existing proposals of the NTA's Cycle Connects inter-urban network and planned network improvements identified by Galway County Council.

The key aim in developing Active Travel options is to provide Gort with a safe, comfortable and integrated walking and cycling network enabling trips to school, work, shopping and all other purposes to be made using active travel.

Options focused on improving connectivity and permeability from residential areas to main trip attractors, including the town centre, key employment and education sites and leisure opportunities.

Where feasible, fully segregated cycle facilities are proposed to improve safety for cyclists. Where segregation is not possible given space constraints, particularly within the town centre, measures have been proposed to provide a safe, low speed, traffic calmed environment for sections of cycle trips which must be made on-road.



Figure 5-2: Example of a Segregated Cycle Track

Certain streets within the town centre are very narrow, creating difficulties for the provision of segregated cycle infrastructure. Footpath widths are generally below minimum standards with a lack of formal road crossings creating an unattractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Given these spatial constraints and existing conditions, improving pedestrian safety and comfort was the priority in central areas. In addition, a number of contra-flow cycle tracks are proposed to increase cycling safety and permeability on the town centre's one-way streets.

A number of leisure and amenity routes have also been proposed, including an extension of the existing Gort River Walk.

5.1.2 Public Transport Options

While active travel investment focuses on encouraging people to switch from car to cycling or walking for short distance journeys, public transport has the potential to encourage mode shift from car journeys for medium and longer distance trips.

The development of public transport options has incorporated insight from the Baseline Assessment and engagement with the NTA, with the aim of encouraging increase in use. As such, the options within the LTP seek to:

- Enhance accessibility for active modes from residential areas to bus stops and the rail station.
- Improve facilities at public transport nodes, through the provision of sheltered waiting areas, cycle parking, and passenger information.
- Work alongside the NTA to deliver enhanced bus and rail services to villages and towns in the wider region.

5.1.3 Road & Traffic Management Options

Options for the Road Network strategy were identified in order to improve safety for all road users. The priority in the development of the road network options (as per NIFTI) is to maintain, renew, manage and operate the existing road infrastructure in a more efficient manner, and any new road schemes must demonstrate that public transport, traffic management or demand management measures cannot effectively address the problem prompting the road proposal or are not applicable/appropriate.

Therefore, road options that would unduly induce car trips that could otherwise be made by active travel would not be appropriate. However, road options that facilitate the reallocation of road space in the town centre by enabling traffic to bypass the town centre streets are more aligned with the LTP objectives and current national policy.

Given these considerations, the main road options are associated with the link road as defined in the LAP, connecting the Loughrea Road and Galway Road corridors. No further new road infrastructure schemes are proposed as part of the long list of options.

In addition to options concerning upgraded and new road infrastructure, a number of traffic management options have been developed in combination with associated Walking & Cycling proposals. These traffic management options are mainly located in the town centre where streets are narrow and active travel facilities are presently poor. These options and their associated Walking & Cycling measures aim to improve the public realm in key areas and provide a safer environment within the town for vulnerable road users.

5.1.4 Supporting Measures

In line with the Five Cities Demand Management Study Avoid-Shift-Reduce-Manage Transport Demand Management (TDM) Toolkit to reduce carbon, improve air quality and the urban environment, and manage congestion, a range of TDM Measures have been identified to support the switch to sustainable modes across the Study Area.

In line with Safe Routes to School measures proposed by An Taisce in Gort, a number of potential Park & Stride⁷ sites have been identified which would reduce congestion at school gates. Schools in Ireland which have implemented park and stride have found that children are more alert in the morning, having had some fresh air and exercise⁸.

Supporting measures include those to promote Active Travel, Public Transport and School Travel. A number of behavioural change measures are identified, including the role that Mobility Management at workplaces, schools and other large trip generators can play in both avoiding the need to travel and supporting a switch from car travel to sustainable modes on a site by site basis.

⁷ The concept of 'Park & Stride' means parking the car a short distance from your destination and making the last leg of the journey on foot. This can have health benefits in terms of promoting physical exercise, whilst also removing traffic from heavily congested areas e.g. outside school gates.

⁸ Fingal School Streets: Pilot Review 1 <https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2020-03/20200302-300548-school-streets-pilot-review-1-issue-1.pdf>

Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031	30087615
Gort Local Transport Plan	31/07/2025

5.2 Options Assessment Methodology

Having developed a long list of options, an assessment process was undertaken to determine which of these options are to be included in the Preferred Strategy for the Gort LTP. The long list of options were passed through a four-stage assessment process as outlined in **Figure 5-3**, including:

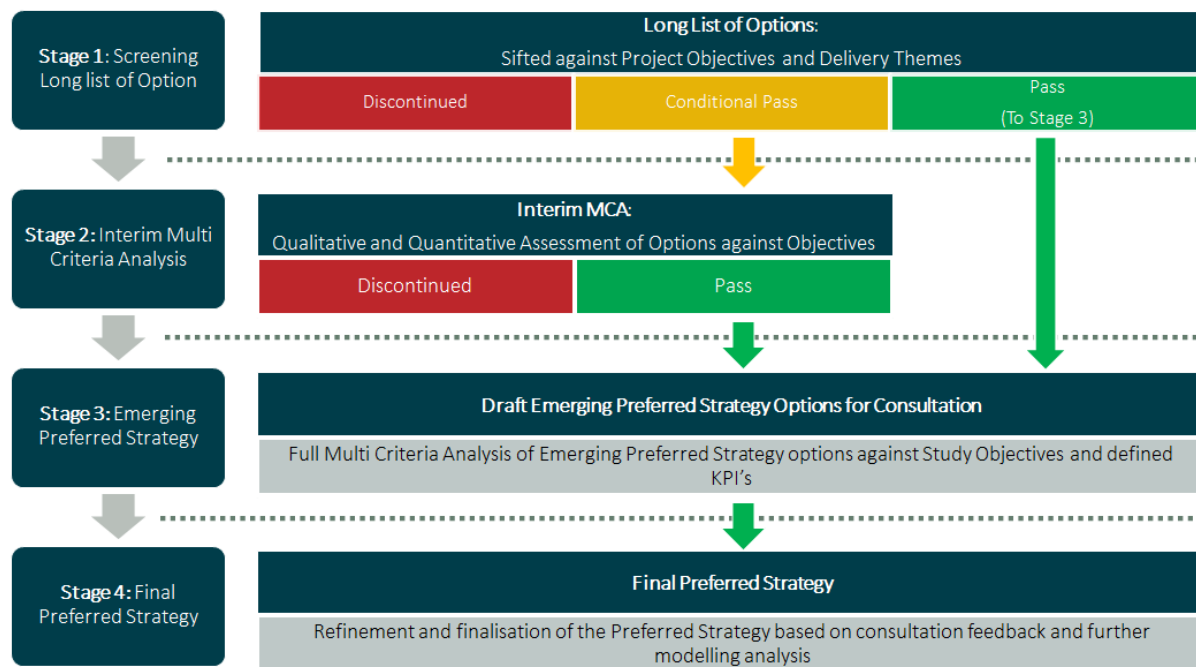


Figure 5-3: Options Assessment Methodology

- **Stage One Options Screening:** The long-list of options were screened against the overall project objectives and core delivery themes to identify which ones should be discontinued, which could pass directly to the final strategy, and which required further assessment.
- **Stage Two Interim Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA):** Options requiring further analysis were passed through a MCA with qualitative indicators used to score each option against the study objectives.
- **Stage Three Draft Emerging Preferred Strategy Options for Consultation:** Options passing Stage One and Stage Two form the initial draft Emerging Preferred Strategy for the LTP.
- **Stage 4 Final Preferred Strategy (Post LAP Consultation):** Feedback from the project steering group and public consultation as part of the Gort LAP process, will be used to refine the preferred strategy for the LTP.

The following sections provide a more detailed description of Stages One and Two outlined above.

5.2.1 Stage One: Options Screening

Stage One of the Options Assessment has examined each of the long list of measures against the LTP objectives. The options have also been assessed against the following core delivery themes:

- Engineering feasibility.
- Acceptability.
- Funding potential.
- Value for money.

Based on this initial screening, options have been classed as follows:

- **Discontinued:** the option did not align with the LTP objectives and therefore is not included in the Emerging Preferred Strategy.
- **Pass:** the option satisfied the project objectives and the core delivery themes, and no alternative proposals were identified in the options development process. These options passed directly into the Emerging Preferred Strategy without the need for an interim assessment.
- **Conditional Pass:** the option aligned with the LTP objectives, however, it either did not fully meet all of the core delivery themes or had a number of alternative proposals identified. In these instances, the options have been assessed in further detail as part of the interim MCA described in Section 5.2.2.

5.2.2 Stage 2: Interim Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA)

The Interim MCA stage has been used to evaluate alternatives based on their performance in achieving the overarching study objectives outlined in Table 4-1. This assessment was predominantly qualitative in nature. A five-point scoring system, outlined in Table 5-1 below, was used to assess the options across the various objectives. This produced a performance matrix which was reviewed to rank the scenarios and identify which ones performed best in terms of achieving the defined objectives of the study, and therefore, passed into the Emerging Preferred Strategy.

To ensure that the options that had advanced to the interim MCA stage were assessed holistically, and that mutually exclusive options were assessed at the same time, where possible/reasonable options were packaged together for the MCA process. Detailed work was undertaken to balance the positive and negative outcomes of each option to assess whether it would be included in the Emerging Preferred Strategy.

Table 5-1: Interim MCA Scoring System

Scoring	
Major Benefit: The proposal is expected to have a clear and considerable benefit or positive impact when compared to existing conditions.	
Minor Benefit: The proposal is expected to have a minor benefit or positive impact when compared to existing conditions.	
Neutral: Overall, the proposal is expected to have neither a positive nor negative impact when compared to existing conditions.	
Minor Disbenefit: The proposal is only expected to result in a minor negative impact when compared to existing conditions.	
Major Disbenefit: The proposal is expected to have a clear and considerable negative impact when compared to existing conditions.	

5.3 Summary

This section has outlined the process followed in developing a longlist of options for active travel, public transport, road & traffic management and supporting measures for Gort as well as the assessment process followed to determine which options would be included in the LTP's Emerging Preferred Strategy.

The following chapter outlines the Preferred Strategy arising from this Options Development and Assessment process.

6. PREFERRED STRATEGY

6.1 Overview

The previous chapters in this report have detailed the process followed in identifying the Preferred Strategy for the Gort LTP. The following sections provide a summary of the proposed measures which have passed through the assessment process and now form part of the Local Transport Plan. A full list of the measures in the strategy by mode of transport can be found in **Appendix B**.

6.2 Walking & Cycling

6.2.1 Overview

The proposed walking and cycling measures in the Preferred Strategy for Gort are illustrated in Figure 6-1 below. These measures have the potential to deliver improved connectivity and permeability by active travel from residential areas to main trip attractors including the town centre, key employment and education sites and leisure opportunities.

Where feasible, segregated cycle infrastructure has been proposed to improve the safety and comfort for cyclists across the network. Note that improvements to footpaths are also proposed on all links where cycle tracks are proposed, benefiting pedestrians.

In addition to these active travel measures, a number of permeability links are proposed which will improve access and increase the walking and cycling catchment of schools and the town centre. Also included are traffic calming measures and new or improved footpaths on a number of roads and streets – this will improve conditions for all active travel users.

The NTA's CycleConnects plan, along with GCC's proposed Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project for Market Square and the town centre, the proposed Gort Town Centre First Plan, and the Galway to Athlone Cycleway have all been taken into account as part of the development of the strategy.

In order to avoid duplication, and in consultation with GCC, the Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement proposals have been taken as a baseline project as part of the development of the Preferred Strategy for the Gort LTP. As such, the proposed LTP measures do not include the town centre area, as these are deemed to be included in the proposed public realm project.

Where cycle measures are proposed alongside national roads, these will adhere to TII requirements as well as the Design Manual for Roads and Streets.

A full description of the proposed measures included in the Preferred Strategy are provided in **Appendix B**. As the final strategy measures follow from an initial longlist of options (as described in the Options Assessment section above), not all measure references are sequential, as some measures were discounted during the Options Assessment process.

The key elements of the active travel strategy are summarised in the remainder of this section with the following terminology used to describe proposed interventions:

- **Cycle Tracks** = cycle lanes separated from vehicular traffic with a physical barrier. Note that improvements to footpaths are also proposed on all links where cycle tracks are proposed.
- **Walkway and cycleways** = two-way cycle route and separate footpath typically located off-line (away from vehicular carriageway / off road).

- **Traffic Calming** = measures to reduce vehicle speeds and create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Typical measures include:
 - Narrowing of the traffic lanes to minimum recommended widths.
 - Raised pedestrian crossings to provide priority for pedestrians.
 - Tightening of corner radii at residential estates to reduce crossing distances and improve safety.
 - Reduced speed limits.
 - Surface treatments, streetscape and landscaping enhancements.
- **Quietway** = low-trafficked street (typically <2,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)) and low-speeds meaning cyclists can safely share the carriageway. Typical measures include:
 - Traffic calming to enforce low-speeds.
 - Improved public realm to encourage active travel.
 - Improved signage and way-finding to encourage use.
 - Surface treatments and landscaping.
- **Permeability links** = walking and cycling links connecting neighbourhoods and providing greater accessibility along desire lines.
- **Traffic Filter** = interventions that allow through access for pedestrians and cyclists but local access only for vehicles.
- **School Zone** = front of school works to prioritise safe pedestrian and cycle access to the school, improving school visibility through signposting & placemaking, reducing vehicle congestion and preventing illegal parking in the area.

More detail can be found in the Table below.

Table 6-1: Active Travel Terminology

INTERVENTION	EXAMPLE IMAGE	INTERVENTION	EXAMPLE IMAGE
○ Cycle Tracks = cycle lanes separated from vehicular traffic with a physical barrier (e.g. Kerb or bollards).		○ Permeability links = short walking and cycling links along desire lines which increase accessibility and reduce active travel distances by providing short-cuts.	
○ Traffic Calming = measures to reduce vehicle speeds and create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Typical measures include narrowing traffic lanes, raised pedestrian crossings, and reduced speed limits.		○ Quietway = a street with low traffic (less than 200 vehicles in the peak hour) and low-speeds where cyclists can safely share the carriageway. Typical additional measures include traffic calming, landscaping and improved signage.	
○ Greenway = an off-road trail for use by cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorised transport, often in scenic surroundings with access to nature and urban areas, connecting residential areas with key destinations.		○ School Zone = front of school works to prioritise pedestrian and cycle safety outside the school gate, improving school visibility through signposting & placemaking, reducing vehicle congestion & preventing illegal parking in the area.	

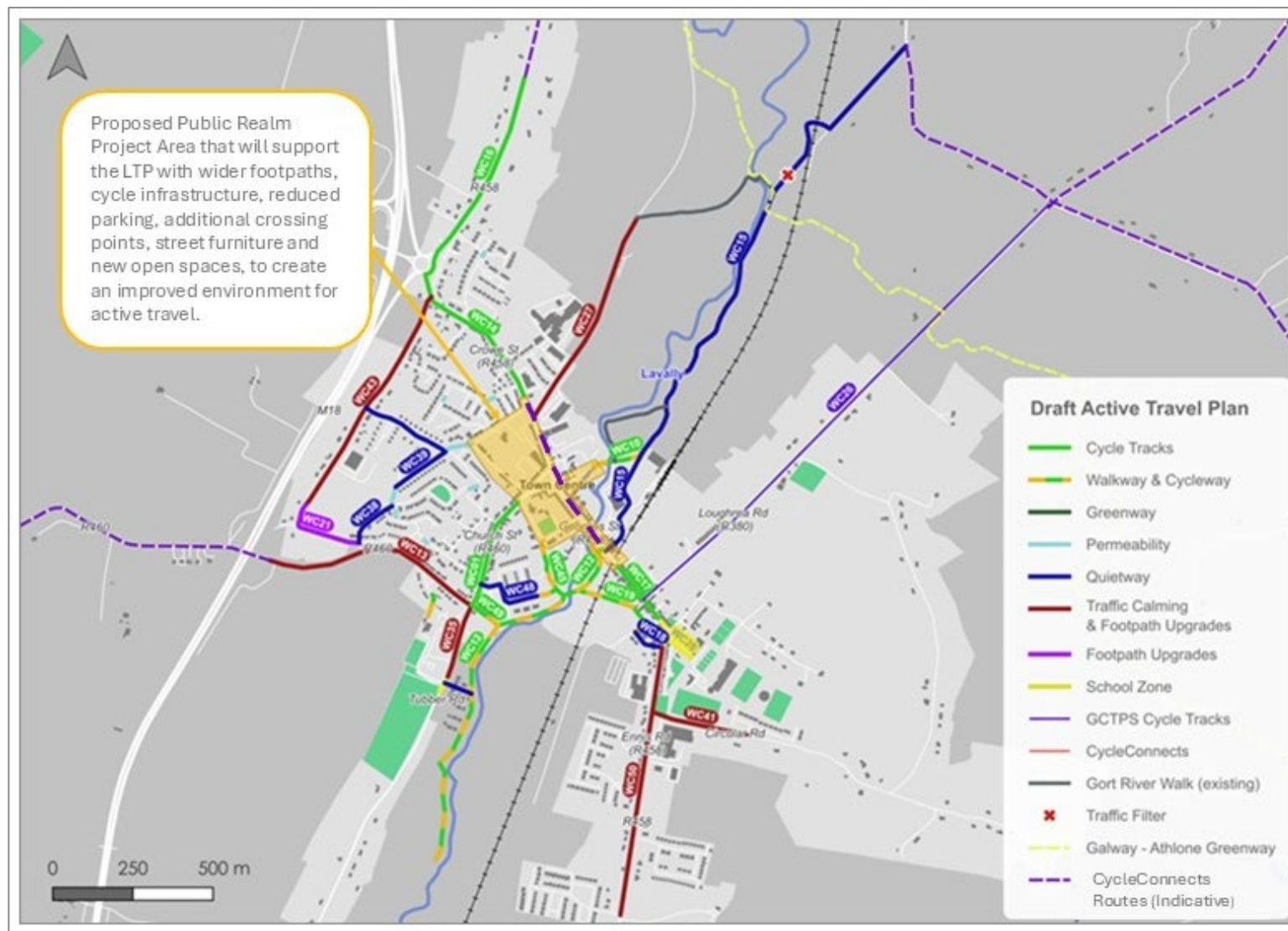


Figure 6-1: Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – Gort LTP Study Area

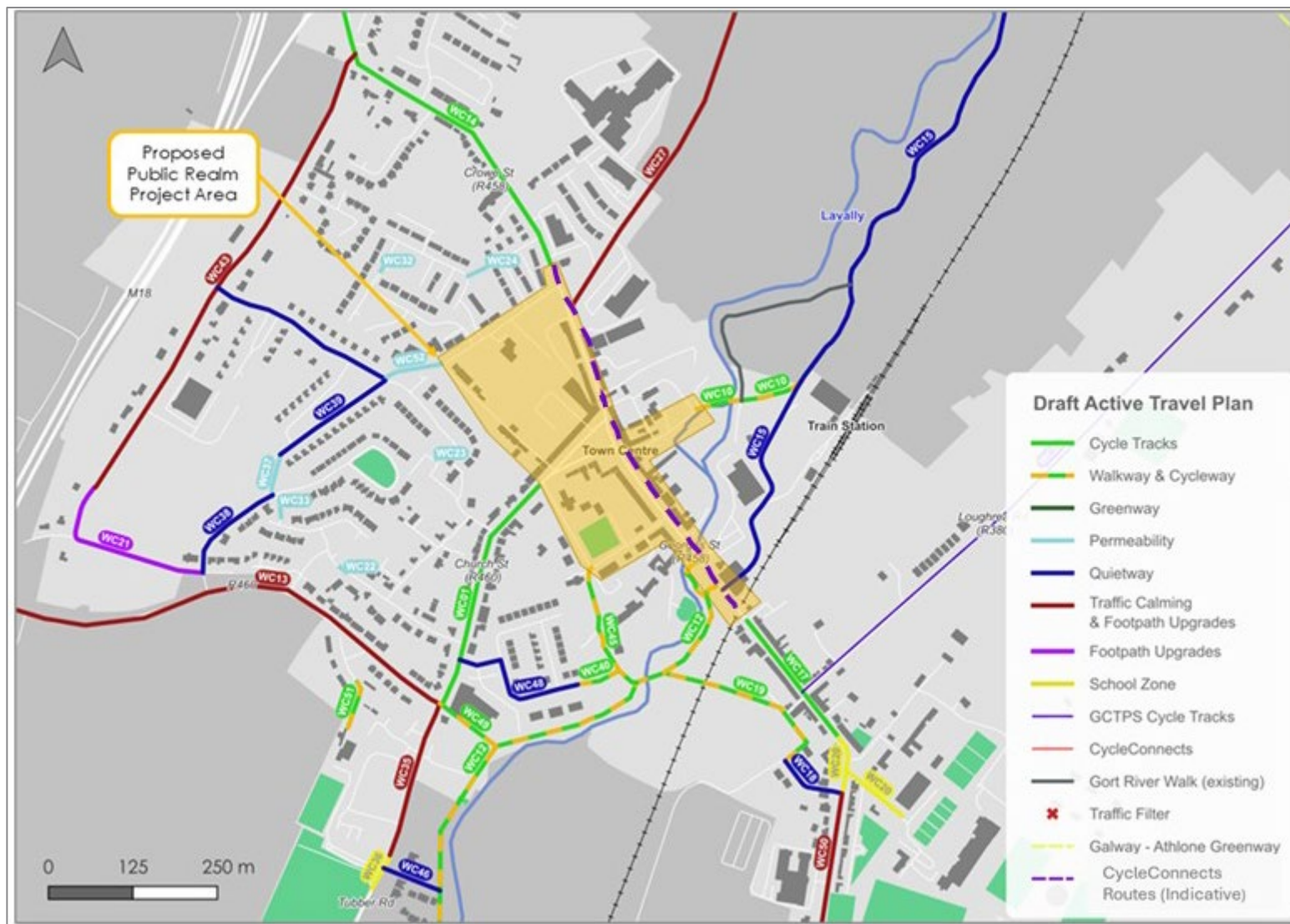


Figure 6-2: Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – central Gort area

6.2.2 Town Centre Public Realm Improvements and Associated Active Travel Proposals

Funding has recently been secured to appoint a design team to prepare enhancement proposals for the public realm in the centre of Gort, with the most recent designs shown in the figure below. These proposals include revised traffic arrangements, footway improvements, new raised zebra crossings, and on street parking changes on Market Square, Crowe Street, Church Street, Main Street and Bridge Street.

The scheme aims to reduce the impact of heavy traffic and car parking in the square, creating space for a variety of cultural events and markets, and encouraging the use of new off street car parks for longer stay users. Please note that the figure below shows draft proposals and are subject to change following the submission of a Planning Application.



Figure 6-3: Market Square Draft Public Realm Proposals, BDP Architects

As part of the draft Public Realm Enhancement strategy, additional off street car parking is proposed near Market Square and Barrack Street and additional on-street parking is also proposed on Church Street. It is intended as part of these proposals that road carriageway widths on wider streets (such as Bridge Street) will be reduced in width to accommodate wider footways and tree planting. Parallel parking, in place of perpendicular parking which requires more road space, is proposed to achieve this.

The indicative plans also proposed that traffic movement in Market Square is slightly altered with the main movement changed to the southern side of the square in both directions. A service street for the businesses on the northern side of the square would be provided, which will take through traffic.

The proposed Public Realm Enhancement Project includes a wider aspirational active travel network, which will not be delivered as part of the project. These proposals were incorporated into the draft Town Centre First Plan and are included in the Active Travel Network as part of this LTP.

It should be noted that as part of the proposed public realm enhancement project proposals, no segregated cycle infrastructure through the town centre is proposed, and cyclists will largely mix with general traffic to access Market Square.

6.2.3 Connections to the Proposed Athlone to Galway Cycleway (WC15, WC16, WC26)

The Athlone to Galway Cycleway Preferred Route passes just north of Gort and links to Coole Park. This is a major national proposal with significant recreational and tourism potential. It will be important to designate a signed and safe cycle route from the Athlone to Galway Cycleway into the town centre to take advantage of passing recreational trade and promote tourism. This is proposed through resurfacing Pound Road and Station Road, and filtering traffic at the railway bridge (see WC15, Figure 6-2). This would create a quiet link between the town centre, rail station, and the Cycleway. The development of such connections to the Cycleway will be undertaken in consultation with Galway County Council's internal design teams (to ensure integration of projects) and in partnership with TII (with regards to interfaces with the national road network and in the interests of safeguarding the strategic function of the national road network and the safety of all road users).

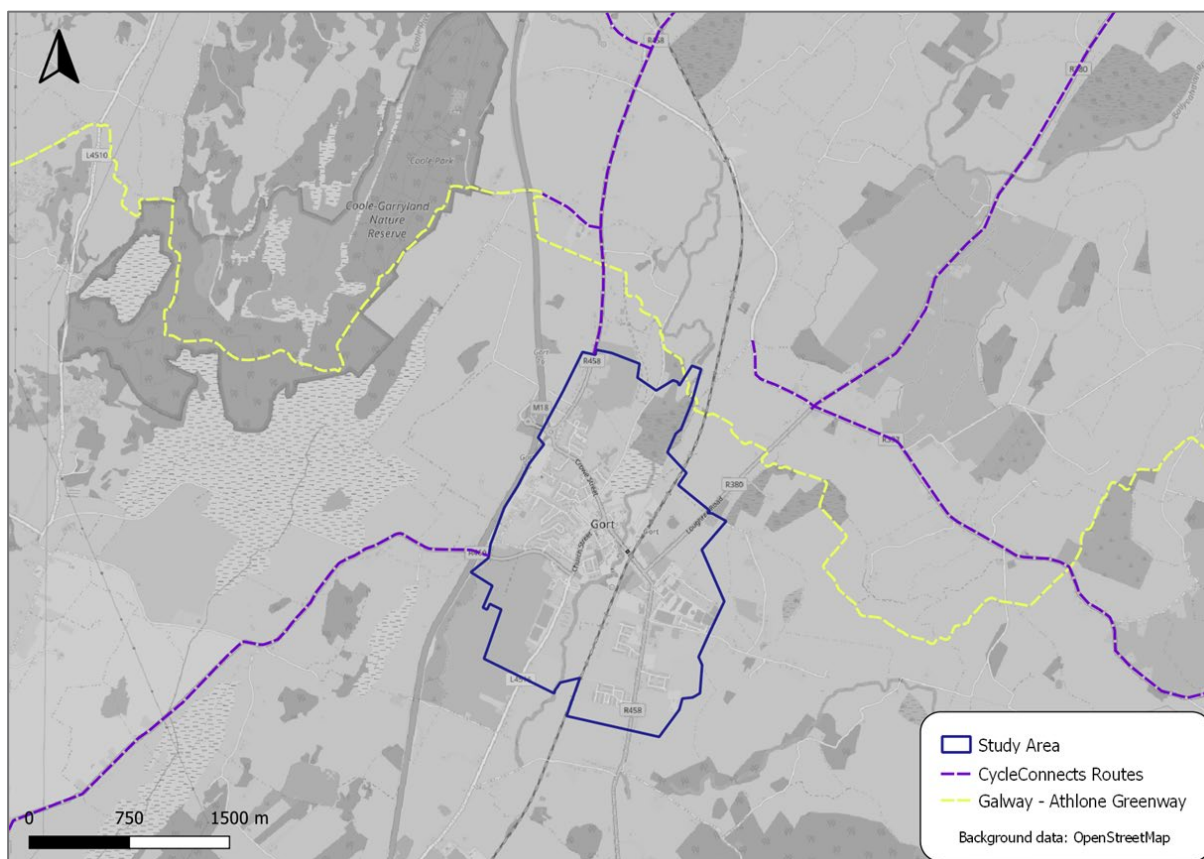


Figure 6-4: Gort with Cycle Connects Network Plan and Galway-Athlone Cycleway

6.2.4 Gort River Walk and Queen Street to Ennis Road Proposal (WC12, WC19, WC27, WC45)

The existing Gort River Walk to the north of Bridge Street is an attractive walking facility developed by the community.

In line with the Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First proposals, the LTP proposes to support the walk by filtering traffic on Pound Road (WC15), and traffic calming and upgrading footpaths along Kinincha (WC27). It is also proposed to extend the walk south of Gort River bridge as a walkway and cycleway (WC12).

This is a key active travel proposal, and provides connections to nearby roads – and in combination with the Queen Street to Ennis Road Active Travel Proposal in the Town Centre First Plan – connects residential areas, the town centre and schools together (see measures WC19, WC20, WC45).

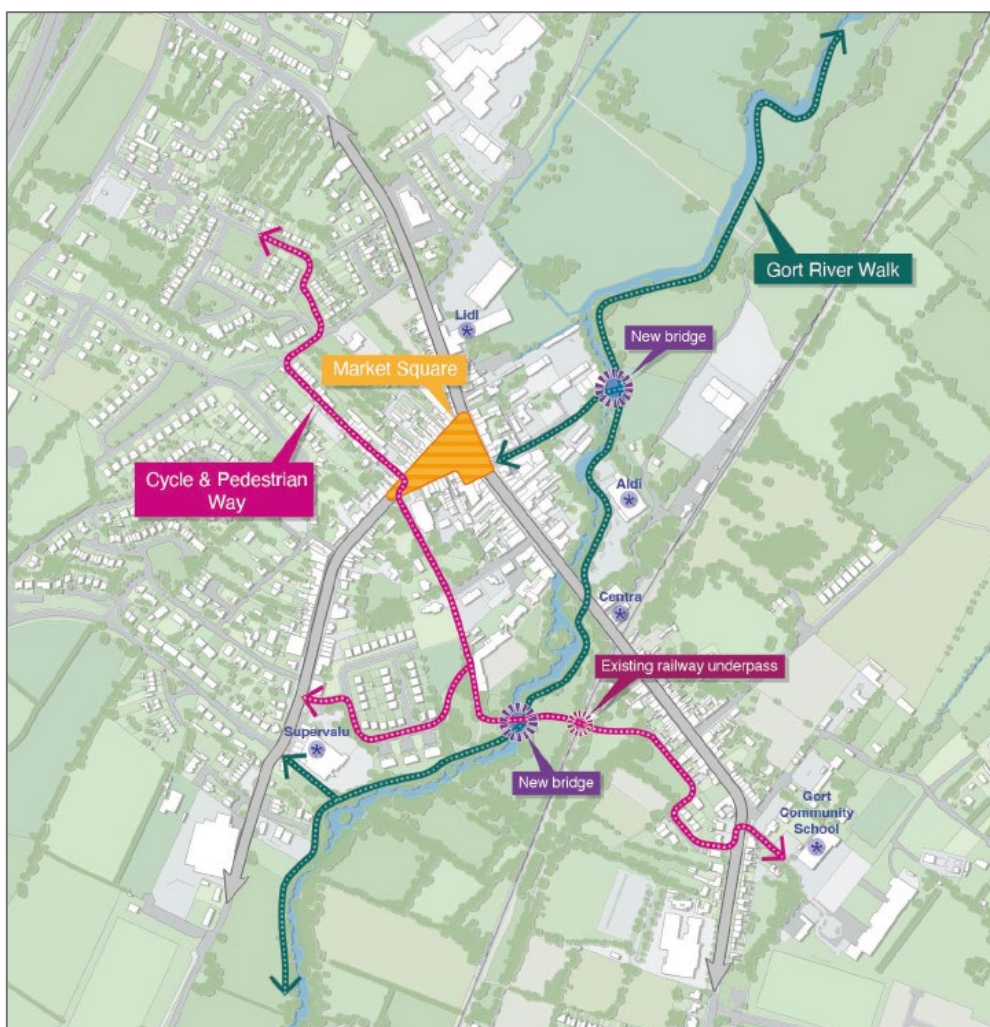


Figure 6-5: Town Centre First Plan for Active Travel Route Connecting Schools and Residential Areas via Queen Street, New Bridge and extended River Walk

6.2.5 R458 & Crowe Street (WC14)

It is proposed to create a segregated cycle way along the R458 (previously the N18) past Glenbrack and along the western end of Crowe Street into the town centre. There is space to achieve a two-way segregated cycle track making use of the shoulder of the R458 and wider sections of Crowe Street. This route will then connect with the proposed Public Realm Enhancement Project.

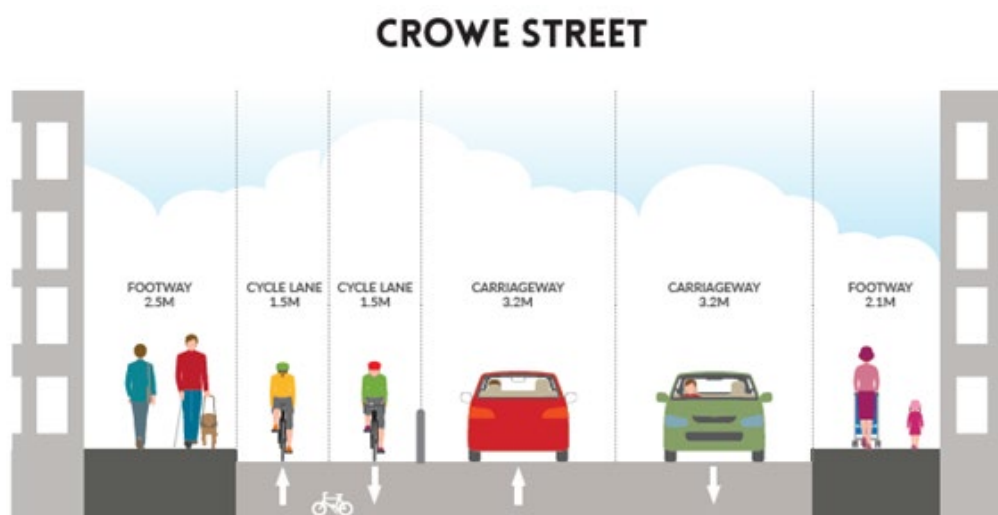


Figure 6-6: Crowe Street Proposed

6.2.6 Gort Boys NS and Gaelscoil na Bhfilí (WC20)

School Zones with appropriate road markings, pedestrian crossings, 20kph speed limits and other safety signage are proposed to create a safer environment for walking and cycling near the school entrances on R460/Tubber Road and on Ennis Road at Georges St junction. These will be developed in line with the NTA's Safe Routes to School Guidance.

6.2.7 R460 and Glenbrack Road (WC13, WC43)

The R460 is relatively narrow and forms one of the Cycle Connects routes into Gort from the Burren area and is an important walking route to the Gort Boys National School (WC13, WC35). Owing to its narrow width and bends, there is little scope to provide segregated cycle tracks without widening the road boundary or changing traffic management arrangements.

A short section of the road has no footpath at Glenbrack which is recognised as insufficient, as can be seen in Figure 6-1, it is proposed to fill this gap in the walking network (WC21). As Glenbrack Road acts as a bypass to the town centre for traffic travelling between Tubber Road and the M18/R458 to the north and it is a residential road, traffic calming measures are also proposed (WC43).

There are opportunities to improve permeability through the housing estates of Gort na Rí and the Maples towards the school and towards Church Street and the town centre, thereby creating a series of Quietways for walking and cycling along residential roads (WC38). These quietways can enable safe

walking and cycling trips for children to school while avoiding busy road and junctions, for example via Boland’s Lane and Queen Street.



Figure 6-7: Missing footway along R460 looking towards Tubber Road



Figure 6-8: Missing footway at blind bend on Glenbrack Road

6.2.8 George’s Street (WC17)

While the proposed public realm enhancement project area covers Bridge Street, a short section of segregated cycle track along George’s Street is proposed to connect the public realm area to the schools off Ennis Road. A School Zone is separately proposed for the entrance to the school.

6.2.9 Loughrea Road (WC26)

Loughrea Road is proposed as an interurban cycle route in the GCTPS. There is a footway to the western side of Loughrea Road which is wide enough to accommodate a shared use cycle track. Although this road has relatively little development along it, new housing is proposed. It is proposed that as development occurs, the road boundary is widened along Loughrea Road to create either a shared use walking and cycle path or footpaths and segregated cycle tracks linking to George's Street.



Figure 6-9: New housing and wide footway on Loughrea Road looking towards Loughrea

6.3 Public Transport

The public transport measures proposed in the plan are focused on medium and longer distance trips to and from the study area. The town was considered too small for the provision of town bus services, with these shorter distance trips better served by active travel.

Gort is strategically located in terms of rail transport on the Western Rail Corridor and there are frequent buses serving Ennis and Galway. These services provide the most significant opportunity for the development of public transport services in the town.

Rail

Currently there is little usage of the rail station in Gort, with just 59 trips on Rail Census day in 2023. The proposed LTP active travel network has also been developed to provide better access for residents of Gort to the train station by walking and cycling. There is a walkway from Station Road directly to the platform, but the footpath on Station Road linking to this walkway is narrow, and there are no pedestrian crossings to access Station Road. This should be combined with additional safe cycle parking facilities at the station to support cycle and rail trips. These measures to increase the accessibility of the station should improve the attractiveness of the rail service for residents.

Improved rail services should also increase usage. The main public transport measures for rail included in the Gort LTP are aligned with the following GCDP 2022-2028 Policy Objective:

- To secure in co-operation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. Iarnród Éireann & NTA) improved rail infrastructure and services on the Western Rail Corridor.

This is supported by the All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review, which proposes extending the Western Rail Corridor to Claremorris and providing increased passing loops and frequency upgrades on the line. The double tracking of the line between Athenry and Galway Ceannt, as also proposed in the GCDP 2022-2028, will increase the number of train paths for trains from Gort towards Galway further, and reduce waiting times in Athenry for both direct trains and trips requiring interchange.



Figure 6-10: All Ireland Strategic Rail Review – Gort

Bus

In terms of bus transport, improvements as part of the NTA Connecting Ireland strategy include increasing the frequency on Corridor 8 (currently route 51) from Cork to Galway to every 30 minutes, and increasing the frequency of the 934 service to Loughrea to three return trips daily.

The LTP supports these service improvements and supports engagement with the NTA in this matter. Further uptake of public transport could be achievable if additional bus services could be provided through enhanced Connecting Ireland and Local Link improvements in order to enhance connections to Gort to surrounding towns and villages not currently served by rail.

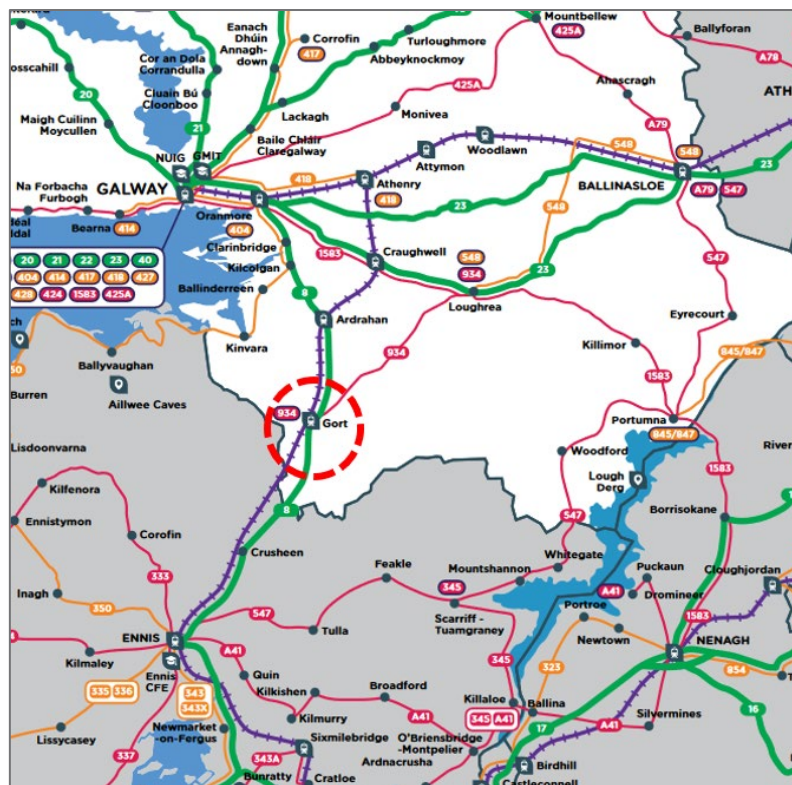


Figure 6-11: Connecting Ireland – Gort

It is considered that there is a need to provide additional bus stops on either side of the town centre to ensure accessibility to public transport. This would increase the catchment area of bus services in the town and support a modal shift to sustainable travel. Proposed potential locations (indicative only) of these additional bus stops are shown below. The provision of these additional bus stops and the extension of bus routes (e.g. 434) further south may require a new bus turning facility on the Ennis Road to support this route extension. This will be considered in partnership with the NTA and other stakeholders, along with the potential for future expansion of bus services within the Gort area.

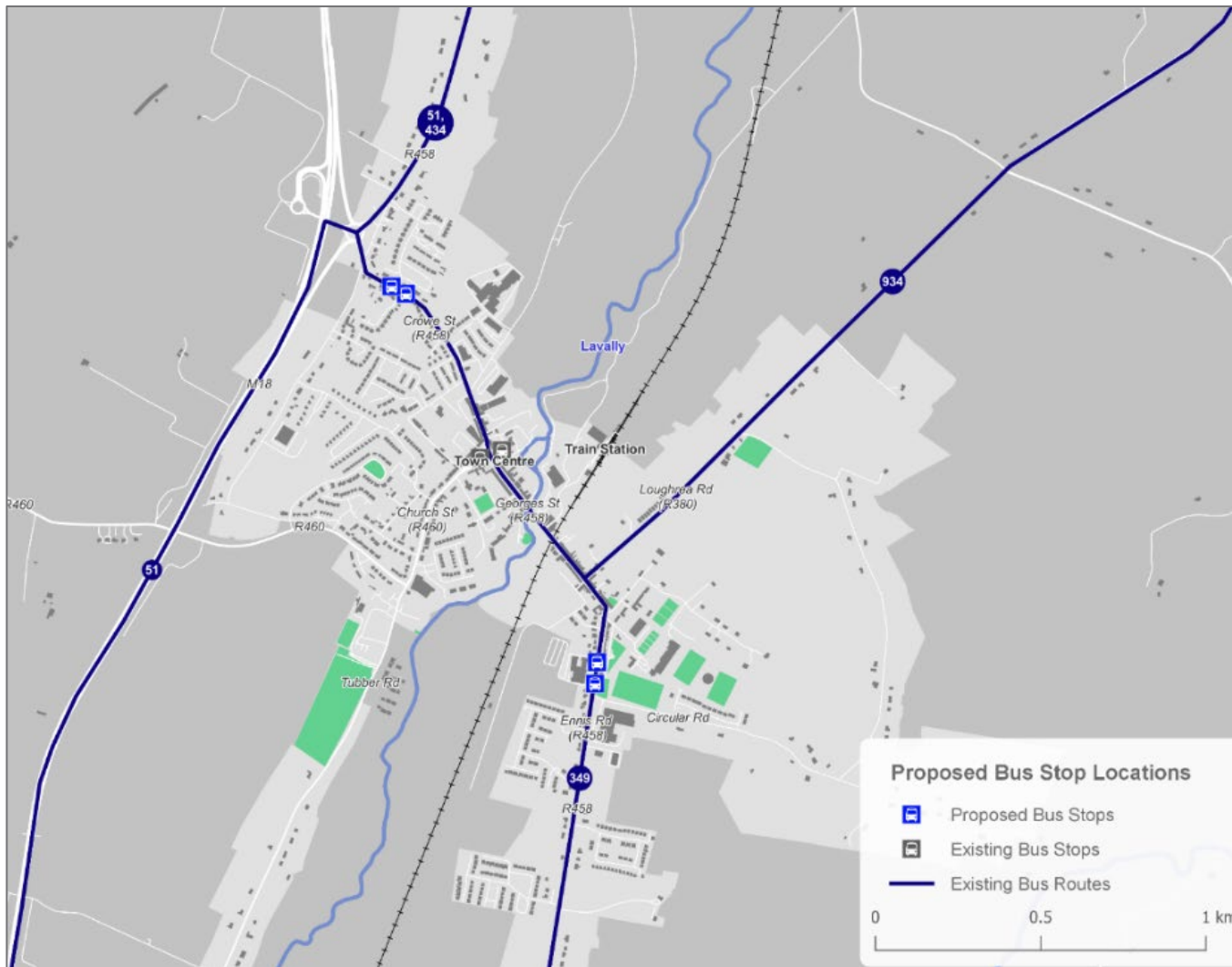


Figure 6-12: Proposed additional bus stops (indicative locations only)

6.4 Road & Traffic Management Options

As outlined above, a number of traffic management arrangements have been proposed within Gort town centre as part of the draft Public Realm project to support walking, cycling and public realm improvements. These include the reallocation of road space at Market Square, Crowe Street, Church Street, Main Street and Bridge Street.

As part of the LTP, it is proposed that the corridor link in Figure 6–13 is reserved from development as an infrastructure safeguard.



Figure 6-13: Proposed Road Infrastructure Safeguards – LAP 2025-2031

The LTP also proposes the upgrade of a number of junctions throughout the town to improve safety for all road users. The current transport network in Gort is often difficult to traverse for pedestrians and cyclists, with few formal crossings provided in the town and most junctions featuring wide, splayed turns for cars leaving long crossing distances for pedestrians and hazards for cyclists from turning vehicles.

As the active travel measures illustrated in Figure 6.1 are delivered, all junctions along these routes will need to be reviewed and upgraded to provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists. Exact details on proposed upgrade works will be defined at the individual project level.

6.5 Supporting Measures

A number of supporting measures have been proposed in the LTP to complement the transport network improvements and support modal shift. These measures include:

- The roll out of cycle parking.
- Provision of improved bus stop infrastructure and passenger information.
- The development of a town parking management strategy, including consideration of both the quantum and cost of parking within the town in the longer term. The parking management strategy will investigate opportunities for car parking rationalisation.
 - This parking strategy will be drafted to support the delivery of the mode share targets as laid out in CAP 2024.
- This parking management strategy will also include the development of an EV parking (and pricing) strategy. This will support compliance with the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, which calls for an increase to 20% for the number of parking spaces which should have provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- The development of an integrated Traffic Management Plan.
- A range of behavioural change measures including mobility management plans for workplaces, schools and new housing developments, cycle skills and maintenance training, and a range of school based sustainable travel initiatives and events.

A full list of supporting measures included in the Preferred Strategy can be found in **Appendix B**.

6.6 KPI Assessment

The Transport Strategy as a whole has been assessed against the objectives and KPIs listed in Table 4-1. The strategy has been assessed against an existing ‘Do Nothing’ scenario using the five-point rating scale outlined in Table 5-1.

The following sections provide an overview of the performance of the Preferred Strategy in meeting the overarching study objectives. It should be noted that (to avoid duplication) the Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement proposals have been considered as a ‘baseline project’ within the LTP. Therefore, the Town Centre Public Realm project has not been considered in this KPI assessment.

6.6.1 Accessibility & Social Inclusion

Table 6-2: Preferred Strategy: Accessibility & Social Inclusion Outcomes

OBJECTIVE	KPI	SCORE
Support and implement transport measures which reduce car dependency and improve access to local services by sustainable modes	Access to key services (ATOS Analysis)	
	Access to Public Transport	

As outlined in Figure 6-1, the Preferred Strategy for Gort includes the creation of an integrated active travel network providing improved accessibility to key services including the town centre and local schools. Strong pedestrian and cycle linkages are proposed to existing employment locations, as well as future planned employment locations within the town to support sustainable travel to work. Local permeability improvements have been identified, providing connectivity which will substantially reducing access times to key services by walking and cycling. The NTA’s ATOS tool was re-run for the future Preferred network proposed as part of the LTP and demonstrate an improvement in accessibility to services within Gort as a result of the LTP measures.

The Preferred Strategy supports improvements to public transport such as frequency increases on existing services, exploration of new bus services, and the addition of new bus stops. Active Travel measures in the strategy will improve walking and cycling accessibility to rail and bus stops. It also includes supporting measures which will improve the quality of bus stop infrastructure in the town and the quantum of cycle parking at public transport stops/stations.

6.6.2 Integration

Table 6-3: Preferred Strategy: Integration Outcomes

OBJECTIVE	KPI	SCORE
To align and integrate with existing and emerging national, regional, and local planning policy	Compatibility of transport measures with local, regional and national policy - Rating Scale	

The focus of the Preferred Strategy on active modes and urban realm enhancements is deemed to comply with national, regional and local planning policy as covered in Chapter 2. In particular, the active travel improvements align with the focus by the Department of Transport on Safe Routes to School.

The overall rebalancing of the transport network towards sustainable modes aligns with the National Planning Framework, the Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Sustainable Mobility Policy, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the GCDP 2022-2028.

6.6.3 Safety & Physical Activity

Table 6-4: Preferred Strategy: Safety & Physical Activity Outcomes

OBJECTIVE	KPI	SCORE
Provide safe access to schools for vulnerable road users and ensure a safe front of school environment	Qualitative assessment of walking and cycling infrastructure to schools - Rating Scale	
	Reduction in walking/cycling distances to school sites (GIS/ATOS assessment)	

The Preferred Strategy has a significant focus on providing safe routes to school by active modes. A number of routes, in particular the delivery of walkway & cycleway routes along and across the Gort River which link to the town's schools. However, it is noted that the town centre will not feature segregated cycle infrastructure due to the proposed public realm project and as such a lower positive grade is given.

In terms of walking/cycling distances to schools, local permeability improvements have been identified, providing connectivity which will substantially reducing access times to key services by walking and cycling. This is particularly true of residential areas east of the M18 which currently feature many cul de sacs, extending walking and cycling distances to schools and the town centre.

The ATOS tool was re-run with the future LTP active travel network to illustrate the impact of the proposed measures on access to schools, and the results highlight a significant increase in accessibility due to the proposed LTP active travel network.

6.6.4 Environment

Table 6-5: Preferred Strategy: Environment Outcomes

OBJECTIVE	KPI	SCORE
Contribute to achieving Climate Action Plan targets through the creation of an environment which encourages a modal shift from the private car to more sustainable modes	Anticipated change on sustainable mode shares - Rating Scale	
	Length of additional / improved walk and cycle infrastructure	

The Preferred Strategy will deliver enhanced sustainable connectivity across Gort, supporting environmental improvements through reductions in carbon emissions, improving local air quality and enhancing the public realm to support active travel. The provision of a wider network of safe pedestrian and cycle infrastructure should help encourage a modal shift to active travel, particularly for short distance trips within Gort.

6.6.5 Economy

Table 6-6: Preferred Strategy: Economy Outcomes

OBJECTIVE	KPI	SCORE
Contribute to Gort's economic vitality through improved connectivity and enhanced public realm	Access to Town Centre	
	Quality of Town centre streetscape and public realm – Rating Scale	
	Deliverability Rating Scale	

The Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement project proposals will deliver a greatly enhanced public realm and streetscape in the town centre. This will make Gort a more attractive place to spend time, increasing footfall within the town centre and supporting local businesses. However while walking provision is greatly enhanced through widened footpaths and improved crossings, the lack of segregated cycle infrastructure within the town centre results in a lower grade for access.

The vast majority of measures in the Preferred Strategy involve reallocation of existing road space to active travel measures and can therefore be delivered in a short to medium timeframe. These short term measures are focussed on providing strong connections from residential areas to key attractions in the town, notably the town centre, schools and employment sites.

Some longer-term proposals will require significant resources in terms of both design and construction. This would include elements such as the new Active Travel bridge over the Gort River to connect the Ennis Road and Queen Street, via an extended Gort River Walk, which will need detailed assessment as part of the scheme development process to determine deliverability.

7. MONITORING STRATEGY & LTP REVIEW

Delivery of the LTP Strategy Measures will be phased over the plan period, and prioritised as part of the LTP implementation phase. It is envisaged that the Measures that will be implemented in the short term will include upgrades to existing permeability links, development of quietways and school zones along with:

- **WC13** – Traffic Calming and filling in footpath gaps along the R460.
- **WC27** – Traffic Calming along the L85314 to connect the town to the Gort River Walk.
- **WC35** – Traffic Calming along Tubber Road to provide safe route to Gort Boys National School.
- **WC50** – Traffic Calming and footpath upgrades along Ennis Road.⁹

Additionally, as new development areas are due to be developed, active travel connections serving these areas will be brought forward for design and delivery.

The Galway County Council Active Travel Team, Forward Planning Team and the Gort Town Centre First Team, along with key stakeholders, will work together on the delivery of relevant projects.

A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed and implemented as part of the delivery process for the Gort LTP. This will monitor mode share ambitions and benchmark performance during the plan period.

The NTA guidance recommends undertaking reviews during defined timeframes (e.g. short term 1-2 years; medium 2-5 years; long term 5 to 10 years; future-term 10 to 15 years).

At the end of each timeframe, monitoring can be conducted to establish the following:

- Progress on the implementation of all infrastructure measures for each mode of transport.
- Progress on the implementation of all public transport service measures for each mode of transport.
- Progress on the implementation of all demand management and supporting smarter travel measures.
- Cross-checking of assumptions in the LTP against current transport patterns and population at the time of monitoring.
- Assessment of actual development and land use outcomes within the LTP Study Area at the time of monitoring against the original LAP assumptions related to land use.

Evaluation of the outcomes of the LTP can also be undertaken within similar timeframes including evaluating the following:

- **Sustainable Travel Mode Share** – for example via updated Census POWSCAR data, Employment and School Mobility Management Plan data, local residents' surveys, cycling and walking counts and bus patronage data. This evaluation will be done in line with Climate Action Plan 2024 targets for a 50% increase in active travel and 130% increase in public transport journeys by 2030. For mode shares, CAP 2024 targets a daily mode share of 53% for car journeys, 19% for public transport, and 28% for active travel.

⁹ Subject to receiving the required funding, consents and approvals.

- **Economic Benefits** – for example via town centre footfall and spend surveys, distinguishing between those who travelled to the town centre by car and by sustainable means.
- **Health and Safety Benefits** – for example via analysis of available local road safety statistics.
- **Environmental Benefits** – for example via Air Quality and Noise monitors at key locations within the town centre and usage of public Electric Vehicle car charging and eBike parking facilities. User surveys can also be conducted to determine user satisfaction levels with new active travel infrastructure and public transport services and waiting environments.

Accessibility and Social Inclusion – updated catchment analysis for access into and within town centre, including for those without access to a car.

8. SUMMARY

8.1 Overview

This report outlines the process undertaken to develop the Gort Local Transport Plan (LTP) for consultation. The key purpose of the LTP is to guide the future transport and mobility needs of Gort, taking into account the transport demand arising from existing and projected development both within the study area and the wider area of influence.

In developing the LTP, SYSTRA have followed guidelines set out in TII/NTA's 'Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes. A Baseline Assessment was undertaken to understand existing conditions within Gort LTP grounded in National, Regional and Local policy.

Through a review of existing conditions and relevant policies and plans, a long-list of proposed measures were identified to support the future transport needs of Gort. These options were passed through an options assessment process to determine the package of measures that would form the Gort LTP. The full set of strategy measures were assessed against the study objectives using identified Key Performance Indicators.

The results indicate that the LTP measures score positively in meeting the overarching LTP objectives. The delivery of a safe, integrated walk and cycle network will improve accessibility across Gort, encouraging an increase in sustainable travel. A number of measures have focused on improving safety for access to local schools, supporting active travel and improving the health and wellbeing of children within the town.

The town centre area falls under the aegis of the separate proposed public realm enhancement project proposals, and as such, in consultation with Galway County Council, it falls outside of the scope of the LTP. The public realm project aims to increase the vitality and attractiveness of Gort town centre, encouraging residents and visitors to meet and spend time, and also increase footfall within the town centre.

The Galway County Council Active Travel Team, Forward Planning Team and the Gort Town Centre First Team, along with key stakeholders, will work together on the delivery of relevant projects.

In terms of wider accessibility, the LTP supports upgrades to existing public transport services and facilities, including improved frequencies of trains and buses to Galway and Ennis and improved public transport waiting environments.

The LTP also includes a range of supporting measures to complement the transport network improvements and support modal shift. These measures include the roll out of cycle parking and a range of behavioural change measures including mobility management plans.

SYSTRA provides advice on transport, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.

A diverse group of results-oriented people, we are part of a strong team of professionals worldwide. Through client business planning, customer research and strategy development we create solutions that work for real people in the real world.

For more information visit www.systra.ie

Birmingham – Newhall Street

Lancaster House, Newhall St,

Birmingham, B3 1NQ

T: +44 (0)121 393 4841

Birmingham – Suffolk Street

8th Floor, Alpha Tower, Crowne Plaza, Suffolk Street

Birmingham, B1 1TT

T: +44 (0)121 393 4841

Bristol

One Temple Quay, Temple Back East

Bristol, BS1 6DZ

T: +44 118 208 0111

Dublin

2nd Floor, Riverview House, 21-23 City Quay

Dublin 2, Ireland

T: +353 (0) 1 566 2028

Edinburgh

Prospect House, 5 Thistle Street, Edinburgh EH2 1DF

T: +44 (0)131 460 1847

Glasgow

The Centrum Business Centre Limited, 38 Queen Street, Glasgow,

G1 3DX

T: +44 (0)141 468 4205

Leeds

100 Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 1BA

T: +44 (0)113 360 4842

London

One Carey Lane, London, England EC2V 8AE

T: +44 (0)20 3855 0079

Manchester –City Tower

16th Floor, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza

Manchester M1 4BT

T: +44 (0)161 504 5026

Newcastle

Floor E, South Corridor, Milburn House, Dean Street,
Newcastle, NE1 1LE

T: +44 (0)191 249 3816

Reading

Davidson House, Forbury Square,
Reading, RG1 3EU

T: +44 118 208 0111

Woking

Dukes Court, Duke Street

Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH

T: +44 (0)1483 357705

York

Meridian House, The Crescent

York, YO24 1AW

Tel: +44 1904 454 600

Other locations:

France:

Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Paris

Northern Europe:

Astana, Copenhagen, Kiev, London, Moscow, Riga,
Wroclaw

Southern Europe & Mediterranean: Algiers, Baku,
Bucharest, Madrid, Rabat, Rome, Sofia, Tunis

Middle East:

Cairo, Dubai, Riyadh

Asia Pacific:

Bangkok, Beijing, Brisbane, Delhi, Hanoi, Hong Kong,
Manila, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Shenzhen, Taipei

Africa:

Abidjan, Douala, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Libreville,
Nairobi



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



SYSTRA

Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Gort Local Transport Plan

Appendix A – Galway Policy Context Report



SYSTRA



GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

Gort Local Transport Plan

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Client/Project owner	Galway County Council
Project	Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031
Study	Gort Local Transport Plan – Appendix A Galway Policy Context Report
Date	31/07/2025
Reference number	300876

APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
1	Author	Ronan Fallon	Consultant	19/09/2022	First draft for client review
	Checked by	Alison Pickett	Associate Director	26/09/2022	
	Approved by	Andrew Archer	Director	27/09/2022	
2	Author	Alison Pickett	Director	30/01/2023	Final draft incorporating CAP 23 updates
	Checked by	Andrew Archer	Director	30/01/2023	
	Approved by	Andrew Archer	Director	30/01/2023	
3	Author	Sean Cronin	Assistant Consultant	22/11/2024	Updated draft incorporating new policies as of 2024
	Checked by	Ben Healy	Consultant	27/11/2024	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	11/12/2024	



APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
4	Author	Sean Cronin	Assistant Consultant	10/03/2025	Updated draft incorporating new policies as of 2025
	Checked by	Ben Healy	Consultant	10/03/2025	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	11/03/2025	
5	Author	Ronan Fallon	Senior Consultant	31/07/2025	Updated final Appendix following approval of Material Alterations for Gort LTP
	Checked by	Alison Pickett	Director	06/08/2025	
	Approved by	Alison Pickett	Director	06/08/2025	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	BACKGROUND	4
1.2	TECHNICAL NOTE CONTENTS	4
2.	POLICY & PLAN REVIEW	6
2.1	INTERNATIONAL	6
2.2	NATIONAL POLICIES & PLANS, GUIDANCE & CONSULTATIONS	7
2.3	REGIONAL POLICIES & PLANS	23
2.4	COUNTY POLICIES & PLANS	27



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- SYSTRA Ltd has been engaged by Galway County Council (GCC) to provide a range of Transport Support for the County. These include the following Workstreams:
 - 1) County Level Transport Modelling Assessment.
 - 2) County Galway Walking & Cycling Strategy.
 - 3) Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for four settlements: Athenry; Gort; Loughrea; and Oranmore/Garraun.
 - 4) Community Transport Studies (CTSs) for six settlements: Clifden; Headford; Kinvara; Oughterard; Portumna; and Maigh Cuilinn.
 - 5) Cycling and Walking Sub-Plans for:
 - The four LTPs and six CTSs settlements listed above in items 3 and 4.
 - Twelve additional settlements:
 - Small Growth Settlements x six: An Spidéal; An Cheathrú Rua; Ballygar; Dunmore; Glenamaddy; and Moylough.
 - Rural Settlements x six: Carna; Clarinbridge; Clonbur; Craughwell; Miltown; and Mountbellow.

These Studies (known as the Galway Transport Support Programme) will guide future transport investment, setting out the County's Walking & Cycling Strategy as well as each settlement's transport strategy for the period to 2028, but also looking beyond to 2040.

1.2 Technical Note Contents

This Technical Note sets out a review of international, national, regional, and county level policies and plans relevant to the Studies outlined above. The development of the Galway Transport Modelling Assessment, Walking and Cycling Strategy and Local Transport Plans / Community Transport Plans will be shaped by and reflect these policies, along with relevant national guidance and current consultations.

This Technical Note summarises the review of policy, plans and guidance relevant to the Galway Transport Support Programme as follows:

- International level
- National level
- Regional level
- County level



This Technical Note will be supplemented by a review of Local Plans and Policies for each of the 22 settlements listed above. These Local Plan and Policy reviews will form part of the Local Transport Plan / Community Transport Plan / Cycling & Walking Sub-Plan reports developed for each of the settlements.



2. POLICY & PLAN REVIEW

2.1 International

Table 1. Policy & Plan Review – International

POLICY & PLANS	INTERNATIONAL
European Union Green Deal (European Commission, 2020) and Fit For 55 Package (European Commission, 2021)	The European Union Green Deal calls for a 90% reduction in transport greenhouse gas emissions in order for the EU to become a climate-neutral economy by 2050. In 2021, the European Commission published its Fit for 55 Package to enable the EU to meet the Paris Agreement carbon targets and achieve net zero by 2050. The Fit for 55 Package encompasses a suite of legislative initiatives across various sectors including energy, transport and buildings. It is intended to fundamentally overhaul the EU’s climate policy framework and put the EU on track to deliver on its climate targets of a 55% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Sustainable transport is one of the underscored ways to achieve this target through providing users with more affordable, accessible, healthier and cleaner mobility alternatives.
UN Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (2019)	In March 2019, Ireland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Article 9 of the ‘UNCRPD’ includes the right to transport and creating an accessible end to end journey. Its focus is: <i>“To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:</i> <i>Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces.</i> <i>Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.”</i> Article 9 for the first time enshrines the right to transport within Irish legislation. The focus on Usability and Accessibility has implications and opportunities across transport planning and provision.

2.2 National Policies & Plans, Guidance & Consultations

Table 2. Policy & Plan Review – National

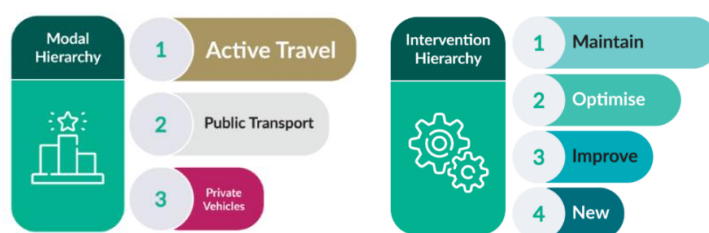
POLICY & PLANS	NATIONAL
Project Ireland 2040 • National Planning Framework (NPF) • National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP)	Project Ireland 2040 sets out a framework for future national development and investment. It encompasses the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030. The NPF sets out Ireland’s planning policy up to 2040. The NPF sets the vision and strategy for shaping the future growth and development up to 2040 and is underpinned by National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs). • Compact Growth • Enhanced Regional Accessibility • Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities • Sustainable Mobility • A strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills • High-Quality International Connectivity • Enhanced Amenity and Heritage • Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society • Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources • Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services. The NDP sets out the enabling investment to implement the strategy set out in the NPF. The NPF combines with the National Development Plan to form Project Ireland 2040. Projects of relevance for Galway city and county include: • Galway – Dublin Greenway; scheduled for completion in 2026 • N6 Galway City Ring-Road • Feasibility study of a Galway City LRT (2022) • Upgrade works to Galway train stations • Continuing to replace diesel buses with hybrid-electric models. In June 2023 proceedings began to review and update the NPF with a Draft Revised National Planning Framework, recognising the need for accelerated delivery of new homes in line with employment and population growth. On 5th November 2024, Government agreed to progress and publish a draft schedule of amendments to the First Revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) arising from the public consultation process which took place from 10th July 2024 to 12th September 2024. In order to finalise the Revision of the National Planning Framework, Government will in due course be required to approve a final Revised NPF following the conclusion of the environmental assessments, which will include a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Natura Impact Statement and Appropriate Assessment Determination, and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
Project Ireland 2040 • National Investment Framework for	The Department of Transport issued the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) in 2021. It sets out the prioritisation for future investment in the land transport network to support the delivery of the NPF and the NSOs.

Transport in Ireland 2021 (NIFTI)

A key objective of NIFTI is to protect and renew our existing transport assets to safeguard the value of our past investment and ensure that the **network is resilient to the impacts of climate change** and adaptable to future transport behaviours. NIFTI sets out two hierarchies – travel modes and transport intervention – to enable the delivery of investments that address four investment priorities:

- **Decarbonisation**
- Protection and Renewal
- **Mobility of People and Goods in Urban Areas**
- **Enhanced Regional and Rural Connectivity.**

The NIFTI Modal Hierarchy outlines which modes are to be accommodated and encouraged when investments and other interventions are made.



Climate Action Plan 2024 (2024)

The new Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) is the third annual update to Ireland Climate Action Plan 2019 and calls for transformational change and accelerated action across the transport sector to meet 2030 transport abatement targets. CAP24 sets out a target of a 50% reduction in transport emissions by 2030 to achieve the overall legally binding objective of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 specified in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (2022 figures reported in CAP24).

CAP24 includes outcome focussed indicators that convey the highly challenging level of change required in the transport sector to deliver carbon reductions. The policy emphasises the AVOID – SHIFT – IMPROVE framework introduced in CAP 2023, as follows:

- **Avoid** measures which aim to reduce or avoid the need for travel through enhanced spatial planning. Integrated transport and spatial planning are critical for reducing our GHG emissions and will bring significant co-benefits—promoting safer, low-carbon, and more people-focused transport, and ensuring long-term transport sustainability.
- **Shift** measures, encouraging a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. These measures can also include those which reduce the private car's 'competitive advantage' by installing bus-gates and reclaiming road-space currently dominated by cars.
- **Improve** measures which typically refer to technology-based measures that improve the GHG efficiency of residual vehicle-based transport or the efficiency of the network itself.

POLICY & PLANS			NATIONAL
All-Ireland Review (2024)	Strategic	Rail	The All-Island Strategic Rail Review, published in July 2024, lays out a strategic vision for the development of Ireland's rail network through 2050, aiming to create a sustainable, efficient, and interconnected transport system across the island. It emphasises the role of rail in achieving decarbonisation goals and promoting regional development. The report identifies key issues with the current rail network, including capacity constraints, slow speeds, and poor connectivity, particularly in certain regions. It proposes a comprehensive set of recommendations to address these challenges, including: • Decarbonisation: The report strongly advocates for the electrification of the island's intercity network as a crucial step towards achieving net-zero emissions targets. It also recommends the procurement of hybrid and electric rolling stock in the medium term. • Intercity Connectivity: A key focus is improving connectivity between major cities, including Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, and Galway. The report recommends upgrading the cross-country network to dual-track and increasing service frequencies. It also suggests developing short sections of new railways to address congestion on certain corridors. • Regional and Rural Connectivity: The report recognises the need to enhance connectivity in underserved regions, including the West Coast, where Galway is located. It proposes several initiatives, including the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor railway between Claremorris and Athenry. This reinstatement would offer several benefits: • Improved freight transport, enabling a direct route from the northwest to ports on the south coast, bypassing the congested Dublin area. • Reconnection of Tuam to the rail network. • Enablement of direct services between Galway and Mayo. • Sustainable Cities: The report acknowledges the importance of supporting urban transport initiatives in major cities, including Galway, to encourage sustainable mobility and reduce reliance on cars. • Freight Transport: The report aims to revitalise rail freight, recognising its potential to reduce road congestion and emissions. It recommends strengthening rail connectivity to ports, developing inland terminals, and reducing track access charges to improve competitiveness. Additional Recommendations: • The report specifically recommends reinstating the Western Rail Corridor between Claremorris and Athenry. This project would reconnect Galway to Mayo by rail, providing a direct route for both passenger and freight transport, and offer potential economic benefits for Tuam. • The report supports improving service frequencies on existing lines serving Galway, including those connecting Galway to Dublin, Limerick, and Cork. It also

suggests exploring double-tracking between Athenry and Galway to accommodate increased traffic.

National Roads 2040 Strategy (2023)

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has a **long term strategy for planning, operating, and maintaining the National Roads network**. National Roads 2040 has been developed to support National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), with the Strategy's investment priorities developed to align closely to the four NIFTI investment priorities:

- Decarbonisation
- Enhanced regional and rural connectivity
- Protection and renewal
- Mobility of people & goods in urban areas.

TII's vision is for the National Roads to be *"An evolving sustainable transport system focused on safety, innovation, accessibility and mobility of people, goods and services."*

Listed roles for TII includes the delivery of *"active travel infrastructure which contributes to compact growth, sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and the transition to a low-carbon future"*; and *"encouraging modal shift from car transport to public and active travel modes."* The Strategy states that:

"Where national roads are too dangerous for walkers or cyclists, meaningful interventions should be considered in cooperation with relevant stakeholders and partner agencies.... delivering improved active travel provision in all its projects, such as improving the safety of National Roads for active travel users and reducing the severance caused by some National Roads in urban areas.

***TII will collaborate with other stakeholders to progress the National Cycle Network plan to cater for more active trips and expand the Greenway network nationwide, on behalf of the Department of Transport. Provision of safe, high quality and active travel infrastructure will encourage modal shift and result in reductions in carbon emissions."* (5.1.3 Active Travel)**

And where there is urban congestion, "TII will support the provision of segregated or offline active travel infrastructure adjacent to national roads."

The strategy also defines TII investment portfolios for coming years and provides guidance to Sponsoring Agencies and Local Authorities. TII, through NR2040, will align with the NIFTI Intervention hierarchy and seek to address transport challenges through the use of existing infrastructure before considering the provision of new infrastructure. When developing a project on National Roads, the relevant Local Authority, third party and / or TII department will need to show that the proposed investment aligns with NIFTI and address how potential negative impacts, against one of more of the NIFTI Investment Priorities, will be mitigated.

“NR2040 is not a ‘predict and provide’ exercise, but a proactive policy led strategy to maintain and develop a network that creates opportunities for the country.”

TII National Cycle Network

NTA Cycle Connects (ongoing)

TII’s National Cycle Network (NCN), is a planned **core cycle network of 3,500km that will crisscross the country, connecting more than 200 villages, towns and cities**. The network will include cycling links to transport hubs, education centers, employment centers, leisure and tourist destinations, and support “last mile” bicycle deliveries. The network will make it easier and safer for more people to cycle for commuting, leisure, and tourism, reducing reliance on the car.

The NCN incorporates many existing and planned Greenways as well as a range of proposed new cycle routes, as part of its proposed national cycle corridors. The NCN will also complement and integrate local cycling development projects and Greenways. It will enable people to easily cycle to the centre of villages, towns and cities being developed by the NTA’s Active Travel programme. It is envisaged the most of the NCN will be delivered by local authorities over the coming years.

The NTA’s Cycle Connects programme aims to complement and build upon the core network of the NCN. The Plan includes proposals for additional routes to connect towns, cities and villages across 22 counties and integrate with cycling plans already developed for the Greater Dublin Area (Meath, Kildare, Wicklow and Dublin). The delivery of these strategies in conjunction with the NCN will create a comprehensive network of inter urban, primary, secondary, greenway and feeder routes throughout the country.

For Galway County, towns and settlements will be connected by either inter urban routes of dedicated Greenway routes such as that proposed from Clifden to Galway City that will serve Maigh Cuillin and Oughterard en route. This will allow improved connectivity for commuting trips and leisure activities through the county. More information can be found here: <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/active-travel-investment-programme/cycleconnects-irelands-cycle-network-active-travel/>

Connecting Ireland – Rural Mobility Plan (ongoing)

The **Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan** is a major national public initiative developed by the NTA, with the aim of increasing connectivity around the country, particularly for people living outside major cities and towns. The plan aims to **improve mobility in rural areas by providing better connections between villages and towns** by linking these areas with an enhanced regional bus network connecting cities and regional centres nationwide. Connecting Ireland seeks to make public transport for rural communities more useful for more people, and it will do this by:

- Improving existing services
- Adding new services
- Enhancing the current Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) network which meets the transport needs of people who live in remote locations.

Proposals for Galway include:

- Enhanced interurban bus services between Galway City and Ennis, Limerick and Cork.
- Enhanced interurban bus services between Galway City and Castlebar and Westport linking Headford to regional towns and cities.
- Improved interurban bus services from Clifden to Galway City serving Oughterard and Maigh Cuilinn en route.
- Improved local bus services from Galway to Portumna to Nenagh and from Ballinasloe via Portumna to Ennis.
- New local bus routes from Ballygar to Athlone and from Glenamaddy, Mountbellow and Ahascragh to Ballinasloe, coordinated with rail services at Ballinasloe to points east to Dublin.
- New and enhanced connections along the west coast of the county, including between Carraroe and Maam Cross, between Roundstone and Clifden and between Clifden and Westport.

Consultation took place in 2022 on the proposals, with more information available (including mapping and routes) here: <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/connecting-ireland>

National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)

The **National Sustainable Mobility Policy** sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an Action Plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing **safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys**. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce journeys taken by car.

In line with the Climate Action Plan, the policy targets 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in vehicle kilometres by fossil fuelled cars by 2030.

The policy aims to make it easier for people to choose walking, cycling and use public transport daily instead of having to use a petrol or diesel car under the following key themes:

Safe and Green mobility

- Expanding walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure across the country.
- Moving the public transport fleet to low and zero emission vehicles.
- Improving the safety of walking, cycling and public transport networks.

People focused mobility

- Making walking, cycling and public transport more accessible for all users – including those with reduced mobility, disabilities and the elderly.
- Introducing a more attractive fare structure.
- Reallocating road space to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport.

POLICY & PLANS

NATIONAL

Better integrated mobility

- Adopting a transport-orientated approach to housing development to place new housing close to public transport.
- Making it easier to switch between walking, bike, bus and rail.

OECD Redesigning Ireland's Transport Network for Net Zero (2022)

This report published by the OECD aims to help Ireland redesign its transport system to achieve its climate goals, particularly in the passenger surface transport sector. It analyses Ireland's current car-dependent transport system and its shortcomings in achieving sustainable accessibility and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The report argues that Ireland's current focus on policies like electric vehicle incentives is insufficient for achieving systemic change and instead advocates for transformative policies that focus on shifting away from car dependency and towards a more sustainable transport system. The report presents a number of recommendations for Ireland to prioritise, focusing on:

- Redefining the goal of the transport system as sustainable accessibility.
- Prioritizing policies with high transformative potential.
- Scaling up shared on-demand services.

Additionally, the report emphasises the importance of revising mental models, communication strategies, and governance structures to support the transition to a more sustainable transport system.

Five Cities' Demand Management Study (2021)

This Study, commissioned by the Climate Change Unit of the Dept of Transport as part of the 2019 Climate Action Plan (Action 81) to "Develop a regulatory framework on low emission zones and parking pricing policies, and provide local authorities with the power to restrict access to certain parts of a city or a town to zero emission vehicles only. Examine the **role of demand management measures in Irish cities**, including low emission zones and parking pricing policies." The Study had four key objectives:

- **Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from road traffic**
- **Address air quality issues due to vehicular traffic emissions**
- **Manage vehicular traffic congestion**
- **Improve the quality of the urban environment**

While the study focused on the five cities, a number of the recommended Transport Demand Management measures are applicable across Galway County such as 1st = **15 Minute Neighbourhoods** and 2nd = **National Planning Framework Delivery Management** along with a range of Transport Demand Management (TDM) measures outlined in the Study's City Toolkit.

Our Journey Towards Vision Zero: Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030 (2021)

The Road Safety Authority (RSA)'s Road Safety Strategy has a new ambition at its core of a Vision Zero approach to Road Safety (delivered by the Safe System approach), which is a long-term goal aimed **at eradicating road traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2050**. This is international best practice and has been adopted by the European Commission in its Road Safety Strategy.

Some of the key interventions include **significant investment in the provision of safe, segregated infrastructure to protect those walking and cycling**, along with **initiatives to promote modal shift** from motor vehicle travel to support environmental, safety and health objectives. There are seven Safe System priority intervention areas aims.

- **Safe roads and roadsides.** To improve the **protective quality of our roads** and infrastructure.
- **Safe speeds. To reduce speeds to safe, appropriate levels for the roads being used, and the road users using them.**
- **Safe vehicles.** To enhance the safety features and roadworthiness of vehicles on our roads.
- **Safe road use. To improve road user standards and behaviours** in line with traffic legislation, supported by enforcement.
- **Post-crash response.** To improve the treatment and rehabilitation of collision casualties.
- **Safe and healthy modes of travel. To promote and protect road users engaging in public or active transport.**
- **Safe work-related road use.** To improve safety management of work-related journeys.

Irish Rail Strategy 2027 (2021)

Galway will see improvements to its rail services and infrastructure, as set out in Iarnród Éireann's 2027 Rail Strategy. These include improvements to both regional services and intercity services including:

- Service frequency improvements to/from Dublin
- An upgrade of Ceannt Station in Galway City
- Infrastructure upgrades at Oranmore. This includes a 1KM passing railway loop at the existing Oranmore Train Station, including additional platform and associated infrastructure.
- Double tracking of the Athenry – Oranmore – Galway Line.
- Additional platform at Woodlawn Station on the Galway Line.

National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2022

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy is a whole of Government approach to improving the lives of people with disabilities. The action plan contains a "Transport and Accessible Places" theme which includes a number of actions relevant to transport in Galway County:

- Action 100: Improve the **accessibility and availability of public transport**
- Action 107: Develop **access to outdoor recreation facilities**, in particular footpaths and trails
- Action 108: Implement the programme of **dishing of footpaths in urban areas**, in line with guidance from the National Disability Authority's publication: *Building for Everyone*
- Action 109: Ensure further roll-out of **accessible inter-city coaches and accessible regional / rural coach and bus stops**

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy is currently in the process of being updated with an extensive and targeted consultation period between November 2023 – February 2024 held for individuals and stakeholder groups.

POLICY & PLANS

NATIONAL

Sport Ireland Participation Plan 2021 – 2024 (2021)

This plan is the national framework with ideas and initiatives to increase physical activity in Ireland. It aims to increase physical activity levels across the whole population and to create a society which facilitates people to lead an active way of life, setting targets to increase physical activity by 1% across all ages and decrease inactivity by 0.5%.

Action Area Four of the NPAP focuses on the use of the natural and built environment as a way to build in daily physical activity. It recognises that **promoting active transport is the most practical and sustainable way to increase physical activity as part of people's everyday routine**. It specifically identifies the role of walking or cycling for utility transport as a means to increase people's physical activity levels.

Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)

Housing for All is the new housing plan for Ireland aims to improve the accessibility to affordable and high standard housing for everyone who wishes to purchase or rent a home. The Plan references Urban Development Zones which includes transport-led development, and the promotion of compact, sustainable and liveable settlements.

The document states that a well-functioning and sustainable housing system requires **strong integration between housing developments and the surrounding transport infrastructure**.

Travelling in a Woman's Shoes (2020)

Transport Infrastructure Ireland's (TII) Travelling in a Woman's Shoes 2020 study identifies that historically, transport has not been designed with the needs of women in mind. **Identifying and supporting the travel needs of women will help Ireland transition to a carbon-neutral transport system**. The Study explores the drivers of car dependency for women, including transport infrastructure, significant caregiving responsibilities, safety concerns and equality of access to quality services.

The study identifies a range of policy opportunities to address this car dependency and encourage the wider adoption of sustainable transport, including active travel.

Transport – Climate Change Sectoral Adaption Plan (2019)

A Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan was prepared for the Transport sector under the National Adaptation Framework. The plan seeks to ensure that the transport sector can continue to fulfil its objectives as the country reckons with ever increasing extreme weather events and rising sea levels due to climate change. The plan lays out a number of actions aimed at:

- Improving understanding of climate change on transport infrastructure.
- Assisting stakeholders in identifying and prioritising climate risks to existing and planned infrastructural assets and enabling them to implement adaptation measures accordingly.
- Ensuring that resilience to weather extremes and longer-term adaptation needs are considered in investment programmes for planned future transport infrastructure.

POLICY & PLANS

NATIONAL

A draft update of the plan is currently being undertaken and is expected to undergo consultation in early 2025. The new plan aims to improve on current progress and align with the National Adaptation Framework 2024 and the Climate Action Plan.

Get Ireland Walking

Get Ireland Walking is an initiative by Sport Ireland. The core aim of the initiative is to **unify and enable the efforts of all agencies interested in promoting walking**. It is a nationwide initiative to deliver programmes in conjunction with All Sports Partnerships. The programme hopes to create a vibrant culture of walking throughout Ireland.

The initiative highlights how places need to be conducive to walking and that walking needs to be integrated into policies and plans at all scales. It highlights how, **in order to increase the numbers of people walking, infrastructure needs to be safe, attractive to walk in and it must cater for all users** including those in strollers, wheelchairs and the elderly.

Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2019 – 2025 (2019)

A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2019-2025's is a national framework to improve health and wellbeing in Ireland. Its vision is for a healthier Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

The Framework identifies a number of broad intersectoral actions, one of which commits to the **development of a plan to promote increased physical activity levels**.

Healthy Ireland: National Physical Activity Plan (2019)

The National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) recognises that physical inactivity is a demonstrated clear risk to health and wellbeing in Ireland, and aims to increase physical activity levels across the whole population. It aims to create a society which **facilitates people to lead an active way of life, setting targets to increase physical activity by 1% across all ages and decrease inactivity by 0.5%**.

Action Area Four of the NPAP focuses on the use of the natural and built environment as a way to build in daily physical activity. **It recognises that promoting active transport is the most practical and sustainable way to increase physical activity as part of people's everyday routine**. It specifically identifies the role of walking or cycling for utility transport as a means to increase people's physical activity levels.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025

Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) is a dedicated office within the Department of Transport charged with supporting consumers, the public sector, and businesses to continue to make the switch to zero emission vehicles.

ZEVI published the **EV Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025** which sets a roadmap for the delivery of Ireland's EV charging infrastructure by 2025. It outlines a comprehensive plan to integrate EV infrastructure into a broader sustainable transport network. The strategy emphasises inclusivity, ensuring that the charging

infrastructure is accessible to all, regardless of age, health, or income. It acknowledges that home charging will remain the primary solution for most EV users, but also provides options for those unable to charge at home. A key focus is on interoperability and user-friendliness across the charging network.

The strategy details various types of charging solutions, including destination charging at leisure and tourism locations, and en-route charging with fast, high-powered stations. It highlights the importance of government support in the form of seed funding to encourage the rollout of these infrastructures. Standards for EV infrastructure are set to ensure ease of payment, accessibility, data sharing, interoperability, smart charging capabilities, and sustainability tracking. The Strategy also outlines existing and new infrastructure supports, such as grants for home and residential charging, and initiatives to promote shared charging solutions.

National EV infrastructure Plan

- **National Road Network EV Charging Plan 2024 to 2030**
- **Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2024- 2030**

Arising from this Strategy is the **National EV infrastructure Plan** which is made up of the **National Road Network EV Charging Plan 2024 to 2030** and the **Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2024- 2030**. Both of these plans provide for delivering EV Infrastructure for national roads, at key destinations and neighbourhood locations to provide infrastructure to support the transition to EVs and address user needs.

- The **National Road Network EV Charging Plan** is a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the national road network, ensuring comprehensive geographic coverage for light-duty vehicles (LDVs) such as passenger cars. The plan outlines a phased approach to infrastructure delivery and includes provisions for heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs), with specific targets for electric trucks and buses by 2030. It considers factors such as grid connection availability and environmental considerations for optimal site locations. The plan also addresses the need for a robust grid infrastructure to support the development of public EV charging capacity.
- The **Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan for 2024-2030** is designed to enhance the accessibility and availability of EV charging infrastructure at a more localised level, focusing on destination and neighbourhood charging. This plan aims to address the diverse needs of EV users by implementing a bottom-up modelling approach, allowing local authorities to estimate infrastructure demand accurately and identify strategic sites for EV charging stations. The plan emphasises flexibility and adaptability to foster widespread EV adoption, ensuring that infrastructure aligns with the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) requirements while also considering potential additional needs.

Local Authorities will play a lead role in delivering infrastructure through the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan and are currently developing EV Strategies for their Local Authorities to identify Neighbourhood and Destination Charging needs and subsequent implementation plans to ensure delivery of this EV infrastructure.

Table 3. Policy & Plan Review – National Advice & Guidance Documents

NATIONAL ADVICE & GUIDANCE	
Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) (2019)	DMURS sets out the manner in which roads and streets in urban areas should be designed to prioritise the needs of sustainable travel users in Ireland and reduce the dominance of the private car. The focus of the guidance is the balance between the different modes of transport to ensure that the urban realm is pleasant and safe for all users. Similar to the NIFTI, the guidelines emphasise that sustainable modes of transport should be prioritised in street designs. Active travel is to be considered first, then public transport, and then cars. The guidance also supports a network-based approach to designing streets. The connectivity of the active travel routes and permeability of neighbourhoods are highlighted as important components of the design of Irish streets. The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) Interim Advice Note – Covid-19 Pandemic Response also includes guidance that designers should ensure that measures align with the principles of universal design, consider Government policy on accessibility for people with disabilities and consult people with disabilities to further appraise measures.
NTA Greening and Nature-based SuDS for Active Travel Schemes (2023)	The NTA recognises the need to mitigate the impacts of climate change and improve the resilience of towns and cities. The greening of urban spaces with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of active travel schemes aim to reintroduce nature and biodiversity through use of parklets, planters and rain gardens as part of urban realm enhancements. The guidelines aim to create an attractive and sustainable nature focused urban environment to encourage outdoor living. When new active travel infrastructure is being implemented, green spaces are to be protected or their reductions minimised to maintain adequate levels of permeable surfaces.
NTA Rapid Build Active Travel Facilities (2023)	In response to rising construction costs and the Climate Action Plan (CAP) requirement for 1,000km of new active travel infrastructure to be built by 2025, the NTA issued an Active Travel Advice Note in February 2023 concerning rapid build facilities. This note outlines that cost-effective rapid build construction approaches, including road space reallocation, are now required as initial options to be considered when planning for new active travel infrastructure. Rapid build active travel facilities are schemes that utilise cost-effective measures to deliver walking and cycling infrastructure quicker than traditional (full build) construction methods. They do not typically involve major construction works such as full road reconstruction or significant changes to drainage systems or relocation of utilities, however they may involve changes to kerb lines and minor drainage works. The works will also be typically within the boundaries of the existing roadway which can simplify the planning process, with positive impacts on project programme and delivery.

Permeability Best Practice Guide (2015)

The Permeability Best Practice Guide provides **recommendations on how best to facilitate demand for walking and cycling in existing built-up areas**.

Recommendations include the **retention and creation of linkages within the urban environment** for people to walk and cycle from their homes to shops, schools, local services, places of work and public transport stops and stations.

The Guide also includes recommended **metrics for measuring pedestrian and cycle link Quality of Service**. These key performance indicators (KPIs) include pedestrian route directness (PRD) and the width of the facility.

Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets

The Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool is used to capture existing conditions of walking routes in relation to its walkability. The Audit Tool supports the Government's policy of transition to more sustainable forms of transport, with increased levels of walking contributing to a wide range of societal and health benefits including improved levels of fitness, cleaner air, safer environments and better social inclusion.

The aims of the audit tool are to **assess if neighbourhoods and streets are places where people of all ages and abilities can walk safely, conveniently and independently**.

National Cycle Manual

The National Cycle Manual provides **guidance on the design of cycling networks and on engineering design of cycling infrastructure**. The guidance is based on the Five Needs of a Cyclist:

- Safety
- Coherence
- Directness
- Attractiveness
- Comfort

Greenways Guidelines

Rural Cycleway Design (Offline and Greenways)

There are a number of documents which provide **specifications and guidelines for the construction of greenways and cycle routes**. These documents focus mainly on the primary route infrastructure such as the path itself, it's design characteristics such as the width, the gradient, the surface finish etc.

One of these documents is the "Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines" (2018) which provides suggestions and best practise examples for the construction of new greenways. TII also provides two documents with relevance to the construction of rural cycleways. These are "Rural Cycleway Design (Offline and Greenways)" (2022) and "Rural Road Link Design" (2017). The cycleway manual provides specifications for:

- Planning for Rural Cycleways
- Design considerations
- Road / Cycleway Junctions & Crossings
- Ancillary Infrastructure
- Pavement & Foundation Construction Details

- Monitoring and Evaluation

The road manual instructs Local Authorities as to how they can implement and integrate cycling infrastructure into the rural road network. Some of the major points in the document include:

- Designing for Speed
- Stopping Sight Distance
- Horizontal Alignment
- Edge Treatment
- Drainage

**Traffic Management
Guidelines Manual (2019)**

Prepared in line with current national transport strategy guidelines that promote sustainability and accessibility through improvement to and better management of the transport system, the purpose of the Traffic Management Guidelines Manual is to provide guidance on a variety of issues.

These include traffic planning, traffic calming and management, incorporation of speed restraint measures in new residential designs and the provision of suitably designed facilities for public transport users and for vulnerable road users such as cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians (including those with mobility/ sensory impairments). It also focuses on how these issues must be examined and implemented in the context of overall transportation and land use policies.

**TII/NTA Area Based
Transport Assessment
(ABTA) Guidance Notes
(2018)**

AND

**ABTA How to Guide, Pilot
Methodology (2021)**

The intention of the ABTA process is to **ensure that sustainable transport is considered and planned for at the earliest stage**, at every level in the hierarchy of plans and investment programmes, and ultimately in the assessment of the developments' transport requirements and impacts at the local level. The key aims of the ABTA approach are as follows:

- Maximise the opportunities for the integration of land use and transport planning by including the ABTA process as integral to the preparation of the Plan.
- Assess the existing traffic, transport and movement conditions within the Plan area and in its wider context.
- Plan for the efficient movement of people, goods and services within, to and from the Plan area.
- Identify the extent to which estimated transport demand associated with the emerging local development objectives can be supported and managed on the basis of existing transport assets.
- Identify the transport interventions required within the Plan area and in the wider context, to effectively accommodate the anticipated increase in demand.
- Inform Site Specific Transport Assessments for development management applications.

**Safe to School: An Ideas
Document for Safe Access
to School (2020)**

The Safe to School: An Ideas Document for Safe Access to School presents research conducted in the context of social distancing requirements since the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. It is designed to present ideas for school principals, boards of

management, teachers, parents and students to consider implementing **to address front of school vehicle congestion and enable more journeys by active travel.**

Eight measures are suggested, including widening footpaths, park 'n' stride, preventing illegal parking, informal car-free zone, school streets, visual interventions, cycle bus and separate access.

NTA Safe Routes to School Design Guide (2022)

The Safe Routes to School programme aims to **increase active travel choices to schools and to improve safety and access** for students and their parents and carers on their journeys to/from school. The NTA Design Guide comprises key design principles to create safer, calmer, more attractive routes to school and improve front of school environments.

Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)

Guidelines for Spatial Planning affecting National Roads were developed to deliver on the National Spatial Strategy. The guidelines make it clear that **government policy no longer support unsustainable urban sprawl or dispersed and car dependent forms of development**, both of which have been accelerated by the location of employment and retail centres near national road junctions.

Moving major inter-urban and inter-regional traffic (i.e. strategic traffic) is the primary purpose of the national road network. Therefore, local authorities must limit development which promotes short trip making on the national road network. There are a number of key messages in the plan regarding development planning and roads:

- Development plans must include **measurable objectives for securing more compact development** that reduces overall demand for transport and encourages modal shift towards sustainable travel modes.
- Development plans must include policies which seek to **maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of national roads and associated junctions**, avoiding the creation of new accesses and the intensification of existing accesses to national roads where a speed limit greater than 50 kph applies. New accesses to these roads are prohibited bar very exceptional circumstances.
- Planning authorities and the NRA (now TII) must work together during the early stages of plan preparation to identify any areas where a less restrictive approach may apply.
- Development plans must include **clear policies and objectives with regard to planning and reservation of new routes and/or upgrades.**
- Planning authorities should consult at a very early stage with transport infrastructure providers (including the NRA) and, in the Greater Dublin area, with the National Transport Authority.

Table 4. National Consultations

NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS	
Moving Together, Department of Transport 2024	“Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to the Improved Efficiency of the Transport System in Ireland” is the new national overarching strategy framework for managing transport demand. The draft strategy aims to alleviate the economic and social costs of congestion and car dependency, in tandem with considerable investment in public transport, active travel and electric vehicle infrastructure – working towards the Climate Action Plan target of reducing overall kilometres travelled by 20% by 2030. Whilst these objectives are designed to lower carbon emissions by the transport sector, they will also target congestion, pollution, road safety and maximise the wellbeing utility of public space. Three key approaches are identified: 1. The leveraging of existing policies, programmes and infrastructures which reduce travel demand. 2. Building an improved evidence base which would inform the identification of any impediments in reducing travel demand, as well as the appropriate ways to address these impediments. 3. Enabling and empowering state and civil society actors at a range of different levels to collaboratively work towards the delivery of the framework’s objectives, through bespoke planning for their communities.

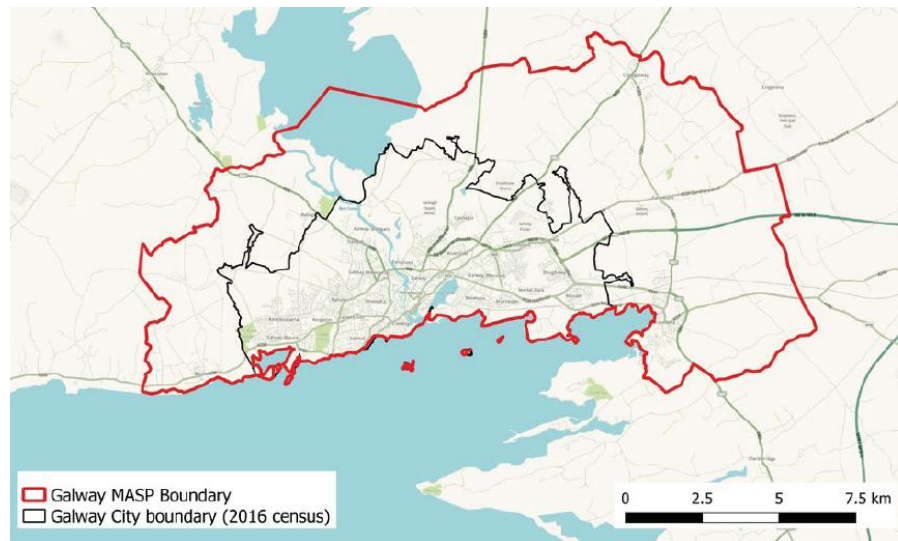
2.3 Regional Policies & Plans

Table 5. Policy & Plan Review – Regional

POLICY & PLANS	REGIONAL
Northern & Western Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020-2032 (2020) AND Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (GMASP)	At a regional level, the NPF 2040 recommends the development of Regional Spatial & Economic Strategies (RSESs) to ensure better co-ordination in planning and development across local authority boundaries, providing a link between the NPF, City and County Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans. Galway falls under the North and Western RSES, which was issued by the Regional Assembly in 2020. The RSES Vision is <i>‘To play a leading role in the transformation of this region into a vibrant, connected, natural, inclusive and smart place to work and live’</i>. The RSES’s strategic outcomes reflect those of the NPF, including a focus on Compact Growth, Sustainable Mobility, and a Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society. The region is highly dependent on private car use, with 2016 Census data confirming 70% of commuter trips are made by private car. In response, whilst there are limited opportunities for use of sustainable transport modes in parts of the region, the RSES identifies four high-level transport principles: ● Improving strategic and local connectivity. ● Improving access to public transport facilities. ● Catering for the role of the car within the region. ● Ensuring sustainable development to cater for long-term growth through reducing levels of traffic congestion. The priority Core Transport Outcomes to be delivered across the region include the following: ● Supporting the achievement of compact, smart growth through the achievement of ‘mutual consistency’ between land use and transport planning/investment/service provision. ● Promotion of higher development densities in appropriate locations with an associated consideration being given to reduced constraints on building heights. ● Strengthening inter-regional connectivity through the improvement of inter-urban road and rail connectivity. ● Strengthening public transport connectivity between the Assembly Area’s city and large towns, and between the large towns, with improved services and reliable journey times. ● Providing public transport infrastructure and services to meet the needs of smaller towns, villages and rural areas. ● Developing a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes in the three Regional Growth Centres and providing similar facilities in other towns and villages, where appropriate. The RSES advises the preparation of Local Transport Plans (LTP) for identified key towns to support compact growth and sustainable mobility. LTPs should identify and prioritise objectives in relation to sustainable travel infrastructure and plan for the efficient movement of people within and outside of the area served by the LTP, which

should **deliver appropriate measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport** use to create accessible spaces (RPO 6.29).

As part of the RSES, a **Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)** has been prepared for Galway, providing an implementation strategy for development outcomes in the Galway Metropolitan Area, which encompasses Galway City and surrounding parts of the county.

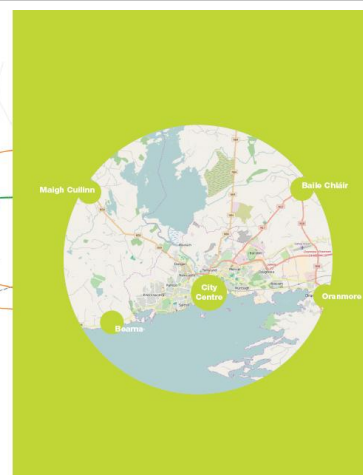


The population of the Metropolitan Area is projected to grow by 27,500 to 2026 and by a further 14,500 to 2031, with the population of the city and suburbs accommodating 23,000 to 2026 and a further 12,000 to 2031. Within Galway County, residential growth areas are identified in Bearna to the west, Oranmore to the east and Baile Chláir to the northeast, with industrial / technology growth identified in Oranmore and around the former Galway Airport.

The MASP reaffirms projects developed under the Galway Transport Strategy, including the Galway City Ring Road, the Tuam Bus Corridor, the Dublin Road Bus Corridor and a high frequency cross-city bus network as well as provision of active travel infrastructure, Park and Ride sites and the double tracking of the rail line from Ceannt station to Athlone.

Galway Transport Strategy (2017)

The Galway Transport Strategy was developed by Galway City Council, in partnership with Galway County Council and the National Transport Authority, to address current and future identified transport issues and opportunities within Galway City and the surrounding metropolitan area.



In terms of impacts on the wider county, the suite of measures in the strategy includes the construction of the N6 Galway City Ring Road and a revamp of the city and commuter bus networks.

The strategy proposes upgrade of the existing main bus corridors to provide high frequency routes. The Brown bus route would extend to Bearnna to the west and Oranmore to the east, both located within Galway County. The strategy aspires for these routes to operate at a frequency of at least once every 15 minutes, with high frequency to be maintained across the daily period as opposed to just within peak hours.

To complement these services, Park and Ride sites along National Roads are proposed to cater for trips to Galway City originating outside of the metropolitan area.

N6 Galway City Ring Road Project

The N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) is a key measure within the Galway Transport Strategy which realises Galway City and County Council's vision of all elements of transport working together to achieve an integrated sustainable transport solution. Galway City currently experiences significant transport issues such as:

- Peak hour congestion and journey time unreliability
- Over reliance on private cars
- Lack of alternative transport modes
- Lack of road space for the development of Smarter Mobility and Public Transport

The ring-road forms a vital part of the councils strategy to minimise these issues and free up the city centre of freight and private car traffic, as illustrated in the figure below.



Western Rail Corridor Financial and Economic Appraisal (2020)

A Financial and Economic Appraisal of the Western Rail Corridor was undertaken on foot of a commitment in the National Development Plan 2018 – 2027. The aim of this report is to assess whether the investment which would be required to reactivate these two phases can be justified in delivering value for money for the Irish Exchequer.

As part of the appraisal a public survey was undertaken which received over 6,000 responses. The survey showed overwhelming public preference for the alignment to be used as a railway rather than a greenway.

The outcome of the Economic Appraisal was a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 0.21, based on estimated construction costs of €264m excl. VAT. Despite the strong economic benefits that the line delivers, they were not found to be sufficient to justify the large capital costs which would be required to reactivate the line.

JASPERS Project Screening Note: Western Rail Corridor Phase 2/3 (2020)

In 2020, JASPERS undertook an independent review of the proposed investment for reconstruction of the Western Rail Corridor phases 2 and 3. The review examined all material available for the project, with specific reference to the Financial and Economic Appraisal prepared by EY.

The review concluded that the findings of the Financial and Economic Appraisal were not unreasonable, and that the project in its current form is likely to present a very weak justification for investment. Additionally, JASPERS found that to gain EU financing through the European Investment Bank or inclusion in the TEN-T networks would require a strong demonstration of the strategic need for the corridor which is not currently available.

2.4 County Policies & Plans

Table 6. Policy & Plan Review – County

POLICY AND PLANS	COUNTY
Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CPD) sets out the strategy and methods through which future planning and sustainable development of the county will be achieved for the period to 2028. Preparation of the CDP commenced in June 2020, and was adopted by the elected members of the Council in May 2022, coming into effect in June 2022. Chapter 6 (Transport& Movement) sets out the ways in which appropriate provision for the safeguarding and upgrading of existing transport infrastructure will be ensured. It seeks to build on the existing strengths within the county while also addressing deficiencies in a sustainable manner, including through taking account of climate change and creating more sustainable communities. The CDP looks to: <i>‘Encourage investment and improvements across all sectors of transport that will support targeted population, economic growth and more sustainable modes of travel including, walking, cycling and public transport’.</i> A number of strategic aims and associated policy objectives are identified to help achieve this, which are outlined below in more detail.
Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2031 (2023)	The strategy aims to promote and capitalise on Galway’s current and ongoing success as a tourist destination through showcasing it’s culture, heritage and natural sites. By developing sites and attractions in a focused manner along patterns of visitors demand and support growth to less known areas, the strategy will help to spread economic gains county wide. The Strategy focuses on sustainable growth and its approach is grounded on a number of key themes, including: • Support for the sustainability of rural economies and communities. • A focus on sustainability in all its forms including environmental, social and economic. • Community engagement as a core part of all development. • An emphasis on ‘opening up the outdoors’. • An emphasis on green and blue infrastructure and associated amenities and experiences.
Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) (2021)	The Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) sits alongside and supports the Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028). The strategy supports the councils transport aims <i>‘To encourage investment and improvements across all sectors of transport that will support targeted population, economic growth and more sustainable modes of travel including, walking, cycling and public transport’.</i>

The development process for the GCTPS followed a thorough baseline establishment as well as identification of planned new development in the County Development Plan. The findings of that process were used in an option development process for defined movement corridors across the county. A longlist of options by mode was considered against key objectives for each corridor in order to develop preferred options by corridor. These preferred options were then combined to form county wide mode based strategies to meet relevant mode based policy objectives in the Development Plan.

The GCTPS proposes a range of measures, including transport infrastructure upgrades, support for transport service enhancements, and supporting activities, which will collectively deliver enhancements and changes in travel behaviour within the County which are consistent with the policy objectives defined within Chapter 6 of the County Development Plan (CDP).

In summary, the GCTPS supports the CDP objectives relating to Transport as follows:

- **Integrated Transport Planning:** Support for transition toward active, sustainable and low-carbon modes of transportation, and preparation of Local Transport Plans for the towns of Ballinasloe and Tuam.
- **Walking & Cycling:** Provision of a modern walking and cycling network which gives such infrastructure high priority within street hierarchies, adheres to the design principles and requirements set out in the National Cycle Manual and DMURS, and which provides safe and secure cycle parking as part of new developments and public space regeneration projects.
- **Electric Vehicles:** Support for the roll-out of charging infrastructure and other facilities to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles.
- **Public Transport:** Support for enhanced public transport services, including provision of new and improved public transport infrastructure; advocacy for improvements to public transport services; engagement with the NTA, TII and others with regard to provision for Park and Ride services, and support for the Galway to Athlone rail link and Western Rail Corridor schemes.
- **National Roads:** Protection of the safe and efficient operation of the national road network, support for planned major upgrade schemes, and use of Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTAs) and Road Safety Audits (RSAs) to assess the impacts of proposed development upon the national road network.
- **Non-National Roads:** Safeguarding of capacity on restricted and non-restricted regional roads within the regional and local road networks; management of through-traffic within town and local centres.
- **Supporting Measures;** use of School Travel Plans and Mobility Management Plans to drive and encourage increased use of sustainable modes of travel to education and other significant development sites; and application of car parking standards and associated requirements as set out in Chapter 15 of the CDP.

POLICY AND PLANS

COUNTY

Galway County Walking & Cycling Strategy (2013)

The 2013 Galway County Walking & Cycling Strategy examines and deals with primary walking and cycling aspects of commuting, tourism and community exercise and activities in Galway County. Tuam, Ballinasloe, Oranmore and Clifden are designated as major study towns.

The cycling network in 2013 is described as variable, with the better-quality cycling facilities usually provided as a result of road improvement schemes. The Strategy identifies the Council's goals for walking and cycling as to:

- Encourage **modal shift** for students and workers from cars to walking and cycling.
- **Boost tourism** within the County through the creation of walking and cycling attractions and facilities.
- Develop local walking and cycling facilities to **encourage uptake in local sporting and physical exercise**.
- Raise **public awareness of the benefits** of walking and cycling.

The following targets are set out as part of the Strategy:

- Increase the proportion of people who walk to work within the County from 5% to 20%.
- Increase the mode share for cycling for journeys to work from 1% to 8%.
- Increase the number of children between ages five and twelve who walk to and from school from 13% to 21%.
- Increase the number of children between five and twelve years old who cycle to and from school from 1% to 6%.
- Increase the proportion of students aged 13 to 18 who walk to school / college to match the national average as a minimum.
- Increase the number of students between 13 and 18 years old who cycle to school / college from 1% to 8%.

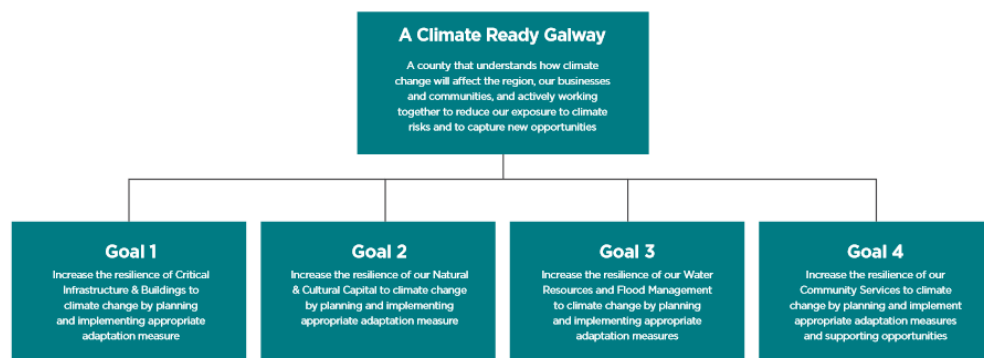
A new County Wide Cycling and Walking Strategy is currently being prepared.

County Galway Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024 (2019)

As part of the National Climate Change Action Plan 2019, County Galway produced and adopted its first Climate Adaptation Strategy in August 2019.

The plan takes stock of the policy context, the profile of the city and county area and the impact of climate change observed to date and projected into the future, first at a global level and then focussing on Ireland. A baseline assessment of climate risks for the county analysed a series of past extreme weather events and their effects on the county. Arising from this work, a Climate Risk & Opportunity Register was compiled.

The strategy has four goals towards developing a 'Climate Ready Galway':



Based on these goals, the strategy contains an action plan with four main headings: Infrastructure, Nature and Culture, Water and Flooding and Community Services. Under infrastructure, there is an action to undertake a risk assessment of critical public road infrastructure to identify relevant hazards arising from climate change and extreme weather events.

Galway City and County Age Friendly Programme 2014 – 2019

The strategy aims to make Galway a great place for older people to live, where they can continue to enjoy living within their communities with dignity and respect. Strategic goals are centred on 8 strategic priorities. Strategic Priority 2 is to ensure that “older people can get to where they need to go, when they need to do so”.

Galway County Integration & Diversity Strategy 2013-2017

The strategy was prepared to address “the significant demographic changes that have taken place throughout the County over the past decade or more”. The plan preparation involved detailed collaboration with stakeholders which resulted in the finding of many positives and challenges to be addressed. Based on these findings, the strategy includes an action plan based on four key areas:

- Education and Training
- Employment and Work
- Health and Public Services
- Community Participation.

Gort Local Transport Plan

Appendix B – Strategy Measures



GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

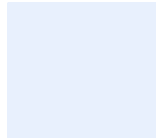
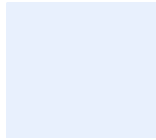
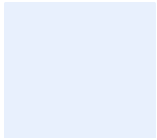
Gort Local Transport Plan

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Client/Project owner	Galway County Council
Project	Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031
Study	Gort Local Transport Plan – Appendix B Strategy Measures
Date	31/07/2025
Reference number	300876

APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
1	Authors	RF, PO BH	Senior Consultant, Associate, Consultant	16/12/2024	Draft Appendix for client review
	Checked by	AP	Director	16/12/2024	
	Approved by	AP	Director	17/12/2024	
2	Authors	RF, BH	Senior Consultant, Consultant	19/12/2024	Updated Appendix following client feedback
	Checked by	AP	Director	19/12/2024	
	Approved by	AP	Director	20/12/2024	
3	Author	BH	Consultant	03/01/2025	Updated Appendix following client feedback
	Checked by	AP	Director	07/01/2025	
	Approved by	AP	Director	07/01/2025	
4	Author	BH	Consultant	14/03/2025	Updated final Appendix following Consultation submissions
	Checked by	DB	Associate Director	14/03/2025	
	Approved by	AP	Director	14/03/2025	
5	Author	BH	Consultant	26/03/2025	Updated final Appendix following final client review
	Checked by	DB	Associate Director	26/03/2025	
	Approved by	AP	Director	27/03/2025	
6	Author	RF	Senior Consultant	08/07/2025	Updated final draft Appendix following submissions to Material Alterations
	Checked by	AP	Director	08/07/2025	
	Approved by	AP	Director	08/07/2025	



7	Author	RF	Senior Consultant	31/07/2025	Updated final Appendix following approval of Material Alterations
	Checked by	AP	Director	06/08/2025	
	Approved by	AP	Director	06/08/2025	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	APPENDIX B: FULL LIST OF STRATEGY MEASURES BY MODE	5
1.1	ACTIVE TRAVEL	6
1.2	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	11
1.3	ROADS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT	13
1.4	SUPPORTING MEASURES	15

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1: Active Travel Measures Map – Gort LTP Study Area	6
Figure 1-2: Active Travel Measures Map – central Gort area	7
Figure 1-3: Proposed Additional Bus Stops (indicative locations only)	11
Figure 1-4: Proposed Infrastructure Safeguard	13

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1: Proposed Public Transport Measures	12
Table 1-2: Proposed Road and Traffic Management Measures	14

1. APPENDIX B: FULL LIST OF STRATEGY MEASURES BY MODE

This appendix contains maps and tables, with measures presented by mode of transport in separate sections. These correspond to the modal sections in Chapter Six of the main Local Transport Plan (LTP) Report.

As the final strategy measures follow from an initial longlist of options (as described in the Options Assessment Chapter of the Local Transport Plan), not all measure references are sequential, as some measures were discounted during the Options Assessment process.

1.1 Active Travel

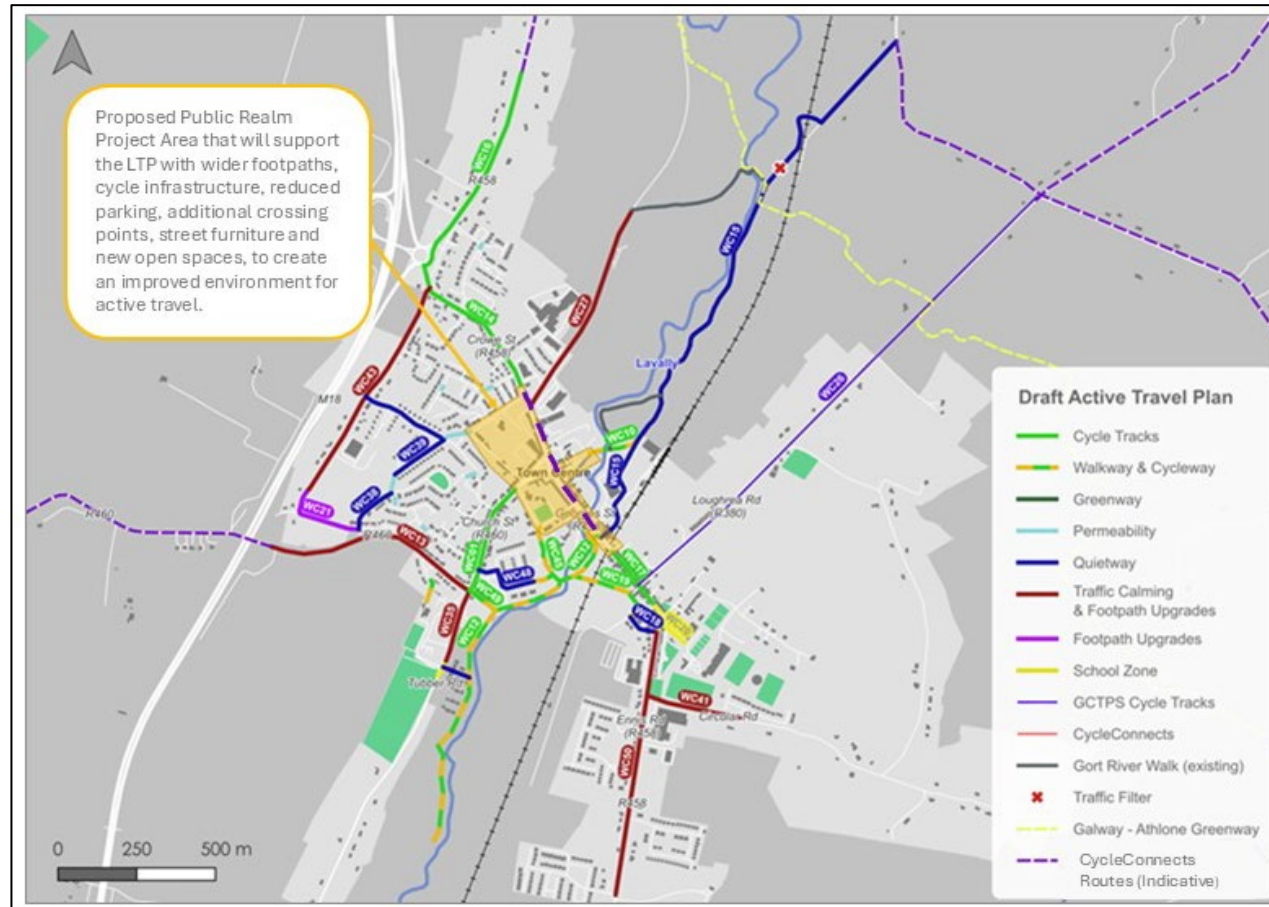


Figure 1-1: Active Travel Measures Map – Gort LTP Study Area

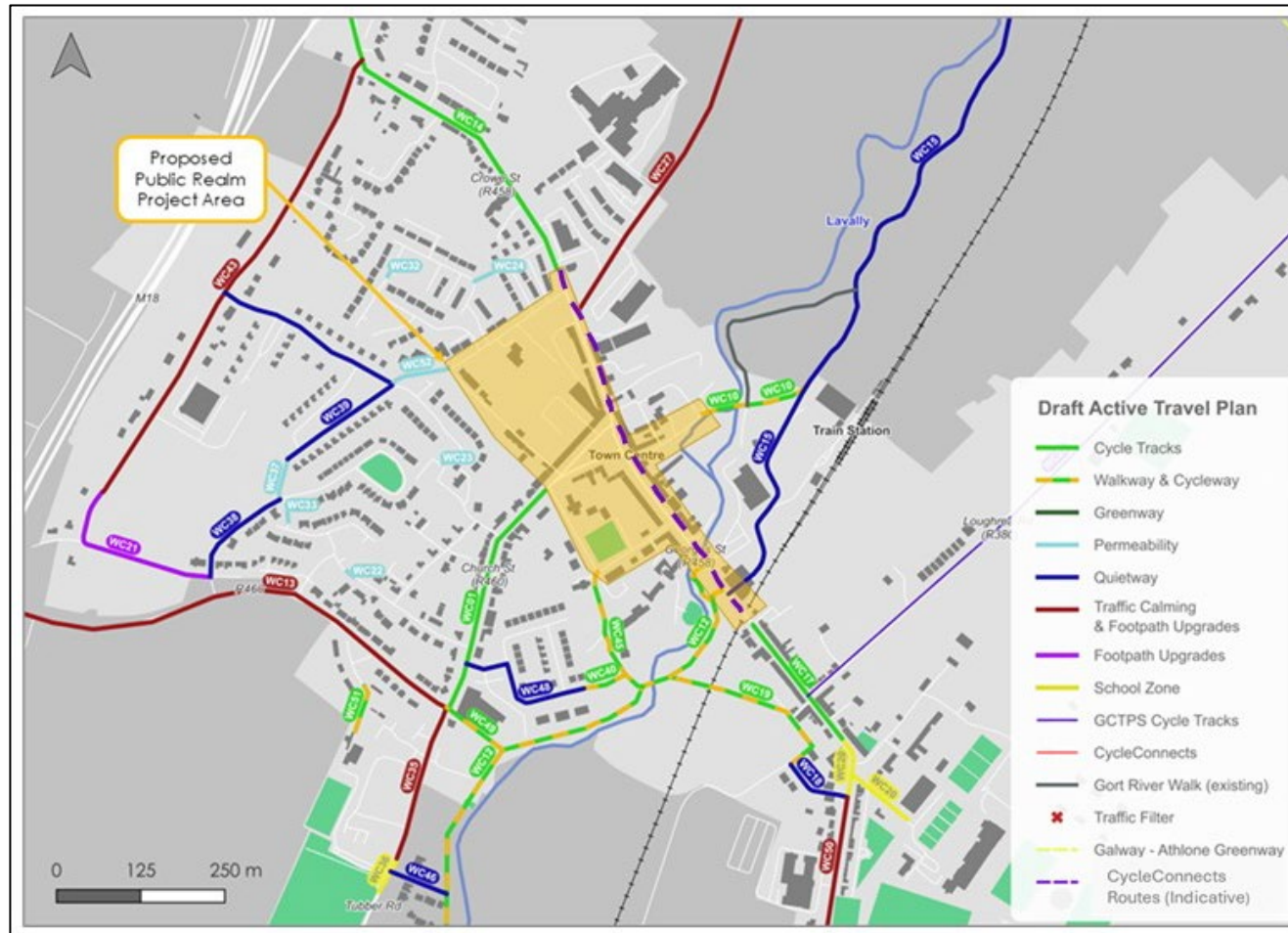


Figure 1-2: Active Travel Measures Map – central Gort area

Ref	Location	Intervention	Description
WC01	Church Street	Cycle Tracks and Footpath Upgrades	From the junction of Tubber Road (near to Gort National School) provide cycle tracks to edge of the proposed Public Realm Enhancement project area.
WC10	Crowe Street to River Walk over Gort River	Walkway/Cycleway	Walking and cycling connection via new bridge from Crowe Street to the Gort River Walk and to proposed Quietway connection to Galway to Athlone Cycleway WC15.
WC12	Gort River	Walkway/Cycleway	Proposed southern extension of Gort River Walk south of Gort River Bridge through Convent lands to southern extent of study area. This would be a connection for both walking and cycling giving potential to facilitate trips to school. Referenced in Town Centre First Plan.
WC13	R460-R380	Traffic Calming	Traffic calming and filling in gaps in footpaths network along the R460.
WC14	R458-R380	Cycle Tracks and Footpath Upgrades	Cycle tracks and footpath upgrades along Crowe Street between roundabout and the proposed Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement project area extent.
WC15	Station Road/Pound Road	Quietway	Quietway along Station Road/Pound Road inclusive of traffic filter south of houses near railway overbridge. This is an important connection to Galway to Athlone Cycleway for leisure and tourism. Placement of traffic filter shows and indicative potential location only.
WC16	R458	Cycle Tracks and Footpath Upgrades	Continuation of Crowe Street cycle tracks to R458 to northern study area extents, connecting to proposed Cycle Connects Inter Urban cycle route and onwards to Coole Park.
WC17	Georges Street	Cycle Tracks and Footpath Upgrades	Short section of segregated cycle tracks and footpath upgrades connecting the proposed Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement project area to School Zone WC20 to facilitate safe cycle trips to school.
WC18	Springwells	Quietway	Quietway through Springwells as part of Town Centre First proposed walkway and cycleway from Queen Street to Ennis Road.
WC19	Queen Street to Springwells	Walkway/Cycleway	Town Centre First proposed walkway and cycleway from Queen Street to Ennis Road.
WC20	Ennis Road/Georges Street	School Zone	School Zone on Ennis Road/George's Street for Gort Community School and Gaelscoil na bhFilí.
WC20	Entrance to Gort Community School and Gaelscoil na bhFilí	School Zone	School Zone at entrance to Gort Community School and Gaelscoil na bhFilí.
WC21	Glenbrack	Footpath Upgrades	Specific footpath upgrade measures to complete gap in Glenbrack Footpaths, acknowledging infrastructure deficit here to be filled as a priority.

Ref	Location	Intervention	Description
WC22	Dún na Rí to Garrabeg	Permeability	Improvement of existing permeability connection between Dún na Rí and Garrabeg to facilitate and improve conditions for cycling, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by cycling as well as walking to schools and to the town centre.
WC23	The Orchard to Nursing Home	Permeability	Connection between The Orchard and Nursing Home, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.
WC24	Crowe Street	Permeability	Permeability link which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.
WC26	Loughrea Road	GCTPS Cycle Tracks	Cycle track proposed here as an interurban route in the Galway County Transportation Planning Study; cycle tracks to be built out connecting to George's Street as land is developed.
WC27	L85314	Traffic Calming	Traffic calming from Crowe Street past Wastewater treatment plant and provision of footpaths (as this road is used as part of a loop in the Gort River Walk).
WC30	Cuairt Bhreac to Coole Haven	Permeability	Connection between Cuairt Bhreac and Coole Haven, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.
WC32	Bolands Court to Crowe Street	Permeability	Connection between Bolands Court and Crowe Street, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.
WC33	Dún na Rí to Gort na Rí	Permeability	Connection between Dún na Rí and Gort na Rí, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.
WC35	Tubber Road (L4514)	Traffic Calming	Traffic calming along Tubber Road from Church Street to Gort Boys National School.
WC36	Tubber Road (L4514)	School Zone	School Zone at entrance to School.
WC37	Gort na Rí to The Maples	Permeability	Connection between Gort na Rí and The Maples which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.
WC38	Gort Na Rí	Quietway	Quietway along Gort na Rí via proposed permeability route, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.
WC39	The Maples to Crowe Street	Quietway	Quietway from the Maples to Crowe Street via proposed permeability route, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.
WC40	Cemetery	Walkway/Cycleway	Potential connection through cemetery from Church Street to Queen Street as proposed in the draft Gort Town Centre First Plan.
WC41	L8530	Traffic Calming	Traffic calming and widening of footpaths between Ennis Road and Rinn Dúin entrance, as this is route is currently a 60km/h zone adjacent to a school with a low wall.
WC43	Glenbrack Road	Traffic Calming	Traffic calming and footpath widening along Glenbrack Road.

Ref	Location	Intervention	Description
WC45	Queen Street to Gort River	Walkway/Cycleway	Queen Street to Gort River connection as part of the Town Centre First Plan proposed cycleway and walkway via railway underpass.
WC46	Gort River to Tubber Road	Quietway	Short quietway connection between proposed Gort River Walkway/Cycleway and Tubber Road/Gort Boys National School.
WC48	River Walk estate	Quietway	Short quietway from WC40/Queen Street to Church Street.
WC49	Supervalu	Walkway/Cycleway	Connection through SuperValu from Church Street/Tubber Road cross to proposed Gort River Walkway/Cycleway.
WC50	Ennis Road	Traffic Calming	Traffic calming and footpath upgrades along Ennis Road. No space to maintain two-way traffic and provide cycle tracks and no feasible alternative routes for traffic to town along Ennis Road.
WC51	Ballyhugh estate to Gort Boys National School	Walkway/Cycleway	Walkway and cycle way to improve connection to school, shortens travel distances for walking and cycling from Glenbrack which decreases school traffic.
WC52	Bolands Lane to The Maples	Permeability	Improvement of existing connection between Bolands Lane and The Maples to facilitate cycling which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre.

1.2 Public Transport

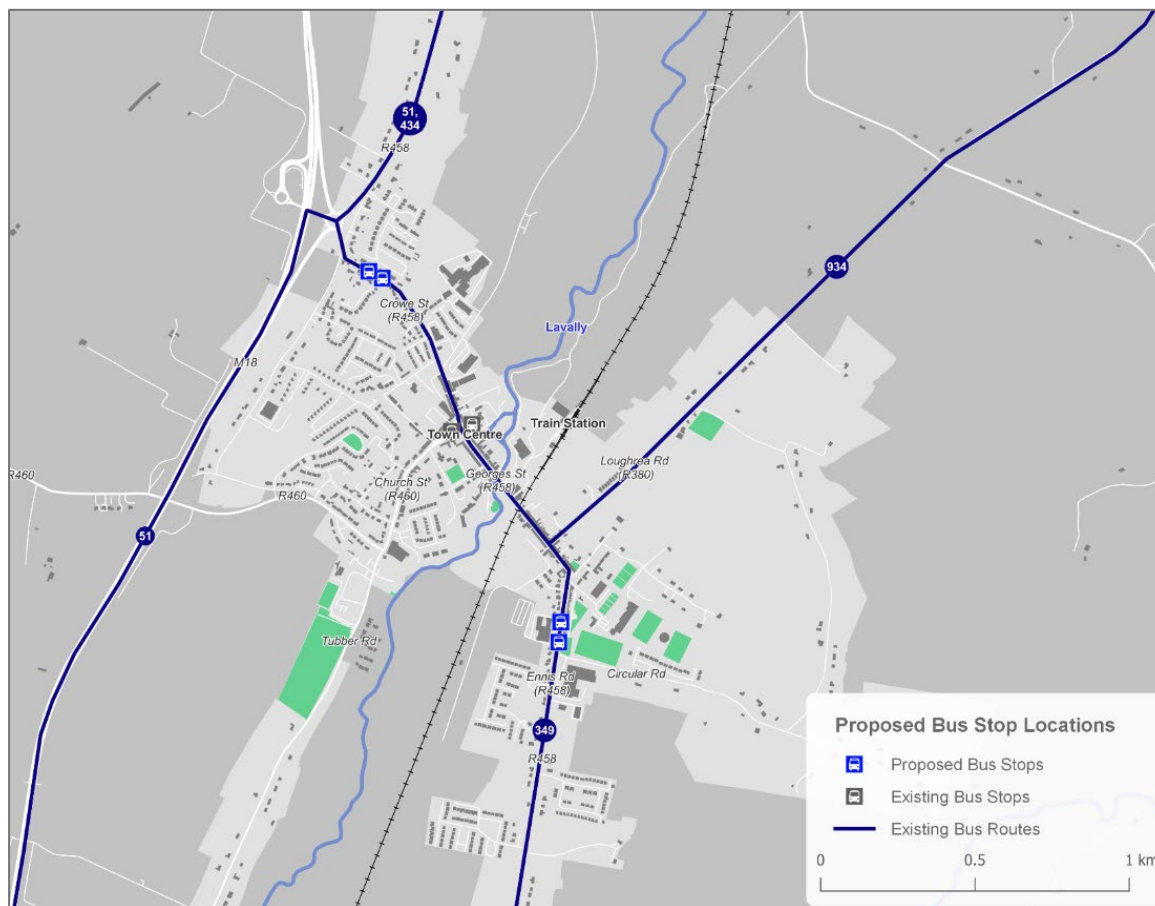


Figure 1-3: Proposed Additional Bus Stops (indicative locations only)

Table 1-1: Proposed Public Transport Measures

Option Ref.	Location	Description
PTRB01	Rail and Bus Services towards Limerick	Support the NTA and Irish Rail to increase service frequency, with particular focus on earlier and later services to expand pattern of trips served, in line with the All-Island Strategic Rail Review and Connecting Ireland.
PTRB02	Rail and Bus Services towards Galway	Support the NTA and Irish Rail to increase service frequency, with particular focus on earlier and later services to expand pattern of trips served, in line with All-Island Strategic Rail Review and Connecting Ireland.
PTRB03	Rail and Bus Services towards Dublin	Support the NTA and Irish Rail to increase service frequency, with particular focus on earlier and later services to expand pattern of trips served, in line with All-Island Strategic Rail Review and Connecting Ireland.
PTRB07	Gort Train Station	Improve the cycling and walking connection from George's Street along Station Road, enabling users to better access the station via the dedicated off-road walkway linking Station Road to the rail station. To provide safe and secure cycle parking at Gort train station.
PTB01	Additional Bus Stops	Work with the NTA, and other stakeholders as appropriate, to review bus stop locations and assess the need for bus infrastructure including turning facilities to support bus usage in Gort.
PTB02	Bus Stop Waiting Infrastructure & Passenger Information	Support the NTA in the roll out of Bus Stop Waiting Infrastructure & Passenger Information to support bus patronage increases (timetables, bus poles, shelters, seating, kassel kerbs).

1.3 Roads and Traffic Management



Figure 1-4: Proposed Infrastructure Safeguard

Table 1-2: Proposed Road and Traffic Management Measures

Option Ref.	Location	Description
R01	Loughrea Road to R458	Infrastructure safeguard for possible future road
R02	Junctions	Upgrade of junctions as part of active travel measures in line with the Cycle Design Manual 2023 and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

1.4 Supporting Measures

Option Ref.	Location	Description
SM - O1	15/10 Minute Town Principles	15/10 Minute Town Principles - embed within Gort land use planning decisions and development of transport network and transport investment decisions. Under the RSES, the Southern Regional Assembly have developed a framework and methodology to be used by local authorities to integrate the '10 Minute Town Concept' into future Local Development Plans. This approach was developed following assessment of 3 key towns (Carlow, Ennis and Tralee) and aims to support increase in sustainable transport and reduce carbon emissions.
SM - O2	Slow Zones	Slow Zones – introduction of 30kph on town centre streets and on residential streets in the Study Area, supported by traffic calming measures and signage to encourage driver compliance. This will be undertaken in line with the current national speed limit review, which proposes a default speed limit of 30kmh for built up and urban areas, including town centres, residential roads and locations where there is a significant presence of vulnerable/active road users.
SM - O3	Workplace Mobility Management Plans (MMPs)	Workplace Mobility Management Plans (MMPs) – support major employers & business parks/industrial estates with the implementation of MMPs in conjunction with the NTA Smarter Workplaces Team.
SM - O4	Residential Mobility Management Plans (RMMPs)	Residential Mobility Management Plans (RMMPs) - introduce requirement for RMMPs for all new residential developments over a certain size. RMMPs manage transport demand at source and combine hard measures (e.g., access to a car club, pool bikes) and soft measures (e.g., Travel Welcome Packs, PT taster tickets).
SM - C1	Cycle Parking Strategy	Develop and implement a Gort Cycle Parking Strategy Including on-street short-stay parking locations & volume (consistent with development standards); provision of parking for cargo bikes & adapted bikes, etc; longer stay bike parking / mobility hubs (e.g., at rail station, residential areas); eBike public parking Strategy; eScooter public parking strategy

Option Ref.	Location	Description
SM - C3	Public Bike Repair Stands	Deliver at key locations, e.g., at rail station, schools, town centre, Gort River Walk.
SM - C4	Cycle Skills Training - children and adults	Deliver at schools, workplaces and via community events.
SM - C5	Cycle Maintenance Training & Bike Maintenance Checks	Deliver at schools, workplaces and via community events.
SM - C6	Behavioural change campaigns to tackle speeds, inconsiderate parking & engine idling near schools	Support behavioural change campaigns to tackle speeds, inconsiderate parking & engine idling near schools.
SM - S1	Education Mobility Management Plans (MMPs)	Support An Taisce Green Schools with the development and delivery of Education MMPs for schools in Gort, through Safe Routes to School active travel initiatives and through the planning process.
SM - S2	Bike and scooter parking at schools	Enhancement of existing facilities.
SM – S3	School based Active Travel initiatives & events	Council support for Green School's programme of school based active travel initiatives (e.g. Bike Week, Scoot to School, challenges, curriculum activities).
SM – S4	Walking Bus & Cycling Bus support for local schools	Support for cycle and walking buses to schools.
DM – P1	Town parking management strategy	Development of a town parking management strategy, including consideration of both the quantum and cost of parking within the town in the longer term.
DM – P2	EV Parking Strategy	Ensure provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) recharging facilities at new developments, in public car parks, on-street (for rapid charging and those without access to private driveways), taxi ranks, mix of rapid and slow charging, distinguish between O&D charging needs. Expanding on existing EV provision in line with County Development Plan policy objective EV1. Development management standards in the county development plan mandate up to 20% of spaces should provide recharging facilities and all spaces should be easily convertible to provide recharging facilities in the future. In residential developments specifically, 20% of

Option Ref.	Location	Description
		spaces should provide recharging facilities and in commercial centres, rapid charge points should be provided.
DM – P3	EV Parking Pricing Strategies	Integration of EV parking pricing over time with Public Parking Pricing policies, balanced to encourage take up of EVs without encouraging unnecessary car trips by providing free parking for EVs.
DM – P4	Parking for new developments	Reduced Residential Parking & Workplace Parking standards for new developments in appropriate locations (e.g., in areas well served by sustainable transport options); Require EV spaces within new residential, workplace and mixed use developments; Require Car Club spaces within new residential, workplace and mixed use developments
DM – P5	Integrated Traffic Management Plan	Development of an integrated Traffic Management Plan to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions, addressing the short, medium and long-term traffic management requirements within the Plan area. The parking management strategy will investigate opportunities for car parking rationalisation. This parking strategy will be drafted to support the delivery of the mode share targets as laid out in CAP 2024.

SYSTRA provides advice on transport, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.

A diverse group of results-oriented people, we are part of a strong team of professionals worldwide. Through client business planning, customer research and strategy development we create solutions that work for real people in the real world.

For more information visit www.systra.ie

Birmingham – Newhall Street

Lancaster House, Newhall St,

Birmingham, B3 1NQ

T: +44 (0)121 393 4841

Birmingham – Suffolk Street

8th Floor, Alpha Tower, Crowne Plaza, Suffolk Street

Birmingham, B1 1TT

T: +44 (0)121 393 4841

Bristol

One Temple Quay, Temple Back East

Bristol, BS1 6DZ

T: +44 118 208 0111

Dublin

2nd Floor, Riverview House, 21-23 City Quay

Dublin 2, Ireland

T: +353 (0) 1 566 2028

Edinburgh

Prospect House, 5 Thistle Street, Edinburgh EH2 1DF

T: +44 (0)131 460 1847

Glasgow

The Centrum Business Centre Limited, 38 Queen Street, Glasgow,

G1 3DX

T: +44 (0)141 468 4205

Leeds

100 Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 1BA

T: +44 (0)113 360 4842

London

One Carey Lane, London, England EC2V 8AE

T: +44 (0)20 3855 0079

Manchester –City Tower

16th Floor, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza

Manchester M1 4BT

T: +44 (0)161 504 5026

Newcastle

Floor E, South Corridor, Milburn House, Dean Street,
Newcastle, NE1 1LE

T: +44 (0)191 249 3816

Reading

Davidson House, Forbury Square,
Reading, RG1 3EU

T: +44 118 208 0111

Woking

Dukes Court, Duke Street
Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH

T: +44 (0)1483 357705

York

Meridian House, The Crescent
York, YO24 1AW

Tel: +44 1904 454 600

Other locations:

France:

Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Paris

Northern Europe:

Astana, Copenhagen, Kiev, London, Moscow, Riga,
Wroclaw

Southern Europe & Mediterranean: Algiers, Baku,
Bucharest, Madrid, Rabat, Rome, Sofia, Tunis

Middle East:

Cairo, Dubai, Riyadh

Asia Pacific:

Bangkok, Beijing, Brisbane, Delhi, Hanoi, Hong Kong,
Manila, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Shenzhen, Taipei

Africa:

Abidjan, Douala, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Libreville,
Nairobi

SYSTRA