

Chapter 10. Mobility: effective transport and movement

In accordance with the vision for Sligo, it is the aim of the local authorities to create a vibrant pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly environment in the SEDP area, with a good provision of public transport, reduced congestion and an attractive city centre which is not dominated by the car.

10.1 Sligo as a regional transportation node

Sligo is the largest transportation node in the North-West. The city is connected to Dublin (via Carrick-on-Shannon) by the National Primary Road N4. Other national primary and secondary roads connect Sligo with Belfast (via Enniskillen), Derry and Letterkenny (via Donegal Town), Galway, Ballina, and other urban centres.

The policy document Transport 21 and the Roads Sub-Programme of the National Development Plan 2007-2013 outline the government's principal objectives which impact on Sligo:

■ Ongoing development of the Atlantic Road Corridor

The N17, N4 (Collooney to Sligo) and the N15 form part of the Atlantic Corridor which loops from Waterford, via Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Sligo to Letterkenny. The upgrading of this route is identified as a specific project to be delivered under Transport 21.

■ Improvement of road links between the NSS Gateways

Links from Sligo to other NSS Gateways include the N17 to Galway and the N15 to Letterkenny (both forming part of the Atlantic Corridor outlined above) and the N4 to Mullingar. The provision of a high quality link between Sligo and Dublin is also identified as a specific project to be delivered under Transport 21, with improvements between Cloonamahon and Castlebaldwin listed as "in planning stage" in 2008.

■ Continued upgrading of road links to Northern Ireland

This measure relates to the N16, which is the major link from Sligo to Enniskillen and Belfast.

■ Targeted improvements in key national secondary roads

The N59 from Sligo to Galway via Ballina, Westport and Clifden is specifically targeted under the NDP.

■ Investment in strategic non-national roads

Strategic non-national roads in NSS Gateway areas are a particular focus in the NDP. Targets in Sligo include the Western Distributor Road and the Eastern Garavogue Bridge and approach roads.

Mobility - strategic policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- SP-MOB-1** Create an integrated and environmentally-sound transport system, in particular with regard to accessibility and choice of transport.
- SP-MOB-2** Integrate transportation planning and land-use planning in order to reduce the need to travel (especially by car), by promoting higher-density development and a sustainable mix of uses.
- SP-MOB-3** Make optimal use of existing transportation infrastructure by traffic management in order to reduce travel times and congestion.
- SP-MOB-4** Encourage the shift from car use to more environmentally-friendly modes of transport and ensure the provision of quality interchange facilities between road, rail, bus and bicycle.
- SP-MOB-5** Integrate the public transportation system with a quality intercity bus and rail service, alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements.
- SP-MOB-6** Plan for the future traffic and transportation needs in Sligo.
- SP-MOB-7** Protect the historic city centre from the impact of traffic congestion.
- SP-MOB-8** Continue to develop a network of strategic and intra-urban roads in the Sligo and Environs area.
- SP-MOB-9** Facilitate and encourage the provision of adequate car-parking facilities in the Sligo and Environs area.
- SP-MOB-10** Protect the carrying capacity, operational efficiency and safety of national roads by ensuring that development proposals accessing onto the N4, N15 and N16 are restricted in accordance with the National Roads Authority's publication *Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads*.



N4/Inner Relief Road (southern section)

Mobility – strategic objectives

It is the objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- SO-MOB-1** Implement the relevant policies in relation to sustainable transport and in particular the Department of Transport's policy document *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future, A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009–2020*.
- SO-MOB-2** Implement the recommendations of the traffic study being undertaken for Sligo City and Environs.
- SO-MOB-3** Develop a strategy to promote and facilitate greater use of sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling, in line with the Department of Transport's *Smarter Travel* and *Cycle Strategies*.

N4/Inner Relief Road

The Inner Relief Road opened in September 2005 and is operating satisfactorily. The road extends for 4.65 km from Carrowroe to Hughes Bridge. It consists of a two-lane, 3.6-km dual carriageway through a rural environment from the Sligo-Collooney dual carriageway at Carrowroe to the roundabout at Summerhill College, with grade-separated interchanges at Carrowroe and Caltragh. The final 1.05 km is through an urban environment, ending at Hughes Bridge.

This new road has improved access to Sligo city centre and has greatly reduced traffic volumes in the city. It allowed O'Connell Street to be closed to traffic in August 2006 and will facilitate further enhancements to the city centre in terms of traffic calming and pavement widening.

Public transport

Sligo functions as the most important rail and bus transport node in the North-West. Improvements to the Sligo-Dublin rail route identified under NDP 2000-2006 have taken place, resulting in a much improved service, from three trains per day to seven trains per day in each direction. The phased re-opening of the Western Rail Corridor from Ennis to Claremorris is targeted in the current NDP 2007-2013, with the preservation of the line from Claremorris to Collooney included in the Western Rail Corridor project in Transport 21. Bus services run from the bus terminus located at the railway station and therefore this area acts as a transport node of strategic importance.

Sligo airport

Sligo Regional Airport is situated five miles to the west of the city, at Stranhill. It runs a commuter service to Dublin and an international service to Manchester. The airport is important in facilitating access to the North-West for both tourist and business interests. Further international air transport services to the region are supported by Ireland West Airport at Knock, just 45 minutes away from Sligo.

The Port

While the significance of the Port in national terms is relatively low, it remains important in the local and regional economy, supporting local industry and providing a sustainable transport mode for imports and exports.



10.2 Strategic road proposals

A Traffic and Transportation Study for Sligo was published in 1999. It recommended the development of a strategic road network, which consisted of the development of the Sligo Inner Relief Road followed by the pedestrianisation of city-centre streets and, at a later stage, by the construction of an Eastern Garavogue Bridge and a Western Distributor Road.

The Sligo and Environs Development Plan (2004-2010) set out a 20-year strategic horizon for the development of Sligo as Gateway City. The Plan adopted the strategic road proposals contained in the 1999 Traffic and Transportation Study and also introduced the concept of a future City Bypass.

In addition, it included the realignment and upgrading to dual carriageway of the N4/N15 (Bundoran Road) from Sligo City (at Hughes Bridge) northwards and the realignment of the N16 (Enniskillen Road) to connect to the N15 north of the urban area.

In 2007, the preparation of a new traffic study for Sligo and Environs was included as part of the appointed consultant's brief for the preliminary design of the N4/N15 Sligo (Hughes Bridge) to the Leitrim County Border Scheme. The brief included the development of a traffic model for the road network and consequent traffic predictions based on projected development. This work was still ongoing at the time of publication of this Plan.

The new Traffic Study is required to develop a strategy for road improvements for Sligo over the period to 2020. Initial findings of the study confirm the future need for a bypass of Sligo City. The Study also confirms the importance of the Inner Relief Road in the provision of access into and the ongoing development of the city centre.

However, the Study indicates that linkages into the city centre from the Inner Relief Road junctions will have to be improved to ensure easy access and to minimise delays to west-east traffic.

Strategic road objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

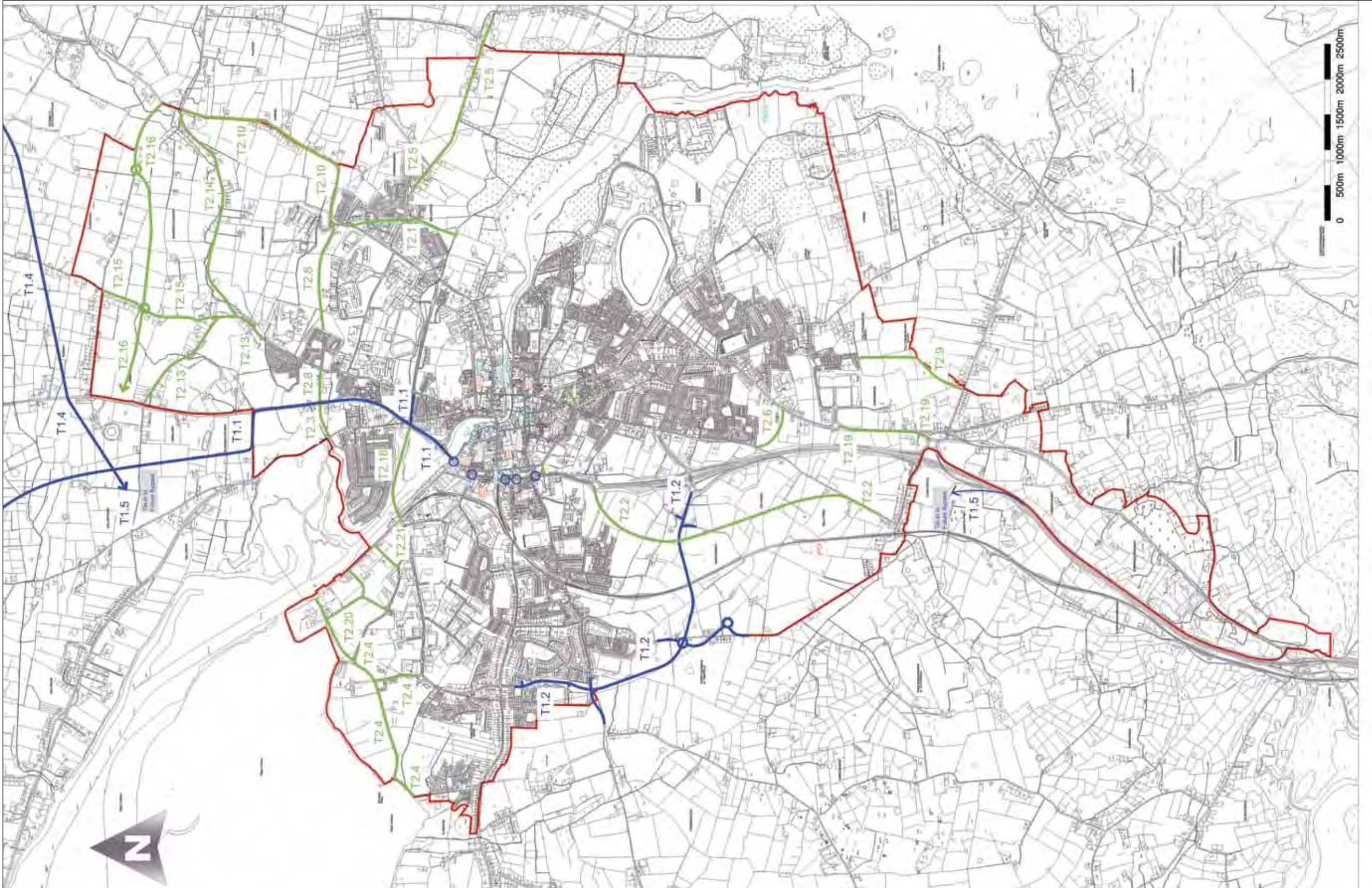
- T1** Reserve strategic road corridors for the development of the following roads:
 - T1.1** Upgrade and realignment of the N4/N15, from Hughes Bridge to Sligo/Leitrim County boundary, including the upgrading of the N16 from the N4/N15 junction to Duck Street roundabout on the N16.
 - T1.2** Western Distributor Road from the Caltragh Interchange on the Inner Relief Road, through Ballydoogan, to the Strandhill Road.
 - T1.4** Realignment of the N16 Enniskillen Road, from the County boundary to Teesan/Ballinvoher, to connect with the existing N15 / Objective T.1.1
 - T1.5** A strategic route option for a City Bypass linking N4 at Carrowroe with the realigned N15 and N16, north of the City. A route selection study will be prepared and a recommendation will be made on the optimal route and alignment.
 - T1.6** Inner Relief Road Corridor – upgrade junctions at John Street, Ted Nealon Street, Lord Edward Street, Lynns Place and Hughes Bridge, including the provision of additional approach lanes and filter lanes, to improve access to the city centre and reduce delays to west-east traffic.



Note

All proposed road lines shown on the Transportation Objectives Map are indicative corridors only and shall be subject to further constraints studies and route selection assessments.

Fig. 10.A Transport, pedestrian and parking objectives - refer to the separate **Map 2. Transport Objectives** for details



10.2.1 Strategic Road Objective T1.1 – N4/N15 upgrade to County Boundary

It is proposed to realign and upgrade this road from Hughes Bridge on the N4, continuing north along the N15 to the Sligo/Leitrim county boundary. Hughes Bridge will be widened to accommodate increased vehicular traffic and will include facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

It is proposed to realign and upgrade the portion of the N15 within the Sligo and Environs area to an urban dual carriageway. This will include the upgrading and reorganisation of all junctions to accommodate projected traffic volumes, and to provide facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

In order to improve traffic flows, the N16 shall also be upgraded from the N4/N15 junction to the Duck Street roundabout on the N16.

10.2.2 Strategic Road Objective T1.2 – Western Distributor Road (W2)

The Western Distributor Road (W2) consists of a two-lane carriageway with cycle lanes and footpaths, beginning at the Caltragh Interchange on the Inner Relief Road and linking to the existing network of roads north of the Strandhill Road via Maugheraboy, Oakfield and Ballydoogan. The road is seen primarily as a route to access and facilitate development in western parts of Sligo. In particular, it will provide access to the proposed new IDA Business Park at Oakfield.

The functions of the Western Distributor Road include:

- to provide access to the proposed new IDA Business Park at Oakfield;
- to improve access to the existing IDA Business Parks at Finisklin;
- to improve access to lands zoned for residential use in the south-western quarter of Sligo City;
- to improve access to Sligo Regional Airport (Strandhill);
- to provide alternative access to western areas of the City and Environs without forcing traffic to enter the city centre.

10.2.3 Strategic Road Objective – Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads (E2)

This key project will facilitate the regeneration and development of eastern areas of Sligo City. The crossing will provide for the strong north-south desire line to the east of the city centre.

Access roads to this crossing will be built as urban streets, capable of linking communities on either side of the river. The new crossing will assist in relieving traffic congestion and delays on the eastern side of the city centre. The scheme will also provide an important public transport link, a cycling and pedestrian way across the river, connecting similar routes on opposite river banks. It will enable the opening up of public access to the northern shore of Lough Gill.

10.2.4 Strategic Road Objective T1.4 – N16 Enniskillen Road

It is proposed to realign and upgrade the existing N16 Sligo-Enniskillen Road. The proposal consists of realigning the N16 from the Sligo/Leitrim county border to intersect the existing N15 at Teesan and connect with Objective T1.1.

10.2.5 Strategic Road Objective T1.5 – City Bypass

It is proposed to make provision for a future City Bypass. It is envisaged that the bypass will link the N4 at Carrowroe with the realigned N15 and N16 north of the city.

A route selection study will determine the optimal route, which will take into account environmental issues, the location of residential areas and the obligation to preserve the integrity of designated ecological sites under the Habitats Directive.

10.2.6 Strategic Road Objective T1.6 – Inner Relief Road

Sligo's Inner Relief Road (IRR) is a strategic transport corridor providing access to the city centre and linkages to the surrounding areas, including the port and Docklands. These linkages need to be maintained and improved.

Key to maintaining adequate access and linkages is the ability of the junctions along the IRR to cater for existing and predicted increases in traffic flows over the period of the Plan and beyond.

In this regard, the junctions at John Street, Lord Edward Street, Lynns Place and Hughes Bridge need to be improved to increase capacity and maintain the ability of the IRR to provide direct access to the city centre and the surrounding areas, thus facilitating the overall development of the city.

10.2.7 Objective T1.5.a – Western/City Bypass

At its Special Meeting of 17 November 2008, Sligo County Council resolved:

“that the Western/City Bypass should be located west of the Second Sea Road with a view to ensuring that the accepted negative impact on those people living between the two Sea roads be prevented”

and that the following text be included in the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016:

“Sligo City requires a Western Bypass to enable traffic not wishing to access the city to pass with ease from North to South and vice versa. A modern well planned bypass will augment Sligo's infrastructure and attractiveness for inward investment allowing it to fulfil its potential as a Gateway City.

By constructing an outer ring road west of the Second Sea Road this will help facilitate expansion westwards while protecting the residential amenity of the area.

By selecting a route as expeditiously as possible Sligo will then be positioned in an economic upturn to take advantage of forward minded planning through its new SEDP.

Following the statutory period of public consultation the following has been agreed to in the determination of the Western/City Bypass route:

- It is considered that the central theme of the objections raised in relation to the proposed variation number 6 of the SEDP to the effect that the impact on the residents both present and future of the area between the two Sea Roads would be disproportionate to the overall goal and aim sought to be achieved by the construction of the Western/City Bypass. To locate the Western/City Bypass in an area between the two Sea Roads would not be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development in the area. Therefore, the Western/City Bypass should be located west of the second Sea Road with a view to ensuring that the accepted negative impact on those people living between the two Sea Roads be prevented.

- It is recognised that to locate the Western/City Bypass or road intersection in an area between the two Sea roads (already serviced and zoned residential) would be considered to be unreasonable in all the circumstances and in particular to the detrimental planning affects on the long established residents in the area. Therefore, as part of an environmental impact assessment of the Western/City Bypass this will not consider that area between the two Sea roads as it is accepted that it is not a suitable alternative. The integrity of the area bound by the two Sea Roads as a residential zone is to be preserved and enshrined in the SEDP 2010-2016 development plan and all future development plans. Further investigation of a proposed Western/City Bypass will continue and will be completed no later than June 2009.

By adopting a route further west this will bring a better quality of life for residents of Sligo and in particular the successful residential strategy that has been incorporated by Sligo Borough Council with the provision of private and local authority housing.

It will reduce congestion and sustain strong communities in a fully serviced locality with beautiful amenities. It will reduce inter-urban journey times and thereby promote a well balanced economic structure in the region and county. This would improve infrastructure, access and proximity to Sligo Regional Airport. A route further west would reduce traffic levels close to the city and thereby improve air quality and noise levels in high density residential areas.”

At the Special Meeting of 2 November 2009, upon adoption of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, Sligo County Council included the following:

Addendum

That the City Bypass should be located elsewhere with a view to ensuring that the accepted negative impact on those people living west of the First Sea Road be prevented and the proposed route west of the Second Sea Road starting at the Carraroe interchange in the townland of Tonafortes, via Oakfield, Ballydoogan, Barnasrahy, Woodville Farm and the whole townland of Cummeen, via Gibraltar and Finisklin should not be adopted.

It is accepted that the natural amenity of Gibraltar, the Special Area of Conservation at Cummeen, Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery, the Ceremonial Enclosure RMP No Slo 14-052 CMC and the integrity of Woodville Farm should be protected for the people of Sligo and the proposed route west of the Second Sea Road should not be adopted.

Policies for roads crossing Natura 2000 sites

It is a policy of Sligo Borough and County Council to require any City Bypass project or any road project which involves crossing a Natura 2000 site to :

- P-N2000-1** Demonstrate the need for the project in light of a “do nothing” context.
- P-N2000-2** Examine the potential for intensifying or upgrading existing roads and routes as an alternative to carrying out new road development affecting a Natura 2000 site.
- P-N2000-3** Develop and evaluate a comprehensive series of plausible alternative routes and design strategies (the latter to include long span and tunnel options).
- P-N2000-4** Demonstrate how each route has taken due account of, and accommodated ecological considerations and legislative requirements.
- P-N2000-5** Demonstrate that the chosen route will not cause any incursions onto or significant adverse effects on habitats in Natura 2000 sites.

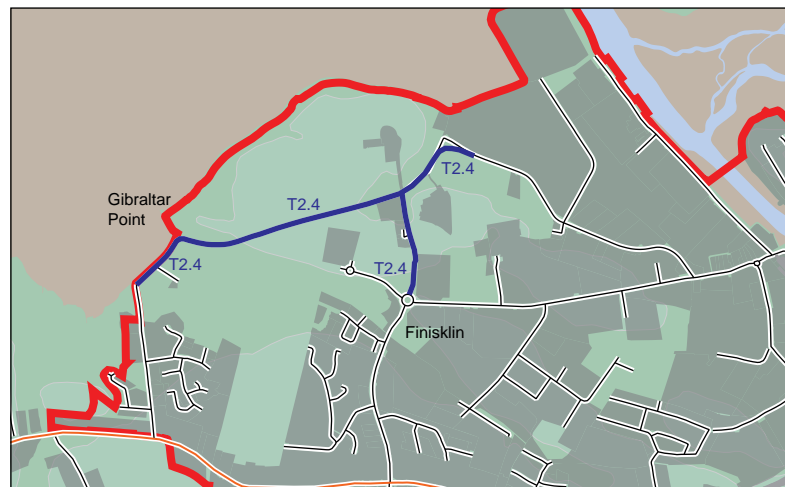


Fig. 10.B Objective T2.4 - upgrading of Gibraltar Road and its links

Note

All proposed road lines shown on the Transport Objectives Map are indicative corridors only and shall be subject to further constraints studies and route selection assessments.

10.3 Intra-urban roads

Providing accessibility within the city and its immediate environs

As Sligo grows, it will be necessary to ensure that adequate links can be maintained between different parts of the city, north and south, east and west. In order to ensure this accessibility, a number of routes within the expanding urban environment are proposed.

The illustrations show several of these proposed intra-urban roads.

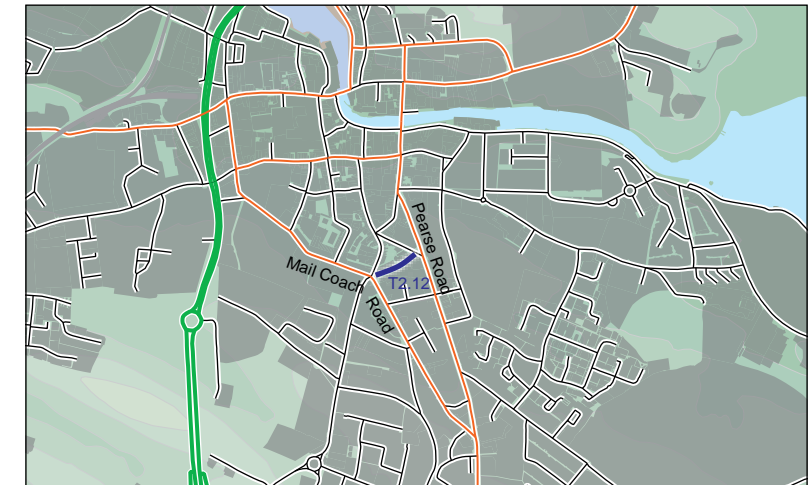


Fig. 10.C Objective T2.12 - a link from Mail Coach Road to Pearse Road

Intra-urban roads objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

T2 Reserve a number of intra-urban road links for the following routes:

- T2.1** A link road from Strategic Road Objective *Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads* northwards to connect with the existing N16 at Yeats Heights/Abbot Roundabout.
- T2.2** A north-south route from Tonafortes / Ballyfree northwards to the Summerhill Roundabout.
- T2.3** From Sea View Drive (Cartron Village) on R291 to the junction with N15 at Shannon Eighter/Cartron.
- T2.4** From the roundabout on First Sea Road, north to junction with Second Sea Road (L-75011-0), via L-75012-0 (north end of First Sea Road); Second Sea Road (L-25011-0), south-west of Gibraltar Point, east to the Borough Boundary at Finisklin.
- T2.5** Continue the realignment, widening and upgrading of Hazelwood Road (R286).
- T2.6** From Pearse Road (R287) adjacent to the proposed Neighbourhood Centre at Cornageeha (in the vicinity of Sligo Park Hotel) to Newtownholmes Road.
- T2.8** From N15 at its junction with T2.3 eastwards to connect with existing N16 at Yeats Heights / Abbott roundabout, except for the section crossing Woodlands/Glendallon housing estate.
- T2.9** A north-south link road from R287 (Carrowroe to Aghamore), north to connect with Road Objective T2.11 at Tullynagracken North.

- T2.10** From the Yeats Heights/Abbott roundabout, east and north along the existing N16 to the Doonally junction (L-3407-22).
- T2.12** A link road from the junction of Burton Street/Pearse Road to the junction of Mail Coach Road/Connolly Street.
- T2.13** Realign, widen and upgrade Rathbraughan Road (L-3410-0, L-7421-0 and L-7422-0) from N15 to Ballytivnan Road.
- T2.14** Realign, widen and upgrade The Line (L-7422-0) from the junction with Rathbraughan Road (L-7421-0), east to N16, via L-3407-0.
- T2.15** Realign, widen and upgrade L-7421-0 at Shannon Eighter from junction with L-3410-0 (Rathbraughan Road) north to L-3407-0 at Carncash.
- T2.16** Provide the North Fringe Avenue from the N15 at Lisnalurg eastwards to the N16 at Shannon Oughter.
- T2.17** Upgrade and realign Flynn's Terrace to provide a direct link from Temple Street to the Inner Relief Road (Ray MacSharry Road).
- T2.18** Construct a crossing of the Garavogue estuary at Finisklin/ Rathedmond to connect to the N15 and N16 junction at Duck Street south of Cartron.
- T2.19** R287 from Carrowroe Roundabout north to Retail Park Roundabout – upgrade to a four-lane carriageway with central median.
- T2.20** Provide a Western Docklands access road.
- T2.21** Provide an additional Western Docklands access road.



10.3.1 East-west connections

There are several important east-west routes in the City and Environs, such as the Strandhill Road, the IDA/Finisklin Road, The Mall, Ash Lane, Clarion Road, Church Hill/Maugheraboy Road etc.

These roads and the future east-west routes will complement the existing and proposed principal north-south routes of the plan (namely the R287 – Old N4, the N4 Inner Relief Road/N15, the proposed Western Distributor Road, the Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads), creating a permeable circulation structure that facilitates movement and interconnectivity between all parts of the City and Environs.

Additional advantages of the east-west routes include:

- facilitating links between different neighbourhood centres, residential quarters and the city centre;
- maintaining ease of access to the countryside.

The “lattice” effect provided by a number of north-south and east-west routes creates “superblocks”, where the external road network facilitates the intensive traffic movements, while the inner areas are traffic-calmed environments, suitable for residential and other developments.

10.3.3 Hazelwood-Ballinode area

A Local Area Plan (LAP) has been prepared for the Hazelwood-Ballinode area of Sligo City and Environs. Specific transport objectives that support this LAP include:

- The realignment and upgrade of the R286 Hazelwood Road (Objective T2.5).
This is the principal access road through the area. Development on either side of this road will feed onto it and will be able to access the city centre.
- The Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Road Scheme, which includes objective T2.1. This proposed north-south crossing of the Garavogue will link the Cleveragh area on the south side of the river with the R286 and the N16 at Ash Lane/Molloway Hill Junction.
- Objective T2.1, which proposes a direct link from the R286 to the N16 roundabout at Abbott.

These road development objectives will provide facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

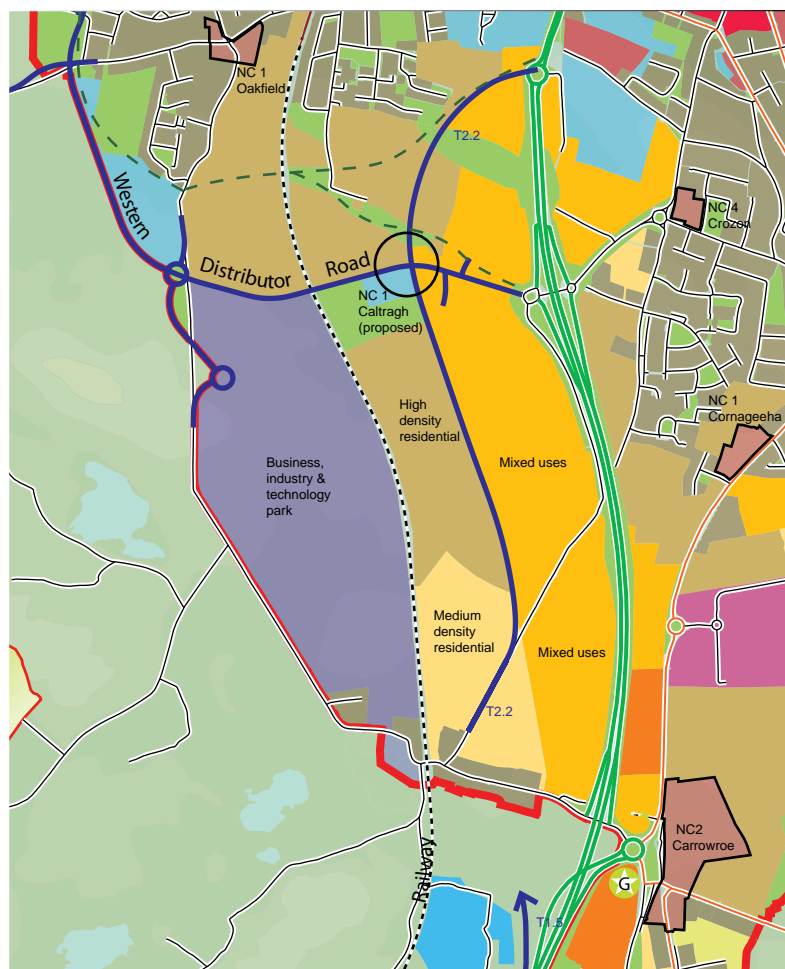


Fig. 10.D Objective T2.2 - a local road linking Summerhill Roundabout to Caltragh and Tonafortes/Ballyfree

10.3.2 A local north-south road: T2.2

There is a significant area of undeveloped land in the Maugheraboy, Caltragh and Ballyfree area, lying between the Inner Relief Road and the railway line. The Western Distributor Road will provide access to this area in an east-west direction from Caltragh Interchange and westwards over the railway line.

However, between Caltragh Interchange and Carrowroe Roundabout, access onto the Inner Relief Road is restricted. On the western side there is no access across the railway line, except at the proposed Western Distributor Road crossing.

In order to ensure that there is a rational and coherent structure to the development of these lands, and to facilitate a future public transport route, a local north-south road is also proposed – Objective T2.2.

The route begins at Tonafortes/Ballyfree (approximately midway between the Carrowroe Roundabout and Newtownholmes Road) and will run north, linking into the Summerhill Roundabout.

Thus, in time, a local bus service would be able to travel in a loop going south from the city centre to Carrowroe Roundabout along the IRR, head westwards along Oakfield Road (L-3601-0), and then northwards along the proposed north-south road, providing access to the businesses and homes in this large block of land.

This road will be supported by a number of local roads running east-west within the area, including the existing and realigned sections of the Newtownholmes Road.



10.3.4 North Fringe area



The area covered by the North Fringe Local Area Plan is connected at the west to the existing N15 (Bundoran Road), at the east to the existing N16 (Enniskillen Road) and is bounded to the south by Rathbraughan Road (local roads L-3410-0, L-7421-0) and The Line (L-7422-0). A north-south road (L-7421-0) runs through the area, from Carncash to Shannon Eighter.

The realigned N15 will consist of a new dual-carriageway to the west of the existing N15 road. It is also proposed to realign the N16 to join with the N15 to the North of this development area. This will allow the existing N15 and N16 to be used more for local traffic.

Rathbraughan Road and The Line, to the south of the LAP area, also act as important access routes to the area. These roads will require to be upgraded – Objectives T2.13 and T2.14.

A central avenue is proposed through the LAP area in an east-west direction. This will act as the circulation route for the surrounding houses, educational facilities and mixed use areas etc – objective T2.16.

Existing local road L-7421-0 running north-south is to be realigned to allow for additional traffic – Objective T2.15.

The primary access point to the area from the existing N15 is proposed at a new junction at the western end of the central avenue (T2.16). The location and design of this proposed junction will be subject to preliminary and detailed design. Access to the existing N16 on the east side will also need to be rationalised.

10.3.5 Docklands access

The Docklands area is currently accessed from the Inner Relief Road (IRR) to the east and through the Finisklin Business Park and Finisklin area to the west. There is no direct vehicular access to the area from the north or south. Currently traffic from the north must cross Hughes Bridge and access the area from the IRR.

In order to facilitate development of the Docklands area, improved access from the north and south will be needed. In the medium term, the implementation of Objective T1.1 which includes the widening of Hughes Bridge and upgrading of N15/N16 junctions will improve access from the north.

However, the IRR junctions at Hughes Bridge and Lynn's Place (T1.6) will require to be upgraded to cater for developments in the Docklands.

The Western Distributor Road will improve access to the Docklands area from the south, but as the area grows, further capacity may be needed.

Objectives T2.4 and T2.20/T2.21 will improve access from the west and from Western Distributor Road. They could also provide access from a future City Bypass.

In addition, all existing roads and junctions in the Docklands area need to be maintained and upgraded, to ensure easy access as development progresses.

In the longer term, objective T2.18 crosses the Garavogue Estuary linking Finisklin to the N15/N16 at Ash Lane south of Cartron.

However, the development of this objective may not be possible because of environmental constraints concerning its potential impact on the estuary, which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive.

The potential development of this option (T2.18) is seen as a long-term objective and would require further studies to assess its environmental impact.

If developed, the T2.18 would allow access to the Docklands from the north without compromising the operation of the IRR as the main vehicular artery into the city centre. It would also facilitate traffic from the north going to Sligo Airport and Strandhill via the Docklands area.

The upgrading of Hughes Bridge/N4 (including the upgrading of IRR junctions) and the possible long-term implementation of objective T2.18 will link to Ballast Quay, Far Finisklin and T2.4, thus providing good access and linkages to the heart of the Docklands area, the Finisklin Business Park and the west of the city.

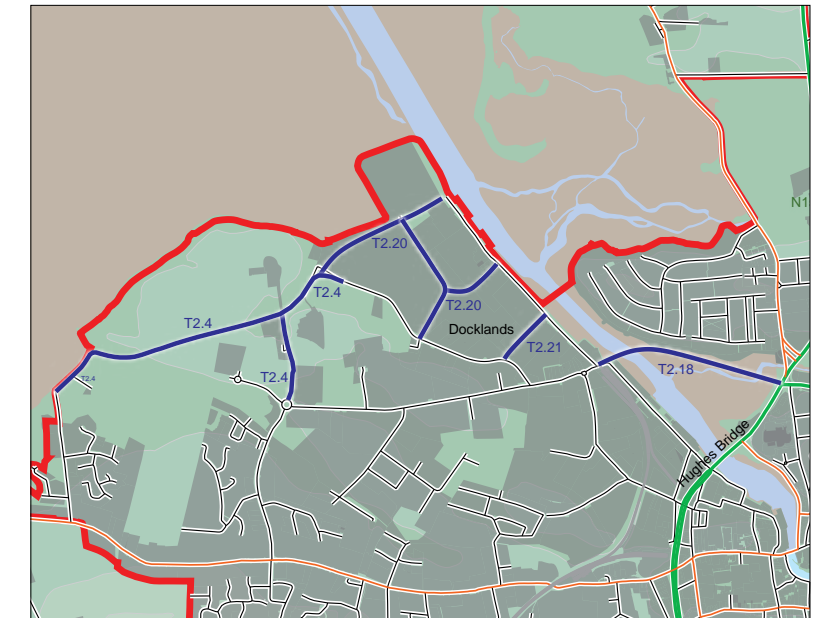


Fig. 10.E Proposed links to facilitate access in the Docklands area

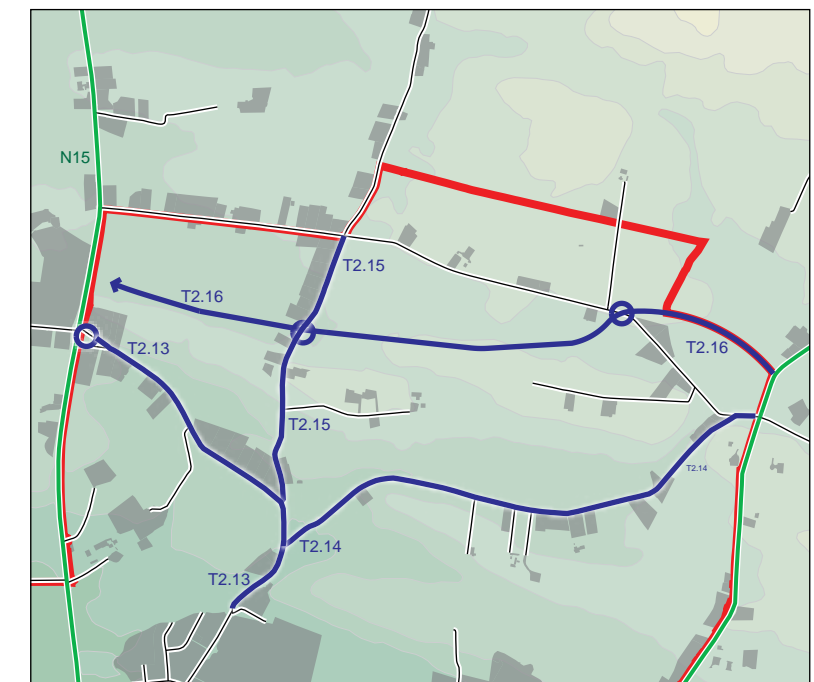


Fig. 10.F Proposed upgrades and a new road in the North Fringe area

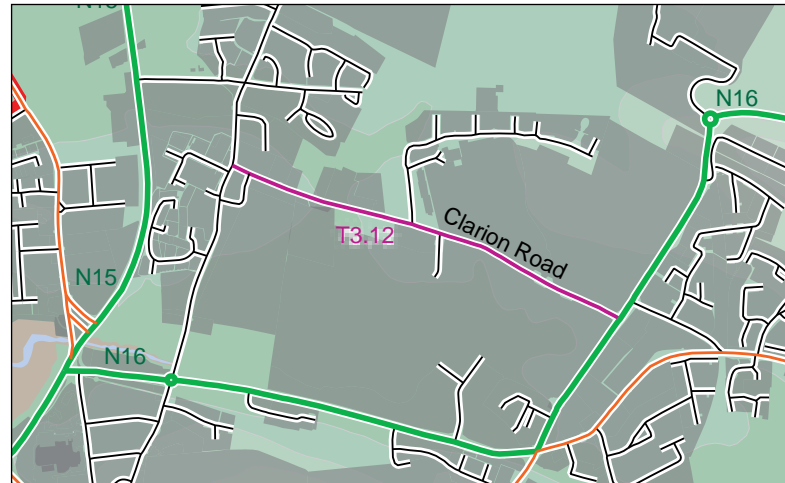


Fig. 10.G Objective T3.12 - upgrading of Clarion Road

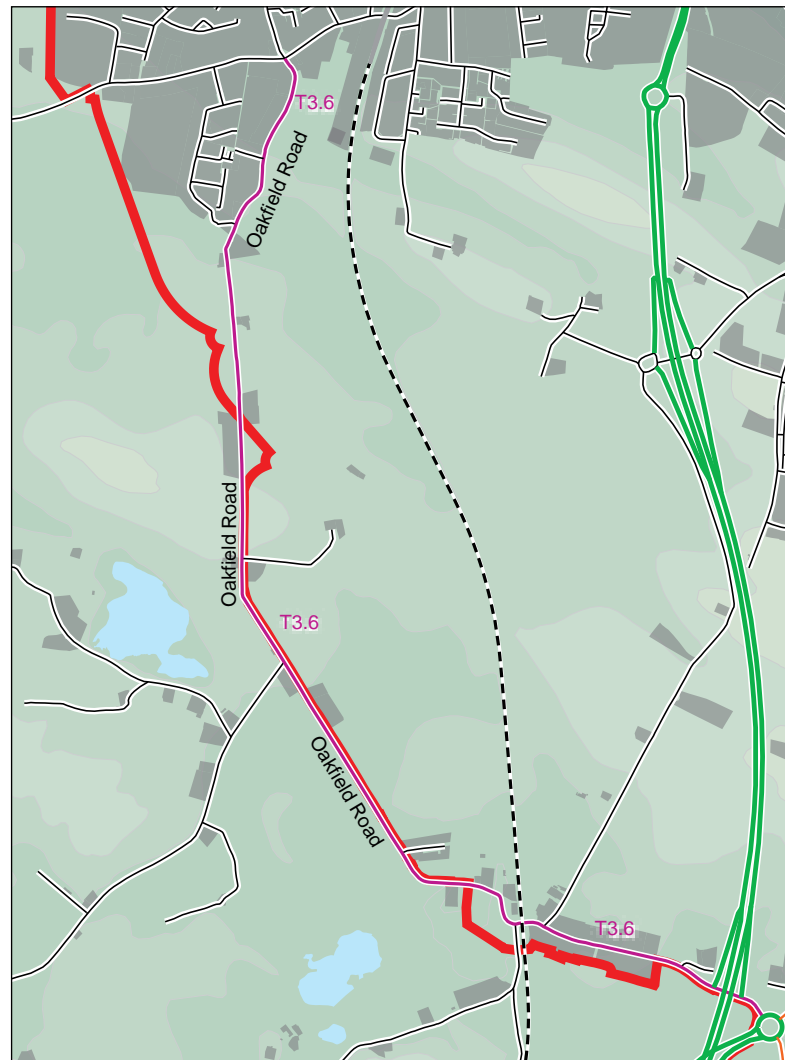


Fig. 10.H Objective T3.6 - upgrading of Oakfield Road and L36011-0

10.3.6 Urban road improvements

A number of urban roads are identified for improvement works. The majority of these roads are outside of the city centre and will involve realignments, widening and upgrades, depending on the location and use of the road.

The widening of Adelaide Street including up-grading of the junctions between Adelaide Street and John Street, Ted Nealon Road and Wine Street/Lord Edward Street will allow for increased capacity along this street and will improve Vehicular access into city centre developments including the centre block.

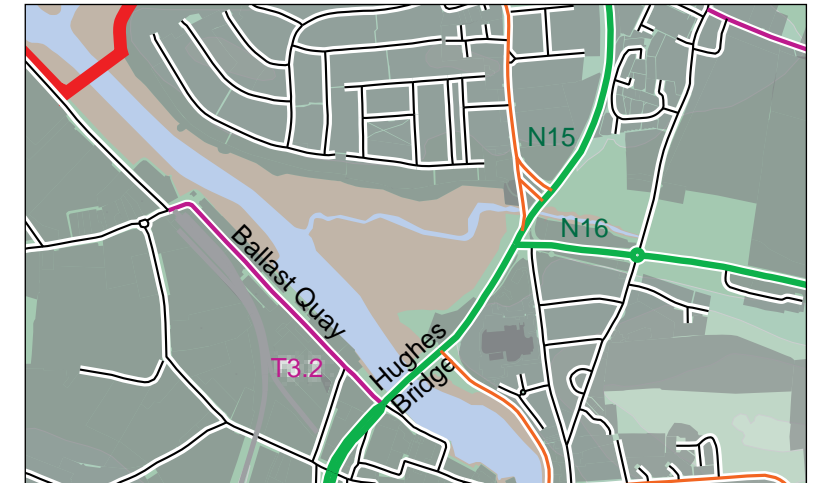


Fig. 10.I Objective T3.2 - upgrading of Ballast Quay

Road improvement objectives	
It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
T3 Upgrade the following urban roads:	
T3.1 Finisklin Road and Far Finisklin from the Inner Relief Road to the Borough Boundary (continue upgrading)	T3.10 Cairns Road and L-3602-0 (county area) (realign, widen and upgrade)
T3.2 Ballast Quay	T3.11.a Newtownholmes Road north of IRR (continue to realign, widen and upgrade)
T3.3 Sea Road and First Sea Road (L-75012-0) from its junction with R292 Strandhill Road north to the roundabout	T3.11.b Newtownholmes Road and L-7601-0 (county area) south of IRR (continue to realign, widen and upgrade) including the realigned Newtownholmes Road to the west of Sligo Inner Relief Road and connecting with Caltragh Interchange
T3.4 Second Sea Road (L-75011) from its junction with R292 Strandhill Road to the bend before Gibraltar Point	T3.12 Clarion Road (continue to realign, widen and upgrade)
T3.5 R292 Lord Edward Street/Knappagh Road/Strandhill Road (realign, widen and upgrade)	T3.13 Cemetery Road (continue to realign, widen and upgrade)
T3.6 Oakfield Road and L36011-0 (county area) (realign, widen and upgrade)	T3.14 Shannon Eighter (Scotsman Walk) from R291 to the N15 road corridor (realign, widen and upgrade)
T3.7 Ballydoogan Road (realign, widen and upgrade)	T3.15 Tonaphubble Road and L-36025 (county area) (realign, widen and upgrade)
T3.8 Circular Road (realign, widen and upgrade)	T3.16 Cleveragh Road (realign, widen and upgrade)
	T3.17 R291 Rosses Point Road (realign, widen and upgrade)
	T3.18 Adelaide Street (widen, increase capacity and reduce delays at the junction of Adelaide Street/John Street, Ted Nealon Road and Wine Street/ Lord Edward Street)

10.4 A pedestrian-friendly city centre



The opening in September 2005 of the N4 Sligo Inner Relief Road has removed approximately 25,000 vehicles per day from the city centre streets. This allowed for traffic calming in the city centre and this, in turn, will enhance the commercial attractiveness and tourist appeal of the city centre.

It is proposed, when the necessary funding to cover the costs is provided by Government or other sources, and when the Borough Council by resolution deems it appropriate, to pedestrianise O'Connell Street.

Before any future pedestrianisation of roads or streets in Sligo City takes place, viable alternative routes for vehicular traffic, which are acceptable to the elected Council, shall be put in place.

In order to facilitate an improved circulation system, it is proposed to establish a short link road from the junction of Burton Road and Pearse Road to the junction between Mail Coach Road and Connolly Street.

A number of pedestrian bridges will also be developed within the Sligo and Environs area to improve pedestrian permeability.

A number of key locations have been identified as suitable for the construction of footbridges, as follows:

- footbridge from Cleveragh to Hazelwood;
- footbridge from the Train Station over the IRR to the proposed Adelaide Square;
- footbridge parallel to Markiewicz Bridge (New Bridge), between Kempton Parade and JFK Parade.

Further possible improvements to city-centre traffic include:

- the introduction of additional approach lanes and filter lanes at key locations;
- the introduction of a new link road along the old Flynn's Terrace from Temple Street directly to the Inner Relief Road. This would greatly improve access onto the Inner Relief Road from Temple Street and would reduce congestion at the Veritas corner at Upper John Street/ Adelaide Street/ Inner Relief Road;
- the introduction of Urban Traffic Control (UTC) systems to the traffic signals along the Inner Relief Road urban corridor.

Pedestrian priority objectives

It is the objective of Sligo Borough Council to:

- O-PED-1** Pedestrianise O'Connell Street when the necessary funding to cover the costs of the pedestrianisation and enhancement of the street is provided by Government or other sources, and when the Borough Council by resolution deems it appropriate.
- O-PED-2** Continue the pedestrian prioritisation and environmental improvements of the City Centre to include Castle Street, Grattan Street, Market Street, High Street and John Street, when funding becomes available and when the Borough Council by resolution deems it appropriate.
- O-PED-3** Facilitate the provision of a waterfront walk from Kempton Promenade (Brewery Lane) to the J. Fallon footbridge.
- O-PED-4** Require the construction of a waterfront walk along the river from Hyde Bridge to Hughes Bridge on the western side (any redevelopment of existing premises in this vicinity will be required to reserve space for such a walkway).
- O-PED-5** Ensure the provision of a pedestrian link between Connaughton Road area and the Stephen Street/ The Mall, as part of any redevelopment of the urban blocks bound by these streets
- O-PED-6** Encourage the provision of an additional pedestrian link between the Mall and the River Garavogue, approximately mid-way between Bridge Street and River Lane.
- O-PED-7** Facilitate the provision of a dedicated pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Cleveragh to Hazelwood
- O-PED-8** Provide a pedestrian and cycle bridge or boardwalk on the east side of Markiewicz Bridge, linking Bridge Street to Thomas Street at Kempton Parade/JFK Parade.
- O-PED-9** Encourage the provision of a pedestrian and cycle bridge over the IRR linking the Train Station to the proposed Adelaide Square.

Policies for city centre traffic management

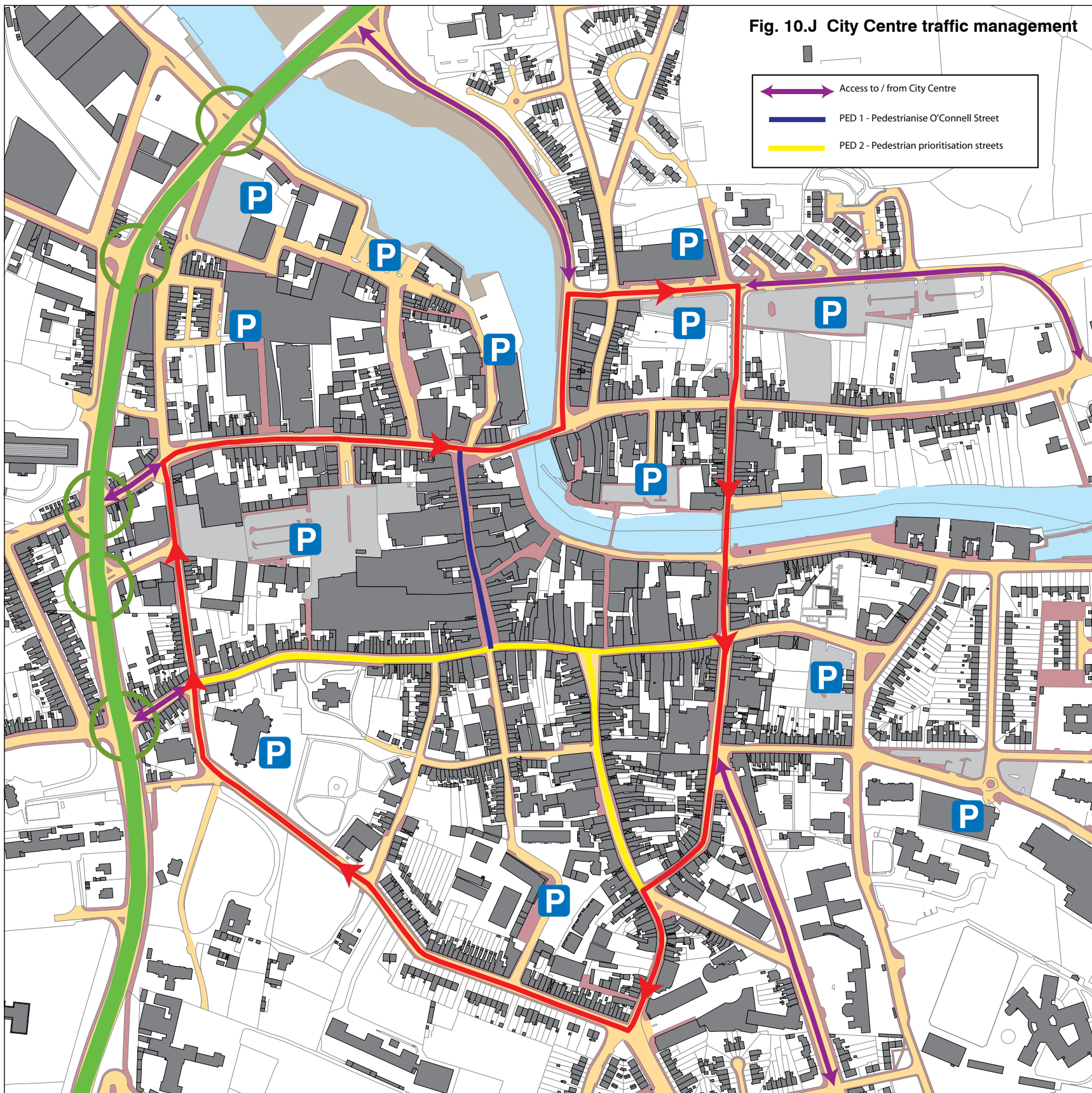
It is the policy of Sligo Borough Council to:

- P-CC-TM-1** Discourage through traffic from penetrating the city centre, by adopting a circulatory system that directs traffic around the centre on a “ring route”, providing multi-storey car parks on the edge of the centre.
- P-CC-TM-2** Pedestrianise or improve the pedestrian environment and give cycling priority to streets within the centre, restricting on-street car parking and undertaking environmental enhancements.
- P-CC-TM-3** Reduce traffic flows in the city centre and introduce traffic calming (shared priority) on main city centre streets including Castle Street, Grattan Street, John Street, Market Street and High Street.
- P-CC-TM-4** Encourage north-south traffic to use the Sligo Inner Relief Road.
- P-CC-TM-5** Encourage the development of new pedestrian routes across the city centre and facilitate these with appropriate pedestrian crossings.
- P-CC-TM-6** Encourage the provision of and facilitate access to new multi-storey car parks adjoining the circular/ring route.
- P-CC-TM-7** Ensure that all new traffic management measures include, as far as possible, improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and for vulnerable road users.
- P-CC-TM-8** Establish and protect public rights of way.

Objectives for city centre traffic management

It is the objective of Sligo Borough Council to:

- O-CC-TM-1** Continuously monitor traffic flows and modify flow patterns, as necessary, to improve overall traffic flows. This may involve the introduction of one-way systems, flow reversals, traffic calming schemes, improved signage etc.
- O-CC-TM-2** Improve traffic flows at interchanges between the Inner Relief Road and the City Centre (including west to east traffic) especially at the major city-centre junctions along Sligo Inner Relief Road i.e. John Street, Ted Nealon Road, Dunnes Stores, Lord Edward Street, Lynns Place and Hughes Bridge.



10.5 Car parking

Car parking in the City and Environs is available both on-street and off-street, with access to the majority of off-street parking directly from the ring route around the city centre. Short-stay parking is permitted in the city centre, with longer-stay parking available outside the core. There are approximately 1,060 on-street parking spaces, 1,000 public off-street spaces and a further 1,650 private off-street spaces. The largest private off-street car park is the multi-storey at Quayside Shopping Centre, with 375 spaces available to the north-west of the city centre.

A pay-and-display parking meter system is in operation, with rates reflecting the various types of use and location. All on-street parking within the city centre is short-stay, with a one-hour time limit and with both hourly rates and 20-minute rates. The duration of stay is lengthened relative to distance from the centre.

Outside the ring route, two-hour parking is permitted, while all-day parking is available in the off-street car parks outside the city centre.

Details of all major car parks within the city are shown on signboards along main approaches to the city centre. Directional signs are provided to each car park location. An *Electronic Parking Information System* (Telematics) has also been erected in four key locations on the approach roads to Sligo, to inform customers on real-time parking space availability within specific car parks, with directional and other relevant information also displayed. This system directs traffic to available car parking outside the city centre, thus helping to reduce congestion in the area. It is intended to expand this electronic information system in conjunction with the development of further multi-storey car parks, both public and private.



Car Parking Strategy

The car parking strategy for Sligo aims to ensure that there is an adequate supply of spaces to support the city centre businesses and that these spaces are effectively managed.

In the city centre, there will be a presumption against long-term parking in preference to short-term stay and a preference for off-street car parking rather than on-street car parking.

Furthermore, in the interests of using the city centre's lands more efficiently and effectively, there is a preference for multi-storey/underground car parks rather than surface car parking.

The multi-storey car parks will be supported by two surface car parks to the immediate south of the city centre – Cathedral Car Park and Market Yard, and by St. Anne's surface car park to the east of the centre.

Concurrently with the development of the multi-storey car parks, there will be a removal of some smaller surface car parking areas at Quay Street and Stephen Street, which will be redeveloped into urban squares.

Car parking policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-CP-1** Adopt car parking management standards within the city centre that reduce on-street car parking in favour of off-street parking and impose a restriction on long term parking (i.e. commuter) facilities in favour of short-term (business, retail and leisure) parking.
- P-CP-2** Restrict parking facilities to locations on the immediate edge of the city centre, with access from, or just outside the ring route.
- P-CP-3** Ensure a spatially-balanced provision of car parking, to help sustain existing businesses and encourage new developments in each quarter of the city centre.
- P-CP-4** Require all individual developments to provide for their own parking demands within their sites, where practicable.
- P-CP-5** Encourage the development and operation of multi-storey car parks at suitable locations by the private sector.

Car parking objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough Council to:

- O-CP-1** Encourage the provision of multi-storey/underground car parks at the following strategic locations:
 - a. Connaughton Road: catering for approximately 800-850 spaces, serving traffic coming into the city from the north and east;
 - b. Quay Quarter: serving those coming from the north;
 - c. Railway Station, west of IRR: serving traffic from the west;
 - d. Wine Street Block: catering for approximately 1,000 cars, serving traffic primarily from the south;
 - e. lands between Market Yard and the Lungy: serving traffic primarily from the south;
 - f. Abbey Street/Charlotte Street: serving traffic primarily from the south-east.
- O-CP-2** Encourage the provision of a multi-storey car park west of the Inner Relief Road, with adequate pedestrian access to the city centre, to reduce predicted congestion along the Inner Relief Road and ultimately in the city centre.
- O-CP-3** Ensure that all spaces are adequately delineated and marked, as inefficient spacing between parked vehicles often means that fewer vehicles are able to park.
- O-CP-4** Continue the enforcement of car parking by-laws.
- O-CP-5** Expand the Telematics system on the approach roads to Sligo city centre.

10.6 Public transport

It is the aim of the local authorities to encourage a significant shift from travelling by car to other modes of transport. Therefore it is of major importance to improve the attractiveness of public transport in Sligo and Environs. The local authorities acknowledge that changing people's travel patterns is harder to accomplish than establishing them. Therefore, the road and land use structure of the city has been designed with public transport routes in mind.

10.6.1 Commuter rail

Iarnrod Eireann provides seven services per day between Sligo and Dublin, having introduced new railcars in 2007.

It may be feasible to use the existing inter-city railway to provide a commuter service from Ballymote to Sligo via Collooney and Ballysadare. The proposed railway station with park-and-ride facilities in Ballysadare would facilitate commuters travelling from West Sligo.

It is also proposed to reserve lands for a future transit stop in the Oakfield area, to accommodate the proposed new IDA Business Park and the mixed-use area at the southern end of the Economic Spine.

In order for commuter rail transport to be viable in the long-term, the proposed land-use structure on both sides of the railway line should accommodate increases in residential density as well as significant employment generators.

10.6.2 Bus services

Sligo functions as the bus distribution centre for the North-West. Bus Eireann provides long-distance, local and rural commuter services, as well as city services. The city service covers central and western parts of Sligo City, with buses running every 20 minutes. The city service also covers Rosses Point, Strandhill, Collooney and Ballysadare.

As Sligo expands, the bus routes in the city will need to be altered and new routes will have to be created to improve the convenience and accessibility of public transport and to reduce trip-times.

This has been a key consideration in the preparation of this Plan. The proposed road network enables the provision of a series of loops that can minimise walk times to transport stops and serve the main places of activity (workplaces, schools, the hospital, the Institute of Technology, neighbourhood centres etc.) and the city centre. The local authorities will continue to work with Bus Eireann to optimise bus services for the existing and future city quarters.

10.6.3 Transportation hub – railway station, bus station and new urban square

The existing railway station in Sligo already functions as a transportation node for the North-West in combination with the nearby bus station. It is important to retain and strengthen the synergy of this node. The availability of undeveloped lands immediately to the north (rear) of the railway station, close to the city centre, offers the opportunity to provide an integrated Transportation Hub for the North-West.

Bus and bicycle parking could be accommodated at this location, as well as a multi-storey car park for bus and rail passengers. It is proposed to provide access to this area from Finisklin Road/Lynn's Place, with Union Place/Inner Relief Road confined to pedestrian access.

To consolidate the envisaged Transportation Hub, it is proposed to redevelop a wider area by providing an urban square to the east of the railway station and the Inner Relief Road, with good pedestrian linkage to the railway station. Adelaide Square – to be located at the junction of Adelaide and Lord Edward Streets – will act as a gateway to the city centre (see also Section 12.4.1 in the Urban Design chapter).



Bus terminal in front of Mac Diarmada Railway Station

Public transport policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-PT-1** Strengthen Sligo's function as a transportation node in the North-West and facilitate an easy interchange between different transportation modes.
- P-PT-2** Continue to work with the service providers, such as Iarnrod Eireann and Bus Eireann, to reduce the need for car trips by improving the availability, reliability and quality of public transport.
- P-PT-3** Ensure that the design and layout of new developments facilitates circulation by foot, bicycle and public transport.
- P-PT-4** Support the reopening and development of the Western Rail Corridor.
- P-PT-5** Promote and facilitate the development of a commuter rail service to Sligo City using existing rail lines.
- P-PT-6** Encourage the maximization of freight transport by rail and through the port.

Public transport objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-PT-1** Promote the redevelopment of the Railway Station and backlands in the vicinity as a major Transportation Hub with a multi-modal interchange, catering for rail, bus (local and regional), car parking, a bicycle station and other bicycle facilities.
- O-PT-2** Provide for bus parking for tour and coach operators on lands to the rear of the Railway Station. These lands shall be accessed from Finisklin Road/Lynn's Place, with pedestrian access only from Union Place/Inner Relief Road.
- O-PT-3** Reserve lands for a future transit stop at Oakfield, in the vicinity of the proposed new IDA Business Park and the mixed-use area at the southern end of the economic spine.
- O-PT-4** Examine the feasibility of a rail link between Sligo and Derry via Manorhamilton and Enniskillen, and the integration of such a rail link with new national road alignments and designs, i.e. N16 (Enniskillen Road).
- O-PT-5** Retain the rail infrastructure, including the Quay branch line and freight yard at Sligo Quay.



Fig. 10.K A possible urban design solution for integrating the Transportation Hub with the proposed Adelaide Square and the City Centre (courtesy of Luciana Campos, urbanist)

10.6.4 Taxi ranks

Taxis provide an essential service to the city, complementing the rail and bus. Taxi ranks are provided within the city centre as well as to the east and west of it. It is intended to continue to review the location and operation of taxi ranks in and around the city centre in order to optimise their use.

Taxi service objective	
It is the objective of Sligo Borough Council to:	
O-TX-1	Maintain taxi rank facilities at a central location within the city centre and at other locations to the east and west of it.

10.6.5 Park-and-ride

Park-and-ride facilities allow commuters and visitors to park their cars outside the city and transfer to a bus or train, or car-pool for the rest of their trip. Park-and-ride systems form part of any sustainable transport plan, as they can reduce traffic entering a city centre.

The most appropriate system in Sligo would be a park-and-ride facility allowing transfer from car to bus. However, the provision of such facilities in Sligo may not be viable in the short term. The concept shall be further examined in the medium-term, as transportation strategies develop. The identification of suitable sites on the north and south sides of the city is essential.

Park-and-ride objectives	
It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
O-PR-1	Identify sites for the provision of park-and ride-facilities.
O-PR-2	Explore the provision of bus lanes on major access routes to the city centre.

10.7 Cycling



Although cycling is an environmentally-sound means of transport, it does not play a major role in Sligo. Cycling is a cost-effective, non-polluting and highly flexible transportation mode, which can reduce traffic congestion in the city. The local authorities aim to promote cycling as a means of commuting to Sligo City, a means of transport around the city, and as a leisure activity.

A Cycling Strategy for Sligo will be produced, with specific targets to develop a cycling network within and throughout Sligo, including the provision of bicycle parking facilities, and the promotion of cycling as an alternative mode of transport.

Proposed cycle routes

Cyclists experience numerous difficulties on the existing local road network, including the discomfort of cycling in heavy traffic and the danger posed by careless drivers. Encouraging cycling in Sligo will require a range of measures, including the introduction of physical improvements to the local road network for cyclists.

In order to facilitate cycling as a mode of transport for commuting, cycle routes will be facilitated on all approach roads to Sligo where feasible.

The Cycling Strategy will target specific routes for implementation on a phased basis.

Cycle lanes will be provided on all new strategic roads, including the Western Distributor Road and the Eastern Garavogue Bridge and approach roads.

A cycle lane will be provided along Hughes Bridge as part of the bridge widening scheme. Generally, all new roads will be designed with cycle lanes.

In order to encourage cycling as a mode of transport around the city, cycle routes will have to link residential areas with key points such as leisure facilities, schools, churches, hospitals, workplaces, recreational areas, colleges etc.

The Cycling Strategy will target specific linkages for implementation on a phased basis.

Adequate bicycle parking in safe and convenient locations is an essential component of cycling infrastructure. Bicycle parking must be made available in all car parks, existing and planned. Bicycle parking should be provided in all new developments, in accordance with the standards set out in this plan, and also as part of cycle routes.

Increasing bicycle use in Sligo will require an integrated approach between the improvement of cycling infrastructure and promotion of its use.

Cycling policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-CY-1** Promote cycling as a mode of travel and implement relevant national policy in relation to cycling, including the Department of Transport's *National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020*.
- P-CY-2** Facilitate a network of safe and convenient cycle routes throughout the City and Environs, linking key institutional, educational, cultural, recreational and retail areas.
- P-CY-3** Ensure that where environmental improvements, traffic calming or road closures are being introduced to a street, there is consideration for the movement of bicycles.
- P-CY-4** Require that all new developments are designed to integrate into a cycling network linking with adjoining development areas.
- P-CY-5** Ensure that adequate cycle facilities are provided in all new institutions, employment centres, sports complexes and leisure facilities, in the form of sheltered bicycle parking and locker rooms with shower facilities.

Cycling objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-CY-1** Prepare a Cycling Strategy for Sligo, with specific targets to develop a cycling network within and throughout Sligo, including the provision of bicycle parking facilities, and to promote cycling as an alternative mode of transport.
- O-CY-2** Provide, improve and extend cycle routes on all existing roads, proposed roads, roads being upgraded and green corridors.
- O-CY-3** Provide bicycle parking facilities at all car parks.
- O-CY-4** Provide bicycle parking facilities in the city centre and at key institutional, educational, cultural, recreational and retail areas and at the Railway Station.