



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

GORT PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

AN COIMISIUN PLEANALA CASE NO. 323066-25

**GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL RESPONSE TO
OBSERVATION BY:**

S. FORAN

Preamble

Galway County Council submit the following response to the Shane Foran observation in respect of the Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project Part 10 Planning Application.

Galway County Council wishes to thank Shane Foran for his detailed observations regarding the Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project (Part 10 Planning Application). We note and appreciate the points raised in the submission and recognise the importance of ensuring that any proposed changes serve the best interests of the entire community.

Promoting Cycling and Responding to Competing Demands and Constraints:

We fully support cycling in urban / town centres and believe that it must be integrated in a safe and appropriate way to reduce potential conflict. As part of the design rationale, we have considered in balance all users including pedestrians, cyclists, cars, buses, delivery vehicles and emergency vehicles. We note their specific movement patterns in Gort.

Following detailed analysis of the existing street widths and available space, it was determined that most Streets within Gort are not wide enough to provide separate cycling facilities given they have parking or frontage activity that makes such provision impractical or disjointed. Design for such environments needs to think beyond standard roads and streets design, defining a slow speed road environment where cycles, pedestrians and motorised traffic can safely integrate. A good street design can help to create a bespoke solution that suits the local surrounding buildings and activities. The Public Realm proposals for Gort will deliver a series of measures to address multi-modal needs in a manner that responds to competing demands. These include:

- Cycle parking provision across the scheme.
- A narrower carriageway and traffic calming measures such as crossings and buildouts to reduce vehicle speeds in the town.
- A new roundabout to control speed at this important node with dedicated cycle approach ramps.
- Additional crossing points to reduce speeds and provide more permeability throughout the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

When developing the streets and spaces of Gort, we have considered movement both along and across, the numerous side streets, driveway access points and an increased number of pedestrian crossings.

The design philosophy is to reduce potential conflict between different users moving in different directions and to provide clear visible junctions and crossing points along the length of the street. A segregated cycle way would significantly increase conflict points between all users due to the physical nature of the street, the movement patterns and the presence of parked cars.

The proposals strike a balance between the need for parking provision in what is a rural market town and the need for public realm improvements for pedestrians and cyclists. To ignore the other important local demands in favour of segregated cycle lanes as suggested would mean a loss of 50% of the parking in the town centre and approaching streets which is not feasible given the feedback received across the stakeholder engagement events.

The proposals also consider future connections to the Athlone to Galway Cycleway (via Gort River Walk) and the Travel Corridor 10 from Gort to Loughrea via the R380.

Conclusion:

Galway County Council values the input given by all stakeholders throughout the community consultation process. This collaborative approach brought the communities priorities to the fore and these were incorporated as far as practicable into the proposed Public Realm Enhancement Project.

Signed on behalf of Galway County Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liam Hanrahan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liam Hanrahan

Director of Services.