



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Collaborative Town Centre Health Checks

Carrick-On-Shannon

Drumshanbo

Mohill



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

Edited by
Neil Galway,
Emma Forde,
Peter Stewart,
Melissa Martin,
Michael Vladeanu
and Justin McHenry



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Dr Neil Galway and MSc Planning & Development students

Edited by Emma Forde, Peter Stewart, Melissa Martin, Michael Vladeanu and Justin McHenry

Contributions by Clive Cooper, Yicun Wang, Michael McKenna, Brian Diamond, Conor Owens, Eleanor Attwood, Earth Lopez, Lynn Hunter, Katherine Blackwell-Smyth, Adam Lendum, Niamh Boyle, Aaron O'Brien, Martin Molloy, Supattra Tunngern, Lap KanWai, Nicole Service, Teresa O'Hare, Niamh Igoe, Ge Song, Weixuan Chen and Niall Togher.

Cover Photo: Nicola Timson

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Introduction

A variety of challenges, such as an increase in online shopping, prioritizing the car over pedestrians and economic difficulties, have played a part in the decline of the traditional high street across Ireland. As a result, the town centre of many towns has become an unwelcoming, low quality environment that further deters users. As the country responds to the economic and social challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, a focus needs to be placed on supporting town centers in order to sustain the businesses which reside there and the communities who use the space.

MSc Planning and Development students considered methods and projects which could aid towns in County Leitrim to become more resilient to these and other potential problems through completing Town Centre Health Check and Plan strategies for three of the county's towns. This project was carried out in conjunction with the members of staff in Leitrim County Council and the Heritage Council.

The selected towns were Carrick-on-Shannon, Drumshanbo and Mohill. These towns were chosen based on their proximity, as well as their varying characteristics and roles as part of the county. Therefore, each town presented distinctive urban characteristics and challenges.



Fieldwork was completed on the 7th and 8th of February 2020 after a briefing session for members of the Leitrim County Council and the Heritage Council. To collect the data, students carried out land use survey mapping, vehicular and pedestrian counts, interviews with local stakeholders and questionnaires with the general public.

After completing the research and compiling various development plans for the county (these are available upon request), the students then presented a summary of the reports to Leitrim County Council in June. This report will summarise the key findings from the Town Centre Health Checks for the three towns and outline development proposals that respond to identified challenges and opportunities.



Photos by Gerry Faughnan Photography

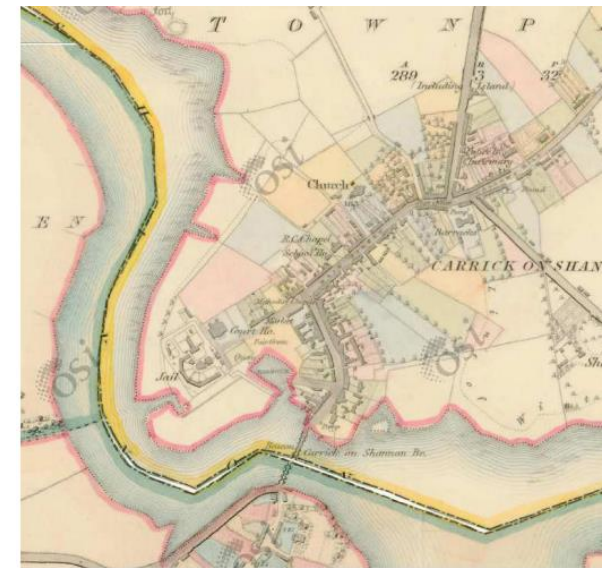


CARRICK-ON-SHANNON

Background

Carrick-on-Shannon is the county town of Leitrim and in recent years has developed into a major tourist destination, appealing particularly to the night-time economy.

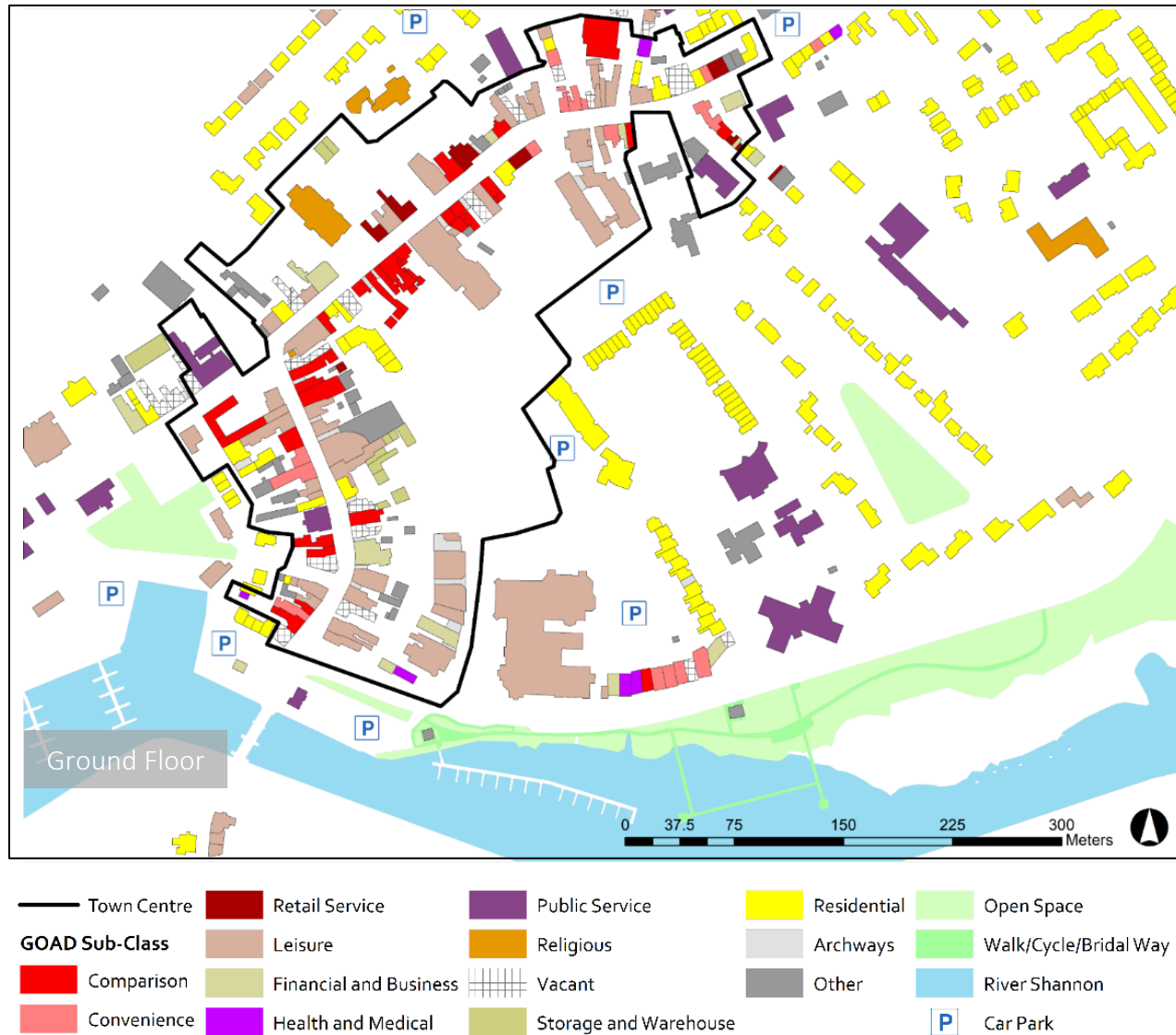
The town has a rich historical past with fortifications dating back to the Iron Age. Importantly, the town experienced development from being a major depot for river trade. The River Shannon remains as a key feature of the town, its tourism and its development. The river is also part of the unique Shannon-Erne Waterway, a 63km stretch of river with 16 locks, unlocking a scenic passage between Leitrim Village and the Upper Lough Erne. The town has a population of 4,062 (Census, 2016) and has seen growth in its population with a 3.3% increase since 2011.



First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1837 compared to the Present View (Carrick-on-Shannon Public Realm Improvement Works, 2018)

"Promoting the sustainable growth and regeneration of the Town Centre in order to develop and improve its social, economic, cultural and environmental assets, while highlighting its importance and function as a county town."

Town Centre Land Use Map



The primary use for ground floor units within the Carrick-on-Shannon town centre boundary was leisure, followed by other retail and comparison (non-food items such as clothing, jewellery, furniture). For buildings that contained one or more units with different uses, the primary use was recorded.

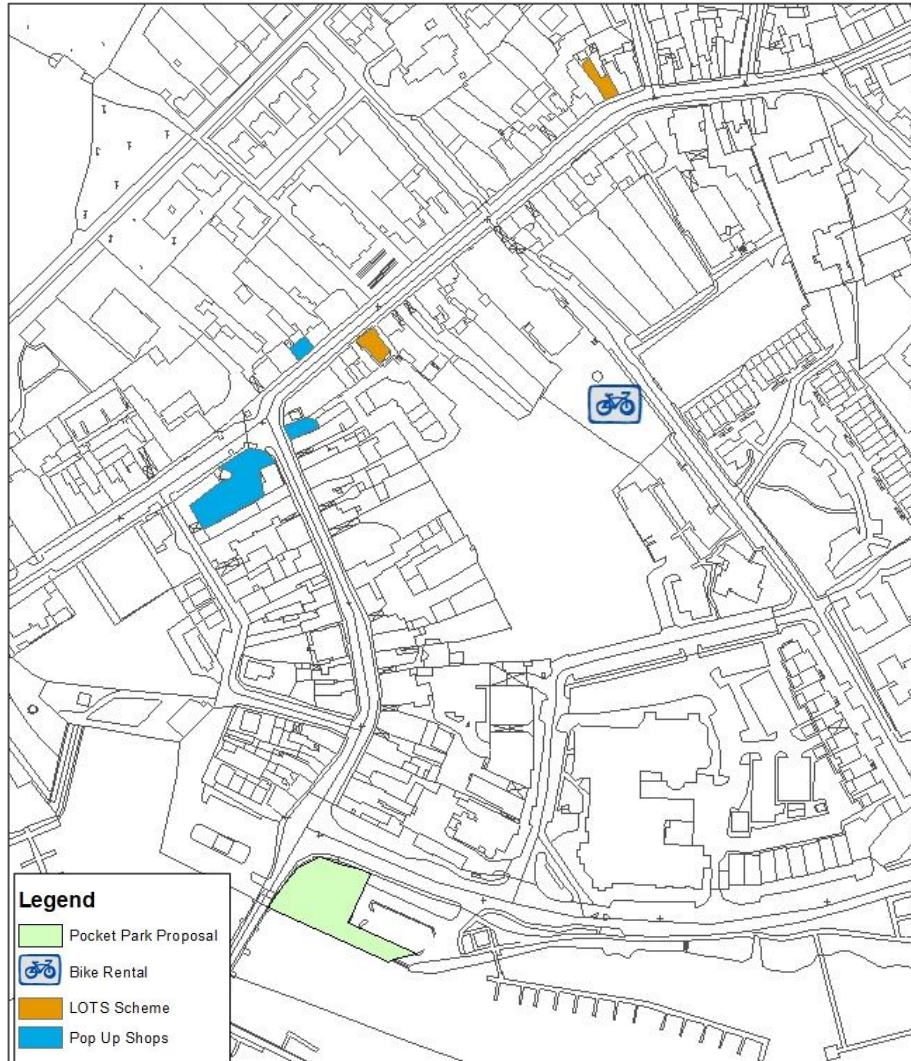
Only 9.7% of the ground floor units were vacant. Retail services made up 4.1% of ground floor units. The data collected shows that there is a good mix of uses in the town which are geared towards the evening and leisure economies.

Land uses at first floor level generally follow the same pattern with higher numbers of residential and vacant units.

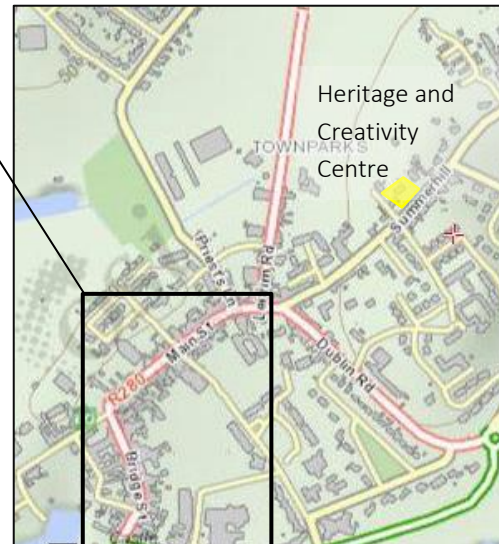
The retail vacancy rate of 30.5% is high relative to the overall vacancy rate because of the low overall number of retail units in the study area.

9.7%	30.5%
overall vacancy	retail vacancy

Regeneration, Strategy and Proposals Map



Proposal extent map showing the location of proposals in Carrick-on-Shannon. (Source: Boards.ie)



This map highlights the location of the regeneration proposals for Carrick-on-Shannon. One proposal, involving the St. Patrick's Hospital, is located outside of the town centre boundary.

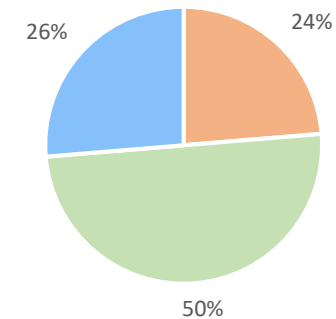
Tourism and Culture

Tourism plays a key role in the town as it is a popular weekend tourist destination, along the Wild Atlantic Way and within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. This is reflected in the provision of tourist accommodation, leisure activities, restaurants, and bars in the town centre, as well as the town's purple flag status.

The most common association with the town, from the questionnaire responses, was hen and stag parties. The general perception of hen and stags is a divisive topic as 50% of participants wanted to see a restriction on them in the future.

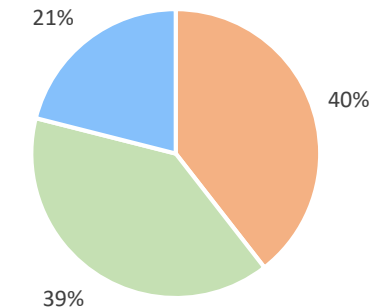


Stag and Hen Do in the Future

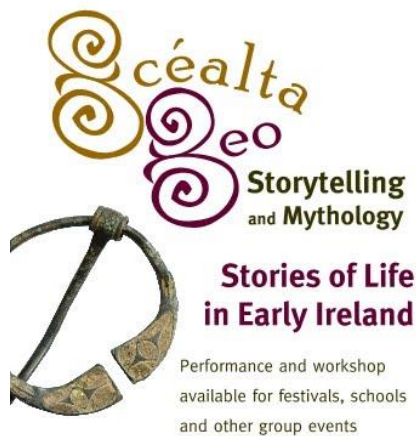


Increased restricted Indifferent

General Perception of Stag and Hen Parties



Generally Positive generally Negative Indifferent



Events held by the Ardagh Heritage and Creativity Centre in Co. Longford. (Image: <http://creativeardagh.blogspot.com/p/scealta-beo.html>)



St. Patrick's Community Hospital, the proposed site. (Image: Google Maps).

Proposal 1: Heritage and Creativity Centre

The site of St. Patrick's Hospital was built as a workhouse in 1841 and is currently on the Record of Protected Structures. To the rear of the site is the Attic Memorial and the Famine Garden of Remembrance. This site is currently in use as a hospital but is moving to a new site in the near future leaving the need for a new use to secure the future of this building.

This centre would host exhibition space for information and artefacts relating to Carrick-on-Shannon's history, as well as space for educational and creative activities and workshops. Currently there is no museum in Carrick-on-Shannon, but the town has a long history and archaeological record. This proposal would highlight the current heritage of the town, whilst ensuring the protection and sustainable use of the built heritage.

The facilities could aid in attracting a more diverse range of tourists through promoting history and heritage, whilst strengthening Carrick-on-Shannon's position on the Wild Atlantic Way.

Heritage related activities, like those provided at the Ardagh Heritage and Creativity Centre in Co. Longford (top left), celebrate the town's history and benefit both tourists and residents as they enrich the character of the town and its history. The proposal also takes inspiration from the South Downs Creativity Centre, Sussex which is 'designed to create a financially self-sustaining space for a new museum alongside British art, craft, food and education'.

Heritage



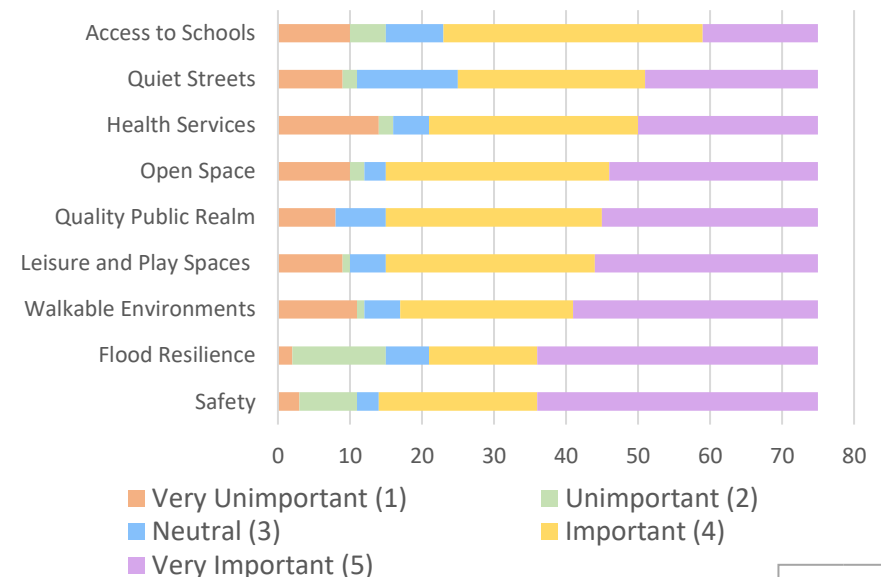
There is a rich build heritage in Carrick-on-Shannon as the town centre's character derives from its development in the 19th century with much of the built fabric deriving from this period with key landmark building such as the Costello Chapel (pictured top left), St George's and St Mary's churches and the Clock Tower.

The River Shannon continues to serve as the most important element of the town's natural heritage. When looking at the factors for better living, many aspects regarding natural heritage were considered very important by respondents.

Furthermore, when asked about the importance of certain factors in the town aspects regarding heritage, such as flood resilience, walkable environments and open spaces, were commonly stated as very important.



Factors for Better Living: How important are the following factors?

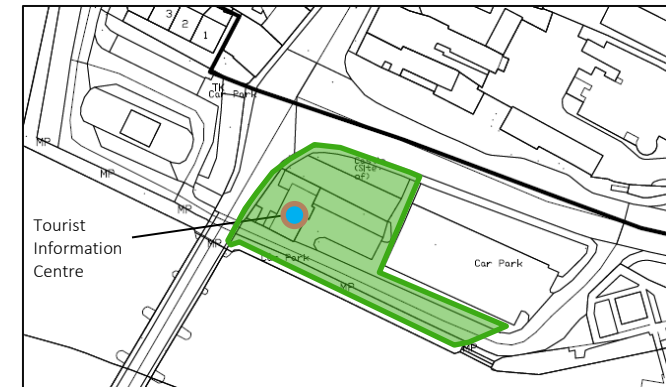


Proposal 2: Riverside Pocket Park

The development of a pocket park would not only enhance the natural heritage of the river and its connectivity to the town, but also contribute to flood risk mitigation through the use of permeable natural surfaces. This proposal also has the potential to make the location of the tourist office more prominent by providing a new public space as you enter the county and town centre.

By using the same material as the planned public realm improvement scheme to resurface the existing road as a shared street, the space would be maximised while slowing cars. This would mean the road network in the area would remain unchanged, as only the car park (containing 7 spaces) outside of the Tourist Information Centre would be developed as a green space. Furthermore, leaving the space open creates flexibility for various uses such as the use of tactical urbanism (short term, low cost projects) to provide various uses for diverse users, while also adding another attraction in the town.

Current Site

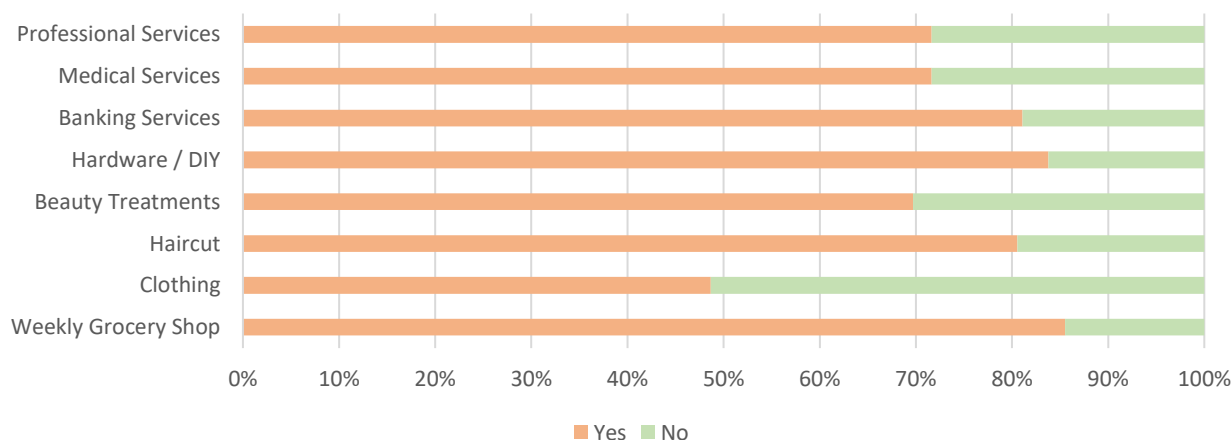


Commercial and Retail

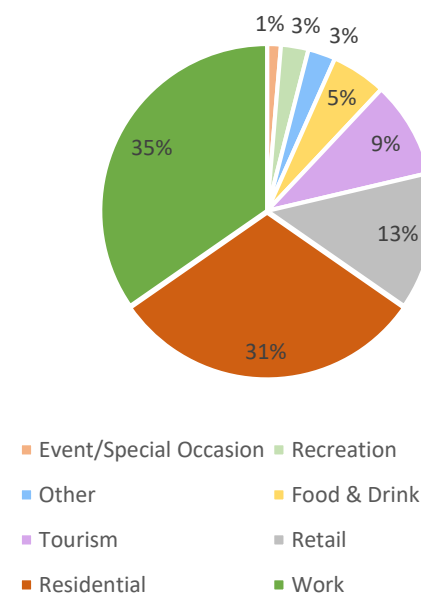
Commercial performance has a major impact on the viability and vibrancy of a town. Importantly, as stated in the Leitrim Retail Strategy 2015-2021, as Carrick-on-Shannon is the largest town within the County, it has the widest retail base and offers over 200 businesses, including retail produce and retail-related services. There is a strong emphasis on tourism-related shops and bijou shopping in the town centre. Hence, economic vitality is of the utmost importance for this town.

From the questionnaire, 13% of respondents were in the town for retail purposes, with most being in the town for work related activities at 35%. Also, when asked they would shop outside the town, nearly 60% said it was due to a better variety of shops. The goods and services most likely to be purchased in Carrick-on-Shannon were groceries and hardware and DIY with clothing being the thing that people were most likely to purchase in other places.

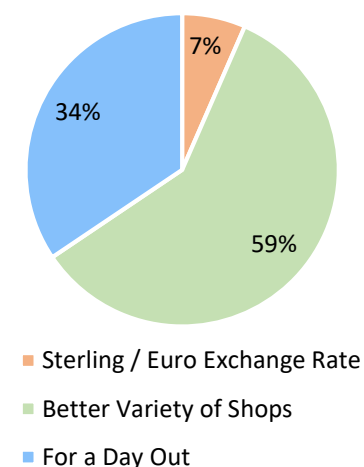
Goods and Services in Carrick on Shannon



Why are you in Carrick on Shannon?



Reasons to shop in other Towns

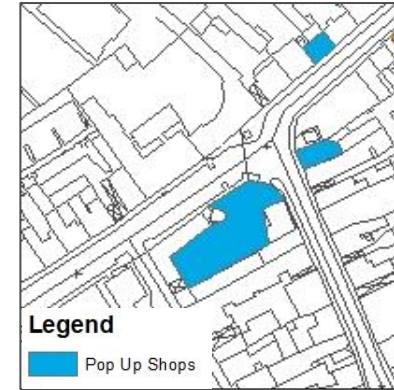


Proposal 3: Pop-up Shops and Spaces

The proposal for commercial and retail for Carrick-on-Shannon surrounds the culture of pop-up shops and temporary spaces to bring around permanent change and reduce ground floor vacancy rates, which are currently just under 10%. Two vacant buildings, from our land use map, have been identified for these spaces.

The focus of the new 'pop-up' spaces will be for local entrepreneurs to develop businesses within the centre of Carrick on Shannon, especially during times of peak tourism (e.g. Carrick Carnival). Creating a space for pop-up shops also creates a place for innovation and creativity to thrive. Businesses may interact to run events once an initiative has been set up. The use of these spaces may not be exclusively retail, with workshops and even cultural events taking place in these buildings. Importantly, this proposal will also seek to build upon Retail Strategy Policy 8 of Leitrim Retail Strategy 2015-2021.

Moreover, this would have capacity to produce a greater variety in shops, which would attract a greater number of visitors. Given the nationwide challenges of improving town centre vitality and viability such a proposal would benefit from National government support, which could include subsidised set up costs, rates incentives and/or short-term lease arrangements. Most importantly, if successful, shops could remain in place for the long term. There is also the possibility of extending this culture to the market square of the town, through market stalls.



Concept picture of pop-up stalls in the Market Square



An example of a previous pop-up shop project (TheStoreFront, 2020)

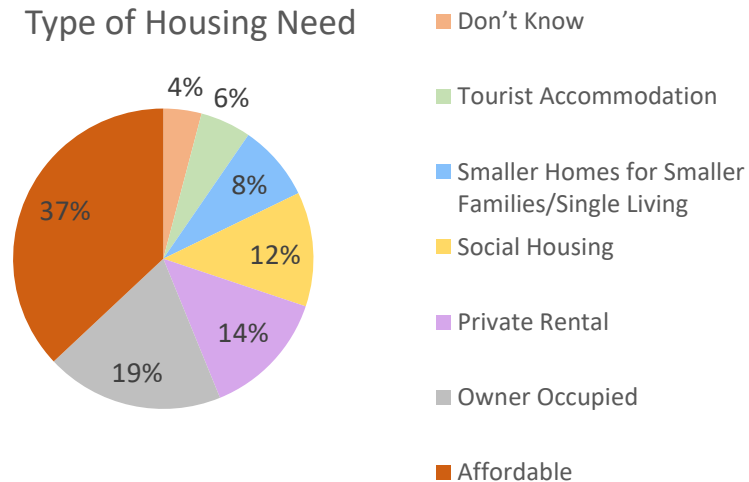


Town Centre Living

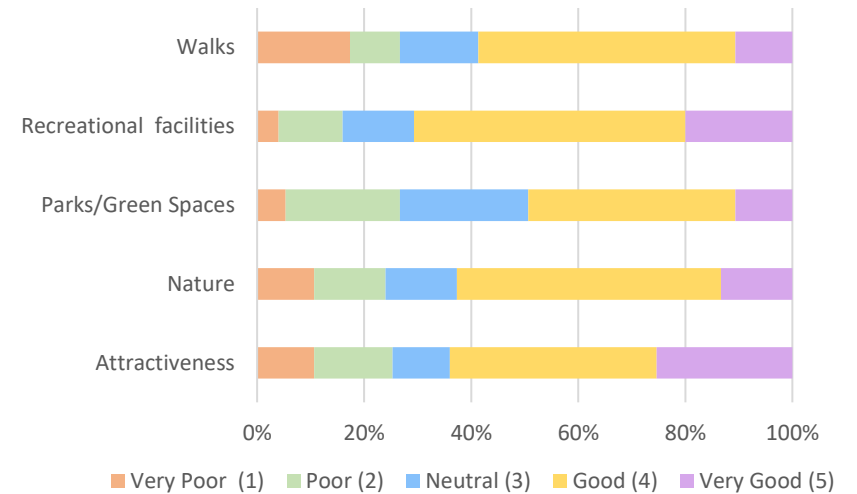
It is known that town centre living can improve levels of economic and social activity within the town. Accordingly, increasing the population of the town centre can encourage local businesses and amenities to thrive, whilst also improving the town's sense of community and engagement with the built environment.

From our results, 75% of people surveyed did not live in the town centre, meaning only 25% surveyed did. Also, when asked what type of housing people would like to see within their town, 37% wanted affordable housing. Importantly, given the dominance of the evening economy, we are aiming to introduce a younger demographic into the town centre. Also, with the high rating of the town's natural environment and the Carrick On Shannon Public Realm Improvement Scheme, we want to encourage more people to live within the town, to fully utilise its natural and built environment.

Type of Housing Need



Natural Environment Rating



Proposal 4: First Floor Living



An example of a redeveloped apartment in the centre of a town (Homeklondike, 2017)

This proposal seeks to renovate and reuse currently vacant first floor buildings within the town (predominantly on the main street) for residential use. Combined with the Public Realm Improvement Scheme, we want to encourage more people to live within the centre of the town, bringing a plethora of economic and social benefits that come with a larger town centre community of residents. This proposal stems from the 'Living Over the Shop' (LOTS) and the 'Living City Initiative' (LCI). Moreover, the LOTS scheme is seen within NI but was discontinued in Ireland during 2006. LCI is seen in some Irish cities and has proven benefits. To help facilitate this proposal, national government could consider the introduction of attractive tax incentives and grants to help owners to convert underused upper floors.

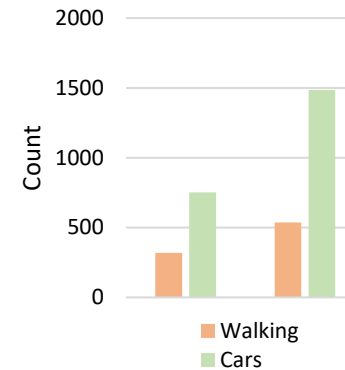
Ultimately, this proposal would provide housing and reduce first floor vacancy rates, thus, increasing the number of people living in the town. Within 2020, there is the need to attract a younger demographic to live in the town centre and reap the full benefits of the Public Realm Improvement Scheme. This proposal will have flexibility in its implementation. During our field work, we did not have access to the upper floors so vacancy was identified through visual analysis. We have suggested two possible buildings that could avail of this scheme but it could relate to any building with underused upper floors.

Movement and Accessibility

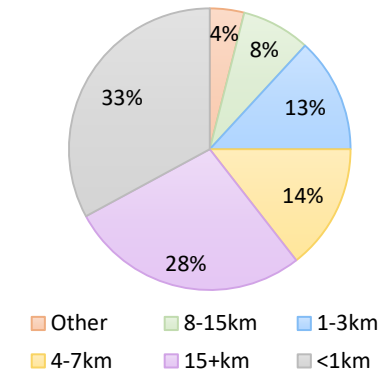
Every town in Ireland should be accessible to all abilities in society, thus being able to move freely around the town for work and leisure activities. From our results, it is clear there is high dependency on cars within the centre of the Carrick-on-Shannon, this is illustrated with the car vs footfall count graph and proportional symbol map.

Moreover, when asked how far people travel to get into the town, 76% of people surveyed travelled a maximum of 7km. This result illustrates the potential for cycle networks and local transport links. Importantly, from the questionnaire, the greatest mode of transport into Carrick-on-Shannon was the private vehicle with 64%. The most unpopular mode of transport was cycling, with 7%. We also asked people on their perception of infrastructure. Positive aspects of the town centre were footpath cleanliness and footpath quality in the town. However, the results show that the aspects most in need of improvement are cycling infrastructure and traffic.

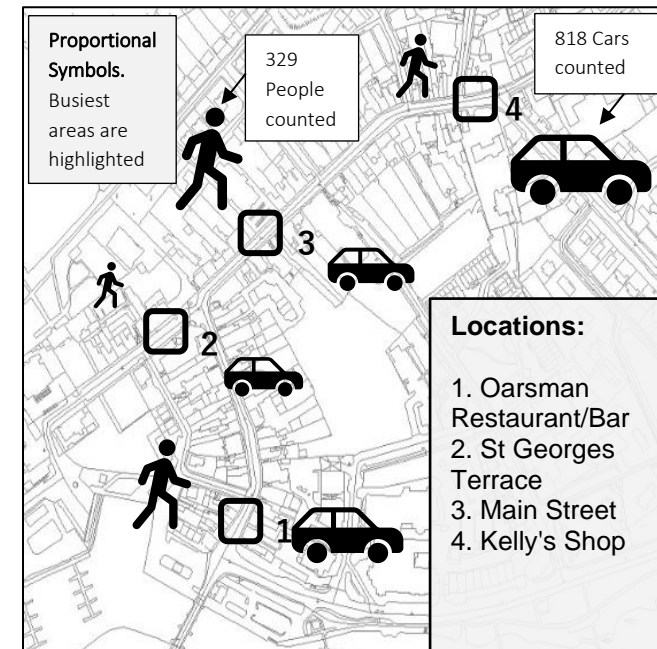
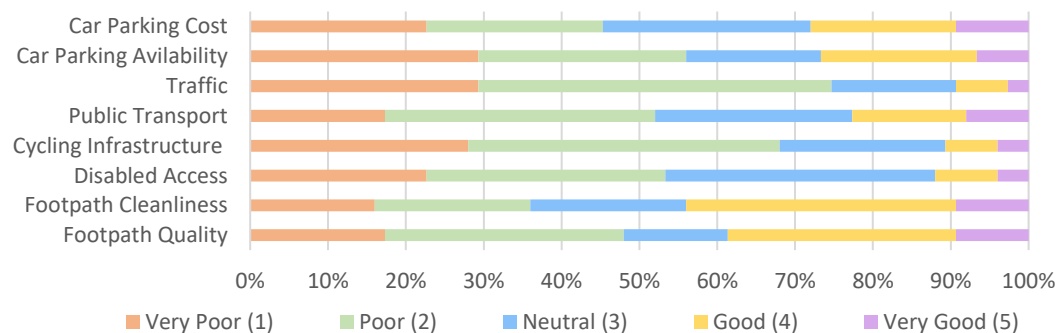
Pedestrian Count vs Car Count



Distance Travelled (km)



Infrastructure Perception in Carrick on Shannon

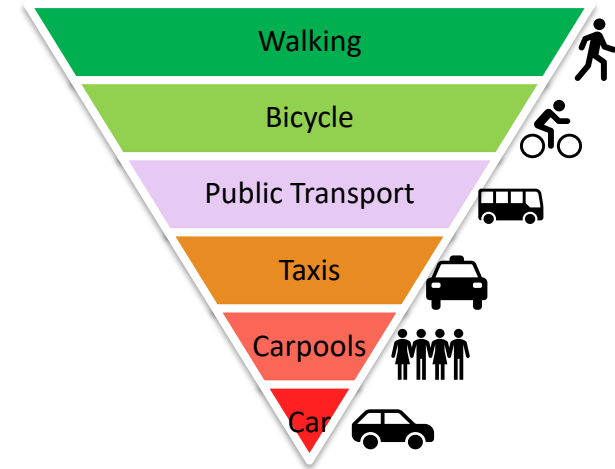


Proposal 5: Council Rental Bikes

This proposal seeks to promote more sustainable forms of transport within the town and reduce the dependence on car usage within Carrick on Shannon. From our survey results it was clear that there was a high dependency on cars and low cycle usage. Accordingly, we want to reverse this and rethink mobilities within the town. One way we can facilitate this is to give people the capacity to cycle, through the implementation of a council owned rental bike scheme. Inspiration has come from 'Dublinbikes' in Dublin and the 'Just Eat' bikes in Belfast.

Furthermore, in line with the Carrick on Shannon Public Realm Scheme, a suitable rental location/shed location would be in the area being developed surrounding Flynn's Field. This area has numerous possibilities of direct connection through existing archways and lanes to Main Street and Bridge Street. Importantly, this would encourage the use of the shared space within the town centre within the Carrick on Shannon Public Realm Improvement Scheme.

Rethinking Mobilities



Concept images for bicycle storage and bike rental stands.



CLONANN
MANORHAMILTON
R208
Down Clonann
DRUMKEERAN
On Donahavagh
DOWRA
Lough Allen
WILLIAMSBURG

Carra pharmacy

The Highstreet Butcher

TIGHE T.V

BAR MARIAN'S LOUNGE

DRUMSHANBO

Background

Drumshanbo is in the heart of County Leitrim and is approximately 13km away from Carrick-On-Shannon and 22km away from Mohill. The two main roads connecting Drumshanbo to other towns are the R207 & R208, which both run through the centre of the town. The town has a growing population, rising from 623 in 2002 to 902 in 2016, with 55% of the total population between the ages of 18-64 (Census, 2002 & 2016).

Drumshanbo originated from growth in the iron industry in the 17th century as this was the location of the Finery Forgery. The town has a unique two-tier, stone fronted High Street feature which leads onto Ireland's shortest Main Street, situated at the foot of Sliabh an Iariann, towards the Southern end of Lough Allen. Drumshanbo is surrounded by picturesque natural beauty that should be accentuated by the bustling activity of a busy, close-knit rural town centre.

The Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021 designates Drumshanbo as a Tier 2B support town to Ballinamore. This is due to Drumshanbo being a smaller town but providing important services, transport links and other facilities to support the other larger towns located within Leitrim. There are several opportunities for regeneration and development within Drumshanbo within retail, housing, accessibility, heritage and tourism. The goal of the following proposals is to:

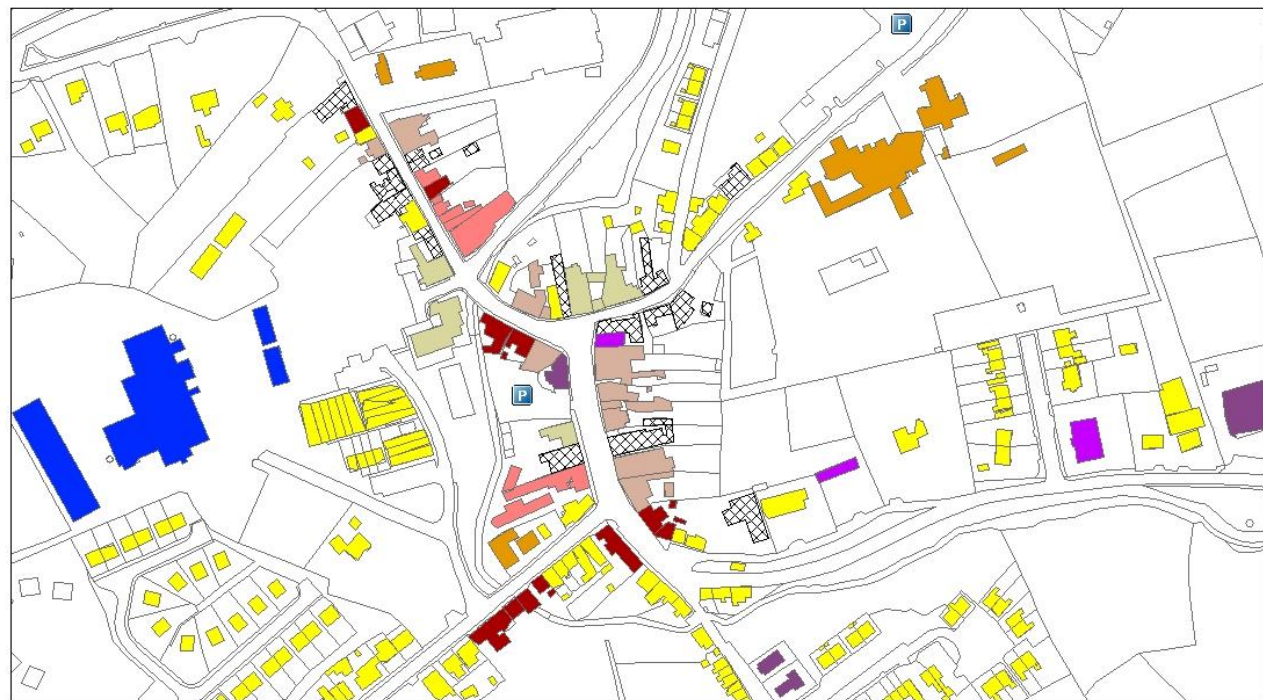
“Make Drumshanbo a more accessible town to live, work and visit with emphasis on developing heritage, tourist and retail opportunities.”



(First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1837)

Town Centre Land Use Map

Drumshanbo is traditionally a market town, however, from the land use map below, it is evident the town centre is dominated by food and drink outlets and other leisure services. Educational and health services are located to the East along the R208, with shopping along Main Street creating a mixed retail and service use. Open space is located at the outskirts of the town at the famous floating boardwalk that provides a blue-way and a greenway, connecting Drumshanbo to other towns such as Carrick-On-Shannon. The town has a total vacancy rate of 23%, creating an unappealing and unattractive appearance which may discourage businesses to locate to the town and tourists to visit. The highest percentage of vacancy was seen along Church Street and Main Street, with vacancy rates of 30% and 16% respectively. Drumshanbo requires regeneration and development to reinvigorate the town centre and attract businesses and people to the town.

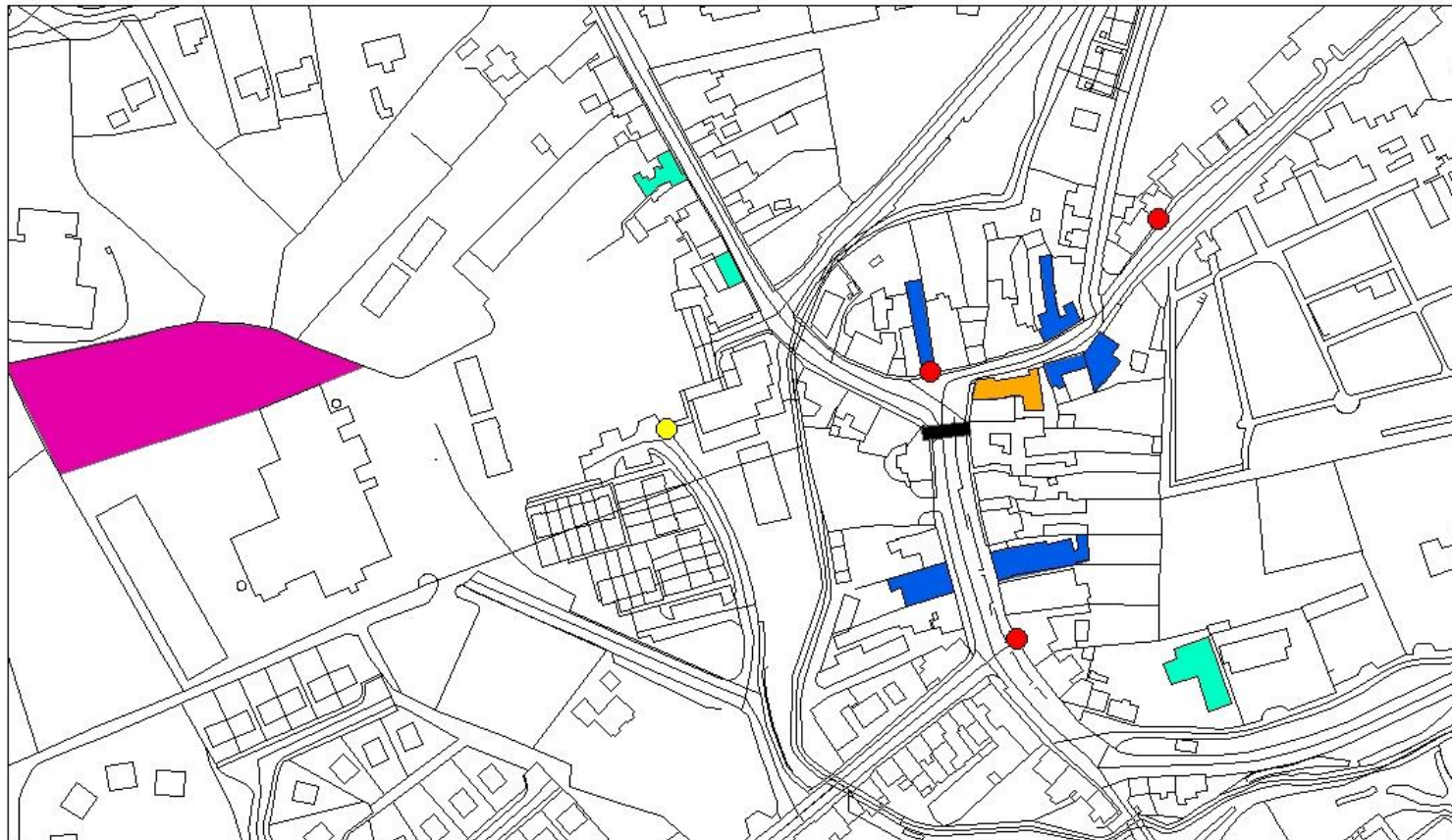


Legend

Car Park	Financial/ Business Service	Public Service	Retail
Commercial	Health Service	Religious Service	Vacant
Convenience	Leisure	Residential	



Regeneration, Strategy and Proposals Map



Legend

Heritage

● Signage Scheme

● Start of Drumhalwy Extension

Commercial and Retail

■ Development of Vacant Land

■ Vacant Buildings for Retail Development

Tourism, Culture & Evening Economy

■ Develop Tourist Information Centre

Town Centre Living

■ Tourist Accommodation

Movement and Accessibility

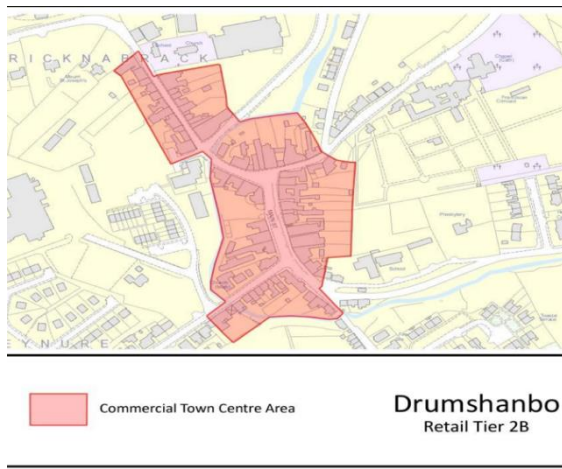
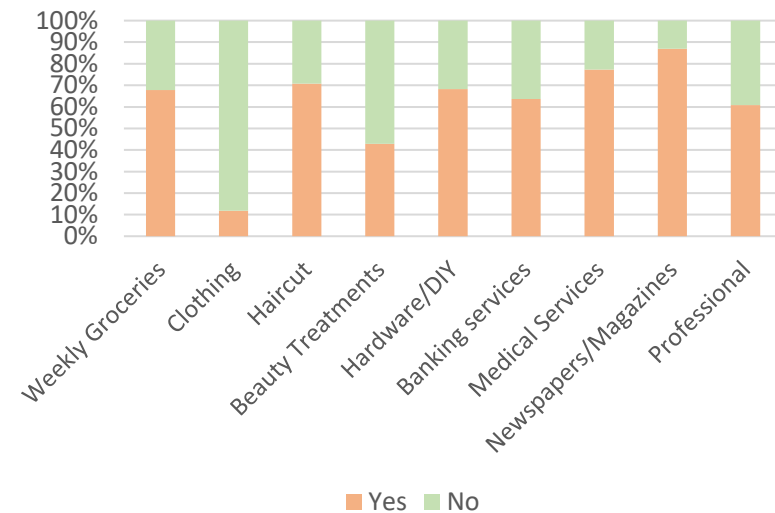
■ Zebra Crossing

Commercial and Retail

The retail core of Drumshanbo is dominated by small, privately-owned, independent businesses, which mainly consist of convenience stores, food and drink outlets, pharmacies, beauty facilities and banks. There are 20 vacant buildings within the primary retail core, with a 30% vacancy rate seen on Church Street. Vacancy creates an unappealing and unattractive view of the town for residents and tourists, hindering the use of commercial and retail services.

From the questionnaire results, the most purchased goods within Drumshanbo were weekly groceries, medical services and papers/magazines. Only 11% of respondents stated they would shop for clothing in Drumshanbo, with most stating they would shop in larger towns such as Carrick-On-Shannon and Sligo, due to a better variety of shops as well as lower prices.

What goods/ services would you purchase/use in Drumshanbo?



Proposal 1: Development of Vacant Land

This proposal seeks to regenerate and renovate vacant and derelict properties and land across Drumshanbo. Regenerating this derelict commercial site within proximity to The Shed Distillery, will enable the business to develop and extend their current operations. It would improve the visual attractiveness and enhance visitor's experience of the new centre. The example illustrates how the land could be used by the Distillery to produce their own botanicals for their Gunpowder Gin and Vodka. Redeveloping this land could boost the towns tourist pull.



The map below shows properties and land that could be redeveloped within Drumshanbo's retail core. Vacant properties create blighted gaps in the landscape and are eye sores, public safety hazards and represent a financial drain on both neighbourhoods and the area at large. Vacant lands and buildings could be transformed into urban farms, pocket parks and community gardens, improving the health and well-being of local residents and improve visitor experience.



Legend

Commercial and Retail

Proposals

-  Development of Associated Distillery Lands
-  Vacant Buildings to Regenerate for Retail Purposes



Bombay Sapphire Distillery, (Inhabitat, 2014)

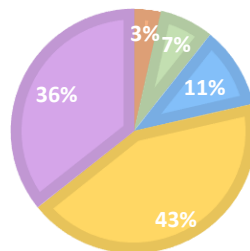
Town Centre Living

Drumshanbo's town centre supplies the basic requirements for town centre living however, vacant buildings were present, with upper floors used for residential purposes. Airbnbs including The Canal House and Ashdale were identified, implying less people than expected are permanent residents in the town, with people renting out residential buildings while living outside of the centre. From the questionnaire feedback, 43% of respondents considered affordable housing important, with 28% stating that more affordable housing is needed. However, residential property sales have decreased over time, with 11 sales in 2010 and only 4 sales in 2013 (Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021). 18% of respondents considered tourist accommodation to be the most needed housing tenure.



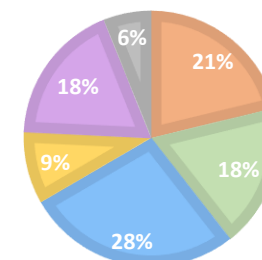
HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU FEEL AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS IN DRUMSHANBO?

Very unimportant -1 Unimportant -2 Neutral -3
Important -4 Very important -5



WHAT HOUSING TENURES DO YOU THINK ARE MOST NEEDED IN DRUMSHANBO?

Owner occupied Private rental Affordable
Social Housing Tourist Accomodation Don't Know



Proposal 2: Short-Term Rental Accommodation

Promoting short-term rental accommodation would see tourist accommodation provided within the town centre, in proximity to attractions and amenities. Tourist accommodation may increase the economic advantages attained from tourist sites such as the Shed Distillery, as well as persuade tourists to visit Drumshanbo's historic and leisure facilities, including Lake Acres and St John's Church of Ireland. This encourages people to stay longer within Drumshanbo instead of taking day trips.

Furthermore, vacant buildings will be given a new purpose to enliven the town. A strategy Drumshanbo could adopt would see the Council or a local social enterprise restoring these vacant buildings for accommodation and use the new Tourist Information Centre proposed as a hub to manage keys and offer breakfast and other amenities to improve the tourist experience.


1



2



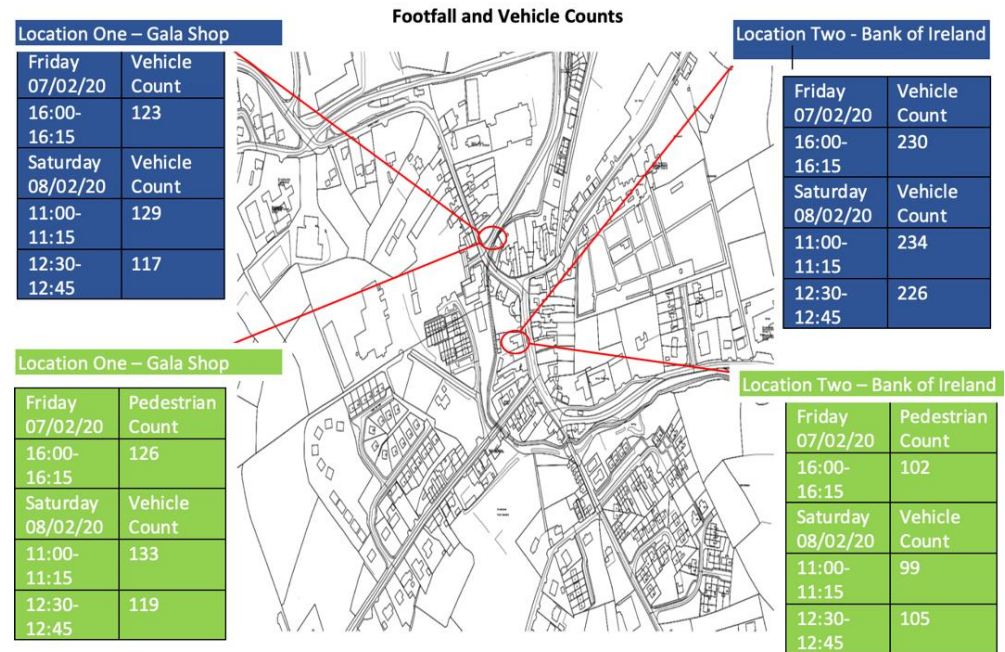
Legend

 Accommodation Development

Movement and Accessibility

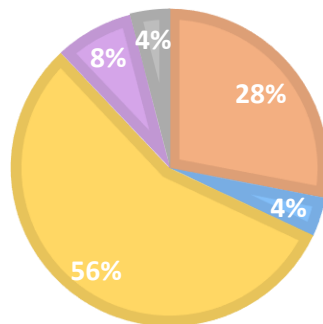
Drumshanbo's movement and accessibility infrastructure is dominated by private vehicles and pedestrians. When asked how respondents got to Drumshanbo, 56% stated they travelled by car, 28% travelled by foot, 0% travelled by bike and only 4% travelled by public transport. Vehicle and pedestrian counts were recorded at two locations, with vehicle counts being highest at the Bank of Ireland and footfall highest outside the Gala Supermarket.

Our results show that respondents were positive about the cost of car parking yet had mixed opinions around the availability of car parking. The respondents felt public transport and disabled access were the two main areas requiring improvement in Drumshanbo.

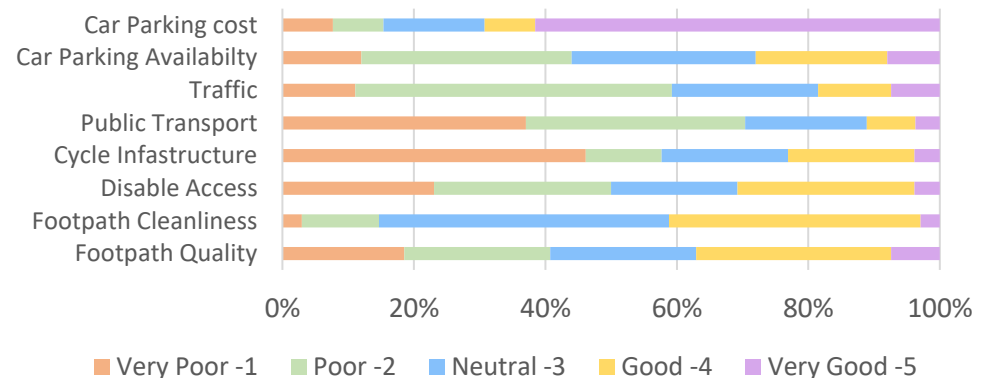


HOW DO YOU REGULARLY TRAVEL TO DRUMSHANBO?

Walk Public Transport Private Car Taxi Other



How would you rate the following infrastructure in Drumshanbo?



Proposal 3: Pedestrianised Elevated High Street

This proposal seeks to pedestrianise the elevated portion of Main Street. Pedestrianisation would allow for the creation of a 'strategy' for cafes and leisure outlets, offering outdoor seating during summer months, creating a pleasant experience for tourists and residents. Our results showed 28% of respondents walk to Drumshanbo, therefore pedestrianisation would improve safety and mobility. This proposal reduces both noise and pollution by discouraging and restricting non-essential vehicles. Furthermore, it promotes transport by foot through making the walking experience more enjoyable. Overall, pedestrianisation creates a pleasant environment, allowing people to get involved in different social, cultural and tourist activities.



Proposal 4: Zebra Crossing

The connectivity of public realm and pedestrian's experience can be improved by creating a zebra crossing at the elevated portion of Main Street. Implementing at least one pedestrian crossing will aid connectivity through the town, whilst simultaneously making movement safer for all. The example shows how the new zebra crossing would look, with this specific location selected due to it being far enough from the main node to allow oncoming vehicles enough time to stop and let pedestrians cross safely.



Tourism, Culture and the Evening Economy

Drumshanbo, in comparison to Carrick-On-Shannon, has a less established tourism economy. However, there are numerous ways to improve the towns visitor pull. The main tourist attractions in Drumshanbo include The Joe Mooney Summer School, The Shed Distillery, Lough Allen and its angling resort and the Sliabh an Larainn Visitor Centre.

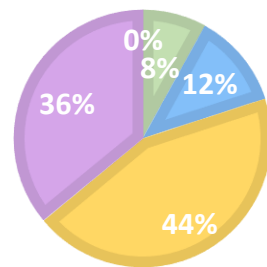
From the questionnaire data, 80% of the respondents rated tourism as very good or good, with only 8% rating tourism as poor. The respondents also felt events in Drumshanbo were good, with 68% rating events as good or very good.



Various elements of tourism currently in the town (TripHobo, 2020)

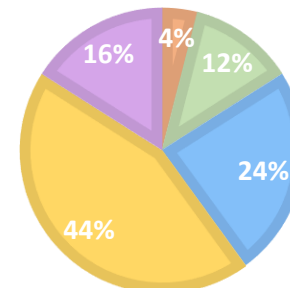
HOW WOULD YOU RATE TOURISM IN DRUMSHANBO?

Very poor -1 Poor -2 Neutral -3 Good -4 Very Good -5



HOW WOULD YOU RATE EVENTS IN DRUMSHANBO?

Very poor -1 Poor -2 Neutral -3 Good -4 Very Good -5



Proposal 5: Tourist Information Centre and Museum Marketing

Tourism in Drumshanbo can be improved through the development of a Tourist Information Centre as well as marketing the Museum, located above the Credit Union. The centre will provide information to tourists on areas of interest such as The Shed Distillery, Acres Lake and the Sliabh an Iarainn Mountain Loop. The Tourist Information Centre could work in conjunction with the Museum by displaying historic items, encouraging tourists to visit the Museum. There are numerous vacant buildings where the Information Centre could be developed. For example, the vacant bank building could be an ideal location as it is in the centre of Drumshanbo, in proximity to the Museum. The photo on the left is an example of Llangollen Tourist Information Centre, previously a vacant church building. This proposal links to the proposal of tourist accommodation in Drumshanbo, as the upper floor of the new Tourist Information Centre could be used for centrally managed tourist accommodation and offering breakfast for those staying in local accommodation.



Llangollen Tourist Information Centre (2020)



Belfast Tourist Information Centre (2020)



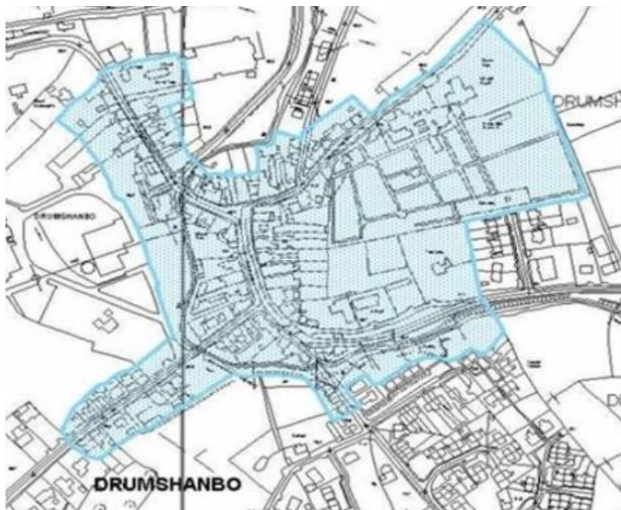
Heritage

The historic core of Drumshanbo is designated as Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) in recognition of its historical architectural character and layout. The centre also contains a number of individually significant buildings including the 5 protected structures listed below. The main natural heritage sites include Lough Allen and St John's Church of Ireland, with its gothic structure dating back to 1829. The Shannon Blueway is also a natural heritage site, offering water and land trails.

Many of the key heritage sites in Drumshanbo are considered underutilised. From the questionnaire feedback, 75% considered Drumshanbo's heritage to be good or very good, while 84% rated nature as good or very good. Only 10% considered Drumshanbo's heritage to be poor or very poor and only 8% rated nature as poor or very poor.



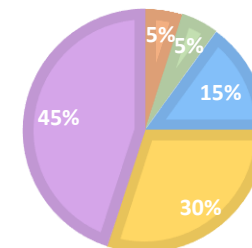
Elements of heritage in Drumshanbo. Top: Lough Allen (The Big List, 2020), Bottom Left: Geograph (2013), Bottom Right: Floating boardwalk (The Irish Times, 2017).



Year of Adoption	Description
1979	Weslyan Church
2005	Roman Catholic Church of St. Patrick
2005	National Irish Bank
2005	Five bay two storey mid-19 th Century House
2005	Elevated Road/Pedestrian Area with cut stone and retaining wall and steps.

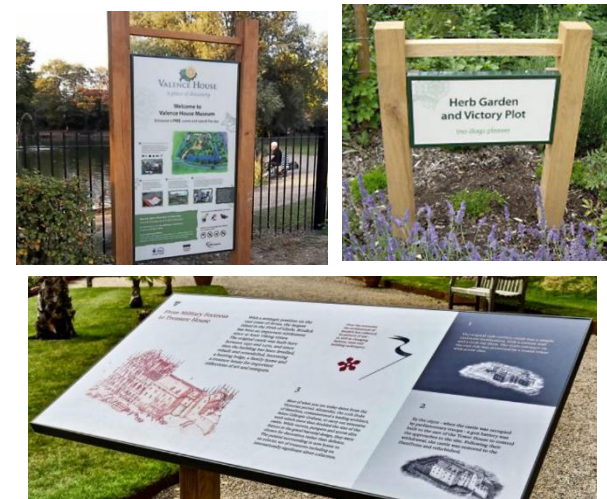
HOW WOULD YOU RATE HERITAGE IN DRUMSHANBO?

Very poor -1 Poor -2 Neutral -3
Good -4 Very Good -5



Proposal 6: Signage

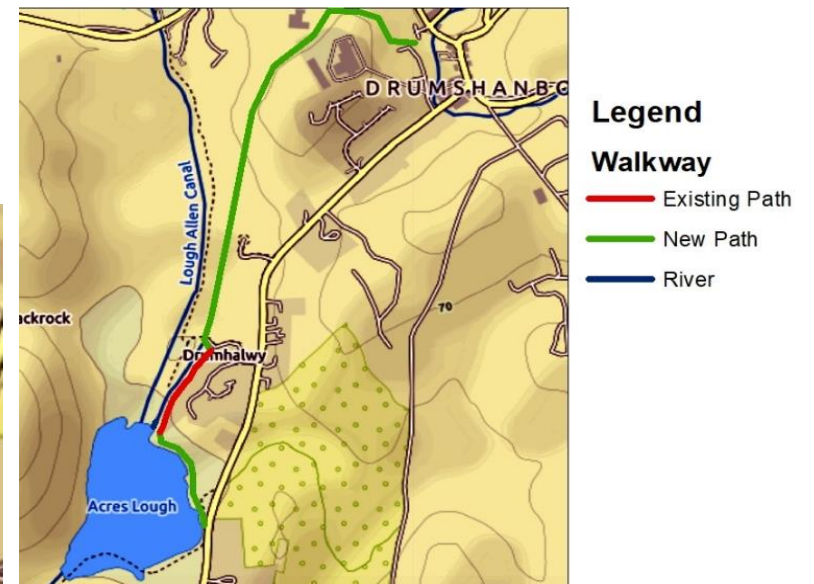
Implementing clear and appropriate, yet unobtrusive, signage will promote visitation of heritage sites as well as responsible and sustainable behaviour regarding safety and site precaution. This will incentivise public enjoyment of the existing built and natural heritage sites. Signs may provide information on -and directions to-sites including, Lough Allen, the extension of Drumhalwy walkway, and built heritage sites such as St John's Church of Ireland. They could also provide information on the site's history. Signage at the Shannon Blueway may list safety precautions when paddling or cycling, ensuring responsible behaviour and safety is prioritised. The signage should not be distracting, but clear and appropriate regarding their positioning and location. Due to Drumshanbo being an ACA, signage should not display neon colours, have moving elements or contain illuminated lights as these affect the character of the conservation area.



Examples of signage styles that could be used Top Images: External Works (2020), Bottom: EVM (2020).

Proposal 7: Extension of Drumhalwy Walkway

Extending the current Drumhalwy walkway would allow pedestrians to walk from the floating boardwalk to Acres Avenue, only 1.1km outside of Drumshanbo. Walkways are an important aspect of Drumshanbo's tourist sector, providing enjoyable and safe options for transportation while reducing air pollution. This project would be ideal for the Greenways Strategy 2019-21, providing funding for the development of greenways. The map shows the current walkway and the vision to extend to the floating boardwalk.



A map showing the proposed new paths alongside existing paths and existing features.



MOHILL

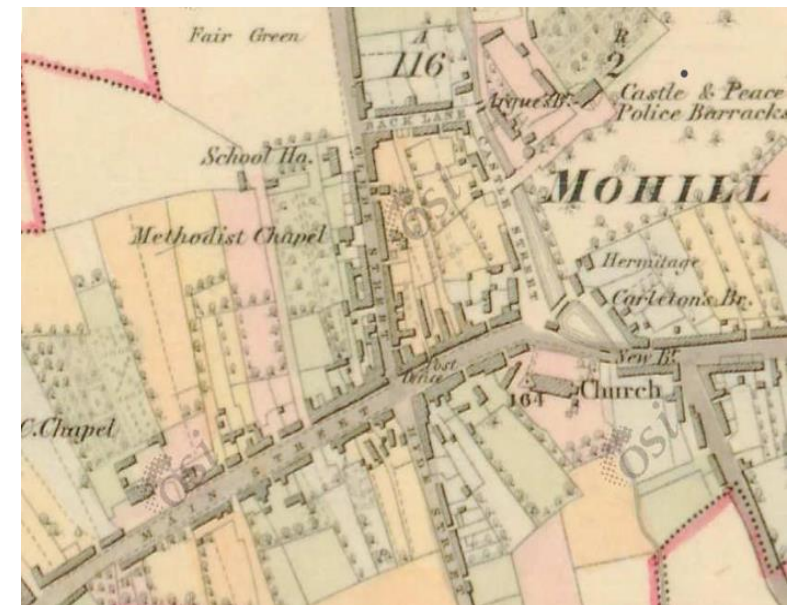
Background

Mohill is in the South of County Leitrim, approximately 16km away Carrick on Shannon and 22km from Drumshanbo. It is readily accessible, with the R201 and R202 regional roads running through the centre of the town. Currently, the population of Mohill is approximately 855 (Census, 2016). The population has seen little change, with only a small increase of 69 people within the past 14 years (Census, 2016). St Manachan founded a monastery in Mohill in 500AD. The town built up around the settlement, with ownership of the town passed to the Crofton's. The Clements Family also owned lands around the town and founded Lough Rynn House and Gardens, which today, is a 4-star hotel.

Mohill is categorised as a Tier 2B 'Support Town' for Carrick-on-Shannon within the County Leitrim Development Plan 2015-2021. Although Mohill is a small town, it carries significant importance within the county, providing strategic transport links and other facilities to boost the larger 'Key Towns' such as Carrick-on-Shannon. There are several opportunity sites within Mohill for regeneration proposals regarding retail, housing, accessibility, heritage, and tourism.

Building upon the Leitrim County Development Plan's vision of making the county vibrant and socially inclusive, providing a good quality of life for all who work, live and visit the county, the regeneration strategies proposed attempt to:

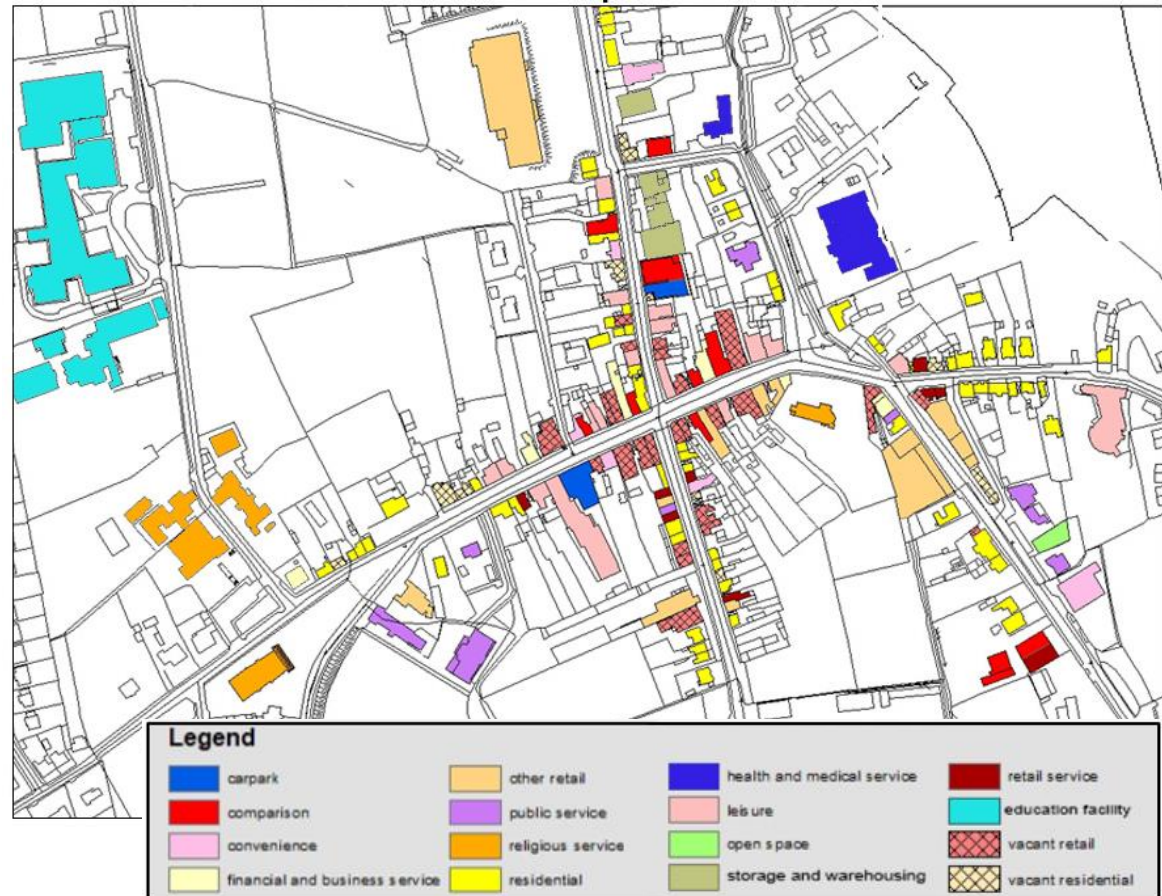
'Recognise what makes Mohill special, and building upon this to create an inviting, resilient, sustainable and accessible town for residents and tourists alike'.



First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1837

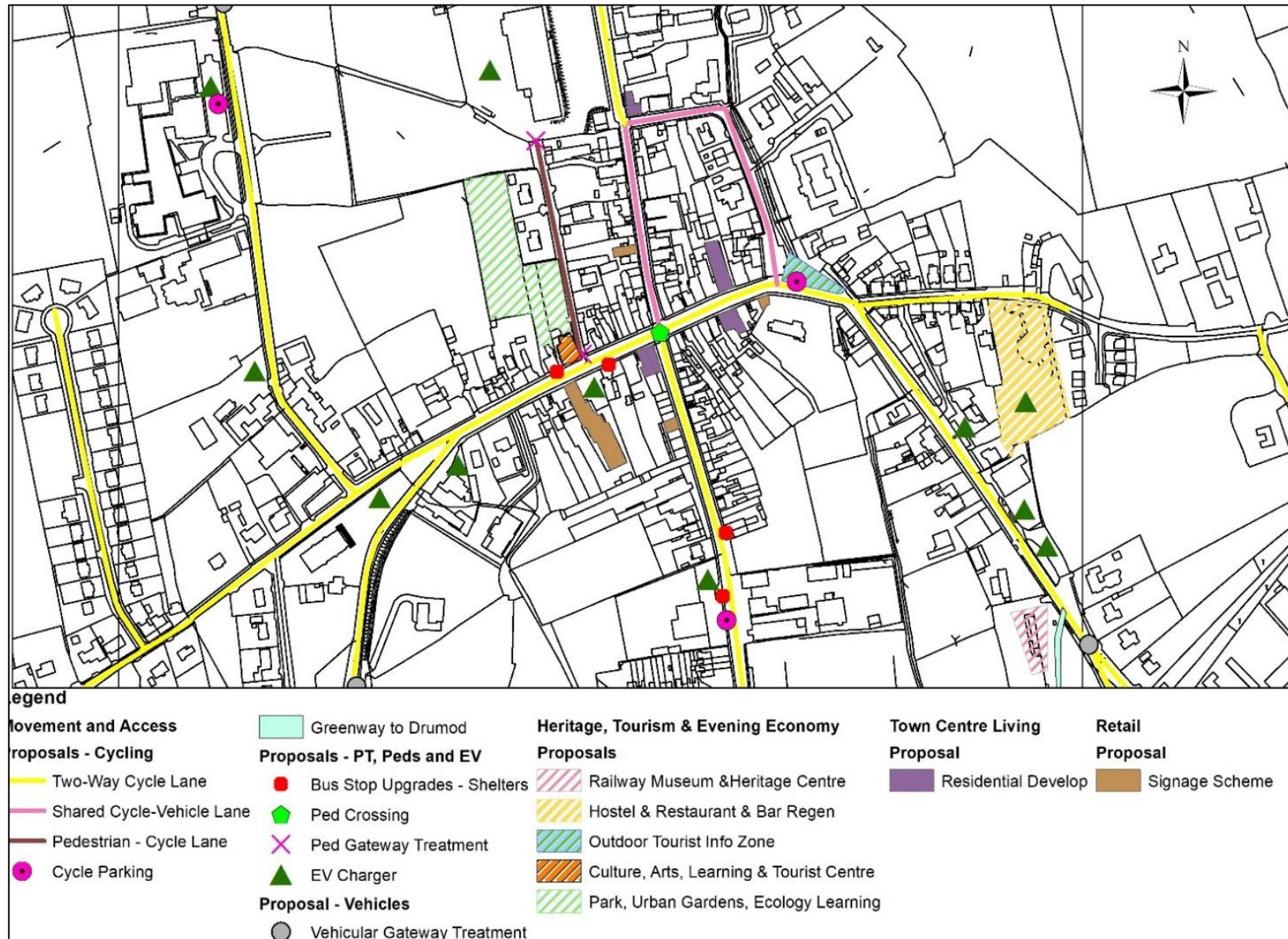
Town Centre Land Use Map

Mohill is a mixed-use town, containing retail, health, education, financial and leisure facilities. The town centre predominately consists of residential and leisure facilities, such as bars and takeaways. Educational facilities are located on the outskirts of the town, with shopping along Main Street and Hyde Street composed of independent retailers. Vacant buildings equate to 18% of the town centre's land use, creating an uninviting, derelict appearance that discourages businesses, facilities, and people into the town. Vacant buildings within Mohill have increased temporally, from 17 in 2007 to 36 in 2020. This implies a movement of businesses and residences out of the town centre, with no new investments introduced. The town requires regeneration proposals and uses for the vacant buildings to enliven the town centre and encourage people, services, and businesses to relocate back into Mohill.



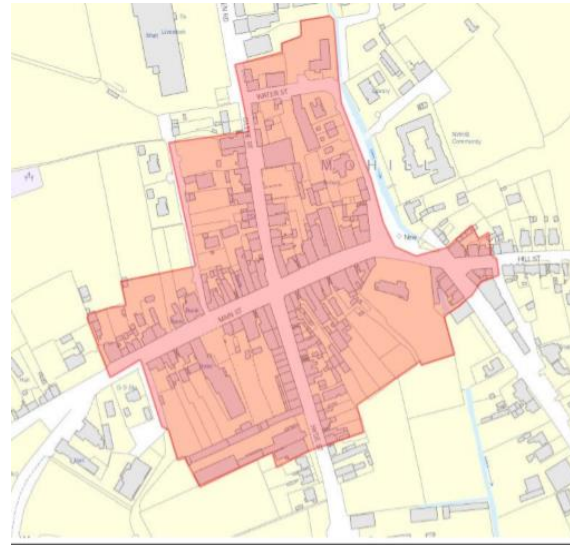
20%
Total Town Centre Vacancy Rate
13.5%
Total Retail Vacancy Rate
6.5%
Total Residential Vacancy Rate

Regeneration, Strategy and Proposals Map



Commercial and Retail

Commercial and retail services are dominated by small and family run businesses offering primary services, including convenience stores, pharmacies, and takeaways, as well as hairdressers, barbers, salons, and banks. No cafes are present, which may prevent people from staying in the town for a longer period of time. Furthermore, few clothes shops were present, with only one providing male clothing and no shops selling female clothing. Some shop fronts had poor or damaged signage, while others had no signage. This is visually uninviting and displeasing, hindering the use of services if individuals are unaware of their presence or location. The questionnaire feedback showed 77% do not class Mohill as a key retail town, however, 86% use the primary services available.

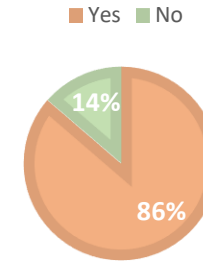


Commercial Town Centre Area

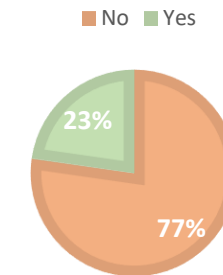
Mohill
Retail Tier 2B



DO YOU USE PRIMARY SERVICES IN MOHILL?



DO YOU THINK MOHILL IS A KEY RETAIL TOWN?



Proposal 1: Improve Shopfronts and Signage

Implementing a shop front scheme into the town would see the improvement of some signage, enlivening the space and creating aesthetically pleasing fronts. The quality of signage and shopfronts varies considerably, with some fine examples including Gannon & Co. and O'Brien's Tavern. As most signage is clean and visually pleasing, this scheme would ensure all signage is of the same standard, encouraging the use of all services and increasing the presence of some facilities Mohill offers. Poorly maintained signage, such as Western Forestry Group's would be cleaned and updated. Numerous units with no signage include a hairdressers and butchers on Hyde Street and a solicitor's on Main Street. If possible, signs should encourage a traditional Irish appearance, emphasising place identity and culture.



Legend

Retail Proposal

 Signage Scheme



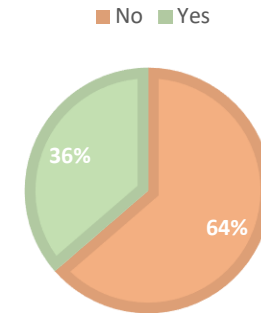
Examples of current signage in the town centre.

Town Centre Living

Most existing buildings have shops on the ground floors and residency on the first and second floors. 6.5% of ground floor vacancy is associated with residential properties. Some traditional residential properties are lying vacant, while some appear visually run down and derelict. This suggests movement of residence to outside of the town centre, discouraging the use of local businesses and amenities. No tourist accommodation is present to accommodate short stays, hindering the use of Mohill's heritage and tourist sites. The questionnaire feedback states only 36% would consider relocating beyond Mohill, with 30% considering tourist accommodation to be the most needed housing tenure.

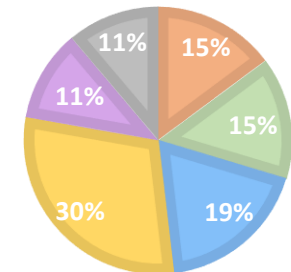


WOULD YOU CONSIDER RELOCATING BEYOND MOHILL?



WHAT HOUSING TENURES ARE MOST NEEDED IN MOHILL?

- Don't know
- Affordable Housing
- Owner Occupied
- Tourist Accomodation
- Social Housing
- Private Rental




Proposal 2: Vacant Buildings for Residential Use

Using vacant buildings for residential purposes allows existing buildings to provide living space and improve the quality of living in Mohill. The current vacant buildings are displeasing, derelict and uninviting. Renovating vacant buildings for residences and painting their exterior gives these buildings a purpose and encourages town centre living. This also encourages the use of Mohill's services, benefitting the town economically. Creating housing with an attractive exterior contributes to an improved and vibrant appearance of Mohill's town centre. These buildings could also be used for tourist accommodation, with it being considered the most needed tenure, encouraging longer stays and increasing visitation of Mohill's tourist and heritage offerings. The examples of renovation below are from Dublin and County Cork, showing their appropriateness for an Irish Town.



Legend

Town Centre Living Proposal

 Residential Development

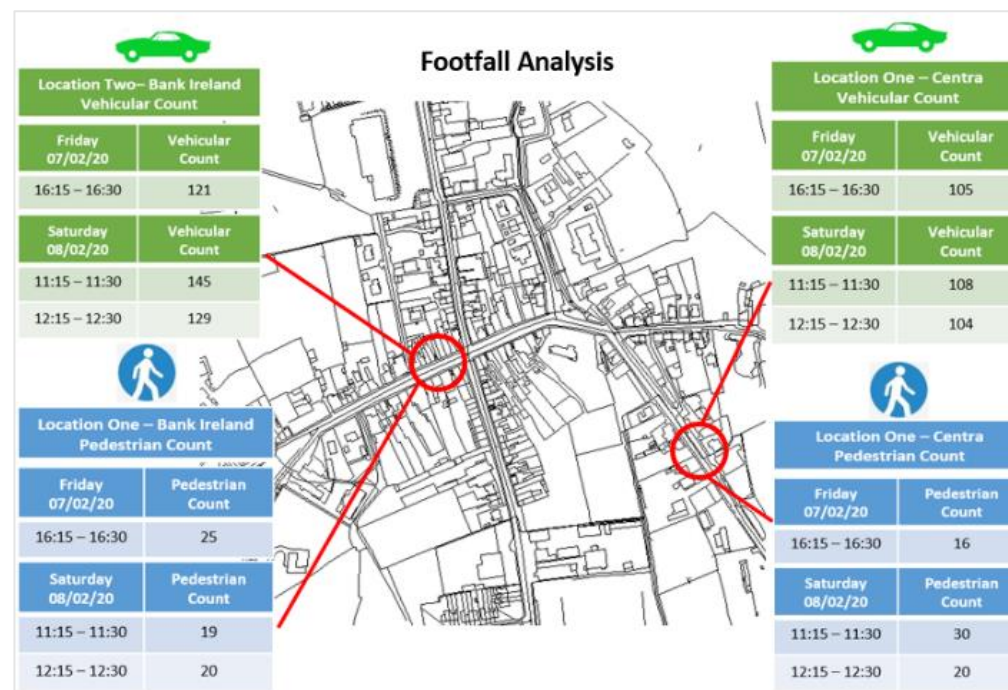
Movement and Accessibility

Mohill's movement and accessibility network is characterised by infrastructure which promotes the dominance of vehicular traffic over active travel. As such, 91% of respondents typically travelled to Mohill by private car.

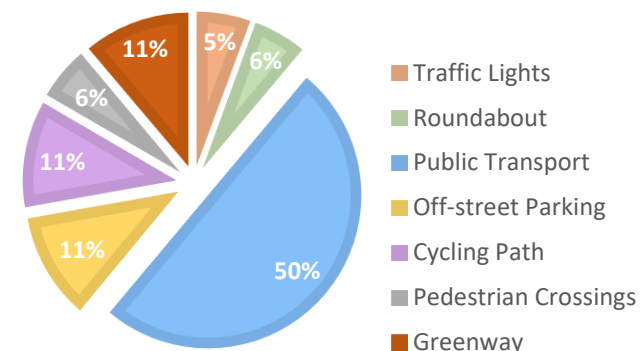
This was also evident in car parking provision, with 206 unrestricted, on-street carparking spaces and 242 off-street spaces throughout Mohill's arterial spine. On-street occupancy was found, on average, to be 78%, while off-street occupancy was just 35%, illustrating that the convenience and oversupply of on-street spaces reduces demand for off-street carparks. This ultimately sees the town centre streets dominated by parked cars, thus reducing vibrancy and footfall; something evidenced by the place analysis which found five times more cars than people walking in Mohill.

Additionally, the absence of cycle facilities and lack of pedestrian crossings, particularly at the busy and excessively wide Main Street-Glebe Street junction, and the location of Mohill's key trip generators (St. Manchan's, the Enterprise Centre, the GAA Pitch, Centra) on the town periphery, creates a hazardous and disconnected active travel environment.

Since the train station's closure, regional accessibility too, is poor. This is exacerbated by none of Mohill's bus stops having shelter or live schedule information. Furthermore, respondents saw Public Transport upgrades, Cycle Infrastructure, Greenway, and off-street parking enhancements as the most requested improvements.

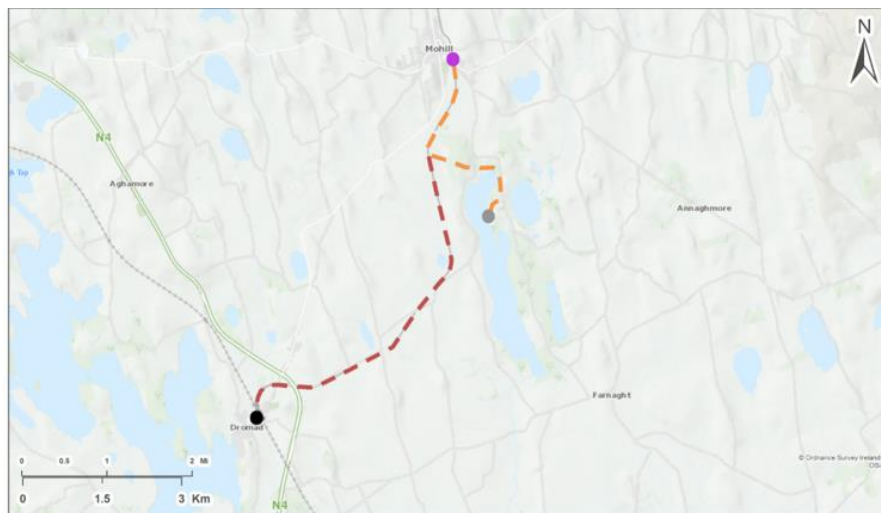


WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY?



Proposal 3: Greenway to Dromod and Lough Rynn and Improved Sustainable Transportation Infrastructure

To improve connectivity and accessibility between Mohill and the town's key surrounding attractions, a greenway is proposed to sustainably repurpose the disused railway line route from the old Train Station building on Station Road. As a first phase route, it is proposed that the greenway connects Mohill to Lough Rynn Estate; a major source of tourist footfall for the area. A second phase of greenway development is then proposed to connect Mohill to Dromod Train Station, something which will significantly improve the town's regional accessibility through a combination of 'rail to trail' sustainable transport infrastructure. The proposed routes and phases are illustrated on the adjacent map. Additionally, to further promote sustainable movement patterns: two-way cycle lanes are proposed between major trip generators, combining both advisory lanes and physical separation options; secure cycle parking at all town centre nodes and gateways; and electric vehicle parking infrastructure at all long-stay carparks.



- Legend**
- Mohill
 - Lough Rynn Estate
 - Dromod Train Station
 - Greenway Route – Phase One to Lough Rynn
 - Greenway Route – Phase Two to Dromod Train Station

Proposal 4: Pedestrian Scramble Junction at Glebe Street-Main Street Junction

A scramble junction is proposed at the excessively wide and busy Main Street-Glebe Street junction. The junction is the core pinch-point for Mohill's vehicular and pedestrian movement and, given its role in connecting all parts of the town, it is paramount to improve movement safety.

Proposal 5: Bus Stop Upgrades

A bus shelter with live schedule information and seating is proposed at all key bus stops throughout the town. As existing, there is a complete lack of seating, shelter and schedule information and this makes use of the stops less accessible and weather dependant.

Tourism, Culture and the Evening Economy

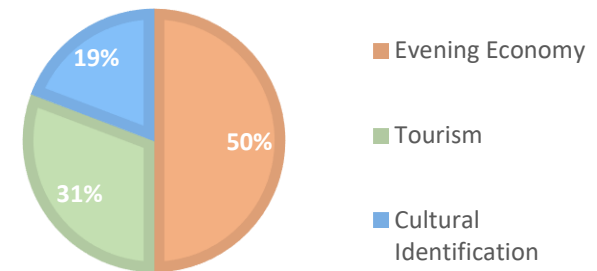
The Shannon green and blue corridor presents numerous opportunities for tourism, culture and the evening economy. 30% of respondents highlighted the need for new tourist accommodation to enhance its accessibility for overnight visitors. Additionally, superior access to Lough Rynn, better railway access, and improved connections to the built and natural monuments were requested as core features to improve tourism potential in Mohill.

Furthermore, 73% noted that, as existing, Mohill was not an attractive and popular tourist destination with 82% attributing the poor evening economy to the lack of quality bars and restaurants.

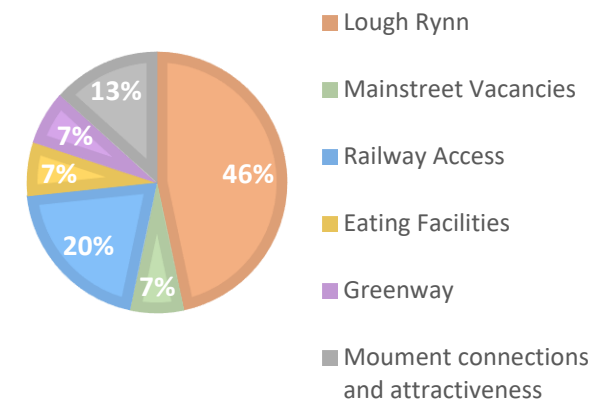
These findings correlate well with the survey findings from the Economic Development Plan for Mohill (LCC, 2019) which indicated that Mohill's tourism, culture and evening economy potential needs to address the provision of tourist accommodation, and arts/culture centre, improved access to Lough Rynn, eco-tourism and, a project for the railway station.



WHAT ASPECT DO YOU FEEL NEEDS ENHANCED AND IMPROVED FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT?

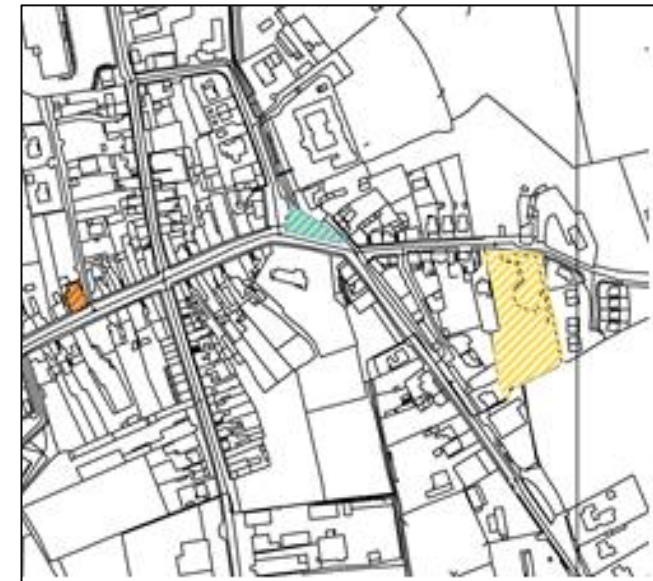


WHAT ASPECTS OF THE TOWN COULD BE FURTHER DEVELOPED TO IMPROVE TOURISM?



Proposal 6: Re-Use of the National Irish Bank as a Tourist Office, Culture, Arts and Learning Centre

Restoration and repurposing of the historic former National Irish Bank building on Main Street as a Tourist Office and Culture, Arts and Learning Centre would address many of the missing infrastructure issues identified overleaf. Regenerating the currently vacant landmark building in this way would add complementing diversity to the visitor experience along Mohill's key central street, attract footfall and vibrancy to the area, and ensure that the town promotes its historic culture and tourist activities successfully.



Legend

Tourism, Culture and Evening Economy

Proposals

- Hostel & Restaurant & Bar Regen
- Outdoor Tourist Info Zone
- Culture, Arts, Learning & Tourist Centre

Proposal 7: Tourist Accommodation at Nova

Designating the surrounding lands for tourist accommodation would facilitate the development of a spacious, and much needed, tourist hostel just off Mohill's main arterial streets. Development of a hostel would ensure that Mohill has suitable, affordable, accommodation to attract overnight visitors in a way which complements Lough Rynn's success in attracting university rowers and rowing enthusiasts to Mohill's surrounding area. The development of hostel accommodation on lands adjacent to the vacant Nova site would also encourage regeneration of the former bar and restaurant by facilitating overnight visitors and thus supporting footfall and customers.

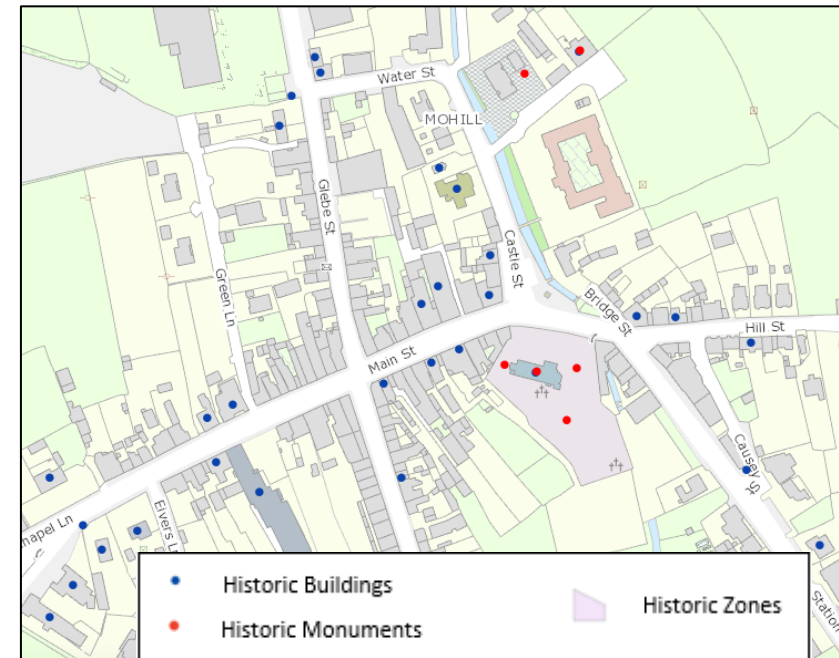


Murphys Bar and Associated Hostel in Geelong (Lonely Planet, 2020)

Heritage

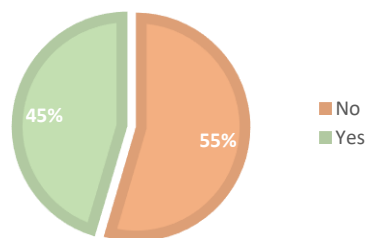
In terms of Mohill's built and natural heritage, despite being in an Area of Architectural Conservation with numerous historic buildings, monuments and designated zones, 73% of respondents felt that there were only a few historic buildings in Mohill. 54% felt that historic buildings were poorly maintained. This reflects the lack of reuse and regeneration of historic buildings which in turn sees heritage assets remain vacant and run-down on strategic town centre sites; such as the Bank of Ireland building on Main Street and the former Railway Building on Station Road.

While green space and natural assets are plentiful surrounding Mohill's periphery, access to natural features in the centre is limited. It was therefore recognised that Mohill fails to capitalise on the potential of its heritage and natural assets and that the Town's growth and regeneration must focus on enhancing reuse of buildings and access to central and surrounding greenspace.

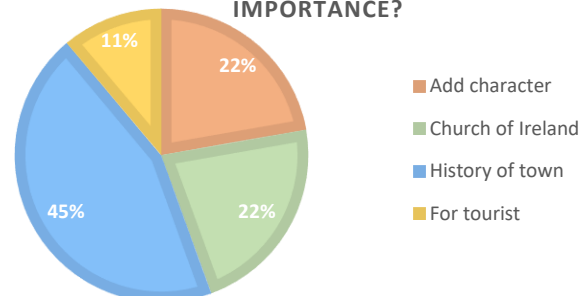


NIAH Historical buildings recorded in Mohill (NIAH,2020)

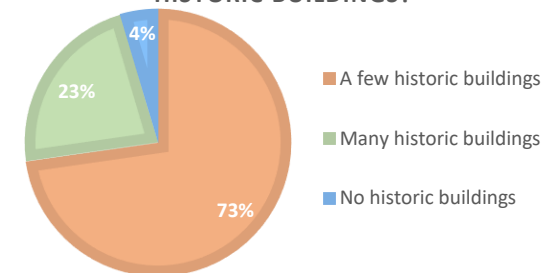
DO YOU THINK HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE ADEQUATELY MAINTAINED?



WHY DO YOU THINK THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE OF SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE?



WHICH BEST DESCRIBES MOHILL'S HISTORIC BUILDINGS?



Proposal 8: Repurposed Vacant Train Station as a Heritage Centre / Museum

As the former Train Station building on Station Road occupies a substantial, historic, opportunity site at Mohill's south-eastern gateway, it is proposed to repurpose the building and surrounding site as a heritage centre and railway museum. Repurposing old railways as museums, including miniature train exhibits, has been successful in reintegrating vacant heritage assets as tourist generators in Irish towns such as Drumwhey and Enniskillen. Regenerating the site would also re-establish an historic gateway vista and complement greenway proposals.



*Headhunters Railway Museum Enniskillen and Drumwhey Junction
Miniature Railway (Discover NI, 2020)*

Proposal 9: Green Park, Urban Garden and Ecology Learning

It is proposed to install a park, urban garden and ecology learning centre at lands to the rear of the vacant National Irish Bank building. This would complement the proposed regeneration of the Bank building as a learning centre, thus also enhancing use of the town's built heritage, add vibrancy and natural surveillance to the connecting laneway, and diversify Mohill's tourist offerings. Improving access to Mohill's green natural spaces would also correlate with the Economic Development Plan (LCC, 2019) which promotes the use of green tourism.



Lands for Ecology Centre and Precedent in Fife (Ecology Centre, 2020)

Summary of Proposals

TOWN	PROPOSAL
CARRICK-ON-SHANNON	Culture and Heritage Centre
	Riverside Pocket Park
	Pop up Shops
	First floor living
	Council rental bikes
DRUMSHANBO	Development of vacant land
	Short term rental accommodation
	Elevated pedestrianised high street
	Zebra crossing
	Tourist Information Centre and Museum Marketing
	Signage
MOHILL	Extension of Drumhalwy Walkway
	Improve shop fronts and signage
	Vacant Buildings for Residence
	Greenway to Dromod and Lough Rynn and Improved Sustainable Transportation Infrastructure
	Pedestrian Scramble Junction at Glebe Street-Main Street Junction
	Bus Stop Upgrades
	Re-Use of Bank of Ireland Building as a Tourist Office, Culture, Arts and Learning Centre
	Tourist Accommodation at Nova
	Repurposed Vacant Train Station as a Heritage Centre / Museum
	Green Park, Urban Garden and Ecology Learning

