

Introduction

Leitrim County Council and Roscommon County Council are progressing the N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod Project to deliver a sustainable transportation solution for transportation problems identified in Carrick-on-Shannon, Cortober and the wider communities along the N4.

The national primary route N4, Dublin to Sligo, is a strategic corridor from Dublin to the northwest and border counties.

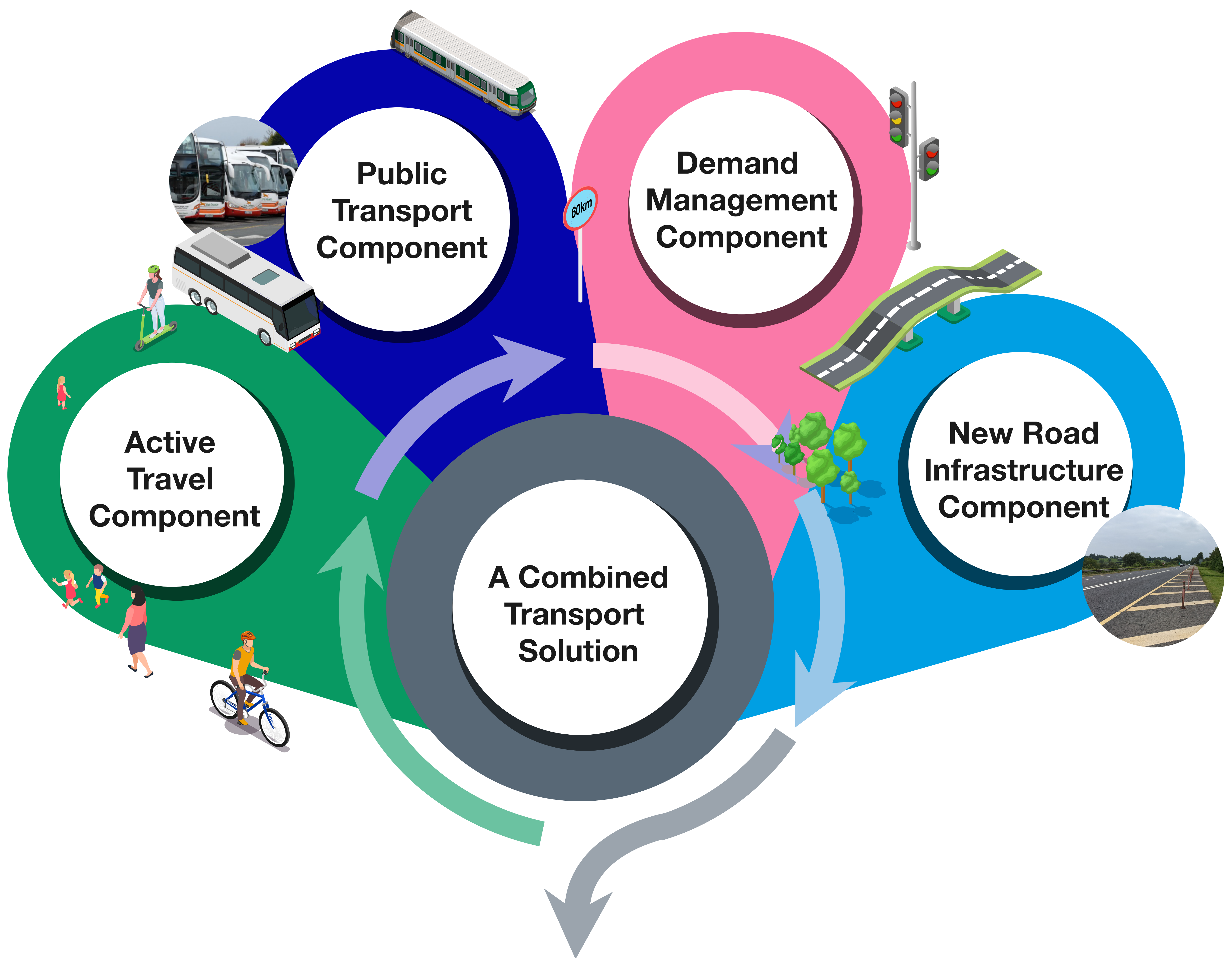
The N4 is recognised as being particularly important in enhancing accessibility to the region. One of the key objectives of the project is to provide opportunities to enhance modal shift within the urban areas and the economic prospects of the region by providing more reliable and better connectivity between the northwest and the rest of the country.

A key driver for the project is to ensure that all elements of transport (including public transport, walking, cycling) are working together to achieve a sustainable solution and to minimise the impact to the natural and built environment.

To date it has been identified that there are significant transportation issues within the key towns of Carrick-on-Shannon and Cortober.

The project development process is in line with the TII project phases. The project is currently at the Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation stage. The Project has now been developed in more detail with a preferred route alignment and junction strategy now identified for the 5.8km bypass section of the N4 transport corridor between the Drumharlow townland west of Carrick-on-Shannon and the Lisseeghan townland east of Carrick-on-Shannon. Active travel and demand management measures have been developed for the section of the existing N4 that passes through Carrick-on-Shannon and Cortober. A new urban street has also been designed to the northeast of Carrick-on-Shannon, providing improved connectivity without the need to cross through the urban area of the town.

The Transport Vision for the N4 Corridor All elements of transport working together...



...to achieve an integrated sustainable solution.

Need for the Project

General

There is currently a single narrow bridge crossing of the River Shannon from Carrick-on-Shannon to Cortober. The existing bridge was built in 1846, for horse and cart and without a national road network or vehicular traffic in mind. Hence, the road geometry is not in accordance with current TII standards.

Although, a new pedestrian footbridge was built on to the masonry bridge in 2009, many pedestrians, on a daily basis, still walk across the masonry bridge close to vehicular traffic. Cyclists also utilise the road carriageway to traverse the bridge. These factors could lead to a serious collision on the River Shannon Bridge crossing, or it's approaches, and would result an unsustainable diversion route for national road traffic.

In addition, flooding has led to the closure and associated diversion of the route on three separate occasions, with the N4 being closed for a period of 19 days in November 2009. While the northbound diversion route can accommodate national traffic in the short term, the southbound diversion route adds 12km to the journey and is wholly inadequate for anything other than emergencies.

These issues result in very little resiliency on the N4 TEN-T Comprehensive Network at this location.

Moreover, the N4 creates a barrier between the town of Carrick-on-Shannon and the marina, its amenities and the River Front Amenity Park. Individuals alighting cruises or private boats have to navigate a busy national road before they can access either Carrick-on-Shannon or Cortober and the amenities therein.

The N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod Project is required to address the significant on-going safety deficiencies which present collision risks for vulnerable road users in the urban area, as a result of prioritisation of traffic over and above the needs of the vulnerable road users. Even with such prioritisation of traffic through the urban area, it remains congested with poor journey time reliability, with the wholly sub-standard and outdated singular River Shannon bridge crossing contributing to considerable delay.

Policy Context

The need for the N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod Project is recognised in national, regional and local policy, including:

- Project Ireland 2040;
- The National Planning Framework (NPF);
- National Development Plan 2018–2027 (NDP);
- the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly; and
- The Leitrim and Roscommon County Development Plans.

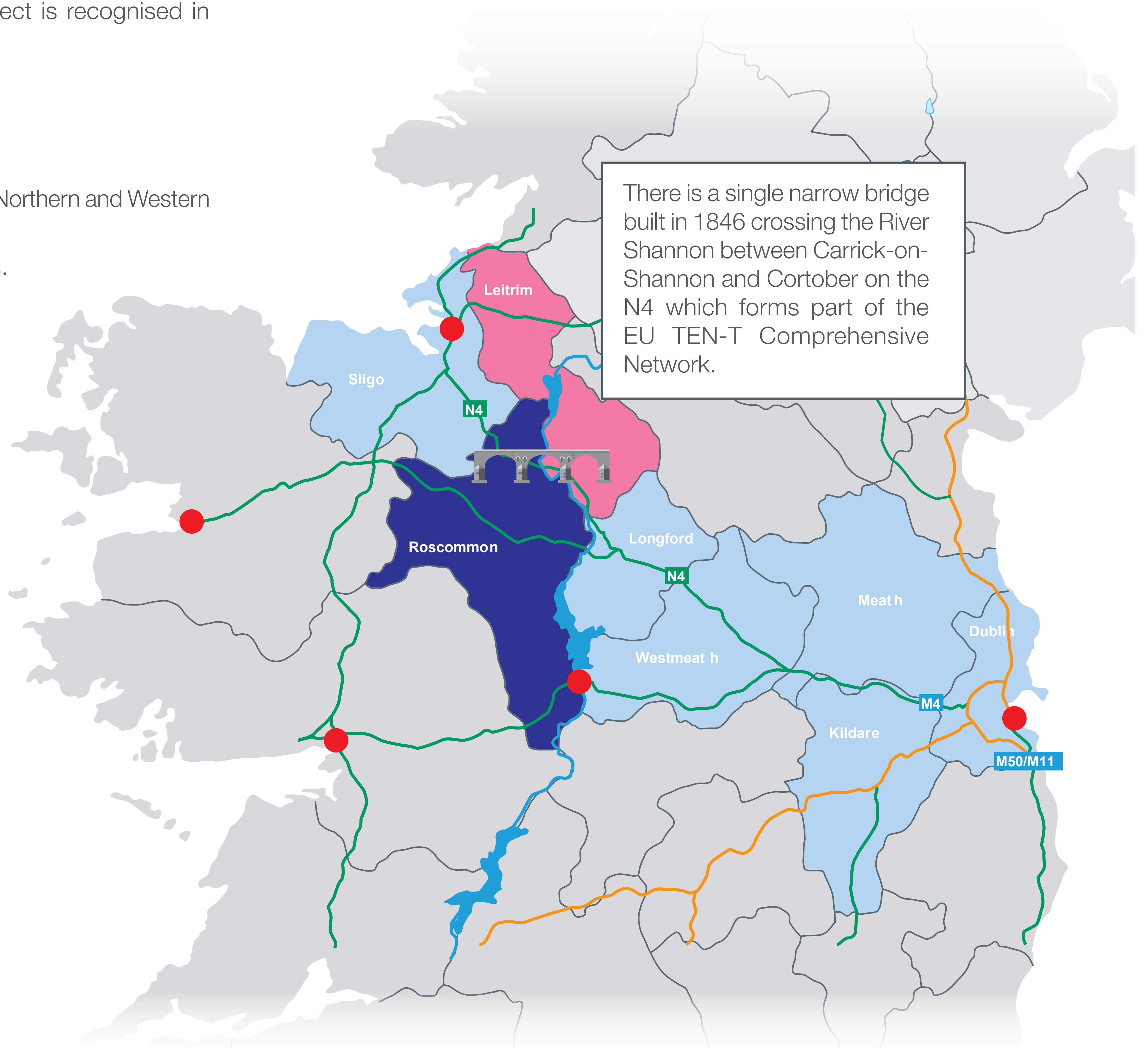
The N4 in the Context of Ireland's TEN-T Comprehensive Network

Legend

- Regional Centre
- River Shannon

TEN-T Road Networks

- Core Network
- Comprehensive Network



The N4 also forms part of the EU TEN-T comprehensive network providing a strategic link between Dublin and Sligo, with Sligo being identified as a regional centre in the 2021-2030 National Development Plan and the National Planning Framework (NPF). The N4 connects directly with the N5 and N6 national primary routes which also form part of the EU TEN-T Comprehensive Network connecting Dublin to the west and northwest of the country. It is recognised as critical in achieving regional connectivity, balanced regional development and will enable unrealised potential – which aligns with National Strategic Outcome 2 (NSO), namely Enhanced Regional Accessibility, and thereby supports the objectives of the NPF.

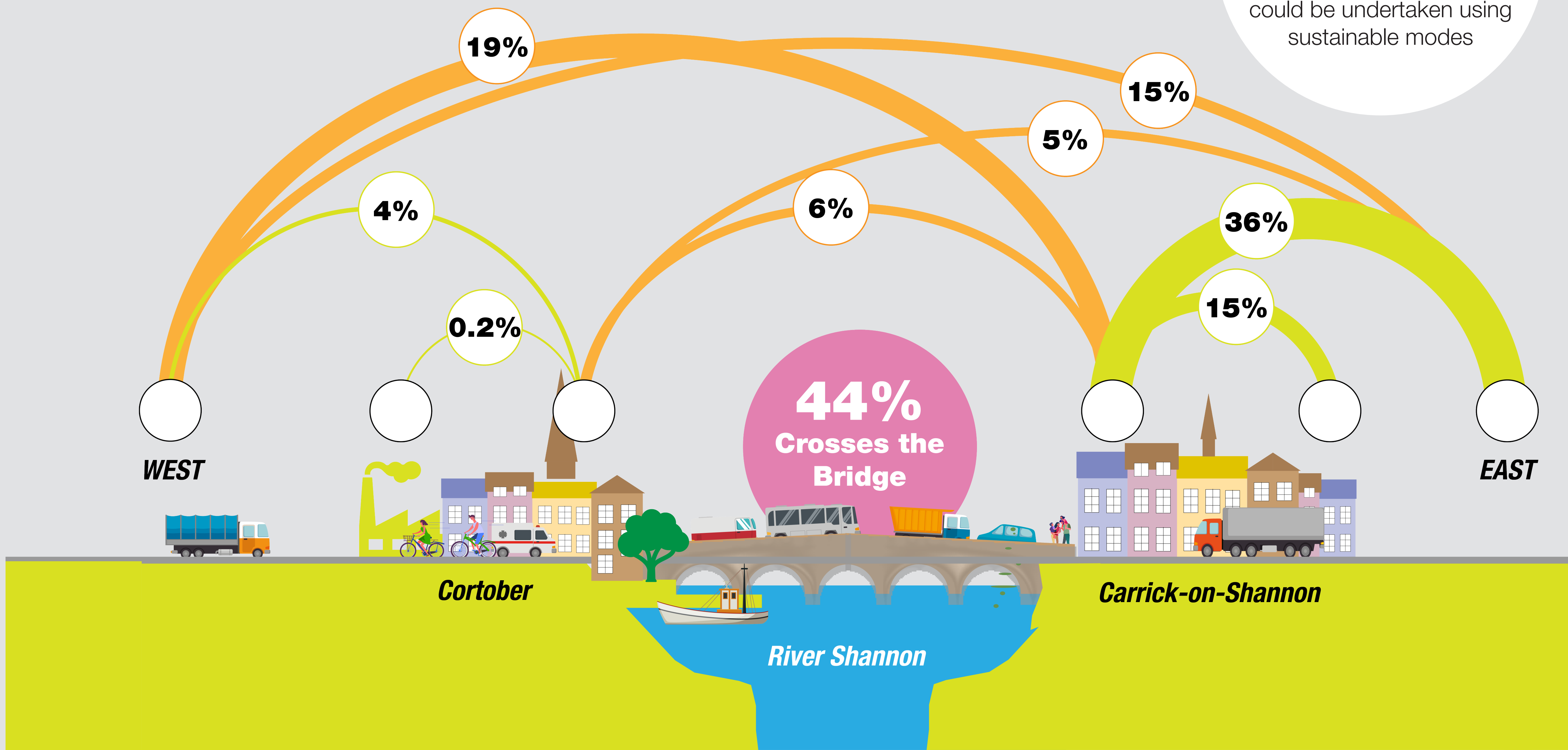
The provision of new infrastructure will seek to enable the delivery of sustainable transport solutions that move more people and goods more efficiently, improving journey time reliability and enabling better provision for alternative modes within the urban area. The project represents an integral component in supporting investment, and linking the northwest to other regions, by aligning the corridor with the wider policy of the TEN-T Comprehensive Network.

Following completion of the Phase 2 Options Selection stage, the Project has now progressed into the Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation stage. However, it is noted that the bypass element of the N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod Project is being prioritised for the Design and Environmental Evaluation stage which will include a new urban street, a demand management component, an active travel component, a road component, comprising the bypass itself, and a public transport component. This aligns with the 2023 Grant Allocations to Local Authorities for National Roads, Active Travel and Greenways, the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2023, other national policies, and the terms and conditions set by the Minister for Transport pursuant to the Roads Acts 1993 to 2015.

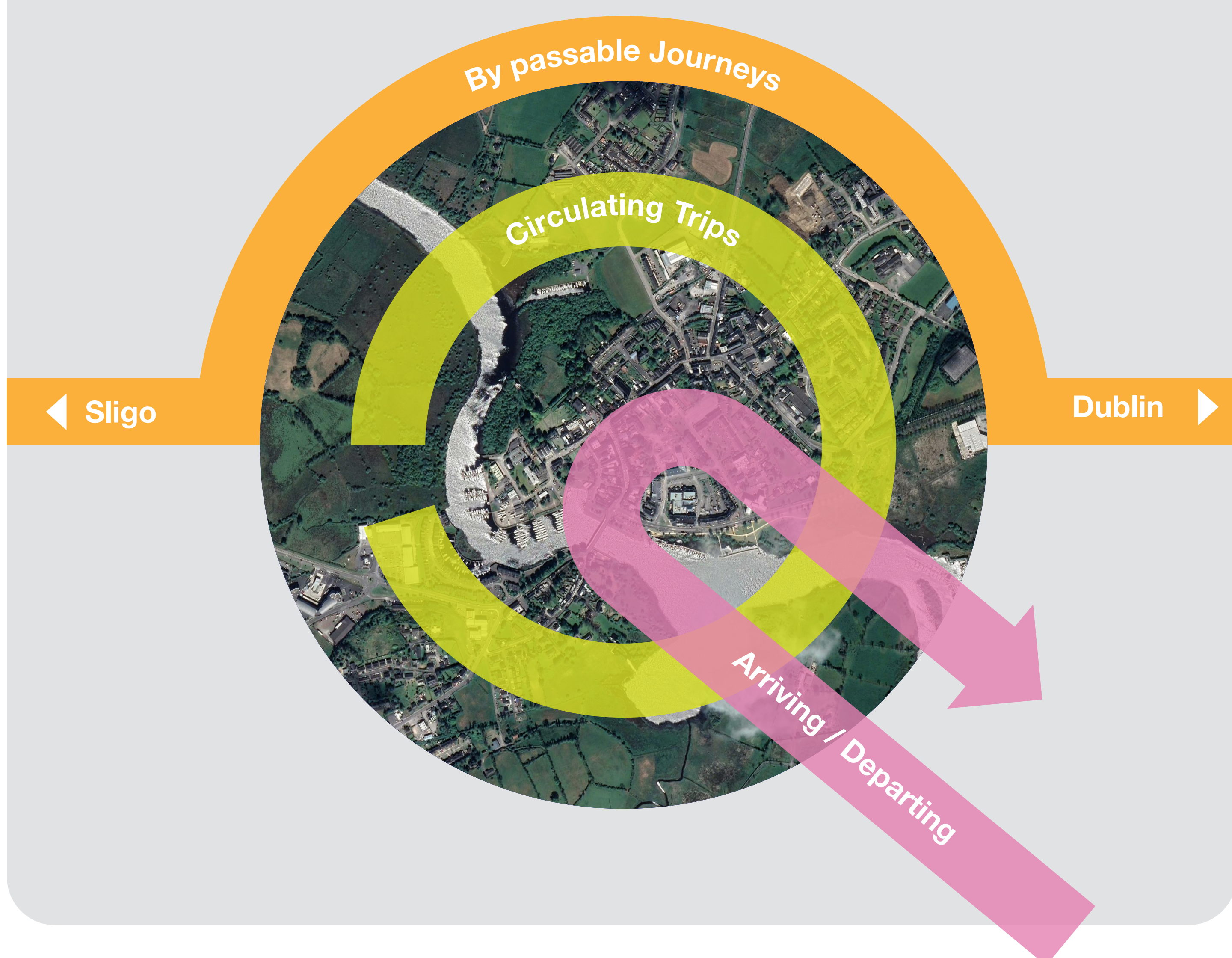
What are the Transport Issues?

Existing Travel Patterns

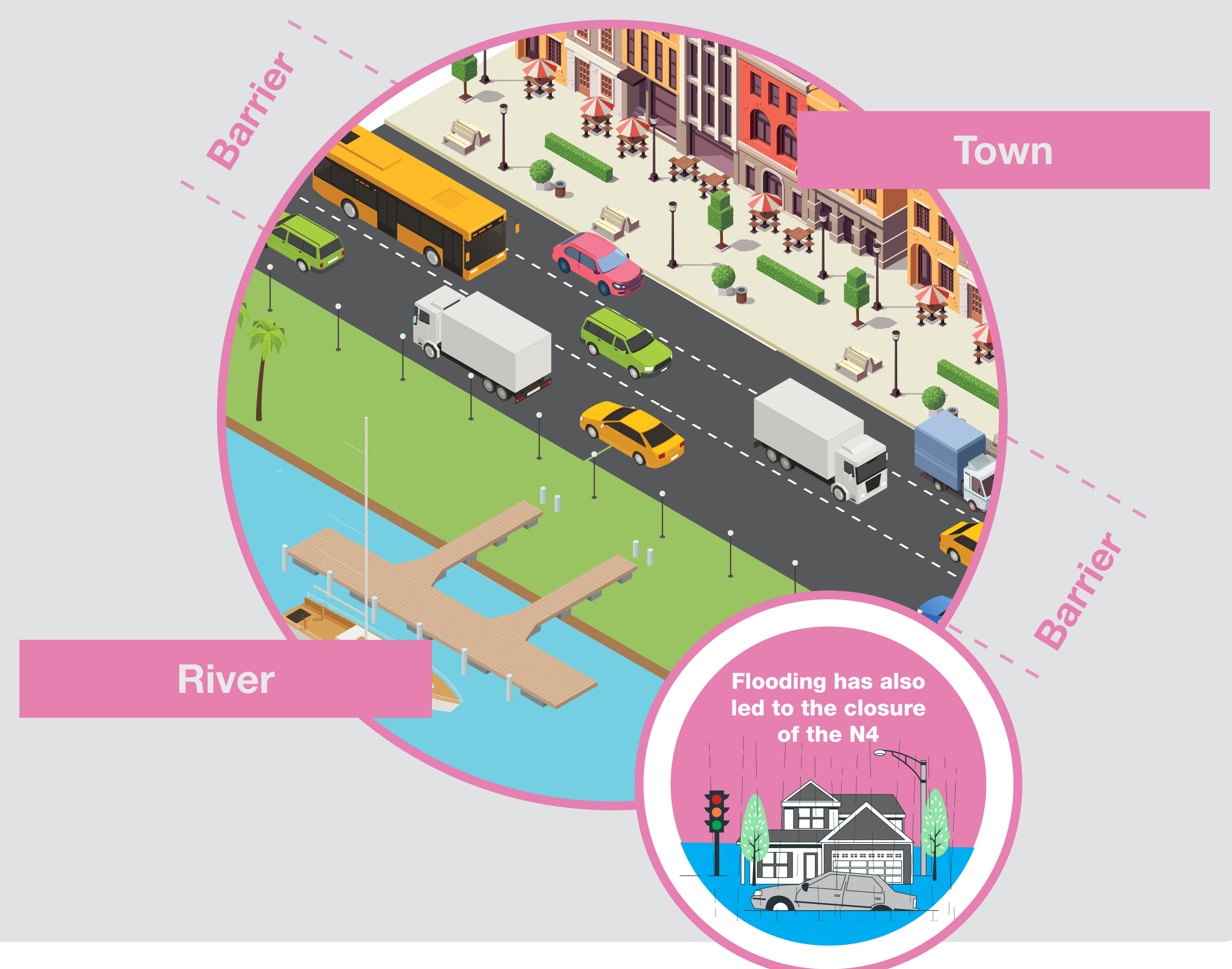
Location of Vehicle Travel Movements as a Percentage of Overall Trip Movements



It is useful to break this traffic into three different components:



The N4, as it currently stands, is a barrier between the river amenities, the Riverfront Amenity Park and the town



Preferred Transport Solution

Road Component

The road component of the N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod project includes a new urban street to the north of Carrick-on-Shannon and a new off-line bypass to the south.

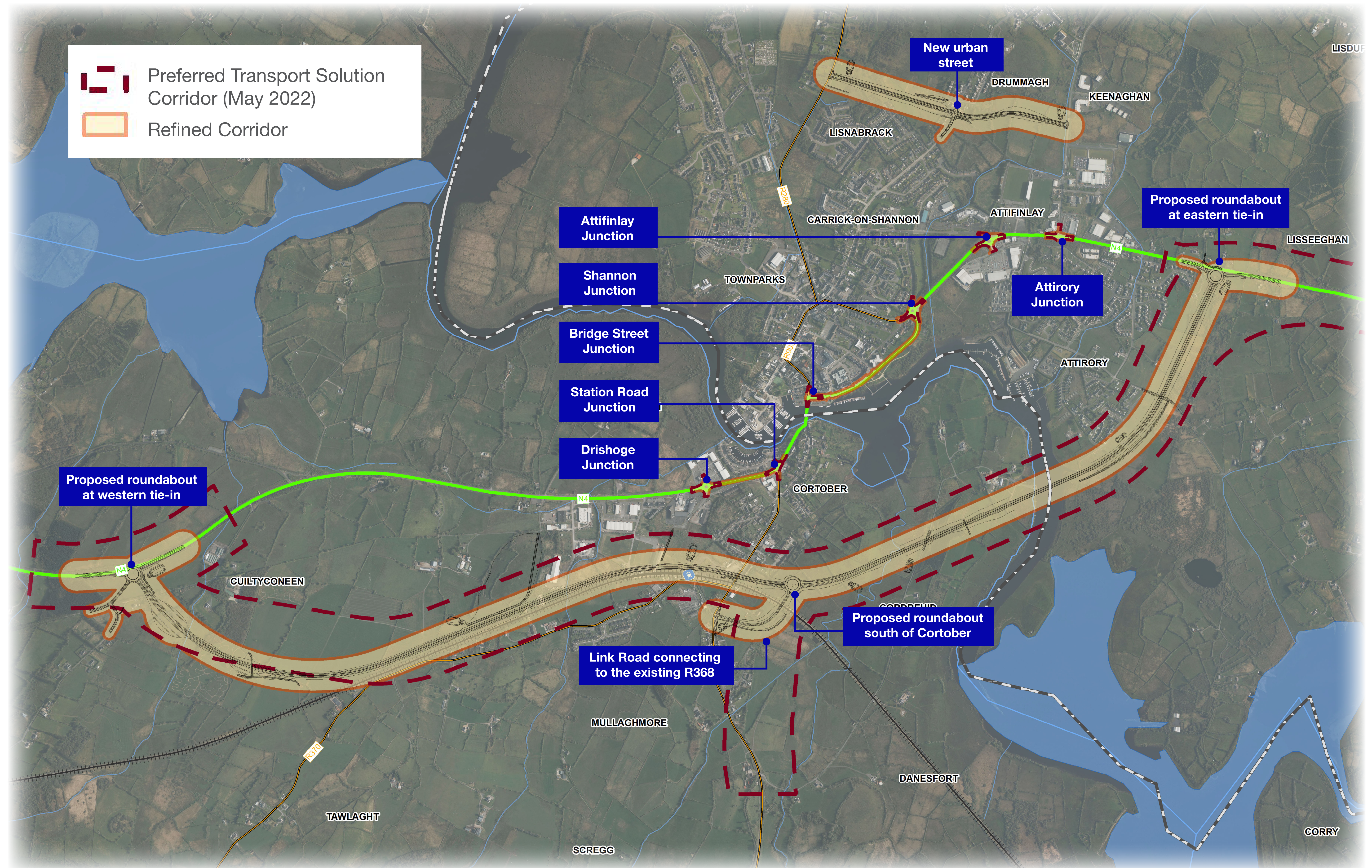
The new urban street will provide pedestrian, cycle and vehicular connectivity between the Leitrim Village Road (R280), Summerhill Road and the Castlecarra Road. A priority T-junction will be provided at the R280 and Castlecarra Road junctions, while a traffic signalised junction will be provided at the Summerhill Road junction. The new N4 Bypass will be approximately 5.8km long and it is anticipated that it will consist of a Type 2 Dual Carriageway cross-section with 2 lanes provided in each direction. New roundabout junctions will be located along the N4 bypass, at its western tie-in, south of Cortober, and at the eastern tie-in with the existing N4 single carriageway section.

At Cortober, a new link road will connect the existing R368, via a new traffic signalised junction, to the new roundabout on the N4 Bypass.

Active Travel and Demand Management Measures

Active travel and demand management measures will be introduced within Carrick-on-Shannon, providing improved facilities for walkers, cyclists and other non-motorised users. These interventions include:

- 30km/h speed limit introduced on the existing N4 between the Station Road and Shannon Junctions
- Signalised and Zebra crossings added to the Drishoge Junction roundabout
- Shared footway/cycleway introduced on both sides of the existing N4 between the Drishoge and Station Road Junctions
- Station Road junction upgraded to a traffic signalised junction with pedestrian crossings
- Bridge Street junction upgraded to a traffic signalised junction with pedestrian crossings
- New 2-way cycle track introduced on the southern side of the existing N4, replacing the existing parking lay-bys, between the Bridge Street and Shannon Junctions
- Two new signal controlled pedestrian crossing points introduced adjacent to the Carrick-on-Shannon Welfare Office and the Landmark Hotel
- Signalised crossings added to all arms of the Shannon Junction roundabout
- Signalised and Zebra crossings added to the Attifinlay Junction roundabout
- Signalised and Zebra crossings added to the Attirory Junction roundabout



Potential Cross-Sections

Provision of a New Dual Carriageway Road



Provision of a new dual carriageway road. Pedestrians and cyclists would be prohibited from using a dual carriageway road but would be accommodated along the existing road network.

Provision of an Urban Street



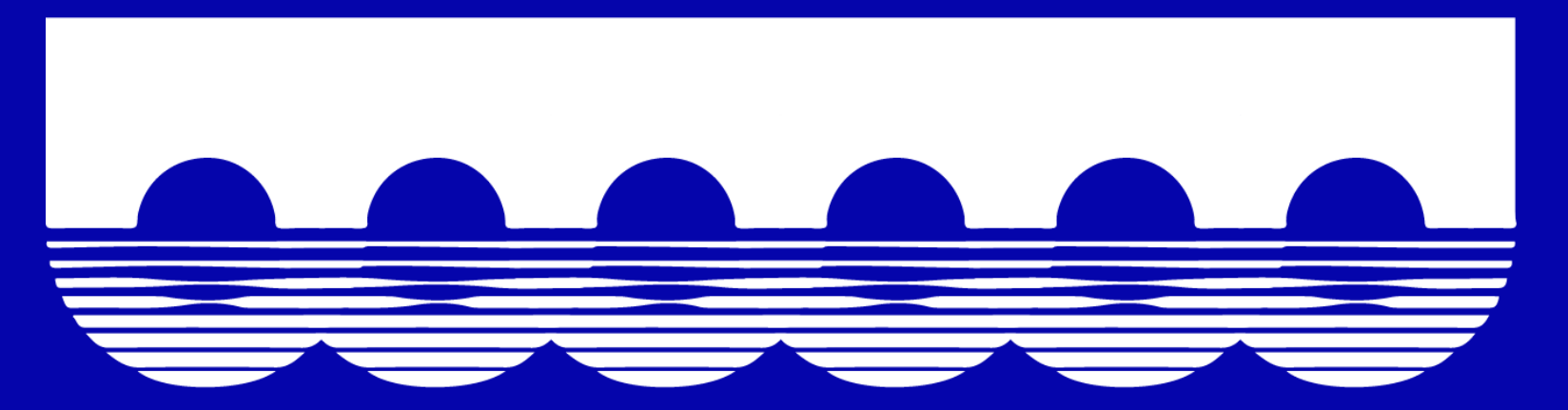
Provision of a new urban street. A new urban street would be designed for all modes to accommodate walkers, cyclists and motorised users.

Provision of Active Travel Measures

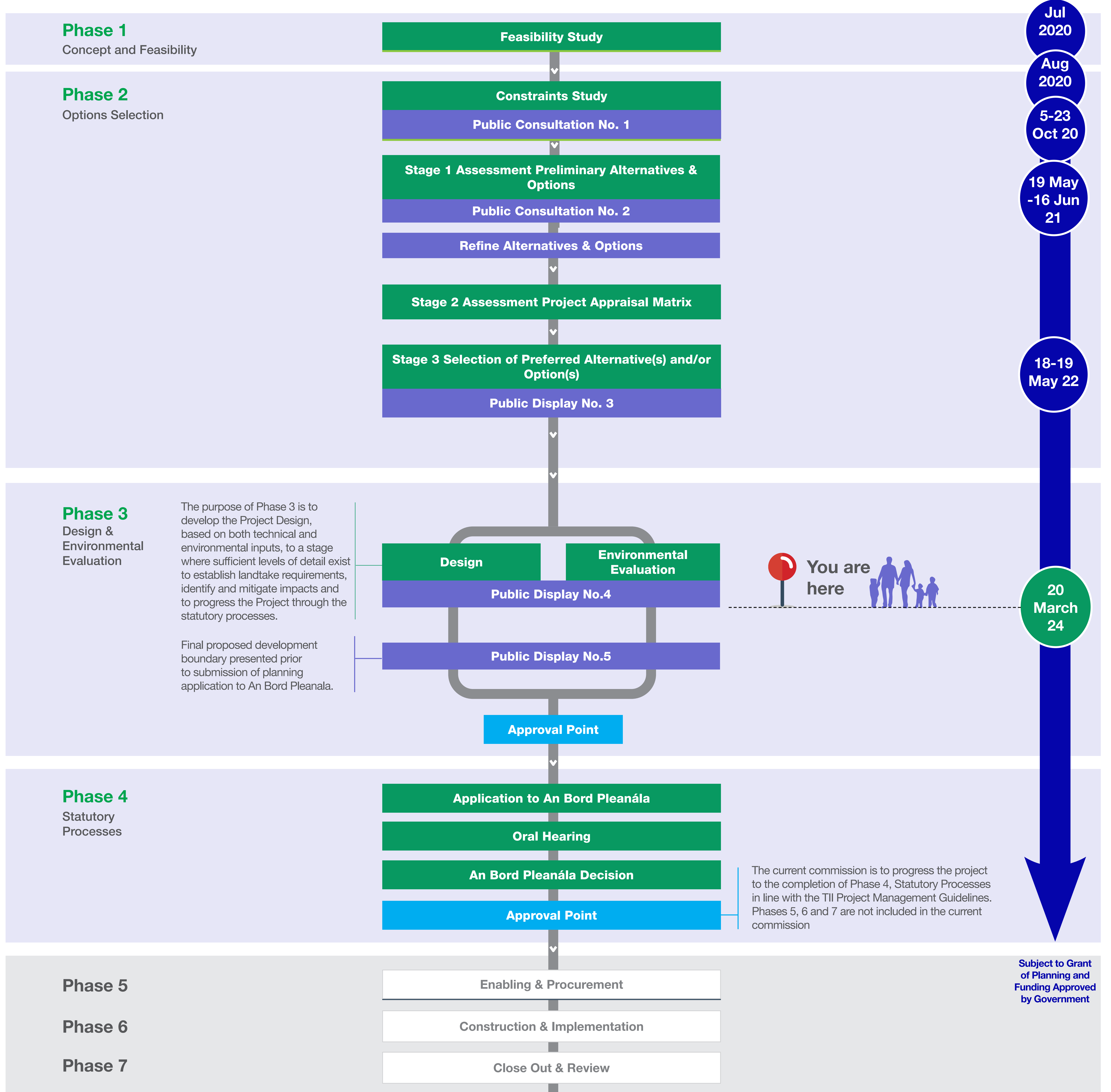


Provision of active travel measures. A new two-way cycle track and signalised crossing facilities would be provided to cater for walkers and cyclists

Proposed Route Alignment & Junction Strategy | Board 6



Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod



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