GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY SCHEME

CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT REPORT

Greenway

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CASTLE NATIONAL
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Galway to Athlone CYCLEWAY

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the strategic screening assessment of candidate cycleway route options, developed from Galway to Athlone. The aim of this assessment is to determine which candidate options progress onto the Route Options Public Consultation for further consideration. The study area for the Galway to Athlone Cycleway is shown for reference in Figure 1.1 below.

Section 2 of this report sets out the objectives for the Cycleway contained in the Project Brief which form the basis of the screening assessment.

Section 3 describes the main constraints, opportunities and drivers in the development of candidate route options.

Section 4 contains details of the first Study Area Public Consultations, feedback received, issues and concerns raised together with a brief summary of the comments received.

Section 5 describes each candidate route option considered from Galway to Athlone.

Section 6 describes the screening assessment matrix developed.

Section 7 contains the overall summary of the report and recommends which candidate route options to progress onto the next public consultation.

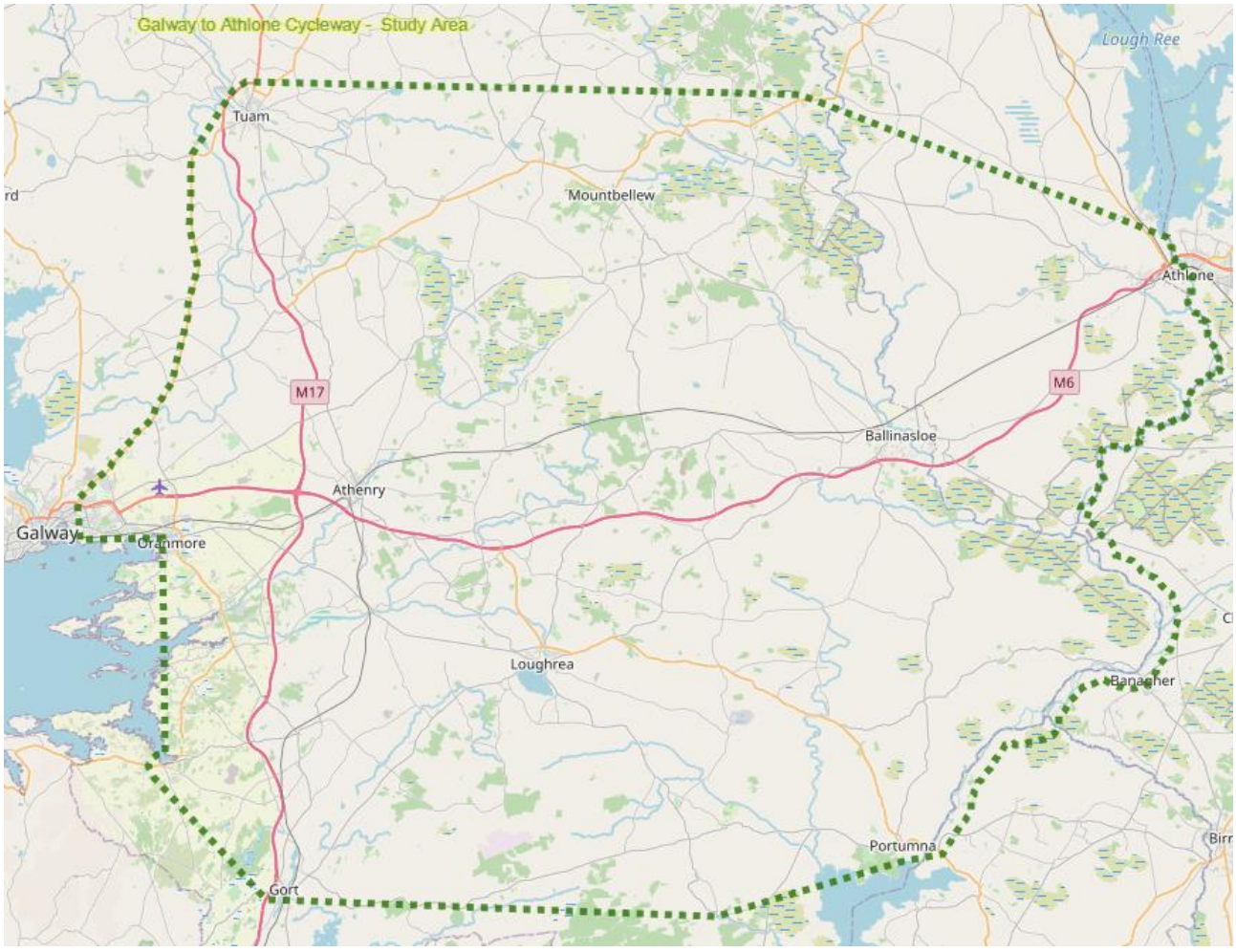


Figure 1.1 – Study Area

2 OBJECTIVES

This section of the report sets out the objectives for the Cycleway which form the basis for the screening assessment of candidate cycleway options. The objectives, taken from the Project Brief, have been prepared using the framework of the Government's Greenway Strategy (2018), and the Common Appraisal Framework headings below.

2.1 Economy

Key economic objectives are:

EC1 – To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards;

EC2 - To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises;

EC3 - To deliver the cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money; and

EC4 - To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.

2.2 Safety

The key safety objectives are:

S1 - To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas);

S2 - To provide a sense of security for cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed); and

S3 - To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.

2.3 Physical Activity

The physical activity objectives are:

PA1 - To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education; and

PA2 - To increase the number of people in Ireland who choose to take part in physically active outdoor recreation and leisure activities.

2.4 Environment

Key environmental objectives are:

EN1 - To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas;

EN2 - To increase public appreciation of the natural environment and cultural heritage, by encouraging people to experience the countryside;

EN3 - To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land;

EN4 - To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive; and

EN5 - To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.

2.5 Accessibility & Social Inclusion

Key accessibility and social inclusion objectives are:

ASI1 - To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances; and

ASI2 - To benefit local communities through enhancing existing amenities and providing new linkages to adjacent town and village centres.

2.6 Integration

The proposed scheme is required to integrate with general policies and plans. The following objectives are outlined for integration:

I1 - To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area;

I2 - To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services; and

I3 - To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.

3 CONSTRAINTS / OPPORTUNITIES / DRIVERS

The vision for the project is to develop a world class cycle and walking trail, safe and accessible for all users, from Galway to Athlone, completing the Galway to Dublin route. Constraints and opportunities in the development of this vision relate to both the natural and human environment. These serve to inform the selection of suitable candidate options, as described in this section of the report.

The goal is to develop the strongest possible tourism and leisure facility, while accounting for the constraints. It is desirable to link strong existing attractions, and route through the most scenic areas. It is expected that there will be strong competition for visitors from other greenways in Ireland, and overseas, and that a very high-quality offering will be needed to realise the benefits that are available to Galway and Roscommon from cycle tourism.

3.1 Public Land

The candidate options prioritise use of public lands in line with the Government's Greenway Strategy (2018). *'The preferred model for future Greenways is to use lands already in the undisputed ownership or control of the State, either through Government Agencies, Government Departments or Local Authorities.'*

The State lands within the study area were identified using landownership data obtained from the Property Registration Authority (PRAI). This data was collated and mapped as shown below to highlight publicly owned lands. The main bodies that own public land in the area include Bord Na Mona, Coilte, Iarnród Éireann and the ESB.

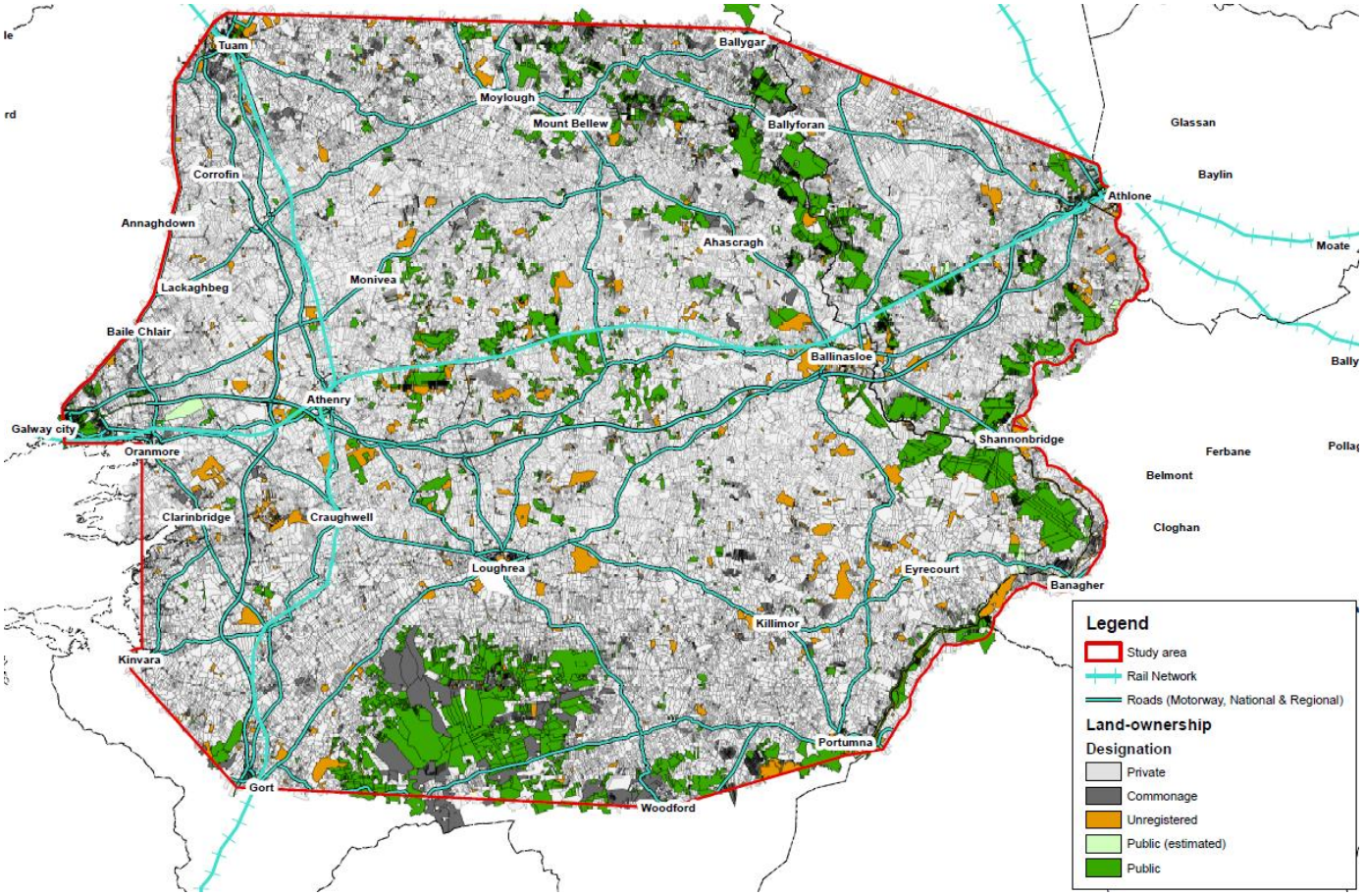


Figure 3.1 – Public Land Map

3.2 Land Use (Farms, Bogs & Forests)

The most common land use between Galway and Athlone is agricultural farmland. Impacts on farmlands such as dairy, poultry, drystock and tillage is to be minimised, and avoided where possible, with routes through public lands, bogs and forests preferred.

Some bog lands in the study area are protected sites. It is desirable to minimise impacts on intact bogs. Light industrial railways and bog roads offer opportunities to avoid productive farmland. Bord Na Móna are very supportive of the cycleway using existing railways as they undergo an accelerated 'Exit from Peat' and bog rehabilitation program. The candidate options aim to use these disused railways and bog roads where feasible.

Forestry within the route options is mostly associated with the state organisation Coillte who welcome the development of the cycleway through their estates. There are also private forestry plots which offer similar opportunities for the development of an attractive cycleway corridor with reduced impacts on farming activities. The candidate options aim to use forest areas that contain existing tracks and trails as much as possible.

3.3 Destinations / Attractions

The Galway to Athlone area contains a rich cultural landscape offering a variety of destinations and attractions. These were identified using information from Fáilte Ireland, tourism websites, local knowledge of the area, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, and the Sites and Monuments Records.

Fáilte Ireland have developed a number of regional tourism brands, in the area, which present three distinct tourist offerings: Ireland's Ancient East; Ireland's Hidden Heartland; and the Wild Atlantic Way. Their rural hinterland is characterised by attractive if unspectacular scenery, generally small farmsteads, dispersed rural dwellings and historic market towns.

The candidate options developed aim to link places of interest and promote recreation in areas that have beautiful scenery with plenty to see and do. Fáilte Ireland's research also indicates that visitors cycling while on holidays want their cycling routes to be scenic and have lots of other things to see and do. The options also include towns or villages along it, with good visitor facilities, including restaurants, accommodation and attractions.

Attractions of significant interest served by the options include the Battle of Aughrim Site, Oranmore Castle, Clonfert Cathedral, Dungaire Castle, Mountbellew Forest Park, Monivea Forest Trails, Athenry Castle, Lough Rea, Coole Park, Portumna Castle, Lough Derg, Athlone Castle and the River Shannon. The Shannon system is the principal water body in the area and is seen as a core tourism and recreational asset in the area.

3.4 Functionality (Accommodation / Distances)

The Target Cycling Market survey conducted by Fáilte Ireland indicates that the length of the Cycleway is very important in attracting international cycling tourists. Cyclists will typically wish to partake in a weeklong holiday. The minimum length required for a cycle route to be marketable internationally is 200 km. However, a route length of approximately 300km is desirable to allow a 5 day trip. This is consistent with the requirements for certification of routes under the Eurovelo Certification Standard. The route from Dublin to Athlone is approximately 130 km in length. The candidate options range from 75 to 190km in length. This would give an overall length from Galway to Dublin of 205 to 320km.

In the development of options, a relatively direct route from Galway to Athlone is normally preferred unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise. Some routes are longer than others in order to link with significant attractions, scenic areas and to utilise public land. The candidate options developed also aim to have reasonable distances between towns and places of interest. This will ensure that both short and long trips can be catered for on daily sections (usually between 30-90 km). They route through some areas that are well served by existing facilities, while also considering that new facilities can also develop organically following the establishment of the cycleway.

Each daily section of the options aim to have at least basic or average standard accommodation (hotels, B&B's, home stays, camping, etc.). The options also include towns with good visitor facilities including shops, restaurants, pubs and attractions. Connecting these facilities along with other attractions in more rural areas will ensure the cycleway offers its users lots to see and do.

The Fáilte Ireland Market research in 2013 asked key oversea markets what makes a good cycling experience. The results are shown in Figure 3.2 below and have been used in the development of candidate options.

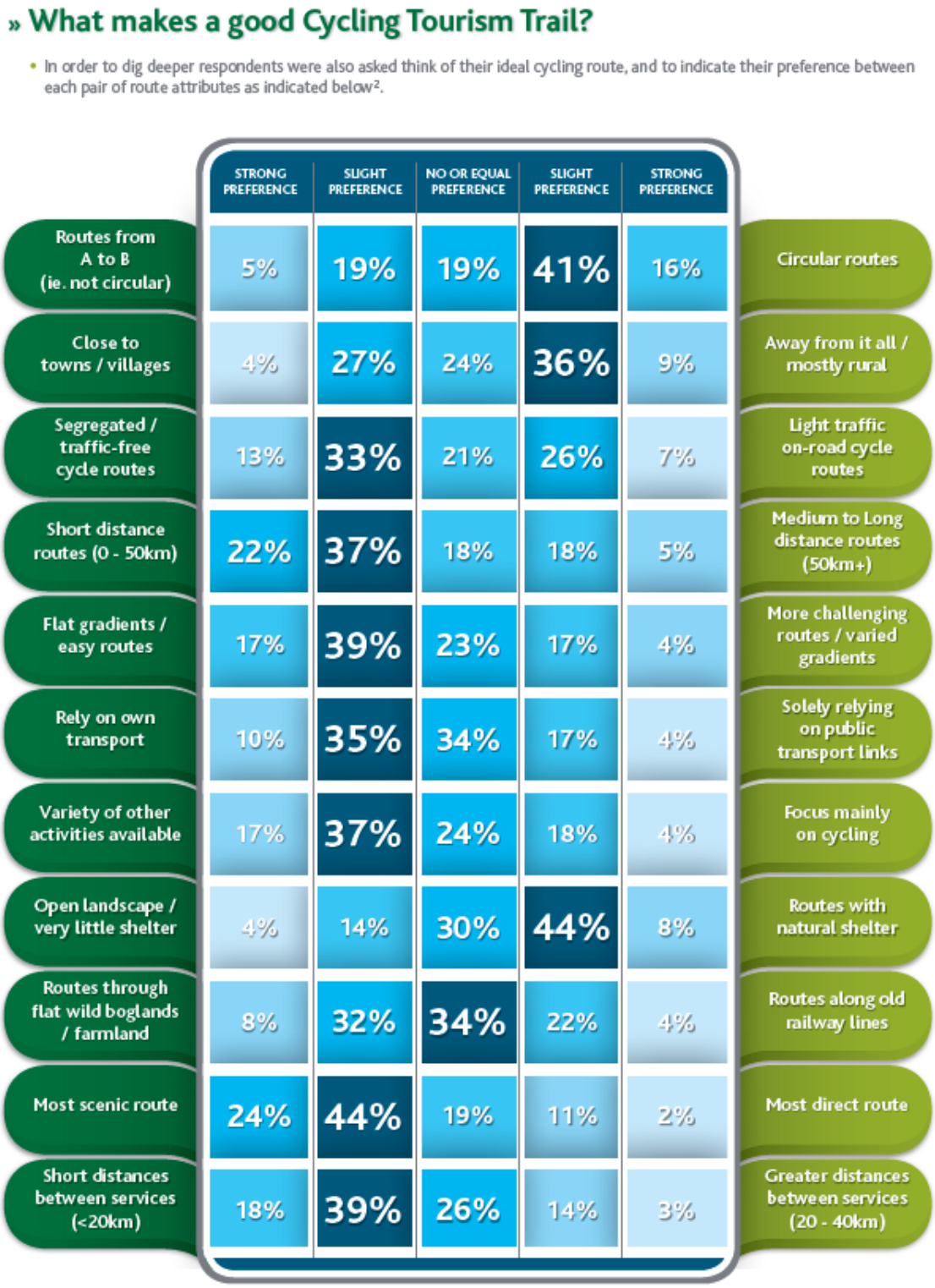


Figure 3.2 – Fáilte Ireland Cycling Market Survey (2013)

3.5 Scenery

The Galway to Athlone corridor has many scenic locations that can provide the type of memorable experience cycling and walking tourists look for. While the area is generally low lying, there are some elevated areas, that offer scenic views across the landscape. These locations among some others could be established as scenic focal points with the development of potential viewing platforms that add value to the cycleway.

Away from specific viewpoints, the area is characterised by pleasant if unspectacular scenery of green rolling countryside and agricultural landscapes. The candidate options propose to route through the more scenic areas where possible, while also providing a variety of landscape experiences for the user.

Landscape areas of medium to very high value include the Shannon system along the eastern boundary, the River Suck, the Slieve Aughty Mountains, Lough Rea, Coole Park, the Burren and the region around Galway Bay, as shown on Figure 3.3 below. The centre and north of the study area in County Galway are rated as having low landscape value, though there are some notable views and focal points.

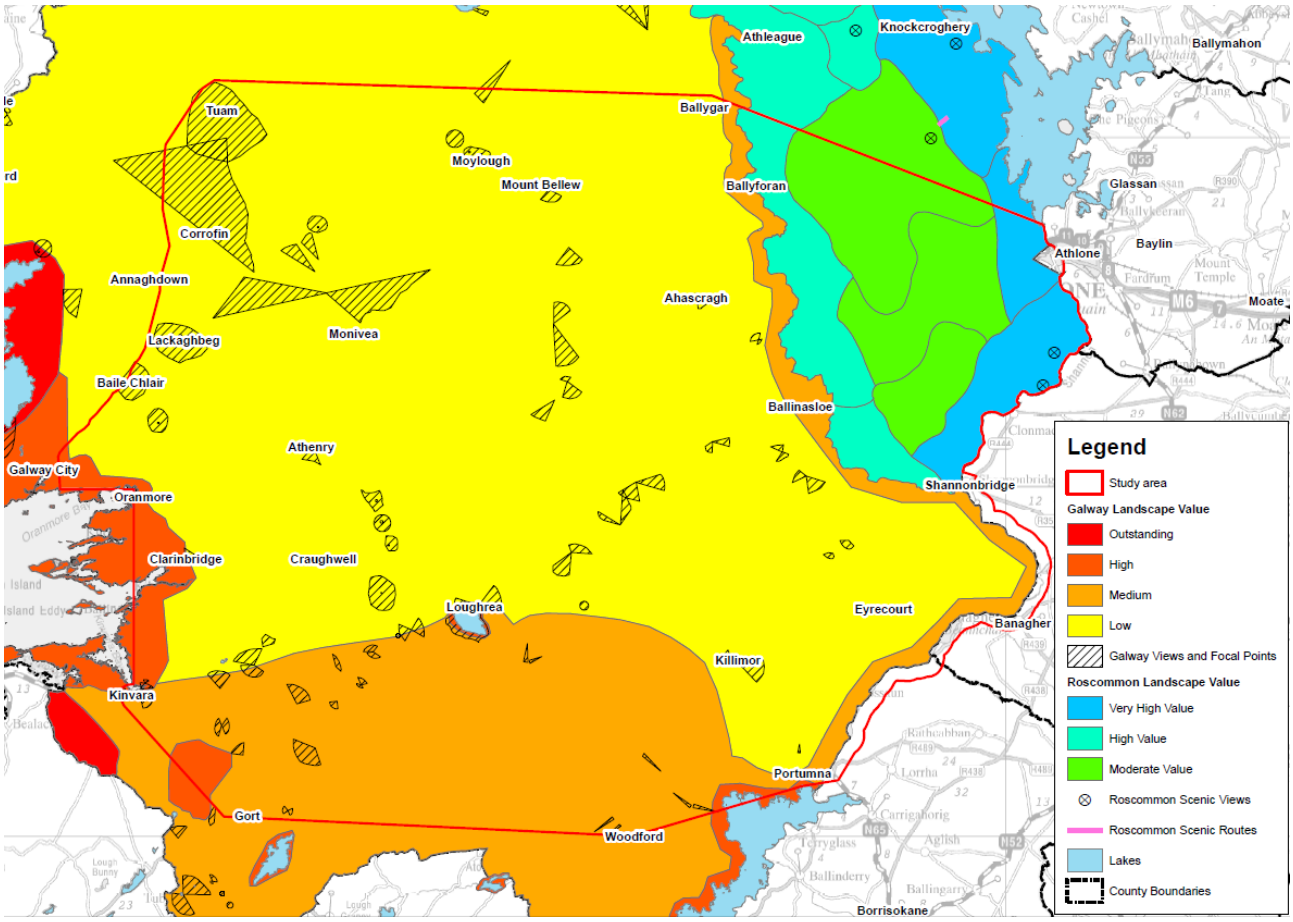


Figure 3.3 – Landscape Value Map (Galway and Roscommon County Development Plans)

3.6 Environment

The European sites and other designated sites within the study area are a significant constraint on the proposed cycleway. There are 50 European sites and 62 designated sites within the study area. There are also four nature reserves and four Ramsar sites within the study area. The candidate options pass through Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), such as the River Shannon Callows, River Suck Callows, Slieve Aughty Mountains, Lough Rea, Coole-Garyland and Galway Bay. In addition to the

habitats and species protected under designated sites, there are numerous records for rare and protected species.

Options through designated sites and other features of ecological interest have been considered due to their attractive ecological features and high scenic value. Routes through these sites use existing infrastructure to minimise potential impacts and avoid sites where there is no existing infrastructure in place. Options that potentially impact on designated sites are likely to require an Appropriate Assessment. If it cannot be demonstrated that the route will not impact on the integrity of the site, then the route cannot be selected as a preferred corridor.

3.7 Archaeology, Architecture & Cultural Heritage

The study area contains a rich historic environment of archaeological and built heritage sites. This includes a wide variety of monuments and structures covering all periods of settlement from the Mesolithic right down to the modern day. The vast number of Cultural Heritage sites shows a wide pattern of distribution, particularly with regard to archaeological monuments. The architectural heritage sites of interest show clear clustering within and around towns and villages.

Although having a denser rural distribution that the architectural heritage sites, the archaeological monuments too are often found in clusters in the towns, such as Athlone, Ballinasloe, Loughrea, Athenry and Tuam. A few patches of low density of archaeological monuments are visible around the Slieve Aughty Mountains and to the east of Ballinasloe.

In terms of location and distribution, the majority of National Monuments are located to the south of the M6 Motorway and north of the Slieve Aughty Mountains. There are notable small clusters of National Monuments at a small number of locations, such as Portumna, Athenry, Loughrea, Aughrim and near Kilcolgan.

The distribution of multiple designation sites is quite wide, however, there are lower densities to the east of Tuam and immediately west and southwest of Athlone and around the Slieve Aughty Mountains. As with the National Monuments, notable clusters are discernible. With the exception of Tuam, the clusters are located mainly in the southern half of the study area, including around Ballinasloe, Eyrecourt, Portumna, Loughrea, Athenry and Oranmore.

3.8 Other

The Cycleway will interact with existing infrastructure. Interactions with the existing rail and road network will provide good accessibility for the cycleway but need careful consideration particularly where crossing the M6, M17 or M18 Motorways and active rail lines.

The network of waterbodies in the study area offer natural severance lines while allowing visitors to experience the natural environment. While this offers an opportunity, there are constraints associated with flooding. The Shannon Callows acts as a flood plain, which can cover an extensive width of up to 2km. Other rivers in the area also tend to flood when the flood plain extends up tributaries of the River Shannon.

Each candidate route crosses either the River Shannon or Suck. Some proposed options use the existing Bord Na Móna rail bridges in the vicinity of Shannonbridge. Other minor river crossing points may use existing bridges where possible. While some level of infrequent flooding on the Cycleway may be acceptable, it will have to remain free from frequent flooding.

4 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

The first Public Consultation for the Galway to Athlone Castle cycleway project was held in August 2020. The purpose of the consultation was to present the study area to the public and invite them to give their opinions on the cycleway.

4.1 Consultation Events

A series of public information events were held in Athlone, Ballinasloe, Athenry, Loughrea and Oranmore between 11am and 8pm during the week of 10th – 14th August, as shown in Table 4.1 below. Information on the project was also made available at public displays held in local authority venues between the 17th and 21st of August. These events were held in compliance with HSE requirements regarding Covid-19.

The consultation was very well attended with a total 524 people attending the events. Members of the project team were present to discuss the project with the public. There was a strong interest in the project expressed at the events, with very good engagement and many useful discussions held during the events.

The project team emphasised that the project was starting again from a ‘clean slate’, with no routes proposed at this point. It was also emphasized that there would be strong consultation with landowners throughout the project development and that a key project aim would be to progress the project in collaboration with affected landowners.

Following the consultations, a large number of responses were received. Many were individual submissions, with submissions also received from community groups and businesses along with one large petition.

Most respondents were of a cycleway through the study area. Many were opposed to a route through private lands and would only support a route through public lands or on-road facilities. Submissions were received from all over the study area.

5 CANDIDATE ROUTE CORRIDORS

Ten candidate route corridor options have been developed from Galway to Athlone. They were developed using feedback from the first public consultation, the project objectives and from identifying the constraints and opportunities within the study area.

The options are shown on a map of the study area and broken into sections on a bar line to show the indicative lengths along with public land between each destination on the proposed route. Each option states the estimated total length and the amount of public land available for use.

The proposed options are shown in four different categories that can include a Mini Study Area, Public Route, Public Corridor and Rail Corridor. Areas of Public Land identified for the cycleway are shown in a green shade for reference on each candidate option.

Mini Study Areas are mostly private land used to link public corridors and routes. These are areas where the project team wishes to engage with landowners to explore route options.

Public Corridors are proposed in areas where there is an abundance of state-owned land. It's planned to explore routes through these lands in consultation with the public landowners to develop a route through the area. Such corridors include the Slieve Aughtys where there are ample forest estates available for consideration.

Public Routes use existing infrastructure such as railways, tracks and trails within state ownership. These routes also use small narrow public land plots to help create a continuous public land route.

Rail Corridors are routes that parallel rail lines. These routes are proposed along the active Galway to Athlone railway and the disused Western Rail Corridor from Tuam to Athenry. There are currently no surplus lands in the ownership of Iarnród Éireann available to the cycleway.

Proposed candidate options are shown in Appendix A and briefly described below, starting from Athlone Castle and travelling west to Galway City.

5.1 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 1 – Northern Route Corridor

The Northern Route Corridor travels in the direction of the River Shannon, along the disused railway in adjacent Bord Na Móna bogs before crossing the River Suck and using the Old Canal to Ballinasloe. The route continues to Mountbellew through Ahascragh or along the River Suck by using existing bog roads and disused rail lines in the ownership of Bord Na Móna. The route then continues to Tuam or Abbeyknockmoy before using a portion of the Western Rail Corridor to reach Athenry and continue to Galway.

5.2 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 2 – BAMM (Ballinasloe, Athenry, Monivea, Mountbellew) Route Corridor

The BAMM Route Corridor travels in the direction of the River Shannon, along the disused railway in adjacent Bord Na Móna bogs before crossing the River Suck and using the Old Canal to Ballinasloe. The route then continues to Mountbellew through Ahascragh or along the River Suck by using existing bog roads and disused rail lines in the ownership of Bord Na Móna. The route then continues through Monivea before using a portion of the Western Rail Corridor to reach Athenry and continue to Galway.

5.3 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 3 – Central 2 Route Corridor

The Central 2 Route Corridor travels in the direction of the River Shannon, mainly by using the disused railway in adjacent Bord Na Móna bogs before crossing the River Suck and using the Old Canal to Ballinasloe. The

route then continues to Aughrim, Woodlawn and Monivea, before using a portion of the Western Rail Corridor to reach Athenry and continue to Galway.

5.4 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 4 – Rail Route Corridor

The Rail Route Corridor travels parallel to the outside of the active Galway to Athlone rail line boundary through Ballinasloe and Athenry, with potential spurs at Aughrim, Kilconnell and Woodlawn along the route.

5.5 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 5 – Central Route Corridor

The Central Route Corridor travels in the direction of the River Shannon, mainly by using the disused railway in adjacent Bord Na Móna bogs before crossing the River Suck and using the Old Canal to Ballinasloe. The route then continues to the area around Aughrim, Kilconnell, New Inn and Athenry before reaching Galway City. This route also has the option to parallel the existing rail line for sections, similar to the Rail Route Option below.

5.6 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 6 – M6 Route Corridor

The M6 Route proposes to parallel the existing M6 Motorway from Athlone to Galway by using existing access roads where possible and space available within the Motorway boundary.

5.7 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 7 – ALP (Athenry-Loughrea-Portumna) Route Corridor

The ALP Route Corridor travels in the direction of the River Shannon, mainly by using the disused railways in adjacent Bord Na Móna bogs and flood embankments in the ownership of ESB, to Portumna. The route then crosses the Slieve Aughty's to Loughrea before reaching Athenry and continuing to Galway City.

5.8 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 8 – Preferred Route Corridor (2014)

The Previous Preferred Route Corridor developed in 2015 travels in the direction of the River Shannon, adjacent to Bord Na Móna bogs before crossing the River Suck and using the Old Canal to Ballinasloe. The route then continues through Aughrim, Kilreekil, Loughrea, Craughwell, Clarinbridge and Oranmore before reaching Galway City.

5.9 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 9 – R446 Route Corridor

This Route Corridor travels parallel to the R446 (Old N6) from Galway to Athlone through Ballinasloe, Aughrim, Kilreekiil, Loughrea, Craughwell and Oranmore using the existing hard shoulder or space available adjacent to the Regional road.

5.10 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 10 – Southern Route Corridor

The Southern Route Corridor travels in the direction of the River Shannon, mainly by using the disused railway in adjacent Bord Na Móna bogs and the flood embankments in the ownership of ESB, to Portumna. The route then crosses the Slieve Aughty's to Gort before reaching Kinvara and continuing up along Galway Bay to reach the city.

5.11 Candidate Cycleway Option No. 11 – Management Option

This option would consist of the selection of a route along existing roads, with route signposting and upgrades to the roads where necessary. These upgrades could include widening or addition of designated cycle lanes.

There are a large number of particular options that would be available, given the large road network between Athlone and Galway.

6 SCREENING

The assessment matrix for screening the candidate options was developed with the project objectives, shown in section 2 of this report. The matrix assesses each section of a candidate route to give a “Good”, “Moderate” or “Weak” grade against the project objectives. The grading system in the matrix is colour coded Green, Orange and Red respectively for each grade. The rationale behind determining grades for each project objective is shown in Table 6.1 below. The assessment matrix is displayed in Appendix B of this report.

Table 6.1 Candidate Matrix Assessment

Ref		Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives	Strong	Moderate	Weak
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.	Very attractive and scenic areas with lots to see and do.	Attractive areas with some things to see and do.	Less attractive areas with very little to see and do.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.	Large influx of tourists to the area expected.	Some influx of tourists to the area expected.	Little influx of tourists to the area expected.
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.	Good value for money based on the length of the route and benefits to be gained.	Some value for money based on the length of the route and benefits to be gained.	Poor value for money based on the length of the route and benefits to be gained.
	EC4	To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.	Areas close to large urban centres.	Rural areas with some towns and villages.	Very remote rural areas with low population densities.

Ref		Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives	Strong	Moderate	Weak
SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).	Areas substantially away from the existing transport network.	Areas adjacent to existing railways and quiet local roads.	Areas adjacent to busy transport routes.
	S2	To provide a sense of security for Cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed).	Areas with low risk of anti-social behaviour.	Areas with some risk of anti-social behaviour.	Areas with a high risk of anti-social behaviour.
	S3	To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.	Areas substantially away from the existing transport network.	Areas adjacent to existing quiet, urban or low speed transport routes.	Areas adjacent to busy high-speed transport routes.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.	Areas close to large urban centres.	Rural areas with some towns and villages.	Very remote rural areas with low population densities.
	PA2	To increase the number of people in Ireland who choose to take part in physically active outdoor recreation and leisure activities.	Areas close to large urban centres.	Rural areas with some towns and villages.	Very remote rural areas with low population densities.

Ref		Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives	Strong	Moderate	Weak
ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitats in ecologically sensitive areas.	Areas that do not contain any European or other Designated sites.	Areas with European or other Designated sites where some minor disturbance may potentially occur.	Areas with European or other Designated sites where disturbance will occur.
	EN2	To increase public appreciation of the natural environment and cultural heritage, by encouraging people to experience the countryside.	Very attractive and scenic areas with lots to see and do.	Attractive areas with some things to see and do.	Less attractive areas with very little to see and do.
	EN3	To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land.	Areas with a significant amount of public land or parallel to existing transport routes.	Urban centres or areas with a mixture of public and private land.	Rural areas with little to no public land.
	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.	Areas close to large urban centres.	Rural areas with some towns and villages.	Very remote rural areas with low population densities.
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.	Areas with existing tracks and trails available to the cycleway.	Populated areas with some or no existing tracks and trails available to the cycleway.	Remote rural areas with no existing tracks and trails available to the cycleway.

Ref		Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives	Strong	Moderate	Weak
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.	Accessible areas with relatively flat gradients and suitable lengths between destinations.	Partially accessible areas with challenging gradients and lengths between destinations.	Remote areas with difficult gradients and lengths between destinations.
	ASI2	To benefit local communities through enhancing existing amenities and providing new linkages to adjacent town and village centres.	Areas close to large towns and villages with good facilities.	Areas close to small towns and villages with some facilities.	Very remote rural areas with little to no facilities.
INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.	Areas with lots of existing or future cycleways planned.	Areas with some existing or future cycleways planned.	Areas with no existing or future planned cycleways.
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.	Areas with good connections to public transport.	Areas with some connections to public transport.	Areas with little to no connections to public transport
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.	Areas with good tourist activities and attractions.	Areas with some tourist activities and attractions.	Areas with little or no tourist activities and attractions.

7 ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTIONS

Following the screening assessment of each candidate cycleway option, the grading results were reviewed to determine which options best meet the project objectives.

The options recommended to progress onto the next Route Corridor Option Public Consultation for further consideration are listed below:

- **Candidate Option No. 2 – BAMM Route Corridor**
- **Candidate Option No. 4 – Rail Route Corridor**
- **Candidate Option No. 5 – Central Route Corridor**
- **Candidate Option No. 7 – ALP Route Corridor**
- **Candidate Option No. 10 – Southern Route Corridor**

The Candidate Cycleway Options above are to be further assessed prior to and following the next Public Consultation to determine the Preferred Route Corridor Option. They may be amended somewhat prior to Public Consultation No.2.

The reasoning behind options that have not progressed beyond this assessment are summarised below:

- **Candidate Option No. 1 (Northern Route Corridor)** did not progress, as the Mountbellew to Tuam section is quite similar to Ballinasloe to Mountbellew in terms of landscape, without adding any major attractions. There are no clear advantages of progressing from Mountbellew to Tuam or Abbeyknockmoy, versus going via Monivea. It would add approximately 15km to the route, without adding any significant variety on scenery, or major attractions. While Tuam would provide options for accommodation, food and sightseeing, the alternative northern route through Monivea is adequately served in this regard.
- **Candidate Option No. 3 (Central 2 Route Corridor)** through the centre of the study area was better served by Option No. 5 (Central Route) which connects to both Kilconnell and New Inn. Sections of this option on public land may still be considered as variants to other routes, especially between Aughrim and Attymon.
- **Candidate Option No. 6 (M6 Route Corridor)** did not progress due to visual, noise and air impacts for a route adjacent to the Motorway. There are also no real attractions directly beside the Motorway that cannot be served by the Central Route which doesn't have these disadvantages. This takes away from the atmosphere and experience of a rural cycleway. While it could be acceptable to parallel a motorway for short lengths, it is considered that a long route by a motorway will not be very attractive to leisure cyclists and be particularly unattractive to overseas visitors.
- **Candidate Option No. 8 (Preferred Route Corridor 2014)** offers very little public land on the corridor from Ballinasloe to Oranmore. The route therefore does not meet a key goal of the 'Greenway Strategy' (2018);

  'The preferred model for future Greenways is to use lands already in the undisputed ownership or control of the State, either through Government Agencies, Government Departments or Local Authorities.'

  The main attractions on the route are available on alternative routes with more public land, and comparable scenery. There is no real reason to progress this route considering the better alternatives that have now become available within the study area.
- **Candidate Option No. 9 (R446 Route Corridor)** did not progress due to the poor user experience of cycling immediately next to a busy wide road with fast moving traffic. It is unlikely to attract overseas tourists, especially considering competition in Ireland and elsewhere. It is less likely to attract Irish leisure cyclists, other than very experienced 'racing' enthusiasts. It might be viable as a commuter route, but this can be progressed independently as a separate project.

- **Candidate Option No. 11 (Management Option)** did not progress due to the lesser user experience of cycling immediately next to road. To achieve full segregation, which is a key project objective, it would be likely to be necessary to perform significant widening of the roads.

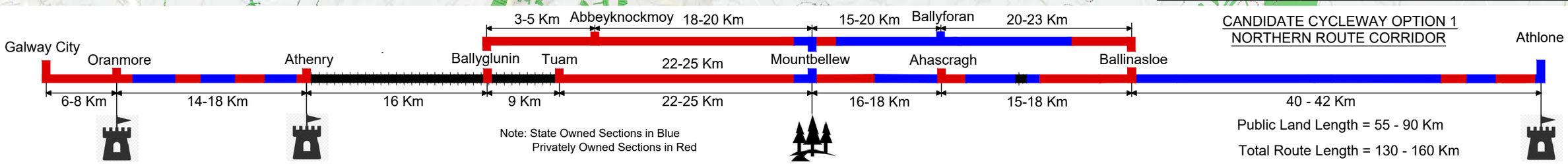
Appendix A

Candidate Route Corridor Options

Tuam
Moylough
Mountbellew
Ballyforan
RAIL CORRIDOR
BORD NA MONA RAILWAY
Abbeyknockmoy
Ballyglunin Railway Station
Mountbellew Forest Park
Athlone
Athlone
M17
FLOOD EMBANKMENT
Ahascragh
PLANNED AMENITY ROUTE ON FORMER COILLTE LANDS
BORD NA MONA RAILWAY
Athenry Castle
Ballinasloe
RIFLE RANGE
M6
Athenry
RIVER SHANNON
Galway
Galway City
Shannonbridge
GRAND CANAL
Oranmore
Oranmore Castle
R446
M6
M18

LEGEND:
PUBLIC LAND
RAIL CORRIDOR
PUBLIC ROUTE
PUBLIC CORRIDOR
MINI STUDY AREA

0.00km 4km 8km 12km 16km 20km
Scale Bar



Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 1
NORTHERN ROUTE CORRIDOR

Public Land Length = 55 - 90 Km

Total Route Length = 130 - 160 Km

Client: Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council; Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council; Westmeath County Council Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí; Transport Infrastructure Ireland Bonneagar Iompair Éireann

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Drawn	MC
Checked	SM
Approved	CMcG
Date	06.10.20
Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: NORTHERN ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

File Ref. MGT0525DG0006 | Drg. No. DG0006-01 | Rev. I01

\\galw-btp-f01\work_transport\MGT0525X - Galway Athlone Cycleway\8.0 Drawings\DG\MGT0525-RPS-00-XX-DR-Z-DG0006 - Route Corridor Options.dwg

Mountbellew

Mountbellew Forest Park

BOG ROAD

Monivea Forest Trails

Monivea

M17

RAIL CORRIDOR

PLANNED AMENITY ROUTE ON FORMER COILLTE LANDS

RIFLE RANGE

M6

Athenry

Athenry Castle

Galway

Galway City

Oranmore

Oranmore Castle

M18

M6

R446

FLOOD EMBANKMENT

Ahascragh

BORD NA MONA RAILWAY

RIVER SUCK

Ballinasloe

BORD NA MONA RAILWAY

RIVER SHANNON

GRAND CANAL

Shannonbridge

Athlone

Athlone

LEGEND:

PUBLIC LAND

RAIL CORRIDOR

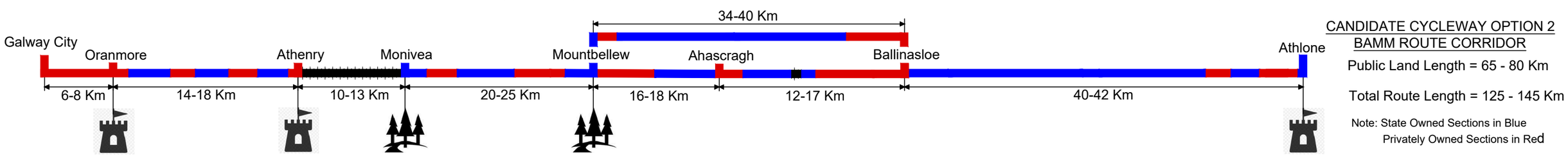
PUBLIC ROUTE

PUBLIC CORRIDOR

MINI STUDY AREA

0.00km 4km 8km 12km 16km 20km

Scale Bar



CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 2
BAMM ROUTE CORRIDOR

Public Land Length = 65 - 80 Km

Total Route Length = 125 - 145 Km

Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

Client

Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council

Westmeath County Council Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí

TII Bonneagar Iompair Éireann Transport Infrastructure Ireland

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Approved	CMcG
Date	06.10.20
Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: BAMM ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

File Ref. MGT0525DG0006 | Drg. No. DG0006-02 | Rev. I01

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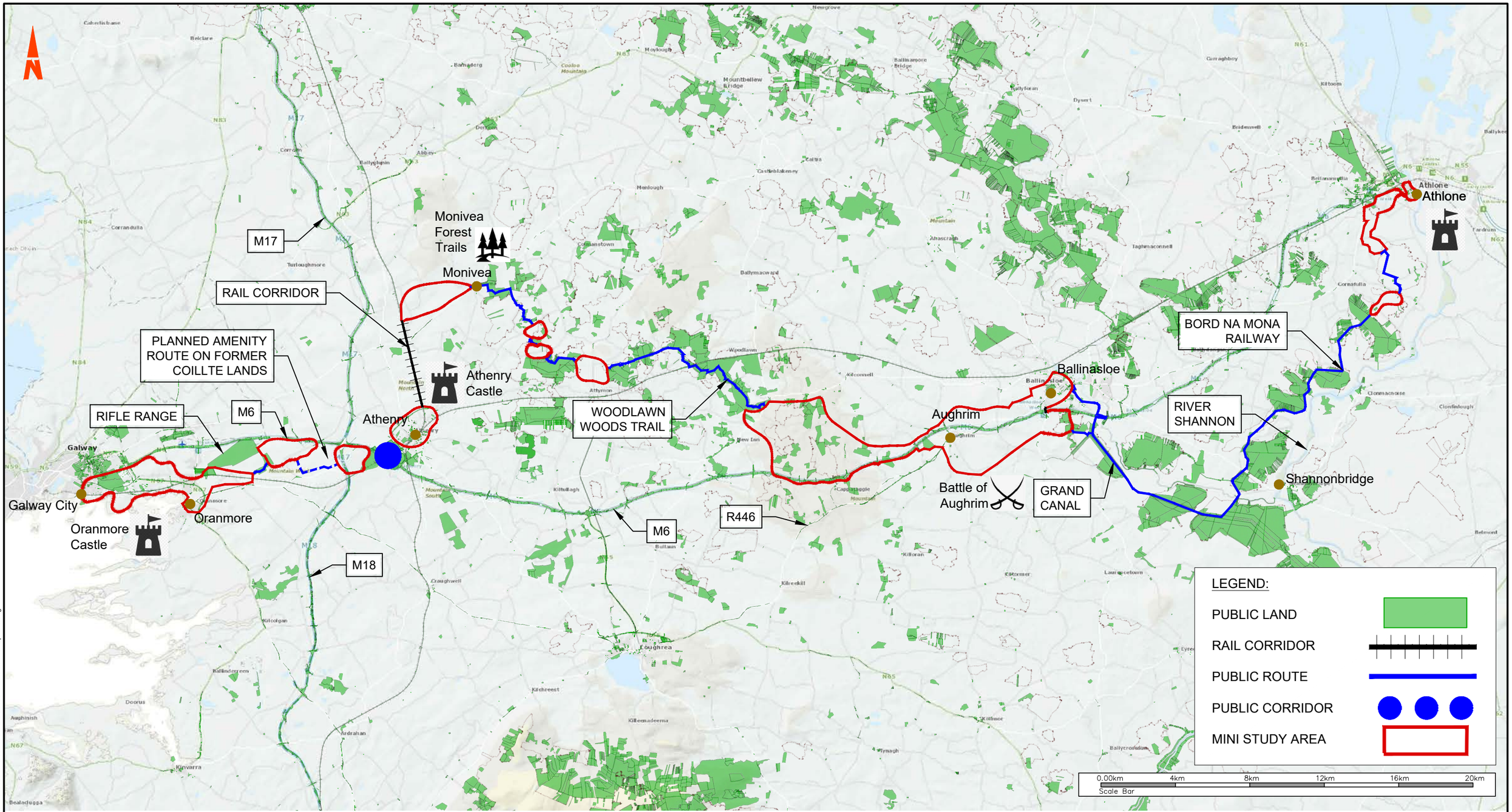

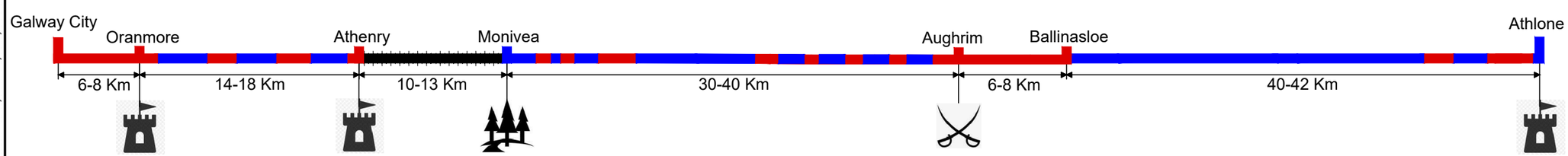

CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 3
CENTRAL 2 ROUTE CORRIDOR

Public Land Length = 55 - 75 Km

Total Route Length = 110 - 130 Km

Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

Client

Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council
Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council
Westmeath County Council Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhi
Bonneagar Iompair Eireann Transport Infrastructure Ireland

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Approved	CMcG
Date	06.10.20
Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: CENTRAL 2 ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

File Ref. MGT0525DG0006 | Drg. No. DG0006-03 | Rev. I01

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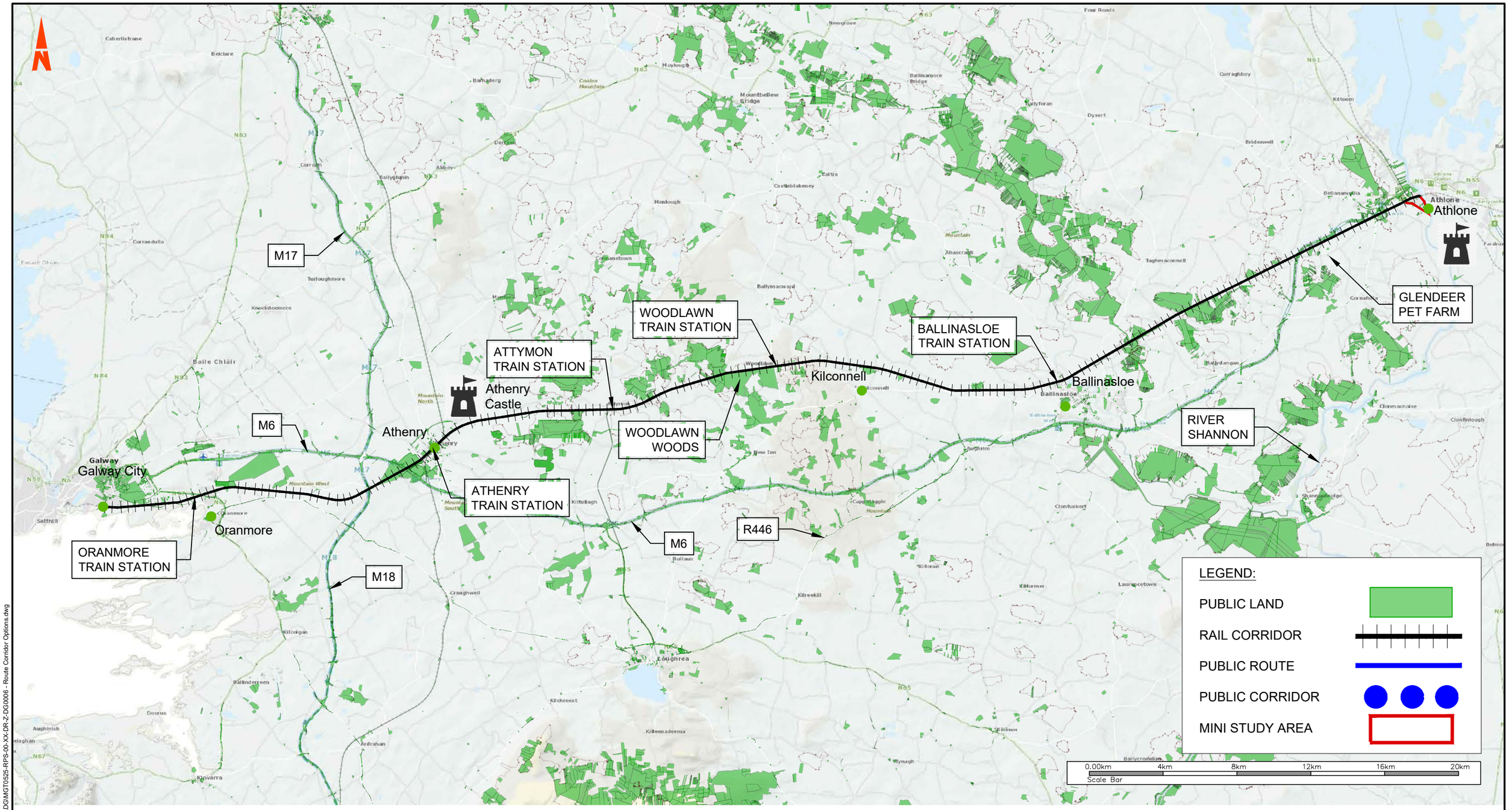

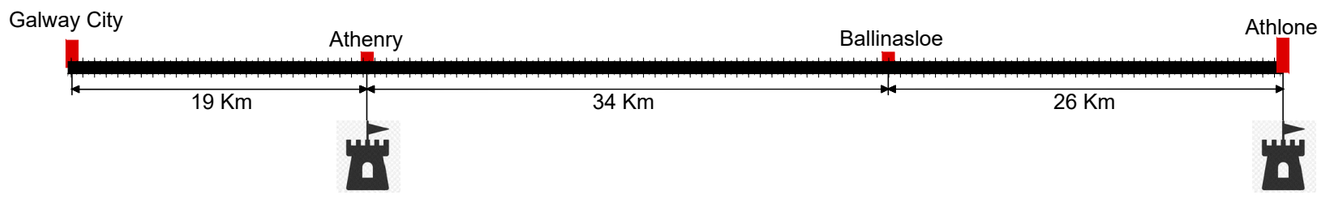

CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 4
RAIL ROUTE CORRIDOR

Total Route Length = 75 Km

Note: Route to parallel Rail Line boundary

Client

Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council
Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council
WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí
TII Bonneagar Iompair Eireann Transport Infrastructure Ireland

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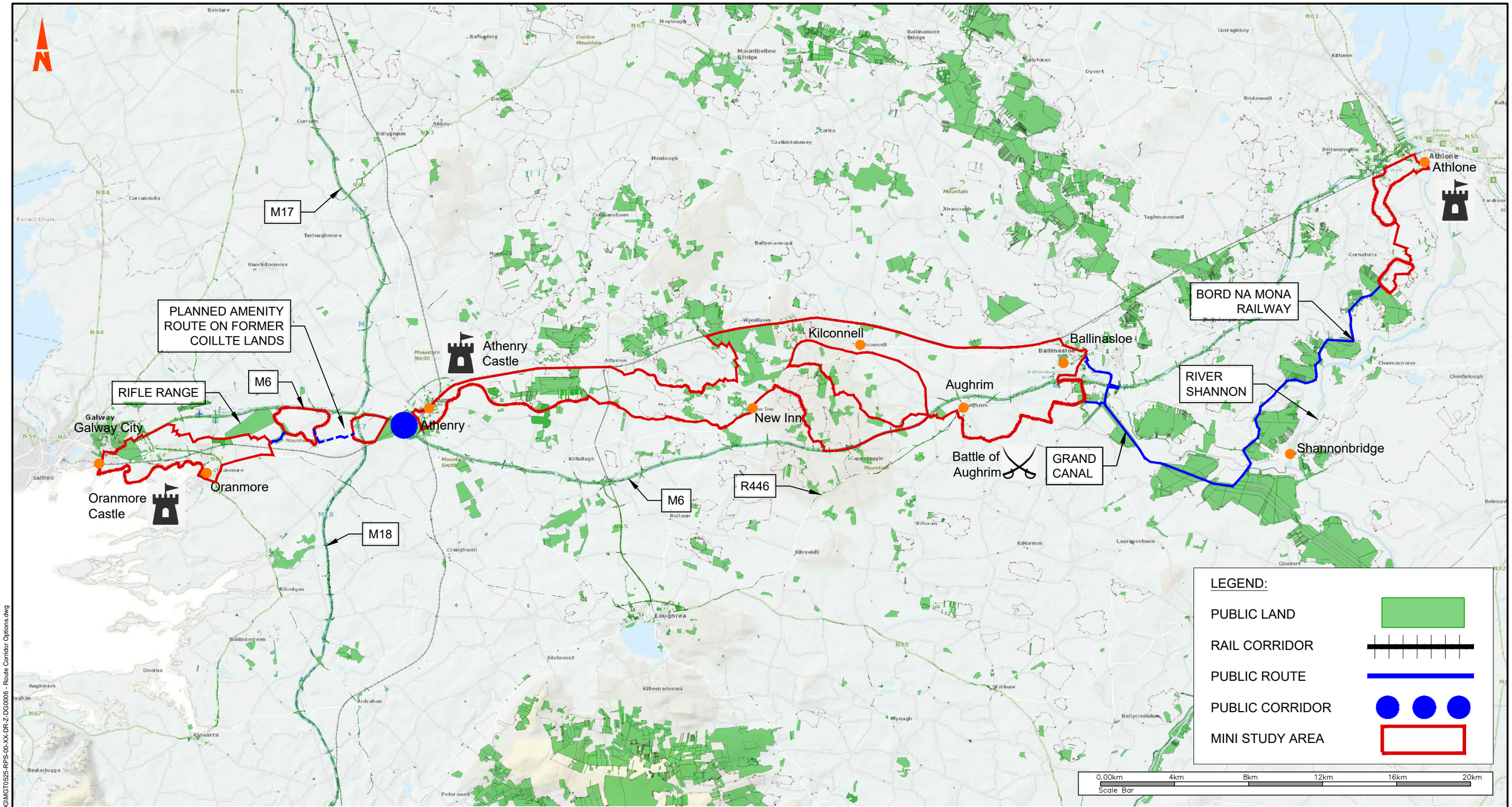
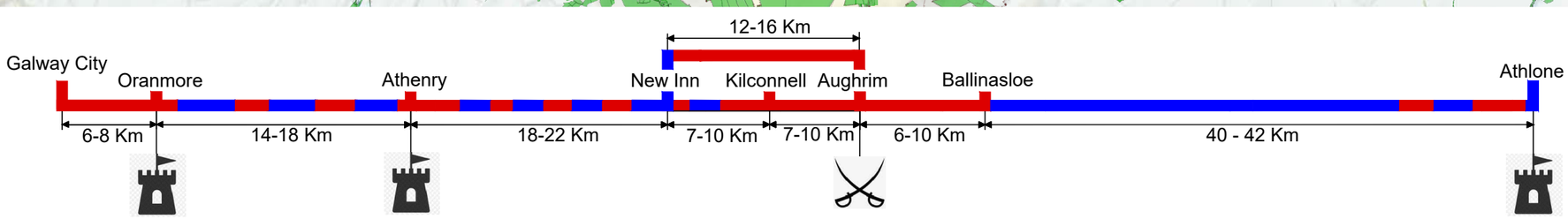
Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: RAILWAY ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

File Ref. MGT0525DG0006 | Drg. No. DG0006-04 | Rev. I01





CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 5
CENTRAL ROUTE CORRIDOR

Public Land Length = 50 - 60 Km

Total Route Length = 100 - 120 Km

Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

Client

ROSCOMMON Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhi

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Date	06.10.20
Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525
File Ref.	MGT0525DG0006
Drg. No.	DG0006-05
Rev.	I01

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: CENTRAL ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

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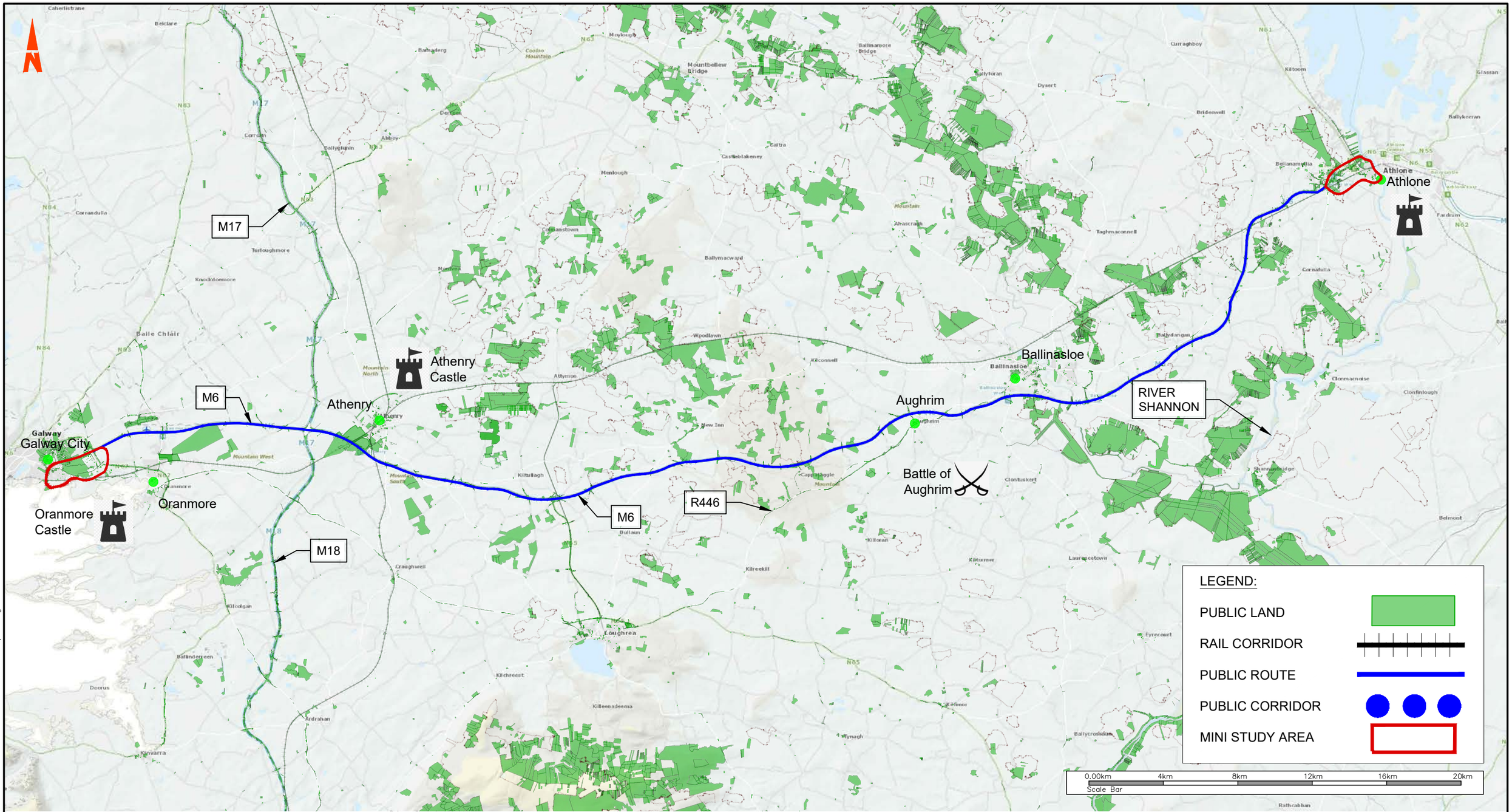

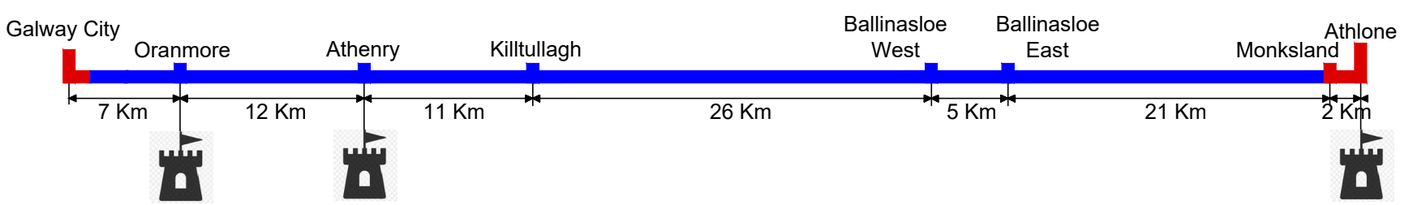

CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 6
M6 ROUTE CORRIDOR

Public Land Length = 75 - 80 Km

Total Route Length = 85 Km

Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

Client

Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council

Westmeath County Council Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhi

Bonneagar Iompair Eireann Transport Infrastructure Ireland

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Job No.	MGT0525
File Ref.	MGT0525DG0006
Drg. No.	DG0006-06
Rev.	I01

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: M6 ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

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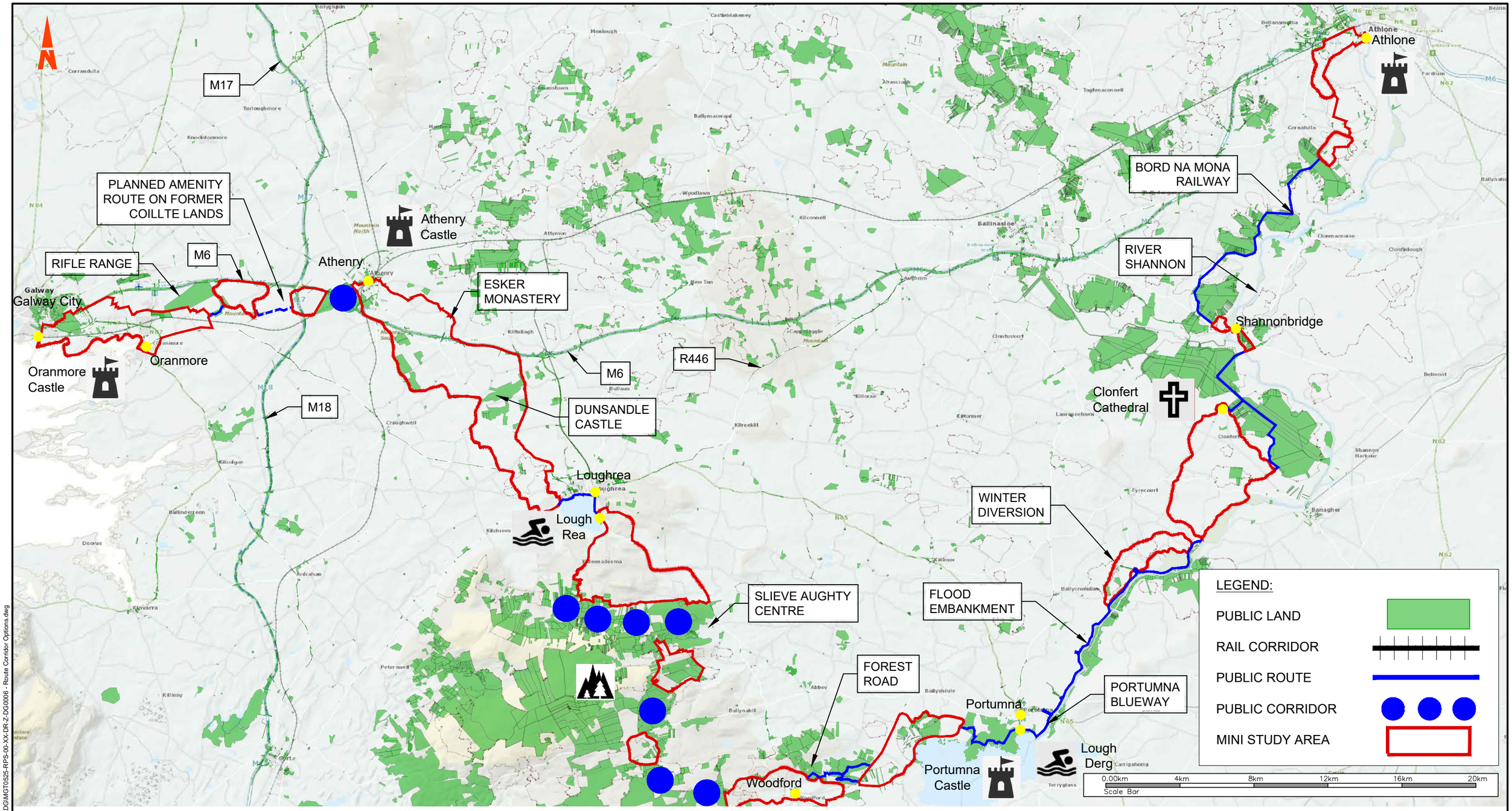

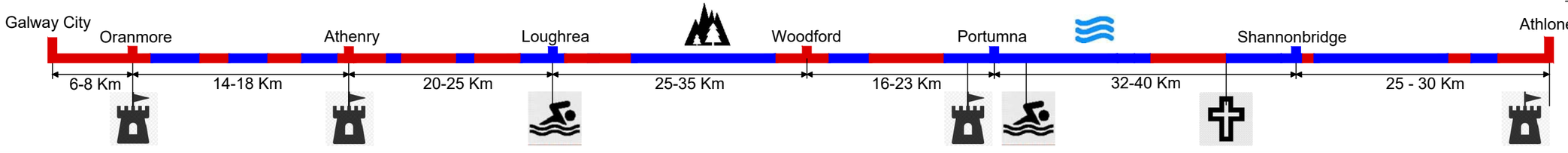

CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 7
ALP ROUTE CORRIDOR

Public Land Length = 70 - 80 Km

Total Route Length = 140 - 180 Km

Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

Client

Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council
Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council
Westmeath County Council Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí
Bonneagar Iompair Éireann Transport Infrastructure Ireland

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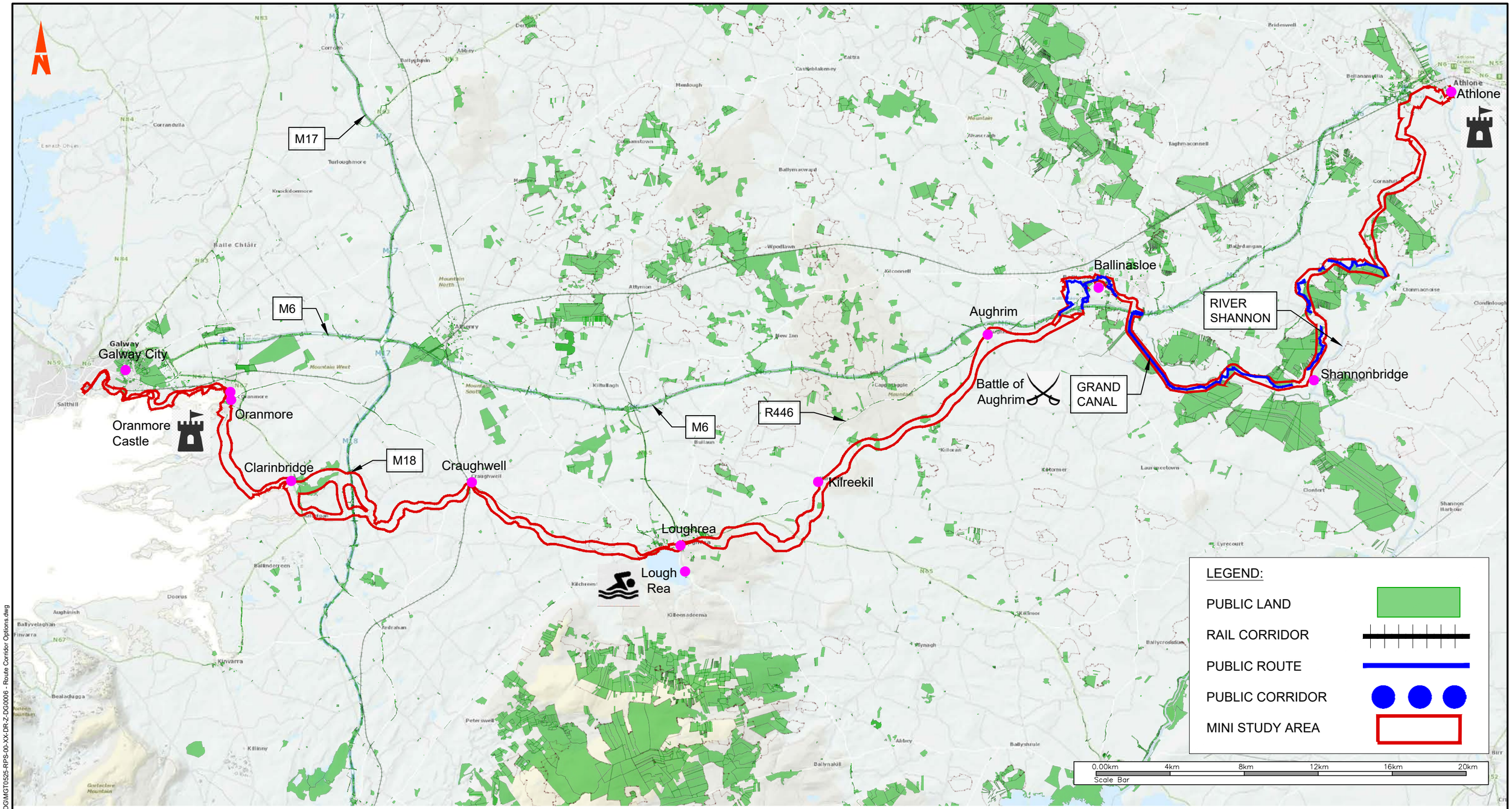
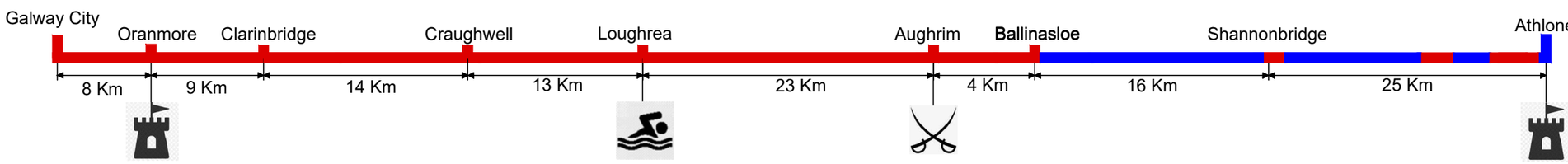
Date	06.10.20
Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: ALP ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

File Ref. MGT0525DG0006 | Drg. No. DG0006-07 | Rev. I01





CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 8
PREFERRED ROUTE CORRIDOR (2014)

Public Land Length = 30 - 40 Km

Total Route Length = 120 - 130 Km

Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

Client

Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin / Roscommon County Council
Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe / Galway County Council
Westmeath County Council / Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhi
Bonneagar Iompair Eireann / Transport Infrastructure Ireland

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RPS MAKING COMPLEX EASY

Drawn	MC
Checked	SM
Approved	CMcG
Date	06.10.20
Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: PREFERRED ROUTE CORRIDOR (2014) OPTION ASSESSMENT

File Ref. MGT0525DG0006 | Drg. No. DG0006-08 | Rev. I01

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M17
M6
M18
M6
R446
RIVER SHANNON
Galway
Galway City
Oranmore
Oranmore Castle
Craughwell
Loughrea
Lough Rea
Kilreekil
Aughrim
Battle of Aughrim
Ballinasloe
Athlone
Athlone

LEGEND:

PUBLIC LAND

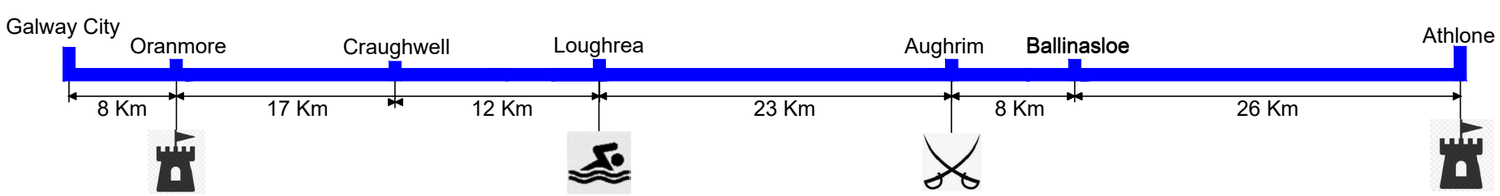
RAIL CORRIDOR

PUBLIC ROUTE

PUBLIC CORRIDOR

MINI STUDY AREA

0.00km 4km 8km 12km 16km 20km
Scale Bar



CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 9
R446 (OLD N6) ROUTE CORRIDOR

Public Land Length = 90 - 95 Km

Total Route Length = 95 Km

Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

Client

Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council

Westmeath County Council Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhi

Bonneagar Iompair Eireann Transport Infrastructure Ireland

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Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: R446 ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

File Ref. MGT0525DG0006 | Drg. No. DG0006-09 | Rev. I01

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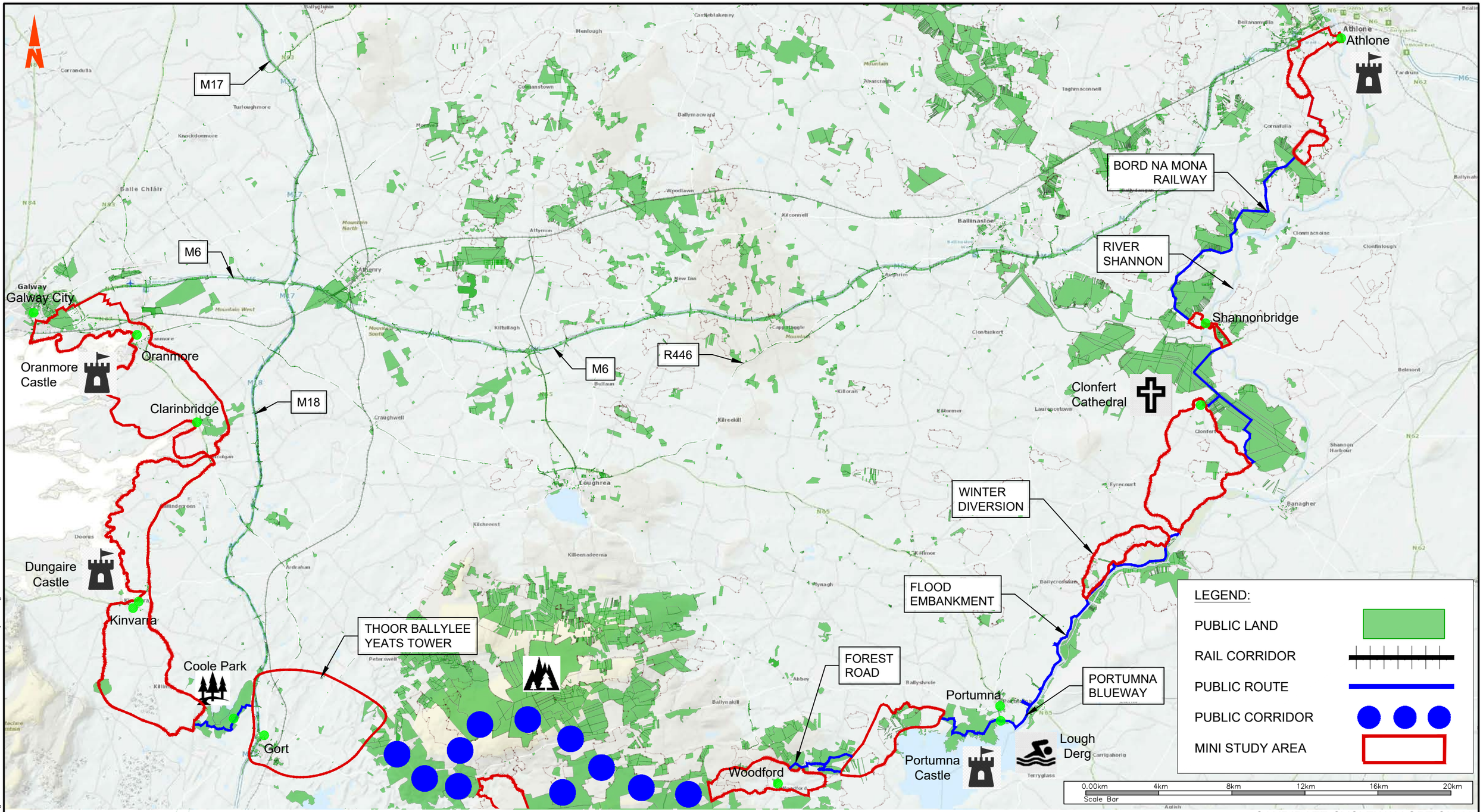

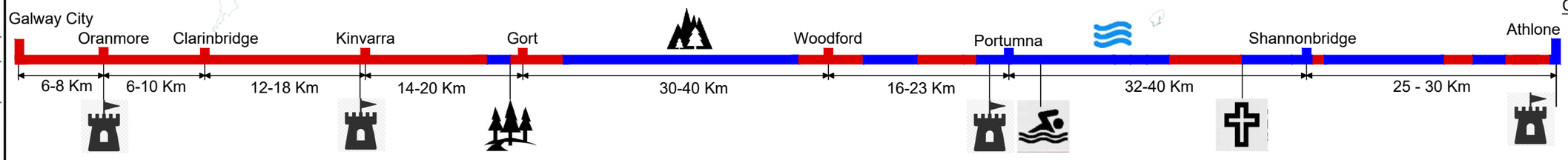

CANDIDATE CYCLEWAY OPTION 10
SOUTHERN ROUTE CORRIDOR

Public Land Length = 70 - 80 Km

Total Route Length = 140 - 190 Km

Note: State Owned Sections in Blue
Privately Owned Sections in Red

Client

ROSCOMMON Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin Roscommon County Council
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No.	Date	Dft. Chk.	Amendment / Issue	App
I01	20.11.20	MC SM	FOR INFORMATION	CM

RPS MAKING COMPLEX EASY

Drawn	MC
Checked	SM
Approved	CMcG
Date	06.10.20
Scale	1:200,000@ A3
Job No.	MGT0525

Project: GALWAY TO ATHLONE CASTLE NATIONAL CYCLEWAY

Title: SOUTHERN ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTION ASSESSMENT

File Ref. MGT0525DG0006 | Drg. No. DG0006-10 | Rev. I01

\galw-blp-f01\work_transport\MGT0525X - Galway Athlone Cycleway\8.0 Drawings\DG\MGT0525-RPS-00-XX-DR-Z-DG0006 - Route Corridor Options.dwg

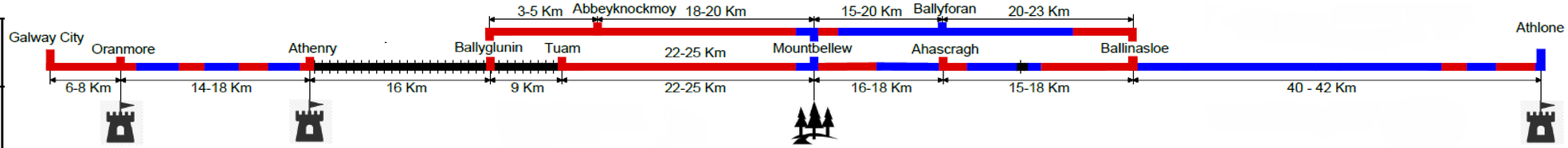
Appendix B

Assessment Matrices

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment



Candidate Cycleway Option No. 1 Northern Route Assessment

	Ref	Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.
	EC4	To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.
SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).
	S2	To provide a sense of security for Cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed).
	S3	To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.
	PA2	To increase the number of people in Ireland who choose to take part in physically active outdoor recreation and leisure activities.
ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas.
	EN2	To increase public appreciation of the natural environment and cultural heritage, by encouraging people to experience the countryside.
	EN3	To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land.
	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.
	ASI2	To benefit local communities through enhancing existing amenities and providing new linkages to adjacent town and village centres.
INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.

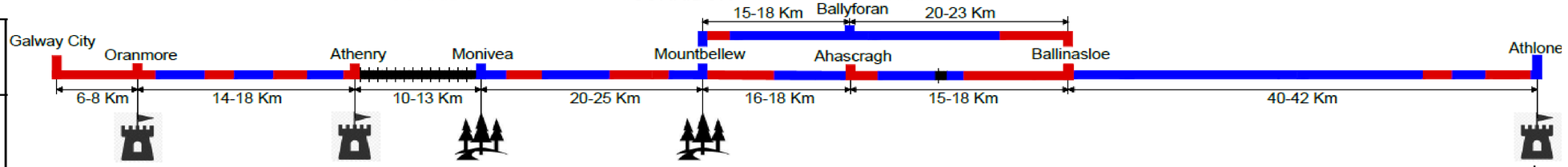
Strong — Moderate — Weak

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 2 BAMM Route Assessment



	Ref	Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.
	EC4	To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.
SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).
	S2	To provide a sense of security for Cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed).
	S3	To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.
	PA2	To increase the number of people in Ireland who choose to take part in physically active outdoor recreation and leisure activities.
ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas.
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	EN3	To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land.
	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.
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INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.

Strong — Moderate — Weak

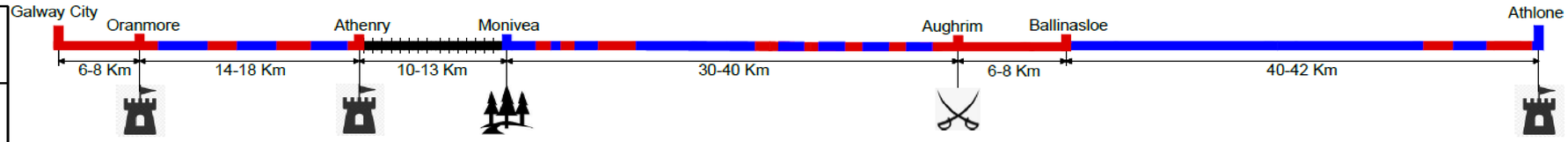
Greenway

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 3 Central 2 Route Assessment



	Ref	Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.
	EC4	To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.
SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).
	S2	To provide a sense of security for Cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed).
	S3	To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.
	PA2	To increase the number of people in Ireland who choose to take part in physically active outdoor recreation and leisure activities.
ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas.
	EN2	To increase public appreciation of the natural environment and cultural heritage, by encouraging people to experience the countryside.
	EN3	To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land.
	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.
	ASI2	To benefit local communities through enhancing existing amenities and providing new linkages to adjacent town and village centres.
INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.

Strong — Moderate — Weak

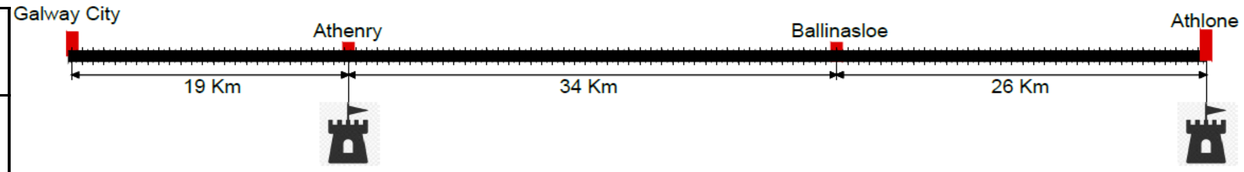
Greenway

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 4 Railway Route Assessment



	Ref	Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives			
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.			
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.			
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.			
	EC4	To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.			
SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).			
	S2	To provide a sense of security for Cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed).			
	S3	To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.			
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.			
	PA2	To increase the number of people in Ireland who choose to take part in physically active outdoor recreation and leisure activities.			
ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas.			
	EN2	To increase public appreciation of the natural environment and cultural heritage, by encouraging people to experience the countryside.			
	EN3	To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land.			
	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.			
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.			
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.			
	ASI2	To benefit local communities through enhancing existing amenities and providing new linkages to adjacent town and village centres.			
INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.			
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.			
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.			

Strong — Moderate — Weak

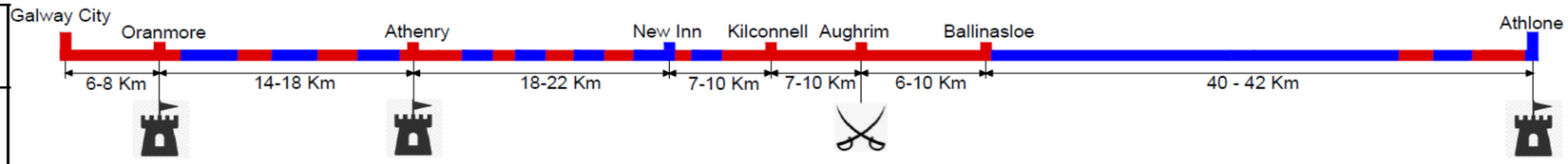
Greenway

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 5 Central Route Assessment



	Ref	Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.
	EC4	To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.
SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).
	S2	To provide a sense of security for Cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed).
	S3	To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.
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ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas.
	EN2	To increase public appreciation of the natural environment and cultural heritage, by encouraging people to experience the countryside.
	EN3	To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land.
	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.
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INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.

Strong — Moderate — Weak

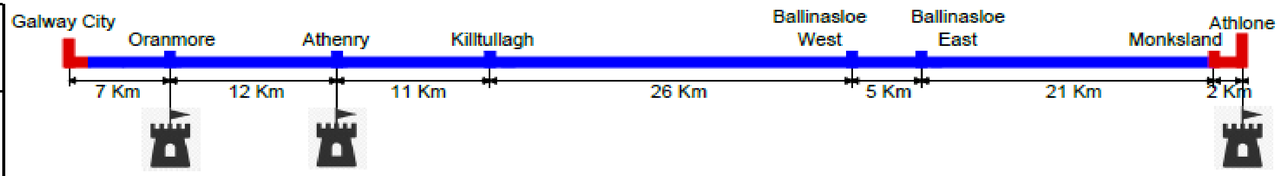
Greenway

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 6 M6 Route Assessment



Ref		Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.
	EC4	To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.
SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).
	S2	To provide a sense of security for Cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed).
	S3	To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.
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ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas.
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	EN3	To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land.
	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.
	ASI2	To benefit local communities through enhancing existing amenities and providing new linkages to adjacent town and village centres.
INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.

Strong — Moderate — Weak

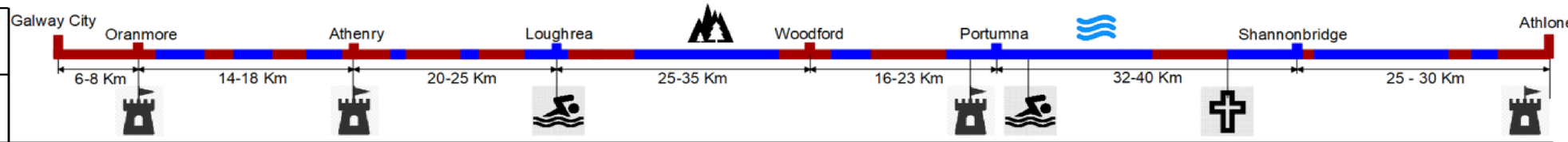
Greenway

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 7 ALP Route Assessment



	Ref	Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.
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SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).
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ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.
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Strong — Moderate — Weak

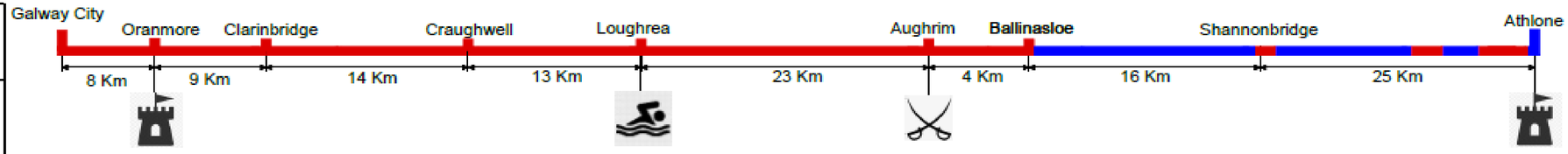
Greenway

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 8 Previous Route Assessment (2014)



	Ref	Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives								
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.								
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.								
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	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.								

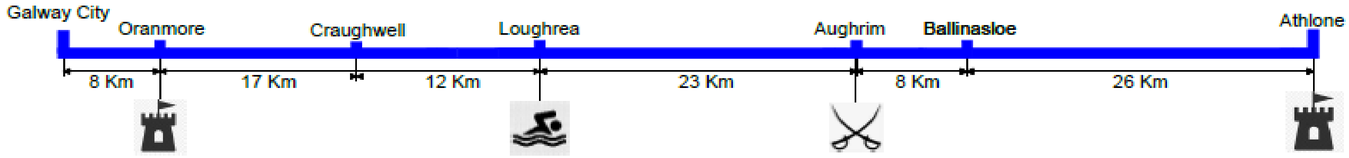
Strong — Moderate — Weak

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

RAIL CORRIDOR — PUBLIC CORRIDOR — PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 9 R446 Route Assessment



	Ref	Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.
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SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).
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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.
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ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas.
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	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.

Strong — Moderate — Weak

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

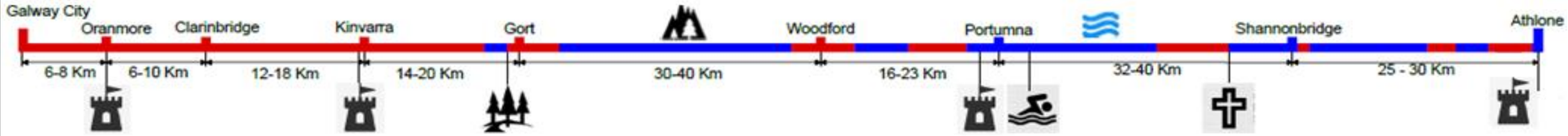
RAIL CORRIDOR

PUBLIC CORRIDOR

PRIVATE CORRIDOR

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Candidate Cycleway Option No. 10 Southern Route Assessment



Ref		Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives								
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.								
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SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).								
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	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.								
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.								
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.								
	ASI2	To benefit local communities through enhancing existing amenities and providing new linkages to adjacent town and village centres.								
INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.								
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.								
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.								

Strong

Moderate

Weak

Greenway

Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway

Galway to Athlone CYCLEWAY

Candidate Cycleway Option Matrix Assessment

Ref		Galway to Athlone Castle National Cycleway Project Objectives	Strong	Moderate	Weak
ECONOMY	EC1	To increase the economic contribution of tourism to the Irish economy, by increasing the numbers of international visitors to the area and delivering a cycleway that is attractive by international standards.	Very attractive and scenic areas with lots to see and do.	Attractive areas with some things to see and do.	Less attractive areas with very little to see and do.
	EC2	To create local employment opportunities and wealth through new and expanded enterprises.	Large influx of tourists to the area expected.	Some influx of tourists to the area expected.	Little influx of tourists to the area expected.
	EC3	To deliver the Cycleway in a cost-effective manner and deliver real value for money.	Good value for money based on the length of the route and benefits to be gained.	Some value for money based on the length of the route and benefits to be gained.	Little to no value for money based on the length of the route and benefits to be gained.
	EC4	To encourage modal change to non-motorised travel modes, thereby reducing congestion and delivering travel time savings.	Areas close to large urban centres.	Rural areas with some towns and villages.	Very remote rural areas with low population densities.
SAFETY	S1	To provide a walking and cycling route that is segregated from motorised traffic (recognising that it may be impractical to achieve full segregation over the entire route length, especially in more urban areas).	Areas substantially away from the existing transport network.	Areas adjacent to existing railways and quiet local roads.	Areas adjacent to busy transport routes.
	S2	To provide a sense of security for Cycleway users, e.g. through provision of secure bike parking facilities and public lighting (where needed).	Areas with low risk of anti-social behaviour.	Areas with some risk of anti-social behaviour.	Areas with a high risk of anti-social behaviour.
	S3	To provide a high level of operational safety on the cycleway through high quality design, construction and maintenance.	Areas substantially away from the existing transport network.	Areas adjacent to existing quiet, urban or low speed transport routes.	Areas adjacent to busy high-speed transport routes.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PA1	To increase the number of commuters within the study area who walk or cycle to work or education.	Areas close to large urban centres.	Rural areas with some towns and villages.	Very remote rural areas with low population densities.
	PA2	To increase the number of people in Ireland who choose to take part in physically active outdoor recreation and leisure activities.	Areas close to large urban centres.	Rural areas with some towns and villages.	Very remote rural areas with low population densities.
ENVIRONMENT	EN1	To minimise damage to the natural environment and cultural heritage sites, especially habitat in ecologically sensitive areas.	Areas that do not contain any European or other Designated sites.	Areas with European or other Designated sites where some minor disturbance may potentially occur.	Areas with European or other Designated sites where disturbance will occur.
	EN2	To increase public appreciation of the natural environment and cultural heritage, by encouraging people to experience the countryside.	Very attractive and scenic areas with lots to see and do.	Attractive areas with some things to see and do.	Less attractive areas with very little to see and do.
	EN3	To minimise land holding severance and utilise public land.	Areas with a significant amount of public land or parallel to existing transport routes.	Urban centres or areas with a mixture of public and private land.	Rural areas with little to no public land.
	EN4	To reduce air and noise pollution by getting people to cycle or walk rather than drive.	Areas close to large urban centres.	Rural areas with some towns and villages.	Very remote rural areas with low population densities.
	EN5	To ensure that planning, construction and operation of the Cycleway is carried out in a sustainable manner.	Areas with existing tracks and trails available to the cycleway.	Populated areas with some or no existing tracks and trails available to the cycleway.	Remote rural areas with no existing tracks and trails available to the cycleway.
ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	ASI1	To be attractive to people of all age groups and abilities, with multiple accesses to the route allowing use for long or short distances.	Accessible areas with relatively flat gradients and suitable lengths between destinations.	Partially accessible areas with challenging gradients and lengths between destinations.	Remote areas with difficult gradients and lengths between destinations.
	ASI2	To benefit local communities through enhancing existing amenities and providing new linkages to adjacent town and village centres.	Areas close to large towns and villages with good facilities.	Areas close to small towns and villages with some facilities.	Very remote rural areas with little to no facilities.
INTEGRATION	I1	To link to other existing and proposed Cycleways within the area.	Areas with lots of existing or future cycleways planned.	Areas with some existing or future cycleways planned.	Areas with no existing or future planned cycleways.
	I2	To be accessible to users arriving by public transport, including bus, rail, and existing or proposed passenger boat services.	Areas with good connections to public transport.	Areas with some connections to public transport.	Areas with little to no connections to public transport
	I3	To connect to other tourist activities or attractions within the area, such as historic and cultural heritage sites, waterway activities and the Wild Atlantic Way.	Areas with good tourist activities and attractions.	Areas with some tourist activities and attractions.	Areas with little or no tourist activities and attractions.

Strong | Moderate | Weak

Greenway