

Proposed 2040 Galway planning for the future

1. Introduction on Galway

Galway has for many years delivered to the west of Ireland a great many jobs and is a key area, for not only Galway City and rural Galway, but for Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, Clare, and as far as Donegal. Providing jobs for people to commute to or to keep them close to where they come from without having to go to Dublin. The jobs that Galway has attracted have been vast from medical field like Boston Scientific to Hi-Tech Industry like SAP. It's also the home of NUI and GMIT Colleges meaning that companies setting up here would be able to tap into the colleges for research and for future highly skilled employees. Galway is also in a great position for the new growth area that is to date not fully developed, that being the sea. With a great natural bay that gives shelter and is home to the National Marine Institute.

2. Health and well-being

Galway itself is a city, but many see it as a town, as the city centre is not vast and is easy to navigate; surrounding suburbs that are not sprawling; and a good mix of people and social classes. Giving the city a unique feel that many cities find hard to replicate. With a life style that means the sea is close by and Lake Corrib with the Connemara at our doorstep there is a great offering in Galway. But the city is at a crossroads. If it's to grow and keep what it has it needs to decide what it wants to do. Growing out into the green spaces is not an option anymore as this requires more spending on providing infrastructure for houses. Do we go up using the infrastructure that's there to allow us to build fast on what we have without the outlay of money for new infrastructure. Most of Galway city centre is low rise, not many of the buildings go past 3 stories. Apart from the area down by the docks, where hits height of 5 stories.

Galway has been for many years the child that has delivered for Ireland but has not got much in return. Galway has not had a new road crossing the Corrib River since 1987. The only other major roads have been helping to connect Galway with Oranmore for the Dublin road and the new Dublin motorway. Many other major cities and minor cities have gotten ring roads and outer bypasses. To compound the mistakes there was a major housing boom that was carried out in areas west of Galway over the Corrib River. But not much was given for people that were living there to work there. West of Galway over the river there is just 1 IDA Park that has been developed fully and has no more room to expand. But come back over the river to east Galway we have 5 IDA parks. Out of the 4 parks Mervue IDA was made in the 70s to 80s and is mostly ground floor industrial manufacture aimed. Most of the companies there no longer work in that area and there is a number of the buildings unused.

Ballybane homes Boston scientific, HP, APC and many more large companies with limited room for expansion

Parkmore West, Parkmore East and the Galway Technology Park are the biggest players in jobs and have huge areas that they can expand to.

IDA Oranmore is the newest Campus that is to take aim at the Biopharma sector but as of yet the 67 acres have yet to see any companies move to it. But it is just off the motorway network and has a rail line running next to it that would allow for workers to travel without needing to drive it; just needs a platform for this to happen.

Galway lost out on a major new company that has the possibility for rapid growth in highly skilled and well paid jobs. The company, by just being here, would have drawn in other small

companies and start-ups, as the talent pool that would have been around this company makes it a Mecca. That company was AirBnB. Its main problem it had was that it could not get the office space it wanted to allow for the expansion. And for most companies this is what they are looking for, for their employees. City living with easy access to shops/food and public transport. As many in this area are more dependent on good transport than having a car and see this as a better way to live.

Galway needs to grow but cannot do so without some brave moves to be taken. There is huge potential for Galway to become the driving force for new jobs.

3. The Crown Site Development

With Brexit now becoming very real and companies looking to move to stay inside the EU Galway could become the safe haven that they are looking for. Galway has huge land banks in the city centre that have yet to be developed. We also have sites that major ground work has been done on and would allow for rapid building on if given the green light. There is a site that could be a key area for Galway's future sitting beside major centres for employment for Galway. It's in an area that is less than 2.5 kilometres from the city centre and has been dug out for 2 story underground parking area, with most of the area concreted and some area having even been built to ground level. This area has 13 acer site had planning for about 41,800 sq meters of office space/retail/hotel with also an extra 131 large apartments to be included but I cannot find there sq meter size. This site is a key area for not just Galway but for Ireland if we want to attract large companies to Ireland. But the site has one more area that has not been exploited to date. Eir has a site next to it that is untapped potential for the whole area. Eir is no longer using vast areas of the site and office space. There have 6 story 1970s made buildings that they have been trying to rent out but due to their age and there design, they are not what most companies would be looking for. If the Eir site was to be included into the Crown Site it would allow access from the dual carriageway that is the N6. This would mean that the site would have 3 access points into and out off the site, making it a very attractive place to do business. Also with the ceiling has been set by the Eir office blocks at 6 stories there would be a chance to have the crown site changed to allow for 6 story office and apartment to go up. This would make this area more productive and also mean that the office/retail/apartments sq meters would increase hugely. But would also give Galway a chance for new living and social areas with art and culture to bring the area to life not only during office hours but throughout the day and into the night. It would also have great access to Galway with bus routes that are well established. If this was done you could then turn the IDA Park that is next door into a new hub with changes needed to the buildings there. If this is done it could mean that Galway could, without huge cost to the existing infrastructure, give a place to work and close to the city. Eir has a communications mast that would also mean that any new communication devices needed to go up, would have very little problems in getting their needs looked after. Just by this the Crown site could be a key to unlock Galway's potential and future direction for living and working



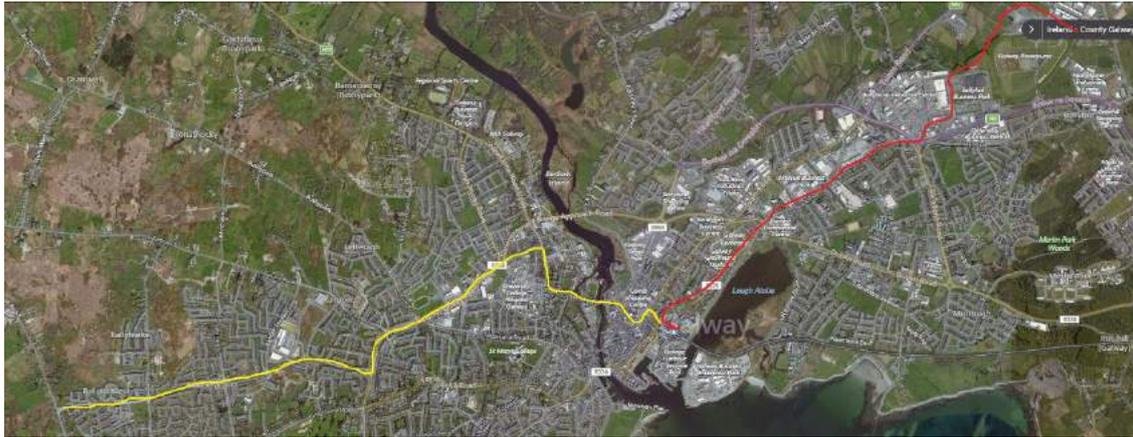
In red is the Crown site before developing work started on it

In yellow is the Air office Blocks and site area

Blue is the IDA Mervue site

Transport for Galway

If Galway is to function as a city for people to get around, a by-pass is needed without a doubt. But giving extra road to use will not be the only answer to Galway problem. Galway city centre is not made for large volume of cars. So my next idea is light rail. Not the cheapest of solutions to a problem but it does help to keep the car usage to a smaller number. And we have key areas that can play bigger parts in the city's need than ever before. We could join out as far as Knocknacarra (an area where many new housing has gone up that still has area to be developed) back to the city centre that would take in UCG Hospital and Collage grounds. As you can see in the yellow markings in the photo below. The red line would link Galway with the IDA parks and major employment areas on the east of the city taking in the Crown site. Most of the road areas that I have picked cover large housing areas but also wide roads that would allow for the train to share road with cars and not cause loss of existing car lanes. But one of the key areas is the Race Course area. This has been used in Christmas as a park and ride area with a small degree of success. But if the untapped potential of this site as a park and ride with a dedicated light train offering quick and easy access to the city was there, then I could see it being a very valuable site to help Galway from becoming a standstill city of traffic. Use of the Race Course land would provide them with an opportunity to build on this and offer new attractions for the city with event centre using the structure that's there. It would also be a major boost for the IDA Park there, giving them new ways to expand without needing more roads. There could be a park and ride area set up in Knocknacarra close to the sports ground allowing that area to be expanded on and making a new area for sports in Galway.



City centre light rail hub.

There is an area in the city centre that is part of the old train system that was a turn table and the old train route to Connemara (there is an old tunnel on site that is marked in orange) this site is quite large and could be developed as the hub for all light rail traffic for the city. It is in an excellent spot close to the city centre. With the private coach station only meters away. The train station is next door along with the bus network for the connectivity. All bus routes for Galway leave the Square so for connectivity, it's the best area in Galway for the light rail to be stopping for the 2 lines. The area could be made into an office block to help pay for the station and office space would be very sought after for its ease of connection to all modes of transport. The area here is surrounded by 5 story buildings, so planning would be at least to that height. The area would furthermore open up the plans that CIE had for changing their use of the train yard to office block and apartments.

<http://connachttribune.ie/ceannt-station-commercial-project-still-on-agenda-500/>

It would also help with further developing the docks area and breathe new life into the city without the need to take your car. This development plan is large and it calls for many agents to come together to make it work, but for most of what I am outlying in this is to make what we have work better. There is a lot of area in Galway that is not living up to its full potential. It is off its day but can be changed to be what we need for the future. There is the Crown site that is offering us a way to bring a new way of living but must be focused on what families' need, if we want apartment living to work for families. We can't do the 2 bed apartments of the boom where it's made for you to be in, but nothing to allow you space to truly live. With your workplace close at hand or easy connection to the city centre to get to work without the need to own a car or the need to drive one. With shopping at your door step and the ability to socialise in the area with your neighbours.

