



FERMANAGH & OMAGH TRANSPORT PLAN

Stage 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Report

SUMMER 2024



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Fermanagh and Omagh Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2035

Stage 1 - Stakeholder Engagement Report

About

1. The Fermanagh and Omagh Sub-Regional Transport Plan (FO SRTP) is currently being prepared by the Transport Planning and Modelling Unit (TPMU) within the Department for Infrastructure (the Department).
2. The FO SRTP when adopted will set the framework for local transport policy and investment decisions in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area up until 2035.
3. Figure 1 shows the process for producing the FO SRTP. The purpose of the engagement exercise conducted at Stage 1 was to inform stakeholders that the Department was preparing the FO SRTP and to seek views on: the strengths of the area; the problems that need to be solved; and the draft the vision and objectives. It was also to allow people to make suggestions on transport schemes that would benefit their area.

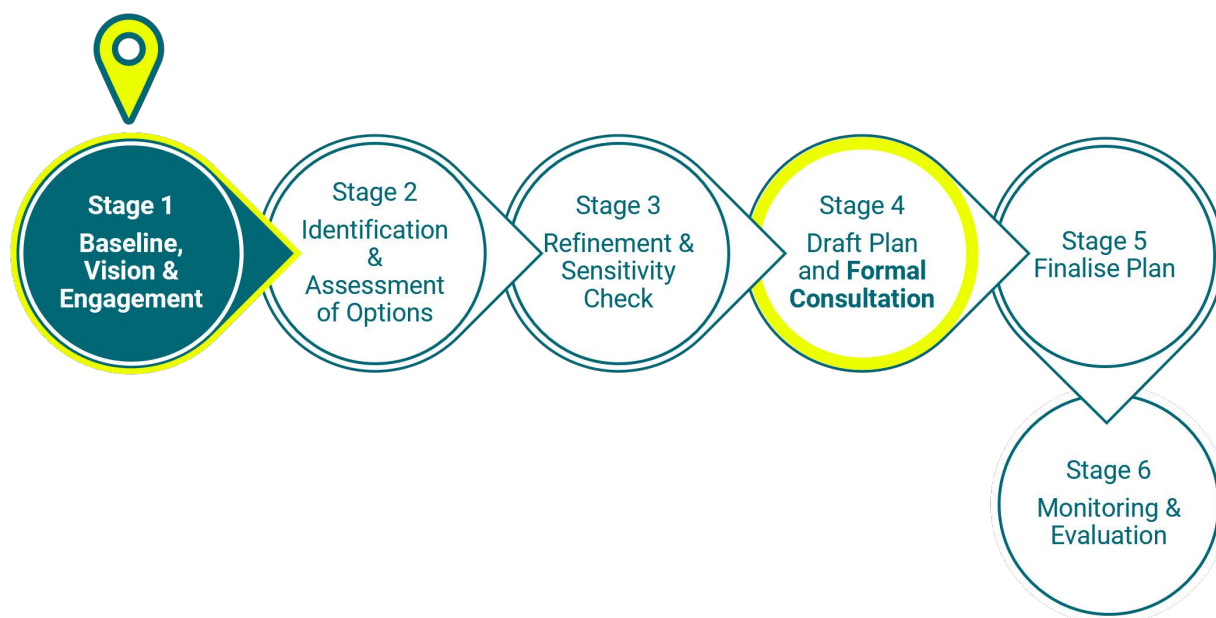


Figure 1 - FO SRTP development process

4. This engagement focused on the public, businesses and the community and voluntary sector. Engagement with other key stakeholders such as the Council, Translink and the Department for Communities is principally facilitated through a dedicated FO SRTP Project Board.
5. Comments were also invited on the [Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report](#).
6. This engagement exercise was not the formal consultation of the draft FO SRTP. This will occur at Stage 4 shown in Figure 1.
7. More information on the FO SRTP is available on the project website <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/fermanagh-and-omagh-transport-plan-2035>

Details of Engagement Exercise

8. The engagement exercise was held from the 11 January - 15 February 2024. Events and activities were hosted by Department Officials.
9. Advertisement of the engagement was principally through the Department's social media channels.
10. A number of organisations with a likely interest in the preparation of the FO SRTP, including community groups, retailing representative groups, public authorities and community transport providers were emailed on the 11 January.
11. The engagement event was covered by local and regional media, including a segment by UTV Live.
12. As part of the engagement the following sessions were held:
 - 12.1. Young People Engagement Sessions:
 - 16 January - Holy Family Primary School, Omagh.
 - 17 January - Royal Enniskillen Grammar School.
 - 12.2. Public drop-in sessions:
 - 16 January – the Connect Centre, Omagh.
 - 17 January – Enniskillen Library.
 - 12.3. MS Teams presentation and meeting with Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) representatives, 30 January.

13. Responses were collected on the Department's online engagement platform Citizen Space [\[Link¹\]](#). This included the use of Geospatial tools that allowed people to make suggestions on maps. This was the first time this Geospatial functionality has been used on Citizen Space by the NI Civil Service. Responses could also be emailed to tpmu@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Young People Sessions

14. The young people sessions in the school were well received. The primary school session was a useful opportunity to discuss sustainable transport. The opinions expressed by the students reflected a general awareness of the need for sustainability in transport.
15. The secondary school session provided more in the way of detailed feedback on vision and objectives and transport options and challenges within the district.

Public Drop-in Sessions

16. The Omagh session received 6 attendees. The Enniskillen session received 25 attendees. The events coincided with yellow weather warnings for snow and ice. These sessions provided useful opportunities to explain what the FO SRTP is. The Team used A1 maps of the District, Enniskillen town and Omagh town, allowing people to show where they thought transport improvements could be made.

Community and Voluntary Sector Meeting

17. This meeting was held at the request of CVS representatives and was facilitated by the Council. The meeting was online. Approximately 30 attendees participated including, IMTAC, Community Transport, SWAP, RNIB. The Department's Director of Public Transport Policy also attended the meeting.

Lessons Learned

18. A significant number of the responses related to matters that are not within the scope of the Transport Plan, such as the Regional Strategic Transport Network. At future FO SRTP events and in the preparation of the local transport plans a

¹ https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/fosrtp2035/consult_view/

clearer statement of the scope of the transport plans will be provided so that stakeholders can effectively engage on the matters that the local transport plans are addressing. Stakeholders will be informed of other Department workstreams in which they can engage, such as a new Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2035.

19. There was a view by some that the Department did not provide enough notice of the events and that the engagement exercise was not extensive enough. This was particularly raised by the CVS, noting the challenges that their members and community face when traveling to events and engaging with policy makers. The method of communication and advertisement, primarily through social media channels, was also criticised by this group.
20. Earlier notification will be provided for future events. The Department will also make greater use of the Council to disseminate information, noting their effectiveness in this area – particularly when reaching out to the CVS.

About this report

21. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the responses to the engagement exercise. It is not intended to detail every response. A number of sample responses have been quoted to provide a snapshot of opinions. All the responses will be considered in the ongoing preparation of the FO SRTP even if they are not specifically quoted in this report.
22. This report does not provide a consideration of the responses. This will be done as part of the ongoing FO SRTP preparation process.
23. Where respondents have provided their consent, their responses are published in full on the Citizen Space FO SRTP webpage Space [\[Link\]](#). These will be available until 30 September 2024.
24. In addition to the responses received in Citizen Space the Department received 4 emailed responses. These were from:
 - The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) [\[Link\]](#);
 - Fermanagh Community Transport Ltd [\[Link\]](#);
 - The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac) [\[Link\]](#);
and
 - an individual.
25. These responses did not follow the Citizen Space format and are not reflected in Figures 2 - 8.

Next Steps

26. The project will now move to Stages 2 and 3 as shown in Figure 1 - the identification and assessment of transport measures. This will include undertaking the required screening and assessments, including an Equality Impact Screening, Rural Proofing, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Screening.
27. To support the ongoing development of the FO SRTP, and associated assessments, the Department will contact individual stakeholders or groups for further information as necessary.
28. The draft FO SRTP Report will then be prepared, and the required screenings and assessments completed for the formal consultation exercise.
29. The details for this formal consultation exercise, including events, will be announced in advance of the launch, anticipated in late 2024.

Results

Overview

30. A total of 102 representations were received.
 - 94 responses were submitted into Citizen Space;
 - 4 responses were emailed; and
 - 4 responses were manually entered by TPMU (2 from verbal feedback at the public drop-in sessions and 2 from the school sessions).
31. There were 85 responses were from individuals, 15 responses from organisations and 2 responses from the school engagement sessions.
32. As outlined above, a sizable number of the responses were in relation to the Regional Strategic Transport Network, for example the A5 and the railway network. These are outside the scope of the FO SRTP. The Regional Strategic Transport Network will be covered in a Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan. Responses relating to other transport plans will be passed to other relevant transport planning project teams.
33. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, and the Loughs Agency provided comments on the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

Key messages

34. A significant majority of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the draft Vision and Objectives. There were also very useful and positive spatial suggestions providing local perspective, knowledge and vision for transport within respondents' communities.
35. Whilst most respondents were supportive, those who provided a written response tended to be those who were less satisfied. These responses are reflected throughout the remainder of the report.
36. In the written comments respondents expressed:
 - that there is poor rural connectivity, particularly in terms of public transport. This poor connectivity included a lack of services, poor services or poor interchange opportunities (to regional public transport services);
 - a general feeling that Fermanagh is forgotten about in terms of transport provision/investment;

- there is poor connectivity to health services, including to Altnagelvin hospital and Belfast hospitals. These comments included connectivity by private vehicles, but primarily focused on connectivity by public transport;
 - the A5 WTC upgrade was needed without delay; and
 - frustration that Fermanagh was not included within the recommendations of the All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review.
37. A number of the community organisations expressed reservations about the project, and materials, including the Baseline Report. Some also commented that the engagement exercise was insufficient and had the appearance of a tick box exercise. These organisations also stated that the project did not fully appreciate the needs of the District and was not reflective of the lived experience of residents. There was criticism that the Department had not utilised all reports that had been prepared to support the Community Planning process and that the Transport Plan had too narrow a vision. These organisations felt that there needed to be better engagement with community groups to ensure that the FO SRTP fully reflects and addresses the needs and challenges of the area.

Results - Vision and Objectives

Draft Vision

38. Do you agree with the FO SRTP Vision:
- A resilient and inclusive transport system designed around people, which supports health, wellbeing and quality of life for all; supports a connected economy and creates successful and prosperous places; and respects and seeks to enhance Fermanagh and Omagh's unique environment.***
39. There were 92 responses to this question. 87% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with the draft vision. The results are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - responses about the draft Vision

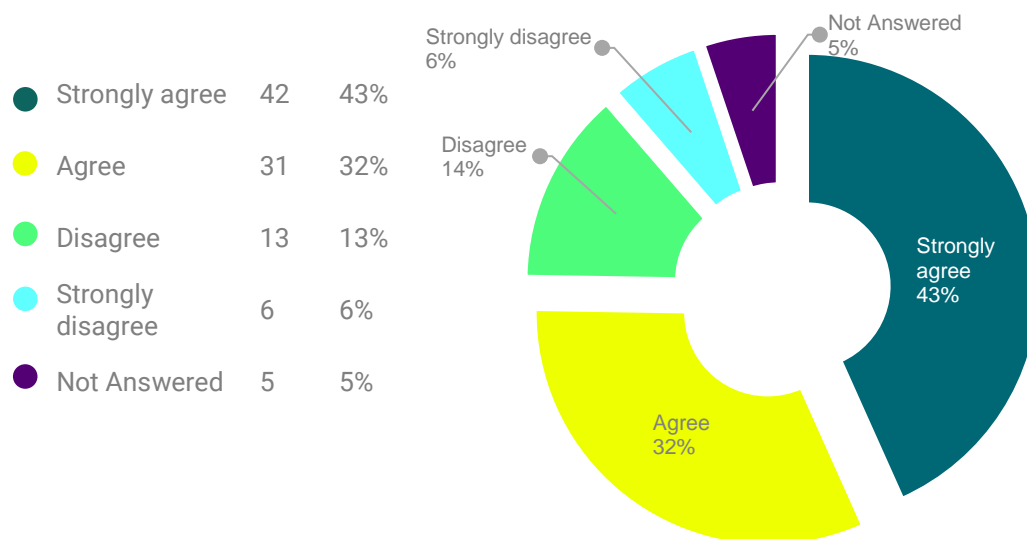
● Strongly agree	60	62%
● Agree	24	25%
● Disagree	6	6%
● Strongly disagree	2	2%
● Not Answered	5	5%

- 40. There were 29 written comments provided.
- 41. The majority of respondents were supportive of the vision.
- 42. There were also comments that stated that the issue of connectivity throughout the FODC area needed strengthened and many of the respondents referred to the unique character and challenges of the area reflecting its rural nature.
- 43. It was stated that accessibility for all needed to be a core theme.
- 44. One respondent stated that while they agreed with the vision it was just 'buzzwords'.

Draft Objective 1

- 45. Do you agree with Objective 01:
Contribute to the reduction in carbon emissions from Transport in particular private vehicles within the wider transport decarbonisation programme through initiatives that provide and promote sustainable travel options.
- 46. There were 92 responses to this question. 75% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with draft Objective 01. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - responses about draft Objective 1



47. There were 35 written comments provided.

48. Most of the respondents were supportive of draft Objective 01. One respondent stated:

Reducing transport emissions should be a large priority for Northern Ireland, and other departments should work to plant more trees and include more biodiversity in urban areas and countryside areas. Reducing carbon emissions will help our health and our environment.

49. The issue of the viability of public transport as a viable option for travel is repeated in a number of responses (and was also reflected the comments about the other draft objectives). Examples include:

- *'Who wouldn't agree with the objective! However, with current services not connecting with other services in either Enniskillen or Omagh, I can't see an increase in usage on public transport...' (full answer at response [\[Link\]](#)).*
- *'Objective 1 could only ever be achieved if there was sufficient regular, efficient and Carbon neutral public transport available throughout all of*

Fermanagh and Omagh (all rural roads and properties included) 24/7. Due to exceedingly poor public transport availability private vehicles are a total necessity'.

- *'You can't penalise people in rural areas who depend on their personal vehicles, especially people like myself who have mobility issues. Decarbonisation is critical but people need supported to transition to EVs and then councils and government should build infrastructure around that to enable people to transition'.*

50. One respondent pointed towards other pressing issues within the district, including rural connectivity of which there is a greater need to address. Another respondent stated addressing road deaths should be a higher priority.
51. One respondent questioned the validity of man-made climate change.

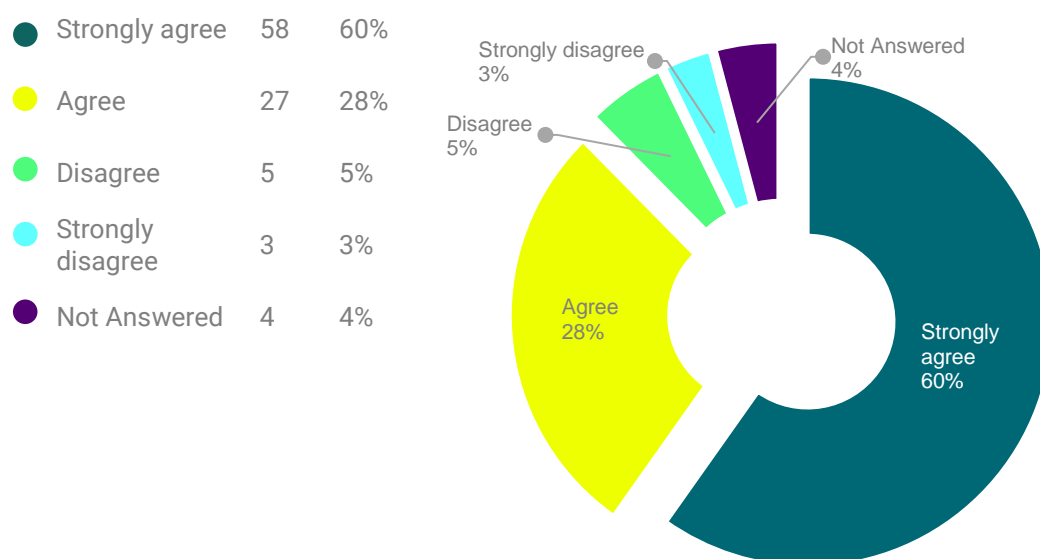
Draft Objective 2

53. Do you agree with Objective 02:

Improve sustainable public transport accessibility to the main towns for people living in Fermanagh and Omagh district where it is sustainable and viable to do so.

54. There were 93 responses to this question. 88% of respondents strongly agree or agree with draft Objective 02. The results are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 - responses about draft Objective 2



55. There were 44 written comments provided.

56. Most of the respondents were supportive of Objective 02, however there were many comments about the challenges related to public transport in rural areas. For example:

- *'Will buses run more frequently than they do at present, will we be able to get a bus straight to Altnagalvin hospital without having to change 3/4+ times? In rural areas, we still need private transport to get to a bus stop to get to Enniskillen before getting further. The outer ring of urban areas has been left behind with reliable public transportation. As the rural lift service depends on funding and as a service user, it has to be pre booked'.*

- *'Providing that the links served communities in all areas rather than those in rural areas through which the quickest or most sustainable route passed. Access should be for everyone'.*
 - *'Sustainable public transport' needs to be defined. Is it self funding? Is it environmental sustainability? Is it trains, buses? Main issue with connectivity between the main towns is poor quality roads and long travel times for short distances. Public transport will not address that and also frequency is key, to get from Omagh to Enniskillen hospital for procedures/appointments/visits could not realistically be sustained by public transport. Would make a 40min car journey into a 90mins ordeal with walking, potentially taxis back and forth to bus links, then bus stops and breaks along the way. compounded by inflexible schedules, e.g. bus may only run every hour.*
57. A respondent stated *'The statement is too vague and "where it is sustainable and viable to do so" provides a get out of jail free for this scheme to be scrapped. I strongly recommend striking this'.*
 58. A respondent stated that while they agreed with the draft Objective, they felt that *'you will do nothing'.*
 59. Several respondents had a concern that *"sustainable and viable" may limit access to transport for the more isolated individuals and communities.'*
 60. A CVS organisation stated: *Blind and partially sighted people tell us that better accessibility to transport and public places is the most important factor to improve their quality of life. However, many are not able to make the journeys they want to – 1 in 3 rarely or never use public transport. This limits their ability to work, socialise attend health appointments and participate more widely in society.*
 61. A number of respondents stated the need for a train line to the District.

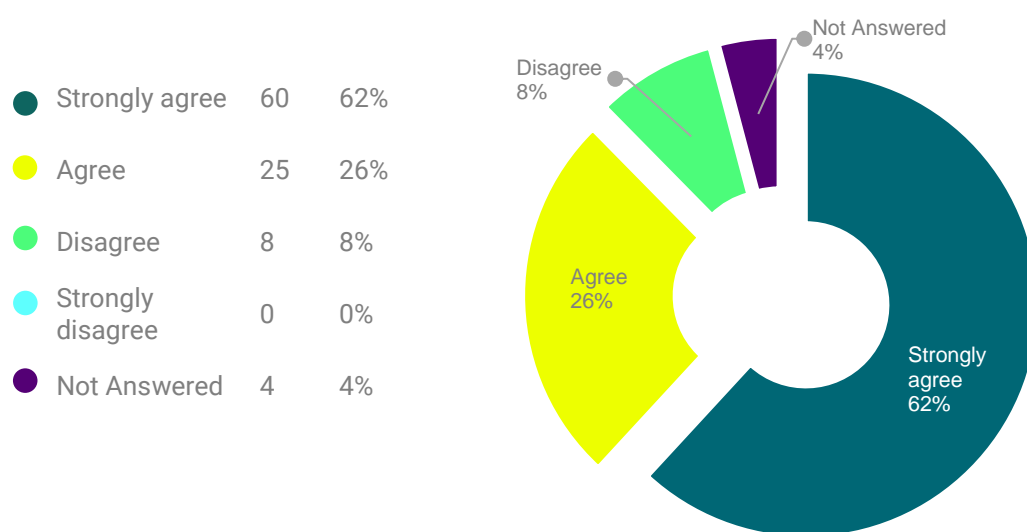
Draft Objective 3

63. Do you agree with Objective 03:

Provide attractive and safe active travel networks enhancing connectivity for residential, employment, retail, tourism and leisure uses in the urban areas of Enniskillen and Omagh.

64. There were 93 responses to this question. 88% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with draft Objective 03. The results are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 - responses about draft Objective 3



65. There were 25 written comments provided.

66. Respondents repeated their earlier comments that rural areas also needed considered. Many of the comments also related to public transport (noting this objective relates to active travel).

67. One respondent stated, '*Sounds great, utilising and renovating old links, railways, creation of cycle and walking areas that connect communities, people and promotes health and green spaces would be brilliant and just have to look at Waterford and the greenway there on how his has transformed the area and created jobs.*'

68. Another respondent stated, '*As an alternative, not replacing, private car use.*'

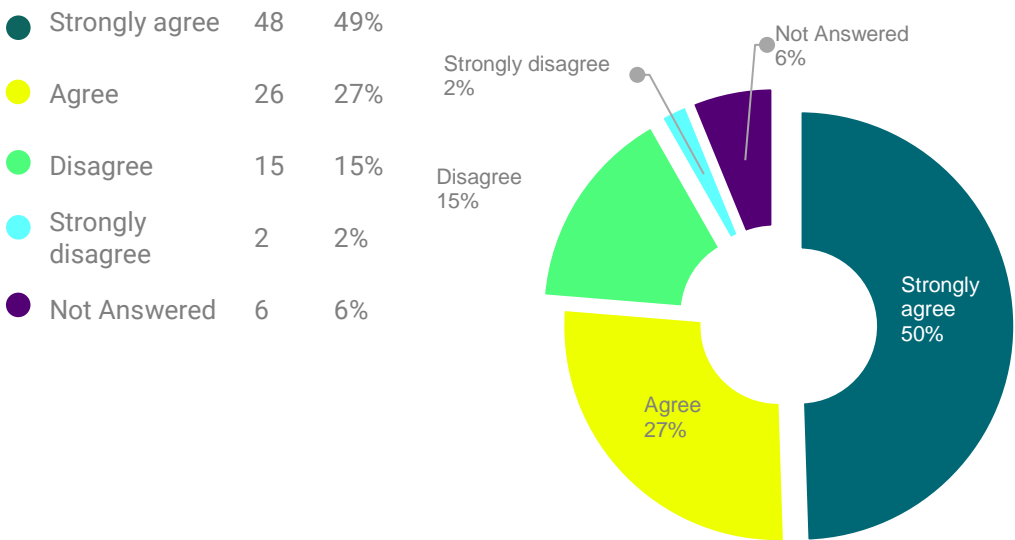
69. A respondent stated, '*The wording of your questions may it impossible to disagree, but doesn't throw much light on what is needed. Who would argue against? It makes me doubt the worth of this consultation. Again if you live in*

Irvinestown, you have no possibility of accessing residential tourism and leisure uses in the areas of Enniskillen or Omagh. There is no way to access entertainment in Omagh as there's no way home and taxis are prohibitively expensive. Unfortunately, if you live in Irvinestown and like theatre/cinema/restaurants and don't drive it's hard luck. Also if you are a tourist without a car - Irvinestown is less attractive as one can't get out/in.'

Draft Objective 4

70. Do you agree with Objective 04:
Support high quality public realm in the centres of Enniskillen and Omagh, making the towns attractive and inclusive places to live, work, study and visit, by prioritising sustainable modes of transport, reallocating land and by reducing vehicle dominance.
71. There were 91 responses to this question. 76% of the respondents strongly agree or agree with draft Objective 04. The results are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6 - responses about draft Objective 4



72. There were 35 respondents also making written comments.

73. A number of respondents stated the objective (and transport plan) had too great of focus on Enniskillen and Omagh to the detriment of the rural area.
74. There were a number of comments relating to the challenges faced by people with reduced mobility. For example:

How is this going to help people with mobility issues? I have a 94 year old great uncle who can't access his bank on omagh main street as there are not enough disable parking bays along the main street and there are none near enough to the bank for him. Reducing car access to main streets in town centres can inadvertently discriminate against people with physical mobility issues.

75. Another respondent stated:

So, if there was an option for park and ride on the outskirts of the towns, how will those with mobility issues be catered for? I fully understand retail need stock and deliveries, so will that be incorporated in the plan to help reduce traffic flow? Since the new footpaths were laid, I didn't realise how hard it was to walk them using my crutch/walking stick so unless it's absolutely essential for me to go into town centres, I don't. The few times I have driven that way, I can never get parked.

76. One respondent commented on parking, stating: *Great in principle but there's not enough vehicle parking space at present, reduce that and people will go to retail parks and increase reliance on home delivery to the detriment of the vitality and viability of town centres and Business rates.*
77. One respondent stated that: *I would love Omagh High Street to be a vehicle-free zone, with the space between shops re-used for benches, greenery, local pop-up businesses and extended (covered) eating space for restaurants etc. But make sure this is a smoke and vape-free zone too, to reap the benefit of better air quality.*

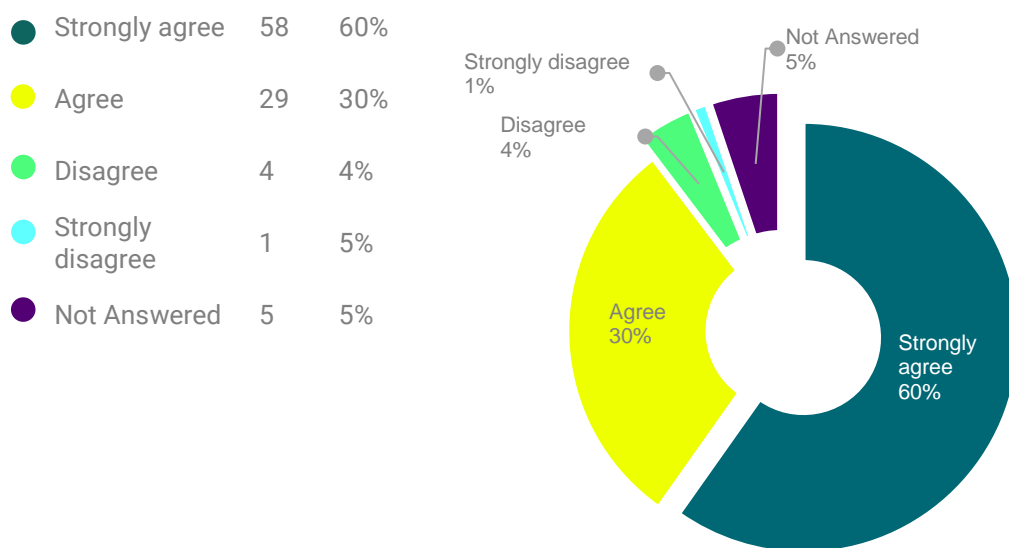
Objective 5

78. Do you agree with Objective 05:

Ensure the transport network is well maintained, sustainable, resilient and adaptable to climate change requirements.

79. There were 92 responses to this question. 90% of the respondents strongly agree or agree with this objective. The results are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7 - responses about draft Objective 5



80. There were 20 written comments provided. A sample of these comments is provided below:

- The ineffectiveness of temporary repairs such as patching of potholes and ruts must be properly addressed. 2. There is also a real need for the various public bodies (roads, electricity, gas, broadband, water, etc.) to get together to form a coherent and efficient planning system whereby newly surfaced roads are not subsequently ruined by the provision or alteration of underground services. 3. One of the key issues affecting sustainability and the environment is the marked increase on the reckless habit which too many people now have, of discarding litter from vehicles. Not only is this dangerous to other more vulnerable road users, but it is a severe blight on the countryside and has the potential to adversely affect*

wildlife and waterways in particular. A lot of the discarded plastics become hidden under the roadside vegetation during summer but gets chewed up and spread around during grass-cutting time. A public information campaign might help, but enforcing the law (perhaps using cameras in the most severely affected areas) would have a much greater impact.

- *We need localised solutions which make travel in local rural villages and districts safer including investment in walkways and paths.*
- *I agree with the spirit of this objective but unless the transport network is going to be properly funded then this objective is never going to happen. Its more of an aspiration than something you can actually ensure through measurable targets.*
- *Maintenance is key we need sufficient resources to ensure our network is maintained properly.*

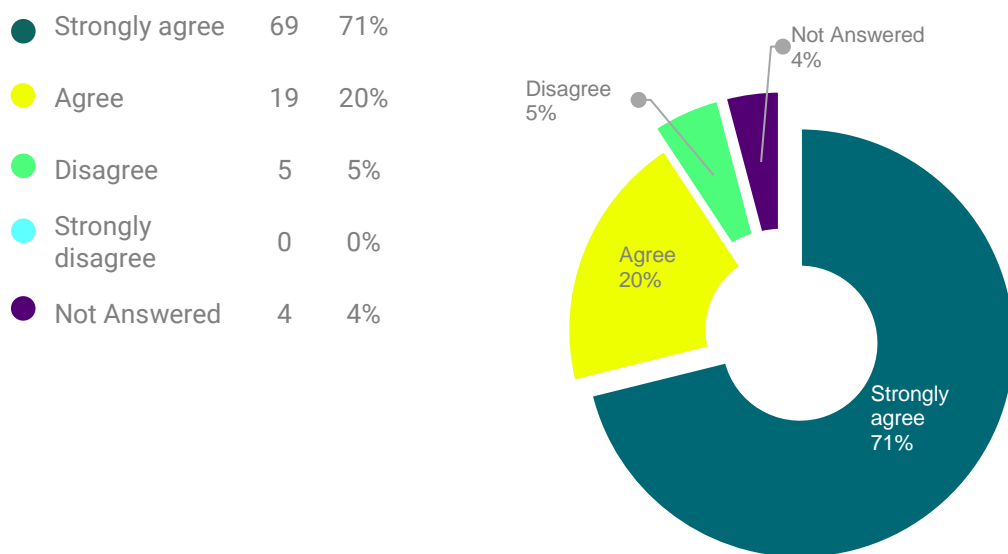
Objective 6

81. Do you agree with Objective 06:

Contribute to improvements in transport safety and a reduction in urban road casualties involving vulnerable road users.

82. There were 93 responses to this question. 91% of the respondents strongly agree or agree with this objective. The results are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 - responses about draft Objective 6



83. There were 19 written comments provided. A sample of these comments is provided below:

- *Provided the ridiculous 20mph zones aren't seen as a means of achieving the aim.*
- *Need to complete the A5*
- *Planning on doing something about the A5 then??*
- *This needs to be data led to understand what the safety issues are, and what the requirements of vulnerable are in relation to transport safety. Should encourage positive responses to the environment rather than draconian laws and regulations around speed, so promote better street*

lighting, well maintained pathways, cycle lanes, lane restrictions that reduce speed, rather than introducing 20mph limits or UEZs.

- *Cycle routes should be physically separated from pedestrian routes and should likewise not impede other forms of transport. So-called speed bumps and ramps, etc. simply do not work and there are strong safety and environmental cases for their removal. A far better solution is widely used in Europe, whereby traffic light and camera systems are triggered by the speed of oncoming vehicles. These systems are also widely seen as being far more effective than speed cameras, as they control speed whilst at the same time reduce congestion. If it is intended to use bus lanes, it would be very important not to miss the opportunity (as adopted in many other urban areas) to make these accessible for two wheeled vehicles also. In some areas, there is a clear need for separate lanes for slow-moving vehicles such as tractors, forklifts, telehandlers, etc.*

Mapped Responses

84. A total of 53 respondents made 94 suggestions for transport schemes or measures using the mapping functionality on Citizen Space.
85. Of these, 27 were in Enniskillen town, 18 were in Omagh town and 49 were elsewhere in the District as shown in Figure 9.
86. To aid in the analysis of these mapped responses they have been categorized as:
- Active Travel - including new or improved walkways/cycleways, improved road crossing points etc. and other improvements that would help those walking, wheeling or cycling with reduced mobility.
 - Public Transport – local bus services.
 - Road Schemes – local road schemes.
 - Parking.
 - Mixed – suggestions that could benefit more than one mode of transport.
 - Other – such as schemes related to taxis etc.
 - RSTN – including rail, suggestions related to the strategic road network or regional bus (e.g. Goldliner) services.

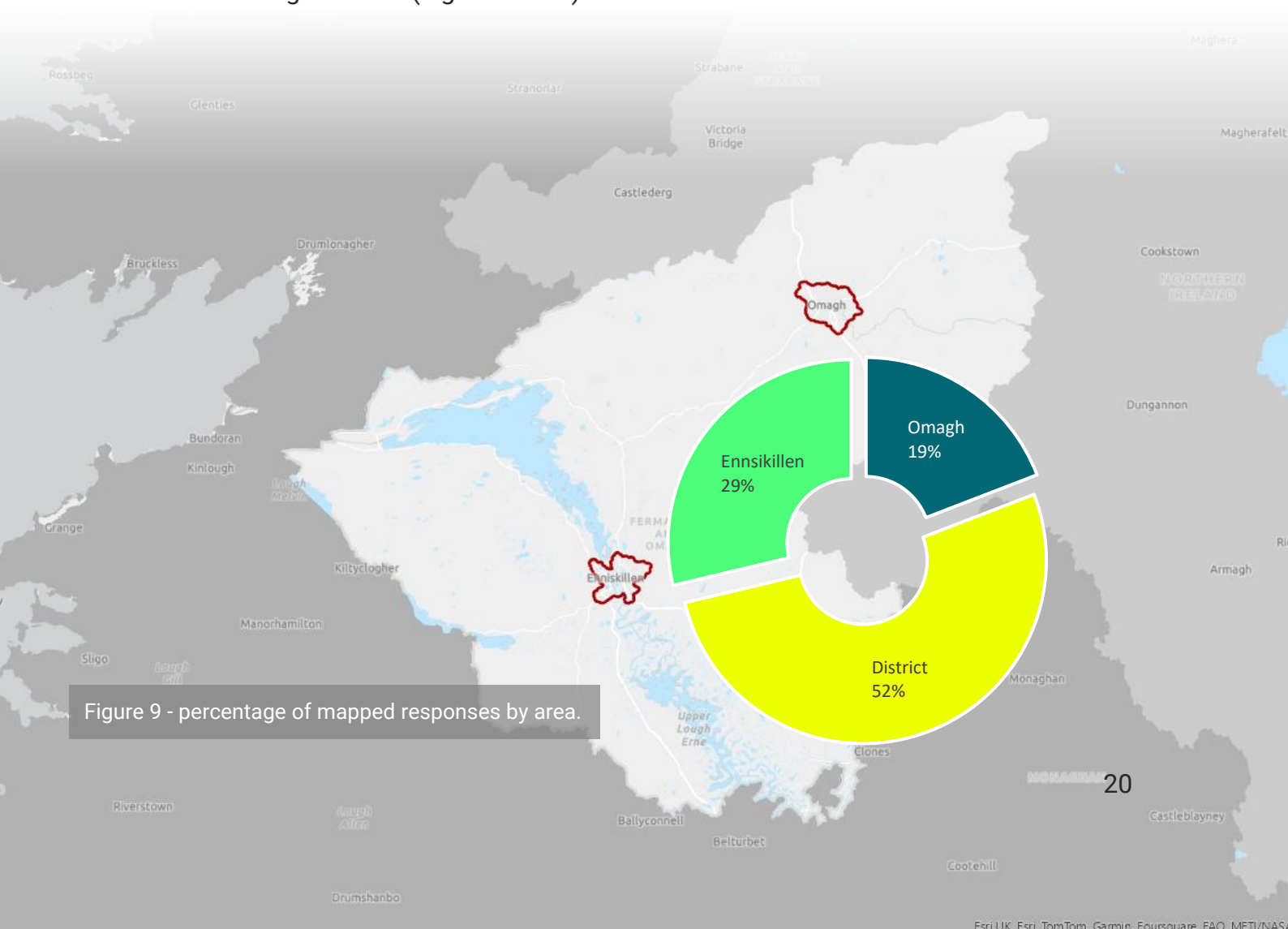
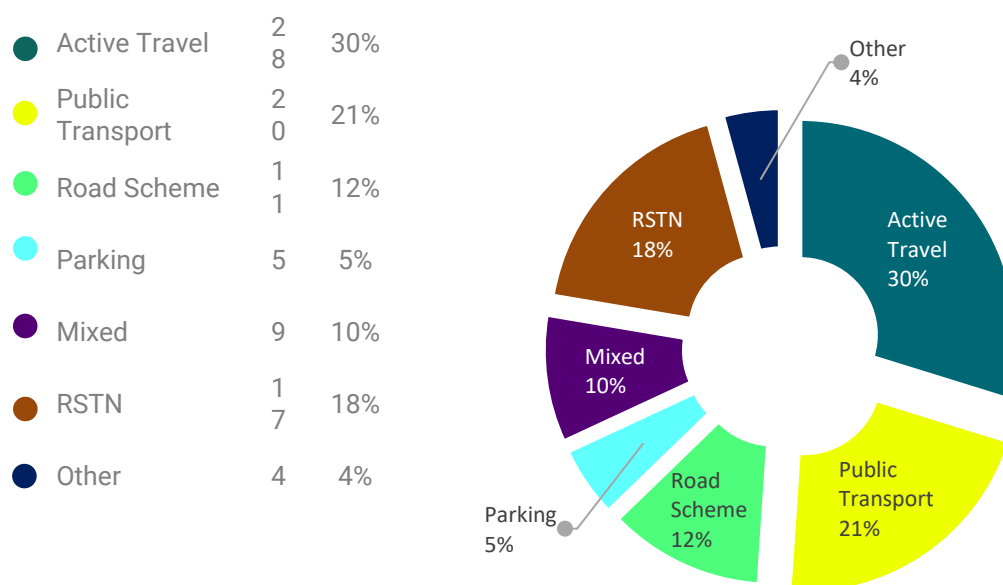


Figure 9 - percentage of mapped responses by area.

87. Figure 10 shows the number of responses by type. Most responses related to active travel at 30% followed by public transport at 21%, RSTN at 18%, Road Schemes at 12%, mixed at 10%, parking at 5% and other at 4%.

Figure 10 - number and percentage of mapped responses by type



88. The suggestions for Enniskillen town are shown in Figure 11.
89. The suggestions for Omagh town are shown in Figure 12.
90. The suggestions for elsewhere in the District are shown in Figure 13.
91. Additional details of mapped responses (where consent to publish has been provided) can be viewed on the mapping page of Citizen Space [\[Link\]](https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/fosrtp2035/consultation/published_select_respondent?view=map_view)².

² https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/fosrtp2035/consultation/published_select_respondent?view=map_view

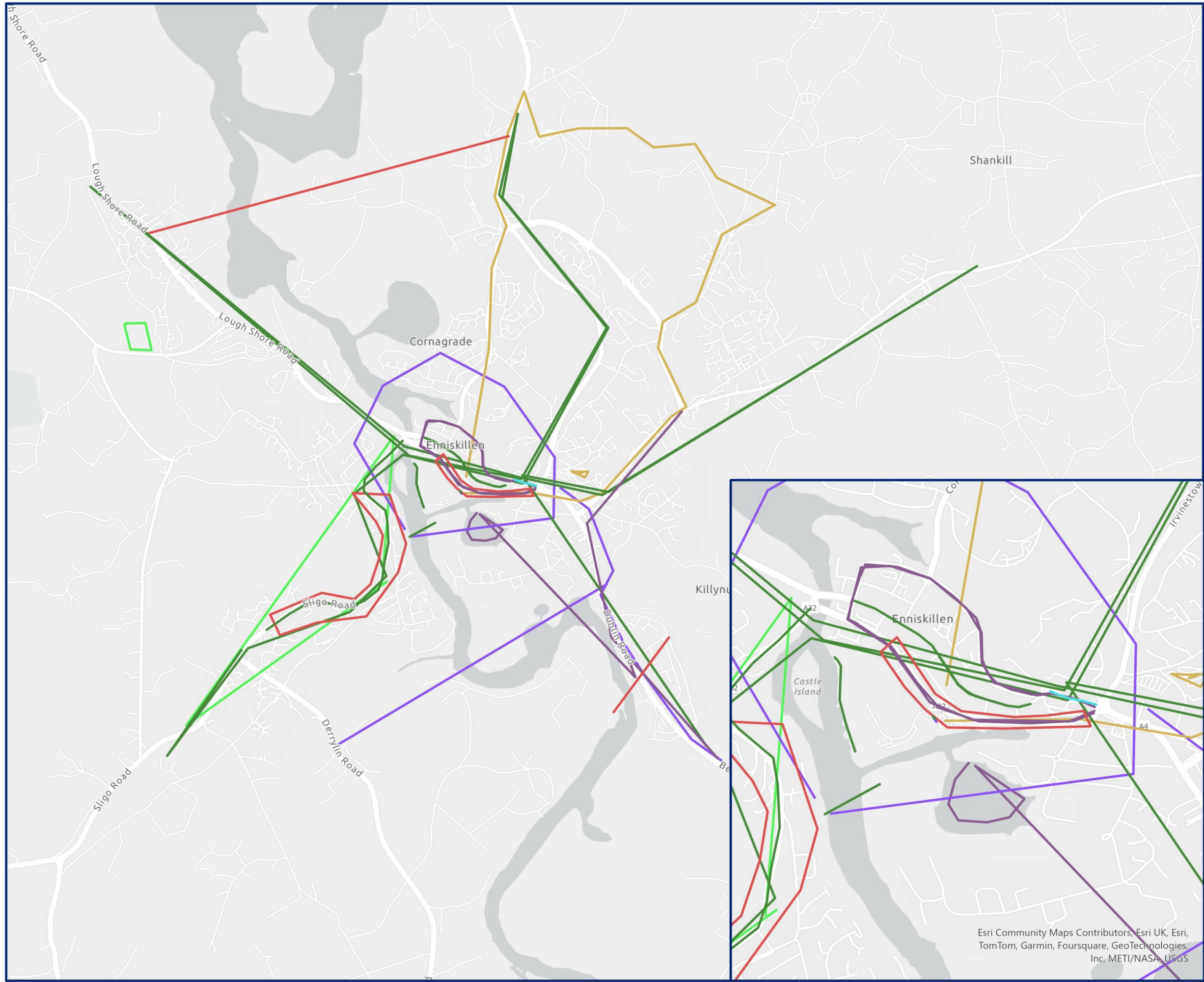


Figure 11
Enniskillen Suggestions

Legend

- Active Travel
- Public Transport
- Road Scheme
- Parking
- Mixed
- RSTN
- Other

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Meters

Drawn by A McGreevy
Transport Planning and Modelling Unit

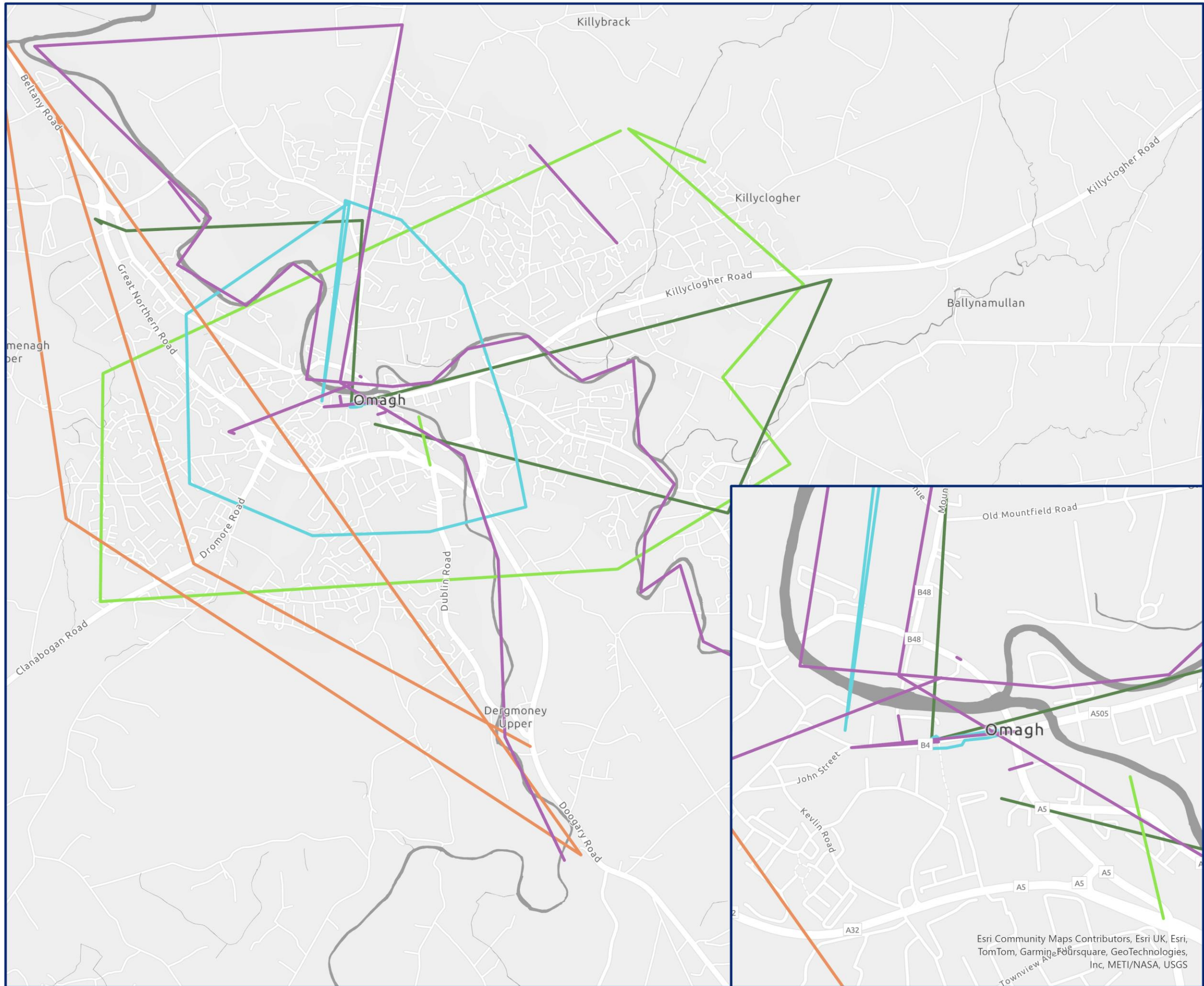
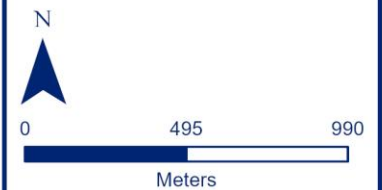


Figure 12
Omagh Town Suggestions

- Legend**
- Active Travel
 - Mixed
 - Parking
 - RSTN
 - Road Scheme



Drawn by A McGreevy
 Transport Planning and Modelling Unit

Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri,
 TomTom, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies,
 Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

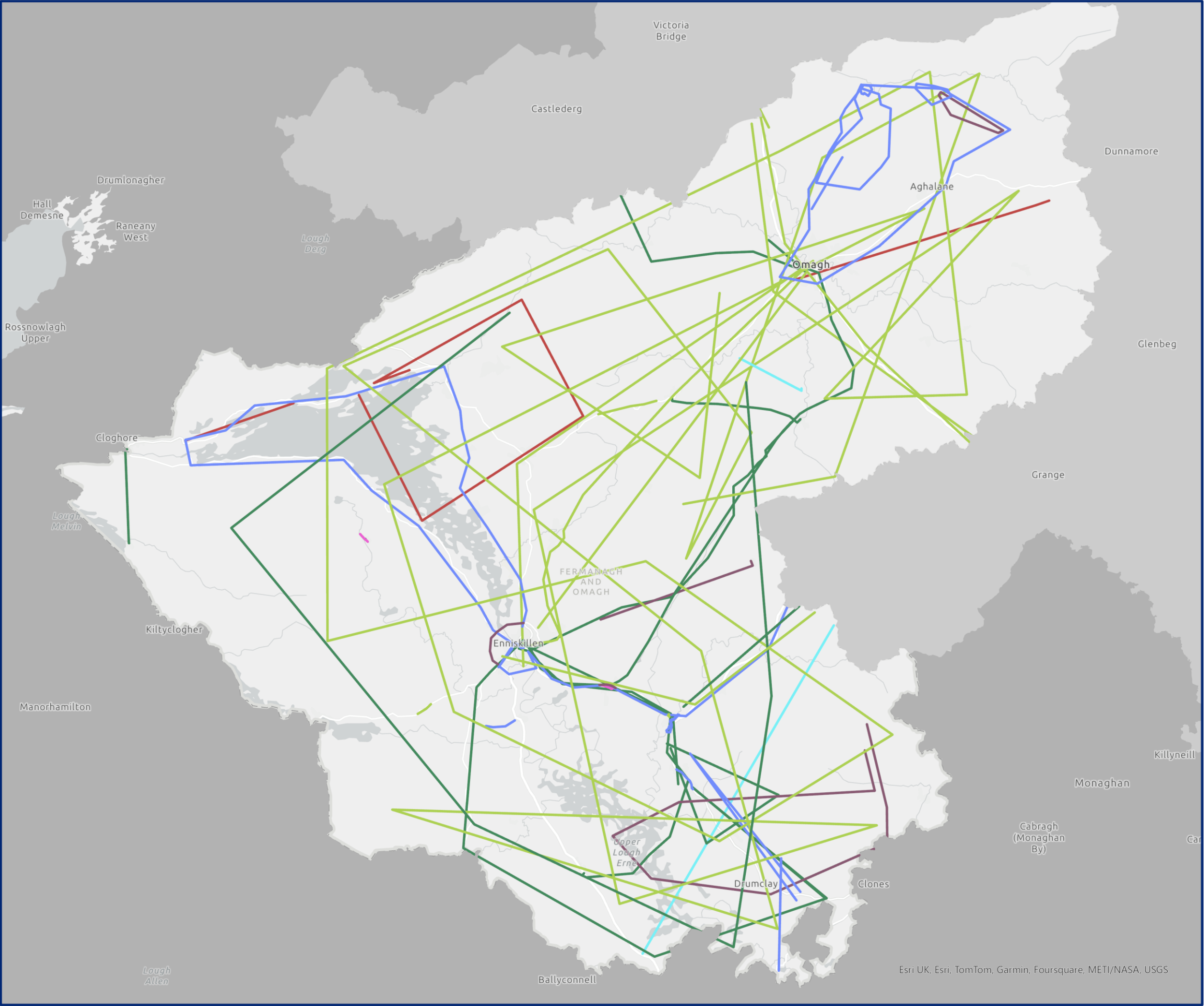


Figure 13
District Suggestions

- Legend**
- Active Travel
 - Public Transport
 - Road Scheme
 - Mixed
 - Parking
 - RSTN
 - Other

