


Eddie O'Gara



Dear Maire / Adrian

Thank you for the presentation on the 18th of January along with the consultants Sheridan Woods.

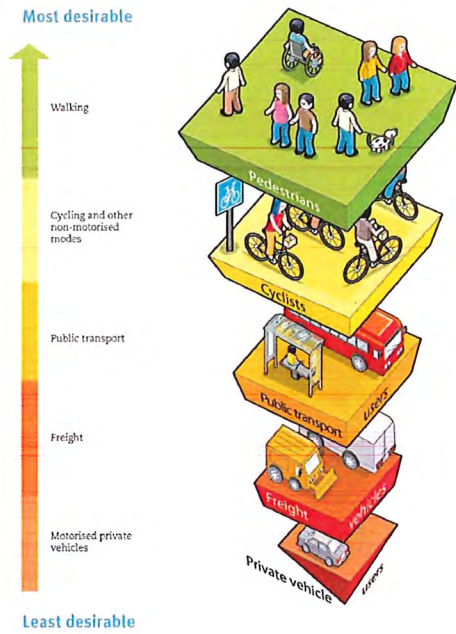
This written submission is quite lengthy and I apologise for not having the time to refine and edit etc, or in places to explain with more graphic examples of what I would like to explain, however I trust that the overarching comments and intent will be clear. I had hoped to make time to discuss in detail with you my observations and concerns prior to the issue of these comments and perhaps there will be an opportunity to do so should you find something here unclear or wish to get further information.

Please note I have generally made comments for both plans at the same time.

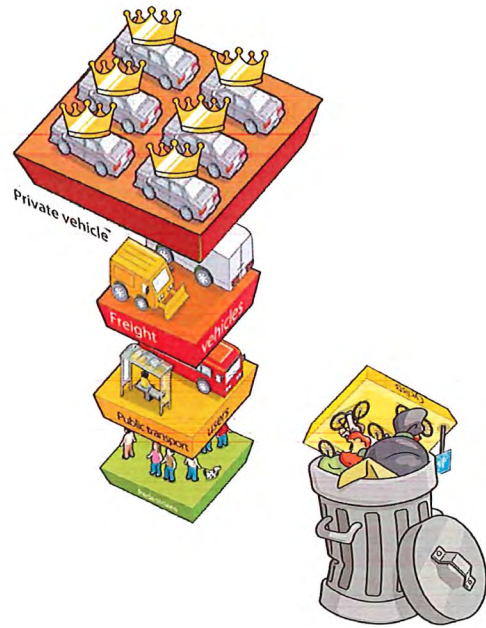
Summary

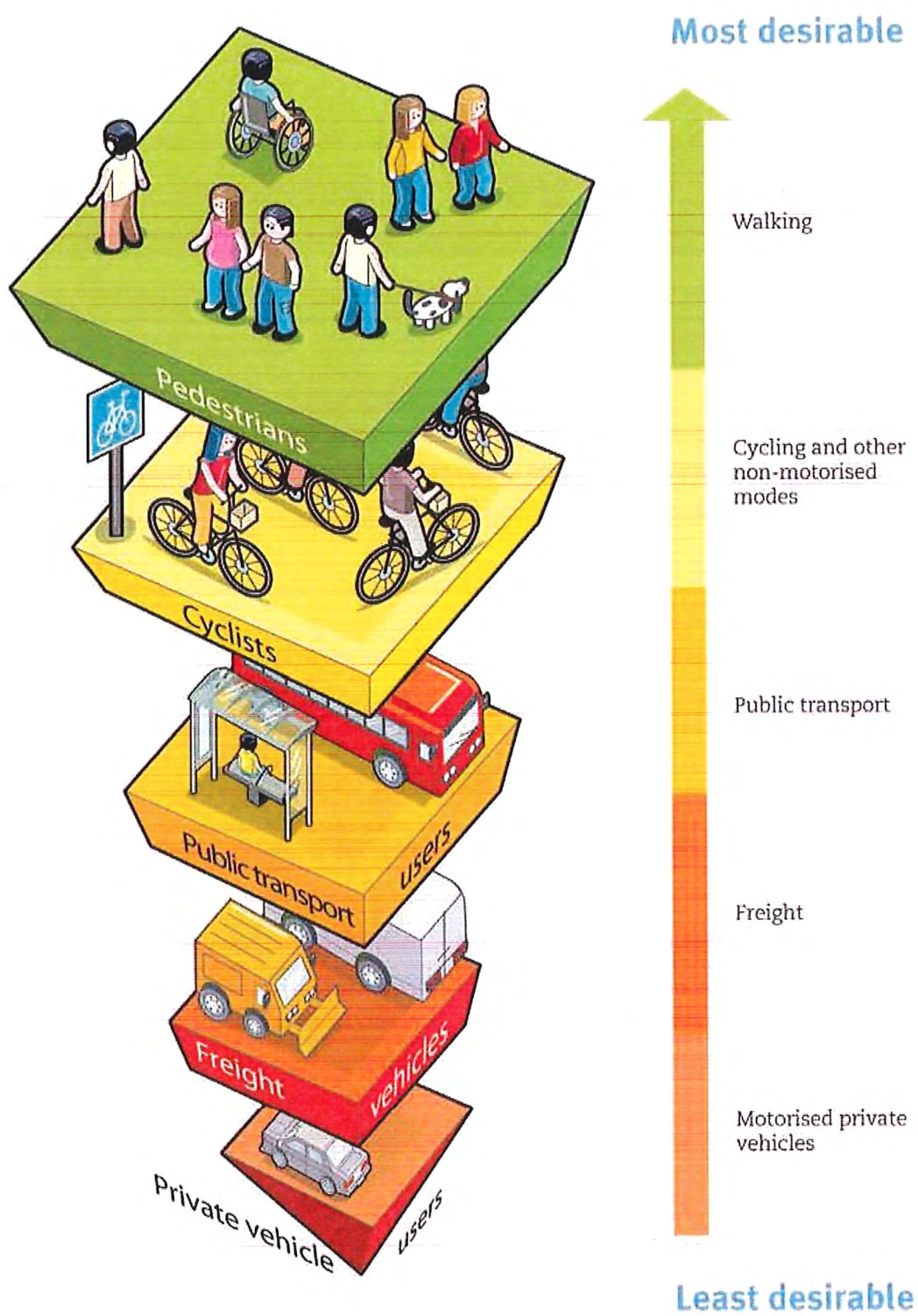
While the plans objectives, goals, vision and background research is generally very agreeable and is everything that a progressive Master Plan should contain, unfortunately the manifestation of this vision into both the Master Plans fails badly. The end result is something that looks more like a vehicle transport plan leading to car parks with various types of building as opposed to a Master Plan which was developed from the person first. The end result will be an increase in the traffic through the town, a significant increase in the traffic through old cross square and no uplift for the regeneration of Dublin Street. The Master Plan falls flat and is a major disappointment from its potential to be a blue print not just for Monaghan but for other towns of similar size in the Country. What is drawn is outdated and not in keeping with the vision of 10 minute towns or people centred design. – When you look at the amount of roads, the amount of parking at each building and the potential proposed additional roads you will see that this plan most defiantly still falls under the 'User Hierarchy For Irish Towns' in the graphic below.

User Hierarchy For Healthy Streets



User Hierarchy For Irish Towns





Access hierarchy by mode

Break Down of Comments

One area the introduction which ultimately causes its problems is the issue of car parking and car dependency. It is our opinion that this accommodation to allow unrestricted vehicle movement around all the development is the fundamental failure of this master plan and one which untimely has an extremely negative effect on it

“The absence of rail infrastructure in the county and the poor level of bus service has resulted in a high level of car dependency in the county which reflects the dispersed rural population and network of small towns and villages. This increases the demand for visitor car parking within the town.

It is noted that the Development Plan recognises reduced car parking demand where there is a more sustainable mix of residential and employment generating uses. Any development of the regeneration plan area will need to accommodate the associated car parking demand generated by the use. Achieving a sustainable mix of uses in the regeneration plan area, and enhanced opportunity to live, work and shop within walking distances to homes within the regeneration plan area will reduce the car parking demand within area.

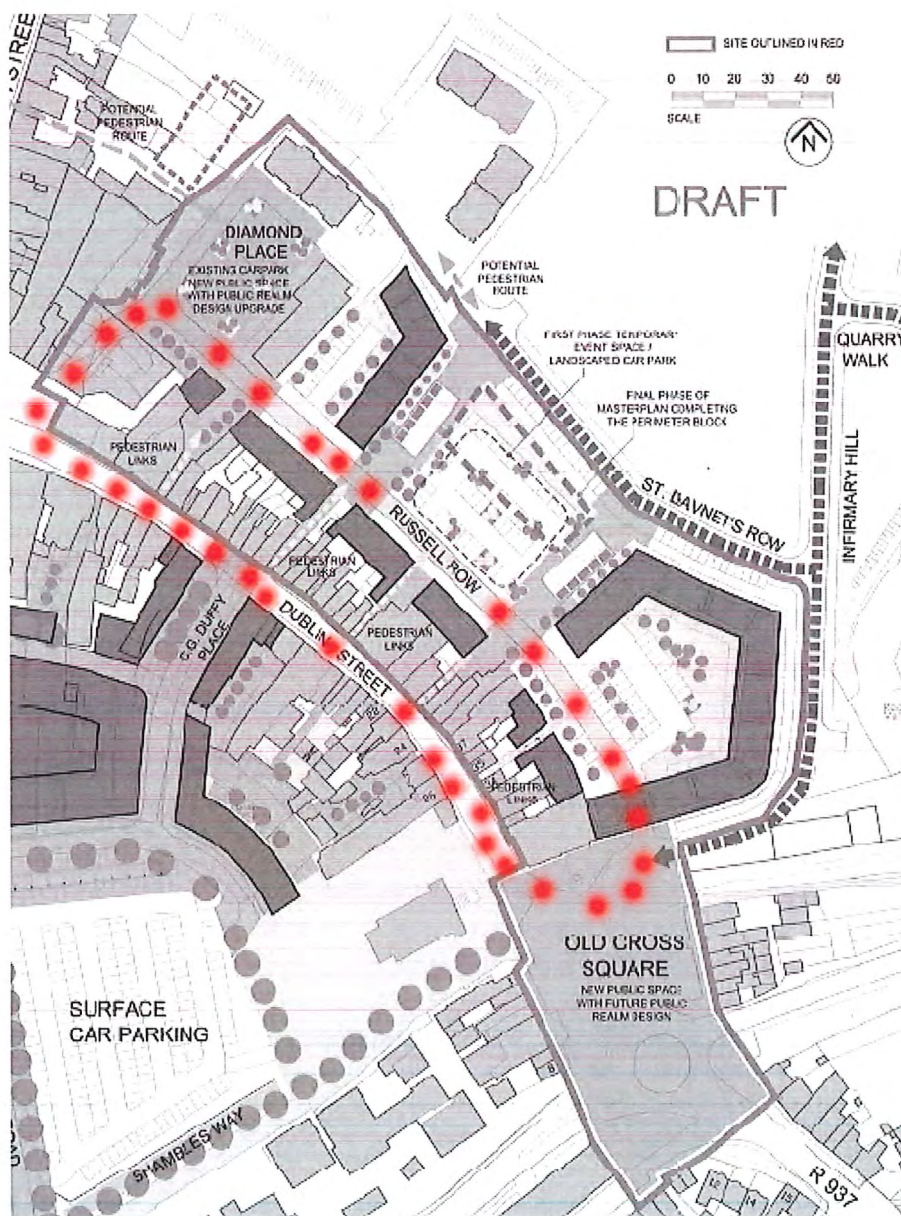
The objective in the plan will be to balance the provision of car parking, with the achievement of a high quality public realm and built environment. It is envisaged that development and car parking will be phased as the plan progresses.”

As a result this master plan ends up as an urban road scheme with some mixed use / residential blocks in between as opposed to the high ideals in the project vision and introduction. – this master plan will increase vehicle movement in the town and do nothing to help regenerate Dublin Street due to the increase in traffic. They claim the objective is to balance car parking with public realm but what is drawn is a complete dominance of car parking and roads without People centred place making. You don't need to balance car parking with public realm. You put public realm first at all times and force car parking (and as a result vehicle movement) to be accommodated away from these areas.

“ By accommodating the car you discriminate the person & place. The Master Plan fails”

Russell Row

A new two directional road "Russell Row" in the back lands which will connect the Diamond and Old Cross Square, therefore increasing vehicle movement in both locations. The existing building on Dublin Street North effectively become a traffic island, that will be 'regenerated' (while dodging the passing cars, vans and trucks) as part of this process??? - see red dots below.



Objective 8 To aspire to create a pedestrian priority zone within the regeneration plan area through the use of shared surface, designated pedestrian zones coinciding with access points through the block, and landscaped courtyard space. – this is nonsense if vehicle movement has been accommodated to such an extent then pedestrian movement will be compromised. A shared surface over a 2 way traffic road does not encourage pedestrian movement especially for the vulnerable users.

Objective 10 Facilitate short term car parking area, and temporary event space in the regeneration plan area (phase 1), to be developed in the longer term, preferably with a residential use, or mixed use as appropriate (Phase 2). This is the creation of a car park in the middle of the development zone, the calling of it as a temporary event space is clearly cover, the front of the courthouse is the event space for Christmas Lights etc while the diamond hosts the country music festival. How many event spaces are needed for a town of Monaghans size and why would they not be within the existing historic core? – ironically they also called the proposed demolished buildings on Dublin Street south and multi use event space.(its a road and not a place, how many of these 'places' 'event spaces' etc will we have and do we need – especially when what is drawn are roads and car parks)

Objective 13 Support low carbon development through reuse and adaptation of existing structures, developments with a high energy efficiency rating, circular economy to reduce waste where possible connecting to low carbon energy networks, smarter sustainable urban drainage, travel, and promote the use of car sharing clubs, as well as electric car charge points. If this is an objective why is there carparking at each development and why is there roads designed for traffic going to all the development sites? Why is there 3no additional roads accessing the historic old cross square and why is there proposals to bring at least one new road to Glasslough Street – this is the polar opposite to low carbon development and no amount of SUDS, Car Sharing or Eclectic Car Charging points will green wash that. What is drawn is a high Carbon Development not only in itself but will actively encourage people to dive into and though the development area.

Objective 16 To provide new residential development to make sustainable use of existing community facilities to reduce reliance on the car, while creating a healthier and more active community. Existing facilities include schools, health services, convenience shopping, public spaces and amenities along the Ulster Canal, Shambles River and the Sli na Slainte

route at St. Davnet's all of which can be reached in minutes walking or cycling from the plan area. This appears as an attempt to create a vehicle movement and parking dominated public realm without any significant or meaningful public realm by attempting to state that the facilities on the greenway and St Davnets will fill the void, while failing to recognise by creating all these vehicle movement dominated spaces and roads the very amenities your cite are been severed from the proposed development area. Its particularly worth noting that the negative impact on the excising senior citizens homes in Rooskey will be impacted by the proposed Quarry Walk Road, marooned by vehicle dominated roads on all sides.

Objective 18: To provide mixed housing type and tenure to ensure a mix of demographic groups including town centre families of different type, which is a critical ingredient in bringing life and diversity to the town. This is highly debatable., the housing mix appears mostly apartment with a small number of town houses, none of which cater for huge mix demographic groups

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Objective 19 To provide for multi generational homes including starter homes, homes for families and for the elderly. Families – with carparking and car movement dominated public realm. Which families will seek to live there as opposed to out of town options and therefore increased car dependency

Principle 6 To create an appropriate entrance to Monaghan Town from the east, and to the proposed Roosky Master Plan area

Objective 27 To enhance the public realm of Old Cross Square including an upgrade of traffic management of the space.

Objective 28 To create a strong building line completing the north western edge of Old Cross Square, with a high quality building design that relates to the scale height and architecture of the adjoining buildings, while avoiding pastiche use of neo-vernacular styles.

This is one of the biggest fallacies in the masterplan, improving the public realm by creating 2 new roads (Russell Row, Infirmary Hill), into an already congested vehicle movement dominated space. Pretending that somehow a quality building edge will disguise what the actual environment will be like. Hostile in particular for vulnerable pedestrians, who will have multiple roads to cross in order to move into town for the East, this includes people already living within the 10minute radius of the town centre.

Principle 7 To provide a high quality public realm and attractive public spaces adopting a people first priority

Objective 29 To improve the pedestrian environment along Dublin Street, through the following measures:

- Widened footpath.
- Consideration of **shared surface**/narrowed carriageway width.
- Relocation of on street parking to backlands of Dublin Street South and Dublin Street North.
- Tabletop at pedestrian crossing points, **Gavan Duffy Place**, entrances to the regeneration quarter at the junction with the Diamond/Old Cross Square.

This is another fallacy, increasing vehicle movement to the East and west of Dublin Street and therefore severing it further from the town... 'People first priority' while severing the pedestrian footpath along the south of Dublin Street by still proposing a road into the car park (Gavan Duffy Place), somehow a raised table will bring it back to being 'People First' its not it is a vehicle movement first and vehicle parking first master plan . – Shared surface is vehicle priority.

Objective 30 To Improve the pedestrian environment and public realm of Old Cross Square through the following measures: ·Rationalised carriageway to provide for routes through to Infirmary Hill, Russell Row, and Dublin Street.

- Enhanced pedestrian environment in Old Cross Square.
- Identify an appropriate location for the excising monument/Cross.
- Signage to mark the historic entrance to the town as approached from the south east.

A complete contradiction, 'improve pedestrian environment' ; by creating two new roads ' Infirmary Hill and Russell Row' – you can't improve the pedestrian environment in Old Cross Square its already destroyed by the dominance of vehicle movement and the plans intent to increase that dominance.

You won't see the signage and hardly even see the historic monument due to the volume of HGV's in the area. – these are meaningless suggestions

Objective 31 To Improve the pedestrian environment and public realm of Diamond Place through the following measures: Realignment of car parking and delineation of parking, pedestrian areas, and introduction of landscaping features to enhance the visual amenity of the space, and ease and safety of pedestrian movement.

This is a car park and following this masterplan it will remain a car park but with a few trees, however worse it will be a car park with a new road passing through it. – Its impossible improve the pedestrian environment and public realm in a town centre (25m from the diamond) by creating a new road. The reference to pedestrian safety is obviously a contradiction.

Objective 32 To provide high quality public realm improvements at the proposed entry points to the regeneration plan area from Dublin Street, including new paving, lighting and pedestrian priority through the use of table top/shared surface throughout the Regeneration Plan area.

This is actually getting ridiculous now. Table top / shared surfaces are installed in areas where the road design and public realm design has failed. – if the public realm is designed from a 'people first perspective' and not vehicle movement perspective then they are not needed! Yet these plans seem to be proposing them as some sort of pedestrian priority measure, they are not, they are a pedestrian warning measure that you are passing a hostile location where a vehicle might hit you. (in a locations where they should not be due to the volume of pedestrians) – its one thing to retrofit them to an excising busy road but to 'design' them into a implied street, tells you everything about that 'street' – its a road

Objective 33 Provide positive interaction between spaces and the built form e.g. building frontages, windows and entrances should face onto and over-look the street and public spaces to create active public realm environment. A positive intention that will be undone by the hostility of the public realm to vehicle movement, the Master Plan completely fails to design from the public realm and the human scale.

Roosky Master Plan

Objective 10 To provide car parking to meet the car parking demand generated by the proposed development.

To consider the use of car sharing clubs is to be incorporated in meeting car parking requirements in order to reduce the extent of on street parking in the Master Plan area.

New developments are to integrate car parking with-in the building where possible through the use of the topography and changes in levels. Surface parking must incorporate high quality landscaping and pedestrian routes to ensure pedestrian priority.

This misses the point and opportunity, yes there will need to be car parking but the need to bring roads and car parking to all the buildings is incorrect. In a 10minute town situation there should be very little car parking within the public realm, in this instance it could be located in 1 or 2 locations only.

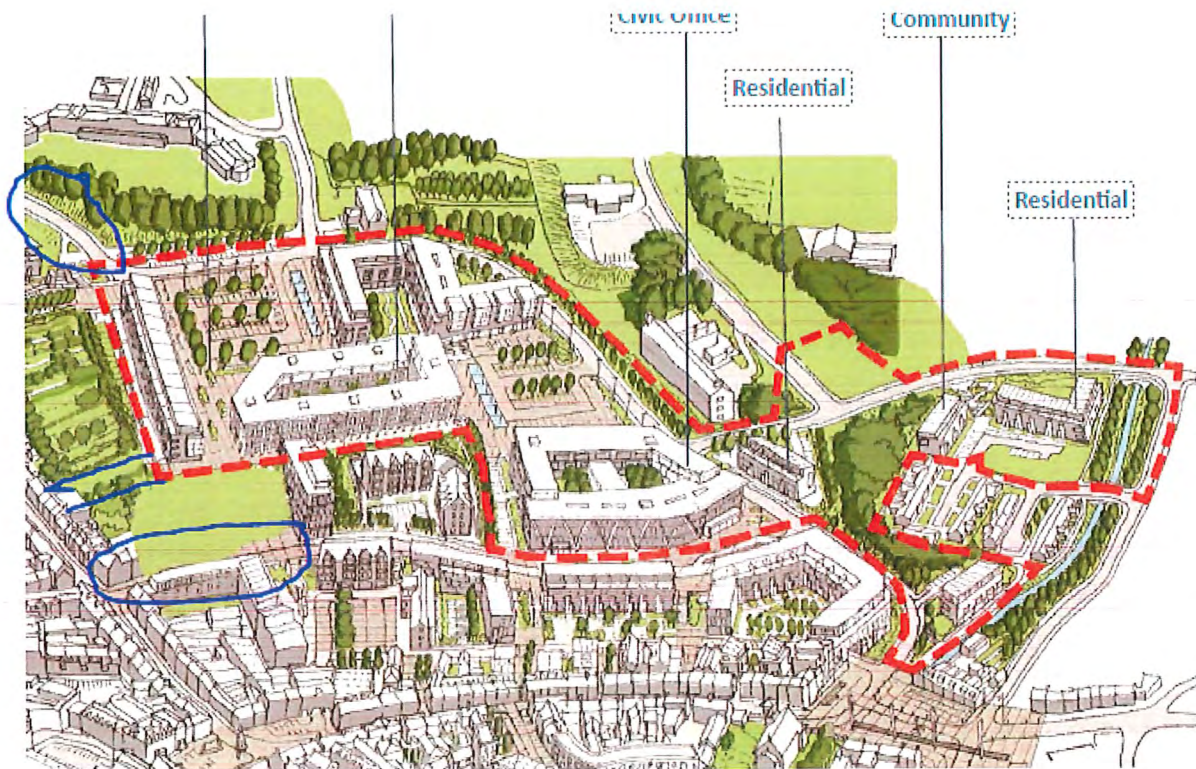
Principle 3: To create an attractive desirable place for people with a sense of place and identity Objective 11 To create new spaces within the plan area to create a sense of place and identity and character areas as they relate to the position on the site and the proposed land use. Three urban spaces are proposed 3 out of the 4 'places' are actually car parks. This is an extremely poor use of space.

Objective 16 To facilitate access from St. Davnet's Row to Glaslough Street as a long term future objective subject to further consultation and detail design

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Objective 17 To facilitate access from Roosky Square to The Peace Campus, subject to further consultation and detailed design.

Both of these objectives are the same, connecting the masterplan site to Glaslough Street. With such a vehicle movement dominated plan and with the plan already indicating connecting Infirmary hill to Glaslough Street, you can see the future knocking of buildings to create roads into the development. All of which will negatively impact on the liveability of this development and the town. This is a major concern of this masterplan, it basically creates another ring road around the town.



Objective 20 To provide for a pedestrian priority zone within the Master Plan area through the use of shared surface, designated pedestrian zones coinciding with access points. This is simply a contradiction, a pedestrian priority with a shared surface, refer to separate point on shared surfaces.



Principle 6 To adopt a people first approach in street design.

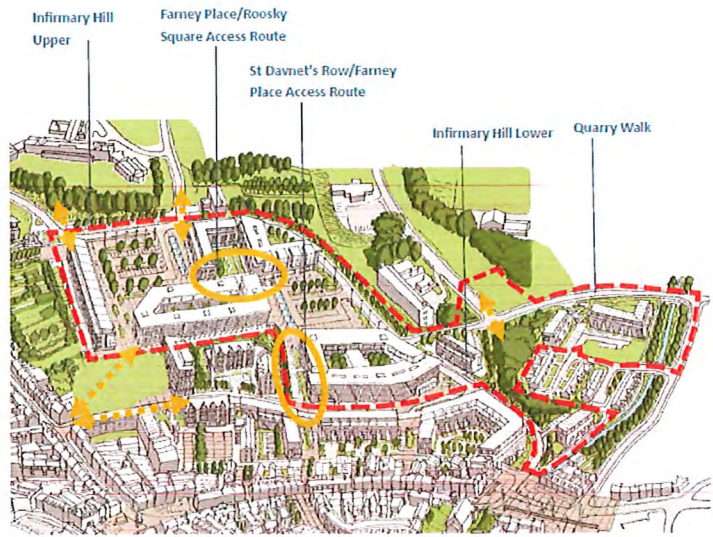
Objective 21 To facilitate active travel, walking and cycling in the plan area, to include street design that prioritises the pedestrian and cyclist, including shared surfaces, wider footpaths, cycleways, reduced carriageway widths, with particular reference to the recommendations and design standards set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and people first approach to street design.

Again this is a total contradiction people first approach but sharing the surface with vehicles. Wider footways do help as does cycleways (non indicated within the masterplan) and reduced carriageway widths, but these can be designed out if the design is based on a people first approach which this plan clearly is not.

Streets, Routes and Links



-  Potential future connections
 -  New Streets—Infirmity Hill/Quarry Walk
 -  Pedestrian Access Routes
- Note all street names are indicative only and for identification purposes
- SEPT 2011 Issue 005.00.00.01



- Master Plan—Streets Routes and Links
- New Streets, routes and links are proposed in the Plan area:
- Quarry Walk
 - Infirmity Hill
 - St Davnet's Row/Farney Place Access Route
 - Farney Place/Roosky Square Access Route

 Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin
Monaghan County Council

SHERIDAN WOODS
architecture | urban design | planning



Your know your master plan is fundamentally flawed when you have to identify Pedestrian Access Routes, the rest is vehicle prioritised.

Other general quick notes:

There is no cycle lanes or cycle priority indicated but lots of 2 way roads (which will have cars, vans and HGV').

The extent of roads will have a significant detrimental effect on the Ulster Canal Greenway as the interface with it to get into town will result crossing at least 2 busy roads.

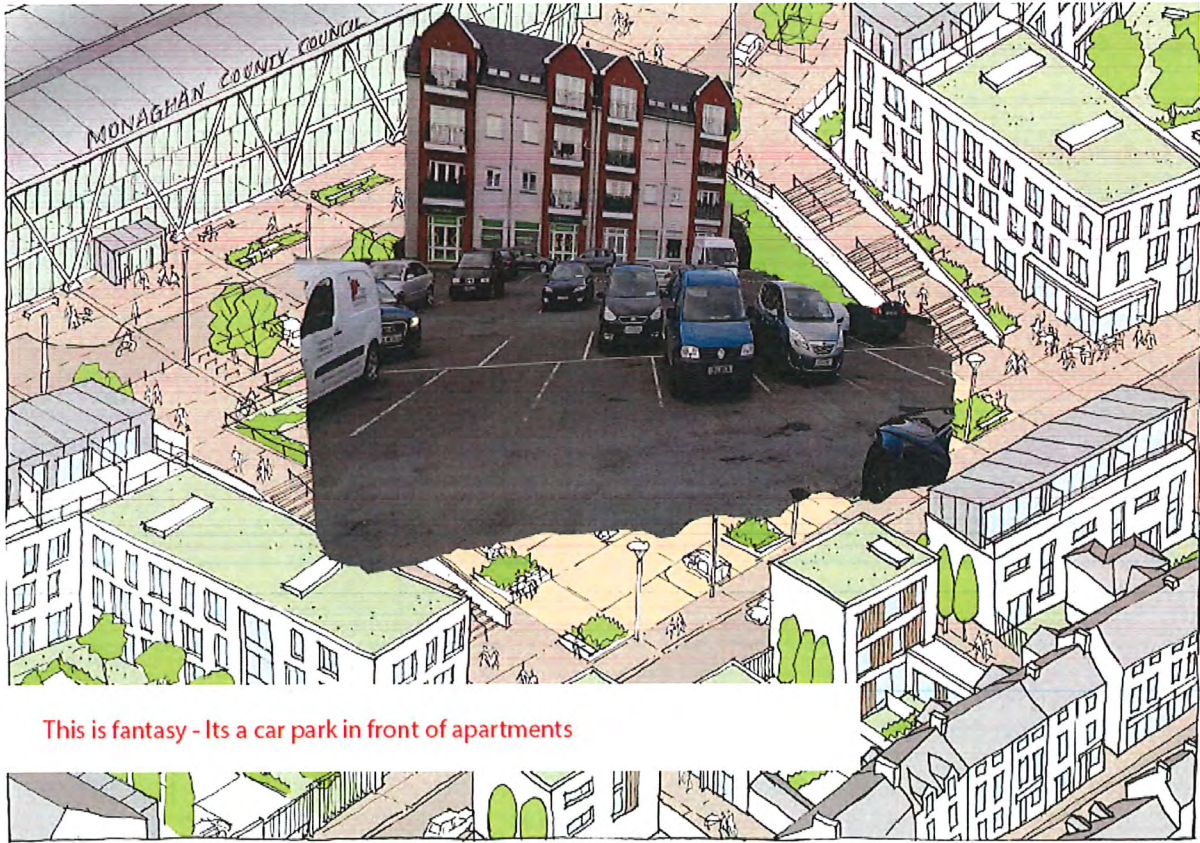
The master plan is located on a hill, the visual impact to what is likely quite architecturally crap apartments. The view of these and other buildings within this development in particular from the cathedral is a worry. – after all nothing in this master plan is nestled into the landscape in a sensitive manner – its a building, a car park and a road. There is no point in claiming high architectural quality and finish of any proposed buildings because that does not exist anywhere in the town for new developments.

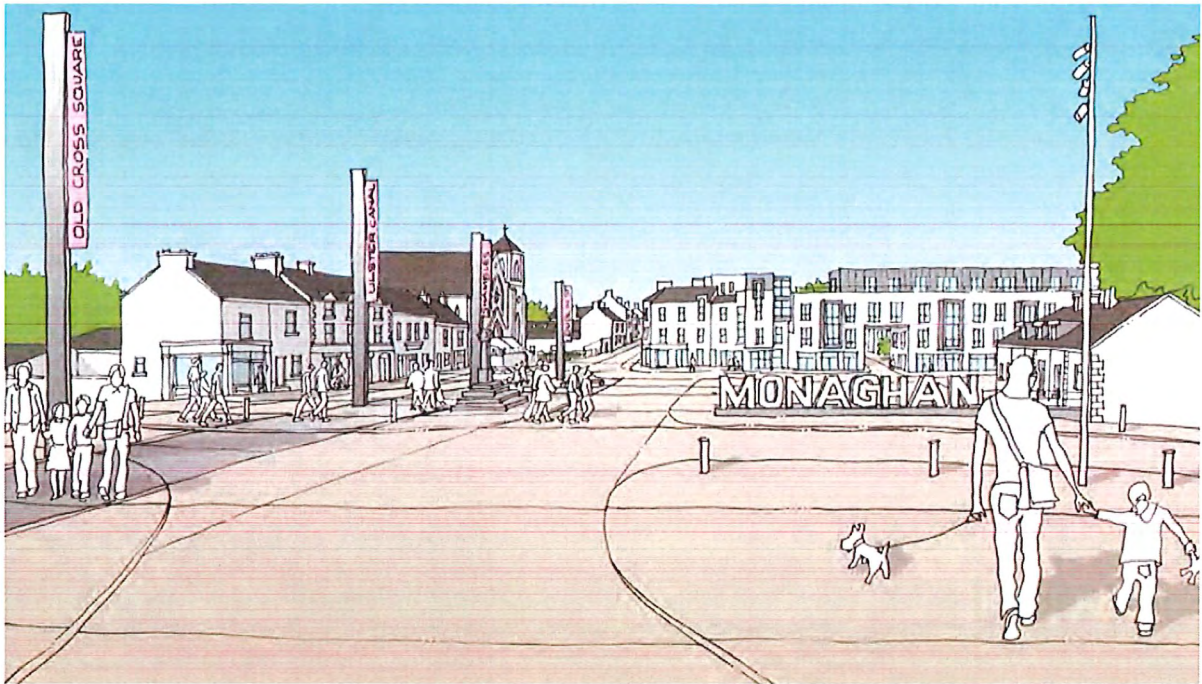
The potential extension of the roads into Glasslough street will almost certainly happen and will result in an internal ring road within the town. – more traffic, less people walking and cycling, loss of footfall on the existing streets, less attractive place to live, work and visit.

I can't see what benefit this masterplan does for Dublin Street in terms of footfall and liveability. (accepting if there is council offices that will bring some footfall but its indirect not targeted at the regeneration of Dublin Street)

We know what state high street retail is in, so apart from some office from perhaps HSE or similar next to the proposed civic offices I can't see this development been anything other than apartments and office, it's certainly not mixed.

Images of Real Master Plan





Old cross square with new roads and increase traffic will look like the above!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Old cross square at 2pm on a Tuesday in January.