

From: [REDACTED]
To: [rse](#)
Subject: New Message (sent by contact form at Northern and Western Regional Assembly)
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Name: Ronan Fallon

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Submission: The key to unlocking the region's economic potential is the development and vibrancy of Galway City. Key to this is sustainable and compact population growth.

Counter-urbanisation pressures have arisen to a large extent due to quality of life, and quality of housing reasons - well documented in Mark Scott (UCD)'s research on rural development. To attract these people to the city, quality housing and apartments (build up!) must be provided with the advantages that city living can provide (high-quality services within walking distance, public transport provision that allows people to live without a car) as well as quality green spaces and parks.

To ensure this happens in Galway, land suitable for parks should be identified and developed as soon as possible. Crucially, a 'Green Belt' should be established around the city perimeter, and proper, enforced limits on 'one-off' rural housing put in place. This, rather than aims like "50% of growth within city limits" (as wonderful as they are), will ensure proper development and prioritisation of infill and brownfield sites. The "quality of life" measures, like park development, will also reduce counter-urbanisation pressures, while compact growth and strict limits on open-countryside housing will prevent a Dublin-like, car-dependant commuter belt developing more than it has.

The development of the N6 ring-road runs completely against this line of thinking, it will drive future car-dependent development and "lock-in" a future of heavy traffic and pollution. The NWRA should advocate for the €650m ring-road funds to be spent instead on the development of a) a huge network of cycle lanes: €300m b) a Luas line (€350m - Luas Cross-City in dublin cost €368m). Proper cycle lanes will help with the aforementioned compact development, reduce pollution and takes thousands of cars off the roads. The argument over whether the population exists to make a Luas line "viable" are irrelevant if the money for a road the price of two Luas lines is available.