

A man with short dark hair and a light beard, wearing a green jacket with a tan collar, stands in a city street. He is holding the handlebars of a red bicycle. The background shows a city street with buildings and a clear sky.

Edinburgh

Walking and Cycling Index 2023

• EDINBURGH •
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL


sustrans
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Published March 2024



Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in Edinburgh



It's crucial that we support and encourage walking, wheeling, cycling and the use of public transport in Edinburgh. The Council has set ambitious targets for

2030, aiming for Net Zero, as well as a 30% reduction in car kilometres. We have a clear policy direction – the challenge ahead of us is delivering this over the next six years. To deliver our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling set out in our City Mobility Plan we will need to invest £1.2 billion.

In 2023 we marked key milestones for healthy, sustainable transport in the capital. We have built the City Centre West to East Link project and trialled new liveable neighbourhood schemes in Leith and Corstorphine. We've launched the tram line to Newhaven and made preparations for enforcement of a Low Emission Zone in the city centre as part of a national initiative to reduce air pollution. We've also proposed changes through Our Future Streets framework to establish clear principles for how we provide suitable space for all users on our streets for the future.

It's vital we maintain this momentum and go even further. The Walking and Cycling Index gives invaluable insights to build

on these efforts to make our city more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

We know that disabled or older residents are less likely to walk or wheel when compared to the wider population. Simply put, our streets are not as accessible as they should be. Actions identified to deliver our City Mobility Plan include a commitment to a comprehensive programme of removing street clutter, levelling footways, installing dropped kerbs, and increasing resting points. These actions are essential for creating safe and accessible streets for our residents and visitors.

We've learned that around a fifth of Edinburgh residents cycle at least once a week, with a further 25% saying they would like to. There's still a disparity between groups of people who do or don't feel comfortable getting on a bike and the Index tells us women in particular feel unsafe cycling. Residents also express concern over the level of safety for children cycling. Our ambition is to make cycling a viable transport option for everyone so that every resident in the city has access to high quality cycling provision on their doorstep.

The Index will allow us to track our progress and identify where work still needs to be done in our vision to build a more vibrant, equitable and sustainable city.

Councillor Scott Arthur,
Transport and Environment Convener

Contents

4 Report summary

6 Walking in Edinburgh

8 Cycling in Edinburgh

10 Benefits of walking

12 Benefits of cycling

14 Walking solutions

16 Cycling solutions

18 Neighbourhood solutions

20 Developing Edinburgh

22 Looking forward

The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life) is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland.

It is delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with 23 cities and urban areas. Each cityⁱ reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the fifth report from Edinburgh produced in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. The data in this report comes from 2023 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,233 residents aged 16 or above in Edinburgh. The survey was conducted from March to June 2023. Social research organisation NatCen conducted the survey, which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Across this report we have included comparisons to 2021 data where available.

Our thanks to the people of Edinburgh who took part in the survey and shared their stories with us.

More details on all reports can be found at www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index. For more data, including 2019 figure where available, see the [Index Data Tool](#).



Defining wheeling

We recognise that some people who use wheeled mobility aids, for example a wheelchair or a mobility scooter, may not identify with the term walking and may prefer to use the term wheeling. We use the terms walking and wheeling together to ensure we are as inclusive as possible.

i. City is used as a shorthand for Walking and Cycling Index cities, city regions, metropolitan areas and boroughs.

Headlines

Edinburgh

Populationⁱ

526,470

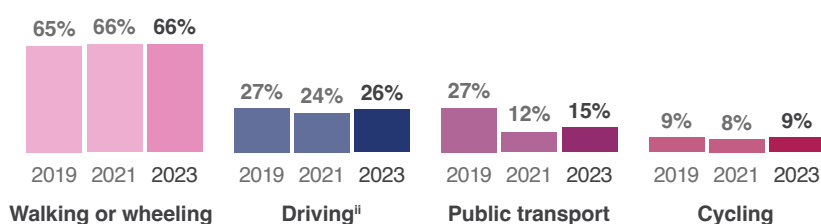
Survey area



The impact of the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic had a big impact on travel. In 2021 whilst most restrictions had been lifted, many people were taking fewer journeys and working from home.

Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in Edinburgh



Participation in walking and wheeling on a regular basis has stayed the same since 2021, but cycling has decreased.

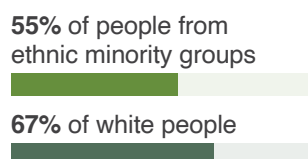
66%
of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week
66% in 2021

22%
of residents cycle at least once a week
26% in 2021

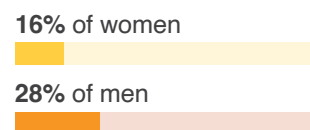
Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

Residents' travel choices and their perceptions of walking, wheeling and cycling sometimes vary widely between different groups.

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week



Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a weekⁱⁱⁱ

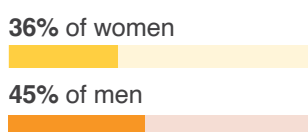


Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety is good



Proportion of residents who think cycling safety is good



Proportion of residents who feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood

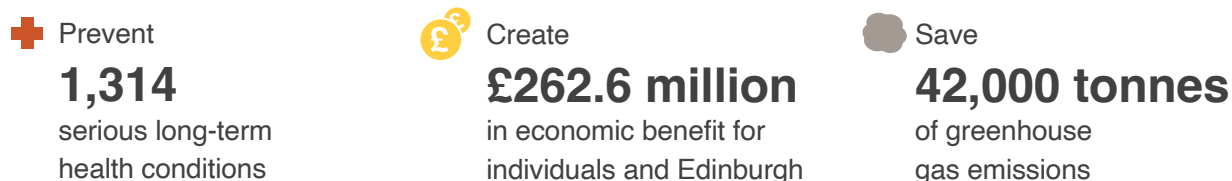


Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

i. NRS mid-year 2021 population estimates. This is the most recent available for Edinburgh ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. In 2019, questions did not include traveling by motorcycle. iii. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here.

Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Every day, walking, wheeling and cycling in Edinburgh take up to **160,000** cars off the road.^{iv} Each year in Edinburgh these three modes combined:



Residents want to walk, wheel and cycle more and drive less

Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

21% of residents want to drive less, yet 28% of residents often use a car because no other transport options are available

Walk or wheel

45% more

3% less

Cycle

49% more

2% less

Take public transport

25% more

9% less

Drive

10% more

21% less

Residents want more funding for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending in their local area:

57% on walking and wheeling

52% in 2021

50% on cycling

52% in 2021

68% on public transport

57% in 2021

26% on driving

27% in 2021

Increased funding would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

Among Edinburgh residents:

58% support

27% oppose

more cycle paths along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

60% agree

23% disagree

that increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

76% support

9% oppose

the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods^v

76% support

10% oppose

banning vehicles parking on the pavement

61% support

20% oppose

the creation of more low-traffic neighbourhoods^{vi}

56% support

21% oppose

shifting investment from road building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

iv. Based on walking, wheeling and cycling by residents that live in a household with a car. Does not include leisure cycling or leisure walking or wheeling trips.

v. See definition on page 14. vi. For definition see [Methodology document](#).



Walking in Edinburgh

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

Walking and wheeling participation

Overall in Edinburgh the number of people walking and wheeling regularly (at least five days a week) has stayed the same since 2021.

Walking and wheeling are often overlooked in transport. This is despite being an efficient use of space, good for our health and having no environmental impact.

97%
of all residents walk or wheel
97% in 2021

66%
of residents walk or wheel
at least five days a week
66% in 2021

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

Genderⁱ and sexuality

68% of women
66% in 2021

64% of men
67% in 2021

75% of LGBTQ+ people

65% of non-LGBTQ+ people

Ethnicity

55% of people from ethnic minority groups
60% in 2021

67% of white people
68% in 2021

Age

72% of people aged 16–25
74% in 2021

70% of people aged 26–35
68% in 2021

67% of people aged 36–45
68% in 2021

65% of people aged 46–55
70% in 2021

59% of people aged 56–65
61% in 2021

61% of people aged 66+
60% in 2021

Disability

61% of disabled people
58% in 2021

68% of non-disabled people
70% in 2021

Socio-economic groupⁱⁱ

69% of AB
69% in 2021

67% of C1
70% in 2021

53% of C2
48% in 2021

57% of DE
60% in 2021

i. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here.

ii. Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

70%

of residents think the level of safety for walking or wheeling is good

77% in 2021

51%

of residents think the level of safety for children walking or wheeling is good

59% in 2021

77%

of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel

84% in 2021

Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good

Gender and sexuality

67% of women



77% in 2021

74% of men



79% in 2021

71% of LGBTQ+ people



71% of non-LGBTQ+ people



Ethnicity

76% of people from ethnic minority groups



82% in 2021

70% of white people



77% in 2021

Age

81% of people aged 16–25



77% in 2021

65% of people aged 26–35



76% in 2021

73% of people aged 36–45



76% in 2021

71% of people aged 46–55



83% in 2021

70% of people aged 56–65



80% in 2021

67% of people aged 66+



79% in 2021

Disability

62% of disabled people



69% in 2021

73% of non-disabled people



81% in 2021

Socio-economic group

70% of AB



84% in 2021

72% of C1



74% in 2021

75% of C2



72% in 2021

62% of DE



68% in 2021



Gurinder, buggy user

Walking with a buggy in the city centre is a scramble for space. I try to avoid the busier streets, but this usually means contending with steps and pavements that are too narrow.

I think wider pavements and more ramps would make a big difference in improving access to shops and restaurants for lots of people.

It would also be helpful to have more public restroom areas that are accessible to wheelchairs and buggies.





Cycling in Edinburgh

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

Cycling participation

Overall in Edinburgh the number of people cycling has stayed about the same since 2021. Despite a much larger potential for cycling, only **22%** of people cycle regularly.ⁱ

Cycling participation, however, is not equal. Barriers to cycling can be far more pronounced for some people. Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.ⁱⁱ Edinburgh residents perceive cycling to be less safe than in 2021.

45%
of all residents cycle

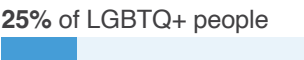
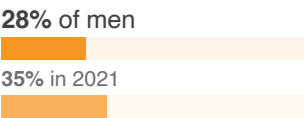
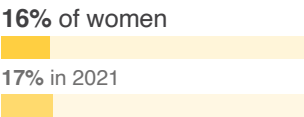
22%
of all residents cycle at least once a week

47%
in 2021

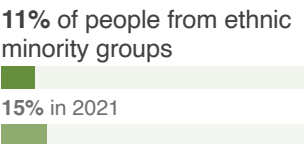
26%
in 2021

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

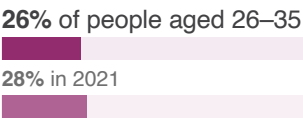
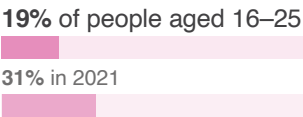
Gender and sexuality



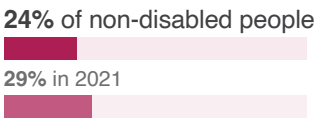
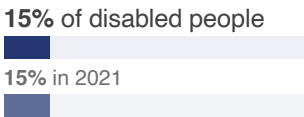
Ethnicity



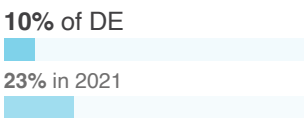
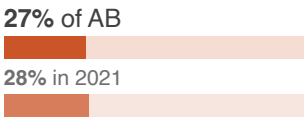
Age



Disability



Socio-economic group



i. Based on people who cycle at least once a week.
ii. See Bike Life 2019 Edinburgh report.

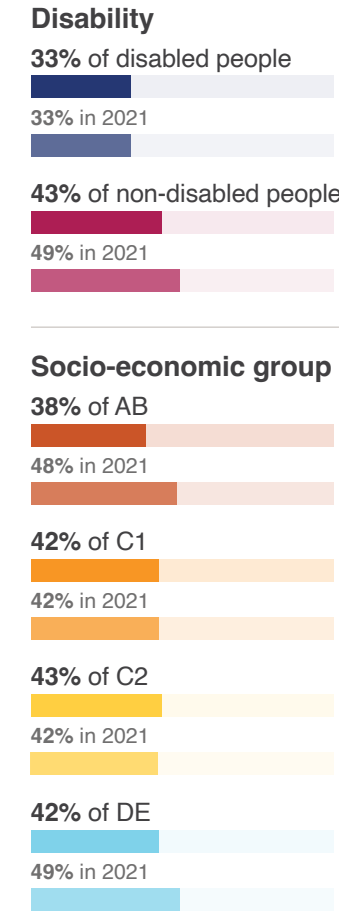
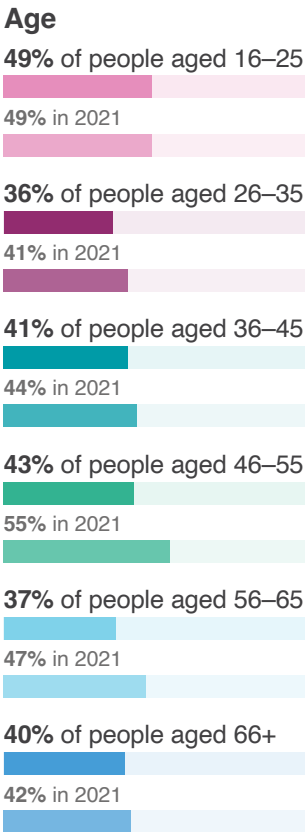
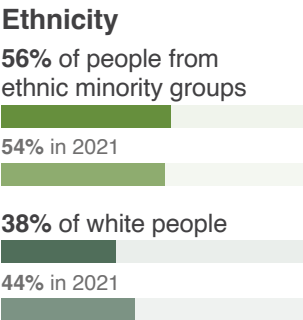
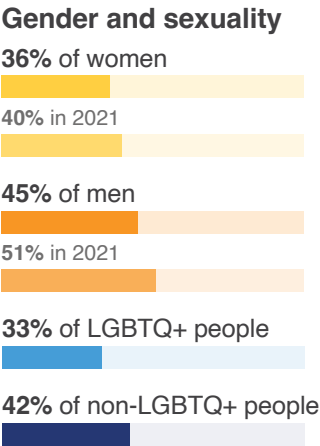
Cycling safety and satisfaction

40%
of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good
45% in 2021

31%
of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good
34% in 2021

49%
of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle
52% in 2021

Proportion of residents who think cycling safety in their local area is good



Esraa, new cyclist



When I moved to Edinburgh for my PhD in 2020, I was struggling with isolation. My friend suggested learning how to cycle with SCOREscotland.

Despite the hour’s bus ride, I went twice a week because I was so excited to learn. I quickly gained more confidence and started attending group rides almost every Saturday.

Now I love it because it’s the only time I can relax and forget about my PhD. I just focus on pedalling and enjoy discovering new parts of Edinburgh. My bike feels like a friend.



Benefits of walking

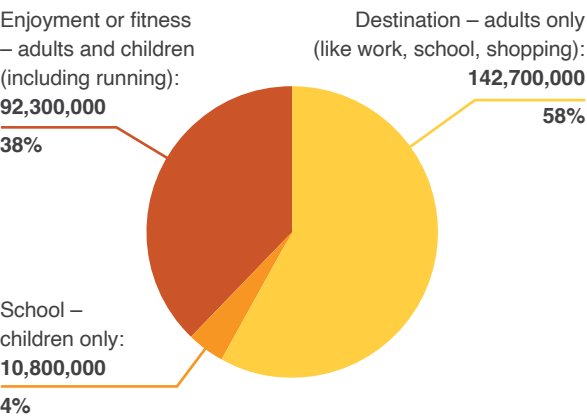
Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

Edinburgh residents walk or wheel 28 times around the world every day

There has been an increase in trips to a destination since 2021. However, walking and wheeling levels decreased for enjoyment or fitness trips.

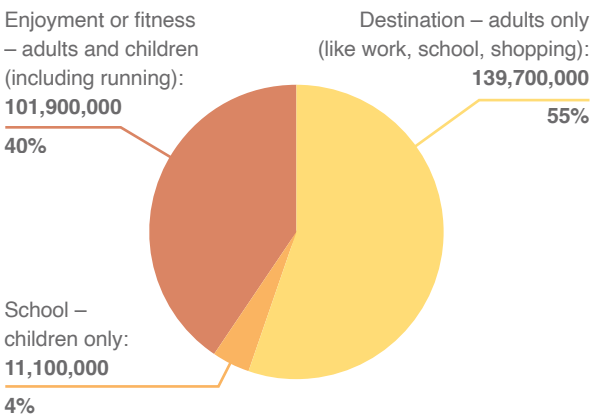
Annual walking and wheeling trips by purposeⁱ

2023:
245.9 million trips



This adds up to
258.8 million miles
= **710,000 miles** a day

2021:
252.7 million trips



This adds up to
268.1 million miles
= **730,000 miles** a day

Walking and wheeling benefits residents and the local economy

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model to understand the costs and benefits of driving and walking. For example travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

46p is savedⁱⁱ
for each mile walked or wheeled
instead of driven in Edinburgh

Over a year this adds up to
£47.6 million
from adults with a car in their household
walking or wheeling to work, school
and other destinations.

£5.2
million
in 2021

The total annual economic benefit from all
trips walked and wheeled in Edinburgh is
£180.8 millionⁱⁱⁱ

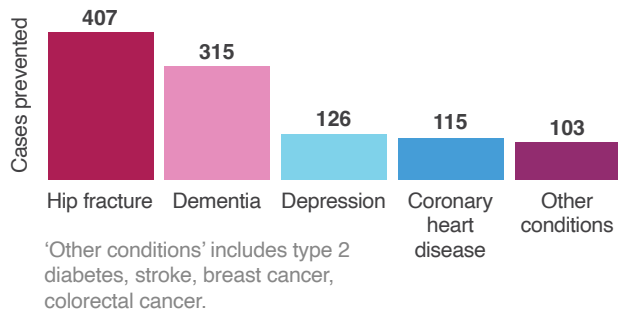
£142
million
in 2021

i. Trips for enjoyment or fitness include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). School trips are shown separately for children only. ii. Benefits have increased significantly, mainly because of increased costs of driving and greater traffic congestion. iii. This includes trips walked or wheeled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car.

Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

1,048
in 2021

Walking in Edinburgh prevents 1,067 serious long-term health conditions each year



Saving the NHS in Edinburgh

£6.8
million
in 2021

£13.4 million per year

230,000
in 2021



equivalent to the cost of

330,000 GP appointments

Based on applying Edinburgh data to Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Edinburgh the physical activity benefits of walking

prevent 347 early deaths annually

316
in 2021

which is valued at

£1.26 billion^{iv}

£1.04
billion
in 2021

Please note wheelchair or mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

People walking and wheeling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

62,000 kg of NO_x
and

68,000 kg
in 2021

9,000 kg of particulates
(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

9,500 kg
in 2021

58% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area

56%
in 2021



Walking and wheeling in Edinburgh helps mitigate our climate crisis

28,000
tonnes
in 2021

28,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by walking or wheeling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



36,000
people
in 2021

37,000 people taking flights

from Edinburgh to New York

In 2021, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **26%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite a reduction in emissions associated with the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, transport rebounded in 2021 and remains the largest source of emissions in Scotland.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2021

Walking and wheeling keeps Edinburgh moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^v This helps to keep Edinburgh moving for all road users.

130,000
in 2021

130,000 return walking and wheeling trips

are made daily in Edinburgh by people that could have used a car.

v. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

398 miles

equivalent to the distance from Edinburgh to Blackpool and back

385 miles in 2021



iv. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of walking by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of walking.



Benefits of cycling

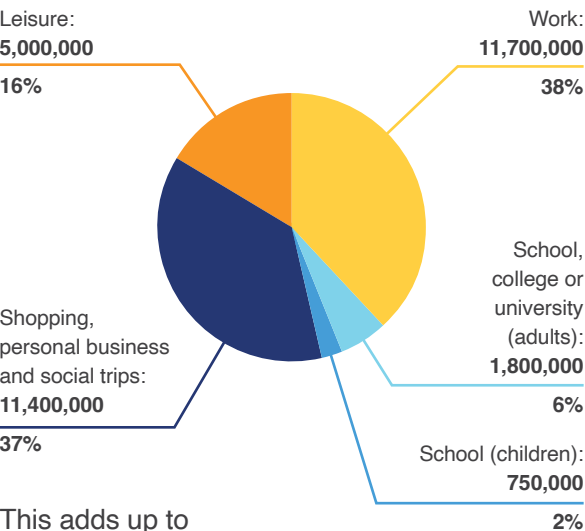
Why everyone gains when more people cycle

Edinburgh residents cycle 9 times around the world every day

There has been an increase in commuter trips since 2021 as more people return to the workplace. Cycling levels also increased for shopping, personal business and social trips.

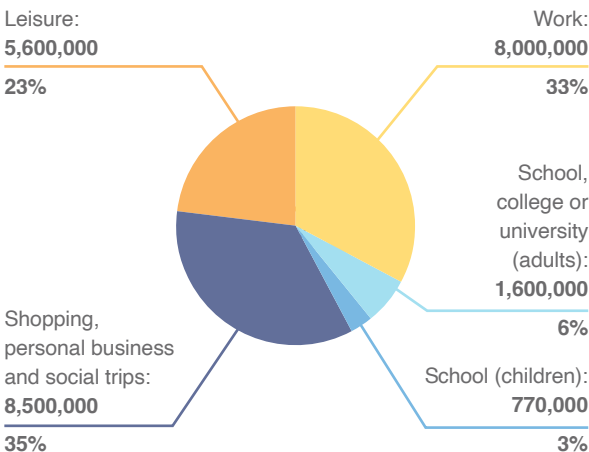
Annual cycling trips by purpose in Edinburghⁱ

2023:
30.7 million trips



This adds up to
83.3 million miles
= 230,000 miles a day

2021:
24.4 million trips



This adds up to
72.9 million miles
= 200,000 miles a day

Cycling benefits residents and the local economy

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model to understand the costs and benefits of driving and cycling. For example travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

£1.40 is saved
for each mile cycled instead
of driven in Edinburgh.

Over a year this adds up to
£72.6 million
from adults with a car in their household
cycling to work, school and other destinations.

£34
million
in 2021

The total annual economic benefit from all trips
cycled in Edinburgh is
£81.8 millionⁱⁱ

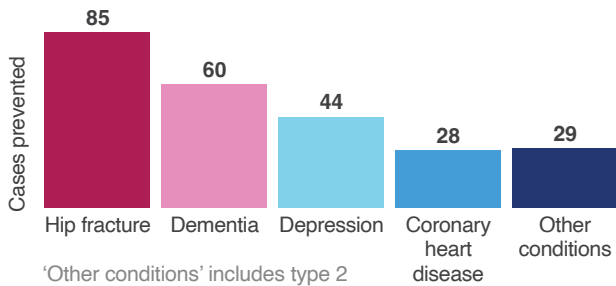
£44.2
million
in 2021

i. Leisure trips include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). Education trips are shown separately for adults and children. All other trips are just adults.
ii. This includes trips cycled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car.

Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

204
in 2021

Cycling in Edinburgh prevents 247 serious long-term health conditions each year



Saving the NHS in Edinburgh

£1.4
million
in 2021

£3.3 million per year

46,000
in 2021



equivalent to the cost of

81,000 GP appointments

Based on applying Edinburgh data to Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Edinburgh the physical activity benefits of cycling

prevent 37 early deaths annually

28
in 2021

which is valued at

£133 millionⁱⁱⁱ

£92.4
million
in 2021

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

27,000 kg of NO_x
and

20,000 kg
in 2021

4,000 kg of particulates
(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

2,800 kg
in 2021

58% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area

56%
in 2021



Cycling in Edinburgh helps mitigate our climate crisis

9,900
tonnes
in 2021

14,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



13,000
people
in 2021

19,000 people taking flights

from Edinburgh to New York

In 2021, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **26%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite a reduction in emissions associated with the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, transport rebounded in 2021 and remains the largest source of emissions in Scotland.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2021

Cycling keeps Edinburgh moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^{iv} This helps to keep Edinburgh moving for all road users.

16,000
in 2021

26,000 return cycling trips

are made daily in Edinburgh by people that could have used a car.

iv. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

78 miles

equivalent to the distance from Edinburgh to Dumfries

49 miles in 2021



iii. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of cycling by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of cycling.



Walking solutions

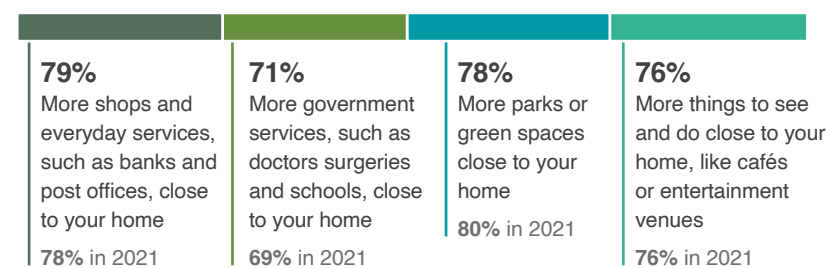
What would help make walking and wheeling easier?

Residents want more services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Ideally, walking or wheeling should be the most attractive option for short journeys. An area can support this by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live. The environment should be safe, comfortable and welcoming.

20-minute neighbourhoods are places where you can walk from your home to many of the things you need on a regular basis. Based on a 20-minute return journey this is around 480 metres each way for the majority of people.ⁱ

What percentage of residents would find more local amenities and services useful to help them walk or wheel more?



72%

of Edinburgh households are in neighbourhoods of more than 40 homes per hectare. These are or can become 20-minute neighbourhoods.

72% in 2021

These higher-density neighbourhoods with more people can sustain local businesses and public transport routes.ⁱⁱ

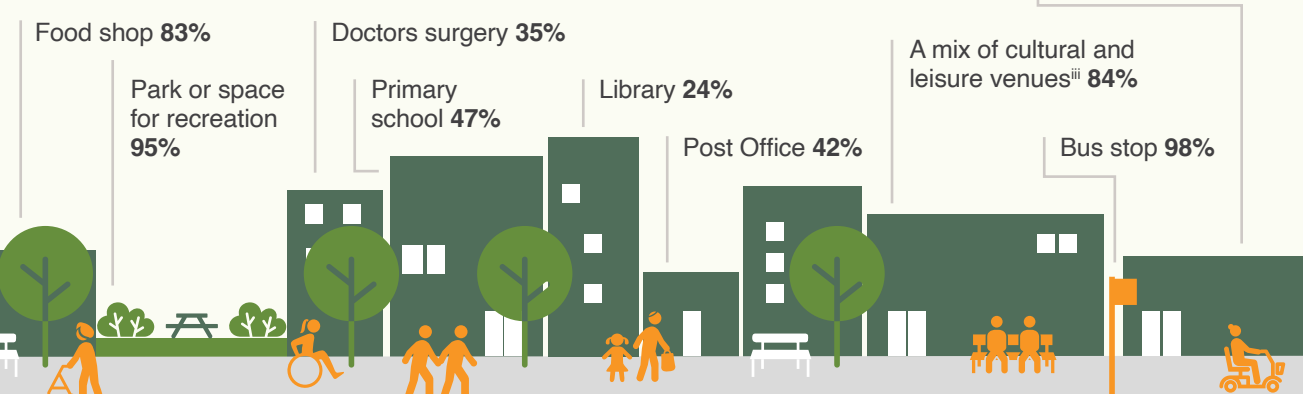
69%

agree they can easily get to many places they need to visit without having to drive

69% in 2021

Proportion of households within a 400m radius of the following amenities

This is modelled as a straight-line distance, as opposed to the actual walking distance based on street layout which is likely to be longer (approximately equivalent to 480m).

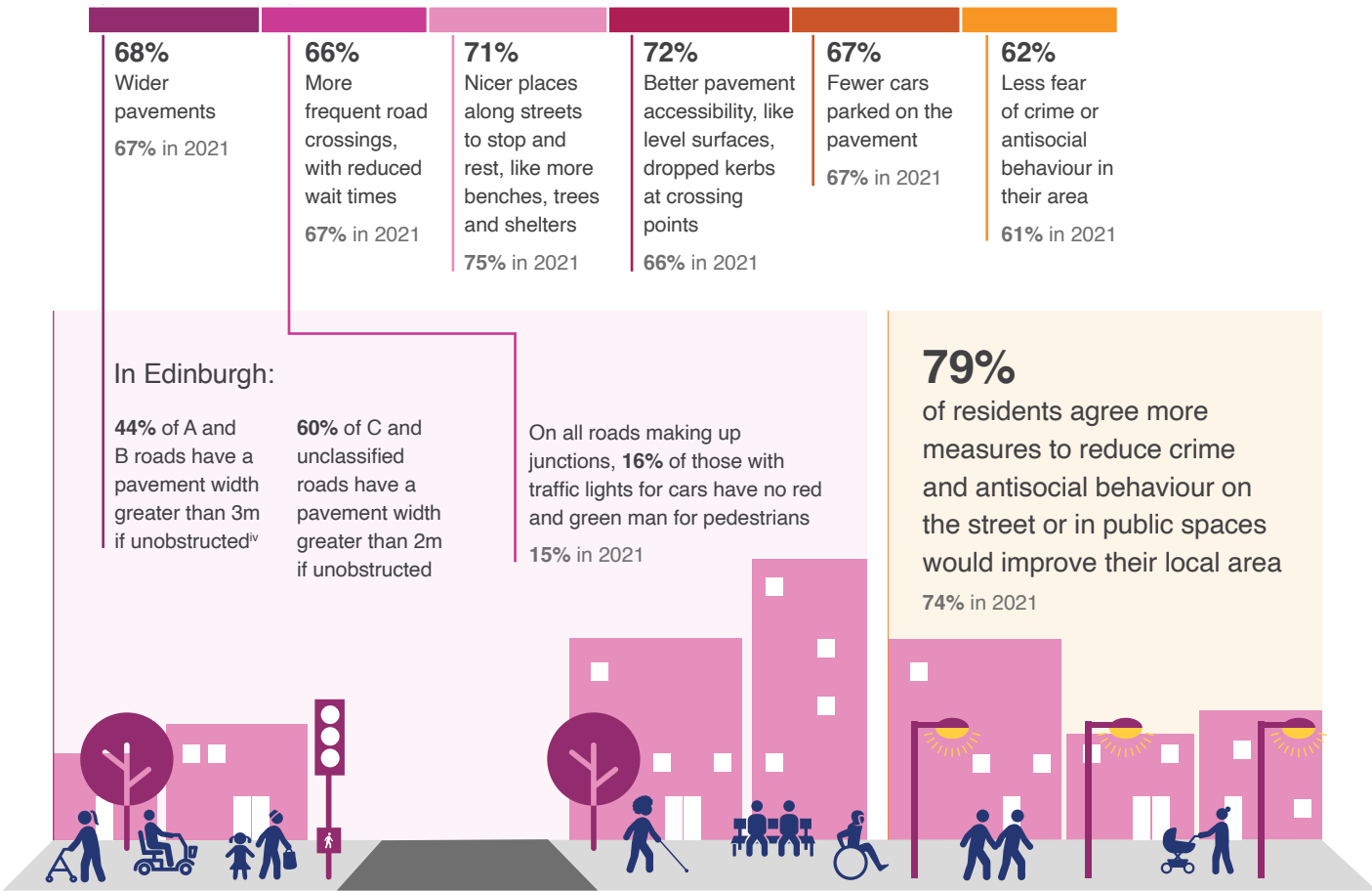


i. Asher et al, 2012. Most older pedestrians are unable to cross the road in time: a cross-sectional study. Age and Ageing.
ii. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning.
iii. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, like cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums.

Residents want better streets

There are many ways to make our streets and neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and comfortable for everyone to walk or wheel in.

What percentage of residents think that these changes would help them walk or wheel more?



Annie, walking advocate



I can't drive, so walking is my number one way to travel flexibly. Walking allows me to get out into the fresh air and into nature, where there isn't any traffic.

I can see parts of the city I wouldn't otherwise reach, and it makes me feel more connected to my community.

I'm visually impaired, so walking is my easiest form of exercise. It's also cost-free. I think for a lot of people with disabilities, walking is something most people can still do. That's why it's so important that walking is made accessible for everyone.

I find navigating spaces shared with cyclists difficult. I feel much safer walking when there is separate dedicated space for cyclists, like on York Place.

iv. OS source measurement now excludes grass verges, so is more accurate than in the 2021 report. A and B roads are main roads. C roads and unclassified roads are more minor roads and often residential streets.



Cycling solutions

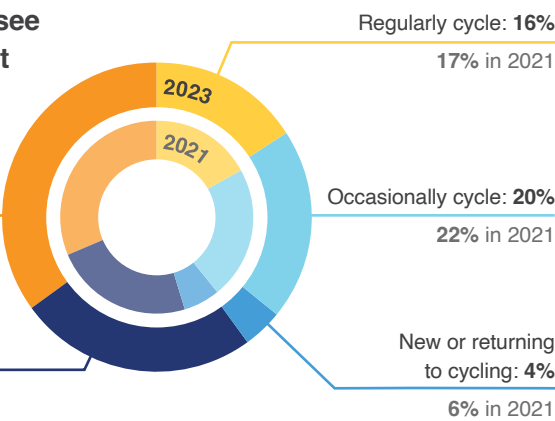
What would make cycling better?

Many Edinburgh residents want to cycle

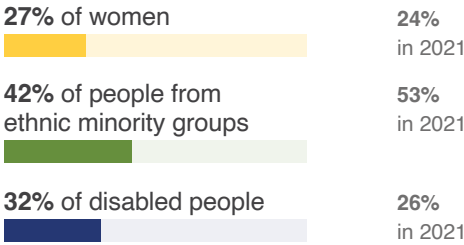
How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?

Do not cycle and do not want to: **35%**
31% in 2021

Do not cycle but would like to: **25%**
23% in 2021

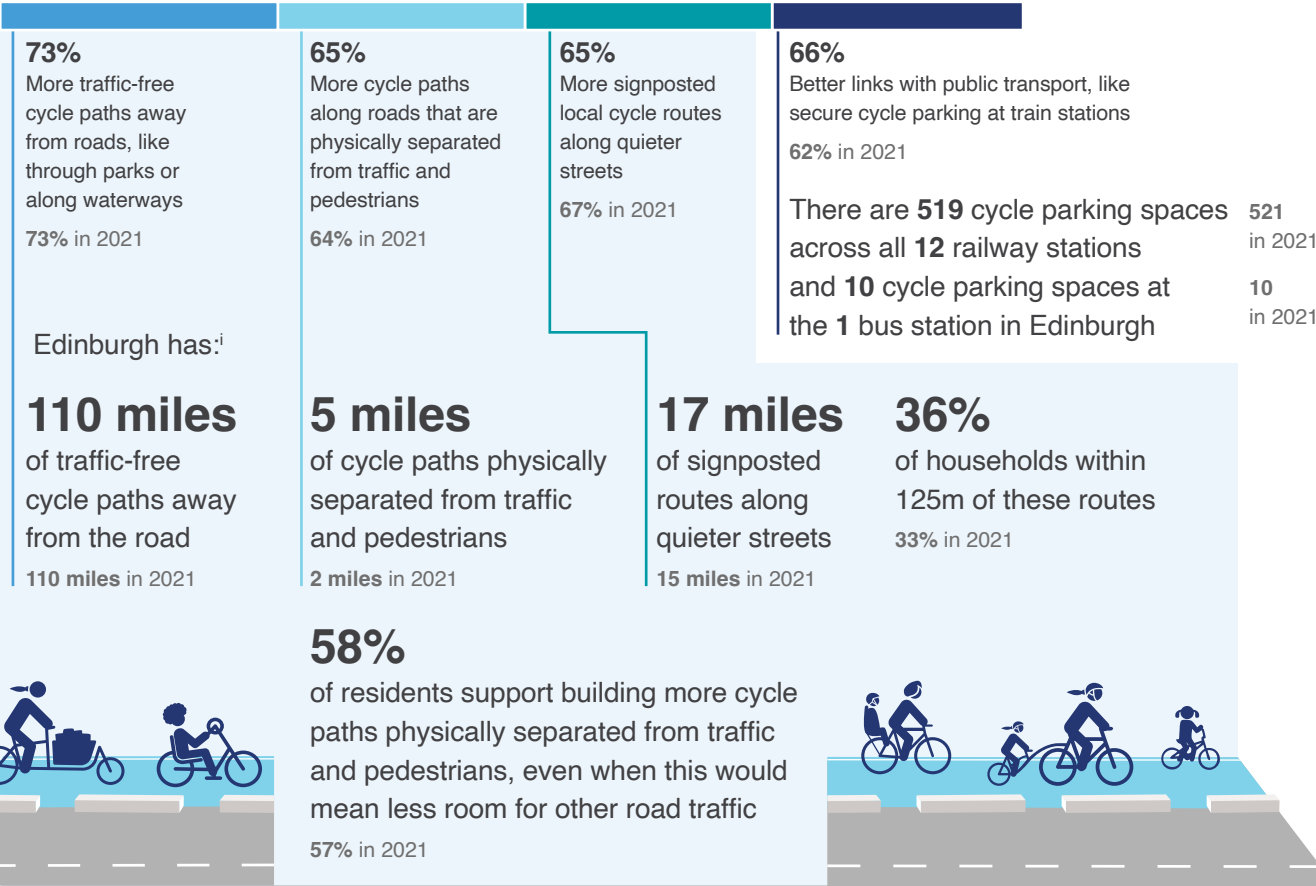


What proportion of residents said they ‘do not cycle but would like to’?



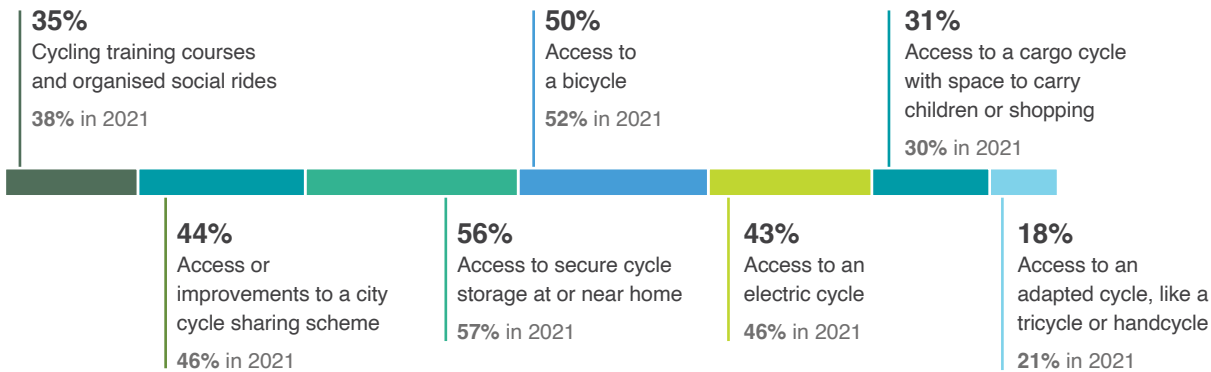
Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

What percentage of residents would be helped to cycle more by better facilities?



Residents want more support to cycle

What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them cycle more?



Public cycle parking

There is a public cycle parking space for every 51 people who cycle in Edinburgh.

54 in 2021



Reported cycle thefts

There were 1,015 reported cycle thefts in Edinburgh in 2022/23.

1,226 in 2021/2022

For every 251 people who own an adult cycle in Edinburgh, there was 1 reported cycle theft in the past year.

Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

57% of residents 58% in 2021

44% of socio-economic group DE 52% in 2021

67% of socio-economic group AB 63% in 2021

58% of residents support financial discounts for people on low incomes or not in employment to help them buy a cycle

56% of households are within 800m of a cycle shopⁱⁱ



Pete, adapted cycle user

When my wife was diagnosed with COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), we were looking for a way to still enjoy the outdoors together. In our local park, we discovered adapted bikes thanks to the Thistle Foundation, and we eventually got our own electric rickshaw about 4 years ago.

The rickshaw enables us to move around the city and visit friends whilst getting some fresh air and exercise. However, occasional obstacles on cycle paths and poor road surfaces sometimes make our journeys difficult.

The rickshaw is 1.1m wide which means we often have to deviate from the cycle paths because of bollards in the way. The lack of dropped kerbs is also a daily problem. Accessible pavements and better connectivity between cycle routes would make our experience even better.



ii. Credit to the Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) for their assistance with cycle shop locations and services offered.

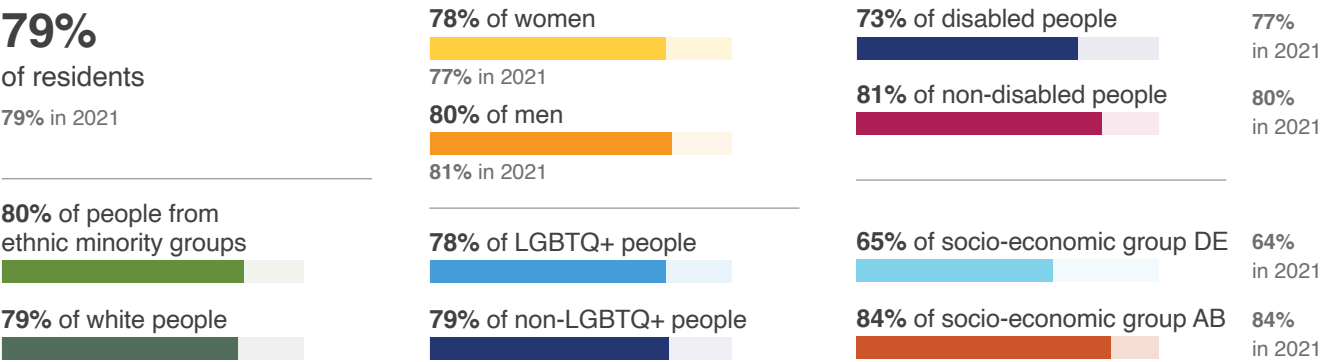


Neighbourhood solutions

What would help make neighbourhoods better?

All residents should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

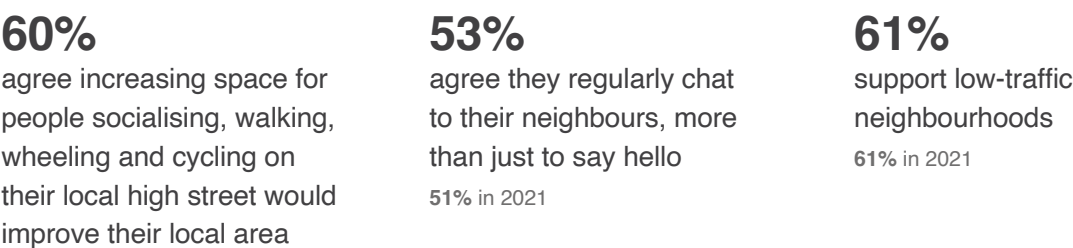
Proportion of residents that feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood



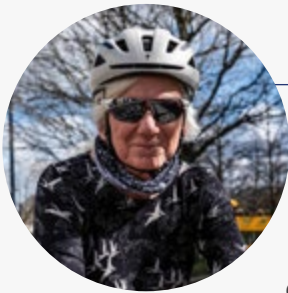
The dominance of motor vehicles can discourage walking, wheeling and cycling



Residents want local streets to be better spaces for people to spend time in



i. Based on analysis by CycleStreets www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org. Unclassified roads are all public roads that are neither motorways, A, B nor C roads. ii. Excludes motorways.



Eve, Cargo Bike Movement volunteer



I returned to cycling during lockdown. In 2021 I joined the Pedal on COP26 ride, and from there I got involved with the cycle campaigns Critical Mass and the InfraSisters. These groups organise mass rides to celebrate cycling, but they also advocate for improved safety.

The best thing has been getting involved with Cargo Bike Movement. Every night we carry out food rescue missions by e-cargo bike, scooping up surplus food from supermarkets to be distributed to people who need it.

I think cargo bikes can shift the way that people view cycling. They can carry people and goods around the city more quickly and cheaply than cars and vans, and with far less environmental cost. Edinburgh could be a real pace setter here, but there is a desperate need for more segregated cycle lanes.

Neighbourhoods must be designed with children in mind

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive. Increasing independence, providing space to play and socialise, and improving the journey to school are all important.

If we design neighbourhoods with children in mind they will then work better for everyone else too.

10 years old

average age when people living with children would let them walk, wheel or cycle independently in their neighbourhood.

11 years old in 2021

80% of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school.ⁱⁱⁱ

55% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play

61% in 2021

68% of households are within 400m of a children's playground

Among Edinburgh residents:

48% agree

47% agreed in 2021

26% disagree

25% disagreed in 2021

closing streets outside local schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

These are known as 'School Streets'.

12 schools

in Edinburgh have School Streets schemes^{iv}

12 schemes in 2021



iii. Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015. iv. Figure given is correct as of 31 May 2023.



Developing Edinburgh

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

Since 2021, we've made great strides in delivering active travel infrastructure in the city.

We completed the City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL), a high quality cycle link from Roseburn in the west, through the city centre, connecting to Leith in the east. CCWEL has implemented nine continuous footways along the route, making pedestrian priority measures more prominent across the city.

We are trialling our first two new liveable neighbourhoods schemes, in Corstorphine and Leith. These are aimed at making it more comfortable for walking, wheeling or cycling and spending time in local streets and outdoor spaces.

Our 20-Minute Neighbourhoods Strategy sets out the Council's approach to delivering healthier, greener and thriving neighbourhoods, where everyone can meet most of their daily needs within a short walk, wheel or cycle from their home. A 20-minute neighbourhoods team has been formed and is progressing pilot town centre improvement projects in Craigmillar and Niddrie, Gorgie Dalry, and Portobello. We are embedding the same thinking in the planning process to help ensure new developments have the same benefits.

To deliver our City Mobility Plan we have identified a requirement for £1.2bn investment in an ambitious active travel programme of work. We've committed to making our streets more accessible for walking and wheeling – removing street clutter, narrowing junction radii on side streets, adding more dropped kerbs, levelling footways and improving access to public transport. To support this we are setting up an Accessibility Commission with the core aim of supporting the Council in meeting Transport for All's Equal Pavements Pledge.

We are actively removing chicanes and other barriers to accessibility, as well as installing hundreds of dropped kerbs where they are currently absent, not up to standard and as part of new developments.

“““

We aim for everyone in the city to be between 250-400m of a high quality cycle route, including expanding our cycle network on our main roads.



Those with buggies, larger bikes and wheelchairs have repeatedly told us that these measures allow them to make journeys they weren't able to make before. We have approximately 17,000 crossing points in the city that are inadequate, demonstrating the breadth of work still required.

We aim for everyone in the city to be between 250-400m of a high quality cycle route, including expanding our cycle network on our main roads.

Recognising that delivery of active travel infrastructure has been delayed due to constraints relating to the Covid-19 pandemic and resourcing issues, we're looking at ways to innovatively and efficiently improve our active travel network.

Where opportunity allows, we've been incorporating active travel interventions into road resurfacing projects to make relatively quick and cheap improvements to streets. For example, on Holyrood Road we were able to introduce approx. 300m of segregated cycling using surface mounted materials. This allowed us to deliver significantly quicker and with less disruption compared with traditional construction methods.

After delay during the Covid-19 pandemic, our residential cycle hangar rollout ramped up in 2023, with at least one hangar going in every day in May. In total, 180 hangars have been installed to date, with a further 200 planned. The programme is significantly oversubscribed and we are looking forward to rolling out more cycle hangars to meet demand in the coming years.

In the last 18 months we've been building momentum for change. We look forward to tracking progress towards creating a more connected, accessible and pleasant city via the Index results.





Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

In the coming years, under our City Mobility Plan, we're delivering projects to improve transport in the city, many of which will make it easier to walk, wheel and cycle. Our Low Emission Zone comes into force in summer 2024, we're rolling out controlled parking zones across the city, and we're improving major junctions to make them safer for those walking, wheeling and cycling. On top of these, locally we'll be trialling a mobility hub model in Granton and Portobello to support greener transport, including deliveries. This work across departments aims to improve air quality, reduce the need to drive, and promote the use of alternative transport modes.

With Our Future Streets, a circulation plan for Edinburgh, we will provide new principles and process for decision-making where street space is limited – to inform a truly integrated, sustainable transport network in Edinburgh. As we work towards our Net Zero targets, we need to ensure greener transport options are considered, aiming to speed up delivery and make projects more impactful.

In the next few years, we will continue delivering our investment programme with some key projects due to complete construction.

Roseburn to Union Canal is in the final stages of construction and, once complete, our cycle network will connect routes in the west of the city onwards to the Meadows and the Southside, as well as the southwest of the city. The project will also increase open and green space for residents around Fountainbridge and Gorgie Dalry.

We will begin construction on the West Edinburgh Link this year which will provide a much needed north-south cycle link from South Gyle, through Sighthill and Wester Hailes, onwards to Colinton. It will provide more opportunity for commuting by greener travel modes and improved connections for more deprived areas of the city.

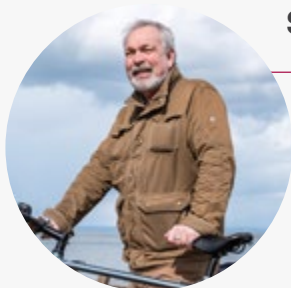
“““

As we work towards our Net Zero targets, we need to ensure greener transport options are considered.

The North Edinburgh Active Travel (NEAT) Connections project is due to complete construction in the next few years. This will include removing the dual carriageway at Pennywell Road, creating a better space for living in and travelling through. The project connects to the Granton Waterfront Development in the north and the North Edinburgh Path Network in the south. NEAT Connections aims to improve access to green and blue spaces, and tackle health inequalities, in an area of deprivation in the city.

Looking further ahead, we will continue to deliver on the City Centre Transformation (CCT), with George Street First New Town and the Meadows to George Street projects both starting in the next few years. We will also keep progressing designs for other projects within CCT, like Lothian Road.

We will continue to make streets safer for walking, wheeling and cycling by expanding our 20mph network and look to reduce speeds on 40+ mph roads, as well as rural roads.



Steven, Bikes for Refugees founder



Bikes for Refugees (Scotland) was inspired by a young New Scot refugee from Syria whom I met here in Edinburgh over six years ago. A local bike shop in Leith gifted him a second-hand bike, and I saw how such a simple thing helped support his resettlement in his new local community.

Refugees and asylum seekers are often isolated and socio-economically disadvantaged. Whilst a day ticket for the bus is almost your entire daily living allowance as an asylum seeker, a bike is cost-free and sustainable.

Having that freedom of movement allows New Scots to connect with communities, access services and attend important appointments. It also reduces the risk of isolation and loneliness, as well as benefitting physical and mental health.

Most of our bikes are donated. They are refurbished by volunteers and then gifted with a New Scots Welcome Pack that includes a helmet, lock, lights, and information on free local resources and activities. We've now supported over 2,000 New Scots with access to free bikes and many of our volunteers are refugees and asylum seekers themselves.

Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from March to June 2023 by independent social research organisation NatCen.

The survey is representative of all Edinburgh residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

2021 survey data was collected from June to August 2021, also by NatCen, following the same methodology.

All other data is sourced from our city partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Sustrans.

Trip estimates use a model developed by Sustrans. When comparing to other travel surveys, some variation may exist in the proportion of journeys travelled by journey purpose.

Rounding has been used throughout the report. In many cases we have rounded to the nearest whole number. Rounding is avoided where this may cause confusion, for example with modelled estimates shown in the summary and benefits sections.

More information and a detailed methodology are available at www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index

Sustrans makes it easier for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

We work for and with communities, helping them come to life by walking, wheeling and cycling to create healthier places and happier lives for everyone.

Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans is a registered charity in the UK No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland)

© Sustrans March 2024

© Photos: City of Edinburgh Council (page 2 headshot), Michael Kelly (page 21, first photo). All other photos: Brian Sweeney.

Thanks to Open Route Service for their support with their isochrone plugin in QGIS.



Printed with 100% renewable energy using an alcohol-free process and vegetable-based inks

Walking and Cycling Index Edinburgh has been funded by Transport Scotland. The project is co-ordinated by Sustrans and has been supported by the City of Edinburgh Council.



• EDINBURGH •
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL




sustrans
JOIN THE MOVEMENT