

Cork Metropolitan Area

Walking and Cycling Index 2023

Published March 2024





Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in Cork Metropolitan Area



**Cllr. Kieran McCarthy,
Cork City Council:**

As Lord Mayor of Cork, I am delighted to welcome the first Cork Metropolitan Area Walking and Cycling Index. It covers a broad spectrum of opinions, data and evidence and gives us a sense of what type of investment and infrastructure our residents want to help create a vibrant Metropolitan Area.

Cork City Council has been committed through successive Cork City Development Plans to walking and cycling improvements with support from the National Transport Authority. Examples include the Mary Elmes Bridge, Passage West Greenway and MacCurtain Street public realm improvements all of which are great additions to our city.

It's encouraging to see that over half of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week, with almost one in five cycling at least once a week.

We have several exciting projects coming to fruition, such as the Marina Promenade and the Pathfinder active travel route from Kent Station to meet the greenway at Dunkettle and on to Midelton.

It is enlightening to know that those choosing to walk and cycle instead of drive, are

creating over €400m/PA economic benefit to the Metropolitan Area, which is saving the equivalent of 230,000 flights from Cork to Heathrow in greenhouse gas emissions.

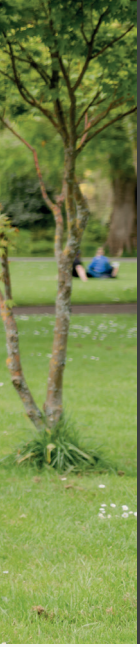
We will continue in our efforts to make Cork a healthy, sustainable, attractive place for those who live in, work in and visit the area.

**Cllr. Frank O'Flynn,
Mayor of the County
of Cork:**



As Mayor of the County of Cork, I warmly welcome the Walking and Cycling Index which provides a clear picture of the walking, wheeling, and cycling opportunities for our residents and strengthens the case for delivering on our ambitious targets for active travel. It is encouraging to know that our residents are choosing to walk and cycle, demonstrating their commitment to our continued investment in active travel infrastructure, which we deliver with support from the National Transport Authority. Examples include the Dunkettle to Carrigtwohill Greenway and our ambitious plans for Middleton and Carrigaline.

We look forward to using the Index to implement our plans and create a happier, healthier Cork which will benefit our residents, visitors, communities and businesses.



Contents

4	Headlines	14	Walking solutions
6	Walking in the Cork Metropolitan Area	16	Cycling solutions
8	Cycling in the Cork Metropolitan Area	18	Neighbourhood solutions
10	Benefits of walking	20	Developing the Cork Metropolitan Area
12	Benefits of cycling	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 first report from the Cork Metropolitan Area produced in partnership with the National Transport Authority of Ireland. The data in this report comes from 2023 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,099 residents aged 16 or above in the Cork Metropolitan Area. The survey was conducted from May to July 2023. Independent market research company Behaviour & Attitudes conducted the survey, which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Our thanks to the people of the Cork Metropolitan Area 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, 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

Cork Metropolitan Area

Populationⁱ

327,649

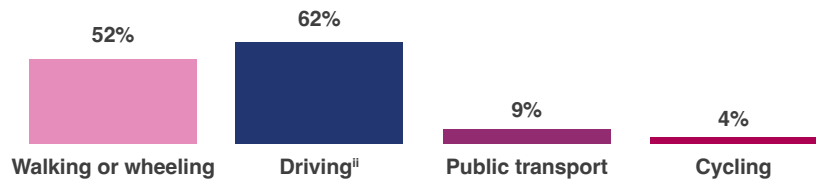
Survey area



Frequency of different modes of travel

More than half of residents walk or wheel on a regular basis in the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in the Cork Metropolitan Area



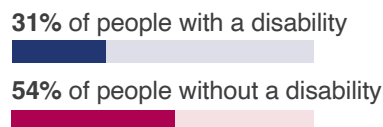
52%
of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

18%
of residents cycle at least once a week

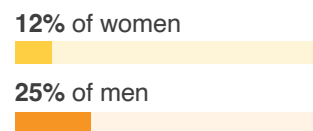
Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

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

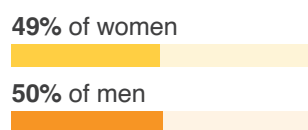


Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

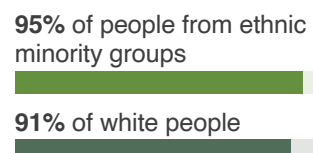
Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety is good



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. CSO Census 2022. This is the most recent available for the Cork Metropolitan Area.

ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or 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 the Cork Metropolitan Area take up to **69,000** cars off the road.^{iv} Each year in the Cork Metropolitan Area these three modes combined:



Prevent

729

serious long-term health conditions



Create

€401.6 million

in economic benefit for individuals and the Cork Metropolitan Area



Save

18,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions

Residents want to walk, wheel, cycle and take public transport more

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

Walk or wheel

52% more

3% less

Cycle

37% more

1% less

Take public transport

40% more

5% less

Drive

21% more

16% 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:

71% on walking and wheeling

63% on cycling

70% on public transport

40% on driving

Increased funding would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

Among Cork Metropolitan Area residents:

69% support

18% oppose

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

86% support

3% oppose

the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods^v

82% support

6% oppose

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

80% agree

10% disagree

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

81% support

8% oppose

the ban on vehicles parking on the footpath

64% support

18% 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 the Cork Metropolitan Area

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

Walking and wheeling participation

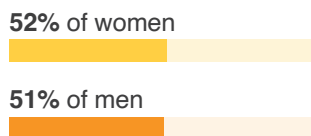
Walking and wheeling are often overlooked in transport. This is despite being an efficient use of space, good for our health and having no environmental impact.

89%
of all residents walk or wheel

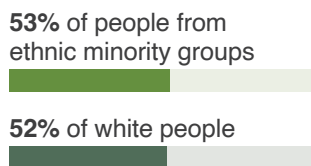
52%
of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

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

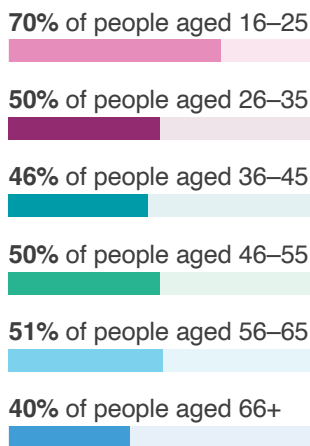
Genderⁱ



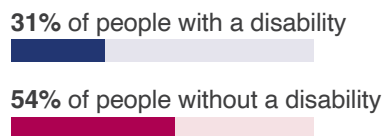
Ethnicity



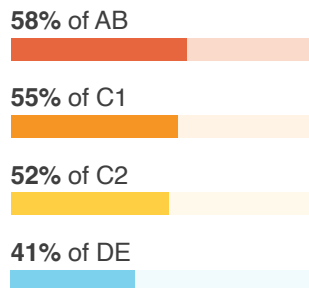
Age



Disability



Socio-economic groupⁱⁱ



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

72%

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

60%

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

76%

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

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

Gender

72% of women



72% of men



Ethnicity

79% of people from ethnic minority groups



71% of white people



Age

80% of people aged 16–25



69% of people aged 26–35



70% of people aged 36–45



71% of people aged 46–55



69% of people aged 56–65



72% of people aged 66+



Disability

71% of people with a disability



72% of people without a disability



Socio-economic group

76% of AB



73% of C1



72% of C2



66% of DE



Joanna Dukkupati, working mum



Growing up in Bombay, I didn't learn to drive because I didn't have to drive. Now, learning to drive is expensive and time-consuming. I use public transport heavily.

The health benefits of walking in Cork are massive but there are challenges. The weather is one and the lack of seating areas to rest is another.

I'd like to see sheltered seating areas, more regular bus routes, pedestrian lifts to go uphill, access to clean public toilets and trees.



Cycling in the Cork Metropolitan Area

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

Cycling participation

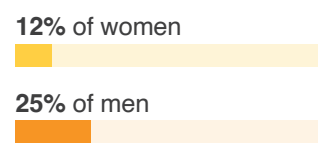
Cycling participation is not equal. Barriers to cycling can be far more pronounced for some people. Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.ⁱ

25%
of all residents cycle

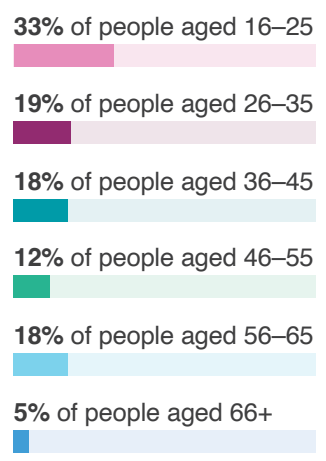
18%
of all residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

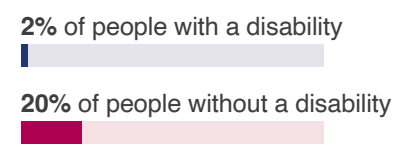
Gender



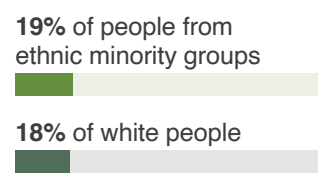
Age



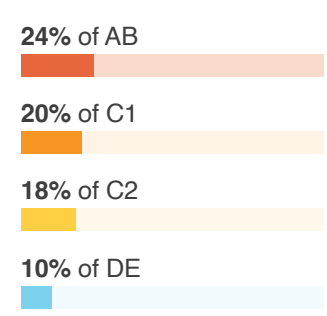
Disability



Ethnicity



Socio-economic group



i. See Bike Life reports 2019 (various cities).

Cycling safety and satisfaction

49%

of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good

43%

of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good

53%

of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle

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

Gender

49% of women



50% of men



Ethnicity

61% of people from ethnic minority groups



48% of white people



Age

60% of people aged 16–25



42% of people aged 26–35



51% of people aged 36–45



45% of people aged 46–55



49% of people aged 56–65



46% of people aged 66+



Disability

44% of people with a disability



49% of people without a disability



Socio-economic group

54% of AB



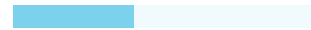
50% of C1



52% of C2



40% of DE



Fionn Rogan, Academic researcher



I cycle for shopping and recreation as well as commuting.

It's cost effective, restorative to my health (physical and mental) and treads lightly on the planet (environmentally speaking).

Cycling is also hugely enjoyable: seeing the world up close, encountering people and nature, and travelling with freedom from traffic congestion.

Cork needs to continue to expand its cycling network to ensure it's connected, better maintain existing infrastructure, and upgrade traffic lights to be cyclist (and pedestrian) friendly.



Benefits of walking

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

The large numbers of walking and wheeling trips in the Cork Metropolitan Area produce important health, economic and environmental benefits for everyone.

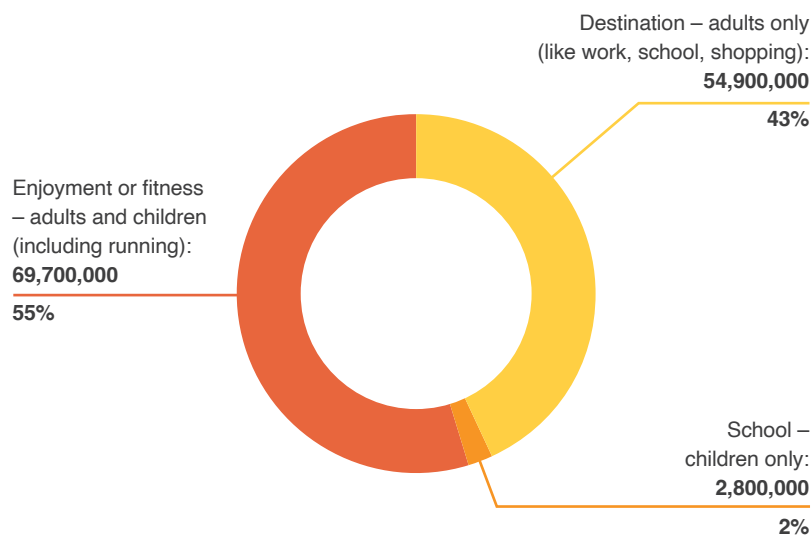
Cork Metropolitan Area residents walk or wheel 22 times around the world every day

127.4 million walking and wheeling trips were made in the Cork Metropolitan Area in the past year, which adds up to

316 million kilometres = 870,000 kilometres a day.

This equates to each resident spending **12 days** walking or wheeling continuously in the past year.

Annual walking and wheeling trips by purposeⁱ



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.

€0.93 is saved for each kilometre walked or wheeled instead of driven in the Cork Metropolitan Area.

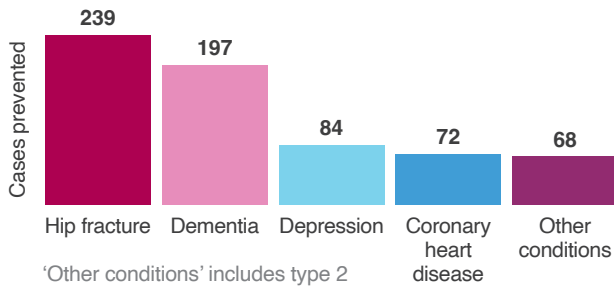
Over a year this adds up to **€88.2 million** from adults with a car in their household walking or wheeling to work, school and other destinations.

The total annual economic benefit from all trips walked and wheeled in the Cork Metropolitan Area is **€364.6 millionⁱⁱ**

i. Trips for enjoyment or fitness include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). School trips are shown separately for children only. ii. 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

Walking in the Cork Metropolitan Area prevents 660 serious long-term health conditions each year



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the HSE in the Cork Metropolitan Area **€9.6 million per year**

equivalent to the cost of **170,000 GP appointments**

Based on applying Cork Metropolitan Area data to the Sport England MOVES tool which calculates the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In the Cork Metropolitan Area the physical activity benefits of walking

prevent 133 early deaths annually

which is valued at

€1.03 billionⁱⁱⁱ

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:

42,000 kg of NO_x

and

5,200 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

90% of residents agree the

air is clean in their local area



Walking and wheeling in the Cork Metropolitan Area helps mitigate our climate crisis

16,000 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



200,000 people taking flights

from Cork to London Heathrow

In 2021 transport accounted for **18%** of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2021 transport emissions rose by **114%**.

Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland's Final Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2021.

Walking and wheeling keeps the Cork Metropolitan Area moving

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

65,000 return walking and wheeling trips

are made daily in the Cork Metropolitan Area 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

311 kilometres

equivalent to the distance from Cork City to Drogheda.



iii. 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

Cork Metropolitan Area residents cycle 3 times around the world every day

7 million cycling trips

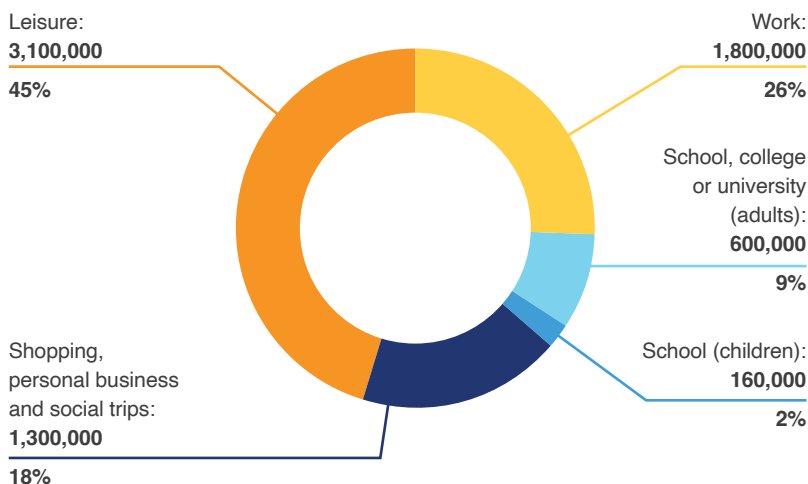
were made in the Cork Metropolitan Area in the past year

This adds up to

43.4 million kilometres

= 120,000 kilometres a day

Annual cycling trips by purpose in the Cork Metropolitan Areaⁱ



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 kilometre cycled instead of driven in the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Over a year this adds up to

€17.4 million

from adults with a car in their household cycling to work, school and other destinations.

The total annual economic benefit from all trips cycled in the Cork Metropolitan Area is

€37 millionⁱⁱ

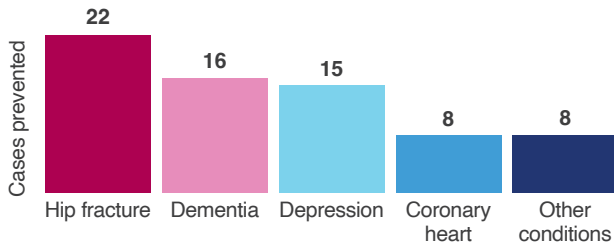
i. Leisure trips include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment).

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

Cycling in the Cork Metropolitan Area prevents 70 serious long-term health conditions each year



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the HSE in the Cork Metropolitan Area
€1.1 million per year



equivalent to the cost of
20,000 GP appointments

Based on applying Cork Metropolitan Area data to the Sport England MOVES tool which calculates the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In the Cork Metropolitan Area the physical activity benefits of cycling

prevent 6 early deaths annually

which is valued at

€47.5 millionⁱⁱⁱ

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

5,000 kg of NO_x

and

615 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

90% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



Cycling in the Cork Metropolitan Area helps mitigate our climate crisis

2,100 tonnes

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



27,000 people taking flights

from Cork to London Heathrow

In 2021 transport accounted for **18%** of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2021 transport emissions rose by **114%**.

Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland's Final Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2021.

Cycling keeps the Cork Metropolitan Area moving

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

4,500 return cycling trips

are made daily in the Cork Metropolitan Area 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

22 kilometres

equivalent to the distance from Cork GPO to Midleton.



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

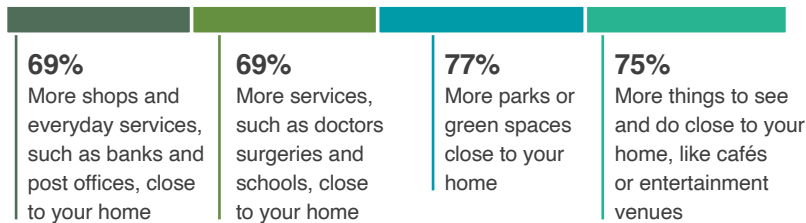
What would help make walking and wheeling easier?

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 (like shops, parks, schools) and back again within 20 minutes.

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



15%

of Cork Metropolitan Area households are in neighbourhoods of more than 40 homes per hectare.

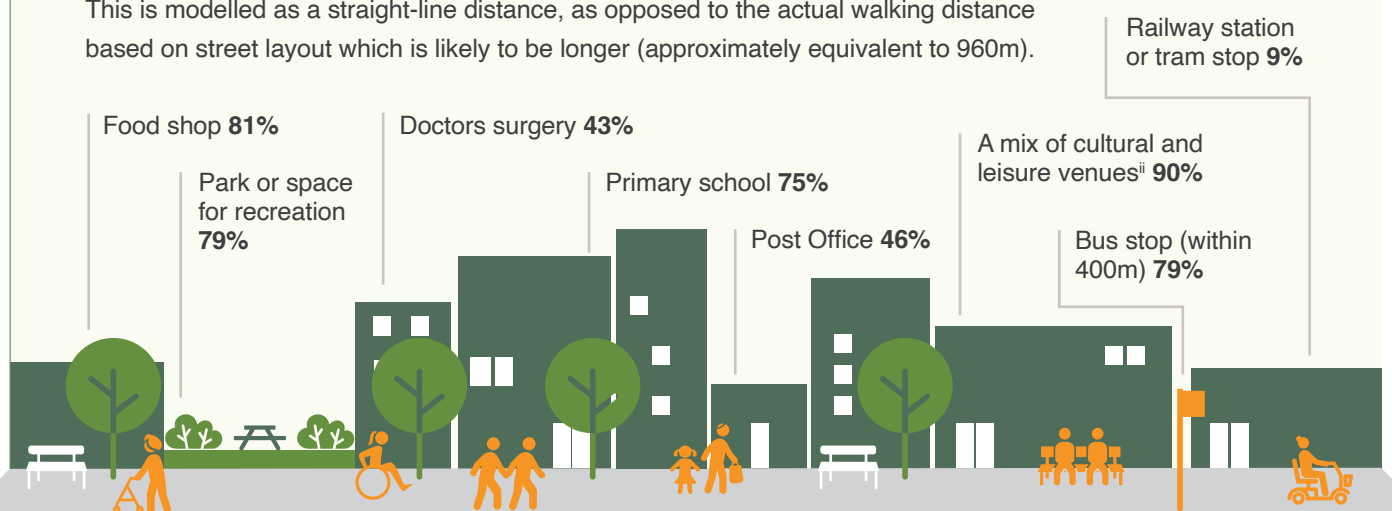
These higher-density neighbourhoods can sustain local businesses and public transport routes more easily. This helps to reduce car dependency.ⁱ

70%

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

Proportion of households within an 800m 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 960m).



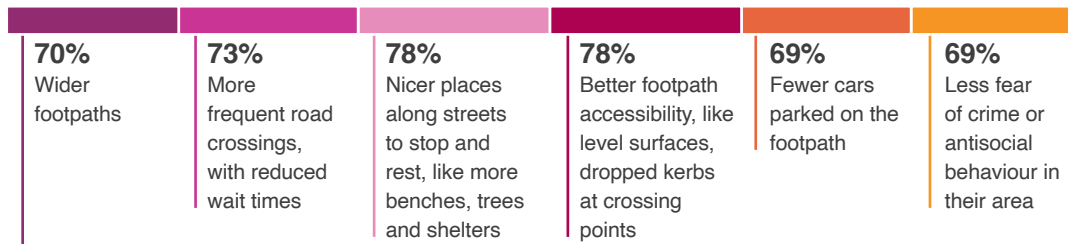
i. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning.

ii. 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?



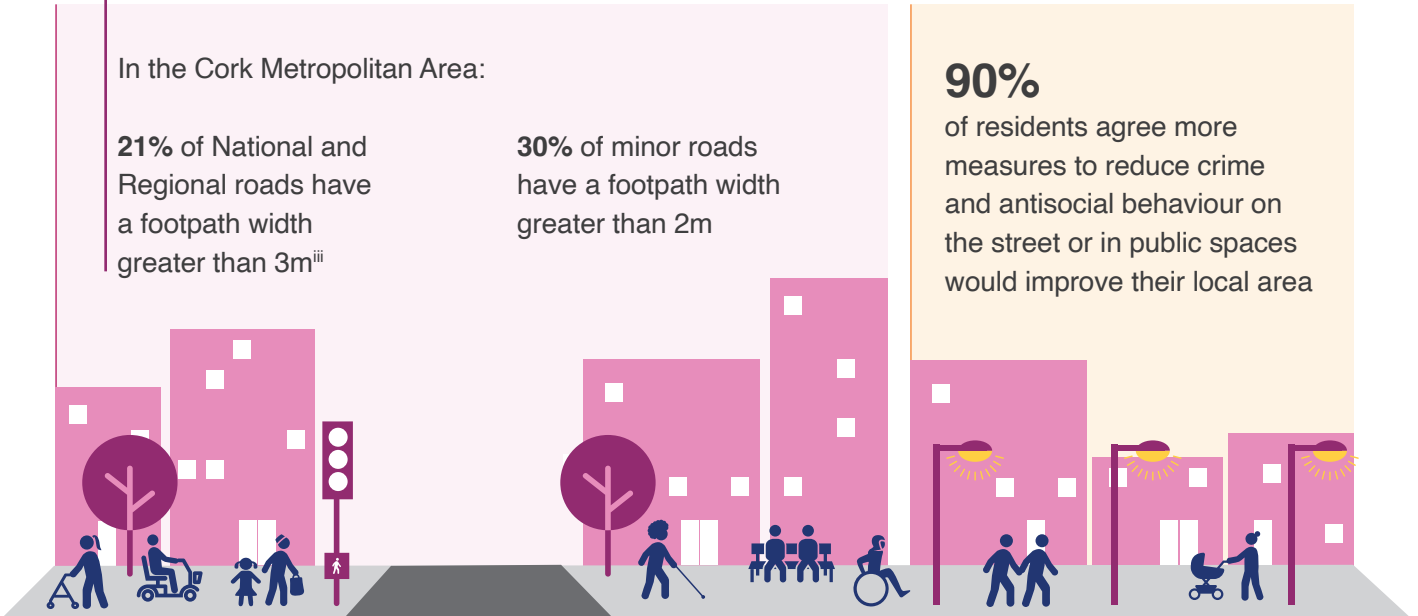
In the Cork Metropolitan Area:

21% of National and Regional roads have a footpath width greater than 3mⁱⁱⁱ

30% of minor roads have a footpath width greater than 2m

90%

of residents agree more measures to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour on the street or in public spaces would improve their local area



iii. National and Regional roads are main roads. Footpath widths were calculated using Tailte Éireann's (formerly OSi) Prime II data licenced under the National Mapping Agreement: CYAL50370872 © Tailte Éireann – Surveying. Footpath width does not account for obstructions, such as bus stops or litter bins.



Nicola Meacle, Community Development worker



My experience, as an electric wheelchair user, is generally good. Cork is an old city but many of the footpaths were widened a few years ago. There are still some which are very narrow, like near the University where my GP is.

Since lockdown, the streets are bustling with street furniture, which is great to see, but they need to leave room for pedestrians.

Sometimes a temporary extension has been added to widen the path but it's not always level. If I'm on my own, it's too awkward an angle for me to navigate.

I'd like wheelchairs to be able to go into cycle lanes if a footpath is not dished at both ends, and, most of all, I'd like an end to cars parking on footpaths, it's so frustrating.

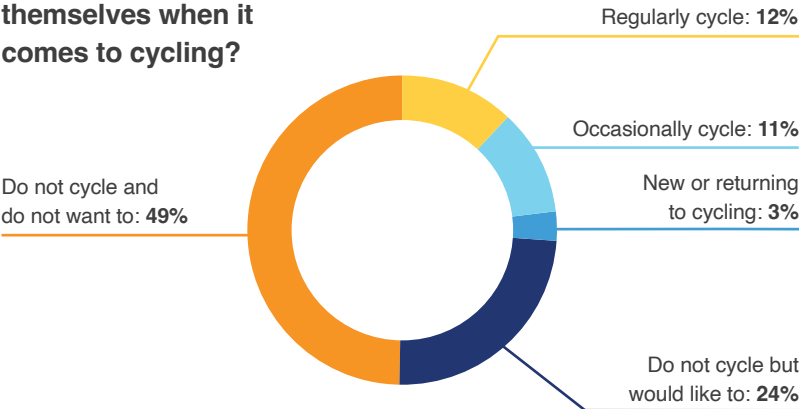


Cycling solutions

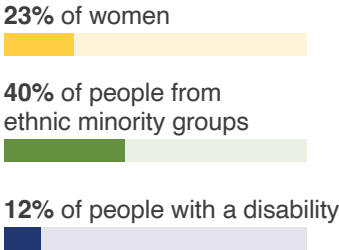
What would make cycling better?

Many Cork Metropolitan Area residents want to cycle

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?



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?

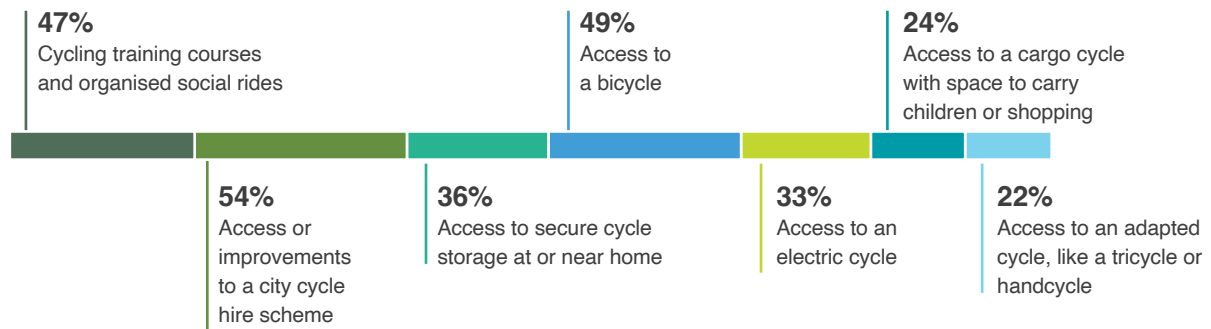


69% of residents support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic



Residents want more support to cycle

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



Cork Metropolitan Area cycle hire schemeⁱ

662

hire cycles

34

cycle hire stations

119,216

annual trips

Reported cycle thefts

There were **726** reported cycle thefts in the Cork Metropolitan Area in 2022/23.

874 in 2021/22

For every **162** people who own an adult cycle in the Cork Metropolitan Area, there was **1** reported cycle theft in the past year.

Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

45% of residents

26% of socio-economic group DE

59% of socio-economic group AB

85%

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

26%

of households are within 800m of a cycle shopⁱⁱ



Arundhathi Krishnan, Maths professor



Cycling is a mixed bag in Cork City. For instance, most of my commute to Kent station is now largely on separated cycling infrastructure. However, there are some missing connections, which can seem particularly challenging when it is wet and dark, and when motorists are impatient.

There are other parts of the city that I would think twice about cycling to because of the lack of safe cycling lanes. Some parts of the city are a delight, like the Blackrock and Curraheen Greenways.

I learned to cycle only as an adult and have grown to love the sense of joy and freedom it gives me, along with the dose of free exercise.

Continuous cycling infrastructure in more parts of the city and more sensitive behaviour from motorists would greatly improve my cycling experience.

i. Data covers July 2022–June 2023.
ii. © OpenStreetMap contributors.



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

91%

of residents



91% of women



91% of men



95% of people from ethnic minority groups



91% of white people



90% of people with a disability



91% of people without a disability



85% of socio-economic group DE



94% of socio-economic group AB



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

68% of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

But residents would find fewer motor vehicles on their streets useful to:

62% Walk or wheel more



55% Cycle more



Low-use minor roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in the Cork Metropolitan Area 19% of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.ⁱ

77% agree that restricting through-traffic on local residential streets would make their area a better place.

Residents would find more streets with 30km/h speed limits useful to:

69% Walk or wheel more



58% Cycle more



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

80%

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

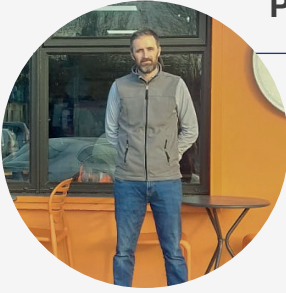
83%

agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello

82%

support low-traffic neighbourhoods

i. Based on analysis by CycleStreets www.lowtrafficeighbourhoods.org. Low-use minor roads are those classed as 'less significant minor roads' on OpenStreetMap.



I own a cafe along the Dunkettle to Carrigtwohill Cycleway. There has been an unbelievable transformation on what was a pretty dangerous stretch of road.

It's a fantastic amenity for locals, or people from other areas looking for a safe place to walk.

Previously we would have been nearly 100% reliant on car traffic. Since the path has been installed, we have seen a huge increase in foot traffic passing our door.

This includes walkers, buggies and cyclists. It is early days too, as it's only been a few months since it fully opened, and a few weeks since the lighting has been put in place.

We have adjusted our business to complement the new amenity and customer demographic. Converting an old roadside diner into a modern coffee shop. It's early days yet, but all signs so far are that it has been a huge success.

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.

11 years old

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

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

82% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play



57% of households are within 800m of a children's playground



Among Cork Metropolitan Area residents:

61% agree



20% disagree



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'.

0 schools in the Cork Metropolitan Area have School Streets schemes.ⁱⁱⁱ But see Safe Routes to School on page 23.



ii. Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015.

iii. Figure given is correct as of 31 May 2023.



Developing the Cork Metropolitan Area

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

Active Travel is a great way to get around, while keeping fit, reducing pollution, and saving money at the same time. Active travel benefits both the individual and the city. The Cork Metropolitan Area comprises all the Cork City Council (CCC) area and parts of the Cork County Council (CCo) area. The National Transport Authority (NTA) works in collaboration with these councils on the delivery of Active Travel projects. This includes the development of segregated cycle lanes and widened footpaths, new walking and cycling bridges, and new pedestrian crossings.

The work of the NTA's Active Travel Programme is underpinned by the aims and objectives set out in the Government's Climate Action Plan 2023. One of the key aims cited is to increase the number of walking and cycling networks so that walking, cycling and public transport will account for 50% of all journeys made by 2030. Projects are funded by the Department of Transport through the National Transport Authority's Active Travel Programme and are managed and delivered by the Local Authorities.

An Active Travel team was established in Cork City Council in 2011 to deliver NTA-funded projects. Up to the end of 2022, €92m has been invested in active travel schemes. Cork County Council joined the programme a year later, in 2012, and to date it has invested €42m.

Since 2020 the rate of investment increased significantly, delivering several active travel projects which provide more opportunities for walking and cycling across the metropolitan area.



The work of the NTA's Active Travel Programme is underpinned by the aims and objectives set out in the Government's Climate Action Plan 2023.



Passage Greenway (Mahon to Marina)

Passage West Greenway Phase 1 was opened in 2022 and provides a high-quality 3km recreational and commuter corridor between the southern docklands and Mahon, in the east of the city.

It links into Marina Promenade, which has been a dedicated walking and cycling route since 2020.

Construction to make this measure permanent is expected to commence over the next year, providing a high-quality connection to Blackrock.

The project also included the planting of 2,000 trees, installation of play areas and restoration of historic railway structures.



MacCurtain St – Active Travel and Public Transport Improvements

The MacCurtain Street Public Transport and Active Travel Improvement Scheme was opened in November 2023. It aims to support economic activity and enhance access to the city centre through significantly improved design.

The project also covers adjacent areas, including the Quays, Christy Ring Bridge, Mulgrave Road and Cathedral Walk.

Upgrades to the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, bus priority, as well as new public lighting and trees are all being provided. It is intended to reduce speed limits to 30km/h MacCurtain Street, Bridge Street and Coburg Street alongside traffic changes in the area.



Dunkettle to Glounthane

Six kilometres of high-quality active travel infrastructure between Dunkettle and Glounthane was fully opened in 2023. The scheme links the Dunkettle Road to the Elm Tree in Glounthane, providing a safe, pleasant, and efficient transport for residents of the eastern outskirts of the city.

The project includes planting, benches and public lighting, and links residential areas with shops, schools and Little Island & Glounthaune train stations. It is the latest section of the Cork to Waterford Greenway project to be delivered.



Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS)

CMATS was published in 2020. It sets out the framework for an accessible, high-quality, and integrated transport network that provides for the travel demand and sustainable growth of the Cork Metropolitan Area as the major growth engine of the South-West Region. One of the objectives of this strategy is to develop a strong cycling culture in Cork Metropolitan Area. This includes the proposed measure ‘to deliver a safe, comprehensive, attractive, and legible cycle network.’

Pathfinder Programme: Cork to Waterford

An active travel link between Cork and Waterford is one of three key priority, ‘National Impact’, projects of the Pathfinder Programme under the National Sustainable Mobility Policy. Cork City Council and Cork County Council are working with the NTA and TII to deliver its section from the city centre to Youghal, with the MacCurtain St and Dunkettle to Glounthane schemes outlined above having already been delivered. The City Council is developing designs for the Kent Station to Dunkettle, whilst the County Council is constructing the link from Glounthane to Carrigtwohill.

Pedestrianisation of City Centre Streets

Many of Cork City’s streets have been permanently pedestrianised, following successful trials in 2020. This has enhanced safety and mobility in the city centre, as well as helping local businesses by providing them outdoor space. Pembroke St and Francis St are amongst those which have been made fully pedestrianised, whilst others have had their hours of pedestrianisation significantly extended. Outside of the city centre, the Marina Promenade has gone through a similar transformation.



Many of Cork City’s streets have been permanently pedestrianised, following successful trials in 2020. This has enhanced safety and mobility in the city centre, as well as helping local businesses by providing them outdoor space.

Safe Routes to School

Cork County was an early adopter of the Safe Routes to School Programme and delivered two of its first School Zones. The first was delivered at Scoil Phádraig Naofain Bandon, the second at Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh in Rushbrooke, Cobh. The scheme was praised as a holistic approach which aims to address road safety and transport issues and create an attractive place for students and the wider community.

Upcoming Schemes

Construction will begin in 2024 on the permanent works along Marina Promenade, linking it to Blackrock.

Works are also expected to begin in 2024 on an active travel scheme on Skehard Road and Ringmahon Road, and the residential areas in between, providing high-quality access to two schools in the area.

The Ballinacurra to Midleton active travel scheme will provide a designated shared use walking and cycling route from Ballinacurra to Midleton, with Phase 1, on Ballick Road, substantially complete.

Patrick Murray, Business owner



I initiated the shift from selling cars to selling electric bikes in 2010. This was not easy, with car-focused brothers in our family-run business to convince. However, we are now proud to have two of Ireland's largest dedicated electric bike showrooms.

My experience of selling electric bikes in Cork City has shown me that advancements in the reliability and design of electric bikes are now enabling E-bikes to become a game-changer for Active Travel, at a time when our planet really needs it.

The measures taken by Cork City Council during the pandemic greatly accelerated the improvements towards safe cycling infrastructure in the city.

What had been a slow and reluctant process took on a greater urgency and attitudes began to change in favour of Active Travel both politically and amongst the general public.

The ever-increasing network of segregated cycle lanes has encouraged many new people into cycling; however, in my opinion the fragmented nature of safe cycling infrastructure in Cork is still a barrier.

Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from May to July 2023 by independent market research company Behaviour & Attitudes.

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

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: Sarah Kate Photography, except page 2 (Cork City Council and Cork County Council), page 7 (Joanna Dukkipati), page 9 (Fionn Rogan), page 10 (Darren Forde/Cork County Council), page 15 (Nicola Meacle), page 16 and page 21 (Cork County Council/NTA), page 17 (Arundhati Krishnan), page 19 (Paul Manning) and page 23 (Patrick Murray).

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

Walking and Cycling Index Cork Metropolitan Area has been funded by the National Transport Authority. The project is co-ordinated by Sustrans and has been supported by Cork City Council and Cork County Council.

