

Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area

Walking and Cycling Index 2023

Published March 2024



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Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area



**Cllr. Gerald Mitchell,
Limerick City and
County Council:**

As Mayor of Limerick City and County Council, it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to the inaugural Limerick Shannon Metropolitan

Area Walking and Cycling Index.

For the first time, we have facts and figures about active travel in our Metropolitan Area which will support us in delivering the investment our residents want in creating a sustainable place, where people and businesses thrive.

The physical activity benefits of active travel in our Metropolitan Area are significant. We can see 52 early deaths are prevented annually, representing €407 million. Elected members in the Metropolitan District recently approved new by-laws to limit many central areas of the city to a 30kmh speed limit, with residents telling us that these safety improvements will further encourage a modal shift.

It is positive to see that 88% of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel and 71% think that the level of safety for cycling in their area is good. This is gratifying given our investment to date with the support of the National Transport Authority.

The report helps us understand the type of infrastructure people say will help them walk or cycle – wider and more accessible footpaths, more crossing, more greenways, signposted quieter streets and segregated cycle tracks.

Castletroy Urban Greenway and Hyde Road are examples of active travel infrastructure which enhance the local environment. Our first School Street at An Mhodhscoil in Limerick city developed under the Safe Routes to School Programme has also been a great success.

We are determined to continue our efforts to provide the active travel infrastructure desired by our residents for now and the future.

**Cllr. Donna McGettigan,
Shannon Municipal
District, Clare
County Council:**



As Cathaoirleach of Shannon Municipal District, I am pleased to welcome the first Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Walking and Cycling Index.

This report provides a useful insight into the behaviours and opinions of Shannon Area Residents towards walking, wheeling, and cycling. It gives us a great sense of what type of investment and infrastructure people want, to help make the area a vibrant, attractive, and sustainable part of the Metropolitan area.

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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 city 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 Limerick Shannon 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 1,105 residents aged 16 or above in the Limerick Shannon 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 Limerick Shannon 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

Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area

Populationⁱ

143,300

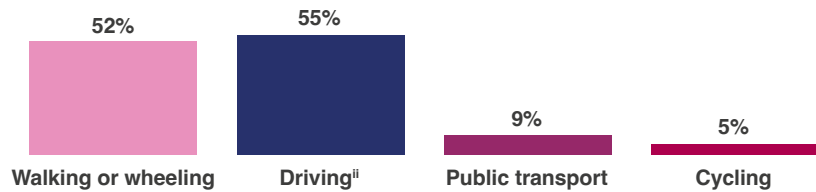
Survey area



Frequency of different modes of travel

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

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



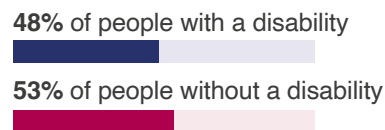
52%
of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

15%
of residents cycle at least once a week

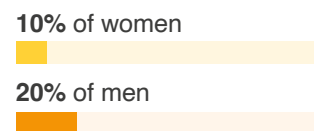
Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

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

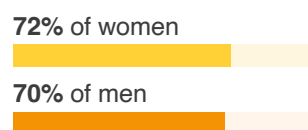


Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

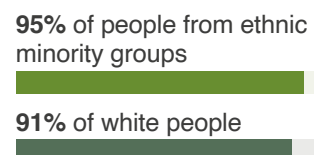
Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety is good



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 Limerick Shannon 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 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area take up to nearly **32,000** cars off the road.^{iv} Each year in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area these three modes combined:

+ Prevent

320

serious long-term health conditions



Create

€145.4 million

in economic benefit for individuals and the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area



Save

6,200 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions

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:

Walk or wheel

49% more

5% less

Cycle

34% more

2% less

Take public transport

40% more

4% less

Drive

18% more

24% 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:

70% on walking and wheeling

61% on cycling

82% on public transport

33% on driving

Increased funding would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

Among Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area residents:

76% support

13% oppose

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

83% support

4% oppose

the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods^v

85% support

5% oppose

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

82% agree

8% disagree

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

82% support

10% oppose

the ban on vehicles parking on the footpath

55% support

25% 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 Limerick Shannon 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.

87%
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

52% of women

52% of men

Ethnicity

52% of people from ethnic minority groups

52% of white people

Age

69% of people aged 16–25

52% of people aged 26–35

55% of people aged 36–45

45% of people aged 46–55

47% of people aged 56–65

42% of people aged 66+

Disability

48% of people with a disability

53% of people without a disability

Socio-economic groupⁱⁱ

57% of AB

56% of C1

46% of C2

48% of DE

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

84%

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

76%

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

88%

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

83% of women



85% of men



Ethnicity

93% of people from ethnic minority groups



83% of white people



Age

85% of people aged 16–25



83% of people aged 26–35



86% of people aged 36–45



84% of people aged 46–55



87% of people aged 56–65



81% of people aged 66+



Disability

77% of people with a disability



85% of people without a disability



Socio-economic group

84% of AB



83% of C1



90% of C2



82% of DE



Elizabeth Sheehan



Walking is handy, but in the city there are narrow, uneven footpaths, lots of obstacles, shops and cafes taking up footpath space. In residential areas, there's a lot of drama around footpath parking.

A city should be liveable. Everyone is a pedestrian at some point, even if it's just walking from their car into a shop.

It's not 'us' against 'them'. We need to start thinking of things in a different manner, making sure we consider everyone's needs.

Designated cycling space would make people feel so much safer. If we have shared space areas for walking and cycling, I suddenly feel much more comfortable walking, because my nearest neighbour is a bicycle, not a car.



Cycling in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

Cycling participation

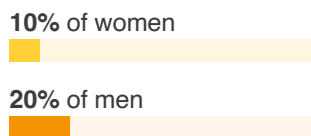
Cycling participation is not equal. Barriers to cycling can be far more pronounced for some people. Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.ⁱ

22%
of all residents cycle

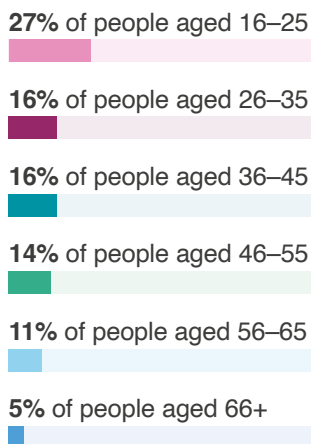
15%
of all residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

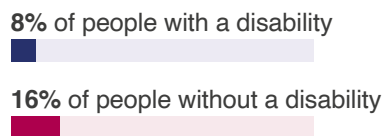
Gender



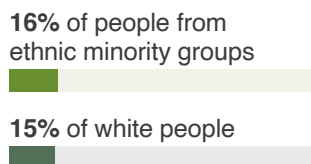
Age



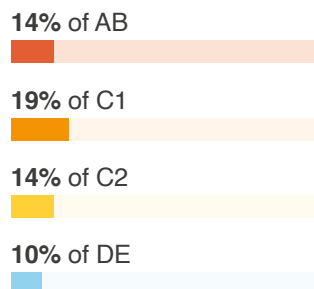
Disability



Ethnicity



Socio-economic group



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

Cycling safety and satisfaction

71%

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

66%

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

73%

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

72% of women



70% of men



Ethnicity

80% of people from ethnic minority groups



70% of white people



Age

74% of people aged 16–25



72% of people aged 26–35



68% of people aged 36–45



77% of people aged 46–55



68% of people aged 56–65



69% of people aged 66+



Disability

66% of people with a disability



72% of people without a disability



Socio-economic group

66% of AB



75% of C1



74% of C2



68% of DE



Maurice Egan, Engineer



Why do I cycle? Because it's more convenient. I'm not contributing to congestion and road dangers. The electric cargo bike is such a game changer, it replaced our second car.

I'll encourage my daughters to cycle to school when they're older, but there's a caveat - the infrastructure isn't there to support them.

If it was completely segregated, then within a couple of years they should be able to cycle on their own. Infrastructure is the key.

I work for an employer with 1,200 people in the company. We have an environmental team who promote active travel, and it's working. We have secure parking, we have changing rooms and showers. More of this is needed.



Benefits of walking

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

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

Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area residents walk or wheel 8 times around the world every day

55.1 million

walking and wheeling trips were made in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area in the past year, which adds up to

119.8 million kilometres

= 330,000 kilometres a day.

This equates to each resident spending

11 days

walking or wheeling continuously in the past year.

Annual walking and wheeling trips by purposeⁱ

Enjoyment or fitness – adults and children (including running):
26,600,000

48%

Destination – adults only (like work, school, shopping):
27,100,000

49%

School – children only:
1,500,000

3%



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.

€0.94 is saved

for each kilometre walked or wheeled instead of driven in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area.

Over a year this adds up to

€30 million

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

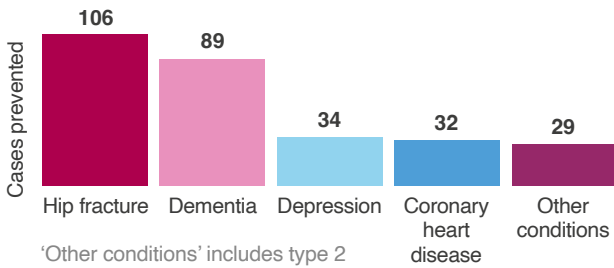
The total annual economic benefit from all trips walked and wheeled in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area is

€133.7 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 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area prevents 291 serious long-term health conditions each year



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

Saving the HSE in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area

€4.1 million per year



equivalent to the cost of

75,000 GP appointments

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

In the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area the physical activity benefits of walking

prevent 50 early deaths annually

which is valued at

€391 millionⁱⁱⁱ

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:

15,000 kg of NO_x

and

1,900 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

89% of residents agree the

air is clean in their local area



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

5,500 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



61,000 people taking flights

from Shannon Airport 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 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area moving

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

29,000 return walking and wheeling trips

are made daily in the Limerick Shannon 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

140 kilometres

equivalent to the distance from Limerick City to Waterford City.



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

Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area residents cycle once around the world every day

3.4 million cycling trips

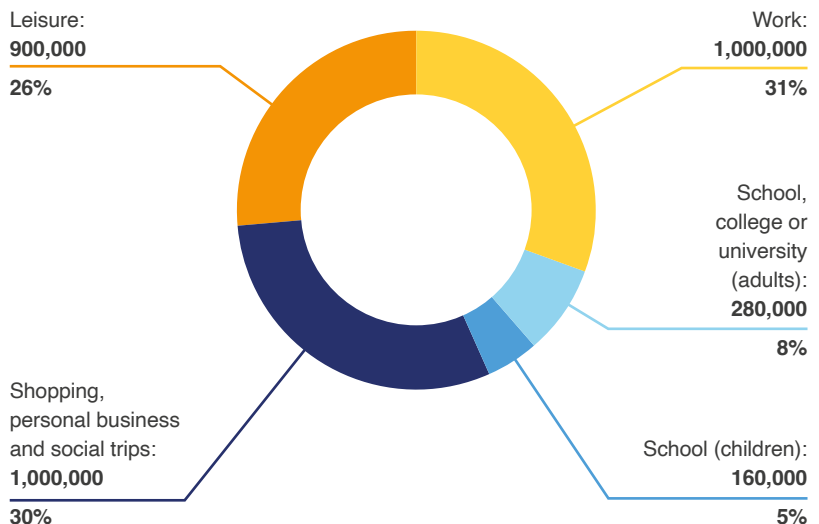
were made in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area in the past year

This adds up to

14.8 million kilometres

= 40,000 kilometres a day

Annual cycling trips by purpose in the Limerick Shannon 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 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area.

Over a year this adds up to

€6.2 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 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area is

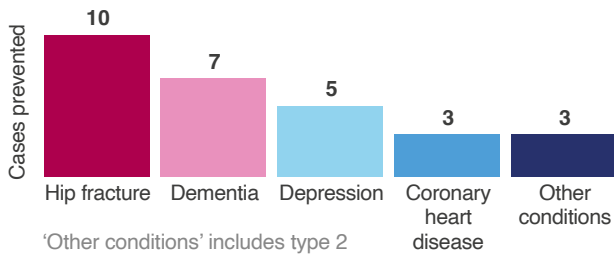
€11.7 millionⁱⁱ

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 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area prevents 29 serious long-term health conditions each year



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

Saving the HSE in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area
€440,000 per year



equivalent to the cost of
8,100 GP appointments

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

In the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area the physical activity benefits of cycling

prevent 2 early deaths annually

which is valued at

€16 millionⁱⁱⁱ

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

1,900 kg of NO_x

and

230 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

89% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



Cycling in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area helps mitigate our climate crisis

750 tonnes

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



8,300 people taking flights

from Shannon Airport 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 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area moving

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

2,300 return cycling trips

are made daily in the Limerick Shannon 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

11 kilometres

equivalent to the distance from Limerick City to Cratloe.



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

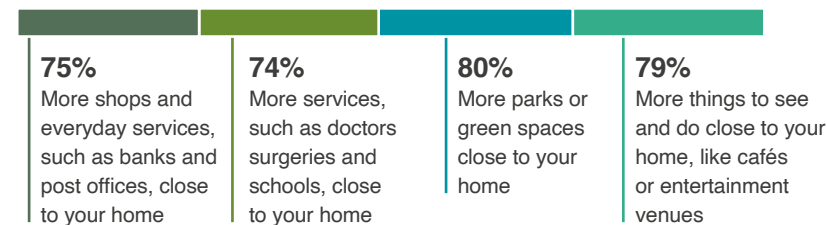
What would help make walking and wheeling easier?

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?



11%

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

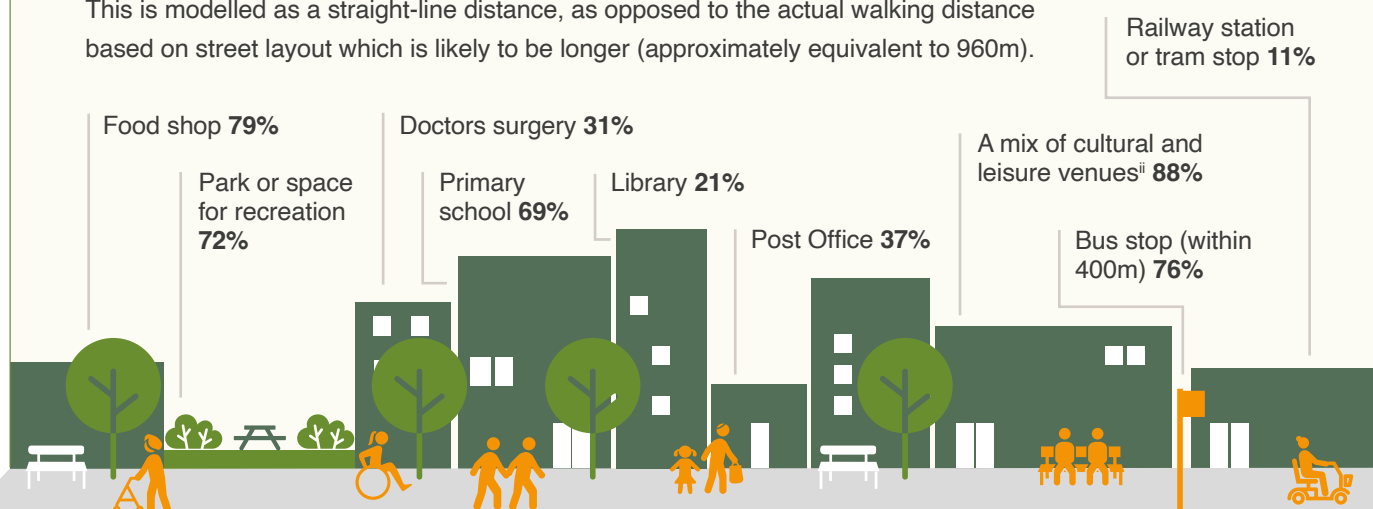
These higher-density neighbourhoods can sustain local businesses and public transport routes more easily. This helps to reduce car dependency.ⁱ

75%

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).



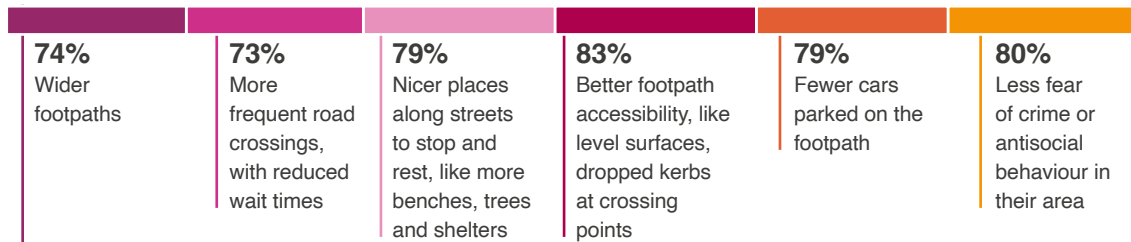
i. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning.

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 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area:

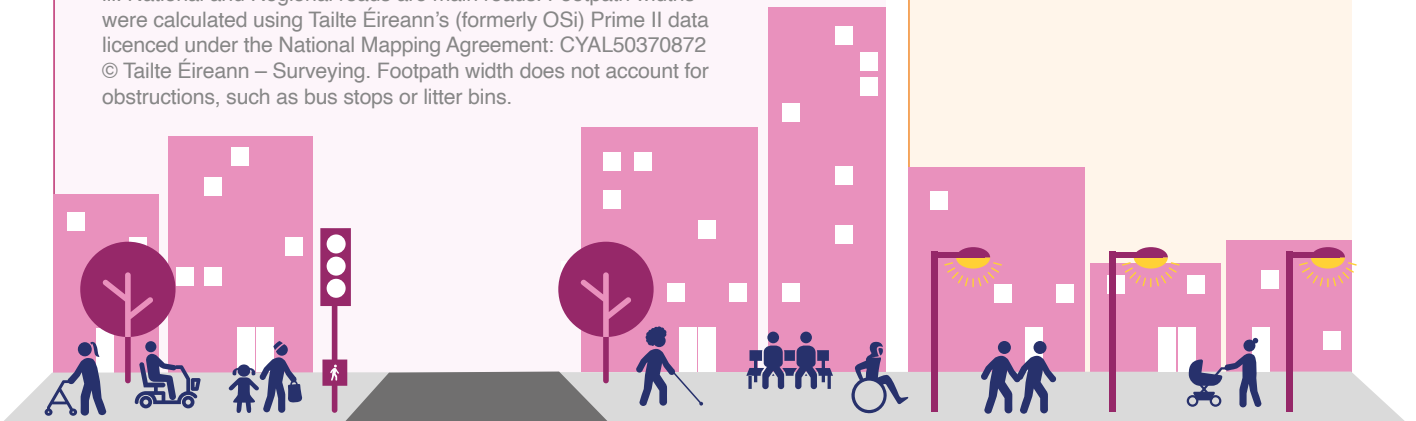
27% of National and Regional roads have a footpath width greater than 3mⁱⁱⁱ

38% of minor roads have a footpath width greater than 2m

93%

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.



Helena Close, Author / Regular Walker



Limerick is a great walking city. I have tried to make a conscious effort to not use my car for journeys that can be done by a short walk.

My family and I are huge rugby fans, and we regularly walk to and from Thomond Park Stadium on match days. The experience is truly wonderful!

We need to reimagine city centres. I would love to see more areas of the city become pedestrianised.

We have some gorgeous walks and I think pedestrianising areas would allow people to enjoy them safely without the congestion. It's off-putting.

The city centre should be a space for everyone to enjoy. Greater investment in walking and public transport would be a good start.

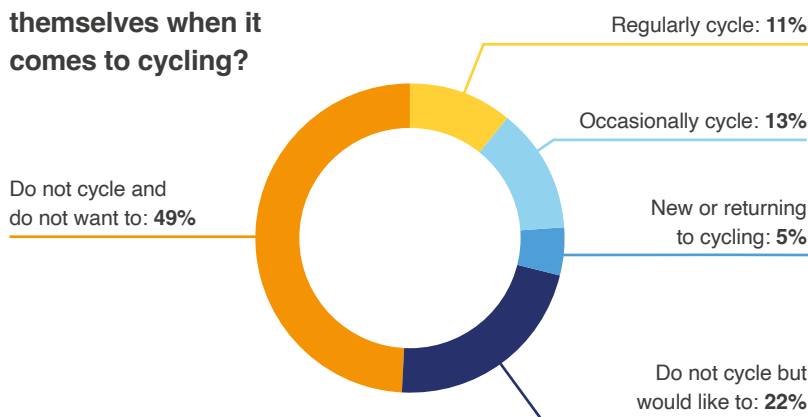


Cycling solutions

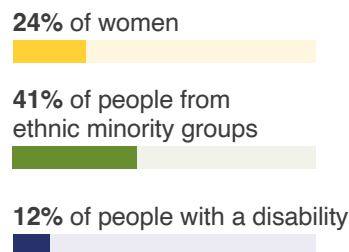
What would make cycling better?

Many Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area residents want to cycle

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?

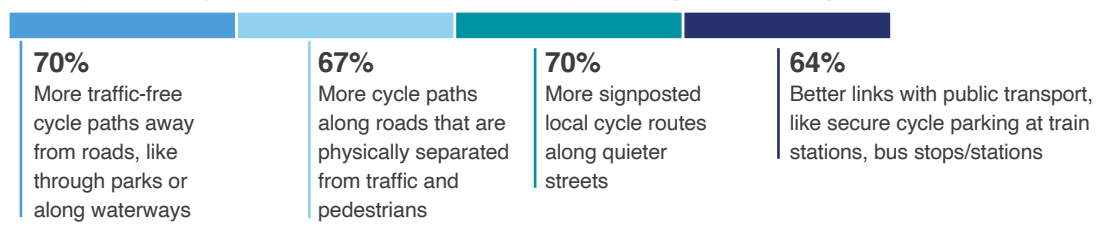


What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'?



Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

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

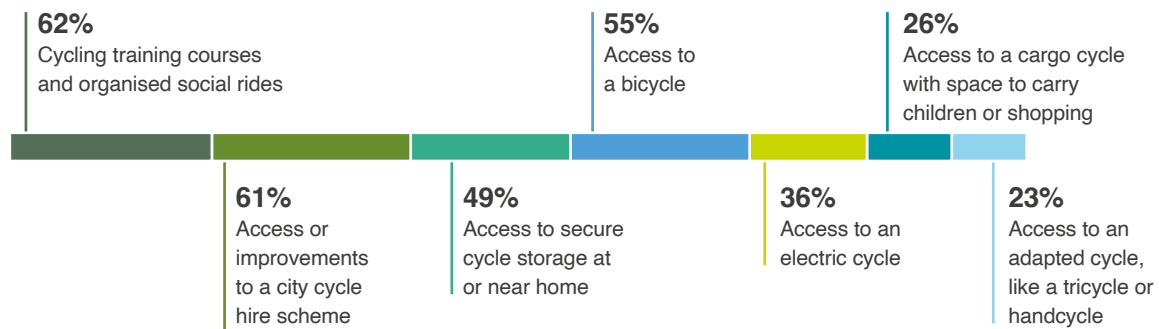


76% of residents support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic



Residents want more support to cycle

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



Across the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area's two cycle hire schemesⁱ

230
hire cycles

37
cycle hire stations

22,610
annual trips

Reported cycle thefts

There were **985** reported cycle thefts in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area in 2022/23.

1,103 in 2021/22

For every **47** people who own an adult cycle in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area, there was **1** reported cycle theft in the past year.

Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

40% of residents

28% of socio-economic group DE

55% of socio-economic group AB

78% of residents support financial discounts for people on low incomes or not in employment to help them buy a cycle

16% of households are within 800m of a cycle shopⁱⁱ



Stephen Murray, Laboratory analyst



My motivation for starting cycling was environmental but it's become more about convenience. I don't want the stress associated with bringing a car into the city.

I set up Limerick Urban Cycling Group after I had become confident on the roads. Anyone can show up, and you get a good mix of people. It's very informal. It's as much a social group as a cycling group.

There is a commitment to active travel at government and council level. Overall, it's trending in the right way.

Limerick needs a well-defined cycle network, to allow you to connect from one side of the city to the other. There are wide roads, especially compared to some Irish cities, so there is space.

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



92% of people with a disability



91% of people without a disability



91% of socio-economic group DE



94% of socio-economic group AB



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

76% 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:

74% Walk or wheel more



65% Cycle more



Low-use minor roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area 16% of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.ⁱ

66% 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:

74% Walk or wheel more



65% Cycle more



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

82%

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

85%

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.



Rachel Enright, Information officer



I've lived in the city for over 22 years. For years I cycled everywhere with my eldest child; however, when my second and third child came along, my bike was parked up for several years.

I couldn't imagine cycling alone with my children due to the absence of infrastructure.

We joined a group of families in our area and began by cycling to school each day. As we grew more confident, we gave up the second car.

Big changes are happening with new segregated cycle routes, and I am hopeful that we will see many choosing to commute actively.

It will reduce congestion and have a positive impact on our environment. But more so because the health, social and economic benefits of cycling as a family are immeasurable.

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.

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

80% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play



41% of households are within 800m of a children's playground

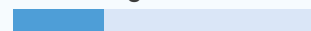


Among Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area residents:

52% agree



30% 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'.

1 school in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area has a School Streets scheme.ⁱⁱⁱ 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 Limerick Shannon 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 majority of residents in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area live in the Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) area. The National Transport Authority (NTA) works in collaboration with LCCC 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.

Limerick's Transport for Ireland Bike Rental Scheme opened in 2014. It covers the city centre area and extends to Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), Thomond Park, Mary I College and the Gaelic Grounds. An Active Travel team was established in Limerick to deliver NTA-funded projects and up to the end of 2022, €53 million has been invested in active travel schemes.

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.



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Castletroy Urban Greenway

Castletroy Urban Greenway was opened in 2021. It offers a safe off-road environment for cycling and walking in the heart of suburban Limerick. The Greenway stretches to almost 1.3km and links local schools, playground, shops and homes. This is the first part of significant investment in the area, with further improvements planned, including Plassey Park Road.



An Mhodhscoil – School Street

One of the first School Streets to be delivered under the Safe Routes to School Programme was opened at An Mhodhscoil in 2022. The project saw Roden St being completely redesigned to include more space for pedestrians and cyclists, buff coloured surfacing, planter and artwork. Motor vehicles are not permitted on the street at drop-off and pick-up times (8-9am, 1:15-2:45pm). The project also included side road junction improvements at O’Connell Ave, a rain garden and a new pedestrian crossing at Quin St.



Hyde Road

The recently opened Hyde Road scheme provides high quality active travel facilities connecting the Childers Road with Lower Carey’s Road, a key artery towards the city centre. It includes 2m segregated cycle tracks on both sides of the road, as well as pedestrian infrastructure and access to new bus stops. It has created a traffic calmed and much improved road environment for residents. Side entrance treatments as per the current guidance and additional pedestrian crossings are also included.



Ballycasey Permeability Project, Shannon

Completed in 2023, the construction phase of this scheme involved widening and resurfacing of existing footpaths, the addition of new footpath routes, along with pedestrian crossing points, ramps and junction tightening works, to improve access to services and the town centre. These measures now provide an alternative route for pedestrians to use. The project will have several benefits to residents in the area and will help support business activity in both the Ballycasey Shopping Centre and the Ballycasey Craft Centre. The project also serves St. Aidans National School, providing safe access for local children.



Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS)

LSMATS was published in November 2022. It sets out the framework for an accessible, high-quality and integrated transport network that provides for the travel demand and sustainable growth in the Limerick. One of the objectives of this strategy is to develop a strong cycling culture in the Limerick area. This includes the proposed measure to deliver a safe, comprehensive, attractive and legible cycle network.

Pathfinder Programme: Limerick City University Connectivity

Active travel linkages between Limerick's three main third level institutions – Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), University of Limerick (UL) and Mary I – is a demonstrator project on the Pathfinder Programme, under the National Sustainable Mobility Policy. The active travel projects will converge in the city centre, providing improved infrastructure in the Arthur's Quay area. The project encompasses three schemes: the existing Greenway linking the Irishtown in the city centre to UL, along the Park Canal and Shannon; and Mary I to City Centre and TUS to City Centre which are expected to be completed by 2026.

Bike Hub

In 2023, Limerick opened the first Bike Hub outside of Dublin. This is a partnership between LCCC, the NTA, social enterprises and charities to provide bike repair and training services. Members of the refugee and migrant communities have availed of the Hub's free services, which has enhanced their ability to cycle around the city to access education, work and the social activities.



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Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

In addition to An Mhodhscoil School Street mentioned above, there are several other schools in the metropolitan area that will be benefitting from SRTS schemes. School zones have already opened at St. Paul's National School in Dooradoyle and Gaelscoil Sairséal, with St Nessian's and Scoil Íde expected to be the next projects to be delivered.

Upcoming Schemes

In addition to the Pathfinder schemes outlined above, LCCC have achieved planning for a range of key active travel schemes in the metropolitan area. Father Russell Road and Raheen to Quinn's Cross will serve large residential areas in Dooradoyle. The east of the city will see the development of Ennis Road as a key spine, whilst Mill Road will be delivered next year in the Corbally area.

Looking further forward, LCCC have received Urban Regeneration and Development Fund funding for new city centre bridges. A business case is being developed for a pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Shannon, between Shannon Bridge and Sarsfield Bridge. Potential new linkages across the Abbey River are also included in this business case.



David McCormack, School Principal



Our school community is delighted with the recent approval of the walking and cycling infrastructure enhancements around our school. The commitment of An Taisce, the NTA & Clare County Council to fostering a safer and more sustainable environment for our students and the community at large is truly commendable.

The addition of new crossing points, signage, lighting, and the thoughtful restriction of parking around the school entrance will undoubtedly contribute to the overall safety and well-being of road users. These measures will also align with the schools broader goals of promoting active travel and reducing environmental impact.

We very much appreciate the collaborative approach taken by the local authority in engaging with the school and considering the unique needs of our students and their families.

This initiative will not only encourage more students and parents to choose sustainable modes of transport but will also foster a sense of community and camaraderie as individuals come together to enjoy these newly enhanced routes.

In terms of further future enhancements, Clonmoney National School would benefit greatly if the existing pathway on the R458 could be extended to the east to meet the R471 Regional Road. This would improve safety and permeability for all users, especially school children.

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 Limerick Shannon 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

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

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

