



Galway Metropolitan Area

Walking and Cycling Index 2025



Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling



Cllr. Mike Cubbard
Mayor of the City
of Galway

As Mayor of the City of Galway, I am pleased to welcome the second Galway Metropolitan Area Walking and Cycling Index.

This report uses independent research and robust data to demonstrate the value of active travel. It outlines how walking, wheeling and cycling generates €171.1m in economic benefit to the Galway Metropolitan Area, while also preventing 278 serious long-term health conditions annually. This is highly significant for Galway and its people, and it demonstrates the importance of continued investment in new active travel and sustainable transport infrastructure.

The report also highlights the strong desire of people here to see further investment in active travel. As Mayor, I'm pleased to see the progress of recent years, including the successful delivery of projects at Doughiska Road South, Wolfe Tone Bridge and Eglinton Canal. With the support of funding partners including the National Transport Authority and the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, more high-quality infrastructure will soon be delivered in other areas of the city, along with newly enhanced bus and train facilities.

All of this will help Galway to develop in a sustainable fashion, benefitting residents, those who work here, and visitors for many years into the future.



Cllr. David Collins
Cathaoirleach
Galway
County Council

As Cathaoirleach of Galway County, I am delighted to introduce the Walking and Cycling Index.

This report offers valuable insights into the behaviours and perspectives of residents in Oranmore, Baile Chláir and Bearna regarding walking, wheeling, and cycling. It provides a clear picture of the investment and infrastructure our communities wish to see and highlights opportunities to plan more effectively for the future. Galway County Council, with support from the National Transport Authority, has taken important steps, including a new pedestrian crossing in Oranmore and the Safe Routes to School project for three schools. We look forward to using this index to guide our plans and create a happier, healthier Galway that strengthens communities and supports local businesses.

Contents

Headlines	4
Walking and wheeling	6
Cycling	8
Benefits of walking and wheeling	10
Benefits of cycling	12
Walking and wheeling solutions	14
Cycling solutions	16
Neighbourhood solutions	18
Developing the area	20
Looking forward	22



The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in the UK and Ireland. It is delivered by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) in collaboration with 22 regional and local partners. Each area reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling a more attractive, everyday way to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the second report from the Galway Metropolitan Area, produced in partnership with the National Transport Authority of Ireland. The data in this report comes from 2025 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent, demographically representative survey of 1,112 residents aged 16 or above. The survey was conducted from April to August 2025. Independent market research company Ipsos B&A 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 2023 data where available.

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

More details on all reports and an interactive data tool to explore the data in more depth can be found at www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/walking-cycling-index



Defining wheeling

Some people who use 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.

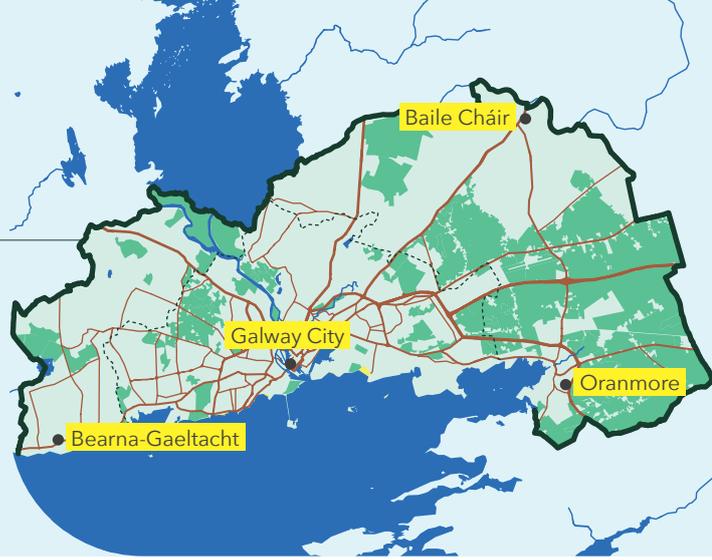
Headlines

Galway Metropolitan Area

Population^[i]
102,107

84,066 adults
18,041 children

Survey area

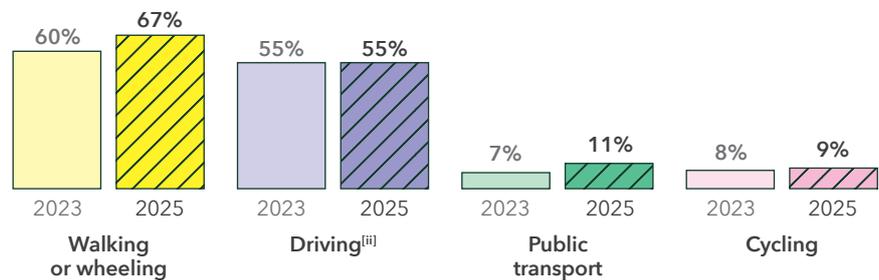


Frequency of different modes of travel

Walking and wheeling is the most common mode of travel amongst Galway Metropolitan Area residents. Since 2023, walking and wheeling has increased.

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

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



ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle.

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.

67%

of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week^[iii]

69% of women

65% of men

21%

of residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

15% of women

28% of men

Not all residents feel safe in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

77% of people with a disability

87% of people without a disability

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to cycle in their local area

65% of people aged 16-25

35% of people aged 66+

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

95% of socio-economic group DE

91% of socio-economic group AB

iii. See footnote on page 6.

iv. Socio-economic groups AB are managerial while groups DE are manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment. See page 6 for full definitions.

Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Based on modelling of survey data, every year, walking, wheeling and cycling.

prevents
278
serious long-term
health conditions

creates
€171.1 million
in economic benefit for
individuals and the area

saves
4,000 tonnes
of greenhouse gas emissions

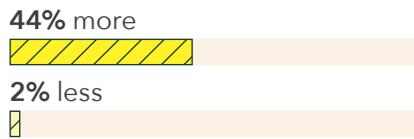
Walking, wheeling and cycling reduces congestion by taking up to 23,000 cars off the roads every day.

Residents want to walk, wheel and cycle more

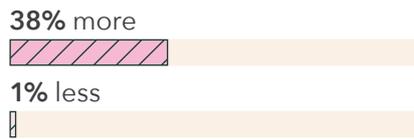
Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

13% of residents want to drive less. 71% of residents agree that they often use a car because no other transport options are available.

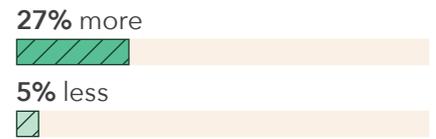
Walk or wheel



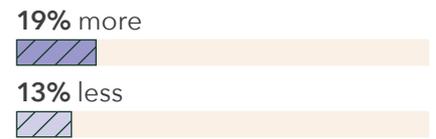
Cycle



Take public transport

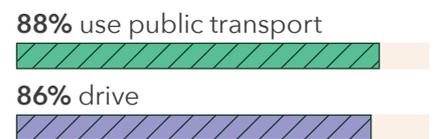
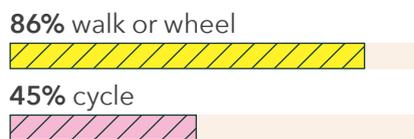


Drive



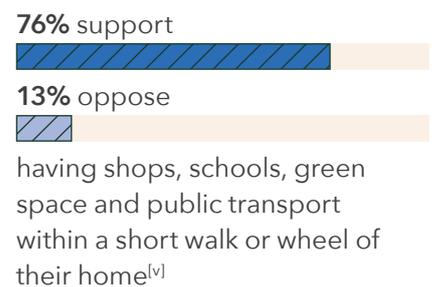
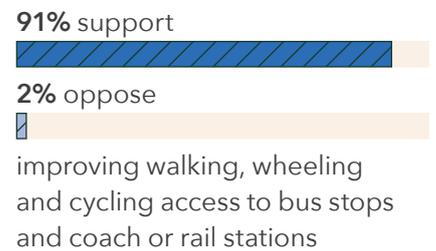
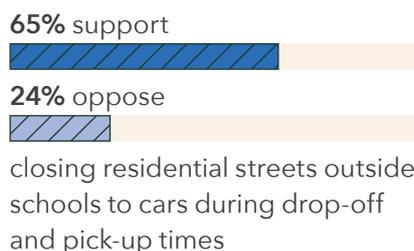
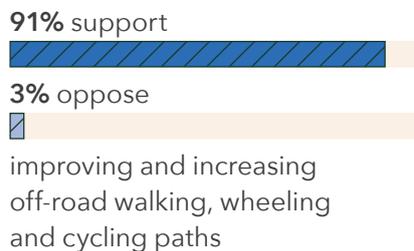
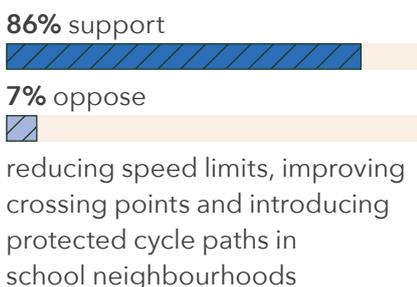
Cycling is seen as less safe than other forms of transport

Percentage of residents who think it's safe in their local area to:



Residents support more connected neighbourhoods

73% of residents support shifting investment from road-building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. 15% oppose such a shift.



v. Local places with services and amenities nearby your home are often known as 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Walking and wheeling

Participation, safety and satisfaction



Walking and wheeling participation

Overall in the Galway Metropolitan Area the number of residents walking and wheeling at least five days a week has increased since 2023.

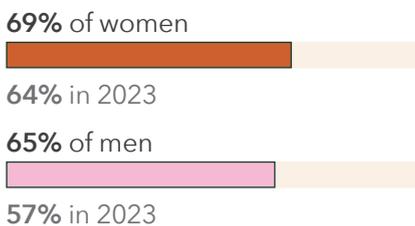
Encouragingly, the majority of residents feel it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area and think it is a good place to walk or wheel.

97%
of all residents
walk or wheel
93% in 2023

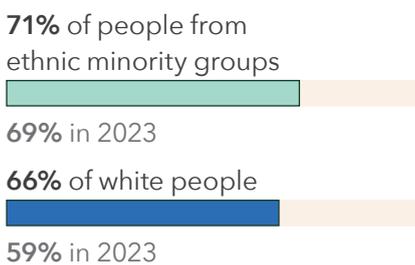
67%
of all residents
walk or wheel
at least five
days a week
60% in 2023

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

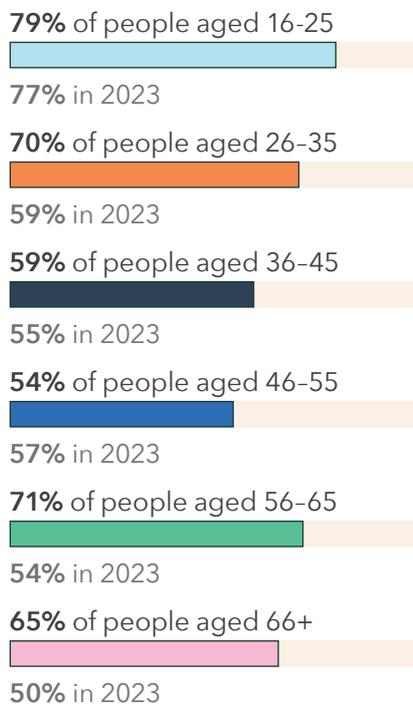
Gender⁽ⁱ⁾



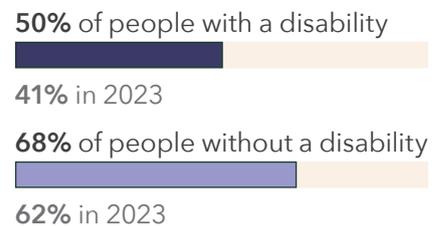
Ethnicity



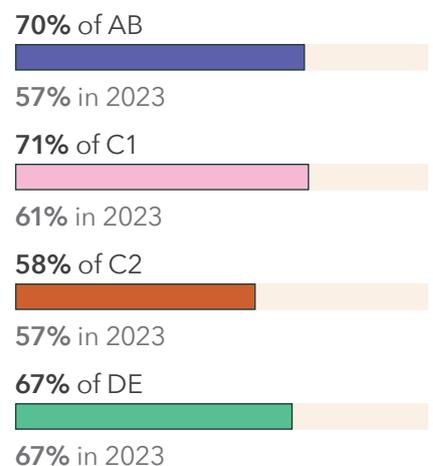
Age



Disability



Socio-economic group⁽ⁱⁱ⁾



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

86%

of all residents think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

85% in 2023

72%

of all residents think it's safe for children to walk or wheel in their local area

73% in 2023

88%

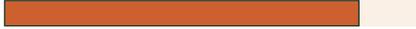
of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel

89% in 2023

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

Gender

86% of women



85% in 2023

87% of men



86% in 2023

Ethnicity

89% of people from ethnic minority groups



94% in 2023

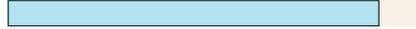
86% of white people



84% in 2023

Age

90% of people aged 16-25



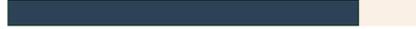
89% in 2023

90% of people aged 26-35



88% in 2023

85% of people aged 36-45



84% in 2023

82% of people aged 46-55



87% in 2023

84% of people aged 56-65



79% in 2023

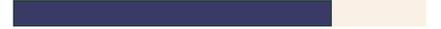
83% of people aged 66+



81% in 2023

Disability

77% of people with a disability



79% in 2023

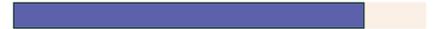
87% of people without a disability



86% in 2023

Socio-economic group

85% of AB



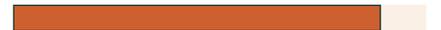
81% in 2023

86% of C1



86% in 2023

89% of C2



87% in 2023

86% of DE



86% in 2023



Cloe Benson

Galway City's compact layout makes it highly accessible on foot. While increased pedestrian traffic during the summer months, often due to tourism, may cause temporary delays, the city's infrastructure prioritises people on foot over cars. Many of the streets are pedestrianised, leading to a safe journey. New bridges and crossings have also helped in recent years to the overall ease of walking around the city

My local village of Moycullen boasts a well-maintained footpath that also serves as a cycle path (although unfortunately that is underutilised). The path is well-lit, ensuring safe and convenient access for pedestrians of all ages and at any time of the day.

Cycling

Participation, safety and satisfaction



Cycling participation

Just over a fifth of residents cycle at least once a week.

Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.^[i]

The Galway Metropolitan Area has been working to provide safe, dedicated space for cycling.

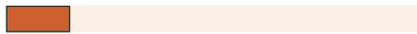
29%
of all residents cycle
28% in 2023

21%
of all residents cycle at least once a week
20% in 2023

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

Gender

15% of women



15% in 2023

28% of men



25% in 2023

Ethnicity

13% of people from ethnic minority groups



9% in 2023

23% of white people



21% in 2023

Age

35% of people aged 16-25



31% in 2023

19% of people aged 26-35



17% in 2023

18% of people aged 36-45



21% in 2023

25% of people aged 46-55



22% in 2023

16% of people aged 56-65



16% in 2023

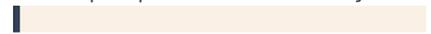
6% of people aged 66+



7% in 2023

Disability

1% of people with a disability



11% in 2023

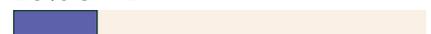
22% of people without a disability



21% in 2023

Socio-economic group

20% of AB



23% in 2023

24% of C1



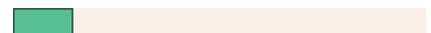
19% in 2023

25% of C2



22% in 2023

14% of DE



17% in 2023

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

Cycling safety and satisfaction

45%

of all residents think it's safe to cycle in their local area

57% in 2023

36%

of all residents think it's safe for children to cycle in their local area

49% in 2023

47%

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

63% in 2023

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to cycle in their local area

Gender

40% of women



55% in 2023

51% of men



59% in 2023

Ethnicity

53% of people from ethnic minority groups



79% in 2023

43% of white people



54% in 2023

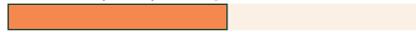
Age

65% of people aged 16-25



65% in 2023

53% of people aged 26-35



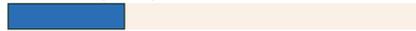
60% in 2023

41% of people aged 36-45



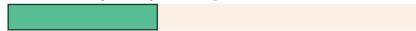
60% in 2023

28% of people aged 46-55



54% in 2023

36% of people aged 56-65



46% in 2023

35% of people aged 66+



49% in 2023

Disability

30% of people with a disability



49% in 2023

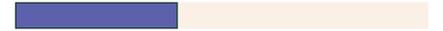
46% of people without a disability



58% in 2023

Socio-economic group

39% of AB



49% in 2023

47% of C1



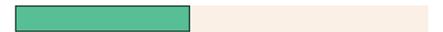
59% in 2023

50% of C2



64% in 2023

42% of DE



54% in 2023



Peter O'Connor

I cycle with my children to school each morning and then continue on to the train station in Oranmore. It's a lovely way to start the day together. Cycling through the village can be a bit of a challenge - the roads are busy during school drop-offs, and there's limited space for bikes alongside cars.

While there are a few cycle lanes, they're quite patchy, and a more connected cycling network would make a big difference. I'd really love for my children to have the freedom and confidence to cycle to school on their own one day.

Benefits of walking and wheeling

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

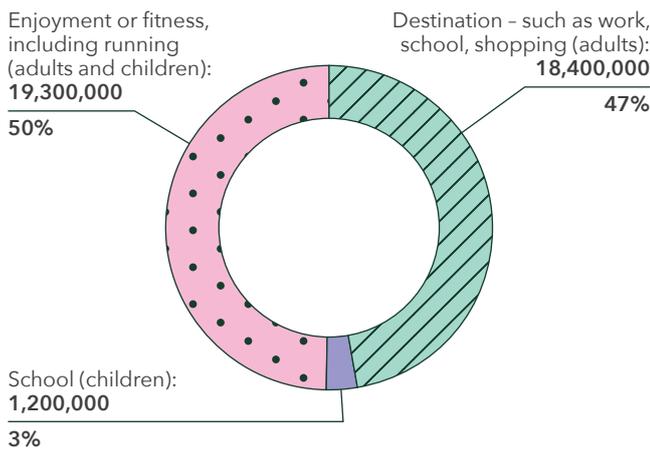


Together, Galway Metropolitan Area residents walk or wheel 7 times around the world every day

Walking and wheeling improves health and air quality, saves the HSE money, and reduces congestion.

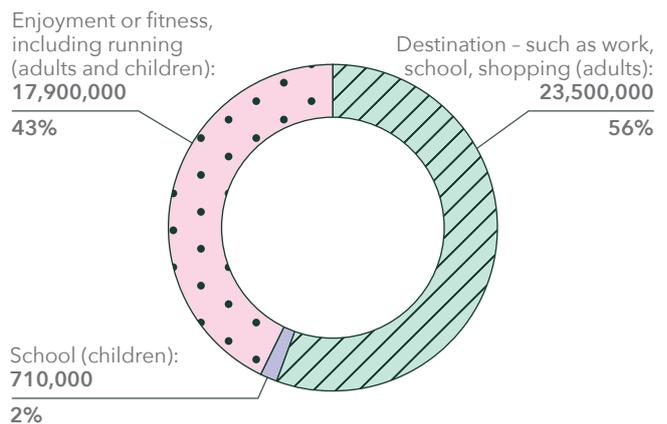
Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose

38.8 million trips in 2025 which add up to **108.5 million kilometres**



Average walking or wheeling trip distance: 2.8 kilometres

42.2 million trips in 2023 which add up to **101.8 million kilometres**



Average walking or wheeling trip distance: 2.4 kilometres

Walking and wheeling benefits residents and society

We model the costs and benefits of walking and wheeling journeys, including those that replace trips which could have been driven, using our Societal Gain model. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

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

€146.9 million

Many of these trips were made by people with access to a car. For these (excluding trips for enjoyment or fitness) our model compares the costs and benefits of walking and wheeling to those of driving.

For these journeys **€1.19** is saved for each kilometre walked or wheeled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **€17 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **14.3 million kilometres** walked or wheeled by those that could have used a car.



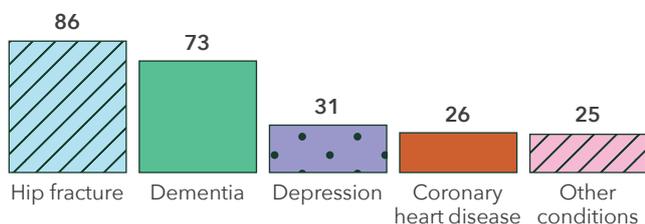
2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated using input data from more robust sources. See methodology report for details.

Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Walking in the area prevents 241 serious long-term health conditions each year.

210 in 2023

Cases prevented



Above figures are based on applying area data to Sport England MOVES tool, which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity. 'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer and colorectal cancer.

This saves the HSE

€3.1 million per year

€2.8 million in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

51,000

GP appointments

50,000 in 2023

The physical activity benefits from walking

prevent 53 early deaths annually

49 in 2023

which is valued at

€400 million

€380 million in 2023

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. Wheelchair and mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

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

7,900 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

14,000 kg in 2023

and

545 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀, which includes PM_{2.5}) annually.

988 kg in 2023

95% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



92% in 2023

Walking and wheeling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By walking or wheeling instead of driving, residents save

2,400 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) annually.

4,900 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

22,000 people

taking flights

from Shannon Airport to London Heathrow.

In 2023 transport accounted for **21.5%** of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2023, transport emissions went up by **129.4%**.^[i]

i. Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland's Final Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2023.

Walking and wheeling keeps the area moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^[ii] This helps to keep the area moving for all road users.

20,000 return trips

are walked and wheeled daily by residents who could have used a car.

26,000 in 2023

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

94 kilometres

equivalent to the distance from Galway City to Athlone.

125 kilometres in 2023

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

Benefits of cycling

Why everyone gains when more people cycle

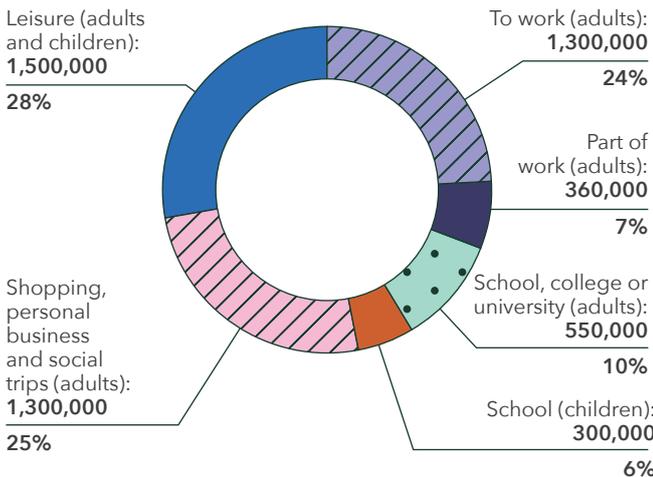


Together, Galway Metropolitan Area residents cycle twice around the world every day

Cycling can be convenient for many local trips, especially in cities and towns. It gives people transport choice and access to education, jobs and community.

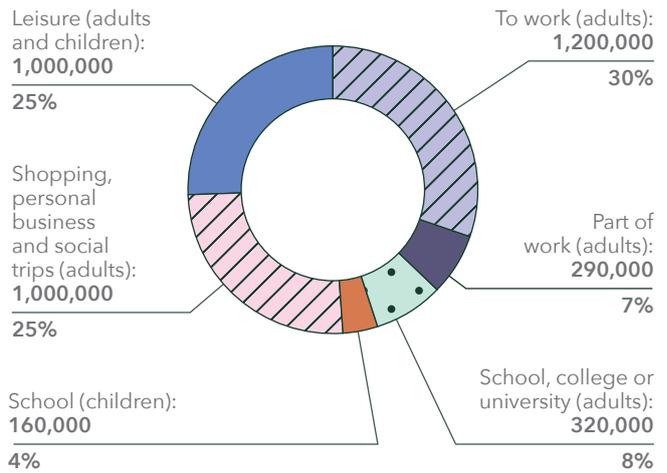
Annual cycling trips by purpose

5.3 million trips in 2025 which add up to **25 million kilometres**



Average cycling trip distance: 4.7 kilometres

4.1 million trips in 2023 which add up to **18.9 million kilometres**



Average cycling trip distance: 4.6 kilometres

Cycling benefits residents and society

We model the costs and benefits of cycling journeys, including those that replace trips which could have been driven, using our Societal Gain model. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

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

€24.2 million

Many of these trips were made by people with access to a car. For these (excluding trips for leisure) our model compares the costs and benefits of cycling to those of driving.

For these journeys **€1.67** is saved for each kilometre cycled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **€15.6 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **9.4 million kilometres** cycled by those that could have used a car.



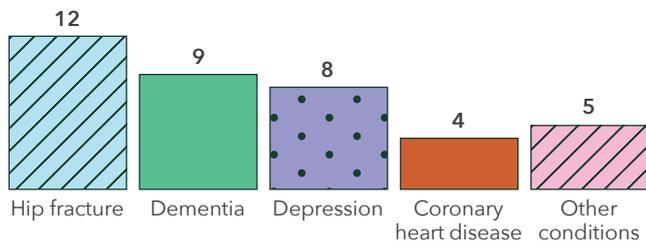
2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated for the inclusion of cycling trips as part of work and using input data from more robust sources. See methodology report for details.

Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in the area prevents 38 serious long-term health conditions each year.

30 in 2023

Cases prevented



Above figures are based on applying area data to Sport England MOVES tool, which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity. 'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer and colorectal cancer.

This saves the HSE

€530,000 per year

€420,000 in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

8,800

GP appointments

7,700 in 2023

The physical activity benefits from cycling

prevent 4 early deaths annually

3 in 2023

which is valued at

€27.1 million

€20.8 million in 2023

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.

People cycling instead of driving improves air quality, saving:

3,800 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

3,700 kg in 2023

and

286 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀, which includes PM_{2.5}) annually.

276 kg in 2023

95% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



92% in 2023

Cycling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By cycling instead of driving, residents save

1,600 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) annually.

1,600 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

14,000 people

taking flights

from Shannon Airport to London Heathrow.

In 2023 transport accounted for **21.5%** of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2023, transport emissions went up by **129.4%**.^[i]

i. Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland's Final Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2023.

Cycling keeps the area moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^[ii] This helps to keep the area moving for all road users.

3,700 return trips

are cycled daily by residents who could have used a car.

3,100 in 2023

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

18 kilometres

equivalent to the distance from Galway City centre to Spiddal.

15 kilometres in 2023

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

Walking and wheeling solutions

What would help make walking and wheeling easier?



New homes and existing communities should have services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Putting walking and wheeling at the heart of new and existing communities gives people greater transport choice, while reducing car dependency.

68%

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

73% in 2023

83%

support prioritising new housing developments that support walking, wheeling, cycling or the use of public transport

New developments and existing communities can support walking and wheeling by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live.

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

67%

more shops and everyday services, such as banks and post offices, close to their home

67% in 2023

69%

more government services, such as doctors surgeries and schools, close to their home

62% in 2023

74%

more parks or green spaces close to their home

69% in 2023

72%

more things to see and do close to their home, like cafés or entertainment venues

71% in 2023

Residents want walking and wheeling to better align with buses

While walking and wheeling should be the most attractive option for short journeys, it should also be integrated with public transport for longer trips.

Bus use is the most common form of multi-modal journey across Ireland, and most bus trips depend upon walking and wheeling. Residents told us they need practical improvements to better integrate these modes of transport.



What percentage of residents would find these changes useful to help them take journeys that include walking or wheeling and the bus more often?

78%

more information to help them plan and take a journey (such as apps, maps, signage or public transport staff)

80%

more direct walking and wheeling routes from housing estates to bus stops

80%

accessible walking and wheeling routes to and from bus stops

80%

improved safety while walking or wheeling to and from the bus stop

81%

improved walking and wheeling crossing facilities near bus stops

83%

improved bus stops (such as accessible, well lit and maintained, cover from rain, display of service information)

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?

74%

wider footpaths

74% in 2023

73%

more frequent road crossings, with reduced wait times

70% in 2023

76%

nicer places along streets to stop and rest, like more benches, trees and shelters

75% in 2023

77%

better footpath accessibility, like level surfaces and dropped kerbs at crossing points

76% in 2023

73%

fewer cars parked on the footpath

73% in 2023

61%

less fear of crime or antisocial behaviour in their area

59% in 2023

In the area, for each road making up a junction with traffic lights

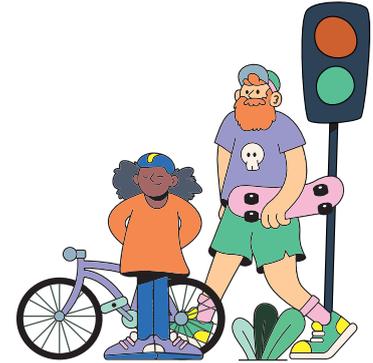
84% have a pedestrian crossing



16% don't have a pedestrian crossing



For example, a T-junction has three roads making up the junction, and a crossroads has four.



Richard Manton

Walking and cycling trails are great for the environment, health and wellbeing. Living in the West End and working in the university, I walk along the Eglinton Canal every day.

The recent upgrade, including zebra crossings all the way from Dominick Street to Ward's, has made the walk serene and carefree. The bilingual waterway trail signage is also a nice touch – keep an eye out for the madra uisce!

At the Cathedral, I can turn right to cross Droichead an Dóchais, the new pedestrian

and cycling bridge, and head into the pedestrianised city core and Ireland's best-located train station. Or I can cross the road and enter University of Galway, Ireland's most sustainable university campus with a beautiful, riverside biodiversity trail all the way to Dangan.

While there have been many improvements in recent years, we still need more greenways, cycle lanes, footpath upgrades and safe junctions to encourage more people to walk and cycle.

Cycling solutions

What would make cycling better?

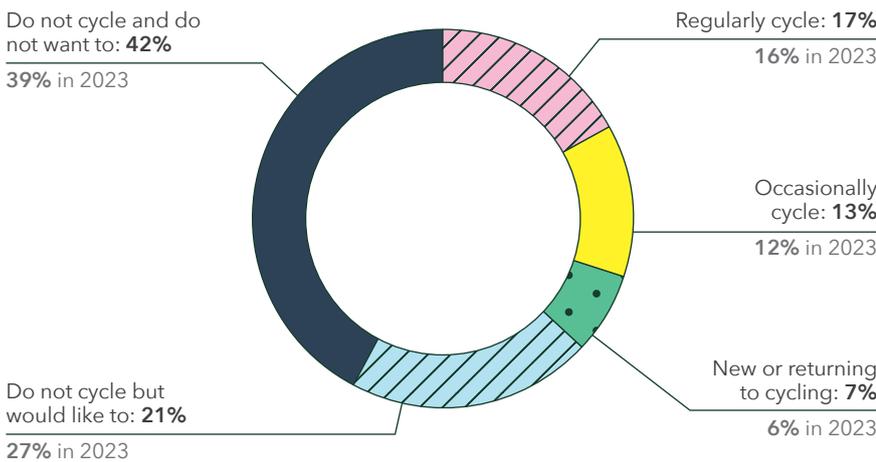


Many residents want to cycle

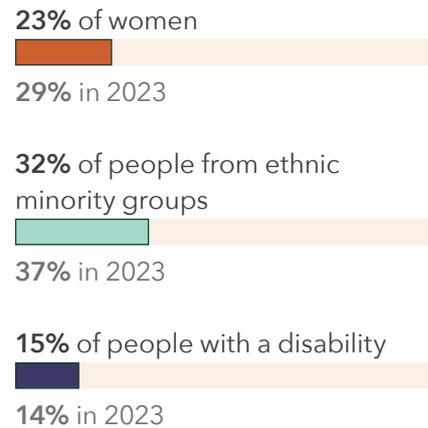
There is considerable appetite to start cycling from residents who don't already.

To meet this demand we must address safety, ensuring people have dedicated space for cycling, as well as supporting access to a cycle, training, cycle parking, and better integration of cycling with public transport.

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?

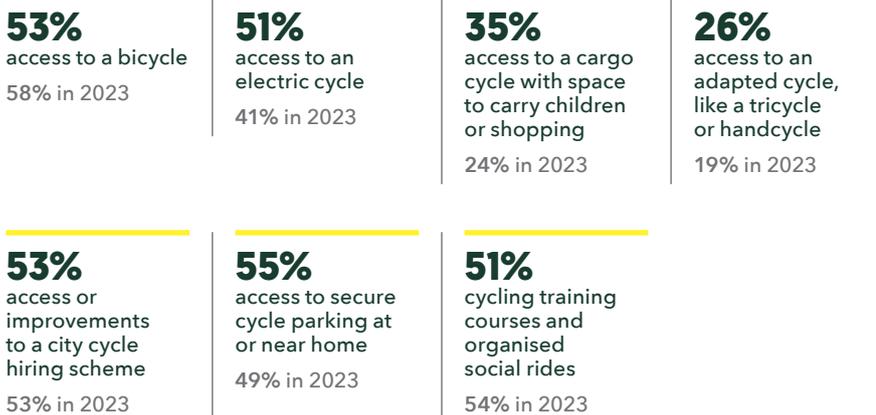


What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'

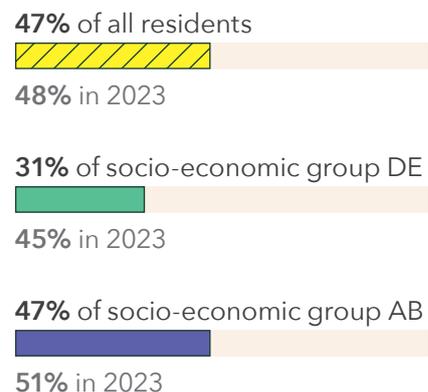


Residents want more support to cycle

What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them start cycling or to cycle more?



Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle



Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

People want networks of dedicated and safe cycle paths, cycle parking and better integration with public transport.

In the area there are:

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

Among residents:

9% of households

are within 125 metres of either traffic-free cycle paths away from the road, or cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

The area has

10 km

of cycle paths level with the footpath, distinguished by a different surface

10 km

of traffic-free cycle paths away from the road

4 km

of cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

38

cycle parking spaces across 3 railway and bus stations

67%

more traffic-free cycle paths away from roads, like through parks or along waterways
70% in 2023

67%

more cycle paths along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians
69% in 2023

66%

more signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets
67% in 2023

61%

better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking at train stations, bus stops/stations
59% in 2023

91%

support improving and increasing local off-road walking, wheeling and cycling paths

82%

support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic
88% in 2023

91%

support improving walking, wheeling and cycling access to bus stops and coach or rail stations



Áine Carroll

Cycling gives me freedom, joy, and keeps me active. As a retiree on my E-Bike, I can cycle with ease, for shopping, appointments, and collecting my grandchildren. It connects me to my community- I say hello as I pass by. I don't worry about parking or traffic. For me, cycling is clean, reliable, and environmentally friendly. I love the functionality of it. You're not parking, you're not looking for a space, paying for a space.

Small little things mean an awful lot to a cyclist or to anybody who's actively travelling. At the end of the Dyke Road, to connect on to Wood Quay there was a little walkway with rutted gravel. We asked the council to repair it and resurface it, and they did a marvellous job. A little bit of tarmac made a marvellous impact, and now even a wheelchair can use it.

Neighbourhood solutions

Thriving places, centring children

Neighbourhoods should prioritise the needs and wellbeing of the people who live there and visit. They should be planned to support community, foster social connection, and be places where everyone feels welcome.

Designing neighbourhoods with children in mind means they work better for everyone.

Improving the journey to school

Schools are at the centre of many neighbourhoods and should be part of any plan to make neighbourhoods better.

This means working with schools to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling, but also improving the neighbourhood around schools to reduce traffic and improve footpaths, crossing points and cycle provision.

65% support



24% oppose



closing residential streets outside schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times

These are known as 'School Streets'.

1 school

in the area has a School Streets scheme

1 school in 2023

86% support



7% oppose



reducing speed limits, improving crossing points and introducing protected cycle paths in school neighbourhoods

These are known as 'Safe Routes to School'.^[i]

13 schools

are in the Safer Routes to School programme

i. The Safer Routes to School schemes aim to provide distinctive colourful schools zones at the front of schools to prioritise children walking, wheeling and cycling, discourage vehicle drop-offs, and improve crossings and key links for children choosing active travel.

Giving children the independence to roam, play and develop

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive. Well-designed neighbourhoods can give children freedom to move around, play and socialise, helping children's independence, social skills, and autonomy.

Average age when parents and carers would let children travel independently in their neighbourhood

12 years old
to walk or wheel

13 years old
to cycle

14 years old
to use public transport

88%

agree there is space for children to socialise and play

91% in 2023

Fewer children play out on their streets than ever before. Just **27%** of children said they regularly play outside their homes, compared to **71%** of those born between 1946 and 1964.

Save the Children, Summer of Play campaign survey, 2022.



Residents support child-safe neighbourhoods

Adults support child-safe neighbourhoods, including traffic-reduction targets and measures to reduce through traffic and traffic speed, but this must be done fairly.

62%

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

65% in 2023

84%

support setting traffic-reduction targets and taking action to achieve these

79% in 2023

79%

support low-traffic neighbourhoods

87% in 2023

13%

of the total length of unclassified roads in the area have nothing to prevent through traffic. This can result in rat running.^[ii]

12% in 2023

Residents would find fewer motor vehicles on their streets useful to:

66% walk or wheel more



59% cycle more



77%

support reducing speed limits on local roads in built-up areas to 30 km/h speed limits

23%

of the area's streets should typically have traffic travelling at speeds below 30 km/h (excluding motorways)

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

65% walk or wheel more



56% cycle more



Everyone should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

Improvements to neighbourhoods must also recognise the needs of adults, for example women, people with a disability and people from ethnic minority groups.

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

95%

of all residents



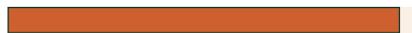
93% in 2023

84%

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

83% in 2023

95% of women



93% in 2023

94% of men



94% in 2023

94% of people from ethnic minority groups



94% in 2023

95% of white people



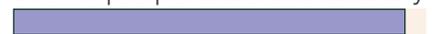
93% in 2023

85% of people with a disability



91% in 2023

95% of people without a disability



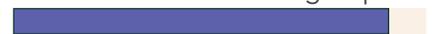
93% in 2023

95% of socio-economic group DE



93% in 2023

91% of socio-economic group AB



91% in 2023

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



Developing the area

Improving walking, wheeling and cycling

The National Planning Framework projects a 50-60% population increase in Galway City and suburbs by 2040, significantly increasing demand for transport infrastructure.

Traffic congestion has long affected quality of life, safety, the environment, and Galway's economic role in the West Region. This impact extends into the wider county due to a large commuter population.

Galway City and County Councils are committed to shifting towards sustainable transport, particularly active travel. Since 2021, both councils have established dedicated Active Travel teams, with staff focused solely on planning and delivering these projects.

Over €57 million has been invested in active travel initiatives since 2019, comprising over €46 million National Transport Authority (NTA), €3.5 million European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and €7.6 million Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) funding. This has enabled the development of new and improved walking and cycling infrastructure, safer school routes and public realm enhancements aimed at encouraging healthier, low-carbon travel choices.

**Galway City and County Councils
are committed to shifting
towards sustainable transport,
particularly active travel.**



Eglinton Canal Active Travel Scheme

The Eglinton Canal Active Travel Scheme, opened in May 2024, upgraded 880m of paths to support safe walking, cycling, and wheeling in Galway's Westend. The route runs from Father Griffin Road to University Road and includes resurfacing, zebra crossings, and traffic calming. It improves access to Galway Cathedral, University of Galway, University Hospital Galway, the city centre, and the Spanish Arch.



Wolfe Tone Bridge II

The Wolfe Tone Pedestrian Bridge II project, completed in May 2024, delivered a new cantilever walkway on the south side of the existing bridge - one of the busiest River Corrib crossings. Mirroring the 2004 northern extension, it provides a safe, segregated route for pedestrians and offers scenic views of Claddagh Quay and the Spanish Arch for residents and visitors alike.



The Crescent/Sea Road Junction Upgrade

This project delivers key upgrades to improve safety, accessibility, and the environment. Raised tables and narrowed junctions calm traffic and shorten crossings. A new footpath links the bus stop to the Medical Centre, while rain gardens and planting enhance stormwater management and aesthetics. Pedestrian safety was boosted with new crossings, safety bollards, and clear markings near Scoil Fhursa on Fr Griffin Avenue and The Crescent.



Doughiska Road South Cycle Network Scheme

The Doughiska Road South Cycle Network Scheme, opened in February 2024, provides safe, segregated cycling and walking facilities along the route linking the Old Dublin Road to the Coast Road. Previously lacking infrastructure, the area now features cycle lanes, footpaths, pedestrian crossings, continuous footways, and redesigned junctions to reduce vehicle speed - improving access to nearby residential, retail, and recreational areas for people walking, wheeling, and cycling.

Looking forward

Better places and streets for everyone



Bóthar Stiofáin Cycle Network

The Bóthar Stiofáin Cycle Network Scheme is an 870 m route connecting key residential, educational, and commercial areas in the west of Galway City. It features raised cycle tracks and zebra crossings, and aims to improve safety, reduce speeds, and promote active travel.

Construction on this project is ongoing.

Western Distributor Road (WDR) Cycle Scheme

The project proposes to enhance walking and cycling infrastructure along the Western Distributor Road, creating a safer, more attractive route for all users. The project includes upgraded cycle lanes, improvements to safety at five roundabouts, and supports the Galway Transport Strategy's vision of the WDR as a Primary Cycle Route. This project received planning approval in October 2025, and is progressing towards construction, beginning in 2026.

Ballybane Road and Castlepark Road Cycle Network Scheme

This scheme will deliver 2.5 km of safe, attractive cycle and pedestrian route along Ballybane and Castlepark Roads. It includes 2 m protected cycle tracks and footpaths, narrowed carriageways, raised and signalised crossings, junction upgrades, and landscaping. The project aims to improve safety, reduce speeds, and encourage walking and cycling. Construction began in February 2025 and is scheduled to be completed in Q3 2026.

BusConnects Galway

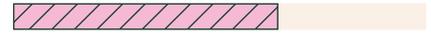
The Cross-City Link and Dublin Road projects will both be transformative for bus transport in Galway. Both projects will create dedicated corridors for public transport and cyclists, offering faster, safer and more comfortable journeys for all bus users, walkers, wheelers and cyclists.

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

66% on walking and wheeling



64% on cycling



69% on buses



63% on trains



55% on other forms of public transport



41% on driving



The project aims to improve safety, reduce speeds, and encourage walking and cycling.

Oranmore Village to Oranmore Train Station

Galway County Council are developing a scheme to provide enhanced connectivity between Oranmore Village and Oranmore Train Station. The station is located within 2km of the Oranmore Village centre and provides a reliable and frequent commuter service into Galway City. By providing new cycling infrastructure and improving pedestrian connectivity from Oranmore and the rapidly expanding Garraun area to the train station, it will enhance the attractiveness of using the train for commuters into Galway City.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

Galway City Council has engaged with An Taisce, the NTA and schools throughout Galway with a view to progressing Safe Routes to School schemes. Works have been completed at Scoil Fhursa, Nile Lodge. In addition, a School Street initiative has been in place at Scoil Iognáid, Raleigh Row since 2021, and this has been supported by permanent works completed in 2024.

Other schools in Galway City which have successfully applied to benefit from part of the Safe Routes to School include:

- Scoil Caitriona, Renmore
- Colaiste Iognaid, Br. Na Mara
- Gaelscoil Dara, Renmore
- Galway Educate Together National School
- Colaiste Einde Secondary School
- St John the Apostle Knocknacarra NS
- St Patricks NS Galway City

Galway County Council has engaged with An Taisce, the NTA and three schools in Oranmore (within the GMA) SRTS Round 1 Oranmore: Calasanctius College, Gaelscoil de hÍde and Scoil Íosaif Naofa which are proposed to be constructed in 2026.



Tanushree Yadav

Walking has always been my favourite way to get around. Since moving to Galway, it's part of my daily routine - whether I'm taking a break from the screen, running errands, or heading to university. It gives me a sense of freedom and clarity. I often use it to rejuvenate and take in the city's subtle yet exquisite details.

Walking along the riverbank or across the bridges brings a reassuring calm - the scenery is serene and the breeze

enhances the experience. Every Saturday, I take part in a 5km walk/run event, helping me stay active and feel part of the community.

Yet challenges remain. Some walkways are uneven or narrow, and crossing busy roads can feel dangerous. Better crossings, lighting, and well-defined routes would help Galway become a safer, more walkable, and connected city for all.

Notes on methodology

The attitudinal survey was conducted from April to August 2025 (April to July 2023) by independent research company Ipsos B&A.

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

All other data are sourced from our regional and local partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. All locally-sourced data are correct as of 28 May 2025.

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

Trip estimates now include cycling trips as part of work for both 2025 and 2023. Previously published 2023 model estimates have been recalculated to include these and allow for direct comparison and using some different input data from more robust sources. This has also impacted walking trip estimates from 2023.

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 on data sources and calculations, including strengths and limitations of the survey and model methodology, are available at www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/walking-cycling-index

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust is the charity making it possible for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

Because people powered movement changes everything. Our health. Our wellbeing. Our world.

www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk

Funding and support

Walking and Cycling Index Galway Metropolitan Area has been funded and supported by the National Transport Authority. The project is co-ordinated by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and has been supported by Galway City Council and Galway County Council.

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust is a registered charity in Ireland (20206824), in England and Cymru (326550), and Scotland (SC039263).

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