# Cork Metropolitan Area Walking and Cycling Index 2023

Published March 2024

Cork County Council

Cork City Council

National Transport Authority

Sustrans

## Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is enlightening to know that those choosing to walk and cycle instead of drive, are creating over €400m/PA economic benefit to the Metropolitan Area, which is saving the equivalent of 230,000 flights from Cork to Heathrow in greenhouse gas emissions.

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

### Cllr. Frank O’Flynn, Mayor of the County of Cork:

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

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

## Contents

[The Walking and Cycling Index 5](#_Toc159241308)

[Headlines 7](#_Toc159241309)

[Walking in the Cork Metropolitan Area 11](#_Toc159241310)

[Cycling in the Cork Metropolitan Area 14](#_Toc159241311)

[Benefits of walking 17](#_Toc159241312)

[Benefits of cycling 20](#_Toc159241313)

[Walking solutions 23](#_Toc159241314)

[Cycling solutions 26](#_Toc159241315)

[Neighbourhood solutions 29](#_Toc159241316)

[Developing the Cork Metropolitan Area 32](#_Toc159241317)

[Looking forward 34](#_Toc159241318)

[Notes on methodology: 36](#_Toc159241319)

## 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[[1]](#footnote-2) reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the first report from the Cork Metropolitan Area produced in partnership with the National Transport Authority of Ireland. The data in this report comes from 2023 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,099 residents aged 16 or above in the Cork Metropolitan Area. The survey was conducted from May to July 2023. Independent market research company Behaviour & Attitudes conducted the survey, which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

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

More details on all reports can be found at [www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index). For more data, see the [Index Data Tool](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/index-data-tool).

Map of the UK and Ireland showing the cities participating in the Walking and Cycling Index: Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Cork Metropolitan Area, Dublin Metropolitan Area, Dundee, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Galway Metropolitan Area, Glasgow, Greater Cambridge, Greater Manchester, Inverness, Limerick Metropolitan Area, Liverpool City Region, Perth, Southampton City Region, Stirling, Tower Hamlets, Tyneside and Waterford Metropolitan Area.

### 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.

## Headlines

Cork Metropolitan Area

### Population:[[2]](#footnote-3)

**327,649**

### Survey area

Map showing the area covered by the survey with Blarney, Cork City, Glanmire, Carrigaline, Carrigtwohill, Cobh and Midleton highlighted. The area is approximately 834 square kilometres and covers all of Cork Metropolitan Area.

### Frequency of different modes of travel

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

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

Walking or wheeling: **52%**

Driving[[3]](#footnote-4): **62%**

Public transport: **9%**

Cycling: **4%**

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

**18%** of residents cycle at least once a week

### Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

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

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

**31%** of people with a disability

**54%** of people without a disability

#### Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week[[4]](#footnote-5)

**12%** of women

**25%** of men

### Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

#### Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety is good[[5]](#footnote-6)

**66%** of socio-economic group DE

**76%** of socio-economic group AB

#### Proportion of residents who think cycling safety is good

**49%** of women

**50%** of men

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

**95%** of people from ethnic minority groups

**91%** of white people

### Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Every day, walking, wheeling and cycling in the Cork Metropolitan Area take up to **69,000** cars off the road.[[6]](#footnote-7) Each year in the Cork Metropolitan Area these three modes combined:

* Prevent **729** serious long‑term health conditions
* Create **€401.6 million** in economic benefit for individuals and the Cork Metropolitan Area
* Save **18,000 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions

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

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

##### Walk or wheel

**52%** more

**3%** less

##### Cycle

**37%** more

**1%** less

##### Take public transport

**40%** more

**5%** less

##### Drive

**21%** more

**16%** less

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

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

**71%** on walking and wheeling

**63%** on cycling

**70%** on public transport

**40%** on driving

### Increased funding would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

#### Among Cork Metropolitan Area residents:

**69%** support, while **18%** oppose, more cycle paths along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

**80%** agree, while **10%** disagree, that increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local main street would improve their local area

**86%** support, while **3%** oppose, the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods[[7]](#footnote-8)

**81%** support, while **8%** oppose, the ban on vehicles parking on the footpath

**82%** support, while **6%** oppose, the creation of more low‑traffic neighbourhoods[[8]](#footnote-9)

**64%** support, while **18%** oppose, shifting investment from road building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

## Walking in the Cork Metropolitan Area

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

### Walking and wheeling participation

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

**89%** of all residents walk or wheel

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

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

##### Gender[[9]](#footnote-10)

**52%** of women

**51%** of men

##### Ethnicity

**53%** of people from ethnic minority groups

**52%** of white people

##### Age

**70%** of people aged 16–25

**50%** of people aged 26–35

**46%** of people aged 36–45

**50%** of people aged 46–55

**51%** of people aged 56–65

**40%** of people aged 66+

##### Disability

**31%** of people with a disability

**54%** of people without a disability

##### Socio-economic group[[10]](#footnote-11)

**58%** of AB

**55%** of C1

**52%** of C2

**41%** of DE

### Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

**72%** of residents think the level of safety for walking or wheeling is good

**60%** of residents think the level of safety for children walking or wheeling is good

**76%** of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel

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

##### Gender

**72%** of women

**72%** of men

##### Ethnicity

**79%** of people from ethnic minority groups

**71%** of white people

##### Age

**80%** of people aged 16–25

**69%** of people aged 26–35

**70%** of people aged 36–45

**71%** of people aged 46–55

**69%** of people aged 56–65

**72%** of people aged 66+

##### Disability

**71%** of people with a disability

**72%** of people without a disability

##### Socio-economic group

**76%** of AB

**73%** of C1

**72%** of C2

**66%** of DE

### Quote from Joanna Dukkipati, working mum

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

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

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

## Cycling in the Cork Metropolitan Area

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

### Cycling participation

Cycling participation is not equal. Barriers to cycling can be far more pronounced for some people. Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.[[11]](#footnote-12)

**25%** of all residents cycle

**18%** of all residents cycle at least once a week

#### Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

##### Gender

**12%** of women

**25%** of men

##### Ethnicity

**19%** of people from ethnic minority groups

**18%** of white people

##### Age

**33%** of people aged 16–25

**19%** of people aged 26–35

**18%** of people aged 36–45

**12%** of people aged 46–55

**18%** of people aged 56–65

**5%** of people aged 66+

##### Disability

**2%** of people with a disability

**20%** of people without a disability

##### Socio-economic group

**24%** of AB

**20%** of C1

**18%** of C2

**10%** of DE

### Cycling safety and satisfaction

**49%** of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good

**43%** of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good

**53%** of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle

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

##### Gender

**49%** of women

**50%** of men

##### Ethnicity

**61%** of people from ethnic minority groups

**48%** of white people

##### Age

**60%** of people aged 16–25

**42%** of people aged 26–35

**51%** of people aged 36–45

**45%** of people aged 46–55

**49%** of people aged 56–65

**46%** of people aged 66+

##### Disability

**44%** of people with a disability

**49%** of people without a disability

##### Socio-economic group

**54%** of AB

**50%** of C1

**52%** of C2

**40%** of DE

### Quote from Fionn Rogan, Academic researcher

I cycle for shopping and recreation as well as commuting.

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

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

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

## Benefits of walking

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

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

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

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

**316** million kilometres = **870,000 kilometres** a day.

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

#### Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose[[12]](#footnote-13)

Destination – adults only (like work, school, shopping): **54,900**,**000** or **43%**

School – children only: **2,800**,**000** or **2%**

Enjoyment or fitness – adults and children (including running): **69,700**,**000** or **55%**

### Walking and wheeling benefits residents and the local economy

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

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

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

The total annual economic benefit from all trips walked and wheeled in the Cork Metropolitan Area is **€364.6 million[[13]](#footnote-14)**

### Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

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

##### Cases prevented

Hip fracture: **239**

Dementia: **197**

Depression: **84**

Coronary heart disease: **72**

Other conditions: **68**

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

Saving the HSE in the Cork Metropolitan Area **€9.6 million per year**, equivalent to the cost of **170,000 GP appointments**

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

In the Cork Metropolitan Area the physical activity benefits of walking prevent 133 early deaths annually, which is valued at **€1.03 billion**[[14]](#footnote-15)

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

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

**42,000 kg** of NOx

and

**5,200 kg** of particulates (PM10 and PM2.5)

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

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

**16,000 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by walking or wheeling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of **200,000** people taking flights from Cork to London Heathrow

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

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

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

### Walking and wheeling keeps the Cork Metropolitan Area moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.[[15]](#footnote-16) This helps to keep the Cork Metropolitan Area moving for all road users.

**65,000** return walking and wheeling trips are made daily in the Cork Metropolitan Area by people that could have used a car.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back **311 kilometres** equivalent to the distance from Cork City to Drogheda.

## Benefits of cycling

Why everyone gains when more people cycle

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

**7 million** cycling trips were made in the Cork Metropolitan Area in the past year

This adds up to **43.4 million kilometres** = **120,000 kilometres** a day

Annual cycling trips by purpose in the Cork Metropolitan Area[[16]](#footnote-17)

Work: **1,800**,**000** or **26%**

School, college or university (adults): **600,000** or **9%**

School (children): **160,000** or **2%**

Shopping, personal business and social trips: **1,300**,**000** or **18%**

Leisure: **3,100**,**000** or **45%**

### Cycling benefits residents and the local economy

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

**€1.40** is saved for each kilometre cycled instead of driven in the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Over a year this adds up to **€17.4 million** from adults with a car in their household cycling to work, school and other destinations.

The total annual economic benefit from all trips cycled in the Cork Metropolitan Area is **€37 million[[17]](#footnote-18)**

### Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

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

##### Cases prevented

Hip fracture: **22**

Dementia: **16**

Depression: **15**

Coronary heart disease: **8**

Other conditions: **8**

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

Saving the HSE in the Cork Metropolitan Area **€1.1 million per year**, equivalent to the cost of **20,000 GP appointments**

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

In the Cork Metropolitan Area the physical activity benefits of cycling **prevent 6 early deaths** annually, which is valued at **€47.5 million[[18]](#footnote-19)**

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually: **5,000 kg of NOx**

and

**615 kg of particulates** (PM10 and PM2.5)

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

### Cycling in the Cork Metropolitan Area helps mitigate our climate crisis

**2,100 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of **27,000 people taking flights** from Cork to London Heathrow

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

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

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

### Cycling keeps the Cork Metropolitan Area moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.[[19]](#footnote-20) This helps to keep the Cork Metropolitan Area moving for all road users.

**4,500** return cycling trips are made daily in the Cork Metropolitan Area by people that could have used a car.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back **22 kilometres** equivalent to the distance from Cork GPO to Midleton.

## 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.

**15%** of Cork Metropolitan Area households are in neighbourhoods of more than 40 homes per hectare.

These higher-density neighbourhoods can sustain local businesses and public transport routes more easily. This helps to reduce car dependency.[[20]](#footnote-21)

**70%** agree they can easily get to many places they need to visit without having to drive

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

**69%** More shops and everyday services, such as banks and post offices, close to your home

**69%** More services, such as doctors surgeries and schools, close to your home

**77%** More parks or green spaces close to your home

**75%** More things to see and do close to your home, like cafés or entertainment venues

#### 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).

Food shop: **81%**

Park or space for recreation: **79%**

Doctors surgery: **43%**

Primary school: **75%**

Post Office: **46%**

A mix of cultural and leisure venues:[[21]](#footnote-22) **90%**

Railway station or tram stop: **9%**

Bus stop (within 400m): **79%**

### 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?

**70%** Wider footpaths

**73%** More frequent road crossings, with reduced wait times

**78%** Nicer places along streets to stop and rest, like more benches, trees and shelters

**78%** Better footpath accessibility, like level surfaces, dropped kerbs at crossing points

**69%** Fewer cars parked on the footpath

**69%** Less fear of crime or antisocial behaviour in their area

##### In the Cork Metropolitan Area:

**21%** of National and Regional roads have a footpath width greater than **3**m[[22]](#footnote-23)

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

**90%** of residents agree more measures to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour on the street or in public spaces would improve their local area

### Quote from Nicola Meacle, Community Development worker

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

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

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

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

## Cycling solutions

What would make cycling better?

### Many Cork Metropolitan Area residents want to cycle

#### How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?

Regularly cycle: **12%**

Occasionally cycle: **11%**

New or returning to cycling: **3%**

Do not cycle but would like to: **24%**

Do not cycle and do not want to: **49%**

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

**23%** of women

**40%** of people from ethnic minority groups

**12%** of people with a disability

### Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

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

**64%** More traffic‑free cycle paths away from roads, like through parks or along waterways

**62%** More cycle paths along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

**63%** More signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets

**61%** Better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking at train stations, bus stops/stations

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

### Residents want more support to cycle

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

**47%** Cycling training courses and organised social rides

**54%** Access or improvements to a city cycle hire scheme

**36%** Access to secure cycle storage at or near home

**49%** Access to a bicycle

**33%** Access to an electric cycle

**24%** Access to a cargo cycle with space to carry children or shopping

**22%** Access to an adapted cycle, like a tricycle or handcycle

#### Cork Metropolitan Area cycle hire scheme[[23]](#footnote-24)

**662** hire cycles

**34** cycle hire stations

**119,216** annual trips

#### Reported cycle thefts

There were **726** reported cycle thefts in the Cork Metropolitan Area in 2022/**23**. (**874** in 2021/22)

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

#### Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

**45%** of residents

**26%** of socio-economic group DE

**59%** of socio-economic group AB

**85%** of residents support financial discounts for people on low incomes or not in employment to help them buy a cycle

**26%** of households are within 800m of a cycle shop[[24]](#footnote-25)

### Quote from Arundhathi Krishnan, Maths professor

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

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

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

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

## Neighbourhood solutions

What would help make neighbourhoods better?

### All residents should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

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

**91%** of residents

**91%** of women

**91%** of men

**95%** of people from ethnic minority groups

**91%** of white people

**90%** of people with a disability

**91%** of people without a disability

**85%** of socio-economic group DE

**94%** of socio-economic group AB

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

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

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

**62%** Walk or wheel more

**55%** Cycle more

Low-use minor roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in the Cork Metropolitan Area **19%** of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.[[25]](#footnote-26)

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

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

**69%** Walk or wheel more

**58%** Cycle more

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

**80%** agree increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local main street would improve their local area

**83%** agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello

**82%** support low‑traffic neighbourhoods

### Quote from Paul Manning, Business owner

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

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

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

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

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

### Neighbourhoods must be designed with children in mind

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

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

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

**80%** of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school.[[26]](#footnote-27)

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

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

Among Cork Metropolitan Area residents:

**61%** agree, while **20%** disagree, closing streets outside local schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area.

These are known as ‘School Streets’.

**0** schools in the Cork Metropolitan Area have School Streets schemes.[[27]](#footnote-28) But see **Safe Routes to School**.

## Developing the Cork Metropolitan Area

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

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

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

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

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

### Passage Greenway (Mahon to Marina)

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

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

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

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

### MacCurtain St – Active Travel and Public Transport Improvements

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

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

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

### Dunkettle to Glounthane

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

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

## Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

### Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS)

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

### Pathfinder Programme: Cork to Waterford

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

### Pedestrianisation of City Centre Streets

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

### Safe Routes to School

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

### Upcoming Schemes

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

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

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

### Quote from Patrick Murray, Business owner

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

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

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

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

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

## Notes on methodology:

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

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

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

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

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

More information and a detailed methodology are available at [www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index](https://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](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/)

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

© Sustrans March 2024

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

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

1. City is used as a shorthand for Walking and Cycling Index cities, city regions, metropolitan areas and boroughs. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. CSO Census 2022. This is the most recent available for the Cork Metropolitan Area. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. See definition in **Walking solutions**. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. For definition see [Methodology document](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. See Bike Life reports 2019 (various cities). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Trips for enjoyment or fitness include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). School trips are shown separately for children only. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. This includes trips walked or wheeled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. This includes trips cycled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, like cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Data covers July 2022–June 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. © OpenStreetMap contributors. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Based on analysis by CycleStreets [www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org](https://www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org/). Low‑use minor roads are those classed as ‘less significant minor roads’ on OpenStreetMap. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Children’s Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Figure given is correct as of 31 May 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)