

TV advert boosts Kelvin Cycleway commuting

Connecting to Bearsden and Milngavie, affluent suburbs in the adjoining East Dunbartonshire, the Kelvin Cycleway is a convenient off-road route into Glasgow City Centre. The cycleway was constructed as an alternative to the more congested adjacent primary distributor roads running from the north west of the city through the Glasgow University Campus and densely populated West End into the Charing Cross business district of the City Centre. The remainder of the City Centre is also easily accessed, since the Kelvin Cycleway links with National Route 7 and thereafter 75.

The path, previously un-surfaced, has been extensively upgraded to accommodate walkers and cyclists through:

- improving the width and geometry
- construction of a new river crossing
- provision of new street furnishings
- improving surface water drainage
- applying a bound bitumen surface.

Utilising the existing River Kelvin Walkway and Kelvingrove Park pathway networks, the cycleway provides city dwellers with access to an urban greenbelt environment. The route incorporates Scotland's first velo-bridge, known locally as the Ha'penny Bridge, spanning over the River Kelvin at Kirklee. The construction was built using environmentally friendly-farmed timber in order to integrate with the ambience of the surrounding parkland vista.

Glasgow City Council provided the infrastructure project funding in partnership with the Scottish Executive's Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets fund. The design and construction cost of the cycleway was £500,000 including £208,000 for the velo-bridge.

Recent surveys have identified that socio-economic groups residing in areas such as Bearsden and Milngavie generate a high proportion of single occupancy car travel. With these suburbs just over 5 miles from the city centre, cycling offers a serious alternative transport mode for many of these commuters.

Pushing the project – the television commercial

In recognition of the route's potential, Glasgow City Council, in conjunction with Cycling Scotland, took the decision to utilise previously untapped media to promote the newly-completed infrastructure, and cycling generally, as a viable transport alternative. A 30-second television commercial was produced, carrying the slogan 'Good for you, good for Scotland'. The primary target was 25 to 45 year old professionals in the West of Scotland area who currently commute by car. The prime aim of the commercial was to illustrate

the difference between a commuter's stressful car journey into the city centre, compared with that of a cyclist. The advert depicts the commuter enjoying a leisurely ride to work and contrasts the ease of his journey with the extremely slow progress of a daily drive. The central character, a professional male worker, was selected to relate to the socio-economic target group. It is clear from his attire that the main subject is neither particularly sporty, nor deemed a "proper" cyclist, illustrating to the audience that they don't need to be athletic or have expensive, specialised equipment to cycle regularly.

The commercial cost approximately £25,000 including production and initial screening. It was shown 26 times over an eleven-day period from the 5th May 2003 to coincide with the reopening of the refurbished route and Ha'penny bridge. It was broadcast within the Central West micro-region which encompasses a total population of over 2 million. The screening took place predominantly after 17:00 on weekdays in order to reach the target group who work during the day and watch television during peak and late night viewing times. At weekends, the commercial was broadcast principally during popular sports events to engage the target audience. A similar screening schedule was carried out during June 2004.

Evaluation

In order to measure the effectiveness of the project, data from an automatic cycle counter sited on the route was analysed. Cycling trips on the cycleway increased considerably following the initial screening of the television commercial, as is shown by the 5 day and 7 day traffic count graphs below. Walking usage of the route had not previously been monitored, so no comparisons are possible, but has been recently surveyed.

Kelvin Cycleway	
Number of cycle trips May – December (26 weeks)	
2002	15,106
2003	20,272

Further information

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