

16 Usage and Monitoring



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To appreciate the role of Greenways it is necessary to understand their potential usage and to measure what is recorded on completed schemes.

16.1 How we Travel

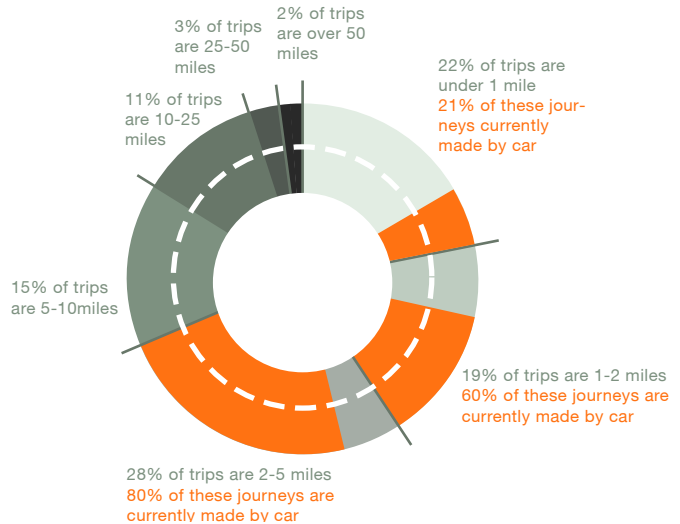
It is worth rehearsing a few general statistics about how we travel.

In the UK, in common with most countries in Europe, we each make just over 1100 trips per annum on average. This number has been almost constant for the last 40 years. In each county and in each town, this number of trips is divided up in various proportions depending upon the custom, the opportunities and policies in each area.

It is important to appreciate that if one wants to see a society where more trips are made by foot or by cycle – for health, environmental or social reasons – then there have to be less trips by some other mode, for example, driving. You can't expect people to travel more by bike and more by car! It follows then that a sure way to reduce car travel, and hence congestion, is to get more trips on foot and cycle (and by public transport).

Diagram 2. Trips per person per year by distance – showing percentage in each group made by car

Source: National Travel Survey 2005, Department for Transport (October 2006)



A large number of our trips are very short, nearly a quarter under 1 mile and nearly three-quarters under 5 miles in length.

A depressingly high proportion of short trips are made by car, 23% under a mile, 33% 1 – 2 miles, and 79% 2 – 5 miles. In fact 69% of all car journeys were less than 5 miles long in 2005. It is many of these relatively short trips which could move to walking or cycling if the conditions were more encouraging. Connect2 seeks to achieve this by overcoming barriers so that routes are more direct and thus shorter, and by making the routes more attractive so more people would be willing to walk and cycle rather more often and a little further.

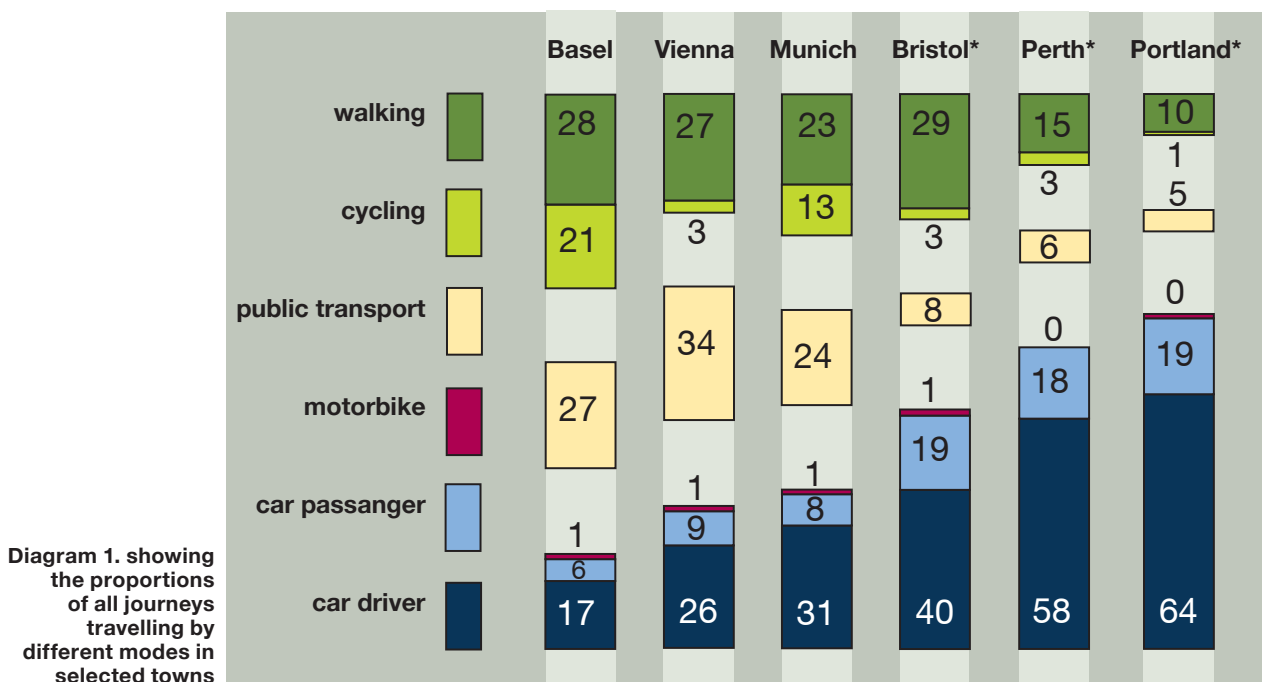


Diagram 1. showing the proportions of all journeys travelling by different modes in selected towns

Source: Socialdata/Sustrans 2004: all figures relate to % of trips by main mode

*data not city-wide

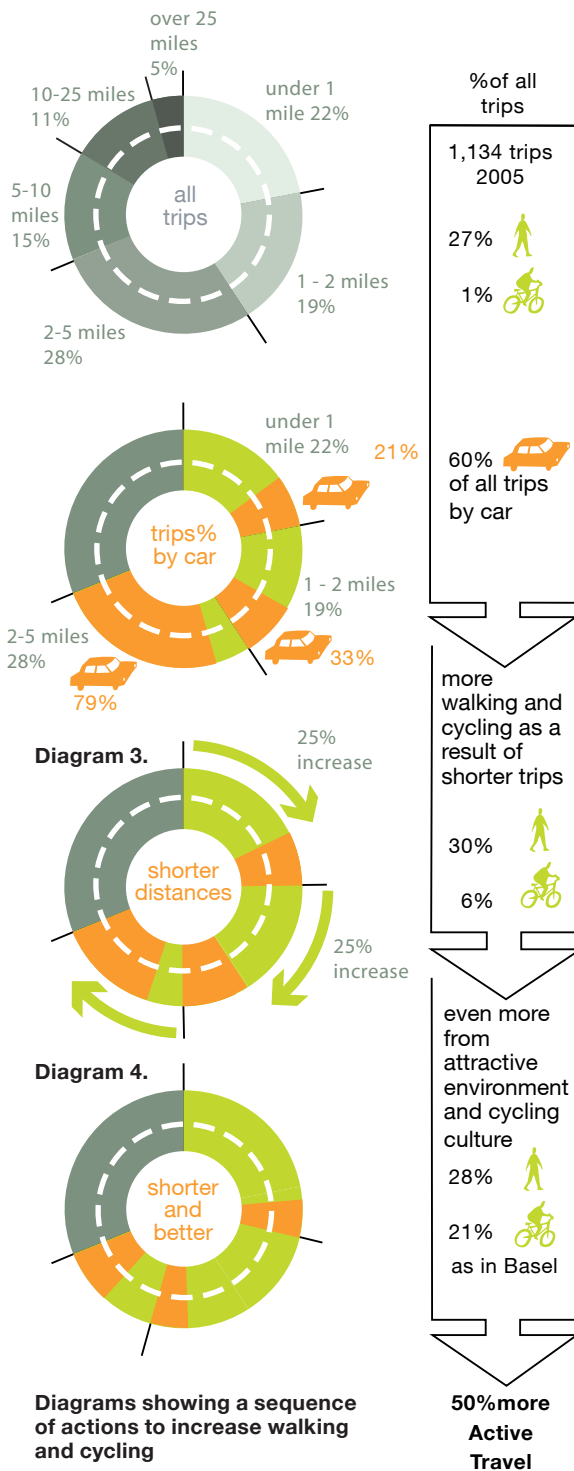


Diagram 3 (left) shows the effect of reversing the trend to longer trips with the result of more becoming suitable for walking and cycling and if the proportion of car trips remained the same in each of these shorter categories of distance, then the overall number of car trips would reduce.

Diagram 4 shows the effect of more attractive routes combined with a popular walking and cycling culture which would see a smaller and smaller proportion of these shorter trips driven by car.

Our aspirations might be to reach the 50% of trips made by active travel modes – walking and cycling – as already achieved in Malmo for example – the main industrial city of Sweden.

Although the proportion of trips made by foot over the less than 1 mile, and 1-2 mile distances has held up over the period 95-05, the overall proportion of trips by foot has declined from 33% to 27% because journeys overall have been getting longer and so the proportion of short trips has decreased.

The chart shows this along with the very small part played by cycling in the UK.

Diagrams showing a sequence of actions to increase walking and cycling

Chart showing stages per person per year by mode: 1995/1997 to 2005	1995/	1998	2002	2003	2004	2005
	1997	2000				
Walk ¹	33	31	27	28	28	27
Bicycle	2	1	1	1	1	1
All car/van	55	57	60	59	59	60
Local bus	6	6	6	6	6	6
Rail/Underground	2	2	2	2	3	2
Other	2	3	3	3	3	3
All modes	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total stages per person per year	1,207	1,186	1,129	1,119	1,116	1,134
Unweighted sample size:						
individuals	22,861	21,868	16,886	19,467	19,199	19,904
stages ('000s)	510	4755	349	397	392	409

¹ Short walks believed to be under-recorded in 2002 and 2003 compared with other years

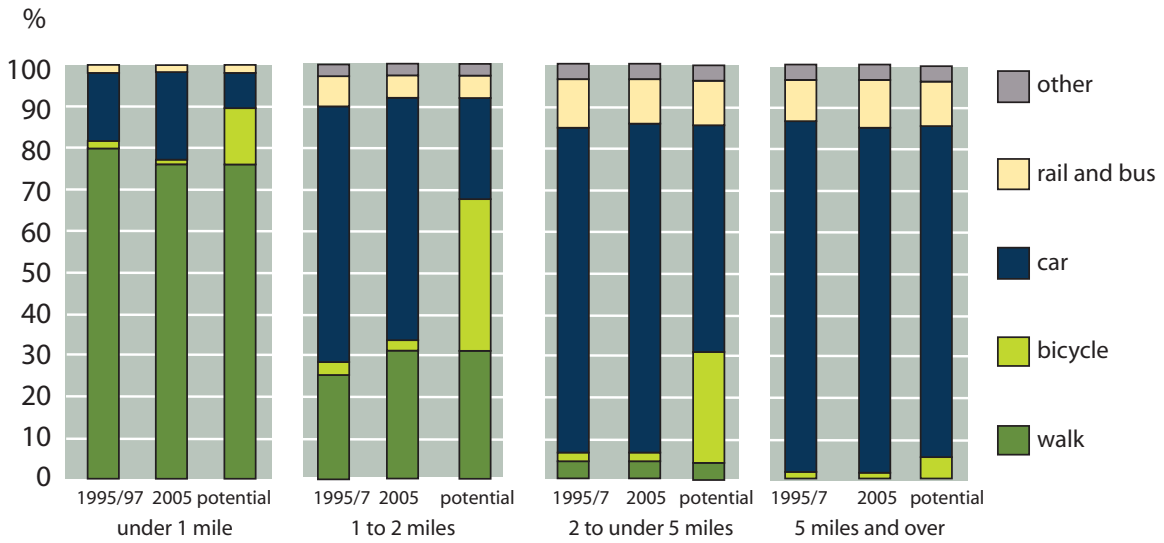
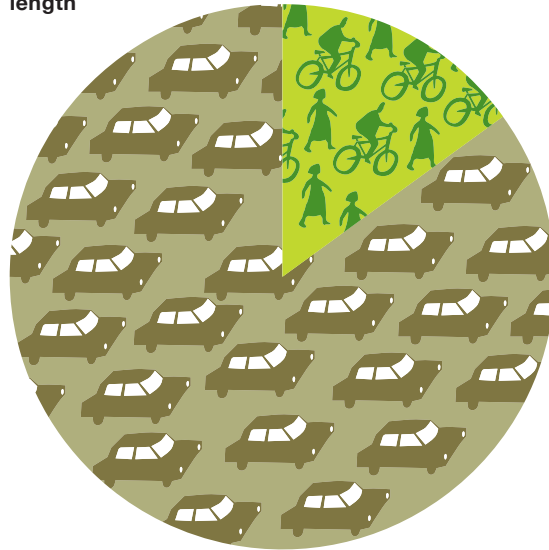


Diagram 5. showing the potential proportions of all journeys travelling by distance

The outcome of positive programmes to increase cycling to 10% or more of all trips will be most noticeable over the shorter distances, and will be the only practical way of cutting back the overwhelming use of the private car in the 2–5 miles bracket. We have added a bar to diagram 5 (above) showing this potential outcome as a result of Connect2 schemes and Greenway construction.

Longer Journeys – although the largest proportion of all trips is short, the relatively few longer trips account for much the greatest part of the mileage driven. So if we are to reduce CO₂ from transport, we need to reduce the overall distance driven and tackle these longer trips in particular. Whilst most walking and cycling journeys are very short, one should not overlook the value of their leading to the public becoming confident in cycling and being prepared to travel in this way for leisure and holiday journeys. This would contribute to a significant reduction in their personal CO₂ outputs. In bringing about a local cycling culture, Connect2 schemes will hope to see an effect on a wider scale.

Diagram 6. 85% of mileage driven is on trips over 8km (5 miles) in length



16.2 The Scope for Behavioural Change

Detailed analysis of actual travel behaviour in a number of towns suggests that there is considerable scope for change. For example, in a Gloucester Study, (TravelSmart 2004), it was found that 65% of all the car trips made by residents did not go outside the boundary of Gloucester (5 miles across) and that of these trips nearly 65% again could be made on foot, cycle or by bus. Our TravelSmart programme has been very successful in reducing car travel by 10% (one trip per week) but as can be seen from the diagram, more so in walking than in cycling, probably because the road conditions are seen as unsuitable and there are very few Greenways in Gloucester.

The challenge for Connect2 is to create both the physical conditions, and the popular culture where cycling, as well as walking, is common; where longer journeys are replaced by shorter ones and where one might hope to achieve much higher levels of walking and cycling.

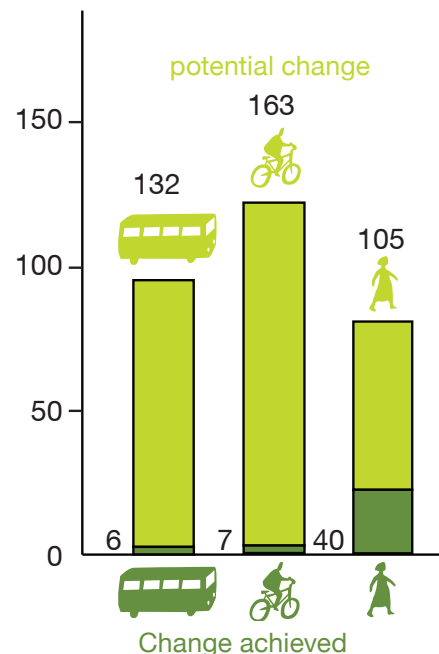
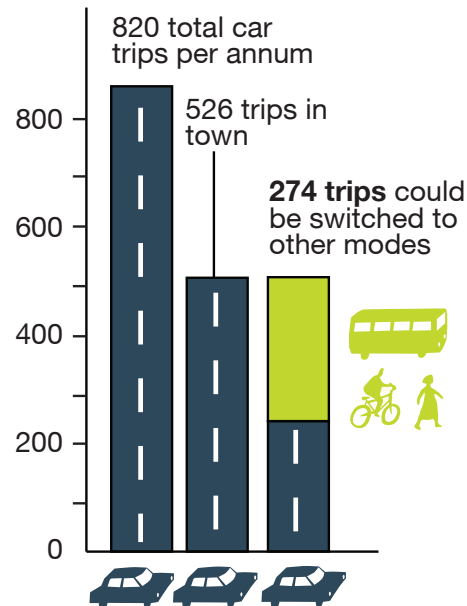


Diagram 7. switching car trips to other modes: potential for change against achieved
(TravelSmart, Gloucester, 2003-4)

16.3 The Purpose of Travelling

Less than 20% of all trips are for work. The school trip may be the most important trip of all because this is today's journey for tomorrow's adults. If they can get in to the habit of walking and cycling then there is a much better chance they will continue throughout their life.

The shopping trip is the fastest growing, and the leisure trip, certainly if one takes into account flying on holiday, the one which produces the most emissions. It follows that policies aimed at building an active and physically fit population, and one which reduces CO₂ output from transport, will be those which tackle every kind of journey. These will aim to both reduce the length of journeys and make them more attractive so that whether for work or leisure, walking and cycling will become the mode of choice.

16.4 Existing Monitoring of Greenways

Sustrans has been monitoring usage of the National Cycle Network for the last 8 years through nearly 1000 automatic counters coordinated with local authorities across the UK.

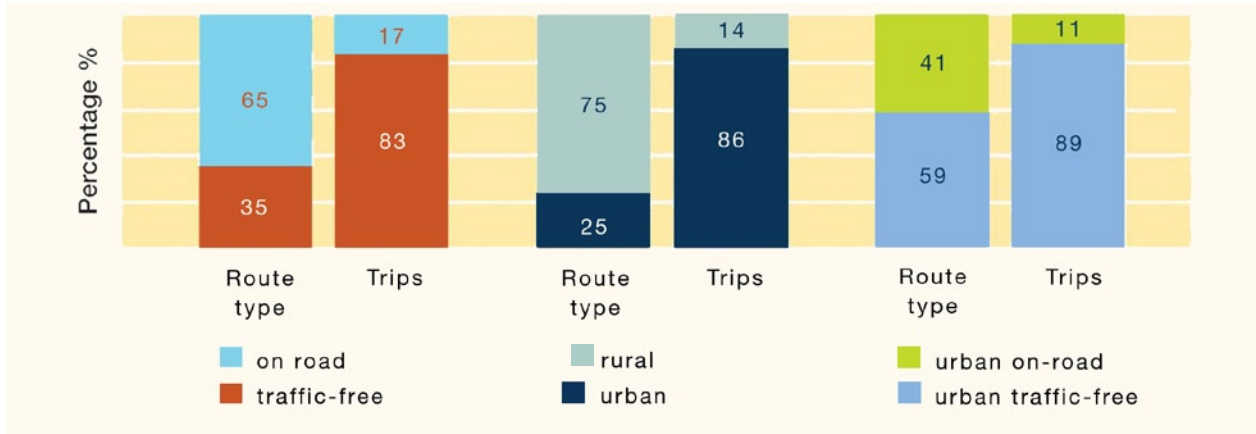
Usage along the traffic-free Greenways of the NCN (3500 miles) has grown year by year as the Network has expanded and use on existing sections increased. In 2006, nearly 200 million trips were made on these sections.

One of the myths of Greenways is that they are for leisure, and that it cannot be a real journey to work or school if one is doing it in pleasant surroundings and possibly enjoying oneself! But, as the data shows, the actual usage of the urban sections of the Greenways has a rather high proportion of commuters.

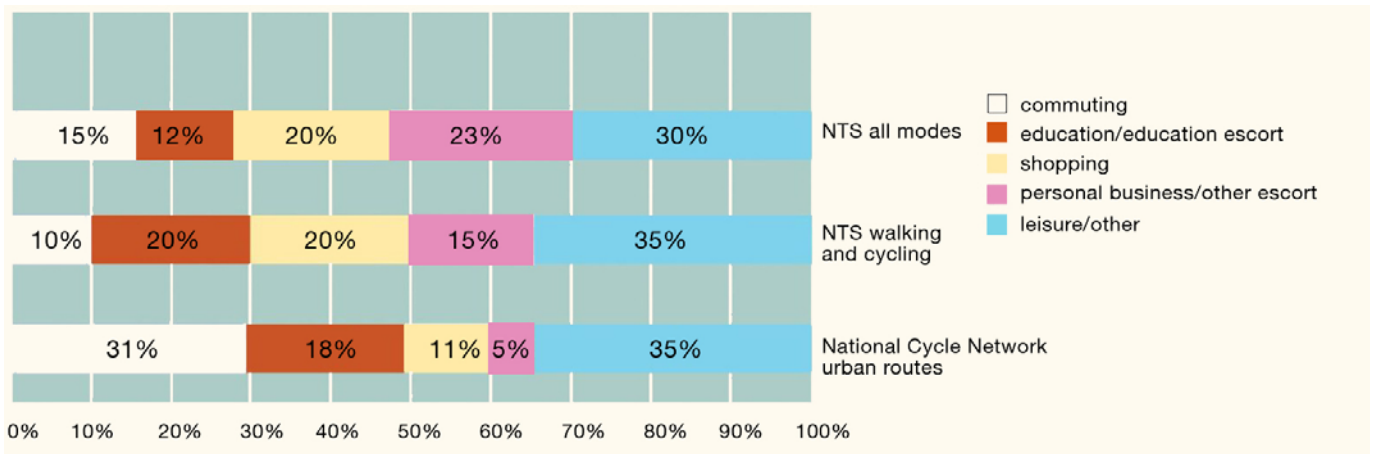


Chart (a) showing growth in usage on the traffic-free sections of the NCN

Chart (b) showing usage on urban and rural sections



Chart(c) showing break down by type of trip on the NCN



One consequence of the attractive nature of Greenways is that the public are prepared to travel a considerable distance along them. For example, the average cycling journey to work on these routes is 5 miles which is about double the distance people are otherwise cycling.

16.5 Connect2 Networks

These are likely to cater for a greater proportion of shorter journeys, simply because they are so local and fine grained in nature. We would anticipate that the data collected will be most interesting and will hugely consolidate our experience that the public will walk and cycle if given half a chance; and that the Connect2 project, by overcoming real barriers, will decisively change the mental map of local travelling.

All new Greenways and Connect2 schemes should include provision for monitoring and counting usage.

This should include automatic counters, which typically only record cyclists, backed up with manual counts to correlate usage, estimate pedestrian flow and assess information about type of journey, length and other data.

The Sustrans Monitoring team (andy.cope@sustrans.org.uk) can advise on details of appropriate monitoring plans.



Manual and automated counting on the National Cycle Network



16.6 Promoting Usage

Promotion has been covered all the way through these design notes including creating the best quality of route, taking links to everywhere the public might want to go, making Greenways an integral part of the council's transport strategy, opening events, signing and mapping.

One particular function of the longer Greenways is that of hosting sponsored events, fun runs and rides, training sessions and local activities of every kind. The Greenway is a second to none resource for public spaces, wildlife, for learning to cycle, for finding ones independence around towns, and for renewal at the heart of the community.

All these, and many other activities, should be encouraged as the sure way to be certain of a well used and popular path, which is well policed through informal surveillance, and well loved by its local community. This success needs to be communicated to the wider public so that they can see that there are other ways of travelling which are popular. The very public displays placed in prominent locations in Copenhagen do just this – showing the daily and cumulative use that year.



Counter in Odense, Denmark for measuring cycle journeys



Opening Spen Valley Railway Path near Heckmondwike



Mayor of Wandsworth welcoming 2005 Trail Blazing Ride from London to the Eden Project