# Edinburgh Walking and Cycling Index 2021

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The City of Edinburgh Council

Sustrans

## Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in Edinburgh

Edinburgh can be a healthier, fairer and compact capital city, with a higher quality of life for all. How our residents, visitors and businesses use and move about our streets is critical to how we achieve this vision. This vision is at the heart of the City’s Mobility Plan which, if delivered, will help to shift our transport system to play its part in achieving our 2030 net-zero emissions climate target. As the Walking and Cycling Index (WaCI) demonstrates, improving our streets to encourage more people to choose walking, wheeling and cycling is an essential part of delivering on this vision. I am therefore very pleased to introduce the Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life). WaCI now not only allows us to understand the value of and potential for cycling to contribute to this city, it also highlights how residents feel about Edinburgh as a place to walk and wheel around.

Delivering ambitious change requires investment. The planned investment programme will help deliver a step-change in the city’s cycling network and improve the safety of our streets for those walking and wheeling. However, it must be built on at every opportunity if we are to realise the healthier, fairer city that Edinburgh could be.

Since Bike Life 2019, the world as we knew it changed almost overnight. During the height of the pandemic we saw our streets with less motor traffic, giving more people the confidence to give cycling a go. Children used streets for playing, our local green spaces supported our mental health and we came to deeply appreciate the value of our local neighbourhoods and high streets.

The WaCI highlights the importance of investing in our neighbourhoods. Living locally has benefits for our citizens’ wellbeing. With opportunities to access services locally, more people will be able to choose to travel actively in order to meet their daily needs – whether for education, food shopping or to access healthcare. The multiple benefits of a local living approach are why ensuring residents live in and can access 20-minute neighbourhoods is such an important thread that must run through the city’s response to the climate crisis.

The WaCI provides a picture of how citizens are moving across the city. It will continue to be an important resource to guide the city’s transition to a net-zero future.

**Dr Sam Gardner, Chair of Edinburgh’s Climate Commission**

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## The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life) is the biggest assessment of walking and cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland. This is the first year walking has been included.

It is delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with 18 cities and urban areas. Each city[[1]](#footnote-1) reports on the progress made towards making both walking and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the fourth report from Edinburgh produced in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. The data in this report comes from 2021 and includes local walking and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,346 residents aged 16 or above in Edinburgh. The survey was conducted from June to August 2021 following Covid-19 travel restrictions across the UK being lifted. Social research organisation NatCen conducted the survey which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk or cycle.

Across this report we have included comparisons to 2019 data where available.

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

More details on all Walking and Cycling Index reports can be found at [**www.sustrans.org.uk/walkingcyclingindex**](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/walkingcyclingindex)

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

### Defining wheeling

We recognise some people, for example wheelchair or mobility scooter users, identify with the term wheeling instead of walking. Therefore we use the terms walking and wheeling together and consider walking and wheeling to include the use of mobility aids and pushchairs.

All walking survey responses within this report include responses from people who wheel. However, please note for graph labels we use walking as a shorthand for walking and wheeling.

## Report summary

Edinburgh

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

524,930

### Survey area

Map showing the area covered by the survey with Murrayfield Stadium and Holyrood Park highlighted. The area is approximately 105 square miles.

### The impact of the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on how, when and the amount we travel, especially in relation to public transport and driving.

Covid-19 Analysis, Transport for Scotland, 2021.

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

##### Walking

2019: 65%

2021: 66%

##### Driving[[3]](#footnote-3)

2019: 27%

2021: 24%

##### Public transport

2019: 27%

2021: 12%

##### Cycling

2019: 9%

2021: 8%

Participation in walking, wheeling and cycling on a regular basis has stayed about the same since 2019.

66% of residents walk at least five days a week (65% in 2019)

26% of residents cycle at least once a week (24% in 2019)

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

In Edinburgh, fewer women cycle than men and a smaller proportion of people from ethnic minority groups walk at least five days a week compared to white people.

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

60% of people from ethnic minority groups

68% of white people

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

17% of women[[4]](#footnote-4)

35% of men

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

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

69% of disabled people

81% of non-disabled people

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

32% of LGBQ+ people

48% of heterosexual people

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

64% of socio-economic group DE

84% of socio-economic group AB

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.

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

Every year, walking and cycling in Edinburgh:

* Prevents **1,252** serious long-term health conditions
* Creates **£186.2million** in economic benefit for individuals and the region
* Saves **38,000 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions

### Walking, wheeling and cycling help to tackle the climate emergency

Every day, walking and cycling in Edinburgh takes up to 150,000 **cars off the road[[5]](#footnote-5)**

However, 70.7 millionjourneys up to three miles are driven in Edinburgh each year

If 80% of these journeys were walked or cycled it could save approximately 23,000 tonnesof greenhouse gas emissions[[6]](#footnote-6)

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

#### Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending on:

52% on walking (60% in 2019)

52% on cycling (62% in 2019)

57% on public transport (62% in 2019)

27% on driving (27% in 2019)

### This would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

#### Among Edinburgh residents:

57% support, while 29% oppose, more cycle tracks along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

58% agree, while 27% disagree, increasing space for people socialising, walking and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

78% support, while 7% oppose, the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods[[7]](#footnote-7)

74% agree, while 6% disagree, more measures to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour on the street or in public spaces would improve their local area

61% support, while 21% oppose, the creation of more low‑traffic neighbourhoods

47% agree, while 25% disagree, closing streets outside local schools to cars during school drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

## Walking in Edinburgh

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

### Walking and wheeling participation

Overall in Edinburgh, the number of people walking and wheeling regularly (at least five days a week) has stayed about the same since 2019.

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.

97% of all residents walk (98% in 2019)

66% of residents walk at least five days a week (65% in 2019)

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

Gender**[[8]](#footnote-8)**

66% of women (67% in 2019)

67% of men (64% in 2019)

##### Ethnicity

60% of people from ethnic minority groups (61% in 2019)

68% of white people (66% in 2019)

##### Sexuality

73% of LGBQ+ people

67% of heterosexual people

##### Age

74% of people aged 16–25 (71% in 2019)

68% of people aged 26–35 (60% in 2019)

68% of people aged 36–45 (67% in 2019)

70% of people aged 46–55 (65% in 2019)

61% of people aged 56–65 (68% in 2019)

60% of people aged 66+ (64% in 2019)

##### Disability

58% of disabled people (59% in 2019)

70% of non-disabled people (67% in 2019)

##### Socio-economic group[[9]](#footnote-9)

69% of AB (68% in 2019)

70% of C1 (64% in 2019)

48% of C2 (58% in 2019)

60% of DE (62% in 2019)

### Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

Important differences exist in how safe people feel when walking or wheeling. Safety includes both road and personal safety.

77%of residents think the level of safety for walking is good

59%of residents think the level of safety for children walking is good

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

##### Gender

77% of women

79% of men

##### Ethnicity

82% of people from ethnic minority groups

77% of white people

##### Sexuality

76% of LGBQ+ people

78% of heterosexual people

##### Age

77% of people aged 16–25

76% of people aged 26–35

76% of people aged 36–45

83% of people aged 46–55

80% of people aged 56–65

79% of people aged 66+

##### Disability

69% of disabled people

81% of non-disabled people

##### Socio-economic group

84% of AB

74% of C1

72% of C2

68% of DE

84%of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk

### Quote from Murdo, 80-years-old

I go for a walk most days now thanks to the Tuesday morning walking group, run by Edinburgh & the Lothians Greenspace Trust. It was hard to find the motivation to go for a walk by myself.

Since joining the group I have more energy, sleep better and walk more instead of taking the bus.

I like the social side of it as you get to talk to people from different walks of life. I always find that I feel happier on a Tuesday afternoon after walking with the group. I usually walk along a route that has bus stops so that I can have a rest on a bench if I need to.

It’d be great to have more benches everywhere.

## Cycling in Edinburgh

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

### Cycling participation

Overall in Edinburgh, the number of people cycling has increased since 2019. Despite a much larger potential, only 26% of people cycle regularly.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Cycling participation, however, 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-11) Encouragingly, perceptions of cycling safety have improved since 2019.

47% of all residents cycle (42% in 2019)

26% of all residents cycle at least once a week (24% in 2019)

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

##### Gender

17% of women (17% in 2019)

35% of men (30% in 2019)

##### Ethnicity

15% of people from ethnic minority groups (14% in 2019)

27% of white people (24% in 2019)

##### Sexuality

25% of LGBQ+ people

27% of heterosexual people

##### Age

31% of people aged 16–25 (24% in 2019)

28% of people aged 26–35 (25% in 2019)

37% of people aged 36–45 (36% in 2019)

28% of people aged 46–55 (26% in 2019)

23% of people aged 56–65 (17% in 2019)

8% of people aged 66+ (10% in 2019)

##### Disability

15% of disabled people (14% in 2019)

29% of non-disabled people (26% in 2019)

##### Socio-economic group

28% of AB (30% in 2019)

25% of C1 (23% in 2019)

22% of C2 (12% in 2019)

23% of DE (7% in 2019)

### Cycling safety and satisfaction

45% of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good (34% in 2019)

34% of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good (18% in 2019)

52% of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle (47% in 2019)

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

##### Gender

40% of women (33% in 2019)

51% of men (35% in 2019)

##### Ethnicity

54% of people from ethnic minority groups (45% in 2019)

44% of white people (33% in 2019)

##### Sexuality

32% of LGBQ+ people

48% of heterosexual people

##### Age

49% of people aged 16–25 (42% in 2019)

41% of people aged 26–35 (27% in 2019)

44% of people aged 36–45 (32% in 2019)

55% of people aged 46–55 (36% in 2019)

47% of people aged 56–65 (34% in 2019)

42% of people aged 66+ (37% in 2019)

##### Disability

33% of disabled people (28% in 2019)

49% of non-disabled people (36% in 2019)

##### Socio-economic group

48% of AB (34% in 2019)

42% of C1 (32% in 2019)

42% of C2 (41% in 2019)

49% of DE (39% in 2019)

### Quote from Mary-Kate O’Reilly, Cycling Social Worker

Lockdown and getting a bike through an initiative for frontline workers gave me the push I needed to start cycling.

Once I actually had a bike it felt like a lifeline.

I’m a Social Worker so once home visits were allowed again I could safely get to my clients by bike. It was cool being the cycling social worker. I’m hugely grateful to the Leith Community Crops in Pots for giving me my lovely blue bike.

It’s been great finding new cycle paths and getting my exercise done before work. It has also hugely supported my mental wellbeing.

## Benefits of walking

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

The large numbers of walking and wheeling trips in Edinburgh produce important health, economic and environmental benefits for everyone.

### Edinburgh residents walk or wheel 29 times around the world every day

252.7 millionwalking and wheeling trips were made in Edinburgh in the past year, which adds up to 268.1 million **miles** = 730,000 miles a day.

This equates to each resident spending 6 **days** walking or wheeling continuously in the past year

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

Destination – adults only (eg work, school, shopping): 139,700,000 (55%)

School – children only: 11,100,000 (4%)

Enjoyment or fitness – adults and children (including running): 101,900,000 (40%)

### Walking and wheeling benefit residents and the local economy in the region

In Edinburgh, the net annual economic benefit for individuals and society from all walking and wheeling trips is £142 million

Of this total, £5.2 millionis from people with a car choosing to walk or wheel for transport in the past year.

5**p** net benefit from each mile walked or wheeled instead of driven

These figures are based upon monetising the costs and benefits of driving and walking. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, medical costs, work absenteeism, congestion, infrastructure, local air quality, noise, greenhouse gases and taxation.

### Walking and wheeling unlock health benefits for everyone

#### Walking in Edinburgh prevents 1,048 serious long-term health conditions each year

##### Cases prevented

Hip fracture: 399

Dementia: 308

Depression: 126

Coronary heart disease: 113

Other conditions: 102

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

Saving the NHS in Edinburgh £6.8 million **per year**

equivalent to the cost of 230,000 **GP appointments**

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

In Edinburgh the physical activity benefits of walking **prevent** 316 **early deaths annually** which is valued at £1 billion**[[13]](#footnote-13)**

Please note wheelchair and 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: 68,000 **kg of NOx** and 9,500 **kg of particulates** (PM10 and PM2.5)

56% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area

### Walking and wheeling in Edinburgh help mitigate our climate crisis

28,000 tonnesof greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by walking or wheeling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of 36,000 **people taking flights** from Edinburgh to New York

Transport within Scotland now accounts for 25% of Scotland’s greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2019, transport emissions went down by 11.3%, while overall emissions went down by 52%.

Calculated using the Greenhouse Gas Account, which has replaced the previous method in Scotland. Scottish Government: Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 1990 to 2019.

### Walking and wheeling keep Edinburgh moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.[[14]](#footnote-14) This helps to keep Edinburgh moving for all road users.

130,000 **return walking trips** are made daily in Edinburgh by people that could have used a car.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back 385 milesequivalent to the distance from Edinburgh to Bath.

## Benefits of cycling

Why everyone gains when more people cycle

### Edinburgh residents cycle 8 times around the world every day

There has been a reduction in commuter trips since 2019 as more people work from home. However, cycling levels increased for leisure journeys.

#### Annual cycling trips by purpose in Edinburgh[[15]](#footnote-15)

##### 2021: 24.4 million trips

Work: 8,000,000 (33%)

School, college or university (adults): 1,600,000 (6%)

School (children): 770,000 (3%)

Shopping, personal business and social trips: 8,500,000 (35%)

Leisure: 5,600,000 (23%)

This adds up to 72.9 million **miles** = 200,000 miles a day

##### 2019: 27.5 million trips

Work: 11,200,000 (41%)

School, college or university (adults): 2,500,000 (9%)

School (children): 860,000 (3%)

Shopping, personal business and social trips: 9,100,000 (33%)

Leisure: 3,900,000 (14%)

This adds up to 87 million **miles** = 240,000 miles a day

### Cycling benefits residents and the local economy in the region

In Edinburgh, the net annual economic benefit for individuals and society from all cycling trips is £44.2 million(£55.3 millionin 2019)

Of this total, £34 millionis from people with a car choosing to cycle for transport in the past year. (£50.1 millionin 2019)

94**p** net benefit from each mile cycled instead of driven (£1.04 in 2019)[[16]](#footnote-16)

These figures are based upon monetising the costs and benefits of driving and cycling. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, medical costs, work absenteeism, congestion, infrastructure, local air quality, noise, greenhouse gases and taxation.

### Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

#### Cycling in Edinburgh prevents 204 serious long-term health conditions each year (251 in 2019)

##### Cases prevented

Hip fracture: 71

Dementia: 47

Depression: 39

Coronary heart disease: 24

Other conditions: 24

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

Saving the NHS in Edinburgh £1.4 million **per year** (£1.7 millionin 2019)

equivalent to the cost of 46,000 **GP appointments** (55,000in 2019)

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

In Edinburgh the physical activity benefits of cycling **prevent** 28 **early deaths annually** (34 in 2019)

which is valued at £92.4million**[[17]](#footnote-17)** (£105 millionin 2019)

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually: 20,000 **kg of NOx** (28,000 **kg** in 2019)

and 2,800 **kg of particulates** (PM10 and PM2.5) (3,800 **kg** in 2019)

56% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area

### Cycling in Edinburgh helps mitigate our climate crisis

9,900 tonnes (14,000 tonnesin 2019) of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of 13,000 **people taking flights** from Edinburgh to New York (18,000 **people** in 2019)

Transport within Scotland now accounts for 25% of Scotland’s greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2019, transport emissions went down by 11.3%, while overall emissions went down by 52%.

Calculated using the Greenhouse Gas Account, which has replaced the previous method in Scotland. Scottish Government: Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 1990 to 2019.

### Cycling keeps Edinburgh moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.[[18]](#footnote-18) This helps to keep Edinburgh moving for all road users.

16,000 **return cycling trips** are made daily in Edinburgh by people that could have used a car. (21,000in 2019)

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back 49 miles equivalent to the distance from Edinburgh to Glasgow. (62 milesin 2019)

## Walking solutions

### What would help make walking and wheeling better?

#### Residents want more services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Ideally, walking should be the most attractive transport option for the vast majority of short journeys. A city can support this by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live. The walking environment should be safe, comfortable, welcoming and attractive.

Neighbourhoods where many facilities can be reached on foot are known as 20-minute neighbourhoods. You can walk from your home to many of the things you need on a regular basis and back again within 20 minutes. This equates to around 800m each way.

72%of Edinburgh households are in neighbourhoods of at least 40 dwellings per hectare. These are or can become 20-minute neighbourhoods.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Lower density neighbourhoods have too few people to make much local business or public transport viable.[[20]](#footnote-20)

69%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?

78%More shops and everyday services, such as banks and post offices, close to your home

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

80%More parks or green spaces close to your home

76%More things to see and do close to your home, eg cafés or entertainment venues

#### Proportion of households within an 800m walk or wheel of the following amenities and services

Food shop 92%

Park or space for recreation 99%

Primary school 80%

Doctors surgery 66%

Library 34%

Post office 71%

Railway station or tram stop 17%

A mix of cultural and leisure venues[[21]](#footnote-21) 71%

Bus stop (within 400m) 96%

### Residents want better streets

There are many ways to make our streets and neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and comfortable for everyone to walk in.

#### What percentage of residents think that these changes would help them walk or wheel more?

67% Wider pavements

67% More frequent road crossings, with reduced wait times

75% Nicer places along streets to stop and rest, eg more benches, trees and shelters

66% Better accessibility, eg level surfaces, dropped kerbs at crossing points

67% Fewer cars parked on the pavement

61% Less fear of crime or antisocial behaviour in your area

##### In Edinburgh:

42% of A and B roads have a pavement width greater than 3m[[22]](#footnote-22)

58% of C and unclassified roads have a pavement width greater than 2m

On all roads making up junctions, 15% of those with traffic lights for cars have no red and green man for pedestrians

74%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 Elaine Boyd, mobility trailblazer

I got my Frame Runner, a custom-built tricycle without pedals, seven years ago and it has changed my life.

I was born with cerebral palsy and have issues with my mobility so Frame Running helps to get me out of the house. It strengthens my legs and allows me to meet new people.

As my hands are strapped into the Frame Runner, I need someone to run alongside me and be my brakes. That’s why I reached out to the running club, Edinburgh Frontrunners, and was lucky to meet my friend Al. Al and I go running together every Wednesday evening and we’ve been running together for six years now. All of this has massively improved my mental health and given me more independence.

However, getting around Edinburgh on my Frame Runner can be difficult. There are a lot of improvements that the council can do to make Edinburgh more accessible for everyone.

Having wider pavements; better placed dropped kerbs; reducing the space taken up by street furniture; and making pedestrian crossing points more accessible, would all make a huge difference.

## Cycling solutions

What would make cycling better?

### Many Edinburgh residents want to cycle

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

Regularly cycle: 17% (16% in 2019)

Occasionally cycle: 22% (17% in 2019)

New or returning to cycling: 6% (5% in 2019)

Do not cycle but would like to: 23% (26% in 2019)

Do not cycle and do not want to: 31% (36% in 2019)

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

24% of women (25% in 2019)

53% of people from ethnic minority groups (51% in 2019)

26% of disabled people (22% in 2019)

### Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

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

73% More traffic-free cycle routes away from roads, eg through parks or along waterways (84% in 2019)

64% More cycle tracks along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians (82% in 2019)

67% More signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets (75% in 2019)

62% Better links with public transport (eg secure cycle parking at train stations) (64% in 2019)

There are 521 cycle parking spaces across all 12 railway stations (503 in 2019) and 10 cycle parking spaces at the 1 bus station

##### Edinburgh has[[23]](#footnote-23):

110 milesof traffic-free cycle routes away from the road (110 miles in 2019)

2 milesof cycle tracks physically separated from traffic and pedestrians[[24]](#footnote-24) (1 **mile** in 2019)

15 milesof signposted routes along quieter streets (20 miles in 2019)

33%of households are within 125m of these routes (34% in 2019)[[25]](#footnote-25)

57%of residents support building more cycle tracks physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic (74% in 2019)

### Residents want more support to cycle

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

38% Cycling training courses and organised social rides (47% in 2019)

46% Access or improvements to a city cycle sharing scheme

57% Access to secure cycle storage at or near home

52% Access to a bicycle

46% Access to an electric cycle (45% in 2019)

30% Access to a cargo cycle (with space to carry children or shopping) (31% in 2019)

21% Access to an adapted cycle, eg a tricycle or handcycle (18% in 2019)

##### Edinburgh cycle share scheme[[26]](#footnote-26)

465shared cycles

87cycle share stations

191,453annual trips

##### Reported cycle thefts

There were 1,746 reported cycle thefts in Edinburgh in 2020/21. (1,594 in 2019/20)

For every 149people who own an adult cycle in Edinburgh, there was 1reported cycle theft in the past year.

There is a public cycle parking space for every 54 people who cycle in Edinburgh. (51 in 2019)

##### Cycle access

58%of residents have access to an adult pedal cycle (55% in 2019)

51%of households are within 800m of a cycle shop

Credit to the Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) and Cycling UK for their assistance with cycle shop locations and services offered.

### Quote from Alice Dickinson, E-bike user

Cycling my E-bike has massively helped me manage my disability and get on with living my life. I was diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome about eight years ago and have suffered from chronic pain as it causes my joints to dislocate easily. I have had to use a wheelchair in the past to help ease the pressure on my joints.

Since I’ve started cycling, my mobility has improved as it’s strengthened my muscles and allowed me to travel in a way that doesn’t put much pressure on my joints. I have more flexibility in where I can travel to and the distance that I travel. It’s allowed me to live the lifestyle that I’ve always wanted – spending time outside in nature and going for a bike ride with friends. Cycling has also helped with my mental health because I’m able to do the things that I love.

When building my confidence with cycling I stuck to the cycle paths as I didn’t want to worry about cars. It’d be great to have more safe cycle routes.

## 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

79% of residents

77% of women

81% of men

78% of people from ethnic minority groups

79% of white people

77% of disabled people

80% of non-disabled people

77% of LGBQ+ people

79% of heterosexual people

64% of socio-economic group DE

84% of socio-economic group AB

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

Only 31% of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

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

59% Walk more

59% Cycle more (65% in 2019)

Unclassified roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in Edinburgh 18% of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.[[27]](#footnote-27)

53% agree that restricting through-traffic on local residential streets would make their area a better place. (56% in 2019)

77% of Edinburgh’s streets have 20mph speed limits.[[28]](#footnote-28) (77% in 2019)

#### Residents would find more streets with 20mph speed limits useful to:

50% Walk more

52% Cycle more (56% in 2019)

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

58%agree increasing space for people socialising, walking and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area (75% in 2019)

51%agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello

61%support low-traffic neighbourhoods

### Quote from Ewen Maclean, school community organiser

I’m part of a community group that wants to make it safe for children to cycle to our local school, James Gillespie’s Primary School. I have two daughters, six and nine-years-old, who go to the school. So far we have been successful in setting up a Bike Bus every other Friday, with 180 children and parents.

We’ve noticed a sense of community when cycling to school. Parents look out for other children and the girls like to chat to people along the way.

As a parent I’m aware of the inequalities in children’s health, and the emerging proliferation of health conditions resulting from sedentary lifestyles. To change this we need to make it safe for them to choose walking and cycling. This means providing segregated cycle lanes and low-traffic neighbourhoods so that they can cycle to school safely.

I think that local and national governments should make brave, long-term, principled decisions to stand by their commitment to tackling climate change.

I’d also like to see the rights of children prioritised by making the necessary infrastructure changes to support a fairer, healthier, more equal society.

### Neighbourhoods must be designed with children in mind

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive: to grow up in, live their lives in and grow old in. 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 or cycle independently in their neighbourhood.

Over 80% of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school (parents’ responses).[[29]](#footnote-29)

61% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play

87% of households are within 800m of a children’s playground

#### Among Edinburgh residents:

47% agree, while 25% disagree, closing streets outside local schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

57% agreed, while 21% disagreed in 2019

These kind of closures are known as ‘School Streets’.

12permanent School Streets schemes exist in Edinburgh[[30]](#footnote-30)

## Developing Edinburgh

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

Despite the pandemic, several projects to make Edinburgh a better place to walk, wheel and cycle have hit the ground since 2019.

Replacing damaged or installing new dropped kerbs is key to making Edinburgh a city in which everyone can walk or wheel to meet their daily needs. The first stage of our citywide dropped kerb improvement programme has begun, focused on fixing kerbs in local high streets and on routes to health centres from nearby public transport stops.

Several different neighbourhoods are now benefitting from upgrades to their local QuietRoutes. New signalised, zebra and tiger crossings have removed notable barriers on QuietRoutes 6 and 61 for those walking, wheeling and cycling. In The Grange local children can reach their primary school more safely and easily. Further south in Gilmerton, residents heading to their local supermarket can cross the main road safely thanks to a new toucan crossing. Access to the Bioquarter and the city’s major hospital, the Royal Infirmary, has been enhanced too with refreshed signage and new segregated paths. For those heading to Hermiston Gait, Edinburgh Park or onto the city centre via QuietRoute 8, there’s a new crossing over the tram line to make the journey that bit easier.

Major changes to the city centre are underway too. The segregated cycle lanes in the east end at Piccardy and York Place are complete. Construction has begun at the west end of the segregated City Centre West to East Link cycle route.

### Secure cycle storage for residents

Bike Life has consistently flagged that lack of safe places to store a bike is a barrier for residents wanting to cycle in Edinburgh.

Over the past two years, we have therefore rolled out 106 secure cycle parking hangars, with a total of 180 cycle hangars across the city due to be installed as part of this initial phase of our programme. These provide space for 1,080 bikes.

The scheme has been met with much enthusiasm from residents, with 76% of the spaces filled when the scheme launched. By Autumn 2021, 99.07% of the spaces available were in use.

With a growing waiting list for a space, we know that more of our residents could benefit from having a safe storage space for their cycle. That’s why, subject to further funding, we will be looking to roll out more hangars over the coming years.

### Duddingston Road trial cycle lanes

2020 and the pandemic brought unprecedented change globally. During lockdown, we saw notable increases in cycling levels on parts of the existing network.

In Edinburgh, we made changes to our streets to reflect the need for people to move differently around our city. These changes included over 22 miles of segregated cycleways, quieter streets for walking, wheeling and cycling and more space for people to walk in town centres (Travelling Safely Projects).

As we’ve moved on from the pandemic, we’re bringing some of this infrastructure with us on a trial basis. These trials can help us to better understand how, in the longer-term, these schemes could support residents to feel able to cycle for more of their local journeys, as well as those trips further afield within Edinburgh.

On Duddingston Road in the east of Edinburgh, the segregated cycle lanes are providing a safe, protected space for children and others to cycle from Duddingston and Portobello to their local primary school as well as for other local trips.

## Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

With our investment programme of £108 million set until 2026, there’s plenty of work to be done. Delayed initially by the pandemic, the refresh of the Active Travel Action Plan (ATAP) is now underway. The ATAP will look to 2030, supporting the city’s transition to net-zero carbon and becoming poverty-free. The updated plan will build on the current programme and the city centre transformation plan. Following the vision set out in the City Mobility Plan. The ATAP will also look to develop the cycle network in the city, with direct routes that use our main roads and are separated from motor traffic.

### Active Travel Routes

Map showing the existing active travel routes, 'Travelling Safely' projects, planned network to 2026 and longer-term proposed network in the central Edinburgh area.

We will continue to make our streets safer and more accessible to all. We’ll be looking to extend the number of 20mph streets, as causualties on our streets have dropped by a third since the initial introduction of 20mph streets. We will continue to roll out the dropped kerb improvement programme across the city and make lighting improvements to the path network. Large junctions have been identified as a barrier for people travelling actively in Edinburgh. We are developing a programme that will tackle some of the most challenging of these locations.

The City Centre West to East Link route is proposed to be finished by Summer/Autumn 2023 and is a major step forward in delivering Edinburgh’s segregated cycle network. Work continues on the West Edinburgh Link; construction of these walking and cycling improvements is due to begin in 2023. In the slightly shorter-term, through our Travelling Safely Programme, we’re looking at how over 22 miles of segregated cycleways installed during the pandemic could contribute to the city’s longer-term network.

Unfortunately, the very popular Cycle Hire scheme contract had to be terminated. We know what an asset this scheme was to so many and we are working to put a new scheme in place.

### Schools and neighbourhoods

Schools lie at the heart of our communities. The recent ‘journeys to school’ review has identified barriers for each school community. We’ll be working to overcome these, so more school runs can be on foot, cycling or scooting. This will include introducing more School Streets in neighbourhoods across the city.

Based on community feedback to date, we’ll shortly be trialling two low-traffic neighbourhoods, one each in Corstorphine and Leith. These schemes will be looking to tackle rat-running traffic through residential streets, providing new artwork and pleasant spaces for people to spend time outdoors in their neighbourhood. Through these trials, communities will have the opportunity to tell us what works and where we can improve and learn lessons.

### Quote from Michaela Jackson, car free family

Our car broke down and as the repairs were so expensive we decided to try living without one for a while. One year on and we’re still really enjoying getting around Edinburgh by foot, bike and bus.

As a family we have discovered a lot of new cycling routes all across the city. My 10-year-old son enjoys cycling to school and my 13-year-old daughter walks to school with her friends. She also takes the bus by herself and has gained independence. I love that they are getting some exercise just by getting to and from school.

I have also joined a cycling club with other women and it’s been great sharing knowledge about cycling routes. The support from other women in the group has definitely helped to build my confidence in cycling on the road.

Deciding to live without a car has improved the quality of our everyday life. We are fitter, healthier, saving money and journeys are no longer stressful.

I encourage everyone to take this step if they can. Living without our own car can be challenging but we have definitely gained more than we have lost.

## Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from June to August 2021 by independent social research organisation NatCen.

The survey is representative of all Edinburgh residents, not just those who walk or cycle.

2019 survey data was collected from April to July 2019, also by NatCen, following the same methodology.

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 cycled 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/walkingcyclingindex](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/walkingcyclingindex)

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Join us on our journey. [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

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

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Transport Scotland

The City of Edinburgh Council

Sustrans

1. City is used as a shorthand for Walking and Cycling Index cities, city regions and boroughs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NOMIS mid-year 2019 population estimates. This is the most recent available for Edinburgh. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. In 2019, questions did not include traveling by motorcycle. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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-4)
5. Based on walking and cycling by residents that live in a household with a car. Does not include leisure cycling or leisure walking trips. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Based upon each journey being 1.5 miles in length. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See definition on [page 23](#_What_would_help). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 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-8)
9. 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-9)
10. Based on people who cycle at least once a week. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See Bike Life, 2019 Edinburgh report. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
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-12)
13. 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-13)
14. Litman, 2021. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 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-15)
16. This 2021 figure is less than the 2019 figure due to an increase in the average car speed. The 2021 speed data was collected during lockdown. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 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-17)
18. Litman, 2021. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021, National Model Design Code. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, eg cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. A and B roads are main roads. C roads and unclassified roads are more minor roads and often residential streets. Pavement width does not account for obstructions, such as bus stops or litter bins. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. To ensure comparability, figures given are correct as of 26 May 2021 for all city reports. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This does not include the 22 miles of ‘pop-up’ cycle lanes installed in 2020/21 in response to the pandemic. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The slight reduction in miles of signposted routes and the percentage of households within 125m of best practice cycle routes is a result of the tightening up of the mapping against the Walking and Cycling Index criteria. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Transport for Edinburgh cycle hire data for July 2020-June 2021. (Source: Transport for Edinburgh). Scheme ceased in September 2021; replacements being investigated. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Based on analysis by CycleStreets [www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org](http://www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org). Unclassified roads are all public roads that are neither motorways, A, B nor C roads. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Excludes motorways and trunk roads. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Children’s Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. This does not include the 17 schools with adjacent street closures or restricted access to the street which were installed in response to the pandemic. Figure given is correct as of 26 May 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)