



Inverness

# Walking and Cycling Index 2023





# Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in Inverness



Inverness is a compact city, making it easy to get around by walking, wheeling and cycling. This latest Walking and Cycling Index reports that 49% of our residents walk or

wheel, and 9% cycle, on five or more days a week. Over a third of residents would like to use public transport more, and almost a third would like to drive less. There is also a clear appetite for improvements: 66% support the creation of low traffic neighbourhoods, 73% want wider pavements, 64% support the creation of segregated cycle paths alongside roads, and 61% want more space for socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling.

More walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport will help tackle the climate emergency: transport is responsible for 26% of Scotland's domestic carbon emissions. Summer 2023 saw record land and sea temperatures across the world. In Highland, climate change is bringing warmer summers and milder winters, with more intense rainfall events. Rising sea levels and more storm surges will put pressure on our coastal communities, including Inverness.

Investing in walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport also supports good mental and physical health, reduces inequalities, reallocates public space more fairly, provides good value for money, and supports vibrant local places. This is a positive vision of our future, for locals and visitors alike.

We are steadily delivering on this vision with key projects in Inverness already completed and more in the pipeline, including Academy Street, Millburn Corridor and Raigmore Interchange. Looking at connectivity into the city, the Inner Moray Firth Active Travel Network plans for better active travel routes and connections to public transport from outlying areas.

It's predicted that Inverness' population will continue to rise steadily but will age, with around a quarter of residents in 2040 being aged 65+. Improved active travel infrastructure will help to support good health and independence among our ageing population. It will also benefit others including the less well off, the young, those with a disability, those who wish to drive less, those who use public transport, and women.

There is a wealth of information in this report – I would encourage everyone to visit the website, and to explore the Index Data Tool.

**Councillor Ian Brown,**  
**Leader of Inverness and Area**



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## 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<sup>i</sup> 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 third report from Inverness produced in partnership with The Highland Council. The data in this report comes from 2023 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,076 residents aged 16 or above in Inverness. The survey was conducted from March to June 2023. Social research organisation NatCen conducted the survey, which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Across this report we have included comparisons to 2021 data where available.

Our thanks to the people of Inverness 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](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index). For more data, including 2019 figures where available, see the [Index Data Tool](#).



### 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.

i. City is used as a shorthand for Walking and Cycling Index cities, city regions, metropolitan areas and boroughs.

# Headlines

## Inverness

### Population<sup>i</sup>

62,975

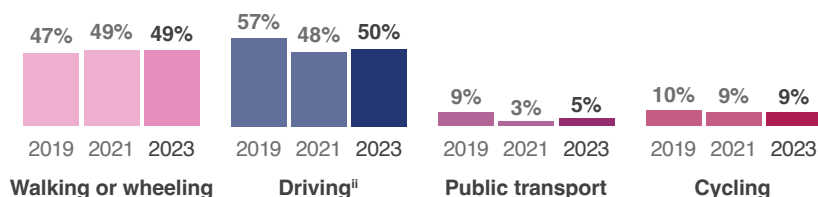
### Survey area



## The impact of the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic had a big impact on travel. In 2021 whilst most restrictions had been lifted, many people were taking fewer journeys and working from home.

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



Participation in walking, wheeling and cycling on a regular basis has stayed about the same since 2021.

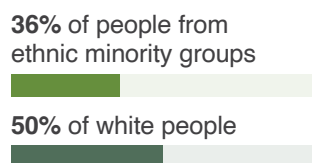
**49%**  
of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week  
49% in 2021

**27%**  
of residents cycle at least once a week  
26% in 2021

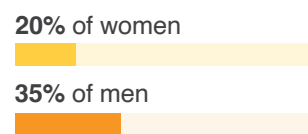
## Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

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

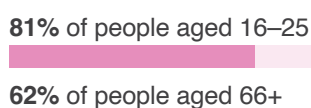


### Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week<sup>iii</sup>



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

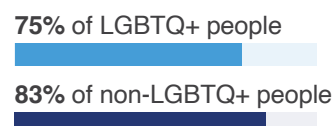
### Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety is good



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



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



i. NRS mid-year 2021 population estimates. This is the most recent available for Inverness. ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. In 2019, questions did not include traveling by motorcycle. iii. 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.

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

Every day, walking, wheeling and cycling in Inverness take up to **16,000** cars off the road.<sup>iv</sup> Each year in Inverness these three modes combined:



Prevent

**202**

serious long-term health conditions



Create

**£58.5 million**

in economic benefit for individuals and Inverness



Save

**3,300 tonnes**

of greenhouse gas emissions

## Residents want to walk, wheel and cycle more and drive less

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

30% of residents want to drive less, yet 46% of residents often use a car because no other transport options are available

Walk or wheel

48% more

3% less

Cycle

52% more

2% less

Take public transport

36% more

8% less

Drive

10% more

30% 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:

54% on walking and wheeling

48% in 2021

50% on cycling

51% in 2021

74% on public transport

61% in 2021

35% on driving

36% in 2021

## Increased funding would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

Among Inverness residents:

64% support

19% oppose

more cycle paths along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

61% agree

17% disagree

that increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

73% support

8% oppose

the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods<sup>v</sup>

76% support

9% oppose

banning vehicles parking on the pavement

66% support

13% oppose

the creation of more low-traffic neighbourhoods<sup>vi</sup>

48% support

23% oppose

shifting investment from road building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

iv. 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.  
v. See definition on page 14. vi. For definition see [Methodology document](#).





# Walking in Inverness

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

## Walking and wheeling participation

Overall in Inverness the number of people walking and wheeling regularly (at least five days a week) has stayed the same since 2021.

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.

**94%**  
of all residents walk or wheel

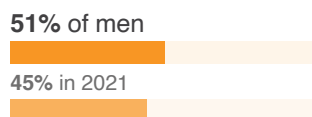
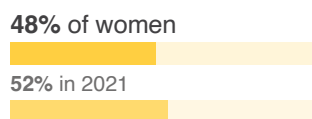
95%  
in 2021

**49%**  
of residents walk or wheel  
at least five days a week

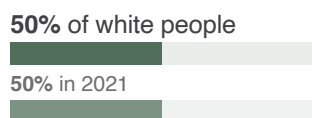
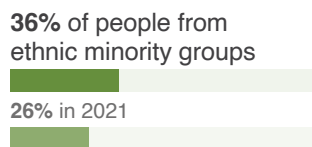
49%  
in 2021

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

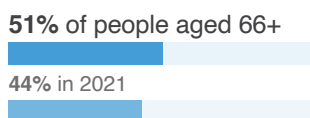
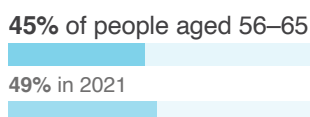
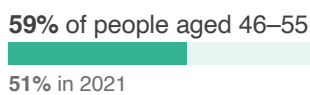
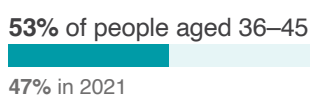
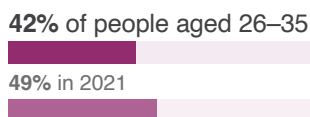
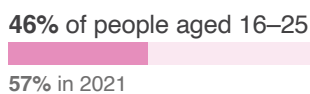
#### Gender<sup>i</sup> and sexuality



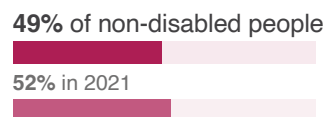
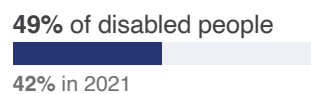
#### Ethnicity



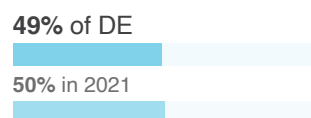
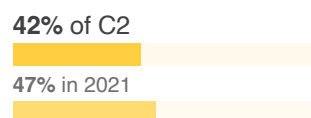
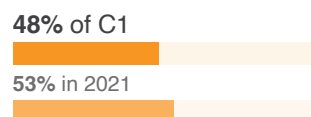
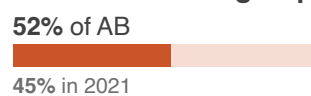
#### Age



#### Disability



#### Socio-economic group<sup>ii</sup>



i. 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.

ii. Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

## Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

**73%**

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

81% in 2021

**57%**

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

65% in 2021

**80%**

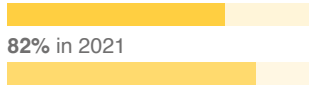
of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel

84% in 2021

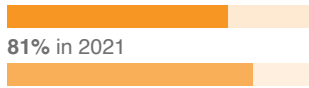
### Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good

#### Gender and sexuality

**72% of women**



**73% of men**



**76% of LGBTQ+ people**

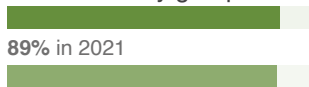


**72% of non-LGBTQ+ people**

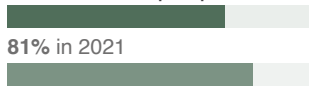


#### Ethnicity

**90% of people from ethnic minority groups**

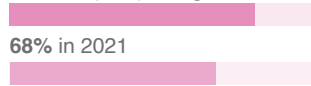


**72% of white people**

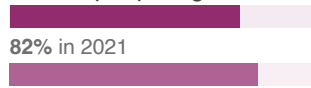


#### Age

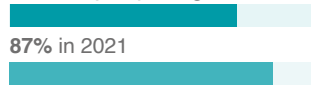
**81% of people aged 16–25**



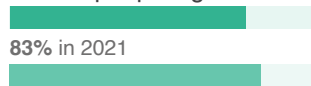
**76% of people aged 26–35**



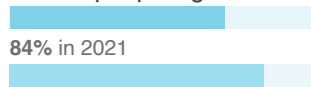
**75% of people aged 36–45**



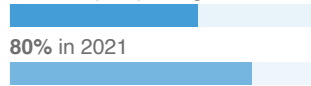
**78% of people aged 46–55**



**71% of people aged 56–65**



**62% of people aged 66+**

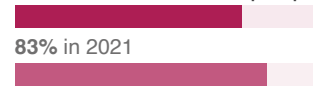


#### Disability

**66% of disabled people**

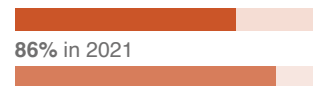


**75% of non-disabled people**

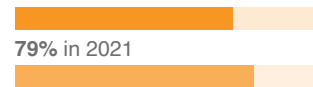


#### Socio-economic group

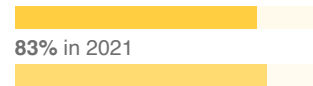
**73% of AB**



**72% of C1**



**80% of C2**



**68% of DE**



**Donald, Spokes for Folks volunteer**



I go out walking every day and feel very lucky to live in a place with great access to greenspace.

I also volunteer with a cycling group called Spokes for Folks.

Many of our participants struggle walking, so our rides get them outside. We take people in care out on social bike rides in greenspace, using electric trikes.

The response you get from the participants and from people out and about is amazing.



# Cycling in Inverness

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

## Cycling participation

Overall in Inverness the number of people cycling has increased since 2021. Despite a much larger potential for cycling, only **27%** of people cycle regularly.<sup>i</sup>

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.<sup>ii</sup> Perceptions of cycling safety have stayed about the same since 2021.

**50%**  
of all residents cycle

47%  
in 2021

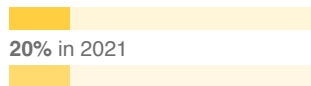
**27%**  
of all residents cycle at least once a week

26%  
in 2021

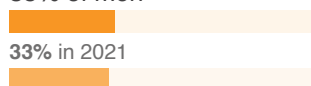
### Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

#### Gender and sexuality

**20%** of women



**35%** of men



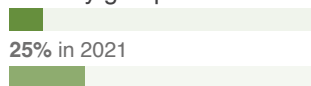
**13%** of LGBTQ+ people



**28%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

#### Ethnicity

**11%** of people from ethnic minority groups

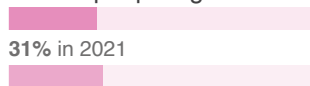


**28%** of white people

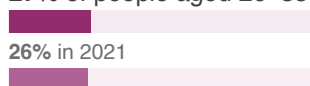


#### Age

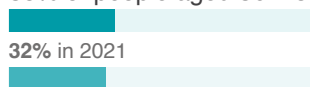
**29%** of people aged 16–25



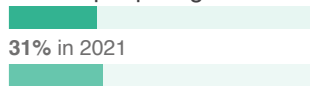
**27%** of people aged 26–35



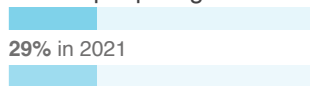
**35%** of people aged 36–45



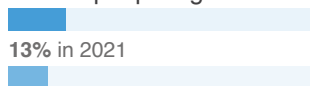
**29%** of people aged 46–55



**29%** of people aged 56–65

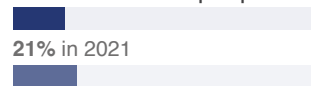


**19%** of people aged 66+

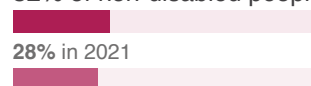


#### Disability

**17%** of disabled people



**32%** of non-disabled people



#### Socio-economic group

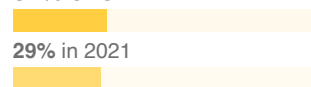
**32%** of AB



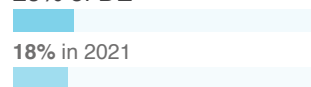
**25%** of C1



**31%** of C2



**20%** of DE



i. Based on people who cycle at least once a week.

ii. See Bike Life 2019 Inverness report.



## Cycling safety and satisfaction

**50%**

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

50% in 2021

**40%**

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

39% in 2021

**56%**

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

56% in 2021

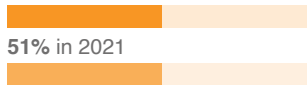
### Proportion of residents who think cycling safety in their local area is good

#### Gender and sexuality

**49%** of women



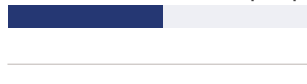
**51%** of men



**28%** of LGBTQ+ people

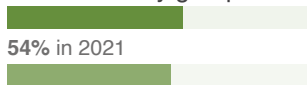


**51%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

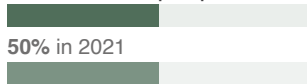


#### Ethnicity

**58%** of people from ethnic minority groups



**50%** of white people

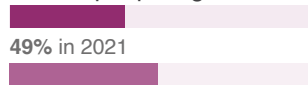


#### Age

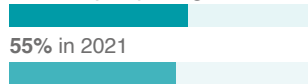
**62%** of people aged 16–25



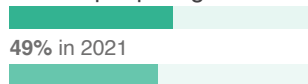
**38%** of people aged 26–35



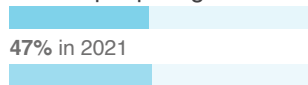
**59%** of people aged 36–45



**54%** of people aged 46–55



**46%** of people aged 56–65

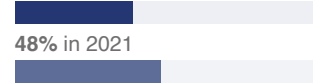


**47%** of people aged 66+

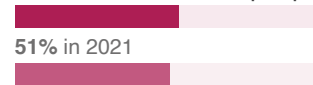


#### Disability

**39%** of disabled people

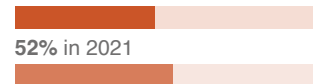


**54%** of non-disabled people

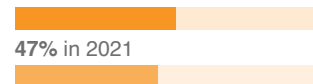


#### Socio-economic group

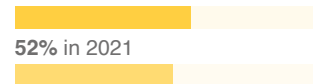
**46%** of AB



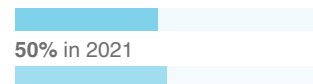
**53%** of C1



**58%** of C2



**47%** of DE



### Joolz, cycling champion



I had never cycled before but a friend convinced me to give it a go during lockdown. He fixed up my bike to make it more comfortable, and rides with Breeze and Velocity Café helped me build my confidence on the road.

I immediately loved the freedom of cycling, and I stopped taking my car for short journeys. Now I'm a cycle trainer!

I think we need more joined up cycle paths away from traffic, to help people gain confidence and cycle more – if I can do it, anyone can.



# Benefits of walking

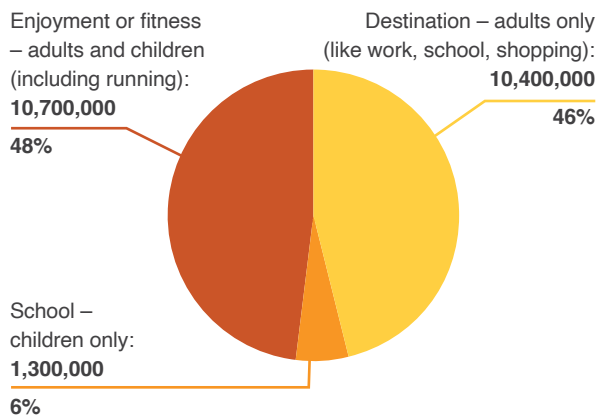
Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

## Inverness residents walk or wheel the length of Great Britain 65 times per day

There has been a reduction in trips to a destination since 2021. Walking and wheeling levels also decreased for school trips.

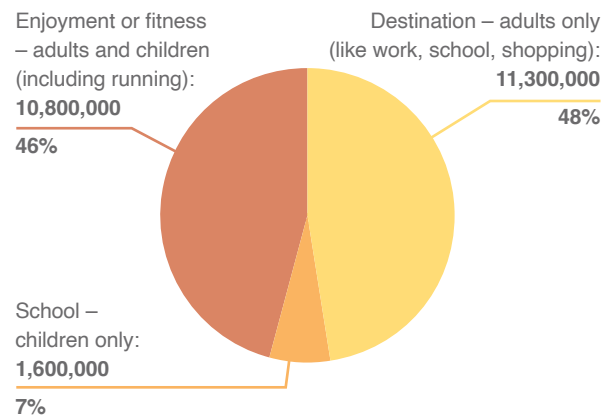
### Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose<sup>i</sup>

2023:  
**22.4 million trips**



This adds up to  
**28.4 million miles**  
= 78,000 miles a day

2021:  
**23.6 million trips**



This adds up to  
**27.7 million miles**  
= 76,000 miles a day

## 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.

5p  
in 2021

**46p is saved<sup>ii</sup>**  
for each mile walked or wheeled  
instead of driven in Inverness.

Over a year this adds up to

**£3.1 million**

from adults with a car in their household  
walking or wheeling to work,  
school and other destinations.

£300,000  
in 2021

The total annual economic benefit from all  
trips walked and wheeled in Inverness is

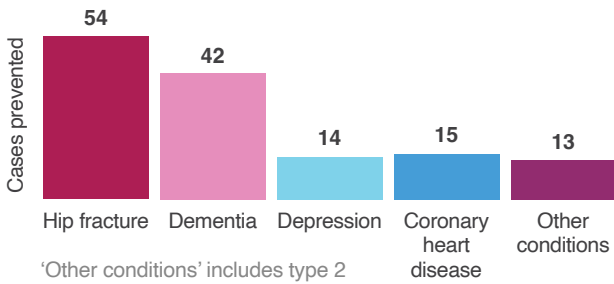
**£42.2 million<sup>iii</sup>**

£35.2  
million  
in 2021

i. Trips for enjoyment or fitness include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). School trips are shown separately for children only. ii. Benefits have increased significantly, mainly because of increased costs of driving and greater traffic congestion. iii. This includes trips walked or wheeled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car.

## Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

138 in 2021 **Walking in Inverness prevents 137 serious long-term health conditions each year**



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

Saving the NHS in Inverness

£900,000 in 2021

**£1.7 million per year**

30,000 in 2021



equivalent to the cost of **41,000 GP appointments**

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

In Inverness the physical activity benefits of walking

**prevent 39 early deaths annually**

33 in 2021

which is valued at

**£140 million<sup>iv</sup>**

£109 million in 2021

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:

**4,500 kg of NO<sub>x</sub>**

4,800 kg in 2021

and

**631 kg of particulates**

(PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>)

669 kg in 2021

**77% of residents agree the**

**air is clean in their local area**

79% in 2021



## Walking and wheeling in Inverness helps mitigate our climate crisis

1,600 tonnes in 2021

**1,800 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



9,000 people in 2021

**10,000 people taking flights**

from Inverness to London

In 2021, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **26%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite a reduction in emissions associated with the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, transport rebounded in 2021 and remains the largest source of emissions in Scotland.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2021

## Walking and wheeling keeps Inverness moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.<sup>v</sup> This helps to keep Inverness moving for all road users.

13,000 in 2021

**12,000 return walking and wheeling trips**

are made daily in Inverness by people that could have used a car.

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

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

**36 miles**

equivalent to the distance from Inverness to beyond Fort Augustus

39 miles in 2021



iv. 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.





# Benefits of cycling

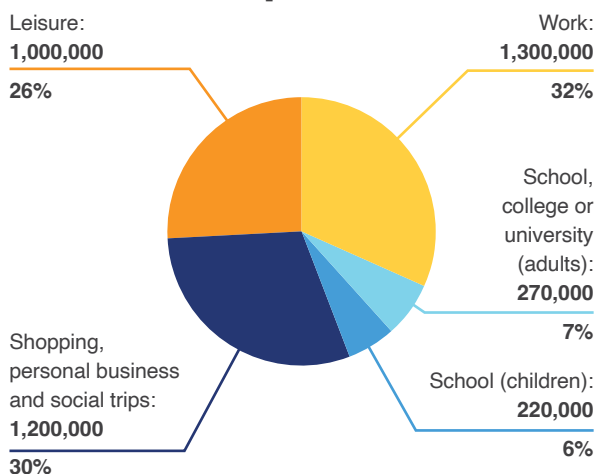
Why everyone gains when more people cycle

## Inverness residents cycle the length of Great Britain 35 times per day

There has been an increase in trips for work, leisure, and adult education since 2021. However, cycling levels decreased for school trips.

### Annual cycling trips by purpose in Inverness<sup>i</sup>

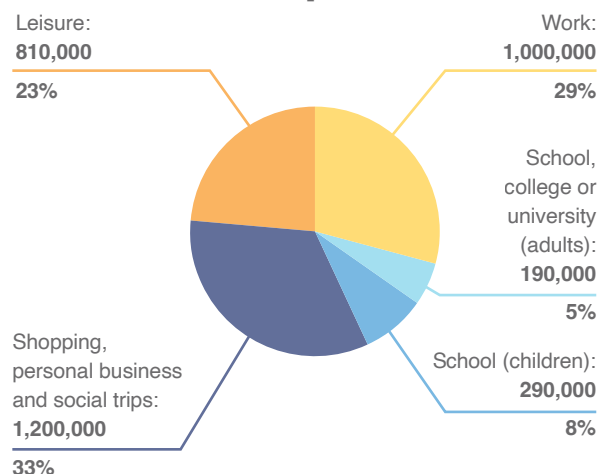
2023:  
**4 million trips**



This adds up to

**15.2 million miles =**  
42,000 miles a day

2021:  
**3.4 million trips**



This adds up to

**12.2 million miles**  
= 33,000 miles a day

## 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 mile cycled instead  
of driven in Inverness.

94p  
in 2021

Over a year this adds up to

**£7.6 million**

from adults with a car in their household  
cycling to work, school and other destinations.

£3.9  
million  
in 2021

The total annual economic benefit from  
all trips cycled in Inverness is

**£16.3 million<sup>ii</sup>**

£10.1  
million  
in 2021

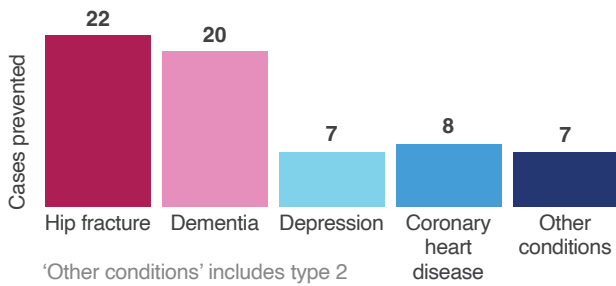
i. Leisure trips include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment).

Education trips are shown separately for adults and children. All other trips are just adults.

ii. This includes trips cycled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car.

## Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

49 in 2021 **Cycling in Inverness prevents 64 serious long-term health conditions each year**



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

Saving the NHS in Inverness **£800,000 per year**

£320,000 in 2021

11,000 in 2021



equivalent to the cost of **19,000 GP appointments**

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

In Inverness the physical activity benefits of cycling

**prevent 7 early deaths annually**

5 in 2021

which is valued at

**£24.2 million<sup>iii</sup>**

£15.6 million in 2021

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

**2,900 kg of NO<sub>x</sub>** and

2,400 kg in 2021

**427 kg of particulates** (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>)

342 kg in 2021

77% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area

79% in 2021



## Cycling in Inverness helps mitigate our climate crisis

1,100 tonnes in 2021

**1,500 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



6,300 people in 2021

**8,300 people** taking flights from Inverness to London

In 2021, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **26%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite a reduction in emissions associated with the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, transport rebounded in 2021 and remains the largest source of emissions in Scotland.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2021

## Cycling keeps Inverness moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.<sup>iv</sup> This helps to keep Inverness moving for all road users.

2,800 in 2021

**3,400 return cycling trips** are made daily in Inverness by people that could have used a car.

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

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

**10 miles**

equivalent to the distance from Inverness to beyond Kirkhill

8 miles in 2021



iii. 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.



# Walking solutions

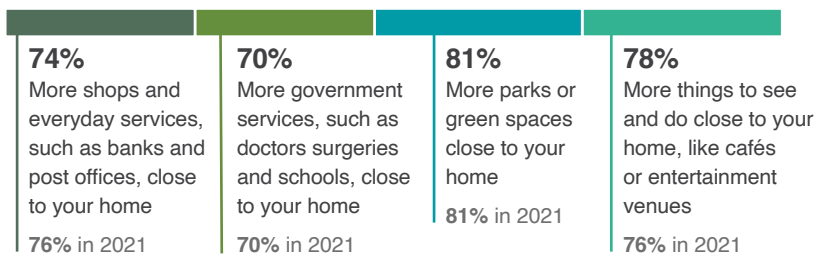
What would help make walking and wheeling easier?

## 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. Based on a 20-minute return journey this is around 480 metres each way for the majority of people.<sup>i</sup>

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



**58%**

of Inverness households are in neighbourhoods of more than 40 homes per hectare. These are or can become 20-minute neighbourhoods.

57% in 2021

These higher-density neighbourhoods with more people can sustain local businesses and public transport routes.<sup>ii</sup>

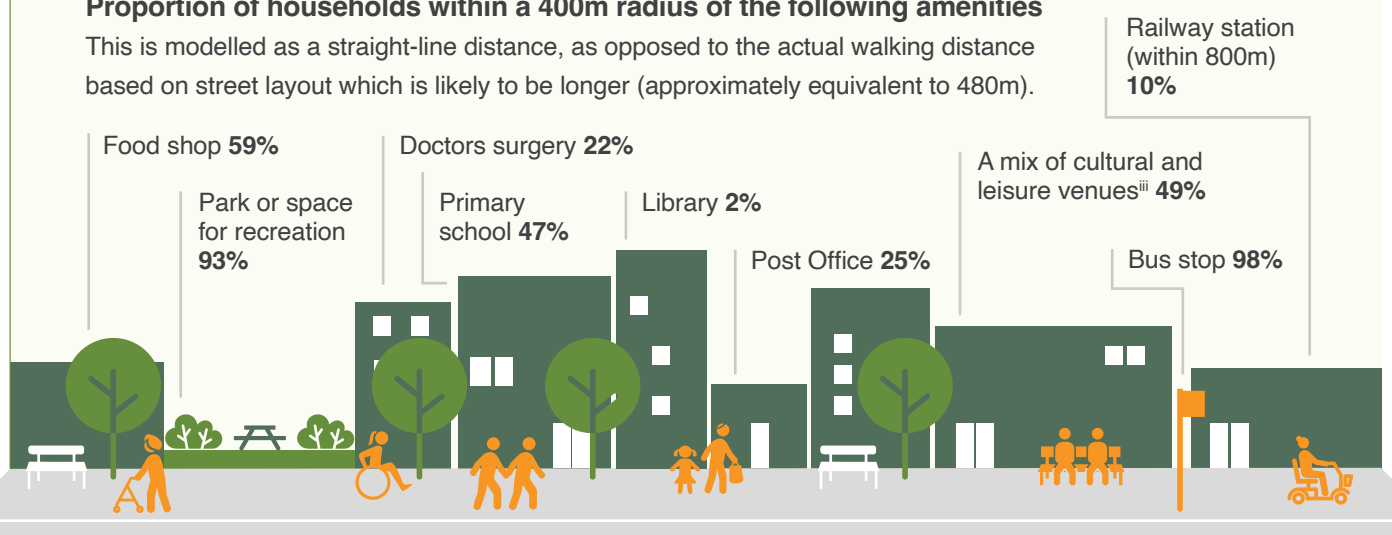
**49%**

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

47% in 2021

### Proportion of households within a 400m 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 480m).



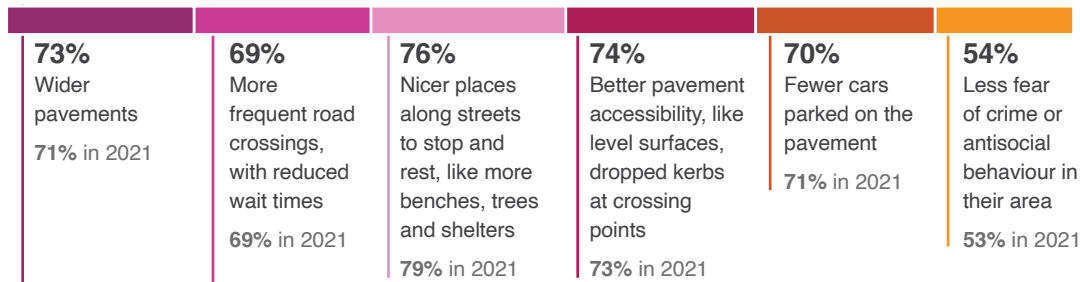
i. Asher et al, 2012. Most older pedestrians are unable to cross the road in time: a cross-sectional study. Age and Ageing.  
 ii. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning.  
 iii. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, like cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums.



## 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?



#### In Inverness:

44% of A and B roads have a pavement width greater than 3m if unobstructed<sup>iv</sup>

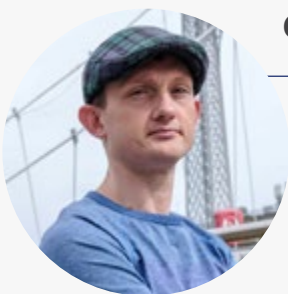
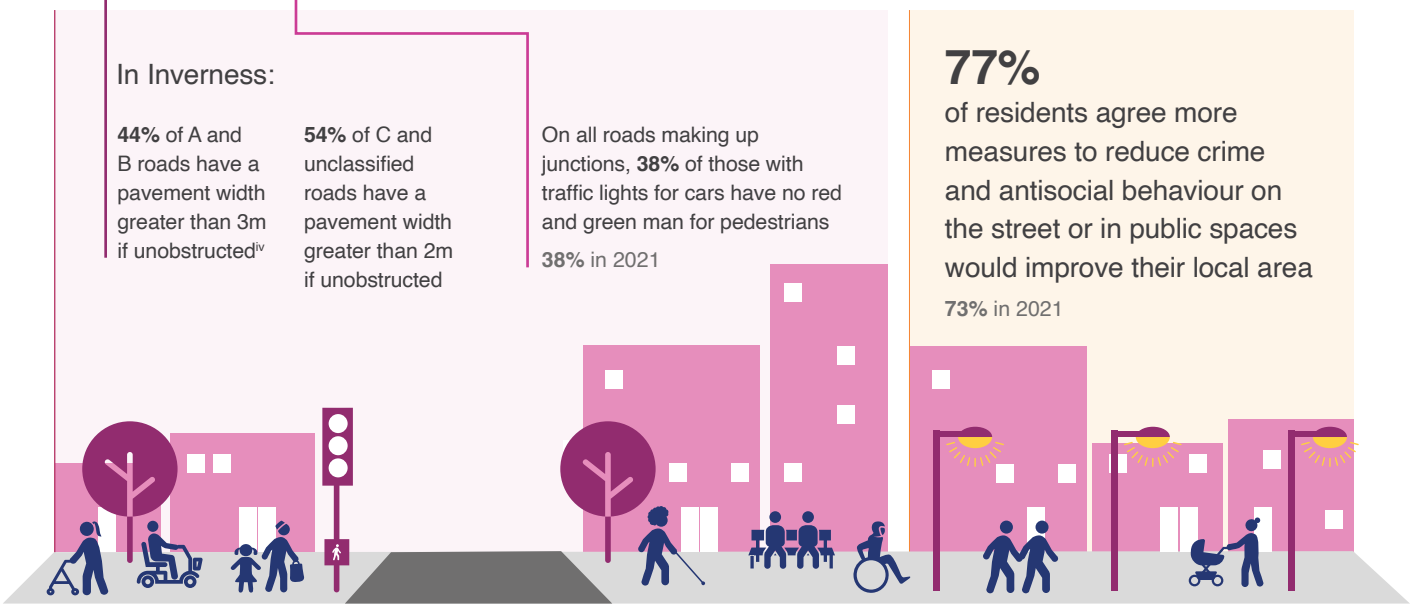
54% of C and unclassified roads have a pavement width greater than 2m if unobstructed

On all roads making up junctions, 38% of those with traffic lights for cars have no red and green man for pedestrians  
38% in 2021

**77%**

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

73% in 2021



**Greg, wheelchair user**



Being outdoors really boosts my mood, so I go for a walk along the river every day. It's also a nice way to meet others and have a chat.

I've been using a wheelchair since 2018. The design of walking paths can be challenging, and even dangerous at times. Wheelchair users struggle with narrow and uneven pavements.

More space and better surfaces would make life much easier. The surface around Eden Court is great – it's like wheeling on butter!

I'm lucky to have a wheelchair adaptation called a free wheel, which gives me more control and stability. But even then, I still have to contend with cars parked at dropped kerbs, and green man crossing times that are too short.

iv. OS source measurement now excludes grass verges, so is more accurate than in the 2021 report. A and B roads are main roads. C roads and unclassified roads are more minor roads and often residential streets.



# Cycling solutions

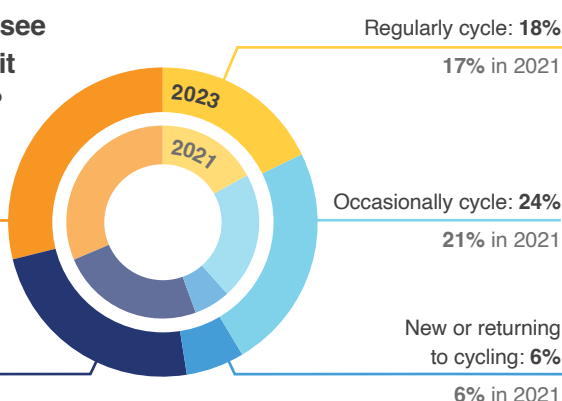
What would make cycling better?

## Many Inverness residents want to cycle

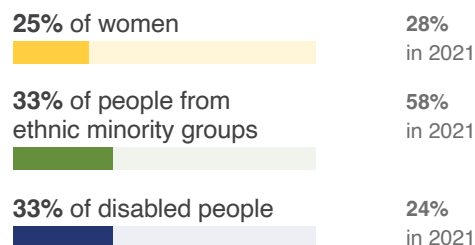
**How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?**

Do not cycle and do not want to: **29%**  
31% in 2021

Do not cycle but would like to: **24%**  
24% in 2021



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



## Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

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

**78%**  
More traffic-free cycle paths away from roads, like through parks or along waterways  
74% in 2021

**74%**  
More cycle paths along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians  
69% in 2021

**71%**  
More signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets  
68% in 2021

**65%**  
Better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking at train stations  
60% in 2021

There are **48** cycle parking spaces at the **1** railway station in Inverness  
32 in 2021

Inverness has:  
**27 miles**  
of traffic-free cycle paths away from the road  
27 miles in 2021

**0 miles**  
of cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians  
0 miles in 2021

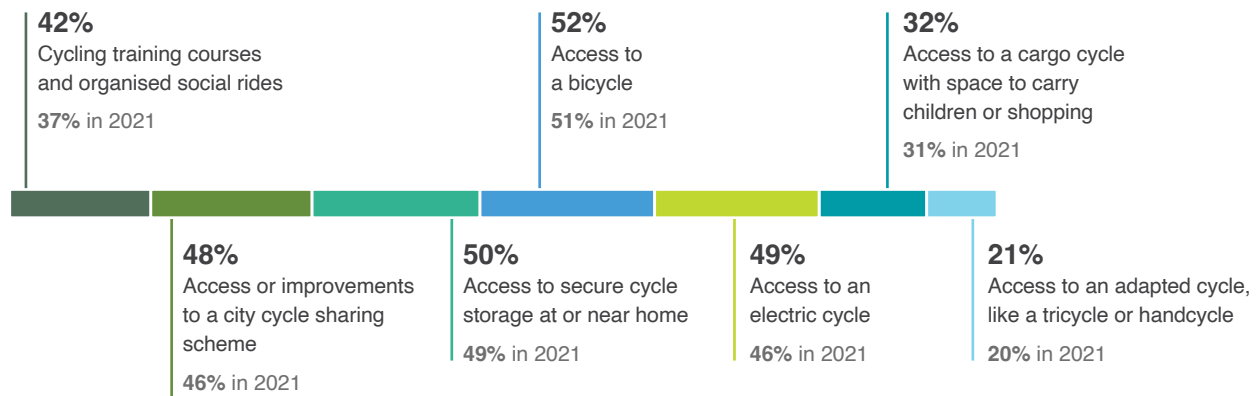
**14%**  
of households within 125m of these routes  
14% in 2021

**64%**  
of residents support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic  
56% in 2021



## Residents want more support to cycle

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



#### Inverness cycle hire scheme<sup>ii</sup>

**60**  
hire cycles

**11**  
cycle hire stations

#### Reported cycle thefts

There were **135** reported cycle thefts in Inverness in 2022/23.

89 in 2021/22

For every **256** people who own an adult cycle in Inverness, there was **1** reported cycle theft in the past year.

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

**66%** of residents 64% in 2021

**52%** of socio-economic group DE 46% in 2021

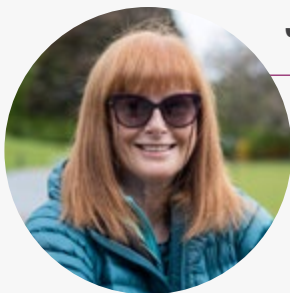
**72%** of socio-economic group AB 70% in 2021

**53%** of residents support financial discounts for people on low incomes or not in employment to help them buy a cycle

**33%** of households are within 800m of a cycle shop<sup>iii</sup>

There is a public cycle parking space for every **61** people who cycle in Inverness.

56 in 2021



**Judith, e-bike advocate**



I suffered central vision loss a few years ago, which meant I was no longer able to drive. I'd always been a social cyclist, so I went to my local bike shop and bought an e-bike. I can honestly say it has transformed my life. Losing driving made me feel like I'd lost so much – my e-bike has given me back a sense of independence.

Through the RNIB I heard about the Visually Impaired Tandem Club. I've met so many lovely people through this. It's increased my joy of cycling and given me a new lease of life.

Cycling just makes me feel better. I am out on the bike most days doing at least 10 miles. My biggest bugbear is road maintenance, especially since I can't fix punctures myself because of my vision.

ii. 2023 data covers July 2022-June 2023.

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





# 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

**82%**

of residents

77% in 2021

80% of women

78% in 2021

85% of men

77% in 2021

78% of disabled people

71%  
in 2021

84% of non-disabled people

80%  
in 2021

88%  
in 2021

82% of people from ethnic minority groups

75% of LGBTQ+ people

80% of socio-economic group DE

59%  
in 2021

77%  
in 2021

82% of white people

83% of non-LGBTQ+ people

85% of socio-economic group AB

86%  
in 2021

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

35%  
in 2021

Only 42% of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

Unclassified roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in Inverness 14% of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.<sup>i</sup>

65% of Inverness's streets have 20mph speed limits.<sup>ii</sup>

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

14% in 2021

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

61%  
in 2021

63% Walk or wheel more

56% Walk or wheel more

58%  
in 2021

62%  
in 2021

62% Cycle more

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

57% Cycle more

57%  
in 2021

54% in 2021

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

59%  
in 2021

**61%**

agree increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

**59%**

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

58% in 2021

**66%**

support low-traffic neighbourhoods

66% in 2021



## Emily, Inverness Bicycle Mayor



As Scotland's first Bicycle Mayor, I want to be a strong voice for cycling in Inverness, and to create positive representation of cycling as being for everyone.

There is good willingness at local level, but the reality of getting new schemes put in requires a lot of public support. I'm here to help coordinate this support and make it more visible, by improving communication between the council and the local cycling community.

If implemented, the emerging Highland Council Active Travel Strategy would be transformational for Inverness. With better infrastructure, the journey from beginner to everyday cyclist would be so much easier. Small changes like cycle parking, parklets, and play streets can also have big impacts.

Hopefully we can grow a network of Bicycle Mayors across Scotland. With a strong combined voice, we could really get things done.

## 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.

### 10 years old

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

10 years old in 2021

80% of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school.<sup>iii</sup>

55% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play



75% of households are within 400m of a children's playground



Among Inverness residents:

47% agree



45% agreed in 2021

26% disagree



25% disagreed in 2021

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 Inverness have School Streets schemes<sup>iv</sup>

0 schemes in 2021



iii. Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015. iv. Figure given is correct as of 31 May 2023.



# Developing Inverness

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

## Academy Street – a place for everyone

The emerging Academy Street regeneration plans will, subject to funding and statutory processes, reallocate a significant amount of public space away from the carriageway and into better provision for walking, wheeling and cycling. Widened pavements with benches, café seating and biodiverse green spaces will provide additional space for businesses and make the street an attractive destination for locals and visitors alike. People with a visual or mobility impairment will benefit from clear, generous footways, improved crossings and spaces to rest.

With this scheme Inverness will join the many cities who have taken the decision to reduce vehicle traffic and are now reaping the benefits of more welcoming, cleaner, vibrant streets which are busy with people rather than with vehicles passing through.



The regeneration plan will provide additional space for businesses and make the street an attractive destination for locals and visitors alike. People with a visual or mobility impairment will benefit from clear, generous footways, improved crossings and spaces to rest.

## Riverside

Linking Ness Walk and Bught Park, the Riverside scheme enhances this vital corridor for walking, wheeling and cycling. Wider pavements, provision of benches for resting and enjoying the beautiful views, provision of cycle infrastructure, and installation of cycle parking will make it safer and more welcoming for all users.

Part of the wider vision of the Inverness City Active Travel Network, it builds on positive feedback from the temporary scheme of summer 2020.

## Good news for buses

The Bus Service Improvement Partnership is working to increase bus and coach uptake by increasing attractiveness, simplicity, and level of provision.

The new Council-owned bus fleet is off to a successful start and there are ongoing plans to expand this pilot, including with electric vehicles.





In another significant step forward, 2023 also saw the UK's first all-electric city bus fleet arrive in Inverness. With no engine noise, vibration or exhaust emissions, passengers and those cycling, walking or wheeling nearby enjoy a more peaceful and cleaner city centre.

Other measures to improve bus travel include installation of twenty new bus-priority traffic lights, the Raigmore Bus Gate, the Rose Street Bus Link, and plans for Millburn Corridor.

With every bus journey also involving getting to and from the bus stop, improvements to bus provision and improvements for walking, wheeling and cycling go hand in hand.

### **The Raigmore Active Travel Link**

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The Raigmore Active Travel Link (RATL) opened in 2022. It provides a gently sloping connection between Millburn Road / Raigmore Interchange and Raigmore Estate / Inverness Campus, connecting with 2013's Golden Bridge and 2021's North Bridge (Sustainable Travel Bridge).

With the steady expansion of Inverness Campus, including 2023's opening of the Life Sciences Innovation Centre and the National Treatment Centre, it is ever more important to offer alternatives to the car.

Reflecting on the 10 years since the opening of the popular Golden Bridge, which has now seen over half a million crossings on foot and more than quarter of a million on bikes, The Highland Council and project partner Sustrans expect that the RATL will likewise open up active everyday journeys for many.

### **Hi-Bike Inverness**

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Hi-Bike Inverness, the city's electric bikeshare scheme, opened in 2021 with thirty bikes at three docking stations: Inverness railway station, Inverness Campus and Great Glen House. Now owned by HITRANS, there are now sixty bikes and additional charging stations at Hilton, Kinmylies and Culloden Library. "Virtual" stations at Raigmore Hospital, UHI's School of Forestry, Eden Court, Inverness Leisure, Dochgarroch and Culloden Battlefield allow users to terminate their trip and return their e-bike to the available pool.

HITRANS have plans to add e-cargo bike share to the app and to install additional charging stations across the city.



# Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

## New Inverness City Centre Masterplan

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An updated Inverness City Centre Masterplan is in progress and will give a clear direction for future investment and regeneration. The aim is to ensure the city continues to be a vibrant, healthy and attractive place for people to live, work, visit and do business. Draft priority outcomes include:

A Green and Healthy City – an attractive, healthy built and natural environment where people can meet, live and socialise in safe, accessible public spaces;

A Zero Carbon City – a city undertaking a transition to becoming a zero carbon region, fair to all, which supports a green circular economy now and for future generations;

An Accessible and Connected City – a welcoming city that is well connected to Scotland, the UK and the world, that is easy to walk and wheel around, where public transport is accessible, and motor vehicles do not dominate.

Walking, wheeling, cycling and using public transport for everyday journeys will play a key part in delivering these outcomes. Redevelopment of Inverness railway station, including better interconnection with the bus station, is progressing and is a crucial part of this vision.

## Mobility Hubs / Park and Ride

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Work is well under way to identify potential locations for Mobility Hubs / Park and Ride provision at the outskirts of the city. These Hubs include good walking, wheeling and cycling provision, alongside bus priority measures. Depending on securing funding, the next stage is to develop the business case and then move to design and construction.



The aim is to make Inverness a green and healthy city with an attractive, healthy built and natural environment where people can meet, live and socialise in safe, accessible public spaces.

## Inshes Corridor

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The area around the Inshes junction includes significant housing provision and some of the city's largest employment destinations: around 13,000 people work in the immediate vicinity. Inverness Campus and Raigmore Hospital are also key destinations for the whole Highland region.

Design work is progressing on Inshes Junction to improve vehicle flow and to build 2050m of shared use paths, 400m of cycle street and 500m of segregated cycle lanes. Bus priority measures are also being considered. This will support people to choose the healthiest and most sustainable modes of transport. It also frees up road space for essential car users and makes fairer use of the limited space available.

## Millburn Corridor: bus and active travel priority

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The Millburn Corridor study is developing transformational options to improve transport connections along this crucial cross-city corridor, with a focus on walking, wheeling and cycling, faster and more reliable bus connections, and clear, attractive links to the bus and railway stations.



**Gordon, active travel advocate**



In an ideal world, we would like to use our car as little as possible. Cycling my son around in our bike trailer is a great workout and you meet lots of people curious to ask you about it! As well as for fitness and the joy of cycling, my main motivation is to show my son it's possible to lead an active lifestyle as part of everyday life.

Walking, wheeling and cycling in Inverness needs to feel safer with infrastructure that makes active travel and public transport more attractive than our cars.

For example, protected cycle lanes that avoid mixing road users removes the vulnerability you can feel on a bike, especially when with children. As a doctor working in emergency care, I'm unfortunately very aware of this risk.

A significant number of us still choose to use our cars for short journeys around the city, myself included at times. Reducing the number of cars in our city centre will make spending time there much more enjoyable. It can only benefit local business, is better for our planet, and will promote Inverness as a role model for other cities to follow.



## Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from March to June 2023 by independent social research organisation NatCen.

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

2021 survey data was collected from June to August 2021, 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 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](http://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](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

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