



MOVING FORWARD

THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF

**Active Travel
in Scotland**

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.

Investment in cycling and walking makes great economic sense. Here is some information on the potential economic benefits of active travel in Scotland.

ECONOMY

Moving people, retail and tourism

Increasing the number of people walking and cycling helps to beat traffic congestion and can unlock growth.

£225m

The estimated cost of congestion in Edinburgh in 2016 ¹



2-3 times

more people can move along a Cycle Superhighway as on general traffic lanes of the same distance ²



Cycle and walking-friendly high streets draw a variety of shoppers and visitors, support a wide range of businesses and increase retail vitality.

30%

increase in retail sales thanks to walking and cycling projects ³

5x

higher retail spend per Sq m – with cycle parking vs same area of car parking ⁴

Walking and cycle tourism are valuable and growing areas of the economy in Scotland.

£1.26bn

Value of walking tourism to the Scottish economy ⁵

£150,000

Value of NCN Route 78, Oban – Ballachulish, to the local economy each year ⁶

EMPLOYMENT

Creating and giving access to jobs

Building walking and cycling infrastructure creates and sustains jobs better than road schemes.

12.7

jobs are supported or sustained for every £1 million of investment in sustainable transport infrastructure



1.6

jobs are created by 1km of cycle lane

7

Active travel, and cycling in particular, helps people to access employment opportunities. Sustrans worked with Derby City Council to deliver advice, practical skills and access to bikes for unemployed people. We want to do similar work with Scottish Local Authorities.

66%

felt bikes helped them to attend training and volunteering opportunities



66%

said it helped them to attend interviews



75%

said it helped them to get to Jobcentre appointments



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HEALTH

Improving health, reducing absenteeism

Walking and cycling saves money on healthcare by improving people's physical health and reducing conditions associated with inactivity.



Health benefits of active travel on the National Cycle Network in 2015 ⁹



Estimated amount the NHS could save over 20 years if Danish cycling levels were achieved in the UK ¹⁰

39%



of people in Scotland achieve the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity on five or more days per week ¹¹

66%



of people surveyed using Sustrans' Community Links projects completed their 30 minutes of physical activity five or more days per week ¹²

Walking and cycling reduces absenteeism, increases productivity and saves businesses money.

20%



reduction in absenteeism by promoting healthier travel options ¹³

1.3



Number of average fewer days missed by cyclists compared to non cyclists (7.4 vs. 8.7) ¹⁴

ENVIRONMENT

Reducing air pollution and carbon emissions

Investing in cycling and walking has been associated with large reductions in air pollution in urban areas where it has the most significant impact on health.



The potential reduction in carbon emissions from transport 2019-50 (55,000 tCO₂e) with a 10% cycle mode share ¹⁵

Seville increased cycling from **0.5% to 7%**, substantially reducing air pollution and cutting the number of days it exceeded EU regulations on air quality from **152 to 40** per year ¹⁶



These are just some of the economic benefits of walking and cycling that should make significant investment in active travel an economic priority.

Contact us to find out how we can help to support active travel in your area, including funding for infrastructure through Community Links, National Cycle Network, Community Links Plus and our behaviour change programmes.

References

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