

Inverness

Walking and Cycling Index 2025



Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling



Councillor Ian Brown
Leader of Inverness and Area
The Highland Council

Welcome to the 2025 Inverness Walking and Cycling Index. Some highlights since the 2023 report include the opening of the Riverside Way and the Hydro Ramp, permanent 20 mph limits, and Hi-Bike's expansion. And of course the opening of the Inverness Castle Experience, which will bring more people to the city centre by all modes of transport.

I'm delighted to see that 80% of survey respondents think Inverness is safe for walking and wheeling, up from 73% in 2023, and that 56% of respondents think cycling is safe here, up from 50%.

The Council's new powers to penalise drivers for pavement parking help keep our footways clearer and safer, especially for those who are mobility-impaired and those with a pushchair or small children. Improved, and new, dropped kerbs also ease those journeys.

We now have four Active Travel Behaviour Change Officers delivering BikeAbility to Highland pupils; in Inverness, we have also delivered several new Safer Routes to School schemes.

Our own bus fleet is expanding and there is ongoing work to improve bus infrastructure including bus priority at signalised junctions and new shelters with real-time information to improve passenger experience.

In Inverness there is a significant minority who cannot drive, and people who want to drive less. Three-quarters of residents said that more traffic-free paths away from roads would help them start cycling or cycle more, and three-quarters said that wider pavements would help them to walk or wheel more. That is a challenge, especially where we are trying to retrofit this infrastructure.

We acknowledge considerable work is still needed to decrease carbon emissions from transport. Inverness continues to grow, and our transport infrastructure needs to keep pace so that people can choose more sustainable transport modes and so that our beautiful city becomes fit for the future.

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The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in the UK and Ireland. It is delivered by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) in collaboration with 22 regional and local partners. Each area reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling a more attractive, everyday way to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the fourth report from Inverness, produced in partnership with The Highland Council. The data in this report comes from 2025 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent, demographically representative survey of 1,164 residents aged 16 or above. The survey was conducted from March to June 2025. 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 2023 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 and an interactive data tool to explore the data in more depth can be found at www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/walking-cycling-index



Defining wheeling

Some people who use 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.

Headlines

Inverness

Population^[i]

63,608

52,926 adults

10,682 children

Survey area

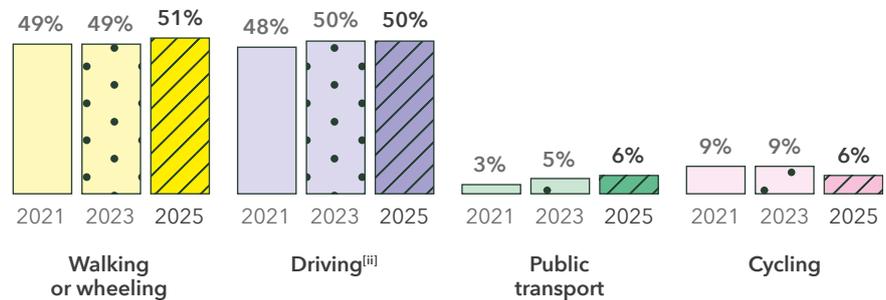


Frequency of different modes of travel

Walking and wheeling is the most common mode of travel amongst Inverness residents. Since 2023 walking and wheeling appears to be increasing.

i. Despite changes to the 2025 Inverness Index boundary to reflect 2022 data zones, the same NRS Census 2022 population figures were used for both 2023 and 2025, as NRS had not released data on 2022 data zones at the time of modelling.

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



ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle.

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.

51%

of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

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

44% of disabled people

54% of non-disabled people

22%

of residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week ^[iii]

14% of women

30% of men

Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

80% of women

81% of men

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to cycle in their local area ^[iv]

50% of socio-economic group DE

60% of socio-economic group AB

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

82% of people from ethnic minority groups

81% of white people

iii. See footnote on page 6.

iv. Socio-economic groups AB are managerial while groups DE are manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment. See page 6 for full definitions.

Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Based on modelling of survey data, every year, walking, wheeling and cycling:

prevents
223
serious long-term
health conditions

creates
£75.3 million
in economic benefit for
individuals and the city

saves
3,700 tonnes
of greenhouse gas emissions

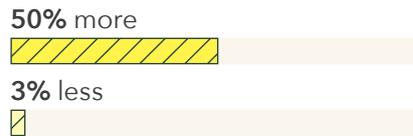
Walking, wheeling and cycling reduces congestion by taking up to 19,000 cars off the roads every day.

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

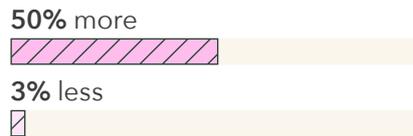
Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

28% of residents want to drive less. 55% of residents agree that they often use a car because no other transport options are available.

Walk or wheel



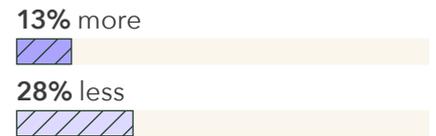
Cycle



Take public transport

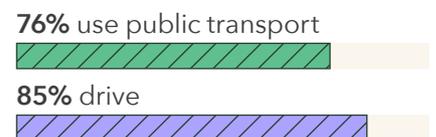
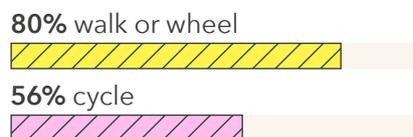


Drive



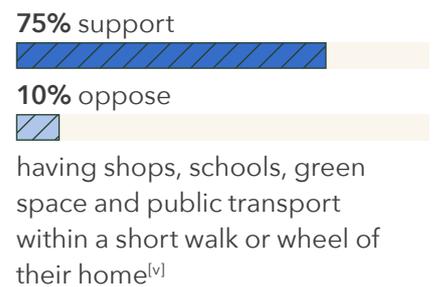
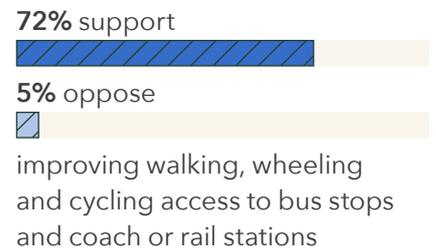
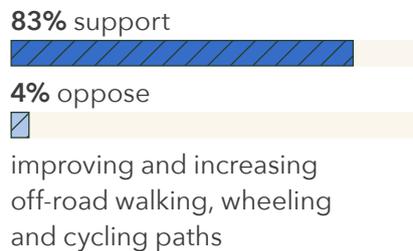
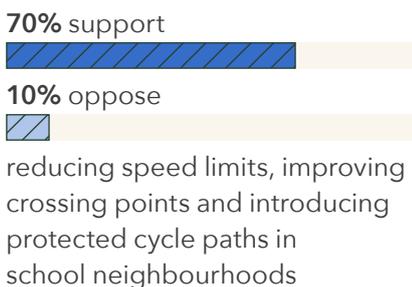
Cycling is seen as less safe than other forms of transport

Percentage of residents who think it's safe in their local area to:



Residents support more connected neighbourhoods

49% of residents support shifting investment from road-building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. 21% oppose such a shift.



v. Local places with services and amenities nearby your home are often known as 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Walking and wheeling

Participation, safety and satisfaction



Walking and wheeling participation

Overall in Inverness the number of residents walking and wheeling at least five days a week has stayed the same since 2023.

Encouragingly, the majority of residents feel it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area and think it is a good place to walk or wheel.

95%
of all residents
walk or wheel
94% in 2023

51%
of all residents
walk or wheel
at least five
days a week
49% in 2023

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

Gender and sexuality⁽ⁱ⁾

50% of women
48% in 2023

54% of men
51% in 2023

49% of LGBTQ+ people
52% in 2023

51% of non-LGBTQ+ people
47% in 2023

Ethnicity

55% of people from ethnic minority groups
36% in 2023

51% of white people
50% in 2023

Age

55% of people aged 16-25
46% in 2023

48% of people aged 26-35
42% in 2023

56% of people aged 36-45
53% in 2023

53% of people aged 46-55
59% in 2023

49% of people aged 56-65
45% in 2023

49% of people aged 66+
51% in 2023

Disability

44% of disabled people
49% in 2023

54% of non-disabled people
49% in 2023

Socio-economic group⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

52% of AB
52% in 2023

51% of C1
48% in 2023

49% of C2
42% in 2023

54% of DE
49% in 2023

i. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and is not shown.
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

80%

of all residents think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

73% in 2023

58%

of all residents think it's safe for children to walk or wheel in their local area

57% in 2023

78%

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

80% in 2023

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

Gender and sexuality

80% of women



72% in 2023

81% of men



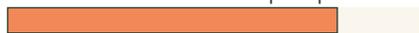
73% in 2023

71% of LGBTQ+ people



76% in 2023

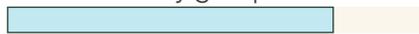
80% of non-LGBTQ+ people



72% in 2023

Ethnicity

79% of people from ethnic minority groups



90% in 2023

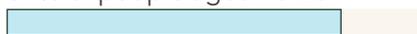
80% of white people



72% in 2023

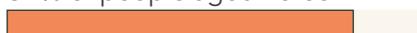
Age

81% of people aged 16-25



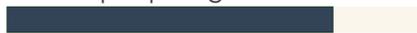
81% in 2023

84% of people aged 26-35



76% in 2023

79% of people aged 36-45



75% in 2023

78% of people aged 46-55



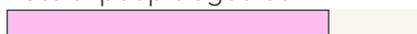
78% in 2023

81% of people aged 56-65



71% in 2023

78% of people aged 66+



62% in 2023

Disability

75% of disabled people



66% in 2023

81% of non-disabled people



75% in 2023

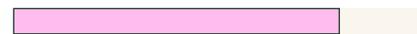
Socio-economic group

83% of AB



73% in 2023

79% of C1



72% in 2023

76% of C2



80% in 2023

77% of DE



68% in 2023



Helen, outdoor explorer

I really enjoy walking and I find it relaxing. I really like being outdoors but I don't have a garden so I just like walking around town. I like the exercise as well. I walk to work because it's really close to where I live. I usually take a longer route along the river.

The cycling infrastructure is great for cyclists and I think it's also made things better for walkers because it's slowed the traffic down.

I think there are some obstacles for people who are using wheelchairs. There are definitely places that could be improved but I think Inverness is pretty good because it's compact. You can walk everywhere within 15 or 20 minutes.

Cycling

Participation, safety and satisfaction



Cycling participation

Currently, 22% of Inverness residents cycle at least once a week. This has decreased since 2023.

Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.^[i]

The potential for cycling is huge, and unlocking it depends on providing safe, dedicated space for cycling.

Encouragingly, perceptions of safety have improved since 2023.

46%
of all residents cycle
50% in 2023

22%
of all residents
cycle at least
once a week
27% in 2023

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

Gender and sexuality

14% of women

20% in 2023

30% of men

35% in 2023

26% of LGBTQ+ people

13% in 2023

22% of non-LGBTQ+ people

28% in 2023

Ethnicity

19% of people from ethnic minority groups

11% in 2023

22% of white people

28% in 2023

Age

24% of people aged 16-25

29% in 2023

18% of people aged 26-35

27% in 2023

26% of people aged 36-45

35% in 2023

29% of people aged 46-55

29% in 2023

21% of people aged 56-65

29% in 2023

16% of people aged 66+

19% in 2023

Disability

20% of disabled people

17% in 2023

23% of non-disabled people

32% in 2023

Socio-economic group

26% of AB

32% in 2023

22% of C1

25% in 2023

25% of C2

31% in 2023

12% of DE

20% in 2023

i. See Bike Life 2019 Inverness report.

Cycling safety and satisfaction

56%

of all residents think it's safe to cycle in their local area

50% in 2023

43%

of all residents think it's safe for children to cycle in their local area

40% in 2023

56%

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

56% in 2023

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to cycle in their local area

Gender and sexuality

53% of women



49% in 2023

59% of men



51% in 2023

46% of LGBTQ+ people



28% in 2023

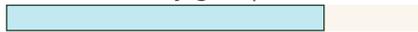
58% of non-LGBTQ+ people



51% in 2023

Ethnicity

77% of people from ethnic minority groups



58% in 2023

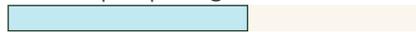
55% of white people



50% in 2023

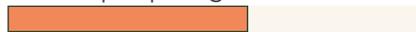
Age

58% of people aged 16-25



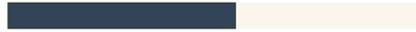
62% in 2023

58% of people aged 26-35



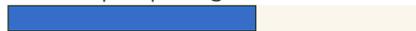
38% in 2023

55% of people aged 36-45



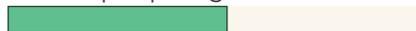
59% in 2023

60% of people aged 46-55



54% in 2023

53% of people aged 56-65



46% in 2023

54% of people aged 66+



47% in 2023

Disability

51% of disabled people



39% in 2023

57% of non-disabled people



54% in 2023

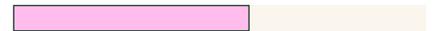
Socio-economic group

60% of AB



46% in 2023

57% of C1



53% in 2023

52% of C2



58% in 2023

50% of DE



47% in 2023



Ruairidh, coimiutair/Rory, commuter

Dh'fhaodadh Inbhir Nis a bhith na àite glè mhath a thaobh coiseachd is rothaireachd, ach tha tòrr a bharrachd againn ri dhèanamh. Mar phàrant, chan eil na rathaidean is na cabhsairean a' faireachdainn sàbhailte idir mar àite dha cloinn. Chanainn gur e cleachdaidhean draibhidh an dùbhlán as motha a tha romhainn ma tha sinn a' dol a

bhrosnachadh coiseachd is rothaireachd anns a' bhaile.

Inverness has the potential to be a great place for walking and wheeling, however there is still a long way to go. As a parent, the roads and pavements do not feel safe for children. I'd say the biggest challenge we face in encouraging walking and wheeling in the city is driving habits.

Benefits of walking and wheeling

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

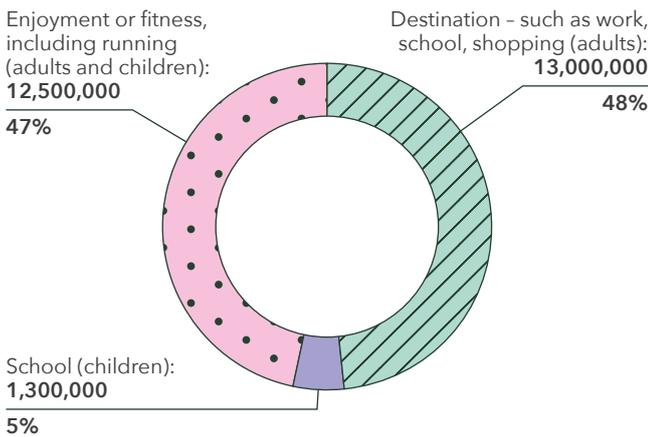


Together, Inverness residents walk or wheel 3 times around the world every day

Walking and wheeling improves health and air quality, saves the NHS money, and reduces congestion.

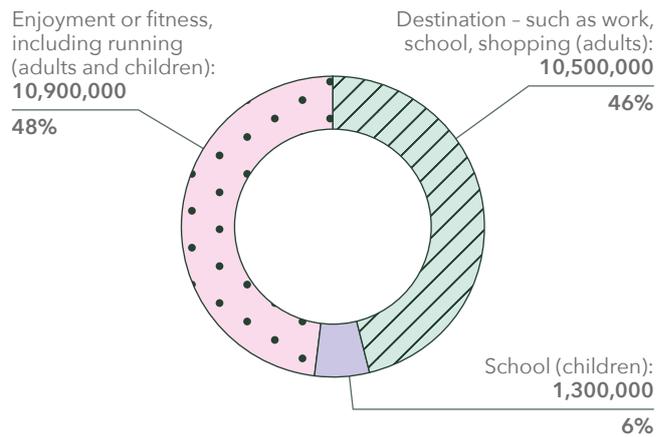
Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose

26.8 million trips in 2025 which add up to **31.2 million miles**



Average walking or wheeling trip distance: 1.2 miles

22.7 million trips in 2023 which add up to **28.8 million miles**



Average walking or wheeling trip distance: 1.3 miles

Walking and wheeling benefits residents and society

We model the costs and benefits of walking and wheeling journeys, including those that replace trips which could have been driven, using our Societal Gain model. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

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

£55.8 million

£42.9 million in 2023

Many of these trips were made by people with access to a car. For these (excluding trips for enjoyment or fitness) our model compares the costs and benefits of walking and wheeling to those of driving.

For these journeys **86p** is saved for each mile walked or wheeled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **£6.4 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **7.4 million miles** walked or wheeled by those that could have used a car.



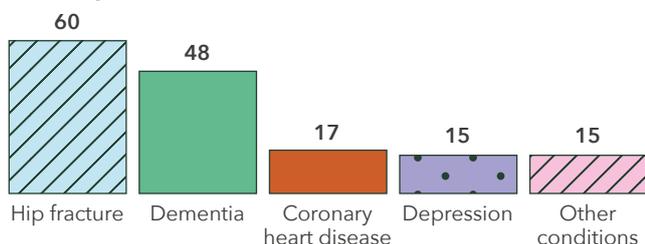
2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated using Census 2022 population data instead of 2021 mid-year estimates, as a more reliable source. See methodology report for details.

Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Walking in the city prevents 155 serious long-term health conditions each year.

141 in 2023

Cases prevented



This saves the NHS

£1.9 million per year

£1.7 million in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

42,000

GP appointments

42,000 in 2023

Above figures are based on applying city data to Sport England MOVES tool, which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity. 'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer and colorectal cancer.

The physical activity benefits from walking

prevent 41 early deaths annually

39 in 2023

which is valued at

£167 million

£142 million in 2023

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.

Wheelchair and mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

People walking and wheeling instead of driving improves air quality, saving:

4,900 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

4,500 kg in 2023

and

427 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀, which includes PM_{2.5}) annually.

379 kg in 2023

78% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



77% in 2023

Walking and wheeling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By walking or wheeling instead of driving, residents save

2,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) annually.

1,900 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

9,900 people

taking flights

from Inverness to London.

In 2023, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **28.8%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2023.

Walking and wheeling keeps the city moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^[i] This helps to keep the city moving for all road users.

16,000 return trips

are walked and wheeled daily by residents who could have used a car.

12,000 in 2023

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

46 miles

equivalent to the distance from Inverness to Fochabers.

37 miles in 2023

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

Benefits of cycling

Why everyone gains when more people cycle

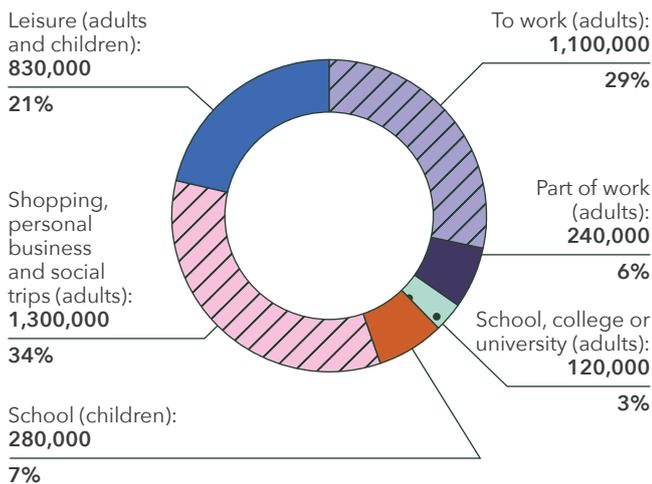


Together, Inverness residents cycle twice around the world every day

Cycling can be convenient for many local trips, especially in cities and towns. It gives people transport choice and access to education, jobs and community.

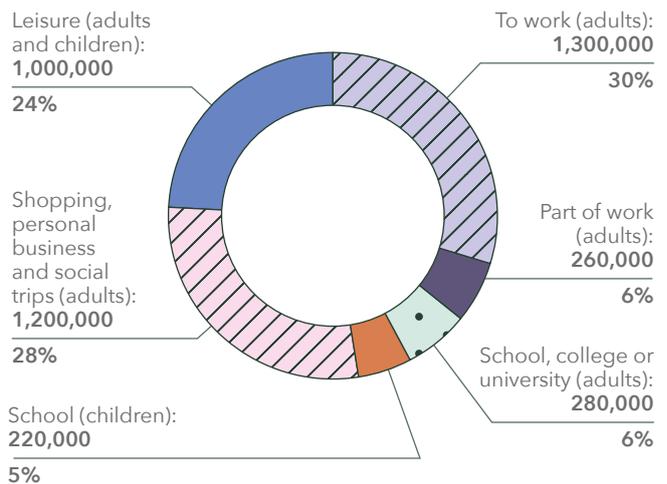
Annual cycling trips by purpose

3.9 million trips in 2025 which add up to **16 million miles**



Average cycling trip distance: 4.1 miles

4.3 million trips in 2023 which add up to **16.2 million miles**



Average cycling trip distance: 3.7 miles

Cycling benefits residents and society

We model the costs and benefits of cycling journeys, including those that replace trips which could have been driven, using our Societal Gain model. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

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

£19.5 million

£17.5 million in 2023

Many of these trips were made by people with access to a car. For these (excluding trips for leisure) our model compares the costs and benefits of cycling to those of driving.

For these journeys **£1.57** is saved for each mile cycled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **£10 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **6.4 million miles** cycled by those that could have used a car.



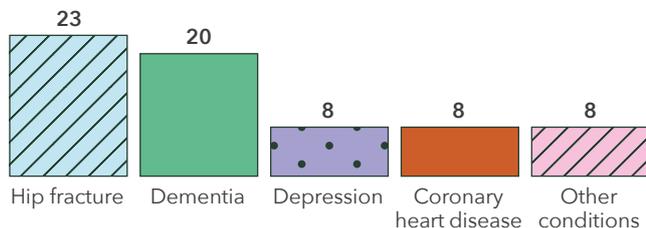
2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated for the inclusion of cycling trips as part of work and using Census 2022 population data instead 2021 mid-year estimates, as a more reliable source. See methodology report for details.

Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in the city prevents 67 serious long-term health conditions each year.

69 in 2023

Cases prevented



This saves the NHS

£830,000 per year

£860,000 in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

18,000

GP appointments

21,000 in 2023

Above figures are based on applying city data to Sport England MOVES tool, which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity. 'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer and colorectal cancer.

The physical activity benefits from cycling

prevent 7 early deaths annually

7 in 2023

which is valued at

£27.9 million

£25.8 million in 2023

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.

People cycling instead of driving improves air quality, saving:

2,900 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

3,200 kg in 2023

and

299 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀, which includes PM_{2.5}) annually.

295 kg in 2023

78% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



77% in 2023

Cycling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By cycling instead of driving, residents save

1,700 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) annually.

1,700 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

8,600 people taking flights

from Inverness to London.

In 2023, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **28.8%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2023.

Cycling keeps the city moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^[i] This helps to keep the city moving for all road users.

3,500 return trips

are cycled daily by residents who could have used a car.

3,800 in 2023

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

11 miles

equivalent to the distance from Inverness to Fettes.

11 miles in 2023

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

Walking and wheeling solutions

What would help make walking and wheeling easier?



New homes and existing communities should have services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Putting walking and wheeling at the heart of new and existing communities gives people greater transport choice, while reducing car dependency.

45%

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

49% in 2023

58%

support stopping new housing developments in areas where driving is the only practical option to visit local services, such as shops and doctors surgeries

57% in 2023

New developments and existing communities can support walking and wheeling by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live.

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

74% in 2023

74%

more government services, such as doctors surgeries and schools, close to your home

70% in 2023

83%

more parks or green spaces close to your home

81% in 2023

81%

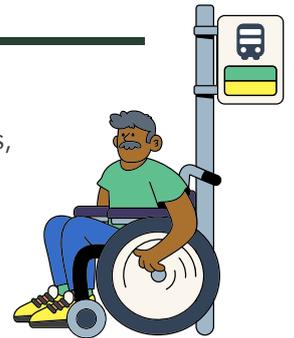
more things to see and do close to your home, like cafés or entertainment venues

78% in 2023

Residents want walking and wheeling to better align with buses

While walking and wheeling should be the most attractive option for short journeys, it should also be integrated with public transport for longer trips.

Walking and bus use is the most common form of multi-modal journey across the UK. If we are to increase walking and wheeling and bus trips, residents told us they need practical improvements to better integrate these modes of transport.



What percentage of residents would find these changes useful to help them take journeys that include walking or wheeling and the bus more often?

74%

more information to help them plan and take a journey (such as apps, maps, signage or public transport staff)

70%

more direct walking and wheeling routes from housing estates to bus stops

71%

accessible walking and wheeling routes to and from bus stops

71%

improved safety while walking or wheeling to and from the bus stop

72%

improved walking and wheeling crossing facilities near bus stops

83%

improved bus stops (such as accessible, well lit and maintained, cover from rain, display of service information)

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?

76%

wider pavements
73% in 2023

71%

more frequent road crossings, with reduced wait times
69% in 2023

78%

nicer places along streets to stop and rest, like more benches, trees and shelters
76% in 2023

75%

better pavement accessibility, like level surfaces and dropped kerbs at crossing points
74% in 2023

69%

fewer cars parked on the pavement
70% in 2023

64%

less fear of crime or antisocial behaviour in their area
54% in 2023

In the city, for each road making up a junction with traffic lights

66% have a pedestrian crossing



34% don't have a pedestrian crossing



For example, a T-junction has three roads making up the junction, and a crossroads has four.



Kristina, doctor

I cycle to work at the hospital. I cycle for environmental reasons and it's good to build exercise, nature and fresh air into the day. Cycling improves my quality of life, and I am working hard to encourage colleagues, family and friends to travel more actively.

Despite being a confident cyclist, narrow rural roads can still be a frightening experience and I don't feel safe.

The safest routes to cycle are those where the bike infrastructure is separate from traffic.

I would like to see more work around improving cycle routes like on the Riverside Way along the River Ness.

Increasing the quality of cycling and walking routes will be beneficial for the economy and the NHS by reducing car traffic and improving public health.

Cycling solutions

What would make cycling better?

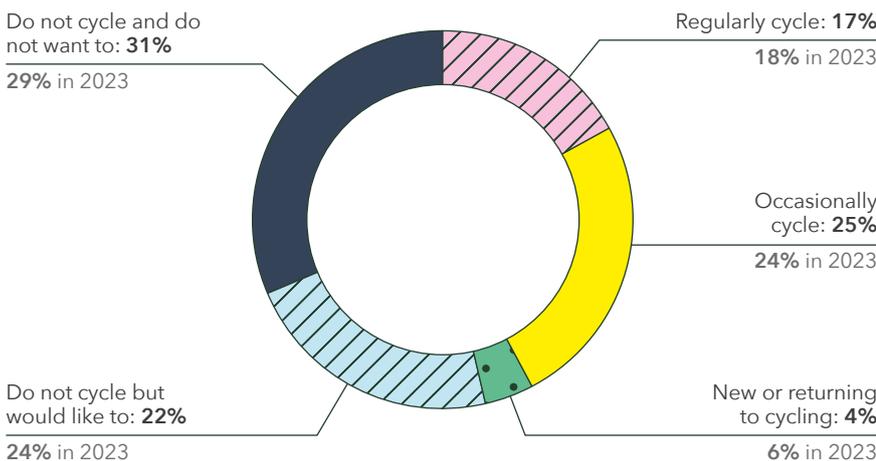


Many residents want to cycle

There is considerable appetite to start cycling from residents who don't already.

To meet this demand we must address safety, ensuring people have dedicated space for cycling, as well as supporting access to a cycle, training, cycle parking, and better integration of cycling with public transport.

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?



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

25% of women



27% of people from ethnic minority groups



32% of disabled people



Residents want more support to cycle

What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them start cycling or to cycle more?

54%
access to a bicycle
52% in 2023

46%
access to an electric cycle
49% in 2023

33%
access to a cargo cycle with space to carry children or shopping
32% in 2023

24%
access to an adapted cycle, like a tricycle or handcycle
21% in 2023

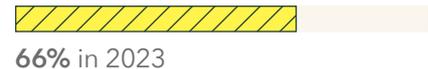
49%
access or improvements to a city cycle hiring scheme
48% in 2023

53%
access to secure cycle parking at or near home
50% in 2023

40%
cycling training courses and organised social rides
42% in 2023

Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

68% of all residents



66% in 2023

57% of socio-economic group DE



52% in 2023

75% of socio-economic group AB



72% in 2023

Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

People want networks of dedicated and safe cycle paths, cycle parking and better integration with public transport.

In Inverness there are

146 cycle parking spaces across 2 railway and bus stations

48 spaces across 2 stations in 2023

What percentage of residents would be helped to start cycling or to cycle more by better facilities?

75%

more traffic-free cycle paths away from roads, like through parks or along waterways
78% in 2023

73%

more cycle paths along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians
74% in 2023

71%

more signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets
71% in 2023

65%

better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking at train stations, bus stops/stations
65% in 2023

Among residents:

83%

support improving and increasing local off-road walking, wheeling and cycling paths

64%

support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic
64% in 2023

72%

support improving walking, wheeling and cycling access to bus stops and coach or rail stations



Stephen, school runner

I use an electric cargo bike. I can dress in normal clothes, get where I'm going and I'm not sweaty when I arrive.

It's main job is the school drop off every day. Given the choice the kids want to take the bike over the car. It's just more fun.

There's parts of town that I don't like riding in because the infrastructure doesn't suit it.

As my kids are getting older and more independent, safer routes for them to get about town would be the biggest thing. They won't fit on the cargo bike forever.

Neighbourhood solutions

Thriving places, centring children



Neighbourhoods should prioritise the needs and wellbeing of the people who live there and visit. They should be planned to support community, foster social connection, and be places where everyone feels welcome.

Designing neighbourhoods with children in mind means they work better for everyone.

Improving the journey to school

Schools are at the centre of many neighbourhoods and should be part of any plan to make neighbourhoods better.

This means working with schools to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling, but also improving the neighbourhood around schools to reduce traffic and improve pavements, crossing points and cycle provision.

52% support



24% oppose



closing residential streets outside schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times

70% support



10% oppose



reducing speed limits, improving crossing points and introducing protected cycle paths in school neighbourhoods

These are known as 'School Streets'.

0 schools

in the city have School Streets schemes

0 schools in 2023



Giving children the independence to roam, play and develop

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive. Well-designed neighbourhoods can give children freedom to move around, play and socialise, helping children's independence, social skills, and autonomy.

Average age when parents and carers would let children travel independently in their neighbourhood

10 years old
to walk
or wheel

10 years old
to cycle

13 years old
to use public
transport

54%

agree there is space for children to socialise and play

55% in 2023

Fewer children play out on their streets than ever before. Just 27% of children said they regularly play outside their homes, compared to 71% of those born between 1946 and 1964.

Save the Children, Summer of Play campaign survey, 2022.



Residents support child-safe neighbourhoods

Adults support child-safe neighbourhoods, including traffic-reduction targets and measures to reduce through traffic and traffic speed, but this must be done fairly.

41%

of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles
42% in 2023

54%

support setting traffic-reduction targets and taking action to achieve these
59% in 2023

65%

support low-traffic neighbourhoods
66% in 2023

14%

of the total length of unclassified roads in the city have nothing to prevent through traffic. This can result in rat running.^[i]
14% in 2023

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

62% walk or wheel more



57% cycle more

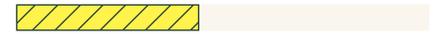


54%

support reducing speed limits on local roads in built-up areas to 20 mph speed limits

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

44% walk or wheel more



45% cycle more



Everyone should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

Improvements to neighbourhoods must also recognise the needs of adults, for example women, disabled people and people from ethnic minority groups.

56%

agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello
59% in 2023

51%

feel able to participate in making their neighbourhood a better place to live
49% in 2023

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

81%

of all residents



82% in 2023

82% of women



80% in 2023

81% of men



85% in 2023

68% of LGBTQ+ people



75% in 2023

83% of non-LGBTQ+ people



83% in 2023

82% of people from ethnic minority groups



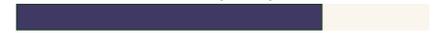
82% in 2023

81% of white people



82% in 2023

74% of disabled people



78% in 2023

84% of non-disabled people



84% in 2023

69% of socio-economic group DE



80% in 2023

87% of socio-economic group AB



85% in 2023

i. Based on analysis by CycleStreets www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org. Unclassified roads are all public roads that are neither motorways, A, B nor C roads.

Improving walking, wheeling and cycling

Inverness continues to grow, and the Council's vision is of a cleaner, greener, more connected city which reflects the pride of our community and the expectations of our visitors. Safe, affordable, attractive, sustainable transport options have a crucial role to play in achieving that.

We know from the household survey that residents find Inverness a safe place to walk and wheel and strongly support measures to make it easier such as creating more traffic free paths. Residents also support the Council's new powers to penalise drivers for pavement parking.

Bike and ebike ownership here is above the Scottish average; two-thirds of residents support the creation of more cycle paths alongside roads to support people to choose to cycle.

Recent improvements include new paths in Culloden / Smithton, expansion of the In-House

Bus Fleet, new cycle parking at the railway station and an increase in permanent 20 mph limits. Hi-Bike continues to install new charging stations; Transport Scotland have improved the footways along Glenurquhart Road.

The new Torvean Mobility Hub supports people to leave their car and walk, wheel, cycle or take the bus to the city centre, helping to reduce congestion and pollution. More Mobility Hubs are being investigated for other sites around the periphery of the city.

Residents also support the Council's new powers to penalise drivers for pavement parking.

Over half of survey respondents would like to see more spending on walking, wheeling and cycling, two-thirds on buses and three-fifths on trains. Our challenge is to bring key partners together and continue to secure funding to deliver on those aspirations.



Riverside Way and the Hydro Ramp

2024 saw the official opening of the Riverside Way, which provides a safer and more comfortable route between Ness Walk and the recently upgraded Whin Park. Heading southwards, new surfacing and lighting installed in 2025 with National Cycle Network (NCN) funding from the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust has vastly improved the ramp connecting the path by Hydro Ness and the shared-use path alongside the Southern Distributor Road. NCN route 78 now provides a traffic-free route between Dores Roundabout and Inverness Cathedral, with better access to a number of key destinations in this Culture and Leisure Quarter of the city including Inverness Leisure, the Botanic Gardens, Bught Park and its new Sports Pavilion, Eden Court and the newly-improved Northern Meeting Park.



Active Travel/Road Safety Behaviour Change Officers

Travel choices for everyday journeys depend on a number of factors including access to the right information, skills and confidence, perceptions of safety, environmental awareness, costs, access to public transport and access to good walking / wheeling / cycling routes. Behaviour change work can help with some of this, supporting people to re-think their travel choices. The Council has recruited four Behaviour Change Officers to promote Road Safety and Active Travel initiatives across the authority area. They are delivering Bikeability Scotland and Road User Awareness training to Highland pupils. In addition the Officers have re-launched Go For It, the Council's active travel incentive scheme for primary pupils.

Looking forward

Better places and streets for everyone



At the time of writing, there are many changes to come. In particular, the Inverness Castle Experience will bring more people to the city, by all modes of travel, and we will need to respond with appropriate infrastructure changes to ensure that residents and visitors alike all have safe, enjoyable and predictable journeys.

It is very welcome that Transport Scotland will signalise the Raigmore Interchange to support walking, wheeling and cycling at this key junction between residential areas, the city centre, Raigmore Hospital and the Inverness Campus, which continues to expand.

Further improvements are in the pipeline for more dropped kerbs in areas throughout the city, a simple and low-cost measure which is transformational for people with a mobility aid or a pushchair. Path improvements are being delivered between Old Edinburgh Road and Harris Road, at the Rugby Club and by the Botanic Gardens.

There is a wealth of data in the household survey to help inform decision-making. For example, there is a significant difference in cycling rates between women and men: 30% of men cycle at least one day a week, but only 14% of women do. There are many factors at play here, including women's journeys being typically more complex because they are often caring for younger or older family members. Delivering on residents' support for more connected cycling infrastructure, separated from traffic, could help make cycling a more appealing choice.

Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending in their local area:

54% on walking and wheeling



50% on cycling



68% on buses



60% on trains



26% on trams



41% on other forms of public transport such as community transport, metro or subway, local ferry



41% on driving



... women's journeys are typically more complex because they are often caring for younger or older family members.

Walking, wheeling and cycling are often part of a multi-modal journey involving public transport and work is under way, also funded by Transport Scotland, to deliver bus infrastructure improvements across the city including better shelters and real-time information displays. The Council's own bus fleet continues to expand, delivering school transport and key routes to, from and within Inverness.

Temporary repairs have been carried out on Infirmary Bridge and significant funding will be required for it to remain open and safe to the public. This is a crucial traffic-free link over the river and a real priority for investment.

National Cycle Network routes 1, 7 and 78 converge in Inverness. We are working to make improvements on these key links to longer trips for leisure and tourism, as well as commuting. In particular with the expansion of housing and

industry to the east of the city we are developing a realignment of NCN1 to better connect the settlements between Inverness and Nairn.

Often, project delivery can take longer than expected and can be frustrating. However, the Council is proud of the progress we have made and absolutely committed to making active and sustainable travel a realistic and attractive choice for residents and visitors: for health, for the environment, for our communities, for our finances and to reduce transport inequalities.



Jem, Hi-Bike user

I use a Hi-Bike to go from the railway station to the campus every office day (unless the weather is terrible) which takes me along Millburn Road, then on the paths through the woods around the Raigmore estate. It's a great start and end to my day in the office. I used to use the bike station on the campus now I use the new one at Raigmore Hospital.

Millburn Road is fine to cycle but access to and from the bike station at Raigmore

Hospital is really poor - there's no clear and direct route. Similarly, getting from Millburn Road cycleway to the bike hub at the railway station is challenging. You have to cross four lanes of traffic then the sleeping policemen at the roundabout behind the station.

More long-distance cycleways like Millburn Road would improve cycling in Inverness.

Notes on methodology

The attitudinal survey was conducted from March to June 2025 (and 2023) by independent social research organisation NatCen. The survey is representative of all Inverness residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

All other data are sourced from our regional and local partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. All locally-sourced data are correct as of 28 May 2025.

Trip estimates use a model developed by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. When comparing to other travel surveys, some variation may exist in the proportion of journeys travelled by journey purpose.

Trip estimates now include cycling trips as part of work for both 2025 and 2023. Previously published 2023 model estimates have been recalculated to include these and allow for direct comparison, and to use population data from the 2022 Census, instead of 2021 mid-year estimates as a more reliable source. This has also impacted walking trip estimates from 2023.

In 2025 the boundary for Inverness changed. This was a result of changes made to data zones following the 2022 Census meaning that 2023 and 2025 data do not cover exactly the same area.

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 on data sources and calculations, including strengths and limitations of the survey and model methodology, are available at www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/walking-cycling-index

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust is the charity making it possible for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

Because people powered movement changes everything. Our health. Our wellbeing. Our world.

www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk

Funding and support

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