



Walkable and bikeable streets are good for business

High streets are at once places and movement corridors. They need to be easy for people to access and move around, but also attractive places for them to hang-out and spend time.

There is a common misconception that most people drive their car to access Sydney's high streets. But our research with the University of Sydney, which surveyed more than 1700 Sydneysiders across 21 different high streets, shows most people access high streets by foot, bike, or public transport.

Walkable and bikeable street upgrades make streets nicer places, while also making streets easier to get around. This is why, as so much research shows, walkable and bikeable streets are good for business.

People who drive and park their car spend less money than businesses expect

- A Brisbane study shows restaurateurs over-estimate by more than double the revenue received from customers coming by car, assuming these customers make up 59% of their revenue, when in reality they make up 19% of their revenue.¹
- A Toronto study shows that 70% of merchants assume 25-50% of their customers arrive by car, when only 4% of their customers actually arrive by car.²
- A Dublin study shows retailers on the main inner-city shopping streets systematically over-estimated spending levels of customers travelling by car.³
- A Berlin study shows businesses assume 22% of their customers arrive by car, when only 7% of their customers arrive by car.⁴

People who walk or bike spend more money than businesses expect

- A Brisbane study shows 70% of restaurant income comes from customers who walk, bike, or take public transport.²
- A London study found that making high street and centres more walkable and bikeable led to a 17% decrease in retail vacancies.⁵
- A New York City study shows cycleways on 8th and 9th Avenues in Manhattan correlated with an increase in retail sales of up to 49% in that area.⁶
- A Toronto study shows people who walk or bike to their high street spend more money monthly at the high street than customers who drive.³
- A Portland study shows people who walk and bike make more trips and have a higher monthly spend in the local convenience stores, bars, cafés and restaurants than people who drive.⁷

1 Yen, B. T. H. (2024, April 24). Parking isn't as important for restaurants as the owners think it is. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/parking-isnt-as-important-for-restaurants-as-the-owners-think-it-is-74750>

2 Chan, M., Gapski, G., Hurley, K., Ibarra, E., Pin, L., Shupac, A. & Szabo, E. (November 2016). Bike Lanes, On-Street Parking and Business in Parkdale: A study of Queen Street West in Toronto's Parkdale Neighbourhood. Toronto, Ontario. <https://www.tcat.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Bike-Lanes-On-Street-Parking-and-Business-A-Study-of-Queen-Street-West-in-Toronto%E2%80%99s-Parkdale-Neighbourhood.pdf>

3 O'Connor, D., Nix, J., Bradshaw, S., & Shiel, E. (2011). Report on shopper travel behaviour in Dublin City Centre. <https://arrow.tu.dublin.ie/comlinkoth/10/>

4 Betzien, J. (2021). Local business perception vs. mobility behavior of shoppers: A survey from Berlin. Findings. <https://findingspress.org/article/24497-local-business-perception-vs-mobility-behavior-of-shoppers-a-survey-from-berlin>

5 Carmona, M., Gabrieli, T., Hickman, R., Laopoulou, T., & Livingstone, N. (2018). Street appeal: The value of street improvements. *Progress in Planning*, 126, 1-51. <https://content.tfi.gov.uk/street-appeal.pdf>

6 DoT, N. Y. C. (2012). Measuring the street: New metrics for 21st century streets. <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2012-10-measuring-the-street.pdf>

7 Badger, Emily. (2012, Dec 5). "Bloomberg - Are You a Robot?" <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-12-05/cyclists-and-pedestrians-can-end-up-spending-more-each-month-than-drivers>



Walkable and bikeable streets are good for business

Bike parking is more efficient and profitable than car parking

- A Melbourne study shows that each square metre allocated to bike parking generates \$31 per hour, compared to \$6 generated for each square metre used for a car parking space.⁸
- A Birmingham study shows bike parking delivers five times higher retail spend than the same area of car parking.⁹

Walkable and bikeable street upgrades increases customer visits

- Another Toronto study shows that reducing on-street car parking at the same time as installing bike lanes, wider footpaths and traffic calming measures increases customer spending and number of customers visiting.¹⁰

Walkable and bikeable streets have higher property values

- A Birmingham study shows walkable and bikeable neighbourhoods are more desirable and generally have higher property values.¹⁰
- A London study found that making high streets more walkable and bikeable led to uplift in office rental values equivalent to an 'additional' 4% per annum, as well as uplift in retail rental values equivalent to an 'additional' 7.5% per annum.¹¹

People who walk to their high street visit more frequently and spend more

- A Berlin study shows more than 50% of people walk to their high street, and that those who walk make up more than 60% of the total weekly spend on the high street.¹²
- Our research with the University of Sydney found that more than 60% of people who visit their local high street more than once a week arrive by foot, bike or public transport.

Perceptions of cycling infrastructure become positive after installation

- Sydney studies show that after the construction of cycleways retailers' negative perceptions of their impact on productivity and parking dissipate as more locals use them.¹³
- Likewise, community views change, seeing cycleways as enhancing quality of life and the neighbourhood.¹⁴

8 Lee, A., & March, A. (2010). Recognising the economic role of bikes: sharing parking in Lygon Street, Carlton. *Australian Planner*, 47(2), 85–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07293681003767785>

9 Rajé, F., & Saffrey, A. (2015). The value of cycling. Department for Transport. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74ad3aed915d7ab83b5a59/value-of-cycling.pdf>

10 Arancibia, D., Farber, S., Savan, B., Verlinden, Y., Smith Lea, N., Allen, J., & Vernich, L. (2019). Measuring the local economic impacts of replacing on-street parking with bike lanes: A Toronto (Canada) case study. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 85(4), 463–481. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01944363.2019.1638816>

11 Carmona, M., Gabrieli, T., Hickman, R., Laopoulou, T., & Livingstone, N. (2018). Street appeal: The value of street improvements. *Progress in Planning*, 126, 1–51. <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/street-appeal.pdf>

12 Betzien, J. (2021). Local business perception vs. mobility behavior of shoppers: A survey from Berlin. Findings. <https://findingspress.org/article/24497-local-business-perception-vs-mobility-behavior-of-shoppers-a-survey-from-berlin>

13 Crane, M., Rissel, C., Greaves, S., Standen, C., & Wen, L. M. (2016). Neighbourhood expectations and engagement with new cycling infrastructure in Sydney, Australia: Findings from a mixed method before-and-after study. *Journal of Transport & Health*, 3(1), 48–60. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S221414051500688X>

14 Harris, M. S. (2023). Community perceptions on the Contribution of Bicycle Paths to Street Quality in Cities New to Cycling Infrastructure. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4607989



Wider benefits of walkable and bikeable streets



IMPROVED SAFETY

Safety features like crossings, bike lanes, and traffic calming measures, or low-speed shared environments, make retail areas safer for everyone.



ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

Retail areas become more accessible, including for people with disabilities or mobility devices such as prams.



ATTRACTIVE STREETS

The street becomes more attractive to people, as there is more space and less pollution and noise.



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Active transport reduces greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to a favourable local climate.



REDUCED CONGESTION

Reduces reliance on cars, pressure on parking, and car traffic congestion in retail areas.



IMPROVED COMMUNITY HEALTH

Encourages activity, reducing the risk and cost of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes, and has a positive effect on mental health.



IMPROVED COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Fosters a sense of community as people interact more with each other and local businesses.



IMPROVED LOCAL IDENTITY

Can create a unique identity for a local retail area, making it stand out from other areas and increasing visitation