



To: City Development

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Subject: Essential Evidence on a page: No 68

Spend on high streets according to travel mode

Top line: Government has recognised the evidence that pedestrians, cycle and public transport users provide as much if not more spending power than car users in town centres. This supports the case for investment in active and low carbon travel in retail areas and corrects a common misconception.

There has been a growing volume of research on the spending power of those travelling to town centres and local high streets by sustainable transport modes compared to cars over recent decades. Although often in grey literature the evidence supports the recent statement made in the Local Transport White Paper that pedestrians, cycle and public transport users bring as much spending to urban centres if not more than do car users.¹

The spending levels amongst car and public transport users are similar, according to the Commission for Integrated Transport research, once income is taken into consideration. Provided that high quality public transport is available, measures to encourage modal shift amongst a target population sector appear to have minimal impact on retail expenditure.² Moreover people travelling other than by car were found to be more likely to support their local town and city centres, and local shops, visiting them more frequently than car users.

Research from a retail street in Australia found that each square metre of space allocated to cars contributed \$6 per hour in expenditure, whereas each square metre of space allocated to bicycles brought in five times as much (\$31 per hour). A significant element is that a bicycle take up 12% of the space used by a car which is to say that one car parking space can be used by 8 bikes. The researchers concluded that replacing car parking with bicycle parking makes economic sense as part of a parking management plan.³

Studies in Germany and the UK have shown that pedestrianised areas have the potential to bring about an increase in footfall for retail services of between +20% to +40%. This is then reflected in increased property rental value.⁴ Such findings also support the proposition that *a good physical environment makes for a good economic environment*. In contrast, research in Leicester has found that as motorised traffic flow increases so does the proportion of vacant shops along that particular street.⁵

In addition, there appears to be consistent misinterpretation by traders that the majority of their customers arrive by car, and this is not just a UK phenomena. In Graz, Austria, traders reported that 58% of customers arrived by car when objective data showed that this was 32%, while 68% arrived by sustainable travel modes and yet traders believed just 42% did so.⁶ Similar surveys in Bristol, Leicester and Edinburgh among others reveal similar results.

¹ Department of Transport, 2010 *Creating growth, cutting carbon. Making sustainable Local Transport happen*. London: DfT. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgf/regional/sustainabletransport/pdf/whitepaper.pdf> accessed 22/02/2011.

² Commission for Integrated Transport, 2006 *Sustainable transport choices and the retail sector*. London. CfIT.

³ Lee, A., March, A. 2010 Recognising the economic role of bikes: sharing parking in Lygon Street, Carlton, *Australian Planner*, 47(2): 85-93.

⁴ Transport Studies Unit, Oxford University, 2003 *The Effect of Urban Quality Improvements on Business Location*. For DfT. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/doc/142775.doc> accessed 22/02/2011.

⁵ Leicester Environment City Trust, 1993 *Streets, traffic and trade: A survey of vacant shops sites in Leicester City Centre*. Leicester: Leicester Environment City Trust.

⁶ Socialdata, 1991 *Sanft Mobilitat*.