

Residents' perceptions about travel to work in Wellington city

Findings from Pōneke / Wellington Transport Survey 2023

Background

Transport plays a vital role in supporting the dynamic functionality of cities and enabling access to places of work, shop, study, and play. A high-quality transport system helps to make cities more livable and helps to improve the wellbeing of residents.

Wellington city has a compact urban form with a growing population and has the highest proportion of people walking and using public transport for their work commute in New Zealand.

Purpose of this report

This report provides insights based on residents' perceptions about travel to work in Wellington city. The report presents Wellingtonians' current and preferred modes of transport to work, reasons for using a particular mode of transport to work, perceptions of traffic and personal safety for walking and biking along the home-to-work route, and acceptable time for travel to work using different modes of transport.

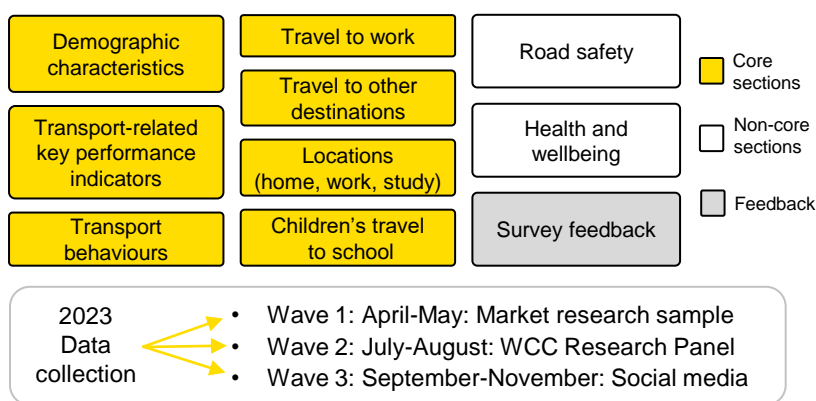
Survey methodology 2023¹



Target group:

Adults residing in Wellington city who had a job and travelled to work

Survey components



Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics with several subgroup analyses by transport user groups².

Survey sample for this report

2596 Respondents

1671 respondents for distance analysis

Data collection:

Wave 1: 609 respondents
Wave 2: 846 respondents
Wave 3: 1141 respondents



Age

48% Young adults (18-39 years)
45% Middle-aged adults (40-64 years)
7% Older adults (65+ years)



Gender

59% Female
37% Male
2% Gender diverse
0.5% Self-described



Ethnicity

71% NZ European
8% Māori
2% Pacific
6% Asian
13% Other



77% had a full-time job
21% had a part-time job



64% had ability to work from home



21% never worked from home even though they could

Home location



23% Lambton General Ward
22% Onslow-Western General Ward
19% Northern General Ward
18% Southern General Ward
18% Eastern General Ward

Work location



69% Lambton General Ward
8% Southern General Ward
6% Eastern General Ward
5% Northern General Ward
4% Onslow-Western General Ward
7% Outside Wellington city

¹ The survey methodology has been approved by Aotearoa Research Ethics Committee (April 2023; Reference AREC23_03)

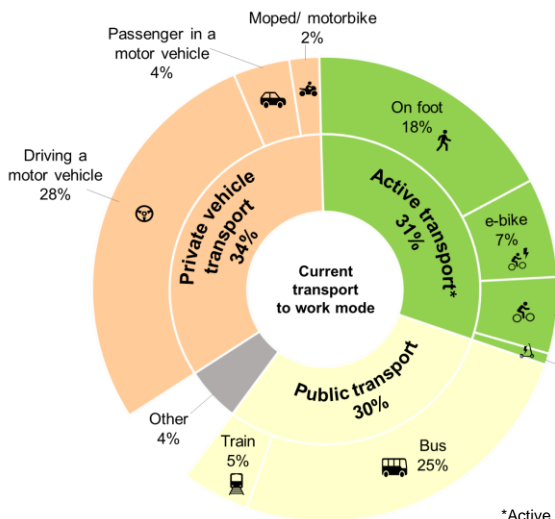
² Transport user groups were defined as respondents who used a particular mode of transport on five or more days per week and reported using all other modes less frequently.

Respondents' travel from home to work

Current modes of transport to work

- 34% of respondents travelled to work by private vehicle (28% driving themselves, 4% driven by others) and 30% used public transport.
- 31% travelled to work using active transport including micro-mobility: 18% on foot, 7% by e-bike, 5% by pedal bike, and 1% by e-scooter.

How do you usually travel from home to work?

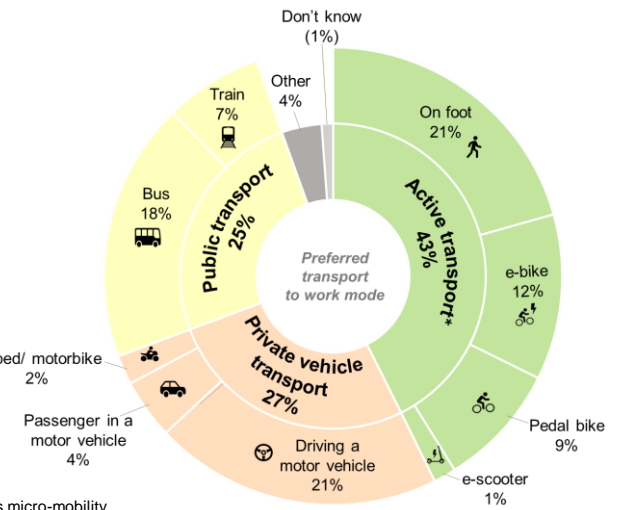


*Active transport includes micro-mobility

Preferred modes of transport to work

- 43% of respondents expressed preference for using active modes for travelling to work (21% on foot, 12% by e-bike, and 9% by pedal bike).
- 27% respondents reported they would prefer travelling to work by private motor vehicle (21% driving themselves, 4% driven by others).

If you had a choice, how would you prefer to travel from your current home to your current work?



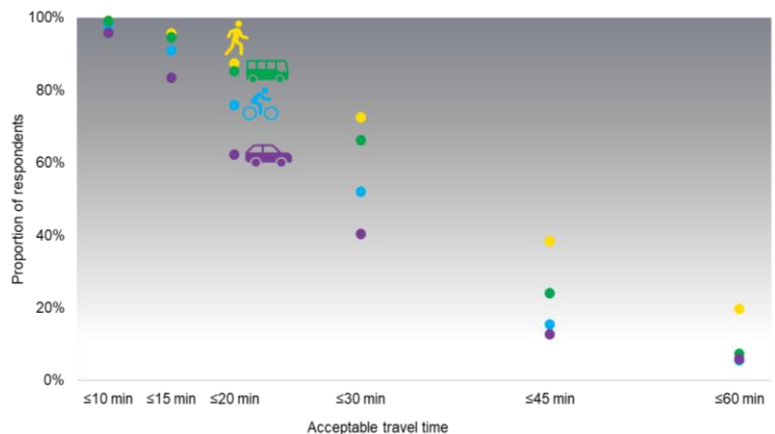
Acceptable commute time by different transport modes

- Three quarters or more of respondents considered that travel times of up to 20 minutes was reasonable for travel to work journeys on foot, by bike, and by public transport.

- Two thirds considered travel times of up to 20 minutes to be reasonable for private vehicle travel.

- People who lived further away from their work perceived longer commute times to be acceptable compared to those who lived closer to their work.

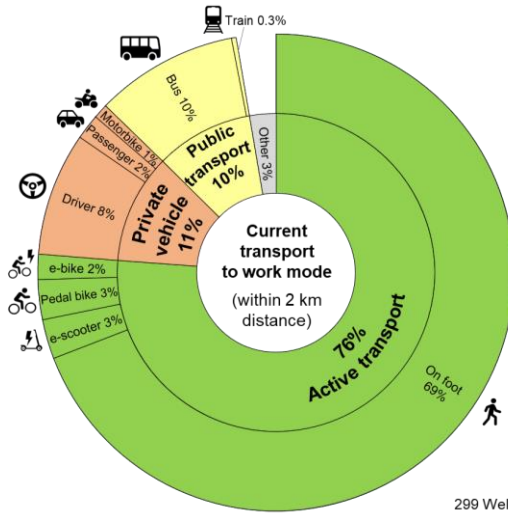
How long do you believe is an acceptable time for your journey from home to work?



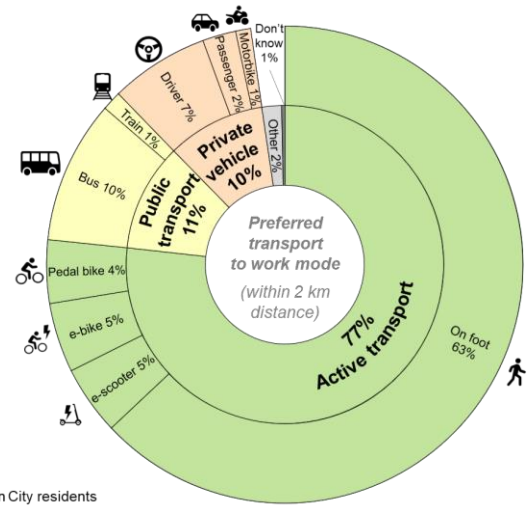
Current and preferred modes of transport to work based on home to work distance

Respondents living up to 2 km from their work (within walking distance)

Three quarters of respondents used and preferred to travel to work by active transport.

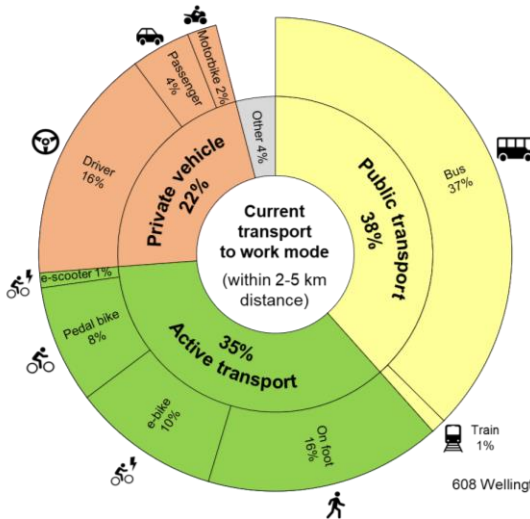


299 Wellington City residents



Respondents living 2 km to 5 km from their work (within cycling distance)

One third of respondents travelled to work by active transport whereas over half preferred to use active transport.

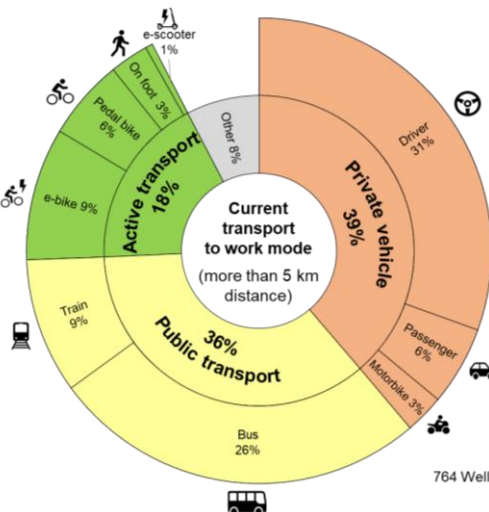


608 Wellington City residents



Respondents living more than 5 km from their work (beyond cycling distance)

One fifth of respondents used and one third preferred to use active transport modes.



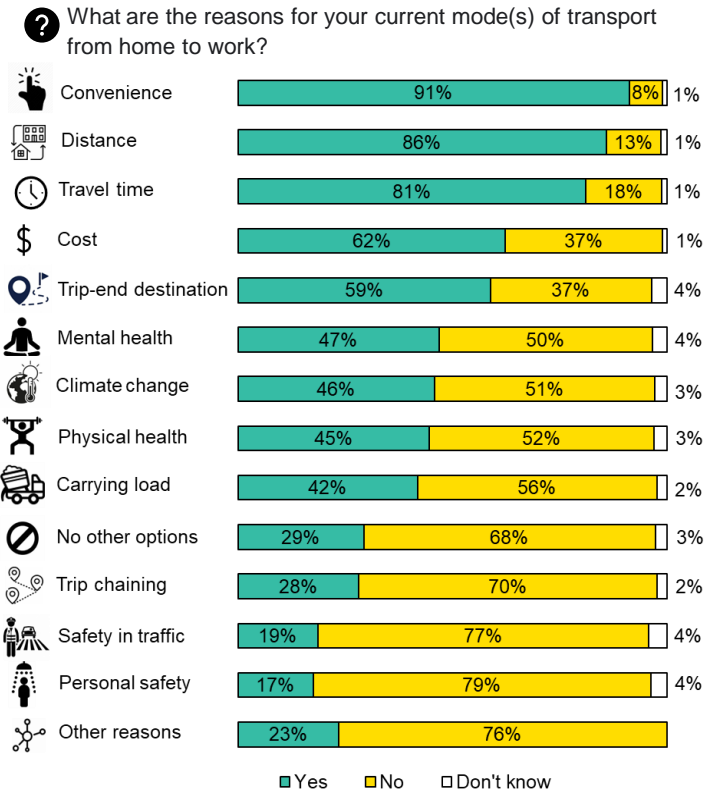
764 Wellington City residents



Reasons for current modes of transport to work

In the total sample, the most frequently reported reasons for the current mode of transport to work included convenience (91%), distance from home to work (86%), and travel time (81%).

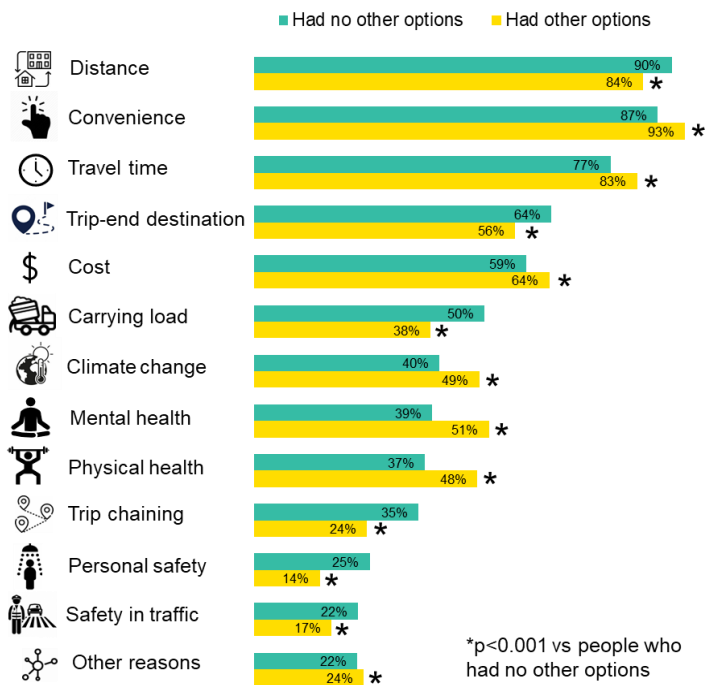
- 29% of respondents had no other options for travel to work. Their modes of transport to work were private vehicles (42%), public transport (32%), or active transport (18%).
- Approximately two thirds to nearly half of respondents reported cost (62%), trip destination (59%), mental health (47%), climate change (46%), physical health (45%), and carrying load (42%) as their reasons.
- Less than one third of respondents reported trip chaining (28%), traffic safety concerns (19%), and personal safety concerns (17%) as reasons for their current mode of transport to work.



Reasons for current mode of transport to work between those with and without other options

Distance, convenience, and travel time were most reported reasons by the people who had no other options as well as who had other options.

- Distance, trip-end destination, carrying load, trip chaining, personal safety, and safety in traffic were more frequently reported reasons by those who did not have other options compared to those who had other options.
- In contrast, convenience, travel time, cost, climate change, mental health, and physical health were less frequently reported reasons by respondents who did not have other options compared to those who had other options.



Note: Only "yes" responses for each reason have been presented here

Reasons for current modes of transport to work

Reasons for current mode to work by different transport user groups



Walkers

Distance	95%
Convenience	93%
Physical health	80%
Travel time	77%
Mental health	77%
Cost	74%
Climate change	55%
Trip-end destination	50%



Bike users

Convenience	97%
Travel time	94%
Physical health	93%
Mental health	86%
Distance	85%
Cost	80%
Climate change	79%
Trip-end destination	50%

• **Convenience, distance and travel time** were most frequently reported reasons by respondents who regularly³ walked, rode a bike, used public transport, or relied on private vehicle for their travel to work.

• **Physical and mental health** were commonly reported reasons by those who regularly walked or rode a bike to work.

• **Carrying load** was a common reason reported by private vehicle users.

• **Cost and climate change** concerns were frequently reported reasons by those who regularly walked, rode a bike, or used public transport to get to work.

• **Trip chaining** was reported as a reason by approximately half of regular private vehicle users.



Public transport users

Distance	89%
Convenience	87%
Cost	75%
Travel time	70%
Trip-end destination	67%
Climate change	64%



Private vehicle users

Convenience	94%
Travel time	91%
Distance	81%
Carrying load	66%
Trip-end destination	60%
Trip chaining	44%

Reasons for current transport modes based on home to work distance

For regular walkers



• Physical and mental health, cost, and climate change were more frequently reported reasons and travel time was less frequently reported by those who lived within 2 km of their work, compared to respondents who lived beyond 2 km.

For regular bike users



• Distance and trip-end destination were more frequently reported reasons by those who lived within 5 km, compared to respondents who lived more than 5 km from their work.

For regular public transport users



• Convenience, travel time, and carrying load were more frequently reported reasons and cost was less frequently reported by those who lived within 5 km, compared to respondents who lived more than 5 km from their work.

For regular private vehicle users

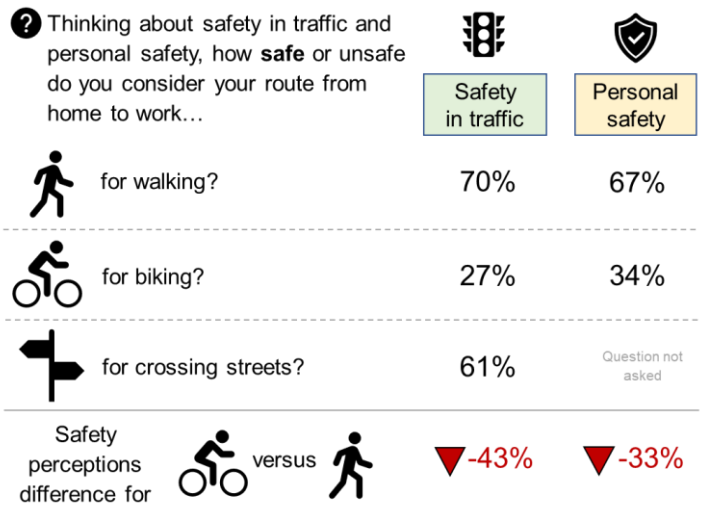


• Carrying load was more frequently reported and convenience, distance, cost, and mental health were less frequently reported reasons by those who lived within 5 km, compared to respondents who lived more than 5 km from their work.

³Regular transport users refer to respondents who used a particular mode of transport to work on 3 or more days per week and reported using all other modes less frequently.

Perceptions of traffic safety and personal safety

- Approximately two thirds of respondents perceived that their route from home to work was safe for walking with respect to traffic safety, personal safety, and for crossing streets.
- For biking, approximately one third of respondents had concerns with respect to safety in traffic and one quarter had concerns with respect to personal safety.
- One quarter of respondents could not rate their safety in traffic and personal safety for biking from home to work.



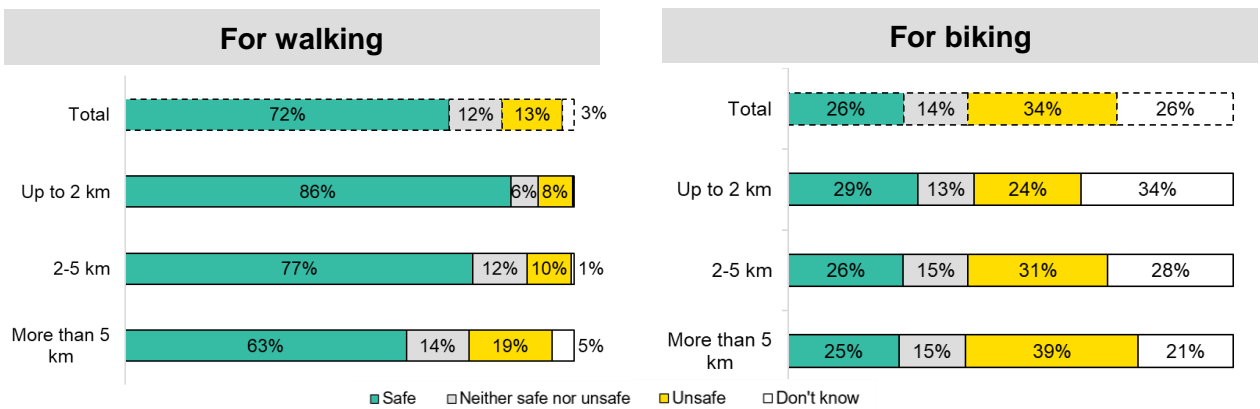
*Data presented in this figure were analysed including the "don't know" category

Perceptions of traffic and personal safety based on home to work distance

• Respondents' perceptions of traffic and personal safety for walking on the route decreased when the distance from home to work increased.

• Traffic and personal safety concerns for biking on the route between home and work increased as the distance increased.

Perceptions of traffic safety



Conclusion

These findings emphasise the importance of home to work distance to understand Wellingtonians' travel patterns, reasons for their mode choice, and safety concerns.

Future policies and interventions should consider home to work distance to achieve a more sustainable and commuter-friendly transport system in Wellington city.

Acknowledgements

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- Data collection was completed in collaboration with Wellington City Council's Research and Evaluation Team.
- Wellington City Council thanks all survey participants for their time and contributions to this research.