

STP Snapshot

Who are the users of greenways in Ireland?

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The Strategic & Transport Planning section is working on a project called MOVE which aims to find out more about greenway users in Ireland. We are collecting data to gain insights such as...

- Who uses greenways in Ireland?
- Why do people use greenways?
- How do people use greenways?
- What aspects of greenways are valued highly?

What is MOVE?

Mobility and Outdoor Value Estimates (MOVE) is a pilot research project between Fáilte Ireland and TII. The project involves collecting data on outdoor active travel infrastructure in Ireland with a specific focus on greenways. A programme of intercept surveys and counts is underway to understand the profile and preferences of greenway users in Ireland.

The aim is to develop a national method for monitoring Ireland's greenways and active travel infrastructure.



Where and when will the surveys be undertaken?

The survey periods have been selected to capture seasonal impacts on the use of greenways.

Greenways are very popular over the summer period and weather and holiday periods have a large influence on the type of people using them.

But it is also important to identify the extent of local and functional use of the greenways over the full year, as opposed to focussing on occasional visitors.



Streamstown on the Old Rail Trail

Survey Locations

- Great Western Greenway (Mayo Co. Co)
- South East Greenway (Wexford Co. Co/ Kilkenny Co. Co)
- Old Rail Trail (Westmeath Co. Co)
- Limerick Greenway (Limerick Co. Co)
- Waterford Greenway (Waterford Co. Co)

Survey Periods

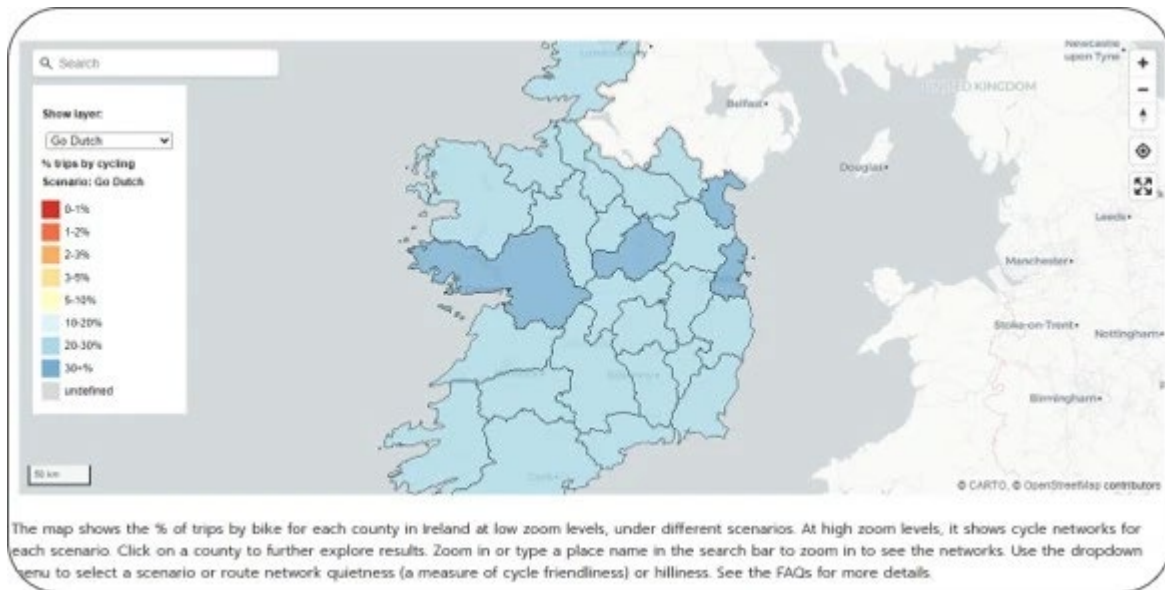
- Winter (December 2023)
- Spring (March/April 2024)
- Summer (June 2024)
- Autumn (August/September 2024)

What will the results of MOVE be used for?

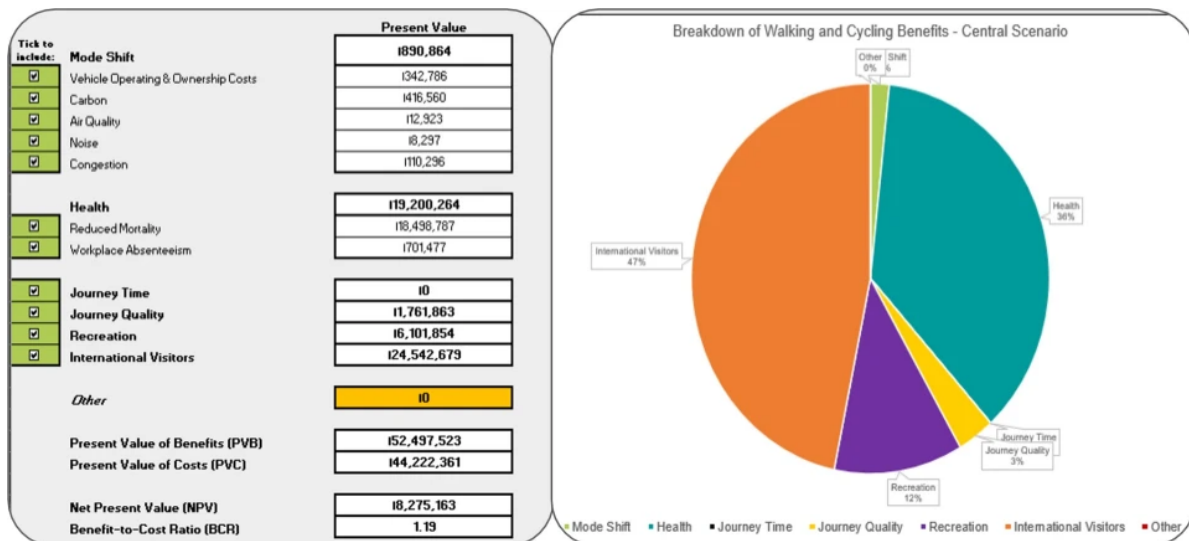
The surveys will provide TII with valuable data to use for the planning and appraisal of future greenways schemes. Benchmarks for the likely usage of future greenways will be available from the data. The parameters and assumptions behind our TEAM appraisal tool (part of [PAG Unit 13.0](#)) and our [CRUSE](#) demand estimation tool will be improved with the survey data.

Fáilte Ireland will use the survey data to develop models to estimate spending associated with visitors to greenways from abroad. Economic estimates of existing greenways will be validated. A methodology for assessing the impacts of future greenways will be developed.

But of course, as this is a research project, we are not 100% certain what we will get from it! There may well be much more value in the data and wider usage of it. For that reason, we hope to disseminate results at the end of the project and make them widely available.



CRUSE (Cycle Route Uptake & Scenario Estimation) - A tool for estimating cycling demand, developed by TII Road Safety



TEAM (Tool for Economic appraisal of Active Modes) - A tool for valuing impacts of active travel, developed by TII Strategic & Transport Planning

What do the emerging results tell us?

We have received data from the Winter 2023 and Spring 2024 surveys and we are pleased with the quality of the data. The surveys are providing valuable insights.

The full potential of the data will be realised when we have results for all seasons. However some interesting results are becoming available from the surveys completed.

If you have the time to keep reading, some of these results are outlined below...

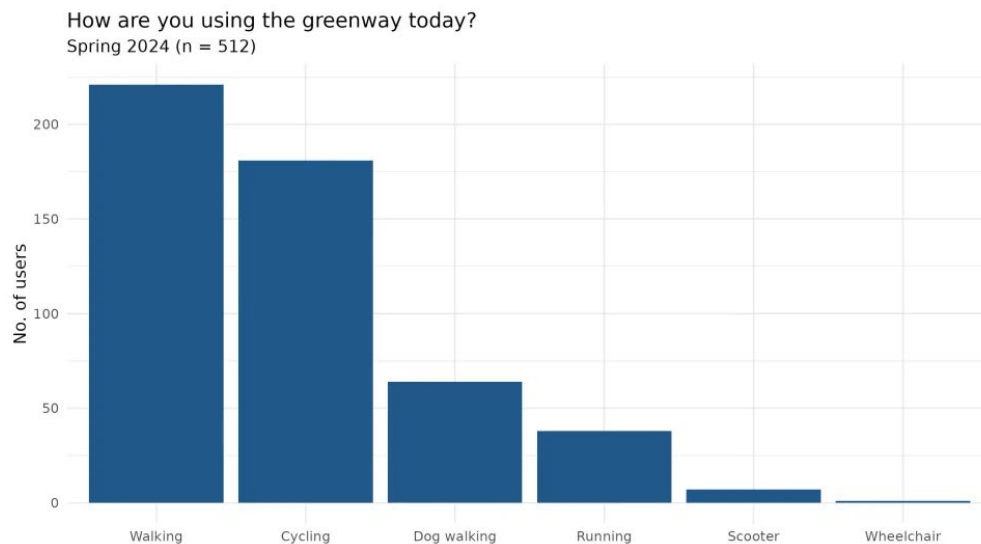


A user intercept survey site on the Great Western Greenway in Newport

Greenways cater for a diverse set of users

Greenways are not just for cycling! This was highlighted in one of our [articles](#) earlier this year.

From those people that were stopped and surveyed, people walking and cycling make up the majority. But we also see the extent of other use for walking dogs, running/jogging and all types of wheeling.

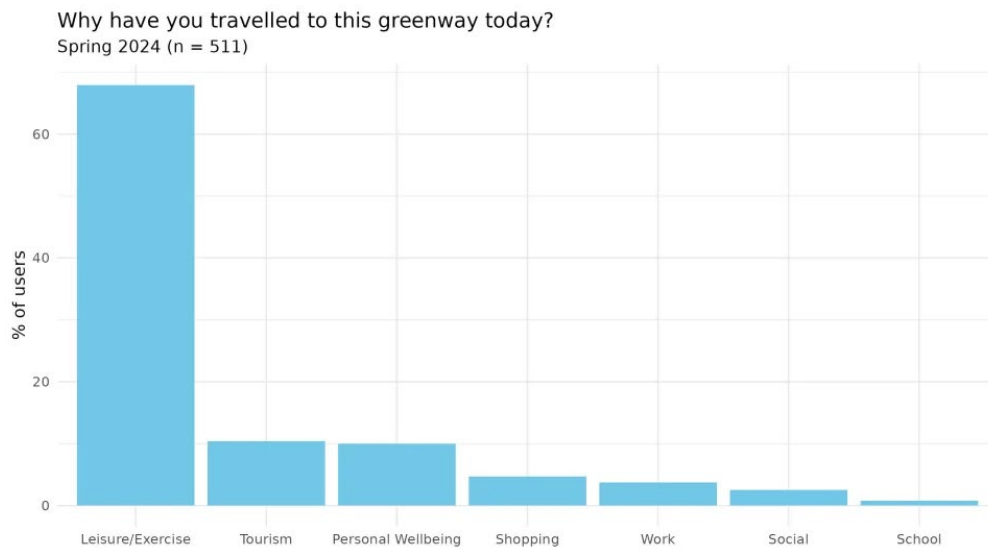


Greenways facilitate a range of journey purposes

Most people are using greenways for recreation & exercise.

This is an extraction of surveys from Spring 2024...but we still see a good proportion of tourists using greenways.

There is also a range of functional use of greenways for local travel emerging from the data.

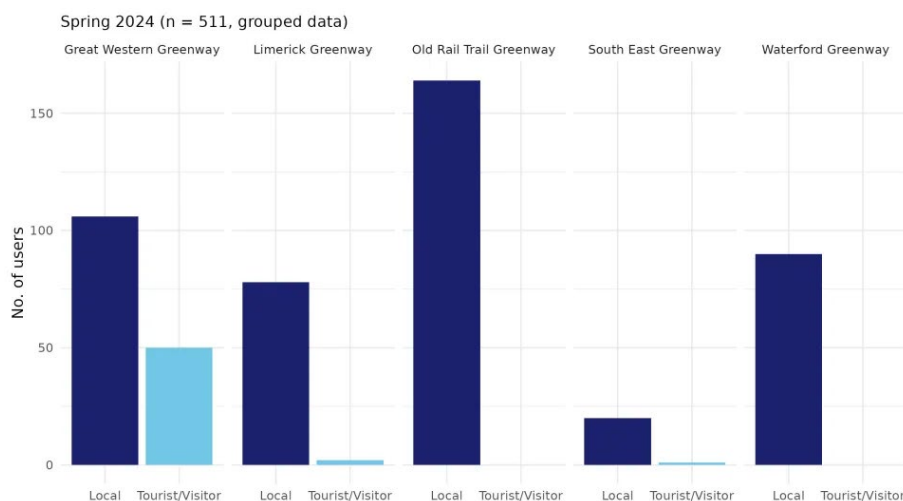


A substantial portion of greenway users are local

When we group data and classify separate local users and tourists/visitors, we can see the extent of this.

We can also see that the Great Western Greenway attracts tourists all year round. This potentially reflects its status as the first major greenway opened in Ireland and the extensive efforts to promote its use.

When we receive the results of the Summer and Autumn surveys, we will have a more complete picture of the portion of local and tourist use of each greenway.



There is a good gender balance on greenways

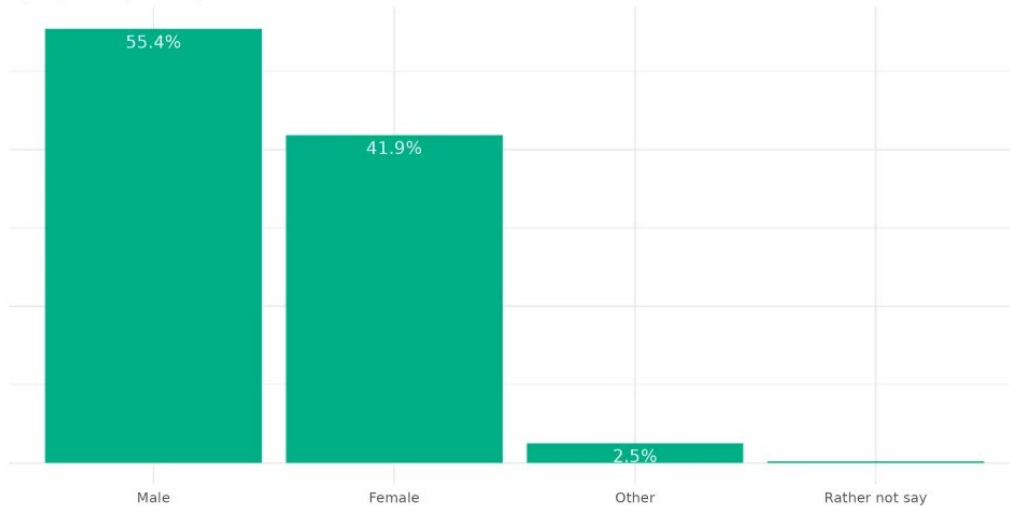
The quality of active travel infrastructure can often be judged by examining the gender balance of users.

Poorer quality infrastructure tends to be dominated by men e.g. an 80:20 split of men to women.

Gender balance on greenways is closer to 50:50, which reflects how safe and attractive greenways are.

There is room for improvement however, and all data collected for MOVE will be segregated by gender. This will tell us a lot.

What gender are you?
Spring 2024 (n = 516)



Users generally rate greenway facilities highly

The MOVE surveys include a lot of questions about users' perceptions of greenway facilities. We see very positive attitudes to most facilities.

Data collected also suggests that certain facilities can be improved including toilet facilities, parking and lighting

How would you rate the following aspects of the greenway experience?
Spring 2024 (n = 440)

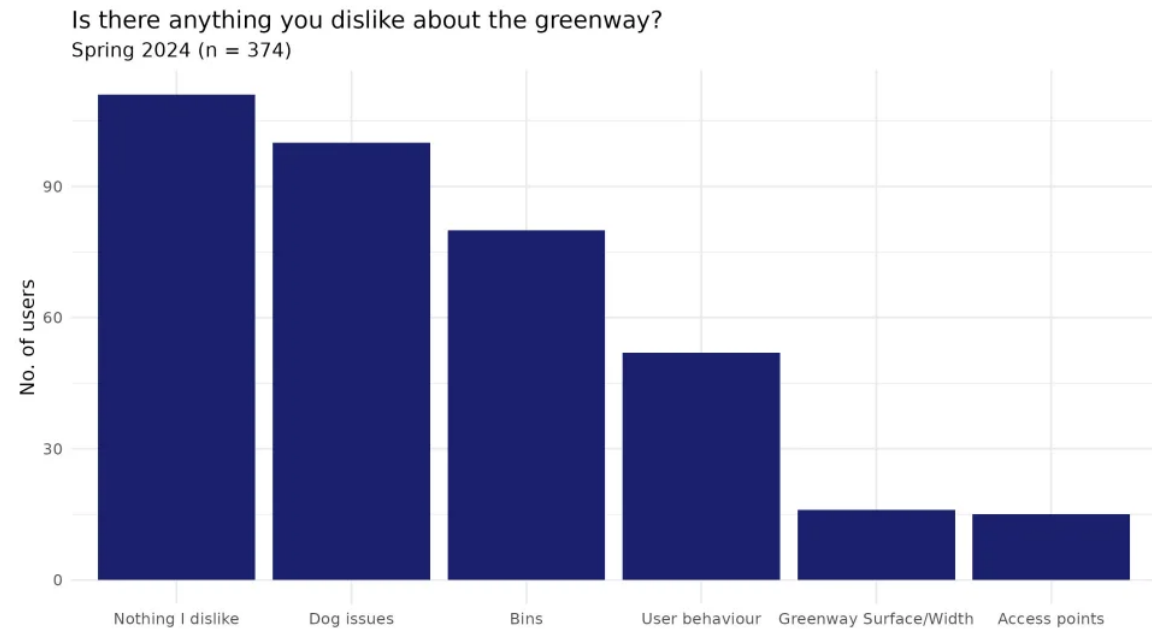


Specific issues have been identified by greenway users

Emerging data suggests that users have some issues with dogs on greenways, lack of bins and the behaviour of other users.

It is interesting to note that there are less issues raised with the direct greenway infrastructure such as surface, width and access points.

This suggests that greenway designers are providing high quality infrastructure but maybe we can do better with supporting facilities.

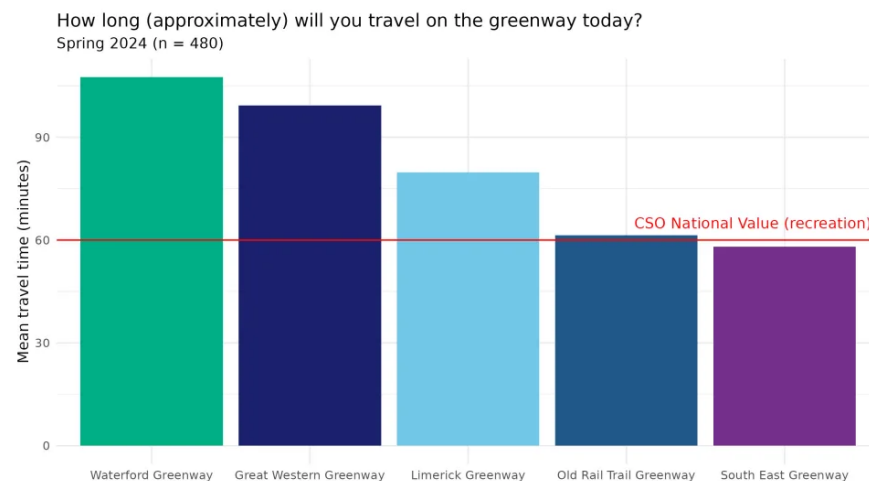


Users are spending a lot of time on greenways

To estimate societal benefits of transport projects, we often focus a lot on the time people spend using the infrastructure.

The longer people spend on a greenway, the higher the health and recreation related benefits. Also for those walking and cycling trips that replace a car trip, the higher the carbon savings.

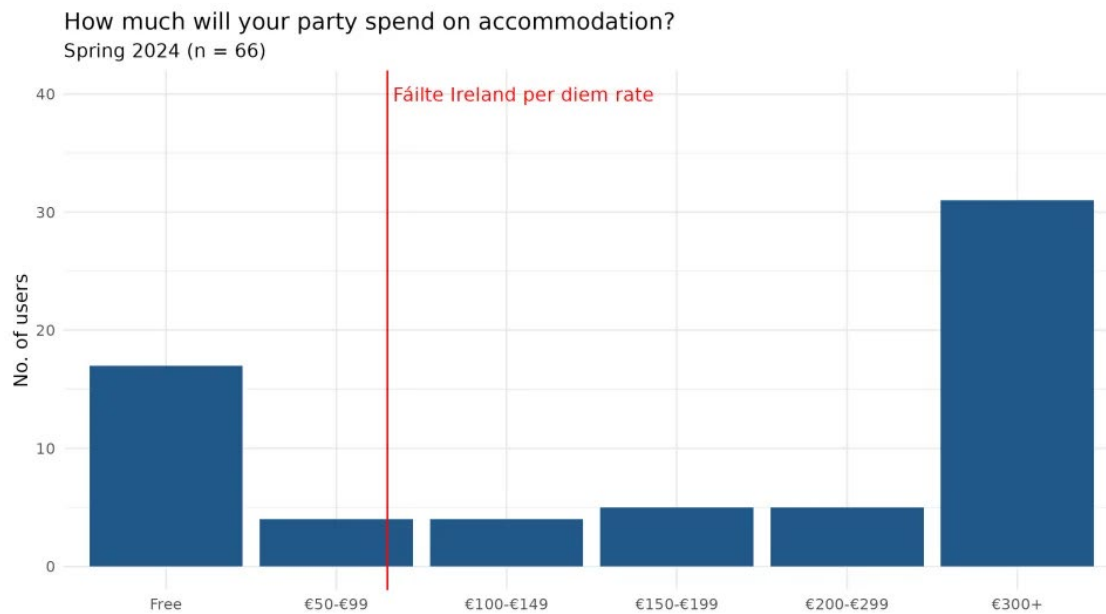
We have current assumptions on average time spent for recreational purposes from the CSO. Emerging results from MOVE suggest that many greenway users spend more time than this - we can potentially value these impacts even higher!



Visitors may be spending more money on accommodation

With the caveat again that more data is required from Summer & Autumn surveys, results to date suggest that visitors may be spending significant amounts on accommodation.

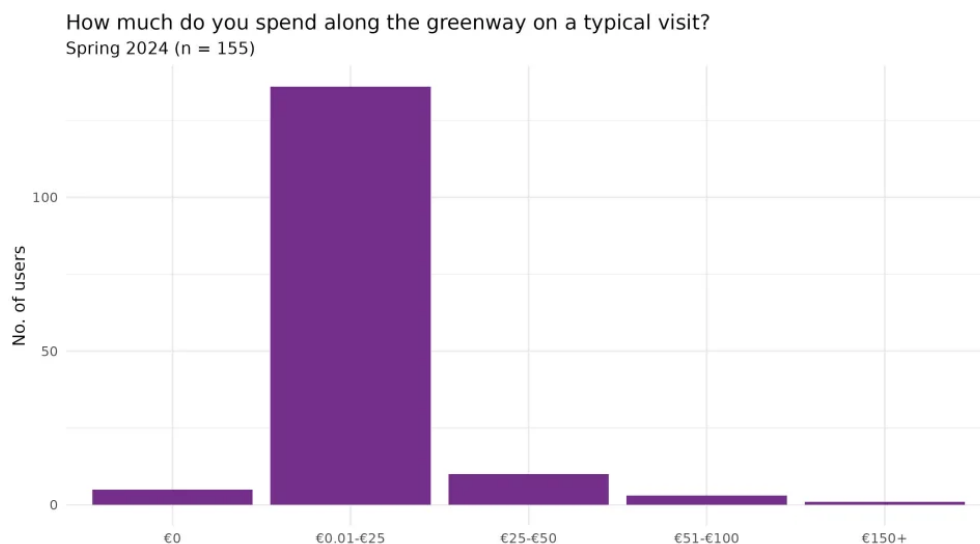
This is certainly worth further investigation, particularly by Fáilte Ireland who use a per diem rate of €96 for 'overseas holidaymakers'.



Users spend money along the greenways

Greenways are known to stimulate local economies. When greenways open, many businesses emerge offering food & beverages, bike rentals and other services.

From the MOVE surveys we can see the profile of spend by greenway users on these services.



Next steps

The above is just a snapshot of the insights we can glean from the MOVE surveys. There is more to come!

When we complete the surveys we will produce a thorough analysis and report on the data and findings. We intend to make the survey data and results available for others to use as required for project design, business case development, project evaluation and for the general promotion of the benefits of our greenways.

We will also use the data collected to improve the robustness and capabilities of our analysis tools for active travel. Watch this space 😊