

With a return to business as normal post-pandemic uncertain, I believe that embracing active travel through a long-term, multi-phased and multi-faceted approach, is a necessary component for a sustainable and successful Cardiff in 2050.

Phase 1: Speed and Connectivity

In 2050, fewer people may commute into work, with more choosing to work from home. As a result, many roads designed for rush-hour traffic would be significantly under capacity, providing considerable space. Driving lanes and parking spaces can be removed and replaced with bike paths, urban greenery and pavement extensions on roads such as Boulevard De Nantes and Castle Street. Wider shared pavements would be implemented on roads and paths too narrow for a segregated bike lane such as Wellfield Road, ensuring a quicker direct walking or cycling route to all key destinations. Evidence shows that active travel methods provide economic, environmental, political and health benefits. Cyclists and pedestrians statistically spend more in businesses along their route than drivers and as students spend £800m a year in Cardiff, linking student accommodation to shopping areas and the city centre would provide a large boost. Whilst having virtually no emissions, active travel infrastructure is also cheap to install and enables those from lower incomes to experience equitable mobility, especially when combined with the Nextbike rental scheme. There are also numerous health benefits from active travel too.

Phase 2: Safety and Connectivity

Shared bike paths such as the Taff Trail through Bute Park would be widened to improve safety and capacity and existing bike lanes would be made safer with the addition of bollards or curbs to protect users from traffic such as on Newport Road. Active travel users would also be more able to integrate their journeys with public transport, with buses being fitted with front bike racks, increasing their flexibility. With quieter roads, people with mobility limitations will be able to use small electric autonomous vehicles to reach destinations safely, also benefiting from the infrastructure. Open streets with bus and disabled driver gates would also be constructed on many roads including Park Place, to provide safer routes for active travel users. Additionally, crossings at junctions would be raised to pavement level, forcing drivers to slow down, further improving safety.

Phase 3: Speed, Safety and Connectivity

Fragmented paths, such as on Merthyr Road and Leckwith Road, would be converted to bi-directional bike lanes and connected to the rest of the network. Where this is not possible, other alternatives such as widening or replacing a pavement on one side to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists together, would be considered to form a fast, coherent cycle network, enabling safe, seamless travel by bike from homes to any destination in Cardiff.

Underpasses, such as the one on Boulevard De Nantes, would also be replaced in favour of safer, more convenient surface crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. Thus, people across the capital of any age, or income will be able to support the success of the city centre sustainably thanks to fast, safe and connected active travel.