

# CONNECTING GLASGOW

Creating an Inclusive,  
Thriving, Liveable City





# FOREWORD

**The Glasgow Connectivity Commission was established by Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council, as an independent body. She invited us not to shirk from making tough recommendations.**

We chose to interpret the term “connectivity” in its widest sense, examining its role in driving Inclusive Growth, i.e. how the transport system connects economic value and social impact, contributing to better life outcomes such as in employability through accessibility and in health through air quality, high levels of road safety and by promoting more active lifestyles.

This is the first of two reports and covers proposals which fall within the jurisdiction of the City Council: land use, roads hierarchy and bus policy. In the second report, which we shall publish early in 2019, we'll consider policies which are crucial to connectivity within the city, but are primarily the responsibility of agencies operating at the regional and national levels, including the city region Cabinet, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Transport Scotland.

We will make recommendations in that report on how to improve rail and road connectivity in the Glasgow travel to work area, issues of national importance, and also comment on the current transport governance structure and whether its level of subsidiarity is fit for purpose.

In this initial report a great deal of our geographical focus has been on Glasgow's city centre, the beating heart of the city region, as any improvements to connectivity must start here, reaching out through the arteries into the regional economy.

We adopted a parliamentary committee approach, taking written and oral evidence and we are extremely grateful for the informed, robust and insightful submissions we received from such a diverse range of stakeholders. I would like to thank my fellow commissioners for giving up so much of their time on a pro-bono basis. It should be stressed that we signed up as members of the Commission as individuals, not representing any particular organisation.

We started from a variety of backgrounds and began with different perspectives on what the ‘connectivity’ problem is and what the cure may be. The city can take encouragement from the fact that our recommendations have the unanimous support of the Commission – this should give confidence to implement our policy proposals as quickly as possible.

It's 20 years since I left Scotland to Chair the UK Government's Commission for Integrated Transport and in that time I have been impressed with the improvements that have been made in its transport infrastructure. Transport has benefited from devolution, and Transport Scotland has become a very effective delivery agency, making significant improvements to connectivity between Scotland's cities and regions, with rail and road links transformed.

It is now time for the Scottish Government to sharpen its focus on improving travel within Scotland's cities and their travel to work areas, starting with our only metropolitan region – Glasgow.

As the Scottish Government steps up its infrastructure investment ambitions, the Glasgow city region must become the number one priority if we want Scotland to deliver inclusive growth. Glasgow is Scotland's principal engine for productivity growth, but it will fail to achieve its full economic potential until it gives opportunity to its citizens throughout the city.

A greater Glasgow, in every sense of that term, will make Scotland's economy stronger. This needs a national focus. It's Glasgow's turn!

**PROFESSOR DAVID BEGG**  
CHAIR, GLASGOW'S CONNECTIVITY COMMISSION



# CONNECTIVITY COMMISSION



## PROFESSOR DAVID BEGG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, TRANSPORT TIMES

Prof David Begg is Chief Executive of Portobello Partnership Ltd which specialises in strategic advice to clients in the transport sector; publishes Transport Times online blog; and runs a series of transport best practice awards in conjunction with the Department for Transport, Transport Scotland and Transport for London.



## ANNE LEDGERWOOD, GENERAL MANAGER, ST. ENOCH SHOPPING CENTRE

As general manager of St. Enoch Centre and Chair of the City Centre Retail Association, Anne is one of the city's most influential retail figures with over 15 years in shopping centre management. She continues to drive St. Enoch Centre as a leading retail destination as it enters its 30th year with further investment and the introduction of a new leisure offering to the city centre.



## IAIN DOCHERTY, PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Iain Docherty is Professor of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Glasgow. He has been researching the transport sector for 20 years, working with governments and public agencies in the UK, US, Australia, Canada, The Netherlands and Sweden. He is currently Non-Executive Director of the ScotRail Operating Board.



## DAMIEN HENDERSON, SCOTTISH AFFAIRS AND MEDIA MANAGER, VIRGIN TRAINS

Damien Henderson is Scottish Affairs and Media Manager for Virgin Trains. Prior to joining Virgin Trains in 2013, he worked as a journalist at The Herald for 10 years, latterly as Transport Correspondent. Damien is on the board of sustainable transport charity Transform Scotland and steering committee of the Release Scotland partnership.



## ROSS MARTIN, INDEPENDENT ADVISER ON REGIONAL ECONOMIES

Working with local and national governments Ross seeks to create the conditions for inclusive growth, developing projects to effect sustainable, transformative change. He recognises the need for a signal shift to the use of low carbon infrastructure, and an accelerating use of digital technology.



## GARETH WILLIAMS, HEAD OF POLICY, SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRY

As Head of Policy, Gareth develops SCDI's major policy reports, including From Fragile to Agile: A Blueprint for Growth & Prosperity; Automatic... For The People? How Scotland can harness the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to increase economic and social prosperity; and Scotland's Big Mo: Industrial Strategy, Inclusive Growth and the Future of Mobility.



## STUART PATRICK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GLASGOW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Stuart is committed to the business success of Chamber members and championing the economic growth of the Glasgow city region. Stuart was previously at Scottish Enterprise, specialising in urban economic development and the transformation of Glasgow. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant, has an MBA from Strathclyde University and an accountancy degree from Glasgow University.



## BILL REEVE (OBSERVER), DIRECTOR OF RAIL, TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

Bill joined Transport Scotland to establish its new rail team, following the devolution of rail powers to the Scottish Parliament in 2005. He is also the Independent Chair of the Rail North Partnership Board, the partnership between DfT and Rail North responsible for the Northern and Trans Pennine Express franchises.

# A CITY OF CONNECTIVITY CONTRADICTIONS

**Glasgow is a city of connectivity contradictions and contrasts. It has the UK's best suburban rail network outside London, where passenger numbers have grown exponentially over the last decade, creating a crisis of growth as even strong levels of national investment struggle to keep pace with relentlessly rising demand.**

On the other hand, its bus network, responsible for carrying a far greater number of passengers, has experienced the steepest decline of any UK city over that same decade, creating a crisis to decline, isolating communities from the city's economic, social and cultural core.

Glasgow has also seen strong investment in its strategic road network, with the recent completion of the M74 and infrastructure improvements on the M8, M73 & M74. Yet it has one of the lowest levels of car ownership in Britain, and these contrasts, coupled with relatively weak traffic restraint, create the potential for a rapid rise in car use and congestion.

These connectivity contrasts are reflected in, and contribute to, an economically divided city, where, in broad terms, two thirds of the population are benefiting from and contributing to growth and a third are simply being left behind. If you live near a train station or own a car you are far more likely to be connected – and contributing to – Glasgow's increasingly strong economy, which is being driven by highly-skilled, productive workers.

Glaswegians who don't own a car currently contribute least to the air pollution but suffer the most from it.<sup>1</sup> If you do not have access to a car and rely on the bus network, the barriers to participation in Scotland's economic powerhouse can be significant. For instance, a quarter of people living on the periphery of the city have to catch at least two buses to get to work.<sup>2</sup> People with disabilities also face significant hurdles, particularly if they don't own a car, as much of the public transport network is currently inaccessible. This is not only socially inequitable but, as companies in Glasgow struggle to address an acute skills shortage, also places a barrier on the ability of the city region to generate growth.

Along with other successful major cities, Glasgow is facing the key urban challenge of our times – how to repurpose transport networks built for the unsustainable, high carbon economy in order to prioritise pedestrians and create attractive, people-centred places supporting thriving populations in a clean and healthy city centre environment.

As Glasgow has such a disproportionately high amount of its city centre space devoted to roads and parking, Glasgow City Council can make a large impact even with its limited powers to act. As temporarily demonstrated during the Commonwealth Games, Glasgow can rebalance its use of street space, reallocating roads dedicated to traffic, allowing the city centre to breathe, and creating spaces where people do not want to simply visit and pass through but spend time.

The city has shown how to get more people walking, cycling and able to linger in a cleaner, more pleasant environment. Pedestrian-friendly streets linking active places and usable spaces, where people safely enjoy a range of activities, can give Glasgow a more cosmopolitan feel.

In step with an increasing number of global cities, Glasgow has begun to rebalance the use of its streetscape through its Avenues project, its award-winning cycling programmes and the recently announced quality bus partnership. These are laudable initiatives which, together with the introduction of Scotland's first Low Emission Zone will help create an agile, connected, liveable city. But they are not enough. Tough, strategic decisions about the priorities in how we use limited land space are now required if Glasgow's potential is to be fulfilled.

# OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

**As a matter of policy principle we recommend that Glasgow City Council adopts and adheres to the recognised transport hierarchy for street space prioritizing the movement of people, cyclists, public transport use and private vehicles, in that order.**

- The acceleration of the Avenues project and its extension into other parts of the city centre such as George Square, Argyle Street, Cathedral Street and High Street
- Glasgow City Council presses ahead with plans to build a roof over the M8 at Charing Cross, creating a new pedestrian space outside the Mitchell Library
- A strategic repurposing of the road network to prioritise people-friendly public spaces and the transport hierarchy and repurposing the inefficient grid system to a smart grid
- Glasgow City Council actively engages with the Vacant and Derelict Land Commission to bring back dead spaces back into productive use.
- The repurposing of Glasgow's roads grid to prioritise pedestrians, active travel and public transport should be aligned with and support the council's policy to repopulate the city centre
- The completion of a network of safe, high quality, segregated cycling arterial routes connecting the city centre to suburbs and peripheral neighbourhoods
- The creation of safe, high quality, segregated cycling corridors through the city centre which connect to these arterial routes, undertaken as part of the repurposing of Glasgow's road grid
- A partnership is created between Glasgow City Council and taxi associations which drives improvements in service standards and better strategic placement of taxi ranks
- The new partnership between Glasgow City Council and bus operators should:
  - Accelerate journey times and provide journey certainty through the rapid roll-out of bus priority measures and reducing dwell times at bus stops
  - Improve the quality of the fleet, meeting Glasgow's LEZ requirements and driving up service standards
  - Improve ticketing and customer information for all bus services, introduction of multi-operator 'Cheapest Day Saver' tickets across the city, and half-price fares for Apprentices and the Under-19s
  - Better enforcement of existing bus lanes to deliver faster, more reliable journeys
  - Deliver patronage growth of 25% in the first 5 years
- Better monitoring of traffic volumes and speeds on Glasgow's local road network
- Local authorities in Scotland should be given the powers in the Scottish Transport Bill to introduce non-residential parking charges
- Glasgow City Council should propose the transport projects that could be funded from this revenue stream and assess the economic, social and environmental case for using these powers
- A particular emphasis should however be placed on supporting city centre retail and leisure at a time of intense pressure from online platforms and appreciating the impact policy can have by creating an uneven playing field against both online and out of town alternatives
- Glasgow City Council should lead by example and review whether council workers should be given free or subsidised car parking
- Better use of strategic bus terminals and car parks to reduce journeys through the city centre



# WHY CONNECTIVITY MATTERS

**Connectivity is the life blood of any socio-economic system – carrying goods, services and people around the places where we live, work and play. But the transport systems we create do more than simply join these dots, they influence a city’s quality of life, shape its urban fabric and determine the type of economic activity it supports.**

Connectivity is the life blood of any socio-economic system – carrying goods, services and people around the places where we live, work and play. But the transport systems we create do more than simply join these dots, they influence a city’s quality of life, shape its urban fabric and determine the type of economic activity it supports.

Over the last half century, as the role and importance of cities has changed, so too have the demands we make on our transport networks. In the 1960s, as city planners confronted declining urban populations and jobs and the rapid rise of the motor car, investment decisions prioritized car use and the need to reduce journey times<sup>3</sup>, often with negative consequences for the urban environment. This corresponded with a dispersal of population away from town centres to peripheral suburbs and estates, increasing the demands on commuter networks.

In recent decades, this focus has shifted as cities have increasingly become the focal point of investment, skills, population growth and productive work. Today’s successful cities create clean, people-friendly environments that support a diverse population mix, connect their citizens with economic opportunities, and attract investment and highly skilled workers. As such, the unintended consequences of prioritizing car use have come into sharper focus: urban dwellers are now less tolerant of polluted, congested streets where pedestrians are the lowest priority; better public health requires us to prioritise active forms of travel (walking and cycling); and decarbonizing transport is an essential component of meeting our climate change targets.

Together, these economic, social and environmental imperatives create an urgent challenge to our inherited planning mindset.

Accommodating this changed set of priorities requires a profound rewiring of urban transport networks. This process is well understood at a European level and was recently summarised the CREATE (Congestion Reduction in Europe: Advancing Transport Efficiency) project as a three-stage historical evolution from a car-oriented city to a sustainable mobility city and finally a city of places. The priorities of each stage are described in the graphic opposite (**How policy perspectives change cities**). Though not inevitable, this repurposing tends to start in the centres of cities – which have better public transport, the most historic buildings and high quality public areas – and then spread outwards to the outskirts of the city and eventually more peripheral areas.

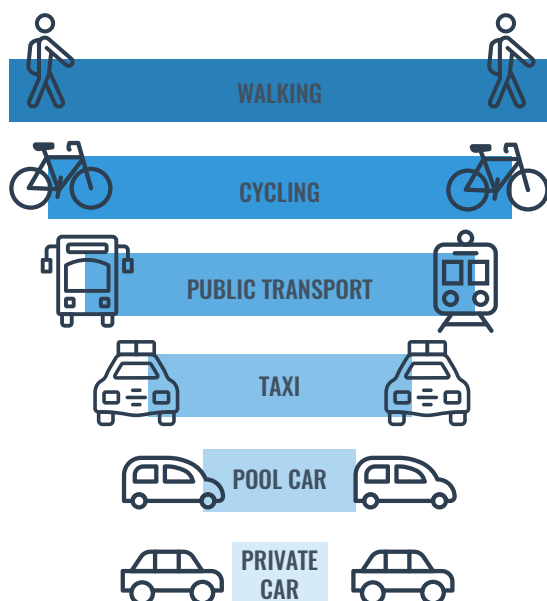
While there is no one recipe for orchestrating this change, we can identify a few key ingredients in the process. One is creating a hierarchy in favour of healthy forms of travel – walking and cycling – followed by public transport and, finally, car use. A related factor is modal shift from car to high quality, comprehensive mass transit systems capable of transporting large numbers of people into and around city centres whilst reducing emissions. As demonstrated in the chart opposite (**Transport capacity of a 4m wide lane per hour**), mass transit systems provide the most efficient use of land space and so offer the only means of delivering growth without increasing congestion. In turn, both these approaches facilitate the creation of high quality public spaces where pedestrians are properly catered for.

## Recommendation:

**As a matter of policy principle we recommend that Glasgow City Council adopts and adheres to the recognised transport hierarchy for street space prioritising the movement of people, cyclists, public transport use and private vehicles, in that order**

# WHY CONNECTIVITY MATTERS

## The transport hierarchy



## How policy perspectives shape cities <sup>4</sup>



- Road building
- Car parking
- Lower density
- Dispersion



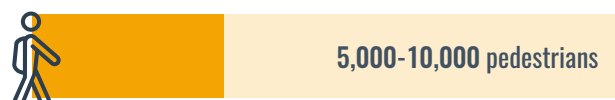
- Public transport
- Cycle networks
- Roadspace reallocation



- Public realm
- Street activities
- Traffic restraint
- Transport on Demand / mixed use developments

## Cars use road space far less efficiently than buses, cyclists and pedestrians <sup>5</sup>

### TRANSPORT CAPACITY OF A 4M WIDE LANE PER HOUR



## The current road-dominated space outside Mitchell Library and plans to open the area up to pedestrians by building a roof over the M8 <sup>6</sup>







# CREATING PLACES IN WHICH TO INVEST TIME, AND MONEY

In common with other major cities in the developed world that have moved from post-industrial decline to renewed growth, Glasgow faces the challenge of rewiring its transport network to support the demands of a revitalized and growing economy. At the heart of this transformation is a vibrant city centre anchored around clean, well-designed, people-friendly public spaces.

On this front, Glasgow faces particularly strong challenges. Using the simple metric of allocated land, Glasgow has a far lower proportion of space in the city centre for pedestrians and a far higher proportion of roads than comparator cities (see the [Land use in Glasgow](#) chart below). Compared to Edinburgh, for instance, Glasgow has twice the proportion of space devoted to roads and parking and significantly less open space. Though famed for its “dear green” spaces, it is notable that these all sit outwith the city centre itself.

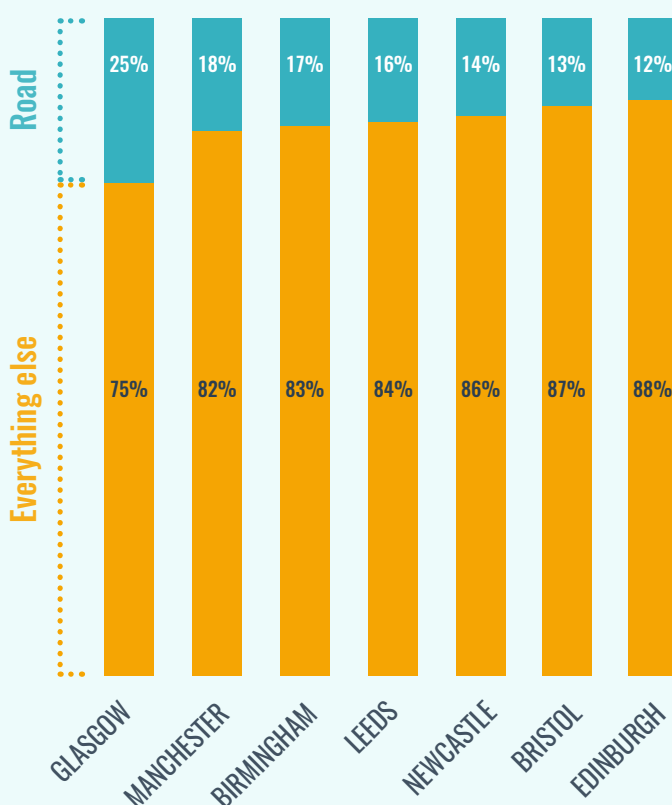
Moreover, Glasgow’s grid system not only de-prioritises the needs of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicle movements, it also creates a vastly inefficient use of space, with cars, buses, pedestrians and cyclists mostly funnelled along the same corridors. A better mix is both possible and desirable, moving to a “smart” grid that separates out these different modes by providing dedicated space for each (see [Shift from inefficient grid system to “smart” grid](#) graphic).

We know that, when space has been given back to people, Glasgow has flourished. The last significant shift away from traffic to trade in the 1970s helped to turn Buchanan Street into one of the world’s greatest streets and helped push Glasgow to become the UK’s second most popular retail destination. More recently, the Avenues project has begun a process of transforming car-dominated corridors into areas that support pedestrian uses and gives people reason to visit – a challenge exacerbated by the shift to online retail. This marks an encouraging start in the process of transformation that Glasgow requires. But more needs to be done, including an accelerated roll-out of the Avenues project to other areas of the city centre and a systematic review of how the grid system can be repurposed.

## Recommendations:

- The acceleration of the Avenues project and its extension into other parts of the city centre such as George Square, Argyle Street, Cathedral Street and High Street
- Glasgow City Council presses ahead with plans to build a roof over the M8 at Charing Cross, creating a new pedestrian space outside the Mitchell Library
- A strategic repurposing of the road network to prioritise people-friendly public spaces and the transport hierarchy and repurposing the inefficient grid system to a smart grid
- Glasgow City Council actively engages with the Vacant and Derelict Land Commission to bring back dead spaces back into productive use

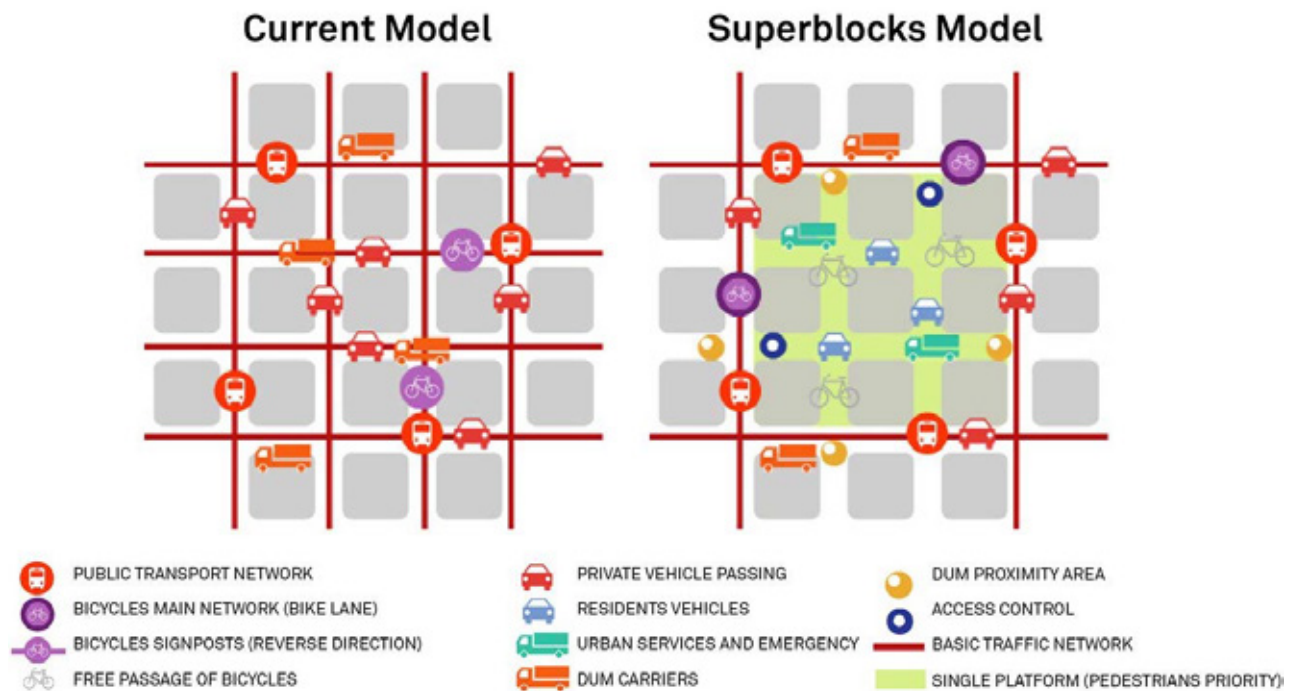
Land use in Glasgow compared to comparator cities





# CREATING PLACES IN WHICH TO INVEST TIME, AND MONEY

## Shift from inefficient grid system to “smart” grid



## Before and after example of Sauchiehall St and Avenues project



## “Dead space” vs productive place <sup>7</sup>





# GLASGOW'S CONNECTIVITY CONTRIBUTORS

## A cycling city

Successful, connected cities have recognised the enhanced role that cycling can play in the transport mix, with obvious benefits to health, the environment and the urban realm. But providing cyclists with safe, fast and consistent routes in cities built around car use can be a difficult task involving re-engineering existing roads, providing new, dedicated cycle lanes and at times making politically difficult decisions about sharing road space between motorists and cyclists.

Glasgow has made an encouraging start in this transformation. The introduction of the Next Bike scheme and establishment of segregated cycle ways have helped drive an 86% increase in ridership over five years, albeit from a low base. These are being followed with a programme to have 1,000 bikes located at 100 bike stations for inter-modal connectivity.

But much more needs to be done to provide cyclists with the same journey quality and consistency as motorists enjoy. One of the biggest remaining obstacles is to provide safe, dedicated cycle routes through the city centre, connecting up arterial routes that often end at the city limits or lead to a confused mix of vehicle and cycling traffic.

Glasgow has been praised for its high quality, segregated cycle paths, such as the recently-built South City Way, pictured.



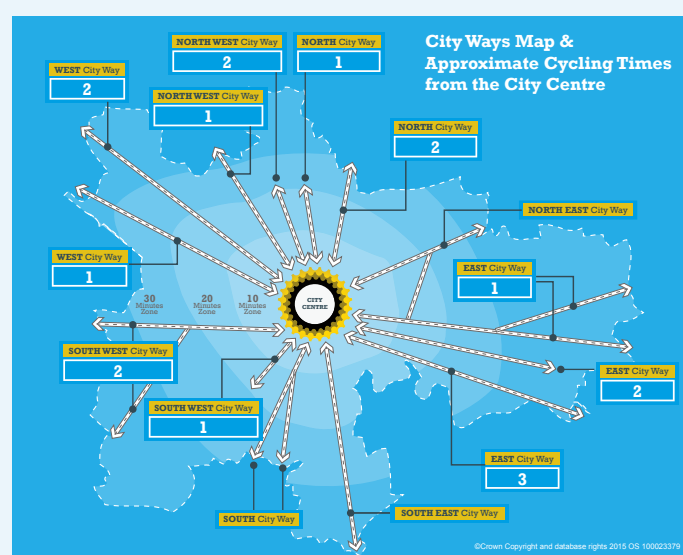
But cyclists still have to endure poorly-designed, unsafe routes with poor segregation, particularly in the city centre, such as this route on Cambridge Street.



## Recommendations:

- The completion of a network of safe, high quality, segregated cycling arterial routes connecting the city centre to suburbs and peripheral neighbourhoods
- The creation of safe, high quality, segregated cycling corridors through the city centre which connect to these arterial routes, undertaken as part of the repurposing of Glasgow's road grid

## Illustration of the cycle to work commuting area



# GLASGOW'S CONNECTIVITY CONTRIBUTORS

## Train takes the strain

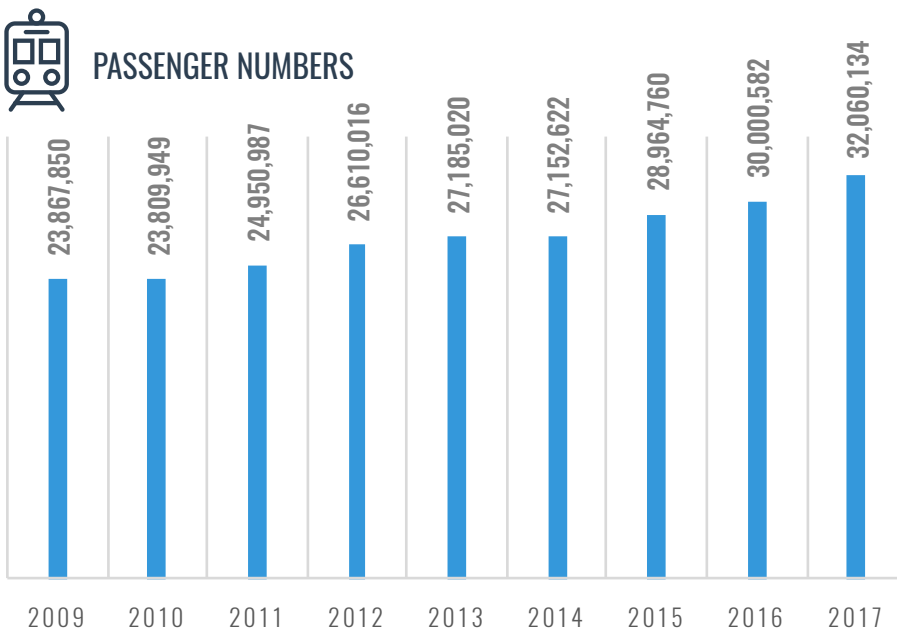
The growth in rail travel in Scotland has been phenomenal. And with the largest suburban rail network outside London, it is perhaps not surprising that Glasgow has benefited from this historic level of growth, with the numbers using Glasgow Central Station alone growing by 10 million over the last decade.

Strong government investment in rail services and infrastructure has helped respond to and accelerate this growth, with Glasgow benefiting over the last decade from a new route connecting Glasgow to Edinburgh via Airdrie,

the electrification of main line between the cities via Falkirk and the ongoing development of Queen Street Station.

This growth is enormously encouraging. But it has limits: even the historic levels of investment in the rail network are not enough to cater for the growing level of demand. Scotland's railway is facing a crisis of growth – which will be addressed in detail in the Connectivity Commission's second report due to be published early in 2019.

### Figures for rail passenger growth at Glasgow Central



## Taxis are integral too

Glasgow's taxis are an integral part of this public transport mix, often plugging gaps in provision when other modes are either not favourable, such as in cold, wet weather, or not operating, such as early morning, late evening or indeed through the night. However, basic challenges of properly connecting the city's taxi fleet into the public transport network need addressed, such as their permeability into its railway stations. Other cities do this better, with seamless connectivity at all key transport nodes.

There is room to improve the service on offer by providing better-located ranks and ensuring that taxis do not double park or sit with their engines running, both of which are common. These improvements should be undertaken through a partnership between the industry and Glasgow City Council as part of the strategic redesign of the city centre, taking into account the significant disruption to the industry through the growth of Uber and potential for other such technology-driven services.

### Recommendation:

**A partnership is created between Glasgow Government and taxi associations which drives improvements in service standards and better strategic placement of taxi ranks**





# PEOPLE MAKE GLASGOW

Growing, vibrant city centre populations are an important ingredient in urban renewal. Research by the Centre for Cities has found a strong correlation between increasing urban population and real jobs growth, with Manchester and Leeds, for example, seeing 84% and 34% increases in city centre employment between 1998 and 2005, allied to population growth of 149% and 151% respectively.<sup>8</sup>

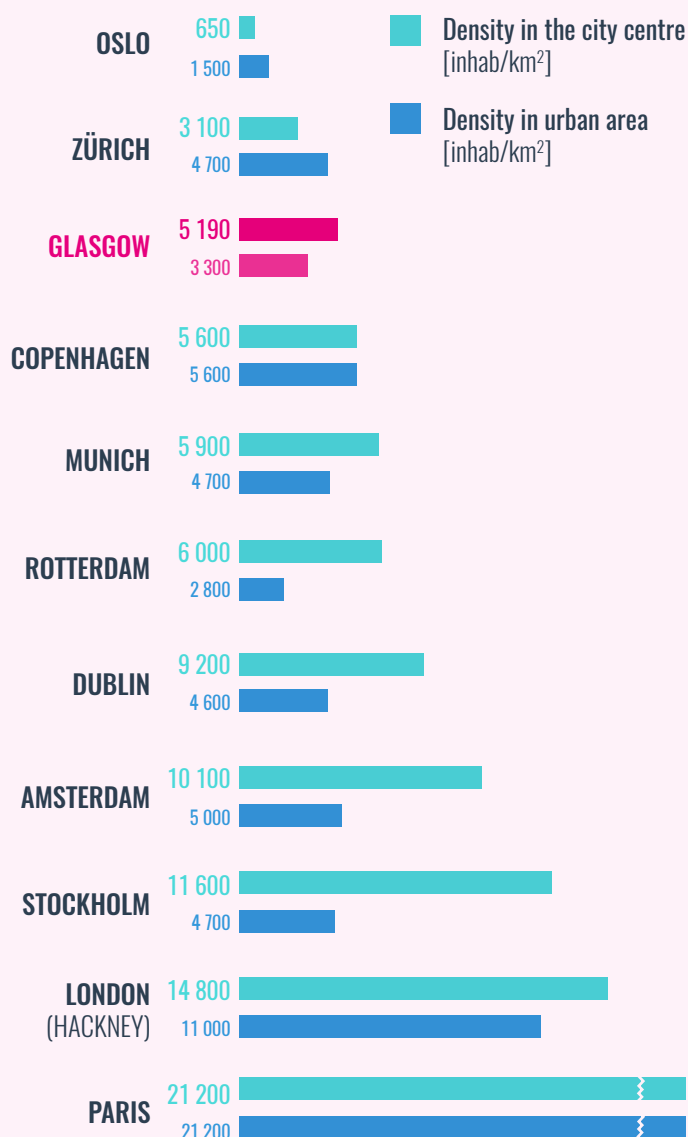
A strong city centre population strengthens the workforce in the area where highly productive, well-paid jobs are being created and reduces strains on travel-to-work networks by reducing the need to commute. This also creates a stronger population mix where residents, workers, visitors, tourists and students use the city effectively, making more efficient use of socioeconomic infrastructure.

The challenge of growing and sustaining an urban population in Glasgow is acute. Decades of poor planning decisions have pushed people out to peripheral estates, suburbs and New Towns – many poorly connected – creating a donut population. In the second half of last century, Glasgow lost 100,000 residents from its city centre, enough to populate any two of Scotland's New Towns, and it now has a lower population density than its comparator cities.

Glasgow's population has recently returned to growth, with an increase of 37,000 in the past 10 years and its population now projected to grow 44,000 over the next 25 years.<sup>9</sup> It is vital that this growth is both encouraged and concentrated within Glasgow's boundaries and helps reverse the planning legacy of the previous half century rather than creating more unsustainable, poorly connected peripheral estates.

While connectivity alone cannot achieve this, it can create the conditions for it. Making an attractive pedestrian-friendly environment is a pre-requisite to inclusive growth, ensuring that the city centre is characterised by clean air, safe streets and walkable, workable places. An agile economy needs mobility.

## Comparison inhabitants per square kilometer in the city centre



## Recommendation:

The repurposing of Glasgow's roads grid to prioritise pedestrians, active travel and public transport should be aligned with and support Glasgow City Council's policy to repopulate the city centre



# CITY CENTRE ROADS AND PARKING

**As we saw earlier, the allocation of road space in Glasgow's city centre prioritises vehicle movements over those of pedestrians and cyclists – relative to successful comparator cities. Evidence on whether this has created a congestion problem, in the sense of slowing vehicle traffic movements, is mixed. Bus speeds have slowed dramatically – with congestion likely to be the primary if not only cause – however overall vehicle numbers within the city centre have declined slightly in recent years.**

Better monitoring of traffic movements is needed to inform robust policy decisions. This includes the merits of introducing a congestion charge: whilst congestion charging has worked well in other cities, the evidence in Glasgow does not currently justify such a move and there are concerns over how it would impact on Glasgow's complex mix of "strategic" motorway routes and local roads, potentially worsening congestion on the former.

What is clear, however, is that the number of vehicle movements through the city centre has had a severely detrimental impact on people's health and quality of life. While Glasgow City Council's commendable move to introduce a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) will substantially ameliorate the former by reducing harmful vehicle pollution, it will not solve the problem of vehicle traffic in the city centre and its dominance over other modes. Some form of vehicle restraint is required.

Moreover, there is convincing evidence that terminating more bus and private vehicle journeys at strategic

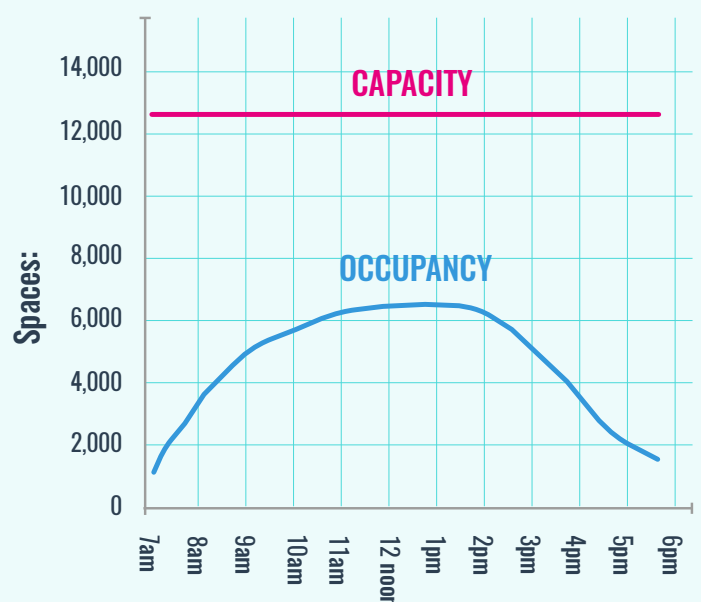
interchanges and car parks will not only reduce traffic levels in the city centre but also will not adversely affect its connectivity. The majority of bus journeys are made to and from – rather than through – the city centre and there is evidence that these would be adequately served by better use of terminals. Glasgow has one of the highest number of car parking spaces per capita of any UK city but its car parks are under-utilised, suggesting there is ample space to relocate parking from on-street provision to car parks.

In addition, Glasgow should gain the same powers as its English neighbours have to introduce a non-residential parking levy, through an amendment to the Transport Bill. Evidence from Nottingham has shown that such a move can help raise revenue which was then used to fund development of its tram system.

**There is sufficient space in Glasgow's under-utilised car parks to accommodate a consolidation from on-street parking in the city centre** ○

## Recommendations:

- Better use of strategic bus terminals and car parks to reduce journeys through the city centre
- Glasgow City Council should lead by example and review whether council workers should be given free or subsidised car parking





# BETTER FOR BUS

**Glasgow needs better buses if it is to grow and prosper. There is simply no other transport mode capable of transporting people in high volumes that connects all areas of the city. And given the greater dependence on bus services by people from socioeconomically deprived areas and the historically low level of car ownership in Glasgow, bus is a particularly important element in enabling inclusive economic growth.**

Given this centrality in the transport mix, the crisis afflicting bus provision in and around Glasgow should give us serious cause for concern. Glasgow has experienced the steepest decline in bus patronage in any UK city – with a loss of more than 70 million passengers per year in less than a decade across the SPT area, more than a quarter of the annual total. If the same decline had affected railways, the loss would be the equivalent of closing all of Glasgow’s five major stations – and the outcry would be deafening. Glasgow cannot succeed as an inclusive, sustainable and economically thriving city unless this crisis is reversed.

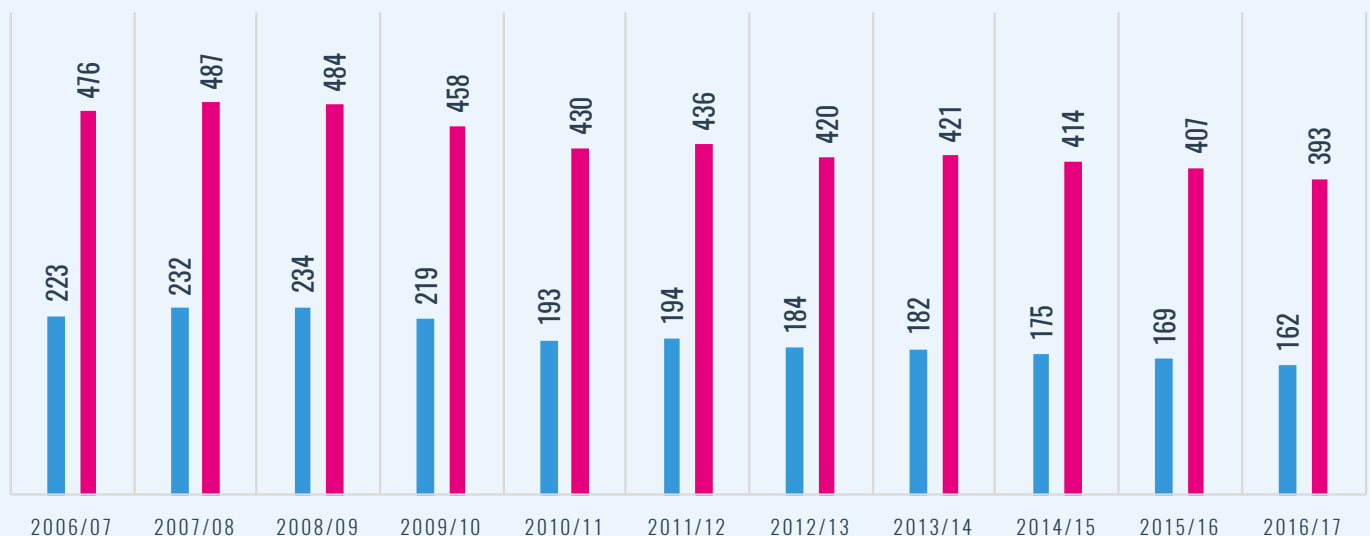
The drivers of this crisis are both complex and collective: bus service quality and passenger information are poor, the bus fleet is one of the oldest in the UK, journey times are declining, ticket prices are prohibitive for many passengers and the partnership of public and private organisations that oversees bus provision has foundered. The frequency of services is declining, with parts of the city effectively cut off as the network has shrunk. One of the few recent major investments in bus infrastructure, Fastlink, built at a cost to the public purse of £40m, is woefully under-utilised, with service frequency between 10 and 20 minutes.

However, evidence from other UK cities shows what can be achieved when the right partnership is in place to deliver improved services, bus priority measures which accelerate journeys and investment. In Leeds, for example, a four-year deal between City Council and bus operators has seen £173m of infrastructure investment being matched by £71m in new buses and a target to double patronage over a 10 year period.

Much political debate is focused on whether regulation is required to deliver such a step change – but it is worth recording that the evidence on this is mixed, as not all publicly-owned bus companies are performing well and some privately-managed networks are delivering. The fresh partnership approach deployed by Glasgow City Council and operators should be given one last chance to succeed. But if it continues to perform poorly on bus patronage compared with other UK cities, the Commission’s firm view is the powers in the new Scottish Transport Bill should be deployed to regulate the bus network.

## Decline in bus journeys

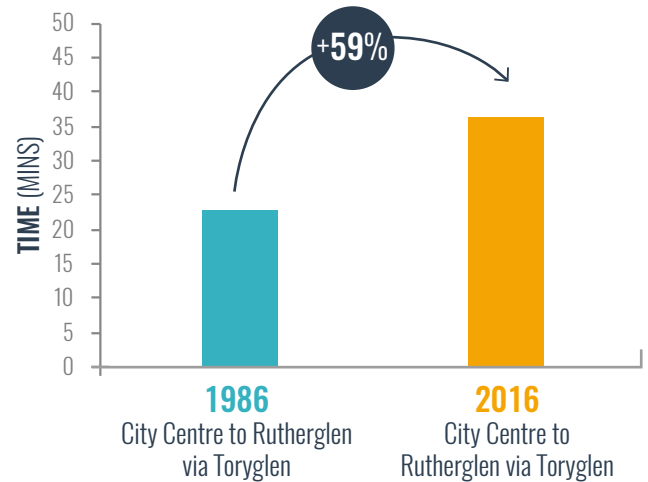
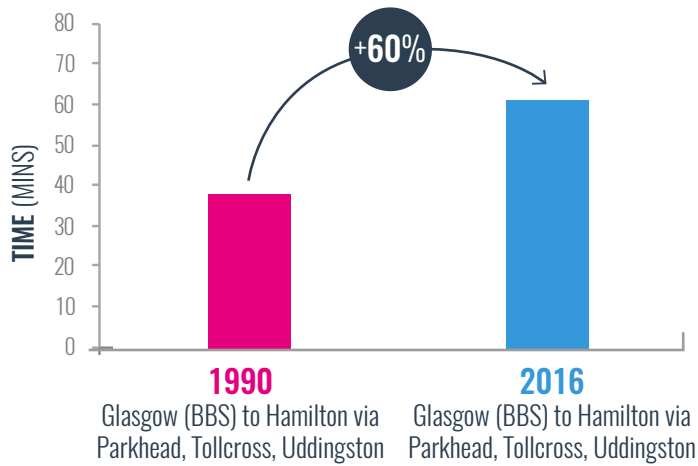
**BUS USE (MILLIONS)** ■ South West & Strathclyde ■ All Scotland





## BETTER FOR BUS

### How bus journey speeds have slowed



### Decline in bus use has highest impact on people from poorest communities

People in the **lowest quintile** make:



**58% fewer** trips as a **car** driver



**75% fewer** trips by **rail**



**50% more** trips on **foot**



**206% more** trips by **bus** and **coach**

Compared to people in the **highest income quintile**.

## Recommendations:

The new partnership between Glasgow Government and bus operators should:

- Accelerate journey times and provide journey certainty through the rapid roll-out of bus priority measures and reducing dwell times at bus stops
- Improve the quality of the fleet, meeting Glasgow's LEZ requirements and driving up service standards
- Improve ticketing and customer information for all bus services, introduction of multi-operator 'Cheapest Day Saver' tickets across the city, and half-price fares for Apprentices and the Under-19s
- Better enforcement of existing bus lanes to deliver faster, more reliable journeys
- Deliver patronage growth of 25% in the first 5 years

Fastlink cost £40m but passengers have to wait at least 10 minutes for a bus





## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Glasgow Centre for Population Health.

<sup>2</sup> John Sherry, Glasgow's Community Planning Partnership.

<sup>3</sup> Abrantes, Grisby, Bray, Urban Transport Group.

<sup>4</sup> CREATE (Congestion Reduction in Europe: Advancing Transport Efficiency).

<sup>5</sup> Sustrans, Bike Life 2017. Graphic source: Litman, 2017. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

<sup>6</sup> Glasgow City Council. Note this is an illustration and not a reflection of what will be done. Options need to be assessed against technical, engineering and financial considerations.

<sup>7</sup> MVRDV / Austin-Smith:Lord, commissioned by Glasgow City Council.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/18-03-22-City-Space-Race-Balancing-the-need-for-homes-and-offices-in-cities-final.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> National Records of Scotland.