



INFO SHEET : CYCLING AND RETAIL

What research tells us:

- **Retailers** typically overestimate the importance of the car for their customers' shopping (see 1 and 2)

>> it is important to investigate perception and reality

- **Shoppers** by bike (and foot) visit more, are more loyal to a shopping location, and spend more in the long-term (see 3, 4 and 7, 8)

>> cycle-friendly environments and calmer streets help local retail

- **Redesigning streets and spaces for people**, not cars, is good for the local economy (see 5 and 6)

>> people will spend more time (and money) and return more often

Non-UK

Mainland European countries are leading in the understanding of the importance of conurbations providing safe, clean and calm (traffic-free) environments for people.

The United States are now swiftly catching up with that focus-on-people approach to urban spaces too. These countries have much more prominent pedestrianisation schemes, implement general car-restraint measures such as parking and congestion charges, limiting car parking.

With space at a premium in urban centres, removing car parking creates more space for retail and people, and has worked out well for shoppers and retailers alike. It creates destinations that people want to spend time in and come back to repeatedly and frequently (as opposed to 'nipping in for a quick shop' and making little connection to the surroundings, people and place).



UK

The UK, in contrast, is more timid in its thinking, and fears retail breakdown and irreversible spending decline when measures of car-restraint are proposed. It is of importance to see it working elsewhere, and that it is the street environment that makes people stay, shop and spend their money and time, and return frequently.

Newcastle

The most prominent local success is *Northumberland Street* in the city centre where retailers were strongly opposed to car-restraint, and now a decade or more later, it's hailed as a great retail success and the street is loved by its users; but could do with a little TLC for continued success according to urban architects *J&L Gibbons* (see 9).

Byker/Heaton's *Shields Road* was less lucky with calming its street environment (despite a motorway bypass) and is struggling as a destination. Grass root campaigns to revitalise the street exist, but have not been heard by the council as yet.

At Jesmond's local retail centre *Acorn Road* we investigated and collated the figures (see 8) to substantiate others' findings (2, 3) and are now working towards improving the street for retail and people.

For Gosforth's *High Street* on Great North Road there is a future afoot. A recent study (see 10) showed yet again that the High Street is used by local people. The majority of users live within a two mile radius and use low impact sustainable means: they walk and cycle there. They would not surprisingly like to see better street environment for people not just cars.

Literature / studies quoted

1. [Europe's parking u-turn](#) and Donald Shoup's High Cost of Free Parking
2. [LN02](#) UK Sustrans Retail
3. [FF39](#) UK Sustrans Retail Vitality
4. [Cycling to shopping](#) Germany
5. [Moving the economy by cycling](#) Germany
6. [Redesign Streets good for economy](#) New York DOT study
7. [Are cyclists good customers?](#) by velocity Marie Kåstrup
8. [Acorn Road studies and surveys](#) by Acorn Road improvement group
9. [Northumberland Street public realm vision](#) by J&L Gibbons
10. [Views on Potential Traffic Improvements in Gosforth High Street](#) by Newcastle City