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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Investing in walking and cycling improves retail profitability

**Cities with a high proportion of cyclists and pedestrians have better air quality – this may come as no surprise. Less well-known is that this produces wider economic benefits and improved safety in city centres.**

In many European cities, car traffic has been given priority over pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The latest Urban Insight report, *Urban Mobility on a Human Scale - Promoting and Facilitating Active Travel in Cities*, concludes that for a long time, the social benefits that accompany increased walking and cycling have been underestimated. In addition to obvious benefits in terms of improved air quality, the efficient use of public space and a more active life style, there are also important monetary and safety benefits to consider.

"The economic benefits with increased walking and cycling should not be underestimated. The reason is that to a larger degree, pedestrians and cyclists contribute more financially to local shops, cafés and restaurants than motorists do. They also contribute to a more vibrant and safer urban environment", says Jeroen Quee, mobility expert at Sweco Netherlands.

The trend is that cities recognise benefits from increasing the share of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The UK Department for Transport has determined that the return on investment generated by investing in bicycle traffic is around £3 for every £1 invested. Through different incentives, London's bicycle traffic has increased by 61 per cent over a ten-year period. Many European cities have similar development.

"Urban planners across Europe are now thinking about how to create more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly communities. I think we will see a lot happen in the next few years," concludes Jeroen Quee.

#### Background

Urban Insight is based on a series of insight reports written by Sweco experts on various aspects of urban development from a citizen perspective. Read the report here: <http://www.swecourbaninsight.com/urban-move/urban-mobility-on-a-human-scale/>

*For additional information, please contact:*

Johnny Nylund, Head of Press, +46 (0)73 773 5189, [johnny.nylund@sweco.se](mailto:johnny.nylund@sweco.se)

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