

Redefining Campus Movement: The Case for Walking at UGA

Introduction

The focus of my Study Abroad was classical culture in Europe meaning instead of going to a classroom everyday our group walked around cities, museums, and sites in order to fully take in the classical culture. On top of that we spent much of our own time exploring the many places we went to on foot. I decided to track my group members activity through the health app and interview my group members on how they felt about walking on the trip. The data I collected from my group members along with additional research fueled my project to make a case to increase walking in the UGA community as an alternative form of transportation.



The problem

Due to increased usage of vehicles as a form of transportation the UGA community is experiencing high rates of vehicle emissions, monetary loss, bad traffic, and limited parking

The Solution

Encourage the UGA community to increase their walking as a means of alternative transportation further promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability using data and research from my study abroad trip to Europe

Sustainability Goals

Environmental

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



Social

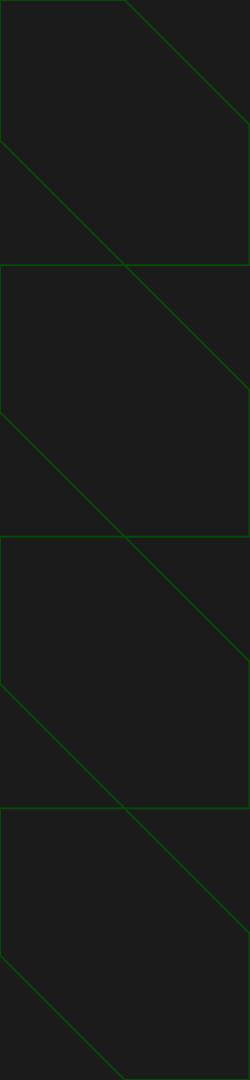
3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING




Economic

1 NO
POVERTY







To start I wanted to display some differences of the walking culture in Europe vs. America



In many European cities, walking is deeply embedded in daily life due to compact urban design and public transit integration



In contrast, American communities often prioritize driving, with sprawling layouts and limited walkability.



At UGA, replicating this culture is both possible and necessary to support sustainability and student well-being.



Edinburgh, Scotland



Rome, Italy



Florence, Italy



London, England

Examples from my trip of street infrastructure allowing much more room for walking than typical American streets:



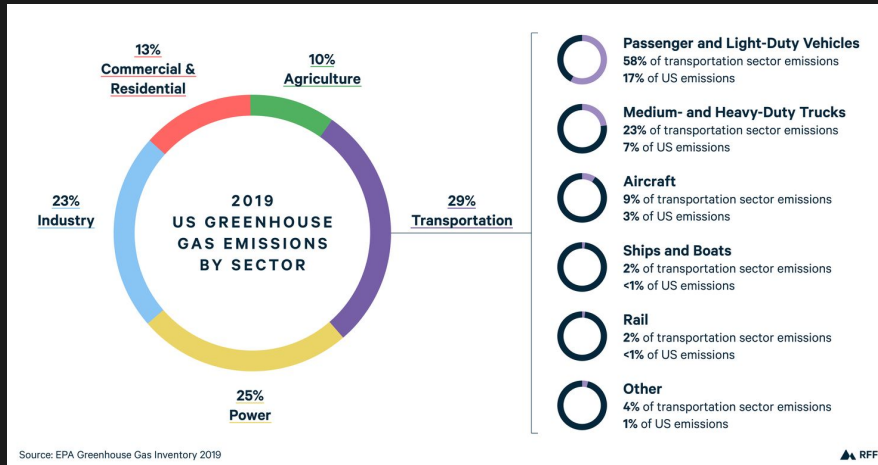
London, England

Environmental Sustainability

How does walking contribute to environmental sustainability?

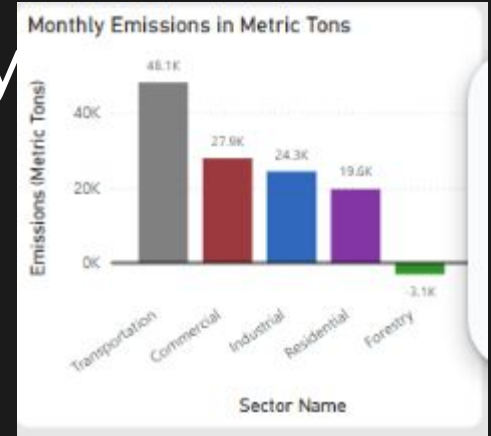


Vehicle Emission



- When considering only direct emissions, transportation is the largest contributor of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions (28%)
- The largest sources of transportation greenhouse gas emissions in 2022 were light-duty trucks, which include sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks, and minivans (37%); medium- and heavy-duty trucks (23%); passenger cars (20%) (meaning 80% of transportation emissions are from cars)
- [Transportation Sector Emissions | US EPA](#)

Emissions data from Athens-Clarke County

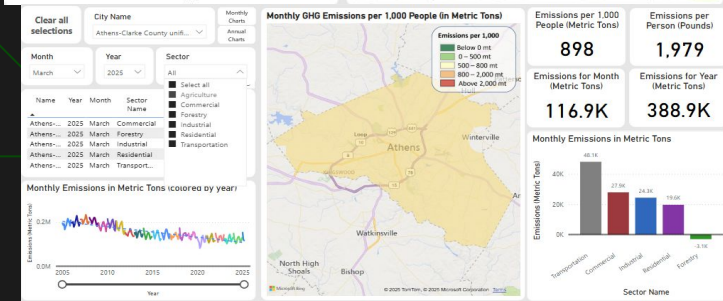
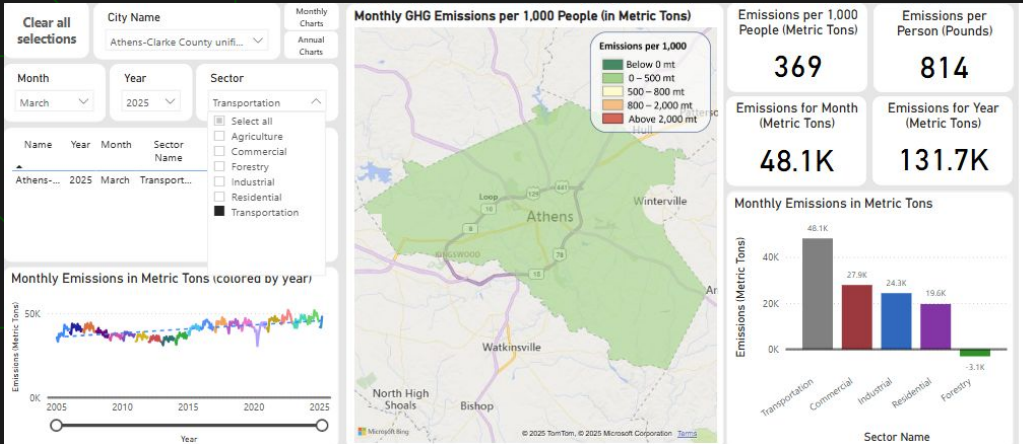


Emissions from transportation sectors

In a given school month, transportation emissions account for 40.4% of all emissions

[GHG Emissions Trackers - Drawdown Georgia](#)

Emissions from all sectors



Drawdown Georgia City GHG Emissions Tracker

The DGA City Tracker shows monthly emissions estimates for 217 cities. The estimates are based on each city's share of county emission estimates, with the shares differing by sector and year. For recent cities the Tracker will show estimates for the city area before incorporation.

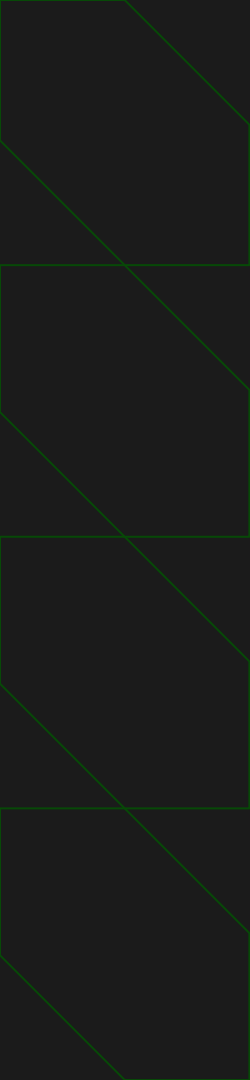


Inspired by Project Drawdown®, we are building a movement in Georgia to accelerate progress toward net zero greenhouse gas emissions. For technical documentation, please visit [drawdownga.atch.edu/docs](#). For data availability, please visit [drawdownga.atch.edu/data](#). To learn more about Drawdown Georgia, please visit [drawdownga.org](#).

Goal 13: Climate Action

- Greenhouse Gases are the primary cause of global warming
- Over 75% of global warming is directly attributed to Greenhouse Gas emissions.
- Carbon dioxide (CO₂) from fossil fuels is the single largest contributor
- In the U.S., transportation is the #1 sector for Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Most emissions come from personal vehicle use, making it a target for individual-level change

Walking instead of driving around Athens is how you can take action against global warming and climate change!!

A decorative pattern on the left side of the slide, consisting of several overlapping, outlined hexagonal shapes in a light green color.

Interview question and answer from my study abroad group member:

How will this trip impact your idea of walking as a means of alternative transportation? "I already walked to campus frequently before the trip which helped me with the amount of walking we had to do on this trip. I'm living even farther from campus next year, but with the experience walking so often on this trip I will be more open to making the trek to campus instead of driving."

Social Sustainability

How does walking contribute to social sustainability?



Encourages Human Interaction

- Walking naturally creates opportunities for face-to-face interaction
- whether that's chatting on the way to class or running into someone at Tate Plaza
- These social interactions can build social bonds, strengthen peer networks and reduce isolation

Interview questions and answers from my study abroad group member:

1. How did you feel about the social aspect of walking on this trip? "Walking around with group members was one of my favorite parts of the trip. It was a great opportunity to get to know some of the group members while also enjoying our surroundings. I feel like if I was driving around the whole trip I would've missed out on seeing important things going on around us and people would've been on their phones in the car instead of socializing."
2. How will that translate to when you're in Athens? "I am living in a Sorority house on Milledge next year so I will be living with a lot of girls. Walking to class with a group of girls would be a good time to get to know some girls that I haven't interacted with a lot rather than driving myself to campus and having to pay for parking. I'm also looking forward to going on walks on Milledge to see what's going on in the UGA community."

Builds a More Inclusive Community

- Areas become social hubs like Tate plaza, Ramsey, North Campus, dining commons, and Myers quad when students are walking through them
- reduces transportation barriers for students who do not have a car or the bus system does not reach them
- Allows all students to participate in university life whether you have a car or not
- Reduces traffic congestion and limited parking issues
 - With over 30,000 thousand students on campus if everyone drove it would be a disaster
 - Sometimes people have to drive and it would be better to know you will not get stuck in traffic and be late to class or not be able to find a parking spot



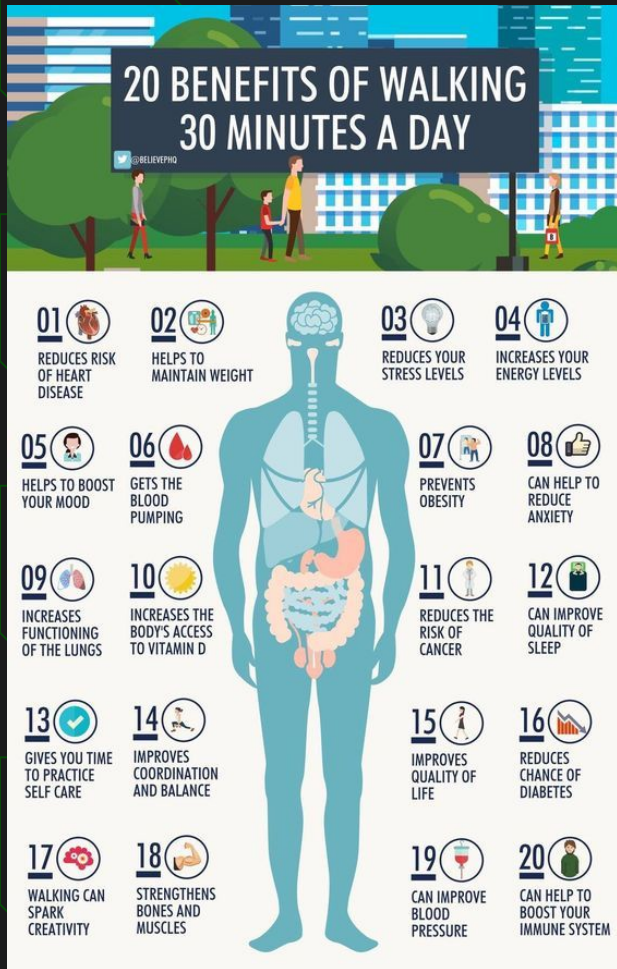
Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle

"Regular brisk walking can help you:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Prevent various conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure
- Increase energy levels
- Improve your mood, cognition, memory and sleep
- Reduce stress and tension"

[Walking: Trim your waistline, improve your health - Mayo Clinic](#)

- People can also kill two birds with one stone by walking for great exercise while eliminating vehicle emissions from a trip to the gym in the car



Study Abroad Group Data

- My groups study abroad trip was from May 10th to June 1st
- We all walked similar amounts as a group so I am going to display data from two of the group members since the data was pretty much the same for everyone
- The data shows trends and differences between the month of May spent in Europe and the month of April spent in America

Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle

Study Abroad Group Data

- Data from this group member displays the average mile/day (7.1) while in Europe in May vs. the lower 3.7 in April while in America
- The calories burned per day are also displayed to go along with the distance difference
- This data highlights how walking to places instead of driving increases the distance you walk in turn burning more calories

Walking + Running Distance

On average, you've walked and run further this month than you did last month.

7.1 mi/day

May

3.7 mi/day

April

Active Energy

The calories you're burning each day are up this month compared to last month.

511 cal/day

May

279 cal/day

April

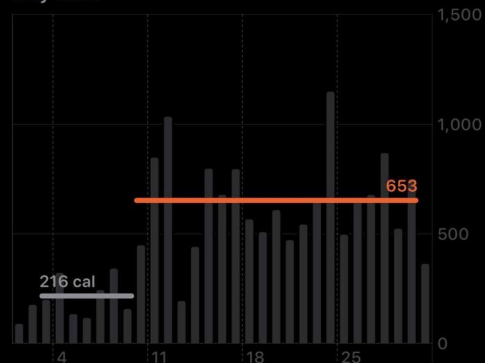
< Activity Active Energy Add Data

D W M 6M Y

AVERAGE

511 cal

May 2025



Trend

Higher for 21 days

Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle

Study Abroad Group Data

- The similar data from this group member reinforces the same idea that in Europe without a car we all walked significantly more than we usually do in America increasing our average movement per day and calories per day

Walking + Running Distance

On average, you've walked and run further this month than you did last month.

6.9 mi/day

May

4.1 mi/day

April



Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle

Interview question and answer from my study abroad group member:

1. How did you physically feel about the amount of walking you did on this trip?:
"Walking so much was definitely tiring but was an opportunity to exercise since we didn't have a gym anywhere on the trip. Although it was tiring because we were walking 10 miles some days when I'm back in Athens it won't be like that. Now I feel like it would be easy to walk a mile to and from class instead of driving and paying for parking."

Economic Sustainability

How does walking contribute to economic sustainability?



Student Finances

It is a common and often true stereotype that college students do not always have a lot of money.

I can say it is true for myself so anywhere I can cut my costs of living I do. Walking is a great opportunity to do so.

- Students can save money on gas, car maintenance, insurance, and parking permits by walking more often
- I can say for myself that seeing an orange parking ticket on your car when walking back from class is a terrible feeling that can also be avoided by walking to campus



How UGA can Benefit from More Walking

- Delay or eliminate the need for new parking lots or structures, which cost millions of dollars
- Less wear and tear on roads, such as cracks and potholes, can help lower long-term maintenance costs



How Local Businesses can Benefit from More Walking

- When people walk they are more likely to be intrigued to enter stores and restaurants (more foot traffic means more customers)
- If someone walks they do not have to pay for parking meters or have timed parking leaving them more time to shop or get food
- More people walking around would make downtown a more attractive atmosphere drawing in more customers



Thank you

Walk with me towards a more sustainable future in the UGA community

