

The argument for trams in Edinburgh

✘ The Edinburgh Tram project is probably the most contentious issue the city has dealt with since the building of the Holyrood Parliament, inciting anger in members of the public, the council and government alike.

However with all the anti-tram noise it is rarely made clear exactly what the potential benefits are, and what is the reasoning of those who still support the project.

So what would be so good about trams?

One argument of course is that of the environmental benefits that the tram system would bring to Edinburgh. The well known counter argument to this, as advocated by Scottish First Minister [Alex Salmond](#), is that the money could have been spent on a fleet of environmentally friendly eco buses, however it appears that this is not a viable alternative because of the numerous other benefits trams possess.

From the offset [TIE](#) has maintained the reasoning behind the Tram project was based on both lowering emissions and reducing congestion in Edinburgh, a rapidly growing city. Congestion costs the government and the public both time and money, in the form of, for example, road maintenance, which according to [Edinburgh Council](#) are some of the most costly of all infrastructural repairs. It is the view of TIE that the increased speed and efficiency of this mode of transport over buses will greatly encourage the public to leave their cars at home when visiting the city centre, thus further reducing congestion and pollution.

In addition to this, there is another view that too much money has already been spent on the project to make abandoning it and cutting current losses viable (known as the sunk cost

trap). This is partly due to the potential costs of cancellation of contracts etc.

One person responsible for advocating the potential benefits of the project is Chief Executive of [Friends of the Earth Scotland](#), Stan Blackely. He said:-

" The trams will, once delivered, reduce car journeys and traffic congestion, improve on-street air quality and reduce pollution levels, and help to cut carbon emissions. The decision to take the initial tram line to St. Andrew Square is plain common sense, and I applaud those City of Edinburgh Councillors who saw sense and voted for this."

Other cities such as Dublin with its [LUAS tram system](#) have enjoyed the benefits of the tram system for some years, and it has been so successful that extensions to the lines have been made.