

CASE STUDY

Slow Zones for Urban Quality of Life in Paris



Healthy City

Built Environment

Climate Issue: Pollution from Cars

- Car dependency has led to significant noise and air pollution in urban environments
- Greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles worsen climate change and have long-term health impacts for millions
- High-speed and heavy traffic also create an unsafe pedestrian environment, reducing outdoor activity
- These concerns over air quality, traffic, and decaying social life have sparked change in cities like Paris. They are creating new street designs to prioritize people over cars.

Implementing Slow Zones

Slow zones refer to urban areas where vehicle speed limits are reduced to create a safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment. Since 2010, Paris has introduced slow zones to:

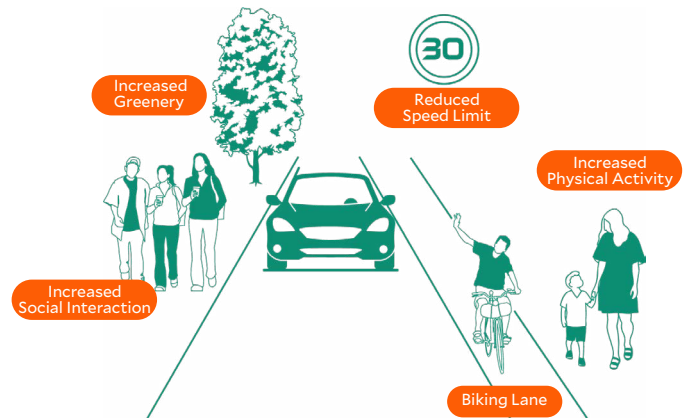
- Enhance safety by reducing the risk of accidents, with minimal impacts on travel time
- Promote sustainable transportation options like walking and cycling, making streets more accessible for everyone
- Reduce noise and air pollution for long-term health benefits
- Decrease greenhouse gas emissions from transportation
- Improve urban quality of life by incorporating street designs with wider sidewalks and green spaces

Social media activity in different neighborhoods over time has been used to measure how well slow zones achieve these goals.

Impacts of Reduced Car Traffic

The science shows that by reducing car traffic, slow zones in Paris have increased residents' outdoor activity and social interaction.

- Residents in neighborhoods with slow zones spend more time walking, shopping, and playing outside
- Improved infrastructure, aesthetic appearance, and perceived safety encourage pedestrian and cycling activity
- Neighborhoods with slow zones attract residents from across Paris, creating hubs for outdoor activity and culture
- Wide implementation has maximized the benefits of slow zones, creating citywide change.



IN A NUTSHELL

- Slow zones with reduced vehicle speed limits represent an emerging street design for prioritizing people over cars
- Implementing slow zones in urban areas can reduce car activity, lowering pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
- By lowering the risk of accidents, these zones create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- Additionally, slow zones can foster social interaction and outdoor activity, enriching the urban living experience.

WHAT CAN YOUR CITY DO?

ESTABLISH slow zones with reduced speed limits to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists

ENHANCE public spaces to encourage outdoor activities and social interaction

PROMOTE walking and cycling by improving infrastructure such as bike lanes and pedestrian paths

REDUCE car dependency by limiting car traffic in certain areas.

To find out more information on this fact sheet, contact **Dr Arianna Salazar-Miranda** at arianna.salazarmiranda@yale.edu. Case study based off Salazar-Miranda, A., Heine, C., Duarte, F., Schechtner, K., & Ratti, C. (2022). Measuring the impact of slow zones on street life using social media. *Cities*, 131, 104010. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.104010>