

Space Reallocation & Lower Speed Responses to Covid-19

20's Plenty for Us Briefing April 2020

http://www.20splenty.org/cv-19_space_reallocation

We all need more space – 2m for safe social distancing during Covid-19. Leading cities are now delivering more room for access on feet and slower speeds for reasons of public health, fewer casualties, to help us breathe, exercise and mitigate car use. If people begin to avoid public transport in our cities then, unless walking or cycling is chosen rather than driving, urban areas may grind to a halt in a polluted traffic jam as travel bans begin to be lifted. 20mph and 30km/h limits are valuable, key tools for accessibility, lung health and economic recovery.



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Milan in Northern Italy has a transport recovery plan which includes significant 20mph limits and active travel measures. Space will be reallocated. The aim is less air pollution by mitigating potential rises in car use and to give space for people moving on foot and by bicycle¹. Traffic reduction is an urgent public health and economic issue, as cars take up excessive public space and there is no desire to return to the highly polluted pre-lockdown air quality. As toxic air quality links to Covid-19 fatality rates, this is a real concern. City officials aim to reduce car use choices for return to work as commuters, understandably, may fear public transport – due to the need for social distancing. 22 miles of central streets will go 20mph; this will be coupled with experimental traffic measures to protect cyclists and walkers. The Strade Aperte plan announced on 21st April has temporary cycle lanes, new and widened pavements. Milan is a compact city of 1.4 million people where 55% commuted by public transport before Covid-19. With average trips of under 2.5 miles, a switch to active modes of travel is achievable for many. Pre-lockdown public transport use levels clearly affect the urgency of car use mitigation strategies.

Brussels, Belgium has published maps for its shift to 30km/h limits for all but a few roads by January 2021². About 60% of roads in the Brussels region are already in a 30km/h zone³. The central core will go 20km/h (12mph) from 1 May for the summer. The Mayor is supporting walking and cycling, so people can get about and exercise more safely. **Boulder Colorado USA** plans to go 20mph for most roads⁴. The City voted for 20mph for residential streets on 21 April with ratification expected on 19 May. Streets will change to the new lower limit soon after. Leaders are responding to Covid-19 by raising neighbourhood street safety.

United Kingdom. Doctors and campaigners are calling on Government and Councils for an emergency national urban 20mph limit, filtering of residential rat runs, creating emergency low traffic neighbourhoods, suspending on-street parking on major routes, installing emergency wide protected cycle lanes or car one-way systems. Where there are four lanes of motor traffic, one each way can easily be reallocated to active travel. Remaining car lanes, with fewer drivers choosing to drive, can still move quickly and efficiently. Temporary guidance from the UK's Department for Transport on 16 April offered some support to Councils to close roads more easily for social distancing⁵. Brighton shut 2 miles of seafront to motors for space to walk and cycle on 19 April⁶. Hammersmith & Fulham are widening shopping area pavements. The Metropolitan Police are prioritising enforcement of speeding including 20mph limits in a bid to reduce speed related casualties⁷

Vienna, Austria has created temporary traffic calming and pedestrian priority zones. It has closed 20+ streets to motorised traffic. **Oakland California** has created quiet streets to raise public space for recreation. It will close 47+ miles of roads to motors. **Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Denver** and cities in **Canada and Colombia** are reported as going the same way. The **New Zealand Government** will fund 90% of the costs of 'pop-up' Covid transport solutions⁸. **Berlin** is studying temporary closure of 30 streets for more public space for families in dense urban districts. **20mph limits and more space for people get about locally are needed now. They are popular, smart moves for all politicians.**

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/21/milan-seeks-to-prevent-post-crisis-return-of-traffic-pollution>

² <https://mobilite-mobiliteit.brussels/sites/default/files/kaart.pdf>

³ <https://www.thebulletin.be/30kph-zone-brussels-which-roads-will-be-affected>

⁴ <https://bit.ly/2VwvZf3>

⁵ <https://lcrig.org.uk/news/traffic-regulation-orders-covid19-guidance>

⁶ <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18391741.coronavirus-brighton-road-closed-lockdown/>

⁷ <https://twitter.com/SuptAndyCox>

⁸ <https://bit.ly/2KtlyTh>

20's Plenty for Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in built up areas without physical calming.

Web www.20splenty.org Twitter @20splentyforus

Rod King MBE
Founder & Campaign Director
rod.k@20splenty.org
07973 639781 @20splentyforus

Anna Semlyen
Campaign Manager
anna.s@20splenty.org
07572 120439 @AnnaSemlyen1

Jeremy Leach
London Campaign Co-ordinator
jeremy.l@20splenty.org
07415 243015