# Oxford Street pedestrianisation plans gain unprecedented public and retail backing



London’s iconic Oxford Street is poised for a major transformation, with plans to pedestrianise a 0.7-mile stretch from Selfridges to Great Portland Street, marking a significant step in the capital’s efforts to revitalise one of its most famous shopping arteries. This initiative, championed by Mayor Sadiq Khan, has gained substantial backing through a public consultation that saw over 6,600 responses overwhelmingly in favour of reducing traffic, reflecting widespread support from both Londoners and major businesses.

The pedestrianisation project aims to establish a traffic-free zone between Orchard Street, near Selfridges, and Great Portland Street. This area has endured several challenges in recent years, including closures of key retailers such as Debenhams and House of Fraser, amplified by the rise in online shopping, the aftermath of the pandemic, and economic pressures. The scheme, with an estimated cost of £150 million, is expected to take until 2027 or later to complete, pending the establishment of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) in early 2026. This MDC will bring together stakeholders including the council, which has historically voiced opposition, alongside government representation to oversee and drive the regeneration efforts.

Major retailers such as Ikea—who recently launched a store near Oxford Circus—and Selfridges have publicly endorsed the pedestrianisation plan. Ikea UK Chief Executive Peter Jelkeby described it as a positive move towards creating “a more welcoming and accessible space.” The New West End Company, representing local businesses, also welcomed the consultation’s outcome as a critical development in Oxford Street’s future. This transformation is designed not only to enhance the shopping environment but to attract tourists, stimulate investment, and boost employment, with aspirations to transform Oxford Street into a vibrant hub for shopping, leisure, and cultural events, akin to celebrated pedestrian zones like New York’s Times Square and Barcelona’s La Rambla.

Removing vehicles will necessitate significant changes to transport in the area, including alterations to 16 London bus routes currently serving the street. The Mayor’s office has committed to releasing detailed traffic and transport proposals later in the year, accompanied by further consultation. The objective is to balance the creation of a pedestrian-friendly area with the needs of public transport users and accessibility considerations.

The push for pedestrianisation has a long history in London. Initiatives dating back to 2018, including proposals by Zaha Hadid Architects and design competitions coordinated by the Royal Institute of British Architects, have explored various ways of reducing car dominance on Oxford Street. These efforts reflect a broader trend in urban planning aimed at reclaiming city streets for people rather than vehicles, with proven precedents both within the UK—such as Glasgow’s Buchanan Street, a successful car-free shopping district since 1978—and internationally.

However, the plan has not been without controversy. Westminster City Council has expressed concerns over the potential traffic disruption, implications for public transport, and accessibility, and has urged for greater clarity on the project’s timeline and local impact. Mayor Khan has acknowledged opposition but remains resolute that transforming Oxford Street is a necessary step to prevent its decline and to maintain its status as a premier retail destination amid intense global competition. He has criticised the traditional planning process, suggesting that decisions on significant developments should shift more towards professionals rather than being hindered by small interest groups, emphasising the national importance of Oxford Street.

Moreover, beyond economic concerns, the street's recent difficulties have included strain from petty crime and an influx of lower-quality retail outlets, some suspected of tax evasion and counterfeit sales. Yet, there are signs of rejuvenation, with prominent retailers returning and new investments signaling hope for the district’s renaissance.

In summary, Mayor Sadiq Khan’s plan to pedestrianise Oxford Street is not merely a traffic scheme but a broader strategic effort to restore the area’s vibrancy, support London’s position as a leading global shopping destination, and adapt to contemporary urban and consumer dynamics. While challenges around implementation and local objections remain, the official momentum and public backing indicate a transformative change on the horizon for one of London’s most storied streets.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/economic-development/oxford-street-gets-green-light-to-pedestrianise-from-great-portland-street-129804), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/londons-oxford-street-go-traffic-free-shopping-area-makeover-says-mayor-2025-06-16/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/economic-development/oxford-street-gets-green-light-to-pedestrianise-from-great-portland-street-129804), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091), [[5]](https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2024/10/05/a-londres-oxford-street-va-etre-pietonnisee-dans-le-but-d-enrayer-son-declin-commercial_6344504_3234.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/economic-development/oxford-street-gets-green-light-to-pedestrianise-from-great-portland-street-129804), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/londons-oxford-street-go-traffic-free-shopping-area-makeover-says-mayor-2025-06-16/), [[5]](https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2024/10/05/a-londres-oxford-street-va-etre-pietonnisee-dans-le-but-d-enrayer-son-declin-commercial_6344504_3234.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/economic-development/oxford-street-gets-green-light-to-pedestrianise-from-great-portland-street-129804), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/londons-oxford-street-go-traffic-free-shopping-area-makeover-says-mayor-2025-06-16/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/economic-development/oxford-street-gets-green-light-to-pedestrianise-from-great-portland-street-129804), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/307cf024-1f21-4386-b0e4-757ce597f4f0)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2024/10/05/a-londres-oxford-street-va-etre-pietonnisee-dans-le-but-d-enrayer-son-declin-commercial_6344504_3234.html), [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/economic-development/oxford-street-gets-green-light-to-pedestrianise-from-great-portland-street-129804)
* Paragraph 7 – [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/307cf024-1f21-4386-b0e4-757ce597f4f0), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/d4324f4f-3c39-480e-b300-6f7f06977699)
* Paragraph 8 – [[5]](https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2024/10/05/a-londres-oxford-street-va-etre-pietonnisee-dans-le-but-d-enrayer-son-declin-commercial_6344504_3234.html), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/d4324f4f-3c39-480e-b300-6f7f06977699)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/economic-development/oxford-street-gets-green-light-to-pedestrianise-from-great-portland-street-129804> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/londons-oxford-street-go-traffic-free-shopping-area-makeover-says-mayor-2025-06-16/> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street, aiming to revitalise the area into a world-class hub for shopping, leisure, and events. The proposal received majority support from Londoners and businesses during a public consultation. Inspired by successful transformations like Times Square and La Rambla, the initiative seeks to rejuvenate the mile-long stretch, which has faced challenges such as the closure of major retail stores and competition from online shopping. The plan is expected to create a 'beautiful public space,' improve tourism, attract investment, and generate employment. Implementation will involve collaboration with the government to pass necessary legislation and identify alternative routes for the numerous buses currently using the street. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/londons-oxford-street-go-traffic-free-shopping-area-makeover-says-mayor-2025-06-16/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan has confirmed the progression of plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street, following strong public and business support. According to a consultation conducted by the Greater London Authority between February and May, 66% of 6,642 respondents endorsed the proposal. Major retailers including Selfridges, John Lewis, and Ikea also support the initiative. The plan will see approximately a mile of the roadway pedestrianised, from Orchard Street to Great Portland Street. To implement the transformation, City Hall will establish a Mayoral Development Corporation within the year, collaborating with businesses, local authorities, and national government. The move aims to revitalise the area, which has faced economic challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of online shopping. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/307cf024-1f21-4386-b0e4-757ce597f4f0> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan has asserted that local residents should not have the final say regarding the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street, a key shopping area of national significance. Speaking at a property conference in Cannes, Khan reaffirmed his determination to push forward with the plan, even without the support of Westminster Council, which has previously opposed pedestrianisation due to concerns over traffic, public transport, and disabled access. Khan now has enhanced powers via the Mayoral Development Corporation granted by the UK Labour government, allowing him to advance the project. He criticised the influence of small groups of local residents and councillors in blocking major developments and endorsed recent government proposals to have planning decisions made more often by professional officers rather than local committees. Khan also emphasised the need to revitalise Oxford Street to compete with e-commerce and malls, warning that without intervention, the area risks decline into low-quality retail. A public consultation on pedestrianisation was launched last month, with ongoing negotiations involving Westminster Council. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/307cf024-1f21-4386-b0e4-757ce597f4f0?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2024/10/05/a-londres-oxford-street-va-etre-pietonnisee-dans-le-but-d-enrayer-son-declin-commercial_6344504_3234.html> - To counter the commercial decline of the famous Oxford Street in London, Mayor Sadiq Khan plans to pedestrianise it by 2027, thus banning buses and black cabs. Historically a showcase for UK retail, this street has suffered from online shopping competition, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cost of living crisis, leading to the closure of major stores like Debenhams and House of Fraser. The pandemic also led to an increase in petty crime and the presence of cheap souvenir and confectionery shops, often suspected of tax evasion and selling counterfeit products. However, signs of recovery are emerging, with major investors like Ikea arriving and the return of HMV, renewing hope for the revitalisation of this iconic artery. ([lemonde.fr](https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2024/10/05/a-londres-oxford-street-va-etre-pietonnisee-dans-le-but-d-enrayer-son-declin-commercial_6344504_3234.html?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/d4324f4f-3c39-480e-b300-6f7f06977699> - The famous London street, Oxford Street, will be pedestrianised under proposals announced by Mayor Sadiq Khan to revitalise the area and make it 'the leading retail destination in the world.' The central street requires significant regeneration due to competition from online shopping, the closure of major department stores, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite opposition over traffic disruption and disabled access, the plan has gained momentum following the election of a Labour government. The renewal aims to generate employment, boost economic activity, and revitalise London's night-time economy. However, Westminster City Council, responsible for the street, has expressed concerns and awaits details on the project's duration and how local issues will be addressed. Despite recent improvements in store vacancy rates, intervention is considered crucial to strengthen Oxford Street's position against global competitors. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/d4324f4f-3c39-480e-b300-6f7f06977699?utm_source=openai))