# London’s Oxford Street pedestrianisation push accelerates amid criticism over economic and logistical risks



London Mayor Sadiq Khan is once again rushing forward with his costly and controversial plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street, aiming to strip away vehicular traffic from the West End’s busiest shopping district — perhaps as early as next summer. This accelerated timetable is a stark departure from his original promise to complete the project by the end of his third term in 2028, a move driven more by political opportunism than genuine urban planning needs. With a hefty price tag of around £150 million and newly granted government powers last year, Khan’s push reveals his lack of regard for practicalities and the economic fallout that will inevitably follow.

Initially targeting only the stretch between Oxford Circus and Orchard Street, the scheme is now being fast-tracked, relying on imminent traffic modelling approvals. If these are greenlit, the project could see traffic removed by spring 2026 — an overly ambitious deadline that raises questions about whether this is a well-thought-out, sustainable solution or merely a headline-grabbing spectacle. Khan’s office paints this as a “transformative” change, but critics argue it will do little to address the real issues facing central London: ongoing retail decline, increased congestion elsewhere, and the disregard for where actual economic activity and local jobs are generated.

Support for this scheme from public and business groups appears overstated, with a consultation that drew responses from 6,600 people, about two-thirds of whom were in favour. But this support comes amidst concerns from many local stakeholders — including local taxis, residents, and small business owners — who worry that prioritising a pedestrian-only zone will only worsen traffic chaos and deter shoppers and workers. Already, opposition figures from Westminster have called the plan a “vanity project,” arguing it will contribute to gridlock, damage local commerce, and amplify crime — echoing longstanding resistance from Westminster City Council that favors incremental improvements over costly, disruptive full pedestrianisation. For all the fanfare, there’s little concrete evidence that such sweeping changes will deliver the promised economic revival.

Khan’s push ignores the lessons learned from other global pedestrian zones which, without proper infrastructure and safeguards, often become havens for crime and disorder rather than thriving hubs. Furthermore, the lack of detailed consultation on bus routes and logistics highlights the government’s failure to consider the practical impact on daily commuters and local businesses. Promises to incorporate features like ‘world-class’ toilets and inclusive facilities seem more like window dressing than genuine measures to support safety, accessibility, or environmental sustainability.

In anticipation of upcoming borough elections in 2026, City Hall seems hell-bent on rushing this project through to bolster their political credentials before the political landscape shifts again. The plan’s urgency disguises a broader neglect of the city’s economic resilience and a reckless disregard for the livelihoods of those who rely on Oxford Street for their business. Instead of sensible, incremental improvements that truly support local growth, Khan’s administration is prioritising political optics over practical urban planning.

This obsession with grand gestures only underscores the failure to deliver real solutions, risking turning what could be a vibrant shopping district into an expensive, congested, and ultimately unviable space. The question remains: are we about to see another costly failure driven by Khan’s desperation to leave a legacy, or will this scheme be quietly scaled back in the face of reality? The economic and social costs of pursuing this political vanity project demand serious scrutiny.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15195547/Sadiq-Khan-accelerates-plans-pedestrianise-Oxford-Street-soon-year-Mayor-wants-make-shopping-district-carless-local-elections.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - 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/> - In June 2025, London Mayor Sadiq Khan announced plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street, aiming to revitalise the area and create a new public space to drive growth. The proposal received majority support from Londoners and businesses during a public consultation. Inspired by successful transformations like Times Square in New York and La Rambla in Barcelona, the initiative seeks to rejuvenate the mile-long stretch into a world-class, accessible hub for shopping, leisure, and outdoor events. Despite attracting around 500,000 visitors daily, Oxford Street has faced challenges with the closure of major retail stores and a decline in footfall. The pedestrianisation plan is expected to improve tourism, attract investment, and generate employment. To implement the project, Khan plans to work with the government to pass the necessary legislation and identify alternative routes for the numerous buses currently using the street. The changes will be introduced as swiftly as possible. ([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.standard.co.uk/news/transport/sadiq-khan-oxford-street-mayor-pedestrianisation-plans-westminster-b1248374.html> - In September 2025, a row erupted over Westminster City Council's decision to transfer control of Oxford Street to Mayor Sadiq Khan. This move paved the way for part-pedestrianisation of the UK's most famous high street, likely to occur in 2027 or 2028. Transport for London (TfL) will replace Westminster Council as the highway authority for the full length of Oxford Street, enabling the mayor to implement the £150 million plan to part-pedestrianise the area between Orchard Street and Great Portland Street. The decision followed a public consultation where nearly 70% of respondents supported the changes. However, the handover and pedestrianisation plans faced opposition from the Conservative opposition on Westminster Council, who expressed concerns over the process and the potential impact on local businesses and residents. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/sadiq-khan-oxford-street-mayor-pedestrianisation-plans-westminster-b1248374.html?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-pedestrianisation-is-going-ahead-after-north-korean-levels-of-support-says-sadiq-khan-b1233250.html> - In June 2025, Mayor Sadiq Khan announced plans to proceed with the part-pedestrianisation of Oxford Street after receiving overwhelming support from Londoners and businesses. The changes will involve more of the road being closed to traffic than initially anticipated, including the eastern section between Oxford Circus and Great Portland Street, in front of the new Ikea store, in addition to the western section between Oxford Circus and the western edge of Selfridges. The Oxford Circus junction itself will not be pedestrianised, as buses will continue to run north-south on Regent Street. The decision followed a nine-week consultation, with two-thirds of respondents in favour. Detailed proposals for traffic rerouting will be published later this year, with the changes expected to be introduced by 2027 or later. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-pedestrianised-sadiq-khan-traffic-free-consultation-decision-mayor-b1233250.html?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.london.gov.uk/overwhelming-support-for-mayors-oxford-street-plans> - In June 2025, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced he would move ahead with bold plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street and revitalise the area following overwhelming public and business support for his proposals. The consultation attracted 6,642 responses, with almost seven in ten expressing support for the Mayor’s proposed interventions to regenerate Oxford Street, while two-thirds are supportive of the idea of pedestrianisation. Major businesses in the Oxford Street area and across the capital also welcomed the plans, which aim to boost retail and drive growth for London and the wider UK economy. Detailed traffic and highway proposals will be developed to pedestrianise the section of road between Orchard Street and Oxford Circus up to Great Portland Street. These will be consulted on later this year. The Mayor will also progress with steps to establish a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) dedicated to regenerating the area and ultimately making Oxford Street a world-leading urban space for shopping, leisure, and outdoor events. ([london.gov.uk](https://www.london.gov.uk/overwhelming-support-for-mayors-oxford-street-plans?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-06-17/sir-sadiq-khan-to-pedestrianise-oxford-street-as-quickly-as-possible> - In June 2025, Mayor Sadiq Khan confirmed that plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street would proceed 'as quickly as possible' following majority support from Londoners. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents to a consultation supported the pedestrianisation plan. A separate YouGov survey conducted in September 2024 indicated 63% of Londoners are in favour of the project. Oxford Street is one of the world’s busiest shopping areas, with around half a million visitors each day. Detailed proposals for traffic rerouting will be consulted on later this year. A previous attempt by Sir Sadiq to pedestrianise that part of Oxford Street was blocked by then-Conservative run Westminster City Council in 2018. His latest proposals depend on obtaining permission from Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner in her role as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to establish a new Mayoral Development Corporation, which would provide planning powers. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-06-17/sir-sadiq-khan-to-pedestrianise-oxford-street-as-quickly-as-possible?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/oxford-street-pedestrianisation-public-toilets-mayor-sadiq-khan-london-assembly-b1236362.html> - In July 2025, the London Assembly urged Mayor Sadiq Khan to include 'world class' public toilets as part of the proposed pedestrianisation scheme for Oxford Street. The cross-party call came as the assembly voted in favour of establishing a mayoral development corporation to drive through changes to the nation's most famous high street. The assembly's motion emphasized the need for Oxford Street to become a 'healthy street' that is inclusive, safe, and accessible to all Londoners, and not harmful to the environment or efforts to tackle climate change. The motion also called for the scheme to prioritize implementing Healthy Streets that are inclusive, safe, and accessible for all Londoners, including providing world-class public toilets. The mayor's consultation on the pedestrianisation, which ran between February and March, received 6,642 responses, with two-thirds of respondents in support of the pedestrianisation idea. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/oxford-street-pedestrianisation-public-toilets-mayor-sadiq-khan-london-assembly-b1236362.html?utm_source=openai))