# London plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street amid mixed reactions and infrastructure challenges



The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is advancing a bold plan to pedestrianise a significant stretch of Oxford Street, one of the city's—and indeed the world's—busiest shopping districts. The initiative seeks to create a vehicle-free zone along a 0.7-mile section between Oxford Circus and Marble Arch, with potential extensions towards Tottenham Court Road under consideration. This comes in the wake of a trial closure in September 2024, where Oxford Street was cleared of traffic for a day, transforming the area into a vibrant pedestrian space with themed outdoor activities, special retail offers, and cultural events aimed at showcasing the potential benefits of a car-free environment.

Oxford Street draws around half a million visitors daily and remains a crucial economic artery for London, contributing approximately £25 billion annually. However, the street grapples with heavy congestion, frequent collisions, and pollution challenges. Between 2016 and 2024, data from City Hall recorded 125 serious injuries and four fatalities among pedestrians and other road users. According to Tanya Braun, Director of External Affairs for Living Streets, pedestrianisation could curb unnecessary short car journeys, reduce congestion, and enhance the pedestrian experience by creating a safer, more accessible environment. The Mayor envisions a revitalised Oxford Street that supports leisure activities such as al fresco dining and outdoor events, aiming to rejuvenate the area from the dual blows of the pandemic and the rise of online shopping.

Public and business support for the plans appears robust, with nearly 70% of respondents backing the pedestrianisation proposal according to a consultation conducted by Transport for London. Major retailers including Selfridges, John Lewis, and Ikea have welcomed the scheme, seeing it as a catalyst to boost retail activity and economic growth for both London and the wider UK. Formal detailed proposals addressing traffic and highway management for the pedestrianised sections are expected to be unveiled and consulted on later in the year, signalling a broader move towards transforming the street into a world-class, accessible destination.

Despite widespread endorsement, the project faces significant opposition and practical concerns. Some critics, such as Conservative Councillor Tim Barnes, argue that the plans have not been sufficiently thought through and warn that redirecting traffic off Oxford Street will simply displace congestion to narrower side streets. This, they fear, could escalate pollution and inconvenience for local residents and businesses without delivering real benefits. Pollutant levels on Oxford Street have reportedly fallen significantly in recent years, with nitrogen dioxide dropping well below legal limits, raising questions about the necessity of the measures purely on air quality grounds.

Other voices, including those from disabled advocacy groups, emphasise the importance of ensuring the plans do not disadvantage people with mobility challenges. Key concerns centre around how bus routes, taxi access, and pick-up/drop-off points will be managed, given the reliance of many disabled Londoners on public transport for accessing central areas like Oxford Street.

Further caution comes from Westminster City Council leadership, which has noted "substantial practical challenges" in implementing the pedestrianisation. The estimated project cost is around £150 million, with funding expected to be sourced from a combination of local businesses, new revenue opportunities, and private investment. The joint responsibility for Oxford Street, now under Transport for London for highways maintenance and Westminster City Council for cleaning and refuse, sets the administrative backdrop for these ambitious redevelopment plans.

Mayor Khan remains resolute in his vision, stating that pedestrianisation will unlock Oxford Street’s true potential to become a cleaner, greener, safer space that competes on a global stage. Comparisons are often drawn with successful European and international pedestrian zones that have revitalised urban high streets, although sceptics caution that London’s unique weather and urban fabric present distinctive challenges not easily overcome by importing such models.

As preparations for the Mayoral Development Corporation proceed, enabling the strategic management of Oxford Street and its surroundings, the debate continues. The transformation to a largely car-free Oxford Street is set to bring significant change, promising a reimagined urban space while prompting ongoing dialogue about balancing accessibility, environmental impact, and the practical needs of Londoners and visitors alike.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/car-free-oxford-street-pedestrian-32532102), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/pedestrianisation-oxford-street-sadiq-khan-mayor-london-traffic-b1248019.html), [[6]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3dvx4e3jryo), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx244r3n50xo)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/car-free-oxford-street-pedestrian-32532102), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/pedestrianisation-oxford-street-sadiq-khan-mayor-london-traffic-b1248019.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.london.gov.uk/overwhelming-support-for-mayors-oxford-street-plans), [[3]](https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/oxford-street-to-go-traffic-free-to-showcase-transformative-benefits-of-proposals-to-pedestrianise-the-iconic-street), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx244r3n50xo)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/car-free-oxford-street-pedestrian-32532102), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/mayor-sadiq-khan-oxford-street-pedestrianisation-plans-backlash-b1223833.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/car-free-oxford-street-pedestrian-32532102), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/mayor-sadiq-khan-oxford-street-pedestrianisation-plans-backlash-b1223833.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/car-free-oxford-street-pedestrian-32532102), [[6]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3dvx4e3jryo)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/car-free-oxford-street-pedestrian-32532102), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx244r3n50xo)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/car-free-oxford-street-pedestrian-32532102> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.london.gov.uk/overwhelming-support-for-mayors-oxford-street-plans> - In June 2025, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street following overwhelming public and business support. A consultation revealed that nearly 70% of respondents backed the proposed interventions, with two-thirds specifically supporting pedestrianisation. Major businesses, including Selfridges, John Lewis, and Ikea, welcomed the plans, aiming to boost retail and drive growth for London and the wider UK economy. Detailed traffic and highway proposals for pedestrianising the section between Orchard Street and Oxford Circus up to Great Portland Street are expected to be consulted on later this year.
3. <https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/oxford-street-to-go-traffic-free-to-showcase-transformative-benefits-of-proposals-to-pedestrianise-the-iconic-street> - In June 2025, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street following overwhelming public and business support. A consultation revealed that nearly 70% of respondents backed the proposed interventions, with two-thirds specifically supporting pedestrianisation. Major businesses, including Selfridges, John Lewis, and Ikea, welcomed the plans, aiming to boost retail and drive growth for London and the wider UK economy. Detailed traffic and highway proposals for pedestrianising the section between Orchard Street and Oxford Circus up to Great Portland Street are expected to be consulted on later this year.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/pedestrianisation-oxford-street-sadiq-khan-mayor-london-traffic-b1248019.html> - In September 2024, a one-day trial of Oxford Street's pedestrianisation took place, closing the street to traffic between Orchard Street and Oxford Circus. The event featured themed outdoor areas promoting fashion, sport, music, food, and heritage, as well as a children's literary festival, three stages, and artistic workshops. Over 30 retailers on Oxford Street offered special deals during the event, showcasing the potential benefits of a car-free environment for the area.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/mayor-sadiq-khan-oxford-street-pedestrianisation-plans-backlash-b1223833.html> - In April 2025, residents' groups criticised Mayor Sadiq Khan's plans to part-pedestrianise Oxford Street, describing them as 'senseless' and a 'vanity project'. They argued that the need for a radical overhaul had been overstated and expressed concerns about the lack of information regarding the plans, particularly how buses would be rerouted away from the street. The London Assembly's planning committee conducted a 'field trip' to the area to inform its response to the consultation on establishing a Mayoral Development Corporation to gain control over Oxford Street and the surrounding area.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3dvx4e3jryo> - In September 2024, Westminster City Council leader Adam Hug warned of 'substantial practical challenges' in pedestrianising Oxford Street. He emphasised the need to properly consider residents, businesses, shoppers, and visitors in the proposal. The plan, announced by Mayor Sadiq Khan, aimed to ban traffic from part of Oxford Street between Marble Arch and Oxford Circus, with backing from the new Labour government. The project was expected to cost about £150 million, with funding hoped to come from local businesses, new revenue streams, and private funders.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx244r3n50xo> - In September 2024, Mayor Sadiq Khan announced plans to pedestrianise part of London's Oxford Street, aiming to regenerate the famous high street affected by a shift to online shopping and the Covid-19 pandemic. The proposal involved pedestrianising a 0.7-mile stretch between Oxford Circus and Marble Arch, with potential for further changes towards Tottenham Court Road. The plan received backing from Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, who stated it would drive growth by creating new jobs and boosting London's night-time economy.