



# 20mph

## CREATING A BETTER SAFER EDINBURGH

### Top Ten 20mph FAQs

#### How were the streets chosen?

**MYTH:** this is a 'blanket roll-out'.

**REALITY:** The proposals are for a network of 20mph streets chiefly in residential and shopping areas, complemented by a network of 30 and 40mph roads on key arterial routes in the city suburbs.

The main roads becoming 20mph have a high proportion of collisions and are also those that are used by the most people and which have the greatest mix of pedestrians, cyclists and motorised vehicles. Pedestrian and cyclist casualties tend to be concentrated on shopping streets and on other main roads in the city centre and inner suburbs. A lower speed limit here can help improve safety and also improve the environment for all road users.

Criteria for selecting potential 20mph streets were agreed in outline by the Council's Transport and Environment Committee and then fine-tuned by a sub-group of its Transport Forum, including representatives from a range of interested groups.

The extensive consultation that we have carried out over several years shows a high level of public support for our proposals.



## Will slower speed limits improve safety?

**MYTH: Safety won't be improved by making roads 20mph.**

**REALITY: Driving more slowly can prevent injuries and save lives. Research by the UK Transport Research Laboratory has shown that every 1mph reduction in average urban speeds can be expected to result in a 6% fall in the number of casualties. It has also been shown that you are seven times more likely to survive if you are hit by a car driving at 20mph, than if you are hit at 30mph. If a child suddenly steps in front of a car, you are much less likely to seriously injure or kill them if you keep to a 20mph limit.**

Other cities that have introduced 20mph speed limits have seen reductions in casualties. For example in Portsmouth it is estimated that 20mph limits have lowered road casualties by 8%, while in Warrington there has been a reduction in collisions of 25% in 20mph speed limit areas; Evidence from the South Edinburgh pilot area also points to a reduction in casualties (20% to January 2014).

## Will slower speeds hold up traffic more?

**MYTH: Slower speeds will increase congestion.**

**REALITY: Research indicates that vehicles flow more smoothly through junctions at slower speeds.**



“The introduction of 20mph zones throughout Edinburgh is a very welcome measure that will be good for people as well as the planet.”  
*(Lang Banks, WWF Scotland)*

## Will air pollution get worse?

**MYTH: Slower speeds will increase emissions and worsen air quality.**

**REALITY: Research indicates vehicles flow more smoothly through junctions at slower speeds. Additionally, as a result of reduced acceleration and braking, 20mph may help to reduce fuel consumption and associated emissions.**

Although research is not conclusive, some environmental benefit from the change is expected from helping to unlock the potential for walking or cycling short distances instead of driving.

With its 20mph speed limit the city has further burnished its transport credentials, and one of the most beautiful cities in the world to walk around just became even more attractive.”

*(The Independent, 14 January 2015)*

## How will the new limits be enforced?

**MYTH: 20mph speed limits won't be enforced.**

**REALITY: The legal speed limits on any roads in the Capital are enforced by Police Scotland and this will be no different whether the street is 20, 30 or 40mph. Police will direct their resources to particular problem areas, as they do currently, and drivers caught flouting the limit will face warnings or speeding fines. Additional measures such as Vehicle Activated Signs could also be installed in streets where particularly high numbers of contraventions are detected or reported.**

“You wouldn’t expect to drive round a shopping centre car park at 30mph. When the local retail environment is slowed slightly people have time to see parking spaces and work with each other. The city streets are not just there for people ‘passing through’ and a more pleasant outdoor environment results in more time spent at local shops, cafes and pubs.”

*(David Gardiner, Laid Back Bikes, Marchmont)*

## **What impact will slower speeds have on businesses?**

**MYTH: 20mph limits in shopping streets will be bad for businesses.**

**REALITY: It is considered that businesses will benefit from the increased “liveability” which slower speeds will foster in their area, with more people attracted to spend time in shopping streets where they feel safer and the environment is generally more pleasant.**

20mph speed limits encourage more considerate driving, leading to safer streets for all road users, including motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. The lower speeds reduce the risk and severity of road collisions. Reducing traffic speed helps make people feel more confident about being on their local streets and helps children and elderly people to travel independently and safely.

Calmer road speeds also help to make walking and cycling more attractive options, contributing to less traffic congestion, better health, less noise, more social interaction and stronger communities.

“The potential benefits are clear and include preventing death, particularly among children and young people, as well as preventing injuries (reducing costs on health services).”

*(Royal Mile Primary School Parents Council)*

## **Will we see speed humps all over the city?**

**MYTH: The city will be covered in speed humps.**

**REALITY: The new limit will be introduced without traffic calming measures. However, if monitoring finds speeds remain significantly above 20mph on certain streets despite signage and public awareness of the limit, we will consider speed reducing measures on the roads concerned. On residential streets this is likely to mean road humps, on main roads other methods would be deployed, for example road markings (e.g. cycle lanes) or central islands which tend to reduce speeds by reducing the apparent width of roads.**

## Will journeys take a lot longer?

**MYTH: Journey times will be much longer.**

**REALITY:** Research in other cities, surveys of current speeds, and results of the pilot project in South Edinburgh, suggest that journey times will not significantly increase and by easing traffic flow, 20mph may actually reduce some journey times.

We would expect changes not exceeding around 25 seconds per mile, probably significantly lower (around 10 seconds per mile has been found in central parts of Bristol where a limit has now been introduced). We will be carrying out more research on this matter in Edinburgh and will post the results on the Council's website.

## Are signs effective in encouraging compliance?

**MYTH: Signs alone don't lower drivers' speeds.**

**REALITY:** National evidence has shown that sign-only 20mph speed limits can help to reduce average speeds and improve safety. Evidence from the pilot scheme in South Edinburgh showed similar results, with average speeds reduced by around 10% to just over 20mph, and with larger falls in speeds (around 14%) on the roads that had higher average speeds before the limit was introduced. Of 1000 people surveyed in the South Edinburgh pilot area, 79% supported the 20 mph limit while just 4% opposed it.

## Is the Council being 'anti-car' by introducing the new speed limits?

**MYTH: This is an attack on motorists.**

**REALITY:** Our aim is to balance the needs of drivers with the safety and environment of local residents. 20mph creates a safer environment for everyone, including motorists. We are not stopping people from driving.

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