

Businesses Profit from 20mph Limits

A 20's Plenty for Us Briefing, November 2012

20mph limits boost business. Places embracing slower speeds and therefore walkers and cyclists have higher levels of footfall and takings. Less fuel is used. Journey times are unaffected.

20's Plenty



Where People Live

Extensive 20mph limits create the foundation for a strong local economy – where firms have healthy workers, are more profitable and resilient to rising oil prices and congestion. 20mph limits:-

Reduce energy costs. German evidence is of 12% less fuel use¹ by vehicles where slower limits were implemented as driving became smoother. All firms have a supply chain. Rising transport fuel costs affect all energy prices and profit margins. A 12% saving is significant and would help UK firms to compete, survive and thrive, boosting jobs.

Reduce road death. When a road death or injury occurs much of the cost is ultimately borne by business - not only the direct loss of a valuable employee or time off for carers of the injured or bereaved family, but also the indirect costs of insurance, health care, pensions and taxes.

Raise health. Protecting working conditions means a healthier workforce and less sick payments. Employees who feel safe enough to walk, cycle or take a bus are generally fitter and healthier than their car-based colleagues.

Reduce vehicle repairs. Keeping a fleet vehicle in pristine condition saves on repair and insurance. Vehicles are available for business more often, are well maintained and keep image and resale value. No claims bonuses are retained. Wear and tear lessens with reduced acceleration and braking. Humps are not needed for 20mph limits.

Raise property values. Pedestrianisation raises shop rental values. So do slower speeds. Property prices rise by up to 20 % where traffic speeds have reduced by 5-10mph². This desirability premium proves the value of slower speeds. Less car commuting employees and customers mean less car parking is needed which also saves money.

Reduce street crime. In the long term, car crime and parking obstruction issues reduce, saving firms money.

In congested areas reducing limits from 30 to 20mph hardly affects total trip time. Indeed, it can smooth traffic flow. 20's Plenty for Us campaigns for 20mph residential roads without humps. Use of non arterials is occasional for many businesses. Stop go driving, junctions and pinch points affect trip times far more than limits. Rod King, Founder of 20's Plenty for Us commented :-

"Some people wrongly imagine that lower speeds cost time and money. But, after a thorough look at the benefits, they conclude that, in our congested towns, there are better ways for us all to use the roads. 20mph limits bring real economic gains to businesses because slower driving allows time to avoid collisions and associated costs"

20mph limits are common in mainland Europe. Groningen, Holland has also planned for cycling. 57% of 170,000 residents cycle. City Planner Gerrit van Werven said - *"This is not an environmental programme, it is an economic programme. We are boosting jobs and business. Planning for the bicycle is cheaper than planning for the car."*

Shopkeepers outside the scheme now regularly submit requests to ban car traffic. UK cities that have successfully pedestrianised like York show how limiting driving raises footfall, commercial rents and profits. Where shoppers feel safe, higher numbers concentrate and spend rises. York is extending the size and timings of its 'foot streets' and has advisory 10mph limits. Bishopthorpe Road traders specifically asked for 20mph limits.

British businesses can embrace 20mph limits. It improves their image, is fuel efficient, raises profits and protects their employees and customers. Request that your Councillors put 20mph limits outside your workplace.

¹ An illustrated guide to traffic calming. by Dr Carmen Hass-Klau (1990)

² Evaluating Traffic Calming Benefits, Costs and Equity Impacts, Todd Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute 1999

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20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in residential streets without physical calming.
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