

OECD calls for 20mph limits in built-up areas

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http://www.20splenty.org/oecd_urban_20mph

The International Transport Forum group of the OECD has just published its report on “Speed and Crash Risk” and has called for 30km/h (20mph) speed limits in built up areas where there is a mix of vulnerable road users and motor vehicles.

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In publishing this report¹ and recommendation OECD² joins such international bodies as WHO, Global Network for Road Safety Legislators and iRAP³ who already recognise that 30km/h (20mph) speed limits are appropriate where people and motor vehicles mix⁴.

The report is categorical that :-

“Where motorised vehicles and vulnerable road users share the same space, such as in residential areas, 30 km/h is the recommended maximum.”

It cites 30km/h as the developing international standard referencing the Netherlands where 70% of urban roads have a 30km/h limit. Also :-

“In many countries, there is a trend into generalising the 30 km/h zones in city centres and residential areas. As mentioned above, some countries are considering setting 30 km/h as a default speed limit in urban areas, with possible higher limits on arterial roads. Most countries report undertaking regular communication campaigns to promote lower speeds and better compliance with the speed limits.”

It repeatedly recognises the benefits of 30km/h limits for reducing injuries to pedestrians and cyclists:-

“Research has indicated that the death risk is about 4-5 times higher in collisions between a car and a pedestrian/road worker on foot at 50 km/h compared to the same type of collisions at 30 km/h. Considering this, there is a strong recommendation to reduce speed in urban areas.”

The report concluded :-

“To reduce road trauma (i.e. fatalities and injuries), governments need to take actions to reduce the speed on our roads and also to reduce differences in speed. As individuals, the risks for a severe crash might seem small, but from a societal point of view, there are substantial safety gains when the mean speeds and speed differences on the roads are reduced.”

Rod King MBE, Founder and Campaign Director for 20's Plenty for Us commented :-

“This is yet another report coming to the firm conclusion that 20 is plenty where people live, work, play, shop and learn. Other countries have adopted a near universal 30km/h limit for urban and residential streets. Over 25% of the UK live in authorities who have also set 20mph as the right urban limit. The Scottish assembly is considering a bill to make 20mph the limit (with exceptions) for built up roads. Its time to end the post code lottery on pedestrian/cycling safety and general well-being in our residential and urban places by setting a 20mph default limit for built-up roads across the UK.”

¹ <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/speed-crash-risk.pdf>

² The mission of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. www.oecd.org/about/

³ iRAP (the International Road Assessment Programme) is the umbrella programme for Road Assessment Programmes (RAPs) worldwide that are working to save lives. <https://www.irap.org/about-us/>

⁴ http://www.20splenty.org/duty_of_care_mandates_20mph

20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in built up areas without physical calming.

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