

Paris Plans to Turn More Streets into Green Spaces

March 2025

Parisians are voting on whether to turn 500 more streets into pedestrian-friendly areas with more trees and plants. The goal is to cut down on car traffic and improve air quality. Paris has already made similar changes, like banning e-scooters and increasing parking fees for large SUVs. The city has been working for 25 years to give more space to pedestrians and cyclists instead of cars.



Since Mayor Anne Hidalgo took office in 2014, Paris has seen big changes. Car traffic has dropped by more than half, and bike lanes have expanded. Between 2020 and 2023, bike use went up by 71%. Residents will help decide which streets should become green spaces.

Even with these efforts, Paris still has less green space than many other European capitals. While the average European capital has 41% of its area covered in green spaces, Paris has only 26%. Critics say these changes make life harder for the 10 million people living in the suburbs, where public transportation isn't as good. Many suburban workers and shoppers rely on cars to get into the city.

Right now, only one in three Parisian households owns a car, but in the suburbs, two out of three do. If the vote passes, nearly 700 streets will have been turned into green areas, making up a little over one-tenth of all Parisian streets. Some see this as a way to make Paris cleaner and healthier, while others worry it will make going to and from work more difficult.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Paris banned e-scooters to give pedestrians more space on the sidewalks. What does "ban" mean?
a) To allow something everywhere b) To make something not allowed
c) To make something free for everyone d) To encourage people to use something more
2. Critics say these changes make life harder for people in the suburbs. What does "critics" mean?
a) People who support an idea b) People who watch a lot of movies
c) People who disagree with an idea d) People who make decisions for the city
3. Why is Paris trying to reduce car traffic?
a) To make it easier for suburban workers to commute b) To increase car ownership in the city
c) To improve air quality and make the city greener d) To stop tourists from driving

4. What problem do suburban commuters face with these changes?
- Public transportation is not as good in the suburbs
 - There are too many bike lanes in the suburbs
 - More people in the suburbs own bikes than cars
 - The changes make it harder to find parking in the suburbs
5. Why might some people support turning streets into green spaces?
- It will make driving in the city easier
 - It will increase the number of cars in Paris
 - It will create more space for SUVs
 - It will improve air quality and make the city healthier
6. How has car traffic changed since 2014?
- It has increased because of more bike lanes
 - It has decreased by more than half
 - It has stayed the same
 - It has increased in the suburbs
7. What do critics say about the plan?
- It makes life harder for people who rely on cars
 - It will make the city more beautiful
 - It helps suburban workers get to the city faster
 - It will increase public transportation options
8. How does Paris compare to other European capitals in terms of green space?
- It has more green space than most other capitals
 - It has the same amount of green space as other capitals
 - It has less green space than many other capitals
 - It has the most green space in Europe
9. How will reducing car traffic affect air quality?
- It will likely improve air quality
 - It will make air quality worse
 - It will have no effect on air quality
 - It will make air quality better in the suburbs but worse in Paris
10. What is the main idea of the article?
- Paris is banning all cars from the city
 - Paris is making more streets pedestrian-friendly to improve air quality
 - Other European capitals have more green spaces than Paris
 - Many cities around the world are trying to become more green

Speaking and Writing Activities:

- Discuss these questions with a partner or a small group
 - Choose one topic and write a response to it. Show your writing to a classmate or teacher.
- If you could change one thing about your city to make it greener, what would it be and why?
 - Do you prefer walking, biking, or driving in a city? What are the pros and cons of each?
 - How would life be different if cars were banned from all major cities? Would this be a good idea?