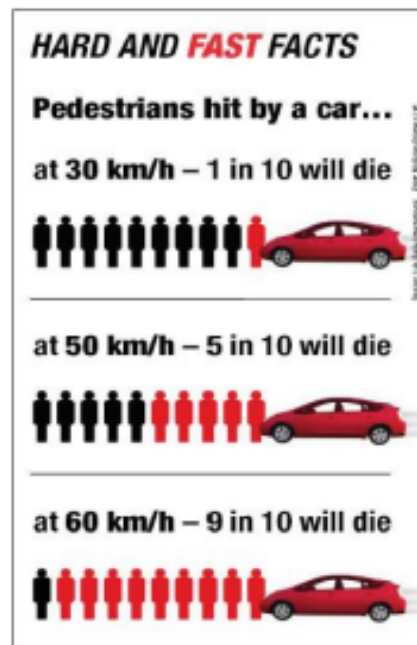


Irish Cycling Campaign Factsheet:

30km/h speed limits in urban areas

30 km/h is fundamentally safer than 50 km/h for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users. Where speeds are reduced to a maximum of 30 km/h in built-up areas a decline in casualties of more than 40% will occur with fewer and less severe injuries. For this reason residential areas in the UK and many EU countries have adopted a default 30 km/h speed limit.



The Love 30 Campaign (www.love30.ie) is an alliance of organisations and individuals who support the concept of lower speed limits in built up areas. We are campaigning for the introduction of more 30 km/h zones in urban areas, but particularly in town centres, villages, residential areas, and near schools and other places of public assembly. Love 30 is a thematic group within the Irish Cycling Campaign, but the campaign extends to advocates for walking, childrens' rights and livable streets.

The Love 30 campaign for lower speed limits, was delighted that the President signed the Road Traffic Bill 2024 into law on 17 April 2024. This legislation reduces the default urban speed limit from 50 km/h to 30 km/h and also reduces speed limits on national, regional and local roads. This is a major victory for road safety campaigners and especially for Love 30.

A default limit does not prevent a higher limit being introduced where it is deemed necessary and safe, but the ultimate benefit of lower speed limits is a cleaner environment and improved safety for people

walking and cycling while also protecting our right to health and wellbeing.

After the Department of Transport issues revised guidelines for setting speed limits, every local authority will have to review speed limits on all roads in their area and the revised speed limits will be subject to public consultation. Love 30 will be working to exert a positive influence on the ensuing public consultations but we need more volunteers to do this successfully.

For further resources see [Love 30 Information for Campaigners | Love 30](#)

Benefits of 30 km/h

1. Safety

Safety is the primary reason for introducing 30 km/h speed limits in urban areas.

2. Freedom for children and the elderly

Give children back their childhood! With lower speeds they can safely play, walk, scoot and cycle in their neighbourhood. Confident, independent, healthy, active travel habits form on safer streets. Many elderly people have slower reaction times, and so slower traffic makes it easier for them to cross the road.

3. People living in 30 km/h zones want to keep it!

The vast majority of residents in areas that have a 30 km/h limit want to keep it. For example, Marino in Dublin was one of the first urban areas to get a 30 km/h speed limit in 2005. A [door-to-door survey in 2016](#) found that that 96% of residents would oppose reverting to the higher speed limit.

4. Quieter, cleaner streets

Lower speeds result in less noise and pollution. On residential roads and shopping streets, people simply don't want to be exposed to the noise, fumes and dangers from higher speed traffic.

Air pollution currently kills more than 1,000 per year in Ireland, primarily through asthma, cancers and other pulmonary illnesses.

5. Little impact on travel times

30 km/h has very little impact on journey times, since much of the travel time in urban areas is spent at traffic lights, or stuck in traffic, so motorists travelling at 50 km/h or faster are just racing to the next traffic lights. On a typical 20 minute journey, travelling at 30 km/h instead of 50 km/h will add between

20 seconds to a minute to the journey time.

6. Encourages active travel and a healthier lifestyle

The introduction of 30 km/h urban speed limits has been shown to lead to an increase in the number of people walking and cycling, and thus enjoying healthier lives. The National Transport Authority's 2019 Bike Life survey found that 25% of adults in Dublin cycle at least once a week, while a further 21% would cycle if they felt safer on the roads.

7. Future travel patterns

The pandemic has changed people's travel patterns and many of these changes will be permanent. People working from home are making more short local journeys that could be made on foot or by bike, if a safe environment is provided. A 30 km/h speed limit provides a quieter, cleaner, safer environment where people are more likely to choose to walk or cycle, thus benefiting local businesses.

8. Saves money

While every life is priceless, the Road Safety Authority estimates [the average cost of a fatal collision to be €2.7 million](#), so any reduction in fatal and serious collisions results in significant financial savings. There were [26 fatalities](#) on roads with a speed limit of 50 km/h in 2020. The cost of implementing 30 km/h is minimal.

9. Easier for Road Users

Frequent changes of speed limits can be confusing for motorists. A default speed limit of 30 km/h in urban areas makes it easier for motorists to know the speed limit. It also reduces the number of speed signs to be installed by Local Authorities.

10. Encourages tourism

Towns, villages and cities with 30 km/h speed limits are attractive places for tourists, and many EU tourists are used to 30 km/h in their home countries.

Background Information

Ireland was a signatory in February 2020 of the [Stockholm Declaration of the Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety](#), which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Paragraph 11 committed to:

“mandate a maximum road travel speed of 30 km/h in areas where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner, except where strong evidence exists that higher speeds are safe, noting that efforts to reduce speed in general will have a beneficial impact on air quality and climate change as well as being vital to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries;”

A default limit does not prevent a higher limit being introduced where it is deemed necessary and safe, but the ultimate benefit of a low speed limit would be a cleaner environment and improved safety for people walking and cycling while also protecting our right to health and wellbeing. 30 km/h speed limits have long been recognised for the safety benefits they offer and in addition can assist in reducing noise and emissions and can help to make our towns and cities more pleasant places to live, work and play.

The WHO Global Plan for a [‘Decade of Action for Road Safety’](#) recommends “, in urban areas where there is a typical, predictable mix of road users (cars, cyclists, motorcyclists, and pedestrians), a maximum speed limit of 30 km/h (20 mph) should be established, unless strong evidence exists to support higher limits.”

Many cities including London (20 mph), Brussels, Milan, Santander, Bilbao, Paris, Washington DC (20 mph), Boulder (Colorado, 20 mph), Wellington, have introduced widespread 30 km/h limits. Several countries are introducing default 30 km/h speed limits in all urban areas including Netherlands, Spain, and Wales (20 mph). Some locations have speed limits as low as 10 km/h. Over 30 million people in the UK live in areas committed to 20mph.