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[Limiting speed to increase safety and reduce pollution in Graz \(Austria\)](#)



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City:

Graz

Country:

Austria

Topic:

Mobility management

Traffic and demand management

Description

In 1992 Graz was the first city in Europe who introduced a speed limits for the whole city: 30 km/h (18.75mph) in all residential areas / side roads and 50 km/h (31.25mph) for all priority roads - for increasing of road safety, reducing pollution, and noise.

Background & Objectives

After a successful 2-year test in two 30km/h areas which was also be accompanied by research work and a year-long discussion in which several parts of the city demanded the introduction of 30km/h-zones, in 1992 and until then the unique model started. Graz was the first city in Europe to implement a speed limit of 30/50km/h for the whole city area.

Implementation

A 30 km/h speed-limit went into effect on all side-roads, in front of schools, hospitals thus covering around 80% of the whole city. Speed limits 50 km/h (31.25mph) for all priority (higher-ranking) roads - for increasing of road safety, reducing pollution and noise.

For the priority roads a traffic-safety-monitoring group (city-experts, police, road safety board, consultants) identified dangerous spots and came up with solutions. Those included changes at programs for traffic-lights, reconstruction of roads and/or traffic-lights, reconstruction of roads and/or intersection, additional speed-limits, etc.

At the most important city accesses, additional four-language info panels were installed, which draw the user's attention to the regulations applicable in Graz.

Before the implementation of this measure a vast (public) awareness campaign has been carried out focusing on different levels: Level 1: Politicians and decision takers, level 2: multipliers (like journalists, priests, haircutter etc), level 3: the general public.

Additional following actions were carried out during the introductory phase of the test period, i.e. in September and October 92:

- extensive information via the media, the city's official bulletin, etc.;
- boards, banners and bills within the main street network;
- various individual actions near intersections, such as moving banners, etc.

There was a strong contra-campaign towards 30 km/h speed limit ongoing before of the implementation. The opponents claimed for a public opinion poll.>The former vice mayor of Graz who was in favour of the speed limit argued that it isn't easy for people to vote for or against a measure like this before they have seen the effects. That is why he decided to have a two years test phase. While people have been very much against the measure before it was implemented a big majority voted for 30 km/h speed limit after the two years testing period.

The monitoring of the implementation "30 km/h speed limit" show that, apart from information and raising awareness, an intensive "area wide" enforcement of speed has to be carried out by police, later since 2006 also of a private speed control company* (which than handed over the task to city-own staff which is supporting the police) is necessary in order to reduce the speed level to the respectively prescribed speed.

* (for more information on this topic have a look on eltis entry "Private speed controlling")

Conclusions

The city of Graz aims at a higher traffic safety for people using non-motorised modes of transport. The strategy focuses on the speed reduction of passenger cars, as they are the main risk for

pedestrians and bikers. Wherever a 30 km/h speed limit had been introduced, the number and seriousness of road accidents could be reduced. Lower speeds bring a significant improvement in road safety conditions for cyclist and pedestrians. At the beginning when the speed limit was introduced a decrease of ca. 25% in serious accidents could have been reached. Later, when enforcement was not so strict any more the number of accidents raised again. In general it must be mentioned that ca. 80% of all accidents happen on streets where 50 km/h is allowed (which is only 20% of the overall street network).

An improvement of the quality of urban live leads to a residential quality in the whole city area.

A reduction on the speed can leads also to a reduction of noise (-3 dB).

A regular low-speed driving mode can even reduce the discharge of noxious exhaust substances.

A focus of the awareness raising activities of the city of Graz lies on the reduction of car use in favour of more sustainable modes.

Keywords

campaigns (large scale)

speed calming measures

livable communities

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