

Oxford Street to Go Car-Free Under New London Revitalisation Plan

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced plans to pedestrianise a large stretch of Oxford Street “as soon as possible,” in a major initiative aimed at rejuvenating the iconic shopping destination. The move comes as part of a broader £150 million regeneration effort designed to tackle declining foot traffic, combat retail vacancy, and create a more inviting environment for Londoners and tourists alike.

The plan focuses on closing a 0.7-mile stretch of Oxford Street to vehicle traffic, from Oxford Circus to Marble Arch, with potential expansion towards Tottenham Court Road. The pedestrianisation will allow for more public space, greenery, seating, and improved accessibility, turning one of the capital’s busiest roads into a more sustainable and pleasant environment. The goal, according to Khan, is to re-establish Oxford Street as a world-class retail and cultural destination and adapt it to the needs of a post-pandemic urban society that increasingly values walkability and outdoor space.

The proposal has garnered widespread support from the public and business community. In a recent consultation, nearly two-thirds of respondents were in favour of pedestrianisation. Major retailers such as Selfridges, John Lewis, and Ikea have publicly backed the plan, seeing it as a necessary shift to revive retail appeal in the West End. The transformation is also expected to align with broader sustainability goals, as it would reduce vehicle emissions and promote healthier forms of urban transport.

Despite the enthusiasm, the plan faces some opposition and logistical challenges. Westminster City Council, which has previously pushed back against similar schemes, has voiced concerns about traffic displacement, accessibility for delivery vehicles, and the impact on surrounding neighbourhoods. However, the council has expressed a willingness to work with the mayor’s office and government officials to find workable solutions.

Sadiq Khan has framed the pedestrianisation project as a key element of London’s post-COVID recovery and its long-term evolution into a more resilient and people-centric city. By reducing traffic and enhancing the public realm, the mayor hopes Oxford Street will once again become a magnet for commerce and culture, drawing locals and international visitors alike.

Implementation of the pedestrianisation is expected to begin within the next two years, following detailed planning, traffic modelling, and additional public consultation. If successful, the scheme could serve as a model for urban renewal and sustainable development across other major UK cities.