

What are the most effective ways to get cars out of cities?

Level 3: Advanced

1 Warmer

a. These cities are the six greenest cities in the world, from an environmental point of view. Put them in order from 1 (the greenest) to 6 (the least green).

London, UK

New York City, USA

Chicago, USA

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Copenhagen, Denmark

Auckland, New Zealand

2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

carpool
divisive

carrot
lane

cash out
measure

congested
shuttle

discount
whopping

1. When a group of car owners agree to _____, they agree to travel to work together so that only one car is used.
2. If an issue or policy is _____, it is controversial and likely to cause arguments between people.
3. A _____ is an action that is intended to achieve or deal with something.
4. A _____ is a bus or train that makes frequent short journeys between two places.
5. A _____ -and -stick approach is a mixture of promises and threats to persuade people to do something.
6. A _____ is a reduction in the price of something.
7. If you _____, you exchange something for money (for example, at the end of a card game).

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8. If a place is _____, there are so many vehicles that it is difficult to move around.
9. A bike _____ is part of a road that is reserved for bicycles.
10. A _____ increase or decrease is a very large one.

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Using real-world data, we rank the most successful measures European cities have introduced

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Ranked: 12 ways to reduce car use in cities

12. Apps for sustainable mobility

- 1 Mobile-phone technology is, unsurprisingly, a growing aspect of strategies to reduce car use. The Italian city of Bologna, for example, developed an app for individuals and teams of employees from participating companies to track their mobility. Participants competed to gain points for walking, cycling and use of public transport, with local businesses offering these app users rewards for achieving points goals. An impressive 73% of users reported using their car “less”.

11. Personalized travel plans

- 2 Many cities have experimented with personal travel analysis and plans for individual residents, including Marseille, France, Munich, Germany, Maastricht, Netherlands and San Sebastian, Spain. These programmes – providing journey advice and planning for city residents to walk, cycle or use (sometimes discounted) public transport – are found to have achieved reductions of 6–12%.

10. School travel planning

- 3 Two English cities – Brighton and Norwich – have used (and assessed) the carrot-only measure of school travel planning: providing trip advice, planning and events for students and parents to encourage them to walk, cycle or carpool to school, along with providing improved bike infrastructure in the cities. Norwich found it was able to reduce the share of car use for school trips by 10.9% using this approach, while Brighton’s analysis found the impact was about half that much.

9. Car sharing

- 4 Perhaps surprisingly, car sharing turns out to be a somewhat divisive measure for reducing car use in cities, according to our analysis. Such schemes, where members have access to easily rent a nearby vehicle for a few hours, have shown promising results in Bremen, Germany and Genoa, Italy, with

each shared car replacing between 12 and 15 private vehicles.

8. Mobility services for universities

- 5 The Sicilian city of Catania used a carrot-only approach for its students. By offering them a free public transport pass and providing shuttle connections to campus, the city was found to have achieved a 24% decrease in the share of students commuting by car to campus.

7. University travel planning

- 6 University travel programmes combine the carrot of promotion of public transport and active travel with the stick of parking management on campus. The most successful example highlighted in our review was achieved by the University of Bristol, which reduced car use among its staff by 27% while providing them with improved bike infrastructure and public transport discounts.

6. Workplace travel planning

- 7 A major 2010 study assessed 20 cities across the UK and found that 18% of commuters switched from a car to another mode if their companies put in travel strategies and advice to encourage employees to end their car commutes, including company shuttle buses, discounts for public transport and improved bike infrastructure, as well as reduced parking provision.

5. Workplace parking charges

- 8 Introducing workplace parking charges is another effective method. For example, a large medical centre in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam achieved a 20–25% reduction in employee car commutes through a scheme that charged employees to park outside their offices, while also offering them the chance to “cash out” their parking spaces and use public transport instead.

4. Mobility services for commuters

- 9 The most effective carrot-only measure identified by our review was a campaign to provide mobility services for commuters in the Dutch city of Utrecht. Local government and private companies collaborated to provide free public-transport passes to employees, combined with a private shuttle bus to connect transit stops with workplaces. This programme, promoted through a marketing

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and communication plan, achieved a 37% reduction in the share of commuters travelling into the city centre by car.

3. Limited traffic zones

- 10 Rome, traditionally one of Europe's most congested cities, has shifted the balance towards greater use of public transport by restricting car entry to the city centre at certain times of day to residents only, plus those who pay an annual fee. This has reduced car traffic in the Italian capital by 20% during the restricted hours and by 10% even during unrestricted hours when all cars can visit the centre.

2. Parking and traffic controls

- 11 In some European cities, removing parking spaces and changing traffic routes – in many cases, replacing the space formerly dedicated to cars with car-free streets, bike lanes and walkways – has proved successful. For example, Oslo's replacement of parking spaces with walkable car-free streets and bike lanes was found to have reduced car usage in the centre of the Norwegian capital by up to 19%.

1. Congestion charges

- 12 Drivers must pay to enter the city centre, with the revenues generated going towards alternative means of sustainable transport. London, an early pioneer of this strategy, has reduced city-centre traffic by a whopping 33% since the charge's introduction in February, 2003.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. How do users of the app in Bologna earn points?
2. How large are the reductions in car use achieved through personalized travel plans?
3. What did the researchers find surprising about car sharing?
4. How did the city of Catania achieve a 24% decrease in the number of students using a car to get to the university campus?
5. How did Rotterdam achieve a 20–25% reduction in employee car commutes?
6. Which city introduced the most effective carrot-only measure?
7. How did that city promote its plan?
8. Who can use a car to enter the centre of Rome at certain times of day?
9. What has the city of Oslo done to replace car-parking spaces?
10. What is a congestion charge?

4 Key language

a. Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column to make expressions that are used in the text.

1. develop	a. parking charges
2. offer	b. revenue
3. achieve	c. car usage
4. improve	d. an app
5. introduce	e. a reward
6. shift	f. infrastructure
7. restrict	g. a reduction
8. generate	h. the balance

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- “All traffic should be banned from city centres.”
- “Public transport should be free.”
- “No one should commute long distances to work.”

6 In your own words

a. Use an internet search engine to research other methods of reducing congestion (and pollution) caused by road traffic in towns and cities. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each one and decide which is the most effective and which the least effective. Present your ideas to the class.