

SPEED LIMITS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND CITY CENTRES

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The level of speed limits in residential areas and city centres causes a lot of debate, but there is lack of systematic analyses concerning the impacts on sustainability.

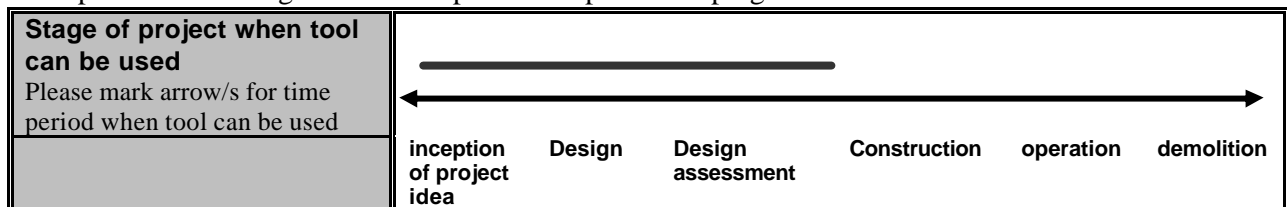
The speed level influences strongly on safety, pollution and travel costs, but has also long term (social or urban structure) effects. The attractiveness of private car or e.g. shops in the city centre may depend on the travel speed made available.

In municipalities the discussion and decision-making is often based only on feelings, because there is a lack of framework for more systematic approach.

TIME AND SPACE SCALES' CHARACTERISTICS?

The project usually lies on a couple of years.

The problem is dealing with the inception of a speed limit program to the assessment of it.



The space scale typically neighbourhood

Scale of project that can be investigated using the tool	Component	Building	Neighbourhood	City	Region
			X		

CONFLICTING AREAS

- The value of time spared by allowing higher speeds is a controversial question; choosing a high value results in high speed limits
- Controlling the speeds is often impossible, and physical constructions (e.g. bumps) are needed, which increases the costs.

CASES STUDIES LINK TO THIS KEY-PROBLEM

No case studies directly on this area. The Liege Pedestrian Master Plan includes aspects on traffic safety.

WHAT SHOULD BE ENHANCED TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY?

Interrelationship between speed and safety both impacts of speed on pollution are the main general criteria for choosing the most sustainable speed limit level. On local level the actual speeds compared to the limits set and the resources available for speed control are important aspects, too.

A procedure to collect the relevant information, carry out the measurements needed and analyse the impacts with public participation will result in minimal pollution and maximal traffic safety with maximal satisfaction of the inhabitants, which is very sustainable.

A framework to face the speeds in decision-making should be developed: a list of main factors that should be taken in account, an illustrative package on main impacts and a suggestion on the best way to weigh the importance of the impacts.