

C40 mayors launch global air quality marathon as new polling shows international support for clean air measures

- **Mayor Hidalgo brings C40 mayors together to launch 'It's In The Air' campaign**
- **New C40 polling from cities on five continents shows 90 per cent of residents want to prioritise action to improve air quality**
- **Widespread support for transforming streets and public spaces counters negative narrative of climate delayers**
- **In London, new data shows C40 Co-Chair Mayor Khan's expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone has cut PM2.5 exhaust emissions from cars in the newly covered zone by 22 per cent in its first six months**

Paris, France (25 July 2024) - Mayors from the C40 Cities, a network of the world's 100 megacities committed to addressing climate breakdown, will meet in Paris today to launch a worldwide clean air zone campaign, giving people more space to breathe, walk and connect with nature.

The meeting comes as new polling for C40 Cities by ClearPath Strategies shows overwhelming support for measures city leaders are taking to clean up the air. Residents of the seven cities surveyed across five continents not only endorse their cities taking action to improve air quality but also believe that transforming streets and public spaces is a vital part of enhancing overall well-being and health.

Polling was carried out in Bogota, Johannesburg, London, Quito, Seattle, Seoul, Stockholm and Warsaw. In every city surveyed, more than eighty per cent of people believed their city leaders should be prioritising clean air (98 per cent of people living in Bogota saw this as a priority). More than 90 per cent of respondents in all seven cities said they would support expanding public transport and active mobility to achieve these goals and an average of 88 per cent were in favour of the establishment or expansion of clean air zones (these received 97 per cent and 96 per cent approval in Johannesburg and Quito respectively).

Meanwhile, new data from London has revealed the expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) by C40 Co-Chair Mayor Sadiq Khan across the whole capital last August is working - driving down emissions and bringing cleaner air to millions more Londoners. Within the outer London ULEZ area, NOx emissions from cars are estimated to have reduced by 13 per cent, and by seven per cent from vans, equating to a total reduction of 424 tonnes in NOx emissions. PM2.5 exhaust emissions from cars in outer London are estimated to have reduced by 22 per cent.

C40's 'It's In The Air' campaign will run from today until Clean Air Day (September 7 2024) with 'streets for people' activities taking place in cities around the world, including street closures and bike rides in Seattle, sport and cultural events in Stockholm and Quito and community workshops in Bogotá and Johannesburg. More than 30 C40 mayors are working to establish or expand clean air zones - defined as areas where targeted action is taken to improve air quality, often by expanding public transport, improving walking and cycling and discouraging the most polluting vehicles - by 2030.

Parisienne preparations for the Olympics have been achieved alongside ambitious plans to reimagine iconic spaces like the Champs-Élysées and the River Seine Bank with pedestrianisation and green spaces. Further solidifying the French capital as a model for sustainable urban development. At the end of 2024, Paris will also introduce a limited traffic zone in the historic city centre.

As well as Mayor Hidalgo, the delegation of C40 mayors includes: Mayor Gallego of Phoenix, Mayor Se-hoon Oh of Seoul, Mayor Solberg of Oslo, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen, Sophie Haestorp Andersen and Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski of Warsaw. These leaders will convene to discuss and share strategies for enhancing urban health, improving air quality, and creating cleaner waterways in their cities.

The 'It's In The Air' campaign aligns with C40's wider work to clean up toxic air, such as Breathe Cities, a pioneering initiative launched by C40 in 2023 in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Clear Air Fund. Breathe Cities aims to reduce air pollution in cities signed up to the 'Breathe Cities' programme by 30 per cent by 2030. With \$30 million in funding, Breathe Cities aims to reduce air pollution, cut carbon emissions, and improve public health, spreading from London to ten other cities worldwide.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "I'm proud that London is now home to the world's largest Clean Air Zone, significantly reducing air pollution and protecting the health of Londoners.

"Cleaning up the air we breathe takes courage and bold action. Alongside ULEZ, we are home to Europe's largest electric bus fleet, and we are leading the way in electric vehicle uptake with more than 20,000 electric charging points – more than one third of the UK's total – as we work to achieve net zero by 2030. The number of protected cycle routes in London has increased fourfold since 2016 and we have planted hundreds of thousands of new trees across the capital in our efforts to make the city more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

"The 'It's In The Air' campaign will help spread the message that reducing emissions is not only essential for public health but can also make cities more pleasant, vibrant and exciting places to live. I commend my C40 global leaders for taking this threat seriously and reaffirming their dedication to improving the air quality in their cities. Together we can build a greener, safer and healthier world for all."

Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, said: "Paris is spearheading a number of initiatives to improve people's health and well-being, and advancing climate action and clean air zone policies to put humans, rather than vehicles, at the heart of our city."

"Under my leadership, Paris has shown a deep commitment to transforming our streets, public spaces, and transport systems. 1500 km of bike lanes are open throughout the city and connect Paris to its neighbouring towns; we have pedestrianised hundreds of roads, including over 200 school streets, and transformed the Seine; all whilst incorporating clean air policies into urban planning."

"Paris's collaboration with C40 mayors ahead of the Olympics and in line with the 'It's In The Air' campaign demonstrates how cities can pass the baton to each other, join forces to combat the climate crisis and celebrate open, healthier, more liveable streets for everyone."

Mayor of Seattle, Bruce Harrell, said: "Seattle is committed to cleaner air and healthier urban living through our Low Pollution Neighborhoods pilot, which prioritizes sustainable, equitable, and resilient communities."

"We are proud to be supporting global C40 leaders as we work to reduce transportation emissions and promote sustainable mobility to achieve our ambitious climate goals. By collaborating with cities like Paris and London through the 'It's in the Air' campaign, we are committed to driving positive change and building a greener, healthier future for all our residents."

Mayor of Stockholm, Karin Wanngård, said: "Stockholm's commitment to clean air is showcased by our advanced clean transport policies and our upcoming first near-Zero Emission Area launching at the end of 2024."

"As a leading advocate in this movement, Stockholm supports the 'It's In The Air' campaign, and watches on proudly as mayors from global C40 cities launch this initiative in Paris during the backdrop of the Olympics."

Mayor of Bogotá, Carlos Fernando Galán Pachón, said: "Bogotá is taking bold steps to improve air quality through initiatives like Zona Urbana por Un Mejor Aire (ZUMA),

which aims to improve air quality and reduce its health impacts in one of the most vulnerable and polluted zones of the Capital District.”

"In Bogotá, we understand air pollution as an environmental justice issue. That's why we are already planning our second ZUMA, continuing to create intersectoral actions that progressively improve air quality, advance climate action, and create a more livable city for all residents. We stand alongside cities like Paris and London as they launch the 'It's In The Air' campaign ahead of the Olympic Games. Together, we commit to reducing emissions and enhancing urban health."

Mayor of Quito, Pabel Muñoz, said: "Through the 'It's In The Air' campaign, we proudly join a global movement of cities dedicated to creating Clean Air Zones, combating climate change, and enhancing the health of our communities. In Quito, our commitment goes beyond improving air quality; we are also focused on revitalizing our city centre to safeguard our UNESCO Heritage site, and making our city center a more livable and sustainable area for everyone."

"By implementing pedestrian-friendly policies, transforming urban transportation, and fostering a culture of sustainable mobility, we are dedicated to building a greener, healthier, and more livable city. Collaborating with leading cities like Paris and London, we aspire to inspire greater action and pave the way for a healthier, more sustainable future for all."

Executive Director of C40 Cities, Mark Watts, said: "The 'It's In The Air' campaign underscores cities' crucial role in the urgent fight for our planet's survival."

"By prioritising clean air and water, cities are spearheading a revolution in urban sustainability, combating the climate crisis head-on."

"From pioneering Clean Air Zones in London to pedestrian-only zones in Bogotá and hundreds of kilometres of new cycleways in Paris, C40 cities are setting a precedent."

"This collective effort is not just about policy—it's about reclaiming our right to breathe unpolluted air, walk freely in our cities and keep our water safe for residents. Together, we forge a path towards a future where every city worldwide thrives in harmony with nature."

Head of Environment Program at Bloomberg Philanthropies, Antha N. Williams said: "Paris has pursued cutting edge programs to clean the air and promote vibrant streets for people."

"Bloomberg Philanthropies is proud to support C40's 'It's In the Air' campaign and visionary mayors in leading cities like Paris, London and Johannesburg to innovate

and collaborate, shaping a future where clean air and climate resilient, healthy communities flourish worldwide.”

Executive Director of Breathe Cities, Jaime Pumarejo, said: "In a world where air pollution accounts for over 8 million deaths a year, it's clear we need to do something different. That is why I am proud to stand alongside C40 and esteemed mayors in Paris to launch the 'It's in the Air' campaign.

"*Breathe Cities* was inspired by Mayor Khan's work in London to tackle air pollution. We now work alongside ambitious mayors across the world, from Paris to Nairobi, who are taking action to create a different future. By working together for clean air, we can tackle the climate crisis and create a healthier, fairer future for millions of people who live in cities."

— Ends —

NOTES TO EDITORS

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Polling

A survey of n=2,100 residents (n=300 each) in Bogotá, Johannesburg, London, Quito, Seattle, Seoul, and Warsaw conducted by ClearPath Strategies from July 15-22, 2024. Full polling available on request.

It's in the Air: 30 C40 cities creating clean air zones to improve health

"It's in the Air" it's a multi-city mobilisation starting in Paris to highlight the benefits of Clean Air Zones - including Low Emission Zones, promoting walking & cycling, Zero Emission Areas - as policies improving air quality, people's health and wellbeing. This approach mirrors the successful strategy implemented by Mayor Khan in London, which played a pivotal role in his recent electoral victory. More than 30 C40 cities are working to ensure a major area of their territory is a clean air zone by 2030.

From now until Clean Air Day, in September, a marathon of different 'streets for people' initiatives will take place in several C40 cities - including Bogotá, Seattle, Quito, Stockholm and Johannesburg - to raise awareness, educate on the benefits of climate action and celebrate the growth of Clean Air Zones. The campaign highlights the progress made in Paris and calls on other cities to join in building more liveable cities; and it celebrates unity, inviting mayors from different regions to advocate and advance their goals of improving public health and well-being for all.

About C40 Cities:

[C40](#) is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a science-based and people-focused approach to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. We work alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to support mayors to halve emissions by 2030 and help phase out fossil use while increasing urban climate resilience and equity.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit [our website](#) or follow us on [X](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Realdania:

[Realdania](#) is a philanthropic association based in Denmark, supporting projects in the built environment to improve quality of life and environmental sustainability. Realdania has given dedicated funding to C40 for over a decade.