

Stockholm to ban gasoline and diesel cars from downtown commercial area in 2025

October 12 2023, by Jan M. Olsen and Karl Ritter



Cars drive on a road in the city center in Stockholm, Sweden, Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023. The Swedish capital plans to ban petrol and diesel cars from parts of Stockholm, gradually starting with a little-congested downtown commercial district, in an effort to curb pollution and reduce noise but also to push the technical progress toward more electric vehicles. Credit: AP Photo/Karl Ritter

A ban on gasoline and diesel-fueled cars from a commercial district of Stockholm's downtown in 2025 will be the first for a European capital, a city official said Thursday.

The ban will take effect in a 20-block area of shops, pedestrian walkways and a few homes in order to curb pollution, reduce noise and encourage use of [electric vehicles](#) said Lars Strömgren, the city council member for the Greens who's in charge of the Swedish capital's transportation.

Many European capitals have restrictions on gasoline and [diesel](#) cars, but Strömgren says Stockholm's complete ban would be a first.

"We need to eliminate the harmful exhaust gases from (gasoline) and diesel cars. That's why we are introducing the most ambitious low-emission zone to date," Strömgren told The Associated Press. The idea is to create an "environmental zone" where only electric vehicles will be allowed. There will be some exceptions such as for emergency vehicles and transportation for the disabled.

In its budget for 2024, the left-leaning, environmentally-focused city council on Tuesday unveiled the plan for the target area just north of the city's famed Old Town. The [municipal government](#) controls a majority in the council, so the vote set for Nov. 23 is expected to be a formality.



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"We are pretty proud, I must say," Strömgren said, adding that gradual expansion of the environmental zone would be decided in the first half of 2025.

One of the city's main cab companies, Taxi Stockholm, said its transition to emission-free vehicles is moving at a fast pace. The company's acting chief executive Pernilla Samuelsson said its emission-free vehicles now make up 30% of its fleet—almost seven times more than last year.

"In other words, the transition is going fast and it is already being driven forward by the industry," Samuelson said.

Some aren't convinced things will go smoothly. Nike Örbrink from the opposition Christian Democrats told the Aftonbladet newspaper that some are concerned the plan would hurt businesses and the hotel industry.

Other European capitals harbor similar ambitions. The Dutch capital, Amsterdam, is aiming for all transport in the city, including automobiles, to be emissions-free by 2030.



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The mayor of Paris wanted to ban all diesel cars before next year's Olympics, and gasoline cars by 2030, but has run up against resistance.

Currently, any diesel cars built before 2006 and gasoline cars built before 1997 are banned in Paris and 77 surrounding towns for 12 hours a day on weekdays. The ban will expand in 2025 for [diesel cars](#) built before 2011 and pre-2006 [gasoline](#) vehicles.

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