

The Graz traffic calming model and its consequences for cyclists

Graz (Austria) a city of 240000 inhabitants introduced a speed limit of 30 km/h for the entire city area - excepting major roads .

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The 30/50 km/h speed limit in Graz

The decisive, fiercely debated “Gentle Mobility” approach was backed up in 1992 by the “30 km/h speed limit for all residential areas in Graz – excepting major roads” experiment. This approach caused some positive effects also for bikers.



The 30 km/h speed limit applies to more than 75% of all roads in Graz. A limit of 50 km/h applies only to major roads and collector roads with important public transport lines. In addition to an information campaign, the police have been closely monitoring adherence to these limits.

Extensive traffic calming

An experiment on this scale is the only one of its kind in Europe. That is why a two-year test phase was conducted between September 1992 and August 1994, combined with a scientific

analysis of all effects. As a consequence of the positive results it was also possible to obtain a regulation backed by federal legislation.

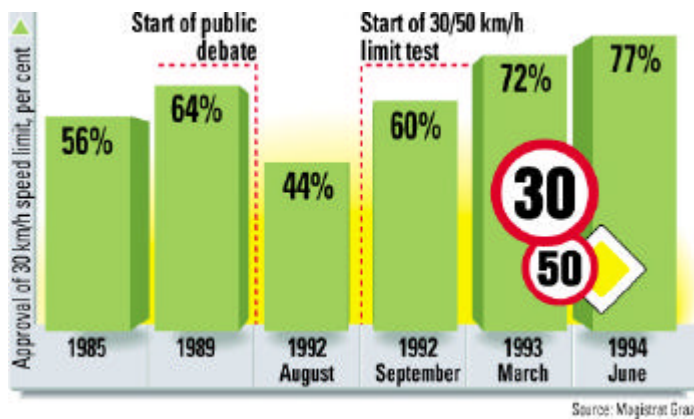


Positive effects

During this experiment, the number of injured persons and the severity of accidents within the whole city area dropped dramatically.

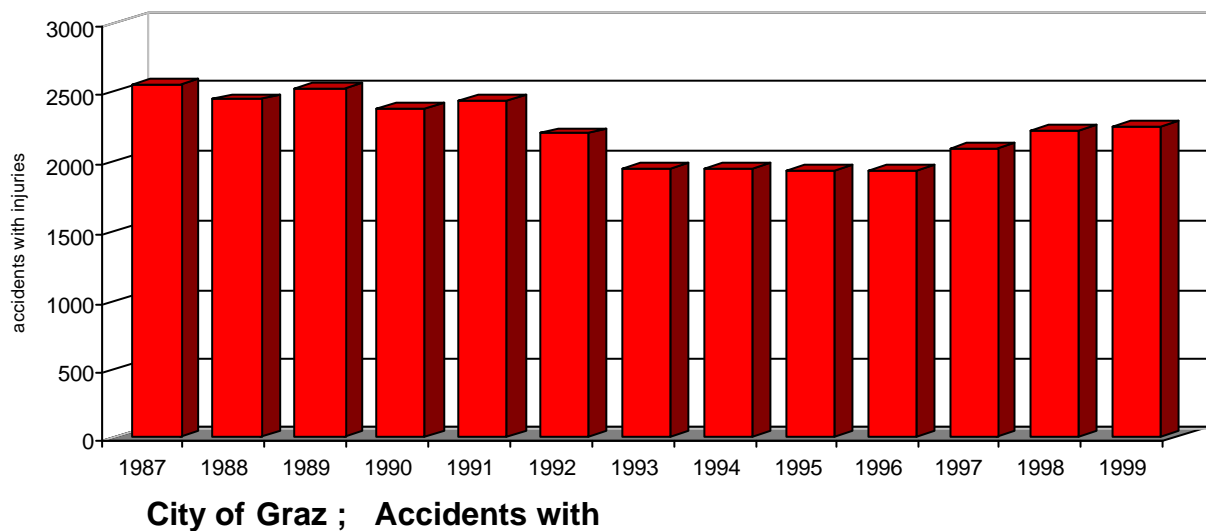
The number of injured pedestrians dropped most. The selection of routes chosen by car drivers has changed only marginally, as well as exhaust gas pollution. Fuel consumption was not negatively influenced. The subjective noise burden on local residents in so called traffic calmed streets dropped noticeably. Average speeds also decreased demonstrably.

Because of the effects that were observed, the 30/50 km/h speed limit was firmly established in Graz in 1994. The majority of the population has meanwhile overcome initial rejection. In June 1994, even 2/3 of car drivers were in favour of this measure – as compared to 1/3 in June 1992.



Long term effects

The Graz traffic calming model has proved to be sustainable since the number of accidents on 30 km/h streets has not increased since 1992, whereas on 50 km/h streets more accidents happened in 1997 and 1998 than the years before. The average speed in 30 km/h streets is even lower now as during the test phase.

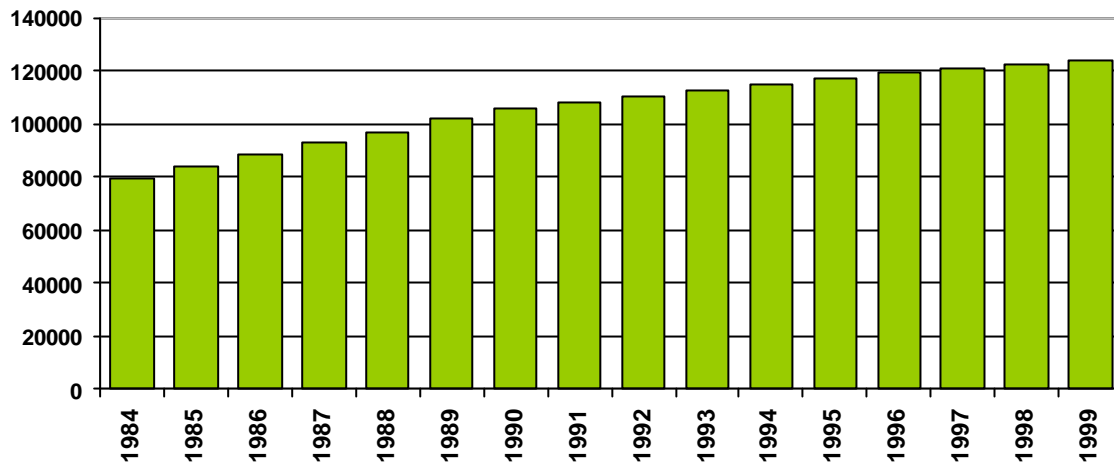


Consequences for cyclists

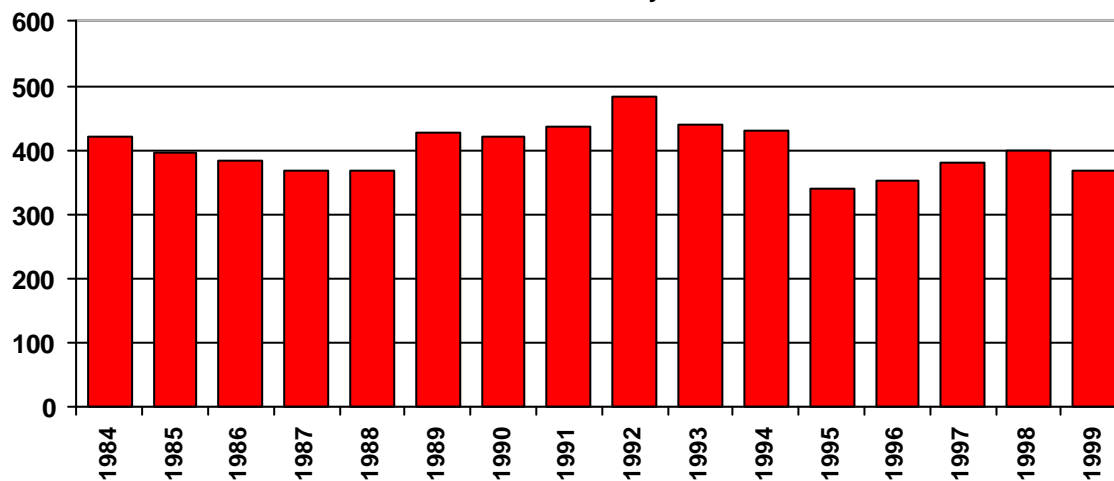
The Graz model offers 800 km of streets with a 30kmph speed limit to cyclists. Due to the lower traffic speeds these streets are more convenient and safer for bikers. Statistics show a considerable decrease of accidents with cyclists involvement whereas the number of bicycle trips increased in the same period.

City of Graz

trips with bicycles per day



number of accidents with cyclists involved



References

Sammer, Pischinger, Schützenhöfer et.al. 30/50 speed limit in Graz; results of the scientific accompanying investigation to the trial model; Abstract, publisher, Municipal Authorities Graz