

# PRESS RELEASE

19 December 2023

## Ground-breaking Warsaw Clean Transport Zone to be introduced following economic and health impact advice from Ricardo

*Ricardo applied its world-leading expertise in air quality modelling and economics to advise the City of Warsaw in its ambition to save lives, improve public health and cut emissions by adopting cleaner transport*

Global strategic environmental and engineering consulting company Ricardo's [clear evidence](#) on the health impacts and economic costs and benefits of tackling transport emissions has resulted in the City of Warsaw voting to adopt the city's first ever Clean Transport Zone in July 2024.

Warsaw is one of the most polluted cities in the European Union. Warsaw has one of the highest vehicle ownership rates (859 per 1,000 people) in Europe and has seen a growing influx of vehicles from outside of the city. Indeed, [every third vehicle in Warsaw is a used car from abroad which emits twice the amount of hazardous gases](#), including nitrogen oxide. The European Environment Agency estimates that in Warsaw 1,900 premature deaths are attributed to nitrogen oxide. Moreover, exposure to air pollution has a health-related cost to society of an estimated 4.2 billion euros every year.

The Warsaw Clean Transport Zone will include the city centre and parts of the central districts: an area of 37 square kilometres or seven percent of the capital's area. Older more polluting vehicles will no longer be allowed to enter the city centre, bringing significant reductions in air pollution and improvements in public health. The scheme will apply to all vehicles entering the city, but to help city residents the council has allowed local car drivers some extra time to comply with the rules.

Ricardo's experts estimated that implementing the Clean Transport Zone in the city could deliver an annual net benefit to Warsaw society valued at 665 million euros (2.9 billion zloty): 12% of the city's annual budget. Greenhouse gas emission reductions are estimated at 756 kilotonnes. Putting a price on health impacts, taking into account mortality rates, morbidity effects, savings in healthcare costs, avoiding lost productivity and the value placed on good health and wellbeing, the overall value of air pollution benefit on human health is estimated at 330 million euros annually.

Ricardo's air quality and economic experts supported the City of Warsaw with the development of its Clean Transport Zone funded through the [Clean Air Fund's](#) Breathe Warsaw programme. The Ricardo team modelled the changes in pollutant concentrations which would result from the various clean transport zone options; assessed the health impacts resulting from these changes in emissions and concentrations; carried out a cost benefit analysis of the different clean transport zone options; and considered how these costs and benefits would be distributed between different social groups and business sectors. A preliminary design of the clean transport zone was then reviewed through a three-month public consultation process, which elicited over 3,000 comments. After reviewing public feedback and analysing Ricardo's reports, the City of Warsaw authorities voted to introduce the scheme from July 2024, but postponed the deadlines for local residents so that owners of vehicles that do not meet the emission standards would have more time to replace them.

The Mayor of Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski said: "The City of Warsaw Council has adopted a resolution on the introduction of a Clean Transport Zone. This solution has been used in hundreds of cities across Europe including London, Paris, Brussels and Barcelona. Its aim is to improve air quality, and thus to care for the health of all of us. Air quality measurements leave no illusions. That is why we must act immediately, because we will suffocate in our cities. The Clean Transport Zone is a gradual change that will last for years (and thus give residents time to adapt to them) and will help our city breathe. We have to reduce air pollution caused by harmful substances which result in a whole range of diseases. Is the right to drive ageing diesel-powered vehicles for a few more years longer to be above the right to health and even life of all residents of a metropolis

with a population of 2 million? I don't think anyone in their right mind would answer this question in the affirmative.”

Guy Hitchcock, Technical Director at Ricardo, said: “Air pollution is the most important environmental health risk of our time. Clean air is not a luxury – it is a human necessity. As internationally renowned air quality experts, we are proud that our analysis has provided compelling evidence for members of the public, businesses and the authorities alike in Warsaw to be able to make informed decisions and take ambitious actions to improve air quality in their city.”

Ends

### **About Ricardo**

Ricardo plc is a global strategic, environmental, and engineering consulting company, listed on the London Stock Exchange. With over 100 years of engineering excellence and employing close to 3,000 employees in more than 20 countries, we provide exceptional levels of expertise in delivering leading-edge and innovative cross-sector sustainable products and solutions. Every day, we enable our customers to solve the most complex and dynamic challenges to help achieve a safe and sustainable world. Visit [www.ricardo.com](http://www.ricardo.com)

### **Media contacts:**

Kathryn Bellamy  
Group Head of Corporate Communications  
Ricardo plc  
Email: [kathryn.bellamy@ricardo.com](mailto:kathryn.bellamy@ricardo.com)  
Telephone: +44(0)7921 941824