

Losing white lines from the road 'cuts speeding' because lack of markers makes drivers more cautious

- Transport for London study showed vehicle speeds fell by up to 13%
- The study was conducted on three routes in the capital
- Removal of white lines has been backed by road safety campaigners

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White lines could be scrubbed out from the centre of urban roads after research showed the move dramatically cut the number of speeding cars.

Transport for London, which controls major roads in the capital, conducted a study on three routes which showed vehicle speeds fell by up to 13 per cent.

The report concluded: 'Centre lines and hatching can provide a psychological sense of confidence to drivers that no vehicles will encroach on 'their' side of the road.



White lines could be scrubbed out from the centre of urban roads after research showed the move dramatically cut the number of speeding cars (stock picture)

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'Centre line removal introduces an element of uncertainty which is reflected in lower speeds.'

TfL says the practice could be expanded to more routes - subject to 'careful analysis of the site to determine if it is appropriate'.

Roads where markings are used to highlight particular hazards, such as approaches to complex junctions, would not be considered.

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Removal of white lines has been backed by road safety campaigners.

Amy Aeron-Thomas, executive director of crash reduction charity RoadPeace, said: 'RoadPeace welcomes the news that white line removal has led to significant speed decreases on 30 mph roads.

'At a time when government is promoting cycling and walking but cutting enforcement budgets, self enforcing measures are key.

'TfL is to be credited with trialling this measure. We look forward to its wider use, including with 20mph roads.'



Removal of white lines has been backed by road safety campaigners, who argue it slows drivers down

Transport for London studied roads which had just been resurfaced.

The most dramatic results were recorded on Seven Sisters Road, in north London, which has a 30mph limit.

The speed of southbound traffic fell by 4.1mph from an average of 32.4mph to 28.3mph - almost 13 per cent - while northbound traffic speeds fell from 31.4mph to 29mph.

The London study follows previous research from the Government's Transport Research Laboratory which concluded there are 'safety benefits' to be gained from removing white lines in 30mph zones.

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Earlier trials by Wiltshire and Norfolk County Councils found that not reinstating white lines after resurfacing led to reductions in collisions causing injury, and in overall vehicle speeds.

A Department for Transport spokesman said: 'Decisions on what type of traffic calming to provide are for local authorities, taking into account local circumstances and road layout. It is for them to decide if removing centre lines is appropriate.'

He added that researchers from the Transport Research Laboratory had concluded that removing white lines 'did help slow traffic but worked best when combined with other measures'.

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