

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR PEDESTRIANISATION AND SHARED PUBLIC SPACES IN THE HISTORIC CENTRE

Gradual traffic calming in the historic centre - Puebla, Mexico

1. DESCRIPTION

The city of Puebla is implementing an urban programme to calm traffic and pedestrianise the streets of the historic centre. Launched on the basis of studies conducted since 2018 and reinforced by new assessments in 2023, the programme is based on gradual interventions ('urban acupuncture') that combine tactical urbanism, the redevelopment of public spaces and the rehabilitation of infrastructure. Its aim is to reduce vehicle speeds, give priority to pedestrians and improve coexistence between different road users.

2. CONTEXT THAT MOTIVATED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRACTICE

The initiative follows a series of problems identified in the historic centre:

- Conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles, residents and commercial activities in narrow, busy streets.
- High levels of motorisation in the centre, with a predominance of cars and public transport at the expense of active mobility.
- Road accidents and deterioration of underground infrastructure.
- Lack of comprehensive approaches and unified technical criteria for urban planning, greenery and the management of public spaces.

3. APPROACH/METHOD

- Initial assessment and identification of strategic streets (2018)
- Mobility studies including a user census: vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists (2023).
- Local 'street-by-street' consultation with residents and business stakeholders prior to implementation, to identify uses and needs.
- Tailored design of interventions based on the characteristics of each street (full pedestrianisation or coexistence).
- Phased implementation through targeted interventions. This began with a nine-month pilot project. Once consolidated, the interventions were extended to the 16 de Septiembre Avenue.
- Continuous adjustments based on experimentation (tactical urbanism): geometric reconfiguration of the road network, access to car parks, reduction of traffic lanes, delivery zones, layout of planters, etc.
- Subsequent regulatory formalisation (2022–2024) through the development of a standard harmonising the urban landscape (2024).



Pedestrianization of Avenida 16 de Septiembre

Stakeholders involved:

- The Secretariat for Mobility and Infrastructure for implementation; the Directorate for the Historic Centre and Cultural Heritage for initial coordination, monitoring and project adjustments through consultation; and the Secretariat for Municipal Administration for social mediation.
- Local stakeholders (residents, shopkeepers, users) were involved throughout the process, from the design phase to implementation.

4. EXPECTED/IMMEDIATE/MEASURABLE EFFECTS

Measurable results

- Reduction in accidents: from 11 incidents in 2022 to 0 in 2026 following the intervention.

Expected outcomes

- Increased pedestrian presence and use of public spaces.
- Improved commercial activity (new businesses and stability of existing ones).
- Greater social ownership of the street, improved coexistence and a greater sense of safety.

Immediate effects

- Extension of the model to other streets in the historic centre.
- Sustainable improvement in road safety and urban quality.
- Consolidation of a model of urban transformation based on learning.
- Reduction in future conflicts thanks to clear regulatory criteria.

5. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Improving quality of life and safety in the historic centre requires rebalancing public spaces in favour of pedestrians and urban life
- Institutional learning can lead to the creation of overarching standards.
- This practice also highlights the importance of a comprehensive, cross-cutting strategy, linking mobility, urban planning, heritage, infrastructure and consultation, to ensure the coherence and sustainability of transformations.



Reduction in the number of traffic lanes on the avenue

FOR MORE INFORMATION :

<https://centrohistorico.pueblacapital.gob.mx/>

