

## Triangle Business Journal

As people flock to the Triangle in droves, many developers are trying to squeeze as many homes into a piece of property as possible.

The team at New Home Inc. is taking a different route. The newly formed company bought 215 acres in Harnett County for \$1.2 million, according to a deed filed Dec. 30. On the land, which sits outside Lillington, the company is planning to build 173 lots with sizes of half an acre to an acre. The project is called Duncan's Creek.

"In Wake County, prices continue to go up and lots keep getting smaller," said [Matt Riley](#), co-owner of New Home. He said areas in outlying counties are becoming more appealing in the age of Covid. "As the Triangle continues to grow – especially when you get into the expansion of 540 and how easy it is to commute in and out of the Triangle and the prominence of remote work – people don't necessarily have to commute into a downtown area into the main employment centers like they once had."

The company plans to break ground this month and start going vertical on the community in the third quarter. He said he isn't sure what the homes will be priced at, but they will range in size between 1,800 to 3,000 square feet with full build out of the community taking three to four years.

Raleigh-based New Home Inc. started just last year and is co-owned by Riley, [Rob Bailey](#), [Rich Sherman](#) and [Rich VanTassel](#). While the company is new to the Triangle, the people are not.

VanTassel founded Royal Oaks Building Group in 2000 and the company grew to become one of the largest homebuilders in the area, ranking No. 5 in the *Triangle Business Journal's* 2017 list of the Triangle's largest residential builders. It [was acquired](#) by Mattamy Homes in 2017.

Bailey said the goal is to build homes in the path of growth, which is spilling out into places like Johnston County and Harnett County.

"Some of these smaller outlying towns like Smithfield and Lillington, they've got a lot of character to them," Bailey said. "They have a lot to offer. We can get into an affordable price range for the consumer."

The new home market in Harnett County has been sizzling lately. Greenfield Communities recently closed on 820 acres on which it plans to [build 2,250 new homes](#). And last year, Dallas-based Reeder Land Development Company announced plans to [build a 940 single-family home community](#) called Matthews Landing



## OPINION AND COMMENTARY

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OPINION

## *GOP senator: I see serious potholes in Gov. Cooper's transportation plan*

BY SEN. VICKIE SAWYER

UPDATED JANUARY 31, 2022 4:15 PM



Republican lawmakers are raising questions about how the state will pay for Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's plan to put more electric vehicles on the roads by 2030. They've asked him to outline a strategy to ensure the state can pay for much-needed bridge and road repairs in coming years. FILE PHOTO



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*Republican lawmakers raised questions last week about how NC will pay for Gov. Roy Cooper's transportation plan. We asked Cooper, a Democrat, and Republican Sen. Vickie Sawyer to address the plan.*

On any given morning, I play with the snooze button, searching for a few more restful minutes before brewing my first cup of coffee and opening my laptop. After returning emails and reading the news I take stock of my day — work appointments, household errands, and making sure our daughter gets to school.

My carefully tailored plans go haywire as soon as I hit the road.

I never know when or how, but at some point, the anxiety-ridden battle of navigating congested traffic begins. It is a race to the next light, or a quick turn out of one lane to another, or a white-knuckled hold on the steering wheel as I see that no one really understands the flow of a zipper merge intersection.

I share this story because it's the same experience for so many other North Carolinians in our growing state.

North Carolina is at a crossroads. The future of transportation is quickly shifting from a reliance on gas-powered vehicles to electric vehicles.

The free market and governmental forces are favoring electric vehicles. That's not necessarily a bad thing. I am a fan of more fuel-efficient and electric vehicles because I want the cleanest environment possible in North Carolina. Plus, let's face it, EVs are just cool.

Gov. Roy Cooper recently announced a goal of getting 1.25 million electric vehicles on the road in North Carolina by 2030. For reference, as of December 2021, there were 24,997 EVs registered in the state. While I support embracing this new technology, we must be realistic about its impact on the DOT's financial picture and what it means for all of us.

What keeps me up at night is the fact that the N.C. Department of Transportation receives nearly 50% of its funding from a tax on gasoline sales. That means as more EVs hit the road the state will have less money to maintain and invest in safe and accessible roads and bridges. Potentially eliminating half of the department's revenue source will have devastating consequences.

The NCDOT is already facing a dire financial situation. In 2017, mismanagement led to the department overspending by \$740 million. That's had a ripple effect on current and future projects that is still playing out in real time.

All over the state, projects that were promised to start a few years ago are being pushed to many years from now. I applaud the new leadership at NCDOT for hitting these challenges head on and working to solve the issues, but the impacts of past mistakes will be felt for decades to come.

When I heard about the governor's goal, I was concerned about what this means for all of us, our state's economic competitiveness, and for our future generations. Due to project delays, inflation, and rising material costs, the NCDOT is already over budget by \$11 billion for future projects. If we want to keep up with the demands of our growing state, we must act now.

The General Assembly has started that process. In the 2021 budget we included an annual transfer of car rental revenue from the General Fund to the Highway Fund. Likewise, existing transportation-related taxes can be dedicated to our roads at no additional cost to taxpayers. However, we must address how EVs, hybrids and other emerging technologies will fairly pay for their use of the roads.

We need to have that hard conversation with the governor, NCDOT, and other stakeholders. We must find real solutions to supplement the loss of revenue as fewer gas-powered vehicles hit the road. We can't let politics get in the way of working together to find a solution.

*Senator Sawyer represents Iredell and Yadkin counties in the N.C. Senate and is chairwoman of the Senate Transportation Committee.*

This story was originally published January 31, 2022 4:30 AM.





## OPINION AND COMMENTARY

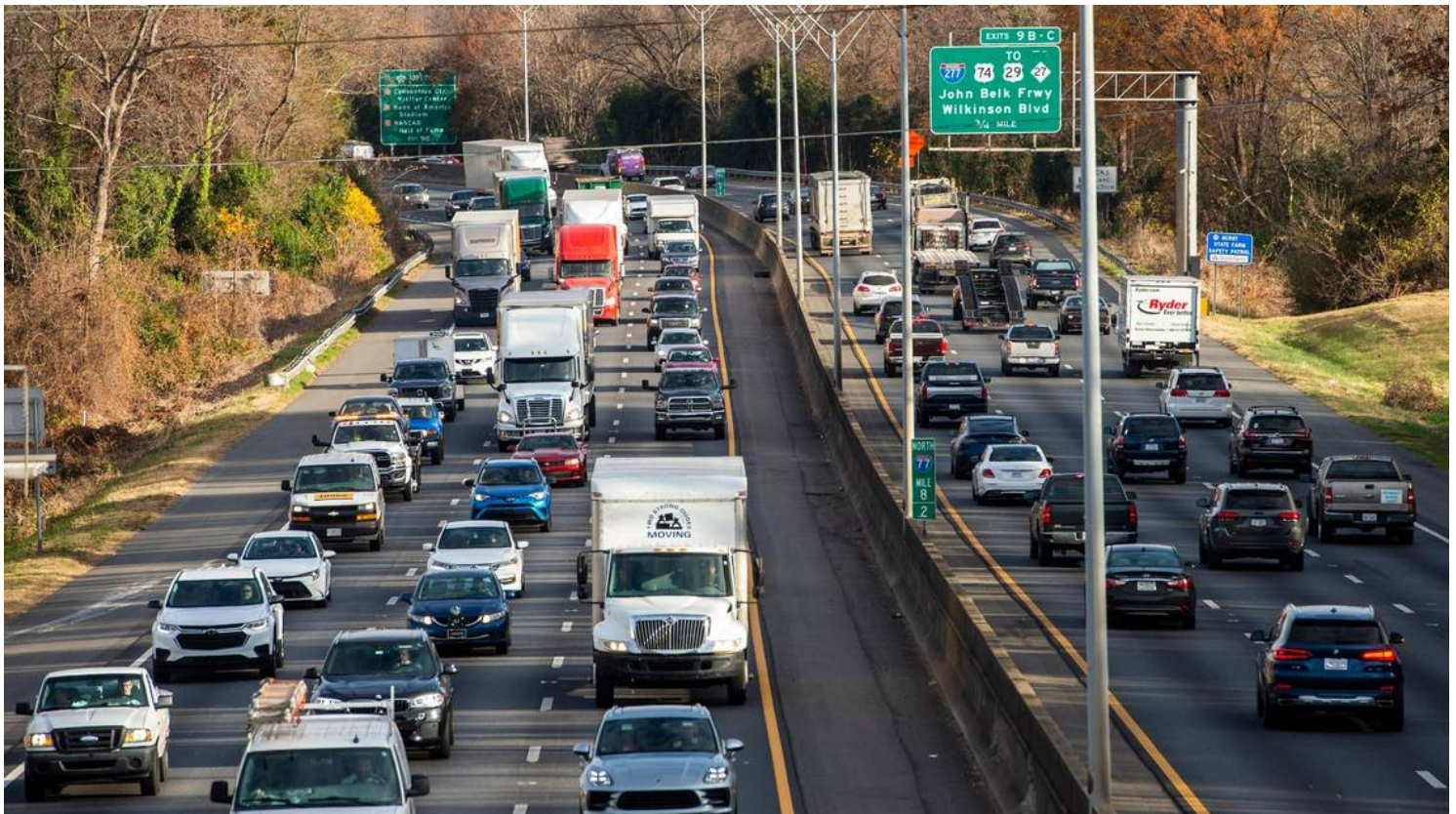
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OPINION

# *Governor: A gas tax in a world that's turning away from gas isn't sustainable*

BY GOV. ROY COOPER

UPDATED JANUARY 31, 2022 4:15 PM



Charlotte traffic on backs up on I-77. Gov. Roy Cooper's recently announced a plan to put more electric vehicles on the roads by 2030, which would decrease gas tax revenues. Republicans want him to outline a strategy to ensure the state can pay for much-needed bridge and road repairs in coming years.

MELISSA MELVIN-RODRIGUEZ [MRODRIGUEZ@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM](mailto:MRODRIGUEZ@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM)



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*Republican lawmakers raised questions last week about how NC will pay for Gov. Roy Cooper's transportation plan. We asked Cooper, a Democrat, and Republican Sen. Vickie Sawyer to address the plan.*

In North Carolina, we're no strangers to the threats posed by climate change and the economic opportunities presented by ever-changing technology. We've watched hurricanes get stronger and floodwaters rise higher. Meanwhile, we see companies find cleaner and cheaper ways to produce electricity and get us from one place to the next.

By embracing the cutting edge of clean energy, we will combat climate change while building a stronger economy that lifts our entire state. We've set ambitious goals, and we're already making progress to meet them.

In 2018, I directed our state to develop a clean energy plan for the power sector. The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality convened public and private stakeholders and experts to craft a plan to reduce carbon emissions and a transition to renewable energy that will produce electricity for our homes and businesses in cheaper and cleaner ways.

That plan led to the bipartisan House Bill 951 that requires our major utility companies to reach a 70% carbon reduction by the year 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2050. By meeting these ambitious goals North Carolina will be a national leader in clean energy, providing affordable, reliable electricity while getting high-paying jobs from companies like Apple, FUJIFILM Dyosynth, Biogen and more that insist on leaving no carbon footprint.

We must build on our progress in the electric power sector by planning for the clean transportation economy that's coming to our country. Everywhere you look, leading auto manufacturers are shifting to electric vehicles. That market transformation is good for our environment and our economy, but we have to be ready for it. Toyota's decision to invest \$1.29 billion in its first electric vehicle



battery plant here is just a start. Both rural and urban North Carolina will benefit from the clean energy economy as long as we keep preparing.



Gov. Roy Cooper signed Executive Order 246 on Jan. 7, 2022, setting a target of a statewide 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The order directed the N.C. Department of Transportation to create a Clean Transportation Plan. Adam Wagner *THE NEWS & OBSERVER*

Earlier this month, I signed Executive Order 246, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions economy-wide and not just in the electric power sector. That means we must take steps to accelerate our state's transition to a clean transportation future, setting the realistic goals of having at least 1.25 million zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) on our roads by 2030 and reducing economy-wide carbon emissions 50% by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

Just as we did with the Clean Energy Plan, we will convene public and private experts and stakeholders to create a Clean Transportation Plan for North Carolina

that will also focus on protecting our most vulnerable communities and seeking environmental justice.

The market is changing quickly. If we want to make, sell, buy or drive new cars here in 10 years, then our transportation infrastructure and policies must change with it.

The Clean Transportation Plan will include strategies to increase equitable access to ZEVs and charging stations, reduce mileage on our highways, enhance the availability of public transit and rail, and advance equity and diversity.

We are also going to need our elected leaders in Raleigh to do their part. Whether due to the resilient rebuilding after violent storms, changes in the way people and goods travel, or the oncoming shift to zero emission vehicles, we know we need to change the way we fund our infrastructure. A gas tax in a world that's turning away from gas isn't sustainable. So the hard work of agreeing to new funding sources as we eliminate the gas tax is critical.

A clean energy economy is good for business and the environment, and we want to make sure it's also fair, sustainable and less costly for all. We owe to our children and grandchildren the opportunities for great paying jobs as well as a planet that will sustain us for generations to come.

*Gov. Cooper is serving his second term as governor.*

This story was originally published January 31, 2022 4:30 AM.



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## International

Dec 11th 2021 edition

## Car wars

## Politicians are sending mixed signals about private car ownership

National leaders are promoting it. Local ones want to curb driving



Dec 11th 2021

MADISON AND PARIS



THE ALLIANT ENERGY CENTRE, a stadium complex in Madison, the capital of Wisconsin, hosts all sorts of events, from exhibitions to concerts. In November it played host to “Mega Monster Trucks Live”, a three-day affair apparently dedicated to choking its attendees, mostly families with small children, with exhaust fumes. The stadium was filled with mud and two large ramps, over which five enormous cars did jumps. “I know we have some big-time monster-truck fans!” called the breathless announcer. At one point an ageing BMW was lifted into the arena for the trucks to crush. A motorcyclist roared in with a bikini-clad model riding pillion, carrying an American flag. Children in ear muffs screamed in delight as the vehicles, with names like “Kamikaze” and “Jailbird”, each a good five metres (16 feet) tall, pulled doughnuts and kicked up mud.

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At shows like this, America's car culture looks as strong as ever. What is more American than owning a giant pickup truck? The vast car park outside the Alliant centre was filled with vehicles such as the Ford F-150, a pickup almost the same size as the M4 Sherman tank used in the second world war. President Joe Biden proudly calls himself a "car guy", and on November 17th was photographed driving an electric Hummer, the civilian version of the Humvee, outside a factory in Michigan. The "Build Back Better" bill being debated in Congress includes hefty tax credits for the purchase of electric cars. Pete Buttigieg, Mr Biden's transportation secretary, sings the praises of electric pickup trucks, including a version of the F-150, as a hardy alternative to petrol for rural Americans.

### Two legs better

And yet American politicians are not all as obsessed with cars as they were. Madison, the liberal college city hosting the monster-trucks rally, boasts about how many of its people walk, take public transport or cycle to work. A series of city leaders elected across America have promised to nudge people out of their cars. For many owning a car is no longer the great aspiration it was. In that, America is gently following a pattern established in Europe for decades, and now accelerating. On both continents city leaders want to reduce car ownership, so as to cut congestion and pollution.

National leaders however tend to want to add to it, to help the car industry. The result is clashing policies, where people are encouraged to buy ever more cars, but find that they are increasingly unable to use them as they would like. Car ownership is becoming political.

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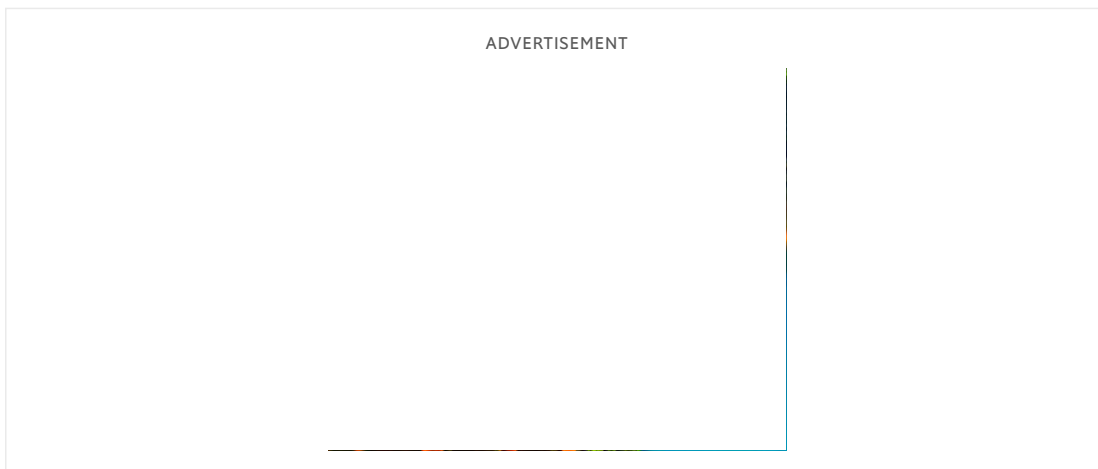
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In New York Eric Adams, the incoming mayor, though famous for flouting parking  
larging in Manhattan at last. In  
or, promises to make several

important bus routes free for the next two years. In Cleveland, Ohio, Justin Bibb, the mayor-elect, promises to put “people over cars”, and to encourage more people to bike and walk, largely by turning traffic lanes into protected bike lanes. Cities as

diverse as Buffalo, New York, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, have begun to ditch “parking minimum” rules, which required developers to provide ample free parking at new buildings. Even in California, a state where driving is practically a way of life, state-assembly members have proposed bills to ban cities from imposing parking minimums near public transport. LA Metro, Los Angeles’s transport authority, is studying congestion pricing.

European cities have been doing this in some cases for decades. London established its congestion charge in 2003. The leading city now is arguably Paris, the capital of France. Under Anne Hidalgo, the socialist mayor, and her predecessor, Bertrand Delanoë, cars were banned from the left and then the right banks of the Seine in 2013 and 2017. On the right bank, an expressway named for Georges Pompidou, who proudly opened it in 1967 when he was prime minister, has been converted into a sort of urban park. Ms Hidalgo, who achieved this despite lawsuits led by the right, called it a “reconquest” of the city for its residents. Bars now line the open sections of the road, while families on bicycles zoom through the eerily quiet (and now unpolluted) tunnels. Ms Hidalgo has been a vocal proponent of “15-minute cities”, the idea that almost everything a person needs for daily life ought to be within a 15-minute walk or cycle.



With public transport closed or discouraged during France’s lockdown, “we did not want people to turn back to their cars,” says Christophe Najdovski, Ms Hidalgo’s deputy in charge of transport. So the city quickly opened more bike lanes. In just a few days in May 2020 they converted 50km of road to exclusive cycle lanes.

Nicknamed “coronapistes” by locals, they can be less pretty than the rest of Paris; crude concrete blocks, soon defaced with graffiti, separate cyclists from motorised traffic. But they worked. When France’s first lockdown ended last summer, there were 60% more cyclists on Paris’s roads than the previous year, and the number has

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## Car-exclusion zones

It is not only Paris. Britain's government gave local councils the power to close roads to create "low-traffic neighbourhoods" (LTNs) without the usual consultations

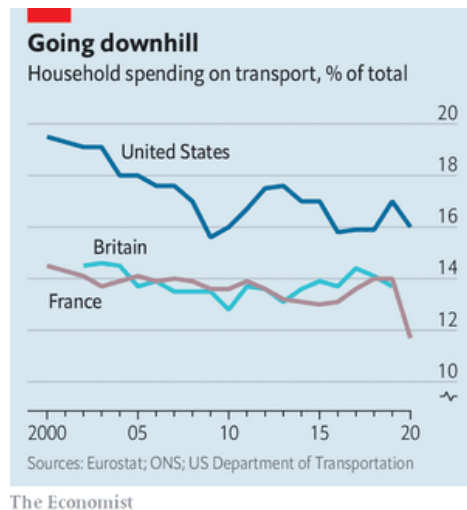
with residents that block them. Planter bollards have proliferated across England's cities, blocking off residential streets to all but bicycles (typically, residents can enter and exit with their cars, but cannot drive through). When lockdowns started, Amsterdam temporarily banned cars from Spuistraat, Haarlemmerdijk, and Haarlemmerstraat, three central boulevards. The change now seems likely to be made permanent. As Glasgow, Scotland's biggest city, played host to COP26 last month, city leaders announced plans to ban all cars from the centre over the next five years, in the hope of reducing carbon-dioxide emissions. In New York City, as in many places, street parking was converted into outdoor dining space, so that restaurants could stay open. Chicago has unveiled plans for a further 160km of segregated cycle lanes.

Such policies work. From 2001 to 2019 car ownership in Paris dropped from 60% of households to 35%. But they are not always popular. Drivers, especially those who live in the suburbs, feel assaulted by urban policies intended to keep them out. In France, although the changes made in Paris are generally popular, a congestion charge is almost impossible, says Mr Najdovski. The national government, which would have to approve it, is still shaken by the *gilet jaune* (yellow vest) protests that began in 2018 against a proposal by President Emmanuel Macron to raise the cost of petrol. In New York City congestion-charging proposals have also been stalled by the state assembly and then the federal government, even though the state governor and the city's mayors were in favour. In London, the expansion of LTNs, and a charge levied on polluting older cars, have led to protests and vandalism.

In general, for national politicians, supporting car ownership is good politics. Car owners tend to be older, and older people vote more. In America the poorest fifth of the population spend 29% of their post-tax income on transport, almost all of it on buying and running their cars, and even the richest fifth still spend around 10%. In countries with first-past-the-post voting systems, such as Britain and America, they are also more likely to live in swing neighbourhoods, such as suburbs, whereas people who drive less live in the centre of cities, which are usually politically safer.

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The cost of running a car has in many countries actually been falling (see chart). Britain's Conservative government has put off planned increases in petrol taxes every single year for over a decade. The federal government's gas tax in America was last raised in 1993. On November 23rd Joe Biden declared he would release oil from the strategic reserve, so as to lower petrol prices, which have climbed by 55% since last year. Electric cars are likely to prove even cheaper to run.

And yet a growing number of drivers believe that there is what Rob Ford, the crack-cocaine-smoking former mayor of Toronto, called in 2010 "a war on cars". Some of this is deluded. In America some on the right have spread the idea that a secret UN "Agenda 21" has called for a ban on private cars. In Britain Piers Corbyn, a conspiracy theorist who believes covid-19, vaccines and global warming are all hoaxes, has promoted a campaign for drivers to break London's new rules on driving. But much is motivated by actual city policies. In Germany *Bild*, a feisty tabloid, lambasts a culture that is "against the car and people who rely on four wheels". In Britain the *Daily Mail* has run a long campaign against LTNS and cycle lanes, arguing that they cause traffic jams and increase pollution.

### Driving on the right

That may reflect the politics of car ownership. In Britain analysis of exit polls from the 2019 election showed that car owners were more likely than non-owners to vote Conservative by a margin of 17 percentage points, while Labour had a similar lead among non-owners. In America a study by Stanford University, using data gathered from Google Street View images, found that if saloon cars outnumber pickup trucks in driveways, there is an 88% probability a city will vote Democrat at a presidential election; if the reverse is true, there is an 82% chance it will go Republican. Polling for Strategic Vision, a consultancy, in 2017 showed that Republicans are roughly eight times as likely as Democrats to drive heavy-duty pickup trucks.

the first place. Young people are driving less. In America in 1983, 92% of 20- to 24-year-olds had a driving licence. By 2017, that had fallen to 79%. The median age of a new car buyer is now 53. In Germany between 1998 and 2013 car-ownership rates fell for all ages under 40, but rose sharply among those aged over 65. Young people are more likely to live in cities, and to prefer public transport (possibly because they can still use their phones).

Eventually, this may mean fewer cars on the roads. For now, however, despite automotive bosses' fears of "peak car", car ownership continues to rise. And as it does, the rules of the road are sure to become more controversial. Over the next two decades, the amount of time wasted in traffic in Britain is likely to increase by 50%, according to a study by the Tony Blair Institute, a think-tank, in August. But it spotted "a huge opportunity to rethink our relationship with our cars and the incentives we put around their use". This would be the introduction of road-pricing, ie, charging tolls to use almost all urban roads. Mayors struggling with air pollution and constant traffic jams will almost certainly agree. National leaders, who need to court the older, petrolhead, vote will probably think the opposite. ■

*This article appeared in the International section of the print edition under the headline "Car wars"*

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## Middle East &amp; Africa

Jan 15th 2022 edition

Make way

## Why more Arabs are embracing pedal power

Cars still dominate, but cycling is growing more popular



Getty Images

Jan 13th 2022

TUNIS



THE DOZENS of cyclists winding past the colonial architecture in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, are an intriguing sight. They ring their bells and let out cheers. Vélorution wants people to know when it is on the move—and wants cars to give its members space. The group, and others like it, are trying to carve fresh paths for cyclists through the crowded roadways of the Middle East and north Africa.

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transport for the poor. Those with  
Most others prefer trams and

They face plenty of obstacles. The number of cyclists may be increasing in the Arab world, but so is the number of cars. The development of new infrastructure has not kept up, leading to hours-long traffic jams—and thus dirtier air. When the cars are moving, the situation is often unsafe for cyclists. According to the World Bank, road accidents are a leading cause of death in the Middle East and north Africa.

Until recently, Arabs had little reason to give up their cars. In Beirut, for example, most trips are within a reasonable cycling distance, but Lebanese could get cheap loans to buy cars and fuel was heavily subsidised. This is changing. Mired in an economic crisis, the Lebanese now face long queues at petrol stations, which are often short of supply. The government, like many in the region, has cut fuel subsidies. Cycling, all of sudden, seems like a less hassle some alternative.

<https://www.bbc.com/middle-east-and-africa/2022/01/13/why-more-arabs-are-embracing-pedal-power>

the young crown prince of Dubai, posts pictures of himself cycling on Instagram. The UAE, which hosts professional races, has many kilometres of cycling track.

Egypt does not, but President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi has called on his people to take up cycling. One reason: studies by the World Bank and others have found that traffic congestion costs Egypt a significant chunk of GDP each year.

There are other reasons, too. Health-care costs are rising across the Arab world, where obesity and its associated ailments, such as diabetes, are a costly problem. Cars are a big source of greenhouse-gas emissions and air pollution. Ditching four wheels for two would improve all of this. Covid-related lockdowns gave Arabs a sense of what more cyclist-friendly streets would be like. Many enjoyed it. ■

*This article appeared in the Middle East & Africa section of the print edition under the headline "Make way"*

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