

Designing for Safe Speeds

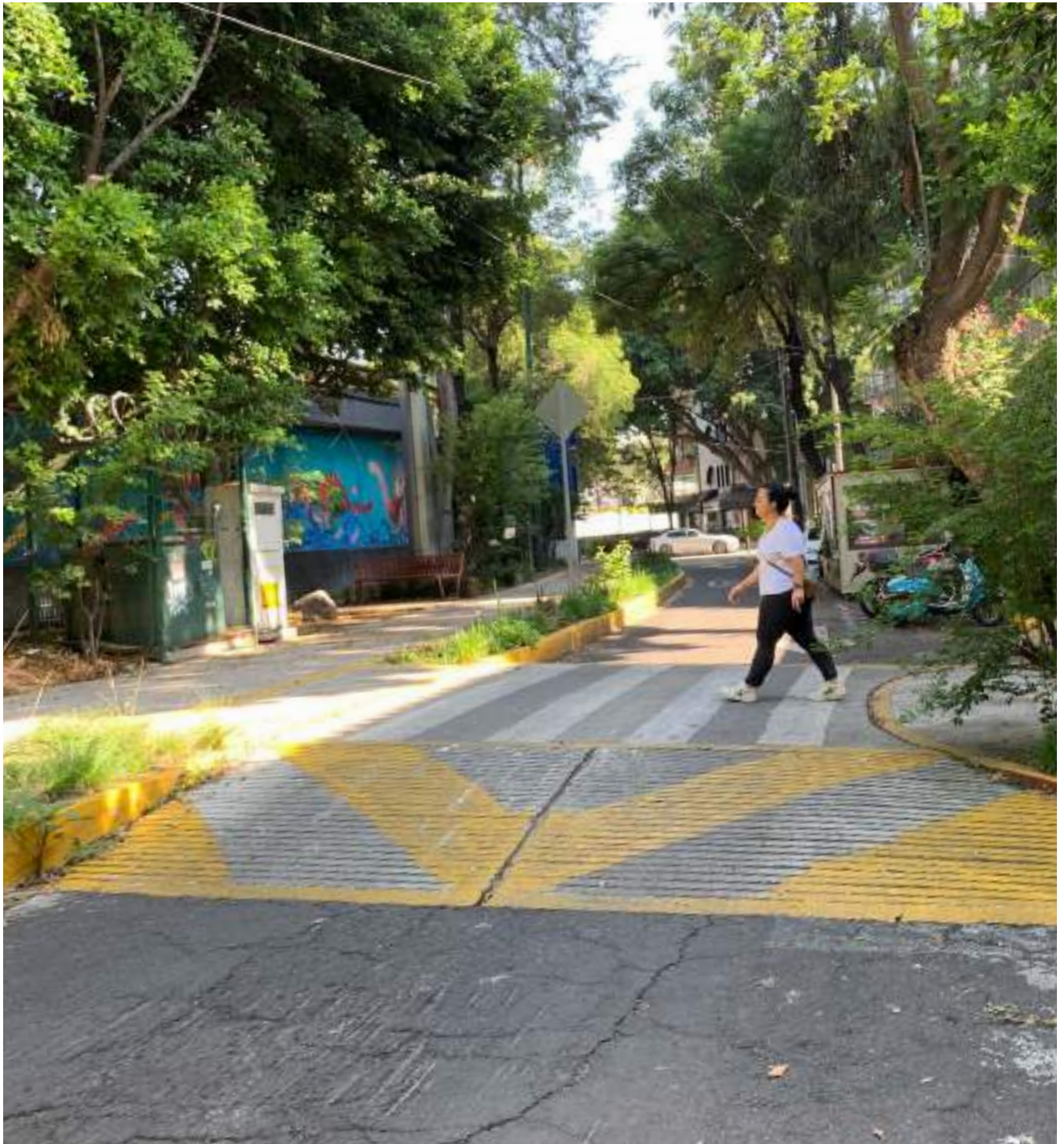


Global Designing Cities Initiative

Designing for Safe Speeds



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The Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI) focuses on the critical role of streets within urban environments around the world. The organization is committed to sharing industry best practices, facilitating peer-to-peer mentoring, and fostering regular communication. The GDCI facilitates the exchange of ideas to help a variety of stakeholders shape streets to promote public health and safety, quality of life, multimodal mobility, economic development, environmental sustainability, and equity. GDCI believes that by working together, cities can save time and money, share lessons learned, scale up best practice implementation, and more effectively achieve their policy goals and objectives.

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Foreword



This guide details the designs and innovative strategies cities can use to build safe-speed principles into every street.

Designing Streets for the Speed of Life

For most of the last century, city streets around the world have been designed not to support the many ways that people get around but to move as many cars and trucks around as quickly as possible. Building wider lanes and increasing speed limits led only to more traffic congestion and more dangerous streets. Nearly 1.2 million people die in traffic crashes each year, and a small difference in speed can mean the difference between life and death: A person struck by a vehicle at 30 km/h (20 mph) likely to survive, while a person struck at 50 km/h (30 mph) is likely to die.

A strong movement of city planners, traffic engineers and local communities are now organizing around the principle that predicting and preventing traffic deaths is an urgent, actionable public health strategy. And it starts with speed.

Designing for Safe Speeds is the next chapter in this story. This guide details the designs and innovative strategies cities can use to build safe-speed principles into every street. Building on the impact of the globally regarded Global Street Design Guide and upon real-world achievements in 86 pioneering cities from every continent, this guide offers the proven, adaptable solutions that cities need to build streets to operate at the speed of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Janette Sadik-Khan'.

Janette Sadik-Khan
Principal, Bloomberg Associates
Permanent Chair, Global Designing Cities Initiative
Former Commissioner of the New York City
Department of Transportation

About the Guide

Designing for Safe Speeds supplements GDCI's *Global Street Design Guide* (GSDG), which sets a new global standard for designing urban streets that prioritize people. This guide builds on the existing GDCI publications on holistic street design and emphasizes speed management, one of the most critical factors in reducing traffic violence and saving lives. In line with GDCI work it maintains a comprehensive approach to help cities create safer, more livable streets for everyone. Though it can be used as a stand-alone document, *Designing for Safe Speeds* is best applied in combination with the GSDG, as it references key principles from the original guide, alongside other GDCI resources. Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, this document will inspire leaders, inform practitioners, and empower communities to advocate for and implement changes in streets and networks towards safe speeds, while helping achieve cleaner air, increased mobility, more physical activity, and other sustainability and livability goals.

This guide aims to:

- Highlight the life-saving and social impact of designing streets for safe speeds.
- Promote safer, more people-centered streets by addressing speed and car dominance through practical strategies.
- Share tools, strategies, examples of street designs, and case studies from around the world that can be adapted to local contexts.
- Provide clear speed management recommendations through effective street design and operational solutions for urban contexts.

Increasing the speed limit or expanding road capacity for private vehicles does not lead to efficient or quick transportation for people in cities. In fact, wider lanes and excessive space allocated for cars often create induced demand, which can result in congestion during peak hours and provide more opportunities for speeding during off-peak times.

This publication shares aspirational examples of street transformations, acknowledging that cities may not always have the budget or resources to implement everything at once. Many strategies can be phased or staged over time, allowing gradual improvements while still working toward broader safety and urban design goals.

Implementing safer speed limits and promoting an equitable distribution of space among different modes of transport can enhance overall livability in cities, open up a range of design possibilities, and save lives.