

Houston Style Magazine

Paris' famous Champs-Élysées set for green transformation

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By Jack Guy, CNN

(CNN) -- One of the most famous avenues in Paris, the Champs-Élysées, is set for a facelift that will see it transformed into a green, pedestrian-friendly space, after Mayor Anne Hidalgo gave the go-ahead for a major renovation project.

The thoroughfare, one of the world's most famous shopping streets, accommodates eight lanes of traffic as it runs between the Arc de Triomphe and the Place de la Concorde.

Under the new plans drawn up by architect Philippe Chiambaretta and his agency, PCA-STREAM, vehicle traffic will be reduced by half, while pedestrians will be able to enjoy wider sidewalks and more greenery in what the agency calls "planted 'living rooms.'"

The transformation is aimed at attracting more visitors to an area that, pre-pandemic, had begun to lose its upscale luster particularly after sometimes violent demonstrations by so-called "gilet jaune" anti-government demonstrators.

The Champs-Élysées committee, a local association that works to promote and develop the area, celebrated the news in a statement Sunday following Hidalgo's announcement in an interview with French newspaper Le Journal du Dimanche.

"The mythical avenue has lost its splendor over the last 30 years," the committee, which began working on proposals to overhaul the area three years ago, said.

"It has been progressively abandoned by Parisians and has suffered a number of crises: the gilets jaunes, strikes, the health and economic crisis," said the committee in the statement.

Reinventing Paris

More than two-thirds of pedestrian traffic comes from tourists, according to PCA-STREAM, with Parisians making up just 5% of total traffic.

In the statement the committee said it celebrates the decision, which shows the town hall "seems to want to make the total renovation of the Champs-Élysées one of the standout urban projects of this decade."

Hidalgo said the first stage of the project will involve the renovation of the Place de la Concorde, which will take place before Paris hosts the 2024 Summer Olympic, and the rest of the avenue will be completed after the games.

A spokesperson for Paris town hall told CNN that further details of the plan will be announced next week.

Paris authorities are also working on a wider revitalization plan ahead of the 2024 Olympics.

Abandoned, disused and outdated spaces will be given a second life as new dining destinations, themed hotels, museums and leisure hotspots.

Some of the projects were hand-picked under the city's urban renewal campaign "Reinventing Paris," which first launched in 2014. They include a major cleanup of the Seine river and the greening of the Eiffel Tower.