

Amsterdam low emission zone for light vehicles canceled

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Amsterdam dropped plans to keep out the most polluting delivery vans from its city centre. Research has shown that the environmental benefits would be less than expected.

[N176 Image 1](#)

The Dutch and environmental zones, or low emission zones (LEZs), don't seem to go together well. The Netherlands' capital Amsterdam, once prone to keep out highly polluting vehicles, delivery vans as well as passenger cars, has now completely abandoned such plans. The LEZ will be upheld for heavy delivery vehicles though.

Earlier plans to keep out all passenger vehicles produced before 1992 met with strong opposition from the Dutch Ministry of Transport. By denying access to the national vehicle registry, needed to determine a vehicle's year of production, the Minister *de facto* blocked the plan.

To the brink

Although the plans for passenger vehicle LEZs were already ditched at an earlier stage, they were still upheld for delivery vans. A scheme to keep delivery vans produced before the year 2000 away from various city centres made it to the brink of implementation. Dutch research institute TNO has calculated the expected emission reduction of the planned scheme. We haven't been able to lay our hands on the report yet, but [other media](#) (Dutch) report that NOx emissions from newer delivery vans, produced between 2000 and 2006, are "higher than such emissions from pre-2000 vans". The environmental benefits would therefore be less than expected and in the case of NOx even turn out to be negative.

[N162 Image 2](#)

Based on this report, the Dutch Minister for the Environment, Ms Cramer, has announced to postpone the introduction of LEZs for the time being. Today, the Amsterdam City Council followed suit.

Take side

Yet, NOx is one thing, soot is another. Most older delivery vans emit more soot than newer ones. In another statement, TNO [claims](#) (Dutch) that "from a health perspective, introduction of environmental zones appears to be sensible. Soot particles are most probably more health-threatening than other small particles."

Let's wait until we have seen the full TNO report ourselves, before we take side.

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