

Moscow Pledges \$83 Billion To Fight City's Massive Traffic Jams

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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City Hall has pledged to commit 2.9 trillion rubles (\$83 billion) through 2020 on resolving Moscow's infamously troublesome transportation issues, which Mayor Sergei Sobyenin has declared the capital's "most acute problem."

About a fifth of Muscovites spend more than three hours a day in transit, an "unacceptable" situation, Deputy Mayor Maxim Liksutov, the head of the city's transportation department, was quoted as saying during a session of the city government last week at which he announced the new spending plan.

The city has only one foolproof way to lessen the burden, Liksutov said: "We must encourage citizens to use public transport for everyday trips and to use their private automobiles more sensibly."

To this end, Moscow will put its transit development program, which previously extended through 2016, into hyperdrive. At the same meeting, Sobyenin reiterated that Moscow will gain 130 kilometers of new subway lines by 2020, on top of the 25 kilometers built since 2011. Meanwhile, as part of the souped-up plan, 400 kilometers of road will be re-built, 240 kilometers of new railroad connections will appear in the city and surrounding regions, and passengers will finally be able to climb aboard the Moscow Ring Railway — a revamped Soviet-era freight line, which will be used to connect suburban trains with the Moscow metro.

Along with improving conditions on public transit, the city has to make travel by car a highly expensive choice, said transportation expert Mikhail Blinkin, who participated in developing the current version of the development plan. "Moscow can never be a happy car-oriented city, like Los Angeles or San Francisco," Blinkin said, adding, "promises of pleasant driving must be completely removed from the city authorities' lexicon." The city made significant progress in this direction with the introduction of paid parking last year but still has a long way to go, he added.

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