

Paris environmental sustainability

From Eiffel Tower selfies to walks in Montmartre, there are many reasons Paris is one of the most-visited cities in the world. Tourists can't get enough of the Louvre museum, the Arc de Triomphe or Notre-Dame Cathedral.

But there is another, less-chic facet of the French capital that cannot be overlooked: Congested boulevards, street noise and trash. Such unpleasant realities are a thorn in the side of many Parisians.

Fortunately, there are an increasing number of sustainable initiatives in the city which aim to combat this --from industrial areas turned into parks to apps that promote walking instead of tourist buses.

Sustainability initiatives in Paris extend to the world of fashion --the city's many second-hand clothing stores--many are located in the Marais district in the city center--garments easily find new owners. Meanwhile, in the city's 18th arrondissement to the north, the Recyclerie eco-culture project is situated in the former Ornano train station.

"The building was the former station of the Petite Ceinture, the predecessor of the M?tro," says Marie-Eugenie Chanvillard, director of Recyclerie, which started in 2014 with the mission of promoting eco-responsibility and social justice. "The station has been used in different ways over the years, including as a bank. We wanted to keep the space and remind people of the station's past," she said.

The Petite Ceinture was a 32-kilometer (19 mile) circular rail line that ran around Paris. In 2007, a first section was made into a pedestrian area, and others followed. Over the years, nature has started to take over and the tracks became a thriving green space-- and now one that has been developed for public use.

In France, "Recycleries" refer to places where non-functional equipment is repaired and resold. As the name suggests, the Recyclerie still has a workshop where broken items can be repaired.

The sustainability theme is complemented with a cafeteria, urban gardens and even the sale of organic food and natural wine. The old tracks are now a cozy public courtyard, while there's also a vegetable garden with a chicken coop in the space's urban farm.

The Recyclerie is not the only place in Paris where a train track has been converted into an outdoor space for people to enjoy. The Coulee verte Rene-Dumont is a four-kilometer-long elevated park on a disused railroad line that begins near the Place de la Bastille in the city's center.

It's unsurprising that converted train tracks should find a new use. Train lines have a special place in the French capital, especially considering the city's main means of transportation is the Metro. Despite what

heavy traffic on the streets might suggest, Paris has an extensive public transportation network that is constantly being expanded. It connects the city's suburbs with the center.

In recent years, however, some Parisians have switched to riding bikes for their work commute, making use of the bicycle lane network that continues to be expanded. The Rue de Rivoli between the Louvre and the Bastille, for example, was converted into a bike lane just three years ago.

In preparation for the 2024 Olympics, the city of Paris is also planning several environmentally conscious changes to the city's busiest squares, including the Place de la Nation. The administration hopes to reduce traffic in tourist hotspots and provide more space for pedestrians. The area around the Eiffel Tower, for example, will be expanded and landscaped.

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