

## Brussels Bans Horse Carriage Rides - Will New York Be Next?

From [Amy Jones, SpeciesUnite.com](https://www.speciesunite.com)

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*Brussels will stop using horse-drawn carriages in January 2024 and switch to animal-free electric alternatives.*



Brussels has become the latest city to ban horse-drawn carriages, with legislation coming into effect in January 2024. In a move to promote animal welfare, the Belgian capital will replace these carriages with animal-free electric alternatives, according to authorities.

Horse-drawn carriage rides around Brussels currently attract 15,000 tourists yearly, with this service offered by a single operator, Thibault Danthine, and three horses who have been working continuously for more than ten years.

"I've been fighting for four years for the horses that ride around the city centre with tourists. It was hard to see the animals lugging tourists around every day," said Zoubida Jellab, Alderman for Animal Welfare in Brussels. "Sometimes they only had a five-minute break between two rides. In these temperatures, it's even more difficult."

Jellab said that the switch from horses to electric vehicles will not result in any loss of business for the operator, with current schedules kept in place. The three new carriages will look almost identical, just without the horse.

Fabian Maingain, the alderman for Economic Affairs in Brussels, highlighted the innovative approach of introducing electronic carriages: "This will allow Brussels to offer something that is

respectful of the environment, respectful of the heritage setting of our city centre, but at the same time to have a certain modernity, this will differentiate Brussels from other European cities.”

### **Changing Times**

In cities across the world, animal activists have been advocating for the ban on horse-drawn carriages, citing the harmful impact of the urban environment on the health of these animals, from joint problems caused by the hard roads to the risk of respiratory diseases due to exhaust fumes.



In 2020, Chicago became the largest city in the United States to implement a ban on horse-drawn carriage rides, which came into effect in 2021. Following a horse's death during a tour in 2018, Montreal also enforced a similar ban in 2020.

Meanwhile, Melbourne is set to prohibit this practice from its central business district, and Palma is planning to emulate this move by replacing all horse-drawn carriages with electric ones by 2024. Additionally, Prague is set to prohibit the two most popular horse-drawn carriage stands situated in the city's tourist hubs, Old Town Square and Stromovka Park, by the end of this year.

### **Will New York Be Next?**

Last summer, a video of a carriage horse collapsing on a sidewalk in New York went viral, sparking outrage around the world against the controversial practice.

The video clips from concerned onlookers showed the carriage horse, Ryder, being whipped and hit by his owner while the horse was in a collapsed state. Ryder was euthanized a few months later.

A veterinarian's exam revealed that he was malnourished, sick, and elderly, according to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

This tragic event led to the introduction of Ryder's Law, by New York City Council member Robert Holden of District 30, which, if enacted, would ban horse-drawn carriages in the city and replace them with electric carriages.

"They're literally treated as machines, and they're not machines," says Edita Birnkrant, executive director of New Yorkers for Clean, Livable, and Safe Streets (NYCLASS), a local group who are campaigning for a ban on horse carriages in the city. "This shouldn't be happening in modern-day New York City."

Despite 71 percent of New Yorkers supporting the ban, counselors have yet to take action and modernize the industry.