

# *Streets for people or roads for cars: How low cost changes can reap big benefits*

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# Plan

1. Form and function of streets
2. Traffic and social interaction
3. Study 1: Creating a 'temporary' people street
4. Study 2: Place for bumping and gathering
5. Study 3: Changing opinions
6. Investing in cycling infrastructure
7. Summary

# What is the purpose of residential streets?

- A place for vehicles?
  - Movement
  - Parking
- Or a place for people
  - That can create and/or enhance community
- Streets not roads!

# Traffic and community



- Donald Appleyard

# Social Interactions on Three Streets - Neighboring and Visiting



Traffic levels: 16,000, 8,000 and 2,000 vehs per day

Figure 1: This image shows how community ties can actually be knit together by a street that is livable and inviting — or torn apart when auto traffic noise, pollution, and threats dominate the street environment.

Source: Figure 3, page 21, *Livable Streets*, Donald Appleyard, University of California Press, 1981.

# Christchurch research

Wiki J, Kingham S & Banwell K, 2018, *Re-working Appleyard in a low density environment: An exploration of the impacts of motorised traffic volume on street livability in Christchurch, New Zealand*. World Transport Policy and Practice Volume 24, 1, 60-68.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/619593021331d42c0b62a1c6/t/62e19f3c72c389412ab3a1bc/1658953537658/wtpp24.1.pdf>

LIGHT (< 500 vpd)



5.1 average connections

“We have **great neighbours** and live in a **safe street**”  
“I **enjoy talking with my neighbours**”

MODERATE (1400-2500 vpd)



5.9 average connections

“Most people get out and about and **talk on the street**”  
“**Family-orientated and friendly**”

HEAVY (8,400-14,000 vpd)



2.1 average connections

“My street is **a car thoroughfare**”  
“Lived here over 35 years, a **decline in people talking to neighbours and children playing**”

# Dilemma 1





And then a street .....



Was closed to through traffic .....



... and became a people street



... and a play street



... and surprisingly ...



... and a social street



# Study 1: Creating a 'temporary' people street

Journal of Transport & Health 18 (2020) 100872



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Journal of Transport & Health

journal homepage: <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jth>

Streets for transport and health: The opportunity of a temporary road closure for neighbourhood connection, activity and wellbeing

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jth.2020.100872>

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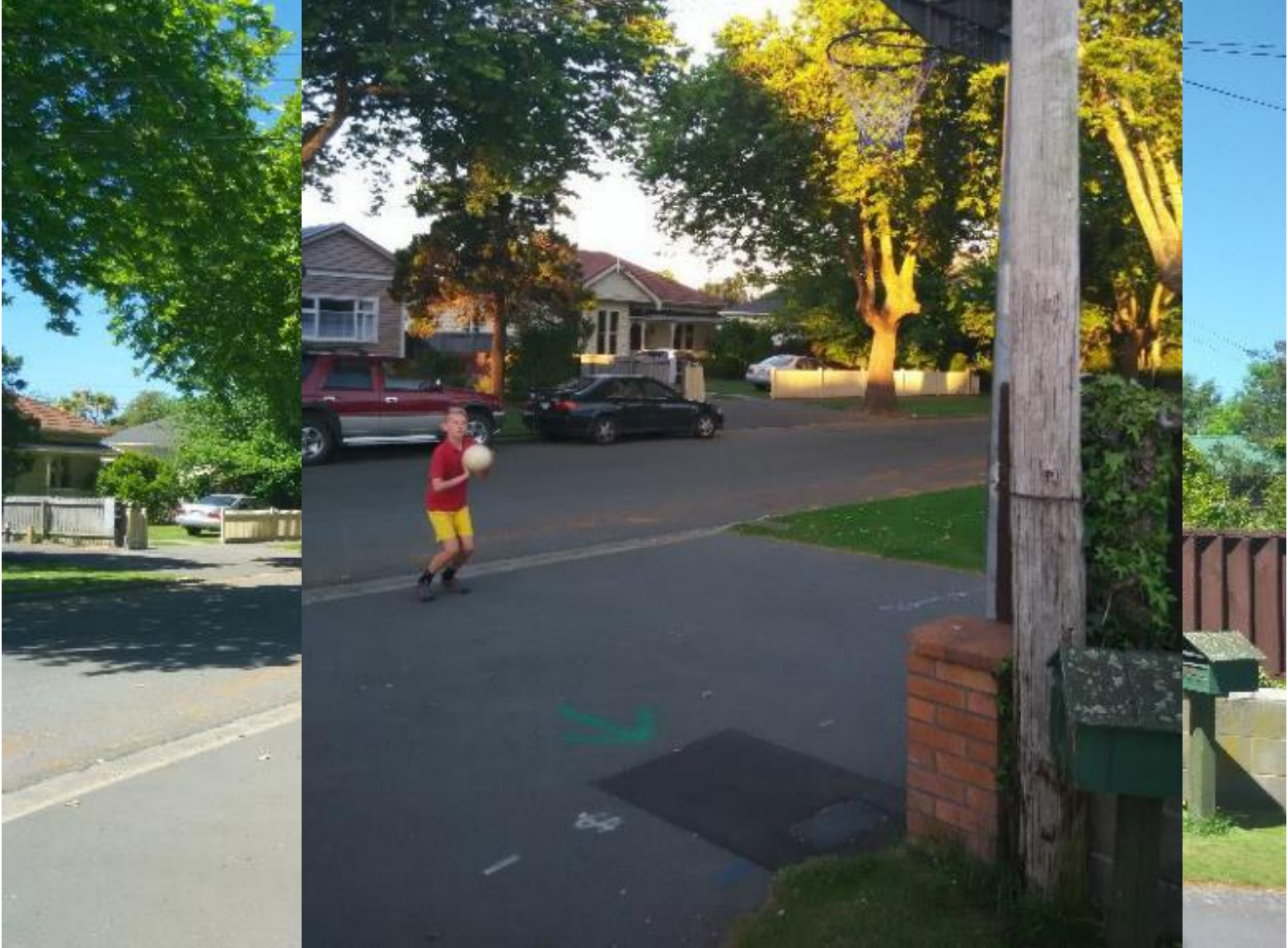
# What we found

- *When closed to through traffic, the street was used as a **place of recreation**.*
- *Residents got to know their neighbours **better & reported increased active travel***
- *Residents supported a permanent **closure of the street to through traffic***
- *Wellbeing **benefits of restricting vehicle access outweigh inconvenience disbenefits***

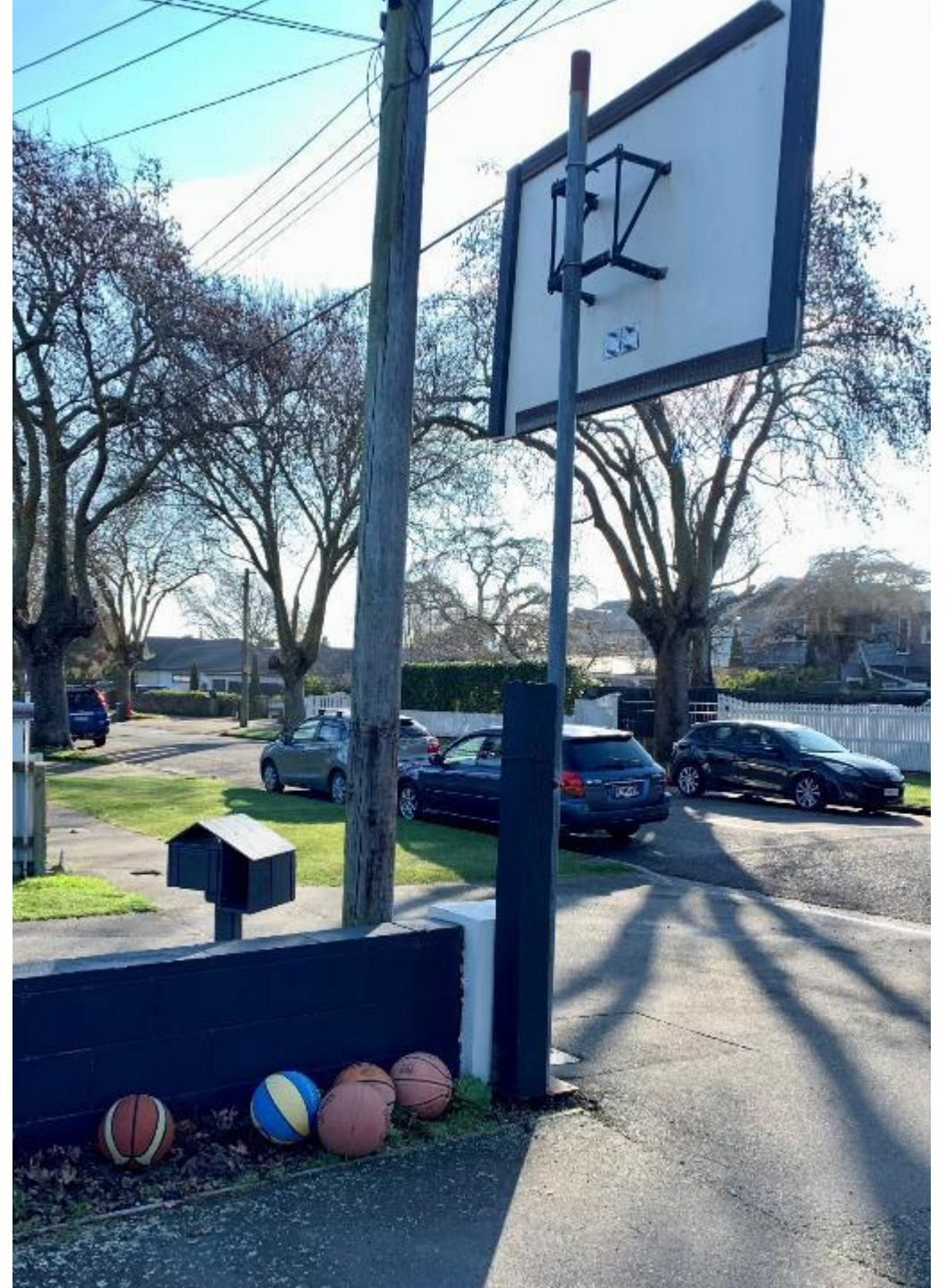
## Dilemma 2



# A solution











# Study 2: Places for bumping and gathering

Wellbeing, Space and Society 4 (2023) 100124



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

## Wellbeing, Space and Society

journal homepage: [www.sciencedirect.com/journal/wellbeing-space-and-society](http://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/wellbeing-space-and-society)

## Living well in your local neighbourhood: The value of bumping and gathering places

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*School of Earth and Environment, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand*

# What we found

- *Bumping & gathering places are valuable for the **social interactions of people** within a neighbourhood*
- ***Seeing others is important for local conviviality** especially for the young, the elderly, & people not in full time employment or who work alone & do not have access to a car.*
- *Walkable neighbourhoods increase the chance of **seeing people** who live near & contribute to weak ties that can **promote wellbeing & a sense of belonging**.*
- *Urban design can **promote health & wellbeing** through bumping & gathering places to enhance simple social interaction.*

# Bumping spaces

e.g. Vancouver



## Bumping spaces

e.g. Christchurch (Alan Jamieson)



# Prioritising people



# More life etc



# More life etc



# Barcelona Superblocks



More:

- social space
- play space
- green space



# Not just Barcelona - Berlin



# Christchurch



# Auckland

<https://content.aucklanddesignmanual.co.nz/resources/case-studies/street-fort-street-precinct/Documents/ADM%20Case%20Study%20Fort%20Street%20Precinct%20Auckland.pdf>



<https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/home-property/72930841/shared-space-lifts-fort-street>

# Vietnam



Not new



# Streets for people



# Streets for people



# Study 3: Changing Opinions

- Public submissions on street re-designs
- Interviews with submitters, after street changes implemented
- People don't like the thought of street changes
- But afterwards many are more positive!
- Trials can be good
- But people want better consultation!



South Express Cycleway



Quarrymans Cycleway



Aranui Streets Project

# Fuel price increases and cycling

- More people cycling is good for multiple reasons
  - Physical health
  - Mental health
  - Greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution
  - Cheap to deliver
  - Cheap to use

Public transport fares waived in two Australian states to combat rising fuel costs <https://news.sky.com/story/public-transport-fares-waived-in-two-australian-states-to-combat-rising-fuel-costs-13525726>

**Labor cuts fuel excise for three months, saving Australians 26c a litre on petrol and diesel** <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2026/mar/30/labor-to-halve-fuel-excise-on-petrol-and-diesel-for-three-months-after-national-cabinet-meeting>

**Canberrans encouraged to consider alternative transport options amid fuel price hike** <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-03-23/act-electric-vehicles-public-transport-petrol-cost-of-living/106487188>

# Study 4: Barriers to cycling

- Main barrier to people not choosing to cycle is perceived safety
- To encourage people to cycle, we need to separate from fast moving traffic

- Kingham, S., Taylor, K., & Koorey, G. (2011). Assessment of the type of cycling infrastructure required to attract new cyclists.

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/research/reports/449/docs/449.pdf>



<https://nzta.govt.nz/walking-cycling-and-public-transport/cycling/cycling-standards-and-guidance/cycling-network-guidance/cycle-network-and-route-planning-guide/principles/people-who-cycle>

# Cycleways & house prices

- Cycleways perceived to lower house prices
  - But they don't
- US studies: Positive or no impact
  - <http://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020926034>
  - <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2025.104146>
- Christchurch
  - *“Cycleway density has a positive effect on house prices city-wide. This opposes the view of local homeowners who oppose cycleway infrastructure development”.*
  - Developers and real estate agents also think they have an adverse impact, but happily use proximity to cycleways in their house marketing
    - <https://hdl.handle.net/10092/107826>

# Cycleways & business

- Cycleways perceived the harm business
  - But they don't
  - Cycle schemes routinely deliver high \$\$ value
    - <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74ad3aed915d7ab83b5a59/value-of-cycling.pdf>
- Cyclists spend more
  - Christchurch: *“cyclists spending the most retail dollars followed by those driving and those walking”*
    - <https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/content/dam/uoc-main-site/documents/pdfs/d-other/geography-repository/GEOG309-15-Travel-modes-and-expenditure-patterns---South-Colombo.pdf>
- Business near/on cycleways do well
  - <https://sydney.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/The-business-case-for-walking-and-cycling.pdf>
- *The mystery of the killer bike lane*

WELLINGTON September 10, 2024

# The mystery of the killer bike lane



**Joel MacManus**

Wellington editor

Wellington

- *A chain of three cafes closed down and the owner blamed cycleways.*
- *But none of the cafes were anywhere near one.*

<https://thespinoff.co.nz/wellington/10-09-2024/the-mystery-of-the-killer-bike-lane#>

# Summary

- Streets not just for cars
- Streets can encourage social interaction
  - e.g. bumping and gathering
- Streets can enhance community
- People like ‘people-friendly’ streets
  - e.g. low speed, low traffic, less cars etc
- But people don’t like change
  - But they don’t mind it after it has happened ... and often like it
    - Trials can help
  - But they want to be consulted (properly... and feel listened to)
- Disbenefits of cycleways are mythical



*If you plan cities for cars & traffic, you get cars & traffic. If you plan for people & places, you get people & places - Fred Kent*

# Thanks

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