



Residential Streets (and Town Centre Streets) As Extensions of Our Living Rooms

BUSINESS AND PEOPLE STILL
OVERESTIMATE VALUE OF THE CAR

#VISIONWEEKNZ

*Transport Begets Land Use, Land
Use Begets Transport, Both Beget
the User Environment (in a City)*

- BEN ROSS. SOUTH AUCKLAND. 2020

About Ben Ross

The Covid-19 and (soon) Post Covid-19 era has/will presented the South Pacific with a unique opportunity to "reset" how we engage Spatial Planning to encourage more positive, friendly experience and interactions with our cities and environments (human and physical).

As a Human Experience Engineer, Urban Geographer and Spatial Planner Ben has been at the forefront of advocacy of improving such human experience in transit, urban design and spatial planning for Southern Auckland.

From large projects like Our Manukau and Airport to Botany Rapid Transit to smaller place making projects such as street calming, parklets and bus lanes. Ben through building relationships with decision/policy makers, fellow urbanists, and those who dream of wanting their urban area to be one of a human experience not a human drama - which is even more critical than era in the Post Covid era.

Ben along with Rob Mayo and Nicholas Lee recently formed Colab and Associates Limited. The Colab Mission: bringing the Human Experience Engineers in all things Transit CX/UX, Urban Design, and Spatial Planning.

With the continued rise of Human Scale and the 15 Minute City Ben and Colab will be there as Human Experience Engineers advocating for cities being a human experience not human drama!

The Post-Covid Era #bounceforward (?)

Social Distancing is engrained into this generation as being frugal was to our grand parents in the Great Depression

Desire to use active modes, buy and support local, working from home or close by (remote office), maintain life balance that lock down reminded us of. Also desire to avoid the Super Commute

Demand for more transit and cycling interventions. Also realisation of the benefits of mixed use zoning and local amenities

However, Auckland reverted to the Status Quo of super commutes, congestion and pollution. Tactical Urbanism measures were removed

My #bounceforward vision

The 20 minute City as
the Mayor of Paris has
touted

Elimination of the Super
Commute

Better integration and
cooperation between the
Regions (particularly the
Golden Triangle)

Re-Emergence of
Industry after 40 years of
Post Industrialisation

Walkable and Transit
Orientated Environments
– They Attract Jobs

This presentation also
runs in parallel with:
**Walkable and Transit
Orientated Environments
– They Attract Jobs**

Extending the Living Room



Turning the street into the extension of our living rooms



The term that is starting to float around in Urban Design circles (have not seen it in Urban Geography yet – is called “The Third Space.”



The First Space is our home, Second Space is work or school and the Third Space is public spaces. From an Urban Geography point of view it can see how the Third Space is coined and how it is used. Thus I agree fully streets should be the extension of our Living Rooms – our Living Rooms at Home and Living Rooms in our Centres.

sham Way

Living Room from House to Street to Town/metro Centres



Living Rooms are where people will most often entertain (given humans are social creatures. People are also nomadic so will tend to seek out and explore (often meeting others as well). Finally I am sure there is Geography of Coffee sub discipline out there (if not we need to draw one up) – that is people will often meet up over hospitality whether that be coffee, tea, lunch or even beer. Put all this together and a definite Urban Geography and Urban Design commonality arises; **that living spaces are often very close to places of hospitality whether it be the kitchen and living room or the Town Square and cafes.**



We know where our living spaces are in residential and Town Centre areas the question is how do we extend them out into true living spaces?

On the Street Where You Live: Residential Streets as Outdoor Living Rooms

“On the Street Where You Live” is a song by Frederick Loewe with lyrics by Jay Alan Lerner, from the 1956 Broadway musical “My Fair Lady.”

Considered in another context, we recognize almost all of us live in places facing a street functioning in a practical role providing a means of travel to connect ourselves with the world around us. But for the purposes of this writing, for many of us in city neighborhoods, the street is where we live and the street, to some extent, defines who we are. Our streets form our communities where we mingle with our neighbors and share various collective values. We take for granted that these roles are our variation of citizenry.

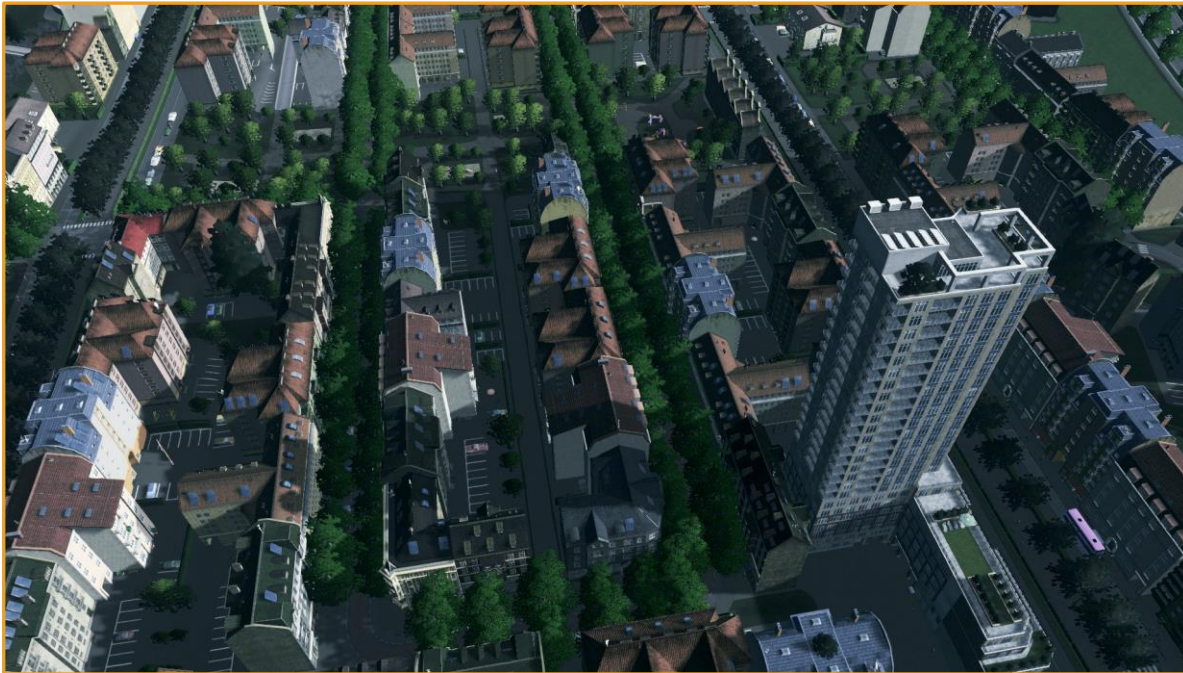
Source: [On the Street Where You Live: Residential Streets as Outdoor Living Rooms](#)

On the Street Where You Live: Residential Streets as Outdoor Living Rooms. Ctd.

The post continues on about the history of streets where:

- prior to the 19th Century they were places of interaction and extensions of living space,
- in the 19th Century to around the 1950's the advent of the railway and heavy industry meant both were often very close to residential areas (thus minimising chances of social interaction),
- deindustrialisation happening from the 1950's until the 1990's (but then came the road and the car isolating us even further from public spaces)
- finally the 21st Century where people and cities are taking back the streets from roads and cars to turn them back into public spaces – living spaces again.

Working on creating the Living Room Extensions



Cars and parking do NOT attract people nor patronage



The question is: are you likely to “entertain” or “live” in a space where cars are roaring by letting off noise and noxious gasses whether it be a residential street or a Town Centre street?



I highly doubt it and the ultimate consequence is either social exclusion (isolation or sedentary activities) which present mental and physical health issues or excessive commuting to a place of social interaction – which creates a negative feedback loop of areas not being attractive as living spaces.

Simple Steps to Achieve Living Streets in Residential area and the Centres



If speed limits were reduced in residential streets to say 30km/h with Town Centre streets getting the same treatment AND a few of them removing cars outright (or turned into Transit Malls if transit does run through the Centre) then a major step into transforming roads back into streets – extensions of living rooms/spaces has been taken.

From there tactical urbanism like parklets, kerb build outs etc can be built to make the living room even more attractive (just as we furnish and decorate our own living rooms at home and a cafe does in a town centre).



Remember positive living spaces – in this case our streets can promote social inclusion while cutting down excessive commuting to other Third Space places. Strong Local cohesion promotes strong Local Community Health.



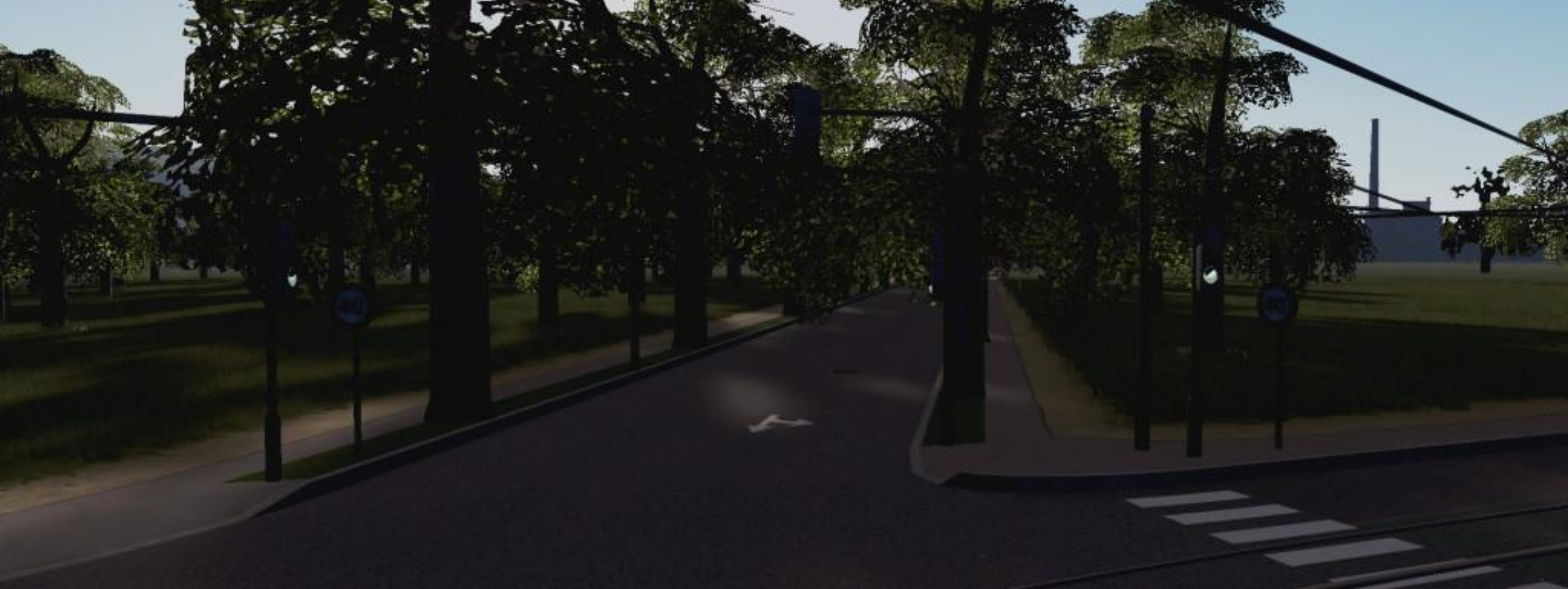
Turning a Residential Road into a Street

Simple measures such as retractable bollards can allow residents to access their homes but cut down rat running from others



Reallocating Road Space in High Density Area

Making a the road a transit mall allows people in this high density area to extend their living rooms 24/7. There is a bus route on this transit mall with buses running every 15mins (at 20km/h)



Greening Suburban Streets

Simple things such as no Centre Line and Street Trees can extend the living area of this soon to be residential area. The trees also offer shelter and filtration of storm runoff



Streets for people or for cars

This former road was converted into a mall where residents from the high density residential area are free to utilise the street space. Community Markets and events can easily spring up here



Streets + Transit = Liveable Centres

A pedestrian mall next to a tram line. This allows residents and visitors to both access the residential area while having readily available transit to either head to the commercial area nearby or transfer to

City wide transit connections

BEN ROSS. 2020



Using Road Hierarchy to guide behaviour

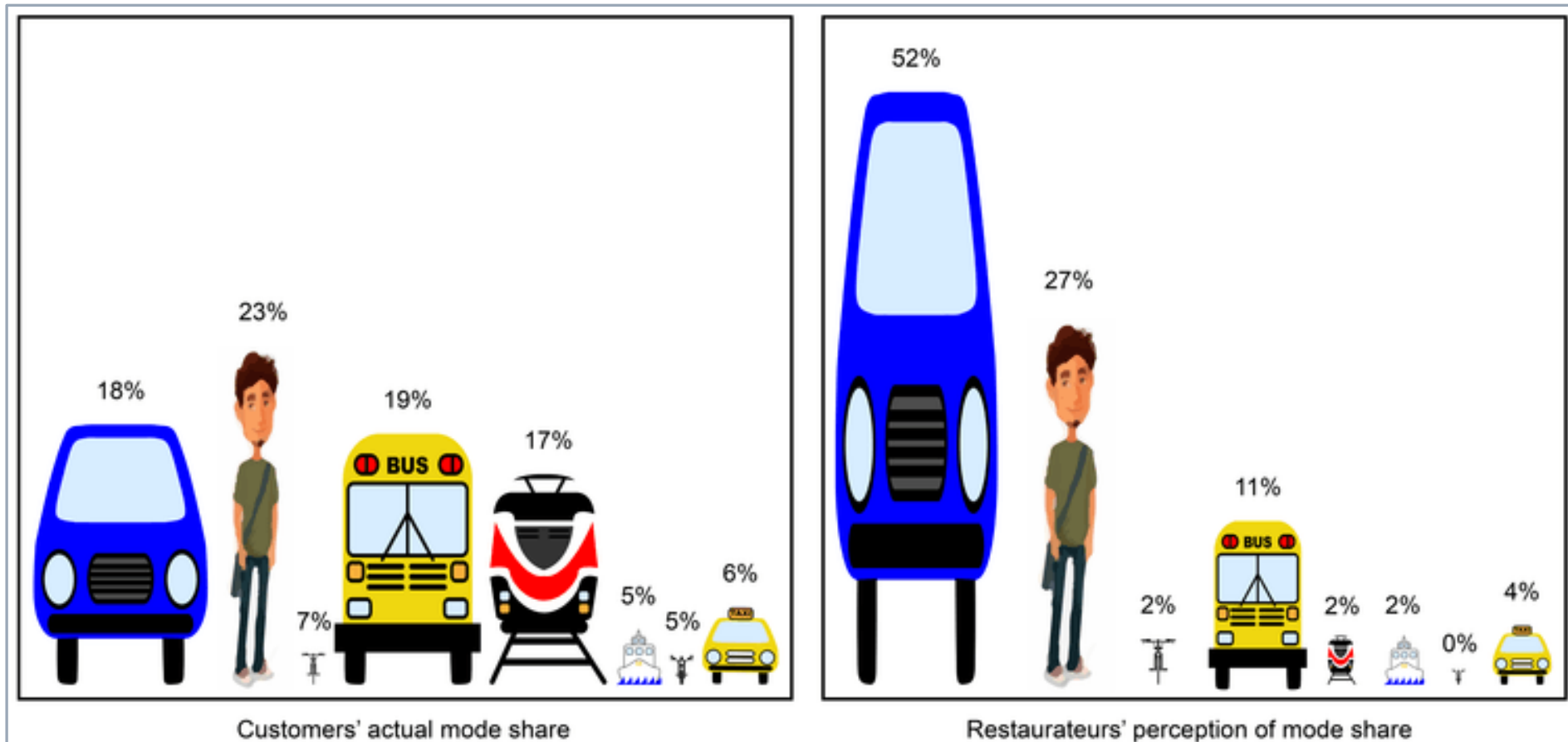
Using road hierarchy can guide spatial form and influence behaviour in the area. A ring road with a pedestrian mall up the middle to move community spaces on existing transport corridors



Never underestimate the power of street trees

Even on feeder roads such as this one street trees can extend living areas through shelter, food (if fruit trees) and filtration of stormwater run off

Reality vs Perception when it comes to Hospitality transport choice



Conclusion

- Residential Streets (and Town Centre Streets) As Extensions of Our Living Rooms
- Reallocating residential and Town/Metropolitan Centres need not be mega expensive projects. Tactical Urbanism done quickly will often be an excellent catalyst to start things off
- Cars and parking do not attract patronage
- Business owners over estimate customer share by transport mode. It was not the car but transit and active mode
- The Linger Factor

Extra information

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