To:	Place Directorate
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Date:	18/09/2018
Subject:	Essential Evidence on a page: No 173 Future Streets: Knowledge exchange and researcher-practitioner collaboration

Top Line: Collaborative projects using participatory design processes to retrofit suburban streets to support active travel are challenging. A uniting feature of collaboration may be a shared commitment to deliver an enhanced street environment for a community.

A mode shift from car to active travel is associated with multiple benefits: to population health by increasing levels of physical activity; to air quality by reducing carbon and other emissions; and to economic productivity by reducing traffic congestion. Within transport networks that were designed to prioritise car travel, infrastructure changes are often needed to support local residents active travel needs of. Multisectoral collaboration between public health and transport researchers and practitioners provides a fertile environment for developing and testing infrastructure changes to support a mode shift to active travel.[1,] Future Streets is a street redesign intervention study aiming to slow traffic, change driver behaviour and make walking and cycling easier and safer in Māngere, an Auckland suburban neighbourhood, New Zealand.[2] The project is a collaborative project between a research team, local community & the city's transport agency.

Differences in the professional and organisational cultures underpinned frustrations experienced by both sides and expectations between the partners. Transport agency engineers were output-driven and accustomed to a linear working model of design, procurement, and delivery to a project brief within an available budget. Auckland Transport staff saw the researchers' expectations around what their organisation could deliver as 'naïve', 'pie in the sky' and 'unrealistic'; and the researchers viewed Auckland Transport as being unwilling to be 'nimble and flexible', citing examples such as an apparent reluctance to trial street change using temporary measures. Responses to questions around project timelines and budget drew the starkest contrasts in professional and organisational viewpoints. Neither the research team nor Auckland Transport understood the time required by the other side to deliver the project.

Working together exposed different professional norms and understandings. These were disciplinary as well as organisational. The tools of trade of traffic engineers included standards and manuals that largely determined what was possible in street designs. Traffic specialists were guided by precedence - what had worked elsewhere. To do otherwise was uncomfortable and associated with individual and organisational risk. Yet for researchers to seek and evaluate innovation is fundamental to their practice. The logics underpinning the partners respective routine practices were in conflict. Nonetheless, as collaborative relationships strengthened and differences were resolved, solution-focused strategies were increasingly worked up together, including ways to avoid or bend rules to advance components of the project. Examples of collaborative practices included identifying a political 'window of opportunity' and preparing a joint business case which supported access to funding, and Auckland Transport agreeing to let multiple contracts so that construction could occur concurrently in adjacent streets.

[1] Handy, S., Davis. A. 2016. The science and art of intersectoral collaboration on transport and health, *J. of Transport & Health*, **3:** 230-231.
[2] Witten, K. et al 2018 Te Ara Mua – Future Streets: Knowledge exchange and the highs and lows of researcher-practitioner collaboration to design active travel infrastructure, *J. of Transport & Health*, 9: 34-44.