The role of citizen engagement in street space reallocation acceptability

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From...













To...















Acceptability vs. support

- Often undefined and used interchangeably
- Support/ preference: associated with an individual, rational calculation about an intervention that has not yet happened and which someone views positively.
- Acceptability: can be positive or negative; “concerns the limits of what people are willing to endure, rather than what they prefer” (Jenkins and Gomez 2026, pp. 2).
- Acceptance: refers to attitudes about an intervention only after it has been implemented.

Street space reallocation acceptability review

- Lack of acceptability cited as barrier to implementation (Aldred et al., 2019)
- Yet, 66% support reallocation to active travel in UK (DfT, 2020)
- Usually more support than opposition
- However, often a large proportion of unaware or ambivalent people
    - E.g. 58% of residents of UK Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) didn't know they lived in an LTN (Ipsos 2024)



Variables associated with acceptability



- Gender (depending on scheme type), education, environmental concern, political beliefs (Goetting et al., 2025; Baumgartner et al., 2025; Wild et al., 2018; and Thaller et al., 2023)
- Age (te Boveldt et al., 2023 and Lanzendorf et al., 2024)
- Road user status (Rein-Sapir and Hickman, 2026; Baumgartner et al., 2025; and te Boveldt et al., 2023)
- Business owners – both positive and negative (Bisley and Bowring, 2025 and Ferster et al., 2021)



Perception of fairness

- Perception of fair cost and benefit distribution increases acceptability (Jones et al., 2026)
- Procedural fairness impacts attitudes but distributive fairness does not (Morton et al., 2021)
- Concern over uneven impacts of LTNs (Larrington-Spencer et al., 2021)
- Social class element (Hickman and Alfonin, 2025)
- Modal shift incentives can help (Pritchett et al., 2024; Rein-Sapir and Hickman, 2026; Goetting et al., 2025; Belcher et al., 2021; and Lanzendorf et al., 2024)

Perception of impacts

- Opponents less likely to notice benefits (Ipsos, 2024 and Larrington-Spencer et al., 2026)
- Lack of pre-implementation evaluation plays a role (Hickman and Alfonin, 2025; Rein-Sapir and Hickman, 2026; and Cairns et al., 2002)
- Low levels of understanding of car use and reallocation impacts, often exacerbated by media (Pritchett et al., 2024; Belcher et al., 2021; Rein-Sapir and Hickman, 2026; Aldred et al., 2019; Ferster et al., 2021; and Bisley and Bowring, 2025)
- Lack of mode shift consideration (Malet Lambert et al., 2026) – catering to a minority (Rein-Sapir and Hickman, 2026; Bisley and Bowring, 2025; and Hickman and Alfonin, 2025)
- Influence of motornormativity (Walker and Brömmelstroet, 2025)





Unwillingness to make trade-offs

- Desire for less local traffic is universal (Pritchett et al., 2024 and Jones et al., 2026)
- 66% of LTN residents said congestion was a serious issue in their area, but at the same time 57% said there wasn't enough car parking (Ipsos, 2024)
- Majority supported the idea of reallocating space from parking to cycle lanes, greenery, and wider pavements, but at the same time, 40% said the city should give everyone free parking (Baumgartner et al., 2025)

Engagement

- Opposition dissipation – mixed evidence (Larrington-Spencer et al., 2026; Wild et al., 2018)
- Given these themes – fairness, perception of impacts, variables associated with support – how do we better engage people?
- Consultations are insufficient
- Does deliberation help?
- What is the goal?



Thank you

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