PLACES FOR PEOPLE

HOW SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL CAN HELP

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AGENDA

- **Share what we're doing in Oxford**

- Discuss how it has been received

- Give an overview of what we might do differently

Oxford has a long history of too much city centre traffic causing economic issues for businesses around the city

1953

1986

"OXFORD IS DAILY CHOKED WITH TRAFFIC" – TELEGRAPH, 1986

We want to reduce 25% of Oxfordshire car trips by 2030, more in the City, and we are very ambitious on how to do this: there are a number of different levers

Things we have started

- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
- Zero Emission Zone pilot
- 20mph wherever requested by residents
- Remove parking (main roads > cycle lanes)
- School Streets
- EV car clubs (Ghent -17% cars in 7 yrs)
- Controlled Parking Zones roll-out
- Car-free developments / limit CPZ permits
- Trialing more Cargo bike / walk deliveries

Things in the future

Bus gates / traffic filters

Aims of the bus gates
- Reduce traffic -30% in city centre
- Increase bus / P&R use by +10%.
- Enable new bus routes.
- Reduce accidents -15%.
- Increase cycle trips by +10%

- Workplace Parking Levy
- ZEZ expansion
- Vision Zero by 2050
- Cowley Branch Line
- Freight consolidation
- Reduce parking lots
- Strategic AT network
- ? Cable Car? (my goal!)

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Broad street parking removal has been widely perceived as successful, although as always there are some complaints

As low as 4% of customers come by car – but business owners usually overestimate this. Doing a survey of customers can be really helpful.
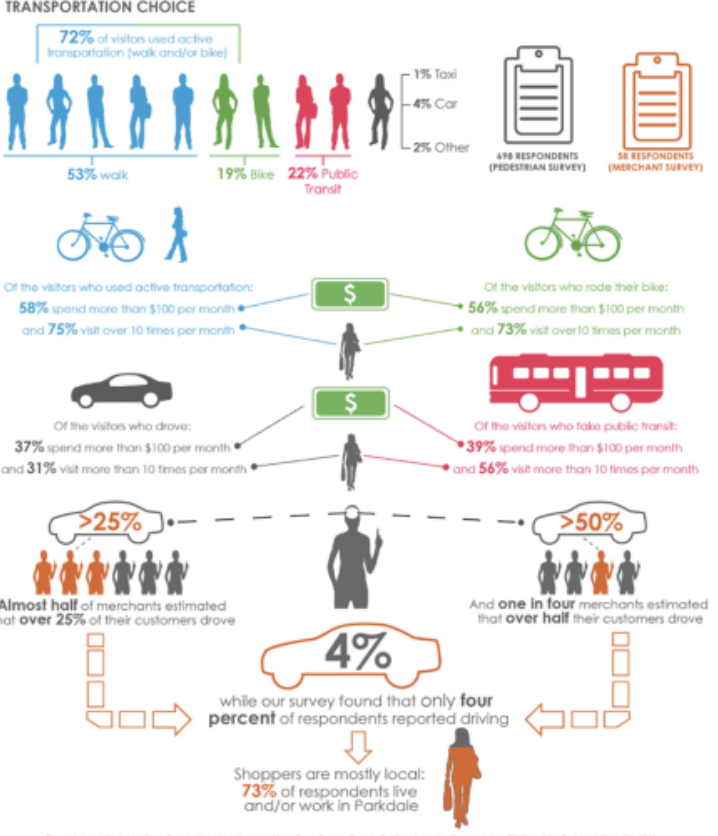
Thoughts on parking

- Business owners are much more likely to drive than customers, and over-estimate how many of their customers come by car

- In Oxford, a 2017 survey of Cowley Rd: 62% Walking / 21% Bus / 13% Bike / 4% Car

- Timed parking to increase churn can be helpful (e.g. 1 hr parking, free for first hour, but with an online parking app where you have to book it, as relies less on enforcement)

- Parking really does take up a lot of space (3 cars at 12.5m2 = 1 house at 36m2) and cars are only used 3.5% of the time (RAC)

- Business owners can be worried about their own parking but present this as a customer issue – talk to them and find out which it is as the solution will be different. Worth doing a survey

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LTNs attract a lot of debate. In my experience, it appears the same type of people tend to skew either "pro" or "anti" LTN - and many don't care at all

Pro-LTN	Anti-LTN	But lots of people are also neutral / unaware
• People with small children	• People who drive for work (skews heavily male)	
• Individuals motivated by the climate crisis	• Some businesses especially retail	
• Public health experts	• People with limited mobility who rely on cars	
• Some businesses especially cafes / restaurants in LTN	• People who are used to driving through LTN areas	
• People who already walk and cycle a lot and / or those without cars	• Some boundary road residents	
• Residents of LTN areas (boundary roads split)		

Cllr Charlie Hicks 🌹
@Charlie_Hicks_

From the last 18 months working on LTNs, if there's one message I could share with any local govt candidate or councillor, it would be this👇

Public Opinion on LTNs

Perceived   VS   Real

There are certain key themes which tend to crop up repeatedly in any traffic reduction debate

Pro-traffic reduction schemes	Anti-traffic reduction schemes

Pro-traffic reduction schemes

- "More liveable and safer streets"

- "It is democratic"

- "Future generations"

- "Status quo is unfair"

- "Traffic evaporation"

- Benefits marginalized people
  - Non car owners
  - Children
  - Locals: no externalities from others cars
  - Cleaner air
  - Climate crisis
  - Cars take too much space

Anti-traffic reduction schemes

- "Dividing communities"

- "Undemocratic"

- "Restricts my freedom"

- "Delays emergency services"

- "Leads to unsafe streets"

- "Increases congestion"

- Discriminates against
  - Disabled people
  - Elderly people who rely on cars
  - People who live on main roads
  - Businesses

And you might get a local paper with a strong editorial position opposing traffic reduction …. and then there are the conspiracies

- Pollution -8.3%, -24% vs 2019
- 4 of 6 LTN boundary roads flat or down, but headline was on the two roads in Oxford which saw pollution go up

- It was actually a trial run
- Headline later corrected

- Oxford was the centre of a global protest against "15 minute cities", conflated with LTNs and sold as the idea that councils were locking people in their homes

Advice No.1: you won't make everyone happy so no need to spend years on it, to some degree issues will only come out with the trial (we are shifting 3 roads now)

- A noisy backlash against traffic reduction is **inevitable and universal regardless of the approach taken**: Amsterdam, Ghent, Paris

- Once they are in place, few want to go back: research by Possible showed **only 8% of people on streets with historic filters wanted to reverse**

- Support for LTNs is **broad but shallow & soft**, while opposition to them is **narrow but deep**

- Better Brackenbury in London started in 2019, multiple rounds of consultation, made all filters permeable, and still faced noisy backlash in 2023 (and the permeable LTNs were removed)
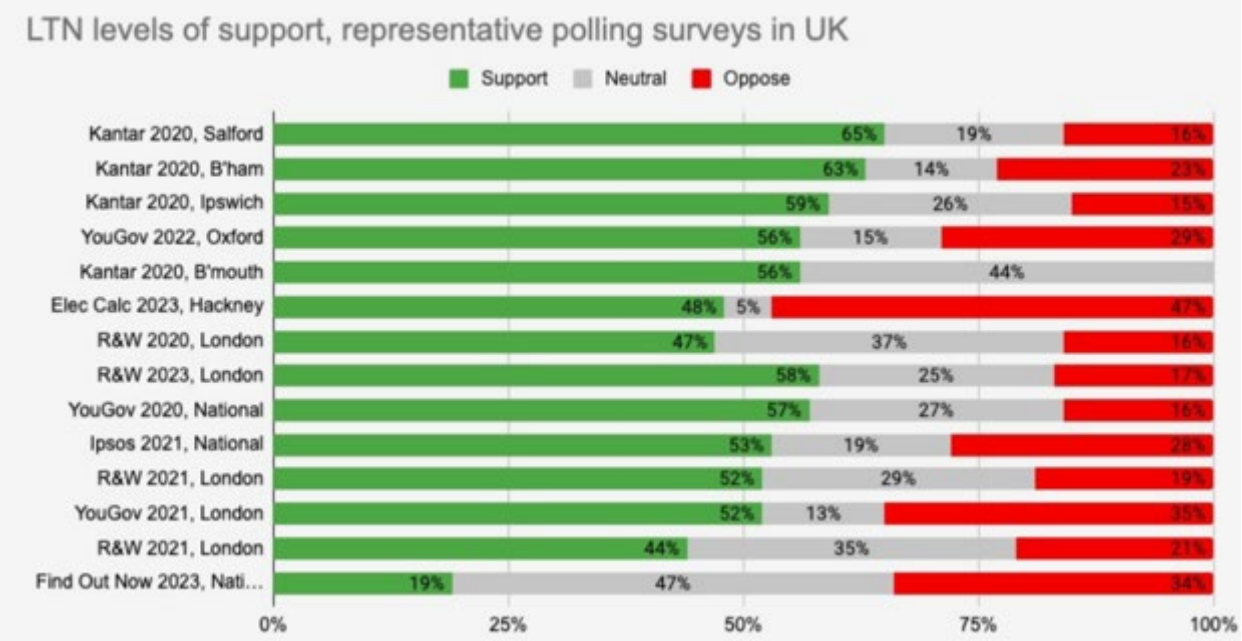
Traffic measures sentiment over time (Goodwin Curve)
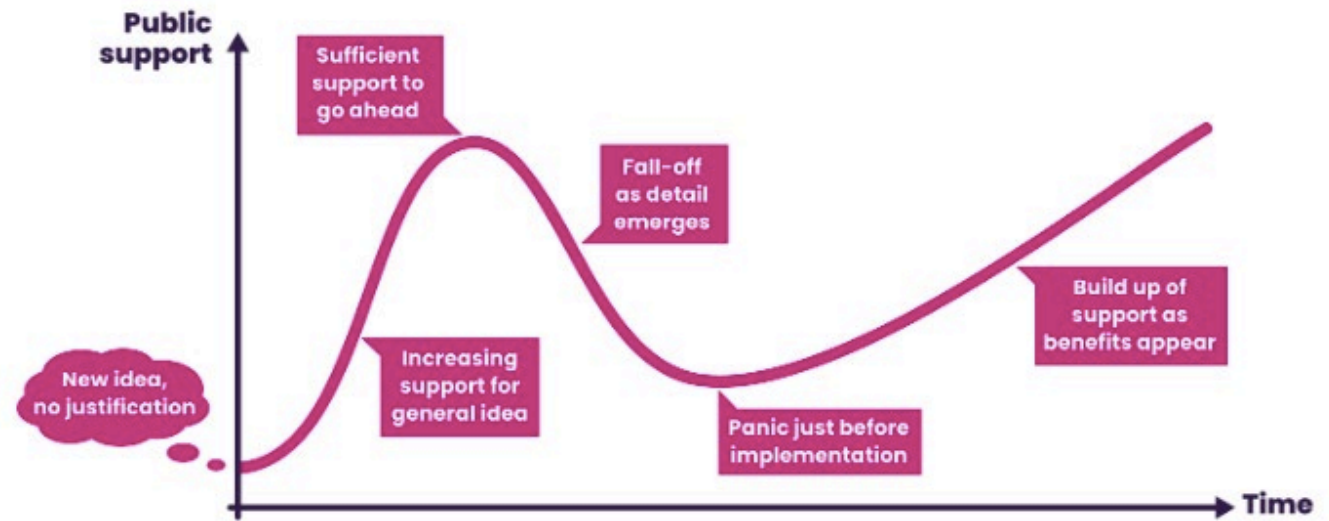
Source: Goodwin P (2006) *The gestation process for road pricing schemes, Local Transport Today* LTT444, 16.2006.

- Think about timing: not just before an election, though generally early summer is a good time to shift behavior and generational shift in new school year

Advice No.2: for big things, do representative polling surveys rather than letting an online consultation have "support, oppose" as otherwise you WILL get people from outside gaming it.

LTN levels of support, representative polling surveys in UK

■ Support ■ Neutral ■ Oppose

Survey	Support	Neutral	Oppose
Kantar 2020, Salford	65%	19%	16%
Kantar 2020, B'ham	63%	14%	23%
Kantar 2020, Ipswich	59%	26%	15%
YouGov 2022, Oxford	56%	15%	29%
Kantar 2020, B'mouth	56%	44%	
Elec Calc 2023, Hackney	48%	5%	47%
R&W 2020, London	47%	37%	16%
R&W 2023, London	58%	25%	17%
YouGov 2020, National	57%	27%	16%
Ipsos 2021, National	53%	19%	28%
R&W 2021, London	52%	29%	19%
YouGov 2021, London	52%	13%	35%
R&W 2021, London	44%	35%	21%
Find Out Now 2023, Nati…	19%	47%	34%

- Every LTN is different… but we've consistently seen that online surveys are gamed by people living outside the area (in Oxford, the Oxford Mail got 1.2m responses to one survey on the LTNs)

- Leave out the "support/oppose" and address this via polling & you'll get much better insight from respondents

"Engagement, especially on schemes where there is public controversy, should use objective methods, such as professional polling to British Polling Council standards, to establish a truly representative picture of local views and to ensure that minority views do not dominate the discourse."

Traffic Management Act 2004: network management to support active travel (withdrawn 2 Oct 2023)

Advice No.3: citizens are keen to get involved, I personally love Telraams (£200, goes in a window, affordable citizen-led science and measuring, live data available free to all)

Per day:
1,100 peds
1,100 cyclists

Per day:
2,500 peds
2,600 cyclists
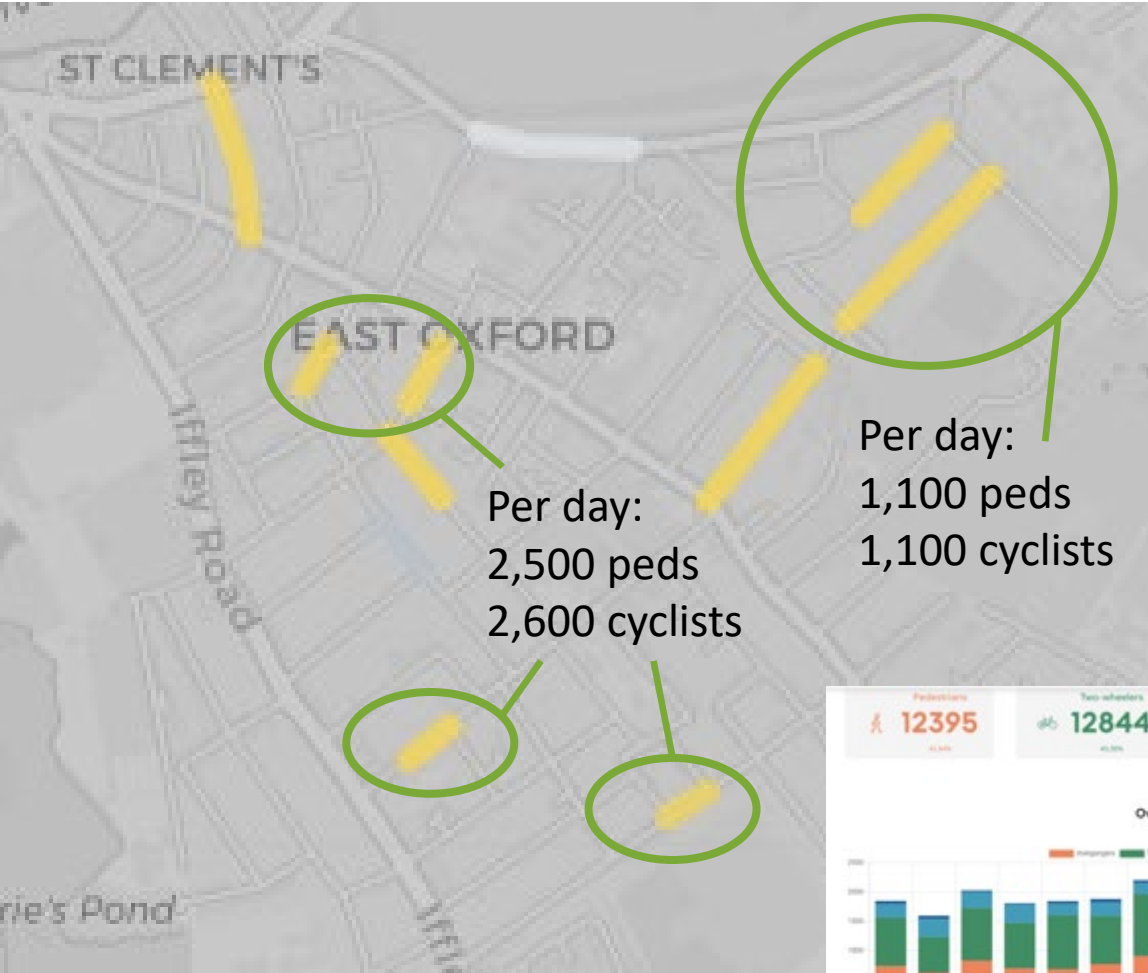
In other words, to do a best-practice traffic reduction scheme you should probably do the three things below

| **Explain** | **Co-produce & give voice** | **Treat people with respect** |

Explain

- Inform citizens on plans, processes of decisions, reasons for decisions
- Ensure data collection and evaluation is thorough and transparent
- Host information on a user-friendly website

Co-produce & give voice

- Design a public participatory process for co-production of the plans
- Undertake professional representative polling

Treat people with respect

- Proactively engage and build relationships with groups who are currently most car-dependent and likely to be hostile
- Find solutions and ideally economic support to help people adapt
- Ensure you also have open channels of communication with supporters: they will often do lots of work to improve schemes & liaise with the community