BEHAVIORAL DESIGN FOR CLOSING STREETS TO THROUGH TRAFFIC

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WHY INTRODUCE A BEHAVIORAL DESIGN LENS?
SOCIAL NORMS

When we aren’t sure how to act, we look to how other people behave.

Source: https://onewaybackpacking.com/2013/09/30/closing-the-chapter
USE SOCIAL NORMS TO INFLUENCE POSITIVE BEHAVIORS

Highlight the positive norm, so people know what they should do:

- Example – “People are using this street so they can safely keep 6ft of space between themselves and others”

Use prosocial messaging:

- Example – “Protect your neighbor – maintain 6 feet of space between yourself and others”
AUTOMATICITY

Our automatic response pattern or habits are triggered by the context
**DESIGN CUES TO REDUCE AUTOMATICITY**

- **Wayfinding arrows**
  - [Image](https://pixabay.com/photos/street-arrow-sign-way-direction-1435744/)
  - Physical barriers
    - [Image](Brookline, @BlineTransport)
  - **High visibility signage**
    - [Image](https://denver.gov/transportation/infrastructure)
We respond differently to the same context based on how it’s been described
FRAME STREETS FOR THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR

Rename to trigger new behavior and not old behaviors

• Examples – “Slow Streets”, “Temporary Recreation Streets”

Highlight positive rather than negative behaviors

• Example – “Can use streets to safely take a walk”

Avoid jargon

• Example – change “no through traffic” to “local resident traffic only”
GATHER FEEDBACK

Asking early and often, and treat residents as the experts
GATHER FEEDBACK FROM RESIDENTS AND ITERATE

- Call
- Text/Email
- Signage

Treat residents as experts
IN SUMMARY, FOUR BEHAVIORAL PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING ROAD CLOSURES

Social norms: Highlight the positive norm and use prosocial messaging

Design cues to reduce automaticity: Use wayfinding arrows, physical barriers, and signage

Frame for the desired behavior: Rename, highlight positive behaviors, and avoid jargon

Gather feedback: Treat residents as the experts