

Creative Streets

Using art, sculpture, and design to calm traffic and create safer streets.

What's it about?

Creative streets leverage art, sculpture, tactical interventions and other installations to create an environment which slows traffic down, and makes streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

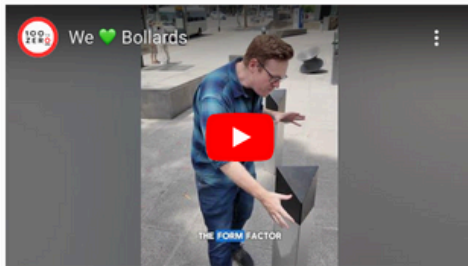
Whether through colorful pavement art, interactive sculptures, or striking murals, these strategies aim to slow traffic, increase pedestrian and cyclist safety, and foster a sense of place and belonging within urban environments. Creative streets prioritise human-scale experiences. Pop up, tactical and short-term interventions are one approach to delivering creative street benefits quickly, others include street art and public art commissions.

Many major projects allocate budget to public art, such as the Western Roads Upgrade in Melbourne's West which includes the commission of new freeway-side sculptures [1]. Other councils have a mandatory contribution of major public works budgets allocated to public art - typically 0.5%-1% and as much as to 2.5% [2].



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Benefits

What are the benefits of Creative Streets?

Enhanced Road Safety

Creative street interventions effectively reduce vehicle speeds and increase driver awareness. By introducing visually engaging elements and unexpected changes to the streetscape, these interventions naturally encourage drivers to slow down and pay more attention to their surroundings. This results in a safer environment for all road users, particularly vulnerable groups like pedestrians and cyclists [3].

Promote Active Transport

Creative streets encourage walking and cycling by making these modes of transport more appealing and safer by slowing motorised traffic down. By prioritising pedestrian and cyclist experiences through artistic interventions and improved infrastructure, these streets promote healthier, more sustainable transportation choices. This also contributes to reduced carbon emissions [5].

Improved Public Space Activation

Creative streets can transform underutilised urban areas into vibrant community spaces. Through the introduction of art installations, seating areas, and interactive elements, these interventions encourage people to linger, socialize, and engage with their environment. This activation of public space contributes to a stronger sense of community and improves the overall quality of urban life [4].

Community Engagement and Expression

Creative street projects often involve community participation in their design and implementation. This process fosters a sense of ownership and pride among residents, allowing them to shape their urban environment. Additionally, these interventions can provide a platform for local artists and community members to express their creativity and cultural identity, contributing to a unique sense of place [4].

Increased Economic Vitality

The implementation of creative street elements can have positive economic impacts on local businesses. By creating more attractive and pedestrian-friendly environments, these interventions encourage increased foot traffic and longer dwell times in commercial areas. This can lead to higher retail sales and improved property values, contributing to the economic health of urban neighborhoods [4].

Creative Street Examples

Tactical Urbanism: Pop-up Parks in Sydney

Sydney has embraced tactical urbanism through initiatives like pop-up parks and parklets. These temporary installations repurpose parking spaces or underutilised areas into small public spaces with seating, greenery, and sometimes art installations.

For example, Transport for NSW's "[Streets as Shared Spaces](#)" program has partnered with councils to deliver various pop-up interventions, including widened footpaths and temporary bike lanes and street events. These quick, low-cost interventions demonstrate how creative approaches can rapidly transform streets into safer, more people-friendly spaces while allowing for flexibility and experimentation.



Griffith City Council Streets as Shared Spaces Program. Photo Credit-Ginette Guidolin

Polka Dot Traffic Calming: Yarraville Village, Melbourne

In Yarraville Village, Melbourne, an innovative traffic calming measure was implemented using polka dots painted on the pavement. This creative intervention aims to reduce driver speeds in areas with potential conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. The colourful pattern is designed to attract drivers' attention, encouraging them to slow down and approach the space with caution. This increased awareness benefits all road users, including the elderly, children, and cyclists [6]



Western Roads Upgrade, Public Art

The Western Roads Upgrade project in Melbourne's western suburbs incorporated public art elements to enhance the visual appeal and cultural significance of the infrastructure. This included vibrant colored gateway bridges reflecting the region's wildflowers and opportunities for local artists to create artwork at the Duncans Road / Princes Freeway interchange. This now includes *Backyard* by local artist Jon Campbell, which represents a stylised pop version of the artists backyard in the nearby suburb of Altona [7].



References

- [1] Victorian Infrastructure delivery Authority, [Western Roads Upgrade](#), Big Build Victoria
- [2] City of Knox, [Public Art Policy](#)
- [3] Barr Foundation, [Quick and Creative Street Projects](#)
- [4] [Tactical Urbanism Guide](#)
- [5] Transport NSW, [Movement and Place, Street Design Guide](#)
- [6] City of Maribyrnong [Polka Dot Innovative Road Safety Measure](#)
- [7] [Jon Campbell](#), Artist

Helpful Guides

- [Tactical Urbanism Guide](#)
- Transport NSW [Streets as Shared Places Program](#)
- [Create Streets](#)