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THINK PIECE PAPER

WHERE'S THE FUN IN THAT?
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ABSTRACT
This presentation will explore the place of fun in Transport. We will touch briefly on academic literature, media, international examples, and anecdotes to challenge the urban gripe that transport is depressing, mundane and must simply be endured.

The mindless hours we spend on urban travel are accepted by some as a necessary evil. After all, boredom and frustration have never killed anyone… directly[1]. Others may try to squeeze in productive work, exercise, or catch up on serious reading during their daily commute.

Or (and this may be radical) we could try to have fun.

Fun in transport is hard to measure, hard to cost, and rarely happens by accident. However, it remains an important part of encouraging modal shift, increasing community cohesion, and improving wellbeing. Being able to articulate what fun is – not only for children, but for all users, may deepen our views on what transport systems can holistically offer to societies.

According to psychology research, fun is a key but often understudied part of consumer behaviour. Oh and Pham (2021)[2] describe fun as supported by two "pillars": hedonic engagement, and a sense of liberation. These are facilitated by a combination of levers, including: novelty, social connectedness, spontaneity, and spatial/temporal boundedness.

While few people would ever use the words hedonism and liberation to describe their transit, levers that facilitate fun can be used to compare interventions and suggest new ways to not only get from one place to another, but to enjoy the journey.

[1] Britton, A., & Shipley, M. J. (2010). Bored to death? *International Journal of Epidemiology, 39*(2), 370-371.
[2] Oh, T. T., & Pham, M. T. (2021). A liberating-engagement theory of consumer fun. Journal of Consumer Research, 49(1), 46-73.

INTRODUCTION

The seed for this paper was planted on a long holiday spanning continents, with a local stint back home in the hinterlands of Aotearoa. This trip included, amongst other attractions: subway trains, Grab (the Vietnamese version of Uber), taxis, buses, light rail, ferries, Brompton bicycles, rusty old bikes with no gears, tiny planes, large commercial planes, spilled L&P on domestic flights, rickshaws, multi-day hiking, road trips with loud relatives, congestion, hitchhikers, a luxury cruise, kayaks, and dinghy paddling.

It is remarkable how transport can be an attraction in itself for tourists, starkly contrasting with public urban perception of transport in our day-to-day. So much so that grumbling about transport is a reliable water cooler conversation in our urban centres, safe even with colleagues who you don't know particularly well, and with whom you do not share a passion for cricket.

This paper examines the fun discrepancy between great trips and soul-sucking ones and digs deeper into the attitudes, design, planning, and decision making needed for people to enjoy journeys and thereby improve their quality of life.

YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE (YOLO)

We begin by asking if fun is, in the grand scheme of things, necessary at all and therefore worthy of exploration in this paper. Can't we just simply exist without it? As we tell all the kids, sometimes one must complete activities one does not enjoy, and that is life.

There is a smattering of academic research about the importance of fun. Almost all these studies begin with a sad acknowledgement that research in Fun is lacking in their fields[3]. Likewise, this paper declares from a cursory scan of Google Scholar that there is currently scant literature on fun within the transport sector.

Related transport research includes the study of individual interventions such as play streets (Meyer et al., 2019), or include fun as one motivation out of many for encouraging mode shift (Waka Kotahi, 2023; Orsini and O'Brien, 2006). The word "fun" is absent from best practice design guidance, although most, such as the Waka Kotahi Cycle Network Guidance (2024a) recommends that facilities should be made attractive to users. Furthermore, there is no specific literature on the factors which would make urban transport choices more fun. As such, this paper draws on research on fun from other areas to develop principles which can be applied to fun in transport.

Researchers generally propose that fun is overlooked because it's seen to be frivolous, distracting, and childish; a "nice to have" rather than a "need to have". Yet the research that does exist shows that fun plays an important part in physical wellbeing, psychology, and social connectedness. In the past few years, increasing studies have been undertaken into what constitutes fun, and its impact on our well-being.

On a biological level, having fun releases dopamine, endorphins, serotonin, and oxytocin, known as "feel good hormones". These have been proven to lower stress and anxiety, which in turn, has positive impacts such as boosting immune response and relieving pain. It is further speculated that having fun increases self-esteem, supports brain development, and that we evolved to have fun to develop mutual cooperation (Rucker, 2023). Having fun can be an incentive to participate in exercise, which produces health benefits, and it can also be an outcome of participating, creating a positive feedback loop. In a similar way, experiences of fun are interwoven with those of social connectedness – and research says this is true for everyone, extroverts and introverts alike (Price, 2021).

[3] See almost all References: as examples "... a striking aspect of the prior literature on fun is its sparsity" (Oh and Pham, 2021), "This study explores the psychologically neglected concept of fun, a concept that contributes strongly to many people's perceptions of quality in life" (McManus, Furnham, 2010)

If this isn't enough to convince us all to have fun, the opposite of fun is boredom, and *Bored to death?* (Britton & Shipley, 2010) has correlated boredom with dying younger, showing that it may indicate more serious risk factors to physical health including addiction and depression.

It isn't hard to identify where boredom lies in our transport system, because most of us have experienced it one way or another. News media in Aotearoa has reported yearly on the amount of time drivers in Auckland, our most congested city, are spending in congestion on the motorway. These reports are likely read by other regions with gleeful schadenfreude. The number of hours wasted in congestion had fluctuated somewhere around 90 hours per person per year, although it spiked to 172 hours in 2017. However, no more snootiness is warranted, with the release of the 2023 Stuff article *Auckland isn't even close to being the slowest city to drive in* (Bijoux), based on Tom Tom data. This article lists in order of the worst congestion – Christchurch (165 h), Wellington (164 h), Dunedin (138 h), Auckland (154 h), then Tauranga (116 h). Whoever the winners and losers, the lost time amounts to around upwards of three working weeks per year for the average driver, and that's only for motorway congestion. It can be assumed that local networks host additional time wastage from congestion, resulting in even more boredom.

While vehicle traffic has also been correlated to stress and resulting poor mental health (Curry, 2016), and it is shown that high vehicle dependence is linked to obesity (Frank, Andresen, & Schmid, 2004), there is already substantial evidence and discussion in those fields. This paper will not dwell on the problem of car dominance and dependency. Instead, it proposes that boredom may be one contributor to the negative wellbeing impacts (including frustration and stress), and that introducing fun – with its host of wellbeing benefits – may be just one way to alleviate a few societal ills caused by too many cars.

Additionally, vehicle traffic is not the only mode of transport where time might be wasted. Catching public transport can result in wait times and delays which are impossible to fill productively. Walking, cycling, and active mode journeys may be thwarted by rainy weather or road closures which result in tedious detours. And there is no accounting for taste. Because there are few experiences which can be said to be universally enjoyable, it is reasonable to assume some people simply do not enjoy [substitute mode of transport] for a variety of reasons.

So, transport consumes the finite time we have in this life, potentially in ways which do not fulfil us as human beings. When such transit takes unnecessarily long, we cannot help but be frustrated, thinking of the numerous other places we'd rather be – eating dinner, spending time with our loved ones, doing exercise, and that's only the start! There are methods to decrease the ennui of a slow crawl through using our phones, podcasts, music, and working (any other creative suggestions welcome). However, this paper questions whether we turn to these as coping mechanisms in a defeatist acceptance of our situation, when instead we could be exploring options to have fun.

LET'S TALK SERIOUSLY ABOUT FUN

The study of fun presents a number of challenges including an adequate definition of what we think fun *is*. Author Catherine Price aptly points out in her book *The Power of Fun* (2021) that modern society has been participating in a chronic overuse of the word "fun". This ranges from truly fun experiences which make us feel alive (she calls these "True Fun"); to activities we are told to be fun, but aren't in practice (an overly complicated game, for example); and furthermore, to describe experiences which are objectively not fun ("Thank you. I had fun at the dinner last night.").

We may also conflate fun with play and gamification, or fun with happiness. Although these concepts are certainly related, they are different. Price's research has shown fun can take a surprising number of forms. Successful fun isn't necessarily dependent on the right material objects, costly holidays, or pleasant conditions. Think of the people who go on long hikes in arduous weather "for fun". People of all ages from the very young, to the beleaguered middle aged, to the very old can have fun. And, perhaps most importantly, fun is a feeling – not an activity.

Various frameworks are available within existing research to identify the contributing factors of fun. These have arisen from qualitative studies, where participants are asked to describe authentically fun experiences they have had, in detail. The different analyses interestingly revealed common or very similar themes. For example, Price places True Fun in the centre of a Venn diagram featuring the overlapping circles of playfulness, flow, and connection. Playfulness is not limited to childish interests – instead, in her description of playfulness, she includes rebellions against normality, the letting down of one's guard, a sense of freedom, and doing something for the sake of it, rather than as a means to any end. Flow is a sense of living in the moment, being present and spontaneous, and may include absorption in an engaging task. Connection is most commonly social connectedness with other people, although deep connection with other entities – nature, pets, or even oneself can count. Social connection is also not limited to friends and family, and encounters with strangers can be equally effective. When all three states are met, True Fun is achieved. Because fun depends on a feeling, rather than an activity, we can't plan to "have fun" per se. Rather, we can create the possibility for fun by identifying opportunities that encourage all three states, and then we can show up.

Similarly, Rucker's definition of fun in *The Fun Habit* (2023) includes "engagement in pleasurable experiences" that are "Biased towards Action", "Prosocial", "Autonomous", and "Extraordinary".

These map well to Price's Venn diagram, where:

- "Biased toward Action" maps to "Flow",
- "Prosocial" maps to "Connection", and
- "Autonomous" and "Extraordinary" map to "Playful".

With these broad understandings in mind, a more technical framework to identify contributing factors to fun has been produced by Oh and Pham (2021), discussed in their paper *A Liberating-Engagement Theory of Consumer Fun.* This is applicable to a transport context if we look at transport provision as a service, with usage dependant on consumer behaviour. Here, fun is described as being supported by two psychological "pillars": hedonic engagement, and a sense of liberation. These are facilitated by four situational factors: novelty, social connectedness, spontaneity, and spatial/temporal boundedness. The two pillars and four factors again have strong parallels to Price and Rucker's findings above. However, unlike Price's model, Oh and Pham do not require that all four situational factors are present prior to experiencing fun, only that they have a part to play in facilitating fun experiences.

Hedonic engagement is described as "the active involvement and immersion into an activity that is intended for pure enjoyment" (p. 15), while a **sense of liberation** is "a temporary release from… internalised restrictions, such as professional obligations, parental duties, schoolwork, financial constraints, and a range of self-imposed disciplines" (p. 19).

The four situational factors can be described in the following ways:

- **Novelty** – participants related that experiences with an aspect of novelty in it were fun. Frequent words and phrases used were "first time", "never done before", "totally did not expect", "something different", "unique" and "explore" (p. 25).
- **Social Connectedness** – increased feelings of fun happen when others are involved. This looks different for everyone, and can involve friends and strangers alike, but Oh and Pham point out that literature suggests more fun can be had without a social hierarchy in place.
- **Spontaneity** – the ability to be spontaneous brings a sense of freedom, while in contrast excessive planning can result in limitations to being playful. Spontaneity can occur as an unplanned activity, or within a planned activity when experienced as a state of flow – for example, playing sports, or attending a music festival.
- **Spatial/temporal Boundedness** – situational boundaries which separate the feeling of fun from the pressures or mundanity of everyday life. Fun generally occurs in a specific place and time, and a defining feature is that it has a beginning and an end.

The participant responses provided for each situational factor within Oh and Pham's study are particularly heartwarming to read, considering the diversity in ages, backgrounds, and circumstances. This paper also encourages readers to consider their own experiences of fun, recent or otherwise, in context of the situational factors. While fun is a feeling, examples can be very tangible, memorable, and relatable, emphasising the universality of fun as a contributor to human flourishing.

FUN WITH TRANSPORT

This paper proposes that Oh and Pham's four situational factors can be used in a simple way to analyse transport service provision and infrastructure and their potential for fun. Furthermore, these factors would be useful levers for creating intentional opportunities for fun on an individual, design, planning, or decision-making level.

As an initial example, being stuck in traffic congestion is generally not fun. Why? With the help of the four situational factors, we can begin to understand what is missing from our journeys. Firstly, there is little to no Novelty, especially for familiar commuting routes. If we are driving in a single occupant vehicle, there is no opportunity for Social Connection. There is negligible scope for Spontaneity, and depending on how bad the congestion is, a high uncertainty on Spatial/temporal boundedness.

Additionally, we note that maximising fun depends on safe and effective transport choices for everyone in our communities. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954) characterizes basic human needs into 5 tiers: physical needs, safety needs, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation. Maslow reasoned that basic needs such as survival and safety generally must be met before higher outcomes could be attained by individuals. It can be assumed that the more effective, safe, and equitable our transport system becomes, the more opportunities there are to introduce fun. When a transport environment is functioning well, that leaves space for people to appreciate novelty, connect socially, and be spontaneous.

While proper data collection has not been completed, Tables 1 – 7 on the following pages visualise at a high level how Oh and Pham's four situational factors can be used as levers; firstly, to assess transport interventions for existing chances for fun, and then to identify potential opportunities to increase fun. A brief study of the seven transport interventions reveals that most "fun" transport interventions do fit our academically derived definition of fun. However, some do not necessarily facilitate movement, that is, effectively moving from a point A to a point B. While placemaking has an important role to play (Waka Kotahi's One Network Framework, 2024b), it is primarily in the movement category that most boredom and stress occurs and must be addressed.

Historically, Novelty commands a lot of attention in the world of fun. It aligns well with our ideas of engagement and attraction, manifesting into play areas, gamification projects, bright colours, and general creative energy[4]. However, the less dramatic levers of Social Connectedness, Spontaneity, and Spatial/temporary boundedness should not be underestimated, along with the simple Novelty of providing transport access to new and unusual places and faces, along with the autonomy and liberation to explore.

A further comment should be made that some interventions may not strongly utilise all four levers. However, holistic consideration could place that intervention in a wider environment that does facilitate fun. Hence, while Wellington's Haka crossing lanterns[5] might only provide Novelty and a touch of Social Connectedness, they contribute to a wider landscape that can facilitate Social Connectedness, Spontaneity, and Spatial/temporal Boundedness – in this case, Waitangi Park, where the lanterns are installed adjacently.

[4] The Greater Auckland article *Making transport fun* (Donovan, 2011) certainly leans on novelty to propose attractive transport solutions proposing flying foxes, and gondolas.
[5] Wellington City Council. (2019.) *Pedestrian Crossing Lanterns*. Available at: https://wellington.govt.nz/parking-roads-and-transport/roads/road-safety/pedestrian-crossing-lanterns (Accessed April 2023).

Table 1 Ability of Play Streets to provide the opportunity for fun

Feature	Levers
Play Streets: Availability of play space on streets through restricting neighbourhood vehicle traffic. Resident lead.  *Play Streets (Waka Kotahi 2023)* **Target users:** Locals, particularly children and families **Function in transport service:** Potentially limited, unless the play street coincides with a journey. Further development of this approach to accommodate transit could take the form of "slow streets" or "home zones".	**Novelty** High novelty, with potential to introduce more novelty through play and games. **Social Connectedness** High potential for social connectedness, as Play Streets are community-focused. **Spontaneity** Introduces a safe space for kids and adults to spontaneously play in the neighbourhood. **Spatial/temporal Boundedness** Limited to the area of traffic restriction, and for a defined period of usually several hours.
Assessment: Play Streets introduce opportunities to fun, as they provide for all four levers, but may have limited function in providing fun for transit purposes. **Indicative cost rating in the grand scheme of things: Low** **Constructability:** NA	
Reference: *Play Streets*, Waka Kotahi, accessed April 2023, retrieved from https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/play-streets/	

Table 2 Ability of the Beercycle to provide the opportunity for fun

Feature	Levers
Beercycle: A pedal-powered bar on wheels.  *Beercycle (Beercycle, 2023)* **Target users:** Social groups consisting of all adults. **Function in transport service:** Will only transport up to 15 paying users to pubs.	**Novelty** Very high novelty for beer drinkers and non-beer drinkers alike. **Social Connectedness** Very high potential for social connectedness. However, this may vary between beer drinkers and non-beer drinkers. **Spontaneity** May be a spontaneous activity and provides opportunities for spontaneous behaviour. **Spatial/temporal Boundedness** Can only be used at a specific time and place.
Assessment: The Beercyle is obviously a vehicle for fun, even when acknowledging likely differences for beer drinkers and non-beer drinkers. However, it is severely limited in scope for the everyday needs of transport users. **Indicative cost rating in the grand scheme of things: Very low** **Constructability:** NA	
Reference: *Beercycle*, Beercycle, accessed April 2023, retrieved from https://www.beercycle.co.nz/	

Table 3 Ability of art, cultural, and heritage features to provide the opportunity for fun

Feature	Levers
Art, cultural, and heritage features: Artwork, sculptures, installations, information boards, and wayfinding which increases amenity or highlights culture and heritage.  *Akau Tangi, by sculptor Phil Dadson (Wellington Sculpture Trust, 2023)* **Target users:** All nearby community, visitors. **Function in transport service:** May provide fun along an otherwise mundane route.	**Novelty** Can introduce high novelty or interest through an appreciation of beauty, amusement, learning, awe, or surprise. **Social Connectedness** May allow users to feel culturally connected to a place. Can be a good conversation starter. **Spontaneity** Interactive installations may encourage flow, or packaging several features together could result in an activity that encourages flow – e.g. sculpture walks **Spatial/temporal Boundedness** Features are bounded by space and can only be experienced by viewers passing through.
Assessment: Art, culture, and heritage features may add fun to an otherwise mundane route. The ability to employ each lever varies – however, features can still contribute to a wider transport service provision that is holistically fun. **Indicative cost rating in the grand scheme of things:** **Low – Medium**, varies. **Constructability:** varies.	
Reference: *Akau Tangi*, Wellington Sculpture Trust, accessed April 2023, retrieved from https://www.sculpture.org.nz/the-sculptures/akau-tangi	

Table 4 Ability of the North Western shared path to provide the opportunity for fun

Feature	Levers
North Western shared path, Auckland: A fully protected cycle superhighway that allows people from West Auckland to walk, cycle, and use other active modes to travel to the Auckland CBD.  *Te Atatū to City Path (Auckland Council, 2023)* **Target users:** People who walk, cycle, and use active modes. **Function in transport service:** can be used for commuting and recreation.	**Novelty** Stunning coastal views, interesting historical and cultural features. The magnitude of novelty may vary between different users. **Social Connectedness** Face to face exposure to other path users provides opportunities for connections and chance meetings. Ability to use shared path with companions. **Spontaneity** Active modes provide flexibility and autonomy for a wide range of diverse users, including those who cannot drive. Exercise is also an opportunity to act in a state of flow. **Spatial/temporal Boundedness** Boundaries are determined by the user journey and may provide an escape from the daily grind.
Assessment: The shared path provides the opportunity for fun journeys, as it enables all four levers. However, engagement still depends on the personal preferences and attitudes of users. **Indicative cost rating in the grand scheme of things:** **Relatively High** but low compared to other infrastructure. **Constructability:** requires infrastructure, however still generally not as complex as vehicle highways.	
Reference: *Te Atatū to City Path*, Auckland Council, accessed April 2023, retrieved from https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/parks-recreation/get-outdoors/aklpaths/Pages/path-detail.aspx?ItemId=107	

Table 5 Ability of Bus Public Transport to provide the opportunity for fun

Feature	Levers
Bus Public Transport: Using public bus services for travel.  *Public Transport in Auckland (Heart of the City, 2023)* **Target users:** Bus patrons. **Function in transport service:** Can be used for commuting and recreation.	**Novelty** Low novelty for anyone who sees it as a daily necessity, may be a novelty for people who catch the bus less frequently, or have a desire to explore different routes. There are opportunities to introduce outreach activities at bus stops and stations etc., to increase novelty. **Social Connectedness** Face to face exposure to other bus riders provides opportunities for connections and chance meetings. Ability to take the bus with companions. May be limited by bus users all using their phones. **Spontaneity** Passengers can watch the scenery, read, listen to music/podcasts, or engage in work which may lead to a flow state. The bus may also provide a spontaneous way to travel widely, but the ease at which a patron can do this is important to a feeling of freedom and autonomy. **Spatial/temporal Boundedness** Boundaries are determined by the user journey and may provide an escape from the daily grind.
Assessment: Catching the bus and having fun is currently very much what the bus patron can make of it. However, there are ways to nudge a bus journey to be more fun by considering each of the four levers. **Indicative cost rating in the grand scheme of things:** **Low**, fun is not generally "built into" our provision of bus services and infrastructure so any incidental fun can probably be considered low cost. **Constructability:** NA, see note in indicative cost.	
Reference: *Public Transport*, Heart of the City, accessed April 2023, retrieved from https://heartofthecity.co.nz/parking-transport/public-transport-auckland	

Table 6 Ability of the Family Carriage to provide the opportunity for fun

Feature	Levers
Family Carriage, Norway: Family playrooms provided on trains, adapted to meet needs of parents with young children, with toys and books.  *Family (Vy, 2023)* **Target users:** Families using trains. **Function in transport service:** Improving the transport experience for families while travelling by train.	**Novelty** High, particularly for children. **Social Connectedness** Allows families to spend time together and provides space and the opportunity for social connection between train users. **Spontaneity** Allows children to play spontaneously. Having a space for you families may also fulfil basic needs for parents, allowing them the ability to enjoy the journey. **Spatial/temporal Boundedness** Spatially bounded to a single carriage and otherwise determined by the user journey.
Assessment: Family carriages provide opportunities for fun through using all four levers. **Indicative cost rating in the grand scheme of things:** **Low** – **Medium** through repurposing an existing carriage, and implementation may impact revenue. **Constructability:** NA	
Reference: *Family*, Vy, accessed April 2023, retrieved from https://www.vy.no/en/buy-tickets/train-tickets/family	

Table 7 Ability of Gamification to provide the opportunity for fun

Feature	Levers
Gamification: games and competitions involving or during transport such as Pokémon Go, the Aotearoa Bike Challenge, smartphone games, Strava, and anything where you can collect points or badges.  *Pokémon Go (Pokémon Go, 2023)* **Target users:** all transport users who have the ability and equipment to participate. **Function in transport service:** Encouraging various types of transport behaviour, or purely for enjoyment.	**Novelty** High, for people who enjoy a particular game or competition. **Social Connectedness** May allow users to socially connect to each other but may also promote anti-social behaviour. **Spontaneity** Allows a flow state for players who are absorbed in the game. May introduce stress, anxiety, or judgement due to competitive nature (Oh & Pham, 2021) which is not conducive to flow. **Spatial/temporal Boundedness** In many cases it is located on a smartphone and limited to availability of free time. User experience may vary as the game may be subject to external distractions or itself be a distraction to other tasks.
Assessment: Games are generally seen to be fun activities, and they can satisfy all four levers, having the potential to be a cheap and simple way to make trips fun. However, it's good to remember that depending on the game and the environment we could be engaging in an activity that we think is fun but isn't necessarily so, when considering real outcomes. **Indicative cost rating in the grand scheme of things: Very Low** **Constructability:** NA	
Reference: *Pokemon Go*, Pokemon Go, accessed April 2023, retrieved from https://pokemongolive.com/?hl=en	

CHOO CHOO WHERE'S THE GRAVY TRAIN

Now that we have discussed what makes "fun" fun, we must consider whose job it is to increase fun in our transport environment, and how it happens. There are currently no specific ways to measure fun[6]. Fun is unable to be neatly packaged up for a benefits-cost ratio and remains a subjective experience. Hence, it can be hard to communicate the added value of fun within transport, in the analytical ways we generally prefer as transport professionals. Many transport projects would be hard pressed to include fun when our highest priorities include cost-consciousness and bare efficiency. As a result, funding opportunities are limited (pun acknowledged).

The outlook is not entirely bleak. As shown in previous sections, fun isn't dependent on a set of activities, or the provision of a particular type of infrastructure. Because fun is a feeling, the different levers for fun can be integrated into our transport lives in a myriad of ways and at various cost, as appropriate. Many interventions use soft approaches, rather than performing as built-in infrastructural features. There are therefore relatively low-cost solutions, and awareness should be raised about the significantly positive impacts of increasing novelty, social connectedness, and proxy concepts like autonomy, flow activities, and placemaking (spontaneity and spatial/temporal boundedness). Such considerations can even result in wider benefits that are more quantifiable than fun – health benefits, for example. For transport, there are three realms where choices that encourage fun can be realised: at an individual level, at a planning and design level, and at a decision-making level. Table 8 summarises possible actions from each realm.

[6] Fun does not specifically feature in the Waka Kotahi Land Transport Benefits Framework measures manual (2024). The closest features that can be considered are Recreation and Tourism, and could perhaps be crudely measured under subjective wellbeing measures.

Table 8 Roles to be fulfilled in increasing fun in transport

Us – as individuals
As individuals, we can proactively seek fun. Some potential examples include: • Identifying opportunities for fun in transport and choosing to show up. • Taking extra time when travelling so we can be spontaneous and open to novelty - perhaps a different route for curiosity's sake, or stopping at the shops for a treat. Choosing routes where we can connect with nature or nice dogs. • Travelling with others - carpool, catch the bus together, strike up a conversation with the Uber driver, make eye contact, smile, and say hi to someone. • Finding activities to do in transit, not with the intention to kill time, but for enjoyment and aim to experience flow.
Planners and designers
Planners and designers can create the right space and environment for fun: • Plan and design for people, rather than metrics. • Provide for safe and functional transport in an equitable manner, first and foremost. • Provide transport choice to allow for autonomy, spontaneity, and flow. • Provide space for Novelty and Social Connection. • Embrace multi-disciplinary design such as collaboration between the technical engineering disciplines, urban landscaping design, engagement, and tāngata whenua, in order to achieve the above.
Decision makers
Decision makers may be distanced from the use and detail of creating opportunities for fun. However, their endorsement of visions to put people at the centre of transport infrastructure is paramount to successful outcomes for communities. Examples of how decision makers can influence the chances for fun: • Understand the role of fun in all three areas of the triple bottom line – profit, planet, and people. • Understand the bigger picture outcomes when fun can be encouraged. These include happier, healthier, and more resilient societies. • Be open to fun in transport, not as a nice to have, but resulting from tangible components that can be easily integrated piecemeal into our infrastructure and transport policy and services. • Champion an environment for fun in transport.

ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?

In conclusion, as the lack of fun-related transport research shows, there is plenty of scope remaining to further develop our understanding of fun. While fun may appear to be a trivial matter in our everyday usage of the word, authentic experiences of fun are of utmost importance for our well-being and human flourishing. Transport provides unique opportunities to add value to our lives by providing opportunities for fun, beyond our straightforward but challenging need to get from one place to another.

Fun is a feeling and not an activity, and therefore certain factors make our environment more conducive to fun. We have borrowed one framework firstly developed in consumer research to look deeper into what constitutes as fun when considering transport. The four levers of Novelty, Social Connectedness, Spontaneity, and Spatial/temporal Boundedness can inform us of opportunities for fun, helping us to communicate and integrate these factors into our behaviour and work.

At the end of all this, there is something to be said about ensuring our humanity remains central to the task of transport, at all levels – as individuals, and as transport professionals. It is easy to look at transport provision as a series of problems to be solved, or a numerical demand to be met. And yet, we are not a series of random, self-locomoting, insentient bodies. Instead, we use transport as people – people who have likes and dislikes, anxieties, celebration, sorrow, individuality, questions, humour, conscience, responsibilities, aspirations – and fun. *Don't forget to have fun*.

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