



# DOUBLE THE FEET ON THE STREET

NZ Walking Conference 2008

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<b>Presentation topic</b>	<b>Shared Streets</b>				
<b>Presentation title</b>	Challenging the Car Dominated Street: Complexity Theory and The Shared Street Movement				
<b>Presentation Style</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Presentation</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Workshop / Walkshop</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Estimated Time Required</b>	0-10 mins	<input type="checkbox"/>	10-20 mins	<input type="checkbox"/>	20-30 mins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Abstract Remit

This paper analyses how the history of traffic engineering can be seen as an increasingly reductionist treatment of a complex system, human movement. Understanding of the way complex systems works has advanced tremendously in recent years, highlighting the difficulties of dealing with complexity using such a reductionist approach.

Currently, feedbacks to this system of movement emphasise the status of the driver and the economic benefit of motorised transport. However, in this era of global warming and obesity, different ways of working with this system of human movement are sought.

Through a complexity theory (also known as chaos theory) based literature review and analysis, this paper will discuss how the shared street alters this system of feedback that has developed in favour of the car. Such streets initially appear chaotic, operating without the rules of the traffic ordering. However, the shared street seems to work, and work more efficiently than the engineered street. The suggestion of this research is that this efficiency is related to the 'swarming' behaviour of the pedestrian. The car user and the walker may be able to create a self-organising swarming-style movement through the increased interaction engendered by the shared street. The implication for the design of walkable cities is that incorporating the shared street creates flexible, multi-modal streets that challenge the dominance of the motor vehicle in urban space. This paper is based on a research from a recently completed Master of Design degree from Massey University.

## Author Profile

I have just completed a Master of Design from Massey University. The research in this combines knowledge from a degree in landscape architecture theory from Victoria University and an earlier degree in maths from Auckland University. My interest in walking as an area of research is based on a passion for walkable cities and many years spent walking through, and observing, the cities of Asia (where I also gained a degree in Chinese).