



The gateway: the detailed design of kerbs, lighting and paving contributes to 'visual narrowing', signalling the gateway or transition zone into the shared space. A report by Kent County Council in September 2010 indicated that, 18 months after the system was implemented, at least 10,000 vehicles a day travel through the shared space zone and the majority travels within the 15 to 20mph range. This puts traffic flow back at pre-project levels after a brief drop, suggesting that locals are becoming familiar with the new circumstances. Research from Europe indicates that it is possible to keep 14,500 vehicles a day moving through complex shared spaces: there is increasing empirical observation of a critical qualitative threshold between human-vehicle traffic interaction at speeds of less than 19-22 mph (Hamilton-Baillie and Jones, 2005) that appears to spring from sensory and communication abilities



Width matters: Road widths and use of materials send powerful signals to drivers. With road widths, every centimetre counts. Crossing a road that's 6m wide is much more comfortable and easier than one that's 6.2m wide, says Whitelaw. The 6m width is crucial for two-way roads, as it has been shown to slow traffic down. Elwick Road, however, is 7m wide in order to accommodate buses and cycles, although design features such as kerbs, lampposts and surface materials contribute to effective visual narrowing. The late shared space pioneer Hans Monderman warned designers not to create streets that are between 6m and 7m wide: if you can't do 6m, go wider than 7m. Many streets in the UK tend to be designed and constructed at 6.5 or 6.6m wide, which is an extremely uncomfortable width for cyclists because it encourages slightly greater vehicle speeds, say designers. If 6m widths aren't possible, advised Monderman, jump to 7m