

Mount Aspiring Collage student engagement session summary

We held an ideation session with the entire class of year 11 students at Mount Aspiring College (approx. 120) and asked them their views on their town centre and transportation issues.

We asked: How do you get into town?

The majority of students use a car but this is closely followed by walking and biking and to a lesser extent school bus, skateboarding and rollerblading. The car is the mode of transport used most often outweighing biking and walking by double.

We asked: Do you feel safe biking/walking to town?

81% felt safe with some saying they mostly did except crossing Ardmore. They commented that it was fine in the day but less so at night and required better lighting. Overwhelming response to how best to improve was to have bike lanes and also to lower speed limit of vehicles.

“Biking can be a bit scary because you don’t want to get hit by a car on the road but don’t want to hit people on the footpath either”

We asked: What would make it more appealing to bike/skate/walk to town?

Key themes in order of priority

1. Safer lanes and better lighting
2. Less traffic/cars
3. Better tracks and bike paths/jumps
4. Plantings and green spaces
5. Street Art
6. Appealing events/facilities in town

Student gathered into groups of 8 for an interactive session using maps of the town centre. We wanted to understand where young people hung out in town and what would make them want to spend more time there.

Groups tended to frequent the Lakefront, Cinema Paradiso and food eateries the most with other places being local parks to play sporting activities or hang out, library, monument, pontoon, gym, friends’ houses and place of employment.

Ideas that they would see as improvements to the town centre were mainly around providing facilities and entertainment for youth and also included a need for safe spaces to chill out after curfew.

A snapshot of some of the comments:

- Theme Park with rollercoaster
- Community events like movie night on Pembroke Park
- Close off Ardmore street and make it all GREEN!
- Buses for public transport
- Diving board on wharf
- More retail and food outlets
- E-bike and electric scooter stations
- Have retro diner for teens to hang out

- No cars in CBD
- Outside fireplace with seating/bean bags
- Tourist tax
- Inflatable obstacle course on lake
- Mall for shopping/entertainment
- 4 story car park
- Music stage

We asked: What would bring you back to Wanaka when you are older?

Themes arose out of ease of getting around including public transport, cycling lanes and pedestrian only town centre. Affordable accommodation and being a comfortable place to live in, the people and the community along with a small town vibe. The beauty of the natural environment, mountains and ski fields.

It was encouraging and energising to hear the students' vision on how they would fill the space if the road was closed along Ardmore for potential activation trials.

Key ideas

- Pop up container market
- Botanical garden
- Mobile food trucks
- Weekly concert event
- 3D pavement art
- Book readings
- Water features
- Seating areas
- Beach volleyball/basketball area
- Pop up events/dancefloor
- Loads of plants and trees
- Street art by community