

Walkable Neighbourhoods: Linkages Between Place, Health & Happiness

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Inbhuanaitheacht
Sustainability

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“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

(WHO, 1946)



‘there is irrefutable evidence of the effectiveness of regular physical activity in the primary and secondary prevention of several chronic diseases and premature death’

Warburton, Whitney Nicol and Bredin (2006)



physical, mental and social well-being

- An anti-inflammatory
- An anti-depressant
- An opportunity for social interaction
- Contributes to increased strength, flexibility, endurance and bone density
- Anti-aging properties - Up to half of decline in function thought to be caused by ageing is actually caused by not being active.
- Decreased risk of dementia
- Reduces absenteeism by up to 20%



physical, mental and social well-being

People



Place



Purpose



Chronic Stress

Intelligent
Health



OLLSCOIL TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA
BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
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Walkability
Criteria

Escapism

PARTNERSHIPS



THE PROGRAMME

As illustrated in the figure below the programme requires integrated support in organization, management, delivery and evaluation.

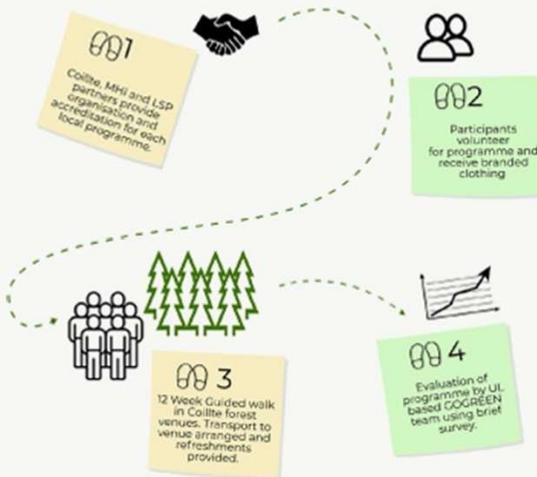
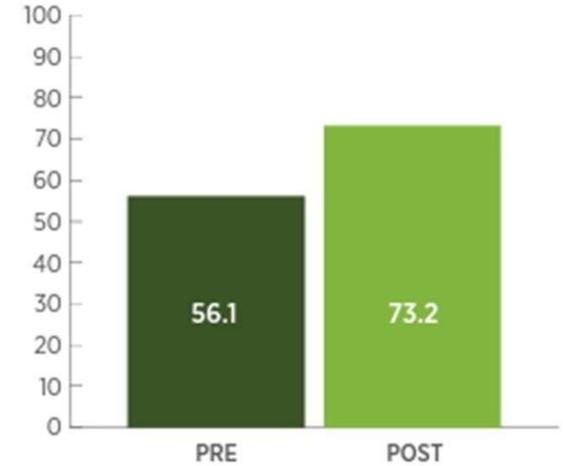
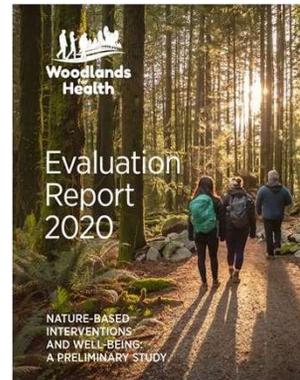


Figure above: The steps in the Woodlands for Health programme.

Well-Being Scores



The scores on the WHO-5 represented a 31% increase in self-reported well-being after the 12 week program. Note that higher scores indicate higher levels of self-reported well-being and values below 50 suggest psychological distress with values above 70 indicative of high levels of well-being. The findings indicated a noticeable positive impact on well-being.



Loneliness

EU loneliness survey 2022 – Ireland 20%
CSO pandemic data 35%

- more harmful than –
- physical inactivity (11% premature mortality)
- as bad for you as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. John Cacioppo, University of Chicago
- air pollution is 5%; for loneliness, it's estimated as 25%.

Ireland has highest levels of loneliness in Europe

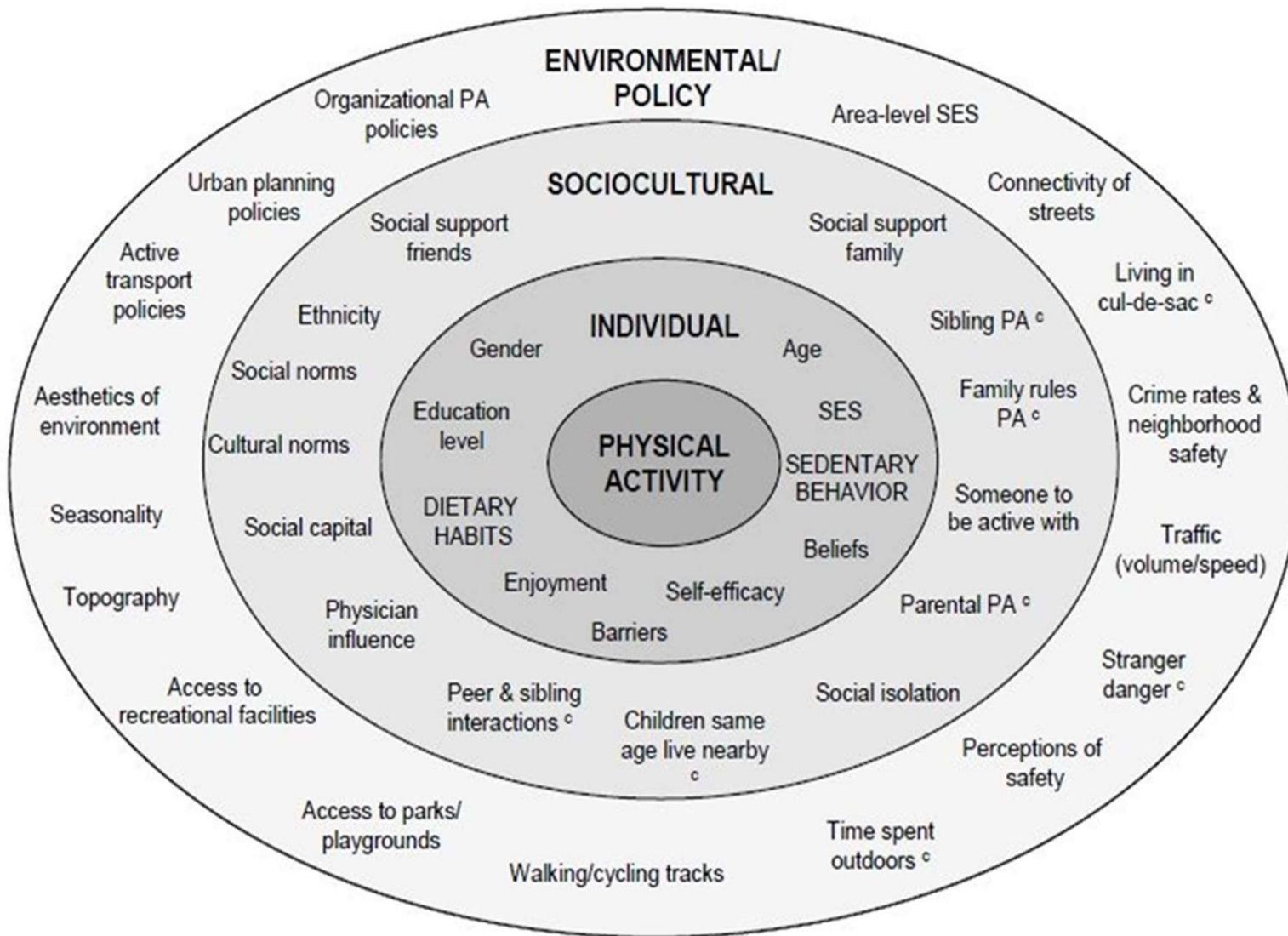
A new EU-wide survey yields insights into how feelings of loneliness are related to the size and quality of social relationships and major life events.

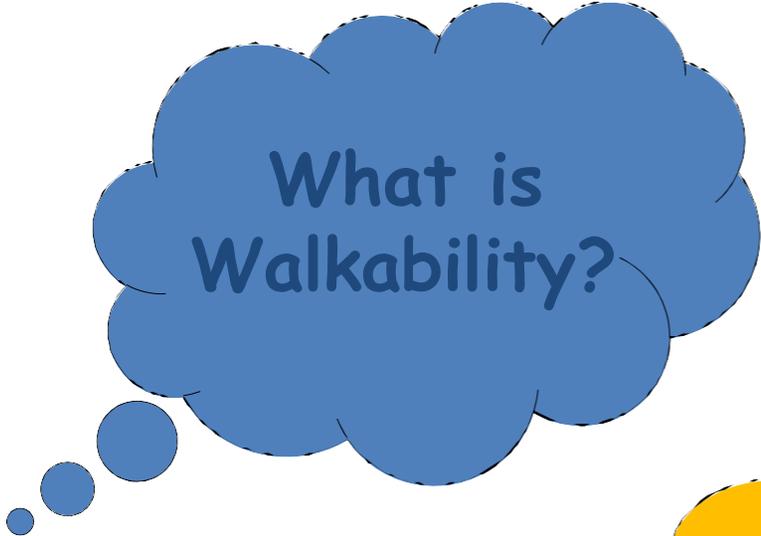
Rachel Donovan

NEWS > NEWS

7 June 2023







What is
Walkability?

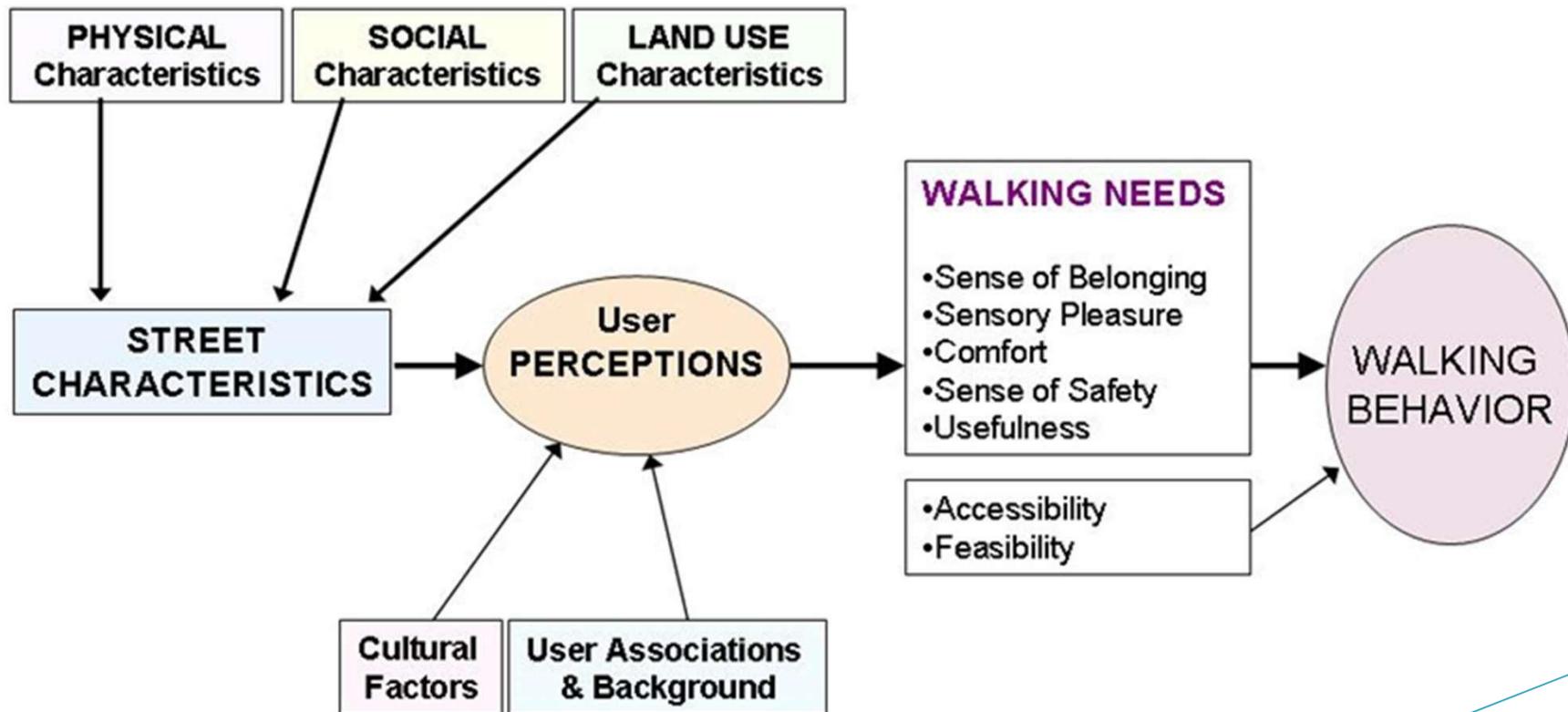
- Ambiguity



Assessment and
Applicability

- Biases in Measurement & Site Identification

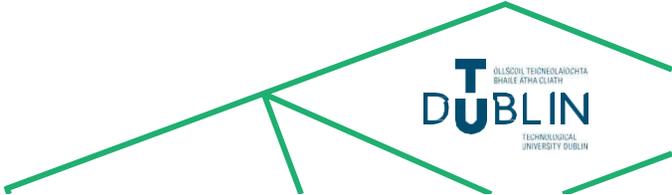
Conceptual framework of walking needs on Main Street Adapted from Mehta (2008)



[Image Source: Intersectionality - Women Friendly Cities Challenge](#)



Intersectionality & Gender Mainstreaming



The 'The Village' , in an urban or rural context,

This is a distinct community where all weekly needs can be facilitated on foot which also has a recreational walking facility nearby and good public transport has opportunities for social interaction and people have a sense of belonging.

Fitzsimons D'Arcy (2013)

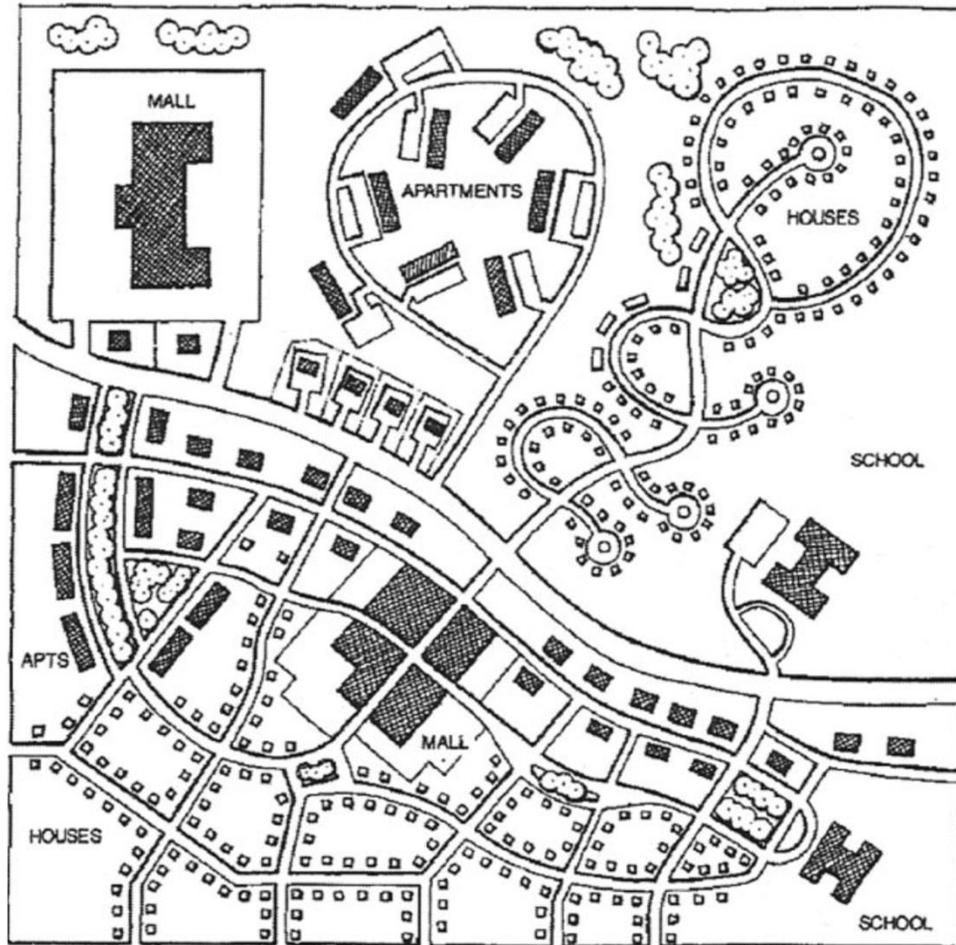
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Suburban sprawl



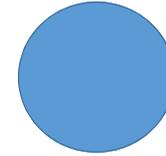
Traditional neighborhood

Two distinct community designs (Saelens, Sallis and Frank 2003)



Architecture & Severance

Village/ Neighbourhood



(Fitzsimons D'Arcy 2013)

© Dr Lorraine D'Arcy

Behaviours

A corner shop/
newsagent



The place you go to
exercise (e.g. a gym
or the park)



A local school



The place you go
to socialise (eg a
pub or community
centre)



A crèche or
childcare facility



A public transport
stop



A supermarket



A bank, credit
union or post office



The friend/ family
member you visit
most often



A church or place
of worship



Scoring:

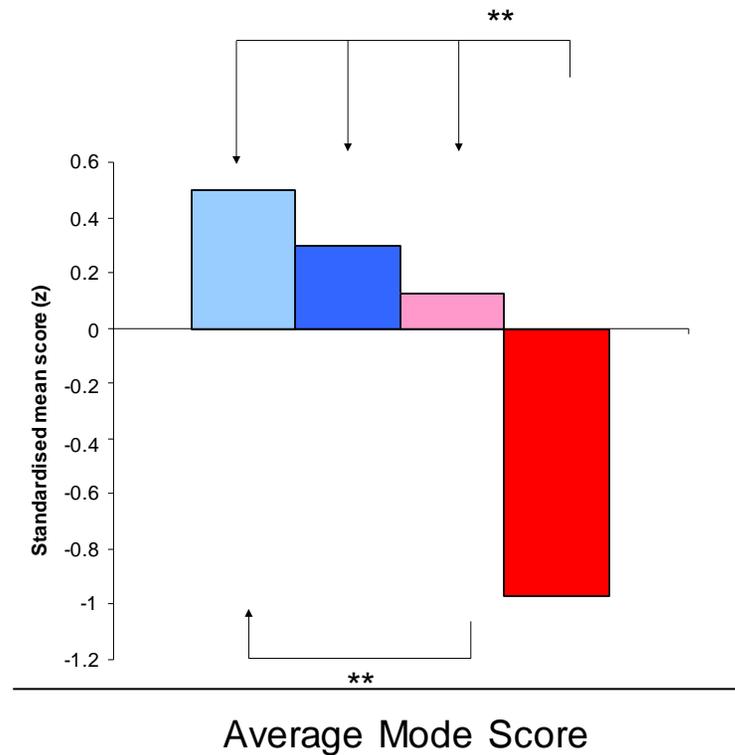
Active = 3

Public Transport = 2

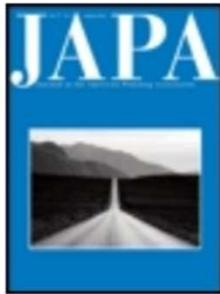
Motorised = 1

** $\rho < .01$, * $\rho < .05$

- High Walkable Deprived (N=278)
- High Walkable Not Deprived (N=279)
- Low Walkable Deprived (N=262)
- Low Walkable Not Deprived (N=242)



Happiness



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Linkages Between Place, Health, and Happiness in Younger and Older Adults

Kevin M. Leyden, Michael J. Hogan, Lorraine D'Arcy, Brendan Bunting & Sebastiaan Bierema

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Happiness and health across the lifespan in five major cities: The impact of place and government performance

Michael J. Hogan ^a, Kevin M. Leyden ^b, Ronan Conway ^c, Abraham Goldberg ^c, Deirdre Walsh ^c, Phoebe E. McKenna-Plumley ^c

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Short Report

The importance of being parsimonious: Reliability of a brief community walkability assessment instrument

Thomas K. Bias ^a, Kevin M. Leyden ^{a,1}, Christiaan G. Abildso ^b, Bill Reeger-Nash ^c, Adrian Bauman ^d

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Understanding the Pursuit of Happiness in Ten Major Cities

Kevin M. Leyden ¹, Abraham Goldberg ³, and Philip Michelbach ²

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RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Social Capital and the Built Environment: The Importance of Walkable Neighborhoods

Kevin M. Leyden, PhD

A growing number of researchers agree that social networks and community involvement have positive health consequences. Persons who are socially engaged with others and actively involved in their communities tend to live longer and be healthier physically and

Objectives. I sought to examine whether pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods encourage enhanced levels of social and community engagement (i.e., social capital).

Methods. The study investigated the relationship between neighborhood design and individual levels of social capital. Data were obtained from a household survey that measured the social capital of citizens living in neighborhoods that ranged from tradi-

Happiness

Traditional Predictors of Crime levels, being unemployed, being healthy and trusting others all have **direct effects** on happiness.

But the type of neighbourhood you live in matters too!

In general, the DIRECT effects of living in a walkable neighbourhood on happiness **mattered most for people 18 to 45.**

For adults aged 18 – 35 years, the effects of walkability on happiness were weaker but present. The direct effect of walkability on happiness for this age group, although positive, was statistically significant only at the ($p = .07$) level.



Happiness

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Happiness

For adults aged **36 – 45 years**, higher levels of walkability were **directly positively related to higher levels of happiness** ($p = .001$). This is a very strong relationship! People of this age definitely felt happier in places where they could easily walk to a multitude of destinations to shop or socialise and where children could walk to school.



Happiness

For older adults things were a bit more complicated.

For adults aged 46 – 60 years, there was no direct effect of walkability on happiness. Instead, and as hypothesized, the effects of walkability on happiness were mediated by **health and trust in others. In particular, higher levels of neighbourhood walkability were positively associated with health and trust, and higher levels of health and trust in turn predicted higher happiness in this age-group.**



Happiness

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Summary: Happiness in Dublin

- For older adults things were a bit more complicated.

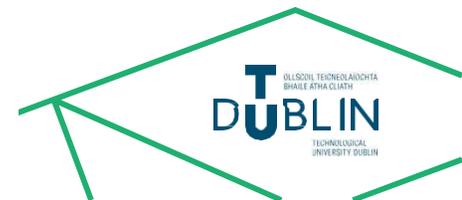
Finally, for adults aged 60+ years the effects of walkability on happiness were strongly mediated by the positive effects of walkability on **health** ($p = .001$). Health matters more as we age and there is something about living in walkable places that enhances for our self-reported health.

Summary: Happiness in Dublin

- Interestingly both younger (18-35) and older people (60+) **appreciate living in attractive places** that have trees, and green spaces, and attractive building and views and this fed into their happiness.

What does all this mean?

It means that the way we plan and design our neighbourhoods affects our happiness as well as our health and trust in others. Planning models differ. We must promote attractive, walkable, urban/suburban designs that are good for people.



What does all this mean?
We want to be
more connected to
the places we live
and to each other.



Carchitecture



Human Scale

Lorraine D'Arcy



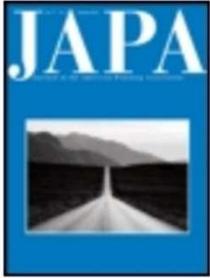
Vision

1. Increasing public discourse on the importance of Walking and Liveable Communities in Ireland and Internationally
2. Showcasing Investment - e.g. inspiring projects towards ensuring money is well spent
3. Empowering Practitioners and Inspiring Decision Makers such as Directors of Service and Public Representatives
4. Establishing a Baseline ... what are the metrics [Investment v's Outcomes]



Malmö, Sweden





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