



Graven summer street, copyright: Aarhus Municipality

AARHUS: Living summer streets in Aarhus

As a part of the “Summer Pedestrian Street Pilot Project”, two streets in Aarhus by the name Graven and Vestergade were converted into pedestrian streets from June to October 2019. The project’s objective was to enhance the liveable urban environment by creating living and green streets. This contributed to the cities.multimodal’s objective by making sustainable mobility attractive and easy to adopt.

During the cold months Vestergade is an ordinary inner-city street with many cafés and smaller companies. The speed limit is 50 kilometres per hour. “Graven” – which is one of the oldest streets in Aarhus is a cycling street with mixed traffic. The cars on “Graven” must adapt to the speed of the cyclists.

In order to accomplish the anticipated outcomes, the two streets were opened for pedestrians and the speed limit was reduced. The streets and pavements were used to facilitate activities that underpinned a good and liveable urban environment. For instance, cafés, restaurants and bars had their outdoor service moved to the lanes of the streets. Also, the streets were decorated with plants and trees which contributed to a greener urban life. At the same time, the whole streets were transformed into a pedestrian zone with new signage. Both cars and bikes now had to follow the pace of the pedestrians. The speed limit was set to 15 kilometres per hour, even the new shared e-scooters were coded to not exceed this limit.

Regardless of whether you cycle, walk or drive along Vestergade, you will encounter a diversity of stores and restaurants. On the one-way asphalt road with narrow pavements, you'll find both cafés, second-hand shops, board game cafés, businesses and diverse eateries. Despite the many different types of business enterprises present, Vestergade is not a particularly busy street. Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers can move through the area relatively smoothly even though the general traffic is affected by business-related traffic.

As a summer pedestrian street, Vestergade has a relaxed atmosphere. More pedestrians and cyclists use the street. Families, including families with prams, also use the street, which now also has outdoor tables and benches on the road. Not all the pedestrians realise they can use the road, i.e. they still use the pavement. The speed of vehicles is also an impediment to curious pedestrians using the road. However, the new street flowers move merrily around, as by-passers think it's fun to move them about.

Graven is considered to be the main artery of the Latin Quarter. The one-way asphalt road with narrow pavements and colorful buildings functions as a link to the surrounding streets. In Graven, local residents of Aarhus live side-by-side with local coffee shops, second-hand stores, art rooms and other specialist stores. Cyclists pass by the many cafés and restaurants at high speed when they use the road as part of their cycle route. Even though the street is busy, with curious pedestrians and busy traders, many people use the grassy area known locally as "Hipster højen" (Hipster mound), especially young people who play music and drink there. Because the street has many functions and users, traffic easily comes to a standstill and requires behavioral adjustments. For example, commercial vehicles affect the pattern of traffic in the street.

As a summer pedestrian street, Graven has more pedestrians and visitors to the various cafés, restaurants and stores. The sound of bells ringing and car horns has become part of the street's characteristic, which is an indication that pedestrians, cyclists and drivers have difficulty finding space for themselves. The black asphalt road is now more varied, as the pedestrians stroll on the road, moving around the café tables and chairs. One of the traffic situations that creates a disturbance during the day, is the movement of commercial vehicles. The extension of the pavement has meant that the road has become narrower and that there are new requirements relating to how you can move on Graven when it is a summer pedestrian street.

During the campaign evaluation has been carried out using observations, interviews and counting. Community councils, traders, residents, cyclists and pedestrians were chosen as target groups for evaluation. Surveys have been carried out on week 35 and 36 in 2019.

Evaluation has been done in the following steps:

- Midway evaluation in August 2019, in the form of focus groups with the Joint Council, representatives from local residents and the business community
- Street interviews with pedestrians and cyclists in week 35 in 2019



- A link to a questionnaire issued via local people's network and channels on social media in weeks 35-40
- A link to a questionnaire distributed to the business community/owners and leaseholders via e-Boks in August and September

During the evaluation process 103 resident surveys, 69 cyclist interviews, 56 trader surveys and 131 pedestrian interviews have been completed.

Different residential priorities create a conflict in the streets – also in relation to attitudes about whether a summer pedestrian street is a good idea and a solution has been found.

Traders' focus/ interests:

- Turnover
- Easy accessibility (customers and goods)
- Good atmosphere/ positive publicity

Cyclists' focus/interests:

- Easy accessibility
- Distance from vehicles
- Feeling of having priority

Residents' focus/interests:

- Accessibility (access to own home)
- Peace and quiet and privacy
- Own inspection of the area

There have been both negative and positive experiences collected among the respondents, such as Increased opportunity to sit outside, cars driving slower, fewer cars, more people on the street and better atmosphere were mentioned as positive changes and more noise, conflicts between cyclists/pedestrians and drivers/pedestrians and loss of privacy were mentioned as negative changes.

The majority of respondents were in favor of repeating the project in the coming year.



The main objectives of the Summer Pedestrian Streets in Aarhus. The active involvement is the main action of the citizen involvement measures.



Involved stakeholders

- Community councils
- Traders
- Residents
- Street users: Cyclists and pedestrians
- Employees of Aarhus Municipality, who have worked on the project

Methods for data collection:



OBSERVATIONS



INTERVIEWS



COUNTING

Timing of the data collection:



CALENDAR WEEK 35 AND 36
IN 2019



WEEKDAY 07:00-09:00,
11:00-13:00 AND 15:00-17:00



SATURDAY 10:30-12:30 AND
14:30-16:30

The budget for creating the Pedestrian Summer Streets were divided between the City of Aarhus, Technical Department and street associations. The distribution will be clearer in 2020.



Recommendations, tips and tricks:

The following recommendation based on the evaluation report are followed for replication of the Summer Pedestrian Streets in 2020 and can be considered for further transferability.

Recommendations and actions about repeat of pilot project in 2020 based on the evaluation (users, residents and traders):



* Street near Graven



Recommendations/ Actions about Repeat of Pilot Project in 2020 Based on the Evaluation (Aarhus Municipality Employees):



* Street crossing Klostergade – the street that is the continuation of Grave street

Contact details:

Gustav Friis

Project Manager

City of Aarhus – Section of Mobility

Phone: +45 8145 9363

Email: guf@aarhus.dk

