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KARLSKRONA: Co-creating public space in Karlskrona

During Karlskrona's car free day on the European Mobility Week (EMW) 2019, the municipality of Karlskrona made efforts to create citizen involvement by implementing the concept of *Living streets*. For one Saturday, public space was closed off from motorized traffic and instead used as a space for human interaction and for meetings between people and the municipality. The idea was to highlight what can be done in the absence of cars and how active mobility can be a positive thing for a city.



The municipality was responsible for organizing the day and citizens were involved in a few different ways. The citizens were there as visitors and participants, taking part of the information that was given by the municipality and engaging in a dialogue with municipal representatives regarding sustainable mobility and the prospect of having a car-free city center. The citizens were also part of the activities that were arranged during the day. For example, some students engaged in activism as part of the

international event “Park(ing) day”, which promotes sustainable mobility and planning by creating mini parks in parking spots. There was also a local hobby horsing group that used a parking area to build a course as well as a combined farmers’ market and flea market, to name a few efforts.



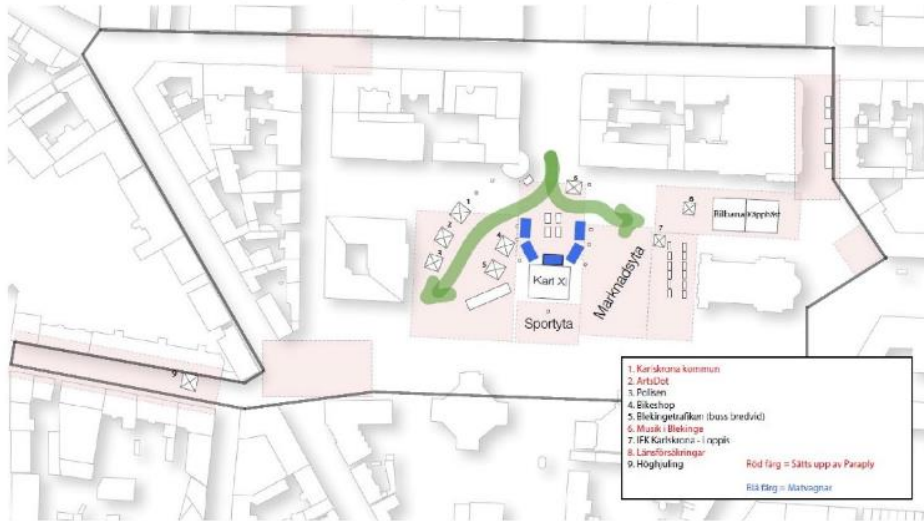
The planning process for the method:

This method was chosen as a way of allowing citizens to participate and claim ownership of how their public space is used. Citizens should feel ownership and responsibility over what happens in their city and how they choose to travel. It was meant to affect the attitudes of citizens and allow them to see the positive outcomes of opening up a city to people and lowering the number of cars - promoting the concepts of living streets and of sustainable mobility. It was a part of Karlskrona’s European Mobility Week, which in turn was part of the mobility management measures within the cities.multimodal project. The idea of the method was to start a discussion about mobility and engaging in mobility management to nudge the population towards sustainability while also gaging the interest, attitudes and opinions of the people for the future work of the municipality.

The logistics department and project department together with the environmental strategist were responsible for planning the event. As it was part of the European Mobility Week, the planning started quite early, three months prior to the event. This was necessary in order to be able to find interested participants and complete all preparations, such as obtaining permissions and structuring the layout of the event.



Layout of the car-free day. Traffic was closed off within the grey lines.



The implementation of the method:

The method was implemented during the car-free day of the European Mobility Week, taking place in September 2019. As it was part of Karlskrona's efforts within the cities.multimodal project, the majority of the funding came from the project. Two project planners and an environmental strategist carried out the implementation.

Many aspects had to be prepared in order to complete the event. Setting up all the activities, coordinating the citizen activities, bringing giveaways and finishing the marketing efforts. The target group of the efforts were all the citizens of Karlskrona, regardless of age and social group. They were reached through face-to-face interactions, social media posts, ads on the municipality website, signage and posters around the city as well as guerilla marketing in the form of saddle covers placed on bicycles.

All this marketing was not done specifically for the car-free day, but rather for the European Mobility Week as a whole. However, the car-free day was the biggest event of the week and did take up a large share of the communication efforts.



Follow up and evaluation:

There could have been better follow up of the event, but there was a lack of time and personnel. The staff which was there did talk to the participants and the people arranging activities, but there was no written evaluation (such as a survey). Furthermore, the municipal communication department was responsible for taking photographs and filming, but because of a lack of prioritization, they did not show up when the most people were at the event. However, there was a lot of media coverage from several local newspapers and the radio.

The gathered results and lessons - both regarding what to do and what to avoid - will be used for the next European Mobility Week, for which preparations have already begun. The concept of a living street has resonated with the municipality and an idea of creating a “summer street” has gotten support on several levels. Preparations have begun and local business owners have expressed a lot of interest in having a pedestrian street outside their shops for a longer period. Such a street could also contain the typical elements of a living street – greenery, benches and of course the involvement of the locals, giving them the opportunity to communicate what they would like to see.

Recommendations, tips and tricks:

The living street concept during the car-free day was successful; it was both inviting and disruptive at the same time, which is a good environment for having dialogues and sharing perspectives. During the day, cars had to give way to pedestrians and parking spots were used for local initiatives, as mentioned above, which is not very common in the city and therefore thought-provoking. There were many visitors during the day, partaking in the fun activities, absorbing information and discussing with the municipal staff. The implementation of the method provided some lessons that will be summarized below:

- Disrupting everyday patterns is a good way of making people stop and think, however:
 - Make sure to have a very clear message and abundant information. This event did have signs and other information outlets, but it became clear that more was needed as some people were unsure of what was going on.
- Do not forget to follow up properly. This was one of the weaker points of this event. A smaller survey or some interviews could provide clear results of what worked and what did not.
- Make sure to book photographers and/or the communications department in time and be clear with what is needed. In this instance, they only showed up for a few minutes in the very beginning of the event, which was not enough and did not show the actual number of visitors.
- Try to get as many local initiatives involved as possible. They bring new perspectives and often attract visitors in the form of friends and family as well as established customers.
- Consider the space you use – opt for a smaller more well-filled area rather than a sprawling, half-empty area just for the sake of it.



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