A CONCEPT TO DISCUSS REDESIGN IDEAS FOR
THE MAIN PEDESTRIAN STREET OF VÄXJÖ
STORGATAN 2.0 –
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THE MAIN PEDESTRIAN STREET OF VÄXJÖ

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Tack så mycket.
STORGATAN 2.0 is a study and design concept investigating the need for change of the main pedestrian street of the city of Växjö, in South Sweden. In order to propose a basis for discussions, and work as an inspiration for further renewal ideas, the design concept presents various, initial redesign visualisations of the site, Storgatan pedestrian street.

The theoretical framework of this study leans on conducting urban studies with human-centred approach to city development. The exploratory research phase of the project was performed through several methods, including site observation, interview, and a survey for the local citizens. Also, relevant secondary research and necessary investigation of the context, Sweden, are part of the study.

In the end, the project focuses on sorting and analysing the data, by using various visual thinking tools as a method. The outcome of the project is a proposal visualising the possibilities for Storgatan, based on the research results. The visualisations are not meant to provide detail-oriented final solutions, but defend the potential of Storgatan to become a stronger version of the main pedestrian street – an enjoyable, pedestrian-prioritised public place that is actively used and shaped by the citizens.

KEYWORDS

main pedestrian street, public space, street redesign, local involvement, urban design
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INTRODUCTION
1.1 Project Description

The main focus of this project is the main pedestrian street of the city of Växjö, in Sweden. The study aims to investigate the need for a change from the perspective of the local citizens, municipality and the state. The theoretical framework being based on human-centred urban studies, the study reflects on social sustainability in relation to city development and the quality street environment.

After performing several methods, including a brief site analysis, site observation interview, survey for the locals, the final result of the project is meant to pull insights from the research, conducted by carefully framed research questions.

The end result as spatial visualisations are not meant to represent detail-oriented urban redesign plans for Storgatan street, but rather work as a basis for discussions and source of inspiration for further development plans and ideas. Therefore, the aim of the project is meant to open a discussion by showing the potentiality and possibilities of Storgatan when it comes to redesign ideas.
1.2 PERSONAL MOTIVATION

Being born and raised in the city centre of Helsinki, the capital of Finland, has naturally increased my interest in urban life and cities in general. When I arrived to Växjö almost two years ago, I had an urge to spend a few days in the city centre before moving into my student accommodation at the university campus. I was pleased to notice that the core of the city centre in Växjö was designed to be quite pedestrian friendly, but I could not help myself feeling slightly disappointed of it. It was not because of the amount or quality of the services, but rather the condition and function of the main pedestrian street. Perhaps it was a feeling that I was not even able to describe to myself back then, but compared to new buildings and upcoming districts in Växjö, the main pedestrian street felt somehow dated and forgotten. Little did I know that it would become the main focus and interest of my thesis project.

Interior architecture and spatial design as my educational background had a quite strong influence on the topic choice. By working with a physical site, in a spatial context, I saw an opportunity to apply my former skills and knowledge in the process. However, the strong social sustainability context with human-centred orientation created a deeper connection to my recent design master studies, with broader understanding of design.

Also, the locality of the subject was of great importance when making the decision, because I wanted to create a deeper connection to the city I had been living in for almost two years. Overall, this topic was an ideal choice for me, due to my personal goal to gain more experience in urban projects, as exterior spaces. And when it comes to the artistic expression process, I have had a long term goal to develop my architectural visualisation skills in order
to master the ideal, airy style for the initial concept phase visualisations. By the certain style, I refer to a mixed technique that could mean a combination of watercoloured style, original photography and a 3D-model.

In the end, seeing this project as an exciting challenge was extremely motivating, but also a bit scary. Therefore, I decided to trust my intuition and jump into the process without fear. In the long run, learning is all that counts.

02. The Location of the project.
1.3 AIMS AND PURPOSES

The aim of this research is to investigate the role and possibilities of a main pedestrian street in relation to the construction of community and city identity. Also, this study aims to defend the traditional Swedish city model where the core of the city centre is pedestrian-prioritised that has lately been threatened by the growth of automobile-oriented external shopping centres. Another purpose of this study is to find out the reasons that support the theory of good street environment conditions increasing human activities and therefore improving street life. The crucial aim of the theoretical framework is to investigate the theme in a strong aspect of sustainability, focusing especially on social sustainability and sustainable urban development.

To contextualise the study and to situate the design project, I have chosen the city of Växjö in Southern Sweden as the location on which to focus. More specifically, the pedestrian zone of the main street of Växjö will be my main interest. Thus, it is crucial to understand the current state and already existing plans of the site and the areas around it. When it comes to the plans for the central station and the surrounding area currently proposed, the purpose of my project is to prove that it is important to keep in mind the old town centre while planning its surroundings. My hypothesis is that the contrast between old and new can be too drastic, causing restlessness, safety risks and even signs of segregation in the main pedestrian street if it is not considered in the development plans.

By conducting an empirical study, my aim is to observe how people use the space as well as to evaluate the functionality of its design. From a cultural and sociopolitical perspective, one of the most important aims is to find out citizens’ genuine feelings about the main pedestrian street, Storgatan.
As they are the users and inhabitants, it is necessary to give the citizens a voice and let them contribute when it comes to shaping and developing the city. Hence, my intention is to get a diverse sample of participants including current and former locals of Växjö in order to refine the design principles from the perspective of citizens. To summarise, the purpose of this study is to connect the project to its geographical context, the city of Växjö, as comprehensively as necessary.

Besides aiming to create a relevant contextual framework for the research, the goal of the project is to come up with a concept that discusses the redesign ideas for the main pedestrian street in the city of Växjö. The aim is that the end result of the project will be based on the conducted research and citizens’ insights. The purpose of my research and design project thus runs deeper than purely aesthetic reasons. To emphasise, the project goal is not to solve everything but rather provide a basis for discussions and hopefully, inspiration for a future development plan with active citizen involvement.
1.4 DELINEATION OF FIELD OF STUDY

The wider context of this study implicates urban theories of public space that emphasise the meaning of the quality of the physical environment and significance of street design in relation to sustainability. In this study, social sustainability is one of the most fundamental parts but it touches upon the environmental, economic and cultural aspects of sustainability as well. Human behaviour and citizen involvement in relation to street design are studied through exploratory research along with secondary research that covers literature, articles and desktop research. The more specific focus of my study, however, is the current condition of the main pedestrian street Storgatan in the city of Växjö. This focus required me to do some research around history and recent trends of the city model in Sweden as well. It consisted a brief research about the Government’s strategy for sustainable urban development, including the notion of it. In order to approach the topic on a more individual level, locals were involved in the research process.
As one of the main results revealed by this study, there is a need and desire for updating the main pedestrian street of Växjö, Storgatan. It was not only my personal motivation and opinion that drove me to propose a redesign of the site, but also the insights of the municipality planning department and the local citizens. Albeit the study is based on urban theories concerning public spaces and exploratory research focused on the site, the project is not aimed to be a detail-oriented, technical urban plan. Nevertheless, it touches upon the field of urban design yet the focus is on the initial idea generation and conceptual phase. Hence, the conceptual design proposal is meant to provide a basis for discussions and inspiration rather than to develop plans for the forthcoming renewal project. When it comes to the research and design process, I have applied my educational background – my knowledge and skills in spatial design – alongside my more recent interest in human-centred design. The end result with visualisations of the conceptual proposal could refer to somewhat traditional, solution-oriented design thinking but it is supposed to represent a visual example, a proposal of urban renewal that hopefully leads to further, more citizen-led discussions and development ideas. On a larger scale, the project could be applied to other cities at least in Sweden, since the pedestrian-friendly city model is quite common.
During my process, I discovered that my study required more than one research question. Some of the questions are more related to the role of a main pedestrian street as a public space and connecting point, whereas others focus on how design can contribute. Formulating research and design questions, not only helped me in the research phase, it also helped me keep the purpose and aim of my project firm in mind. It could be said that the questions worked as a red thread running through the process. The research questions are introduced below.

Why should cities prioritise and maintain the pedestrian precincts of the city centre, and what makes the role of a main pedestrian street prominent, and moreover, for whom is it important?

Why is it crucial to develop and maintain the existing areas in the city centre while planning new areas around them?

How can design contribute to the revival of the main pedestrian street of Växjö, in order to work as a basis for further discussions and ideas led by citizen involvement?
2.1 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to achieve a more comprehensive and solid foundation for my design project, the research process has included both theoretical part and empirical studies. When it comes to theoretical framework, this thesis is very much based on the Danish architect and urbanist Jan Gehl’s study of public space and the importance of the quality of the physical environment in relation to citizens’ activities. Gehl, as a praised professional in the field of urban planning, with established Gehl Architects office, influenced remarkably the city development of Copenhagen after 40 years of research and 10 years of practice focused on developing cities for people (Gehl et al. [No date]). Strongly observation based theory by Gehl creates a relevant framework for this study and supports my own hypotheses. Hence, one of the most fundamental theoretical bases for this study, is the classic publication ‘Life Between Buildings’ by Jan Gehl, first published back in the 1970’s (Gehl, 2006, p. 7).

Another urban theorist this study leans on, is William H. Whyte with studies related to Gehl’s as they examine city centre and public spaces in a quite similar, human-centred way. United States-based William H. Whyte, passed away in 1999, was appreciated and acknowledged urbanist, who, with his peculiar love of cities, emphasised the meaning of human scale in architecture and planning (Underhill, 2012; Whyte et al. 2012). The publication ‘City – Rediscovering the Center” written by White and published by Paco Underhill in 2012 is one of the central pieces when it comes to the theoretical framework of this study. Both of these theorists from the urban planning field not only create a strong theoretical framework for this study, but also frame it when it comes to the disciplinary aspect.
The theoretical and empirical parts of my research include qualitative in-depth interview and a quantitative survey with qualitative elements. Urban and spatial studies provide a relevant framework for my study, while information about Växjö city and pedestrian precincts in Sweden connects my research to the site upon which I focus, Storgatan street. The empirical part of the study was carried out as a site observation, during which I paid particular attention to details and the varied ways people use the space. In qualitative, in-depth interviews, I gained further knowledge about the site from the professional city planning perspective while a quantitative online survey with qualitative elements gave me an impressive range of opinions, insights and suggestions represented of a diverse sample of current and former local citizens. To sort through and analyse the data I used different techniques from contextual analysis to survey statistic evaluation and issue mapping for framing the design principles. For idea generation I used different techniques from mapping to sketching and finally some participatory activities to involve citizens in refining the concept.

2.1.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH

Besides, the primary research, which refers to a more exploratory research involving participants, I used secondary research as method. Secondary research means collecting and synthesizing information from an existing data, meaning books, research papers, journal articles, governmental statistics, and so forth. (Martin et al. 2012). In the early phase of my research process I went through some journal articles and studies in the field of urban design. In order to understand the context of Sweden better, I investigated the city model trends and governmental principles in relation to sustainability. I used desktop research for searching information about
relevant street design examples that I examined briefly. To understand the principles and future development plans of Växjö municipality, I searched information about it, mainly by reading through Växjö Kommun’s website with English translations. The secondary research that I used as one of my method, was strongly framed by my research questions.

2.1.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

To find out more information about the city centre of Växjö and Storgatan pedestrian street especially from an urban development perspective, using interviews as a research method seemed relevant. Indeed, interviews are essential to collect first-hand information on experiences, opinions, attitudes and perceptions (Martin et al. 2012, p. 102). I contacted the municipality, Växjö Kommun, and after having been invited to a meeting with their landscape architect, I planned a semi-structured in-depth interview. According to Cohen et al. (2006), a semi-structured interview is based on an ‘interview guide’, which is a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the discussion. Besides planning a list of discussion topics, I wanted to keep my meeting with the landscape architect less formal in order to discover unexpected topics and views as well. In this case, the semi-structured in-depth interview was a successful method, since the list of questions and topics were covered whole leaving room for a more organic conversation.

2.1.3 SITE OBSERVATION

I chose site observation as one of my methods in order to develop a deeper connection to the space, Storgatan pedestrian street. It was crucial to
understand how people use the space and what the nature of the pedestrian traffic is. According to Gehl et al. (2013, p. XII) observation provides the researcher with interesting information about the interaction of public life and public space. Thus, rather than only counting people, it was important to observe people’s behaviour, reactions and decisions whether spontaneous or not. Before conducting the observation study, it required a brief site analysis using photography and notes. The site analysis helped me to plan the actual observation. To document the observation, I printed empty charts and created a simple illustrated map of Storgatan pedestrian zone for note-taking and sketching. Besides the charts and map illustrations, the observation materials included a digital camera, markers and a list of targeting questions. The method was planned to be performed as fly-on-the-wall observation, which allowed me to gather information without direct participation or interference with the people being observed (Martin et al. 2012, p. 90). Due to the time of the year, the unstable weather was no doubt one of the main challenges. As Gehl (2011, p. 11) claims, a broad spectrum of human activities take place when exterior conditions are favourable, when weather and place invite them.

2.1.4 Survey

In order to get an overview of the current and former locals’ opinions and feelings of Storgatan street in Växjö, I decided to include an online survey in my study. According to Martin et al. (2012, p. 172), survey is an efficient tool for collecting plenty of data in a short time, and with large enough sample, results are possible to analyse statistically. In order to get a larger sample of participants, it was important to plan the survey carefully by basing the aim and questions on previously performed methods, such as site observation, but more importantly on my research questions. The survey included several
types of questions, for example closed ones with forced choices, specific ones focusing on particular details, judgemental that ask for participants’ opinion and requests for suggestions that invite participants to express new ideas or insights (Martin et al. 2012, p. 172). When planning the survey, it was crucial that the participants remained anonymous. Hence, the hypothesis was that people would be more willing to express stronger opinions and negative feelings when their personal details were not identified.

To create the survey, I used a free online software, Google Forms, due to its effortless accessibility. Before publishing the survey, it was tested by a co-student to estimate the length of time and to avoid possible errors or complexities. It was important that the survey was accessible for the participants without being too difficult or exhausting. I used social media to reach out to suitable participants, so I posted the survey on a couple of local Facebook groups as well as on my personal Facebook wall.

It was necessary to acknowledge the limitations of this method as well. An online survey is often based on self-selection, which is a risk since the researcher is not able to control the participant selection. Due to self-selection, one participant is technically able to take the survey multiple times. Also, it is important to keep in mind that not everyone uses social media, so the survey may not reach certain age groups at all.

2.1.5 IDEA GENERATION

After the theoretical and empirical studies, I moved towards the idea generation phase of my design project. In order to begin my creative process, I used mind mapping to map out the issues based on the survey results.
According to Martin et al. (2012, p. 118), mind mapping is a helpful visual thinking tool that helps the designer to understand the relations between the collected information, which is useful for idea generation and initial concept development. By categorising the issues of Storgatan, to traffic or aesthetics for example, I was able to create links between them. The issue map was a simple but crucial method for me to sort out the data and moreover, to frame my design concept.

After the issue map, I was able to define the focus of my sketching process. According to Herring et al. (2009, p. 5) “sketching refers to a rough drawing of an idea”, which meant visualising the redesign focus points for myself, in my case. Due to my educational background in interior architecture, it was natural for me to create a mood board before making conceptual visualisations of the redesign proposal. The mood board that consisted of my own photos and free, high quality stock images, defined a visual guideline for the atmosphere goal of my final street visualisations. I used a mixed technique to visualise the redesign ideas for Storgatan. The visualisations were supposed to be a combination of a simple 3D-model of the street, original photos to represent the building facades, and an intense layer working in Photoshop in order to emphasise the aimed atmosphere and light conceptual feeling, rather than represent photorealistic final solutions.

2.2 RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

All the focus points and decisions of my creative process were pulled out from the conducted research. It means, that the end result of my concept should be heavily based on the theoretical framework, contextual analyses, my exploratory research and insights from the local citizens. Hence, the idea
was not to provide a solution leaning on my own preferences and creativity alone. However, as a designer I used sketching and visualisations as a tool for communicating the ideas and proposals to others. Based on my own experience and design philosophy, it is often much more effective to show your thinking and ideas by visualising them than only telling about them. Making connections and pointing out the big picture by using my visual skills, is something that I have been acknowledged of. Therefore, I wanted to utilise my skills when it comes to the artistic expression.
3

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSES
3.1 CITY IN TRANSITION

In response to the problem of increased private automobile use in the 1950s, Swedish cities planned strategies recommending that the commercial core of the city centre should be based on pedestrian-priority zones. Since the increased use of automobiles was incompatible with the cultural, economic and physical fabric of city centres, these strategies were rapidly implemented all over Sweden (Robertson, 1991, p. 301). It is safe to say that pedestrian streets have played a prominent role in the history of Swedish city development. One could claim that the identity of a Swedish city centre has been built around its strong pedestrian precinct, as represented by the main pedestrian street. In general, I have noticed that Swedish cities are commonly associated with their pedestrian-friendly old town centres.

In recent decades, the role and function of the city centre has been in transition all over in Sweden. The retail environment has changed by shifting from local areas and neighbourhoods to automobile-oriented external shopping centres (Kärrholm, 2001, p. 1905). This phenomenon can also be explored in the city of Växjö by looking at the growing amount of empty retail spaces around the main high street. Meanwhile, the spacious Grand Samarkand shopping centre on the outskirts constantly manages to engage citizens by providing them a wide range of services. However, according to Kärrholm (2001, p. 1905), when it comes to retail development, these changes are not only a question of relocation, but rather a question of assemblage, density and territorialisation. When the centrality of a place is not dependent on its position in relation to the old town centre anymore, it creates a new kind of competition. In this case, the old city centres follow the model of territorialisation by locating stores in, for example, pedestrian precincts, since they are identifiable and accessible areas. Also, other qualities
such as the proximity to other significant places, having a strong identity, or being considered attractive become more crucial. (Kärrholm, 2001, p. 1905) As the location of services and retail environment gradually shifted from city centres to external shopping centres, it is interesting to reflect on the role of the old town centre. What distinguishes the old town centre from automobile-oriented external shopping centres? Moreover, what are the benefits of the old town centre? First of all, accessibility is a major strength of the old town centre, not only because of the comprehensive public transport network but also due to the pedestrian precinct. As many cities in Sweden, Växjö provides a pedestrian-friendly old town centre for the citizens. According to National Association of City Transportation (2015, p. 192), the city centre consists of several pedestrian-priority spaces that are beneficial as they allow people to move at their own pace as well as inviting them to stop, stay and spend time. In order to provide good quality public spaces, and a variety of urban experiences, pedestrian-priority spaces, – whether smaller plazas, pocket parks or large shopping streets – should be included in the city’s larger network of regular streets, parks, and other public spaces (National Association of City Transportation 2015, p. 192).

When debating about urban sustainability, it often revolves around several parts, including spatial, ecological and social issues (Colantonio et al. 2010, p. 30). In the aspect of social sustainability, it is interesting to ponder the reasons of urban regeneration and phenomena such as transition of the city centre. Moreover, the question is who is involved in the decision making and what social exclusion in this context is. As reported by the Council of the EU in 2007, households have very different capacities to participate in the urban economies developing around them, not only due to the challenges of increasing migration and population growth but also due to increasing dominance of one-person households in European urban life (cited in
Colantio et al. 2010, p. 54). Thus, it is often the better-educated members of society that are able to take part in these opportunities, rather than the ones with lower income. Acknowledging this ‘duality’ is in a central position when it comes to addressing social cohesion and social sustainability issues in European cities. (Colantonio et al. 2010, p. 54)

In 2014, the Government of Sweden assigned the key agencies and administrations including the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning to develop and administer a platform focusing on issues around sustainable urban development. The Government of Sweden defines ‘sustainable urban development’ as a “continuously evolving process taking into account social, economic and environmental sustainability”. Some of the main aims of the platform are greater collaboration, coordination and knowledge development within the urban development context. (Boverket, 2017). Therefore it is remarkable that the Government of Sweden is particularly aware of the issues of urban sustainability. According to Boverket (2017), utilising the existing development potential in cities and collaboration between different fields of competences are required in order to fulfil the economic, environmental and social challenges cities are facing. However, it is another question when, and to what extent it applies to individual level. As mentioned above, urban sustainability revolves around several concerns, and it is not unambiguous but rather complex.

3.2 GOOD STREET ENVIRONMENT

To examine the quality of street environment, one should come down to the level of individuals in order to understand how people use the space and what their needs are. Appreciated and acknowledged in his field, William
H. Whyte as a twenty-first-century urbanist and researcher emphasised the meaning of human scale in architecture and planning. Whyte was known of his ability to observe and make sense out of it. By carefully observing city life and citizens, he understood what density meant to people. (Underhill, 2012; Whyte et al. 2012). As claimed by Whyte, what attracts people most is other people (Whyte et al. 2012, p. 10). Therefore density is one important factor when defining a successful, good quality public space. When examining a pedestrian street, since people attract people, what brings them there in the first place?

Another recognised influencer in the field of urban planning, Jan Gehl, has conducted remarkable studies of life between buildings. According to Gehl (2011, p. 11), when the outdoor areas, such as streets and city spaces are of poor quality, only strictly necessary activities take place yet better physical conditions invite a wide range of optional activities, including more enjoyable activities such as stopping, sitting, eating, playing and so on. The protection from danger and harm is also one crucial theme when it comes to defining a good quality street environment. If people feel insecurity at the street, due to the fear of criminality and vehicular traffic, they are going to avoid the place. (Gehl, 2011, p. 171). Therefore, it is important to notice the safety question of street environment. In the case of pedestrian streets, walking has a major role in the quality of the street environment. According to Gehl (2011, p. 133), walking demands space, so it is necessary to be able to walk without being disturbed by pushing or blocking elements.

Overall, it is necessary to deeply understand the needs and preferences of the people when it comes to street design projects, because: "streets are places for people, and a city cannot work without human-centered streets", according to National Association of City Transportation, (2015).
3.3 STREET DESIGN AND PROJECTS

To shift the focus towards more practical design aspect, I chose some relevant street design and project examples to review. These examples were chosen for different reasons. The first example is focusing more on the high quality of a certain pedestrian street, while the second one represents an inspiring example for a more temporary street revival solution.

3.3.1 STRØGET, COPENHAGEN

When discussing about well-designed pedestrian streets, the main pedestrian street of Copenhagen, Strøget is a classic example due to its brilliant function. According to Gehl (2013, p. 157), Copenhagen has an impressive reputation of representing a fascinating and inviting city from an international perspective. In Strøget, the vehicular traffic is prohibited, meaning that even bicycles are not allowed there (Rothenbeg et al. 1995, p. 49). As a pedestrian-prioritised street, Strøget is relaxed place from the pedestrian perspective, and it is safe for walking. Also, the street design of Strøget is visually appealing, due to the patterned pavement stones.

3.3.2 POP UP PARK HUMLEGÅRDSGATAN

A pop up park for Humlegårdsgatan street in Stockholm, designed by Tengbom design agency in 2016, is a great example of a temporary solution aiming to revive the street life. According to Tengbom, the park was meant to transform an ordinary, quite anonymous street into a “lush oasis” that will invite people to stay. In their website, the design agency itself describes Humlegårdsgatan pop up park as the city’s living room that is visually
inspired by Danish sand dunes and Italian sorbet. (Tengbom, [No date]). The colourful, pallet-structured furniture design really stands out in the street view, making the ordinary place more appealing and interesting for the users.
Before focusing on the actual site of this study, Storgatan main street, it is crucial to understand its context, the city of Växjö. According to Växjö Kommun (2017a), Växjö is a rapidly growing regional centre in the middle of the south of Sweden. With the slogan “Europe’s greenest city”, the idyllic yet ambitious small town has a strong environmental policy and a great diversity of blooming facilities, including university, businesses and arenas (Växjö Kommun, 2017a). When it comes to the street life and social sustainability, perhaps the increasing population growth of Växjö has the most remarkable impact on it. As reported by Växjö Kommun (2015), 30,000 new inhabitants are expected to be accommodated by Växjö in less than fifteen years. The city should be able to keep up with the population growth, by providing them a variety of urban experiences and ideal living conditions. In order to offer opportunities for social interaction, active recreation and an improved quality of healthy life, pedestrian-priority spaces should be systematically divided throughout all neighbourhoods (National Association of City Transportation, 2015. p. 192).

The main pedestrian street of Växjö city centre, Storgatan, has a prominent role as a connecting point for the citizens due to its central location and nature as a common public space. Together with other pedestrian streets connected to Storgatan, they create a strong pedestrian street network that promotes the city centre of Växjö as an accessible, walkable and enjoyable place for the citizens. Approximately 550 meters long and 18 meters wide pedestrian zone of the main street provides a suitable platform for a decent amount of services, yet it leaves space for pedestrian-prioritised traffic. However, what makes Storgatan pedestrian street of Växjö slightly unusual, is the allowance of bicycle traffic. This feature makes Storgatan a shared space, except heavier
vehicles than bicycles are allowed only on special occasions. According to Prelovskaya et al. (2017, p. 524), shared space creates a new approach to street design by aiming to minimise the distinction between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. In fact, there is a marked bike lane at Storgatan, but it is hardly visible, which causes uncertainty in users.

When it comes to the interview with a landscape architect of Växjö Kommun, Hansson Broman (personal interview, March 8, 2017) addressed that one of their current concern and focus of planning Storgatan pedestrian zone is primarily the bicycle traffic and difficulties around it. According to Hansson Broman, the issue of mixed pedestrian and bicycle traffic in relation to safety is quite recent, since the population used to be remarkably lower in Växjö, which means that Storgatan was possibly more organised and functional back then. Another current concern of the planning department, is the poor condition of Storgatan’s trees since their roots are constantly lifting the pavement, and therefore decreasing spatial accessibility, according to Hansson Broman. These complexities together with the mentioned retail environment shift towards external shopping centres are crucial to take into account when making plans for Storgatan.

What is the role of Storgatan main pedestrian street in the future, if the retail environment will be more or less focused on the shopping centres in the outskirts, and if the increasing population leads possibly to more hectic traffic? As mentioned by Hansson Broman (2017), there have been discussions that the pedestrian zone of Storgatan will be focused on restaurants and cafes rather than chain stores, which can already be noticed. This trend indicates that Storgatan could have a strong potential to become a pleasant place to stay, a vivid living street. However, in the case of Storgatan, the need for change is more than a question of the type and quality of services. The

____________________ 35 ____________________
condition of the street itself should be critically examined and evaluated. Involving citizens, the users, to take part in discussions and development plans is crucial, because their needs and preferences should be met.

With a new, enormous station area plan, Växjö is already prepared to meet the needs of increasing population. According to Växjö Kommun (2017b), the station area is aimed to be a vivid place with retail units, offices, residential and sustainable solution to traffic. By looking at the impressive architectural plans and stunning visualisations proposed by the competition winner, White Architects (Växjö Kommun, 2017c), it is very plausible that the station area will achieve a central position in Växjö. Thus, it raises a question concerning the destiny of the main high street, Storgatan. If the old town centre including Storgatan will be remained as it is now, there is a danger that the contrast towards the new station is too drastic – in a negative light. According to the ‘broken window theory’, a building window left unrepaid often leads to situation where the rest of the windows will be broken as well, which refers to the strong link between disorder and crime (Wilson et al. 1982). In the case of Storgatan this theory could seem exaggerated, but it is completely plausible that the new, attractive station area will shift the focus of the city centre away from the main street. In theory, it means a change of function and eventual segregation, which can alienate the site or increase certain types of uses of the space. According to Ellickson, these types of uses of the space could include, for example, loitering, aggressive beggary or littering (cited in Foster, 2011 p. 60). Thus, it is crucial to comprehensively find out the opinions and feelings of the current users of Storgatan before assuming more.
DESIGN PROJECT
4.1 STORGATAN AND POSSIBILITIES

One of the main aims of this project was to find out if there is a need for change in Storgatan, and how I could contribute in it by means of design. In order to discover the possibilities for redesign, the issues of Storgatan needed to be defined in several ways by using different methods. It was crucial to visit Storgatan frequently and analyse its functions and physical condition, because I wanted to create a real connection to the site. In the beginning of the research process, I contacted the Växjö Kommun municipality to discuss about Storgatan and receive information if there were any existing plans for the street already. The meeting validated the relevance of my project, since the municipality is currently aiming to decide what to do with Storgatan, meaning that the plans are on a very initial phase. In this case it means, my timing for the project was the most ideal since no finished redesign plan would have overlapped with it. However, the target of this project was never to develop a detailed urban plan nor a solution-oriented redesign concept. On the contrary, my goal was to come up with a concept that works as a basis for discussions regarding the future of Storgatan, and hopefully inspires locals to actively contribute in the idea generation process. Thus, in this case the visualisations I created were meant to present the potentiality of Storgatan in the future, and very conceptually illustrate the redesign ideas and mood based on the research.
05. Storgatan, the main pedestrian street of Växjö.

06. The City centre of Växjö.
4.1.1 SITE

The pedestrian zone of Storgatan is approximately a bit over half a kilometre long and less than twenty meters wide, except one broader part, Willans Park plaza. Storgatan, as the main pedestrian street of Växjö is surrounded by three important squares, the main square Stortorget, Teatertorget and Oxtorget. This position makes the role of Storgatan prominent for special events like Växjö Pride walk or Saint Lucy’s days, to mention some. Storgatan is situated near the train station which means it is often one of the first places visitors see in Växjö. Other pedestrian streets around Storgatan form a larger pedestrian street network that makes the city centre fairly walkable.

Before performing the site observation, I decided to briefly analyse the street by taking notes and photographs. This method was not particularly planned or prepared, but rather guided by my intuition. February, as the beginning
of the year meant more quiet season for the site, which brought challenges analysing the site. However, it was interesting to pay attention to the physical elements and materials of the site, and the type of the services. I noticed that, the overall feeling of the physical elements and materials in Storgatan was overall quite worn out and dated. When it comes to the range of services in Storgatan, it is quite wide. There are several cafes and restaurants, clothing stores, two small shopping centres, the department store Åhlens, banks, a hotel, beauty salons, government-owned liquor store Systembolaget, and so forth. I noticed that the pedestrian flow was often busy in the eastern part of Storgatan, close to the old town and Stortorget square, while loitering took place in the West, where fast food restaurant McDonald’s is located.

4.1.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

In the very initial phase of my research process, I decided to contact the Växjö Kommun municipality in order to receive information about the current state of Storgatan and plausible existing plans. After contacting the municipality, I was delighted to receive a meeting request by one of the landscape architect of their city planning department. For the meeting with the landscape architect, Moa Hansson Broman, I planned a semi-structured in-depth interview with a list of topics that needed to be covered during the session. My list included topics such as the current situation and condition of Storgatan, a brief history of it, some technical information and a discussion of a few inspiring street design examples. Besides discussing about the planned topics, I received a lot of other valuable information about Storgatan since Hansson Broman was very kind to share it with me. Overall, I was grateful for the fruitful one hour meeting, which provided me useful point of views for my project.
During the meeting, Hansson Broman showed me the current city manual regarding the milieu of the city of Växjö. However, this manual was not up to date, and in the department they are currently working a new, more contemporary city manual to meet the targets and development principles of the city. I was also told that albeit Storgatan is connected to Stortorget square, which represents the old town of Växjö, the appearance of Storgatan does not need to refer the old town visually when planning the redesign. On the contrary, Storgatan should rather have its own feeling and identity as the main pedestrian street of the city.

Also, it was interesting to receive a brief description of Storgatan’s history. According to Hansson Broman, Storgatan used to be more organised and peaceful pedestrian street back in the days when the population of Växjö was remarkably smaller. Today, the issue is the mixed pedestrian and bicycle traffic which is their current focus in the urban planning department of Växjö Kommun. Another central issue they have been lately focused on, is the poor condition of the existing trees in Storgatan. According to Hansson Broman, these trees cannot be taken down due to their long age and historical value. However, there could be a possibility to transfer the trees somewhere else, and replant them. This is a detail that I kept in mind when in the concept development phase of my project.

With Hansson Broman, we also discussed about the future of Storgatan in relation to retail environment. In the near future, Storgatan will be possibly more focused on restaurants and cafes, rather than chain stores for example. This indicates the fact that Storgatan is highly potential to be redesigned as more enjoyable place to stay where the citizens gather together from the various districts of Växjö. Therefore, the role of Storgatan could be emphasised as the prominent connecting point of the city.
When discussing briefly about the technical information of Storgatan, it came out that there is a plumbing system under the street that could affect on actual project length. However, I had already decided that the technical and detail-oriented design thinking was outside my project framing. Eventually, in the end of the interview we discussed about good street design examples, and Hansson Broman encouraged me to think outside the box when working on this initial conceptual project. Before finishing the session, Hansson Broman mentioned she was curious to see the end results of my project, which is something I willingly agreed. Overall, the interview with Hansson Broman was truly irreplaceable part of my study.

**4.1.3 SITE OBSERVATION**

A Site observation performed at Storgatan was a useful part of my research process, in order to understand how people use the place. However, I felt that the time of the year was challenging for observing, since February and March are tend to be colder seasons in Sweden. Regardless, for the observation afternoon, I managed to choose the most ideal when it comes to weather forecast in March in Sweden – sunshine and +15 Celsius degrees. I decided to perform the observation at Willans Park plaza, the wider part of Storgatan. First, I was counting people by categorising their activities, but soon understand it was not relevant. I finished the counting and decided to focus instead on observing the quality of the activities and reactions of the people. The most valuable conclusion provided by my observation study, was a notice that people are must likely to sit and enjoy when the weather and place are inviting, in this case meaning that more spacious Willans Park plaza has quite ideal facilities for staying. My hypothesis was that if there was more seatings or even a pop up park set up for the summer seasons, it could revive
the street life of Storgatan remarkably. To get more conclusions out of the observation, I should have performed it more frequently and vary the time of the day. Albeit, this was the limitation of my method, I felt it was more urgent to approach the citizens, rather than only observing them.
4.1.4 SURVEY

After sketching a few concept ideas based on the above-mentioned methods and secondary research, I noticed that my study was lacking local involvement. I chose online survey as a method after browsing local Facebook groups as they seemed promising for reaching the current and former citizens. The in-depth interview with the landscape architect Hansson Broman, my brief site analyses and finally the site observation helped me to narrow down the survey questions. The aim of the survey was to collect valuable data about the opinions and feelings of Storgatan, but also to define and narrow down my design project.

To create the online survey, I used Google Forms due to its effortless accessibility. In order to get some relevant quantitative data, I wanted to know the age and occupation of the participants, as well as if they currently lived in Växjö and how long they have lived there. The questions especially focused on Storgatan, were meant to find out how frequently participants visit the site and what their purposes of going and staying there are. To get an overview of the main challenges of Storgatan, I asked if there is something that makes the place unpleasant. For that mandatory question I provided preliminary answer options based on my assumptions, but also on my research findings. The option ‘other’ with a comment possibility was given as an alternative. This question was followed up by an optional open-ended question, asking to specify what makes Storgatan unpleasant if answered so above. The next question had a more positive approach by asking what kind of improvements could make Storgatan better, in participants’ opinion. At first, this mandatory question was meant to be open-ended only, but after my colleague, who tested the survey, examined the question too difficult or stressful without seeing any alternatives, I decided to provide multiple
options to choose of. This question was also including the ‘other’ alternative with a comment possibility and a follow-up, optional open-ended question to write more improvement ideas and suggestions for Storgatan. Before ending the survey with a feedback and comment form, I added an optional open-ended question to ask if participants had any good pedestrian street or zone examples from other cities, located in Sweden or abroad.

Before posting my survey on social media, I created a photo collage of Storgatan including an illustrated map, and attached it in the beginning of the survey in order to help the participants visually recall the site. I posted the survey link to a large, local Facebook group, to my university campus Facebook group and on my own Facebook wall. In order to receive more open-ended answers, I allowed participants to write in Swedish if it felt more comfortable. The number of people who were interested in the topic surprised me, since I received approximately 80 answers in only two days. I kept the survey open for a bit over a week, and got 121 participants in total. It was delightful to notice that the sample of participants was quite diverse when it comes to age or the length of living in Växjö. In total I received 54 open-ended answers, including feedback and comments, which was more than I expected. However, the survey had its limitations that were shown in the results. For example, I did not manage to reach certain age groups meaning youth, elderly nor children.

It was interesting to see how strong opinions and feelings people have about Storgatan. The majority felt that the mixed pedestrian and bicycle traffic makes Storgatan unpleasant, even dangerous. For example, one participant described the mixed traffic as “horrible”, when another used the word “confusing”, and continued that it is impossible to take a relaxed walk at Storgatan. Also, the lack of trees and plants, and the poor condition of
Do you live in Växjö?

- Yes: 86.8%
- No: 13.2%

How long have you lived in Växjö?

- < 1 month: 35.5%
- 1-2 years: 35.5%
- 2-4 years: 19.8%
- 2-6 months: 13.2%
- +5 years: 11.6%
- Always: 17.4%
- Never lived in Växjö: 0.6%

Age

- under 12: 22.3%
- 12-17: 30.6%
- 18-24: 35.5%
- 25-34: 45.5%
- 35-44: 47.9%
- 45-54: 22.3%
- 55-64: 13.2%
- 65-74: 11.6%
- 75 or older: 17.4%
- 75 or older: 11.6%

Occupation

- Student: 47.9%
- Employed: 46.3%
- Unemployed: 13.2%
- Retired: 11.6%
- Other: 17.4%
the street furniture were popular answers when participants were asked to specify the unpleasant features. Overall, Storgatan was several times described as boring – “no spirit” – as one participant stated. When it comes to the reasons people go to Storgatan, the majority announced shopping and eating out. However, the survey does not tell if people choose Storgatan over the more distant Grand Samarkand shopping centre, unless mentioned in open-ended answers. Albeit, several participants chose the option that said Storgatan to be overall pleasant, they were not against improvement ideas and suggestions. The majority voted for clearer bike lanes and bike parking, and for more trees and green plants to Storgatan. Also, the suggestion of pop up street furniture or park was a popular choice alongside with street furniture renewal.

Due to the quality of the data and somewhat large and diverse sample of local participants, an online survey was a successful method in this study. The results did not only give me an overview of the current issues of Storgatan, but also provided valuable information about the needs and preferences of the local citizens regarding the street. Since the data was already calculated and sorted in the Google Forms program, it was effortless for me to map out and frame the issues of the site, and to define the focus points for my design concept proposal.
I used mind mapping technique to map out the current challenges of Storgatan, based on the survey results. It helped me to link the connections between the main issues. The illustration of the mapping is introduced below.
4.1.6 MOOD BOARD

To define a very light and initial visual concept based on the results of the collected data, I used mood board technique. To create a digital image collage representing the proposed feeling of the renewal idea of Storgatan, I used high quality free stock photos and my own photos.
11. Mood board.
12. Illustrated focus points of the redesign proposal.

- Clearer bike lane, more contrast (or preventing the bicycle traffic)
- More unified street furniture
- More trees & plants
- New pavement: clarity & accessibility
- + Pop up park or furniture
I used sketching as a visual thinking tool in different stages of the project. In the early phase of the process, even before completing the research process, I started sketching light redesign ideas for the concept. I soon understood that I needed to collect more data, in order to continue the idea generation process of the concept. However, sketching drawings and ideas during the whole process was useful for my later visualisations, as I had managed to develop my artistic expression. For the refined, final visualisations I used Blender 3D-modeling software, to get a proportioned model of Storgatan.
street with the help of the OpenStreetMap extension. I documented the visualisation process by actively taking screenshots. Overall, it was useful to document carefully my sketching process, since it was beneficial for my final visualisations.
15. Some highlights of my visualisation process.
4.2 STORGATAN 2.0 - PROPOSING A CHANGE

With the finished visualisations, my aim was to point out the desired atmosphere and possibilities for the upcoming redesign idea generation regarding Storgatan. Thus, I used a sketch-inspired, mixed visualisation technique to represent the feeling on a very initial phase, which is not aiming to provide polished final solutions but rather work as a basis for discussions and more developed ideas.

By producing different variations, I wanted to emphasise the discovered main issue of Storgatan: mixed pedestrian and bike traffic. By visualising the site with a clearer bike lane, I wanted to show the effect and meaning of contrast when marking areas. The visualisations without any bike lane illustrate a possible situation where Storgatan is redesigned as a pedestrian-only street, which was one of the most popular requests based on the survey results. Also, the simpler, light grey pavement is a significant change compared to the current situation of Storgatan. The unified pavement in a lighter shade creates an illusion of a more spacious, wider street, which is important since the population is expected to increase in Växjö. In these visualisations, the existing trees of Storgatan have been transplanted elsewhere, in order to plant new, healthier trees more freely. The benches are not meant to represent any certain collection or form, but they have been added to these conceptual atmosphere visualisations to emphasise the effect of a more unified style of street furniture. Also, a light concept of a pop up park is visualised in the views of Willans Park plaza, in order to propose more temporary and seasonal revival ideas.

To summarise, the target of these visualisations was to show the potentiality of Storgatan to become a more appealing and functional pedestrian street.
22. A Visual proof to show the issue of lacking contrast. The Bike lane should be emphasised more.
4.2.1 APPROACHING THE LOCALS

As my project aim was to provide a concept that speaks for the local involvement, I decided to continue my visualisations to work as a discussion tool to communicate with the local citizens about the renewal ideas of Storgatan. I prepared a folder where I collected the visualisation proposals.
together with the mood board, and two photos of the current situation of Storgatan. I added a communication card with a list of questions to the package, in order to make approaching the pedestrians easier at the site.

4.2.2 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, due to the late stage of development, I was not able to test the communication tool properly, which is not the very ideal if aiming to evaluate the method critically. However, I managed to show the outcome to a few students at my university, which led to brief discussions of the conceptual redesign visualisations. In that case the reception was definitely positive and welcoming for the change, which is promising.

To summarise the project result, I am satisfied how it came out. During the process it was delighted to notice that people were genuinely interested in this project, especially when several persons told me they were curious to see the outcome of my work. The interest of the people and the satisfying outcome of my visualisations gained my confidence to continue with the project after this thesis. In fact, the end of this phase is, hopefully, the beginning of the next step of this project.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT STORGATAN?
IS THERE A NEED FOR CHANGE?

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE IDEAS AND VISUALISATIONS?

OPINION: BIKE TRAFFIC IN STORGATAN?

ANY VISIONS OR PREFERENCES FOR STORGATAN?
SUMMARY & DISCUSSION
If being slightly humoristic, this project was nothing but a learning lesson for me. First of all, this was my very first experience of making a Master’s Thesis, which meant that I had to be realistic with my project goals, and most of all, I had to learn to give mercy to myself.

During the process, it was more than few times when I was disappointed in myself. Those moments were usually regarding the issues of time management or the challenges of framing the project. I was also questioning the relevance of my chosen research methods, and often felt they should have been more participatory approached. Also, due to the short amount of time, I created less variations of the visualisations than I aimed to. However, in the end I became more proud of myself than disappointed, which lifted up my motivation in many ways.

This project about Storgatan was my very first step towards the field of urban planning, since my educational background in spatial design was focused on interiors. That is something I should give myself credit of, and even dare to celebrate afterwards. To summarise, many things could have been done other ways, but in the sense of learning, it is no less to leave something for the next time. Besides, in my opinion I managed to fulfil most of the aims I had in the beginning. By now, I know that I am much wiser, thanks to this one semester long learning lesson.
5.2 Future Potentiality

As my project aim was to work as a basis for discussions, and to provide inspiration for the redesign plan of Storgatan in the future, it would be a logical next step to approach the locals with this project outcome. In the best case, the development of this project outcome after this study could lead to more citizen-led ideas, for example, tactical urbanism.

I was already contacted by a local journalist due to my project about Storgatan, which is a promising starting point for a next step. Now it is up to me as a designer to figure out how to reach the locals as comprehensively as possible. One of my plans is to hand in this work to the Växjö Kommun municipality, and it is up to the city how they want to use these results. Only time will show what is going to happen in the future. Perhaps we will see a completely different Storgatan, someday?
REFERENCES

BOOKS


ARTICLES


MAGAZINES


WEBSITES


INTERVIEWS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


01. Photograph. Sanni Vuori (the author). 2017. p. 8


03. Photograph. Sanni Vuori (the author). 2017. p. 17


06. Illustration. Sanni Vuori (the author). 2017. p. 39


08. Photographs. Sanni Vuori (the author). 2017. p. 44


17. Photograph. Sanni Vuori (the author). 2017. p. 57


25. Figure. Sanni Vuori (the author). 2017. p. 62

Storgatan, Växjö

I am working on a design project (master’s thesis) focused on Storgatan, the main pedestrian street of Växjö city centre. I am interested in your genuine opinions, feelings and insights about Storgatan. Please note, that the project focus is only on the pedestrian zone of Storgatan street.

Your answers will be completely anonymous. Thank you for your participation, it is very much appreciated!

Questions and contacts: sanni.vuori@gmail.com

Sanni Vuori
Master programme in Design (2015-)
Linnaeus University

1. Do you live in Växjö?*
   ° Yes
   ° No

2. How long have you lived in Växjö?*
   ° Less than a month
   ° 2-6 months
   ° 1-2 years
   ° 2-4 years
   ° +5 years
   ° All my life
   ° I have never lived in Växjö

3. Age*
   ° Under 12
   ° 12-17
   ° 18-24
   ° 25-34
   ° 35-44
   ° 45-54
   ° 55-64
   ° 65-74
   ° 75 or older

4. Occupation*
   ° Student
   ° Employed
   ° Retired
   ° Other
   ° I don’t want to answer

5. How often do you visit Storgatan pedestrian street?*
   ° Daily
   ° 2-4 times a week
   ° Once a week
   ° Once a month
   ° Less than once a month

6. Why do you go to Storgatan? For what purpose do you go there? You can choose multiple options. (You can also fill in your own answer if necessary.)*
   ° For shopping
   ° For eating out
   ° To use the services (bank, etc.)
   ° To transit somewhere else
   ° My workplace is located there
   ° For meeting (a meeting point)
   ° For loitering (without apparent purpose, i.e. to ‘hang out’)
   ° Other:

7. Is there something that makes Storgatan pedestrian street unpleasant? You can choose multiple options. (You can also fill in your own answer if necessary.)*
   ° Street infrastructure
   ° Mixed pedestrian and bike traffic
   ° Unsafety – restlessness
   ° Garbage around – messiness
   ° Not enough trees and plants
   ° Poor accessibility (for disabled)
   ° Poor signage
   ° Poor lighting
Street furniture and elements are worn out
No. Storgatan is overall pleasant in my opinion.
Other:

8. Can you describe more specific what makes Storgatan unpleasant? (If you answered so above.)

9. What would make Storgatan better in your opinion? You can choose multiple options. (You can also fill in your own answer if necessary.)*
Clearer bike lanes and bike parking
More trees and green plants
New street furniture (one style, more connected)
New ground tiles (pavement)
Clearer signage
Better street lighting
Pop up street furniture or pop up parks (for i.e. summer)
Flatter ground (etc) to make the street more accessible
I don’t know
Other:

10. Do you have more improvement ideas or suggestions for Storgatan? In the user perspective, what could make the experience of the pedestrian street better?

11. Can you think of a good example of a pedestrian street or zone in another city? What makes it good in your opinion? (The example can be located in Sweden or abroad.)

12. Feel free to share your feedback. You can also comment anything around the topic.
ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Do you live in Växjö?*

- 86.8% Yes
- 13.2% No

How long have you lived in Växjö?*

- 35.5% < 1 month
- 22.3% 1-2 years
- 19.8% 2-6 months
- 17.4% 2-4 years
- 11.6% +5 years

Age*

- 30.6% under 12
- 22.3% 12-17
- 35.5% 18-24
- 7.4% 25-34

Occupation*

- 47.9% Student
- 46.3% Employed
- 4.7% Unemployed
- 1.3% Retired
- 0.4% Other

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Google Form

APRIL 14 – 24, 2017

121 participants
How often do you visit Storgatan?*

- Daily: 23.5%
- 2-4 times per week: 30.4%
- Once a week: 9.6%
- Once a month: 30.4%
- Less than once a month: 23.5%

Is there something that makes Storgatan pedestrian street unpleasant? You can choose multiple options. (You can also fill in your own answer if necessary.)*

- Street infrastructure: 61 people (33.6%)
- Mixed pedestrian and bike traffic: 52 people (30.4%)
- Unsafety – restlessness: 39 people (22.6%)
- Garbage around – messiness: 25 people (14.8%)
- Not enough trees and plants: 17 people (10.0%)
- Poor accessibility (for disabled): 16 people (9.6%)
- Poor signage: 10 people (5.8%)
- Poor lighting: 10 people (5.8%)
- Street furniture and elements...: 8 people (4.7%)
- No, Storgatan is overall pleasant..: 8 people (4.7%)
- Other: 55 people (32.2%)

Can you describe more specific what makes Storgatan unpleasant? (If you answered so above.) 35 answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other answer</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Att det är långt mellan de olika affärerna</td>
<td>14 people (20.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bike traffic is horrible. It feels like you need to watch over you back all the time and it would be nice with more flowers and plants in the grey and cold jungle.</td>
<td>10 people (14.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having no clear bike lane is unsafe. I don't like using the street because of this.

Bumpy, the paving stones are hard to both walk on and roll wheelchairs on

See above

For example the fact that most people does not know the rules regarding the streets that cross Storgatan, making walking along it quite unsafe. Also the risk when walking of getting hit by a bike and when cycling the risk that a young child for example runs out in front of the bike. The worst thing in my opinion is the old tiles though, as they are really uncomfortable both when riding a bike and walking.

The need of always looking for bikes so they dont run over you

It's unpleasant only when I'm biking, as pedestrians seem not to stay on the pedestrian path only and wonder around dangerously (and I probably don't notice that I do the same myself when I walk!)

The varied architecture and doesn't feel very open

It's kind of boring, the other street that cross it with the playground in it is more fun! I'm sure it's not very disabled-friendly either because of the rocks.

Too much criminals, groups of violent immigrants, Im scared of being robbed, raped, beaten etc. Too expensive to park, to Long too goo

Its no good stores on storgatan. Grand has everyone.

I feel lonely

The function it fills isn't 'compatible' with it but personally I would have liked some green (plants etc)

Inga egentliga problem med mixad gång & cykeltrafik med många cyklar för fort, stor risk för olyckor, specielt för mindre barn som inte har koll.

Biltrafiken som korsar. För få ställen att sitta på som inte kräver att man köper något.

Storgatan is actually very well organized compared to my home country. It would be helpful to have bike Lanes, as pedestrians are every way you turn. Outdoor seating would also benefit the street.

When biking it is annoying to stop every second for walkers. Also the lack of natural elements

Bikes teasing pedestrians on one lane. Rubbish especially during weekends and partying days, bottles all over though they are cleaned later. Signage in Swedish and inaccurate.

More shops, more restaurants. It is only lively on saturday. In the evenings it is desert. Cars can surprisingly drive close to the children's playground.

Stükiga gång från Dalbo

It's boring and have no personality. Ordinary small town street.

More places to sit on

Its messy

It feels closed in.

It doesn't look colorful, I could not find the secondhand shop.
Parking is expensive
I already wrote this in the previous question.

Too few people at night time makes the place feel less safe.

No spirit, it’s dead 3/4 a year.

Känns grå och tråkig
The overload of street furniture, sculptures, kiosks and other elements. Plus, the almost invisible bike lane that is mixed with the walking lane. Also that makes it confusing. Also, the elements I mentioned are all quite dated.

Riktig skitgata. Fram och tillbaka mellan affärerna. Ren transportsträcka idag, behöver konst och gronomrader.
there are less and less opened stores - the street do not look modern

The mixed traffic is confusing and makes it impossible to take a relaxed walk.

What would make Storgatan better in your opinion? You can choose multiple options. (You can also fill in your own answer if necessary.)*

Clearer bike lanes and bike parking
More trees and green plants
New street furniture (one style, more..
New ground tiles (‘flooring’) Clearer signage Better street lighting Pop up street furniture/pop up parks.. Flatter ground to make the street.. I don’t know Other:

Do you have more improvement ideas or suggestions for Storgatan? In the user perspective, what could make the experience of the pedestrian street better?

28 answers

Different colored ground tiles for pedestrian and bike traffic

No

I would like to see it more active as a place to stay not just as a place to move through.
Make it more accessible for wheelchairs and people with walkers. More greenery with seating would be nice.

The street would be much better if the bike parking moved to the side streets and if Storgatan where more organic and variable. Both in terms of flow, but also height and colour.

Inga cyklar

Clear information for both Storgatan and the roads crossing it, as well as the things mentioned above.

Something to make the street look "nicer". More furnitures that could be used by people not bikes.

I honestly just don't like the current art pieces located around there. But that's my own taste! I would definitely replace them with small green decor/relax areas

Street lamps and something to unify it

I mostly think about the bikes and that you're not sure about where to walk. It's sad that there are few cafés that are not chains like espresso house and condeco. I want cozy cafés, more than askelycan.

More green plants. Nice little playground for kid. Cafeteria for normal ppl and cheap not just café for the brats and ppl from öster Högsetorp with money

Some kind of interactive furniture or game, urban design, a cool plant-sculpture

Redgreen lights so I'm not the trafficbump

Interactive areas for instance a painted piano on the ground that plays when stepped on

Arkitekturen på husen har stor påverkan. Många av husen är fruktansvärda, och då syftar jag på dom fyrrkantiga lådorna (från 50/60 talet?).

Mer utsmyckningar.

It needs more colors and craziness :)

Pedestrian Lane and bike lanes should be differentiated. Bike parking well aligned and restricted.


Ingen cykeltrafik eller biltransporter. Varutransporter på nätter och/eller med lastcyklar

Where is the culture, design and extraordinary art manifesting Växjö as a destination of interest?

Clear bike lanes.

More bins for waste, traffic lights at the crossings, create an environment that doesn't visualise segregation.

the plazas are jokes! they dont gather people... they gather filthy cars... (oxtorget, teatortorget, stortorget). båtsmanstorget and vatentorget are good but they need improvements.

Forbjud TV-skarmar med reklam. Skapa större områden för umgange, t.ex. vid speakers corner och utanfor askelycan. Utanför askelycan hade varit ett utmarkt ställe for food trucks.

No cars on roads close

Bring more people out somehow. It looks like a grave yard even om weekends.
Can you think of a good example of a pedestrian street or zone in another city? What makes it good in your opinion? (The example can be located in Sweden or abroad.) 19 answers

Göteborg

Gothenburg's local pedestrian strett for shopping is nice. The road is broad and no bike traffic.

Coloured bike lanes

Storgatan in Malmö is somehow always pleasant, just as the small streets by Järntorget in Gothenburg. I guess what makes them special is the feeling of dynamic and changeable environment. With a lot of small pop-up stores, or cozy dining places.

I don't know the names of them, but there are several good examples both in Sweden and abroad.

Avenue Kleber Paris, Avenue Montaigne or Avenue George V

Streetart, Musicians

Las ramblas, in Barcelona, Spain

The grove.

Queens Street in Stockholm.

Hauptstrasse in Heidelberg, all pedestrian streets in Italy. The elegance and style of the street, the history, the art, the good typical food and drink, the genuine food, low prices.

The only pedestrian shopping street in Copenhagen

Amsterdam is cool, fun and charming

Halmstad city

Oxford Street in London has diversity but you don't see the less educated being drawn to one place only so you don't see one particular unsafe area.

Kalmar has cozy streets with lots of outdoor seatings (mostly in larnortget tho).

At Sundstorget in Helsingborg they have pop-up gardens where they grow things with different themes. One season they planted things focusing on smell - different beds were designed to give different scents - and another time they planted things for people to taste (berries and stuff mixed in with the flowers). They also provide nice seating areas in the garden where you can sit and enjoy it and they've had DJ's guest starring and playing lounge music there some sunny weekend afternoons.

Nyhavn street copenhagen because the ground is flat and large line which can useful when you are in wheelchair or with a suitcase even though it is mixed with cobblestone.
Feel free to share your feedback. You can also comment anything around the topic. 7 answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One lane for bikes, one for pedestrians, one for cars, clearly marked with lines and perhaps colours. Also better pedestrian crossings where cars cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that something that makes Storgatan not too attractive is mainly the lack of &quot;life&quot;. It seems to be more a fast lane for going in and out of shops, or reach other locations, rather than the main street of this town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I am to compare with the time when storgatan was a common street I would say that gågatan is what keeps the innercity alive. With the big malls outside the citycore it’s quite a competition for the smaller businesses. But gågatan makes it pleasant and it provides a different experience compared to the malls (it’s outside, easier to spot people you know etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best of luck with your project!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream is not the answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me, sustainability is very important. So when making changes, they should be designed to last as long as possible, and I don't think one should make changes unless they are necessary or well-motivated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INVOLVING LOCALS / PACKAGE
Communication tool, Sanni Vuori

STORGATAN, VÄXJÖ. SANNI VUORI, 2017.

Moodboard: List of Illustrations p. 71
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT STORGATAN?

IS THERE A NEED FOR CHANGE?

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE IDEAS AND VISUALISATIONS?

OPINION: BIKE TRAFFIC IN STORGATAN?

ANY VISIONS OR PREFERENCES FOR STORGATAN?
STORGATAN

PEDESTRIAN ZONE SIZE APPX. 550 m x 18 m

Illustration based on Google Maps: Sanni Vuori. 2017. NOT IN SCALE.
THE DEFINITION OF CITY CENTRE IN VÄXJÖ

Illustration based on Google Maps: Sanni Vuori. 2017. NOT IN SCALE.
STORGATAN PEDESTRIAN ZONE

RESTAURANTS, CAFES, CLOTHING STORES, PHARMACY, SHOPPING CENTRES, BANKS, HOTEL, SECONDHAND STORES, BAKERIES, BARS, SMALL MOVIE THEATRE, ETC.

Illustration based on Google Maps: Sanni Vuori. 2017. NOT IN SCALE.
PEDESTRIAN STREETS OF
THE CITY CENTRE (VÄXJÖ)

The Site

STORGATAN

Illustration based on Google Maps: Sanni Vuori. 2017. NOT IN SCALE.