

Mobility in Good Cities



Urban Transport and Transport Planning Committee Meeting in Odense, Denmark, Oct 25-26, 2017

Transformation of Odense

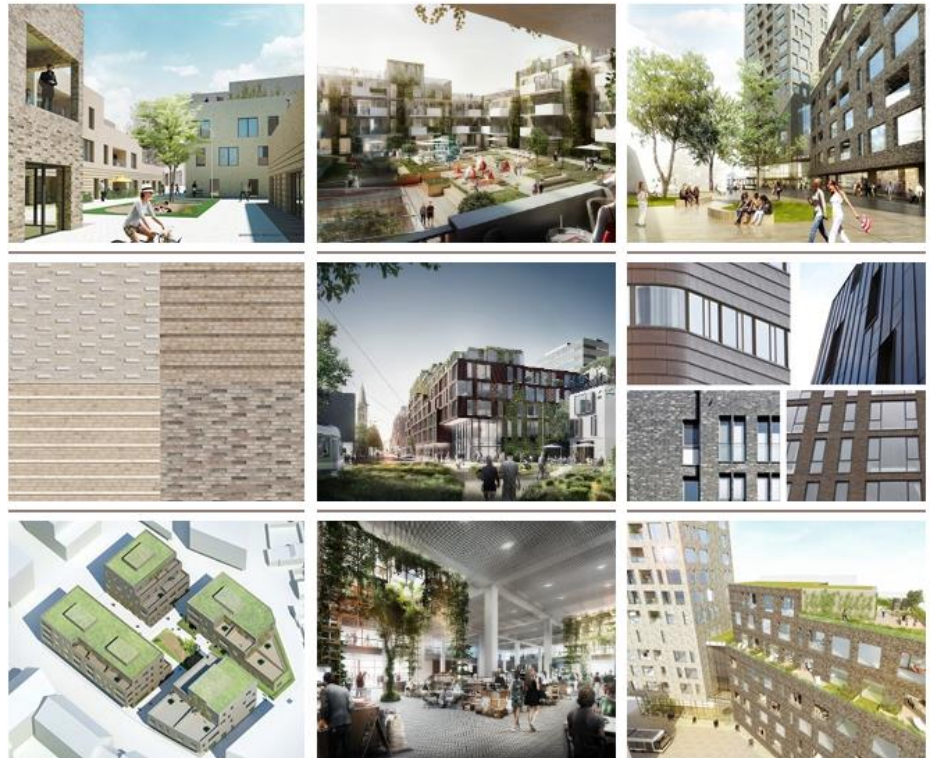
With 200,000 inhabitants, Odense is Denmark's third largest city. It is also one of Denmark's oldest cities with a history dating back more than 1000 years. The city is flat and relatively sprawled. Car driving and biking are the dominant modes of transportation. The modal share of public transportation is low. In recent years the city has made large efforts to transform its prospects by making itself a desirable place to live and invest. Urban development projects, including new solutions for mobility, are crucial parts of the transformation process.

Closing a major road

In the 1960s a four lane road - the Thomas B Thriges Street - was built right through the center of Odense. It was used by some 25.000 cars a day. Over the years, the street was more and more perceived as a barrier for city development. Hence, in 2014, the City of Odense decided to close the street. Closing the Thomas B Thriges Street became one of the most important and most ambitious projects in transforming the city.

New development

Closing the four lane road freed substantial space for city development. Construction of underground parking is a priority, with some 1000 new parking spaces, which is 500 more than before. On the ground, a mix of new properties are being built for residential, recreational and commercial use, including a new hotel and a new H.C. Andersen museum. New mobility solutions are developed through a new tram way and improved bike lanes. The costs are cover by the City of Odense (255 million Dkr) and Realdania (same amount), a private philanthropic organization. Another 462 million Dkr is covered though the selling of land, parking etc. Investment costs for the tram way (3 billion kr), is equally shared between the city and the national government.



New city development on former road space. City of Odense

Reflections from the committee:

- A very bold and visionary decision to close a major road.
- Bold to invest heavily in a tram line although public transport previously have had a low modal share in the city.
- "From road to city". Road space is reused for city development!
- Integrated planning where mobility and land-use has been considered together.
- The city keep the ownership and responsibility of areas surrounding the new building. Interesting solution.
- Less focus on decreased car usage. New and more parking facilities might make car trips more accessible.
- Underground parking makes a lot of space available for walking, biking and for recreational areas in the city.

New Mobility Options in Reykjavik

The expected growth of inhabitants in Reykjavik capital area between 2015-2040 is 70 000. This puts the transport system under pressure since Reykjavik has a high car but low public transport modal split. The city has adopted new strategies related to transport and by densification and corridors of development, the proposed BRT system Borgarlina is one important measure to increase the use of public transport. There is also an ambitious cycle strategy in Reykjavik.

State Roads and City Development in Finland

Traffic authorities and cities are facing conflicts of interest in some urban areas where national main roads go through developing urban areas. A study has been made to understand the sources of the conflicts and suggest alternative procedures. Some of the key findings in the study was that actions of the cities has a great importance in developing national connections, that there are deficiencies in common goal setting between cities and the state and that there is a lack of long distance perspective.

Plan for the Swedish Transport System to 2029

Trafikverket has presented the proposal for a National Transport Plan for 2018-2029. The main focus in this presentation was to highlight investments and measures relating to real estate development, public transport and bicycle. The proposed investments linked to real estate development are expected to increase housing with up to 100 000 for the major projects. Other projects are expected to increase housing with around 1200-7400 new developments.

Transport Solutions for Sustainable Cities

Conclusions from group discussion on possible mobility solutions with transformative potential in cities:

- Big scale "game changers" that provide necessary leverage for reallocating street space and changing modal splits. Typical example: modern light rail.
- A functionally differentiated street network to support the needs of the transport system and on the other hand enabling areawide traffic calming schemes.
- Bicycle "highways" is a great means of giving a strategic impact on modal priorities. A solution that not only has functional benefits but also has great promotional value.
- New connections for cyclists and pedestrians to reduce barrier effects and shorten distances between city districts. Typical example: bridges and tunnels.
- Strong focus on multimodality, solutions enabling efficient travel chains that can be competitive with private cars.

Planning for Future Transport Systems

Conclusions from group discussion on the need for better planning methods and procedures related to mobility in good cities:

- Travel Surveys need to be modernized to provide reliable information on travel behavior in cities. Reply frequency low using traditional methods. New technology is available and are currently being tested.
- Better knowledge needed of different road user groups, especially cyclists and pedestrians.
- Different sources provide conflicting information about bicycle traffic. Is it increasing or decreasing?
- Better valuation methods needed of health effects for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Information about existing bicycle traffic is often missing,
- Effects has to be analyzed, before and after, measures for cycling are implemented. Questions that need to be studied include: What effects were achieved on the number of cyclists at different times? Did increased cycling come from car or from public transport?
- Better understanding needed about the travel behavior of service providers (plumbers, home help, etc.).

Strategic Challenges and Innovation

Conclusions from group discussion on strategic challenges and the need for innovation related to the topic of mobility in good cities:

- Differences in planning has to be considered (long-term, toll systems, bypakker etc.)
- Automated vehicles may lead to new services and change behavior, what to expect, how to plan...
- Parking policies important – also Park'n Ride
- Sharing economy – also related to parking, automated vehicles and city life
- Redistribution of space and road capacity a strategic issue
- "Politology" - ways to influence political choices about how the cities and landscapes should be
- Communication – how to gain acceptance and local ownership from the public
- Mobility at a human scale – "democratic" mobility, "happy" mobility.
- Improved "Effect catalogue" – which measures result in which effects?



The Thomas B Thriges Street before under and after transformation. Image from City of Odense

About the Urban Transport and Transport Planning Committee

The Nordic Road Association (NVF) promote advances within the road, road traffic and road transport sector through cooperation among professionals in Denmark, Finland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Urban transport and transport planning committee promote experience and knowledge exchange that strengthens the future competencies of participating organizations. The committee aims to have a broad view of topics such as mobility planning, urban freight transport, strategic development of the transport system, planning methodology and socioeconomics. More information: www.nvfnorden.org