

Tactical urbanisme-approch in urban redesigns with focus on active mobility and livability in Sydhavn, Copenhagen

MSc Sustainable Cities
Aalborg University Copenhagen
2nd Semester, SS26

Jonathan Klattkowsky
Ingimar Sveinsson
Rebecca Patricia Fagan

Supervisor: Nanna Finne Skovrup

Trafikdage 2026
August 25 · Aalborg

Problem formulation

The challenge

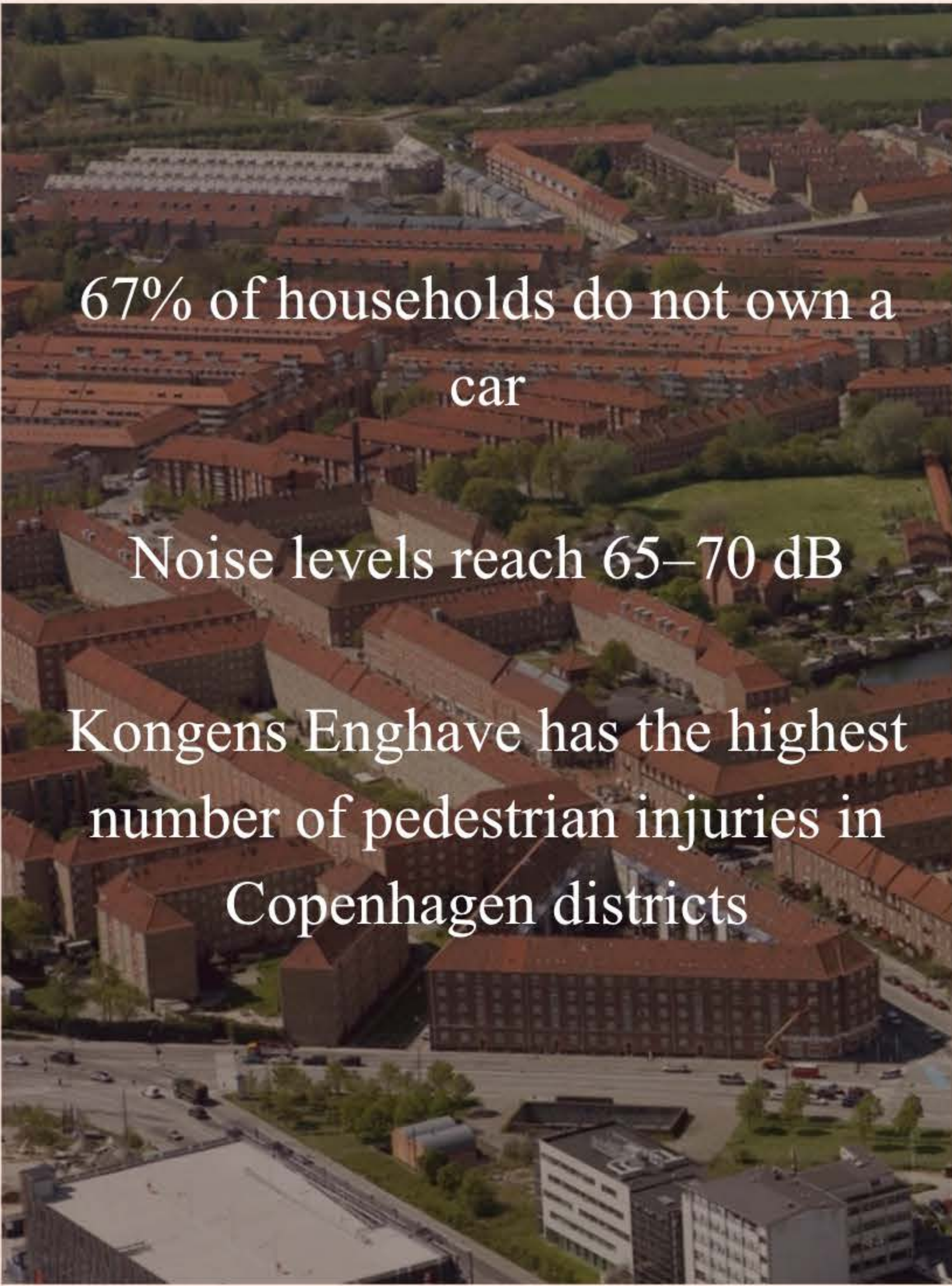
Borgbjergsvej is officially classified as a pedestrianoriented Strøggade, yet it functions as a car-dominated through-traffic corridor; wide, straight, noisy, and hostile to the majority of residents who travel on foot, by bike, or by bus.

Research questions

What are the conditions on and around Borgbjergsvej that design proposals must respond to? How can redesign scenarios rooted in tactical urbanism address these challenges and how are they received by stakeholders and residents?

Why Sydhavn?

Borgbjergsvej is the main commercial street in old Sydhavn, Copenhagen. Despite serving a neighborhood with low car ownership and high dependence on walking, cycling and public transport, the street remains dominated by through-traffic and parking. This limits street life, pedestrian comfort and local business development.



"67% of Sydhavn families are car-free, yet the street is designed for the minority who own one."

Mobility and liveability are treated as reinforcing priorities, not competing ones.

"Ambitious plans for Sydhavn have historically struggled to find political traction."

Methods

The project focuses on creating 4 prosed redsigns for Borgbjergsvej in Sydhavn, based on a tactical urbanisme approach and a focus on active mobility and livability. The resresearch combines spatial analysis, stakeholder engagement and international best-practice examples to evaluate redesign opportunities for Borgbjergsvej. The tatical urbanisme approach creates 5 steps for implementing redesigns focused on enhancing urban livability and active mobility measures.

- Site analysis
- Resident interviews
- Expert interviews
- International case studies
- Stakeholder survey

TACTICAL URBANISM IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK — APPLIES TO ALL FOUR SCENARIOS

1	2	3	4	5
Diagnose Traffic counts, noise levels, pedestrian flow, demographic baseline — before any intervention	Prototype Low-cost, reversible installations — painted markings, planters, parklets. Hours to install and remove	Measure Speed, dwell time, footfall, resident surveys. Before—during—after methodology over 4–8 weeks	Engage Co-design with residents, businesses, Movia, police and local committee. Community ownership	Scale Evidence legitimises permanent investment. Each step earns the next: planter → median → kerbing

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

No single scenario wins

Each proposal involves trade-offs. Scores cluster in the middle across most criteria, with high ratings in one area accompanied by lower ratings elsewhere. Scenario 3 offers the most broadly acceptable starting point given its incremental, non-disruptive

Testing beats planning documents

Survey respondents struggled to evaluate spaces they hadn't experienced — this itself argues for tactical urbanism. Physical trials generate real evidence and shift public perception in ways that planning documents alone cannot. Residents become stakeholders through experience.

Mobility and liveability together

A safer street invites active mobility. More active mobility generates street life. Street life attracts local business and builds the political confidence for more ambitious change. The four scenarios are best understood as sequential stages, not alternatives.

"A flower pot on a street corner is not a compromise; it is the first sentence of an argument. If it slows traffic, it becomes a median. If a median generates safer conditions, it becomes permanent kerbing. Each step is evidence for the next."

Four proposed redesigns of Borgbjergsvej

1

Traffic-slowing measures

Planter boxes, bollards, chicanes introduce horizontal deflection to reduce speeds. Protruding bus stops act as combined passenger infrastructure and traffic calming. Street retains its through-traffic function.

- Lowest disruption
- Bus route unchanged
- Safety focus
- Start: painted markings + planters

2

Summer street

Seasonal pedestrianisation inspired by Vestergade (Aarhus), Montréal, and Paris Respire. Carriageway closed to traffic; activated with markets, seating, events. Bus diverted. Strong liveability gains at a temporary mobility cost.

- Seasonal closure
- Community activation
- Bus detour required
- Start: single car-free weekend

RECOMMENDED START

3

Wider paths, less parking

Parking reallocated to wider footpaths and improved cycle lanes. Parklets introduced in vacated bays. Seating and greenery along building edges. Street remains fully operational — broadest stakeholder acceptance.

- Permanent reallocation
- Accessible design
- Start: 2–3 parklets at active frontages

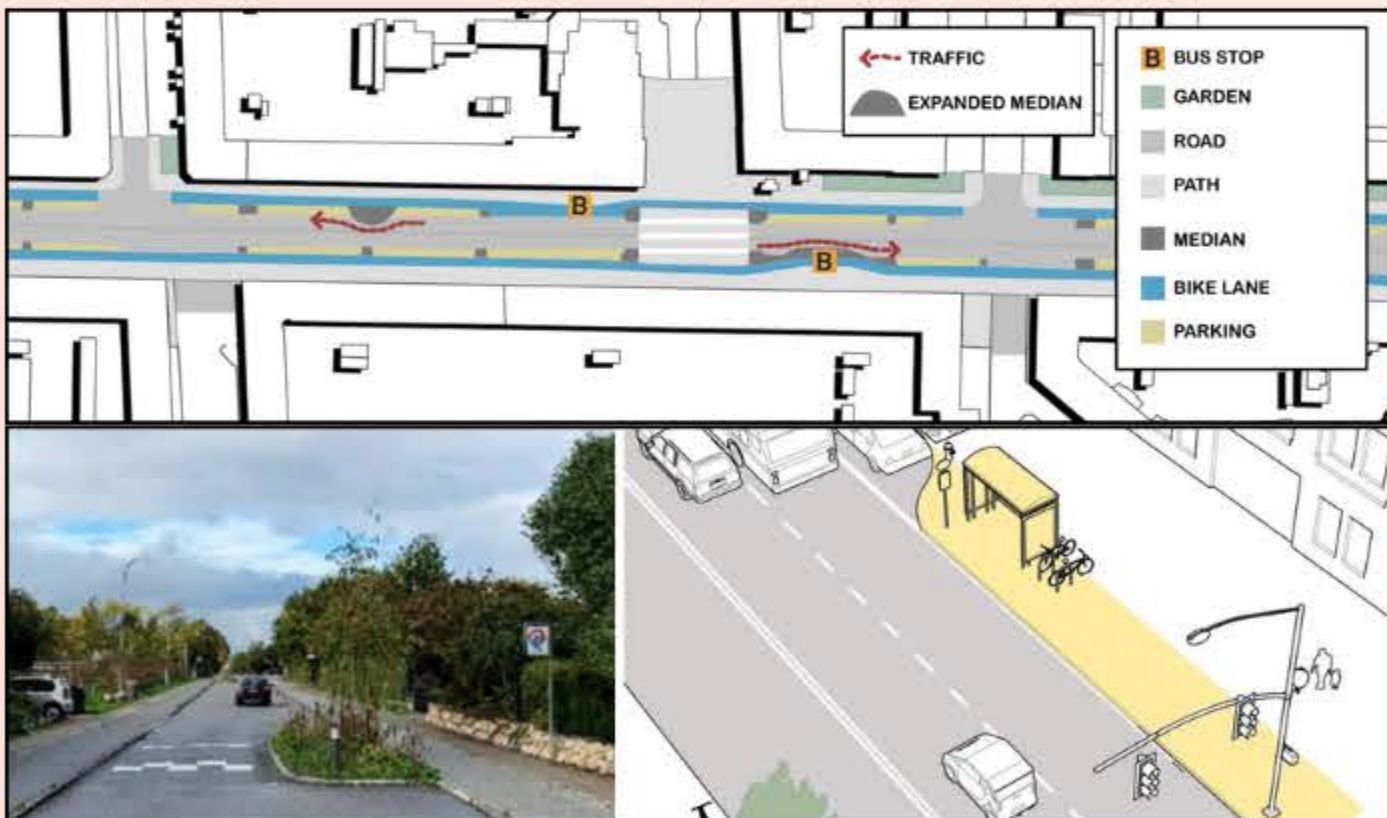
4

Bus & bike street

Private cars removed entirely. Carriageway shared by buses and cyclists only. Pedestrian paths substantially widened. Addresses all Gehl criteria and Healthy Streets indicators — the most contested scenario with the widest stakeholder divergence.

- Car-free
- Maximum liveability
- Requires resident support
- Start: car-free weekends + monitoring

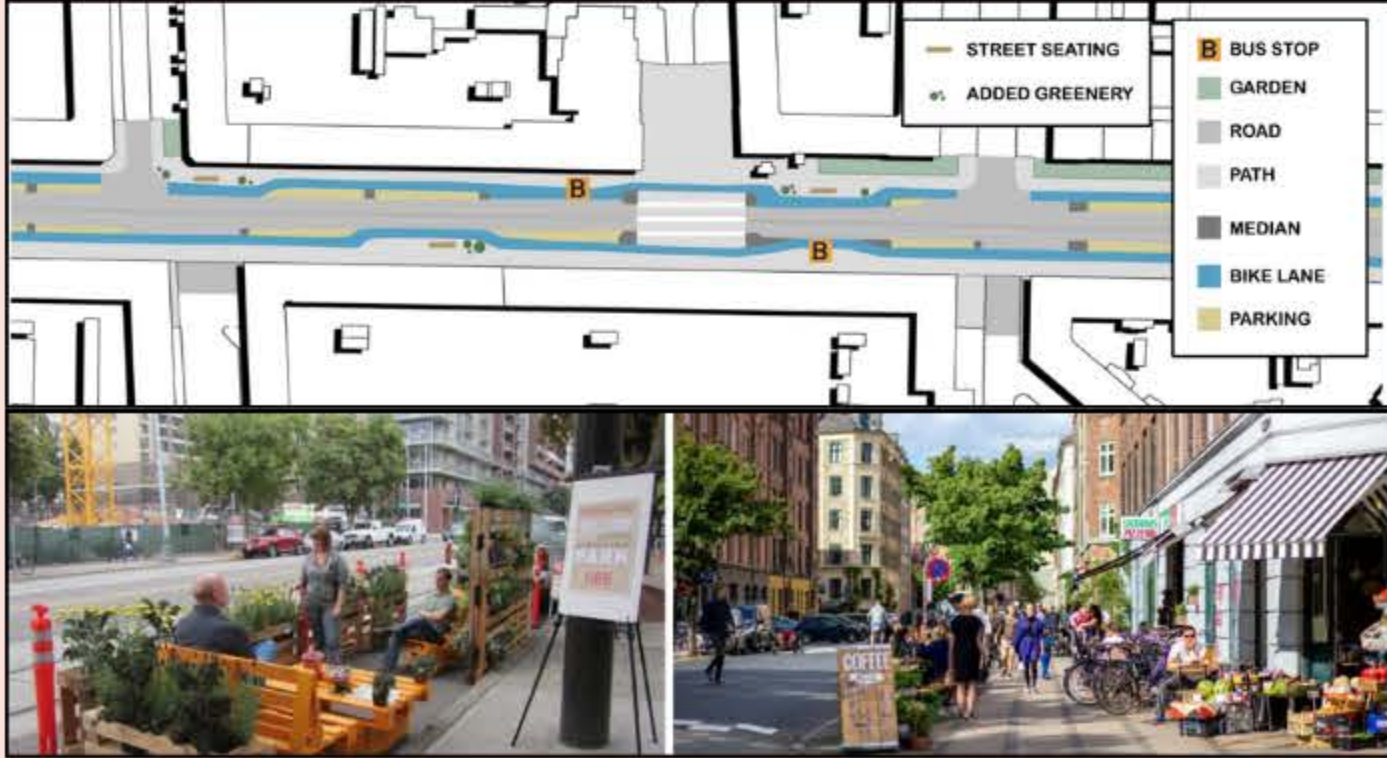
Scenario 1 - Traffic-Slowing Measures



Scenario 2 - Summer street



Scenario 3 - Wider Pedestrian and Cyclist Paths with Reduced Parking



Scenario 3 - Wider Pedestrian and Cyclist Paths with Reduced Parking



Borgbjergsvej has the potential to become a people-oriented neighborhood street rather than a traffic corridor. Tactical urbanism offers a low-risk pathway for testing changes, engaging stakeholders and gradually transforming the street toward greater livability and active mobility.

The project demonstrates how existing urban streets can be transformed without major infrastructure investments. By prioritising walking, cycling and public life, municipalities can improve public health, reduce environmental impacts, strengthen local businesses and create more attractive neighbourhoods. The approach is transferable to many Danish urban areas facing similar mobility and livability challenges.