

Summary

Characteristics of walking strategies affecting their usefulness and effect

Studies of walking strategies in Haugesund, Trondheim, and Ås

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Walking as a means of transport is rapidly becoming more relevant and important. Many municipalities develop their own walking strategies to get more people walking and to improve the experience of walking. In this report, we have examined what characteristics of walking strategies that affect whether they become good and effective tools in municipal planning. Recommendations for cities developing walking strategies can be summarized as: The walking strategy should have a long-term and holistic strategic part and a more short-term and concrete action plan that is revised frequently; The municipality should make the walking strategy itself; The walking strategy should be broadly anchored; Involve multiple municipal departments and other relevant actors in the preparation of the walking strategies; Participation from the population is important – mapping of where children walk and mapping of data and planned interventions are tools to engage; Campaigns that are conducted anyway should be included as part of the walking strategy.

Introduction

Walking as a means of transport is an important topic in discussions about urban development and urban transport. Increased walking shares on everyday trips are important for more people to achieve targets for daily physical activity and for achieving the zero growth in traffic volumes in Norwegian urban regions. More walking contributes to more pleasant and vibrant streets and cities, and it can contribute to increased social interaction. In 2012, the Norwegian Public Roads Administration published a national walking strategy with two main objectives: to improve the experience of walking and, and to make more people walk more. An important purpose of this was to stimulate municipalities to develop their own walking strategies.

This report has been prepared as part of the research project WALKMORE, which will develop knowledge about how to plan and develop small Norwegian cities in ways that contribute to improving the experience of walking and to make more people walk more. Through the project we follow the work of three small cities in developing their own walking strategies and assist them in this. As part of this, we have examined what characteristics of walking strategies that affect whether they become good and effective tools in municipal planning. In a previous project, we found no systematic investigations of walking strategies. We have therefore decided to publish our findings so that others can benefit from it.

When starting the work of developing a walking strategy, it is natural to ask what characterizes walking strategies that could be useful and effective tools in municipal planning. We understand this as the walking strategies contributing to changes and implementation of measures that contribute to more people walking, and to improving the experience of walking.

Walking strategies can contribute to this directly, for example, by developing action plans with measures that contribute to goal achievement, see Figure S1. Measures may include

large and small physical interventions, regulatory changes, changes in responsibilities, campaigns, better operations and maintenance, etc. Walking strategies can also contribute to goal achievement indirectly, by affecting other plans in ways that lead to a development of land use and transport systems (and other issues) that contribute to more people walking and improved walking experiences.

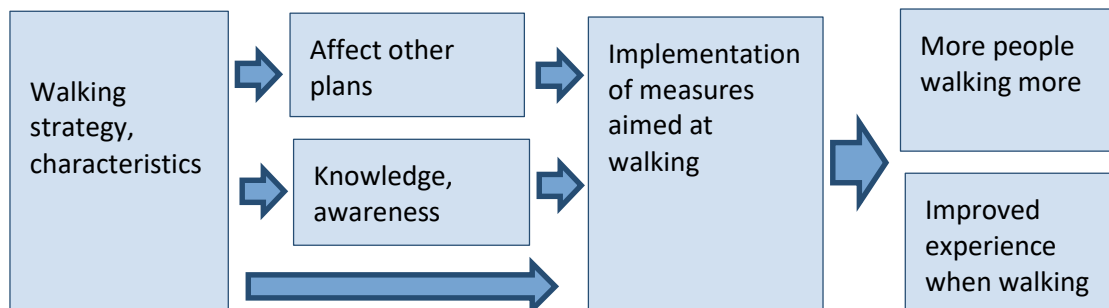


Figure S1: How walking strategies can help more people walk more and improve the experience of walking. Based on Hagen, Knapskog and Tennøy (2019).

Different characteristics of walking strategies can influence whether and how they constitute useful and efficient tools and contribute to goal achievement, such as: Defined goals, strategic approaches, how specific they are, the use of proven knowledge, how results are evaluated, the design of the document, what processes have been implemented, who has participated, etc.

We have examined this through comparative case studies with the walking strategies for Haugesund, Trondheim and Ås as cases. The study was conducted using document studies and interviews with relevant professionals.

Results

The three walking strategies are quite different, both because they are adapted to the local context and because their focus differ. The walking strategy in *Haugesund* was prepared as a background document for the municipal master plan. It consists of a map that shows important links and how these connect destinations for walking. It also has an action plan aimed at four different themes: land use, urban development, design, and changing attitudes. The walking strategy for *Trondheim* focuses on shortcuts, visibility of walking in streets, image, and information design (signage, logos, messages painted on streets and pavements). They highlight the playful and positive sides of walking. They have chosen to start with ‘easy’ projects that give quick results, and then address bigger challenges later. *Ås* municipality has developed a common cycling and walking strategy which follows the planning and building laws’ procedures with respect to participation, hearings, and decisions (as the only one of the three walking strategies). It has a long-term strategic part that is fixed, and a short-term action plan that is revised annually in connection with the adoption of the municipal budget. This ensure an active use of the strategy, and that the action section is regularly updated.

In sum, all three walking strategies have a strategic and long-term part, and Trondheim and Ås also have concrete action plans. None of the strategies plan to measure the effects of the strategy and its measures within defined deadlines. All three municipalities have chosen to make the walking strategy themselves, and they agree that this contributes to building knowledge, ownership, and engagement. However, all hired consultants for limited tasks

such as design, transport distribution calculation, and surveys. All furthermore leaned on the national walking strategy.

Those we interviewed said that it is important to anchor the walking strategy broadly politically and administratively in the municipality, and to include relevant actors such as the county and the Norwegian Public Roads Administration. All find it important that someone is responsible for following up the strategy and give input about walking within the municipality in various processes. Inclusion of professionals across sectors also creates trust and awareness of walking and reduces vulnerability.

The three cities have had different degrees of participation with the population, but all the project managers see it as important. The mapping of where children walk ('barnetråkk') and similar, as well as mapping of data and measures, contribute to the population becoming more active both in the preparation and follow-up of the strategy.

The walking strategies say little about campaigns such as 'beintøft' and 'cycling to work', compared to how important these are in cities. Such campaigns should perhaps be given a more prominent place in the walking strategies.

The results showed that the walking strategies have had an effect both directly by the making of action plans and implementation of measures that can contribute to more people walking more and improved experiences when walking, and indirectly by influencing other plans in directions that contribute to this. The work with the walking strategies also contributes to increased knowledge, awareness, and commitment, which can contribute to the cities being developed in ways that achieve goals related to walking.

Recommendations

We found that different characteristics of the walking strategies have affected whether and how they contribute to goal achievement related to walking. Based on findings of the study, recommendations for other cities to create walking strategies can be summarized as:

- The walking strategy should have a long-term and comprehensive strategic part and a more short-term and concrete action plan that is revised frequently
- It is advantageous that the municipality makes the walking strategy itself, because it helps to build knowledge, ownership and engagement, help can be hired for limited tasks
- It is important to anchor the walking strategy broadly, both administratively, politically and in the population
- Involve multiple departments in the municipalities (such as planning, health, and maintenance) and other relevant actors (especially the county municipality and the Norwegian Public Roads Administration) in the preparation of the walking strategies
- Participation with the population is important - mapping of where children walk ('barnetråkk') and similar, as well as mapping of data and measures, could cause engagement
- Yearly campaigns should be included as part of the walking strategy