

City centre use and appreciation in seven Norwegian cities

Surveys

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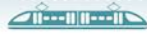
In several projects, the Institute of Transport Economics (TØI) has carried out surveys with questions related to the use and experience of their city centre. Such surveys have been carried out in Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer, Tønsberg, Hamar, Kristiansand, and Oslo. The results show that most respondents visit the city centre often and appreciate the city centre. Most respondents also find it easy to get to the city centre. In this simplified TØI report we mainly present frequency distributions. The purpose is to make the results available to the cities and others who may benefit from them. The report mainly presents frequency distributions. The results will be used in further analysis of how different physical characteristics of the cities and the city centre affect the use of the city centre.

In several projects, the Institute of Transport Economics (TØI) has carried out surveys with questions related to the residents' use and experience of their city centre. Such surveys have been carried out in Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer, Tønsberg, Hamar, Kristiansand and Oslo. The results from the various cities are presented in this TØI report. The purpose is to make the results available to the cities and others who may benefit from them. The report mainly presents frequency distributions.

We have been concerned with different matters relating to the use and experience of the city centre presented in the report. We are particularly concerned with three questions, namely how often people visit the city centre, how well they like it there and how easy or difficult it is to get to the city centre. In short, we found the following:

How often they visit their city centre

- In all cities, the respondents visit their city centre often.
- In the cities surveyed in 2022, the proportion who answer that they usually visit their city centre about once or more a week varies from 64% in Arendal to 86% in Kongsberg. The share who answered that they visited the city centre during the last week varies from 70% in Arendal to 83% in Kongsberg.
- In the other three cities (Hamar, Kristiansand, and Oslo), the proportion of respondents usually visiting their city centre about once or more a week varies from 39% in Kristiansand to 42% in Oslo. The share who answered that they visited the city centre during the last week varies from 53% in Oslo to 61% in Kristiansand.



- The proportion who are often in the centre is higher among respondents in Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer and Tønsberg than in Oslo, Hamar, and Kristiansand. One reason for the differences may be how we have recruited participants for the surveys. Also, in larger cities, less use of the centre may be due to more frequent use of the local centres, which have a greater range of trade and services than in small and medium-sized cities.

How much they enjoy visiting their city centre

- Most respondents somewhat like it or like it very much to stay in the city centre.
- In Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer and Tønsberg, the proportion who answered that they like to stay in the city centre very much or somewhat like it varies from 77% in Kongsberg to 95% in Lillehammer.
- In Hamar, Kristiansand, and Oslo, the proportion who answered that they like to stay in the city centre very much or somewhat like it varies from 73% in Kristiansand to 84% in Oslo. Note that Kristiansand was measured in January/February and Oslo in May/June.

How easy they find it to travel to the city centre


- Most people find it very easy or somewhat easy to get to the city centre (at the time of the survey)
- In Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer and Tønsberg, the proportion who answered that it is very or somewhat easy to get to the city centre at this time of year varies from 84% in Tønsberg to 96% in Arendal.
- In Hamar, Kristiansand and Oslo, the proportion who answered that it is very or somewhat easy to get to the city centre at this time of the year varies from 94% in Hamar and Oslo to 96% in Kristiansand.

The surveys have been carried out as part of three different research projects with different purposes. When comparing results across cities, it must be noted that different recruitment methods and periods for carrying out the surveys may have impacted the results. For the same reasons, we present the results in different chapters, one covering results from Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer and Tønsberg, and one for Oslo, Hamar, and Kristiansand. In Oslo, the questions about the use and experience of the city centre were included in a larger survey about changes in the transport systems and how employees travel to and from work (BYTRANS). The survey was carried out in May/June 2019, right after removing most of the street parking in the centre and introducing a new driving pattern. There was a lot of construction work going on in the streets. In Hamar and Kristiansand, the surveys were part of a study of how employees travel to and from work and what influences the choice of transport mode (IPTC). In Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer and Tønsberg, the surveys were part of a project dealing with the city centre (CITYCENTRE). The different focus may have influenced who chose to answer the various surveys. For example, those most interested in the city centre answered in Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer and Tønsberg, while those concerned with the transport system and commutes answered in the other cities.

The timing of the surveys may also have influenced the results. The survey in Oslo was carried out in May/June 2019, in Hamar in May/June and November 2019, in Kristiansand in January/February 2020, in Arendal in July and in September/October 2022 and Kongsberg, Lillehammer and Tønsberg in September/October 2022.

Comprehensive analyses of the results from Arendal, Kongsberg, Lillehammer and Tønsberg are carried out in the CITYCENTRE project. These will be published as separate articles and reports later. We then examine, among other things, the following:

- How appreciation of and accessibility to the city centre affect use
- How physical characteristics of the cities, such as where trade, services, housing and workplaces are located, affect the use of the city centre

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- Whether those who live or work in the central area use the city centre more often than those who live elsewhere in the urban area and how centrally located homes and workplaces contribute to the performance of the city centre
 - How the transport system and accessibility to the city centre affect the use of the city centre
 - How the physical characteristics of the city centre areas affect the use and experience of the city centre

Presentations, scientific articles, and reports relating to these, and other issues will be available on the CITYCENTRE project's website:

<https://www.toi.no/citycentre/>