Walk-speed Streets and Cycle-speed Streets

In Gothenburg, we have good experiences since many years of rebuilding 5-10 streets in central parts of the city to "walk-speed streets". Motorized traffic is allowed, even heavy vehicles, but they must drive so slowly and carefully that pedestrians can walk on the entire street. No parking is permitted, only short stops for deliverances can be made. The pedestrians often walk in the middle of the street, and this means the capacity for pedestrians has increased substantially compared to pavement streets. This way, the possibilities to walk safely in central parts of the city are enhanced and it has become more attractive to walk the last distance to the endpoint of your journey. Since car and truck driving speed is low and parking is forbidden, it is less attractive to go by car, but still possible to do necessary transports. The design of the streets increases both attractiveness and makes it natural to adjust the speed.

In the last years, Gothenburg has taken this concept one step further by rebuilding two central major streets to "cycle-speed streets". The roads are redesigned to promote cyclists to use all of the streets for cycling, and to promote car- and truck drivers to adapt their speed and driving behavior to the cyclists. This was made in streets where it was not possible to build separate cycle-lanes since the streets are not broad enough. Earlier, the cyclists had to cycle in the right side of the road, between driving cars, parked cars and the pavements. This was unsafe since car-drivers often had a higher tempo. Now, the cyclists are in the middle of the road and the cars follow their speed. It appears to be a more safe and attractive way to promote cycling, and still keep the possibilities to get access to the area with vehicles, but at a little lower speed. Evaluations show that both cyclists and motorists are more satisfied after the transformation into cycle-speed streets. In the future more streets will be designed this way.

Cycle-speed street