

Evaluation of the Heart Zone project

Experiences from
Bergen Municipality

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Heart Zone

- A defined «zone» around the school where car driving is prohibited (or strongly restricted)
- Traffic safety measure first and foremost
- Active mobility → health and environmental effects
- Change «traffic culture» within a specific geographical area



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What constitutes a Heart Zone?

No single recipe!

The concept must be **adapted** to the traffic environment and available resources at each school

MAIN ELEMENTS



Awareness-raising measures



Simple measures to improve physical environment



Continuous process



Photo: Håvard Prestegården



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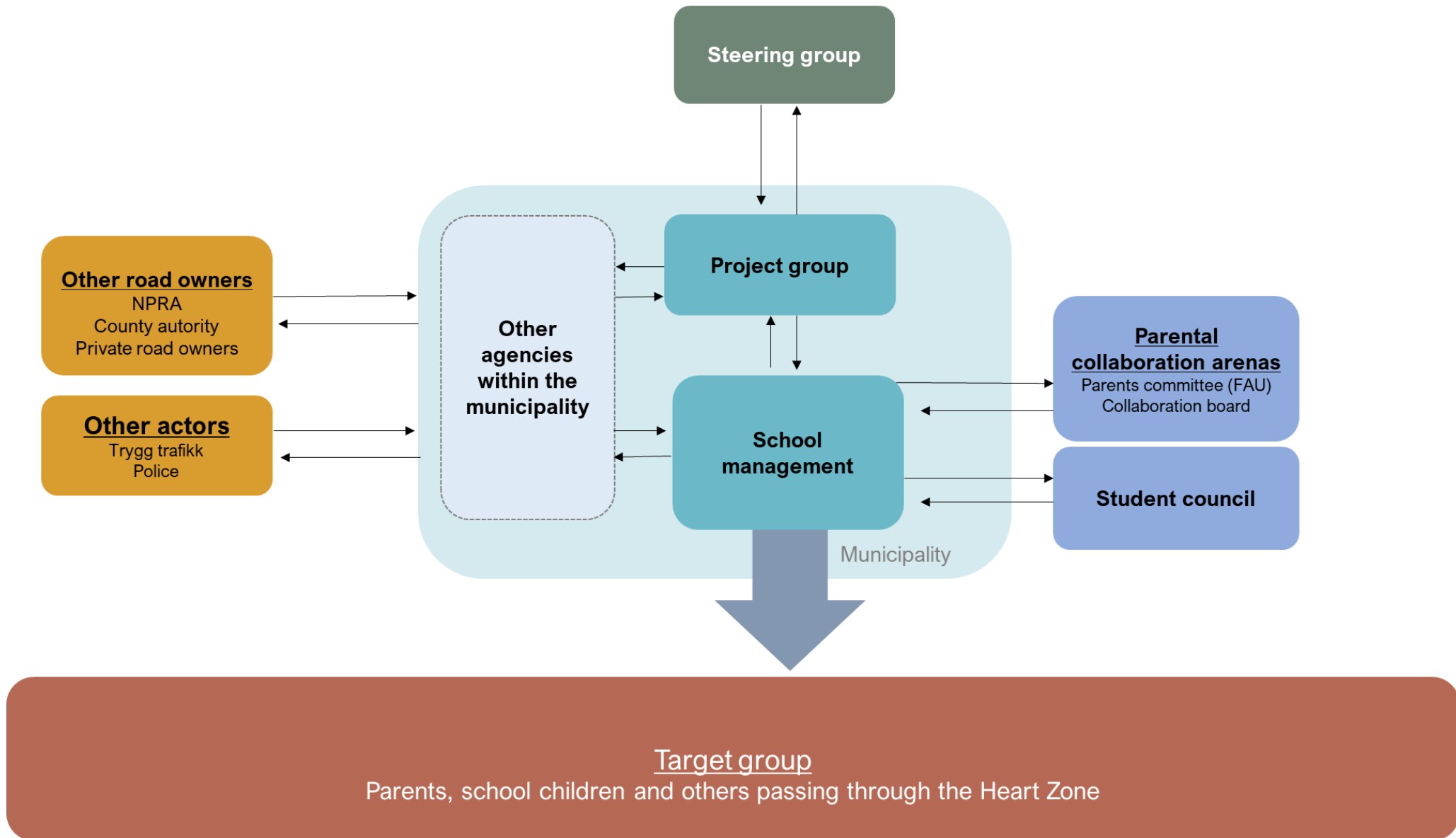


Photo: Marit Økland

The Heart Zone Project in Bergen

- First municipality in Norway to introduce the concept at municipality level
- Politically initiated
- Different from prior Heart Zone initiatives
Top-down approach





Study aims

- 1 Map experiences from project group and steering group
- 2 Map the organization of the project at different schools
- 3 Map factors that promote and inhibit implementation
- 4 Discuss challenges and areas of improvement

Interviews

Focus groups and
personal interviews



Project management

Members from the project
group and steering group
(n=9)



Six different schools

Headmaster and school
management, parent
representatives, school
council (n=19)

Survey



Four additional schools

Parents and school
employees (n=240)

Political initiative: Pros and cons

- Formal anchoring in school management and broad anchoring in the municipality
- The project is by some regarded as one task among many assigned from higher up the chain
- Systemic effects – integrated in formal municipality documents (area plan)



Results from implementing Heart Zone



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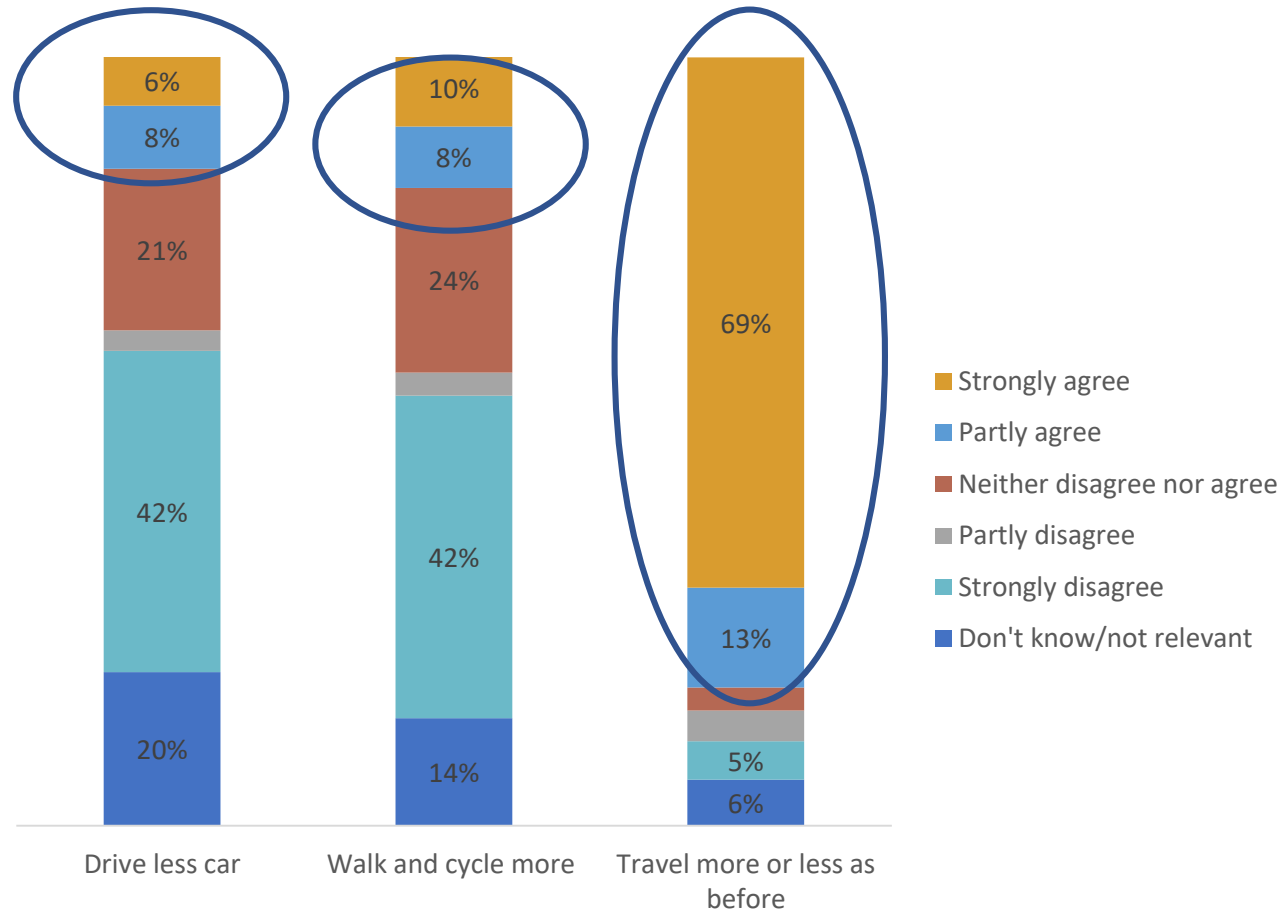
- Perceived results vary across schools
- Reported positive effects
 - Increased awareness of traffic safety and driving culture
 - Less traffic chaos at peak hours
 - Safer to walk and cycle to school
 - More children are walking and cycling
- Some schools reported few or no changes

Results from implementing Heart Zone

- Existing infrastructure and traffic safety challenges pose barriers towards finding good solutions
 - Drop zones
 - Moving traffic chaos to other locations
- Schools with «suitable» road infrastructure were the most satisfied!
- Maintaining continuity to the Heart Zone work was a challenge for many schools
→ largely due to the pandemic



Do parents drive less?

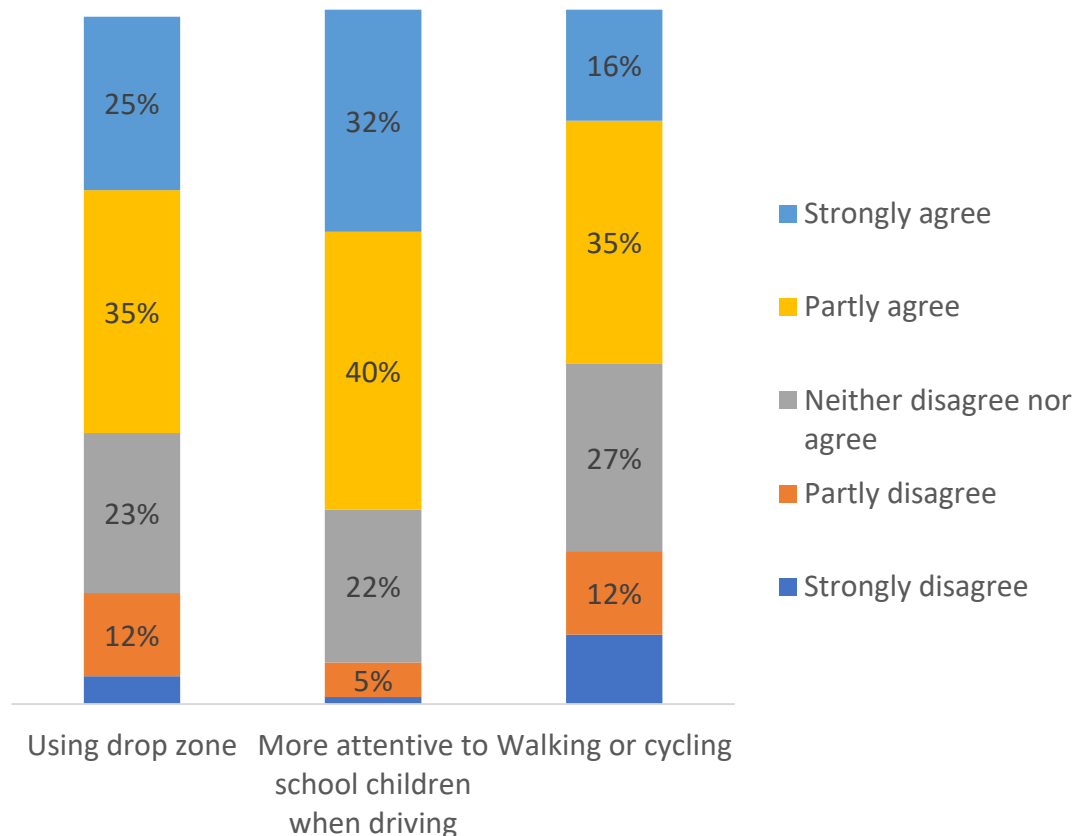


- 14 % report driving less frequently
- 18 % report cycling and walking more
- 82 % travel as they did before the Heart Zone was implemented
- N=220

What explains change in amount of driving?

- Age
- Distance from home to school
- Traffic culture

Does Heart Zone influence traffic culture?



- 60 % agree that other parents are using drop zones
- 72 % agree that other parents are attentive to cycling and walking school children
- 51 % agree that other parents walk or cycle when escorting their kids to school

What facilitates change in traffic culture?

- Implementation of Heart Zone measures (Walk groups, drop zones and sanctioning of unnecessary driving in the Heart Zone)
- A high level of anchoring in the school management is important for successful implementation



Key learning points

- Impact assessment and resource clarification is important
 - What agencies and other actors need to be informed?
- Map schools individual needs prior to project start
- Physical inspections on school premises are important
 - Finding optimal solutions
 - Clarification of expectations
- Awareness-raising work is an important element – but not sufficient to achieve successful implementation alone
- Some schools have infrastructure and road environment needs that require more extensive measures



Conclusions

- Appears to be an effective measure to reduce driving and improve road safety around schools
- Broad implementation at the municipality level is complex
 - Schools have different traffic environments and different opportunities to «tailor» the concept to their needs – one size does not fit all!
- Strong anchoring in the school management is important
- Anchoring and implementation (drop zone, walking groups, sanctioning) appear to be the most effective components in terms of traffic culture change



Link to report

- Summary in English

<https://www.toi.no/publikasjoner/evaluering-av-hjertesone-en-prosessevaluering-av-hjertesoneprosjektet-i-bergen-kommune-article37455-8.html>

TØI rapport 1877/2022

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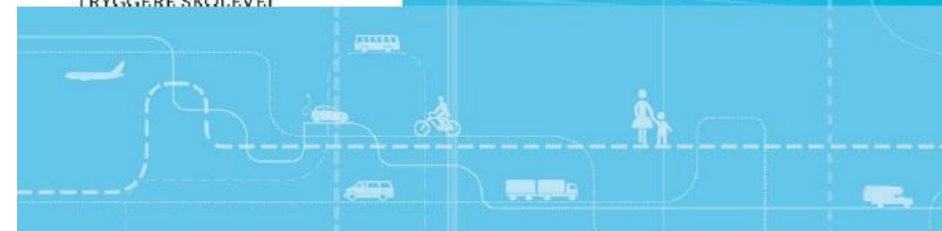
tøi Transportøkonomisk institutt
Stiftelsen Norsk senter for samferdselsforskning

Evaluering av Hjertesone

En prosessevaluering av
hjertesoneprosjektet i Bergen kommune



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Thank you for your attention!