

MIND

the City

*Decoding Spatial Narratives
& Reimagining Nordstan for People*

Shevani Shanmugham
Master's Thesis Spring 2026

Chalmers School of Architecture
Department of Architecture & Civil Engineering

Examiner: Julia Fredriksson
Supervisor: Joanna Gregorowicz-Kipszak

MIND

the City

*Decoding Spatial Narratives
& Reimagining Nordstan for People*



CHALMERS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Shevani Shanmugham
Master's Thesis Spring 2026

Chalmers School of Technology
Department of Architecture & Civil Engineering
Architecture & Urban Design
Urban Design

Examiner: Julia Fredriksson
Supervisor: Joanna Gregorowicz-Kipszak

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank everyone who contributed in their own way in making me reach to this point of life, and also to those who helped make the work of this master thesis joyful.

Thanks to my parents and family, for always supporting me in my unconventional journey, and who allowed me to question everything and in following my own path. I'm shamelessly proud of my worldview, purely shaped because of the exposure I received throughout my life, and for that I thank my '*appa*'. My intuition/spidey sense, I believe on the other hand is my superpower, and for that I thank my '*amma*'.

I would like to thank my '*anna*' for marrying a wonderful woman. I would like to thank my sister in law *Sandy* and my friend, *Janani* who are constant motivations, who push my limits and who believe in me more than I do in myself. I also want to thank my niece, *Aditi*, who brought back the child in me and made me embrace my curiosity.

I thank *Shalu*, my cousin sister for not making me feel lonely as a misfit and passing on her wise wisdom in dealing with life, family and society. I thank *Shankar anna* and *Thara akka*, for making me yummy Indian food and fulfilling my emotional eating in Gothenburg to make me feel home.

I thank my chosen family, my friends back from home, who have constantly been there for me, throughout everything, and supported me whenever I questioned myself, while my prefrontal cortex was still being developed.

I thank my '*German*' and local *uni friends* for making me one of their own, and just being as eccentric as me. I also thank my friends from the swim and fika club-for forcing me to take breaks, which significantly helped my thesis progress without crashing and for intrinsically motivating me.

I thank my randomly stumbled upon, online sociology professor on coursera, *Bart van Heerikhuizen* for guiding my thesis research indirectly, and who unknowingly shaped my understanding of societies, during this process.

I thank all the professors whom I had previous studios with. Every course has inherently shaped what my thesis is today. I sincerely thank my supervisor *Joanna*, for helping me structure my thoughts and chaotic ideas in ways I could never have imagined.

I thank the *Bernt Gustavssons fond* for funding my study trip, which greatly helped me in my research process.

Finally, I honour my fate, which is exactly what brought me here and I thank *Friedrich Nietzsche* in making me not merely tolerate or accept hardships of life, but actively rejoice in them.

My understanding of the world comes from observing the environment around me and making sense of it through curiosity, analysis, questioning, and reasoning.

My curiosity extends into every aspect of life, including metaphysical and philosophical questions about human experiences, existence and its relationship to the physical environment.

My architectural interests range from analysing rural and urban contexts to critically evaluating situations, always grounded in awareness of social disparities and a desire to work toward more inclusive, egalitarian spaces.



About the author

EDUCATION

2024 - 2026 : Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden

- Master in Architecture and Urban Design (MPARC)
STUDIOS:
- Architecture in the Anthropocene
 - Sustainable Develeopment and the Design Professions
 - Urban Prototypes
 - Urban Inequalities
 - Managing Design Projects
 - Reality Studio (2025 Kisumu, Kenya)
 - Building on Context and Buildings

2014 - 2019 : Meenakshi College of Engineering, Chennai, India

- Bachelor in Architecture
STUDIOS: Residence, PHC, Mixed Use, Rural and Urban Studies.

PRACTICE

2017, 4 months : INTERNSHIP

Zero gravity Studio - Architects and Interior designers, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

2020-2023 : ARCHITECT | COFOUNDER

Spacepective Architects, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

In contemporary urban environments, people navigate spaces shaped by strong commercial, infrastructural, and symbolic cues that guide their perception and movement, often without conscious awareness. Nordstan, Gothenburg’s central urban node, is one such environment: a complex hybrid of commercial, transit, public, and office space. Over time, its development has increasingly prioritised foregrounding commercial visibility and infrastructural efficiency, while user comfort, publicness, and clear pedestrian movement are backgrounded. With the upcoming Västlänken development expected to significantly increase pedestrian traffic, rethinking Nordstan becomes increasingly important.

This thesis critically analyses Nordstan as a commercial-transit hybrid space through Henri Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of the production of space. Lefebvre’s spatial triad of perceived, conceived, and lived dimensions of the built environment, is used to guide the study in examining Nordstan’s social production beyond the commercialisation of its public space, while questioning user prioritisation. Design scenarios are used as part of the analysis to situate the tensions of lived space-specific to users, commuters, public, shoppers, to finally examine contradictions and constraints in the spatial dimension.

Using archival and morphological studies, alongside predominantly qualitative methods including serial vision, photo-elicitation, node & centrality mapping, user questionnaire—the research investigates how, spatial configurations, semiotic cues and social power structures shape everyday experiences of movement, perception, and behaviour of public users. Despite knowing Nordstan’s centrality and

role as a major pedestrain transit node, the findings indicate that ongoing development has been driven largely by profitability and infrastructural efficiency. These priorities have produced spatial conditions that encourage rushed movement, reduce legibility, and weaken the site’s sense of publicness within the lived space dimension. Findings from the design scenarios exposes tensions between social use and commuter movement and give us insights on spatial user needs.

This thesis argues for a more human-centred approach to future infrastructural development in Nordstan, grounded in critical spatial thinking and informed by interdisciplinary modes of inquiry. Drawing on the findings from the critical spatial analyses and the design scenarios, while foregrounding the narratives of lived space, the study exposes the necessity of qualitative approaches in addressing the complexities of urban development and advocates to rethink design strategies prioritising user’s spatial experience.

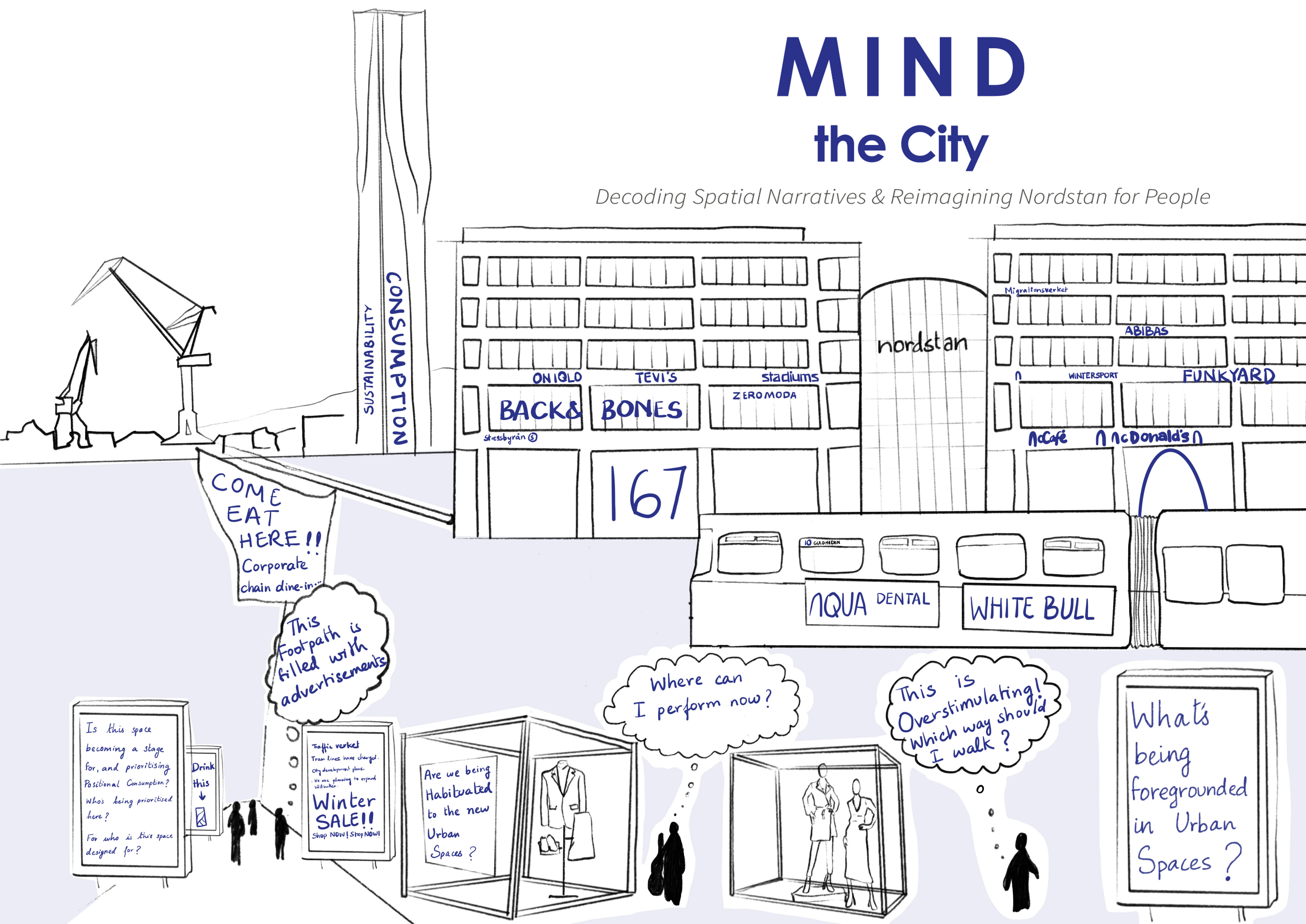
KEYWORDS

Critical Spatial Practice, Design Scenarios, Foregrounding Consumption, Lived Space, Publicness, Reimagining Nordstan, Spatial Triad, Spatial Experience, Spatial Narratives, User Priority

MIND

the City

Decoding Spatial Narratives & Reimagining Nordstan for People



RESEARCH SCOPE

The broader goal of this thesis is to respond to the growing complexity of contemporary urban environments and the urgent need for interdisciplinary approaches to understand and address them. Such spaces operate as intertwined social, political, economic and cultural systems which cannot be adequately examined through conventional methods; form, function and technical analyses rooted in architectural-planning practices. By engaging with conceptual perspectives from existing philosophers, sociologists, the thesis adopts experimenting a different approach to critically read space and it's production. By doing so, the objective is to question which spaces prioritize who. I believe this interdisciplinary understanding is essential for making informed design decisions that acknowledge how the built environments shape individual experience, and in turn, broader societal dynamics. Architecture in this thesis is approached not merely as a formal or aesthetic practice, but more as an investigative one with tangible social consequences.

PERSONAL MOTIVATION

This thesis project started from a place of intuition, curiosity and personal experience with the space of Nordstan in Gothenburg. The thesis is conducted as a critical and interpretative study considering myself as a researcher and as a user of the space.

For someone like me, who moved to Gothenburg not less than 3 years ago, this space has served me with functions of a mall, a transit and a meeting place, all at different points of time.

As someone who lived in Hisingen and had to travel to the city center, Nordstan was a key transit to change trams and buses to reach other parts of the city, in my daily life. Nordstan being also a commercial space, was serving the factor of being convenient to shop groceries or other necessities on my way home. The inner streets seemed public because of how they connected the transits around Nordstan, and they were the ones I always took to change trams. This also made me realise the centrality of the space and it's significance to people who are new to the city and also to daily commuters.

When I was new to the city and searching for a job, I didn't have a big social group and Nordstan seemed to be a convenient place to meet. It seemed inexpensive (even if it

wasn't). I met my friends here without proper seating and not having able to sit for too long. This is when I realised the feeling of being rushed and that I had to move out of this space quicker than I would like. There was also a feeling of being habituated in this space with a sense of overwhelm and overstimulation, which is completely different in comparison to other spaces in Gothenburg. As a user, I found this spatial setup disorienting and emotionally taxing, highlighting how such a transit-linked commercial environment can compromise comfort and clarity in everyday urban movement. Overtime, this uncomfortable feeling made me, or rather forced me to explore other spaces to hangout with my friends and take alternative routes avoiding walking through or around Nordstan.

It prompted me to understand how native residents perceive and experience this space. My curiosity to this complex space, led me to explore and apply different approaches in analysing Nordstan for diverse user groups. This thesis seeks to open a discussion on how such complex spaces can be understood through multiple lenses, how and how such perspectives can inform better decisions that prioritise users—ultimately shaping built environments that support user experience and wellbeing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND 2

AIM & RESEARCH QUESTIONS 3

DELIMITATIONS 4

CHAPTER 2: THEORY

LITERATURE & REFERENCES 5

DESIGN PRINCIPLES 6

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

METHODS & PROCESS 9

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION 11

CHAPTER 5: CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION 13

CONCEIVED SPACE 14

FINDINGS 21

PERCEIVED SPACE 23

FINDINGS 28

LIVED SPACE 31

FINDINGS 41

CHAPTER 6: SYNTHESIS

PEDESTRIAN FLOW MAP 43

HEAT MAP 44

INTERVENTION 45

DESIGN PRINCIPLES 47

DESIGN INSPIRATION 48

CHAPTER 7: DESIGN SCENARIOS

INTRODUCTION 49

TRANSIT SPACE 51

MEETING SPACE 53

COMMERCIAL SPACE 55

HYBRID SPACE 57

INSIGHTS & REFLECTIONS 61

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

DISCUSSION 63

REFERENCES 65

IMAGE SOURCES 66

APPENDIX 67



Figure 1 Fredsgatan, Gothenburg [Photograph]. Personal collection of author.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Nordstan is one of Gothenburg's most active urban nodes, integrating commercial programs, offices, public interiors, and immediate access to major tram and bus routes. Functioning simultaneously as a retail centre and a transit passage, it is a space encountered daily by thousands of users—many of whom move through it not by choice, but as part of their commute.

Across decades of development, decisions shaping Nordstan have been guided primarily by infrastructural efficiency and commercial profitability. These priorities have structured its circulation, visual hierarchies, spatial function and organisation. While this has produced a highly functional transit-linked commercial environment, it has also foregrounded consumption and infrastructural logic, often backgrounding user comfort, clarity, and the experiential qualities of public space.

The main problem lies in the attempt to compress multiple, often conflicting functions—transit, commercial activity, circulation, meeting spaces, and public life—into a single architectural environment and expect it to operate seamlessly. This pursuit of maximum efficiency results in spatial logics that prioritise flow and consumption, while the users end up feeling overstimulated, confused, rushed and stressed in the space. As a result, the space becomes over-determined by functional demands, leaving less attention to how these spaces are experienced at a sensory and everyday level by their users.

Human behavior in urban environments is shaped by attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control—core constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1987, as cited in Khogali, Mohamed Ali & Ramdani, 2025). These psychological dimensions are deeply influenced by environmental cues and spatial arrangements, making them essential considerations in the design of transit-oriented development (TOD) and

other urban spaces.

From an architectural perspective, this raises critical questions about how built form and design decisions after being built influences movement, perception, and behaviour. The spatial configuration—its routes, thresholds, entries, signage, and interior landscape—directs how people navigate the space, what they pay attention to, and how much agency they retain while moving through it. Spatial design influences social cognition, shaping how people perceive and interact with others in shared urban spaces. Knipprath (2021, et al.) shows that urban configurations affect intergroup perceptions, reinforcing or challenging social boundaries through spatial semiotics. The dense layering of commercial cues and controlled circulation patterns shapes user experience in ways that are felt but rarely articulated.

Due to this there's a gap between the analyses of spatial organisation and infrastructure, and lack of evaluation of lived, embodied experience within such environments. Khogali and Ramdani (2025) advocate for a behavioral science-informed approach to urban planning, one that aligns spatial design with human cognitive and emotional needs. This perspective shifts the focus from purely functional or economic goals to inclusive, responsive environments that support mental health and social engagement.

Nordstan offers a relevant case in examining and investigating the complex relationship of multifunctioning spaces and users.

In spaces where overstimulation becomes routine, perception dulls and agency fades - Urban Design must reclaim these environments as sites of reflection, not just movement or consumption.

AIM

This thesis aims to critically analyse Nordstan as a commercial–transit hybrid space, using Henri Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of the production of space and design scenarios. Focusing on the lived space, the thesis questions and reinterprets space toward a more human-centred and socially responsive urban environment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can a critical analysis of Nordstan’s built environment reveal the spatial narratives that shape how people move and experience the space?

- Using Critical Spatial Practice as a discourse to reveal and challenge dominant narratives.
- To explore how qualitative analyses, using spatial configurations and semiotic approaches would expose what’s being foregrounded in space.

How can Lefebvre’s spatial triad reveal the production of space and how can this inform design scenarios to reimagine Nordstan for people?

- This theoretical base explores in viewing space through different lenses and record the different narratives through the analyses.
- To test how aspects of analyses derived from Henri Lebvre’s triad can be used as an approach to inform design scenarios.
- Focusing on ‘lived space’, user-specific design scenarios allow examination of potential tensions within complex, multifunctional environments, while enabling exploration of wellbeing-oriented design interventions.

DELIMITATIONS

This study focuses on Nordstan as the primary site of investigation. The intention is not to generalise the findings beyond this local context. The research is to focus on the importance of Nordstan as more than just as a space of efficiency.

This research experiments uses a conceptual approach; Henri Lefebvre’s spatial triad—perceived, conceived, and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991), to view and analyse Nordstan through an investigative lens and to interpret its spatial narratives from a subjective perspective as an architect. Analyses from the triad are decided based on personal interpretation.

It includes only spatial and visual aspects from the built environment, not going deep into ownership models or program mix. The problem or tension which mostly occurs in the street level of Nordstan is taken into analysis, along with public level, but not other floors of the building complex.

The research draws on the architectural discourse of Critical Spatial Practice, referencing Leach (1997), to explore how the built environment engages with issues of consumerism.

The study centres on how people perceive and navigate Nordstan in relation to its spatial and symbolic design elements. It does not aim to measure psychological outcomes or model behaviour quantitatively. Instead, it uses qualitative methods to understand how spatial cues shape comfort, clarity, and everyday movement. Broader themes such as city branding, economic development, and regional planning may be mentioned for context, but they are not the primary focus of this thesis.

The research adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach, using tools such as photo elicitation, spatial mapping, and semiotic analysis rather than statistical methods. If certain data directly relates to the main inquiry, it may be included to enrich the analysis and support critical reflection.

Rather than proposing fixed solutions, the study develop design scenarios to explore new ways of rethinking Nordstan. These scenarios help later inform design and bring to discussion how we can prioritise design decisions based on user experience and which respond to the issues uncovered in the research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY

Critical Spatial Practice: Discourse

Architectural space cannot be understood merely through form, function or efficiency. It operates as a complex interconnection of cultural and ideological construct-mediating and shaping perception, behaviour and social relations. This understanding is central to Rethinking Architecture (1997), where Neil Leach situates architectural theory within a broader critical and cultural context, by curating many of the key philosopher’s and cultural theorist’s principles of the 20th century.

The discipline of architecture according to Leach, mentions how contemporary construction is criticised for producing generic, “soulless” environments, yet the discipline lacks a shared vision for meaningful alternatives. To move beyond a self-focused design discourse, he mediates that architecture must learn to critique its own assumptions through external perspectives that reveal how built spaces mediate experience, behaviour, and power.

Drawing on thinkers such as Lefebvre, Simmel, Benjamin, Barthes, Kracauer, and Foucault, and their various conceptualisations of space, we can highlight how spaces are simultaneously produced, perceived, and governed, rather than unified or neutral. Within conditions of rapid late-capitalist urban growth, these distinctions become critical, as capitalism operates spatially through circulation, visual hierarchy, and the prioritisation of commercially legible behaviour. Architecture thus functions not merely as form or infrastructure, but as a medium through which economic and ideological logics are naturalised in everyday experience, especially visible in spaces like Nordstan which is shaped by continuous

ongoing processes of negotiation and adaptation. Leach emphasises architecture’s role in shaping everyday life through analysis, critique and interpretation of space.

Critical spatial analysis provides a way to interrogate how environments encode hierarchies, regulate movement, and privilege certain uses or users over others. It exposes how spatial organisation, thresholds, visibility, and circulation are never neutral, but cultural and political choices that influence how people inhabit space, which is especially important amid rapid ongoing processes of late-capitalist urban growth. Through this lens, publicness, agency, and belonging become spatial conditions that must be read rather than assumed.

Jane Rendell’s framework in Art and Architecture: A Place Between (2006) also supports a critical spatial analysis that considers how design decisions impact human behavior. Her work emphasizes the transitional nature of space—how it mediates between art, architecture, and lived experience—making it a powerful site for both reflection and intervention.

Positioned within the context of critical spatial analysis, Nordstan cannot be adequately understood through conventional architectural categories (like typology, programme, circulation efficiency, aesthetics, etc.), given it emerges as a site of contradiction and conflict, that not only reflect social values but actively produce patterns of behaviour, agency, and embodied experience.

Critical spatial practices challenge and reshape the social context of a site while questioning the norms of their own discipline.

Urban Space Beyond Geometry: Form to Meaning

There are different approaches in understanding space as an entity and this thesis uses Henri Lefebvre’s approach. In the Production of Space, according to Lefebvre (1991), Urban space is not merely a geometric or physical construct, but socially produced shaped by political, economic, and cultural processes. He also argues that space is shaped by dominant ideologies, through socio-economic and political structures. In the contemporary context, this approach is significant in addressing capitalism and development today, to expose how dominant spatial ideologies are internalised in everyday life embedded with systems of meaning, control and identity. This understanding challenges the neutrality of spatial design, emphasizing that space is actively constructed through social practices, institutional decisions, and symbolic representations.

THE TRIAD:

To understand how space is produced, maintained and lived through multiple, coexisting dimensions, Lefebvre (1991) introduces a conceptual framework of the spatial triad.

The spatial triad corresponds to three dimensions of

space, perceived, conceived and lived space.

- The conceived space/ representations of space explains how space is planned, designed and conceptualised.
- The perceived space/spatial practice explains how space is routinely used and navigated. It focuses on the urban form and how its encountered physically from observation of everyday routines, physical flows and spatial practice.
- The lived space/spaces of representation explains how space is experienced, felt and given meaning from observation of experiences of embodied feeling, remembrance and the social rituals practiced in space.

The three dimensions can lead us to understanding who is benefitted from the built environments production.

The thesis contributes a conceptual–methodological approach that combines critical spatial theory with qualitative spatial analysis and design scenarios to address complex urban conditions.

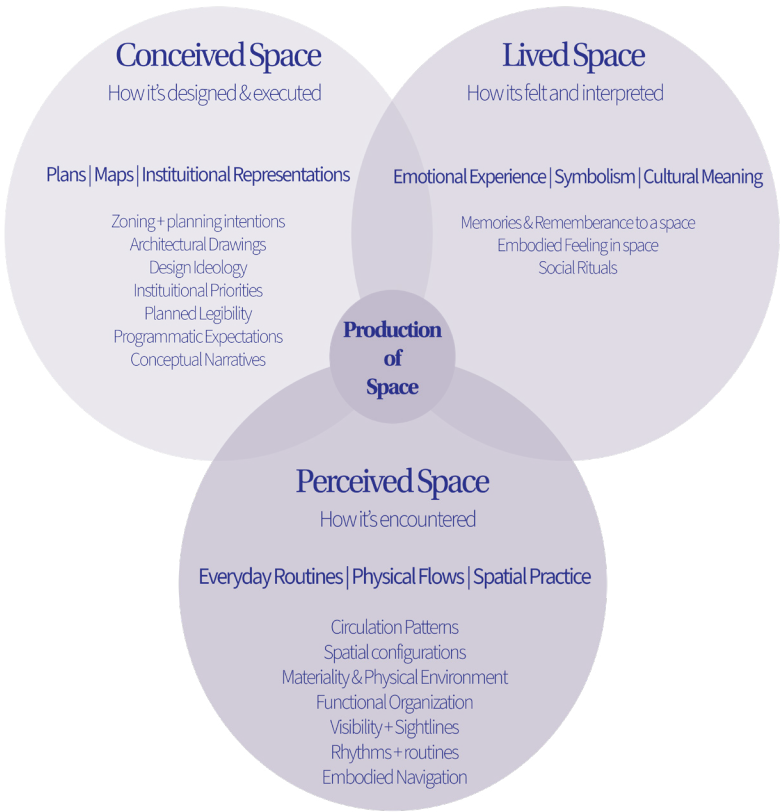


Figure 2 Spatial triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space
Source: Author's own diagram, adapted from Lefebvre (1991).

Consumption & Design Responsibility

Drawing on Ann Thorpe’s critique in *Architecture and Design versus Consumerism: How Design Activism Confronts Growth* (2012), interrogates how urban form and meaning are used to serve consumerist agendas. In transit-linked spaces, advertising and design are not just aesthetic choices—they may lead to mechanisms of behavioral conditioning. Thorpe points out how design increasingly serve consumerism by maximizing stimulation, status, and commercial use of space, leading to habituation and weaker well-being. Public spaces become commodified, while genuine well-being—rooted in connection, reflection, activity, and cooperation—is sidelined.

City governments have responded by adopting strategies that aestheticize public space, focusing on its visual consumption. This shift has led to increased control of public spaces by private entities, altering the material and symbolic fabric of cities and risking homogenization and loss of local identities. As Zukin (1998) argues, urban governance increasingly depends on partnerships with the private sector, prioritizing economic gains and growth over public interest. Cities, are no longer landscapes of production but have become landscapes of consumption, and according to Zukin—’sites of spectacle’ (1995) where branding, commerce, and curated experiences dominate the urban narrative.

Urban Semiotics

Urban semiotics offers a powerful lens for interpreting how cities communicate meaning—not just through physical structures, but through symbols, spatial arrangements, and everyday practices. Space is understood as a kind of language, shaped by cultural, technological, and social interactions, and requiring interpretation rather than passive observation. As Bellentani, Panico, and Yoka (2024) describe, space is an exigendum—a demand for meaning. In their *Introduction to Semiotic Approaches to Urban Space* (2024), they frame architecture as a symbolic system, where elements like buildings, signage, and pathways are not merely functional but carry curated meanings that influence identity, behavior, and power, often reinforcing dominant narratives within the urban fabric.

As Beaten argues (2019), branding strategies often prioritize marketable aesthetics over inclusive spatial practices, influencing how cities are perceived and experienced. Through zoning regulations and policy frameworks, local governments play a central role in determining what is foregrounded in the urban landscape—such as commercial signage, iconic architecture, and curated public spaces—and what is relegated to the background, including informal uses, historical layers, and non-commercial social functions. These curated environments become sites where branding, consumerism, and governance intersect, reinforcing dominant narratives while marginalizing alternative spatial expressions.

“Our contemporary paradox finds us relying for our well-being on consumer-driven economic growth that we actually can’t afford—not in environmental, economic or social terms.”

~ Ann Thorpe

Architecture, for example, is not only functional but also communicates through its form and use. People engage with spaces in different ways—some follow the intended design, while others reinterpret or transform it through their actions. It shows how cities can become interactive and dynamic environments. These ideas are especially useful for exploring how urban spaces influence behavior, perception, and meaning in complex, layered ways. In this research, narrative mapping is done inspired from Gordon Cullens method of serial vision. Through this, the aim is to question and decode the semiotics in space.

Design Principles

Jan Gehl

Jan Gehl, a leading figure in human-centered urban design, argues that cities should be shaped around people rather than buildings or vehicles (Gehl, 2010). He emphasizes starting design with the user and making public life the foundation of urban development. Gehl highlights the importance of multisensory experiences—considering sound, touch, movement, and scale—and categorizes urban activities into necessary, optional, and social types (Gehl, 2011). His “Twelve Quality Criteria” outline key elements like comfort, legibility, and sociability, guiding the creation of inclusive, engaging public spaces that support well-being (Gehl, 2010).

Kevin Lynch

Kevin Lynch’s book, *The Image of the City* (1960), argues on how a city is perceived by people as mental maps and that it consists of five basic elements; Paths, edges, Districts, Nodes, Landmarks. Edges and Nodes are the elements which are taken into account for analysing the context. Edges; boundaries such as walls, buildings, streets, facades, especially are the grounding base to the design scenarios in this research. His theory is relevant to acknowledge user perception and it strengthens the human centered approach which this thesis aims for.

Christopher Alexander

Christopher Alexander, a renowned architect and design theorist, developed a set of fundamental properties that contribute to the creation of environments with a sense of wholeness and life. Among these, levels of scale refer to a coherent hierarchy of sizes that help spaces feel human-scaled and approachable. Strong centers are focal points that give spatial meaning and value, while simplicity and inner calm advocate for reducing visual noise and complexity to promote clarity and comfort. Lastly, not-separateness emphasizes the importance of designing buildings and spaces that feel connected to their surroundings rather than isolated (Alexander, 2002).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS & PROCESS

This chapter explains the methods and process involved in the thesis. To investigate the research aim and questions, this project will employ a combination of qualitative and spatial methods tailored to the context of Nordstan. The study begins with conceptual analysis using Henri Lefebvre’s production of space, which after synthesis informs the design scenarios. The design scenarios are built as part of the analysis and later synthesised to show the contradictions of spatial and user conditions, from which results and conclusions are discussed.

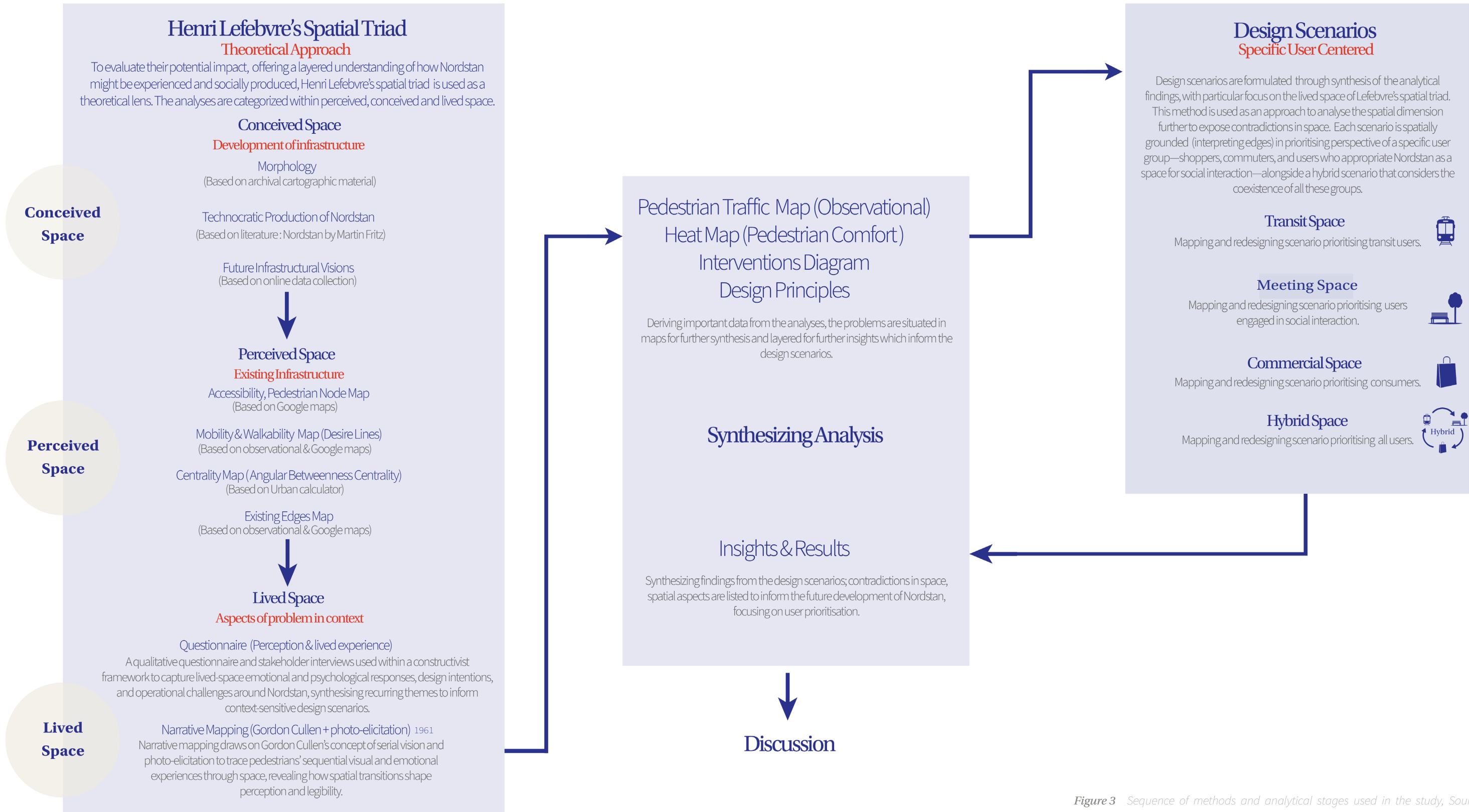


Figure 3 Sequence of methods and analytical stages used in the study, Source: Author's own diagram (2026).

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT

This chapter is an introduction to the context of Gothenburg and Nordstan; the site to be critically analysed. The text also explains why the thesis uses Nordstan as the study area.

Introduction

Gothenburg, or Göteborg, on Sweden’s west coast, is second in population only to the capital, Stockholm. Founded in 1621 by King Gustav II Adolf, Sweden’s second city soon established itself as a commercial fishing and shipbuilding hub, and later as a leader in transport innovation.

Nordstan is Gothenburg’s busiest transit linked commercial space. It is the largest shopping centre in Sweden in terms of revenue. Nordstan is located in Gothenburg’s city centre, connected to the Gothenburg Central Station by an underground pedestrian tunnel.

With approximately 180 shops and 150 offices, Nordstan not only functions as a destination, but also naturally emerges as a transit hub, given it’s bordered by three of city’s major transit stops and it’s proximity to the central station. A majority of the visitors use public transportation. Originally completed in the early 1970s, Nordstan has been continuously altered and expanded, resulting in a complex that today extends over more than 300,000 m². The complex consists of nine interconnected buildings that integrate retail, dining, civic functions, convenience services, and office spaces. The ground floors consist mostly of retail, and the upper floors of other functions like offices and hotels . The covered streets and squares comprise 8,000 m2 (86,000 sq ft). The shopping centre also offers parking space to 2,700 cars.

What distinguishes Nordstan from many other shopping centres is that the main streets inside the building function as public space and remain accessible after shop hours, closing only during the late-night period between 00:00 and 05:30. Social life here resembles the public sphere but is shaped by commercial interests, rules, and surveillance—a condition

Bergman (2003) describes as a “regulated public street” (*en reglerad gatuoffentlighet*).

Nordstan, Gothenburg’s busiest transit-commercial hub, brings multiple functions into close and often overwhelming proximity. Originally designed for optimum efficiency, it operates today as a space navigated primarily for convenience—serving as a site for shopping, circulation, and the transfer between trams and buses, enabled by its central location in the city.

Why Nordstan?

While it effectively helps people to keep moving, the built environment brings various uncomfortable experiences in the space. Because exposure in physical space is involuntary, users—especially newcomers and immigrants—quickly become habituated, navigating mechanically through an environment that can generate stress, disorientation, and reduced agency. This raises broader questions about how such transit-commercial interiors shape embodied experience and what it means for a space to be genuinely public. ConsideringIn a city celebrated for sustainability and quality of life, the pressures of globalised urban branding risk overshadowing socially grounded spatial strategies. Considering wellbeing through the lens of habituation reveals how repeated overstimulation can condition behaviour and dull sensitivity to the environment. Yet this also opens opportunities: small, intentional spatial interventions could reduce sensory overload, restore attentiveness, and re-centre human wellbeing in a setting where it is currently overshadowed by efficiency and consumption.



Figure 4 Location of study site in Gothenburg (adapted from Google Earth)

- Opened: 1972
- Architectects: Backström & Reinius
- Total Area: 320,000 sqm
- Retail Area: 70,0000 sqm
- Streets & Squares Area: 8000 sqm
- Annual Visitors: 25 million (2015)
- Annual turnover: 4.1 billion SEK (2025)

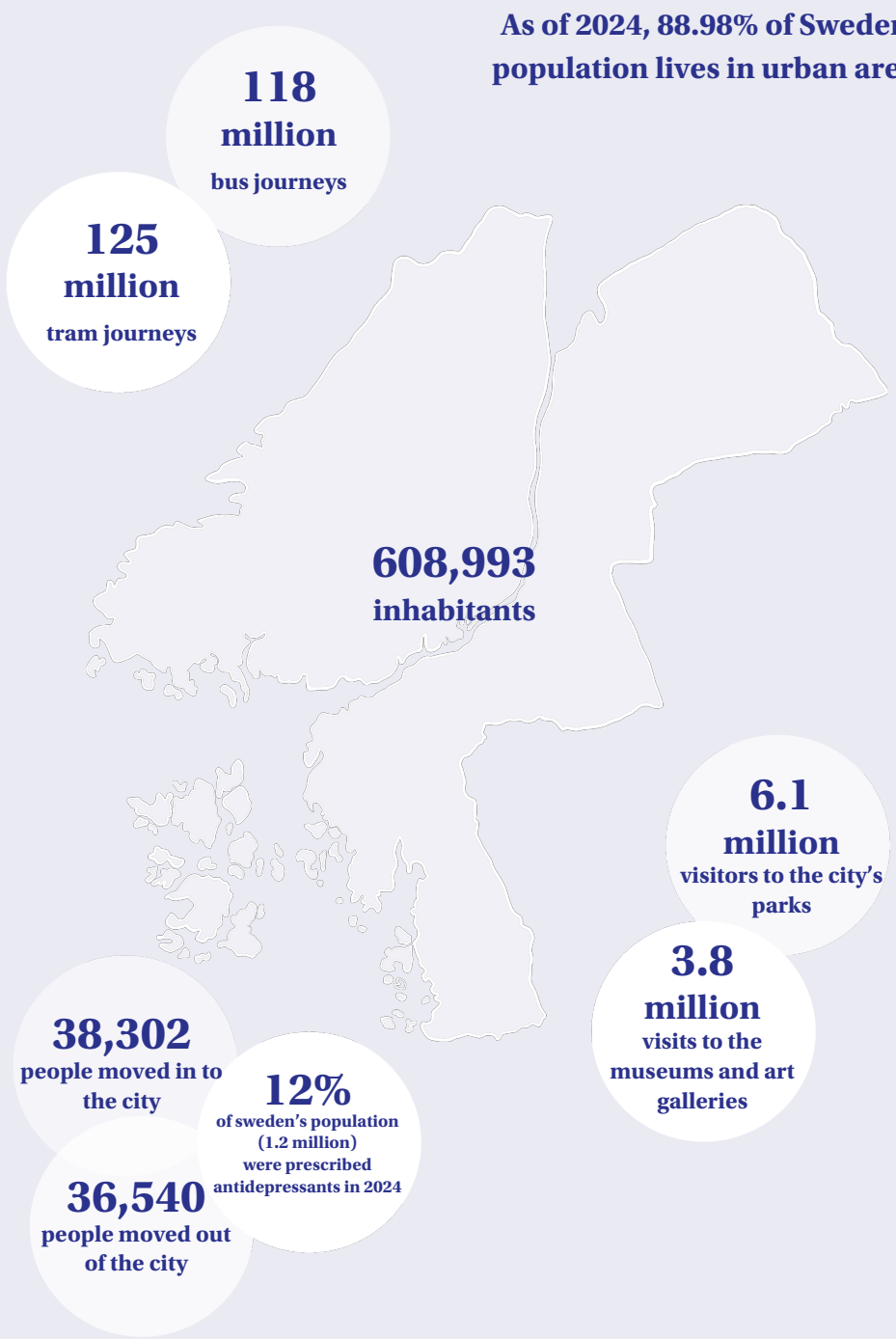


Figure 5 Edited visual from ‘The City of Gothenburg in Figures,’ Annual Report 2024.

Gothenburg’s daily movement patterns show how vital its transit hubs are for connecting people across the city. In such habituated and rushed spaces, ensuring calm and clear navigability becomes essential for supporting smoother movement and better user experience.

While TOD policies often emphasize sustainability, they frequently neglect the nuanced ways in which users perceive and engage with these spaces -an oversight that these figures clearly underscore.

With the Västlänken development set to reshape mobility flows, Nordstan emerges as a key site to rethink - offering an opportunity to improve clarity, orientation, and overall spatial quality in one of the city’s busiest corridors.

CHAPTER 5: CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

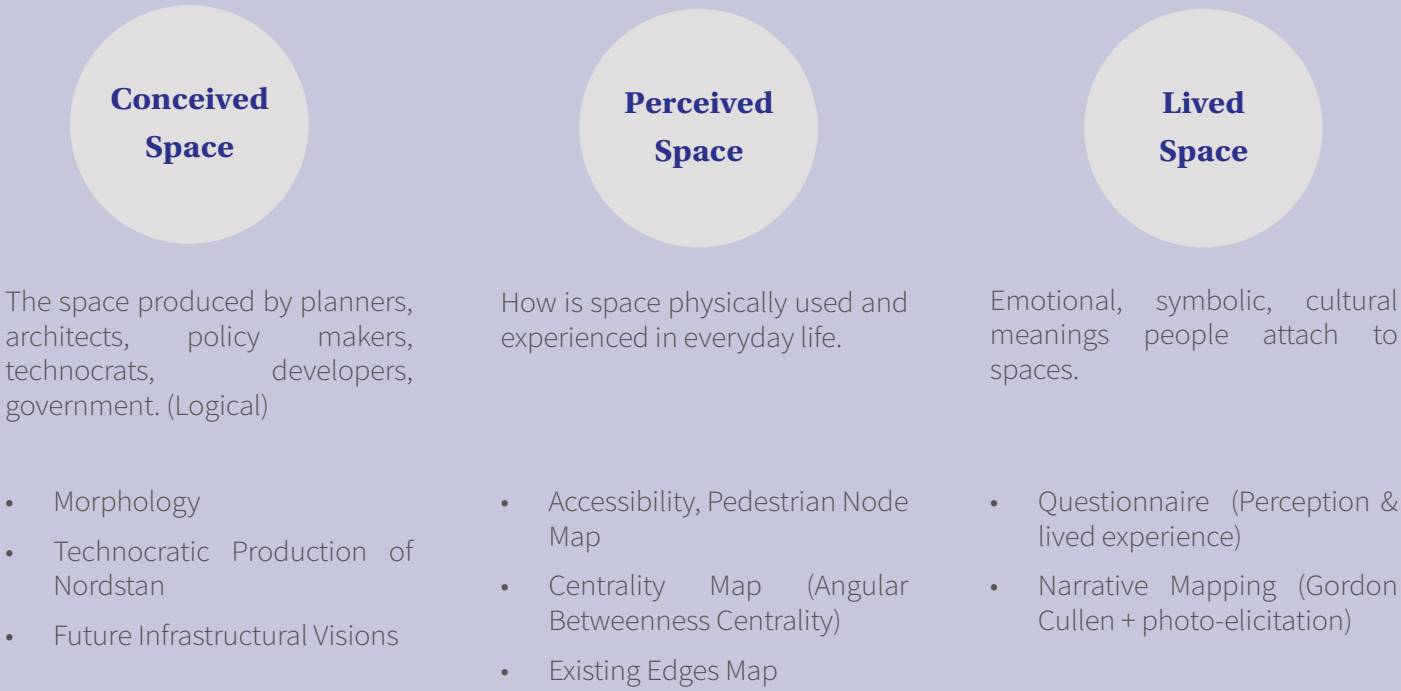
This chapter is about the interpretive analysis of Nordstan through the theoretical and conceptual lens of Henri Lefebvre’s production of space. It’s used as a way to view Nordstan in different aspects and be informed of its narratives, while critically examining the built environment and its role with user’s everyday life.

How to read the following

The following qualitative analysis is conducted through a theoretical lens grounded in Henri Lefebvre’s triad of space—perceived, conceived, and lived space. The approach is with analytical decisions informed by this conceptual framework, which is interpetive.

Symbols are used to indicate each category of analysis.

Following the discussion of each conceptual space, a dedicated page presents the corresponding findings.



MORPHOLOGY

Historical Context & Narratives

The morphology map of Gothenburg’s Nordstan focuses on Östra Nordstan to trace the historical evolution of the area and also its relationship to the central station. By mapping past spatial patterns, the study reveals how this district functioned as a key urban gateway and how its form was shaped by flows of trade, migration, and infrastructure development.

It shows that Östra Nordstan extends beyond the present mall, reflecting a layered urban fabric tied to Gothenburg’s growth. The area once flaunting its beautiful landscape with the Dutch canal system, later reflecting spatial qualities of efficiency. It developed through port-based trade, large-scale storage, and movements of people—particularly emigration to the United States and immigration via the central railway. As a result, it became a node of warehouses, hotels, migrant lodging, and service functions, with minimal permanent housing. Its strategic location created demand for stronger connections to the city core and anticipated future intensification.

MORPHOLOGY

1790



Early Industrial Foundations

- Gothenburg still shaped by its Dutche-influenced grid, canal system.
- The city emphasized order, trade and civic pride. The canals played a key role in transporting goods.
- Östra Nordstan was close to the harbor and central market, making it a hub for maritime trade. Gothenburg was emerging as a key port city.

1820



Expansion & Port Activity

- The city began expanding beyond its original walls. There was a growing emphasis on commerce and connectivity.
- Streets widened, port infrastructure improves.
- 'Gateway' for Swedish exports (timber, iron) grew. Östra Nordstan became more integrated with trade routes and was a lively commercial district.

1860



Emigration & Industrialisation

- Industrial expansion and peak emigration to America turned the area into a gateway of movement.
- The railway and Gothenburg Central Station enabled direct flow from trains to ships.
- Commerce thrived, shops and inns emerged, solidifying its role as a vibrant transit corridor.

1870

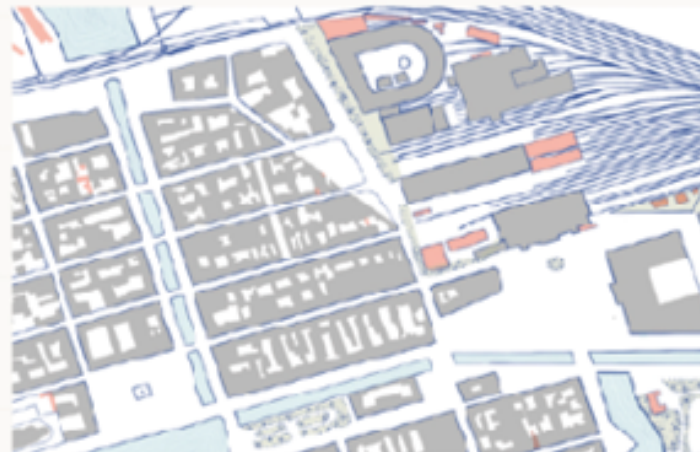


Fig.6

Infrastructure and Urban Density

- Urban density increased, civic infrastructure was prioritised. The city was modernizing rapidly.
- Tram lines were introduced, the station area became a multimodal hub.
- Östra Nordstan was a bustling district with mixed use buildings, with shops on the ground floor and residences above.

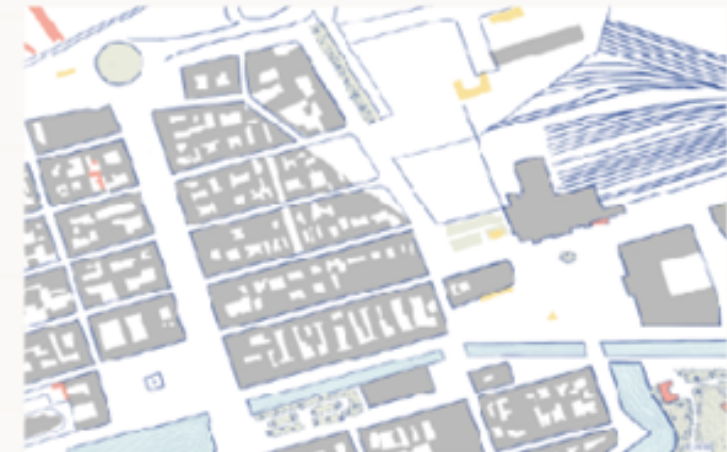
1890



Commercial Consolidation

- The city emphasized modernisation and commercial efficiency.
- Tram line expanded, pedestrian movement was structured around commercial streets.
- Östra Nordstan became a spot for trade and logistics, with warehouses, merchant offices and shipping related activities tied to the port.

1920



Town Planning & Civic Pride

- The International Town Planning Conference marked Gothenburg's shift toward civic aesthetics and structured urbanism.
- Östra Nordstan became part of a vision for connectivity, green boulevards, and public space.
- The district remained a commercial center, now with formalized retail and civic buildings.

Figure 6 Morphology. Created by author using historical maps sourced from Göteborgs Stad's digital archive.



Figure 7 Book cover of Nordstan by Martin Fritz (1997)

TECHNOCHRATIC PRODUCTION OF NORDSTAN

Nordstan Martin Fritz 1997

Description

Martin Fritz's 1997 book Nordstan: från gårdagens vision till dagens affärscentrum offers a historical account of the creation, planning and development of Nordstan, in Gothenburg.

The book focuses on tracing the origins and planning process of Nordstan and is a documentation of how the project began as an approach to tackle the deteriorating inner city district into a modern commercial center.

Östra Nordstan, then characterized as dormant and inactive was deperately in need of redevelopment. The area consisted mainly of warehouses, crafts and small industries. The first discussion was if a large shopping mall was necessary in Gothenburg during that time. The following questions were being put forward for the decision of redevelopment:

- Would the redevelopment sharpen the geographical divide between commerce, housing and work.
- There were already persisting problems on order and well-being in the area.

It was a total renovation of an entire city district, initiated largely by private developers but supported by the municipality. As we see it was a business strategy, considering the location, especially after the central station was built and developed in Gothenburg.

The development focused on the following aspects:

- Urban renewal of Östra Nordstan, considering its centrality.
- Economic and commercial strategy.
- Architectural and planning decisions.
- Positioning of the project with important stakeholders.

After several years of problems developing the project (funds, permissions, partners coming in and going out), the project was successfully developed but the narrative always focused on profitability, spatial efficiency (how people should keep moving) and infrastructural development. It reveals Nordstan evolving as a collaborative model between propoerty owners and tenants, who jointly managed public spaces, programming, and commercial strategies. It constantly shifts the narrative from purely physical transformation to ongoing spatial management and place-making.

Today, Nordstan stands as a layered urban landscape shaped by continuous change reflecting a process of transformation in response to economic growth, urban pressures and changing social needs.

How is the space conceived by designers, planners, operators, or commercial actors?

What narratives of efficiency, convenience, consumption, or publicness are embedded?

What indicators of success appear to guide decision-making?

Overall Planning & Intent

- Modernize Gothenburg’s city center during post war economic boom.
- Replace “decaying,” small scale 17th century district with a fully controlled commercial complex.
- Create Sweden’s first large covered shopping mall integrated with transit and car access.
- Redevelopment framed as necessary for growth, efficiency, and urban order.

What Existed Before (Rationale for Demolition)

- 17th century street grid, warehouses, emigrant hotels, crafts, small industries.
- 60% of businesses had less than employees — fine grained social & economic fabric.
- Area perceived as sleepy, deteriorated, and unproductive which was the justification for total renewal.

Actors & Power Structures

- Private construction consortium (SIAB, Skånska Cement, Bygg Oleba + 7 local builders).
- Supported by banks (Skandinaviska Banken, Handelsbanken, Göteborg Bank).
- Political support from municipality.
- Key individuals shaping planning: Jan Steen (Master Builders), Prof. Sune Lindström & VBB (urban plan), Ulf af Trolle (economic layout of shops).
- Property owners + tenants governed space through Community & Business Associations.

Governance & Management Model

- To acknowledge the challenges of managing a semii public space, a Community Association + Business Association was formed to control operations, marketing, events, tenant mix.
- Pedestrian streets legally public brought tension between commercial control and civic rights, where attempts to close the mall at night rejected because public spaces cannot be locked.

Planning & Redevelopment Process

- Full expropriation of properties (58 of 81 by 1964).
- Entire district demolished in the 1960s → rebuilt at once as a unified project.
- Use of prefabrication, steel systems, slipform elevator towers.
- Detailed layout plan: shop positioning, entrance design, roofing, pedestrian connections, underground freight streets.
- Integration with Central Station via planned pedestrian tunnel.

Social Order & Control Objectives

- Early reactions of Nordstan were described as sterile, overly concrete, and lacking the organic character of the former district.
- Tensions persisted between Nordstan’s role as a controlled environment and its function as a public urban space. Issues such as youth gatherings, drug activity, conflicts with vendors and musicians.
- “Public order problems are the price of the roof” → highlights contradictions in conceived intent vs lived outcomes.

Modernization, Marketing & Adaptation

- “Miljö 90” renewal: new lighting, colors, water features to soften sterility.
- Expansion of balconies, cafés, hotel additions (Hotel Europa).
- Exhibitions and events (flower shows, garden events, Gothia Cup, Christmas markets) used to improve attractiveness.
- Nordstan positioned as regional hub: 70k–80k daily visitors, strong car accessibility, appeal to youth, families, tourists, and office workers.

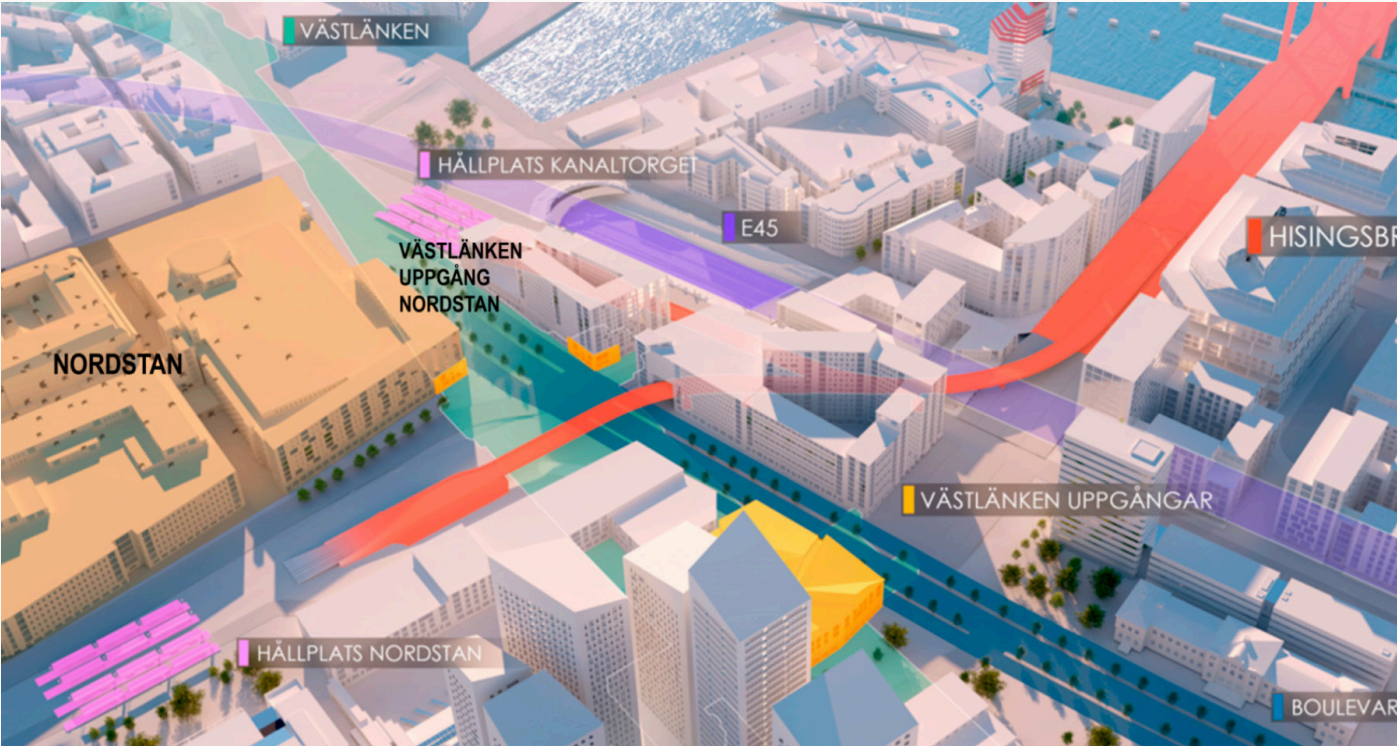


Figure 8 Development Plan for Västlänken’s infrastructure expansion. (Akuro, n.d.)

Future Infrastructural Visions

The North entrance and Västlänken development project carry strong narratives of infrastructural progress and urban renewal. While planning documents and renders highlight classical facades, pedestrian-friendly movement, and improved landscaping, they often omit the visual impact of commercial signage and clutter, raising doubts about how these spaces will actually feel once built.

Key questions emerge: What spatial elements will be foregrounded or backgrounded in practice? Will pedestrian comfort and user experience truly be prioritized? How would activation of Kanaltorget affect pedestrian movement in and around Nordstan? The thesis questions how the built environment would prioritise the public user, to anticipate how future spatial configurations may shape user behavior and urban perception.

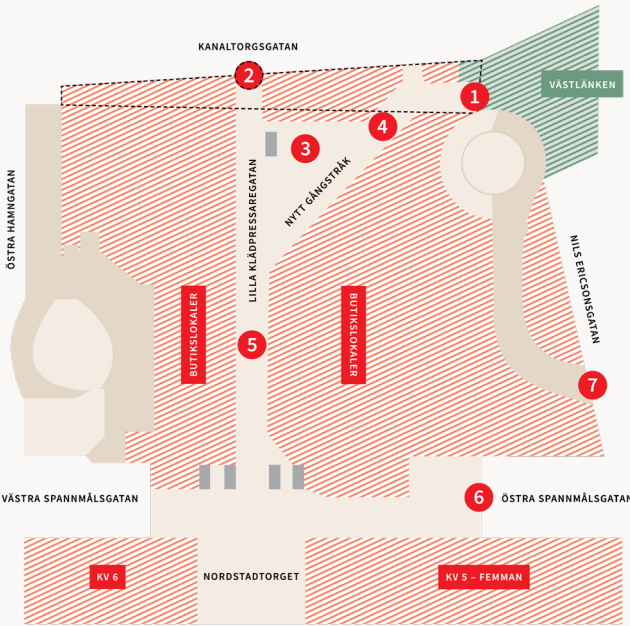


Figure 9 Northern Entrance Plan to Nordstan. (Nordstan, n.d.)



Figure 10 Northern Entrance of Nordstan. (Nordstan, n.d.)

Architectural renders rarely reveal what will truly be foregrounded— they prioritize visual appeal and often fail to reflect the lived experience.

FINDINGS

Civic Pride and Landscape Integration

Urban Identity: The area began as a Dutch-influenced landscape, marked by canals and a sense of civic orientation. There was pride in public beauty and cultural expression.

Mobility and Migration: The arrival of the train station marked the beginning of more industrialized movement. Streets in this zone were deeply tied to emigration history, linking personal transitions with urban flows.

Design Values: Urban development prioritized aesthetic coherence, public function, and civic symbolism. Spaces supported gathering and reflection-landscape was integral, not decorative.

Commercialisation of Urban Space

Urban Identity: Nordstan shifted from a diverse small scale historic district to a unified, retail dominated and controlled environment. It erased much of its earlier social and spatial character. Later efforts tried to constantly redevelop and change functions in the interior of its landscape.

Mobility and Migration: The redevelopment prioritised accessibility, using proximity to central station, and extensive parking to serve both regional and local users. This created a highly connected hub but also highlighted tensions between car dependency and public transport goals.

Design Values: It was designed as modern, efficient, large scale commercial system with covered streets and integrated functions, reflecting strong modernist, planning ideals. It briefly shifted from a sterile, concrete environment to the now evolved modernist space.

Västlänken Integration

Risk: The extension of Västlänken and modifications to the Central Station will funnel even greater flows of commuters directly into Nordstan. As a result, Nordstan will increasingly function not as a mixed-use public/commercial space, but as a core transit artery for the city. The future, as currently unfolding, suggests more of the same—build first, engage later. Infrastructure continues to dominate, leaving little space for meaningful civic participation or social spontaneity.

Mobility and Migration: The design trajectory points toward Nordstan becoming a pure transit zone—a space of movement rather than dwelling. This intensifies pressure on pedestrian infrastructure and raises the stakes for addressing spatial obstructions, exclusion, and overstimulation. Still top-down; focused on technical solutions over lived experience or emotional resonance.

Design Values: Driven by efficiency and consumption. Participation is reactive, invited after infrastructure is already imposed. Civic agency is reduced, and beauty is replaced by branding.

Findings

- Changed landscape from historic civic values, which actually benefitted the public users.
- Efficiency and profit driven infrastructure development and management of space.
- Reflects ongoing negotiation between urban form, social use, economic priorities, and public life.
- Ignorance of the space's centrality, and the street's importance of pedestrian traffic, while planning.
- Constant change of urban landscape within Nordstan, with recurring public issues, all focusing on infrastructure and commercial visibility, while not prioritising user needs or experience.
- Västlänken development urges for better pedestrian prioritisation in design, due to more pedestrian influx into Nordstan in the future.
- Importance of future development, for a coherent public spatial design in Gothenburg, reflecting its sustainability.

Accessibility | Pedestrian Node Map

The purpose of this map is to show entry, exit points to Nordstan and pedestrian clusters, to show connectivity.

- The map shows the closes transits, like the central station, bus and tram stops.
- The map also shows car parking in Nordstan.
- The map shows greenery around Nordstan.
- The map also shows Nodes where pedestrians change transits, and it's marked based on how many people use it.

In Kevin Lynch's framework, **Nodes** are strategic points in the city that people enter, pass through, or concentrate around, and which function as focal points in the mental image of the city (Lynch, 1960).

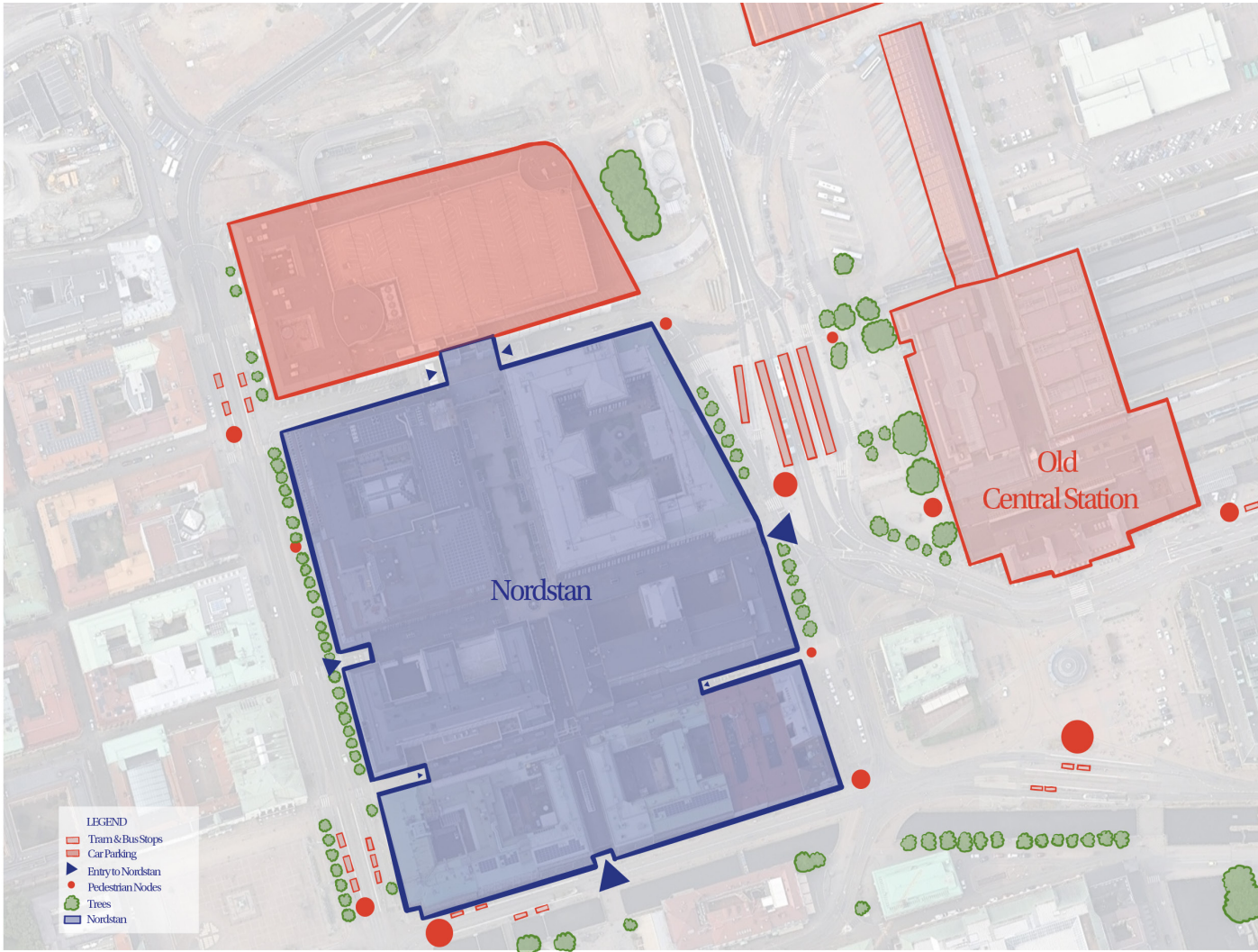


Figure 11 Accessibility & Pedestrian Node Map Nordstan, using Satellite image of Nordstan, Gothenburg (Google Earth, 2024). Created by author.

Mobility & Walkability

The purpose of this analysis is to present the pedestrian's inconvenience in and around Nordstan. The map exposes how connected spaces still fail on foot.

- The map shows pedestrian routes from one transit to another.
- It shows desire lines of easiest routes tot he transits.

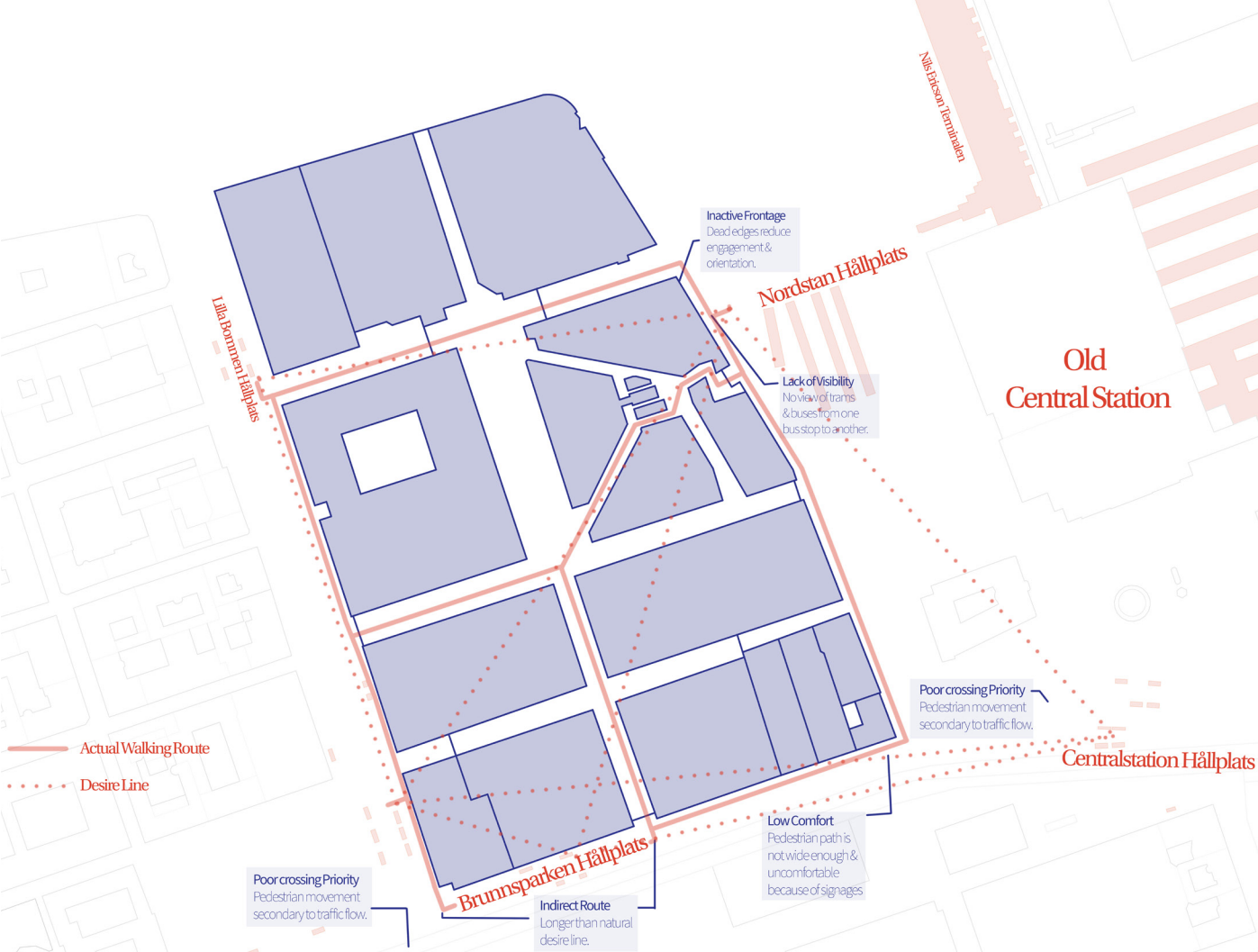


Figure 12 Mobility & Walkability Map: showing Actual walking route & Desire Lines. Created by author.

Angular Betweenness Centrality Map

This map shows the streets which have significance in the city wide connection and are functionally most central. It also shows which streets are local; they play an important role for the neighborhood movement.

Urban calculator was used to extract data on angular betweenness centrality of the streets in and around Nordstan for 1, 2 and 5KM radius.

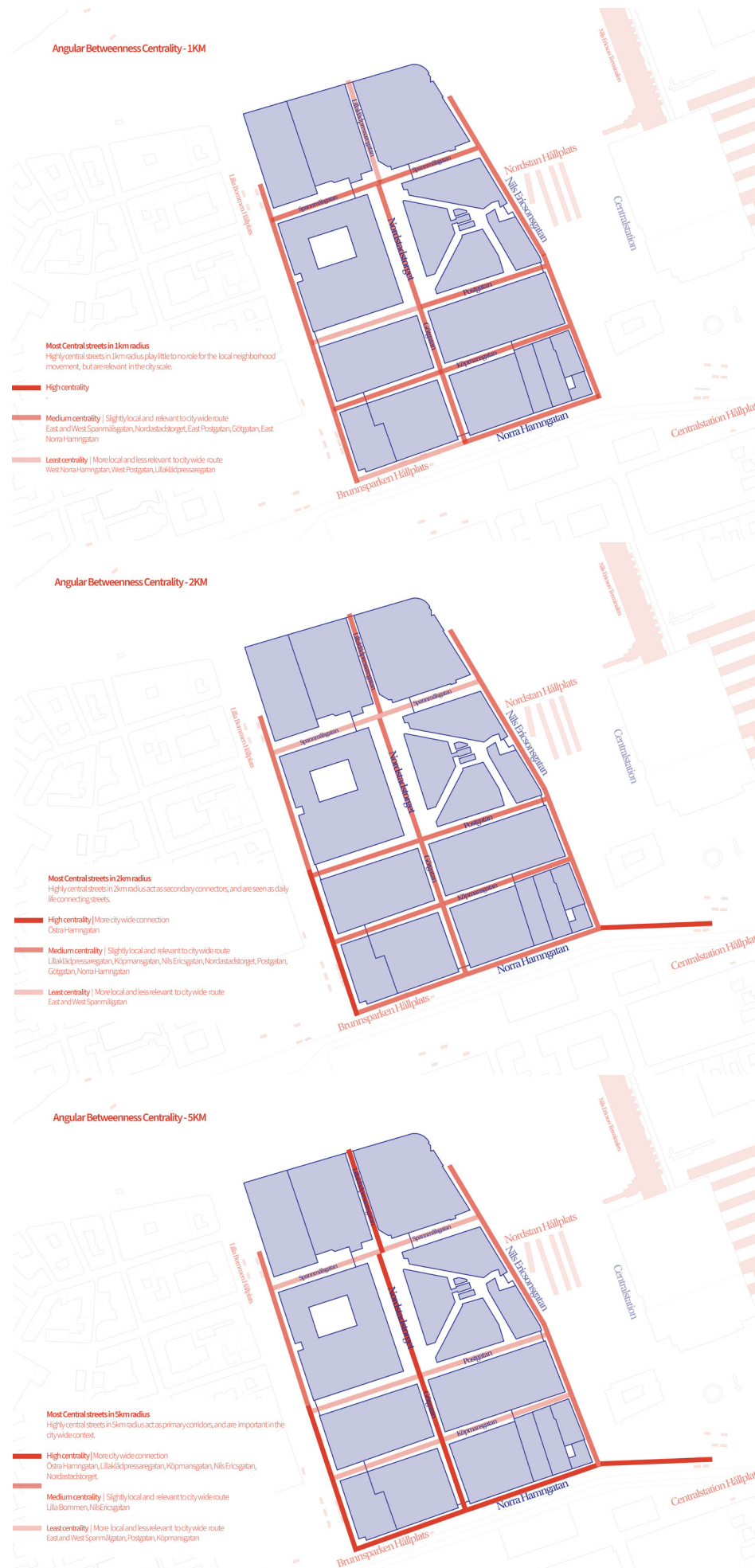


Figure 13 Angular Betweenness Centrality map 1, 2 & 5 KM maps derived from analysis done on Urban Calculator, Created by author

Centrality Map

The data from the Angular Betweenness Centrality maps of 1KM, 2KM and 5KM are synthesised to see which streets in Nordstan are most central.

These streets have city wide significance in connectivity, is relevant while thinking of pedestrian traffic and mobility. It helps situate focus on these streets and in thinking of future developments.

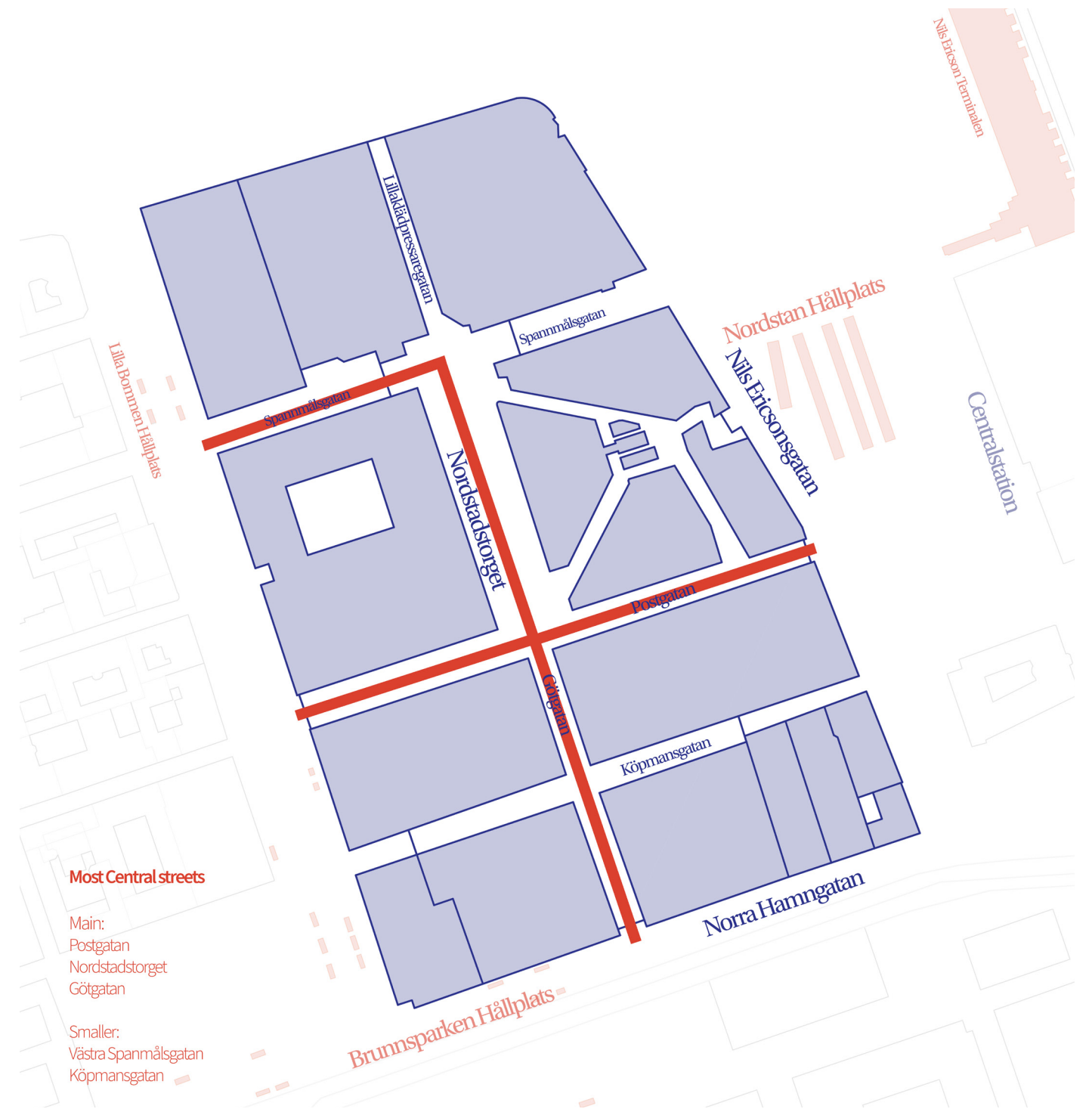


Figure 14 Map showing central streets inside Nordstan, derived from analysis done on Urban Calculator, Created by author

Existing Edges

This map shows the existing edges in Nordstan.

It also shows the furniture and display elements as existing now in Nordstan.

It gives a base to draw scenarios how these edges can be reconfigured specific to certain users so we could reimagine the space and think of alternate futures for future development.



Figure 15 Map showing Nordstan's existing edges, Created by author

FINDINGS

From the above maps and analyses, we can find that Nordstan is strategically placed in between several transit stops. Intentionally or unintentionally, pedestrians are directed into the mall. There's a lack of comfortable links in the routes despite spaces being connected. The priority here seems to be for the built form and not its public users (pedestrians).

From the centrality maps we can see the significance of these inner streets in a city wide connection and this along with the heavy pedestrian traffic, explains the funneling effect near Götgatan, we see in Nordstan. With increasing pedestrian traffic from Västlänken, this corridor would be even more congested and needs to be planned for commuters in priority.

From the edges maps, we can see strategic placement of shops, restaurants and hotels. Although it satisfies the user's convenience, some commercial shops placed in the central axis streets make it inconvenient not only for commuters, but also people who come to shop. There needs to be more analyses on how reconfiguration of these edges could impact pedestrian movement. Depending on certain street's vitality, reconfiguration of edges could make significant difference in the pedestrian traffic in and around Nordstan. Placement of tram and bus stops could also then be rethought based on this to balance the pedestrian activity across the three outer streets enveloping Nordstan.



Figure 16 Pedestrian pathway along Norra Hamngatan, Gothenburg. Photograph by the author.

ANALYSIS | PERCEIVED SPACE | PHOTO NARRATION



Figure 17 Annotated photograph, Norra Hamngatan, Gothenburg. Photograph by the author.

ANALYSIS | PERCEIVED SPACE | PHOTO NARRATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

To understand the spatial dimension of the user's embodied experience in Nordstan, a qualitative questionnaire is made. Insights are compiled to inform the lived dimension of space.

Students

Commercial users (Mall): 14
Transit users: 8
Public space users (meeting people): 1

Reading:
Students overwhelmingly experience Nordstan as a mall, with a strong secondary transit function. Very few perceive it as a social / meeting place.

This may relate to:
Preference to meet near campus or other parts of the city.
Instrumental in running errands, passing through.

Not working & New Residents (job-seeking / undisclosed)

Commercial users (Mall): 2
Transit users: 1
Public space users (meeting people): 3

Reading:
This is the only group where public space / meeting perception is relatively strong.

This may relate to:
More flexible time.
Use of Nordstan as an accessible, weather-protected place to be.
Place of convenience.
Lower pressure to optimize movement.

I prefer outside/around if I don't have any specific errands. The outside feels less crowded with people and less stressful. But usually I have errands which forces me to walk inside anyway.
Depends on the weather, if it's sunny then definitely outside but on windy and rainy days i prefer talking the inside path.
through the shops because I am usually hopping between shops to buy stuffs.

Working respondents

Commercial users (Mall): 7
Transit users: 4
Public space users (meeting people): 1

Reading:
Working users show a similar pattern to students, though slightly less transit-dependent. Nordstan is primarily instrumental: errands, shopping, passing through.

This may relate to:
Place of convenience.
Preference to visit shops in other parts of the city.

Long time residents

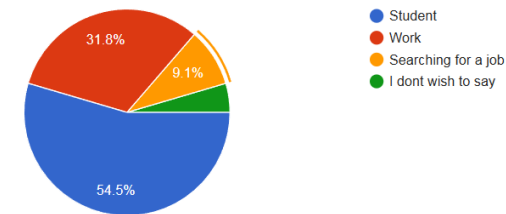
Commercial users (Mall): 4
Transit users: 1
Public space users (meeting people): 0

Reading:
Long time residents hardly use Nordstan as a meeting place.

This may relate to:
Preferring other spaces to meet friends and family.
The feeling of being rushed, could impact users.
High pedestrian traffic.

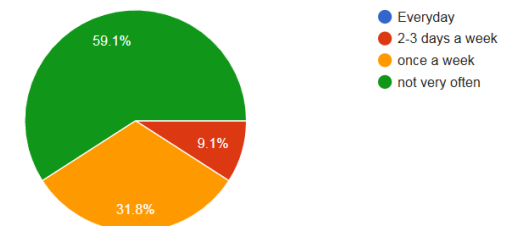
What do you do?

22 responses



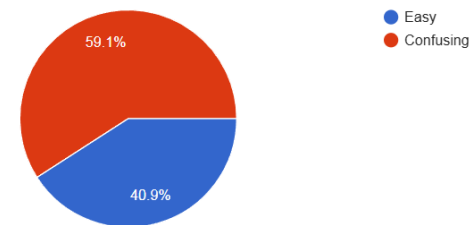
How often do you visit Nordstan?

22 responses



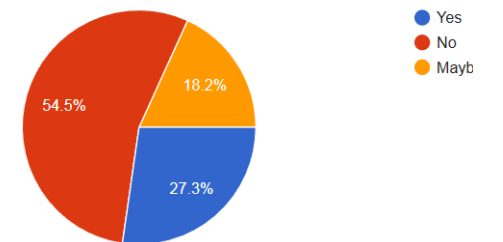
Does moving through Nordstan feel easy or confusing?

22 responses



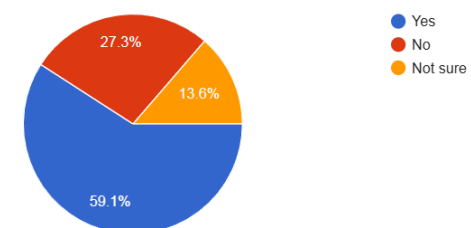
Do you feel forced to walk through Nordstan?

22 responses



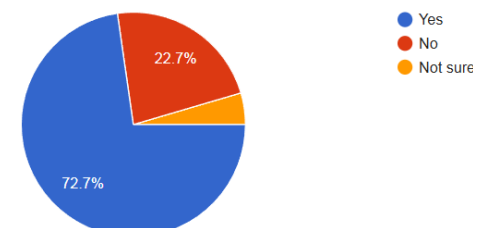
Does it feel overstimulating inside Nordstan?

22 responses



Do you feel rushed in here?

22 responses



Do you take shelter from the weather (incase it's bad) in Nordstan?

22 responses

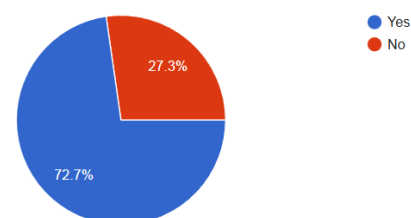
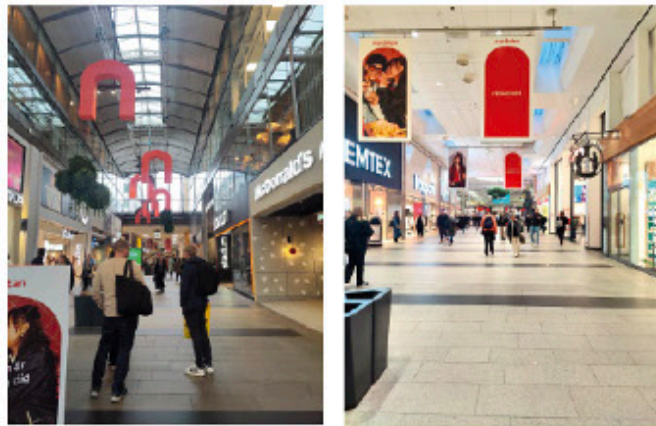


Figure 18 Pie Charts from questionnaire, Created by author

NARRATIVE MAPPING

Norstan | Daytime

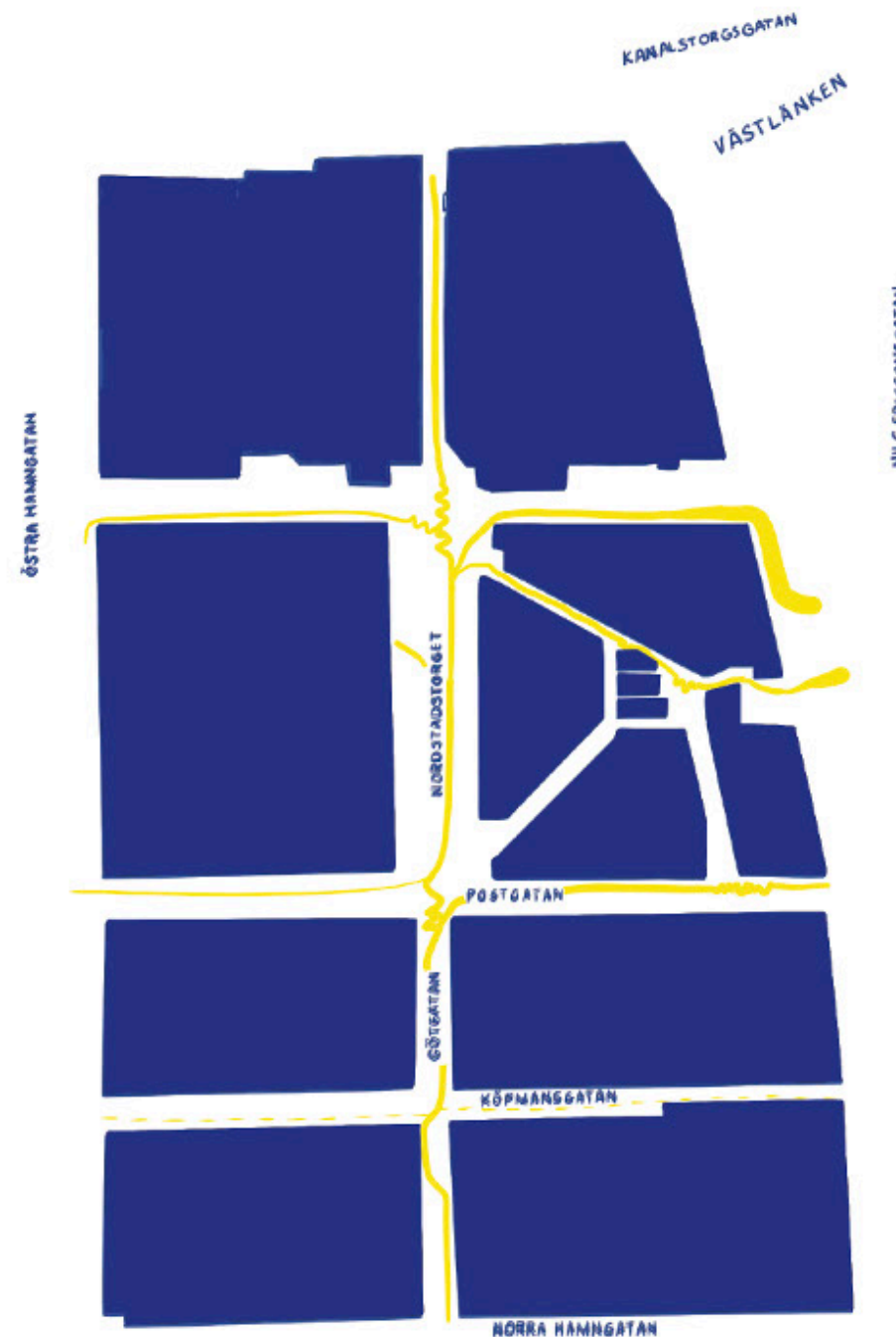
Lived Space



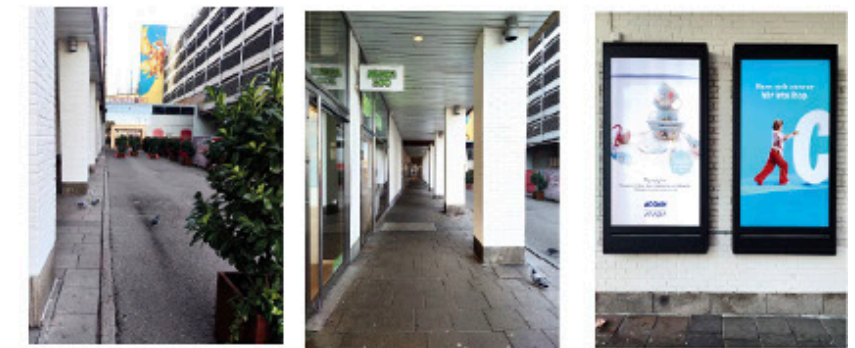
- Hundreds of Signages when entering Nordstan, especially during end of season.
- Every year there's a new commercial installation in the middle of these 'internal roads'.
- Recent installation in the center where people used to protest and played instruments. Intentional?



- Östra Hamngatan lined with trees, giving seasonal aesthetics.
- Narrow pedestrian, several advertising boards on the path given precedence.
- High traffic times confusion while crossing and signal.



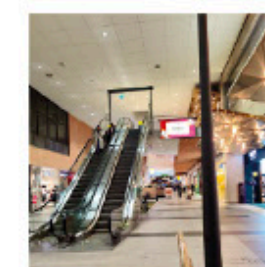
- Narrow pedestrian outside lures me to go through Nordstan, except when the weather is good and I want to stay outdoors more.
- Having a view of the Hotel Eggers (historic sense), but mostly being surrounded by modern infrastructure reflecting no story.



- My route to Nordstan when I need the convenience of grocery shopping on my way home.
- Narrow pathway but still serves the sense of being outside for a bit.



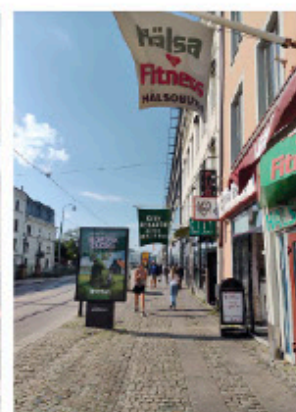
- Never take the subway from Nordstan to Central station, especially in the night.
- The escalator is very oddly placed and is not inviting. Never explored the restaurants on the next level.



- Interior of Nordstan is unlike the malls I've been to, and is very weird and inconvenient to walk through for changing public transport.
- Use it only for convenience of grocery shopping.



- The new wild landscape is pleasing to walk through, but the closer I get to Nordstan, the more stimuli I face.

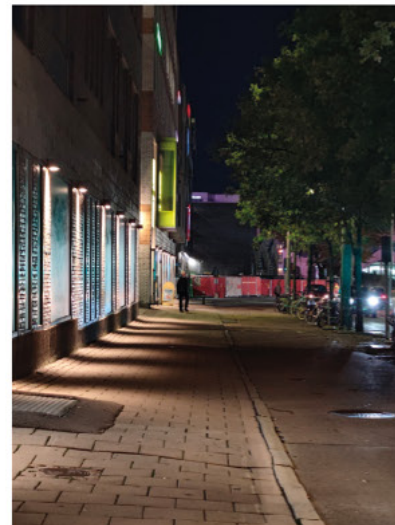
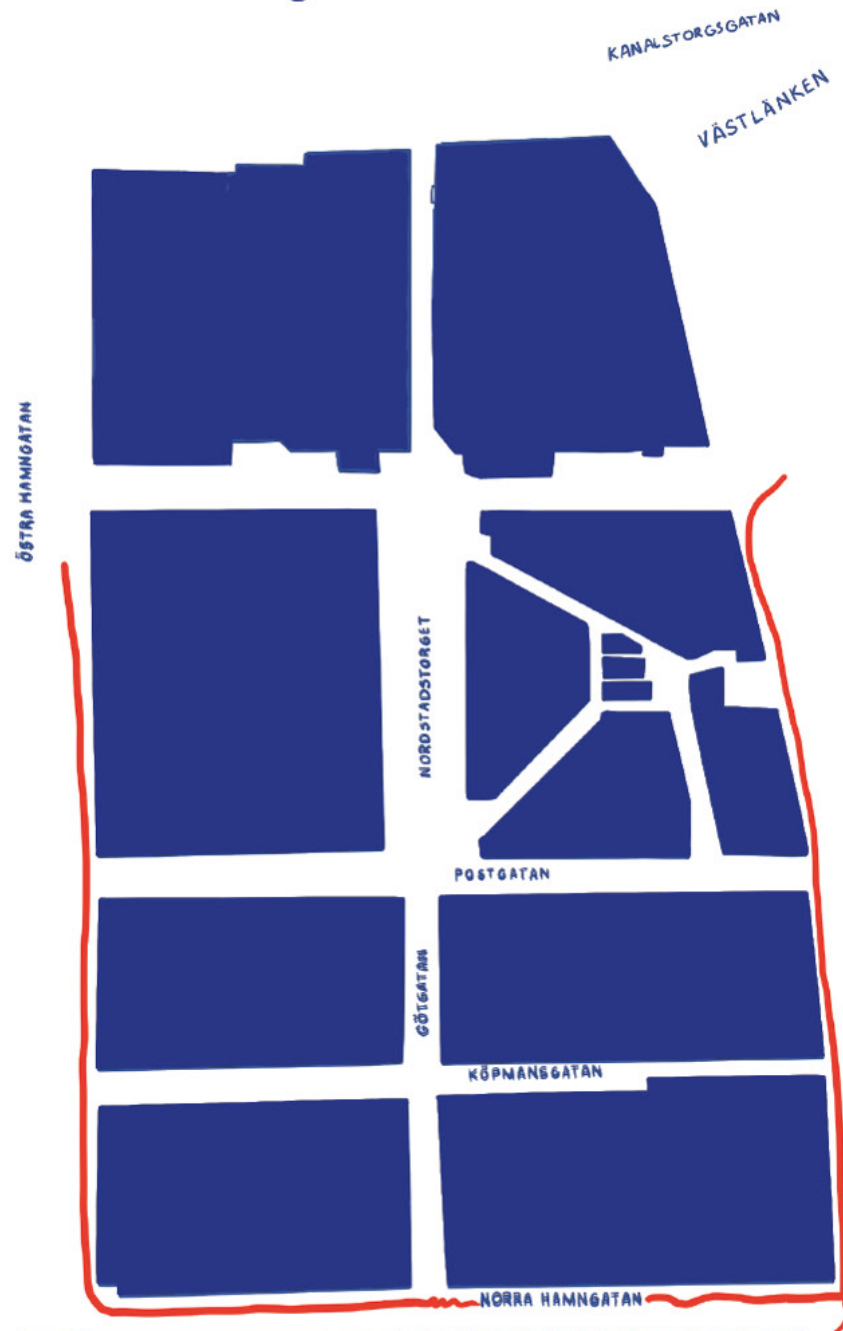


- Too many Signages, doesn't feel like a pedestrian pathway for walking, rather for advertising.
- Sometimes seasonal events are displayed.

Figure 19 Narrative mapping undertaken during daytime hours. Source: Author.

NARRATIVE MAPPING

Nordstan | Nighttime



- Colored lights from shopfronts left on during nights and winter time again highlight and foreground the commercial spaces.

- Lights make me feel safer to walk outside Nordstan.

- The 'internal roads' are closed during night time, which is confusing.



- The subway is something i rarely use in the night. Spaces around are free but with no seating or resting spaces in case of long waiting time.

- Several signages given precedence in the name of safety?



- Central Station with several entrances is confusing.

- Facade filled with signages of offices and shops overpowering the old entrance of the station, making it seem insignificant.



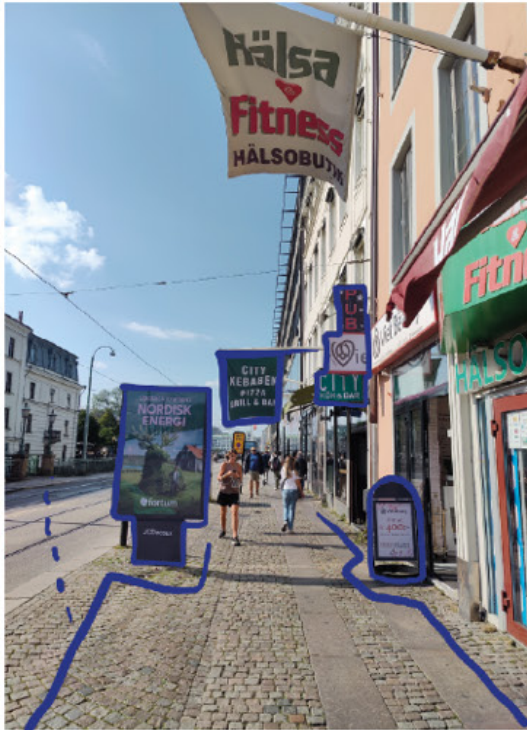
- Winter decorations are aesthetic but still sometimes overpowered by advertising signages with lights.

- Slippery stones on the pedestrian pathway outside Nordstan, when icy weather.



Figure 20 Narrative mapping undertaken during nighttime hours. Source: Author.

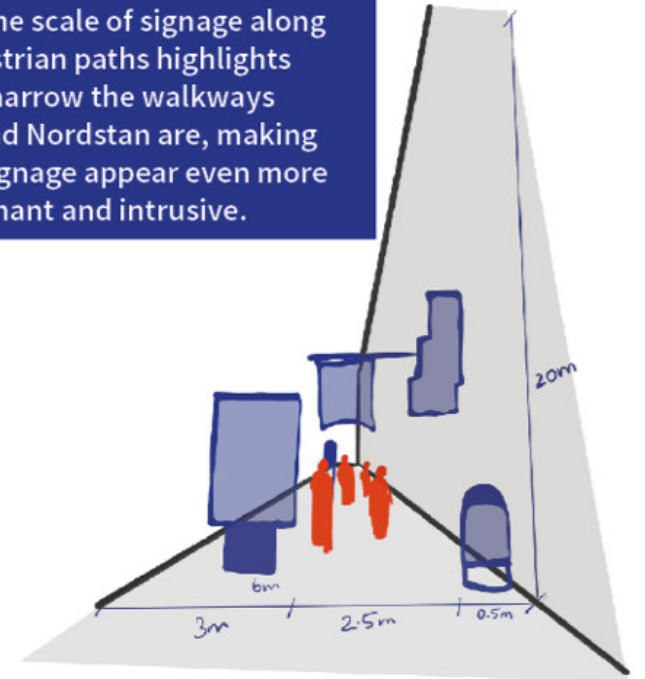
Spatial Obstruction & Overstimulation



- Signages taking up pedestrian path.



A comparison of street widths and the scale of signage along pedestrian paths highlights how narrow the walkways around Nordstan are, making the signage appear even more dominant and intrusive.



What does this say about the space's priorities?
Who is included or excluded?
How does this reflect urban semiotics?

- The dominance of signage and seasonal decoration suggests a prioritization of commercial visibility over pedestrian comfort, contributing to overstimulation.

- This reflects a semiotic landscape where consumption is foregrounded.

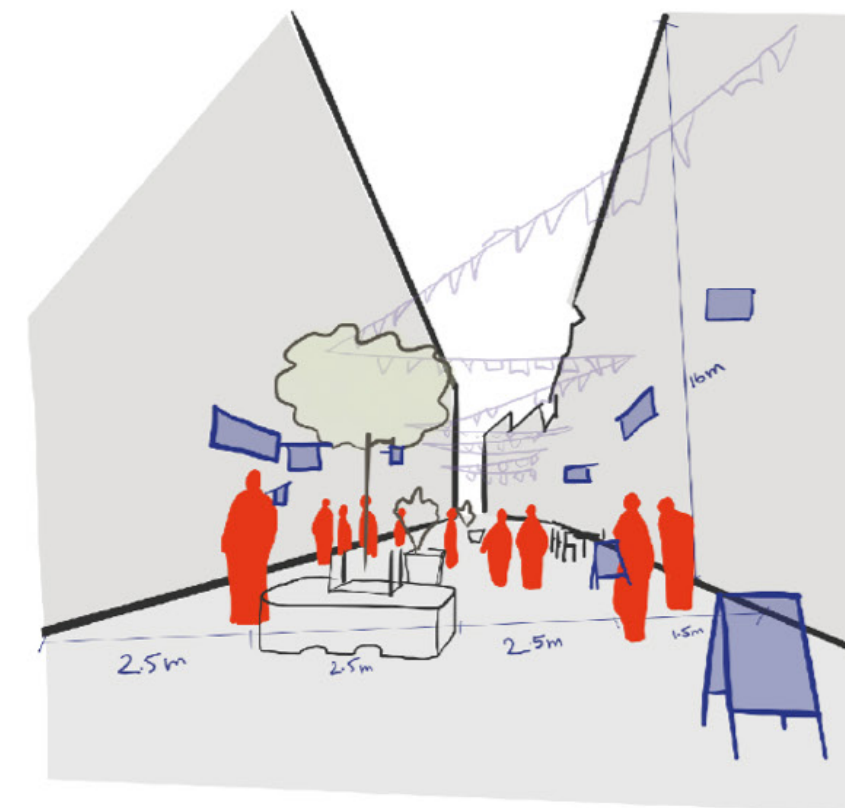


Figure 21 Drawing showing visual clusters from edges. Source: Author.

- Compared to Nordstan, this is the most stimulating based on the signages (backlit), surfaces (reflective), proportion of road width to the height of the buildings adjacent.

Agency & Public use



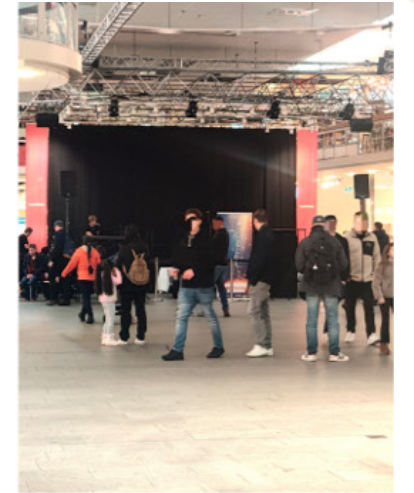
- Recent glass mannequin installation replaces space in the center where people used to protest, perform and promote. Intentional?
- Resting spaces being removed or repurposed to deter homeless people and vandalism.
- Seasonal decorations (low ceilings, hanging plants, mannequins) adding to visual clutter.

What does this say about the space's priorities?

Who is included or excluded?

How does this reflect urban semiotics?

- Excessive signage and seasonal décor contribute to a visually saturated environment, reflecting the intent to boost footfall and encourage consumption during peak seasons.
- While Nordstan is positioned as a public gathering space—hosting events and serving as a meeting point—its everyday use is often conditional, with seating and resting areas largely accessible only to paying customers, subtly discouraging non-commercial use.



- Landscaping integrated with outdoor resting space.

- Protests, promotions, policing occurs day to day.

- As we move closer to Nordstan, you cannot miss the 157/Jack & Jones signage which is three times bigger than 'Nordstan's' signage.

- Signages take over the building as a facade element.

- Shaded, warm enclosure.

- Seasonal markets, concerts, movie preview, voting events—temporary uses of public space.

- Previously used as roads, now privatised bby Nordstan. Closes at night past 10 pm.

-A meeting place for newly moved immirgrants. How is the space addressing this aspect? Hardly any seating except for the ones offered by cafes and restaurants.

Figure 22 Photo narration for 'publicness' in and around Nordstan. Source: Author.

FINDINGS

The questionnaire gives us insights on the relationship between the user background and their frequency of using Nordstan spatially. We see that long time residents dont prefer visiting the space to meet people and only visit rarely.

Commuters or transit users feel mostly rushed and overstimulated from the high pedestrian traffic in these enclosed streets and also from the chaotic flow between different pedestrian movements in this space. There is also the problem of advertisements, signages and other commercial visuals foregrounding the built environment which make the user experience uncomfortable.

Public users or new residents use this space more frequently along with youth, as its one of the most central spaces recognisable to everyone. But, we also see that to maintain the pedestrian flow to keep moving, there are no interactive seating thats free to use.

People who come here to shop, are also affected from the heavy pedestrian traffic and prefer going into the store for a more calmer and focused experience of shopping.

Narrative mapping from two different times of the day gives us insights on how the edges function with the lived dimension of space. Although the narrative mapping is purely interpretive, its based on physical aspects of the built environment.

Daytime with higher pedestrian traffic , gives the feeling of being rushed into Nordstan, while during nighttime, the streets are closed from 12pm - 5.30 am. This helps reduce vandalism but it also reflects lack of comfort in pedestrian mobility during nighttime. Its especially important to consider the weather and time of the year. Some routes which feel unsafe need to be addressed and prioritised for development using design strategies.

Signages and advertisements are another aspect which hinder the pedestrian comfort. This reflects priority

given to consumption over user comfort. People are habituated to enter, rush and get out, which may be efficient, but doesnt encourage a feeling of agency or comfort. Mannequins also take over spaces to avoid street performers, and it makes us question where is public agency in such spaces. Considering its central location, should Nordstan reflect city values? Can prioritisation of users be developed to reflect the social values of the city?

Lastly green spaces are concentrated only towards brunnsparken. Civic values around city design should be integrated with bringing focus to surrounding greenery and historical buildings.

Quotes

“You can’t sit anywhere you have to keep moving”

“I use it mostly to get from A to B”

“Meant to pass through as fast as possible”

“There is so much going on... I feel more stressed the second I enter”

“Crowded, overstimulating, hectic”

“It feels like you have to keep walking unless purchasing”

“No places to sit unless one spends”

“Feels overwhelming and makes me feel anxious”

“I often get a bit lost”

“Inside a store is the most comfortable”

CHAPTER 6: SYNTHESIS

This chapter is about synthesising findings from the previous analyses using maps and diagrams.. It situates the problem spatially and draws design principles to be used to inform the design scenarios.

PEDESTRIAN FLOW MAP

This observational map identifies streets in and around Nordstan with high pedestrian traffic and, drawing on lived-space data, highlights routes that are preferred for walking.

It gives insights on relationship between the street’s physical connection with pedestrian rush and preference. This further informs the design scenario, when working with paths and edges.



Figure 23 Pedestrian Flow map based on daytime observation. Created by author.

HEAT MAP

This map is derived from lived-space data and identifies areas associated with higher stress as well as zones of comparative comfort. This map is to spatially situate the findings of discomfort from the previous analyses.

These spatial distinctions inform the development of design scenarios, particularly targeting sites of stress for interventions.

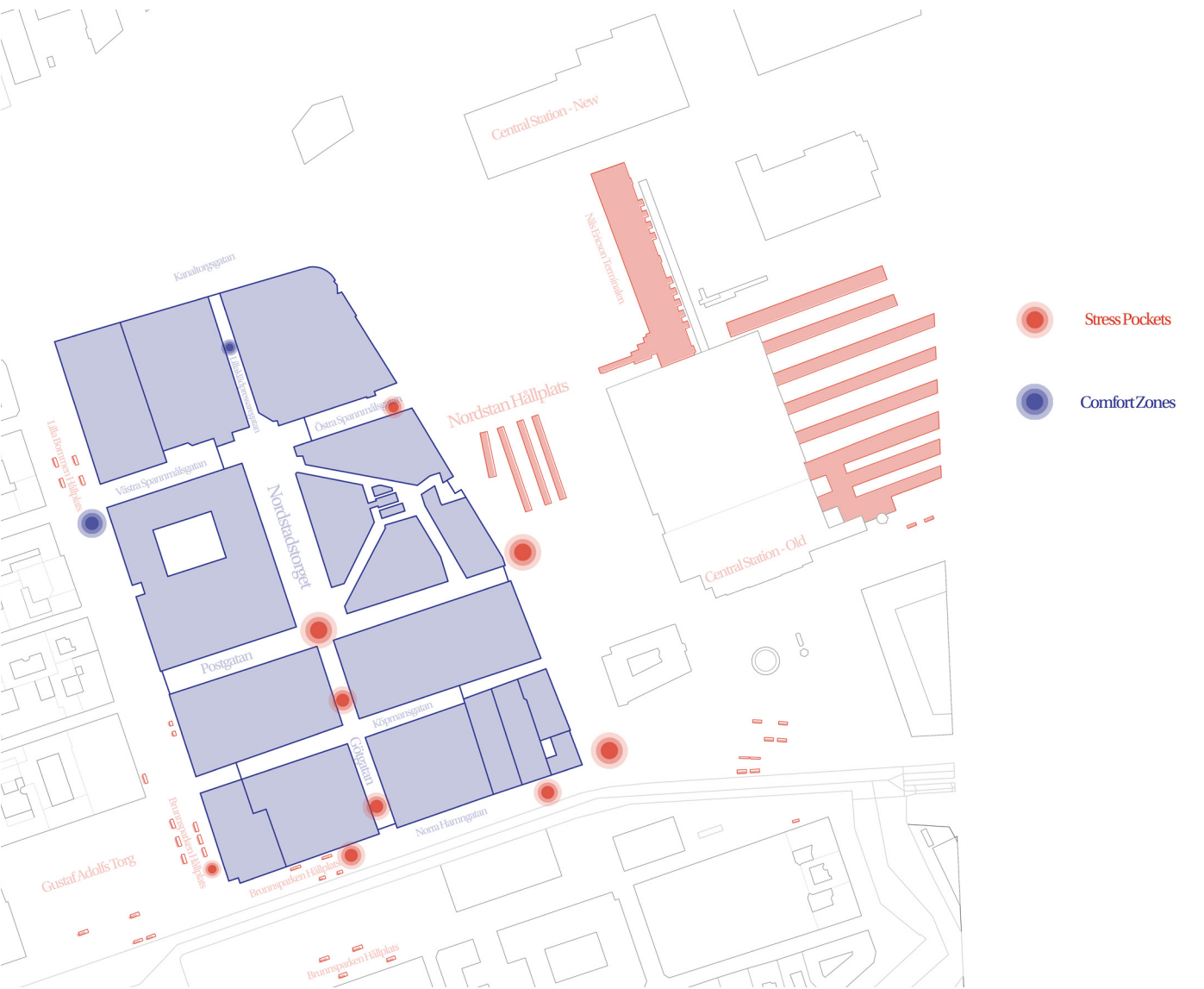
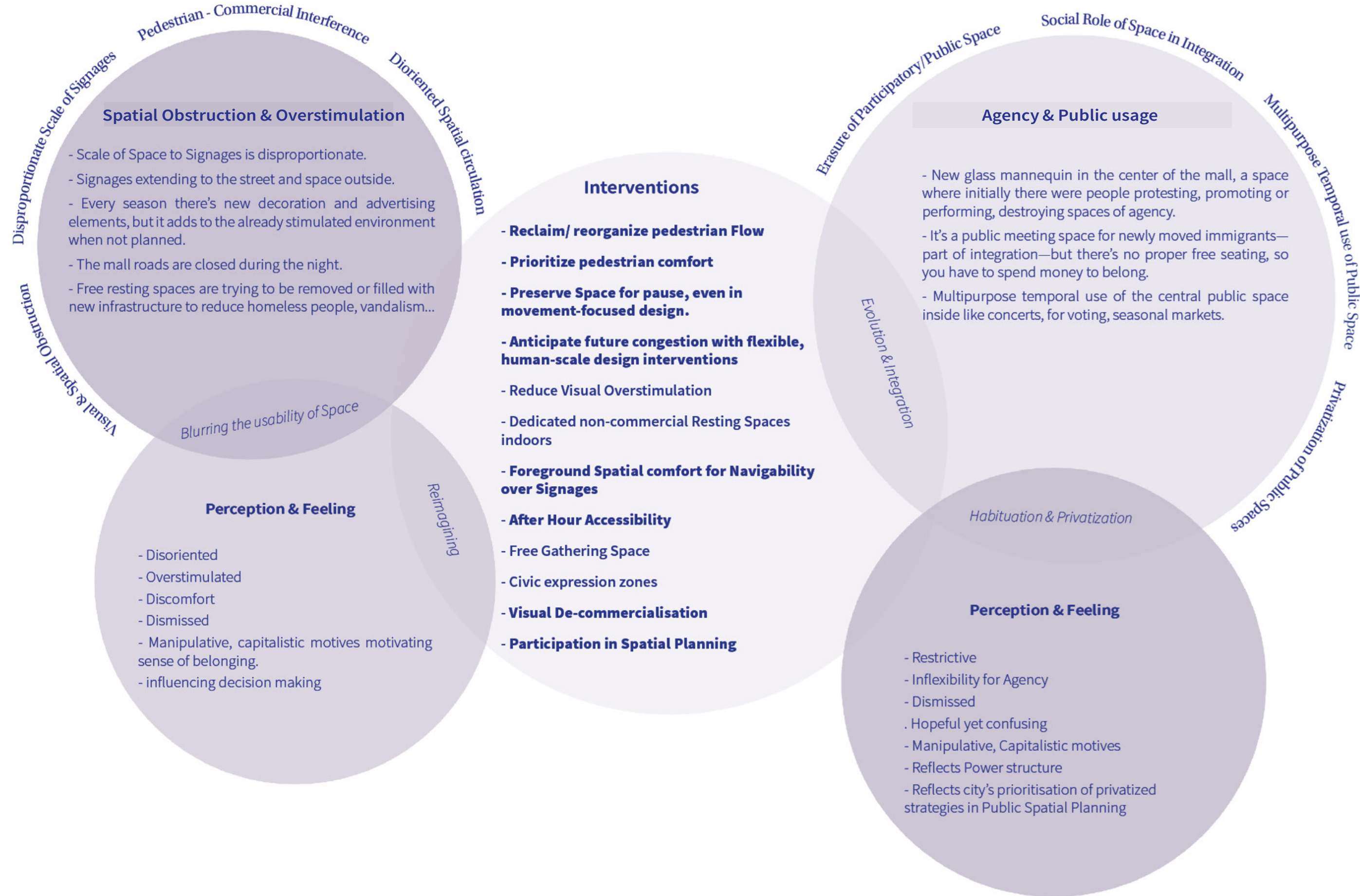


Figure 24 Map showing stress pockets and calmer spaces. Created by author.

INTERVENTIONS DIAGRAM

The findings from the lived space are specifically synthesised to derive with interventions and user priorities.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The interventions are derived from design principles of Jan Gehl (Cities for people) and Christopher Alexander (Pattern Language). The two theorists relate architecture and spaces, prioritising human comfort.

Christopher Alexander Principles

Widening streets	Pattern 61, 98, 52	Creates positive space, human comfort, clear realms
Opening the roof	Pattern 114, 160, 105	Adds light, sky, relief; removes tunnel effect
Adding trees	Pattern 168, 175, 238	Enhances nature connection, shade, comfort
Central courtyard	Pattern 61, 106, 129	Establishes a strong center + social life

Jan Gehl’s Criteria

Protection	Comfort		Enjoyment
Protection against traffic and accidents.	Options for mobility.	Options for seeing.	Scale.
Protection against harm by others.	Options to stand and linger.	Options for talking and listening/hearing.	Opportunities to enjoy positive aspects of climate.
Protection against unpleasant sensory experiences.	Options for sitting.	Options for play, exercise, and activities.	Experience of aesthetic qualities and positive sensory experiences.

NACTO & Global Street Design Guide

Major pedestrian streets / transit corridors: 15–25 m total width

DESIGN INSPIRATION

Study Trip: Maria Theresia Straße, Innsbruck



Pedestrian prioritised streets.



Private vehicles have specific time for street access during the week.



Material of building facades are natural stones.



Wide, playful zebra crossing.



Arches and material make space feel comfortable for human scale



Specific spaces for advertisements and non obstructive.



some corridors have light installations, to make darker spaces more inviting.



Signages are subtle and designed in relevance to the contextual space.



Spatial branding follows contextual design aesthetics.

Figure 25 Photographs of the streets, Maria Theresia Straße, Innsbruck, Austria. Photograph by the author.

CHAPTER 7: DESIGN SCENARIOS

INTRODUCTION

Design scenarios in this research is used as an analytical approach, in the process of ‘research by design’. The scenarios are based on prioritising specific public users in the spatial context of Nordstan. They are based on designing for the extremes, and then comparing to see where contradictions occur.

Through this we can get insights on where, for whom and how space needs to be prioritised in the process of design interventions and decision making.

Questions to ask

- How does Nordstan change if we prioritize different dominant users and their spatial needs?”
- How does prioritizing one user transform the entire spatial system?
- Areas of conflict: see if they are the spots on the map as problem areas.

Text in this color is to represent general description of design interventions in the scenario.

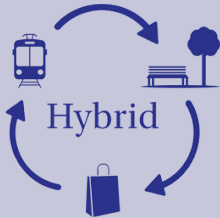
text in this color is to represent what contradicts in space, or which users it clashes with.

Text in this color is to represent oppurtunities and to discuss what works.

How to read the following

The following spaces prioritise specific users, based on findings from the analyses and focusing on designing foregrounding user centered values.

Symbols of users and their priority are used to indicate each scenario.

Transit Space	Meeting Space	Commercial Space	Hybrid Space
			
This design scenario focuses on commuters and Nordstan prioritised for transit users. Transit-First Diagram Dominant user: Commuters, People buying on the way home Spatial logic: Clear navigability efficiency and refuge spaces spatial comfort Key question: What happens when Nordstan stops being a high functioning, overstimulating corridor?	This design scenario focuses on people who come to meet friends and family and Nordstan prioritised as a public space, considering it’s central location. Social / Dwelling-First Nordstan Dominant user: People meeting, staying, inhabiting space Spatial logic: pause over movement encounter over efficiency spatial comfort What changes: insertion of “stay nodes” (benches, micro-plazas) widened nodes at intersections reduced pressure for directional flow Key question: What happens when Nordstan stops being a corridor and becomes a place?	This design scenario focuses on consumption and Nordstan prioritised for users who visit to shop. Retail-First Nordstan Dominant user: Shoppers / consumers Spatial logic: orientation, attraction, circulation loops storefront dominance What changes: looping paths instead of linear transit routes visual density increases thresholds become commercial filters Key question: What happens to publicness when consumption structures movement?	This design scenario focuses on the the space being used by diverse users and where multiple needs are prioritized. Hybrid Negotiated Nordstan Dominant user: All public users like present day scenario Spatial logic: coexistence of all user types layered circulation What changes: separation of fast/slow paths overlapping programs adaptive thresholds Key question: Can conflicting urban logics coexist without hierarchy?



TRANSIT SPACE

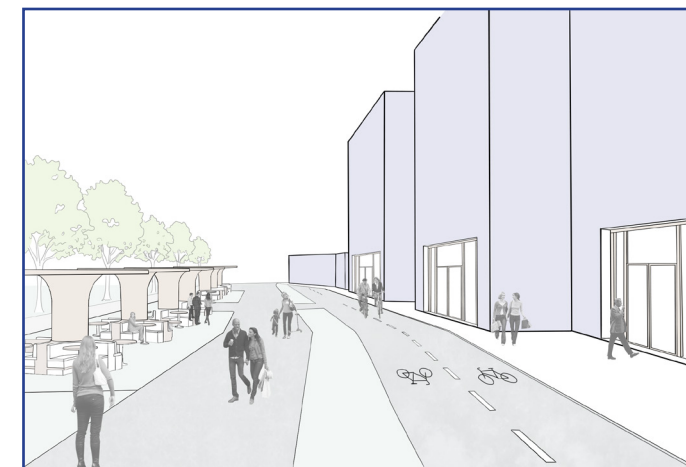
The following map is for rethinking Nordstan purely as a transit space focusing on commuters, making it more legible for mobility and walkability.

The scenario tests widening Götgatan and Lillakläpparegatan to the same width (20m, for heavy pedestrian traffic & to remove the funneling effect), making it homogenous for user's clear navigability and leaving it open to sky, expanding not just width but also volume.

The edges here represented are reconfigured to prioritise pedestrian movement, convenience and comfort. Edges inside act as shopfronts and shops for convenience like presbyrån, while restaurants are inwards. The outer edges having priority to pedestrians, includes proposing the roads of Östra Hamngatan & Nils Ericsgatan to be prioritised for pedestrians with speed control, time based traffic restriction (where vehicles are monitored during pedestrian peak hours) and signages reflecting clear pedestrian priority.



Figure 26 Edges Map, Transit Space, Nordstan. Created by the author.

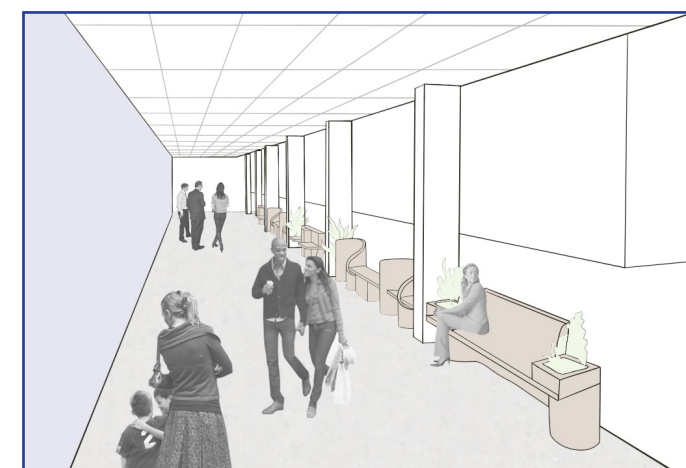


1

Shaded seating, with wide pedestrian, cycle lanes. Lanes separated by landscape patches.

Potential for the space redirecting pedestrian flow along the exterior edge of Nordstan, through comfortable pathways.

May not follow desire line.



2

Resting spaces, seating near Spanmålsgatan. This keeps people interaction active in this space and makes it feel safer.

Resting spaces for pedestrians. Could make the space feel less unsafe.

Could promote loitering, vandalism.



3

Postgatan: opening the roof, and widening the street by volume.

Matches the shopping streets like other parts of Gothenburg. Widening street gives clear visibility of buses and trams running on parallel streets.

Lack of shaded area.



4

Shaded arcade for weather protection and to match facade with human scale.

Gives weather protection. Makes facade to be perceived in harmony with the human scale.

Gives lesser visibility to the outside, could promote negative activities, because of low visibility.

Figure 27 Views, Transit Space, Nordstan. Created by the author.



MEETING SPACE

The following map is for rethinking Nordstan purely as a meeting space focusing on users who come here to socialise, making it more public and encouraging public agency within.

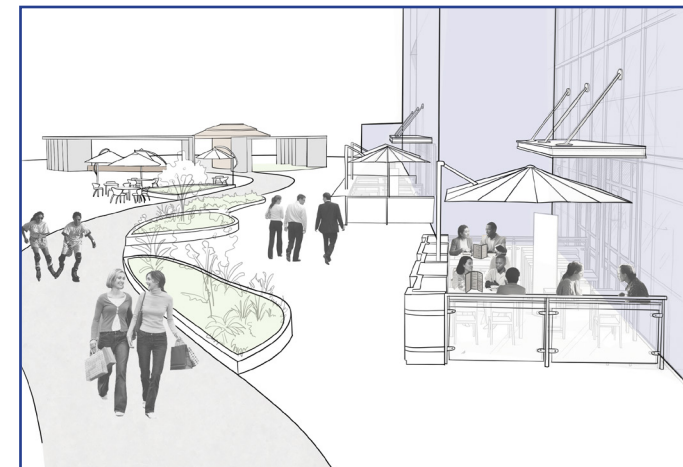
The scenario also tests widening Götgatan to remove the funneling effect, and making Postgatan into open streets with restaurants on its edges. Götgatan, Nordstadstorget and Lillakläppressaregatan are shown open to sky.

The edges here represented are reconfigured to allow these spaces for resting, lingering and unrestricted public usage promoting agency.

The facades promote seating outside with shade, connected to restaurants, concentrating Nordstadstorget primarily for local restaurants and businesses, while commercial spaces are backgrounded from its priority.



Figure 28 Edges Map, Meeting Space, Nordstan. Created by the author.

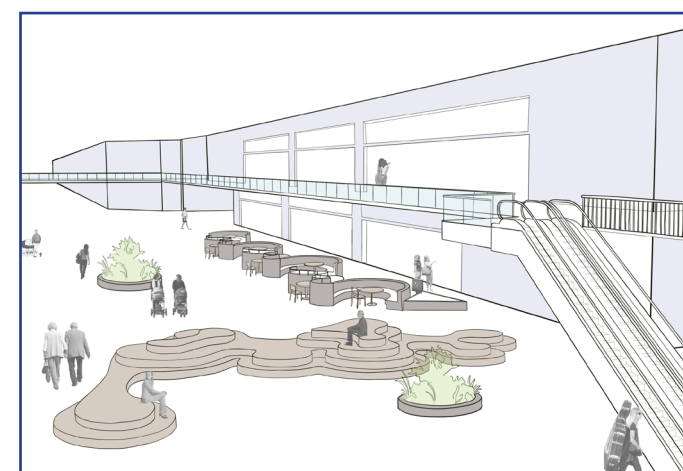


1

Shaded seating, with wide pedestrian, cycle lanes. Lanes separated by landscape patches.

Place making, preferred outdoor seating. More green spaces.

This might clash with the commuter traffic. These paths could be avoided because of desire lines.



2

Postgatan: opening the roof, and widening the street for clear visibility and navigability. Adding landscaping to separate pedestrian flow.

Seating and restaurants in ground floor to make it lively along the edges and promoting local businesses by keeping it to the ground floor.

Promote social aspects like more businesses to local restaurants. Better resting spaces, free public seating, more public agency.

may clash with the commuters pathway. Pedestrians with different walking speeds.



3

Different forms of public seating in the interior, for people who come to meet friends.

The street becomes more open and promotes a more comfortable perception. Could reduce rushed feeling.

may clash with the commuters pathway. Pedestrians with different walking speeds/ could be potential resting spaces.



4

Restaurants and cafe seating along Norra Hamngatan. Facade receding 5m in the ground floor to match human scale.

The space has potential for shops of convenience like Presbyrån.

may clash with the commuters pathway. Pedestrians with different walking speeds/ could be potential resting spaces.

Figure 29 Views, Meeting Space, Nordstan. Created by the author.

COMMERCIAL SPACE

The following map is for rethinking Nordstan purely as a retail space focusing on users who come here to shop, making it more into a mall.

The scenario also tests widening Götgatan to remove the funneling effect. It also involves creating several small centers and a larger center (like an atrium) in Nordstadstorget, while having restaurants in the upper floor.

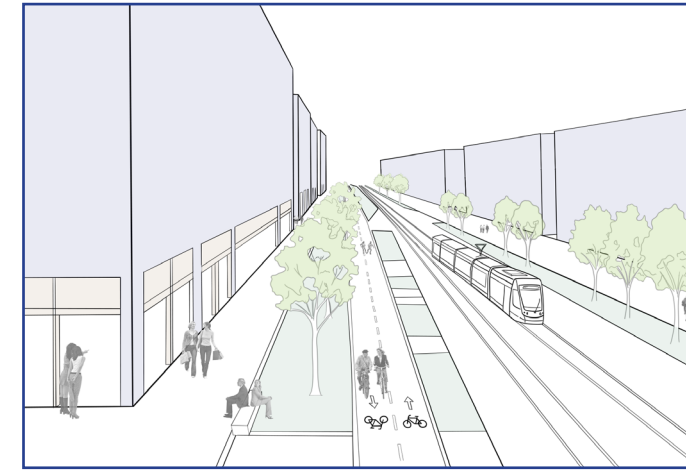
The edges here represented are reconfigured to allow these spaces for strolling and to encourage walking and viewing

merchandise in a more interactive way, and making the experience of shopping less stimulating and focus oriented.

The outer edges are proposed with shopfronts more suited to human scale, which makes the shopping experience extended to the north of Östra Hamngatan and near the new Västlänken entrance. It looks at prioritising pedestrians with speed control, time based traffic restriction (where vehicles are monitored during pedestrian peak hours) and signages reflecting clear pedestrian priority.



Figure 30 Edges Map, Commercial Space, Nordstan. Created by the author.



1

Human scale aligned shopfronts for more interactive advertising. Wide pedestrian pathway, with buffer zones.

Comfortable pedestrian pathway could direct and encourage shoppers to walk along outer edges of Nordstan.

Road becomes narrow, allowing space only for public transport, so private vehicles should be redirected or controlled with timing, whereas pedestrians are given priority.

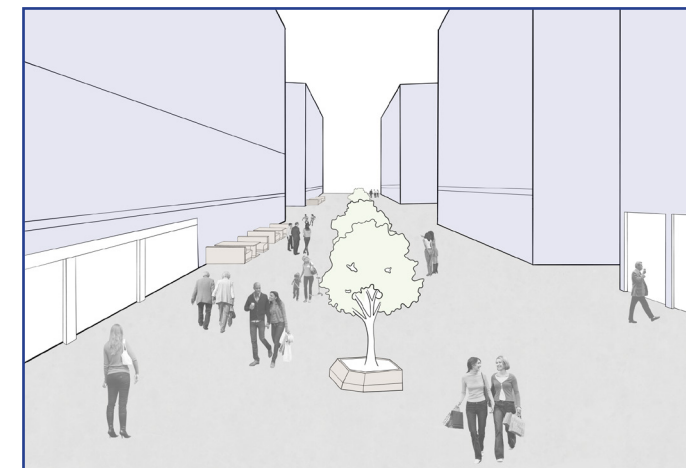


2

Different approaches of displaying merchandise, with interactive aspects, making advertisement more like a gallery view.

Makes advertising and display less as an obstruction and more as a choice to go and see.

may clash with the commuters pathway. Pedestrians with different walking speeds/ could be potential resting spaces. The space has potential for shops of convenience.



3

Street with shopfronts to human scale.

Better visibility and encourages taking time to actually view shopfronts.

may clash with the commuters pathway. Pedestrians with different walking speeds/ could be potential resting spaces. The space has potential for shops of convenience.



4

Restaurants and cafe seating along Norra Hamngatan. Facade recessed 5m in the ground floor to match human scale.

Shaded space with convenience of visiting cafes, strengthening the social character of the street.

may clash with the commuters pathway. Pedestrians with different walking speeds/ could be potential resting spaces. The space has potential for shops of convenience. The space could be darker than present scenario leading to loitering, vandalism and other possible crime activities.

Figure 31 Views, Commercial Space, Nordstan. Created by the author.

HYBRID SPACE

The following map is for rethinking Nordstan but with the same existing function as a multifunctional public space.

The scenario tests by having specific usage in specific zones. Nordstadstorget, Lillakläppressaregatan, Götgatan homogenous in width to accommodate commuters navigability and open to sky, along with resting spaces and shops or spaces of convenience close to this axis. The Eastern side facing inwards, having restaurants, kids play area and spaces to linger.

The edges here represented are reconfigured to allow these spaces for strolling and to encourage walking and viewing

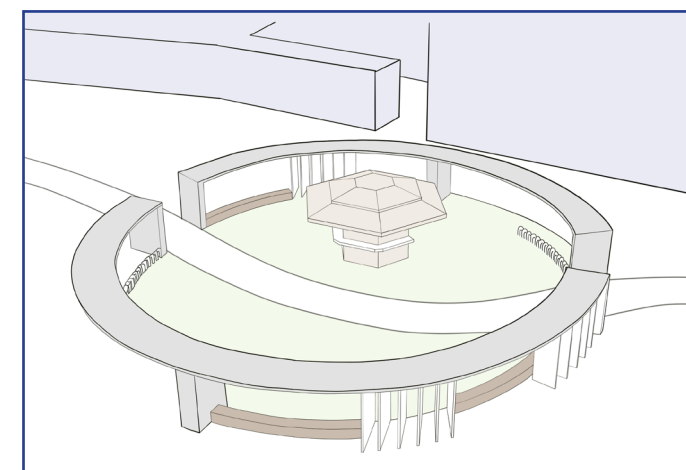
merchandise in a more interactive way, and making the experience of shopping less stimulating and focused.

The outer edges are proposed with shopfronts more suited to human scale, which makes the shopping experience extended to the north of Östra Hamngata, prioritised for pedestrians with speed control, time based traffic restriction (where vehicles are monitored during pedestrian peak hours) and signages reflecting clear pedestrian priority.

The landscape around is also imagined as if bringing back the historical civic value, with blue and green infrastructure around Nordstan.



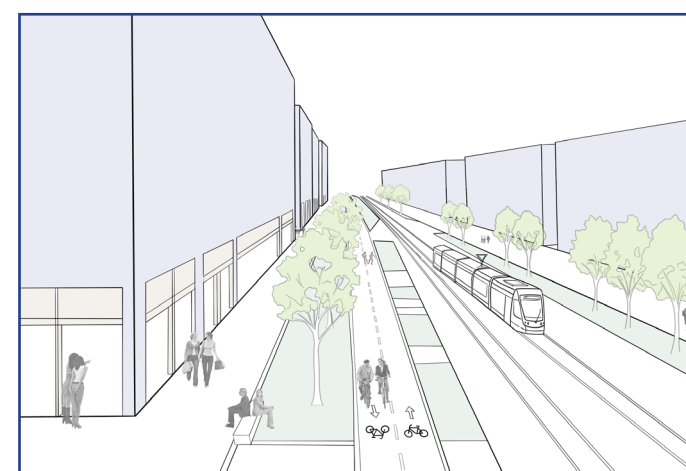
Figure 32 Edges Map, Hybrid Space, Nordstan. Created by the author.



1

Outdoor public space design as resting and meeting space.

Shading, cycle parking, seating and green spaces, promote place making qualities. With provision for kiosk & vendor spaces..

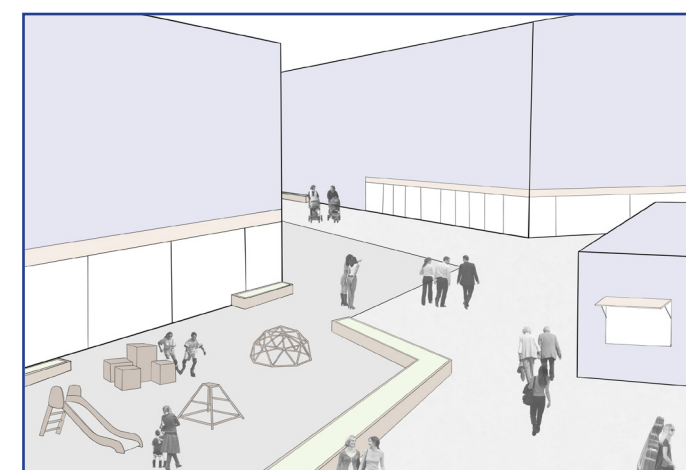


2

Widened pedestrian and cycle paths, with buffer zones of green spaces. Reimagining Östra Hamngatan with narrow canal waterways like the 1800s.

Brings back the civic values benefitting user experience. Comfortable pathways for users. Making the edge more for commercial display of shopfronts and encourage shoppers to walk along this edge.

Road becomes narrow, allowing space only for public transport, so private vehicles should be redirected or controlled with timing, whereas pedestrians are given priority.

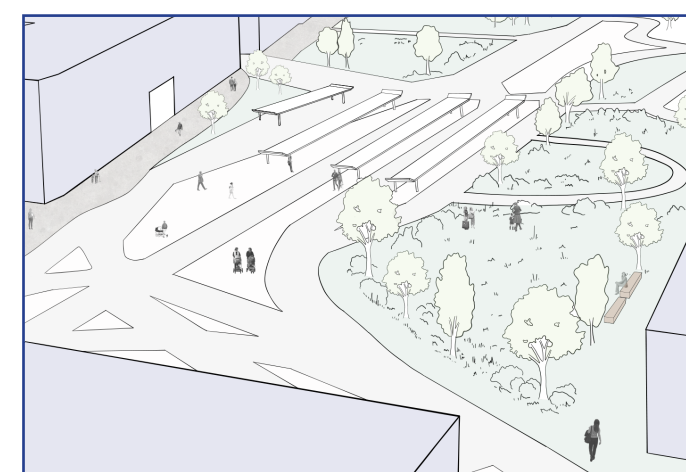


3

Open street with no roof. Edges lined with small cafes.

Commuters navigability improves with visibility between stops. Open to sky could make the street more comfortable, and less rushed.

Lingering users may clash with high pedestrian traffic.



4

Landscape around NilsEricsgatan also envisioned with more green spaces and resting spots, to promote pause.

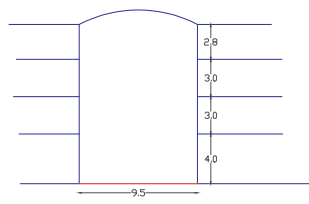
Quality of space improves the everyday perception of users in the space. It reflects better civic values for users wellbeing.

Road becomes narrow, allowing space only for public transport, so private vehicles should be redirected or controlled with timing, whereas pedestrians are given priority.

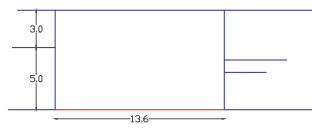
Figure 33 Views, Hybrid Space, Nordstan. Created by the author.

Existing Edge

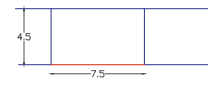
A matrix with sections of the major streets in focus to see how functions of edges interact with the streets and their widths.



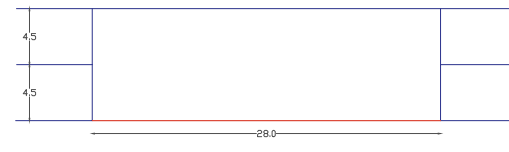
GÖTGATAN



POSTGATAN

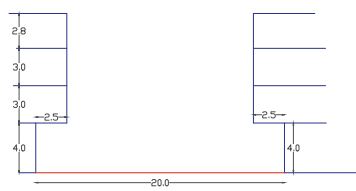
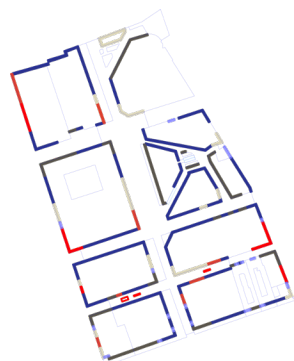


LILLAKLÄDPRESSAREGATAN

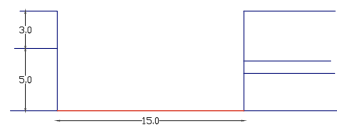


NORDSTADSTORGET

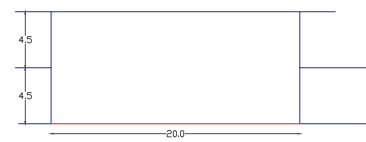
Transit Space



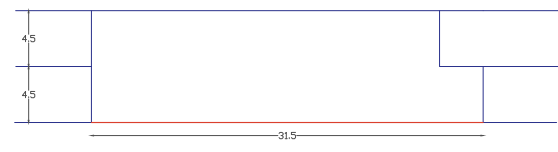
GÖTGATAN



POSTGATAN

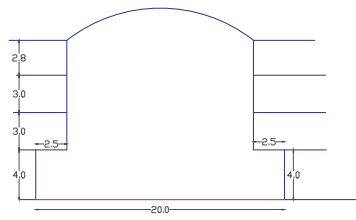
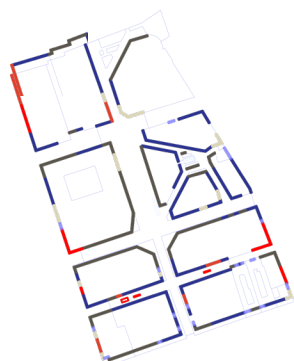


LILLAKLÄDPRESSAREGATAN

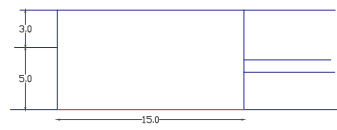


NORDSTADSTORGET

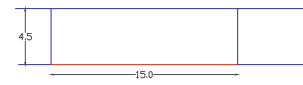
Meeting Space



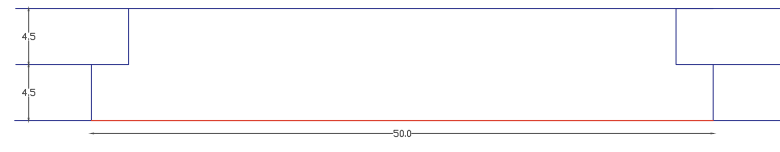
GÖTGATAN



POSTGATAN

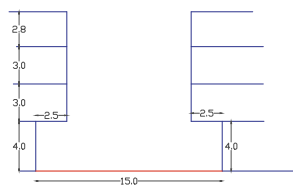


LILLAKLÄDPRESSAREGATAN

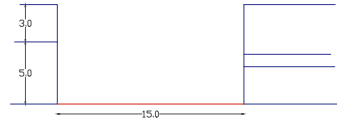


NORDSTADSTORGET

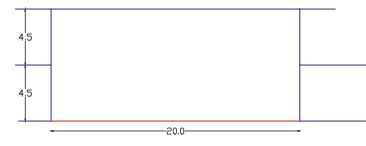
Commercial Space



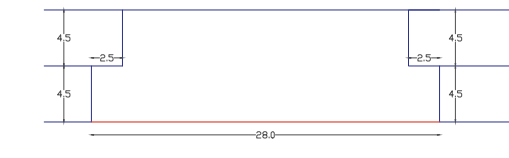
GÖTGATAN



POSTGATAN

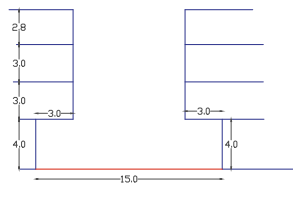


LILLAKLÄDPRESSAREGATAN

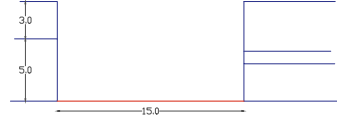


NORDSTADSTORGET

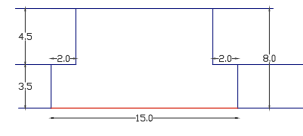
Hybrid Space



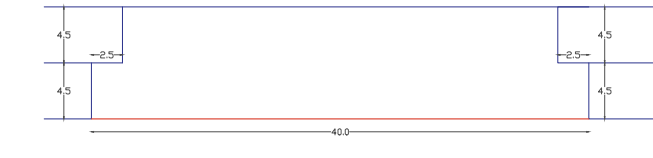
GÖTGATAN



POSTGATAN



LILLAKLÄDPRESSAREGATAN



NORDSTADSTORGET

Figure 34 Inner Street Sections, Nordstan. Created by the author.

Insights & Results

The design scenarios reveal fundamental contradictions between user groups.

Transit Space: when commuters are prioritised in spatial design, there are contradictions of certain spaces which don't follow desire lines because of the existing street layout. Some streets which are secluded like Västra Spanmålsgatan, when activated with seating and resting spaces could increase loitering and vandalism. Postgatan if opened up would result in spatial comfort, but could also result in scarcity of shaded spaces for people who would want to stay here longer. Arched and shaded streets along the facade in Norra Hamngatan, could also make the space darker and might attract activities because of low visibility. This promotes faster movement in space like present scenario in Nordstan, but it might affect users who want to slow down and experience the space in a slower pace.

Meeting Space: Most interventions might clash with the commuter movement, due to different walking speeds.

Commercial Space: Most interventions in this scenario clash with private vehicular movement and commuter movement, due to different walking speeds.

Hybrid Space: Users in this scenario are consolidated to specific zones in Nordstan to minimise contradictions, but it isn't guaranteed because of tram and bus stops located around the building, mainly questioning road networks, tram and bus lines reconfigured to prioritise pedestrian comfort and navigability.

Despite various clashes, there is a potential for some spaces to be reimaged in and around Nordstan, which could significantly improve the meaning of the place and

also reflect user's everyday comfort in using this space.

Västlänken entry and the space outside could potentially act as a small center, to have resting spaces and greenery in its landscape. This could potentially improve walkability on the outer edges of Nordstan.

This follows for Östra Hamngatan and Nils Ericsgatan as well, where both streets could prioritise pedestrian usage, and transportation is time controlled. Commercial viewing and activity could be promoted this way along the outer edges for easy access and exit, without entering the high traffic streets (used by commuters).

The axis of Götgatan, Nordstadstorget and Lillakläddpressaregatan can be widened to have a homogenous path for better visibility, and navigability uninterrupted. This could include resting spaces on the edges as well. The edges by itself could be configured with necessary public spaces like toilets, postnord, apotek. The roof could be a dealbreaker, as being closed could shelter users, while open roof could improve the perception of this street. The same could be seen for Postgatan as well. Norra Hamngatan also has the potential for a more comfortable pedestrian pathway, with lesser signages or advertisements which have no relevance for user comfort. This could be arcades or shaded as well for shelter and refuge during cold weather. The edge along Norra Hamngatan also has a very disproportionate facade compared to human scale, which could be redesigned for better visibility.

Landscape around Nordstan is very sterile right now, except for Brunnsparken. This is also an aspect that could improve the user preference of walking along the outer edges of Nordstan.

*Development is about people, not things.
Design should be about enabling people to be
more, not to have more.*

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter conclusions are drawn from the interpretive study, leading to discussion on the important takeaways. It informs how Nordstan is seen through various narratives, where development can be made better in terms of urban design, and about the research process itself.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that architecture and spatial experiences heavily shape behavioural rhythms in public user's everyday life. Narratives of spaces like Nordstan say that it's developed and behaviourally conditioned with profitability, speed and efficiency of space in mind. In a world led by capitalism, urban spaces reflect the normalising of consumption expected to habituate and engage with people living in the cities. Nowadays standardised signages, advertisements and other aspects take over the space. Overall, there needs to be a critical approach in addressing how such aspects reduce agency in public space by foregrounding positional consumption. Such spaces with high complex systems need to be fundamentally questioned for, who its prioritising and how. How are we reflecting Gothenburg's city values through a central space like Nordstan.

Henri Lefebvre's theory and other such conceptual theories could be used to view spaces in different perspectives, giving us different approaches in understanding the complexity in urban systems - it's production and evolution. By understanding the various aspects of how the system works, we can decode which decisions in space have made the built environment remain neutral or backgrounded. The qualitative methods strengthen the narratives of everyday users, which quantitative and technical aspects don't seem to touch upon. Such narratives are important to consider the actual user experience compared to the 'presumed' one, while designing spaces.

CONCEIVED SPACE:

Dominance of efficiency and capitalistic logic.

The conceived space of Nordstan gives us narratives heavily based on decision making, efficiency. Today Nordstan stands as a layered urban landscape in the city of Gothenburg, shaped by continuous change; from the historical landscapes which was once its identity of civic pride, to the now urban landscape, which removed natural landscape like green spaces, and the blue infrastructure to accomodate the growing needs of efficiency. It also shows how the streets were from the beginning exposed to a lot of pedestrian traffic and had historical significance in the area, which later should have been taken into account for planning the space and the streets inside. The commercial complex is continuously evolving and reflects the tension between ongoing spatial management and place-making. This space is an important landmark because of its centrality. While now

we don't see any relevance of Gothenburg's character in this space, I question how does it reflect the city values? How is the city of sustainability reflected through its built form and urban environment in and around Nordstan, especially because it's the first space people encounter from getting out of the central station. With Västlänken planned ahead, it's very important we address the heavy influx of pedestrians into Nordstan and think about its effects on commuter experience. It urges ways to rethink spatial reconfiguration in and around the site.

PERCEIVED SPACE:

Spatial configuration enforcing movement patterns.

The perceived space of Nordstan reveals and draws the importance of this space through its streets being highly central in the city wide connection. It also shows how Nordstan has strategically been placed in the middle of several important transits, which draws people in and pushes them to move out fast, making the whole landscape seem rushed. The built form is the priority and such a busy place doesn't give easy connection between these transit stops; not designed using desire lines as a guiding principle. Further, the edges map, shows the functions of the fronts/edges to the streets, and this is relevant because navigability is controlled one way or another by the configuration of these edges. We see how the ground floor is predominantly flocked with big commercial shops while local restaurants are on the first floor. While it avoids the rushed feeling for people who want to sit and eat, it also delimits the opportunity to linger in the mall or rest, due to its pseudo nature of behaving as a transit street and as a public mall at the same time. It also affects shoppers who might want to take time and just look at shop fronts at a slower pace, making all users move faster in the space.

LIVED SPACE:

Realtime experience of discomfort, avoidance and overstimulation.

From studying the lived space, we get interesting data on background of users visiting Nordstan-frequency of use and its role as a central spatial connector. While this is a central location for all types of users to pass by, the space compared to other spaces in Gothenburg is overstimulating and confusing to most people, and is realised only over time. The questionnaire as I reflect, reveals how long time residents prefer not to use this space unless for convenience or specific needs.

So then, this space keeps functioning with predominantly commuters, youth and new residents of Gothenburg, who want to meet and socialise. The photonarration also helps us to connect how space as a physical entity enables these issues. It exposes how public space is highly controlled and conditioned using advertising strategies in the built form which remove public agency, while foregrounding consumption. It also reveals the huge contrast of urban character from the other significant spaces of Gothenburg. The study further questions then, if these are our primary public users, then how is the built environment supporting their needs. Considering its centrality, how can its physical space be a medium to integrate new immigrants into the city, while shoppers and commuters comfortably and simultaneously use this space.

What's most interesting is that Nordstan is always changing its landscape, because they sense the tension between the users, and they want to direct the public towards specific spaces in the form of interventions, while I believe that it should be the other way around, where-in, user comfort needs to be studied first and later this input needs to be used to implement interventions in space to test and see how it could help contradictions in space.

The use of design scenarios as a way of analysis, helps in focusing and situating the user experience in a spatial sense. It also helps in finding which spaces potentially face contradictions of user needs. Where does most of the conflict happen, for whom and why. The results of these scenarios reveal, specific user tensions and requirements, which can inform decision making regarding spatial functions within Nordstan and its

surrounding. This approach allows for the prioritisation of targeted interventions for specific users in specific spaces. Further studies would help develop Nordstan into not only a more efficient space, but also into one where social integration, agency and place-making coexists.

Further the approach of this research is a test for using qualitative methods and theoretical concepts to viewing spaces in built form differently and interpret its production through a different narrative. This potentially could help deal with complex urban spaces like Nordstan in other contexts.

AI use

I used AI as an aid to enhance my written text by refining structure and conciseness, without altering the original intent or content of my work. Another way was to summarise my own writing using AI.

I used AI for referencing APA style.

REFERENCES

Alexander, C. (2002). The nature of order: An essay on the art of building and the nature of the universe. Book One: The phenomenon of life. Center for Environmental Structure.

Beaten, R. (2019). City branding and the link to urban policy: The need for a contextualized approach. *Cities*, 89, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2019.01.005>

Bellentani, F., Panico, M., & Yoka, L. (Eds.) (2024). *Introduction to Semiotic Approaches to Urban Space*. In F. Bellentani, M. Panico, & L. Yoka (Eds.), *Semiotic Approaches to Urban Space: Signs and Cities* (pp. 1-14). (Spatial interventions). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800887220.00006>

Bergman B. (2003) Handelsplats Shopping Stadsliv: En historik om butiksformer, säljritualer och det moderna stadslivetstrivalisering. Symposium

Cullen, G. (1961). *Townscape*. Reinhold Publishing Corporation.

Fritz, M. (1997). *Nordstan: Från gårdagens vision till dagens affärscentrum*. Tre Böcker.

Gehl, J. (2010). *Cities for people*. Island Press.

Gehl, J. (2011). *Life between buildings: Using public space* (6th ed.). Island Press.

Global Designing Cities Initiative. (n.d.). Comparing street users. In *Global street design guide*. Retrieved from <https://globaldesigningcities.org/publication/global-street-design-guide/designing-streets-people/comparing-street-users/>

Johnson-Ulrich, L., & Forss, S. (2025). *How cognitively demanding is the urban niche? Reconsidering exaptation and habituation*. *Animal Cognition*, 28(1), 48. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10071-025-01965-y>

Khogali, M. M. E., Mohamed Ali, E. A., & Ramdani, A. (2025). Integrating behavioral science into urban planning: A framework for human-centered spatial design. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, Article 1632523. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1632523>

Knipprath, K., Waldring, I., Crul, M., & Bai, X. (2021). *Urban space and social cognition: The effect of urban space on intergroup perceptions*. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 697(1), 192–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162211058710>

Leach, N. (1997). *Rethinking architecture: A reader in cultural theory*. Routledge.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Blackwell.

Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Martin, B., & Hanington, B. (2012). *Universal methods of design: 100 ways to research complex problems, develop innovative ideas, and design effective solutions*. Beverly, MA: Rockport Publishers.

Microsoft. (2025). *Copilot (GPT-4)* <https://copilot.microsoft.com>

National Association of City Transportation Officials. (n.d.). Lane width. In *Urban street design guide*. Retrieved from <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/street-design-elements/lane-width/>

Offer, A. (2006). *The challenge of affluence: Self-control and well-being in the United States and Britain since 1950*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-921663-8.

Rendell, J. (2006). *Art and architecture: A place between*. I.B. Tauris.

Stojanovski, T. (2020). *Light railways and busways as key drivers for sustainable urban development: Swedish experiences with transit-oriented development*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net>

Thorpe, A. (2012). *Architecture & design versus consumerism: How design activism confronts growth*. Routledge.

United Nations. (2018). 68% of the World Population Projected to Live in Urban Areas by 2050, Says UN | UN DESA Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>

Zukin, S. (1998). *Urban lifestyles: Diversity and standardisation in spaces of consumption*. *Urban Studies*, 35(5–6), 825–839. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43084034>

Zukin, S. (1995). *The cultures of cities*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Image Sources

Fig.4 Google. (2026). Gothenburg, Sweden [Google Earth]. <https://earth.google.com/>

Fig.5 City of Gothenburg. (2024). Annual report 2024: The city of Gothenburg in figures. https://goteborg.se/wps/wcm/connect/cb052507-f416-43d0-8612-6952bd621fde/240916-002-010+%C3%85sredovisning%2C+en+2024_web.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

Fig.6 Göteborgs Stad. (n.d.). Historiska kartor. Retrieved October 24, 2025, from <https://karta.goteborg.se/?m=historiska-kartor>

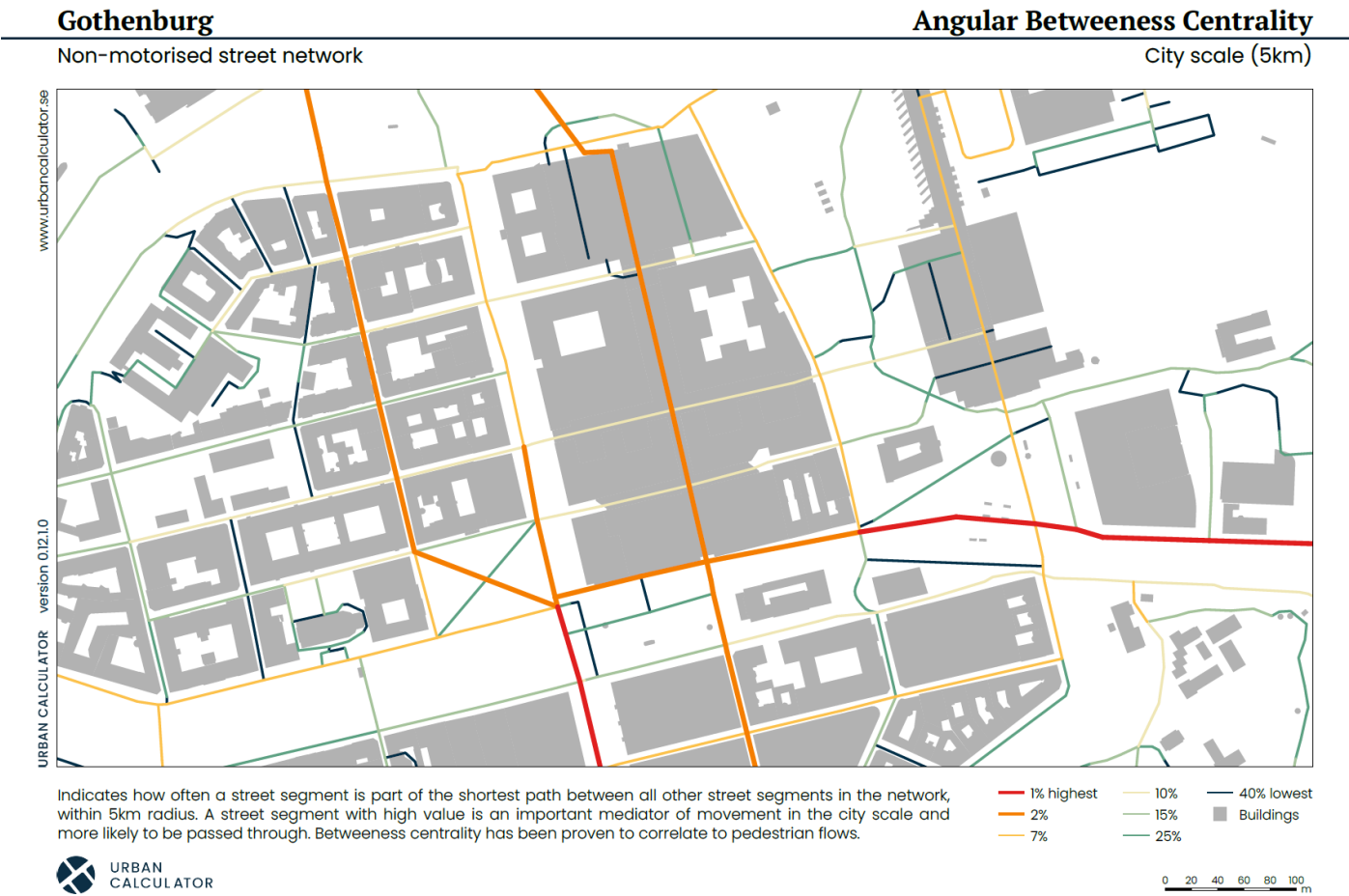
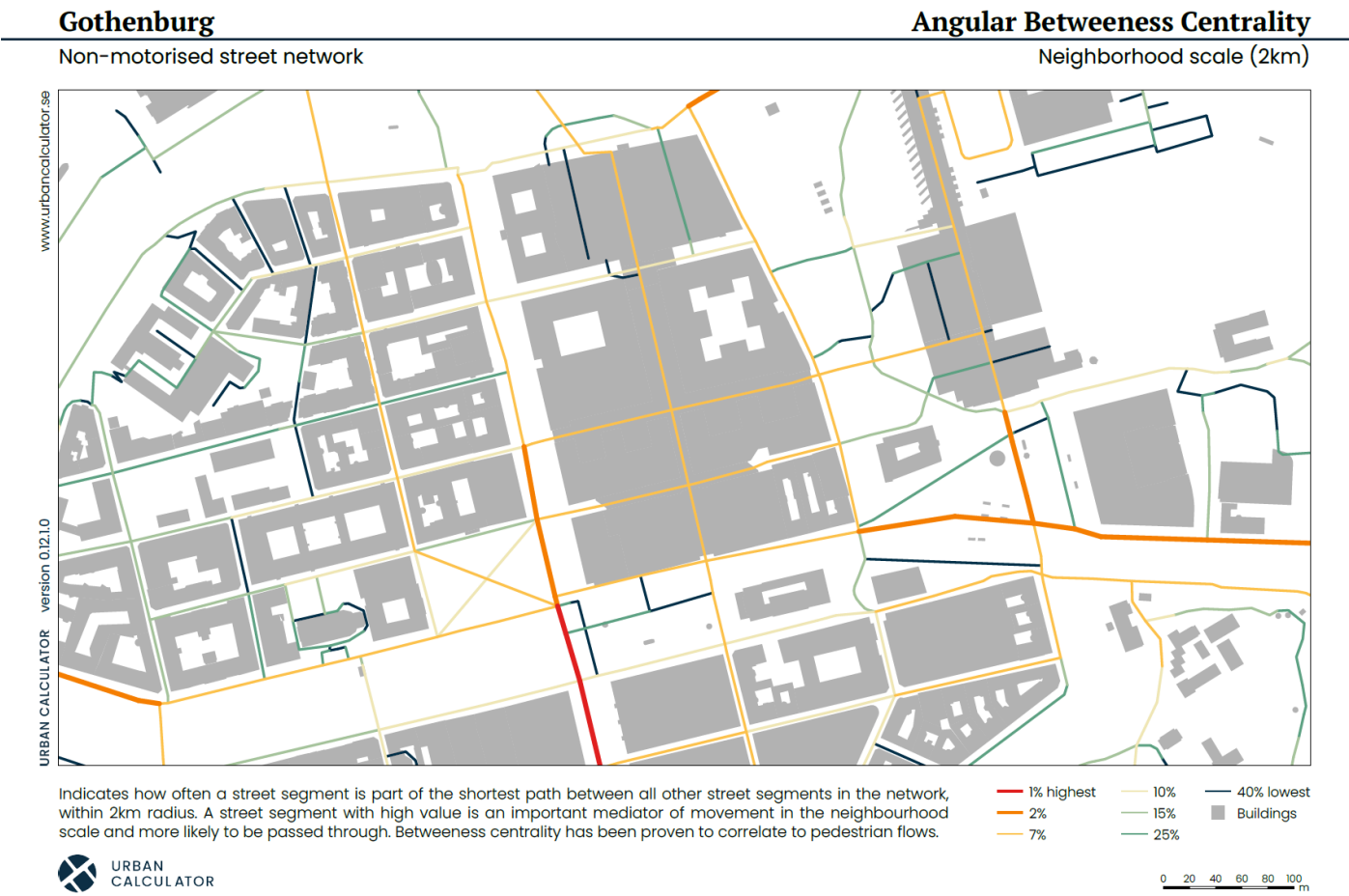
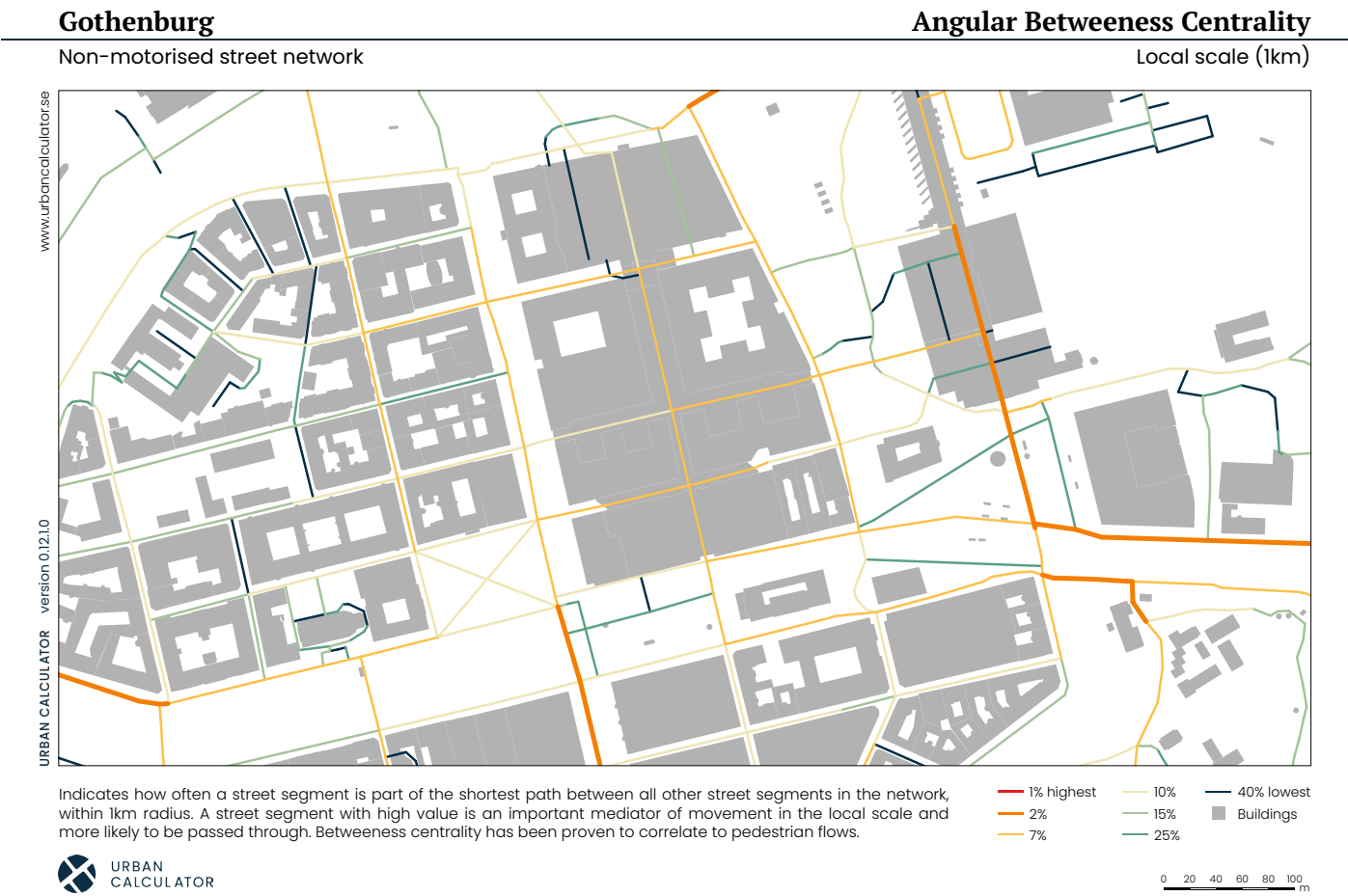
Fig.8 Akuro. (n.d.). Utveckling Nordstan [Photograph]. Akuro. <https://www.akuro.se/projekt/utveckling-nordstan>

Fig.9 Nordstan. (n.d.). Projekt Norra Nordstan [Photograph]. Nordstan. <https://www.nordstan.se/sv/artikel/projekt-norra-nordstan>

Fig.10 Nordstan. (n.d.). Projekt Norra Nordstan [Photograph]. Nordstan. <https://www.nordstan.se/sv/artikel/projekt-norra-nordstan>

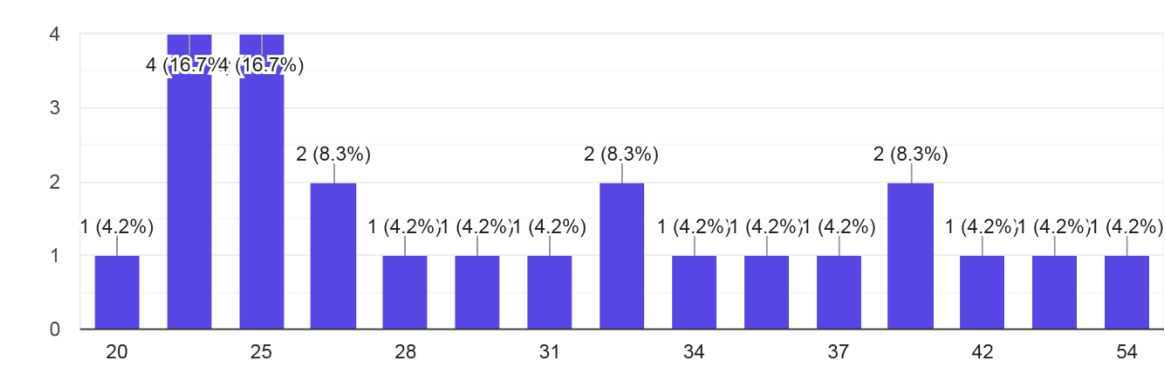
APPENDIX

Angular Betweenness Centrality Maps (non-motorised street networks - 1, 2, 5KM) from Urban Calculator



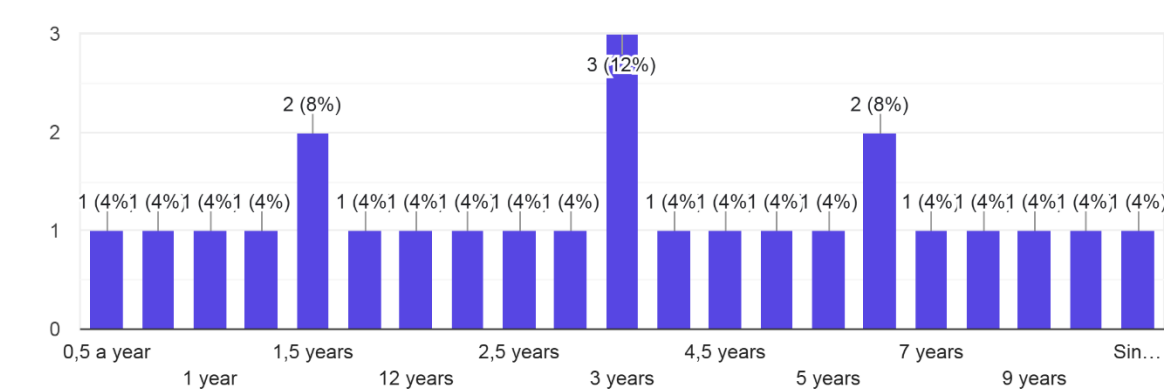
How old are you?

24 responses



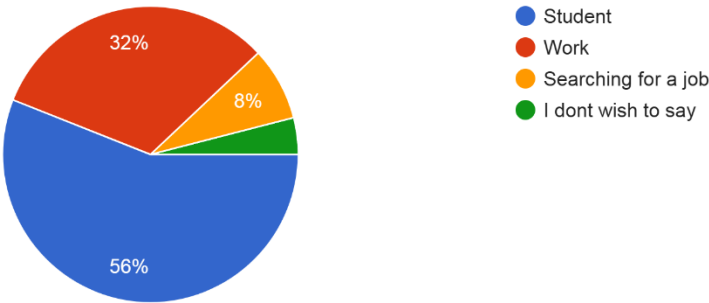
How long have you lived in Gothenburg?

25 responses



What do you do?

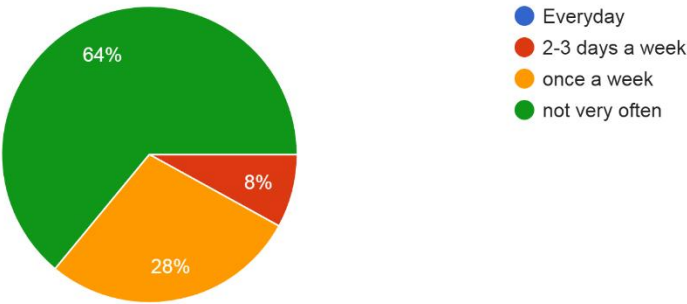
25 responses



Everyday Use & Movement

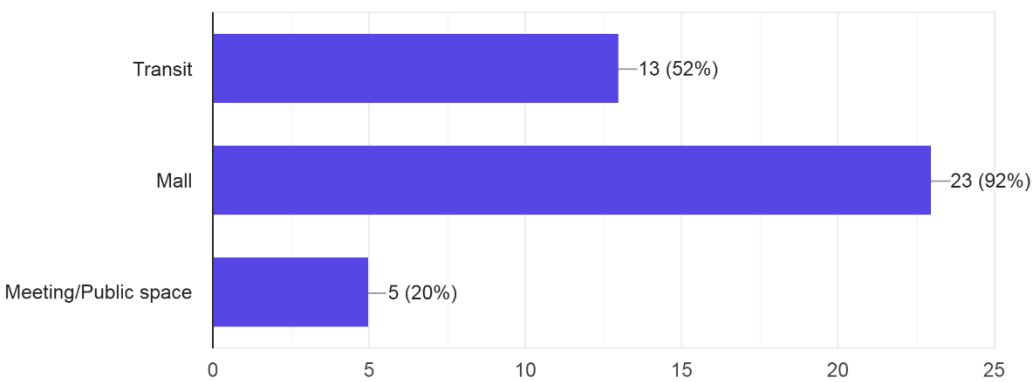
How often do you visit Nordstan?

25 responses



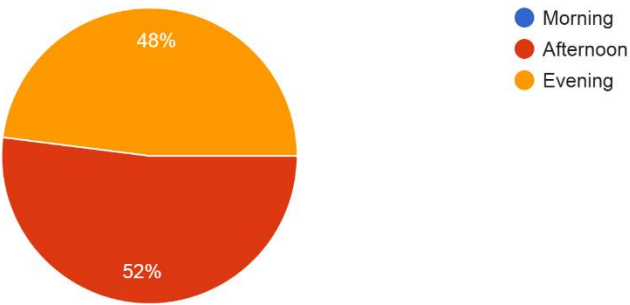
What is Nordstan to you? (Transit? Mall? Public space?)

25 responses



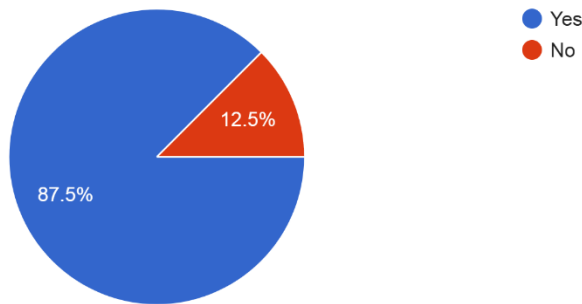
At what time of day are you usually here?

25 responses



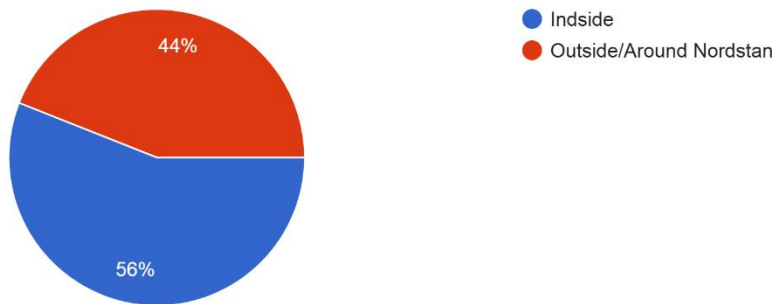
Does it feel safe?

24 responses



Do you usually walk inside or outside of Nordstan ?

25 responses



Which path do you prefer taking? Why?

No such preference
Around Brunnsöarken, nice scenery and bustling atmosphere
Entrance on Östra Hamngatan - Near alighting bus stop
through the shops because I am usually hopping between shops to buy stuffs.
Entrance from Brunnsparcken or from Centralstationen depending on which bus/tram stop I take
Main door?
When it is cold or i need to shop inside, otherwise outside
Brunnsparcken to central station
from Brunnsparcken through the longer corridor towards certain shops
I like the centric area close to Åhlens
I sometimes walk inside the mall, sometimes around the mall to explore other things around nordstan
From Brunnsparcken into whatever store I am going to and then back the same way. Or possibly take the underground
tunnel exit towards the train station, if im going to take a train
Depends on the weather, if it's sunny then definitely outside but on windy and rainy days i prefer talking the inside
path.
Whole length of the mall (from Lilla bommen to brunnsparcken)
I prefer outside. The atmosphere is really overwhelming. I don ´ t like being inside. Especially when I don ´ t need to buy
anything.

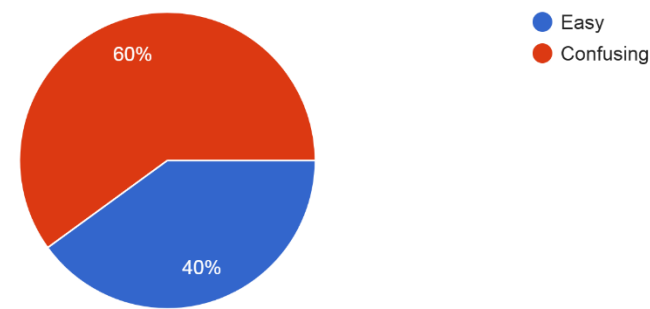
I often use it as transit to get to my bus stop quicker. So i always take the directest way
Both, depending on weather
Both outside or inside depending on the purpose of the visit
I prefer outside/around if I don't have any specific errands. The outside feels less crowded with people and less
stressful. But usually I have errands which forces me to walk inside anyway.
I prefer taking either the central aisle(inside) or the road leading from Brunnsparcken to lilla bommen (outside)
In front of the mall between brunnsparcken, to the central station. Because it is the most convenient between trams
that I have to take.
Inside because its warm
indoors path

Do you tend to follow the same route each time, and are there any parts you avoid — if so, why?

I do not like that nordstan is one big corridor that becomes skinnier and smaller the further in you go (the north part,
where system bolaget etc are). I do not stroll around in nordstan either as it has no circulation. You can't follow one
corridor and walk around aimlessly and then loop back to where you started. (Marieberg mall is like that)
Yes, I stick to my same route. I avoid the subway connecting Nordstan and central station. I also avoid the rear end of
the mall, the one close to the system bolaget.
Yes I tend to follow the same routes. I usually walk through Femman if possible, because it's less crowded. There are
no specific parts I avoid.
always depending on my target goal, sometimes also from Lilla Bommen or the other station of Brunnsparcken to
Göteborg Centralstationen
It depends on what I am looking for in Nordstand. Usually I have something that I am looking for to buy at nordstan
I avoid the pocket areas that have potential for crime activity, but mostly outside indoors is fine.
The shops which are of my interests are in the central part of the Nordstan mall.
Don't like walking through it if I am using it for transit, to busy inside
I don't follow the same route every time and I do not avoid any route
No, i normally go to specific stores but not always in the same route
Yes, i always take the tunnel that takes you to central station
I avoid entering the mall. I follow the same path mainly.
Yes i follow the same routes but i don't avoid any part
Avoid entrance on Norra Hamngatan - Very crowded
Same route when I come from my usual direction
Yes, because otherwise it's easy to get lost
I always walk the same route for convenience
No. I never have to got to the same store.
I don't think there are parts to avoid
Most times I follow the same route.
No parts I avoid. Different routes
Mostly the same route.
No, and no
Same
No

Comfort & Embodied Experience

Does moving through Nordstan feel easy or confusing?
25 responses

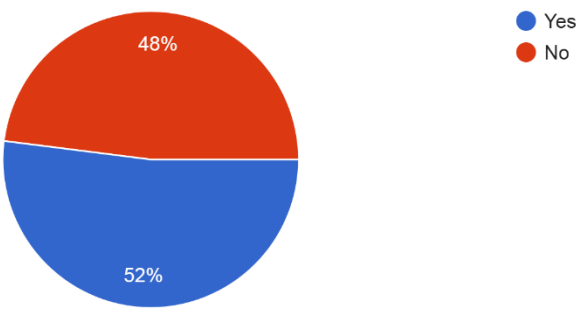


How does it generally feel to walk through Nordstan?

Crowded
It's to busy and cramped. And the side corridors often feel isolated and sometimes abandoned. I have a tendency not to like walking into corridors nor stors that might be completely empty. I kinda rush through them,
The main path is easy to orient yourself in, however once you go on the right side (coming from the front door, Lidl, Kicks etc.) of Nordstan it gets rather confusing on where the shops are
It is really overstimulating. I feel like everybody is in a hurry and is stressed. It is really hard to move around people. I feel like the second i enter I feel more stressed than before
I often get a bit lost. Shops that seem easy to access from the outside are often confusing to find in the mall
some parts I dont think about to much but some are not very logic and I need to focus to orientate myself
Really full and overwhelming. I also wish there would be a better connection to the harbour/Opera
It feels overwhelming and makes me feel a little anxious because it's always so crowded
overstimulating, overwhelming, sterile, lots of people standing or walking weirdly
I see it is a busy area, more people, but it is okay for me
Not safe most of the time, irritating with the crowd .
Crowded! And a bit confusing to find the right shop
Crowded, overstimulating, hectic
Loud, bright, crowded, trashy
Chaotic and unsafe
over stimulating
Very busy, fast
Good and safe
Overwhelming
Overcrowded
Safe & free
Stressful.
Annoying
Busy

In case of meeting people, when you plan to go shopping together or want to meet at a frequent public place everyone knows of
not-so-good - No places to sit unless one spends ; poor public utilities
Not a good place for meeting, not very intimate, a lot of distractions, no comfortable place to sit, only consuming is possible
good for a combined fika and gathering with friends, or dinner spots, not so good for longer study sessions or relaxation
Not-so-good for calm relaxed meeting
You can't sit anywhere you have to keep moving
Not so good place due to the small protests that's help inside.
It's too noisy and crowded. I prefer to meet friends in smaller places.
Central location
good central spot to meet people and then take off.
Convenience
the amount of people that are there and that you have less places where you can just have a relaxing zone, I feel likt it needs better zoning.
I only come for utilities purposes
There are more appealing places for me to meet up with friends. Don't like the atmosphere in Nordstan in general to hang out with others
Good place to buy everything at one stop. Bad as a pubic/meeting space
It's good because Nordstan works as a shelter from bad weather, centric meeting point and you can find any type of shop inside.
I prefer to meet in other areas with people.
Do not know why I would meet someone there
It's enough other stimulations around. Then I don't need someone else to talk and negotiate with.
The business, visual clutter, and available personal space around you. Aesthetic is important for me too. I prefer being in a place that makes me feel relaxed, Safe, interested etc.
It is just overstimulating. I think the walking ways should have as less stimulation (music from the shops, Decoration feeling like obsticles) as possible since it is already a very stimulating space. And that takes energy

Do you feel comfortable being here without planning to buy anything?
25 responses



Do you have someplace you can sit and talk inside Nordstan? Do you feel comfortable using the public seating?

No
Not really a place I would use to sit and talk
No. I can sit there if I need to kill time for a couple of minutes.
There are a lot of seating options but i never want to sit their
Seatings are mostly available but usually feel hesitant to sit.
i don't use public seatings, just at e.g. Burger King, Joe & The Juice, Espresso House, combining rest with another activity such as dinner, studying
No, I don't
Haven't done that. Don't know.
No I avoid even going to the restaurants at nordstan. Using the public seats I avoid more
Nop

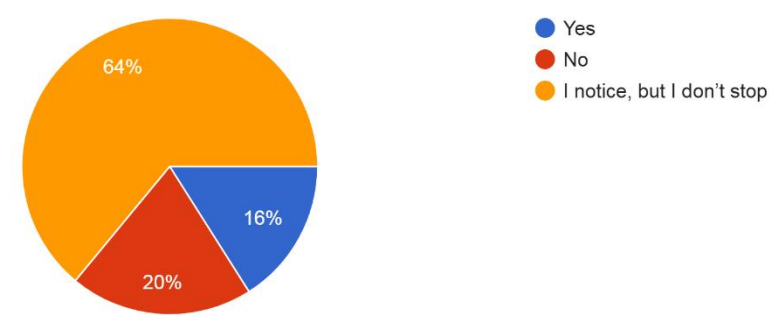
Not that comfortable to sit
no.
No to both. If there were benches in Femman I could be comfortable to use that seating. But I don't think there is, I haven't seen any when looking for it.
I dont know a good place besides some caffee shops but then I am forced to order something but just to sit and relax I would not say that there are any, or i cannot think of any
No places to sit unless one spends
I don't find enough public sitting inside Nordstan. I usually have to go to a cafe.
Yes there are some restaurants and coffee shops
Not really
Never done it
No. So many people around. Walking by

How does it feel to you when there are events happening inside Nordstan? How long would you spend in here during such an event?

It is a nice way of using the empty space
I avoid them. As I am not comfortable spending time there even if the event is intresting. The only event I will stop for if it's there when I am, is the Christmas market.
Haven't spend time for an event.
I don't go to events here, only happen to catch them if I already had an errand planned. It feels too busy to enjoy an event here. Not long, 5 min maybe.
Enjoyable. Gives the mall some more life
Maybe an hour
I avoid them
I try to walk past the things quickly. It is interesting to observe from distance but I'm not interested in attending or participating.
Never been a spectator of any events
I don't stay for any events
If its a market I generally go there.
Few minutes
depends on the situation, i would be curiouse but i am mostly going there with a goal so I usually rush through only
Never interested
I dont go there often so it does not influence me
Not a second
If there is music , games for kids , stalls I liked spending time inside looking around.
I notice ,sometimes stop by.
It feels like a happy environment and I tend to stay and watch depending on the event that is happening.
I would not spend time but its nice to see people having a good time there
Just pass it with curiosity
I like it. I can spend up to an hour during an event there.
I don ´t go to events.
I think the same amount of time bit maybe it is also because i never stay longer than that i habe to
Fun. Usually do not spend any extra time

Do you stop to notice people advertising, protesting or performing here?

25 responses



How does it feel when people perform, preach, or protest here?

Not so safe
Broadly good as there is life and energy in the mall
Sometimes noisy and crowded
It feels crowded.
Sometimes annoying
Ok.
overwhelming but also curious about the "street life in Göteborg"
It feels like it is the wrong environment for it. People seem to be in a rush and overwhelmed so that they don't stop for it.
Not nice. It feels like you are forced to either interact or ignore people
Fun when they perform, stressful when protesting
Just another reson that makes the place more crowded and anxiety enducing
It ´s a lot there is already so much going on. I usually don ´t have the headspace to think about there purpose. I always hope they leave me be. I usually don ´t have so much issues with strangers approaching me. As long as there are enough people around me.
It feels okay
It is a public place shielded from weather
Its a public space why not
It okay
Feels wrong
not comfortable
It's even louder, but otherwise I don't mind
i dont mind but I ignor it so I have a neutral feeling towards it, once I was approached by Jehovah witnesses that was funny :) they where trying to make me join their religion, but I passed.
Feels unsafe and try to avoid
Feels loud and not the place to do these sorts of demonstrations because it's a mall, it's not an open public space like a plaza.
A little disturbing.
Odd sometimes

Visual Environment

What feels prioritized in this space?



Advertisement
Advertisements
The different advertising of the stores
Advertisement and trying to grab the pedestrian attention
Nothing worth mentioning

Ad
I Guess tram stop
Nothing
Walking freely
Restaurants / bars
Shopping
The signs
Consumerist
Advertisement over people, walking space, sitting space and greenery.
Trams and business. Not the people walking
City Kebab
advertisement
Pedestrian walkway
Consumerism
The flags that stick out the most.
junk food
Fitness
pedestrians who are walking from A to B

How does this image make you feel about being in this space?



Not very safe
Strange place for a zoo. Fairly neutral
Relaxed
Nothing
It feels abandoned
Deserted
unease, discomfort, meant to pass through as fast as possible
Its not a space for humans, but for cars and capitalism, at least it prtects from the weather
Too cramped and to follow the path
It feels like an area where I have to keep walking unless I'm interested in purchasing at Arken Zoo. But there's no other business or distraction to look at.
I don't really want to enter
Random smell of cigarettes (makes me annoyed)
Feels like the path will never end. Uncomfortable!
Dark area not very pleasant
Covered
Empty
Like I took a wrong turn, and that there might be some funky people around.
walking through the loggia seem nice but the space outside is such a contrast and the birds make it a bit creepier in my opinion

Unsafe, creepy
Sad
dull walkway and makes the shop also neglected.
Aloof and creepy
Little sketchy
Boring
Not safe. It is dark and I don ´t feel like I could step out of the situation if something happens.

Do these digital advertisements catch your attention? Have you noticed them in other parts of the city?



Yes
They normally don't catch my attention but I have seen them a little everywhere.
I'm avoiding them and try to find my way through the floor.
It catches my attension but I feel like it could be used as a map for nordstan instead of advertisement
Yes I notice them. But no didn't catch my attention.
Haven't noticed
I don't really notice
Yes, I have seen them and I do read what's on them.
No
Not really. Yes, I have.
Not sure
I have noticed once when my favorite comedian was on display. Otherwise they haven't caught my attention. I have not noticed them in any other parts of the city.
sometimes
If im in a rush not really, i usually dont mind them
Yes it's very bright
It catches me and i have also noticed them in other parts of the city
Yea but I will basically only read it for a sec or two then keep walking. I notice them mostly on big walking streets and at tram stops.
No. Sadly not
Yes, sometimes
No they don't vatch my attatention and yes i noticed it i think elsewhere aswell
Yes I do notice them
Not always
Not so much
I have seen them

What do you tend to notice visually while walking through Nordstan?

lots of bold letters, colours, the transport hubs are overwhelming and overcrowded, too many busses and trams
Trying to not run into people and smells
Signs shops people

The shop names and public events
Sometimes
The pavement, I dont understand why its made of concrete or stone when its supposed to be a mall and its all dusty and dirty
change in seasonal decoration and awareness of nearing fests.
The crowd
I focus mostly on finding the shops that I need, the rest I mentally blend out because it is a lot going on there.
People, events, art, windows
People and shops
The windows maybe. I'm always just trying to understand my way through it.
Mix of people
The amount of people
Stores, discounts, their new collections
Storefront displays
Visual merchandising of every season's collection
Too many people
The people!
People and stores
There's not a nice decorative environment, looks older building. But the new area they're restructuring close to PostNord looks better.
Crowds
A lot. I always try to keep my direction and mind and not to think to much about my surrounding
People, walls, floor and a white sealing.

Are there things you feel you’ve stopped noticing over time, when inside Nordstan?

No
For any new shops
Not that i can think of
Advertisements
No idk
The noise
What kind of shops there are
Probably the windows of the shops
Difficult to say
I stopped going to the 1st floor of the mall. I don't care anymore
yes I blend out what is not important for me
Yes
yes.
Probably ads that I have seen somewhere else.
Store fronts, I have to actively look at them to see what is there.
I'm blending out the advertisement signs more and more
I haven’t noticed seating areas at all, maybe because I can not imagine spending time here.
I don’t know

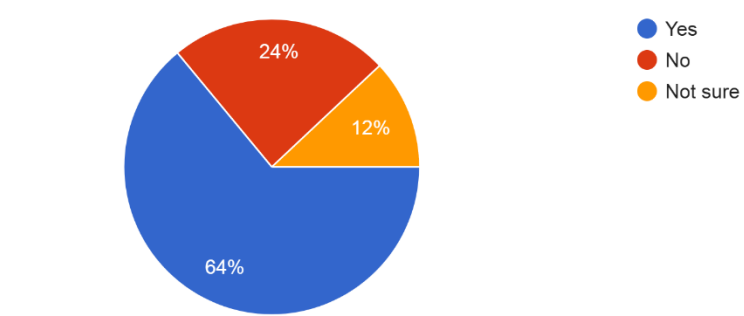
What feels prioritized in this space?



The exhibition or advertisement idk what it is
The squares with things inside
The commercial space (the glassboxes).
The window exhibitions

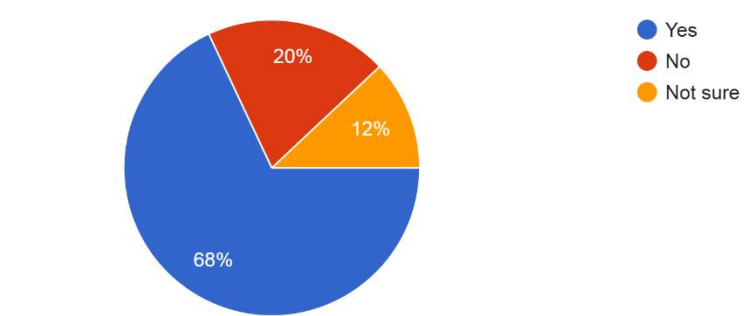
Does it feel overstimulating inside Nordstan?

25 responses



Do you feel rushed in here?

25 responses



How does it feel to walk around (outside) Nordstan?

Feels okay
Cautious in some areas
I feel like outside it is still very confusing to walk and stressful aswell. Everybody just looks kind of oht for themselves to get through the area rhe safest and the quickest possible i have the feeling
Feels buissy
it is a big contrast it has little atmosphere and the outside is to active, it is a mental bipolar situation.
Big building, doesn’t give me comfort either, but it’s nicer to be in the fresh air. It is not a place where I would stop, always on the go. Also with the trams and centrals station, it is a transit place.
Good as well
Like you always have to look around you to see if there is a car, bike or tram coming.
Cold. Nordstan feels massiv
The pathways are too small, it is a weird space, undefenable, tranist space mostly
Crowded
Busy and noisy.
Fine
also usually hectic and overstimulating
More enjoyable, and more easy to navigate
Confusing, to many possibilities, to many different stations
Not bad, it feels better than inside
Loud
Feels like walking a regular pedestrian
relaxed

Also crowded
Comparatively better and more space to breathe.
Rushed too, there are to many people and to little space to comfortably walk around, stroll or stand around waiting for the bus.
Not safe
Do you feel visible or anonymous?
Anonymous
Visible
Anonymous.
I feel anonymous
anonymous
i dont know
I feel visible
Yes ! I feel anonymous
No
I feel more seen in the shops on the paths inside the building I dont feel so visible because there are to many people, outside I am more in the spotlight again.

Do you feel visible or anonymous?

Anonymous
Visible
Anonymous.
I feel anonymous
anonymous
i dont know
I feel visible
Yes ! I feel anonymous
No
I feel more seen in the shops on the paths inside the building I dont feel so visible because there are to many people, outside I am more in the spotlight again.

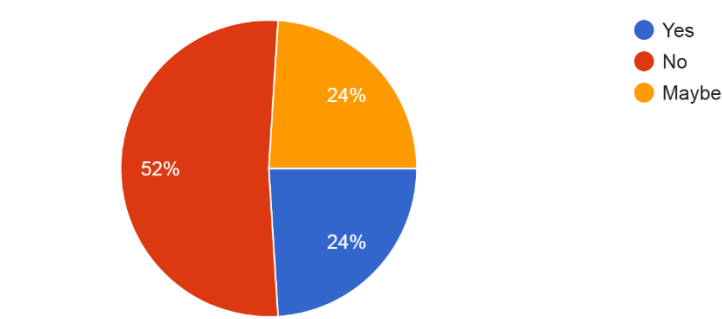
Are there places where you feel more relaxed or more stressed? Do you stop here or mostly keep moving?

the exit to Brunnsparken is also relatively stressful, i try to pass through it in a speedy manner
Feel relaxed near H&m
Normaly keep moving unless I visit a specific store. Don't fell relaxed nor stressed.
I feel stressed crossing the road towards nordatan because a lot of trams and busses. I feel more relaxed on the left side or nordstan (where the 18 and 10 line drive)
I keep on moving
The upper floor is more calm, and a lot of the shops if I need som quieter space.
Mostly just moving and i dont get a feeling of relaxed
The north eastern part over lidl and stadium is really confusing. This is stressing
More relaxed I find it to be in the are close to the PostNord office. The part where I rush is in the alley that comes from Brunnsparken until before reaching the center of the mall.
Femman feels more relaxed, here I feel I can stop. The rest of Nordstan I keep moving, always.
More relaxed I feel on the other site of the small canal at brunnsparken. With some distance to the mall. I like this one stationary / paper store in the basement floor. There I can feel relaxed. But mainly moving and feeling stressed in all of the rest.
When I walk from the bus stop Brunnsparken to the bus stop Nordstan, it feels a little more relaxed. I usually keep moving.
library slows down the pace and is a relaxing hangout.
If they have interventions inside the building where you can stay then it can be relaxin, like cafes, once there was a football court they did in the center of the big hall. There you do different activity then shopping.
I usually keep moving
Usually I keep moving, no specific places
In the shops i feel less stressed
Mostly keep moving
Inside a store is the most comfortable. Away from the noice and visibility of the big main corridor.
I use it mostly to get from a to b
Mostly moving

No
Relaxed mostly when I'm inside the shops. I keep moving when I'm out of those shops.
No?
Keep moving

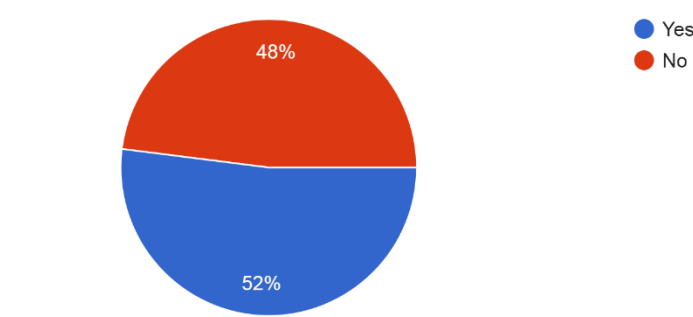
Do you feel forced to walk through Nordstan?

25 responses



Do you feel comfortable being here without planning to buy anything?

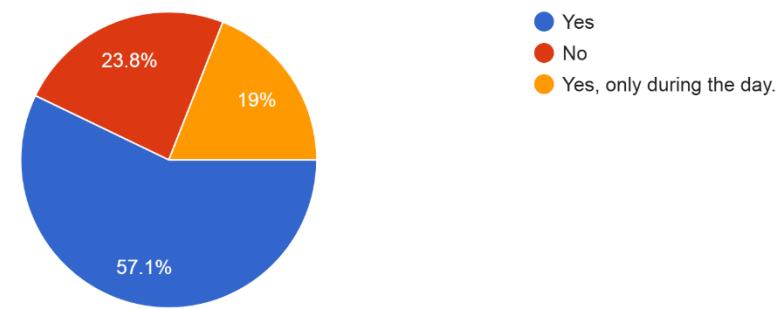
25 responses



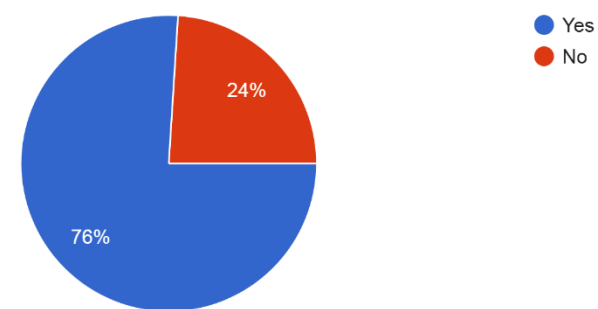
Does being in this space influence whether you enter shops? If yes, how?

No
No idk
It might be excited to enter one but afterwards when I exit and still are inside this monstrous place I don't feel like entering more, because I can't breathe fresh air and it's still as bright as in shops. So I would say it influences me entering less.
I am usually there with the goal to enter a certain shop
Not really. If I go there, I usually have a purpose.
yes, if shops are only mildly filled, the likelihood of entering is the highest
Yes, I only enter shops when I have specific errands. The space influences me in that I very rarely go in shops because I feel like it, it is strictly errands.
Yes, I'm more likely to enter a shop
Not really.
No not really
I don't like strolling, because it's so busy so I only go in the shops that I really want to
I dont usually go in stores
Honestly yes. But the only reason is that it has some stores that I only can find there ex Åhléns.
Yes
Only Lidl, it's very convenient
Sometimes it is so full. I wanna go to a shop but then I go to something closer in order to avoid the walk.
yes i defenatly am more drawn to go into a shop and shop
I don't know

Does the subway connection between Central Station and Nordstan feel comfortable to use?
21 responses

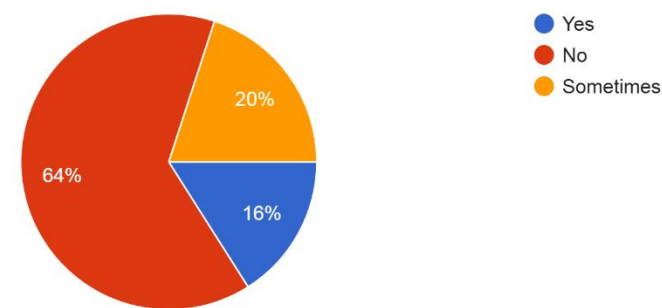


Do you take shelter from the weather (incase it's bad) in Nordstan?
25 responses



Social & Public Life

Do you meet people here?
25 responses



What according to you makes this a ‘good’ or ‘not-so-good’ place for that?

It is good because sometimes it's one stop for everything (food, shopping, meeting friends) sometimes during sale season it is very crowded and could be overwhelming
Too stressful and busy and commercial.
Its not good, too many people
Not so good because there is so much going on - doesn't feel comfortable enough

Some kind of installations
pedestrians participating in the activities
There is soo much going on - the people are for sure not prioritized
Visual merchandising
Consumerism and movement
the instalation that seems to be in the way
Consumerism
Human flow
The random installation for marketing
The exhibition space underneath an atrium.
The decor
Sales pitch
The showcase
The store thinks rather then space to freely move and walk.
The event
A visual presentation
The visual merchandising
The boxes
festiv sale
The display
Give way to people moving around

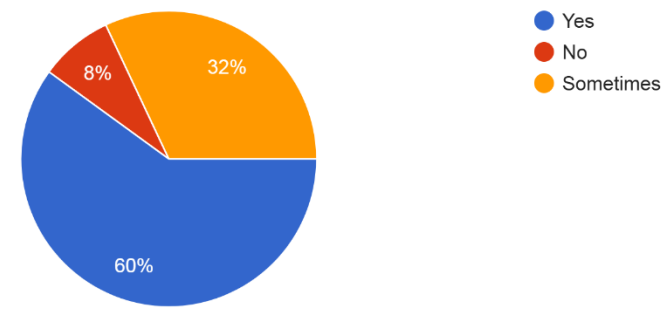
What feels prioritized in this space?



Pedestrain pathway
the place seems reserved for citizens using the public transport system of Göteborg
The poles.
The shops
Max
The “cones” that emphasise there is a crossroad
Movement
eateries
Side walk
Trams and business
Space for the tram stops. And some advertisement. If there would be any focus on walkabikity the ground material would likely be more smooth. Ex like asphalt
The human movement
Large commercial f&b
Walking path
Restaurants
Train, Street
Walking
Traffic
Nothing really, only the McDonald's sign

traffic and facade communication
Channelling the pedestrians into the mall
Bright lights
Pedestrians

Do you notice other buildings around Nordstan?
25 responses



Reflection & Comparison

What stands out the most to you about Nordstan?

The practicality of meet up point and shop on the way due to it's location.
The pavement generally I still dont understand while it feels like you are outside when you are inside walking on a pavement. And why is it not taken care of
Many empty spaces in the middle
The amount of people
the arena in front of Nordstan
1 stop for many shops
Nothing just a crowded small shopping mall
The stressed feeling when i am in there
The business of people and the tram stops outside.
People and stores
A variety of shops, a covered space
The double height corridors
Size
The crowd
It is large. I like the idea of creating this warmer, interior space. Sadly the space is really overstimulating to me. It also makes the surrounding cut of and feels even darker/coulder that it is caotic
Confusing place with a lot of people passing by
Crowds of people
It's massiveness
The bright light, the noise, the huge red Nordstan sign.
It's a very big mass of building right in the centre. Slightly impermeable, definitely visually so
the centrality and compactness
The stressful atmosphere

Are there other places in Gothenburg you visit to meet people? If yes, where?

Slottskogen, Linnégatan, Eriksberg
Chalmers, Slottskogen, Jarntorget, Stigbergstorget
Centralstation
Avenyn
Smaller coffee shops
Brunnsparken but not Nordstan
Yes jarntorget
Johannesberg or Linne, with its reasturants and more intimate shops, Järntorget with its pubs and some meeting places. But honestly I prefer the gym fysiken.

Around avenyn, domkyrkan, Linné
Domkyrkan or Järntorget/Linnégatan.
Yes. In the city centre between grönsakstorget and domkyrka. Or mainly in majorna!
Haga, vasa, avenyn, hisingen
Yes, cafés, restaurants, parks
Cafés, the shopping street around
Yes,cafes
Slottskogen, Haga, Linne
I mostly go to peoples home, or to coffes in the city, less in nordstan because i use it more to shop. If i want to meet people I meet them where I can also remain outside.
Yes! Usually smaler spaces with a clear function (sports; coffee; Bar) I usually don ´t have an issue meeting people in crowded spaces
In open spaces
I prefer Kungsportsplatsen rather than Nordstan or it's surroundings
joe & the juice (café), MAX Burgers, espresso house
Bars or coffees
Yes like cafés, comfy places, parks, ...
In Kungsportsplatsen saluhallen, arket coffee

What is one thing you would change about Nordstan?

Path for crossing the road or clear biking line to stay alive between all the trams
add resting areas
The PAVEMENT!!!
The brightness of light.
Make more exits, more paths
I wouldn't want to change anything
If im not able to remove it , then change The corridor feeling. It's like a three diagram today.
I would remove the entire mall and bring back street shopping like Kungsportsplatsen
How unsafe it feels, there's always guards and shady people
More seating, separation from transit
No events inside
A big foodcourt
zoning
Make it more cozy with public seats and flowers
The infrastructure, decoration, lightning and public spaces.
More amount of calmer smaller areas, like Femman.
I would make it more visually permeable
There should be more visible signs indicating where to go and which exit to use.
No preaching, protest inside the mall
I would remove decoration/noice/advertisement out of the shared/public saces. To avoid overstimulation.
surrounding construction completed and out of sight
Being less crowded and confusing place

If Nordstan could become a different kind of space, what would you personally prefer it to be?

Not sure
Park
A classic mall
It could stay a mall but it should feel more user-friendly and easier to get around.
Places to sit without spending
event hall
less commercial activity
Remove it! And create a space that would look more like hede shopping center or a half open square with shops around it. Would love to have a space that can function both for shops, resturants, nature and events like October fest.
A swimminghall.
I like the idea of to create something. I would imagine something that invites to stay and connect instead of constant movement in and out.
more non commercial indoor areas - third spaces where you can actually relax and not be forced to transit or consume something
Just a shopping mall
I would just break it open a bit more not necessarily give it a new purpose

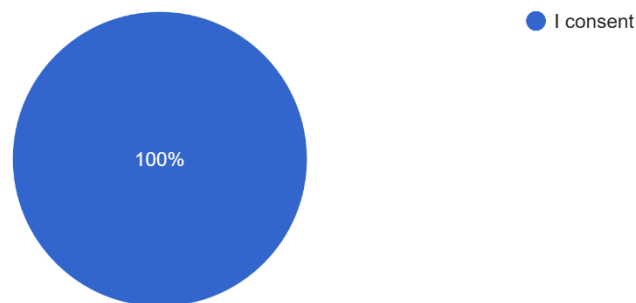
Maybe something that makes people enjoy their shopping experience rather than see how accumulated people is there
 Not as much consumerism focus.
 Maybe make a bigger part of it for happenings like congresses.
 I think it is good that it still offers possibility to do groceries
 A different type of mall, more pleasant to walk by and make shopping.
 Workshop place for all ages
 I think a mall is a suitable use
 Regular grid pattern street with stores

How do other streets in Gothenburg make you feel?

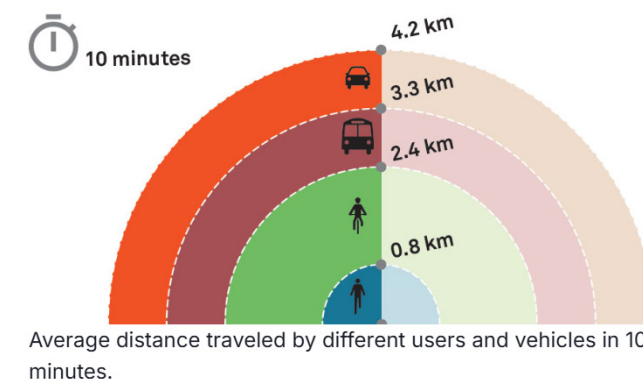
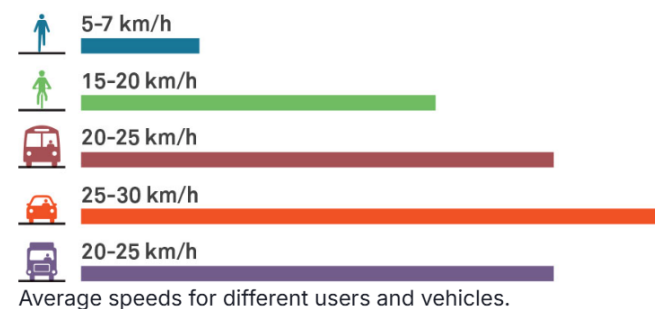
Calmer
 They make me feel better, not so overwhelmed
 I like many of them
 Relaxed
 Cute
 This specific street on the picture have a similar feeling to norsarna. But a bit more freeing as it does not have a roof. But most spaces are just for walking or moving from one place to another.
 Is more pleasant and I like to walk in those for shopping and windowshopping
 More for strolling, just wandering
 I like many that are in other parts of the city. Like the one in the photo, and Magasinsgatan and the streets around there.
 This one feels safe and feels nice to walk by.
 Nice
 It is an inviting street. It can be really nice as long as weather works
 Feels okay, have not felt unsafe anywhere
 here i feel like there is better balance between outdoors and indoors
 More connected to the city, cozier, more aesthetically pleasing
 Emotional, admirable
 Slightly calmer than Nordstan
 Super nice! I love all the streets they are calm and joyful
 happening and happy
 Streets feel safe and fun to move around.
 a bit calmer and less hectic (this street for expample), slower speed
 Comfortable

I understand that my participation is voluntary and anonymous, and I consent to my responses being used for academic research.

25 responses



NACTO & Global Street Design Guide



Street Width & Volume/Capacity

