

Using summer streets as transition tools for permanent urban space improvements

Henna Kluge, SUMP Seminar 21.4.2026

Helsinki

What are summer streets



Places to sit and linger

Traffic calmed streets



Street greenery



Graphics



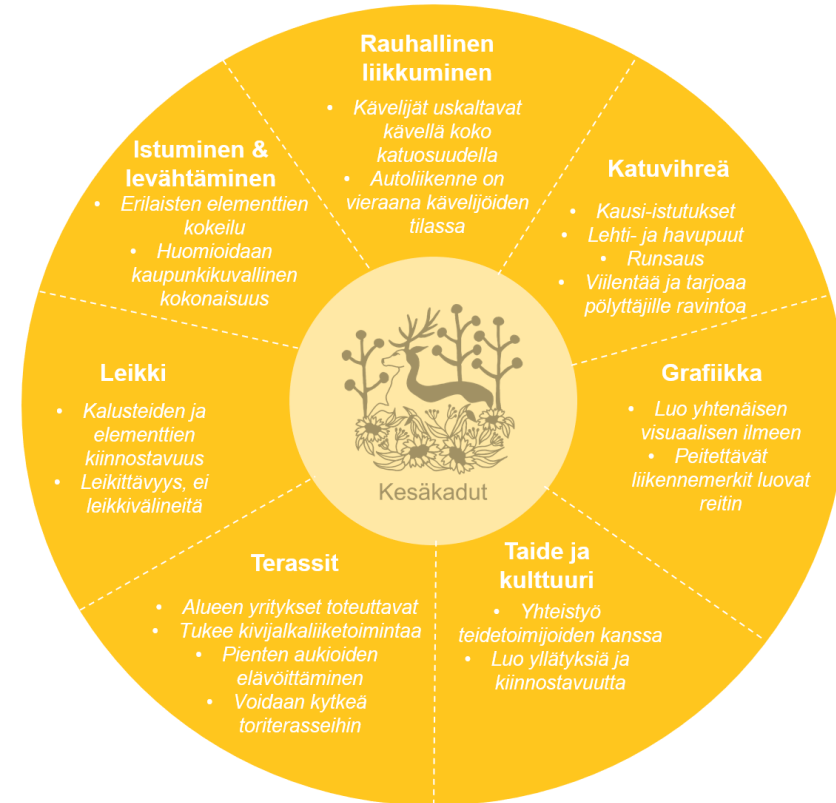
Art and culture



Terraces



Play



Summer street concept in Finnish, City of Helsinki (2022)

... and why do we have them?

- **What are the benefits of street experiments?**
 - Increase **TRUST** between stakeholders
 - **ACCELERATES CHANGE** you achieve results faster and get through things that you wouldn't be able to get through as permanent solutions
 - **DATA** You study and find out about the effects
 - **LEARN**, what works and what doesn't. It's just as valuable to know what's not working!
- **How can they help increase social justice and civic engagement in cities?**
 - Higher quality public space: more places to socialize and also more unofficial social contacts
 - Experiments provide a platform for people to implement their own ideas
- **How can experiments accelerate the transition process to sustainable urban mobility?**
 - By monitoring the effects of the experiments, we will obtain information on the actual impacts instead of modelling them (e.g. pedestrian and car traffic volumes and displacements)
 - The experiments have not had a wider impact on the choice of modes of transport themselves, but as they scale, they may have an impact

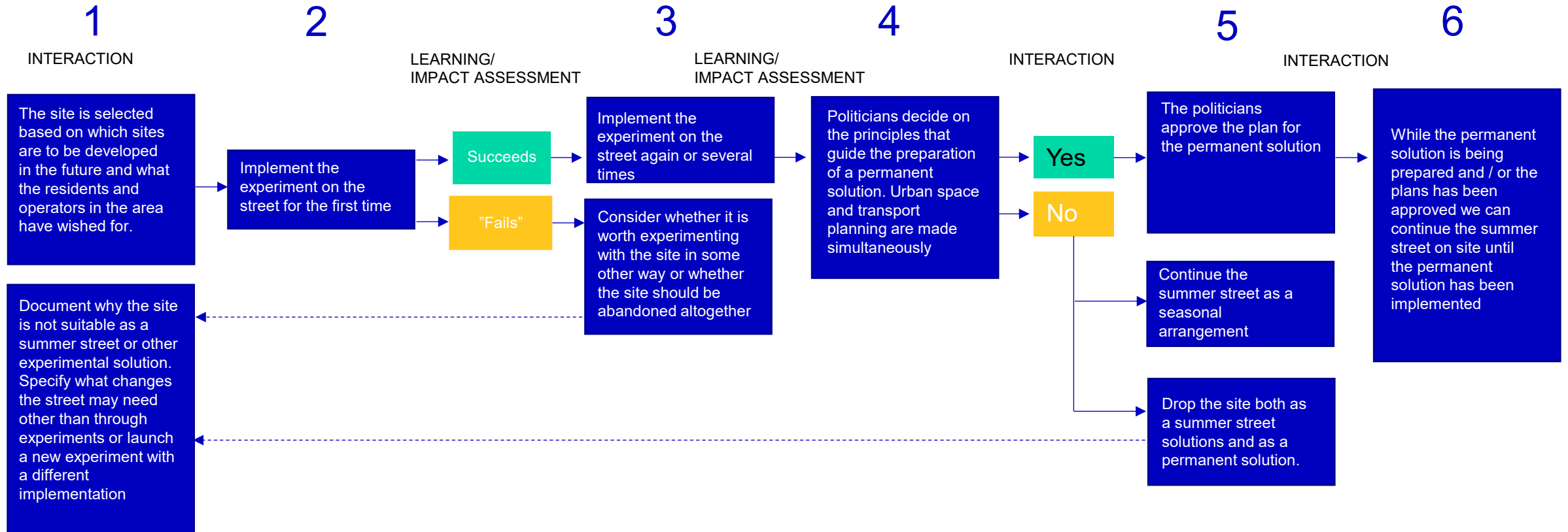
Summer street objectives

Urban Environment Committee (6. / 620 §, 8.11.2022)

1. **Summer streets improve the attractiveness of urban space**
2. People spend more time on the streets and more people walk there
3. Summer streets support the vitality of the city and have positive impact on local business
4. Local residents, businesses and people using urban space are an active part in the planning process
5. Support reaching our carbon neutrality goals
6. Support the parking policy of Helsinki where we aim to centralized underground parking solutions in the city center
7. Ensure good accessibility on summer streets and the nearby areas
8. The benefits outweigh the resources invested in summer streets



Operating model for summer streets and experiments



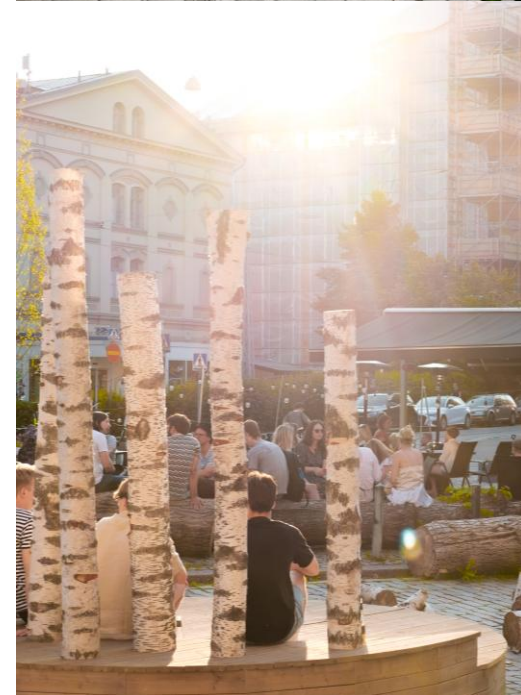
Started in 2021

A terrace was realized in Kasarmitori and two summer street led to the terrace from the city center

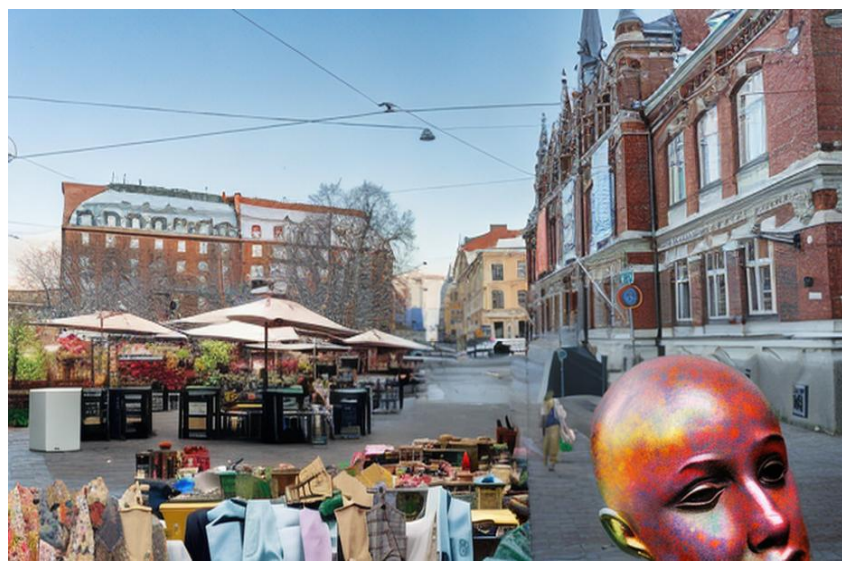


Continued in 2022

3 out of 5 pilot street were chosen to continue

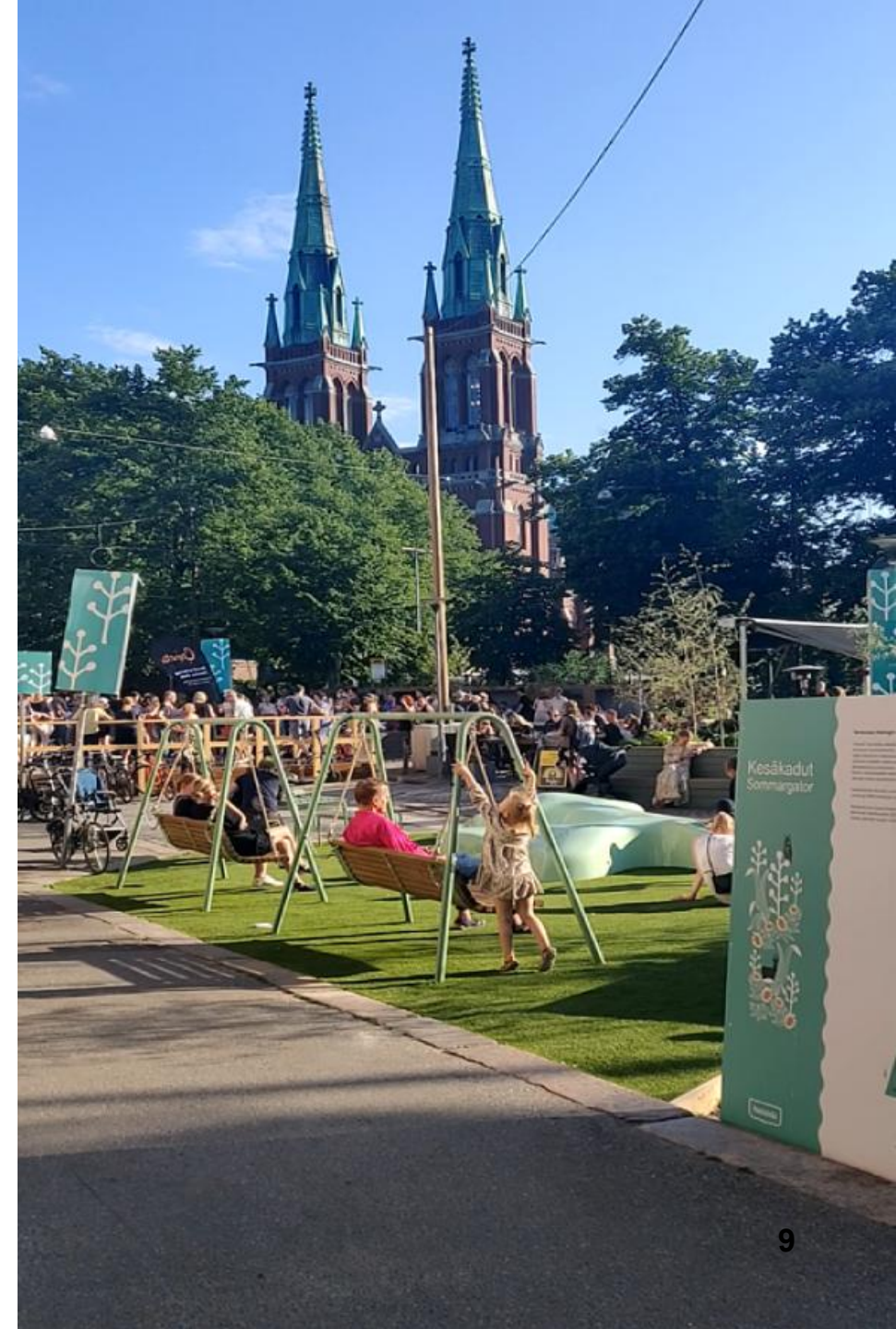


Helsinki



2023: Residents used AI to illustrate what they wanted

Here is how it turned out

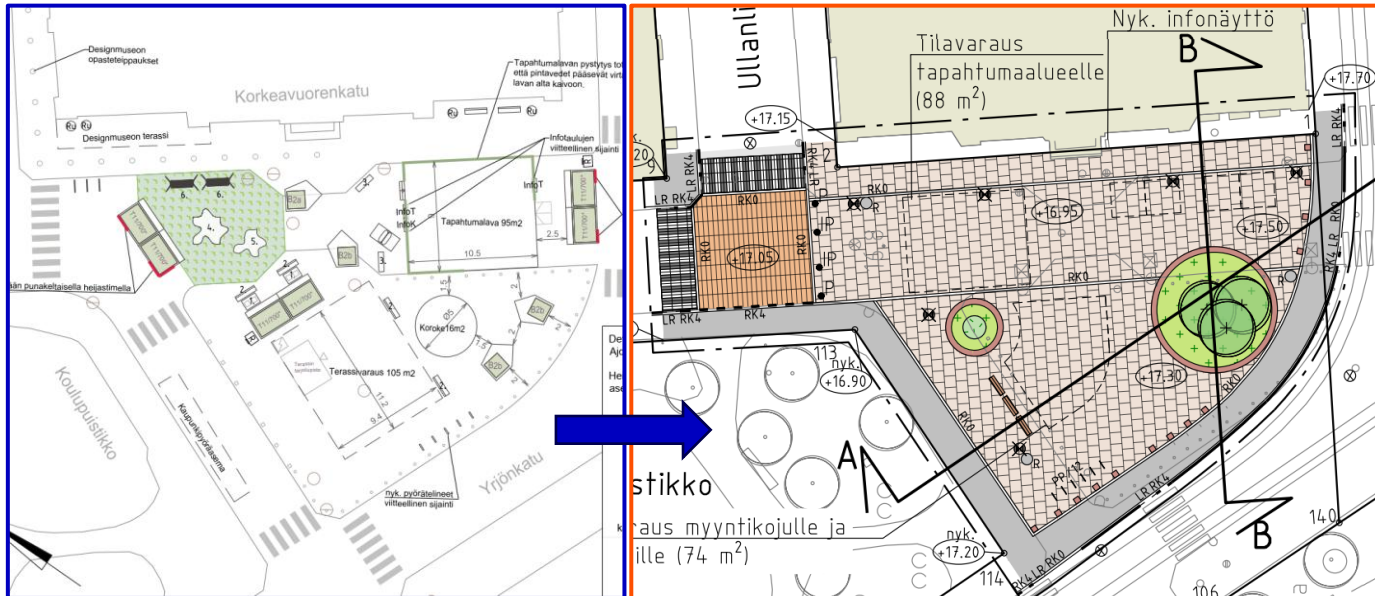


In the end, two summer streets will be turned into a permanent solution

- The street plan in front of the Design Museum or officially for Koulupuistikko Square was approved, and implementation will be finished this year. Summer 2025 was the last summer street implementation.
- On Erottajankatu, the business owners made a petition to keep the experiment, as it allowed a total of 3 terraces that would not have been possible otherwise. On Erottajankatu, the arrangement will continue until further notice. The actual street plan will only be finalized early 2030s.

Koulupuistikko square

The first site that will have a permanent solution based on a summer street experiment



In the interaction process of street planning, closing Korkeavuorenkatu from car traffic was not questioned at all. The traffic arrangement had been tested since the summer of 2021.

However, there were differing opinions about the closing Merimiehenkatu for car traffic. This was not part of the summer street implementation.

Kallio summer streets 2025 →

Objectives of Kallio summer streets

1. Understanding the role of each street and square as an attractive pedestrian environment

What kind of potential do the streets really have, should they be fully pedestrianized streets or should the change be milder?

- Based on the first summer, the primary development direction seems to be the implementation of a woonerfstreet, but part of the street also has the potential to become a pedestrian street.
- The urban life centre of Kallio's summer streets has been in Karhupuisto. It has activated operators in the area to organise various events.

2. Forming a network that can be used in the permanent development of the area

With the help of the summer streets, the companies and residents of the area can be involved in the planning and committed to the development of the area

- The summer streets have already taught us that the residents' own ideas create urban life and that the place is perceived as more their own

3. A transition from individual summer streets to traffic calmed neighborhoods

The summer streets are the first step not the final outcome. The experiment will possibly lead to a permanent improvement of walking and recreational environments in the Kallio district.

- The first sections are already planned as permanent solutions

KALLIO SUMMER STREETS

VAASANKATU

SUMMER SQUARE

Street area designated only for pedestrian and bicycle traffic

WOONERFS

Street area that also allows car traffic but only at 20 km/h. Street layout very pedestrian oriented

WIDER SIDEWALKS

Street greenery and terraces added next to the footway

FRANZENIN-AUKIO

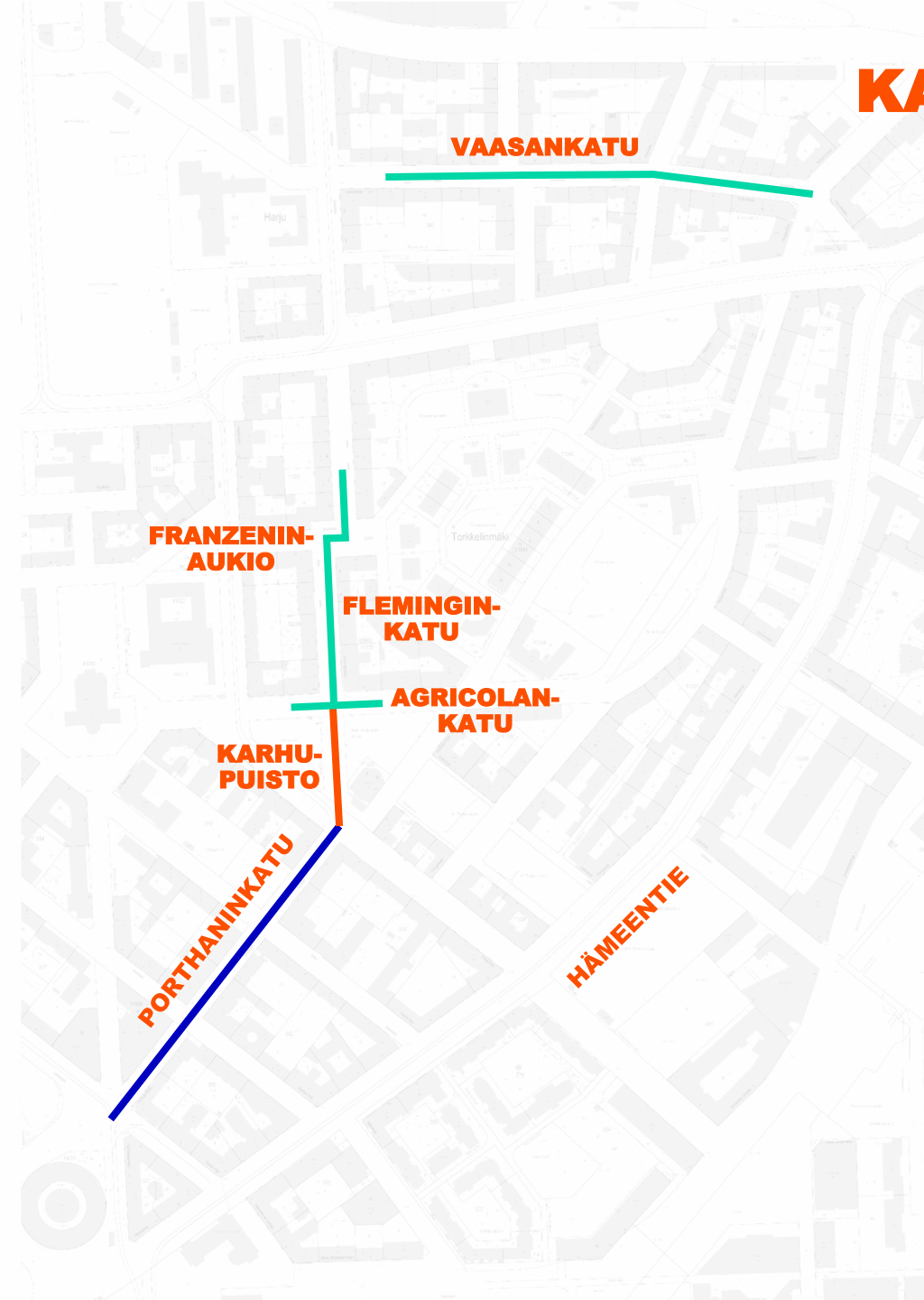
FLEMINGIN-KATU

AGRICOLAN-KATU

KARHU-PUISTO

PORTHANINKATU

HÄMEENTIE



Residents behind the selection of sites

- Several participatory budgeting proposals have called for both temporary and permanent improvements to the area's pedestrian environment.
- According to a resident survey conducted in 2022, Vaasankatu and Fleminginkatu were the most desirable destinations for summer streets after Pohjoisesplanadi.

Karhupuiston kesälaajennus



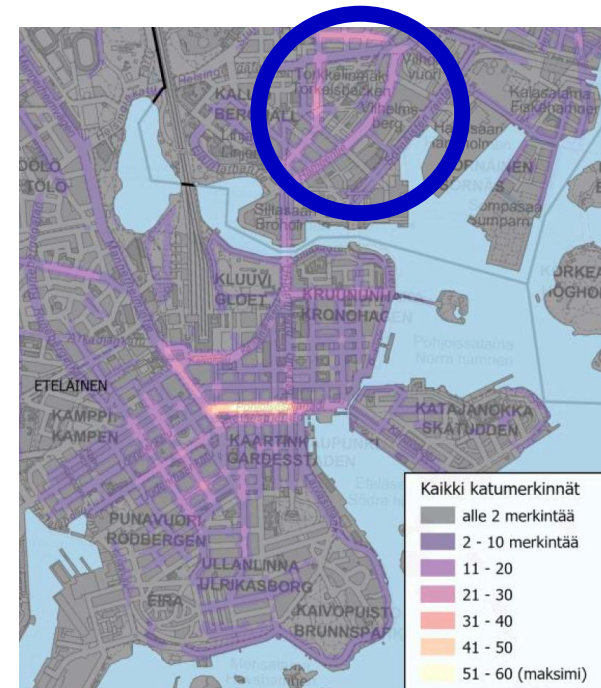
Penkkejä levähtämistä varten Kallioon, Hakaniemeen, Alppilaan ja Hermanniin



Lisää vehreyttä Kallion, Harjun, Sörnäisten ja Vallilan alueille!



Parempia kulkuväyliä pyöräilijöille Kallio-Sörnäinen-alueella



Citizen engagement

- **Design process**

- Co-design with key business owners in the area, property owners and city residents in joint workshops

- **Feedback collected during the summer streets**

- Feedback from the businesses, residents and visitors of the streets involved during the summer streets

Events and cooperation meetings held

- Corporate and association events
- Resident event
- Pop-up planning on-call service
- Street interviews in June-August 2024.
- Tell us your opinion survey
- Rescue Department and Police
- Antilooppi (Ympyrätalo) property owner
- Uniarts Helsinki
- Visits by upper secondary school students
- Kallio Library
- Helsinki Pride
- Kalliola Settlement

Fleminginkatu/Karhupuisto



- The event stage was used a lot. Ping pong tables, a new terrace and a children's play area are also popular.
- The rules of use of the stage were also violated, and the living comfort of the area suffered as a result.

Fleminginkatu:

- People spending time in urban space increased by 400%
- Comfort, smoothness of walking and people's sense of safety improved from 2024.

Karhupuiston kohta:

- The number of pedestrians increased by 50%
- Car traffic (about 3500 driving/day) was completely eliminated.
- Traffic volumes on the surrounding streets increased by 1500 vehicles/day.



Fleminginkatu/Franzéninaukio



- Hammocks as the main attraction of the square.

Fleminginkatu:

- People spending time in urban space grew by 400%
- Comfort, smoothness of walking and people's sense of safety improved from 2024.

Franzéninaukion square:

- The number of pedestrians increased by 5-20%
- Car traffic decreased by 80%



Porthaninkatu



- This summer street has a role of leading from Hakaniemi metro station to Karhupuisto summer square.
- Abundant greenery cheered up the concrete filled streetscape.

Porthaninkatu:

- The number of people spending time did not increase (although sitting naturally increased since benches were added)
- Comfort, smoothness of walking and people's sense of safety improved from 2024.



Vaasankatu



- Swings as an attraction on Vaasankatu.
- Vaasankatu:**
- People spending time in urban space grew by 115%
 - Number of pedestrians increased by 7%
 - Comfort, smoothness of walking and people's sense of safety improved from 2024.
 - Car traffic decreased by 23%.



Smaller summer squares and Hämeentie

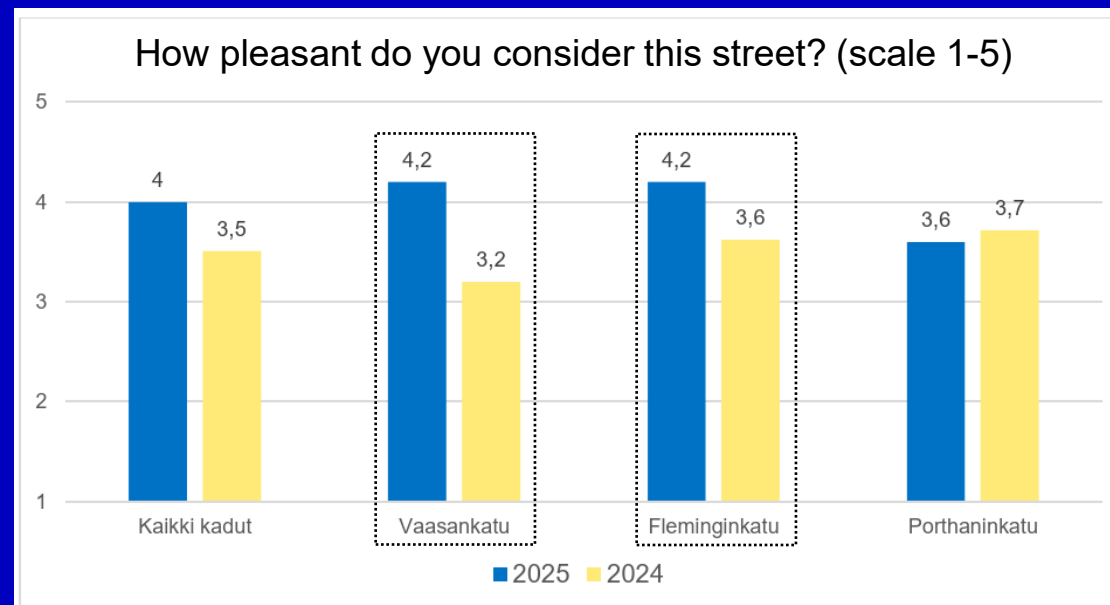


Based on interview studies, the summer streets of Kallio have increased the pleasantness of the streets.

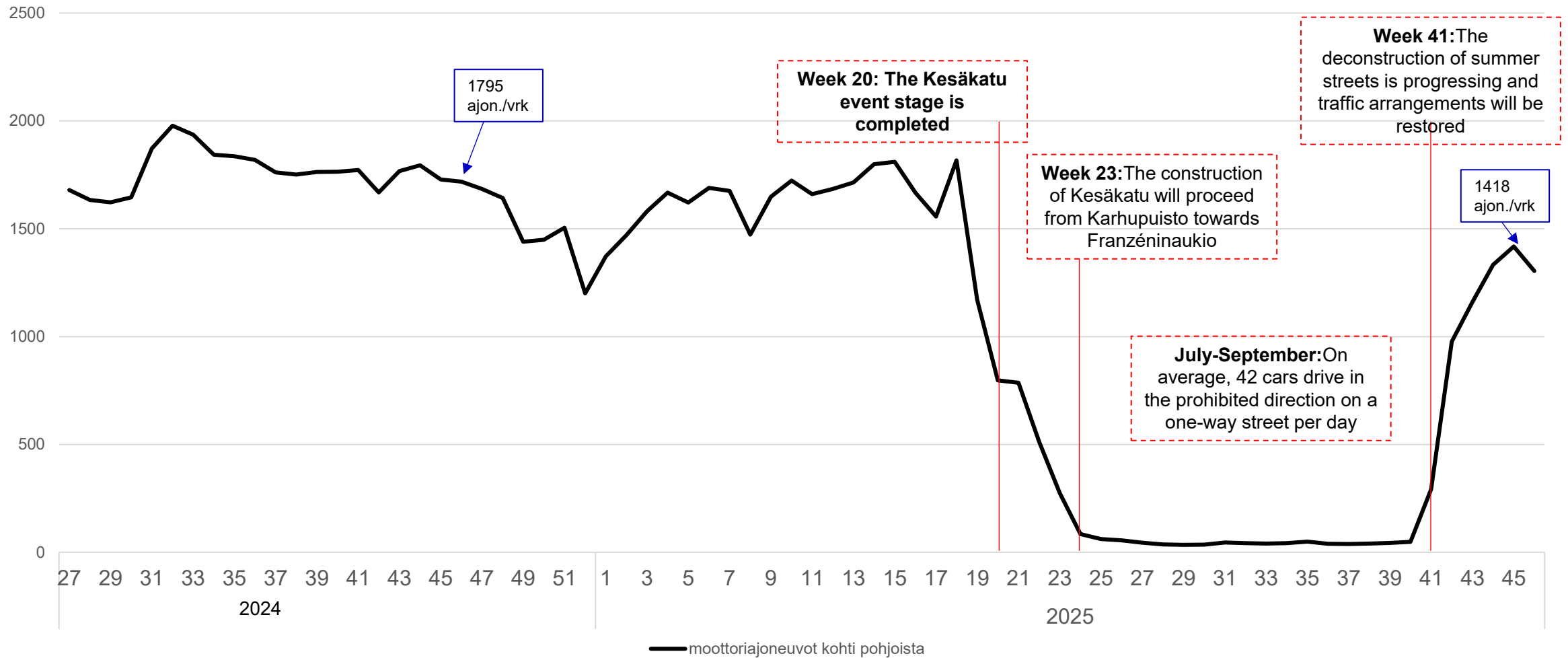
The biggest change in comfort has taken place on Vaasankatu, but the change has also been significant on Fleminginkatu.

On a scale of 1-5 (5 best), the interviewees gave Vaasankatu pleasantness score rose from **3.2** to **4**.

On Fleminginkatu, the corresponding figures were **3.6** before the summer streets and **4.2** during the summer streets.

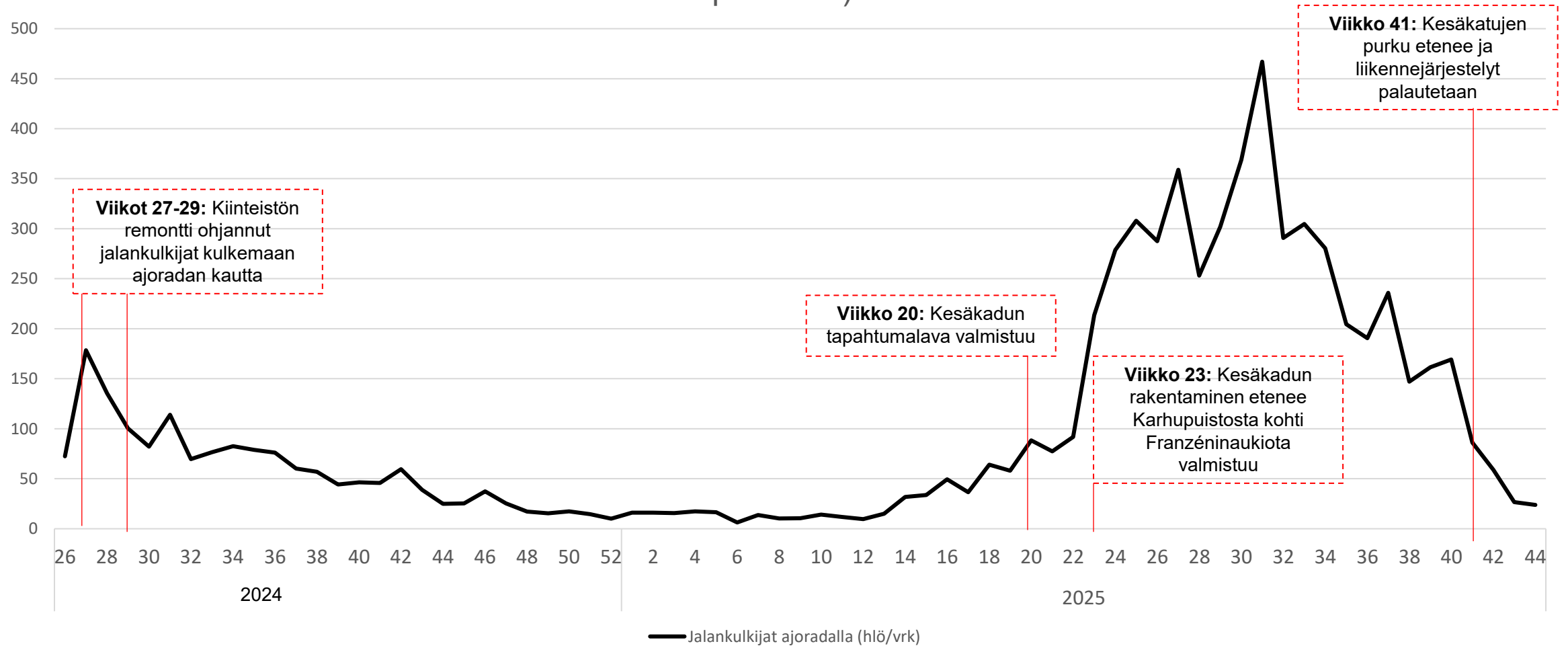


Fleminginkatu: Motor vehicles towards the north (weekly average daily traffic)

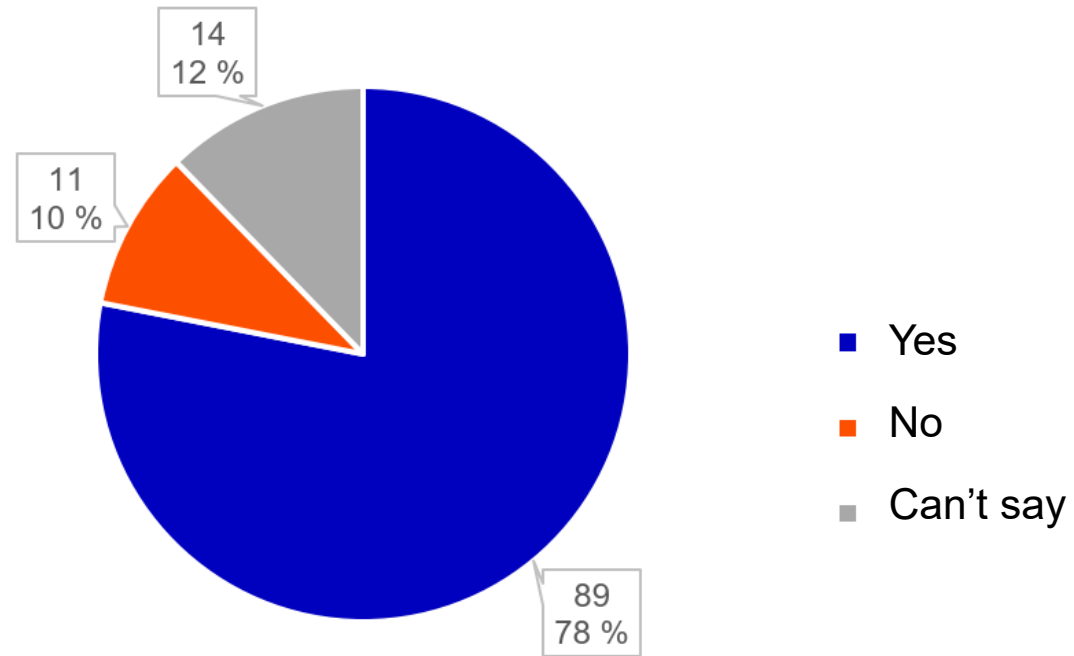


Fleminginkatu:

Pedestrians on the driveway of the courtyard street (person/day, average daily traffic per week)



Olisiko mielestäsi toivottavaa, että Kallion kokeilun pohjalta suunniteltaisiin **pysyviä ratkaisuja**? (2025)



Vitality & economic effects

- N = 105 businesses
- The success of the summer street experiment according to the businesses:
 - **Positive rating: 47 % of respondents**
 - **Negative rating: 28 % of respondents**
- Change in turnover from previous summer:
 - **Positive estimate: 32 % of respondents**
 - **Negative rating: 35 % of respondents**
- Factors that have had a positive impact on the business:
 - Improved comfort and appearance of the area, increased visitor numbers and new tourist-customer groups. The area's strengthened sense of community and attractiveness.
 - The businesses who invested and adapted to new environment gained most of the benefits
- Factors that have had a negative impact on business:
 - Changes in tourism: Effects of the war in Ukraine, lack of Russian tourists. The general economic situation and consumer caution have an impact on net sales.
 - Reduced accessibility due to reduced parking spaces and logistical challenges. Increased disturbances, lack of toilet facilities and changes in public transport. For some, the visibility of business premises has deteriorated.



Lessons from the summer of 2025

Successful aspects

- People have liked the visual look and functionalities of the summer streets: benches, street greenery, ping pong tables, swings and playground equipment.
- The summer streets have increased the number of people in the area, and the majority (69%) of those who visited the summer streets also intended to visit the services in the area.
- People have been hoping for a continuation of the summer streets in Kallio and in Helsinki in general.



Lessons learned from the design solutions



The square-like areas in Karhupuisto and Franzeninaukio attracted people to spend time in urban space the most. These areas should primarily be developed as places of urban life and community.



In central locations within the scope of services, also in smaller summer squares, the best input-output ratio is e.g. In front of Kallio Church. On the other hand, Torkkelinaukio in a more residential area attracted less attention.



The leading street sections on Fleminginkatu and Porthaninkatu are also valuable, as they make the summer streets easier to find and connect the squares to each other. The time spent in both locations was relatively high in relation to the number of furniture.



The westernmost block of Vaasankatu was quieter and the stay attracted groups that expel other people who are staying in the area. For the time being, a courtyard street would seem to be a better solution than a pedestrian street (clearer for the user and the police do not have the resources to monitor unauthorized driving)

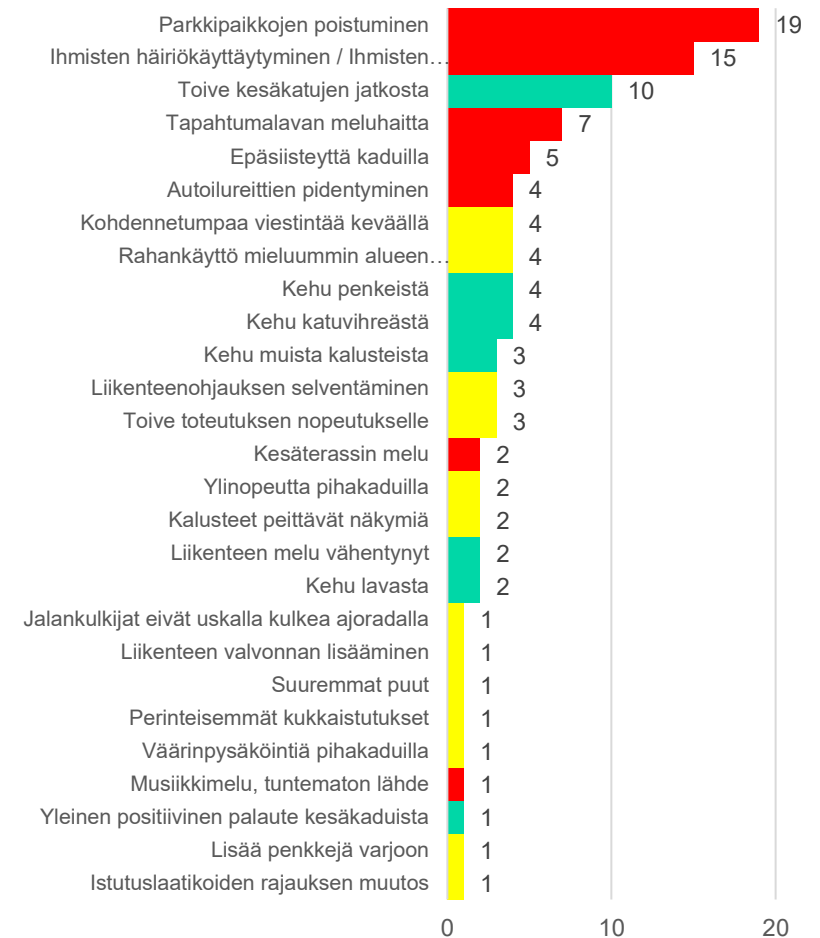
The city's feedback system from summer 2025

Through the feedback system, **positive feedback** has been received on the benches, street green and other furniture. People have also hoped that the summer streets will continue next year and beyond. **Development proposals** have been given for the development of communications, the speed of implementation and e.g. traffic control. **Negative feedback** has mainly been received about the removal of car parking spaces, people roaring on the streets, and noise emanating from the platform or terraces.

78% of those interviewed on the streets of Kallio hoped that permanent solutions would be designed on the basis of summer streets.

95% of those interviewed on the streets of Kallio hoped that summer streets would be implemented in Helsinki in the future as well.

Resident feedback classified



Media Coverage

The summer streets of Kallio have been prominently featured in the media (e.g. YLE, HS, HU). The news is mainly positive. The slow implementation also caused poor visibility. The people interviewed in the news have also had a mostly positive attitude and even hoped for an extension to next year's implementation.

Onko tässä Helsingin onnistunein kesäkatukeilu? – Kalliossa loikoillaan nyt riippukeinussa keskellä katua



Helsingin kesäkaduista piti tulla "reheviä", mutta laatikot Kalliossa seisovat nyt tyhjinä

Kesä | Helsinki halusi Kallioon terasseja, oleskelutilaa ja kasveja tietyille kaduille. Kasvilaatikot kuitenkin seisovat edelleen tyhjinä.

Kalliossa asuva Juha Vuori ja Liisa Teitti testaavat ensimmäistä kertaa Flemingin riippukeinua. MARJO J. RAMO



Porhanskadulla kesäkadut levitettiin kaadunviihtävyyden tilaan, johon kaupunki lupasi puoda katuilla viihtyvyyttä parantavia tontteja ja kalusteita. kuva: Roo Gendary / HS



FLEMINGINKATU, HELSINKI

Helsingin Kalliossa puistojen välissä kulkevalle kadulle on noussut kesäinen olohuone.

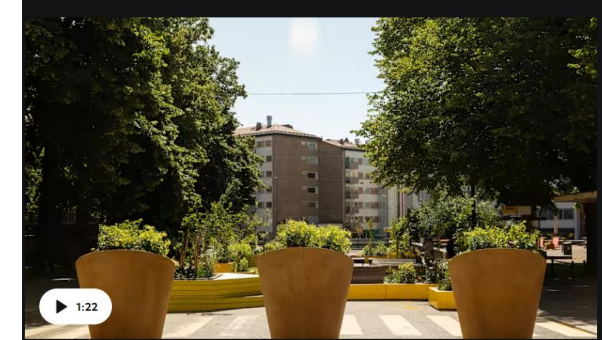
Lähellä Kallion kirjastoa sijaitsevaa kesäkatua on kuvattu kuin olisi Berliinissä.



Eveliina Mäkelä ja Kerttu Mäkinen nauttivat autoilta suljetun kadun yhteisöllisestä fiiliksestä ja rauhallisuudesta.

Kallion kesäkadut Helsingissä saavat jatkoa ensi vuonna – kaupunkilainen: "Tämä voisi olla vielä astetta laajempi"

Kaupungin mukaan suuria muutoksia toteutukseen ei ole ensi vuonna luvassa, mutta tästä kesästä otetaan oppia.



1:22

Kävimme kysymässä helsinkiläisten mielipiteitä Kallion kesäkatupilotista. Mitä he ajattelevat kaduista ja millaisia toiveita heillä on jatkolle?

Helsinki



Nicolas De Bouët du Portal
kokki, ravintola Gastro Cafe Kallio

Mutta ihan huippuidea ja toivotaan, että jatkuu.











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Thaimaalainen ravintola







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Thank you!

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