



The lived experience and place Urban Spaces for Health

WHO: Urban Design for Health
14th of April 2021

Gehl

Louise Vogel Kielgast, Associate Gehl
Copenhagen

Gehl makes cities for people

We believe that by applying a people-first approach to the planning and design of our cities, we can address some of our cities' most pressing challenges in **equity, health, and sustainability** and make cities vibrant places where all people are invited to engage and connect.



Our work bridges disciplines by nature



Social Science

As social scientists we investigate how behavior is influenced by the environment and how place contributes to quality of life.



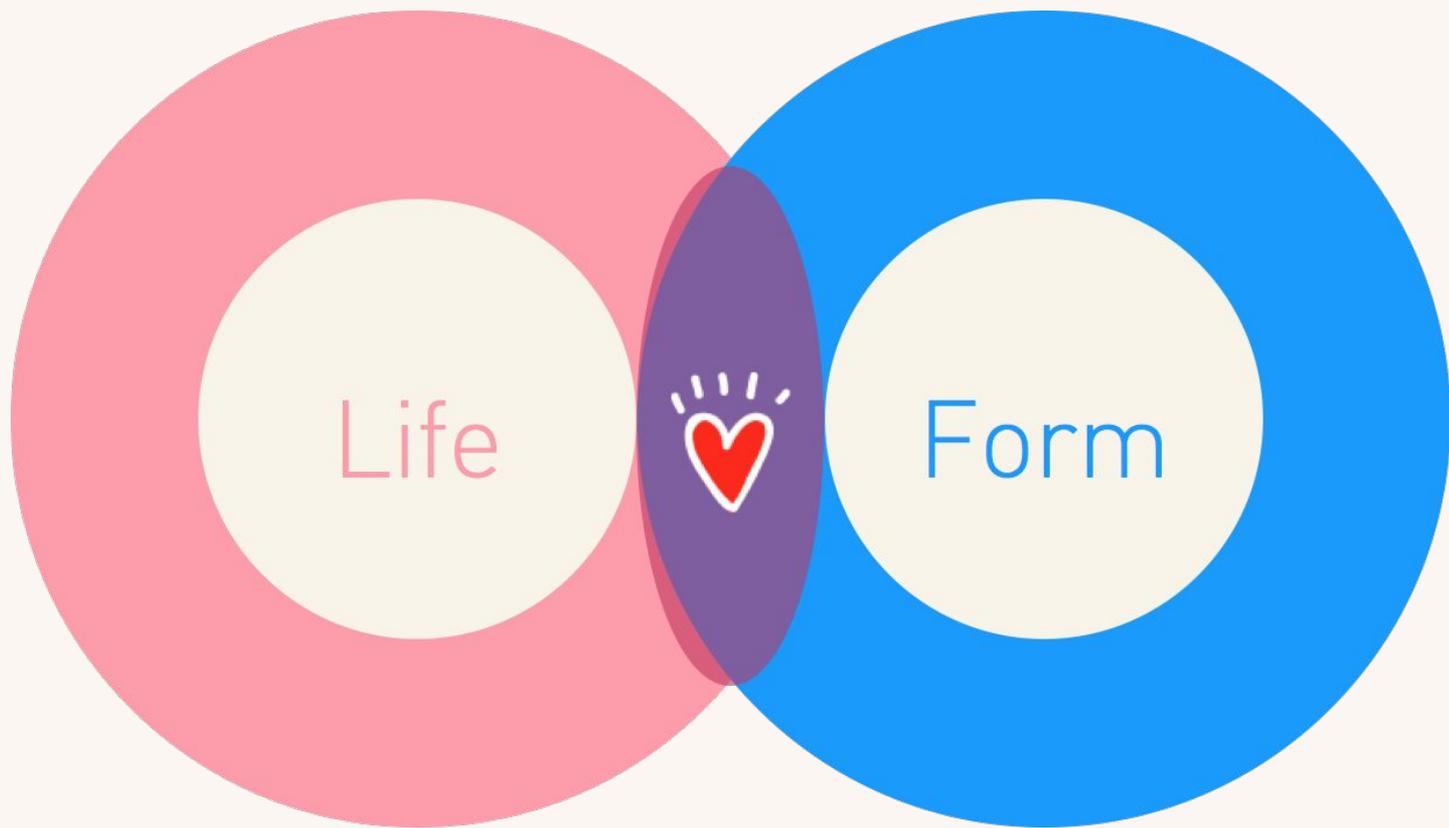
Systems Thinking

As system thinkers we study and identify behaviors and patterns over time, unraveling the complexity that drives urban change.



Urban Design

As designers we are concerned with how the built environment responds to people's needs.



A blue-tinted photograph of a park path. In the foreground, a woman wearing a helmet and a dark tank top is riding a bicycle towards the camera. To her left, a man in a light-colored polo shirt and dark pants is walking. Further back on the path, another man in a dark t-shirt and dark pants is walking. On the right side of the path, a woman in a dark athletic outfit is jogging. The path is surrounded by trees and foliage, and the overall scene is bright and active.

Place shapes health.

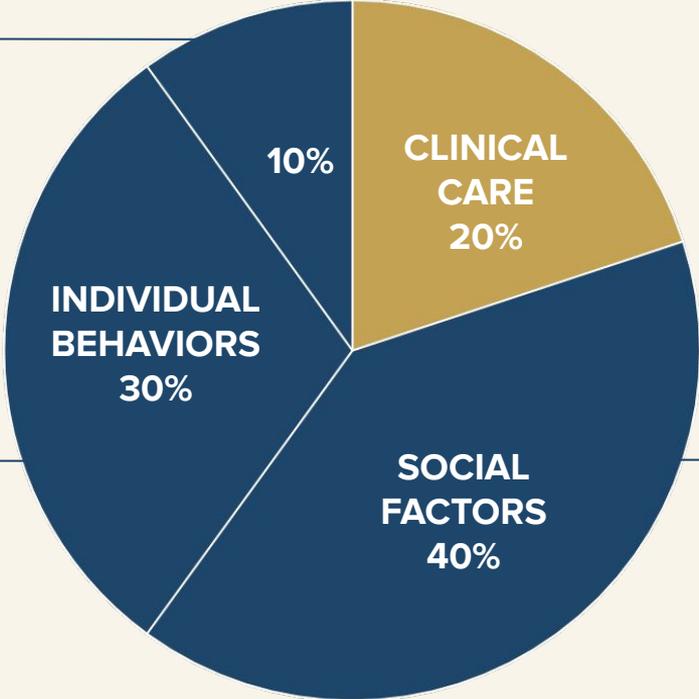
Environment, behavior, and socioeconomic factors shape 80% of a community's health; Clinical care accounts for just 20%.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Air and water quality
- Housing
- Transit

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS

- Diet and exercise
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol and drug use
- Sexual activity



SOCIAL FACTORS

- Education
- Employment
- Income
- Family and social support
- Community safety

Place and public space can play a key role to play in fostering positive social factors, healthy behaviors, and creating a healthy physical environment.



Physical Activity

- Creating safe, inviting walking and biking infrastructure
- Providing opportunities for play and exercise



Community Social Connection

- Providing the stage for planned and unplanned interactions with other people in your community
- Creating safe and inviting places



Environmental Health

- Facilitating access to parks, green space, and trees
- Helping reduce air pollution
- Providing access to healthy, affordable food

Health and Cities

Good Urban Design Matters

Findings across 15 cities and 6 continents suggest that urban planning can reduce the health burden of the global physical inactivity pandemic.

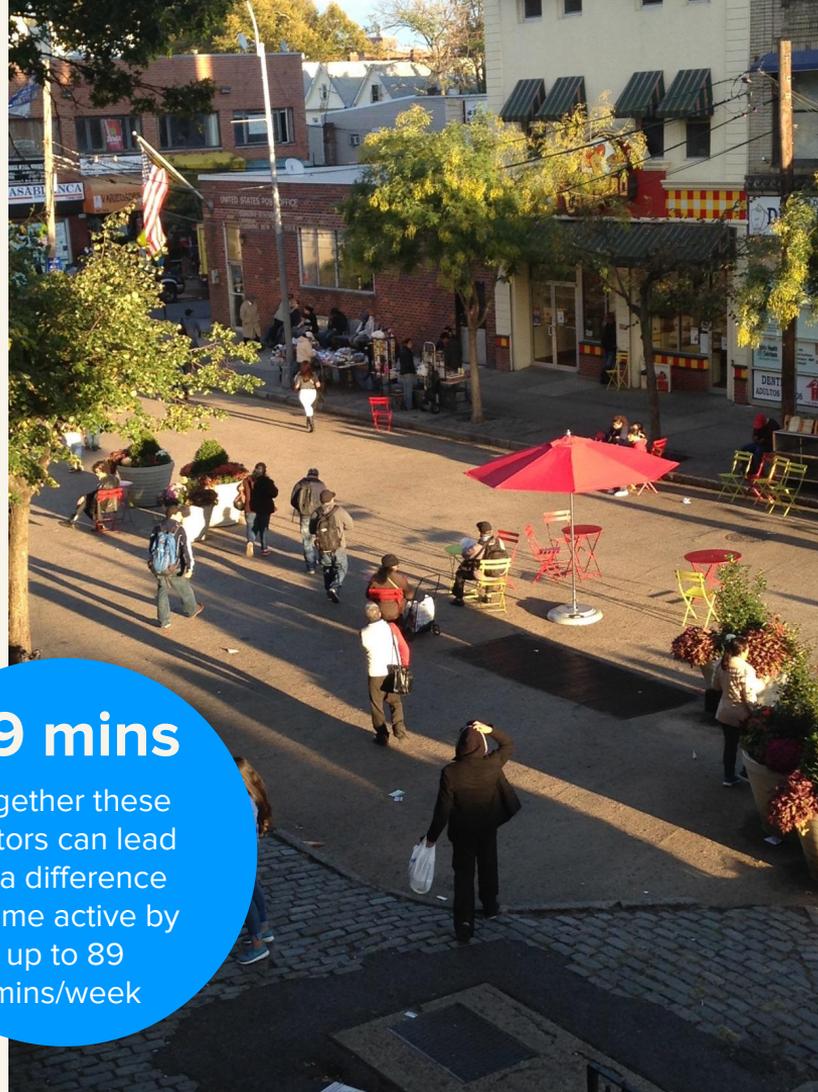
These factors matter most

- Net residential density
- Intersection density
- Public transport density
- Number of parks

Source: Physical activity in relation to urban environments in 14 cities worldwide: a cross-sectional study
James F Sallis, Jens Troelsen, et al.
Lancet Medical Journal - 2016

Gehl — Making Cities for People

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & Gehl / Applying the IHP Framework



89 mins

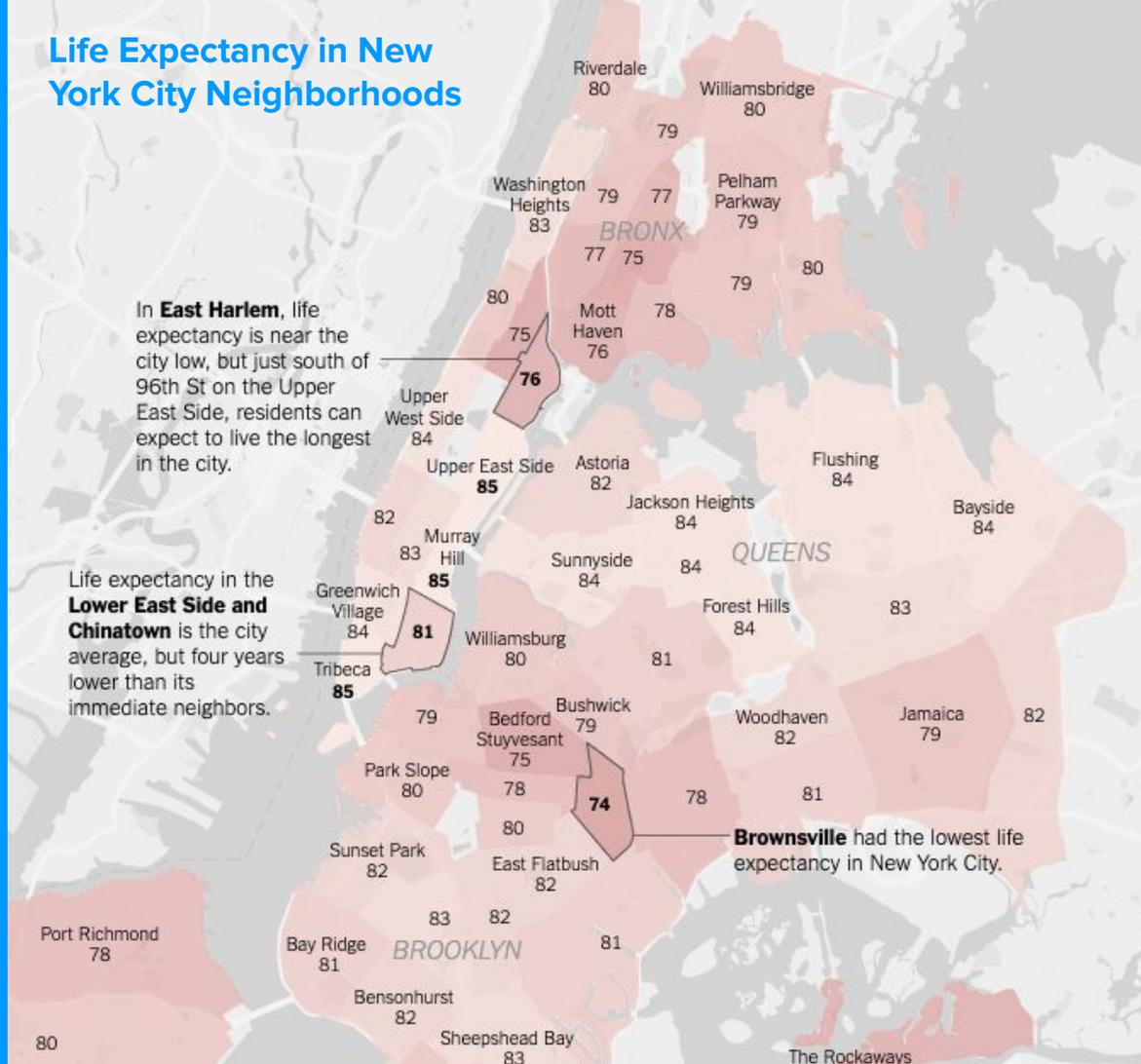
Together these factors can lead to a difference in time active by up to 89 mins/week

We have a long way to go in achieving health equity.

For example, it is well documented that in most places, your zip code determines your likelihood of living a long and healthy life. Where you live and the opportunities you have to live a healthy lifestyle matters.

Tavernise, Sabrina. "Same City, but Very Different Life Spans." New York Times. April 28, 2015.

Life Expectancy in New York City Neighborhoods



In **East Harlem**, life expectancy is near the city low, but just south of 96th St on the Upper East Side, residents can expect to live the longest in the city.

Life expectancy in the **Lower East Side and Chinatown** is the city average, but four years lower than its immediate neighbors.

Brownsville had the lowest life expectancy in New York City.

Understanding how we live...



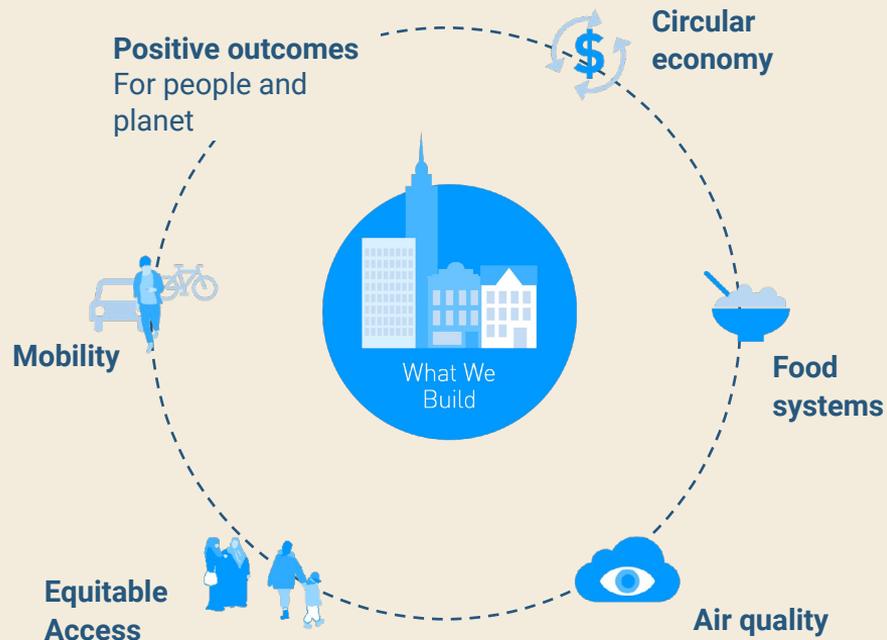
Conscious decisions
empowering people by providing the
outlet to act sustainably



Everyday convenience
enabling everyday routines to act
subconsciously



...to shape what we design.



**We study and design
for how people
actually behave
—not how we think
they behave**

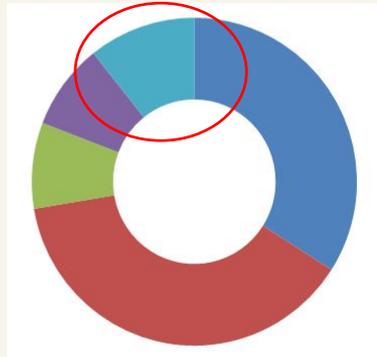


Observation uncovers hidden needs



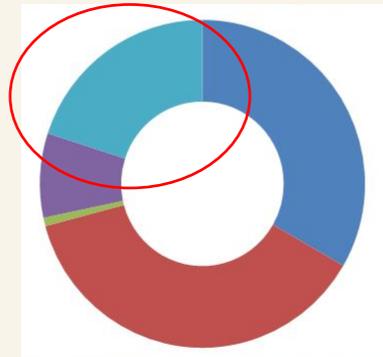
Scarcity of time - impact on well-being and what makes us happy

Daily time distribution
– 2.5 hour commute



2,5 hours left over for the stuff that makes us happy

Daily time distribution
– 15 minute commute



4,75 hours left over for the stuff that makes us happy



Time is a scarce resource!

55% of Copenhagensers cycle!

Why? **The environment invites them to do so!**

56% Quick, easy, convenient

21 % Exercise

12 % Cheap

1 % Environmentally friendly



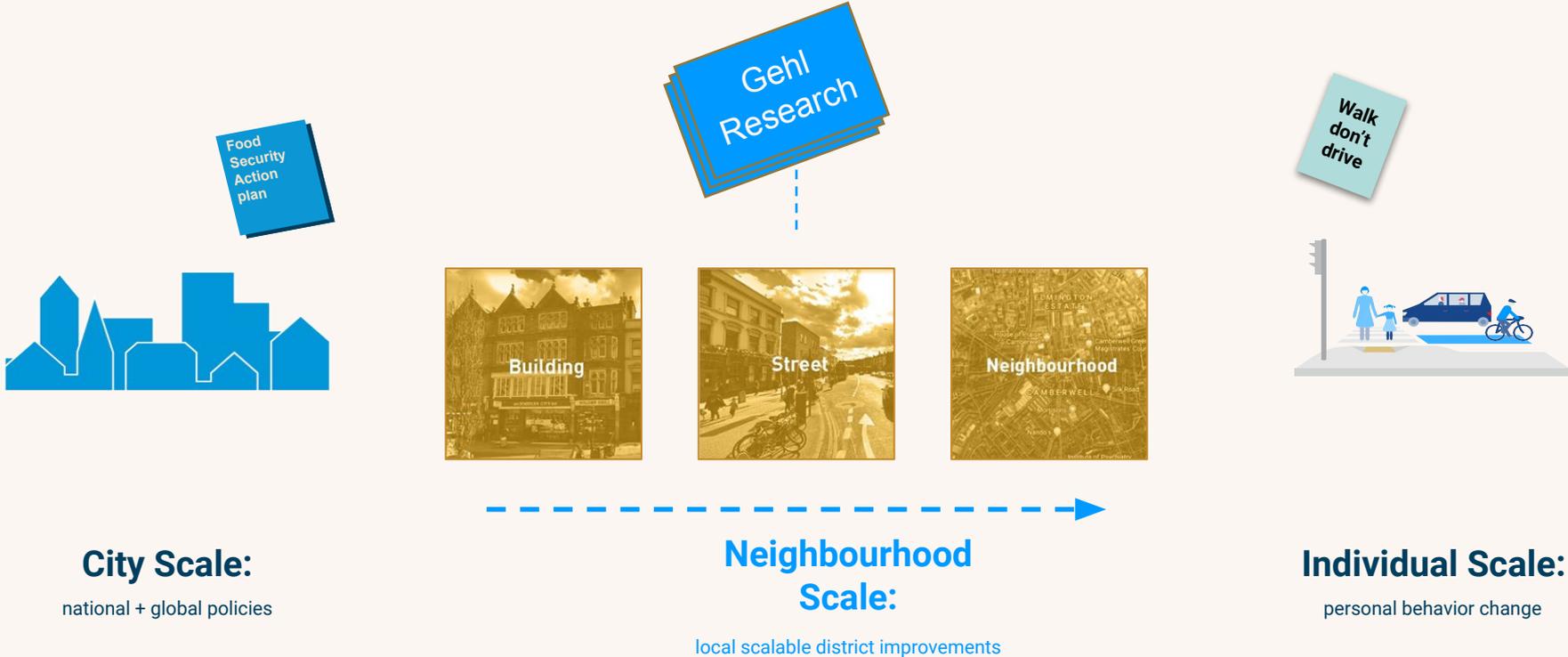
Overlap of functions



Aarhus, Denmark

**The method of
'lived experience'**

Neighborhood based approach



Gehl Lens is a bundle of methods to understand people's lived experience in places



Focussing on Life in Cities



A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods

The Gehl Public Life App. It is used on-site and observational

Inclusive and qualitative

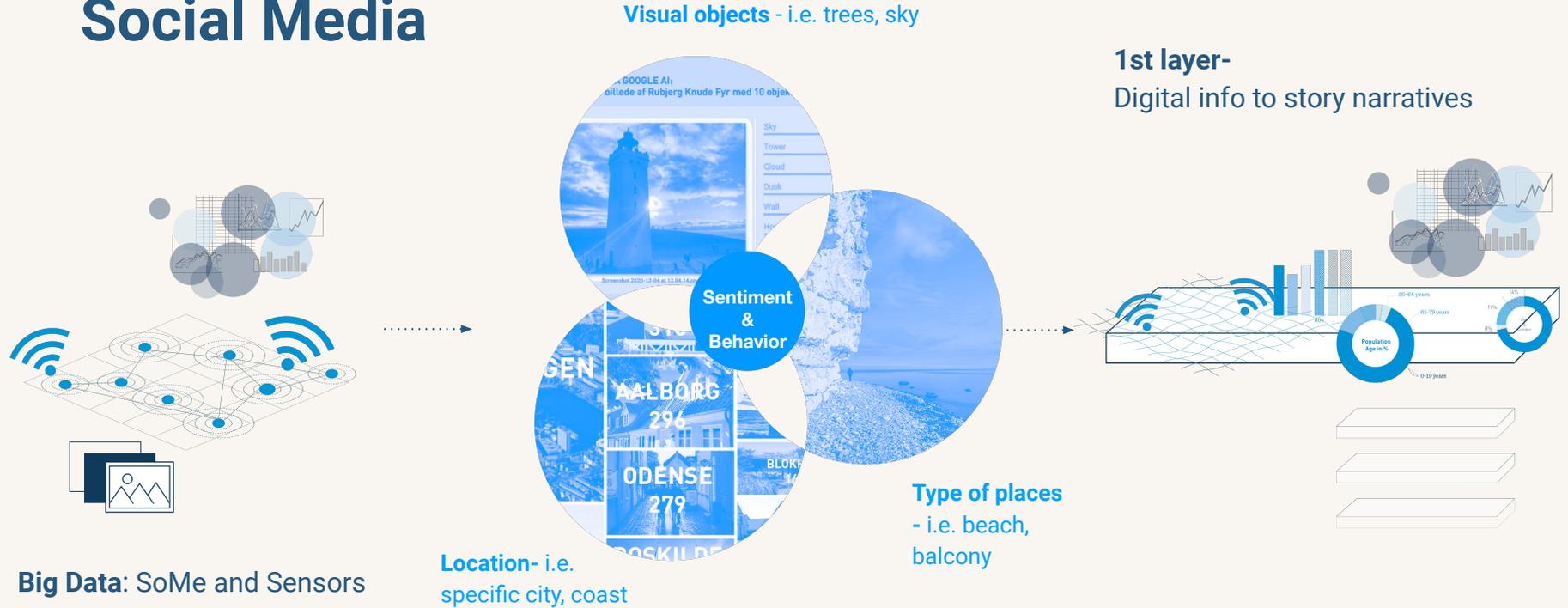
Onsite observations of

- How many people move through a space?
What modes of travel do they use?
- The age/gender of people present in places
- How do people spend time in a space?
What activities do they engage in?
- Who is spending time in a space — or not
spending time — and how they are
interacting?
- How does this patterns change throughout
the day and the week?



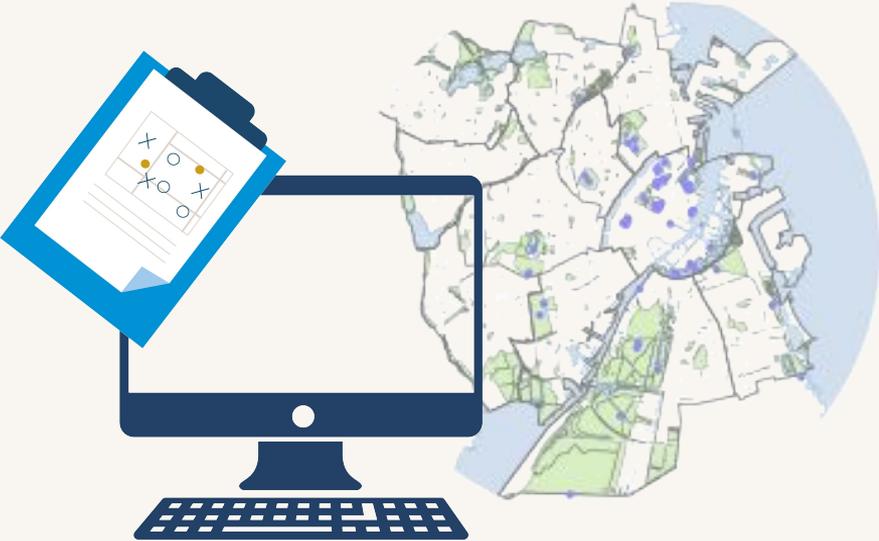
Methods

Social Media



Methods

Targeted online surveys



Delivering targeted online surveys

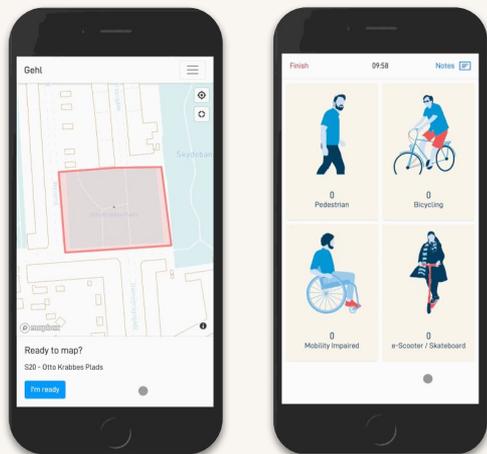
2nd layer - Targeted surveys:
Specific questions for specific populations



Methods

Public Life app

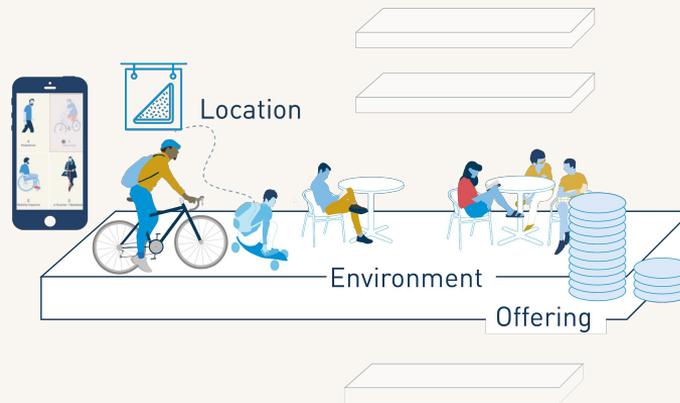
People moving



People spending time

Gehl

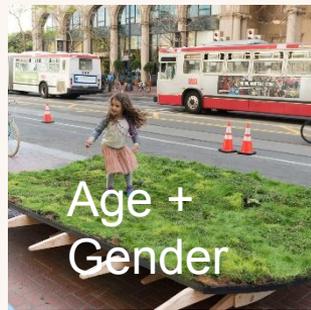
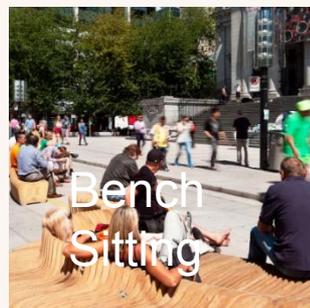
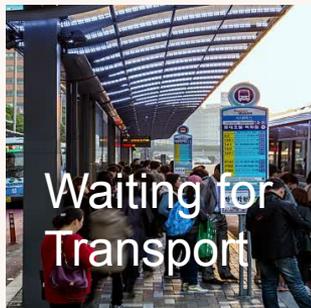
3rd layer - On-site analysis:
Observing who is there, or not there and what they are doing



We measure quantity of people moving – who and where



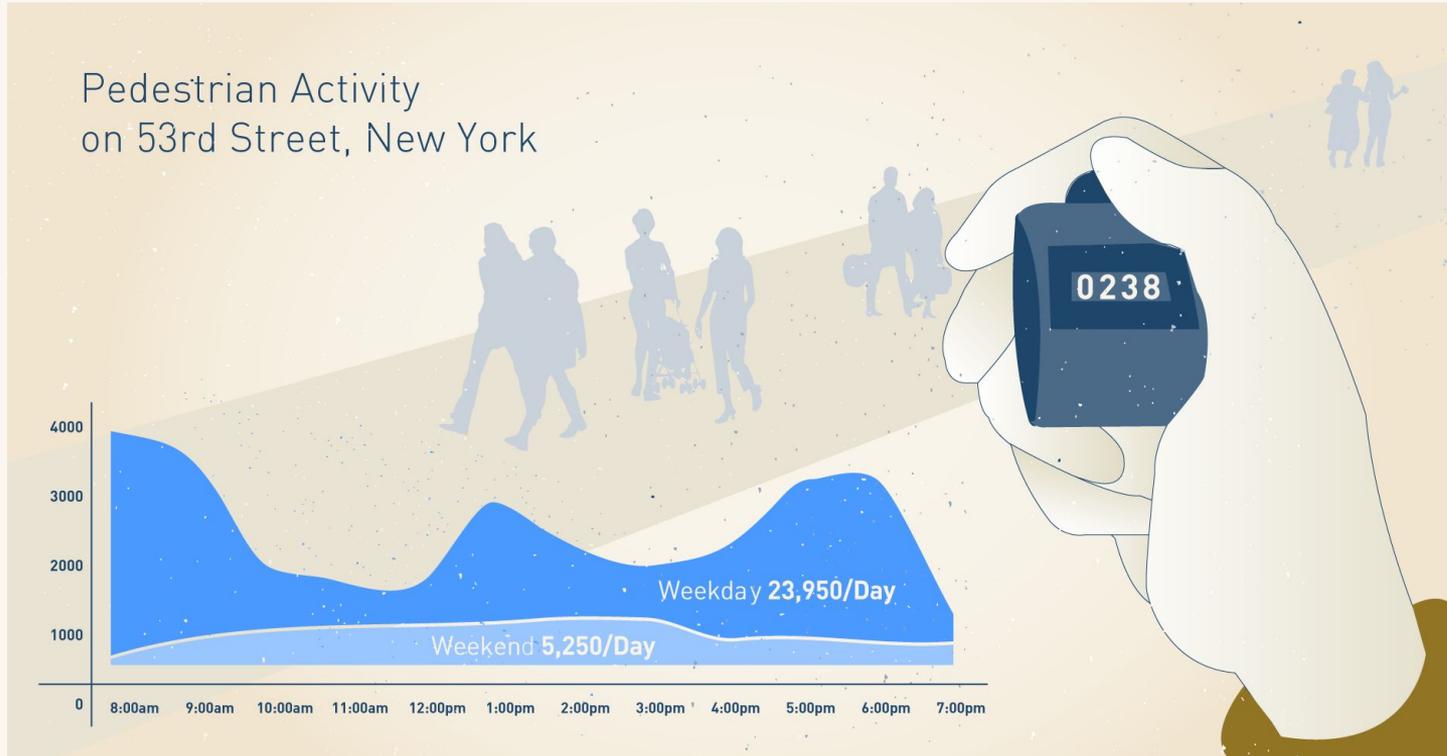
We measure people staying



We have
worked in
over 300 cities
around the world



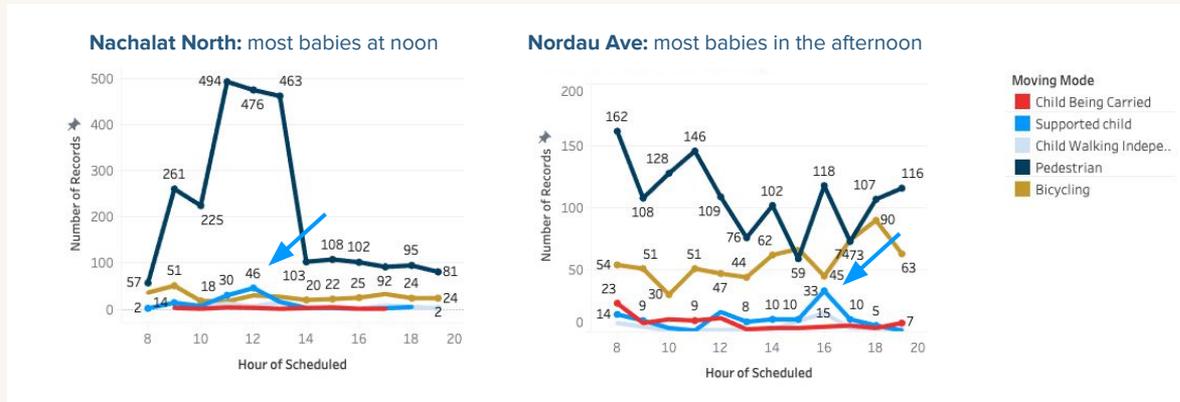
To identify patterns – e.g. daily flows



Daily flow patterns

Children moving through the city

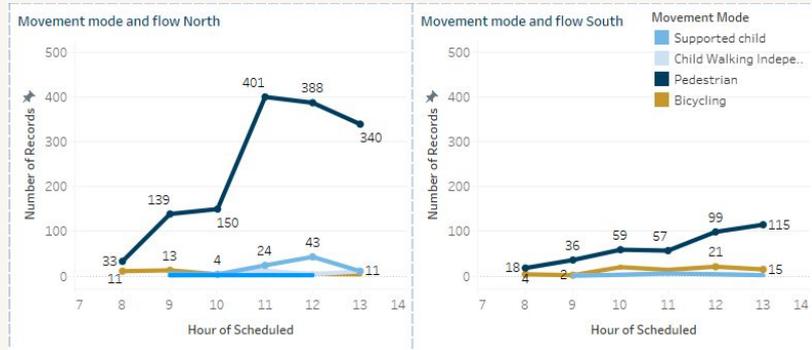
Comparison between different streets



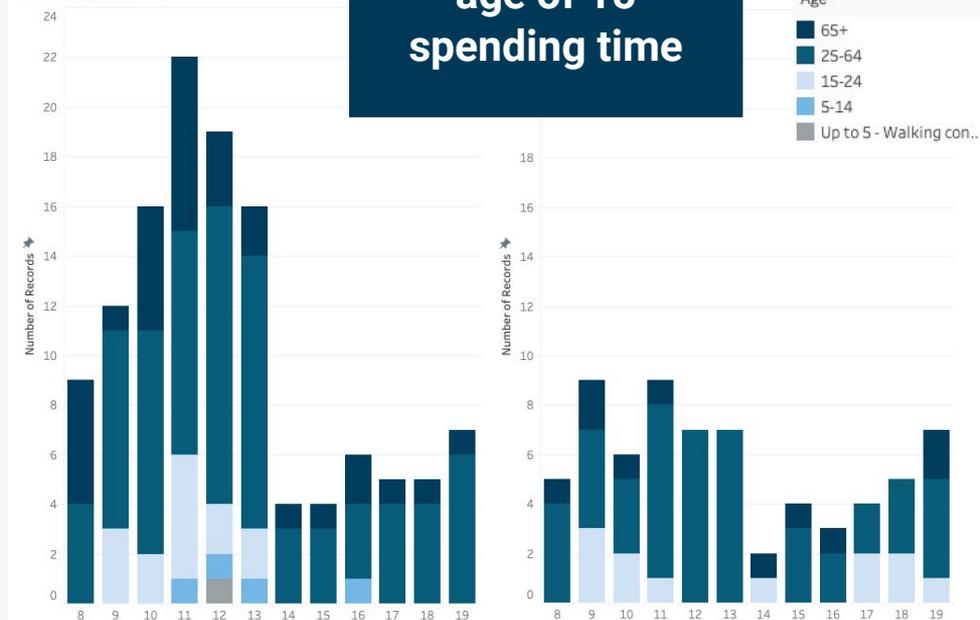
Comparing between movement patterns...

...and people spending time

No one under the age of 15 spending time



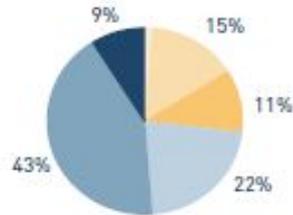
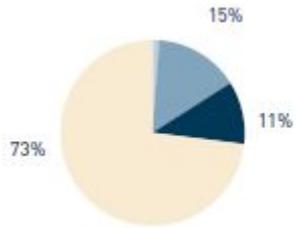
Stationary Age by hour North



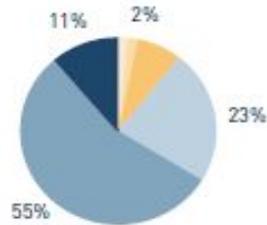
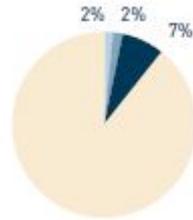
Comparisons between cities

Presence of children

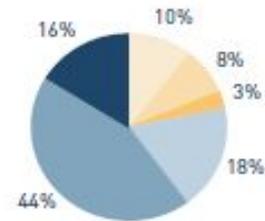
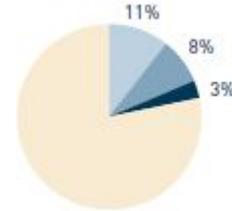
Recife



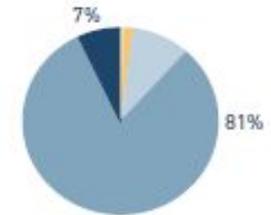
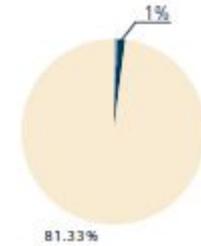
Tirana



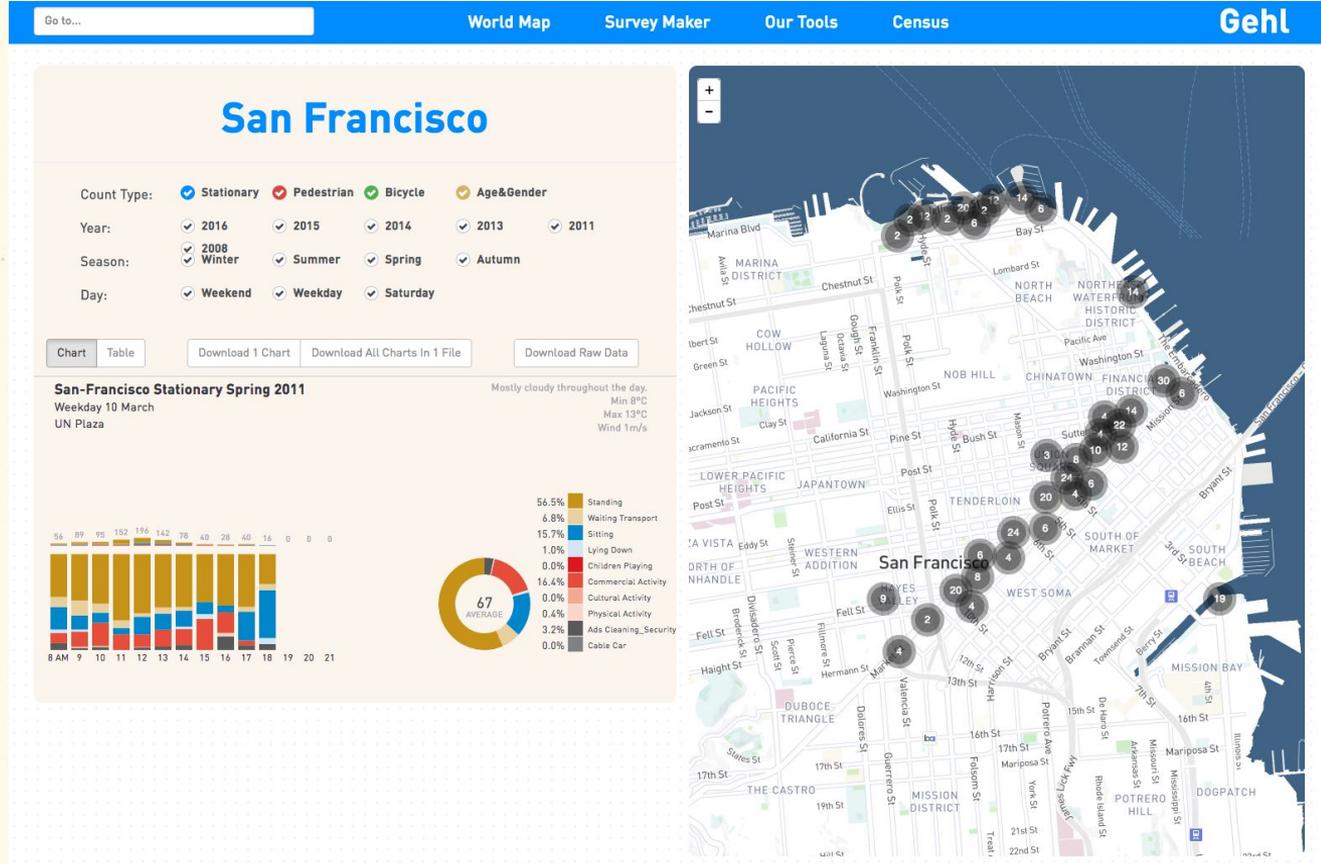
Tel Aviv



Lima



Different roles of public spaces in a city



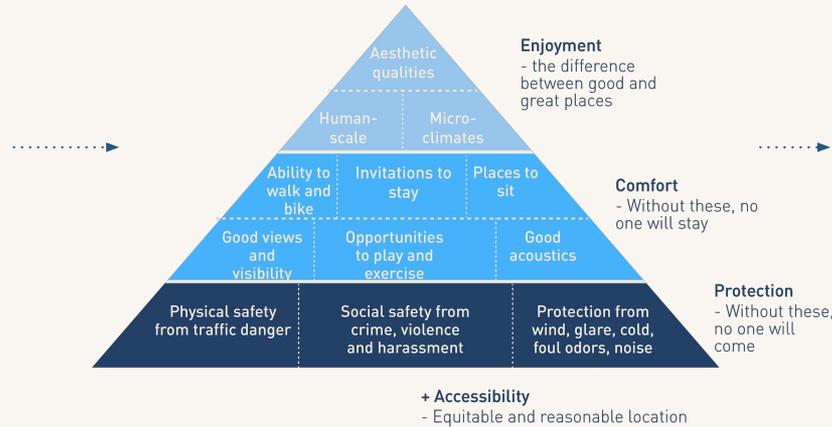
Methods

Amenity Tool



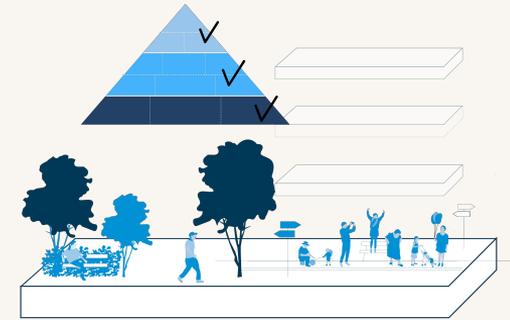
Mapping functions and destinations

Gehl



Hierarchy of spatial qualities

4th layer - What's there: mapping amenities, spatial quality criteria



Quality Criteria

PROTECTION

FEELING SAFE

- Protection against traffic and accidents
- Protection for pedestrians
- Eliminating fear of traffic
 - low speed



FEELING SECURE

- Protection against crime and violence
- Lively public realm
- Eyes on the street
- Overlapping functions day and night
- Good lighting



MICROCLIMATE

- Sun/shade
- Heat/coolness
- Shelter from wind/breeze
- Minimize pollution
- Minimize dust, noise, glare



COMFORT

WALKABLE

- Part of a network
- Links to destinations
- Room for walking
- No obstacles
- Good surfaces
- Accessibility for everyone



SIT & STAY

- Edge effect/attractive zones for standing/staying
- Zones for sitting and resting
- Good places to sit with view, sun, people



SEEING

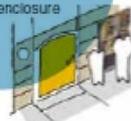
- Easy orientation
- Reasonable viewing distances
- Unhindered views
- Orientation at night



ENJOYMENT

HUMAN SCALE

- Buildings and spaces designed to human scale
- Dimensions and detailing that stimulate our senses
- Spatial enclosure



IDENTITY

- History
- Sense of place
- Local identity
- Amenity values



SENSES

- Good design and detailing
- Good materials
- Fine views
- Trees, plants, water

**Some learnings from
working with food & the
public realm**

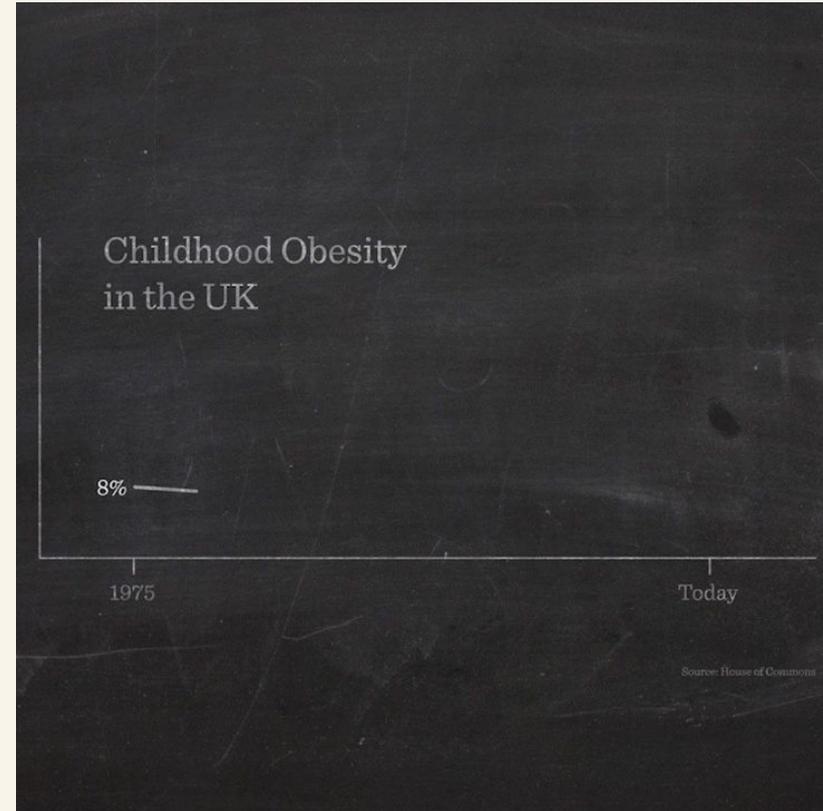


**Food problems
aren't always about
the food**

Tackling childhood obesity through design

Big Data

Childhood obesity is on the rise in the UK in some of the least deprived communities. Camberwell, South London has a **52%** childhood obesity level for youth 10-12 years old.

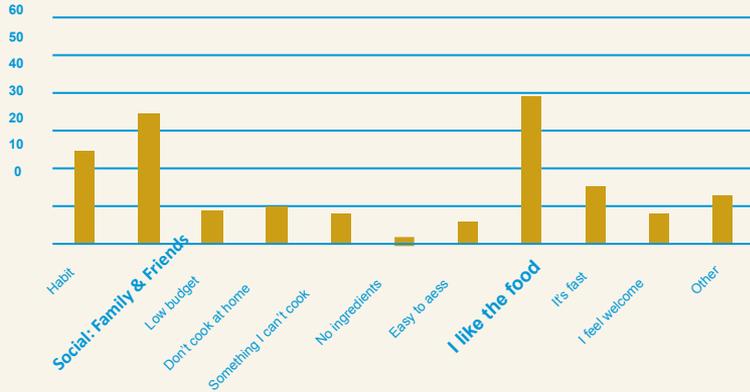


Listening to youth

By interviewing and spending time with youth in Camberwell,
We learned that food behavior is not always about the food.

This type of data is “Thick Data”

What are your top three reasons for eating out?



Observing youth

Thick Data

We learned that food behavior is not always about the food.

Young people eat in fast food restaurants to be social, and often because they have nowhere else to go.

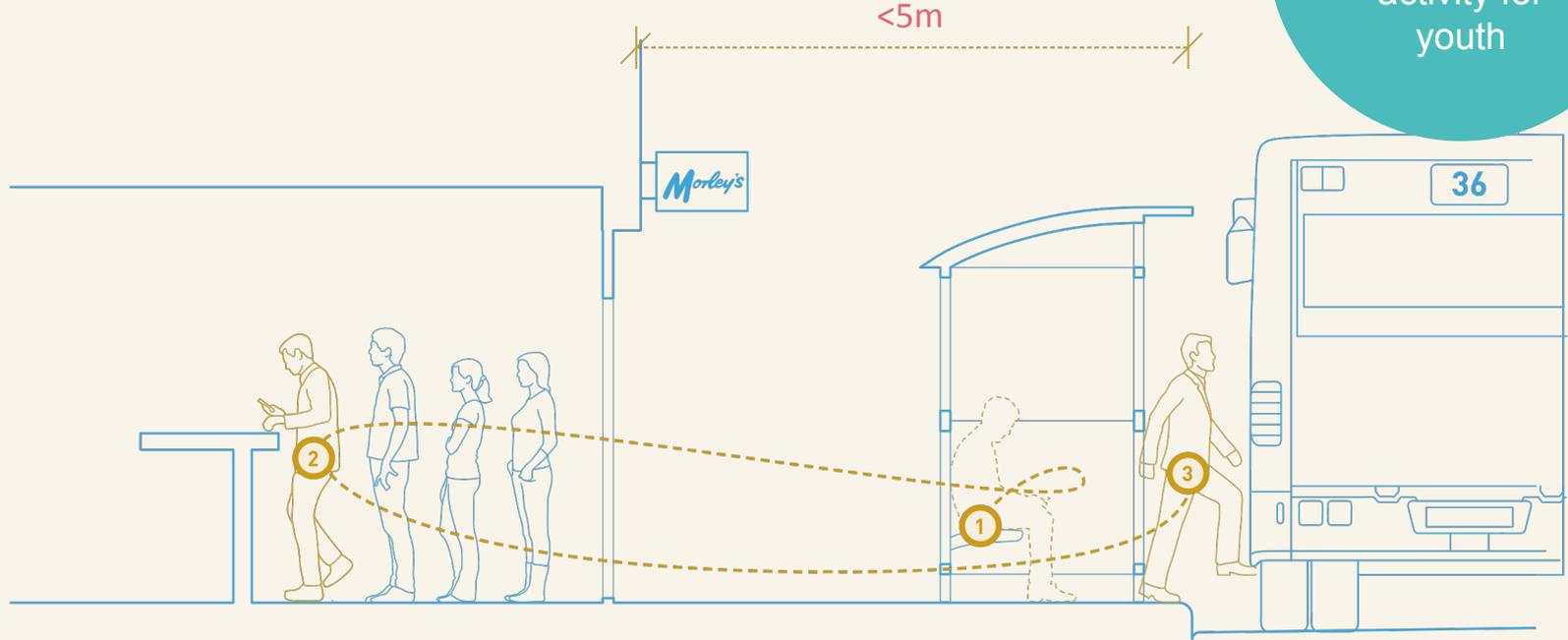
Fast food places create inviting places for you and some pay a premium to be located at bus stops

Bus stops are becoming an extension of unhealthy eating habits



Fast food follows transit lines

Waiting for transport is the dominant activity for youth



Transportation plays an important role in childhood obesity



The Bermuda Triangle of Health



Super Stops

Framework for Public Life

Key Finding

Transit stops are contested and act as an extension of fast food locations.

Principles

- A. Blending the edge of the stop with public spaces.**
- B. Infilling leftover space with new options.**
- C. Creating inviting waiting spaces for different user groups.**





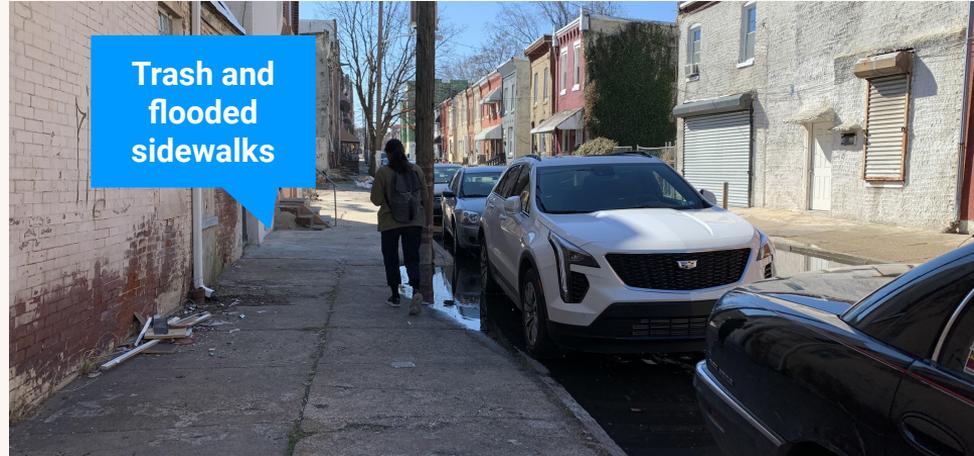
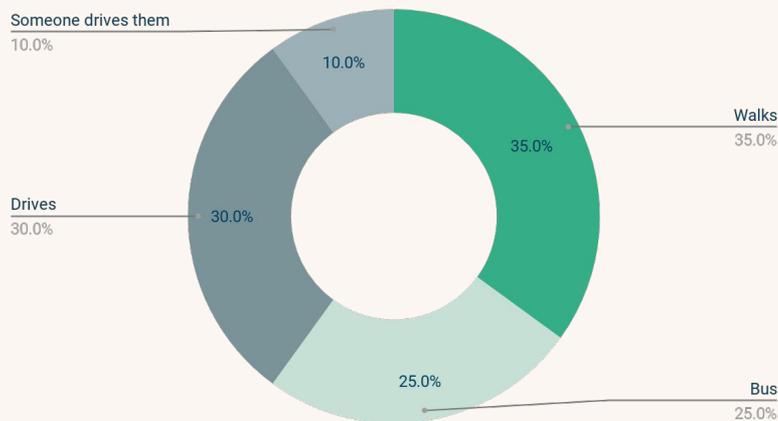
Public realm barriers are food access barriers

Super markets
that have fresh
produce are far
away from where
people live

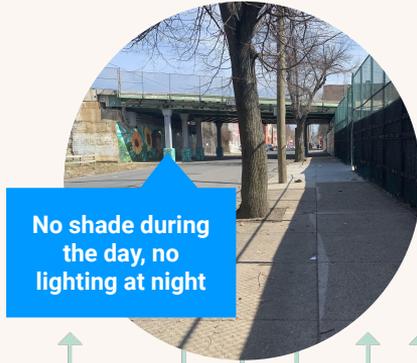
Only about 19% of
residents are in a
walkable distance to
a grocery store in
the neighborhood



Most people walk or take the bus to find their groceries, but the public realm is harsh and uninviting



Urban quality makes it challenging to access the food people want



Assumed time from subway to supermarket
18 min

Actual time from subway to supermarket
23 mins

M



Cousin's Supermarket

Built on decades of understanding,
the **Gehl Lens** uses data,
thick and thin,
making **meaningful stories** from thorough
human-centered research.

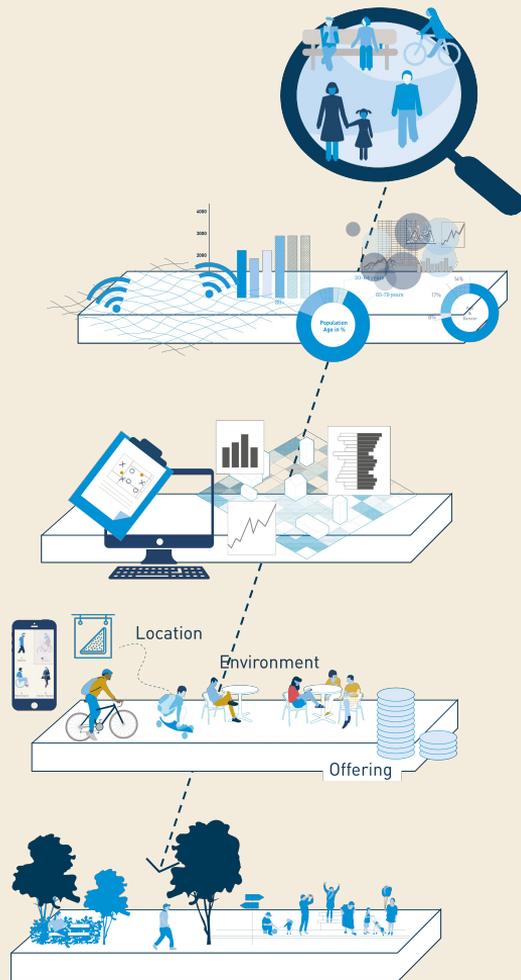
Lived experience
from eye-level

Big Data

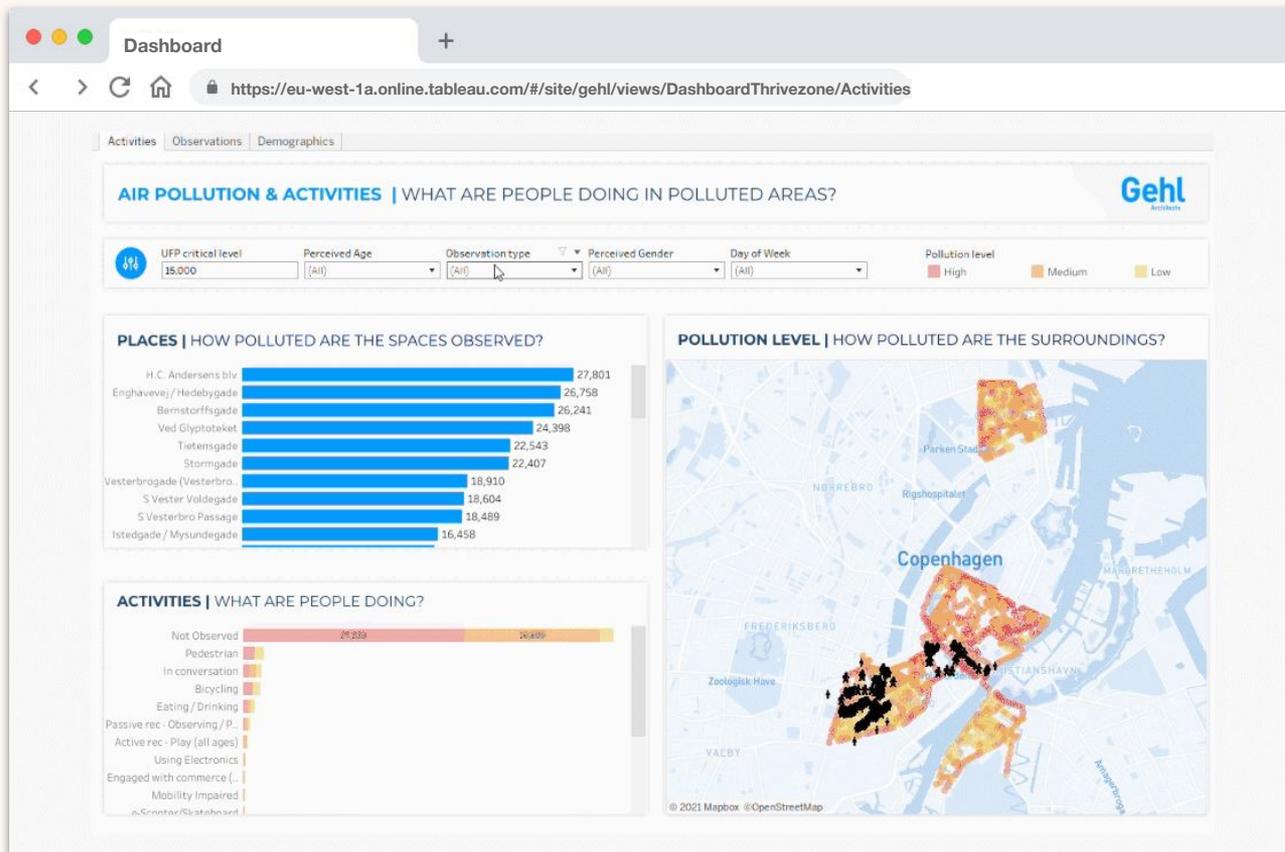
Online surveys

Neighborhood life

Socio-demographic
data and market
research



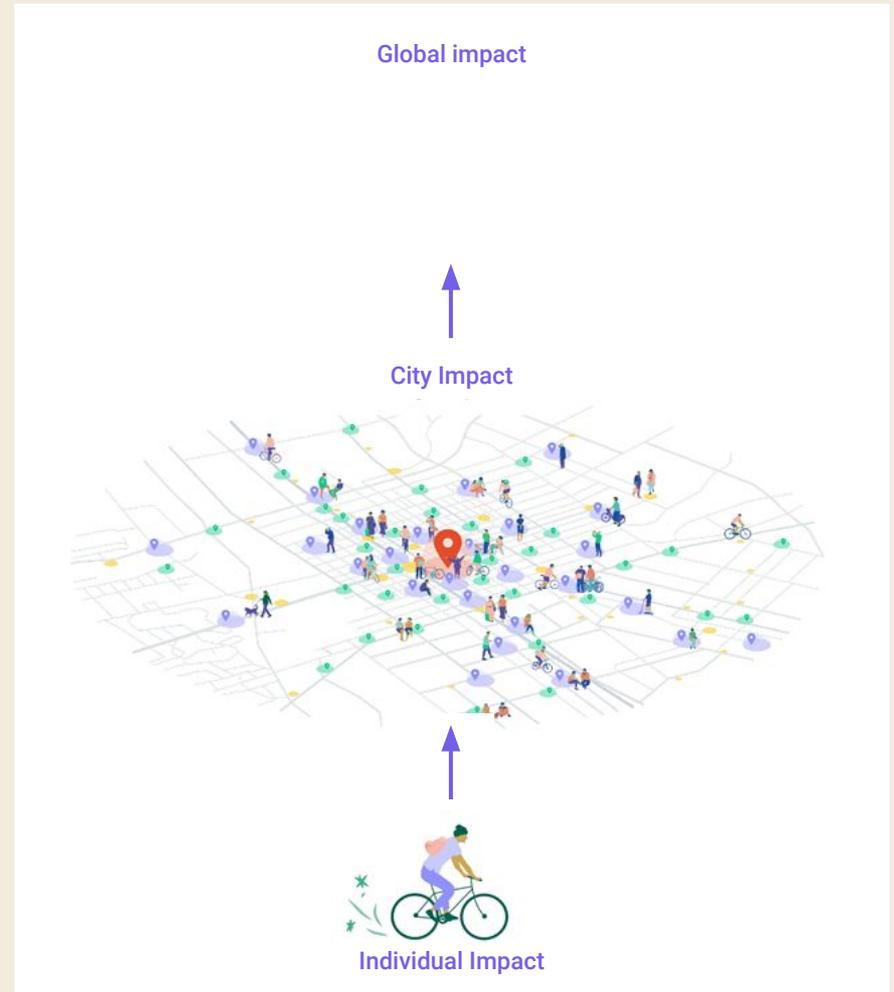
Air pollution and childhood development



Google Air View data
collected over 1.5 years

Lived Experience data
collected using Gehl Lens

Individual impact, City Impact, Global impact





Thank
you!