



# Impact of Asphalt Art on Public Space Activation: Kessariani, Greece

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For Bloomberg Philanthropies  
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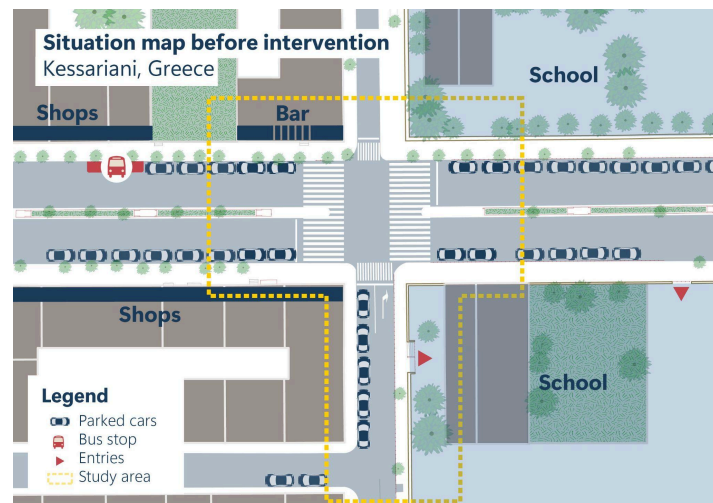
## Kessariani, Greece - Enhancing mobility with safe, new pedestrian space

The intervention area is located at the intersection of two distinctive axes in the urban area of Kessariani, on the gateway to Athens, Greece. One axis, Leof. Eth. Antistaseos, is a busy street with two lanes in each direction, heavy traffic, and public transportation. The other, Filadelfias Street, has a more urban character, featuring schools, a senior center, and two large green spaces. The contrast between these two urban environments makes the intersection both a focal point and a key transition area for the community.

On the southern side of Filadelfias Street, the sidewalks were narrow and difficult to navigate due to obstacles such as broken tiles and trees, leading pedestrians to often walk in the road. Ground-floor uses around the intersection include a coffee bar, two schools, and a closed store.

### Aim of the project

The primary objective of the asphalt art project was to enhance road safety and prioritize pedestrian movement. The initiative specifically aims to benefit children and the elderly, who are frequent users of the area. Additionally, the project seeks to improve overall pedestrian and active mobility by creating a shared space, establishing a safe route between the parks and community landmarks, and providing a waiting area in front of the school for children and parents.



### Community engagement

More than 100 people, residents (adults, elderly and children) and visitors of the area were actively engaged during the design process, installation days, and outreach events.

### Artwork

Colouring on the ground, redefining the layout of the intersection: crosswalks have been narrowed by sidewalk widenings protected by bollards. Seating and plants were also added to the new spaces in front of the school.

### Organisations involved

- Municipality of Kessariani, Local government and site owner
- Municipal Public Benefit Enterprise of Kessariani, Fiscal agent
- STIPO Greece, Team for better cities, Project Management & Artistic Curation
- EPLO, Circular Economy and Climate Institute, Mobility Consulting
- Antonia Michalakakou, Artist

**Size:** 304 M2

**Date:** 30 May-9 June 2023; 10th June Festival day

## The measurements

Since the main target group were mainly children from neighbouring school, the measurements took place on weekdays, at the beginning of school hours and during the afternoon break. The before measurements were held in the beginning of May, and the after measurements in mid-September, approximately three months after the implementation. On all occasions it never rained, but during the after measurements the temperature was significantly high, 32°C, much higher than in May.

The maps summarize conditions before and after the asphalt art intervention, and detailed tables on the number of people, activities, group sizes, and dwell time are provided below.

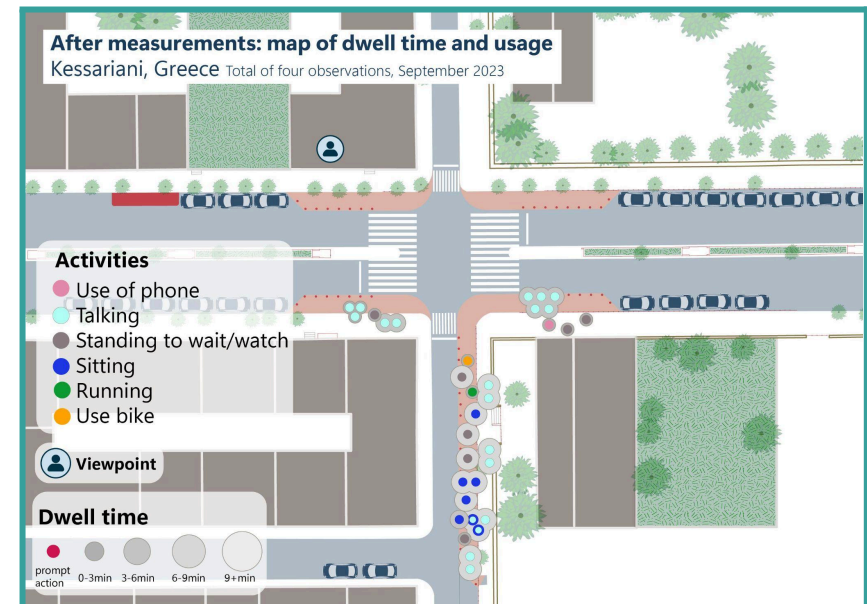
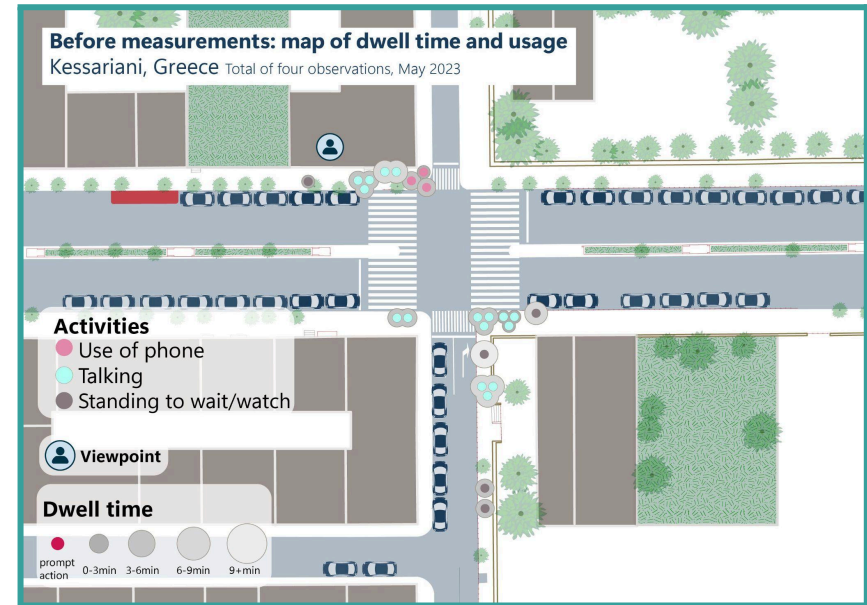
	Date	Counting times	Observation Times	Weather
Before	08.05.2023	08.00-08.15	12.30-12.50	Sunny, 17-21°
		13.15-13.30	13.30-13.50	Sunny, 21°
	09.05.2023	08.00-08.15	12.30-12.50	Cloudy, 16°
		13.15-13.30	13.30-13.50	Cloudy, 16-18°
	User survey responses			
After	14.09.2023	08.00-08.15	12.30-12.50	Sunny, 21-29°
		13.15-13.30	13.30-13.50	Cloudy, 23°
	15.09.2023	08.00-08.15	12.30-12.50	Sunny, 23-29°
		13.15-13.30	13.30-13.50	Sunny, 32°
	User survey responses			

### Before implementation

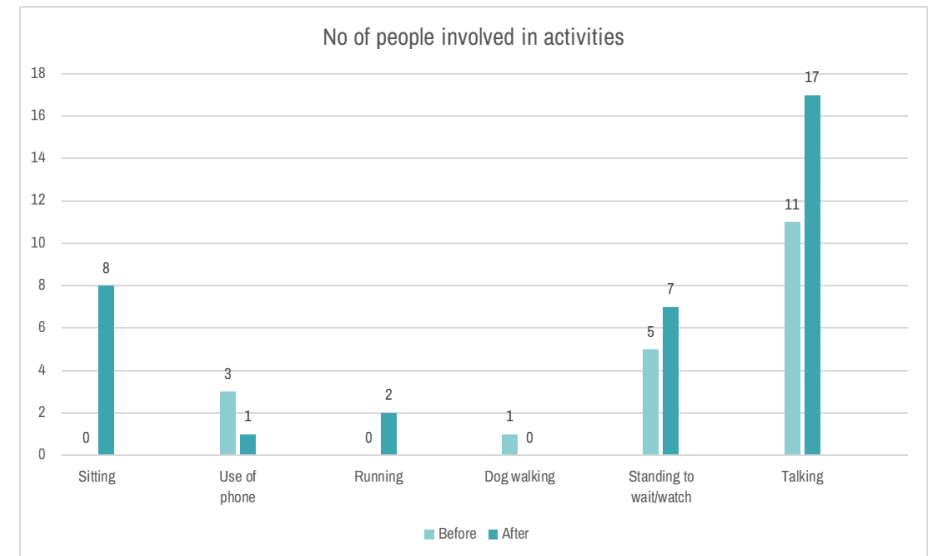
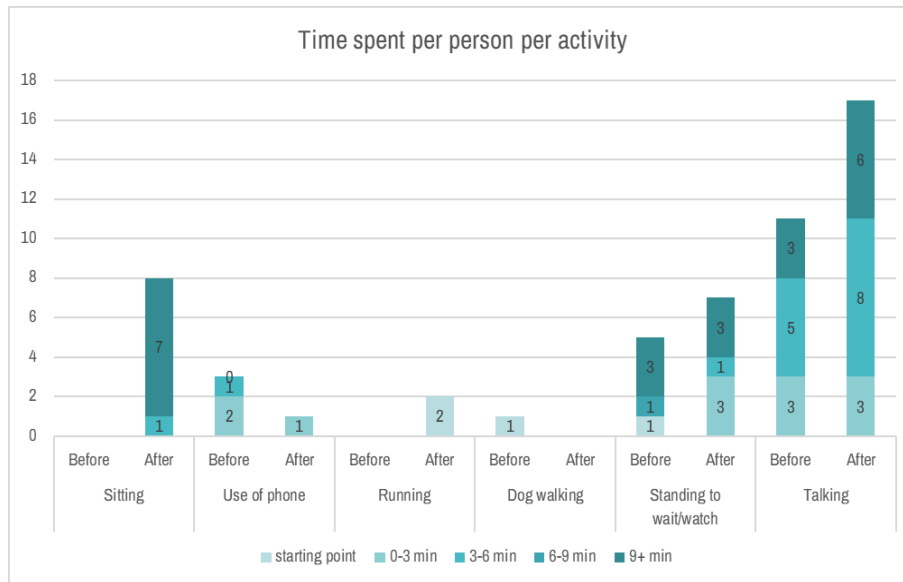
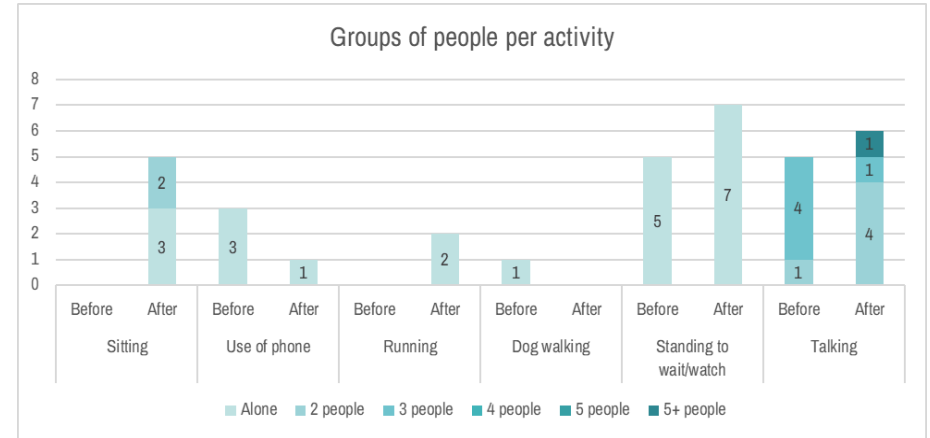
Before the asphalt art intervention, the narrow pavements were not used by many people. People were waiting for their children to get out of school in front of the coffee bar on the opposite street corner. Only a couple of people used the narrow pavements near the school entrance. There were no opportunities to sit in the area. We counted 513 pedestrians passing by.

### After implementation

The additional pedestrian area—an important outcome of the asphalt art intervention—enabled new uses of the area in front of the school and the pavement leading to the school. Parents now moved closer to the school entrance, and the added seating in the shadow, surrounded by plants, led to an increase in both the number of people sitting and talking and the time they spent doing so. After the intervention, we counted 471 pedestrians passing through, 47 fewer than before. This decrease may be attributed to higher temperatures. Despite the overall drop in pedestrian numbers, the number of teenagers passing through the area increased by nearly 50%, from 58 before to 103 after the intervention.



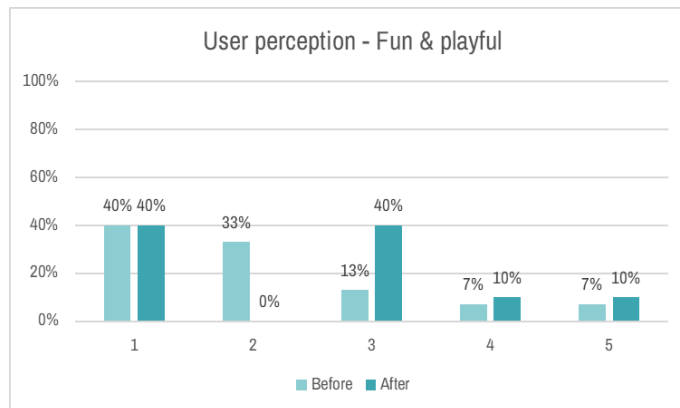
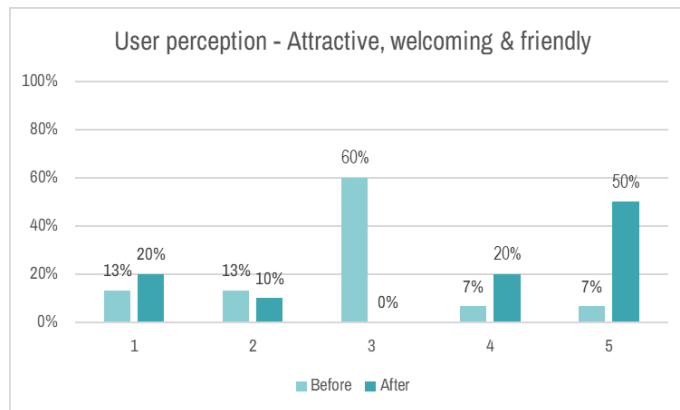
**“A very beautiful intervention for both parents and children, please keep going”** a resident



## People's perception

Few people were willing to complete the user survey. Of approximately 60 users approached, only 15 participated before the intervention and 10 afterward. Among those who responded, 86% rated the area's attractiveness as below average before the intervention. After the intervention, this shifted, with 70% rating it above average. While many users did not initially perceive the area as fun or playful, 60% rated it above average following the implementation.

We also observed that people who were aware of the project from the start were more likely to respect the artwork. In contrast, newcomers to the area—those who were not involved from the beginning—were less likely to do so and, for example, sometimes parked their motorcycles on the artwork.



## Fun Facts

Neighbors across the street have taken responsibility for caring for the plants installed in the area, demonstrating a sense of responsibility and co-ownership. This is a key principle in placemaking, as people with a stronger attachment to a space tend to take better care of it.

The school traffic warden reported that the children feel safer and often express joy at the colorful asphalt. Additionally, the café owner on one corner of the intersection actively ensures that motorcyclists do not park on the painted pavements.

**“Children from other schools in the district have asked to repeat this implementation outside their schools as well.”**

Marios Kibelis, Deputy Mayor of Education, Civil Protection, Tourism and Ecology - Municipality of Kessariani

## Final assessment Kessariani

Although the observed area was limited in size, the asphalt art in Kessariani has improved the sociability of the area in front of the school. We suspect that the asphalt art invention and widening the pavement in combination with the added seating opportunities in the shade, attracted people from the nearby cafe to wait closer to the school entrance. And while waiting, the parents started to socialise.

1. The amount of parents sitting, standing and talking, while waiting for their children near the school entrance increased from 16 to 32. (+75%)
2. A rise in average dwell time after the artwork was implemented (+17%), with people spending more time sitting (from 0 → 8.4 min) and talking (from 4.9 → 5.6 min).
3. The new pedestrian space near a school doubled the amount of waiting parents who socialized with each other. The ratio of people in groups vs waiting alone increased by 385%.
4. Despite the decrease in the total number of pedestrians, we counted an almost 50% increase in the number of teenagers passing by (58 before, and 103 after). This is a notable difference that may be explained by unknown external factors, but the painted public space might have had a positive influence.