GAINING CITIZEN SPACE, AN EXAMPLE IN TIMES SQUARE (NEW YORK)

Posted on 12/04/2010 by Naider

Green Light for Midtown is a pedestrianization project started in May 2009 (here the initial project presentation) which has generated new areas closed to traffic in New York, specifically on Broadway at its intersection with Times Square and Herald Square, complemented by another series of measures to improve traffic safety on the same street from Columbus Circle to Madison Square. Because these are such emblematic areas, the project has received a lot of attention and support, although it has also received the well-known criticism from those who fear that hindering road traffic in the city could pose a problem for the functioning of the city, criticism from even himself< a href="http://www.nysenate.gov/news/expressing-concerns-about-dots-green-light-midtown-project " target="_blank" rel="noopener">district representative for the State of New York, thus opposing the determination of MayorBloomberg. Here are some pictures of before and after the intervention

However, for this intervention it has scored several successes , both analyzed by the Department of Transportation itself (the report evaluation report can be downloaded here) as by the Times Square Alliance; among these successes is the reduction in the accident rate of both pedestrians and vehicles, while traffic in the area has been streamlined -contrary to what is usually said of this type of action-, the increase in the influx of people being also important to the area and the social acceptance of the project. The success has led to continuing to generate new ideas through the project reNEWable Times Square: Designing Temporary Surface Treatments, aimed at temporarily exploring possibilities for the reactivation of urban space in the Times Square area.
A video from the City Department of Transport allows us to see the type of micro actions and the figures for improvement in safety and even in travel times by wheeled vehicle.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=BEFRL_NxOJg

I was in New York in December 2009 and I already knew that some corners of Times Square were being pedestrianized; For some, limiting the presence of cars in this area known precisely for its hustle and bustle, its noise, and its yellow taxis, meant losing the expected typical New York postcard. A matter of taste (or ideology), but the fact is that it seemed to me a great success, although I cannot compare it with the previous situation. It seemed to me an intelligent way of gaining land for open use without interfering with traffic and of ordering an occupation of the space by pedestrians that already occurs in fact given the intense use of the street in this confluence of the city. And, in this sense, it is an intervention that may be closer to those of the