

# SLOW STREETS NETWORK

September 2020

GZIRA



This document has been authored by studjurban and Studio Tom Van Malderen on behalf of the Local Councils' Association Malta.

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Slow Streets is a project of the Local Councils' Association's Resident First vision 2024. Follow Resident First on <https://www.facebook.com/ResidentFirst>

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Streets in Malta are mostly dedicated for vehicles, including local streets which should encourage a greater pedestrian activity. Vehicles also travel at relatively high speeds, causing safety concerns for residents and other street users. At the same time, the average width of pavements is, at best, 1m – too narrow to allow two people to pass each other comfortably, or for wheelchair users to be able to navigate along a pavement, or even for an individual to pass by with a stroller. As a result, people are forced to be in close proximity with passing vehicles, risking walking, running, scooting, or cycling in the street next to speeding cars. This is a street safety issue, as well as a public health issue, in the light of the new social distancing guidelines.

## What is the Slow Streets initiative?

Slow Streets is a pioneering initiative in Malta and Gozo geared towards giving back streets to the people rather than cars, focusing primarily on residents' wellbeing. The Local Councils' Association, in partnership with Transport Malta and the Planning Authority, is collaborating on this action plan in order to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists by promoting walking, cycling and better accessibility to public transport networks. These new strategies will plan to ensure that mobility within localities is safe, sustainable, healthy and efficient, in addition to providing more public open space that contributes to an elevated quality of life.



The initiative focuses on strategies of traffic calming and management. In addition, each Local Council will study the degree of pedestrianisation it should implement according to the locality's street network and the needs of its residents, whether temporarily or permanently. Slow Streets provides residents with an opportunity to experience their neighbourhoods in a new way, as a number of safe walking corridors will connect civic landmarks, medical facilities and other important services. This includes linking cycling priority routes and temporarily designated streets converted into creative play areas for children to enjoy safely.

In Malta, streets are the primary public spaces, used daily by everyone. In order to improve the liveability of our localities, therefore, we need to start from our streets. Having pedestrian-friendly streets implies greater, equitable access to the outdoors, active transportation, opportunities to exercise, and the support of both physical and mental health.





## Who are Slow Streets for?

At the heart of Slow Streets lies the local community and the need for better well-being for all residents. The ultimate objective is to make streets more welcoming and accessible to people of all ages, who want to travel on foot, by bicycle, wheelchair, scooter, or skateboard. In particular, there is special consideration for the needs of the elderly and physically disabled.

## How do Slow Streets work?

The Slow Streets programme is designed to limit through traffic on certain residential streets so as to allow such streets to be used more as shared spaces. 'Through traffic' is vehicular traffic which passes through a particular locality or area, rather than stopping there, solely in order to arrive at another destination.

Simple tools such as signage, floor markings and cones will be used to slow down speeds and block roads, either temporarily or permanently, to improve safety for people who want to walk or cycle. This type of intervention is commonly referred to as 'tactical urbanism'. Access to private driveways/garages and loading and unloading of goods will be maintained for residents and businesses respectively, with better management schemes, as well as access for emergency and service vehicles as required.

Different degrees of interventions are subsequently proposed according to findings from comprehensive site analyses and the development of a vision for each street as part of a wider, more extensive, network.



## What is 'tactical urbanism'?

Tactical urbanism involves using temporary materials in order to repurpose places and transform them into more dynamic public spaces, with pedestrian safety as a primary concern. The strategy is a phased approach, with short-term commitment that eventually leads to more permanent solutions.

Such experiments are carried out inexpensively, and with flexibility, in order to assess the potential success of an idea and to enable making adjustments before committing significant capital expenditure. Tactical urbanism can push existing ideas to move closer to implementation in the quickest manner.

Some examples of tactical urbanism strategies are:

- temporary signage and bollards to close off some streets for different uses, such as play streets or the setting up of markets;
- use of planters to define a boundary, especially at important pedestrian entrances;
- use of temporary movable furniture to turn a parking space into public space;
- use of painted markings on pavements to highlight priority for pedestrians; and
- added signage to help minimise through vehicular traffic and prioritise walking and/or cycling.

Selected materials will likely involve some level of trial and error before reaching the optimal design for the particular context. The flexibility of tactical urbanism initiatives provides an opportunity for creative thinking, and is the starting point for real change.

**At the heart of Slow Streets lies the local community and the need for better well-being for all residents.**

**The ultimate objective is to make streets more welcoming and accessible to people of all ages, who want to travel on foot, by bicycle, wheelchair, scooter, or skateboard.**

**The Slow Streets Network is based on this important concept, wherein local streets become primarily focused for local resident access and services, as opposed to through traffic.**

In order to propose a solid strategy for the locality, both desktop and on the ground research was conducted to assess the potential of a Slow Streets network.

The first step of in-depth desktop 'macro' analysis entails studying the locality in terms of transportation networks, main activity zones, development density and the presence of public open spaces. Analysing transportation networks is important to understand the main vehicular and pedestrian routes, in order to be able to identify which roads should be mainly encouraged for vehicular use and, subsequently, which streets may be alleviated, or even liberated, from traffic so as to be prioritised for pedestrians. Over the recent years, there has been significant investment within the arterial and distributor road infrastructure in Malta, which has undergone expansion and upgrading, however it is not being used to its maximum potential. The widening of the arterial and distributor road networks should enable us to relieve the pressure on our local roads, particularly from through traffic.

The strategies of Slow Streets are based on this important concept, wherein local streets become primarily focused for local resident access and services, as opposed to through traffic. Within these strategies, access to public transportation is always being permitted, even within those streets which have been selected to have no (or very limited) access for vehicles, so as to further encourage the public to use buses rather than their private cars.

The main outcome of the desktop analysis is the selection of potential Slow Streets, which together make up a comprehensive network. The selection of streets to be included within this network comprises a critical stage, as it sets the overall strategic vision for the locality. The selected streets undergo further in-depth 'micro' analysis, wherein on-site observations are carried out at different times of day and



for different days of the week, in order to ensure that the selected strategy may be carried out successfully. These observations include:

- pedestrian connectivity (understanding the location and frequency of crossings and pavement continuity);
- other connections, such as stairs or informal/unsurfaced paths;
- solar exposure of the street network (and the amount of shade throughout the day);
- the presence of green or urban open pockets, including front gardens;
- the availability of street furniture;
- ground floor use (for instance, whether commercial or residential);
- the amount and frequency of garage doors and the presence of reserved parking; and
- social behaviour and activity within the urban spaces.

Pavements and roads are further measured on site in order to sketch an accurate section for each of the selected streets. This exercise is crucial for determining the possible intervention within each street, based on the available road space, and taking into account both the activities and characteristics of the street.

All the data is collated and the proposed network is analysed with all the information at hand. The project team goes through this analysis and establishes a vision for the locality – with a prime objective being that of resolving existing problems caused by through traffic and improving the connections to important public spaces – following which, individual street and space interventions are discussed and agreed upon.

The strategy is finally concluded once it may be established that the individual interventions are able to coexist seamlessly, without creating any unwanted repercussions and while further considering potential extensions with neighbouring localities.

## Gzira

Gzira encompasses two large public spaces that act as important nodes, the Gzira Gardens (Gnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa) and the promenade. In addition, Manoel Island provides important potential recreational space, in spite of development being planned for its future. The locality has numerous educational institutions and several iconic civic buildings, such as the Gzira Church and the Orpheum Theatre, which currently is an underutilised asset. Within the locality, away from the waterfront, however, there is a lack of readily available public open spaces and playgrounds.

Gzira's central location, lying in between the localities of Msida and Sliema, results in a number of traffic issues that occur within its local streets, notably resulting from the occurrence of through traffic. Rue D'Argens is particularly used as a transit route into Sliema, in addition to Triq San Albert that is used to access Triq Reggie Miller, causing congestion within Gzira and simultaneously devaluing the quality of its streets for local residents.



# SLOW STREETS LOCALITY

GŻIRA



SLIEMA

SAN ĠWANN

MSIDA

TA' XBIEX



0 100 200 300 400 500M

Resident  
First   
Adventer quality of life



# SLOW STREETS ACTIVITY ZONES

GŻIRA



## LEGEND

- Public open space
- Activity zone

ORPHEUM

FORT MANOEL

EMPIRE STADIUM

TAL-QROQQ  
SPORTS COMPLEX



0 100 200 300 400 500M



# SLOW STREETS DESTINATIONS

GŻIRA



## LEGEND

- Public open space
- Activity zone
- Health centre
- Sports facilities
- Educational centre
- Civic centre
- Religious centre



0 100 200 300 400 500M

ORPHEUM

EMPIRE STADIUM

FORT MANOEL

TAL-QROQQ  
SPORTS COMPLEX

# SLOW STREETS NETWORK

GŻIRA



## LEGEND

- Public open space
- Activity zone
- Health centre
- Sports facilities
- Educational centre
- Civic centre
- Religious centre



0 100 200 300 400 500M

ORPHEUM

EMPIRE STADIUM

TAL-QROQQ  
SPORTS COMPLEX

FORT MANOEL



**“The Lack of resources is no longer an excuse not to act. The idea that action should only be taken after all the answers and the resources have been found is a sure recipe for paralysis. The planning of a city is a process that allows for corrections; it is supremely arrogant to believe that planning can be done only after every possible variable has been controlled.”**

**Jaime Lerner**  
Architect, urbanist, former mayor of Curitiba,  
Brazil, winner of the Global Sustainable City  
Award

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Type of Interventions

Slow streets level 1 - signage & branding  
Slow streets level 2 - re-routing  
Slow streets level 3 - tactical urbanism  
Slow streets level 4 - reconfiguration  
Slow Paths  
Play Streets  
Extensions

## Cycling

## Gzira Interventions

## Phasing Strategy



## Types of Interventions

The interventions that are envisaged to take place on different streets have been collated into the following four levels:

**Level 1 - signage & branding** refers to interventions such as signage, branding measures and basic floor marking that emphasise the slowing down of vehicular traffic, without altering the nature of the street. Level 1 has been applied to streets that contribute to the formation of a continuous network.

**Level 2 - re-routing** entails traffic management measures such as the introduction of dead ends and access-only to local traffic, rerouting and converting two-way streets to one-way routes. Such actions are critical in order to allocate more space for pedestrian or cycling use. At the same time, as discussed earlier, traffic management is also crucial to encourage drivers to use the arterial and distributor roads rather than the local roads, enabling faster access across localities. The shift of vehicles onto the main infrastructural routes would free up local roads from unnecessary traffic, and resultant congestion, allowing more people to use the streets and resulting in less noise and air pollution for residents.



**Level 3 - tactical urbanism** mainly refers to tactical urbanism initiatives, defined previously, within a specific area, focusing particularly on traffic intersections and pedestrian crossings. These markings first highlight the need to prioritise pedestrians and their safety, which eventually might lead to a more permanent infrastructural change, such as raised crossings and wider pavements. The paint markings may also introduce colour and/or artistic flair to the area, potentially contributing to a greater sense of place and local identity.





# IMPLEMENTATION

which establishes a width of 3.7m as required for access by a fire tender, which is the largest emergency vehicle that should be able to access the road safely. In this regard, therefore, roads that are wider than this standard and that are considered to provide important pedestrian routes therein, are being reconfigured to this width.

In many cases, a number of the above strategies are combined together in order to achieve a bigger impact.



**Level 4 – reconfiguration** refers to the most substantial intervention which is the reconfiguration of the street section. As explained earlier, streets have been studied and measured on site, in order to assess whether more space may be allocated to pedestrians (extending beyond existing pavements), cycling lanes and/or greening initiatives (such as the introduction of planters). The designation of vehicular space is based on the Planning Authority’s Development Control Design Policy, Guidance and Standards 2015 (DC15) Standard S1 (Vehicular Access Width Standards),



**‘Slow paths’** comprise another specific typology of Slow Streets (although the two names may seem similar, it must be clarified that ‘slow paths’ is not another term for ‘slow streets’). Slow paths refer to a designated slow section of the road, when intervening on the entire street is not possible. This is often used in larger roads where slower-moving, more localised/dedicated slip roads or dedicated bus lanes are available, and where priority for pedestrians and cyclists is often not considered.





## Play streets – programming

Programmes and cultural activities are important for the success of play streets. They bring together the local community and give residents a sense of ownership of their neighbourhoods. Different festivals and activities attract a broad audience, expanding the circle of participants. They can vary from art and music activities to the organisation of games and fitness classes, or a combination of more than one activity. Preparation for such interactive activities may further occur with the active, hands-on, involvement of residents, which increases their sense of belonging and ownership of the public space (for example, helping with road painting, or further embellishing the streets with their own plants).

■ ■ **Extensions** The last type of intervention refers to ‘extensions’ with adjacent localities and/or within the same locality. These links are important as they represent the future potential expansion of the network, resulting in even better connectivity for local and /or neighbouring residents. Such expansion may involve the need for infrastructure upgrading, and could be scope for future local council projects.



■ **‘Play streets’** are a type of intervention where local roads are closed off to cars temporarily, for example on weekends, so that they can be transformed into places where neighbours of all ages may gather around together and play freely. Children may use skates, bicycles, and movable playgrounds may be set up while adults may play cards, chess or simply watch their children in a safe environment. Play streets can occur on a regular basis (for instance, weekly or monthly), and may constitute an important part of daily life for the local community because they:

- give children more opportunities to play in a safe space close to their homes;
- provide a chance for residents to come together and for everyone to get to know their neighbours; and
- help residents to be more physically active and healthier.





# SLOW STREETS NETWORK

GŽIRA



0 100 200 300 400 500M

Resident  
First   
Adventer quality of life

# SLOW STREETS INTERVENTION

GŽIRA



## LEGEND

- Slow street level 1 signage & branding
- Slow street level 2 rerouting/repurposing
- Slow street level 3 tactical urbanism
- Slow street level 4 reconfiguration
- Slow path
- Play street
- Extension



0 100 200 300 400 500M



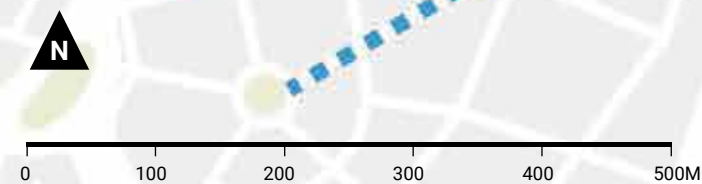
# SLOW STREETS INTERVENTION

GŽIRA



## LEGEND

- Public open space
- Activity zone
- Health centre
- Sports facilities
- Educational centre
- Civic centre
- Religious centre
- Slow street level 1 signage & branding
- Slow street level 2 rerouting/repurposing
- Slow street level 3 tactical urbanism
- Slow street level 4 reconfiguration
- Slow path
- Play street
- Extension





## Cycling

Cycling lanes form an integral part of the Slow Streets network and their inclusion within the interventions discussed above has been a core objective. Providing opportunities for alternative modes of transport may contribute to the decongestion of vehicular traffic and therefore provide more opportunities for space.

According to the Bike Advocacy Group, the solution to traffic congestion is having more people cycle. Since the average distance of a typical journey travelled in Malta is 5km, cycling is the fastest and cleanest mode of transport, especially when taking into account how much time car drivers spend looking for parking. Bicycles also occupy much less space which decongest roads and crossings, and decrease the need for parking space.

This is further reflected in the words of Transport Malta's National Cycling Strategy (2018, p.46): 'The promotion of cycling as an alternative mode of transport is considered to be an essential part of any scheme or strategy to promote sustainable mobility through which transport authorities can address traffic congestion, improve accessibility, promote personal health, reduce air pollution as well as contribute towards lower greenhouse gas emissions, all of which are attributes necessary to improve the quality of life of any community.'

Providing quality cycle networks creates more accessible neighbourhoods, which in turn increases social relations and benefits the wellbeing of the entire community.



Cycle paths therefore improve both the connectivity and the overall liveability in localities. The real added value of cycling is experienced through a combination of all environmental, social and health benefits combined.

In the Slow Streets interventions, designated cycling lanes have been considered within important connecting routes, especially if there is the opportunity to reroute traffic and create one-way routes so as to allocate the remaining space for bicycle lanes and pedestrian space. In the proposed scheme, both pedestrian and cyclist connections have been given due importance. Naturally, every street case is different depending on its physical features; however, when possible, barriers (such as cones or planters) are further proposed to provide increased cyclist safety, or parallel parking has been shifted such that pedestrians and cyclists may be protected by the parked cars.

In narrower streets characterised by less space, signage is being proposed to slow down cars and raise the awareness of shared space with cyclists. These streets are included within the Level 1 interventions discussed previously.

The Slow Streets initiative lays the groundwork for future strategic locality plans, wherein the urban cores and important public spaces may be freed from car traffic and instead used by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.






# SLOW STREETS CYCLING NETWORK

GŽIRA



## LEGEND

-  Shared road, clear signage and reduced speed
-  Dedicated cycling lane
-  Extension



0 100 200 300 400 500M





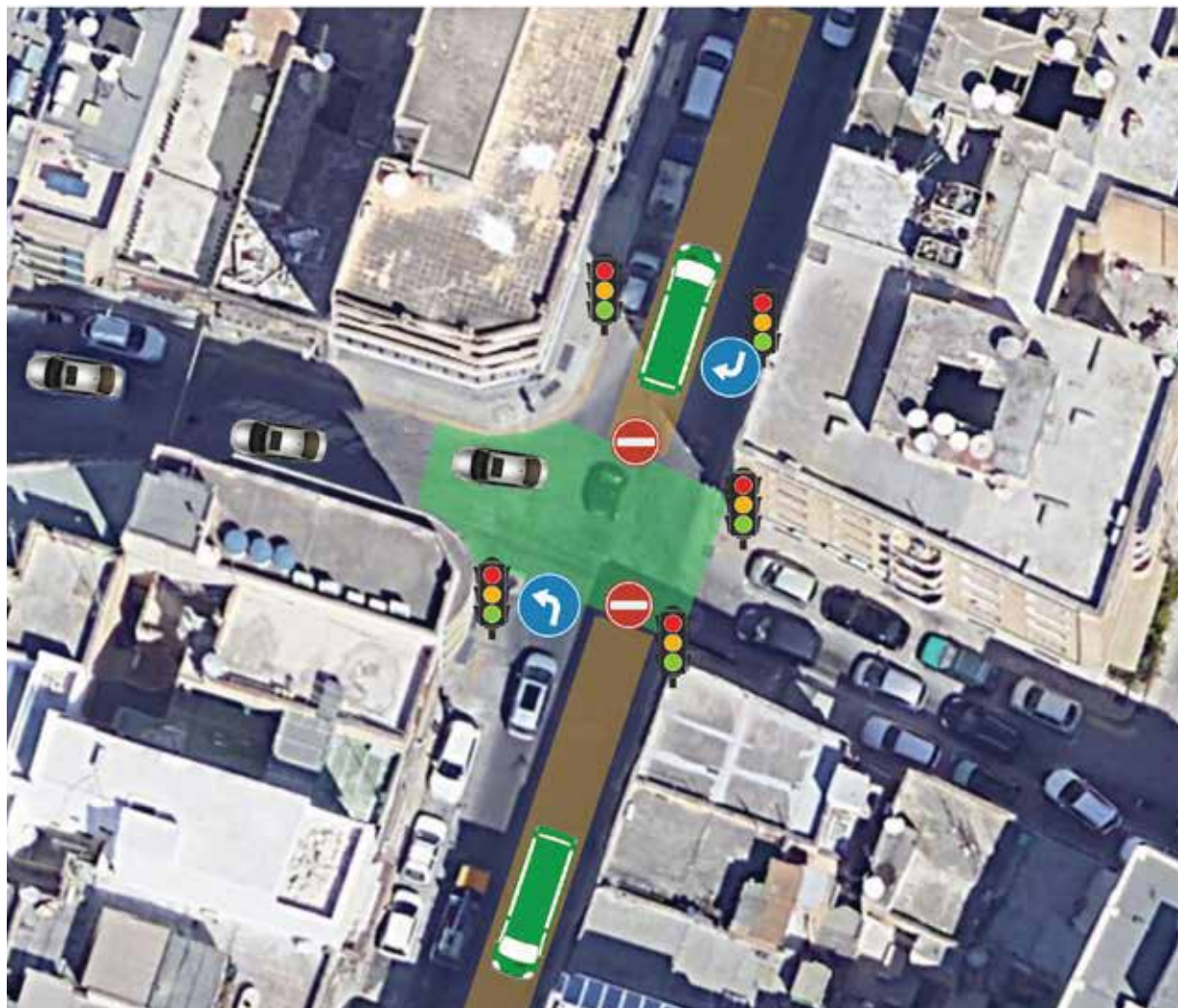
## Gzira Interventions

The Slow Streets route encompasses various interventions that were decided upon based on the individual nature of the streets and the need to resolve particular traffic issues within the locality.

Notably, the strategy for Gzira comprises a number of re-routing interventions within the local street network that centre on the need for better traffic management so as to deter drivers from driving through the locality to only access Sliema and instead encourage them to use the arterial road infrastructure.

### Intervention 1

#### Rue D'Argens: Level 4



Rue D'Argens is a main connecting route between Msida, Gzira and Sliema. It is currently mostly used as a transit road from Msida to Sliema, causing congestion within local streets. In order to revert the flow of traffic to the arterial road network located close by, the intervention proposes that car access be restricted until the intersection with Triq Tas-Sliema. Cars either coming from Msida or down from Sliema would have to exit via Triq Tas-Sliema, while only buses and bicycles would be allowed to continue straight through Rue d'Argens. In this manner, the lanes would be designated as shared bus/bicycle, marked in a different and characteristic colour, which could also be shared with pedestrians when the pavement becomes too narrow.

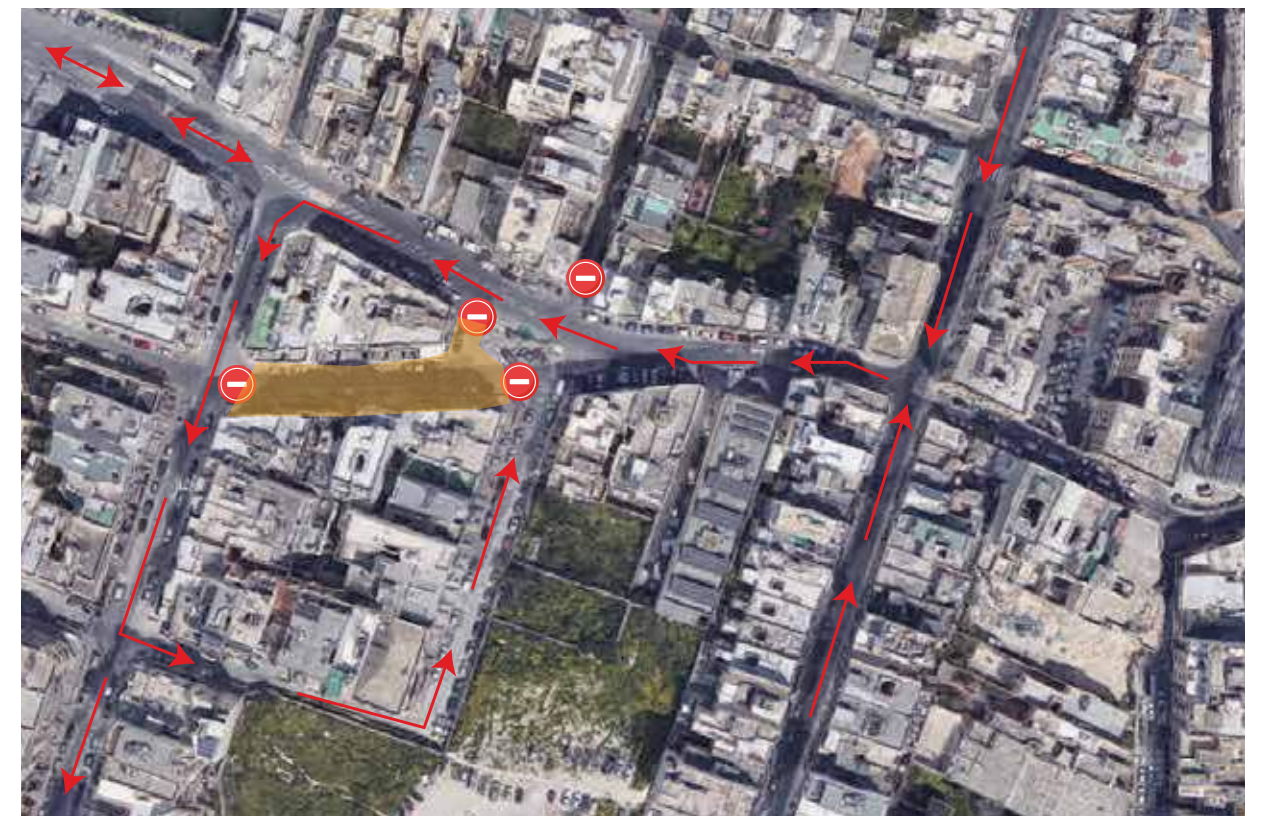




## Intervention 2

### Triq Tas-Sliema: Level 4

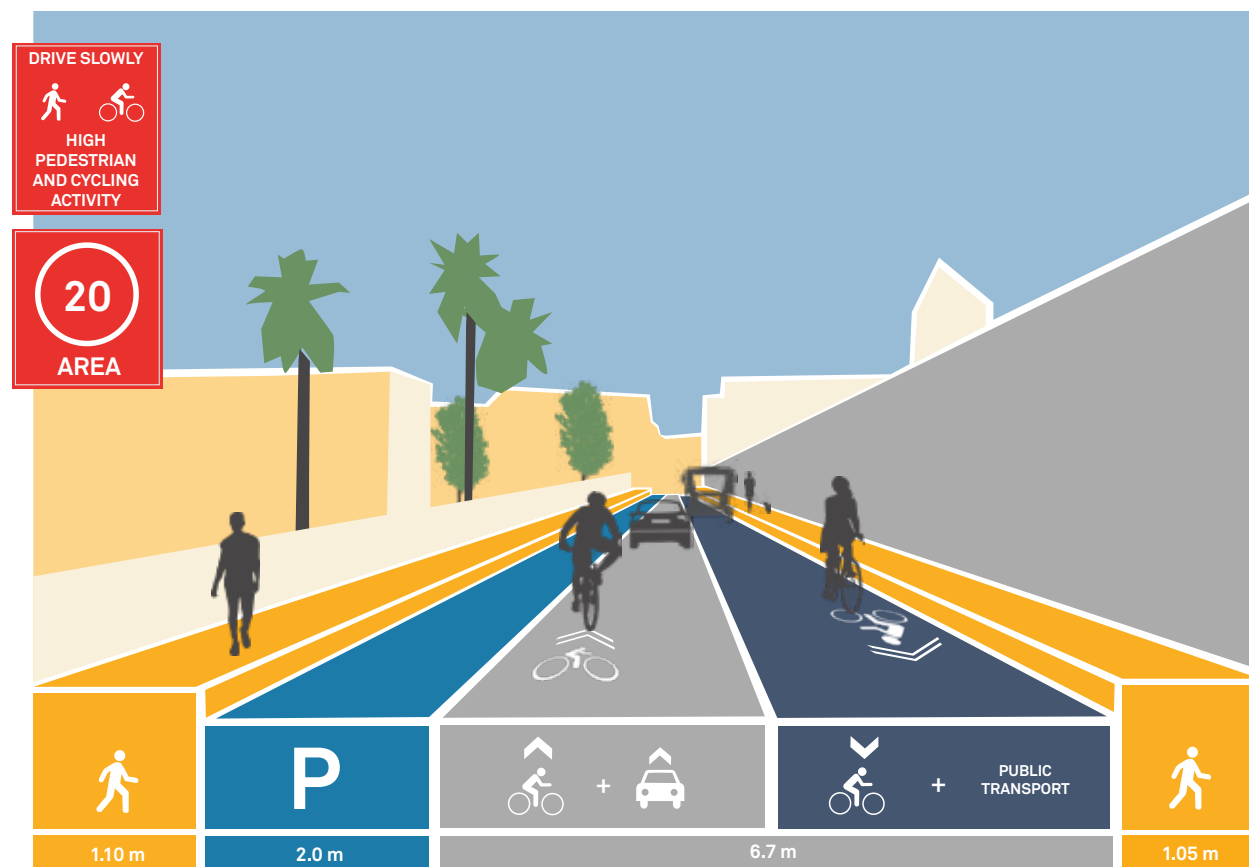
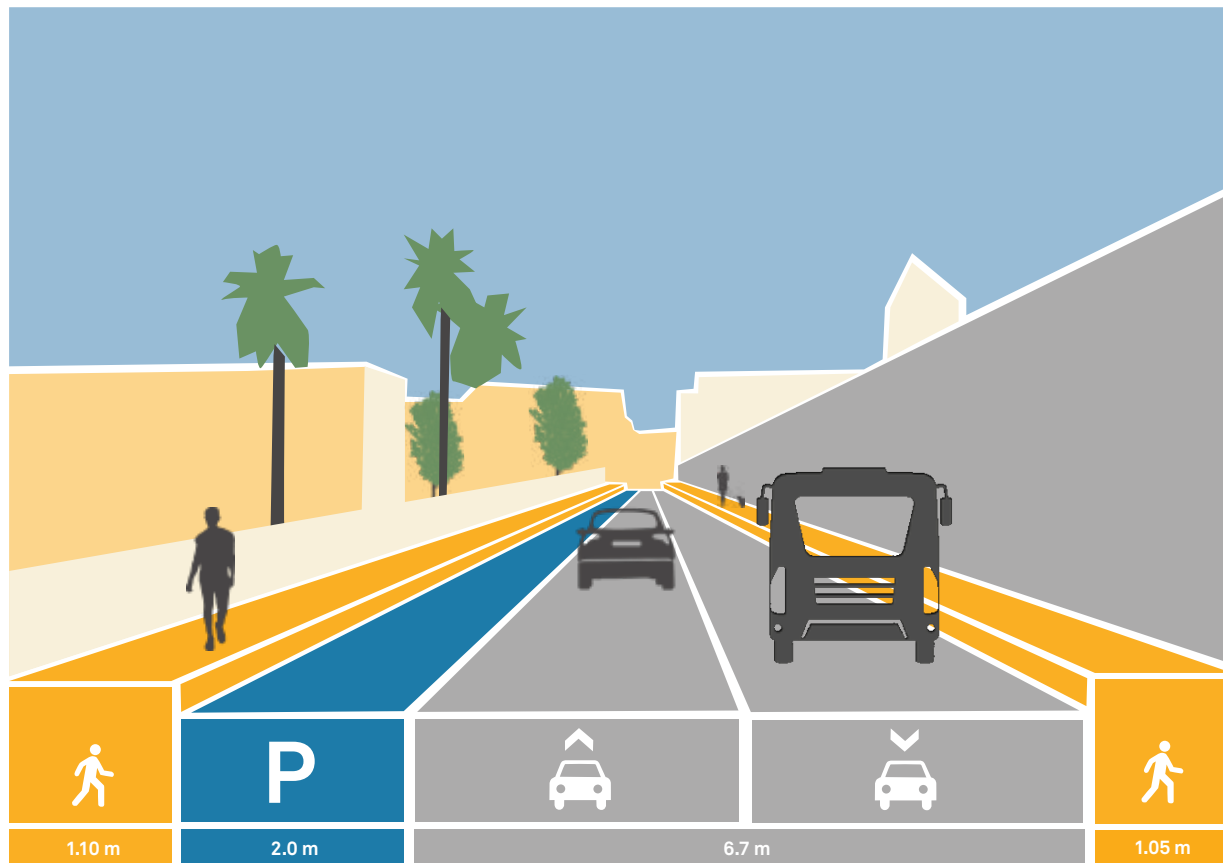
Simultaneously to the proposed intervention on Rue D'Argens, car access within Triq Tas-Sliema will therefore follow a one-way route towards the arterial road until Triq Nazju Ellul, while the remainder of the road (leading to the Kappara roundabout) would still allow two-way traffic.



## Intervention 3

### Triq Turu Rizzo: Level 2

Given that there is a viable alternative route for cars to enter Gzira through Triq Najzu Ellul and loop back into Triq Tas-Sliema, Triq Turu Rizzo may be proposed to be accessed only for parking purposes, potentially turning this road into a pedestrian-oriented commercial street. This would create more pedestrian activity in an urban area that is otherwise very car-oriented.







## Intervention 4

### Triq Luqa Briffa: Level 2

In order to preclude cars from taking a shortcut through Rue D'Argens and Triq Luqa Briffa to enter into Sliema, this street is being proposed to be one-way down towards Triq Tas-Sliema. This strategy, applied simultaneously with Interventions 1 and 2, would be critical in order to ensure that cars do not navigate unnecessarily through Gzira's local streets, particularly if they are headed to the neighbouring localities, and instead be required to use the arterial infrastructure.



## Intervention 5

### Triq San Albert: Level 3 & 4

Triq San Albert stretches diagonally across Gzira, intersecting with Rue d'Argens and connecting with the civic landmarks of the Police station and the Healthcare Centre, right off and on Pjazza Meme Scicluna respectively. The intervention proposes turning the entire upper stretch of this road (from Triq il-Madonna tal-Gebra to Rue d'Argens) into a one-way route with one traffic lane towards Rue d'Argens. The remaining space may be allocated as a designated cycling lane that would further be protected by bollards and a small buffer zone so as to encourage cyclists to feel safer on the road.





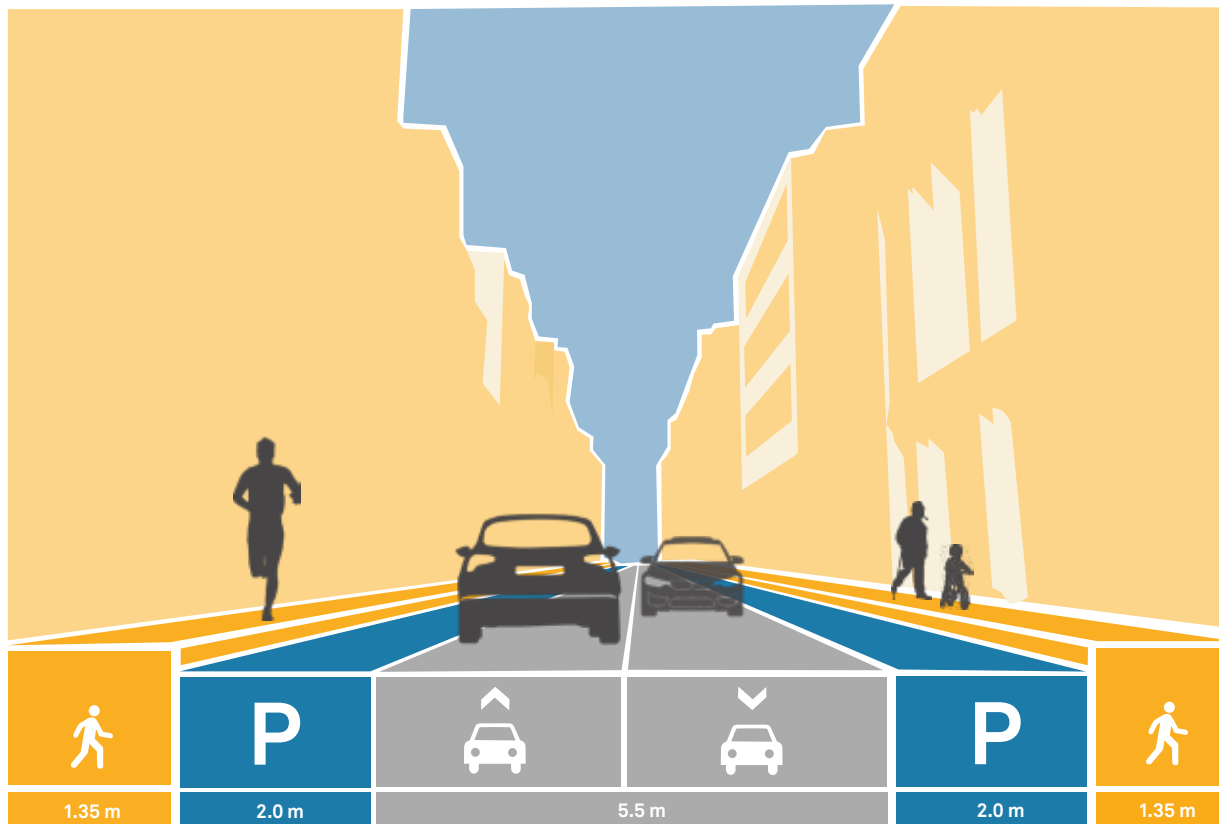
# IMPLEMENTATION

Following on from the above, at the intersection with Triq Luqa Briffa, cars would only be able to access Triq San Albert in a one-way direction towards Rue d'Argens/Pjazza Scicluna, in addition to the existing route upwards towards Triq Emanuele Giordano. The intersecting space at the bend, currently chamfered, could be delineated with floor paint markings in order to extend the current pavement to a larger pedestrian space, and simultaneously increase pedestrian safety while also slowing down vehicles as they navigate this bend.



source: super fresh design

source: Tactical Urbanism





## Intervention 6

### Triq Emanuele Giordano: Level 2



In order to block car access into Sliema using the route of Triq Il-Madonna tal-Gebbla through Triq Antonio Sammut to access Triq Reggie Miller, the last segment of this street is proposed to be a no entry. This intervention is important to ensure that car traffic does not use Triq San Albert and other local streets to access Sliema instead of using the available arterial road.

## Intervention 7

### Triq Antonio Sammut: Level 2



Following the logic of the previous intervention, this street would be required to become a one-way access for cars (direction Triq Emanuele Giordano towards Triq Il-Madonna tal-Gebbla). This intervention would also allow cars to access the schools via a safe and slow traffic loop (Triq San Albert – Triq Emanuele Giordano – Triq Il-Madonna tal-Gebbla).

## Intervention 8

### Triq il-Madonna tal-Gebbla: Level 1

The first segment of this street is currently a popular route to access Sliema. However, with the implementation of Interventions 6 and 7 cars would instead be redirected to Triq Antonio Sammut and back to this street. Car traffic would therefore not be able to access Triq Reggie Miller into Sliema. The intervention for this street focuses on signage for slower speeds and pedestrian priority, as pedestrians need access to two school entrances and the Bible Baptist Church.

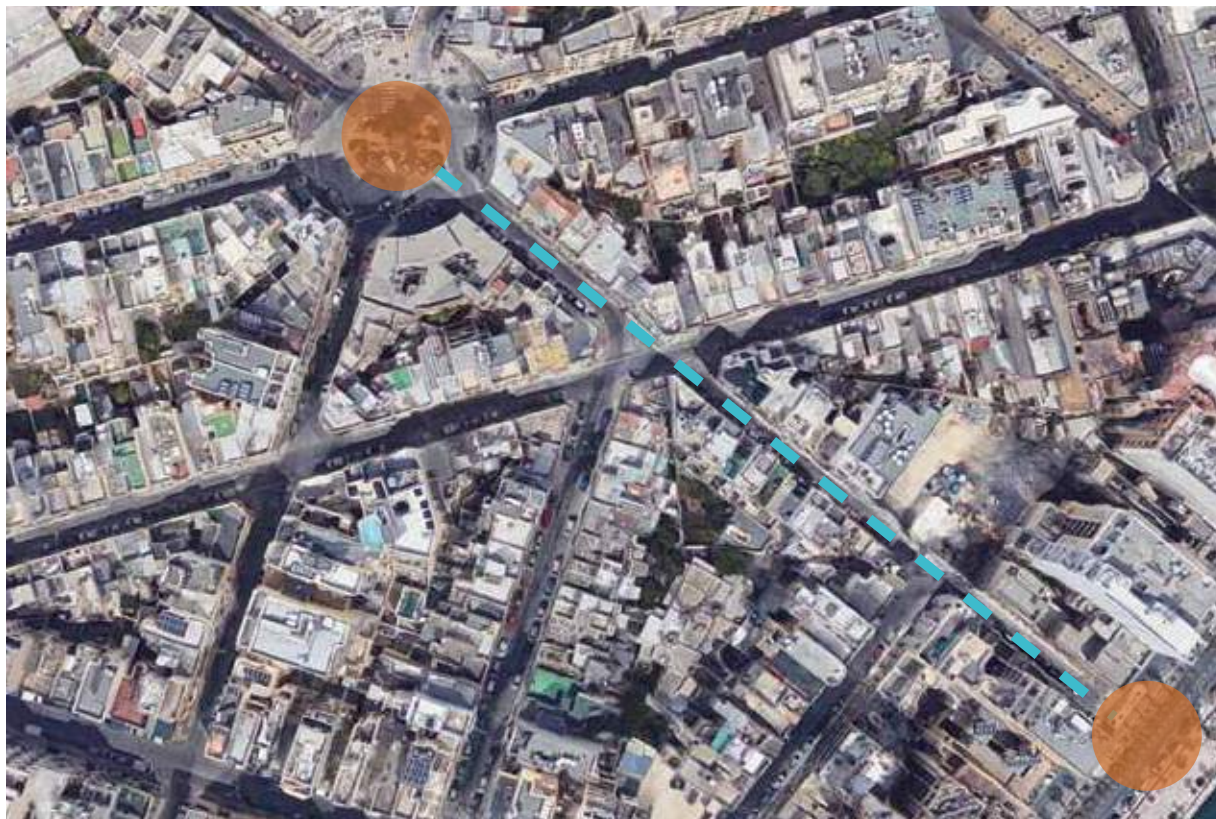




## Intervention 9

### Triq Belvedere: Level 1

This street connects Pjazza Meme Scicluna down to the Gzira promenade. It is therefore an important extension to the previously discussed intervention on Triq San Albert, wherein pedestrians would be encouraged to walk to and from the promenade. Given that it is currently a narrow road, Level 1 signage will promote it as a shared slow street with slow moving vehicles in the presence of both pedestrians and cyclists.



source: shutterstock



source: oakparkil

## Intervention 10

### Triq Nazju Ellul: Level 4

This street is particularly wide for a one-way route, and has positive qualities as a pedestrian-oriented street, such as a flat topography and the presence of open front gardens lining its edges. The intervention proposes narrowing down the lane allocated for vehicular road space in order to introduce a designated cycling lane. This street is a long stretch across Gzira and connects to various local streets, making it a main axis for local cyclists. This street could also become a preferred cycling route rather than Rue D'Argens, which would subsequently transform Intervention 1 into a faster dedicated route for public transport, as opposed to a shared route between buses and bicycles.

This street also provides an important link to the University of Malta's grounds and sports facilities, and subsequently access to the campus itself via the short tunnel passing beneath the arterial road (Triq Mikiel Anton Vassalli). Both pedestrians and cyclists may benefit from this transverse shortcut into Gzira, and subsequently connect to Triq Nazju Ellul in order to access other local streets.



source: oakparkil





Intervention 11  
Misrah Turu Colombo & Triq Sir William Reid:  
Play street

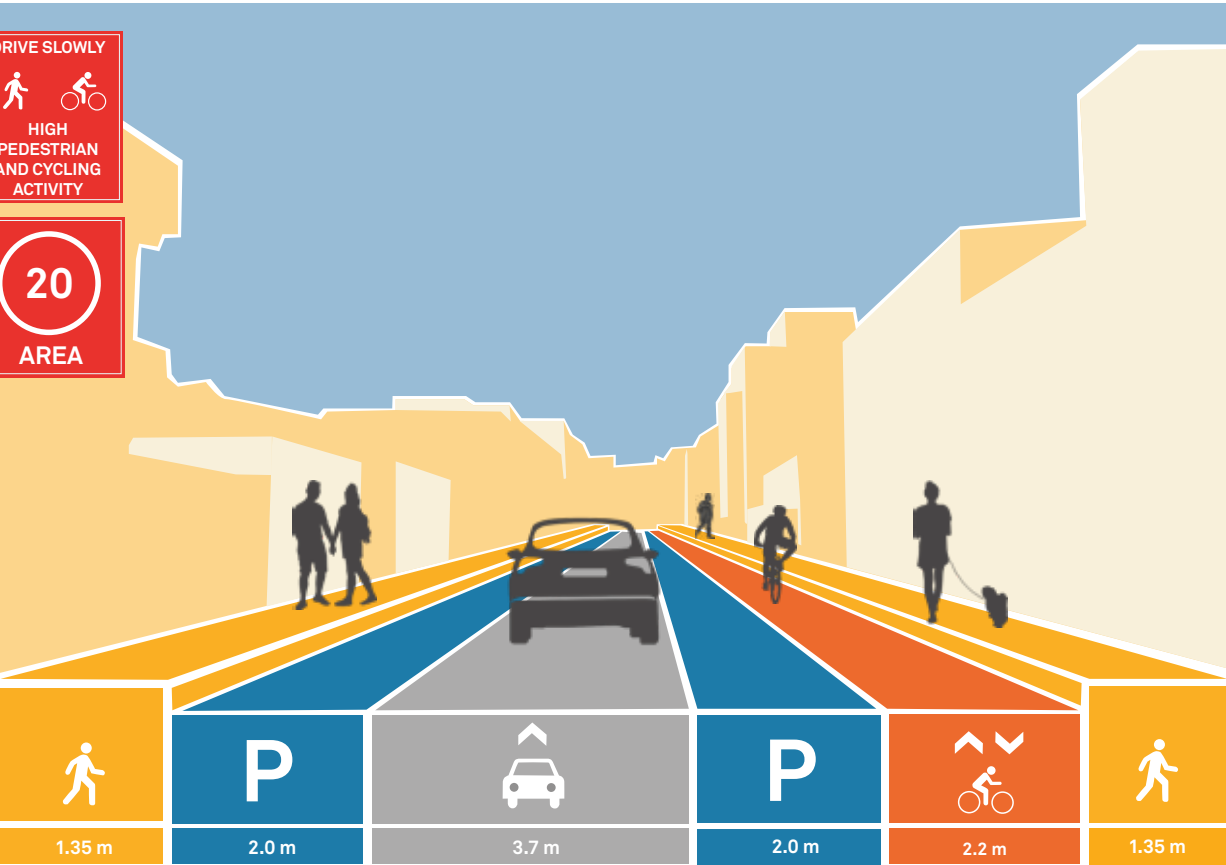
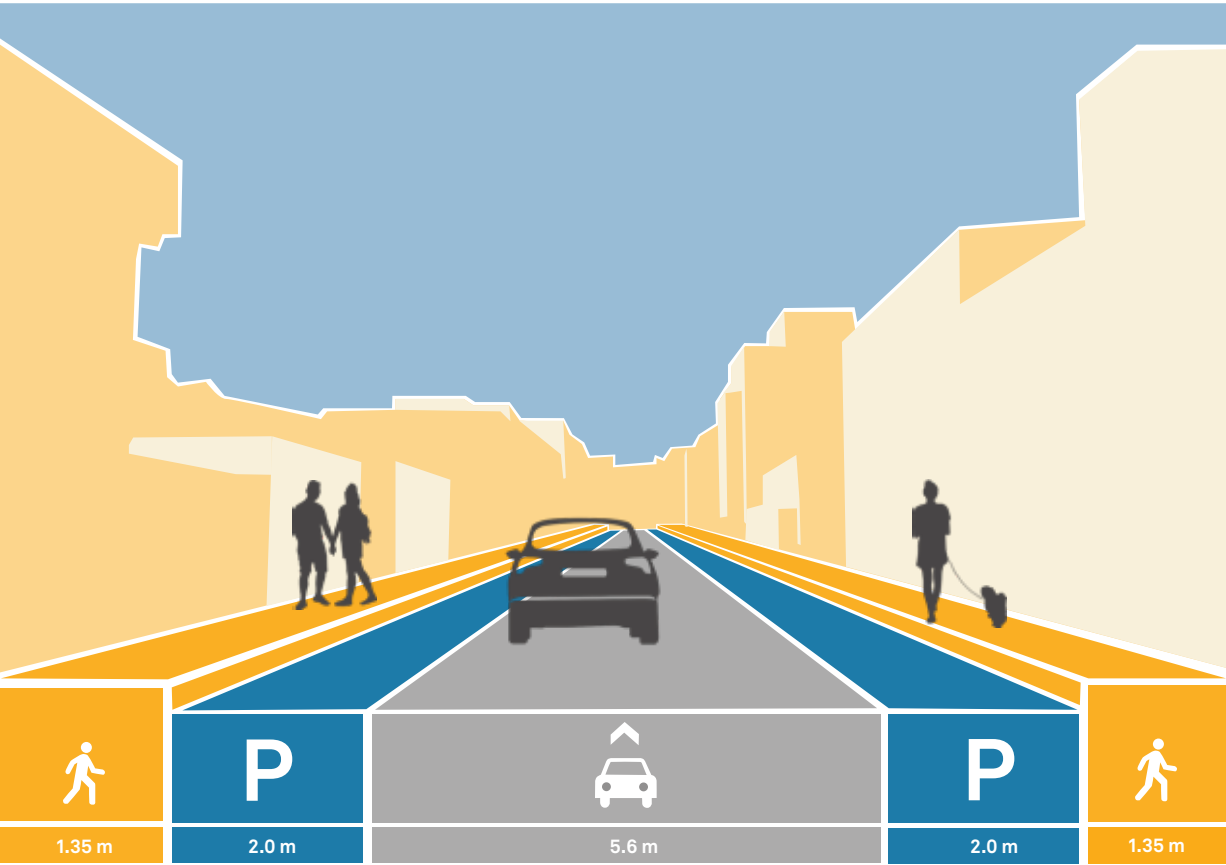
Three local roads – Triq Nazju Ellul, Triq Sir William Reid and Trejjet Nicola Cotoner – feed into a small green pocket that is surrounded by St Clare College, residential buildings and the ex-Golden Harvest premises. This node, extending into Triq Sir William Reid, is being proposed to serve as a play street on designated days and at specific times, given its interesting configuration and the fact that Triq Sir William Reid also connects Triq Nazju Ellul to Rue d’Argens through the pocket node. It would therefore provide a nice extended pedestrian priority space for the residents and their families.



source: OakCliff Advocate



source: ALA Seattle





# IMPLEMENTATION



**Street furniture**  
moveable chairs, tables,  
play, exercise and shade  
elements are preferable

**Landscaping elements**  
plants and trees go a  
long way in making an  
inviting space to play  
and socialize

**Programming**  
activating play streets  
with programming is key  
to success. Events and  
activities can include  
exercise classes, live  
music, food trucks,  
markets, etc.



**Surface treatment**  
can be used to further  
define the playstreet

**Signs**  
or slow street branding  
and explanation and to  
communicate traffic  
regulations for street  
use

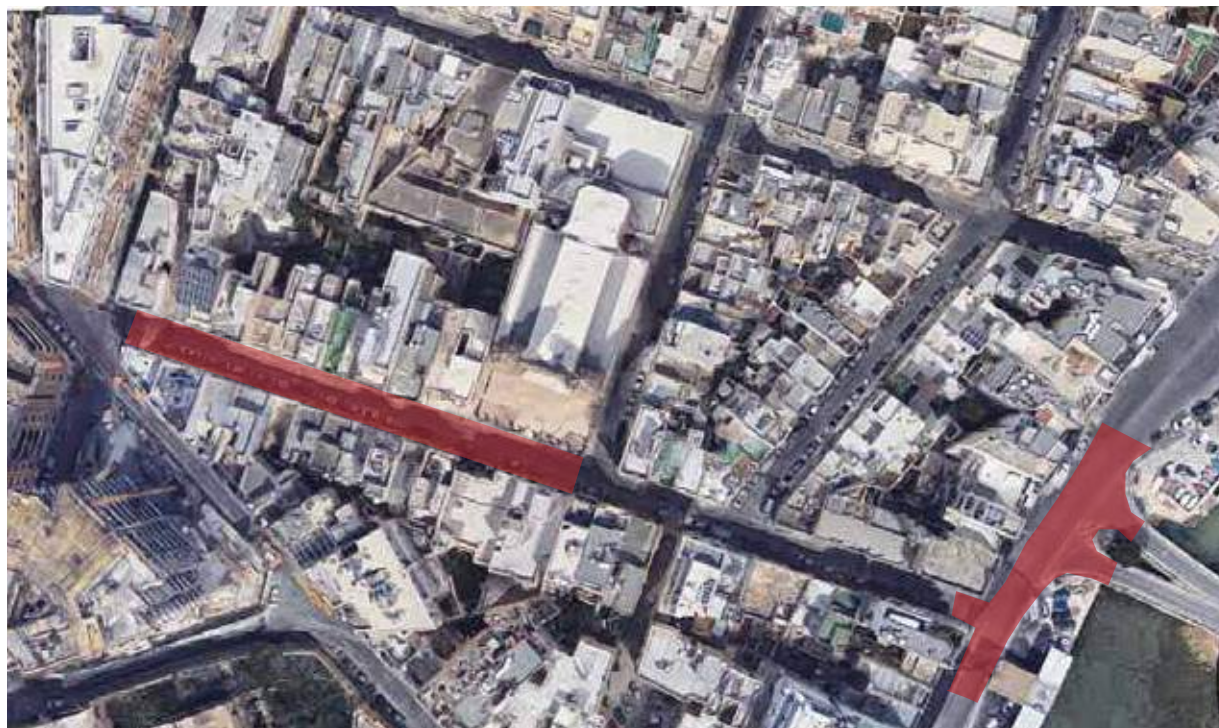
**Barrier elements**  
should be used to  
create a strong edge  
and define the place  
as a pedestrian zone



## Intervention 12

### Triq Manoel De Vilhena: Play street

The street runs across Gzira from the promenade all the way to Triq Nazju Ellul, intersecting with Rue D'Argens. It is characterised by a narrow, one-lane, road, with a number of characteristic Maltese townhouses lining its edge. Pleasant and human-scale streets such as this should be prioritised for use by residents rather than cars. The Gzira Parish Church is also located on this street. Triq Manoel De Vilhena could be closed off to traffic on specific days (for instance, on Sundays), and would instead serve as a second play street for the locality, in order to cater for the residents living within the neighbourhoods lying east of Rue d'Argens. This intervention will particularly link the church's parvis to the street that runs along it.



## Intervention 13

### Triq Gerry Zammit: Level 1 and 2

The intervention is divided into two: The first segment of the street from Rue D'Argens to Triq Luqa Briffa through the roundabout, is dedicated for slow speed and pedestrian priority signage. The second segment from Triq Luqa Briffa towards Triq E.H. Furse, which is currently a two-way road, is being rerouted into a one-way street towards Msida. This would resolve current issues of congestion and make the street safer for both pedestrians and cyclists.





## Intervention 14

### Gzira Promenade – Triq ix-Xatt: Level 3 and 4

The Gzira promenade is a particularly active and busy area. As there are currently two vehicular lanes on each side of the road's median strip, the intervention proposes dedicating one of the two lanes to a shared bus and cycling lane on each side of the road, with heavy enforcement so as to be respected and used correctly. The road space on the side of the promenade already works relatively well with one of the two lanes being a bus-only lane, which would further allow bicycles thereon. This intervention would allow cyclists to have a dedicated space; a space which is currently lacking and that consequently raises safety concerns for these road users. Cars would be limited to one lane of traffic, which would necessarily slow down their speed, thus resulting in less accidents that often arise from overtaking within the available road space or the presence of blind spots.

In addition, it is being proposed that current pedestrian crossings would be marked again more evidently, with the marking area extending before the actual crossing itself to alert drivers to slow down ahead of time. This would make elderly residents feel safer when crossing the road to and from the promenade. In particular, it is being proposed that the area in front of the Manoel Island bridge would be marked until the existing petrol station. This area is currently heavily used by pedestrians crossing over, and therefore should be transformed to a pedestrian priority zone that is characterised by slow-moving vehicles.



## Intervention 15

### Gzira Marina: Slow Path

The promenade section in front of Gnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa, which is currently predominantly a car parking space, is being proposed to contain a designated slow path, retaining space for pedestrians who wish to access the gardens or continue onto the Ta' Xbiex promenade. In this manner some continuity between the existing Gzira and Ta' Xbiex promenades may be created more strongly.



## Phasing Strategy

The interventions have been phased in stages, starting with those that are simple to implement and that could potentially catalyse bigger changes in the near future. The stages have been designed to facilitate the implementation of the overall Slow Streets vision.

**Phase 1 - Starting and Testing:** Projects that are straightforward and easy to implement and that can provide the groundwork for a more significant future reconfiguration, thus requiring less initial financial investment. This phase includes the creation of the proposed play street, tactical urbanism interventions and the testing of elements for eventual Level 4 interventions and are characterised by the use of temporary (removable or reversible) elements that could be deployed on certain days and during certain times.

**Phase 2 - Strengthening:** This phase is envisioned to intervene on important connector routes and often requires more investment in order to build on Phase 1, such as designating cycling lanes.

**Phase 3 - Completing:** Concluding the Slow Streets network, with branded signage, completing necessary rerouting and making testing of street closures more permanent

Monitoring should be carried out simultaneously with execution, and post-implementation, in order to gauge whether the intervention is achieving the desired outcome, and if there are actions to be done that could achieve better results. Monitoring will determine whether the interventions could become permanent in nature, and eventually further transformed into more significant infrastructural changes.



source: Brend Toderian



source: Carolina Angles

The simplest interventions to implement first would be the play streets, tactical urbanism interventions (namely floor markings) and testing the dedicated bus/cycling lanes along Triq ix-Xatt. Floor markings at intersections and critical crossings can be carried out first as pedestrian priority is the primary concern of the Slow Streets initiative. Specifically at Triq ix-Xatt, pedestrians would feel safer to cross the road to access the busy public space. Secondly, play street closures during this phase may be carried out on designated days and at times when traffic is already low. The dedicated bus/cycling lane may also be tested throughout weekends, to eventually become more permanent. This phase allows the public to slowly get used to the new road system and accept the changes gradually.

The second phase would tackle street reconfiguration for important axes, which are Triq Nazju Ellul and Triq San Albert. The reconfiguration of, and rerouting within, these streets would set the tone for the rest of the interventions. The proposed intervention in Triq Nazju Ellul is a simple one as it involves the narrowing of a road lane that is a wide one-way road. Triq San Albert should be reconfigured simultaneously with the rerouting of traffic within Triq Antonio Sammut and Triq Emanuele Giordano, in order to function comprehensively.

In addition, the strategy for Rue D'Argens may be tested throughout weekends. This testing requires the use of temporary road barriers and introduction of appropriate signage, in tandem with pre-planned campaigning. Play streets from phase 1 can be implemented for longer periods and the dedicated bus/cycling lanes along Triq ix-Xatt may undergo further testing on weekdays. During this phase, signage for all necessary streets should also be completed.

Phase 3 would require the permanent implementation of Rue D'Argens and Triq Tas-Sliema. Having previously tested these interventions and implemented other street interventions during Phases 1 and 2, residents would have grown more accustomed to the road changes. Furthermore, these two interventions would be enabled by the traffic rerouting that would have already been tackled within other important roads during Phase 2. The rerouting of Triq Gerry Zammit would also be implemented during this phase.



# SLOW STREETS PHASING: STARTING & TESTING THE NETWORK

GŽIRA



## LEGEND

- Slow street level 1 signage & branding
- Slow street level 2 rerouting/repurposing
- Slow street level 3 tactical urbanism
- Slow street level 4 reconfiguration
- Slow path
- Play street
- Extension



0 100 200 300 400 500M



# SLOW STREETS PHASING: STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK

GŽIRA



## LEGEND

- Slow street level 1 signage & branding
- Slow street level 2 rerouting/repurposing
- Slow street level 3 tactical urbanism
- Slow street level 4 reconfiguration
- Slow path
- Play street
- Extension



0 100 200 300 400 500M



# SLOW STREETS PHASING: COMPLETING THE NETWORK

GŽIRA



## LEGEND

- Slow street level 1 signage & branding
- Slow street level 2 rerouting/repurposing
- Slow street level 3 tactical urbanism
- Slow street level 4 reconfiguration
- Slow path
- Play street
- Extension



0 100 200 300 400 500M



**People traffic replaces car traffic, and the streets become 'paved parks' where people of all abilities can come out and improve their mental, physical and emotional health.**

**Slow Streets is a concept that can potentially extend to a permanent network of social places to stay, safe walkways and low-stress biking.**

In order for Slow Streets to be successfully executed, a high degree of collaboration and communication is required between various stakeholders. Whether at the testing or strengthening phase, projects require collaborations between Local Councils (as well as the Local Councils' Association and the Regional Committees) and local residents, with the involvement of other entities – NGOs and community groups such as the Bike Advocacy Group and Walking Malta, Transport Malta, Malta Public Transport, the Planning Authority, the Environment and Resources Authority and other government entities.

Partnerships are important for creating an agreed-upon plan for signage, programming, and for the creation of an ongoing management plan once the project is implemented. Specifically within tactical urbanism projects, a collaborative effort with residents is beneficial for its successful implementation. The most successful plans for change often come from the residents themselves, as they centre on their daily needs. Therefore residents should be engaged throughout the entire process such that the outcome may be more fruitful.

Slow Streets involves a combination of strategies that aim to result in safer and more frequent use of streets by pedestrians. However, the future vision is for Slow Streets to incentivise larger scale projects that could give back high quality urban public space to the residents. For these future projects, partnerships, active resident involvement and participatory design will be essential.



Gzira encompasses various large and iconic public spaces, including the Gzira gardens (Gnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa), the promenade along Triq ix-Xatt, and Manoel Island, which have the potential to be linked better and reinforced through the establishment of slower-moving cars within restricted road space, the creation of more designated space for cyclists, the introduction of better crossings, especially if part of wider pedestrian-priority zones. This would all contribute to the creation of safer, direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists alike, and is particularly pertinent in the case of vulnerable users, particularly the elderly.

Away from the promenade, however, there is a lack of open public spaces and playgrounds. Gzira's local streets are used heavily by through traffic – vehicles that use the locality primarily to transit into Sliema – causing congestion and devaluing the quality of the streets for local residents. The Slow Streets strategy for Gzira therefore also focuses heavily on creating better traffic management – both as a deterrent for drivers who solely choose to drive through Gzira in order to access Sliema, encouraging them to make use of the upgraded arterial road infrastructure instead, and simultaneously to release important safer public space for pedestrian and cyclist use while still retaining the important bus routes that navigate within the locality.

The individual strategies are categorised according to the level of interventions, which entail diverse tools of traffic management and tactical urbanism. These include:

- Level 1 interventions: Introduction of signage which alerts drivers to slower speeds and increased pedestrian and cyclist presence and activity
- Level 2 interventions: Rerouting of traffic, which shifts priority of the spaces to pedestrian and cyclist use
- Level 3 interventions: Tactical urbanism initiatives – low cost and temporary solutions that are focused on reallocating more space to pedestrians and cyclists rather than cars and that can be used in the short term (to test Level 4 interventions) or the long term

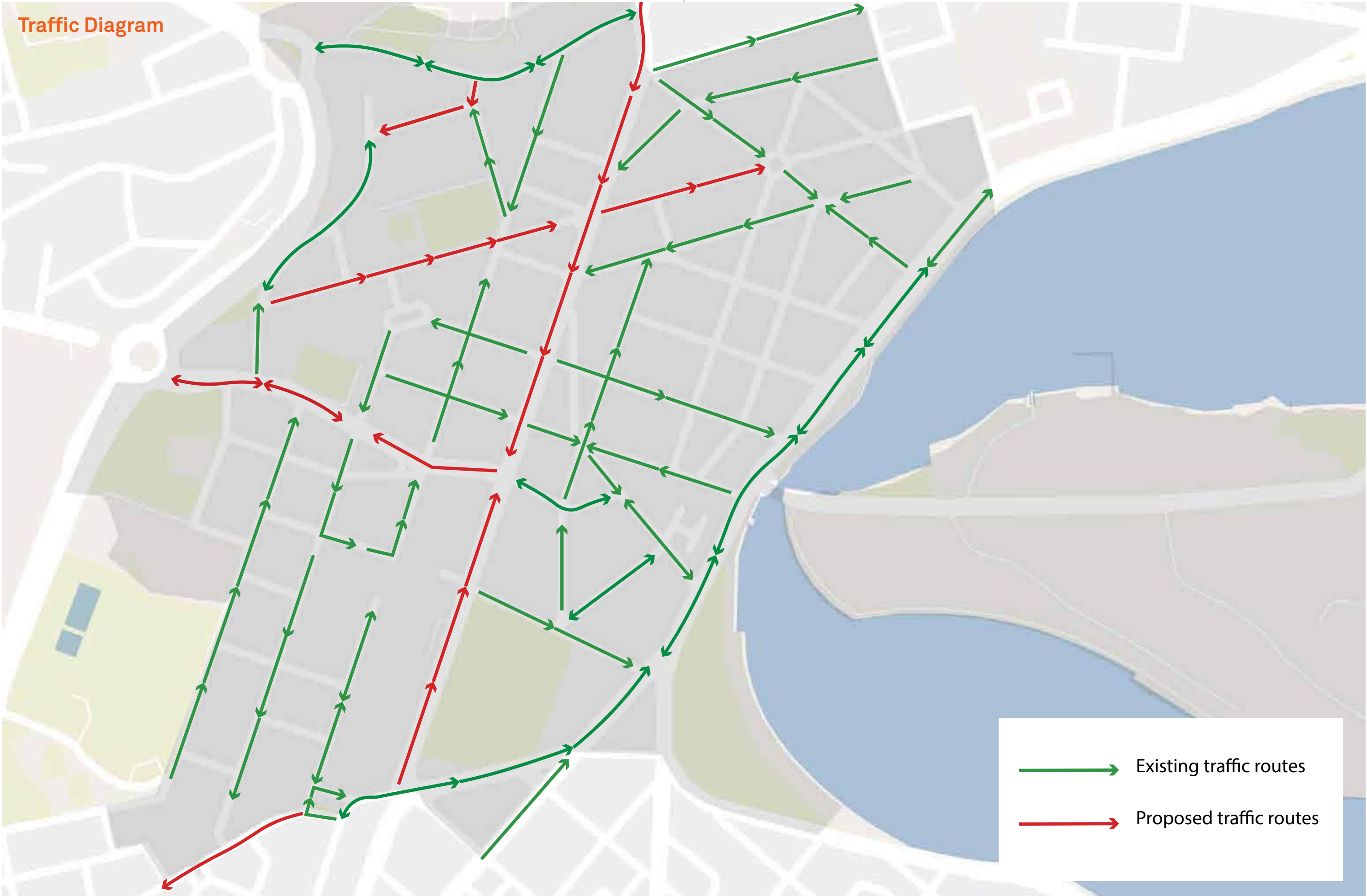
- Level 4 interventions: Reconfiguration of the street section to allocate more physical space to pedestrians and cyclists
- Slow Paths: A designated slow section of the road, when intervening on the entire street is not possible, particularly for use in larger roads where slower-moving, more localised/dedicated slip roads are available, and where priority for pedestrians is often not considered
- Play Streets: A type of intervention where a local road is closed off to cars temporarily, for example on weekends, so that it may be transformed into a place where residents of all ages are free to gather, socialise and play
- Extensions: Important links that represent future potential expansion of the network, and better connectivity for residents of different localities

The phasing strategy is designed to begin with the interventions that are simple to implement and that could potentially catalyse bigger changes in the near future.





Traffic Diagram





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