

ResidentFirst

SLOW STREETS

December 2020



KUNSILL LOKALI
MQABBA

ResidentFirst

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

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Contents

Introduction	2
Slow Streets Network	6
Implementation	20
Types of Interventions	22
Cycling	34
Mqabba Interventions	38
Phasing	58
The Way Forward	66
Summary	68

Introduction

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.

Slow Streets provides residents with an opportunity to experience their neighbourhoods in a new way.



Source: publicspace.org

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.



At the heart of Slow Streets lies the local community and the need for better wellbeing for all residents.

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.

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.

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.

Slow Streets Network

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.

Mqabba

Mqabba is a small traditional village located in the southern area of Malta, surrounded by other small localities, such as Qrendi and Kirkop, with some agricultural land and a number of soft limestone quarries at its periphery. The locality is also renowned for its fireworks, which are often displayed during the locality's feast and within local and international competitions.

The centre of the locality is characterised by the Parish Church dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady, two Band Clubs, other commercial units and a vast array of monuments and historical artefacts which attract both residents and visitors on a yearly basis. The most prominent attractions within the central square and the local streets stemming out of it are the chapels dedicated to St. Basil, St. Catherine of Alexandria, St. John and Our Lady of Sorrows. In the southern edge of the residential area of Mqabba one can also find the Neolithic Ta' Mintna Catacombs which are open for the public during certain times of the year.

Streets around the centre of the locality are winding and narrow, making them

ideal for those accessing the square on foot. Other roads which are more vehicular oriented are highly used by through traffic and public transportation, however these link to public open spaces and gardens which are also highly frequented, especially by residents. Both types of roads, especially those in proximity or around the central square, would therefore benefit from being more walkable, in turn becoming safer for all to use.

The main aim of the Slow Streets strategy, therefore, is to liberate local streets around the central square from extraneous traffic that could instead be safely used by residents. By using different schemes of traffic management, including both rerouting opportunities and tactical urbanism interventions, the priority within these streets is being shifted to pedestrian and cyclist use rather than cars, while still retaining the important bus routes that navigate within the locality. Some key routes have also been identified for potential reconfiguration since they could provide critical and much-needed change to the entire network and enable a stronger and safer street environment for pedestrians and cyclists alike.



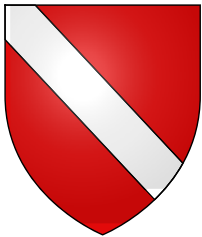
Pavements and roads are further measured on site in order to sketch an accurate section for each of the selected streets. This exercise is crucial for determining the possible intervention within each street, based on the available road space, and taking into account both the activities and characteristics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

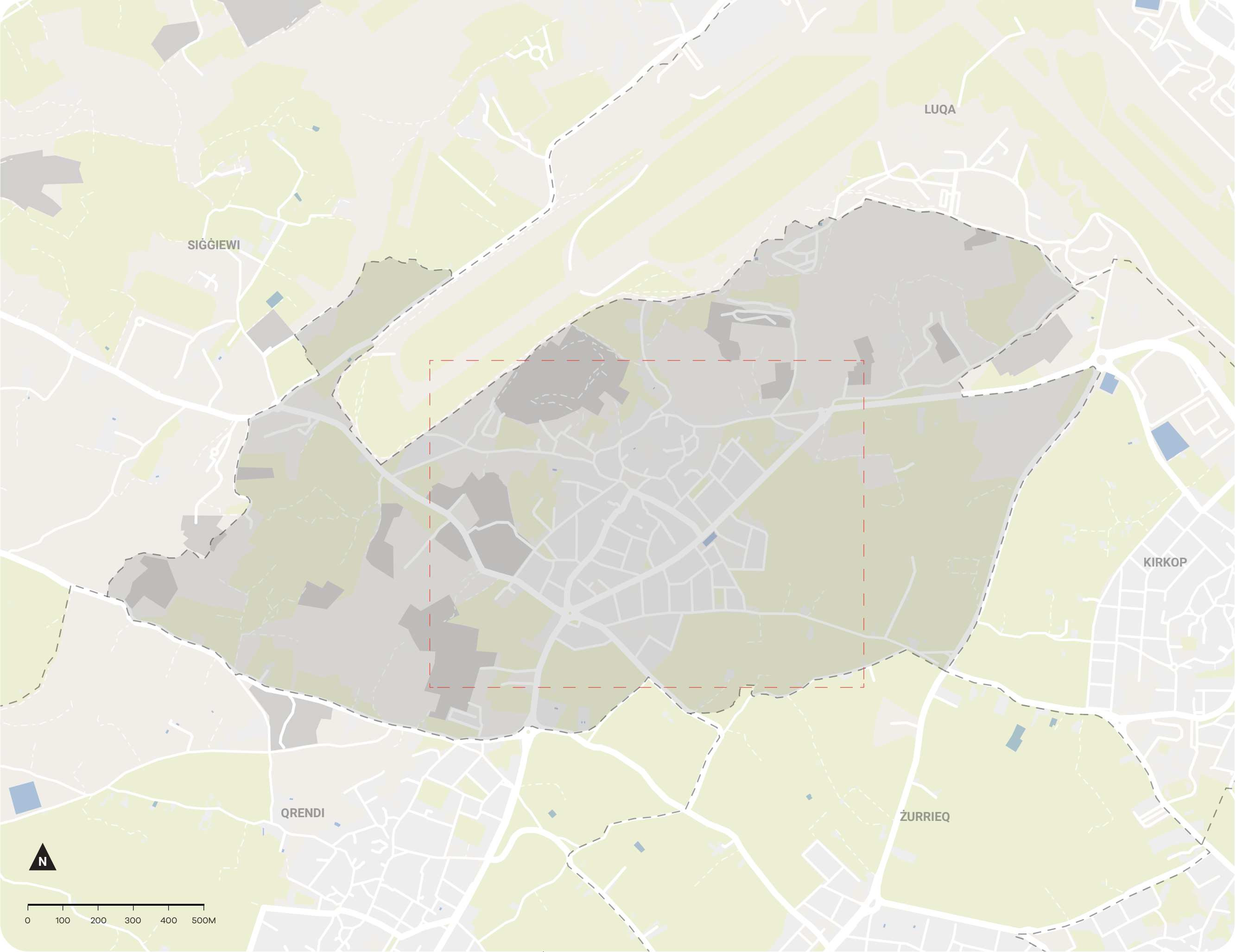
The strategy is finally concluded once it may be established that the individual interventions are able to coexist seamlessly, without creating any unwanted repercussions and while further considering potential extensions with neighbouring localities.

Within these strategies, access to public transportation is always being permitted, even within those streets which have been selected to have no access for vehicles.

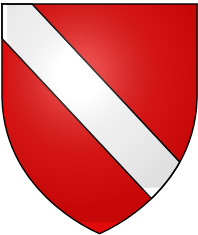
LOCALITY



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MQABBA



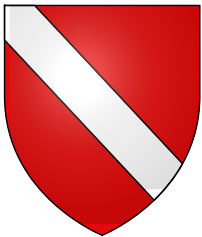
LOCALITY



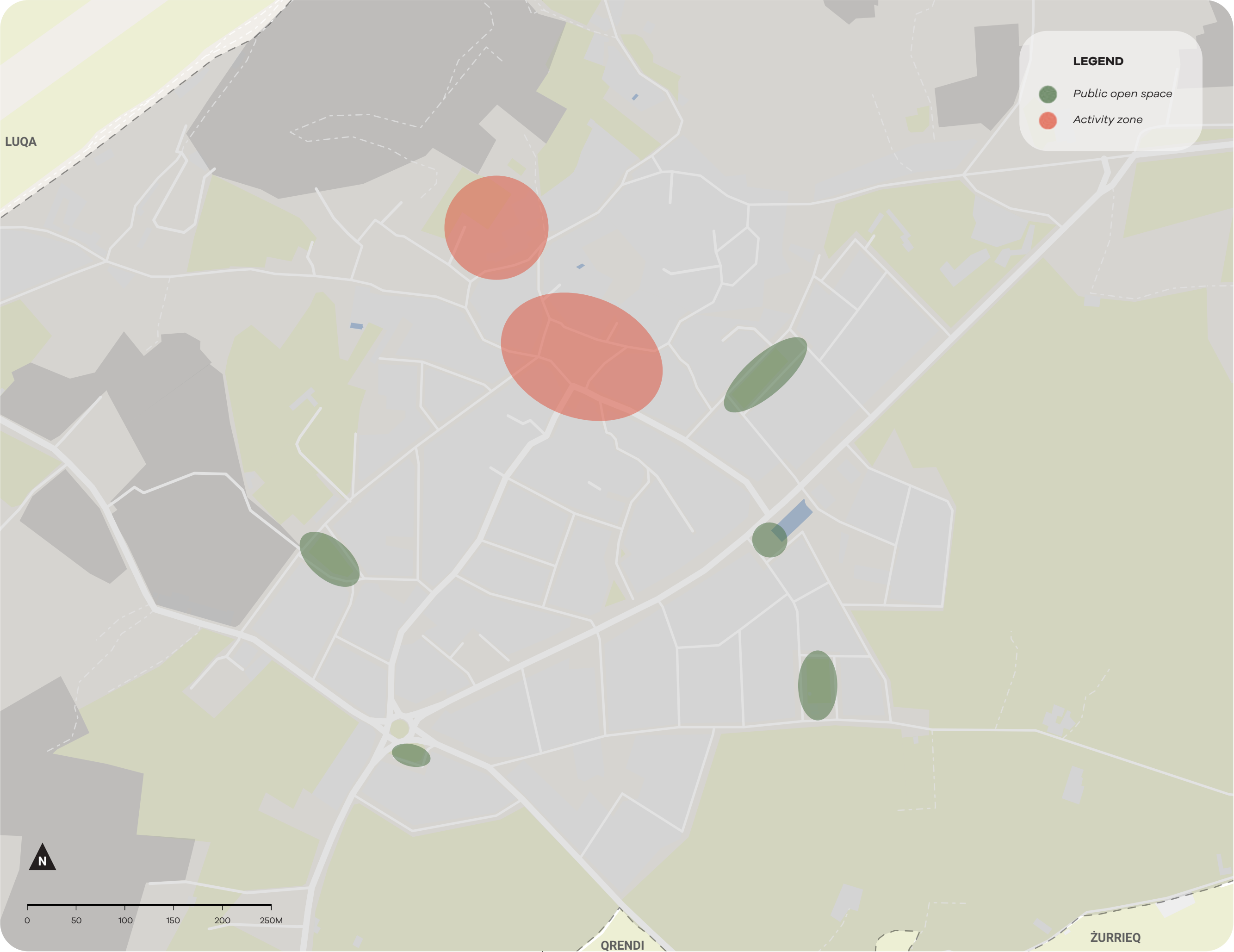
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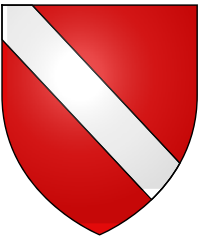
ACTIVITY
ZONES



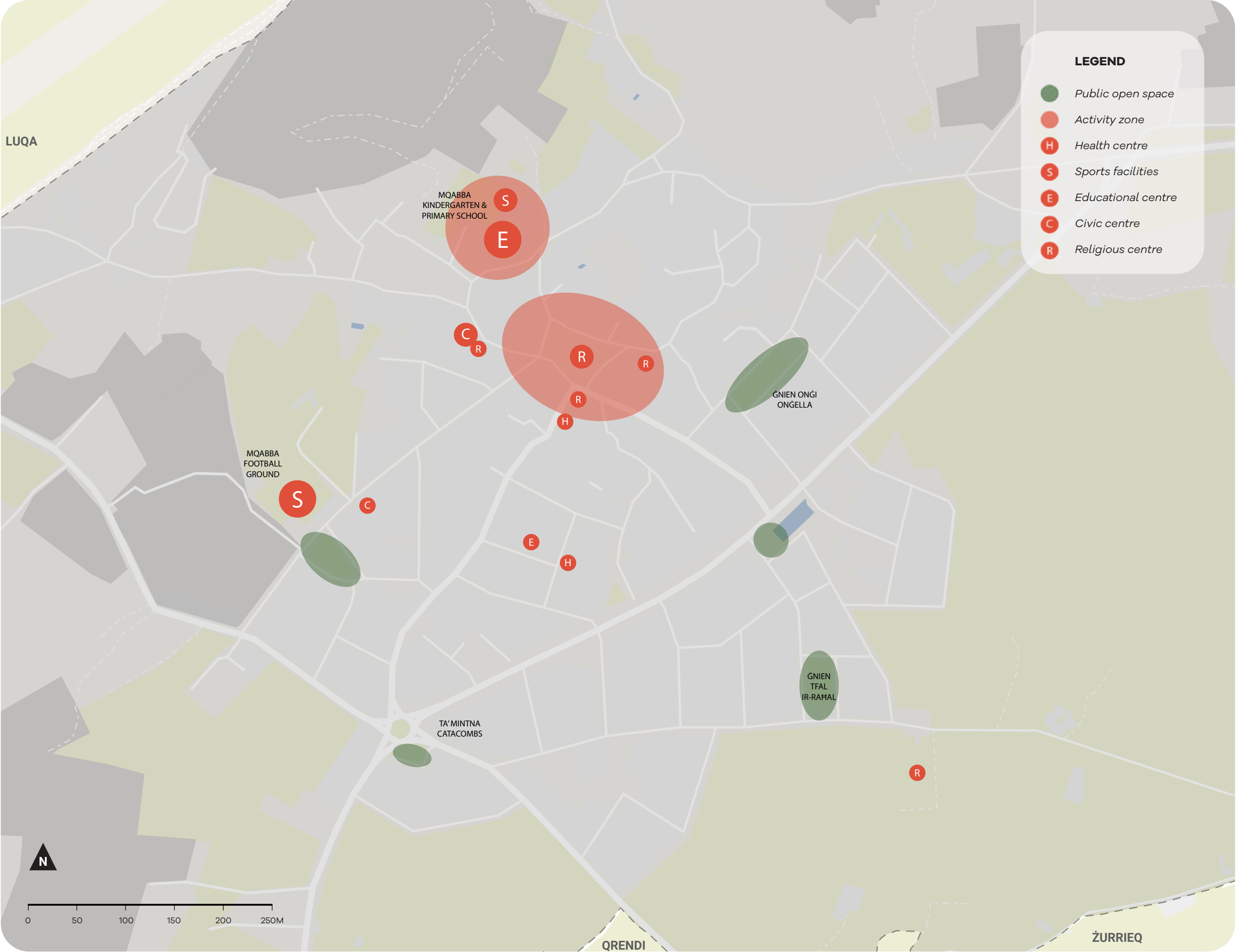
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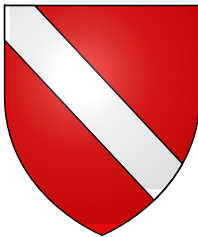
DESTINATIONS



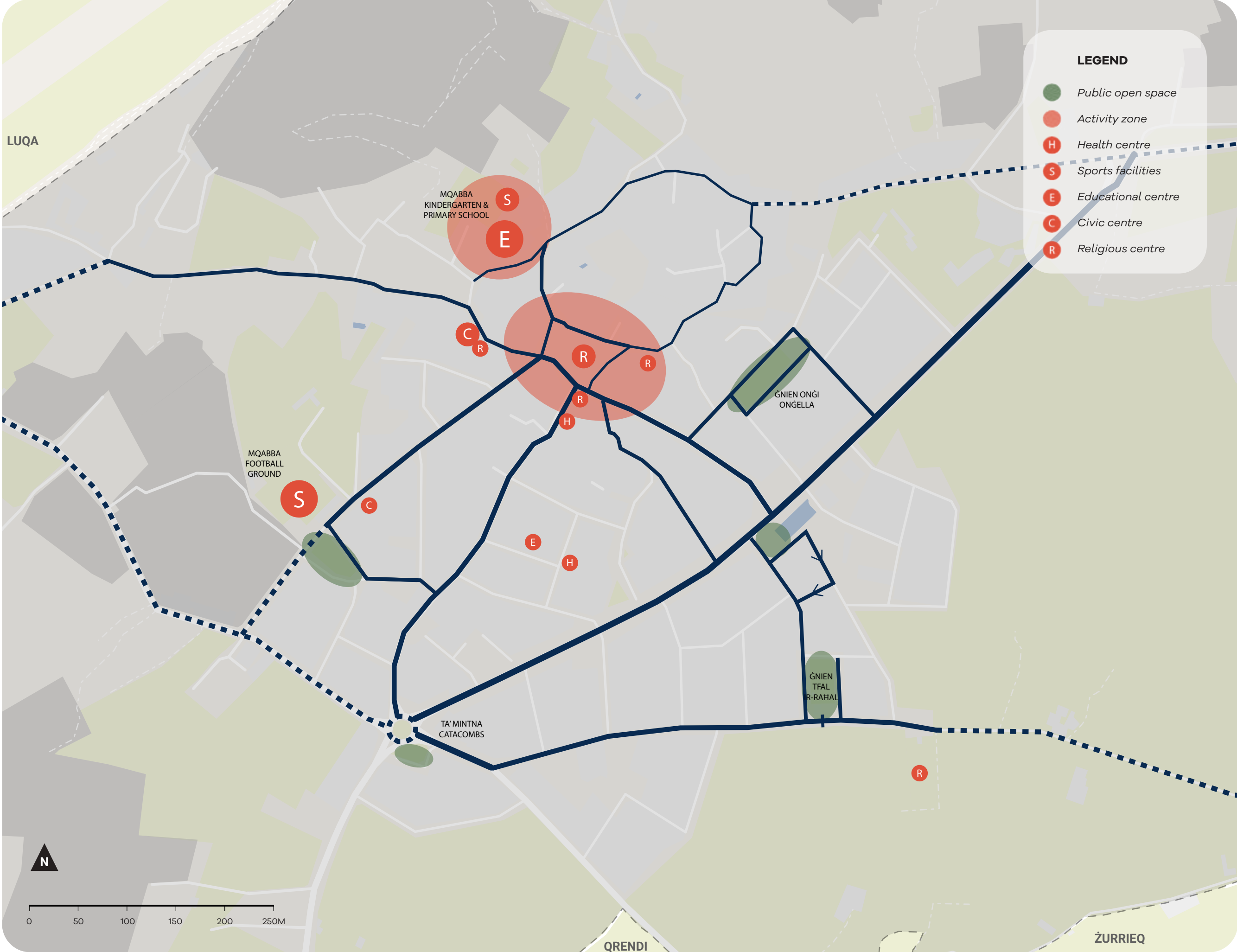
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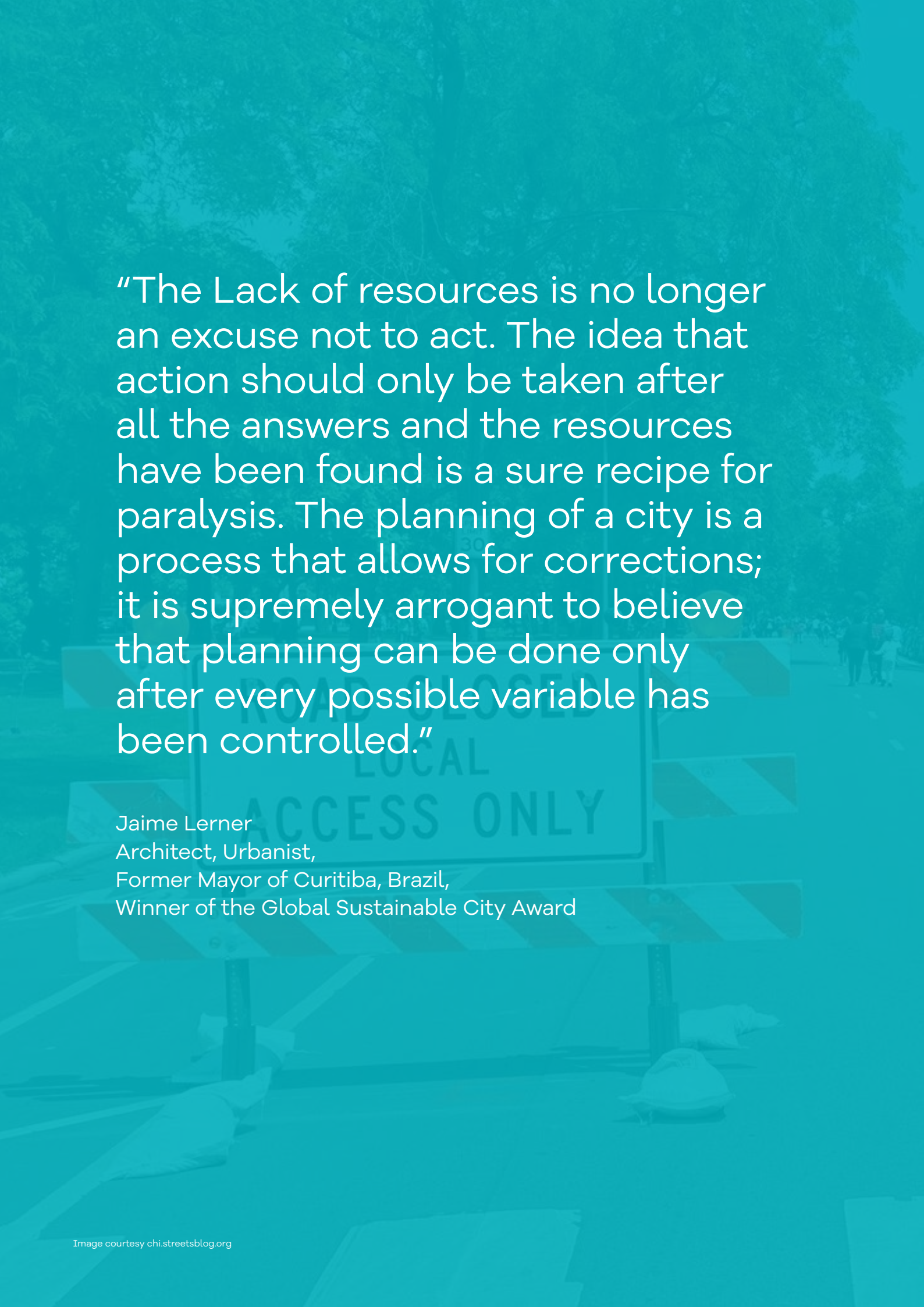


NETWORK



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“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

Mqabba 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.





source: Smart Growth Online

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), 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.



source: South Carolina Safe Routes



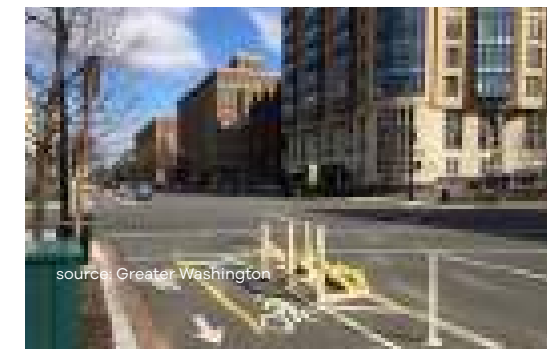
source: publicspace.org

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.



source: Global Design Cities



source: Greater Washington

Play Streets

'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.



source: Cadence



source: designcouncil.org.uk



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).

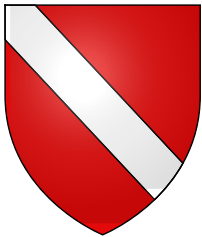


Extensions

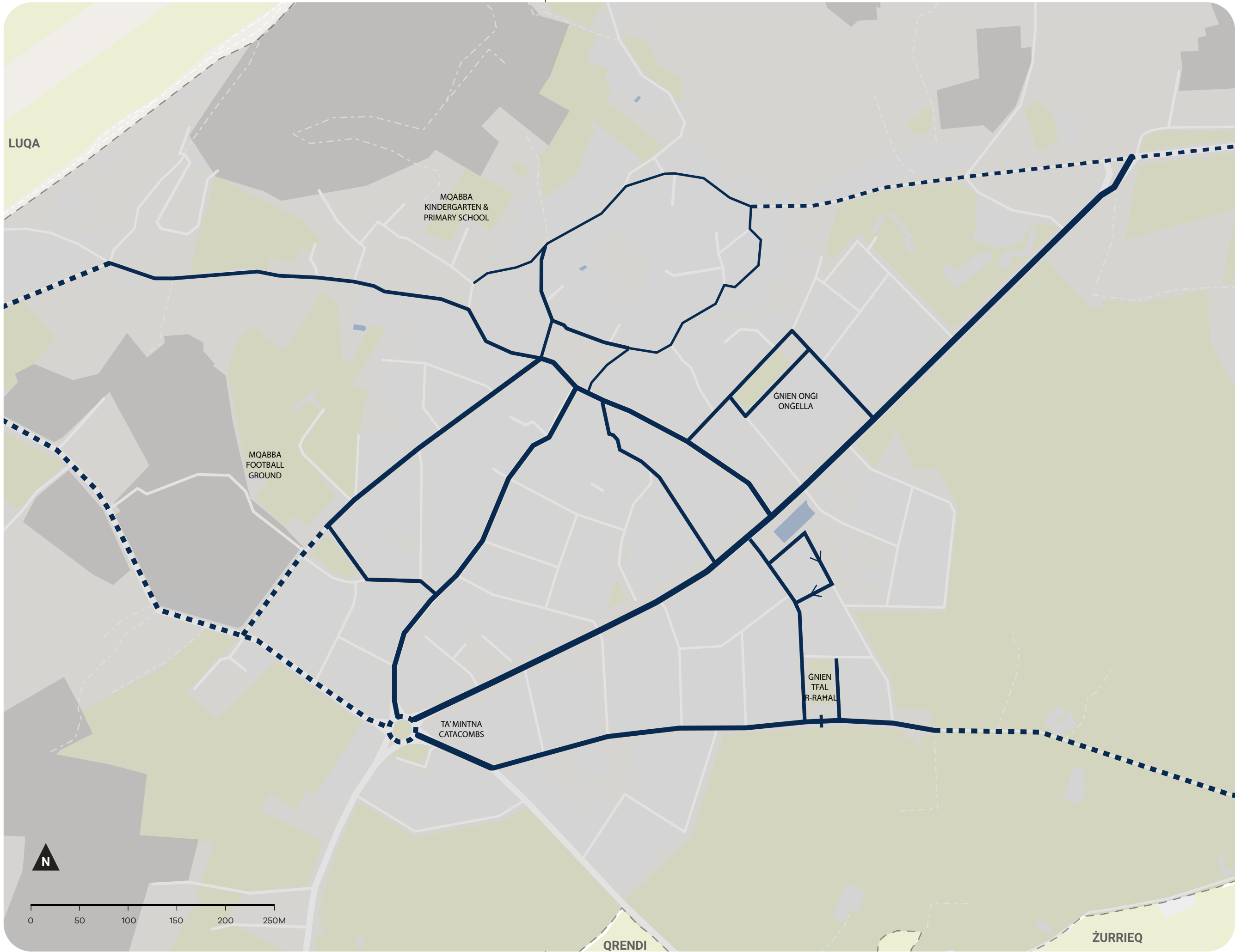
The last type of intervention refers to ‘extensions’ with adjacent localities and /or within the same locality. These links are important as they represent the future potential expansion of the network, resulting in even better connectivity for local and /or neighbouring residents. Such expansion may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



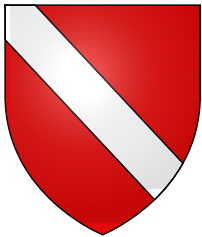
NETWORK



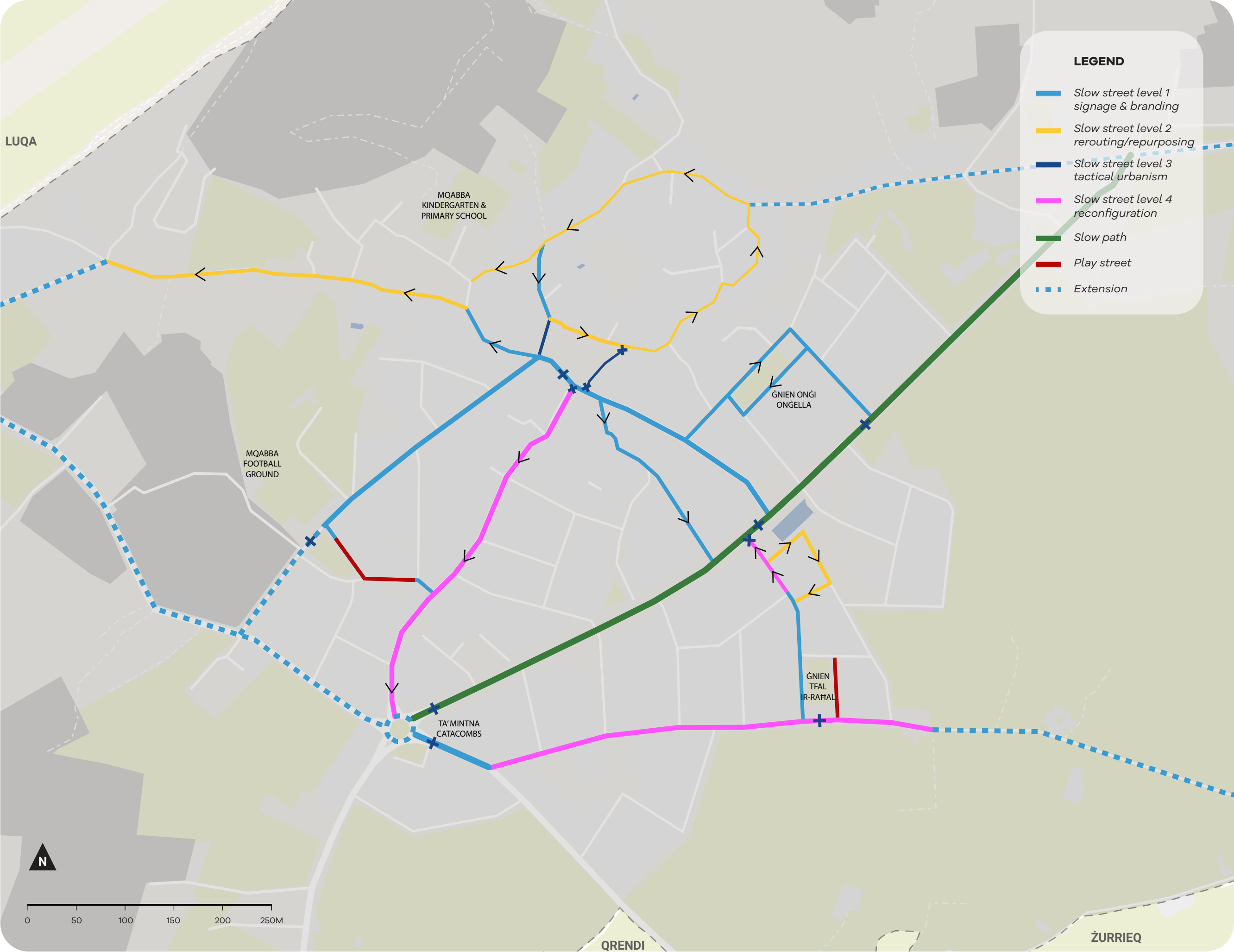
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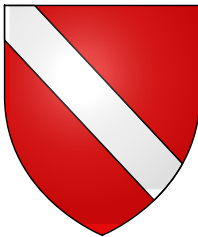
INTERVENTION



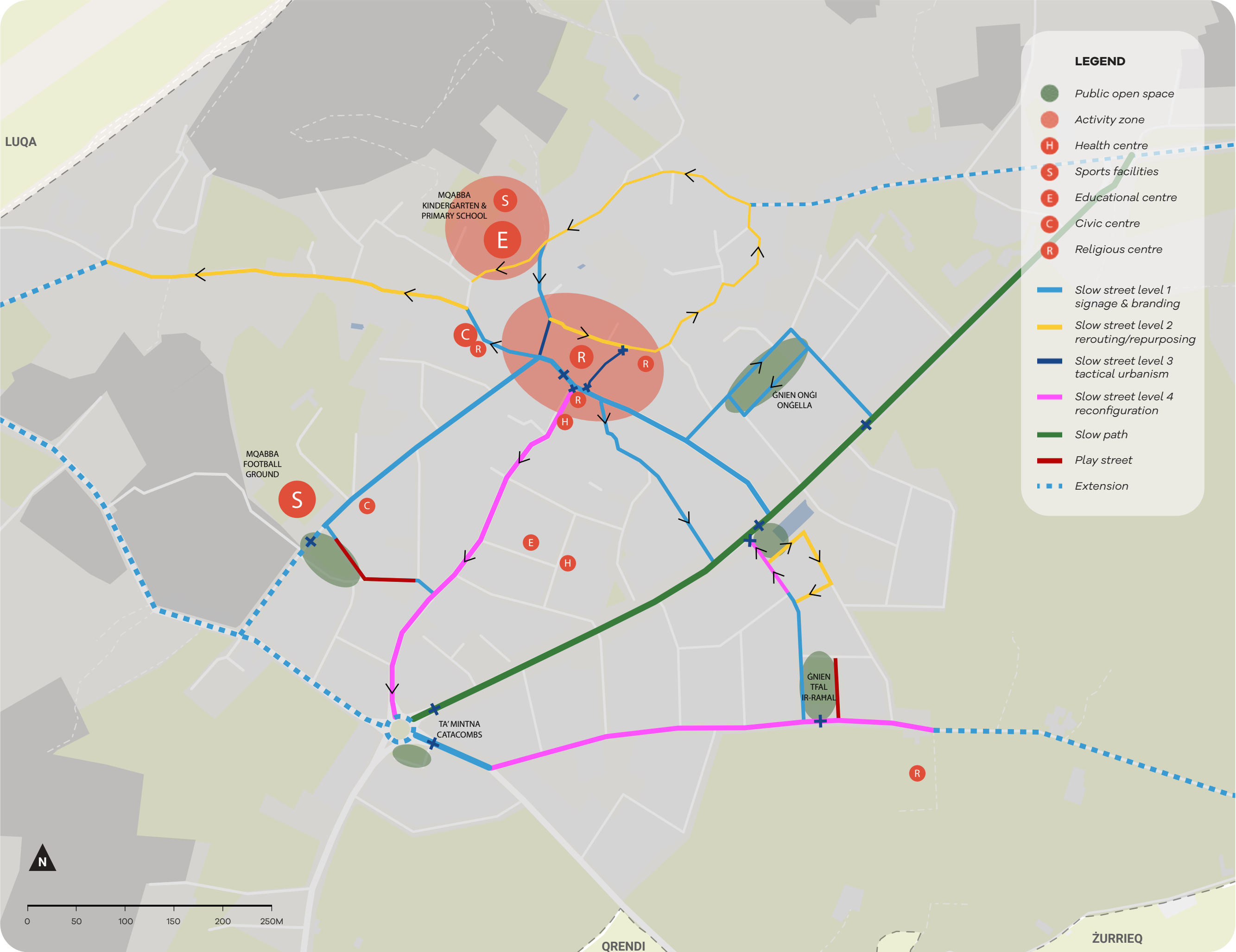
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INTERVENTION



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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.

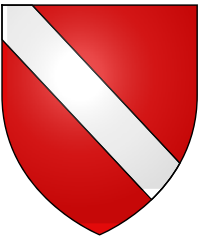
In narrower streets characterised by less space, signage is being proposed to slow down cars and raise the awareness of shared space with cyclists. These streets are included within the Level 1 interventions discussed previously.

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.



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

CYCLING
NETWORK

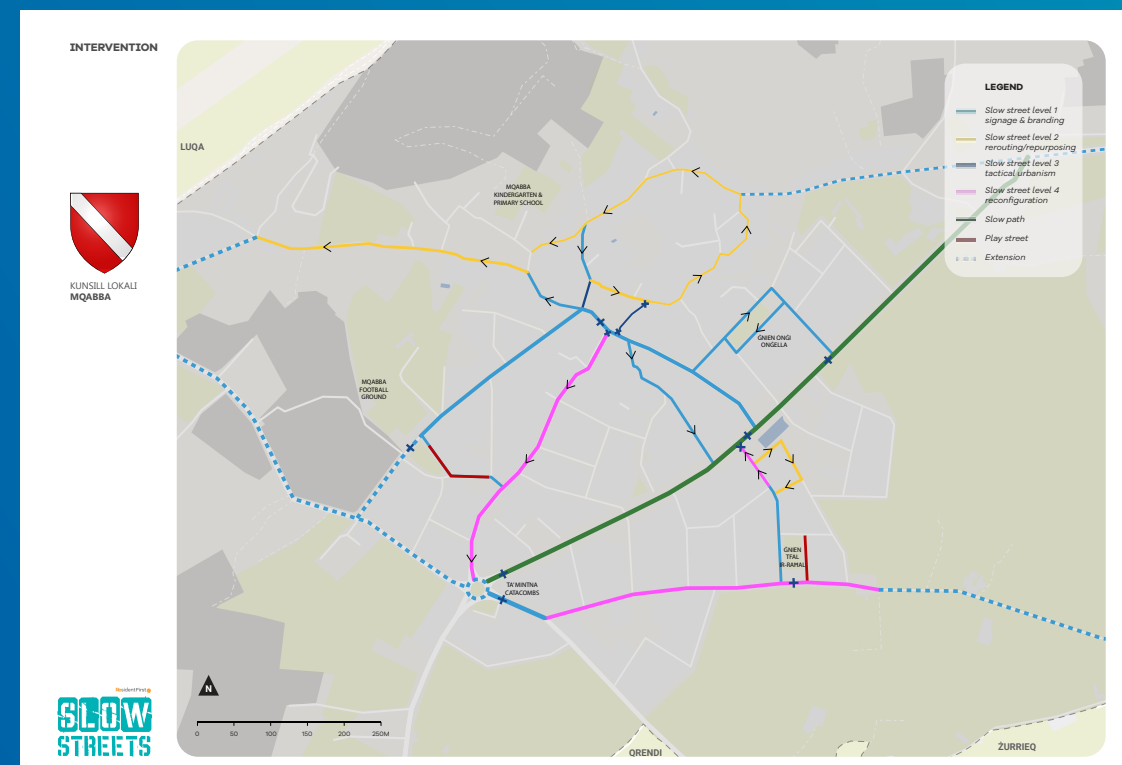


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Mqabba Interventions

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. One of the main challenges in Mqabba is to decongest the narrower local streets around the central square from extraneous, through traffic and instead divert drivers onto more prominent routes, particularly the distributor road network (Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija). The second challenge is to identify walkable routes that link peripheral areas and open spaces better to the centre, so as to avoid a fragmented network disconnecting the edges of the development area from the rest of the urban fabric.



Intervention 1

Triq in-Naẓẓarenu: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4

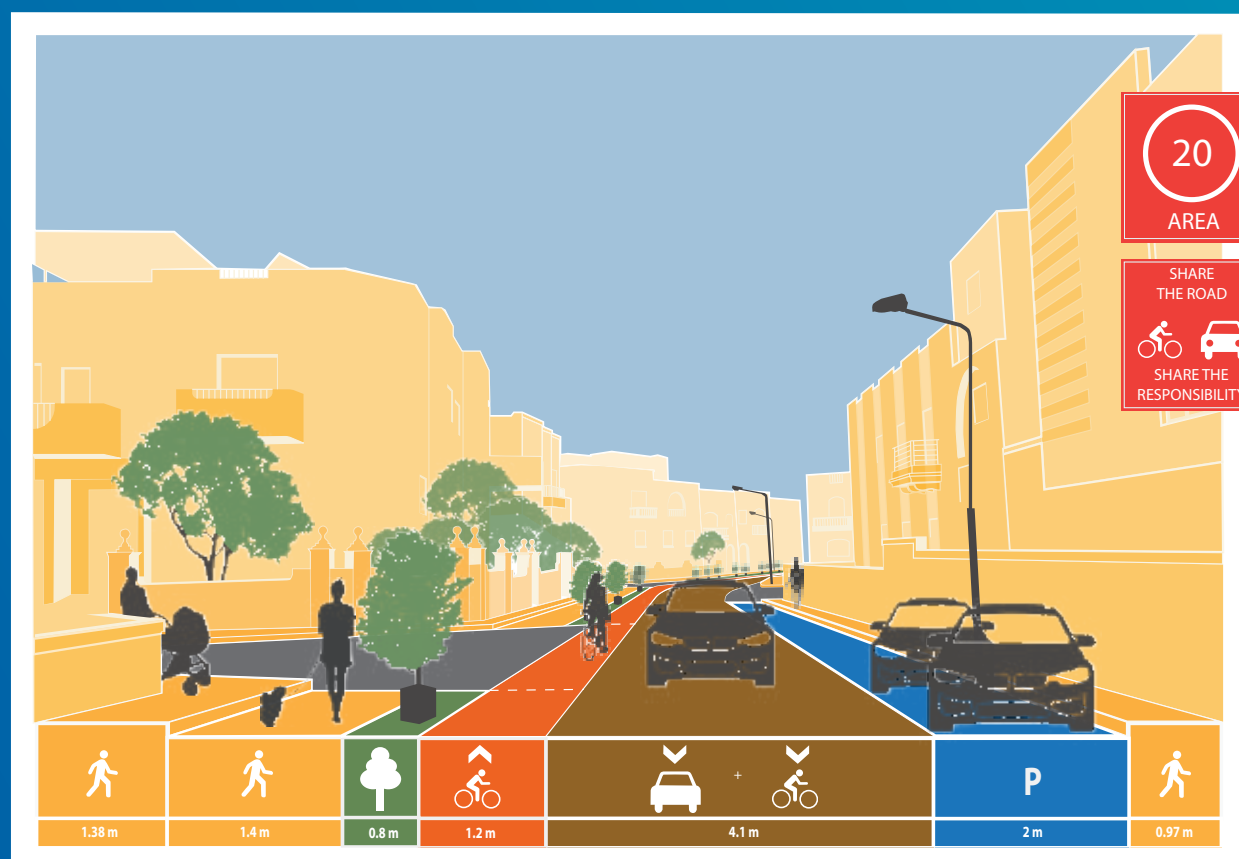
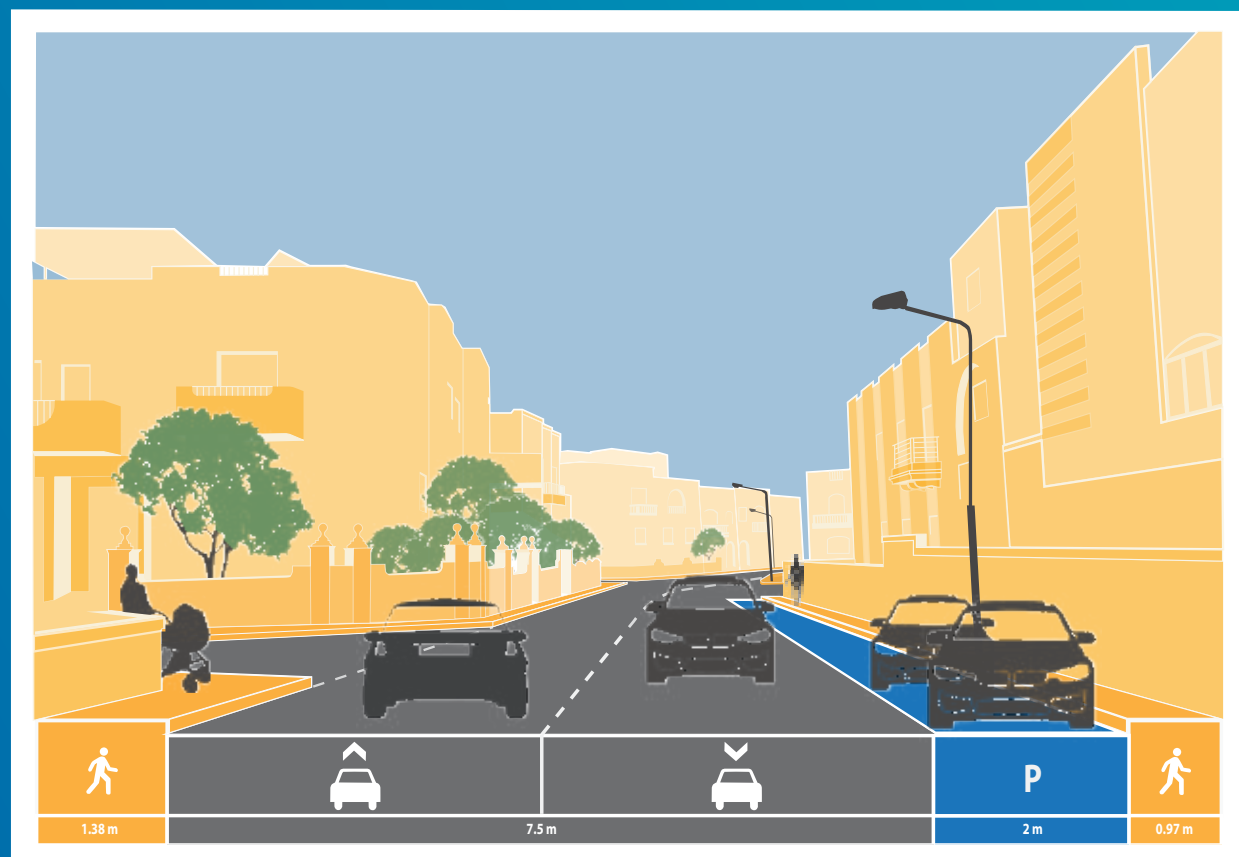
Triq Filippo Venuti, Triq il-Ħajt ta' Matla and Triq Dun Anġlu Mallia: Level 1 and Level 2



The southern residential area of Mqabba is separated from the rest of the residential local centre by the main distributor road, Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija. One of the access roads stemming out of the arterial road and leading to this area is Triq in-Naẓẓarenu which is currently characterised by an open seating space at the road's entrance. In order to reduce vehicular flows within this road and, in turn, be safer to access on foot, its northern section (from Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija to the intersection with Triq Dun Ġeraldu Mangion) is being proposed to be rerouted into a one-way road from its current two-way configuration. This intervention would allow vehicles to only exit the road northwards onto the distributor road, relieving traffic around the public open seating space. The rest of the road, from Triq Dun Ġeraldu Mangion to Triq Hal Kirkop would retain its two-way configuration and include adequate signage for slow speeds.

The left-over space from the removal of one traffic lane would therefore be better dedicated to pedestrians. It is being proposed that within this space a cycle lane would be introduced in the opposite direction of the proposed vehicular flow, planters would be strategically placed along the cycle lane and additional space for pedestrians would be provided for as an extension to the existing pavement (along the side of the open public space). Whilst the introduction of planters would create a greener environment, these would also act as buffers for pedestrians from moving vehicles and bicycles, in turn making the area more pedestrian friendly.





In addition, tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor marking is being proposed at the northern end of Triq Nażżarenu, intersecting with the service road off the distributor road, in order for drivers to slow down when entering this slip road. Adequate signage is also being proposed for sharing the road between drivers and cyclists and marking high pedestrian activity around the open public space.

In another attempt to relieve this area from extraneous traffic flows, Triq Filippo Venuti, the northern section of Triq il-Ħajt ta' Matla (from Triq Filippo Venuti to Triq in-Nażżarenu), and the eastern section of Triq Dun Anġlu Mallia (from Triq il-Ħajt ta' Matla to Triq in-Nażżarenu), are being proposed to be rerouted from two-way to one-way roads. This intervention would create a vehicular loop from Triq Filippo Venuti to Triq il-Ħajt ta' Matla to Triq Dun Anġlu Mallia and back onto Triq in-Nażżarenu, reducing further traffic flows around and along the side of the public open space. In addition, all roads are proposed to have adequate signage for slow speeds.

LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

- Fully pedestrian space
- Floor marking - slowing cars
- Car parking space
- Physical barrier (bollard)
- One-way
- Limited access

Traffic Management

- Private Cars
- Public Buses
- Bicycles
- All modes of transportation
- Cars + Buses
- Buses + Bicycles
- Bicycles + Cars

Triq in-Nażżarenu, Triq Filippo Venuti, Triq il-Ħajt ta' Matla, Triq Dun Anġlu Mallia



Intervention 2

Triq Mikelina Galea: Playstreet

Within the southern residential area of the locality lies another public open space with an integrated children's playground, Ġnien Tfal ir-Raġal, overlooked by residential units which provide natural surveillance of the open space. This road is therefore being proposed to be used as a play street during designated times and/or days as traffic use is already very low and localised, and thus may also act as an extension of the existing open space and children's playground.

Programming the space for various potential activities could attract residents from a wide catchment within the community and does not need to be limited to the residents on this particular street, given that this road may easily be reached by pedestrians from the surrounding areas.



LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

- Fully pedestrian space
- Floor marking - slowing cars
- Car parking space
- Physical barrier (bollard)
- One-way
- Limited access

Traffic Management

- Private Cars
- Public Buses
- Bicycles
- All modes of transportation
- Cars + Buses
- Buses + Bicycles
- Bicycles + Cars



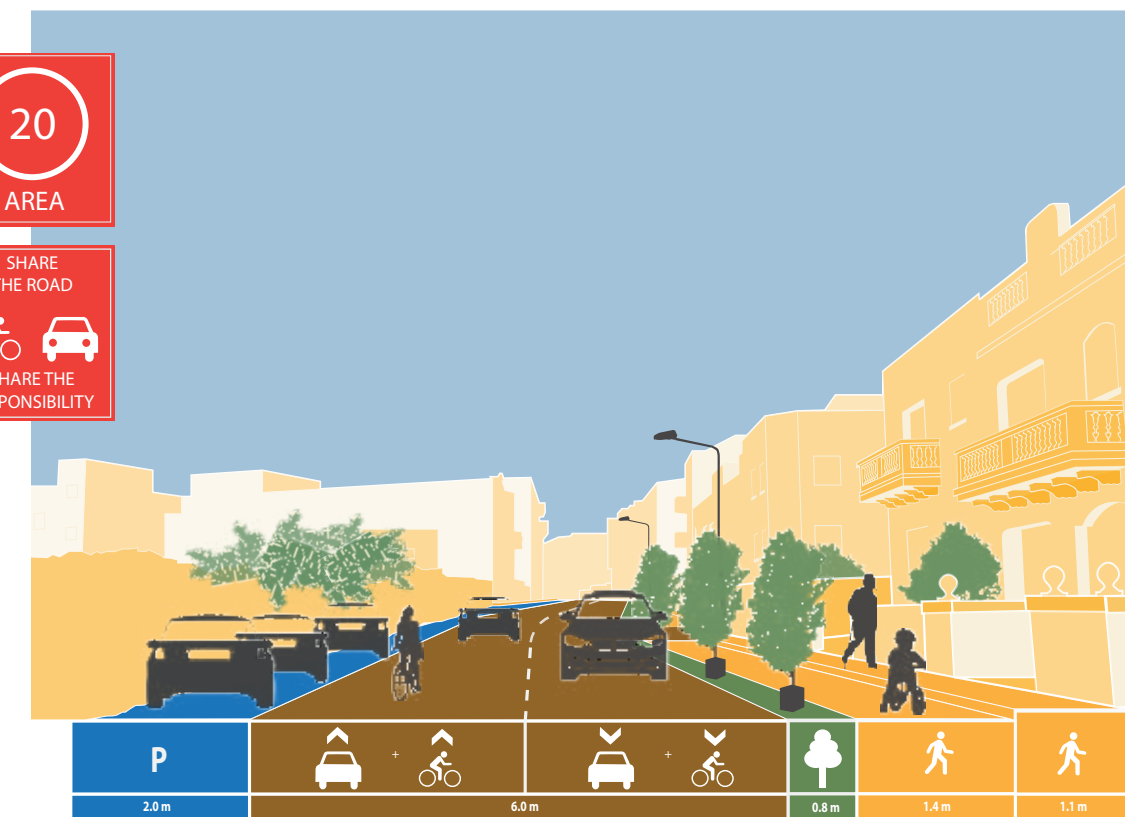
Intervention 3

Triq Ħal Kirkop: Level 4

Triq Ħal Kirkop lies perpendicular to the proposed playstreet Triq Mikelina Galea and is one of the vehicular routes which connect Mqabba to the neighbouring locality of Kirkop. This road is generously wide for vehicular traffic and lacks pedestrian amenities, thus it is being proposed to be reconfigured in order to provide a more walkable environment along the southern residential area of Mqabba.

Whilst the road would still cater for two-way traffic, it is being proposed that the over-dimensioned road width would be reduced to 6m. In turn, the left over space would be used to provide formalised parking bays on the left side of the road (along the high blank wall) to cater for residents of this area and additional pedestrian space on the right side of the road (along the residential fronts). In addition, planters are being proposed to be placed strategically along this road, buffering the pedestrian space from the moving traffic. Adequate signage is also being proposed for slow speeds and to share the road between drivers and cyclists.





Intervention 4

Pjazza tal-Ġublew tad-Djamanti: Level 1 and Level 3

The western end of Triq Ħal Kirkop, approaching the distributor road junction, links to Pjazza tal-Ġublew tad-Djamanti and houses the Ta' Mintna Catacombs and a public open space which would benefit from being better connected and safer for pedestrians to use. Therefore, it is being suggested that tactical urbanism in the form of floor markings is introduced in order to visually connect the two spaces together. In addition adequate signage when approaching this space would be included for the new pedestrian crossing zone and to ensure slow vehicular speeds.



LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

- Fully pedestrian space
- Floor marking - slowing cars
- Car parking space
- Physical barrier (bollard)
- One-way
- Limited access

Traffic Management

- Private Cars
- Public Buses
- Bicycles
- All modes of transportation
- Cars + Buses
- Buses + Bicycles
- Bicycles + Cars

Pjazza tal-Ġublew tad-Djamanti



Intervention 5

Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija: Level 3 and Slow Path

Whilst Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija forms part of the distributor road network, it still has a significant impact on the locality of Mqabba, as it is highly used to cross from the southern residential area to the main local square and used by through traffic to access neighbouring localities. In addition, this distributor road has been recently upgraded; however, unfortunately, it does not cater for formal designated cycle lanes. Thus, in order to promote alternative modes of transportation, the service roads on both sides of the road are being proposed as Slow Paths, wherein the designated speed would be lower than that of the main vehicular lanes and adequate signage would be introduced to share the service roads between drivers and cyclists.

Tactical urbanism is also being suggested in the form of new pedestrian crossings so as to ease access for those on foot from the southern area to the northern/central square area of Mqabba, and vice versa. Pedestrian crossings are being suggested to be included at the intersection of Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija with Triq in-Nazzarenu/ Triq Karmenu Ciantar, linking to proposed Interventions 1 and 8, and enhancing the existing ones at the intersection with Triq l-Imterrqa, (linking to Intervention 6) and at the western end of the road, approaching the main traffic node/Pjazza tal-Ġublew tad-Djamanti.



LEGEND

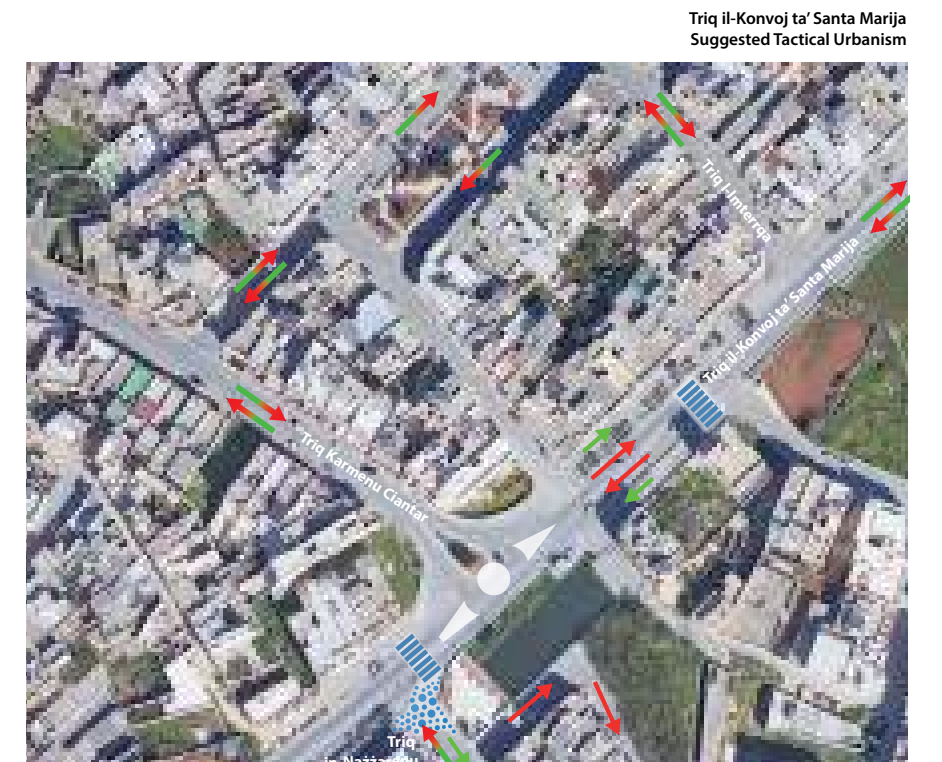
Signage/Tactical Urbanism

- Fully pedestrian space
- Floor marking - slowing cars
- Car parking space

- Physical barrier (bollard)
- One-way
- Limited access

Traffic Management

- Private Cars
- Public Buses
- Bicycles
- All modes of transportation
- Cars + Buses
- Buses + Bicycles
- Bicycles + Cars



LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

- Fully pedestrian space
- Floor marking - slowing cars
- Car parking space

- Physical barrier (bollard)
- One-way
- Limited access

Traffic Management

- Private Cars
- Public Buses
- Bicycles
- All modes of transportation
- Cars + Buses
- Buses + Bicycles
- Bicycles + Cars



Intervention 6

Triq id-Disgħa ta' April 1942, Triq l-Imterrqa and Misraħ il-Fidwa: Level 1

The north-eastern residential cluster of Mqabba includes another garden with an integrated children's playground, Ġnien Onġi Onġella, which has been recently refurbished and attracts a number of visitors on a daily basis. The existing traffic flows within this area are very low and localised and thus it is being proposed that Triq id-Disgħa ta' April 1942, Triq l-Imterrqa and Misraħ il-Fidwa would include adequate signage for slow speeds and sharing of the roads between cyclists and drivers.

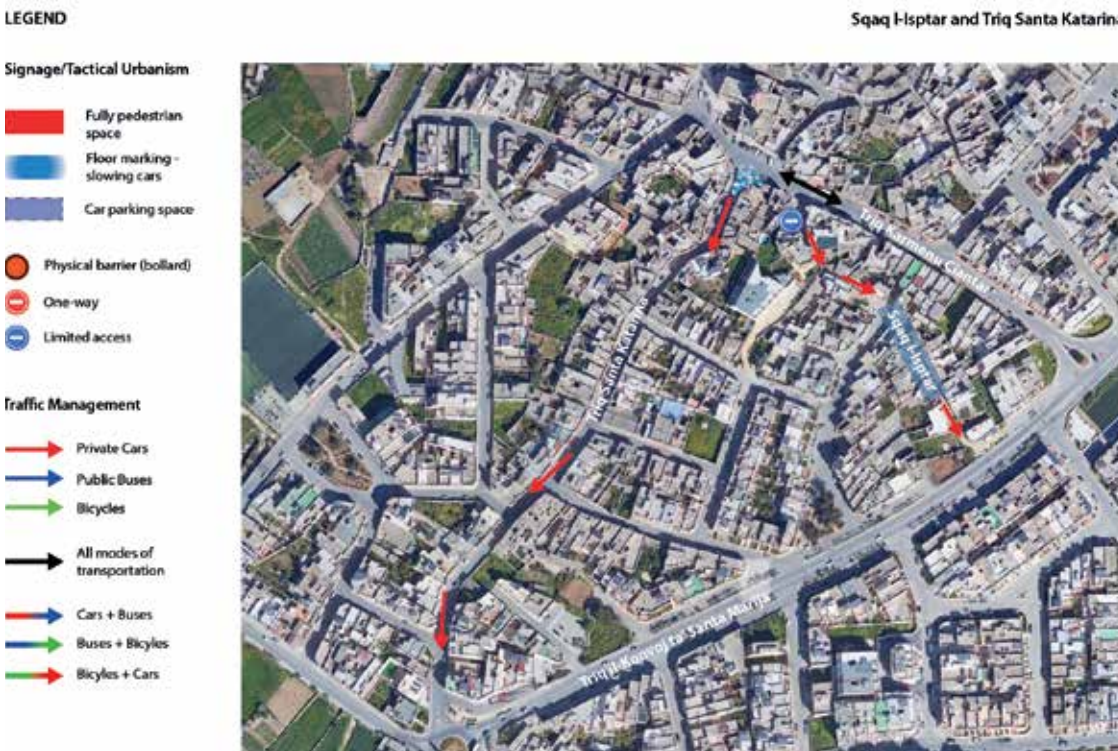
These three roads surround the playground and also link the main distributor road Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija to one of the main spines leading to the central square, Triq Karmenu Ciantar. Therefore, this intervention would make these roads more walkable and provide for multiple modes of transportation to access this residential area and Ġnien Onġi Onġella.



Intervention 7

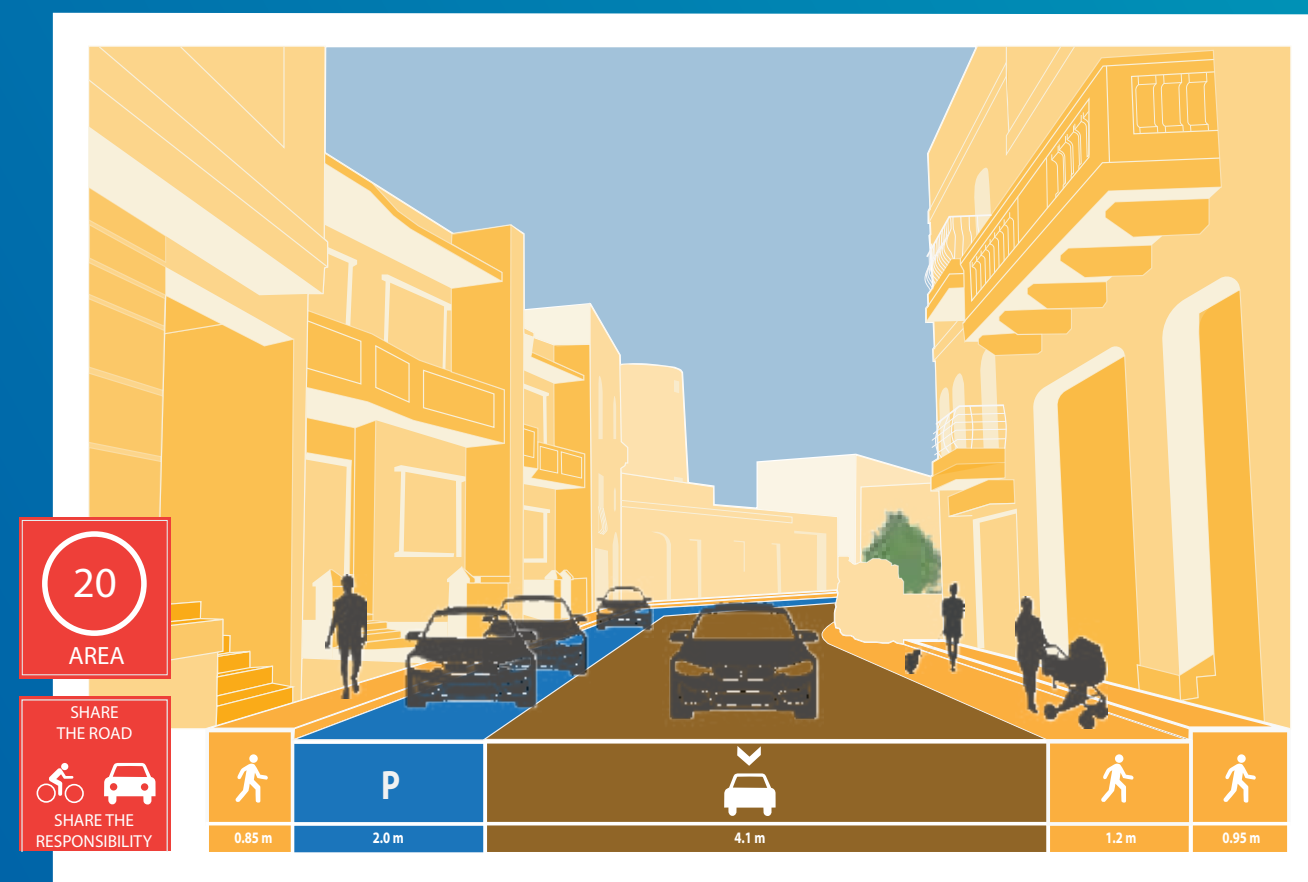
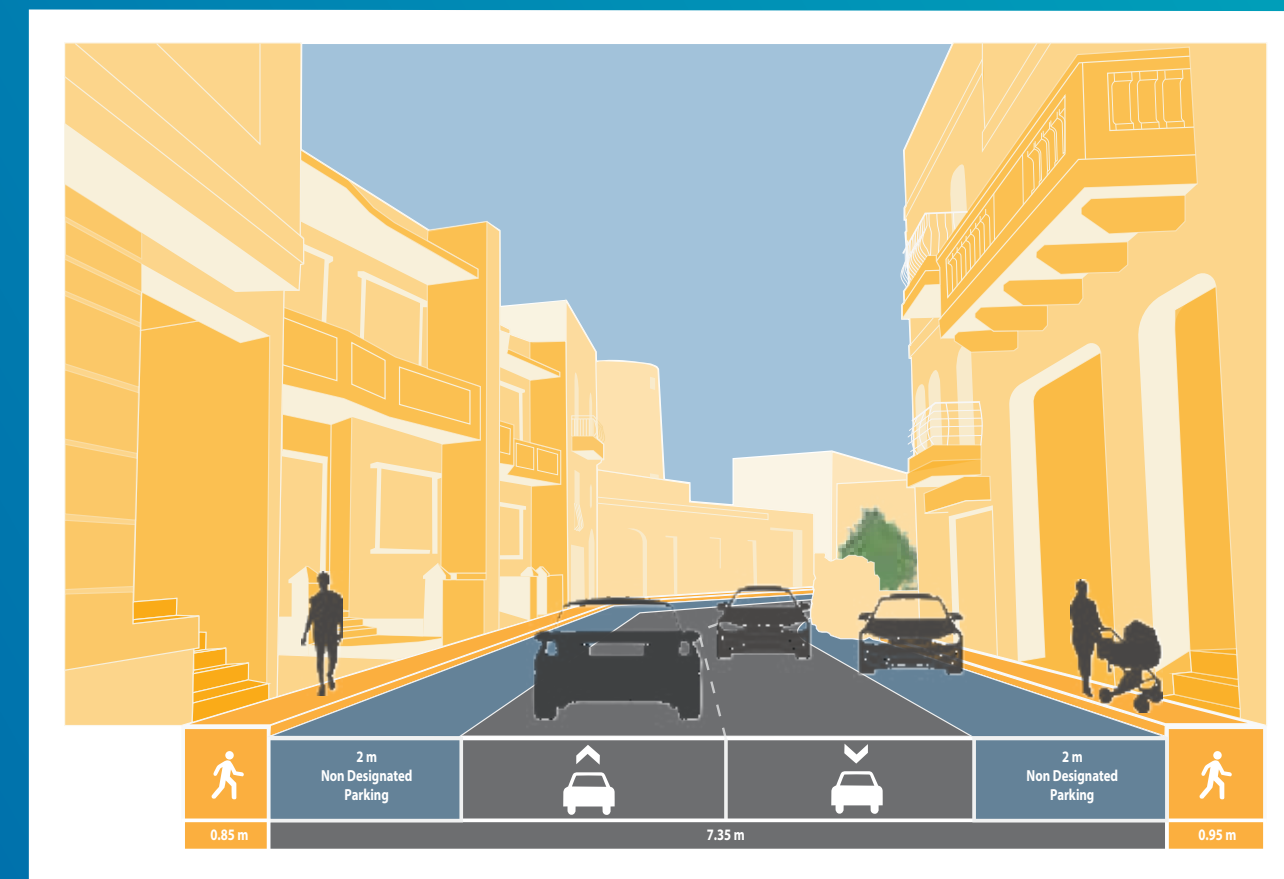
Sqaq l-Isptar: Level 1 Triq Santa Katarina: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4

Sqaq l-Isptar and Triq Santa Katarina link the main distributor road, Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija, to one of the main spines leading to the central square, Triq Karmenu Ciantar. Whilst Sqaq l-Isptar is an already one-way paved road, direction south towards the distributor road and carrying a low vehicular flow, Triq Santa Katerina currently caters for two-way traffic and therefore creates an impact on the vehicular flow towards and from the central square. It is being proposed that Sqaq l-Isptar, which is paved and carries low residential traffic, would have adequate signage for pedestrian priority, improving walkability from the main road, Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija, towards the main spine Triq Karmenu Ciantar.



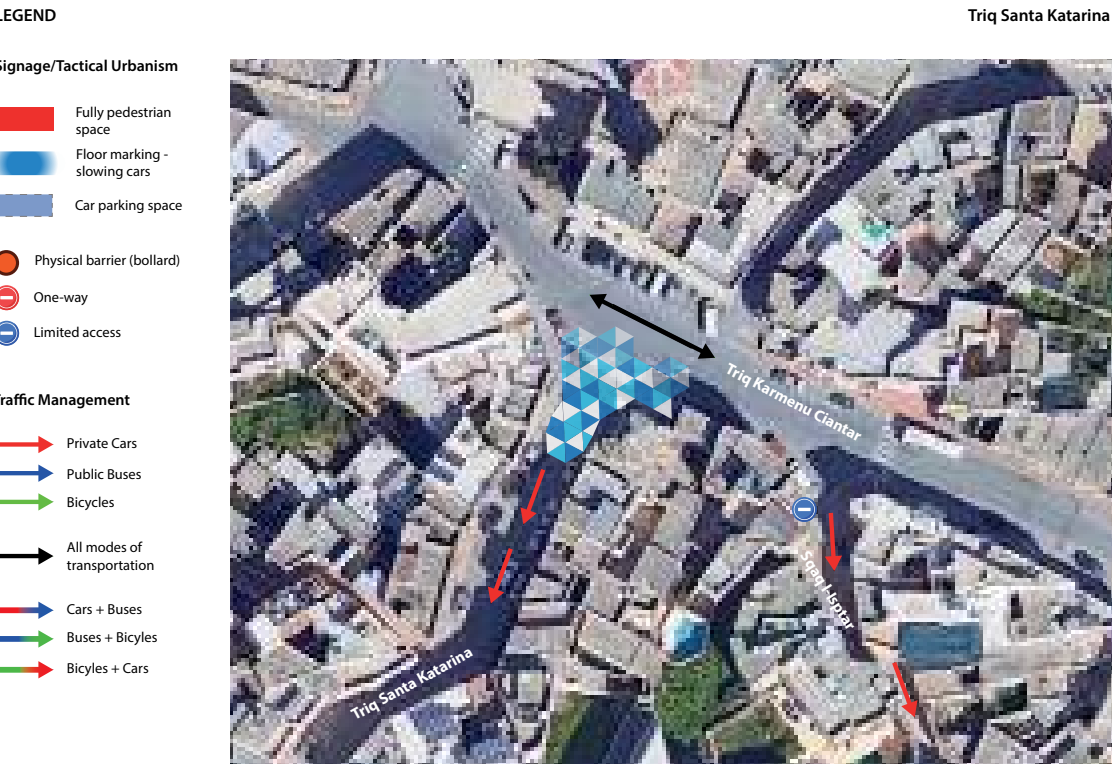
One of the main aims of the Slow Streets Network in Mqabba is to relieve the central square from extraneous traffic, with the potential of closing the square for pedestrian use only during designated days/times, as discussed with the Local Council itself. Thus, Triq Santa Katarina is being proposed to be rerouted into a one-way road from its current two-way configuration, direction south away from the central square, and include adequate signage for slow speeds.

The vehicular lane is being proposed to be 4.1m wide in order to cater for public transportation during the instances where the central square is closed off for vehicular traffic (Suggestion, Intervention 8), as well as possible two-way car traffic resulting from the closure of surrounding roads and/or in the event of an emergency. The left over space from the removal of one traffic lane is being proposed as formalised parking spaces on one side of the road and additional pedestrian space acting as an extension of the existing pavement on the other side of the road. In addition, adequate signage is being proposed for slow speeds and pedestrian priority.





Tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor paint is also being proposed at the northern end of Triq Santa Katarina (central square) in order to slow down vehicles prior to entering this road and to better designate the unarticulated open space as a pedestrian priority area.



Intervention 8

Triq Karmenu Ciantar and Triq il-Madonna tal-Ġilju: Level 1 and Level 3



Triq Karmenu Ciantar and Triq il-Madonna tal-Ġilju are the two main spines which connect the central square to peripheral areas, carrying vehicular traffic in both directions, and are also highly used by public transportation. Whilst these roads are being proposed to retain their existing configuration, adequate signage is being proposed for sharing of the roads between cyclists and drivers, promoting alternative modes of transportation, and new signage for high pedestrian activities, especially around the central square area.

By allowing these two roads to retain their existing vehicular traffic, other narrower roads around the central square and within the residential areas would be able to be intervened upon to potentially become more walkable and pedestrian oriented - roads such as Triq il-Missjoni ż-Żgħira (Intervention 11), Triq Santa Katarina and Sqaq l-Isptar (Intervention 7). As such, tactical urbanism in the form of floor paint is being proposed to emphasise the existing pedestrian crossings in Triq il-Madonna tal-Ġilju at the intersection with Misraħ il-Missjoni ż-Żgħira (in front of the football ground) and at Triq Karmenu Ciantar at the intersection with Triq Santa Katarina.



Whilst with this intervention the majority of vehicular traffic around the central square would be limited to Triq Karmenu Ciantar and Triq il-Madonna tal-Ġilju, reconfigurations could be implemented to close off the square for pedestrian use during designated times and days - specifically, Friday and Saturday between 7:30 and 14:00, and Sunday from 11:30 to 17:00 - potentially leading to permanent closure and full pedestrianisation of the central square.



The fully pedestrianised space would include the main square, Pjazza tal-Knisja, together with the surrounding local roads that branch out of this central space, including Triq il-Karmnu, the currently pedestrian street Triq il-Parroċċa, Triq id-Duluri and the upper end of Triq Karmenu Ciantar that interfaces with the square (until the intersection with Triq Santa Katarina and beyond the intersection with Triq San Bazilju).

Whilst Triq Santa Katarina would be able to carry this vehicular flow and the larger public transportation buses through its reconfiguration (explained in Intervention 7), the bend at Triq il-Madonna tal-Ġilju with Triq l-Aħwa Ġhigo is somewhat sharper and may be affected by on-street parking which might limit the maneuvering of public buses. Therefore, following a more in-depth study with regard to the turning radius required for buses on these streets, on-street parking controls would also have to be implemented, possibly including the relocation of a few car parking spaces in order to allow for adequate turning of buses.

Whilst Triq Santa Katarina would be able to carry this vehicular flow and the larger public transportation buses through its reconfiguration (explained in Intervention 7), Triq l-Aħwa Ġhigo and Triq il-Barumbara have sharper bends and on-street parking which might limit the maneuvering of public buses. Therefore, following a more on-depth study, on-street parking control have to be implemented, including the removal of few car parking spaces to allow for adequate turning circles of the buses.

The closure of the square would occur with the introduction of moveable planters that provide a good, aesthetic edge, while being flexible enough to be removed easily if an emergency had to arise and the square would need to be opened up for specific vehicles to pass through. In addition, it is the Local Council's intention that the square's closure would further preclude access to the on-street parking located therein. As an alternative, vehicular parking could be accommodated within the school grounds, which are within walking distance from the square and which would not be in use during the envisaged times for the piazza's closure.

LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

- Fully pedestrian space
- Floor marking - slowing cars
- Car parking space
- Physical barrier (bollard)
- One-way
- Limited access

Traffic Management

- Private Cars
- Public Buses
- Bicycles
- All modes of transportation
- Cars + Buses
- Buses + Bicycles
- Bicycles + Cars

Triq Karmenu Ciantar, Triq il-Madonna tal-Ġilju - Main Square Closure

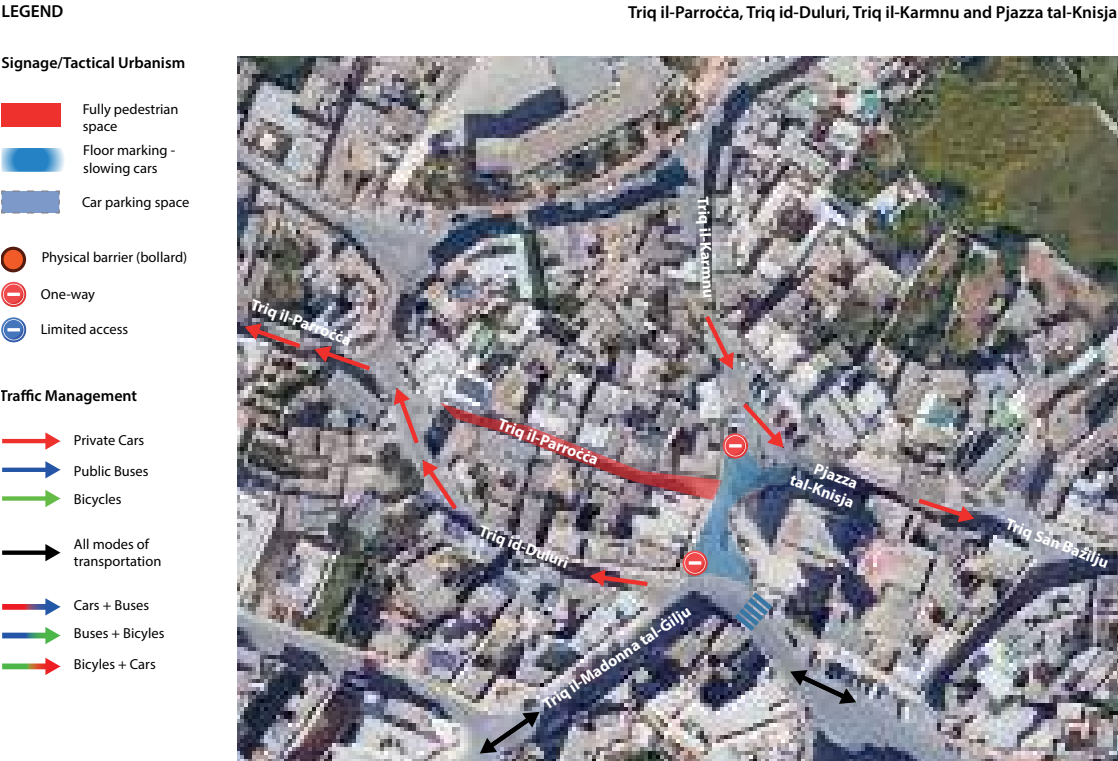


Intervention 9

Triq il-Karmnu and Triq id-Duluri: Level 1
Triq il-Parroċċa (western section) : Level 1 and Level 2
Pjazza tal-Knisja: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3

These north-western roads stem out of the central square and have a significant impact on vehicular flows within this same area. Therefore, it is being proposed that Triq id-Duluri and Triq il-Karmnu remain as one-way roads in their existing directions, and include new signage for slow speeds and sharing between drivers and cyclists. In addition, the western section of Triq il-Parroċċa, from the intersection with Triq id-Duluri towards the west (exiting the locality) is a very narrow road which currently caters for two-way traffic. Therefore, it is being proposed that this section of the road would be rerouted into a one-way road towards the west, as a continuation of the existing eastern section of the same road.

In addition, the area fronting the Parish Church, between the church and the eastern residential and commercial fronts, is already paved in an effort to slow down moving vehicles across the square and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. It is being proposed that this area would be closed off for traffic and in turn, become a fully pedestrian zone.



Vehicles would no longer be able to cross from the North side to the South side of the square and in turn, pedestrians would have a safer space, especially considering that it already is a very busy area with commercial activities and an existing pedestrian path. 'No entry' signage is therefore being proposed, including signage to alert drivers of high pedestrian activity. To further close off the area for pedestrian use only, movable planters could also be placed along the edges, creating a safer and more walkable environment for those on foot.

In instances when this part of the square would need to be open for vehicular traffic, such as during school hours (further explained in Intervention 10), or for emergency purposes, planters could be removed accordingly so as to allow vehicles to pass from the North (Triq il-Karmnu) to the South (Triq id-Duluri).

Intervention 10

Triq San Bażilju and Triq Valletta: Level 1 and Level 2

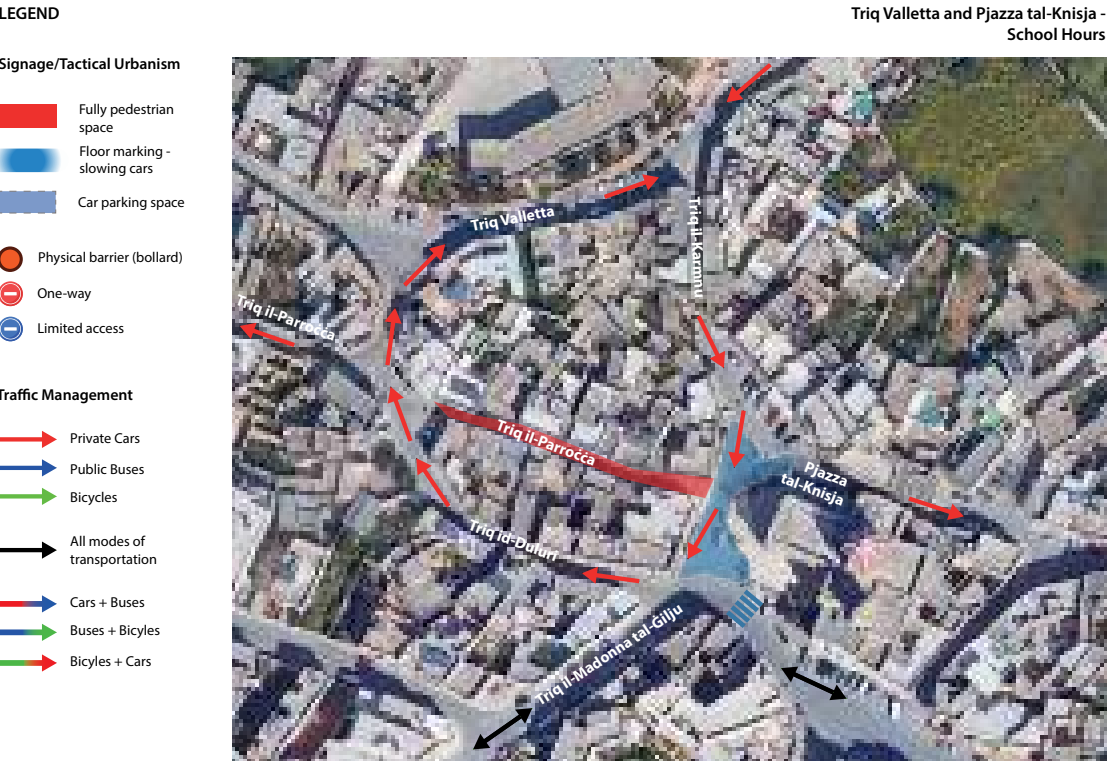
Triq San Bażilju is a very narrow local road, stemming out of Pjazza tal-Knisja and currently catering for two-way traffic. As a continuation of the previous intervention, it is being proposed to be rerouted into a one-way road, direction north towards Triq Valletta, in order for vehicles to exit the central square only. In turn, Triq Valletta is also being proposed to be rerouted into a one-way road direction west, creating a one-way vehicular route within the northern area of the locality (from Triq Valletta to Triq il-Karmnu to Triq San Bażilju and back to Triq Valletta).

The lower section of Triq San Bażilju, at the back of the Parish Church, is being proposed to be closed off for vehicular through traffic. Limited access for servicing of the small commercial outlets within this road section, or for residential access (drop off), would be allowed from the southern entrance, exiting northwards. This road would therefore be better oriented for pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, tactical urbanism in the form of floor marking is being proposed at both ends of this narrow road section to emphasise its pedestrianisation and make it more visible for pedestrians and cyclists to use. Adequate signage for limited vehicular access and high pedestrian activity is also being proposed.



The western section of Triq Valletta, which houses the Primary School, is already a one-way part-road direction east, but it is being proposed to change traffic direction towards the west as a continuation of the rest of Triq Valletta. With this intervention, vehicles coming from the north-eastern area of Mqabba, would be able to exit the locality directly through Triq Valletta and Triq il-Parroċċa, rather than using the main square.

Note: During school hours only, it is being suggested that the vehicular direction within the western section of Triq Valletta would shift so as to carry traffic in the eastern direction, whilst Pjazza tal-Knisja would be opened up for vehicular traffic during this limited time window so that a traffic loop could be created between the western section of Triq Valletta, Triq il-Karmnu, Pjazza tal-Knisja and Triq id-Duluri, easing access to the school area.



Intervention 11

Triq il-Missjoni ż-Żgħira and Triq il-Mithna: Level 1 and Playstreet



Triq il-Missjoni ż-Żgħira is a local road with a low traffic volume, stemming out of Triq il-Madonna tal-Gilju, located opposite to the Mqabba football ground and along the public open green space Misraħ il-Missjoni ż-Żgħira. It leads to Triq il-Mithna and further to Triq Santa Katarina (which is being proposed as a slower moving, more walkable route, Intervention 7). Thus, both Triq il-Missjoni ż-Żgħira and Triq il-Mithna are being proposed to have adequate signage for slow speeds in order to be safer and more walkable for pedestrians to use.

In addition, these two roads are being proposed as one continuous play street during designated times and/or days as traffic use is very localised therein. This play street would act as an extension of the existing open green space which already includes outdoor public gym equipment. It would also be in close proximity to the football ground and could be naturally looked over by the residential fronts along these roads. Just as Triq Mikelina Galea is being proposed as a play street to cater for the residents of the southern area of Mqabba (Intervention 2), this play street would cater for the northern area of Mqabba, including those residing in proximity to, or around, the central square.





Barrier elements

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

Programming

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

Landscaping elements

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



Street furniture

moveable chairs, tables, play, exercise and shade elements are preferable

Signs

to announce and explain the Play Streets concept, the Slow Streets branding and to communicate official traffic regulations

Surface treatment

can be used to further define the playstreet

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 play streets, 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 require more investment into signage and branding in order to build on Phase 1, and implement the necessary re-routing measures as discussed previously.



Phase 3

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.



Mqabba

The simplest interventions to implement first would be the play streets, tactical urbanism interventions (namely floor markings) and temporary signage. Floor markings at intersections and critical crossings may be carried out first as pedestrian priority and safety is the primary concern of the Slow Streets initiative. Specifically the entrances to specific roads together with floor markings around the main central square could be implemented to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Play street closures during this phase may be carried out on designated days and at times when traffic is already low, such as on a Sunday. Testing of the key interventions around the square leading to their eventual implementation may also be carried (specifically the roads north to the central square - Triq San Bazilju, Triq Valletta, Triq il-Karmnu and Triq id-Duluri). In addition, the Slow Paths of the distributor road, Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija, may be implemented.

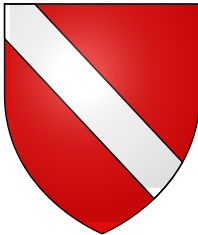
During the second phase, the reconfiguration and rerouting of the roads south of the central square, specifically Sqaq l-Isptar and Triq Santa Katarina could be tested and eventually carried out as these would link to the roads tested in Phase 1. In addition, the testing of the reconfiguration interventions of Triq Hal Kirkop and Triq Nażżarenu could be tested out. Simultaneously, Phase 1 testing on Sundays may extend over the entire weekend and possibly on other designated days (and/or at designated times) during the week.

Finally for Phase 3, the implementation of all interventions at their full scale is envisioned to occur, including the interventions of the southern area of Mqabba (specifically Triq in-Nażżarenu and surrounding roads) and all Level 1 interventions so as to consolidate the Slow Streets Network of Mqabba.

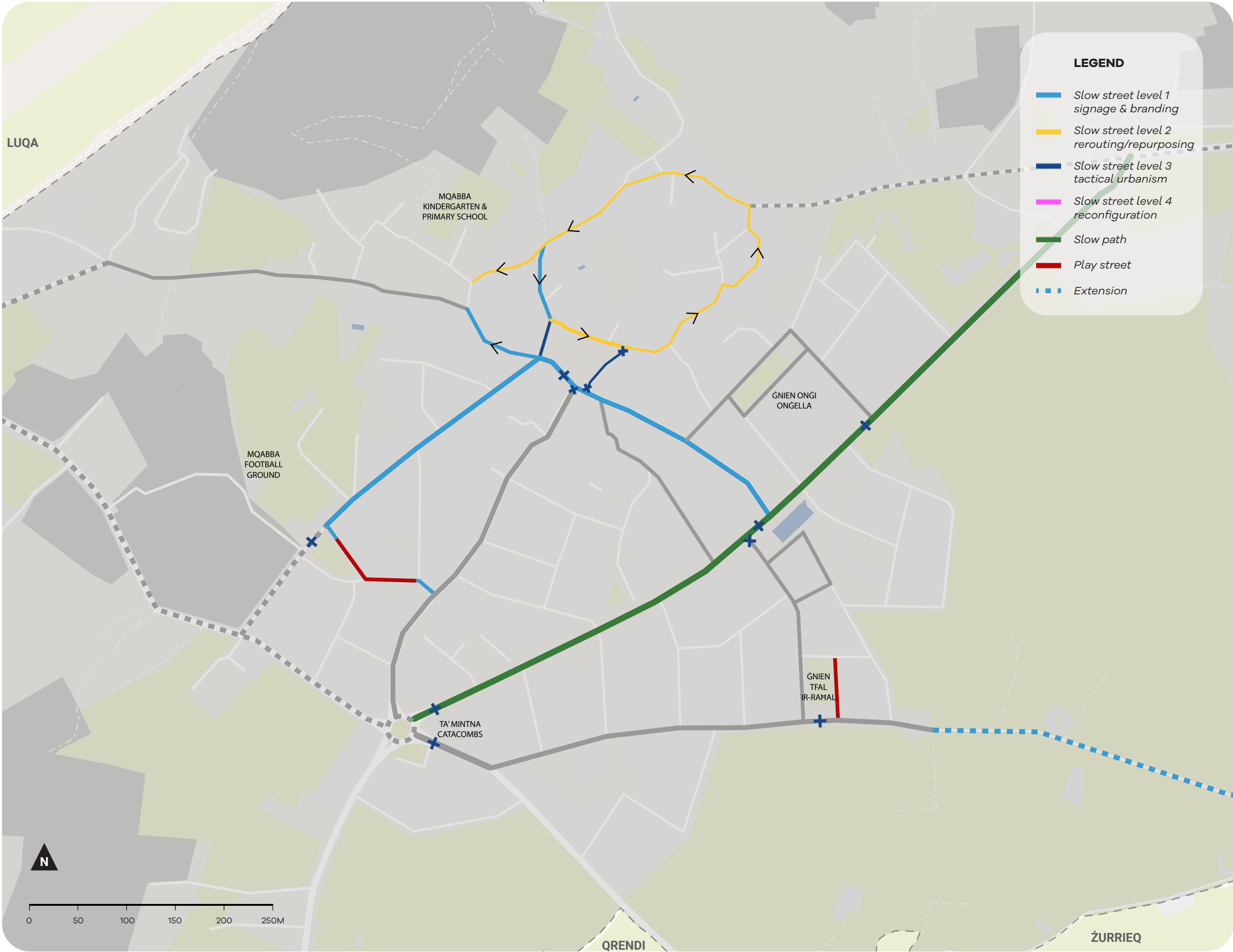


PHASING

STARTING &
TESTING THE
NETWORK

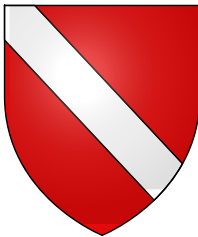


KUNSILL LOKALI
MQABBA

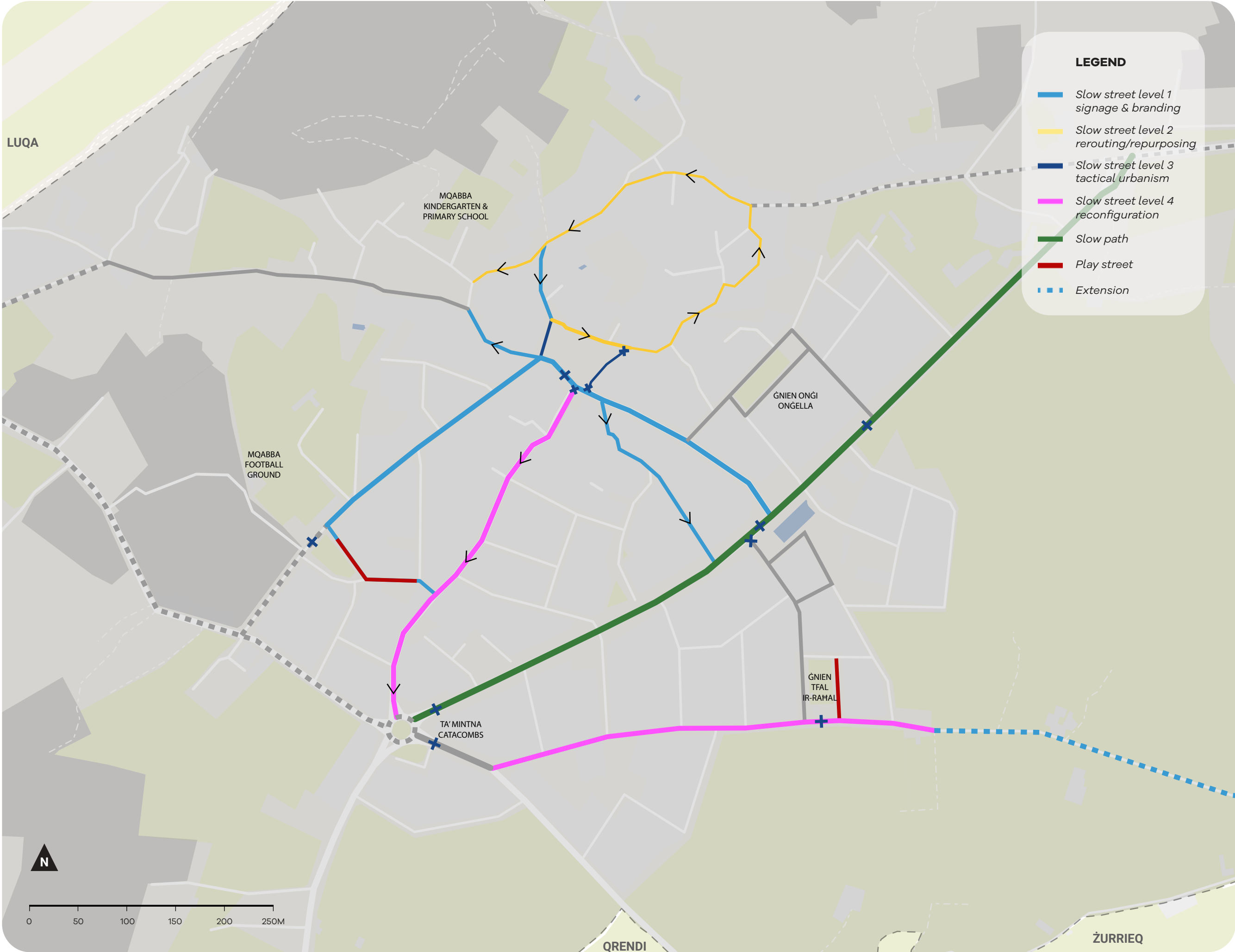


PHASING

STRENGTHENING
THE NETWORK

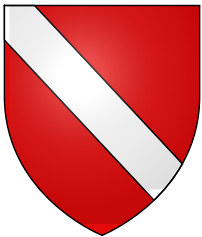


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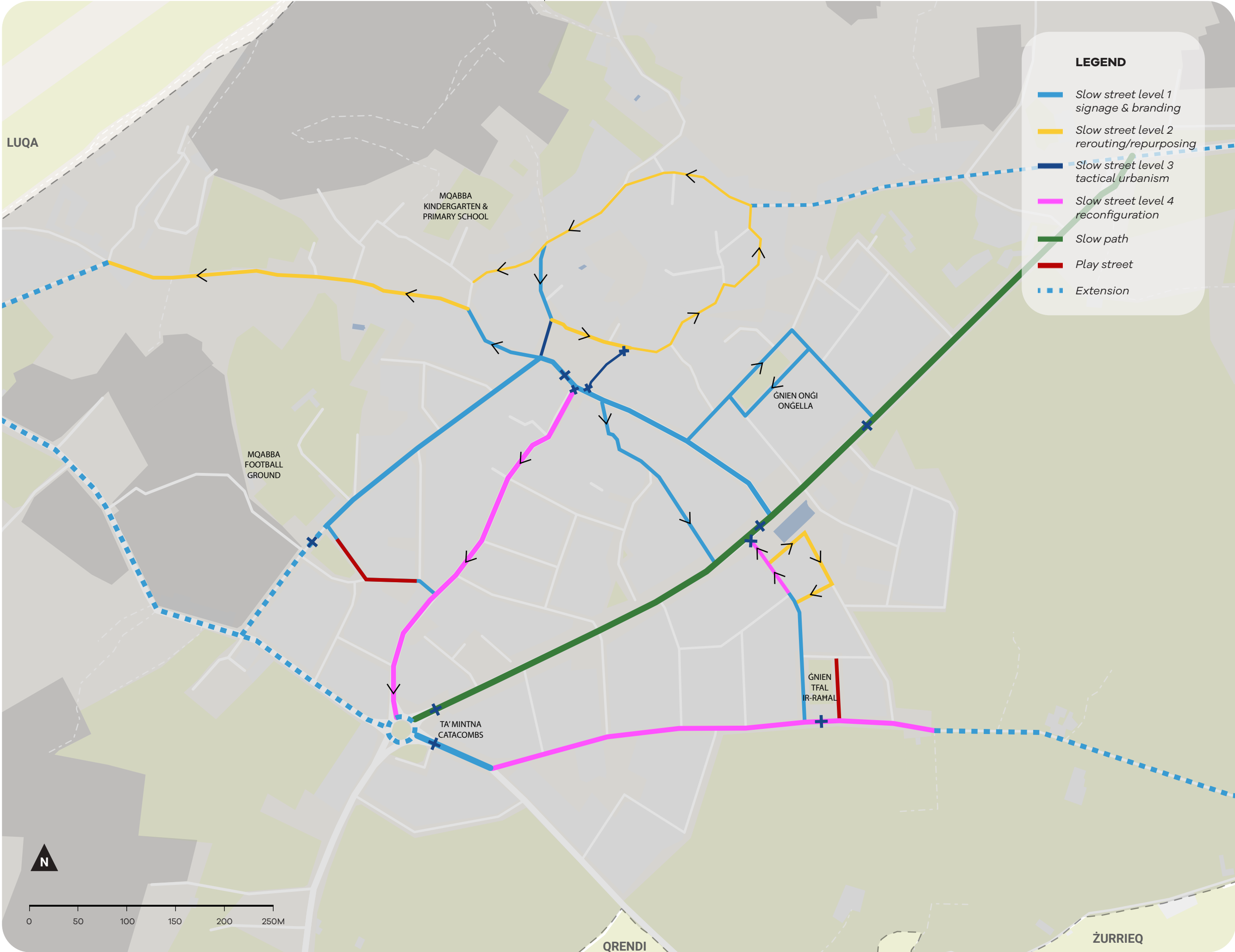



PHASING

COMPLETING
THE NETWORK



KUNSILL LOKALI
MQABBA





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.

The Way Forward

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.

Mqabba is a small traditional village located in the southern area of Malta, with some agricultural land and a number of soft limestone quarries at its periphery. The locality is also renowned for its fireworks, which are often displayed during the locality's feast and within local and international competitions. The centre of the locality is characterised by the Parish Church, social and community facilities and commercial amenities, while a vast array of monuments and historical artefacts within the locality attract both residents and visitors on a yearly basis. Streets around the centre of the locality are winding and narrow, making them ideal for those accessing the square on foot. Other roads which are more vehicular oriented are highly used by through traffic and public transportation, however these link to public open spaces and gardens which are also highly frequented, especially by residents. Both types of roads, especially those in proximity or around the central square, would therefore benefit from being more walkable, in turn becoming safer for all to use.

The main aim of the Slow Streets strategy is to liberate local streets around the central square from extraneous traffic that could instead be safely used by residents. By using different schemes of traffic management, including both rerouting opportunities and tactical urbanism interventions, the priority within these streets is being shifted to pedestrian and cyclist use rather than cars, while still retaining the important bus routes that navigate within the locality. A number of key routes have also been identified for potential reconfiguration since they could provide critical and much-needed change to the entire network and enable a stronger and safer street environment for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

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

Summary

- 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.

Slow Streets involves a combination of strategies that aim to result in safer and more frequent use of streets by pedestrians. In order for Slow Streets to be successfully executed, a high degree of collaboration is required among various stakeholders. Engaging the residents, preferably throughout the entire process, will produce the most successful plans for change.

Intervention Summary street by street

Intervention 1 - Triq in-Nazzarenu (signage & branding, rerouting, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: pedestrian priority (near public open space)

Signage: share the road (cyclists and drivers)

Signage: one-way road

Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road direction north towards distributor road

Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of colourful floor paint

Reconfiguration: reduce vehicular lane width to 3.7m, introduce formalised parking spaces on one side of the road and a cycle lane in the opposite direction, additional pedestrian space and strategically placed planters to buffer the pedestrians from bicycles and vehicles on the other side of the road

Tactical urbanism: floor marking to designate additional pedestrian space and planters

Intervention 1 - Triq Filippo Venuti, Triq il-Ħajt ta’ Matla, Triq Dun Anġlu Mallia (signage & branding and rerouting)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: one-way road

Rerouting: two-way part-roads to one-way part-roads (forming a vehicular loop from Triq Filippo Venuti to Triq il-Ħajt ta’ Matla to Triq Dun Anġlu Mallia)

Intervention 2 - Triq Mikelina Galea (Playstreet)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: road closure on designated Play Street days

Play Street: programming of activities

Intervention 3 - Triq Ħal Kirkop (tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 30km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (cyclists and drivers)

Reconfiguration: reduce vehicular lanes width to 6m, introduce formalised parking spaces on one side of the road (along blank wall) and additional pedestrian space with strategically placed planters to buffer the pedestrians from vehicles on the other side of the road

Tactical urbanism: floor marking to designate additional pedestrian space and planters

Intervention 4 - Pjazza tal-Ġublew tad-Djamanti (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: pedestrian priority zone

Signage: pedestrian crossing point

Tactical Urbanism: floor markings to visually connect the Ta’ Mintna Catacombs to the public open seating area

Intervention 5 - Triq il-Konvoj ta’ Santa Marija (tactical urbanism and Slow Path)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: share the service road (cyclists and drivers)

Signage: pedestrian crossing points

Tactical Urbanism: floor markings to emphasise existing and provide new pedestrian crossings

Intervention 6 - Triq id-Disgħa ta’ April 1942, Triq l-Imterrqa and Misraħ il-Fidwa (signage & branding)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (cyclists and drivers)

Intervention 7 - Sqaq l-Isptar (signage & branding)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: limited access for residents only
- Signage: pedestrian priority

Intervention 7 - Triq Santa Katarina (signage & branding, rerouting, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: pedestrian priority
- Signage: share the road (cyclists and drivers)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road direction south away from the central square
- Reconfiguration: reduce vehicular lane width to 4.1m, introduce formalised parking spaces on one side of the road and a cycle lane in the opposite direction and additional pedestrian space as an extension of the existing pavement
- Tactical urbanism: floor marking to designate additional pedestrian space and floor marking at entrance of road to slow down drivers before entering road

Intervention 8 - Triq Karmenu Gıantar and Triq il-Madonna tal-Ġilju (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (cyclists and drivers)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor marking to emphasise existing pedestrian crossings
- Suggestion for closure of the central square:
- Signage: no entry (to the square)

Intervention 9 - Triq il-Karmnu and Triq id-Duluri (signage & branding)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: pedestrian priority area
- Signage: share the road (pedestrians, cyclists and drivers)

Intervention 9 - Triq il-Parroċċa (western section) (signage & branding and rerouting)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 30km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (pedestrians, cyclists and drivers)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road, direction west to exit the locality

Intervention 9 - Pjazza tal-Knisja (signage & branding, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (pedestrians, cyclists and drivers)
- Signage: high level of pedestrian activity
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road, direction east to exit the central square
- Intervention 9 - Pjazza tal-Knisja - pedestrian only zone (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)**
- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: no entry
- Signage: high pedestrian activity zone
- Tactical urbanism: planters to further close off the area for pedestrian use only

Intervention 10 - Triq San Bażilju (signage & branding and rerouting)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (cyclists and drivers)
- Signage: one-way roads
- Rerouting: two-way road to one one-way road, direction north away from the central square
- Signage: limited access for servicing and residents only, part-road at the back of the church (Triq San Bażilju)

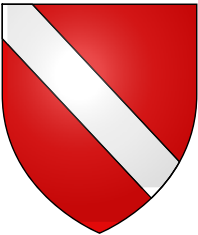
Intervention 10 - Triq Valletta (signage & branding and rerouting)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (cyclists and drivers)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road, direction west towards the school

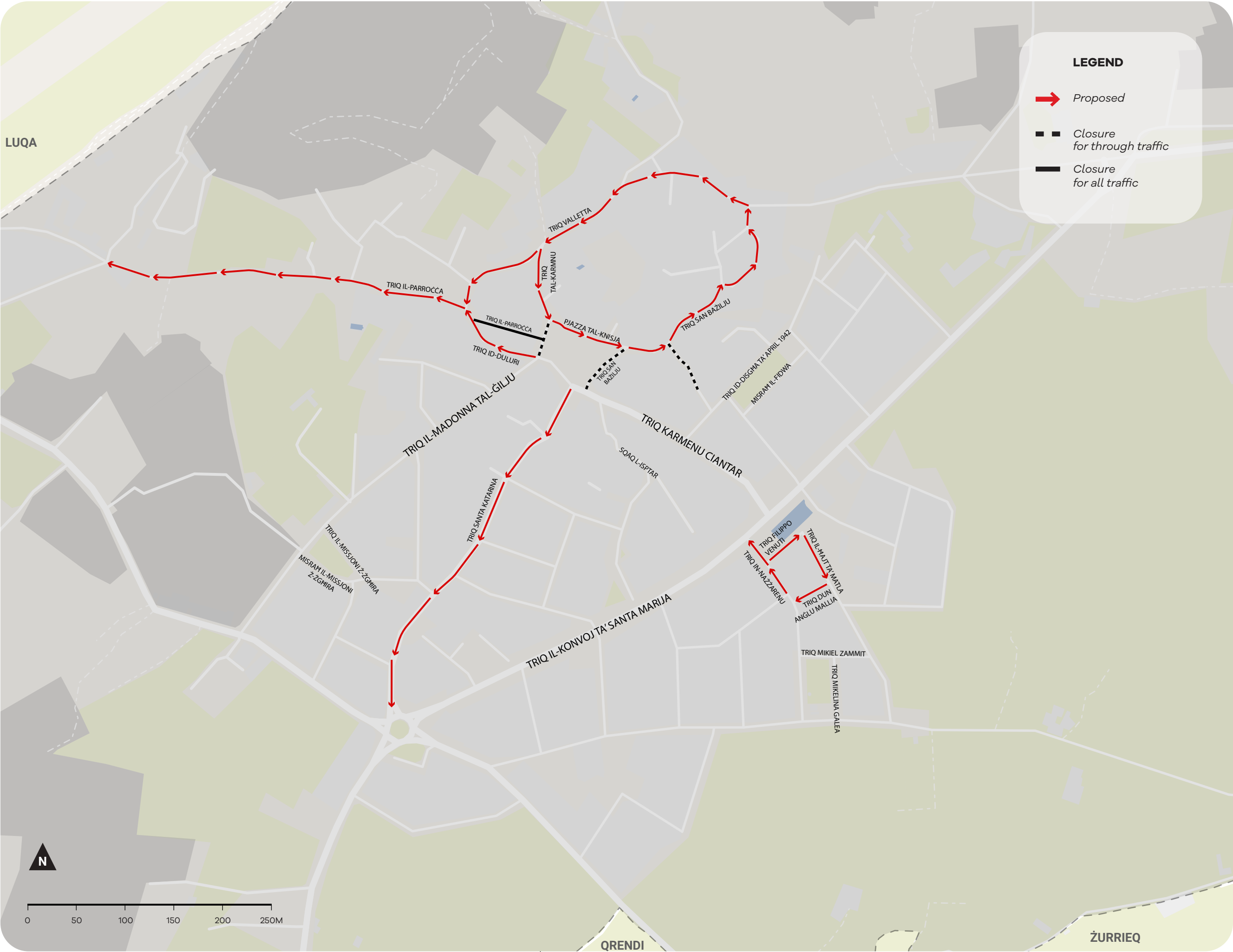
Intervention 11 - Triq il-Missjoni ż-Żghira and Triq il-Mithna (signage & branding and Play Street)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr
- Signage: road closure on designated Play Street days
- Play Street: programming of activities

TRAFFIC



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