

SLOW STREETS NETWORK

September 2020

L-IMSIDA



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

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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.

Msida

What currently characterises the locality of Msida is the disconnection between different areas, which are divided by heavy infrastructure, namely arterial roads, resulting in a fragmented urban fabric. Given that crucial service buildings, namely Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta, are located in the north-western part of the locality, it has been important to identify connecting routes that may allow all residents a safe and convenient access to this area. Good quality access to the Local Council offices, a number of schools, churches and important civic and community buildings, has also been a prime consideration.

The main challenge with Msida has therefore been to define a well-connected and comprehensive network of streets and spaces that pedestrians could use in order to reach these major nodes and landmarks. The network culminates in an improved access to the Msida promenade, which acts as the locality's largest public open space.



SLOW STREETS LOCALITY

MSIDA



SAN ĠWANN

GŻIRA

TA' XBIEX

BIRKIRKARA

PIETA

SANTA VENERA



0 100 200 300 400 500M



SLOW STREETS ACTIVITY ZONES

MSIDA



LEGEND

Public open space

Activity zone

VALLEY ROAD

SWATAR

MATER DEI

UNIVERSITY

MARINA

PJAZZA L-5
TA' OTTUBRU

JUNIOR COLLEGE



0 100 200 300 400 500M

SLOW STREETS DESTINATIONS

MSIDA



LEGEND

●

Public open space

●

Activity zone

H

Health centre

S

Sports facilities

E

Educational centre

C

Civic centre

R

Religious centre

VALLEY ROAD

SWATAR

MARINA

PJAZZA L-5
TA' OTTUBRU

JUNIOR COLLEGE



0 100 200 300 400 500M

SLOW STREETS NETWORK

MSIDA



LEGEND

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

VALLEY ROAD

SWATAR

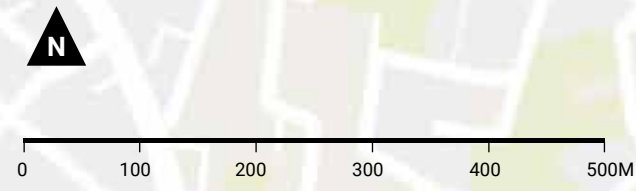
UNIVERSITY

MATER DEI

MARINA

PJAZZA L-5
TA' OTTUBRU

JUNIOR COLLEGE



“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

Msida 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.



source: Pikist



source: Transport Auckland



source: Londenplay.org.uk



source: houstonpublicmedia.org

IMPLEMENTATION



source: Auckland Council



source: Auckland Council

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: Chicago Tribune

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.



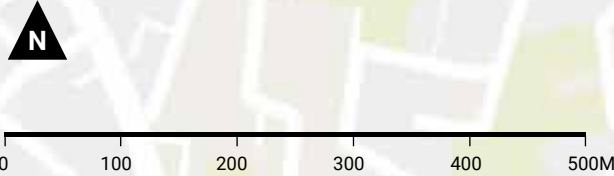
■ **‘Play streets’** are a type of intervention where local roads are closed off to cars temporarily, for example on weekends, so that they can be transformed into places where neighbours of all ages may gather around together and play freely. Children may use skates, bicycles, and movable playgrounds 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

MSIDA



SLOW STREETS INTERVENTION

MSIDA



LEGEND

Slow street level 1
signage & branding

Slow street level 2
rerouting/repurposing

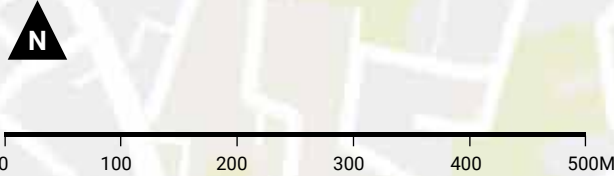
Slow street level 3
tactical urbanism

Slow street level 4
reconfiguration

Slow path

Play street

Extension



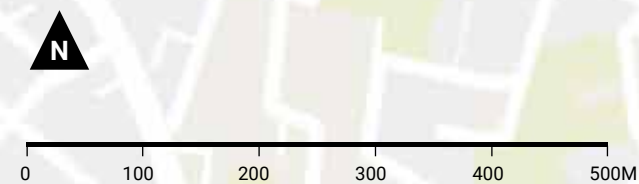
SLOW STREETS INTERVENTION

MSIDA



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

MSIDA



LEGEND

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

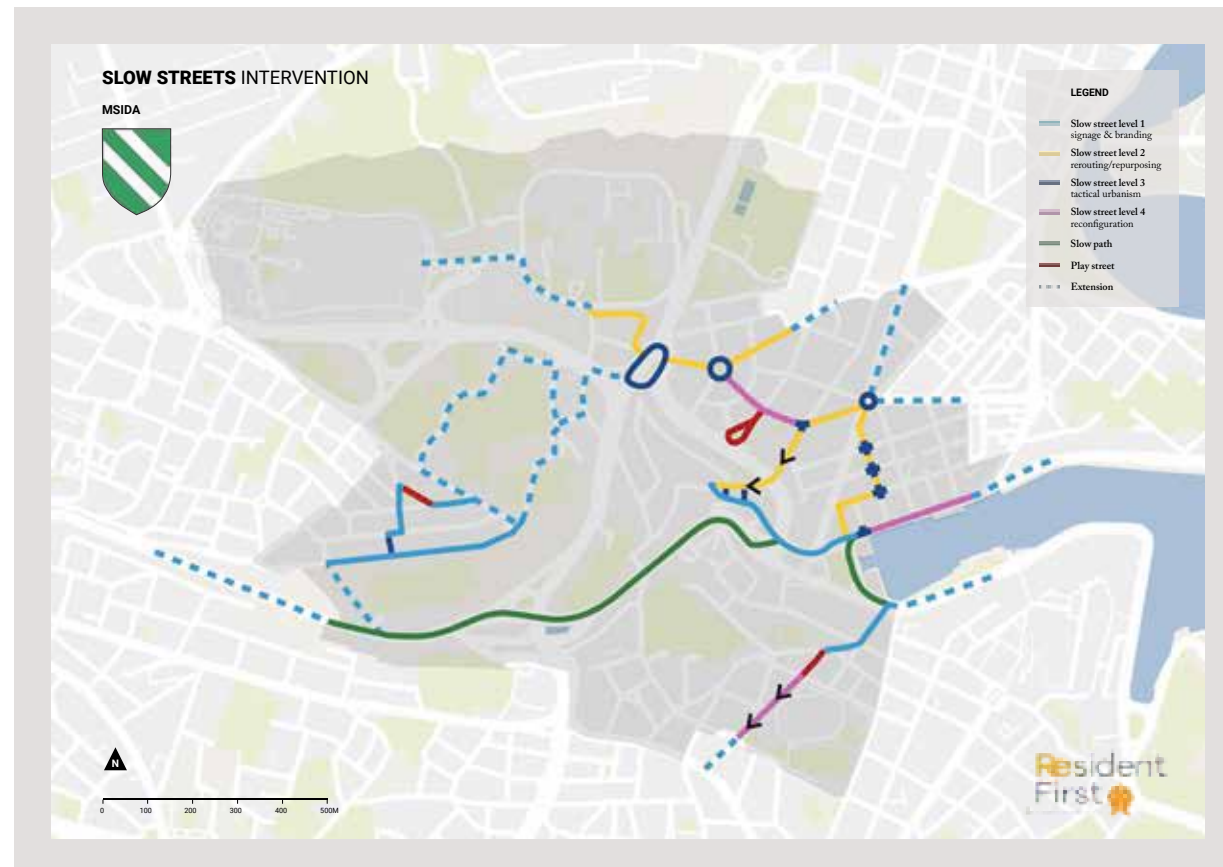


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Resident
First 
A better quality of life

Msida Interventions

The Slow Streets route encompasses various interventions that were decided upon based on the individual nature of the streets.



IMPLEMENTATION

Intervention 1

Triq Esperanto - Level 2

The street, which is currently characterised by low traffic volumes, is proposed to have no access to through traffic, shared with pedestrians and cyclists with priority to pedestrians. It will therefore serve as a safe pedestrian route connecting the Skatepark subway to the University grounds.



Intervention 2

Msida Skatepark - Level 3

The Skatepark is a well known landmark and connecting node in Msida, especially to the University. The connecting subway infrastructure is present however many people do not know how to use it. Therefore the use of the existing paths could be increased with simple interventions.



1. Signage: The subway has four entryways that are connected to different areas around the Skatepark roundabout, although there is no information that explains where the routes lead to. Adding appropriate signage at each subway entry point that explains the route's destination (even beyond the subway exit) and the time required to get there would encourage pedestrians to take this path rather than attempt to



cross the dangerous arterial road, which is not designed for such movement. For example, one route can be identified as University – Msida Circus as a 5-minute walking distance.



2. Floor markings/guides: In addition to signage, the route should have floor markings or guides, such as arrows or minute countdowns (for example, ‘3 minutes to University’) that guide pedestrians while they are using the routes. These types of messages could help to reassure pedestrians further, encouraging more people to use these routes. The increase in foot traffic creates a feeling of safety and in turn would motivate even more people to use these routes.



3. Colour: Colour-marking the entryways and immediate surrounding zones would firstly provide an identity for the subway infrastructure and also aid pedestrians in spotting these entry points more easily. Many pedestrians do not use the subway because they are unaware of the precise locations of these access points. The subway entrances also have the potential to be embellished further using planters, which would also protect pedestrians from passing vehicles.



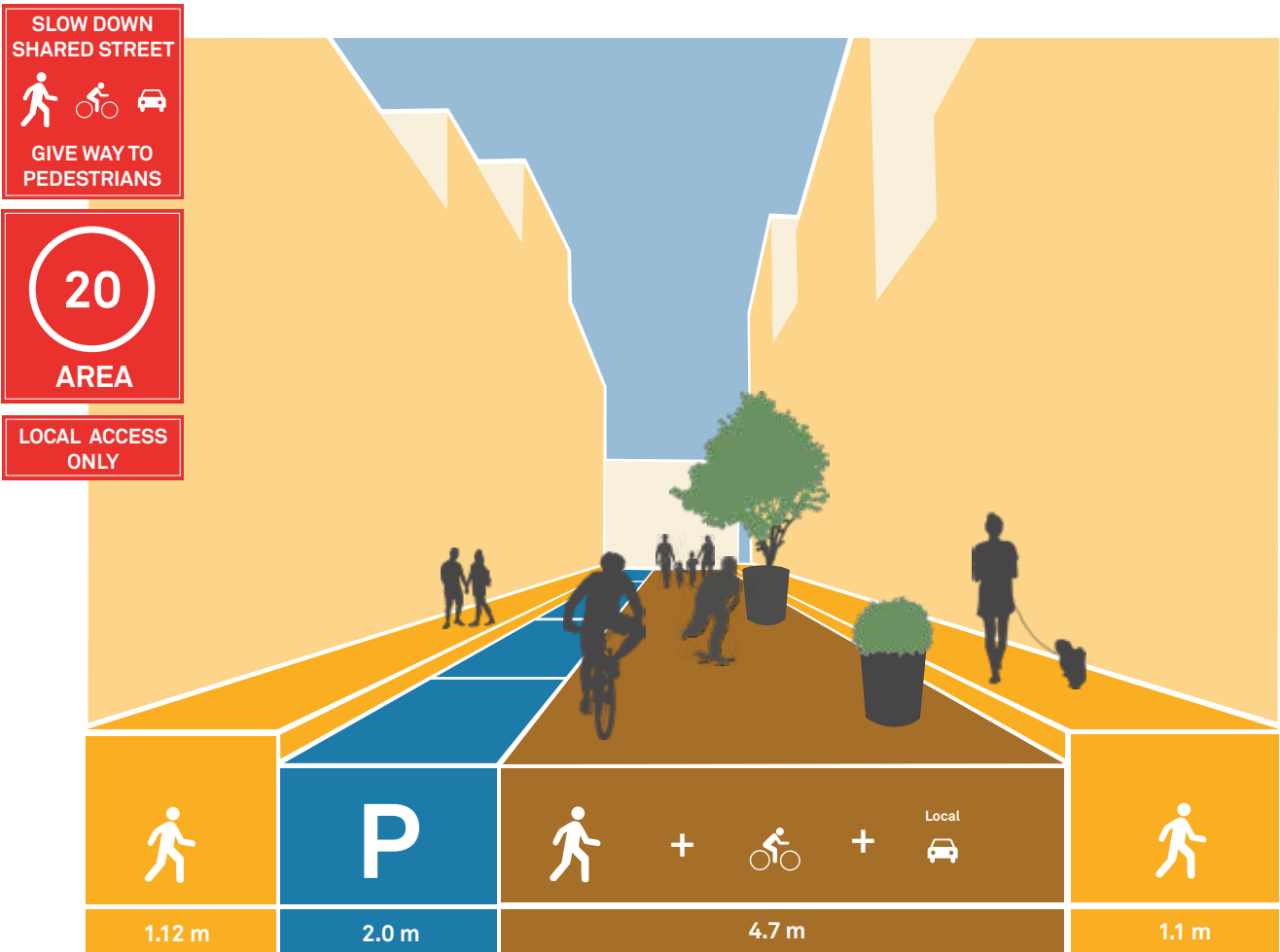
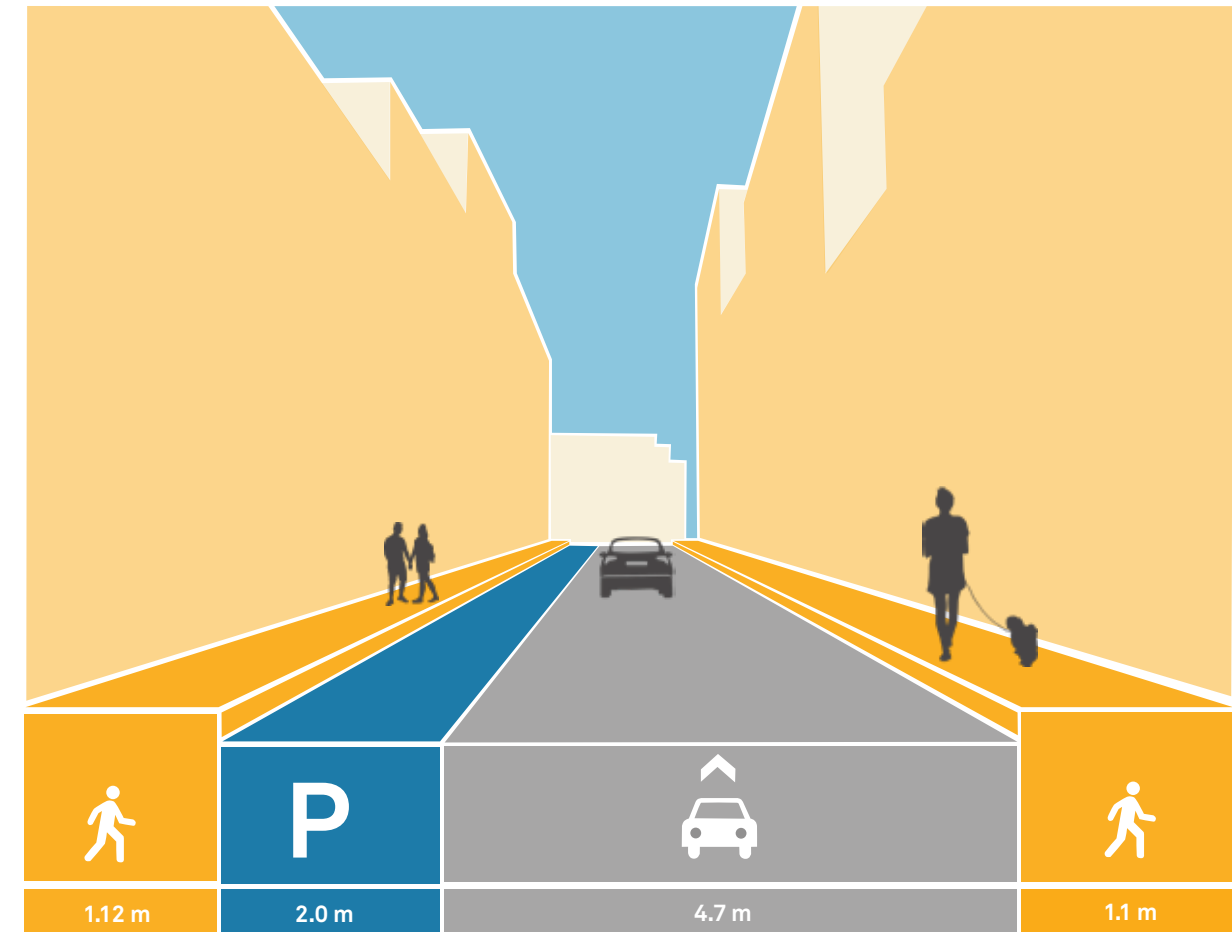
Intervention 3

Triq il-Punent: Level 2

This street would be an important pedestrian spine linking the Skatepark subway to the eastern part of Msida. Therefore, it would be important to have a fully pedestrian street in order to promote and encourage pedestrian use of the subway, reached from this street. In addition, this street may become an important cycling access point, and could further serve as a catalyst for eventually creating a better public space at Cirku Msida (Msida Circus), which is currently just a traffic roundabout. Traffic access may be easily rerouted through the different nearby streets.



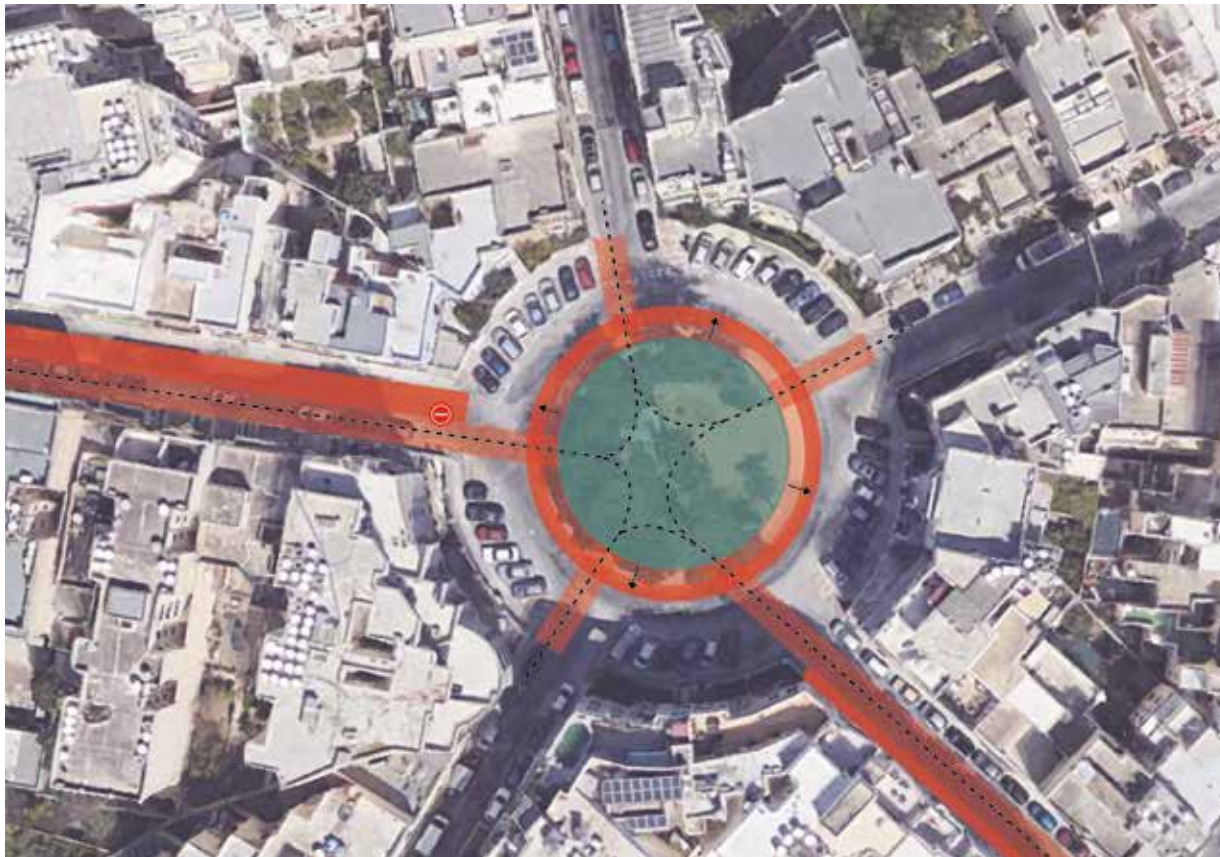
IMPLEMENTATION



Intervention 4

Cirku Msida: Level 3

To highlight the continuation of the route from Skatepark through Triq il-Punent and Triq l-Iskola to the promenade, marking the path on the road would also further emphasise the potential of this roundabout to serve more as an urban public open space for use by residents and commuters. There is also a potential extension through Triq Ta' Bieb it-Torri that would create a connecting route with Gzira.



Intervention 5

Triq l-Iskola: Level 4

The one-way road provides abundant space for vehicular use. As several educational institutions are located on that street, the road may be reduced to the standard of 3.7m in order to liberate space for pedestrian use. Narrowing the current unnecessary road width would slow down cars in an area that is highly used by students and employees alike.

Defining the allocation of space properly through well-designed road markings at the intersection with Triq Sant'Antnin would also be crucial, as there is currently a lot of leftover space that could eventually be reallocated as landscaped pockets, while also providing safer pedestrian crossings, especially adjacent to the schools.



Intervention 6

Triq Victor Denaro: Play

Triq Victor Denaro already has a wide pavement adjacent to the school grounds. There is a pleasant open pocket with seating and planters in the middle of the road, but it is currently mostly used as a roundabout for cars. The proposed intervention entails restricting the two-way road access to a one-way route, and closing it off on designated days or times (for instance, during the weekends) as a play street for residents. The parking spaces may also further be reassigned to the middle of the road, to act as a barrier between the cars and the play street.

Eventually the pocket could expand and connect to the existing wide pavement, thus transforming most of the space to a pedestrian environment rather than as road space for cars.



Intervention 7

Triq Sant'Antnin: Level 2

This street is an important pedestrian path linking to Rue d'Argens, connecting the busy commercial road to Triq l-Iskola and upper Msida. As there are alternative routes for redirecting vehicular traffic, the street is proposed to be closed off to through traffic, for it to be accessed only by residents. This pedestrianisation could serve as a catalyst for more pedestrian-friendly interventions in Rue d'Argens, which are currently lacking.



Intervention 8

Rue d'Argens: Level 3

Rue d'Argens is an important connecting road to Gzira, but the intersection with the edge of Ta' Xbiex is also a highly used pedestrian node. There is a small fountain in the centre of the street, surrounded by landscaping around all the traffic junctions. The proposed strategy is to use tactical urbanism in the form of paint markings throughout the entire extent of this intersection so as to emphasise the need for



drivers to slow down and prioritise the space for safe pedestrian use, thus enabling a more efficient use of this existing landscaped space. In the long term, the entire zone could be transformed into a raised crossing that could serve more as a small piazza.

This zone will also form an important extension to the neighbouring locality of Gzira.



Intervention 9

Triq Antonio Bosio: Level 2 and 3



The road connects Rue d'Argens to the promenade and is particularly interesting because of the typical Maltese houses that are present therein and that provide an important characteristic identity to the area. In order to highlight these unique features, the street is being proposed to be closed to through traffic, until the Msida promenade and around the Msida Parish Church into Parish Street.



Since there is a degree of interaction and commercial activity taking place within this street, especially at the junctions, road markings are being proposed at all intersections so as to prioritise pedestrian safety and increase the pedestrian use thereof, increasing the vitality of the street environment. The markings could take the form of diagonal white lines (recalling a typical zebra crossing) hatched over a bright primary colour.



Intervention 10

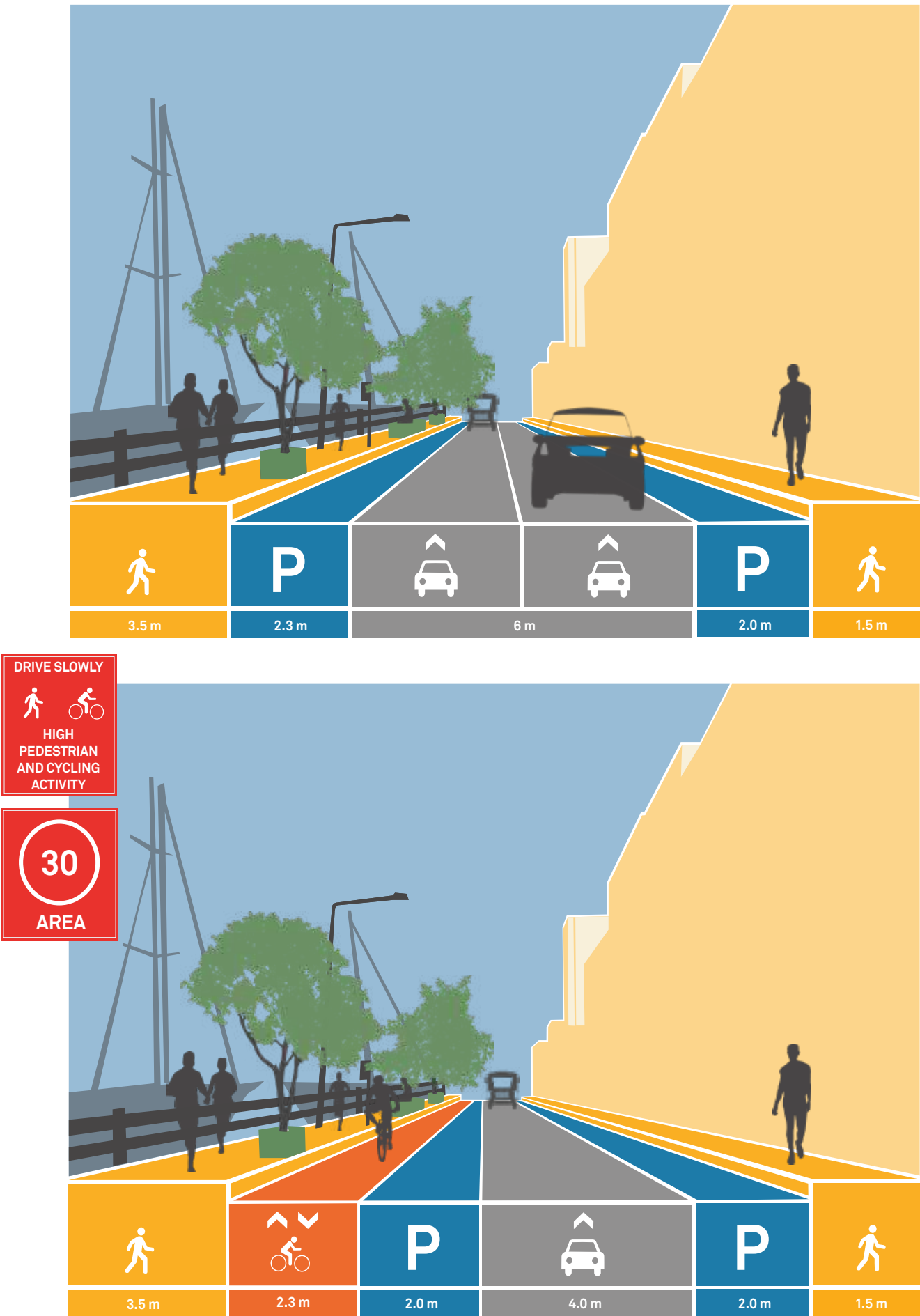
Triq ix-Xatt: Level 4

The promenade is the busiest area in Msida. This intervention proposes to reconfigure the street within specific days and times, potentially commencing with the weekends as an initial test, and eventually implementing it more permanently. The road currently comprises two lanes occupying 6m of space, parts of which are often blocked by instances of double parking. It is being proposed to turn this road into a single 4m-wide lane, shared between vehicles and buses, which on weekends can further be limited to access by public transport. Parallel parking is being shifted into part of the existing traffic lane, allowing for the additional space (occupied by the current parking bays) to be used as a designated 2-way cycling lane and therefore increasing the space for residents to enjoy. The existing pedestrian crossing next to the Msida Parish Church could also be emphasised further through colourful road markings that would enhance its visibility.

The Msida promenade could extend with the locality of Ta' Xbiex in order to form a continuous pedestrian-oriented promenade.



IMPLEMENTATION





further into a safe street that is characterised by slow moving vehicles.

The connecting stairs to the elevated Triq San Alwigi are being proposed to be made more evident through the use of colour, including the path leading to them, such that pedestrians may be aware of their presence and may be further incentivised to use them as a connecting route. The paint, extending to the public street, would in turn also make the stairs feel more 'public', as they currently give the impression that they are private extensions to the adjacent buildings.



Intervention 11

Misrah San Guzepp: Slow path

The bus lane is being transformed into a shared bus and cycling lane in order to continue the proposed designated cycling lane on the promenade, with proper road marking in order to emphasise these road users. The path connects to the adjacent locality of Pietà, with the possibility to extend this route further along this locality.



Intervention 12

Triq il-Kuncizzjoni : Level 1

This road connects the Local Council with the promenade and Triq San Alwigi which again leads to Triq l-Iskola, forming another connection loop. This road is already currently one-way and paved, therefore adding signage using the common Slow Streets branding would reinforce the efforts carried out to date to transform it

Intervention 13

Triq San Alwigi: Level 2

An important connection through the arterial road, this narrow road is currently a two-way route which results in congestion. Therefore, the traffic is being reconfigured into one-way access towards Triq il-Kuncizzjoni.



Intervention 14

Valley road: Slow path

Valley Road serves as the best connection to Swatar and Birkirkara, as it is the flattest terrain and is well-shaded by the mature trees that align it. Currently, however, most of the street space is for vehicular use, causing it to feel unsafe for pedestrians, especially in the portion beneath the tunnel. The proposal includes using brightly coloured road markings to extend the route beyond the slower moving slip roads, designating appropriate pedestrian space.



Valley Road serves as a crucial connector with several localities, highlighting its role as an extension. A dirt path located behind the large commercial complex is currently used by pedestrians as an informal route to Swatar, connecting to Triq L-Ghabex. This unofficial path is an important extension of the pedestrian network that informally connects different parts of Msida together.



Intervention 15

Triq Indri Grima, Il-Balliju Guttenberg, Mons. Arthuro Bonnici: Level 1 and 3

As Swatar is a quiet residential area, the interventions being suggested for this road are mostly Level 1, which include signage designating low vehicular speeds and encouraging pedestrian activity.

This street offers a vantage view of Msida, overlooking the arterial road. Throughout the evenings many residents take out their chairs and use the road as an open space wherein to socialise together. This Slow Street characteristic should be emphasised further with signage that ensures that drivers are aware they are entering a resident-priority area.

The intersection with Triq Balliju Guttenberg is currently a large asphalted and unarticulated space that is only used for parking. Tactical urbanism is being proposed to encourage residents, and especially children, to reclaim the space for playing activities and social interaction.



Source: Bernard Van Leer



Intervention 16

Triq G. Calleja: Play street

The road adjacent to the playground is being proposed to serve as an extension of the playing area during designated times (such as weekends), giving children the opportunity to skate and use their bicycles outside the designated playground. It may be easily blocked from through traffic by installing traffic cones accompanied by appropriate signs.



Intervention 17

Extension - Recreational route

In Swatar, two existing narrow roads (Triq Sant'Andrija and Triq Indri Grima) are currently used as pedestrian routes to the Skatepark, as they lead to one of the subway entrances. These narrow roads form an informal route which may, in the future, be blocked off for cars and designated as a recreational route for running, walking and cycling.

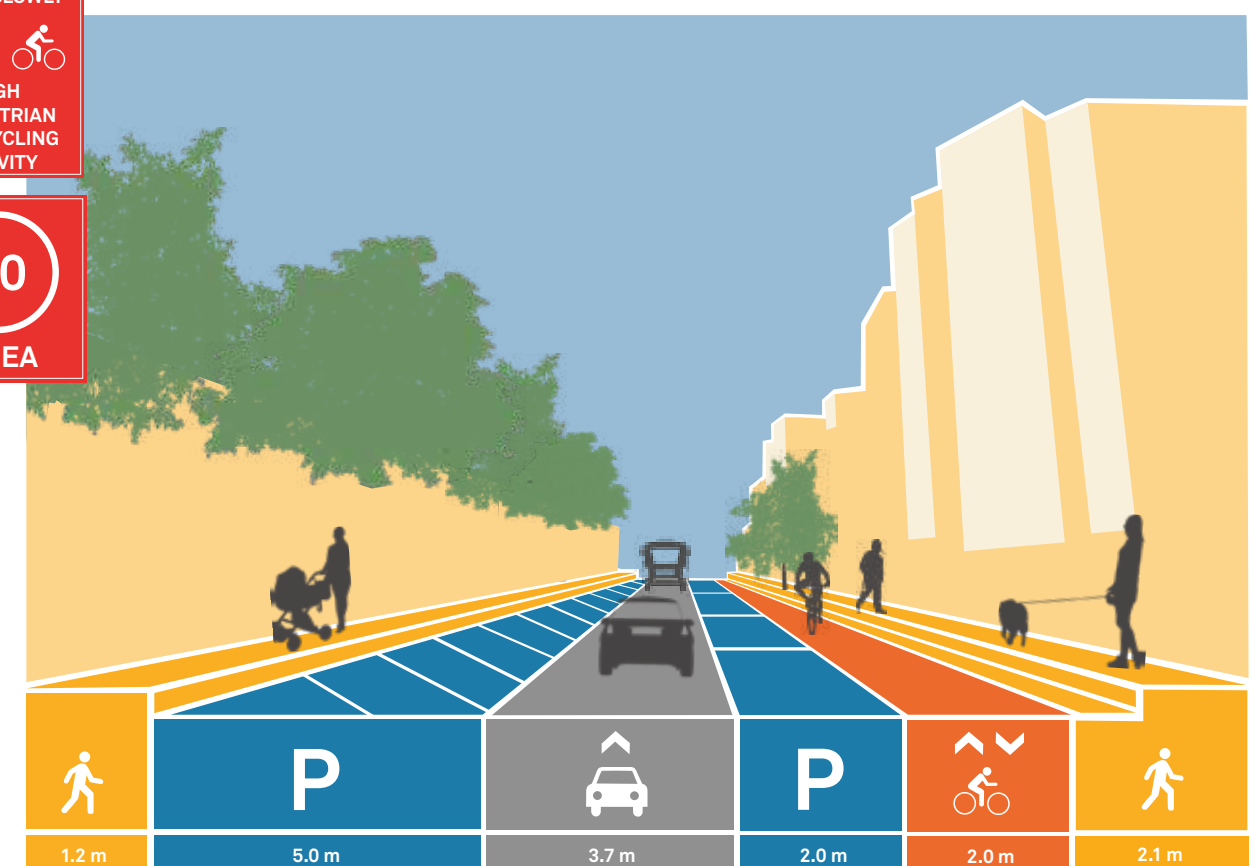
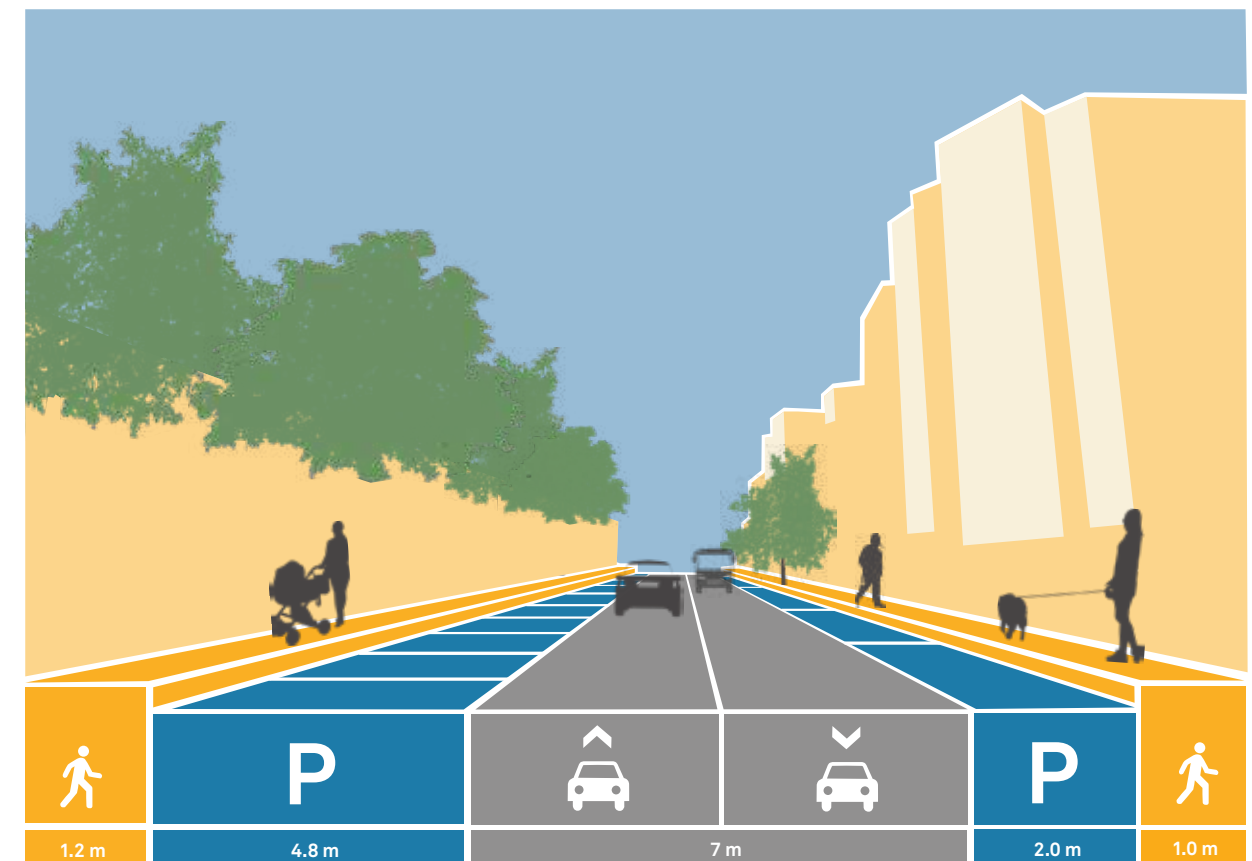
Intervention 18

Oscar Zammit: Level 4 and Playstreet

Triq Oscar Zammit is an important connection between Msida and Santa Venera. In addition, it is the site of an activity node next to the Junior College and a number of other amenities and commercial units, including several stationeries and cafés, are located, highly used by students. The street is currently a wide two-way road, which is being proposed to be turned into a one-way route upwards (towards Santa Venera). This configuration may liberate space for the inclusion of a designated cycling lane. Also the perpendicular parking next to the school is being suggested to be turned into 45-degree parking bays which could increase the parking capacity while liberating space for landscaped pockets in between the parked cars.



IMPLEMENTATION





The lower end of the street (which connects to Quarry Street) has great potential to become a play street on designated days and during specific times, given the presence of amenities for parents and children alike. This space may also offer the residents an alternative urban environment to the promenade.



source: City of Minneapolis news



source: politicalcritique.org



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

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

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



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 - Completing: Concluding the Slow Streets network, with the interventions eventually becoming more permanent solutions.

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.



IMPLEMENTATION

Monitoring will determine whether the interventions could become permanent in nature, and eventually further transformed into more significant infrastructural changes.

In Msida, the crucial starting points are: the Msida Skatepark subway network, the play streets, tactical urbanism in Rue D'Argens and Triq Antonio Bosio and the temporary testing of the reconfiguration of the Marina promenade. These are all envisioned to be catalysts for more people-centric projects. If the experiments to close off the chosen streets and spaces on specific days or at specific times prove to be successful, it will eventually be possible to turn them into more permanent solutions. This is particularly relevant in the case of the Msida promenade. In turn, the tactical urbanism interventions for the Skatepark subway will likely increase pedestrian access throughout the entire area given that it is a crucial connector. Therefore, there is a greater chance that more pedestrians will use the rest of the Slow Streets network.



SLOW STREETS PHASING: STARTING & TESTING THE NETWORK

MSIDA



LEGEND

Slow street level 1
signage & branding

Slow street level 2
rerouting/repurposing

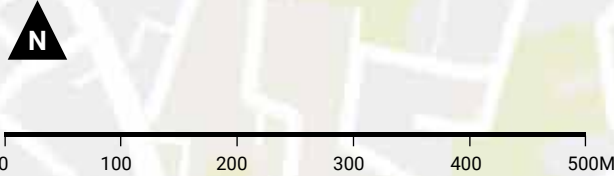
Slow street level 3
tactical urbanism

Slow street level 4
reconfiguration

Slow path

Play street

Extension



SLOW STREETS PHASING: STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK

MSIDA



LEGEND

Slow street level 1
signage & branding

Slow street level 2
re-routing

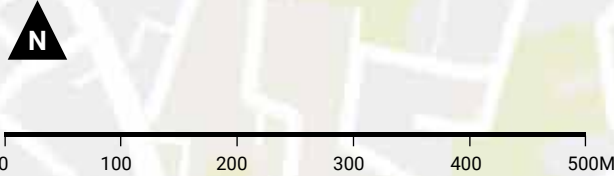
Slow street level 3
tactical urbanism

Slow street level 4
reconfiguration

Slow path

Play street

Extension



SLOW STREETS PHASING: COMPLETING THE NETWORK

MSIDA



LEGEND

Slow street level 1
signage & branding

Slow street level 2
rerouting/repurposing

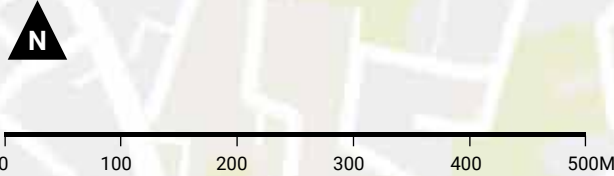
Slow street level 3
tactical urbanism

Slow street level 4
reconfiguration

Slow path

Play street

Extension



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.

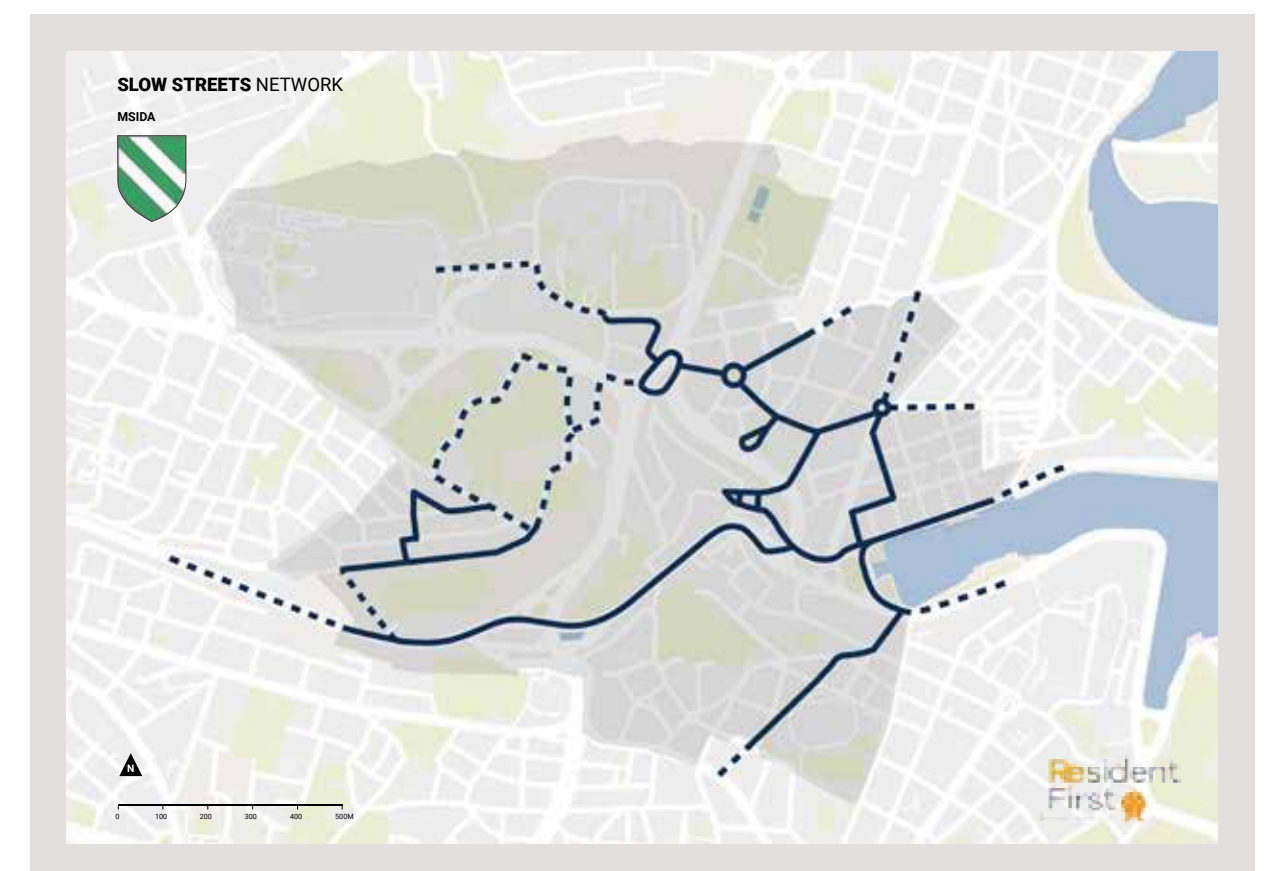
Slow Streets involves a combination of strategies that aim to result in safer and more frequent use of streets by pedestrians. However, the future vision is for Slow Streets to incentivise larger scale projects that could give back high quality urban public space to the residents. For these future projects,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

As a locality fragmented by the presence of major road infrastructure, the proposed Slow Streets network in Msida aims to propose catalysts that will bring about new projects and strengthen existing ones. Streets may act as urban catalysts by creating pedestrian demand and better access to specific areas. Therefore the main challenge has been to establish a well-connected and comprehensive network that pedestrians may use to reach major landmarks and nodes including, among others, Mater Dei Hospital, the University of Malta, the Local Council offices and the Msida promenade, which acts as the locality's largest open space. 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.

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.



ResidentFirst 