

SLOW STREETS

November 2020



KUNSILL LOKALI
QALA

ResidentFirst

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

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Introduction

Streets in Malta and Gozo 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 and Gozo, 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.



source: Global Designing Cities



source: Global Designing Cities

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.



source: Chicago Tribune



source: changing-transport.org

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.

Qala

Qala is a large locality in the eastern edge of Gozo, which is characterised by large stretches of agricultural land. The village is also characterised by a rugged coastline with parts featuring a number of sea caves, such as Għar Minka, and other areas defined by salt pans, attracting a number of local and foreign visitors annually. Qala is also an attraction for swimming and diving activities, especially during the warmer summer days, with its beach at Hondoq ir-Rummien. The village also contains a number of historic and natural attractions. Unimpeded views of Malta and Comino are possible from its rocky hillsides and unique viewpoints – such as the Qala Belvedere. Other attractors and landmarks include the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady (Tal-Hondoq) church, the Qala windmill within the residential area of the village, remains of prehistoric cart ruts, St. Anthony's Battery and Fort Qala.

Despite the large size of the locality, the built up area in the centre of the village is quite small. It is mostly residential in nature with some commercial activity around the central dominant Parish Church dedicated to St. Joseph, and the civic centre together with two educational institutes within the western side of the village. The square is an open space currently primarily used as a parking area for those residing or visiting the centre. The surrounding roads, although straight, are steep which makes it challenging to walk along them. This locality would therefore benefit from a reduction in vehicular traffic around the central square,

in order to make it more pedestrian-oriented, and develop a walkable network for people to travel on foot around the locality.

The main aim of the Slow Streets strategy, therefore, is to liberate local streets 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.



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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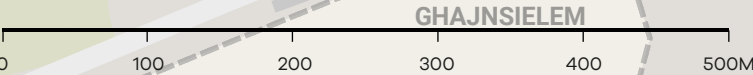


LOCALITY



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IN-NADUR

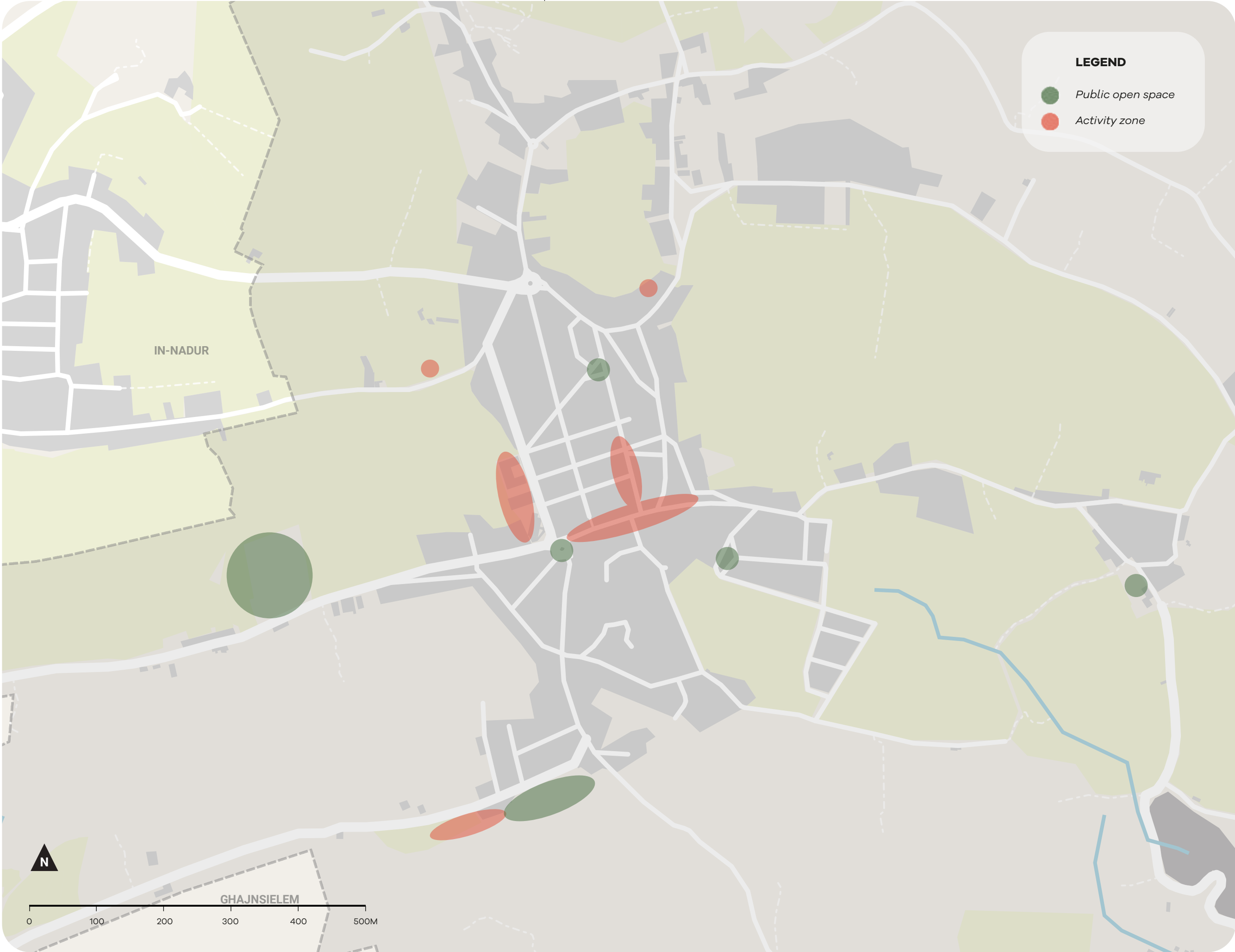


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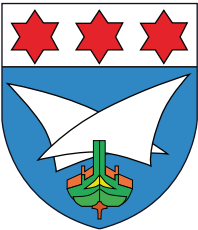
ACTIVITY
ZONES



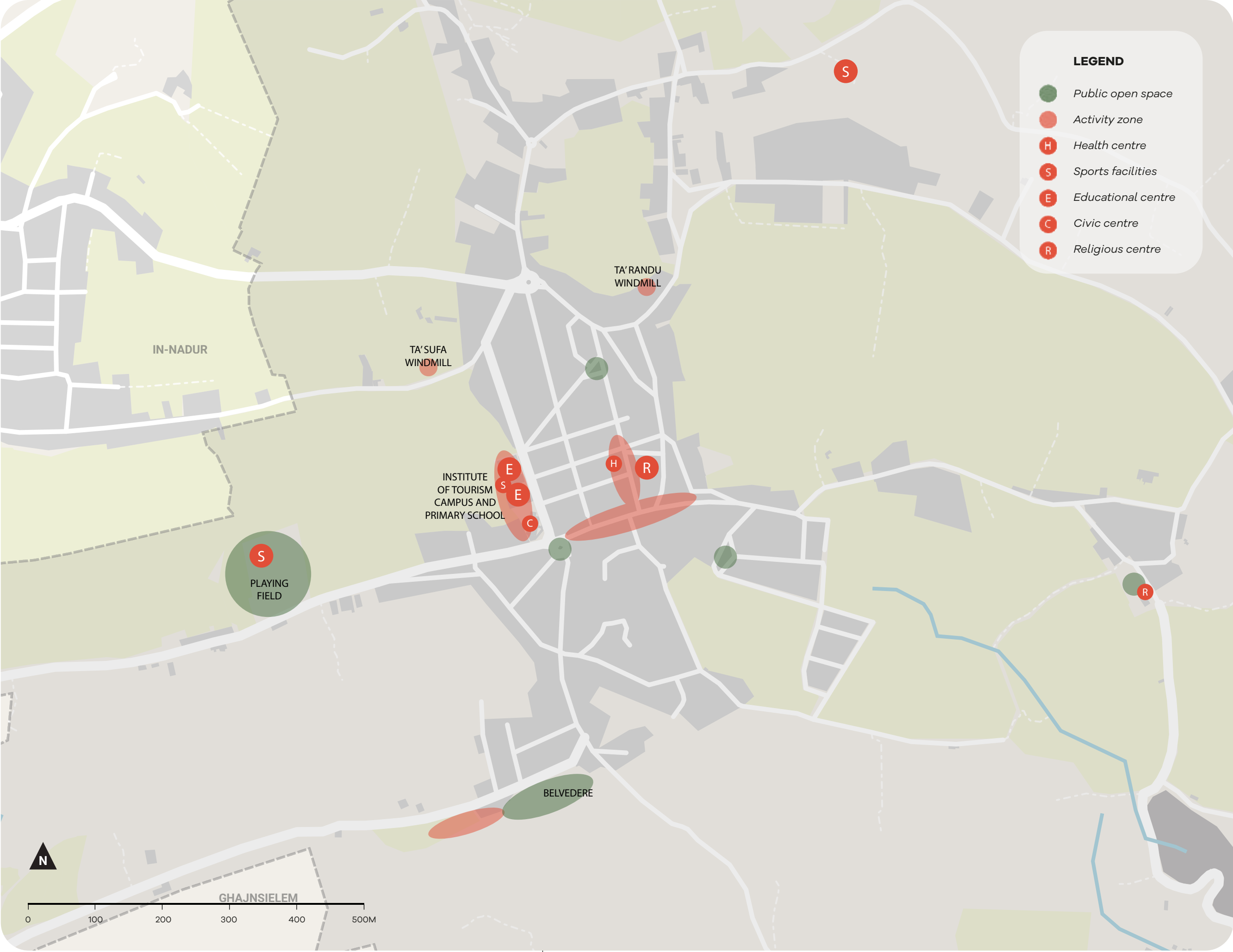
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DESTINATIONS



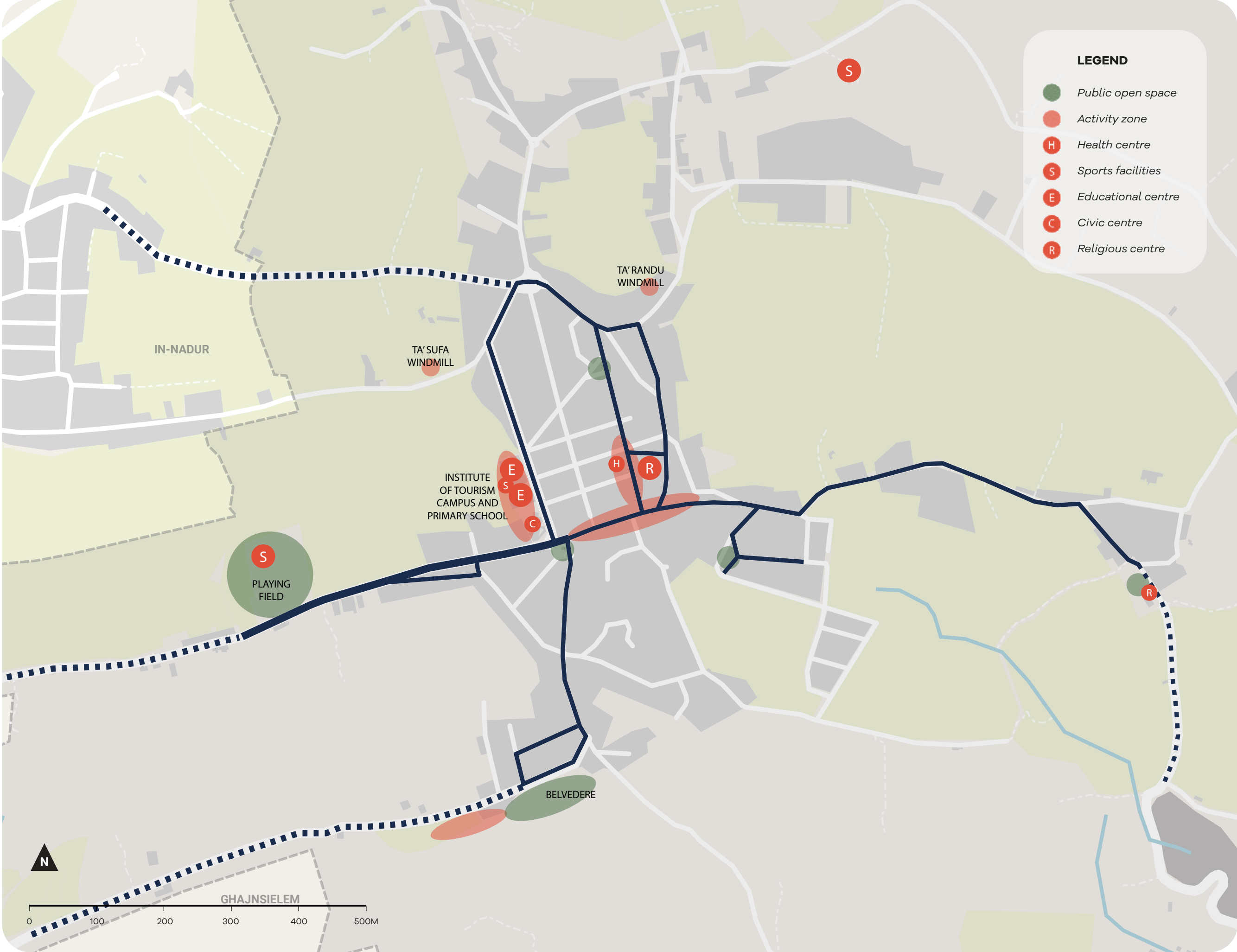
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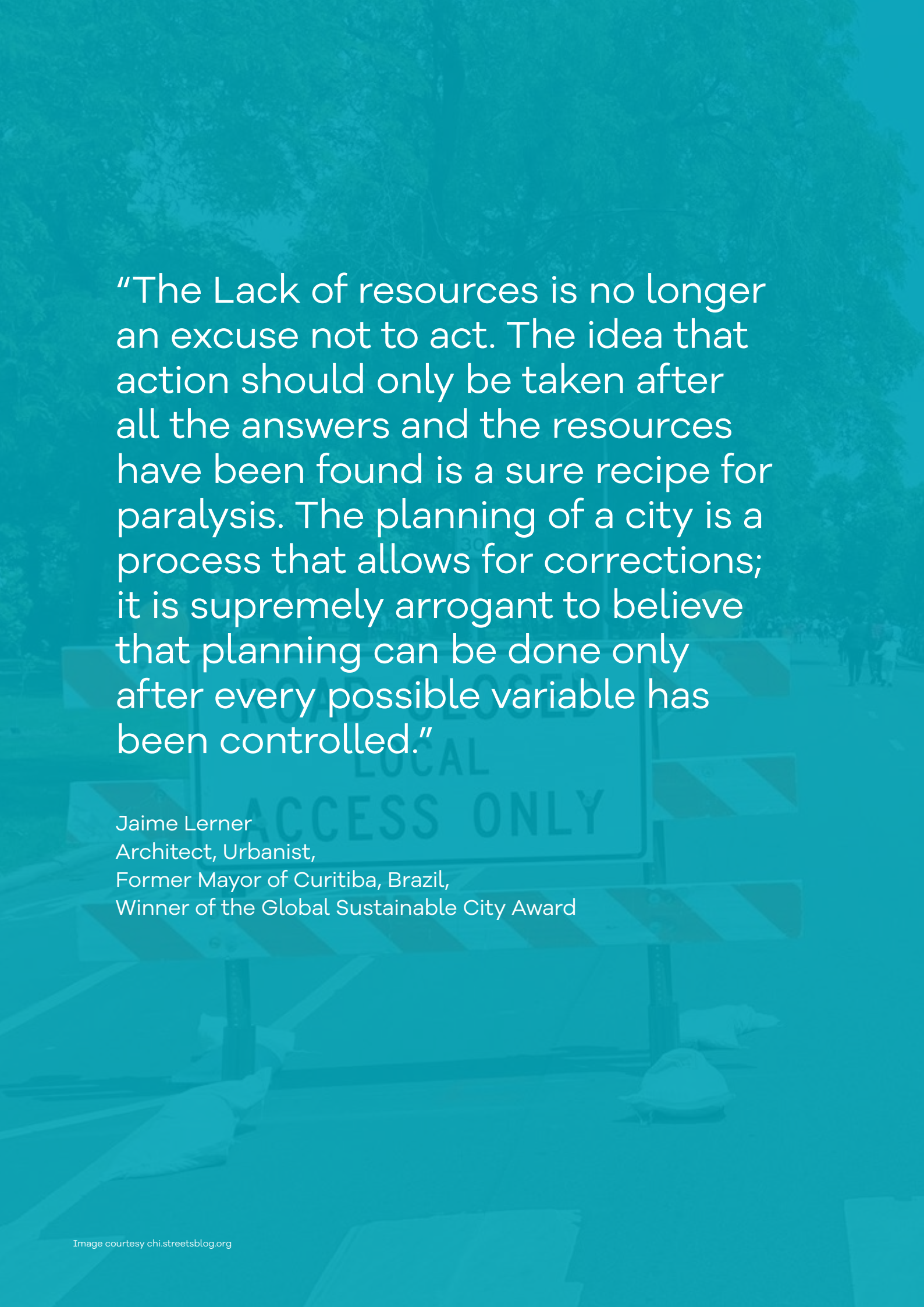


NETWORK



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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

Play Streets

Extensions

Cycling

Qala 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.





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.



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.





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).

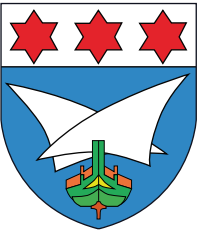


Extensions

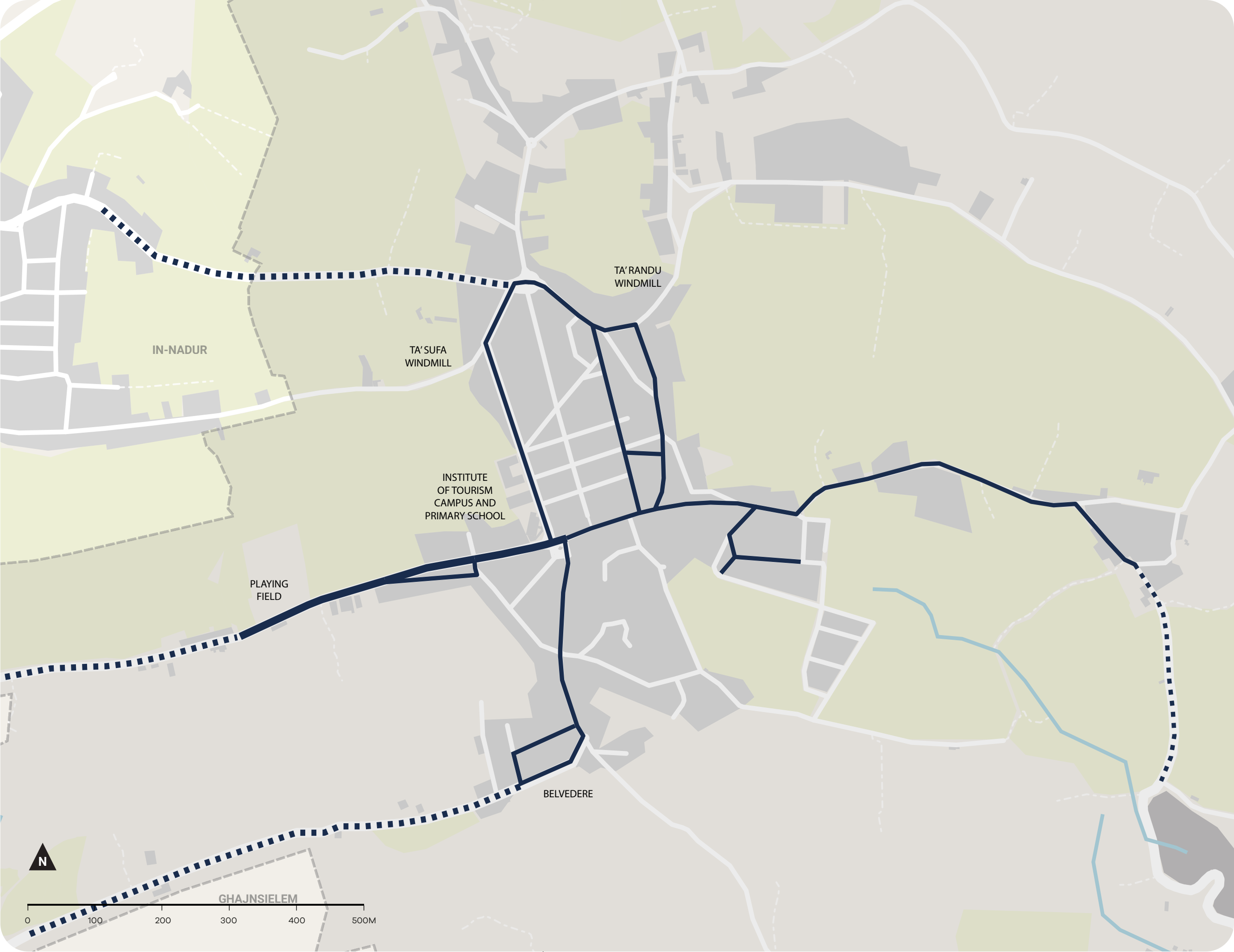
The last type of intervention refers to ‘extensions’ with adjacent localities and /or within the same locality. These links are important as they represent the future potential expansion of the network, resulting in even better connectivity for local and /or neighbouring residents. Such expansion may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



NETWORK



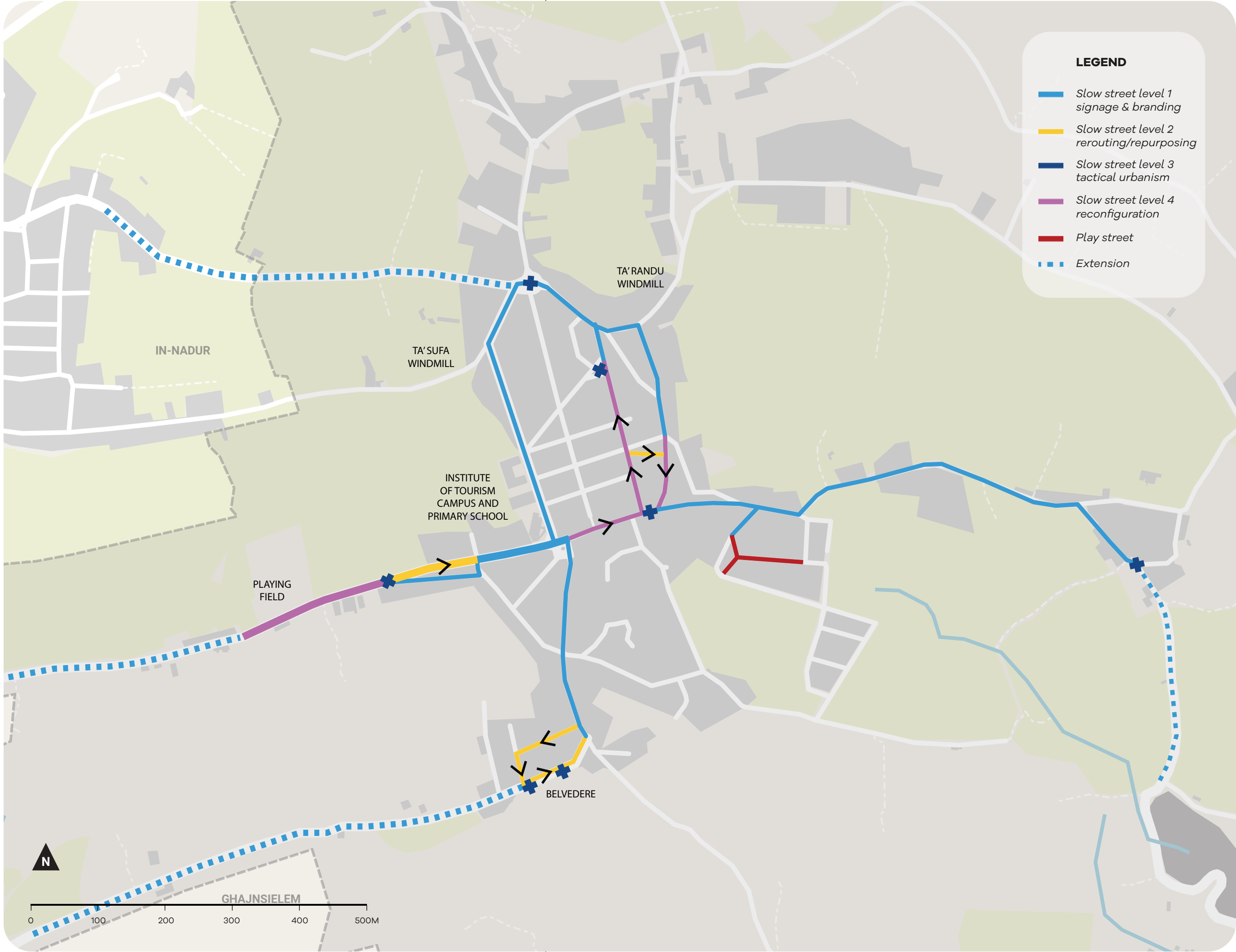
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INTERVENTION



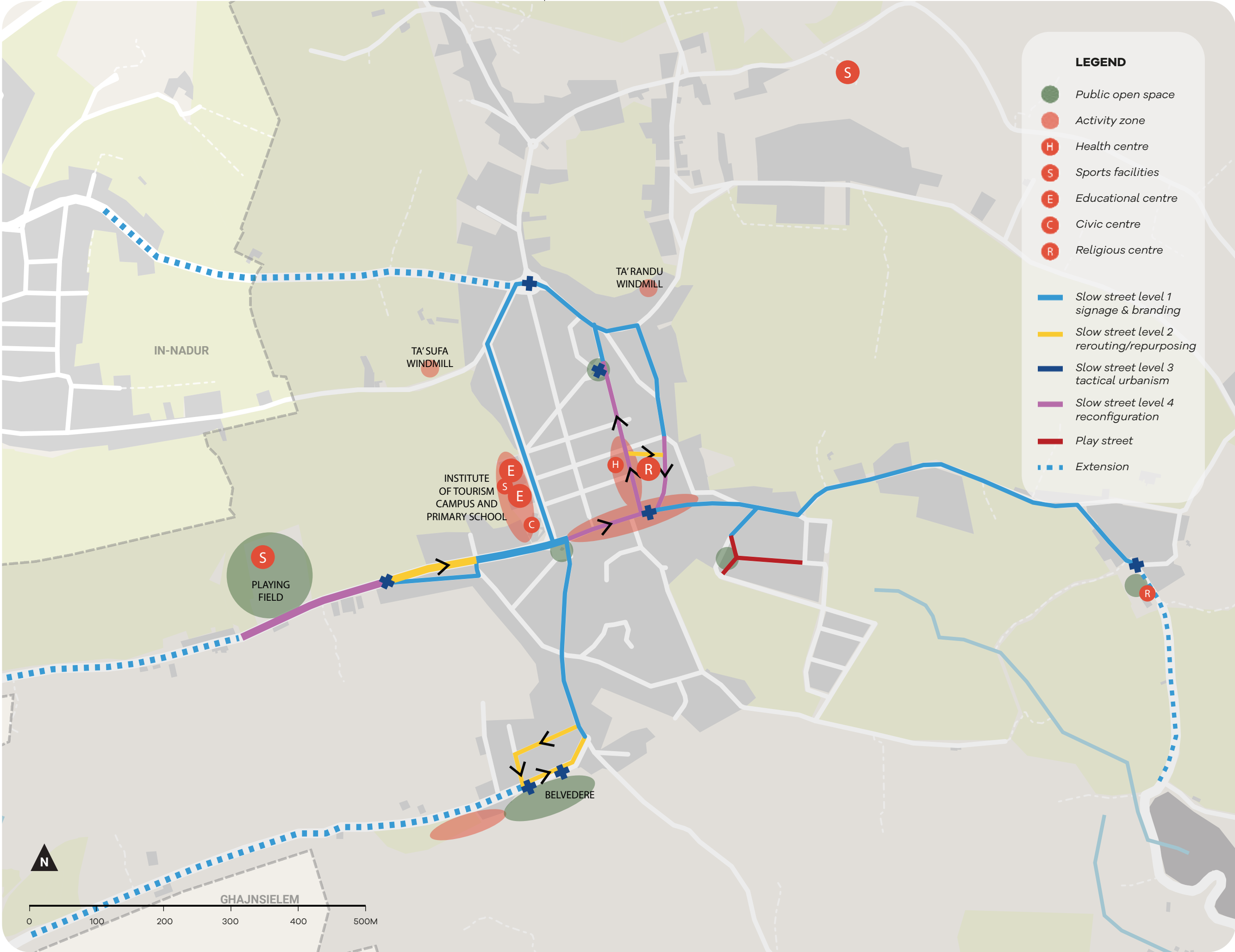
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INTERVENTION



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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.

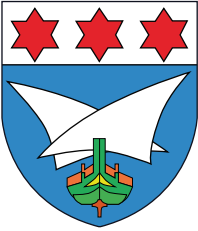
In narrower streets characterised by less space, signage is being proposed to slow down cars and raise the awareness of shared space with cyclists. These streets are included within the Level 1 interventions discussed previously.

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.

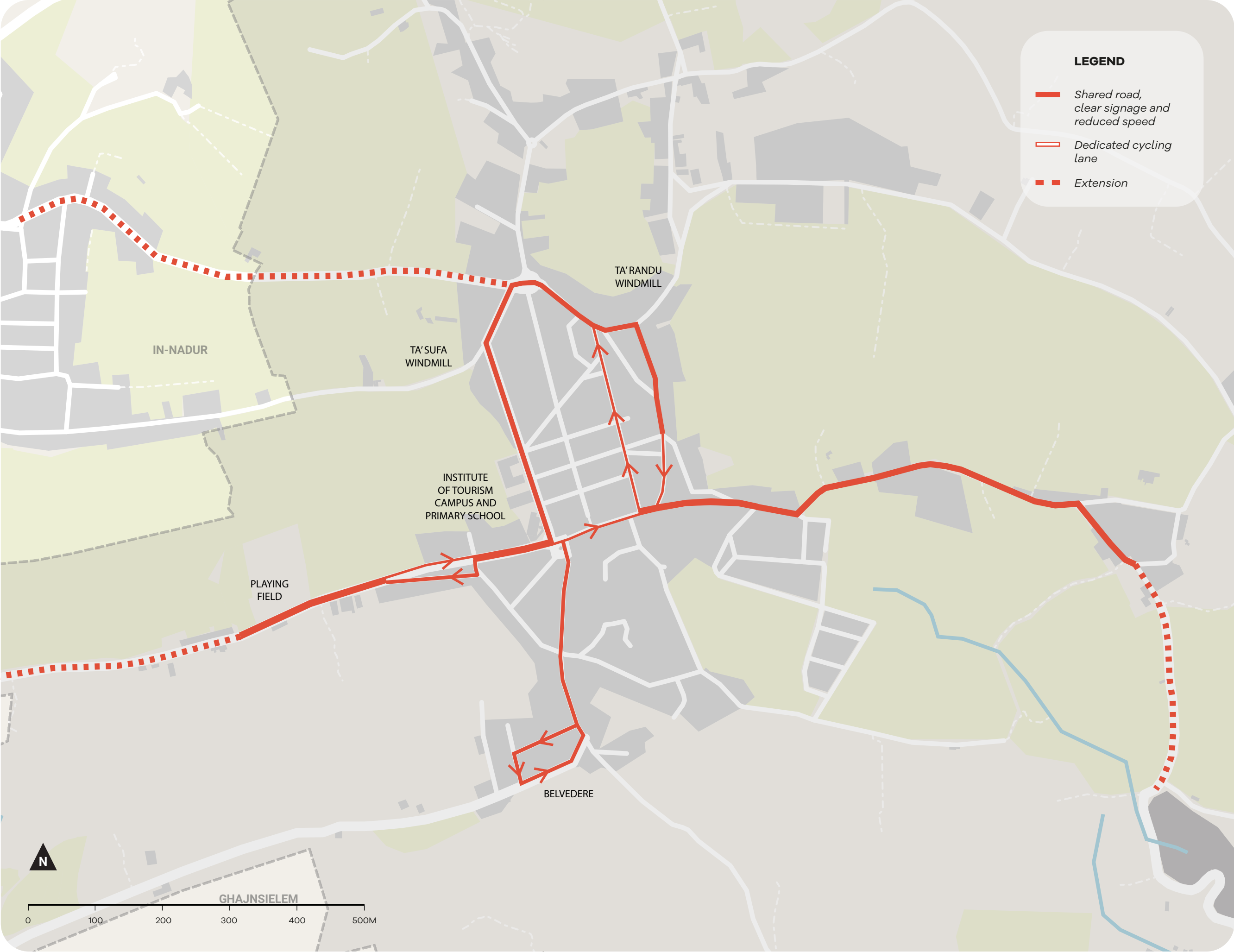


Providing quality cycle networks creates more accessible neighbourhoods, which in turn increases social relations and benefits the wellbeing of the entire community.

CYCLING
NETWORK

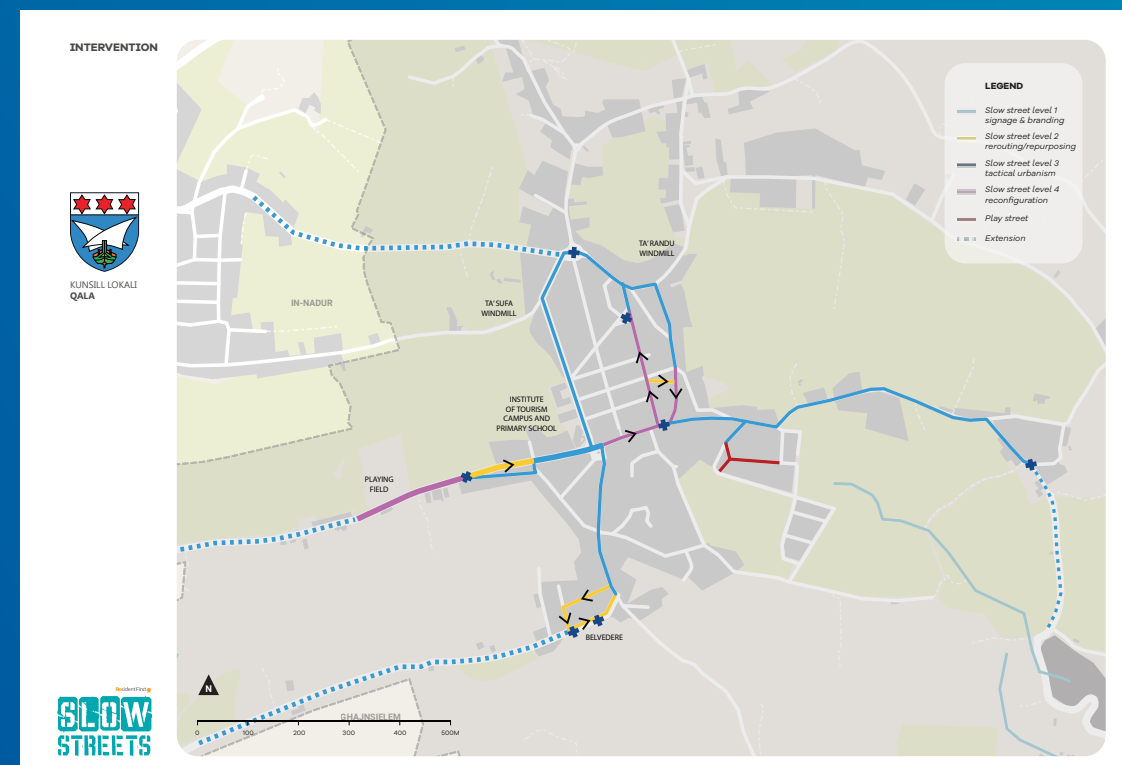


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Qala Interventions

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 Qala is to decongest the central square and narrower local streets from extraneous, through traffic and instead divert drivers onto edge routes along the village's outskirts. In this manner the central areas may become more pedestrian-friendly. Another challenge is to identify walkable routes that link peripheral areas better to the centre, so as to avoid a fragmented urban network wherein the edges of the development area are disconnected from the rest of the urban fabric.



Intervention 1

Triq il-Kuncizzjoni / Pjazza San Kerrew: Level 1 and Level 3

Triq il-Kuncizzjoni is the main road that leads vehicles from a small secluded residential cluster within the eastern extent of the village to the central area of the village, further leading vehicles westwards to the main distributor road, Triq l-Imġarr. Within this eastern cluster lies a small urban pocket (Pjazza San Kerrew) characterised by the locality's cemetery and the church dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady (Tal-Hondoq).

Triq il-Kuncizzjoni is also used to access the well known beach of Hondoq ir-Rummien which is an attraction in its own right. It is therefore being proposed that this street would have adequate signage for slow speeds and sharing of road between drivers and cyclists, promoting multiple modes of transportation.

Tactical urbanism in the form of floor markings is also being proposed at Pjazza San Kerrew (the intersection of Triq il-Kuncizzjoni with Triq il-Fortin Sant Anton) which currently contains some formal seating spaces and small gardens/green pockets. A new pedestrian-priority zone is being proposed with the introduction of tactical urbanism, in the form of floor paint. This would improve the walkability of this zone and enhance pedestrian safety when navigating between the different zones around this urban space, signalling to drivers to slow down while further helping to visually connect them together.

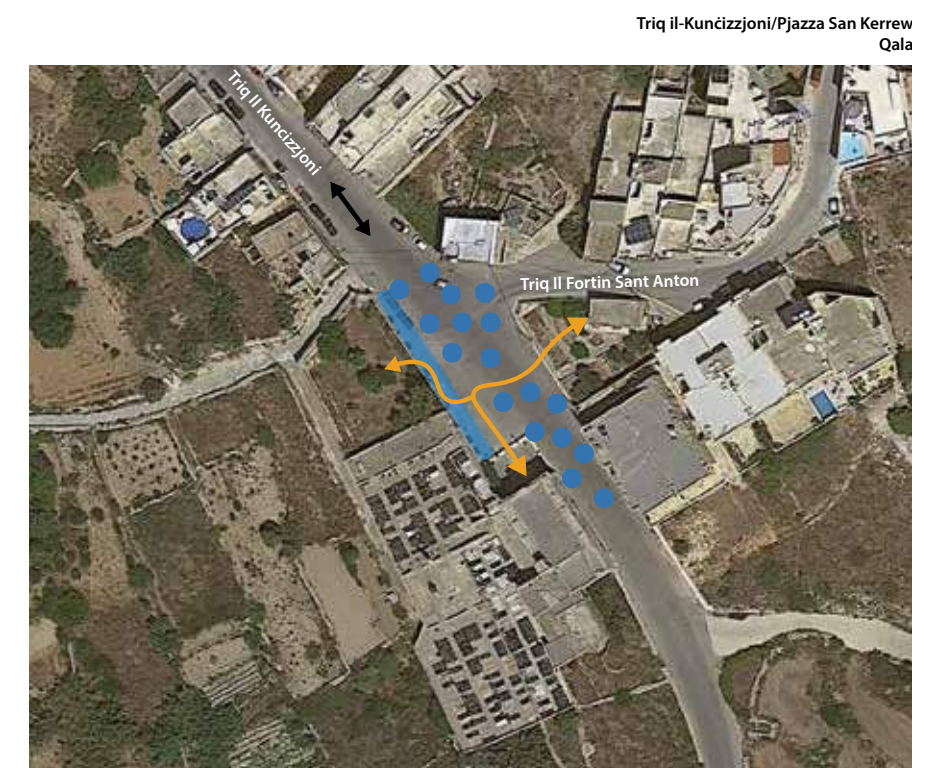
LEGEND

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
- Pedestrians
- All modes of transportation
- Cars + Buses
- Buses + Bicycles
- Bicycles + Cars



Intervention 2

Triq iż-Żewwieqa (Belvedere): Level 2 and Level 3

Another small residential cluster is located in the southern part of the residential area of Qala, accessed from Triq il-Belvedere which stems out of the distributor road Triq l-Imġarr. At the edge of this zone is a viewing point equipped with seating amenities from which one may overlook a large stretch of agricultural land.

Tactical urbanism in the form of road marking is being proposed along this stretch of public amenity space and seating area, such that vehicles may slow down when approaching this pedestrian-priority space. The markings could be densified at the entry points to the belvedere.

As an attempt to further reduce the traffic around the belvedere and within this residential road, as well as increase the attractiveness of this amenity space and public seating area, it is being proposed that the road be rerouted into a one-way access, in the eastern direction towards Triq taċ-Ĉawl/Triq il-Belvedere. There would further be appropriate signage emphasising slow vehicular speeds, pedestrian priority and road sharing between drivers and cyclists. There could also be the possibility of closing off this specific stretch of Triq iż-Żewwieqa on designated days and/or times in order to enhance the attractiveness of the belvedere, allowing the possibility of events and/or activities to occur within this space. In such cases, Triq Wied Biljun and F. Barocci would become two-way to cater for vehicles leaving the residential area.



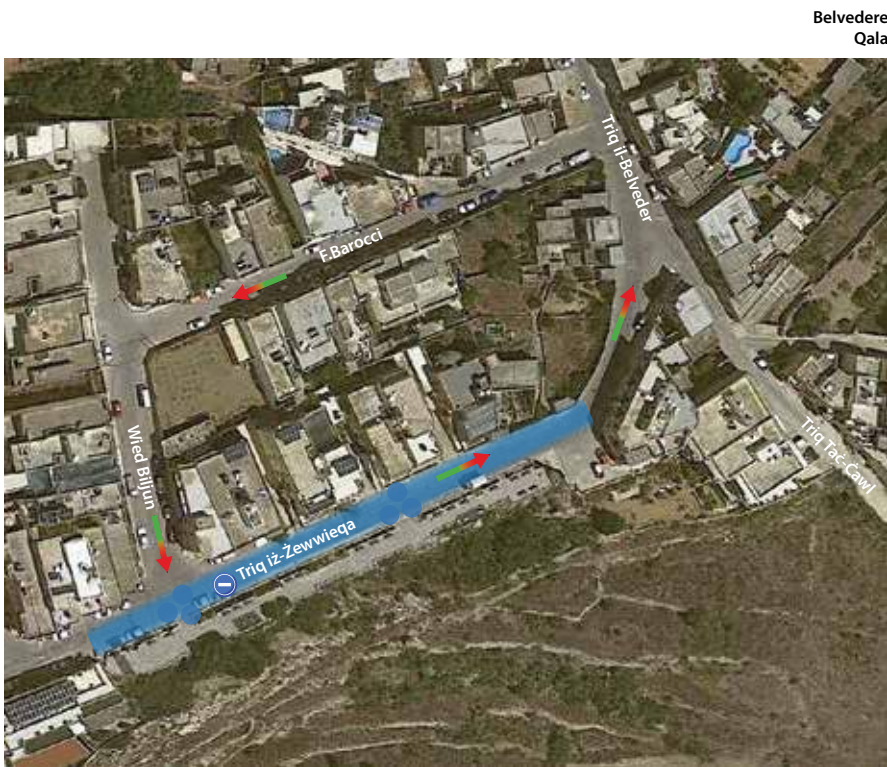
LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

- Fully pedestrian space
- Floor marking - slowing cars
- Car parking space
- Physical barrier (bollard)
- One-way
- Designated days/times

Traffic Management

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



Intervention 3

Triq Wied Biljun and Triq F. Barocci: Level 2

These two residential roads are being proposed to be rerouted into one-way roads from their current two-way configuration, in turn working with Triq iż-Żewwieqa (Intervention 2) to form a vehicular loop around the residential area, from Triq F. Barocci to Triq Wied Biljun to Triq iż-Żewwieqa. This intervention would enable these local roads to become more walkable and less vehicular-oriented, thus being safer for pedestrians to use. The integration of adequate signage along these roads would be focused on slow speeds, pedestrian priority and road sharing between drivers and cyclists, given that these roads also form part of the proposed cycling network for the locality.

In the event that Triq iż-Żewwieqa would be closed, as discussed in Intervention 2, these roads would be reverted back to two-way routes during the closure of the belvedere area.

Intervention 4

Triq l-Imġarr: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4

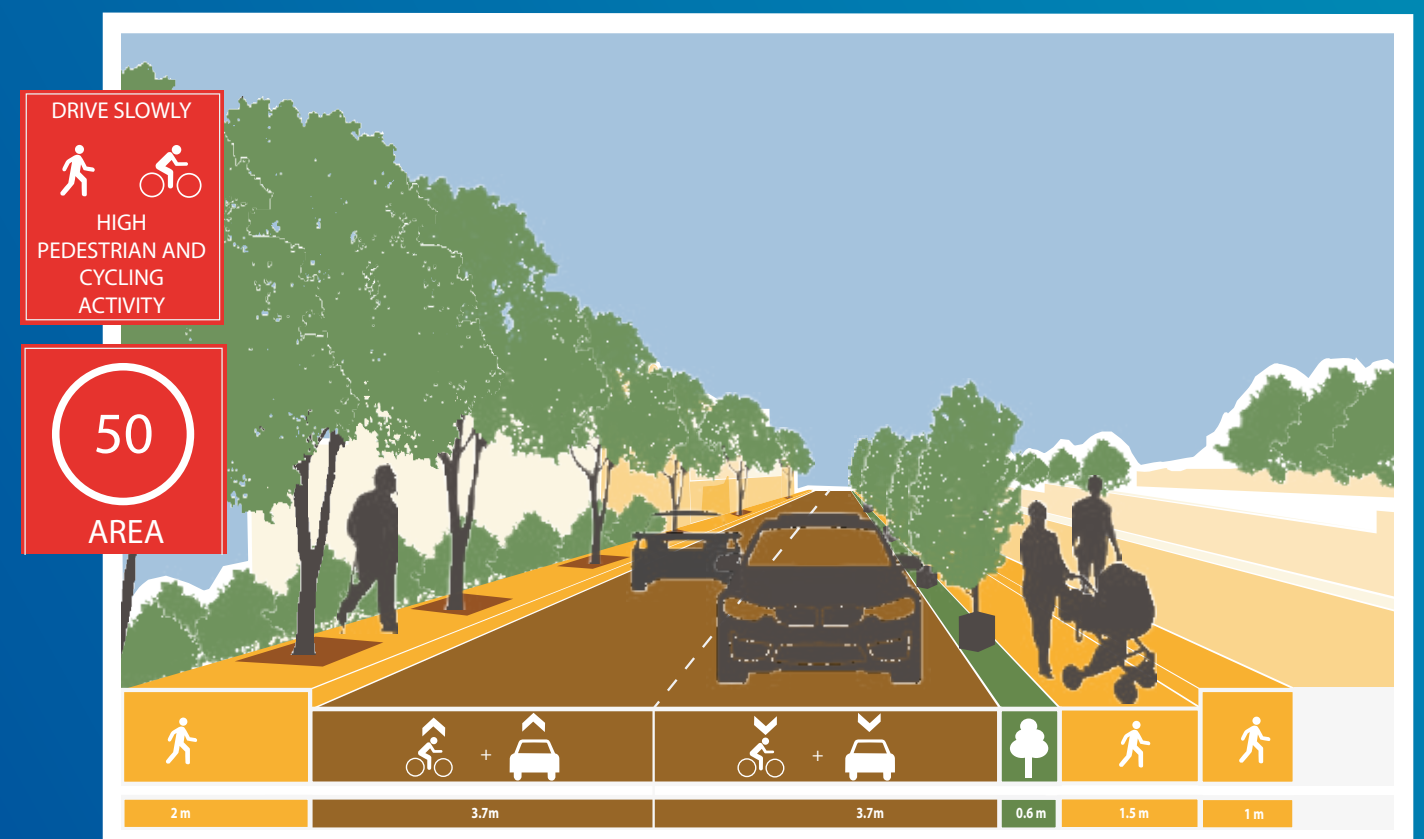
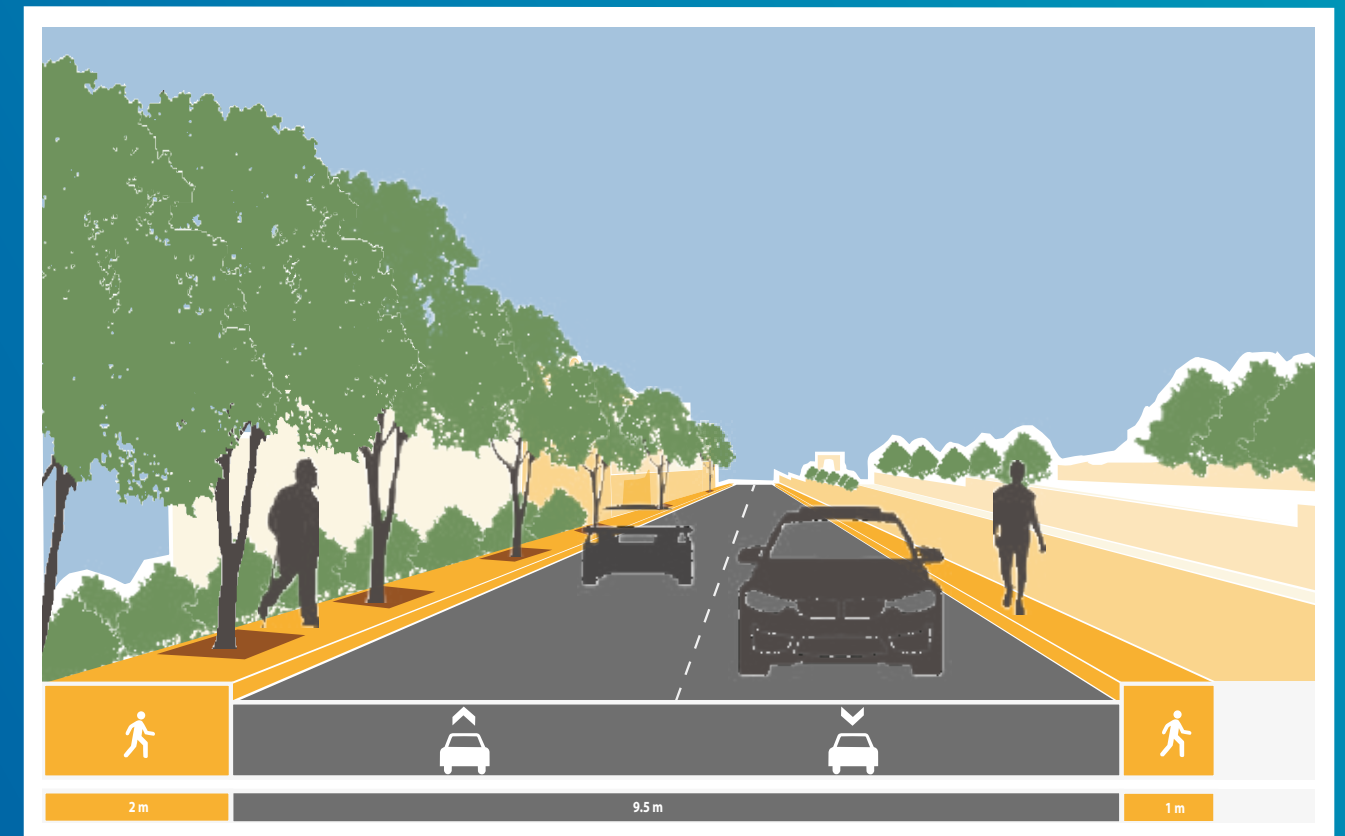
Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli: Level 1

The vehicular western entrance to the village of Qala (Għajnsielem) is through Triq l-Imġarr. Even though Triq l-Imġarr forms part of the distributor road network within the island of Gozo, it is being suggested that this road also be intervened upon in order to better cater for all modes of transportation within the village, including trips occurring on foot, given:

- (a) its significant impact on the local character and identity of Qala; and
(b) the presence of important local amenities throughout its extent that require safe accessibility and improved pedestrian connectivity, notably the playing field located on the outskirts of Qala.

The western end of Triq l-Imġarr, which houses the children's playground and playing field, is being proposed to have adequate signage for slow vehicular speeds and the sharing of the road space between drivers and cyclists. In addition this part of the road is being proposed to be reconfigured by reducing the overly generous traffic lanes to 3.7m each (in both directions). Given the road designation, which in turn implies higher vehicular volumes and the increased probability of larger vehicles therein, it has been decided to retain a generous two-way road space of 7.4m, in spite of vehicular access width standards that specify 5.5m as being enough for two lorries to pass each other, referred to in Development Control Design Policy, Guidance and Standards 2015 (DC15) Standard S1 (Vehicular Access Width Standards).

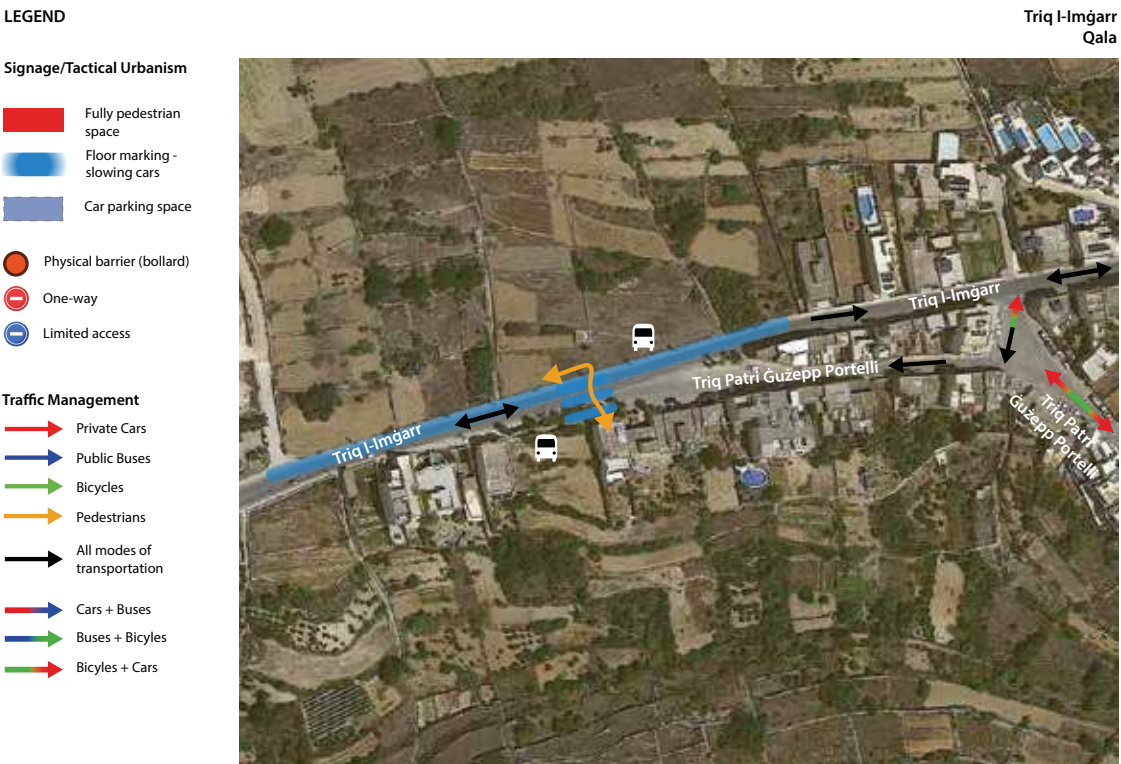
The intervention further includes tactical urbanism in the form of floor marking to delineate additional pedestrian space gained from the reduction of the traffic lanes; specifically, along the lane which carries traffic eastwards towards the central square. In addition, planters are being proposed to be strategically placed along the road, buffering the additional pedestrian space from the vehicular lane.



As it approaches the residential area and the central village square, Triq l-Imġarr widens, specifically at the intersection with Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli. Here, tactical urbanism is being proposed in the form of a new pedestrian crossing, in order to enable pedestrians to cross the road more safely and to encourage them to use better allocated pedestrian space along this road, thus improving walkability throughout its extent.



In addition, so as to reduce traffic flow in Triq l-Imġarr where the section of the road narrows down once again, it is being proposed that this section (from the existing bus stop named 'Biljun' to the intersection with Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli) could be rerouted from its current two-way configuration into a one-way road easterly towards the square. Vehicles travelling westwards (coming from the square), would be able to use the already one-way road, Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli, as an alternative, accessing Triq l-Imġarr once again after leaving the residential zone. Adequate signage for slow speeds and sharing of the road between cyclists and drivers would continue along Triq l-Imġarr and also be introduced within Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli.



Intervention 5

Triq it-28 ta' April 1688: Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4



This road is a continuation of Triq l-Imġarr, closer to the central square, and in a similar manner to Triq l-Imġarr it forms part of the distributor road network within the island of Gozo. However, for similar reasons given to Triq l-Imġarr (discussed in Intervention 4) it is also being suggested that this road would greatly benefit from specific interventions that would help to integrate it better with the entire Slow Streets network for Qala.

The western side of the road, from the intersection with Triq l-Isqof M. Buttigieg to the central square, reduces in width while remaining two-way in nature, and currently is very dangerous for pedestrians, lacking even the most basic pavement space. For this reason, it is being proposed to change this two-way road into a one-way road, direction towards the square, where the vehicular lane would be reduced to 4.1m. The gained space from this intervention would allow the inclusion of tactical urbanism in the form of floor markings designating decent pedestrian space, thus providing a much-needed, safer walking environment between the school and the square. In addition, planters are being proposed to be placed along the street, acting as a buffer between the pedestrian space and the vehicular traffic lane while enhancing the aesthetics of this important spine and entry point to the village. Adequate signage would also be introduced so as to ensure slow vehicular speeds and road sharing between drivers and cyclists.





LEGEND

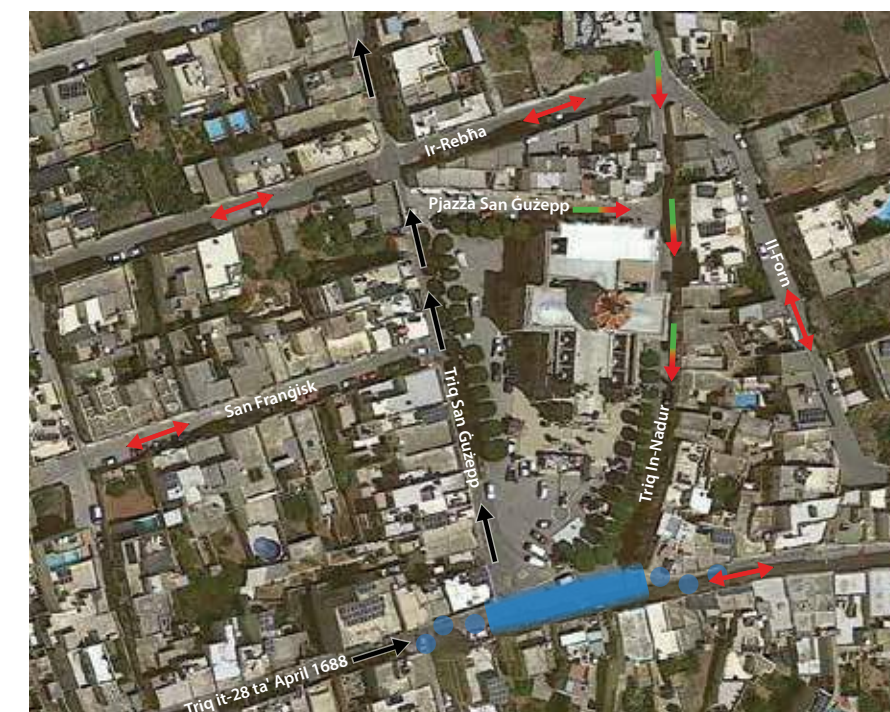
Signage/Tactical Urbanism

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

Traffic Management

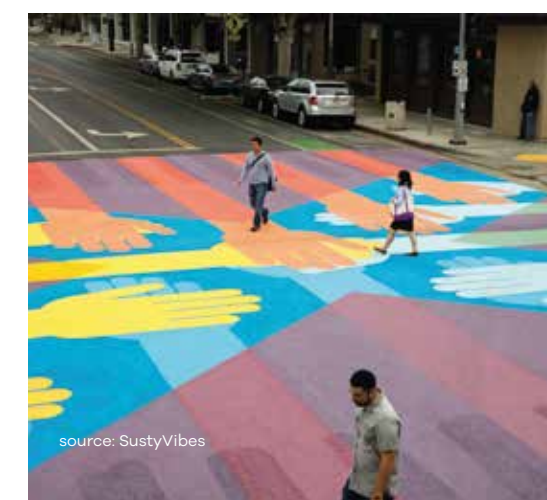
- Private Cars
- Public Buses
- Bicycles
- Pedestrians
- All modes of transportation
- Cars + Buses
- Buses + Bicycles
- Bicycles + Cars

Triq it-28 ta' April 1688 and Central Square Qala



When approaching the central square tactical urbanism, in the form of floor markings, is being proposed to slow down traffic as it gradually arrives at the square. Adequate signage emphasising high pedestrian activity would further alert drivers.

The floor marking would stretch from Triq it-28 ta' April 1688 towards the open space in front of the Parish church, which is currently used as a parking area. The introduction of such interventions would enable the presence of a more walkable square and could be a first step leading to its potential reconfiguration that could include the relocation of the parking bays in front of the church (discussed further in Interventions 6 and 7), thus strengthening Qala's central square as a more pedestrian-oriented area.

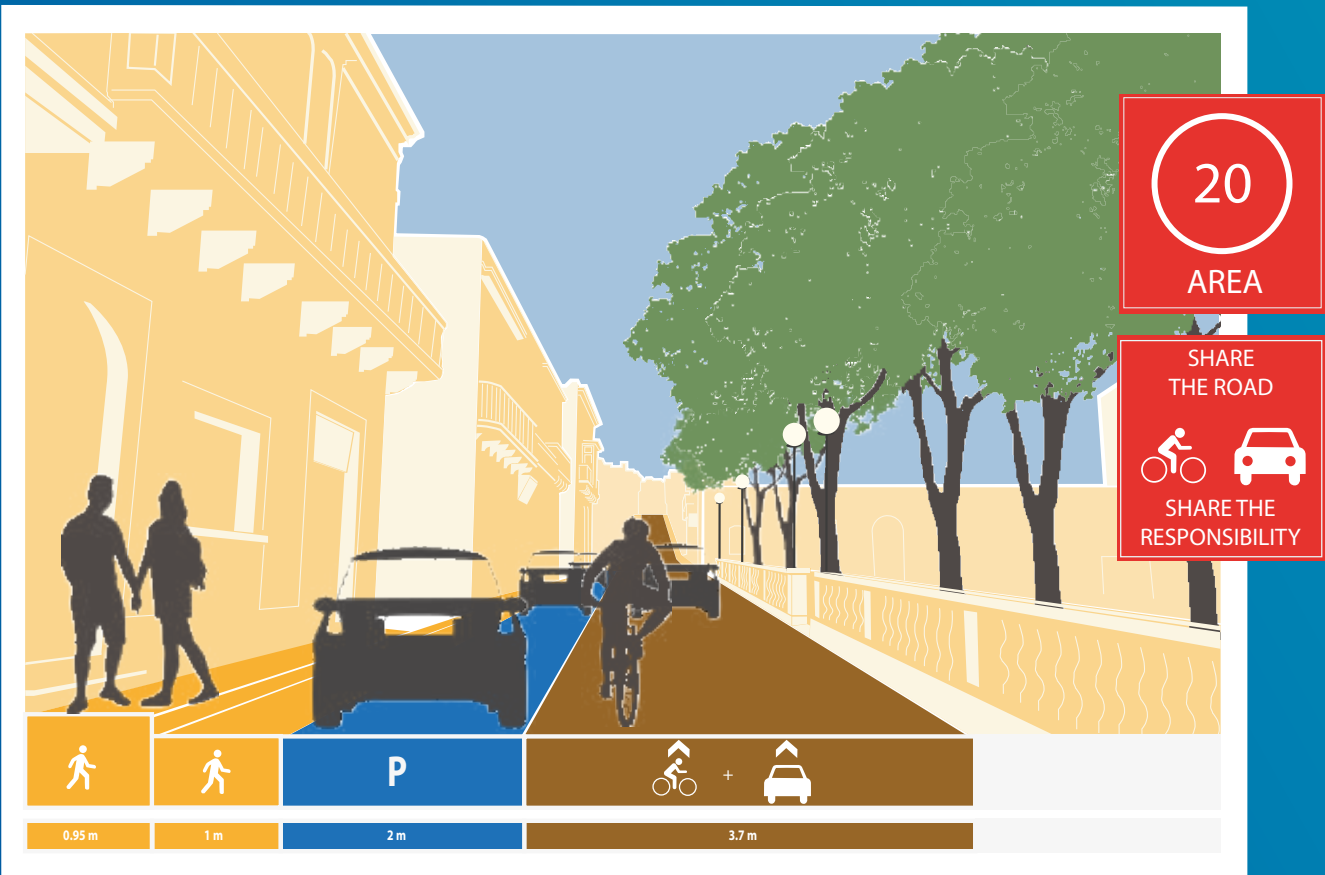


Intervention 6

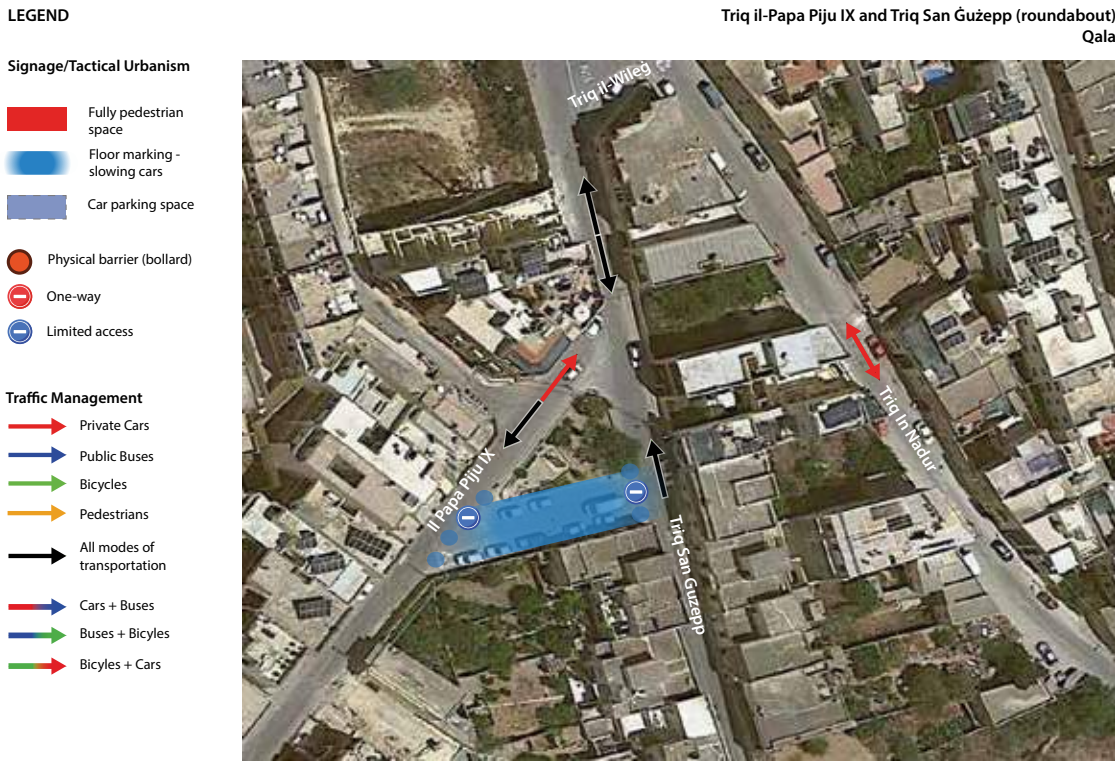
Triq San Ġużepp: Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4
Triq il-Papa Piju IX (roundabout): Level 3

Even though this road is located in the centre of the locality and runs along the Parish Church, it also forms part of the distributor road network (as a continuation of Triq it-28 ta' April 1688). This road would however greatly benefit from interventions which would aid in reducing the traffic volume that is presently around the square. It is therefore being suggested that this road be rerouted into a one-way street (northerly direction, away from the square and towards Triq ir-Rebħa) from its current two-way configuration.

As Triq San Ġużepp would be shared by all modes of transportation, adequate signage is being proposed, including signage for slow speeds and pedestrian priority. In addition, through tactical urbanism interventions, parking bays along the residential side of the road could be formally designated. With the latter, it is envisaged that the parking area within the open space in front of the Parish Church would eventually be removed and turned into a fully pedestrianised area.



Bus route suggestion: Currently, Triq San Ġużepp caters for public transportation in both directions, however this situation creates several vehicular and pedestrian conflicts due to the narrow street width, wherein vehicles, including public buses, have to wait for those coming from the opposite direction to be able to pass. In order for this intervention to work well, it is being suggested that the existing bus route would also be rerouted. Buses would arrive at the central square through Triq it-28 ta' April 1688 and access Triq San Ġużepp as existing; however, instead of using the same road to exit the square, buses would subsequently travel from Triq San Ġużepp to Triq il-Papa Piju IX and further down to Triq l-Isqof M. Buttigieg (located adjacent to the school). This proposed change would relieve the centre of the village from extraneous traffic flows and further allow better public transportation connections to the area around the school and civic centre.



At the northern part of Triq San Ġużepp lies a green pocket which is currently being used largely as a traffic junction. In order to give this space back to the residents and make it safer to access, the short stretch of road space between Triq San Ġużepp and Triq il-Papa Piju IX is being proposed to be closed off for through traffic and would instead be limited to residents only to access their garages. Adequate limited access signage is being proposed at both ends of this stretch of road and tactical urbanism, in the form of floor marking, would connect the green pocket to the existing pavement along these residential units while further alerting drivers of this pedestrian-oriented space.

The rest of Triq San Ġużepp, from Triq il-Papa Piju IX to Triq il-Wileg and Triq il-Qala would remain as a two-way road, however including adequate signage to slow down drivers.

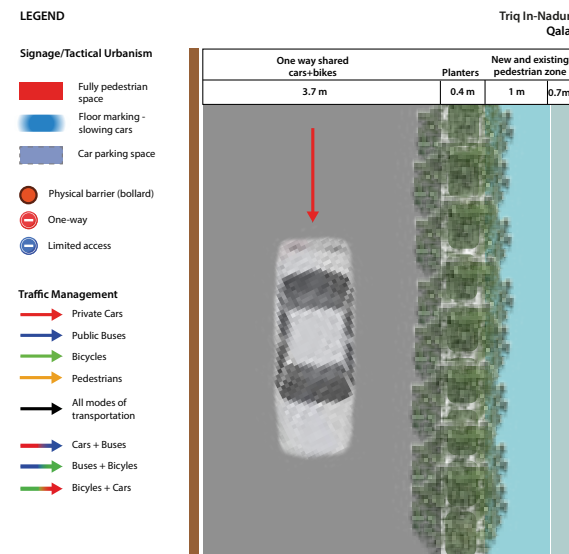
Intervention 7

Pjazza San Ġużepp (uppermost extent): Level 2 Triq in-Nadur: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 4

The vehicular system around the Parish Church is a proposed clockwise one-way loop, in order to reduce vehicular presence and increase the walkability of Pjazza San Ġużepp. It is being proposed that the uppermost extent of Pjazza San Ġużepp be rerouted from a two-way road to a one-way road direction east towards Triq in-Nadur. As a continuation, Triq in-Nadur is also being proposed to be rerouted into a one-way road, direction south towards Triq it-28 ta' April 1688. Therefore, a one-way loop would be formed between Triq it-28 ta' April 1688, Triq San Ġużepp (Intervention 6), Pjazza San Ġużepp (uppermost extent), Triq in-Nadur, and back to Triq it-28 ta' April 1688.

The gained space, from the rerouting of Triq in-Nadur into a one-way access, would be given to pedestrians as an extension of the existing sidewalk, and it is being proposed that planters be placed along this road to provide an important buffer between the new pedestrian space and the vehicular lane. In addition, adequate signage for slow speeds and sharing of road (between cyclists and drivers) is being proposed in both roads.

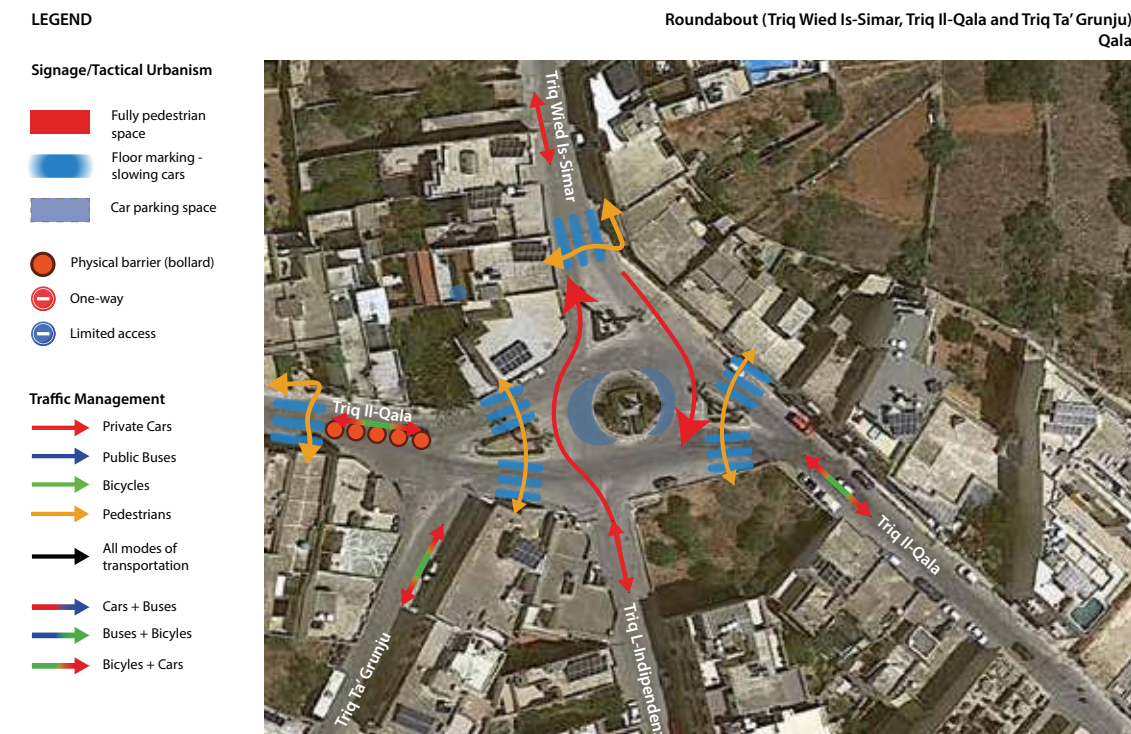




Intervention 8

Triq Wied is-Simar, Triq il-Qala and Triq Ta' Grunju (roundabout): Level 1 and Level 3

Within the Northern residential area of the village, several roads meet at a traffic junction which is currently characterised by a significant vehicular presence that often makes it hard for pedestrians to cross safely, particularly the more vulnerable road users. In order for this open vehicular space to become more walkable and safer, tactical urbanism using different forms of floor marking is being proposed.



In this respect, new pedestrian crossings are being proposed at Triq il-Qala and Triq Wied is-Simar, including new crossings closer to the roundabout. In addition, floor paint is being proposed to be used around the roundabout to increase its size and in turn decrease the space taken up by cars going around it. This intervention would encourage drivers to slow down both when approaching this junction and also when driving through it, making the route from the Northern part of the village to the central square safer for pedestrians to use.

Adequate signage is being proposed when approaching the junction and also throughout both Triq il-Qala and Triq Ta' Grunju to share the road between drivers and cyclists.

Intervention 9

Triq B. Cagliares: Play Street

Triq B. Cagliares is located in a residential zone within walking distance from the square. It is reached through Triq il-Kuncizzjoni and currently caters for a public open space which appears to have been used as a playground in the past and which is clearly not currently being enjoyed to its full potential.

This road has the potential to be used as a play street during designated times and/or days, given that it is characterised by very localised traffic and strategically complements other interventions proposed for the locality. The play street would also become an extension of the existing open space. The residential area wherein this road is located is also seeing an increase in residential development, including young couples and families, thus having a play street would further be used by the future potential residents.

Programming the space for various potential activities could attract even more residents from a wider catchment within the community and would 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 residential areas via the proposed Slow Streets network.





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

Barrier elements

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



Street furniture

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

Surface treatment

can be used to further define the playstreet

Signs

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



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.



Qala

The simplest interventions to implement first would be the play streets, tactical urbanism interventions (namely floor markings) and temporary signage that would enable preliminary testing of some of the more significant interventions. Floor markings at intersections and critical crossings may be carried out first as pedestrian priority is the primary concern of the Slow Streets initiative. Play street closures during this phase may be carried out on designated days and at times when traffic is already low. This testing on Triq B. Cagliares could begin on Sundays during this phase, for instance, using temporary signage and protective barriers. Testing of the key interventions around the square leading to their eventual implementation may also be carried out, specifically the proposed reconfiguration interventions within Triq it-28 ta' April 1688, Triq San Ġużepp and Triq in-Nadur.

During the second phase, the interventions for the reconfiguration of the roads around the square, commencing in Phase 1, may continue to be tested on other days of the week and times, and eventually concluded. In addition, testing on the proposed interventions of Triq l-Imġarr may commence and, simultaneously, Phase 1 testing on Sundays may extend over the entire weekend and designated weekdays. Interventions within the southern area of the locality could also occur in this phase, as well as some of the other Level 1 and Level 2 interventions.

Finally for Phase 3, the implementation of all interventions at their full scale is envisioned to occur, including all outstanding Level 1 interventions that enable the network to be consolidated.

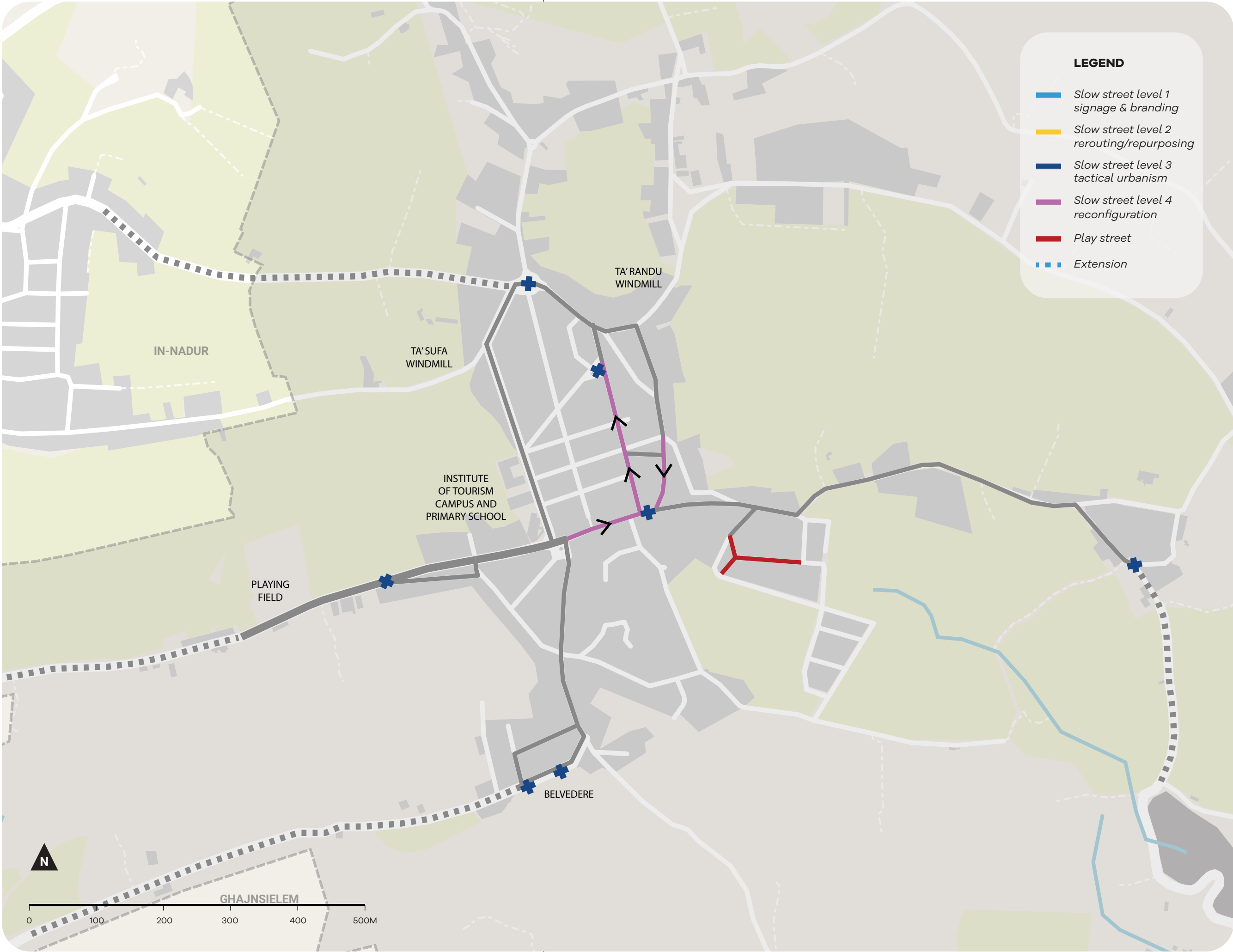


PHASING

STARTING &
TESTING THE
NETWORK



KUNSILL LOKALI
QALA

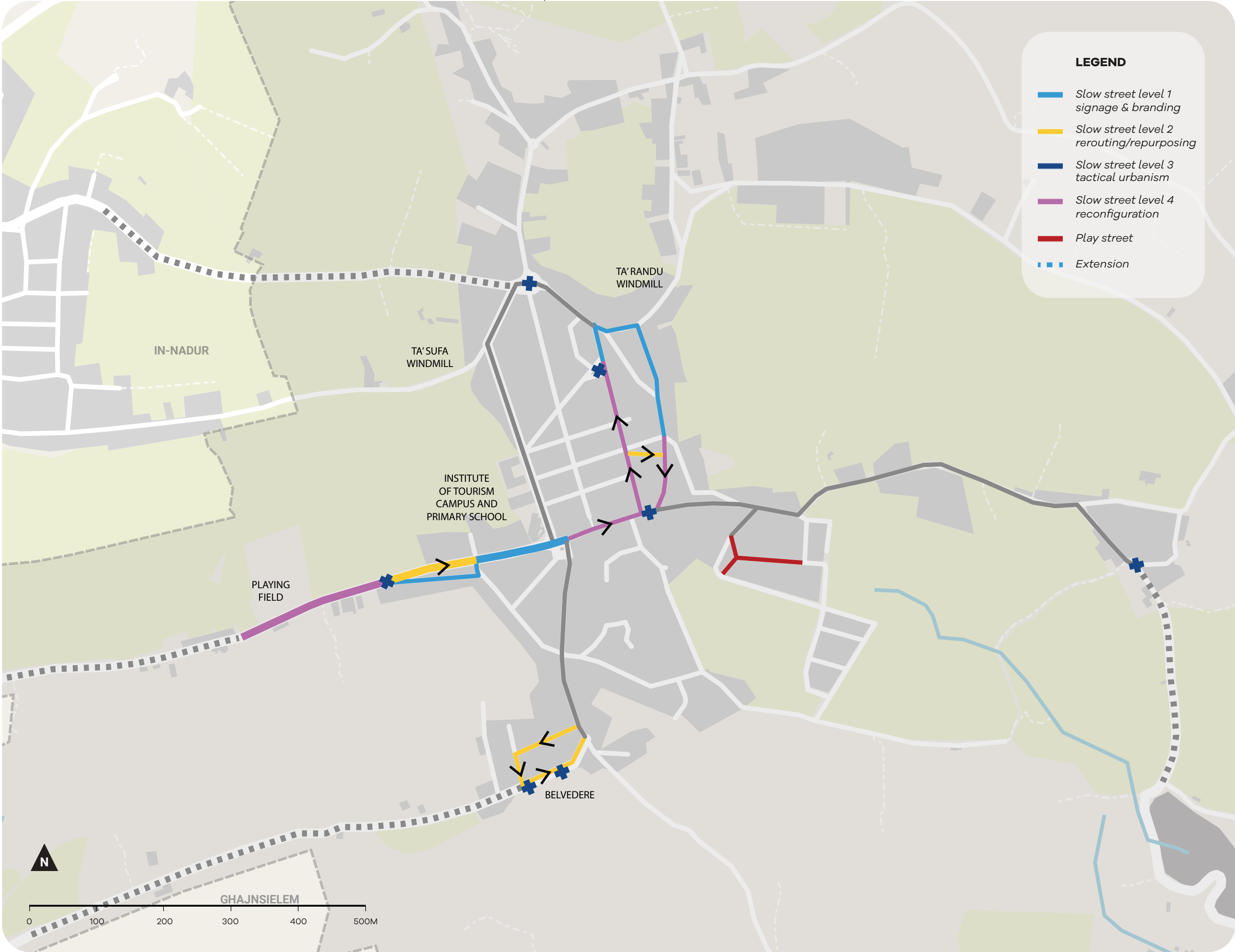


PHASING

STRENGTHENING
THE NETWORK

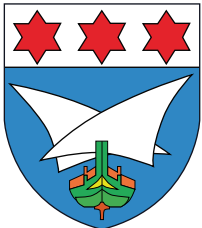


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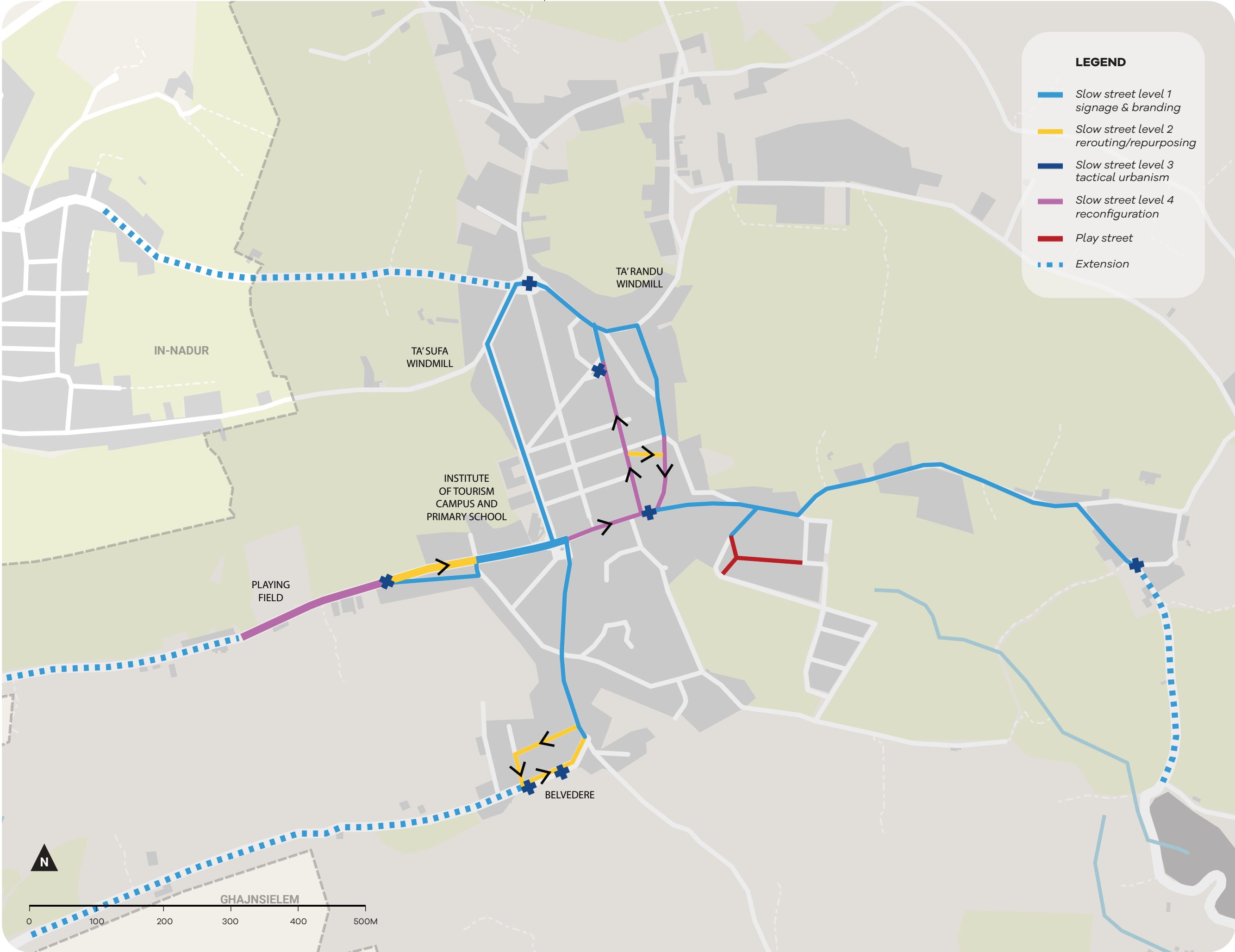



PHASING

COMPLETING
THE NETWORK



KUNSILL LOKALI
QALA





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.

Summary

- 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.

Qala is a large locality in the eastern edge of Gozo, characterised by large stretches of agricultural land and a rugged coastline with sea caves, saltpans and the Hondoq ir-Rummien beach. The village also contains a number of historic and natural attractions. Unimpeded views of Malta and Comino are possible from its rocky hillsides and unique viewpoints – such as the Qala Belvedere – and other attractors and landmarks include, among others, the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady (Tal-Hondoq) church, the Qala windmill, St. Anthony's Battery and Fort Qala.

The locality is mostly residential in nature with some commercial activity around the central Parish Church dedicated to St. Joseph, and educational institutes and the civic centre within the western side of the village. The square is an open space with immense potential, albeit also used as a parking area for those residing or visiting the centre, while the surrounding roads, although straight, are steep which makes it challenging to walk along them. This locality would therefore benefit from a reduction in vehicular traffic around the central square, in order to make it more pedestrian-oriented, and develop a walkable network for people to travel on foot around the locality.

The main aim of the Slow Streets strategy, therefore, is to liberate local streets 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, as much as possible, still retaining the current 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.

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

Intervention Summary street by street

Intervention 1 - Triq il-Kunċizzjoni / Pjazza San Kerrew (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 30km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings within Pjazza San Kerrew

Intervention 2 - Triq iż-Żewwieqa (Belvedere) (rerouting and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: pedestrian priority
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road, direction east towards Triq taċ-Ĉawl/Triq il-Belveder, with possible closure (designated days/times)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor marking around the belvedere intensified at the entry points

Intervention 3 - Triq Wied Biljun and Triq F. Barocci (rerouting)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Signage: one-way roads
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road, direction west (Triq F. Barocci) and two-way road to one-way road, direction south (Triq Wied Biljun); possible two-way retention in tandem with closure of Triq iż-Żewwieqa (Belvedere) stretch (designated days/times)

Intervention 4 - Triq l-Imġarr (western side up until Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli) (signage & branding, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 50km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Signage: high pedestrian and cyclist activity
- Reconfiguration: reduce road width to 7.4m (3.7m each lane), introduce additional pedestrian space throughout the gained space and planters strategically placed along the road, buffering the additional pedestrian space from the vehicular lane
- Tactical Urbanism: floor marking delineating additional pedestrian space and space for planters

Intervention 4 - Triq l-Imġarr (along Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli) (signage & branding, rerouting tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 50km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way part-road to one-way part-road (direction east to central square)
- Tactical Urbanism: pedestrian crossing (at intersection with Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli)

Intervention 4 - Triq Patri Ġużepp Portelli (signage & branding)

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

Intervention 5 - Triq it-28 ta’ April 1688 (rerouting, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 30km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road (direction east towards the central square)
- Reconfiguration: reduce road width to 4.1m, include additional pedestrian space in the gained space and planters to buffer the pedestrian space from traffic
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings to delineate additional pedestrian space and space for planters
- Tactical Urbanism: colourful floor marking to alert drivers to slow down (at the central square)

Intervention 6 - Triq San Ġużepp (rerouting, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: pedestrian priority
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road (direction north)
- Reconfiguration: reduce road width to 3.7m and designate formal parking bays along the residential side of the road
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings designating parking bays

Intervention 6 - Triq il-Papa Piju IX (roundabout) (tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: pedestrian priority
- Signage: no entry except for residents (limited to bottom access)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor marking to connect the green pocket to the existing pavement along the residential units within the intervened stretch of road

Intervention 7 - Pjazza San Guzepp (uppermost extent) (rerouting)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road (direction east towards Triq in-Nadur)

Intervention 7 - Triq in-Nadur (signage & branding, rerouting and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road to one-way road (direction south)
- Reconfiguration: reduce road width to 3.7m, introduce an additional pedestrian space from the gained space and planters to buffer the pedestrian space from the traffic lane
- Tactical Urbanism: floor marking to emphasise designated pedestrian space and planters

Intervention 8 - Triq Wied is-Simar, Triq il-Qala and Triq Ta’ Grunju (roundabout): (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)
- Tactical Urbanism: pedestrian crossings and floor marking around the roundabout; bollards for better car manouvering

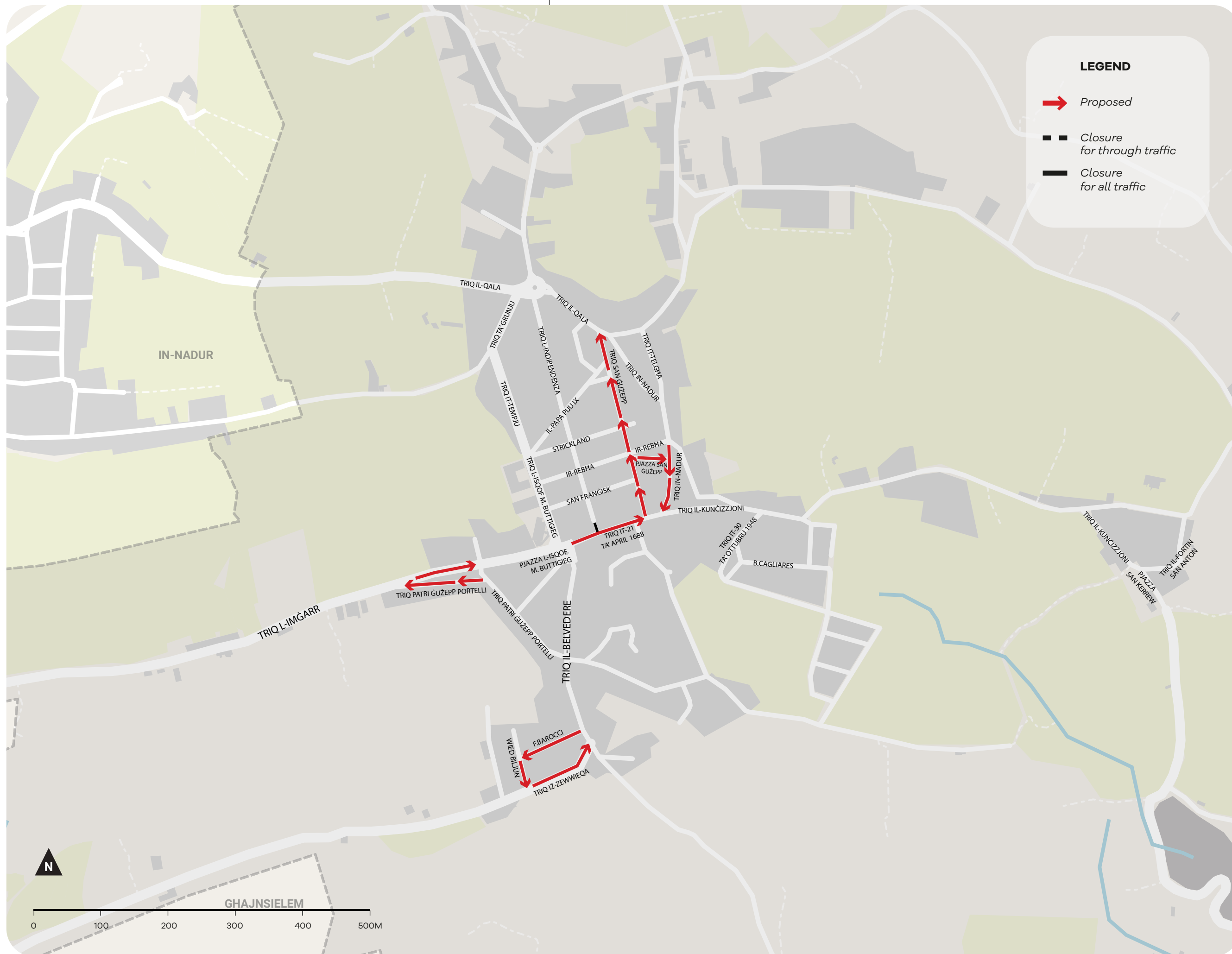
Intervention 9 - Triq B. Cagliares (Play Street)

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

TRAFFIC



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MINISTRY FOR TRANSPORT,
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Local Councils' Association Malta