

ResidentFirst

# SLOW STREETS

November 2020



KUNSILL LOKALI  
SWIEQI

ResidentFirst

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

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**Acknowledgements**

The project teams would like to express their gratitude to the Local Councils' Association for its ongoing support, to Transport Malta for providing important geospatial datasets for the locality, the Planning Authority for providing the digital base plan of the locality, Bicycle Advocacy Group and Environment and Resources Authority: ERA.

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

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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](https://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.

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.



source: Chicago Tribune



source: changing-transport.org

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.

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.

## SWIEQI

Swieqi is a large residential locality in the Northern region of Malta, with a mixed population including local and expat families, as well as young foreigners given its proximity to St Julian's which is a popular employment node and a beach, nightlife and dining destination. The locality is made up of several regions: The 'central' Swieqi area, Madliena (High Ridge), Victoria Gardens, and Tal-Ibraġ. Commercial activities take place at specific nodes along three main streets – Triq Is-Swieqi, Triq Il-Qasam, and Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ. The main historic landmarks include the Parish Church, Marija Immakulata Omm il-Knisja, located on Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ, and the iconic Fort Madliena.

The local roads are often quiet, with designated slow speeds. However the locality has a significant problem of extraneous through traffic, such as drivers accessing Pembroke to San Ġwann and vice versa. Additionally, the locality is separated from St Julian's and Pembroke by a large arterial road with limited entry and exit points, which causes the locality to feel disconnected from the seafront. Narrow local roads are often used as traffic shortcuts instead of using the arterial infrastructure, threatening the residential calmness and pedestrian safety while contributing to additional pollution levels.

A particular problem area is the Swieqi tunnel, which is actively used by both cars and pedestrians, but in its current form poses serious safety issues for pedestrian users.

The locality is characterised by four main green open spaces – Victoria Gardens, Ġnien L-Imhallef, Ġnien F.X. Ebejer, and the Swieqi Public Garden which also houses the civic centre and Local Council. However, it is devoid of formal urban squares and has no designated town centre. The presence of a town centre would help strengthen the local identity and would serve as a space for activities and feasts, attract more local businesses, and provide a space for residents of all ages to interact and enjoy.

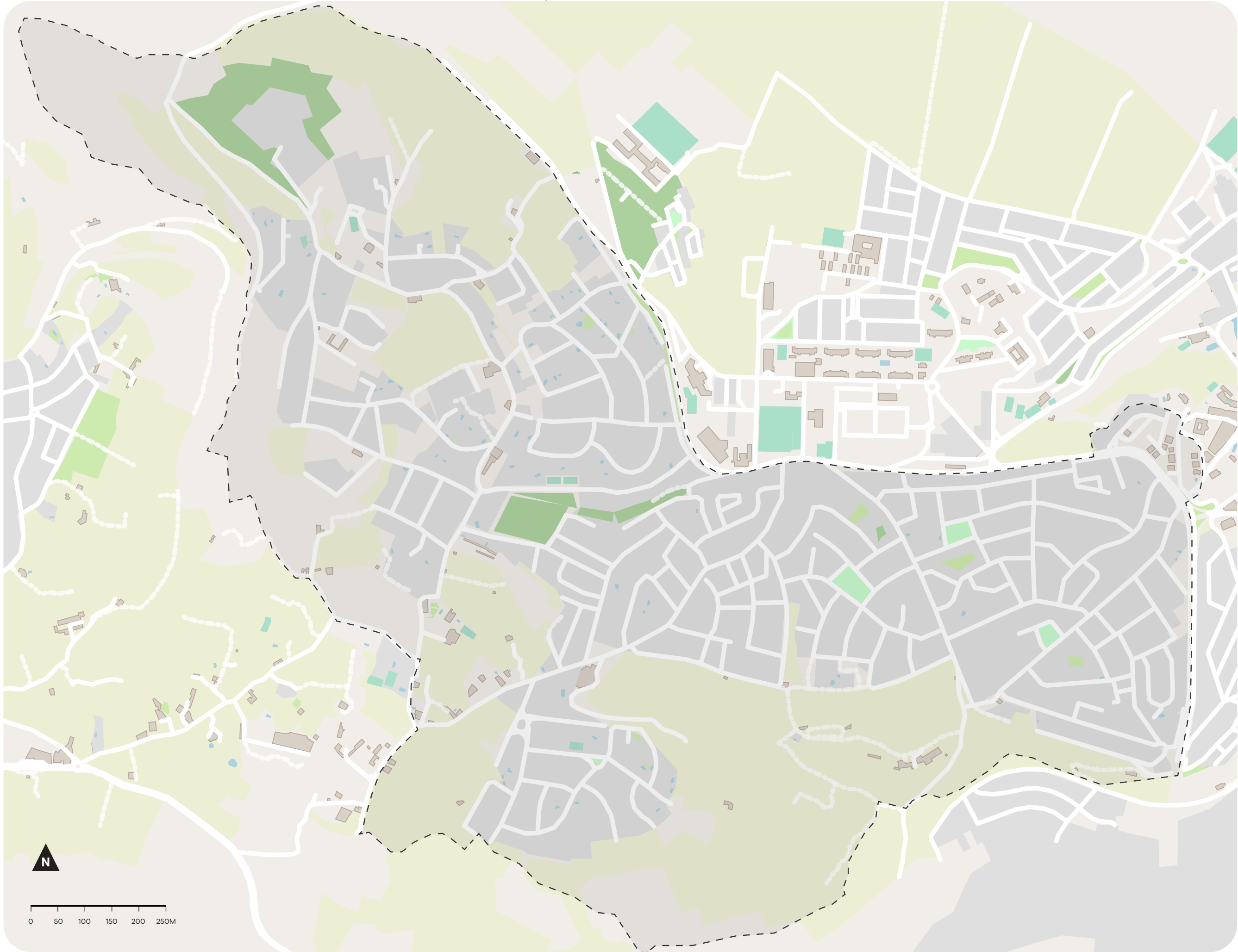
The main aim of Swieqi's Slow Streets strategy, therefore, is to liberate local streets from extraneous traffic that could instead be safely used by residents. By using different schemes of traffic management, including both rerouting opportunities and tactical urbanism interventions, the priority within 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.



LOCALITY



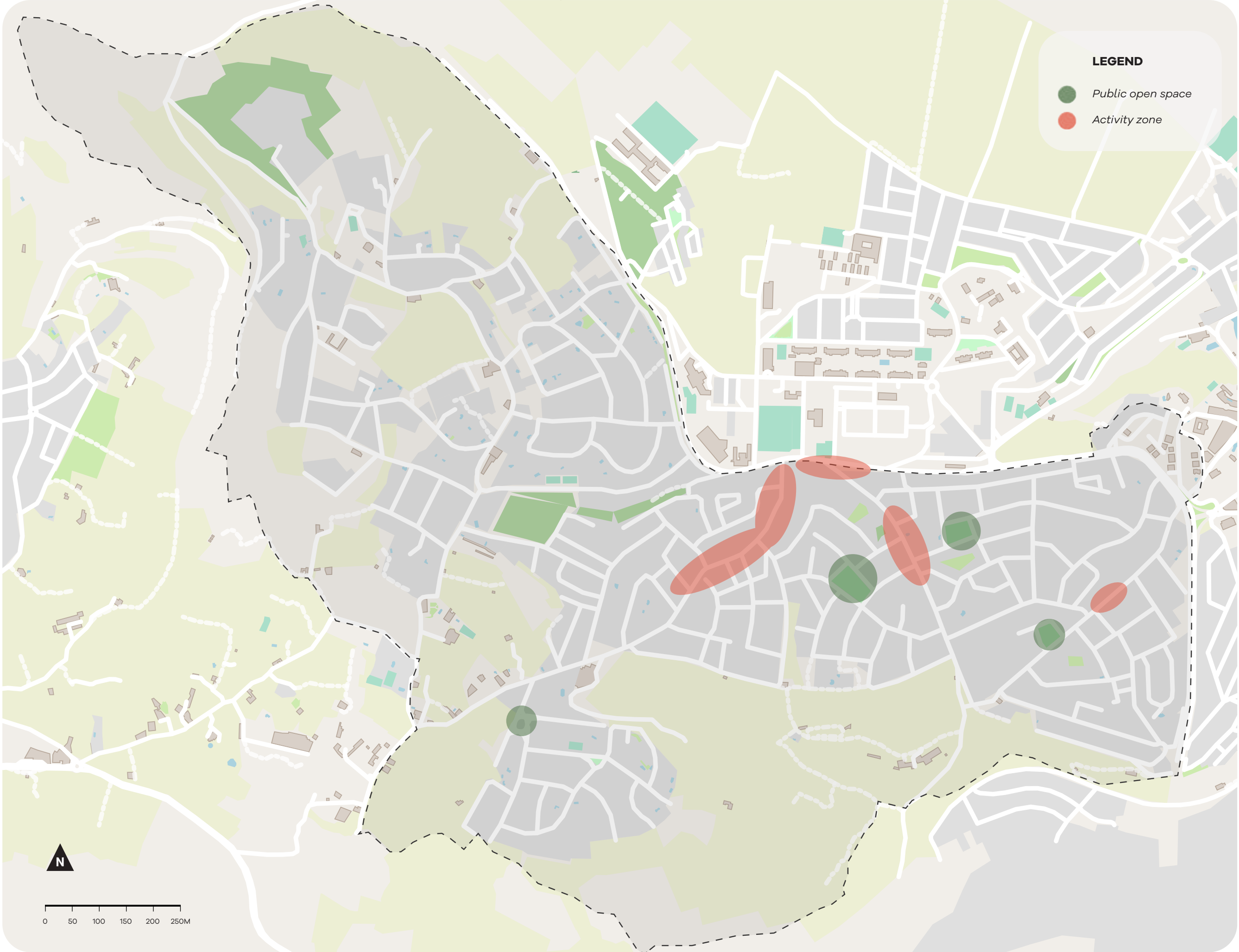
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ACTIVITY  
ZONES



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SWIEQI

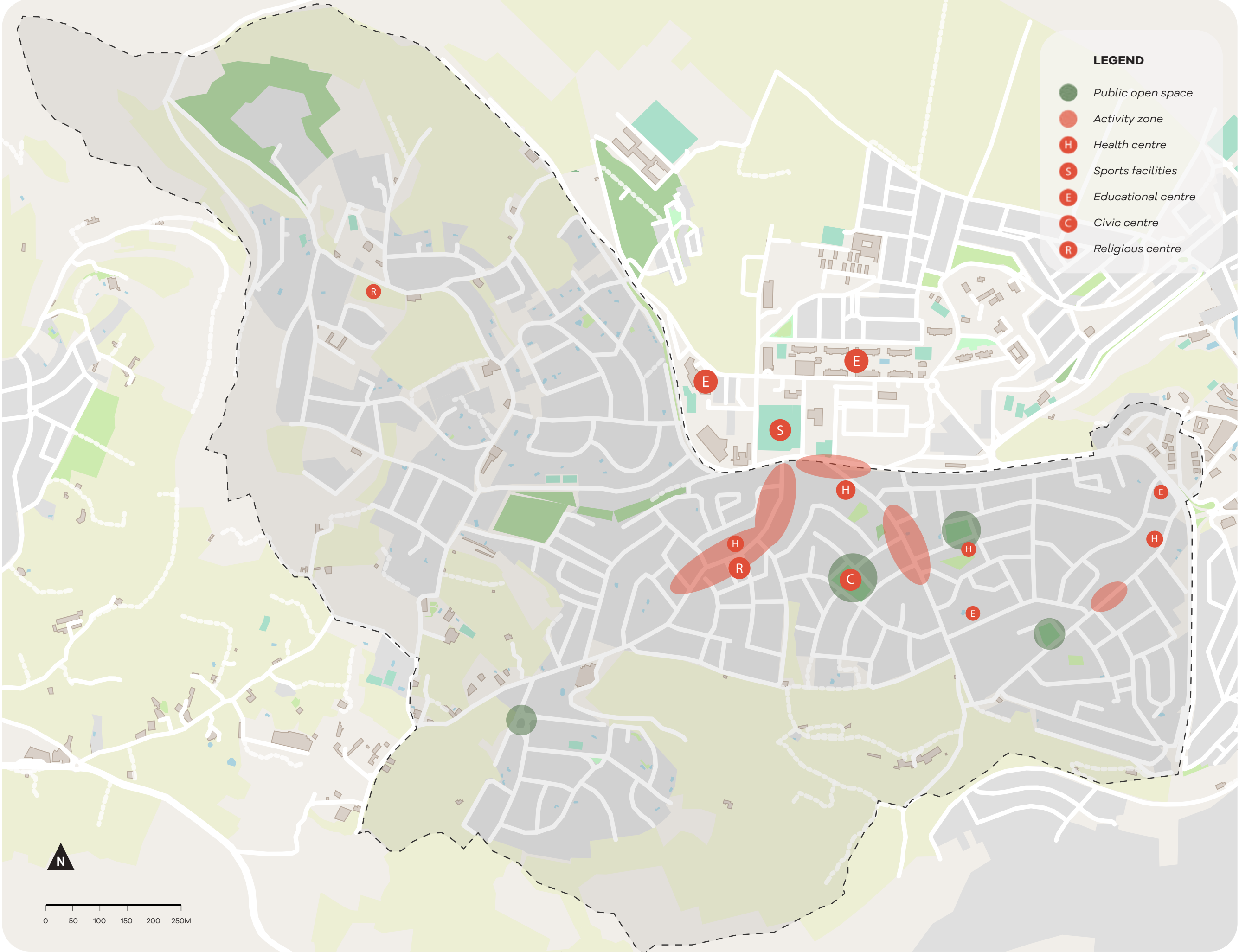




DESTINATIONS



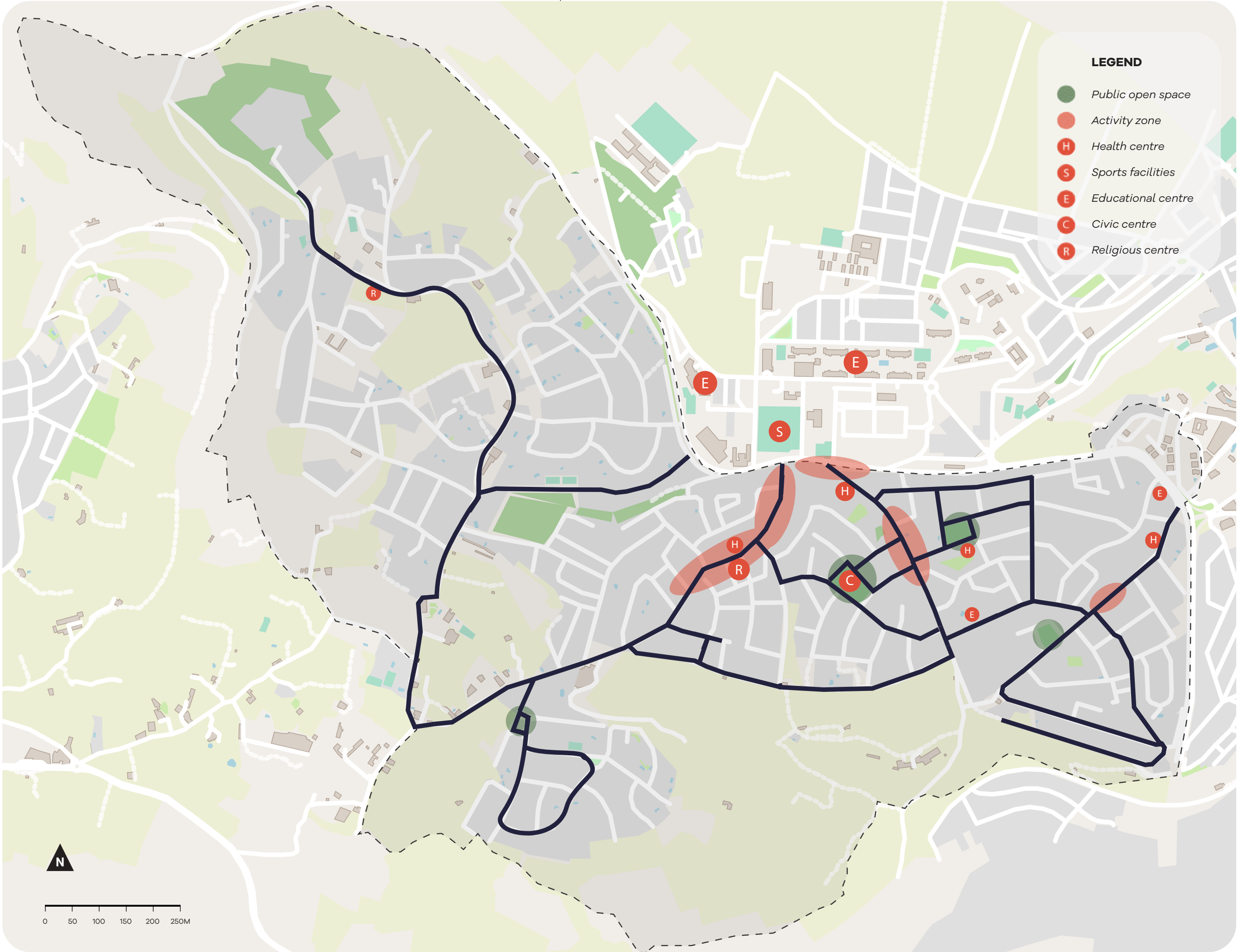
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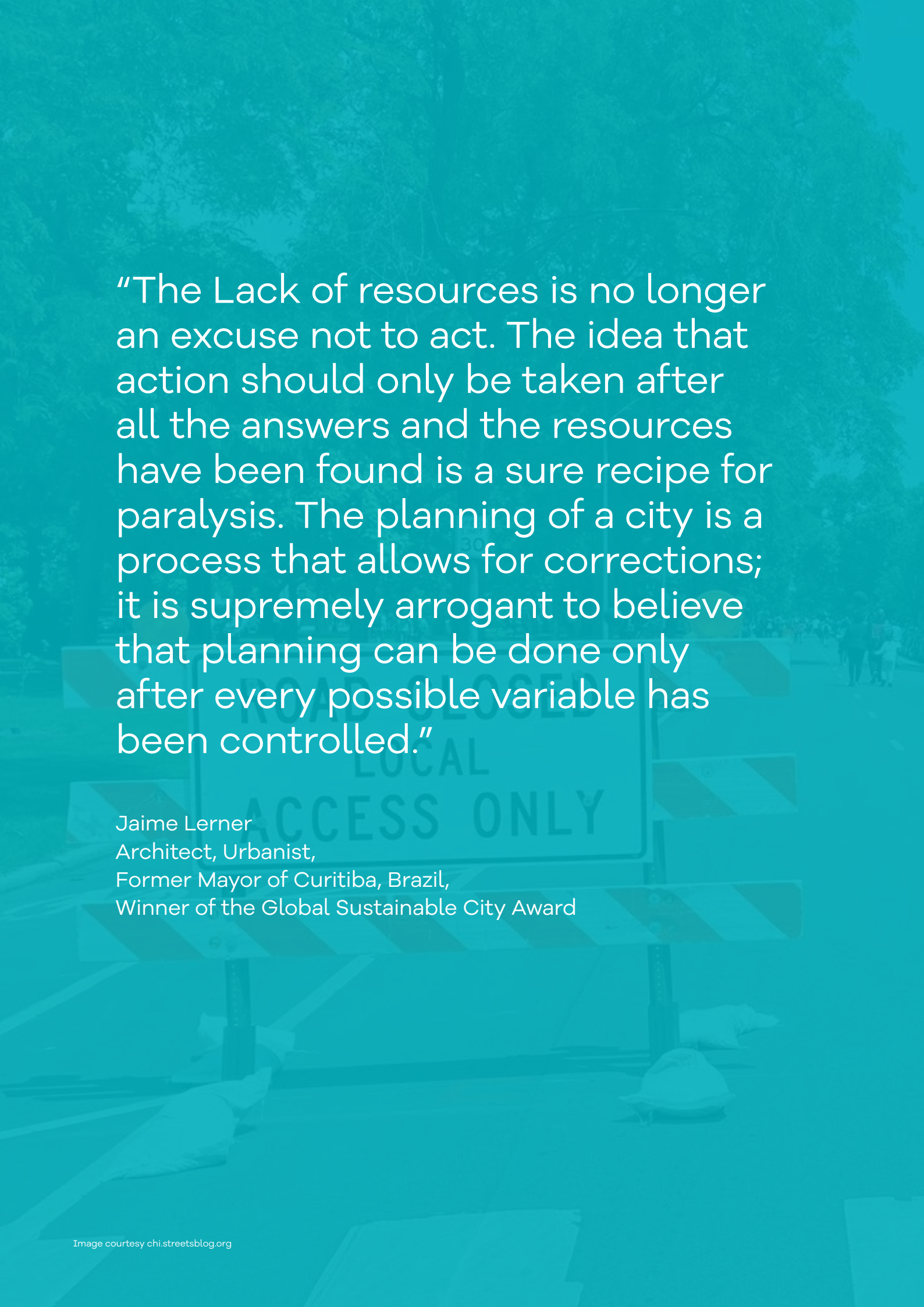
NETWORK



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SWIEQI







“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**

### Cycling

### Swieqi 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.

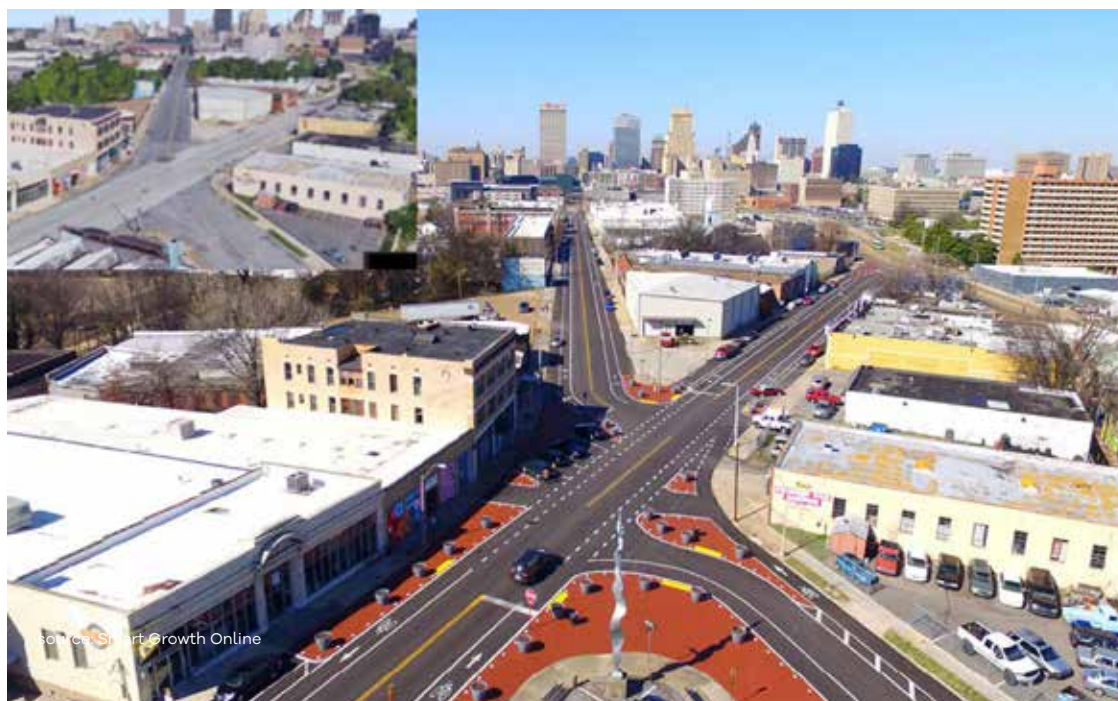


## Level 3 - tactical urbanism

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).

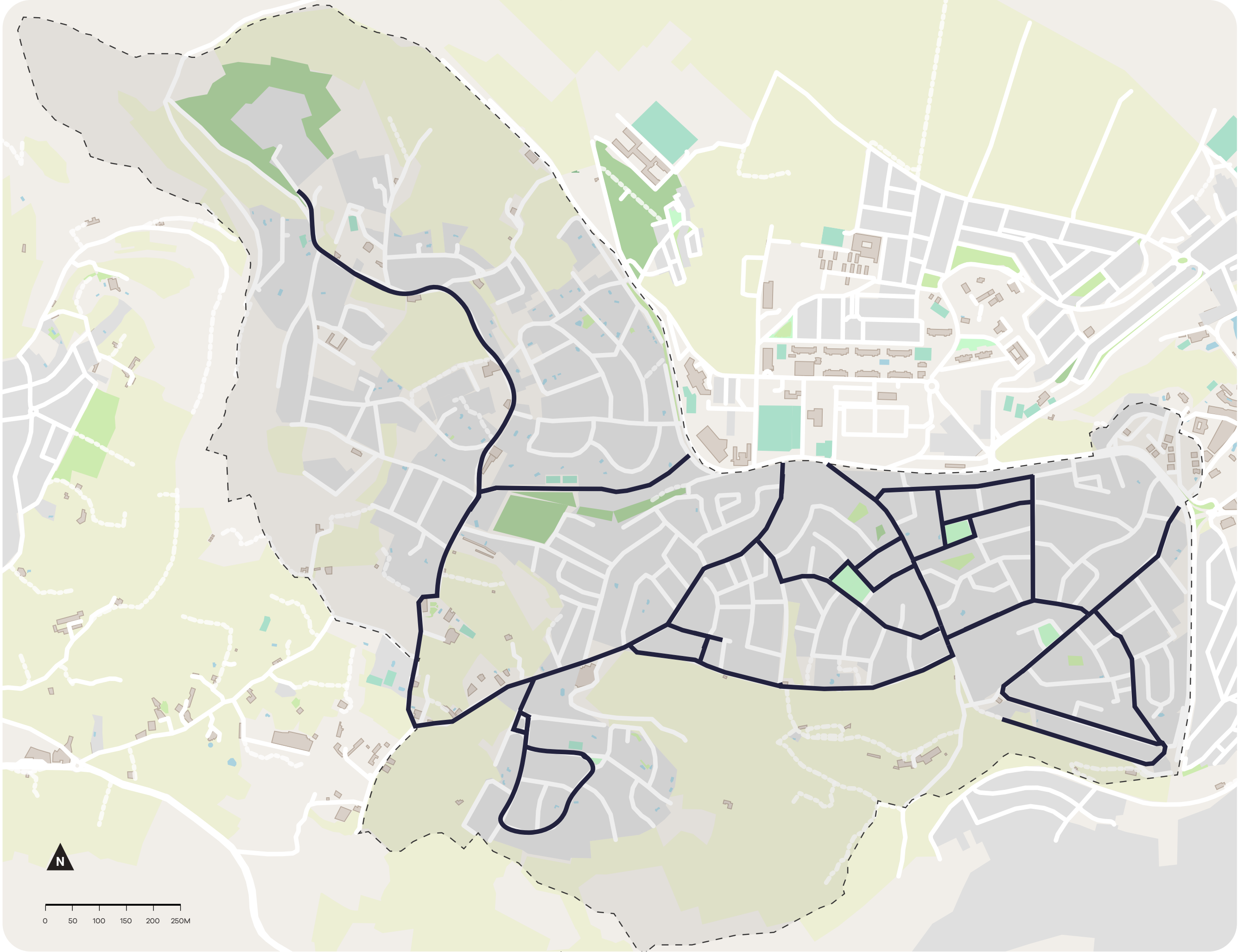




NETWORK



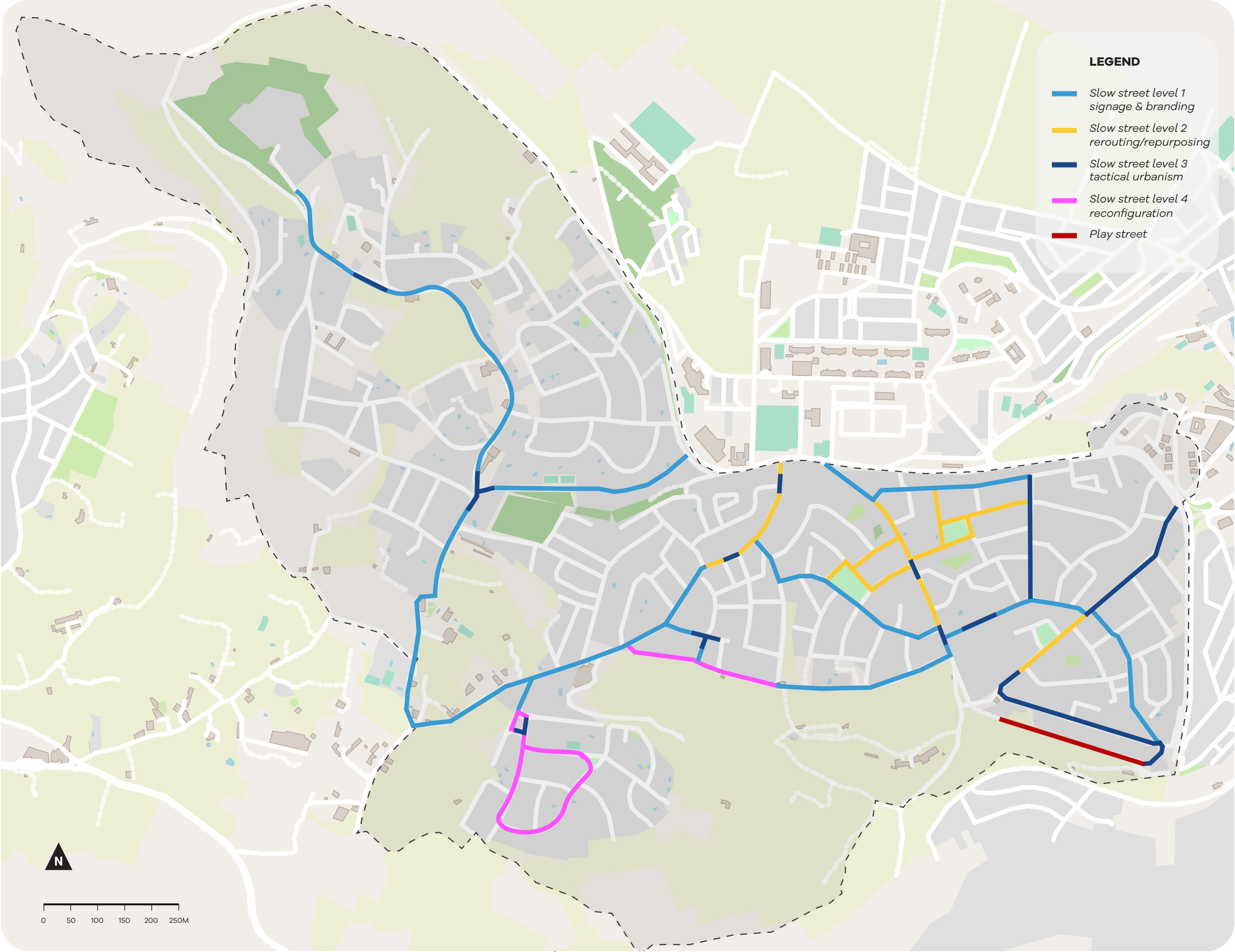
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INTERVENTION



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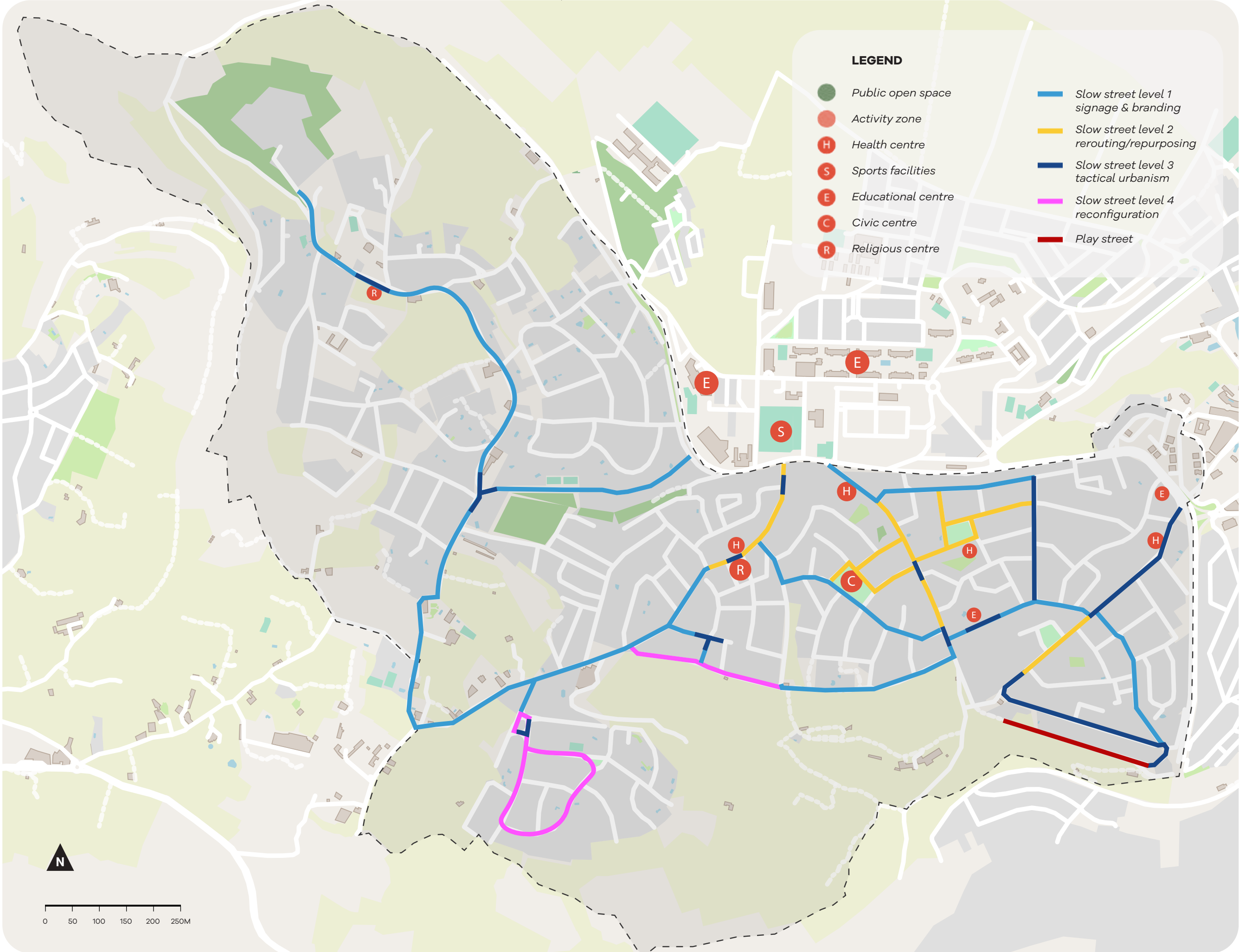




INTERVENTION



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SWIEQI



# 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.



source: cheville On Bikes



source: Bike Auckland

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.



source: greenbelt.org



source: TenStickers

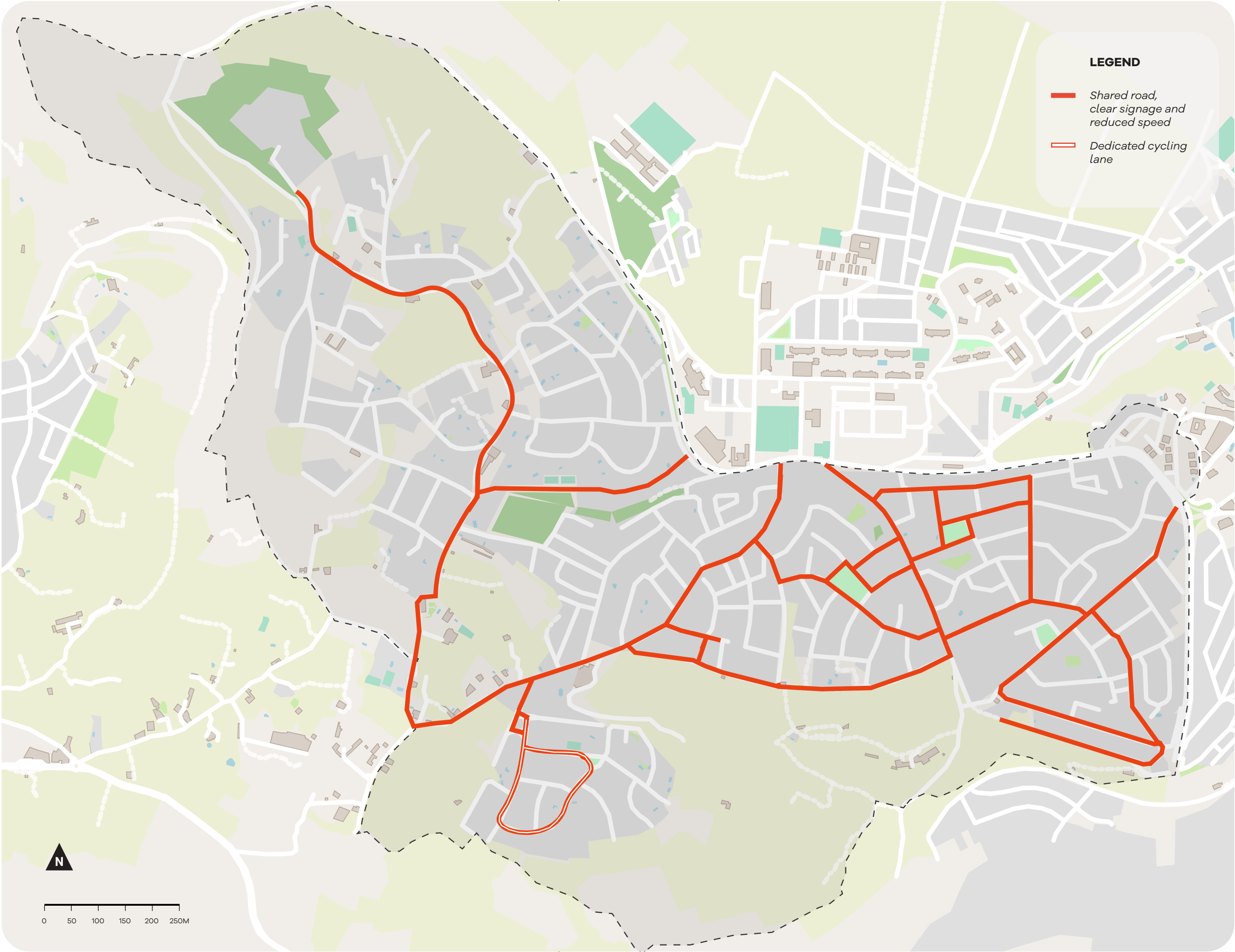
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CYCLING  
NETWORK

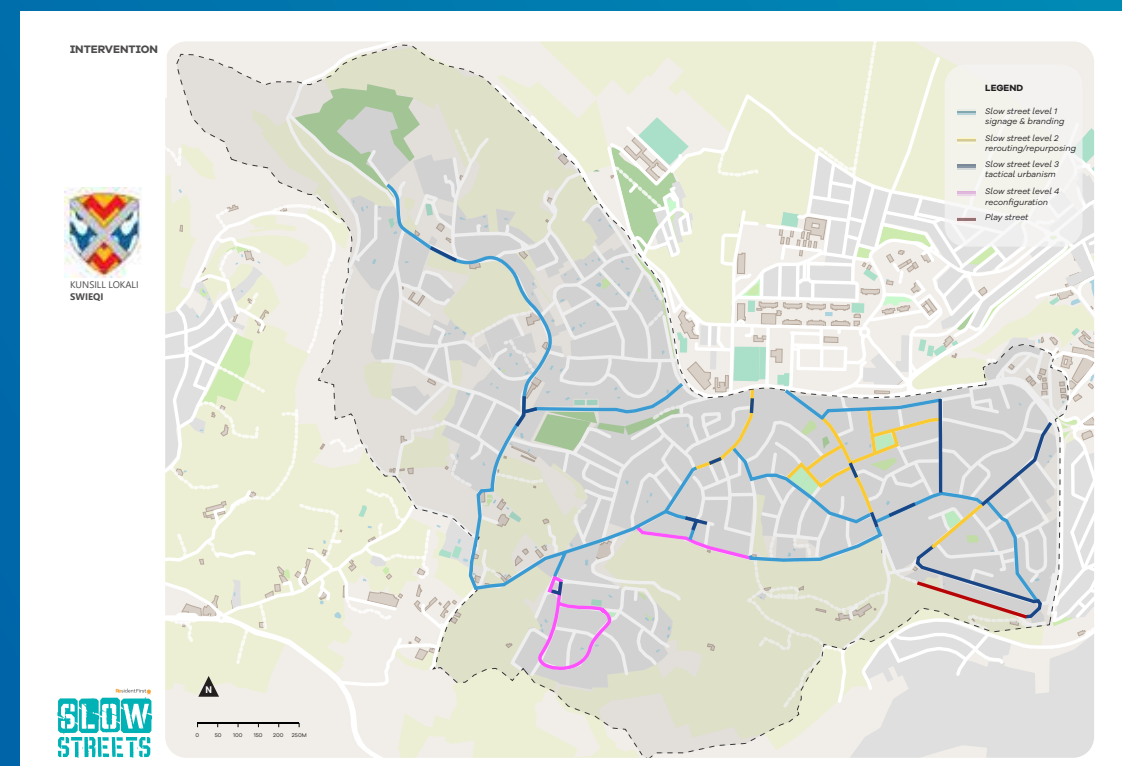


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SWIEQI



# Swieqi 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 is to deter through traffic from local roads and instead divert drivers onto more peripheral routes. The second challenge is to identify walkable routes that link residential areas better to the open spaces, so as to avoid a fragmented network and instead connect all areas of the locality using safer routes.

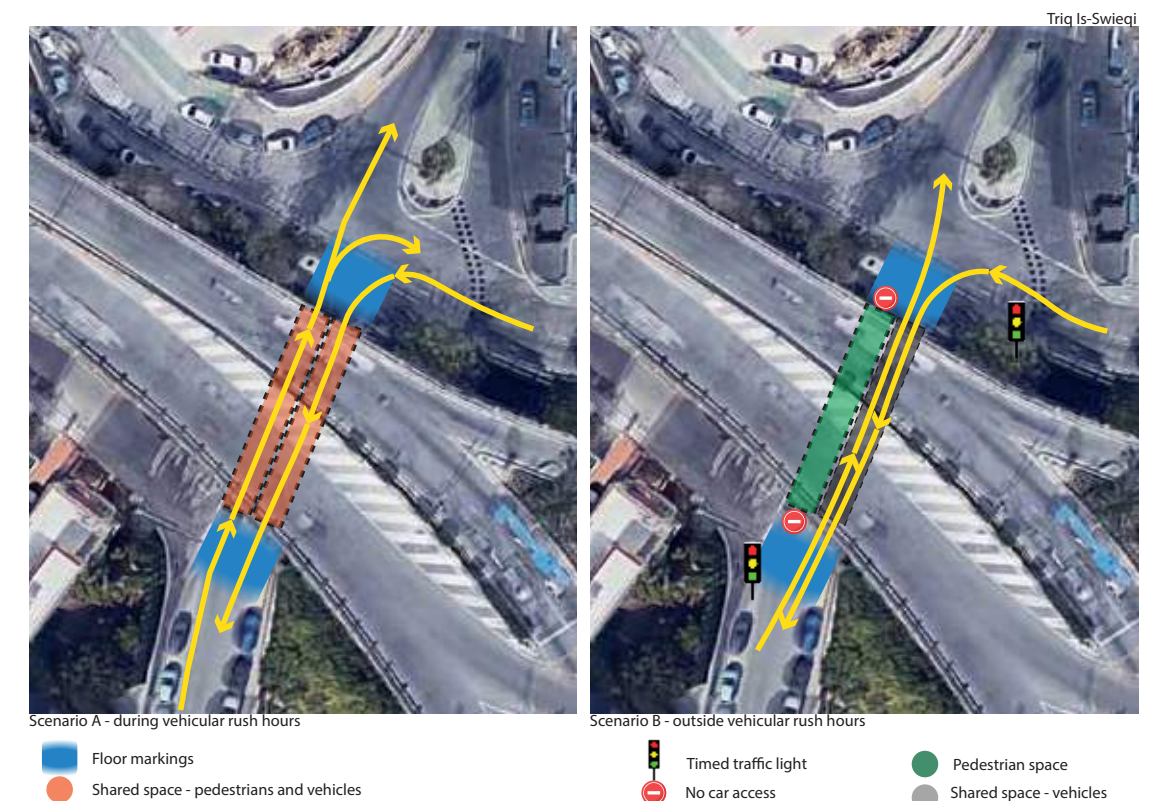


## Intervention 1

### Triq Is-Swieqi: Level 2, 3 and 4

Triq Is-Swieqi is the main spine of the Swieqi area that is directly connected to St Julian's. The road is also particularly important because it connects to Triq il-Pellikan which leads to San Ġwann. Therefore during rush hours, this road becomes even busier. A green node, Ġnien F.X. Ebejer, is located on Triq Is-Swieqi.

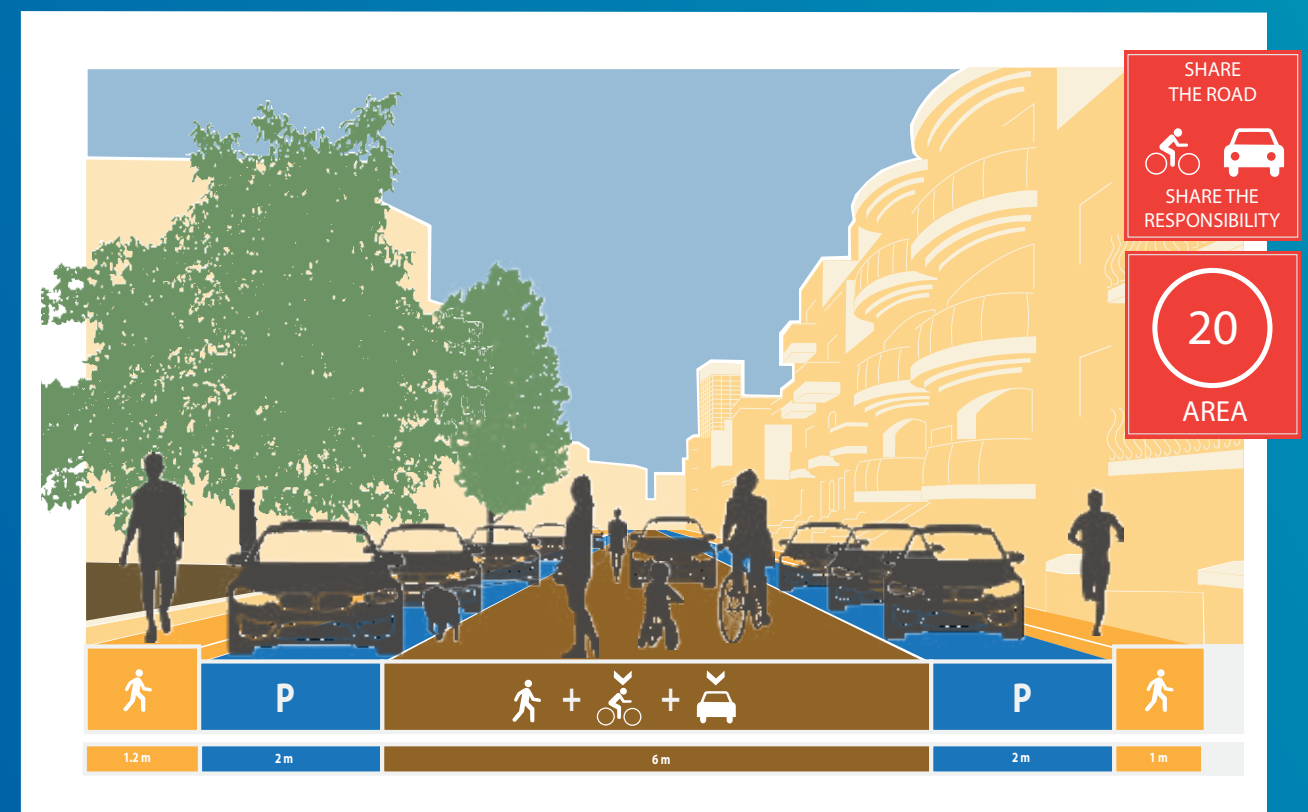
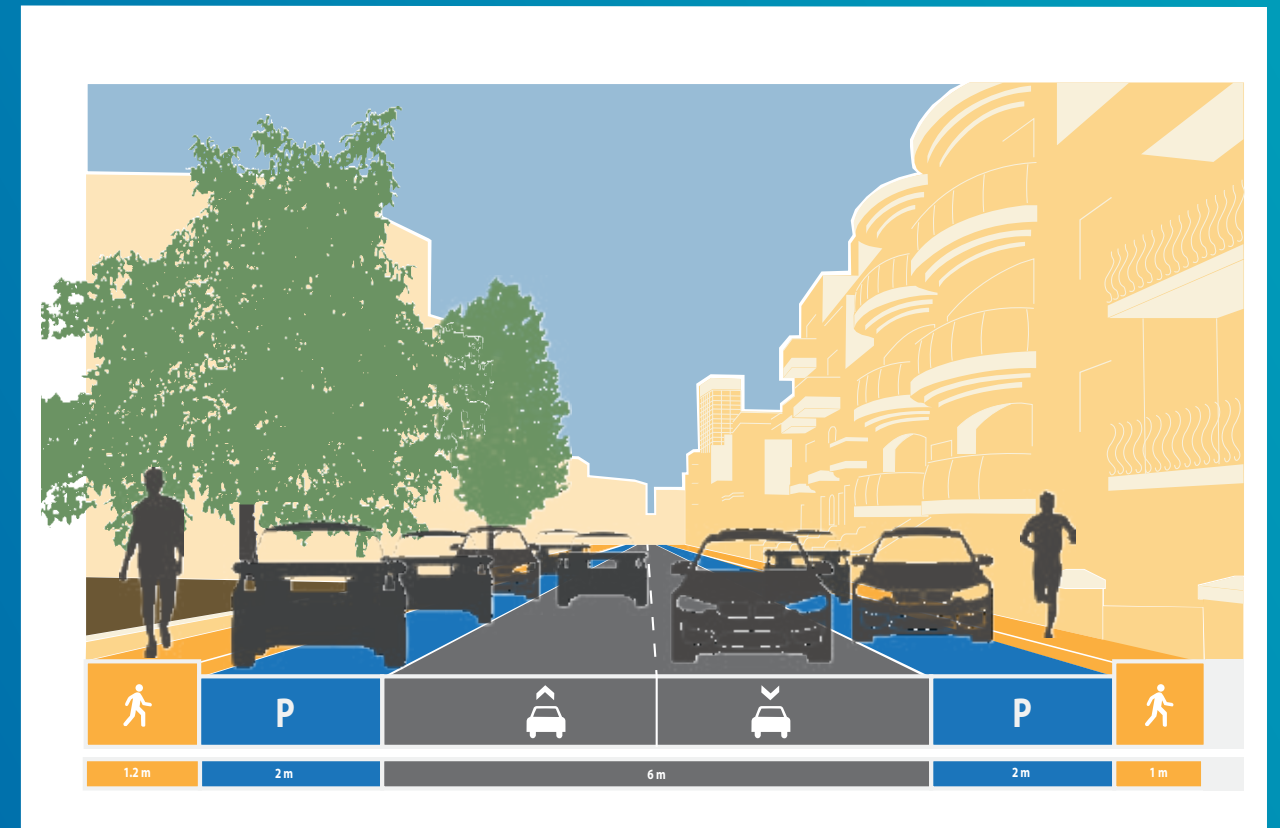
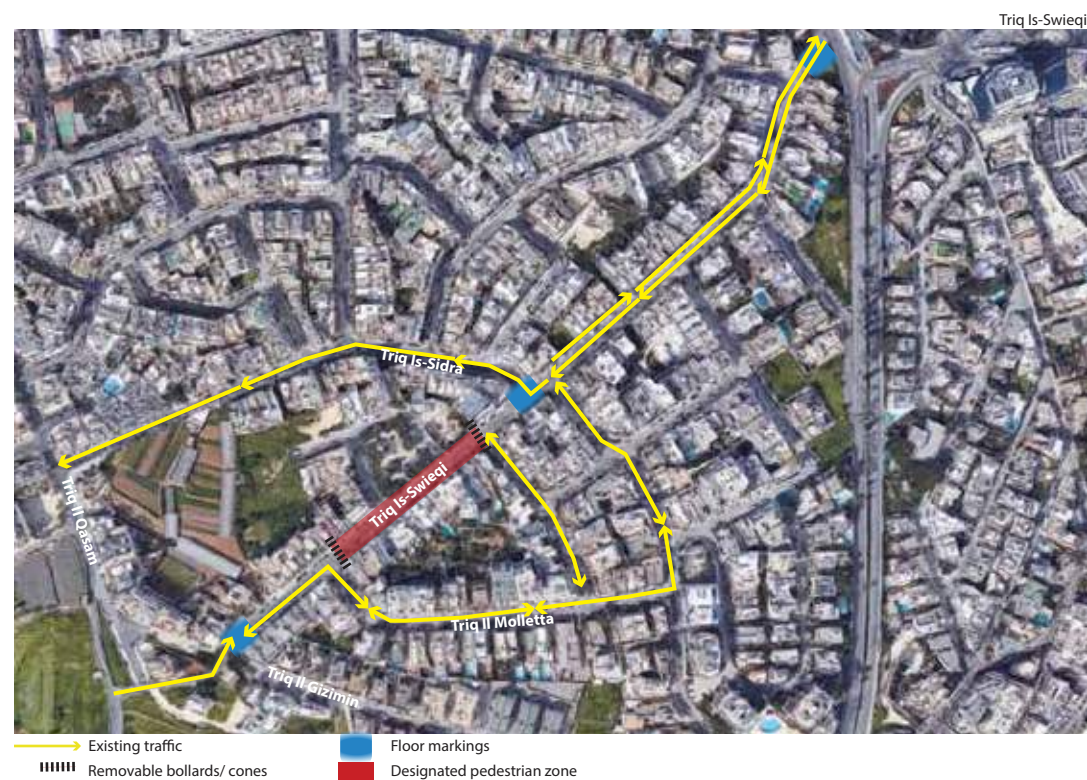
The first strategy is aimed at resolving the shared usage of the Swieqi tunnel between drivers and pedestrians. Currently, the tunnel is actively used and, although defined as a pedestrian priority area, poses serious safety issues for pedestrians since the designated space painted on the road is extremely narrow. Given that there is an issue of lack of physical space and proper infrastructure, the intervention proposes using traffic management schemes for different times of the day. During periods of high pedestrian traffic, such as in the evenings (and particularly on weekends), the intervention would introduce the sharing of one vehicular tunnel for both two-way directions, regulated by traffic lights. This would allow one tunnel to be entirely designated for pedestrians and cyclists. During morning and early evening rush hours (for example, 8-10am and 5-7pm), both tunnels could allow vehicular access of the tunnels as currently existing today, shared with pedestrians and cyclists. Improved signage and tactical urbanism using floor markings at either ends of the tunnels and within the tunnels themselves would reinforce the pedestrian priority aspect in this area. Planters could also be used at the tunnel entrances to make it more inviting for pedestrians. It would also be suggested





to improve the lighting around the tunnels at night. The designated hours would have to be studied in terms of volume and nature of traffic (internal or extraneous). The aim of this intervention is to deter traffic without removing an important point of access for vehicles, particularly for Swieqi residents.

The second strategy aims at liberating pedestrian space next to Ġnien F.X. Ebejer, which could be used as an extension for pedestrian activities and leisure. The intervention proposes that the street segment from Triq il-Ghamad to Triq IL-Molletta be accessed only for resident parking during weekends. Access to the parking zone would be allowed from the direction of the Swieqi tunnels. Drivers coming from Triq IL-Pellikan would either use Triq IL-Ġizimin or Triq IL-Molletta, and drivers coming from the direction of the Swieqi tunnels would still be able to turn onto Triq Is-Sidra or Triq l-Ilma. Furthermore, colourful floor markings are suggested to be implemented at the intersections with Triq Is-Sidra and Triq IL-Ġizimin. These markings would signal drivers to slow down, particularly given the high vehicular activity onto Triq Is-Sidra and the start of the pedestrian friendly area at the intersection with Triq IL-Ġizimin.





## Intervention 2

### Triq il-Ġizimin: Level 1 and 3

Triq il-Ġizimin is a quiet residential street which serves as an attractive pedestrian route because of the connections to the lower Triq Josef Kalleya, which in turn leads to Spinola Bay. It is particularly attractive because of its wide pavement. Through the inclusion of signage and floor markings, it should be made evident to all street users that this is a street where pedestrians take priority over vehicles.



Floor markings are also being proposed in front of the stairs linking to Triq Josef Kalleya and also at the lower end of the road, within different parts of the turn leading to Triq Josef Kalleya. This curve is currently quite dangerous for pedestrians due to the sharp turn and lack of pedestrian amenities and would benefit from a better-signalled and more legible environment for cars to slow down as they approach and navigate through the curved access.



— Existing traffic  
- - - Pedestrian circulation  
■ Floor markings



## Intervention 3

### Triq Josef Kalleya: Play street

This street may successfully function as a play street primarily because it is currently a dead end, which largely heavily limits car access to residents. Secondly, it lies at the interface with the valley, offering attractive views thereof and enabling some interaction with a more natural environment. In this respect, the current masonry wall would benefit from being made more secure. The play street would serve as an open recreational space for the residents in the lower parts of Swieqi and the upper St Julian's neighbourhood bordering Spinola Bay. Planning active programming and providing temporary furniture could contribute to making this street a successful space for social interaction for different residents.





## Programming

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

## 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



## Surface treatment

can be used to further define the playstreet

## Street furniture

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

## Signs

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



# Intervention 4

## Triq il-Ġiebjja, Triq l-Ilma: Level 1

These streets are identified as potential pedestrian routes linking Triq Is-Swieqi and Triq Josef Kalleya. Therefore, signage for low driving speeds and pedestrian priority would increase walkability within them and provide a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists to use them within their daily route.



# Intervention 5

## Triq Is-Sidra: Level 1 and 3

This street is important as it connects Triq Is-Swieqi and Triq IL-Qasam, the two main axes of Swieqi. Appropriate signage would be important to highlight pedestrian priority and limited car speed.

Floor markings are being proposed on the street next to the bus stop IL-Qasam, extending into the pavement area wherein the bus stop is located. The bus stop is located at the start of a generously sized concrete area including part pavement and

a wide parking space, together with access to an important neighbouring farm in the locality. The ample space here merits some potential rearticulation, wherein the bus stop could be integrated into a more attractive and greener environment with the integration of planters, potentially formalising into a better designed bus shelter in the future. The waste receptacles presently located close to the bus stop's waiting area could be shifted further into the parking area which in turn could be reorganised so as to be less wasteful in terms of land take up.

It is important to note that encouraging residents to use public transport includes improving bus stops and ensuring that they may be used in different weather conditions.



# Intervention 6

## Triq IL-Ħemel and Triq IL-Ġhajj: Level 2 and 3 Triq is-Sejjieħ and Triq IL-Qatta: Level 2

Currently, Triq IL-Ħemel is divided into two segments. The first segment from Triq Is-Sirk to Triq IL-Ġhajj is in a one-way direction towards Triq IL-Ġhajj. The second segment from Triq IL-Ġhajj to Triq IL-Qatta is currently a two-way street, which links to Ġnien L-Imħallef. The intervention first proposes floor markings at the wide intersection between the two segments at Triq IL-Ġhajj, which would slow down cars and simultaneously provide a visual link to Triq IL-Ħemel.

Additionally, the intervention proposes rerouting the second segment to a one-way



This rerouting would also be critical for the implementation of the intervention on Triq Il-Qasam, discussed next.



## Triq Il-Qasam: Level 1, 2 and 3

In order to liberate space in this active node and enhance its pedestrian quality, the intervention proposes a traffic management scheme limiting car traffic on designated days when traffic volumes would be lower. The intervention proposes that, during such period, vehicles entering Triq il-Qasam from Triq Sant'Andrija would turn onto Triq it-Tiben, down Triq Il-Qatta and back onto Triq Il-Qasam through Triq Is-Sejjieħ. In turn, vehicles coming from Triq Il-Pellikan could either turn onto Triq Il-Wasliet so as to enter into the eastern part of Swieqi or Triq Il-Keffa so as to exit via Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ. The commercial node would in this case become liberated from vehicular congestion and





## Intervention 8

### Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ: Level 1, 2, and 3

Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ is a long road which connects the arterial road to the inner, more isolated, residential roads of Swieqi, eventually linking to Triq tal-Balal. The road widens and narrows along different segments. Two commercial nodes are currently present along the stretch. One node is located at the beginning of the street close to Triq Sant'Andrija, which has been paved. For this area, the intervention proposes tactical urbanism using floor markings at the junction with Triq L-Uqija in order to slow down vehicles that are entering from or exiting onto the arterial road.

The second node is located at the slip road next to the bus stop L' Ibraġ stretching to the front of the Parish Church, Marija Immakulata Omm il-Knisja, which is the main focus of this intervention. The strategy aims to liberate the immediate area around the church from vehicular activity. On designated days characterised by low traffic volumes, it is being proposed that vehicles would not be able to access the segment of Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ between Triq Il-Mizura and Triq Il-Kejla (the stretch right in front of the church). Cars from Triq Sant'Andrija would instead be diverted towards Triq il-Mizura, eventually onto Triq tal-Franciz, in order to access Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ once again. This would automatically also liberate the streets surrounding the church, Triq M. Pianta and Triq il-Kwarta. The intervention aims to make this area a safer destination and strengthen it as an important public space in its own right.



Colourful floor markings are proposed within this zone in front of the church to make the area more pedestrian friendly and highlight its significance as a local landmark. Furthermore, floor markings are proposed at the entry and exit points of the slip road next to the bus stop. The remainder of the road is proposed to have signage limiting car speeds and highlighting pedestrian priority, particularly at narrower stretches that have no pavement.





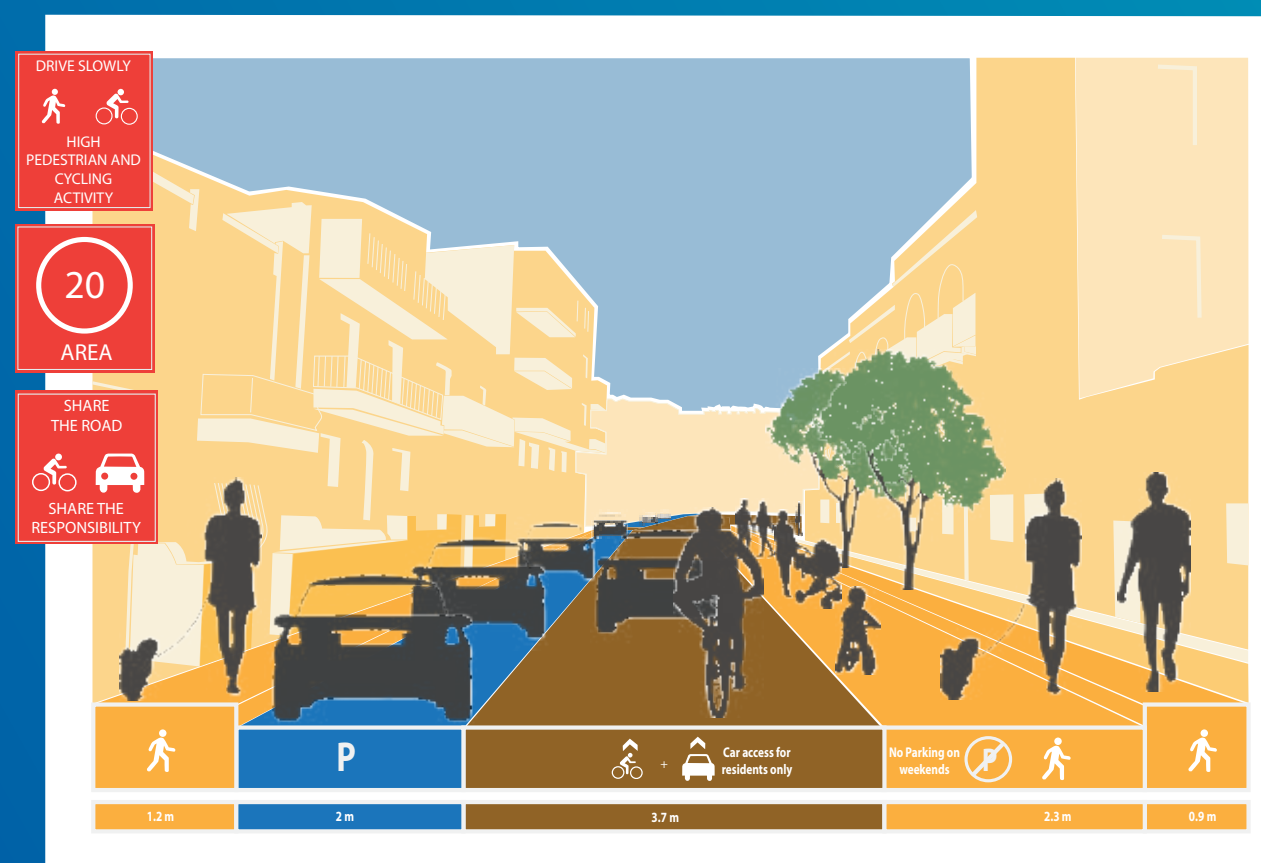
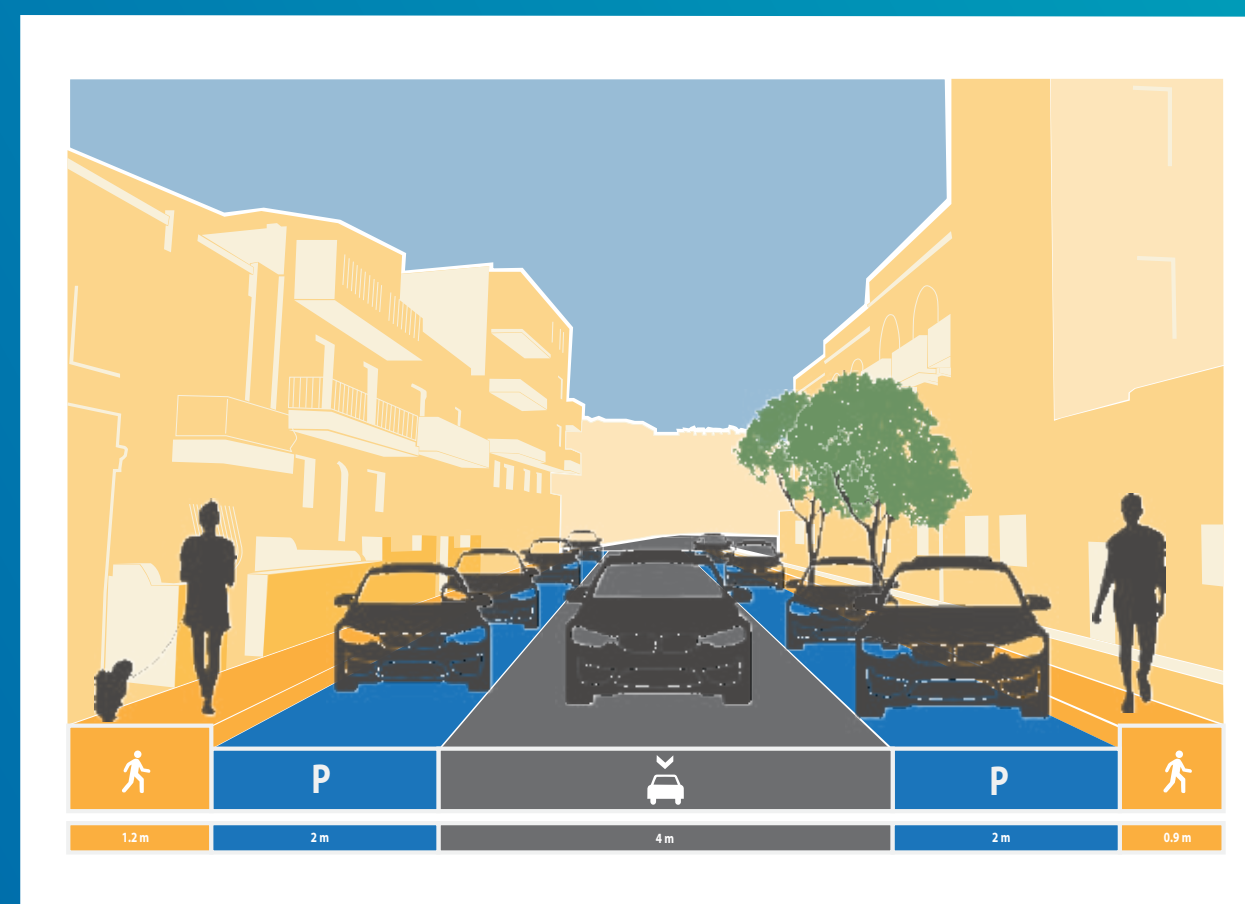


## Intervention 9

### Triq il-Kwarta: Level 2 and 4

Situated next to the landmark Parish Church, Triq il-Kwarta currently serves as an exit route onto Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ, but has the potential to become a natural extension to the previous intervention being proposed to the main spine. In line with this, Triq il-Kwarta is being proposed to be rerouted in the opposite direction such that when the area in front of the church would be closed off for vehicles, this would automatically render Triq il-Kwarta as a local access road only.

Furthermore, the current road is 4 metres wide with designated parking on either side. In order to strengthen the nature of the proposed public space discussed in the previous intervention, during specific days/times (possibly on weekends but eventually possibly more permanently) the designated parking on the side of the church could





## Intervention 10

### Triq Il-Wizna and Triq Il-Qantar: Level 2

The residential streets surrounding the Local Council garden are currently used as shortcuts for vehicles to drive between Triq Il-Qasam and Triq Il-Keffa. This proposal aims at deterring such through traffic within this area by rerouting such traffic, making the streets more attractive for pedestrian and cyclist use rather than for vehicles.

First, Triq il-Qantar could become a one-way road throughout its entire stretch, in the direction towards Triq il-Qasam. Second, Triq Il-Wizna would become divided in opposing directions, one-way from Triq Il-Qasam towards Triq Ir-Ratal, and one-way from Triq It-Terz towards Triq Ir-Ratal. Cars using Triq Il-Wizna would use Triq ir-Ratal/ Triq F. Assenza in order to access Triq IL-Mizura, and cars driving from Triq Il-Keffa would use Triq IL-Qantar to get to Triq il-Qasam.

As this strategy makes it somewhat harder for through traffic to use local streets as shortcuts, it is expected that this would result in lower volumes of vehicular traffic within these streets, which would make them safer and more attractive for residents to use, while facilitating the connection to the surrounding green spaces.



## Intervention 11

### Triq l-Istasija and Triq G. Lebrun: Level 3

The intersection of Triq l-Istasija with Triq G. Lebrun currently functions as a parking lot. This large expanse of asphalted space is visually unarticulated and is equally dangerous as it encourages speeding of vehicles that furthermore often do not stick to the designated road space. Such spaces could remain for the use of parking but they could also be visually upgraded using landscaping, simultaneously using this upgrade as an opportunity to articulate the space further, to create better legibility and to provide shading to parked cars and pedestrians alike. The intervention proposes that planters could be placed on the triangular edges of the parking area while floor marking would run across the road connecting the planters on opposing sides of the street and forming 'entryways' to this larger space which would visually signal to drivers to slow down when driving through the space.







## Intervention 12

### Triq Il-Barmil: Level 3 and 4 Triq il-Buganvilla, Triq Il-Kaffis: Level 4

Victoria Gardens serves as an open green space for this separate residential neighbourhood in Swieqi. As it is located in an area of low vehicular traffic, the first intervention proposes introducing a one-way access around the garden rather than the current two-way, except on the side of the dead-end road which would remain a two-way. This reconfiguration would enable the further expansion of the garden in the future, which is envisaged by the Local Council. Floor markings are proposed from the garden's entrance connecting to the pavement on Triq Il-Barmil, and also from the bus stop Victoria to the pavement surrounding the garden. These markings would connect the garden to its surrounding context and increase pedestrian safety.

Additionally, in line with the Local Council's suggestion, a designated one-way cycling lane could be introduced within the streets of this neighbourhood. Currently, Triq Il-Barmil measures 8.4 metres in width, with non designated parking on both sides of the pavement. The intervention proposes designated 2m parking on one side of the road only while narrowing the road width to 4.1m that still enables two-way vehicular access. The remaining space could be used for a designated 1.1m cycling lane as well





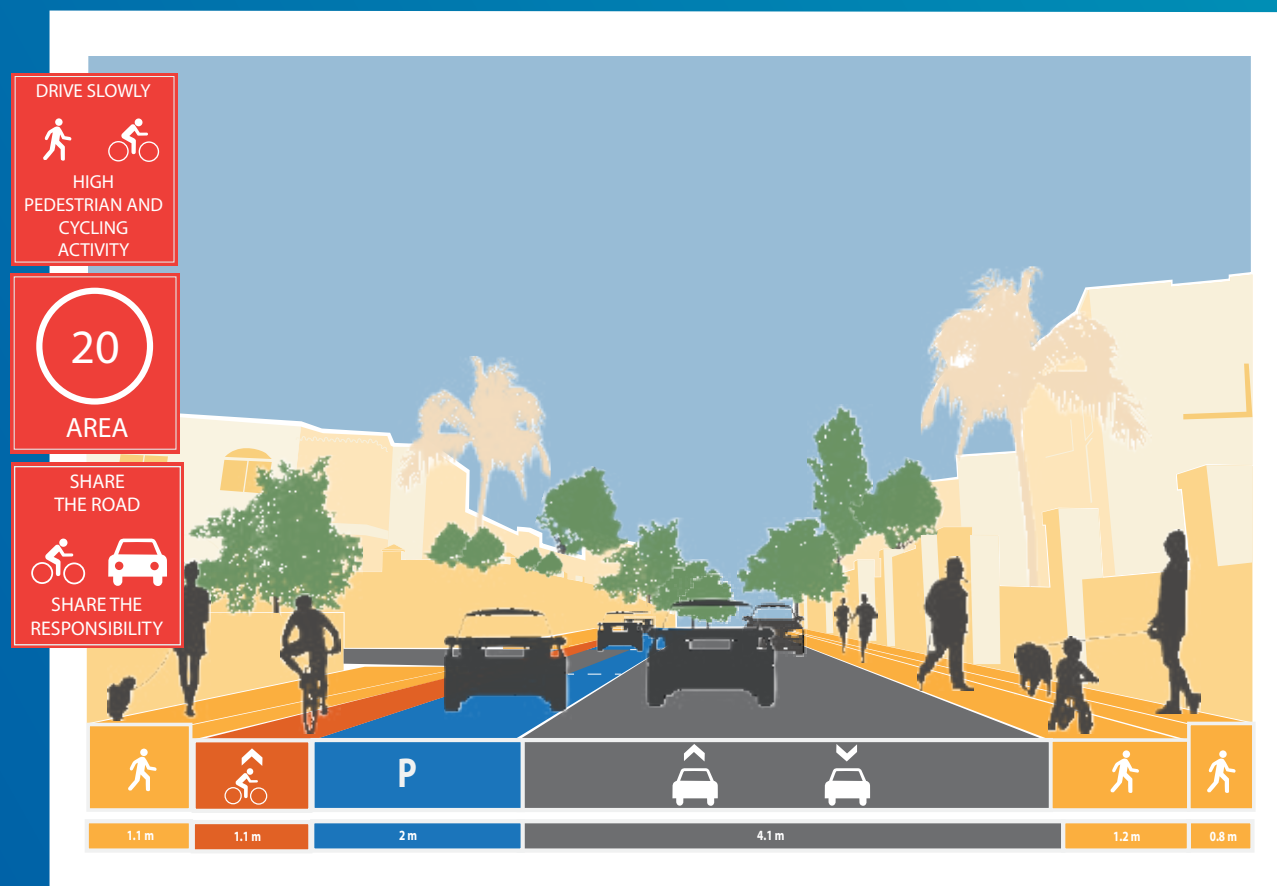
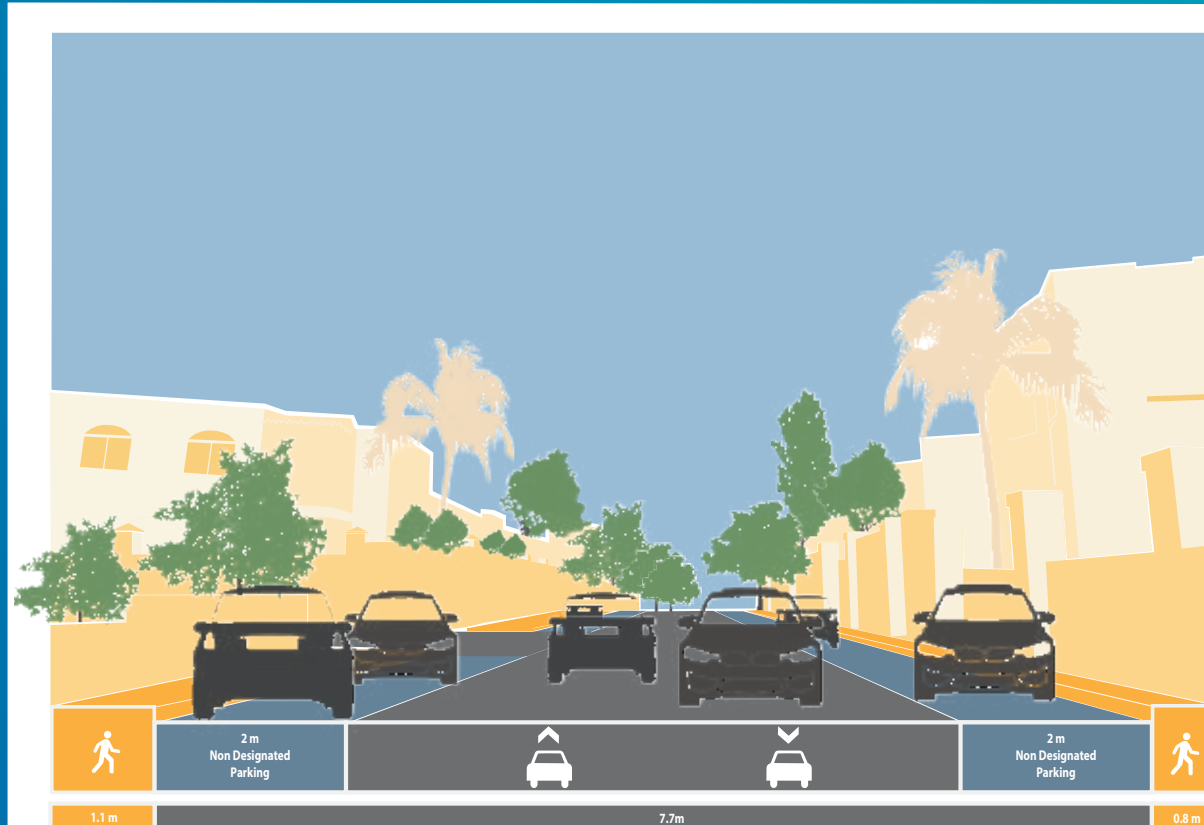
## Intervention 13

### Triq il-Pedidalwett, Triq il-Madliena: Level 1 and 3

Triq il-Pedidalwett is an important access route for cyclists as it links to the slip road off Triq Sant'Andrija and the designated cycling lane on the arterial road to the inner residential roads of Madliena. It allows a direct link to Triq il-Madliena which leads to the historic landmark of Fort Madliena. The road is currently limited to car speeds of 30km/hr which also makes it a preferred route for both pedestrians and cyclists. The intervention proposes more signage highlighting pedestrian and cyclist priority, possibly reducing the designated vehicular speed further to 20km/hr.

At the intersection of Triq il-Pedidalwett and Triq il-Madliena, there is a wide pavement with a water fountain and some planted trees. The legibility of this small urban pocket has the potential to increase. In this respect, floor markings are proposed around the paved area which would also extend to the opposite pavement onto Triq Il-Markiz Scicluna, improving the connectivity to the surrounding context and hence improving overall walkability. The floor markings would also signal drivers to slow down which would result in safer pedestrian crossings.

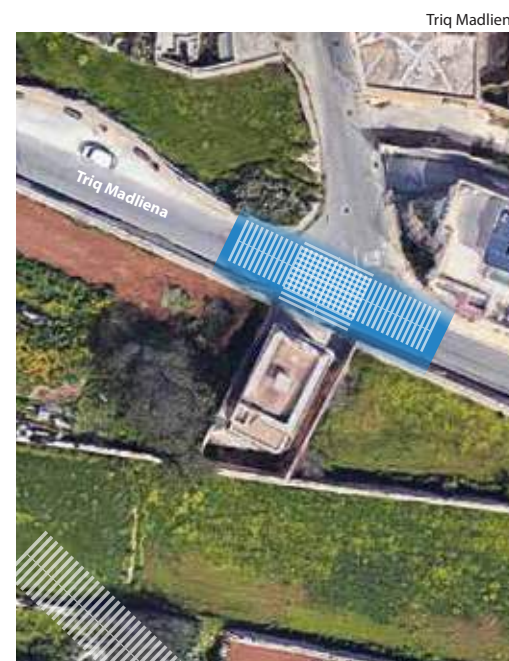
Triq Madliena is a long stretch linking Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ all the way north to Fort Madliena, running mainly through farmland. The road becomes very narrow along some stretches, to about 3.4 metres in width, which limits the possibility for any continuous reconfiguration. Therefore, the intervention first proposes improved signage limiting car speeds to 20 km/hr and emphasizing pedestrian priority, particularly along the narrower stretches. The signs should be of a good size and tonality so as to draw drivers' proper attention. In addition, the intervention proposes floor markings in front of the historic Madliena Chapel and the road leading to Fort Madliena. These floor markings would highlight the cultural importance of the historic buildings while simultaneously slowing down drivers when entering these areas.







Floor markings



Triq Madliena



source: Tactical Urbanism Guide



source: super-fresh design

## Intervention 14

### Triq tal-Franciż: Level 4

Triq tal-Franciż is currently a disconnected road for vehicles, but allows the passage of pedestrians through a narrow dirt road. In the future this street would most probably

be very important as it connects two important roads within Swieqi, Triq Il-Qasam and Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ. The street contains villas and buildings that have been constructed on one side of the road, overlooking the Swieqi valley and offering pleasant views within a rather quiet area.

The first segment connected to Triq Il-Qasam is mostly used for residential parking, as it is a dead end for vehicles. Therefore walking along the road could be quite pleasant due to low traffic volumes; however, the infrastructure is poor and requires upgrading. The intervention for this segment proposes clear signage designating pedestrian priority, particlay for cars accessing garages and on street parking.

The second segment connected to Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ, serves as a bus route and has a wider road width with undesignated parking. However the street has very narrow pavements – 1 metre next to the residences and even narrower 0.6 metres along the masonry wall (valley edge). Narrowing the 7.5 metre road width to 6.9 metres and considering 2m of designated parking would still allow for two-way vehicular traffic that would enable the concurrent passage of a car and a bus in opposite directions. This would enable the 0.6m pavement to be extended to a width of 1.2m such that pedestrians could walk safely along the outer edge of the road. This wider pavement would connect to a bus stop currently located next to a green pocket with seating amenities, at the intersection of Triq tal-Franciż and Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ, which in turn would be highlighted further using floor markings.



Existing traffic  
Proposed widening of pavement  
Floor markings  
Green pocket



# 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.



## Swieqi

The simplest interventions to implement first would be the play street, tactical urbanism interventions (namely floor markings) and temporary signage. Floor markings at intersections and critical crossings may be carried out first as pedestrian priority is the primary concern of the Slow Streets initiative. Specifically at the intersections on Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ and Triq IL-Qasam, pedestrians would feel safer to cross the road and use these streets as primary walking routes with improved connections.

Play street closures during this phase may be carried out on designated days and at times when traffic is already low. During this phase, testing of the Swieqi tunnel and testing for the closure of Triq IL-Qasam, Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ and Triq Is-Swieqi could commence on specific days and/or at particular times characterised by reduced vehicular volumes, such as on Sundays, using temporary signage and protective barriers.

During the second phase, the interventions for the proposed reconfigurations on Triq IL-Barmil, Triq IL-Buganvilla and Triq IL-Kaffis could be carried out, again following a testing period. Simultaneously, the proposal for the increased pedestrian space and limiting of vehicular access within the central core, and specifically at Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ, may extend over the entire weekend, while further testing for the interventions within the inner local roads could occur at carefully chosen times. All signage for Level 1 interventions should become permanent during Phase 2.

Finally for Phase 3, the implementation of all interventions at their full scale is



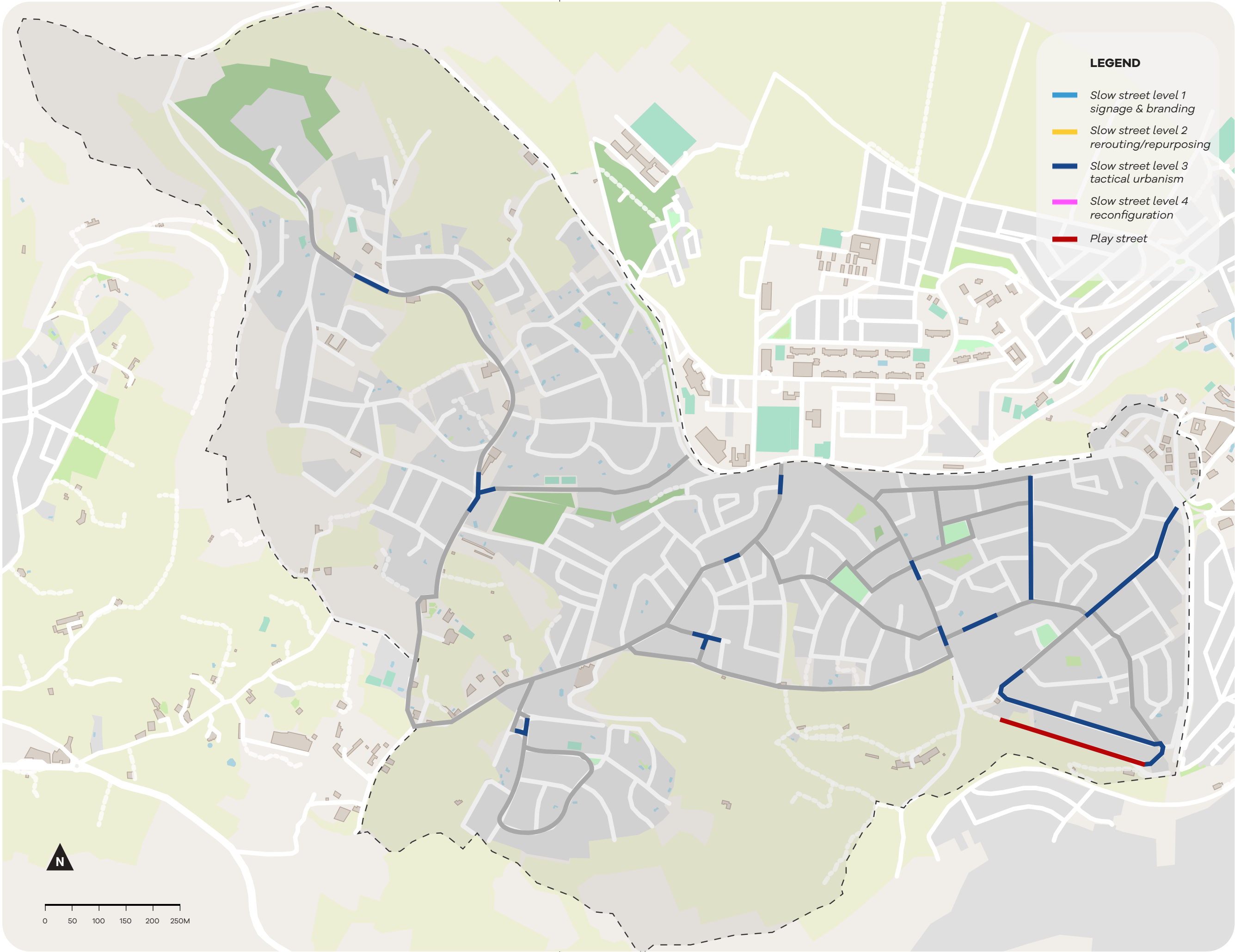


PHASING

STARTING &  
TESTING THE  
NETWORK



KUNSILL LOKALI  
SWIEQI



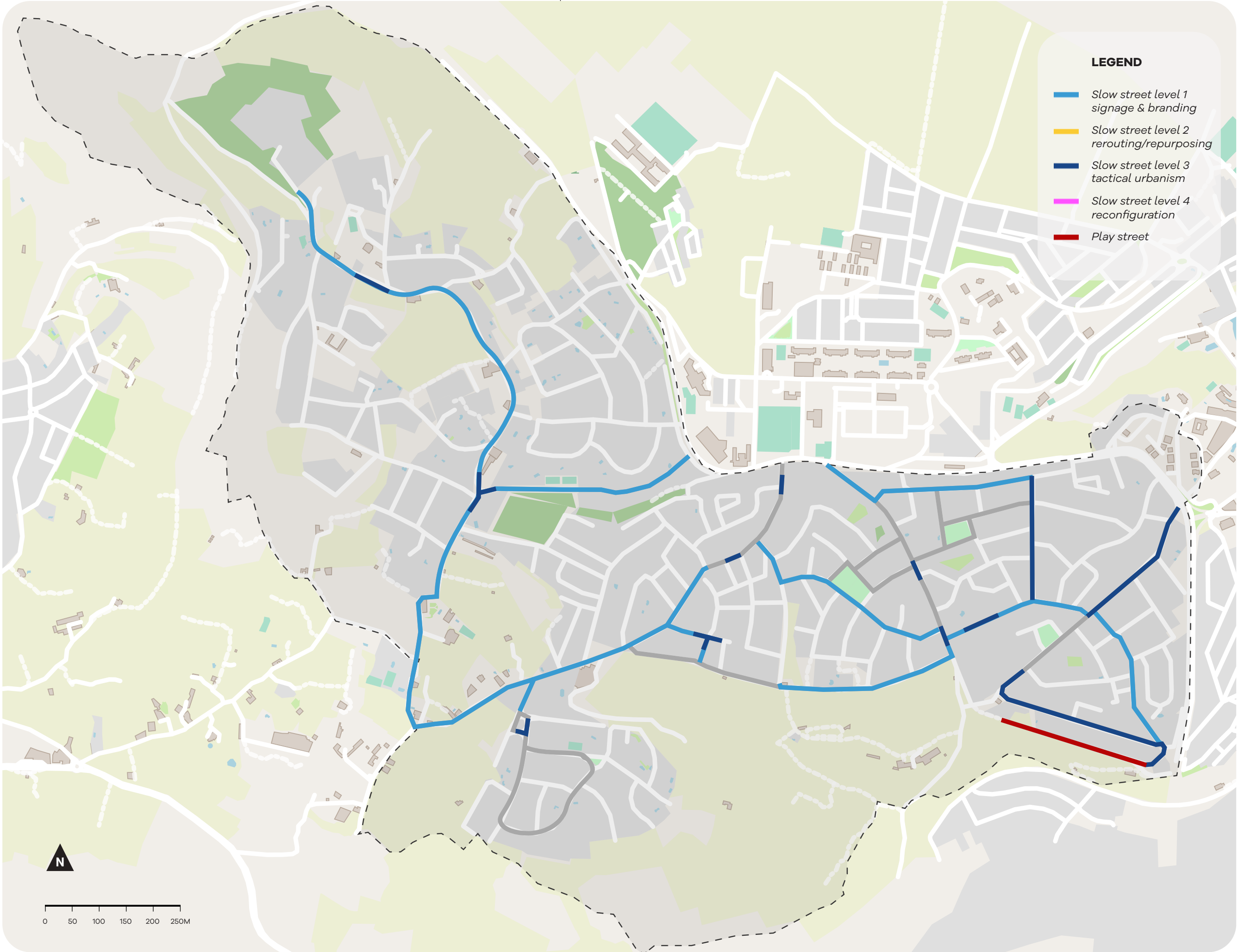


**PHASING**

STRENGTHENING  
THE NETWORK



KUNSILL LOKALI  
SWIEQI



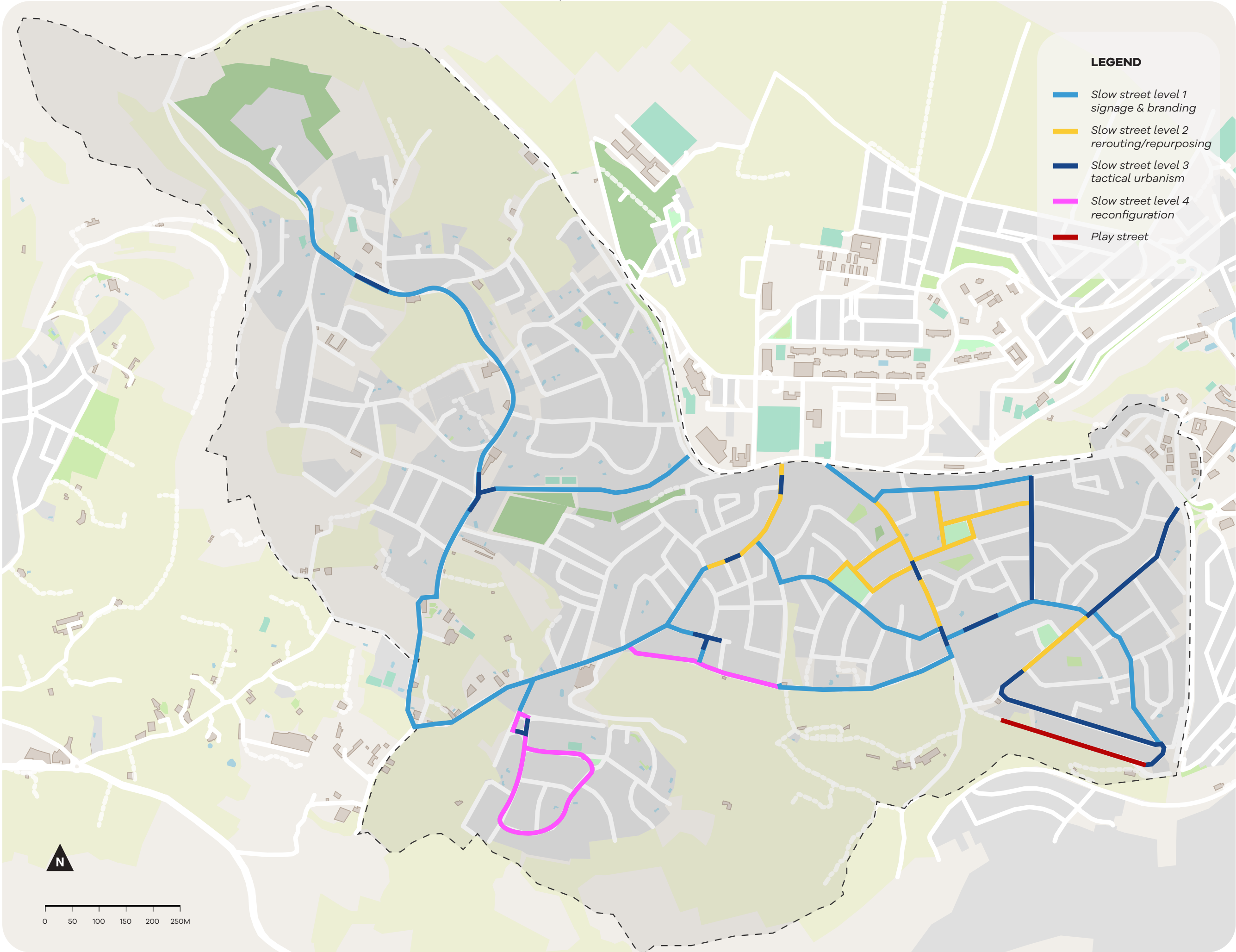


**PHASING**


COMPLETING  
THE NETWORK



KUNSILL LOKALI  
SWIEQI







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.



Swieqi is a large residential locality in the Northern region of Malta, with a mixed population including local and expat families, as well as young foreigners given its proximity to St Julian's which is a popular employment node and a beach, nightlife and dining destination. The locality is made up of several regions: The 'central' Swieqi area, Madliena (High Ridge), Victoria Gardens, and Tal-Ibraġ. Commercial activities take place at specific nodes along three main streets – Triq Is-Swieqi, Triq Il-Qasam, and Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ. The main historic landmarks include the Parish Church, Marija Immakulata Omm il-Knisja, located on Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ, and the iconic Fort Madliena.

The local roads are often quiet, with designated slow speeds. However the locality has a significant problem of extraneous through traffic, such as drivers accessing Pembroke to San Ġwann and vice versa. Additionally, the locality is separated from St Julian's and Pembroke by a large arterial road with limited entry and exit points, which causes the locality to feel disconnected from the seafront. Narrow local roads are often used as traffic shortcuts instead of using the arterial infrastructure, threatening the residential calmness and pedestrian safety while contributing to additional pollution levels. A particular problem area is the Swieqi tunnel, which is actively used by both cars and pedestrians, but in its current form poses serious safety issues for pedestrian users.

The main aim of Swieqi's 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.

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

## 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.



# Intervention Summary street by street

## Intervention 1

### Triq Is-Swieqi (rerouting, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

Rerouting: the street segment from Triq il-Ghamad to Triq IL-Molletta be accessed only for resident parking during weekends

Tactical urbanism: Floor markings around tunnel, at intersection with Triq Is-Sidra and intersection with Triq IL-Gizimin

Reconfiguration: Traffic management scheme for Swieqi tunnel depending on vehicular and pedestrian rush hour

## Intervention 2

### Triq IL Gizimin (signage and tactical urbanism)

Tactical urbanism: floor markings in front of stairs leading to Triq Josef Kalleya and at the bend

## Intervention 3

### Triq Josef Kalleya (play street)

Play street

## Intervention 4

### Triq Giebja and Triq Ilma (signage)

Signage: Slow Streets branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (bicycles and cars)

## Intervention 5

### Triq Is-Sidra (signage and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (bicycles and cars)

Tactical urbanism: Floor markings in front of bus stop ‘IL Qasam’ and planters delineating a more articulated space

## Intervention 6

### Triq IL-Hemel and Triq IL-Għajn (rerouting and tactical urbanism)

Rerouting: make Triq IL-Hemel entirely one-way towards Triq IL-Qatta

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at intersection of Triq IL-Hemel and Triq IL-Għajn

Signage: one-way road

### Triq is-Sejjieħ (rerouting)

Rerouting: opposing traffic direction, one towards Tria IL-Qasam and the other segment towards Triq L-Ispiera

Signage: one-way road

### Triq IL Qatta (rerouting)

Rerouting: make one-way towards Triq is-Sejjieħ

Signage: one-way road

## Intervention 7

### Triq IL-Qasam (signage, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (bicycles and cars)

Rerouting: vehicles would not be able to access the segment between Triq it-Tiben and Triq is-Sejjieħ on designated weekends

## Intervention 8

### Triq Ta’ L-Ibraġ (signage, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (bicycles and cars)

Rerouting: vehicles would not be able to access the segment of Triq Ta’ L-Ibraġ between Triq IL-Mizura and Triq IL-Kejla on weekends



Tactical urbanism: floor markings at the junction with Triq L-Uqija, in front of the Parish church, and access points of bus stop slip road

#### **Intervention 9**

##### **Triq Kwartà (rerouting and reconfiguration)**

Rerouting: change traffic to opposing direction

Signage: pedestrian priority

Reconfiguration: remove on-street parking next to Parish church and narrow road width to introduce pedestrian space

#### **Intervention 10**

##### **Triq Il-Wiżna**

Rerouting: opposing traffic direction towards Triq Ir-Ratal

Signage: one-way road

##### **Triq Il-Qantar (rerouting)**

Rerouting: make entire street stretch one-way

Signage: one-way road

#### **Intervention 11**

##### **Triq l-Istasija and Triq G. Lebrun (tactical urbanism)**

Tactical urbanism: planters introduced at parking void edges and usage of floor markings between planters

#### **Intervention 12**

##### **Triq Il-Barmil (Tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)**

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at entrance of Victoria gardens and at Victoria bus stop

Reconfiguration: narrowing of road width and introduction of one-way cycling lane and widening of walking space

Signage: high pedestrian activity

##### **Triq il-Buganvilla, Triq Il-Kaffis (reconfiguration)**

Reconfiguration: narrowing of road width and introduction of one-way cycling lane and widening of walking space

Signage: high pedestrian activity

#### **Intervention 13**

##### **Triq il-Pedidalwett, Triq il-Madliena (signage and tactical urbanism)**

Signage: Slow Streets branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (bicycles and cars)

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at the intersection of Triq il-Pedidalwett and Triq il-Madliena, and floor markings in front of Madliena Chapel

#### **Intervention 14**

##### **Triq tal-Franciż (reconfiguration)**

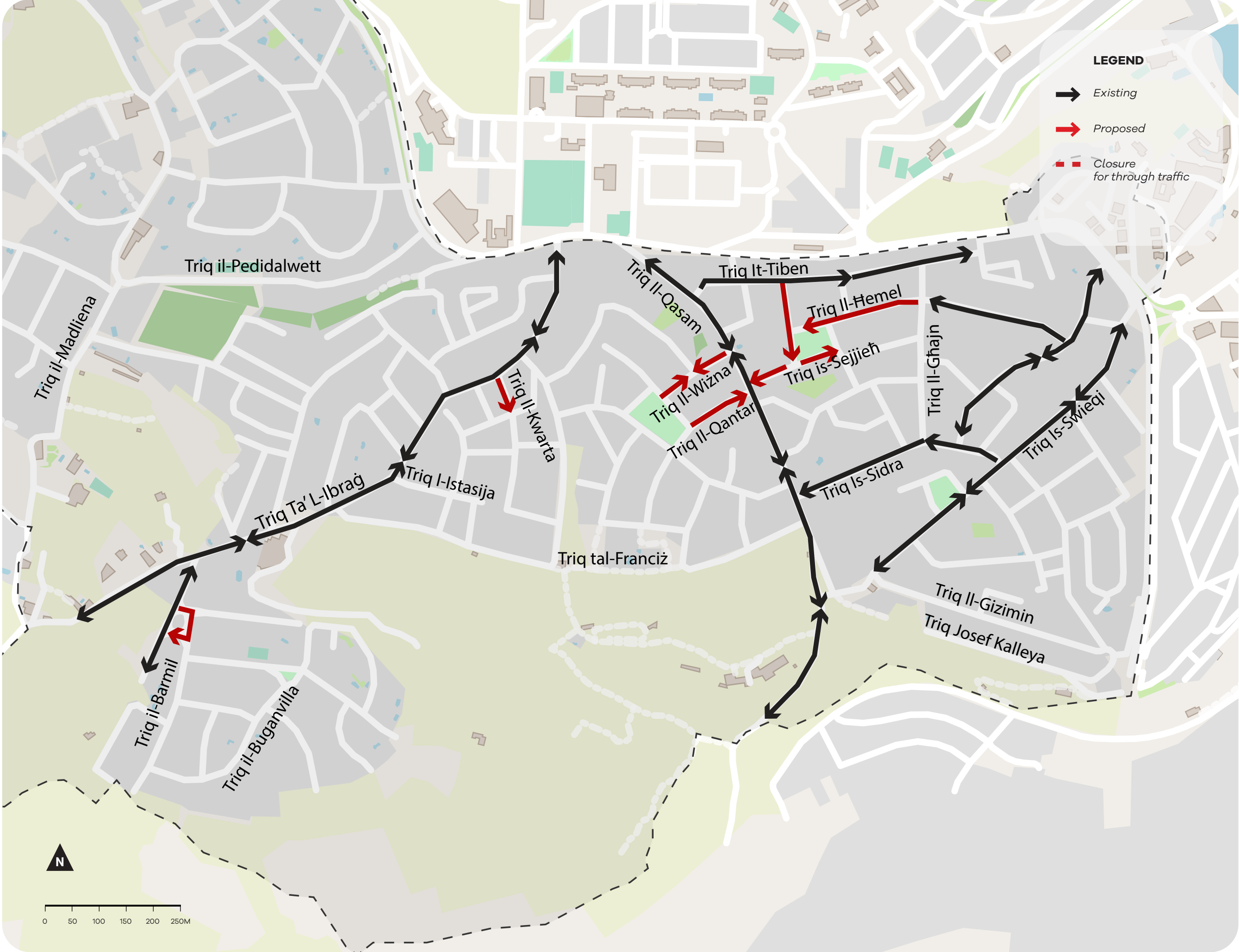
Reconfiguration: widening walking pavement within the wider segment from Triq Il-Mizura to Triq Ta' L-Ibraġ



TRAFFIC



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