

SLOW STREETS NETWORK

September 2020

TA' XBIEX



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

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

What is the Slow Streets initiative?

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



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

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



Who are Slow Streets for?

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

How do Slow Streets work?

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

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

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



What is 'tactical urbanism'?

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

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

Some examples of tactical urbanism strategies are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ta'Xbiex

Ta Xbiex is a small locality in the Northern Harbour area, known for having several embassies, insurance office buildings, and large villas. A large portion of the space forms the waterfront promenade, which is split into two levels. The lower level connects with the Msida marina towards the south-west and the Gzira Gardens (Gnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa) towards the north-west. The elevated level (Ir-Rampa ta' Ta' Xbiex) is a local road that provides access to other local roads and residences contained therein; it is more of an informal public space, as the pavement is less wide and has less street furniture, although it has been observed that some residents bring out their own furniture and use the space during temperate evenings. What is also characteristic of Ta' Xbiex are the clusters of social housing, concentrated mostly along the western flank of the locality, with small, repeated green pockets between them which have potential to become more actively used.



SLOW STREETS LOCALITY

TA' XBIEX



GŻIRA

MSIDA



0 50 100 150 200 250M

SLOW STREETS ACTIVITY ZONES

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

Public open space

Activity zone

GNIEN IL-KUNSILL
TAL-EWROPA

WHITEHALL
MANSIONS

BLACK PEARL

MARINA



0 50 100 150 200 250M

SLOW STREETS DESTINATIONS

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

- Public open space
- Activity zone
- H Health centre
- S Sports facilities
- E Educational centre
- C Civic centre
- R Religious centre

GNIEN IL-KUNSILL
TAL-EWROPA

WHITEHALL
MANSIONS

MARINA

BLACK PEARL



0 50 100 150 200 250M

SLOW STREETS NETWORK

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

- Public open space
- Activity zone
- H Health centre
- S Sports facilities
- E Educational centre
- C Civic centre
- R Religious centre

GNIEN IL-KUNSILL
TAL-EWROPA

WHITEHALL
MANSIONS

BLACK PEARL

MARINA



0 50 100 150 200 250M

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

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

IMPLEMENTATION

Type of Interventions

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

Cycling

Ta' Xbiex Interventions

Phasing Strategy

Types of Interventions

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

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

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



source: Pikist



source: Transport Auckland



source: Londenplay.org.uk



source: houstonpublicmedia.org

IMPLEMENTATION



source: Auckland Council



source: Auckland Council

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



source: Chicago Tribune

IMPLEMENTATION

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

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



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



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



Play streets – programming

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

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



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

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



SLOW STREETS NETWORK

TA' XBIEX



0 50 100 150 200 250M

Resident
First



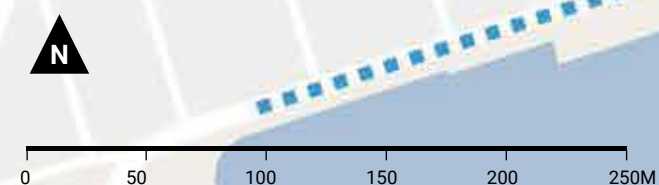
SLOW STREETS INTERVENTION

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

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



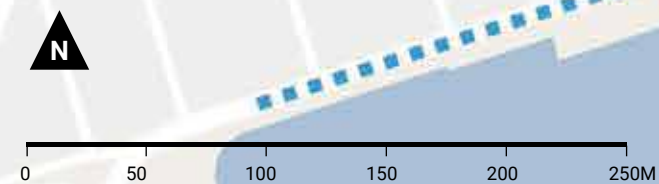
SLOW STREETS INTERVENTION

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

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



Cycling

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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






SLOW STREETS CYCLING NETWORK

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

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



0 50 100 150 200 250M

Ta' Xbiex Interventions

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

Intervention 1

Triq il-Principessa - Margerita: Level 3 and 4

Principessa Margerita is a main spine street within Ta' Xbiex that connects to Rue d'Argens and Triq Testaferrata to the west and Triq l-Abate Rigord to the east. These are all important spines, some of which are more commercial in nature and, in the case of Rue d'Argens, run through and connect the localities of Msida and Gzira. In this manner, Triq il-Principessa Margerita acts as



an important link road for the three neighbouring localities. The street is wide and contains pleasant landscaping along both its sides, with traffic passing in a one-way direction. It has significant potential as an outdoor public space.

The intervention proposes to introduce no car access for the last segment of this street towards Triq L-Abate Rigord Junction (adjacent to the Ta' Xbiex roundabout), instead limiting car access into the preceding streets that lead to the Gzira and Msida waterfronts respectively. Since these streets provide adequate alternative routes to reach the same destinations, Triq il-Principessa Margerita may be dedicated further to the residents given that it provides a central location and a pleasant environment for outdoor activities to occur. Buses would still be allowed access as per current routes. The reconfiguration of lanes would designate one shared bus and cycling lane.



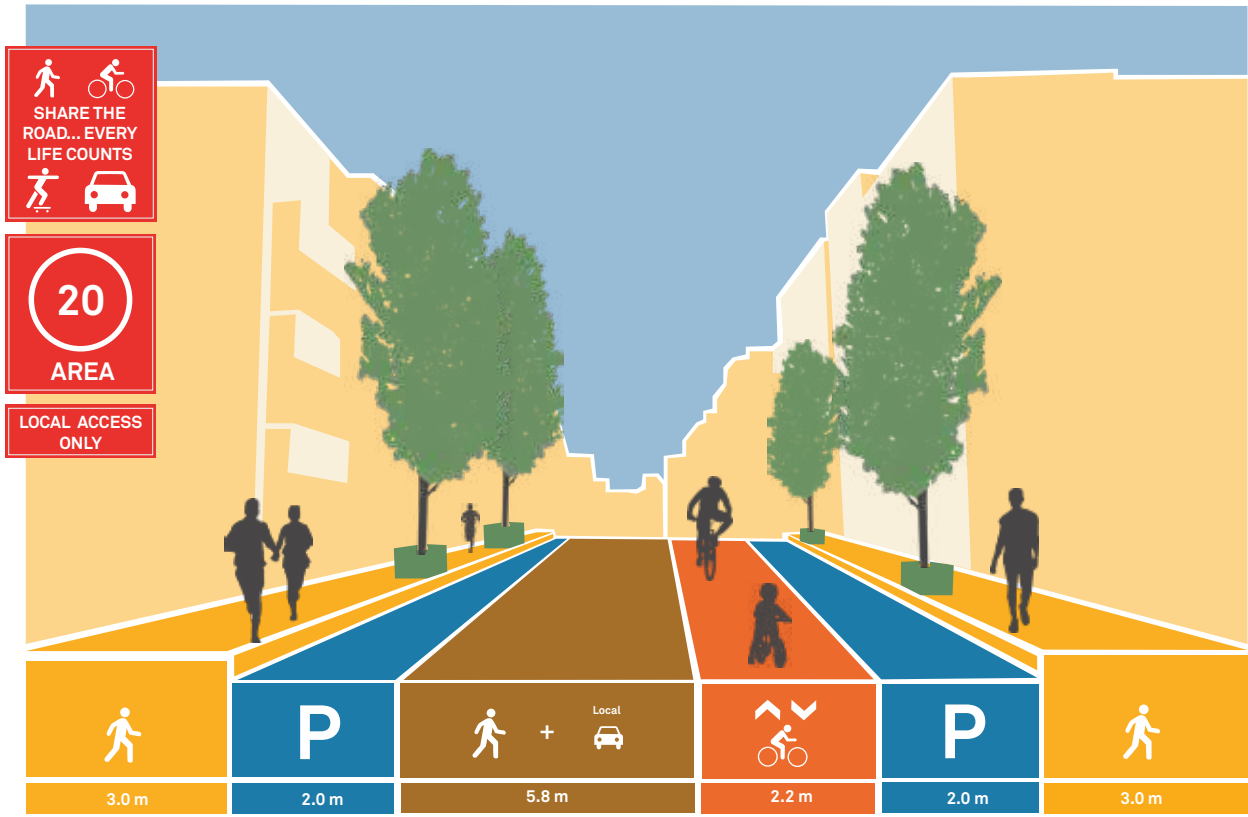
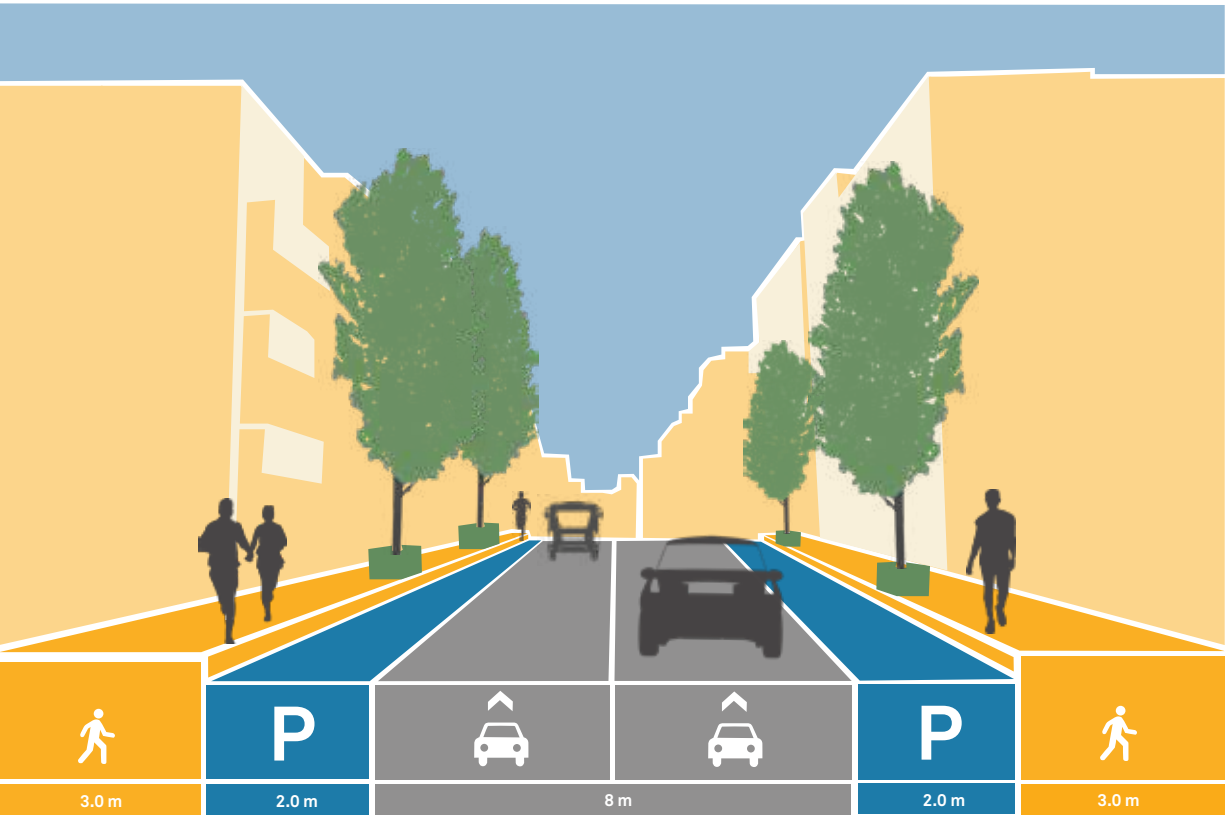
There would also be the need for tactical urbanism markings at the diverter adjacent to the traffic junction that leads towards Triq L-Abate Rigord, which shall ensure that the stepped access points to the social housing zones become more prominent and potentially further creating a better connecting public open space with this landscaped pocket in the future.



Intervention 2
Triq il-Watar: Level 1 and 3



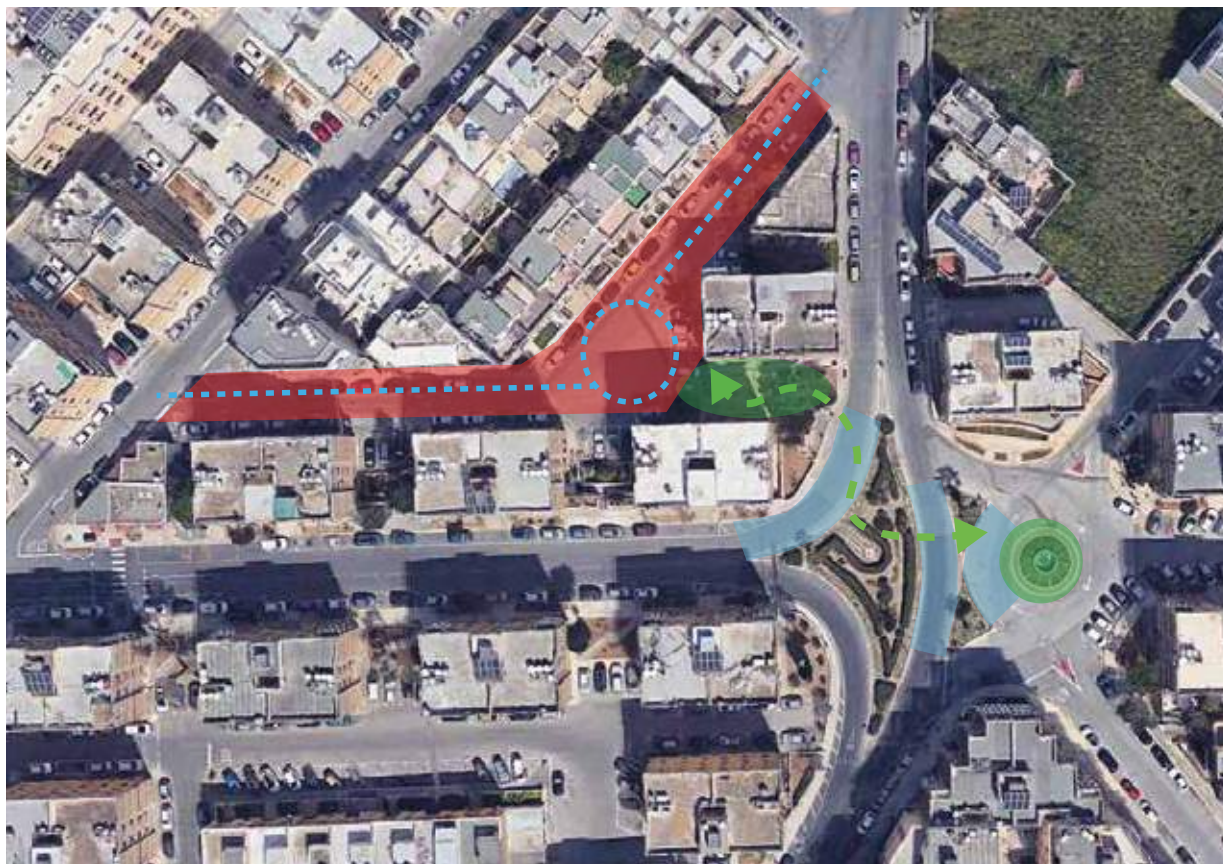
In between the social housing units, there are a number of existing green pockets which have the potential to be expanded upon so as to be more evident as public spaces and to be used more frequently by residents and visitors alike. The space that is currently dedicated to traffic use and on-street parking is much larger than what is actually needed. Therefore, the proposal entails moving the parking slots further towards the street, thus liberating more space for green (that in the short term could be characterised by potted plants/planters) and future street furniture. These small plazas provide very valuable outdoor space, particularly for the amount of residents living in this neighbourhood, and even more so for the elderly and children populations. Therefore, Triq il-Watar is also proposed to be Level 1 with increased signage so as to slow down the passing vehicles.



Intervention 3 Triq il-Halg: Play Street

Triq il-Halg is located within the social housing development, and is currently mainly designated for parking. As there is ample space for more pedestrian use, the intervention proposes closing off the street as a play street. Cars may instead circulate around using the adjacent Triq il-Watar as an entry and Triq il-Qoton as an exit, leaving this street solely for resident use, while retaining the on-street parking availability. As this street connects to an existing upgraded green pocket, there is considerable potential to connect it with the landscaped traffic junction at Triq il-Principessa Margarita.

This would in turn reinforce the connectivity of the social housing pockets to the landscaped junction at Triq L-Abate Rigord, and provide better pedestrian crossings. As mentioned within the previous intervention, this further has the potential of becoming a valuable public open space in the future.



source: super fresh design



source: Talk Wellington



source: Essential Surrey



source: AIA Seattle

IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

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

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



ROAD CLOSED
TO THROUGH
TRAFFIC



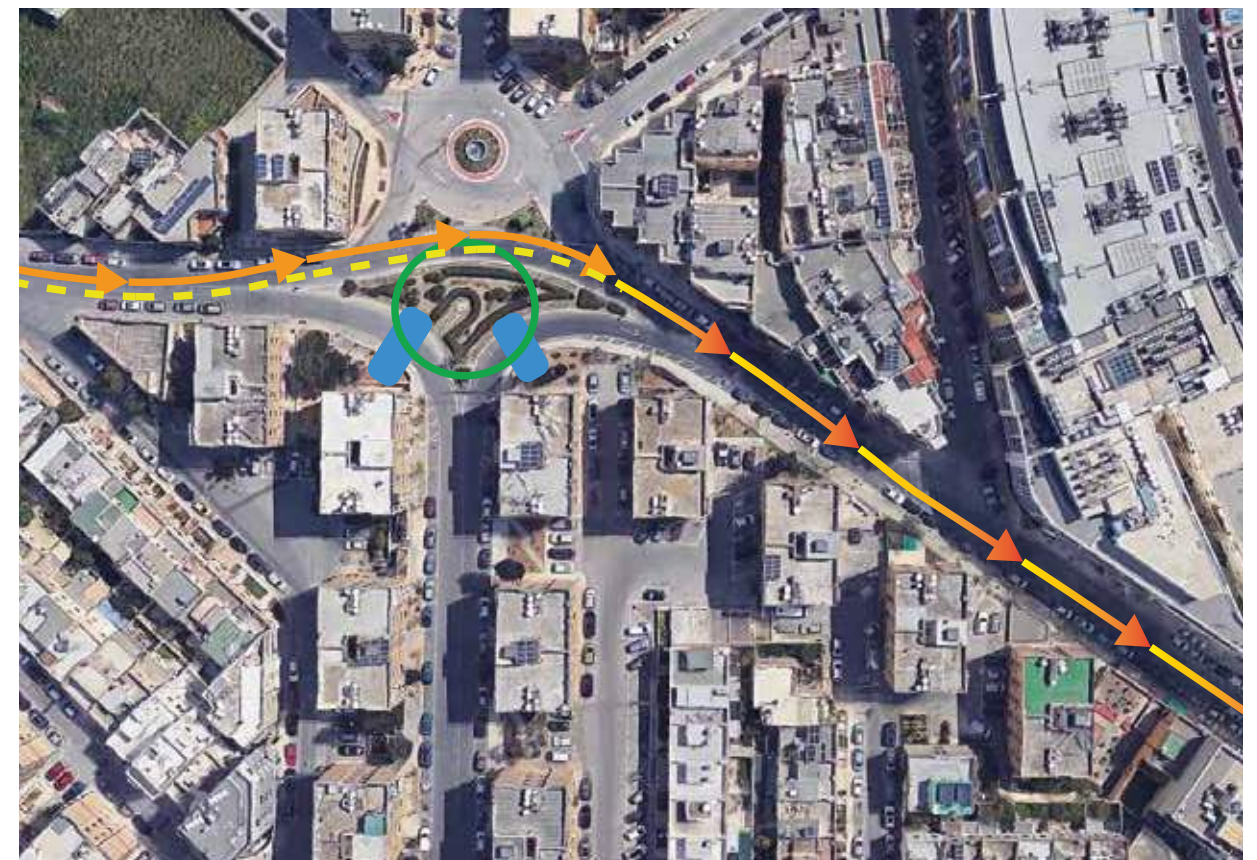
Intervention 4

Triq l-Abate Rigord: Level 2 and 3



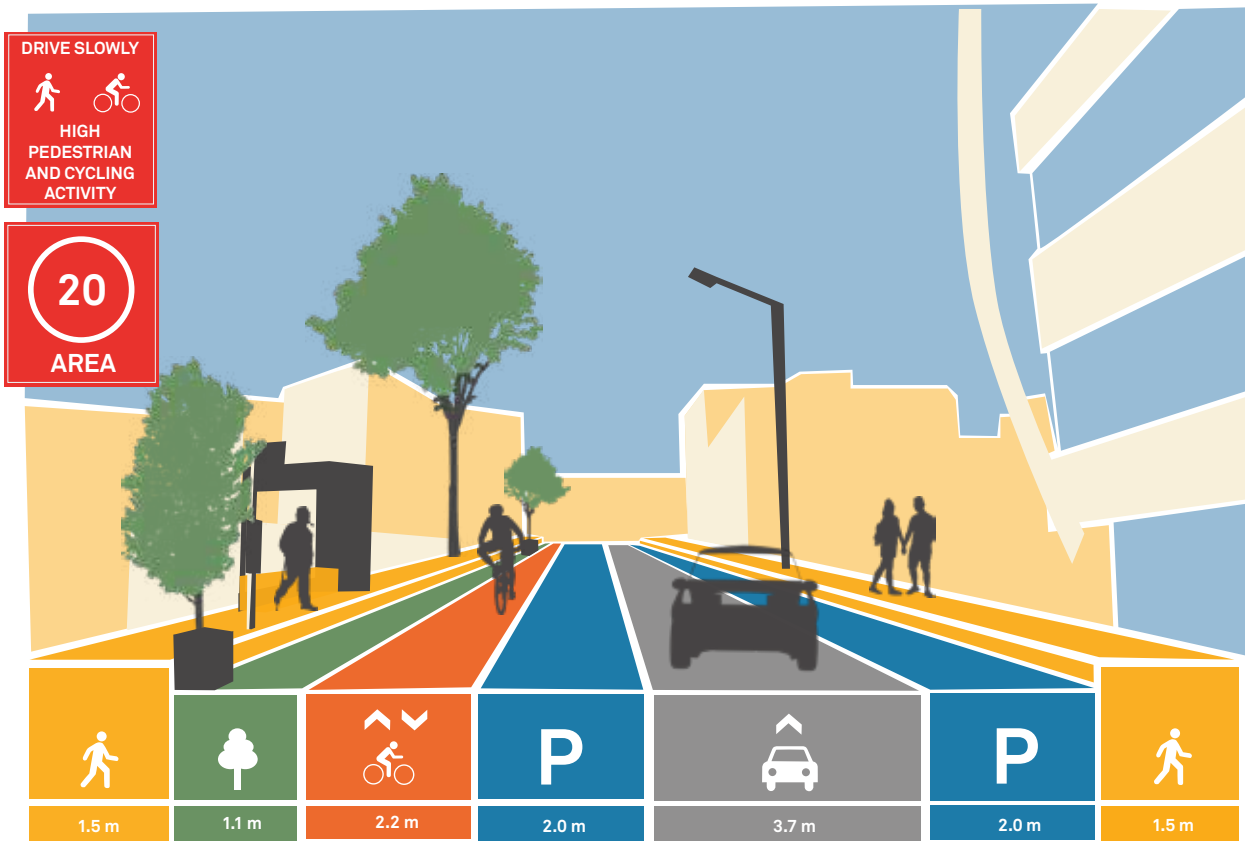
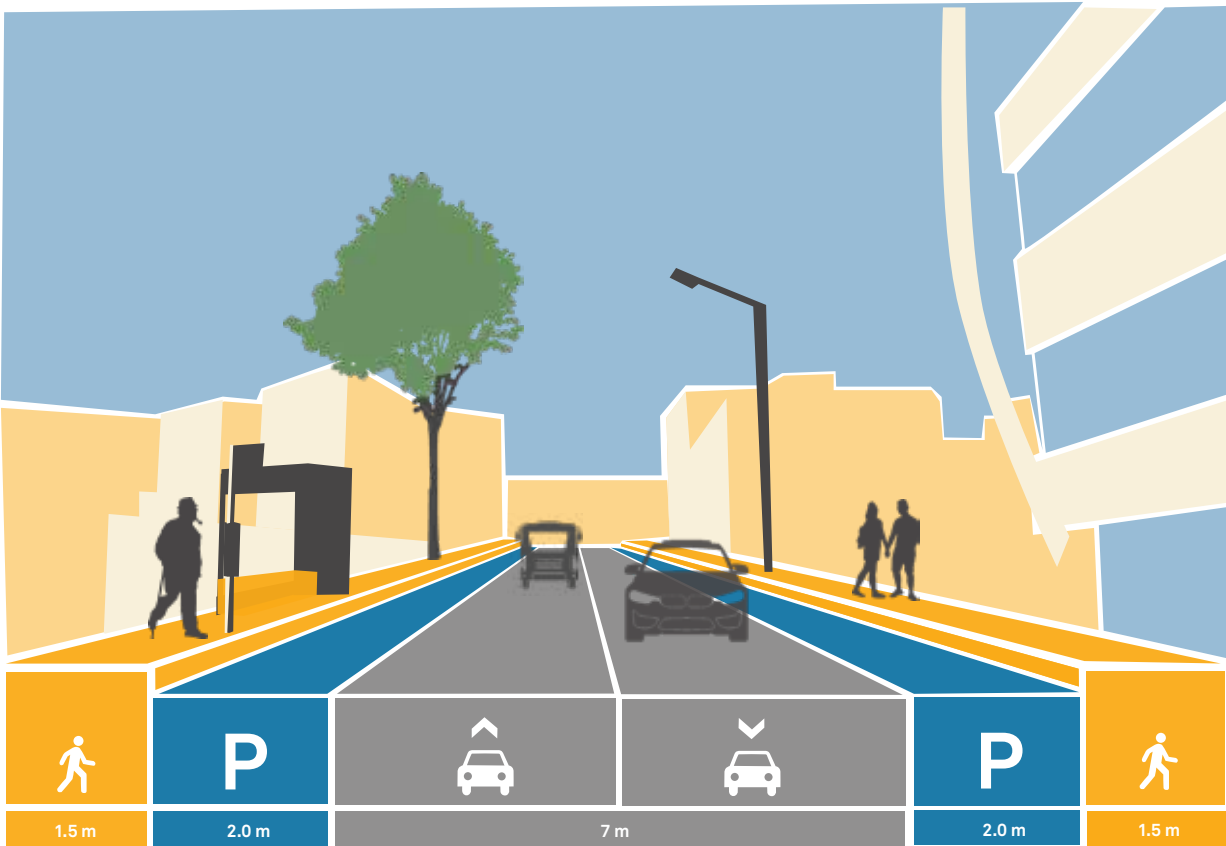
This street cuts through Ta' Xbiex vertically, connecting the Gzira and the Ta' Xbiex sides of the promenade. The intervention proposes to convert the street to one-way traffic upwards from the Gzira promenade towards the Msida marina through the junction. Cars may instead use Triq Testaferrata in order to access Gzira. This rerouting would also help to liberate Triq il-Principessa Margerita (as explained in Intervention 1) from car traffic.

Within the first segment of the street (From Triq ix-Xatt to the traffic junction), this proposal also introduces a designated cycling lane, which integrates with cars as a shared lane beyond the junction down towards Msida Marina. This creates an important connecting route between three important open spaces – the Gzira garden, the Msida marina and the Ta' Xbiex promenade. The cycling lane is proposed





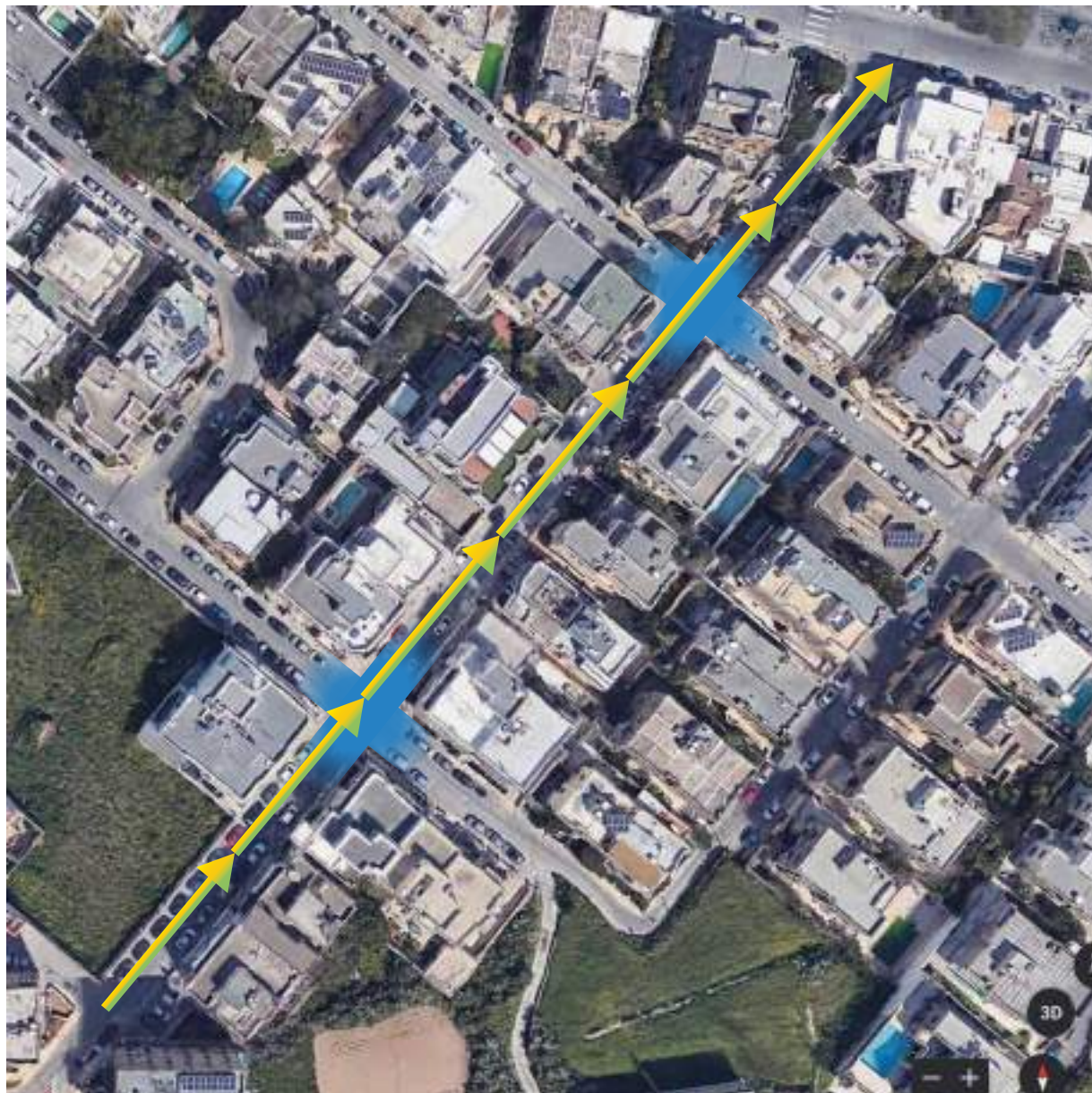
This street cuts through Ta' Xbiex vertically, connecting the Gzira and the Ta' Xbiex sides of the promenade. The intervention proposes to convert the street to one-way traffic upwards from the Gzira promenade towards the Msida marina through the junction. Cars may instead use Triq Testaferrata in order to access Gzira. This rerouting would also help to liberate Triq il-Principessa Margerita (as explained in



Intervention 5

Triq Principessa Elizabetta: Level 1 and 3

Given that this is a narrower street with two sides of parallel parking, the intervention proposes the introduction of a more pedestrian and cyclist friendly route with improved signage. The intersections with other streets would feature tactical urbanism interventions in the form of colouring and existing road space that is currently not designated as parking may be taken up to liberate more space for pedestrians. Coloured intersections would slow cars down, while providing a stronger identity to the street; an identity that may be further strengthened if the residents themselves are involved in the process of creating these interventions.



IMPLEMENTATION



Intervention 6

Triq Sir Ugo Mifsud: Level 1 and 3

The connection between Triq Principessa Elizabetta and Triq Giuseppe Cali can serve as a good pedestrian link. This intervention proposes rethinking this portion of the street as a shared space between pedestrians, cyclists and cars using better street signage in order to ensure slow vehicular speeds and pedestrian priority. Moreover, it is envisaged that paint markings at the intersections of Triq Sir Ugo Mifsud with Triq Testaferrata and Triq Giuseppe Cali will further slow down traffic.



IMPLEMENTATION

Intervention 7

Triq il-Imradd (fronting Local Council): Level 1 & 2

This street links the promenade to the traffic junction on Triq L-Abate Rigord through a staircase located next to the Spanish Embassy. In order to make that part of the street more pedestrian-friendly, the intervention is being divided into two. The street would be accessible for traffic only until the junction with Triq Il-Prinjolata, thus limiting the number of cars that feed into the rest of the street. After this junction, the second intervention would be to transform the street into a shared space between pedestrians, cyclists and cars with the insertion of more appropriate signage.



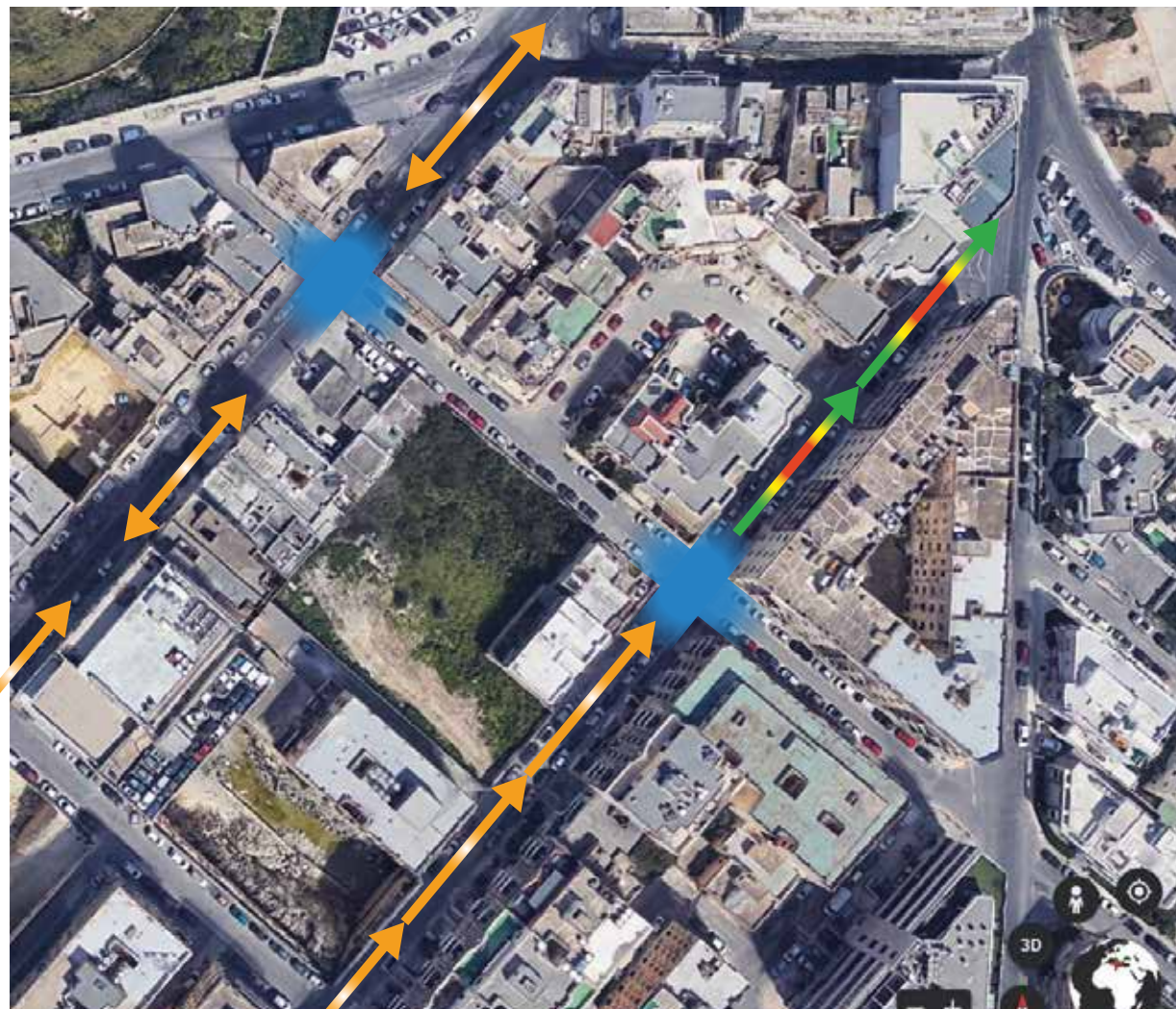
source: shutterstock



no source



source: Connect Savannah



source: moqool.org



source: reddit



Intervention 8

Triq il-Prinjolata (next to Local Council): Level 1 and 3

The street would become a shared street, with the inclusion of appropriate signage, for pedestrian priority due to its connection to the lower marina via a stairway. As this stairway is currently not very visible, tactical urbanism is being proposed to strengthen the pedestrian connection to the upper section of Ta' Xbiex, and the Local Council building itself.



source: Asphalt-Art



source: Green Prophet

Intervention 9

Triq ir-Rampa ta' Ta' Xbiex and Ix-Xatt (the Ta' Xbiex Promenade): Level 4 and Slow path

The promenade is the most used space in Ta' Xbiex and is possibly one of the busiest within the Northern Harbour area. People should be prioritised over cars in such public spaces. In this spirit, this intervention proposes turning Triq ix-Xatt into a one-way street, towards Msida, in order to liberate space for a designated cycling lane, as this is envisaged to become an important route for cyclists. The cycling lane would be located next to the pavement, therefore shifting the parallel parking further towards the road to act as a protective barrier, while enabling better maneuvering into the parking bays without disruption to the cycle lane. Narrowing the road would also decrease speed, and conversely increase safety, for all users. The continuation of Triq ix-Xatt next to the Gzira Gardens (Gnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa) is being proposed as a slow path for pedestrians so as to be able to access safely the public space from the main road.

Traffic approaching Ta' Xbiex from the opposite direction (towards Gzira) will subsequently be diverted onto the elevated Triq ir-Rampa ta' Ta' Xbiex. The on-street parking that is currently designated is limited to reserved parking bays and disabled

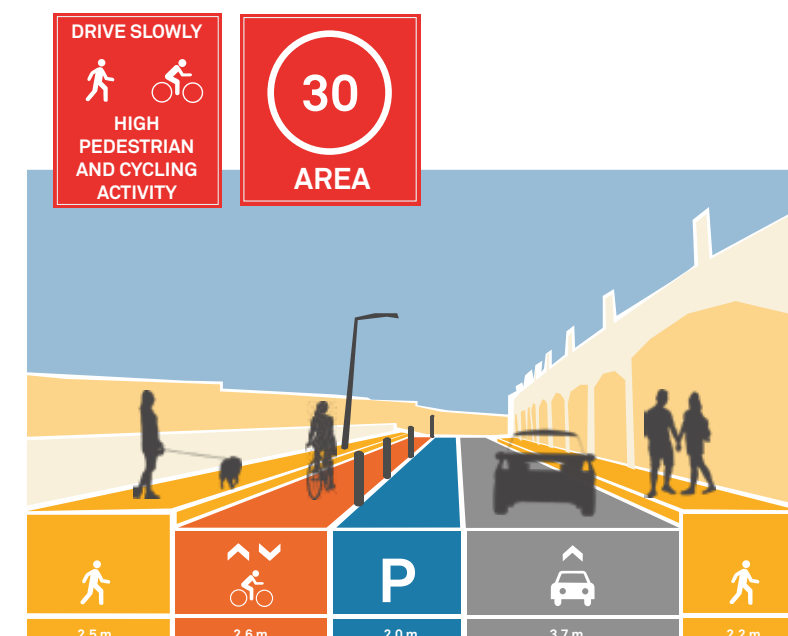
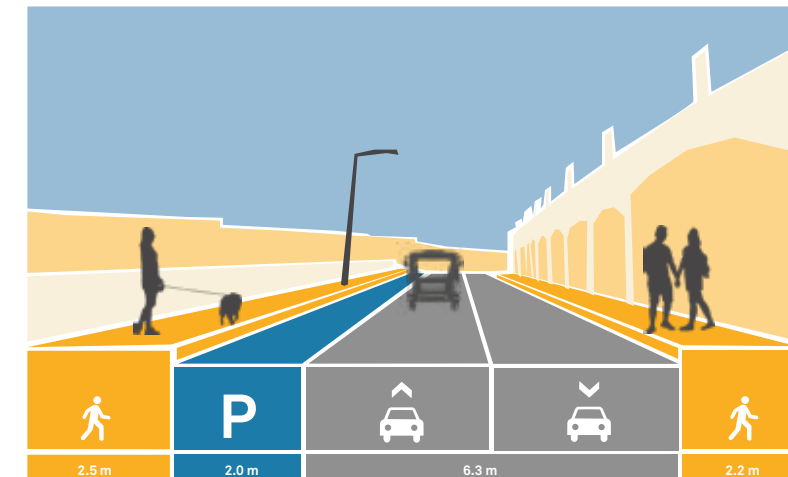




parking – nevertheless, the undesignated parking is still being taken into account given the high demand at present. Informal urbanism is also present along this road, as some residents enjoy bringing out their own chairs and tables and occupy part of the pedestrian walkway, mostly during temperate evenings. The road is therefore being reduced to 4m for one-way traffic towards Gzira, with the rest of the space being allocated for on-street parking on the side of the existing buildings as well as additional space next to the wider pavement (along the outer edge) that could eventually contain planters, so as to protect pedestrians using this space while making the route more pleasant.



IMPLEMENTATION



Intervention 10

Triq Giuseppe Cali: Level 1 and 3



The segment of this road from Sir Ugo Mifsud until Triq ix-Xatt would turn into a more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly shared path through the introduction of appropriate signage. This link is a continuation of the pedestrian route from Ta' Xbiex to Gzira and, as discussed in Intervention 7, introduces floor markings at the intersection with Triq Sir Ugo Mifsud.



Intervention 11

Sir Temi Zammit Avenue: Level 2



This street is aesthetically pleasing and very characteristic of Ta' Xbiex, due to the presence of interesting residential architecture. The Ta' Xbiex Parish Church is located on this road with a small parvis and an adjacent garden that provides an amenity green space. The vision for this street is to be entirely pedestrianised for the benefit of all residents, ideally with the (eventual) removal of on-street parking which could be made up for if formal parking bays are designated along Triq ir-Rampa ta' Ta' Xbiex, as discussed in Intervention 9. Given that the promenade may become

congested, even due to the presence of users from other localities, this street would provide an alternative (and quieter) option, particularly for residents. In addition, on specific days (such as Sundays) this street could be used as an extension to the church ceremonies and activities.



Phasing Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

In the case of **Ta' Xbiex**, Triq il-Principessa Margerita is currently already an important spine. The street has the potential to become a direct pedestrian and cyclist route and provide crucial open space linking the two housing unit zones. The proposed intervention could be implemented with minimal costs and could result in tremendous, visible improvement for the local residents. It could therefore be carried out during the first phase. Simultaneously, road closures for the play street (Triq il-Halg) and Sir Temi Zammit Avenue, and re-routing within the promenade could be carried out during quieter days and/or times (such as on Sundays or throughout the entire weekend). This testing would be important in order to ensure more successful permanent solutions. All tactical urbanism floor markings are also envisaged for Phase 1, given that increasing pedestrian safety is the primary priority for Slow Streets.

Phase 2 includes carrying out interventions for all central streets that are vital connectors between the Gzira and Msida marinas. More investment will be required to designate cycling lanes within Triq l-Abate Rigord and along the promenade.

Phase 3 would complete the strategies for all remaining streets with the inclusion of appropriate signage, and applying all the proposed street closures and permanent rerouting.



source: Brend Toderian



source: Carolina Angles



source: Cadence



source: The City Fix



source: New Urbanism

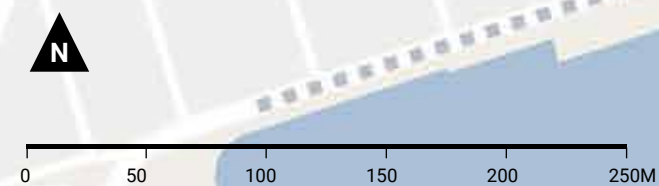
SLOW STREETS PHASING: STARTING & TESTING THE NETWORK

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

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



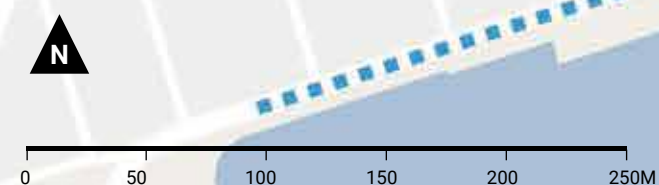
SLOW STREETS PHASING: STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

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



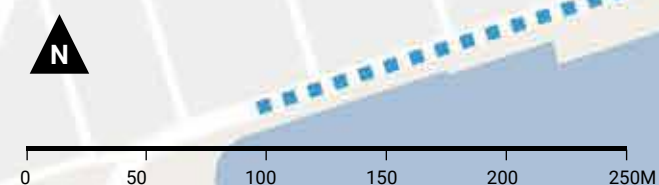
SLOW STREETS PHASING: COMPLETING THE NETWORK

TA' XBIEX



LEGEND

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



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

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

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

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

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

Ta Xbiex is a small locality with a large waterfront promenade, which is split into two levels. What is also characteristic of Ta Xbiex are the clusters of social housing, with small, repeated green pockets between them which have potential to become more actively used. The two main road axes are Triq Principessa Margarita and Triq l-Abate Rigord.

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

- Level 1 interventions: Introduction of signage which alerts drivers to slower speeds and increased pedestrian and cyclist presence and activity
- Level 2 interventions: Rerouting of traffic, which shifts priority of the spaces to pedestrian and cyclist use
- Level 3 interventions: Tactical urbanism initiatives – low cost and temporary solutions that are focused on reallocating more space to pedestrians and cyclists rather than cars and that can be used in the short term (to test Level 4 interventions) or the long term
- Level 4 interventions: Reconfiguration of the street section to allocate more physical space to pedestrians and cyclists
- Slow Paths: A designated slow section of the road, when intervening on the entire street is not possible, particularly for use in larger roads where slower-moving, more localised/dedicated slip roads are available, and where priority for pedestrians is often not considered
- Play Streets: A type of intervention where a local road is closed off to cars temporarily, for example on weekends, so that it may be transformed into a place where residents of all ages are free to gather, socialise and play
- Extensions: Important links that represent future potential expansion of the network, and better connectivity for residents of different localities

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

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



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