

January 2021







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

Project Team – studjurban

Dr. Antoine Zammit
Tala Aldeiri
Amaryllis Bista
Shannon Farrugia
Steve Montebello

Project team – Studio Tom Van Malderen

Tom Van Malderen Anna Horvath Daniel Lupi

© studjurban and Studio Tom Van Malderen 2020

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.

Document images are cited by source. Unless otherwise specified, images have been produced by studjurban and Studio Tom Van Malderen.

Published by:

Local Councils' Association
Local Government Building
Local Government Road
Marsa
Malta
Tel: (+356) 25968000
Email: lca@lca.org.mt
Website: www.lca.org.mt

Slow Streets is a project of the Local Councils' Association's ResidentFirst vision 2024. Follow Resident First on facebook.com/ResidentFirst

Contents

Introduction	2
Slow Streets Network	6
Implementation	20
Types of Interventions	22
Cycling	34
Victoria Interventions	38
Phasing	60
The Way Forward	68
Summary	70

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.



Who are Slow Streets for?

At the heart of Slow Streets lies the local community and the need for better well- being for all residents. The ultimate objective is to make streets more welcoming and accessible to

people of all ages, who want to travel on foot, by bicycle, wheelchair, scooter, or skateboard. In particular, there is special consideration for the needs of the elderly and physically disabled.

How do Slow Streets work?

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

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

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





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

What is 'tactical urbanism'?

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

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

Some examples of tactical urbanism strategies are:

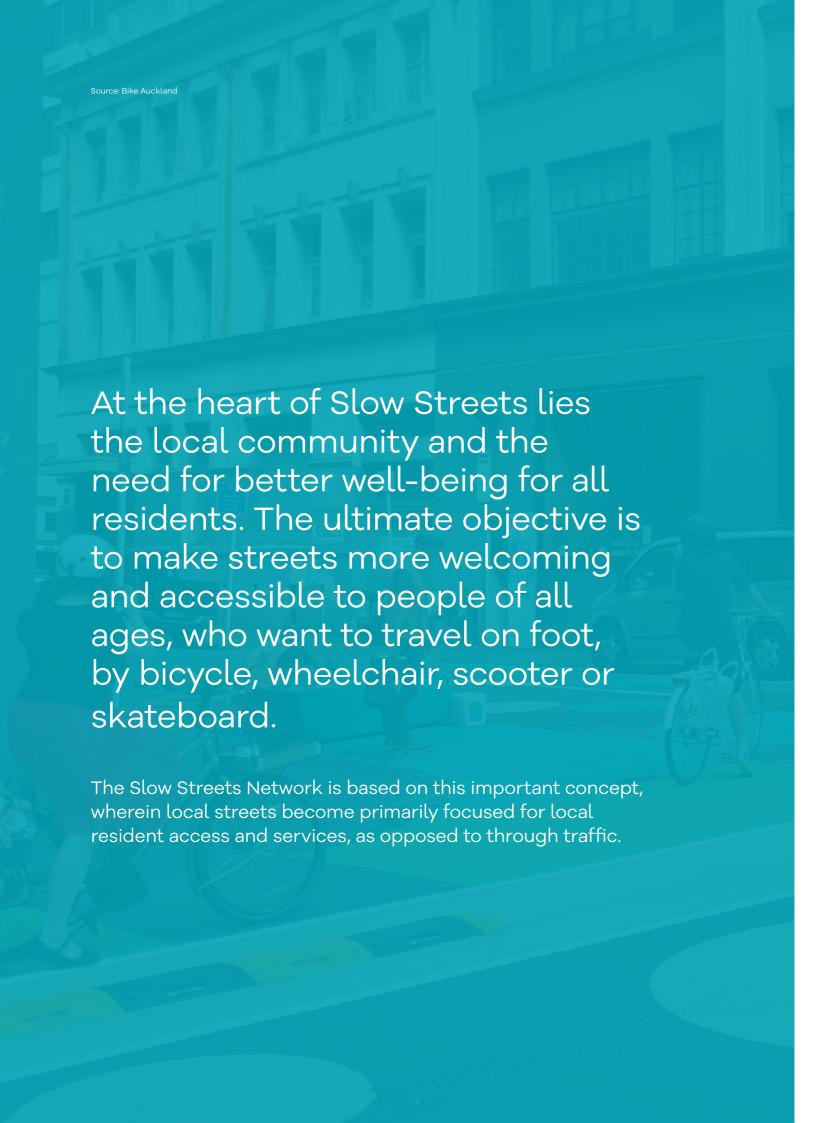
- temporary signage and bollards to close off some streets for different uses, such as play streets or the setting up of markets;
- use of planters to define a boundary, especially at important pedestrian entrances;
- use of temporary movable furniture to turn a parking space into public space;
- use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

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





Tactical urbanism involves using temporary materials in order to repurpose places and transform them into more dynamic public spaces, with pedestrian safety as a primary concern.



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.

Victoria

Victoria, always known as 'Rabat', is the capital city of Gozo, Malta's sister island. It is situated on high land in the centre of the island and enclosed by neighbouring localities, such as Kerċem, Munxar, Xewkija and Xaghra. Due to its location, history, attractions, and specific amenities, it is the most visited Gozitan locality on a yearly basis, and thus receives a large flow of people and vehicles all year round. Victoria also houses the fortified Citadel ('Iċ-Cittadella'), dating back to the Neolithic times, in which one can also find the Baroque Cathedral of the Assumption of the 17th Century, the Gozo Museum of Archaeology, the Folklore Museum, the Natural Science Museum and the Old Prison.

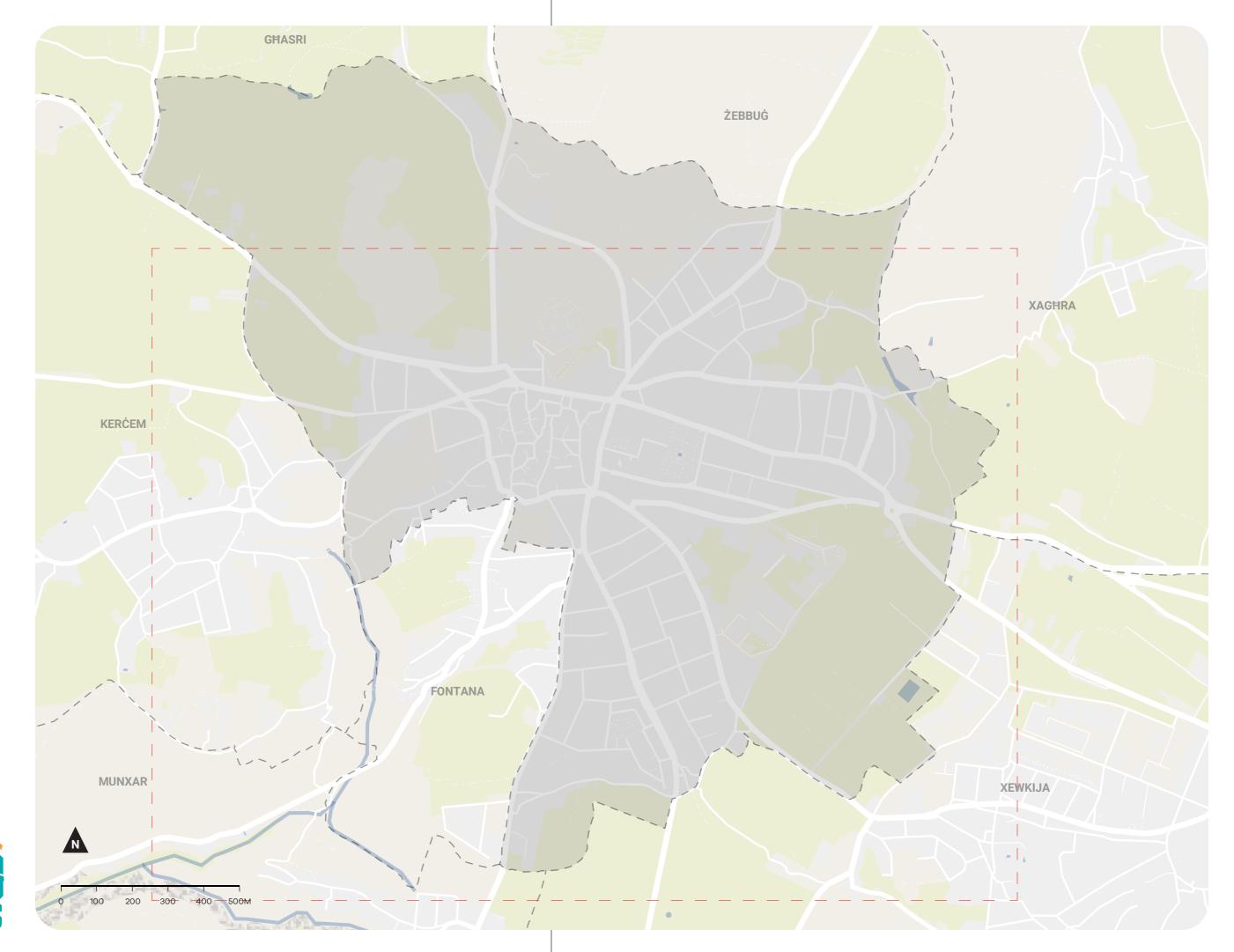
Outside of the Citadel, Victoria has three main squares – Independence Square, St.Francis Square and St. George's Square – all catering for a large number of local and commercial activities. Whilst Independence Square is largely used to hold the traditional Maltese outdoor market on a daily basis, St.George's square houses St.George's Basilica, which is the Parish Church of Victoria, further increasing the attractiveness of this locality.

Other attractions include Villa Rundle Gardens, St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Francis Conventual Church, St John Bosco Oratory, the Gozo General Hospital and a number of schools. Narrow, local and pedestrian priority streets link the central open spaces together, while on the periphery, the roads become wider and more vehicular-oriented – most of the latter forming part of the arterial and distributor road network.

The main aim of the Slow Streets strategy, therefore, is to firstly make the narrower local streets safer and more walkable for pedestrians to use. By using different schemes of traffic management, including both rerouting opportunities and tactical urbanism interventions, the priority within these streets is being further emphasised as pedestrian and cyclist zones rather than cars, while still retaining the important bus routes that navigate within the locality. A number of key routes have also been identified for potential reconfiguration since they could provide critical and much-needed change to the entire network and enable a stronger and safer street environment for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

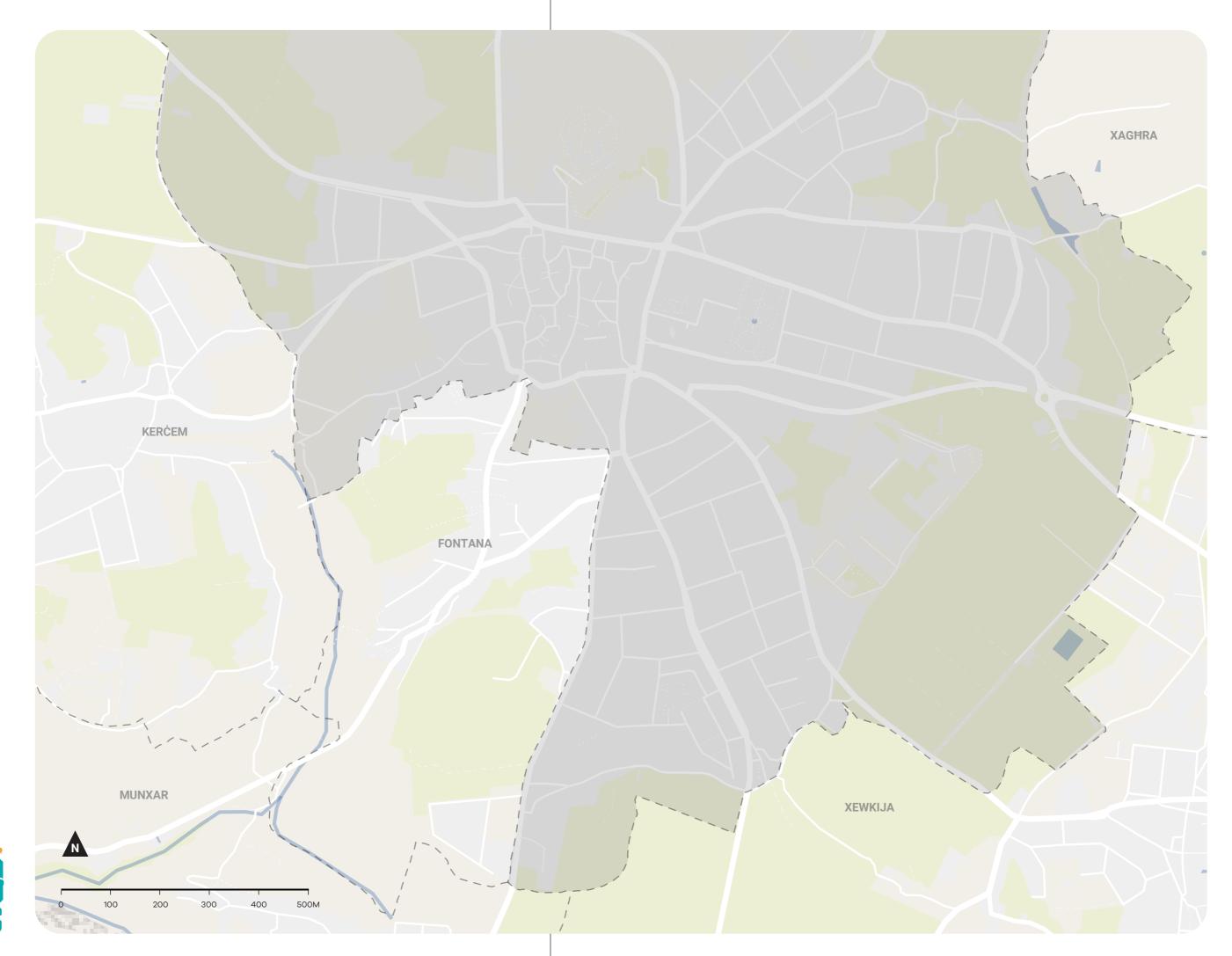






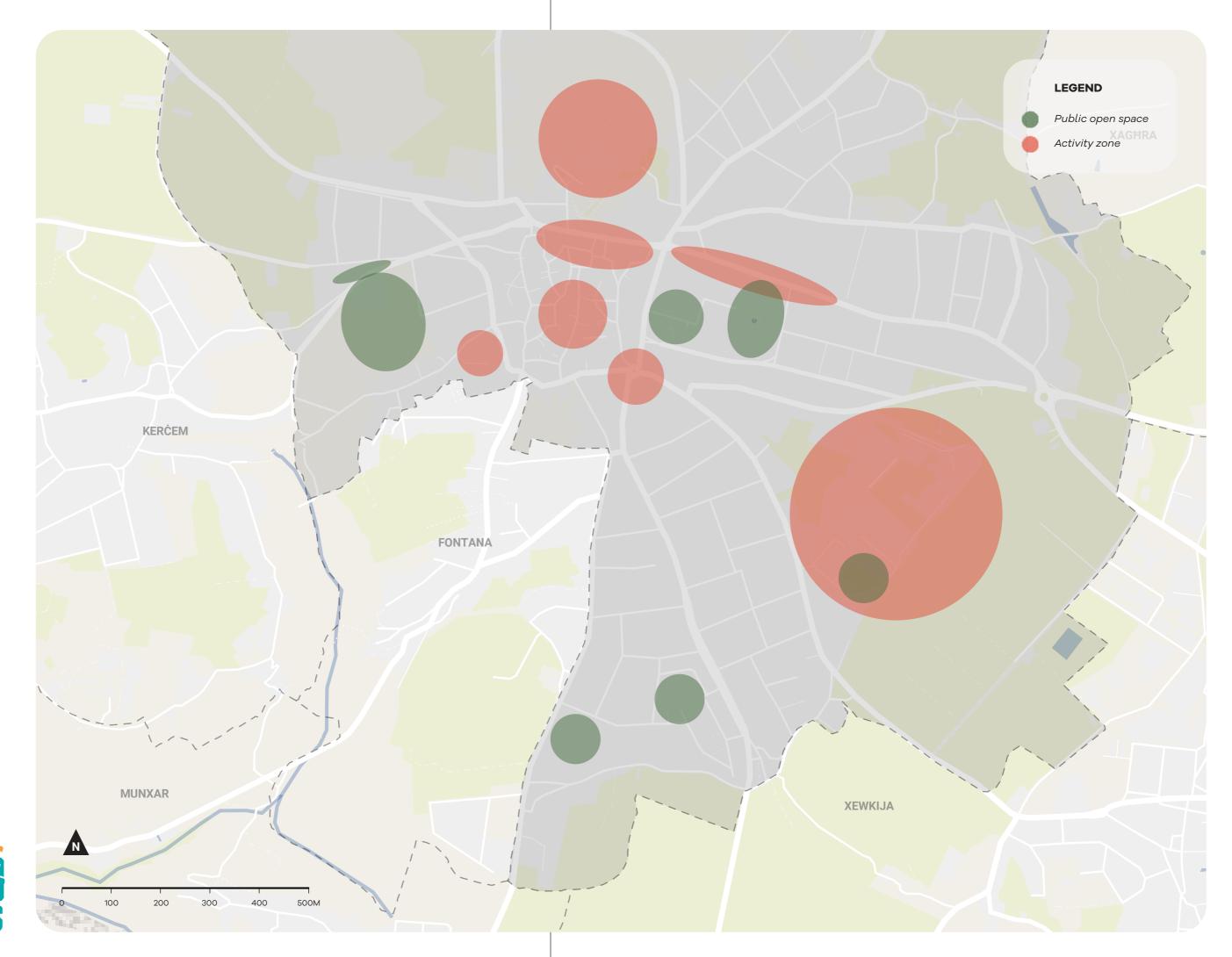






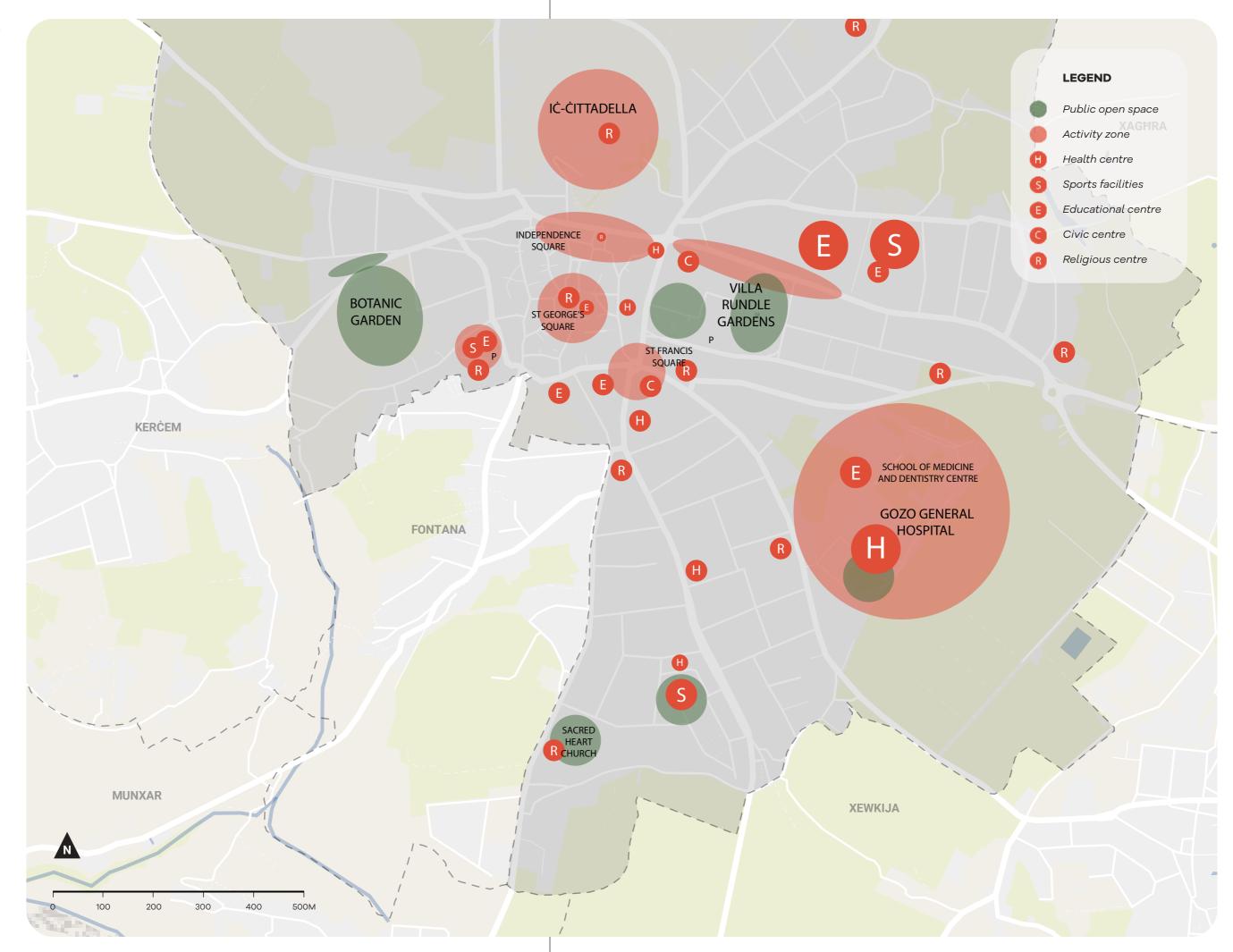






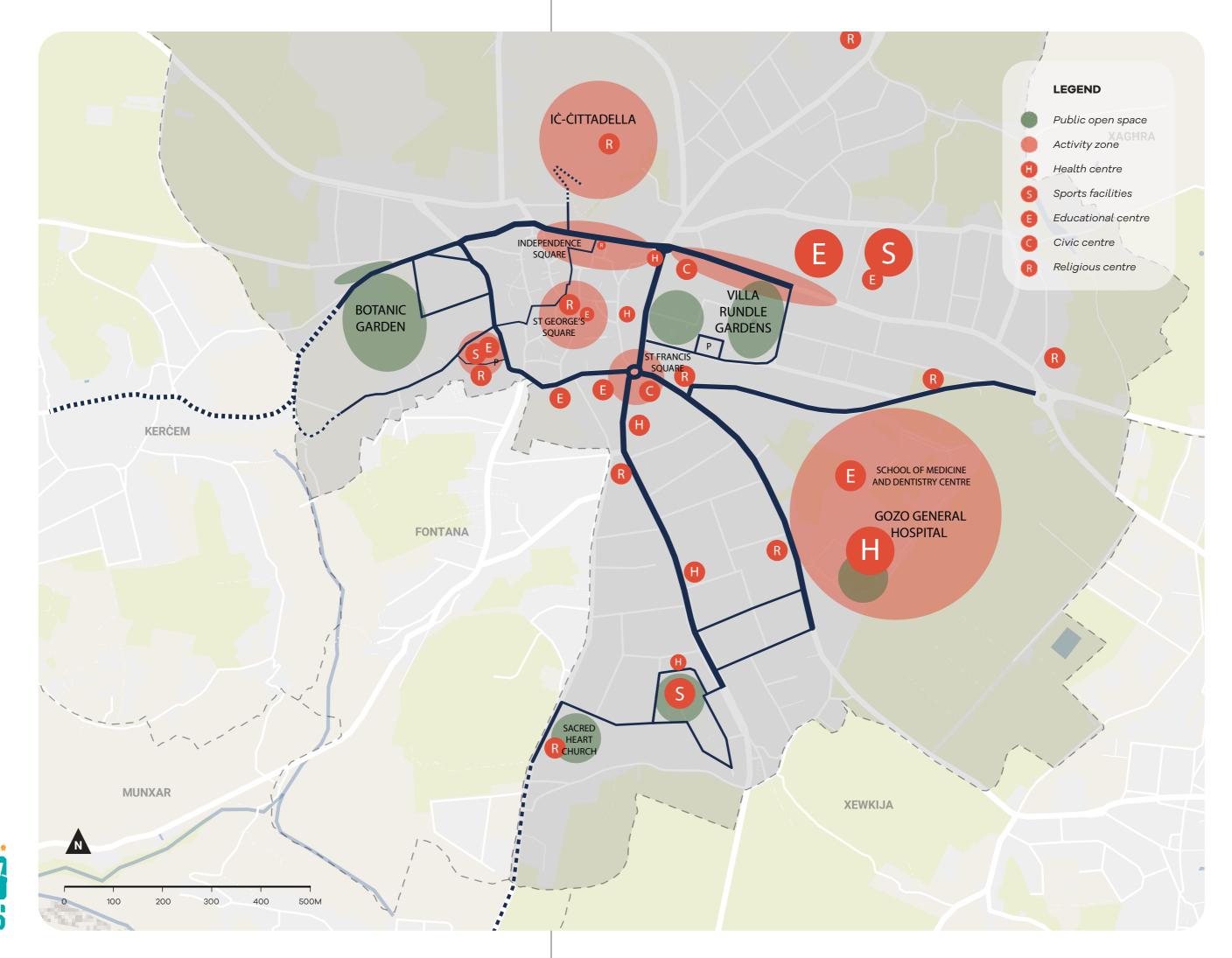














"The Lack of resources is no longer an excuse not to act. The idea that action should only be taken after all the answers and the resources have been found is a sure recipe for paralysis. The planning of a city is a process that allows for corrections; it is supremely arrogant to believe that planning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

Jaime Lerner Architect, Urbanist, Former Mayor of Curitiba, Brazil, Winner of the Global Sustainable City Award

Implementation

Type of Interventions

Slow streets level 1 - signage & branding

Slow streets level 2 - re-routing

Slow streets level 3 - tactical urbanism

Slow streets level 4 - reconfiguration

Play Streets

Extensions

Cycling

Victoria Interventions

Phasing Strategy

Types of Interventions

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

Level 1 - signage & branding

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

Level 2 - re-routing

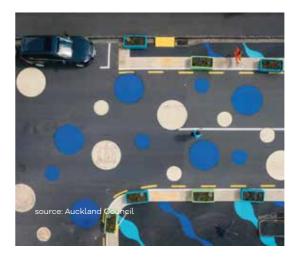
entails traffic management measures such as the introduction of dead ends and access-only to local traffic, rerouting and converting two-way streets to one-way routes. Such actions are critical in order to allocate more space for pedestrian or cycling use. At the same time, as discussed earlier, traffic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













Level 3 - tactical urbanism

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





Level 4 – reconfiguration

refers to the most substantial intervention which is the reconfiguration of the street section. As explained earlier, streets have been studied and measured on site, in order to assess whether more space may be allocated to pedestrians (extending beyond existing pavements), cycling lanes and/or greening initiatives (such as the introduction of planters). The designation of vehicular space is based on the Planning Authority's Development Control Design Policy, Guidance and Standards 2015 (DC15) Standard S1 (Vehicular Access Width Standards), which establishes a width of 3.7m as required for access by a fire tender, which is the largest emergency vehicle that should be able to access the road safely. In this regard, therefore, roads that are wider than this standard and that are considered to provide important pedestrian routes therein, are being reconfigured to this width. In many cases, a number of the above strategies are combined together in order to achieve a bigger impact.









Play Streets

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

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









Play streets - programming

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

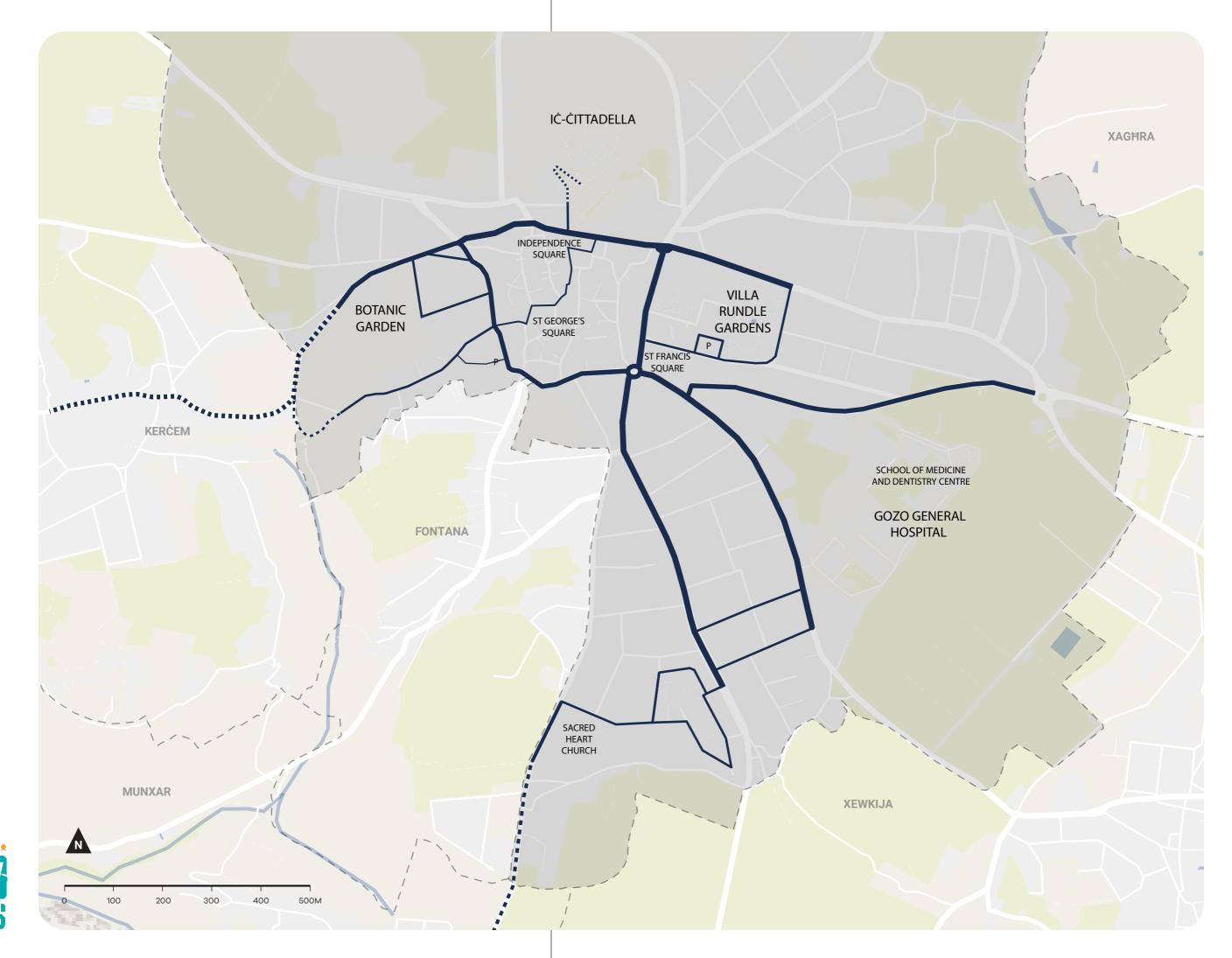




Extensions

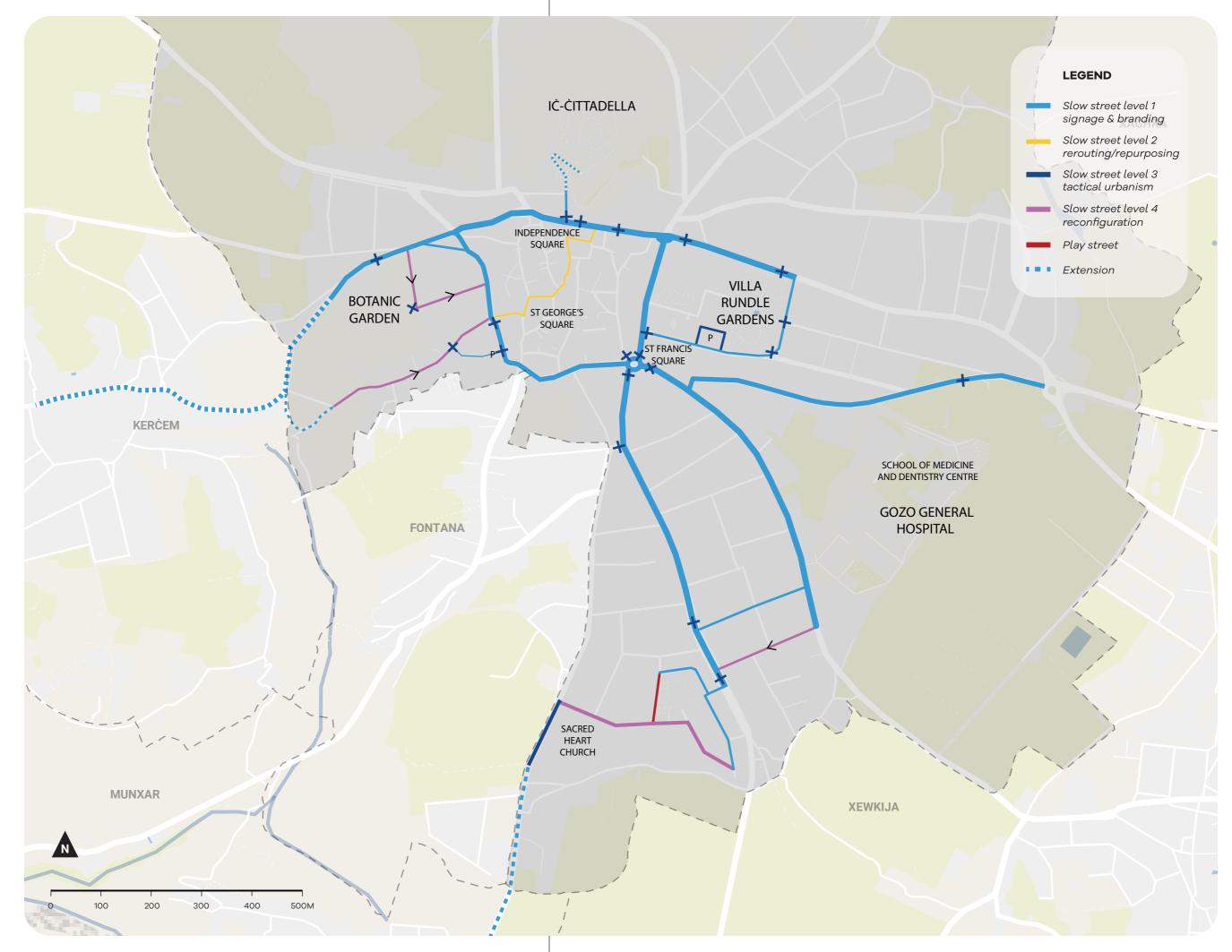
The last type of intervention refers to 'extensions' with adjacent localities and /or within the same locality. These links are important as they represent the future potential expansion of the network, resulting in even better connectivity for local and /or neighbouring residents. Such expansion may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





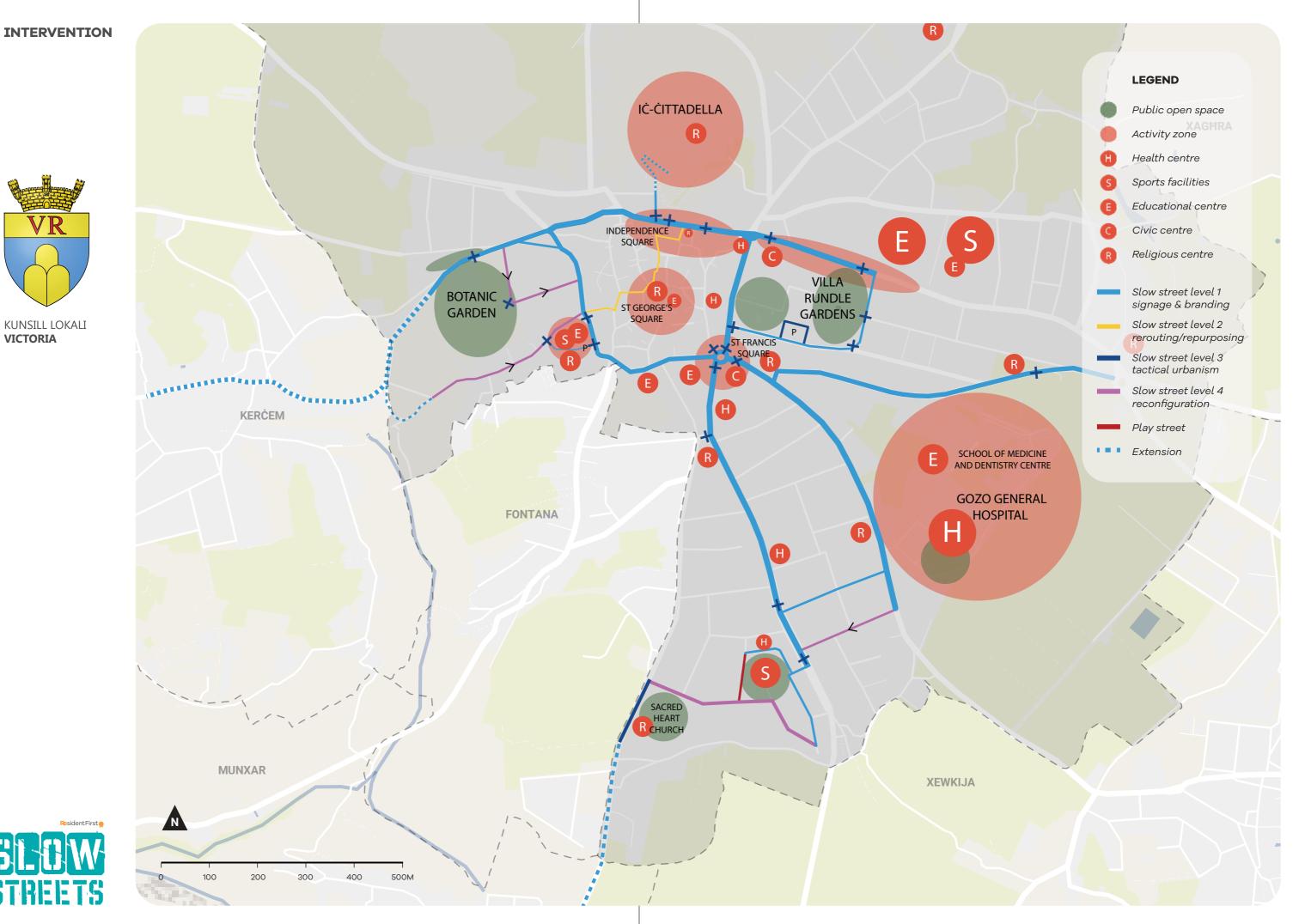














Cycling

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

Jourcel Theville On Manage

part of any scheme or strategy to promote sustainable mobility through which transport authorities can address traffic congestion, improve accessibility, promote personal health, reduce air pollution as well as contribute towards lower greenhouse gas emissions, all of which are attributes necessary to improve the quality of life of any community.'

Providing quality cycle networks creates more accessible neighbourhoods, which in turn increases social relations and benefits the wellbeing of the entire community. Cycle paths therefore improve both the connectivity and the overall liveability in localities.



The real added value of cycling is experienced through a combination of all environmental, social and health benefits combined.

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

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

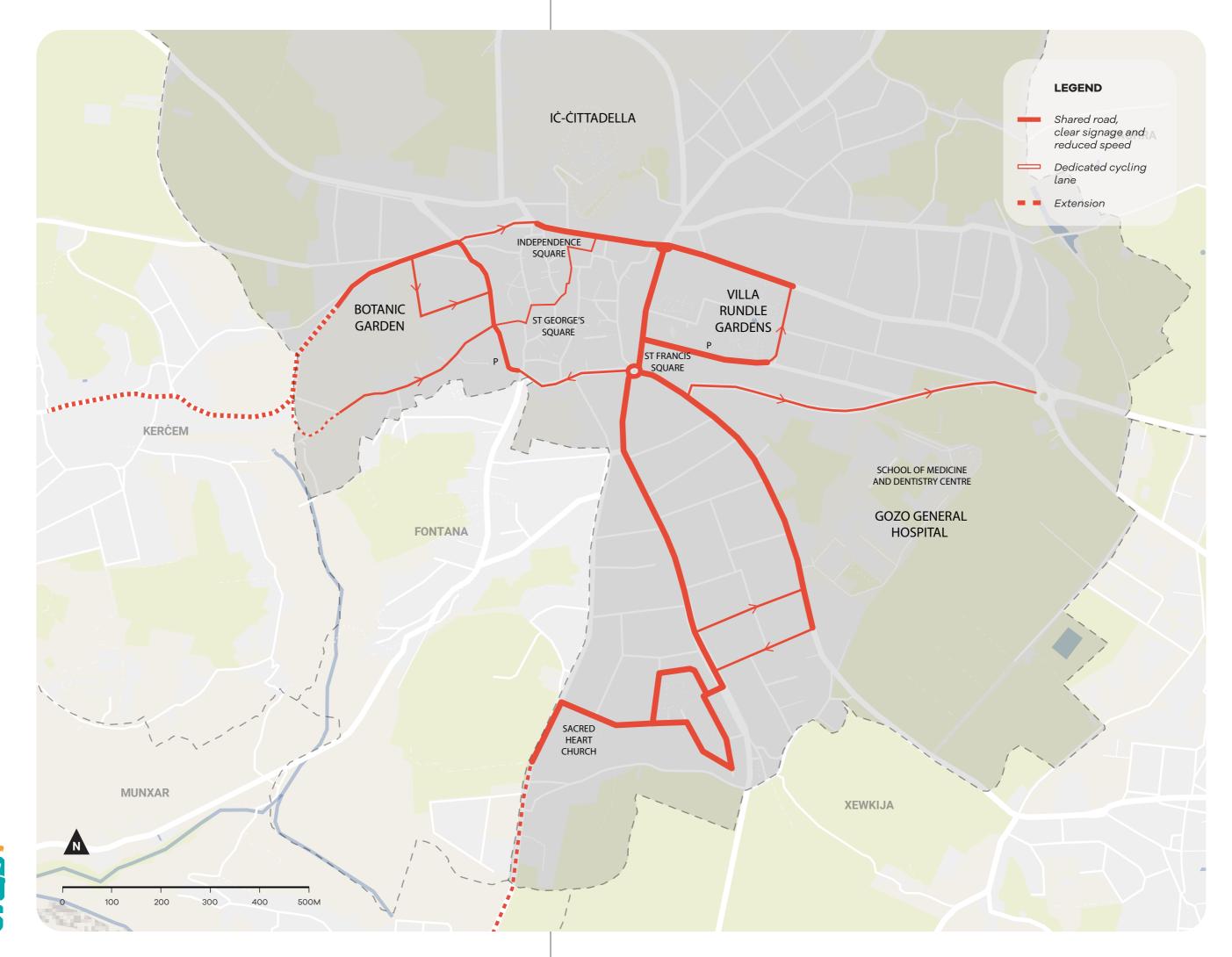
The Slow Streets initiative lays the groundwork for future strategic locality plans, wherein the urban cores and important public spaces may be freed from car traffic and instead used by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.





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







Victoria 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. The first objective for Victoria is to emphasise the pedestrian-oriented nature of the local streets, particularly the narrower ones, by further reducing through traffic therein and instead divert vehicles onto more prominent routes.

The second objective is to identify walkable routes that link peripheral areas better to the centre, so as to avoid a fragmented network disconnecting the edges of the development area from the rest of the urban fabric. Whilst most roads are of an arterial and distributor nature, tactical urbanism is being suggested to also improve walkability within them and their permeability to connecting routes.

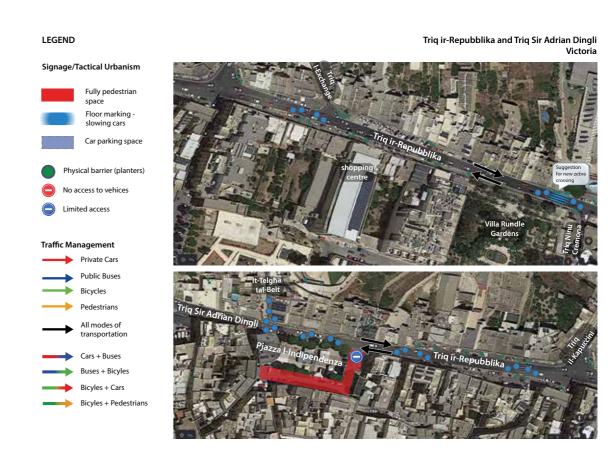
Intervention 1

Triq ir-Repubblika, Triq Sir Adrian Dingli and Pjazza Savina - Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3



Triq ir-Repubblika is the main road of Victoria, designated as an arterial road and dominated by the high level of commercial activities. Whilst this road carries a large traffic volume due to its central location that links to several other neighbouring towns, it is also used by pedestrians to access the amenities found within the centre of the locality. A number of pedestrian crossings exist along this stretch of road, however, it would benefit from a reinforcement of these crossings and the introduction of a new one to improve walkability and make it safer for pedestrians to use.

Therefore, tactical urbanism in the form of a new pedestrian crossing is being proposed at the intersection with Triq Ninu Cremona, in front of Villa Rundle Gardens, to provide for safer pedestrian access within this zone. In addition, tactical urbanism in the form of floor markings is being proposed before and after each existing pedestrian crossing along Triq ir-Repubblika, specifically at the intersection with Trejqet l-Exchange (in front of the shopping centre), near the junction of Triq il-Kapuċċini and in front of Pjazza l-Indipendenza. Colourful floor marking is also being proposed at the entrance to It-Telgħa tal-Belt, intersecting with Triq Sir Adrian Dingli, which leads to the Citadel. This intervention would alert drivers to slow down when approaching a pedestrian crossing and important pedestrian accesses, to allow for a safer environment within this busy arterial road.



It is also being proposed that planters are placed along the edges of the protruding pavement along Triq ir-Repubblika. As vehicular parking is catered for along the entire road, greenery would improve the area aesthetically and also demark the zones where the pedestrian pavement is located. In addition, adequate signage is being proposed at the entrance of Pjazza l-Indipendenza, to emphasise local access only to residents or for servicing requirements, and to further designate this road as a pedestrian-priority area. Adequate signage is also being suggested at Triq ir-Repubblika and Triq Sir Adrian Dingli to share the road between drivers and cyclists.

Triq Sir Adrian Dingli leads westwards to Pjazza Savina, which currently caters for vehicular parking and some commercial activities. It is being proposed that signage for limited access to parking only is installed at both sides of the southern road of the square. This intervention would limit the number of vehicles accessing this zone and general traffic would instead access Pjazza Savina from the west side only (that is, from Triq Mons Lwiġi Vella). Adequate signage for road sharing between drivers and cyclists is also being proposed.

In addition, tactical urbanism in the form of floor marking is being proposed at the entrance of Triq Santa Marija, which is a quiet and narrow road, and ideal for walking through as a shortcut. This intervention would alert drivers to slow down before entering this road, and also make it more visually prominent for pedestrians to use.

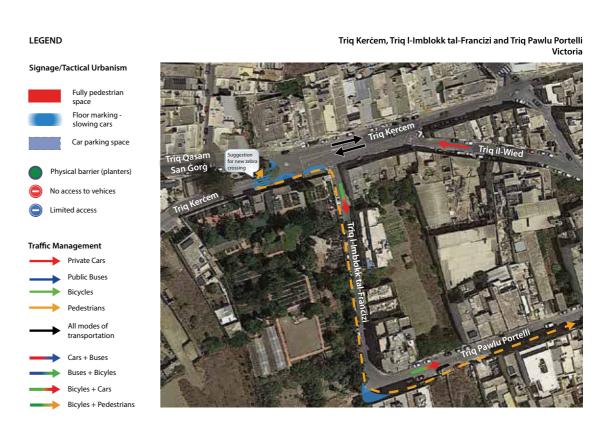
Fully pedestrian space Fully pedestrian space Filor marking slowing cars Car parking space Physical barrier (planters) No access to vehices Limited access Traffic Management Private Cars Public Buses Bicycles Pedestrians All modes of transportation transportation Cars + Buses Buses + Bicyles Bicyles + Pedestrians Bicyles + Pedestrians Bicyles + Pedestrians

Intervention 2

Triq Kerċem, Triq l-Imblokk tal-Franċiżi and Triq Pawlu Portelli - Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4



In the west area of the locality lies a large Botanic Nursery which is open to the public and surrounded by residential streets – an area which would benefit from less vehicular activity and a more pedestrian-friendly environment. It is therefore being proposed that tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor markings be introduced at the two entrances of the garden, in Triq Kerċem and Triq l-Imblokk tal-Franċiżi/Triq Pawlu Portelli, in order to make these entrances more prominent. A new crossing is also being proposed in front of the garden's entrance at Triq Kerċem, leading to another open space wedged between Triq Kerċem and Triq Qasam San Ġorġ, together with floor markings at the edge of this open space to create a continuous walking path for pedestrians crossing from one side to the other. Triq Kerċem is also being proposed to have adequate signage for slow speeds and road sharing between cyclists and drivers.



Triq l-Imblokk tal-Franċiżi, located along the edge of the garden, and Triq Pawlu Portelli are two quiet residential two-way roads with a pavement along the residential front and non-designated vehicular parking along the garden. Because of their proximity to the existing public open spaces and their walkable nature, they are being proposed to be rerouted into one-way roads, forming a vehicular loop between Triq Kerċem – Triq l-Imblokk tal-Franċiżi – Triq Pawlu Portelli – Triq il-Wied – Triq Kerċem. This intervention would further reduce vehicular flows within these roads and make them safer for pedestrians to walk through. In addition, adequate signage is being proposed to emphasise slow speeds and in order to share the road between drivers and cyclists.

It is also being proposed that these roads be reconfigured. As Triq l-Imblokk tal-Franċiżi is being proposed as a one-way road, the vehicular lane width would reduce to 4.1m (a width that still allows for two-way car access in the event of an emergency and/or surrounding road closures), introducing formalised designated parking on the right hand side, and introducing 0.7m of pedestrian space along the existing 0.3m-wide pavement. With this configuration, the new 0.7m pedestrian space would initially be designated with floor paint, and there would therefore be a step between this pedestrian space and the existing 0.3m-wide pavement. Thus, in order to have a fully accessible 1m-wide pedestrian sidewalk along the garden, it is suggested that both the 0.7m and 0.3m-wide pedestrian spaces would be on the same level – either by removing the existing narrow pavement (and retain the wider link at the road level) or constructing the new additional 0.7m pedestrian space in line with the pavement (providing a more permanent 1m-wide pavement). This reconfiguration would also be applied to Triq Pawlu Portelli as a continuation of Triq l-Imblokk tal-Franċiżi.







Intervention 3

Triq id-Dawwara - Level 1 and Level 3 Triq San Ġwann Bosco - Level 1 and Level 4 Triq San Ġwann, Triq Santa Marija, Triq ilProvidenza and Triq San Ġorġ - Level 1 and 2

Triq id-Dawwara links to several local roads, including Triq San Ġwann Bosco wherein the access to the school and football ground is located, a public parking area and Triq San Ġwann, which in turn leads to St.George's Square. Tactical urbanism is therefore being proposed along Triq id-Dawwara, specifically using floor markings at the intersection with Triq San Ġwann Bosco and Triq San Ġwann to slow down vehicles, and introducing a new pedestrian crossing to improve walkability and make the road safer for pedestrians to use. Floor markings are also being proposed within the public car park and along the path that leads to Triq San Ġwann Bosco, in order to make this pedestrian shortcut more visually prominent. In addition, adequate signage for slow speeds and to share the road between drivers and cyclists is being proposed.

A pedestrian-oriented link is also being proposed, acting as a shortcut to access St.George's Square from Triq id-Dawwara, by installing adequate signage for limited access to residents and servicing only along Triq San Ġwann, Triq Santa Marija, Triq il-Providenza and Triq San Ġorġ. These roads are all very narrow, quiet and sheltered all day long, and thus, this intervention would reinforce this route as a safe and walkable link for pedestrians.

EGEND

Triq San Gwann Bosco, Triq id-Dawwara, Triq Santa Marija, Triq il-Providenza and Triq San Gorg, Victoria

Fully pedestrian space
Floor marking - slowing cars
Car parking space

Physical barrier (planters)
No access to vehices
Limited access

Traffic Management
Private Cars
Public Buses
Bicycles
Pedestrians
All modes of transportation

Cars + Buses
Buses + Bicyles
Bicycles + Cars
Bicycles + Cars
Public Buses
Bicycles + Cars

On the other hand, Triq San Ġwann Bosco, which is already a one-way vehicular road towards Triq id-Dawwara, is being proposed to be reconfigured to strengthen it as a more pedestrian-oriented road, considering the amenities found within. It is being proposed that the vehicular lane be reduced to 4.1m, to allow two cars to pass at the same time in case of an emergency and/or road closure, and new pedestrian space would be introduced within the gained space along the wall of the football ground. Formalised designated parking is also being introduced to the left of the vehicular lane, with planters placed strategically between the new pedestrian space and the parking so as to buffer pedestrians from moving vehicles.

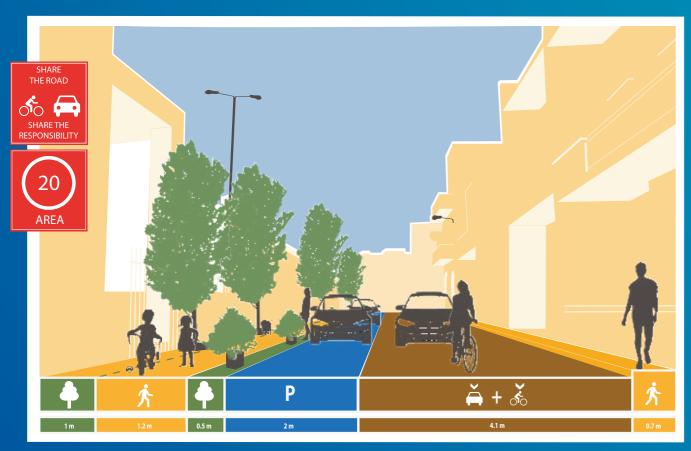
In this case, additional pedestrian space would be very important given that the existing pavement on the opposite side is not continuous along the stretch of the road. It is currently therefore not adequate enough to cater for all individuals, particularly those who have mobility impairment.

In addition, the western end of the road narrows down from a total road width of 8.9m to a total road width of 7.9m. It is therefore being proposed that, within this section, the reconfiguration would continue in the same way as the rest of the street, except that the planters along the built frontage would be removed, so as to allow the vehicular lane to retain a 4.1m width.







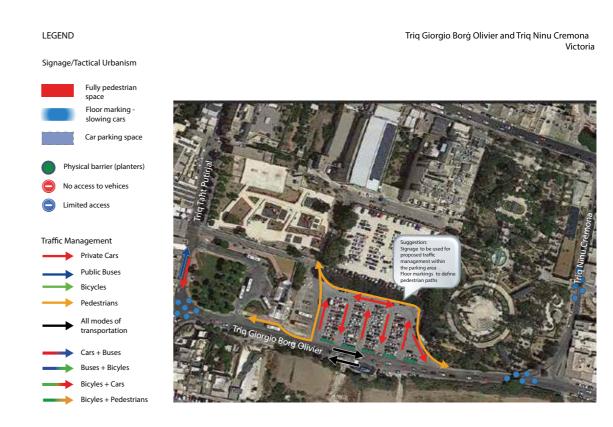


Intervention 4

Triq Giorgio Borġ Olivier and Triq Ninu Cremona - Level 1 and Level 3

Being one of the largest and most popular gardens in Victoria, Villa Rundle Gardens attracts a number of visitors on a daily basis. Whilst a pedestrian crossing is being proposed at the front entrance along Triq ir-Repubblika (Intervention 1), tactical urbanism (in the form of floor markings) is being proposed at the other entrances – within Triq Ninu Cremona and at the intersection of Triq Ninu Cremona with Triq Giorgio Borġ Olivier – in order to emphasise these entry points and make them more visible.

At the back of Villa Rundle Gardens and in close proximity to St. Francis Square, one can find a large public car park which is also highly used on a daily basis; however, there is no buffer between the vehicular road, Triq Giorgio Borġ Olivier, and the actual surface car park, resulting in an unsafe environment for pedestrians. It is therefore being proposed that tactical urbanism in the form of physical barriers, such as planters, would be introduced at the edge of the car park, acting as a buffer between the parked cars and the vehicular road. In addition, floor marking is being proposed all around the car park to designate a clear pedestrian walkway, which would create a safer environment for pedestrians navigating through the car park. Finally, new floor markings are being proposed to emphasise the existing road marking arrows that drivers may follow around the car park.



At the intersection of Triq Giorgio Borg Olivier with Triq Taħt Putirjal, tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor paint is being proposed, in order to alert drivers to slow down when approaching this intersection and the traffic lights therein. Adequate signage for slow vehicular speeds, as well as to alert drivers of high pedestrian activity and to advise them to share the road with cyclists, is also being proposed along Triq Taħt Putirjal, Triq Giorgio Borġ Olivier and Triq Ninu Cremona.





Intervention 5

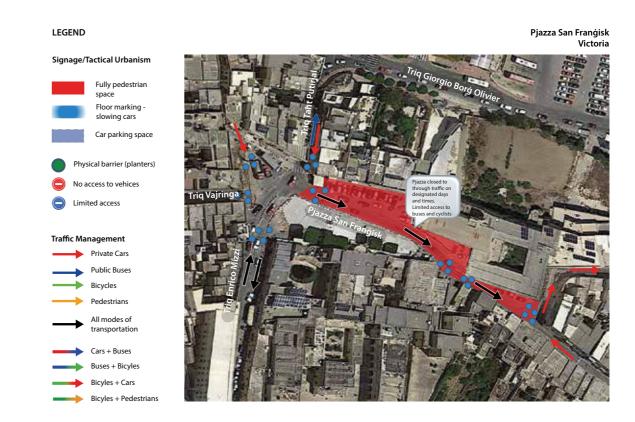
Pjazza San Franģisk - Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3



Pjazza San Frangisk is one of the busiest open spaces in Victoria, catering for an appreciable number of commercial and pedestrian activities, and it houses the Conventual Church of St Francis of Assisi. This area has also been recently refurbished with a new and upgraded roundabout, new signage and designated pedestrian zones.

In an effort to further improve this square and make it safer for pedestrian use, tactical urbanism in the form of floor marking is being proposed at all entrances of the roads stemming out of it. This intervention would alert drivers to slow down when entering the square. In addition, it is being proposed that Pjazza San Frangisk be closed to through traffic on designated days and at specific times, while still allowing access for buses and cyclists, providing an opportunity for limited activities to be held within this area and for it to become even more pedestrian-oriented on such days.

Adequate signage for slow speeds, pedestrian priority and road sharing between drivers and cyclists, is also being proposed across the entire square, specifically Triq Taħt Putirjal, Triq Enrico Mizzi, Triq Vajringa and Pjazza San Franġisk.



Intervention 6

Triq l-Arcisqof Pietru Pace - Level 1 and Level 3

Pjazza San Franģisk leads eastwards to Triq l-Arċisqof Pietru Pawl, which is a one-way road, direction east. Tactical urbanism in the form of floor paint is being proposed within the road section connecting the existing belvedere and the school, making the area safer to cross and improving walkability.

In addition, adequate signage to share the road between drivers and cyclists is also being proposed, together with signage for slow speeds.



LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

Fully pedestrian

Car parking space

Physical barrier (planters)

No access to vehices Limited access

Bicyles + Cars



Intervention 7

Madonna ta' Pompei - Level 1 and Level 3

Triq Enrico Mizzi, stemming out of Pjazza San Frangisk is a one-way street, direction south towards the vehicular junction, Wesgha Vincenzo Labini, with limited access northwards for public transportation and residents only. As this junction receives traffic from four roads, several vehicular conflicts tend to occur. It is also an area which is highly frequented by pedestrians because of the Madonna Ta' Pompei Church and the local commercial amenities situated within it; however, pedestrian safety is currently very low.

Therefore, tactical urbanism in the form of floor marking is being proposed at the entrance to each road stemming out of this junction, in a similar manner to St. Francis Square, in order to alert drivers to slow down when approaching this area. In addition, new floor markings on both sides of the existing pedestrian crossing are being proposed to make this crossing more visible and thus improve walkability within this area. This area is also being proposed to have adequate signage for slow speeds and for road sharing between drivers and cyclists.

Madonna Ta' Pompei Signage/Tactical Urbanisn



LEGEND

→ Bicycles + Cars

Bicycles + Pedestrians



50 | Slow Streets Slow Streets | 51

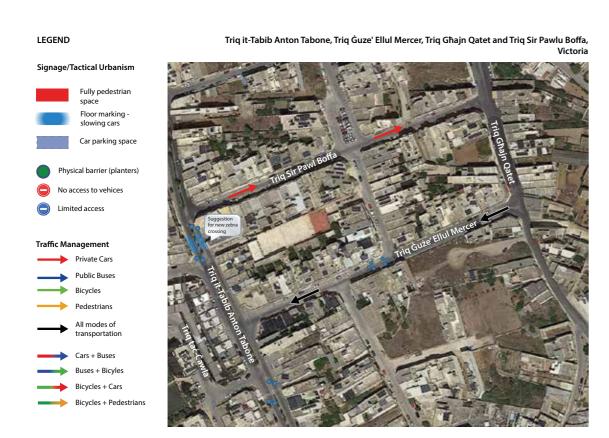
Intervention 8

Triq it-Tabib Anton Tabone, Triq Ghajn Qatet and Triq Sir Pawlu Boffa - Level 1 and Level 3 Triq Ġuże' Ellul Mercer - Level 1, Level 3 and Level 4

Triq Sir Pawlu Boffa and Triq Ġuże' Ellul Mercer are two local one-way roads located in the south residential area of Victoria, and are wedged between two distributor roads. They also carry some through traffic travelling from one distributor road to another. Furthermore, Triq Ġuże' Ellul Mercer forms part of the local bus route.

In order to improve walkability to access these roads, tactical urbanism in the form of floor marking is being suggested before and after the existing pedestrian crossing in the distributor road Triq it—Tabib Anton Tabone, close to the entrance to Triq Taċ-Ċawla, to make it more visible for pedestrians to use. In addition a new crossing is also being suggested before the intersection with Triq Sir Pawlu Boffa.









Within Triq Ġuże' Ellul Mercer, floor markings are also being proposed before and after the existing pedestrian crossing, in order to make it more visible and, subsequently, alert drivers to slow down.

This road is also being proposed to be reconfigured, in order to improve the pedestrian amenities within it and designate vehicular parking more formally. From a total available road space of 8.7m, it is being proposed to reduce the vehicular lane to 4.1m, retaining the one-way vehicular direction and having adequate width for public transport to pass through. Within the gained space from the reduction of the vehicular lane, additional pedestrian space is being introduced on the left hand side (in the direction of traffic, as visible in the section drawing), with formalised designated parking separating the additional pedestrian space from the vehicular traffic. Furthermore, 1.4m of additional pedestrian space is also being introduced on the opposite side, including the possibility of placing some planters strategically at the edge, delineating the space and doubling up as buffers.









In a similar manner to Triq it-Tabib Anton Tabone, tactical urbanism in the form of a new pedestrian crossing is being suggested in the other distributor road, Triq Ghajn Qatet. This intervention is considered to be very important for the Slow Streets network of Victoria, as this would connect the residential area to the Gozo General Hospital and improve safety for pedestrians across the road. In addition, tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor marking is being proposed at the entrance to the hospital in order to alert drivers to slow down when approaching the hospital's entrance.

All roads within this area are being proposed to have adequate signage to share the road between drivers and cyclists, and to emphasise slow vehicular speeds.



Intervention 9

Triq Santa Dminka and Triq taċ-Ċawla - Level 1 and Level 3
Triq Patri Anton Debono SJ - Level 1, Level 3 and Level 4
Triq it-Tlieta u Għoxrin t'April - Level 1, Level 3 and Playstreet

The southern residential area of Victoria surrounds an open public space, with an integrated football ground and playing equipment. Pedestrian safety within this area and the surrounding roads is therefore paramount.

In this regard, tactical urbanism in the form of floor marking is being proposed at the three entrances to the public open space, specifically at Triq Taċ-Ċawla, Triq it-Tlieta u Għoxrin t'April and Triq Patri Anton Debono SJ. In a similar manner, floor markings are being proposed at the entrance to the surrounding roads, specifically at both ends of Triq it-Tlieta u Għoxrin t'April and at the intersection of Triq Taċ-Ċawla with the distributor road, Triq it-Tabib Anton Tabone. This intervention, together with adequate signage for slow speeds and high pedestrian activity would alert drivers to drive slowly in this residential zone.

LEGEND

Triq Santa Dminka, Triq Patri Anton Debono SJ, Triq it-Tlieta u Ghoxrin t'April and Triq taċ-Cawla Victoria

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

Fully pedestrian space
Floor marking slowing cars
Car parking space

Physical barrier (planters)

No access to vehices
Limited access

Traffic Management

Private Cars
Public Buses
Bicycles
Pedestrians
All modes of transportation

Cars + Buses
Buses + Bicyles

Furthermore, Triq Patri Anton Debono SJ leads from the public open space to the periphery of the locality, specifically Triq Santa Dminka, wherein a Retreat House is located. This stretch of road currently has very poor pedestrian amenities, and in order to improve this, new pedestrian space, 1.2m wide, is being proposed along the entire road and within Triq Santa Dminka (approaching the retreat house). Triq Patri Anton Debono is currently a two-way 9.4m-wide road, allowing it to have 1.2m of additional designated pedestrian space (using floor paint), 2m for designated parking on one side of the road and 6.2m as vehicular lanes (which would still cater comfortably for two-way traffic). Therefore, for this reconfiguration, parking would be shifted towards the vehicular lanes to act as a buffer between moving traffic and the new pedestrian space. On the other hand, Triq Santa Dminka is also currently a two-way road, but with a narrower width of 6.1m. A 1.2m designated pedestrian space may also be introduced along the built up side of the road, leaving 4.8m for two-way vehicular traffic. All the roads in this area are being proposed to have adequate signage for slow speeds and for road sharing between drivers and cyclists, including signage for high pedestrian and cyclist activity around the public open space.

As this area is very local and residential, with considerable natural surveillance and high pedestrian activity, Triq it-Tlieta u Għoxrin t'April is being proposed to be used as a play street during designated times and/or days as traffic use is already very low and localised, and thus can also act as an extension of the existing open space and children's playground. Programming the space for various potential activities could attract residents from a wide catchment within the community and does not need to be limited to the residents on this particular street, given that this road may easily be reached by pedestrians from the surrounding areas.









Barrier elements

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

Landscaping elements

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

Programming

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



Street furniture

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

Surface treatment

can be used to further define the playstreet

Signs

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

Phasing Strategy

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

Phase 1

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

Phase 2

Strengthening: This phase is envisioned to require more investment into signage and branding in order to build on Phase 1, and implement the necessary re-routing measures as discussed previously.



Phase 3

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



Victoria

The simplest interventions to implement first would be the play street in Triq it-Tlieta u Ghoxrin t'April, 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 the entrances to already existing paths may be implemented first to increase the attraction and use of these roads, together with floor markings around Independence Square and St. Francis Square to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Play street closures during this phase may be carried out on designated days and at times when traffic is already low, such as on a Sunday.

During the second phase, the rerouting interventions around St. George's Square can be tested and eventually carried out as these would link to the roads intervened upon in Phase 1. Testing of the reconfiguration of roads on the periphery may start, specifically at Triq l-Imblokk tal-Franciżi, Triq San Ġwann Bosco and Triq Ġuże' Ellul Mercer, leading to their eventual implementation.

Finally for Phase 3, Phase 2 interventions testing may be implemented at their full scale including all outstanding Level 1 interventions that enable the network to be consolidated.



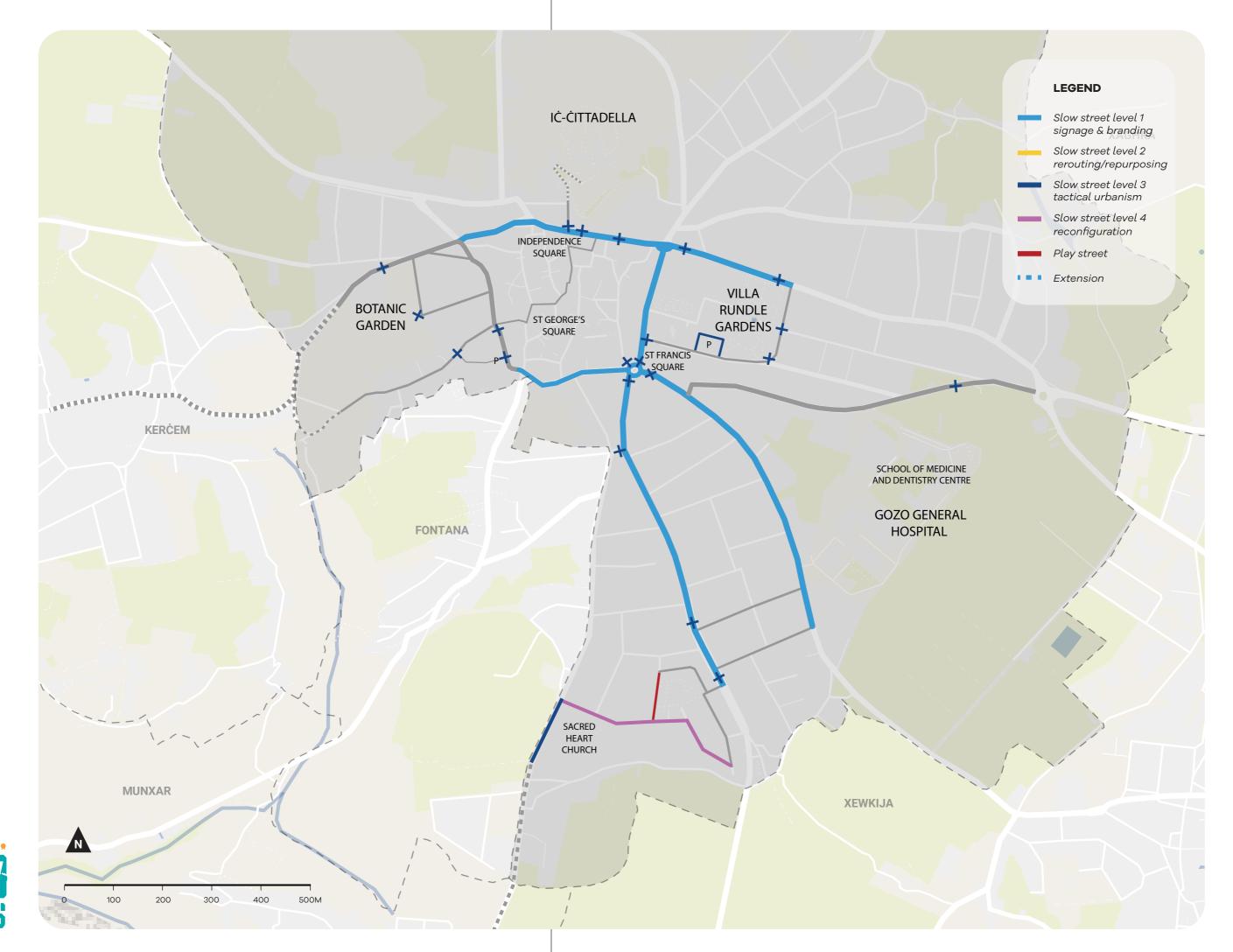


PHASING

STARTING & TESTING THE NETWORK



KUNSILL LOKALI VICTORIA

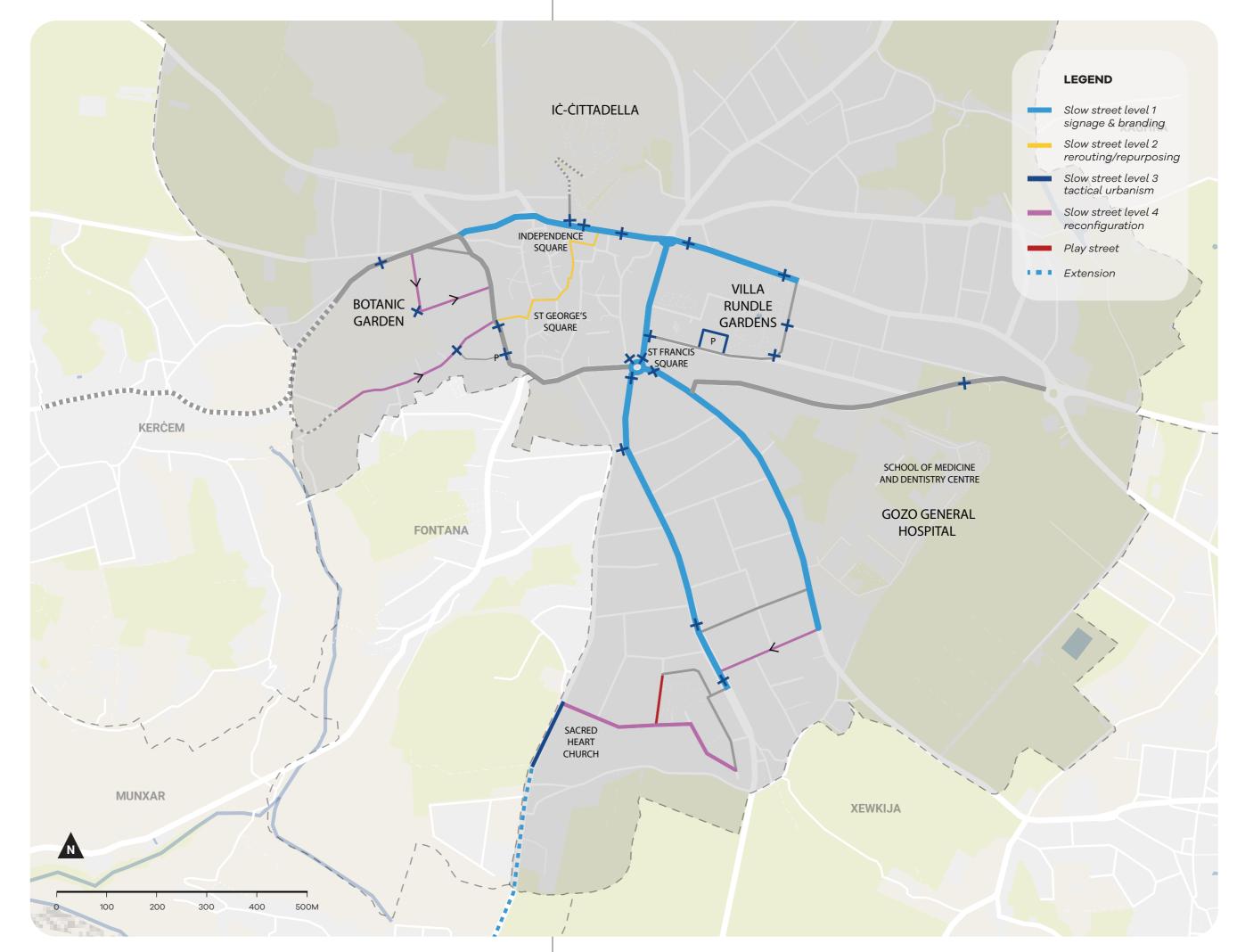




PHASING

STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK



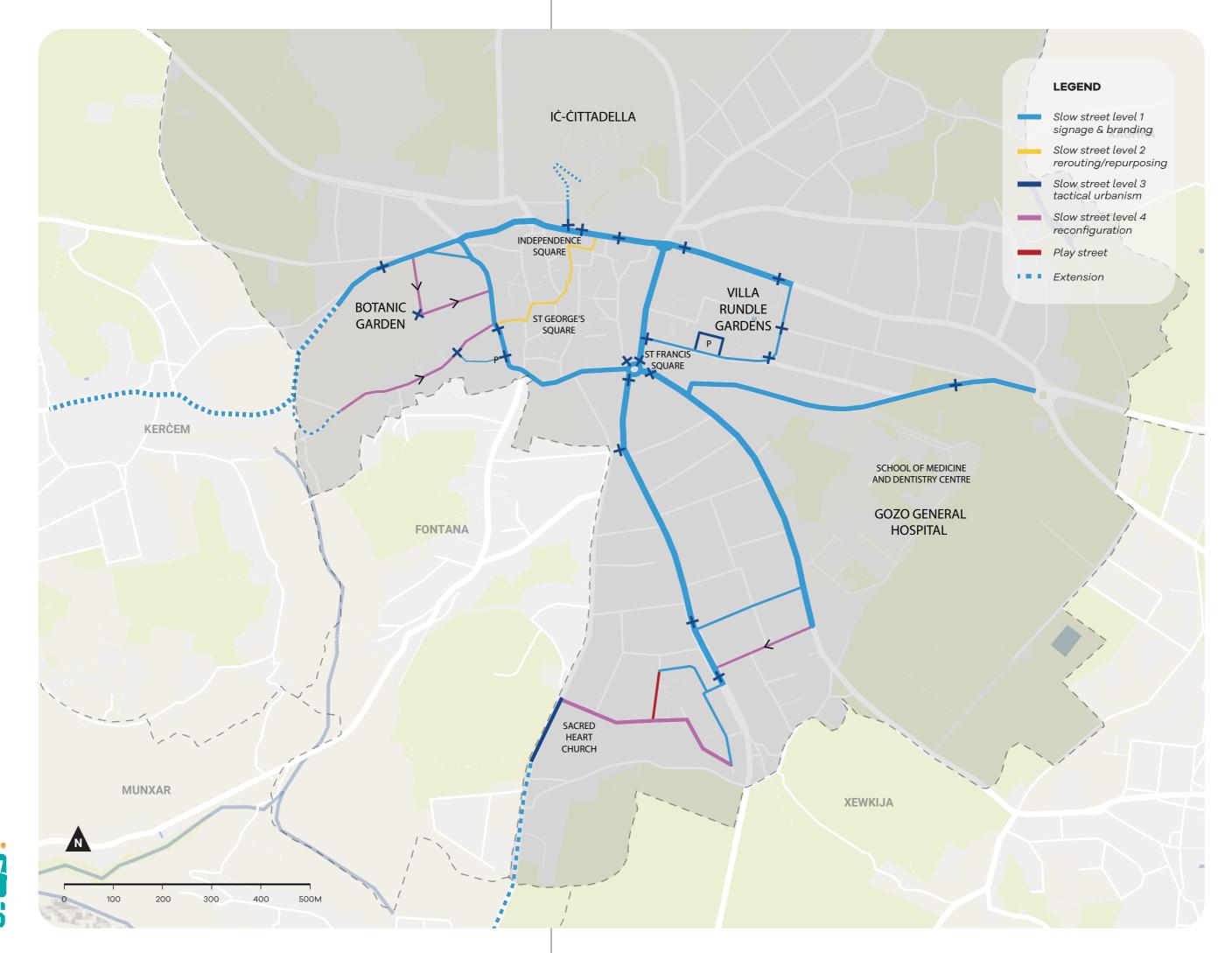




PHASING

COMPLETING THE NETWORK







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.

ROAD CLOSED
LOCAL
ACCESS ONLY

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.

Image courtesy chi.streetsblog.org

Victoria, always known as 'Rabat', is the capital city of Gozo, situated on high lands in the centre of the island and enclosed by neighbouring localities, such as Kerċem, Munxar, Xewkija and Xaghra. Due to its location, history, attractions, and specific amenities, it is the most visited Gozitan locality on a yearly basis, and thus automatically receives a large flow of people and vehicles all year round. It also houses the fortified Citadel ('Iċ-Ċittadella'), dating back to the Neolithic times, wherein one may also find the Baroque Cathedral of the Assumption of the 17th Century and several museums. Three main squares are also found outside of the Citadel and in the centre of Victoria - Independence Square, St.Francis Square and St. George's Square – all catering for a large number of local and commercial activities. Other attractions include Villa Rundle Gardens, St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Francis Conventual Church, St John Bosco Oratory, the Gozo General Hospital and a number of schools. Narrow, local and pedestrian priority streets link the central open spaces together, whilst on the periphery, the roads become wider and more vehicular-oriented most of the latter forming part of the arterial and distributor road network.

The main aim of the Slow Streets strategy, therefore, is to make the narrower local streets safer and more walkable for pedestrians to use. By using different schemes of traffic management, including some limited rerouting opportunities and tactical urbanism interventions, the priority within these streets is being further emphasised as pedestrian and cyclist zones rather than cars, while still retaining the important bus routes that navigate within the locality. Key routes have also been identified for potential reconfiguration since they enable a stronger and safer street environment for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

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

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 ir-Repubblika and Triq Sir Adrian Dingli (signage & branding, and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Signage: high pedestrian activity

Signage: pedestrian crossing points

Tactical Urbanism: planters and floor markings to emphasise existing and new

pedestrian crossings

Intervention 1 - Pjazza Savina (signage & branding, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Signage: limited access

Rerouting: limited access for parking only

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at intersections

Intervention 2 - Triq l-Imblokk tal-Franciżi and Triq Pawlu Portelli (signage & branding, rerouting, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Signage: one-way roads

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at entrance to garden

Rerouting: two-way roads into one-way roads (from Trig l-Imblokk tal-Franciżi to Trig

Pawlu Portelli)

Reconfiguration: reduce vehicular lane to 4.1m, introduce formalised designated parking on the right hand side, and introduce 0.7m of pedestrian space along the existing 0.3m-wide pavement

Tactical urbanism: floor marking to designate additional pedestrian space

Intervention 2 - Triq Kercem (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Tactical urbanism: new pedestrian crossing and floor markings

Intervention 3 - Triq id-Dawwara (signage & branding, and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Tactical urbanism: new pedestrian crossing and floor markings

Intervention 3 - Triq San Ġwann Bosco/Triq Dun Pawl Micallef (signage & branding, and reconfiguration)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: high pedestrian activity

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Reconfiguration: reduce vehicular lane to 4.1m, introduce new pedestrian space on the left hand side along the wall of the football ground, formalise designated parking on the left side of the vehicular lane, and planters placed strategically between the new pedestrian space and the parking.

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

Intervention 3 - Triq San Ġwann, Triq Santa Marija, Triq il-Providenza and Triq San Ġorġ (signage & branding, and rerouting)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: pedestrian priority zone

Signage: limited access

Rerouting: limited access to residents and servicing only

Intervention 4 - Triq Giorgio Borġ Olivier and Triq Ninu Cremona (signage & branding, and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: high pedestrian activity

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Tactical urbanism: new floor paint to guide drivers, floor markings to designate pedestrian space, floor markings at the entrances of the garden and intersection of roads

Intervention 5 - Pjazza San Frangisk (signage & branding, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: pedestrian priority zone

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at the entrances of each road stemming out of St.

Francis Square

Rerouting: Pjazza San Frangisk closed on designated days - no access through this road except for buses and bicycles

Intervention 6 - Triq l-Arċisqof Pietru Pace (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Tactical urbanism: floor markings acting as a crossing point

Intervention 7 - Madonna ta' Pompei (signage & branding and rerouting)

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Signage: pedestrian crossing

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at intersections and to emphasise existing crossing point

Intervention 8 - Triq it-Tabib Anton Tabone, Triq Għajn Qatet and Triq Sir Pawlu Boffa (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Signage: pedestrian crossing points

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at intersections and to emphasise existing crossing point

Intervention 8 - Triq Ġuże' Ellul Mercer (signage & branding, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Signage: pedestrian crossing points

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at intersections and to emphasise existing crossing point

Reconfiguration: reduce vehicular lane to 4.1m, introduce additional pedestrian space on the left hand side, formalised designated parking separating the additional pedestrian space from vehicular traffic, and additional pedestrian space on the right hand side, with some planters placed strategically at the edge, acting as buffer Tactical urbanism: planters and floor paint to designate additional pedestrian space

Intervention 9 - Triq Santa Dminka and Triq taċ-Ċawla (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Tactical urbanism: floor markings at intersections and to designate pedestrian space

Intervention 9 - Triq Patri Anton Debono SJ (signage & branding, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

Signage: 20km/hr speed limit

Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Reconfiguration: reduce street width to 6.2m for two-way traffic, introduce designated parking space on the right hand side, and a new 1.2m-wide pedestrian space (along the blank wall)

Tactical urbanism: floor markings and to designate pedestrian space

Intervention 9 - Triq it-Tlieta u Għoxrin t'April (signage & branding, tactical urbanism and playstreet)

Signage: Slow Streets Branding

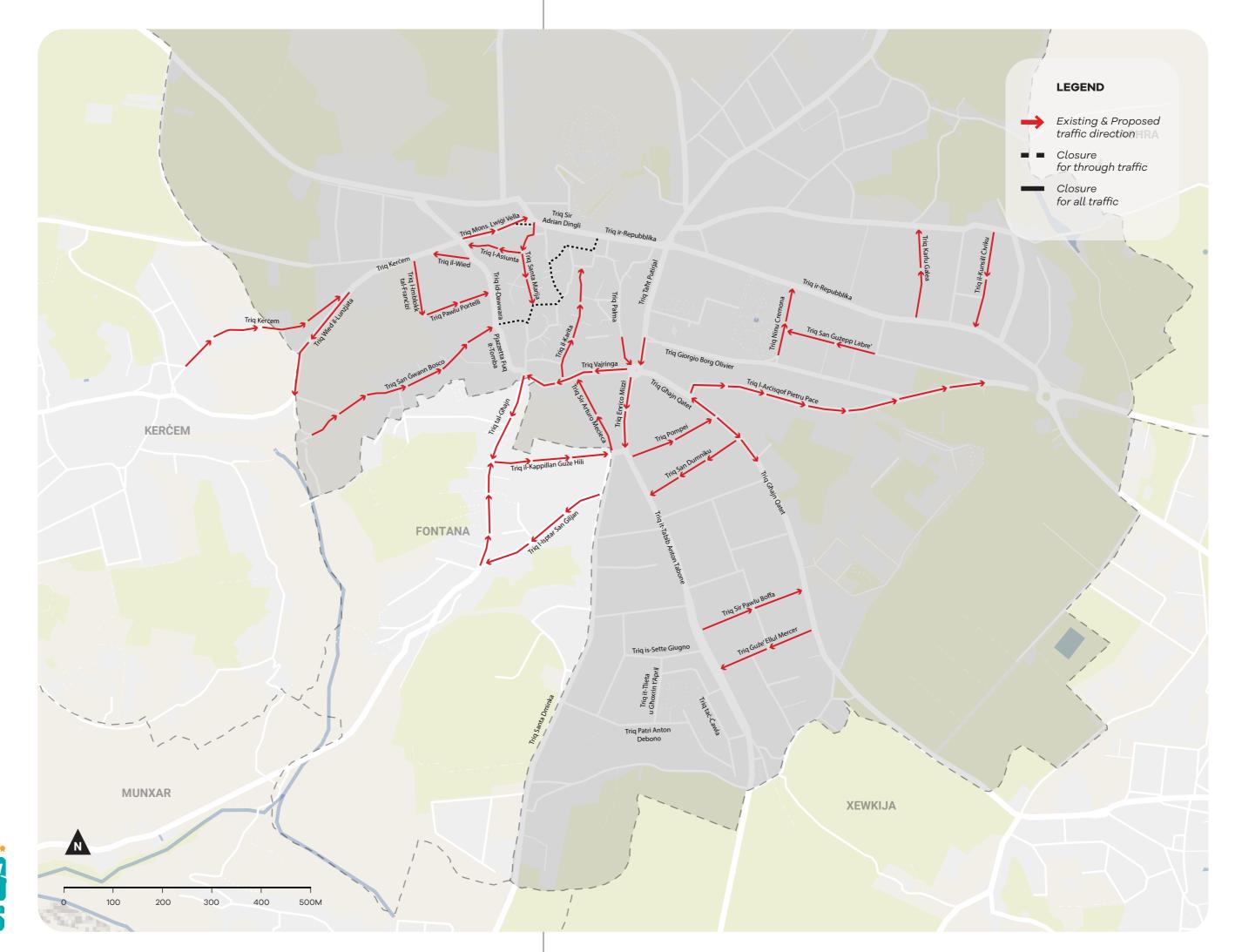
Signage: share the road (drivers and cyclists)

Signage: road closure on designated Play Street days

Play Street: programming of activities

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







ResidentFirst







