

SLOW STREETS

April 2021



KUNSILL LOKALI
XAGHRA

ResidentFirst

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

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Introduction

Streets in Malta and Gozo are mostly dedicated for vehicles, including local streets which should encourage a greater pedestrian activity. Vehicles also travel at relatively high speeds, causing safety concerns for residents and other street users.

At the same time, the average width of pavements is, at best, 1m – too narrow to allow two people to pass each other comfortably, or for wheelchair users to be able to navigate along a pavement, or even for an individual to pass by with a stroller. As a result, people are

forced to be in close proximity with passing vehicles, risking walking, running, scooting, or cycling in the street next to speeding cars. This is a street safety issue, as well as a public health issue, in the light of the new social distancing guidelines.

What is the Slow Streets initiative?

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

The initiative focuses on strategies of traffic calming and management. In addition, each Local Council will study the degree of pedestrianisation it should implement according to the

locality's street network and the needs of its residents, whether temporarily or permanently. Slow Streets provides residents with an opportunity to experience their neighbourhoods in a new way, as a number of safe walking corridors will connect civic landmarks, medical facilities and other important services. This includes linking cycling priority routes and temporarily designated streets converted into creative play areas for children to enjoy safely.

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

Slow Streets provides residents with an opportunity to experience their neighbourhoods in a new way.



Source: publicspace.org

Who are Slow Streets for?

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

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

How do Slow Streets work?

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

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

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



source: Global Designing Cities



source: Global Designing Cities

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

What is 'tactical urbanism'?

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

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

Some examples of tactical urbanism strategies are:

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



source: Chicago Tribune



source: changing-transport.org

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

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

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

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

Slow Streets Network

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

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

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

private cars.

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

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

Xagħra

Xagħra is one of the oldest towns on Malta's sister island, Gozo, located in its eastern area and surrounded by other localities, such as Marsalforn, Victoria, Xewkija and Nadur. It houses the megalithic remains of Il-Ġgantija Temples, dating back to the Neolithic period (3600BC), and the Xagħra stone circle – attractions which continue to draw to the locality a number of visitors and tourists every year. Other historical remains which give this locality its unique character are Ninu's Cave, Xerri's Grotto and Calypso Cave, with the latter overlooking the vast sandy stretch of Ramla beach. Xagħra is one of the largest localities in Gozo, with regard to population and the size of its residential area, as well as due to its surrounding agricultural land and beach.

Xagħra has also one of the busiest central squares in Gozo, Victory Square, catering for a significant number of retail, food and beverage establishments, and the Victory Band Club – which attract visitors on a daily basis and, in turn, make this square even more lively and active. Victory Square also houses the Parish church of the locality, the Basilica of the Nativity of Our Lady (Marija Bambina) which is also known as the church of Our Lady of Victory.

The residential roads which directly stem out of Victory Square are narrow and have a very local character, whilst other roads in the surrounding areas are wider and may better cater for vehicular traffic. Whilst efforts are already being made by the Local Council to make the central square more pedestrian-oriented, including its closure for traffic on designated days/times, this locality would further benefit from having even more pedestrian-

oriented roads outside of the central square and instead redirect vehicular traffic onto more peripheral roads.

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



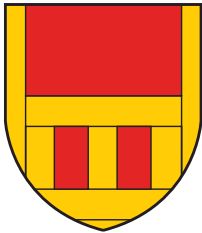
Pavements and roads are further measured on site in order to sketch an accurate section for each of the selected streets. This exercise is crucial for determining the possible intervention within each street, based on the available road space, and taking into account both the activities and characteristics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

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

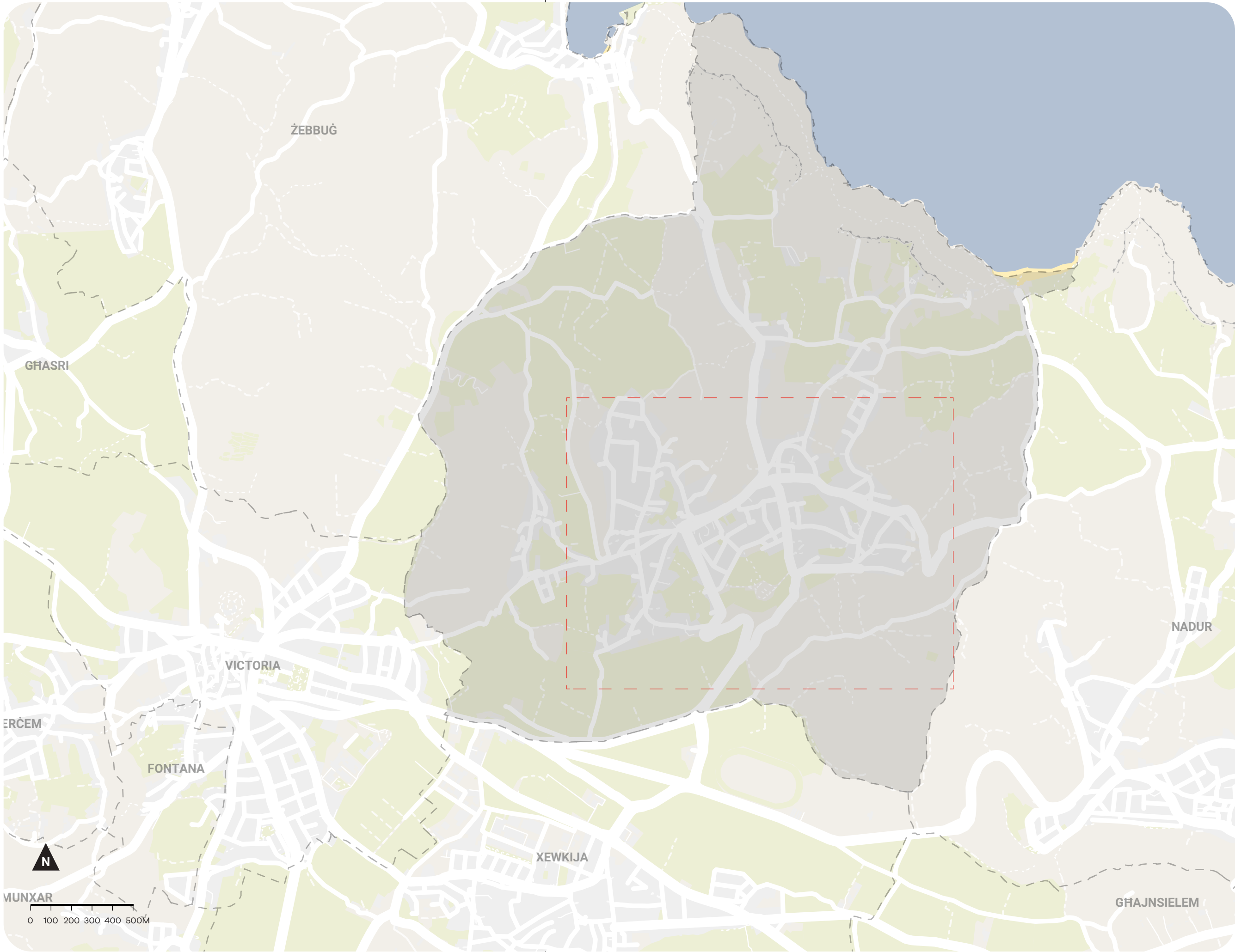
The strategy is finally concluded once it may be established that the individual interventions are able to coexist seamlessly, without creating any unwanted repercussions and while further considering potential extensions with neighbouring localities.

Within these strategies, access to public transportation is always being permitted, even within those streets which have been selected to have no access for vehicles.

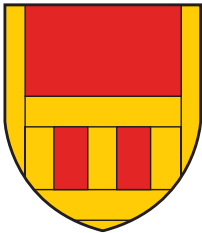
LOCALITY



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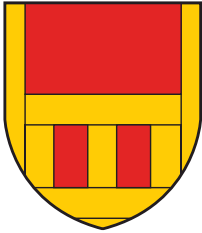
LOCALITY



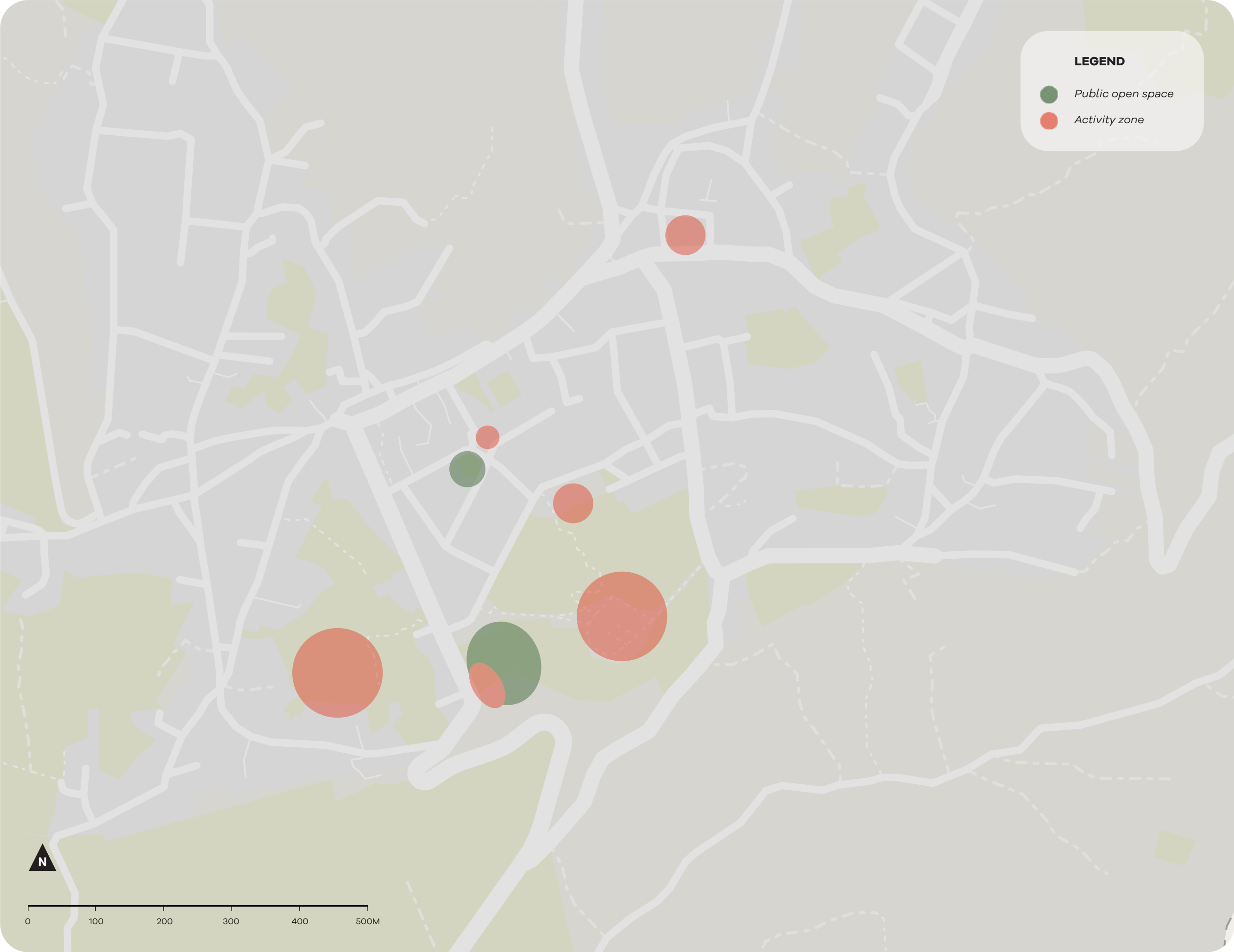
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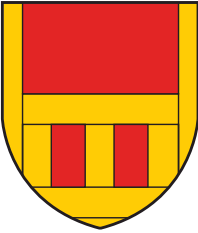
ACTIVITY
ZONES



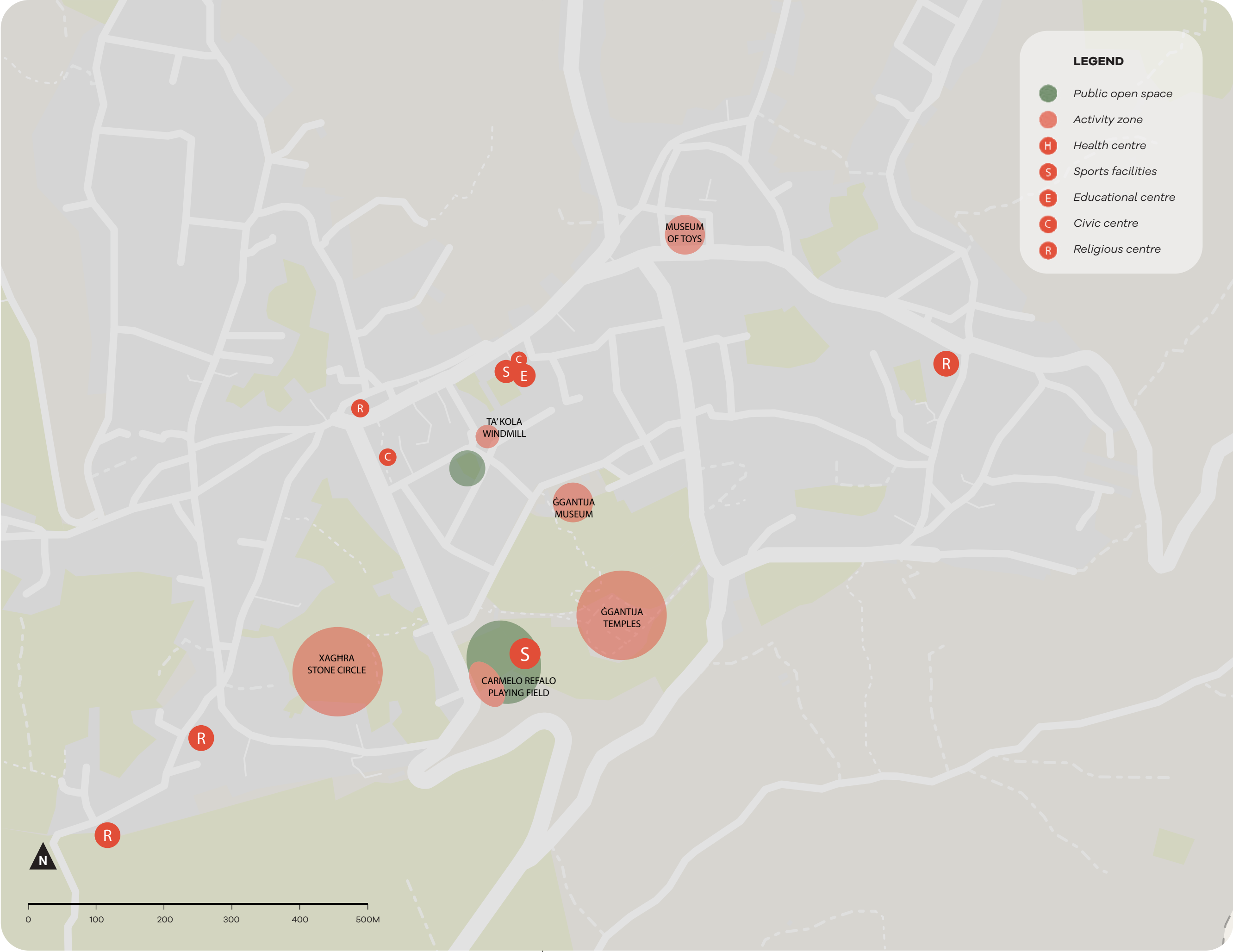
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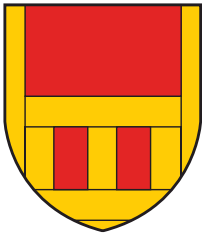
DESTINATIONS



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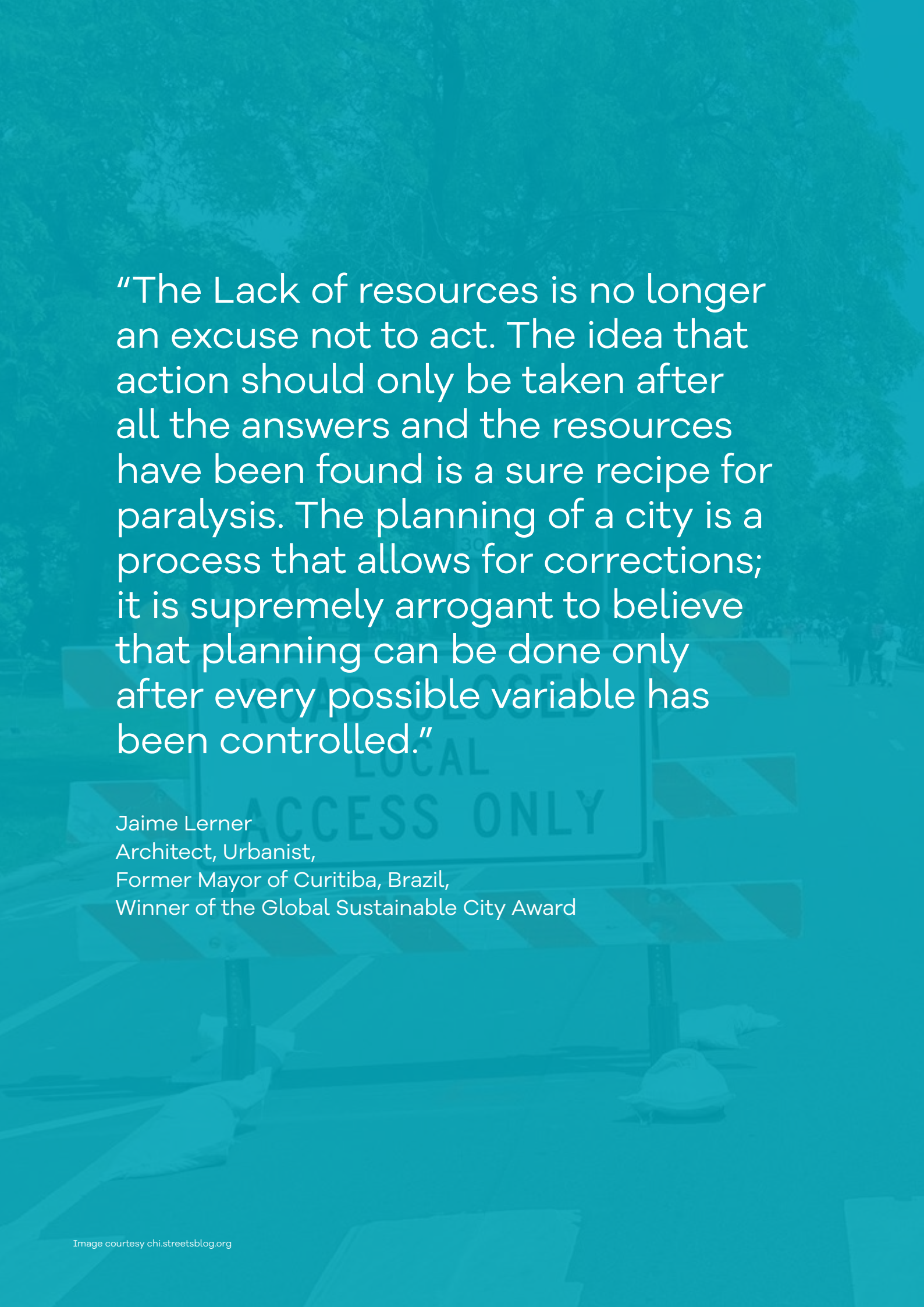


NETWORK



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

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

Implementation

Type of Interventions

Slow streets level 1 - signage & branding

Slow streets level 2 - re-routing

Slow streets level 3 - tactical urbanism

Slow streets level 4 - reconfiguration

Play Streets

Extensions

Cycling

Xaghra 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.





source: Smart Growth Online

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.



source: South Carolina Safe Routes



source: publicspace.org



source: Cadence



source: designcouncil.org.uk

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.



source: Tactical Urbanism



source: Talk Wellington



Play streets – programming

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

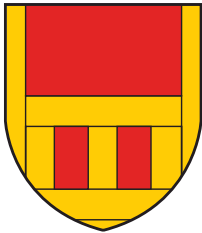


Extensions

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



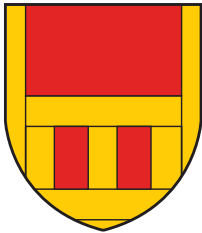
NETWORK



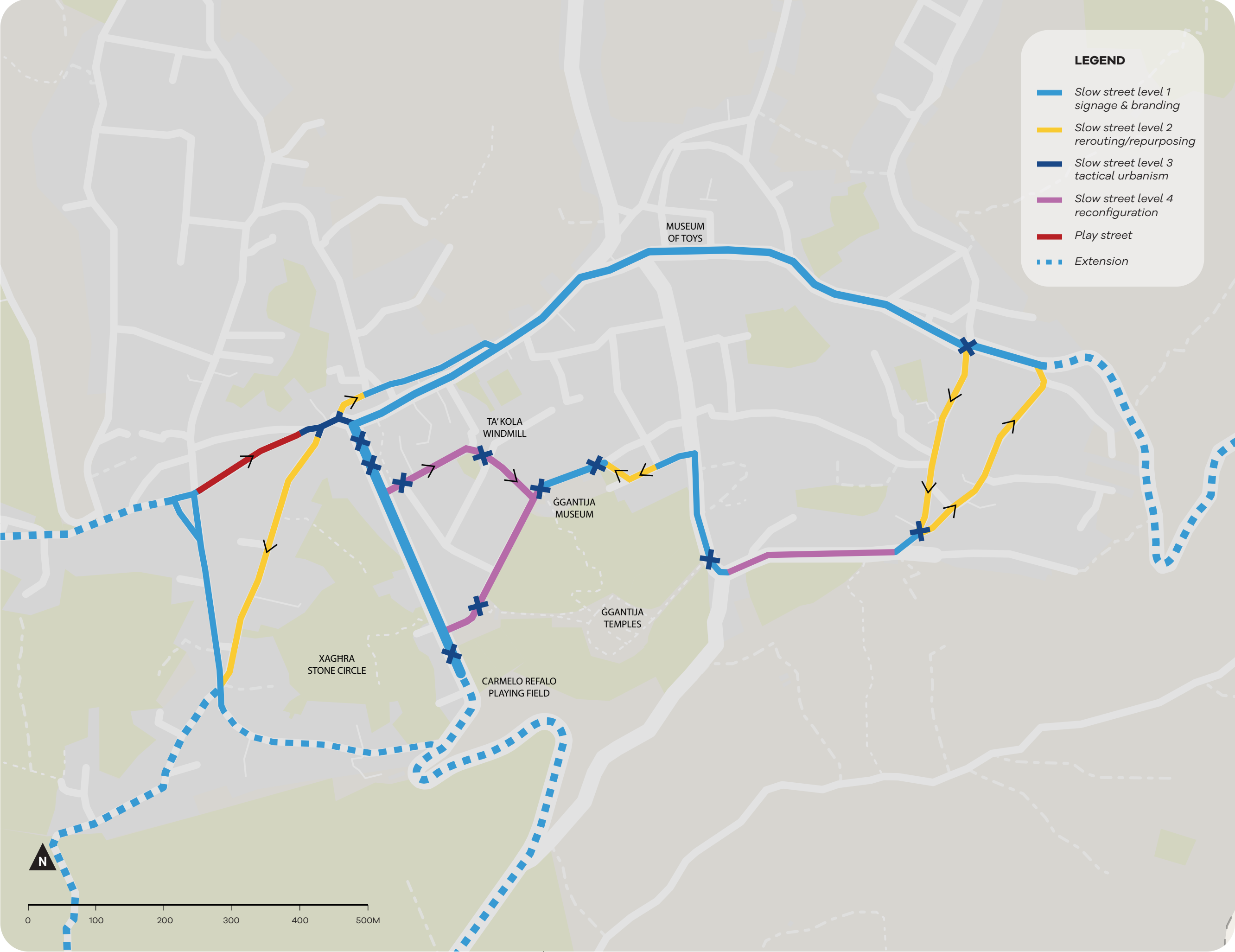
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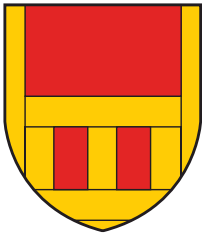
INTERVENTION



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INTERVENTION



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Cycling

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

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

This is further reflected in the words of Transport Malta's National Cycling Strategy (2018, p.46): 'The promotion of cycling as an alternative mode of transport is considered to be an essential

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

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



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

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

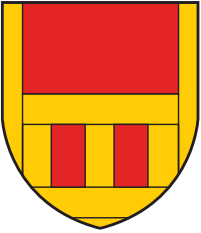
In narrower streets characterised by less space, signage is being proposed to slow down cars and raise the awareness of shared space with cyclists. These streets are included within the Level 1 interventions discussed previously.

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



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

CYCLING
NETWORK

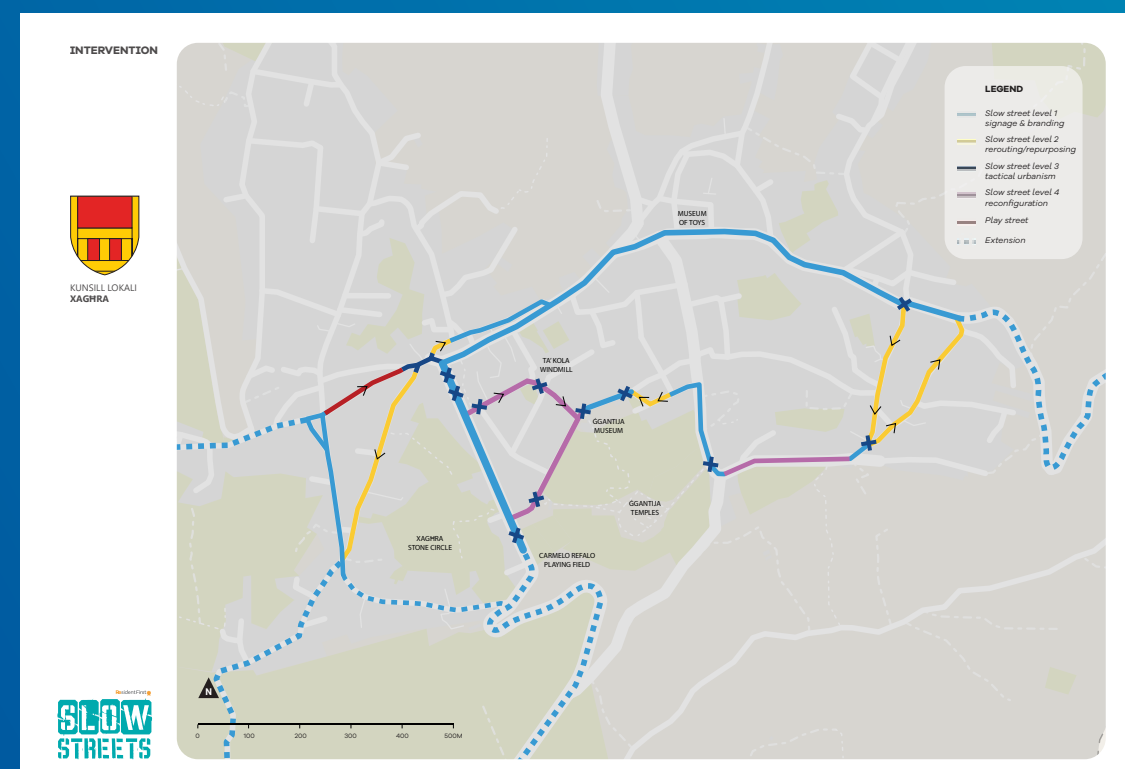


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Xagħra Interventions

The Slow Streets route encompasses various interventions that were decided upon based on the individual nature of the streets and the need to resolve particular traffic issues within the locality. One of the main challenges in Xagħra is to decongest both the narrower local streets stemming out of the central square from extraneous, through traffic and also the square itself from being used as a transitional route; and instead divert drivers onto more prominent routes, particularly the arterial/distributor road network and the peripheral roads of the locality. The second challenge 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.



Intervention 1

Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru (southern section) and Triq Il-Parsott: Level 1 and Level 3
Triq L-Imqades: Level 1, Level 3 and Level 4



The southern area of Xagħra is characterized by the Ġgantija Temples and may be accessed through the arterial road Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru. A large public garden containing children's equipment also lies adjacent to the megalithic remains. This part of the locality would therefore greatly benefit from slower vehicular traffic and safer pedestrian amenities.

Even though Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru is an arterial road, it is being suggested to have tactical urbanism, in the form of a new pedestrian crossing, in order to allow for safer crossing from one side of the road to the other, specifically at the point of access to the public garden and playground. Further floor marking is also being suggested to be introduced before and after the suggested pedestrian crossing in order to alert drivers to slow down when approaching it. This would be supplemented by new signage indicating the new crossing point.

In addition, tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor marking is being proposed at the entrances of the Ġgantija Temples and Museum – specifically, two entrances along Triq L-Imqades, and another entrance along Triq il-Parsott. This intervention would make all entrances to the temples more prominent and visible, both for pedestrians to use and for drivers to slow down. Adequate signage for slow speeds is also being proposed along all three roads, together with signage for pedestrian priority at each of the entry points to the temple and near the public garden and signage for road sharing between drivers and cyclists along Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru and Triq il-Parsott.

LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

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

Traffic Management

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

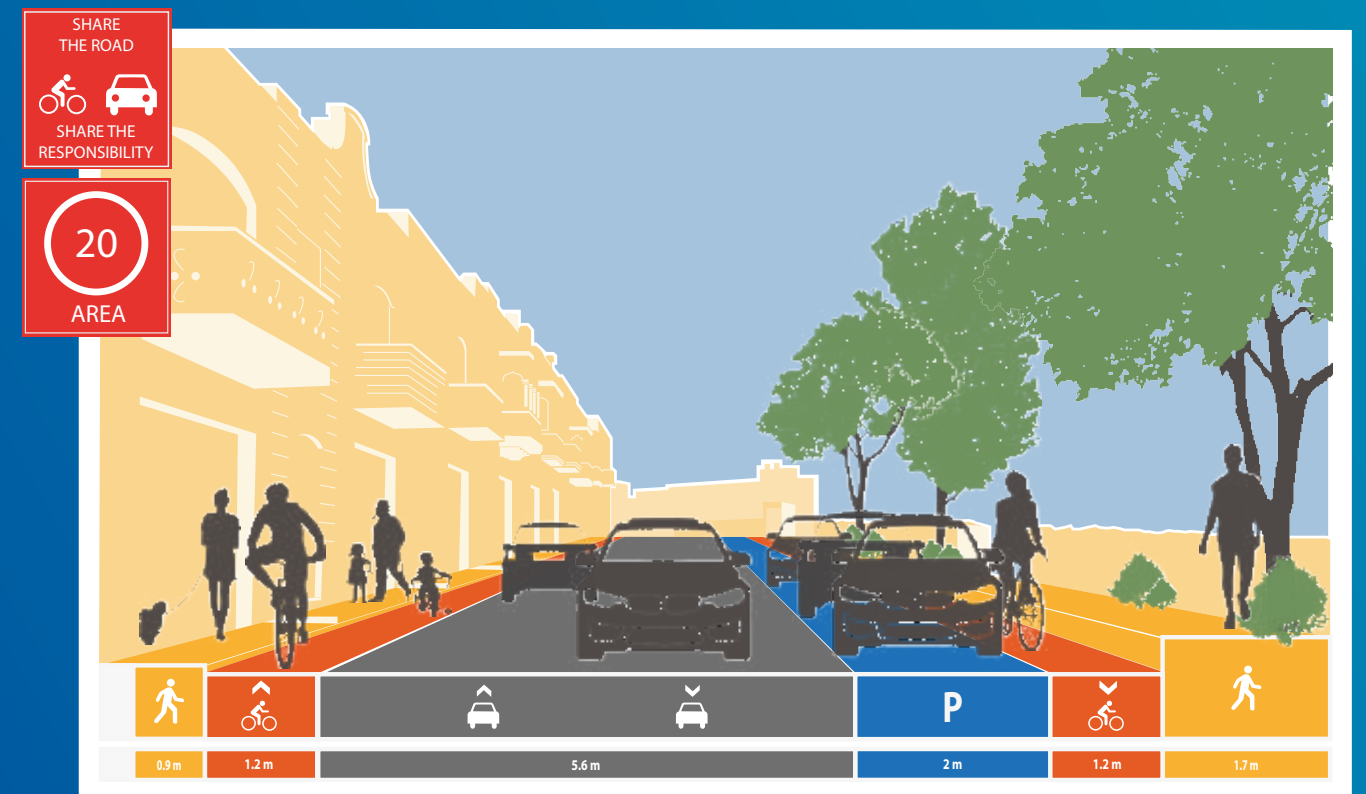
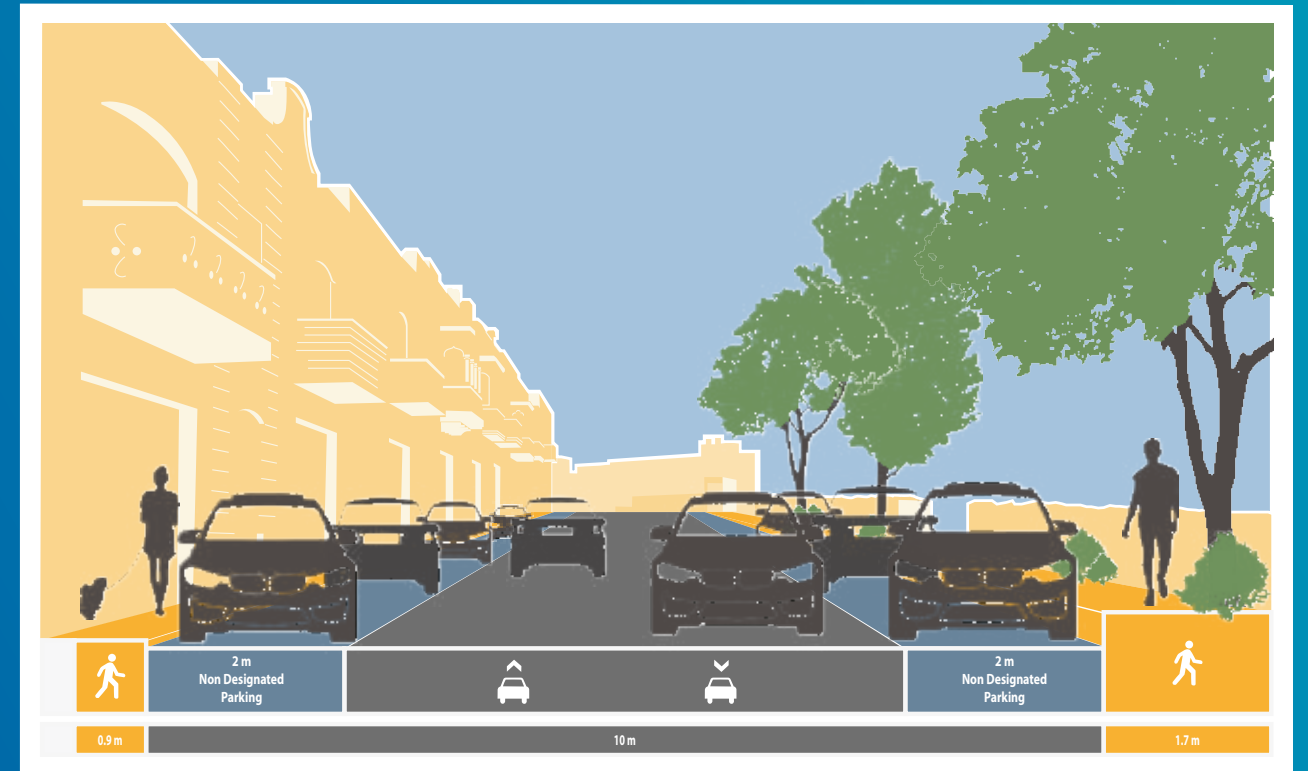
Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru, Triq L-Imqades and Triq Il-Parsott, Xagħra





Triq l-Imqades, which contains two of the entrances to the temples, is currently a wide road catering for two-way traffic, and whilst tactical urbanism would improve pedestrian safety across this road, further reconfiguration is being proposed to improve the road for all modes of transport.

The current 10m-wide road is proposed to reduce to 5.6m catering for two-way traffic including larger vehicles such as tourist buses and coaches, and subsequently introducing designated parking bays on one side of the road, and a cycle lane on either side of the road to promote different and more sustainable modes of transportation. The cycle lanes would buffer the existing pavements from the moving vehicles, making the pedestrian space safer to use.



Intervention 2

Triq L-Isqof Rużar Farrugia: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3

Triq John Otto Bayer: Level 1 and Level 3

Triq John Otto Bayer is a continuation of Triq l-Imqades, leading towards a small open public space with some seating within. Therefore, tactical urbanism in the form of a new pedestrian crossing is being proposed in Triq John Otto Bayer including floor marking before and after the crossing, in order to improve walkability for pedestrians accessing the public open space and alert drivers to slow down when approaching it. In this regard, tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor marking is also being introduced along the entrance to this public open space in Triq l-Isqof Rużar Farrugia, to make this entrance more prominent for pedestrians to use.

Furthermore, the residential road Triq l-Isqof Rużar Farrugia, situated within this residential area and adjacent to the public open space, is being proposed to be partially rerouted into a one-way road from its current two-way configuration. This road would be rerouted from the intersection with Triq ta’ Stellini to the intersection with Triq John Otto Bayer, directing traffic to the latter, in the western and northern directions. This intervention would drastically reduce vehicular flows within this local road, and in turn, improve walkability across this residential area.

Adequate signage is also being proposed for Triq John Otto Bayer and Triq l-Isqof Rużar Farrugia for slow speeds and sharing of the roads between drivers and cyclists. Signage for a new pedestrian crossing point is also being proposed in Triq John Otto Bayer.



Intervention 3

Triq Marija Bambina and Triq il-Mithna: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4

Ta’ Kola Windmill square: Level 1, Level 3 and Level 4

One of Xagħra’s attractions is Ta’ Kola Windmill, situated north to Triq l-Imqades and Triq Otto Bayer and in front of an unarticulated open space (Ta’ Kola Windmill square) adjacent to the public garden of Christ the Redeemer. Whilst this residential area carries very local and low traffic, it would benefit from better articulation of space and more pedestrian-oriented roads.

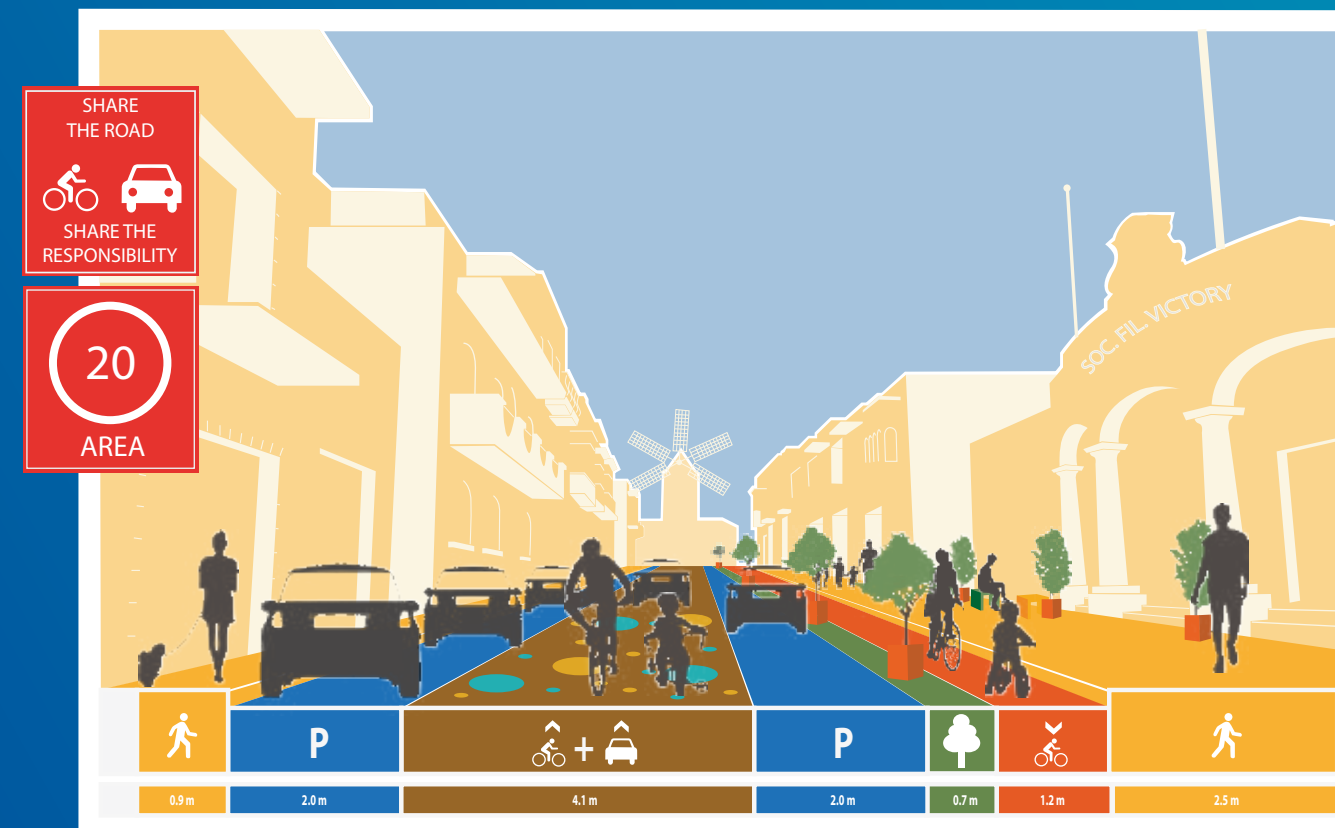


Triq Marija Bambina, stemming out of Ta’ Kola Windmill square, houses the Xagħra Band Club (Soċjeta’ Filarmonika Victory A.D. 1898), and thus, tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor marking is being proposed at the entrance of the band club in order to alert drivers to slow down when approaching it. In addition, Triq Marija Bambina and Triq il-Mithna are proposed to be rerouted into one-way roads, directing traffic eastwards towards Ta’ Kola Windmill square and southwards towards Triq l-Imqades/Triq John Otto Bayer respectively. Adequate signage is also being proposed for slow speeds on both roads, and road sharing between drivers and cyclists in Triq Marija Bambina.





Triq Marija Bambina is further proposed to be reconfigured by reducing the existing road width to a 4.1m-wide vehicular lane (so as to still permit 2-way car traffic in the event of an emergency or due to any surrounding road closure) catering for one-way traffic shared with cyclists, designated parking bays on either side of the vehicular lane, a designated cycle lane on the right side of the road along the existing pavement to cater for cycling in the opposite direction and planters acting as a buffer between the cycle lane and the designated parking.

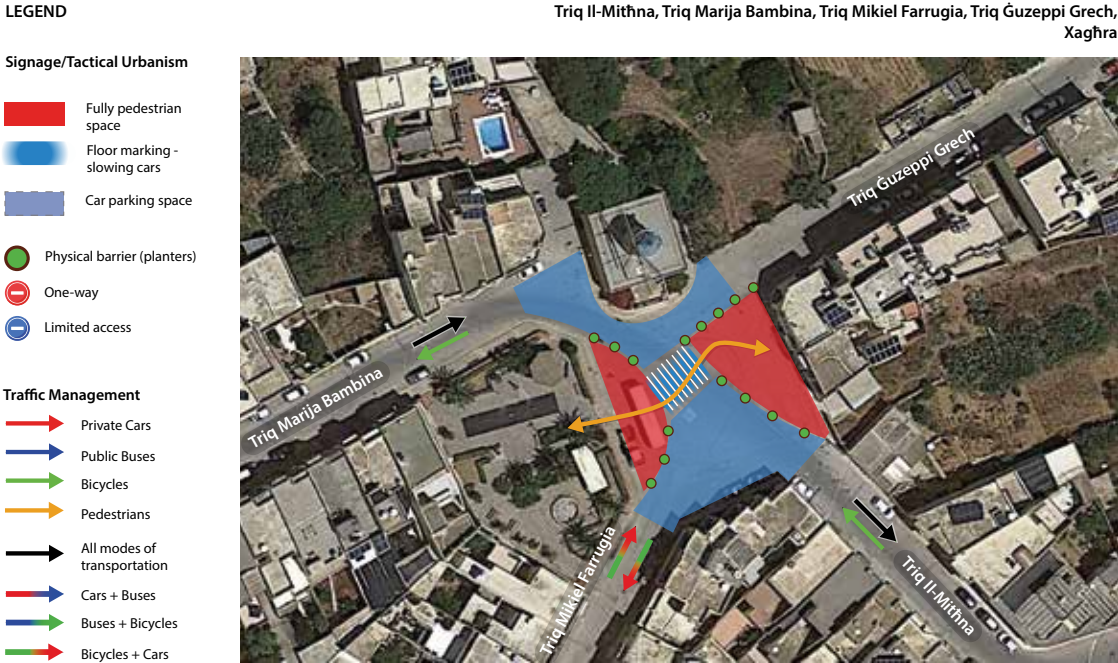


Ta' Kola Windmill square, the intersection of Triq Marija Bambina with Triq il-Mithna, is also proposed to be reconfigured in a way to better articulate this area and provide better walkability and pedestrian safety using tactical urbanism. Colourful floor marking is being proposed across the entire square to alert drivers to slow down when approaching it.

In addition, further colourful floor markings are being proposed on the left and right sides of this square, specifically in front of the entrance to the garden of Christ Redeemer and along the pavement between Triq Ġużeppi Grech and Triq il-Mithna so as to designate additional pedestrian space across both sides of the square and, in turn, better articulate vehicular traffic in between.

Movable barriers, such as planters, are also being proposed at the edges of these new additional pedestrian spaces, consolidating their edges and improving safety for those walking within them.

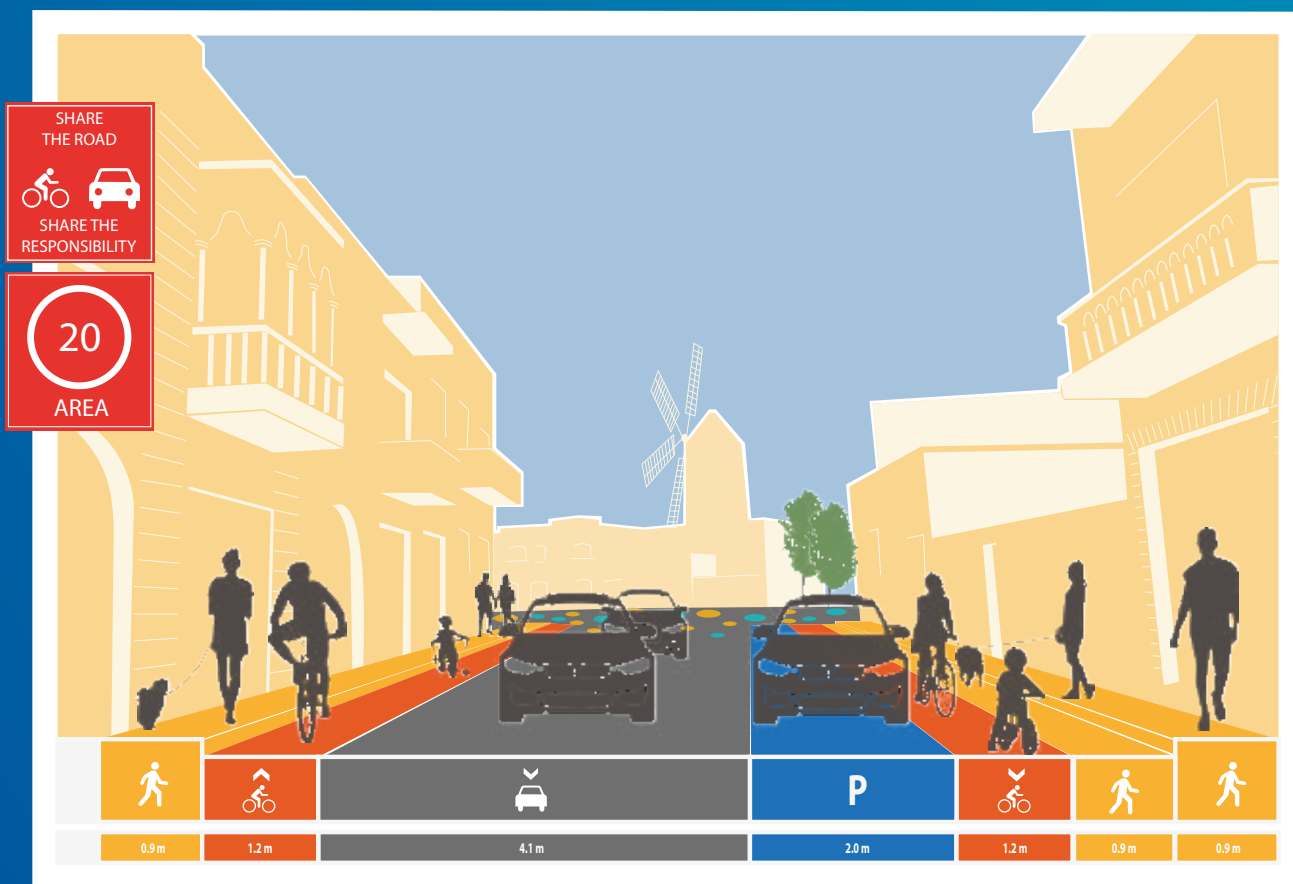
In addition, tactical urbanism in the form of a new pedestrian crossing is being proposed at the centre of this square, to provide a safe crossing to and from the additional pedestrian areas on either side. Adequate signage is also being proposed designating the new pedestrian crossing point, so as to alert drivers to slow down, as well as for pedestrian and cyclist priority.



In a similar manner to Triq Marija Bambina, Triq il-Mithna is also being proposed to be reconfigured by reducing the existing road width to 4.1m, catering for one-way vehicular traffic, together with designated parking bays along the right side of the vehicular lane, and a cycle lane along either side of the road, catering for cycling in both directions. Additional pedestrian space is also being proposed along the right hand side of the road, in between the cycle lane and the existing pavement, in order to improve walkability across this road.

With such configuration, those cycling through Triq l-Imqades would be able to continue cycling along Triq il-Mithna towards Ta' Kola Windmill square and further along Triq Marija Bambina in both directions, in an easy and safe manner, thus promoting different modes of transportation within the locality.





Intervention 4

Pjazza il-Vittorja and Triq l-Arcisqof Ġużepp Diacono: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3
Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru (northern section), Triq il-Knisja and Triq it-Tmienja w Għoxrin ta' April 1688: Level 1 and Level 3

The central square of Xaghra, Pjazza il-Vittorja, is one of the most visited areas of the locality due to the presence of food and beverage establishments and retail outlets. The square would therefore benefit from having less vehicular flows and being more pedestrian-oriented. While acknowledging that the square will comprise part of a future master plan for the entire locality of Xaghra, that has been embarked upon by the Local Council in an effort to improve its pedestrian nature, the following proposals could nonetheless be implemented either within an initial interim period or in addition to the eventual master plan's implementation. It would be beneficial to try and integrate the best options for the square (and indeed the entire locality) emanating from both the Slow Streets project and Xaghra's master plan.

Although Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru is designated as an arterial two-way road (being an important vehicular spine leading to Pjazza il-Vittorja), tactical urbanism is nonetheless being suggested in the form of colourful floor paint before and after the existing pedestrian crossing in order to make it more visible. This intervention would alert drivers to slow down when approaching the crossing located in this highly vehicular-oriented road, and in turn make the crossing more prominent for pedestrians to use.

LEGEND

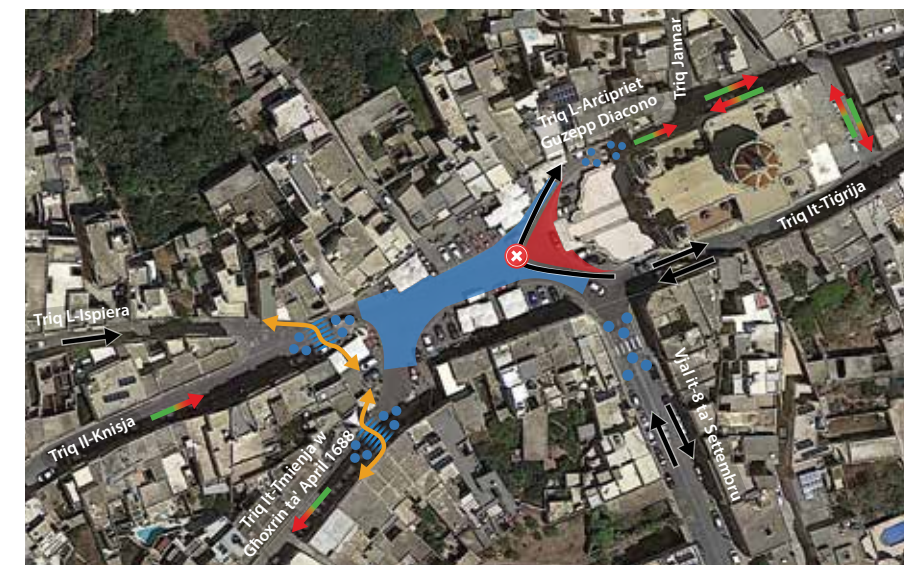
Signage/Tactical Urbanism

- Fully pedestrian space
- Floor marking - slowing cars
- Car parking space
- Physical barrier (planters)
- ⊗ No turn
- ⊗ Limited access

Traffic Management

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

Pjazza il-Vittorja,
Xaghra



In a similar manner, tactical urbanism in the form of floor marking is being proposed before and after the existing pedestrian crossing in Triq l-Arċipriet Ġużepp Diacono to also make this crossing more prominent for pedestrians to use.



Whilst reinforcing the existing pedestrian crossings would improve safety for those accessing the square from the eastern area of the locality, tactical urbanism via new pedestrian crossings are being proposed in Triq il-Knisja and Triq it-Tmienja w Ġhoxrin ta' April 1688, in order to improve safety for those accessing the square from the western area of the locality. In addition, adequate signage for new pedestrian crossing points is being proposed in these two streets.

Tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor marking is proposed across the entire asphalted square in order to alert drivers to slow down, emphasising the square as being a pedestrian priority area. In addition, colourful floor marking is being proposed outside of the Parish Church parvis, so as to increase the additional pedestrian-only space and prohibit vehicles from turning around the parvis. In this regard, vehicles entering Pjazza Vittorja from either Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru or Triq it-Tigrija, would not be able to turn right onto Triq l-Arċipriet Ġużepp Diacono. Instead, vehicles would continue straight westwards across Pjazza il-Vittorja.



In addition, the eastern section of Triq l-Arċipriet Ġużepp Diacono, from Pjazza il-Vittorja to the intersection with Triq Jannar, is being proposed to be rerouted into a one-way road in the eastern direction, exiting this square. As this part of the road is very narrow, it would benefit from catering for one-way traffic, whilst this intervention would also contribute to the reduction of vehicles entering the square. Signage for slow speeds and road sharing between drivers and cyclists is being proposed for all streets, including the entire stretch of Triq l-Arċipriet Ġużepp Diacono together with one-way signage for the eastern section of the latter street and adequate signage designating Pjazza Vittorja as a pedestrian-priority zone at its entrance.

Intervention 5

Triq Il-Knisja: Playstreet

Triq il-Knisja stems out of Pjazza Vittorja, is overlooked by residential units which provide natural surveillance on the street and carries mostly local traffic. In a similar manner to how Pjazza Vittorja is closed for traffic during designated times of the week so as to become a pedestrian-only square, Triq il-Knisja is being proposed to be used as a play street during designated times and/or days. 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 main square and surrounding areas.





Programming

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

Barrier elements

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

Landscaping elements

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



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

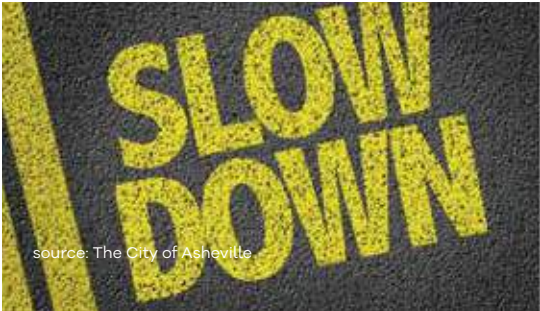


Intervention 6

Triq Il-Knisja and Triq It-Tmienja w Għoxrin ta' April 1688: Level 1 and Level 2
Triq San Ġuzepp: Level 1

Triq il-Knisja and Triq it-Tmienja w Għoxrin ta' April 1688 are two very narrow roads currently catering for two-way traffic into and out of the central square. In a further effort to decrease traffic flows across the central square, and also make these two roads more walkable and safer for pedestrians to use, they are being proposed to be rerouted into one-way roads. Triq il-Knisja is proposed to cater for traffic in the eastern direction towards the square, and Triq it-Tmienja w Għoxrin ta' April 1688 would cater for traffic in the southern direction, exiting the square. This intervention would create a vehicular loop from Triq it-Tmienja w Għoxrin ta' April 1688 to Triq San Ġuzepp to Triq il-Knisja.

In addition, adequate signage is being proposed for both Triq il-Knisja and Triq it-Tmienja w Għoxrin ta' April 1688 to designate them as one-way roads, together with signage for all three roads (including Triq San Ġuzepp) designating slow speeds and sharing of these roads between drivers and cyclists.



Triq Il-Knisja, Triq It-Tmienja w Għoxrin ta' April 1688 and Triq San Ġuzepp, Xaghra

LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

Fully pedestrian space

Floor marking - slowing cars

Car parking space

Physical barrier (planters)

No turn

Limited access

Traffic Management

Private Cars

Public Buses

Bicycles

Pedestrians

All modes of transportation

Cars + Buses

Buses + Bicycles

Bicycles + Cars



Intervention 7

Triq L-Ghejun (western section): Level 1, Level 3 and Level 4

The easternmost residential area of the locality is accessed through Triq L-Ghejun, a straight and wide road, mostly surrounded by agricultural land with a few residential units, and wherein drivers tend to speed significantly when navigating through it. This road also has minimal pedestrian amenities, and thus, tactical urbanism in the form of floor paint is being proposed along the unbuilt side of the road so as to designate new pedestrian space, specifically along the western section of the road from the intersection with Triq il-Parsott to the intersection with Triq Ta' Mannar.

LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

Fully pedestrian space

Floor marking - slowing cars

Car parking space

Physical barrier (planters)

One-way

Limited access

Traffic Management

Private Cars

Pedestrians

All modes of transportation

Bicycles + Cars

Triq L-Ghejun, Xaghra

An aerial photograph of a road section in Xaghra. Colored lines and arrows indicate proposed tactical urbanism interventions: red for fully pedestrian space, blue for floor marking to slow cars, and green for car parking space. The road is labeled Triq L-Ghejun. The source is cited as "The City of Asheville".

Designated parking bays are being proposed to be introduced on either side of the road, however, these would be implemented in an alternating manner. This intervention would automatically result in drivers having to slow down so as to manoeuvre between the parking spaces. This would in turn increase safety and enhance walkability along

this stretch. Planters may further be introduced before and after each group of parking spaces, providing a barrier between the parked and moving vehicles. Adequate signage for slow speeds is also being proposed, including signage to share the road between drivers and cyclists.



Intervention 8

Triq Ta' Mannar and Triq Ta' Gorf: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 Triq Ġnien Xibla: Level 1 and Level 3

These two residential roads stem out of Triq l-Ghejun, and whilst Triq Ta' Mannar is already a one-way road catering for traffic in the northern direction, Triq Ta' Gorf is a two-way road despite its narrow road width. In order to decrease vehicular flows across Triq Ta' Gorf, it is being proposed to be rerouted into a one-way road from its current two-way configuration, catering for traffic in the northern direction. This intervention would be in line with the existing bus route, given that buses use this road in the north direction.

In this regard, and in order to work better with the new configuration of Triq Ta' Gorf, Triq Ta' Mannar is being proposed to be rerouted by changing its direction to cater for traffic in the southern direction. This intervention would form a vehicular loop from Triq Ta' Gorf to Triq Ġnien Xibla and further to Triq Ta' Mannar. Adequate signage designating these roads as one-way roads is being proposed, including signage for slow speeds and sharing of the roads between drivers and cyclists.



In addition, tactical urbanism in the form of floor paint is being proposed at the intersection of Triq Ta' Mannar with Triq Ta' Gorf in order to better articulate this space.



LEGEND

Signage/Tactical Urbanism

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

Traffic Management

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

Triq Ta' Mannar, Triq Ta' Gorf and Triq Ġnien Xibla, Xagħra



Further tactical urbanism in the form of colourful floor marking is also being proposed at the northern end of Triq Ta' Mannar, specifically at the intersection with Triq Ġnien Xibla in order to better articulate the open space (Tan-Nazzarenu Square). This floor marking is also being proposed to continue along Triq Ġnien Xibla, specifically in front of the existing church therein (Knisja Ġesu' Nazzarenu). This road, together with Tan-Nazzarenu Square, is also being proposed to have adequate signage for slow speeds and road sharing between drivers and cyclists.



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.



Xagħra

The simplest interventions to implement first would be the play streets, 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 the main central square, Pjazza il-Vittorja, 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. Testing of the key interventions around the square leading to their eventual implementation may also be carried out (specifically the roads of Triq il-Knisja, Triq it-Tmienja w Għoxrin ta' April and Triq l-Arċipriet Ġużepp Diacono), together with the initial testing of the reconfiguration interventions around Ta' Kola Windmill square (specifically Triq Marija Bambina, Triq il-Mithna and Triq l-Imqades).

During the second phase, the other interventions around Pjazza il-Vittorja could be eventually carried out as these would link to the roads tested in Phase 1. Simultaneously, Phase 1 testing on Sundays may extend over the entire weekend.

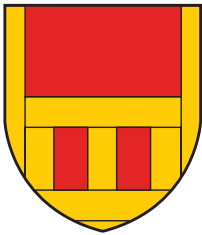
In addition, the eastern residential roads (specifically Triq l-Għejun, Triq Ta' Gorf and Triq Ta' Mannar) and the interventions around the public open space (Triq l-Isqof Rużar Farrugia) may be tested for rerouting and, if this proves successful, eventually implemented fully.

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



PHASING

STARTING &
TESTING THE
NETWORK

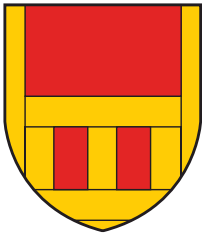


KUNSILL LOKALI
XAGHRA



PHASING

STRENGTHENING
THE NETWORK

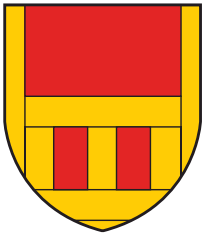


KUNSILL LOKALI
XAGHRA

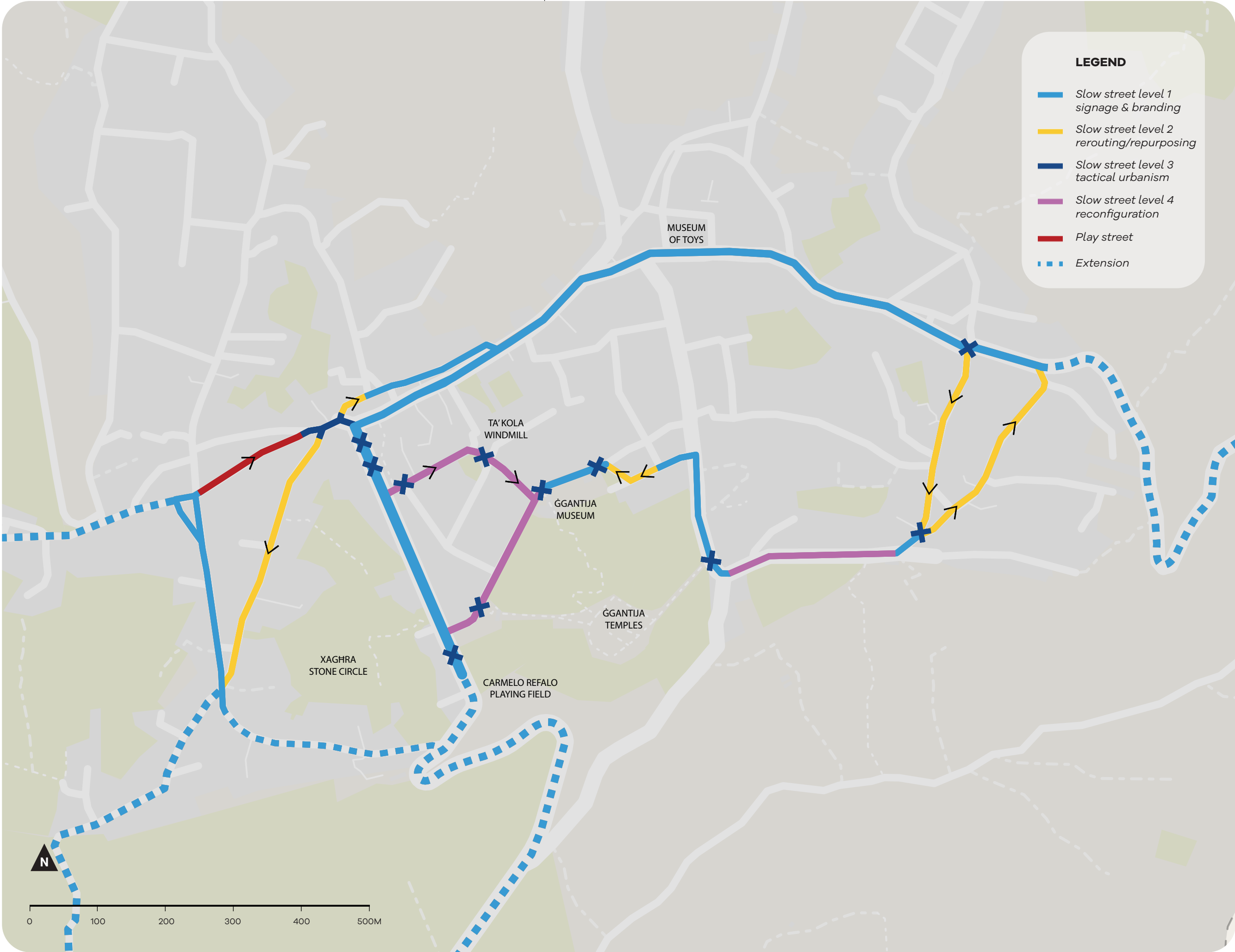



PHASING

COMPLETING
THE NETWORK



KUNSILL LOKALI
XAGHRA





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

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

The Way Forward

In order for Slow Streets to be successfully executed, a high degree of collaboration and communication is required between various stakeholders.

Whether at the testing or strengthening phase, projects require collaborations between Local Councils (as well as the Local Councils' Association and the Regional Committees) and local residents, with the involvement of other entities – NGOs and community groups such as Rota 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.

Xagħra is one of the oldest towns located in the eastern part of Gozo and surrounded by other localities, such as Marsalforn, Victoria, Xewkija and Nadur. It houses the megalithic remains of Il-Ġgantija Temples, the Xagħra stone circle Ninu's Cave, Xerri's Grotto and Calypso Cave – all being attractions which attract a number of visitors and tourists to the locality annually. Xagħra is one of the largest localities in Gozo and also has one of the busiest and liveliest central squares in Gozo, Victory Square, catering for a significant number of retail, food and beverage establishments, the Victory Band Club and the Parish church of the locality, the Basilica of the Nativity of Our Lady (Marija Bambina). The residential roads which directly stem out of Victory Square are narrow and have a very local character, whilst other roads in the surrounding areas are wider and may better cater for vehicular traffic. The envisaged Slow Streets network aim builds on the Local Council's current efforts to make the central square more pedestrian-oriented through its closure for traffic on designated days/times.

The main aim of Slow Streets strategy is to liberate local streets from extraneous traffic that could instead be safely used by residents, by using different schemes of traffic management, including both rerouting opportunities and tactical urbanism interventions. Key routes have also been identified for potential reconfiguration since they may 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:

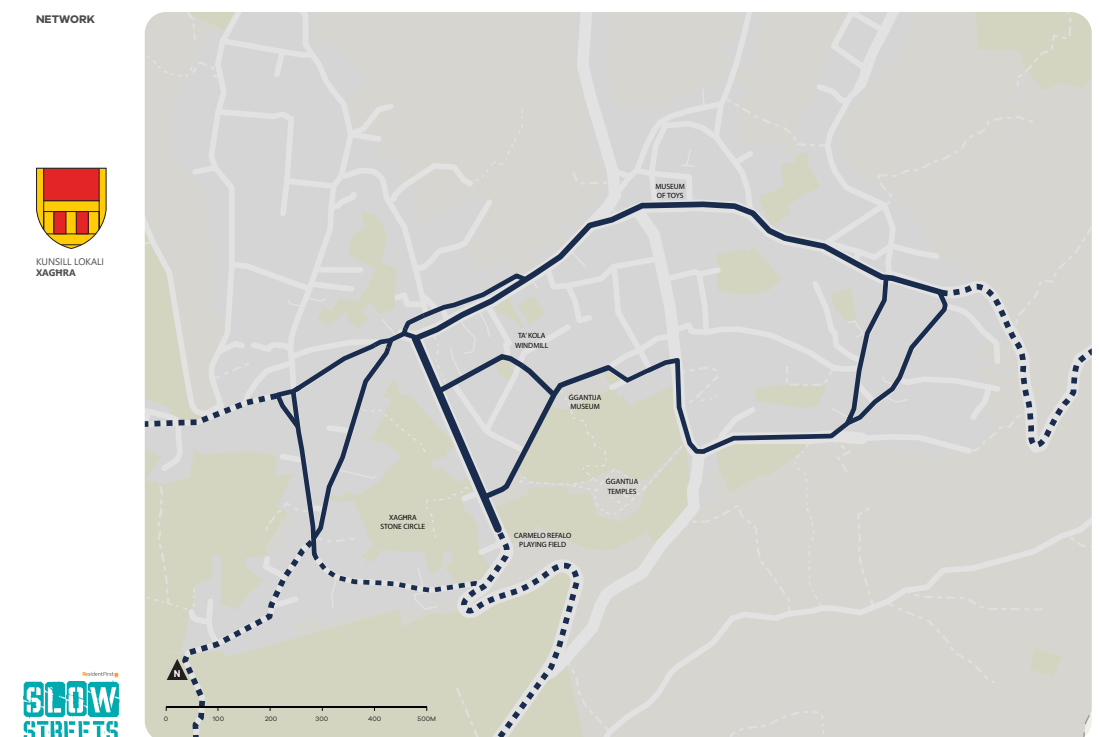
- Level 1 interventions: Introduction of signage which alerts drivers to slower speeds and increased pedestrian and cyclist presence and activity
- Level 2 interventions: Rerouting of traffic, which shifts priority of the spaces to pedestrian and cyclist use
- Level 3 interventions: Tactical urbanism 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

Summary

- 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 - Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru (southern section) (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Signage: pedestrian crossing point
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of a new pedestrian crossing, colourful marking before and after the crossing

Intervention 1 - Triq il-Parsott (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of colourful floor paint (Ġgantija temples entrance)

Intervention 1 - Triq l-Imqades (signage & branding, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of colourful floor paint (Ġgantija temples entrances)
- Reconfiguration: reduce street width to 5.6m, designate parking spaces on right hand side of the traffic lane, and introduce two designated cycling lanes on either sides of the road to buffer pedestrians from vehicular flow
- Tactical urbanism: floor paint to designate cycle lanes

Intervention 2 - Triq L-Isqof Rużar Farrugia (signage & branding, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of colourful floor paint (entrance to public open space)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way part-road into one-way part-road, direction west and north (towards Triq John Otto Bayer)

Intervention 2 - Triq John Otto Bayer (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Signage: pedestrian crossing point
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of a new pedestrian crossing

Intervention 3 - Triq Marija Bambina (signage & branding, rerouting, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the vehicular lane (vehicles and bicycles)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of colourful floor paint (Band Club entrance)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road into one-way road, direction east (towards Ta' Kola Windmill square)
- Reconfiguration: reduce street width to 4.1m, designate parking spaces on either sides of the traffic lane, introduce a designated cycling lane on the right side of the road and planters buffering the cycle lane from the designated parking
- Tactical urbanism: floor paint to designate cycle lane and planters

Intervention 3 - Triq il-Mithna (signage & branding, rerouting, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road into one-way road, direction south (towards Triq l-Imqades/ Triq John Otto Bayer)
- Reconfiguration: reduce street width to 4.1m, designate parking spaces along the right side of the traffic lane, introduce two designated cycling lanes on either sides of the road, and additional pedestrian space along the right hand side of the road, wedged between the cycle lane and the existing pavement
- Tactical urbanism: floor paint to designate cycle lanes and additional pedestrian space

Intervention 3 - Ta' Kola Windmill square (signage & branding, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: pedestrian and cyclist priority
- Signage: pedestrian crossing point
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of a new pedestrian crossing
- Reconfiguration: introduce two new pedestrian spaces along both sides of the square, planters acting as buffers along their edges
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of colourful floor paint (across entire square) and planters

Intervention 4 - Pjazza il-Vittorja (signage & branding, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: pedestrian priority
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Signage: no right turn
- Rerouting: vehicles entering the square from Triq it-Tigrija/Triq it-8 ta' Settembru cannot turn right to Triq l-Arcisqof Ġużepp Diacono
- Tactical Urbanism: colourful floor paint to alert drivers to slow down (across square), floor marking emphasising additional pedestrian space (in front of parvis)

Intervention 4 - Triq l-Arcisqof Ġużepp Diacono (signage & branding, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way part-road into one-way part-road, direction east
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings emphasising existing pedestrian crossing

Intervention 4 - Vjal it-8 ta' Settembru (northern section) (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings emphasising existing pedestrian crossing

Intervention 4 - Triq il-Knisja and Triq it-Tmienja w Ġhoxrin ta' April 1688 (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of new pedestrian crossings

Intervention 5 - Triq il-Knisja (play street)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: road closure on designated Play Street days
- Play Street: programming of activities

Intervention 6 - Triq Il-Knisja and Triq It-Tmienja w Ġhoxrin ta' April 1688 (signage & branding and rerouting)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road into one-way road, direction east (Triq il-Knisja) and south (Triq It-Tmienja w Ġhoxrin ta' April 1688)

Intervention 6 - Triq San Ġużepp (signage & branding)

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

Intervention 7 - Triq L-Għejun (signage & branding, tactical urbanism and reconfiguration)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 30km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Reconfiguration: designate alternating parking spaces on either side of the traffic lanes, planters at the end of each parking section, and introduce additional pedestrian space on the right hand side
- Tactical Urbanism: floor marking designated additional pedestrian space, and planters

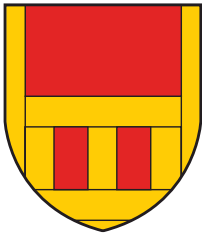
Intervention 8 - Triq Ta’ Mannar and Triq Ta’ Golf (signage & branding, rerouting and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Signage: one-way road
- Rerouting: two-way road into one-way road, direction north (Triq Ta’ Gorf)
- Rerouting: change direction of one-way road, direction south (Triq Ta’ Mannar)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of colourful floor paint (intersection)

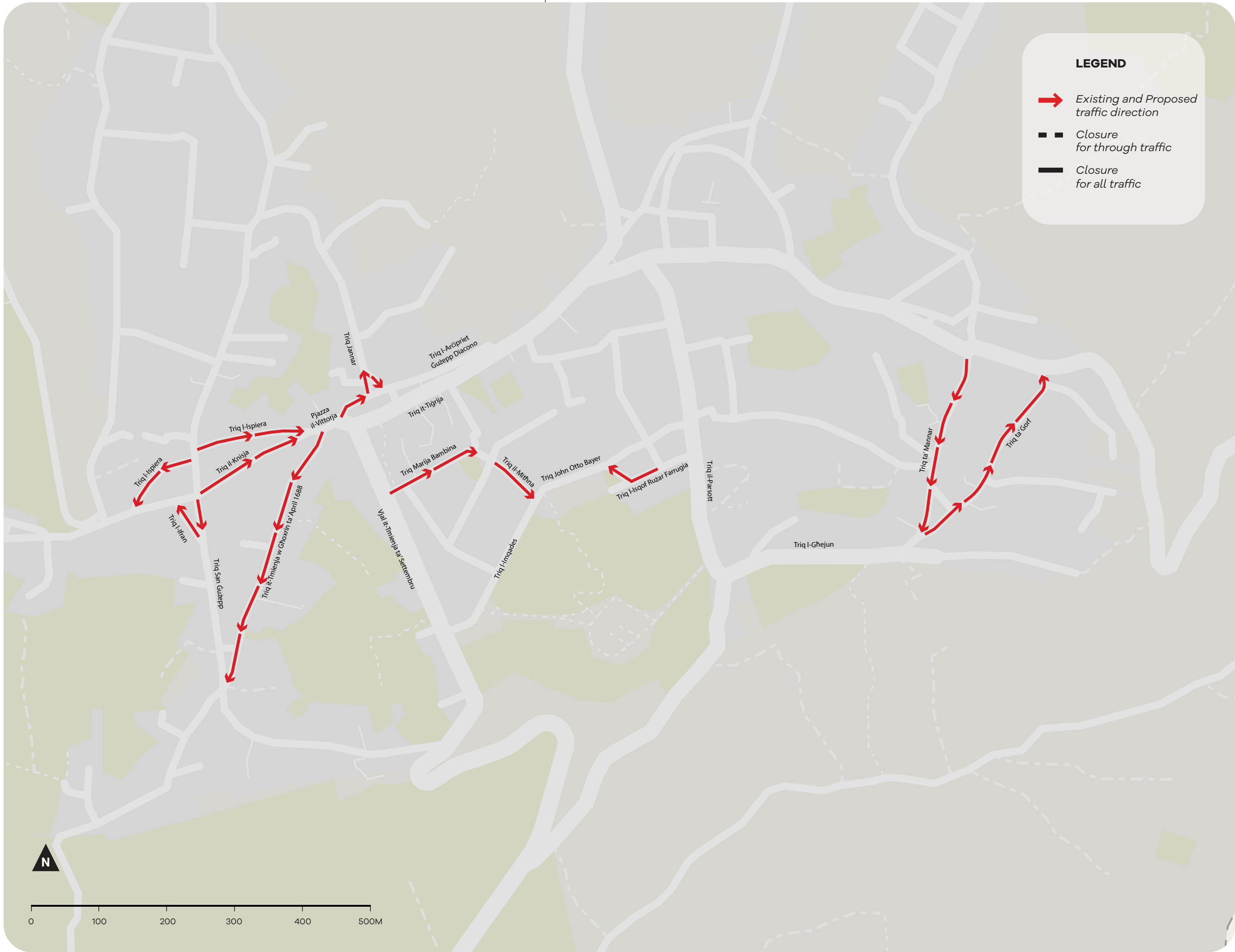
Intervention 8 - Triq Ġnien Xibla (signage & branding and tactical urbanism)

- Signage: Slow Streets Branding
- Signage: 20km/hr speed limit
- Signage: share the road (vehicles and bicycles)
- Tactical Urbanism: floor markings in the form of colourful floor paint (in front of church)

TRAFFIC



KUNSILL LOKALI
XAGHRA



ResidentFirst



MINISTRY FOR TRANSPORT,
INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL PROJECTS



MINISTRY FOR THE NATIONAL HERITAGE,
THE ARTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Transport Malta



**Assoċjazzjoni
Kunsilli Lokali**

Local Councils' Association Malta