



Thriving STREETS



Designing mobility for attractive cities

Mobility is at the crossroads of various urban policy: Thriving Streets is connecting mobility with economic prosperity, accessibility, inclusion, participation and health to encourage a change towards more resilient and attractive cities. As an URBACT Action Planning Network, this project aims to improve sustainable local policies through integrated action planning and an organised process of exchange and learning among cities across Europe. It is a network of ten cities working together to improve sustainable mobility in urban areas from an economic and social perspective.



NOVA GORICA MAKING SOLKAN LIVELY AGAIN

City context

- Population: 19.000
- Nova Gorica is a Slovenian city on the Slovenian-Italian border. The common trans-border Metropolitan zone covers 73.750 inhabitants, the wider cross-border region is home to 80.000 people on the Slovenian side and 80.000 on the Italian side
- Excellent location in the Alps in a river valley, close to the sea
- While the original city is more than 1.000 years old, Nova Gorica has only one old street, the rest of the city was built as a new, modern city after the 2nd World War when the original city was cut by the new state border between Italy and Slovenia.
- This is reflected in its architecture – as well as in its mobility infrastructure, characterized by expansive, wide roads.



Challenge

The Integrated Action Plan focuses on the Solkan district. Solkan used to be a neighbouring settlement with its own distinct identity – now it is the oldest part of the urban area. The specific challenges include:

- Unattractive and visually unpleasant historical core with limited public services
- Unsafe and unpleasant public space shaped by the needs of cars, not humans (massive transit traffic, poorly arranged pedestrian areas, no safe zones for cyclists, free parking – incorrectly parked cars occupy most of the public space).
- Most buildings are degraded, not renovated (lots of vacant premises, tax regulations discourage their rent or sale, no economic incentives to encourage revitalization)



Ambition

We wish Solkan to be a lively old town again, with people, bars and shops, which will also be attractive for tourists and can be safely crossed by an 8-year-old child.

Small scale actions

The small-scale action of Nova Gorica focused on a square in Solkan. It involved some temporary changes of the existing traffic rules and rearranging existing parking places to create 500 m² quality public space, free of cars. In addition, a small green kiosk (nick-named Mobilet) was also placed on the square to create a centre for a safe community space that respects the cultural heritage and can host public events for people, to bring more life to the square. The changes triggered an honest conversation with residents about the future of the square.





Action plan

The action plan envisages various interventions to make public space more attractive, especially in the Solkan old town.

Our objectives:

- 1. Centre safely accessible for pedestrians and cyclists**
Developing safe, protected bicycle connections, expanding pedestrian zones free of motorized traffic, reducing the proportion of free parking places, improving public transport connections.
- 2. Connected community**
Attractive and safe public spaces for socializing, quality urban furniture and frequent public events in public spaces.
- 3. Vibrant commercial and service centre**
Encouraging economic activities and the commercial use of currently vacant shops.
- 4. Local heritage as cultural and touristic attraction**
Quality renovation of heritage buildings, developing an offer of frequent quality cultural events.

Lessons learnt

- Every square cm of quality public space for people counts and makes a big difference!
- Tests and temporary arrangements are not waste of time and money - they provide valuable insights into the dynamics of a place and a solid basis for designing interventions. They can also help people to gradually get used to the change, giving them time to prepare.
- Be open and listen to the opposers of change, respond politely even to disruptive criticism; identify the supporters of the change (you may be surprised how many of them are there) and work hand-in-hand with them.
- Short term desires of individuals and citizen groups do not equal the long-term interests of residents; decision-makers must be ready (and brave) to take „unpleasant“ and unpopular political decisions from time-to-time, if necessary.

The City of **Nova Gorica**
is a partner of the
Thriving Streets network

