

Toward live and attractive Solkan's historical core



Integrated Action Plan Nova Gorica



*Photo on the front page: Solkan's historical centre during URBACT Thriving Streets project Small Scale Action intervention in summer 2021.
Photo: Mateja Pelikan*

The municipality of Nova Gorica thanks everyone,
who by participating contributed to the implementation of the project activities
and contributed the content for the IAP

IAP prepared by **Mestna občina Nova Gorica**
Aleksandra Torbica
Nataša Kolenc
Andreja Trojar Lapajne

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Solkan's historical centre during URBACT Thriving Streets project Small Scale Action intervention in summer 2021.
Photo: Aleksandra Torbica

1.Context and Process

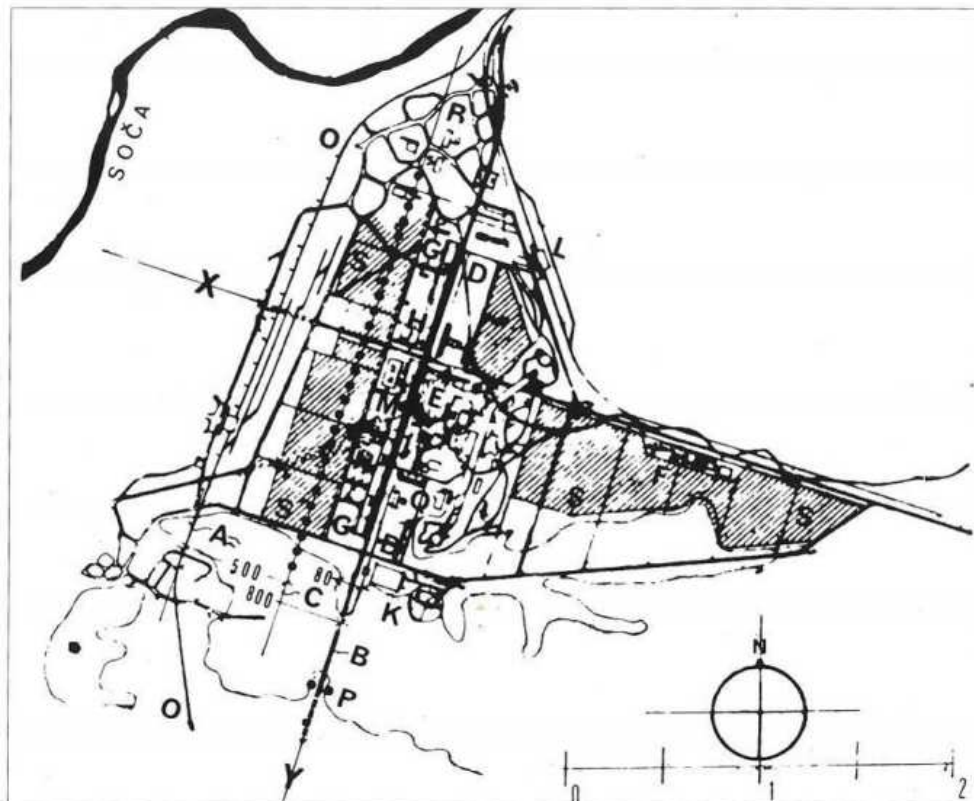
1.1 City Context

Nova Gorica, a town with 19.000 inhabitants, is a centre of the municipality with 31.000 inhabitants, located on the south-west edge of Slovenia, right on the border with Italy.



Nova Gorica in Slovenia (front of the picture) and Gorizia/Gorica in Italy (back of the picture). Photo: Leo Caharija

It is known as one of the youngest cities, created in late 1940-ties, as the answer on new after II. world war geographic and political reality. The new state border set in 1947 between Italy and Slovenia (Yugoslavia at the time) separated part of towns and villages from their century-old administrative and cultural centre by granting old town of Gorizia to Italy. As a consequence a completely new centre was built - beside the old one, but in a different state.



Edvard Ravnikar: Draft spatial plan of Nova Gorica 1946 . Source: PANG



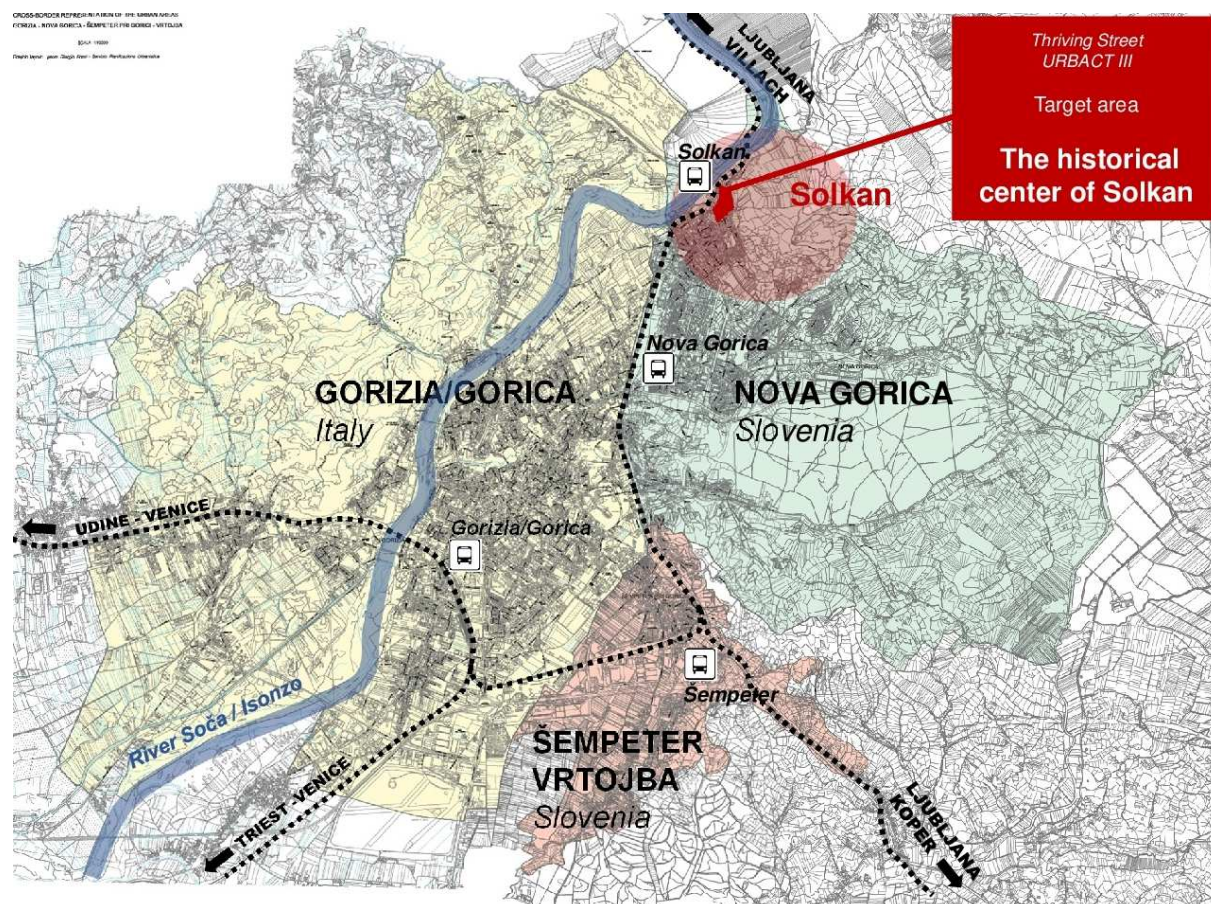
Model of modernist plan of new Nova Gorica city from 1947 located in the centre of the city, with the description "We should build something big, beautiful and proud, something that would shine across the border". The monumental Municipality building from 1952 in the background. Photo Nataša Kolenc.

With Slovenia entering in EU in 2004 and in Schengen area in 2007, connecting divided territories and realities became one of the top priorities for »twin-city« of Nova Gorica (SLO) and Gorizia/Gorica (ITA). Nowadays the cross-border identity and multi-cultural reality of the area is recognised as its strongest development potential. The area of Nova Gorica/Gorizia has the benefit of rich cultural heritage and to be close to natural areas and touristic centres of Adriatic coast and the Alps. It is also close and/or easily accessible from big Central-European cities. It has a mild Mediterranean climate.



Cross-border urban area of Solkan (in front) Nova Gorica, Gorizia/Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba, view from the North. Photo: Klub Zagon.

The Nova Gorica's urban area, together with the city of Gorizia/Gorica (Italy) and the Municipality of Šempeter-Vrtojba (Slovenia), forms a cross-border urban area with 73,750 inhabitants and covers 365 km².



Cross-border urban area of Nova Gorica, Gorizia/Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba. Source: MONG, URBACT Thriving Streets project, 2021.



The representatives of both cities celebrating the nomination of Nova Gorica with Gorizia/Gorica for the European capital of Culture 2025 on the crossborder square.

On 18 December 2020, Nova Gorica and Gorizia/Gorica were designated European Capital of Culture 2025.

The first and foremost objective of the ECOC is to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the city and its wider surroundings. It is a unique opportunity to integrate all the potentials of border towns and areas through cultural engagement into a cultural, tourist, economic, educational and infrastructural unit that will increase economic development and investment, thus attracting both the masses of cultural tourists and providing a better quality of life for current and new residents.

From the very beginning of the preparation of the candidature, the ECOC area has included the Soča Valley, Goriška Brda, the Vipava Valley, the Trnovo-Banjsko Plateau and part of the Karst region, extending to the territory of all the municipalities that are members of the Regional Council, crossing the border with Italy and including Gorizia as a twin town and the territory of the Goriška Region.

The focus of Nova Gorica's ECOC candidature (called GO! BORDERLESS) is on coexistence and cooperation between the two countries, especially in the border area, and the programme focuses and highlights in particular those projects that support this cross-border dimension.

General profile of Nova Gorica

- **Economic profile:** The unemployment rate lies at 9,6% (national average 11.2%). Youth unemployment is an issue, with most unemployed being under 35. The city is working on improving tourism in the area, with casino visitors (a previous main tourist attraction) on the decline. City counts on more intensive cross-border cooperation and on improved cultural offer, as festivals and other events.
- **Geography of the area:** Nova Gorica lies is located at the end of the Soča and Vipava valleys, at the eastern edge of The Friuli Plain in Italy, in forested hilly surroundings.
- **Climate:** Average temperature Jan 4°C / Jul 22°C. Average precipitation 1188mm per year.



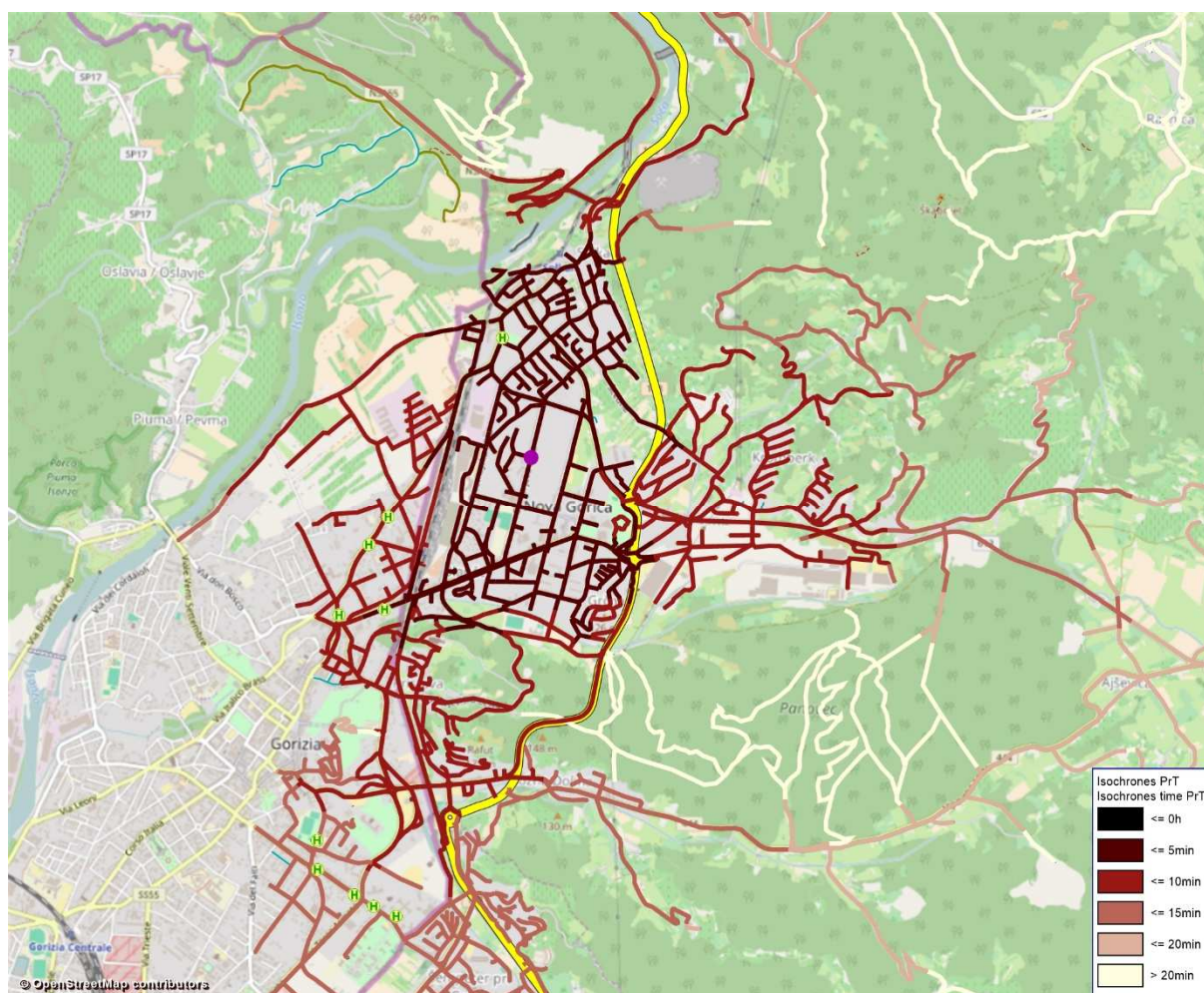
Casino Perla gaming room. Source: Casino Perla



Soča Fun Park zip line in Solkan. Source: The Vipava Valley website

Mobility profile of Nova Gorica

- **Modal share:** 69% car; 18% walking; 8% public transport; 5% bicycle.
- **Public transport:** there is a free city bus service that connects Nova Gorica with Solkan, Šempeter, Vrtojba, Rožna Dolina, Kromberk, Ajševica and Gorizia/Gorica on Italian side of the border. The network consists of four city lines and one international one, which serves to connect Nova Gorica to the railway station in Gorizia/Gorica. The concession carrier is NOMAGO. Some busses are over 20 years old and highly pollutive.
- **Bike ownership:** no data. We can say that each family in Goriška region owns at least 2 bikes. All children learn to drive a bike at school and most have their own bike. Toddlers use the running bike, very popular in Slovenia recently.
- **Bike infrastructure:** Nova Gorica has a relatively solid network of cycling links, but often interrupted and closed. Many details of cycling infrastructure implementation are not at the level of best practices and with the adequate knowledge the safety and convenience. Cycling links can be improved without significant investments. In general, the terrain is flat within the urban area and between bigger settlements. It is mostly hilly. The climate is favourable, and the distances suitable for cycling. Survey results show that the most problematic aspect is network congestion, bicycle parking, lighting and speed of motor vehicles. Also, for visitors the absence of routing marks and tables is problematic. A lot of improvements are being made in the last period as the bike infrastructure has been identified as one of the key elements for the development of the city.



Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan Nova Gorica - accessibility by bike (The entire urban area is reachable in less than 20 minutes by bike).

- **Car ownership:** 590 passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants (average age: 11 years). Sharp decline compared to 2008, but small uptake since 2013. This lies well above the Slovenian average of 523 cars / 1000 inhabitants.
- **Shared mobility:** Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba have a bike sharing system.
- **Urban vehicle access regulations:** In addition to over 5,000 free parking spaces, the municipality also has around 500 paid parking spots, mostly in the city centre, which are relatively high occupied. A parking

policy, with the goal to establish and implement the parking regimes (paid parking, time restrictions, annual subscription etc.), is being prepared.

- **Traffic safety:** The number of road accidents decreased by more than 40% by 2015 compared to 2002 or by 47% compared to the worst year of 2009. In 2015 there was only 1 fatal traffic accident, and 9 serious injuries. However, it is necessary to point out the shortcomings in the methodology for collecting this data, since many minor traffic accidents are no longer recorded in this database since the European Road Accident Report, which is a substitute for the police record, is used.
- **Health:** Overweight and obesity are increasing in Slovenia. Adults, children and adolescents are increasingly overweight due to their lack of physical activity and sedentary lifestyles and thus exposed to many risk factors for various diseases.
- **Pollution:** although air pollution with particulates is decreasing, the limit values are still exceeded. In smaller places because of fireplaces and in major cities due to traffic. The largest share of children aged 0-15 were exposed on average to concentrations between 21 and 30 $\mu\text{g PM}_{10} / \text{m}^3$ (2008-2017), which is above WHO recommendations. The most common cause of hospitalization of children under the age of 15 is asthma. In summer, there is excess ground-level ozone due to favourable climatic conditions for the formation of ozone with high temperatures and more solar radiation.



*New cycling bridge on Soča river in Solkan connecting urban area of Nova Gorica with upper Soča river towns, villages and nature areas.
Photo: Mitja Marussig*

1.2 Presentation of the intervention area and key challenges

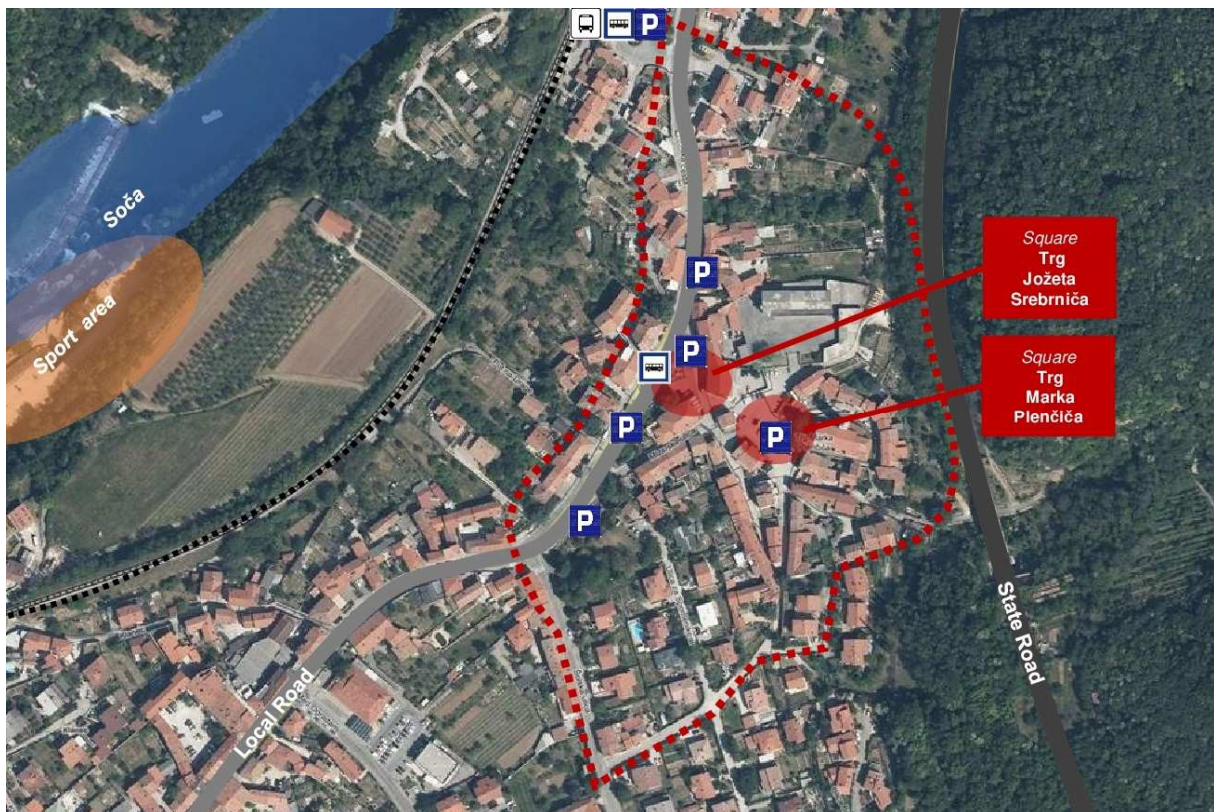
1.2.1 The intervention area

The area of intervention of URBACT Thriving Streets project is the historic core of **Solkan**, more than 1000 years old settlement, nowadays incorporated in Nova Gorica-Gorizia/Gorica -Šempeter-Vrtojba urban area.



Solkan, an old settlement at the North part of Nova Gorica, Gorizia/Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba urban area. Source: MONG

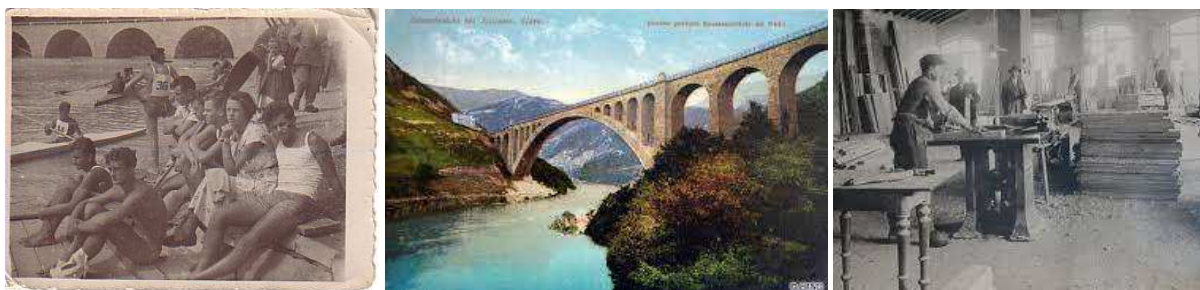
The intervention area is focused around two historical squares, upper Trg Marka Plenčiča square and lower Trg Jožeta Srebrniča square.



URBACT Thriving Streets intervention area in Solkan. Source: MONG, URBACT Thriving Streets project, 2021.

The historical Solkan, which functioned as an independent and lively town for centuries, is transforming into a degraded area with worsened quality of life for its inhabitants. It is characterised by poor public services, lack of shops and other offer, (parked) cars taking all possible space and by lack of proper care for its diverse cultural heritage, tangible and intangible. Solkan is losing its strong identity and importance built through centuries.

The Solkan area is full of historical elements. It has a strong relations with the nearby Soča river and other natural areas in the vicinity.



Images from Solkan's history: life by the river, Solkan bridge, one of carpentry workshos in Solkan, known for high quality wooden furniture.. Source: MONG

The area has a long history of carpentry, with a small museum (Mizarski muzej) opened recently. It is known for white-water sports as kayaking, for cycling, hiking and similar outdoor activities. One of the main attractions is exploring the rests of the of the I. World War Soča/Isonzo front, following the thematic path named Walk of Peace.

The mediteranean climate and fertile soil make the area excelent in the food production. Solkan has its own vegetable „celebrity“, a traditional type of red radicchio called „Sukenski regot“, known in Italiy as „Rosa di Gorizia“ - culinary specialty of the region.

The most famous landmark of Solkan is Solkan bridge (Solkanski most), more than 100 years old railway bridge crossing Soča river. It is known as the world's longest stone arch railroad bridge and second-longest stone arch bridge, after Germany's Syrtal Viaduct, a road bridge. It was originally built in the time of the Secession, between 1900 and 1905, and officially opened in 1906, as part of wider Austro-Hungarian railway sistem linking the capital Vienna to its southern provinces.

Solkan was almost completely demolished during the 1st World War, with the Soča/Isonzo front laying right over the settlement. Almost all houses were demolished or severely damaged. Many people left the area because of the war.

The 2nd World War brought additional damage. The post-war Yugoslav authorities did not encourage renovation of old buildings, but construction of new ones. In the case of Nova Gorica a completely new city was planned and constructed. They wanted to build a city that that will "shine" across the state border, as written on the monument with the model of original modernist town from 1947. As the result Solkan almost lost its physical presence, identity and function helt for centuries.

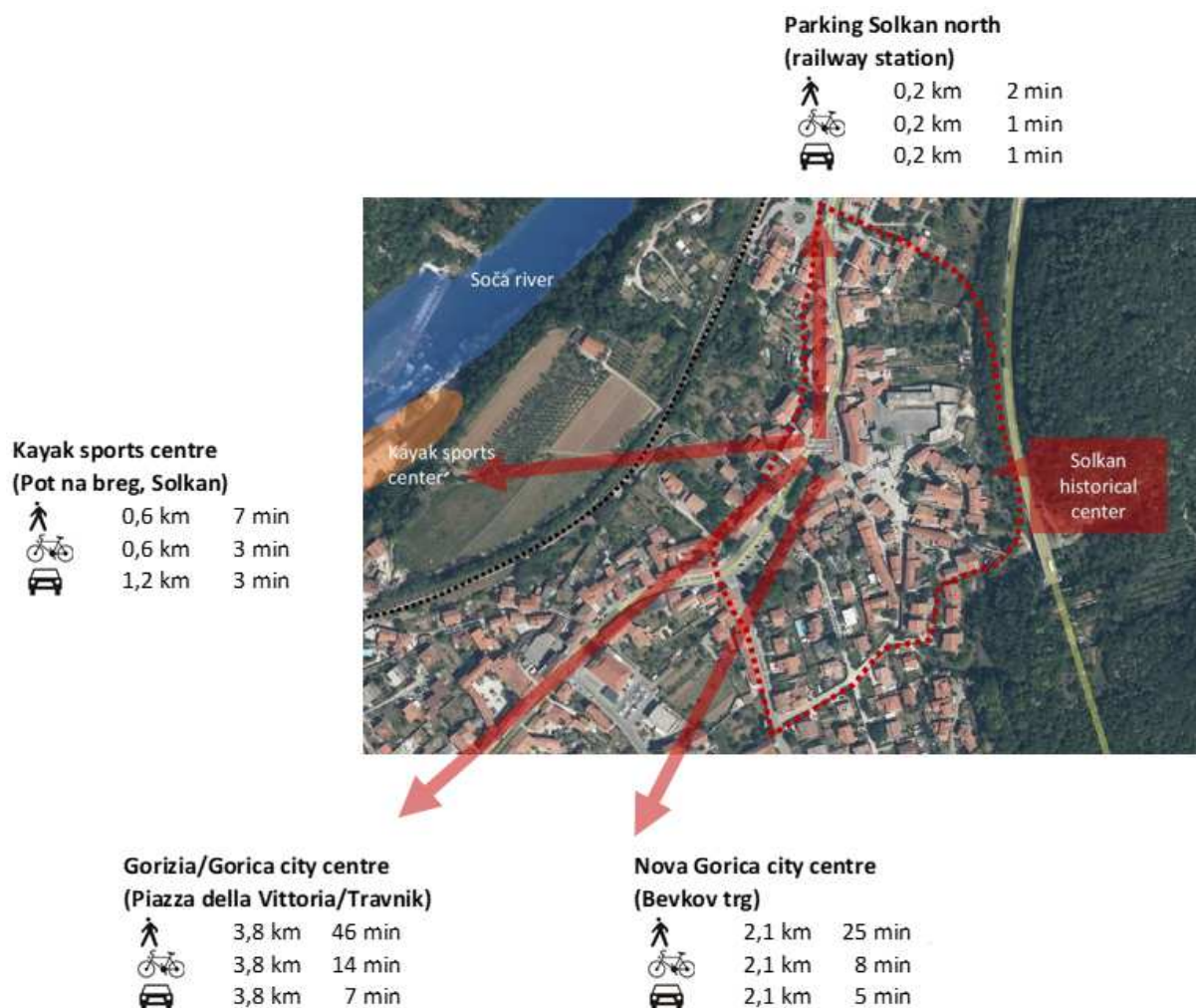


Destruction of Solkan in World War I. Source: PANG

Mobility in Solkan

• Accessibility

Solkan is a relevant subcenter of the urban area with good spatial conditions for the development of the sustainable walking and biking accessibility for all the inhabitants and visitors needs.



• Parking arrangement

In Solkan there are 925 parking spaces that are mostly in public domain. 24% represents illegal parking spots and only 5% are payable parking spaces.

Parkirni režimi na parkiriščih

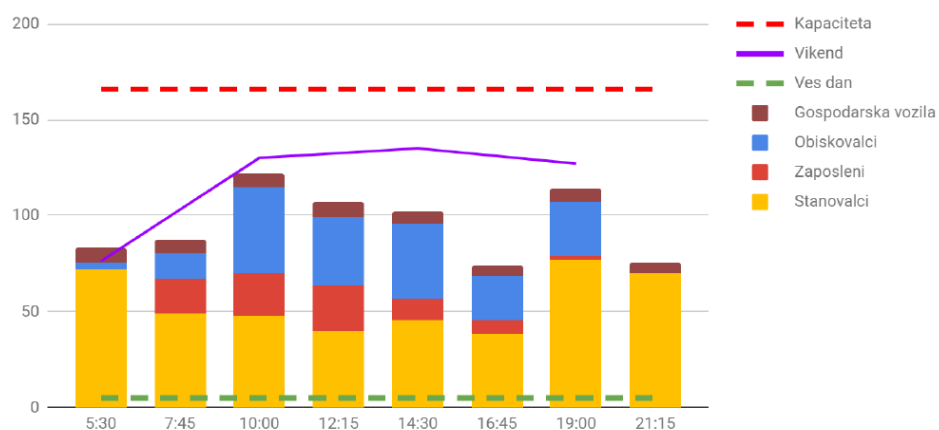
Solkan (skupaj 925 parkirnih mest)



An analysis of the occupancy of the car parks shows that the car parks are used by a variety of users and that the occupancy of the car parks is not excessive. The perception of a lack of parking spaces by users is probably mainly related to the habit of door-to-door car use and the habit of parking the car directly in front of the final destination of the journey.

Zasedenost parkirišč - Solkan sever

Kapaciteta: 166



1.2.2 Summary of key challenges

The problems people (inhabitants of the area, people from other parts of the city) are facing in the area can be summed in three conditions:

- **Unnatractive and visually unpleasant historical core of Solkan with limited public services**
- **Unsafe and unpleasant pubic space shaped by the needs of cars, not humans**
- **No properly restored and revitalised buildings**

Such conditions are dragging the place to negative spyrall of general degradadion, which brings also social degradation.



The view from the church to the upper square in Solkan's historical core. Photo Nataša Kolenc.



Small local event on the parking space in Solkan. Photo Aleksandra Torbica.

The key challenges

1. The area is dangerous and not attractive for pedestrians and cyclists

The local road crossing Solkan is congested with a large amount of transit traffic from upper Soča valley towards Nova Gorica and other centres (and the opposite). Despite the construction of the bypass road several years ago, the local road still has the same profile (shape) as when it functioned as an important state road. The road profile is primarily arranged for the needs of motor traffic and parking, it remains attractive for transit traffic (unwanted from inhabitants of the area) and very unattractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

Pedestrian areas are poorly arranged and unattractive. There are no safe areas for cyclists, neither for the needs of the residents nor for the needs of visitors, even though the area is being promoted as an area for cycling tourism, with strong emphasis on sport tourism in general (kayak centre, attractive cycling locations close by, walking paths etc.)

2. Limited existing public functions in the area, no adequate operating conditions for public functions

Solkan local community offices and small public library, located in historical building on the main square in historical centre, operate with limited space conditions, not using their full potential. Therefore their offer of quality services for the needs of the community, as organization of small events, space for meetings or similar, is very limited.

There is also a public institution of regional character, the Home Help Center, offering the daily support of elderly or disabled people in the region. Their activity is very useful and generally welcomed, but the organisation of their work is inappropriate for the location. They operate mainly by movable service, using historical core of Solkan mostly for parking for their 15 official vehicles – occupying public car parks and also other public space when cars are parked improperly.

The nature of the service requires exits and arrivals to the location several times a day. The offices of the institution are not open to the general public.

3. Economic activities are closing due to inadequate tax legislation, lack of incentives, unattractiveness and inadequate accessibility to the area

Several buildings are vacant, but potential tenants find it difficult to find adequate space to rent or buy, as there is no proper tax legislation to encourage the rental or sale of vacant premises (no property tax) and no other incentives to promote economic revitalization.

Existing (and potential) providers of public services and offer (shops, bars, restaurants, etc.) are convinced that direct contact parking spaces are essential for their operation – they claim that their main trouble is not have enough parking spaces close to their shops, bars etc., demanding even more public space to be changed in parking lots.

Existing economic activities are only exceptionally visually open to public space. Due to unorganized and parked public space, constant noise and little number of pedestrians on the streets, most of the shops and offices have shop windows covered to prevent visual contact between interior and exterior, contributing to boring streets.

Existing catering activities are mostly tied to guests from the cross-border urban agglomeration, who are used to park directly next to the restaurants. They access the site by car and rarely decide to visit the site on foot or by bike. The reasons for this are related to the lack of safe and attractive infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists and the insufficient supply of public transport. There are almost no shops or other attractions along the way, despite the fact that the entire settlement was known for its shops and crafts located in the ground floor of the buildings in the past, especially on the main street crossing Solkan.

4. Non-existent parking policy creates conflicts in space between different users

All parking in the area is free. Only a small proportion of car parks is intended for short-term parking. Most users (residents, employees, visitors) park directly next to their target location. Many vehicles are parked incorrectly, which further worsens the situation for pedestrians and cyclists.

Control of inappropriate parking is practically non-existent in the area, which results in the widespread belief (especially of residents) that they have a guaranteed right to keep their parking habits also in the future.

5. The diverse cultural heritage of the area is unrecognizable and disrespected

Much of the building fabric is unrenovated or improperly renovated. Public space is arranged in a way that contribute to further degradation of already degraded image of the settlement.

The presence of transit traffic and the arrangement of public space, primarily for the needs of personal vehicles, in combination with the extensive presence of incorrectly packed vehicles, makes it impossible to identify historic buildings, monuments and other cultural features in the area. Monuments of the past are placed in such a way that it is difficult to identify their purpose.

The rich and interesting cultural heritage and local traditions are difficult to properly value and interpretate (use as development potential) because of general degradation of the area.

6. Potential social degradation

Unattractive image of the area and declining living conditions cause social degradation of the area. Most of present inhabitants are local people in senior age, used to live in the area for a long time, in many cases born in the area. The new commers are often people from other places, also work immigrants, with little or no attachments and understanding of local culture and similar values.

In many cases they don't come to historical core because they like it, but because they don't have the resources to buy/rent something better, in more attractive areas.



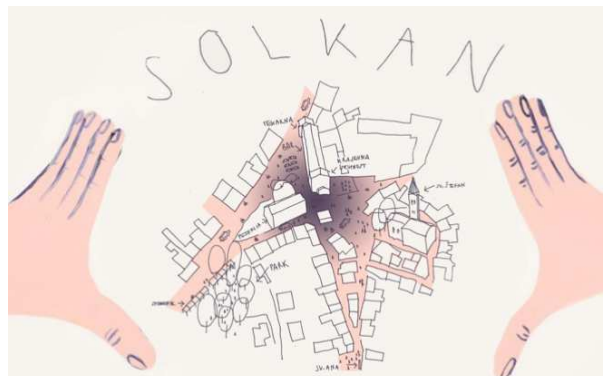
The abuse of the limited pedestrian paths and degradation of human spaces and cultural heritage due to the car dominance in the public space of the area. Photo Aleksandra Torbica.

1.3 Focus and Vision

1.3.1 Focus

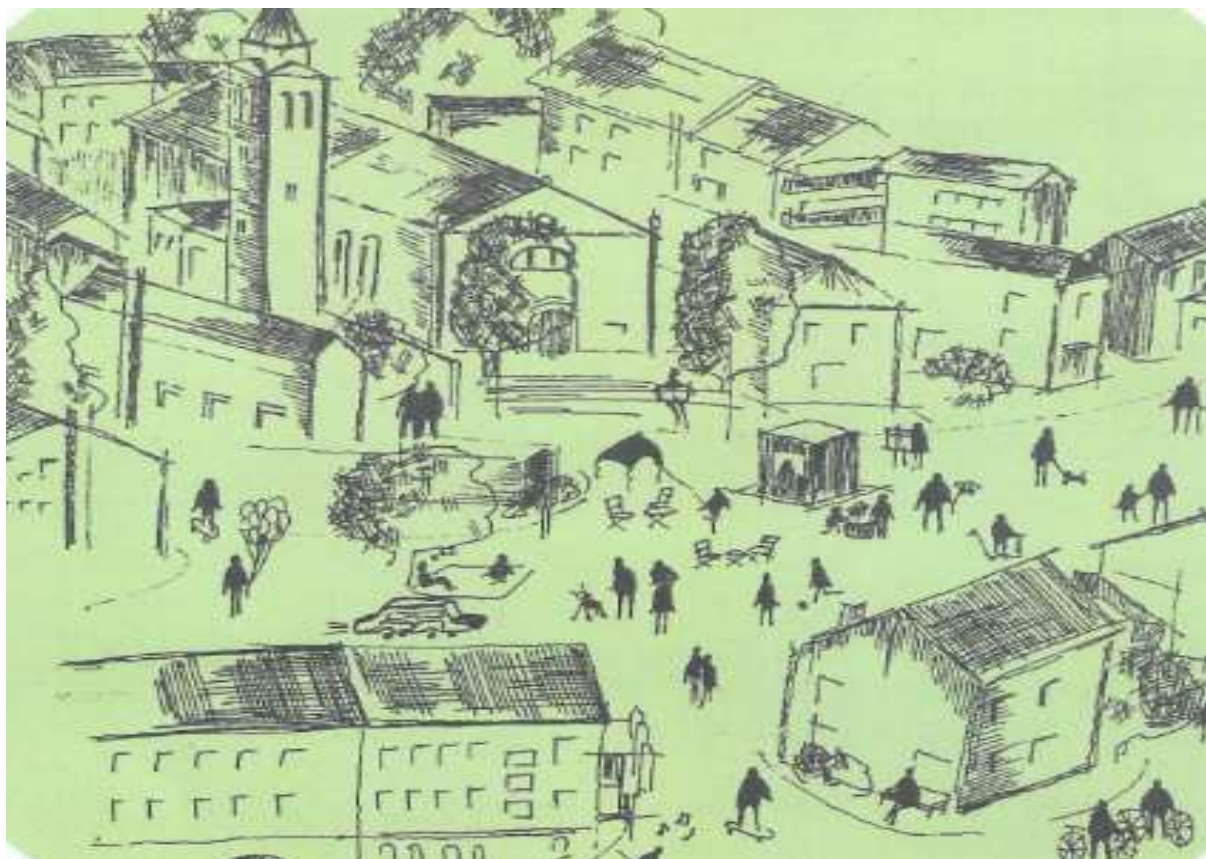
The focus of Integrated Action Plan for Solkan historic core is to improve the quality of life of the community by creating quality public spaces for socialising and leisure activities, while at the same time creating an attraction for economic activities.

Drawings: Prostorož



1.3.2 Vision

The historic core of Solkan is a lively old town with people, bars and shops, pleasant for its inhabitants, attractive for tourists and safe to the point that an 8-year child can move around walking or cycling without the company of an adult person.



VISION PILLARS

1. The area has safe and sustainable accessibility

The transport space of the historic core will be safe with guaranteed sustainable access to all activities in the area. The preferred mode of mobility will be on foot and by bicycle. The supply of public transport will also be improved. The transport system will provide an appropriate way of access for all the tourist activities that the area offers. The transit traffic will be diverted in a clever way and almost completely disappeared. The remained (reduced) cars needing parking will be directed to parking lots on side locations, with regimes determined to regulate public space use.

2. Spatial conditions for community strengthening will be provided

Additional spaces will be provided for community meetings in both outdoor and indoor areas. Additional public pedestrian areas in the form of car free squares and social/play areas will be appropriately arranged. In the existing building fund, more suitable spaces for the library and a large community space will be arranged. New services will be put in the area such as sheltered housing for older or disabled people, with complementary services serving wider population and quality open spaces linking new structures and historical buildings of Solkan centre – on the location of empty building of the former shopping mall.

The public institution of regional character Home Help Centre will be moved to a more suitable location outside the historic core of Solkan.

3. The historic core will be attractive for economic activities

Empty shops and offices will be occupied by economic activities, using the potential of revitalised Solkan area. Economic activities will be additionally supported by Municipality of Nova Gorica measures such as incentives for economic activities and regular communication and support and synergy with new public programmes in the area. Due to the attractive environment and safe, pleasant accessibility, there will be more and more customers.

4. Clear rules and limited parking options create a friendlier space for everyone

Public parking in the area will be limited, payable and arranged in a way to ensure optimal use of parking lots, taking into account the needs of residents, vulnerable groups and the need to access the basic services. For the needs of tourist visits, employees and larger events, a larger parking lot will be arranged on the northern edge of the area.

5. The renewed and presented cultural heritage serves the community

Immovable heritage is properly arranged and presented. The renewed heritage strengthens the pride and identity of the local population and creates new local jobs. Tourists visit and get to know the heritage of the area.

1.4 Description of the planning process

1.4.1 Presentation of the ULG

The ULG is formed basically by the Municipality of Nova Gorica working group members (from different departments, sectors), formal representatives of local community of Solkan and external experts. The ULG is extended according to the content of individual activities with key actors and authorities from tourism, cultural heritage, mobility or other sectors.

The head of the working group is the deputy mayor. The working group has a formal appointment by the mayor.

The activities are discussed and prepared as a draft by the work group following the methodology of Urbact III program in relation to the needs of the study case.

Major steps of the process are discussed with local community representative and other key actors and authorities on the field (depending on the topics). The proposed action is then discussed with the mayor's advisory body at the Municipality of Nova Gorica (political level) That is followed by the discussions at Solkan local community council (formal local community level). The final version of the activity is designed considering the feedbacks from both levels.

For every action the targeted stakeholders and the manner of their participation are determined, as well as the methodologies for communication (workshops, conversations, public discussions etc.). Different individuals or interest groups are involved to help organise events, meetings

The results of the performed activity are included in further planned activities. All involved receive feedback on the activities carried out and planned follow-up activities.

This mode of operation was developed gradually and proved to be the most suitable for the project proposes.

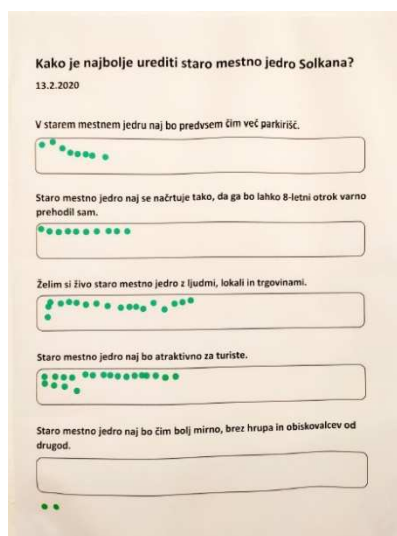
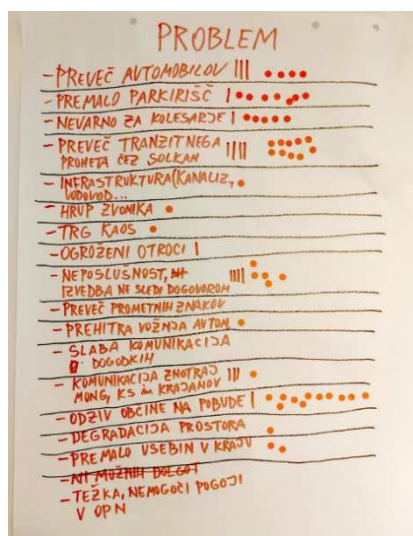
Municipality of Nova Gorica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor's office representative; Department of Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Infrastructure; Development office, Investment's office, Finance office, Public relations office.
District of Solkan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives of the district authorities
Institutions subordinated to the Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Institute for Tourism Nova Gorica and Vipava Valley; Centre for Sustainable Mobility, Public library "F. Bevka".
Other public organizations/institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Chambre of commerce, Chambre of Crafts.
NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solkan Carving, Marquetry and Restoration Society, Association of Coastal Architects.
Other stakeholders' resident in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents Restaurant "Soča", Church (Župnija Solkan), Home help centre (Center za pomoč na domu), ...
Other stakeholder's non-resident in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotel "Sabotin", Kayak club "Soške elektrarne", "Čolnarna" pub, Soča Fun Park, Restaurant "Žogica", ...

1.4.2 The planning process

The process began with the formation of a working group in the municipality and a review of all existing materials in the area and the existing guidelines of development acts of the municipality.

The first meeting for the formation of ULG continued, where it turned out that it was necessary to include representatives of KS Solkan in the narrow circle of the working group. In the meantime, interviews were conducted with opinion makers from Solkan, from which it was easier to understand the view of the situation, expectations and, last but not least, the relationship with the municipality.

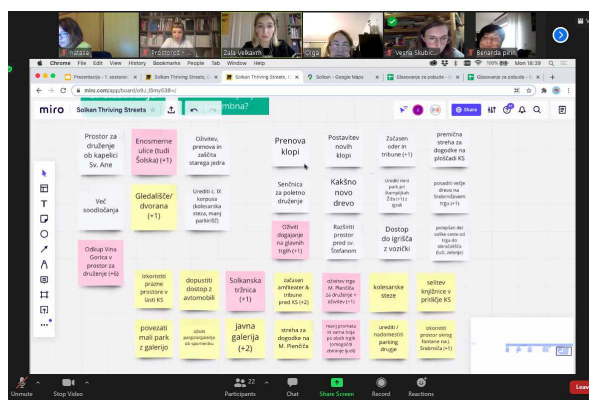
In the next phase, workshops on problems, goals and vision for the old town of Solkan with residents and a workshop with various institutions on problems, goals and vision and ideas and possible activities for the development of Solkan on 4 basic pillars: tourism, sports, cultural heritage and mobility.



Extract from the results of the workshop with residents. Report made by IPoP



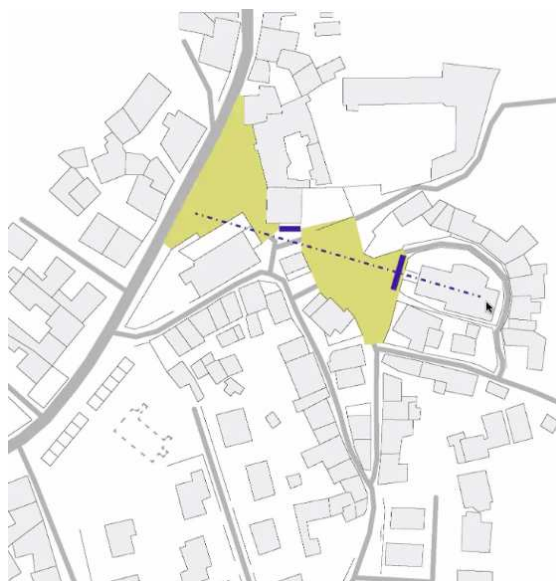
Workshop with different stakeholders and UGL members in 2021. Photo: Aleksandra Torbica



The workshop with institutions and economic operators was carried out via Zoom due to the COVID 19 situation

In 2021, an additional workshop was conducted with institutions directly related to the narrower area of the old core. In addition to the findings on the problems, the confirmation of the goals and the vision, a set of ideas for the future with prioritization was made at the workshop.

In spring 2021 Municipality of Nova Gorica started collaboration with external expert specialised in preparing urban interventions based on an intensive communication with public. They started exploring the area combining it with small actions such as setting up an outdoor improvised office at each visit and helping with the organization of one event in spring 2021.



On the left the photo of the temporary office of Prostorozh (external assistance in the implementation of the process and SSA) dedicated to the needs of space analysis and direct communication with users on site.

Up the extract of the results of the space analysis.

Photo and drawing: Prostorozh

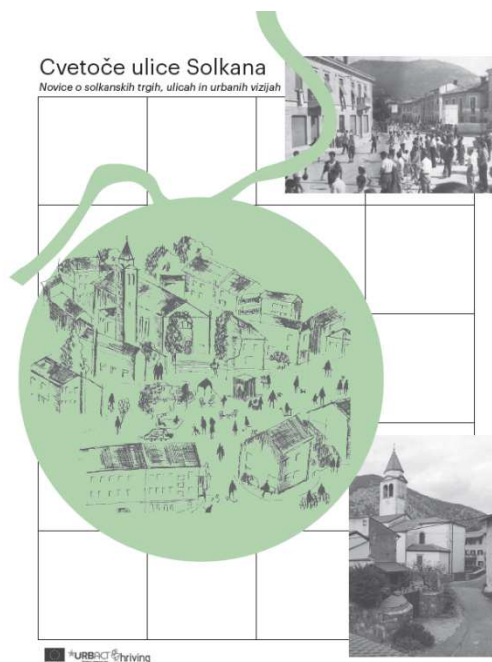


Landscaping of the area for the opening of an exhibition of illustrations during the City of Books festival in Nova Gorica in June 2021..

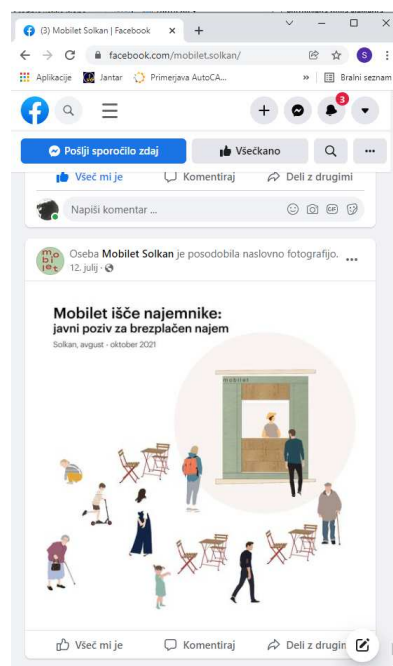
Photo: Prostorozh, Aleksandra Torbica (right)



In parallel, there was a dense notification about the course of project activities through various media (newspapers, facebook, instagram ...).



Newsletter with information on the progress of the project was created and distributed to letterboxes in the area. Author: Prostorož



An facebook and Instagram with all the informations about the activities related to the SSA was created. Author: Prostorož



Example of the publication of an article about the process of revitalising the old town of Solkan in Primorske Novice – the most relevant news paper covering the regional area with daily information.



Example of the publication of an article about the process of revitalising the old town of Solkan in Novi Glas - the online newsletter of the Christian community

All these activities on one hand aroused the curiosity of residents and regular users of the area and thus enabled the establishment of contact on the other attracted the participation of students from Solkan, which proved to be extremely positive both in terms of communication with a fairly closed local community and in terms of giving young people from the area the possibility to concretize the SSA in their home town.



Young creative Solkaners contributed to the design and implementation of the SSA based on the starting points of the participation activity

The idea for the SSA was formed gradually on the basis of a workshop with institutions, meetings with the district authorities, mayor's office and conversations with residents and other users of the space.

1.4.3 Role and impact of transnational learning

The exchange of experience between the cities in the network and the training seminars have enabled the municipality to acquire a considerable amount of new knowledge in the field of spatial planning in relation to sustainable mobility and the promotion of economic development. Above all, the municipality has gained insight into the experiences and practices of other cities, which has contributed significantly to both a better understanding of the Solkan area and to placing the local situation in the context of global trends in urban development.

Through trainings and organised lectures for the exchange of good practices, we gained insight into the different approaches of individual cities in the field of coping with spatial changes related to sustainable mobility (the importance and functions of public space, the primary role of strategic and implementation spatial planning and urban planning, the necessity and necessity of cross-sectoral coordination in the implementation of spatial changes, ...).

The training and exchange of experiences has given us the opportunity to understand in more detail that there are no final solutions, as people's needs change and it is therefore important to design both some final "interim" solutions and it is also extremely important to design steps in the desired direction in the interim, with smaller and as pragmatic as possible interim solutions, on the one hand, allowing for testing of agreed actions, less stressful and less invasive, first of all for the users of the space but also for municipal budgets and local politics, and on the other hand, allowing for a gradual adaptation to change and adjustments based on direct practice in the planning of change.

It has become very clear that the problems of urban renewal and the creation of a much-needed attractive and, above all, physically, socially, communally healthy public space intended for different users for different purposes, social as well as economic, recreational, touristic, often breaks down precisely on the excessive use of the private car and the related control of irrational reactions of individuals, who are faced with a change in their habits by the political leadership of each time.



Urbact networks exchange knowledge and experience at the #WalkAndRollCities international event, Barcelona July 2022.
Photo: Aleksandra Torbica

1.4.4 SSA implementation and key learnings

SSA implementation

The SSA was concentrated on the Solkan historical core (Marko Plenčič Square) lately used primarily as a parking area. The aim of SSA was to create community space that will be safe, respectful of the cultural heritage and which will enable community socializing, events. The temporary changes of existing traffic arrangement enabled to create 500 m² of public space free of traffic, where a kiosk with a rich and varied program was set up in the period between August and October 2021.



The rearrangement of the area. Author: Prostorož



Before the traffic regime change.
Photo: Prostorož



After the change of traffic layout and siting of the Mobileta kiosk.
Photo: Prostorož

The green kiosk nick-named Mobilet (a word game tied to local carpenters' heritage and mobility) was designed to become Solkan's new "attraction" - to bring public attention back to the historical centre. At the other side, new kiosk offered new space opportunity to local providers, associations and other local institutions to show what they have to offer to their community.



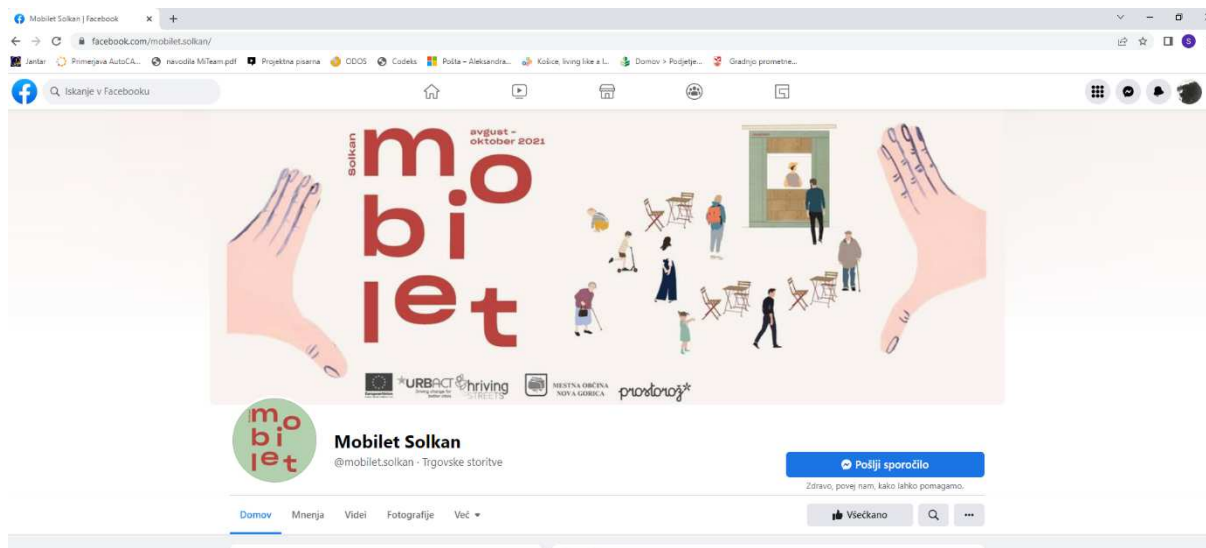
During the lifetime of the SSA, there have been more than 20 different users in the area, among economic operators, institutions and individuals.

The kiosk has enabled the following activities to be carried out:

trade	➔ 48 days
catering	➔ 27 days
workshop venue	➔ 8 events
space for lectures and public debates	➔ 3 events
music stage	➔ 1 event

When nothing was going on the safe public space that was created served simply for people to gather and for children to play.

The Mobilet Solkan Facebook profile was used as a promotional and information tool for the happening on the side. It also provides all the photos and information about the program of the implemented SSA.



Based on SSA, we have received a lot of feedback through different channels and observations.

We have taken a systematic approach to conducting an online survey and physically meeting at a public hearing.

The online surveys were mainly completed by a variety of users, typically non-residents in the area. The results of the surveys show a fairly even split between those in favour and those against, with a slight preference for those in favour.



At the public hearing, which was attended mainly by older residents in the area, the opinion was overwhelmingly against the proposed solutions, but in the choice of scenarios the participants only expressed the opinion that it was better not to have the traffic arrangement it as it was before. They were strongly against too noisy and frequented activities near their homes. In particular, they expressed concern that in the future they would be prevented from parking their cars directly in front of their homes in a public area (even and mainly illegal).



The proposed scenarios at the public hearing

After some time in form of a petition they inform us that they want the thinks exactly as they were before.

The municipality removed the temporary arrangement and is at the moment making small improvements suggested during concretion sessions, waiting for the elections in November 2022.

SSA key learnings

- the upper square has to be arranged as a safe and peaceful space with occasional events suitable to a predominantly residential area;
- the Solkan's M. Plenčič Square is attractive for economic activities, but there are other parts of the historic core that are more suitable for public programmes and less annoying to residents (for example the lower square and IX. Korpus street); therefore it is necessary to stimulate the rental of vacant spaces / real estate for the needs of business activities, especially businesses / services serving directly to residents and visitors;
- for the development of the historic core is crucial that the large empty building (former shopping centre) located by M. Plenčič Square, which is for sale, becomes public property – in a way that the Municipality of Nova Gorica and local community of Solkan can influence its future use and control the future use of that property will have to rest of Solkan's historical core. The new functions of the property must be compatible and supportive to Solkan's desired development. The use potentially available additional outdoor space only to create additional parking lots is contrary to the vision set and would lead to additional conflicts in the area;
- the space in front of the church is a valuable, shaded public space that needs to be preserved as a car-free space;
- it is necessary to maintain a direct safe pedestrian and bicycle connection between the lower and upper square, which is at the same time the visual and valorisation axis;
- the future traffic arrangements have to take in consideration wider area of Solkan's historical core, not only one or two squares and streets;
- it is necessary to establish parking regimes that will be primarily intended to support inhabitants and other existing users of the upper square (residents, elderly church users etc.) and will not generate additional traffic on the upper square;
- it is essential to relocate or reorganise a regional public institution Home help centre out of the area, to free the public space from significant number of vehicles used linked to Home help centre activities;
- it is necessary to promote arrivals of employees and visitors of Solkan's historical core by foot, by bicycle or bus or train and promote the use sustainable mobility by local residents;
- it is necessary to make sustainable mobility more attractive and easily understood by residents, employees and visitors of the area;
- it is necessary to redirect most of the employees and visitors of Solkan's historical core to existing parking at the North end of Solkan (distance 200 m), which must be upgraded and properly equipped;
- soft measures should be used to encourage changes in parking habits;
- it is necessary to ensure the appropriate forms of information, co-operation and co-creation of various stakeholders throughout the entire period of implementation of the planned activities.

The transfer of the developed SSA approach with the Urbact Thriving streets

The kiosk Mobilet as space marker that opens up possible new public spaces in the city was recognized by the mayor's office as a useful instrument for urban development and in 2022 the kiosk is moved to make change in the degraded green area of the city in order to test if the area can become as a inclusive green gathering and recreational public space for all.



Kiosk Mobilet changing a degraded area to an inclusive urban green area. Photo: Aleksandra Torbica

2.Action Plan

2.1 Specific objectives and strategy

Summary table of specific objectives

Specific objective	Result indicator	Baseline value	Target value	Source of information
SO1 A safe pedestrian and cyclist accessible Solkan centre	Additional meters of new safe cycling connections (lines)	0	Additional 500 m	Street plans
	Additional square meters pedestrian areas (Free of car traffic)		Additional 2.500m ²	Plan for new Solkan core arrangement /drafts and final version/
	Percentage of charge free parking spaces and parking time in Solkan centre area	90% of parking spaces are free of charge 24 hours a day	10% is the target value for parking spaces free of charge during 24-hour period	Department of environment, space and public infrastructure (Regimes for use should be established by MONG and controlled by Mestne storitve d.o.o.)
	Daily number of local bus connections	27	30% more	Bus company
	Daily number of train connections	6 (Bohinjska Bistrica) 3 (Sežana)	20% more	Train Company
	Number of public bike sharing locations close to Solkan centre area	1	3	MONG, local centre for sustainable mobility
SO2 Connected community	Additional m ² of attractive and safe public areas for socializing and playing	1390 m ² (existing playground and lower quare)	Additional 600 m ²	Plan for new Solkan core arrangement /drafts and final version/ small in-between interventions
	Additional m ² of indoor public spaces, inside the buildings in Solkan centre	120 m ² (area of local public library + KS hall)	Additional 250 m ² of premisses with public programmes for	Municipality records

			inhabitants and visitors	
	Additional public programmes and offer for inhabitants and visitors (events, ...)	Number of traditional events	Additional 20% more	KS Solkan, other providers
	Urban equipment on public spaces – improvement of existing elements and upgrading (benches, playground etc.)	0 EUR Amount of money spent in 2021 for urban equipment maintenance and upgrading	5.000 EUR	MONG, KS Solkan
SO3 Solkan – a vibrant commercial and service centre	Number of economic activities / providers in the area	15 existing activities / providers	Additional 20%	Department of Economics
	Number of abandoned/empty shops or similar indoor spaces in the area	10 currently abandoned/empty shops or similar indoor spaces in the area	Additional 20%; including (local banks) ATM location	Department of Economics
SO4 Solkan - cultural heritage location, using its potential for development of cultural tourism and other forms of sustainable tourism	Number of properly renovated buildings	30 currently non renovated or poorly renovated buildings	Additional 45%	Statistical Office
	Number of permanent cultural tourism and/or cultural empowerment programmes (for example “heritage road”, guided tours, digital tools for guiding and interpretation)	1 Mizarski museum with signs	5	Javni zavod za turizem Nova Gorica in Vipavska dolina, Goriški muzej, NGOs
	Number of European capital of culture 2025 events/programmes linked to Solkan	0	3	ECOC office, ULG

2.2 Proposed actions

Specific objective	SO1 a safe pedestrian and cyclist accessible centre		
Action	Necessary resources	Responsible body and partners	Timescale (From-to)
Action 1 Technical documentation and permits for Change of traffic regulation and general arrangement of Mizarska Street and M. Plenčič Square for the purposes of safe management of pedestrians and cyclists and the establishment of additional pedestrian public spaces in the area (implementation of small in-between interventions)	40.000	MONG (Municipality of Nova Gorica)	2022
Action 2 Implementing Change of traffic regulation and general arrangement of Mizarska Street and M. Plenčič Square for the purposes of safe management of pedestrians and cyclists and the establishment of additional pedestrian public spaces in the area (implementation of small in-between interventions)	40.000	MONG (Municipality of Nova Gorica)	2023-2025
Action 3 Designing and Introduction of parking policy measures (parking regimes for different groups of users - paid parking spaces, parking with permits, new signalization etc.)	15.000	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2022-2023
Action 4 Plans for Change of traffic regulation on Roads IX. Korpus, Soške ulica and Trg J. Srebrniča for the purpose of safe management of pedestrians and cyclists (implementation of small in-between interventions)	30.000	MONG	2023-2024
Action 5 Communication activities - Informing, collaborating, co-creating (informing, con - creation of solutions, public debates, surveys, stimulated synergies, collecting needs and wishes, suggestions – from inhabitants, visitors, businesses and other stakeholders; explaining, testing, promoting use of public transport and other sustainable options, ...)	10.000 per year	MONG	2022-2030
LINKED "OUTSIDE AREA" ACTIVITIES /solution of the problem of IAP draft being too wide/			

Action 6 <i>Relocation of the regional institution (Home Help Center) to the historic core of Solkan to a more suitable location</i>	5.000	Home of pensioners Nova Gorica	2022-2023
Action 7 <i>Preparation of project documentation for the upgrade of the parking lot in the northern part of Solkan</i>	50.000	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2023-2025
Action 8 <i>Implementation of the upgrade of the parking lot in the northern part of Solkan</i>	1.500.000	MONG	2026-2027
Action 9 <i>Preparation and implementation of the renovation of Road IX. Korpus, Soške ulica and Trg J. Srebrniča</i>	2.500.000	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities), ULG	2024-2030

Specific objective	SO2 connected community		
Action	Necessary resources	Responsible body and partners	Timescale (From-to)
Action 1 Maintenance, improving and upgrading urban equipment of public spaces in Solkan centre area (playgrounds, sitting-meeting areas, trees for shadow, decorative plants etc.	15.000 EUR per year	MONG, KS Solkan	2022-25
Action 2 Supporting community events and programmes ("Solkan's day", community picnic etc.)	10.000 EUR per year	MONG, KS Solkan NGOs,	2022-25
Action 3 Preparation and implementation of redesigning the public space of Mizarska ulica and M. Plenčič Square to insure quality space for residents and the establishment of a secure external community space <i>(linked to Action 1 and 2 in SO1)</i>	70.000	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2023-25
Action 4 Preparation and implementation of the investment in the renovation of the public areas of Mizarska ulica and Trg M. Plenčiča <i>(linked to Action 1 and 2 in SO1)</i>	2.500.000	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2025-2030
Action 5 Activating 2 additional bike sharing points in Solkan	_____EUR	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2022-2025
Action 6 Talks and agreements with local bus company	_____EUR	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2022-2025
Action 7 Talks and agreements with train company	_____EUR	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2022-2025
Action 8 informing, collaborating, co-creating (Informing, con - creation of solutions, public debates, surveys, stimulated synergies, collecting needs and wishes, suggestions – from inhabitants, visitors, businesses and other stakeholders; explaining, testing,	10.000 per year	MONG, KS Solkan (district authorities), ULG	2022-2030

promoting use of public transport and other sustainable options, ...)			
LINKED "OUTSIDE AREA" ACTIVITIES /solution of the problem of IAP draft being too wide/			
Action 9 <i>Buying former shopping centre Vino Gorica</i>	950.000	MONG	2022-2023
Action 10 <i>Renovation of former shopping centre for new purpose supporting desired development of Solkan centre</i>	3.000.000	MONG	2023-27

Specific objective	SO3 a vibrant commercial and service center		
Action	Necessary resources	Responsible body and partners	Timescale (From-to)
Action 1 Placement of city-forming public functions e.g. tourist information centre for the wider area of Solkan + “Solkan shop/market”	20.000 per year + Staff (Possible PPP)	MONG, KS Solkan (Solkan local community, local tourist organization, NGO's, businesses, farmers, wine producers – gathered in 2021 in SSA, kiosk Mobilet)	2023-2025
Action 2 Introduction of incentives for renting premises and carrying out economic activities	50.000 per year	MONG	2022
Action 3 Establishment of a contact point for the exchange of information between property owners and potential tenants	5.000 per year	MONG, Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Crafts, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2023
Action 4 Informing the legislator about the necessary changes in tax legislation	-	MONG, Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Crafts, KS Solkan (district authorities)	2022-

Specific objective	SO4 cultural heritage a pillar of development		
Action	Necessary resources	Responsible body and partners	Timescale (From-to)
Action 1 Introduction of initiatives for the renewal of settlement heritage	20.000 per year	MONG	2022
Action 2 Informing and raising the awareness of property owners about cultural heritage and advising on renovation purposes (WORKSHOPS, ARTICLES...)	10.000	Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage OE Nova Gorica	2022-2030
Action 3 Design of tourist products or attractions related to the old town (eg guided and self guided tours, radish festival, carpenters' trail ...) (HERITAGE ROADS, GUIDED TOURS, DIGITAL TOOLS...)	30.000	Public Institute for Tourism Nova Gorica and Vipava Valley, KS Solkan (Solkan local community)	2022-2030
Action 4 Location promotion	5.000 per year	Public Institute for Tourism Nova Gorica and Vipava Valley, KS Solkan (district authorities), ULG	2024-2030
Action 5 Informing inhabitants about their cultural heritage		Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage OE Nova Gorica, ECOC 2025	2022 -
Action 6 Informing locals about opportunities for developing tourist offer of the area, creating new businesses linked to tourism, INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT... Make people co-create their new touristic identity			

2.3 Summary Gantt Chart

	Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029 →
	Actions									
SO1	<i>A safe pedestrian and cyclist accessible Solkan centre</i>									
A1	Technical documentation and permits for Change of traffic regulation and general arrangement of Mizarska Street and M. Plenčič Square for the purposes of safe management of pedestrians and cyclists and the establishment of additional pedestrian public spaces in the area									
A2	Implementing Change of traffic regulation and general arrangement of Mizarska Street and M. Plenčič Square for the purposes of safe management of pedestrians and cyclists and the establishment of additional pedestrian public spaces in the area									
A3	Designing and Introduction of parking policy measures (parking regimes for different groups of users - paid parking spaces, parking with permits, new signalization etc.)									
A4	Plans for Change of traffic regulation on Roads IX. Korpus, Soške ulica and Trg J. Srebrniča for the purpose of safe management of pedestrians and cyclists									
A5	Communication activities - Informing, collaborating, co-creating (collecting needs and wishes, suggestions – from inhabitants, visitors, businesses and other stakeholders; explaining, testing, promoting use of public transport and other sustainable options									
	<i>* LINKED "OUTSIDE AREA" ACTIVITIES /Solution of the problem of IAP draft being too wide/</i>									
A6	<i>Relocation of the regional institution (Home Help Center) to the historic core of Solkan to a more suitable location</i>									
A7	<i>Preparation of project documentation for the upgrade of the parking lot in the northern part of Solkan</i>									
A8	<i>Implementation of the upgrade of the parking lot in the northern part of Solkan</i>									
A9	<i>Preparation and implementation of the renovation of Road IX. Korpus, Soške ulica and Trg J. Srebrniča</i>									

SO2	Connected community									
A1	Maintenance, improving and upgrading urban equipment of public spaces in Solkan centre area (playgrounds, sitting-meeting areas, trees for shadow, decorative plants etc.									
A2	Supporting community events and programmes ("Solkan's day", community picnic etc.)									
A3	Preparation and implementation of redesigning the public space of Mizarska ulica and M. Plenčič Square to insure quality space for residents and the establishment of a secure external community space (linked to Action 1 and 2 in SO1)									
A4	Preparation and implementation of the investment in the renovation of the public areas of Mizarska ulica and Trg M. Plenčiča (linked to Action 1 and 2 in SO1)									
A5	Activating 2 additional bike sharing points in Solkan									
A6	Talks and agreements with local bus company									
A7	Talks and agreements with train company									
A8	informing, collaborating, co-creating									
	* LINKED "OUTSIDE AREA" ACTIVITIES /Solution of the problem of IAP draft being too wide/									
A9	<i>Buying former shopping centre Vino Gorica</i>									
A10	<i>Renovation of former shopping centre for new purpose supporting desired development of Solkan centre</i>									
SO3	Solkan – a vibrant commercial and service centre									
A1	Placement of city-forming public functions e.g. tourist information centre for the wider area of Solkan + "Solkan shop/market"									
A2	Introduction of incentives for renting premises and carrying out economic activities									
A3	Establishment of a contact point for the exchange of information between property owners and potential tenants									
A4	Informing the legislator about the necessary changes in tax legislation									
SO4	Solkan -cultural heritage location, using its potential for development of cultural tourism and other forms of sustainable tourism									
A1	Introduction of initiatives for the renewal of settlement heritage									

A2	Informing and raising the awareness of property owners about cultural heritage and advising on renovation purposes (WORKSHOPS, ARTICLES...)									
A3	Design of tourist products or. attractions related to the old town (eg guided and self guided tours, radish festival, carpenters' trail ...)									
A4	Location promotion									
A5	Informing inhabitants about their cultural heritage									
A6	Informing locals about opportunities for developing tourist offer of the area, creating new businesses linked to tourism, INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT...Make people co-create their new touristic identity									

3. Implementation framework

3.1 Framework for the delivery of the IAP

The Urbact Thriving streets project was managed and implemented by the administration of the Municipality of Nova Gorica on the basis of an established interdepartmental working group, the members of which were appointed by the mayor.

The working group later, in accordance with the Urbact methodology, upgraded itself with ULG, and above all made a tight connection with representatives of Solkan district.

For the purpose of continuing the activities set out in the IAP, the Municipality of Nova Gorica will supplement the working group with individual responsible for each department, depending on the actions of IAP.

In the future, we will strengthen the UGL with members who are relevant for the implementation of the set goals (representatives of economic activities, individual institutions, residents, active individuals, ...), and above all, we will take push towards the synergy effects in the implementation of activities.

We will pay special attention to the inclusion of vulnerable groups and intercultural dialogue.

3.2 Resourcing and funding

The following sources of funding will be used to implement the activities foreseen in the IAP:

- Budget of the Municipality of Nova Gorica,
- State budget of the Republic of Slovenia,
- European funds
- Public Private Partnership
- Private funds

In addition to the URBACT Thriving Streets project funds, the 2022 budget of the Municipality of Nova Gorica also provides additional funds to enable continuity of the activities in the treatment area, and the individual activities are also linked to other planned activities of the Municipality of Nova Gorica and the related funding through the municipal budget.

The individual activities foreseen are already included in both the Regional Development Programme, which focuses on development content of regional importance, and the Sustainable Urban Strategy of the City of Nova Gorica, which focuses on resources for urban development. The individual activities are included in the programme documents related to the implementation of the foreseen activities of the European Capital of Culture, while the activities related to sustainable mobility measures are also programmatically included in the existing SUMP of the Municipality of Nova Gorica. Given the cross-border nature of the area, the content is also linked to the development orientations of the cross-border urban space and related programming.

All the above-mentioned strategic and programming documents are appropriate bases for accessing the various sources of funding mentioned above.

The Municipality of Nova Gorica will continue its efforts to participate in European and other cooperation projects that will contribute to the implementation of the activities foreseen with the IAP Nova Gorica.

3.3 Monitoring framework

Within the working group of the Municipality of Nova Gorica, a person will be appointed to monitor the implementation of the planned IAP activities. The appointed person will collect the data from individual departments and other organizations involved and prepared the annual report on implementation to be discussed within the working group and ULG that will be responsible to indicate the needed changes or adjustments to be made to the planned activities that will have to be presented and confirmed by mayor.

3.4 Overview and analysis of risks

Risk assessment table

RISK	PROBABILITY ¹	IMPACT ²	MITIGATION PLAN
Changes in the government and / or its political programme (absence of political will and decisions on the implementation of the IAP)	High	High	Presentation of IPA by professional
Low or unsecured financial resources for IAP implementation	Medium	Medium	Active search for additional funding sources
Low personnel capacity of the municipality for implementation or staff changes in municipality or no determination of the implementation manager	Medium	Medium	Provision of staff in the MONG administration
Disagreements of residents for implementation (lack of communication)	Low	Medium	Timely involvement of the public in the implementation of the action plan

1;2

High

Medium

Low

4. Contact details

The City of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) together with the partner cities of Parma (Italy), Antwerp (Belgium), Igoumenitsa (Greece), Klaipėda (Lithuania), Santo Tirso (Portugal), Oradea (Romania), London Borough of Southwark (United Kingdom) and Debrecen (Hungary) form the Urbact Thriving Streets network, under the leadership of the Lead Partner City of Parma (Italy).

The project focuses on how to use sustainable mobility measures to create public spaces that are human-scaled and at the same time attractive for economic activities.

For more information on the project activities and the Integrated Action Plan Nova Gorica, please contact:

Municipality of Nova Gorica

Adress: Trg Edvarda Kardelja 1, 5000 Nova Gorica, Slovenia

E-mail: mestna.obcina@nova-gorica.si

Contact person:

Aleksandra Torbica - Local coordinator

E-mail: aleksandra.torbica@nova-gorica.si

Tel: 00386 (0)5 3350365