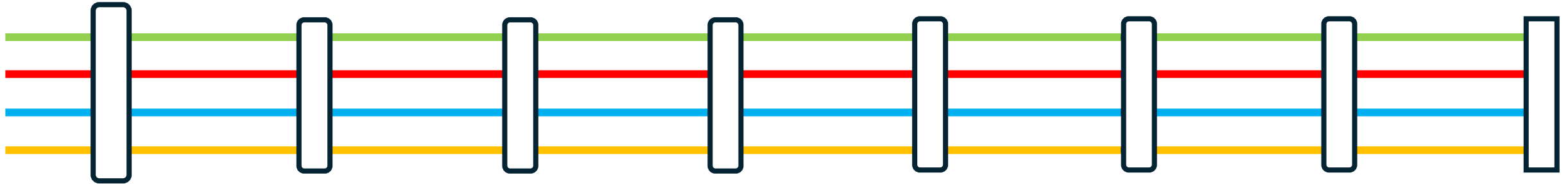


SCHOOLHOODs'

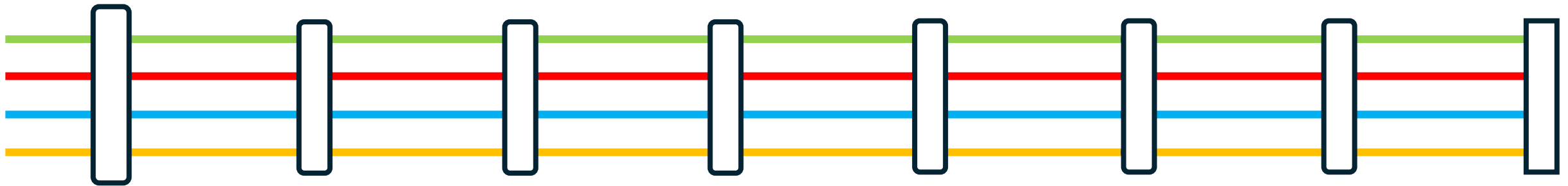
First Quarterly Network Report



January – March 2024

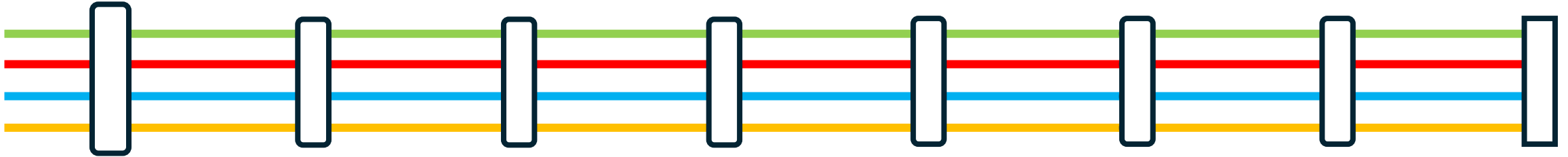
The SCHOOLHOODs network time table

First stop - analysis & vision



- Line 1 - learning and exchange @ network level
- Line 2 - putting things on the ground
- Line 3 - what else is out there?
- Line 4 - creative work with methods and tools

Back to the past – our starting position



It is tempting to go the easy way and tell that the SCHOOLHOODs main challenge is on too many cars arriving at school start (and end) that causes poor road safety conditions for active and independent school trips of pupils. It would be easy to blame this on the parents of pupils, they are the ones who drive the cars to school in the end. But our analytical work during the network activation phase showed that the challenge, its effects and who is part of it, is more complex.

We decided to approach the idea that school trips should be green, safe and happy. For working in this direction, we need to address how traffic is organised in our cities, how infrastructure conditions favour or hamper the different transport modes and how modal choices in this environment and in the light of social convenience, societal norms and trust in the ability of our children are taken.



Line 1 – learning & exchange @network level



Lessons on analysing school trips and integrated planning processes

To understand how school trips are done, learning how pupils come to school today is an evident need.

The [SCHOOLHOODs webinar #1](#) took exactly this topic to provide network cities and any interested visitor from sister networks with hand-on ideas and inspiration. Maciej Zacher from the Municipality of Skawina, a SCHOOLHOODs network city, shared his experience and lessons learnt from measuring school mobility since 5 years in a row.

The main hints are to concentrate on the facts you want to know, to carefully phrase the questions, to employ recognised channels for the promotion of the survey to schools and to keep the data collection as simple as possible – like by raising hands on questions. And on how to make use of the data – by publishing for everyone and in schools. And by using the data as the baseline knowledge to decide on fitting measures.

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#1 webinar

11.03.2024 9:00 - 12:00 CET

MEASURING SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL

Emily Sykes [Modeshift, UK]

Maciej Zacher [Municipality of Skawina, Poland]

SAVE THE DATE

Line 1 – learning & exchange @network level



Lessons on analysing school trips and integrated planning processes

Maciej based his school mobility measurement on the STARS method. This method and the entire programme on active school mobility got introduced by Emily Sykes of [ModeShift](#).

The UK-based NGO created a Travel Plan Scheme called [ModeShift Stars](#) for schools going way further than producing mere plans. With ModeShift Stars, a local team of pupils (and teachers) take the initiative to improve the share of active school trips.

They get support by the ModeShift team for analysing the state of play, defining objectives for a change of the modal split, planning and delivering measures and monitoring the impact to re-start the process and continue increasing active modes' share on all trips.

Schools get accreditation for their plans following a colour-coded stars system. And they get recognition at a national event honouring the most ambitious school travel plans.

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Line 1 – learning & exchange @network level



Lessons on analysing school trips and integrated planning processes

There is more to analysing school mobility though than the essentials on how pupils get to school, how they would like to get to school and if they come alone, with friends or with a caregiver. Taking up the thread from the first webinar, the network meeting in Brno presented and discussed further options to learn more on the school trips of pupils.

Fact-finding missions like school way or school environment analyses help to get the opinion and views of pupils. These can take a wider and more structured approach like creating mental maps employing the use of 5 structures to public space.

More simple exercises like the Traffic Snake Game or asking pupils to draw their way to school on a sheet of paper bear additional credit. They involve parents in a competition for sustainable mode use or demonstrate the difference of experience a child has when walking to school or when getting driven by car.

How public space is used at all, how people move in it and if public space meets the needs of pupils, especially of younger age, can be assessed by a range of methods as established by the Gehl People or the Van Leer Foundation applying the URBAN95 perspective.



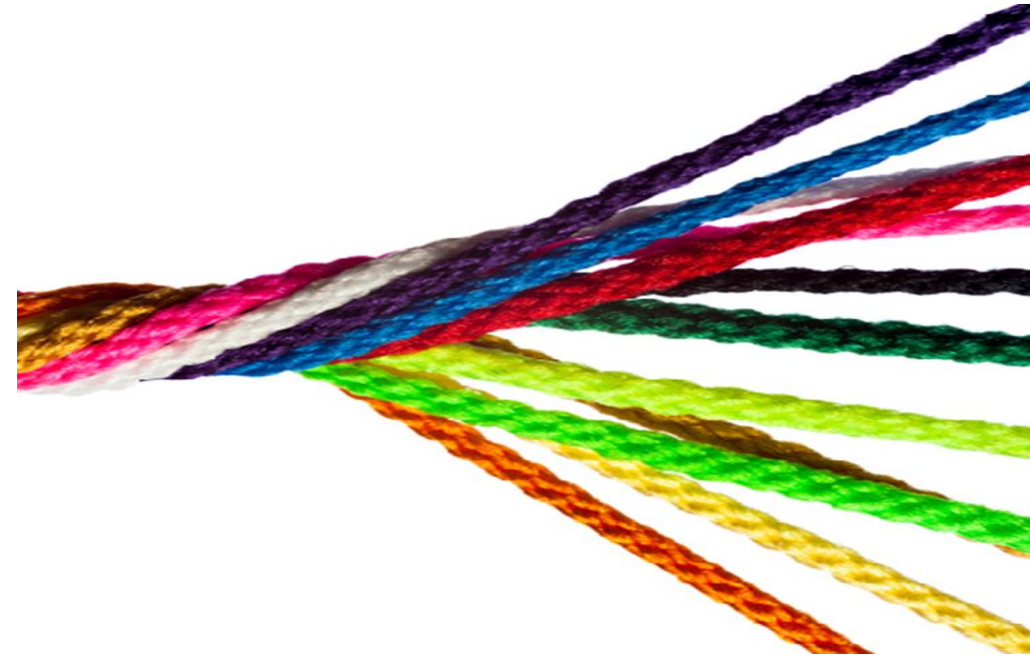
Line 1 – learning & exchange @network level



Lessons on analysing school trips and integrated planning processes

When is the right time to talk about integration for an „integrated planning process“? Our answer is „always“, so the SCHOOLHOODs teams started right with the start of the planning actions phase to perform a check on „how integrated are our plans for the process?“. Following an introduction on „what do we understand by „integration“ based on the URBACT guidance, every city performed an early stage integration check using the [Integration Assessment Grid](#). Interview groups of 2-3 cities reviewed the self-assessment and supported each other in improving the planning process to meet integration criteria.

A lesson learnt from our exercise on integration levels at local level was the increasing complexity of the topic connected to the spatial intervention, the objectives to meet and the measures to prepare. While preparing a single measure like a PEDibus seems easy to handle, adding further interventions to address our objectives is expanding a) the sectors we need and want to involve in our ULGs, b) horizontal and vertical cooperation needs, c) the territory to consider and d) the mix of soft and hard measures alongside respective funding sources for these.



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Line 1 – learning & exchange @network level



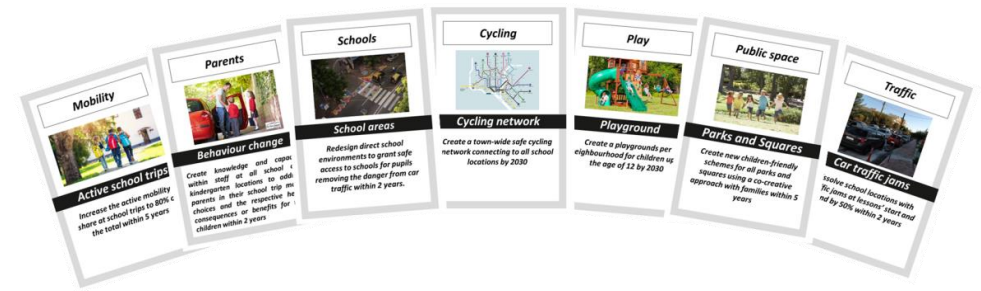
Lessons on analysing school trips and integrated planning processes

Our experiences from first ULG meetings is that the ULG members are always eager to start discussing measures right away. Our task - to „slow down“ the process and put the focus on creating a vision and fitting objectives to it - is not easy but necessary to base the work on the integrated action plans on a sound basis.

Therefore, the SCHOOLHOODs team discussed and practised variations on how to make work on visions and objectives interactive and fun.

The „Newspaper of Tomorrow“ exercise is a well known option thanks to the URBACT Summer University. In our Brno meeting, we tested the Three Ways Game. It works for discussions around different versions of a vision by asking participants to decide for one version and argue for it. The result is a joint or majority decision on a preferred vision statement. The Three Ways Game is based on a Runaround Game.

For identifying objectives, we tested a card game that confronts the group with a given set of possible objectives alongside the task to define which are fitting, which are missing and - if any are missing - to add them as new entries.



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Line 2 - putting things on the ground



Lessons on analysing school trips and integrated planning processes

Activation of Rethymno's ULG for the creation of a safe, green and happy environment on the way to school!

The Municipality of Rethymno in March 2024 conducted site visits and face-to-face meetings with municipal officials from the education and technical departments alongside the responsible deputy mayors of education and technical issues as the first move. Following this, the full ULG meeting involving 2 of the 3 main target groups, teachers and parents of the focus schools was held. The main purpose of the meetings was to diagnose and record on the spot the needs of each school and to sensitize both teachers and parents to actively participate in the actions of the local group by submitting their ideas and suggestions.

All parties agreed that changes are needed both in the transport infrastructure and public space to serve children as independent users of traffic with alternative modes of transport and in parental attitudes towards travel mode choices. In this context, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to the students in order to collect necessary information on how they travel to and from school and the factors that influence their choice.



Line 2 - putting things on the ground



Lessons on analysing school trips and integrated planning processes

In Brno, the first ULG meetings were organized school-wise. There was a dedicated meeting in February for the elementary school Krásného and another one for the elementary school Tuháčkova.

Both ULG meetings gathered representatives of pupils, parents, teachers, headmasters, the police, the city district and a transport expert. The meetings introduced the wide set of stakeholders to SCHOOLHOODS and to their mission as ULG members.

The main topic of the meetings was on discussing the problems that the respective school is facing and what the ULG members would like to change. For more deeper information ULG's members agreed preparing and running a survey about school mobility for pupils, parents and teachers. And to ask pupils to draw their way to/from school into a "mental map" with specification of the problematic points.

These results are expected for May 2024 will form highly important resources for shifting the attention to looking for suitable measures for at least one of the schools working as the role model within SCHOOLHOODS.



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Line 3 - what else is out there?

The Viennese approach to school mobility management

The SCHOOLHOODs team connected the Brno core network meeting with a Site Visit to Vienna and its Mobility Agency, a city-owned agency tasked with promoting and developing active mobility in the city.

Ms Anna Henkes presented and discussed with us how active mobility is promoted in schools and kindergartens, showcasing the work of the Mobility Agency.

One main approach is to supply kindergartens, primary schools and secondary school with teaching materials in the format of dedicated topic boxes.

The [kindergarten mobility box](#) makes use of stories, toys, games, materials on cycling for haptic experiences as well as an easy-to-use modal split assessment game using stickers. The box supplies pedagogues with a choice of topic on how to move in the city, exploring the kindergarten area and on skills and safety in traffic.

The boxes are available to any kindergarten for 4 – 6 weeks for free and get delivered to the kindergarten directly using a cargo bike.



Credit: Mobility Agency of Vienna

Line 3 - what else is out there?



The Viennese approach to school mobility management

For primary schools, the Mobility Agency created the programme „[The City & You](#)“ (Die Stadt & Du). The programme works with 3 boxes: the „way to school box“, the „neighbourhood box“ and the „bike-box“.

Each box includes a teaching module ready to use by teachers, a police and a workshop module. Once a class has run through the teaching and police modules, it can choose among a set of workshops fitting to the chosen box theme, like a rallye in the neighbourhood or a cycling training unit.

The teaching module includes a poster, guidance for the teacher and a workbook with exercises and materials for the lessons. The police module is connected to a visit of police staff to the class focused on traffic safety.

The programme „The City & You“ is free of charge and available for all schools. It connects well to the obligatory topic on traffic education that forms part of the curriculum for primary school in Austria. Since 2019, more than 66,000 children took part in the programme.



Credit: Mobility Agency of Vienna

Line 3 - what else is out there?



The Viennese approach to school mobility management

The programme „[Your City. Your Path](#)“ (Deine Stadt. Dein Weg) addresses secondary school pupils aged 10 to 12 years. It works with a set of teaching topics to motivate pupils for active mobility, sustainable behaviour and critical thinking.

The box supplies teachers with teaching guidance and material on the topics of health, climate protection and safety. Since traffic education is no longer an obligatory element of curricula in secondary schools, these topics got chosen and developed to match well to the standard teaching subjects for the first 2 grades after primary school.

The teaching guidance delivers 15 ready-to-use teaching units alongside respective challenges for the pupils. Once a class finished 3 of the 15 units, it can apply for a workshop such as an advanced skills cycling training, a bicycle repair workshop or a detective game investigating the quality of pedestrian spaces. Classes and pupils are honoured as mobility ambassadors once the programme is completed.

Since 2023, 400 boxes got handed out and 8,500 pupils rewarded as ambassadors.



Credit: Mobility Agency of Vienna

Line 3 - what else is out there?



The Viennese approach to school mobility management

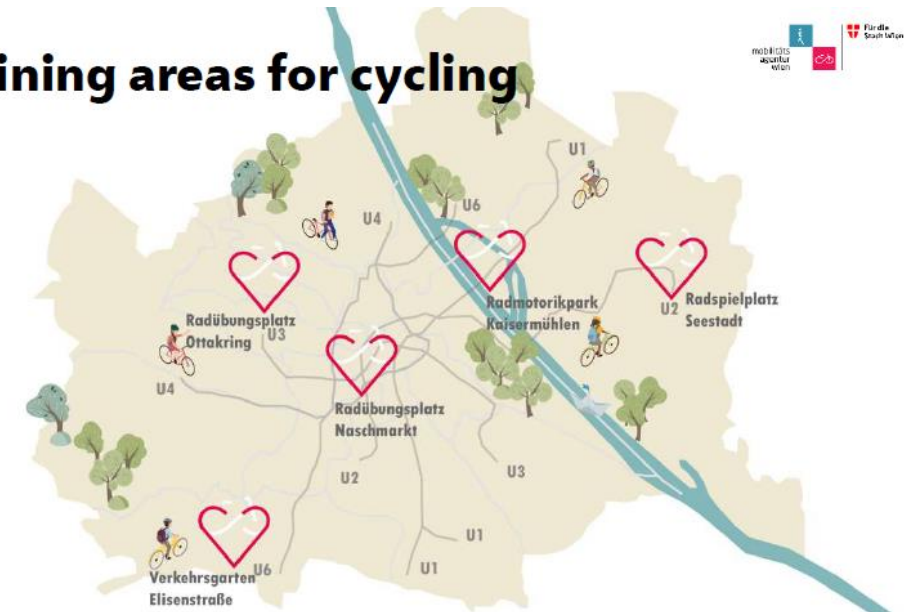
Cycling is clearly one of the major topics for Vienna's school mobility management programmes. In support to get more pupils cycling, a set of cycling training areas is ready to use for everybody.

Permanent training areas take up different topics such as motor skills and traffic rules. These are supplemented by a set of temporary training areas where a street or a parking space is reused for the purpose of cycling training.

The Mobility Agency and partners offer free of charge cycling training at four of the training areas. Children of 3 -12 years can take part without any pre-registration on Saturday or Sunday for each weekend between April and November. During official training times, skilled staff is present at the locations to guide and aid the children in practising.

Bicycles and helmets can be borrowed at the sites. Each of them is equipped with a drinking water fountain, toilets and a first-aid kit.

Training areas for cycling



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Line 3 - what else is out there?



The Viennese approach to school mobility management

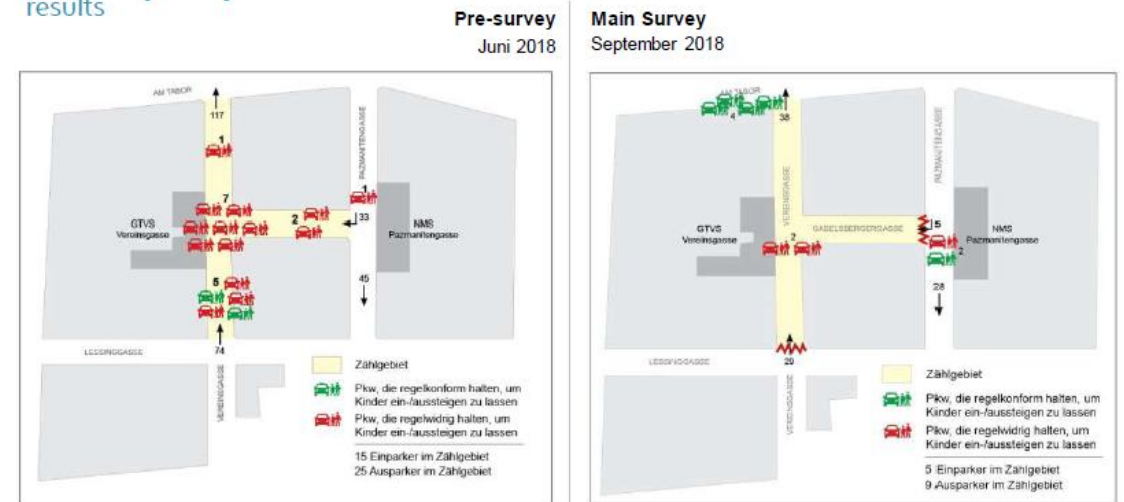
The idea of „School Streets“ is still rather new, although countries like Italy already look back at a rich history. The idea is to close the access road to a school for motorised traffic around lessons' start and end.

Vienna started to install School Streets using a [pilot project](#) in 2018 in the Vereinsgasse. Access roads to the primary school got closed with the start of school after holidays for a period of 2 month. The closure was done using a removable barrier fence.

The pilot used data collections on how children go to school before the summer holidays in June 2018 as well as during the pilot. Variations of the pilot with and without the barrier fence showed that the car drivers did not respect the street closure if no fence was at hand. The pilot's results was that with the fence in place, most cars stopped outside the fenced-off area. Active mobility shares increased, specifically walking while car and public transport arrivals decreased.

Today, Vienna has introduced 10 school streets.

Pilot project 2018 results



Line 3 - what else is out there?



The Viennese approach to school mobility management

The „ultimate goal“ for traffic schemes around schools is to create permanent structures that replace a public space working as a street for spaces working as outdoor lounges for pupils in the first place.

The SCHOOLHOODS team visited two of such examples in Vienna.

The primary school in the Schulgasse ran a participatory approach employing the pupils as planners. The idea was to connect the school to the park opposite of its location and create a space with a high quality of stay as a bridge to the park. The space between the school building and the park got turned to a pedestrian zone and the street alongside the building block and the park into a play street.



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Line 3 - what else is out there?



The Viennese approach to school mobility management

The second example was the redesign of the access road to the primary school in the Pfeilgasse.

Before the redesign, the road was a dead-end already, but with a teachers' parking space directly in front of the school and on-street parking along the road side.

The redesign removed all parking spaces and created a seating area for pupils where teachers' cars were parked before. The road itself got turned to a cycling street without access for motorised traffic. The cycling streets is part of a larger cycling connection from the nearby metro station at the inner ring to the inner city of Vienna.

Parts of the former road space is today used as green areas with seating options for everyone.



Line 4 - creative work with methods and tools



How to measure the quality of public space for children?

If children can walk or cycle to school depends on a wide set of factors. Taking a look at the infrastructure conditions, it is quickly evident that the pure existence of a walking or cycling connection is not enough. The space children are moving in or through needs to fit their needs. To define these needs, SCHOOLHOODs took a look at a set of methods at hand. The Van Leer Foundation developed the Urban95 Quality Criteria for measuring urban experiences of young children. The key is to take the perspective of a child by looking to a set of „eye-glasses“ at the level of 95 cm height. The level can be adjusted, if the perspective of older and taller children is in the focus of interest. The toolkit works with assessing a range of criteria in a 3-option-scoreboard, looking at protection, basic needs, comfort, interaction and connection of the space in question.

During the Brno meeting, the SCHOOLHOODs team tested the URBAN95 Quality Criteria and gathered experiences on to what extent an traffic-reduced inner-city square meets the criteria. It became evident, that even a largely pedestrianised square with the function of a market and meeting place is not by itself scoring well for the needs of children.

The Van Leer Foundation and Gehl People provide a [practical set of tools](#) to study public life and public spaces including the Urban95 Quality Criteria.



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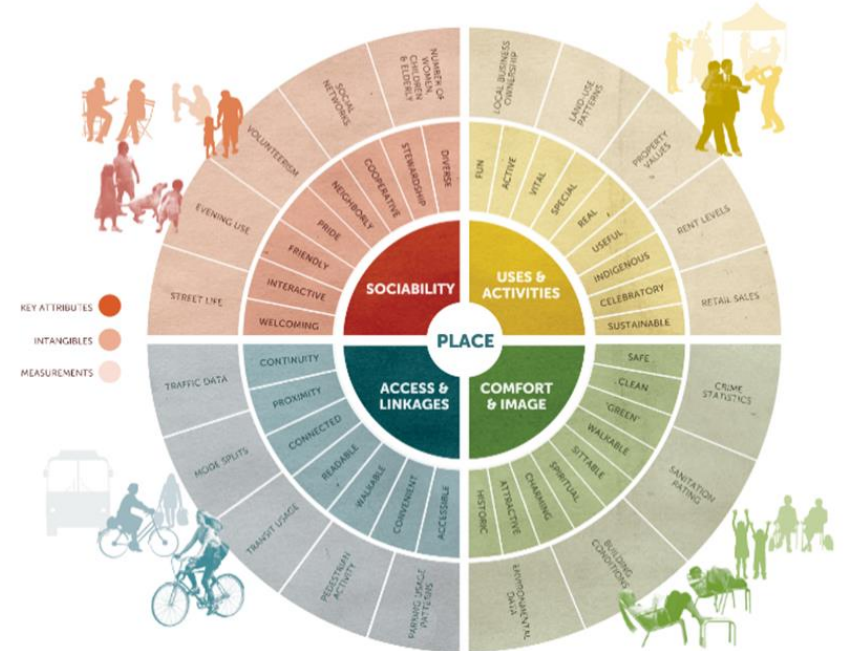
Line 4 - creative work with methods and tools

How to measure the quality of public space for children?

The SCHOOLHOODs team learned about more available tools to analyse and measure public space and school routes.

The [Open Route Service Map](#) is a free map web service working with isochrones or distances for different transport modes. The service allows to determine a max. distance around a location presenting the area as well as the population covered. It helps to show stakeholders the coverage of the area at walking and cycling distance. The Open Route Service is compatible to the [free GIS service QGIS](#) by a plug-in enhancing the level of information accessible to routing trips between e.g. home addresses and schools. Open Route Service as standalone can measure walking or cycling distances from a chosen destination to any point on the map.

The [Place Game](#) works similar to the URBAN95 Quality Criteria using an assessment system based on the four main topics sociability, uses and activities, comfort and image as well as access and linkages. These four topics are split into measurable and intangible values to assess. The latter are captured on the spot by observing and interviewing people. The measurable values can be assessed before or after the observation time.



The look ahead – our next station



Now, after the first three month of joint learning and local work, the SCHOOLHOODs team feels well-equipped to work for a better understanding on school mobility in our network cities. Local activities will concentrate on analysing the challenges and learning the details to them. And the work on concluding the understanding of today's situation comes along with the question how change should look like and how this change can manifest.

The point of attention will transform from the analytical focus to creating a vision on the desired future and defining fitting objectives and targets that help us to arrive at this vision. Still, our ULG work will need to put a certain „hold“ on the desire to talk and discuss on actions, but at the end of the next 3-month work period, we expect to be ready to start looking out for fitting actions that promise to be suitable to meet our objectives.

Which focus on creating safe, green and happy ways to school!



How to get in touch?



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Stay tuned to learn more about SCHOOLHOODS

At URBACT's official website: <https://urbact.eu/networks/schoolhoods>

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