



**Rethinking public space
for a sustainable
metropolitan future**



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Public space invites people to meet and interact. It allows human activity to flourish in cities, therefore, fostering cultural interactions, creativity, economic and social activity. Public spaces cannot reach their full potential if they are dominated by cars. Unfortunately, in many metropolitan spaces around the world, this is still the case today.

The pandemic highlighted the key role that local and metropolitan governments play in constructing the built environment. Urban regions are transforming their urban areas to give space back to people. They are providing better accessibility to green public spaces and meeting points within walking distance linked within a wider, resilient network of green spaces and good air quality.

Over the last two decades, cities all over the world have been working hard to transform public spaces and give them back to people, especially by providing less space for cars and more for pedestrians and cyclists. In the wake of the Covid-19 health crisis, there was a significant increase in the number of these initiatives worldwide. The pandemic has served as a reminder of the human need for social interaction. The basic function of urban spaces is to create places where people can easily meet. Just as the living room is the heart of our home, public space is the essence of a good urban environment, where people can live, meet each other and be active. A place where all persons can feel healthy, secure and confident. Public spaces must be (re)designed as an invitation to interact with others.



Pascal Smet
Secretary of State
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Octavi de la Varga
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Introduction

This publication aims to inspire and pave the way for metropolitan spaces in creating better public spaces for all, by providing urban planning tools, processes and recommendations.

This initiative, led by the Brussels-Capital Region in collaboration with Medellín, Montreal, Seoul Metropolitan Government and Barcelona Metropolitan Area, aimed to exchange experiences on the future of public metropolitan spaces. These exchanges took place between May and December 2021 and brought together urban practitioners and political leaders.

This publication recognises the challenges posed by comparing ten public spaces at varying scales, where concepts have distinct meanings in different contexts. To improve our understanding of urban spaces, both quantitative and qualitative indicators are needed to analyse the success of a public space. Quantitative data helps us understand density and the number of people using a particular public space. However, without qualitative indicators, it would be impossible to truly understand which societal groups are benefitting from public spaces. This study uses qualitative data to analyse public spaces according to their local context.

Since complex emergencies, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change, present the greatest threats and opportunities to metropolitan spaces, it is no surprise that most of these public space projects aim to promote human and planetary health. These ten case studies have implemented strategies to reduce

CO2 emissions and the heat-island effect and promote active mobility, biodiversity and greener environments for all. Another common element among these case studies is the great emphasis on creating a network between public spaces to create continuity and ensure that all communities have access to liveable and healthy environments and lifestyles, particularly in the context of the pandemic.

The ten case studies highlighted in this document aim to provide better public spaces for all, while cultivating happiness and a sense of community. These projects recognise the importance of fostering people's connection to where they are, to build social resilience. This is why the large majority of these public space projects are going back to basics by implementing practices based on community engagement and focusing on reintroducing nature to the urban landscape. In most of these projects, there is still room for improvement in better reclaiming public spaces for all. This is particularly important as public spaces are not neutral and inequalities are often reproduced in urban public spaces. In future developments, integrating women's voices and other perspectives and developing an intersectional analysis will be key to transforming public spaces into areas that foster belonging, equality, happiness and autonomy for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, ability, identity or socio-economic status.

In turning our attention to the future of public spaces, cities and regions are returning to the essential building blocks of our communities: people, places and nature.



Font del Rector, Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. © Adrià Goula



Bolivar Park, Medellín. © APP Agency

Creating a common language

To understand the level of inclusivity, sustainability, resilience and quality of these ten case studies on public spaces, it was necessary to develop a common language to allow us to analyse projects using the same lens.

Resilient and sustainable public spaces

Resilience does not have the same meaning to all metropolitan spaces. Many define resilience as the capacity of a territory to adapt and mitigate environmental changes. This definition is clearly linked to sustainability and climate change. Although not all metropolitan spaces define resilience as environmental resilience, all of them do include aspects of social resilience in their projects, such as ensuring social cohesion and inclusion in their public spaces. In the case of Medellín, the Green Corridor project also integrated aspects of economic resilience, by allocating space for economic activity in the public space.

The Covid-19 pandemic influenced the concept of resilience and led many administrations to include urban health as a key aspect of resilience.

The Covid-19 pandemic influenced the concept of resilience and led many authorities to include urban health as a key aspect of resilience. Most metropolitan spaces highlighted that extreme care should be taken when planning outdoor spaces to integrate health parameters. This means going beyond greening spaces and ensuring that public spaces promote socialisation, play, sport and facilitate caring activities. Preventing mental illness and improving overall wellbeing should also be a key element in the design of public spaces.

“

The Covid-19 pandemic influenced the concept of resilience and led many administrations to include urban health as a key aspect of resilience.

In this publication, sustainability is defined as a series of solutions to fight against global warming and a lever for changing travel patterns and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, conversations around the definition of sustainability revolved around the place of nature in urban areas. Many metropolitan spaces define nature as a global ecosystem that is both a service and an infrastructure in urban areas.

Links to its context

Considers the place of nature
 Local economy
 Optimal use of resources and space
 Long-term vision
Adaptable to expectations and different uses
 Fits within the “bigger picture”
 Circular economy
 Good management
 Contribute to ecology
Proportion of built-up areas and open spaces Tree planting
 Meet people’s needs

Words associated with urban resilience and sustainability during the second workshop on public spaces.



Place Alice-Girard. © City of Montreal

Inclusive public spaces

Public spaces fulfil key societal functions and shape the characteristics of urban areas. Public spaces should be accessible and safe for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, ability, identity or socio-economic status.



Gender considerations are not systematically mainstreamed in public space projects.

Inclusive public spaces were largely defined as places that are safe, accessible, readable, liveable and integrate gender and universal design considerations. Although this definition includes a wider vision of inclusivity, there are challenges for truly incorporating the needs of specific groups within public spaces. For instance, gender considerations are not often mainstreamed in public space projects. Although many of the projects presented are thought to be safe for women and girls, none of them have been designed or implemented using a gender-based analysis. Many metropolitan spaces are now starting to incorporate this perspective into new projects.



Words associated with inclusive public spaces during the second workshop.

Qualitative public spaces

Quality depends on what a particular place needs. All projects have a clear quality component and all workshop participants stated that quality should be present every step of the way and needs to be measured in relation to the project objectives. Qualitative public spaces were defined as site-specific spaces that increase welfare and have a high level of appropriation.

To ensure high quality public spaces, cities and metropolitan spaces follow high standards in terms of competition, project design, programmes, materials and management. The notion of high quality materials is not the same all over the world and depends on the local context.

Quality was also linked to the concept of comfort. For instance, the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, or AMB for its initialism in Catalan, defines a comfortable public space as a place that promotes people's wellbeing. During workshops, participants highlighted the importance of testing before building the final product. In this sense, tactical urbanism strategies can be used to enable creativity and measure functionality before committing to the final product.



Words associated with qualitative public spaces during the second workshop.

How can success be measured?

Many cities, regions and metropolitan spaces chose public space indicators according to the priorities in their territories' action plan. Indicators are a useful tool to provide credibility, increase comparability between projects and create a common language to advance more quickly towards the same goals. Yet in many cases, not all departments use a common set of indicators. This can create difficulties when aiming to implement a strategic vision.

“

Public space indicators are site- and context-specific.

Today, collecting result indicators is still a challenge in many metropolitan spaces. In many cases, public authorities have a comprehensive idea of how a project will be implemented, but little knowledge of the level of appropriation and satisfaction with a particular public space. Polling can help with assessments and feedback on specific projects. Polling can be carried out before or after the implementation of a project. Some territories use polling after the project is completed, but because of budget constraints, not many resources are available to analyse the results. This is why some administrations allocate a specific budget for polling, to ensure that projects have the necessary resources to understand the level of success of a particular public space.

The success of a particular public space should not only be measured quantitatively (i.e. by the number of people who use the space after an urban intervention) but rather qualitatively (i.e.

on the benefits and usefulness of the space to local communities). What's more, understanding how a public space changes over time and its ability to adapt to the needs of dwellers is key to understanding success.

Tip: How can your administration think about indicators?

- **Put happiness at the centre of public space design** and define clear objectives for the public space in question before identifying indicators.
- **Rely on the desired indicators, not on the technical sophistication of a tool.** Sometimes a simple spreadsheet can be useful to gather and analyse data.
- **Choose indicators based on the needs of a specific project.** It is always important to use a common set of indicators across all departments. Nevertheless, not all projects have the same set of objectives. Choose indicators that can better help your administration understand and respond to the needs of the communities that use the space.
- **Results and implementation indicators have proved to be the most effective factors when gathering data.** Think about using systematic surveys to avoid lengthy annual data collection.



School Contract. © City of Brussels



School Contract. © PTArchitekten

Public space is the building block of our communities. The large majority of the projects highlighted in this study are going back to basics by implementing practices based on community engagement and focusing on bringing nature back to the urban landscape. These projects may use different approaches, but they all have a common thread: the emphasis on people, places and nature.

Vision and implementation

All the projects, except for Font del Rector Park in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, were part of a wider programme or strategy. Strategic documents are useful to ensure projects follow a set of values and a shared vision for the territory. Strategic documents also serve to validate the work carried out by the technical teams working on pilot projects that implement new ways of rethinking public space.

Many of the projects described administrative barriers and collaboration between departments or other levels of government, as constraints. These difficulties usually put pressure on decision-making and meeting project deadlines.

Once these public spaces opened to the public, half of the public spaces were managed directly by the city or borough and the other half were being run by the regional or metropolitan government in partnership with the municipal

level. The maintenance and evaluation of public spaces were also described as challenges. Many administrations are trying to address this by implementing evaluation tools that measure progress and the use of public space to identify potential safety issues and conflicts between uses, particularly in terms of noise, drinking on the street and so on.

Promoting socialisation and a sense of belonging

All projects aimed to provide better public spaces for all, while fostering wellbeing and a sense of community and belonging in metropolitan spaces. Participants agreed that public participation is a key vehicle for creating a common vision and sparking discussion around the places we inhabit. In many of the projects, participation was a key component in determining the design and scope of public space. Including dwellers and users in the conception and design of the project was also a way of avoiding conflicts between different uses for the space and ensuring a sense of ownership and belonging.



Public spaces must be designed as an invitation to interact with others.



L28 revitalisation project in Brussels. © urban.brussels, Séverin Malaud

Although many of the projects presented are thought to be safe for women and girls, none of them mainstreamed gender during the design and implementation process. Designing urban spaces with a gender perspective sheds light on the diversity of interests, experiences and social realities present in public spaces and can help create metropolitan spaces that are more equal and inclusive. This is why many metropolitan spaces are now starting to incorporate this vision in their projects.

In terms of accessibility, most of these public spaces are readable and accessible to different groups. Some of them were designed using universal design practices but are missing the appropriate signage. The Les Planes Park in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area was the only public space specifically designed for people with disabilities (i.e. providing adequate material and equipment so that children with different abilities can play in the park).

Children and teenagers' views and experiences are not always considered when drawing up public spaces, such as parks, squares and streets and even playgrounds, school environments and sports venues. Only the School Contract Project in Brussels included children's perspectives, although it was not the only project that had an impact on children's right to the city.

Adaptable and flexible spaces

Although mixed-use spaces can create conflict between different uses, mainly between residential and commercial uses, these projects promote different functions and connect people through a network of public spaces. Combining different uses can be challenging because uses can sometimes be contradictory. For instance, in parks, there is pressure to increase the number of green spaces and biodiversity, while providing more places for sport and play. Sometimes both needs can create conflict, such as ensuring nature is well taken care of. A range of strategies can help resolve this dilemma: creating a network of public spaces to better manage different needs and uses, clearly defining spaces and their particular uses, providing a guide explaining how to use the space and clearly displaying signage to guide users and help with the legibility of the public space.

Most of these case studies encourage a controlled appropriation of the space. This is achieved either by providing specific spaces where dwellers and users can decide how to better use the space or by providing a set of guidelines to inhabitants explaining how to



L28 revitalisation project in Brussels. © urban.brussels, Séverin Malaud

make the best possible use of the public space. However, some metropolitan spaces are trying out using less planning in their projects to allow people to use the space as they wish.



Some metropolitan spaces are trying out using less planning in their projects to allow people to use the space as they wish.

Promoting urban health

Although none of these public space projects incorporates a health impact assessment or data related to health, all these spaces help improve liveability and promote healthier environments and lifestyles for all. From a human health perspective, many of these projects have had to quickly adapt to the needs created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The health and social crisis pushed technical teams to redefine some projects to better cover people's needs and work quickly to open extra public space. From closing roads to create social meeting points, allowing additional space so restaurants could extend their terraces and increasing space for cycling.



From a planetary health perspective, the goal of many of these projects has been to reduce CO₂ emissions and the heat island effect in metropolitan spaces by creating green corridors, providing shade, reducing motorised traffic and promoting active mobility. Most spaces encourage a variety of uses and functions and try to connect with different areas within the metropolitan space. Many of these projects, including the Pierre-Dansereau Park in Montreal and the L28A railway project in Brussels, create a network of public spaces that encourage play, relaxation and socialisation, while developing new sustainable ways of managing water and sewerage and improving biodiversity in urban areas.

Working towards urban resilience in metropolitan spaces

Environmental resilience is at the heart of most of these projects. Many of these public spaces have been designed using nature-based solutions to protect, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems while addressing societal challenges and increasing biodiversity. These strategies are key to reducing the risks associated with the climate emergency and creating climate-resilient cities and regions. These strategies include reducing space for motorised traffic, encouraging active mobility and the use of public transportation, reclaiming urban spaces for the people,

implementing greening strategies and enhancing water and waste management strategies.

While bringing nature back to metropolitan spaces is more important than ever, it is sometimes difficult to guarantee that all communities benefit from these actions. As greening becomes a tool to make under-invested neighbourhoods more attractive and boost economic growth, these urban regeneration strategies can potentially displace existing dwellers through green gentrification. Many of these public space projects included greening strategies but lacked the technical capacity to measure gentrification. Ensuring that minority and lower-income populations continue benefiting from these new green spaces in the long run is key to promote equality and inclusion in metropolitan spaces.

Yet resilience is not only about environmental resilience, but also about economic and social resilience. Some of these public space projects set out to restore unused spaces and preserve historical spaces to contribute to urban resilience, while others had a larger focus on improving the culture and heritage of a particular place, therefore promoting local economic activities in the public space.

The next challenge is to incorporate a vision that is more people-centric and focuses on the specific needs and experiences of different groups to create truly thriving and resilient public spaces for all.



Avenida Jardin, Medellin. © APP Agency

Public space case studies

Each of the following ten case studies have been analysed using six main indicators selected from the entire study, including:

- Participation
- Gender
- Accessibility
- Health
- Resilience
- Sustainability

These indicators help deepen our understanding of what constitutes an inclusive, sustainable, resilient and high-quality public space. Moreover, particular attention was dedicated to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in these spaces and how these projects contribute to improving wellbeing and adapting to the changing needs of communities (see Annex 1 for complete methodology).

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**Brussels-
Capital Region**



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**City of
Medellín**



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**Barcelona
Metropolitan
Area**



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**City of
Montreal**



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**Seoul
Metropolitan
Government**



Brussels- Capital Region



New public space repurposed from the old 28A railway line. © urban.brussels, Marc Detiffe

The Brussels-Capital Region is made up of 19 local authorities and governance is divided among numerous institutions, such as urban.brussels, which is responsible for urbanism, heritage and urban renovation and perspective. brussels, which oversees territorial planning.

The Brussels-Capital Region has competencies in many areas related to territorial planning and follows three principles for urban renewal: 1) building or refurbishing housing, 2) the reclassification of public space and 3) encouraging social cohesion. Therefore the region invests mainly in priority zones or urban revitalisation zones, which are areas where there is little interest from private investment and which usually have high population density.



Vision for the Klavertje Vier primary school forecourt. © act. Wauw – Tractabel.

Better school environments for all

The Klavertje Vier primary school is a grey island in a green environment. This project seeks to improve safety and street visibility while encouraging soft mobility in the quieter streets of the neighbourhood.

The project to redevelop the forecourt of Klavertje Vier school is part of the regional urban renewal programme School Contract led by perspective.brussels. This programme seeks to improve school environments in Brussels and better integrate schools in the surrounding neighbourhood by opening school infrastructure to the neighbourhood and redesigning public spaces around schools. The programme focuses on schools located in urban revitalisation zones to improve social cohesion.

The redevelopment of Klavertje Vier primary school's forecourt aims to make the school safer by creating a square that will act as a meeting point and narrowing the road to create three wider pedestrian crossings. The project also includes a large, landscaped staircase with space for foot traffic and for people to stop and rest, acting as a meeting place and a link between the school and the neighbourhood. It is designed as an object in its own right, with integrated bicycle storage to free up space for play. Playful elements and signage will be placed on the forecourt to make young and old aware of cycling through the area.

With a budget of €528,770 for the redevelopment of the forecourt and €46,180 for the creation of a cycle lane, the project has four main objectives:

- Making the public spaces around the school more comfortable.
- Improving safety and street visibility.
- Encouraging active modes of transport such as cycling.
- Creating a space for rest and a meeting point for pupils and dwellers.

Why is the School Contract scheme important?

- It invests in schools and their surroundings, creating a safe and inclusive environment for children and providing high-quality public space for dwellers.
- The scheme provides concrete tools for municipalities, schools and designers to improve the quality of public spaces around schools, as well as offering suggestions on how to involve children in the design of these spaces.

A step-by-step guide

1

Study: The Klavertje Vier School Contract project started with a study analysing the environment around the school and identifying the challenges and opportunities for the school and the neighbourhood. This study phase was carried out by a consortium of two consultancies made up of architects, urban planners and sociologists, on behalf of perspective.brussels.

2

Participatory process: During the study, a participatory process helped define the needs and expectations of students and teachers, as well as neighbourhood associations. Improving street visibility to guarantee safety at the entrance of the school, improving the park opposite the school and making the forecourt a meeting point and resting space for the neighbourhood were the priorities of the school community.

3

Programme: The Klavertje Vier School Contract project follows a detailed programme including a budget, timeline and a set of activities with students to foster social cohesion and raise awareness of sustainable development.

4

Implementation: After being approved by the government, the implementation of the project began by choosing a project coordinator. Works for the redevelopment of the forecourt will start in summer 2022 and take 10 months. To minimise disruption, the project is being carried out in different phases.

5

Appropriation: To support the appropriation of the project, the project coordinator set up a complementary participatory process. Three events were organised to ensure appropriation by local actors.

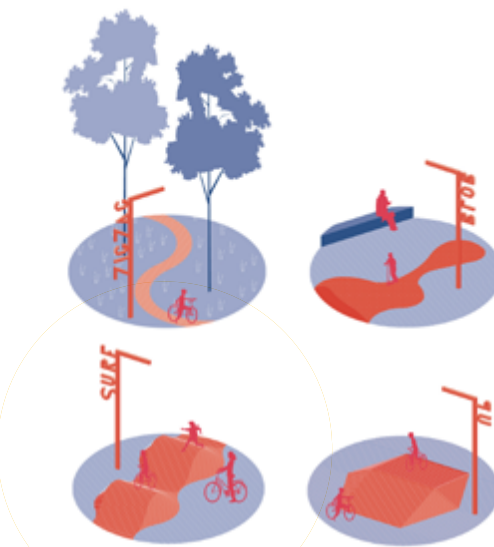
The main barriers

Parking space

A petition was drawn up and signed by several inhabitants to express their dissatisfaction with the removal of parking spaces that was planned as part of the redevelopment of the public space. The City of Brussels, as the body in charge of the project, decided to reduce the number of parking spaces to be removed.

Local appropriation

In the years to come, appropriation of the project will be a crucial element to measure the success of this public space.



Klavertje Vier primary school design.
© act. Wauw – Tractabel.

| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|--|-------------------|---------------|---|
| Limited | ⊗ | Easy-to-read material but no use of universal design | Social resilience | Tree planting | Encouraging play, socialisation, active mobility and improving safety |

Learn more about the [Klavertje Vier School Contract project](#) and the [redevelopment of the school's forecourt](#). [The School Contract for the Brussels-Capital Region](#).

[Explainer video](#)



New public space repurposed from the old 28A railway line. © urban.brussels, Séverin Malaud

Repurposing a former railway line

The 28A was an abandoned railway line that has become an attractive public space thanks to the Bockstael Sustainable Neighbourhood Contract.

This unused linear space crosses the Brussels-Capital Region from north to south. The objective of the L28A project was to create new public space from unbuilt, inaccessible space resulting from the railway infrastructure. This new public space also aims to create a public green area that is integrated into neighbouring districts and connects with existing infrastructures, such as the Senne Park, the ongoing development of the West-Station Urban Renewal Contract and the future Tour & Taxis Park. The creation of this green corridor outlined two main challenges: 1) reinforcing the identity of the district and 2) creating a regional green network.

This project is part of the Bockstael Sustainable Neighbourhood Contract, which revolves around Bockstael square and railway lines 28, 50 and 60. The Sustainable Neighbourhood Contract is part of a scheme to improve low-investment and neglected areas in the Brussels-Capital Region. The programme, in partnership with the Brussels-Capital Region, the municipality and dwellers, seeks to improve social cohesion and quality of life in urban areas. The Bockstael district is densely built-up and has few green spaces for dwellers to enjoy, this is why the revitalisation programme chose to invest in the following:

- A green network and five pocket parks.
- A pedestrian/cycle link along the railway line.
- The development and enhancement of public spaces and the creation of community facilities.
- Projects for youth and participatory initiatives focusing on communication, the environment and culture.

How participation was ensured

- The project was part of a participatory process in the context of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Contract. Participation and communication with the neighbourhood were encouraged through general assemblies, neighbourhood commissions and exploratory walks. Participation started with the programme that was drawn up in 2013 and continued throughout the Sustainable Neighbourhood Contract until 2018.
- A dweller representing the Habiquart L28 sustainable neighbourhood was part of the advisory committee to appoint the design team in 2016, organised by the Bouwmeester-Maitre Architecte (BMA).
- The selected design office (Landinzicht, Baukunst, ARA) worked together with an agency specialised in participation (MAAT). During the preliminary phase of the project, they set up a participatory process specific to the project, which included a few round table discussions and meetings with dwellers. During the permit phase, participation went smoothly because there was little opposition to the project.

A step-by-step guide

1

Scale: The project acts in response to the lack of green space in the district and consists of the removal of current occupants, obtaining the right to use the land, implementing a master plan for the entire site, developing access and connections to real estate and the L28A site developed by Environment Brussels. This project also aims to continue greening the area by creating a pocket park, a green play area and recreational and sports areas while preserving the wooded atmosphere on the site.

2

Administrative division: Urban Brussels monitors the implementation of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Contract for the Brussels-Capital Region. The City of Brussels is the contracting authority for the global study and oversees the implementation of the Tielemans Pocket Park (adjacent to the L28A Park) and other programmes, as well as acquiring land for the L28A Park. Environment Brussels took part in the Advisory Committee, co-financed the L28A Park project and is the contracting authority to execute the project.

3

Sustainability: To ensure the sustainability and technical aspects of the project, the consultancy agency ARA—as a partner of the multidisciplinary project team—assisted in the process, from the design stage to project completion.



© urban.brussels, Séverin Malaud

What worked well

- Co-financing with another public institution contributed to a much more ambitious project. The total budget for the project was €3,900,000, which resulted in high-quality landscaping and architecture.
- Commitment from all parties and the local neighbourhood association resulted in a coherent programme that responded to the needs of inhabitants. Moreover, as Environment Brussels is responsible for the development, management and maintenance of the green space, this new green pocket in the region will be well conserved.

The main barriers

- Co-financing made project management complex (in terms of organisation, schedules and procedures). For instance, the City of Brussels oversaw acquiring the land, while Environment Brussels was responsible for the development of the park project. Each of these moving parts has its own schedule and procedures. Pre-agreed responsibilities and schedules can be helpful.
- When acquiring land, it is key to consider the price for the development of public space and calculate the purchase price based on a private/commercial development.
- It is key to have flexible structures and regulations in place that allow new principles to be implemented. For instance, the project considered reusing soil, but it was impossible because of existing regulations.



© urban.brussels, Séverin Malaud

Learn more about the [Bockstael Sustainable Neighbourhood Contract](#) and the [L28A project](#). Watch this [video](#).

| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|---------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| ✓ | ✗ | Limited | Environmental resilience | Restoration of wasteland, greening and preservation of nature | Increased social interaction, active mobility, safety and green spaces |

City of Medellín



Bolivar Park. © APP Agency, Medellín

The city of Medellín has a population of almost 2.5 million inhabitants (2018). It is the capital of the Antioquia Department and is the second biggest city in Colombia. Its metropolitan area, the Valle de Aburrá, is home to 3.9 million people, which makes it the second largest metropolitan area after Bogotá.

The municipality is divided into 16 districts. Medellín uses the Management System for Territorial Equity (SGET) strategy to guarantee equity across the urban area and avoid segregation in the city. The strategy is based on the future needs of the area and has three main stages: planning, action and financing.



Regeneration of Bolívar Park. © APP Agency, Medellín

Reactivating the historic city centre

The renovation of Bolívar Park, one of the most important parks in Medellín, located in the historic city centre, aims to improve the park by highlighting its heritage.

Bolívar Park is a heritage park located in the centre of Medellín. It is an iconic public space located in an Asset of Cultural Interest area. The famous Catedral de Villanueva, for example, is located next to the park. The area brings together a variety of mixed-use, mostly commercial and residential. Most users are seniors who use the park as a meeting point.

Based on the needs identified for Downtown Medellín in 2012-2015, the Mayor's Office developed a management plan for the integral development of the city centre, the PGIIC, which

defines the basis for the different actions needed to improve the quality of life of all inhabitants. The analysis included people's needs for Bolívar Park and its surroundings.

In this project, it was very important to highlight the heritage of the area and give greater priority to pedestrians by reducing the space dedicated to motorised traffic and expanding the park's footprint. The project also aims to provide resting spaces, cultural activities and meeting points, encouraging a sense of belonging to the city.

To highlight the area's heritage, the park's design includes stages for performances, such as La Retreta, a traditional concert that has been held in Bolívar Park since 1892. A pergola that frames the Simón Bolívar monument allows for gatherings in the public space and emphasises the greenery in the park. The project also restored the façades around the park to highlight heritage buildings in the area.

What worked well

- The park follows universal design principles and was designed on a single level to improve wheelability and walkability.
- The conception of public space on a single level and the reduction of the vehicle access allowed the park's footprint to be extended while reducing motorised traffic and noise pollution.

The main barriers

- Coordination between different municipal agencies was challenging and disagreements in the design of the heritage area affected the timeline and approval from the Ministry of Culture and the Administrative Department of Planning.
- Pre-existing problems are still prevalent in the area and some cases have increased. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on launching the programme.



Renovation Plan of Bolivar Park.
© APP Agency, Medellin



Bolivar Park. © APP Agency, Medellin

| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|---------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| ⊗ | ⊗ | ⊙ | Environmental and social resilience | Increased green area | Increased social interaction and green spaces |



Avenida Jardín Corridor © APP Agency, Medellín

An urban green corridor

This project highlights Avenida Jardín’s existing characteristic as a green corridor. The project connects 1.3 kilometres of green and public space and encourages play, rest and economic activity in the neighbourhood.

Avenida Jardín is an important main road and high street that connects two heritage parks. It is a tourist and commercial corridor that lacks adequate public infrastructure. This once residential zone is now a mixed-use zone with restaurants, designer boutiques, hotels and residential buildings. This area has experienced rapid changes, in some cases without complying with urban planning regulations.

The project, which was completed in 2020, aimed to improve universal accessibility, safety and mobility conditions for dwellers and visitors. To expand public space, Medellín reduced three lanes of traffic to two and created pavements on both sides of the road. To increase safety, zebra crossings, greenery and street furniture (bus stops, loading and unloading zones and seating areas) were put in place. Moreover, tactical urbanism strategies were used in an intersection to test the new street organisation and traffic before making any permanent changes. This test

allowed the city to successfully experiment while improving safety for pedestrians.

In terms of environmental resilience, this project also represented an opportunity to strengthen the continuity of the green corridor, increase green public spaces in Medellín and reduce air and noise pollution in the area. The project also preserved heritage trees in the corridor, conserving nature in the area.

In terms of economic resilience, the project aims to encourage economic activity and create a source of non-tax income that will maintain the urban landscape. For the time being, the areas destined for economic use can only be occupied with temporary commercial elements. Because of the importance of promoting the local economy and as part of the city’s economic reactivation plan, the APP Agency is developing a strategy alongside the Municipality of Medellín to allow permanent structures in these economic zones.



Cross Section Detail - Avenida Jardín Corridor © APP Agency, Medellín

A step-by-step guide

1

The 2016-2019 Development Plan for the Municipality of Medellín set out Integral Projects for Medellín. This was defined as the renovation of public space in selected areas of the Commune of Laureles. The Agency for the Management of Landscapes, Heritage and Public-Private Partnerships (APP) was responsible for the design and implementation of the project, which began in 2017.

2

The project started by characterising the territory, identifying the state of public infrastructure, requirements and carrying out an ethnographic study involving the different stakeholders in the community, including children, young people, adults, seniors, shops owners and visitors.

3

Working groups and workshops were organised with the Administrative Department of Planning and the Secretary of Mobility to create a vision for the design.

4

Community workshops were organised to discuss the project and to approve the design of the area and the refurbishment of the façades along the corridor. A participatory budget was allocated to strengthen relations between the state and civil society.

5

The APP Agency monitored the construction and design of the project, which allowed it to track the behaviour and activities of commercial and residential stakeholders even when construction was suspended due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

When the gradual reopening of the city was started by the government, the APP Agency could analyse behaviour and use of public space in terms of different logistics services related to the restaurant sector, including the loading and unloading of goods and home delivery services. This had an impact not only on the construction of the project but also on vehicle and pedestrian mobility in the area.

What worked well

- The continuous monitoring carried out by the APP Agency allowed it to adapt to the changing circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Tactical urbanism strategies made it possible to try out the new organisation of the street and traffic before making any permanent changes. This allowed the city to successfully experiment while improving safety for pedestrians.
- Using a participatory budget and organising workshops with dwellers and businesses strengthened relations between the city and civil society.

The main barriers

- The coordination of the construction works with three different contracts required extensive coordination by the APP Agency.
- The design of the waste management system is a major problem for the corridor. The APP Agency is planning a second phase of the project to find an optimal and sustainable solution for proper waste management.
- Parking and traffic are significant issues in the area, particularly because of the increase in deliveries during the Covid-19 pandemic. To better understand demand, the APP Agency is working with the Secretary of Mobility to develop regulated parking zones.



Avenida Jardín Corridor, © APP Agency, Medellín

| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|------------------------------------|---|----------|---|
| ✓ | ✗ | Accessible space but lacks signage | Economic, social and environmental resilience | Greening | Increased space for active mobility and better waste management |

[Learn more about Avenida Jardín Corridor](#)

Barcelona Metropolitan Area



Les Planes Park. © AMB

The Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB) is formed by 36 municipalities and has 3.2 million inhabitants over an area of around 636 km². The metropolitan area includes 52% of open green spaces, mainly two rivers, mountains, the beach and the agricultural area next to the delta of the river.

The AMB is responsible for three areas: territorial planning, urban planning and infrastructures of metropolitan interest. The Public Space Department works mainly on two areas: new projects and conservation. The Metropolitan Area does not only analyse, design and build the

projects, but it is also in charge of maintaining public spaces, such as infrastructure related to mobility, parks, beaches and natural areas. This allows the administration to evaluate the projects and understand what works.

The integrated urban planning of the metropolitan territory through the Metropolitan Urban Master Plan (PDUM) and the Municipal Urban Planning Scheme (POUM). The AMB is responsible for the initiative in terms of the design and initial and provisional approvals of both plans and their subsequent amendments.



Les Planes Inclusive playground. © AMB

An inclusive playground

This inclusive playground seeks to provide the Les Planes Park with new equipment to turn this area into a green lung and allow dwellers to enjoy themselves and socialise in this space.

The Barcelona Metropolitan Area oversees 52 urban parks, which includes the maintenance and improvement of these public spaces. Before the pandemic, park use was limited and parks have now become the best places to do sport and socialise.

More than 120,000 people live in the vicinity of Les Planes Park, within 15 minutes by foot. The idea behind this inclusive playground was to create a place that is vibrant and provides high quality space for dwellers. The park is divided into two platforms joined by a large slope, making use of the topography to create another

space to play. The inclusive playground is a circular area in the centre of the park. This design aims to provide an inclusive space by offering all children the opportunity to enjoy the playground. The project uses different types of equipment and materials, such as the use of rubber flooring, to increase accessibility, while creating rest areas, planting trees to guarantee shade and signposting the equipment. To make the most of this project, dwellers received a booklet explaining the space.

Sustainability is another key point in this project. The project aimed to reduce the need to change the park topography and better manage rainwater drainage, which runs into two large drainage strips that filter the water into the ground. This park has become a green lung in the Hospitalet de Llobregat area and attracts people from the entire district to enjoy this sustainable space.

A step-by-step guide

1

The decision to build a new children's playground came after several meetings with municipal technicians to determine the best programme to revitalise the park. The concept of inclusivity was a mandatory policy in the project's development.

2

The main public administrations and institutions involved in financing the project were the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and Hospitalet de Llobregat City Council.

3

The Town Hall carried out meetings with schools around the park to find out what kind of playground children imagined.

What worked well

- The park allows children with different abilities to play. It is very popular and well-adapted so that children in wheelchairs can play.
- Using the topography of the space to create a play area. Instead of changing the layout of the space, the slope is another play element, with ropes and slides.
- This park has become a green lung in Hospitalet de Llobregat and attracts people from the entire district to enjoy this sustainable space.

The main barriers

- Before the project, this public space had management issues, particularly in terms of dogs. To solve this, two large dog areas were integrated into the design.
- At the moment, there are problems in summer because of high temperatures. A line of trees was planted to help create shade in 5-6 years.



| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|---------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| ⊗ | ⊗ | ⊙ | Environmental resilience | Restoration of non-used space, nature preservation, better rainwater management and greening | Play area thought to improve wellbeing for children with disabilities |

[Learn more about the project](#)

Font del Rector Gardens



Renovation of Font del Rector. © Adrià Goula

Bringing nature back to dwellers

The project to renovate the Font del Rector Gardens and the surroundings of Ca l'Altisent in Sant Climent de Llobregat is part of a series of actions that aim to transform the town.

The project to renovate the Font del Rector Gardens and the surroundings of Ca l'Altisent in Sant Climent de Llobregat is part of a series of actions to transform the town of Sant Climent. The project includes two separate parts: The Plaza and access to the future Sant Climent library and the Sant Climent Park.

The park improvement project is part of a field study that covers the entire area surrounding the river, between Carrer Marí and Carrer Església. This area is to become part of the Sant Climent metropolitan park. Sant Climent did not use to

have a metropolitan park. The objective was to reclaim this unused space to create an open space for dwellers and create a network of parks.

Moreover, access to the new library is designed based on the future facilities, prioritising opening the space and clearing out any elements that hinder expansion, making it possible for this space to host all kinds of events.

The project was financed by the Action Programme for Natural and Urban Landscapes of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and co-financed by municipal funds.

The river plays a major role in this space. To ensure biodiversity, the larger trees in the area were preserved, such as the eucalyptus trees in the middle and laurel trees on the riverbank. The park also serves as a refuge for birds and small animals.

What worked well

- A natural space has been recovered and has become part of the metropolitan park network.
- The conservation and promotion of biodiversity in this public space was a key element.



Renovation of Font del Rector. © Adrià Goula

| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|---------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | Social resilience by restoring a historical space | Greening and preservation | Increased space for active mobility and social interaction |

[Learn more about the project](#)

City of Montreal



Place Alice-Girard. © Bernard St-Denis

The City of Montreal is the second largest city in Canada, with 1.8 million inhabitants and the largest city in the Province of Québec. Its metropolitan area, Greater Montreal, has a population of 4.1 million and covers an area of 3,825 m² (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2020).

In Québec, the 'Act respecting land use planning and development' defines the planning and regulatory instruments that can be used to ensure the development of living environments. This law determines not only the obligations and powers

of metropolitan, regional and local authorities but also the rules of governance between each different level. Montreal is currently revising the planning programme it adopted in 2004.

Montreal City Council shares jurisdictions with 19 borough councils. As determined by the City Charter, these boroughs are either fully or partially in charge of urban planning, culture, parks and recreation, community development, human resources and housing, among other issues.



Place Alice-Girard. © City of Montreal

Bringing together communities

Located at the heart of the MIL Montreal project, Place Alice-Girard stands out for its thoughtful design. Named after the first female dean of the University of Montreal, this square is the 'pièce de résistance' of the new district, highlighting the area's industrial and railway history while acting as a meeting point for workers, students, inhabitants and visitors alike.

On former railyards that were in operation for 100 years in the northern part of the borough of Outremont, the University of Montreal and Montreal City Council are working on strengthening the urban and social fabric of the area, as part of the MIL Montreal urban project, by creating a network of impressive public spaces. Place Alice-Girard is the centrepiece of a development plan that includes a university science campus covering 300,000 m², the University of Montreal's "MIL Campus", 1,300 housing units, local shops and 4 hectares of new urban parks. In 2007, the plan was submitted to a public consultation held by an independent body, the 'Office de consultation publique de Montreal'. Following a review, the plan was officially adopted by Montreal City Council in 2011.

Opened in 2019, Place Alice-Girard is the heart of the new neighbourhood, surrounded by mixed-use development, shops, cafés, restaurants, the first university buildings and a new primary school set to open in 2024. It is also close to two important high streets and two metro stations and is connected to the city's bicycle network. The central location of the public space acts as a meeting point for workers, students, dwellers and visitors alike. The project celebrates the memory of the area's industrial past taking ownership of the large diagonal space, following the angle of the train tracks, turning them into a structural feature of the landscape. This former rail corridor became a brownfield site and draws inspiration from plant life and the existing materials in the square. A monumental mist fountain, built as an art installation, stands in the middle, along with an impressive work of public art.

From a technical point of view, the design displays leading practices in terms of development and sustainable management. Metaphorically, the rail inserts that were used to transport materials are now used to transport water. Surface levelling directs the rainwater to steel rails, channelling water to permeable green spaces.

The project was awarded the Grand Prix du Design and the National Award of Excellence from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (2021).

A step-by-step guide

1

The entire project was financed by the City of Montreal. The project also received a grant from higher levels of government via the 'Fonds Chantiers Canada-Québec'.

2

The design of the plaza started in 2016 and was completed in 2017. An integrated design process brought together the city's technical services, the borough of Outremont, the University of Montreal and landscape architects and engineers.

3

Construction began in May 2018. Some technical processes, such as enlarged pits or rooting cells, were used for the first time on a larger scale. Water retention and greening were an important part of this project. Attention was paid to improving tree growth conditions in terms of minerals, to ensure healthy trees.

This public space was designed according to universal design and accessibility principles. An exploratory walk was carried out by people with mobility impairments in May 2021 to test accessibility issues in the space after its completion. The next challenge in terms of development is to integrate gender-based analysis into projects to make spaces more inclusive.

The square is an urban integrator, bringing together different cultural communities, despite the pandemic. This square has become a landmark that attracts people to sit, eat and play and it brings together artistic communities. Place Alice-Girard raises the question of its role and inherent man-made structure in a context of climate change that seeks the reduction of heat islands.



Place Alice-Girard. © City of Montreal

What worked well

- Pre-project detailed design documents with precise construction details, greening plan, etc.
- Consensus around a strong concept (signature fountain, custom-made paving stones, etc.) helped create a social contract between actors and formed a solid basis for carrying out the following phases despite changes to the teams in charge.
- Adoption of innovative greening practices that allow for healthy canopy growth. For instance, rain gardens inspired by the railway wasteland liven up the area with colour.
- Water management: the stone surfaces were levelled to direct the rainwater towards the steel surface gutters to channel the water towards permeable green spaces.

The main barriers

- Lack of coherence and unity between public and private outdoor spaces. A better connection between the two projects would have strengthened the mutual spatial qualities of both spaces and created consistency.
- Public spaces are designed according to parameters that depend on theories and fashions: in the era of climate change, the public square aimed to participate in the effort to manage rainwater and offer maximum climatic comfort by increasing greening coverage. Although the percentage of greening in the square was a clear step forward (around 20%), it could have been even higher.
- The design process for the square was not subject to public consultation.



| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| ⊗ | ⊗ | Accessible space but lacks signage | Environmental resilience | Greening, increased biodiversity and water management | Increased social interaction, active mobility and green spaces |



Pierre-Dansereau Park. © City of Montreal

An innovative stormwater management system

A resilient neighbourhood park that meets the needs of the community and serves as a sustainable stormwater management system for the surrounding area.

The Pierre-Dansereau Park was implemented as part of the MIL Montreal project and is located in the northern part of the City of Montreal's Outremont borough. The new park, which was designed alongside inhabitants, meets the recreational needs of the community whilst playing a major role in the management of rainwater in the area.

The redevelopment project for the former Outremont marshalling yard represented an opportunity to consolidate the urban and social fabric of the area by creating a network of public spaces that respect its railway and industrial heritage. The objective of the Pierre-Dansereau Park was to provide a space for leisure and play, increase green infrastructure and improve biodiversity in the area. The park includes a children's playground and a water play area; a multipurpose area; benches and picnic tables; a pedestrian walkway linking the site from east to west; and green infrastructure to retain stormwater.

As with any innovative project, there is a need to convince and reassure the public. Good communication between all parties throughout the project development process was a major factor in building trust.

How can metropolitan spaces increase resilience by systematising rainwater management?

- Draining impermeable areas towards permeable areas
- Prioritising water management on the surface rather than underground by maximising infiltration areas
- Designing public spaces to tackle levelling and therefore get the maximum possible benefits in terms of water regulation

A step-by-step guide

1

A citizen participation process was carried out to involve the community in the park's design. During the consultation, citizens were asked to express their views on two design options. The outcome of this consultation led to a design that took aspects from both options into account. The choices endorsed by inhabitants were ambitious and proved to be a challenge in practice, namely the curved steps.

2

The project's technical committee included the city's technical services, the borough of Outremont and the University of Montreal. The community was closely involved in the design stage of the project and was considered a key player in terms of gaining information, awareness and support.

3

The design of the Pierre-Dansereau Park began in 2017 and construction started in May 2019. The park was officially delivered in July 2020, although dwellers started using the park before the official opening date due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

4

The project, which won the award for "Innovative project" from the Québec Urban Planners Organisation (2021), was financed by the City of Montreal and received a grant from higher levels of government via the Fonds Chantiers Canada-Québec.

Pierre-Dansereau Park is a green infrastructure and an open-air water management structure. One of the main successes of the park is its simple, inexpensive (except for the curved stones) and replicable design, which will encourage Montreal's Water Department to change its practices and promote the inclusion of innovative stormwater management techniques in future green spaces.

What worked well

- The citizen participation process allowed us to raise community awareness of new practices for ecological water management.
- The shared design process brought out innovative design solutions to ensure the park had two functions: water management and recreation functions forced the team to take on new challenges in terms of levelling, structure and planting. For instance, a rain garden combines rain retention functions with a play space for children to the east of the park. This allowed the topographical variations to be created to ensure that rainwater can be retained in an ecological way.
- The park follows a greening strategy based on creating biodiversity by planting vegetation. This contributes to the infiltration of small amounts of rainfall, thus reducing the number of civil drainage infrastructures in the park.

The main barriers

- The development of a resilient public space with a participative approach required constant compromise between the technical objectives for water retention and the recreational needs of the community. The benefits of the consultation would have had more of an impact if the focus had been on the views and desired ambience of the landscape, rather than the finer details of the design.
- Procurement processes for playgrounds and rigid safety standards have an impact on the quality of the design of the play equipment. Despite the specifications for the play equipment, the resulting play area is below the team's expectations.
- This new type of infrastructure could create maintenance challenges. Providing information on how to better care for the space is crucial for the park's long-term conservation.

| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|---------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | Environmental resilience | Greening, increased biodiversity and water management | Increased social interaction, active mobility and green spaces |

Seoul Metropolitan Government



Persimmon Tree Alley. © Seoul Metropolitan Government

Seoul is the capital of South Korea and its largest metropolis. It has a population of 10.29 million and its sprawling metropolitan area is home to 25.6 million inhabitants.

While Seoul achieved rapid growth through population concentration and industrialisation, this growth created territorial inequality. Seoul

Metropolitan Government's goal is to become a sustainable and pedestrian-friendly urban area by restoring public spaces and giving more space to people. Two urban regeneration programmes have been developed: the Urban Residential Management Project and the Urban Regeneration Proliferation Project.

Persimmon Tree Alley



Persimmon Tree Alley, before.
© Seoul Metropolitan Government



Persimmon Tree Alley, after. © Seoul Metropolitan Government

Improving quality of life

The Persimmon Tree Alley project preserves the character of the area while refurbishing an alley of detached houses and remodelling the houses in the alley in partnership with dwellers.

This project is part of the Seoul Urban Regeneration Programme, which aims to repair, reuse and recover urban spaces and infrastructure to enhance wellbeing, instead of developing projects based on demolition. The enhancement of this alley aimed to preserve the local identity and historical assets of this public space while complying with the wishes of dwellers.

Persimmon Tree Alley is a small public space located in a low-rise housing area. As there is no vacant space left to expand the area, the project focused on improving this public space by replacing old bricks with permeable bricks, installing sculptures and adding benches in a new space created by pushing the exterior walls of houses 30 centimetres back to create additional public space. In addition, each household that was part of the project agreed to have their house remodelled in terms of appearance and energy efficiency with a subsidy from the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

A step-by-step guide

1

The project started with a call to recruit households interested in participating in the project. The approval of dwellers was of the utmost importance because the project involved not only enhancing public space but also improving private residences (i.e. remodelling housing by lowering walls and pushing back walls).

2

A group of architects carried out a field study to select the most suitable places to enhance the public space. Next, gatherings, discussions and walks were carried out to reach an agreement on the project. When the project started, only three households were on board. Thanks to discussions with the local community, the approval rate for the project reached almost 90% of households by the time construction work started.

3

The project started in June 2017 and July 2018. The design of the alley lasted 10 months from June 2017 to March 2018. Two surveys and discussions with dwellers helped inform the design of the project at several stages. Construction lasted for 4 months, from April 2018 to July 2019.

What worked well

- Given the urban character of the Seoul Metropolitan Area, many projects are based on demolition. This project showed that it is possible to renovate a public space while ensuring quality, without resorting to the demolition of low-rise housing.
- This concept is transferable to other countries where urban regeneration is necessary. At the moment, Seoul Metropolitan Government has implemented 13 projects of this type and 33 more are on their way.

The main barriers

- As this was a new type of project in Seoul, the challenge was to ensure that the community understood the benefits and changes proposed in the area.
- At the time, it was difficult for dwellers to understand the objective of the project. Numerous interactions with dwellers but also architects, designers and civil servants helped move the project forward.



© Seoul Metropolitan Government

| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|---------------|-------------------|--------|---|
| ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | Social resilience | ✗ | Better liveability, water and sewerage management |



Seoul Plaza. © Seoul Metropolitan Government

A place for people

Seoul Plaza aims to give people more space by transforming part of a road into a green space that promotes the organisation of cultural and social activities in Seoul city centre.

Historically, this space was not accessible to people, because it was a restricted area under the military regime from 1980 to 1990. Afterwards, the space was a high traffic area because it served as a roundabout for Teapyeong-ro Street. Since its redevelopment in 2004, the space has become one of the best places to gather in Seoul. It has become a fun, open and democratic space for people to express themselves freely.

The idea to create this plaza began with the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup, when people gathered in this area. Traffic was temporarily blocked by barricades during the event and people came to cheer for the Korean football team, which had never happened in the history of Korea. This image was broadcast all over the country and the world and it brought about a debate on the use of space. People wanted to make this space available for people permanently, to create a space for events, festivities and tourism.



© Seoul Metropolitan Government

A step-by-step guide

1

When public will for the Seoul Plaza first emerged after the 2002 World Cup Game, the Seoul Metropolitan Government, alongside academics, carried out a SWOT analysis of the space, started managing the development plan and surveyed public opinions to develop the project.

2

The Seoul Metropolitan Government drafted a development plan and organised a public hearing to review it. After the development plan was adjusted by public opinion and an expert group, the plan was reviewed by the city council and the city planning committee.

3

After that, the plan was confirmed and construction started in March 2004. The construction of the plaza took 79 days to complete.

4

The design introduced five pedestrian crossings to access the plaza and recovered the historical symbolism of the space by redirecting the flow of traffic and creating more space to walk and participate in cultural activities.

What worked well

- Open space is essential to create a sense of community. This project is a good example of reducing space for motorised traffic and redirecting vehicles to provide more space for people to play, be active and relax.

The main barriers

- There were concerns about whether this project would create more traffic and increase traffic jams in the city. Public hearings and discussions were organised to mitigate concerns and provide the best solutions to this issue.



Seoul Plaza. © Seoul Metropolitan Government



© Seoul Metropolitan Government

| Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|---------------|--------|---------------|-------------------------------------|----------|--|
| ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | Environmental and social resilience | Greening | Increased social interaction and less space for cars |

[Learn more about the Seoul Plaza project](#)

Methodology

Through ten case studies, the objective of this publication is to better understand the complexity of creating inclusive, sustainable, resilient and high-quality public spaces.

To study public space issues, a working group was set up and three workshops, a webinar and two bilateral meetings were held between May and December 2021.

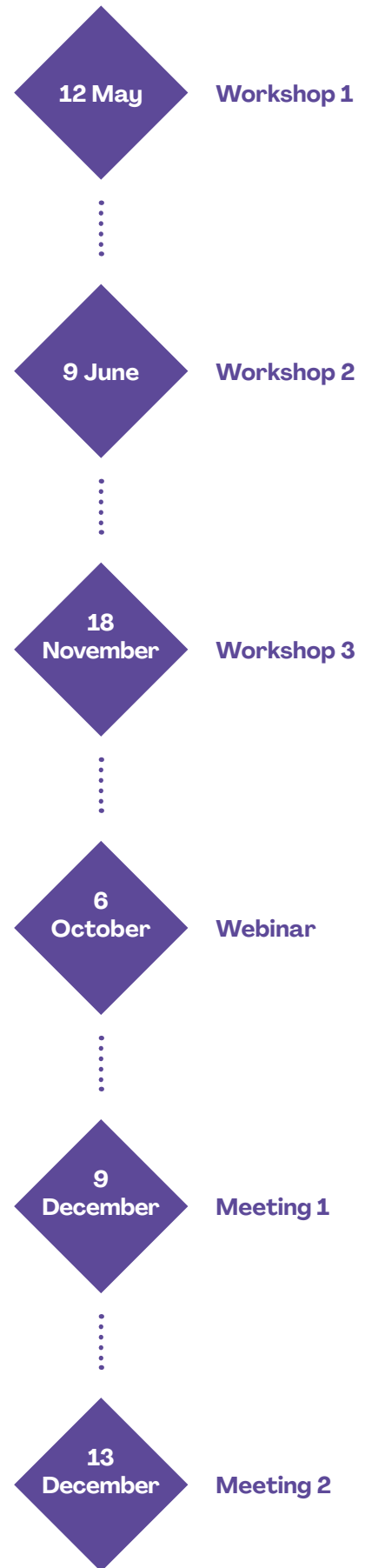
Ten case studies were proposed by working group members to discuss the opportunities and challenges in metropolitan public spaces. Working group participants from the Brussels-Capital Region, Medellín, Montreal, the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Barcelona Metropolitan Area completed project sheets and indicator forms to allow for comparisons to be made. To fill in these documents, representatives from the metropolitan spaces engaged in discussions with other departments and stakeholders. This methodology allowed participants to rethink and review their public space projects and opened up the opportunity to exchange information and expand the way they measure and evaluate projects with new indicators.

In total, ten public space case studies were analysed according to a set of fifteen indicators measuring inclusivity, sustainability, resilience and quality indicators. These indicators allowed us to deepen site and context-specific factors influencing public space, including gender, accessibility, health, participation, resilience and sustainability. Particular attention was dedicated to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on these spaces and how these projects contributed to wellbeing and adapted to the changing needs of communities.

Moreover, the study of these public space projects made it possible to compare objectives, urban planning tools, processes, as well as financial arrangements and governance methods involving different public authorities, the private sector and local communities.

Finally, the analysis also investigated barriers, lessons learned and recommendations for the implementation of similar projects in other metropolitan spaces.

These public space case studies aim to inspire policymakers, practitioners, civil society organisations, the research community and urban actors to look at interrelated urban challenges and take bold action.



Summary of selected public space projects

| | Participation | Gender | Accessibility | Resilience | Nature | Health |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------|--|---|---|--|
| L28A | ⊙ | ⊗ | Limited | Environmental resilience | Restoration of wasteland, greening & nature preservation | Increased social interaction, active mobility, safety and green spaces |
| Klavertje Vier School | Limited | ⊗ | Easy-to-read material but no use of universal design | Social resilience | Tree planting | Encouraging play, socialisation, active mobility and improving safety |
| Avenida Jardin | ⊙ | ⊗ | Accessible but lacks signage | Economic, social and environmental resilience | Greening | Increased space for active mobility and better waste management |
| Bolívar Park | ⊗ | ⊗ | ⊙ | Environmental and social resilience | Preservation of green area | Increased social interaction and green spaces |
| Inclusive Park | ⊗ | ⊗ | ⊙ | Environmental resilience | Restoration of non-used space, better rainwater management and greening | Play area designed to improve wellbeing for children with disabilities |
| Font del Rector Park | ⊙ | ⊗ | ⊙ | Environmental and social resilience | Greening and preservation | Increased space for active mobility and social interaction |
| Place Alice-Girard | Design of the park | ⊗ | Accessible space but lacks signage | Environmental resilience | Greening, increased biodiversity and water management | Increased social interaction, active mobility and green spaces |
| Pierre-Dansereau Park | ⊙ | ⊗ | ⊙ | Environmental resilience | Greening, increased biodiversity and water management | Increased social interaction, active mobility and green spaces |
| Seoul Plaza | ⊙ | ⊗ | ⊙ | Environmental and social resilience | Greening | Increased social interaction and less space for cars |
| Persimmon Tree Alley | ⊙ | ⊗ | ⊙ | Increased social resilience | ⊗ | Better liveability, water and sewerage management |



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