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FROM ROAD TO STREET

We make a conceptual distinction between a road and a street. A street is something more than a road. The street is a paved public way with adjoining buildings in an urban context, where people may freely assemble, interact and move about.

We are focusing on the current mono-functional character of the road, which serves commuters and local inhabitants. The road should become a street, and its multifunctional aspect should be reinforced to open it to additional categories of users and activities.

ANALYSIS

We assume that existing traffic on the WZ road will decrease thanks to the building of the DSR ring road and that car technology will reduce noise and air pollution.

DIFFERENT AGENTS, DIFFERENT SCALES

We assessed this place from the perspective of different stakeholders with diverging interests. For the local authorities this place is potentially very valuable due to its central location, but it is actually a hurdle with negatively impacts on the city's image as a meeting place. For car users its value is ambivalent, as it is a very convenient shortcut with wide lanes, but with a congestion problem. For bicycle users, it is a good connection through the city, but currently difficult to use, due to heavy traffic and limited number of crossings. For pedestrians, the place is potentially valuable as a connection with the city centre and a place of distinctive heritage character, but it is currently impracticable due to air and noise pollution. For its inhabitants, the area has similar advantages as for pedestrians, but they are more likely to feel the actual drawbacks. Tram users should perceive the place positively due to its good connections and accessibility. For economic agents, this place might bring opportunities, but at present the lack of pedestrian traffic makes it unattractive.

PARTICIPATORY, SUSTAINABLE AND STAGED TRANSFORMATION

In practical terms, we cannot prioritise pedestrian flows over traffic, and both categories of users are equally important. The street should remain a defining axis in the city. However, in the medium term, depending on the development of the city, this street may become more pedestrian. Its dividing function is only partly negative, as it protects the city centre from heavy traffic, but the division is problematic for pedestrians and public transport users. Creating links across the WZ street

STRENGTHS

- location in the city centre
- well connected by public transport
- good accessibility for cars
- good connecting point between eastern and western part of this city
- relevant architecture and heritage (reminding the history of the city from the middle ages – from the Olawska gate to the present, including religious objects)
- wide space for pedestrians (although of uneven width)
- large number of possible public spaces

WEAKNESSES

- unappealing degraded aesthetics
- noise pollution
- safety concerns for pedestrians and bicycles
- lack of usable public spaces
- lack of green areas
- poor lighting
- traffic congestion
- impermeable surface (road and pavement)
- limited amount of crossings for cars and pedestrians
- low air quality due to intense traffic

OPPORTUNITIES

- quality of walking space and quality of public spaces that could foster pedestrian-friendly usage
- transport haub
- heritage and potential gate of the city
- increased permeability between the northern and the southern part of the historic centre
- possible development of small-scale economic activities

THREATS

- further degradation, if the interventions do not succeed or there is no intervention
- lack of acceptance by residents of the evolution of the area
- increased traffic congestion
- gentrification in case the interventions significantly increase the quality of life

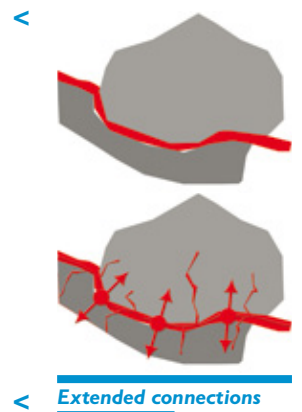
would provide a better connection between the historic city centre and its southern part, with its numerous cultural points of attraction. We do not consider the limitation of perpendicular traffic as a decisive issue, as it contributes to deflecting traffic from the city centre but possible interventions on these dead ends should be discussed with their inhabitants.

- > The planning process should be staged, with incremental interventions and reviews according to development and usages of the city. Initial small physical and symbolic interventions, linked to the existing heritage would improve pedestrian movements, such as raising the overall level of four major crossings to align it with the sidewalks. A reduction of car lanes to 2x2 would provide space to widen sidewalks, and add lines of trees, greenery and a bike lane. Moving the tramway to the side would concentrate car traffic in the middle with islands for pedestrians crossings. Enlarged pavements would turn existing niches into public spaces and create new passages with the surroundings.

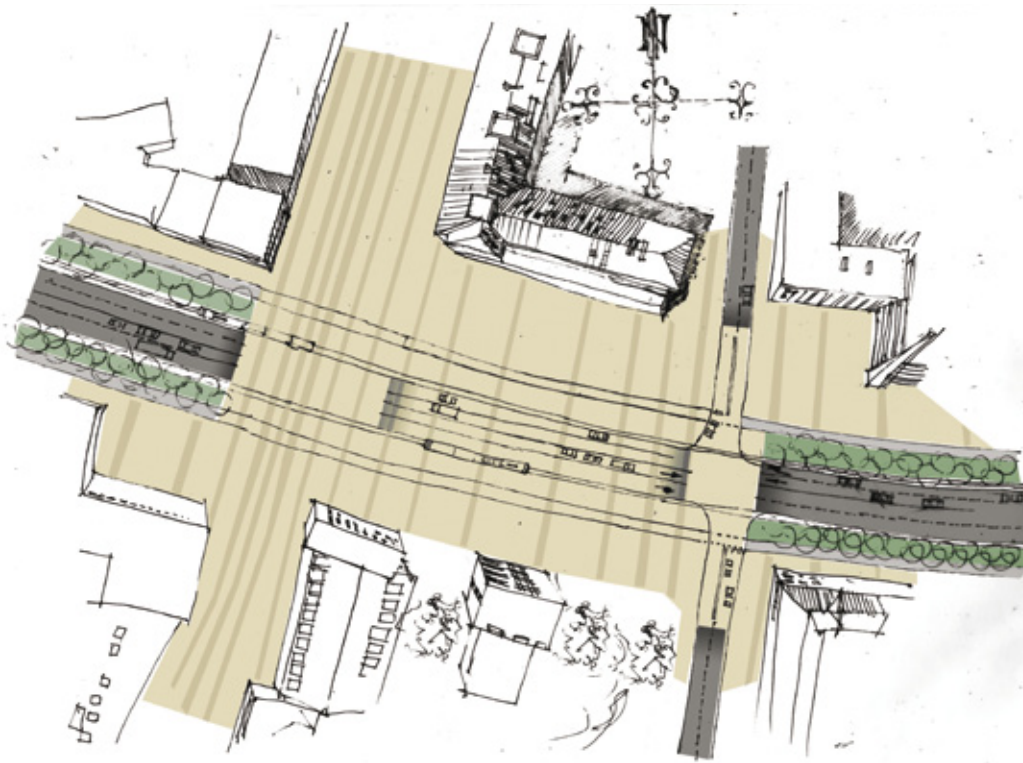
Public authorities should devise policies to enhance economic activities using tax incentives to favour specific types of businesses. Economic actors, local government and private owners of the buildings on WZ Street should agree a renovation strategy to enhance the aesthetic quality and attractiveness of the street which could become **'cultural path'** linking the different cultural activities or heritage elements in the city and on both sides of the WZ Street, using the already well-anchored dwarfs. A policy would be needed to deal with increased demand for parking spaces.

Inhabitants should be actively involved in the transformation process of the street and its surroundings and gentrification pressures which are becoming an inherent part of historic city centres should be consciously addressed.

Reflecting trends adopted worldwide, every modern city should aim towards sustainability, and help citizens to face the challenges of tomorrow's cities. The street where people meet is a good starting point, by providing sustainable lighting and water management.



< Extended connections



Desired change

