



Toolbox for City Changers

A handbook by Wir machen Wien, Changing Cities & Prostoroz

Toolbox for City Changers

A handbook by Wir machen Wien, Changing Cities & Prostoroz

Wir machen Wien, Changing Cities & Prostoroz

Fricka Lindemann, etc.

Wir machen Wien

About

A handbook by Wir machen Wien^a, Changing Cities^b and Prostoroz^c from the Erasmus+ project Toolbox for City Changers.

The content is by Fricka Lindemann and [further contributors], the handbook design by Bernhard Hayden.

Licence



CC BY 4.0 Wir machen Wien, Changing Cities & Prostoroz

Unless stated otherwise, the contents of this handbook are licensed under the Creative Commons license CC BY 4.0^d Wir machen Wien, Changing Cities & Prostoroz. You may share and adapt the contents as long as you give appropriate credit to the authors.

Image sources

- Bellermannkiezblock Berlin-Mitte: photo BA SGA Mitte, L. Fritsche.
- Supergrätzl Favoriten: photo Wir machen Wien 2026.
- Lendplatz Graz: photo City of Graz, Simon Gostentschnigg.
- Tactical Urbanism Guide tool groups: Street Plans.
- TikTak Galilei, Galileigasse Vienna: photo Tim Dornaus.
- LTN tool screenshot: A/B Street LTN Tool.

Erasmus+ notice



Co-funded by the European Union

The workshop series was developed through an Erasmus+-funded collaboration. The views and opinions expressed are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency.

a <https://wirmachen.wien>

b <https://changing-cities.org>

c <https://www.prostoroz.org>

d <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Contents

Cover	1
Title page	2
About.....	3
Contents	4
Glossary	5
1. Why this toolbox?	7
2. Starting superblocks	9
3. Tactical urbanism and street design	13
4. Mobilisation and strategies for change	17
5. Monitoring: making impact visible	20
6. Work plan and sources	22

Glossary

This glossary explains key Toolbox terms in alphabetical order. It helps you read chapters 1 to 6 without prior knowledge.

Agenda setting

A tactic for making an issue publicly visible, for example through an action, a petition or a media image.

Framing

Naming and telling a problem and its solution so that they are understood in a new way.

Kiezblock

The Berlin variant of the superbblock, strongly driven by local initiatives.

Low-traffic neighbourhood

A cheaper form of traffic calming with little through traffic, discussed as a Viennese variant.

Milestone

A visible intermediate goal that gives a campaign progress and orientation.

Mobilisation

Work through which people understand why they participate and become ready to act together.

Modal filter

A barrier such as a bollard, planter ring or concrete element that stops through traffic but lets access and delivery traffic pass.

Monitoring

Systematic observation and documentation of traffic, use, support and political progress.

Narrative

The story of an engagement that clearly states its goal, window of opportunity, alliances and intended change.

Street design

Jointly designing streets with simple modules such as a street plan, banner or tree visualisation.

Superblock

An area where through traffic is systematically interrupted so streets inside can be used more safely and in more diverse ways.

Tactical urbanism

Temporary, low-cost interventions in urban space that test changes and make them visible.

Theory of change

An assumption about how social and political change happens, helping you choose tactics deliberately.

Through traffic

Traffic that only crosses an area without having a destination or origin there.

Window of opportunity

A favourable moment for change, such as an election, media attention or a political decision.

1. Why this toolbox?

The “Toolbox for City Changers” is for people who want to make their neighbourhood safer, greener, more inclusive and more resilient to climate change, and need practical tools to do so. It brings together experiences from Vienna, Berlin and Ljubljana [from x, y and z, each contributing this and that].

This handbook is for everyone asking:

How can we make our city more liveable?

All following chapters help answer this question step by step.

How to use this handbook

If you are already in the middle of an initiative, do not read everything in order. Start with the chapter that fits your next decision: defining an area, planning a first action, winning allies or documenting impact.

What this handbook offers

As an essential part of the Toolbox for City Changers, this handbook summarises...

- How superblocks work as a planning concept to make your neighbourhood safer, greener and more people-friendly (chapter x)
- How actions and interventions can make ideas for a better city visible (chapter x)
- How street design tools can help neighbourhoods generate ideas for better design
- How tactical urbanism can turn these ideas into reality with little effort and cost
- How various [monitoring tools] provide measurable arguments for redesign
- And what it takes to inspire as many people as possible to support your cause and actively get involved.

The three workshops

[TCC goals and intentions]

The series consisted of three sessions in Ljubljana, Berlin and online:

- **Superblocks & Playful Interventions**, 21 March 2026: How local initiatives emerge, how superblocks and Kiezblocks work, and how playful actions attract attention.
- **Tactical Urbanism & Street Design**, 9 May 2026: How temporary, low-cost interventions visibly open up different uses of street space, and how groups develop street designs together.

- **Mobilisation & Monitoring Tools**, 30 May 2026: How initiatives gain supporters, track progress and structure their campaigns with goals, milestones and shared tasks.

2. Starting superblocks

Superblocks reduce through traffic and create space for spending time, walking, cycling, greenery and neighbourhood life. Barcelona made the concept internationally known; Berlin developed Kiezblocks, a version strongly driven by local initiatives; Vienna has a high-quality implementation in Supergrätzl Favoriten and is now discussing cheaper “low-traffic neighbourhoods”.



Bellermannkiezblock in Berlin-Mitte. Photo: BA SGA Mitte, L. Fritsche.

What changes

A superblock is more than a single piece of street furniture or a greening project. The central lever is traffic management:

- Modal filters, one-way systems, bollards and other measures prevent through traffic.
- Access and delivery traffic remain possible, but move more slowly and under more direct control.
- Space inside the area becomes available for spending time, routes to school, small open spaces, trees, seating and safe junctions.

Question	Superblock logic	Single measure
Traffic	Through traffic is systematically interrupted across the area	One junction, pavement or section is improved
Space gained	Several streets become newly usable together	One specific place becomes safer or more pleasant
Participation	Neighbourhood, schools, businesses and district need a shared vision	Affected groups can be involved in a targeted way



Supergrätzl Favoriten: bollards, upcycled concrete planter rings as traffic filters, and new trees. Photo: Wir machen Wien 2026.

Learning from Berlin

Changing Cities shows that superblock initiatives do not need perfect plans from the start. What matters is making a local group visible and keeping it able to act over time. Berlin's Kiezblock initiatives work with guides, advice, traffic counts, conversations with businesses, fact checks and ideas for actions.

The lesson for Vienna: do not wait for the finished master plan. Define a clear area, an understandable problem and your first allies.

Do not wait for the finished master plan: a clear area, documented evidence of the problem and first local allies are enough to start.

Getting started in seven steps

1. Define the area: Choose a neighbourhood where you can clearly identify through traffic, routes to school, heat, missing trees or unsafe junctions.
2. Document the problem: Record observations, photos, points of conflict and, where possible, traffic counts.
3. Form a core team: Clarify roles for research, neighbourhood contact, social media, district contacts and actions.
4. State the goal simply: For example, “no through traffic around the school” or “safe routes and more space to spend time inside the neighbourhood”.
5. Make a first sketch: Work with a base map and consider where modal filters, one-way streets or places to spend time might fit.
6. Build alliances: Talk to residents, parents, schools, local associations, shops and district politicians.
7. Make your demand public: Use actions, media work, petitions, district motions or open letters, depending on the political opportunity available.

Playful interventions

Playful interventions show how differently a street could be used. They can be easy to join: chalk, mobile seating, pop-up games, temporary greenery, information stalls, street picnics or visualisations using banners.

The action should do more than look nice: it should make a demand clear. What problem does it show? What solution does it anticipate? Who should act afterwards?

Quiz: What makes a good start for a superblock initiative?

1. A clearly defined area
2. A documented problem
3. A finished official master plan
4. First local allies

Correct answers: 1, 2, 4

Materials

- Wir machen Wien: How to start superblock initiatives^a
- Changing Cities: How to Superblock^b
- Wir machen Wien and Radlobby Wien: Superblocks for Vienna^c
- Wir machen Wien: Playful interventions^d
- Radlobby and Geht-doch: Superblock base map^e

Video

The public workshop page refers to recordings of the series, but the researched materials contained no verifiable YouTube link for this workshop. Add the link here once the recording has been published or approved for release internally.

a <https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-superblock-initiativen-starten/>

b <https://changing-cities.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/How-to-Superblock-Changing-Cities.pdf>

c https://wirmachen.wien/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/WmW_und_Radlobby_Superblock_Workshop_20260321.pdf

d <https://wirmachen.wien/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/WmW-Spielerische-Interventionen-WS20260321.pdf>

e <https://www.radlobby.at/superblock-grundkarte>

3. Tactical urbanism and street design

Tactical urbanism means low-cost, temporary interventions in urban space that can test changes, make them visible and accelerate political action. This is relevant in Vienna because the city government is considering tactical urbanism and “low-traffic neighbourhoods” as cheaper forms of traffic calming.



Lendplatz in Graz as an example of traffic-calmed shared spaces with coloured markings. Photo: City of Graz, Simon Gostentschnigg.

Basic principles

Tactical urbanism works particularly well when five conditions come together:

- The measure is rooted locally and solves a specific problem.
- It can be implemented quickly and carries little risk.
- It demonstrates a longer-term change on a small scale.
- It builds relationships between the neighbourhood, initiatives, public administration and politicians.
- It generates useful experience: What works, what needs adjusting, and who uses the space?

Check before every action

Can a passer-by recognise within a minute which problem the action highlights and which better use it proposes?

Six tools

The Tactical Urbanism Guide and Wir machen Wien materials identify six simple groups of tools:

- Barriers such as bollards, concrete elements or planter rings
- Greenery and planting elements
- Street furniture
- Surface design using colour
- Signs and signage
- Events

Quality lies in the appropriate use of an object, rather than the object itself: a painted surface is only effective if it changes behaviour, helps people find their way or makes a new use plausible.



Tool groups from the Tactical Urbanism Guide by Street Plans. Source: Street Plans.

The reality in Vienna

Vienna is highly regulated. Proposed uses of public space need review and approval, particularly by the relevant municipal departments such as MA 46, responsible for traffic management and technical traffic matters.¹ Bottom-up interventions therefore need an appropriate permit, cooperation with the district or city, or a form of action planned in accordance with the law.

¹ Responsibilities may differ depending on the measure. Early coordination with the district and administration prevents a good idea from failing on formal questions.



TikTak Galilei in Galileigasse, Vienna. Photo: Tim Dornaus.

Street design as a group tool

Wir machen Wien uses street design workshops to turn dissatisfaction into concrete visions of space. The modules can be used individually or together:

- **Street Design Table:** A street plan is adapted using paper, scissors and pens. The group discusses uses, space requirements and alternatives.
- **Street Banner:** Street widths are visibly divided to show how much space could be available for walking, cycling, greenery or spending time.
- **Tree Love Set:** Mobile tree visualisations show where shade and greenery are needed.
- **Leiwander Straßen Radar:** A simple survey sheet makes quality of life, safety and the need for action visible.
- **Street Shit Bingo:** A walk sharpens awareness of obstacles, hazards and absurd misallocations of street space.

Running a local workshop

1. Choose a street or junction.
2. Gather problems: heat, noise, pavement width, crossings, parking pressure, conflicts, missing seating or green spaces.
3. Measure the space or understand its dimensions using plans.

4. Build alternatives: minimal, bold, long-term.
5. Define an immediate measure: Which temporary action best demonstrates the idea?
6. Clarify permits and alliances.
7. Document the action afterwards: photos, people's views, uses, media coverage and political reactions.

Video

Video: Prostoroz Ljubljana: Public space is shared space. Workshop contribution to the Toolbox for City Changers.^a

Materials

- Wir machen Wien: How to use tactical urbanism in Vienna^b
- Wir machen Wien: The street design workshop^c
- Wir machen Wien: Tactical urbanism presentation^d
- Remake Streets Wien: How coloured markings can change behaviour^e
- Wir machen Wien: Street design workshops^f
- Street Plans: Tactical Urbanism Guide^g

a <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87JUbbq48r8>

b <https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-tactical-urbanism-für-wien/>

c <https://wirmachen.wien/blog/street-design-workshop-mit-wirmachenwien/>

d https://wirmachen.wien/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Tactical_Urbanism_WirMachenWien_20260509.pdf

e https://wirmachen.wien/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Remake_Streets_Wien_Sylvia_Kostenzer_6MB.pdf

f https://wirmachen.wien/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Street_Workshops_WirMachenWien_20260509.pdf

g <https://tacticalurbanismguide.com/>

4. Mobilisation and strategies for change

Mobilisation is more than reach. An initiative needs to understand why people participate, what story it tells about change and what assumptions underpin its strategy.

Mobilisation is not just a question of how many people see something, but of why they are willing to act together.

Your own narrative

A narrative of engagement answers four questions:

- What are we working towards?
- Why is now a good window of opportunity?
- Who can build power with us?
- What change should our pressure bring about?

Wir machen Wien uses the Platz für Wien campaign as an example: many signatures, strong media coverage and Vienna's 2020 election were meant to create political pressure for a different transport policy. A local initiative can start smaller, but needs the same clarity.

Theories of change

Theories of change are assumptions about how social and political change happens. They help you choose tactics deliberately instead of simply trying everything at once.

Three perspectives particularly useful for local urban initiatives are:

- **Major leaps:** Change happens when a problem is redefined, new actors emerge and media attention opens a window.
- **Grassroots:** People build power through collective action, even without an institutional position.
- **Group formation:** Shared values, identity and norms keep a group able to act and give it a distinct character.

Elements of action

These theories suggest practical options:

- Set the agenda
- Gain prominent supporters
- Generate media interest
- Use a window of opportunity
- Influence decision-makers

- Forge alliances
- Reframe issues
- Make social norms visible
- Build capacity
- Communicate familiar values

Not everything suits every initiative. A small group should consistently use two or three suitable levers rather than ten half-heartedly.

If you mainly need ...	Then ... fits better	Example
Attention	Agenda setting	Media image, petition, visible action
To build local power	Grassroots work	Door-to-door conversations, meetings, sharing roles
To stabilise a group	Group formation	Clarify values, rituals, shared language

Campaign structure

A simple campaign structure is enough to start:

1. Goal: What should change, and by when?
2. Decision point: Who can approve or prevent it?
3. Target groups: Who do we need to activate, persuade or put under pressure?
4. Milestones: Which visible intermediate goals demonstrate progress?
5. Tasks: Who handles research, outreach, actions, documentation, media and political discussions?
6. Rhythm: When does the group meet, when does it communicate publicly, and when does it evaluate?

Quiz: Which questions belong to a simple campaign structure?

1. What should change, and by when?
2. Who can approve or block it?
3. How do we avoid any public visibility?
4. Which intermediate goals show progress?

Correct answers: 1, 2, 4

Video

Video: Wir machen Wien: Theories of Change, talk by Sebastian Raho and Alec Hager.^a

^a <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEd4UIxHigw>

Materials

- Wir machen Wien: How to work on strategies for change^b
- Wir machen Wien: Guide to theories of change^c
- Evaluation Innovation: Pathways for Change^d

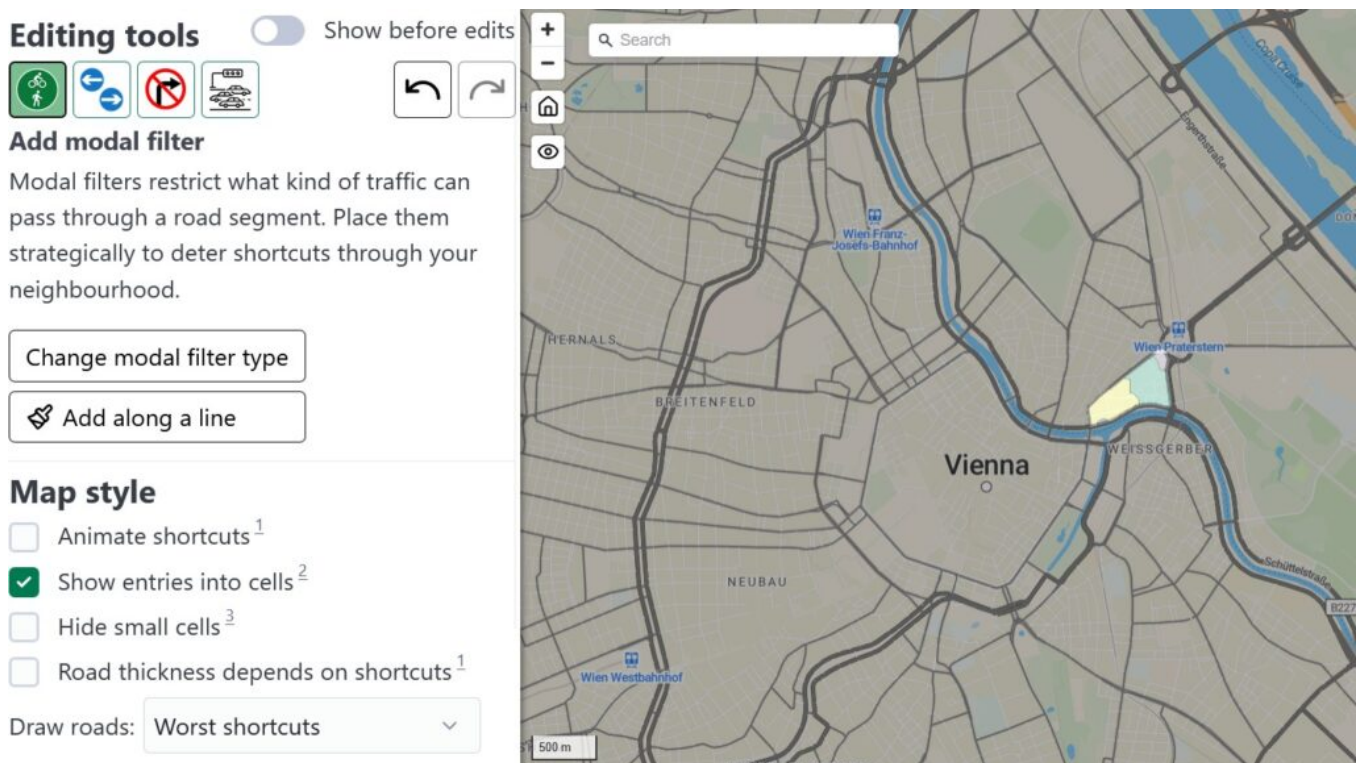
^b <https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-an-strategien-des-wandels-arbeiten/>

^c <https://wirmachen.wien/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Leitfaden-WirMachenWien-Theories-of-Change.pdf>

^d <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Pathways-for-Change.pdf>

5. Monitoring: making impact visible

Monitoring means documenting progress and impact so that an initiative can learn, communicate and make political arguments. It does not need to be complicated. What matters is deciding what to observe before an action.



The LTN tool helps test traffic filters and diversions in a neighbourhood scenario. Source: A/B Street LTN Tool.

What can be measured

Simple indicators work well for superblocks, tactical urbanism and street design:

- Traffic volumes: How many cars, bicycles and pedestrians use a section?
- Speed and conflicts: Where do people drive too fast, and where do dangerous situations arise?
- Use for spending time: Do people stop or sit down, do children play, do conversations emerge?
- Climate and comfort: Is there shade, urban heat, greenery, drinking water or noise reduction?
- Support: How many people sign, attend meetings, share content or offer help?
- Political progress: What motions, discussions, commitments or administrative reviews are taking place?

Indicator	Simple method	Good result format
Through traffic	Count at two fixed time windows	Figure, photo, map
Quality of stay	On-site observation	Short notes and quotes
Heat and comfort	Shade map, photo points, temperature comparison	Before-and-after photo pair
Support	Conversations, signatures, meetings	List with roles and contacts

A minimal monitoring plan

1. Document the baseline: photos, a map, a short problem note and an initial count.
2. Define a target: for example, less through traffic, more safe crossings or more supporters.
3. Choose a method: traffic count, walk, interview, street radar, before-and-after photos or media monitoring.
4. Assign responsibilities: one person coordinates data, one photos, and one quotes and contacts.
5. Present results: One page is often enough: problem, method, key figures, photos and demand.
6. Learn: What needs adjusting in your demand, action or alliance-building?

Monitoring as mobilisation

Monitoring can itself be an action. A street traffic count gets people talking. A walk with neighbours makes problems visible together. A map of dangerous spots can attract new supporters.

Start small

Robust monitoring does not need to be scientifically perfect. To start, a repeatable method is often enough: same place, same time, same observation question.

Tools from the series

- Traffic counts following the Changing Cities approach
- Conversation guides for businesses and local actors
- Leiwander Straßen Radar for quick on-site assessment
- Superblock base map and LTN tool for spatial scenarios
- Before-and-after documentation for tactical urbanism actions

Video

The workshop announcement lists mobilisation and monitoring tools for the third session. No verifiable video link was visible in the publicly researchable materials. Add the link here once the recording has been published or approved for release internally.

6. Work plan and sources

This chapter summarises the toolbox as a work plan. It can serve as a checklist for a new or existing neighbourhood initiative.

A 30-day start-up plan

Week 1: Problem and area

- Define the area and mark it on a map.
- Formulate three main problems.
- Gather photos, initial observations and existing plans.
- Establish a core team and communication channel.

Week 2: Strategy and goal

- Write your narrative in five sentences.
- Decide whether to focus on superblocks, tactical urbanism, street design or mobilisation.
- List decision-makers and potential allies.
- Define your first demand and next milestone.

Week 3: Visibility

- Plan a small public action.
- Organise a walk, a count or a street design session.
- Talk to residents, schools, shops or associations.
- Prepare materials for social media and local media.

Week 4: Evaluation and the next point of pressure

- Summarise results.
- Refine your demand.
- Contact district politicians, public administration or media strategically.
- Set the next date and assign tasks to complete by then.

Guiding principle

Good initiatives combine four things: a clear demand, a visible local group, a plausible spatial solution and evidence that change is needed and achievable.

Final check before the next step

Phrase your next message so it contains all four elements: demand, group, solution and evidence. If one is missing, outsiders will find the story harder to understand.

Quiz: What makes a good initiative?

1. A striking action that attracts a lot of attention
2. A clear demand carried by a visible local group, with a plausible spatial solution and evidence that change is needed and possible
3. A detailed master plan approved by the administration
4. A large budget for professional campaign materials

Correct answers: 2

Key sources

- Toolbox for City Changers: three workshops^a
- How to start superblock initiatives^b
- How to use tactical urbanism in Vienna^c
- How to work on strategies for change^d
- The street design workshop with Wir machen Wien^e
- Changing Cities^f
- Kiezblocks^g
- Prostoroz^h
- Tactical Urbanism Guideⁱ
- LTN tool for low-traffic neighbourhoods^j

a <https://wirmachen.wien/blog/von-berlin-und-ljubljana-lernen-drei-neue-workshops/>

b <https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-superblock-initiativen-starten/>

c <https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-tactical-urbanism-für-wien/>

d <https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-an-strategien-des-wandels-arbeiten/>

e <https://wirmachen.wien/blog/street-design-workshop-mit-wirmachenwien/>

f <https://changing-cities.org/>

g <https://www.kiezblocks.de/>

h <https://prostoroz.org/>

i <https://tacticalurbanismguide.com/>

j <https://a-b-street.github.io/ltn/>