

IMAGINE • SEVNICA

a 2023 NEBoD project with Hochschule Biberach



INTRODUCTION

The Danube is a long river. The major blue-way divides and joins its neighbouring states, cutting through a sequence of different levels of prosperity: the GDP at its source is 300 times higher than at the estuary. In its catchment area there is an unparalleled diversity in languages and cultures, religious and political beliefs, geographical and human landscapes, income and lifestyle.

It is a region of controversies and ruptures, but also power drawn from in-between conditions and the great spirit inhabiting hybrid identities. Both- and conditions in constant flux determine the life of 85 Million. From Austria to Serbia, from Hungary to Moldova or Germany to Ukraine people deserve a livable future.

The New European Bauhaus on the Danube initiative (NEBoD) demands an update of planning horizons and procedures.

What if the unorderedly condition of territories along the Danube, becomes re-read as a potential reserve for resilient development and action?

What if changing industrial and infra-structural landscapes breed

new business models that can be embedded in empty spaces and vacant factories?

Or, if digitisation and local production enable projects of common interest in urban peripheries, shrinking towns and rural communities?

The NEBoD functions as a think-and-do tank that generates and shares knowledge and activities. It doubly serves as an open communication platform for experiences and ideas as well as a base to exchange competences in the fields of design, art, architecture and culture.

Activities support shared identities and highlight the need to transform spatial structures for post-fossil needs.

The Danube Region has to maintain its traditional function as a hybrid and intermediary part of Europe, a buffer zone, able to harbour and protect people and needs or people in need.

This precious quality has been appreciated and cared for by many people along the corridor. Now times of crises call for joint action and orientation. The challenge is too big, to go alone.

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SEVNICA

An Attempt To (Re)Read



the challenge is too big to go alone

Sevnica has many qualities, but there are also questions on how to lay the path to a resilient future.

We found we have to develop this path from a “larger picture”, a shared idea or identity is needed to answer questions about land use.

the famous 3c in urban development

Realising the sustainable development goals will require a coherent and self-reinforcing urban development. In this context, there are three key words: compact, connected and coordinated.

no sugar added

Sevnica 2050 doesn't need new “visions from the outside“. Anything can be evolved from the already existing assets.

biggest asset: people

It is crucial to bring citizens, experts and institutions together to transform the urban environment we live in.

THE REGION

Utopian Future?



If you look for Slovenia on the map, you will find that it is one of the smaller countries in Europe. As part of the former Habsburg Empire and the USSR, it has as turbulent and violent past as the rest of Europe.

In 1991, Slovenia gained its independence as a sovereign state. In 2004, it became a member of the European Union. Today, the country faces similar difficulties as the rest of the EU, which is an exciting challenge for us as students.

As foreigners, with different social and cultural backgrounds, we look at a country and, in particular, a region and try to understand and classify it. With a new perspective, we analyse the existing, rearrange contexts and connections and propose suggestions and impressions.

The „Green Banana“

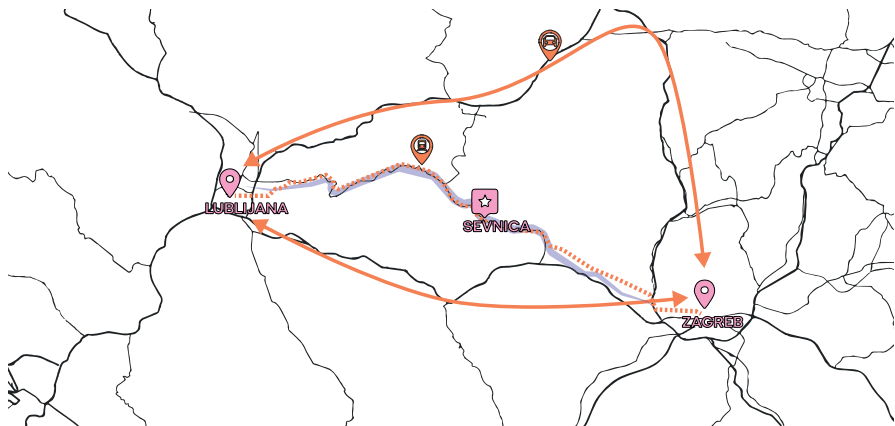
In our research, we have enlarged the excerpt of our point of view. Surrounded by hills, forests and small waterways, our first impression was inspiring.

The municipality pointed out, for them, it is a disadvantage to be separated from the fast tracks between Ljubljana and Zagreb. In-between the motorway, the railway is guided by the Sava River and thus, creates a sustainable connection between the capitals. It is a strong infrastructure for the future, which should not be underestimated in the development of the region.

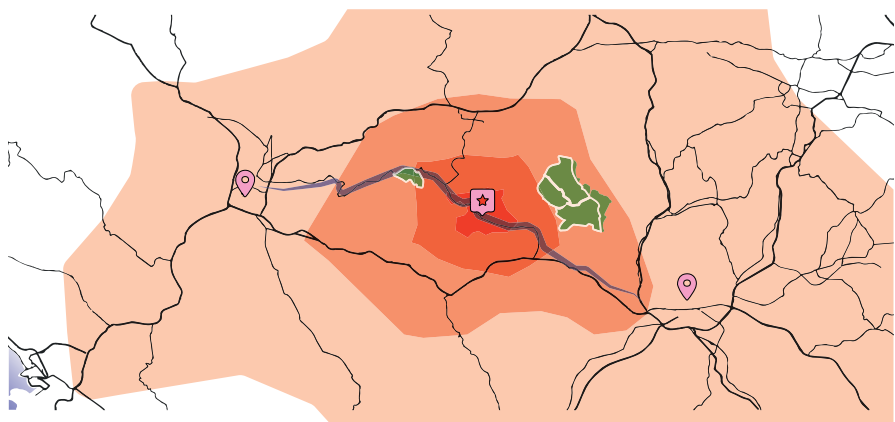
Between the existing infrastructure are regions that do not form large urban centres, but are highly sparsely populated. What is not a settlement or a collection of houses is either used as agricultural land or is plain nature. Therefore, these regions create a green ribbon that connects the capitals of two countries.

From our point of view this is their greatest potential to develop a sustainable and regional confident future.

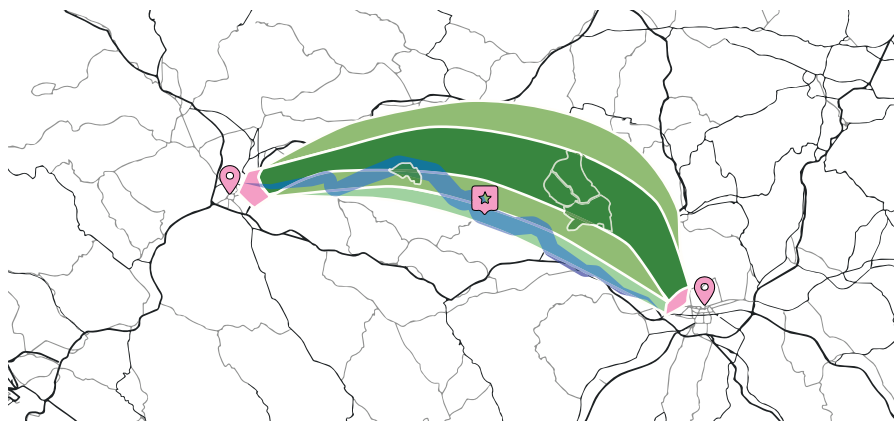
Our creative euphemism for the green ribbon is called “Green Banana”. We use this wording, because it serves the purpose of keeping the big picture in mind to answer small questions of further development. The elaboration in the direction of a utopia is based on the existing national parks, which have a role-model function for the entire Sava region.



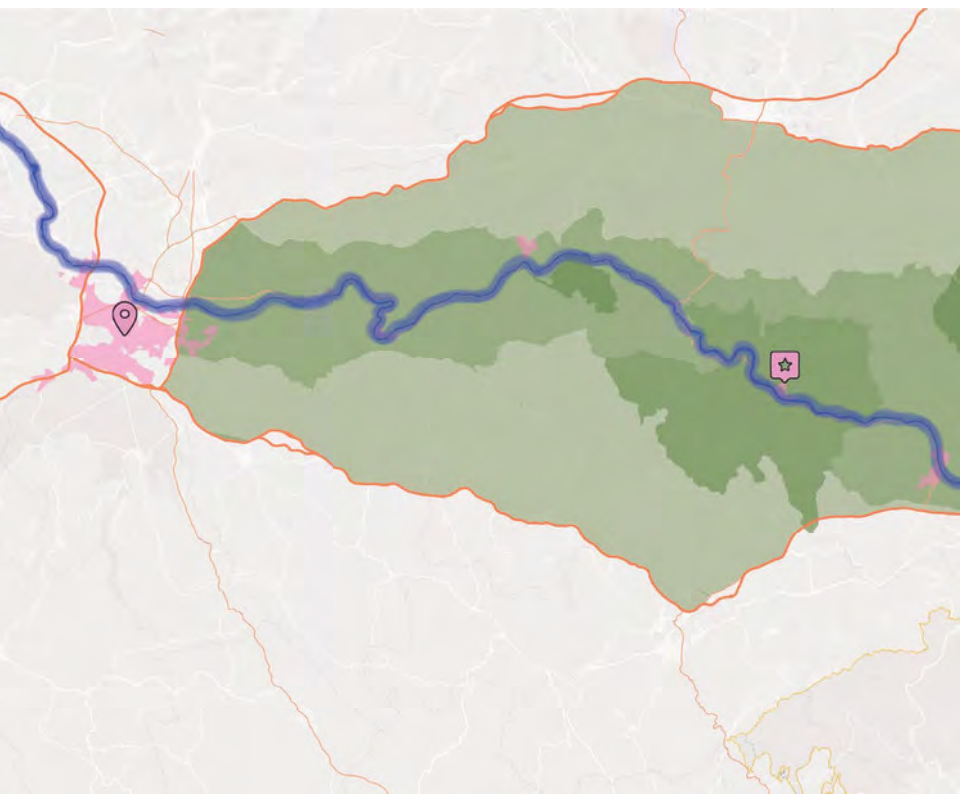
Main Existing Infrastructure



Distance Chart

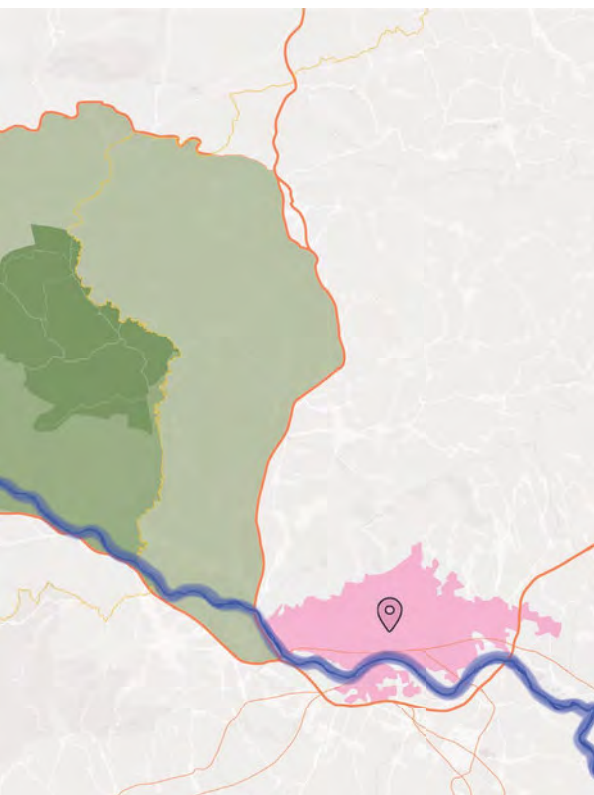


The „Green Banana“



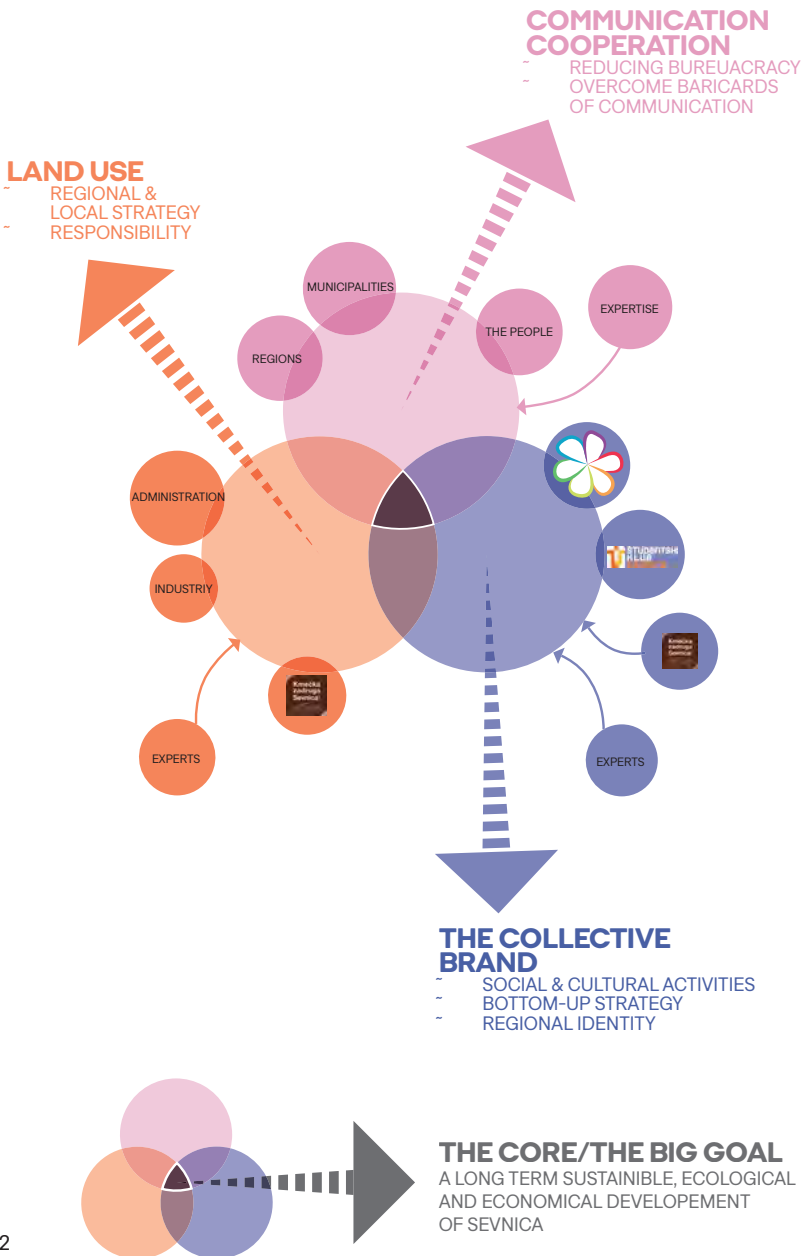
The lush nature and gentle landscape is a strong part of the identity of Sevnica and the entire Posavje region, such as the “Green Banana”. This picture becomes the leitmotif for any further development.

We think that nature conservation is an important milestone. For this purpose, further sealing should be avoided, and a main focus should be put on the revitalization of what already exists. This includes local traditions, production and trade relations.



The „Green Banana“ in its real dimensions.

Communication Is Key



The graphic illustrates the basic structure for the development of Sevnica as well as the Posavje region. Three main components form the goal we see in the symbolic image of the green banana: sustainable, social and economically healthy development.

the collective brand

We believe that involving local resources in the urban planning process will lead to great benefits in terms of flexibility and feasibility. Especially initial smaller projects are much easier to initiate with the power of local people.

Therefore, it is necessary to provide them with a platform where they can meet, organize, discuss and contribute their first ideas. An important milestone for a sustainable urban strategy is the activation of all local resources such as the student club, the farmers association and the local industry in Sevnica.

We see the Flower of Posavje not only as a tourist brand, moreover, as a necessary platform that brings people together through a bottom-up strategy, giving a voice to locals, politicians, and experts.

land use

For the future development of Sevnica many decisions need to be made. Where is space left for an industry that is looking for an opportunity to expand?

Should the factories move to another place further apart from the city centre? What will happen with the empty shops and buildings in the old town of Sevnica? The decision must be made whether to focus on constructing more single-family

houses or to prioritize densifying the city center.

Will there be a big hotel for tourists or is there another possibility to offer them a more unique stay, thinking of sustainable tourism.

There will be endless questions but the point is that they are important to consider within a frame, a leitbild for the land use based on an overall vision for the future. In order to assure an ongoing process, having a responsible institution for land use is a fundamental requirement.

communication and cooperation

As the municipality of Sevnica is relatively small, regional, national and international communication and cooperation becomes even more important.

Local administrations could be supported by experts in urban planning, new trading connections to foreign cities or countries and fed with the forward-thinking ideas of students.

By embracing the spirit of cooperation across national borders, we can work together to find innovative solutions and overcome the challenges faced by various small towns across Europe. Together, we can create vibrant and sustainable communities that offer a high quality of life for residents and attract visitors from near and far.

By fostering strong partnerships and collaboration, we can build a brighter future for these towns, where prosperity, growth, and a sense of belonging thrive. Let us unite our efforts and work hand in hand to create a positive and prosperous future for all.

A Glimpse Into The Future

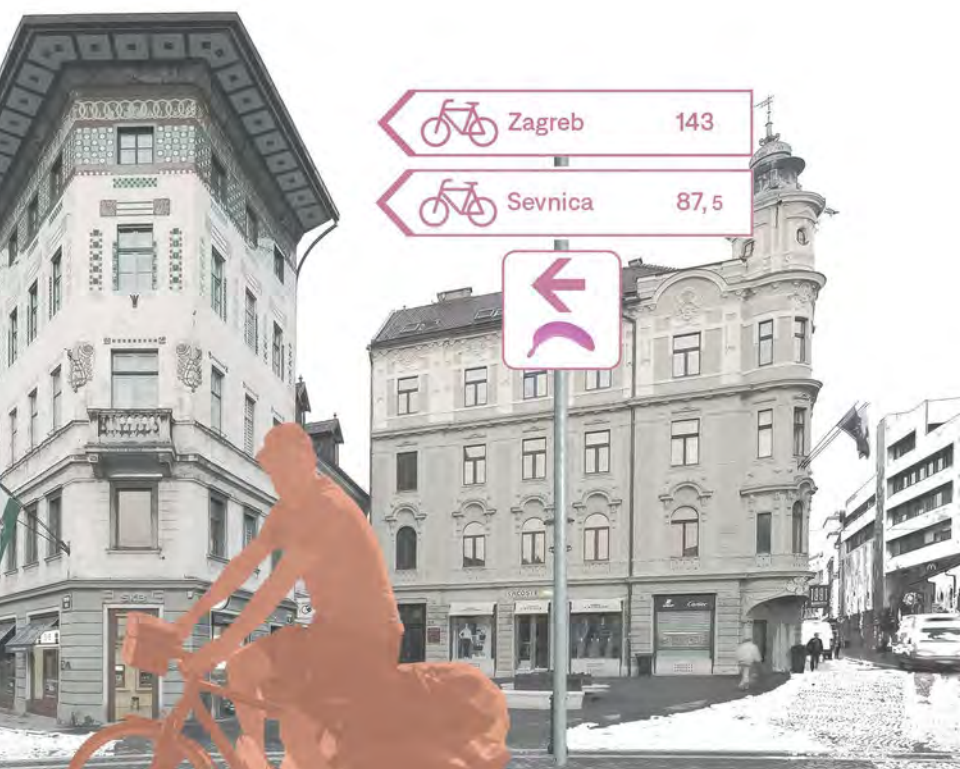


In a short-story, we take the reader with us. Together we are travelling through the “Green Banana” along the Sava. We visualize what the future could look like.


“On a beautiful morning, we start our journey at the Plaza France Prešeren in Ljubljana. However, we could start our journey anywhere in the city, because the presence of Solvenien on well-known, international route guides makes it easy to find the signposted cycling path through the “Green Banana”.

The next destination of our trip is Sevnica. The small town is right in the middle of our journey to Zagreb.





 Zagreb 143

 Sevnica 87,5





Once we leave the city, the path leads us past meadows, forests, and the banks of the Sava river. We are thrilled by the untouched nature. On our journey, we repeatedly drive past crossroads where paths lead into the hills. Many of them are lined with small watercourses.

The extensive network of bicycle paths is tempting to explore. Some of them are well-developed, others are only narrow gravel paths. It is a good mix and makes the journey all the more adventurous and varied.

Along many of these routes are places to stop for refreshments. Our ride takes us to one of these locations. Most of these places are organized and connected by regional cooperatives. During our break, we enjoy regional food and drinks, while coming into contact with local people.

For our overnight stay, we have booked a campsite on the hills in the hinterland of Sevnica, which is located near a traditional Kozolec.

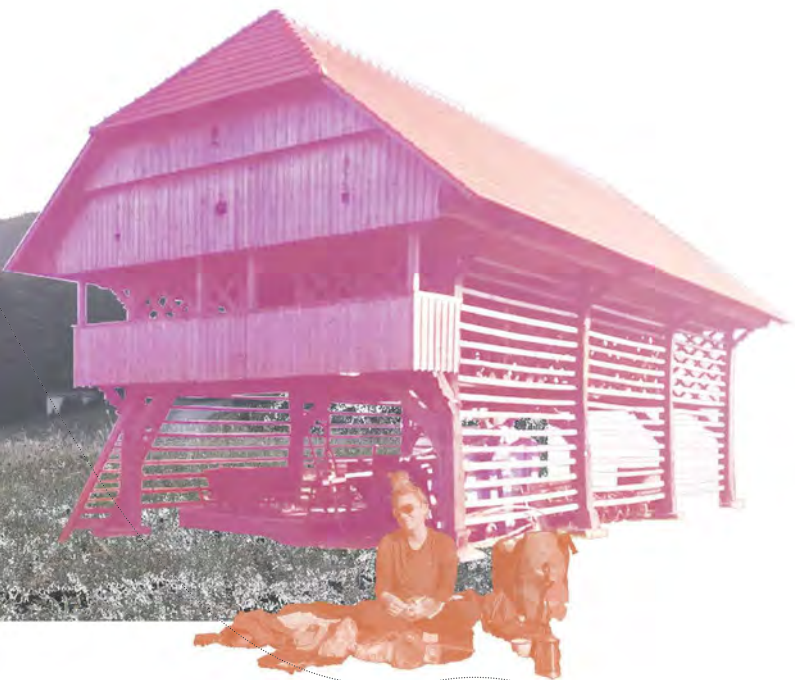
The hospitality of the locals completes our eventful day to a beautiful experience.





Our further journey continues through the remaining half of the “Green Banana”. Due to the warm weather the next day, we decide to stop for refreshment in the Sava. Here we make a small pick-nick with our purchased food. Especially the traditional salami, the local cheeses and the Blaufränkisch wine, which we bought in the castle, remain in our memories.

We arrive in Zagreb in the evening of the second day. Upon arrival, we meet cyclists who will start their journey to Sevnica the next day. We tell them about our experiences and recommend our favourite places. We're heading back home after an unforgettable journey through the “Green Banana”.





The sustainable, social and economic development of Sevnica is for us a task that we can master together in the continued lively exchange through platforms such as the NEBoD and in cooperation with various experts. The first small steps may seem insignificant, but they will be the most important in the process of development.





DOWNTOWN

New City Centre

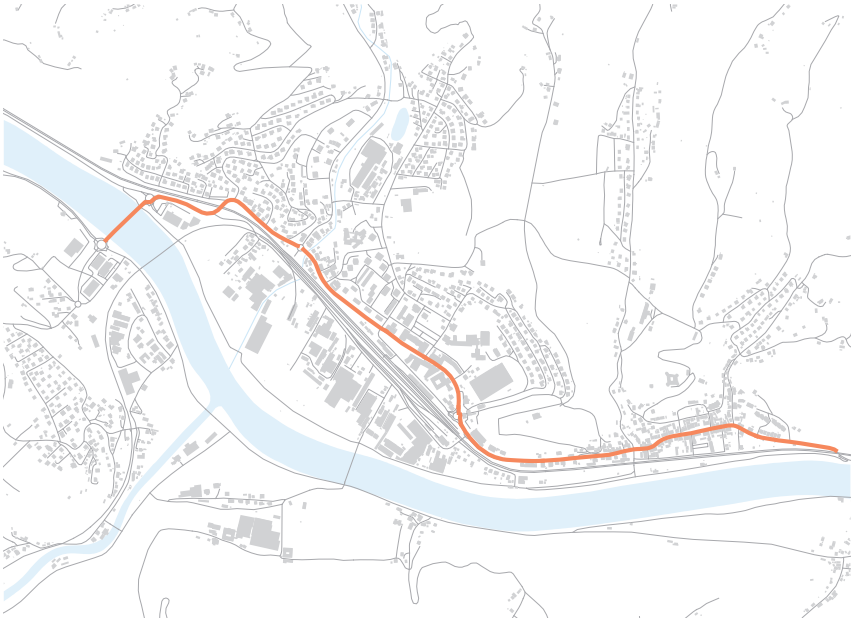
Our task was to analyse the newer part of the city and work on a concept to make the city centre more attractive to everybody.

We experienced the city by car and on foot to get an image of how the city works. We talked to people in order to see what they aspire for their city in the future and how they can contribute to that. In the following cards, images, and collages you get a good idea of Sevnica and how it's built.

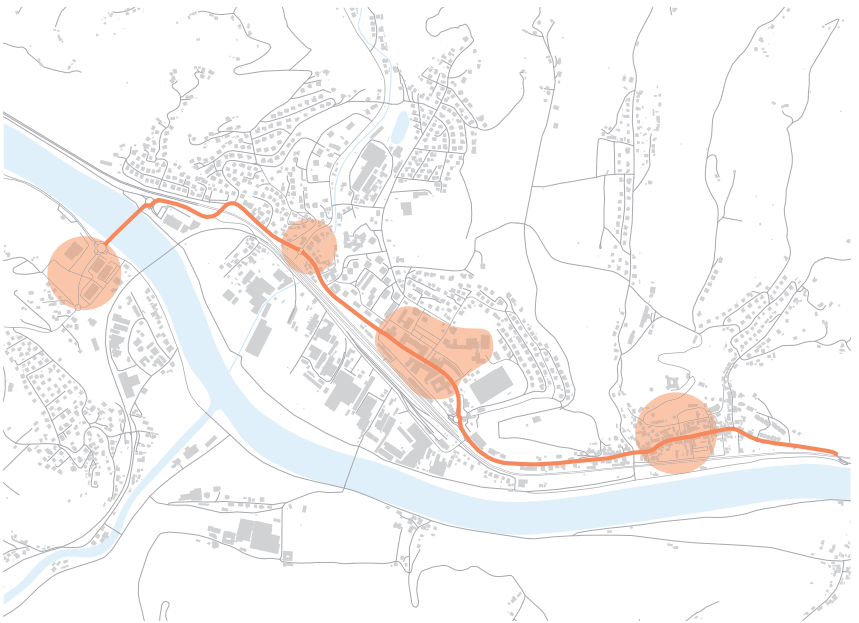
We also gave some long and short-term proposals on how to develop and improve the city in the future.

The Main Street is the primary axis of movement, for all road users - cars, pedestrians, cyclists - all activities take place along this axis.

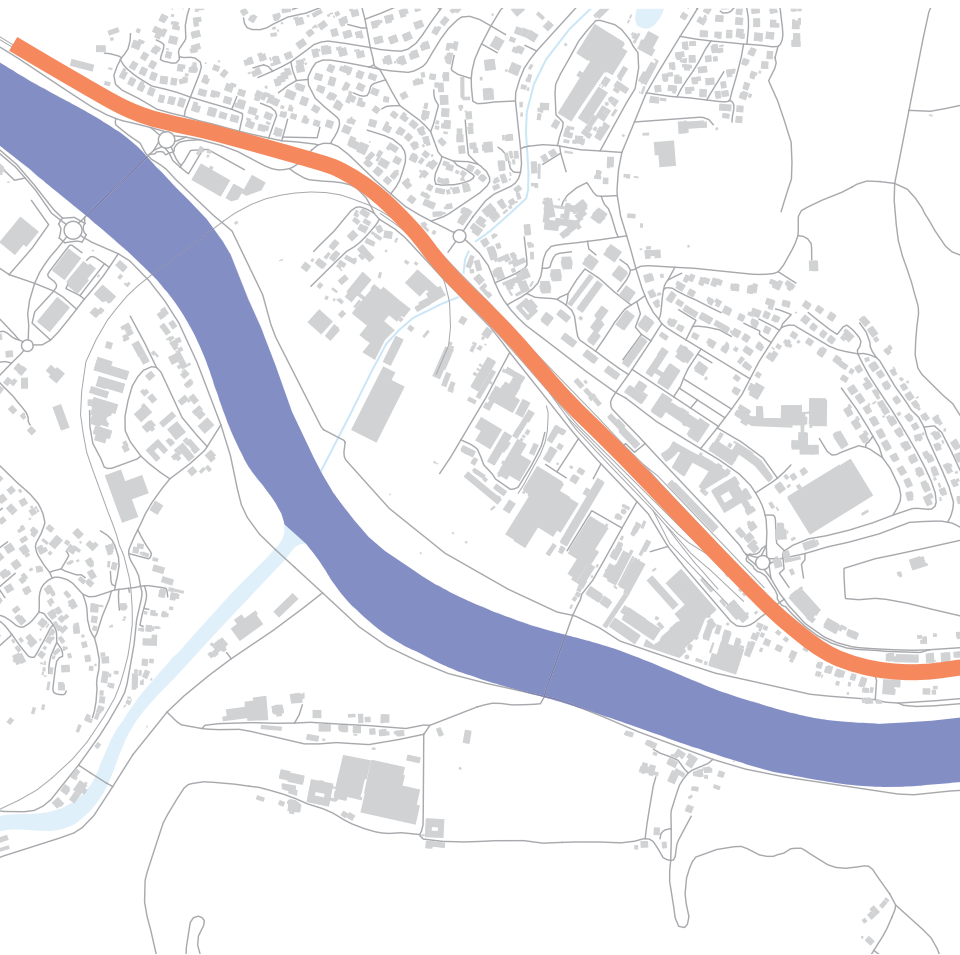
The city can be seen as a pearl necklace. Along the main street, the different city centers are lined up. In those centers the action takes place, but if you leave them it feels like leaving Sevnica.



Main Street - Axis of Movement



Pearl Necklace - Different City Centers





There are two big horizontal barriers that divide the city. The train lines, which are only traversable in a few places. And the river, which has only two bridges crossing. One mainly for cars and the other just for pedestrians.

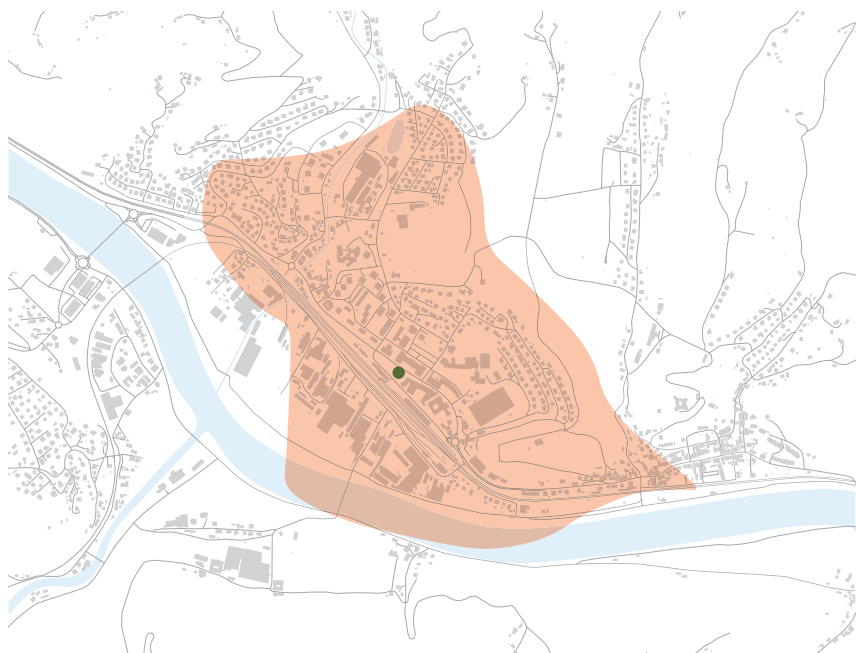




Walkable City

This map shows the area that you can reach by bike in 15 minutes from the railway station. If Sevnica becomes more bike-friendly, with better roads for bikes and shared bikes, fewer people will take the car.

This will allow the town to reuse former car parks in a way that is explained further in the „Old Town“ chapter.





30 min walk from trainstation



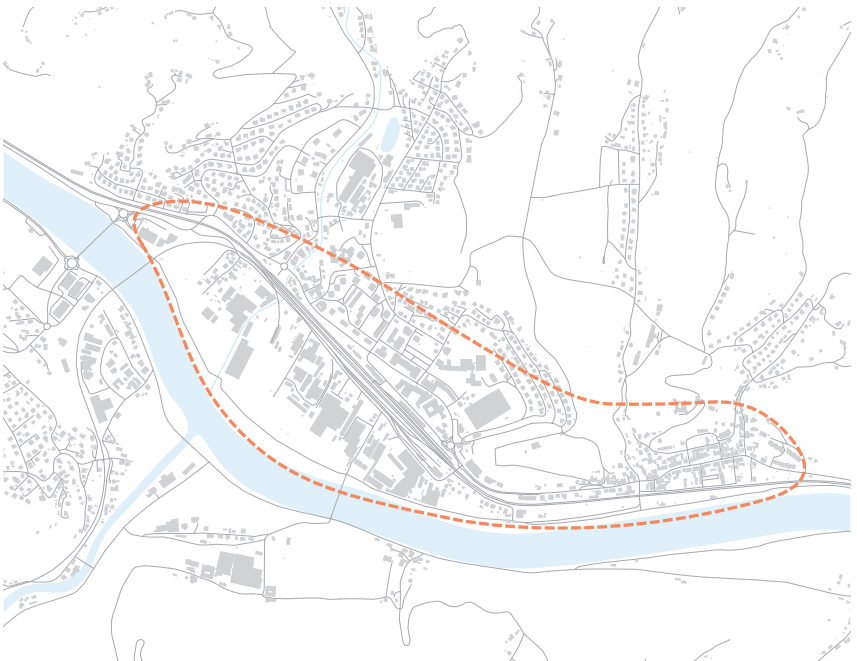


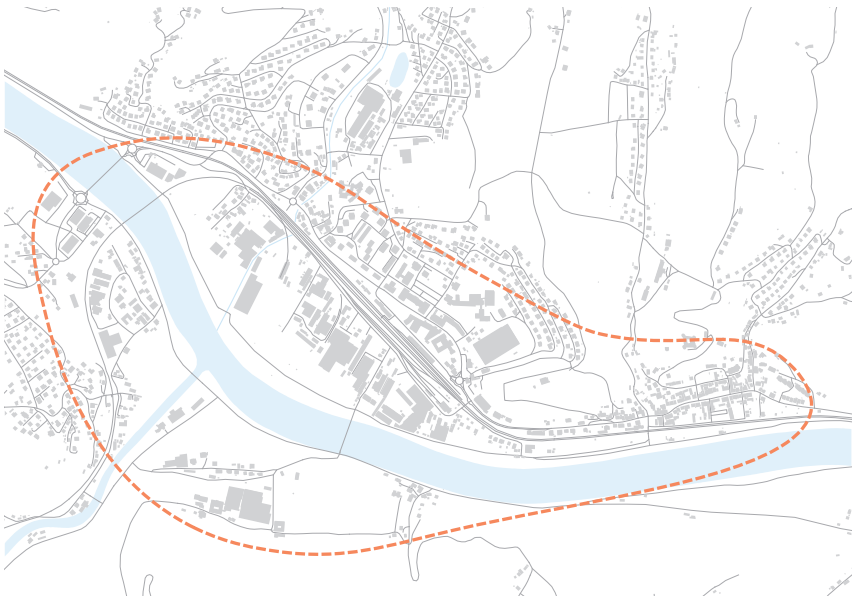
Housing development with abundant green spaces connecting the entire area. Paths away from the main street are very beautiful and tranquil.

The Whole City

A big point is, that the city should be perceived as a whole again, shown in the first map. First step in seeing the inner core of Sevnica that needs to be connected.

As a long term task, the city should be connected in the bigger way, shown in the second map.



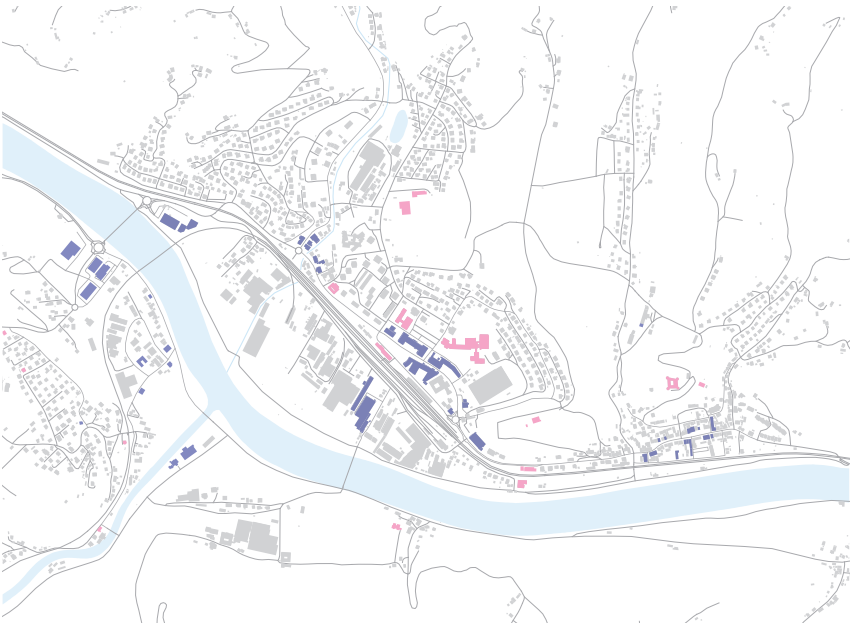


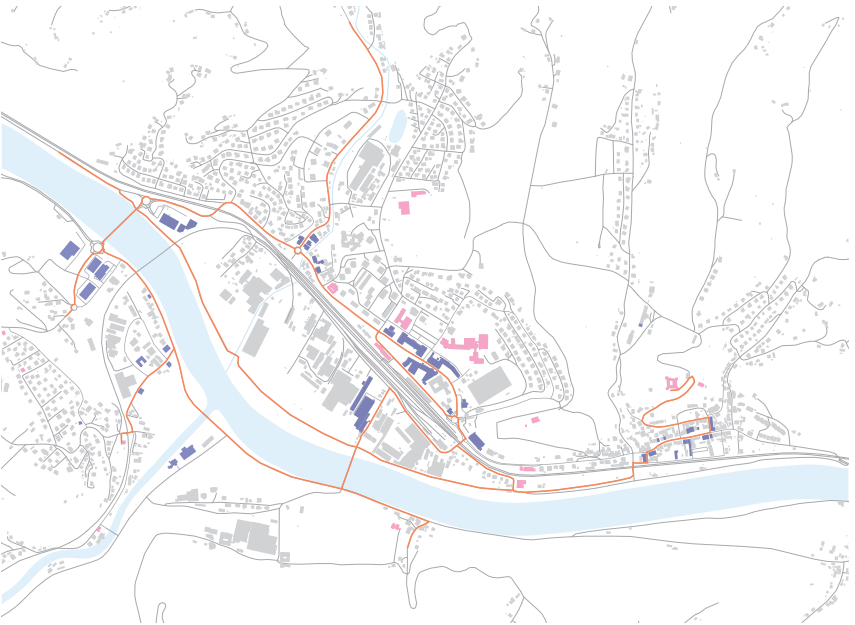
City Connection along the Sava

Buildings And Movement

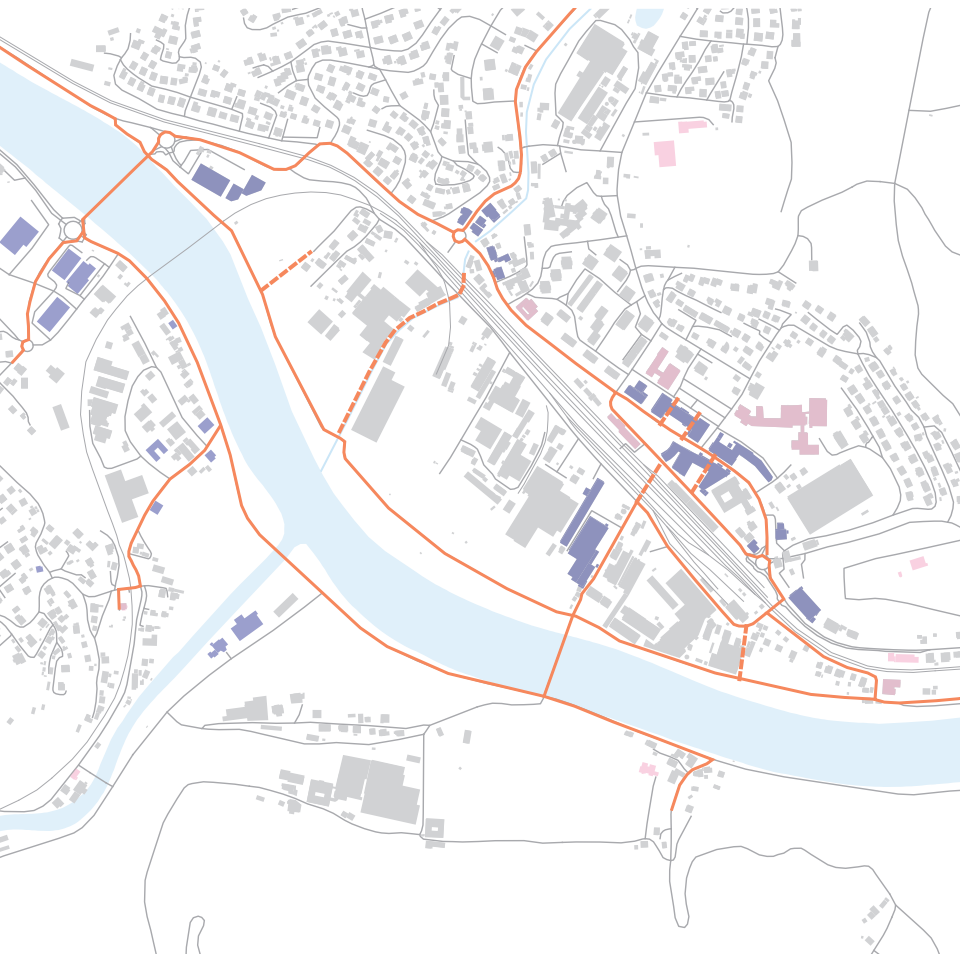
There are two different types of public buildings we marked out. The blue ones are shops, restaurants, cafes etc.. The pink colored buildings are public services that have a high frequency of human traffic. For example schools, the castle, the hospital, the train station.

The orange lines show the common routes people take if they're walking or going by bike. The movement is mainly along the main Street and the river. Any movement outside of the established routes is not attractive because of the lack of possibilities on them.





Common Routes



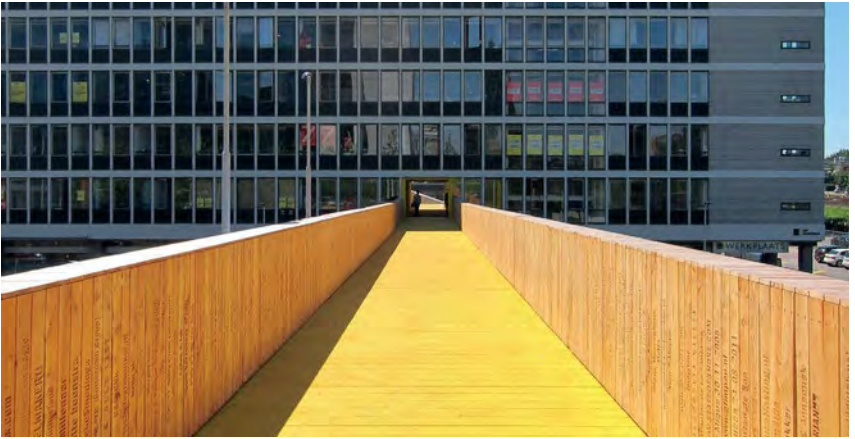


The orange dotted lines are possible connections that are already there or could be established. By creating those connections and highlighting existing shortcuts between the horizontal streets the movement of the people changes to the vertical direction. The way to the river is now a more visible and possible option.



designed by: ZUS - 2015
Netherlands, Rotterdam

Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/770488/the-luchtsingel-zus>



The Luchtsingel in Rotterdam is a three part bridge rotating around a centre. It connects three public areas around and across the rail-ways of the Central Station. The connection for pedestrians lead to a much more vivid environ-ment in this central district of Rotterdam.

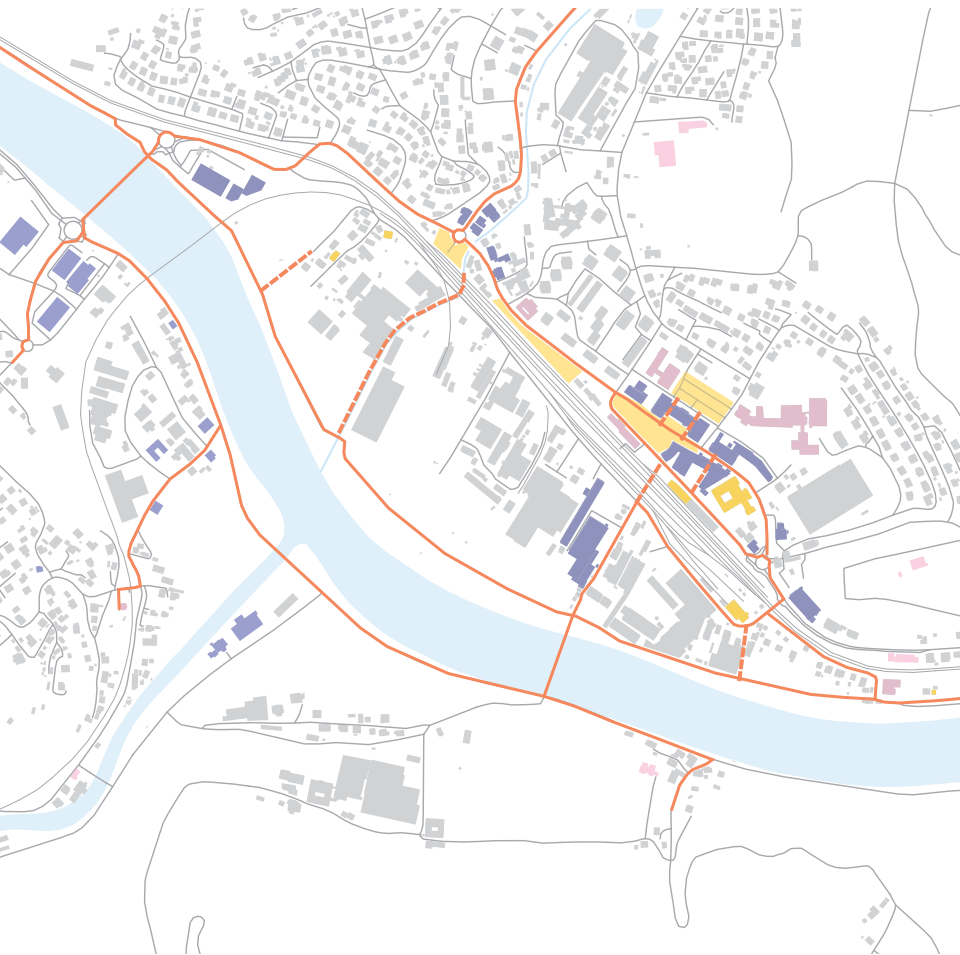
Furthermore the construction is a great example for participation in urban design. The names of local residents who helped cover the structure with wooden planks are engraved on those.

Connected City

The city aims to highlight underutilized cross-connections, which, if given more attention, could greatly benefit the city. The use of color intends to bring these connections into focus once again, promoting a slower pace and enhancing interconnectivity within the city.









In order to make those marked out shortcuts more attractive for people to take, there needs to be something along or at the end of them. The yellow colored building and spaces are possible locations for temporary or long term uses to encourage people to take routes they normally wouldn't take.



The Orchard Dry Dock is situated near Orchard Place and the River Thames, close to Trinity Buoy Wharf. In the 1970s, the area was redeveloped and many wharfside buildings were replaced with light industrial sheds. The new marketing suite, located next to the Dry Dock, will be the first building in the Leamouth South redevelopment project. Its goal is to maintain the current character of the area while creating a new connection to the River Thames.



It can be a starting point for the redevelopment of the industrial site to be more open and included in the city. And also to provide new links to the river.

designed by: HAL Architects - 2020
Great Britain, London

Source: <https://www.halarchitects.co.uk/goodluck-hope>



Zollhaus Zürich is a historic building located in the heart of Zurich, Switzerland. This 18th-century structure was originally a customs house, serving for trade and taxation. Today, it has been transformed into a cultural and event venue. Its architecture, with its iconic clock tower and riverside location, makes it a notable landmark in the city.

Zollhaus Zürich now hosts a variety of cultural events, exhibitions, and gatherings, celebrating both its historical significance and its role as a contemporary cultural space, where the past and present beautifully converge.



Switzerland, Zurich

Source: <https://www.zuerich.com/de/besuchen/kultur/regenbogenhaus-zuerich>



This collage shows an example of a vivid gathering. It is an illustration, how upgrading specific key points in the ,new' road network, by revitalizing, reactivating, and repurposing individual buildings to make more distant areas attractive again.

Even small steps, taken under the leading of existing collectives in Sevnica, would make a big difference.



Building near the trainstation at STILLES



Example for a highlight or a popup store.

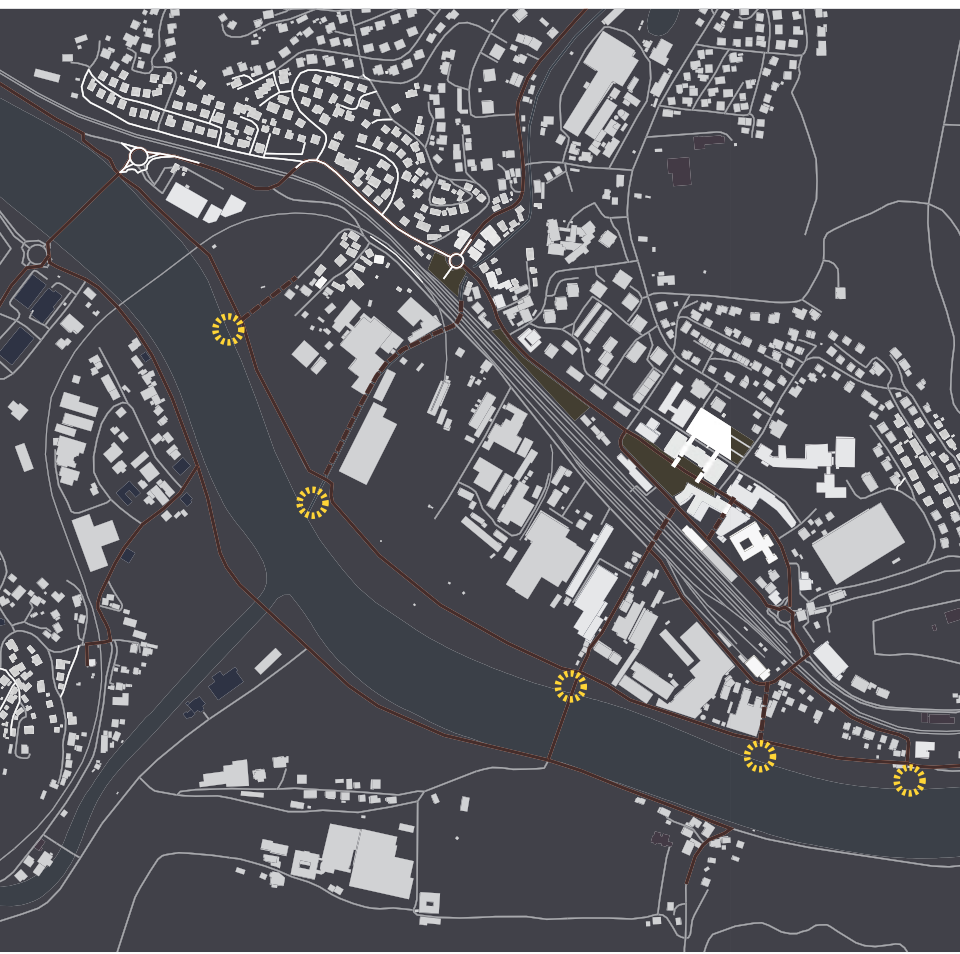
Germany, Mannheim

Source: <https://www.alter-mannheim.de/sport-verleih/>



ALTER - this is a public space that provides space to linger and have fun with free sports and cultural offers as well as a kiosk. Due to a spatial transformation, the former parking lot between the beer garden „Alter Bahnhof“ and the cheap supermarket „Lidl“ became a leisure area that is particularly popular with children and young people.

The principle: Everyone is welcome and no one should be forced to consume here. ALTER is neither exclusive nor profit-oriented. With this rule of thumb, the area breaks down social barriers and gives the Neckar city what it urgently needs: public sports and activity areas that are shared and shaped by different milieus.





The dotted circles are possible places along the Sava for a contemporary festival. By establishing spaces along the river where action takes place, the river can be transformed into a place people hang out and have a good time rather than just walking past.



By means of pop-up architectural interventions and cultural and educational programming, Rivers of Sofia made these spaces accessible to the public for the first time in 80 years and increased their visibility as urban heritage.

With Rivers of Sofia, a broad alliance of citizens, public institutions, private businesses and civil society organisations encouraged the Municipality of Sofia to commit itself to permanently restoring and revitalising the rivers as green public spaces.



Pop-Up Architectural Interventions.

initialized by: The Collective Foundation
Bulgaria, Sofia

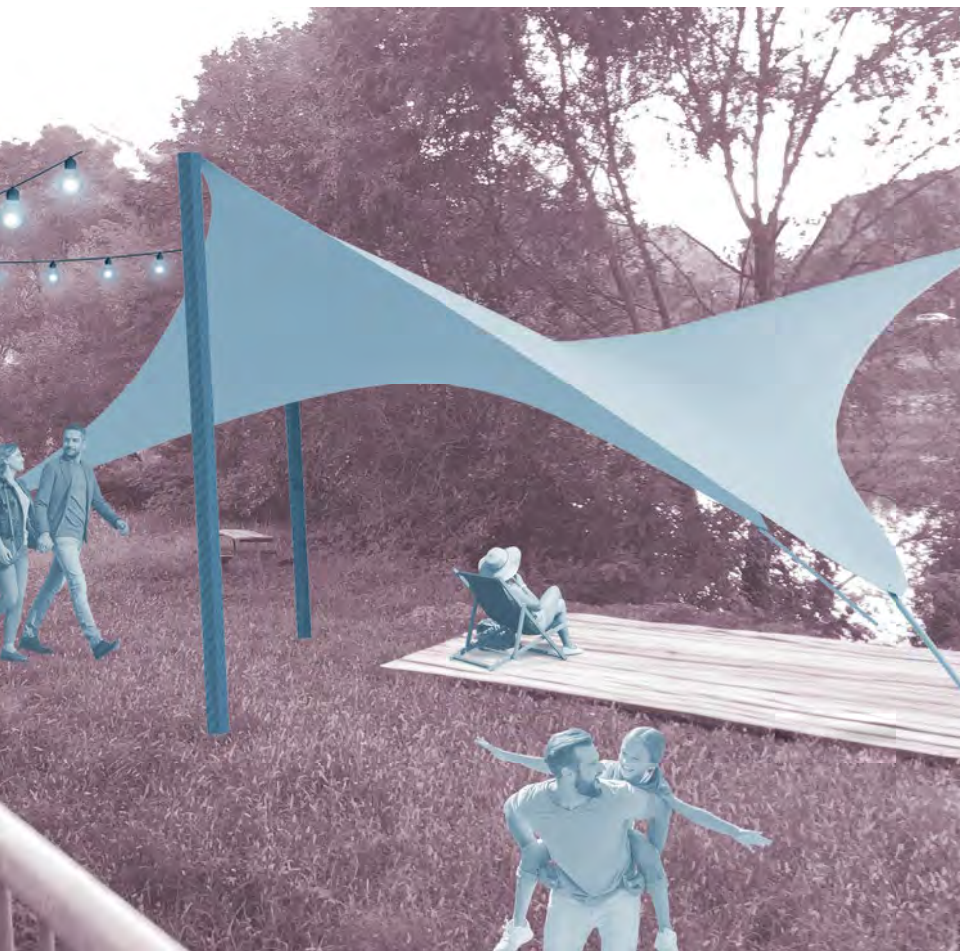
Source: <https://www.europeanheritage-awards.eu/winners/rivers-of-sofia/>



Example of upgrading specific key points in the ,new' road network.

Creating points of interest (POI) along the Sava. Because, in the long term, the city should orient itself towards the river to enhance the quality of life.

River: tranquility, nature, cool air, relaxation.



Riverbanks. A place of tranquility, cool air and a place of relaxation

The Aim Of Transformation

In summary, Main Street serves as the primary thoroughfare accommodating all road users, while deviations from this central axis are unattractive due to the concentration of activities. The city faces challenges with horizontal barriers like railway tracks and the river, limiting access.

However, by improving bike infrastructure and creating new connections, the city can shift movement patterns and enhance vertical connectivity. Reusing underutilized public spaces and establishing attractive destinations along these routes can encourage people to explore new paths and utilize the city's potential, especially along the river, transforming it from a mere passageway into a vibrant social hub.





OLD CITY

Ideas Are The Beginning Of All Fortunes

The old town was first mentioned in 1275 by its German name Lichtenwalde. At that time, it was one of the most important settlements along the lower Sava. Today it is one of the three major settlements in the Lower Sava Valley.

Unfortunately, the old town has developed over the years in such a way that its daily routine is not immediately apparent to visitors, which makes it difficult to find your way around the city.

Apart from Sevnica unique history and traditions, its position beneath the historical castle and along the Sava River makes it attractive to everyone visiting Sevnica. This might also be the reason why tourism has increased in past few years.

Since Sevnica has decided to make its town a friendly place for tourists, the cross-connection between castle, city and river is an important aspect on the way to the big picture.

It is important to plan the development of the town according to its growth and fame which is increasing day by day. It is also necessary that all changes are implemented according to their demands. A financial advantage is to initiate changes in small steps, especially where they are needed. At the beginning, small but effective targeted measures should make moving through the old town much more pleasant and attractive. Before larger funds are used to achieve goals, local resources should be used. Using existing materials and mobilizing volunteers is an effective way to stimulate community interest. The most important variable is the people of Sevnica and their culture and traditions. Locals and visitors should come into contact through various activities.



No city can withstand the decay of time unless it follows its contemporary needs.

Revival



Map of the old town with all shops.

■ shops ■ empty shops






The surest way to succeed is always to try again. Depending on its size, the city has a lot of shops (in black), but unfortunately many of them are empty (in orange).

This situation could be used to arouse tourists' interest in local products or just to cover everyday needs. The community should support such an initiative by relieving the financial burden on businesses at the beginning. It is a win-win on both sides if the right initiatives are taken.

Renovation



Map of Houses in need of renovation

-  low damage
-  medium damage
-  high damage



The people, not the houses, make the city. There is always one problem that old cities bring with them and that is their age. This problem should be everyone's concern and everyone can contribute. In Sevnica there is not a lack of craftsmanship, but rather a lack of purpose. The community and residents should come together to find cost-effective solutions.

The decisions that arise will have a direct impact on the appearance of the city. This makes it all the more important to retain the old quality features. No city can withstand the decay of time unless it follows its contemporary needs.

Re-Interpretation

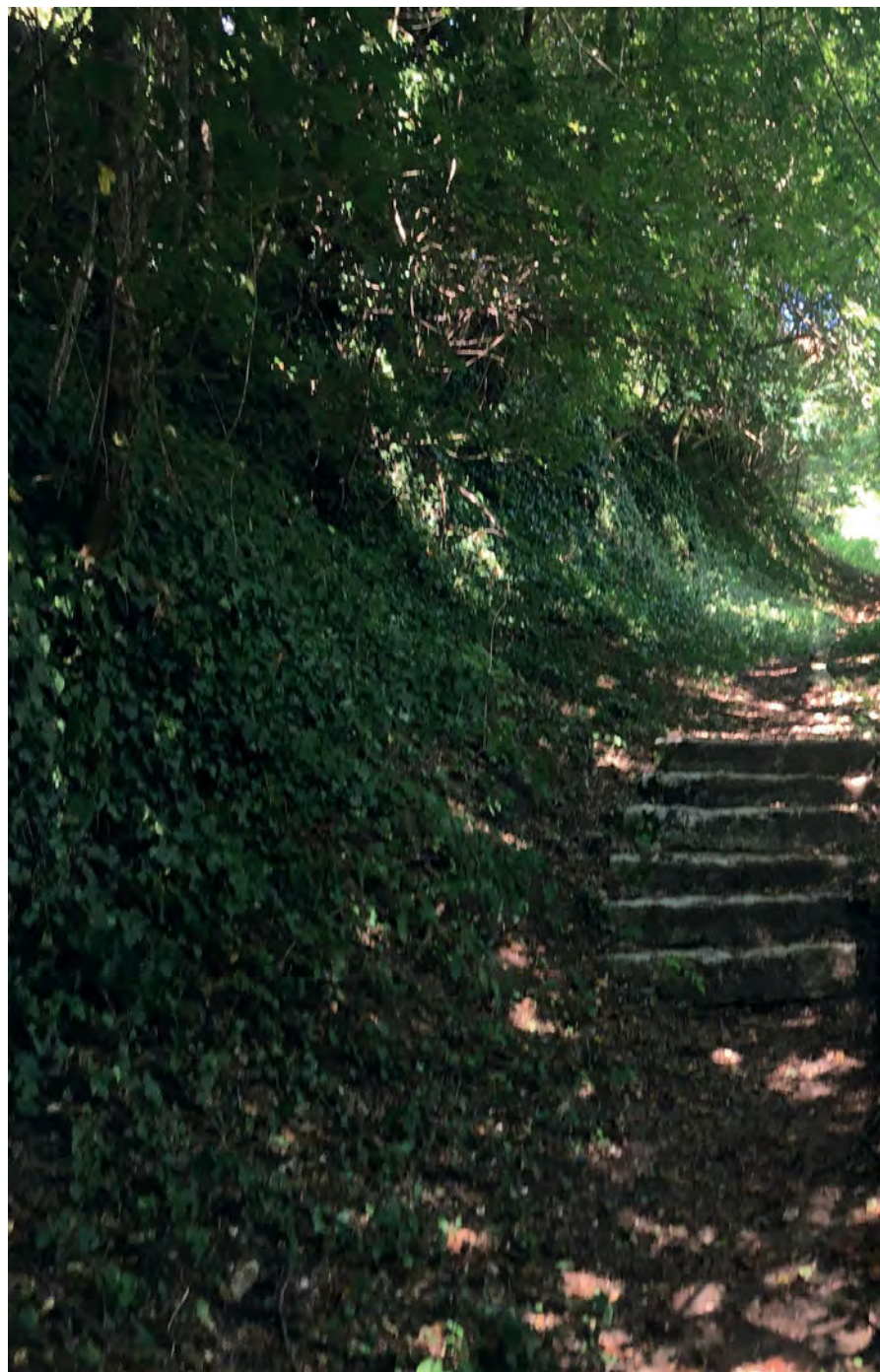


Map of Nature within town

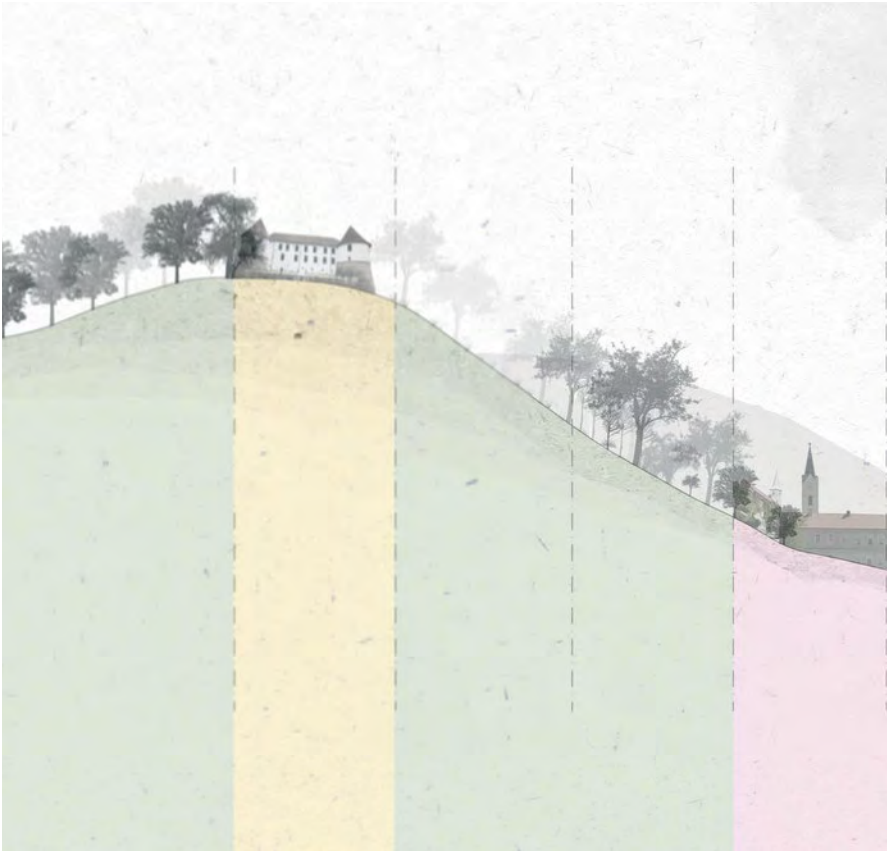
orange concrete Areas green Green Areas



Nature is the best pharmacy. It is easy to see that there are more concrete areas than green areas within the old town. This appearance has a great influence on the city. Many are of the opinion that these are important parking spaces and without them there would be no space for the enormous number of cars. However, in this argument we should always put our well-being and our health first. It is essential to reverse this situation so that the goal of green tourism also makes sense and is reflected.







A section through the old town reveals its structure. The castle lying on top of the hill, a green zone on the hillside, the town, the railway and the river. This exemplifies the chance the town has. Many tourists come to visit the castle and have a beautiful view of the old town next to the river.

This creates the possibility for people to identify objects of interest inside the city which may cause them to wander down to the city to visit these places, vitalizing the city and enabling the establishment of more and more varied business. The result of looking at the town like this is thinking the tourist experience like a path from the castle to the river.





Start with what is necessary, then do what is possible and suddenly you will do the impossible.

At the bottom of the hill, the beautiful nature that surrounds the castle is suddenly gone. Unnecessary parking spaces and asphalt areas should slowly but surely be reduced and given back to nature.



You don't have to take your car everywhere. First of all, the speed of cars passing by on the main street should be reduced so that the traffic situation is more beneficial to pedestrians and shops. At the same time, the path for pedestrians should be wider; this can also initially be achieved with simple financial means and natural resources.

Parking spaces that are located along the pedestrian path could be placed further towards the middle of the street, thereby creating new opportunities for shops and pedestrians. The next step would be to completely remove a few parking spaces to create islands for people to linger. If these measures are accepted by the residents, it is possible to take permanent measures so that the old city can regain life.



Simply moving the parking spaces closer to the road creates a space for people



A viewingtower in form of a staircase is just shown as an example for a visually enticing landmark.



Places should be attractive not intimidating. Throughout the city, from the castle to the river, it is extremely important to have signage and advertising to guide you, creating a feeling of safety and familiarity.

Visually attractive features such as a platform or stature, that can be seen from a distance, are very useful. Inviting gestures at intersections or shops are essential to arouse the interest of visitors.

The Old Town has so much to offer and show that is either not visible at first glance or is happening somewhere in the backyard. It is important to welcome and coordinate people.







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