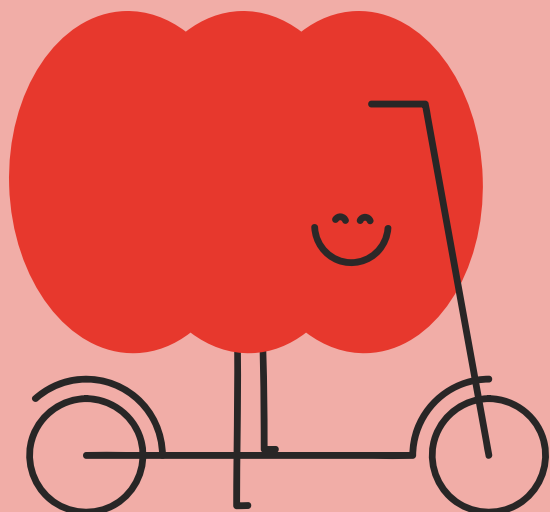
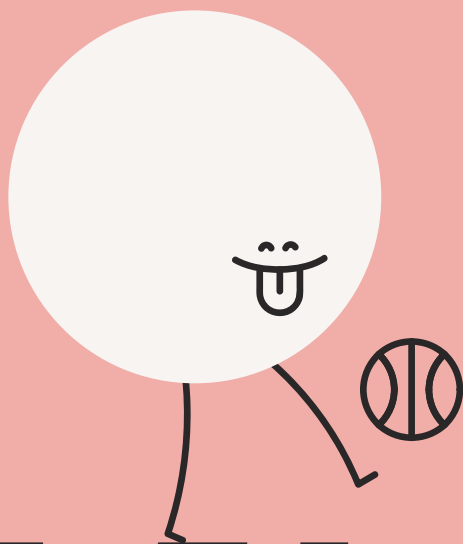


COMMUNITY PLAY-STREET



Manual

MESTO
PRE DETI





What can you find in the manual?

01

Community Playstreet Manual

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Image 01: Playstreet at Malo-karpatské námestie school.
Source: MIB, 2023.

Community Playstreet Manual

01

Introduction

↓
Image 02: Playstreet at Malo-karpatské námestie school.
Source: MIB, 2023.

→
Image 03: Community Playstreet at Za kasárňou school.
Source: MIB, 2024.



What is a Playstreet?

A Playstreet is created by closing a city street for a period of time. During this time, motor traffic is prohibited to create a safe and open environment for free play, recreational activities and community interaction. A Playstreet gives people – from children to seniors – the opportunity to play and move freely in a public space.

Playstreets are generally organised in residential zones on streets where there is only a low volume of traffic and which are mostly used by people from the neighbourhood itself.

One of the main goals of Playstreets is to bring people together within the same neighbourhood and create a space for them to interact with their neighbours. Playstreets are open to all, but are primarily community-based, local events organised by and for the local community.

The second important goal is to enable children to use the outdoor public space freely and to the fullest when playing their own games and activities without the threat of danger in the form of cars and other means of transport.

Playstreets are not an innovation, but rather try to bring back, at least temporarily, what was the norm a few decades ago – whether it's playing with a ball in the street in front of your house or drawing with chalk on the asphalt.

The concept of Playstreets in its current form originated in 2009 in Bristol, England, and has since quickly gained popularity around the world. The positive impacts of Playstreets are also indicated by research. In areas where they have been introduced, there have been reports of improvements in the traffic situation, increased community cohesion and a sense of social bond between locals.

Community Playstreets can be held on both an occasional and regular basis.

Outdoor free play is vital to children's health and well-being, and play streets are an ideal way for children and communities to reconnect. Playstreets have a long-lasting impact on physical activity, mental health, friendships, independence and a sense of belonging in communities. They address pre-existing barriers to children's freedom to play outdoors, such as increased traffic and child safety concerns.

→ **In this manual you will find detailed instructions on how to get started with supporting free play outdoors on the street near your house, in the courtyard or in another public space where you live. The information you will find here is the extract of more than two years of experience we have gained in the City for Kids project (www.mestopredeti.sk). This manual is for all who want to support children's free play.**



What is the difference between Playstreet festivals and Community Playstreets?

If you are following our activities you have noticed that we have organised several Playstreets as part of the City for Kids project. These festivals were organised in collaboration with the schools involved in the project. Playstreets were neighbourhood festivals during which we also closed streets where there is normally a significant transit of cars (e.g. Vazovova street). The aim of these festivals was for people to experience their street differently than on a normal day. In many places we did production-intensive activities that involved building a stage, food stalls or a foam party.

The idea behind Community Playstreets is the organization of such events by the neighbourhood itself. It is a low-maintenance version of the event, where there doesn't need to be food stalls or a DJ on the streets. It is the aspect of children playing freely outdoors, in a safe environment and close to their homes that is important. So it's not an attempt to extend Playstreets in the way you've seen it in Bratislava recently, but an attempt to extend the idea in a similar way to what has happened in Bristol, England. There, neighbourhoods organise Community Playstreets on a regular basis, e.g. every weekend or weekday afternoon. It is common there for children to play like this in the street where they live after school.

We are aware of the diversity and specific character of Bratislava (based on our experience and also on the basis of participation with citizens). Therefore we understand that Playstreets may not only happen directly on a car road, but also in a courtyard, a wide sidewalk next to a block of flats, a communal garden, etc.

What does free play mean?

It is an unstructured activity that has no predetermined rules, no goals and is not directed by adults. The children themselves determine what they will do and how they will do it. This allows them to be creative, independent and spontaneous. Free play encourages the development of different skills such as problem solving, social skills or the ability to work with others. In the context of free play, children often use common objects (e.g. sticks, stones, boxes) to create their own games and scenarios.

How do I organize a Community Playstreet in my neighborhood?

This manual contains a step-by-step process for preparing Community Playstreets. The complexity of the process depends on the specific location where you want to organise the Playstreet. If you want to invite children to play in the courtyard and offer them a safe environment that is normally car-free, you only need a few weeks to inform everyone you want to invite. Alternatively, if you live on a block of flats and want children to play on a road where cars normally park or drive, you need to go through a permit process. This is described in Step 02 - Permits and can take a few weeks longer as it involves more planning.

We also recommend contacting communities that already have experience with Playstreets. We can connect you with them or give you advice if you contact us at info@mestopredeti.sk.



Image 04: Community Playstreet on Kúčerského street. Source: Bratislava-Staré Mesto, 2024.



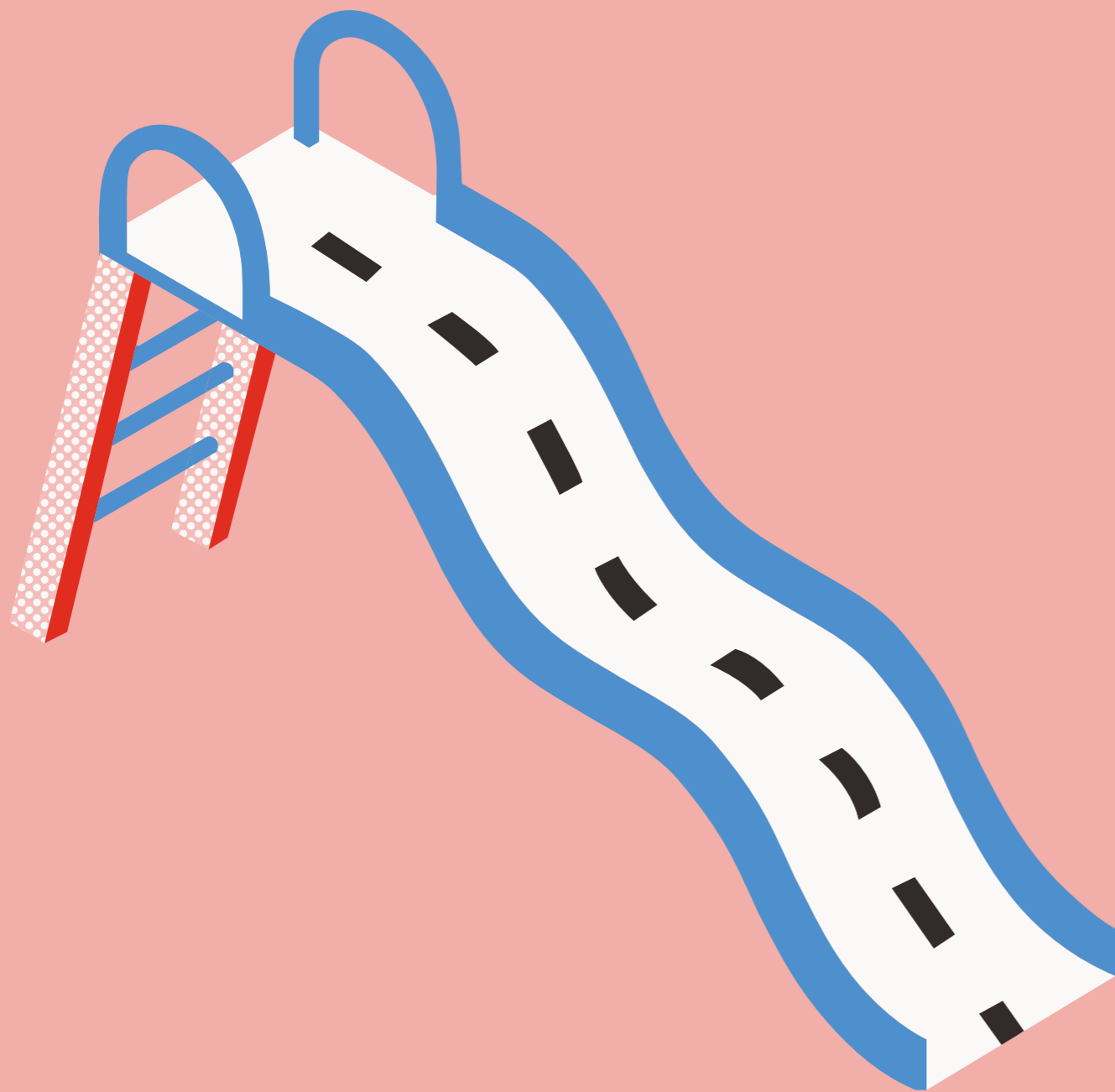
Image 05: Playstreet at Malokarpatské námestie school. Source: MIB, 2023.



THE HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF HEALTH AND HEALTH-RELATED BEHAVIOURS IN 11-, 13- AND 15-YEAR-OLD SCHOOLCHILDREN PUBLISHED IN 2024. IT PRESENTED AN ALARMING PREVALENCE OF DIFFICULTIES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN OVER 60 % OF BOYS AND 40 % OF GIRLS AGED 13 – 15. MANY SCIENTIFIC STUDIES CONFIRM THAT FREE PLAY REDUCES STRESS LEVELS WHILST BUILDING RESILIENCE. IN CONTRAST, THE DECLINE IN CHILDREN'S OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN FREE PLAY, ESPECIALLY OUTDOORS WITH OTHER CHILDREN, CONTRIBUTES TO INCREASED ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, FEELINGS OF HELPLESSNESS AND NARCISSISM IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.



10 Reasons to organise a Playstreet



1. Children need to play

Play is essential for children's physical and mental health and well-being. The right to play is also listed in the UN Convention as a fundamental human right for children. Play provides children with exciting and joyful experiences. Free play helps children to satisfy their need for human companionship and teaches them to discuss and cooperate with each other.

2. The street is an empty canvas.

The street does not offer play elements that are designed for specific games, but it does offer space for free play and endless imagination of children. Free play does not have to take place only on playgrounds or sports fields. Playing in a public space that is not primarily designed for children develops imagination and independence.

3. Children need to play close to their homes.

The place that is most accessible to children is the immediate surroundings of their home. However, this is only the case if the place is safe enough. Initiatives such as Community Playstreets help make the neighborhoods around our homes safer by raising awareness about safe children's play in public spaces.

4. Children need enough space for free play.

Children are often unable to get to larger parks or open spaces on their own. These spaces offer enough space for them to be physically active. Therefore, turning their street into a safe space, even if only for a few hours, will make free play more accessible.

5. Playing in the streets strengthens communities.

Community Playstreets are meant to be a place where all neighbors come together, regardless of their age or whether they have children. Community-led activities help people to find and strengthen their relationship with their neighbourhood.

6. Playing in the street creates new opportunities for making connections and friendships.

Children and people of all ages and those who do not attend a catchment school meet in the street. They are able to make friends right in their neighbourhood.

7. Children learn valuable skills and gain independence.

Children can learn new physical skills - cycling, skating or scootering. At the same time, they can also practice social skills, which is extremely important for their eventual independence.

8. Playing in the street allows parents to have their children partially supervised and feel safer.

Where outdoor play is a normal part of neighbourhoods, children may feel safer with partial supervision from their parents, carers or neighbours. If a child has a reasonably safe neighbourhood around their home, the likelihood of them playing outside goes up.

9. The street is the "starting point for all journeys." (Tim Gill, 2007)

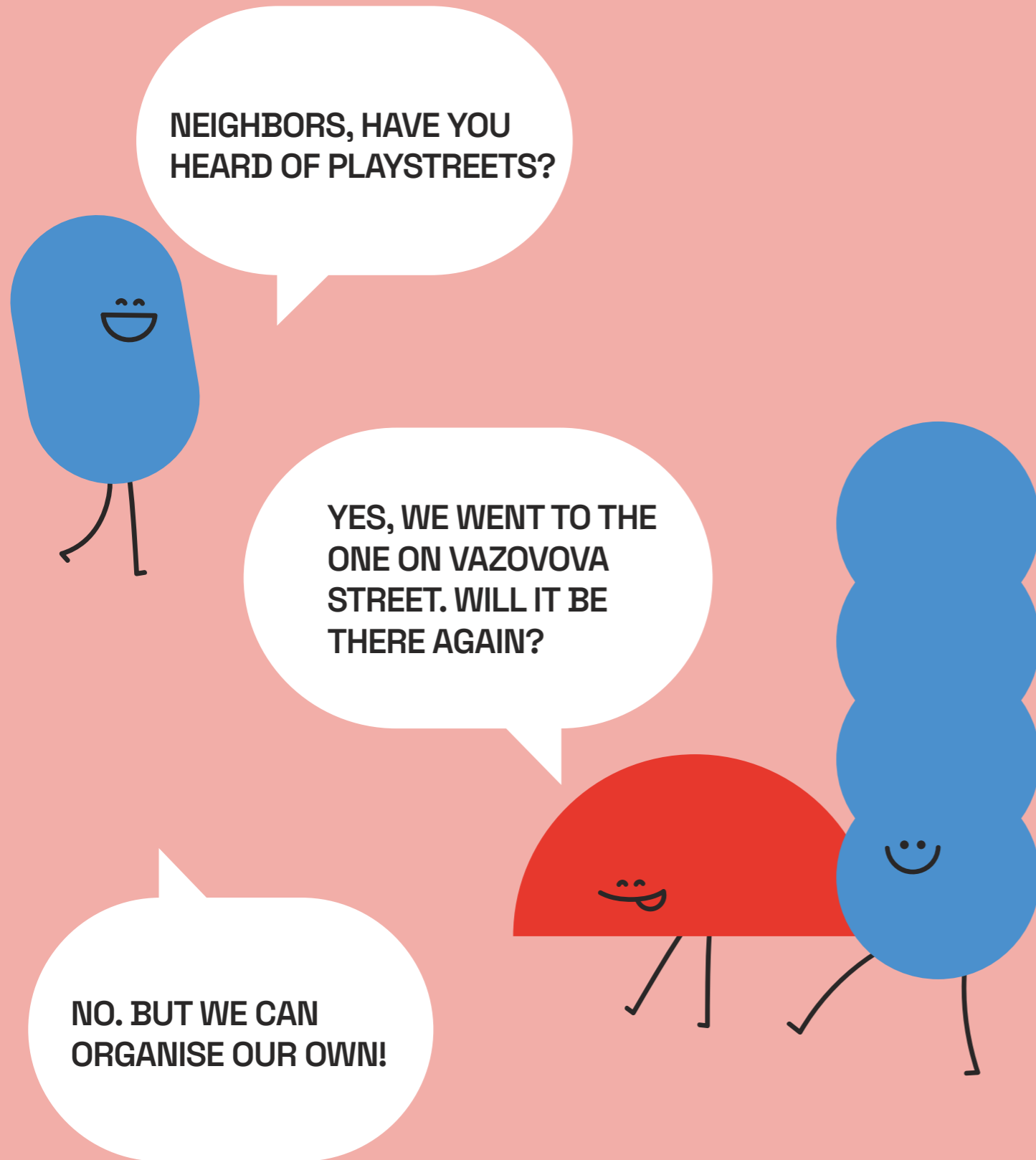
Playing outdoors in front of or near the house is a great starting point for building children's independence. Children gradually become more confident and are more likely to manage longer journeys, for example to the shop, the park or to friends.

10. Streets constitute the vast majority of public space in the city.

To view streets as spaces for moving cars or parking cars is to underestimate their true potential. Streets can be places to meet, relax, do sports and even spaces for play. They also make up the majority of public space in the city, so we hope that one of the streets or courtyards in your neighbourhood will be suitable for organising a Community Playstreet.

Step 01: How to reach out to the neighbourhood

↘
Image 06: Playstreet on the Freedom square.
Source: MIB, 2023.
→
Image 07: Playstreet at the Černyševského school.
Source: MIB, 2023.



→ Making your street a place to play can be a brave step and it's good to have moral support. Before you share this with the whole street, ask a few neighbors you know if they would be enthusiastic about organizing a Community Playstreet. You'll need some time and energy. The whole process from the idea to the first meeting can take 8 to 12 weeks, but you can divide the tasks and spend most of that time simply waiting for permissions.



Reaching out to the neighbourhood

Look for a street in your area that is suitable for such an event. Be sure to avoid streets with public transportation lines and major transit streets in the city. Also consider the terrain, especially in hilly parts of the city. Find out if any businesses need to have round-the-clock car access. We recommend keeping it simple to begin with.

If you live in an apartment building or a house with a transit street in front of it, don't be discouraged. Parking lots, courtyards and wider pedestrian paths are also excellent places to play.

The Playstreet organizing team should ensure that everyone in the neighborhood is well informed in advance. We recommend holding a kick-off meeting, informing your neighbours and inviting them to attend if they are interested or have questions.

Ideally, this meeting should be held at least two months before the planned Community Playstreet. This is so that no one feels left out of the process, whether they would like to help with the organization or, on the contrary, need to voice their concerns. You can invite people in your neighborhood in person by ringing their doorbell or talking to them outside. Also reach out to local non-profits. To catch as many people as possible, we recommend printing a few invitations to put on the entrances of apartment buildings or in places that people frequent.

The aim of the first meeting is to introduce people to the idea of Community Playstreets, to spark their interest and enthusiasm, to find out if there is enough support for such an event and to agree on the first details.

At the meeting, you can explain why you have decided to choose your street and whether you have also decided to request a road closure. Explain that a road closure does not mean that they will not be able to get to their homes by car. It also does not mean that they will not be able to park on the street in front of their house or leave by car if they need to. For better reasoning and to prepare answers to potential questions, the Practical Q&A will help you.





←
Image 08: Using a courtyard in Bratislava-Nové Mesto for free play.
 Source: MIB, 2024.

↓
Image 09: Playstreet at the Freedom square.
 Source: MIB, 2024.

Idea brainstorming

Everyone seems to have their own idea of what exactly the Community Playstreet should look like and what it should feature. At the kick-off meeting you can share your ideas and ask others for theirs. These can be ideas about venues for event, activities that will take place there, but also ideas about how to spread the word to others to get positive feedback. Discuss the potential advantages and disadvantages of the proposed options. You can discuss whether you want to try a one-off event or a recurring one. Try showing your neighbors photos or videos of this event at other locations within the city. Ask how your neighbours used to play when they were children and inspire each other.

Picking the right place

There are neighbourhoods in Bratislava with different types of housing and each of them offers different potential spaces for organising the Community Playstreet. A suitable space is one that can welcome people from the whole neighbourhood and is not only used by specific people from one house (like someone's garden). This means that it is publicly accessible. In the case of blocks of flats, the idea of organising an event on green spaces between them or on pedestrian routes within them may be an option. If you are organising the event in the summer months, try to choose a location that will not be in direct sunlight and where there will be plenty of shade.

Why choose the streets?

Historically, the streets have always been the main spaces of all cities, where a whole range of activities from meeting to trading have taken place. In recent decades, streets have largely been degraded into transit-dominated spaces. By closing the street to cars, children and adults gain the opportunity to see their neighbourhood from a different perspective and use a space that is otherwise inaccessible to them. It also paves the way for rethinking street use in the future.

Setting the date

Choose the day and time you want to organise the Community Playstreet – people usually prefer weekends, i.e. from Friday afternoon until Sunday. That's when you have the best chance of attracting the most people from your neighborhood, and it's also when there's less traffic overall, which can make the street closure process easier. If you want to organize the event on a regular basis (for example, weekly or monthly), a good time might be on weekdays after school is out.

Then decide how long the event should last – it can be half a day or a full day, but if you're organising for the first time, two to three hours is the optimum length. If the event should be extended due to high interest, be prepared for this in advance and take this into account when dealing with permits.

Once you have set a date for the Community Playstreet, set milestones for when you want to have each stage of the preparation process completed.



I WILL BE THE PLAY CAPTAIN!

Division of roles and responsibilities

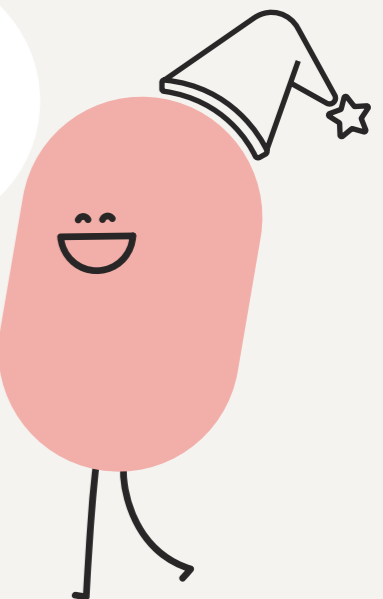
Try to assemble a core team of people who will be involved in preparing the Playstreet and divide up the different tasks. The standard three roles are:

Play Captain: At least one person (but it can be two or three) should be the main organizer who coordinates the event. Roles of the main Play Captain may include securing permits or communication for the entire event. No need to worry about this though, the Play Captain doesn't need to have any special experience – we've created this guide to help you with the process.

Safety Hero: There should be at least two adults on each Community Playstreet to oversee the traffic safety of the event and to ensure that drivers cross the closed street at no more than walking speed and only if they are residents of that street. The Safety Heroes also regulate the number of vehicles, letting them through one by one and giving them instructions so that no one feels unsafe.

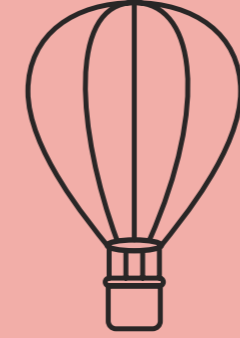
Helpers: Someone to take care of activities such as handing out posters, putting up road signs, etc.

I WILL HAND OUT ALL THE INVITATIONS.



Timeline

The timeline will help you with the timing of the whole process, and you can also show it to the neighborhood at the first meeting. That way everyone will know what the preparations entail. Keep in mind, however, that this manual is meant to help you through each step and you can use all of the pre-prepared materials. We have prepared samples of permits, letters, and invitations, and we also offer you the loan of signage, games, or tables and chairs. All of the permit and letter samples are in Slovak language.



REACHING OUT TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD
First coffee together or A discussion about the possibility of organising the Community Playstreet.

THE KICK-OFF MEETING
Sharing ideas, discussing potential concerns, selecting a suitable location, choosing the organizing team and the frequency of the event.

FIRST TEAM MEETING
Defining individual team roles and responsibilities.

SECOND TEAM MEETING
Production preparation of the Community Playstreet.

BORROWING GAMES, URBAN FURNITURE AND TRAFFIC SIGNS

COMMUNITY PLAYSTREET

1 TÝŽDEŇ

1 - 2 TÝŽDNE

1 MESIAC

1 MESIAC

1 TÝŽDEŇ

PREPARATION OF PERMITS AND WAITING FOR APPROVAL
Preparation of the necessary permits depending on the location where the event will be held. Permits are prepared well in advance so that you get them in time. You can prepare them before the first meeting team meeting, but also shortly after.

GETTING THE PERMITS

GETTING FEEDBACK FROM NEIGHBOURS

ASK FOR THE PERMITS AT LEAST 2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

WE WILL LEND YOU OUR INVENTORY!

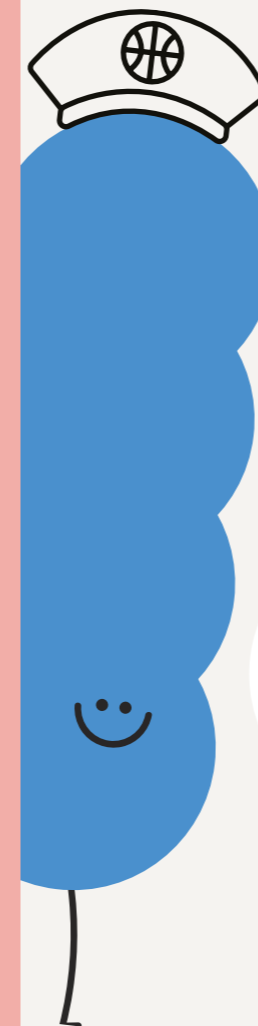
- COMMUNICATION
- PERMITS
- THE EVENT - COMMUNITY PLAYSTREET
- OPTIONAL STEPS

Step 02: Permits

↓
Image 10: Playstreet at
Vazovova school.
Source: MIB, 2023.

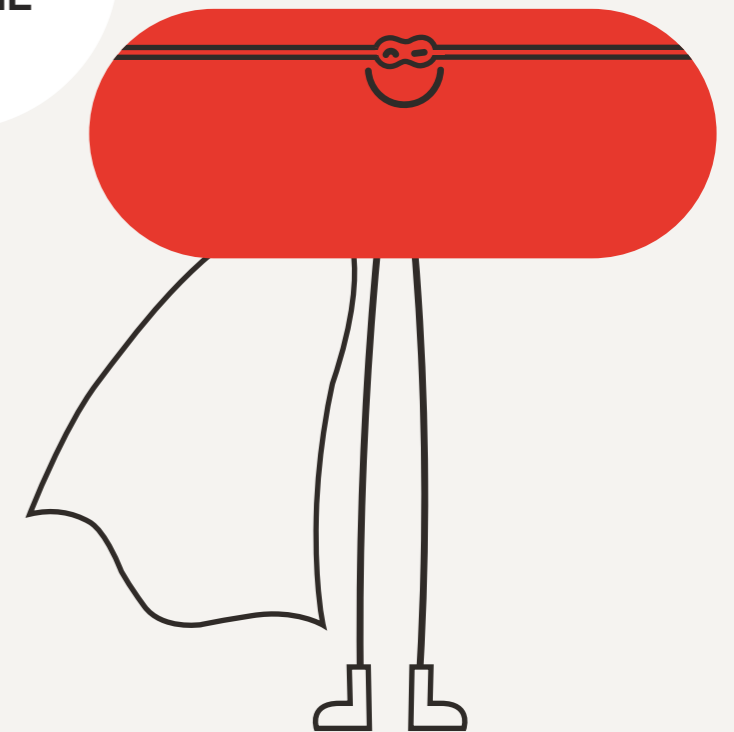


- There are a number of ways to effectively and efficiently temporarily close a road to motor vehicles, each approach having its own advantages and specificities. The most common methods include the use of physical barriers (see images 10, 11 and 12), the installation of traffic signs, temporary traffic regime changes, the use of technological solutions and the organisation of temporary closures on special occasions (such as Earth Day or European Mobility Week). In the text that follows, we will discuss in more detail the different methods of road closures and their benefits for the population and the environment. We will also describe the possibilities of holding the Community Playstreet in other areas in the public space, such as a courtyard, a paved area of a car park or wider pedestrian pathways.



AS THE SAFETY
HERO, I WILL MAKE
SURE EVERYONE
FEELS SAFE

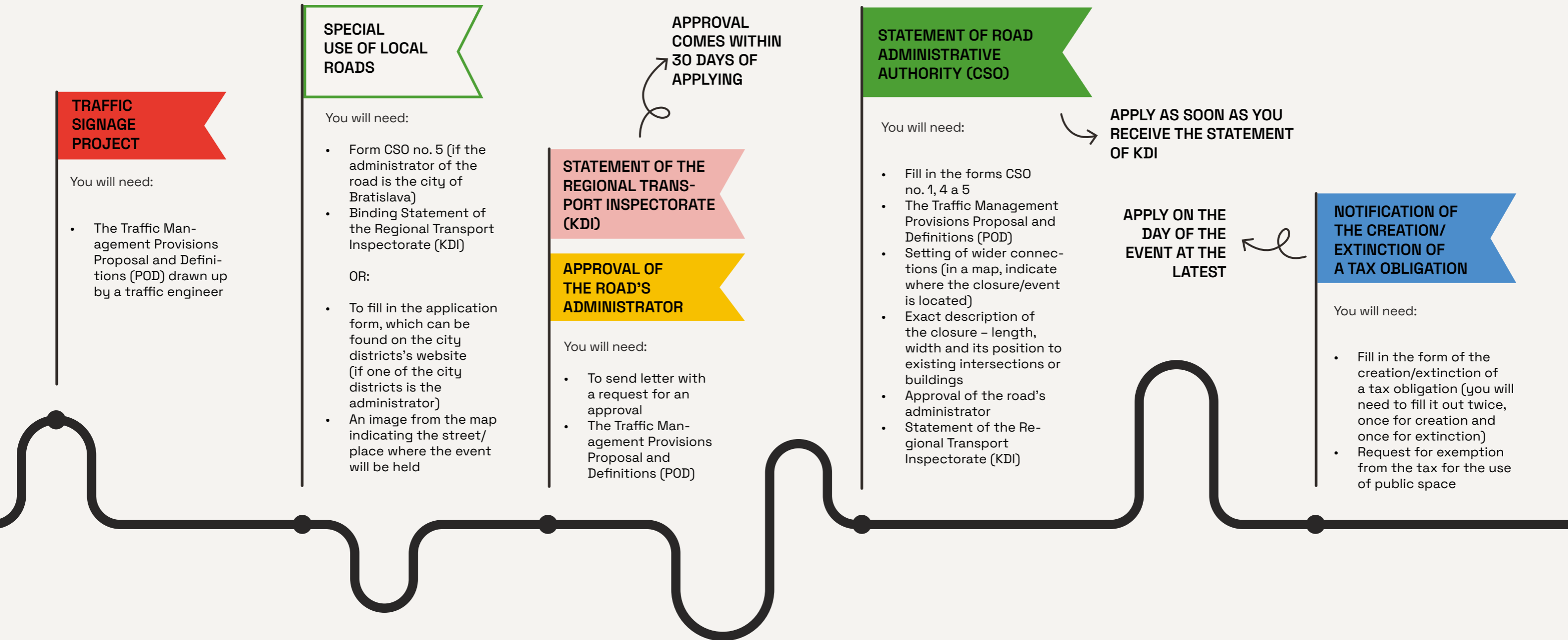
WILL YOU HELP
ME WITH THE
PERMITS?



Below you will find a list of permits in the order in which they need to be processed. In the following, we describe 3 scenarios together with the permits that apply to the situation. Although dealing with permits looks very difficult, it is actually a matter of filling in forms or sending out a simple application.

Important: All of these permits and forms are in Slovak language. We advise that you get help from your Slovak-speaking friends to obtain these permits.

TO DOWNLOAD THE SAMPLE LETTER/FORM CLICK ON THE FLAG (IN SLOVAK LANGUAGE)



Scenario A: Temporary road closure (with safe passage and parking of cars on the road).

A temporary road closure means that you close the street with temporary traffic signs and pre-arranged permits for your event. If you know in advance that you want to repeat the event, list multiple dates on the application. If you decide to repeat the event after the first event, you may use the traffic signage project as an attachment repeatedly. However, you must complete and submit all the remaining forms again.

You will need:



Scenario B: Temporary road closure (with a complete ban on entry and parking on the road).

In this situation you follow the same procedure as in scenario A, the difference will be in the traffic signage project. You also need to ensure that the neighbours park their cars elsewhere. Once you have obtained all the necessary permits, inform the Municipal Police about the event. They do not need to be a part of it, but it is a good idea to keep them informed of the upcoming event. If there is any misunderstanding, you can call the Municipal Police to the site. The number for the Municipal Police is 159.

You will need:



Scenario C: Temporary use of public space (without any traffic restrictions).

A public place is defined as: a street, square, park, marketplace, and other space open to the public without restriction. A public space may be owned or administrated by the City of Bratislava, municipal districts or privately owned. Information on who owns or administers the space can be found in the Land Registry (a list of streets and information on their management can be found here – however, it is in Slovak). A request for temporary use of a public space must be sent to the administrator of the space.

If the public space is administered by the City of Bratislava, the request should be addressed to the City Hall.

In case of special usage of local roads (roadways, sidewalks, squares, roadside greenery), your request will be dealt with by the Department of Transportation.

In case of special use of public space, not local roads, your case will be dealt with by the Department of Greenery.

If the public space is administered by a municipality, the request should be addressed according to the municipality's website. The application can be found on the Internet if you search for: žiadosť o zaujatie verejného priestranstva, MČ Bratislava-XYZ.

You will need:



or



Image 11: Community Playstreet at Za kasárňou school.
Source: MIB, 2024.



Image 12: Playstreet at Černyševského school.
Source: MIB, 2024.



Step 03: Communication

↓
Image 13: Playstreet at Nevě-
dzová school.
Source: MIB, 2023.

→
Image 14: Playstreet at Dobrý
trh.
Source: MIB, 2024.



→ In this chapter, we will guide you through communication with your neighborhood so that everyone is informed in a timely manner and can be involved in the planning or activities of Community Playstreet.

Communication with your neighbourhood

In this section we will repeat some of the information that has already been covered in Step 01, but we consider communication to be crucial and have therefore decided to deal with it in more detail in a separate chapter.

It's great if you invite your neighbours via social media, phone or email, but don't forget that some of them may not actively use the internet. We therefore recommend that you put invitations in hallways, mailboxes or hand them out in person to those people who are unlikely to use social networks.

Letters, social media invitations, emails and text messages are a quick way to keep people informed, but there's nothing like face-to-face contact.

A few days before the event, we recommend printing a few notices to put behind the windshield wipers of cars parked on your street. This will inform drivers who may not live in the immediate area but park their car there. Explain in the letter what will be happening, what the traffic regime will be on the street that day, e.g. they will be able to drive their car down the street, but only at walking speed, so that everyone feels safe.

Even if you don't close the road, you can put flyers behind the windshield wipers to attract other potential event attendees. To make this process easier, at the end of this chapter you will find sample invitations, letters, and downloadable printables that you can customize and use in your neighborhood outreach process.





Image 15: Playstreet at Nevádzová school.
Source: MIB, 2023.



Image 16: Playstreet at Nevádzová school.
Source: MIB, 2023.



Image 17: Playstreet at Tbiliská school.
Source: MIB, 2022.

How to include everyone?

The Community Playstreet should be open to all ages and people who don't have children. It is important to prepare a space that is welcoming to all. Prepare seating for older neighbours, for example folding chairs. You can invite anyone who is not planning to join in the games to join you for tea or coffee, or ask them to help direct traffic in a place where it will be restricted. Their role would be to let residents' cars onto the street and warn them to move at maximum walking speed.

Use simple language when communicating and explain things that might cause concern. Emphasise that children are always the responsibility of their parents or carers and that you will not restrict their ability to get to their entrance/parking space by car. We recommend that you choose a style of communication and language that makes the text understandable to everyone. Properly chosen language will ensure that people understand your intent and potentially have fewer worries.

Listen to the feedback from those who have reservations about Community Playstreets. Keep in mind that they, like you, live on this street and have a right to voice their concerns. We encourage you to take inspiration from the Practical Q&A where we have summarised answers that you can use too. Try to address neighbourhood concerns as accurately as possible. You can also make an agreement to the event at least once, and after it has taken place you can meet again to discuss whether anything could be improved, or to agree on compromises so that the event can be repeated. If some are still opposed to holding another Community Playstreet, calmly and clearly explain to them who they can contact at the local municipality with their concerns. They may get clearer answers to their questions from local officials and ultimately understand your efforts to organize such a community event.



Think about activities that are not just for children. You can also use the event for a book swap, communal planting/landscaping near your homes or a neighbourhood picnic. Try to keep these ideas low-key or sporadic in organization so that the busyness of the activities doesn't deter you from future Community Playstreets. Occasional activities for all may attract people who are not interested in the outdoor play program and would not otherwise participate.

Communication just before the event

A few days before the Community Playstreet, we recommend having a last meeting where the organizing team makes sure everyone knows what their roles and responsibilities will be for the duration of the event.

At the same time, it is a good idea to make sure that all the materials are ready. Some street games require equipment such as chalk, cones or ropes. The Safety Heroes need reflective vests. The closed part of the street requires appropriate traffic signage.

What do you need to prepare for?

Communication doesn't stop with sending out and distributing invitations to an event. Many questions from people come in continuously and many, on the contrary, come after the first Community Playstreet has taken place. It is a good idea to prepare for these questions in advance so that everyone gets a clear answer. We have therefore prepared the Practical Q&A, where you will find the most common questions that we have received as well.



Step 04: On the day of the Community Playstreet

↓
Image 18: Playstreet at
Nedbalova street.
Source: MIB, 2024.

→
Image 19: Playstreet at
Nevádzová school.
Source: MIB, 2023.



Road closure/special use of public space

On the day of the event, put up temporary traffic signs, set up urban furniture and games, give all the team instructions, and start getting to know your neighbors. Temporary traffic signs will be provided by the City Traffic Dispatch, who will bring the signs and also remove them.

If it is not a street (road) but a public space, you do not need to use temporary traffic signs, but we can lend you traffic cones to mark the area.

What about the cars?

- Scenario A: Temporary road closure (with safe passage and parking of cars on the road).

During Community Playstreets with temporary road closures that allow certain cars to safely pass and park on the road, we recommend a clear briefing for the Safety Heroes who oversee traffic safety during the event. They direct drivers who can cross the street or park on the street if necessary.

- Scenario B: Temporary road closure (with a complete ban on entry and parking on the road).

During Community Playstreets with full road closures, we recommend temporarily moving cars off that street to provide a safe and clear space for children and families. If this is not possible, the street may be partially closed with safety barriers to minimize risk. Car owners should be notified in advance of the event so that they can plan to park elsewhere to contribute to the safe and smooth running of the event.

- Scenario C: Temporary use of public space (without any traffic restrictions).

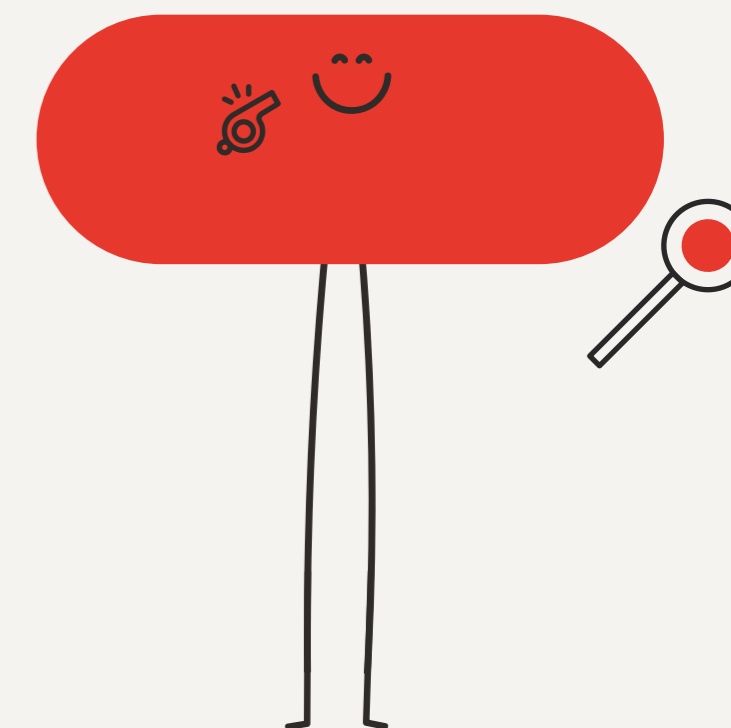
In case you want to organize the Community Playstreet in a place other than the street, it is possible that there will be no parked cars in this area. If there are, they may still be in the area, they can be part of your event and will be guided by Safety Heroes on how to safely cross the event space if needed.



Briefing of the organizing team

In the morning before the event, take time to brief the entire team involved in the day's preparations. Divide up the various roles of who will be the Play Captain, Safety Hero (minimum of two people) and Helpers. The Helpers can help with the decoration of the event, setting up the equipment and games on the street. The Play Captain is responsible for the first aid kit and answering any questions from neighbours.

Safety Heroes should wear a reflective vest, a stop-go sign, and a whistle to alert drivers that they must drive at walking speed if they wish to pass through the event. The Safety Hero leads the car by walking alongside it. He or she does the same if a car wants to park or pass from the street.



↙
Image 20: Playstreet at Nevádzová school.
Source: MIB, 2023.

↓
Image 21: Using a courtyard in Bratislava-Nové Mesto for free play.
Source: MIB, 2024.



Cleaning up the street

Inform participants that the event is coming to an end and ask them to begin clearing up their belongings and preparing to leave. If temporary decorations, posters or traffic signs have been placed on the road, remove them and ensure that the road is returned to its original condition. Work with participants to start collecting litter and removing temporary items such as games, leisure equipment, street furniture and other equipment used during the event. If barriers or signs have been used to close the road, remove them and store them in a designated location. Ensure that traffic signs are properly returned to their original location or handed over to the appropriate authorities. Following these steps will ensure that the road is clean and safe after the event.

What next?

After the event, meet briefly with the organisers or volunteers to review how the event went, what went well, what could be improved and to thank everyone for their help.

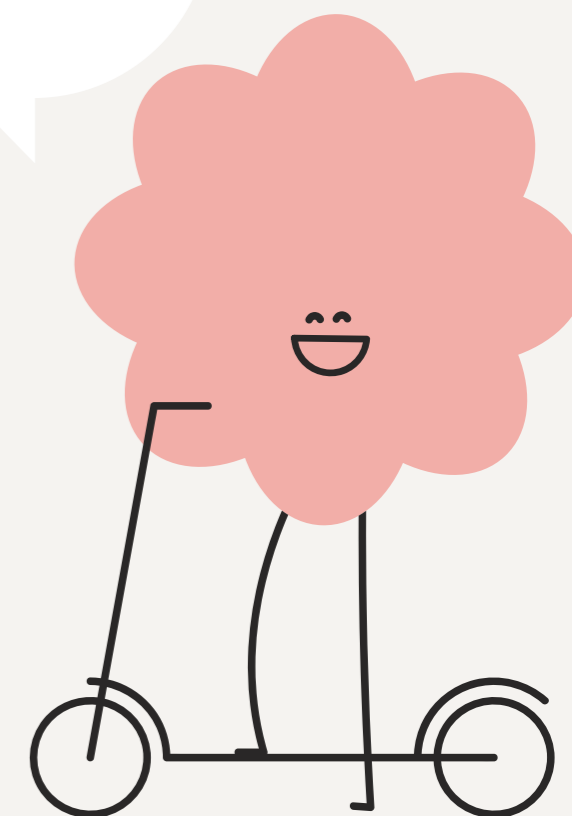
What can you expect on the day of the event?

Well done for getting this far! You may be feeling excited, tired or even a little nervous. It's all normal. You'll be excited when it all gets started. You've done your best to keep people informed and involved, so you can only wait and see who comes to play.

Playing on the street

Now all you have to do is play!

If we create safe conditions for children to play during Community Playstreet, perhaps the street games that were common in previous eras will return to the public space. These games are suitable for a variety of environments; you can play them in courtyards, on sidewalks, and if you decide to stop transit on your street for a few hours, you can play them on the road as well. A list of games with instructions on how to play them can be found in the second part of the manual (Useful Documents), in the Street Games chapter.



Useful Documents

02

Check-list

↙
Image 22: Playstreet at
Nevádzová school.
Source: MIB, 2023.



Preparations

- ✓ Getting to know the process
- ✓ Reaching out to the neighbourhood
- ✓ Invitation for the kick-off meeting
- ✓ First team meeting
- ✓ Looking for active people willing to help with preparations
- ✓ Creating a common communication channel

Planning (at least 2 months in advance)

- ✓ Agreeing on the venue, date and time of the Community Playstreet
- ✓ Obtaining permits

Material preparations

- ✓ Toys, games, sports equipment
- ✓ Traffic signage
- ✓ First aid kit for minor scuffs and scratches
- ✓ Drinking water in case of need
- ✓ Folding chairs in case someone with reduced mobility arrives
- ✓ Hardware (such as speakers, if you want to have music playing)

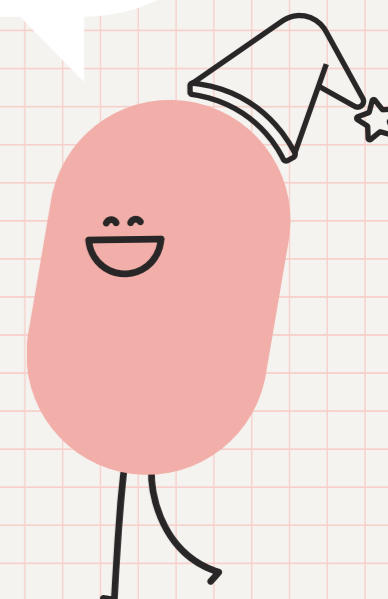
Informing the neighbourhood

- ✓ Flyers on the gates of houses
- ✓ Sharing the event via social media
- ✓ Informing people parking on the street (e.g. by posting notices behind wipers) in case of traffic restrictions

The day of the Community Playstreet

- ✓ Placement of equipment on site
- ✓ Repeating instructions for Safety Heroes (how to navigate drivers if they need to access the house by car?)
- ✓ Fun!
- ✓ Taking pictures
- ✓ Getting feedback
- ✓ Cleaning up
- ✓ Preparing to do it again

FOR THE CHECK-LIST IN A PRINTABLE FORMAT CLICK HERE



Practical Q&A

↓
Image 23: Playstreet at Nedbalova street.
Source: MIB, 2024.

→
Image 24: Playstreet at Riazanská school.
Source: MIB, 2023.

↘
Image 25: Playstreet at Drieňová school.
Source: MIB, 2023.



What if the neighbours don't show enough interest?

If you don't get enough enthusiasm from those around you, sometimes there's no point in pushing it - after a while you can try again. In the meantime, you can generate interest in this type of event by playing outside (on the sidewalk, on a green space) even with a small number of people, for example as a family with children or as a group of friends.

What if my neighbors don't agree to organize the Community Playstreet?

Ask your neighbours what their concerns are and the reason for their disagreement. There are some people who will always disagree with everything on principle, but in most cases this attitude stems from a lack of information. Discuss with them and try to explain why they have nothing to worry about.

What is a Playstreet?

Playstreets give residents (from children to seniors) the opportunity to play and move freely in a space that is otherwise normally reserved for motorized traffic. Playstreets are generally organised in residential zones on streets where there is only low traffic volume and which are mainly used by people directly from the neighbourhood. Even if you don't live on a street with vehicular transit, you can still organize the event. Such community-led events often take place in places where there is no traffic, making the whole preparation easier and faster. A great Community Playstreet can also take place in a courtyard or similar pedestrian spaces.

What is a Community Playstreet?

A Community Playstreet is an event that is planned and organized by the community itself. The place where the event takes place is also the place where the community lives or to which it has a connection to. It is not a high production or costly event, but an opportunity for children from the same

neighbourhood to meet, get to know each other and use the space for free and safe play.

Aren't existing playgrounds or parks adequate for play?

Parks are great places for families or older children, but younger children usually don't have the opportunity to go to the park on their own without adult supervision. In addition, street play is very different - firstly, it takes place right 'under the windows' so there is still a degree of control, and also it is a way for children to meet and make friends with other children on their street who they don't normally meet (they may be in different schools or at different ages). It also provides more space and freedom to move around. Skipping the rope, skating, cycling and scootering are generally not possible in a playground.

Who can organize Community Playstreets?

Anyone can be an organizer! No need to have special experience, no need to be a parent. All you need is determination and an interest to do something good for your neighbourhood.





Why aren't Playstreets organized by the city/city district?

Bratislava plans to continue to organize Playstreets, but the scope of these events is larger, with a cultural program and activities that are more demanding to organize. In addition, these events are only held a few times a year and cannot cover all locations within the city. The advantage of Community Playstreets is that you do not have to wait for the municipality, but can create better conditions for outdoor play yourself. You can choose the time, location or programming based on the individual needs of your neighborhood.

What if the weather changes and it starts to rain?

A number of Playstreets have already taken place during rain or snow. From the children's point of view, rain is usually a welcome change that makes the game even more fun.

Aren't streets just for cars?

The idea that streets in the city are just "roads", i.e. spaces for driving and parking cars, has gradually expanded until it has become a generally accepted fact. Up until the 1970s-1980s, however, street play was seen as a normal part of life in our neighbourhoods. Streets are the main and most common urban public space and are also the place where a sense of community and neighbourhood belonging can be created. Community Playstreets serve in part as a demonstration of the fact that it is a social space that has many uses and is for everyone.

Why do you want to temporarily close our street?

The number of cars in the city has grown rapidly over the decades. The need to close the street is not an ideal situation or a long-term solution. However, the danger from fast-moving cars or from driver inattention is the main reason why it is no longer common to play in the street as it was in the past. Moreover, many times parked cars take up so much street space that play is impossible. In such circumstances, closing the street and supervising its maintenance is an 'insurance policy' - among other things, for parents who would otherwise not dare to let their children play there. The Playstreet can be the first step towards a change of attitude in the perception of the position of cars in residential streets.

Ideally, our streets should be spaces where cars and people of all ages can coexist happily. This is the long-term goal of Playstreets.



Image 26: Playstreet at Drieňová school.
Source: MIB, 2024.



Image 27: Playstreet at Tbiliská school (Tai-Chi session).
Source: MIB, 2022.



Image 28: Playstreet at Dobrý trh.
Source: MIB, 2024.

I'm afraid I will be disturbed by the noise of children playing outside.

Based on the experience of already organized Playstreets, the event itself generates much less noise than what is present when the street is open to traffic. People with different needs live in the city and it is important that they are able to function alongside each other. So even people who only walk to get around the city are forced to endure the noise caused by traffic. Children cannot live only inside their houses, schools and playgrounds. The city belongs to them too, and it is their right to use public space in accordance with their own needs. Moreover, the Playstreets only last for a few hours and are not a permanent source of noise.



I'm worried about damage to my car parked on the street.

If you're too worried, it's best to temporarily park your car at another location - information about the Community Playstreet event is posted a few days in advance. However, so far we have not seen any incidents of damage to vehicles. Community Playstreets generally involve activities such as cycling, chalk painting on the ground or playing chase, which cannot be considered to be an increased risk compared to a normal day in this respect.

I don't like children playing unsupervised.

During Community Playstreets, children are always the responsibility of their parents, but if any other adult sees harm being done or witnesses an injury, they should responsibly and reasonably discuss the situation with either the children directly or with their parents. Supervision by other adults in the community is an important learning experience.

Wouldn't that lead children to believe that the road is normally a safe place to play?

Even young children can tell the difference between a street closure event and a normal situation. A report published by the University of Bristol found that when children were questioned on the subject, they could clearly describe the visual and auditory cues indicating different situations (e.g. based on the noise of moving cars or the presence of supervisors



wearing reflective vests). Community Playstreets are also a good opportunity for parents to talk to their children about safety on the roads or in public spaces.

I don't have young children and that makes me feel like I can't participate.

Organisers should assure people that everyone is welcome, regardless of age, family situation or place of residence, at all times. Community Playstreets should not just feel like a family event. Adults can play and have fun on the street too - the aim is for everyone to be able to fully enjoy the space their neighbourhood has to offer. However, if someone isn't interested in joining in the activities, it's perfectly fine if they just watch what's going on in the street from a bench.

Can the Community Playstreet also include activities that are designed more for adult participants?

Of course! The street is for everyone and it is common in this kind of event to create a programme for different age groups. It can

be a sports game (e.g. street football) or a neighbourhood yoga or Tai Chi session. If you have music provided, dancing is also a great option. In addition to sports activities, it can also be various board games.

What other benefits do Community Playstreets bring?

In addition to safer streets, another great advantage is the independence and free play of children. Parents, for a variety of reasons, feel apprehensive about allowing their children to play in the street and are often unsure whether this is even acceptable. Community Playstreets are an opportunity for parents to come together and support each other to let their children play outside.

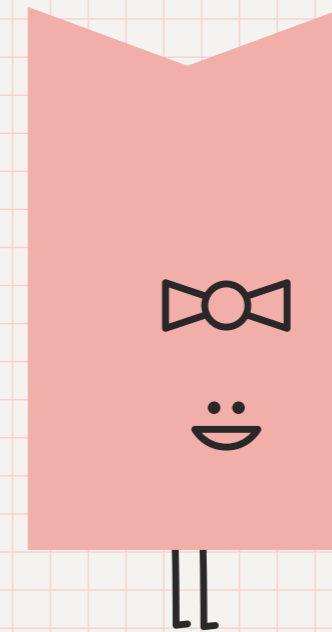
Street Games

↓
Image 29: Using a courtyard in Bratislava-Nové Mesto for free play.
Source: MIB, 2024.

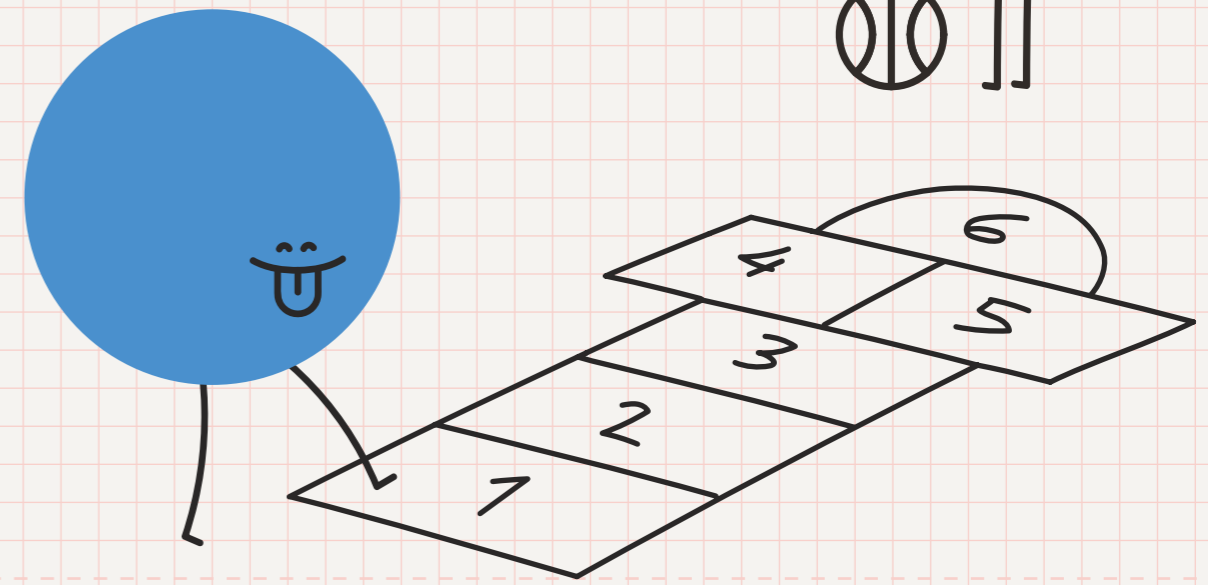
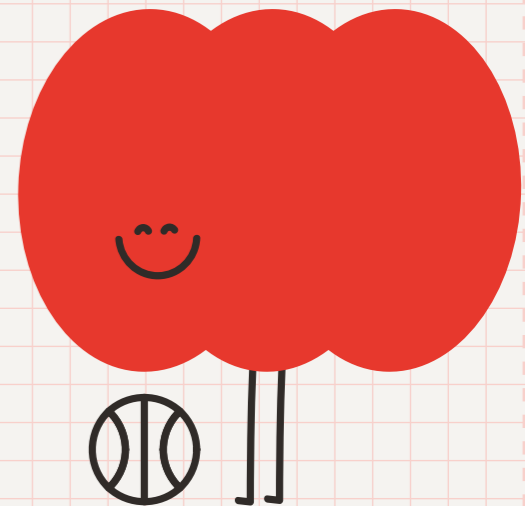
↓ ↓
Image 30 - 46 na s. 42 - 49:
Photos of street games.
Source: MIB, 2024.




→ In this chapter, we have prepared some street games that can be played with very minimal equipment. These are games that many of us played in our childhood on the street or in the courtyards. Although Community Playstreets try to encourage mostly free play that children direct themselves, you can show them these games.



WHO'S GONNA PLAY FOOTBALL TENNIS WITH ME?



Name of the game	No of players	Players' age	Game rules	Equipment	Game type	Photo
Chase whilst holding a body part	8+	7+	At the beginning of the game, the players decide who the catcher is. The catcher is the player who chases the rest of the players involved in the game. As soon as the catcher catches another player, the new catcher must hold the body part in question and catch the others. He is only released from his "captivity" when he catches another player.		movement game without equipment	
Football tennis	2+	5+	Draw a playing field with chalk. Play football through a string stretched in the middle of the drawn field. The opponent can pick up the ball directly in the air or after it hits the ground once. Play with your feet.	cone (2 ks) rope ball chalk	movement ball game	
Line catcher	2+	5+	There are many lines drawn on the floor using chalk. The catcher is never allowed to step on the line, other players can only move on these lines. Players may not stay on the same line for more than 5 seconds. Whoever is caught becomes the catcher.	chalk	movement game without equipment	
Fruit salad	3+	5+	Each player stands in a circle and names the fruit they want to be. The player in the middle throws the ball high in the air and shouts the name of the fruit chosen by one of the other players, for example "pear". All players run. Only the player named "pear" catches the ball as quickly as he can. As soon as he has it in his hand, he shouts "stop" loudly and everyone must stand still. Now the player with the ball will do three big steps and try to hit one of the players. If that player catches the ball, he can throw it on to another player. If the player in the middle does not hit any opposing player, he throws the ball in the air and the round repeats.	foam ball	movement ball game	

Name of the game	No of players	Players' age	Game rules	Equipment	Game type	Photo
Jumping frog	4+	4+	Players divide into two groups and stand next to each other. The first player in each group jumps as far as possible from the standing position. The next player in the group begins his jump where the first player landed. The winner is the group that jumped the farthest.		movement game without equipment	
Ball in the air	2+	5+	The player who is next in line throws the ball in the air. Before catching the ball again, the player must complete a task, e.g.: clap 3 times turn in a circle touch the floor jump jump on one leg sit on the ground As soon as a player can no longer catch the ball in time without it falling to the ground, it is the next player's turn. Several tasks can be accomplished in one throw.	big stone marbles or small pebbles chalk	movement ball game	
Sidewalk drawing	1+	5+	At the start of the game, two groups are formed. Each group thinks of a few words (e.g. roof, summer, forest). One player from each group is chosen in turn to draw the word that the other group has invented. The other group whispers the word in the other group's ear. Now they have to draw it with chalk for their group. The rest of the group tries to guess the word within 3 minutes.	stopwatch/hour-glass chalk	observational game	
Jumping elastics	2+	5+	The elastic band is stretched on the legs of two players standing opposite each other, or on chairs. The third player jumps the pre-arranged tricks. After each trick, the band is stretched higher. As soon as a player makes a mistake, it is the next player's turn. The first player to jump all the tricks at each height wins. If there are only two players, the elastic band can be tied around the post.	elastic band	movement game with equipment	

Name of the game	No of players	Players' age	Game rules	Equipment	Game type	Photo
Tic-Tac-Toe	2+	6+	Draw a 3x3 square with chalk. Each person chooses the symbol of a cross or a circle. The first player to draw a row of three of their symbols vertically, horizontally or diagonally wins.	chalk	logical and observational game	
Pebble throwing	2+	5+	Players take turns and try to throw the pebble as close to the wall or curb as possible. The winner is the player whose pebble stays on the ground closest to the wall.	a pebble for each player	movement game with equipment	
Zombie chase	4+	5+	One of the players is the catcher and tries to catch the other players. As soon as he catches one of the players, he turns into a zombie and has to help the catcher catch the other players at walking pace in a strange position. Players who are still free can save the zombies by touching them on their backs without being caught themselves.		movement game without equipment	
Marbles	2+	5+	Draw a circle on the floor with chalk. About 12 steps from it, draw a line or put a string/rope or stick (can be less steps depending on age). Players take turns trying to roll their marbles into a circle away from the line. As soon as a player does/n't reach the circle, the next player comes next. The player who rolls their marble closest to the center takes all the marbles and the round is over. All players continue with the next round.	marbles chalk/rope/string/ skipping rope	logical and observational game	

Name of the game	No of players	Players' age	Game rules	Equipment	Game type	Photo
Wet feet	2+	5+	Draw a wide river on the ground with chalk. One of the players is a crocodile standing in the river. The other players must try to cross the river without getting their feet wet. Players have 4 – 8 sheets of A4 paper to step on to cross the river. They can lay the sheets of paper down, throw them or pass them to each other. Players must always touch the papers in some way with their hands or feet. If they lie in the river without being touched, the crocodile will come and simply tear the paper away. With fewer pieces of paper, crossing the river becomes increasingly difficult. After each round, you can switch roles. River crossings can be more difficult if you are holding hands with a teammate or jumping on one leg.	papers (A4) chalk	movement game with equipment	
Cycle track	2+	4+	Use stones, traffic cones or other materials to create an obstacle course or slalom. Players take turns. The player who passes the track faster wins. Be careful! On streets with more traffic it is better to create the obstacles only with chalk by drawing them on the road.	a coin for each player marbles chalk	movement game with equipment	
Marble roulette	4+	5+	A circle is formed on the floor using a rope. Numbers are drawn in it with chalk. The numbers should be no higher than 20 and may appear several times. Marbles are poured into a cup. The first player more or less vigorously empties the marbles into the circle with the numbers. The numbers on which the marbles rest are counted and written down. The winner is the player with the most points at the end. To make the points between numbers count, the number boxes can also be painted with border lines.	marbles cup rope chalk	logical and observational game	
Marbles in the target	2+	4+	A large circle is drawn in chalk on the floor. A big stone is placed in the centre of the circle. Players then take turns throwing balls or smaller stones as close as possible to the stone in the centre without crossing the circle. Whoever is closest to the target wins. Alternatively you can play this game on grass by digging a hole which is then the target.	big stone marbles or small pebbles chalk	logical and observational game	

Downloads

***please note that some of these materials are in Slovak language online**

↓
Image 50: Playstreet at Jeséniova school.
Source: MIB, 2024.

Communication:

Invitation to the kick-off neighbourhood meeting (full-colour version – ENG)
Invitation to the kick-off neighbourhood meeting (word – ENG)
Notice of temporary street closure (full-colour version – ENG)
Notice of temporary street closure (word – ENG)
Invitation to the Community Playstreet (poster – ENG)
Invitation to the Community Playstreet (mailbox – ENG)
Invitation to the Community Playstreet (social media – ENG)
Today the Playstreet is ours! (poster – ENG)
Organise a Community Playstreet! (poster – ENG)
Sample invitation to the Community Playstreet (poster – ENG)
Sample invitation to the Community Playstreet (social media – ENG)

Permits:

Sample Traffic Management Provisions Proposal and Definitions – temporary road closure (pdf – SVK)
Sample request for statement of the Regional Transport Inspectorate (word – SVK)
Sample request for approval of the road's administrator – City of Bratislava (word – SVK)
Sample request for approval of the road's administrator – City district (word – SVK)
Sample request for special use of local road (pdf – SVK)
Vzor formulára CSO č. 1 (pdf – SVK)
Vzor formulára CSO č. 4 (pdf – SVK)
Vzor formulára CSO č. 5 (pdf – SVK)
Form – creation/extinction of tax obligation (pdf – SVK)
Sample request for exemption from the tax for the use of public space (word – SVK)

Useful documents:

Check-list
Practical Q&A

Inventory to borrow

Temporary traffic signage
Today the Playstreet is ours! (marking of the event)
Furniture (metal tables and chairs, portable trash bins)
Playbox
Games
Chalk
Sports equipment
Balancing elements
Rotation cones
Delineation cones
Basic package for organizers (whistles, badges - marking of organizers, reflective vests for organizers)



Bibliography

When writing this manual, we have been inspired by scientific studies and research, as well as the work of foreign institutions and organisations working on the topic of free play:

Unicef

Learning through play, Strengthening learning through play in early childhood education programmes, Unicef, 2018.

<https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/UNICEF-Lego-Foundation-Learning-through-Play.pdf>

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Slovakia

<https://hbcslovakia.com/>

Playing out

<https://playingout.net/play-streets/impact-overview/building-stronger-communities/>

<https://playingout.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Atlantic-Article-29.07.24.pdf>

Pěšky městem

<http://peskymestem.cz>

Connect familias

https://www.connectfamilias.org/uploads/3/4/0/0/34007313/how_to_play_street_guide_-_english.pdf

Rues aux enfants

<https://www.ruesauxenfants.com/>

Bau- und Verkehrsdepartement des Kantons Basel-Stadt

https://www.basel-unterwegs.ch/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PDF_klein_Spielfibel_2.Auflage_2017.compressed.pdf

Škograd

<https://skograd.org>

Illustration on page no. 10 – inspired by Ben Kothe/The Atlantic



Image 51: Playstreet at Nedbalova street.
Source: MIB, 2024.



Community Playstreet Manual

Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava
Participation and Urban Studies Section
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Published in Bratislava in 2024 by the Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava.

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Participation and Urban Studies Section

In an interdisciplinary way, it explores the interconnections, interactions between people and the physical environment and the resulting planning processes. The section's team's primary focus is on inclusive public engagement in investment projects and strategies to enhance their quality and public benefit. It is a think-tank that conducts pilot projects and studies, using insights from sociological theories of the urban environment, applied research and data analysis.

City for Kids Project (Mesto pre deti)

City for Kids is a conceptual project of the Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava, which aims to approach planning and public policies with a focus on children. The project names the needs of children and their parents (caregivers), the fulfilment of which is important for a healthy and stimulating childhood in an urban environment.

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