Msida Creek - Second Round of Feedback

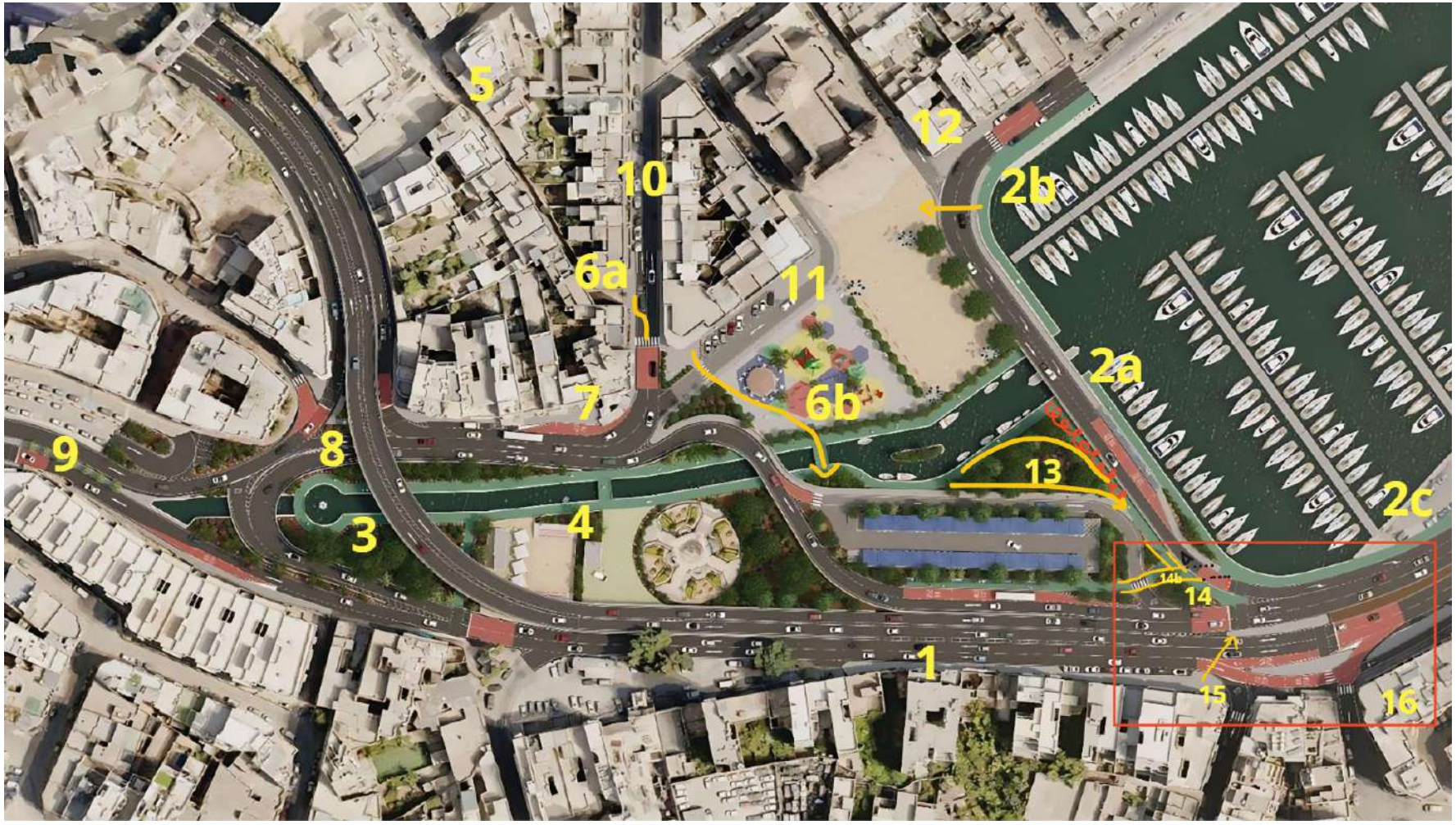
As part of our consultation, we visited the Msida junction over 3 different days of the week. We noticed that this is frequented by hundreds of pedestrians over the span of an hour, which reinforces our plea to truly prioritise pedestrians and cyclists in this project.

As a preamble, we must refer to the 5 CROW guiding principles which are crucial for pedestrians and bicycle users. Every intersection needs to consider these 5 principles, or else it will fail the users. If we were to assess this for car users, we find that most of the new projects implemented over the past years check most of these points for CAR users, but leave much to be desired for pedestrians and bicycle users. We need to start prioritising these principles for active mobility. The dangers in our roads are real, and it is our responsibility to voice the concerns of many bicycle users, including our own.

1. **Cohesion - Connecting origins and destinations**
2. **Directness - Creating short and fast routes, while minimising detours**
3. **Safety - Avoid differences in speed and mass of vehicles**
4. **Comfort - Minimal stops or nuisances**
5. **Attractiveness - You can say this is the only subjective one.**

Unless otherwise specified, the term users in this document refers to pedestrians and bicycle users.

We will be referring to this image as a reference since this includes labels which will enable us to pinpoint problematic areas.



Point 1 - Need for direct and safe bicycle passage
In our meeting, you highlighted that cyclists can use the pavement, and you also noted that this has a pinch point of 1.5m.

In a 5 car lane street this is unacceptable. The bicycle should not be forced to use pavement to avoid dangerous encounters with cars, unless the pavement is specifically designed for bicycle use.

This is one of the most crucial changes that is needed in this project. There are 5 car lanes in the design. If we shave off 20cm from each, we can win a 1 metre bicycle lane. The wider the better since if we can gain more width we can have the lane segregated. We also highlight that the car lanes do not have to be the same width all the way. It is important to note that research shows that speeding increases with increasing lane widths.

Space is not an issue here, it is a matter of prioritisation. Do we want bicycle users to have safe and direct access?

Point 2 - **Revamp of the bridge design**
This is one of the most important crossings in the project, since it is connecting Msida to Gzira and Ta' Xbiex, and vice versa. These are our suggestions:

- The Green path by the sea at 2A can be eliminated. Instead of this, we should segregate users to another bridge right next to the one for cars. This can be the same bridge, as long as different traffic is **segregated** completely, and the surface used is different. If we opt for the latter, the current bridge design will need to be widened to allow for more comfortable shared space. However, we recommend having a separate bridge since this is safer. We make reference to the pedestrian bridge near AUM in Birgu. Such a design for users will be the ideal option. This will allow more directness for pedestrians and bicycle traffic, and more comfort since it is elevated and will also be more difficult to flood when it rains.

- The adoption of the previous point will allow the removal of the green path underneath the bridge, which is prone to flooding and is not direct. This path also contains blind corners

(90 degree corners) which poses a risk for users, since you never know if a bicycle is approaching. Research also shows that such scenarios are especially scary for female users, so we should avoid such corners. The route should be visible at all times. We have also seen the problem in the Msida skatepark subway (after which mirrors were retrofitted).

- After the Zebra crossing at 2B (going towards 2A), the car lanes should be one lane since it closes up to one lane anyway at the end of the bridge. This will allow more space for the pedestrian bridge.

- The bus stop on the bridge can remain as is, or else shifted to 2B.

These changes will improve this point of the design drastically. While the passage by the sea looks superb on paper, having a pedestrian bridge is a much better option and is liked more by users.

Point 3 - Concerns on the inlet
While the pedestrian path extends up to here, we have some concerns over the water quality here. Will there be a pump to move the water? If not, a number of people have voiced concerns over the smell and quality of the sea water that will collect here. They have also raised concerns over the fact that any waste carried by rainwater will be deposited here. A suggestion we've received is to collect rainwater in reservoirs rather than throw it out to sea, which will in turn be used to water all the plants and trees in the area.

While this is not directly a topic of our concern, if the stagnant water leads to bad smell and mosquitoes, this will impact the experience (CROW Attractiveness principle) of users.

Point 4 - Crossing to Point 7
A crossing from Point 7 to Point 4 will be ideal for users to provide more directness.

Point 5 - Alternative Route to University

In our last meeting you suggested a route to University through this area. We reiterate that if alternative routes are suggested, signage is included from before and throughout the route to make sure it is easily accessible by users.

Another alternative route to University (but lengthier, thus going against the CROW principle of directness) is:
https://goo.gl/maps/fL24YqqxuU178BYw5

However, the most direct, obvious and cohesive route is from the bypass at point 8. There is ample space right now for a bicycle lane on both sides of the roads.

Point 6 - Extend pavement and connect 6b
We've illustrated at point 6A that the pavement should be extended (marked with orange) so users coming from Point 5 have ample space to turn and reach the zebra crossing at 6a. The route should connect well to the bridge at point 6B. In the proposed plans, the orange arrow at 6b is not possible, but with this small intervention it can be made more accessible.

Point 7 - Extend pavement
The pavement here can be extended further rather than having the extra hard shoulder for the bus lanes (which is illustrated as a very narrow red area). On the plans this is marked as an unloading bay area, can you confirm if this will remain as a bus stop please? This area also needs to be connected to point 4 as explained previously.

Point 8 - Safe crossing
This is another ideal location to introduce a crossing to enter the green pathway for users coming from the other side of the road.

Point 9 - Bicycle lanes
If this area is within the project's scope, can space be rearranged here to make room for safe bicycle access?

Point 10 - Traffic calming measures and if possible, a bicycle lane
This road is currently used as a very wide single car lane with parking on the side. We note that this can be improved for users by

extending the pavements and installing a bicycle lane and slow traffic.

Point 11 - Pedestrian areas
We took note of this point to confirm if the muted gray areas make use of cobblestones since these are a good way of slowing down traffic.

Point 12 - Bicycle Racks
This is an ideal location for bicycle racks.

Point 13 - Redesign of access
For this point, we propose that trees are shifted towards the bridge (marked in red) so users can have direct access along the path (marked with an orange arrow). The orange line also shows a curved path which can be used as an alternative, which also avoids having a blind corner. This makes this portion of the project more user-friendly.

Point 14 - Redesign of junction
The current design includes a 90 degree turn (14B) for users, which is not comfortable for bicycle users, especially with oncoming foot or bicycle traffic. Hence, we suggest a small intervention which straightens the path, extending it as a slanted crossing to the other side (illustrated in black dots). This improved the overall experience of all users making use of this junction.

Point 15 and 16 - Crossing needed
A crossing at point 15 would offer the most direct crossing, given the current design. One note on this, which we will delve deeper in the following feedback, is that the currently existent crossings from the side of Junior College to the marina will not improve at all with the newly proposed project. As commented in the beginning, area 16 (marked with a red bordered box) is frequented by thousands of users on a daily basis. What can be done to improve the experience of users at these crossings? How can we make the crossing more direct and comfortable for users?