

Dear reader,

Low-cost, temporary interventions in neighbourhoods have been very effective in making streets and squares more liveable within days or weeks. The very attractive umbrella term Tactical Urbanism was coined in North America – and is used more and more. Often such tactics start bottom up – as actions that are a bit subversive and initiated by local citizens or other activists. More and more, they are also used by planners and municipalities, to test new approaches and achieve visible results very quickly.

We hope that with this EPOMM e-update we are able to provide you with inspiration and insights on the approach of planning by doing!

## An international movement



Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials and Design, 2016

Over the past decade Tactical Urbanism has become an international movement, bringing about a profound shift in how communities think about project development and delivery. See this attractive [video](#) with examples from Boston, Vancouver, Rotterdam and more.

Mike Lydon from the Street Plans Collaborative says: “The goal is not to simply do a cool project that will get cleaned up by the city or thrown away, but to make something – even something temporary – that will change how a place works and is perceived. And once that change has been made, to figure out how it can be made again or made permanent”.

[Tactical Urbanist guides](#) have been created and are offered for free download.

## From a parking lot to a park



Photo: Norbert Michalke - Source: [upperbike.com](http://upperbike.com)

Linguistically linked but in practice and reality miles apart. Or not?

Citizen activists around the globe turn parking spaces into amazingly designed mini-parks for a day to **demonstrate the need for more urban green space**. This idea had its roots in San Francisco, where a metered parking space was temporarily transformed into a mini-park for the first time. Nowadays it is a worldwide event known as 'PARK(ing) Day' held on every third Friday in September. Just Google pictures for World Parking Day and you will be amazed! You have grassroots initiatives

This approach, originally a bottom up project, as in Berlin (info in [German](#)), is supported in many European cities. Recent examples are [Oslo](#) and Vienna. Oslo's city council has the ambition to become the first European capital to be completely car free. Next to limiting car traffic in the central areas, a substantial part of this plan is the reduction of on-street parking spaces in the city centre. Vienna supports the establishment of seasonal [so-called parklets](#) and citizens can apply and supported in the construction process.

## The Rope: A tool for democracy and active citizenship

A new tool for democracy and active citizenship has been created in 2017 by [Ief Spincemaille](#), a visual artist and set designer from Belgium.

With the focus on imagination and change of public space on a human scale, a piece of art called 'Rope' is central in this experiment. This is indeed a rope of 65 meters length, a diameter of 30 cm, and a weight of 196 kg.



Source: [iefspincemaille.com/ROPE](http://iefspincemaille.com/ROPE)

Used as an open design tool for reinterpretation of public space on a human scale, Rope is setting forward four implicit functions:

- **Agora:** As the agora was the beating heart of the neighbourhood and the city, Rope wants to revitalise this function in our modern (smart) cities.
- **Democracy:** Rope is not part of any party or intention. It is an unprejudiced spectator, not limited through existing protocols or habits, trying to understand the world.
- **Imagination:** Where Rope appears it causes a disruption of the existing public space and makes room for imagination of ideas.
- **Instrument:** It is a rapid prototype tool for testing ideas. Links being made, temporary cycling lanes being delineated, the different possibilities, forms and function of Rope are only limited by the imagination.

## Be a gorilla ... for cities, streets and neighbourhoods at human scale



Source: [iedereengorilla.be](http://iedereengorilla.be)

Iedereen Gorilla ('Everybody a Gorilla') is inspiring, empowering and supporting citizens who undertake small temporary actions in public space at a local level. Gorilla Actions question the claim of motorised traffic on public space. **Iedereen Gorilla** gives public space back to the people and fights for space for sustainable transport, road safety, space for social life, space for nature.

These local actions are meant not only as solutions for some problems, but also as signals to local government. Iedereen Gorilla is especially active in small municipalities in Flanders and wants to inspire local politicians to be open to and to facilitate citizens' initiatives. As a further aim, it wants to **create a network of gorillas** and is at the same time **a call for free public space** because that is where the democratic magic happens. Society is constantly changing and not every good idea needs to be captured in a bureaucratic structure. Keys to success of Iedereen Gorilla are the positive action mode, the group identity and the anonymity, as gorillas operate under their gorilla name.

## Experimental changes to create a playable quarter



Source: Landeshauptstadt Kiel, Tiefbaum

Since 2017, the **City of Kiel** is one of four demonstration projects within the field of research **Active Mobility in Urban Quarters** of the federal programme **Experimental Housing and Urban Development** (all information in German only).

The theme of this demonstration project is to create a neighbourhood that encourages play. With experimental changes in the public realm and on the streets, these initially temporary measures are aimed to support active travel.

These experimental changes are especially designed to **allow children to use the public realm for playing**. With citizen participation, this year bicycle parking is being installed to block car traffic in the area named Kieler Kuhle. Also, the traffic island at Wellingdorfer Street is being changed into an 'outdoor living room'. Together with artists, the traffic island was designed to be inviting and colourful, so that citizens use it to meet and children to play.

After evaluation of the temporary measures, these areas are to be changed with permanent measures in 2019.

## The time is ripe and people are hungry for ...



Source: [lendwirbel.com](http://lendwirbel.com)

Since 2006 a multi-day street festival, characterised by self-organisation, community and openness, is organised in the district of Lend in Graz, Austria.

The festival, called '**Lendwirbel**' (information in German), **motivates over a hundred actors** to engage with the topics of neighbourhood, use of public space, urban development, art and controversial topics in various forms of action, such as performances, installations and discourse. Their focus is the question of the **best possible common life and work in the city, the promotion of joyful use of public urban space and the creation of collective spaces** of action beyond commercialisation and exclusion.

Interestingly, the association behind the Lendwirbel is now also partner in the EU-project Metamorphosis, which aims to support and further develop various tactical urbanism approaches. Specifically, it develops mobile parklets, temporary road closures in front of schools, street festivals, street parties and alternative usages of the street. Further it aims to make such temporary approaches easier, and to make it easier to make temporary changes permanent. See many examples and fascinating pictures on their [website](http://lendwirbel.com).

## Tactical Urbanism and Mobility Planning



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In her **Master's Thesis**, **Tactical Sustainable Mobility: The Opportunities And Challenges of Using Tactical Approaches to Advance the Implementation of Sustainable Mobility Projects**, Chloe Mullin from the **Aalborg University** used 'tactical sustainable mobility' as an analytical lens to understand how municipal planners are currently approaching sustainable mobility planning at a municipal level.

Mullin concludes, inter alia, that "Although [...] municipal planners are using tactical approaches to create opportunities within sustainable mobility planning, it is still unclear what the exact role a planner should take in tactical projects and how to involve citizens in this process to take advantage of the benefits that tactical sustainable mobility can produce, including increased efficiency and democracy in planning processes, and harnessing the creativity of citizens."

This thesis could help to provide further food for thoughts to alternative approaches in order to reach not only city goals, but also the ambitious goals of the **European Commission** in terms of alternative fuels and emission reduction in urban areas.

## Conclusion: Tactical Urbanism and the Right to the City

Will an alternative urban reality emerge out of diverse tactical initiatives, **giving birth to a new kind of city** such as imagined by Lefebvre's 'right to the city'? To close off a street for people, to install a piece of furniture on the street, to convert a parking lot into a park – such takeovers certainly hint at alternative possibilities for urban space. And such tactics do have the power to question authorities' role of shaping and controlling space.

As a grassroots approach, Tactical Urbanism gives a sense of what self-organised public space could look like. If this is met with top-down support (as occurred for some time in New York; see the **website of Janette Sadik Kahn**) – we can expect and hope for an urban revolution.

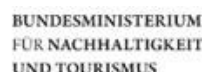


Source: [archandphil.wordpress.com](http://archandphil.wordpress.com)

## Upcoming events

- **2018 Polis Conference**  
22-23 November 2018 | Greater Manchester, United Kingdom  
[polisnetwork.eu/2018conference](http://polisnetwork.eu/2018conference)
- **Urban Transitions 2018**  
25-27 November 2018 | Sitges, Spain  
[elsevier.com](http://elsevier.com)
- **Innovation and Change in Mobility Management: What's New and What's Next? Act TravelWise Annual Conference & AGM**  
31 January 2019 | Birmingham, United Kingdom  
[acttravelwise.org](http://acttravelwise.org)

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