CIVITAS Study Tour in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

19 & 20 June 2014

Palacio Zulueta – Public Space and Nature Environment Service,

Paseo de la Senda 2, Vitoria-Gastez

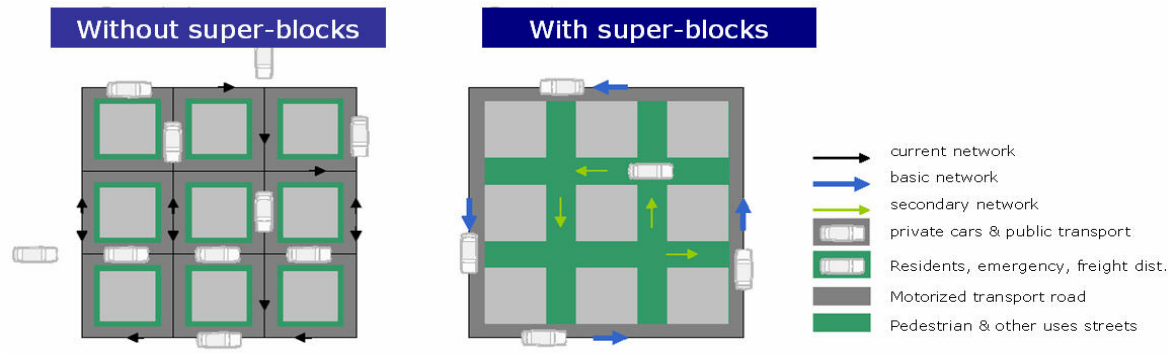
Giving back the public space to the people

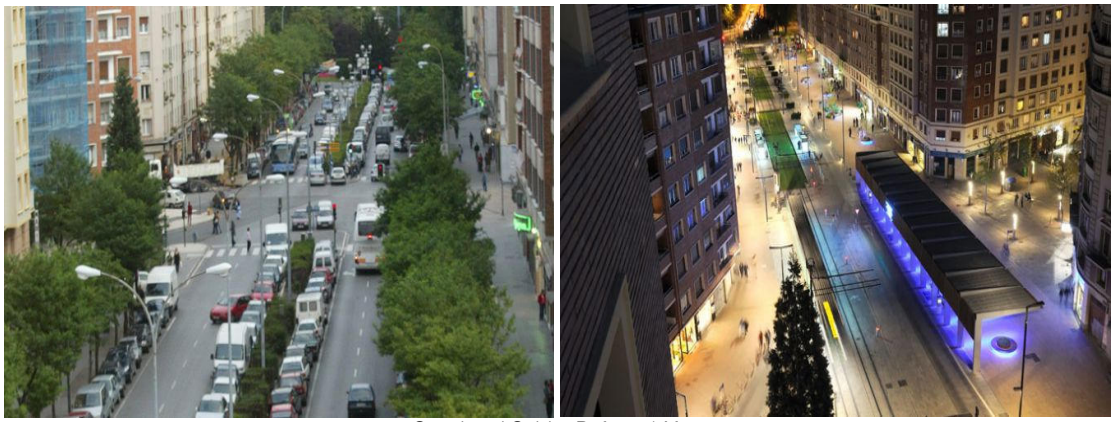
Mobility measures in Vitoria-Gasteiz

Superblocks

The superblocks are urban units of varying dimensions where motorized mobility is moved to the surrounding streets, so that the inner streets are reserved for pedestrian and cyclist mobility, neighbors and services. Through traffic is removed and the interior roads become calmed streets.

To deploy the superblocks model it is necessary to establish a hierarchy among the various types of roads: basic streets and secondary or inner streets (living streets). These last streets will be closed to vehicles that just want to pass through and will be open way for the others at certain times.





Sancho el Sabio: Before / After

Actions

- Sancho el Sabio superblock:
  - Pedestrianization of some streets.
  - Elimination of 3 car lanes, bidirectional flow and 4 car parking lines in Sancho el Sabio street; now there is only 1 car lane in one direction, the rest is occupied by pedestrian space and the tram line.
- Central superblock:
  - The main streets in this superblock were pedestrian ones before the measure was applied.
  - Video camera based car flow control, to avoid passing-by cars.
  - Allow bicycles to use tram & bus lanes, but forbid them to use pedestrian streets.
- 15 other superblocks in the city centre:
  - Traffic calming: when there were 2 lanes for cars, take one only for bicycles, and set a maximum 30 km/h speed in those streets.

Traffic calming

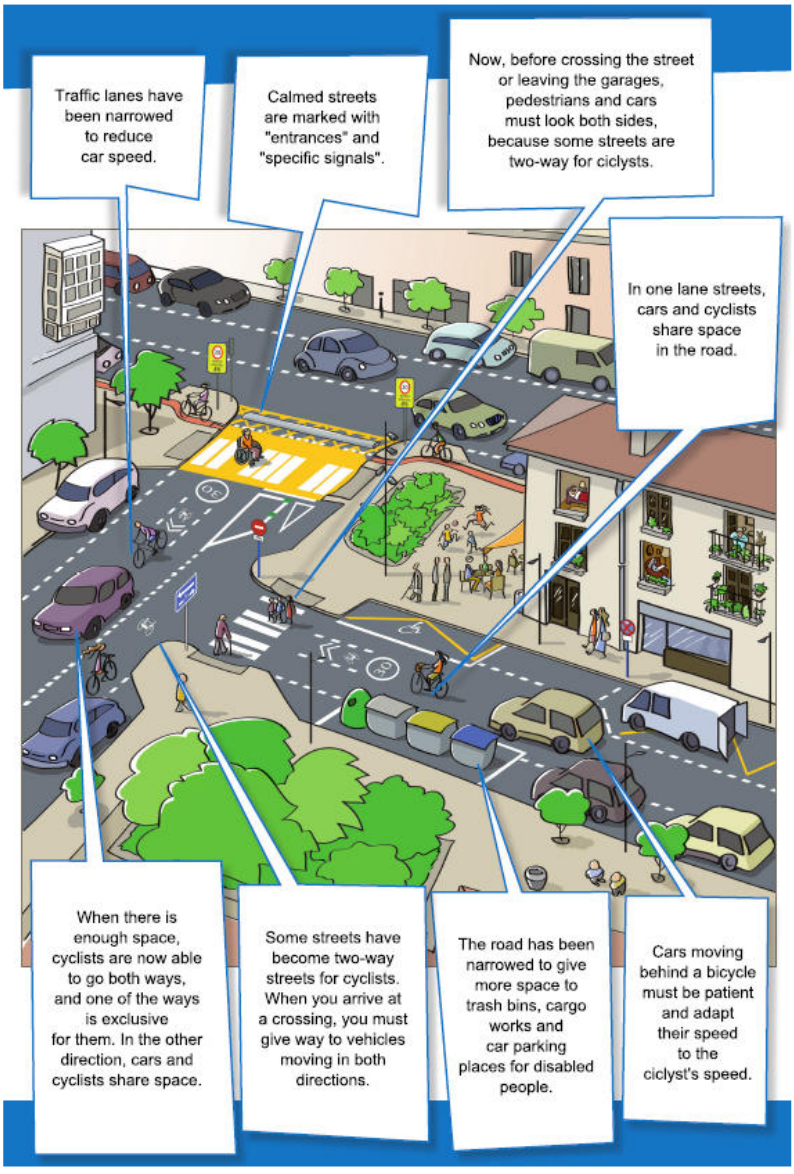
The main objectives of the traffic calming actions in Vitoria-Gasteiz were:

- To create safe and secure roads, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, allowing a new modal share of the public space.
- To improve the air and public space quality and reduce noise thanks to a better demand management in the city centre.
- To reduce traffic congestion thanks to a decrease in the use of cars.
- To free up public space occupied by private transport and reuse it for social activities and pedestrian relations.

One very local problem in Vitoria-Gasteiz was also targeted by the action: there is a very high percentage of cyclists who use the sidewalks in their trips, and the action wanted to give them more space on the road so that they could ride their bikes safely and could leave the pedestrian space to pedestrians.

Actions

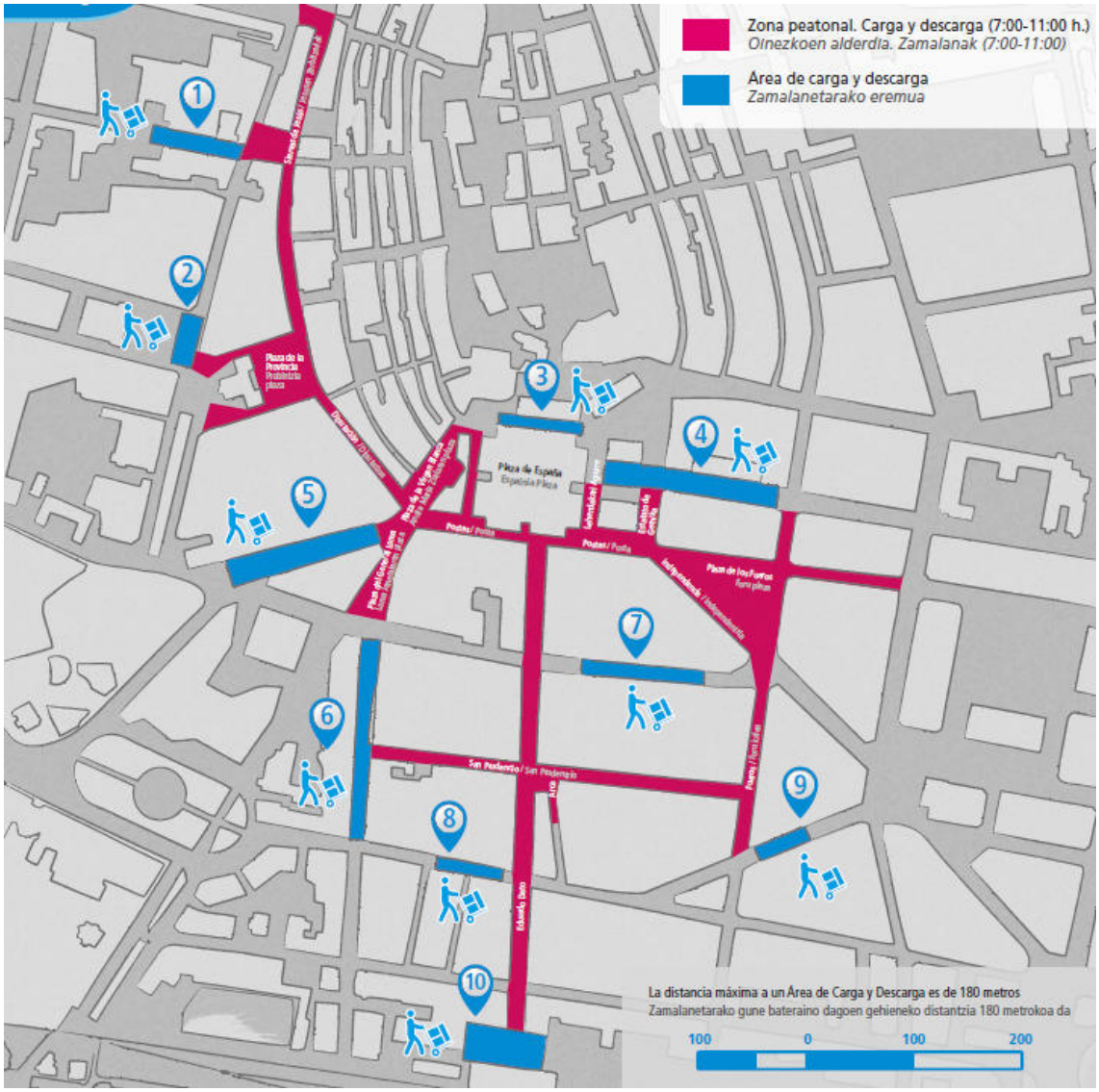
- Changes in 47 streets of the city centre. Project developed in January 2013.
- Definition and signalling of slow-speed streets, so the motorised vehicles should adapt their speed to the speed of pedestrians and cyclists. A maximum speed of 30 km/h was established in those streets.
- Entrances of the streets heavily signalled so that drivers could see they were entering a low speed space. A coarse and noisy yellow band was installed on the pavement, and the zebra crossings next to them were also painted in yellow.
- In streets with two lanes for cars, in one of the lanes car passing was forbidden and the lane was reused to create a contraflow bike lane. In the other lane cars had to adapt their speed to cyclists, because they were redesigned to become car/bycicle shared lanes. That last solution was also applied in streets with one lane.
- Installation of several elements on the pavement (flower boxes, recycling containers, etc.) helped narrow the lanes width and therefore reduce the car speed.



Freight distribution

Until 2014, freight distribution was allowed in the city centre pedestrian streets until 12:00 AM. Now the loading/unloading works with motorized vehicles inside the pedestrian centre must finish at 11:00 AM.

Several freight distribution places have been created in the limits of the zone to ease those works. The freight distribution companies can use those zones until 14:00 PM. From there to their final destination, they must use light cargo vehicles.



Public transport

In 2009 Vitoria-Gasteiz created a new bus&tram network: the old one, based on 18 bus lines, was replaced by a totally new integrated grid based on 2 tram lines and 9 bus lines.

Criteria for the implementation of the network

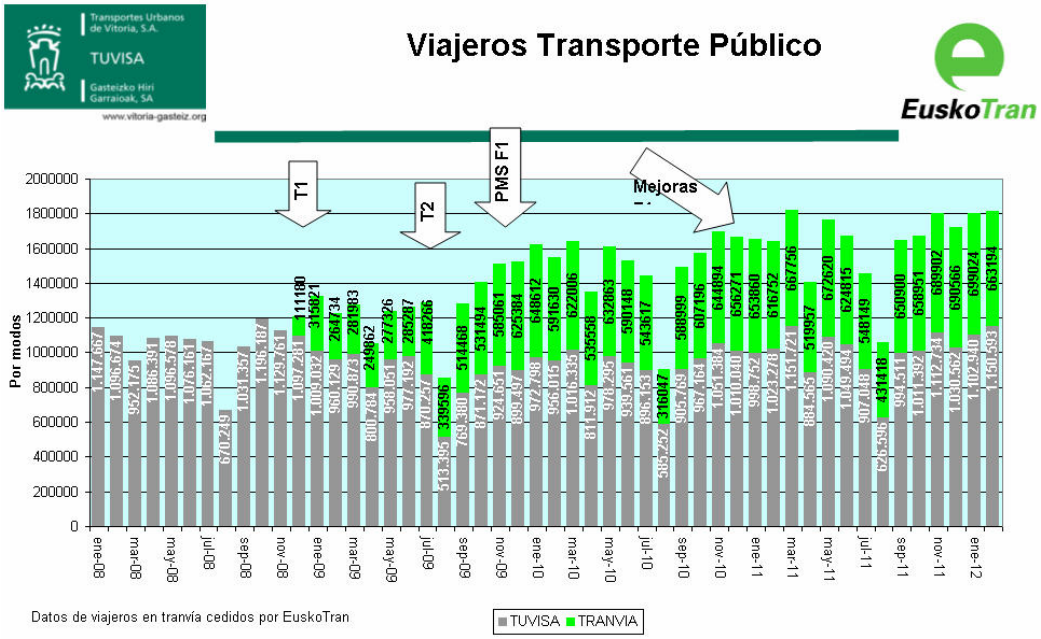
- Network Integration: according to the superblocks scheme.
- Continuity: forming a homogeneous and reticular network, achieving maximum efficiency.
- Coverage: accessible to the citizens.
- Simplicity: direct lines and bus stops at the grid nodes and spaced 400 meters giving full coverage to the territory.
- Connectivity: designed to allow the user to reach the entire city with only one transfer.
- Accessibility.

Actions

- Creation of 2 tram lines.
- Relocation of 144 bus stops and reduction of lines.
- 17 new buses.
- New platforms at bus-stops.
- Traffic light priority and queue jumpers for the bus at busy junctions to pass the bottlenecks.
- Bus&tram integrated fare (BAT Card).
- Push and pool measures (changes in the regulation of surface parking).
- Dissemination and participatory initiatives (recruitment campaign for volunteers to inform on-street).
- Increased journey frequency from 20' to 10'.
- Increased speed of the PT network by 20%.

Results

- 75% increase in public transport users.



Bicycle mobility & cycling infrastructure

The Local Bicycle Mobility Plan has the objective of reaching 15% of bicycle modal share in 2015. In 2001 it was 1.4 % and in 2011 it was 6.9 %.

However, pedestrian space has to be preserved for pedestrians, as nowadays 68% of cyclists are using, at least in part, those spaces.

Actions

- Improved cycling infrastructure (130 km).
- Contraflow cycling lanes in one way streets.
- Installation of parking lots (up to 5.000 places).
- Regulatory changes to promote cycling: permmission to use some bus & tram lanes, contraflow cycling in some streets (even if there is not bicycle lane), permmission to use any of the lanes in the streets (previously only the right side of the right lane could be used)…
- Limitation of bicycles in pedestrian streets.
- Traffic calming measures.
- Safe cycling courses for students and for adults.