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ULI ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

FRANKFURT MAINKAI

UNLOCKING FRANKFURT'S POTENTIAL: A COMPREHENSIVE
VISION FOR MAINKAI RIVERFRONT TRANSFORMATION



About ULI

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organisation comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics.

Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 80 countries. ULI has been active in Europe since the early 1990s and today, we have almost 5,500 members and 15 national councils.

The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanisation, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns. Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognises and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.



ULI Advisory Services Programme

The goal of the ULI Advisory Services program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalisation, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and are screened to ensure objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day Advisory Services panel (ASP) is tailored to meet a sponsor's needs. The sponsor briefs ULI members, engage with stakeholders through in-depth interviews, deliberates on their recommendations, and make a final presentation of those recommendations. A report is prepared as a final deliverable.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfilment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

Acknowledgments

This panel is a result of multiple individuals and organizations participating collectively toward achieving transformational change for the Mainkai. The Advisory Services program acknowledges, with gratitude, the team of the mobility department with the project Head Ulrike Gaube, the political support of all three departments and their heads: Mobility (Mr. Siefert), Urban Planning and Housing (Mr. Dr. Gwechenberger) and Climate and environment (Mrs. Heilig) and the support of their departments Mrs. Schwappach who did a wonderful tour and Mr. Schneider of the Frankfurters Grünflächenamt.

ULI also thanks the more than 47 stakeholders who shared their experiences, perspectives, and insights with the panel.

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Thank you to project sponsors and initiators





Panel Assignment and Objectives

In the pursuit of transforming urban spaces into vibrant, sustainable, and people-centred environments, the city of Frankfurt has embarked on an ambitious journey to redefine the iconic Mainkai riverfront. As the Main river weaves its way through the heart of the city, the Mainkai holds immense potential to become a hub of activity, culture, and connection.

With a focus on sustainable urban planning, mobility, cultural enrichment, and holistic well-being, the ULI expert panel was tasked with providing strategic recommendations to guide the redevelopment of the Mainkai. The panel was asked to provide guidance on the following questions:

- What are the necessary uses and qualities that citizens and visitors require at this central location?
- How to build the business case for the various stakeholders?
- How can we define the character of the river Main embankment when it is not influenced by cars, but instead prioritises people as the key factor?
- What role can and should urban space play in the future in addressing the challenges posed by climate change?
- What is the appropriate approach to preserving and honouring the historical, cultural, and social significance of the Mainkai?
- How do we envision presenting the city? What is the significance of connecting the city centre with the Main river?
- What are the relevant sections and interdependencies with the surrounding area, and what planning considerations should be taken into account?



Cornelius Pfannkuch

The Frankfurt Mainkai Project

The Frankfurt Mainkai project aligns with a global movement, seeking to enhance public space usage by transforming a heavily trafficked area into a pedestrian-friendly zone. By restricting vehicular access and promoting alternative modes of transportation, the project aims to foster more active lifestyles, improve air quality and reduce noise pollution, stimulate economic activity, and strengthen community ties.

Frankfurt am Main, the fifth-largest city in Germany, is actively embracing **people-centric planning**. As part of its inner-city concept, the city's planning department initiated the temporary closure of the northern Mainkai riverfront to reduce vehicular traffic and promote pedestrian-friendly spaces (Frankfurt Stadtplanungsamt, 2014) in 2019. The initiative aims to reduce the presence of heavy vehicular traffic specifically on Berlinerstrasse and Mainkai, connecting the pedestrianised city centre to the Mainkai riverfront via Römerberg plaza. The closure experiment, which began in August 2019, aimed to link the city centre's pedestrianised zone to the Mainkai riverfront via Römerberg plaza, encouraging pedestrian usage (Figure 1).

By temporarily closing the northern Mainkai street to vehicular traffic, the project has sparked debates and discussions among citizens and policymakers. While some view it as a success for opening up new possibilities for public space usage, others highlight concerns about increased traffic congestion in neighbouring areas.

As a riverside road, the Mainkai is currently used by around 11,000 vehicles per day. In 2021, cycle lanes were incorporated, and it is becoming an increasingly important cycle path connection. For pedestrian traffic, the crossings at the Eiserner Steg and Zum Pfarrturm - coming from the cathedral - are particularly essential. The riverside path is an important pedestrian connection in the east-west direction and is also used by cyclists. In order to be able to use and design the historically significant urban space between the Old Town and the Main differently in the future, temporary spaces for experience are just as important as the successive reduction and redirection of car traffic in a way that is compatible with the district.

Öffnung Mainkai für Fuß- und Radverkehr

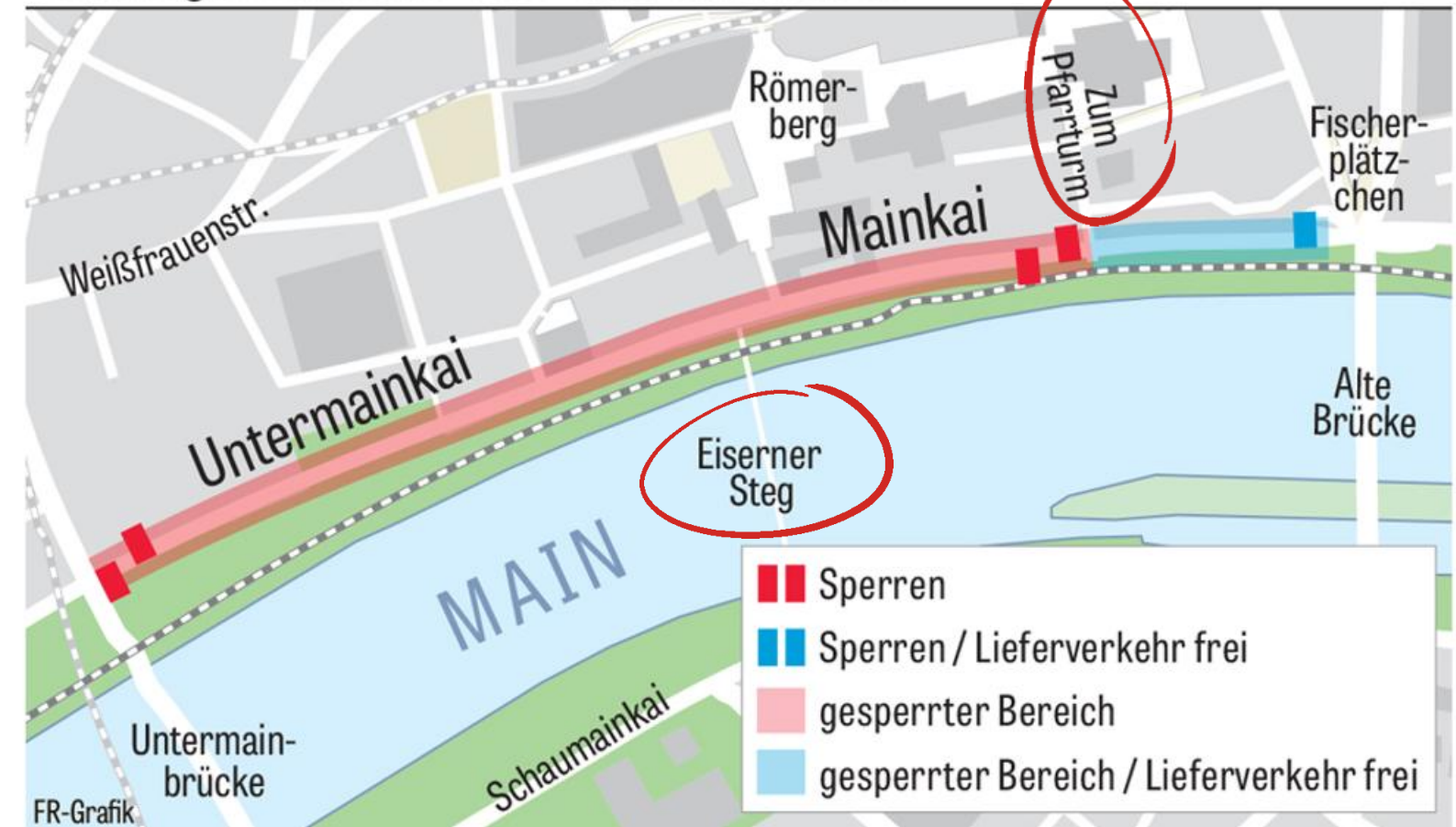


Figure 1. Pedestrianised Mainkai street on the northern Main riverfront in Frankfurt (Frankfurter Rundschau, 2019)

People-Centric Planning

At its core, people-centric planning transcends traditional city planning by placing individuals and communities at the heart of every decision-making process. It seeks to create urban environments that are not only efficient and functional but also conducive to human connection, quality of life, and a sense of belonging. This approach recognizes that cities are fundamentally shaped by their inhabitants, and thus, any development must align with their desires and requirements.

Incorporating elements of inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability, and cultural enrichment, people-centric planning aims to foster vibrant communities where individuals can thrive physically, socially, and emotionally. This entails designing public spaces, transportation systems, and urban amenities that prioritise pedestrian experiences, green spaces, and cultural activities. Moreover, it considers the diverse demographics and needs of a population, ensuring that the urban landscape caters to all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

In the context of Frankfurt's Mainkai project, the principles of people-centric planning can play a vital role in reshaping the city's core. By prioritising pedestrian-friendly zones, green spaces, and cultural amenities, the project aligns with the ethos of creating a vibrant and livable urban environment. As we delve deeper into the strategic recommendations, it becomes clear that a people-centric approach is not just a trend but a fundamental cornerstone in crafting the city's future identity and fostering a lasting sense of community.

Panel Recommendations

The panel proposed three pillars of recommendations for transforming the Mainkai urban space into a vibrant, sustainable, and people-centred environment. These consist of three phases outlined below:

Phase A: Vision and Strategy



Mainkai as a catalyst propelling broader urban development: Develop a visionary and transformative masterplan that goes beyond pedestrianisation. Envision the Mainkai not just as a space but as a dynamic cultural and architectural landmark, fostering a vibrant nexus for residents and visitors alike.



Align with regional and citywide development plans: Ensure that the Mainkai project aligns with broader regional and citywide development plans. Collaborate with relevant authorities and stakeholders involved in city planning, transportation, and environmental initiatives to create a cohesive and integrated urban strategy.



Stakeholder engagement and community communication: Engage with all stakeholders, including residents, businesses, cultural institutions, and environmental groups, from the early stages of the project. Conduct transparent and inclusive communication to build support and address concerns effectively.

Phase B: Create an Iconic Presence



Emphasize placemaking and public art: Promote placemaking initiatives and integrate public art installations to enhance the attractiveness of Mainkai. Create vibrant public spaces that foster a sense of community, social interaction, and cultural expression.



Integrate blue and green infrastructure: Incorporate green and blue elements into the Mainkai design, such as urban farming, green roofs, sustainable drainage systems, and urban forests. Leverage the waterfront as an urban amenity for sport and play.



Prioritise active mobility and reimagine the Bahnhofsviertel: Implement a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycling paths, green spaces, and sustainable mobility solutions to enhance accessibility and livability. Extend this focus to the Bahnhofsviertel area, fostering safety and connectivity.

Phase C: Project Implementation



Establish a dedicated authority for project development: Create a dedicated authority or development corporation responsible for overseeing the Mainkai project. This entity should have a strong vision, expertise, and resources to ensure the successful execution and long-term management of the riverfront transformation.



Branding and image projection: Leverage the Mainkai as an opportunity to rebrand and showcase Frankfurt as a city of innovation, sustainability, and quality of life. Promote the Mainkai as a unique attraction that enhances the city's competitiveness in attracting talent, businesses, and tourists.



Phased planning approach
Adopt a systematic, step-by-step implementation strategy. This method allows for careful consideration of various aspects, enabling adaptive responses to evolving needs and fostering a sustainable and successful redevelopment of the riverfront over time.

Background on Movements to Create more People-Centred Urban Environments

Streets have long been an integral part of cities, constituting on average over 80% of public spaces globally. However, many urban streets fail to cater to the needs of their communities, with inadequate provisions for safe walking, cycling, and other active modes of transportation. Over the years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of a people-centric planning approach over an automotive-centric one, leading to movements advocating for the pedestrianisation of cities. These movements emphasise creating urban spaces that prioritise pedestrians, bicyclists, and other active users over private cars, aiming to enhance the quality of life and promote sustainability.

The movement to pedestrianise streets has historical roots dating back to the mid-20th century when the rise of private car ownership led to urban road congestion. One of the pioneering concepts was the 'Woonerf design' in the Netherlands, followed by experimental implementations in Germany, Sweden, and Denmark¹. Various initiatives, such as traffic calming and road closures, have played a significant role in enhancing road safety in urban areas².



Globally, passive modes of transportation have led to insufficient physical activity levels, particularly among adolescents³. To address this, cities are adopting mobility management measures to encourage sustainable travel behaviours. Contemporary approaches, such as traffic-calming strategies, aim to transform streets into multifunctional spaces that prioritise pedestrian activities alongside other modes of transport.

The movement to pedestrianise cities gained momentum as urban areas faced mounting challenges related to air pollution, traffic congestion, and insufficient levels of physical activity. Studies conducted by the World Health Organization indicated that a significant portion of the population, including 81% of adolescents, were not engaging in sufficient physical activity due, in part, to environmental factors such as traffic density and lack of recreational facilities³.

To address these issues, cities around the world have adopted various strategies to promote pedestrian-friendly environments and encourage active travel modes (cycling, walking etc). Traffic calming aims to create streets that accommodate multiple activities and prioritise the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists, while reducing the dominance of cars.

1. Kjemtrup, K., & Herrstedt, L. (1992). *Speed management and traffic calming in urban areas in Europe: A historical view*. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 24(1), 57–65. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-4575\(92\)90072-Q](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-4575(92)90072-Q)
2. Juhász, M. & Koren, C. (2016). *Getting an Insight into the Effects of Traffic Calming Measures on Road Safety*. *Transportation Research Procedia*, Volume 14.
3. World Health Organization. (2018). *Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world*. Geneva World Health Organization.

Benefits of Pedestrianisation and People-Centric Planning

Pedestrianisation brings numerous benefits to cities across different categories:



→ **Pedestrian Behaviour and Density:** Pedestrianised areas encourage physical activity and social interaction, leading to a higher pedestrian density¹.

→ **Stationary Activities:** Traffic calming facilitates stationary activities, such as socializing and cultural expressions, enhancing the vibrancy of public spaces².

→ **Environment:** Pedestrianisation contributes to improved air and noise quality by reducing motorised traffic in specific areas³.

→ **Economy:** Pedestrian-friendly areas stimulate economic activity, street footfall and increase property values⁴.

→ **Social Development:** Temporary street closures, such as 'Open Streets,' foster community interaction and organisation for health promotion activities⁵.

→ **Transportation flows:** Contrary to concerns about traffic diversion, studies have shown that pedestrianisation does not necessarily lead to significant traffic congestion elsewhere⁶.

1. Carmona, M. (2019). *Place value: place quality and its impact on health, social, economic and environmental outcomes*. Journal of Urban Design, 24:1, 1-48, DOI: 10.1080/13574809.2018.1472523

2. Gehl, J. & Svarre, B. (2013). *How to Study Public Life*. Island Press, 200 pp., Washington, DC.

3. King, E & Murphy, A. (2009). *Reducing pedestrian exposure to environmental pollutants: A combined noise exposure and air quality analysis approach*. Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment.

4. Sohn, D., Moudon, A. & Lee, J. (2012). The economic value of walkable neighborhoods. Urban Design International. 17. 10.1057/udi.2012.1.

5. Maryann, M. et al. (2011) Ciclovía in Chicago: a strategy for community development to improve public health. Community Development, 42:2, 221-239, DOI: 10.1080/15575330.2011.558203

6. Cairns, S. et al. (2002). Disappearing traffic? The story so far. Municipal Engineer. 151. 13-22. 10.1680/muen.151.1.13.38856.

Elevating Urban Living: The Mainkai Project as a Catalyst for Placemaking and Urban Redevelopment

The Frankfurt Mainkai project stands at the crossroads of urban transformation, embodying a paradigm shift from conventional pedestrianisation initiatives to a comprehensive strategy of placemaking and urban revitalisation. This report delves into the strategic significance of this evolution, grounding its insights in urban planning literature, and highlighting the project's unique role in enhancing Frankfurt's competitiveness on the global stage.

Strategic Location: A Conduit for Global Connectivity

The Mainkai project, nestled in the heart of Frankfurt, transcends its role as a local endeavour and emerges as a potential gateway to propel the city onto the global stage. This transformation is strategically anchored in its proximity to the Main-Hauptbahnhof, a bustling transportation hub radiating connections across Germany and beyond.

This strategic advantage extends to the Mainkai's regional and international hyperconnectivity. This is aided by its proximity to Frankfurt Airport, a pivotal player in the city's global connectivity. A quick, under 30-minute journey by car or public transit links the Mainkai to the Frankfurt Airport, one of Europe's busiest. The Mainkai, thus, becomes more than a picturesque riverside promenade and transforms into a transition point for international travellers. It offers not just scenic views but serves as an introduction to Frankfurt's rich cultural and architectural offer.

From Pedestrianisation to Placemaking:

The concept of pedestrianisation, while pivotal, is not an end in itself; it is a gateway to a broader, more ambitious objective — the creation of a high-quality, active public realm. As cities around the world embrace the imperative of people-centric planning, initiatives like the Frankfurt Mainkai project exemplify a profound shift from mere traffic management to the cultivation of vibrant, livable spaces.



This transition is not just about restricting vehicular access, but rather an opportunity to craft an urban realm that resonates with the pulse of its inhabitants, weaving an immersive experience of culture, recreation, and architecture. Placemaking, at its essence, is the art of transforming spaces into meaningful places that reflect the identity and aspirations of a community. The Mainkai project serves as a canvas upon which Frankfurt can paint an iconic narrative of its past, present, and future.

Creating an Iconic Presence:

Iconic landmarks, whether architectural wonders or vibrant cultural hubs, not only enhance the aesthetics of a city but become magnets for tourism, commerce, and community engagement. In the global arena, cities are not merely competing for economic dominance; they are competing for attention, for talent, and for a reputation that transcends borders. The Mainkai project, through thoughtful placemaking, positions Frankfurt as a city that doesn't just evolve; it narrates its evolution through tangible, memorable spaces.

Global Competitiveness: Beyond Economic Metrics

In the contemporary urban landscape, a city's competitiveness transcends economic indicators; it is intricately linked to its quality of life. Placemaking, can become a strategic move in the global competition for talent, innovation, and investment. Richard Florida's concept of the 'creative class' underscores the symbiotic relationship between a city's cultural vibrancy and its economic dynamism¹. The Mainkai transformation can sign with this narrative by positioning Frankfurt not just as an economic hub but as a city that invests in the holistic well-being of its residents.

Recreational and Cultural Activation

A vibrant public realm is characterized by the dynamic interplay of recreational and cultural activities. The Mainkai project, pivoting towards pedestrian-centricity, creates a canvas for diverse engagements. The transformed Mainkai could be more than a conduit, but a platform for communal celebrations, public art, and cultural expressions. Such activation not only enriches local life but contributes to the social capital that defines a city's resilience and competitiveness.

1. Florida, Richard L, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York, NY, Basic Books, 2002.

Phase A: Vision & Strategy

The Mainkai project marks a pivotal moment for the city as it seeks to transform a heavily trafficked area along the Main riverfront into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly zone. It presents a unique opportunity for Frankfurt to reimagine its urban landscape and create a lasting impact on its future development and to connect to the wider region.

Integrating Mainkai into the wider regional development strategy

One of the primary challenges and opportunities faced by the Mainkai project is its location at the heart of Frankfurt. This central positioning means that the project significantly impacts numerous stakeholders, businesses, and residents, leading to emotionally charged sentiments and a sense of collective ownership. To overcome this challenge, the panel suggests that the city avoids analysing the project solely from a hyperlocal viewpoint. Instead, the focus should be on integrating Mainkai into the wider city strategy and aligning it with larger regional projects of Frankfurt.



Guiding Principles

The vision for the Mainkai should be guided by four key principles:

Pedestrians first: The core principle of the vision is to prioritise pedestrians and active modes of transportation, creating a car-free environment along the river embankment. This ensures that the Mainkai becomes a safe, accessible, and enjoyable space for people to walk, cycle, and engage in various activities.

Green and sustainable Mainkai: The vision emphasises creating a green and sustainable riverfront that addresses climate change challenges and enhances the city's resilience. This includes incorporating green spaces, urban farming, urban forests, and sustainable drainage systems to promote biodiversity and a healthier urban environment.

Active and inclusive public spaces: The Mainkai should be designed to offer a diverse range of amenities and cultural activities accessible to everyone. The vision focuses on creating active public spaces that showcase the city's cultural assets, provide opportunities for social interactions, increase dwell time and cater to the needs and interests of the entire population.

Integrated mobility: The vision should include an integrated mobility plan that promotes multi-modal transportation and reduces reliance on cars. By linking the riverfront with various transportation corridors in the region, the Mainkai can become easily accessible, which will support sustainable urban mobility and seamless connections within the city.

Case Study

Barcelona's Urban Transformation - Reimagining a City's Identity

Background

Barcelona, Spain's second-largest city, is renowned for its rich history, stunning architecture, and vibrant culture. In the 20th century, the city faced significant challenges, including rapid urbanisation, traffic congestion, and declining urban spaces. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, Barcelona underwent a transformative urban development project that redefined its identity and turned it into a global model for city revitalisation.

The urban transformation of Barcelona began in the early 1980s, following the end of the Franco regime. In 1986, Spain joined the European Union, which provided access to EU funding for urban development projects. This period marked a turning point for Barcelona's city planning, as local authorities sought to improve the city's infrastructure and quality of life¹.



Strategy and Approach

The visionary approach to redefining Barcelona's identity was driven by the city's leadership, including Mayor Pasqual Maragall and architect and urban planner Oriol Bohigas. Their strategy focused on several key elements.

Urban renewal and public spaces: The project aimed to reclaim public spaces, reduce car usage, and enhance pedestrian areas. Historic squares, such as Plaça Reial and Plaça del Pi, were revitalized, and car lanes were replaced with pedestrian-friendly zones, creating vibrant gathering spaces for residents and visitors.

Revitalising the waterfront: Barcelona had historically turned its back on its waterfront, which was heavily industrialised. The transformation project sought to reconnect the city with the sea, converting industrial areas into public spaces, parks, and cultural venues. One of the most notable achievements was the development of the Port Olímpic for the 1992 Summer Olympics, which revitalized the coastline and brought new life to the city².

Preserving cultural heritage: While embracing modernity, the project also respected Barcelona's rich architectural heritage. Renowned landmarks like Sagrada Família and Casa Batlló were carefully preserved and integrated into the urban fabric, blending contemporary architecture with charm.

Economic diversification: The transformation project aimed to diversify Barcelona's economy beyond traditional industries like manufacturing. By investing in cultural initiatives, tourism, and technology, the city attracted new businesses and talent, boosting economic growth and fostering innovation.

Social inclusivity: The vision for Barcelona's transformation was inclusive, aiming to benefit all residents regardless of socioeconomic background. Affordable housing initiatives and accessible public spaces were prioritised to ensure that the changes would positively impact the entire population.

1. Illas, Edgar, 'The Barcelona Model of Urban Transformation', Thinking Barcelona: Ideologies of a Global City (Liverpool, 2012; online edn, Liverpool Scholarship Online).

2. City Journal. (n.d.). *Barcelona, and the journey of urban transformation*.

Case Study

Barcelona's Urban Transformation - Reimagining a City's Identity

The visionary approach to Barcelona's urban transformation yielded impressive results.

Economic growth: The urban regeneration including revitalisation of public spaces and cultural landmarks attracted millions of tourists, contributing significantly to the city's economy. Barcelona became one of Europe's top tourist destinations, generating substantial revenue and employment opportunities.

Enhanced liveability: The creation of pedestrian-friendly zones and public spaces improved the city's liveability, promoting a sense of community and fostering social interactions. Residents and visitors alike enjoyed a higher quality of life in the reimagined urban environment.

Environmental improvements: Barcelona's efforts to reduce car usage and promote sustainable transportation resulted in decreased air pollution and improved overall environmental conditions. The city's commitment to sustainability earned it accolades as an eco-friendly city.

Cultural renaissance: By preserving its cultural heritage and investing in arts and cultural initiatives, Barcelona experienced a renaissance of creativity and innovation. The city's vibrant arts scene attracted artists, designers, and intellectuals from around the world, enriching its cultural fabric.

Global recognition: Barcelona's urban transformation garnered global recognition, serving as a role model for other cities seeking to redefine their identities through visionary urban planning.



Barcelona, Spain

Engaging Stakeholders and Effective Communication: Building Consensus for Mainkai Project

The success of the Frankfurt Mainkai project hinges on the support and involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including local residents, businesses, community organisations, city officials, and urban planners. Given the emotional attachment that many stakeholders have expressed to the Mainkai area, engaging them throughout the planning and implementation process is vital. By fostering an inclusive and collaborative approach, the project can address concerns early on in the process, incorporate valuable input, and build a shared sense of ownership, ensuring a more sustainable and enduring transformation.

Creating a Shared Vision

Engaging stakeholders from the outset allows for the co-creation of a shared vision for the Mainkai project. This participatory process ensures that the diverse perspectives and needs of the community are taken into account, ultimately leading to a more well-rounded and inclusive plan. By involving stakeholders in vision-building workshops, focus groups, and public forums, the project can gain valuable insights, identify potential challenges, and explore creative solutions that align with the wider city vision.

Transparency and Communication

Transparent communication, rooted in a two-way dialogue, is central to successful stakeholder engagement. It is essential not only to keep stakeholders informed about the project's progress and any plan changes but also to actively listen to their feedback. Regular updates through various communication channels, such as town hall meetings, newsletters, social media, and project websites, foster a sense of trust, inclusiveness, and confidence among the stakeholders. By valuing input from the community and taking it on board, the project gains insights that can lead to more effective decision-making and a more widely embraced transformation.

Incorporating Local Knowledge and Expertise

The Mainkai project should leverage the wealth of local knowledge and expertise within the community. Engaging with local organisations, historical societies, and environmental groups can provide valuable insights into the area's cultural heritage and ecological significance. By incorporating this knowledge into the planning process, the project can better respect the history and identity of Mainkai, ensuring that the revitalisation complements the city's unique character.

Addressing Concerns and Mitigating Negative Externalities

Some stakeholders may have expressed reservations or concerns about the Mainkai project's potential impacts, such as changes to traffic patterns, noise levels, or property values. Addressing these concerns through open dialogue and evidence-based analysis is essential. Conducting impact assessments and sharing the findings with stakeholders demonstrates a commitment to responsible planning and allows for targeted mitigation strategies.

Interactive Digital Platforms: Democratizing Information Access

In the digital age, expanding communication channels is crucial. Develop an interactive online platform dedicated to the Mainkai project. This platform should serve as an information hub, offering real-time updates, virtual town hall sessions, and a space for digital discourse. By harnessing technology, the project can transcend geographical constraints and reach different age groups, enabling a more extensive and diverse range of stakeholders to participate in discussions and decision-making processes.

Case Study

Strøget - Copenhagen, Denmark

Background

Strøget is a famous pedestrian street and urban renewal project in Copenhagen, Denmark. It is one of the longest and oldest pedestrian streets in Europe, stretching approximately 1.1 kilometres through the heart of the city. The transformation of Strøget from a car-dominated area to a vibrant pedestrian-friendly zone, which began in 1962, faced challenges and scepticism initially but eventually became a successful and iconic public space.



Strategy and Approach

Several elements were applied to create a thriving pedestrian-friendly zone in Strøget. Many of which can inform the Mainkai project and help overcome challenges and realize its full potential as a catalyst for urban transformation and community wellbeing.

Public Debate and Vision: The decision to pedestrianise Strøget was met with opposition and scepticism from some businesses and residents who were concerned about the potential negative impacts on traffic and commerce. However, the city engaged in extensive public debate, explaining the long-term vision for creating a more walkable and people-centric urban space. The vision focused on enhancing the city's identity, culture, and economic vitality.

Gradual Implementation: The pedestrianisation of Strøget was carried out in phases. Initially, the central portion of the street was closed to vehicles, and its success gradually led to the expansion of the pedestrian zone. This approach allowed stakeholders to observe and experience the positive changes before fully committing to the project.

Focus on Urban Design and Public Realm: Strøget's redesign prioritised the creation of a high-quality public realm. The street was designed with attractive paving, seating areas, greenery, and public art installations. The design aimed to create a welcoming and visually appealing environment for pedestrians.

Mixed-Use and Placemaking: The project emphasised the integration of various functions and uses along the pedestrian street. Retail, restaurants, cafes, cultural venues, and public spaces were strategically placed to create a lively and diverse atmosphere, attracting both locals and tourists.

Promotion of Active Transportation: As part of the project, cycling lanes and improved public transport connections were introduced around Strøget to encourage sustainable transportation options. This integration of active transportation contributed to a reduction in traffic congestion and improved air quality.

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation: The success of Strøget was not achieved overnight. The city continuously monitored its performance, solicited feedback from users, and made adjustments to ensure the street remained relevant and functional over time.

Phase B: Creating an Iconic Presence

The Mainkai as a catalyst for wider development

The Mainkai project has the potential to act as a catalytic force, not just for its immediate area but for the broader city of Frankfurt. In order to succeed, the project should evolve into a destination that magnetically draws footfall, a place where people want to be and return to. This chapter explores the multifaceted and interconnected intervention points identified to transform Mainkai into a global icon, examining the vital elements of green and blue infrastructure, active amenities, and cultural and arts programming (Figure 1).

Consider the Southbank in London, a case study in transformative urban development. Anchored by the Tate Modern as well as other well-known cultural attractions such as the Globe Theatre, the London Dungeons, and The London Eye. The Southbank achieves a seamless and fluid urban design as it is effectively bookended by major cultural landmarks on its Western and Eastern sides. This exemplifies effective placemaking, where the public realm seamlessly integrates with cultural hubs. Strategically planned cultural programming which is adapted to seasonal changes also contributes to the area's pull factor. Mainkai, aspiring to such dynamism, could leverage a singular iconic presence, potentially an Opera House, serving as a venue for cultural events and programming. Partnerships with other cultural institutions, including the museums along the south side of the Mainkai could also be strengthened to facilitate programming throughout the year.

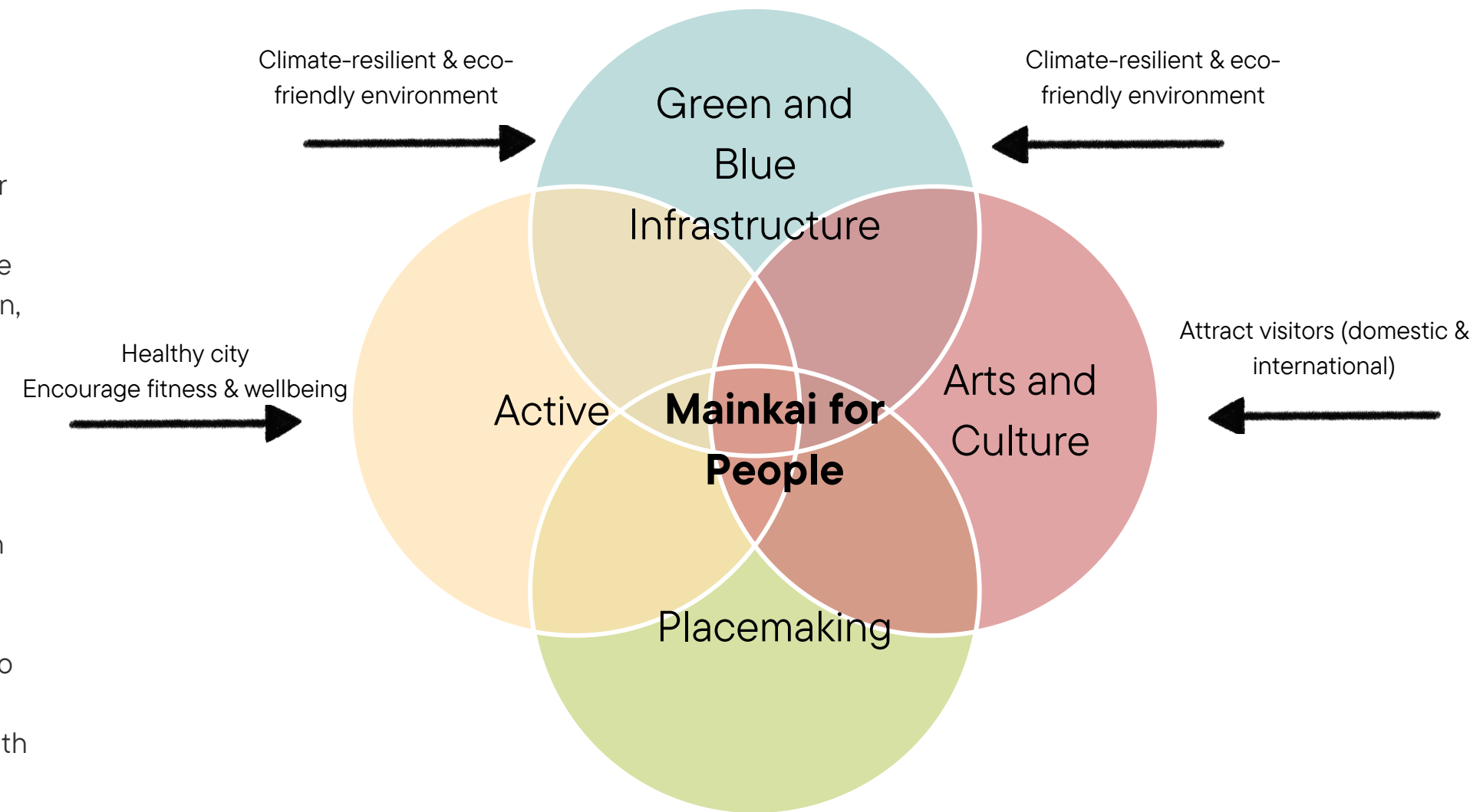


Figure 1. Interconnected elements necessary to transform the Mainkai

Preserving Historical, Cultural, and Social Significance

The Mainkai, situated along the picturesque banks of the River Main, holds a rich historical heritage that has been integral to Frankfurt's identity for centuries. Historically, the river served as a vital trade route, fostering commercial activities and cultural exchange. It was the epicenter of the city's development, serving as a bustling waterfront where goods were transported. The Mainkai was once a site with an array of water-based activities, such as boat transportation, fishing, and riverside markets. It served as a focal point for social gatherings, festivals, and celebrations that brought the community together. Figure 2 shows pictures of historical commercial and cultural activities taking place on Mainkai.



Figure 2. Archival images of the Frankfurt Mainkai and its many recreational amenities

Blue and Green Infrastructure

With a focus on sustainable urban development, blue and green infrastructure should be key components of the Mainkai revitalisation. Green corridors, consisting of lush tree-lined promenades and waterfront parks, will provide cooling effects, reduce urban heat island effects, and create a welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) should be integrated to manage stormwater runoff, ensuring the riverfront's ecological health.

Example: The Copenhagen Harbour Baths project in Denmark serves as an exemplary case study of leveraging blue and green infrastructure to enhance urban livability and promote recreational activities. The project, initiated in the early 2000s, aimed to transform the city's industrial harbour into a series of open-air public baths, allowing residents to enjoy the water and reconnect with their waterfront heritage.

A fusion of green spaces with urban farming initiatives can empower local communities, enhance food security, and create educational opportunities for all ages. Cities like Berlin have established urban farms within their city limits, encouraging a symbiotic relationship between residents and agriculture. By cultivating similar initiatives along the Mainkai, this can not only address sustainability but also establish interactive platforms for residents to engage with nature firsthand.

Urban Forest, Farm, and or Orchard: The introduction of diverse native trees, shrubs, and flowering plants creates an urban forest that restores biodiversity and mitigates the heat island effect. An urban orchard or farm could further enhance the area's ecological value while offering opportunities for educational programs and community engagement.

Urban Plaza and Education Hub: A central urban plaza can serve as a hub for communal gatherings and cultural events while doubling as an educational space to raise awareness about sustainable practices, ecology, and the history of the riverfront.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS): One of the cornerstones of green urban development, SuDS exemplifies forward-thinking solutions that mitigate flood risks, enhance water quality, and offer recreational opportunities. By strategically integrating SuDS elements such as permeable pavements, rain gardens, and bio-retention areas, the Mainkai can serve as a blueprint for responsible stormwater management. London's King's Cross and Seattle's South Lake Union Park stand as examples of how SuDS can transform urban spaces into sustainable spaces.

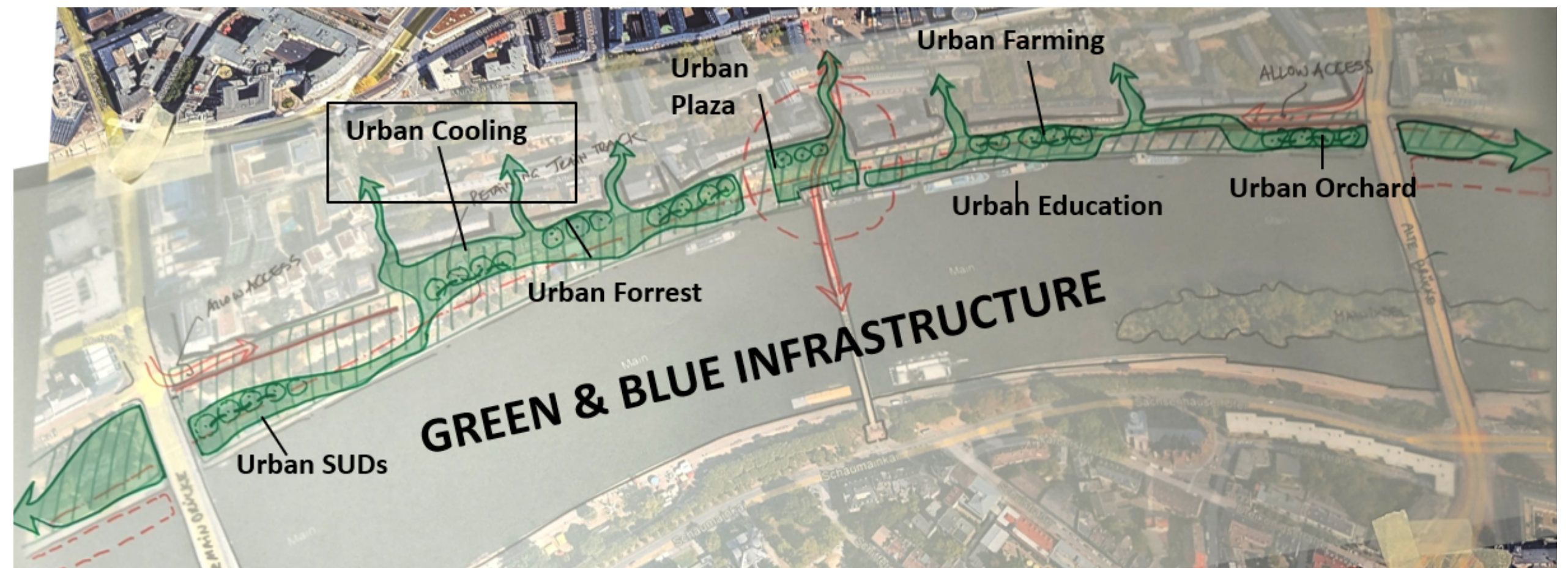


Figure 3. Suggested green and sustainable amenities for the Mainkai

Sports and Recreation

The transformation of the Mainkai isn't just about physical changes; it's also about creating a dynamic and inclusive urban space that resonates with the city's diverse population. This section delves into strategic recommendations aimed at making the Mainkai an inviting haven for all, fostering social cohesion, and nurturing a sense of belonging. By prioritizing people's needs and providing inclusive amenities, the Mainkai becomes a true gathering place where everyone can connect, relax, and thrive.

Relocating Boat Mooring: Currently, large boats are docked at the most central spaces of the Mainkai. By thoughtfully relocating boat mooring, this could make way for a harmonious coexistence between water-based activities and riverside enjoyment. This balance ensures that the riverfront remains a shared space for relaxation and engagement.

Integrating Recreation and Sport: City dwellers seek spaces that not only stimulate the mind but also cater to physical well-being. The Mainkai can follow suit by incorporating areas for yoga, fitness, and active play, fostering wellness and encouraging a healthy work-life balance among residents.

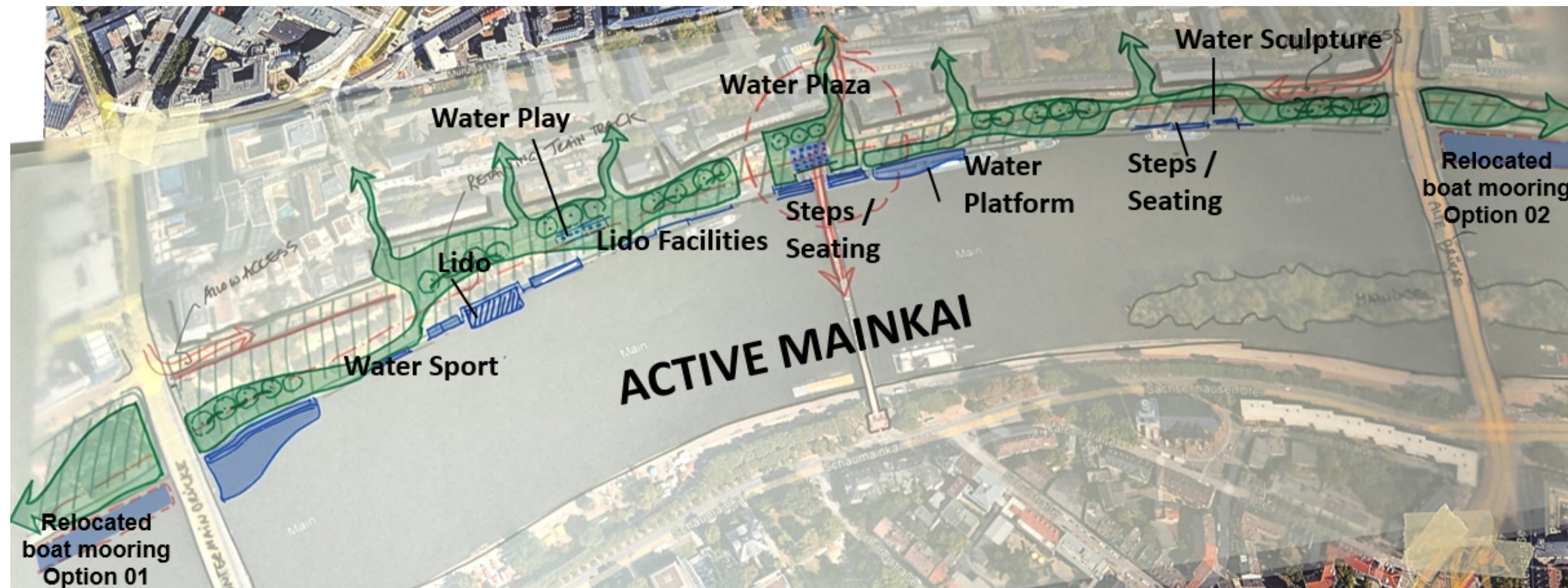


Figure 4. Suggested recreational amenities for the Mainkai

Water Sculpture and Seating Steps: The addition of a distinctive water sculpture, accompanied by seating steps leading to the river, embodies artistry and function. This focal point not only captures attention but also invites contemplation and human interaction.

Consider the success story of Lisbon's Ribeira das Naus. The addition of distinctive seating steps along the Tagus River not only transformed a neglected naval shipyard into a vibrant pedestrian promenade but also set a precedent for the integration of artistry and functionality.

Swimming areas and Water Play: A lido area, coupled with water play facilities, extends an open invitation to people of all ages. This aquatic playground fosters community connection, a sense of well-being, and shared moments of joy.

Arts and Culture

In the dynamic landscape of urban planning, the significance of cultural and creative amenities cannot be overstated. Cities worldwide are increasingly recognizing that the infusion of cultural vibrancy and creative expression not only enriches the daily lives of residents but also contributes to the city's competitiveness on a global stage. This section introduces strategic recommendations that illuminate how the Mainkai's transformation can evolve beyond physical enhancements, becoming a catalyst for cultural vitality that attracts and retains the skilled and creative individuals essential for a city's sustainable growth.

Cultural Vibrancy as the Heartbeat of Urban Life: Cities globally are recognizing the transformative power of culture in shaping urban spaces. Venice's Biennale and Melbourne's Arts Precinct serve as testaments to how cultural hubs can draw visitors and locals alike, invigorating urban life. Infusing the Mainkai with cultural and artistic experiences – be it outdoor galleries, street performances, or interactive installations – not only celebrates Frankfurt's creative spirit but also transforms the riverfront into a vibrant canvas that narrates the city's evolving story.

Activating Public Spaces for All: The resurgence of urban plazas as multifunctional social hubs echoes across cities like Madrid, Rome, and New York. These spaces, once underutilized, have been reimagined as stages for social interaction, from bustling markets to

live street performances. The panel's strategic recommendations for open-air markets, flexible outdoor spaces, and music areas along the Mainkai provide a platform for diverse gatherings and shared experiences. Some examples of these are illustrated in Figure 5.

F&B Market Hall: The reimagined Mainkai can also be a culinary destination that entices locals and visitors alike. Draw inspiration from the remarkable transformation of Porto's Mercado do Bolhão. This vibrant fresh produce market in the heart of Porto stands as a beacon of successful urban renewal. With over 80 traders, its preservation-focused approach, retaining the façade and original features, is a model of harmonizing modern infrastructure with historical charm.

Movable Platform for Performance: The dynamic flexibility of a movable platform for performances creates an ever-changing canvas for artistic expression. This enriches the cultural fabric of Frankfurt while inviting diverse communities to gather and celebrate.

Unleashing Expressive Potential The Mainkai's transformation is an opportunity to forge connections through culture, expression, and active engagement. By partnering with the numerous museums local to the area, the Mainkai can emerge as a nexus of vibrancy, imbued with the essence of Frankfurt's cultural pulse. This transformation will not only enhance the riverfront's attractiveness but also serve as a magnetic force, drawing diverse communities to celebrate, participate, and contribute to the city's shared narrative.

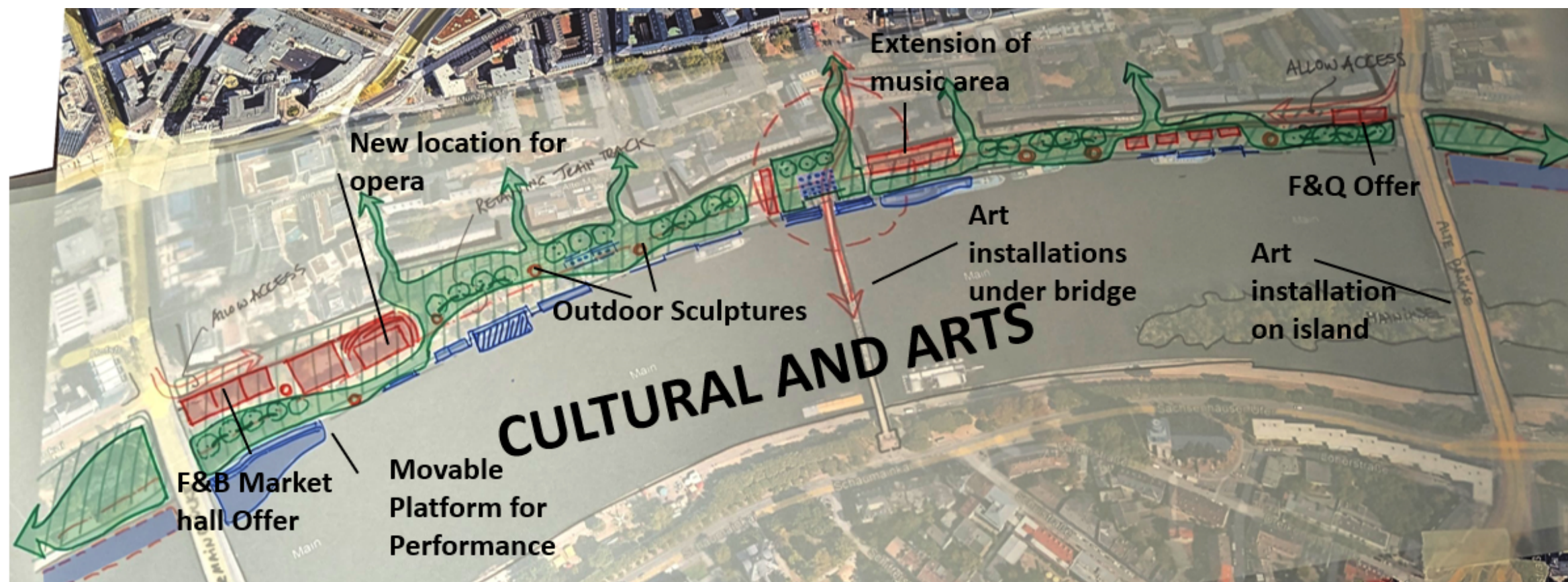


Figure 5. Suggested cultural amenities for the Mainkai



Superkilen park, Copenhagen, Denmark

Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusivity

An essential aspect of the Mainkai's transformation is its inclusivity, making the riverfront accessible to people of all ages and abilities. By implementing pedestrian-friendly pathways, cycling-path, wheelchair-accessible areas, and universally designed spaces, the project will create an inclusive destination that fosters social cohesion and community engagement.

Example: An exemplary project that showcases the importance of accessibility in urban transformations is the "Superkilen" park in Copenhagen, Denmark. Superkilen features a variety of pathways and seating areas that are designed to be wheelchair-accessible and universally usable. The park's pathways are smooth and gently sloped, ensuring easy navigation for strollers, wheelchairs, and those with mobility aids. One notable feature is the "Red Square," which hosts an adaptive playground. This playground includes equipment that is designed to accommodate children with various physical abilities, ensuring that all children can play and interact together.

Economic Competitiveness and Talent Attraction

Investing in the transformation of the Mainkai into a vibrant urban waterfront is not only an aesthetic endeavour but also a strategic move to boost Frankfurt's economic competitiveness. A revitalised riverfront, offering enhanced liveability, cultural amenities, and recreational opportunities, will serve as a powerful magnet for skilled professionals, innovative businesses, and visitors seeking an exceptional urban experience.

Example: HafenCity in Hamburg is a massive urban redevelopment project that transformed a former industrial harbour area into a modern and sustainable mixed-use waterfront district. The development has attracted numerous national and international businesses, hotels, restaurants, and cultural institutions. The influx of investment and commercial activities has stimulated economic growth, job creation, and increased tax revenues for the city. Additionally, the mix of residential, commercial, and cultural spaces has fostered a lively and diverse urban environment that draws in visitors and residents alike.



HafenCity, Hamburg, Germany

Enhancing Mobility

The current mobility landscape in Frankfurt reflects a car-oriented infrastructure that was primarily designed between the 1960s and 1980s. While the city has made efforts to integrate bicycle infrastructure, there is still a need to prioritise active modes of transportation and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Frankfurt's mobility structure has resulted in traffic congestion, limited public spaces, and challenges in achieving a sustainable urban environment.

Opportunities for Enhancing Mobility

To address these challenges, the transformation of the Mainkai presents an opportunity to enhance mobility in Frankfurt. By prioritising pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, the project can shift the city's focus from car dominance to a more people-centred approach. The following opportunities can be explored to achieve this goal:

Pedestrian-Centric Pathways and Plazas: Take inspiration from the urban transformation of Medellín, Colombia, where a comprehensive strategy was implemented to create pedestrian-centric zones, cycle paths, and green streetscapes. The city's success in developing interconnected pedestrian pathways, complemented by bicycle lanes and well-maintained public spaces, has not only improved mobility but also fostered a sense of community engagement.

Similarly, the Mainkai project can prioritise the creation of wide pedestrian pathways, safe cycle lanes, and vibrant plazas, promoting sustainable transportation choices.

Green and Sustainable Streetscape: Hamburg's Baakenhafen Quarter is a testament to innovative urban landscaping. Baakenhafen concentrated on developing sustainable zones from underutilized spaces. The project's success lies in the incorporation of green infrastructure, sustainable landscaping, and the strategic placement of trees. This initiative not only elevated streetscape aesthetics but also effectively tackled urban heat island effects and improved air quality.

Urban Plaza Regeneration: Barcelona's "Superblocks" concept provides valuable insights into reshaping urban spaces. The Mainkai project can take cues from this approach by repurposing certain sections into urban plazas with dedicated spaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and community gatherings. Integrating seating, public art installations, and interactive features can create vibrant and functional spaces that encourage active transportation and social interaction.

Stimulating ground floor activity: To promote active mobility, the ground floors of buildings along the Mainkai should be designed to accommodate a mix of uses, such as retail, cafes, and cultural spaces. This will create an engaging streetscape that encourages people to explore the area on foot and interact with the surroundings.



Pueblito Paisa, Medellín, Colombia

Reconnecting the City to the River

One of the key opportunities presented by the Mainkai project is to reconnect the city of Frankfurt with its historic waterfront. Currently, the Mainkai area is disconnected from the riverfront due to the presence of busy roads and vehicular traffic. However, by reimagining and redesigning four parallel streets that run along the Mainkai as highlighted in yellow in Figure 6, the project can create a seamless and vibrant connection between the city and the waterfront.

The redesign of the four parallel streets should involve reducing car lanes, reallocating space for pedestrians and cyclists, and introducing green spaces along the sidewalks.

This transformation is not only about physical changes but also enhancing the overall experience for pedestrians. Wayfinding measures, including well-placed signage and indicative directions, should be strategically implemented to guide pedestrians and cyclists efficiently through these streets, ensuring a smooth and intuitive flow towards the riverfront. This approach not only enhances accessibility but also encourages people to explore the riverfront area, discover new spaces, and engage with the revitalized urban environment.

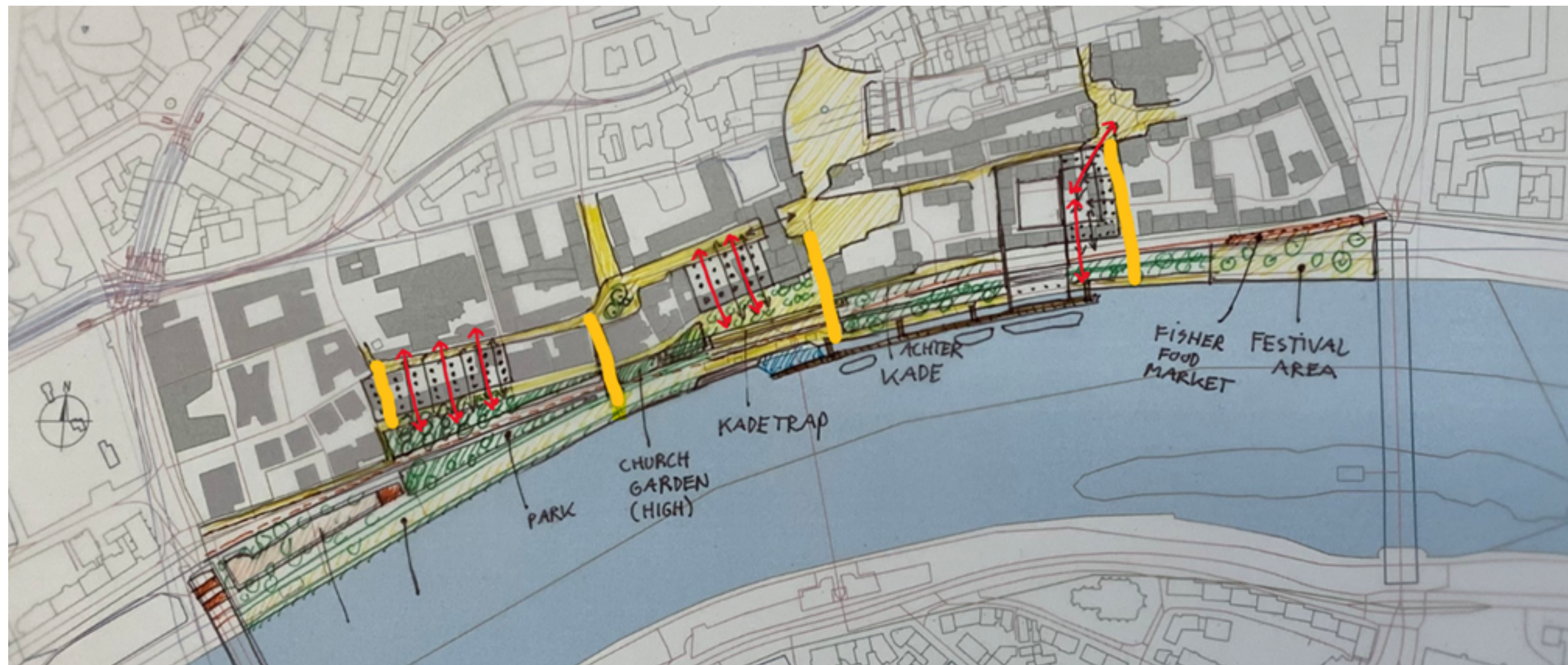


Figure 6. Four streets identified for redesign to enhance connectivity with the river

Figure 7 illustrates the current state of the streets in question. Wider pedestrian walkways and dedicated cycling lanes would enhance safety and encourage active transportation, further supporting the project's vision of making the Mainkai area an inviting and vibrant destination that seamlessly integrates with the fabric of the city. By integrating wayfinding elements into the redesign process, Frankfurt can ensure that the reconnection between the city and the riverfront is both functional and user-friendly, enriching the overall experience for residents and visitors alike.



Figure 7. Current state of streets identified for redesign to enhance connectivity with the river

Incorporating historical cobblestone pavement along the streets can serve as a reminder of Frankfurt's rich history and its connection to the riverfront. This practice requires a careful balance between preserving history and ensuring practicality for modern usage.

To address these concerns, the redesigned streets can incorporate dedicated and separated cycling paths adjacent to the cobblestone areas. This strategy would allow cyclists to have a smooth and safe path, separate from the uneven surface of cobblestones.

By maintaining a clear distinction between the cobblestone walkways and the cycling paths, the project ensures that both historical preservation and cycling infrastructure can coexist harmoniously.

It's imperative to consider the inclusiveness of the design. Cobblestone pavement, while charming and historical, can pose challenges for those with limited mobility, such as wheelchair users, individuals with walking aids, parents with strollers, and the elderly. To address this, the project can incorporate accessible routes with smoother surfaces parallel to the cobblestone areas. This thoughtful design approach ensures that the streets remain inclusive and usable for everyone, regardless of their mobility requirements.

Figure 8 identifies the areas along the Mainkai that would benefit from added cobblestone pavements, strategically positioned to enhance the visual appeal and historical ambience of the streets. By carefully integrating historical elements and prioritizing practicality and inclusiveness, Frankfurt can create a streetscape that not only honours its past but also accommodates the diverse needs of its present and future residents.

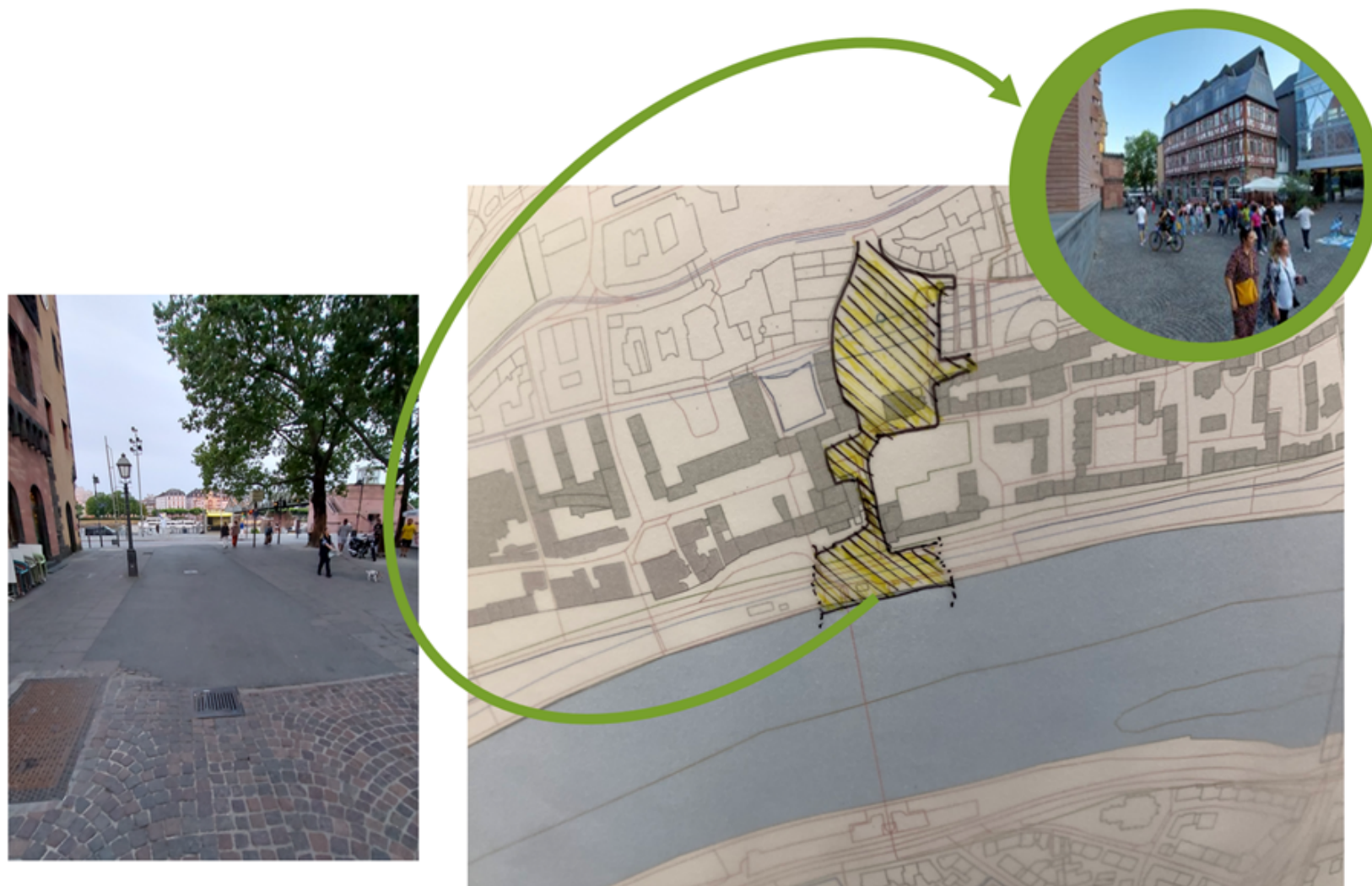


Figure 8. Opportunities for incorporating historical cobblestone

Implementing the opportunities for enhancing mobility in Frankfurt can lead to several positive outcomes:

Sustainable mobility system: The shift towards pedestrian and cycling infrastructure will contribute to a more sustainable mobility system, reducing the city's carbon footprint and supporting its climate change goals.

Climate adaptation: By prioritising pedestrians and green infrastructure, the Mainkai project can address climate change challenges. The inclusion of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) will help mitigate the heat island effect, manage stormwater, and enhance overall climate resilience.

Improved air quality: Reducing car traffic and promoting active modes of transportation will lead to improved air quality along the Mainkai and the surrounding areas, benefiting the health and well-being of residents and visitors.

Recommendations for Enhancing Mobility

Integrated Mobility Plan: Develop a comprehensive mobility plan that integrates pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, and public transportation to ensure seamless connectivity across the city. The plan should identify priority areas for improvement and establish a clear timeline for implementation.

Engaging the Local Community: Engage with local residents, businesses, and community organisations throughout the planning and implementation process. Gathering feedback and involving stakeholders will help ensure that the mobility enhancements align with the needs and preferences of the people who will use them.

Balanced Approach: While promoting active modes of transportation, it is essential to strike a balance and maintain necessary vehicular access for goods delivery and emergency services. A thoughtful approach to mobility design will cater to all users' needs without compromising safety and efficiency.

Continuous Improvement: Mobility planning should be an ongoing process, with periodic evaluations and updates based on changing needs and emerging trends. A commitment to continuous improvement will ensure that Frankfurt remains adaptable and responsive to evolving mobility demands.

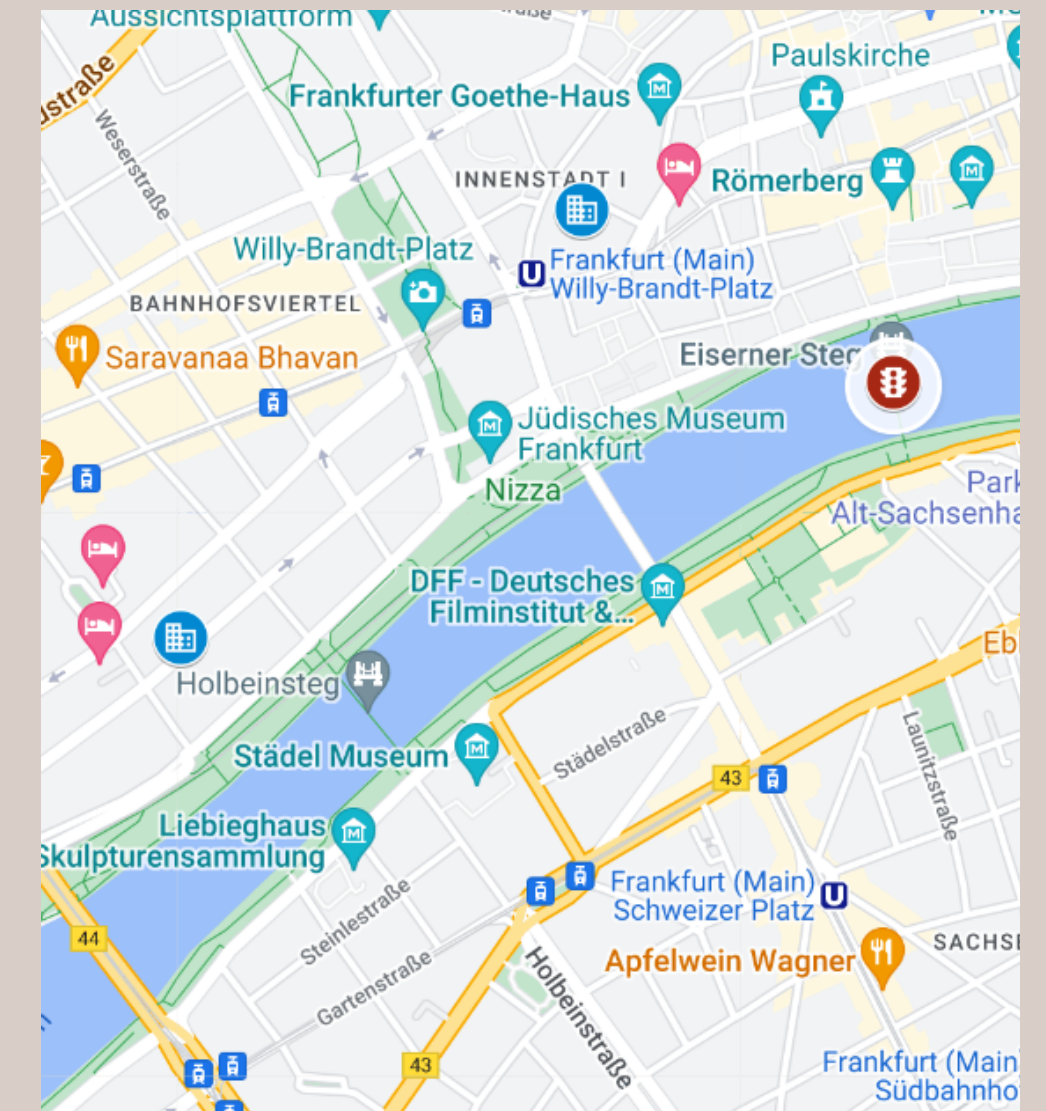
Transformation of surrounding streets into a tree-lined active transportation corridor

The streets surrounding the Mainkai presents a transformative opportunity to reimagine its identity as a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly corridor. Taking inspiration from the successful urban intervention in Leiden, where a similar mobility-focused street was revitalized, the vision for the surrounding streetscapes can draw upon the principles and strategies employed in Leiden's transformation. By embracing a people-centric approach, integrating green infrastructure, enhancing pedestrian and cycling facilities, and creating inviting public spaces, these streets can become a model of sustainable and liveable urban development for Frankfurt.

Learning from Leiden's successful retention of mobility functions while promoting active transportation, streets can integrate dedicated and protected bike lanes alongside upgraded pedestrian pathways. These enhancements will create a safe and convenient network for cyclists and pedestrians, making active modes of transportation a preferred choice for commuters.

By prioritising non-motorised mobility, the street can align with Frankfurt's vision for a sustainable and resilient city.

Greening the Mainkai area through the strategic integration of trees and green infrastructure offers numerous benefits that can enhance the corridor's appeal and overall urban environment. Beyond its environmental benefits, greening streets fosters a sense of connection with nature, promoting a healthier and more enjoyable urban experience for pedestrians, c through the strategic integration of trees and green infrastructure offers numerous benefits that can enhance the corridor's appeal and overall urban environment. Beyond its environmental benefits, greening the streets with nature promotes a healthier and more enjoyable urban experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and residents.



Connecting Mainkai and Bahnhofsviertel: Enhancing Connectivity and Safety

The success of this project hinges on its ability to foster connectivity and safety, not just within Mainkai, but also in the surrounding neighbourhoods. This section focuses on the Bahnhofsviertel district, a vibrant area known for its nightlife and cultural diversity, located near Frankfurt's central train station.

Historical Significance and Current Dynamics

Understanding the historical significance of the Bahnhofsviertel is essential. Once a thriving hub linked to the central train station, it has evolved into a cultural hotspot but faces challenges related to public safety. The district, often synonymous with nightlife and entertainment, can benefit from strategic interventions to create a safer and more inviting environment.

Strategic Recommendations

Pedestrianisation and Crime Prevention: Studies have shown that pedestrianisation can contribute to crime reduction¹. Urbanist Jane Jacobs introduced the concept of "eyes on the street" as a fundamental element in urban safety. This principle emphasises the importance of natural surveillance, where the presence of people—residents, workers, and visitors—actively engaging with public spaces serves as a deterrent to criminal activities. The pedestrianisation of Ljubljana's city centre led to an improved environment in the city centre². A similar approach

could be adopted in Bahnhofsviertel, by connecting pedestrianisation efforts of the Mainkai to the Bahnhofsviertel. This measure should be done with careful planning to ensure that the design of the pedestrianised areas promotes visibility and natural surveillance.

Enhance public spaces and lighting infrastructure: Well-lit and well-designed public areas contribute significantly to perceptions of safety³. The success of Stockholm's Södermalm, which transformed underused spaces into well-lit, accessible areas, exemplifies the positive impact of strategic lighting. The available evidence on street lighting suggests that its impact on public safety is promising, reducing crime by, on average, 20% and as much as 40%⁴.

Mixed-Use Development: Encourage development that includes residential, commercial, and cultural spaces. Drawing inspiration from Copenhagen's Vesterbro district, where urban renewal projects have transformed formerly problematic areas into thriving, neighbourhoods, this approach promotes safety through increased human presence. Mixed-use developments can foster a sense of community, as residents and businesses share common spaces⁵. This can lead to stronger social ties and a collective interest in maintaining safety.

Community Engagement: Engaging the local community in the planning and implementation process can foster a sense of ownership and stewardship. Local partnership arrangements are also essential in developing an approach to tackling antisocial behaviour⁶. These partnerships can help identify and respond appropriately to the diverse problems of the area.



Public Art and Cultural Activities: Public art and cultural activities can help to foster a sense of community and deter antisocial behaviour⁷. This could involve community art projects, music festivals, and other cultural events.

1. Cozens, P. (2008). *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*. Environmental Criminology and Crime Analysis.
2. Köllinger, C. (2019). Pedestrianisation of Ljubljana city centre. Eltis, The Urban Mobility Observatory.
3. Gray, A. (2021). *Crime prevention: are our streets safe?* RICS.
4. Kaplan, J., Chalfin, A. *Ambient lighting, use of outdoor spaces and perceptions of public safety: evidence from a survey experiment*. Secur J 35, 694–724 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-021-00296-0>
5. Pena, J. & Shah, S. (2022). *Supporting Active Living Through Mixed-Use Developments*. American Planning Association.
6. London Communities and Local Government. (2010). *Tackling anti-social behaviour: Tools and powers – toolkit for social landlords*.
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Phase C: Project Implementation

Thinking Big: Mainkai as Part of a Wider Interconnected Riverfront

To unlock the full potential of the Mainkai project, it is essential to view it as part of a broader interconnected riverfront initiative. We recommend developing a comprehensive masterplan that seamlessly integrates the Mainkai with other riverfront developments and city-wide initiatives. This approach will enable Frankfurt to maximise the Mainkai's impact and create a lasting legacy for future generations.

Establishing the Mainkai Development Corporation

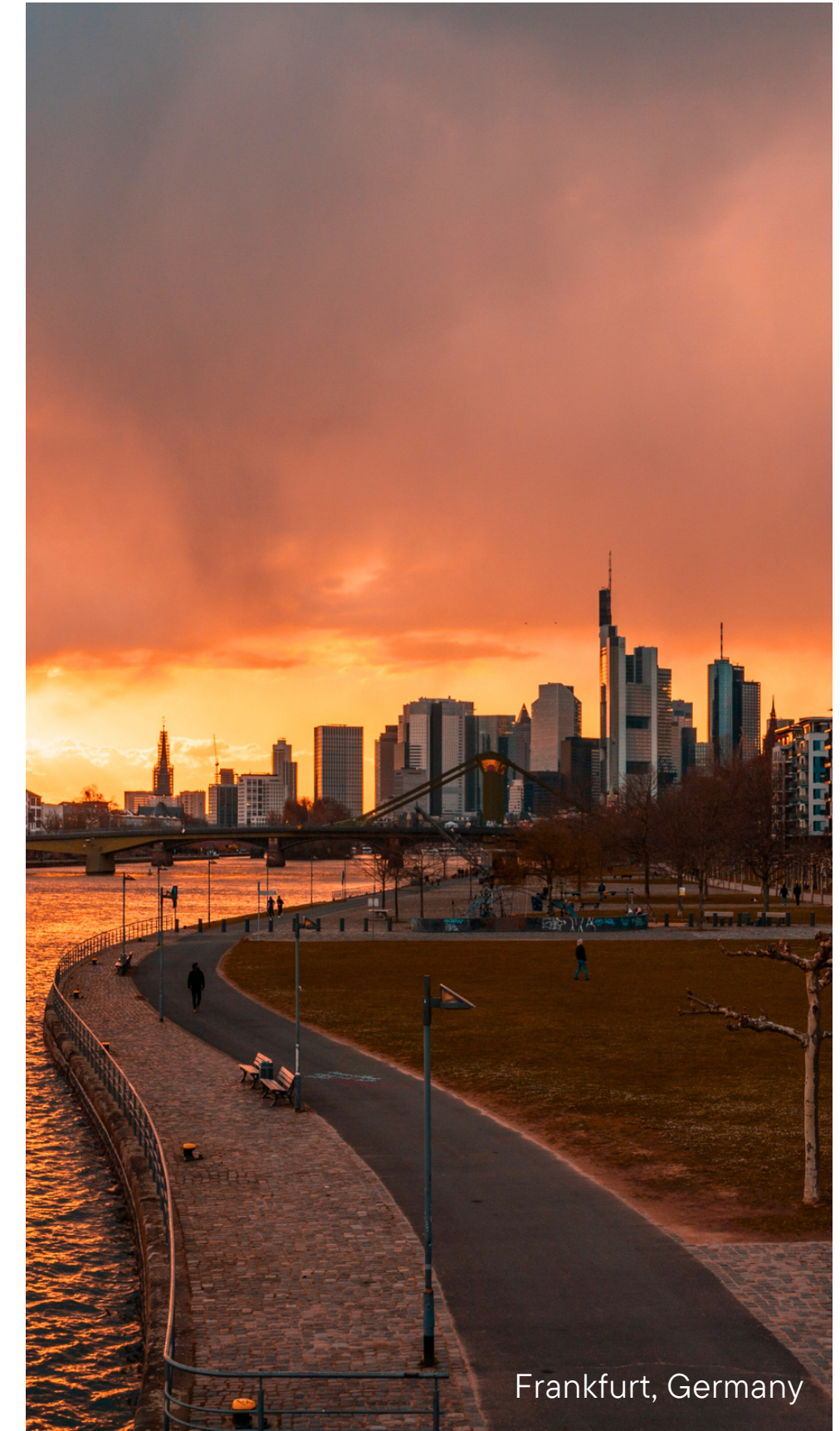
The success of the Mainkai project hinges on the establishment of a dedicated and empowered Mainkai Development Corporation (MDC). The MDC should consist of experts in urban planning, architecture, sustainability, and community engagement, working collaboratively to drive the project forward. The MDC will have the authority to make strategic decisions, manage financial resources, and engage stakeholders effectively.

The financing of the MDC can be a combination of public funding from the city government, grants from regional and federal bodies, and private investments from entities that share an interest in Frankfurt's urban revitalisation.

The participation of private investors brings diverse perspectives, resources, and a vested interest in the project's success. It also ensures a balance between public welfare and economic growth, as well as financial sustainability in the long term.

The MDC should be established as an independent entity with a clear governance structure that ensures efficient decision-making and accountability. While the MDC operates autonomously, its activities will be closely aligned with the overarching vision and goals of the city. This partnership model will enable the MDC to access funding from various sources, including public funds, grants, private equity, and potentially even crowd-sourced contributions from citizens who wish to be part of the transformation.

By adopting a public-private partnership model, the Mainkai Development Corporation can pool resources, expertise, and innovation from both sectors. This collaborative approach not only fosters a balanced approach to urban development but also enhances transparency, accountability, and public engagement. The MDC's primary focus would be to lead the design, development, management, and maintenance of the Mainkai transformation, guided by a strong vision that reflects the aspirations of the city and its residents.





Frankfurt, Germany

Branding the Mainkai: A Transformational Project for Frankfurt

Positioning the Mainkai as a transformational project for the whole city is critical for its success. To do this, we recommend developing a compelling branding and marketing campaign that communicates the project's ambitious vision, by highlighting the positive impacts on the city's economic competitiveness, cultural vibrancy, and overall well-being.

This strategy should spotlight how the Mainkai project directly improves the lives of Frankfurt's residents. The emphasis should be on enhancing the city's livability, promoting inclusivity, and enriching recreational experiences. Residents should be informed about the pedestrian-friendly pathways, wheelchair-accessible areas, and cultural amenities that will make the riverfront a space for people of all ages and abilities.

Proponents of the project should highlight how the project reinvigorates the urban landscape, fostering cultural vibrancy through public art installations, community events, and interactive spaces. For example, showcasing design renderings of universally accessible playgrounds, tranquil seating areas, and dynamic event spaces can convey the inclusive and vibrant environment the Mainkai project aims to create. The messaging should underscore that the Mainkai transformation will not only provide aesthetic enhancements but will also offer tangible opportunities for relaxation, interaction, and cultural enrichment.

Another component of the communication approach should focus on Frankfurt's position as a competitive and innovative

global city. The Mainkai project represents a remarkable opportunity to bolster the city's appeal to a diverse talent pool and reinforce its global standing. This is a chance to showcase Frankfurt's commitment to sustainable urban development, which resonates with the values of forward-thinking professionals and companies.

Innovative communication channels should be explored to connect with the city's youth and substantial student population. Collaborations with local universities for student-led initiatives, design competitions, or cultural festivals can create a unique bond between the project and the younger generation, fostering a sense of pride and identity.

Messaging should be tailored to resonate with different segments of the audience. For residents, the emphasis should be on a more vibrant, accessible, and livable city, where community engagement is at the core. For external stakeholders, the narrative should centre on Frankfurt's competitive edge, its commitment to innovation, and the allure it holds for a globally-minded workforce.

A strategic communication plan should not only inform but also inspire and engage Frankfurt's diverse audiences. By showcasing the project's tangible benefits for residents' daily lives, cultural experiences, and inclusivity, and by positioning Frankfurt as a forward-looking and attractive hub for talent and innovation, the Mainkai transformation project can effectively drive community engagement, promote vibrancy, and bolster the city's competitiveness on the global stage.

Phased Planning Approach: A Strategic Roadmap for the Mainkai's Success

Given the scale and complexity of the Mainkai project, a phased planning approach is essential. It is essential to prioritise key interventions that have an immediate impact and lay the groundwork for future developments. The phased approach allows for continuous evolution, iterative improvements, and adaptability to changing needs and opportunities.

Prioritising Immediate Impact and Long-Term Vision

In crafting a phased plan, it is imperative to strike a balance between delivering immediate impact and laying a robust foundation for sustained development. Initial phases should prioritise interventions that yield tangible benefits swiftly, enhancing the project's visibility and building momentum. For instance, the transformation of key streets into vibrant and accessible pedestrian corridors, as previously outlined, can serve as a catalyst for reshaping the Mainkai's image.

Simultaneously, these early interventions should be designed with a long-term perspective, ensuring their alignment with the overarching vision for the Mainkai's revitalisation. Green spaces, cultural installations, and accessible amenities can form a cohesive narrative that resonates with Frankfurt's historical significance, its connection to the river, and its modern aspirations.

Adaptability and Iterative Improvements

The project's dynamism demands a planning approach that embraces adaptability.

A phased strategy allows for iterative improvements and adjustments based on real-world outcomes and evolving requirements. By integrating continuous feedback loops and engagement mechanisms with stakeholders, the project can evolve in response to changing preferences, technological advancements, and unforeseen challenges.

Stakeholder Communication: Ensuring Alignment, Timeliness, and Adaptation

Central to the success of the phased planning approach is transparent communication with stakeholders. Regularly communicating project goals, timelines, and opportunities for feedback fosters a sense of involvement and ownership in the community. By keeping stakeholders well-informed, the project can stay aligned with their expectations and adapt to their evolving needs. This two-way dialogue not only enhances transparency but also enhances the project's credibility and its ability to respond effectively to concerns and aspirations.

Seizing Opportunities and Navigating Challenges:

A phased approach also enables project leaders to seize immediate opportunities while thoughtfully navigating challenges. For instance, if a certain area presents an underutilized space suitable for transformation, it can be prioritised in the initial phases, instantly enhancing the riverfront's appeal. On the other hand, addressing complex infrastructural issues or extensive community engagement might necessitate careful sequencing, ensuring the project's success without compromising its holistic vision.



Frankfurt, Germany

Case Study

Madrid Rio - Madrid, Spain

Background

Madrid Rio is a prominent urban renewal and pedestrianisation project that transformed the Manzanares River's banks in Madrid, Spain. The project aimed to reclaim the riverfront from automobile-dominated infrastructure and revitalise it into a vibrant public space for the community. The transformation faced harsh criticism in the beginning due to concerns about traffic congestion, displacement of businesses, and construction disruptions.



Madrid Rio, Madrid, Spain

Strategy and Approach

Madrid Rio faced initial criticism, but through careful planning, engagement, and a phased approach, it has transformed into a widely praised success. The project has measurably improved the city's liveability, offering residents and visitors a well-designed, pedestrian-friendly space that promotes active lifestyles, enhances community connections, and celebrates the city's cultural heritage.

Vision and Stakeholder Engagement: The success of the project can be attributed to a well-defined vision and strong stakeholder engagement. The city government involved citizens, businesses, and community groups throughout the planning process. Public consultations and workshops allowed residents to actively participate in shaping the project and understand its long-term benefits. This collaborative approach fostered a sense of ownership among stakeholders and built support for the project.

Phased Implementation: Madrid Rio was implemented in phases, allowing for iterative adjustments based on feedback and lessons learned from each stage. This approach ensured that any negative impacts were mitigated promptly, and improvements were made along the way. Gradual implementation also helped manage costs and allocate resources efficiently.

Redistribution of Road Space: To address initial concerns about traffic congestion, the project involved the careful redistribution of road space. Some roadways were transformed into pedestrian-friendly areas, while others were reconfigured to accommodate alternative modes of transportation, such as dedicated cycling lanes and improved public transit connections. This balanced approach improved mobility while prioritising pedestrians and active transportation.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Madrid Rio continuously monitored the project's impact on traffic, air quality, economic activity, and community satisfaction. Data-driven evaluation allowed the city to identify areas of improvement and make data-backed decisions. It also enabled the city to demonstrate the project's measurable positive impacts over time, which helped build public support.