

Humanizing Public Space:

A HANDBOOK FOR
TACTICAL URBANISM
—ACTIONS—

This manual is a translation of the **Guía de Urbanismo Táctico**, published and edited by Low Carbon City in 2018. The original can be found through the following link:

<https://lowcarbon.city/es/guia-de-urbanismo-tactico/>

We thank to **CAF - Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina**, since they were the ones who contributed to carry out this process.

Editing and Diagramming by:





CONTENT

Introduction.....	3
What is Tactical Urbanism?.....	4
How to put this into practice?.....	4
Which methods do exist?	7
Strategies of Communication and Public Awareness	10
Step by Step.....	11
What type of interventions can be created?.....	15
Tactical urbanism from the experience.....	17
Discover these examples from Latin America.....	19
References and Bibliographies.....	20
Photos.....	21





INTRODUCTION

#CebrasPorLaVida, Cebras por la Vida and La Ciudad Verde, 2014

Tactical Urbanism is a tool for citizens and urban administrations to transform and influence the present and future of cities. It was created as a response to the urban development model that has prioritized pavement, motorized mobility and consumer society.

Through location-specific and short-term actions, Tactical Urbanism allows to redesign and resignify public spaces, promote the development of social capital in citizens, build organizational and collaborative capacities, and most importantly, generate the test cases and prototypes for long-term changes, prioritizing human beings and their urban environment.

This participatory-approach-based handbook is a tool for planning and executing interventions in public spaces. At the centre of this approach are the citizens and their actions for a change towards social well-being in the streets of Latin American cities. Likewise, it seeks to methodologically guide citizens through designing, organizing and implementing ideas and interventions that may have a direct impact on long-term government actions and public policy.

The content of this document has been built on the experiences and lessons learned from the development and implementation of several Tactical Urbanism actions such as BicisPorLaVida (2012), Rey Peatón (2013), Palacé Para Todos (2015) and Días de Playa (2015). Aforementioned activities were carried out by La Ciudad Verde Medellín with support from the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater, the Mayor's Office of Medellín, CebrasPorLaVida of Bogotá, Colombia, and City Explorers (2017). The guide also features inputs from the “Do It Yourself” Workshop held in the cities of Pasto and Cali in Colombia in the second half of 2017 with the support of DériveLAB (Querétaro, Mexico), La Ciudad Verde (Cali, Colombia), Bicivilízate (Pasto, Colombia) and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF).

This guide understands itself to be a complementary extension of the existing literature on Tactical Urbanism and therefore hopes to contribute to the promotion of citizen-led actions, to facilitate not only the positioning of relevant issues on the public agenda of local governments, but also to create discussion platforms for a more sustainable and participatory citizenship.





#CebrasPorLaVida, Cebras por la Vida y La Ciudad Verde, 2014

1. WHAT IS TACTICAL URBANISM?

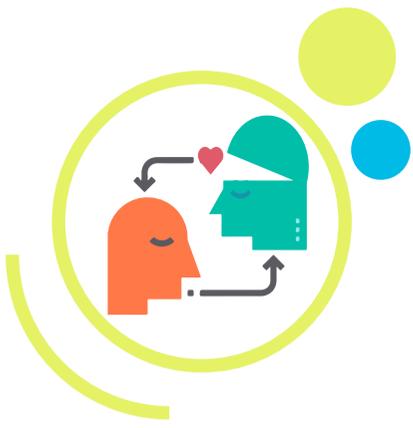
Tactical Urbanism intervenes in existing but underused urban spaces, assigning them new uses through interventions, though not exclusively permanent or architectural. Such interventions feature short-term, low-risk commitments with possibly high rewards, offering local solutions to planning challenges of local authorities, as well as building social capital and public-private relations (Lydon et. al, 2012). In Tactical Urbanism interventions, citizens are given the opportunity to make up for lacking involvement in large-scale urban changes put into practice by the public sector.

This practice is known today as Tactical Urbanism, though the existence of this type of actions and interventions predates the term. Named differently throughout time, this practice has always kept its purpose aimed at making the city a more human and liveable place.

2. HOW TO PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE?

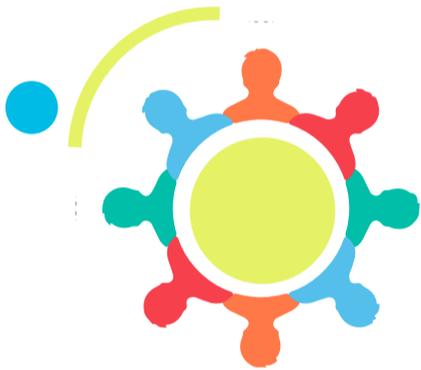
We propose using the “Design Thinking” methodology, which can be applied to Tactical Urbanism in order to find solutions adapted to the context of the respective community. Design Thinking is a methodology that helps generating innovative ideas and creating practical solutions to its beneficiaries (Institute of Design at Stanford University). From theory to practice: Tactical Urbanism allows for the recovery of public space, returning the city to those who claim their legitimate right to it - the citizens.

Characteristics of Design Thinking in Tactical Urbanism:



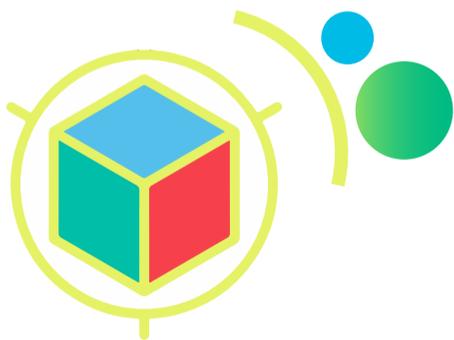
2.1 Generating empathy:

Understanding the problems, necessities and desires of the users implicated in the building of the desired solution. Regardless of what is designed, or built, the interactions and relationships between the participants are at the core of the process.



2.2 Facilitating teamwork:

Calling upon different profiles when building the team is favorable. Individual capacities and differences can create more original and singular ideas.



2.3 Building prototypes:

Validating different ideas and possible flaws before selecting one allows for choosing the best solution.



2.4 Promoting enjoyment:

Seeking to generate an enjoyable process with enriching experiences. The objective of the activity is to display the potential of the participants and the community.



2.5 Creating powerful images:

Using techniques to generate targeted creative processes, applying imagination and analytical spaces, finding innovative and feasible solutions.

For a satisfactory process and the development of co-creation spaces, the following elements are crucial:



2.6 Assorted materials:

A diverse array of low-cost materials that can support the creative process of visualization and construction of prototypes. Keeping a photographic record is important to allow visual communication and subsequent interpretation and analysis.



2.8 Adequate venue:

This style of working requires a space with good lighting, large tables and walls suitable for pasting and organizing information, thus, a place where you feel comfortable working as a team.



2.7 Human Talent:

Within a participatory methodology it is essential to promote diversity, different points of view, knowledge and experiences. If feasible, a “facilitator” with in-depth knowledge about the methodology should guide the process. Other roles may be assigned depending on the type or phase of the project (for instance in the stage of idea generation or prototype testing).



2.9 Good attitude:

Creative processes require a good attitude, being curious and very observant. Participants should be aware of the fact that even the most “ridiculous” idea can be valuable and crucial in the process of finding the best solution. Be empathetic, both with people and their contexts. Question the established reality and avoid prejudices. Be optimistic, positive and proactive. Accept mistakes and allow yourself to see mistakes as opportunities for continuous learning.

3. WHICH METHODS DO EXIST?



Workshop Hazlo Tú Mismo - Bicivilízate Pasto, 2017

The following methods may all be applied in the process of designing and executing the project. Depending on the project itself but also on the preferences and skills of the participants, they all may be used at

different points in time and to different extents. Fact is, that they may facilitate the implementation of different project phases, allow for new information and foster teamwork.



3.1 Quantitative Surveys

Objective: Surveys are a very useful method to measure and quantify characteristics of the use of public space and of public life.

Description: Certain aspects of public life are measured to better understand what happens in an urban space and what changes can foster public benefits. Pedestrian or vehicular surveys can be conducted during certain times on sidewalks, streets or intersections.

3.2 Walkability

Diagnostics

Objective: The objective of this method is to make visible those areas optimal for pedestrian use and to design the use of public space accordingly.

Description: Carrying out this diagnosis provides opportunities in raising awareness about the status quo in a specific area as well as the advantages of walking environments.

3.3 Stakeholder Mapping

Objective: The objective is to identify the stakeholders (users/communities) of public space to involve

them in finding collective solutions. **Description:** The “stakeholder map” can be designed in a way showing the connections among individuals, public actors and institutions. Generating collective solutions, no stakeholder should be disregarded. This map can help visualizing interests, ideas and interconnections.

3.4 Qualitative Interview

Objective: A qualitative interview helps to empathize with the user/-community of the respective public space. Here, you should try to objectively understand their motivations, sentiments, feelings and points of view.

Description: Documenting or recording the interview is crucial. One person should conduct the interview whilst the other takes notes or recordings. Obviously, the recording should only be taken with the consent of the interviewee. It is pertinent to obtain unbiased data by asking the questions in a neutral, impartial manner.

3.5 Insights

Objective: Relevant information is identified from which we can generate value or establish starting points.

Description: Insights or discoveries allow for new elements to be unearthed, it is about giving visibility and clarity to hidden information, they help identify challenges or opportunities in the design process, they are patterns that are identified from the information gathered in the discovery phase.

3.6 Brainstorming

Objective: The idea is to generate the largest possible number of ideas.

Description: Brainstorming generates a large number of ideas and may be key to finding the “perfect” solution to the problem. Brainstorming does not require anything but a pen and a sheet of paper. Even the most ridiculous and unfeasible idea may lead to the desired solution, wherefore this activity should be free of judgements of other people's ideas and destructive or demotivating comments.

3.7 Experimentation:

Objective: Experimentation is about testing and visualizing possible ideas.

Description: Once you came up with some possible solutions to urban problems and shortcomings of the use of public space, it helps a lot to model possible interventions (the solutions) to identify flaws, difficulties and hurdles which have to be overcome.

3.8 Prototyping

Objective: Prototyping is about testing a possible solution in a visual or graphic way.

Description: Capturing the main features of a possible solution visually with an image makes the planned intervention “tangible” and facilitates discussing it with the whole team.

Other tools that can be used are: mind-maps, participatory mappings, “drawing welfare”, citizen declarations, bicycle surveys, diagnostic bike-routes, prototyping bikeways, neighborhood postcards, “barter looms” (interconnexion visualizing methodology), community surveys and “adopt a tree” (tree planting event). These tools are used by Ciudad Emergente a laboratory of tactics and tools for citizen urban planning in Chile.

Learn more about existing methods and forms of intervention (in Spanish): www.ciudademergente.org/herramientas



PRÓXIMAMENTE:



10

RAZONES POR LAS QUE MONTAR EN BUS ES "SEXY" ¿CUÁLES SON LAS TUYAS?

#EnBusMásSexy by La Ciudad Verde, 2013

4. STRATEGIES OF COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

After successfully designing and prototyping a public intervention, the next step is to communicate the goals of the intervention to the identified shareholders and those citizens affected by the intervention. The following steps should 1) raise awareness and 2) motivate the citizens to take action to jointly tackle the identified problem.

1. Naming: Create a recognizable name for the intervention.

2. Make use of social media and even think of creating a website to communicate information and news related to the intervention.

3. Use a #Hashtag and promote its use to leverage the scope of social media.

4. Next to digital forms of promoting the intervention, make use of signs and flyers on the streets to be sure to also reach those people being offline (e.g. older generations)

Once the visual identity of the project has been created, it is important to start documenting and disseminating every step and activity carried out. Constantly being up to date has a very engaging effect on the community and may further increase the degree of collaboration between citizens as well as their motivation to take action.



Workshop Hazlo Tú Mismo - Cali 2017

Step 1: Select a place for the intervention

In your city or neighborhood there may be spaces or places underutilized or overused by elements that should not be part of the environment. Identify one of these places and make a list of the shortcomings and potentialities of a “Tactical Urbanism”-type of intervention.

Step 2: Identify community leaders and key-persons

It is important to identify, get to know and gather the leaders of the intervention area. If you gain their support and motivation to act upon the problem, the implementation or realization of your idea will turn out to be way easier. Keep in mind that, using the above listed me-

thods, you should constantly try to involve more citizens, to never stop asking “why” and to adapt recommendations or new ideas.

Step 3: Make a diagnosis of the neighborhood

At this point you should use a diverse range of above suggested tools (such as surveys or qualitative interviews) to gather information, specify the problem and find the ideal solution.

In a Tactical Urbanism intervention in Medellin called “#palaceparatodos” (#palaceforall), engaged citizens reviewed the projects that the city’s administration realized in their neighbourhood and observed that where the government had built a cycling trail, other residents used the space as parking lots. Consequently, they decided to organize a “peaceful takeover” of said informal parking lots and thus created space for pedestrians and cyclists.



Low Carbon Neighborhood, LowCarbonCity, 2017

Step 4: Consult citizens

Consult the citizens by asking them “How would you like the space to be?” or “What do you think should be changed?” Schedule meetings within the neighbourhood and tell them about the idea, why it is important to act upon the identified problem and how your intervention would improve the situation. Additionally, invite them to follow the intervention on social networks and to participate personally (e.g. in the following step).

Step 5: Brainstorm the intervention

Review the list of tools where the brainstorming methodology is explained. Make sure you find an appropriate space for this activity. It should be loca-

ted close to the location of the intervention to make sure that many affected citizens participate.

Step 6: Choose a date for the intervention and communicate it through all existing channels

It is essential to spread the information through all social networks as well as by word of mouth and with flyers distributed near the site of the intervention. Identify those spots where people usually gather (these may be shops, hairdressers or churches) and make sure to use a simple language for your flyers (or publications).





Step 7: Procure necessary materials

The intervention should be well planned and organized. One crucial step therefore is to buy all required materials before the intervention starts. During prior stages you may try to identify possible resources (monetary, technical or physical) which can be contributed by people involved in your project. You can be creative when it comes to procuring those materials, but always keep in mind the sustainability of the intervention: Try to use recyclable materials only!

Step 8: Put into practice your public intervention

People of different generations can participate during the intervention. It may be valuable to plan what type of activities can be carried out by children, adults or seniors.

Incentivize the participation in your intervention by communicating an agenda with specific activities during the day of the intervention (e.g. construction, painting, planting). In this way

people can plan ahead and schedule when they can offer their help.

Step 9: Follow-up

Once you successfully finished your intervention, you should think of which steps to take next. As Tactical Urbanism interventions mostly serve as a short-term solution, the next step would now be to come up with a medium-term plan (e.g. improving communication with territorial authorities and communicating the success and improvements brought about by your project) as well as with a long-term plan including institutional actions.

To leverage the community's interest, you may think of gathering statistical proofs for the success of your intervention. Government authorities are more likely to take action when there exists evidence for the need to act.





Workshop Hazlo Tú Mismo - Bicivilízate Pasto, 2017

Photo: William Canchala

5. WHAT TYPE OF INTERVENTIONS CAN BE CREATED?

5.1 Cycling

Action: Paint a Bike Lane/Trail and use it for a day. (demarcating with paint)

Expected Impact: A bicycle lane will be built in a space with high circulation of cars and pedestrians.

Action: Build Bike Racks and monitor their use during one week.

Expected Impact: Authorities install bike racks with the necessary security requirements for parking bicycles.

5.2 Walking

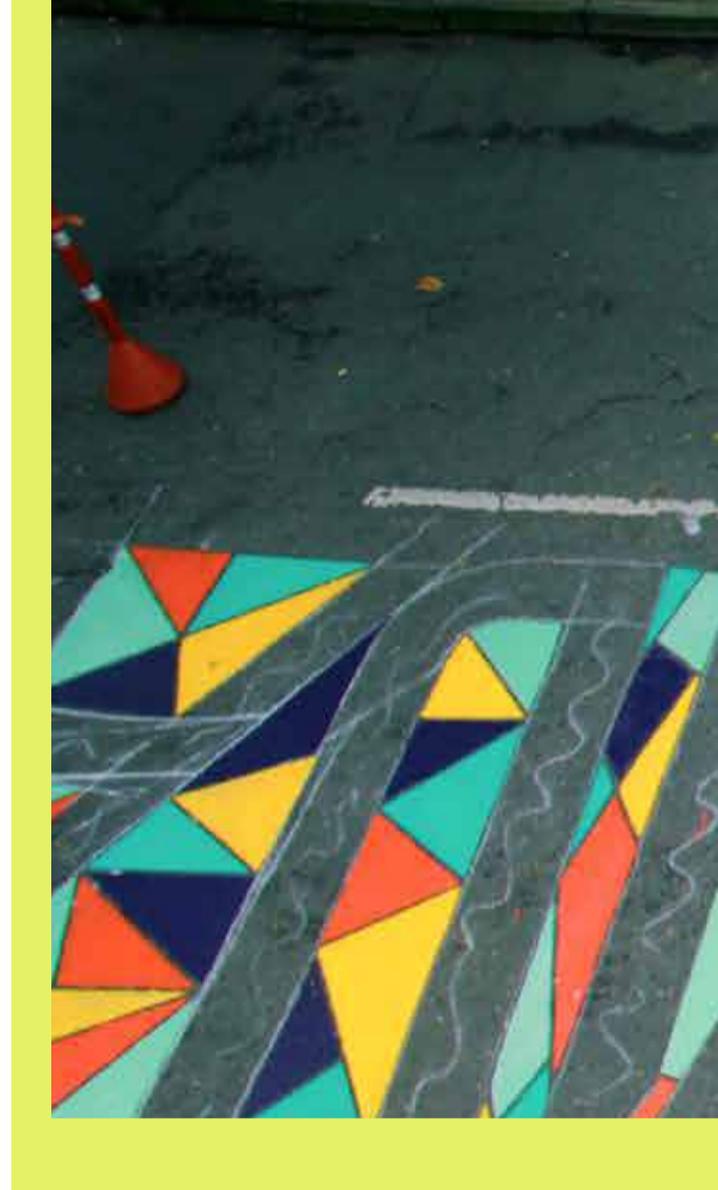
Action: In an original and creative way, paint a street crossing, inviting pedestrians to use it.

Expected Impact: Outline safe crossing places for pedestrians.

Action: Install measures to reduce risks when crossing the street.

Expected Impact: Identify patterns of movement at crossings and intersections.

Identify mobility routes by adults and children.



5.3 Public Space

Action: Urban Furniture: Build useful elements such as chairs and tables with recycled materials so that people can sit and spend quality time in public spaces.

Expected Impact: Authorities react on the success of these elements and replace them with some long-term solution (e.g. park benches)

Action: Urban Forestry and Silviculture: Use discarded or underused items such as paint jars or empty cans to plant plants or trees.

Expected Impact: Trees and ornamental plants are planted in all urban areas.



#BicisPorLaVida, La Ciudad Verde and Teatro Pablo Tobón, 2014

Action: Games: Paint games on the street with children, this will promote use and mobilisation around the space.

Expected Impact: Current or potential public spaces are increasingly used, and become safe places.

Action: Road closures: Some roads can be blocked either with prior permission or in the course of urban activism (which might be fined) to raise awareness on traffic and pollution-related problems.

Expected Impact: Decrease pollution and noises. Decrease traffic in residential areas.

Action: Shared Streets: Another option is to partially close a road to promote sharing the street among pedestrians, cyclists and cars.

Expected Impact: Options for sustainable mobility will be generated (cycle paths).

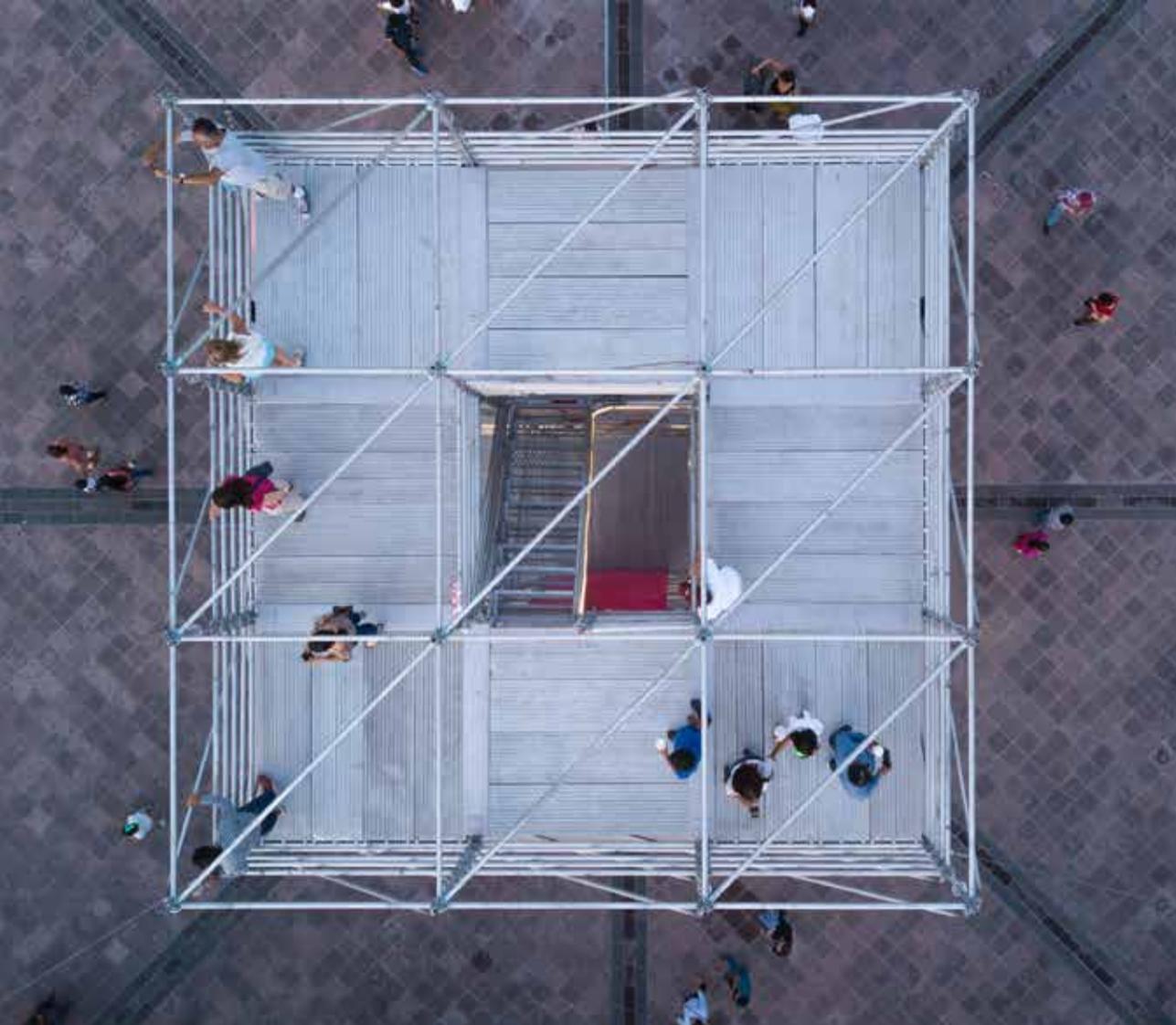
Action: Adapting and preparing the space: Before beginning any intervention it is important to clean and adapt the space.

Expected Impact: Better quality and long-lasting impact of the intervention.

Action: Markets: Inviting artisans or farmers to sell their products in unused public space is a good option to activate its potential.

Action: Exhibitions: Using the public space as a place to show exhibitions helps to create a safe environment and encourages the passage and visit of more citizens.

Expected Impact: Current or potential public spaces are increasingly used and become safe places for the recreation of people of all ages.



#MonumentoQro: Ephemeral intervention to rescue the best view of the city and ma

6. TACTICAL URBANISM FROM THE EXPERIENCE

Tactical urbanism is part of a series of actions that represent "The right to the city is,... a right to change ourselves by changing the city..." as stated by David Harvey. Clearly, Tactical urbanism actions thus generate a capacity for greater agency and responsibility on the part of citizens who participate in the analysis, conceptualization, design and implementation of these tactics. It is interesting to know that this type of urban transformations are mostly led by people highly involved in the transformation of citizenship, all in the desire to prove that a better world can be built.

People interested in transforming cities propose that the "social" can have an impact on the "physical" of the city and vice versa. That is why tactical urbanism interventions are



Make it accessible to all. Mexico, México, dérive LAB

simply put: a tactic and, as such, must be linked to many others thus forming a larger strategy. A single action in a vacuum cannot have an impact, but a successful tactic within a larger strategy can present results: it can serve as a learning opportunity, can evolve into new configurations for places, new relationships among citizens, it can redirect and influence policies and dynamics of participation, can give feedback on design concerns, or test a collective idea of improvement. Thus achieving positive changes in our cities, to the benefit of citizens.

When a tactical urbanism intervention's design cycle finishes it leads immediately the beginning of a new

cycle. Evaluating the intervention, its achievements and failures allows us to discover new information, findings for new ideas, and to opportunities for new actions. This capacity for iteration produces positive feedback loops for urban transformation: tactics become more robust and enhance the success of real strategies for change.

To make sure that Tactical Urbanism actions efficiently improve our cities, one should

always ask oneself: "Who are we? And what do we want for our city? What do we want to happen in our public spaces and in our city?"

Retaking ownership and responsibility for the public spaces of our cities is just one of many challenges in urban life. Taking a collective approach, however, makes it possible to effectively scale up short-term interventions. With Tactical Urbanism, citizens can truly make cities more sustainable, greener and happier.

[Download the Manuals of dérive LAB](#)





Barrio Ba

7. DISCOVER THESE EXAMPLES FROM LATIN AMERICA

- #PalaceParaTodos
- Bicivilízate Pasto
- #DíasDePlaya
- #ReyPeatón
- #CebrasPorLaVida.
- #BicisPorLaVida
- ParkingDay: Política pública en San Francisco & Sao Paulo.
- MalónUrbano de Ciudad Emergente
- #ParkletsCali
- #A80MatasOTeMatas
- #AbrazamosLaVida
- Green Virus
- #GaleríaBallindamm
- #MonumentoQro
- #CalleEjemplar





Urbanismo táctico en Carbono, LowCarbonCity, 2017

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

(1) Acerca del Urbanismo Táctico, Arquitectura y Ciudades

<https://arquitecturayciudades.wordpress.com/a-cerca-del-urbanismo-tactico/>

(2) The Collaborative, Urbanismo tactico 2 digital edition, Issuu

https://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/urbanismo_tactico_2_digital_edition

Get Started with Design Thinking, Stanford d.school

<https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources/getting-started-with-design-thinking>

Urbanismo táctico: pequeñas acciones con gran impacto para las ciudades, Alcaldes de México

<http://www.alcaldesdemexico.com/notas-principales/urbanismo-tactico-pequenas-acciones-c>

The Collaborative, Urbanismo Tactico (Vol. 3), Issuu

https://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/ut_vol3_2013_0528_17

Downloads, The Better Block

<http://betterblock.org/downloads/>

BUENOS AIRES CIUDAD, Intervenciones Peatonales

http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/sites/gcaba/files/intervenciones_peatonales_2016_0.pdf

Calle Ejemplar, dérive LAB

<http://derivelab.org/tag/calle-ejemplar/>

Complete Streets Fundamentals Archives | Smart Growth America

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/tag/complete-streets-fundamentals/>

Primer manual de Calles Compartidas en español, dérive LAB

<http://derivelab.org/2015-11-2-presentan-primer-manual-de-calles-compartidas-en-espaol/>

Truper WPBlogger, Complete Streets NC, Completestreetsnc.org

<http://www.completestreetsnc.org/>

Parklets, dérive LAB

<http://derivelab.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/PARKLETS-low.compressed.pdf>

Parklet Manual, Groundplaysf.org

http://groundplaysf.org/wp-content/uploads/S-F_P2P_Parklet_Manual_2.2_FULL1.pdf

Online TDM Encyclopedia - Street Reclaiming, Vtpi.org

<http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm30.htm>

Tactical Urbanism Materials and Design Guide, Tacticalurbanismguide.com

<http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/guides/>

Online TDM Encyclopedia, Traffic Calming

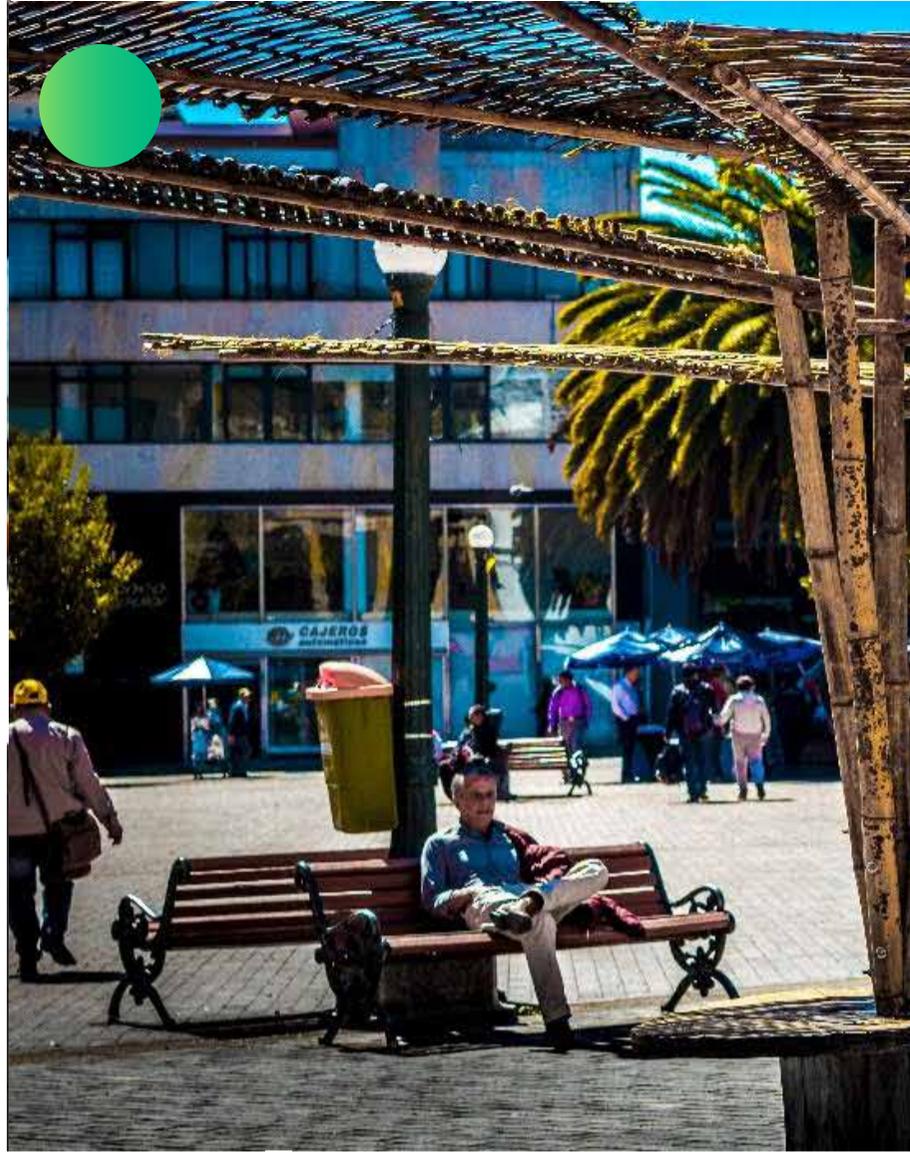
<http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm4.htm>

Medir, Ciudad Emergente

<https://ciudademergente.org/medir-herramientas>

Gehl Institute

<https://gehl.institute.org/>



 #CebrasporlaVida Mexico: Creative interventions to crosswalks.

 #PalacéParaTodos Medellín: Creative intervention to recover public space.



Do it by yourself / Bicivilízate
Pasto: Creative intervention to activate public space.