

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF THE STREET IN FRONT OF THEIR SCHOOL

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_ Milena Vukmirovic

PhD, Associate Professor, University of
Belgrade – Faculty of Forestry, Belgrade, Serbia,
milena.vukmirovic@sfb.bg.ac.rs, [0000-0002-0239-3157]

ABSTRACT

Understanding how children perceive and experience urban environments, particularly streets near schools, has become a growing interdisciplinary concern that bridges urban design, public health, environmental psychology, and child studies. While the “school street” model has gained global traction as a tool to improve safety, mobility, and well-being, few studies have integrated children’s subjective spatial knowledge into early stage planning. This research examines how young children perceive the street in front of their school in Belgrade and how these insights can inform more inclusive, safe, and joyful urban design strategies. The study involved 16 second-grade pupils (eight years old) from Vladislav Ribnikar Elementary School in Belgrade. Using a child-centred participatory methodology grounded in the Urban500 initiative and inspired by the GDCl’s international toolkit, students engaged with four large-format poster boards that focused on emotions, mobility habits, desired activities, and preferred urban elements. In addition, the students conducted a photo-documentation task during their daily commute, capturing images of street elements that they liked and disliked. The resulting visual, verbal, and tactile data were interpreted using the SCORELINE framework, which evaluates public spaces across six hierarchical criteria: safety, accessibility, legibility, comfort, inspiration, attractiveness, and liveability. Children’s responses revealed a layered understanding of their urban surroundings.

Positive feedback clustered around green infrastructure, playspaces, legible and clean walking paths, and culturally resonant landmarks. Negative impressions focused on unsafe crossings, obstructed sidewalks, graffiti and poorly maintained buildings. Despite their age, the children demonstrated spatial literacy and emotional nuances when assessing their environment. Most participants walked to school, but many reported feelings of discomfort and insecurity in doing so. The findings illustrate the value of integrating children’s perspectives into urban planning processes, not only as users, but also as capable evaluators and co-designers of space. Their feedback aligns closely with International School Street principles, highlighting a broader vision of child-friendly and joyful cities. This study offers timely evidence for embedding participatory, child-centred methods into local planning frameworks in the Serbian context. The results also serve as input for the reconstruction of the Vladislav Ribnikar school and the surrounding public space, following the tragic events of 2023. Ultimately, streets shaped by children’s needs and imaginations hold the potential to improve not only safety and function but also emotional well-being and community cohesion.

KEYWORDS _ *Children’s participation, school street, emotional mapping, Urban500, public space design*

INTRODUCTION

Understanding how children perceive and interact with their everyday urban environments, especially the streets surrounding their schools, has become a critical focus across multiple disciplines including urban design, environmental psychology, public health, and childhood studies. Far from mere conduits for movement, these spaces function as dynamic arenas that shape children's cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. As Lynch and Banerjee (1977) and Ward (1979) first argued, children are not passive occupants of urban spaces; they are active agents who navigate, interpret, and reshape their environments. Building on this legacy, contemporary scholars such as Meng and Wang (2022), Adams et al. (2013), and Lu et al. (2015) have further emphasised the need to consider children's subjective experiences of urban form, particularly about mobility, safety, and well-being.

The "school street" model—temporarily restricting motorised traffic around schools during peak hours—emerges from this broader movement toward child-centred urbanism. It draws on Henri Lefebvre's (1996) notion of the "right to the city" and is closely aligned with frameworks such as UNICEF's Child-Friendly Cities initiative (Gill, 2021; Hart & UNICEF, 1997). The model also reflects a deep commitment to traffic safety, as expressed in the Vision Zero movement (Tingvall & Haworth, 1999) and public health literature that links active mobility (walking, cycling, scooting) with better physical health, mental well-being, and academic performance (Brussoni et al., 2012; Tranter & Sharpe, 2007).

School-street initiatives are grounded in environmental sustainability. By discouraging car use near schools, they aim to reduce emissions, improve air quality, and support broader climate goals (Newman and Kenworthy 1999; WHO 2018). The model repositions streets not only as conduits for movement but also as vibrant social and communal spaces, echoing Jacobs (1961), Whyte (2001), and Gehl (2010), who highlight the role of street life in fostering social interaction, civic engagement, and human-scale urbanism.

Participatory governance is another defining characteristic. Following Arnstein's (1969) and Hart's (1997) calls for inclusive decision making, school street interventions often engage children, parents, educators, and residents in planning, ensuring greater relevance and long-term support. These strategies are frequently tested through tactical urbanism—low-cost, temporary installations that allow cities to experiment, iterate, and gather feedback before investing in permanent redesigns (Lydon & Garcia, 2015).

Cities such as London, Barcelona, and Paris have embraced these principles, successfully adapting school streets to local contexts. While Serbia has not yet institutionalised the school street model as a distinct policy instrument, several recent initiatives indicate a growing alignment with its core values. *The smart Mobility of New Belgrade Schoolchildren* (EU in Serbia, 2023) and *Green Paths for Tiny Steps* (Pantelić et al., 2025) promote active mobility and traffic safety through experiential learning. Cities like Kruševac, Šabac, and Pirot have implemented Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPS) that prioritise walking and cycling infrastructure, and national campaigns such as *Safe Roads to Schools* aim to reduce traffic hazards near schools.

Of particular significance is the *Handbook for Children- and Family-Friendly Design of Open Urban Spaces* (Антонић et al., 2024), developed with support from UNDP Serbia. The handbook advocates for accessible, safe, and inclusive urban spaces that foster child development and explicitly align with school street philosophy. It calls for participatory planning processes in which children and families act as co-creators of urban environments, marking a critical step toward embedding school street principles in Serbian urban policy.

These developments reflect an emerging commitment to reconfiguring urban spaces in ways that prioritise children's autonomy, health and safety. They suggest fertile grounds for formally integrating school street models into Serbia's urban planning agenda, aligning local practices with global standards for equitable and sustainable city making.

METHODOLOGY AND MATERIAL

This study was designed as a qualitative, child-centred participatory research project within the framework of the *Urban500* initiative (Vukmirovic et al., 2024), focusing on the everyday experiences of second-grade students (aged eight) attending the Vladislav Ribnikar Elementary School in Belgrade (Fig. 1). This study aimed to explore how children perceive and evaluate the street environment in front of their school and along their daily routes using a combination of adapted international tools (Krishnamurthy et al., 2018), structured participatory exercises, and visual documentation methods.



Figure 1: Study location for Urban500 initiative (Vukmirovic et al., 2024)

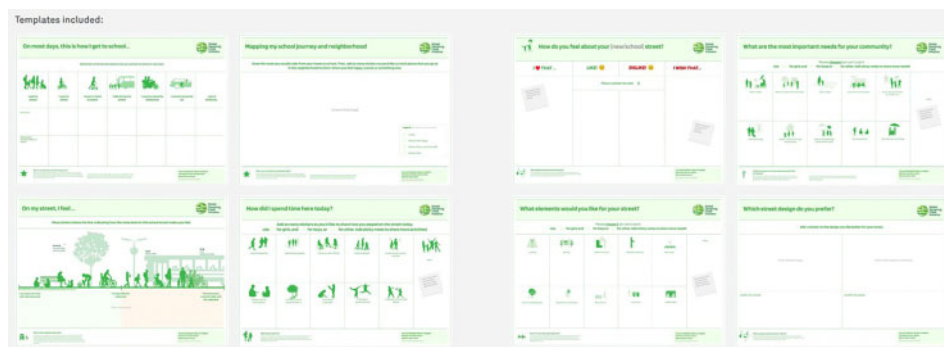


Figure 2: Templates of interactive boards (GDCI, 2024)

The methodological approach was informed by materials developed by the Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI), particularly their *How to Engage Kids in Street Design* (2024), which provides structured templates for engaging children in discussions on street safety, mobility, and spatial experience. Elements of the GDCI's interactive boards (see Fig. 2), such as sticker-based evaluation, emotional mapping, and visual feedback, were translated and localised for use in the Belgrade school context. B

The participatory activities were conducted using large-format poster boards organised into four key themes: (1) children's emotional responses to the school street (e.g., "I like it / I do not like it"), (2) their modes of arrival (on foot, by car, by bicycle, etc.), (3) their preferred activities in the street environment, and (4) their desired physical interventions such as play equipment, greenery, benches,

or safer crossings. These visual formats enabled children to respond through tactile engagement—placing stickers, drawing symbols, and commenting orally—thereby ensuring accessibility for young participants, regardless of their reading or writing proficiency.



Figure 3: Workshop organised in Vladislav Ribnikar Elementary School. Source: Author

An additional layer of data was collected through a photo-documentation task, where students were invited to take photographs of elements they liked and disliked along their route to school. These images serve as visual narratives of children's everyday movements through public spaces and offer first-person perspectives on their environment's spatial, aesthetic, and emotional qualities. Comments associated with these photographs—whether spoken or added later as annotations—provided contextual depth and enabled thematic coding that aligned with the study's interpretive framework.

Although the Urban500 digital platform was not used in this workshop, the research was grounded in the SCORELINE framework, which served as a conceptual and evaluative guide throughout the data interpretation phase. SCORELINE has six hierarchy-related criteria: safety and security, accessibility, legibility, comfort, inspiration and attractiveness, and liveability. These dimensions reflect an ascending order of spatial needs, beginning with physical protection and ending with broader social and experiential capacities. Each thematic activity and the resulting dataset were interpreted through this lens, offering a structured approach to understanding the experiential dimensions of the school's public realm from a child's perspective.

The workshop was further contextualised within ongoing local processes related to the school's future. Following the tragic events of May 2023, the *Vladislav Ribnikar* school became a focal point for community reflection and transformation. While the workshop did not explicitly address themes of trauma, the research was developed as part of the preparatory process for international competition for the reconstruction of the school and the creation of a new memorial and community space. In this sense, the methodology also served a symbolic function: restoring children's voices as legitimate actors in shaping spaces that directly affected their lives.

The research team supplemented the participatory tools with qualitative observations and a post-session thematic analysis. Children's contributions are interpreted through visual gestures, verbal interactions, and spatial preferences, enabling a comprehensive understanding of their needs, values, and aspirations. This triangulated, multimodal approach—combining visual, tactile, and verbal data—enhanced the reliability of the findings and affirmed the value of incorporating children's perspectives in the early phases of spatial planning.

This methodology represents a hybrid model that draws from global best practices in child-inclusive urbanism, while remaining sensitive to the community's cultural and emotional landscape. Tools and techniques reveal how children interact with and imagine their urban surroundings. They highlighted how their insights can inform the design of more inclusive, resilient, and meaningful public spaces.

RESULTS

Children's Visual Reflections on Their Everyday School Environment

The photographs children take on their way to school provide an evocative glimpse of how they interpret and feel about their urban surroundings. Through this exercise, they identified the spaces they valued and those that evoked discomfort, fear, and disapproval. Their contributions are deeply spatial, intuitive, and closely aligned with the SCORELINE framework, revealing much about what defines quality in a child's everyday city experience.

Positively perceived elements

One of the strongest recurring themes in the positive examples was the presence of greenery and places for play. Children frequently photographed parks, soft green surfaces, trees, and playground equipment, suggesting that access to nature and opportunities for physical movement represent the core aspects of what they value in the public realm. These areas appeared to provide recreation and a sense of calm and sensory comfort.

Another group of images focused on well-preserved buildings and recognisable cultural landmarks (see Fig. 4). The *Nikola Tesla Museum*, in particular, was described as “beautiful” and “important”, emphasising the role of architectural quality and cultural identity in children's spatial awareness. Decorative lighting and aesthetic detail on façades were also positively noted, demonstrating that children respond to ambience and the sensory qualities of space, even during transitional moments like walking to school.

Several children highlighted places that activate street life: bookstores, small courtyards repurposed for social or creative purposes, and cafés with outdoor seating. These photographs suggest appreciation for everyday vibrancy and a preference for street-level spaces that feel lived-in and inviting. The children also gravitated toward sidewalks that were wide, clean, and lined with trees. Such areas provide clarity of movement and visual order, reinforcing the significance of legibility and comfort in the urban environment.

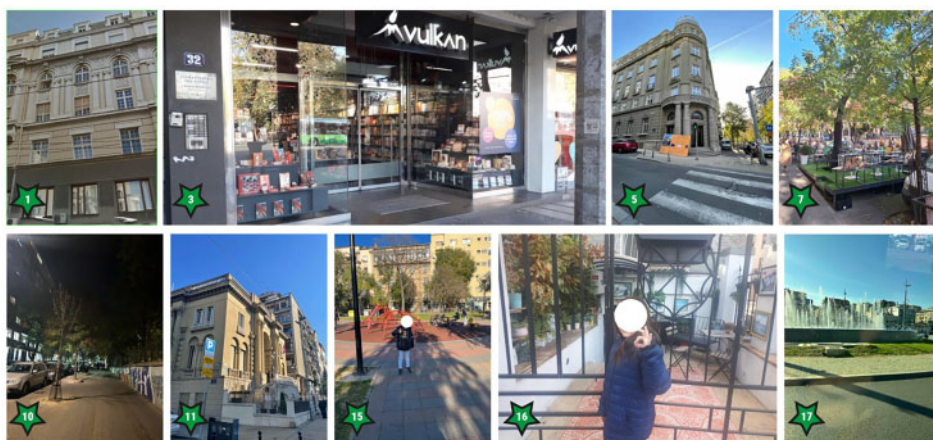


Figure 4: Photos of locations with positive evaluations

In summary, the elements that children identified as *liked* fell into several recurring categories.

1. Green infrastructure and play areas
2. Cultural and architectural landmarks
3. Public and semi-public space use
4. Wider sidewalks and vegetation along walking routes and
5. Lighting and clean finishes

Elements perceived negatively

On the other hand, many photographs highlight experiences of discomfort or frustration. Several children pointed to poorly maintained infrastructure, especially broken or uneven sidewalks near schools. These were described as places where “*someone could fall*”, linking physical neglect directly to feelings of insecurity. One child mentioned a long waiting time at a pedestrian crossing, identifying a specific barrier to ease and independence.

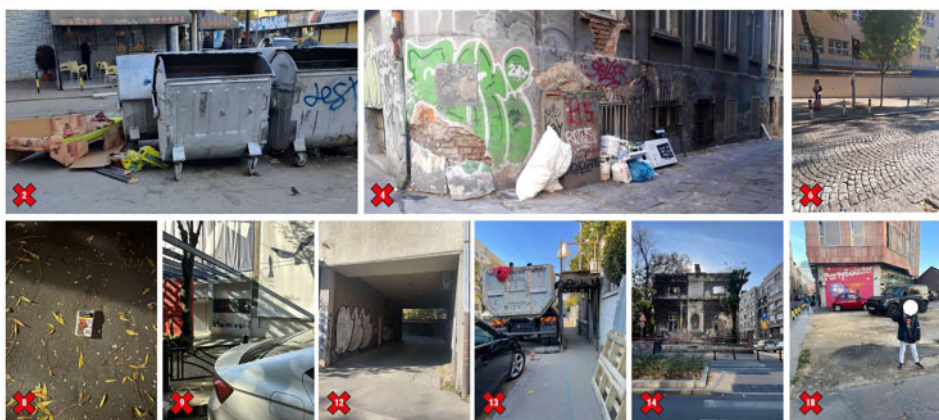


Figure 5: Photos of locations with negative evaluations

Visual pollution is another concern. Graffiti-covered walls, trash containers, and areas with strong odours are often marked as undesirable. Children associate these elements with a lack of care and attention from cities or communities. Notably, they distinguished between expressive street art and uncontrolled vandalism, suggesting a nuanced appreciation for urban aesthetics.

Dark narrow passageways, such as underpasses and *haustors*, repeatedly appeared in the “*dislike*” category (see Fig. 5). These were interpreted as threatening or uncomfortable, not necessarily because of what occurs there, but because of their closed form, poor lighting, and degraded materials. In this context, fear emerges from spatial cues.

Traffic-related concerns have also been reported. Children photographed cars parked across sidewalks, noting that these situations left “*no room to pass*.” These images highlight the dominance of vehicles over pedestrian spaces, which undermines children’s sense of autonomy and safety.

Finally, a group of children photographed old villas on Krunska Street not for their beauty, but because they seemed neglected or dangerous. This highlights that children notice when a building or environment is abandoned or lacks care and associate this with unease. Therefore, their value is based not on novelty, but on maintenance, use, and symbolic presence.

What the children disliked presents a significant critique of the urban setting and includes the following:

1. Unsafe pedestrian conditions
2. Graffiti, trash, and odour
3. Dark and narrow spaces
4. Traffic and obstructive parking
5. Buildings that are dilapidated or poorly maintained.

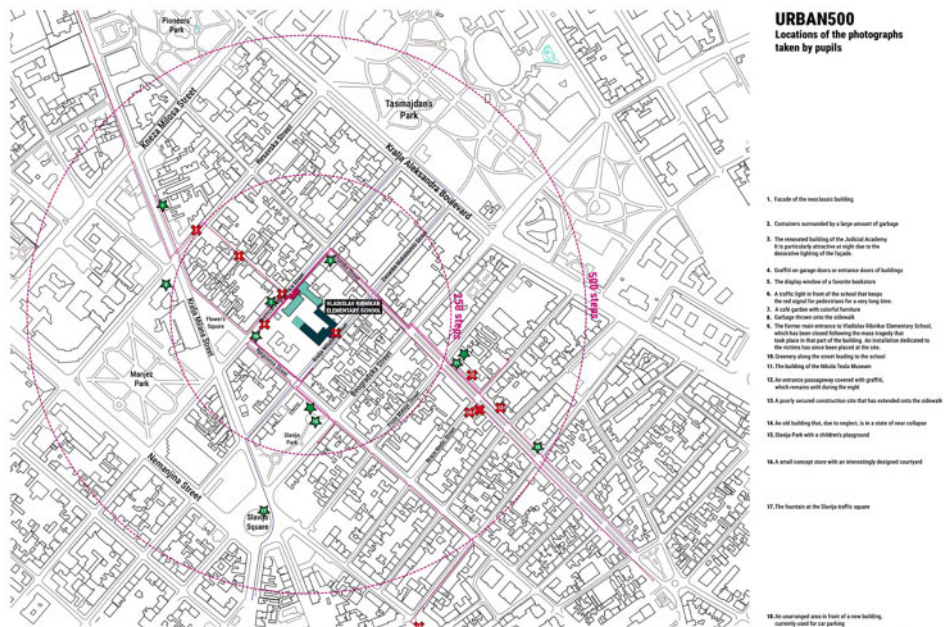


Figure 6: Distribution of locations photographed by pupils. Source: Author

Together, the photographs form a layered narrative of children's experiences in their everyday environments (Fig. 6). They speak clearly to the principles embedded in the SCORELINE framework: safety, security, accessibility, legibility, comfort, inspiration, attractiveness, and liveability are not abstract ideals but tangible, observable qualities of the spaces children inhabit each day. Importantly, this exercise also reveals the ethical obligation to listen to and take children's spatial intelligence seriously and design it in a way that responds to their lived realities.

Insights from Child-Led Evaluation of the School Street Environment

The workshop activities were structured around four thematic poster boards, each designed to engage children in expressing their views of the street environment surrounding their school. These boards collected direct responses using sticker placement, drawings, and symbols, allowing for quantitative aggregation and qualitative observation. Sixteen second-grade students participated in this workshop.

Emotional Response to the School Street

The first board addressed the children's emotional perceptions of the street in front of their school. Students were asked to indicate whether they *liked* or *did not like* the street environment by placing a circle (drawn by hand or pre-cut) in the corresponding field. Of the 16 children, 9 (56%) expressed a positive feeling, while 7 (44%) indicated a negative feeling toward the street.

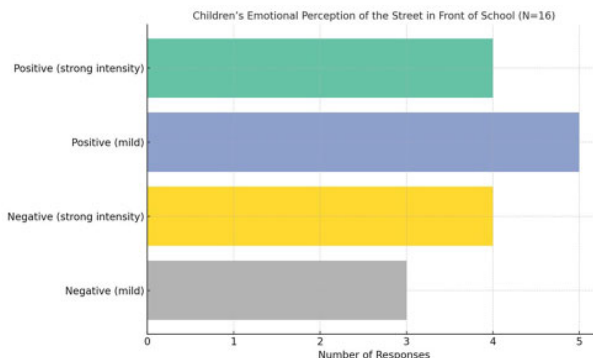


Figure 7: Emotional perception of the street in front of the school

Variations in the size and intensity of the drawn circles allowed for an additional layer of interpretation (Fig. 7). Among the positive responses, four were marked with strong expressive gestures (large bold circles). Simultaneously, five were more restrained in form. On the negative side, four responses displayed high emotional intensity, such as dense shading or exaggerated form, whereas three were more minor and neutral in tone. This suggests diversity in emotional engagement, reflecting binary sentiment and degrees of affective investment.

Modal Split: How Children Arrive at School

The second poster board explored mobility habits by asking students to indicate their typical mode of arrival at school. The children were invited to place a sticker representing a mode of transport (walking, bicycle, scooter, car, bus, etc.). Some students selected more than one mode, reflecting variability in their daily routines.

From a total of 18 responses (across 16 students), the breakdown was as follows: Walking - 9 responses (50%), Car - 4 responses (22.2%), Bicycle - 2 responses (11.1%), Bus - 1 response (5.6%), Scooter/Skateboard - 0 and "With someone" (e.g., parent or sibling) - not selected.

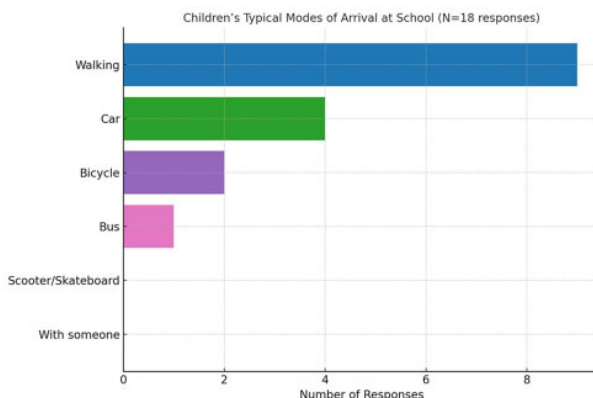


Figure 8: Typical modes of arrival at school.

The dominance of walking suggests a degree of proximity and autonomy in children's movements (Fig. 8). However, motorised transport, particularly private cars, highlights concerns about traffic safety and pedestrian quality of schools' access points.

Desired Street Activities

The third board invited the children to express how they would like to spend time on the street if they were more welcoming and accessible. This exercise aimed to uncover latent spatial desires and the preferred modes of street engagement.

The responses (N=24) indicated the following preferences: 5 – climbing trees/nature exploration, 4 – ball games, 3 – quizzes and fun games, 3 – running/roller-skating, 2 – super play structures (tall, adventurous equipment), 2 – Group games, 2 – Chalk drawing/reading, 1 – Painting-art, 1 – Hanging out with friends, and 1 – Other (free field not used).

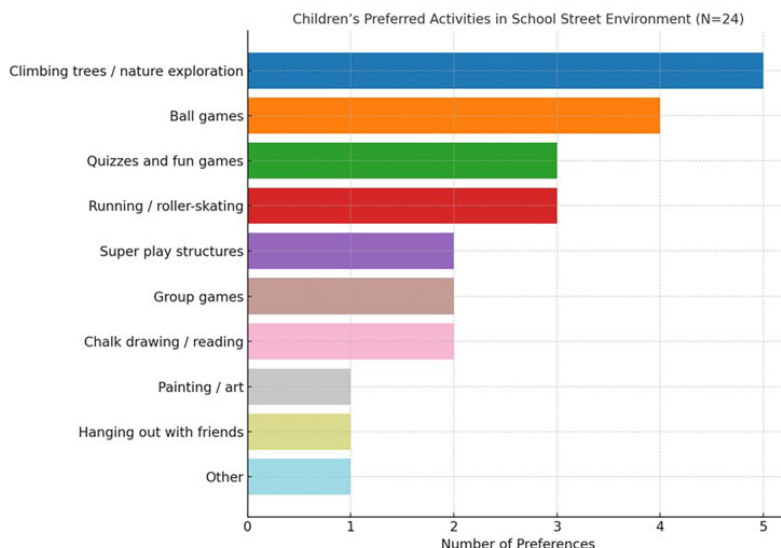


Figure 9: Preferred Activities in School Street

The strongest cluster was formed around active and nature-based activities, and social and creative interaction elements (Fig. 9). Few responses indicated passive or commercial use, reaffirming the children's preference for movement, freedom, and sensory engagement.

Desired Street Elements

The fourth board collected responses about physical features that children would like to see on the street near their school. This allowed the participants to define material improvements from their perspectives.

Of the 47 total responses, the most frequently selected elements were (Fig. 10): 9, trees and greenery; 6, playground equipment; 6, play structures for physical activity (e.g. swings and climbing); 4, traffic calming/safety elements (e.g. speed bumps, bollards); 4, benches and sitting areas; 4, public art (murals, colourful surfaces); 3, scooter/bike lanes or flat surfaces; 3, trash bins; 3, water elements (fountains, drinking water); 1, public toilets; and 1, street lighting.

The data revealed a strong emphasis on nature, play, and protection, followed by secondary concerns about cleanliness, comfort, and infrastructure. The combination of elements points toward a vision of the street, not merely as a transition zone, but also as a social and ecological space.

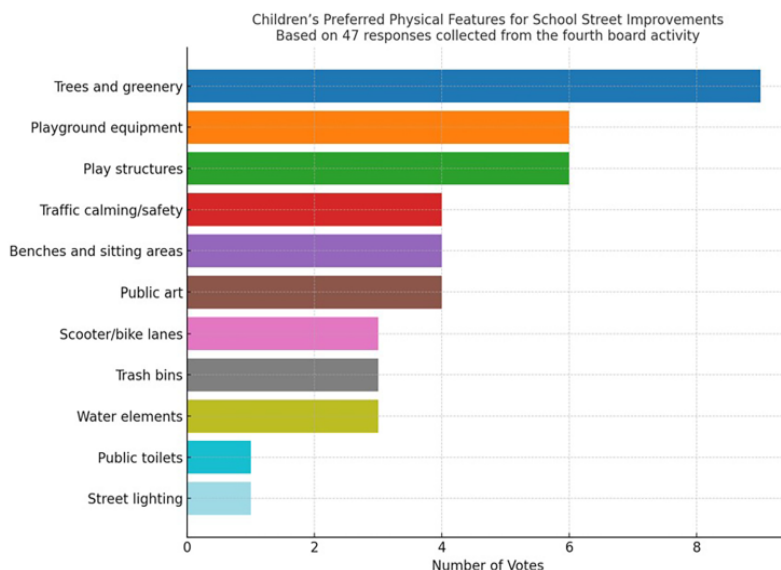


Figure 10: Preferred physical features for the school street

DISCUSSION

Participatory research conducted at *Vladislav Ribnikar Elementary School* resulted in a rich body of data collected through multiple methods, including large-format thematic poster boards and pupil photographic documentation. These diverse forms of expression offer insight into how children perceive and experience the urban environment in front of their schools. The analysis of these outputs was grounded in the SCORELINE framework, which defines six hierarchy-related criteria for evaluating public-space quality (Fig. 11): safety, security, accessibility, legibility, comfort, inspiration and attractiveness, and liveability. Although the children were not explicitly instructed using this framework, their visual and verbal responses aligned well with their dimensions.

Safety and Security

Children's concerns about safety were evident across both the datasets. On the first poster board, where participants expressed how they felt about the street in front of the school, nearly half of the children (7 out of 16) indicated negative emotional responses, with many displaying high-intensity marks, such as bold or densely shaded circles. This visual language was echoed in their photographs, which captured broken sidewalks, narrow haustors, construction zones, and dark underpasses as sources of unease and danger. The mention of long wait times at traffic lights further demonstrates how infrastructural systems can contribute to feelings of restriction and vulnerability.

These responses reaffirm the primacy of safety and security in children's spatial evaluation. In daily mobility, children are exposed to both physical and psychological forms of insecurity, and they articulate this clearly when provided with appropriate tools for expression. The fact that safety concerns emerged prominently in both collective and individual formats suggests that they are not isolated observations, but shared experiences.

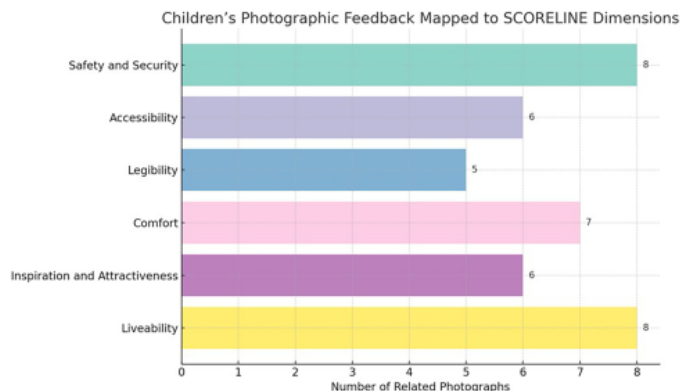


Figure 11: Photographic feedback mapped to SCORELINE dimensions

Accessibility

Accessibility is a core concern. On the mobility-focused board, most children reported walking to the school. However, the photographs often revealed obstacles that limited the journey, such as cars blocking sidewalks and improperly managed construction debris. Poster activities did not directly ask about barriers. However, the desire for safer crossings and traffic calming elements featured prominently on the board about the desired street features, indicating that children associate accessibility with reachability, ease, freedom, and dignity in movement.

The absence of responses for micro-mobility modes such as scooters or skateboards and the limited use of bicycles suggests that while these options may be desirable, they may not feel feasible under current conditions. Thus, children's spatial autonomy is closely linked to how permissive or restrictive infrastructure feels, even when distances are short.

Legibility

The children responded positively to spaces that offered clarity and openness. Their drawings and photographs highlighted wide tree-lined sidewalks, predictable spatial arrangements, and clear visual boundaries as desirable. In contrast, visual clutter, unclear crossings, and mixed-use conflicts (e.g. street areas oscillating between parking, walking, and play) were implicitly critiqued through omissions and negative commentary.

This suggests that legibility—the ability to intuitively understand and navigate a space—is a key component of how children assess public environments. While legibility is often addressed in wayfinding systems for adults, in the case of children, it supports confidence, calm and independent use, especially in transition zones like school streets.

Comfort

The children's responses frequently referenced aspects of urban comfort in multisensory terms. On the board, when asked what they would like to do on the street, children expressed a desire for places to rest, green shade, playgrounds, and clean, pleasant environments. Their photographs further underscored trash, odour, graffiti, and noise discomfort. These observations reflect a nuanced understanding of space beyond its physical form, including the atmospheric and emotional dimensions.

In this context, comfort is not a luxury, but a basic condition for participation and well-being in public spaces. It directly affects whether a street is passed through or actively engaged with. That many children referenced benches, trees, and places to stop signals a desire for hospitable streets, not just passable ones.

Inspiration and Attractiveness

The aesthetic and symbolic dimensions of the space were present in the children's feedback. In both their photo selections and responses on the fourth poster board (which asked what physical elements they would like to see), the children consistently highlighted the importance of beauty, colour, and artistic features. Images of the Nikola Tesla Museum, decorative lighting, and murals were labelled positively, while deteriorating façades or graffiti-covered walls were often interpreted as signs of neglect or decay.

This suggests that children respond to urban spaces through their functions, meaning, identity, and imagination. The fact that they included public art, decorated surfaces, and even historical buildings in their responses indicates recognition of the design's symbolic and affective roles. For young users, an attractive space is not a superficial concern; rather, it is tied to joy, pride, and memory.

Liveability

Finally, the children's vision of a liveable street emerged through both workshop formats. When asked how they would like to spend time on the street, the children expressed interest in group play, creative games, nature-based activities, and places to socialise. The desired street elements included play structures, trees, water fountains, public toilets, seating, and bike lanes. These choices reflect inclusive, multifunctional, and sociable spatial ideals.

As framed by SCORELINE, liveability represents the cumulative quality of space when other foundational needs have been met. In this study, children's definitions of liveability were extended beyond comfort to include meaningful use, interaction, and continuity of presence. From their perspective, a liveable school street allows them not only to arrive but also to belong.

Methodological Reflections

This discussion further validates the methodological combination of the visual, participatory, and spatially grounded tools. Poster-based exercises encouraged collective engagement and dialogue, whereas photographic documentation enabled personal expression and spatial storytelling. Both methods effectively allowed children to identify problems and articulate possibilities regarding their daily environment.

The integration of the SCORELINE framework as an interpretive tool proved particularly valuable. It offered a structured vocabulary to synthesise children's inputs without distorting their voice, and it helped frame responses regarding what was missing and what matters most. This approach affirms the role of children as active contributors to public-space discourse, capable of expressing preferences, proposing interventions, and evaluating existing conditions with clarity and emotional depth.

CONCLUSIONS

This study affirms that children are not passive users of urban spaces but active interpreters, evaluators, and co-creators of their environments. Their perceptions of the street in front of their school, gathered through participatory poster boards, visual expression, and photographic documentation, reflect a highly nuanced understanding of the everyday urban realm. Through their voices, we see that a street is not merely a conduit for movement but also a meaningful place of encounter, learning, emotion, and memory.

The findings demonstrated a precise alignment between children's spatial experiences and the six dimensions of the SCORELINE framework: safety, accessibility, legibility, comfort, inspiration, and liveability. Children articulated concerns about unsafe crossings, visual pollution, and degraded infrastructure while simultaneously envisioning more vibrant, green, and inclusive spaces for play and gathering. This duality—their ability to critique and imagine—signals their readiness to participate

in shaping a more just and joyful urban futures.

Importantly, this study situates children's perceptions within a broader urban discourse. It connects with international movements, such as the school street model, Vision Zero, and child-friendly cities, while also responding to Serbia's growing engagement with participatory planning and sustainable mobility. Initiatives such as the Handbook for Children- and Family-Friendly Design and local SUMPS show increasing institutional openness to ideas that prioritise children's rights, safety, and independence.

By bringing children's insights into the foreground, this study contributes to academic knowledge and advocates for a shift in urban design practices. It encourages municipalities, planners, and educators to embed participatory tools and child-centred frameworks at the earliest stages of spatial planning. In doing so, streets around schools can become safer, more imaginative, expressive, and responsive to the communities they serve, particularly to their youngest members.

This vision aligns powerfully with the emerging discourse on joyful cities—urban environments designed not only for functionality or efficiency, but also to foster delight, play, connection, and well-being. As thinkers such as Charles Montgomery and Jan Gehl argued, joy is not a frivolous or secondary outcome of good design; it is a core measure of how well a city supports human flourishing. Children's spatial preferences make this abundantly clear; they call for spaces where they can move freely, feel safe, express themselves, and experience wonder every day. Their joy is often found in small details—clean sidewalks, green shade, a playful bench, and a beautiful building—reminding us that micro-scale interventions can have profound impacts.

The school-street model embodies these values. Such initiatives actively shift urban logic toward care, equity, and happiness by reconfiguring spaces around schools to prioritise pedestrians, reduce traffic, and support community presence. While Serbia has yet to institutionalise school streets fully, many recent initiatives and policy frameworks suggest a growing readiness to do so. This study contributes a compelling case for this evolution, demonstrating how children's experiences, when taken seriously, offer a roadmap for designing public spaces that are safer, more inclusive, and more joyful.

Ultimately, listening to children is not merely an ethical imperative but a design strategy. Their vision of the street balances movement with meaning, protection with play, and infrastructure with inspiration. Integrating this vision is central to building cities that are not only functional but truly liveable for all.

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