

# From Congestion to Conservation: Reimagining Sliema's Future

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## Grade 6

Sliema, a very busy touristic town in Malta, is known for its lovely location by the sea. Nowadays, Sliema is one of the top commercial districts in Malta, where leading designer shopping outlets, restaurants and cafés can be found. However, it has some issues when it comes to overdevelopment, causing an increased traffic congestion, increasing a strain on local resources such as waste management, pollution and poor air quality. This should be addressed as soon as possible as it is affecting the residents' quality of life.

New high-rise buildings are increasingly occupying available spaces, while old traditional houses are being demolished and replaced by apartment blocks that do not reflect traditional Maltese architecture. This concern is also supported by an interview I conducted with tourists along the Sliema promenade.



A traditional Maltese house lost between two aesthetically poor developments.

Source: Original photo



What should the government do to imj

From almost every angle of Sliema, construction is visible. The noisy sound of drilling can start from early in the morning till late afternoon and this makes it hard for residents to live a peaceful lifestyle. Noise is recognised across Europe as the second most significant environmental health risk after air pollution, and Malta's high population density and limited mitigation options make the problem even worse (Maltadaily, 2026).

The Sliema local council is however conducting a comprehensive carrying capacity study, spread over a year emphasising on urban planning "to ensure that future growth is sustainable, informed by objective, scientific findings rather than short-term market pressures" (ABnewswire, 2025). Waste management has also become a major concern for both residents and tourists, highlighting the need for more efficient waste collection systems. Rubbish is often left on the streets for extended periods before being collected, cluttering pavements, making it difficult for pedestrians to pass, and frequently causing unpleasant odours.



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## **Improving Air quality**

The interviews I conducted clearly showed that traffic remains one of the main concerns in Sliema. It can be easily heard in the background. Both residents and tourists highlighted the need for improvements, particularly

suggesting a more efficient and reliable public transport system. They believe that better public transport would encourage people to rely less on private cars, which could help reduce congestion and ease the overall traffic situation in the area.



What changes would you like to see in Sliema?



What will make Sliema a better place?

Sliema is in an urgent need of a clear and ambitious plan to upgrade and enhance its environment so that it looks but also functions better. The level of quality expected by 2026 should be significantly higher than what residents are currently experiencing.

Sliema also lacks sufficient green spaces where families can take their children to play freely. Many of the existing playgrounds are filled with equipment, leaving limited open space for young children to run around and express themselves. Green areas, including trees and plants, are essential in any locality as they help provide cleaner air and create a healthier environment. They also offer a peaceful setting where people can relax and unwind after a long and stressful day.



A key garden in Sliema left neglected, with a non-functioning water fountain at its centre.

Source: Original photo

If families in Sliema wish to take a break and enjoy a picnic in a park instead of going to the beach, they often have to travel by car. This increases the likelihood of getting stuck in traffic and contributes further to air pollution. This concern was also highlighted in the interviews I conducted with residents, who identified traffic as one of the major problems affecting Sliema.

### **The path forward**

One effective way to begin this transformation would be through a **pedestrianisation programme**. Across Europe, pedestrian zones have proven successful in boosting local economies, cutting down traffic, improving air quality, and creating more welcoming public spaces. In a study done in France, it was found that “the transformation of streets into pedestrian zones has a positive impact on public health, especially for vulnerable populations such as children” (<https://www.pollutrack.net/index.php/en/news-feed/national/pedestrianization-works-30-reduction-in-pollution-in-french-regions> ).

Sliema is well-suited for this kind of change, and many residents have already voiced their support. With thoughtful planning, pedestrian areas could enrich community life while also enhancing the town’s appeal to visitors, making Sliema a more pleasant place to live and explore (DeGiovanni, 2025).

Sliema is a beautiful town, but it needs some extra care to stay a happy and healthy place for everyone. If we work together to reduce traffic, keep our streets clean, add more green spaces, and make some areas safer for people to walk, Sliema can become quieter, cleaner and more enjoyable. With good planning and good choices, the town can grow in a way that protects both the environment and the people who live here.

## References

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- DeGiovanni, K. (2025). *Time to prioritise Sliema*. Malta Independent.
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