

GIVING CIVIL PARTICIPATION A FAIR SHOT





The potential
of co-creation
and co-decision
with citizens
in urban
development.

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Abstract

Citizen participation is frequently mentioned in debates about our urban environment but proves difficult to be meaningful in practice. Often, participation is characterised by intransparency, poor communication and distrust. It is a loss seen the potential positive effects of influential civil participation that could help us overcome problems regarding the increasing complexity of cities. Enabling the potential and making citizen participation a valuable asset demands the extra step; full facilitation.

The research's aim is to understand how participation needs to be facilitated to make it worthwhile. Therefore, the following research question is formulated: How can Rotterdam facilitate and structure co-creation in the built environment in an inclusive, supportive, human-oriented and meaningful way? Although the outcome of this research reaches beyond Rotterdam, will Rotterdam be used as research subject.

To answer this research question, current context and good practices are analysed. Additionally, a real-life street experiment in the Old North of Rotterdam has been conducted. The context analyses consist of the current approach of Rotterdam in facilitating participation in the city, interviews about participation with urban and architectural firms in Rotterdam, and current programmes and strategies. Relevant good practices outside of Rotterdam are analysed for valuable lessons and used as input for the design. The experiment consists of the regeneration of a street, in which the process and co-creation were vital elements. The outcome of this research consists of recommendations and a design proposal. The main recommendation for Rotterdam is to communicate more about the process and the assessment of proposals. The design proposes a next step in the appropriation of public space by residents. This appropriation is guided by design coaches connected to the municipality. Currently available, as well as newly created space, is used to demonstrate the strategic design proposal.

Conclusion; facilitating participation in urban developments is strongly connected to actively guiding and initiating processes, good communication and transparency. For the design; to keep it tangible and make people take ownership of their surroundings, process scales should not be larger than the scale of the neighbourhood. Integrating participation into society needs to be done step by step but with complete commitment. Participation is not about saving money, but rather a new way of approaching design processes.

One of the main dilemmas in participation remains not being able to attract unusual suspects. The personal door-to-door approach connected people to the process, but not as active participants. Analysing digital tools will be interesting for follow-up research in this regard. Overall, analyses of existing practices remain an interesting way to learn

Keywords: participation, co-creation, Rotterdam, urban development, experiment

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Research



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01 Introduction

1. Context
2. Personal motivation
3. Project location

1.1 Context

The scene on the right shows the life of a city street in the 19th century in the Netherlands. There is something tangible to it that makes it very appealing. It is a place that embeds the speed of the human and is fully centred on the basic needs of a human; a roof above your head, social interaction, making an income to get around. Most places in our time do not feel this tangible anymore and are focused on the other things besides basic needs.

Many architects and urbanists are trying to bring this tangible human centred feeling back to our streets and cities. But, where can one start? Richard Sennet's "Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City (2018) presents a way to look at the city in terms of closed and open practices. Open cities embrace the complexity and richness of the human habitat. Whereas closed cities try to manage and steer.

The foundation of his work starts with the difference between "cité" and "ville". He defines the cité as a collective place-consciousness, shaped by all the things that happen and done in a certain place. It is the collective feeling of all the elements combined (Image 1); The salesman who transports his good, the boy with the ball who is on his way to his friends and the man with his hat and case. The ville as the physical form of a city that shapes and interacts with this consciousness; the height of the buildings and the streets' structure.

Since cities grew organically for the longest time, the cité and ville were acting and reacting to one another. This resulted in places imbued with both concepts, leading to a rich and complex human habitat.

The organic interaction between the ville and cite faded away at the beginning of the 20th century. Most of all, to counter the backlashes of this organic growth.

There has been a reason that people decided to change to way cities were orchestrated after all - Cities were filthy and dangerous places. The design of the ville became dominant in the way we approached cities: steering, controlling, measuring, making it efficient and profitable. With this approach, we seem to have traded the richness and depth of our habitats with efficiency and serving the economy

With the focus on the human scale and the natural world, we are trying to shift the focus back to the interaction between the cite and the ville. Are we able to find the right balance and create perhaps a sort of improved natural habitat?

This research focuses on direct forms of citizen participation in urban development, like co-creation and co-decision. It could be considered a part of the human scale shift in our cities. This time it is quite literally to bring back citizens into the development and shape of everyone's direct environment.

The hope is to reconnect citizens with their spatial and social direct environment and to celebrate life in the places that we inhabit.



Image 1: Photo of a dutch street in the 19th century. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 / A derivative from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/8725928@N02/8661951920>

1.2 personal motivation

The answer to the question “how to bring back the tangible human centred feeling” might start with reflecting on our desire to measure and control everything as planners, politicians and designers. Has this desire to control led to a shallow understanding of the richness of human habitats? One of missing element seems the missing connection between people and their direct environment.

When I moved into my new apartment in the Heliport in Rotterdam, I met a group of people who decided to regenerate their own direct environment some years ago. Claiming back their connection, ownership and responsibility in the place they live. It made for a highly contextual, good looking and supported plan. And at the same time, it has strengthened the cohesion. Many people are now actively connected via a Facebook group, and there are recurring plastic collection days, among many other events throughout the year; movie night, markets, and live music (image 2)

At the same time, I heard about a project in Heerlen, where people took things into their own hands and decided to start restoring facades in the city to their original state. It was a wholesome project that brought a big group of people together and made them feel connected to their city in a new way.

Both projects inspired me to look into the role of citizen participation in the light of the human centred shift in urbanism. And also which role it can play in cohesion, especially in the strongly heterogeneous neighbourhoods of Rotterdam. Some questions started this research; What are the implications of successful participation? Are we giving it our best shot? What potential is there? Do we trust each other and believe in this collaboration between citizens and the government?

1.3 project location

Although the research will be relevant for understanding citizen participation in any given location, the focus will be on Rotterdam. The main reason is that I live in Rotterdam. This makes it accessible to talk to organisations, citizens, companies and the municipality. Part of this research is also an experiment in the north of Rotterdam (the southern part of the Tollensstraat). This location was chosen because of its accessibility as well, among other reasons that will be discussed later.

1.4 Terms and scopes

Participation is a broad term. For example, it can imply participation in the job market, but also doing groceries for your neighbour. In this research, the term participation is aimed at participation in urban development. This can be the whole ladder described in the theoretical framework (Figure 2).

There is, however, a particular focus on more influential forms of participation in this research like co-creation and co-decision. This will be validated in the section about the benefits of participation.

It is also important to mention that participation as a word and concept is approached differently in the text. A few examples; civic participation, civil participation, citizens participation, participatory processes, public participation, citizens engagement, involvement of citizens. In general, and also in this research, these terms are interchangeable.

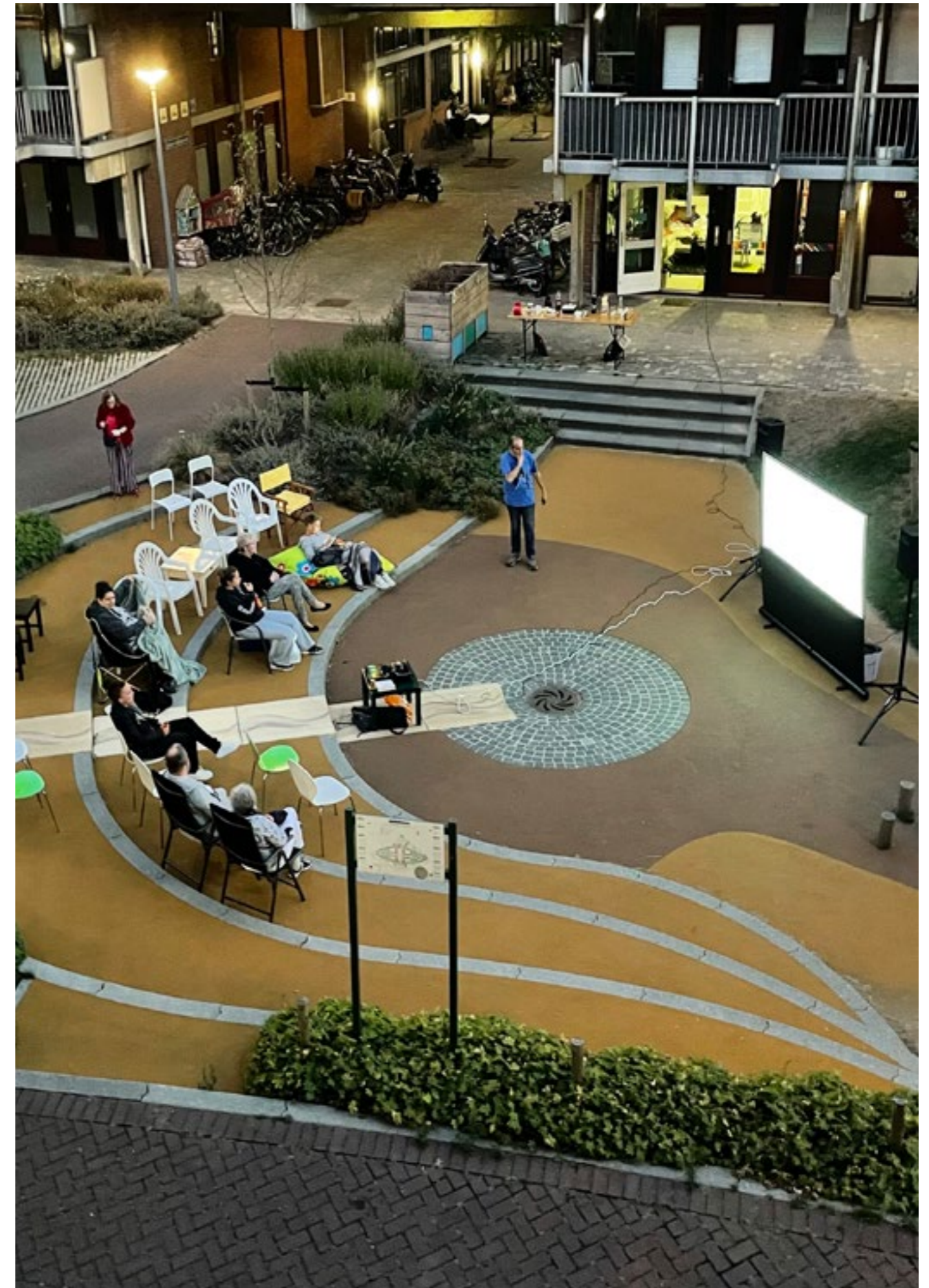


Image 2: Heliport's square at the start of a cinematic evening (Robert van Overveld, taken on August 18, 2022)

02 Theoretical framework

1. Introduction to participation
2. Participation society
3. The objectives and benefits of citizen participation
4. The arguments against citizen participation
5. Who is participating?
6. Trust
7. The state of our democracy

2.1 Introduction to participation

Participation can be understood differently, and there is a difference in how researchers conceptualise the term (Uittenbroek et al., 2019). Figure 1 shows the different types of civil participation in urban development on a time and purpose scale (Based upon Walraven, 2013). Participation can be more temporary, like a workgroup that organises an event in the main square or a street that wants to integrate water storage somewhere. On the other hand, it can also be more long-term and organised, just like the 39 new neighbourhoods councils (wijkraden) in Rotterdam or OpZoomeren that provides and organises a diverse set of smaller scale initiatives. Both will be discussed further at a later stage.

Participation can also be understood by the well-known steps of the participation stepladder. Figure 2 shows this ladder and the tools for urban development (Based upon Sok et al. (2009)). The steps from least influential to most influential: Inform, consult, advise, co-production/design and co-decide.

There is also a difference between bottom-up participation in cities and top-down organised participation. Participation in cities is always structured, organised or granted by the municipality. Still, there is a difference between whether a citizen is an initiator or a firm/municipality. Often this is connected to scale. Bigger scale project participation will primarily be initiated top to down.

History

Citizen participation is an often discussed topic nowadays, but it is nothing new. It is arguably as old as human life itself. In the last centuries, participation has mainly existed as political participation (Heater, 2004). Mainly your wealth and background would determine if you could be part of the participating group. Only after the 20th century has societal and cultural participation been acknowledged as part of the concept (Walraven, 2013).

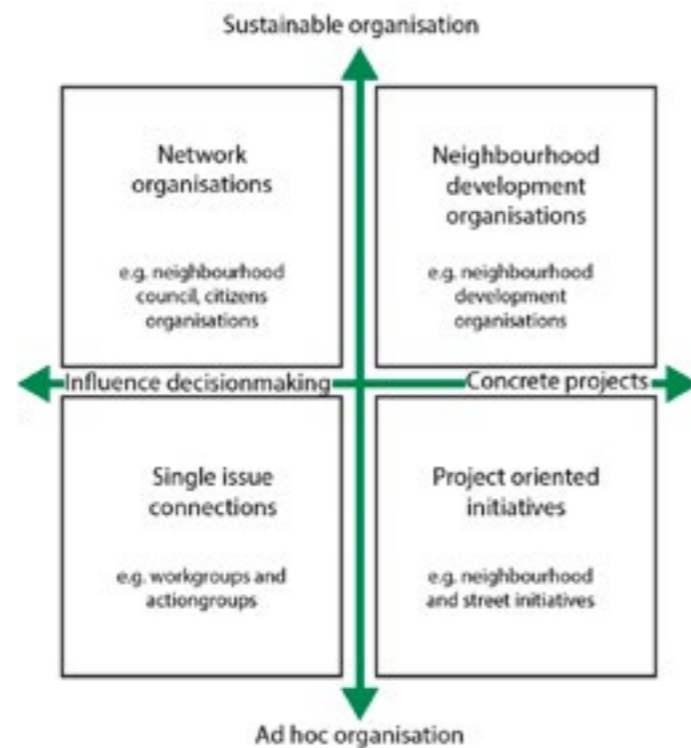


Figure 1: Participation on a time and purpose scale (Based upon Walraven, 2013)

2.2 Participation society

Citizen participation in urbanism is part of a larger movement in the Netherlands. The welfare state with its represented democracy, known from the 20th century, is making space for a more participating democracy. Therefore; more privatisation and more citizen involvement (Knibbe & Horstman, 2018).

The dutch political system has been and currently still is mainly based upon representation. This is the case in the municipalities as well. The course of one's city is therefore mainly shapeable during the election rounds every four years. The idea behind it is that society consists of too many opinions, citizens don't feel the need to steer and too much participation would lead to instability of the whole democratic system (Lowndes, 1995). Participating in this situation consists of voting.

But, this tide seems to shift and there have been a few reasons for it (Knibbe & Horstman, 2018). The first reason has been that the well-fare state proves to be not financially sustainable. Another reason has been that the welfare state seems to create complaining and spoiled citizens. The state instead

wants to strengthen self-sufficiency and collective resilience. Thirdly, the downsides of the bureaucracy that it results in. The shift could bring back the human scale in our society. Lastly, could the welfare state prove not viable in a context of deindustrialisation, globalisation, slow economic growth, and changing family demographics (Esping-Andersen, 1996).

In 1974, the government already spoke about the importance of participation as a new part of our welfare state (Hurenkamp 2013). In 1991, Wim Kok, the prime minister at the time, repeated this as well at the time. But, only after the king's speech in 2013, got the concept of the participation society more attention:

"The welfare state that we live in is slowly changed towards a participation society. Everyone who can, is asked to take responsibility for their own life and environment."

Not the concept of participation nor the participation society is new. Nevertheless, are both terms more often mentioned in public debate and news articles these days (SCP, 2014). At this point, it is generally assumed

Steps on the participation stepladder	Tools and methods	Approach
Inform	Informal gatherings, hotlines, concept meeting	Informal and formal Top-down initiated
Consult	Surveys, satisfaction research, group discussion, individual conversation	Informal and formal Top-down initiated
Advise	advisory boards, interactive dashboards and forums, participation boards	Formal Top down and Bottom-up initiated
Co-production Co-design	Workshops, collaborations, drawing sessions, tactical urbanism	Formal Top down and Bottom-up initiated
Co-decide	Steering group, citizen jury, referenda	Formal Top down and Bottom-up initiated

Figure 2: Steps on the participation ladder. Based upon Sok et al. (2009)

that we are transitioning into a participation society (Wijdeven, de Graaf en Hendriks, 2013). The central question: which role can, must, want or are citizens allowed to take? Furthermore, how much and which responsibility is the government taking?

Drawbacks

Participation might have the ability to solve some of the issues that our country faces in the 20th century. Nevertheless, are there drawbacks to a participation society. Snel and Engbersen (2015) warn of the Matthew effect, which implies that it mainly benefits people with social and material capital—resulting in a situation where the other will be excluded. This would amplify the already

existing gap between people concerning wealth and chances in our society.

This is, therefore, also directly a danger for participation in general, as we will see in this research. The consequences of this will be further discussed in the problem section.

Direct democracy

Next to a participating and represented society, one can find direct democracy. In a participating society, people more actively can influence and shape decisions made in a democracy.

2.3 The objectives and benefits of citizen participation

Glucker et al. (2013) (in Uittenbroek et al., 2019) have brought conceptual clarity into the objectives and benefits of participation. They structured the objectives of participation into nine objectives, which they categorized into: normative, substantive and instrumental (Figure 3). The grouped benefits will be discussed further to clarify their benefits.

The first one is inducing social learning and cohesion (normative). By meeting and working with new and different people on the same task, you learn from one another, create trust, make new friends, and understand different perspectives (Putnam, 2000; Foley & Edwards, 1996). This is especially interesting since it can happen in your direct environment, making it more likely that you feel at home in the place you live and expand your socioeconomic chances in this country. The consequences of the latter will be discussed later in this research.

The second one is collecting local knowledge and expertise (substantive). No one knows a place better than the people who have been living in a particular place. Gaining knowledge from this group can strengthen the plan by making it more contextualized and embedded. Additionally, every neighbourhood is filled with creative and knowledgeable people on a vast array of topics. Unlocking this existing potential in a neighbourhood can strengthen the project, arguably, our whole society.

Thirdly, acceptance, understanding and support for decisions (instrumental). If done correctly, citizen participation can heighten the support and acceptance of a plan—this can smoothen the process overall. Furthermore, by bringing in citizens in the right stages, trouble along the way can be avoided. This way, you can strengthen citizens' connection with their direct environment, heightening their chance to function well in our society (Backx & Doosje 2014).

Overall is civil participation essential in good functioning democracy (Nieuwenhuijzen &

Steur, 2005). Participation is an expression of democratic engagement. It has an intrinsic value. This appreciation makes people want to participate even more and longer. Van Gunsteren explains that the development of the society and norms, values and virtues of its citizens stagnate when they do not actively participate (1998). Citizen participation is also instrumental in this regard (Nancy, 2003). Giving a voice to the have-nots towards to tyranny of the haves.

People like Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that democracy needs to be learned (Nancy, 2003). The only way to learn it, is to practice it. Citizen participation comes with a self-development that brought people to their full potential in regard to society. The result? Direct participation as a solvent of social conflict (Nancy, 2003).

Lastly, there is a more formal argument on why we should integrate citizen participation in urban development. At the moment, municipalities are integrating the "omgevingswet" in their planning and design frameworks. Participation is a central element in de omgevingswet, and municipalities will need to integrate the new way of doing.

It is important to note that more benefits in participation can be gained in more influential forms of participation: co-production and co-decision. A survey will not have the same power as a workshop in creating more cohesion. It is important to make this distinction. Not all participation is created equal. The quality of the participation is a significant factor in this as well.

The objectives and benefits of participation vary per process and domain. This has also brought some confusion to the debate about participation (Uittenbroek et al., 2019). The wrong objectives and benefits connected to the a certain project could lead to the wrong conclusions about the outcomes of the process.

Objectives of public participation

Normative	1. Influencing decisions	Public participation will enable those who are affected by a decision to influence that decision.
	2. Enhancing democratic capacity	Public participation will enable participants to develop their citizenship skills (such as interest articulation, communication and cooperation) and, at the same time, provide participants with an opportunity to actively exercise citizenship.
	3. Social learning	Public participation will enable deliberation among participants and thus lead to social learning.
	4. Empowering and emancipating marginalized individuals and groups	Public participation will alter the distribution of power within society, thus empowering formerly marginalized individuals and groups.
Substantive	5. Harnessing local information and knowledge	Public participation will enhance the quality of the decision output by providing decision-makers with environmentally and/or socially relevant information and knowledge.
	6. Incorporating experimental and value-based knowledge	Public participation will increase the quality of the decision output by providing decision-makers with relevant experimental and value-based knowledge.
	7. Testing the robustness of information from other sources	Public participation will increase the quality of the decision output by testing the robustness of information from other sources.
Substantive	8. Generating legitimacy	Public participation will legitimize the decision-making process, thus providing legitimacy to the authority and facilitating project implementation.
	9. Resolving conflict	Public participation will contribute to the identification and resolution of conflict before final decisions are made and thus facilitate project implementation.

Figure 3: The objectives of public participation (Glucker et al., 2013)



Image 3: Group photo of a workshop in the Tollensstraat (Robert van Overveld, taken on June 29, 2022)

2.4 The arguments against citizen participation

Despite the seemingly many benefits of citizen participation, some argue against it. The main arguments against it (based upon Nancy, 2003):

Citizen participation is based on a false notion. The argument is that people are flawed. They are either too passionate and selfish or too passive and apathetic. This rational, compassionate human being that is able to listen and understand the common good is, in this argument, just not the average participant.

The second argument is that participation is inefficient. The government is a complex bureaucratic system that demands expertise and experience to work with. As a result, the face-to-face relationship that valuable participatory processes demand is not achievable without losing the capacity to conclude and take action.

Thirdly, the existing interest groups, government and market players are too strong and smart to truly stand up to. Especially in bigger projects, investors are often the ones that can make or break a project. The same goes for the municipality that has been making strategies for decennia about specific topics. A citizen, nor a group of citizens, can be brought up to the same power level without having referenda about everything.

Fourthly, citizen participation is mostly an unaffordable luxury. Participation requires skills, resources, money and time that most citizens do not have. People are busy with their own lives and problems. The outcome would be that inequality would start to play a significant role. A situation in which only the "lucky" ones can participate and shape the world to their view.

Dilemma's

These arguments against participation, but also the ones in favour, could be discussed and researched in follow-up research to see to what extent to are true. The weight of each argument is a whole topic in itself as well. Suppose we surpass these two pieces of

research and discussions and follow up on the idea that we think that participating has more advantages than disadvantages. In that case, we still find ourselves in a few dilemmas. These dilemmas are also discussed in Nancy's (2003) research.

The scale of participation. Especially direct citizen participation asks for a small-group approach in which people are approached and treated personally. Implementing this in a large and complex bureaucratic system such as a municipality is difficult. It does not need to be implemented in the largest of scales in all domains, but it does beg the question which scale would be suitable.

Secondly, the differences in expertise. It is difficult to defend your opinions or wishes if you, as a citizen, do not have the same knowledge as the other stakeholders. This knowledge, experience and expertise gap is almost impossible to fill. The least complex projects, therefore, become the most interesting projects since the gap is not as significant.

The third one is crisis management. In the last few years, we have seen many crises, from covid to our current energy crisis. In urbanism, we have seen the impacts of the climate crisis on how we want to do things. Participation in times of crisis is not ideal. For example, we would not want to discuss with citizens whether they think the heat island effect is a problem. This, again, begs the question of which scale this participation should take place and which roles citizens can play to what extent.

Lastly, there is a time and space problem in addition to the last dilemma. At the end of 2022, we find ourselves in a potentially developing economic crisis, a current energy crisis that raised the costs of materials and goods, and a housing crisis. People lack time and space to join participation programmes joyfully, and companies also have more complex tasks ahead. Projects need to be circular, financially attractive and climate-proof. Has participation enough benefits to be able to be part of the process? All of these dilemmas will be addressed in this research.



Image 4: One of the main elements in Rotterdam as planned city; the Coolsingel (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

2.5 Who is participating?

Whether people participate is in the first place depending on their (il)legal citizens status, their language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability (Walraven, 2013) (Figure 6). The second level is social capital; the amount of connection with the people around you. This can be either social contact with a homogeneous group (social bonds) or people from a heterogeneous group (bridging). Someone's social capital and the chance of participating are linked as well. The more social capital, the more likely someone is to participate. Lastly, your employment status, housing situation, education and health play a role. If you are employed, own a house, have a good education, and are healthy, you are more likely to participate.

The participating group

Of the group that participates in some way, can we mainly find higher educated, religious, native and older people (Edelenbos & Monnikhof, 2001). This is one of the most heard complaints about participation. Participation processes are often not socially representable (Nieuwenhuijzen & Steur, 2005). This aspect will extensively be further discussed in the problem section.

The following data about the number of people participating in Rotterdam is retrieved from the wijkprofiel of Rotterdam (figure 4 & 5). In 2020, 20% of the citizens had been active in citizen participation in some way. In the north of Rotterdam (where the experiment of this research will take place), this percentage is only 14%. Why the north of Rotterdam scores this low, and the other city parts relatively high, is unclear. Since the averages of each part are not weighted by the amount of citizens living in a city part, the overall average remains constant. Further, 29% of the citizens had been part of plan-making in Rotterdam. In the north, this is a bit higher with 33%. Both are a collection of participation in different domains.

The representability of the numbers is claimed to be high (Wijkprofiel, n.b.). The data is based upon samples and altered to be representable. It does, however, not say anything about the quality of participation or the amount

of influence. Maybe someone just filled in a survey at some point.

Only a small percentage is likely participating in a way that is enhancing their social learning or adding value to the embedding and depth of projects.

The not participating group

Verba et al. (1995) make three categories in the not-participating group;

1. The people that can't
2. The people that do not want to
3. The people that nobody asked.

Which is translated by the author into: resources, recruitment, and engagement. Resources and engagement are two aspects that will be intensively discussed in this research. In the engagement group are people who could be active if the conditions are right, and people who will remain very unlikely to participate. The former is mainly depending on recruitment. Engagement is therefore discussed in the next paragraph and not further in the problem section

The lack of interest can make people decide not to participate as well (Denters et al., 2002). A citizen with little interest in their direct environment is simply not likely to participate. This is also connected to priorities. If someone works a lot and has a family, then there is not much time for participation. Other reasons could be bad previous experiences, not trusting experts/politicians, a lack of time or satisfaction. The latter seems to be connected to culture as well. Some cultures are simply easier at ease with their lives and surrounding, compared to the high performance society that the Netherlands seems to have become. Since problems are reasons to participate, it is not surprising that satisfied people are less active in participatory processes.

Citizens who are active in a citizen initiative



Figure 4: (Wijkprofiel (n.b.). <https://wijkprofiel.rotterdam.nl/nl/2022/rotterdam/noord/noord/sociale-index/participatie-objectief>)

Citizens who have been part of planmaking for the neighbourhood or city

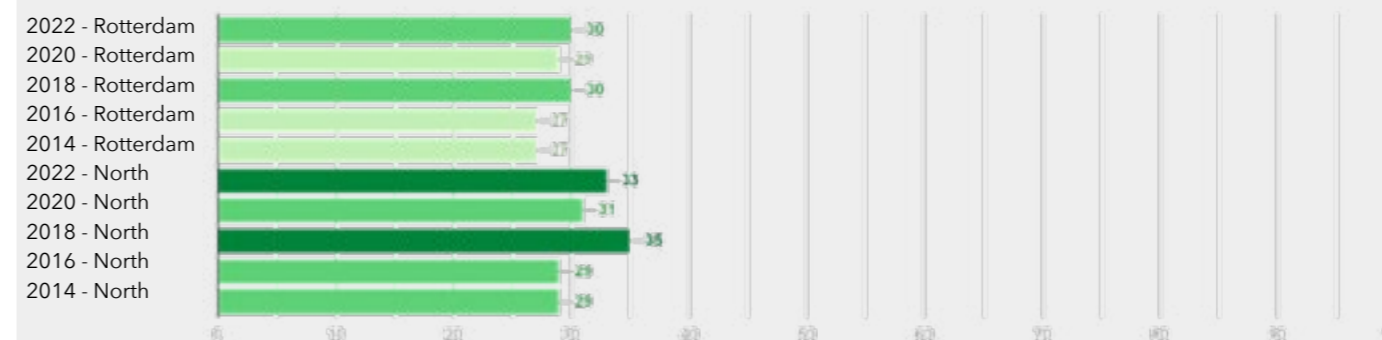


Figure 5: (Wijkprofiel (n.b.). <https://wijkprofiel.rotterdam.nl/nl/2022/rotterdam/noord/noord/sociale-index/participatie-objectief>)



Image 5: Language as well as culture differences can imply that people are less likely to participate. (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

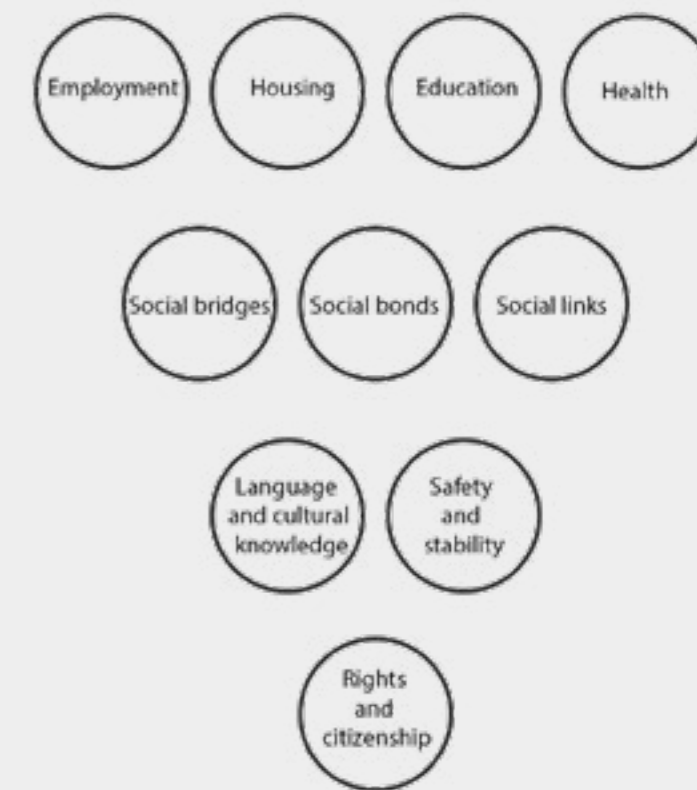


Figure 6: parameters for participation (Based upon Walraven, 2013)

2.6 Trust

Civil participation can be seen as a collaboration between the state or municipality and the citizen. As with any relation, can this collaboration not function without trust in one another. In the last years, this trust has been put to the test with multiple affairs, untransparent choices and mistakes by the government. The following two chapters will look into the state of our democracy and the amount of trust it gains these days.

Trust can be categorised into three categories within citizen participation; (dis)trust in: government/politics, distrust in experts and distrust in other people (Meer, 2021). The amount of trust in something will differ per citizen, but also per topic and per day and is, therefore, difficult to pin-point (R. V. H. O. & Raad voor het openbaar bestuur [RR], 2018). Trust seems also something cyclical. A lack of trust from time to time is unavoidable, in other words (Meer, 2021).

This does not imply that we, as a society, should not strive to keep this level of trust as high as possible. A less trusted governance is at risk (due to its loss of moral authority) for less cooperation from its citizens (Meer, 2021). This cooperation by the society is vital for the organisation of the public good and also at the core of each participation process.

A few characteristics of someone tell something about the expected levels of trust, therefore, their chance of participating. For example, only 39% of the group that received the lowest education have trust in other people. For higher education, that is 84% (figure 7). Even the city you live in can make a difference (Figure 8).

Schmeets concludes that age and education bring the most significant differences in trust between people (2018). Younger people trust more, as well as more educated people. Income seems less relevant overall but does show a 20% difference in trust between low and high. This data on trust is linked with the people that are most active in participatory processes. The exception is the youth.

Whether there is a downward trend overall in the amount of trust is difficult to say. The average person and the news will tell you that the amount of trust is degrading, but many sources conclude differently. Neither the trust in the institutions, nor the trust in other people is degrading (Schmeets, 2013; 2017). It is important to note that these are averages and that there are differences between groups. Some groups might show a downward trend in overall trust. The unanswered question is whether this feeling of a downward trend influences the way people act.

2.7 The state of our democracy

The general belief is that our democracy is crumbling, a belief that has existed since the 70s. However, trust in our democracy is not weakening. Over 90% of people in the Netherlands still believe that democracy is the best system, and more than 70% are still satisfied with its overall functioning (Dekker & Den Ridder, 2015). However, there is critique on the practical execution of our democracy, mainly on our politicians and officials. The main arguments are that they do not listen, that they just do what they want, that there is too little influence for citizens to change anything, that politicians are not decisive and that people are dissatisfied with overall policy (Dekker & Den Ridder, 2015)

Still, is the level of trust in politicians not going down overall. From 2002 to 2017, every new coalition in our government started with the same amount of trust (Van der Meer, 2017). The economic crisis in 2008 has put a blanked of distrust in politics in Europe in general, but should be considered conjunctural (van der Meer, 2017). As with the corona crisis, the level of institutional trust seems polarised. People with a lower socioeconomic status (SES) have lower levels of trust, and people with a higher SES have a higher amount of trust (Snel, Farisi, Engbersen & Krouwel, 2022).

What did change is that people would like to see more forms of direct democracy: referenda and choosing your major (Ridder et al., 2015). This would not imply that direct democracy is replacing the current representative democracy. It would rather be

a new layer on top of it. Therefore, we can conclude that more an influential form of citizen participation in urban development is a wanted development.

How Rotterdam will develop in the years to come will partly depend on the amount of trust/resistance in the society. Rebuilding and

maintaining the trust relationship between the citizen and the municipality should be priorities for both sides. Giving people access to more direct forms of democracy could prove to be a vital element in keeping this trust relation between citizens and the government healthy.

Figure 7: Trust categorised by level of education (CBS, 2018)

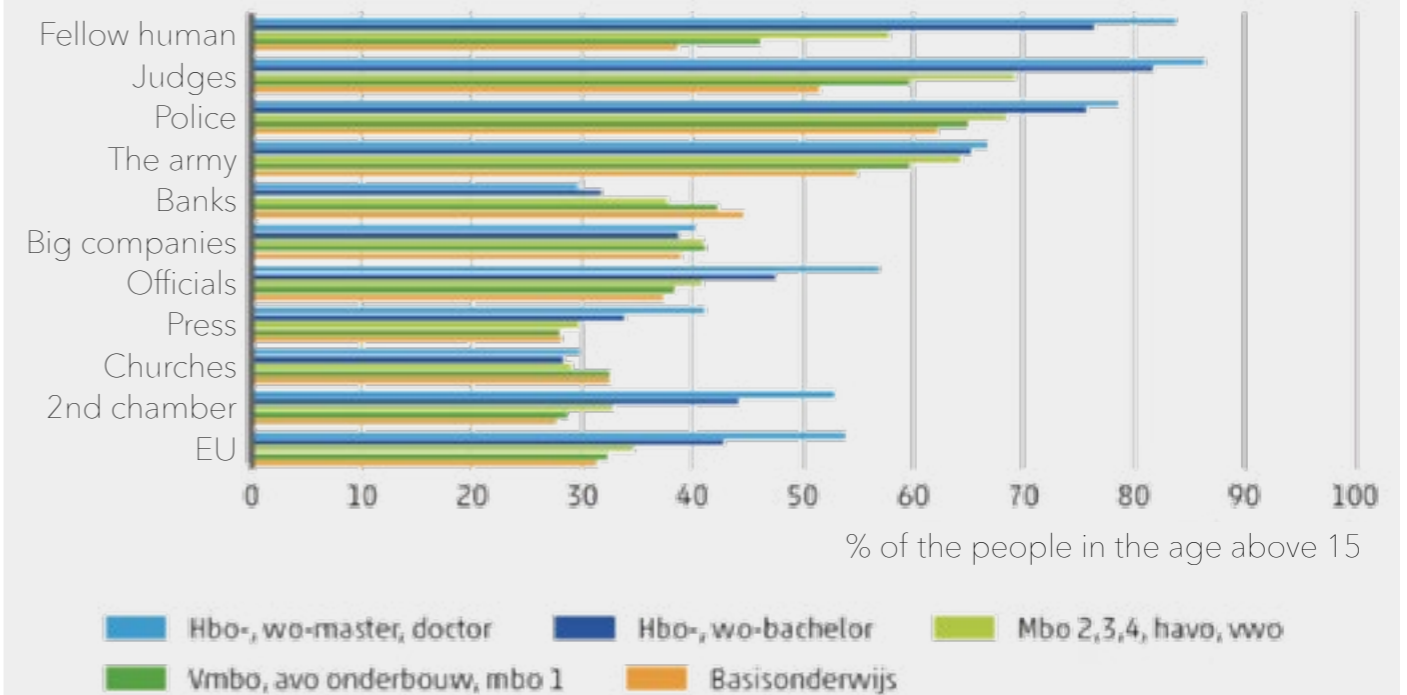
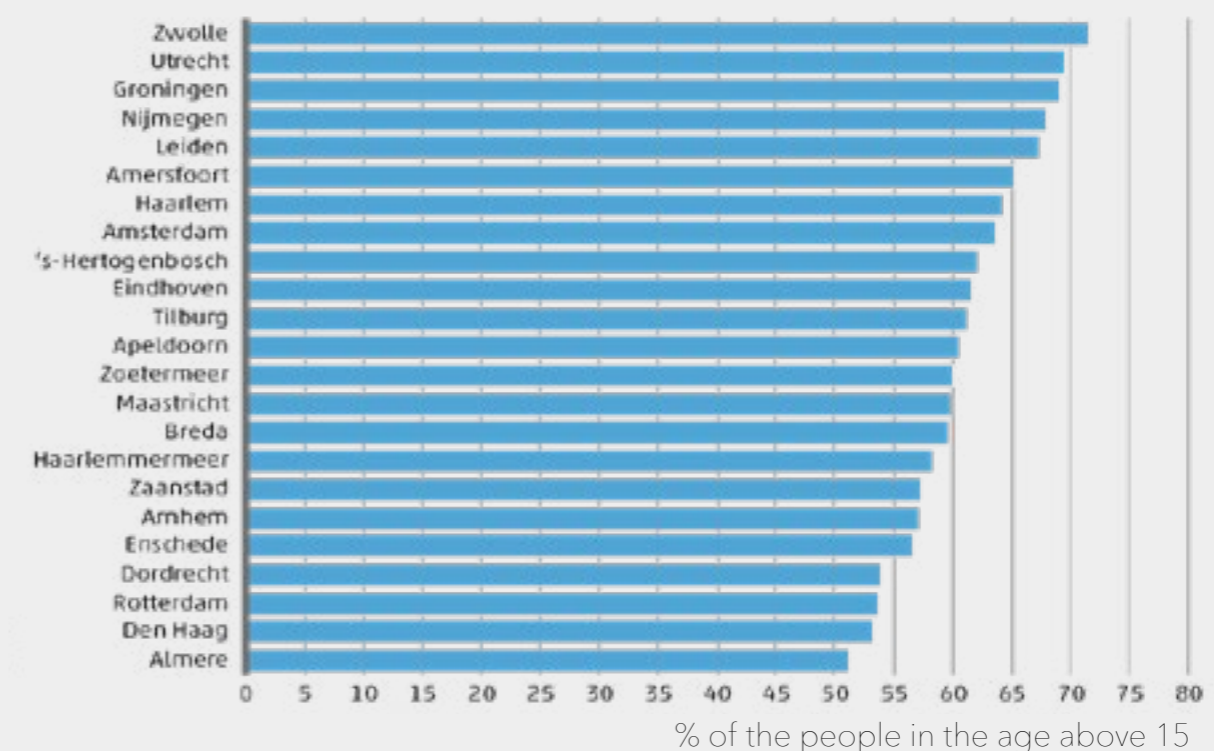


Figure 8: Trust in other humans categorised per city (CBS, 2018)



03 Problem definition

1. Problem statement
2. Research aim and objectives
3. Knowledge gap
4. Research questions

3.1 Problem statement

In this research, three main problems in participation will be addressed: Exclusion in participation, the quality of the environment/process and the distrust stakeholders have in one another.

Exclusion in participation

One of the main problems in citizen participation in urban development is the gap between the group that wants to participate and the group that does not. Mostly higher educated, religious, older and native people participate. The majority are not. The people that participate happen always to be the same group - the so-called participation paradox (Nieuwenhuijzen & Steur, 2005). More commonly known as the participation of the usual suspects. It means that most people participate very little, and very few participate a lot. Partly, the participation paradox might not be a problem, but overall it is. To understand why this divide is a problem, one must ask why people are not participating.

For a part of the non-participating group, there are several barriers in the current participation culture. This part consists of people who lack skill, competence, money, social capital and knowledge (Keygnaert, 2005, p. 10-12) and are known as the vulnerable group. Some of these characteristics can be addressed in a way that participation becomes more accessible. However, other characteristics are more difficult to address, which is problematic (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid [WRR], 2005, p. 162-163). It entails people with a low SES, immigrant citizens, mentally vulnerable, elderly, physically disabled, healthcare avoiders, lonely people and the chronically ill (Loyens & Walle, 2006, p. 10). It has resulted in participation processes mainly attended by people already well-known with management processes and the right skills.

The vulnerable group is vulnerable in many domains. Each domain has the task of overcoming barriers for this group if we, as a country, want to be inclusive and give people equal chances in life. The design of the public

space can make it easier or more difficult for this group to function well in our society (Backx & Doosje 2014). The fact that they, due to various reasons, do rarely participate in urban design higher the chance that their needs and wishes are not translated into the design of the built environment. This way, the barriers in other domains will also become more prominent, weakening this group's and people's resilience.

A part of the vulnerable group already lives in social housing, of which it is not theirs to decide which apartment they want. It is a group that cannot decide where to live and at the same time is not, and often does not feel, capable enough to participate in projects that change their direct environment. It is also a group that struggles to get around and does not have the energy or motivation to spend their free time in meetings about a public square (Milikowski, 2021). Therefore, it is not surprising that this group probably lacks the intrinsic motivation to participate.

Their house and direct environment are a given, not an expression of identity. They focus on things they control, have a connection to or improve their situation in this society. It is a group that is more connected to family and friends, especially with our currently retreating government (Milikowski, 2021). One starts to understand how difficult it must be to be resilient toward the broken cohesion due to gentrification in these so-called "deprived areas".

The quality of the environment

Part of citizen participation is the environment that the government creates and the recruitment of people in participation—so-called "government participation". If the government, or municipality, does this right, many people will know about participatory processes and have access to it. People also need to feel they have the necessary political support to change something (Gurtner-Zimmerman, 1996).

One of the main drivers of the participation society has been saving money. The financing of the government in different domains has

been stopped (Vrieling & Verhoeven, 2011). The government is retreating. People need to become more self-sufficient. The idea has been that public initiatives and participation would fill these gaps. However, successful participation can never be reached without a strong government commitment (Beierle & Konisky, 2000). The latter is especially the case for the vulnerable group.

Part of that environment is also the recruitment of participants. Every project is different, and the principal needs to see how citizens can be integrated each time. There are currently no rules on how citizens should be involved. This has led to the situation that some see participation as a box that needs to be checked. In such a case, the quality of the process will remain low, and they do not try to engage people.

My personal experience is that you often need to be actively involved and connected to the proper channels in the city to know about participatory processes. For example, the consultation evening about the development of Pompenburg, one of the most significant developments in Rotterdam at the moment, has not been able to reach me. Whereas I live 50 meters away from the project, I have been a far above-average active citizen, and I was researching citizen participation in Rotterdam at the time.

The quality of the process

There are a few pillars to successful participation (Beierle & Konisky, 2000):

1. The quality of the deliberative process
2. The quality of communication with the government
3. The commitment of the lead agency
4. The degree to which jurisdiction over the process was shared

If people fail to meet these criteria, there is a risk that participation starts to be connected to bad experiences and memories. The result is that people stop participating and distrust more (Hanson, 2018). People can distrust the government and

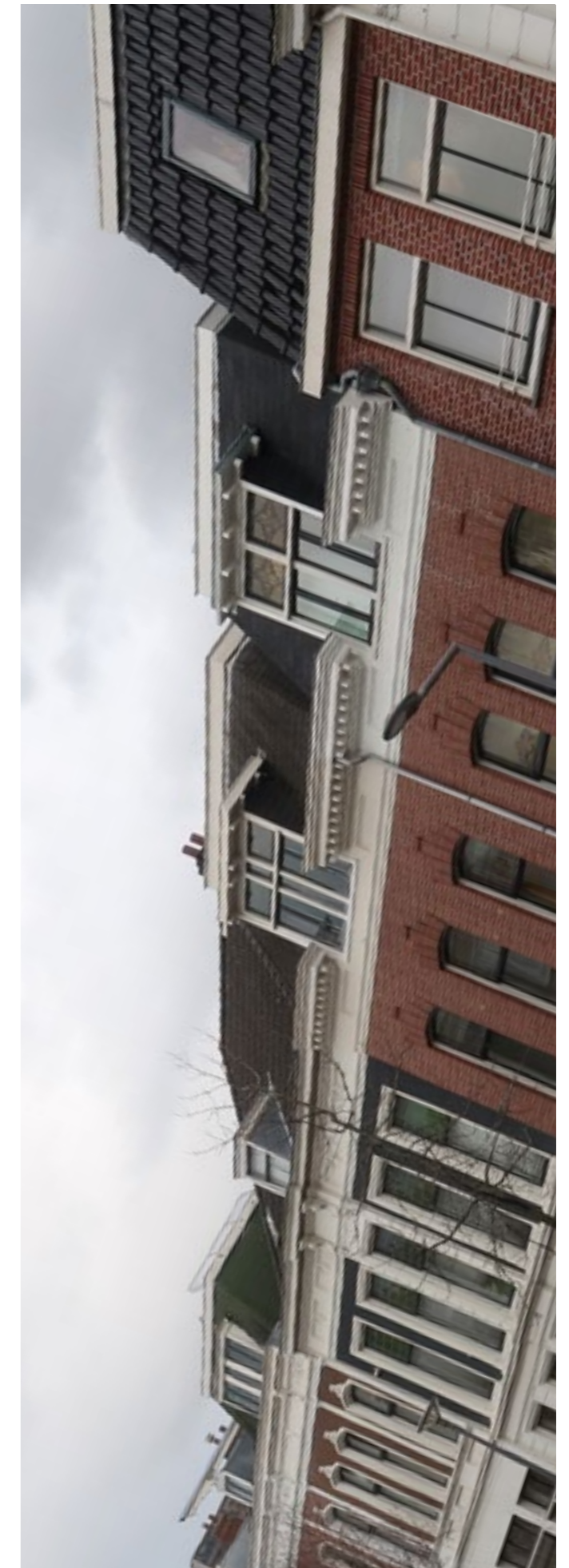


Image 6: Glimpse of the project location (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

people's intentions even more due to low-quality processes. Many times this has been the case (Milikowski, 2021). To give a few examples of poor quality in processes:

- A monologue instead of dialogue. A focus is on technical information, but participants have little opportunity for feedback about their concerns. The decision is often already made, and the participation is a formality (Window dressing)
- An evening for public comments on a project, but participants never receive feedback on their input. As a result, they feel unheard, even if something has been done with the input.
- Not being clear about expectations, people roles and influence.

It is difficult to tell the overall quality of the participation processes in, for example, Rotterdam. Nevertheless, since the complaints seem omnipresent in every conversation about this topic, it does seem safe to conclude much can be gained when the quality would be improved.

Distrust by the different stakeholders

An often-heard comment is that politicians (in this regard, it also applies to planners, architects and urbanists) are alienated from the ordinary citizen. The "top" rarely walks in neighbourhoods and talks informally to the people they plan and design for. Not only citizens can distrust participatory processes after a bad experience. Officials or organisation can be distrusting as well. This will mainly be a distrust in citizens' value and quality of input.

Distrust seems to be a barrier stopping the participation society from blossoming. It is likely the reason why co-creation and co-decision are not the norm. In most cases, participation remains a monologue instead of the wanted dialogue. Planners and public actors are vital in facilitating more influential forms of citizen participation (Pestoff, 2014). Building relations with citizens via more personal and informal contact can significantly change this.

3.2 Research aim

The aim is to reflect on the role citizens want, could and should play in the development of urban environment. Therefore, it is a reflection on the connection between citizens and politicians, planners and designers.

More valuable citizen participation is a wanted development and this research aims to see what the potentials is, how we can overcome barriers and where Rotterdam as a city should aim for.

3.3 Knowledge gap

This thesis aims to extend the knowledge on civil participation in urban development in relation to exclusion, distrust and embedded quality. The goal is to set up an experiment, identify existing good practices and research how new ways of participation can potentially play a role in overcoming existing problems. Whereas most research in this domain and topic looks through a politician, planner and designer lens, will this research include a sociological and psychological lens.

3.4 Research questions

Main research question: How can Rotterdam facilitate and structure co-creation in the build environment in an inclusive, supportive, human oriented and meaningful way?

SRQ 1 - What is the current state of participation in urban development in Rotterdam?

1. The historical and current approaches towards urban participatory processes in Rotterdam
2. Which NGO's, companies, programmes and initiatives are currently existing that are occupied with citizen participation?
3. How do urban/landscape/architecture design firms from Rotterdam position themselves towards participation?

SRQ2 - How can Rotterdam establish a well-functioning co-creation environment, while at the same time work on trust relations, strengthen cohesion among stakeholders and overcome the usual-suspect problem? (experiment)

1. Which elements of city development on the streetscale could be steered by or given to inhabitants?
2. Do people feel more connected to a place after a co-creation process?
3. Can you boost the trust of inhabitants in the process by approaching people personally?
4. When is a face to face approach effective?
5. Can you attract a more diverse audience in design process by asking residents in person?
6. Are people more positively connected to the people in their neighbourhood after the experiment?

SRQ3 - In which way could the municipality facilitate co-creation in the urban developments of Rotterdam on the street and neighbourhood scale?

1. What are the recommendations following the conclusions of SRQ 1 and 2?
2. What are good examples regarding co-creation, citizen involvement and creating tangible human environments and what lessons can be learned from them?
3. The development a co-creation process design in Rotterdam

04 Methodology

1. Conceptual framework
2. Research approach
3. Research structure
4. Methods and techniques

4.1 Conceptual framework

The right page shows the conceptual framework of this research. Three observations have led to an hypothesis, which exposes the main problem of this research. The propose part shows the

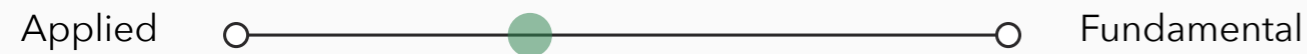
bases for the design and expected results. The final part entails the politicizing of the outcomes in the planning frameworks.

4.1 Research approach

The bars below show the position towards applied vs fundamental, deductive vs abductive and analytical vs explorative. Each position will shortly be explained.

research about Inequality, distrust and participation processes. The research will also embed itself in this context, but the method towards it applied. The experiment will generate new solutions that will be used as input.

The research is based on fundamental



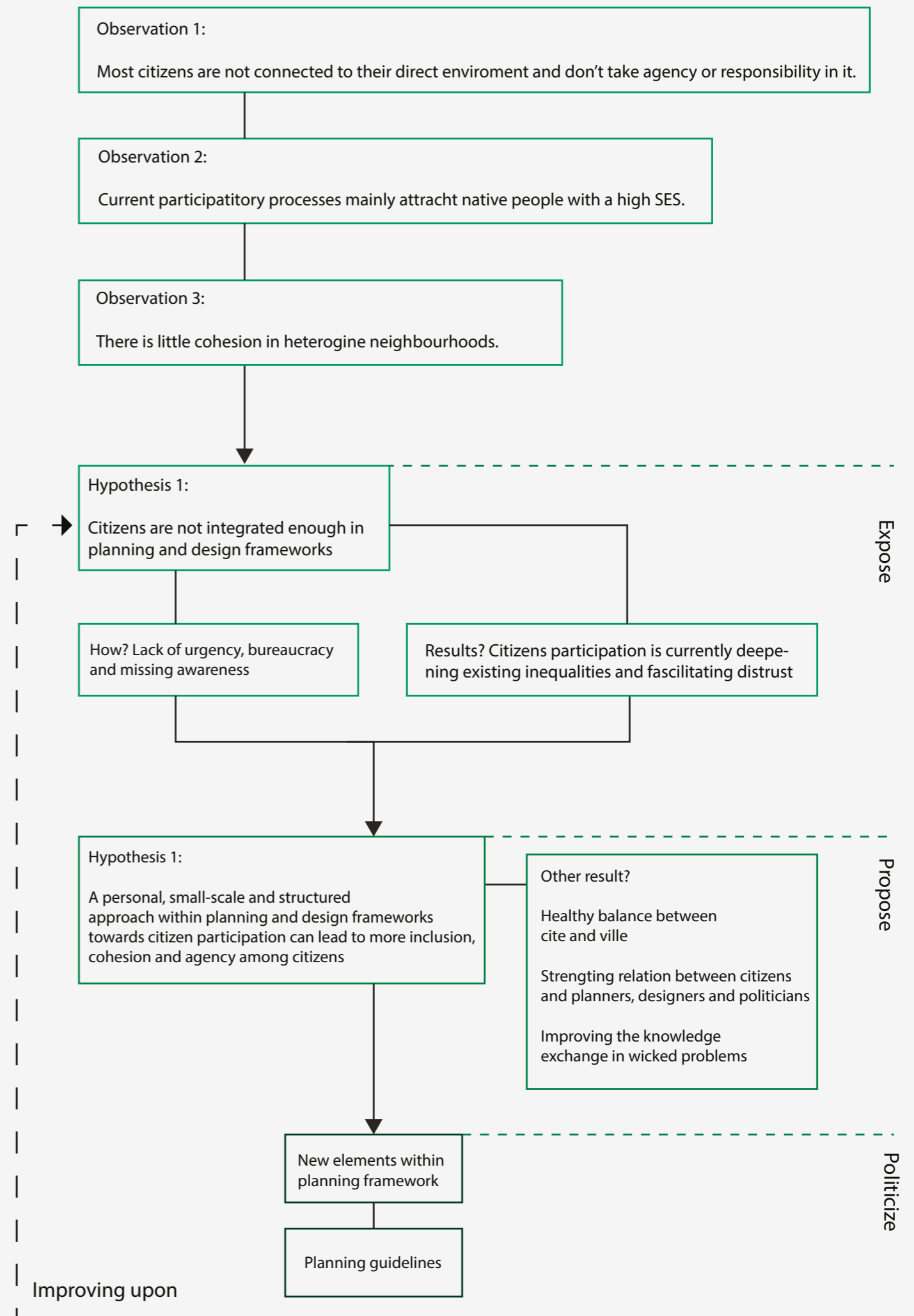
Again, the research starts with a theoretical underpinning but uses an experiment to get new data. The outcome will not lead to a clearly defined answer but is rather a part of an answer. This is opposing a deductive method,

in which a more clear theory or answer can be formulated.



The research is a good mix between analysis and exploration. Different case studies will be used as input, as well as already conducted

research on the topic. The explorative part of this study entails the experiment and the testing of the digital participation tool.



4.3 Research structure

<u>RQs</u>	<u>Parts</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>
1,2	Analysis	<p>Understand the development of citizen participation in Rotterdam</p> <p>Identify current participation processes in Rotterdam</p> <p>Understand participatory processes, the different approaches and the current backlashes</p> <p>Understand citizen participation in different scales</p> <p>Identify good practice examples</p> <p>Identify possible methods and tools</p> <p>Conclude on the found overview</p>	<p>Historical review</p> <p>Literature review</p> <p>Stakeholder analysis</p> <p>Case-study analysis</p> <p>Fieldwork</p>	<p>Synthesis</p> <p>Participation in Rotterdam</p> <p>Participatory processes</p> <p>participation and scales</p>
2	Experiment	<p>Conduct an experiment to understand the potential of a personal approach</p> <p>Conduct an experiment to understand the potential of digital participation</p>	<p>Fieldwork</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Experiment based design</p>	<p>Pilot project</p> <p>Perception of users</p> <p>Results on the process</p> <p>Results on the citizen's voice</p> <p>Result of personal approach</p>
3	Implementation	<p>Show the benefits of new approach and the reason its innovative</p> <p>Framing and formalizing the found potentials for Rotterdam.</p> <p>Reflect on financial implications</p>	<p>Strategic-planning</p>	<p>Scaling strategy</p> <p>Planning recommendations</p>
4	Reflection	<p>Reflect on the results</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	

4.4 Methods and techniques

<u>Method</u>	<u>Technique</u>	<u>Intented outcome</u>
Historical review	Readings and research, interview	Written context description & Historical timeline
Literature review	Readings and take position	Written context description & Structure Diagram
Stakeholder analysis	Spatial mapping Power-interest chart	Overview of stakeholders & Map of initiatives
Fieldwork	Interviews, photos, observing, collaborating	Input for framework, transcriptions, visualisations
Case-study analysis	Interviews and readings	Input for framework, transcriptions,
Surveys	Interviews and digital questionnaire	Input for citizen's voice & data
Strategic planning	Planning framework	Planning framework Spatial framework Stakeholder framework
Experiment based design	Design by doing, observing, altering	Input for framework
Evaluation	Reflect on potentials, outcomes and further research	Evaluation

05 The state of participation

1. The historical and current approaches towards urban participatory processes in Rotterdam.
2. Which programmes are existing that are occupied with citizen participation?
3. How do urban/landscape/architecture design firms from Rotterdam position themselves towards participation?

5.1 The historical and current approach towards urban participatory processes in Rotterdam

The following pages will give an overview of the options you currently have and some that existed in the past. Each option will briefly be discussed for its value and barriers. Followed up by a reflective conclusion

Current options

Citizens initiative

As a citizen of Rotterdam, you can write to the city's council, even from the age of twelve (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). This writing must contain an initiative about topics the municipality controls. The council is also explicit about the topics that they have control over, but you are not allowed to address:

1. The execution of national law
2. Municipal procedures
3. The municipality as an organisation
4. Budgeting
5. Municipal taxes
6. Facilities for officials
7. Behaviour of officials
8. Appointment or functioning of officials
9. Subjects that evaluated by a judge
10. Subjects that belong to other departments

If your subject does not address one of the above, you are asked to collect signatures - 25 for local and 150 for the city scale.

The functioning of this system has been criticised (Rekenkamer Rotterdam, 2020). The access to the system is good, but the execution of the initiatives often takes much longer than wanted. The result is often that the energy flow is out of the initiative, and critical players quit.

Resident initiative

If you have a good idea for your neighbourhood, you can ask for a small or big residential initiative (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). It needs to be for and by residents or improve the neighbourhood. The small residential initiative will give you a subsidy of 2500 euros and the big initiative up to 20.000 euros.

To give examples of what one can initiate; more green in your street, art on a wall, coming together for the elderly or a Christmas market. The local council will evaluate small initiatives. Big initiatives will be evaluated two times a year during a voting in which inhabitants can join. Small proposals are dealt with by an organisation called Opzoomer mee, and the big ones by the municipality itself. This organisation makes sure the initiatives comply with the rules and pays everyone. The local councils do the official agreement for the initiative.

Overall, it is a well-functioning system (Panteia & Opzoomer Mee, 2015). It is clear to people how it functions, and they are also helped quickly in most cases. One of the recommendations for the organisation has been that Opzoomer Mee needs to guide the themes for the initiatives more. In 2015 they appeared to be random and not connected to one another. Since then, Opzoomer Mee started with themes you could join as a citizen. For example, a rain collector in your street to water the plants.

Opzoomer Mee is, at this point, the central organisation for smaller-scale citizen participation - From green in your street to organising a street party.

City Lab 010

City Lab 010 is a start-up programme in Rotterdam with an annual budget of 3 million euros (n.d.). The programme helps people to formulate a realistic plan for their ideas and brings people in contact with one another. The topics can vary, but they need to address one or more of the following goals:

1. The futureproof economy

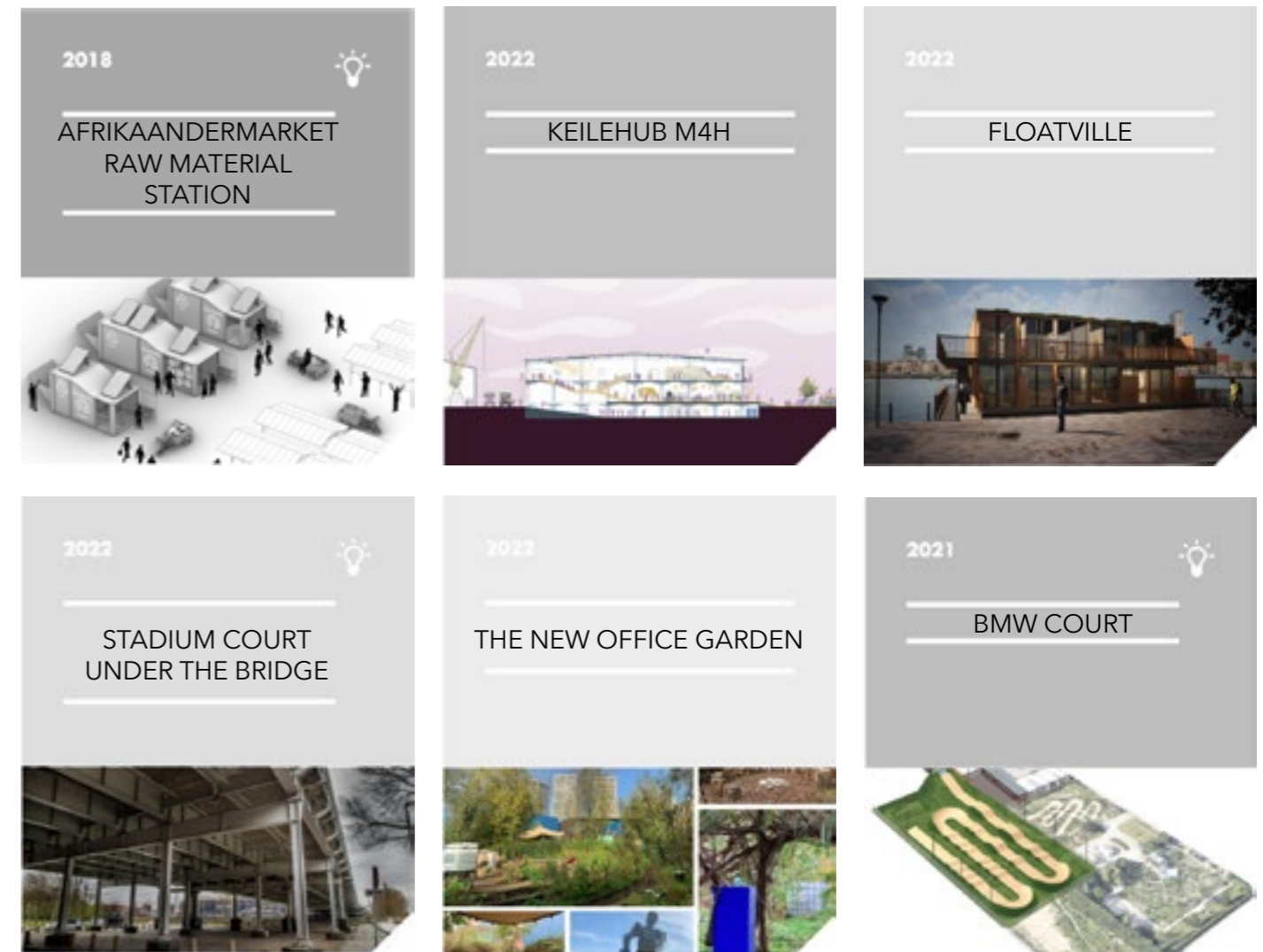


Image 7: Six examples of projects by Citylab 010



Image 8: Example of resident initiative (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

2. Employment for vulnerable groups
3. Possibilities for people in all groups to participate in society
4. Free, safe and pleasant recreation in Rotterdam

If you join the programme, you will be assigned to a coach who helps you through every step of the way. After handing in your project plan, the jury will evaluate your plan in the six months after.

Although City Lab is more general, it is still a well-defined and good-functioning platform for people to participate and be active in the city. Still, the municipality seems to discontinue the programme in 2023. Why is unclear.

Right to Challenge

Right to challenge is a way to challenge the municipality in its doings (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). If you think you can do something better than the municipality for the same money, you can challenge them. There are some criteria:

1. You need to be established in the area you are addressing
2. You challenge a currently existing facility or municipal task
3. No exclusively assigned task for the municipality-like jurisdiction.
4. Your expertise and experience must be convincing enough to assume that you will be able to manage a good outcome.
5. The local community supports the initiative.
6. You do not harm anyone.
7. You are a legal business form
8. The costs are not higher than the current costs.

Right to challenge is a more formal and business-oriented programme, but the possibilities are extensive. Even a street redesign could be one of the possibilities, for example.

Although they position the programme as something that opposes the municipality, it can also be about bringing expertise together and working together.

Burgerpanel

Translation: Citizen panel

In 2006 the municipality of Rotterdam started the "burgerpanel" (n.d.). The organisation consists of volunteers who give wanted and unwanted advice on a vast array of topics concerning the quality of services given by the municipality. The burgerpanel is a restart of the urban quality panel that existed the 14 years prior. With the new panel, the municipality wants to focus on and enhance citizen participation. This participation can be vertical, from panel and citizen to municipality, and horizontal between citizens.

The advice and panels are not without obligations. Both sides need to comply with specific rules, and the municipality needs to react within six weeks to recommendations made by the panel. An example of how this looks in real life:

The panel has researched neighbourhood perception. Research showed that 40% of the people were dissatisfied with their direct environment. So the panel dove into the most poorly rated neighbourhoods to find out why they were not valued well. After analyses of the history of the neighbourhoods, the team interviewed and talked extensively in the streets to find out what should be done. They found out that many unknown initiatives exist and safety, low-quality public space and the low budget for social facilities are the main concerns. The municipality acknowledges and recognises the problems and claims they have started programmes to improve things.

The panel is still existing and seems to function as an entity. At the same time, does the panel admit that the impact on society and the influence in the municipality is not high. In the municipality, they see the difference in power as a barrier, and within the neighbourhood, it remains difficult to reach beyond the usual suspects.



Image 9: Example of street renewal made possible by Right to challenge (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)



Image 10: Example of research conducted by the Citizen Panel; accessibility of public toilets in Rotterdam. (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

There is also a youth version called Young010. Citizens between the ages of 13 to 24 organise events and talk to teenagers and young adults to formulate asked and un-asked advice for the municipality.

Rotterdams Weerwoord

Translation: Rotterdam's reply

If you want to improve Rotterdam's climate adaptability in specific, then you can find help and subsidies by Rotterdams Weerwoord. (n.d.). Rotterdams Weerwoord is initiated by the municipality and a few important water management partners in the city. Their aim is climate adaptivity and biodiversity in Rotterdam in every aspect. Their extensive list of goals and ambitions are connected to broader climate goals, as well as specific aims like making 75 buildings climate adaptive in the coming years. Their point of view is that climate adaptation can only be done together. You need a shared direction as a society, also because 60% of the space is private in the city.

As a citizen, but also a professional, you can ask for a diverse set of subsidies. You can get up to €1.500 for small improvements around your house and up to €50.000 for bigger projects in both the city as well as on private terrain. Next to that is there a subsidy if you want to promote climate adaptation, for example, in a commercial. There are also subsidies in case you want to use native plants or trees in the city.

They help you with small projects, like making a green facade, as well as with bigger projects. Each category within climate adaptation has its own tips and advice. They also have playful actions from time to time, for example, their green music caravan which they used to end the tile replacement competition. The price; a new green blue street.

Between 2018 and 2022 they managed to realise and add:

- 3.725 m³ of rainwater storage
- 7.3 ha of water-permeable surface
- 21.5 ha of green
- 9,4 ha of additional green roofs

- 13 green and blue schoolyards
- 1.023 facade gardens
- 176.303 removed tiles

The numbers prove that much can be done and realised together using subsidies.

Stoepgroepen

Translation: Sidewalk groups

A more recent experiment in citizen participation is called Stoepgroepen. The concept is to make a walk with inhabitants through a project while talking about the space and its possibilities. Its strength is its open and unrestrained approach to new developments. The ideas and suggestions are collected, after which they are shared with urban and landscape design offices. A conversation between the stakeholders could follow after this.

Their first walks are connected to the seven big green spaces developed throughout Rotterdam. One of them is the Hofbogenpark. In total, there are already 17 groups.

The question for me with this approach is how it will be embedded into daily practice. The aim to stimulate unrestrained creativity, also makes it less connected and integrated into existing practices. Other stakeholders often do not know about its existence as a result. Besides, the downside of unrestrained possibilities is that the possible things to think about are endless as well. Making it either more complicated or a bit superficial. Moreover, most ideas presented to the design offices are redundant from the start since the office cannot even change certain criteria, for example.

The fact that they seem to be able to reach a substantial group of people in these 17 groups and seven projects, does tell us that the concept has potential.

Zelfbeheer

Translation: self-management

It is possible to take initiative in maintaining



Image 11: Example of waterstorage measurement by Rotterdams Weerwoord in ZOHO; the water is collected from the Hogbogen into the letters (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)



Image 12: Photo of a Stoepgroepen walk through the Old North of Rotterdam (Robert van Overveld, taken on Aug. 30, 2022)

green in your environment. Green around the trees and directly next to the facade is free to use. The only rule is to have at least 1,8 meters of walkway width. A step further is the care for a green strip and small public gardens. In agreement with your neighbours, you can take things into your own hands. If your plan remains accessible to everyone, you can write to the neighbourhood director, who will permit you. The exact process occurs when you want to use an empty plot as a garden temporarily. The neighbourhood director can also bring you in contact with a specialist to work out a maintenance plan and give tips.

Rotterdammer centraal

Translation: The citizen of Rotterdam in the centre.

“Rotterdammer centraal” is a community for professionals that provide a service in Rotterdam (n.d.). It is independent and non-profit but subsidised by the municipality. The goal is to see how the citizens of Rotterdam can play a more central role in the projects and services of these organisations.

The community work with five principles:

1. Put the citizens of Rotterdam central. Design based upon the needs and context of the citizen. Not from the technique or your organisation.
2. Be satisfied when citizens are satisfied. Design, test, measure and improve. Moreover, keep on doing that.
3. Make it accessible for citizens. Design simple processes, accessible systems and write for everyone to understand.
4. Work fact-based, not on assumptions. Design based on facts and research. Do not assume citizens are like you.
5. Be transparent and share knowledge. Work together and share your knowledge and experience. Open up to feedback.

The European regional development fund funds the organisation. There is also an accompanying community and website called “gebruiker centraal”, which translates to user central. This website focuses on the digital services that the government provides to

people. The ministry of national affairs funds this community.

Digital options

Gemeentepeiler

Translation: The municipal poll

This low-key digital participation platform collects information from (live) polls and surveys about a vast array of topics (n.b.). If you want to use the application as a citizen you need to fill in some personal information, for example, your postal code. Just like Whatsapp notification, you will be notified about a new topic that is related to you and in which you are allowed to vote.

Rotterdam uses this platform since 2018. The options on how to use the app for the municipality are diverse and have the potential to further grow. For users, it is an easy, fun and accessible way to let others know what they think. The maximum number of questions is 15. In a way, it is the digital version of the beforementioned citizen panel.

Although the number of people who downloaded the application is still relatively low, the percentage of people reacting is high.

Furban

Furban is an online platform Furban in which it becomes possible to design projects in a game-like environment of a location (n.b.). Comparable to the software IKEA uses to let customers design kitchens. After you finish your design you can upload it for others to see and vote on. A finished design can be used as augmented reality as well. It is free for anyone to buy and use the software.

It is again an easy, fun and accessible way to get citizens involved in the design of the public space. People do not need to learn more complex programmes, like Rhino3D or Revit, but can straight away start with putting elements in the location. This automatically has to consequence that it is less specific.

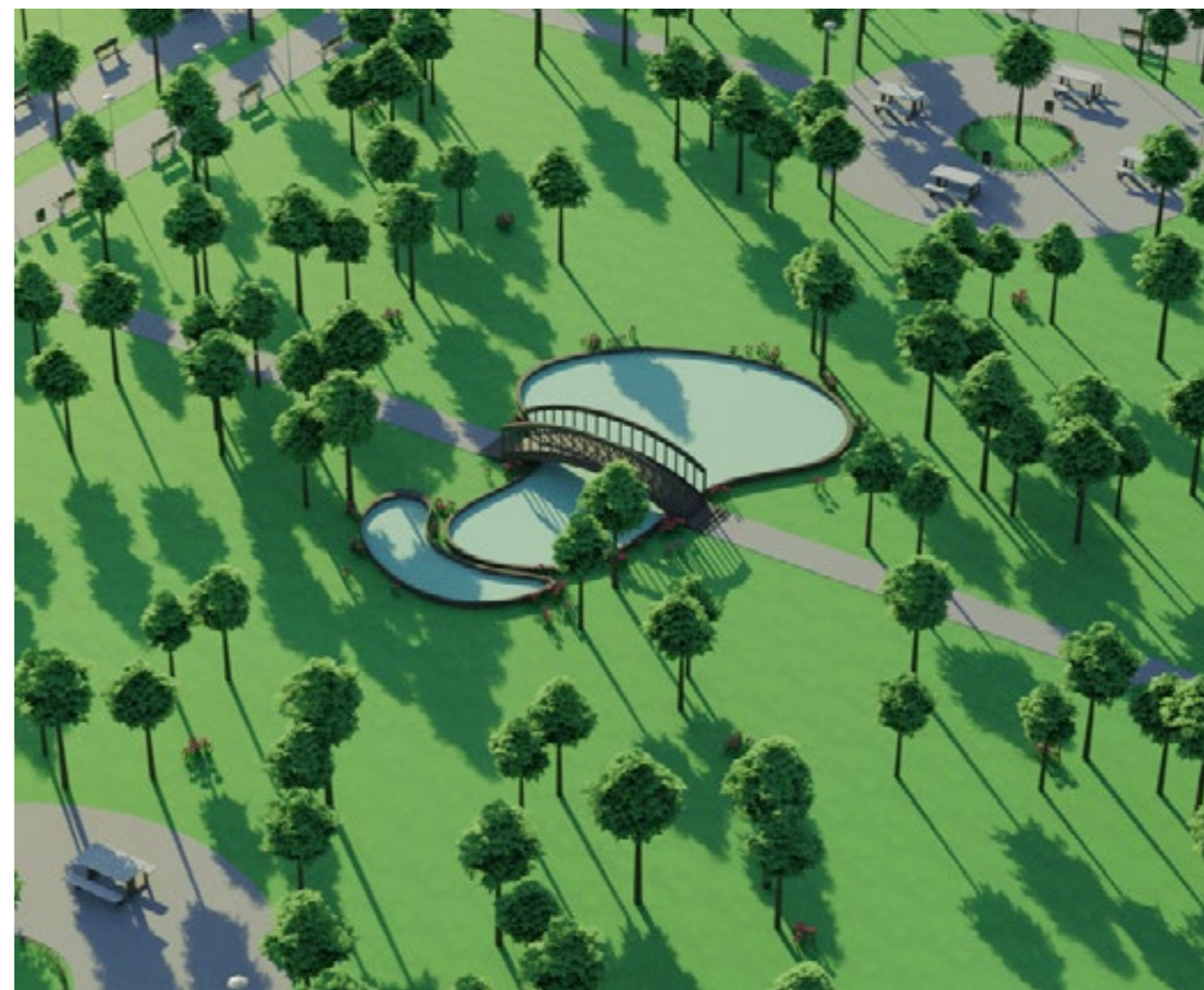


Image 13: The digital game-like environment of Furban.

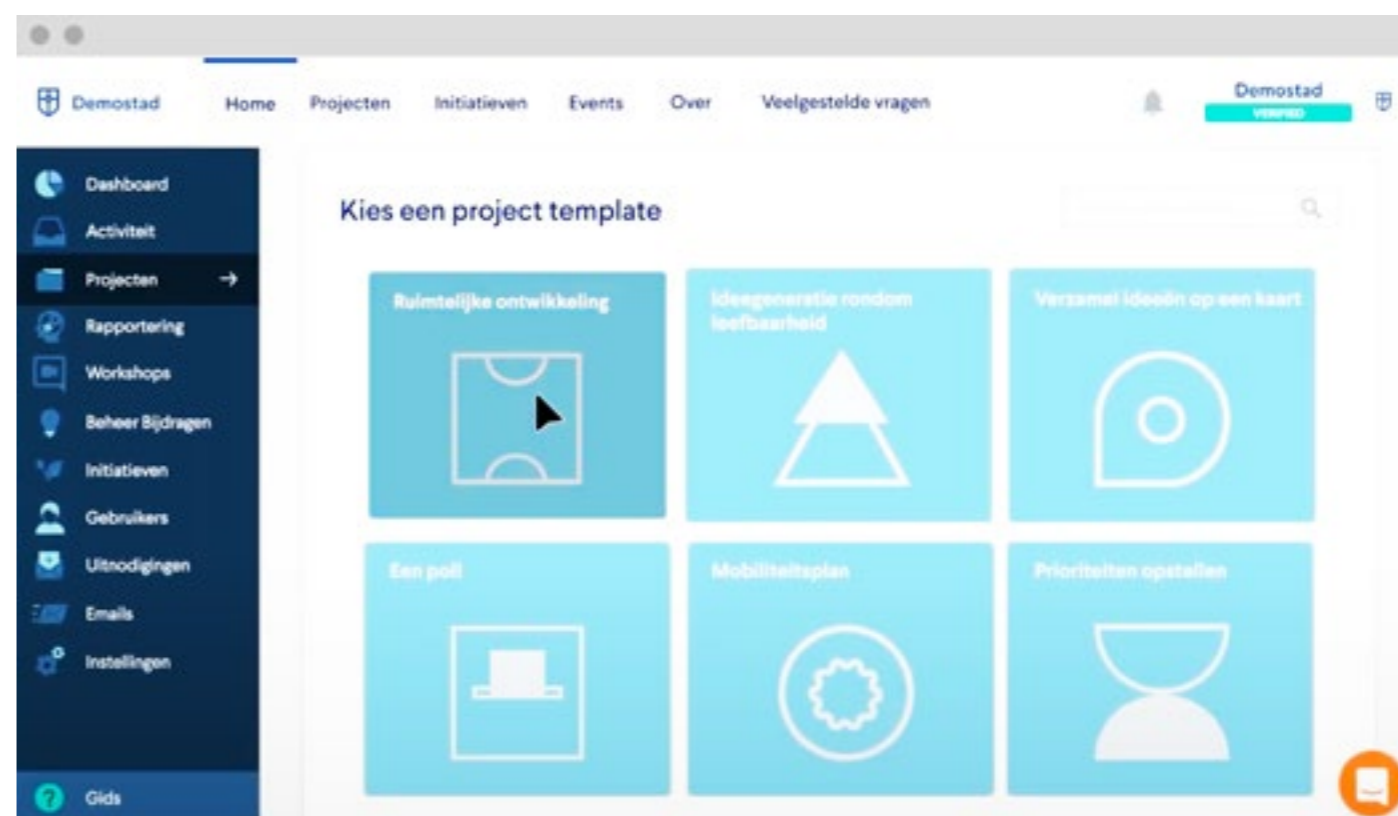


Image 14: The example of the digital platform that CitizenLab can create (next page)

Furban mainly collects information about what people's first thoughts would be on the programming of a certain location. The latter has brought some concerns to officials, whether people understood that is more a brainstorm than an actual design

Overall, does Furban show that participation and co-creation have digital potential. The software can extend and eventually become as realistic as programmes like Lumion.

CitizensLab

Citizenslab provides a more extensive version of the Gemeentepeiler (n.b.). Their main product is a platform in which you bring stakeholders of a project together. You can design your platform to the needs of the project and choose an array of different participation approaches. The platform makes it easy to share information quickly with a larger group. You can ask for people's opinions, let them join online sessions or let them co-create the budgeting of a project, for example. This information is easy to be translated and used by the initiators.

CitizensLab will also help you with the platform as well as give you advice on how to approach your participation process.

Options in the past

Droomstraten

translation: Dreamstreets

In 2015 Rotterdam started with the so-called Droomstraten. The inspiration came from Gent, where in 2013, several streets were temporarily closed to cars and opened to inhabitants to appropriate for a while. The overall goal was to improve the quality of living on the streets for everyone. In addition, an indirect goal was to bring people with heterogeneous backgrounds and lifestyles together.

Each street in 2015 - a total of six streets have participated - made a plan and received a small 20.000 euros. The streets used this

money differently, but often on green and facilities. Overall, the Droomstraten proved to be a success. The street got greener, there were new facilities for children, and some streets even made a long-term plan with an architect. For months there were events and activities.

The following year, another six streets were selected. This time the streets had to take a more integrated approach. Some created a family square. Others made a traffic safety plan for their neighbourhood.

Why the Droomstraten ceased to exist after these two years is not clear. It was clear, however, that the projects taking place till that point were mainly initiated and carried out by native, relatively wealthy house owners. This also led to some discussions from time to time between different inhabitants. Whether this was on an unacceptable scale remains unclear. Whether the Droomstraten improved the cohesion has been argued as well. It seemed to mainly improve the cohesion of a certain group at the time. It is not to say that it would have only been successful if everyone had been involved since that is almost impossible.

The results of the Droomstraten can still be seen to this day. The inhabitants of the Kettingstraat even got new plans. In other words, the projects ignited a flame that still exists six years after.

Conclusions

One of the main ways for the municipality to enable participation is through subsidies. They are also willing to help you and provide customized work. The height of the budgets seems sufficient for most proposals as well.

The interesting thing about the programmes of the municipality are that there are many that serve similar purposes but are not linked to each other. Rotterdams Weerwoord, is initiated and subsidised by the municipality and a specialist in climate adaptation for the city, but almost not visible on the municipality's website. Instead, there exist two other sustainability platforms; an information point on the website of the municipality itself and



Image 15: Photo of a Dreamstreet in Rotterdam. The square is used as a street garden. (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

another fully developed platform on another website. You can also go to Opzoomeren for the same topic or directly ask for a resident initiative. Perhaps this multitude of different groups fastens your process, but it mostly seems to create chaos.

It is also interesting to see that there are many people occupied with participation in this city. The quality of participation platforms and groups will likely only improve in the coming years. Digital platforms seem to have many potentials. Especially in attracting a new group of people that does not have the time or energy to go to meetings or co-create.

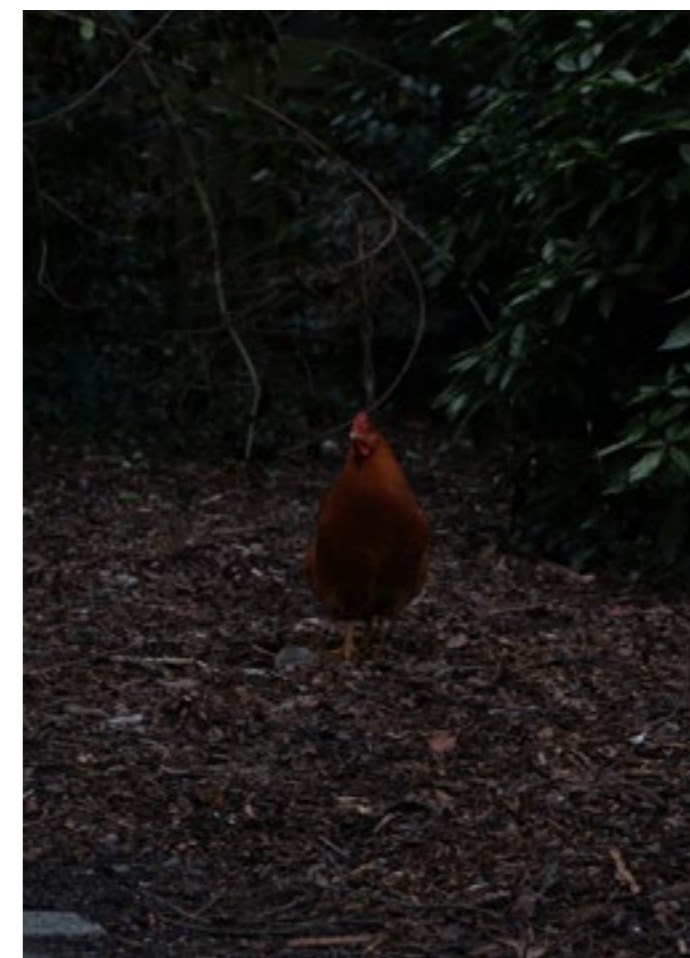


Image 16: They still have chickens walking freely around! (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

5.2 Which programmes are existing that are occupied with citizen participation?

Current programmes and strategies

Buurt bestuurt

Translation: Neighbourhood decides

Then there is "Buurt Bestuurt", where you, as a citizen, can start a committee in your neighbourhood to address three topics within your neighbourhood (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). These topics are mostly related to police and urban supervisor topics but can also entail collecting garbage or making a square greener.

Still, are these groups depending on the approval of the municipality. An often-heard complaint is that they do not get enough reaction and feedback. As a result, the energy drains out of the committee, and the relationship with the municipality is again weakened. Something the municipality was trying to improve with Buurt Bestuurt.

Omgevingswet

Although not initiated by the municipality, has the "omgevingswet" the potential to change how the municipality deals with initiatives from citizens. This new law should change the relationship between citizens and the municipality by shifting responsibilities. This is upfront aimed at the physical environment.

The law states that the citizens, and those connected to a particular development, should be involved in the early stages of a process. How a municipality does this is free to their interpretation.

For Rotterdam, this has resulted in 6 pillars formulated in an executive programme called "betrokken stad" or "involved city". This programme builds further on all the existing participation entities, and their visions, in the city.

Betrokken stad

Translation: Involved city

The six pillars of the Betrokken Stad are (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.):

1. Participation as customised work. This seems to imply that the municipality sees the "how" in participation as part of their job.
2. Involvement in your direct environment. Involvement is an essential point of the whole law. An example of that is the digital platforms that inform and let people react to surveys about topics. As a result, the overall strategy is more approached and orchestrated on a neighbourhood level.
3. Clear expectations and response. The municipality wants to be more explicit about what everyone's role is and can be in the process. That should also explain how decisions are made overall in the process.
4. Taking initiatives as the starting point. As the title says, should big and small initiatives be used as development guides. The district and neighbourhood commissions and committees will play a significant role in facilitating this.
5. High quality and inclusivity. The plan is not to make even more tools and platforms, since there seem to be enough, but the improve their overall functioning. More attention will be given to the handling and response to initiatives and be more proactive. The latter also implies that the usual-suspect problem will be tackled.
6. Participation is a profession. The municipality wants to be more than just a platform that tries to provide participation. It wants to be connected to initiatives and support them in new ways.

Goals Betrokken Stad

At the beginning of 2019, which has been the start of the new municipal bench. The municipality concluded that the involvement of citizens could be further extended. The municipality set two goals regarding

participation, which are monitored each year:

1. A significant amount of people think that they have been more involved in thinking about measurements in their city (after four years)
2. A significant amount of people think that they have been more enabled in decide about measurements in their city (after four years)

Wijk aan zet

Translation: The neighbourhood's turn

The practical execution of the Betrokken Stad is translation in a programme called Wijk aan zet. The programme consists of the integration of Wijkraden (neighbourhood councils), Wijkhubs and MijnRotterdam (a new participation platform). Each of them will be explained.

Starting with the Wijkraden. The former gebiedscommissies (district councils) have been scaled down to the level of the neighbourhood, resulting in 39 neighbourhood councils. Members of these councils have been elected during the municipal elections in the beginning of 2022, and will be re-elected ever four years. People do not need to be connected to political parties to run as candidate.

One of the core intentions with these new councils is a even more accessible connection between the citizen/organisation/ entrepreneurs and the municipality. The council will serve as a contactpoint and advisor if you want to change or do something in your neighbourhood. A more specific goal of the council is the formulation of a neighbourhood agreement and plan. This plan includes recommendations towards the municipality on what the neighbourhood will need to be successful. The council also checks if the agreements are met by the municipality.

In order to get in contact with this council you can send e-mail, or you go to one of the Wijkhubs. These wijkhubs are locations in the neighbourhoods where you can ask all sorts

of question, including questions about ideas or plans for the neighbourhood. The officials will get you in contact with the council.

The third new element is called MijnRotterdam. A digital environment in which you can participate in Rotterdam. You can submit plans and ask for subsidies (the ones mentioned in the previous section), see what other plans exist in the city and in your neighbourhood, and vote for projects in your to be granted or rejected. In this digital environment you can also find information about you Wijkraad, like the council's neighbourhood plan.

These new development were launched in 2022 and about its functioning is not much to conclude yet. One of the complains have been that the council does not have any power on itself. Everything it wants to do needs to be approved by the municipality. It functions mainly a lobbying neighbourhood organ at this moment. The failing trust in each other is arguably not been done much good with this set-up. One of the reaction has been that it is currently not the neighbourhood's turn, but the turn of the people in charge. It is their turn to indeed give up some control and make this city truly more democratic (Omlo, 2022).

Evaluations

Rekenkamer huidige staat

Translation: Evaluation of the current state

In 2020, Rotterdam researched the current state of affairs concerning participation (Rekenkamer Rotterdam, 2020). The main research question has been:

"Is the municipality of Rotterdam enabling citizen initiatives enough to enable citizens to develop themselves and create public value?"

The citizens in Rotterdam initiate a more-than-average amount of projects. One in every 120 citizens does so, leading to a total of 2000 initiatives a year. The topics vary, from improving the quality of public space to

strengthening the elderly involvement in the neighbourhood.

Whereas most initiatives are heard and executed to a certain extent, do initiatives in the social and physical domain prove challenging to deploy. Overall, is only 40% positive with the feedback and reaction they get. The research concludes that the municipality seems to be mainly able to react to initiatives and rarely proactively react to ideas coming from citizens.

The latter explains why the changes in the physical domain prove difficult; unless small, they are always a process. Four out of five projects in the physical domain initiators explain not to get the help they would have expected. One out of five projects is not getting enough help to bring any change. All initiators felt a negative influence by the municipality on the final result. Most heard barriers are the unwillingness to change the municipality's visions, bureaucratic inertia, and the lack of interest in learning together about participation in the physical domain.

Past programmes

Mensen Maken de Stad

Translation: People make the city

“Mensen maken de stad” is a method that was used between 2003 and 2009 in Rotterdam. The goal was to enhance the street's social structures and promote active citizenship. Therefore, a social contract was formulated with the help of youth and community workers. In this contract, rules were written down on how they wanted to take care of the street and how they thought they wanted to relate and communicate with one another.

The concept entailed three phases:

1. Social diagnose. The potentially interesting streets are mapped, and the most relevant ones are chosen.
2. The starting phase. The current situation is evaluated to compare differences after

a while. The social contract is formulated in this phase, and the concept version is tested. The starting phase ends with a street agenda in which all agreements are collected.

3. Realisation phase. The last phase consists of implementing and using the formulated rules. For two years, a community worker will monitor and stimulate the flow. After those years, the street needs to take the initiative into its own hands.

All in all, it seems that *Mensen maken de stad* is a method that tries to create communities in streets. A particular focus has been on streets with difficulties and social cohesion could make sure inhabitants solve those problems partly together.

Conclusion

With these new programmes and platforms Rotterdam tries to facilitate participation better in the city. A development that in the light of this research can only be applauded.

An often heard reaction to the *Wijkraden* in interviews has been that they are not much different from the previous set-up. The bigger question is also whether Rotterdam is truly addressing the main complains, which is mainly that participation in Rotterdam is superficial. It is easy to make your facade green and ask for information, but slightly more extensive projects remain difficult to execute.

Rotterdam seems in a split. On the one hand they do everything to promote and facilitate participation, but the other hand are they very opinionated about what the city should be. The results is that a substantial group of people feel parented by the municipality. Even the linked neighbourhood councils do not have any budget to act on their own. It seems that Rotterdam wants to be Richard Sennett's open city, but it is not ready to trust it yet.



Image 17: Marketing photo for Rotterdam new approach to participation; *Wijk aan zet*.

5.3 How do urban/landscape/architecture design firms from Rotterdam position themselves towards participation?

Each company could be thoroughly investigated for their approach towards participation. This is, unfortunately, not possible within the given time for the thesis. Instead, each company is interviewed to talk about their position towards participation in urbanism, what they consider the barriers and what they think the future of participation in design processes is.

BGSV

Organisation:

BGSV is a company based in Rotterdam that focuses on advice and strategy for neighbourhoods, districts and cities (n.d.).

Participation:

BGSV starts by saying that they mainly depend on the wishes of clients in deciding their participation strategy. Nevertheless, do they think it is good for the process to get in contact with people from the very beginning. In doing so they use different approaches, from organised meetings to a pop-up stall in the street. The main goal is to extend the understanding of the location and to ask people how they like to see the place developing.

When there is already a plan for the area, BGSV tries to discuss compromises with people. For example, the height of a building is often a point of discussion, but often up to the client. The company tries to stimulate the conversation about compromises to see if the people most "harmed" by the design can get something else out of it. The latter often proves difficult because inhabitants feel most motivated to discuss the pain point.

BGSV tries to initiate participation whenever relevant but thinks it could do more at the beginning of processes. Direct participation, such as co-creation and co-decision, does not take place in their company. The reason for that are the relatively larger scales and mainly

make masterplan-like plans they make.

Urbis

Organisation:

Urbis is a Rotterdam-based office that focuses on urban design and landscape architecture on various scales (n.d.).

Participation:

Urbis tries to incorporate participation where possible and sees participation as a valuable asset in their processes. For example, they organise meetings, information markets, small excursions, or surveys.

The scale is of great importance in which form of participation is interesting to them. Larger, more complex projects lead to different approaches than smaller scale projects. For a large scale project in Luxembourg Urbis co-organized a participation event with festival like appearance to reach as many stakeholders as possible who would not participate otherwise and ensure people would feel at ease. Clients are tried to be convinced to integrate participation in their projects. Urbis explains the participants their role in the process and what will happen with their contributions. It also occurred that people could intensively think along on the development of a square or street, which was a great success. When an idea is right, they try to insert it."

When asked about the future of participation in urbanism, they are more doubtful. The rising prices and the limitations set on building make it more challenging to work freely as an office. Whether inhabitants feel motivated to think along in the future and whether there is enough space in processes remains a difficult-to-answer question.

Stijlgroep

Organisation:

Stijlgroep is a landscape and urbanism design office based in Rotterdam (n.d.).



Image 18: A participation event with outdoor bar co-organized by Urbis



Image 19: Participation in the beginning of a design process by BGSV; choosing the style of architecture.

Participation:

Stijlgroep's position on participation is clear from the beginning; if you want to let people participate in a valuable way, call us. Stijlgroep is an office that fully believes in the power of participatory processes.

They start to explain that they facilitated several bottom-up larger scale participatory processes. One of the examples is Plan Tijn, a neighbourhood in Dordrecht. People contacted the Stijlgroep asking if they could facilitate the design and development of a new waterfront-type neighbourhood. It is almost a privatised space. The municipality is responsible for the underground utilities and the inhabitants take care of all the rest. From the water quality to the design of the urban space. Stijlgroep considers it a great success. Neither are they concerned about the future of the project. They consider it a lifestyle concept; if you dislike being responsible for your direct environment, do not live here. On the other hand, if you care and want to be invested, this is the place to be.

Projects like these have convinced the office that the scale is not that interesting in participation. The co-creation that took place in Dordrecht functioned perfectly. It could happen anywhere, from the street scale to larger urban projects.

The office has seen what has followed Rotterdam regarding participation in the last 30 years and is unhappy about it. They think Rotterdam only likes participation as a concept but almost never follows through. The fear of letting go of control is regarded as one of the main problems. The omgevingswet has the potential to change this, but they do realise that a city as big as Rotterdam might never change due to its size.

The usual suspect problem is not either a problem to them. In their experience, they attract a diverse audience in their doings. Currently, they are working together with a Muslim community in the south of Rotterdam, which they used as an example.

De Plekkenmakers

Translation: the placemakers

Organisation: Occupied with initiating and guiding co-creation processes in urbanism and architecture.

Participation:

When researching citizen participation, one will soon stumble upon the dreamlabs by De Plekkenmakers (n.d.). It is a participation method in which they open up a lab on-site. This can be in a building or a street, for example. De Plekkenmakers believe that places for people should be made with the people. For them, it is about dreaming about the places you inhabit and helping people imagine new things. That is not to say that they think participation has no limitations.

In their process, getting in contact with all stakeholders from the start is essential. They summarise projects in three aspects: the people, the rules/project, and the design. They often see that people communicate in different worlds; municipalities talk in rules and project language, and citizens talk from a human perspective. An essential part of the concept is, therefore, to establish a common communication ground.

In the dreamlabs themselves, they try to find interactive and creative ways to involve people in the process. In smaller projects, they try to involve people personally as well. Besides the on-site lab, they establish the projects online. Sometimes a website is made, sometimes there are online surveys or a Facebook group. The latter depends on how people connected to the project like to communicate, which they are asked at some point.

De Plekkenmakers think that participation could exponentially grow. To them, it is connected to trust. The more people participating, the more people will trust participation in general. They believe that participation has a strong social component. If you know someone who participates and convinces you to come, you come.



Image 20: Extensive participation process by the Plekkenmakers; a whole space is temporarily used to co-create in.



Image 21: Co-created neighbourhood by the Stijlgroep; Tidal park that is completely co-designed and maintained by the inhabitants.

Although there is no limitation regarding scale for their dreamlab method, they do see the limitations of participation in general. The rules and frameworks that the municipality need to take into account make for practical limitations in their concept.

LAP Landscape and urban design

Description:

LAP is a multidisciplinary office with partners in all domains. They try to fill the gap between planning and architecture, focusing on ecological sensibility and sustainability (n.d.)

Participation:

LAP takes perhaps a more conservative position in the conversation about participation in urbanism. For them, there are simply too many complex layers in an urban design process to be able to co-create. The layers are difficult to share with other people.

When LAP organises participation trajectories, they like to keep things in their own hands. Therefore, the collaboration with communication offices in participatory processes is redundant in their experience since they are neither familiar with design processes.

The office organises evenings on which people can react to proposed plans. Sometimes it is a presentation. Other times there are tables where people can talk and write. At the beginning of the process, they open themselves up and ask people what they would like to see. A brainstorm-like reaction follows.

BDP

Description:

BDP is an international office with expertise in a vast array of topics located in four different countries (n.d.). They consider themselves place makers of every scale .

Participation:

BDP tries to integrate participation where possible and when wanted by clients. However, in their experience, is co-creation and co-decision difficult to reach steps on the participation ladder.

They found that the concept of participation is often misused by inhabitants who simply try to form an anti-project group. Especially in neighbourhoods from the '50s, '60s and soon '70s, this proves to be problematic. They explain that these neighbourhoods could be considered social places, with relatively much social housing, low-quality building standards and a set price point for new apartments. In other words, if the municipality wants and starts to regenerate such a neighbourhood, there is simply not much space left to participate. Many tasks are predetermined.

It has also happened in their projects that people went to the municipality, talked to politicians or started a WOB (act public governance) procedure. Politicians sometimes want to avoid complications and decide to stop or change projects. It even happens that citizens ask other design offices for an alternative plan that honours their wishes. Especially native citizens are becoming smarter with the possibilities they have to foil projects.

Projects that are in their experience better for participation are bigger scale projects. In bigger projects, for example, the development of a vision document, you overcome the anti-group problem since more people start participating.

The big question to them is how to set the right borders in participation. Participation in urbanism is becoming more important, but it is problematic if a hand full of people can stop a bigger urban development. Making the right frameworks and borders in participation can avoid miscommunication and the wrong expectations that a minority can influence bigger developments. One of the solutions, in their eyes, could be an independent project president that balances and weighs arguments. He or she also decides the rules for participation in this process. Another realisation for the company has been that

their profession is being extended. These days you cannot only be a good designer, but as an urbanist, you need to be a people person that can communicate and sympathise with people.

Conclusions

All of the offices incorporate participation in some way. Whether an office used more influential participation methods mainly depended on:

1. The design process needed of a project and the amount of set borders by clients.
2. Their philosophy about the role of a designer

The interviews mainly showed that the scale of a project is does not matter in participation. It is mostly a matter of believing in the average human being as an equal stakeholder. The Stijlgroep proved that even full neighbourhood developments can be led and, in the end, maintained by inhabitants.

Scale does matter for how you can and should approach participation. Again, the quality and the approach towards communication proves vital. Your client determines this as well. Many offices stressed the dependency on clients in participation. The good practice project of Haarlem, that will be discussed in a later chapter, is a great example of co-creation on a larger scale, but also took over a year to conduct. If your client is not willing to pay for it, it will prove difficult to execute.

The philosophy of the office is what mainly drives high quality participation processes. LAP seems to believe in the expert spatial designer who simply does what he/she does best: integral designing and developing plans. Most offices positioned themselves in the middle and applied more participation methods when appropriate. Only for a few offices is the user the main figure in the majority of the projects. The potential value of participation is, therefore, for most offices clear.

The only question remaining is what the

quality is when projects are suited for inhabitants or citizens. Again, not all participation processes are created equal. The more inspiring examples exist, the more other companies will be able to get the most out of participation. Sharing good practice seems highly valuable.

06 The experiment

6.1 The experiment

For this research, an experiment will be conducted to understand the current situation in Rotterdam to a greater extent. This experiment consists of regenerating a street in the old north of Rotterdam. The following pages will describe the problems and set-up of the experiment. Summarised, it comes down to:

1. Regeneration of a suitable street
2. Three-step bottom-up approach: Introduction, experimental phase and formal phase
3. The researcher is the initiator and pivotal point of the process.
4. Four problems/dilemmas will be addressed: the lack of connection between the citizen and their direct surrounding, the weak relation between citizens and municipality, cohesion in heterogeneous neighbourhoods, and the usual suspect problem.

This experiment will answer six research questions:

1. Which elements of city development on the street scale could be steered by or given to inhabitants
2. Do you feel more connected to the street you live in?
3. Can you boost the trust of inhabitants in the process by approaching people personally?
4. When is a face-to-face approach effective?
5. Can you attract a more diverse audience in design processes by asking residents in person?
6. Are people more positively connected to the people in their neighbourhood after the experiment?

Problems to be addressed

The problems that will be addressed will guide the set-up of the experiment.

At the beginning of this process, four main problems have been identified that could partly be answered by this experiment; the lack of connection between the citizen and their direct surrounding, the weak relation between citizens and municipality, cohesion in heterogeneous neighbourhoods, and the usual suspect problem. Each problem will be briefly looked into, after which an answer will be given on how they will be addressed.

Lack of connection with the direct environment

Almost everyone is connected to their direct environment for the simple reason that it is connected to someone's feeling of home. Your house might be the pinnacle of this feeling, but the street and the place you live in are the contexts of it. There is a difference, however, in the relationship most people have with the street they live in compared to, let us say, their living room. The living room is by many people carefully assembled and kept clean and liveable. The relation with the street is often different. Why people are not connected to their direct environment, in this case, their street, can have multiple reasons. Some are already touched upon in previous sections. They give a complete overview of the basis upon which decisions are made, an overview of the groups and their reasons are listed beneath:

1. The group that has no interest and is weakly connected to its direct environment. Some people will just not feel interested. There can be plural reasons for this, but the baseline is that they are not interested and most likely will never be.
2. The group that potentially cares. At the moment, it is not their responsibility. Therefore they do not think about it that much, but this has the potential to change in the right circumstances.
3. Those people in the street that are interested and want to do something

but who know it is difficult to change something. Many will look at their street and feel the urge to improve. Perhaps some even decide to unite and make a plan the change something. However, along the process with the municipality, they keep running into barriers, concluding that it is not worth their time. It is a group that does care but also knows that change is difficult and ends up stopping to think about it. This group is relatively connected to their direct environment but cannot identify with it entirely since they cannot express themselves in it.

4. At last, the small group that is doing something. Then there is a small group involved and connected to their direct environment. The difference with the previous group is probably that it is willing to put more time into it to make it work. But, unfortunately, it is a small group.

Conclusion about connection with the direct environment

At the moment, streets and public spaces are almost fully orchestrated by the municipality. The municipality takes this role very seriously and tries to think about every aspect—part of this research questions whether the municipalities are going too far in this role.

By keeping the responsibility to the inhabitants in this street, we can see how the connection and ownership develop. The latter can, for example, be done by working bottom-up. Let the people decide and think about what is wrong with the street, let them think about possible solutions and coach them in the process.

The research question connected to connection:

RQ1 Which elements of city development on the street scale could be steered by or given to inhabitants?

RQ2 Do people feel more connected to a place after a co-creation process?

Relation with the municipality

As we have seen in the theoretical framework, is the trust in the practical execution of officials and politicians low. Almost everyone interviewed for this thesis jokingly wished me success in communicating with the municipality. The process appears to be very slow, and the belief in the capacity of the officials is low.

Conclusion about relation

It seems important to put energy in closing the gap between citizens and the municipality. The main complaint is that officials are not in contact with the average citizen. In this experiment, the researcher will be the point of contact for both the municipality and the inhabitants.

One of the ways to improve could be to approach people face to face. This way, the point of contact will have a face from the start. The latter will likely boost trust in both the project and the contact person.

The research question connected to relations:

RQ3 Can you boost the trust of inhabitants in the process by approaching people personally?

RQ4 When is a face-to-face approach effective?

The usual suspect problem and its conclusion

Part of the reason why a personal door-to-door approach seems good is to see if the usual suspect problem can be minimised. The last two groups, as talked about in "Lack of connection with the direct environment", will likely be interested in a street renewal if they can be reached. The first two groups need to be convinced.

The research question connected to usual suspects:

RQ5 Can you attract a more diverse audience in a design process by asking residents in person?

Cohesion in heterogeneous neighbourhoods

The social bonds in the places that you inhabit can make a world of difference in your experience of the place. Communicating with fellow inhabitants and working together on the world around you can positively influence these bonds. The result is cohesion. Cohesion is at the centre of many participatory processes, or at least of this experiment.

Cohesion is, in particular, interesting during this experiment since it will take place in the heterogeneous Rotterdam. The cohesion in the often heterogeneous neighbourhoods in Rotterdam might be at stake for some time. Hipp en Perrin (2009) conclude that big differences in people's socio-economic status, age, marital status and whether someone's has children lead to less connection with other citizens.

Conclusion on cohesion

Cohesion in the experiment could mainly be stimulated by the shared goals created with this experiment. Besides, can a social approach towards to process help to smoothen conversation and create informal moments along the way. For the experiment, would it be interesting to find a street with a diverse set of people. This is also important for the investigation of the usual suspect problem.

Cohesion is not easily measured. Seen the time given, can cohesion only be measured with interviews in the street.

The research questions connected to cohesion:

RQ6 Are people more positively connected to the people in their neighbourhood after the experiment?

The scale of the experiment

The strategy is to keep the experiment simple, tangible and local. That implies that the experiment will take place in people's immediate public environment, their own street. People's own street is something they are confronted with on a daily basis and know

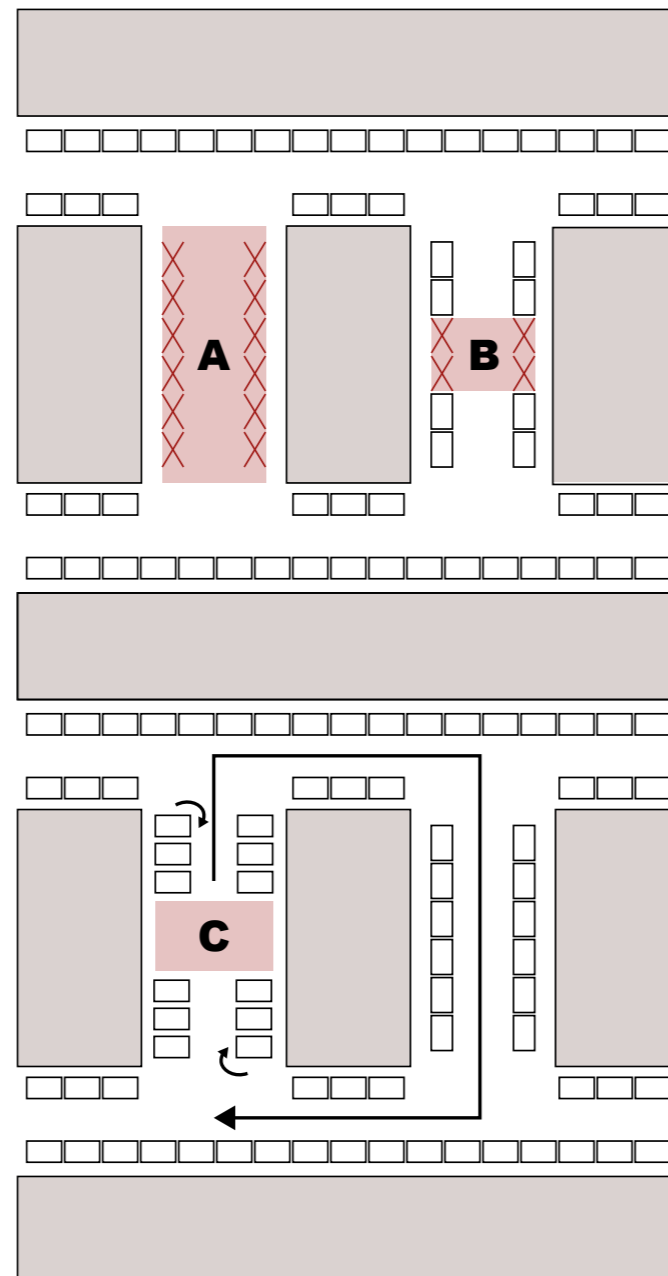


Figure 9: Possible way to re-design the street for more public space and its consequences for car mobility

thoroughly. Neither are the options too vast, which makes it easier to think about, and the duration of the process will likely be shorter.

Location

In order to address more than only the sidewalks, the idea is to look for streets that could possibly be closed down for cars. By closing down a street, more public space can be created. Whether more public space is needed or a wanted outcome is arguable but won't be argued in this research. It's at least a likely scenario when fewer people own cars in the future. How this could be done can be seen in figure 9.



Figure 10: Conceptual timeline of the experiment conducted.

In option A on the left top, you will lose parking spots but have more space to work with. Option B is portrayed at the right top. In this case, you will give up some parking spots in the centre, but keep them for those that are depending on a spot in the street. Option C, in the bottom left, creates less public space than A but keeps the parking spots. The latter will not be possible in every street and will be investigated further in the following chapters. In all cases, the flow of mobility will hardly change in these streets, as the arrow in the lower part shows. It mainly implies that cars need to ride around the housing block. The options for using the public space are, however, positively changed.

Roles and timeline

This experiment emphasises the role of the citizen. Citizens need to be given the time to think about it longer and make the knowledge gap about the project as a whole between the municipality and the citizen smaller. In order to avoid system thinking, the municipality will not be involved from the beginning.

To further extend the tangibility of the project, a tactical urbanism approach will be taken. The idea is to divide the process into three parts;

1. Introduction, with a focus on cohesion
2. Experimental phase
3. Formal phase

In the first phase, everyone will be contacted in person. The relationship with the initiator is, at that point, partially established. The connection between inhabitants will be established during a first come together in de street. The goal of this meeting is to create a social connection and establish an overview of problems, wishes and solutions for the street. This will be done using the

format of a workshop combined with a street celebration. There will be food, activities for children and tables to talk to one another.

The second phase is the tactical phase, in which low-cost, accessible materials and tools will be used to test out ideas derived from the first come together. This phase takes about 2 to 3 months, after which conclusions will be drawn about the interventions taken. This will be done for three reasons;

1. To smoothen the conversation between inhabitants by avoiding conflict about details.
2. To avoid high costs and long processes in which the timeline and outcome will fully depend on the municipality.
3. To build a stronger case for certain ideas and measurements towards the final phase.

The last phase is a formal phase in which the municipality will play a bigger role in which more money is needed. After the first two phases are finalised, a more thorough plan will be presented to the municipality. The bench that during the experimental phase is made out of scrapwood will now be updated to the city's standards, for example. The timeline of the three phases can be seen in figure 10.

Communication

After this first contact, people need to stay informed and updated about the events. The best way to do this seems either a WhatsApp group or a Facebook group. The number of people living in the street will decide which platform will suit the situation better. Everyone who is interested in participating will be added to the group.

Initiative and framework

There are two elements in this bottom-up

approach that briefly need to be explained:

First the initiative. In direct participation, as suggested in this research, it's of less importance who initiates the project. It could be the municipality that initiates a bottom-up approach, the citizens themselves, or, in this case, a researcher. It does matter who carries the responsibility of the project at the core, but one could argue that multiple actors need to carry a part of the responsibility of the project aims to be successful.

In other words, the researcher will take the initiative and also push the project. The main reason for that is to keep as much control as possible over the timeline.

Secondly, the framework. In order to find reasons and a direction for the development of the street, you need guidelines. Guidelines can be budget, general limitations, goals, etc. Therefore, the researcher will function as a spokesperson as well. The researcher can give the tools to come to a proper development of a plan. Information about rules and regulations will be gathered by the researcher via the municipality. Or, preferably, provided by the municipality directly.

A suitable street

In order to find the most suitable street to enrol this experiment in, a few aspects have been taken into account:

1. Potential to be improved
2. Low infrastructural
3. impact concerning mobility.
4. It's preferably a street that could be closed down without creating significant problems for the mobility department.
5. Accessibility. The project is based upon personal contact, which will be most accessible if the project

takes place in an easy-to-reach location for all actors involved.

6. Heterogeneous inhabitants. To be able to investigate the usual suspect and cohesion problem, we need to find a diverse audience in the street.

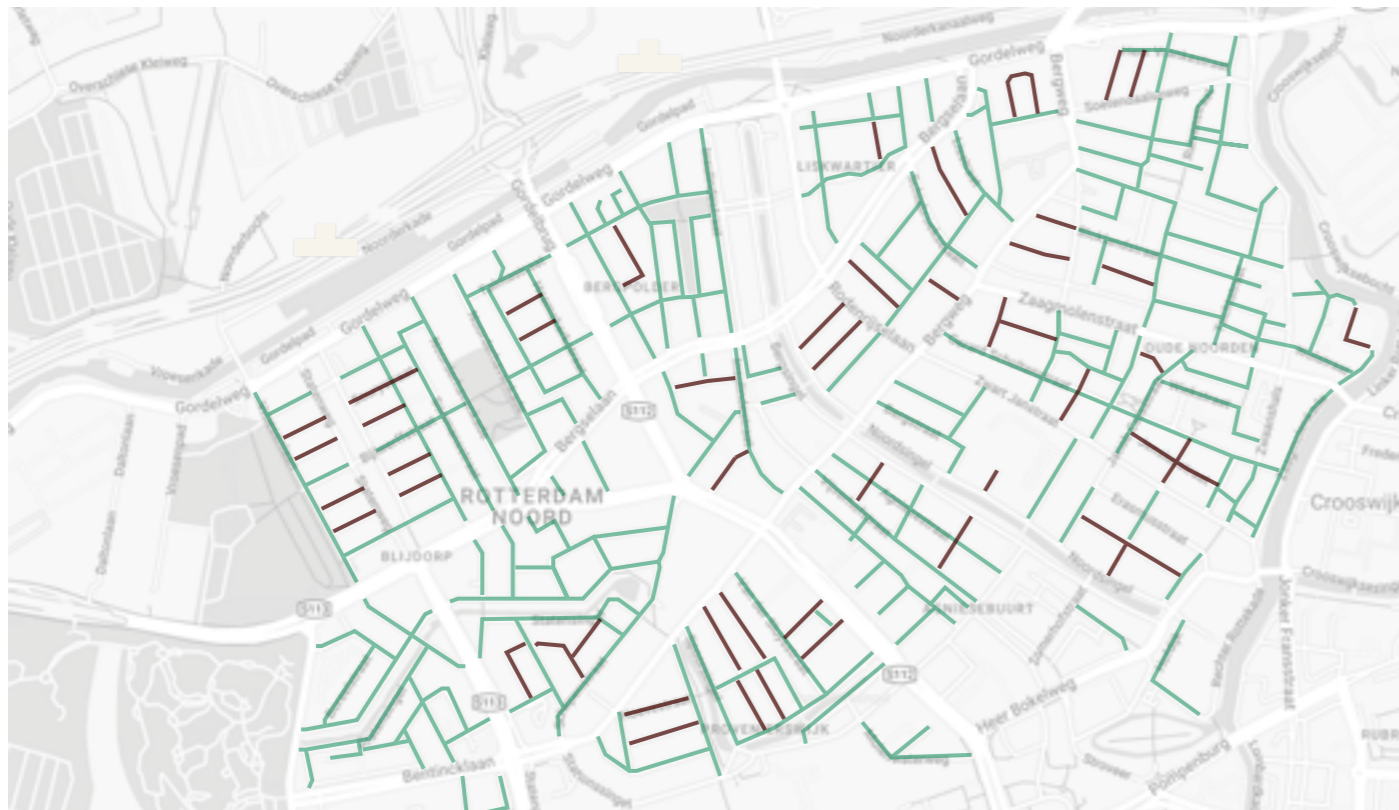
The two districts that seemed interesting are the north and south of Rotterdam. The former is the closest location for all actors. The latter is an interesting region since it's one of the focus regions of the municipality. That implies that the municipality is more likely to be open to new ideas and that other researchers are investigating the area.

The accessibility in the north is, however, heightening the chance of success. That's why it has been chosen to focus on this region.

The search for a suitable street started with identifying the different street types in Rotterdam North (map 1 & 2). One of the first conclusions has been that residential streets and expedition streets have the most potential to be developed. Playstreets and residential areas have potential as well but are most often already developed.



Map 1 & 2 : Streettypes in Blijdorp



Map 3: Residential and expedition streets in the north of Rotterdam indicated with green. Those with the most potential can be seen in red.



Map 4: Streets in the North that could potentially be transformed in green. In red the streets that proved unsuitable. In orange the streets chosen.

Filtering the northern region's residential and expedition street leads to the green and red lines in map three. The red lines indicate the streets with the most potential. Those have been selected by their role within the mobility network. The ones with the least impact on the

flow have been selected. The located streets are next to that selected based on their length. Whether a street can easily be transformed and possibly closed off is also depending on the consequences for parking. Rotterdam does have the intention to facilitate fewer parking spots in the city, but this will be done step by step. By choosing a smaller street,

you minimise the number of people affected, therefore, lowering the number of people that possibly need to be convinced. At the same time is a smaller street more accessible to monitor.

Live Traffic

Another information source is the traffic (jam) monitors that are constantly kept up to date by google. Most residential streets are not even monitored, which is likely due to their inactivity.

The main mobility lanes show some peak moments at certain times, but this doesn't seem to influence the residential streets.

Street profiles and possibilities

How each street could potentially be transformed is also depending on the width of the street. In image 22, you can see a street profile with the lowest accepted widths in which two cars can park perpendicular to the street (Standaard Wegenbouw Details, 2013). Rotterdam recommends 1,8 meters of sidewalk (opzoomer mee, 2022) and 4,75 meters for a two-way street (Zimmermann, 2019). It implies that a minimum width of 18,35 meters is needed to realise option B. Option A & C will stand either any width. The selected streets that meet these criteria can be

seen in map four.

Walking through the neighbourhoods

Although there are ways to gather information about the streets with the most potential, it's not enough to make any real conclusions. In order to do so, all selected streets have been observed during walks. These walks gave a good understanding of whether it would be likely and necessary to create more public space on that specific street.

The streets that appeared to be unsuitable are indicated with red in map four. The reasons for being unsuitable are diverse. Sometimes the street already had a distinct character, and other times there is a park connected to it.

The decision for a street

Although many streets have the potential to possibly be transformed, one street stood out. This has been the southern part of the Tollensstraat, indicated with Orange. The street has already been closed down in a similar fashion as option B. However, the public space that was created by this action has not been used to the full extent. Choosing the Tollenstraat for the experiment avoided the whole obstacle of closing down the street and its parking spots. This closing down would

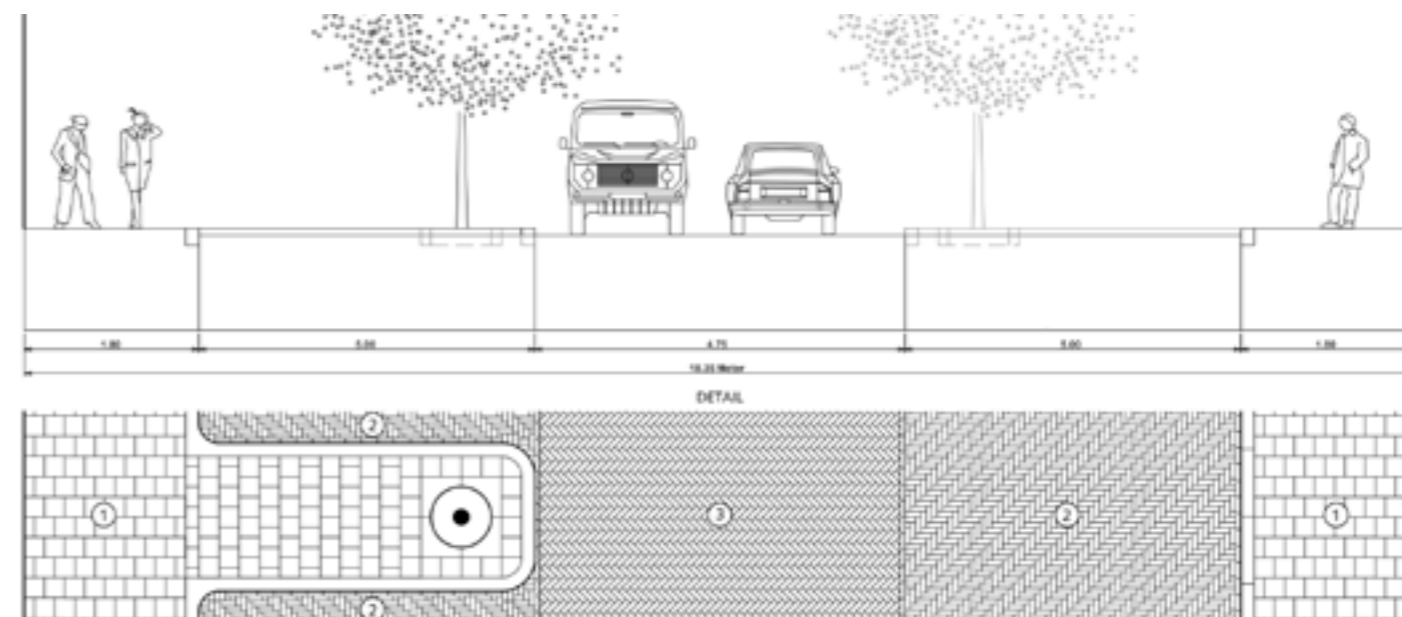


Image 22: Minimal measurements of a street that could potentially be re-designed without losing parking spots (Standaard Wegenbouw Details, 2013).



Image 23: The Tollensstraat and its diverse housing type collection; social housing in colour (Robert van Overveld, taken on Aug. 22, 2022)



Image 24: The Tollensstraat and its new housing block. In colour the dead-end and new housing (Robert van Overveld, taken on Aug. 22, 2022)



Image 25: The Tollensstraat and its surrounding. Source: Google Earth.

Context of the Tollensstraat

The Tollensstraat is a street located in the old north of Rotterdam. The southern part of the street is blocked for cars, with a small square dividing the street in two. The street can be found between Zomerhofkwartier (ZOHO) and the Zwart Janstraat. ZOHO is a well-known makers district, and the Zwart Janstraat is one of the essential shopping streets in Rotterdam. The location is about a 10 to 15 minutes walk from the central station.

Besides, can one find a school with a playground close by. The playground consists of a soccer and basketball field, plus an area with a swing and a small carousel. A bit further is a bigger square located called Noorderplein. All other streets are residential streets.

The street itself

Note: The southern part of Tollensstraat, which is the area of focus, will, from now on, be addressed as the Tollensstraat.

The Tollensstraat is a relatively quiet street these days. The street used to be for through traffic but was closed down for cars at some

point. Initially, there was no ramp for cyclists and scooters, which resulted in traffic in front of people's doorsteps. The ramp towards the middle of the square brought relief. At this point, the centre is only reachable for people with a key.

The houses in the street vary in price range. There is social housing, as indicated with colour in image 23. Which adds up to about 20 households. All other houses are privately owned. In the last years, a new apartment block has been realised (coloured in image 24). The price differences between houses are big, stretching from social housing to houses above a million euros. In other words, the SES of the street is diverse.



Figure 11: The type of housing in the Tollensstraat



Image 26: The Tollensstraat and its small square - the latter in colour (Robert van Overveld, taken on Aug. 22, 2022)



Image 27: The Tollensstraat and its unused square - the latter in colour (Robert van Overveld, taken on Aug. 22, 2022)

The square itself

The square was designed the moment the street was closed off. The problem with this square is probably that it's not considered a square. The result is that it seems mostly poorly used space. The closing off and the green brought peace and uniqueness to the place, but it never filled its full potential. At this moment, it's mostly a scooter and bike passage and parking. Ambulance, police and the fire department need to have access as well. There has been playing equipment for children, but most of it rotted away, leaving only one balance disk and a small sitting tub. This unused potential has been one of the reasons why this square has been chosen.

The numbers

The context of this street in numbers shows that it scores relatively low on the indexes of the municipality (Wijkprofiel, n.d.). Public space, vandalism, nuisance and participating in the neighbourhood (subjective score) seem to score particularly low. Looking at the age of people, you can see that the neighbourhood houses relatively more people between the age of 15 and 45. People above the age of 45 are lower in numbers. The difference between the average of Rotterdam is about 5%. Lastly, the neighbourhood hosts a variety of cultures and different backgrounds. The percentage of western, Moroccan, and Turkish people is about the same.

Cohesion

One way they get a notion of which social connection exists in the street has been to ask them during the first face-to-face contact. The rough estimation of these connections can be seen in figure 13. The private houses on the east know each other relatively well, and some of them have a connection with one of two houses on the other side of the street. The social housing seems mostly connected to the people within the social housing block. Exceptions will be there. Lastly, the new building block on the corner seems like a different world on its own. They have already formed a group with people living on the perpendicular street for events in the past.

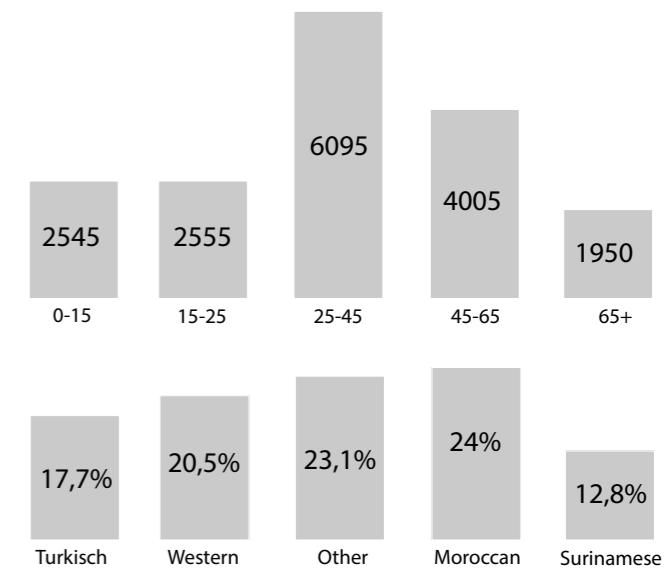


Figure 12: Data on background and age for the old north, Rotterdam (Allecijfers, 2022)

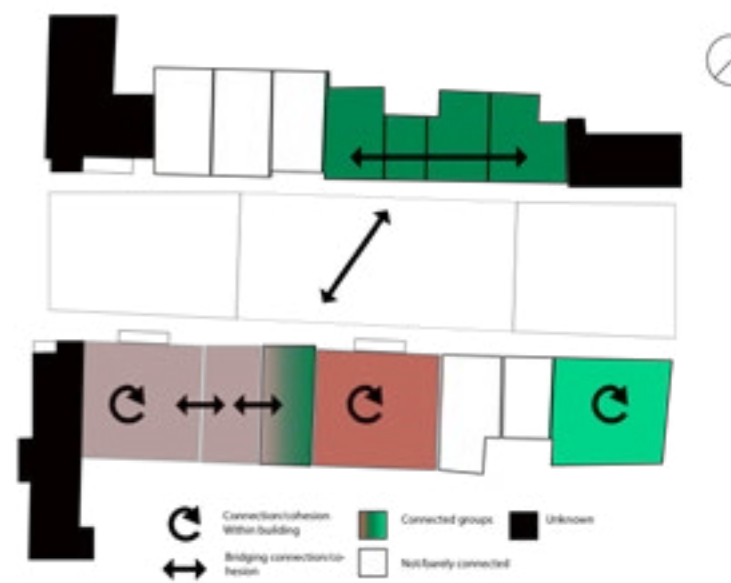


Figure 13: Estimation of the social connections in the Tollensstraat.



Image 28: Wijkprofiel data for district Old North, Rotterdam (n.d.)

Mobility

Image 30 shows the most frequently used roads. Black for cars and green for slow traffic. The Tollensstraat is a fast link between ZOHO and the Zwartjan straat due to the close-by bridge. This is also known by scooters and delivery services, which currently leads to problems. At the same time is it a link that is valuable for people, and also a link cycling lobbying groups like to see protected.

Images 31 to 33 show the mobility infrastructure for cyclists, pedestrians and cars in that specific order. The car is not allowed to enter the square but can be accessed with the right key in certain circumstances.

For pedestrians is the square a safe haven on which children can play as well. Overall is the square a unique element in the neighbourhood, making sure cars play a silent role.

Lastly, the square needs to be accessible for emergency services and their vehicles should be able to serve as a secondary escape route (image 29).

In this part of the street, about 25 cars can park and on average can one find about 50 bicycles parked on this street. Most of them are parked around the staples, but also connected to the lightning poles, planters or next facades.



Image 29: The square, as well as the street, should be accessible and usable for emergency services. Removable poles are positioned at the beginning of the square



Image 30: The main mobility lines. Green indicates cyclist and scooter, black is used for cars. The thickness gives in indication of the importance.



Image 31: The mobility lines for cyclists and scooters with possible driving directions.



Image 32: The pedestrian friendly spaces and sidewalks



Image 33: The car mobility lines with possible driving directions.

Programme of the square

The square itself is defined by the car parking possibilities on each side. The square can be accessed by a small ramp which is placed on each side. Each side is blocked by three poles of which the middle one is removable.

Looking at the programme of the square we notice a total of six trees, with squared planters. The trees are about 3 to 5 meters high and are different in kind. The planters differ in size and some of them have a small bench connected to them. The planters are currently filled and maintained by inhabitants, but due to the bad quality of the soil, as well as the occasional poor

maintenance, they look a bit poorly maintained.

Another element is the six bicycle staples. In practice are all the spaces horizontally from the planters used for parking bicycles. On an average day, there are about 50 bicycles located on the square. There are also lighting poles, which are placed in the centre of the spaces between the planters as well.

Other elements are a sheltered bicycle garage on the top left and two additional trees outside the square, of which only one has a planter.

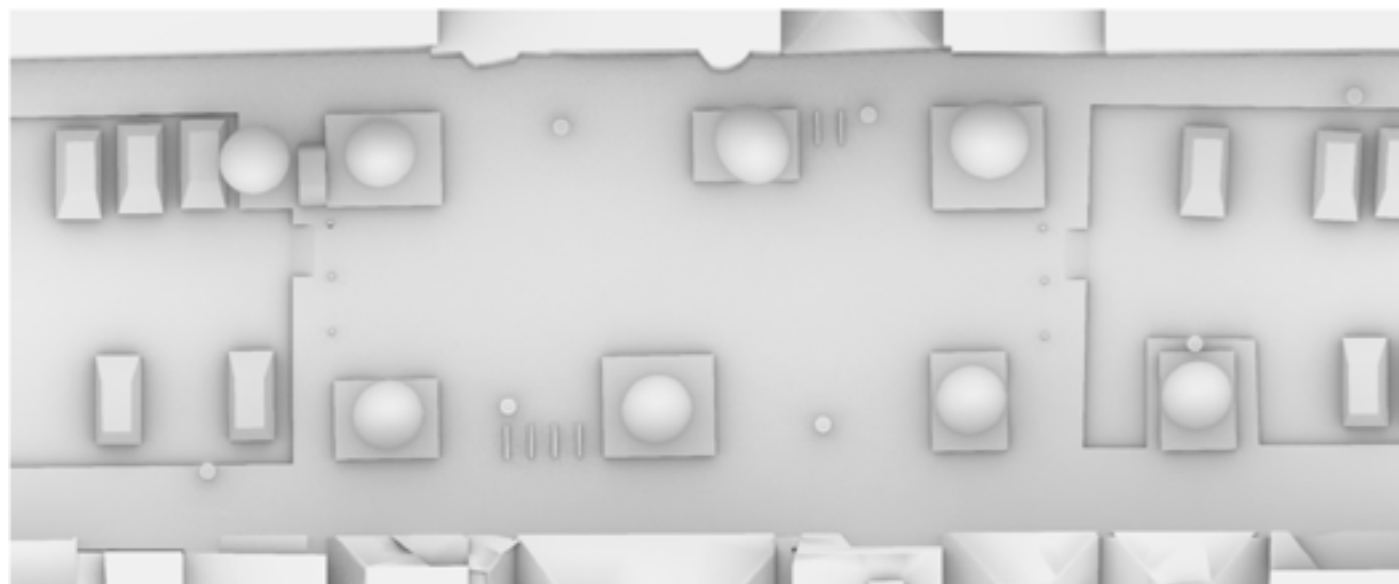


Image 34: Model of the currently existing square

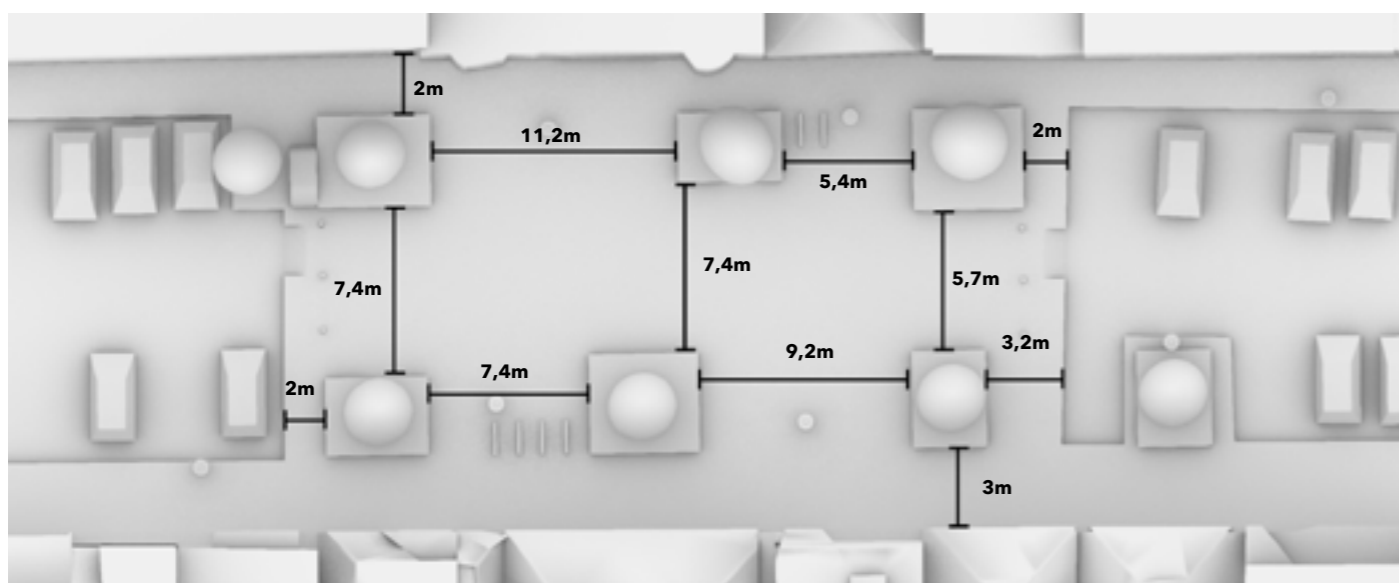


Image 35: Measurements of the square

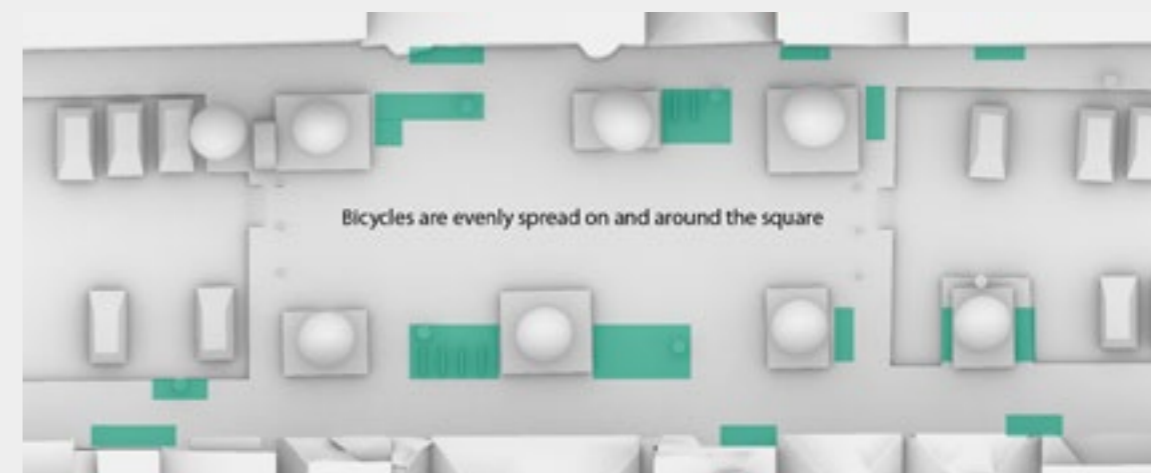


Image 36: The places where people currently park their bicycle



Image 37: Green programme of the street

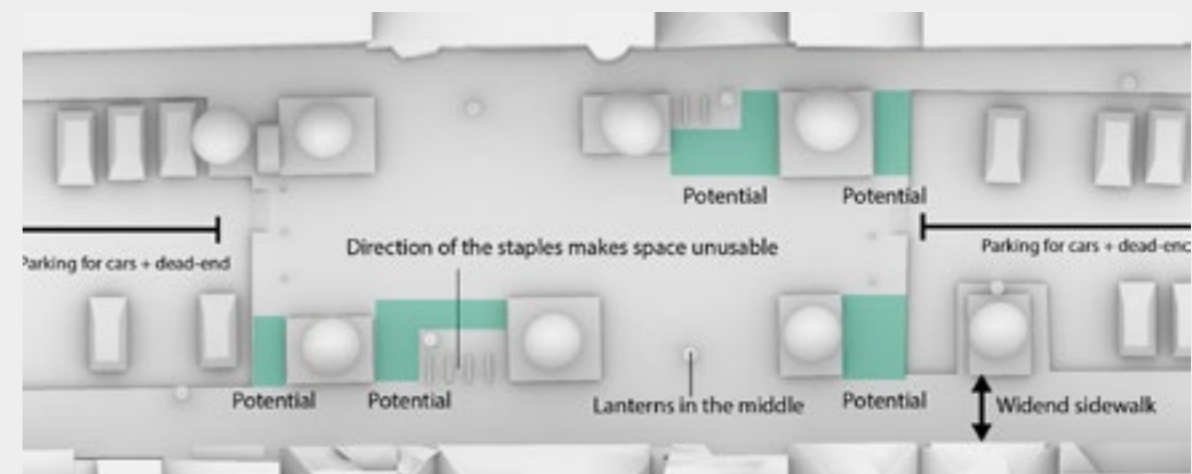


Image 38: General information of the square and the current spaces with potential to be used better.

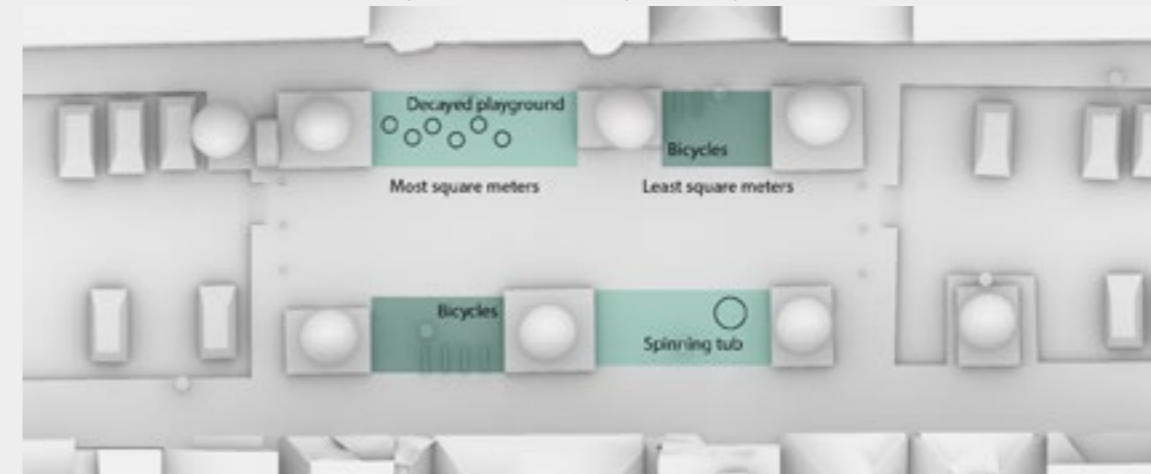


Image 39: The current programme of the spaces in between the planters

Flows

One of the main flows is the flow to the front doors of the houses. Image 42 shows all the entrances of this part of the street. The green arrow indicates an entrance with a special relation to the square. The open character of this entrance, which is mainly due to the small balcony connected to it, its size and visibility, the entrance feel like a pivotal place in the square. It doesn't play a pivotal role and there might be no reason to give it this role either, but it might be interesting to take into account.

Images 40 and 41 show an indication of the most frequently used paths on the street. The former shows the paths taken by cyclists and scooters and the latter of pedestrians. The thickness of the lines gives an idea of the importance of the line. The main axis for cyclists is the

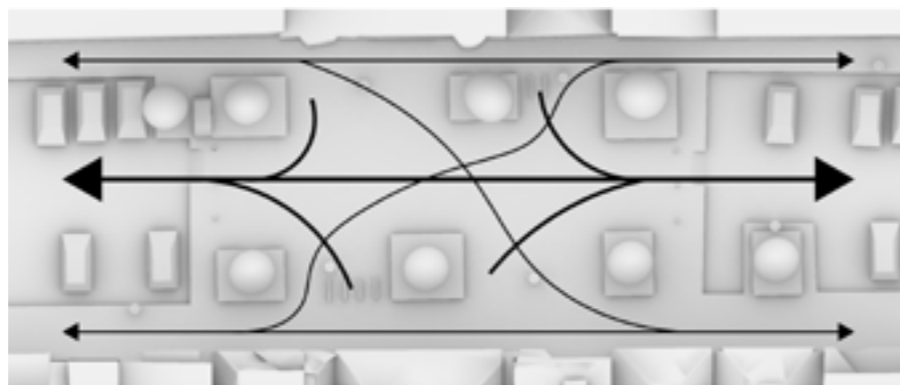


Image 40: The flows of cyclists and scooters in the street



Image 41: The flows of pedestrians on the street

centre, which they either enter via the parking spots or use as a passage. The sidewalks are by them as well, which has often led to dangerous situations which ask for attention. Lastly, people also cross the square, which is possible due to its currently open character. Changing this aspect fully might not be wanted, since for everyday usage it's practical and people got used to it.



Image 42: The Tollensstraat and its entrances

For pedestrians, the square is used in different ways, as well, due to its open character. This openness is also used by the children; they are able to run, cycle or skate around the place.

Connection to square

Image 43 shows a gradient of the houses that experience the square the most. Houses coloured in green experience the biggest connection, red the least. People in the green houses encounter the square daily. For people in orange, this will depend on whether they can use the square in any way, for example, for their children. The size of this group can grow if there would be more spatial purpose.

Image 44 shows an image of buildings that have a ground connection. The people in the green houses will experience the square in quite a different way. Being in their apartment implies seeing this square.

Image 45 shows the houses can serve a social security goal. Their view of the square is most clear and they will be the first ones to be able to act when something needs attention. A total of 22 houses are can keep an eye on the square, which makes this square likely quite safe and uninteresting for anything criminal.



Image 43: The houses of the Tollensstraat and the strenght of their relation to the square



Image 44: The houses of the Tollensstraat that are groundly connected to the square



Image 45: The houses of the Tollensstraat and their capacity to keep an eye on the square.



Image 46: The first workshop in the Tollenstraat (Robert van Overveld, taken on June 30, 2022)



Image 47: The first workshop in the Tollenstraat (Robert van Overveld, taken on June 30, 2022)

Face-to-face approach

Every household was approached face-to-face at the beginning of May. In the average conversation, the set-up of the experiment, the regeneration and the co-creation were explained, after which a more informal conversation would follow. In the informal part, we would often speak about the relations people had with their neighbours if they ever participated in Rotterdam and which aspects or elements in the street could be improved.

A total of 33 households have been contacted this way. Twenty-eight of those households wanted to be involved, after which they were added to the WhatsApp group. Three of the households weren't interested. Another three never opened the door. Some of the households got out of the WhatsApp group over time. Over time, about 22 households stayed in the chat.

Conclusion: the face-to-face approach worked well. The bond created in this beginning proved valuable. Many people reacted positively and wanted to be part of the process. Many small details were gathered during the conversation about the context as well. The latter helped to work faster. The approach does take more time, but it can be done in a day or two on this scale.

Whatsapp and day planners

Whatsapp is an ambiguous platform for these types of things. Most people don't react to the messages, which leaves you unaware of what they think and whether they are still willing to join. Texting people individually has been tried as well, but that didn't seem to make much of a difference.

For the workshop, we tried to set a date together via a day planner. This is not recommended. Simply communicating the day and time works better. Evenings between

Monday and Thursday seem to work the best.

It would probably rain on the day the first workshop would take place, which would be outside. The workshop was, therefore, moved a day upfront. This sudden change in the last week appeared not practical. Many people weren't able to come anymore. That's why a second workshop was organised during the day that we originally planned. The whole chaos still made for some people to not be able to join anymore. Recommended is to have a second location and stick with the date.

Conclusion: Be leading and decisive in planning, and think about different scenarios. Last-minute changes are not recommended. Whatsapp works well but use it mainly to broadcast your planning, designs and conclusions.

Workshops

Photos of the first workshop can be seen on the left. The street was slightly decorated, and there was some music as well as food for everyone. Gradually and automatically, everyone started to talk about the streets and their problems/solutions. The group was divided, and each subgroup had to focus on one of the problems and come up with solutions. Afterwards, the problem statements and solutions were presented to each other. In the end, we collaboratively digested all the plans and tried to combine them.

The second workshop was inside and has been used to further finetune the plans made during the first workshop.

Conclusion: The workshops were good for cohesion and works efficient to identify problems and come up with creative solutions. An addition like food is mainly important to show people that you, as an outsider, care for a good outcome.

3 households weren't reached
3 households didn't join

28 households joined

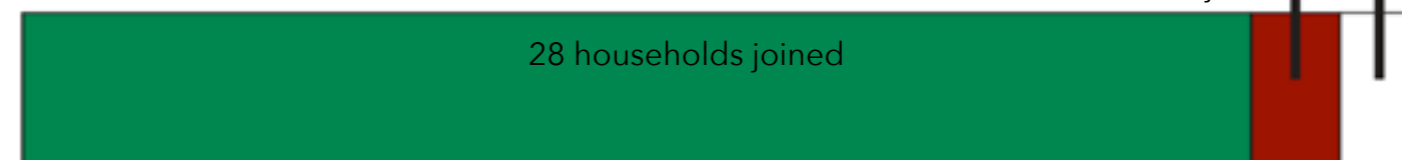




Image 48: Visualisation of the speeding problem of the Tollensstraat.

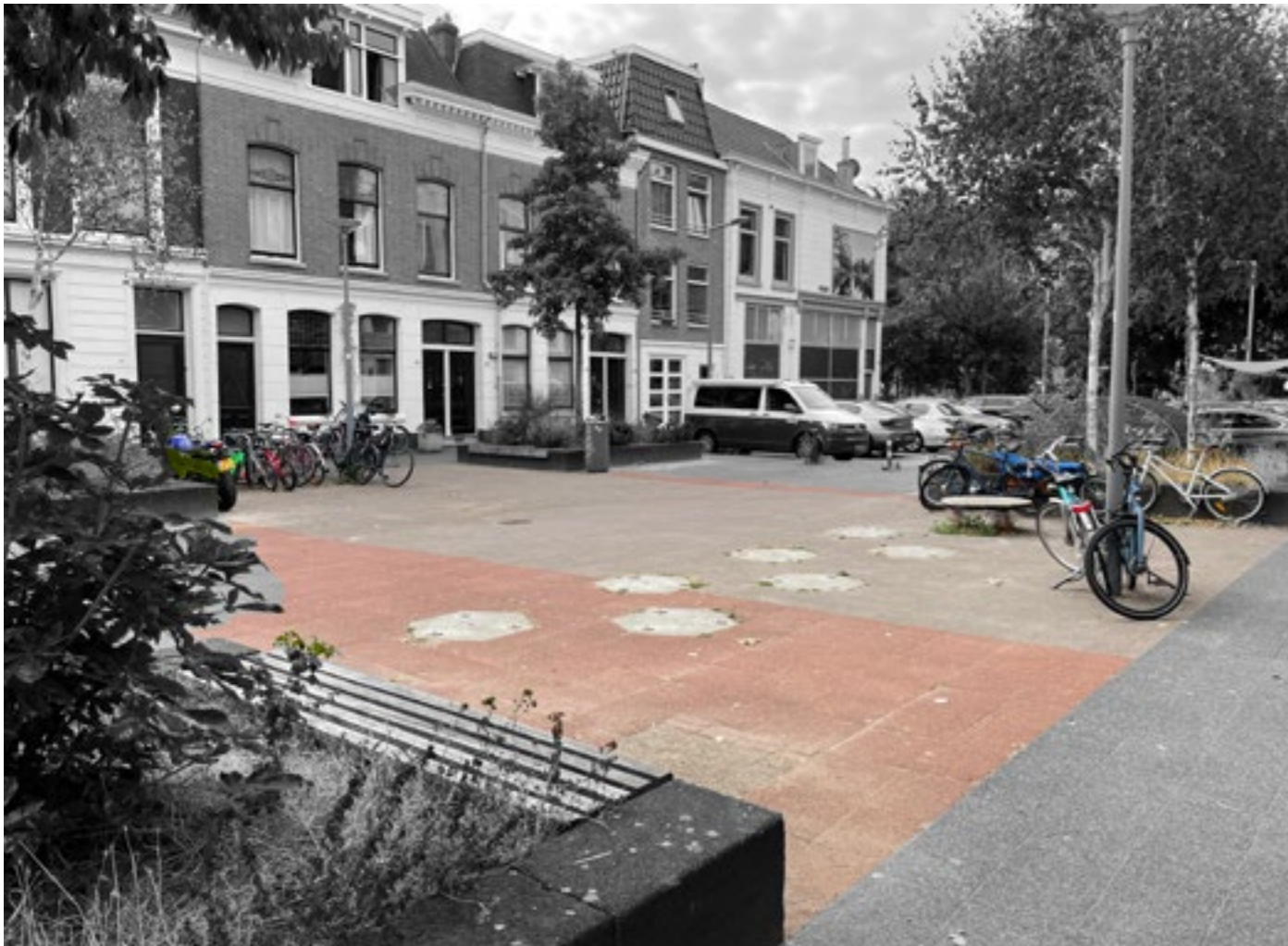


Image 49: Deterioration and unused potential in the Tollensstraat (highlighted) (Robert van Overveld, Aug. 22, 2022).

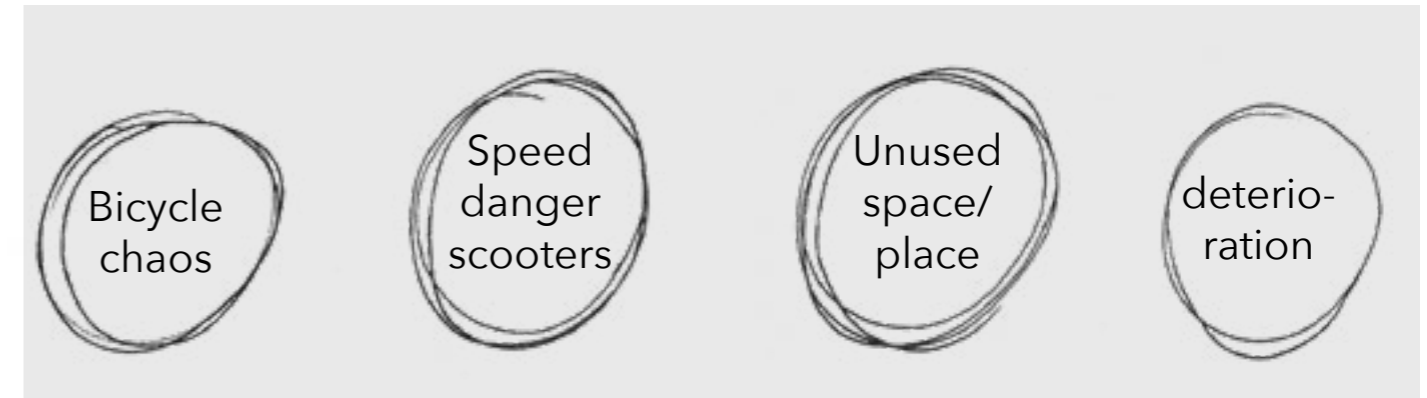


Figure 14: The four problems identified in the street.



Figure 15: The three goals for the project in the Tollensstraat.

Problems

There are four main problems, as identified during the workshops:

1. Bicycle chaos. Since there is no programming in the street and few parking possibilities for bikes, everyone parks their bike randomly. The result is that the space is mainly used as a big parking for scooters and bicycles.
2. Speed danger scooters. The street is still accessible for scooters and bicycles. Unfortunately, many drive carelessly over the square at high speeds. The sidewalk is, for many, a pleasant alternative as well to avoid the small ramp that already exists. In practice, this has led to many (almost) accidents already. Especially on the east side, since the west side has been narrowed by green in the last years.
3. Unused space/place. As mentioned before is the square never fully used to its potential. By rearranging the parking for bikes, there would be space to fill in a meaningful way.

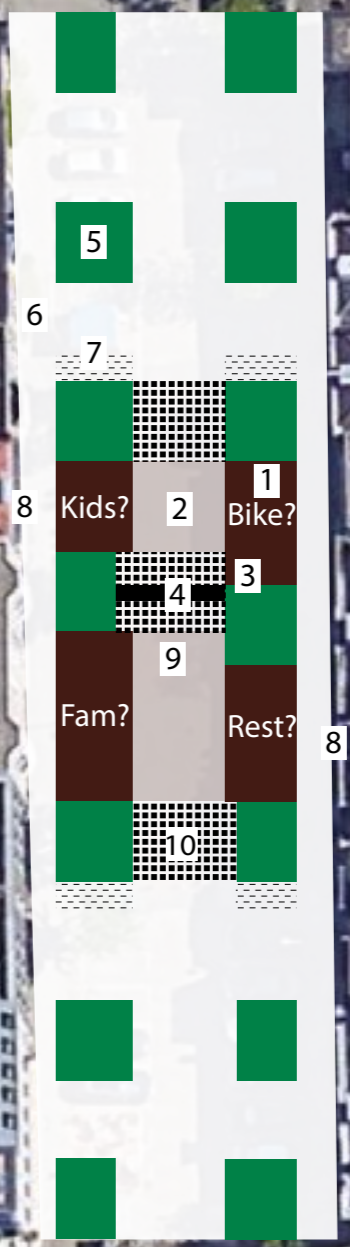
4. Deterioration. The existing play equipment has rotted away partially in the last few years. The soil around the trees, which could be used to plant things, is in such a bad condition that hardly anything grows.

Goals

As a reaction to these problems and additional wishes, there have been three goals set for this project:

1. Creating a safe space. If you want to turn this place into a safe and comfortable environment, you need to make sure that traffic speed is adjusted.
2. Climate adaptive. At the moment, the square is tiled up for the biggest part and there are no possibilities to store water or collect organic waste. Many suggested aiming for a climate adaptive square; green and waterproof.
3. From traffic passage to a place to stay. As mentioned before is the square mainly used as a passage and storage. The wish is to bring the square to the next level with some place-making.

1. Programmema in the red zones
2. Connected to red zones, but open for emergency
3. Bio-box
4. Speed-bump to decelerate traffic
5. Finish the unsymmetric tree lane
6. Small gardens in front of the facade
7. Smarter ways to facilitate bicycle parking
8. Create slaloms to slow traffic down
9. Create an extra bump to slow traffic down
10. Open tile to decelerate traffic and dewater



The collection of outcomes of the workshops

Bold letters indicate elements with an informal test version.

Timeline

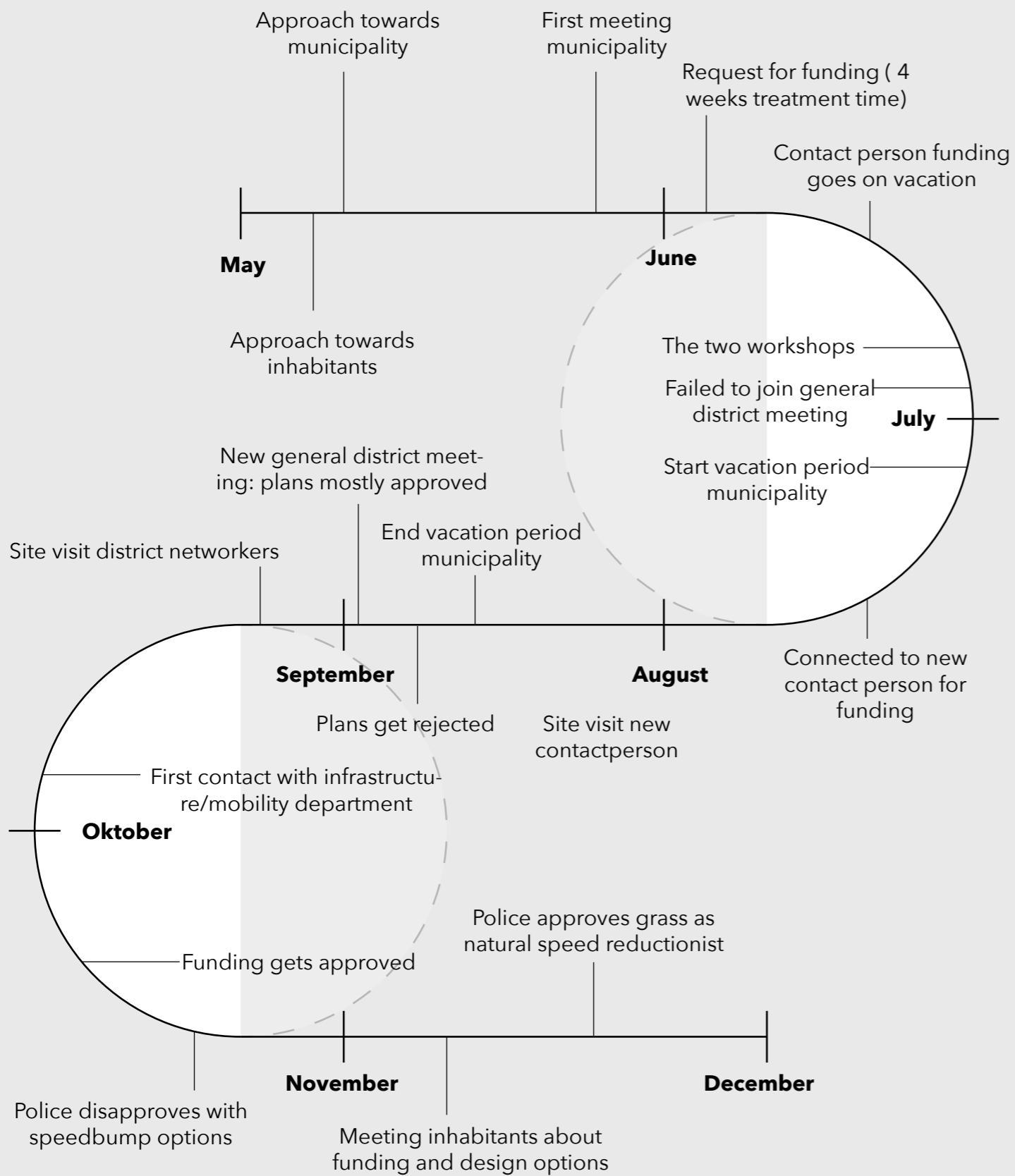


Figure 16: Timeline of the co-creation process in the Tollensstraat

Process

The process proves to be long-winding. The picture on the left shows an overview of all the main events in the period between May and December.

The summarised version is that we had to wait for funding and approval for 4,5 months instead of the four weeks claimed. The result has been that we were not able to experiment during summer. The reason that they approved, in the end, is that the municipality was fed up with its long, draining character as well.

The positive side is that we did get approval for a reasonable amount of design proposals. The three-step process wanted turned into a two-step process, turning the concept mainly into a thorough participation trajectory.

There are two reasons for the difficulties that we faced:

1. The municipality, which is the district office in this case, needs to decide things in accordance with the office itself and with different departments. It became almost impossible to get things done due to the vacation period during these months. Even in September and October, this remained a problem with some people gone.

There were two elements in the proposals that we liked tested to decide how to approach them in the formal phase. The first ones were the speedbump and slalom in order to see if we could achieve a more safe situation regarding traffic. The second one was programming of any kind to see what kind of space we wanted to create.

Both got stuck in the process of approval. It's interesting to look into each barrier since it shows which underlying framework and aspects slow processes like these.

To start; the municipality wanted to use Rotterdam's styling to realise the speed bump. This defeated the concept of experimenting since such a speed bump would cost tens of thousands. The bike

association disagreed as well since they wanted a pleasant passage for cyclists. Both arguments got off the table at some point, but then the police claimed that the bump would get too slippery when it would become icy. The latter seems a weak argument in many ways since the speedbump imagined for the experiment would only be there during summer, and if ice would hit the streets, then the whole city would be slippery and dangerous.

2. The second reason: the programming. The main programming that people imagined was a programme for children up to the age of eight - there are many young children in the street. Every item that is placed on the streets must conform to regulations. In other words, if it is not, the municipality is at risk for trials in court. How big this risk is, in reality, did not matter. The municipality seems to avoid any risk.

A faster suggested option was to use existing equipment that the play department has stored. They, however, did not want to help out, since they want to cluster equipment more often in the future. This implies that you need to take your child to a playground as a parent in this street, since there is no play equipment in the surrounding for this age-group. Arguing for an exception is difficult since the district office represents you.

Conclusions:

1. The municipality doesn't have a proper answer to temporary and experimental urbanism.
2. Framework, handbooks, visions, criteria and rules on this scale are not shared with residents.
3. The municipality of Rotterdam seems to avoid any risk and sticks to regulations. This makes for a slower process that demands everyone's energy and motivation.
4. Bad communication, like the unannounced vacations, made for a slower process.



Image 50: visualisation of the first imagined outcome of the formal phase.



Image 51: visualisation of the sidewalk slalom & the new green.



Image 52: visualisation of the sidewalk slalom.



Image 53: visualisation of a proposed temporary speedbump during the experimental phase.



Image 54: visualisation of a proposed temporary closed slalom during the experimental phase.



Image 55: visualisation of a proposed temporary open slalom for emergency services.

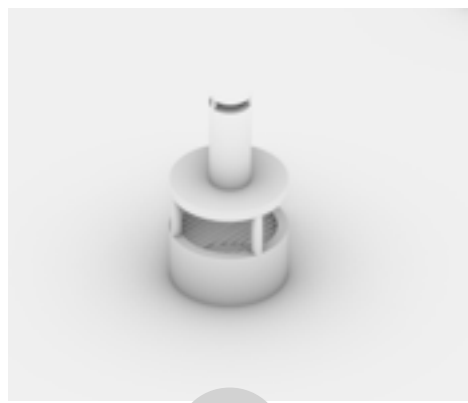
Experimental phase

A diverse set of renders and proposals have been sent to the municipality. The bigger one shows an outcome as we imagined after the workshops for the long run; open tiles, art, green and a programme for children. The other images show some of the experiments that we wanted to conduct to see how to reduce speed in the street. Only the planter on the sidewalk has been accepted in the end.

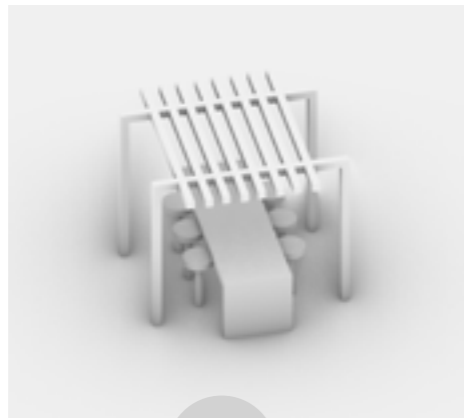
In the conversation held, there were again two difficulties:

1. First, the municipality, and later the departments, reacted to it as a final design, whereas we had explained multiple times that it would simply be used for a month or two, to see how the street would be used. The concept of the experiment didn't seem to exist.
2. Departments only wanted to react to it with a "yes" or "no". They weren't able to tell you how to adjust it or where to look for approved examples. They even asked to make a fully executable plan, which takes time and would defeat the purpose of experimenting.

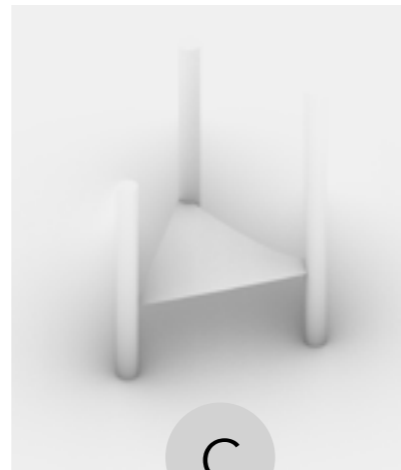
Conclusion: departments only react and are not proactive, and neither are the criteria clear. This makes again for a slower process.



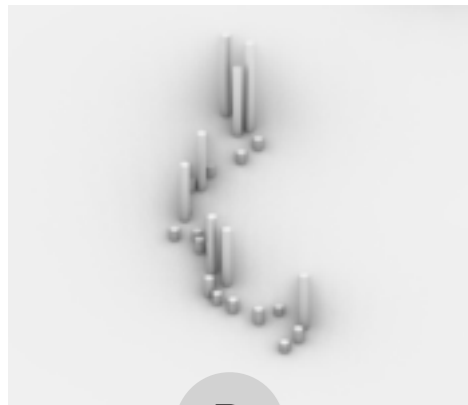
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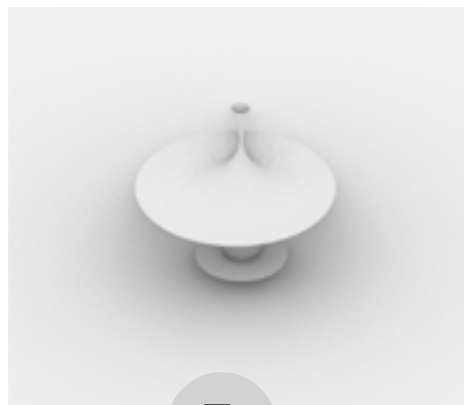
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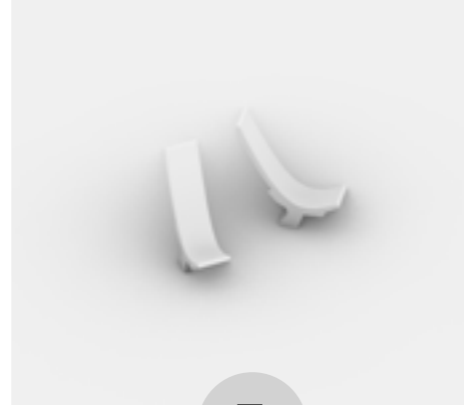
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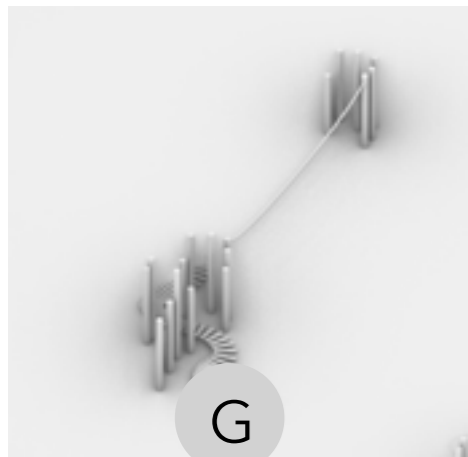
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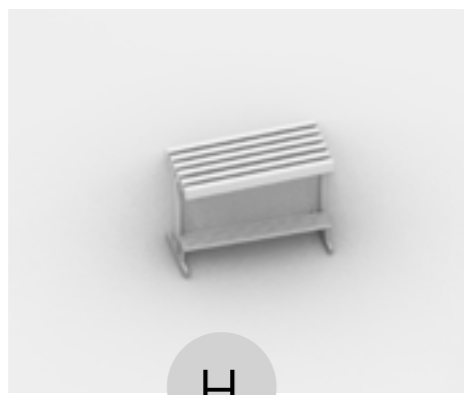
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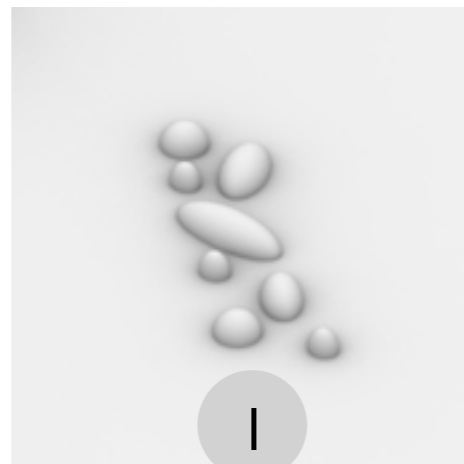
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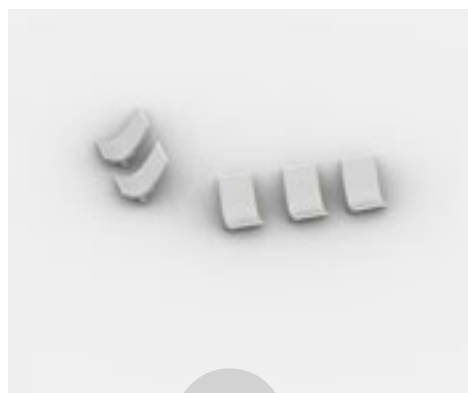
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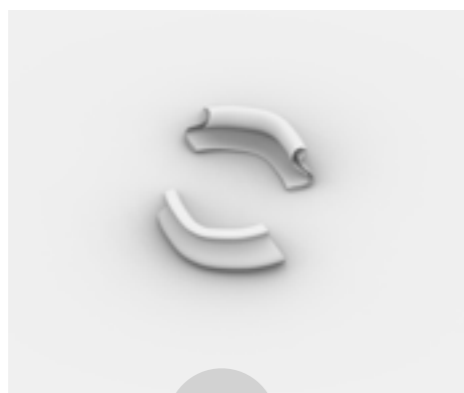
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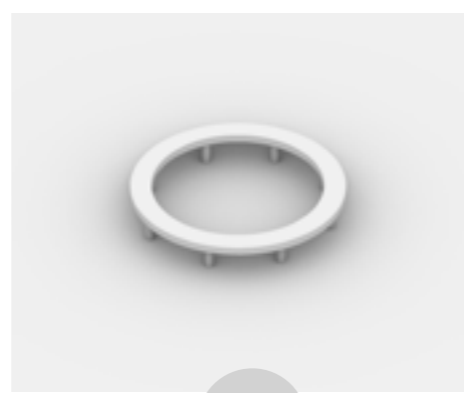
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L

Formal design

Although the testing/experimental phase did not happen, we still designed the potential formal phase. We worked with options and elements to open up the conversation about the design. The direction for these designed options and elements has been guided by the workshops and the reaction to our plans by the municipality.

The workshops made a few things clear:

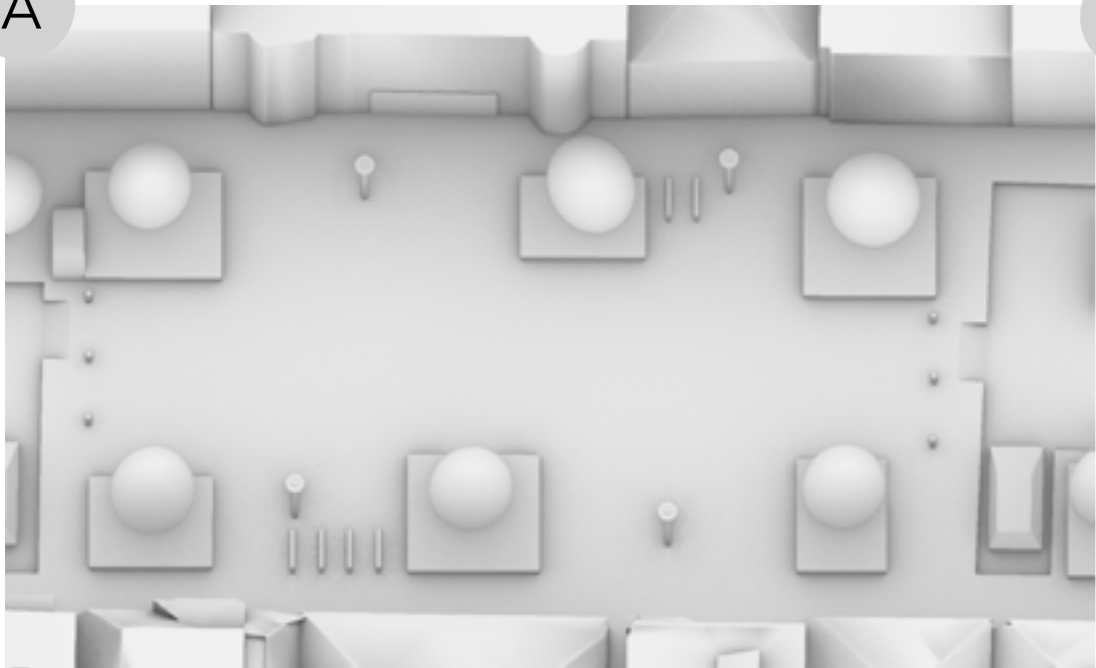
1. The households in the street were filled with young children. It made sense to programme the square partially for this age group - The playground in front of the school is mainly directed to children above eight. A more natural playground seemed in favour. Object C, D, G, and I show options that had potential in this street.
2. There has been a lot of nuisance from teenagers who sat in the street in the past. In combination with the irritations about the speed of scooters, people are hesitant about placing cosy seating. An option would therefore be to place a table, without the seating. Inhabitants in the street could then place their own seating during good weather. An example of that is option H and E. Object J, F and K are options that are less interesting for youngsters or groups.
3. The bicycle staples could be placed smarter. By doing so, a part of the square would be able to be used for the programme. Especially the edges seemed empty.
4. More green, organic waste collection and water adaptive measurements were an unanimous wish. Rainwater storage underground would probably be too expensive, but better water drainage should be possible.
5. In order to make a pleasant place, the speed of cyclists and scooters should be addressed both in the centre of the square and on the sidewalks.

6. People were willing to take responsibility for the green in the street, but the quality of the soil needed to be improved to be able to do anything with it.
7. The main goals for this project; from passage to place, climate adaptivity and a safe environment.

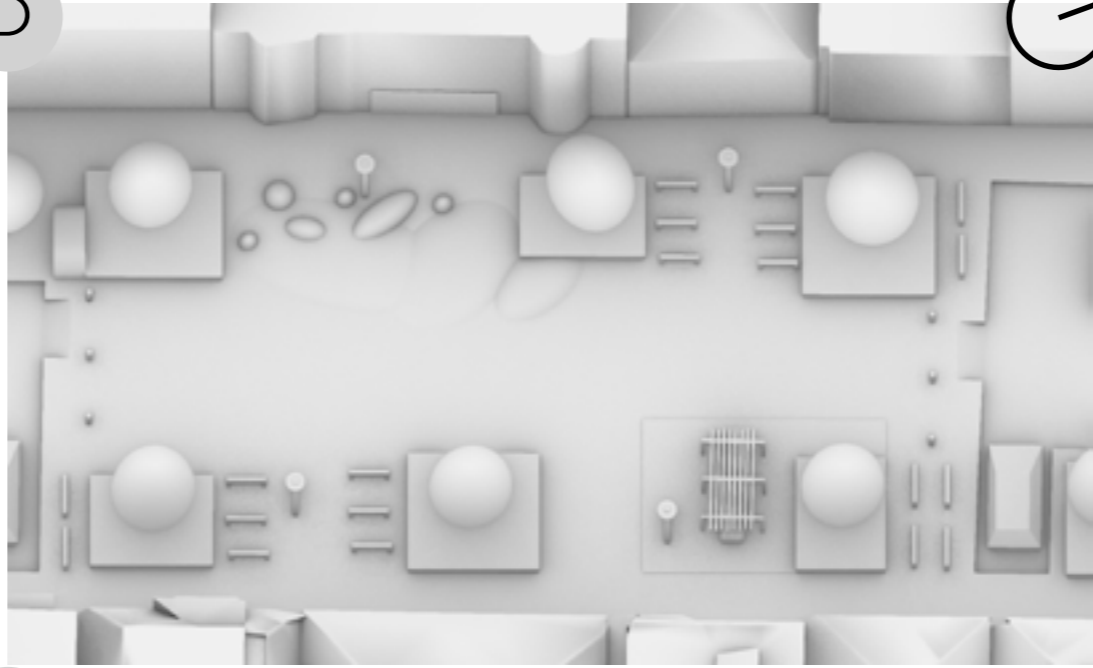
The municipality, departments and emergency services guided the formal design and things that were possible as follows:

1. The soil in the planters will be done by a company in spring.
2. The staples were an easy fix. The only thing they wanted to know is where to place them. The latter depends on the full design.
3. The organic bin is subsidised.
4. The green next to the facade is subsidised, and the leftover tiles will be picked up.
5. The square needs to be accessible for emergency services. What this means never became fully clear. Even in the end to keep on blocking proposals without making clear the reason for the rejection.
6. Speedbumps, slaloms or fences are not easily implemented. Different stakeholders are involved in these decisions. The wider grass and the slalom on the sidewalk seem the most accessible option.
7. The half-open tiles were not an option for unclear reasons.
8. The play equipment from the storage could possibly be available for the coming two years time but was for unclear reasons not available for the experiment.
9. Seating and other elements must be in Rotterdam's style.
10. A formal phase will likely unfold during the renewal of the sewer in 2024. They were thinking about hiring a landscape architect to fully finish the project.

A



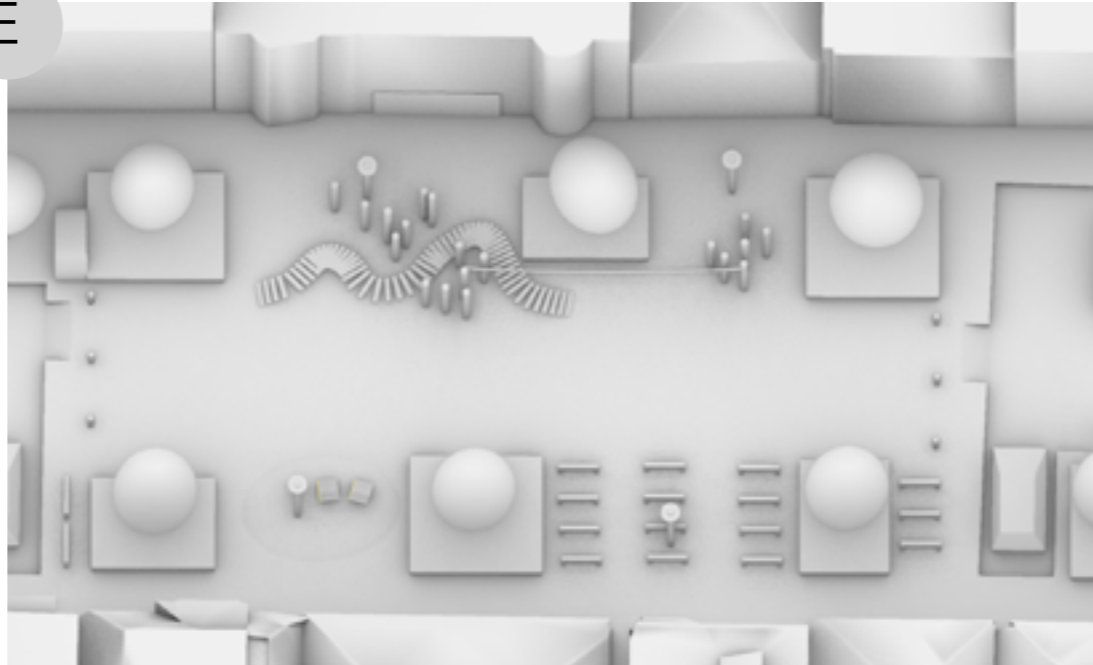
D



B



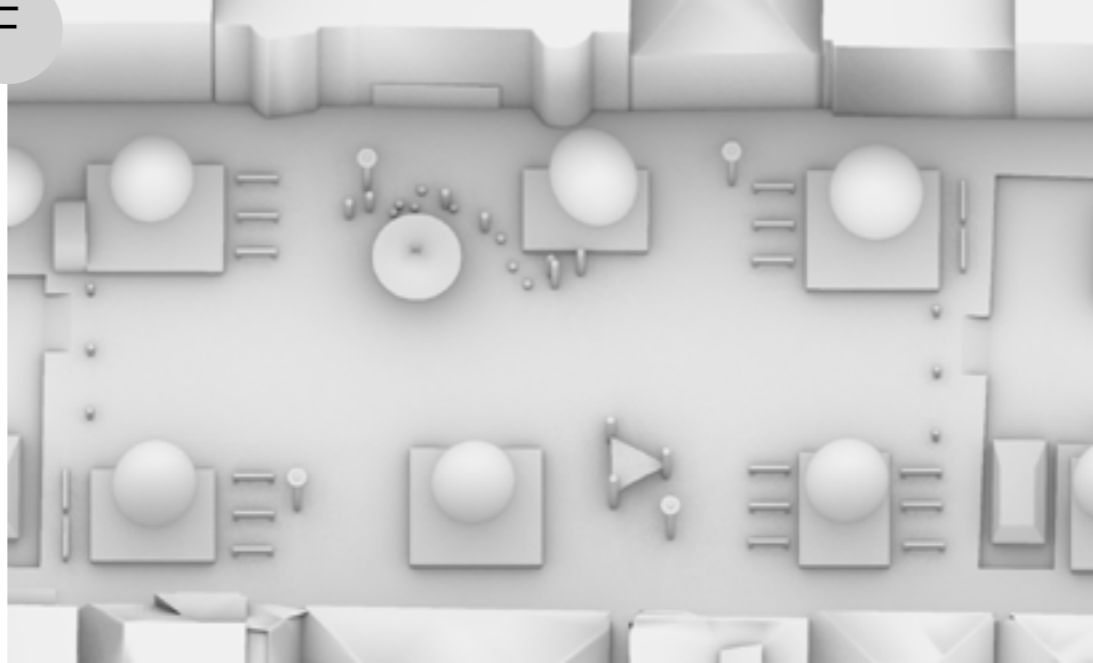
E



C



F



Options

There are a few elements in this location which you can use to think about the design. In the first place, the bicycle staples, the programme, and the positioning and surrounding of the two. Another factor that needs to be taken into account is the sun. Which shines in the first half on the top part and the evening in the lower part. Lastly, the amount of square metres between the given location of the planters. The top left has the most space, followed by the right bottom. The current situation is shown in option A.

As mentioned, the public space is currently used mainly as one big bicycle parking lot. The problem is that people do not like to walk too far to park their bikes. Spreading the new staples equally over the public space, as in option F, would make the most sense in this regard, but would narrow the public space available for the programme. Having different sides for the programme and the staples, like in option B, could lead to bicycle sprawl again and does not use the movement of the sun. Either way, on the edges, is more space to store bikes. Lastly, the social housing connected to the square has an indoor parking facility.

Choosing between C, D, and E is mainly choosing a bicycle strategy as well as what kind of character we wanted to create on the square. Some have more "coming together" elements - which were not in favour in the end -, while others are more oriented towards children and relaxing for one or two.

Other elements that drew our attention were hills or, the opposite, a possible didge. A didge that would be useable for water storage (wadi) and the hills as a playful element. The soil of didge could be used for the hill, as well as the soil that we gained from the soil renewal of the planters. Additional elements that could live up the square are painted trash bins, wall art on one of the available walls, art in the planters and a better position for lighting - in some options it blocks the programme currently. The plants in the planters and the facades will make a welcome addition as well.

In total there have been about 20 options, of which the group chose its favourites.

Image 57: Designed design options for the Tollensstraat (formal phase).

Design

The final design proposal consisted of; a wadi, an adventurous path crossing that wadi, poles to balance through for children, seating in Rotterdam's style, seating with a pergola without chairs and an organic waste collector.

The staples can be found on both sides and placed in between the planters with the least square metres. The number of staples grew from six to twenty-two, The hope is that the quality of the programme avoids people from parking in or directly next to the programme. Changing the location of the lighting poles is important in this regard as well to avoid people locking their bikes to it. The latter is not done in the design presented, since this will not happen in the coming years.

Next to that is the square partially undone of tiles and provided with grass. The grass ensures better water drainage and is the newest proposal to block speeders a bit. The corners of the grass are sometimes rounded off, either to provide the required space for emergency vehicles or to avoid goat trails. The sidewalks are provided with green slaloms and green facades where possible.

The granted subsidy of 2500, will be used for wall art, art in the planters and plants in the planters.

Despite the sewer renewal in a couple of years, will most of these plans be executed in the spring of 2023. This has come as a surprise for everyone. Whereas, the municipality did not want to experiment during the summer, do they consider the coming years to be perfect to experiment in the street. They value the energy that has already been put into the street since it has taken work out of their hand.

This renewal of the street will be partially temporary. The location of the sewer will decide which parts need to be opened up. For the municipality this is not much of a problem, since the staples can be used again, the grass is not much of a cost, the soil can be used again as well and the play equipment can easily be re-used if it proves to be unsuitable.

This does imply that the poles and the adventurous path will likely be swapped with different play equipment. The pergola will be easier to realise since no regulation needs to be passed, which is the case for play equipment. For the time being it will be easier to use existing, already-passed play equipment.

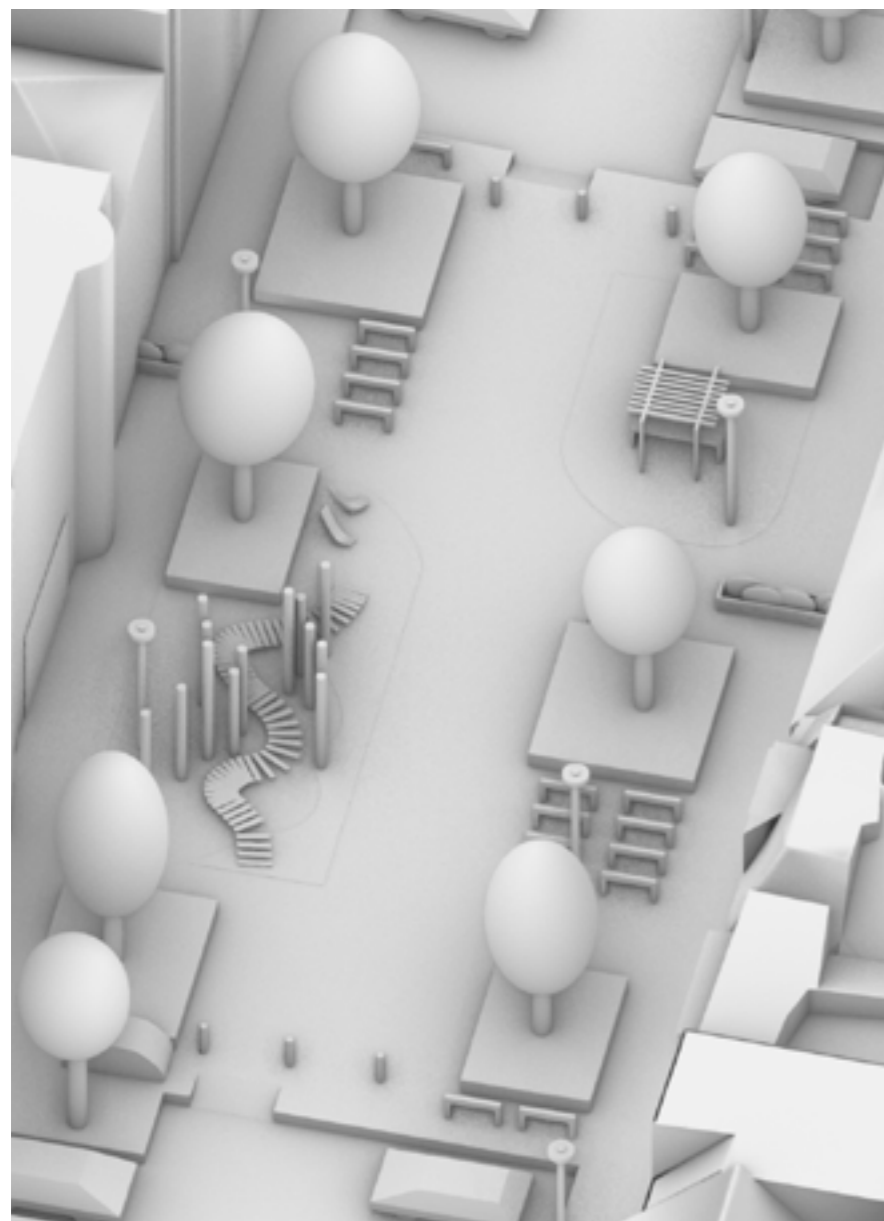


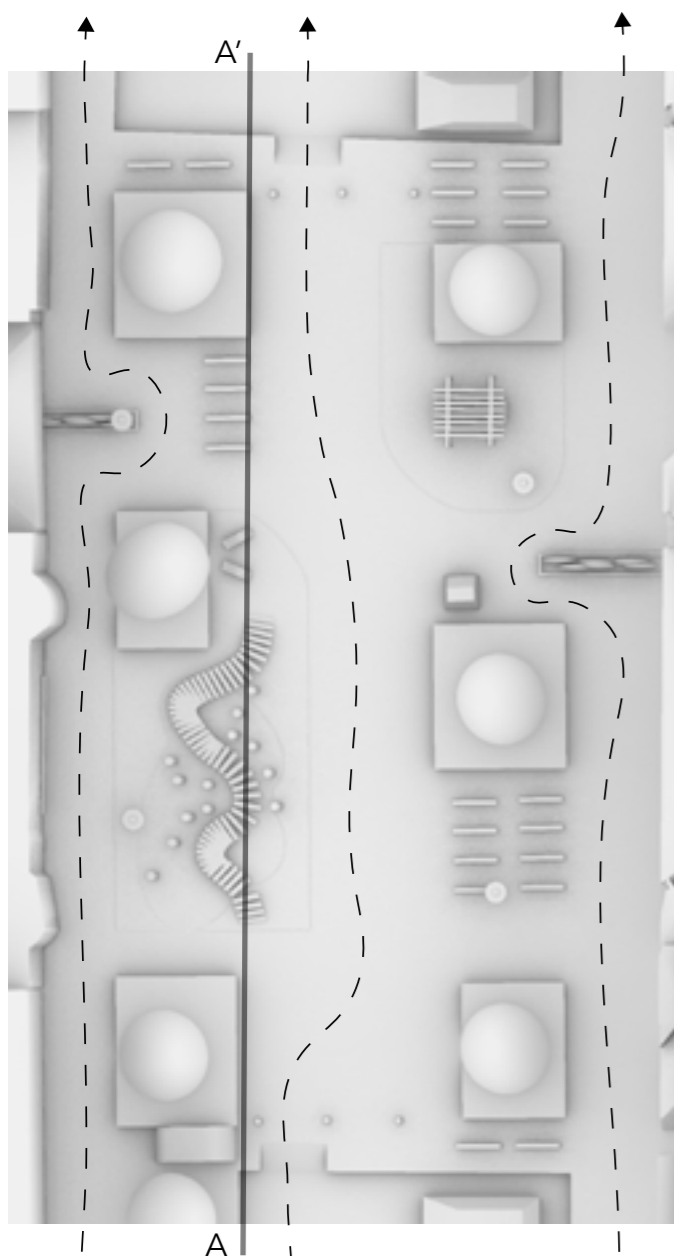
Image 58: 3D view of the last design proposal.



Image 59: Render of programme in the last design proposal.



Image 60: Render of programme in the last design proposal.



Key elements

The mobility flow has been a key element. The choices regarding the placement of the slalom can be seen in image 65. Since we wanted to use the largest space fully and use the parking on the east side, the location in image 66 seemed to be most suitable. Image 61 shows the mobility lines for going-through traffic, and Image 62 the on-square traffic. There is less freedom of movement in both cases, but that is the trade-off. The red line indicated the required space for emergencies.

Another connecting key element has been bicycle parking on the square. Image 63 shows the current situation, the spots in which people currently park their bikes and the front doors. Image 64 shows the new situation, with the new bicycle organisation, people's front doors and the new flows towards the parking. The majority of the staples are placed east side since the majority of the west side has its own indoor parking. The set-up is also chosen in regard to the sizes of the spaces. The two largest spaces are used for the programme since that is where it is most pleasant to be.

Looking at the flows in image 64 we see that most houses have still parking nearby, the social housing block is the exception since they already have their parking.

Image 61: Topview of the design, plus cyclist and pedestrian routes.

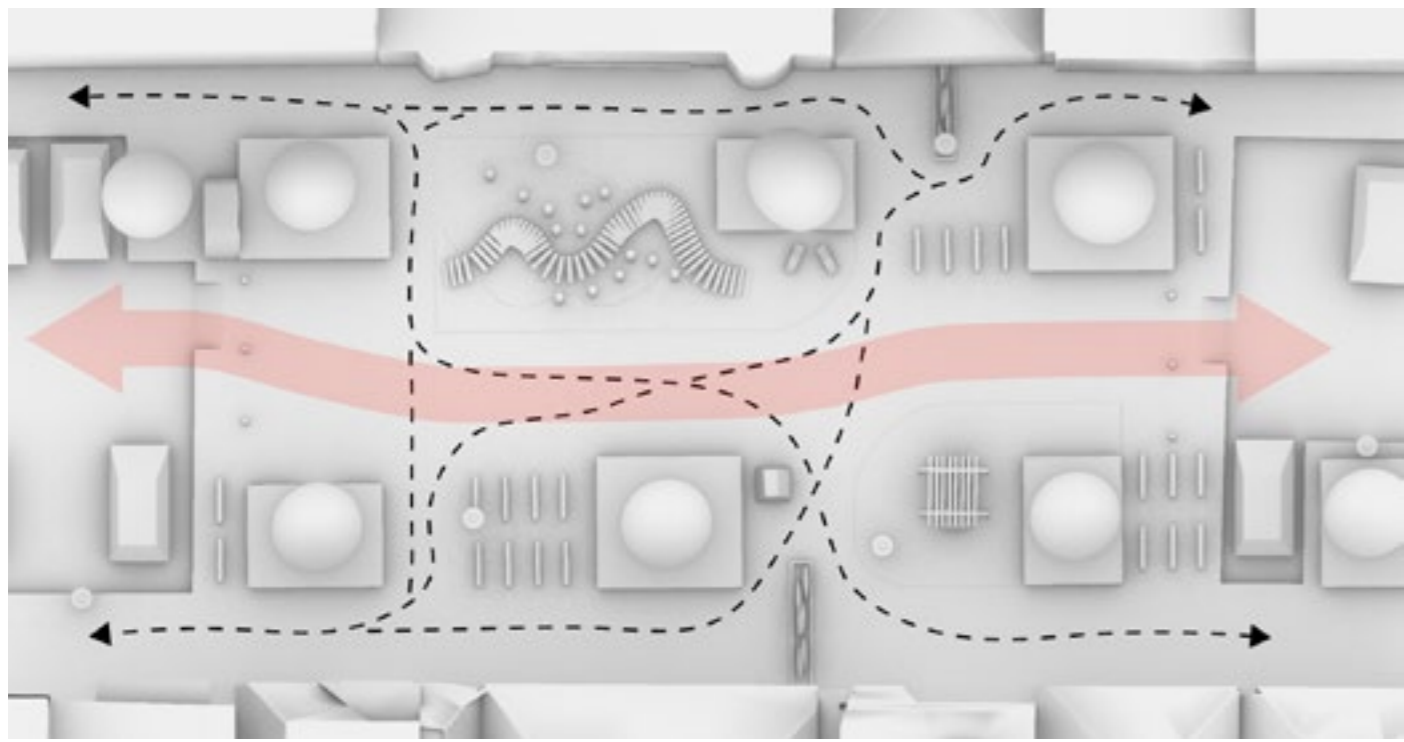


Image 62: Topview of square with the new on-square walking flows.

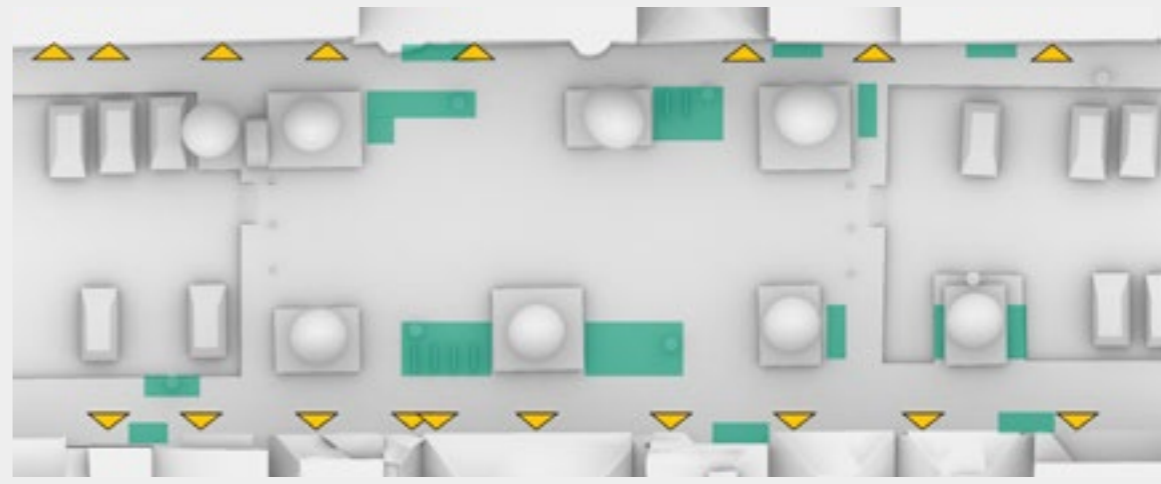


Image 63: The former parking spaces for bikes, plus the entrances to the houses

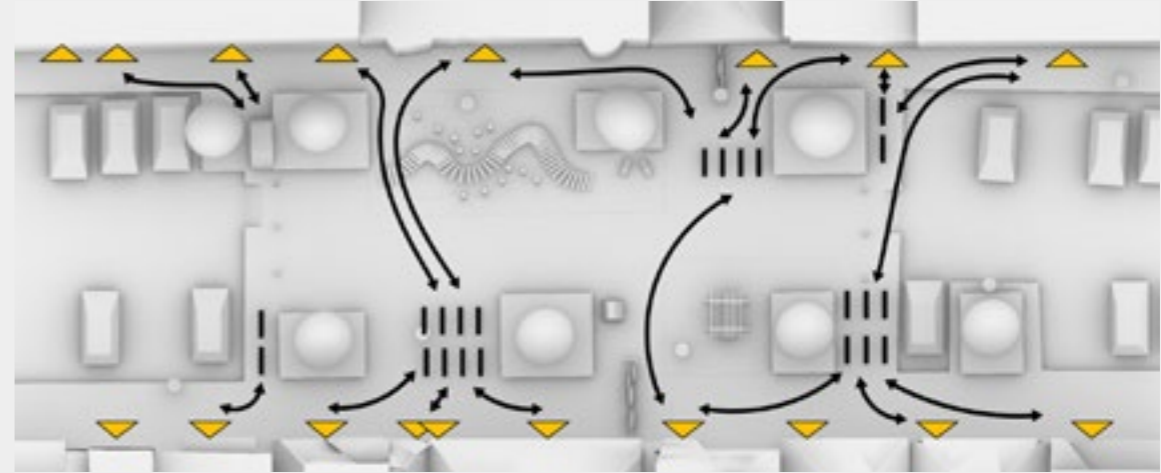


Image 64: The new parking space for bikes, the entrances to the houses and the routes to the bikes.

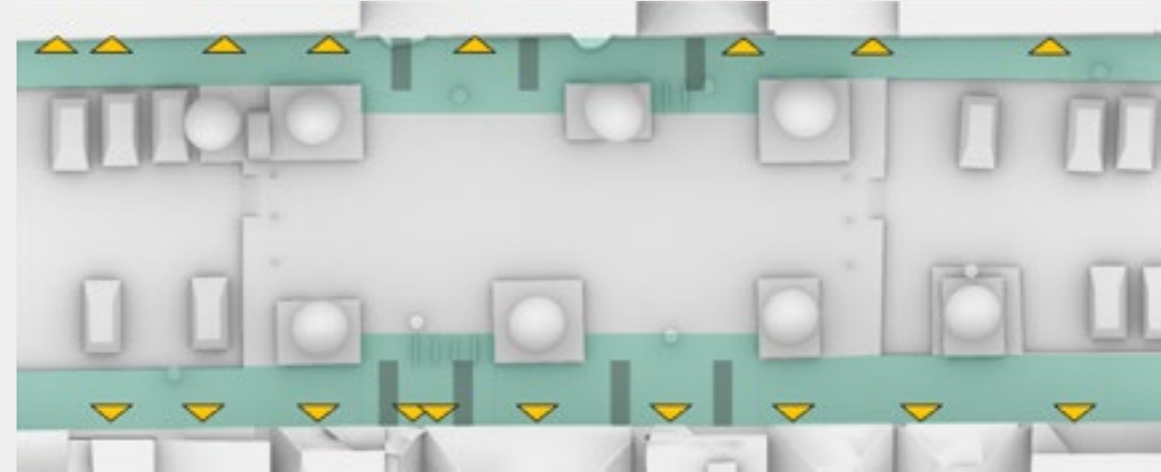


Image 65: The possible locations for the slalom, the sidewalk and the entrances.

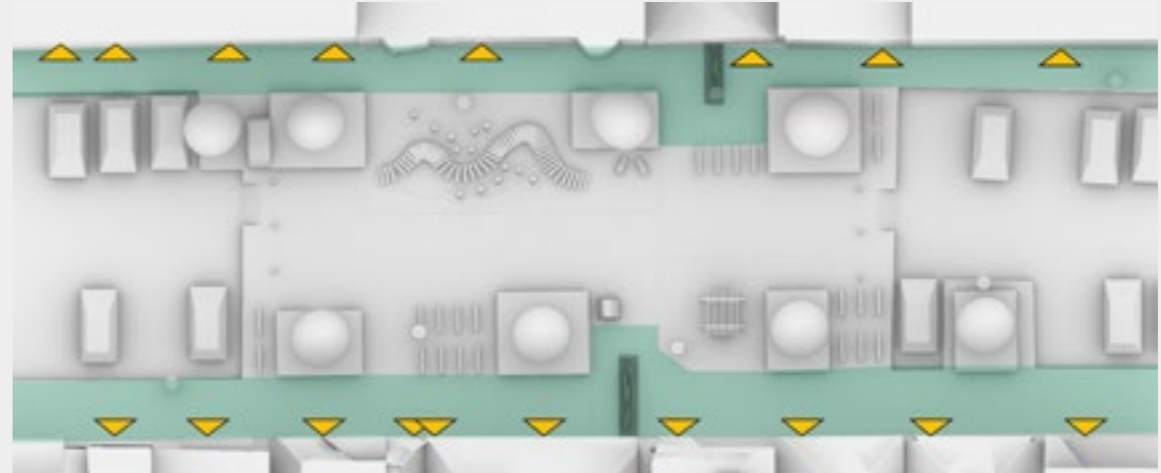


Image 66: The chosen location of the slalom, the sidewalk and the entrances.

Furthermore, is the sun taken into account regarding the placement of the programme (image 68). The programme for children is interesting during the morning and day. The table, where one can have lunch or a bbq is placed on the east, which makes it interesting for early afternoon and evening.

Looking at the measurements (image 69), there are a few interesting elements. The first one is the space the emergency services need in the centre, which is a minimum of 3 meters. The second one is the spaces for bicycles. Each staple is placed 85cm from the other (which seems standard), which makes it possible to position staples on the edges. These are minimally two meters wide. The last noteworthy element is the spaces connected to the slalom. These are kept one and a half to two meters wide to make sure people need to slow down, but can still relatively easily pass.

Lastly, a section of the square, in which the wadi and the playground can be seen.

Reflection and conclusion on the process and the design

Overall, the process has been smooth. It has been relatively easy to pinpoint the potential and come to solutions together. Communication was not always as easy. We did not manage to create a lively communication spirit in the chat, which often implied that only a few people reacted to questions or proposals. Perhaps the others did not have a strong opinion, which we could interpret as a silent agree.

Towards the end, especially when we discussed the possible transformations of car parking, some people livened up and questioned suddenly why we even needed more staples. It shows that it doesn't make sense to work on a final design altogether. Instead; work together, come to options, let people choose the best option and make a provisional final design. Make sure everyone sees that design and make adjustments where possible.

Their possible disagreement is more difficult

to defend for them knowing that there have been many chances to react and change things to their liking.

As for the outcome; the design and programming of the square seem to be to everyone's liking, which is the most important achievement. The flows and positioning of all the elements seem to make sense in theory. In the coming years, the street will experience the design and has the possibility to make adjustments once the sewer is renewed.

In the spring of 2023, things will be developed and the facades will be opened up by the residents themselves. Both will make all the thinking of the last year alive. It might even open up the conversation about adding parking spots to the square (image 67)

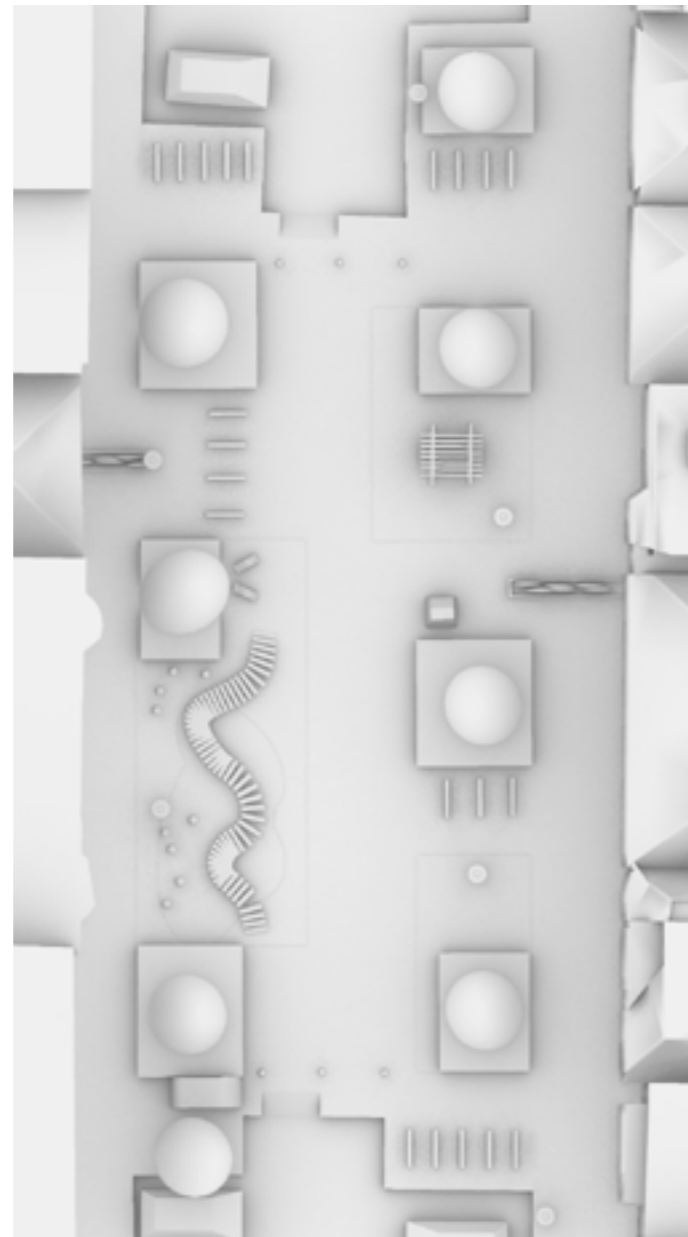


Image 67: Adding three parkingspots to the square (?)

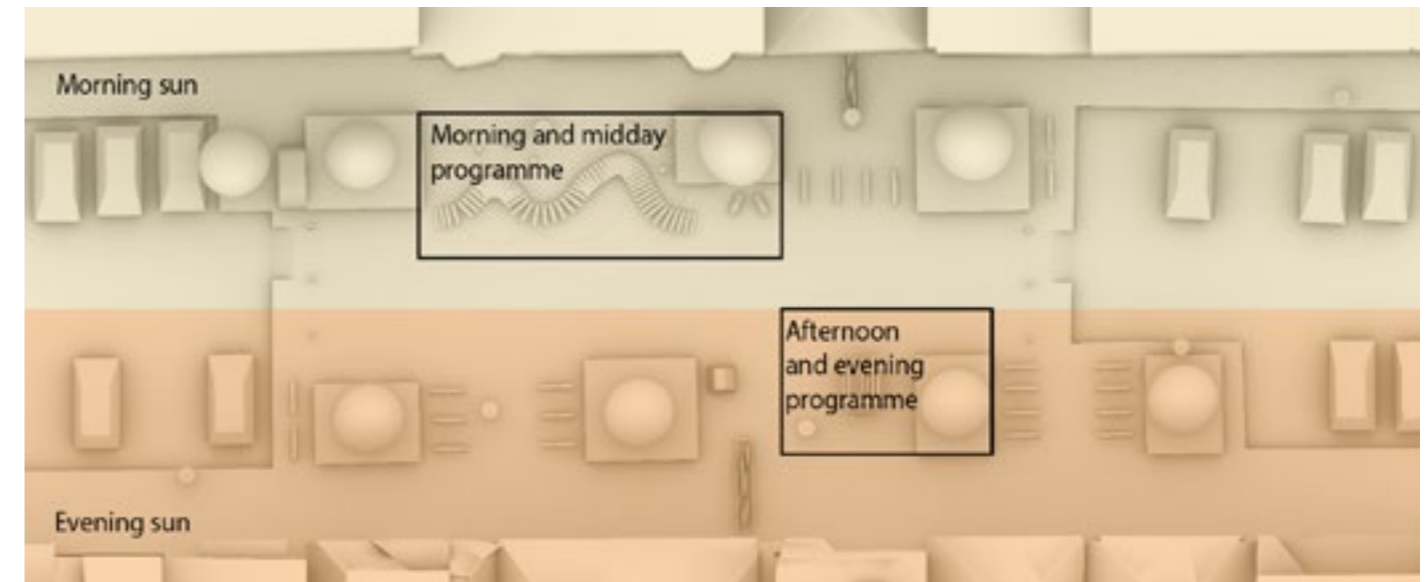


Image 68: The programme of the square in relation to the sun.



Image 69: All the measurements of the new square.

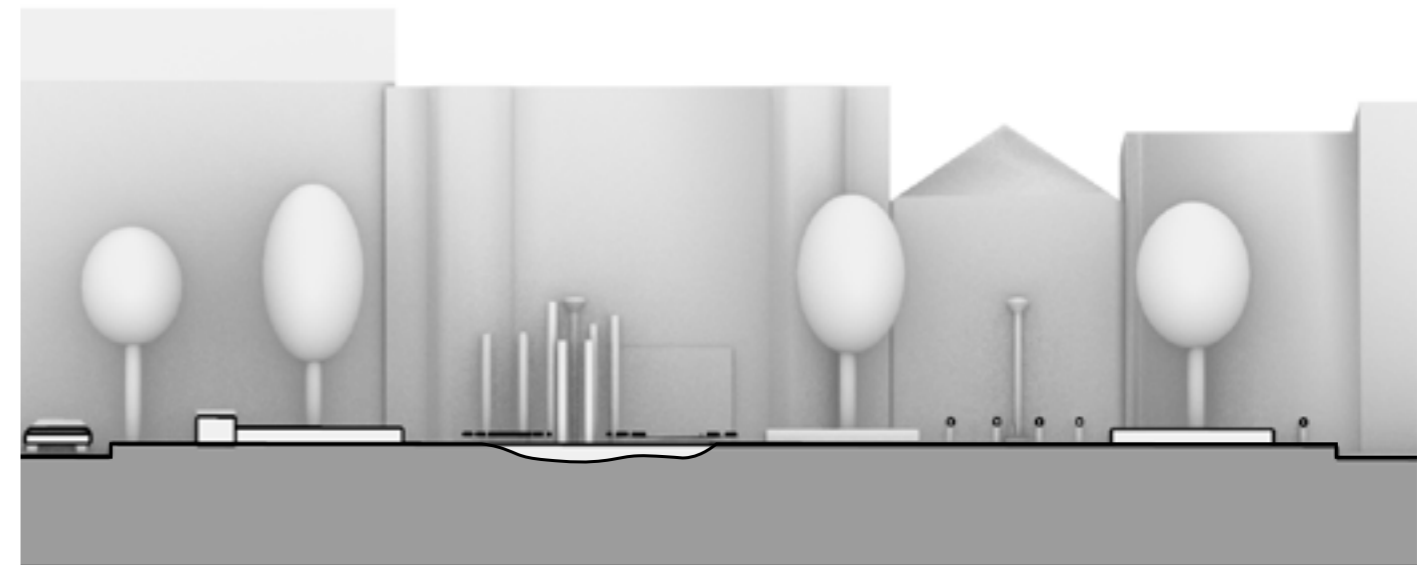


Image 70: Section AA: Section of the square, with the playground and wadi.

Reflection on the conclusions about the approach taken with inhabitants

There are a couple of conclusions about the process with the inhabitants:

1. The door-to-door approach takes a bit of time but makes for a personal, trust-based process overall. You turn people from "the old man" to "the man I had a great conversation with about for an hour". It makes it easier to call someone on their phone and ask for something. It makes it easier to create a nice atmosphere in the group during workshops because you know every single one of them already.
2. The initiator is the one who pulls this weight. There were people that were highly interested, but they wouldn't have been able to get things off the ground in the first months. Other people (the majority) are simply patiently waiting for instruction and information. Organising everything together with others is difficult, that is why it is recommended to be leading and decisive in planning.
3. Can the approach taken be recommended? Yes, it can. People have other priorities in their life, and that is why you do not always get the energy and appreciation that you hope for. But building a foundation like this can almost only be beneficial. People bonded with each other and with the initiator (which could have been the municipality).
4. Was the missing experimental phase a big loss? Yes and no. It is likely that more people felt motivated to join when things started to happen in their street. It would have also been a moment to get to know each other even better, creating an even stronger and more durable foundation. On the other hand, it has already been valuable at this point. People were having good conversations. Besides, there was also a chance that only a few were willing to spend their free time in their street.

Reflection on the conclusions about working with the municipality

Working with the municipality gave good input for this thesis as well. The main conclusions:

1. In general, there is no overview. There is no overview about what kind of options you have for participation, what kind of people work where and what role they fulfill, how initiatives are accessed, etc. This has implications for people outside of municipal walls but also for those working for the municipality. For people outside the municipality, it's difficult to know where you need to be and how to orchestrate initiatives because you don't know what the rules are. Within the municipality, you need to network to know who is doing what. I found that many people who do relating things don't know anything about what the other is doing. The result? For residents, you depend on the network and knowledge of your contact person, which in this case implied that I've often been sent back and forward. For officials, it can imply that work is done double or that plans are not adjusted to another.
2. The district offices, but especially the departments and the emergency services, are not proactively working toward solutions. The result is that plans need to be evaluated multiple times and that you again need to wait on others for directions. In other words, it slows everything down. As a resident, you don't know what the rules and criteria are, and the departments and services only tell you whether something is accepted or declined. Either people need to know the criteria, or people need to be proactively guided by the departments and services.
3. The municipality avoids too many risks if you want co-creation to take place. If you want to extract the energy that people are willing to put into this city, you need to accept certain risks. At the moment, the municipality seems to strictly follow the rules and avoid exceptions to these rules. Whereas part of those risks is barely significant. The only thing that the

municipality makes sure this way is that they won't need to show up in court too often. The price they pay for it is the lost positive energy to improve from a big group of people in this city. The amount of money that those rare court cases would cost will likely easily be overshadowed by the current cost of the extra work (the approval for the project took 4,5 months instead of four weeks).

Research questions

The answers are based on the findings, conclusions and reflections drawn from this experiment.

Which elements of city development on the street scale could be steered by or given to inhabitants?

If you want co-creation on this level to succeed, you have two options; either the municipality needs to facilitate an accessible platform for bottom-up co-creation of public space, or the municipality needs to initiate and facilitate co-creation processes themselves.

The first option

There're two barriers that you would need to overcome in the current way of doing. The first one is strategies, guidelines and rules. Those are currently not shared with citizens. On the other hand, interpreting and being able to work with them isn't a one-day course either. If you provide these to people, they will be able to make better proposals. Not perfect, but better. On the other, you will get more complicated processes since people are informed.

The second one is regulation and risk assessment. One of the main reasons for people to give up on their plans for the city is the expectation that it's too difficult to get something done in Rotterdam. Currently, the municipality is truly risk avoided, which draws energy out of probably every project. Other municipalities condone or adopt risks more often since risks are often quite neglectable.

The second option

In the second option, the municipality would take the lead and work more coherently with the current way of doing. This would be the more equal option since co-creation is, to some extent, a luxury to be able to do. Besides, is it easier to scale it up to the entire city and use to money available equally.

Do people feel more connected to a place after a co-creation process?

This question has been discussed with the group during the last session in November. Their answer; probably in the future. As a street, they have been trying a few things occasionally; sometimes a Halloween festivity, other times a street Christmas tree. In other words, some already felt quite connected to the street, especially since it closed down for cars. They do think that this will only grow when the square can be appropriated in new ways. They also imagine meeting new people when the full design is realised. Currently, there are hardly any opportunities for random encounters.

Can you boost the trust of inhabitants in the process by approaching people personally?

The connection that you're able to make by the personal conversation in the beginning makes for an overall more trust-based process. Staying in contact with them by updating them from time to time about the situation, we were able to consistently keep a certain positive energy in the group. People themselves would occasionally post ideas in the group as well. Overall, people trusted the initiative and the initiator, but they remained distrusted and disappointed towards the municipality.

When is a face-to-face approach effective?

A face-to-face approach is effective when you're able and willing to give them a defined role in a process. Putting effort into this approach communicates to them that you are personally interested in them as a person and in what they have to say. If you're not interested in what they have to say, or you can't do that much with their input, then it's

not the right approach. And even worse, you can probably further decline the trust they have in participation if you don't do them right. Next to that, do you need to have the platform for the size of the group. In this case, we were with 30 people in a WhatsApp group, which worked well. If there had been 100 people, a WhatsApp group wouldn't have sufficed.

Can you attract a more diverse audience in the design process by asking residents in person?

Looking at who attended the workshops and those who reacted in the WhatsApp group, we need to conclude that it did not make much of a difference with standard procedures. It seems that mostly the usual suspects attended and reacted. The face-to-face approach did achieve to get other people interested. All of them joined to WhatsApp group. It's not to say that they won't participate in any way in the future. Especially when things start to happen, it might be so that more and more people will start to show their faces.

During the first workshops, about ten people filled in a questionnaire to see who showed up. As can be seen, the age of people is quite diverse. The education and ethnic, and cultural background is monotone.

Are people more positively connected to the people in their neighbourhood after the experiment?

This question has been discussed during the last session as well. The workshops in this experiment worked well for the cohesion in the street. Some people who had been living in the street for 40 years met for the first time. The atmosphere was relaxed, and everyone seemed to listen well to each other. The people who joined definitely got to know each other better. Then again, the people who didn't get to meet new people.

Gender

- 4 Man
- 6 Woman
- 0 Other

Living situation

- 4 Single household
- 0 Living with partner
- 4 Living with partner and children
- 1 Living with roommates
- 1 Other

Age

- 3 30 to 40 years
- 3 40 to 50 years
- 1 50 to 60 years
- 1 60 to 70 years
- 2 70 to 80 years

Type of property

- 8 Owner-occupied home
- 0 Rental property
- 2 Social housing
- 0 Other

Education

- 0 Primary school
- 1 Secondary school
- 0 MBO
- 3 HBO
- 6 WO
- 0 Other

Ethnic cultural background

- 1 Aruban
- 9 Dutch

Religion

- 6 Nothing
- 1 Boedhism
- 2 Christianity
- 1 Humanism



Image 71: Hand-made pasta with a eggplant & arabiatta saus as welcome to the first workshop.

7 Good practices

1. Barcelona - Superblock
2. Gent - Living streets
3. Maastricht - A citizen annual budget
4. Haarlem - Co-created masterplan
5. Citylab - Sparkjes

8.1 Placificació Barcelona

Relevance

The debate about co-creation is also a debate about how we use our public space, and how public it truly is. In current times, individuals can decide to buy a car and claim about 12 m² of public space for only €115,2 per year. That is how much a parking spot costs in Rotterdam and how easily we give away precious public space. The same applies to the road network. The consequences for our health are neither paid by car owners. This can be done in a smarter, more equal way as shown in Barcelona.

Description

The grid of Barcelona that can be seen on the right was designed this way to spread out the city's population equally over the city. There is no hierarchy in the streets. In an attempt to make the city more traffic friendly and reduce pollution, they start testing the concept of the superblock in 2003 (Bausells, 2020). In this superblock nine housing blocks are grouped and made slow-traffic friendly. You can not pass through by car and the maximum speed is 10km/h. The amount of parking space is reduced and new public facilities are introduced. As a whole, the area becomes much greener as well. In the beginning, people protest, but it proves to be a success.

As a follow up a new, bigger mobility plan is developed (Bausells, 2020). Part of the plan are superblocks (or superilla in Spanish). The end goal is a plan with a total of 500 superblocks, about 70% of the city. In total, 60% of the space is freed up and made into new public space. Part of it is 300 kilometres of new cycling lanes. Everywhere in the city, you are no more than 300 meters away from the first bus stop, with a maximum waiting time of five minutes. The plan is estimated to cost €37.8 million over the next ten years and is part of the city's aim to ensure every resident has a square and a green street within 200 metres of their home (Andrews, 2021)

Overall, there are a few goals connected to it:

1. Sustainable mobility
2. Urban green and more biodiversity
3. Social cohesion
4. Self-sufficiency
5. Improve governmental processes.

With this plan, about 3500 premature deaths can be avoided in Barcelona's metropolitan area, due to the improved air quality (Bausells, 2020). Another 1200 deaths could be prevented by the lower nitrogen dioxide levels, among many other benefits related to the improved air quality situation; less asthma, less acute bronchitis and fewer cardiovascular-related hospitalisations. One can imagine car accidents are less prone to happen, resulting in fewer fatalities.

Difficulties

The plan was more thoroughly tested in 2016 in Poblenou. The neighbourhood is about five blocks away from the one that the plan makers originally wanted. Bad communication leads from the start of the experiment to unsatisfied inhabitants. People don't know anything about the superblock, neither if it is an experiment nor if the changes will stay forever.

The different working speeds of the plan makers and municipality also lead to complications. The plan makers want to design the new public places with the inhabitants, but the municipality is mainly interested in prove to enrol the projects further into other neighbourhoods. Especially people on the borders of the experiment are starting to get furious and decide to start a platform for victims of the superblock. They demand that the experiment stops. Some people simply don't know what to do with the new public spaces. Are they supposed to develop it, is the municipality going to do that?

The municipality decides to invest in the new public spaces, after which many people start to see the benefits of the experiment. The benefits slowly begin to outweigh the dissatisfaction and more people are convinced. The right tone and proper communication proved again to be essential.



Image 72: Topview of Barcelona. The city structure used for the superblocks can clearly be seen. Licensed under CC BY 4.0 / A derivative from <https://unsplash.com/@loganstrongarms>

Current status

Within the superblock, traffic has been reduced by 58%, and the traffic on the edges has only gained 2,6% traffic (Bausells, 2020). The roads in the block are now called human axes. This would shift the focus from mobility to all aspects the superblock addresses. Further is their aim at the moment to (Welcome to Superilles | Superilles, n.d.):

Working to create a new way of organising the entire city's public space which puts people at the centre of everything. creating a network of green hubs and squares throughout the city. The goal is for all residents in the Eixample to have a green space or square within 200 metres from their home

Conclusion

The plan in Barcelona has and will lead to discussion. At the same time, has it proven to the gains are highly significant. A concept like a superblock touch upon many of the goals set for the future of cities and is, therefore, beyond interesting for other cities. The main puzzle for other cities is to see how concepts like the superblock can be translated into non-orthogonal city plans.

Integration

The superblock model is a new way to create public spaces, but also a new way in how we could design our streets. Rotterdam does not have a rational city plan, plus the design of the public space is already done differently. The concept should be translated to the many different layouts of Rotterdam. The financial feasibility needs to be defended as well. The latter probably needs to be connected to budgets for climate adaptation.

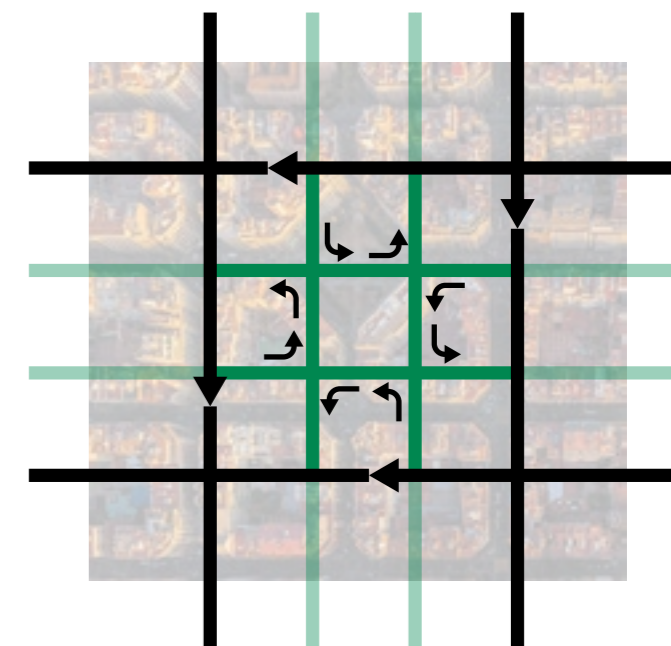


Figure 16: Mobility concept of the superblock model in Barcelona.

8.2 Livingstreets

Relevance

The Livingstreets and the experiment in this research share many similarities. The main difference is that the experiment in this research used tactical experiments to facilitate the formal design phase, while the Livingstreets are experiments to investigate the future of the street and open up the conversation about it. Due to their similarities can lessons from the Livingstreets further strengthen the understanding of co-creation and experimenting in Rotterdam.

Intro

Lab van Troje is an independent network of collaborating citizens, companies, governments and organisations. The aim is to experiment and learn to see how a structural change in our cities is possible. One of the ways that has been done is with the Livingstreets, which is the predecessor of the before-mentioned Dreamstreets in Rotterdam.

Description

The Livingstreets are a good example of a transition initiative (Lab van Troje, 2018). With the experiment, alternative paradigms and practices were tested. It investigated what kind of different futures are possible. One of the main goals was to see what kind of urban environments could be created by rethinking the way we design streets and deal with our parking spots. Another goal was re-think the role of the citizen in urban design and how the spatial could lead to stronger social connections.

During the experiment, inhabitants were given the freedom the appropriate their direct environment and co-create and co-decide together about problems and potentials. Lab van Troje positioned itself as a conductor between the streets and the municipality. It remained an experiment, all of the Livingstreets went back to their original state after a few months.

The Livingstreets experiment started in 2013 with 14 streets. Another 36 experiments were conducted till 2018. During corona in 2021, another 30 new Livingstreets came into existence

Difficulties

One of the main struggles in this experiment was the changing parking situation. Instead of communicating to everyone that streets were going to lose parking spots for those three months, they instead posed it as a question. They used the creativity of the inhabitants to see how they could change the parking situation. Was there a more efficient way to organise parking spaces or were there people that did not mind parking their car one kilometre further. The strategy proved to be successful.

Reflection

The streets unfolded themselves as decors of a world without the car as a priority. A world in which you can enjoy your direct environment and the cohesion that comes with it. People did not talk or work in a designer language. Many of the processes and outcomes were, therefore, quite messy. Not a single Livingstreet was the same, but most of the time it worked out perfectly well.

Due to the experiments, people got to see what could happen if a street was fully programmed as a human-friendly public space. The conversation about the role of the car in the city opened up. The overall relationship between citizens and the municipality improved as well.

The Lab van Troje stress that the experiment is an answer to all question regarding city development (2018). But, there is a lot to learn about these chaotic and messy processes and streets, filled with artificial grass and hand-made benches. The clutter has been the strength in the eyes of the Lab of Troje. Nothing in this clutter was there without a reason and people came to a good solution to problems and were able to get more out of their street.



Image 73: A temporary Livingstreet in Gent

The living streets could, through the eyes of the system world, come across as a rebellious act which has brought discomfort to some (Lab van Troje, 2018). This is a shame since the organic world has always used the public realm as a space to express itself. It is like the bench that was supposed a certain way but appropriated in another.

The Lab of Troje considers the living streets part of a bigger movement. Urbanism in the 20th century consisted of classical design and often static structures. In urbanism people still talk about land-use development and planning (ordening en planning). The integration of complex solutions, like climate adaptive measurements or the regeneration of deprived neighbourhood, lead to difficulties within the current framework. The current challenges ask for a more organic framework to be able to be more flexible and deal with temporary situations.

Lab van Troje also explains the shift from trying to find support for plans, to people demanding more ownership. The wish for suiting regulation started to rise, which posed

new questions for the system world. The municipality's role could be extended from providing to facilitating. Experiments like the Livingstreets improve our understanding of how the latter could be done. (Lab van Troje, 2018).

The Livingstreets of Gent got attention in the Netherlands as well. Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, Zwolle and The Hague also



Image 74: A temporary Livingstreet in Gent

started experimenting. The context of Gent was likely different from the ones in these Dutch cities. Not everyone was happy with the developments. Some people disliked the consequences of the accessibility of their houses. In Amsterdam, surrounding streets were not informed. In Rotterdam, the Dreamstreets only existed for a couple of years, after which they vanished from programmes.

Lessons

It probably proves that experimenting in this way has many potentials, but that you need to create the right context and the will to make it work. Neither can the living street exist without a proper solution for parking and mobility. Besides, everyone needs to be involved in communication. Especially people that surround the streets. This way, you can make sure that they benefit from the new situation as well, instead of having difficulties with parking all of a sudden.

Lessons and recommendations for the municipality (Lab van Troje, 2018):

1. Learn and dare to deal with uncertainty.
2. Look beyond the mess and try to see what each street is trying to communicate.
3. Try to see living streets not as a threat, but as a chance to see investigate existing elements. For example; the value of public parks in relation to high-quality streets.

Lessons for citizens in co-creation processes:

1. Learn to be more flexible and dare to deal with temporarity.
2. Give fellow inhabitants time to understand the new situation. Not everyone understands your style of communication.

Lessons for everyone about the Livingstreets:

1. This is not about a clash between organic and systematic.
2. Trust in the problem-solving capacities of the inhabitants.
3. Inhabitants can prove their capacities

to deal with complexity in a responsible manner if you are open to it.

4. Livingstreets are not a long-lasting street festivity. Nor is it an attempt to nostalgically return to a time when people used horses to go around town.

Conclusions

The Livingstreets prove the value of experimenting in public space. The future of our cities will always be a debate about conservative and progressive thinkers. Too many times we end up polarised about what to do, whereas in many situations we try to achieve the same thing. The only difference is the way we imagine getting there. Temporary experiments can soften up these tense conversations.

Integration

The Lab of Troje has already been able to facilitate 80 experiments in the last eight years. It stresses and shows how important the right approach is in difficult situations and conversations. The personal and open approach taken in the Livingstreets avoided people from switching into defence mode. The latter seems of great importance if we want to facilitate a healthy relationship between citizens and municipality in Rotterdam.



Image 75: A temporary Livingstreet in Gent



Image 76: A temporary Livingstreet in Gent

8.3 (Digital) Co-creation in Haarlem

Relevance

The developers of Ontwikkelcombinatie SZW (Hoorne Vastgoed en HBB) wanted to set up a co-creation process to develop an urban plan, including new public space and housing (Urban Sync & Gemeente Haarlem, 2020). Urban sync lead this process initially. Later, this responsibility was handed over to the municipality. Just when the process started, the pandemic started. The co-creation could not entirely take place in person and a digital version had to be made. It is useful to analyse how they approach the co-creation process and how they used what kind of digital strategies.

Description

The co-creation process in Haarlem took over a year and about 400 people took part in it. Of those 400 people, there were 59 active and consistent participants. A total of four events were organised, a living room festival in which people got to know each other, as well as three co-creation workshops. One each month and each with a different theme. In order to decide the themes, the team went into the city to get an idea of important issues and chances of the area. Three themes were formulated as a result of it:

1. Green and community,
2. Buildings and facilities
3. Mobility and movement

The festival took place in real life, but the workshops could not. A central platform, in which everything could be done and found, was created in order to facilitate this well. The advantage of this has been that people could react live, but also afterwards. The workshops would have taken several hours in real life, which they wanted to avoid online. Therefore, the workshop took place five days in a row. About 60 people per workshop about took place on average. During the last day of the first workshop, people could ask

open questions. They stopped this in the next workshops because only one person showed up.

Connected to each theme there were four different activities each month. Ideas for the activities could be sent in by the inhabitants. The activities were connected, but more informal than the workshops. For the urban designers, as well as for officials, has it been a good way to create personal connections with inhabitants and to understand the context of the project better.

There was also a podcast, with a total of five episodes in the end. In each episode, they visit a different part of the district to better understand its character. The makers themselves talk about each part, but there are also many inhabitants that talk about their direct environment.

Their recommendations

1. Continuity during the co-creation process is important. Make sure the gathered input remains in the entire process. Everyone in the team needs to be aware of the nuances of the process as well.
2. The input needs to be actually used. Even during the building period, it is important to keep listening to what people have to say. They are the ones that will inhabit it.
3. If the input can not be used, or a different decision is made, let people know why. Explain what the arguments were and why you chose to do it differently.
4. Keep people tuned, also when there is not much news to be told.
5. Make sure there is a clear digital and physical platform where people can find information.
6. Work together. In larger co-creation processes it is important to keep the sometimes different groups updated on each other. Especially the workgroup needs short lines with the different groups.
7. Continuity makes people trust. The co-creation process that we started in Haarlem broke the ice for many people. It is a valuable good that can and should be used

in future projects. Keep the connection that is made here alive.

Conclusion

The co-creation process in Haarlem shows how extensive co-creation can become. It takes time, it takes money, but it is an investment for the whole city. All stakeholders are more trusted due to its success and future projects will likely function in a similar manner. The lessons learned from this process gives also gut input for this research.

Integration

The hybrid process used is of great value and could serve as an example for Rotterdam. One platform where people can find digital input, as well as all the information about real-life events.

The scale of this project is, however, different from the one suitable for bottom-up co-creation in Rotterdam. Haarlem mainly serves as an example for urban architecture and landscape design offices.



Image 77: A voting about the architecture in the Spoorzone of Haarlem.



Image 78: Digital brainstorm about an element in the co-creation process.



Image 79: A come-together in the streets of Haarlem during their co-creation year.

8.4 Annual citizen budget Maastricht

Relevance

The municipality of Maastricht decides to financially open up to their inhabitants, giving them a budget to improve their social and spatial direct environment. It relates to the experiment by the changing relationship between the municipality and citizens that is created.

Intro

Since the beginning of 2021, The city of Maastricht started with an annual citizen budget. In total, 300.000 euros can be spent on projects voted on by citizens. In total there are four rounds:

In the first round, 5 out of 50 themes are chosen for that year. The themes are divided into four categories: encounter and livability, citizens, public space, and buildings and sites. Multiple evenings are organised in which people are informed about the different themes. In the second round, the available €300.000 needs to be divided over the five chosen themes. The third round consists of submitting ideas that fall within one of the five categories and within the budget set for that specific theme. In the last round, people vote about the projects that they would like to see in Maastricht.

After this first completed year, a total of 38 projects will be realised, averaging a small 8000 euros per project. This year's themes are: new meeting places and/or activities in buildings or public spaces, social activities (loneliness), empty buildings and sites, and making streets and parks green.

Outcomes

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4		
Choosing themes	Dividing budget	Submit Projects	Develop and assess plans	Choosing projects	Execution
September	October	April	June	October	End of October

Figure 17: Conceptual timeline of the citizens budget in Maastricht

A few projects will be highlighted, to get a better image of the outcomes of the citizen budget. The first one is an open-air theatre (image 80) The stand of the theatre will be made out of recycled hardwood by volunteers. The total budget for this theatre is 5.000 euros.

The second project is a Petanque court (jeu des boules in dutch). Last year the street already claimed 20 tree drip lines. For the citizen budget, they claimed their direct environment even more, by designing a court in one of the green spaces. The total budget for the court: 7.000 euros.

Another project entailed new, more challenging play equipment in their close-by square. The total budget: €17.000

Lastly, a project that wants to extend the amount and improve the quality of walking routes on the edges of the city. Budget: €8.600

Conclusion

The citizen budget in Maastricht shows probably mostly how much can be done with relatively little money. The projects are contextual and aimed directly at problems and potentials that exist at this very moment. Citizens in Rotterdam can also make this work in their city. The difference, however, is the way people see their municipality. In Maastricht, the municipality opens up and gives a clear budget, in Rotterdam it feels that you will probably run into several barriers.

Integration

Maastricht gives part of its budget for the design of public space successfully to their inhabitants. It would be interesting to see Rotterdam whether Rotterdam could budget this as well in a way.

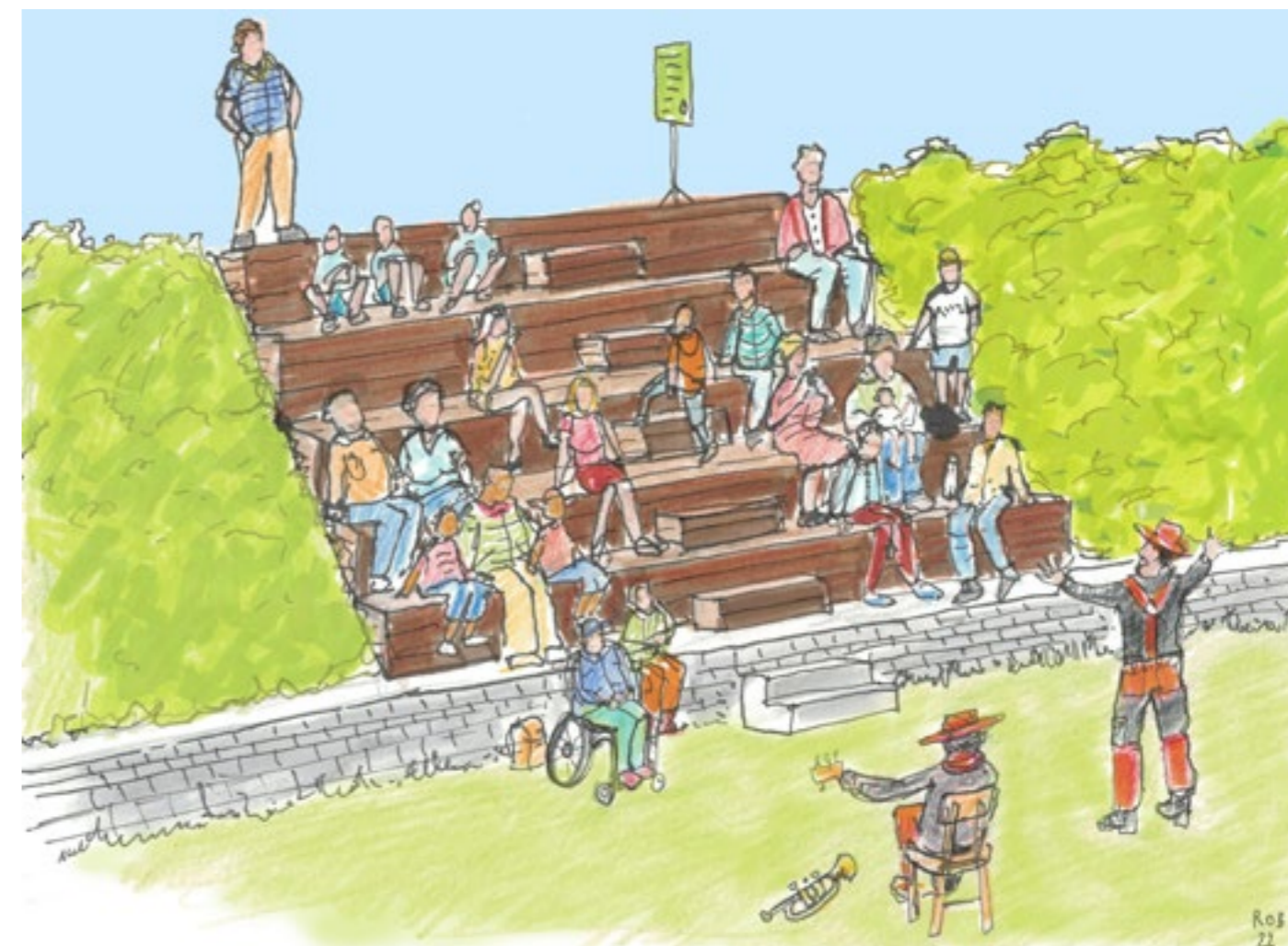


Image 80: Visualisation of the open-air theatre in Maastricht financed by the citizens budget.



Image 81: Visualisation of a square's new programme in Maastricht financed by the citizens budget.

8.5 Sidewalk parks

Relevance

In the Soetendaalseweg in Old North of Rotterdam one can find small sidewalk parks, or, as they like to call them: "Sparkjes" (a neologism of the dutch words "stoep" en "Parkjes"). During the experiment we regenerated available space on a square, a few streets further this has been done with available space on the sidewalk. The Sparkjes are a good example of what can be achieved with smaller available public spaces. It also gives input and confirmation for the later proposed design.

Intro

It all started with the planters of image ... The street and sidewalk are reasonably wide and residents, therefore, decided to use the available space for some friendly green. At some point, someone initiated to take this a step further. They organised different workshops in which each of the available spaces could be designed with all sorts of scrap material. In later workshops, together with the architects of Superuse studios, the design of the Sparkjes is further developed.

The result consists of two types of sidewalk furniture. The first is made with piles of available sidewalk tiles and a wooden, curved bench on top. The second type is made with an iron structure of pentagon shapes and finished with wood. The second type is more sophisticated than the first one and has planters, a table to have lunch, and one of them even a chessboard. The first one is only seating.

Outcomes

To truly understand the effect the Sparkjes have, one should observe them for a while. The latter has not been done by anyone yet. Out of conversations, it is clear that the Sparkjes are used. Children play on them and adults have their lunch here. It also seems to be a catalyst for conversation. How frequently each of them is used seems to depend on

their position. Does the sun reach them? Then that is the moment people like to use them. Is it located next to a school, or company? Then it is used during the breaks. Is it located in a safe, cosy corner? Then it is more likely people use it. In other words, it seems that it is highly important to look at available space and try to understand the likelihood of it being a place. When this chance is very average or low, it is better to perhaps leave it like it is, make it green or give it some other purpose like a bicycle garage.

During the process, the initiator tried to bring up ownership of the Sparkjes. People could adopt a Sparkje if they liked. Although, the initial workshop attracted about 40 people, non of them was eager enough to adopt any of the Sparkjes. The result is that the maintenance of the Sparkjes is done by a few people that like to place some plants in the planters from time to time. The maintenance of the wood is still done by the company that made the Sparkjes. In total, the Sparkjes are planned to stay for five years, of which three years have passed. The sewer in the Soetendaalseweg will be renewed soon as well, which implies that the Sprakjes could be integrated into the new design. This time with a more sustainable character.

Conclusion

The Sprakjes are a great example of people taking ownership of their direct environment. They make the street look more friendly, and they seem to be a catalyst for social interaction. Integrating them into the new situation seems interesting. This situation also shows that the caretaking of these objects is hardly done by inhabitants. Eventually, they might maintain it, but it is not on their direct priority list.

Integration

This example shows that almost every space can be appropriated with some creativity. It also shows the power of small interventions and the effect it has on the character of a street, which is more of a place than (probably) ever before. Maintenance does need to be one of the focus points when



Image 82: The starting point



Image 83: One of the two designs

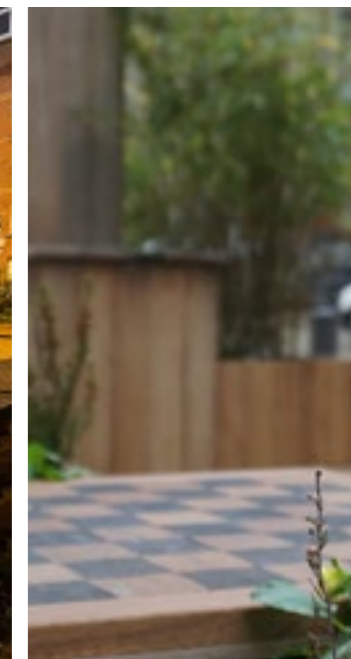


Image 84: Chessboard



Image 85: The second, more sophisticated, design type that can be found in the street

8 Design of the recommendations

1. Responsibility/liability. Analyses and overview of the legal options and consequences.
2. Facilitating participation. How to facilitate participatory processes and what to communicate to citizens.

8.0 Intro

The conclusions, dilemmas and barriers discovered in this research resulted in three recommendations and a design. As we will see, municipalities have barriers, but also options when it comes to participation. The main two options they have:

1. Choosing their legal strategy
2. The effort put into facilitating participation

The two options are translated into three recommendations. Recommendations regarding:

1. Responsibility and liability
2. Communication
3. Overviews

The report “Regel die burgerinitiatieven”, which translated to “arrange those citizen initiatives”, gives insight into the legal possibilities and gives useful recommendations for municipalities regarding communication (Ministerie van BZK, 2013). A part of what is written down is a translation and summary of that rapport.

8.1 Responsibility/liability

The first recommendation is connected to the municipality's legal strategy. The municipality is the owner, therefore, legally responsible for things that happen in public spaces. This is not possible to change, without giving away ownership. In the case of the public space, this will not happen. The risk assessment of participation is for municipalities, therefore, important. Liability and the risk to be held accountable are unavoidable factors that a municipality needs to take into account in participation. Certain strict legislation, for example, about play equipment, is a given as well.

As a municipality you have six options in approaching plans in legal terms;

1. Giving out a permit. Especially relevant for

parties, events, construction and temporary use of vacant space.

2. Making an agreement. For management and utility activities, like the concept that will be presented later. In this agreement, you can find the roles, tasks and responsibilities of all stakeholders. The municipality's liability is minimised and the accountability of initiators is made explicit.
3. Condone actions. The municipality refrains from following legislation in temporary situations. Condoning actions can be done when risks are minimal, or when initiatives are starting and the agreement is not fully finished. In other words, you don't minimise risks but accept them. Officials seem to struggle with this option since it is easier to follow rules. Besides, many officials avoid the risk to be accountable in any way. Among higher officials condoning actions is more common. Both still fear the harm done to the organisation when something terribly fails.
4. Adopt risk full aspects of plans. For example, the legislation around play facilities is strict at the moment. The municipality can decide to make an agreement for the green, but adopt the idea for a playground. It is a collaboration between the inhabitants and the municipality. Although this option has potential, is it rarely used by municipalities.
5. Adjust plans to fit the first three options
6. Or, forbid

How a municipality estimates risk decides which option will be chosen. Therefore, also how processes will look like. Rotterdam seems, based on the interviews and the experiment, more prone to choose either option two or six. In the experiment's situation, that is what made it difficult to get things done. Whether it is a full or true image of Rotterdam or not, it is good to be highly aware of the legal possibilities.

The frequently seen misconception is that responsibility is purely connected to complying with the rules and that the municipality is always responsible in case

something goes wrong. The municipality has the task to make sure the rules are met and that nothing is poorly maintained. However, in the first place are citizens expected to keep themselves and their children safe. This already applies that many of the incidents that take place will not have financial consequences for the municipality. Secondly, even if the decisions are made righteously, can this still lead to damage for citizens. In this case, the municipality follows the wrong rules.

Agreements, adopting or condoning.

Since permits are less relevant for participation in the development of the urban space, let us take a deeper look at the other three.

The majority of municipality agreements are likely the most chosen reaction to civil plans. The downside of agreements is that it takes time to formulate and decide on all the roles, tasks and responsibilities. Often, citizens need to form a legal entity as well. This comes unexpectedly, which can have an energy-draining effect.

Overall, 61% of the 67 initiatives analysed in the report had a very low risk involved, which should imply that those are easily processed. The Ministerie van BZK recommends, therefore, to de-rule and focus more on adopting and condoning strategies. In case this is not possible, at least use simplicity as the essential term when making an agreement. It is also possible to be more creative with regulations, for example, by excluding certain places from certain rules. This is not possible with every rule, but, again, with some creativity, there is much to gain.

For municipalities, it would be interesting to deepen their understanding of the other options and their relevance in different situations. Therefore, we take a further look at adopting and condoning.

Adopting

Many initiatives have a low-risk profile, but it happens that part of the initiative has a higher risk profile or is more complicated. For



Image 86: Glimpse of a natural playground

example, sometimes the combination of green and play. The play equipment needs to be executed following WAS Laws and regulations and can have a higher liability factor to them. Rather than approaching the whole initiative, which is more complicated and directly implies that citizens are faced with complexity and a longer process, adopt the high-risk part of the initiative. The result; citizens are kept out of the complexity and the initiative keeps more of its flow. This makes the process more fun and no unnecessary risks are taken by citizens. Taking over this responsibility cost time and money for the municipality, but that is still a better outcome than citizens by accident not fully complying with the rules and being held accountable when something goes wrong. This can also happen when the maintenance is not done correctly by them.

Condoning

Condoning construction can only function when no one makes a claim on laws and regulations. Condoning can be mostly used in two situations;

1. When initiatives are small scale, short term and there is not much that could go wrong.
2. At the start of initiatives when the initiators do not have all the legal elements complete yet but you still want people to start with the project.

The most interesting situation is the first one. In practice, the risk assessment proves to be significantly different between higher and lower-placed officials. Lower-placed officials avoid more often any risk to mainly avoid any possible risk to be held responsible. They simply want to stick to the rules, because that is what they are supposed to do. We have already seen that it is more complicated than only following rules and the main result of this attitude is that processes are often longer than necessary. Higher officials look more at the risk and estimate the liability. When this is low they easier turn to condoning.

Therefore, the first problem is this often disagreement in the municipal organisation about condoning. When arguing about this

too much, condoning will not be a good option anymore. The debate that should be held is what kind of organisation you want to be. Do you want to be an open, more relaxed organisation that accepts that every now and then something will go wrong, or do you want to be strict and closed off and put your time and money into making every aspect of initiatives completely risk-tight? Both cost money. How much is hard to measure but the strict version will cost money for sure.

As a higher official, you could close this debate to make a list of situations in which lower officials are allowed to condone. When it is a borderline case, you make the decision yourself.

8.2 Facilitating participation

The second recommendation is connected to the quality of the facilitation of participation. Facilitating participation is all about proper communication. The most difficult part of participation for people is the laws and rules connected to it, which are currently poorly or not communicated. This is part of the reason why the municipality seems to most people a big barrier in executing their nicely made plans.

It's not about communicating these complex aspects to the citizens, because that will not improve the accessibility, but rather finding new ways to communicate. What happened during WOII cannot fully be explained in 20 minutes, but you can give people a good summary in that time. The obligated serving and caretaking role of the municipality makes it their task to provide this summary of this complex side of participation. Their current strategy; "simply ask us and we will answer you" leaves citizens blind. Providing clarity, for both citizens as well as for a part of the officials would speed up the process.

Suggestion 1 - A risk assessment tool

Risk assessment is currently not done objectively, structurally or transparently. One of the ways to facilitate participation better is to make the risk assessment more clear. For officials it would become easier to react faster

to plans and for citizens would it become easier to formulate plans that are more likely to be accepted. Plus, citizens can already alter expectations about, for example, the time it takes to approve a project.

The report uses four factors to calculate risk within five different categories. The four factors:

1. Duration of the proposal
2. Scale. Street, city or region?
3. Ownership. Municipality, private or mixed?
4. Complexity. Technical complexity, legal, political, but also complexity in safety.

There are also five categories, each of them with a different risk profile. In-house public space should be easily processable, for events the risks are higher and the processes longer.

Each factor is given points based on the amount of risk, zero points are low and ten points are high. For example, let us take the speed bump in the experiment. Within the category "temporary use of space," we give three points to timespan for the three months that it would last. It is relatively small in scale, but there is a bigger group affected: four points for scale. The ownership belongs to the municipality, so ten points. The technical complexity is low, but the safety, political, and legal might be quite high. Therefore, nine points. This adds up to 26 points, which almost borders the red colour. We can likely make an agreement, but there is a chance that we need to change it. There is also a small chance they will forbid it.

With this information, we would have known that the speedbump would likely not be approved in a few weeks time. We could have altered to experiment in such a way that some of it was able to be tested.

Other suggestions and recommendations are done by the Ministerie van BZK that relate to this research (2013):

1. Communicate to everyone always who can be held accountable. No transparency on this aspect can scare people away or let

Content of the initiative	Riskgroups	Riskpoints
In-house public space	Timespan Scale Ownership Complexity	+ 4 to 16 20 to 28 32 to 40
Play	Timespan Scale Ownership Complexity	+ 4 to 16 20 to 28 32 to 40
Self-managed buildings	Timespan Scale Ownership Complexity	+ 4 to 16 20 to 28 32 to 40
Temporary use of space	Timespan Scale Ownership Complexity	+ 4 to 16 20 to 28 32 to 40
Events	Timespan Scale Ownership Complexity	+ 4 to 16 20 to 28 32 to 40
Strategies	Change policy, change initiative, adopt partially, agreement or permit	Change initiative, agreement, permit, adopt partially or forbid

Figure 17: Risk assesment tool, based upon Ministerie van BZK (2013)

people take unwanted risks.

2. As a municipality, stay in contact with initiators during and after self manages activities by initiators. Make sure that this is in the agreement.
3. Accept that the kind of plants and the maintenance will be different if it is done by inhabitants.
4. Think of new alternatives for cases in which an initiator needs to become a legal entity.
5. Letting people appropriate or maintain aspects of the public space implies letting go of the equality of it. This needs to be communicated to everyone.

More legal guidance and examples can be found in the document of the Ministerie van BZK (2013)

Suggestion 2 - Overviews

The municipality of Rotterdam consists of 17.000 employees. These people are all doing different things that are not always documented, or communicated. One can also imagine the constant roulette of people leaving and entering the organisation. All of this makes it difficult to create overviews that would capture and make you understand the municipality of Rotterdam as a whole.

When talking to the municipality about it they acknowledge that the lacking overviews make the municipality indeed a difficult-to-work-with partner. Creating the overviews, however, in their eyes undoable for the entire organisation. Their strategy is; simply call us, and we will tell you as well as we can.

Unfortunately, only a small percentage know to a greater extent what is going on and what is possible. In slightly more complex situations, just like the experiment, does this imply that you will be reconnected over and over again.

Whether it is interesting to make an overview for only one department, in this case, participation, is debatable. But if it is somewhere relevant then it is participation. The overviews that are missing, which could be interesting and to develop:

1. Make sure available programmes are not only clearly shown, but also why you should choose one over the other. Show also programmes that are indirectly connected to the municipality.
2. Give summarised overviews of processes, criteria and rules. This way initiators can communicate accordingly. This does not need to be described in all its complexity, but as an indication for initiators.
3. Make an overview of stakeholders that are involved in processes and different departments and people are linked. Right now, initiators will over the course of time get a grasp of who is involved and how things are related. Tell people briefly what each stakeholder is doing and how they will influence the process. It would make initiators more equal partners. At the moment, initiators are fully dependent on other people.

An example of the implication of more overview, better communications and more transparency for just-started initiatives can be seen on the next page.

At the beginning of the year, the website of the municipality was lacking overview more than it does a year later. Showing again the constant flux of renewals in this organisation. Nevertheless, is there much to gain when it comes to overviews.

Initiator	Hi, we want to make our street greener and possibly add something for the children.
Municipality	Hi, that is great! We have different programmes for regenerating streets. I'll send you a link, which gives you a brief overview of the different options you have to add green to your street. As for adding play equipment, that is more complicated. I'll send you a summarised overview of the risk assessment that we do for public space. Some aspects are more riskful than others. These more riskful elements need likely a different approach, which we gladly help you with. Take a look at the overview to get an idea of how easy or difficult it is to implement certain ideas.
Initiator	Thank you! Will you guide us through the process the entire time?
Municipality	There are a few departments that are connected to changes in public space, which will also further help you access the plans. I'll send you an overview of the departments and a summary of what they do. The main contact person for you is the "wijknetwerker" who will get you in contact with everyone and help you with your plans.
Initiator	Thanks again. I already understand better what we are getting ourselves into. Can you connect us to our contact person?
Municipality	Yes, I can!

9 The design proposal



Image 87: Visualisation of co-created new public space in Rotterdam - Art with flowers.

9.0 Intro

This research is about the integration of co-design, co-creation and co-decision in the development and regeneration of public space in Rotterdam. It is about trying to bring participation to its full potential because only up the ladder are the true benefits of participation. Only up the ladder can we find new ways to rebuild trust. Only together, with our shared effort and creativity, will we be able to answer the challenges that we face and will face.

The design presented is a maximisation of a bottom-up guided co-creation process in Rotterdam. It consists of spatial as well as operational elements and is centred around longevity, scalability, cohesion, building trust and a feeling of ownership and pride. All of it is based upon the challenges, dilemmas, potentials and conclusions drawn in the research.

The two strategies regarding the integration of co-creation, as described in the conclusions, will guide this design. Which are:

1. The municipality needs to facilitate an accessible platform for the bottom-up co-creation of public space
2. The municipality needs to initiate and facilitate co-creation processes itself.

The one does not exclude the other. Therefore, the design is the integration of the two fully developed strategies.

A new pillar for Rotterdam's public space

In order to integrate co-creation and its goals in the current frameworks, we need to be aware of the pillars on which Rotterdam's public space is currently based. These pillars are not grouped somewhere, but will likely connect to:

1. Mobility. Trying to provide the best infrastructure in the whole world.
2. Uniformity. Ensuring well-functioning spaces that communicate unity. This is Rotterdam!
3. Safety. Making sure that you are physically safe, and also feeling safe.
4. Climate crisis proof. One of the new goals, in which we make try to embrace the natural world and adapt to the challenges it poses.

Each of these pillars positively influences Rotterdam as a city. But, neither of them seems directly focussed on making lively human habitats - one of the core elements of what we do as (landscape) architects and urbanists. Therefore, to give guidance to the design of the proposal and improve the habitat, one new pillar is added. The city and its public space should be a:

Manifestation of life. It needs to be accessible to feel connected and feel responsible for your own direct environment as a citizen. The public space should be appropriable and be

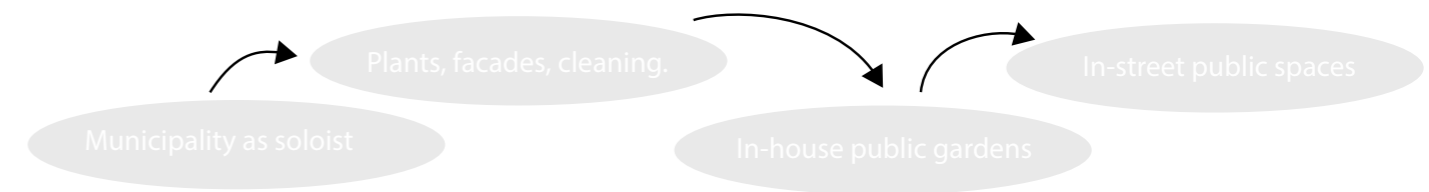


Figure 18: The next step in citizen participation Rotterdam able to be used in its zeitgeist.

The measurability of this goal is an important factor. That's also why the existing four pillars seem so effective. How this will be done, will be explained in the following chapters.

Scale

As we have seen throughout this research can participation processes, as well as co-creation, be applied in almost every scale and project. How that process looks like in every scale is different.

In Haarlem, the co-creation has been on a larger, complex scale. Co-creation mainly implied taking people into a design adventure by organising workshops, informative Sundays and letting them choose between different types of environments, for example. Although the process in Haarlem is probably rather unique, there is a chance that we will see this more often with the tools and platforms available these days. On a mid-size scale do interesting co-creation processes take place as well, as we have seen with the Stijlgroep office. Both scales mainly depend on the philosophy of offices and their clients.

On the scale where co-creation is likely most exciting for citizens, we find unused potential; the local, tangible and less complex small to medium scale. The scale above the greening of the facade, but slightly smaller than a public square.

Concept proposal

The concept proposal contains the creation of a co-creation environment for this small to medium scale. In public space, we start to reserve spaces that are allowed to be appropriated by the inhabitants of a street. This will be done with the help, or on the initiative, of coaches, similar to Citylab 010.

It implies that we take a next step in a process that is already visible in Rotterdam. The municipality went from the soloist in the public domain, to concepts such as the in-house public gardens (eigen beheer). The next step will be "In-street public spaces". An example of the spatial implication can be seen in images 87 and 88.

Where these new public places should be located and in which quantity they are allowed to exist will in the end be decided by the municipality. The next chapters will go into



Image 88: Visualisation of co-created new public space in Rotterdam - Playfull art with picnic table.

Roles

The development of these public spaces can either be initiated by the municipality or by the inhabitants themselves. In either case, there will be an important role for the municipal urban/landscape designers. This can also be an official that is trained to work with the frameworks and legislation. This role is essential for successful, equal and fluent processes and outcomes. You can provide better information about the criteria, frameworks or visions to citizens, but to work efficiently in this profession takes time. In the first place, you need experience and knowledge on an array of topics. Additionally, the functioning of the municipality is complex, mainly because it is subject to constant change. Your network and possible good relations with co-workers, the departments as well as emergency services, therefore, make for more fluent workflows and easier made decisions.

This additional role will consist of coaching bottom-up initiatives, advising citizens, initiating projects and co-designing these new public spaces. Both could be done by the designer as well as by the official. However, the responsibilities that could be carried by the designer can be more extensive.

To sum up the tasks of both:

1. Lead and/or coach the design projects
2. Share knowledge on the criteria/rules
3. Builds up a possible intervention library

The possible extra responsibilities of the municipal urban/landscape designers:

1. Design context new public spaces/open masterplan/location quality plan
2. Monitor and guard good practice

Process

The first step of any process will be making the public space available for a project. How this will take be done is explained in a next chapter. After a new public space is opened, there are two main process strategies. Either, inhabitants can take things into their own hands if they want and start their own process.

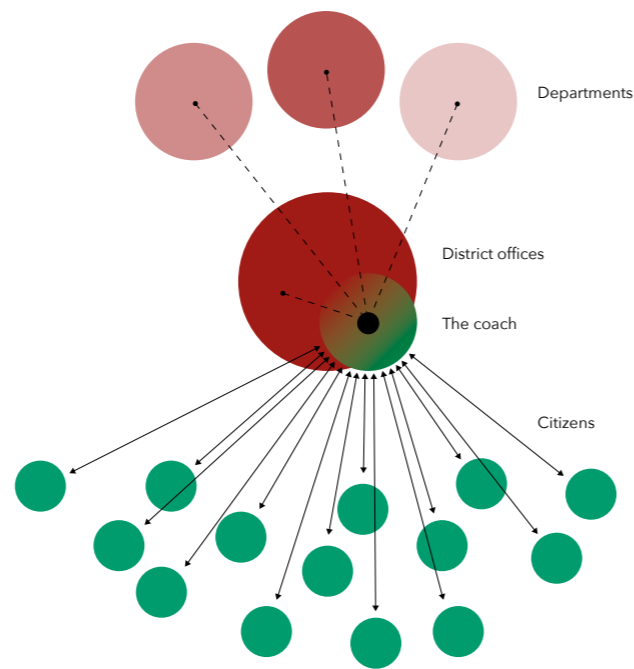


Figure 19: The position of the coach within the organisation of Rotterdam.

In such a case, they will be coached and given the tools necessary for a successful outcome. Or, the municipality initiates a project itself, similar to an efficient version of the experiment conducted in this research.

The summarized versions of both processes can be seen in figure 20. For each option there will be a few things that need to be made sure.

Processes initiated by the municipality need to make sure:

1. The majority is contacted, preferably face to face.
2. The platform for communication is adjusted to the group.
3. Inhabitants are informed about expectations, the budget, the process and the progress.
4. Inhabitants are the ones that need to appropriate the space, not the designer.
5. Analog and digital tools and platforms can be used to involve people and develop the plan.
6. The unheard are represented in a way.

Processes initiated by the inhabitants need to make sure:

1. The majority is contacted in face-to-face or similar approaches. Coaches need



Image 89: Visualisation of co-created new public space in Rotterdam - Covered BBQ and graffiti container with equipment to use for?

to evaluate whether this has been done sufficiently.

2. The group is well-informed about the context of their doings: stakeholders, contact persons, criteria, expectations, budget, collaborations, aims of neighbouring projects, etc.
3. The group is helped towards a plan that can be evaluated and executed.

Financing

The financial side of this concept is important. At the moment, many of the locations that will be proposed are low-maintenance spaces that cost little to no money. How the budget for these projects will become available is in practice quite a puzzle. There is no budget in the current state of affairs.

The most sustainable situation would be if the municipality integrates the new pillar and makes a budget available. Another option is making use of the existing connection that exists between other domains that already have a budget; climate change adaptation programmes, as well as budgets for the healthy city. A last option consists of collaboration with entrepreneurs. Perhaps there is a space next to their shop and are they willing to sponsor part of it. This will always need to happen under the supervision of the municipality to avoid some form of privatisation of these public spaces. Funds and other connected organisations are interesting as well in this regard.

Either way, the projects will need to be mainly financed by the municipality. To get an idea of the amount of money involved in this proposal, an estimation is made for a scaled-up, sustainable variant.

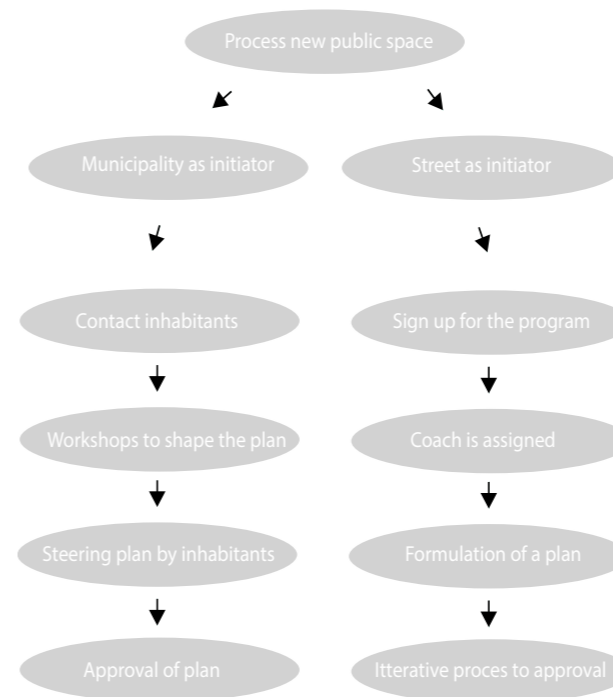


Figure 20: The two variants of the conceptual process of the design.



Image 90: An unused existing public space in Rotterdam



Image 91: Visualisation of co-created new public space in Rotterdam - Hammock with flowers.

Overall, two main factors need to be financed: The coach and the project itself. The amount of coaches, and therefore, the amount of projects, is scalable to a significant extent. As an example, we connect the number of coaches to the number of neighbourhood councils (wijkraden). For each neighbourhood, there will be two coaches. In total there are 39 councils, which adds up to 78 coaches. These 78 coaches should probably be spread out over the six district offices. Each coach can likely do eight projects per year. This implies that each year about 624 new public spaces can be realised in the city.

The costs of a single coach, in case this person would do the coaching full-time:

Gross salary + Employer's costs =

$€36.000$ (3000 per month) + (30% of gross salary) = $€10.800$ =

€46.800

There are 78 employees in the scaled example, which would make the total:

$Cost\ per\ employee\ \times\ number\ of\ employees = €46.800 \times 78 =$

€3.650.400

The projects themselves will vary in cost. Costs for many projects can remain low, especially if you give more freedom in the furniture that is allowed to be used. For example, projects could derive designs from the Rotterdamse Stijl but still be made frugally and with second-hand materials. In that sense, the projects would be creative circular design sessions.

In order to keep things equal and modest, the budget is set at 5000 euros per project.

$Budget\ per\ project\ \times\ amount\ of\ projects = €5000 \times 624 =$

€3.120.000

Perhaps, in addition to this budget, there is a voting two times a year giving projects an opportunity to double their budget. 25 of the best designs can win.

$Amount\ of\ winning\ designs\ \times\ extra\ budget = 25 \times 5000 =$

€125.000

The total cost for the scale-up version of the concept =

€6.895.400

To be on the safe side, let us add an additional hidden cost margin of 30% to the total cost of the scaled-up version =

€8.964.020

In other words, the proposed concept will cost about seven to nine million euros per year. Whether this is a lot of money is debatable.

To put it in perspective, at the moment, the annual expense for the development and design of the public space is 406 million and the annual expense for culture, sport and recreation is 239 million. It is unclear how these budgets are exactly spent and which percentage are fixed necessary costs.

The financial benefits gained with this concept are not directly quantifiable, but defensible. You are tackling loneliness, improving cohesion, increasing social learning, rebuilding trust, attributing to climate change adaptation, getting people to move outside and possibly improving the overall happiness experienced in the city. How much money you save by making these improvements depends on the magnitude of each effect and the size of the group.

For the latter can we roughly estimate that about 15 people taking part in each project. If there are 624 projects each year, then about 9360 people are directly involved. That's 1.5% of the people living in Rotterdam that you reach each year. The number of people that uses these new public spaces will be larger, perhaps tenfold the number of people directly involved. In other words, per year you improve the direct environment of about 10% of the people to some extent. All in all, the financial benefits easily start to add up.

detail about the latter, as well as all the other aspects of this proposal.

Location of spaces

Another main question for this design is where in public space these spaces will be located. There are a few factors that will decide the location of these new public spaces:

1. The debate about progressive vs conservative city development
2. The number of people connected to a place
3. The amount of publicness
4. Gentrification, the wealth gap and financial viability
5. Existing usable spaces
6. The position of the car in public space
7. Each of the factors will be analysed, reflected and concluded upon.

The debate

The location of the new public spaces will need to be evaluated by an aesthetics committee based on a quality plan that already exists for each urban category. The city is in a few different ways categorised. First; a categorisation is based upon their urban concept, a characteristic, or the time they were built in. Each of the categories is described in its context, its values and aims.

There is also a categorisation based on their status in relation to the commission. In the harbour, there are parts which are not assessed by the committee. Furthermore, are there locations that have a regular status, but also locations with a special status. Special status areas have either historical or significant public value. The quality expected is in these areas higher than in the regular status areas.

Additionally, there are protected city views. In these areas is the urban situation highly protected. Lastly, development areas are mostly given a special briefing on what is expected.

The location of new public spaces is more accessible within the regular locations. Within the first categorisation, it is mainly

important to see what is expected within that context.

Three of the categories of the aesthetics committee have been looked into in order to see how categories are described and what this committee is trying to protect (Jandirk Hoekstra et al., 2012). The two following pages show maps with the different categories as well as an example of Lombardijen.

Planned urban expansions

Description: In the planned urban expansions, the independent building blocks form a significant architectural unity. All of them are arranged in (symmetrical) ensembles. In urban development, as well as in architecture, is the collective aspect (repetition, coherence, hierarchy) strongly apparent and the expression of individual objects subordinate.

Aim: for every procedure in either the operational domain, maintenance, as well as for newly build objects, one must evaluate the consequences for the urban and architectural unity and composition.

Unplanned urban expansion

Description: in unplanned urban expansion is the urban structure established with closed building blocks and is the built environment consisting of individual buildings with unique architecture or consisting of a small series of the same architecture.

Aim: the starting point for spacial policy and the aesthetics committee is keeping the architectural ensembles and the original urban structure recognisable.

The stamp and stripes method

Description: In the stamp and stripes building method are architecture, public space and green designed as a composition. Characterising is the seeming less blend of each of them, closed spaces do not exist.

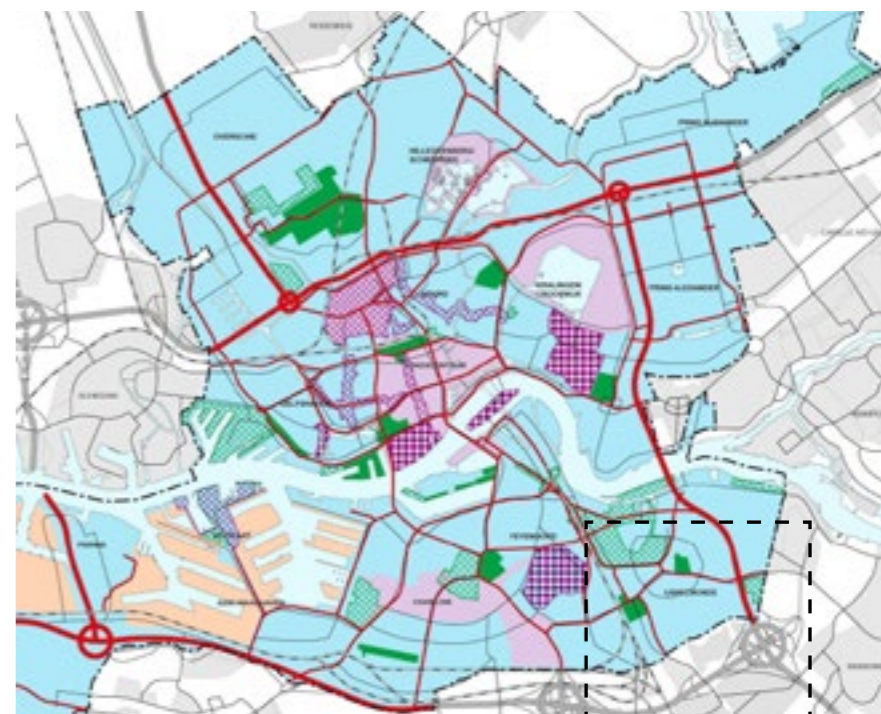
Aim: the starting point for spatial policy and the aesthetics committee is the transformation of the highly important relation of architecture, public space and green.

- Historical lines and cores
- Unplanned urban expansions
- Planned urban expansions
- Garden cities
- The stamp and stripes method
- Housing 1970 - 1985
- Housing after 1985
- Urban villa districts
- Centrummix
- Urban intersections
- River locations
- Office locations
- Harbor and business
- Urban green
- Other green

- ▬ Municipal border
- Free of quality plan
- Regular
- Special
- Development
- Future development
- Protected scene
- Future protected scene
- Mainroad structure
- The rhombus



Map 5: Rotterdam categorised by urban its context.



Map 6: Rotterdam categorised by its quality plan status.

Lombardijen

Lombardijen, indicated in the dotted square, falls in a regular area and within the stamp and stripes building method. A project in this location is more accessible and mainly needs to ensure the balance between architecture and surrounding. Directing the design proposal and communication towards this balance likely smoothens the assesment.



Image 92: Photo of typical scene in Lombardijen. Source: Google maps.



Image 93: Section of typical scene in Lombardijen

Rotterdamse Stijl

Translation: Rotterdam style

Additional to the quality plan and the aesthetics committee is there also a handbook Rotterdamse Stijl (with a toolkit). Rotterdam created this handbook in order to create more uniformity and coherence in the city (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). At this moment, the handbook is guiding and determining the design of the public space to a great extent. Therefore, can and will it guide this concept. A summary of the goals and aims:

The handbook tries to develop and strengthen the character of the different areas. This implies that they want to react to unique elements but at the same use the same group of materials and furniture (toolkit). Overall, the design of the public space must be timeless, but trends must be accommodated.

In the Rotterdamse Stijl, they strive for a less dominant position for cars in the city and extend the quantity of human-friendly public space. To do so they propose parking garages, integrated parking in buildings and improved public transport. This shift will be done step-by-step over the years.

There is an extra focus on younger generations, they will get more public space

since they form a relatively big group in Rotterdam. For the youngest generations, this implies that green and possibilities for play should be close at home as well. As for green; the aim is to improve the quality and make it more playable/usable.

The handbook also gives more practical spatial direction. This is done by category; lines, rivers and quays, main roads, boulevards, avenues and for the different areas. Especially, the information about two of the areas is interesting for this research; urban neighbourhoods and garden cities.

Urban neighbourhoods

About urban neighbourhoods, they conclude that car ownership has had a significant impact on the neighbourhoods. Therefore, the space for recreation, sport and play is significantly reduced over the years. Overall, these are intensively used parts of the city. The living qualities can often be found in inner gardens.

The aim is to create more recreation and play space. This implies that the number of parking spaces needs to be reduced and streets should be repurposed to low-traffic environments since there is no space left at the moment. This can only be done by simultaneously rearranging parking, for example, in neighbourhood garages. They

also recommend a smarter way of using space and being cautious with the amount of furniture. The current, as well as future, public spaces should be designed on a neighbourhood level.

Garden cities

About garden cities, they conclude that the designed balance between green, space and architecture is under pressure due to car ownership and densification. The quality of the green is also at stake due to reduced budgets.

They propose to redesign the often over-dimensioned traffic space and use it for play, recreation and green. The soberness and the robustness of used principles should be used for the redesign.

Conclusion Rotterdamse Stijl and aesthetics committee

The aims of the Rotterdamse Stijl appear to be truly coherent with the goals of the concept. This is especially the case for their overall aim, but also their strategy for urban neighbourhoods. The soberness and robustness principles of the garden city do not directly match the aims of the proposed concept.

Neither are the aims of the aesthetics committee fully aligned; protecting and keeping the existing urban and architectural ideas and compositions preserved and recognisable, as opposed to giving people more freedom to appropriate their direct environment.

It is unclear how strictly the aesthetics committee follows their aims and how they relate to the goals of the Rotterdamse Stijl. The Rotterdamse Stijl wants to accommodate trends, extend the quantity of human-friendly public space and give space to younger generations in various ways. Not directly coherent either.

One can also wonder why there is not a prosperous human habitats committee as well. For example, the post-war garden city neighbourhoods have their values but are

often rather dull places. Should the concept remain untouched if its human potential is not fully explored? If people cannot identify with it, or appropriate it? A similar argument can be made for the many of the streets in urban neighbourhoods. What is the weight of the prosperous human habitats argument compared to the existing aesthetics argument?

One can also wonder to what extent the new public spaces can be seen as islands in an ocean that remains to communicate its concept? Maybe they do not conflict at all. The debate in this conclusion partially defines where the new public places could be located.

The number of people

The location of the new public spaces is also depending on the size of the group. A smaller group of people will likely feel more responsibility for the projects and be more connected to other participants. As we have seen in the theoretical framework, participation is also about skills and trust.

In the experiment of this research already mainly extravert and skilled people took the stage. Since the group was smaller, it was possible to defend the more introverted and help the less skilled. The bigger the group the harder it will be to get everyone involved and heard. Plus, in larger groups even more people feel unprepared/skilled/smart enough to give their input.

Projects that take place in a slightly larger urban square will, therefore, already be problematic for this concept. You will partially lose the personal approach. There would be too many people to be contacted and you would not be able to build up trust before you start the project. The latter made it possible in the experiment to lay a foundation for the cohesion that later started to evolve.

Concluding: when analysing project locations, think about the number of people that are connected to that place. If it exceeds more than ≈ 50 households, the approach will need to be altered.



Image 94: Visualisation of co-created new public space in Rotterdam - Lounging in green environment.

Publicness

There is no clear answer in the debate about the publicness of a place and whether frequent users should have more rights or say in it. Truly public spaces are already ruled out by the potential group size of a location. However, there will be locations that will be (slightly) more public.

There seems probably only one right answer, and that is that the municipal urban/landscape designer should take the initiative and lead in more public project locations.

Gentrification, the wealth gap and financial viability

There are a few dilemmas with this concept that makes you reflect on which locations would be appropriate:

1. If the municipality improves the public space of neighbourhoods like Lombardijen and Pendrecht, the housing prices will go up. In other words, you are simply gentrifying these areas. If the concept proves successful, we created another place that will be too expensive for the poorest people. Either these people need to be protected - in practice that does not seem to happen in currently gentrified neighbourhoods - or, you deliberately decide to keep these areas less successful human habitats. Which is also lowering the chances that these people have in our society.
2. It also works the other way around. People that bought houses in the city will profit from successful new public spaces. It also connects to the usual suspect problem. In many ways, you are making the wealth and equal chance gap larger.
3. The financial viability of the concept is already mentioned before, but in light of the two dilemmas mentioned above, this becomes again a topic for reflection. Maybe the small ten million that this concept costs every year is simply too much, improving the financial viability of the city as a whole. You can bring the costs down to be more selective

about neighbourhoods in which the two dilemmas are too prone. Unfortunately, would the latter likely not work in practice.

Existing usable spaces

So far we have been looking at the theory behind the possible location. There is also a spatial side to it. Either we use existing usable spaces or create new ones. First, we take a look at the former.

The first, and most accessible locations for this proposal are in existing public spaces. Some areas in Rotterdam might be relatively full, nevertheless, is there still much potentially interesting space left everywhere in Rotterdam. This can be a widened sidewalk, a stroke of grass, the fields of grass in the post-war urban environments or a slightly boring public garden. In almost every area there are potential places since there is no minimum size to make it work, only a maximum size. Examples can be seen throughout this chapter so far, as well as the 10 pictures in images 95 and 96.

Creating new public spaces

The design proposal can also be taken a step further by creating new public spaces. This could be done by taking away cars in the streets, but also by more efficiently organising streets. This can be done as shown in the location analyses of the experiment, but also by integrating the superbloc concept in Rotterdam, for example. The financial side of the concept will then change.

Integration of the Barcelona model

The role that cars currently take in our cities is an often-mentioned topic, in the Rotterdamse Stijl as well. The superblocs in Barcelona showed that a revised role of the car in neighbourhoods can lead to additional public spaces. These new public spaces could partially be used to unfold the in-street concept.

Rotterdam is different and more diverse in layout than the rational grid in Barcelona. Not every neighbourhood will therefore

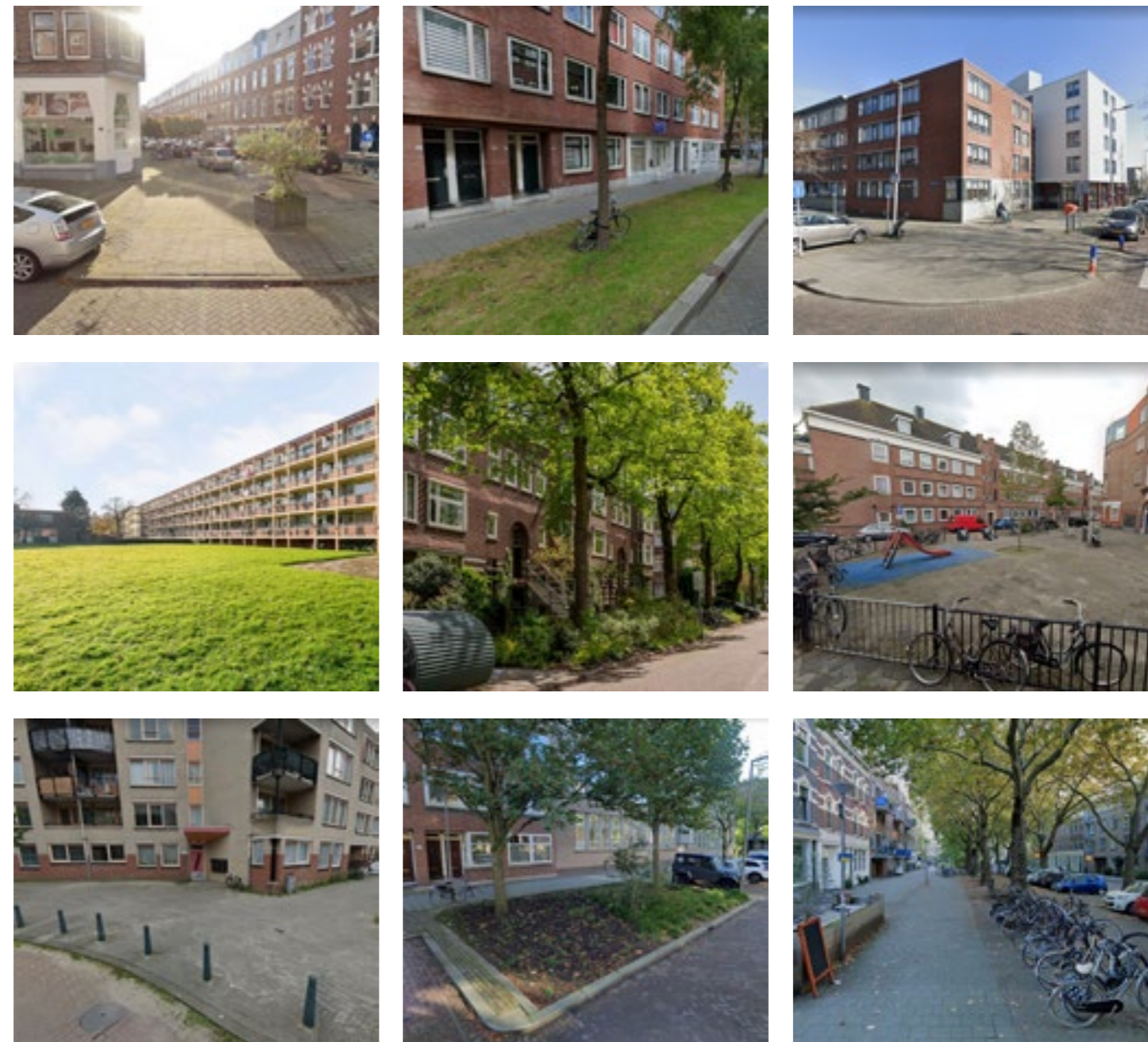
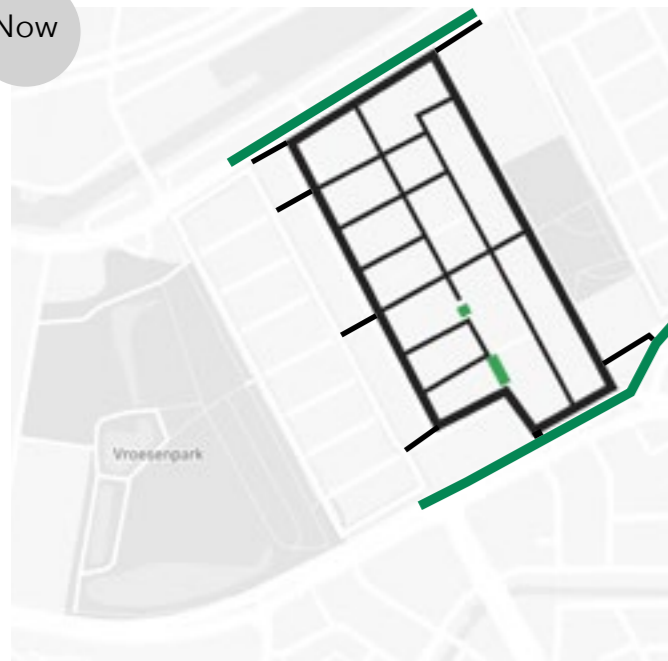


Image 95: Existing usable spaces in Rotterdam. Source: Google Maps.



Image 96: Visualisation of co-created new public space in Rotterdam - Adventure path along the sidewalk

Now



be suitable for the integration of a similar concept. Still, proves the Barcelona concept interesting for a city like Rotterdam as demonstrated in figures 21, 22 and 23.

The current situation in a part of Blijdorp, Rotterdam can be seen on the top left of figure 21. The bolder line on the edges are the access roads for the neighbourhood, the tinner lines are in intern roads and the green blocks are closed-off parts of a street. Traffic in the neighbourhood is mainly guided by one-way streets that make the possible routes internally limited. Furthermore, do people park in the streets or on the edges of the parks.

By revising the intersections internally it is possible to create five more squares in this area, without changing the number of parking spots. In option one, the streets are looped. Option two shows a situation where there are dead-ends, turning for cars should then be made possible. Option three shows a version of the same principle, but this time people are still able to drive through their neighbourhood.

The first two options will improve the safety of slow traffic further, making it possible to start using streets in a variety of ways. The third option will do this for a few streets, still ensuring a better flow of car traffic. The latter is a downside in the first two options. It will be undoable for people to understand

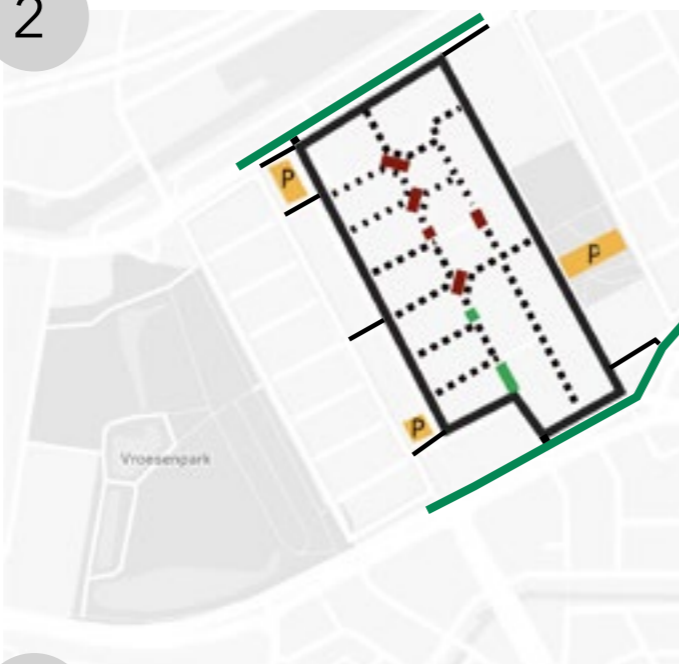
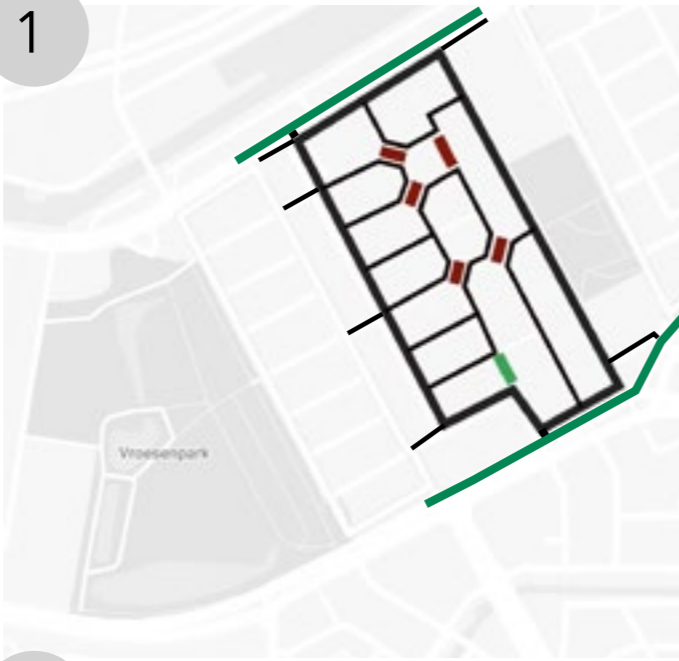


Figure 21: Mobility in Blijdorp now and with the integration of the superblock concept of Barcelona in different ways.

exactly how to get to their destination without navigation or knowing the neighbourhood.

Options two and three also show a situation where the amount of public space is further extended by removing parking spots in the streets themselves. The latter is indicated with dotted lines. The consequence of that would be that parking should be facilitated differently for the time being. For example, in this case, the open spaces in between could facilitate a parking hub of a few stories high, as shown on the following pages.

First, the intersection. This could be designed as shown in Figure 22. The bicycle streets (like image 97) lead to two lanes which guide people 90 degrees into the next street. The square follows this lane, as well as the sidewalk on the other side. This implies that the maximum amount of space can be used. On the sidewalk is enough space to design something as well. The result is an intersection that used to consist of roads, turned into an intersection that has substantially more usable public space.

As we have seen in the good-practice example of the Sparkjes, is one of the most essential things in successful place-making to understand the space. Turning this usable space into a place will be, therefore, guided by its context;

- what kind of people are living in the close surrounding? Are there many families?
- Is it a nice place to sit? Is there sun for most of the day?
- Is there a school close by? Or office spaces?
- What kind of facilities are there in the close surrounding? What is still missing?

This implies that one square will be more exciting and more of a place than the other. Some might simply bring some spaciousness to the situation, or you could come to the conclusion that keeping the intersection is more beneficial. In case you add five new squares in a relatively small proximity, it is interesting to make the programme on each

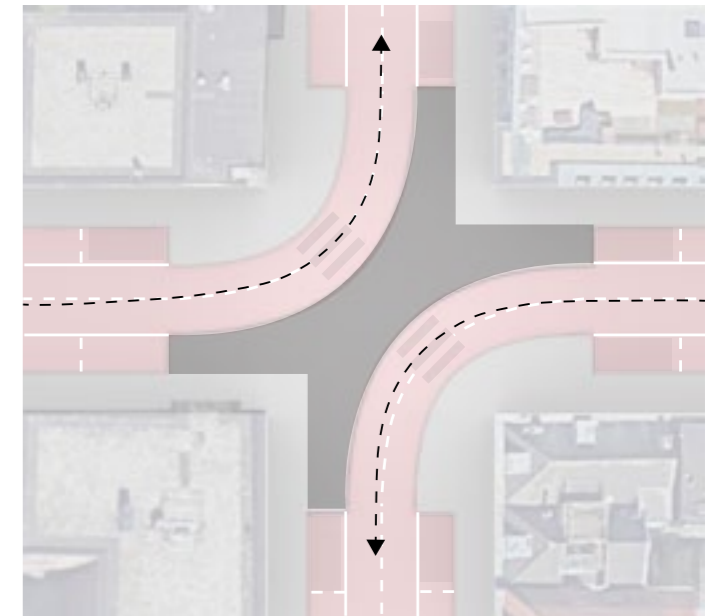


Figure 22: The concept behind the reworked intersections. Cars cannot go through anymore, creating a new public space.

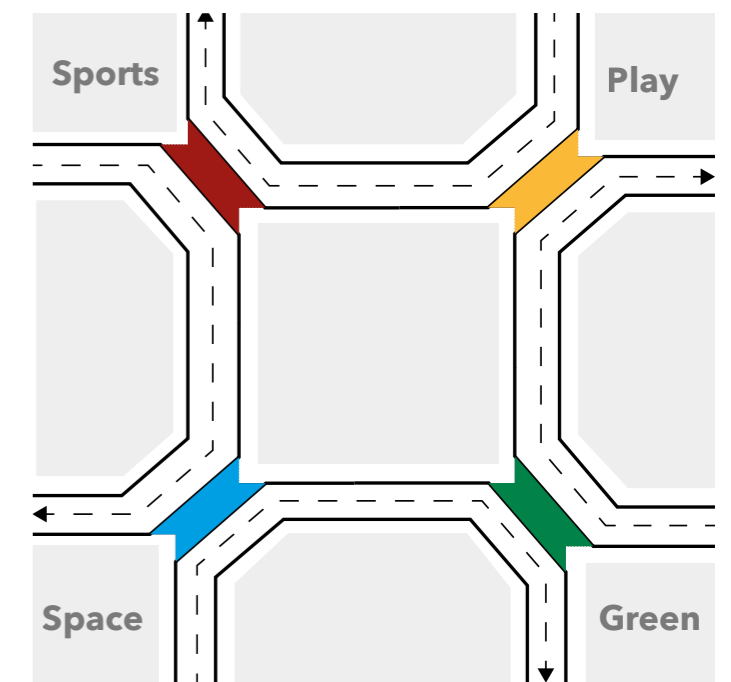


Figure 23: Squares could be adjusted to each other, providing the most interesting and appropriate mix of facilities in the neighbourhood.



Image 97: Example of cyclist street with a small path for cars (Robert van Overveld, taken on 15 January, 2023)

square a bit different. Maybe one square has a few exercise elements, while the other is more open and is able to host a market or summer cinema night. An example of Barcelona can be seen in image 63. In this case, they used the square as a playground. Either way, will it always be interesting to make it climate adaptive; greener and able to process a lack or abundance of water.

The width of the tunnel should be minimally three and a half meters, which is often the minimal width of a single-way road. The advantage of a smaller lane would be that cars will not speed as much. The downside of it is that it might be a little tight because the car drives at an angle. In this minimum width example, the diagonal of the intersection is 16.8 meters. This is also the minimum width the diagonal of the intersection should minimally have to make this concept work. The minimum width is in this situation 11.5 meters.

A wider lane would function more fluently. Adding the width of two cycling lanes and narrowing the car space by a meter results in a six and a half meters wide lane. A car needs to use the cycle lanes partially to go through the lane, as we see more nowadays. This either implies that the intersection needs to be bigger in size (Figure 24), or you will give up some space on the square. Either way will speeding be a bigger problem, which might not be a wanted outcome next to a square. Figure 25 shows an example of a wider intersection in which the minimum width of the lane is kept. The size of the square itself grows substantially.

Image 99 shows a square with similar proportions as the just mentioned larger situation. In this case, the space on this intersection came into existence due to the non-symmetrical situation. This square is already an example of how available space becomes a place. This square is sort of a small park with trees, seating, a bit of shelter and some art.

Which options one should choose depends on the situation and the goals. The squares could be co-created with inhabitants, but will often cost more than the 5000 euro estimated. The

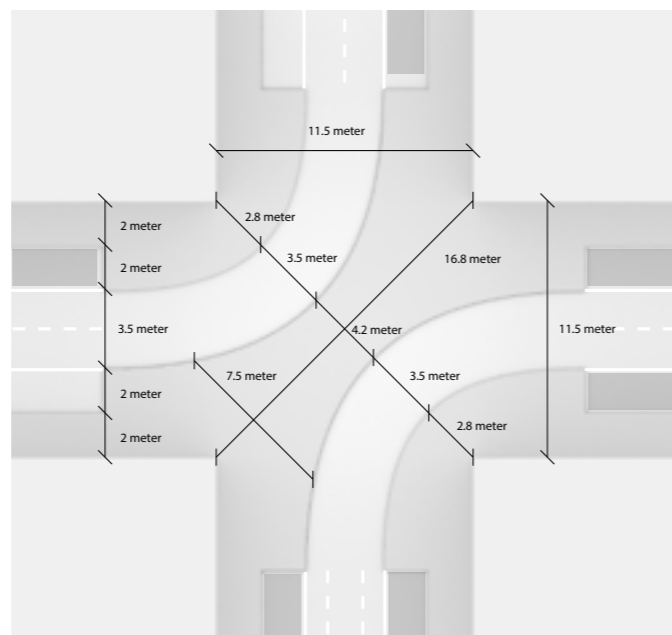


Figure 23: The concept behind the renewed intersections. Cars cannot go through anymore, creating a new public space. In the streets themselves are also a few parking spots removed, which is now also usable public space.

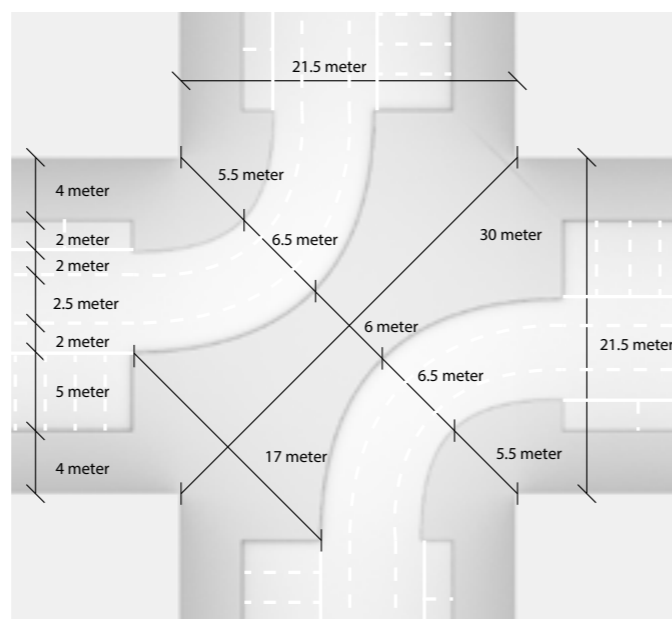


Figure 24: Same concept, but different intersection size.

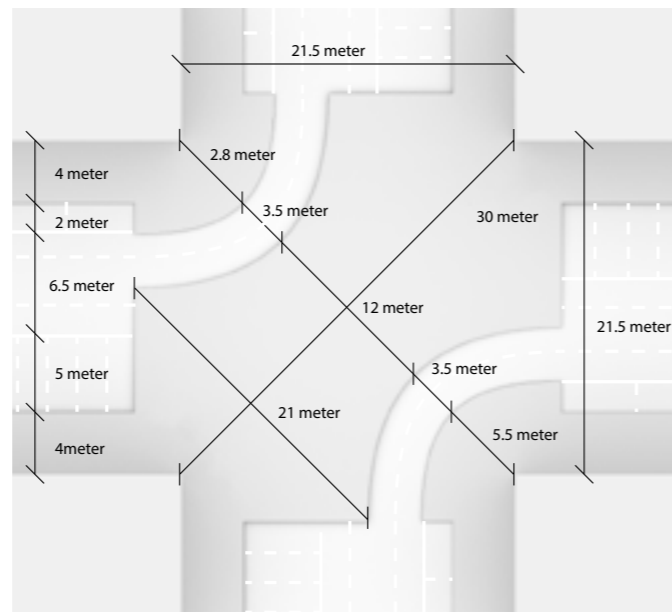


Figure 25: Different intersection size, but minimum lane width lanes.



Image 98: Render of a newly created.



Image 99: Same concept, but different intersection size. (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

financial side of the concept should in this case be revised.

An example of the low-traffic streets can be seen in image 101, Witte de Withstraat in Rotterdam. Image 101 shows a situation in which a part of the cars can still park in the street. In Blijdorp parking could be done in spaces in between the building blocks, if you would decide to have fewer parking spots in the streets. Currently, this location in Blijdorp hosts a small parking lot. Image 100 is a collage with a design by JAJA Architects. A wooden parking hub in which many things besides parking happen; work spaces, sports and package services.



Figure 26: The low-traffic streets and parking highlighted



Image 100: A collage of a possible parking solution in Blijdorp. Based upon a design of Jaja Architects (2022) <https://jaja.archi/100-green-mobility-labs-greater-copenhagen-jaja-selected-gate-21-project/>



Image 101: Example of street that has made space for different programme; Witte de wit straat (Robert van Overveld, taken on January 15, 2023)

The future of the city

The pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the economic crises and climate change remind us of the fact that the government is merely a boat on a sea, with no true power when it storms. Purely relying on the government as a saviour is a weak strategy for us as a society. The cities that we inhabit are becoming more complex as well, which forces municipalities to work more contextualised and on smaller scales. Both imply that the role of self-organisation, for us as individuals and us in communities, will become more important in the future. A future which is more centred around doing it together should guide our strategies and the development of our cities.

Climate change and the health of people in cities push us to think about cities in a different way as well. Streets will need to be made climate smart; greener and water adaptive. At the same time is the quality of the air in cities relatively poor, leading to health problems in the long run. Loneliness is also often mentioned in debates about our society, as well as the consequences of individualism.

All and all is there enough reason to rethink the way we approach the strategy for the development of cities. The proposals in this thesis are suggestions of developments that might contribute to solving these challenges. To further understand how the proposed design would look in the future, we will take a look at different future aspects of it.

Cars

For many of these future elements, we need space. Space that is currently occupied by cars and car usage. In the foreseeable future will cars still play an important role in our economy and society. Important does not imply anymore that space will be used for cars mostly. Parking will mainly happen in centralised parking hubs, in which many other facilities can be found as well. Parking in the streets is still possible, but only with a good reason, for example, for people with handicaps or people that directly need it to execute their work.

Sharing and locality

When self-organisation becomes more important in the future, neighbourhoods and streets will take a part of centralised services and goods into their own hands. The space that will come available in our streets, due to the less central position of the car, will be used for growing food, sharing facilities, more green, drone hives and water and energy systems. People will share different modes of mobility and there will be shared workspaces to repair and make things.

This city or neighbourhood of the future still has centralised or international services and goods available, but what can be done locally is done locally. These neighbourhoods are resilient and can manage a temporary crisis.

To give an example of to what extent some things could be managed locally; water will be collected on the roofs of houses and shared among people in the street. Annually, 800 litres of water falls per m² and the roof of an average apartment block is 200m². This implies that 160.000 litres of water fall on such a roof. One household consumes about 50.000 litres per year. In other words, a big part of this need could be solved locally. A similar argument can be made for growing vegetables and collecting energy.

Community

One of the main aspects of this future city is the role of communities in the city. These shared local elements make community building already more accessible. Citizens know the people who are living around them better and the city starts to be more of a collection of villages when it comes to its social character. Again, does it not exclude people from being part of other communities all around the city.

It is simply easier to find purpose in your direct environment and loneliness among people subsided drastically as a result of it. People take care of the vegetables, the chickens and each other. This city of the future is a place that has been able to integrate the most valuable aspects of our former and current century.



Image 102: Render of the future city, with the current situation in the right bottom corner. Source of current situation is Google Maps.

6 Conclusion

The goal of this research has been to give an answer to the question: How can Rotterdam facilitate and structure co-creation in the built environment in an inclusive, supportive, human-oriented and meaningful way? In order to answer this question the research has analysed the current situation in Rotterdam, the execution of a participation experiment and a good practice analysis. All of which will first be concluded.

We have seen that Rotterdam currently facilitates participation in various ways, financed mainly through subsidies. They are also providing customised help to people. The interesting thing about the participation programmes of the municipality is that there are many, that serve similar purposes, but are not linked. Although there is different knowledge in different programmes, the programmes are not linked to each other, leaving people blind to which one they should choose.

It became clear that many people are occupied with participation and that the quality of what currently exists will improve. Digital participation seems a development that has the potential to attract new groups in the future. A just-installed improvement is the Wijk aan Zet, with its smaller-scale approach to facilitating participation in various ways. The main complaint with the latter is that Rotterdam still does not address the biggest complaint: participation in Rotterdam is superficial. The municipality keeps control tightly in their own hands with annoyed and disappointed citizens as a result.

All of the offices in Rotterdam that have been interviewed incorporated participation in some way, although there were significant differences in how this was done. The philosophy of the office is what mainly drives high-quality participation processes. When an office believes in its power, there seem almost no limitations for scale or power that citizens have in projects. The scale does also matter for how you can and should approach participation.

A few companies are finding new ways of making processes successful and making

good examples which others can learn from. Still, as an office do you need a client that is supportive of this strategy.

The experiment has shown that a personal approach is able to attract many people. Good communication and elements such as food prove to be the oil of a good process. About half of the people that wanted to be informed were also actively involved in the process. Unfortunately, this half consists almost fully of usual suspects. Therefore, participation seems to remain a luxury and inclusion difficult to achieve. Furthermore, citizens do not often seem to prioritise the process. Depending on them is risk full, especially in the beginning stages. Once the project is more developed, more people seem to get interested and willing to take some responsibility.

The municipality in this process proved to be a difficult partner from time to time. There is a willingness to help, but there are many reasons why this help does not occur from time to time. The reasons for this the sometimes poor or non-existing communication, unannounced long vacations and no transparency in criteria, handbooks, visions, risk assessment, stakeholders or rules. Another difficulty that slowed the project down was the missing proactive attitude, which pushed us from wall to wall. Lastly, the no-risk attitude towards the assessment of proposals resulted in the same being-pushed-around effect. On the positive side, after half a year, the provisional design is ready and the municipality and the street are both eager to start the project in the spring of 2023.

Analyses of good practices work well as input for participatory processes. When looking for inspiration, answers or to make processes smoother, search for similar projects that already exist. The projects analysed for this research show that experimenting is a great tool to open and destress discussion, that scale is not a barrier to participation, that open budgets have a liberating effect which builds trust, and that sidewalks can be appropriated in a meaningful way if the context is right. All of these conclusions have been used as input for the recommendations and design.

The recommendation, in-street public spaces as well as the re-interpreted mobility plan in the neighbourhood all answer the main research question of this thesis. Answers are derived from the analyses, the experiment, as well as the design itself.

The recommendations show that there are two elements the municipality can control; their legal reaction to plans and how they facilitate participation:

1. Responsibility/liability. It became clear that the municipality is accountable for the public space, but only to a certain extent and it is neither a true barrier to making participation work. The main advice is to be awaiting with agreements in low-risk initiatives. Furthermore, to be more aware of legal options and integrate more often adopting and condoning strategies in processes.
2. Facilitating participation. Processes can be more complicated than initiators realise from the start. The municipality has the task to communicate and be transparent about this. Do not try to explain all its complexity and every detail but only a good summary that is understandable and gives a notion of what processes look like.

The first suggestion gives a way to communicate risk assessment. It is a tool that works with points and should give people an idea of how complicated a certain idea is and what time a process will likely take.

The second suggestion is connected to the overviews that should be made in order to enable citizens to be equal and better partners. Currently, people are left blind.

The design of the in-street public spaces shows what is possible with existing spaces and how they could be co-created. They show a way in which the municipality could integrate co-creation in a meaningful way in their city-developing strategies.

The debate that resulted from it is connected to citizens' claim of their direct environment. The existing visions of the municipality seem

to already conflict with the goals that an aesthetic commission has. The main question is; should there be a commission that protects and defends the human habitat and the manifestation of life in it?

The re-interpreted mobility plan in the neighbourhood, which is derived from the superblock model in Barcelona, gives a way in which the in-street public spaces could be scaled-up. This plan reuses the way we divide public space, shifting it to the direct surrounding of people.

The future prospect of these proposals is a city that integrated self-organisation spatially. The city as a collection of small spatially connected communities, that make sure that what can be done locally is done locally; providing in the water demand, growing vegetables and sharing energy. All of it as an addition to the diverse city that we know today.

All in all, Rotterdam is a lively city which truly tries to make participation happen. The biggest step that needs to be made is seeing participation as an important developing strategy. Only when participation is fully facilitated can it become a valuable asset. The new connection with citizens that will be established will lead to more trust, making it more inclusive, human-oriented and meaningful.



Image 103: Appropriation of space (Robert van Overveld, taken on 15 January, 2023)

7 Discussion

The research presented proved to be more guided by informality and real-life experiments than expected. The topics and questions posed in the research are difficult to answer objectively and pushed me into taking a more hands-on approach.

The expectation of this research was to find a strategy to integrate participation better in the existing planning frameworks. The results show a way how this could be done. Since the research focuses on Rotterdam, is especially the outcome of the design is particularly interesting for this city.

The theoretical research showed that there are a few dilemmas in participation processes, the most noteworthy being the usual suspect problem. The realisation that this research was not able to find new answers to the dilemma, is unfortunate. The personal approach and quite some effort did not seem to make a difference. There is a chance that digital tools can attract people from this group. Another good option is focusing more on community leaders. Nevertheless, I realise now, that it will likely always be a problem. Since most participation outcomes do not harm people in any way, is it not enough reason for me to question participation in general. In the worst-case scenario, the programme does not directly benefit these people.

Looking at the limitations of this research; interviews and the experiment are a significant input for the answers found in this research, and a different experience would have given slightly different outcomes. That is not to say that the conclusions drawn are not to a reasonable extent generalisable. The hands-on method used still seems to be the best way to find answers to this topic. Theoretical research and analyses on other cities and strategies barely exist, which made it difficult to base this research upon them. These analyses need to be made and are mainly based on published documents of processes.

In order to extend the impact of this research, a follow-up step needs to be taken. A step towards the municipality to take a look for a strategic reality check. The proposed in-street public space costs money, for example. Or, maybe they have their reasons for not giving overviews of certain aspects. Either way,

should we try to see which elements could be interesting for the municipality and how they could be further developed and integrated. The follow-up actions, therefore, are not necessarily connected to more theoretical research.

In case the municipality decides not to take the extra step required in facilitating participation, there is a chance that trust in the organisation will further decline. Many people are willing to put effort into this city, but these people also want to be taken seriously.

The recommendations regarding future research are connected to three elements within this topic:

1. The potential of digital tools in participatory processes. The future of participation will be a blend of physical, as well as digital participation. Not enough is known about the impact that it already has and will have in the future. Researching its potential and limitations would be a great contribution to strategies in participation.
2. More analyses on good practices would contribute to improving strategies as well. There are so many people in the world that are occupied with participation and setting up participatory processes. Rather than more theoretical research, it is recommended to focus more on the examples that can be found in every city.



Image 104: Citizens helping the municipality with keeping the Rotte clean (Robert van Overveld, taken on 15 of August, 2022)

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