



Learning Log 2

Good practice transfer workshop in Pori, Finland

22nd – 26th September 2014

This report provides a summary of the main results from the P4C good practice transfer workshop in Pori. It begins with a brief overview of the context in which the transfer of placemaking practices took place, followed by a brief description of the placemaking activities that had been undertaken in the run up to the transfer workshop. Then a detailed account of the results of the peer review is provided together with a summary of the key messages from the CommUniversity meeting. This report concludes with an interim assessment of progress made in working towards medium and long-term outcomes identified in the baseline developed by Pori in preparation of this transfer workshop, together with key learning points intended to support the Pori team in achieving the long term outcomes. Further details associated with the workshop, including agenda, meeting report, handouts and presentation slides, are available of the P4C project website.

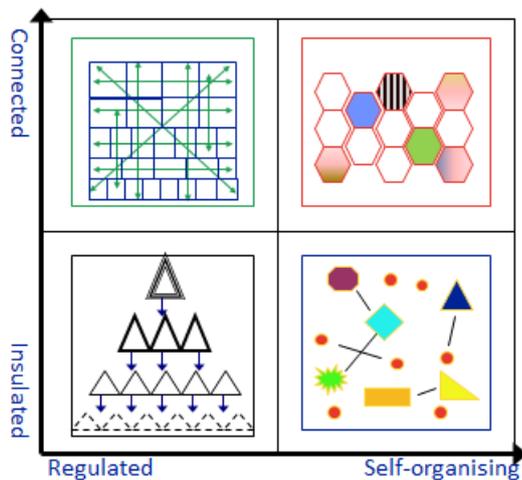
1. Context for the adoption and adaptation of placemaking practices

The P4C project is led by officers working in the City Planning Department which provides detailed local plans as well as strategic planning frameworks for the development of the city. Community engagement forms part of both the statutory planning processes concerned with land use development as well as non-statutory priorities such as enhancing social cohesion through participatory planning processes. The P4C project offers the City Planning department an opportunity to explore new ways of engaging with and empowering local residents.

The municipality consists of a fairly typical range of departments which are line managed by a mayor and two deputy mayors who are civil servants and accountable to political representatives on the City Board who in turn represent the elected politicians of Pori. While there are strategic visions for the development of the city these are very general. For example, the vision for Pori is to be a 'city of employment' or a 'city with a high quality of life', but there are no integrative frameworks which would show how individual departments would contribute towards the achievement of such visions. Comparison was made to the County Development Plan in DLR which combined the articulation of overarching goals with operation targets that would lead towards their achievement.

Despite a reduction in resources and an increase in the range of services the municipality has to provide the city administration of Pori is sufficiently well resourced to implement agreed and detailed guidelines and procedures associated with land-use planning, development and maintenance. However, the integrative dimension of placemaking, in particular the engagement of citizens in design, implementation and maintenance of

improvements, is not recognised as contemporary practice. The strong departmentalised approach towards service provision makes the distribution of such practices very difficult, hence the officers currently involved in the P4C project have so far felt rather ‘isolated’ in their work. Using a model from the P4C Baseline Study the municipality was described as being like the ‘pine tree’ in the bottom left quadrant where hierarchical thinking and organisation results in individual departments pursuing their priorities in isolation from each other. There are also parts of the organisations which are operating in a matrix structure where expertise and resources are pulled into projects from across the municipality according to the demands generated by projects. The top right quadrant depicts a ‘honey comb’ structure where independent units are closely connected and this is also reflected in the way the municipality works. The bottom right depicts a ‘melting pot’ where anything that works is pursuing with anyone who is able and willing to make a contribution. This latter quadrant is where the good practice provider, DLR, perceive themselves to be in relation of community led placemaking practices and officers in Pori have been working in this way to some extent to apply the placemaking practice from DLR. Hence there has been a tangible transfer of working practices from DLR to Pori.



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Following the transfer visit there was further discussion on the above model and the Pori team suggested that staff just have to develop networks and relationships to get their work done. Hence the melting pot quadrant in the bottom right, labelled ‘you do the best you can’, represents a reality for officers working in Pori too. The issue is that officers have choices about which perspective they adopt when pursuing a task, officers create the reality of processes in their municipality. The P4C pilot exposed that some officers would prefer to work in a more cross-cutting and collaborative way while others feel more strongly bound to established procedures which are primarily rooted in a departmental and hierarchical perspective on how work should be done. Challenging departmental and procedural thinking started with the SURE project and P4C has progressed this further. The following comments were made by Pori officers during the discussion:

“We are using all of these models. You have to build your own system to deliver your projects”

“If you want to do something new you cannot insist on working through a matrix or hierarchical structure.”

2. Description of placemaking activities undertaken

The place chosen for the P4C placemaking project is the Makasiinitori Square. It was identified as a priority in the SURE Local Action Plan under the 3th main objective “Making the recreational areas more varied” and envisaged as a medium-term intervention. This piece of land has been left vacant for many years. The physical appearance of the area is dominated by the Shell petrol station from the 80's and a sewage pumping station. The area is not surfaced, covered in gravel and used for car parking and launching private boats into the Kokemäenjoki River. The placemaking work focused on an area of 200 m x 50 m (circa 1 ha) between the Raumansilta Bridge and residential apartments of the Teurastamo neighbourhood.

This place has an excellent location being only 10 minutes of walk from the Market Square of Pori. The target area is bordered on the south by Karjarannantie Street which leads to the city centre and during the Jazz festival thousands of tourists pass the Makasiinitori Square to cross the river. The local population consists mainly of retired people, the number of families with children is very low and the proportion of single person households is high (for more details on the place and background information see the P4C baseline study at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/urban-renewal/placemaking-4-cities/homepage/>)

The officers leading the placemaking process in Pori had been very active prior to the exchange visit. A number of principles were adopted from DLR, including:

- Trying to do as much as possible *with* the community and as little as possible for the community
- Expecting and working with resistance to change
- Creating quick wins
- Providing information
- Encouraging collaboration across departments and agencies.

The placemaking activities undertaken respond to one or more of the principles set out above and include:

- a) Formation of a steering group consisting of local residents. This groups could build on contacts developed during the SURE project
- b) Site analysis through ‘walking tours’ with local residents
- c) Students erect a temporary gallery, the ‘white cube’, on the project site to exhibit their work
- d) Installation of a shipping container on the project site to provide storage facilities for placemaking materials
- e) Erection of a tent for a ‘pop-up’ exhibition during Pori Jazz Week where students could exhibit their work
- f) Residents begin to meet in the space and start to adorn trees and other features in the space with their knitting work (knitting graffiti)
- g) Competition for and execution of a mural on the pumping station
- h) Installation of information boards explaining the history of the site
- i) Temporary planting of trees and shrubs in containers to experiment with space design options

- j) Installation event during the workshop; students design a 'ship' around the storage container and attract passers-by with 'free sausages'.

All of these activities were initiated by the officers of the municipality, some actively involved residents in design and implementation (a, b, f, g, i) while others were led by students under supervision of their tutors (c, e, h, j). Some activities involved other departments or community development initiatives of the municipality (g, h, i) and others involved private or public agencies specifically for this placemaking project (d, g).

3. Results of the peer review

The criteria for the peer review were carefully prepared and agreed by the hosting partners as well as the visiting peers. The criteria were an amalgamation of good practices studies in DLR, key challenges identified by the hosting city and short, medium and long term results this pilot is expected to deliver. This led to the definition of 24 criteria, 16 of which were primarily concerned with the 'place and its people', while 8 criteria were designed to explore the 'institution and its people' (see Appendix 1 for the peer review criteria used in Pori).

The execution of the peer review differed from the planned process in two significant ways. First, the programme for the exchange visit was designed to allow for up to 7 hours of peer review over two days, but by the time the main messages had been formulated ready for presentation at the CommUniversity about 5 hours had been used in total. Second, the number of criteria included for review proved too large. Asking every participant to comment on each criterion made the process too lengthy which in turn led to a loss of focus and intensity of inquiry. This was addressed by 'collapsing' a number of criteria into a higher level criterion. For example, five criteria specifically designed to explore the analysis stage of the placemaking process were aggregated into one criterion 'place analysis' with the five lower level criteria providing indicators about what peer reviewers should be considering when reflecting on the performance of the host city (Appendix 2 contains the improved peer review score sheet which formed the basis for the next good practice transfer workshop in Albacete).

The peer review came to the following conclusions in relation to analysis, planning, implementation and continuation of the placemaking work undertaken in Pori:

Place analysis:

This element of the placemaking process was considered to be good or very good. The analysis of problems and opportunities as well as the options appraisal was exhaustive and consisted of detailed technical data available to the planning department and also resident input through the 'walking tours' which was the innovative element of the place analysis. There was a strong emphasis on municipality led analysis however with resident input being potentially perceived as an 'add on' rather than a key contribution.

Conflicts of interest were also identified exhaustively and included a strong input from residents. The proposition of solutions to these conflict seemed to be solely based on views of professionals however. On key recommendation from the peers was that identifying a conflict of interest in itself is worthwhile, one does not have to have the solution ready to discuss conflicts of interest however. There should be scope for local stakeholders to weight

up potential solutions and then engage in an informed debate with professionals on how conflicts of interest can be resolved.

Planning:

The many actions that took place prior and during the visit were very complex and required a high level of planning and co-ordination. While this was considered excellent the peer reviewers felt that too much, in fact almost all of the preparations for the placemaking actions, had been led by the lead officer of the municipality. However, the work done so far clearly demonstrated to local stakeholders that the community can be deeply involved in placemaking processes and ideas from local stakeholders did influence what was being planned to some extent. Nevertheless, peers felt that too much was led by the municipality and not enough by local residents.

On reflection the lead officer from Pori argued that *"I have learned a lot about how to activate residents and I must get better at it because this will become even more important in future."* However, there were also arguments which pointed to key differences between DLR and Pori. The target groups and areas in DLR had very different demographic profiles and in the examples studied in DLR residents had a direct interest in shaping the place they lived next to. The problems in activating residents who do not feel there is a need for change was exemplified by the current P4C project in DLR which is progressing very slowly: *"People do not become active unless their personal interest is affected, this is normal. We have a different starting point here compared to DLR."* However, there is also a recognition in Pori that people can be encouraged to take more interest in the way services or spaces are designed and the work done through SURE and P4C is raising the profile of among citizens that participative approaches to planning and implementation can bring better results for them.

Implementation:

The range and quality of placemaking actions impressed the peer reviewers. Of particular note was the excellent balance of primarily temporary with very limited permanent improvements. This was considered to challenge local attitudes, demonstrating that improvements can be achieved quickly and with little money, but they could be undone and changed in future if residents decided to do so. However, almost all the actions were initiated and controlled by the municipality's lead officer, hence this aspect of the placemaking process received a neutral score.

Continuation:

More community development work is required to put the placemaking process in the Makasiinitori square on a more sustainable footing. Clearly a very large amount of time and effort has been invested by the City Planning Department to advance the placemaking process, but this is not sustainable from a municipality perspective, neither would it be desirable if the placemaking approach of DLR were to provide the framework for future development. While there is of course a need for an officer to be available to local communities when *they* need help, the work of placemaking should not be done for them. The P4C peer reviewers felt that a most important and demanding piece of work had been accomplished by the time the review took place, namely that the municipality had created the conditions under which the local community could begin to take control of the placemaking process. There was alarm, however, at the suggestion that the Makasiinitori

square would now be subject to a comprehensive improvement project undertaken by the municipality. This would not only set a potentially dangerous precedent, namely that if a community goes along with municipality led placemaking (without doing much themselves) they will eventually get the municipality to carry out the improvements local people are asking for. The good practice studied in DLR is based on the principle that everything possible should be done to do things *with* local people, but as little as possible should be done *for* them if the aim is to develop local capacity for placemaking.

4. Key messages from the CommUniversity

This session was intended to share the main results from the peer review with a diverse group of local stakeholders and to hear their views on the challenges put forward by the P4C peer group. The event was very well attended with about 30 participants including residents, NGOs, students and tutors as well as the local press. Absent were politicians and officers from the municipality, except those involved with the P4C pilot.

Following an explanation of the placemaking concept and the purpose of the P4C project, the achievements of the local work were praised by the P4C peers. The presentation by the P4C team finished on four questions which were intended to reflect the key issues identified through the peer review:

- i. How will placemaking continue in Pori?
- ii. How will you evaluate your placemaking experience?
- iii. How can you develop a forward plan?
- iv. Would 4-5 small grants for community actions encourage more placemaking projects in Pori?

Most of the discussion focused on point i. and iv., there was little interest or concern for evaluation and planning, the interest of local stakeholders was on the continuation of practical actions. In terms of views about the continuation of the P4C project work stakeholders argued that now that they know each other and have demonstrated that they can bring about practical actions they will continue to do so, but there was little enthusiasm for the development of an 'action plan'. Instead residents and other stakeholders wanted to be more spontaneous in the way the placemaking project would continue. The option of 'adopting' the storage container was discussed. This would involve the municipality making the land and the container available free of charge or with a nominal charge while the community group would take responsibility for it. The benefits of taking ownership of the container were sketched out during the meeting and are likely to be explored further during the remainder of the P4C project.

With regard to the possibility of funding a number of additional placemaking projects in Pori participants were not convinced that funding could be allocated on a competitive basis. One participant said: "There would be war if one group gets money and another doesn't!" However, there was a reluctance to consider how the placemaking work undertaken through P4C could be upscaled to benefit other parts of the city.

5. Key learning points

P4C demonstrates how the conditions for placemaking can be created in the context of a Finnish municipality. This pioneering work is demanding and time consuming but promises

scope to change current practice in Pori. The main learning points identified during the workshop are not specific to the project site P4C actions were focused on but aim to address specific yet more generic issues concerned with placemaking processes. These include:

- Strengthen vertical connections with private and third sector partners

This project demonstrates that there is scope for a wide range of collaborations to bring about practical placemaking actions. Residents, students and university staff were particularly enthusiastic to engage with the project but private companies and public utility providers were also keen to be involved and, importantly, wanted to be seen to be involved. The opportunity created by P4C should be captured and connections strengthened.

- Make cross-departmental collaboration part of the routine practice when working with communities

P4C illustrates how this can be achieved in Pori. This project is an experiment which explores the actions and skills required to obtain support from other departments. These seem to be primarily concerned with coalition building and negotiating skills and less so with technical skills, such as planning or design. Hence officers of the municipality at front line and, perhaps more importantly, at managerial level require some support and encouragement to facilitate process that are designed to reach and engage citizens.

- Community engagement requires resources and particular skills

The good practice transfer process has given the officers from Pori access to skills which they deployed in their placemaking practice, but in doing so they have spent a large amount of time which cannot be recovered from core job functions they are required to perform. The municipality could maximise the benefits from this pilot by establishing a capacity development initiative within Pori so that a larger proportion of the organisation learns about community placemaking practices.

- Community development requires risk taking and sharing of power and control

The experience of the transfer visit points to a culture of risk aversion which is an attitude that appears to be shared by officials and citizens. The P4C pilot has created actions and processes that are demonstrating how citizen engagement can change practices in public agencies – the mural is the clearest example of this. While this is laudable, both citizens and officials not directly engaged in P4C seem reluctant to take advantage of these opportunities. It would seem important, therefore, to maintain the momentum of the current P4C project especially if additional placemaking initiatives are aimed for in other parts of the city.

6. Overall assessment of progress towards achieving desired results

In preparation of this good practice exchange visit the team from Pori produced a 'baseline' which summarised the current situation and identified desired changes that might result from the P4C placemaking project (attached in Appendix 3). The following summary provides an interim assessment of progress towards achieving these goals. However, reflecting on the outcomes of the placemaking work undertaken so far and the feedback from the peer review presented here, some of these goals are likely to be subject to revision over the remainder of the P4C project.

Desired outcome	Comments on progress
Collaboration, working together and information sharing is a normal procedure in planning and implementing and between the departments of the municipality (P4C project can bring together different departments and hopefully that will continue beyond this project)	There is some evidence to suggest that the P4C project has started to bring officers from the planning, housing, parks and water/utility departments together. The challenge is to build relationships which will support the cross-departmental development of similar projects in future.
Scarce resources can be used more efficiently with cross-departmental collaboration and information sharing	Pori Water provided materials and electricity for the mural. The Parks Department provided scaffolding, planting materials and advice for the mural and landscaping improvements. In addition, sharing information relevant to placemaking has improved between departments as a result of the P4C work so far. Building effective cross-departmental relationships would seem to be important to progress the development of similar placemaking projects in other parts of the city.
Decision-makers are more involved in planning	There was no evidence suggesting that political or administrative decision makers took an interest in the placemaking approach. Much more effort would be required to raise the profile of this approach to an extent which would attract attention from this target group. However, the pilot also pointed to the critical role front line officers play; they seems to have significant flexibility to adopt community engagement techniques without have to obtain 'clearance' from senior management first.
Sectoral conflicts can be better harmonised	The review so far did not shed much light on this issue. Perhaps for the remainder of the project examples should be documented which illustrate where and how such conflicts are being mediated as a result of the practices applied in the P4C project.
P4C can act as an positive example how strategic goals can be achieved in planning, design and realisation of the plans (on a modest scale but nonetheless)	This goal is related to the goals above and should perhaps be incorporated in them.
Community engagement is essential part of the planning process (city planning department is currently pretty much the only department developing participation)	So far there is little to suggest that this is likely to happen as a result of the P4C project. However, local team members should be alert to document such instances and to document them as they arise in their P4C diaries .
Placemaking approach and methods are applied also in other projects	There is a project running in parallel to P4C called Pori for All. This project seems to adopt some of the placemaking principles identified as good practice in DLR.
Openness and informing of the planning and implementation has	This goal could usefully be incorporated in one of the goals listed above

increased	
Collaboration with private and third sector stakeholders is increasing	There is good evidence to show that P4C has been an incentive to generate contacts with private and third sector stakeholders to facilitate the placemaking process. This should be carefully documented, especially where there are further instances of private sector sponsorship, for example for the container.
Public participation has increased and residents are more aware of their possibilities to participate	There is good evidence that public participation has increased, so far it is rather re-active and predominantly passive in character. Developing a group of local stakeholders who pro-actively pursue their project ideas is something that should be aimed for, it would seem that this is currently within reach and efforts should be made over the remainder of the P4C project to create the capacity for residents to continue the placemaking process.
Local communities actually have a say and possibilities to have an effect on planning and implementation	It would seem that the community involved in the Makasiinitori square has now got a voice and a say in planning processes, but this came at a big cost to the Planning Department. The question is how can the experience of the P4C project applied to other projects which are perhaps based on stronger inputs from other departments.

Reflecting on the first draft of this report and the visit overall the Pori team felt that URBACT provided an essential opportunity for smaller cities like Pori to engage with experimental processes. Unlike big cities which have more capacity and also experience in engaging with ERDF or ESF programmes here officers encounter a culture that is risk averse and sceptical. Financial austerity appears to harden positions further. The P4C pilot shows that change comes from action and the actions taken by front line staff:

“People in the field can be more flexible than their bosses. As long as you are not asking for money you can simply do it. They must of course have connections with their bosses but front line staff should stretch the boundaries, take risks that their bosses would not officially sanction.”

“P4C is about saving money in Pori. Use volunteers to do things themselves. The less we use money, and we have less money every year, the more we need residents. The big money is for ready made projects, placemaking does not need big money. Big money destroys placemaking actually.”

Hans Schlappa
14th October 2014

Appendix 1

Original Peer Review Score Sheet Pori

Part One: Focus on the *Place* and the People

	Score 1-5		What is done well	What should be done differently or more of
1. The problems and potential opportunities for the place is being fully analysed				
2. Options are being explored and priorities are identified				
3. Potential conflicts of interest are explored				
4. Place analysis includes contributions from residents				
5. Design proposals are based on ideas from residents				
6. Community leaders are identified and their capacity is developed				
7. Attitudes and assumptions of residents which makes them avoid putting forward their own ideas are being changed				
8. Residents attitudes which are barriers for them taking 'responsibility' for the public place are being changed				

Please turn the page for more categories of placemaking

Focus on the Place and the People (continued)

	Score 1-5		What is done well	What should be done differently or more of
9. Quick wins are created				
10. Doing things with little or no money is attempted				
11. Opportunities for interim uses led by residents are being explored				
12. Opportunities for animations which involve residents' actions are being explored				
13. Local residents will have opportunity and capacity to contribute to construction and maintenance of the place				
14. Evidence about the benefits and also the costs of community engagement is being collected				
15. A group of actors led by local people is emerging				
16. A plan of actions to progress the placemaking process is emerging				

Add some additional criteria or an overall comment on the placemaking work in Pori here:

Part Two: Focus on the *Institution* and its People

	Score 1-5		What is done well	What should be done differently or more of
1. Officers work across departments to progress the placemaking project				
2. Resources are beginning to be shared across departments				
3. Strategic and operational objectives are jointly agreed across departments				
4. Efforts are made to change attitudes and assumptions about community involvement among officers and politicians				
5. Officers have opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills to engage with communities				
6. Collaboration with third sector and private sectors organisations is developing				
7. There is a willingness among officers to change established institutional rules or procedures to give more support to community led placemaking				
8. There is a willingness among officers to include residents in decisions about the design and maintenance of places				

Add some additional criteria or an overall comment on the placemaking work in Pori here:

Appendix 2

Revised Peer Review Score Sheet (Includes overall scores)

Part One: Focus on the *Place* and the People

	Overall Score 1-5	What is done well	What should be done differently or more of
1. Place analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problems and potential opportunities for the place is being fully analysed • Options are being explored and priorities are identified • Place analysis is based on active participation of residents • Potential conflicts of interest are being explored 	4 - 5		
2. Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community leaders are identified and their capacity is developed • Proposals for action are based on ideas from local stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attitudes and assumptions of local stakeholders which a barriers to putting forward their own ideas are being changed 	1-2		
3. Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick wins are created • Doing things with little or no money is attempted • Opportunities for interim uses led by residents are being explored • Opportunities for animations which involve residents' actions are being explored 	3		
4. Continuation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents attitudes which are barriers for them 	1-2		

<p>taking 'responsibility' for the public place are being changed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An independent group of actors led by local people is beginning to take control over the future direction of the place• plan of actions to progress the placemaking process is emerging• The capacity of local stakeholders to continue the placemaking process is being developed• Evidence about the benefits and also the costs of placemaking is being collected			
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Part Two: Focus on the *Institution* and its People

	Score 1-5	What is done well	What should be done differently or more of
9. Internal collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers work across departments to progress the placemaking project • Resources are beginning to be shared across departments • Strategic and operational objectives are jointly agreed across departments 	3		
2. External collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with third sector and private sectors organisations is developing 	4		
3. Organisational culture and attitudes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts are made to change attitudes and assumptions about community • Officers have opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills to engage with communities involvement among officers and politicians • There is a willingness among officers to change established institutional rules or procedures to give more support to community led placemaking • There is a willingness among officers to include residents in decisions about the design and maintenance of places 	1-2		

Add some additional criteria or an overall comment on the placemaking practice you are reviewing here:

APPENDIX 3

Baseline to measure impact of placemaking in Pori

Current Situation and Desired Future Approach to Placemaking in Pori

A) The current approach towards bringing about physical improvements on sites like the target area

- Strong contrast between the lack of resources and the goals set out in national and regional level strategies
- Planning and implementation is fragmented and that also hinders achieving goals set in city's strategies
- Budgeting of the departments does not encourage channelling resources to common goals (every department is responsible for its own profit, i.e. 'no jobs done for other departments')
- Collaboration in municipal administration is fairly poor
- Planning and design is not seen as a shared process but rather differentiated tasks done independently by various departments of the municipality
- Existing collaboration between the departments is rather based on individual contacts than on an institutional level approach
- Authority and professional led planning system easily neglects residents and public participation even though Land Use and Building Act requires participation and interaction procedures
- No culture of community engagement and giving residents actual power in the planning process and implementation
- On the other hand lack of public participation and interest is low and thus problematic

B) How the P4C project might change practices and what might be different in 2015-2016

- Collaboration, working together and information sharing is a normal procedure in planning and implementing and between the departments of the municipality (P4C project can bring together different departments and hopefully that will continue beyond this project)
- Scarce resources can be used more efficiently with cross-departmental collaboration and information sharing
- Decision-makers are more involved in planning
- Sectoral conflicts can be better harmonised
- P4C can act as an positive example how strategic goals can be achieved in planning, design and realisation of the plans (on a modest scale but nonetheless)
- Community engagement is essential part of the planning process (city planning department is currently pretty much the only department developing participation)
- Placemaking approach and methods are applied also in other projects
- Openness and informing of the planning and implementation has increased
- Collaboration with private and third sector stakeholders is (P4C has already been a good example of
- Public participation has increased and residents are more aware of their possibilities to participate
- Local communities actually have a say and possibilities to have an effect on planning and implementation

