

**PORI**

proudly presents an

**INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN**

titled

**"THE TIME IS NOW"**

In a private screening for



# [credits]

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This plan would not have been possible without the valuable input of our Urbact Local Group members:

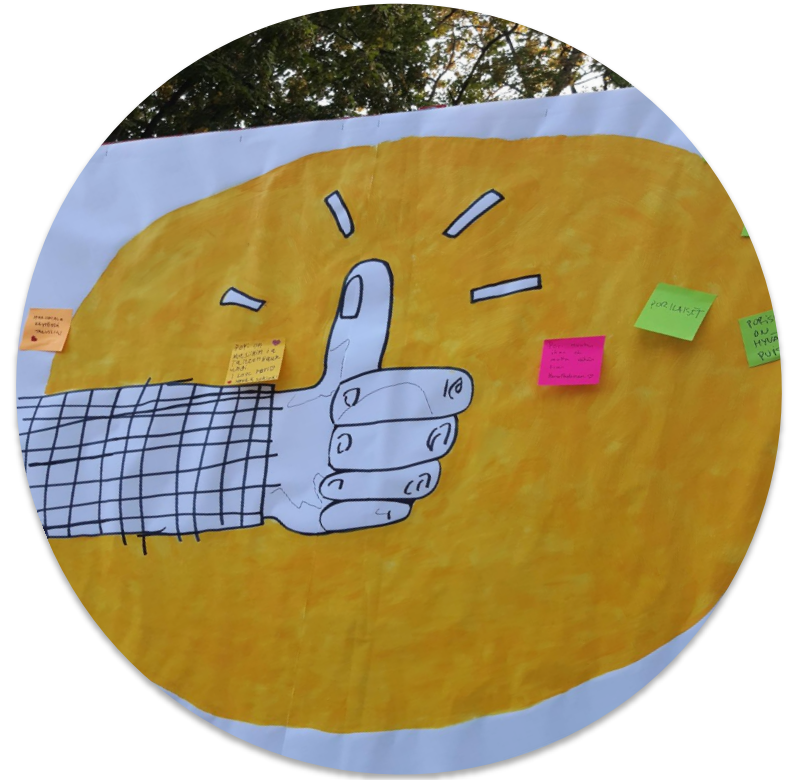
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Huge thanks to all the iPlace project partners for the inspiration and support!

Honorary mention to Café Teljäntori and Caffé Locale for their excellent service.



**A SUSTAINABLE,  
CONSTRUCTIVE AND  
INCLUSIVE PROCESS  
= SUCCESS**



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An aerial photograph of a city, likely Umeå, Sweden, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, green spaces, and a river. A large black circle is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text '1. BACKGROUND' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background image shows a dense urban area with various building styles, including multi-story apartment blocks and smaller commercial buildings. A river flows through the city, and there are green fields and forests in the distance. The sky is clear and blue.

# 1. BACKGROUND





**1.1  
HOW AND  
WHY WAS  
THIS PLAN  
MADE?**

## [1.1 how and why was this plan made]

This Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is the main output of URBACT iPlace project in Pori, Finland. The agenda for the project is "Finding our niches for sustainable local economic development". iPlace started in 2019 and will end in the summer of 2022.

The lead partner is the city of Amaranthe in northern Portugal. Other partners are Heerlen (NED), Balbriggan (IRL), Gabrovo (BUL), Kocevje (SLO), Medina Del Campo (ESP), Saldus (LAT), Pärnu (EST) and Grosseto (ITA).

Pori decided to focus iPlace on the rejuvenation of our City Center. As the project is nearing its end, we can say it was the right choice.

The most important element in iPlace has been the interaction between our wonderful partner cities. It has been fascinating to see how each city approaches their work and what kind of challenges each city has and how they plan to solve them. There is something to learn from everyone.

It is noticeable, that we all actually share pretty much the same issues everywhere. Each society, people and the landscape all form a unique mix, but the when we strip in down to the bones, things are not at all that different.

When speaking of the obstacles of development work, it is quite rare to hear anyone complain about the lack of funding. Some cities even already have all the money they need, and still they still can't solve some of the fundamental issues.

If Pori all of a sudden had millions and millions of euros we could spend on our City Center, would we really know what to do? Would we be wise, efficient and sustainable in the choices we make?



## **[1.1 how and why was this plan made]**

In 2019, Pori started creating a new development program for rejuvenating our City Center. It is the major plan for the City Center in Pori for almost 30 years. Since there has been no culture for creating such a plan, how do you actually make the process creative, productive, inclusive and sustainable? To solve this we set up a Urbact Local Group (ULG) for iPlace to start working on the issue. During the whole process, the group has had around 30 members, of which some have been involved more or less the whole time and some only visited us only briefly. They are local people from different backgrounds such as city administration, business, property management and culture.

Our ULG started as more of a steering group, but eventually it turned into a proper working group.





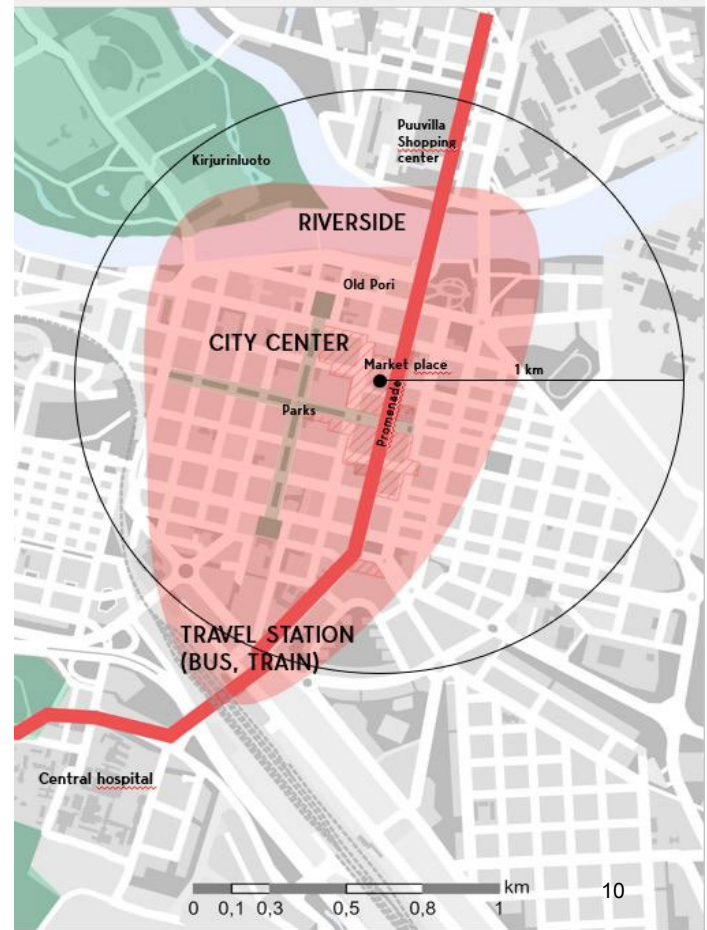
**1.2  
PORI CITY  
CENTER -  
OUR CROWN  
JEWEL?**

## [1.2 pori city center - our crown jewel?]

When we talk about City Center development in Pori, we mainly talk about the older part of the area that is located between the train station and Puuvilla shopping mall, forming a corridor of roughly two kilometres in length

The City Center tells the whole history of Pori. All historical layers are present in the area, from the oldest buildings of the 1850's to the post-war functionality, coming to the modern era. It is the home of about 12.000 Pori people and about 600 businesses. The City Center is our heart and it reflects everything that we are as a community.

Like many other city centers around Europe, these days the Pori City Center is going through challenging times. Local zoning decisions, changes in consumer behaviour with the increase of online shopping and the COVID-19 pandemic have all put the City Center in a situation, where it is no longer the people's hub of the city.



## [1.2 pori city center - our crown jewel?]

Puuvilla shopping mall opened in 2016. At the time people were concerned what would happen with the older part of the City Center, as some of the shops were sure to move to this new and, for a reason, interesting location. Some considered Puuvilla a healthy dose of competition, and that both areas would do fine. Today, it's easy to say Pori simply does not have enough population to support two commercial areas with a similar profile in the City Center.

From the perspective of an average Pori citizen, Puuvilla shopping mall is mainly a good thing. These days we have a more diverse selection of shops in Pori, as many international chains have now opened shops here. Puuvilla also works very in the Finnish climate and you never have to worry about rain or snow.

On the other side of the river things are looking different. Around the market square there are many vacant shops and the environment looks a bit outdated.

At times, the pedestrian area "Kävelykatu" is very quiet. The ones that try to compete with Puuvilla, like IsoKarhu shopping mall, are the losers in the game. About 12% of all the shops in this area are empty. "The City Center is dead", you hear people say. Some shopping areas have managed to redefine themselves and found a new line of business. BePop mall is now an "expert center" and Teljäntori has profiled itself for the older population.

In 2019 we established a new NGO operator for the area called Porikorttelit. It is supported by the City Organisation and Porikorttelit is a flexible organisation that is maintaining the business network in the area and is also managing the stages and terraces of the public space. Porikorttelit has brought much needed dynamics to our daily work and is an important partner. At the moment, Porikorttelit has over 300 business members.

Many Pori people feel we should take determined action to rejuvenate the City Center. We simply have to make sure our crown jewel shines the way it is supposed to. It is too precious be derelict like this. There is so much potential and we know it.

In May 2022 we will have a new central building opening at the market square. It is a joint venture between Hesburger restaurant company and the City. The timing is perfect, as this building will be the symbol of a new era in the City Center.

Once we get our machines running, we might be surprised to see how quickly we can turn things around.







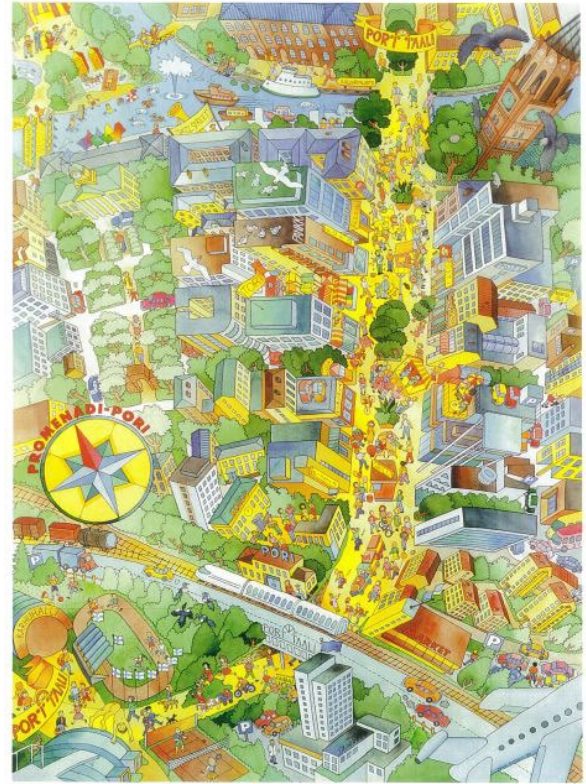
# 1.3 STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT WORK



## [1.3 status of development work]

The last City Center Development program in effect in Pori is the 1994 "Promenadi-Pori". This plan introduced the concept of Promenadi-Pori corridor that forms a stream of "Pori-life". In hindsight, we can say it is a great plan, since a lot of it still resonates to this day and we are still building up on it.

After Puuvilla mall opened, the City Council decided in 2017 that City Center rejuvenation is one of our future focus points. Promenadi-Pori was still creating projects: in 2017 the City moved the bus station to a new location near the train station to create a "traveling center". Pori also opened an electric bus service line "City-Linja", where Pori people can travel with ease and comfort for a price of one euro.



PORI PROMENADE CITY CITY CENTRE PROJECT 2000



## [1.3 status of development work]

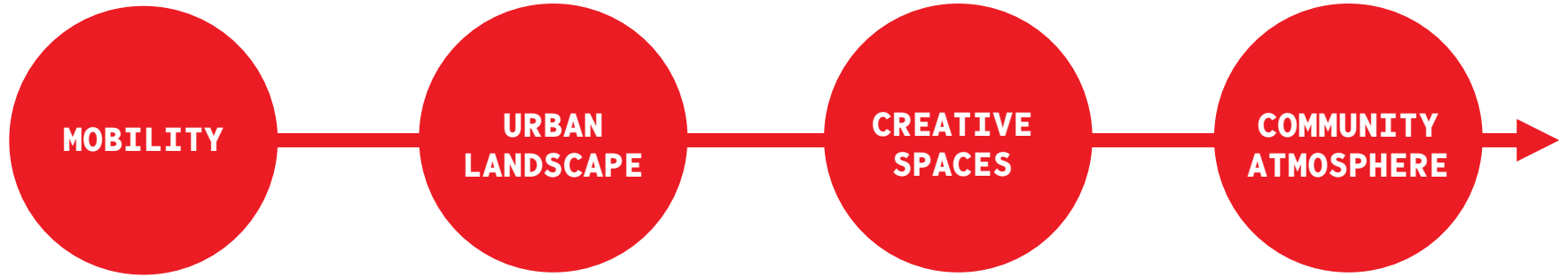
In 2019 the City Planning Department started the process of making a new comprehensive development program. Around the same time, the City Culture Unit started an international two-year INTERREG project UrbCultural Planning, that focused on using participatory and artistic methods for developing the City Center. We didn't plan these projects would happen at the same time, but we decided to see what could come out of it.

Initially, it was not easy to find common ground in our ways of working. As one can imagine, the departments have a different approach: one works more with infrastructure, the "hardware", and the other is humanistic, "the software". It took quite a bit of trial and error before we discovered how we can make it work.

In the UrbCultural Planning project we took an experimental approach. We worked with Pori residents to see how we could welcome them in the process. The core idea was simply "Everyone is an expert". We set up a pop-up space called "Poris", where over 2.000 people shared their ideas and needs for the City Center in over 2,400 post-it notes. We used the space also for City internal meetings, events and other workshops.



**We analysed the responses of the residents and got four main themes:**



Accessible, flexible and safe transportation in all forms is important.

The way the City Centre looks and feels: use of arts and green in the public space

People want spaces where they can freely do what they want, spend quality time and share the space with others without having to necessarily pay.

The feeling of belonging – “This is our place.”



**These themes gave us an important guideline on what issues to work with, when we want people to use the City Center.**

## [1.3 status of development work]

Parallel to this, the Planning Department organised internal workshops among City employees to find focus areas for the program. The workshops had about 100 people participating and they produced important material for the upcoming development work.

It was not until the first draft version of the development program in autumn 2021 where these two processes really came together. When we saw the two years of work (most of it during the COVID-19 pandemic) in one document, it was a key moment: for the first time we could see how a new and coherent new way of working was starting to take shape.


Then in November 2021 City Executive Board approved the first draft version of the development program and gave the project spearhead status.

After the draft version was finished, we decided to use the remaining time of iPlace to work on co-creation methods with local stakeholders to pave the way for the final program.

We have come to realise, that the City Center holds many precious qualities that we can develop much further. Our puzzle has very good pieces, but they are all scattered across the table. We are still a bit missing the big picture, the vision that guides us, so that we can put it all together. We can solve this by working together to create an ambitious, doable and exciting plan. The time is now!

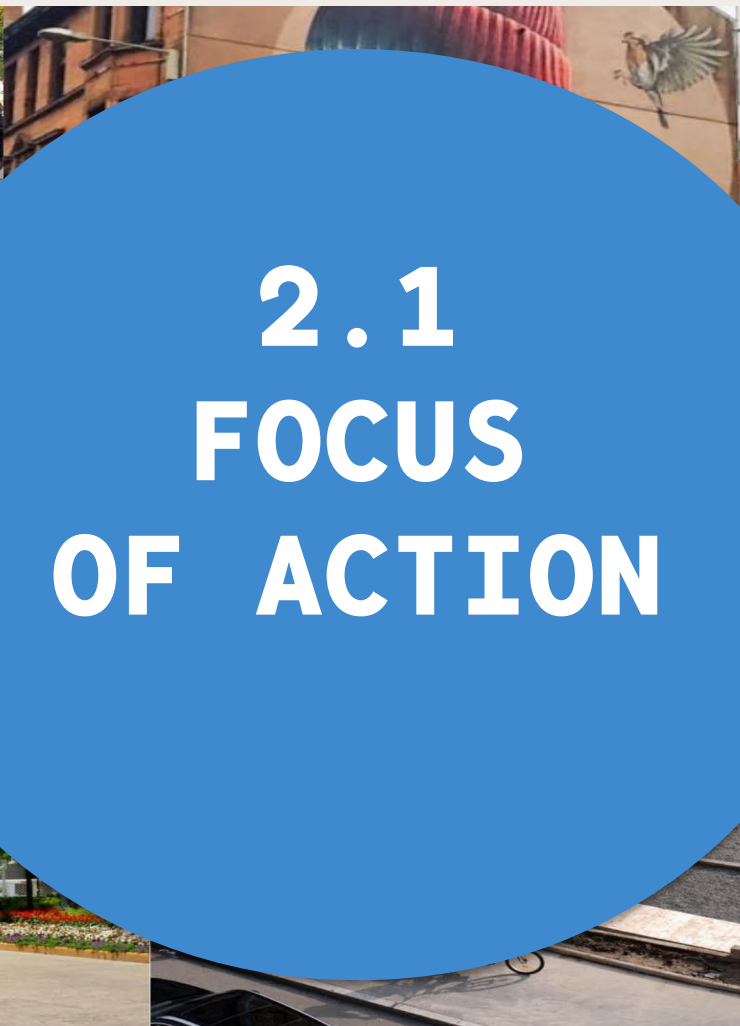






# 2. ACTION!





## [2.1 focus of action]

The draft version of the City Center Development Program includes a lot of the *what*, whereas this IAP focuses only on the *how*. If the deadline for this IAP was two months later, we would also have a much more concrete plan of also the City Center Area itself. Right now we are focusing on the people who are the first wave of changemakers.

The actions described in this IAP should put forward during the next year. Many of them will have effect for years to come and if successful, they will give our activities a much needed boost. The important thing now is to make sure we empower all parties involved at this stage and try to think of ways to bring in new changemakers.



**For us, the IAP stands for:**



= holistic approach



= learning things by  
doing



= practical guideline





## [2.1 focus of action]

Our goal is to create a steady and sustainable flow of development, a *routine of creativity*, where we have processes, spaces and concepts that keep our blood running and help us achieve success in the long run.

We should keep our experimental approach. We have learned a lot through experimentation and doing so has built our confidence. As we see more potential in what we are doing we will be able to take bolder steps in the future.





**2.2  
PAINTING  
THE  
BIG  
PICTURE  
TOGETHER**

## [2.2 painting the big picture together]

During iPlace project, we've been working on developing custom co-creation methods to create an dynamic inclusive and sustainable process. There are no ready-made answers on how we should do this, so we should come up with our own way of working. We need to create common meaning and commitment to the process. This leads to a more sustainable way of working and better decisions.

Our development program lists various ideas and projects that we should work on. However, as mostly only City organisation employees have been involved in making the program, we have little or no commitment from other stakeholder groups. The program draft has no clear priorities for the projects, so it will be difficult to communicate and to turn it into action.

To move ahead, we gathered small a 5 person team from ULG members (business, property, media and culture) to create a visionary document called "Everyone wants to go the City Center". This paper is a more focused version of the program with clearer focus on certain areas of the public space, the ways of working together, and ideas on how to structure the development work. We made use of the different perspective and insight of this group.

We also acknowledge that we will also need private investments for the City Center. By including potential future investors now, they can feel more ownership and commitment to the process and take their own initiative.



## [2.2 painting the big picture together]

To move ahead, we gathered small a 5 person team from ULG members (business, property, media and culture) to create a visionary document called **"Everyone wants to go the City Center"**. This paper is a more focused version of the program with clearer focus on certain areas of the public space, the ways of working together, and ideas on how to structure the development work. We made use of the different perspective and insight of this group.

We also acknowledge that we will also need private investments for the City Center. By including potential future investors now, they can feel more ownership and commitment to the process and take their own initiative.



## [2.2 painting the big picture together]

In April 2022 we will have a workshop called THE GREAT NEGOTIATION, where we bring the Development Plan draft and visionary paper together. In the workshop we will try to find even more focus and decide on the first concrete projects we will start implementing. The negotiation will have roughly 10 people working and it will include representatives from the city organisation and our ULG. Our idea is, that we want to find a vision we firstly believe in ourselves. Only after that it can be possible for a wider audience to get excited about it.

The process will continue with at least two co-working workshops before autumn 2022, when we will have the final version of our program.

The Great Negotiation also works as a template for annual action talks, where we will together decide on what to do the following year. The core of the ULG will remain even after iPlace, and it will be a permanent local action group under a different name.



## DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

- New Development Program every four years, for each elected City Council
- Annual action negotiations

**OWNERSHIP:** Relevant City Depts,  
iPlace ULG extended

**HOW:** Arrange workshops

**WHEN:** Has already started

**MEASURABLES:** / Intermediate Result  
Indicators





# 2.3 CHANGE COMMUNICATION



## [2.3 change communication]

The City Center project is an excellent opportunity for us to learn about change communication. Active, open and motivating communication of the change process is key. We need to make people aware of what we are working on and how they can be a part of it. All of this obviously becomes much easier, if we are doing interesting things people can feel related to.

In recent years, the City of Pori has done exceptionally well in terms of marketing communication. We have had several successful marketing campaigns, such as the Pori branding campaign in 2016. We used a new participatory approach Over 2,000 Pori residents participated in the making of the new brand. The campaign got national recognition from advertising professionals and started a new era in Pori on how we communicate.



"Very strange,  
absolutely unique."





## [2.3 change communication]

In early 2022, the City Communication department launched a marketing campaign "Porisuhdeneuvoja", where a character portraying the current mayor Aino-Maija Luukkonen gives people advice on how to deal with their relationship to Pori.

"Porisuhdeneuvoja" (Pori relation therapist) is a pun made from "Parisuhdeneuvoja" (couple therapist). In just over a month, the videos received more than 3 million views with overwhelmingly positive feedback. In a recent survey with 2600 replies, 90% said Pori is a more attractive city because of the campaign.

Most cities in the world can only dream of having something like this. So there are things we are definitely doing right. Again, everything started from being open to experimentation in the beginning process, and then learning by doing.



## CHANGE COMMUNICATION

We should use these skills when communicating the change of the City Center. We can use the current brand of the City and adapt it to this context. We have already created a certain "Pori state of mind" in our ways of communication and that is something we can really build upon.

**OWNERSHIP:** City Comms Dept, supported by City Center Coordination Team

**HOW:** Arrange campaigns that community change and potential in the City Center that invite people to share and take action

**WHEN:** Starting from THE GREAT NEGOTIATION on April 19<sup>th</sup> and continuing from there.

**MEASURABLES:** number of campaigns, number of media hits, number of people receiving and reading newsletter,



## 2.4 SPACES OF CHANGE

## [2.4 spaces of change]

If we want to boost the process of change, we should work with changemaking spaces. Spaces boost empowerment of local active residents and open doors for new ways of thinking. They are important hubs for people and projects that bring dynamics and cohesion.

We already have good experiences with this way of working: in our 2019 Pori- pop-up space, where for six weeks we worked with over 2,000 Pori residents on creating ideas and gathering information about the city center. We held city internal meetings in the space and arranged various networking and co-creation opportunities for locals.

Even if this was short term experiment, it still resonates to this day. For example, it produced a number of new projects, such as the art exhibition Ars Pori Megastore in the autumn of 2021. The exhibition gathered almost 15,000 people to see art in empty spaces of the IsoKarhu shopping mall.

Projects like these are positive "side effects" of inclusive development that will happen if we have these change-committed spaces.






## **SPACE 1: City Center Development Hub**

This is a permanent space for coordinating the City Center Development Process. We currently still have the Poris space in use (inactive mainly due to the pandemic) and we have started activating it again in February 2022. It has a very central location on the main pedestrian area and it has easy access.

The space includes workstations for people working on the matter and it is the hub for related meetings. We will have all our plans and works in progress spread out on the walls to make them more accessible and transparent. This will be the machine room of our work.



**OWNERSHIP:** Relevant City Depts, Porikorttelit NGO, any City Center Focused project

**HOW:** Combine people and projects in to the space, get furniture and keys

**WHEN:** Has already started

**MEASURABLES:** Space opened/not, number of organisations involved, number of events, number of participants

## SPACE 2: Open Community Space

In the summer of 2021, ULG members visited the Kalasatama Free City Living Room (Kalasataman olohuone) in Redi shopping mall in Helsinki. Kalasatama neighbourhood is roughly the same size as the population of Pori City Center (???). The Living Room works as an open concept space, where people can arrange events, have meetings, do their work or study and simply spend time in the urban space without the need of spending money. The space is very active and has brought great added value to the mall. The concept is quite simple and communicated well.

According to our research, people have a longing for these kinds of spaces in Pori. We need to make our version of the Living Room, where local changemakers can arrange activities according to their interests and people can really make the space their own. The space needs to be easily accessible, it needs to feel cozy and welcoming. Through this space we can create ownership and empowerment for people to use the City Center and to shape it into something of their own. The city government can support this space by arranging e.g. modern library services in the space.

We have already had preliminary discussions with property owners and other operators for opening such a space and will continue these discussion, aiming to have it opened in 2023.



**OWNERSHIP:** City Culture Dept, property owners, local NGOs

**HOW:** Continue discussion, arrange meetings and workshops

**WHEN:** Aim for 2023 opening

**MEASURABLES:** Space opened/not, number of organisations involved, number of events, number of participants





**2.5  
EVENTS  
OF  
CHANGE**

## [2.5 events of change]

Pori is known both nationally and internationally as an Event City. We have Pori Jazz, SuomiAreena (annual political discussion festival in July) and many other well-produced events and festivals.

We should make use of this also in our City Center rejuvenation project. We can do events where we introduce plans, collect ideas or try out ways to activate residents in using our public space. The themes for these events will be chosen according to our project focus at the time.

When planning actions for e.g. change in the public space, we should produce the events as a multi-disciplinary team. Previously the City Planning Department has attempted to organise events on urban development issues themselves, even if they are not event production professionals. They are skilled in practical urban planning issues and should be able to focus solely on that.





## EVENTS OF CHANGE

In the future, these events would benefit from the know-how of the Culture Unit in planning events and also the skills of the communication department, when inviting people to join. If we have project funding, we can also hire local event professionals to do certain areas of the production. This way, each department can focus on their core skills and can make the best out of the event.



**OWNERSHIP:** City Planning Dept, City Culture Unit, Communications Unit

**HOW:**

**WHEN:** First event would be for introducing the City Center Development Plan in Autumn 2022

**MEASURABLES:** number of participants

## **EVENT SERIES: URBAN FORUM**

As we have agreed for a more active co-operation between stakeholders, we will set up the URBAN FORUM in Pori. It is a local networking concept, where we invite local changemakers to join and to present their projects and ideas for the City Center. This will develop our local networks, make thinking visible and create more ownership in the city.

We can start off small with simple morning coffee sessions, where we share information and local projects among those interested. Depending on the topic, we can also invite outside experts for new knowledge and inspiration. If there is strong enough interest for this kind of activity, we can expand it into an urban development festival targeted to a local and national and also international audience.

The first test run of the Urban Forum will be organised in a small scale during iPlace project in mid-June 2022. In this event, we will introduce the current status of the CCDP along with other topics to be decided later. The Urban Forum can also operate in the community space mentioned in section x on this IAP. Urban Forum is coordinated by the local steering group.

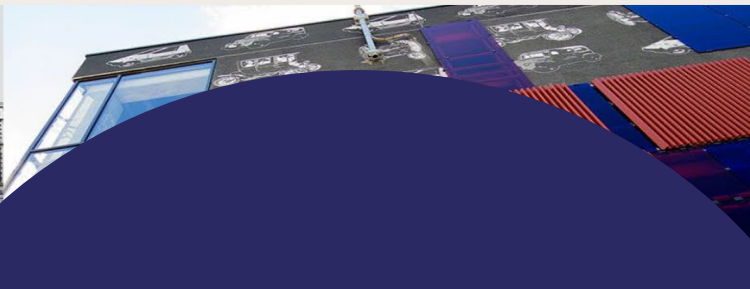


**OWNERSHIP:** Extended ULG, City Center Coordination Team, space owners

**HOW:** Start experimenting with the concept and build from there

**WHEN:** First test run in June 2022

**MEASURABLES:** Number of themes addressed, number of events, number of participants



# 2.6 PROJECTS SUPPORT CHANGE





## [2.6 projects support change]

Working with international EU projects and partners has been essential for our process so far. We have been able to tap into the most recent know-how of urban development and by applying this to our own environment, we have really learned a lot. In practice, almost all of new initiatives, experiments and approaches have come from the few international projects we have made. However, it is still an underused resource for Pori.

We are already a relevant and desired partner for projects. What we are doing here e.g. in terms of participatory work has relevance

Now that we are getting our City Center rejuvenation process really going, we should use project funding to give it a proper boost. Co-creation, participatory methods, bottom-up approaches and sustainability are all buzzwords describe our process, and where is there is plenty of potential funding and partners available. In practice, if and when we have good things happening, there is more than enough funding available. There are many regional, national and international funding programs available we can use. Some funding is for infrastructure, other for dynamics and experimentation. We just have to grab the share we need.



## PROJECT OFFICE

We suggest Pori immediately sets up a project office for the City Center project to apply for projects, run them and build a proper funding strategy for the years to come. It will pay back our investments quickly and bring continuity in our work.



**OWNERSHIP:** Relevant City Depts

**HOW:**

**WHEN:** ASAP

**MEASURABLES:** Amount of projects, amount of funding amount of staff funded through projects,



A night street scene with a large black circle overlaid in the center. The background shows a city street at night with cars, a cyclist, and buildings. The text inside the circle is white and reads: 3. ...BUT IS IT RISKY?

**3.**  
**...BUT IS**  
**IT**  
**RISKY?**



**3.1**  
**...BUT IS**  
**IT**  
**RISKY?**



### [3. ...but is it risky?]

In short, it would be more risky NOT to take action. Without proper planning and concrete action to take things forward, we let others decide our fate.

We must also be ready to change our plans if needed. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine prove there are things beyond our control. Therefore, we must have a structure in place where we actively keep contact with each other. When the time comes to take drastic action, we should already know how to work together. Frankly, not knowing how to work together would be again a bigger risk.

From the above we can already see and feel: we can and will stick together, if really needed. Let's keep that in mind, when we do our work with the City Center. It's all a matter of determination.

We will work together as a team. All involved should understand the big picture, then it will be easier for new people to jump in. Even if we cherish all the people that are joining us in our work, we should not be too dependent on specific people to manage to process. We can never know what life throws ahead of us and who knows where one might end up. Let's just all try to learn and do work we think is meaningful.







**4.**  
**MEASURING**  
**SUCCESS**



# 4.1 MEASURING SUCCESS



## [4.1 measuring success]

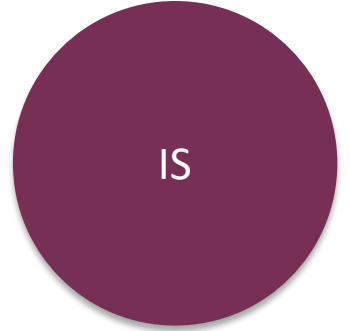
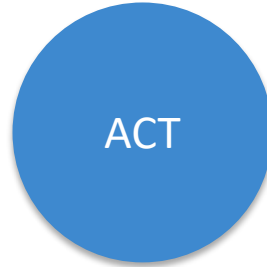
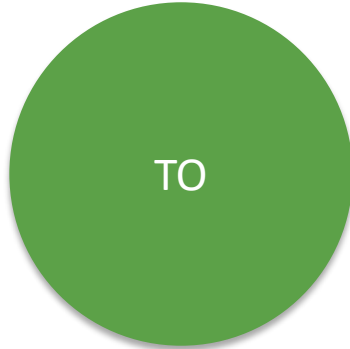
How to measure success in our case?

We have indicators we can follow. It will be easy to see if there are participants in our events or not. We also know how much project funding we have had over the last three years, and then compare it to how much we have three years later. These things are important, but they are not real measurement.

In many ways we can say we are already successful. We have already created a world of potential for our beloved City Center and we have many people who want to see it come to life. We have also learned a great deal on our path so far. We can already look back and give ourselves a little tap on the shoulder.

For the future, the real measures of success are a little harder to put in an excel sheet. One day, we will simply know it. It will be in the feeling of the Pori people: how they are proud of their own environment. How they are eager to share it with the world and invite them to come over.





**NOW .**