



RAIL4CITIES

Report on placemaking activities at Living Labs

Deliverable 2.3



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1 Executive summary

This deliverable outlines the methodology used in the placemaking activities of the RAIL4CITIES project within the "Validating Solutions" phase for each of the four Living Labs. The primary goal of these placemaking activities is to engage local stakeholders, including citizens and station users, to promote the revitalization of underutilized spaces near railway stations. These participatory efforts aim to discover the local assets and potential of these spaces, leading to more impactful projects that meet community needs and aspirations.

In alignment with the project's requirements, the placemaking activities were conducted from June to September 2024 in four Living Labs located in Italy, Belgium, France, and Poland. These activities sought to transform railway stations into active hubs, contributing to the city's urban ecosystem. While all Living Labs followed a unified methodology, each adapted its approach to reflect the unique context and specific challenges of its location.

The main topics addressed in each Living Lab are as follows:

- Italian Living Lab (Milano Rogoredo Station): Focus on the circular economy, with the station serving as a hub for sustainable energy and resource management.
- French Living Lab (Toulouse Matabiau Station): Exploration of the station as an intermodal mobility hub, with a specific focus on cycling.
- Belgian Living Lab (Ottignies Station): Development of a 24/7 "15-minute city" concept around the station, emphasizing accessibility and liveability
- Polish Living Lab (Tomaszów Mazowiecki Station): The station is positioned as a socially inclusive hub connected to green and blue infrastructure, integrating the natural environment with urban services.

Placemaking, as employed in these Living Labs, is a participatory, hands-on process that reimagines public spaces to strengthen connections between people and places. This approach emphasizes collaborative design and the enhancement of physical, social, and cultural characteristics of urban spaces, ultimately fostering the health, well-being, and engagement of the communities involved.

2 Introduction

This deliverable explains in detail the methodology used in the placemaking activities in each Living Lab, precisely the step “Validating Solutions” in Figure 1. Rationale for the placemaking activities is to support engagement with the local stakeholders of the living labs. Hence, the participatory activities are dedicated to specific topics of each living labs with local citizens, users, and communities, in order to let people use the space in a way they need and in developing activities that they want. In this way, we can then really discover local assets and potentials of such spaces, thus developing projects that could have more impact.



Figure 1 – Living Labs Methodology steps



3 Methodology

3.1 Background

Following the requirements of the call, saying: *“The implementation of at least four 4 specific Living Labs that will investigate how stakeholders and citizens...”* the RAIL4CITIES project wants to fully involve citizens and stations’ users in the Living Labs. Therefore, placemaking activities have been organised from June to September 2024 to involve communities around common activities in those spaces near stations that are currently underused, but could become new spaces for services, thus revitalizing and boosting railway stations as hubs in the city.

The methodology for placemaking activities follows a common line for all 4 Living Labs involved in this phase (Italy, Belgium, France, Poland), but with small differences due to the adaptation to each context, and also because of the different topic(s) of each Living Lab.

Here below, each chapter reports on the methodology for each Living Lab based on their respective specific needs.

Firstly, it is useful to recap the main challenges and topics of each Living Lab:

- Italian Living Lab - Milano Rogoredo Station: it treats the topic of the station as a circular economy hub, and as energy hub. For the placemaking activities, we have chosen to focus on the circular economy topic, as the energy topic will be studied aside.
- French Living Lab - Toulouse Matabiau Station: here we study the topic of the station as a hub of intermodal mobility, focusing mainly on bicycle.
- Belgian Living Lab - Ottignies: here we analyse the station as a hub in a context the should live 24h and 7/7 days, by developing 15-minute city in its surroundings.
- Polish Living Lab - Tomaszow Mazowiecki: here the topic is the station as a hub of socially-inclusive services for citizens using green/blue infrastructure (UGI) connected with the Natural protected environment.

As a general method, placemaking is an overarching idea and a hands-on approach for improving a neighbourhood, city, or region, that inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm to maximise shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution. With community-based participation at its centre, an effective placemaking process capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and well-being.





3.2 Specific approach and objectives for the Italian Living Lab

This chapter aims to describe the methodology that has been adopted for the Living Lab to be set up at Rogoredo FS station, which is intended to be closely related to the specific area of intervention and to the defined community that is involved.

The process within the Rogoredo FS station described has the following objectives:

- Advocacy for Circular Economy and Sustainability: Disseminate awareness and encourage dialogue on critical issues related to the circular economy and sustainability within the community.
- Advocacy for Collective Creation: Use tactical urbanism and field experiences as a means of collective creation and identify site-specific needs to be addressed.
- Enhancing Train Station Activation: Increase the presence and ownership of people and improve its usability, also by talking to the users of the station itself with specific questions.

The initiative, revolving around the theme of circular economy, unfolds across three pivotal phases from mid-June to end of September, following these steps:

1. Engagement of the target community

This initial phase involves observing, talking to and involving the community to gather valuable insights, starting from the information already collected by the project group. Given the capacity for time and resources, it is considered useful to define a specific target group with which to work on project activities: this will be the first activity to start with the project team, so that all the best next steps can be clearly defined. Some of the possible stakeholders identified are:

- Nearby residents (Santa Giulia and Rogoredo neighbourhoods).
- Workers of the Santa Giulia business district.
- Associations and shop owners.

The specific stakeholder groups will be then identified together with RFI and FS Park.

The type of activities chosen will be tailored depending on the stakeholder group. We propose to organise on-site activities (informal conversations and meetings, place game workshop) to co-create the programme to be carried out during the day of the final event, with possible input from experts in the circular economy sector. By doing so, we will not only gather insights into people's perceptions of the space but also foster greater awareness about the project's theme. Additionally, we can have 1:1 interview with specific stakeholders identified by RFI and FS Park that can contribute to.

2. Synthesis of results and preparation

Building upon the observations, the insights gathered and the RAIL4CITIES team survey results (from previous steps), this phase focuses on consolidating and synthesising emerging ideas to



inform the subsequent stages of the process. At this stage, it is also necessary to start the preparatory procedures for the event itself, the procurement of materials, the involvement of any specific actors and so on.

3. Space Activation and Final Event

The final phase revolves around activating the identified spaces based on refined ideas generated in the previous phases. Activities related to the circular economy will be defined and implemented on an activation day. Not only the target group will be involved, but also general users of the area who will be able to participate freely.

Collaborative Decision-Making and Feedback Mechanism:

Throughout the process, ongoing discussions and online feedback sessions will be facilitated with the steering group, composed of the RFI and FS Park and selected network members. Alongside this, the best communication channels to leverage, both online and offline, will also be explored and evaluated.

3.3 Specific approach and objectives for the Polish Living Lab

The project to implement the Living Lab and placemaking methods at Tomaszów Mazowiecki railway station aims at:

- Mobilising the local community by encouraging social activities in the station area; considering the station as an important urban public space.
- Supporting the development of new initiatives and services: Gaining knowledge of citizens' ideas and expectations regarding railway spaces, with an aim to diversify the range of services and leisure activities in the railway station area.
- Promoting better integration and connection to the city centre: Putting the station on the mental map of residents and tourists; improving wayfinding and aiming to change perceptions of the station area as an important element of the urban fabric.

The declared objectives have been achieved through following actions:

1. Community Observation and Listening

The first step, which determines further actions, is to identify and classify local stakeholders - beyond the initial stakeholder mapping already undertaken - and engage with the local community. The main aim is to gain insight from local residents and users of the station, as well as local governance institutions and organisations in the area. This helps to reach the people who may be interested in participating in the planned activities. The preliminary stakeholder groups for the process are:

- Residents of Tomaszów Mazowiecki (especially children and youth);
- Local social organisations.
- Tourists (possibly Łódź and Warsaw residents; users of PKP and ŁKA railways);

- Daily commuters (residents of Tomaszów Mazowiecki, daily commuting for work or education)
- A more precise list of stakeholders will be developed during the first phase. The connections will be made via informal meetings and conversations.

2. Engagement process

This phase starts with summarising the insight provided by the stakeholders. Then it is proposed to set up a small, tactical intervention in the area of the railway station (e.g. an open 'pop-up café' corner) which provides a meeting space for the locals and a place to rest for commuters and tourists, as well it attracts interest for the initiative. At the same time, we organise a photography contest related to the integration of the station area into the urban fabric. The name and the main theme of the contest is: "Railway stations: a place in the city". There is a stand nearby, offering registration and guidelines and the contest is promoted online and through the channels of local stakeholders. The contest has a character of an urban game – the contestants are provided with themes and clues that they must locate in the city and include in their photos. Themes revolve around the railway station and its spatial relations. As a result, each contestant creates a collection of photographs.

3. Final event

On the day of the closing event, a small-scale activation of the station area takes place, including: the final stage of the photo competition (participants' photos are displayed in a photo exhibition), workshop activities for children and families, and a discussion session on how to activate the station in a multi-functional model and use it as a place of opportunity for local communities. Invited partners of the RAIL4CITIES project have the opportunity to discuss with the community the role of railways in modern cities.

3.4 Specific approach and objectives for the French Living Lab

During the workshops with the various stakeholders involved in the Toulouse Living Lab, we identify a lack of awareness of existing bike services at the Toulouse Matabiau station. To address this, we organise a placemaking event called "Gare au vélo" (end of June), to test different signages and inform users of what exists. We also collaborate with bicycle user groups.

Methodology proposed:

1. Stakeholders' engagement

Objectives: Identify and engage local stakeholders on the topic of cycling - previously identified in the initial stakeholder mapping phase of the Living Lab and newly identified - to see what opportunities exist to make the station more bikeable, what service to put in place in and around the station to come by bike.

Methodology: Involve the community, identify and meet potential partner stakeholders, and consultation/activation in the form of micro-testing, collaborative advisory panels (voting on ideas, proposals in the form of drawings, etc.) during the event.

2. Implementation

Objective: Highlight the bike-related services available at the station and the station's accessibility by bike.

Mission: 1-day event on the station forecourt open to all stakeholders, with 4 animators, a fun bike stand, a bike repair pop-up, quizzes, a giant map, games, etc. An assessment is carried out to highlight what has been achieved during the consultation phase with stakeholders, as well as during the event, so that it can serve as an experience for other stations.

Illustrations of the signage to be used during placemaking activity:

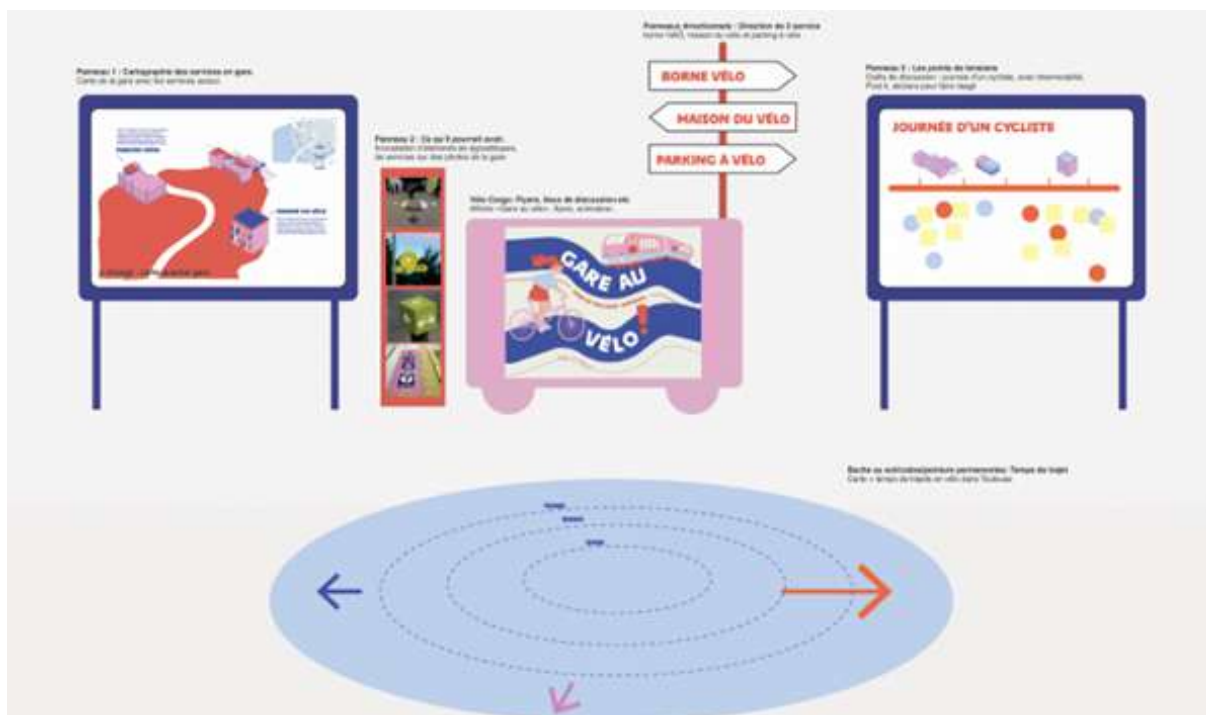


Figure 2 – Illustrations for the Toulouse-Matabiau Living Lab placemaking activity

3.5 Specific approach and objectives for the Belgian Living Lab

Over the course of two days, an external company contracted by SNCB has conducted in-depth field surveys and observation, and users' engagement to explore and understand the experiences of Ottignies station and its users. Steps of these activities have been the following:

- Day 1: Arrived in the morning for rush hour (8:30am), observation and interviews until post-lunch rush hour (2pm). Observed "non-work" time. Came back in the afternoon to observe the evening rush hour (4pm-6:30pm).

- Day 2: Arrived in the morning for rush hour (7:30-9am), spent the afternoon talking to shops nearby, came back for the afternoon/ evening rush hour (5pm).

A total of 47 users of the station have been involved in observation activities and in 1:1 interviews, with the objective of letting them re-think the station and its surroundings as a vibrant more liveable space with mobility and proximity services, serving the neighbourhood, the citizens, and the users.



4 Results

In this chapter, we report the results of the activities of placemaking done in three living labs: Polish, Italian, French.

4.1 Placemaking activity in the Polish Living Lab

The placemaking activities, implemented in July-August 2024 in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, as a part of a Living Lab intervention of Rail4Cities project, aimed to:

- mobilise the local community: Encourage social activities in the station area; consider the station as an important urban public space.
- support the development of new initiatives and services: Gain knowledge of citizens' ideas and expectations regarding railway spaces, with an aim to diversify the range of services and leisure activities in the railway station area.
- promote better integration with the city centre: Putting the station on the mental map of residents and tourists; improving wayfinding and aiming to change perceptions of the station area as an important element of the urban fabric.

The implementation was supervised by STIP VOF with a support of a local Polish organization (Utila Sp. z o.o). The partners of the implementation were: PKP S.A. and the Road and Bridge Research Institute. Railway Company PKP as well as iBDM have been involved to organise, coordinate together with STIP VOF, and participate to the event and activities. They brought 50+ participants between users, citizens, and local associations thanks to their contacts and network. iBDM, afterwards, supported in the preparation of the report of the activities and results, and also organised a specific event for dissemination.

1. Topic of the placemaking activity and problem to solve

The activities of the placemaking activities in Tomaszów Mazowiecki consisted of 3 main elements: community observation and listening, engagement process and final event. The main component of the activities was a photo competition called "Tomaszów Mazowiecki Station Closer to Us". The aim of the competition was to present the functions of a railway station in the city. The main challenge addressed by this activity was to start a conversation among the residents about the variety of uses of the stations and their surroundings for social functions, and also to imagine possible improvements of the connection - both spatially, but also culturally and functionally - between Tomaszów Mazowiecki station and the city centre.

2. Key objectives & expected results

The project had several objectives, but the main one was to socially activate and increase interest in the Tomaszów Mazowiecki railway station and its potential uses. The station is



located relatively far from the city centre, which makes it perceived as something distant from the city centre. As a result, many tourists and some residents choose to use private transport, and if they do use public transport and depart from the station, they make minimal use of it - just to cross the platform and get on the train. The project aimed to stimulate the imagination of possible improvements to the station, mainly in terms of additional uses or functions that it could serve both for the local community and for visitors and tourists. In addition, the activities aimed to demonstrate the importance of the station as an integral part of the city and to encourage residents and tourists to consider it as a valuable element of the city. The photo competition was held with the aim of encouraging innovation among the residents and visitors of Tomaszów Mazowiecki, as well as supporting new ideas for the reuse of the station building.

3. Methodology

Community observation and listening

The first step of the project was to identify local stakeholders and engage with the local community. A desk research was carried out and, based on this, a search was made for locally active NGOs that had helped to promote the event and also shared information about the competition on their profiles. The main aim of this step was to gain insight from local residents and users of the station, as well as local leaders and organisations in the area. This made it possible to reach people who might be interested in participating in the planned activities. It also helped to define in detail the placemaking activities to be carried out in the later stages of the project, such as developing the final form and theme of the photo competition. As part of this activity, local organisations and stakeholders were contacted and interviewed, such as the Municipal Cultural Centre, the Tourist Information Office, the Office of Social Communication and Promotion of the Municipality of Tomaszów Mazowiecki, the Friends of Children Society, the local scout group, as well as NGOs based in the city whose activities are based on supporting social initiatives, social activation and promotion of the region's resources - including cultural and natural heritage.

Engagement process

This step helped to detail the later activities and allowed to move on to the second stage - the engagement process. It was decided to use the photo competition as the main element of the activities and to build the social engagement around it. In addition to the photo competition, a promotional campaign was needed. It started with the creation of promotional materials: posters, leaflets, models with descriptions. A Facebook event was created, where information about the competition activities and various interesting facts about the use of railway stations for social purposes were posted several times a week. The NGOs and local organisations were also involved in sharing information about the competition and reposting the event page.

For the engagement activities, it was decided to set up pop-up interventions in the city - to provide information about the competition and to use the element of surprise to generate interest in the project - the stands were planned to be colourful and eye-catching, using

elements such as chairs and sun loungers, as well as plants and colourful posters. The aim was to attract the attention of passers-by so that they would stop and engage with the stand - reading the information posters, starting a conversation about the possible uses of the stations. The stands were set up in various locations in Tomaszów Mazowiecki over a two-week period, and an ongoing media campaign was run to promote the competition.

Final event

The culmination of the competition activities was the selection of the winners and an exhibition of the submitted works during a picnic organised by local NGOs called "Local Unconventional". This festival was chosen because it is one of the biggest social activities in the city at this time (the end of the summer) and it was known that there would be a large number of people at the event who would be potentially interested in the Rail4Cities stand and the exhibition of photos submitted to the "Tomaszów Mazowiecki Station Closer to Us" competition. A panel discussion on how to activate the station in a multifunctional model and use it as a place of opportunities for local communities was also planned. Various activities for children were also prepared, including quizzes and guessing games to engage the youngest participants.

4. Results

a. Description of the activities

During the engagement phase, the physical interventions took place in Tomaszów Mazowiecki - pop-up information stands were set up to provide all the details about the competition and to stimulate imagination and discussion about the social use of railway stations. The stands were located in the city centre (on the main square of Tomaszów Mazowiecki), in the most popular city park (called "Nowe Bulwary") and near the railway station. Visitors to the stands could read interesting facts about Tomaszów Mazowiecki, as well as additional material about the social use of railway stations in Europe and the competition itself. The stand was colourful and decorated with plant elements, making it an eye-catcher. It attracted a lot of interest from passers-by. In addition, the design of the pop-ups invited participants to use them according to their needs - especially in the station, where those waiting for their trains chose the chairs at the stand (instead of the seats on the platform).



The stands in Urban area of Tomaszów Mazowiecki – Tomaszów Mazowiecki's main square and municipal park (photo: Utila, 10/08/2024)



The stands at the railway station area (photo: Utila, 07/08/2024)

The final event took place on 25 August 2024 in Tomaszów Mazowiecki by the Pilica River during the organised "Local Unconventional" picnic. The winners of the competition received



prizes and the other participants received consolation prizes. The stand also presented information models about the possibilities of using railway stations for social purposes in Poland and around the world. For the youngest participants there were various activation games based on the railway station.



The stand organized by Utila LLC (photo: Utila LLC, 25/08/2024)



The stand organized by Utila LLC (photo: Utila LLC, 25/08/2024)

The picnic also included a panel discussion where a representative from the Institute of Roads and Bridges, the Deputy Mayor of Tomaszów Mazowiecki and representatives from two local organisations discussed the role of railway stations in cities. The panel discussion lasted 30 minutes and attracted a large audience.



Discussion panel during the Final Even - Picnic "Local Unconventional" (photo: Utila LLC, 25/08/2024))

b. Typology of users, and other stakeholders

The first element of the engagement process - the pop-up stands - attracted a different type of audience depending on their location. At the stands in the city centre (in the main square), there was a majority of senior citizens who stopped by to talk about the possible uses of the stations. There was not much difference between the participation of men and women. The stalls in the park attracted mainly young people and families with children - in this case it was mainly kids who were attracted by the unusual look of the stall. In the third location - the railway station - the profile of the audience varied significantly. This stand aimed to attract commuters and was set up both during the week - to attract residents - and at the weekend - to attract visitors.

Although the photo competition was open to everyone, it was mainly attended by adults - mostly young and middle-aged. This was mainly due to the summer period during which the event was organised, when many children and young people were away on holidays and camps. On the other hand, as the competition was promoted online and through means such as the Tourist Information Office, it also attracted a lot of visitors and tourists. The competition received 26 entries, about half of which were sent by visitors to Tomaszów Mazowiecki and the other half by residents of Tomaszów Mazowiecki. The majority of participants (about 70%) were women.

The final event was much more diverse in terms of the participants. The festival was attended by all - children, young people, adults and senior citizens. It's important to note that the additional activities organised at the stand were much appreciated by the children and their families, while the exhibition attracted a lot of attention among the seniors. The panel

discussion organised at the festival was mainly attended by adults, many of whom had some connection with the local organisation or the municipality.

c. Challenges and obstacles identified during the process

The main challenge was the short time available to carry out the engaging activities. In addition, due to the summer period, many people who would normally be interested in participating in the competition (for example kids and youth) were absent, and the support of local organisations, such as the cultural organisations, was somewhat limited as they had no ongoing activities in the centres at that time. It was therefore decided to extend the theme and adapt the competition and other activities to visitors and tourists, not just residents.

Another challenge was to develop an appropriate theme for the competition. The station in Tomaszów Mazowiecki in its current state evokes some negative feelings and opinions among the residents, and the organisers of the competition, based on discussions with the project partners as well as local organisations, wanted to avoid a situation where the competition would be perceived negatively because it referred to an unpopular building. Therefore, it was decided that the participants should present their vision of the ideal station they would like to see in Tomaszów Mazowiecki.

d. Key success factors

The key to success was the involvement of a very large number of NGOs, which, having already attracted a large audience, made it possible to promote the competition sufficiently in a short period of time. In addition, the "unusual" location of the stands in the city helped to attract the attention of the inhabitants. In this case, this didn't lead directly to entries to the competition, but it did provide an opportunity for fruitful discussions about the possible use of railway stations for social activities.

A very effective step was to combine the final of the competition with the annual Local Unconventional picnic. This allowed many people to take part in engaging activities prepared by the contest organisers, such as station-themed games and recreational activities - and to learn about the Rail4Cities project through information displays. The stand attracted a lot of interest from the picnic participants and all the materials prepared for the participants were distributed.

e. Participants opinions

The participants were very interested in the concept of the project - during the many discussions they didn't immediately see how the stations could be used for different functions, but after looking at the materials and talking about it, they quickly came up with different uses and how the building and its surroundings could be a great asset to support social, cultural and economic activities. They often summed up the conversation by saying that it was very important to discuss this issue and that there was great potential in activating the station, and often shared that they were happy to see such initiatives taking place in their city.

f. Lessons learnt for future placemaking

The main lesson learnt from the placemaking activities carried out in Tomaszów Mazowiecki was that the most important stage is to get to know the local organisations that know their city and its social conditions best, and to establish cooperation with them. It is also extremely important to find out opinions about the areas where placemaking activities are to take place - it is vital to find out whether a particular area will cause controversy in the local community. It is therefore very important to understand the opinions of local residents and the factors that might risk arousing negative emotions, and to be able to adapt the process accordingly.

5. Expected impact after the placemaking:

a. Organisers' opinion: which impact could have this event/activity

The most significant impact of the placemaking activities in Tomaszów Mazowiecki was the increased interest in railway stations and their potential users among the participants of the competition and the final event. People who familiarised themselves with the materials created as part of the project had the opportunity to change their perception of railway stations and create a new vision for the development of their buildings. What certainly happened was the beginning of a new thread in the public discourse about the use of previously unused urban spaces for socially important purposes.

b. From facts or hypotheses (by interviewing participants), let's find out if this activity will leave an impact, and which one, and if the initiative can continue afterwards

Many people liked the concept of revitalising the stations. The information about the competition was posted in many places in the urban area of Tomaszów Mazowiecki, so there is a great chance that many people will remember the new concepts for the social use of the station buildings, which in the future will be translated into real actions of the authorities in the matter of the development of the railway station in Tomaszów Mazowiecki. In addition, local NGOs saw great potential in using the railway station to support their activities - both as a potential location, but also to carry out some activities there - for example, exhibitions by local artists or concerts. They also identified the potential for a direct link between the station and the surrounding natural areas.



4.2 Placemaking activity in the French Living Lab

1. Topic of the placemaking activity and problem to solve

Our placemaking is part of the Toulouse living lab dedicated to intermodality and the use of bicycles.

First, the workshops of this living lab focused on the following questions:

- How can the link between train and bike be strengthened, while limiting the number of bikes taken on the train?
- How can we encourage people who currently use their car to switch to using the bike and the train?

Secondly, we realized that services meeting these challenges already existed, and that the challenge was to make them better known to meet the needs of the Living Lab. The placemaking challenge was therefore to find a way of raising awareness of the cycle-related services available at station or in the immediate proximity.

Railway Company SNCF H&C, as well local station managers from SNCF G&C have been directly involved to organise the event and give permits for occupying the ground. G&C participate to the event also by involving local users. In the overall, more than 100 participants between users, citizens, and local associations have been involved, especially leveraging local network.

2. Key objectives & expected results

Key objectives:

1. Organize a fun, visible all-day event to raise awareness of the cycling services available at or near station.
2. What is stopping people from using their bikes?
3. How can we change things so that people use their bikes more?

Expected results:

- Make many users aware of the services available at stations
- A better understanding of the barriers to cycling and the solutions that could be found.

3. Methodology (how they developed the placemaking activities)

1. Observation phase: Two spotting at the Toulouse Matabiau station were carried out before the placemaking to understand which were the strategic locations and where we had to intervene.





The forecourt of hall 2 is the main entrance to the station which attracts the largest flow of users. We therefore chose to make our intervention at this location.



Also, this observation phase allowed us to note the blatant lack of information relating to the use of bikes in station.

2. Stakeholders commitment: we participated in two living lab workshops and spoke with different stakeholders and players in the Toulouse cycling community to identify which elements to target during our intervention.

We discussed with the Maison du Vélo, Tisséo Collectivités (attractiveness department), Palanca (Toulouse consultation agency), en Selle Deniers (bikes users associative), SNCF (hubs and connection), EFFIA (Western regional department).



3. Placemaking design: thanks to these discussions, we identified the importance of highlighting the presence of:

1. La Vélo station
2. Vélô Toulouse self-service
3. La Maison du Vélo

To do this, we chose to organize a highlight event in front of the station to push the elements previously targeted to the forefront, with fun and interactive communication with users.

From 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday June 27, 2024, we set up a stand on the station forecourt with a cargo bike, coffee, large format maps and flyers.

4. Results:

a. Description of the day/event - which activities they did

On 27 June 2024 from 8am to 6pm, we organized an interactive and fun event on the station forecourt to highlight:

1. La Vélo station
2. Vélô Toulouse self-service
3. La Maison du Vélo

We set up a stand with a cargo bike, large-format maps and flyers.

We were 4 all day long to organize the event: 2 at the stand and two mobiles.

Our activities consisted of talking to the curious users who came to us and going out to meet other users by positioning ourselves in several places in the station: the parking to reach car users, the city-crossing platform to reach bicycle users, and in front of the station to reach pedestrian users.

b. Who participated (typology of users, and other stakeholders, and how many of each)

Typology of stakeholders:

Upstream:

- Effia: proposal to give users a free month's subscription to the vélostation
- Maison du vélo: distribution of flyers to highlight the services offered by the Maison du vélo
- SNCF: facilitating the organization of the event

During the event:

- Effia: bike park operator - 1 person on site on the day of the event to show visitors around the vélostation

Typology of users: people coming to the station on foot, by bike or by car; either Toulouse residents, or French or international tourists.

c. Challenges and obstacles identified during the process

Challenges:

- Capturing the attention of station users, who are often in a hurry.

- Management of unforeseen events and possible conflicts, as the event was taking place in a public space.

Obstacles: no real obstacles identified (the only obstacle to this placemaking could have been the weather, but it was particularly fine that day).

d. Key success factors – success related to the activity done (e.g. why a particular time / date, local stakeholder partners, etc.)

Design: we worked with a graphic designer to come up with visual and aesthetic materials to attract attention: poster, map, signage, flyers, quiz, etc.

Date: the end of June meant we still had some workers, which would not have been the case if we had done it in July or August, when we would have had many more tourists.

Duration: 8am to 6pm to attract users going to and from work.

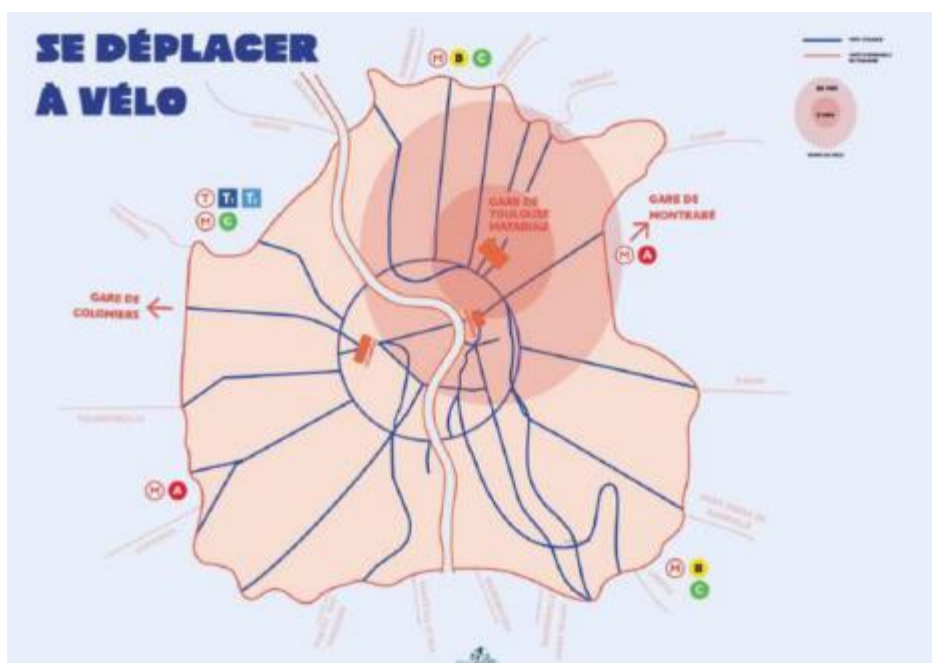
Involvement of stakeholder partners: Effia's involvement was beneficial for placemaking. By offering tours of the vélostation and free one-month subscriptions, Effia enriched the placemaking proposals.

Implementation: be placed in a visible location where there is a flow of traffic, go out and meet users, offer coffee and croissants to attract attention and talk to users, have an eye-catching display: large, colorful communication media, a cargo bike stand, etc.

The communication material:



Creation of a poster and a name for the event



A map of Toulouse and its suburbs showing the cycle paths of the REV network and highlighting the journey time: first circle 5 minutes by bike, second circle 20 minutes to highlight the distances easily covered by bike.



Map showing the 3 main cycle services near the station (Vélostation, Maison du vélo and Vélo Toulouse) and practical information



Quiz to test your cycling knowledge

SE DÉPLACER A VÉLO



UN RESEAU VÉLO ENRICHIS
La métropole de Toulouse propose un nouveau plan de circulation à vélo le Réseau Express Vélo (REV). Les travaux seront réalisés jusqu'en 2030 afin d'aménager 14 lignes, dont 2 circulaires, autour du centre-ville et de Toulouse, reliées par 12 lignes transversales. Ces pistes desserviront les pôles urbains, les grandes zones commerciales, les pôles d'échanges multimodaux du réseau structurant TC.

CHIFFRES CLÉS
54 communes desservies
4 habitants sur 5 qui seront à moins d'1 km d'une ligne
440 km de pistes cyclables dont 290 km à Toulouse métropole

Facilitez vos déplacements !
Une carte des itinéraires cyclables de Toulouse téléchargeable sur le site Toulouse-Métropole.
Bike Vélis : une application mobile gratuite pour organiser l'itinéraire qui vous convient.

CYCLOQUIZZ !

1. Selon vous, en partant en vélo de la gare de Toulouse Matabiau, combien de temps vous faut-il pour rallier ?
A. Le Capitole E. 19 minutes
B. Le Grand Rond F. 24 minutes
C. La Cité de l'Espace G. 5 minutes
D. Mairie de Balma H. 11 minutes
2. Il existe un parking vélo nommé "Vélostation" avec un accès direct au quai de la gare. Combien a-t-il de places ?
A. 150 C. 72
B. 678 D. 632
3. A la maison du vélo on trouve :
A. Un service de location de vélo C. Des ateliers d'auto-réparation collectifs de vélo
B. Des cours collectifs pour apprendre à faire du vélo D. Le matériel jeune du tour de France
4. Si je vous dis "REV", vous pensez à quoi ?
A. Le nouveau tracé de pistes cyclables D. Un moyen de circuler à vélo en toute sécurité dans la Métropole de Toulouse
B. Vos prochaines vacances
C. Un café glacé supplément caramel
5. Combien coûte l'abonnement annuel de Vélo Toulouse pour accéder en illimité aux vélos libre-service ?
A. 25 € C. 35 €
B. 5 € D. 10 €

Front and back of the flyer



MAISON DU VÉLO

SERVICES VÉLO

VÉLO TOULOUSE

VÉLOS EN LIBRE-SERVICE





VÉLOSTATION

PARKING SÉCURISÉ

Signage to help locate cycling services



Event's stand "Gare au vélo"



Discussions with users



e. Participants opinions

The event was well received by users. More than 300 users reached during the event. 78% of the people interviewed indicate that they do not come to the station by bike because:

- They are passing through the city
- They have luggage that does not enable them to take a bike
- They have a feeling of insecurity due to the lack of cycle paths
- They prefer the car because they live too far from the station
- They prefer walking because they live near the station
- They prefer public transport to avoid physical effort

“Sharing areas with multiple modes of transport is dangerous.”

“I find that cycling in Toulouse is not very pleasant. It's dangerous, you have to concentrate. I prefer to come on foot and take advantage of a decompression airlock.”

Only 13% of those questioned knew of the existence of the bike station. Among them, many say that the bicycle parking is not well indicated and that a high sign visible from the square would be a solution.

f. Lessons learnt for future placemaking

The conviviality of this type of event is a key factor in its success. Placemaking is useful for highlighting a subject, but to increase its effectiveness a structural action must also be implemented.

5. Expected impact after the placemaking:

a. Organisers' opinion: which impact could have this event/activity

An increase in the number of subscriptions for the bike park and the number of visitors to “La Maison du vélo”.

b. From facts or hypotheses (by interviewing participants), let's find out if this activity will leave an impact, and which one, and if the initiative can continue afterwards

The impact left behind could be a relative increase in the number of users cycling to the station, but discussions with users during the placemaking revealed that to have a significant impact on the number of users using bicycles, much more structured actions would have to be implemented, such as:

- Better signage around bicycle services at stations would be greatly appreciated by users.



- The creation of cycle paths within Toulouse and its employment areas clearly appears to be a determining element in changing user behaviour.
- Develop secure bicycle parking in small stations on the Toulouse' suburbs and Vélô Toulouse self-service terminals.

This last point responds to a real issue that cyclists have told us about: being able to take their bikes on the train.

“Regional Express Trains are full, especially during peak hours. It's not possible for me to have two bikes and I don't have a public transport solution in my destination station, so I have to take the bike on the train. We would have to remove a few seats to increase the space dedicated to cycling in the RET because demand is growing, and we are increasingly squeezed.”

“It would be good to consider the development of different uses inside the train. In Alsace, there are places in all the wagons. In the Toulouse RET there are only 2 or 3 bike spaces for an entire train.”

In conclusion, we think that this initiative could be repeated once a year to continue to inform users and encourage the station to improve its signage.



4.3 Placemaking activity in the Italian Living Lab

1. Topic of the placemaking activity and problem to solve

The project is founded on the concept of transforming train stations into new urban vitality hubs, integrating socially inclusive services, local proximity amenities, and green mobility options to support citizens in their daily lives. These hubs will embody the principles of the "15-minute city" by providing easy access to essential services within a short distance.

Additionally, the stations will serve as installations of advanced engineering solutions, applying circular economy practices for environmental sustainability—focusing on the production, reuse, and recycling of resources.

The Italian railway company (both RFI and FSPark) have been involved to organise, coordinate together with STIPO, and participate to the event and activities. Many families and users have been involved, and the railway company was presiding the event directly, with an active participation of one RFI officer in the event. Afterwards, they also contributed to the report of the event.

Key aspects of the project include:

- A new operational model for stations that enhances their role as community and mobility hubs.
- An EU-wide methodology for the effective implementation of this model.
- A tool for application and impact assessment that addresses the interconnected challenges (such as profit-driven business models, the complex network of stakeholders, and existing policy gaps). This tool will empower decision-makers, including Railway Companies and City/Regional Administrations, to transform stations into drivers of sustainable urban development.
- The model's core pillars are being tested in five Living Labs and one case study. One of these is the Rogoredo station in Milan, where themes such as the development of an energy and circular economy hub, and a mobility hub powered by locally produced renewable energy, are explored.

This holistic approach aims to make stations catalysts for sustainable cities across Europe.

To ensure that train station hubs are truly integrated with and tailored to the communities they serve, it is crucial to actively engage and listen to these communities. This approach aligns with the principles of Placemaking—an approach and method for revitalizing public spaces by empowering communities to collectively envision and shape them into vibrant, functional hubs that meet their unique needs.

Placemaking emphasizes collaboration, encouraging local residents, businesses, and stakeholders to contribute to the transformation of public spaces. The goal is to foster deeper

connections between people and the places they share, creating environments that reflect community values, aspirations, and cultural identity.

At the core of placemaking are the following elements:

Community Engagement: The process involves local voices in envisioning and designing public spaces, ensuring that the results truly reflect the strengths and character of the neighbourhood.

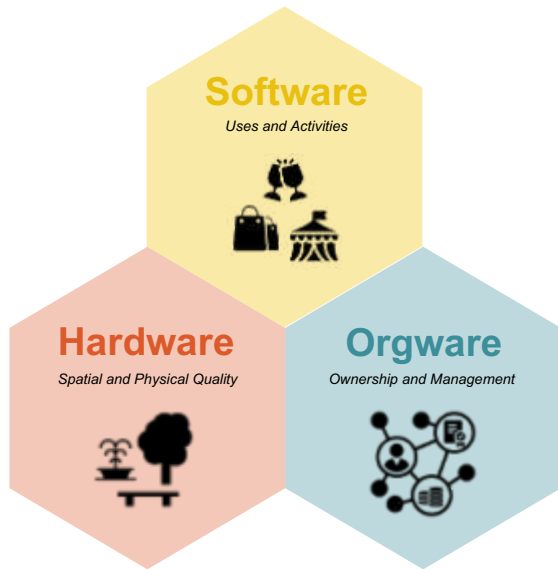
Hardware, Software Orgware Approach: Effective placemaking focuses not only on the physical elements (infrastructure, urban furniture, layout) but also on the activities and events that animate these spaces. The way public spaces are managed and maintained by the community is equally important, fostering a shared responsibility-

Diverse Activities: By encouraging a range of cultural, social, and recreational activities, placemaking helps create vibrant, lively spaces that serve various community needs, enriching public life.

Originating from urban thinkers like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte in the 1960s, placemaking advocates for urban environments that prioritize human interaction, inclusivity, and safety over mere functionality. These pioneers highlighted the value of active, welcoming public spaces where people feel a sense of ownership and belonging.

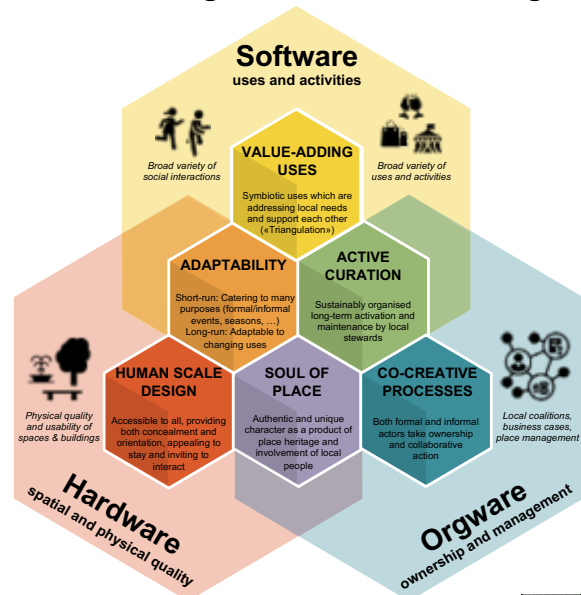
By embracing these placemaking principles, the Rogoredo station activation initiative aimed to foster a strong sense of community ownership and well-being. This approach experimented how public spaces within the station can enhance the quality of life for all stakeholders involved—creating a hub that is not only a point of transit but also a thriving centre of community life.

Three Dimensions of Placemaking



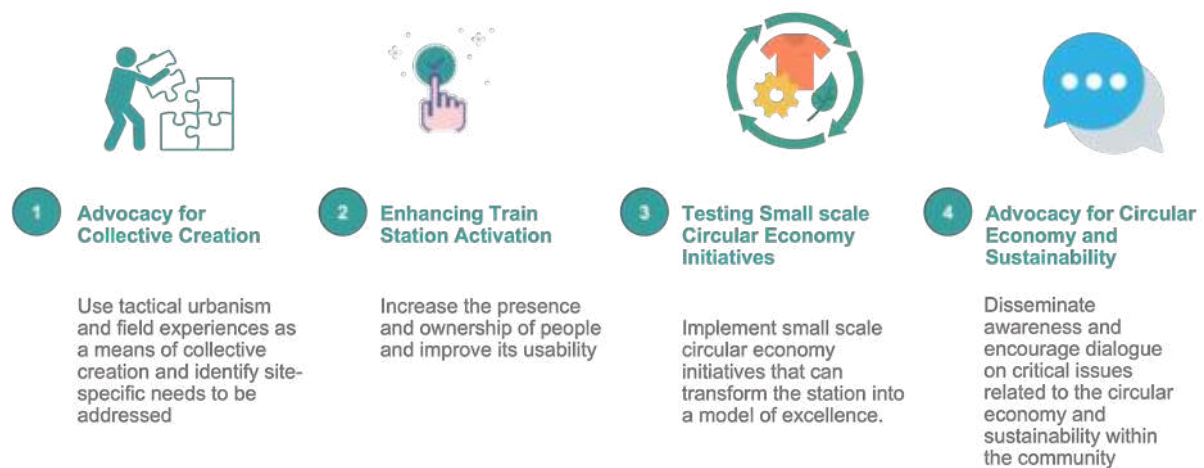
Co-created by The City at Eye Level and Placemaking Switzerland (2023)

Six Building Blocks of Placemaking



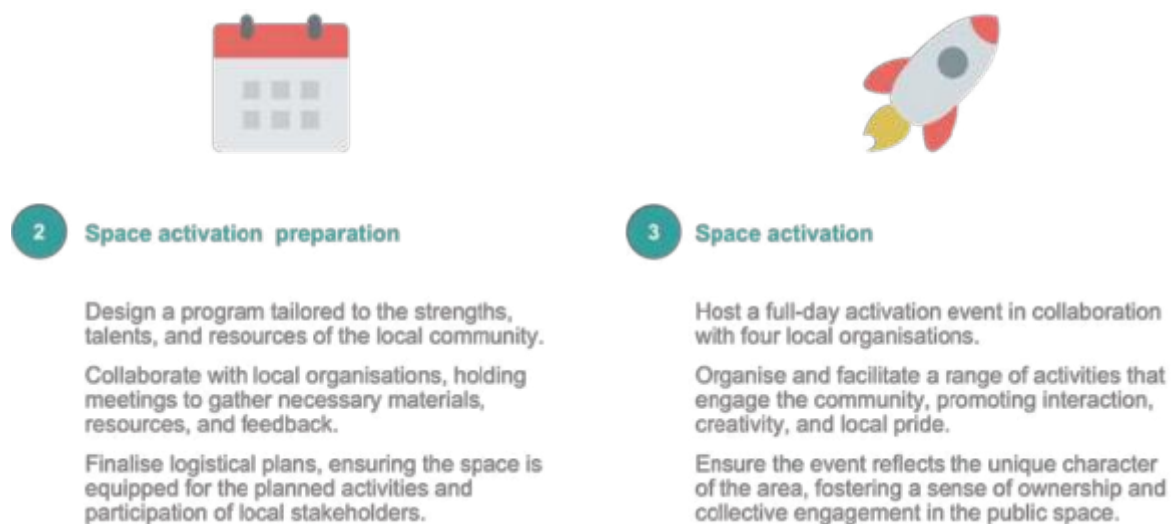
Co-created by The City at Eye Level and Placemaking Switzerland (2023)

2. Key objectives & expected results





The process:



3. Methodology (how they developed the placemaking activities)

The methodology is rooted in participatory design, tactical urbanism, and placemaking principles, with an emphasis on community engagement and co-creation. Here's a breakdown of the applied methodologies:

1. Participatory Design

This project involves the active participation of local stakeholders, such as residents, workers, and shop owners, in shaping the outcome. The emphasis on engagement, informal conversations, workshops, and one-on-one interviews suggests a design process that seeks to include community input at every stage. This approach ensures that the interventions reflect the needs and desires of those who interact with the space.

2. Tactical Urbanism

The use of small-scale, temporary urban interventions (like the creation of installations with waste materials or the proposed parking space intervention) points to a tactical urbanism methodology. This approach is often used to test ideas in a low-risk, flexible way before implementing permanent solutions. In this case, the proposed interventions aim to improve the station's usability and bring awareness to circular economy principles.

3. Placemaking

Placemaking is central to the activation of the space, focusing on enhancing the physical, cultural, and social aspects of the train station area. The project aims to increase the sense of ownership and presence of local users by activating the space through events, co-created installations, and activities. This mirrors the placemaking process, which strengthens community ties and maximizes the value of shared public spaces.

4. Human-Centered Design

The project's focus on understanding the users' perceptions and needs through observation, interviews, and workshops points to a human-centred design approach, ensuring that solutions are tailored to enhance the well-being of the people who use the space.

5. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)

This methodology emphasizes leveraging the existing strengths, assets, and capabilities of the community rather than focusing on its deficits. The project likely taps into the existing networks, skills, and knowledge of local residents, businesses, and organizations, thereby creating interventions that are rooted in the community's assets. This method helps foster stronger connections and sustainable engagement by focusing on what the community already does well.



4. Results

Neighbourhood analysis:

The activities had a preliminary phase of identifying the opportunities and criticalities of the neighbourhood, primarily by analysing the urban and spatial conformation.

In fact, the Rogoredo FS station is located at a crucial junction for the old Rogoredo district and the new settlement of Santa Giulia and Merezzate: this strategic position has led us to address our activities to all these potential target communities.



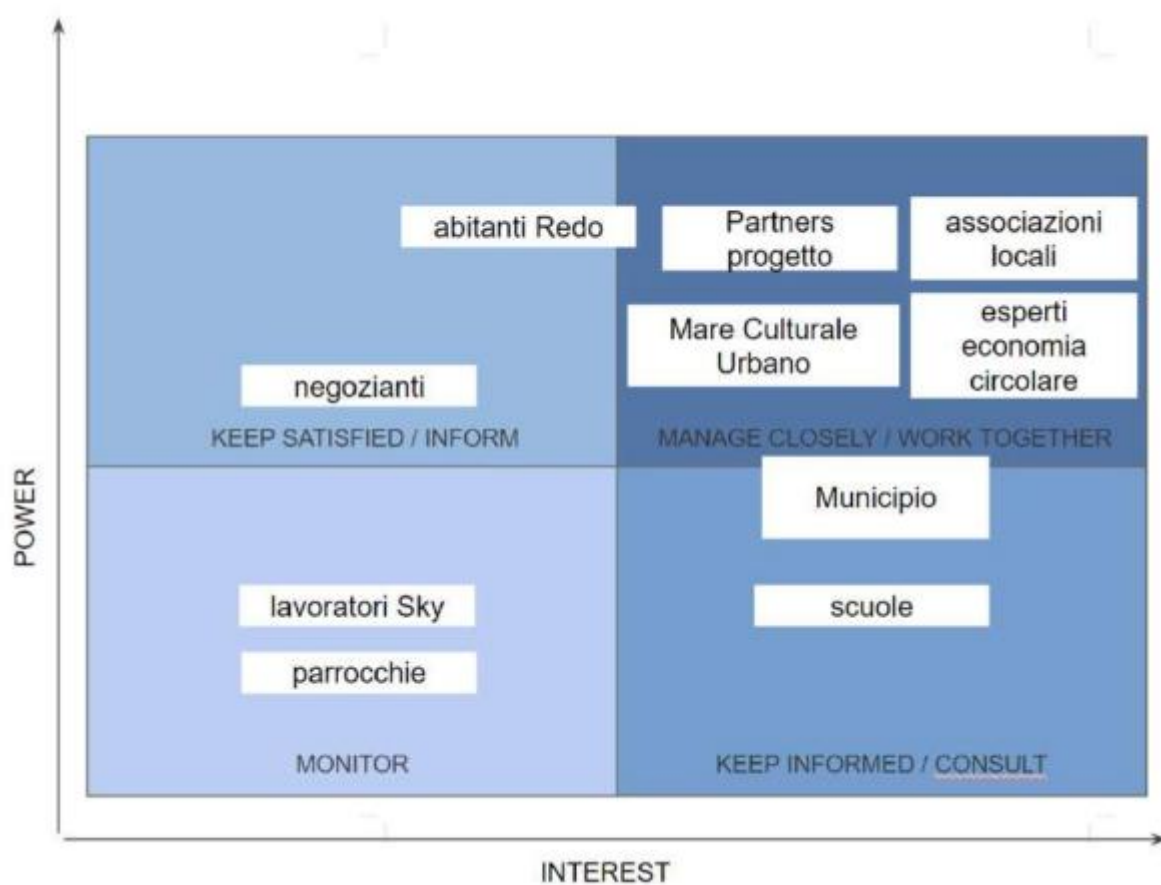
Stakeholders' map:

The identified realities were then entered into a matrix that was useful to determine the level of collaboration and involvement, in view of the project objectives and timeframe.

In addition, as can be seen from the matrix and given the objective of disseminating the concept of the circular economy, we involved partners and experts in the process.

All key partners and stakeholders are described hereafter.

**Please note that we also worked to include Sky workers in the process (with different ways of involvement, even testing directly at the headquarters) but it turned out to be a difficulty: probably the summer months and the short timeframes were not enough to involve a company that has different times of action given its large caliber.*



Who participated and how they collaborated:

The RAIL4CITIES project partners acted as the glue with the entire Rail4Cities journey so far, recounting the background, the interviews that had already taken place and preparing the general aims of the placemaking activity.

Type of involvement: technical and decision-making support.

Continuous activities: workshop and coordination meetings, on-site visit to Rogoredo station and ad hoc discussion of the issues and needs of the area.

VIVI ROGOREDO ASSOCIATION

A non-profit association in the neighbourhood whose main aim is to enhance the environmental, artistic and cultural heritage by living it.

Type of involvement: active presence in all stages, from organisation to implementation.

Continuous activities: support in discovering the neighbourhood and its relations, even with an exploratory walk; dissemination of organised initiatives and involvement of schools; meetings and preparatory workshops for the event.

Role in the event day: collaboration during the interactive stand throughout the day, for the self-construction of the seats and organisation of the circular economy themed walk in the Rogoredo district.

**MARE
SCIROCCO**

CULTURALE

URBANO

Scirocco is the new hybrid socio-cultural urban regeneration space located at Piazza Tina Modotti 7, which aims to be a new neighbourhood stronghold.

Type of involvement: logistical and strategic support, both in the preparation phases and during the actual activities.

Continuous activities: coordination with the Scirocco inauguration activities, which also took place on 21st September, and shared dissemination; support point for the storage of useful materials.

Role in the event day: place for lunch and logistical support for self-building activities.





REDO MEREZZATE DISTRICT AND LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Merezzate is a newly built neighborhood near the station that represents new form of sustainable living that focuses on people, the environment and sociality. Recently, a residents' association, Hubita, was formed and organized several initiatives that were opportunities for synergy with the placemaking activities.

Type of involvement: dissemination partners, especially during the neighborhood festival on Sept. 14th.

Role in the event day: active participation and collaborators in the future management of the self-made seating.

GIACIMENTI URBANI ASSOCIATION

Founded on the principles of cooperation, respect for the environment, the territory and people, aims to develop the Circuit of virtuous activities aimed at facilitating and linking those who play an active role in promoting sustainable living, through the proper use of energy, waste reduction, soft mobility and all lifestyles consistent with this goal.

Type of involvement: strategic support and expertise.

Continuous activities: dissemination of organised initiatives; meetings and preparatory workshops for the event.

Role in the event day: sharing specific expertise on the circular economy, especially during the “quiz to the expert.”



GABBIANI
CULTURAL ACTIVITY

FATTI

Gabbiani Fatti is a musical duo composed of young people who expound their views on the world, today's society and even Milan, with tongue-in-cheek humor. Each song is described in its philosophy and comes straight with its message. In the case of the event, Gabbiani Fatti repurposed the repertoire to answer questions about the circular economy quizzed to the expert.

Type of involvement: logistic support and entertainment.

Continuous activities: meetings and preparatory workshops for the event.

Role in the event day: afternoon performance along with the quiz to the expert, in a hit-and-run mode.



SUPPORT & EXPERTS

Yourban association (administration), Design to Connect (storytelling), Siyamak Arabkasmaei (video and photos), Martina Mion (organisation).

The success of an event and activities that include several actions at the same time is based on the collaboration and help of different people and various skills.

Administrative support, work on documentation, support on strategy definition and storytelling and organizational help are necessary.



Materials used:

NATURDESIGN “MOBILI IN CARTONE”

The goal of “making disclosure and raising awareness with respect to the circular economy” was also incorporated into the very definition of the materials used. Natur Design provided us with furniture that was easily assembled, moveable and above all recyclable, being made entirely of cardboard. This allowed us to be sustainable and also to ensure easy future use of the same furniture by associations and entities in the area.



Activities performed:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE FINAL EVENT

The whole process, the involvement of the actors and the systematization of the objectives with respect to the station led to the creation of a dense schedule for an event that would include all these aspects.

The day, organized in synergy with the inauguration of the Scirocco hub, had a differentiated participation with respect to age (young people, children, elderly), type of involvement (people active in the neighbourhood and passers-by at the station), time spent (some only a few minutes, others spent the day with us, other came back twice during the same day). This was due to the process of defining the event, the support network, the different ways of dissemination and the variety of activities organized.

In the next pages we will see in detail each action and its purposes.



PROGRAMMA DELLE ATTIVITA'

Partecipa al Progetto Rail4Cities e aiutaci a immaginare nuovi modi di vivere la stazione!
L'obiettivo di Rail4Cities è sperimentare modi per rendere le stazioni ferroviarie luoghi accoglienti e vivaci, non solo di passaggio.

A Rogoredo, l'iniziativa è promossa da BABLE - Smart City Innovation Platform, Rfi e FsPark, e la giornata è coordinata da STIPO.

@Largo Redaelli // 10-13:00 & 14:30-18
Stand interattivo e punto bookcrossing/scambio allestito in collaborazione con Design to Connect e Vivi Rogoredo

@Quartiere Rogoredo // 10:30-11:30
Passeggiata nel quartiere "Verde in città, economia circolare e benefici ecosistemici" (in collaborazione con l'associazione Vivi Rogoredo)
**partenza in Largo Redaelli*

@Scirocco // 11:30-12:30
Laboratorio di autocostruzione collettivo con le associazioni del quartiere (in collaborazione con Mare Culturale Urbano)
**possibilità di pranzo*

@Largo Redaelli // 16:00 - 17:00
Intervista sull'economia circolare all'esperto con accompagnamento musicale (in collaborazione con Giacimenti Urbani e Gabbiani Fatti)



INTERACTIVE STAND

Collecting opinions and interactions with passers-by

The common thread throughout the day was the presence of an interactive and engaging stand on the station forecourt, strategically located for both those leaving the station itself and those living in the neighbourhood instead.

Through totems, post it notes, and games about recycling, we interviewed and talked to a great many passersby and asked them: "Imagine Rogoredo station transforming into a place

where you can feel at home, a space that inspires tranquillity and well-being. What activities, events or services do you dream of finding to make it a welcoming and living environment?"



INTERACTIVE STAND

Bookcrossing

Our stand has become a bookcrossing point. Literally it means “crossing a book”. A way to exchange and distribute them for free that promotes reading and creates community. By definition it is also a circular practice because it does not fuel consumerism and allows the reuse of the same good. All this while spreading culture.

INTERACTIVE STAND

Activities for children

Cross-over proposal, throughout the day, of simple but easily engaging games for children such as: coloring cardboard butterflies, writing key words on post-it notes, using stickers. These are small gimmicks that make a difference in engaging young&children and thus hearing from them and their accompanying parents.

These activities were also popular for some adults taking a break from their walk and doing a creative activity (as you can see from the picture).



INTERACTIVE STAND

Dissemination of project topics

Creation of communicative and engaging materials - such as postcards with seeds inserted that can be planted and interactive test about recycling - for disseminating project themes and grafting discussions with passersby. Circular economy, placemaking, new possible futures were discussed.



WALK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD 'Green in the city, circular economy and ecosystem benefits' in collaboration with Vivi Rogoredo

Loop route that touched some symbolic places in the neighbourhood, from the historic Rogoredo small gardens to the sports field. Some curiosities came to light as well as the importance of trees and their many functions, a perfect example of circularity!



COLLECTIVE SELF-CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND PASSERS-BY

Making use of the cardboard seats, we conducted a DIY workshop with interested local associations, entities and passers-by. The goal was to create together new tools useful for activating the local area: in fact, the chairs we built have remained a legacy and will be used collaboratively by those who need them to activate the neighborhood and the station!

We received numerous inquiries from passers-by, with some seats being taken by individuals who were curious and drawn to the activities. This provided us with an additional opportunity to raise awareness about the project and highlight the importance of the circular economy.



SHARED LUNCH

Placemaking is also - and especially we can say - based on the sharing of daily actions, where you can exchange and get to know other people. That is why moments of leisure, as a shared lunch as in this case, are actually among the most useful activities for creating connection.



CIRCULAR ECONOMY EXPERT INTERVIEW WITH MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT *in collaboration with Giacimenti Urbani and Gabbiani Fatti*

The goal was to engage passersby and station users, entice them to stop and talk about circular economy. We hosted a special quiz in our “Rail4cities lounge” with Gianluca Bertazzoli of Giacimenti Urbani. Gianluca could answer questions and curiosities from the audience. This was alternated with the songs of the Gabbiani Fatti, a back-and-forth educational entertainment.



Feedback from participants:

The feedback covered several topics, but we could generally divide the suggestions into macro-themes:

- Culture;
- Sociality;
- Commercial Attractiveness;
- Attention To Children;
- Bike Culture;
- Comfort;
- Sport
- Safety.

We also point out that during the activation day, the president of City Hall 4 (the district in charge of neighbourhood government for Rogoredo area) also came and shared his enthusiasm for the initiative.

Furthermore, including the opinions of the previously described stakeholders who collaborated throughout the process, it appears that there was a general good inclination of people to participate in the activities and share their ideas.

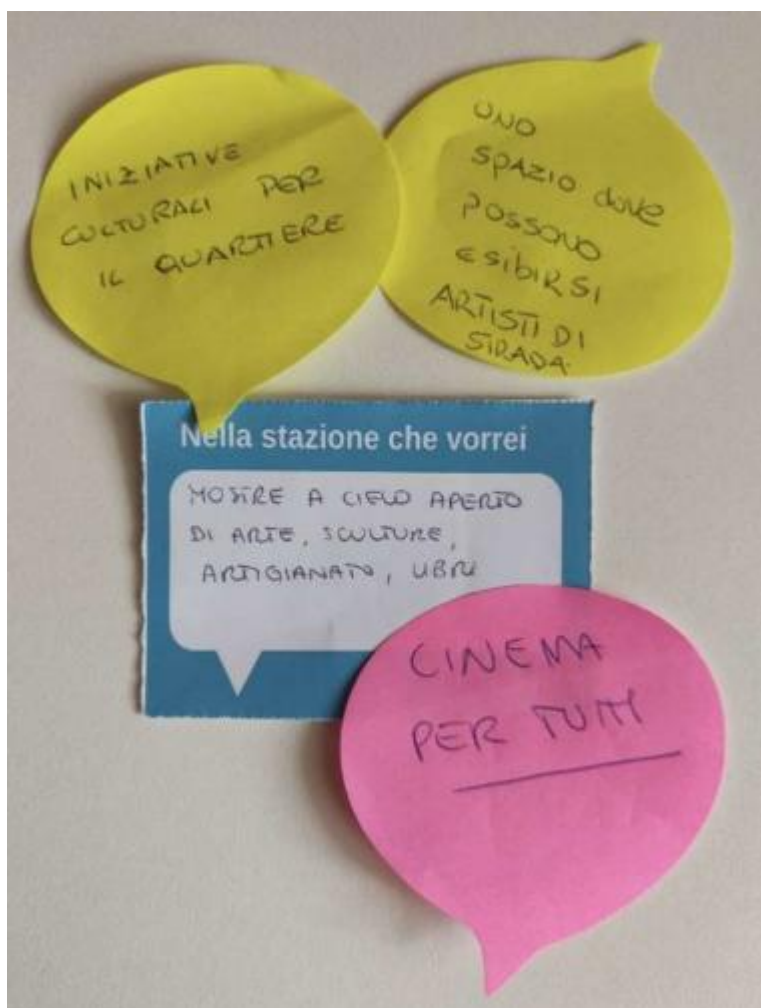
In the beginning, there was some mistrust in some cases, but the format made it possible to reduce barriers. The event, in its most informal manner, and the questions asked focused attention on their opinion, and they felt 'seen and considered'.

CULTURE

The highest percentage of post its and conversations related to the topic of culture, with many suggestions in this regard (perhaps also prompted by the musical activities present).

The creation of a free space where street artists (or even ordinary passers-by) can perform, both while waiting for the train and in general to experience the station, has been mentioned several times. In this case, the suggestion to also involve the Bosco della Musica (the new headquarters of the Milan Conservatory that will open near the station) is very fitting.

Many cultural activities are also mentioned, such as the creation of art galleries in the subway, cinema/theatre rooms (also in existing and unused station spaces) and areas for bookshops/libraries and bookcrossing.



SOCIALITY

The second predominant theme was definitely about all initiatives to increase social cohesion and neighbourhood activities.

In fact, there are some very good suggestions for specific activities to be organised, such as:

- open and shared kitchens to organise neighbourhood evenings;
- setting up a collection centre for throw-away materials and organising every two weeks, for example, workshops with people from the neighbourhood to reuse them;
- having or activating multifunctional neighbourhood spaces in the station, with shared use management;
- have a community green space;
- place public tables for studying, working, eating, etc.



COMMERCIAL ATTRACTIVENESS

Several suggestions are based on the connection of local resources with the need to purchase goods. For example, there are calls to bring the Saturday market closer to the station area, or to organise farmers' markets with local products, as well as to have shops for basic necessities and handicrafts.

ATTENTION TO CHILDREN

In many cases, the issue of children and the services/activities that could be useful for them was brought to attention. First and foremost, the need for play areas, but also educational activities (such as discovering tree and animal species in the neighbourhood) or workshops with families. And no less important, more colour!

BIKE CULTURE

There was also no shortage of cyclists and bike enthusiasts. They expressed the need for bike station (larger and more visible), better ease of moving bikes around the station, and also the need to be able to organize bike clubs to grow the culture of cycling.

COMFORT

The station and yards are very grey and hot, especially in the summer months. People are clamouring for more greenery (also as a noise barrier), shade systems, and more care in cleaning, including shared cleaning. They also point out a difficulty for people with disabilities to get around the spaces and the lack of toilet facilities.

SPORT

Spaces where people can exercise outdoors or otherwise play sports are in high demand. Also related to this is a great demand for pool spaces that should be placed instead in the neighbourhood itself.

SAFETY

Several people point out that they feel unsafe when crossing the station, especially due to lack of control and people. Increased activity inside and better management of lighting could lead to improvements.

Key success factors:

Collaboration with a strong territorial network > the realities already present are those that allow for the continuation and future impact of the project, in addition to having an in-depth knowledge of the territory and its relations.

Exploitation and amplification of existing opportunities > the presence of the Scirocco neighbourhood centre and its establishment during the project period contributed to a practical synergy.

Already existing associations network > Leveraging the pre-existing network and enthusiasm of associations further enriched the project, enabling it to build on strong local foundations

Challenges and obstacles:

Overall duration of activities > building an ongoing relationship with the neighbourhood, with those who live in the station and in general with all stakeholders requires time and resources.

Period of activity > the month of August for the city of Milan is one of the most difficult for socialising activities as the fabric of residents and regular users of the station are mostly located outside the city for vacation.

Bureaucracy times > Italian legislation is very often complex, even in the case of activation interventions, and requires a lot of processing time that must be taken into account in the total project timeline.

5. Expected impact after the placemaking

The great legacy of the process, although with a very limited time period, is to have created new connections within the neighbourhood network between realities that already existed and realities that are being consolidated now, such as Scirocco.

The legacy (symbolic but also practical) of the cardboard seats that were built together and that have remained with the associations and people in the neighbourhood represent the ultimate goal: to make this conversation about the circular economy and togetherness become an ongoing process, for real future impact on the station and the neighbourhood.

The associations involved in the process are excited about the momentum generated and are eager to welcome future initiatives centred around the improvement of the train station.

Moreover, the management approach employed throughout this process is highly adaptable and can be easily replicated in other neighbourhoods and cities.

Among all the ideas collected, we list here a number of activities and actions that could also start tomorrow, in view of the continuity of the Rail4cities approach:

- Create a materials collection centre and every two weeks recycle everything by doing crafts with children and adults;
- Organize citizen groups for collective cleaning;
- Create art gallery in the underpass and spaces for street artists to perform;
- Creation of bookcrossing point or bookstore;

- More block parties in the spaces in front of the station;
- Larger bike station and small tools to help transport bikes between levels;
- Implementation of public tables and, in general, spaces for working;
- Installation of public restrooms;
- Using existing unused spaces as multifunctional places where station users and citizens are facilitated to organize initiatives;
- Organize market for crafts or agricultural products from the neighbourhood;
- Give more space to colour, including temporary paintings that make the space attractive and playful.

5 Conclusions

The placemaking activities carried out in the RAIL4CITIES project demonstrate the power of community-driven urban transformation. Despite the relatively short time frame of the interventions, each Living Lab has shown that public spaces near railway stations can be reimagined as vibrant, multifunctional hubs that meet the social, cultural, and infrastructural needs of their respective communities. These activities have not only improved the physical environment but have also fostered stronger social ties and created platforms for future initiatives.

In Milan, the circular economy theme has proven to be a unifying factor, bringing together diverse community groups around shared sustainability goals. The legacy of the project is likely to extend beyond the immediate outcomes, as local associations remain committed to further improving the station area. Tomaszów Mazowiecki's placemaking activities have succeeded in reshaping public perception of railway stations, opening up new possibilities for social use and cultural programming. The involvement of local NGOs in particular points to a strong potential for the station to become a key player in the city's cultural life. In Toulouse, the emphasis on cycling infrastructure has highlighted the growing demand for multi-modal transport options and the need for better integration of cycling services with train travel.

Across all three Living Labs, the participatory nature of the placemaking activities has been crucial to their success. By involving local citizens, associations, and station users in the co-creation process, the projects have not only generated immediate results but also laid the groundwork for sustainable, long-term improvements. The methodology used in these activities is highly adaptable and can serve as a model for other cities looking to revitalize underutilized spaces near transportation hubs.

The key lesson from the RAIL4CITIES project is that successful urban revitalization requires more than just physical improvements—it also depends on fostering a sense of community ownership and engagement. By empowering local stakeholders to take an active role in shaping their public spaces, these placemaking activities have set the stage for ongoing collaboration, ensuring that railway stations continue to evolve in ways that meet the needs of the people who use them.