

# .PLACEMAKING

Course | Pro-module Academic Literacy and Research  
Breda University of Applied Sciences | BUas Urban Living Lab

Students | Arina NFrancisco Adriane | Marek Heijne

## How can Breda residents be more involved in planning t'Zoet while keeping the identity and heritage of the site?

+ It has been around three years since the municipality of Breda bought the CSM terrain. The area is envisioned to be transformed into a built area with housing, offices, parks, and leisure. It is a long-term project that will take time for the area to be fully developed. Residents of Breda and its surrounds are already engaged in the placemaking process making plans more concrete. Several activities take place especially during the summer, including the **open-air cinema, with some leisure and events.**

+ Long-term Breda residents know this place well, especially the sweet smell of sugar being processed in the former Sugar Factory. Since the factory was demolished in 2009, the site has been mostly closed off to the public due to hazardous elements. Reopening the area with activities will offer new and unique opportunities for residents in the upcoming years.

+ As the area development progresses, the Municipality is actively seeking the residents' participation in the planning process. Their ideas and insights are invaluable in shaping the future of this area. Their input will help the professionals create the **frameworks and guidelines** for this future development. However, a detailed action plan has not yet been implemented. The Municipality and the Province planned to collaborate and co-create with the people since the beginning of 2023, however, current projects remain small in scale, under-funded, and volunteer-driven.

## Is the industrial heritage essential for building communities on the site?

## Why is resident participation (creative placemaking) crucial for this project?

+ The Municipality and the Province planned to **collaborate and co-create** with the people since the beginning of 2023, however, current projects remain small in scale, under-funded, and volunteer-driven.

+ The t'Zoet site development process offers a **unique opportunity for various stakeholders**, and especially the Municipality and residents to work together in transforming the former CSM site into a vibrant, mixed-use area featuring housing, offices, parks, and recreational spaces. The current short-term and small-scale initiatives pave the way forward for more medium- and longer-term projects. Only through a slow built-up of involvement, investment and participation can communities actively remain part of the placemaking process in shaping the future of the site.

+ Events like open-air cinemas during the summer engage locals and foster a sense of belonging. With its historical significance tied to the sugar factory, the area holds sentimental value for Breda residents that should not be lost in the process. The municipality values residents' input, recognizing their role in creating new communities through their active involvement in public placemaking. The strategic documents from the Municipality clearly underscore this.

## Why is it important for the municipality to employ placemaking and participation strategies at t'Zoet?



+ The goal of the t'Zoet development is to strengthen the **resilience and sustainability** of the city of Breda, environmentally and socially. Bringing people together in an inclusive manner is at the core of citizen participation for the City, "whether you are rich or poor, young or old," (from a "village or city" - Gemeente Breda (author's emphasis).

+ Currently, the municipality is **not focused on permanent creative placemaking projects**. All of the examples are based on temporary festivals that can take place only in summer and cannot work as permanent public spaces. How can creative placemaking be expanded upon to include short and medium-term interventions?

+ Reflecting on the city documents and current park initiatives, we need to highlight that the **goals of the municipality and the on-the-ground reality** pose some contradictions without a clear action plan. There are some issues to be resolved, such as the former concrete basements, but already plenty of opportunities eg. the informal DIY skateparks, seasonal events, and an inner-city wildlife sanctuary.

+ The leap from small-scale interventions to the proposed full-scale development requires careful **coordination of placemaking steps**. These 'slow' and 'soft' aspects of the site are memories of its social and ecological past, but also the way placemaking initiatives find a way to engage with the residents through various creative initiatives (Breda Trees, park walks, etc). More of this is needed, and the intensity and frequency of these events should increase to avoid that the process run away from us into just another big-scale, top-down initiative.

