

SEEING TOMORROW'S TAMPERE THROUGH EVERYDAY EYES

Where would I sit? Could I manage those stairs? How far would I have to walk to a taxi? In Tampere's WeGenerate workshops, residents brought the future city into focus through the practical questions that shape their daily lives.

A digital model can show new buildings, green spaces and pedestrian routes. Residents bring something equally important: an understanding of what it would actually feel like to use them. Through digital twin workshops, creative activities and collaboration with local cultural actors, Tampere is exploring how people with different interests, abilities and experiences can help shape their city's future.

A BENCH IS MORE THAN A DESIGN DETAIL

Workshops in 2024 and 2025 invited participants to explore a digital twin of Tampere's developing railway station area. Among the senior participants, many had little previous experience of digital twins, but considerable experience of the city itself.



Their observations were specific. Would benches be high enough to make standing up easier? Would they have armrests? Were there handrails on both sides of the stairs, and were accessible alternatives available for people using walking aids?

"Benches should have armrests at the ends," one participant said.

Questions about winter made accessibility even more concrete: how would snow be cleared, would surfaces become slippery, and could passengers reach taxis without a long walk? These comments showed how much the attractiveness of a public space depends on **whether people can use it comfortably**.

DIFFERENT PEOPLE, DIFFERENT PURPOSES

The discussions challenged the idea that everyone wants the same thing from a station square. Some participants imagined cafés, art, greenery and places to meet. Others prioritised straightforward movement through a busy transport hub.

Nevertheless, they shared a desire for **somewhere to sit, talk or wait without having to enter a café**.

An earlier participant offered another perspective: "Not just kids, adults need to have fun too."



Together, these views raise a practical question: how can the area accommodate both people passing through and those wishing to stay?

The workshops also exposed challenges in the digital model. Participants sometimes struggled to identify their location or understand where a route led. Figures wearing summer clothes disrupted the winter view. Meaningful participation requires understandable visualisations, time to explore and opportunities for participants to explain their views in their own words.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS THROUGH THE CULTURE DISTRICT

In Tampere's Culture District, participation also means **connecting the people and organisations that give an area its character**. The Culture District digital map, developed with ZoneAtlas, brings local cultural destinations into view and helps people discover them.

For Miiro Seppänen, whose work involves H23 Agency and ZoneAtlas, this connection between local culture and urban development is essential:

"I believe projects that support local culture and bring together small and large local actors are an important part of vibrant, sustainable and community-oriented urban development. They strengthen people's connection to the area where they live or work and create opportunities for new forms of collaboration."

Having returned to Tampere, Miiro values the opportunity to help build the area's identity and appeal alongside local designers and other actors. His perspective highlights how discovering, showcasing and connecting local places can strengthen a shared sense of pride.

PARTICIPATION BEYOND THE WORKSHOP

At Hakametsä Ice Hall, indoor walking events brought senior citizens together with Tampere University students participating in the Health Innovation Challenge. Alongside gentle exercise, students interviewed attendees to understand what supports and motivates independent movement. This connected innovation work with the experiences of its intended users.

For children, the Night Bugs drawing competition offered a creative way to contribute. Organised with Children's Cultural Centre Rulla, the Night Bugs drawing competition invited children to imagine their own night-time creatures. Selected drawings were **illuminated and displayed** in Kirjastonpuisto Park and the Laikunlava area as part of the 2025 Festival of Light, bringing children's creativity into Tampere's public spaces.





Across these activities, participation needs a clear purpose and a connection to what happens next. **Sharing results with participants helps sustain that relationship**. For WeGenerate, **everyday perspectives provide concrete priorities:** a suitable bench, a manageable transfer, a cultural destination to discover or an opportunity to create something together. Each offers a starting point for shaping a city that people can use, contribute to and feel part of.

City of Tampere WeGenerate

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