

## *South Harbor* *-Visions for Helsinki*

### **/Generating change through social validation**

- background for the proposal

### **/Visions for Helsinki**

- the proposal

The proposal *South Harbor - Visions for Helsinki* seeks to take advantage of the site's potential for collective urban development and introduces a strategy to produce operational structures generating the local scene of urban culture, arts and activists, responsible and aware citizenship and spaces that generate social change, resilience through continuous of citizen engagement.

## Generating change through social validation

South Harbour is a deserted site with a sigh of memory, in its vastness time stands still. All the consistency of movement and determined directions of the systematic city dissolve in the place. The site can be conceived as a “left-behind” space but not to be considered leftover or waste, while its current qualities are called for to serve a purpose in the city that seeks to constantly harness its voids for immediate productivity. The currently predominant scenario of applying a copy-pasted success model on the site in predetermined form, while ignoring some specific potential values of the existing qualities of this place.

That value of the place is in its the breath of purposelessness making the site a neutral non-place, that lets the one who experiences it to tune oneself into another frequency to note the self-evidence of existing conditions of the city. When one is experiencing the city in within its extents but outside of its productive predominant order, one can break free from the numbing restrictions of the surroundings and by gaining a distance to the prevailing conditions be able to envision unforeseen possible futures.<sup>1</sup> The value is also in its emptiness and otherness that evokes the emotions and criticality resulting in a personal, subjective experience, marking the place conciever’s own, yet no-one’s property. Through the personal experience one starts to position themselves in the city and acknowledging their role to commit and to contribute to the places development.<sup>2</sup>

The potential provided by the absence of the predominant rules of order and ownership, is a social and political one that can, when preserved and utilized rightfully for common interests have far-reaching impacts on the development of the city.<sup>3</sup> The

value of the places potential to fulfill citizens’ collective desires is immeasurable in the currency of the profit that would be made by applying the suggested success model. When there is no agreement of economic issues, the city could seize the opportunity to think beyond its conventional business model of simply selling the public property. The value of the South Harbor’s potential is priceless because places like this are under a threat of being forced under the order of productivity.<sup>4</sup>

Once South Harbour is “sold out” to a brand that represents neither the city nor the people it is hosted by, there is a danger that citizens will no-longer truly relate or identifying to the place. When the city that gives out the public space, for attractions serving international investors or tourists, rather than to its inhabitants, it might suffer an inflation of credibility in the eyes of its own citizens, alienating the them from the predominant authorities of the city. Strong contradictions between the makers and the users of the urban spaces will not help in supporting sustained civic practices that breathe the life into the urban spaces and promote the local identity.

The future focus of development and what values it is regarding considering the few remaining places like this might be determined by the fate of the South Harbor site. To restore the valuable qualities of this place does not deny any attempt to use the vacant space. Unarguably the redevelopment of such valuable land should also aim at the main development goals of the city. But it is arguable if the goals like growing global competitiveness, vibrant urban culture and smarter city can best be achieved by applying a model with no sensitivity for local potential, or a proposal that is aiming at serving the common interests and empowering the citizens, who are already devotedly working towards the mutual goals.

Helsinki already has a bunch of active citizen and creative groups that are self-motivated and -organized and relentlessly and unconditionally create activities that generate responsible and aware citizenship and attractive urban life by rapidly es-

Lefebvre, henri, 1974, *The Production of Space*, Translated to English by Nicholson-Smith, Donald, 1991, Blackwell Publishing

<sup>4</sup> “There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served.”

Jacobs, Jane, 1961, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Random House, New York

ablishing urban practices that reach their target group. These activities seek to open up urban possibilities by bending the boundaries and restrictions over the use of the city space.

Sometimes while seeking to occupy the space that is rightfully theirs the citizens cross a line, break a rule and misuse the urban space causing unnecessary confrontations with the authorities. The innocent violations of the city order could be prevented by offering the citizens an opportunity of true participation, not only in form of preventive referendums, but in every step of the urban development from concept to execution. In return for the experienced ownership the citizens are more willing to invest in long term developments.<sup>5</sup> This approach of social validation of a urban developmetn project should be considered in the qualities of the proposal for the South Harbor site to consider the design activities merely as guiding the public in reclaiming their right of producing the production of urban commons.<sup>6</sup>

To take advantage of the potential of the city’s existing activities calls for creating forums and platforms for open discussion and exchanging thriving inspiration as well as new structures allowing easier participation and immediate action. In the following proposal South Harbor is a strategy to transform the site into a mediating space between the authorities, the active organisations and the hiding potentials of the city by collective forces through a democratic development process. This proposal strategy seeks to take advantage of the site’s potential for collective urban development and suggests that the spatial outcome should result from the suggested operational structures. The strategy seeks to generate a change in the whole city through this project supporting the local scene of urban culture, arts and activists, generating responsible and aware citizenship and activating spaces that will generate social change and resilience through continuity of positive engagement.

<sup>5</sup> The acknowledgement of “place identity” is a dynamic phenomenon that develops from oneself’s relation to physical space through lived experience of beliefs, preferences, feelings, following a bond with the place that will impact their engagement in maintaining, improving and responding to changes within those spaces.

Lynne C. Manzo1, Lynne C., Perkins, Douglas D., *Finding Common Ground: The Importance of Place Attachment to Community Participation and Planning*, Journal of Planning Literature, May 2006 vol. 20 no. 4 335-350

<sup>6</sup> Swyngedouw, Erik, *Designing the Post-Political City and the Insurgent Polis*. Civic City Cahier 5, 2011, Bedford Press, London

1 According to Simone Pizzagalli “Void[...].also the only place where the recollection of reality, the composition of the parts, fragments, of life can happen.” Pizzagalli, Simone, 2013, Schoonderbeek, Marc Ed., *Space, Poetics and Voids*, Architectura & Natura Press, Amsterdam

2 The acknowledgement of “place identity” is a dynamic phenomenon that develops from oneself’s relation to physical space through lived experience of beliefs, preferences, feelings, following a bond with the place that will impact their engagement in maintaining, improving and responding to changes within those spaces.

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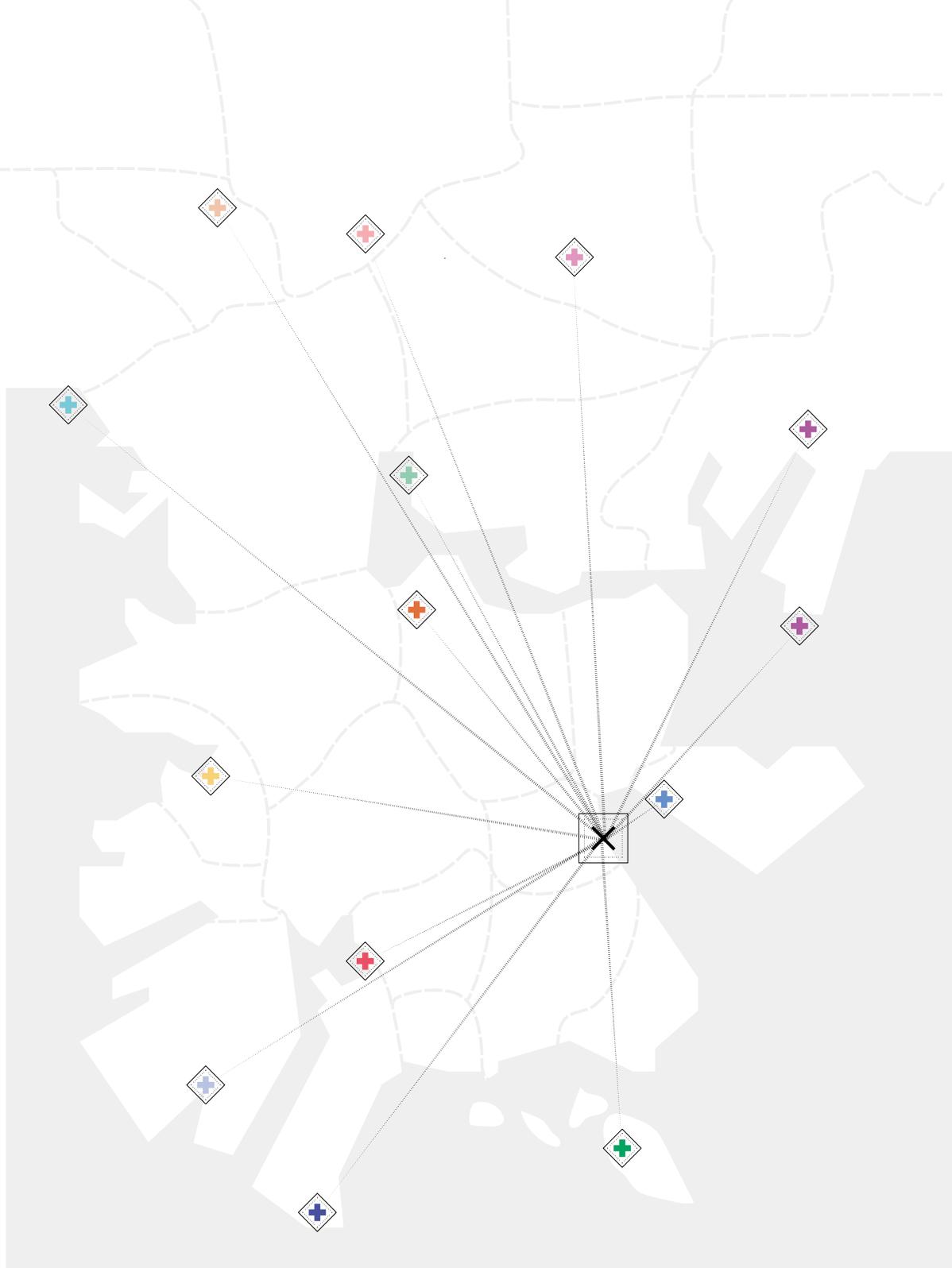
3 According to Lefebvre Social space is a social product but also prior to social changes.



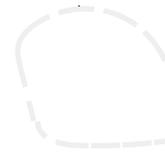
# Visions for Helsinki



- 1. Mapping Potential Places**  
Project starts by mapping out in each district of Helsinki the **Potential Places** with qualities like those of South Harbor, not yet taken full advantage of.
2. Setting the Vision Forum
3. Applying the District Strategy
5. Building the Beta Spaces
6. Displaying, Revise and Funding Execution Ideas
7. Executing Execution Ideas



*South Harbor*



*Helsinki District*

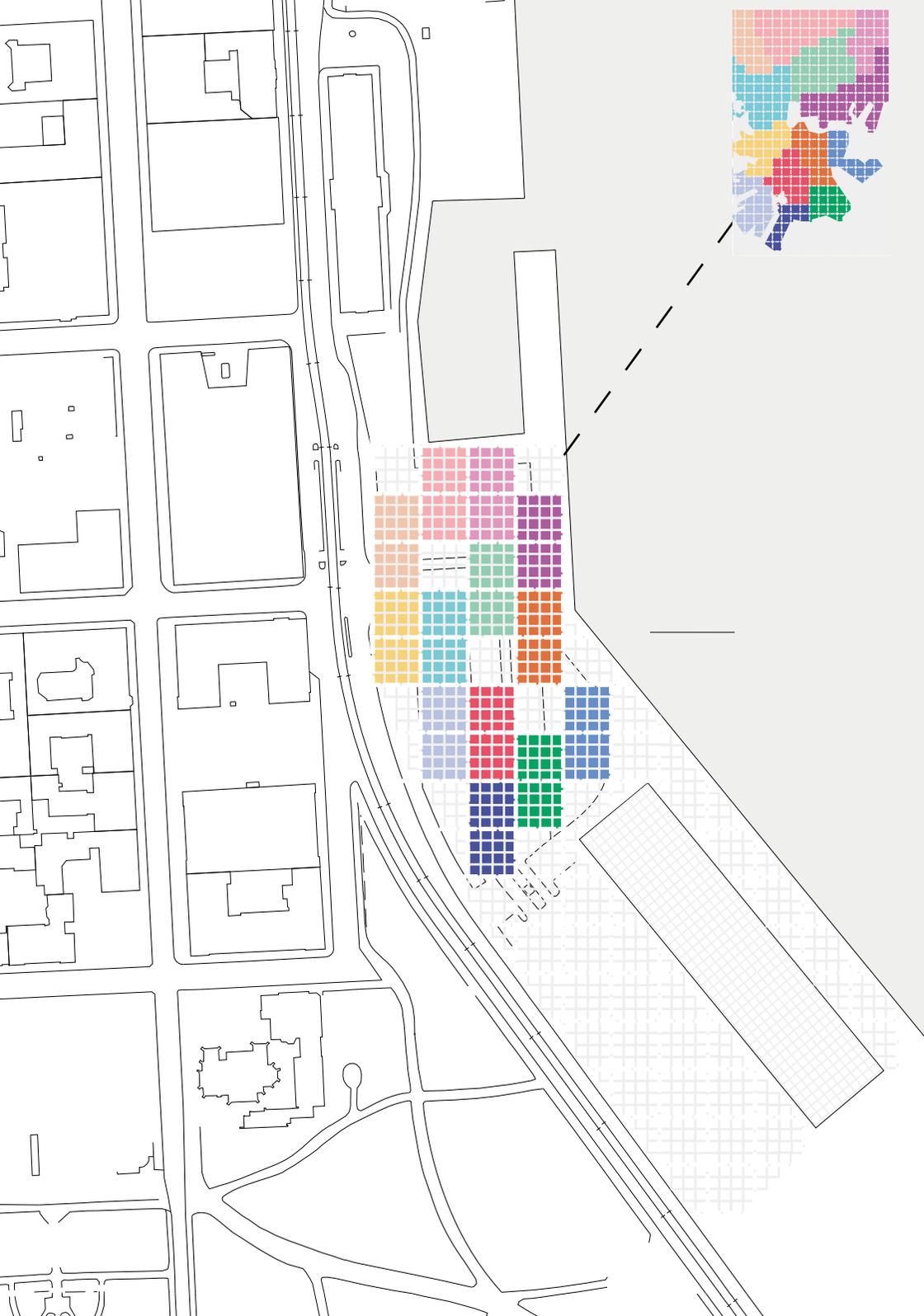


**Intervention Space**

### **1. Mapping Intervention Spaces**

The possibilities of the Potential Places will be examined in South Harbor and turned into **Intervention Spaces** by giving them the purpose of realizing the urban dreams of the district they represent.

2. Setting the Vision Forum
3. Applying the District Strategy
5. Building the Beta Spaces
6. Displaying, Revise and Funding Intervention Ideas
7. Executing Execution Ideas



## South Harbor

	<b>common ground</b>		<i>Etu-Töölö Lapinlahti</i>
	<i>Ruskeasuo Laakso</i>		<i>Kluuvi Kaartinkaupunki</i>
	<i>Pasila Kumpula</i>		<i>Kamppi Punavuori</i>
	<i>Hermannin Arabia</i>		<i>Ruoholahti Jätkäsaari</i>
	<i>Sörnäinen Kallio</i>		<i>Hermesaari Eira</i>
	<i>Alppila Vallila</i>		<i>Ullanlinna Kaivopuisto</i>
	<i>Meilahti Taka-Töölö</i>		<i>Kruununhaka Katajanokka</i>

1. Mapping potential Intervention Spaces

### 2. Setting the Vision Forum

South Harbor will facilitate a common interaction platform to display and discuss the ideas for Intervention Spaces by providing equal infrastructure and spatial possibilities for each of the Helsinki districts.

3. Applying the District Strategy

4. Building the Beta Spaces

5. Displaying, Revise and Funding Intervention Ideas

6. Executing Execution Ideas



**Beta Space**

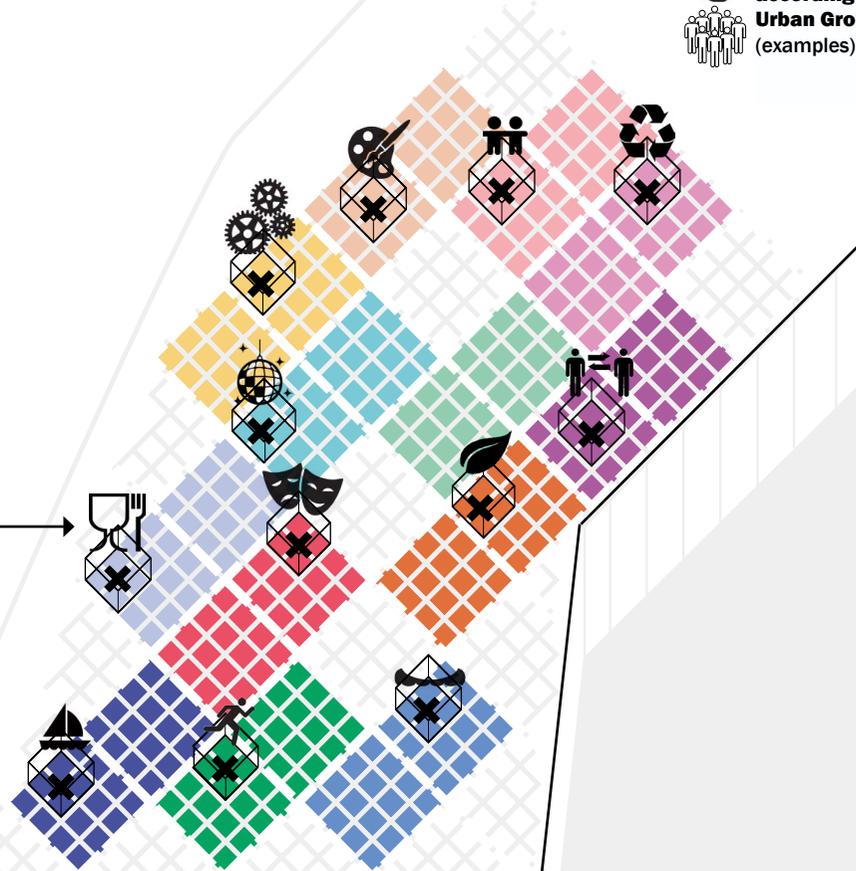


**District Strategy**

**according to**

**Urban Group**

(examples)



## South Harbor

*example district themes*



*common facilities and programme*



*technology*



*fine art & public art*



*urban cultivation*



*children and youth*



*performing arts*



*recycling*



*urban food culture*



*peer education*



*archipelago*



*well/being*



*active life sports*



*festivals & nightlife*



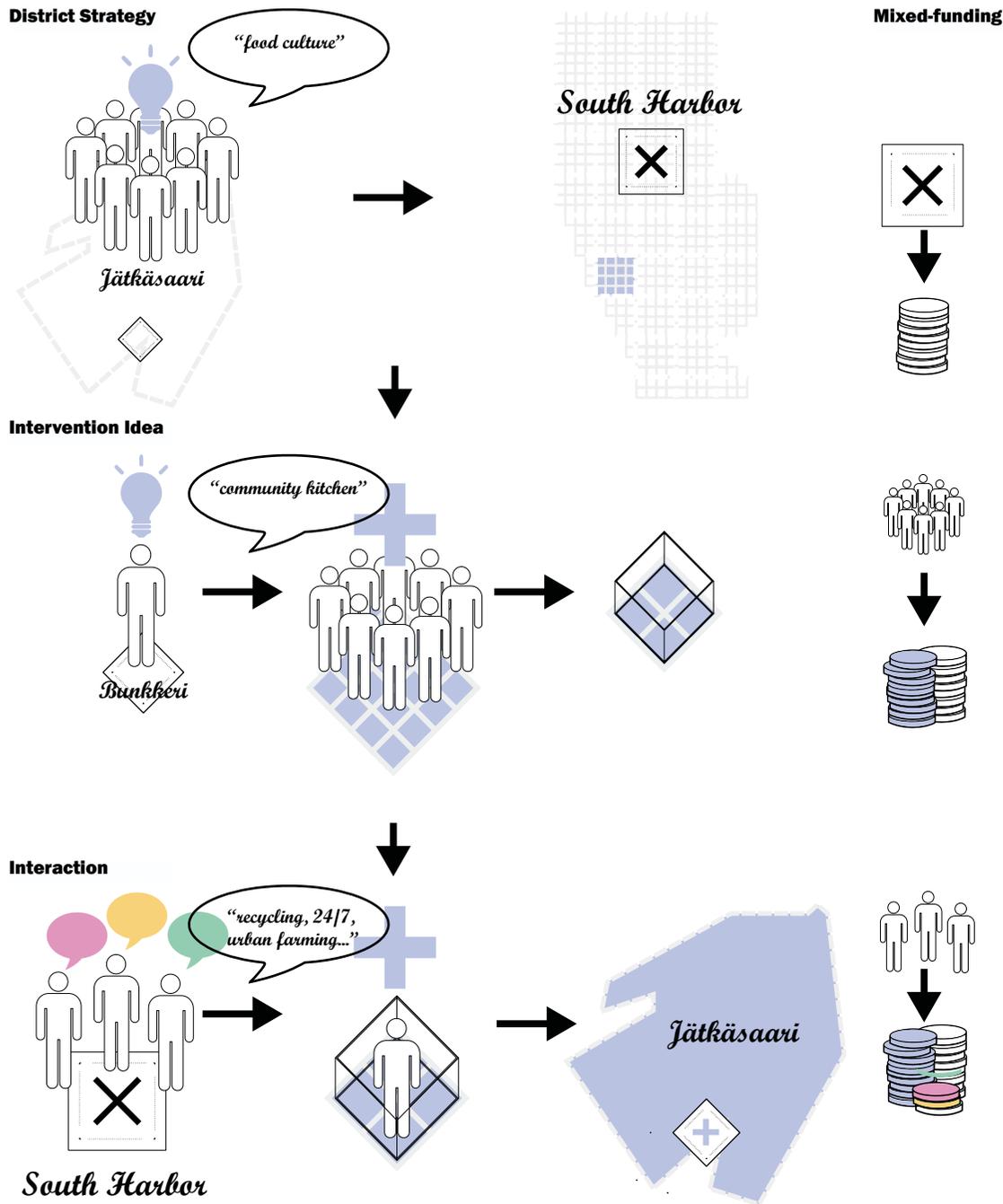
*marine activity*

1. Mapping potential Intervention Spaces
2. Setting the Vision Forum

### **3. Applying the District Strategy**

The space provided for each district can be acquired by any groups Urban Groups that hold interest establishing a strategy specially targeted to meet the districts needs for the desand committing to their development. After presenting district strategy with special locally targeted focus the Urban Group become responsible of managing the building and running of the Beta Space that will serve as a interacting platform for all ideas presented for the use of the Intervention space.

4. Building the Beta Spaces
5. Displaying, Revise and Funding Intervention Ideas
6. Executing Intervention Ideas



1. Mapping potential Intervention Spaces
2. Setting the Vision Forum
3. Applying District Strategy

#### 4. Building the Beta Spaces

After the Beta spaces are co-funded and -built according to the customised needs of each districts focus, any other individual or group can submit their idea that responds to the district focus to be applied in the Intervention space. The idea will be approved by the Urban Group and presented in the Beta Space.

#### 5. Displaying, Revising and Funding Ideas

While the idea for Intervention Space is presented in Beta Space, it is open property and anyone can visit the Beta Space to review, discuss and revise it during the interaction period, while interactors can crowd fund the idea.

#### 6. Executing Ideas

The finalised ideas will be carried out by the author of the idea and the production and marketing will be co-managed by Urban Groups.