

# Let's Play!

## Reimagining Innovation in Public Sports Infrastructure

Public sports infrastructure is vital to making sure our cities move. These spaces form the playgrounds where our children play and the outdoor sporting facilities we continue to use as adults.

Yet, despite their importance, participation rates among youth are dropping, and busier lifestyles mean facilities are seeing limited usage. Various attempts have been made to bring more technology, interactivity, and innovation to public sports spaces through new equipment and digital innovations. However, many of these interventions have fallen short. Facilities remain underutilized, and the gap between what's provided and what communities actually need continues to grow.

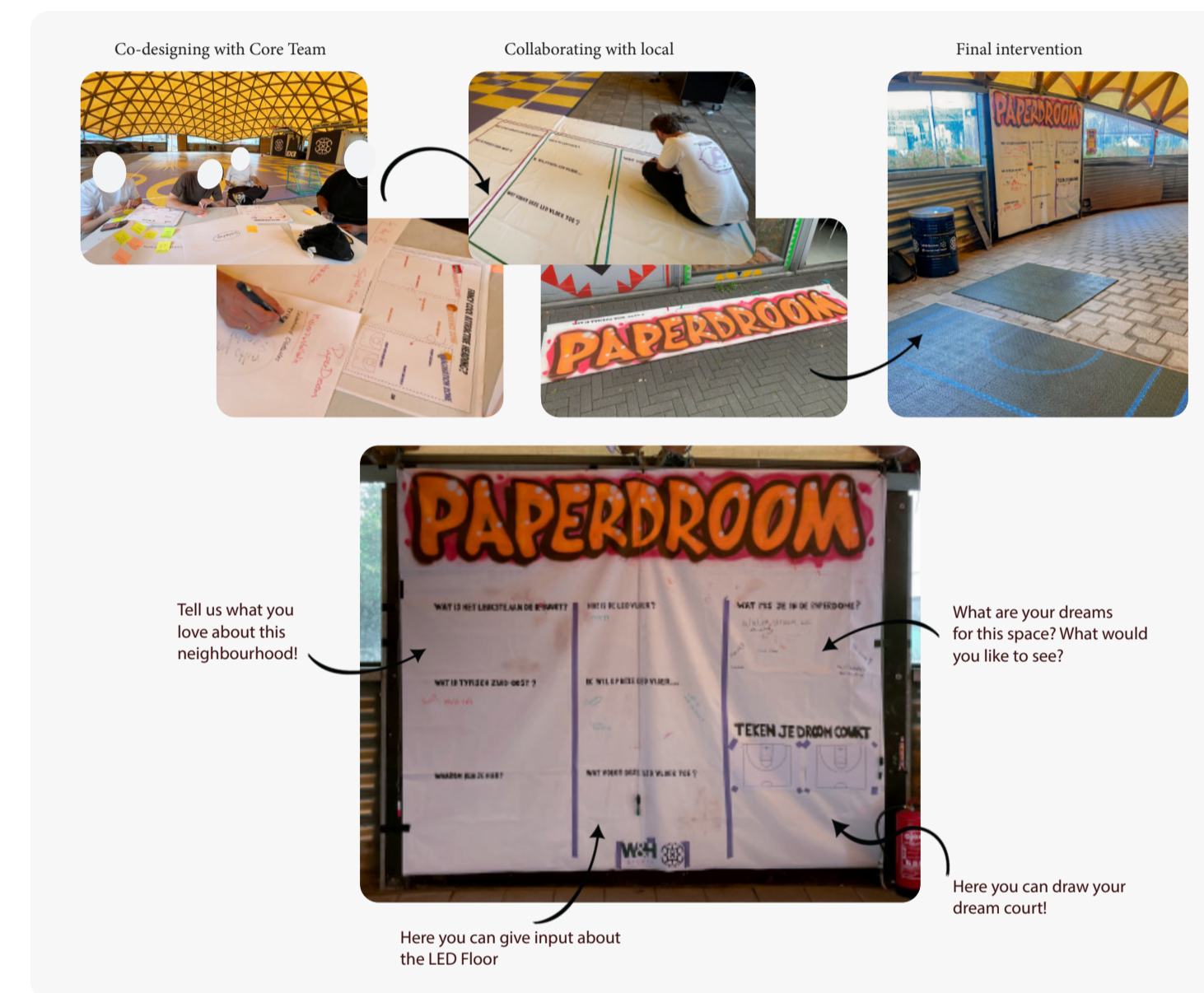
At the same time, we're witnessing exciting shifts: the rise of alternative sports formats, urban sports becoming more mainstream, and technology becoming ever more integrated into our sporting lives. This presents a unique opportunity for genuine innovation.

This thesis explores how innovation in Dutch public sports can be re-imagined to truly involve users and respond to their environments. Rather than imposing top-down solutions, it draws on design-led approaches and participatory methods to increase collaboration in building playgrounds, sports facilities, and cities that promote inclusivity and vitality.

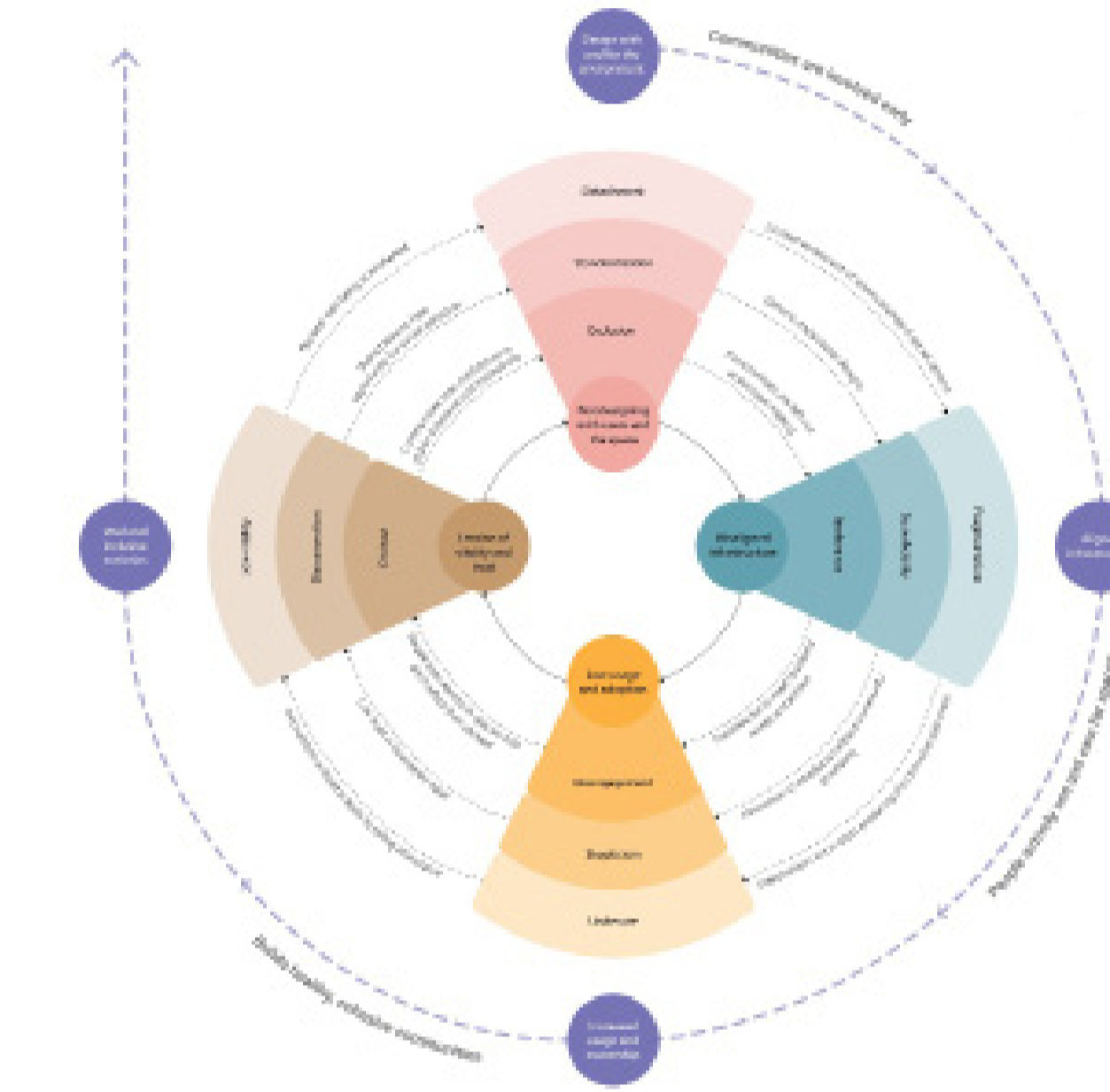
By centering the lived experiences of communities, this research reframes public sports innovation as a collaborative challenge; one that requires listening, co-creating, and holistic thinking.

The outcome is W&H Playscape - a comprehensive toolkit designed to empower sports equipment suppliers and innovators to facilitate meaningful change in public sporting spaces.

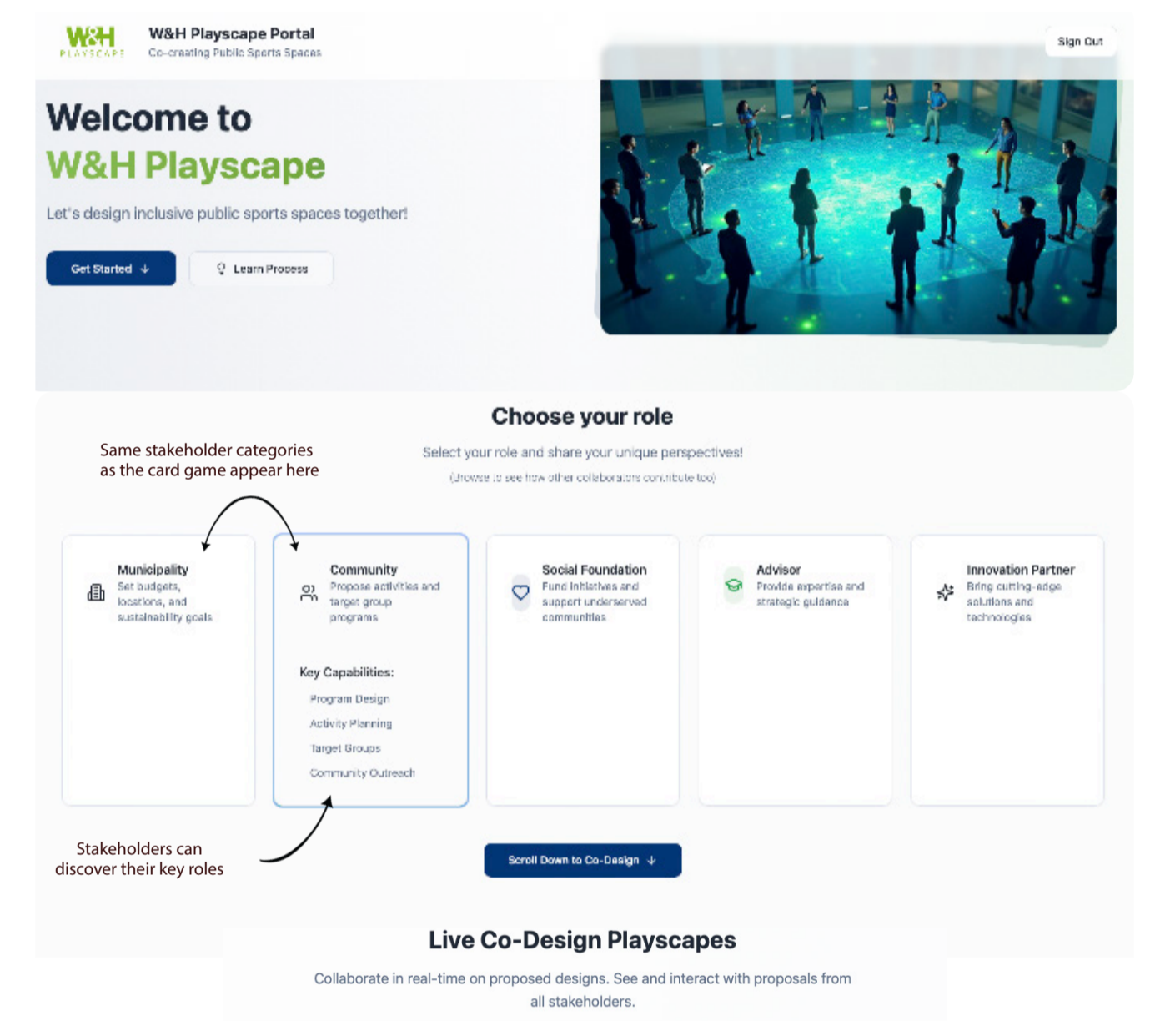
### Deploying participatory methods



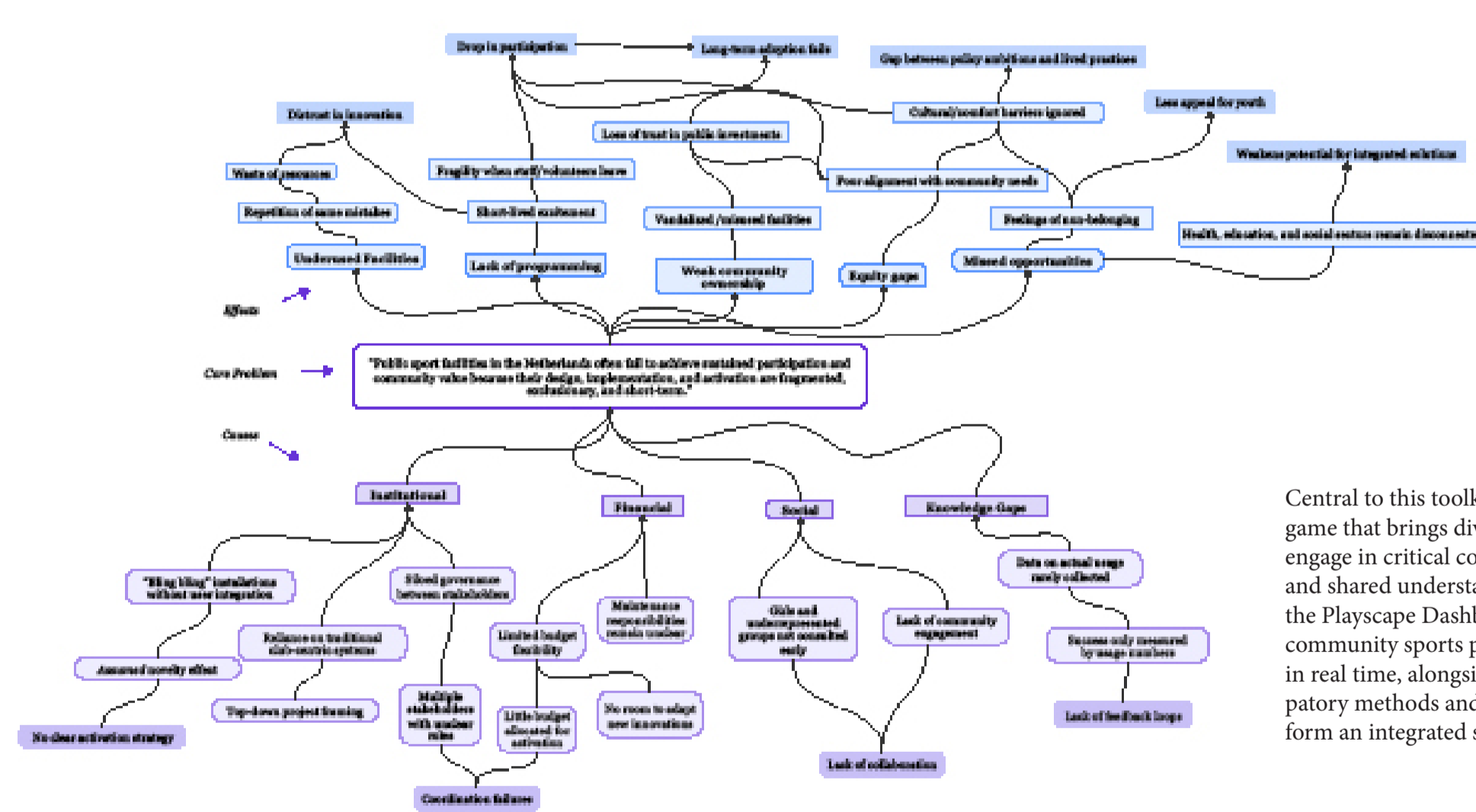
### Breaking the vicious cycle - a strategic shift



### Designing the playscape portal



### Mapping the Systemic Problem



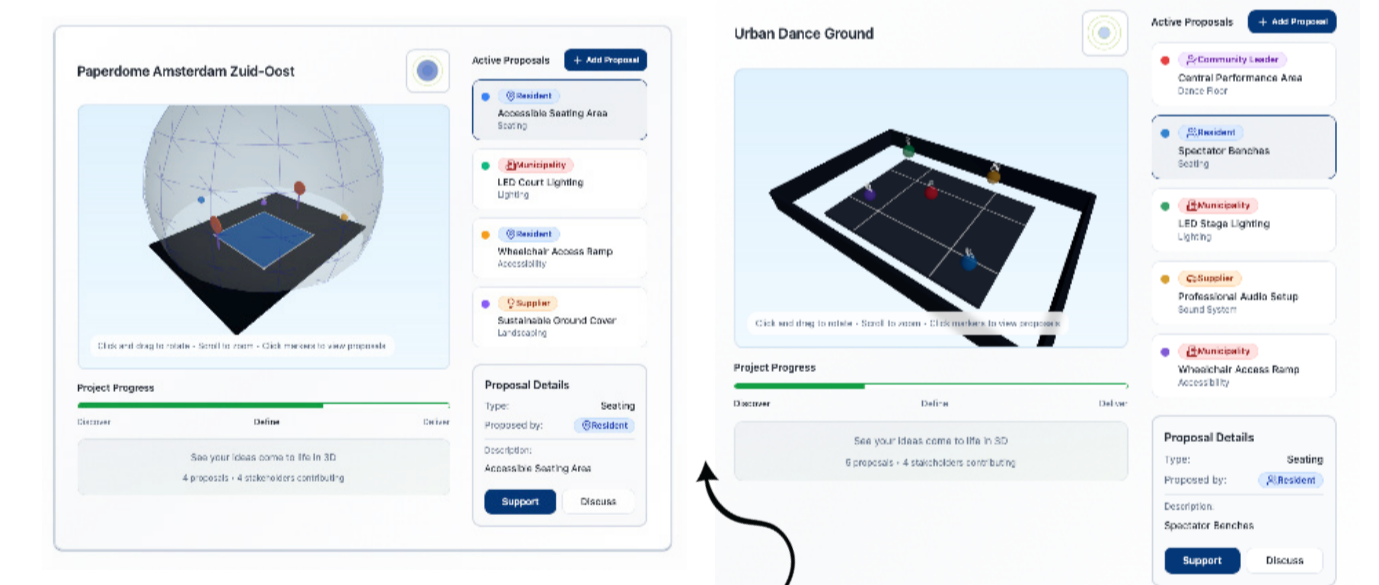
to facilitate dialogue around public sports infrastructure and co-create sporting environments that authentically reflect community needs and aspirations.

Ultimately, this thesis advocates for a fundamental shift in how public sports infrastructure is designed and delivered in modern society. A move away from prescriptive, top-down models toward collaborative, community-centered approaches that drive systemic change.

In an era where urban vitality and public health are increasingly at risk, it calls for sports infrastructure that serves communities authentically, placing local voices at the heart of a more inclusive and active future.

Central to this toolkit is the Playscape Game, a card game that brings diverse stakeholders together to engage in critical conversations, fostering empathy and shared understanding. This is complemented by the Playscape Dashboard, an online platform where community sports projects are visualized and tracked in real time, alongside a curated database of participatory methods and tools. Together, these elements form an integrated system that enables W&H Sports

### Designing the playscape toolkit



Here they can contribute to the Live Playscapes and co-design with other stakeholders

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