

**R-INNOVARE
LA CITTÀ
CANTIERI**

IMMAGINARE LA CITTÀ
DOPO LA PANDEMIA

OBSERVATION AND MONITORING OF THE NEW SCHOOL SQUARE ON VIA PROCACCINI

Report on the Post-Intervention Phase



SPAZIO A BOLOGNA

Muoversi e vivere nella città che riparte



Comune
di Bologna

fondazione
innovazione urbana

EX
TRA experimenting
with city streets
to transform
urban mobility



Immaginare
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1. Introduction

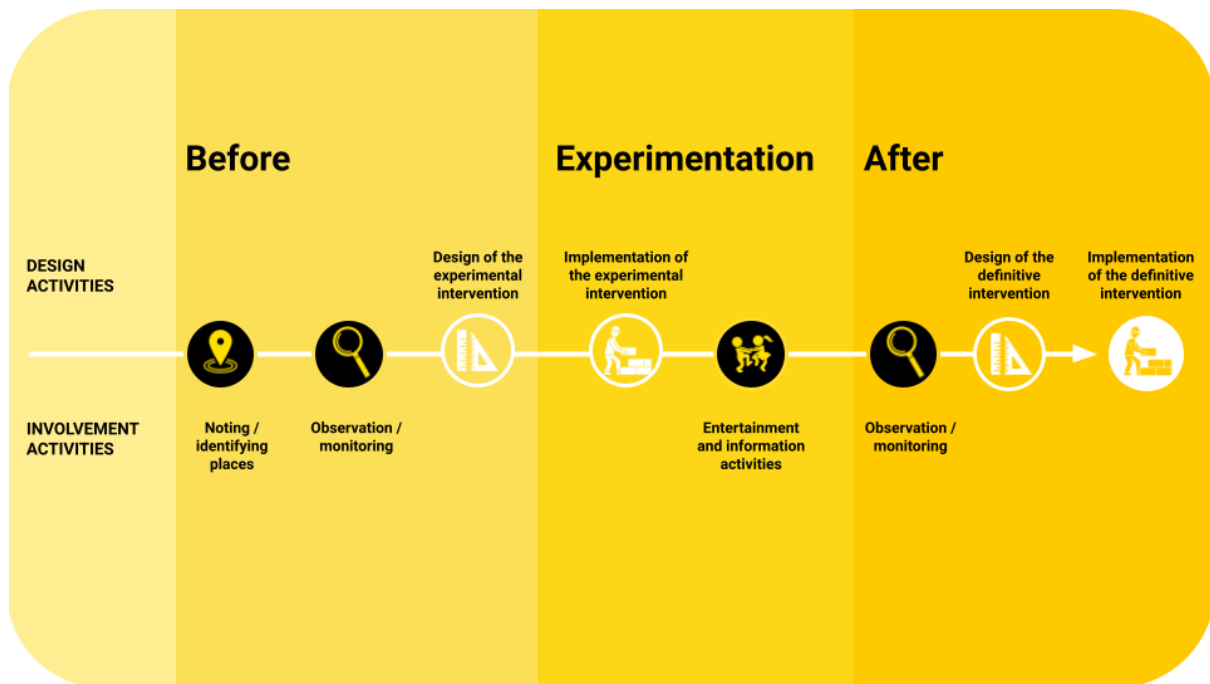
The purpose of this report is to inform citizens and the administration about the progress and impact of the experimental tactical urbanism project initiated in the area where Via Procaccini, Via di Vincenzo, and Via da Faenza meet in the Navile District. The intervention in question was realized in collaboration with the Politecnico di Milano and the University of Westminster under the European research project EX-TRA (Experimenting with City Streets to Transform Urban Mobility); observation and monitoring via camera was done through collaboration with Systematica s.r.l. The project falls under the Emergency Pedestrian Plan (*Piano per la Pedonalità Emergenziale*), approved through a city resolution at the end of July 2020. The goal of the plan was to test new solutions for outdoor public spaces to counteract the limitations experienced by people during the pandemic.

Specifically, the plan aimed to intervene in residual spaces of road areas with the goal of making them attractive public spaces for social gathering, with particular reference to families, children, and teenagers, as well as the areas around the schools. On Via Procaccini, in fact, the area near the Testoni-Fioravanti middle school (IC 5), was equipped with seating, coloured paint on the road surface, games, writings on the ground co-designed with students from the school, and innovative elements. The goal was to create a '**school square**' for students to gather in the hours before and after school, and also to provide a pleasant space for adults, teenagers, and children in general to stop and socialize. As envisaged by the Emergency Pedestrian Plan, the intervention is aimed at testing alternative means of using and enjoying public space through a transitory set-up that allows the space to be used in different ways to maximize its potential. The objectives are therefore to increase the spread of local public spaces, create comfortable, balanced spaces that use innovative and creative urban furniture, and create new, ample spaces close by that are equipped for unconventional leisure, recreation, sports, and culture.

The development of the projects illustrated in the Emergency Pedestrian Plan involves observation and monitoring of these spaces by the Fondazione Innovazione Urbana both before and after the intervention. These activities fall under the practice of '**tactical urbanism**', a technique adopted by the City and the Fondazione to implement the interventions in the Plan. This practice entails a procedure in which the use of a space is changed quickly using temporary, inexpensive elements, their effectiveness is analysed, and the definitive project is then adapted based on the reactions of users of the space. Based on temporary, reversible, accessible, agile actions such as coloured stripes, urban furniture, planters, or games painted on the ground, these types of quick, simple transformations allow new dynamics and uses of the space to be initiated in local communities.

In the context of this practice, the first stage of observation and monitoring in the area occurred at the beginning of the transformation process and then continued with implementation of the temporary project. The effects of this were subsequently monitored in a second observation and monitoring phase. Both phases involved the use of tools employed in [tactical urbanism](#), such as questionnaires, interviews, field observations, and focus groups with subjects active in the area. The goal was to understand how the experimentation was working and to use citizens' reactions to directly identify which aspects needed to be modified with a view to the definitive intervention. For the intervention on Via Procaccini, the tools adopted for monitoring also included an experimental camera for analysing mobility flows, thanks to a collaboration with Systematica s.r.l.

The key to tactical urbanism is that the definitive project should best respond to the needs of residents and the area, because people have had the opportunity to experience the space with the temporary experimentation and provide suggestions for improvement.



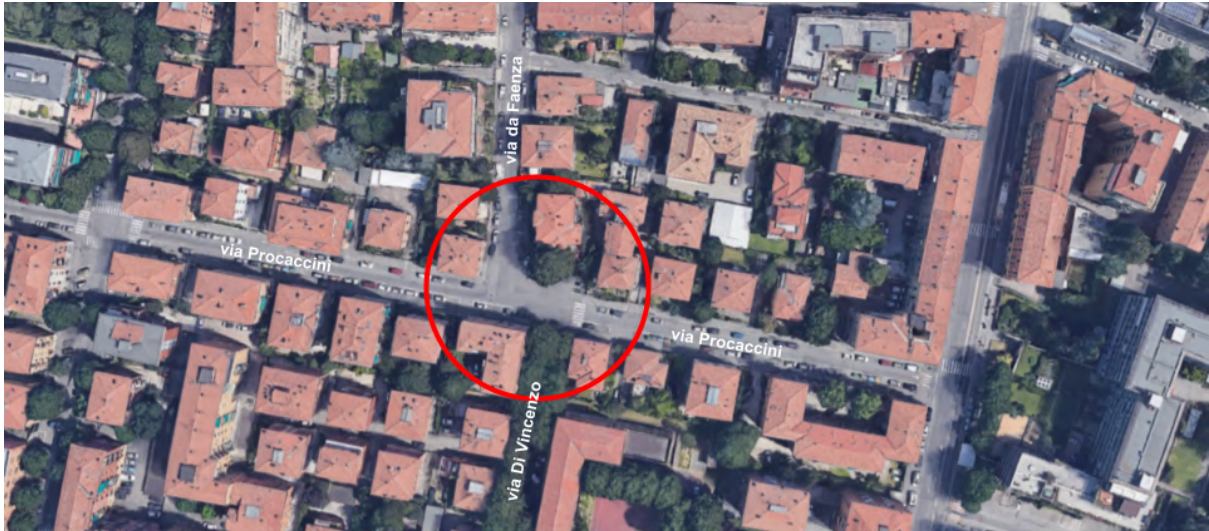
Graphical diagram of the tactical urbanism process

This report therefore illustrates the various assessments of the public space and the relationships recorded between citizens and the space in question during the observation and monitoring activities in order to construct a document that can also advise political and administrative bodies on ways to implement and improve the intervention in view of its definitive realization. At the same time, another report concentrating on the observation activities carried out by Systematica will be published and shared. This report will illustrate the results obtained before and after the intervention regarding the analysis of traffic and pedestrian flows using an experimental camera.

Following an initial part in which we briefly describe the project area, the characteristics and goals of the experimentation, and the method employed for the activities, we illustrate and compare the results from the first and second monitoring phases (before and after). In the conclusion, we collect the main aspects to keep and those to improve to implement the intervention.

2. Description of the Project

2.1. Project Area



Location of the area at the crossroads of Via Procaccini, Via Andrea da Faenza, and Via de Vincenzo

The object of analysis is the wide asphalted area at the crossroads of Via Procaccini, Via Di Vincenzo, and Via da Faenza. Before the intervention, the area consisted of an asphalted road surface, part of which was used for paid car parking. There was a bin nearby for the collection of used clothing, while a bin for waste collection was located on the surrounding pavement. There were no other particular elements of urban furniture in the area (benches, tables, planters, etc.). The entire central part was used exclusively for traffic and there were no markings on the road surface. The trees present are those pertaining to the surrounding residential building properties, although given their size, they also partially shade the area, which is the property of the City.



The area at the crossroads of Via Procaccini, Via Andrea da Faenza, and Via de Vincenzo before the intervention

The prominent feature of this wide area is the Testoni-Fioravanti Middle School (IC5), which has two entrances on Via Di Vincenzo: one near the intersection with Via Bolognese, and the other near the area on Via Procaccini. The two school entrances are both situated directly on the pavement, which is about 2 metres wide. To guarantee the safety of the spaces near the schools, the City had planned to completely pedestrianize Via Di Vincenzo on school days at the beginning and end of school. In the morning, pedestrianization is active between 7:40 and 8:10, while in the afternoon it is active between 13:50 and 14:30. At these times, the outlets of Via Di Vincenzo onto Via Procaccini and Via Bolognese are closed with barriers to prevent motor vehicles from passing through. Near the school entrance on Via Bolognese there are waste collection bins and a bus stop for TPER urban lines 11 and 37.



Pedestrianization of Via Di Vincenzo when school starts (view from the area on Via Procaccini)

2.2. Characteristics and Goals of the Intervention

As envisaged by the Emergency Pedestrian Plan, the goal of the intervention is to test alternative means of using and enjoying public space through a temporary set-up that allows the space to be used in a different way to maximize its potential. The objectives are therefore to increase the spread of local public spaces, create comfortable, balanced spaces that use innovative and creative urban furniture, and create new, ample spaces close by that are equipped for unconventional leisure, recreation, sports, and culture.

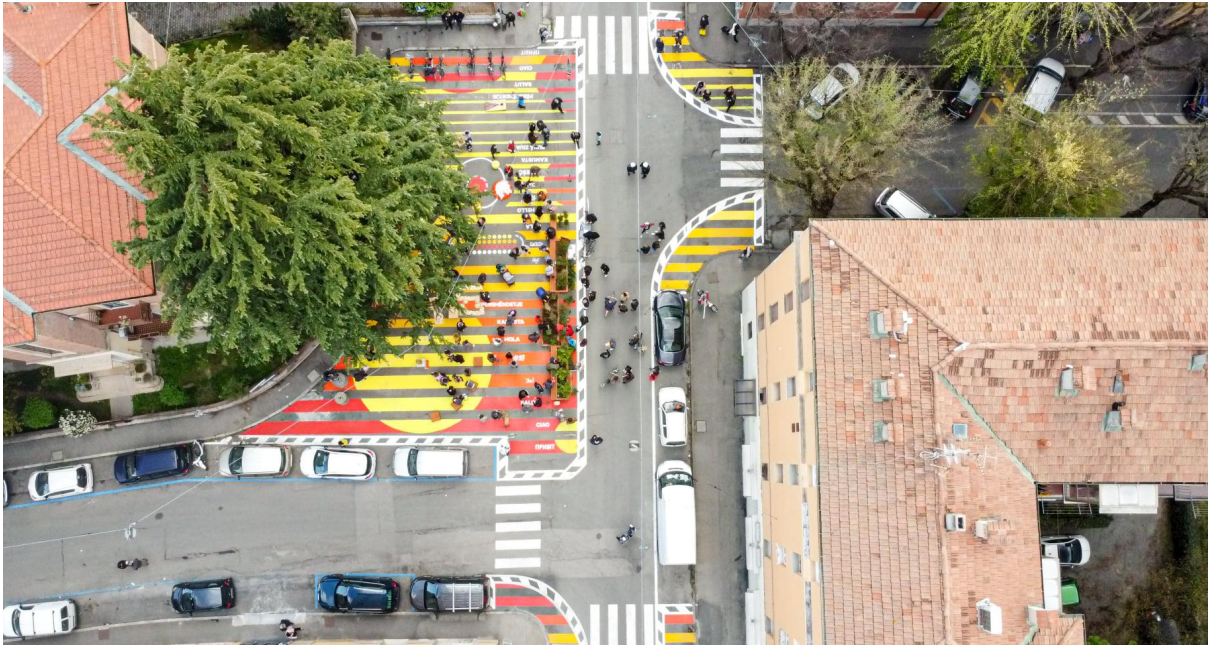
The set-up was designed as a procedural tool aimed at establishing a dialogue between the urban space under transformation and the people experiencing it. In fact, the Emergency Pedestrian Plan envisaged the enhancement of attractiveness to pedestrians in the areas in question, leaving open to interpretation the possible functions that the spaces might welcome. The experimental set-up during the temporary period therefore aimed to empower people in their exploration of new, different possible uses of the space being transformed.

The intervention on Via Procaccini was set out in the Emergency Pedestrian Plan under the category 'Pedestrian spaces near school entrances'. This category of intervention involved the enhancement, securing, and expansion of spaces near schools: painting on the ground, transformation of road or parking areas into pedestrian areas, widening the pavements, inserting seating and planters, relocating traffic or parking areas to another position nearby, and limiting speeds. The specific transformation for the area on Via Procaccini proposed an experimental solution called '**school square**', which would create a pedestrian space dedicated to students at the Testoni-Fioravanti schools when waiting to enter or getting out of school, and to provide a solution for the confusing mix of pedestrians and traffic in the project area.

2.3. The Project

The architectural design of the intervention was conducted by the Fondazione Innovazione Urbana. The project design involved various areas created with coloured paint on the ground and assorted elements of urban furniture, including

- **Bicycle racks;**
- **Two signs illustrating the intervention**, one for adults and one for kids;
- **Benches** arranged in a semicircle for kids to gather informally;
- **Games painted on the ground** for kids to play and interact;
- **Cement spheres and hemispheres** for kids to gather informally;
- **Wooden seating and tubs** containing vegetation.



Aerial photograph of the completed set-up

One of the elements that made the architectural project design unique and lent it added value was the involvement of students at the Testoni-Fioravanti middle schools. In fact, this involved co-design activities in the schools with the participation of some third-year classes to jointly define some elements of the experimental set-up. The co-design activities were guided and facilitated by the Fondazione Innovazione Urbana, which prepared three discussion tables with the students to define three specific elements of the intervention:

- **Writings on the ground:** the co-design table for the writings in the new school square reflected the design idea of writing the word 'hello' in 13 different languages in the coloured bands painted on the ground in the square, spreading a message of welcoming and inclusion. During the discussion table, three phrases popped up repeatedly ('All you need is love', 'Never give up', 'Never say never') and were ultimately inserted in the games created on the ground;
- **Games on the ground:** the co-design table for the game elements on the ground in the square yielded two design ideas:
 - An expanded version of the game 'Twister' as an element to favour friendship and interaction;
 - The 'Game of the Goose' revisited according to the guidelines indicated by the youths and integrated with the cement spheres and hemispheres;
- **A sign for kids:** the co-design table for the poster illustrating the intervention yielded different visual concepts and suggestions that could express the sense of the kids' belonging to the square and the values it should inspire.



Students from the Testoni-Fioravanti middle schools at one of the co-design tables

3. Method

Observation and monitoring of the public space was conducted using methods that have already been long used in other contexts. These are based on empirical evidence obtained using rigorous analytical tools. The goal is to understand the impacts of an intervention on people and the urban context.

The qualitative and quantitative methods and tools refer mainly to the tools used by Gehl Associates, illustrated in *How To Study Public Life* (Gehl and Svarre, 2013). Each of these tools has different characteristics and investigates different aspects of the use of public space. The joint use of different tools therefore leads to a complete, complex image of the use of the space.

Each tool has its own characteristics and a protocol through which it was employed. Specifically, the tools used for the monitoring activities were:

- **Counting:** this quantitative analysis tool documents the number of people moving through a space. For 10 minutes, the observer remains on site and counts the different types of users or vehicles that cross the space and notes the paths they follow;
- **Mapping:** this qualitative analysis documents the activities conducted in the space of interest at a precise moment. For 10 minutes the observer moves along an observation path and locates the users' activities on a map using predefined symbols;
- **Urban photography:** this is not an analysis tool in itself, but it serves to illustrate the precise interactions between people and the space in question, providing useful information for confirming the observations. The observer chooses stations and takes photographs with a camera, and the framing and angle of the photos corresponds to the visual capacity of the human eye;
- The **questionnaire:** this qualitative and quantitative tool systematically documents user experiences. The questionnaire for these monitoring activities was administered to citizens through various channels, both online and offline. It consisted of various types of questions: closed single-response questions, multiple-choice questions, scaled-response questions, and open-ended questions;
- The **interview:** this tool mostly gathers qualitative information, exploring deeper aspects compared to other tools. This is adopted to gather a larger amount of information from subjects that are particularly informed about the area or are

specific representatives of given demographic/social categories (school principal, parents' representative, shopkeeper, local association representative, etc.);

- The sheet containing the '**Twelve Quality Criteria**' from the Gehl Institute: this is a tool for qualitatively assessing the space using twelve criteria, which are in turn organized around three main areas (pleasantness, safety, and comfort) that assess the quality of a public space. In this specific case, the assessment was presented to citizens through specific questions in the **questionnaire**.
- The adoption of these tools involved the use of a **single protocol for investigation in monitoring both before and after the intervention**, with the goal of assessing the effective impact of the transformation of the space on residents in the most truthful way possible.

In this specific case – the intervention on Via Procaccini – two additional tools were also tested for the observation and monitoring activities:

- **Outreach**: this is a means of informal interaction and exchange with citizens who frequent and/or pass through the project area. The goal is to directly identify their perceptions and needs regarding the space. The activity was conducted during the monitoring phase after the intervention and took place within the context of field observations, together with the counting, mapping, and photography mentioned above;
- **Experimental camera for analysing mobility flows**: this tool was developed through a collaboration with Systematica s.r.l. and installed on an existing pole in the area. The camera was installed before and after the transformation of the space to capture the area and analyse the change in vehicle and pedestrian flows before and after the intervention, assessing its impact. The results emerging from the observation using this specific tool are addressed in a dedicated report.

4. Results of Monitoring

4.1. Field Research: Counting, Mapping, Photography, and Outreach

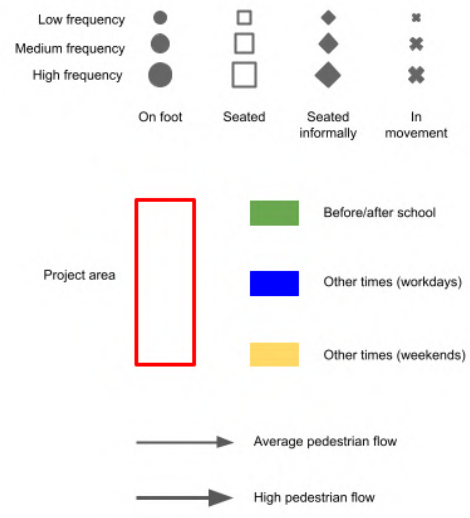
The primary goal of the field research was to understand how the space was used by residents, with the goal of tracing the various ways the installation was used and to understand if changes in frequency of use were detected with respect to the conditions before the intervention. The observations were made by counting the people crossing the space and mapping the uses observed in the project area and surrounding spaces, accompanied by photos made of the space before and after the observations to further document the various ways in which the space was used.

In total, **6 research sessions** were conducted in the field (counting, mapping, photography, and outreach). Specifically, 2 sessions were conducted on weekdays when school got out, 2 sessions on weekdays at the start of school, 1 session on a weekday in the evening, and 1 session in the afternoon at weekends. These planned sessions were joined by other moments of briefer, occasional observation that contributed to recording the uses of the project area.

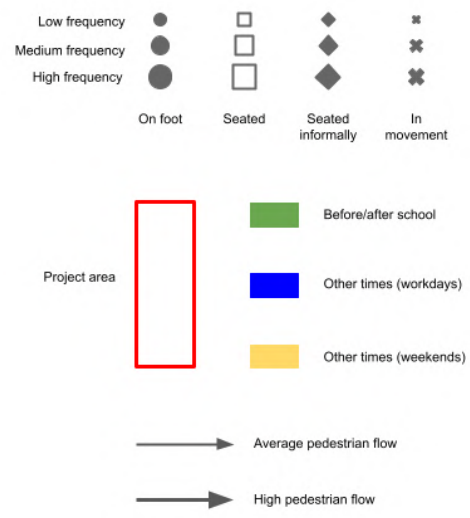
The results of this analysis are reported below, illustrating the mapping of the uses of the space in question, the practices of informal use, and the people and flows that were observed in the space. These results are also compared with those obtained during the observations before the intervention to understand if meaningful changes were found after the new set-up was arranged.

4.1.1. Mapping Uses and Flows in the Project Area

The new set-up installed in this area on Via Procaccini undoubtedly yielded both a qualitative and quantitative increase in the use of the space. Below, mappings of the uses and flows recorded in the space before and after the intervention are compared.



Mapping of uses and flows before the intervention



Mapping of uses and flows after the intervention

In particular, it is clear how the new installation is used especially when school starts and ends, in line with the goals of the intervention: to create a 'school square' in the area for students at the nearby Testoni-Fioravanti schools. In this sense, more gatherings were recorded, especially in the areas with the cement spheres, funbank, and seating arranged in a semicircle, which often constituted a place for socializing and leisure for the kids. The set-up was also used by different people, such as adults with children, single adults, and elderly people at other times, especially for rest and recreation.



Children from the Testoni-Fioravanti schools playing and socializing in the school square after school



Adults with children playing in the school square on a weekend



Adults sitting on the funbank bench in the school square

The analysis of flows recorded during the observations also showed how the new installation managed to reorganize and optimize the paths along which pedestrians moved through this wide area. Before the intervention, pedestrians crossed the intersection at Via Procaccini and Via Di Vincenzo by cutting through crosswise in a vehicle-accessible area very exposed to traffic and outside the pedestrian crossings. The arrangement of the new set-up instead managed to guarantee better protection for pedestrians crossing the area, carrying the flows within the school square and directing the road crossings towards the new pedestrian stripes situated at the corners of Via Procaccini/Via Di Vincenzo and Via Procaccini/Via da Faenza. The pedestrian flows with the highest intensity were recorded at the entrance, crossing, and exit of the school square, while those crossing Via Procaccini and Via Di Vincenzo outside the square were less intense.

4.1.2. Use of the Project Area

The field observations showed particular means of interaction between citizens and the experimental set-up, which was deemed important to report in order to underline the variety of uses recorded and elements that could possibly say something about the identity of the new space.

Specifically, different observed usage practices are listed below:

- The **'funbank' benches** were often used by the kids as play equipment, as well as for seating and informal gathering;



Youths playing around one of the funbank benches

- The **benches arranged in a semicircle** were sometimes used by students at the Testoni-Fioravanti middle schools for studying before school;



Girls studying on the benches arranged in a semicircle before school

- The **cement spheres and hemispheres** were used by some middle school students to meet and eat together at lunch and during breaks before afternoon activities;



Middle school students eating lunch

- The **cement spheres and hemispheres** were also used by kids when it was raining, since some of them are protected by the branches of a tree growing on the property of private housing in front of the school square;



Middle school students stopping in the school square on a rainy day

- The square is also used in general by classes and staff as a meeting point for school initiatives, for example, outing;



Teachers taking class attendance in the school square before leaving on an outing

- At weekends, the square was also used for moments of leisure at lunch time by students taking Arabic courses at the Sopra i Ponti association.



People stopping in the school square at weekends

With regard to the uses recorded in vehicular traffic after the intervention, the following is reported:

- The new arrangement is often used by parents as a place to drop off or pick up their children by car at the start and end of school. In this sense, most uses of this type were recorded at the corner of Via Di Vincenzo (in front of the barrier blocking off the road to traffic), in the new pedestrian areas created at the crossroads, or sometimes even at the edges of the pedestrian area of the square;



A parent stopping the car in the new pedestrian area on Via Procaccini to drop off a student at the start of school



A parent waiting in the car to pick up a student at the end of school

- The vehicle-accessible area in the square is occasionally occupied by a delivery van;

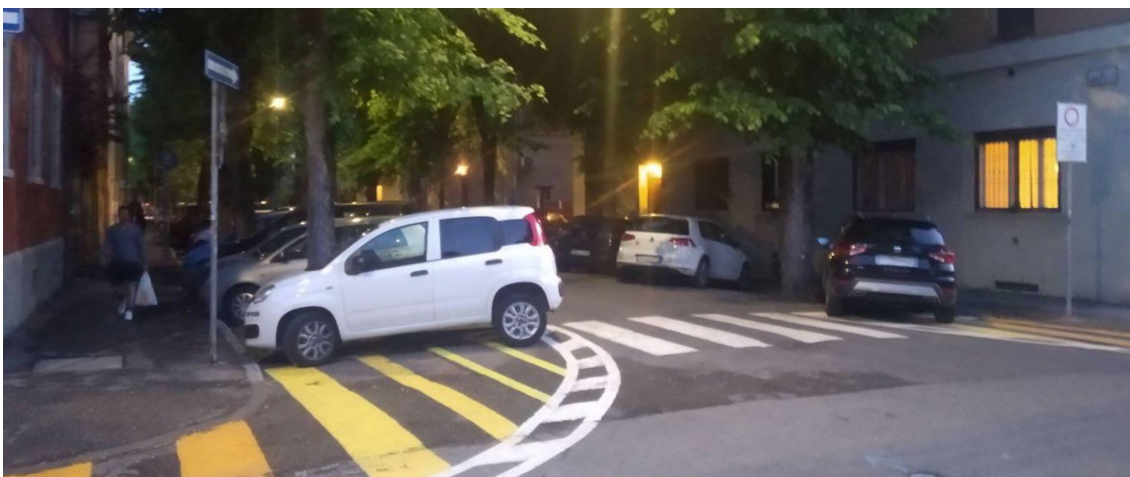


Van parked in the vehicle-accessible area of the experimental set-up

- Vehicles occasionally stopped improperly, both in the dedicated parking areas and in the new pedestrian areas of the set-up.



Car parked outside the limits allowed by the set-up



Cars parked incorrectly in the evening in the new pedestrian areas at the corner of Via Di Vincenzo

Finally, on one occasion, maintenance was necessary to protect the cleanliness of the area.

4.1.3. Results of Outreach Activities

The outreach activities highlighted the impacts on citizenship and points of attention in the experimental intervention. In particular, the following points are highlighted:

- One Testoni-Fioravanti student, when asked about the usage of the space, underlined the use of the bicycle racks in particular. In fact, he said that he had begun to go to school by bike following installation of the racks in the experimental set-up;
- A group of girls from the Testoni-Fioravanti schools who stopped at the installation during lunch before continuing on with their afternoon activities said that they went to the nearby Piazza dell'Unità to find lunch and then came back to eat it in the school square. This behaviour shows that the new installation managed to create an area for kids to gather that is preferable to others in the area, such as Piazza dell'Unità. One of the girls also suggested the possibility of installing a box for books to be used freely by those frequenting the area;
- During one observation session, gardeners were intercepted and worked on the school square to remove branches hanging from the private tree in front of the area which risked falling on the square, thus creating a hazard for those using it. This suggestion was made by a local mother to the owner of the private house with the tree, and the owner acted immediately to try to resolve the problem. The gardeners and owner showed their appreciation for the new set-up, although they were somewhat perplexed about the scant protection from the traffic on Via Procaccini for young people and children.

4.2. Listening to Citizens: The Questionnaire

To assess the qualitative/quantitative aspects of the experimental intervention, area residents (and others) were presented with a questionnaire that asked about their use and perception of the space following the intervention, as well as possible suggestions for improvement they might have imagined. The questionnaire was disseminated online through communication channels of the Testoni-Fioravanti schools (IC5), the school parent council, the Network Office of the Navile District, and the Fondazione Innovazione Urbana, as well as through three signs with a QR code situated at the project area. The questionnaire remained open for about four weeks, from 16 May to 13 June 2022.

The total sample of respondents after the intervention – **sample B** – during this period included **109 people**. To assess the impact recorded following the new set-up of the space, the focus mainly dealt with analysing the sample of respondents that had already completed the questionnaire before the intervention – **sample C** – to verify whether there really was a change in the respondents' use and perception of the space. This sample consisted of **42**

people, thus equal to about **39% of all respondents in sample B**. This initial observation may already show that the intervention has aroused the interest of residents and is capable of attracting a good number of new respondents.

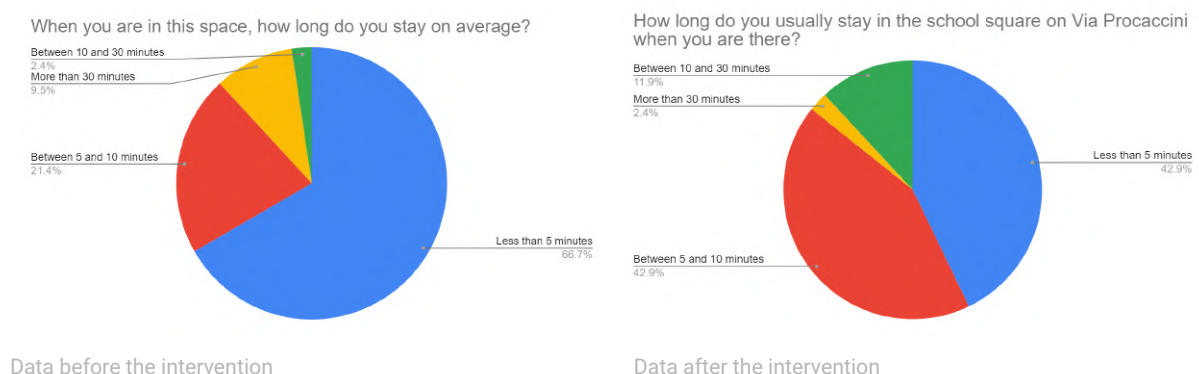
With respect to the composition of **sample C**, the following data are reported:

- 59.5% of respondents were women, while 38.1% were men; 2.4% preferred not to provide information regarding their gender identity;
- 95.3% of respondents were Italian; the other origins recorded were Cuban (2.4%) and Romanian (2.4%);
- The most common family situation was couples with children (71.4%); other situations consisted of couples without children (11.9%), single parents with child custody (7.1%), single people (4.8%), extended families (2.4%), and separated parents with shared child custody (2.4%);
- No people with specific accessibility needs were observed.

4.2.1. Relationship between Residents and the Project Area

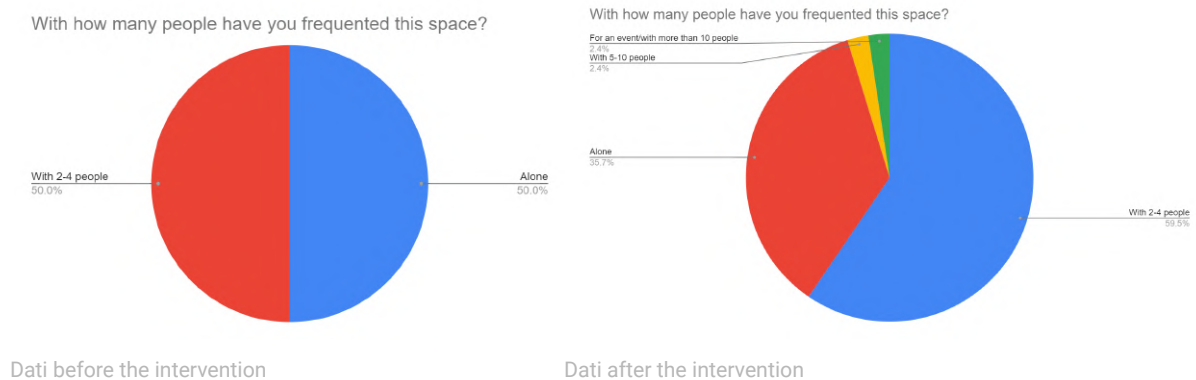
In this section we illustrate the answers to questionnaire items whose primary objective was to understand the relationship that people have with the project area, investigating the ways and frequency with which they use the space.

The first observation seen in these types of questions is that **the experimental set-up encouraged people to spend time in the wide area on Via Procaccini**. In fact, as seen in the graphs that follow, it is clear that the number of people stopping in the space for more than 5 minutes increased by about 20%, while the number of people spending less than 5 minutes decreased by about 25%. This comparison shows that the new school square configured the area as a space to stop and spend time pleasantly.



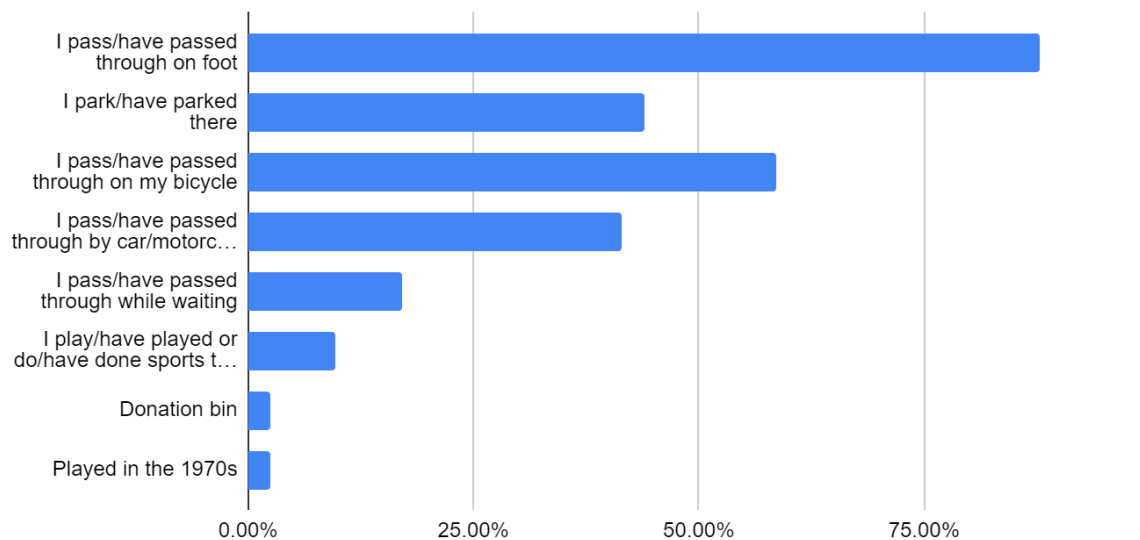
Compared to the conditions before the intervention, it should also be noted that there was an increase of about 15% in frequenting the space in the company of multiple people, as reported in the graphs below. The data therefore show that **the new set-up effectively**

increased the possibility of gathering and socializing in the space, consequently decreasing its use by people individually.



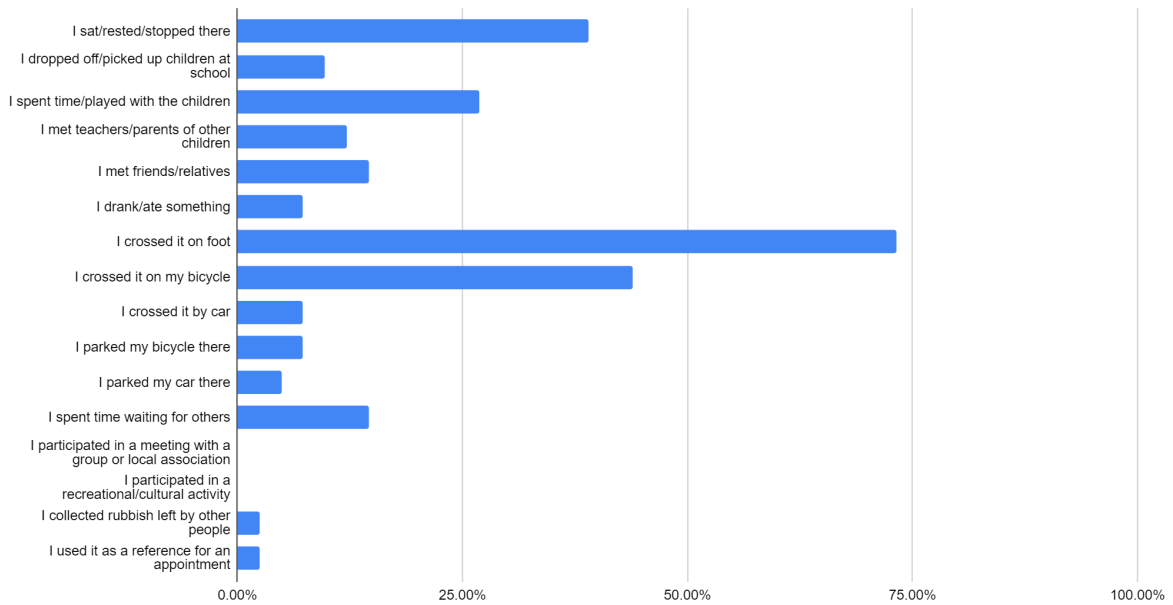
Finally, it is also important to highlight **the increase in the variety of ways the space was used** following the intervention. A comparison of the before and after data shows how uses tied to play and socializing increased significantly, and new means of using the space were also recorded, especially those tied to the presence of the nearby Testoni-Fioravanti schools. This also includes, for example, parents accompanying their children to school and socializing between parents and teachers.

Why did you happen to use this space?



Data before the intervention

How have you used the school square on Via Procaccini?

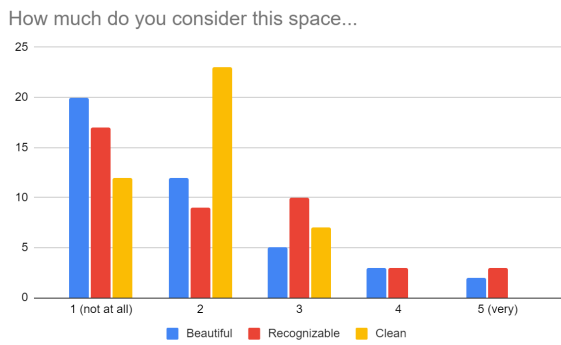


Data post-intervention

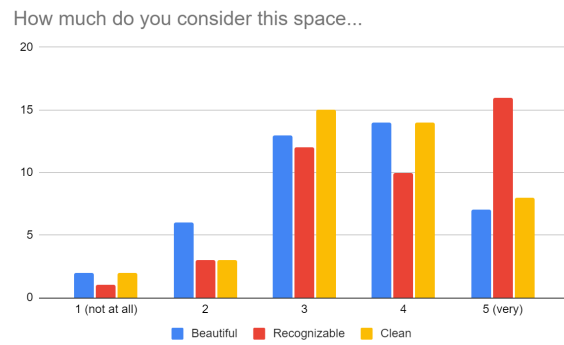
4.2.2. Perceptions of the Quality of the Space in the Project Area

This section centres on investigating the way in which people perceived the new set-up, with the goal of understanding whether they felt like it was a new quality public space. The items in this part of the questionnaire were formulated according to the 12 Quality Criteria model delineated by Gehl Architects, which defines 12 criteria for assessing the quality of a public space by dividing it into three main areas: **Enjoyment**, relating to the **aesthetic quality and the sensory pleasantness of the space**; **Protection**, relating to the **protection of the space with respect to risk factors** (e.g. accidents, atmospheric agents, etc.); and **Comfort**, relating to the **comfort, functionality, and variety of means of experiencing the space** (e.g. accessibility of the paths, possibility to sit, leisure, etc.). The perceptions with respect to these three main areas were therefore investigated by asking the respondents about eight aspects of quality for the space in question (beauty, safety, comfort, etc.), assessing them on a scale from 1 (most negative) to 5 (most positive). At the end of these questions, the respondents were allowed to leave brief comments about their assessments.

The aspect of **Enjoyment** was assessed considering the answers to questions that asked respondents if they considered the space to be beautiful, recognizable, and clean. A comparison of the before and after data for these quality criteria showed an effective improvement in the respondents' perception at medium-high levels regarding all the criteria in question. With regard to cleanliness, some answers referred to the need for better cleaning of the ground, which was often covered by needles from the tree that overhangs the square.

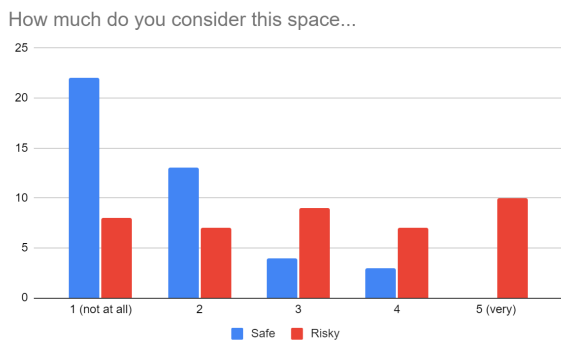


Data before the intervention

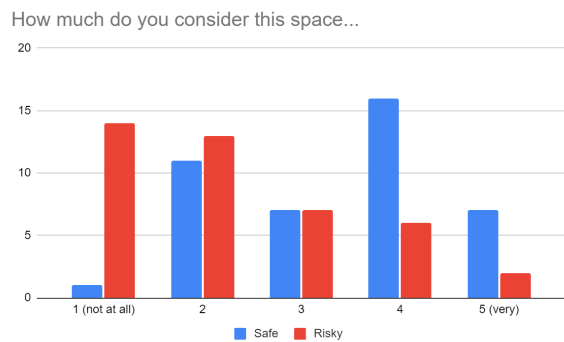


Data after the intervention

The aspect of **Protection** was assessed considering the answers to questions that asked respondents if they considered the space to be safe or negatively affected by passing cars and motorcycles. In this sense as well, a considerable improvement in perception was recorded, especially regarding risks due to vehicular traffic, which the respondents mostly considered to be scarce or non-existent compared to the situation before the intervention. Some comments showed that it would be good to secure the area from the street, in particular to better protect children and teenagers playing in the area.

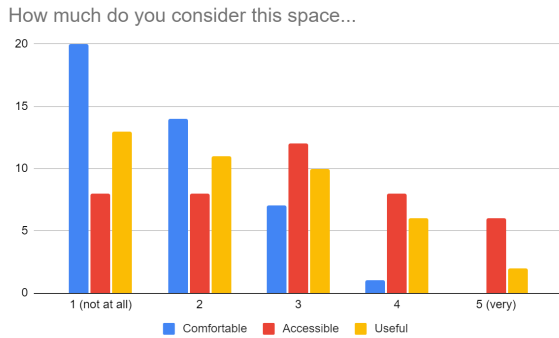


Data before the intervention

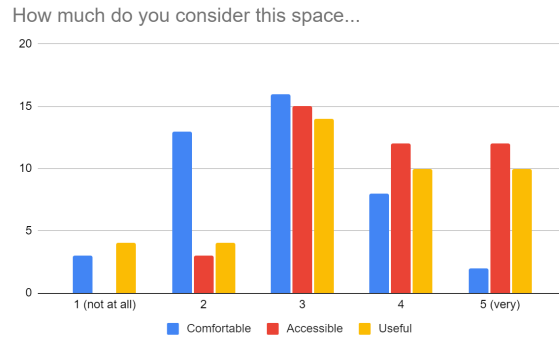


Data after the intervention

Finally, the aspect of **Comfort**, that is, the comfort and accessibility of the space, was assessed considering the answers to questions that asked respondents if they considered the space to be comfortable, accessible, and useful for citizens. In this sense, the increase in perception was recorded at medium-high levels, especially with respect to accessibility and utility. The aspect of comfort showed an increase, although less significant, with some comments referring in particular to the uncomfortable seating (specifically the funbank).

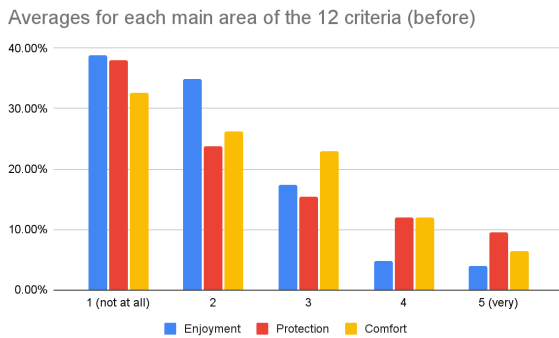


Data before the intervention

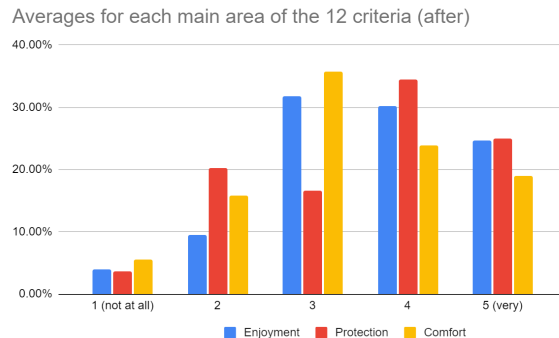


Data after the intervention

The averages of the responses for each main area¹ yielded a trend for the three parameters of the 12 Quality Criteria and a comparison between them. The comparison confirms a **generally positive trend and improved perception compared to the situation beforehand**, illustrating the positive impact of the school square on the respondents.



Data before the intervention



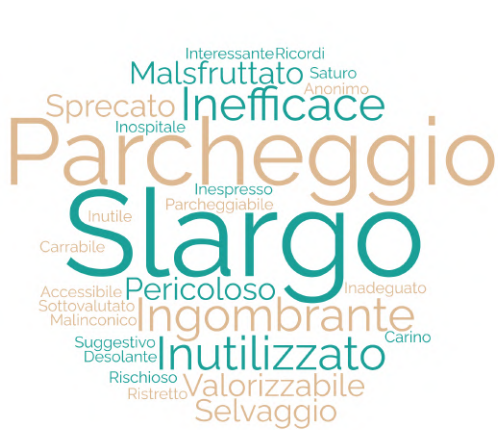
Data after the intervention

4.2.3. Suggestions and Imagery for the Project Area

This last section dedicated to the results of the questionnaire illustrates the respondents' answers to questions which asked them to describe the project area in a few words and to express possible opportunities for improvement.

The graphics below show the words most used by the respondents to describe the area on Via Procaccini before and after the intervention. The comparison shows how the new set-up is perceived in improved terms by the respondents, some of whom also hit on the values of sharing, socializing, and sustainability that inspired the project.

¹ Specifically, the statistical processing of the main area 'Protection' involved a correction. This main area contains a question regarding the risk due to cars and motorcycles formulated around a negative quality of the public space, while the other questions in the area concentrated on positive qualities. Therefore, to avoid errors when representing the data, the decision was made – only in this stage of statistical processing – to make the question positive rather than negative and therefore invert the values of the responses (e.g. an answer that considers the space not risky at all, resulting in a score of '1 (not at all)' was evaluated as an answer that therefore considers the space very safe and protected from the presence of cars and motorcycles, giving it a value of '5 (very)').



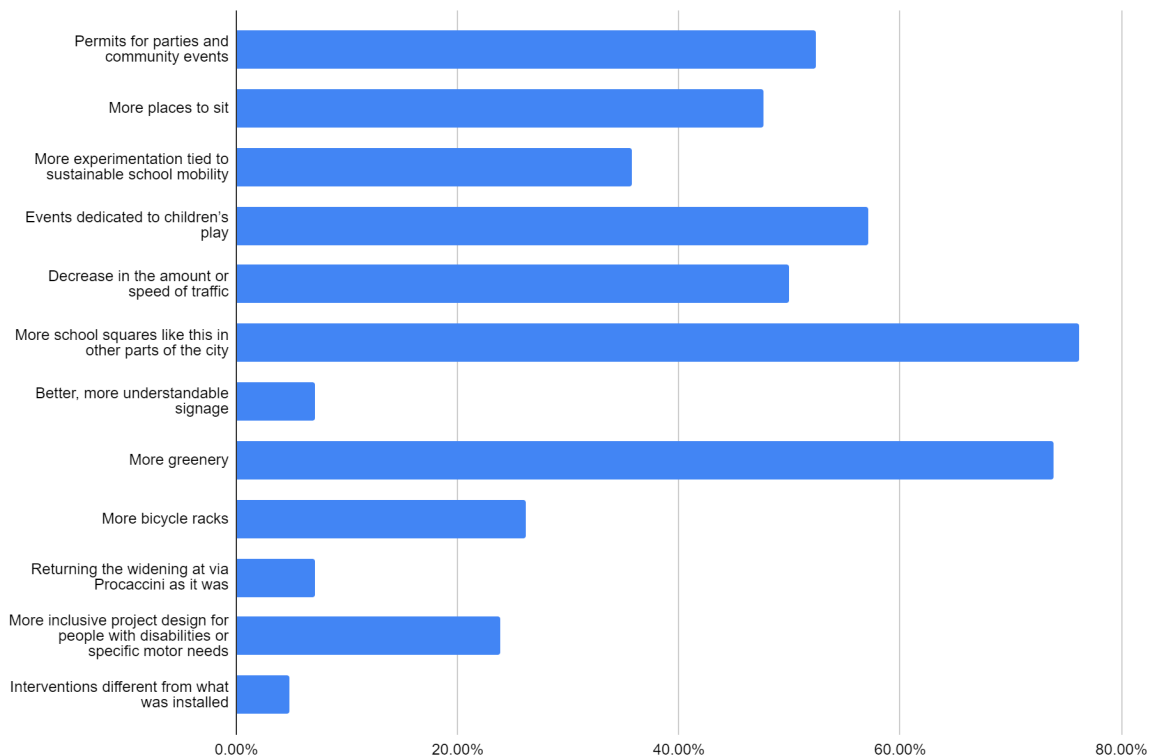
Data before the intervention



Data after the intervention

With regard to the opportunities for improvement expressed by the respondents, a clustering of the main elements suggested is shown below.

What would you like to see in the school square in the future?



Answers to the question 'What would you like to see in the school square in the future?'

The graph shows that the idea of the school square intervention managed to instill itself in the minds of citizens and resonated with the respondents, to the point that they would like to have others like this at other places in the city (about **76%** of respondents). Appreciation of

the school square was also in line with the proposals and uses suggested by the respondents as illustrated in the [pre-intervention report](#), which largely reflected the need to make the space a 'small square' dedicated to gathering and socializing, especially for young children. In this sense, some comments underlined how the intervention managed to give a space formerly dedicated to cars back to pedestrians and people, creating a gathering place in an area that really felt the need for one.

With respect to the specific project area, some elements reported in the graph are listed below, integrating them with additional comments submitted by respondents:

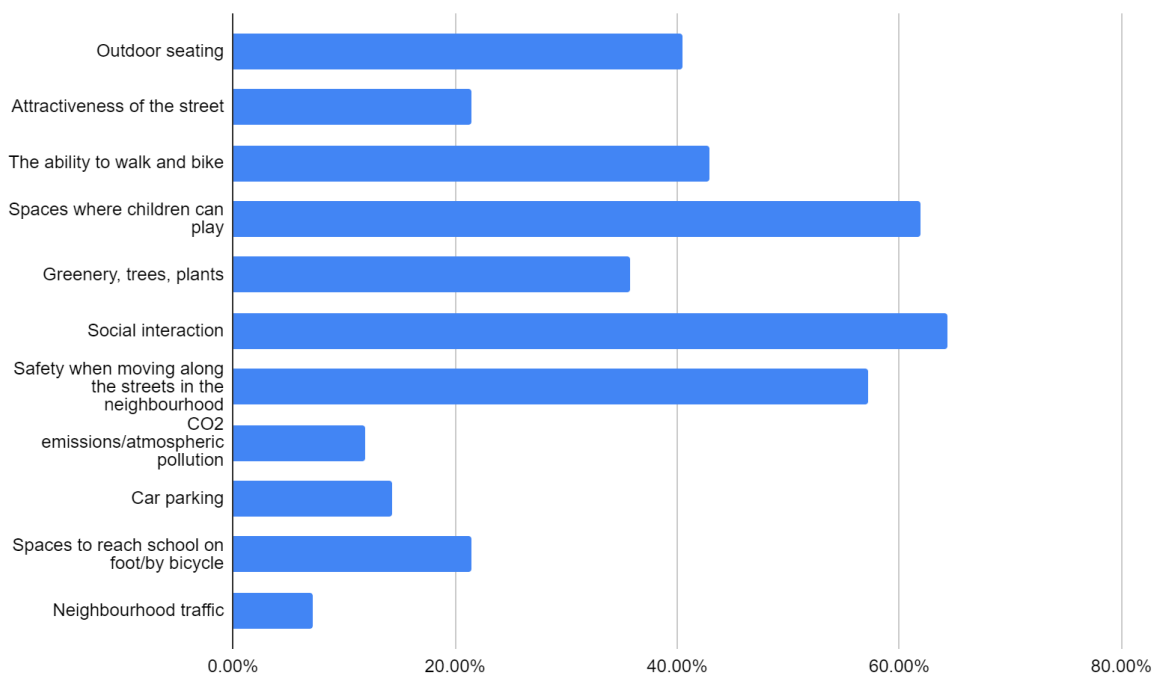
- **Decrease in the amount or speed of traffic:** this point was noted by **50%** of respondents and was reported in particular due to the need to guarantee the safety of children and young people, pointing out that 'cars that can go straight are dangerous' and that 'it is dangerous when children are playing football. The ball can hit vehicles and/or people crossing at the time, or the kids run after the ball without looking to see who is crossing'. Related to this issue, the need to secure the pedestrian crossings on Via Tibaldi and Via Franco Bolognese with speed bumps to slow traffic down was also mentioned;
- **More places to sit:** for this question, answered by about **48%** of respondents, the most common recurring points were the lack of conventional seating with a seatback, given that the current set-up has only wooden benches (without backs) and funbanks (deemed by some respondents to be uncomfortable, 'aesthetically debatable', not very inclusive, and in some cases even dangerous for little children); tables to sit at when gathering, socializing, or even working were also suggested;
- **More experimentation tied to sustainable school mobility:** for this topic, shared by about **36%** of respondents, the suggestion was made to 'modify the current traffic flows so that the school square is adjacent to the school pavements and it is not necessary to cross the street'. The possibility of implementing biking paths on Via Procaccini was also indicated, possibly constituting an aspect of implementing sustainable school mobility;
- **More greenery:** with respect to greenery, indicated by about **74%** of respondents, this need was reported since there are very few, if any, green areas in the zone. In this sense, the possibility of adding other elements of urban greenery – for example, planters – was suggested. The related issue of cleaning the ground was also raised due to the needles from the tree near the square, which constantly cover the area;
- **Interventions different from what was installed, returning the widening at Via Procaccini as it was:** all respondents making these two suggestions (about **12%**) reported above all a feeling of discontent due to the perception that there was less car parking in the area, which, according to them, might inconvenience those needing to move by car. Another point also consisted of the small size of the area, which,

combined with the low safety of pedestrians and children with respect to the roadway, would make the area little suited to creating a square.

In addition to the points above, there were also suggestions relating to various **furniture elements** which could be arranged to complement the scope of the school square, for example, 'fountains', 'chess tables', 'more lighting', and 'technological support'.

Finally, there was also a cluster of some points noted in response to an item in the questionnaire which may further confirm the framework depicted thus far.

What are the most important questions for you when you think about the school square on Via Procaccini?



Answers to the question 'What are the most important questions for you, when you think about the school square on Via Procaccini?'

4.3. Listening to Subjects Active in the Area: Interviews

The interviews were primarily conducted with some subjects close to the project area in order to expand upon aspects, critical points, and needs of the intervention from social and demographic categories in the territory represented by the person in question. In this specific case, the principal and president of the parent council at the Testoni-Fioravanti middle schools were interviewed. The interviews therefore allowed requests to be collected from parents, families, educators, and children in the area around the new installation.

4.3.1. Interview with the Principal of the Testoni-Fioravanti Middle Schools

Among the **strengths** of the new set-up, the principal of the Testoni-Fioravanti middle schools mentioned the relationship between the school square and pedestrianization of Via di Vincenzo before and after school, which further encouraged the usability of the area and allowed a large pedestrian space to be created for the use and benefit of students at the schools. Another aspect that was highlighted was the gathering and recreation encouraged in the square at other times, therefore making the space 'an asset for the entire neighbourhood'. Finally, the value of co-designing the intervention together with students at the schools was also mentioned as enhancing the potential for gathering in the space.

With regard to **critical aspects**, a dip in the ground was reported in the corner of the square near the intersection between Via Procaccini and Via da Faenza where puddles of water were often found, reducing the practicability of the area. The principal also mentioned how uncomfortable the funbanks were, although their experimental value was understood and appreciated. Finally, emphasis was placed on the possibility of better maintaining the colours in the square, especially those used to paint the ground, to keep them more vibrant.

Finally, the **opportunities for improvement** included the possibility and willingness to use the square as a place for more 'formal' gathering, for example, for school council meetings and end-of-year presentations by students. In this sense, the use of the square for recreational purposes at weekends by the Sopra i Ponti association, which holds Arabic courses in the rooms of the Testoni-Fioravanti schools, was also mentioned.

4.3.2. Interview with the President of the Parent Council at the Testoni-Fioravanti Middle Schools

Among the **strengths** of the new set-up, the president of the parent council underlined how the space was not stolen from cars, but recovered from the use of cars and made available to students and youths, thereby confirming the positive nature of the initiative. The gathering potential of the set-up for people other than students – for example, families, pensioners, and the educational community – was also highlighted. In this sense, another element of interest reported by the president was the way in which the square can be used by area residents as a stop along a path. For example, he saw an elderly lady who stopped in the square during her daily walk to talk with the children playing nearby. The general aesthetics of the set-up was also largely appreciated, in particular the use of colours to paint the ground in the square.

With regard to **critical aspects**, he particularly highlighted the repeated parking of a delivery van in the vehicle entrance, which risked taking away space in the square from children and neighbourhood residents in general. He also noted parents stopping their cars on the new

pedestrian areas at the corner Via di Vincenzo when school starts and ends, which may also reduce the space available to pedestrians.

As an **opportunity for improvement**, one of the most salient points reported for the square was to imagine experimentation falling under the idea of sustainable school mobility. In this sense, the president confirmed that these discussions have been brought forward for years at Testoni-Fioravanti school council meetings and he highlighted how the school square had become a point of reference for walking bus routes, thereby becoming a potential stimulus for other possible experimentation. The possibility of adding tables and more places to sit was also cited as a way to invite people to stay and socialize for longer, thereby also encouraging more opportunities for community gathering. Likewise, the topic of parties and community events was also touched on as a further element to encourage socializing and gathering. Finally, the possibility of planting greenery was mentioned, to provide elements of coverage and shading in summer, since the square may be used less at that time of the year due to the asphalt and lack of water.

5. Conclusion

With respect to the objectives established in the Emergency Pedestrian Plan and based on the results collected in the observation and monitoring activities, the following conclusions can be drawn.

- **The mission of the space is clearly marked by gathering, socializing, and leisure for children and students at the Testoni-Fioravanti middle schools when school starts and ends**, consistent with the goal of creating a school square. Together with this school use, the area is still frequented by various demographic bands (children, adults, elderly people) outside of school hours, thus defining the square as a **place for gathering not only for students, but also for the entire neighbourhood**.
- Another element of the mission of the space relates to the **new role that the square has played in terms of school mobility**. In fact, the new set-up is often used by parents accompanying their children to and from school and, as the president of the parent council underlined, the square has also become a **point of reference for walking bus routes**, leading to the possibility of imagining solutions regarding the area along the lines of sustainable school mobility. It is also important to highlight that these elements were also noted by the citizens and questionnaire respondents – for example, the student that started to go to school on bike following completion of the installation and comments in the questionnaire that proposed extending the square on Via Procaccini to the pavement of the Testoni-Fioravanti schools to improve mobility of the new pedestrian area.
- Finally, as **noted by the representatives of the middle schools , the desire to address the possibility of creating events and opportunities for gathering** is another element that may contribute to defining the potential of the square. This is also a very heartfelt topic for the questionnaire respondents, who, among their hopes for the future of the school square, largely expressed the desire to provide permits for organizing parties, community events, and events related to children’s play. It is also important to underline that the first initiatives to guide this potential have recently been carried forward, for example, on **World Play Day**, when the school square filled with opportunities for play thanks to a collaboration with a local association to celebrate every child’s right to play.

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