The Open Metropolis, a project factory. For Toulouse Metropolis, the Smart City is much more than a concept built around digital technology. It is seen as actively supporting social innovation and citizen well-being. Building on these actions, the Smart City “project factory” is a key tool serving the sustainable city of tomorrow.

Toulouse Metropolis launched the “Toulouse, the Open Metropolis” strategy for the period covering 2015-2020, setting out five ambitions, namely “a metropolis that is more breathable, international, with a good quality of life, attractive, cleaner and safer and one with more fluid mobility”.

Named 2018 European Capital of Innovation, Toulouse Metropolis has been identified as a sustainable city management pilot-territory and for the implementation of a new national reference system with a European scope, the “Innovative and Sustainable City Label”.

Driven by this spirit of joint construction, in 2016, Toulouse Metropolis decided to join the global network of FABCITIES, alongside cities such as Paris, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Boston, Medellín; members are committed to fostering a transition towards a self-sufficient and connected city drawing on local resources to underpin a more sustainable and autonomous development.

The Metropolis of tomorrow, a joint construction with business and citizens.
A Fab City action plan

In order to pursue and reinforce its action, Toulouse Metropolis has chosen to draw more on the contribution of Local Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) players, which represent 3,100 businesses and 33,000 jobs, i.e., 8.3% of the territory’s total jobs. The sector enjoyed growth of 8.4% between 2009 and 2018.

Hence, in 2019 it has been discussing the introduction of a “Fab City Action Plan”, developed around 4 priority areas: the dynamic mapping of innovative SSE companies, experimental projects, collaborative projects and calls for citizen projects.

The objective of dynamic mapping is to identify SSE companies offering innovative local goods and services. It is aimed at citizens who see themselves as “proactive responsible consumers” seeking a different approach to consumption. Available on an open data basis and on the “Toulouse” app from the start of 2020, it will be tested before being fully rolled out to citizens. Evolving in nature, it will initially contain data relating to around one hundred companies covering 7 themes: “Eating better, Wasting less and sharing, Acting for the environment, Discovering unusual places, Travelling, Ageing well, Doing business and working differently”.

When nature inspires the city

To address the significant expectations of citizens and climate change issues, Toulouse Metropolis is committed to bringing more nature into the city, rallying citizens to the cause and getting them involved in joint experimental projects and demonstrators with businesses, prior to full-scale roll-out. In 2019:

- As part of the “Forum Toulouse + Verte” (Greener Toulouse Forum) event organized in April 2019, the Metropolis joined forces with the Laboratoire des Usages to run workshops with companies, associations and citizens. The 700 participants came up with proposals such as “providing community composters (managing agent, apartment building, etc.)”; “fewer roads for more green spaces”; “increasing the number of street vegetable gardens”. These proposals have given rise to an action plan for the City of Toulouse (100,000 trees by 2030, etc.).

- With start-up company Kyanos Biotechnologies, a joint construction workshop was organised with citizens concerning the introduction of an algal tree prototype, urban furniture used to cultivate microalgae with a carbon sequestration potential equivalent to one hundred trees. Thanks to photosynthesis, microalgae capture CO₂ and convert it into biomass, then used as fertilizer or turned into plant-based charcoal.

In 2019, Toulouse Metropolis has also launched the fourth Call for Citizen Projects promoting individual or collective initiatives aimed at improving quality of life across the territory. It is launched in partnership with public and private players, including the social innovation incubator “Première Brique” [First Brick], the purpose of which is to support the creation and development of innovative social and solidarity companies. The 2019 call for projects concerns the ecological transition and includes three theme-related awards, in the areas of “Climate”, “Nature in the City” and “Cleanliness”.

- A first “Urban Canopée” [Urban Canopy] demonstrator has been rolled out in partnership with start-up company Urban Canopée, Toulouse Metropolis, the City of Toulouse, the Jeune Chambre Économique [Junior Economic Chamber] and INP-Purpan engineering school for a period of 5 years. Its objective is to install “plant corollae”, connected urban furniture that can be used to trial oases of freshness in paved areas, supporting a more inclusive city that is a pleasant place to live.