

Municipality area	6,85 km ²	Population	71.075 (2007)
Area of green spaces	0,3 km ²	Trend	decreasing
Area of green spaces per inhabitant	Budapest 40 m ² , but only 2 m ² in Józsefváros District		

Józsefváros District of Budapest and its green structure

Budapest is located on the boundary between the Great Hungarian Plain and the Transdanubian Hills. The climatic range of the city is from continental to semi-arid. The River Danube flows through and divides the city into the hilly Buda and the lowland Pest.

Budapest has no coherent green space system and few natural areas are protected.

Józsefváros is one of the 23 districts in Budapest. The district, located within the inner-city on the Pest side, lies about 1 km from the River Danube and exhibits a flat physical land profile. Due to the dual administrative system of governance for the district (city council and local district administration) there are often conflicts of responsibility regarding public space.

The district has a high average density of residential development but is poorly supplied with green and other public spaces: the proportion of green spaces being lower than in the other parts of the city. In the past few years the district has been facing a marked growth in high density building development with consequent declining numbers of open spaces. This situation has brought about a decrease in the amount of publicly owned property and an increase in private ownership.

The district's greenery is similar in profile to Budapest's green spaces: a mosaic-like spatial structure. The distribution of green spaces in Józsefváros is very asymmetrical and can be likened in character to the city as a whole where distinctions exist between the Buda and the Pest sides. The woodland in the district covers an area of 53 km², the public parks 11 km² and the cemeteries 5 km². These 'green' areas, which are all in a poor condition, represent 10.1 %, 2.1 % and 0.9 % respectively of the total land area of Budapest.

The main problems facing Józsefváros which stem from the disintegration of the green system are:

- their low quality;
- poor accessibility;
- insufficient finance to maintain and develop;
- political instability;
- bureaucracy;
- maintenance problems;
- pressures to build on the open spaces; and
- ineffective green planning instruments.

There are some projects which support the development of green spaces in the district. These include: Ecological Corridor of Middle-Józsefváros, Orczy Garden Nature Preservation Project, Botanical Garden Project, Corvin Promenade Project and the Community Gardens in the Magdolna neighbourhood.

Urban green space strategy

The challenges and approach to building an urban green space strategy

The Green Space Strategy which has been prepared for Józsefváros is at the district level of administration. At this level it has to work with a 3-fold ownership system: the city of Budapest, district level ownership and private landowners.

The Strategy is one of the first of its kind in Hungary. It is 'informal' in status as there is currently no specific legislation in the country that requires the formulation of such a strategy. In view of this status the challenge, therefore, is one of disseminating the Józsefváros' Green Space Strategy amongst other Budapest districts and Hungarian cities, as a commendable example of good practice which they may wish to adopt. Within the district it is intended that the Green Space Strategy will be incorporated into the corporate Integrated Urban Strategy for the district.

Rev8 is the responsible party for the formulation of the Green Space Strategy but unfortunately the professional experts of Rev8 and GRI HAS are presently facing low levels of political and public support. The strategy draft is being published, however, as a separate document so that it can be used to increase public and political awareness and understanding of green spaces issues.

The "Green Book" has been prepared as a policy paper to illustrate the local Greenkeys process and demonstrate the potentials for the capital and municipalities regarding green development.

Description of the urban green space strategy**Vision, mission and goals**

Vision: To create a liveable and sustainable district in part of Budapest

Mission: To use the urban green spaces as a tool for social and economic rejuvenation

Goals: integrated green/ecological system; revising the quality of green spaces; using the participatory tools in the green development actions; revising the accessibility of green spaces

The concept and main issues

The City of Budapest's new Environmental Protection Programme, which was launched towards the end of 2007, is the first approach to be aimed at green space improvement at the municipal level. The Programme contains measures to be undertaken which aim to improve the quantity and quality of the green spaces together with protection and management issues. The following topics in the programme relate to the development of green areas:

- To create new green spaces in the densely built-up areas
- To revitalise the underused urban parks
- To revise existing maintenance levels
- To create a park keeper service
- To review the protected green areas and extend their coverage, if possible.

The Green Danube Promenades is one of the programme's projects. This benefits several districts by creating green spaces along the river corridor.

The main issues addressed in the Urban Green Space Strategy draft are:

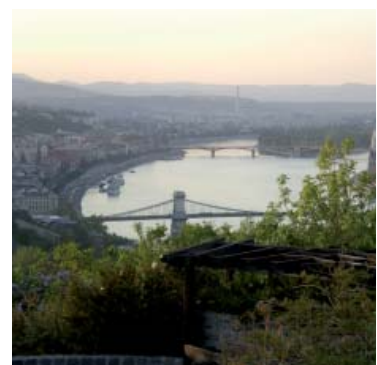
- To create general indicators of the green space system (ecological performance, the provision of urban areas with green space, their character, use and network)
- To analyse the green space hierarchical system and the green space availability in Józsefváros
- To provide suggestions and firm programmed actions for green space improvement.

Important tasks and actions

- Develop the issues concerning green spaces development and incorporate them into the Integrated Urban Strategy
- Prepare and adopt an integrated public space development and comprehensive development plan for the inner part of the district.
- Improve green corridors so as to connect the green areas and the hinterland (to develop an integrated green surface structure)
- Inspire citizens to develop community gardens (to enhance and encourage participative and cooperative green space development)
- Create a public parks revitalisation programme (e.g. Orczy Garden, Botanical Garden, Museum Garden)
- Develop Green Space Monitoring and Green Space Audit systems for Józsefváros

Good practices/lessons learnt

- As a 'bottom up' process the Józsefváros' green space strategy has proved to be a successful planning approach. The Strategy has become a positive influence at the city level in addition to the district, and a very effective means to gain public and political attention and support.
- A small group of professional experts began the formulation of the district's green strategy with an initial growth in political support. As a result of public activities such as workshops, events and local forums the group has increased the awareness and empathy of citizens and politicians about green spaces and their potential.
- To obtain the support of citizens and politicians a number of supporting documents have been prepared, like the Urban Green Book, as policy papers for municipal and public interest.
- Implementation of an urban green space strategy in a situation where there is an absence of legal demands for it and the proposed integration of all important strategy points and issues into the Urban Development Plan, which is a legally binding planning document.
- This is an example of a green space strategy prepared at the district level which also serves as a good example at the more broadly based city and national levels.





Green Project > Mátyás tér

Key data

Name of the project	Improvement of a residential area with green space
Area	0,5 ha
Responsible body	Rev8 Józsefváros Rehabilitation and Urban Development Co.
Size of the project	Small
Progress of the project	Finished April 2008

Short description of the project

The pilot project Mátyás tér is part of a larger programme aimed at improving the existing open and green spaces in the central residential area of Józsefváros. Mátyás tér (Mathias Square) is situated in the periphery of Budapest's inner-city, in one of the earliest built-up areas of Central-Józsefváros. The area is characterised by the very high residential density.

Mátyás tér is of poor quality, it looks unplanned and has no connections to the neighbouring green spaces. One of the most important aspects of the Mátyás tér neighbourhood is its run-down architectural and physical characteristics.

The square was partly renewed in 2002. Currently, the existing vegetation is poor, with low diversity. The regeneration process in 2002 did not affect the original functions of the area: it is still a concentration of homeless people and stands out as having a high rate of prostitution. Since 2005 an integrated social urban regeneration project has been taking place. This also cares for the open space redevelopment which was supported by GreenKeys.

Objectives and goals for the improvement

The main goal of the project is to create quality, well-maintained urban green space with new public functions and good recreational facilities (children's playground, adequate and interesting vegetation structure).

These goals, coupled with the redevelopment objectives of the run-down area around the Mátyás tér are as follows:

- Provide good quality green spaces that reinforce the local identity
- Use green space development to improve the social integration of the neighbourhood
- Involve the local residents in the processes
- Promote green space integration within a 'special' social environment and promote its acceptance by the public
- Improve public security.

Challenges and Problems

- To handle the project within the 3-fold ownership system
- Low political support, no previous experience and therefore a lack of guidance
- The Strategy Group is not the decision making body and from time to time the work doesn't flow systematically in accordance with the GreenKeys guidelines
- Long delays with the procurement procedures
- Despite the efforts made, the participation of local residents was weak and disappointing during the preparatory phases of the project. This increased and improved markedly during the project's implementation.

Actions undertaken

The preparatory phase and the public consultation exercise were completed by the end of January 2006. This commenced with the development of a green concept which was approved by both the Budapest City Council and the District VIII (Józsefváros). This was followed by the design process and the phase of implementation. The project is now in the second phase of implementation.

In total 5-6 financial/funding sources are being used:

- direct EU funding;
- EU funding via GreenKeys (for the first part of implementation);
- funding from the Hungarian Management Authority (ASTUTE);
- City council of Budapest (80% of total budget); and
- Józsefváros district funds.

Planting activities, in cooperation with local citizens, took place at the end of the 2nd implementation phase in 2007.

Maintenance Concept

A special concept for the maintenance of the scheme has been prepared for Mátyás tér involving local stakeholders. Like all other GreenKeys partner cities Budapest and Józsefváros district have linked up the maintenance regime to available resources. Generally the maintenance of the pilot project will be incorporated into the regular maintenance scheme that the municipality has for all of its urban green spaces.

The maintenance of the Mátyás tér has some notable specific aspects. These include the financing of the park keepers and the social workers who are involved in the next period of Magdolna Regeneration Programme (to be financed by the EU). Some tasks belong to the local Civil Council and the local institutes.

Good practices/lessons learnt

- Active public relations encouraged the participation of the citizens in a community which was initially very passive. Local social events, meetings, workshops, etc. were organised to inform, activate, engage with and involve local residents and stakeholders – after these actions the involvement of residents and the acceptance of the project increased substantially;
- This acceptance and willingness to be involved induced a high level of cooperation between the local and other stakeholders. Local partners created a snow ball effect which encouraged the cooperation of other experts and important stakeholders (university and schools);
- The undertaking of surveys to find out the problems, needs and aspirations of local people;
- The involvement of local residents was more successful in the implementation phase than during the preparatory phase of the project;
- The use of different funding sources to finance the implementation of the pilot project: this is not a commonplace approach in Hungary;
- The local project was financed by several smaller financial sources – supported by the Municipality of Budapest, Municipality of Józsefváros, EU projects (GreenKeys and ASTUTE).