



Municipality area	13 km ²	Population	20.000 (2002)
GDP per inhabitant	15170 €/year (for Slovenia 2006)	Trend	decreasing
Area of green spaces	all open spaces: 5,43 km ² ; urban green spaces: 0,43 km ²		
Area of green spaces per inhabitant	271,5 m ² /inh. (all open spaces); 21,5 m ² /inh. (urban green spaces)		

Nova Gorica and its green structure

Nova Gorica is situated within a flat valley, on the edge of Goriška plain and is surrounded by low hills to the north, east and south. The municipality lies close to the border between Slovenia and Italy, hence Nova Gorica has close ties with the Italian city of Gorizia. The maritime climate, with hot summers and mild winters, allows the use of urban green spaces throughout the year.

The city is surrounded by wide green areas which in places penetrate the urban tissue. Within the city there are many smaller green areas: some are already developed as parks whilst others remain untended and unkempt. Panovec urban forest plays a very important role in the city's urban structure as a recreational and leisure facility.

Nova Gorica was planned with a strong influence from the modernism movement as a 'city in green'. This concept is noticeable in the city structure which is distinguished by wide, parallel and perpendicular streets together with intervening built structures and green spaces. These are not, however, equally distributed within the urban fabric and some residential areas, especially those that are newly built, suffer from a deficiency of urban green spaces.

There is an accelerating trend to give up agricultural land use within the urban area. This results in deterioration into unused accommodation land and building plots for development of new residential areas. As the expansion of the city is limited there are pressures to preserve those spaces which have not yet been built upon.

There are some studies and projects (ecological stability, protection of biotopes and species, vulnerability of recreation areas) that support the development of urban green spaces. To achieve this, minor problems remain such as insufficient finance, political instability, bureaucracy, maintenance, an ineffective green planning system, lack of cooperation within the administration and growing pressures to build on the areas.

Another problem the city is confronted with relates to questions of land ownership following independence. The issue of ownership of most of the major green spaces within the high density residential areas is still proceeding before the competent court. The tendency to privatize public space through this judicial process can lead to a limiting and shrinking of public green spaces. The challenge of the municipality is to prevent the spread of this process and to secure ownership of urban green spaces.



Urban green space strategy

The challenges and approach to building an urban green space strategy

There is no legally binding spatial legislation for Green Space Strategy development in Slovenia, so the municipality chose not to accept the Green Space Strategy as an independent document.

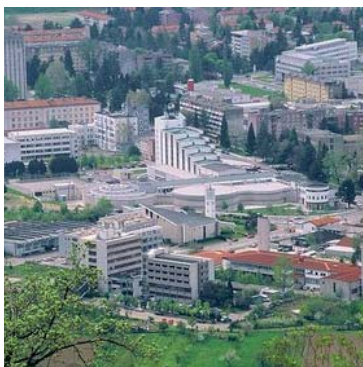
A working version of such a document has been created by the city administration while working on the Green Strategy issue. As a consequence of this work we now have a preliminary draft of the Green Space Strategy which provides:

- the vision;
- goals;
- guidelines for modifying appropriate spatial documents and administrative acts (such as the master plan, the town's urban plan, its strategic and implementing section, ordinances on maintenance of public areas, ordinance on the city appearance);
- guidelines on green space typology (type, inventory, quality, deficiencies, policy).

The Strategy foresees:

- the establishment of required registers, such as the green areas register, and the planted species register;
- how and when set goals are to be reached;
- the basic coordination amongst task performers; and
- the completion of the basic goal of the draft – presenting the Green Space Strategy to the City Council to gain its approval.

At the present time there is a low level of political and public support for preparing the Green Space Strategy. The first and most important challenge is to raise public awareness and political interest about importance and benefits of a Green Space Strategy for the city. A public information publication about the possibilities and challenges of urban green in the city has been prepared as a first step towards the Green Space Strategy. Once the publication has been presented to the municipal administration to get legal support the development of the strategy will follow.



Description of the urban green space strategy

Vision, mission and goals

Vision: A green city within a healthy and pleasant environment, with well designed and maintained green spaces, which are always accessible to the public.

Goals: - to encourage the use of green spaces

- to enhance awareness about the importance of urban green spaces among all stakeholders - so as to increase interest in investing in public green spaces
- to define and maintain a diversified green system of the city (parks, green corridors, playgrounds, etc)

The concept and main issues

In urban, strategic and executive documents, the aim is to define urban green areas:

- to set down a clear framework to categorise green spaces for different uses and locations (green spaces of modernism, green spaces in neighbourhoods, green avenues, parks, historical parks, cemeteries, rose gardens)
- to document all green spaces, their quality, facilities, problems and needs, policies and guidelines, recommendations, standards

Guidelines will be set throughout the executive and spatial documents for each type of green space in Nova Gorica.

Important tasks and actions

- Documentation of all green spaces
- Implementation of the guidelines for managing, maintaining and protecting green areas in the city and in the municipality
- Organisation of a public event entitled 'enjoy your urban green' which will be held annually in different green areas of the city

Good practices/lessons learnt

- How to take the first steps, with low levels of support, in building the strategy in a situation which is not legally binding and how to raise awareness about the importance of urban green.
- The setting down of guidelines for each type of green space. It is important to connect all types of green space in a system/network and prepare some general guidelines.
- The experiences to be gained from the inclusion of stakeholders and from a public-private partnership. The private initiative (HIT, tourist concern) co-financed the development of urban green space (children's playground and skate park). 2 examples:

1. Children's playground

- A local artist made thousands of daisies out of waste plastic bottles and planted them in front of the community building. He sold flowers and donated all the money he collected towards the building of a central children's playground in the city park. This gave rise to a high level of very effective publicity.
- The amount of money collected was not sufficient to completely fund the playground but the level of public awareness became so high after this action that the project caught the interest and attention of politicians and other decision makers. When the community asked HIT (the main gambling company, situated near the planned playground) to cofinance the project, the company agreed. Some other small companies also collaborated financially.
- As the municipality owns the land, the children's playground was built in a very short time period of one year.

2. Skatepark

- HIT, the main gambling company, needs a new parking garage. The best location for this is beside Hotel Perla, under the skate park.
- The municipality owns the land and has prepared a plan for this area, which must be adhered to.
- If the company wants permission to build on the municipality land, they have to co-finance the construction of a new skatepark on the top of the parking garage and also invest in some other public infrastructure.
- Agreement has not yet been secured.
- How to use the experiences gained from the pilot projects to help strategic planning. The analytical part of the Pilot Project was of most importance. In this regard the intention was to provide a direct connection between the intervention into the urban green area of the pilot project and the formulation of the urban green strategy.

Two methods were carried out:

- Monitoring the urban green area, where the motions of urban green users were recorded, together with their habits, what they did in the park, when etc. All the actions were mapped precisely and as a consequence very applicable data was secured that can be used further. It is intended to repeat the monitoring after the project has been executed for a short period in order to test its impact, results and any consequences.
- A questionnaire survey among different kinds of users was carried out as part of the 'bottom up' planning strategy. This has provided information about the complete spectrum of problems and potentials concerning the specific topic, including the needs and expectations of users. When considered alongside the 'top down' methods of analysis this approach can lead to a more efficient and effective form of urban planning which highlights spatial problems and potentials at the practical 'grass roots' level.

Both methods used provide very specific viewpoints on the problems and potentials of our urban green. They also offer pointers to practical and achievable directions and guidelines that may be included in the resulting spatial planning documents or actions.





Green Project > City park of Nova Gorica

Key data

Area	5 ha
Targeted users	Dwellers of city centre Youth, Residents of the city, spending time in the city centre
Responsible body	municipality of Nova Gorica
Size of the project	relatively small
Progress of the project	Finished in May 2008

Short description of the project

The project is located in the city centre, between the city access roads and the main administrative offices and institutions.

The park is divided into the larger southern part which possesses a more natural aspect covered with tall pine trees, and the smaller northern part which is more urbanized. In the centre of the park is a pond, (serving as a hinterland water retainer) which has developed a distinctive habitat for birds, including several families of ducks. This part of the park, which accommodates a meteorological station, is not readily accessible by the public and is devoid of access routes and facilities. During the day it is seldom used by walkers and in the evening becomes a location where the marginal population gathers. The edges of the park are poorly defined and the overall area is gradually being reduced through the incursion of parking lots. In the northern part there is a skating area which is frequented by young people. In general, the park lacks access routes and facilities for its functions. A new playground in the south-west part was constructed within the last 2 years (2006-7).

Objectives and goals for the improvement

- Increase the accessibility and usability of the park during the day by different social groups.
- Improve the urban quality of the park within the city centre.
- Provide recreational facilities for children and young people within the park and improve the overall urban green.
- Improve security.
- Preserve flora and fauna.

Challenges and Problems

How to improve safety

Actions undertaken

The implementation of a pilot project, divided into two stages:

The first is analysis stage: using questionnaire results (published in September 2007) to determine the specific needs of users, this stage was completed during 2006.

The infrastructural stage: involves the implementation of facilities based on the information gained from the first stage. This commenced in 2006 and it was completed in September 2007.

Maintenance Concept

The Municipality of Nova Gorica has not made any special arrangements for the maintenance of the GreenKeys Green Project. The maintenance of the project will be incorporated into the regular maintenance regime that the municipality operates for all its urban green spaces. Like all other GreenKeys partner cities Nova Gorica has linked maintenance with the availability (or otherwise) of financial resources.

Good practices/lessons learnt

1. Organisation of a public-event ('enjoy your urban green') with the collaboration of stakeholders. Good publicity and PR activities (articles in papers, news on local radio, internet), workshops with experts, local residents and children. This has educated people about the new situation in the park and encouraged the higher use of the area, reducing crime risks.
2. Funding through donations from local artists and businesses.
3. The conducting of good quality research about users of the park and their needs. The research aimed to demonstrate the relationship between urban green and its users, to educate through experiencing the urban green and to redefine contemporary guidelines for managing and implementing urban green areas.
4. Using research and monitoring the needs of the people besides the new location has encouraged a higher numbers of visitors.