



Municipality area	5,06 km <sup>2</sup>	Population	47.428 (2001)
GDP per inhabitant	no data available at this scale	Trend	increasing
Area of green spaces	all green spaces: 0,25 km <sup>2</sup> ; urban green spaces: 0,11 km <sup>2</sup>		
Area of green spaces per inhabitant	5,3 m <sup>2</sup> /inh. (all green spaces); 2,3 m <sup>2</sup> /inh. (urban green spaces)		



### Xanthi and its green structure

Xanthi is located in northeast part of Greece amongst the foothills of the Rodopi mountain range and on the alluvial plain that extends south to the Thracian sea. Surrounded by hills the climate is mid-humid Mediterranean continental with mild summers, and cold winters. The river Kosynthos divides the city in two: the historical old town and the modern city.

The city is cited in 'UN best practices' for its sustainable policies and the preservation of its cultural heritage.

The open space ratio is below the national average for Greece, which is around 3.5 m<sup>2</sup>/inhabitant. This is due to the fast population growth which occurred mainly during the period from 1980 to 2000. The fiscal incentives policy neglected to safeguard the open spaces and the sustainable development of the urban environment. This has resulted in a lack of green spaces in some parts of the city and a general lack of suitability of existing open spaces for public use. There are 5 major parks serving the whole city, along with less developed small parks in some neighbourhoods. One of the attractive green spaces in the city is the peri-urban natural forest north of Xanthi, which is rich in flora and fauna, of significant size and easily accessible by all means of transport.

The major problems facing the green spaces are:

- insufficient finance,
- continuous maintenance,
- bureaucracy,
- ineffective green planning instruments; and
- the competition between open spaces and housing development.

There is a conflict between private citizens and the municipality over the land ownership because of a lack of Municipal Land Register records.

### Urban green space strategy

#### The challenges and approach to building an urban green space strategy

The challenges of green space strategy are connected to the fast population growth and the need for housing,

Another challenge is the lack of administrative and planning experience amongst the municipality departments. The need to establish cooperation between the municipal departments has resulted in a very slow development of the strategy.

#### Description of the urban green space strategy

##### Vision, mission and goals

###### Vision:

Meet the national standard for the provision of urban green areas per inhabitant in the city.

###### Mission:

Establish a sustainable pedestrian network connecting the green spaces and increase their sustainable use.

#### The concept and main issues

The main issues are:

To increase the quantity of green spaces which could influence the general development plan, as there is no integrated development plan

To raise public awareness about the importance of green spaces through public events and the involvement of stakeholders (including the university)

**Guidelines, recommendations, standards**

A part of the national averages, which are rather weak compared to EU standards. There are presently no other guidelines to follow.

**Important tasks and actions**

- to secure the ownership of the municipal urban green spaces
- to incorporate the improvement of green spaces within the general development plan
- to organize public events (workshops, presentations, meetings, etc.) for different target groups

**Good practices/lessons learnt**

The lessons learnt from the Xanthi experience revolve around what is possible and the measures needed to start the process of building a strategy for green spaces in very difficult, non supportive situations. These include:

- The administrative and planning problems (ineffective municipality administration, no experience in inter-departmental cooperation, especially regarding green spaces) make the development of the strategy very slow.
- Action to raise public awareness and collaboration with different institutions (university) and stakeholders could have a good influence – to push the process forward.
- Cooperation with the university and integration of urban green development and governance in the educational process brings some good results at different levels (raising awareness, starting with the urban green space topic).



### Green Project > Limnio Park

#### Key data

Area	1,8 ha
Targeted users	Residents of the neighbouring communities Students of the University's Polytechnic School Users of the municipal swimming pool
Responsible body	Local authority of the municipality
Size of the project	Medium



#### Short description of the project

The goal of the project is to improve the quality of the existing park. This has considerable potential to influence the traditional old part of the city, the bordering areas of the banks of river Kosynthos and the open market area of Pazari. The project is located within walking distance of the city centre, next to the University's Polytechnic School and near to a public swimming pool. The surroundings are either areas with deficits of green spaces or with no green space at all. A Saturday open market takes place in the area and this makes the site more popular. The site is flat for the most part with a large basin or depression in the centre. The site is currently utilised as a recreation and walking area, however it lacks amenities.



#### Objectives and goals for the improvement

- Improve the image of the surrounding neighbourhoods
- Improve the 'green' quality of the space.
- Encourage different social groups to use the site.
- Increase safety.

#### Challenges and Problems

- Conflicts with the business activities taking place within the site.
- Changes from the initial plan concept into a different concept that needs collaboration with local stakeholders (university, schools, local residents).
- Limited involvement by local people (mainly sport clubs of the area).
- A lack of motivation and/or human resources on the part of the municipal departments involved has caused delays and a reduction both in effectiveness and public acceptance.



#### Actions undertaken

The park character on the eastern part of the site is well maintained, but there is a need for the mapping out of paths and small-scale embellishments. There has been a redefinition of the project and a readjustment of the budget. In addition, a contract was signed with a private consultant at the beginning of October 2007. Part of the site is being used for open air cultural activities. The initial plans provided for an existing open-air coffee shop to be moved away by December 2006. This did not materialise in light of an existing contract of uncertain legal status. According to the contract the coffee shop will remain in operation there until the end of December 2007. This situation impacted on the initial plan and necessitated a revision. Recently, the neighbouring university (School of Architecture) has organised public activities and competitions for the design of the whole site by their students, in co-operation with students from the elementary schools. Xanthi also organised with the University an international seminar about urban green, and undertook the task of making a model of the redesigned park.



#### Maintenance Concept

The maintenance of the Green Project will be incorporated into the regular maintenance scheme for the municipality that addresses all of the city's urban green spaces.

New ideas were introduced during the international seminar week organised in the Limnio park in mid November. There is, however, no implementation to date of any of these ideas in light of the complexity of bureaucratic procedures.

#### Good practices/lessons learnt

- Activation by the municipality of different groups interested in the park's renovation.
- Integration of the project into the educational schemes of the University