

ÉRD



CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

ÉRD CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

2022

Roads and Routes for Relief- How to transform Érd
from a commuter town into a vibrant, green suburb?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Edited by | Éva Bördös

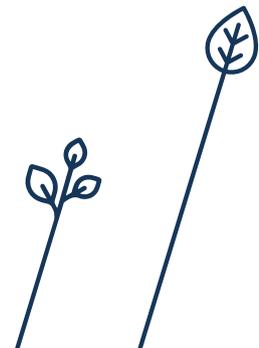
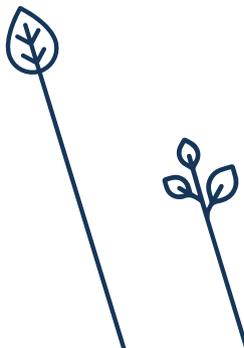
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FOREWORD BY THE MUNICIPAL LEADERS OF THE CITY OF ÉRD

For a more lovable and livable city

According to historians, citizens' assemblies were already used in the ancient Greek civilizations that were the cradles of modern democracies. Our municipal government also saw such an assembly as a fabulous opportunity for actively engaging the residents of Érd to find solutions for our most pressing local concerns. Érd, one of the youngest and most dynamically developing municipalities in Hungary, is a typical suburban area; it sprawls across a vast area and is plagued by numerous problems that suburban areas tend to struggle with. Thus, for example, infrastructural and institutional development tends to lag behind the growing population size; our desire to conserve green spaces clashes with the need to establish industrial and economic zones in the city; we lack local subcenters in the city and, in some cases, neighborhood communities have not yet been established either. Traditional decision-making methods do not always make it easy to find solutions to the dilemmas confronting municipal leaders. That is why we called our citizens' assembly "Ways and Ways Out" so that, like Miskolc and Budapest before us, we too would start from a "point zero" in seeking answers to these questions.

Working with the DemNet Foundation and its expert staff, we created a brand-new forum to debate and ascertain what the local public wants; this is the greatest conceivable help for local decision-makers. After all, what could be more comforting for a decision-maker than the knowledge that their decisions certainly meet the needs and desires of the citizens in their city? The "mini-Érd" we created using statistical methods, the Citizens' Assembly convened based on this method, was representative of our local

citizenry and proffered real-time and effective responses to our most pressing problems.

The need for ongoing feedback from the citizens has always characterized our governing philosophy. To this end, we have actively relied on social media platforms, organized public forums, and deployed other online instruments to solicit the views of local residents. But this new form of participation allowed us to gain a much more comprehensive picture of the opinion of locals about the issues we raised. That is why we were delighted to see that an extraordinarily high number of Érd residents registered to participate in this progressive and innovative forum.

The Assembly was held at the best time possible since we had just finished the social consultation about our new climate strategy, and we were also in the process of putting the finishing touches on our Sustainable City Development Strategy. We were able to organically integrate the results of the Citizens' Assembly into the latter.

Having completed all this, it is now up to us, the leaders of our municipality, to ensure that the proposals adopted by the Assembly members are reflected in our decisions, thereby laying a whole new foundation for the dialogue between the residents and the municipal leadership.

Dr László Csőzik

Mayor

Érd Municipal Government

Örs Tetlák

Deputy Mayor

Érd Municipal Government



FOREWORD BY THE ORGANIZERS

Taking action rather than just drifting along; planning rather than frantically putting out fires

Drifting and putting out fires – many feel that recently these terms have best captured their lives. For years now, national and global crises have followed closely on the heels of each other, forcing us to adapt rapidly. These cast doubt on how evident it is that the world as we know it will continue to be the same next year – or even tomorrow, for that matter.

Nevertheless, despite the many difficulties, fears, and anxieties that the underlying changes give rise to, being forced out of our comfort zone also holds out many opportunities. One such opportunity, for example, is that we can rethink our priorities, we can launch a process of rebuilding or fixing the problems in our environment – together and effectively. Because when if not now? And with whom, if not together?

Are we going to allow the concept of democracy to be hollowed out further, for it to be reduced to meaningless and often misleading slogans? Are we actually going to deepen the trenches that separate people from one another? Or will we finally acknowledge that this is not productive for society overall and not at all satisfactory for citizens either?

It is, after all, the citizens who experience – or suffer, as the case may be – in their everyday lives how a community, a city, or a country functions. They see the problems that need to be fixed and – our experience with citizens' assemblies in recent years has clearly demonstrated this – they are glad to share their knowledge and experience and to work together towards a worthy goal. Forgoing this collective will and wisdom would simply be too much of a luxury.

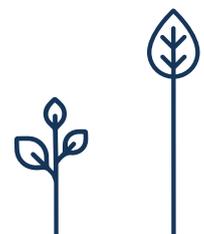
Because of its proximity to Budapest, the pressure on Érd keeps increasing every year. The city is developing dynamically, which goes hand in hand with an explosion in the population size and the traffic passing through Érd. These developments obviously confront the city with new challenges and have escalated some pre-existing tensions, too.

Faced with this situation, Érd's leadership has decided to seize the opportunity to talk to and brainstorm jointly with the residents: It is the third city in Hungary to host a citizens' assembly to this end.

The Érd Citizens' Assembly focused on how a municipality could transform from a regular suburb into a green suburb. This issue mobilized residents and spurred them to identify collective answers – answers in which the city overall would be just as invested as each resident of Érd.

To what extent the proposals born out of collective wisdom can be transformed into actual practice is now in the hands of the decision-makers. At the same time, based on the participants' feedback, it is readily apparent that those who took part in the Assembly have felt the intense potential and pleasure that comes from thinking about these issues jointly with others. As many of those who took part put it: bridges were created – bridges between the members of the community and bridges linking the community and its decision-makers. Preserving and reinforcing these bridges is our common interest and responsibility.

Éva Bördös
the Director of DemNet



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How could Érd transform from an ordinary commuter town into a living city? How could it become greener, more livable, and home to a more vibrant community? That was the question explored by 50 randomly selected Érd residents in the summer of 2022, during the city's first-ever Citizens' Assembly. The Assembly, which spanned two full weekends (from June 11-12 and June 25-26), was jointly planned and implemented by the municipal government of the City of Érd, DemNet, and a team of experts.

In terms of its population, Érd has been among the most dynamically developing Hungarian cities over the past three decades. However, this growth has also been accompanied by many challenges: the limited options in terms of local transportation; the increasingly congested road network between Budapest and Érd, which is burdened by the growing commuter traffic; and the lack of a real city center that is worthy of a city of Érd's size – these have emerged as issues that influence the Érd residents' quality of life regardless of age, gender, or life circumstances.

In this situation, the city's leadership has recognized that it could react most effectively to these challenges by involving the community and soliciting its active participation in the efforts to identify potential solutions. To this end, as the third city in Hungary to do so, it convened a citizens' assembly.

In May 2022, 10,000 randomly selected Érd residents were invited to participate in the Érd Citizens' Assembly. From the ranks of those who responded to the invitation sent out by the municipality (375 people), DemNet chose 50 people by lot, making sure in the process that this group would be representative of the adult population of Érd in terms of gender, age group, educational attainment, and the various neighborhoods of this

city. These became the members of the Érd Citizens' Assembly.

Over the two weekends allocated to the Assembly, with the help of experts the members discussed the most pressing issues concerning the city's infrastructure and transportation, analyzed the various aspects of the issues involved, shared their experiences and opinions, and, at the end of the process, they jointly formulated and voted to adopt a package of seven proposals, which they presented to the leaders of Érd.

The complete package of adopted proposals contains the following items: 1) promoting safe transportation and the reduction of automobile traffic by rethinking the Érd road system and greater support for bike traffic; 2) making the city more attractive for businesses with a smaller ecological footprint, which could help increase Érd's revenues and create jobs locally; 3) reviewing the city's infiltration trench system and building an effective rainwater collection system to improve water management; 4) creating several city subcenters by rethinking community spaces and public spaces, augmented by community-building processes; 5) creating more green areas in the city; 6) fostering local tourism and creating more leisure opportunities for local residents; 7) completely reconceptualizing Érd's central parking system.

As a result of the Citizens' Assembly, a real dialogue emerged on how the city could become more livable, and how implementing the Assembly's proposals could serve the city's sustainable development. The Citizens' Assembly could also constitute a major step in promoting community life in the city and help give rise to a new form of municipal self-governance based on genuine partnership.



WHAT IS A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY?

Although the citizens' assembly is a fairly new phenomenon in Hungary, it has been successfully used in many countries around the world. It seeks to improve and make more effective the involvement of citizens, the members of the community, in public affairs and political decision-making and to boost the principle of participatory democracy. The objective of a citizens' assembly is for randomly selected members of a given community – who are representative of the community based on certain demographic indicators (e.g., age, gender, and education) – to come together and participate in a process of learning and public deliberation, and to use these to draft policy proposals aimed at solving problems involving vital issues confronting their community. During the process, the participants receive help from recognized and independent experts who help them learn about the relevant facts and see how different issues are interconnected. At the same time, these experts also help ensure that the assembly members learn about dissenting expert opinions and are exposed to various viewpoints. The debates are led by impartial, trained, and experienced facilitators whose job is to ensure that all participants can actively contribute to the work of the assembly and that every voice is heard.

Although they are easily customized to match a specific set of circumstances, citizens' assemblies need to adhere to some strict methodological features and recommendations that consider the following criteria and principles:

◀ Impartiality

The implementation of the citizens' assembly, including the planning of the process and its program, is performed by actors who operate independently of the decision-makers. Correspondingly, all those who participate in shaping the process, the organizers, experts, and facilitators, are independent of

the decision-makers. Those involved in the implementation, individuals as well as organizations, must be free of conflicts of interest that could affect their activities in the framework of the citizens' assembly.

◀ Equality

Every community member needs to have an equal chance to become a member of the citizens' assembly. In addition to the above, during the recruitment and implementation phases alike, everyone needs to have equal access to all the relevant information concerning the citizens' assembly.

◀ Inclusivity

Citizens' assemblies are inclusive. The organizers and the staff do their utmost to consider and accommodate individual circumstances during both the process of recruitment as well as the subsequent implementation phase, to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate in a citizens' assembly and to be actively involved in the process.

◀ Balance

Citizens' assemblies are impartial and free from the influence of interest groups. A variety of viewpoints and positions are discussed on the issues raised in the assemblies, and the participants are free to weigh these against each other. Everyone can share their opinion during the assembly, as long as they are respectful towards the opinions of others.

◀ Transparency

Citizens' assemblies are transparent and the essential information about the implementation is publicly disseminated. Some segments of the assembly are open to the press and outside observers are also allowed to attend.

The use of citizens' assemblies...

- ◀ strengthens democracy;
- ◀ reduces political inequalities;
- ◀ improves democratic debate culture;
- ◀ makes the cooperation between the decision-makers and citizens more effective;
- ◀ creates a higher level of public trust; and
- ◀ the assemblies provide genuine public support for the policy decisions subsequently adopted.

Over the past two decades, more than 400 citizens' assemblies have been held in over 20 countries across the globe, involving assemblies at the local, national, and international levels. In Hungary, the first local-level citizens' assembly that enjoyed the support of local decision-makers was held in the fall of 2020 in Budapest; another assembly followed in Miskolc in the fall of 2021. This makes Érd the third city in Hungary where this innovative method is used to improve local decision-making.



AZ ELSŐ ÉRDI KÖZÖSSÉGI GYŰLÉS

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

DemNet and the municipal government of the city of Érd launched consultations on the implementation of a citizens' assembly in December 2021. The planning process took several months and was managed by a coordination body composed of representatives from DemNet and the Érd municipal government. This coordination body was responsible for planning the assembly and its smooth implementation. The respective responsibilities and assignments were clearly delineated within the team; two senior experts and a senior facilitator also actively participated throughout the entire process.

In planning the Érd Citizens' Assembly, the organizers drew heavily on the experience collected from previous assemblies held in September 2020 in Budapest and the fall of 2021 in Miskolc, as well as several citizens' assemblies realized at the municipal level in other countries around the world.

After several months of preparations, the first Érd Citizens' Assembly was finally held at the Érd Vigadó. The sessions spanned two weekends, June 11-12 and June 24-25, 2022.

EXPERT CONSULTATION

As one of the first steps in preparing the Citizens' Assembly, the coordination body went through several rounds of consultations to review the challenges faced by the city, the issues that typically deeply divide Érd residents, and the objectives that the city leadership wishes to realize. The goal of the consultations was to identify issues for the Citizens' Assembly that could promote the city's sustainable development, are of critical importance for the city's residents, and can provide the municipal leadership with vital assistance in planning future policies.

The consultations were also augmented by a round of deliberations scheduled to last half a day involving outside experts and stakeholders. The purpose of this closed event – which involved the representatives of the municipality, local and national NGOs, the private sector, and delegates of the municipality's background institutions – was to gauge whether the groundwork preparing the assembly was genuinely reflective of the concerns of Érd residents, and to make sure that this vital work is carried out with the broadest possible inclusion of experts and stakeholders. This consultation was a substantial asset for the organizers and the experts who managed the assembly in their efforts to narrow the potential topics to be discussed and to identify the key challenges confronting the city.

ÉRD: A CITY OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES – THE TOPIC OF THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

In terms of its population, Érd has been one of the most dynamically developing cities over the last three decades. It holds several records in Hungary and is a unique mixture between a typical Hungarian suburb and a typical commuter town known from international examples. As part of this evolution, the city has grown excessively in many respects. In terms of infrastructure and the services available, Érd has not been able to keep up with the rapid growth of its population.

The above has led to a situation in which many challenges and unspoken tensions burden the lives of Érd residents. The cohesive power of local communities has also been unable to provide effective solutions to these problems since, on account of the many new residents, the ties between the locals are either still weak or non-existent.

Although generally it is good news when a municipality in a country with a declining population attracts an ever-growing number of new residents, at the same time this also gives rise to many challenges that the city previously did either not have to contend with at all or at least not to the extent experienced today. The local residents and the experts alike agree that the situation has an increasingly deleterious impact on the quality of life since the city is often noisy and overcrowded, the air quality is frequently bad, while the absence of local services compels a higher than necessary number of residents to commute to Budapest regularly. Furthermore, Érd does not have an urban center befitting a city of its size, and the locals often do not genuinely identify as „Érders.“

To a significant extent, the challenges center on the issues of public spaces and traffic/transportation: The limited options for local transport and the low quality of roads are problem areas, and the same holds for commuting. With respect to the latter, the public roads going in the most important direction, towards Budapest, are increasingly overcrowded. The high share of automobiles has massive adverse effects. Although the railroad connection is improving, traveling by train remains a challenge for many since access to railway stations is often difficult. These processes have emerged as issues with a fundamental impact on the quality of life of many Érd residents – regardless of age, gender, or life situation.

However, these local challenges are not specific to Érd; they are closely associated with the general problems that plague the Budapest metropolitan area, the nation, and the world. Automobile use not only gives rise to congestion, noise, and bad air, but also significantly contributes to the continuously increasing amounts of carbon dioxide emissions. If we want to preserve our civilization and leave it behind in a more or less functional state for our grandchildren’s generation, we need to abandon the use of oil, coal, and gas by the second half of the century. Everyone, including the residents of Érd, has a responsibility in this monumental undertaking. We need to find ways of transportation that we can use without devastating our climate further.

When it comes to climate change, we are prone to ask first what we ourselves, as individuals, can do to prevent our climate from collapsing. However, while individual action is essential, at the same time it is also important to realize that changes in the latter will only have a limited impact since a major portion of our emissions stems from community-level systems, including the energy and transportation networks. Thus, to protect our environment, actions taken by local communities and central governments are at least as important as the sum of individual contributions. It would not help if everyone suddenly wanted to use bicycles to move about when the necessary bike routes and parking facilities are not available!

As a novel form of social dialogue, the Érd Citizens’ Assembly does not limit itself to drafting responses to the local challenges of transportation and urban development, but also wishes to serve the needs of long-term global sustainability. Hence, it seeks to answer the following question:

How can we turn Érd from a commuter town into a green city?



OPEN CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROGRAM

Following the closed consultations and the drafting of the central questions that the Érd Citizens' Assembly would address, we issued an open call in early May to ensure that we would not gloss over some key ideas and proposals that merit consideration. The call asked organizations and experts with an interest in the issues discussed by the Assembly to indicate if they wished to convey their perspectives and ideas to the members of the Citizens' Assembly. The experts managing the Citizens' Assembly subsequently did their best to integrate into the Assembly's agenda the roughly half a dozen proposals submitted in response to our open call.

DATA PROTECTION

In keeping with the effective data protection rules, the organizers designed a complex data protection protocol in the preliminary phase of the Citizens' Assembly; this was meant to ensure that the protection of the personal data submitted by potential participants and the eventual members of the Citizens' Assembly would be safeguarded throughout the entire process. Érd residents were informed about data protection issues in the appendix attached to the invitation to join the Assembly. Furthermore, the relevant information was also available on the respective websites of Érd and DemNet.

PER DIEM

The organizers agreed that the members of the Citizens' Assembly would receive 40,000 forints each in tax-exempt benefits, along with a gift set, in recognition of their dedicated work and the fact that they devoted two full weekends to the Citizens' Assembly.

FACILITATION

A The chief facilitator of the Citizens' Assembly was Szilvia Zsargó, and her work was assisted by a total of nine independent facilitators (Áron Csere, Attila Ész, Éva Fekete, Ádám Kobrizsa, Donát Lánszki, Krisztina Leba, Katalin Mokos, Anna Molnár, and Zoltán Váradí), who worked at the various tables. The team of facilitators was responsible for ensuring that during the two weekends dedicated to the Citizens' Assembly, the work of the Assembly would be successful and follow the previously outlined guidelines for the process while also considering the participants' needs. The two senior facilitators were further also responsible for the methodologically proper implementation of the Citizens' Assembly, the detailed agenda, and conducting the individual sessions of the Assembly.

We also used visual facilitation techniques at the Érd Citizens' Assembly. The wonderful drawings by Krisztina Halmi (www.visuama.hu) were created live with the artist staying near the tables, putting the ideas of the presenters and Assembly participants into a visual form. Thanks to this spectacular technique, everyone was able to easily recall the key ideas expressed during the sessions of the Assembly. At the same time, it was also instrumental in conveying to outsiders what had transpired at the Assembly. The drawings were exhibited at the Érd City Hall between the two sessions of the Citizens' Assembly.

THE SELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ÉRD CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

A core methodological element of organizing citizens' assemblies is the multi-stage, random selection process based on which participants are selected. This is the best way to ensure that all members of the given community – in this case, the entire adult population of Érd – have an equal chance to be chosen to participate in the Assembly.

So what exactly does this process look like, and what instruments do we use to this end?

THE STAGE OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

Data request

The Municipality of Érd contacted the Deputy State Secretary's Office for Data Registers (a department at the Ministry of Interior) in April 2022, requesting that the latter provide the municipal government with the addresses of 10,000 randomly selected Érd citizens who are representative of the city population overall based on their age and gender.

In the second week of May, the mayor of Érd, Dr. László Csőzik, sent the selected 10,000 Érd residents an invitation, asking them to register for the Érd Citizens' Assembly. Neither the municipal government nor DemNet had any influence on who the 10,000 people initially selected to receive an invitation were.

Registration

Those who received invitations had until May 31st to register for the Citizens' Assembly.

During the registration period, the organizers set up a special phone line that the invitees could use to register. This telephone service was maintained by the Municipality. Citizens could ask any questions by calling this phone number or contacting DemNet. Through these channels, we also extended technical assistance for registering online. Furthermore, this phone line, along with the contact information for DemNet, which was also available to potential participants, allowed citizens who were interested to ask questions or request technical instructions on registering online.

Throughout the entire registration period, the Municipality and DemNet used a wide variety of forums to inform citizens about the Citizens' Assembly. The local press regularly reported on the planned event, and Érd citizens also encountered billboards placed by the municipal government at bus stations and other traffic hubs. Furthermore, the staff of the Municipality was also available to answer questions at the Children's Day organized by the city, at the Érd picnic held at the end of May, and during the climate week event series. On location, they encouraged the Érd residents at these events to register for the Assembly if they had received an invitation to participate.



All registrations were handled through the HubSpot system, which was managed by DemNet. The registration data was also transferred to the HubSpot system if a citizen indicated their desire to participate by calling the hotline. The HubSpot system automatically assigned a random identification number to everyone who registered, and the number was sent out to each registered person in an automated message.

Representativeness

One of the principles underlying citizens' assemblies is that based on certain key demographic indicators, the participants need to make up a representative cross-section of the given community's adult population. To calculate the target figures to make the sample representative of the general population in terms of age, gender, and educational attainment, we used the relevant data provided by the Ministry of Interior and the Central Statistical Office.

THE TARGETED DEMOGRAPHIC MAKEUP OF THE ÉRD CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATOR	The total population of Érd	Those who registered	Target numbers for selection	Members of the Assembly
Gender				
Female	51,71%	205 (54,7%)	26 (52,0%)	26 (52,0%)
Male	48,29%	170 (45,3%)	24 (48,0%)	24 (48,0%)
Age group				
18-29	15,77%	73 (19,5%)	8 (16,0%)	8 (16,0%)
30-49	39,24%	130 (34,7%)	20 (40,0%)	20 (40,0%)
50-64	22,5%	93 (24,8%)	11 (22,0%)	11 (22,0%)
65+	22,5%	79 (21,1%)	11 (22,0%)	11 (22,0%)
Educational attainment				
Basic level	19,82%	65 (17,3%)	10 (20,0%)	10 (20,0%)
Intermediate level	55,52%	166 (44,3%)	28 (56,0%)	28 (56,0%)
Advanced level	24,66%	144 (38,4%)	12 (24,0%)	12 (24,0%)
City districts				
1	7,5%	22 (5,9%)	4 (8,0%)	5 (10,0%)
2	8,2%	27 (7,2%)	4 (8,0%)	4 (8,0%)
3	8,2%	42 (11,2%)	4 (8,0%)	4 (8,0%)
4	7,9%	31 (8,3%)	4 (8,0%)	3 (6,0%)
5	7,8%	23 (6,1%)	4 (8,0%)	3 (6,0%)
6	7,6%	24 (6,4%)	4 (8,0%)	4 (8,0%)
7	8,6%	42 (11,2%)	4 (8,0%)	3 (6,0%)
8	7,8%	26 (6,9%)	4 (8,0%)	4 (8,0%)
9	9,2%	32 (8,5%)	5 (10,0%)	4 (8,0%)
10	8,6%	32 (8,5%)	4 (8,0%)	4 (8,0%)
11	8,3%	37 (9,9%)	4 (8,0%)	6 (12,0%)
12	10,1%	37 (9,9%)	5 (10,0%)	6 (12,0%)

Notes:

We determined the composition of the adult population of Érd based on the Ministry of Interior's population registry and the 2016 micro-census carried out by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH).

Educational attainment was determined based on the following categories: basic level: 8 years of elementary school education (previously: 4 public or 4 high school classes, in the new system: 9-10 grade, unfinished high school) or vocational training certificate, exam, certificate of mastership, journeyman's certificate, school of professional training

Intermediate level: successful final exam from high school or secondary vocational school (some higher education with a degree) and specialized technical training contingent on successfully passing the high school final exam (excluding apprenticeship exams, however!), (secondary) technical institute, training designated as advanced

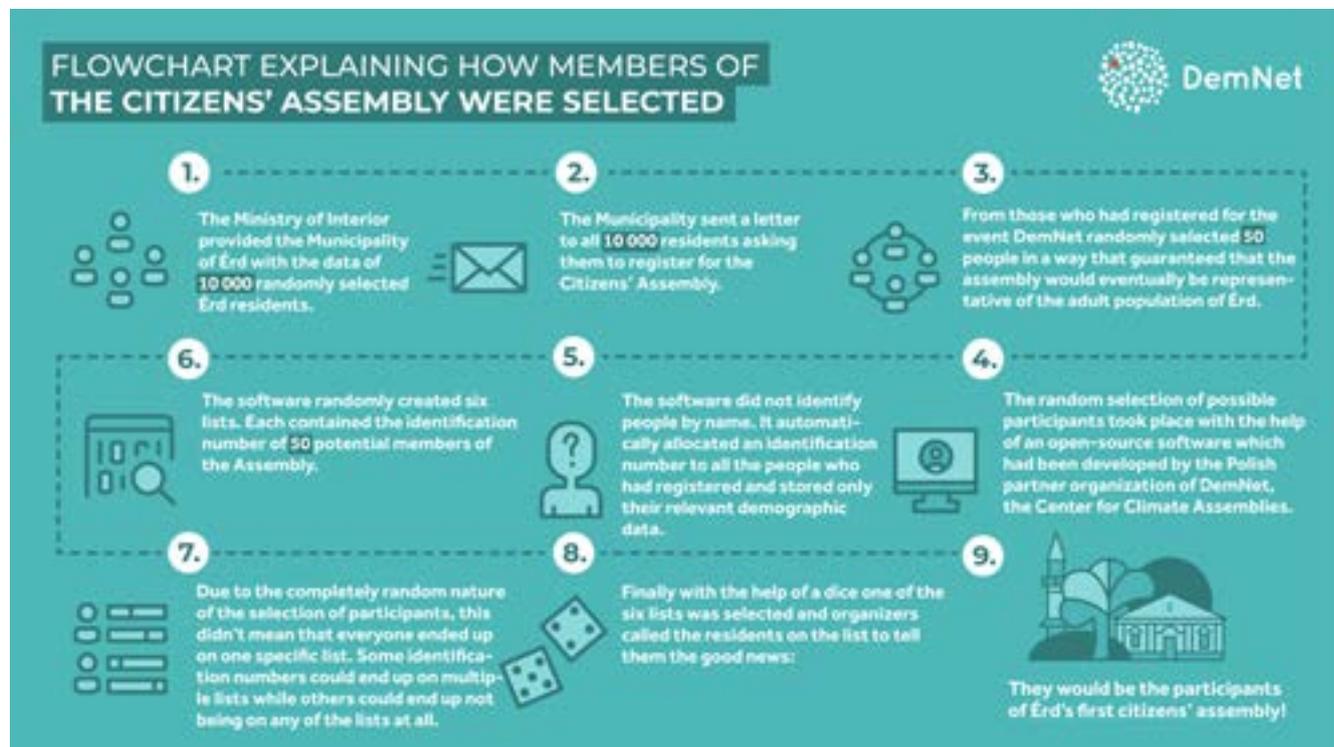
Higher level: college or university diploma.

Since administratively all of Érd is one zip code, and our goal was to make sure that the composition of the Assembly would also be representative of the city's various neighborhoods, we used the municipal electoral districts as the basis for calculating the targeted local distribution based on the addresses within Érd.

Individuals who had registered as non-binary in terms of their gender were then randomly assigned to either the female or the male category. This was necessary because, as of now, the Central Statistical Office's records do not recognize non-binary as a category; hence, this method was the best way to ensure that the composition of the Assembly would be representative of the Érd public in terms of gender.

Lottery

Just like we had experienced in Miskolc, one of the questions that most people were most interested in during the registration period was how the participants of the Citizens' Assembly would be selected. DemNet and the Municipality received numerous questions on the topic both from members of the public and the media. It was also something that came up most frequently in the comments on our social media pages. That is why we made it a priority to not only rigorously follow the established steps of the selection process but also to devote sufficient time and energy to explaining the process to locals and ensuring that it is as transparent as possible. This, too, increased public confidence in the process.



We received 375 valid registrations for the citizens' assembly during the registration period. Following the methodological guidelines, we rejected as invalid those registration requests that were submitted by people persons who had not been initially invited or who submitted their request after the deadline designated in the invitation (which thus everyone was aware of). We could not consider these when in selecting the members of the Citizens' Assembly because doing so would have violated the principle of equality and hence also of randomness.

We selected the actual participants from the list of those who had submitted valid registrations using an open-source software. The software had been developed by DemNet's Polish partner organization, the Center for Climate Assemblies. We had also used the same software to select the members of the Miskolc Citizens' Assembly, which was held in the fall of 2021; our Polish colleagues have used it in several previous citizens' assemblies organized in Poland. The data necessary for selecting the participants was entered into the software in an anonymized manner. Apart from the unique identifier assigned to each person during registration, the software only "knew" their basic demographic data.

In the following step, the software randomly assigned the registered individuals to six distinct groups. Regarding the criterion of random selection, these six lists were the same, thus boosting the randomness of the ultimate selection. All the lists featured the unique identifier number of potential participants, and every list was a 100% match for the demographic target indicators previously designated based on the Central Statistical Office's statistical data.

To ensure maximum transparency, we broadcast the procedure – hosted by Péter Novák, a popular host and entertainer – live on DemNet's Facebook page.

Because of randomness, in some cases individuals were on more than one list while others did not make it onto any of them. We ultimately selected the list comprising the unique identifiers of the planned Citizens' Assembly by casting a die.

In addition to the 50 members, we randomly selected six substitutes in case one of the originally selected full members were to drop out of the process. Like the full members, the substitutes were present during the entire Assembly and received the same benefits for their involvement.

By making the lottery public, we ensured that the entire selection process would be transparent and subsequently available for review and verification. At the end of the process, we contacted the 50+6 registered people we had randomly selected to inform them about the good news: they were the members and substitutes, respectively, of the first Erd Citizens Assembly!

On the first day of the Citizens' Assembly, two of the 50 full members we had selected did not show up, and their places were taken by the substitutes whose demographic profiles were closest to those who had not come. Another member had to cancel their attendance between two rounds for health reasons, and their place was also taken by a substitute. The remaining members of the Assembly stayed involved throughout. As a result, the recommendations in the package of proposals drawn up by the Assembly were voted upon by the originally planned 50 members.



THE STAGES OF THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

FIRST STAGE: LEARNING (June 11-12, 2022)

A key consideration in drafting the program and schedule of the Citizens' Assembly was that by the end of the learning stage, the participants of the event would have a thorough understanding of the challenges facing Érd on account of its situation as a suburban municipality and the population growth it has experienced over the past few years. This was also meant to include a knowledge of the traffic-related problems stemming from the aforementioned developments while also allowing the participants to learn about the benefits and drawbacks of the potential responses to these challenges.

During the learning stage, the participants talked to nine experts in total. It is important to stress that the engagement with the materials presented by the experts was not limited to a passive absorption of the experts' perspective. Each of the 15-minute expert presentations was followed by discussions in smaller groups of 7-8 people who engaged with the materials raised in the presentation. After the internal discussions, each group could ask the expert two questions on the given topic. If the group had more than two questions, the experts answered these in writing before the second weekend of the Assembly.

At the end of the first weekend session, the members of the Citizens' Assembly also had the opportunity to invite further experts – thereby ensuring that the participants would feel genuinely involved in the process as shapers and that, within reasonable limits, they would receive as much information as they felt they needed during the Assembly.

The participation of the press and observers

The first morning session of the Citizens' Assembly was open to the press. During the remaining time, outside observers were allowed to attend. The observers included the staff of NGOs and academic institutions, Érd Municipal Government staff members and elected local officials, as well as six representatives of other municipalities. On the first day of the Assembly's second weekend session, the Polish, Czech, and Slovakian partners of DemNet also attended; on the day before, the deputy mayor of Érd, Örs Tetlák, also met with the foreign guests.

To prevent potential hitches or any outside influence on the internal deliberations, journalists and observers were not permitted to listen in on the activities of the individual working groups we created as part of the Assembly. Journalists were free to turn to the organizers with any questions regarding the Assembly.



To build a sense of trust among the participants, we had them sit at the same table and talk to the same group of Assembly members throughout the entire first day. However, on each of the remaining days of the Assembly, they were assigned to different tables so they could meet and discuss with other participants.

The presentations given in the framework of the Citizens' Assembly looked at the public spaces in Érd and the city's transportation, exploring connections and challenges and looking at the underlying issues from a variety of perspectives. It was clear almost from the very start of the Assembly that building roads alone would not suffice to meet the transportation needs of the continuously growing population of Érd; the surge in the number of cars has created reached levels that the problems that this gives rise to can no longer be managed merely by expanding the road network or the number of lanes. Especially so since the citizens of Érd also want to live in a greener city with cleaner air and take their children's future into account. Correspondingly, looking at alternative modes of transportation, the Assembly discussed the Budapest Suburban Railway Strategy and the situation of rail transportation in general; the issue of bicycle transportation, exploring the challenges the latter faces and the potential avenues of its further development; as well as the present state and future of local and suburban bus transportation.

A recurring question discussed in the Assembly was the ratio of paved areas in the city. Along the same lines, the challenge of rainwater management and the possibilities for expanding green areas also came up.

The presentations at the Citizens' Assembly also touched on the concept of the 15-Minute City, the creation of city subcenters, and urban community development. The mutually reinforcing effect of renewing public spaces and actively stimulating urban community organizations holds out massive potential for improving life in the city. The members of the Citizens' Assembly learned about the existing best practices of community organization, they discussed the factors that currently impede the efforts to improve community life in Érd, and the possibilities for the self-organization of Érd citizens. Community initiatives aimed at the active use of public spaces generate a commitment and a sense of responsibility in the local community, and they provide an important tie between institutions, various organizations, and local residents. These ties contribute to the long-term prospects of the community as well as to their environmentally conscious use of public spaces.



The senior experts and presenters at the Érd Citizens' Assembly

The two senior experts of the Citizens' Assembly, István Bard and Balázs Édes, were responsible for the professional coordination of the Assembly and for drafting the topics discussed.

István Bard

is a climate policy expert who has been working on climate policy, the impact on society of climate change, emissions reductions, and adapting to climate change for twenty years. He is the global climate policy director of the Environmental Defense Fund, the founder-director of the Climate Strategy 2050 Institute, a member of the board of the Hungarian Energy Club, and an external expert for the Equilibrium Institute. Between 2011 and 2015, he served as the founder-director of the Hungarian Energy Efficiency Institute (MEHI). Between 2005 and 2011, he worked in Brussels at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action, focusing on European and international climate policy issues. During his work in the Hungarian public administration between 2002 and 2005, he was in charge of introducing the EU Emissions Trading System in Hungary.

Balázs Édes

is a transport economist who received his degree in Economics from the Corvinus University of Budapest in 2006. His primary focus has been on controlling network-based industries in the fields of transportation, communications, and postal services. As an advisor and an expert, he has participated in transportation projects for over fifteen years. In this capacity, he has previously worked at MÁV (the Hungarian Railway Company) for the office of the company's President and CEO. Subsequently, he worked for the CEO of the Budapest public transportation company BKK until 2014. Balázs Édes regularly takes part in research focusing on urban issues and NGO and citizens' initiatives. He is also a curator at the Contemporary Architecture Centre (Kortárs Építészeti Központ). Currently, he is working on transportation-related issues as a researcher and a freelance advisor.

The experts of the Érd Citizens' Assembly

Bálint Kádár

Associate Professor at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME), Department of Urban Planning and Design, Contemporary Architecture Center (KÉK)

Architect, urbanist, vice dean of the BME's Department of Urban Planning and Design, research fellow and instructor at the BME's Department of Urban Planning and Design. In 2015, he defended his Ph.D. thesis on measuring urban tourism, the conflicts the latter gives rise to and its systemic development. He has been active in public forums involving civic architecture. In that capacity, he has organized numerous conferences, workshops and other architectural events at the memo association before 2006 and at the Contemporary Architecture Center since 2006. He manages his architectural agency and is involved in numerous competitions and exhibitions. His research focuses on exploring the development of historic neighborhoods, and the planning of tourism-related investments and their implications for urban design.

Illés Levente Varga

architect, head of project, Center for Budapest Transport (BKK)

During the first decade of his career, he planned office and residential buildings as an employee and entrepreneur. In the next phase of his career, which spanned seven years, he worked for the municipality of a major town in Fejér County in various positions: as the head of the municipal building and zoning authority, a city manager, and an advisor at the city development committee. He was a member of the team that drew up the first National Climate Change Strategy and was the editor-in-chief of the architectural magazine Ökotrend (Ecotrend). At the Ministry of Interior, he was involved in the development of the electronic system of public administration. As a member of the Center for Budapest Transport (BKK) project management team, he was involved in a variety of projects, including the renovation of the M3 subway line and the planning and design of public spaces. Currently, he leads a project focusing on developing bicycle infrastructure. He is an editor of the erdlako.hu community blog.

Agnes Imrefi

urbanist, National Transportation Center

Her professional focus is on municipal and regional planning, and she is interested in both, the theoretical as well as practical aspects of these issues. As an expert in urban planning at the recently transformed National Transportation Center, she is responsible for ensuring that new developments best serve the needs of the wider public and local residents. She is also personally invested in trying to make sure that these developments do not merely function as elements in the infrastructural chains but also contribute to raising the comfort level of their users. One of her favorite topics is the relationship between suburban areas and Budapest, the question of how the instruments of regional and transportation development could be used to improve the quality of life in our region

Melinda Kádár

spokesperson, Hungarian Bicycle Club

Melinda Kádár is a member of the Hungarian Bicycle Club's communication team. The Bicycle Club has been tirelessly working for 20 years now on promoting bicycle-friendly investments in Hungary. As the largest organization representing cyclists in Hungary, it actively advocates for the creation of roads that can accommodate bicycle traffic; raises awareness of the relevant issues among both, the broader public as well as the community of competent experts and professionals; and thereby promotes a more livable and healthier Hungary. As an independent community and professional organization, the two main pillars of its work are infrastructure development and awareness-raising. The objective of the Hungarian Bicycle club is to ensure that a growing number of people get to experience the opportunities that cycling provides; because fun cycling experiences also make for a great living experience!

Orsolya Bányai

Assistant professor, Faculty of Political Science and Law, the University of Debrecen

Dr. Orsolya Bányai, Ph.D., works as an assistant professor in the Environmental and Labor Law Department of the University of Debrecen's Faculty of Political Science and Law. She is a university professor, researcher, and from time to time she also serves on Hungarian and international research teams.

Her main areas of research are, in temporal order: sustainable energy law, the environmental regulations of municipal governments, and a natural law approach towards the eco-civilizational crisis. She is the author of a monograph and numerous expert studies on these subjects.

Gábor Ungvári

Senior research fellow, Regional Energy Economy Research Center

His professional work centers on analyzing water usage and water damage prevention domestically and regionally, focusing especially on economic and environmental factors.

He has participated in a wide variety of interdisciplinary research and expert programs on water resource management, including the issues of flood risk and waterlogging, groundwater regulation, water catchment management, and the development of the Danube boat transportation routes.

His other area of specialization concerns the economic issues surrounding water supply utilities.

As part of his civic activities, he is also the editor of the blog published on the website www.szelidvizorszag.hu (loosely translated as “calm water country”), which seeks to raise awareness about issues involving the water cycle and water management.

Kovács Bendegúz

urbanist, participation expert, National Transportation Center

He studied regional and environmental economics at the Budapest University of Technology.

He has worked with Central Europe’s best urban planners and sustainability experts during his career. He has worked as a communications manager for the municipal government of Budapest’s 12th district. Then, as a project manager, he was involved in helping Budapest residents become acquainted with and love their city through the urban walk project called Hosszúlépés.

As the National Transportation Center’s project manager in charge of participation, his focus is on ensuring that the interests of residents are integrated into the planning process of complex infrastructural projects, thereby making Budapest and its environment a better place.

Gábor Szohr

Landscaper, founding member of the Újirány (New Direction) group

He began his studies in landscaping at the Szent István University, and completed his training at the Universität für Bodenkultur in Vienna. While studying, he was also active in designing architectural models. In 2000, he was a founding member of the New Direction Group, which seeks to respond to the new challenges facing urban areas stemming from the changes in the world around us, as well as to sketch the direction that new developments could take. Representing his company, he is involved in landscaping/architectural projects, conferences, workshops, and presentations. In his landscaping projects, he emphasizes communicating with local residents as the users of the spaces he designs.

Imre Erik Novák

Head of the service management team at Volán Zrt.

He is a transportation engineer who graduated from the Budapest University of Technology and Economic. He has been working for Volán Zrt. for seven years as head of the service management team. His team is in charge of maintaining schedules nationwide and preparing operation plans.

The ideas that came up during the first round of collective brainstorming at the citizens' assembly

Following the expert presentations, during the second half of the Citizens' Assembly's first weekend session, the members of the Assembly set out to brainstorm their initial ideas with the help of the facilitators. The objective was for the participants to draw on the information and ideas shared by the experts in coming up with their own proposals – raw ideas, for starters. From this collection of raw ideas, they would pick those they deemed worthy of taking up again in subsequent sessions to discuss further and refine. These could then serve as the basis for the full set of proposals drafted in the Assembly's conclusion.

At the end of the day, we gave the ideas that were thus collected to the representatives of the municipal government, who reacted to them at the beginning of the second weekend session.

The ideas that were collected during the first round of brainstorming at the Citizens Assembly

1. More bike roads, integrated into a network
2. A public bicycle lending system, bicycle vs. automobile – support from the municipal government for electric transportation, bicycles; designing star-shaped bike sheds and increasing their number
3. Boosting public transportation – including its extension to areas which the network does not yet reach
4. Building and expanding boardwalks, more pedestrian crossings, gravel removal
5. Promoting the implementation of the 15-minute city concept: ensuring that there are stores, playgrounds, cultural facilities, etc., available nearby for everyone
6. Creating centers for each city district: a central information board featuring a map of Érd, recommendations on what is worth visiting as well as public events
7. Rehabilitation of the spa and the public pools, restarting their operations
8. Creating a zoo
9. Making public transportation more user/passenger-friendly: bus network, increasing bus service frequency, including more frequent night-time buses to and from Budapest, as well as the integration of neighborhoods that were hitherto outside the public transport routes into the

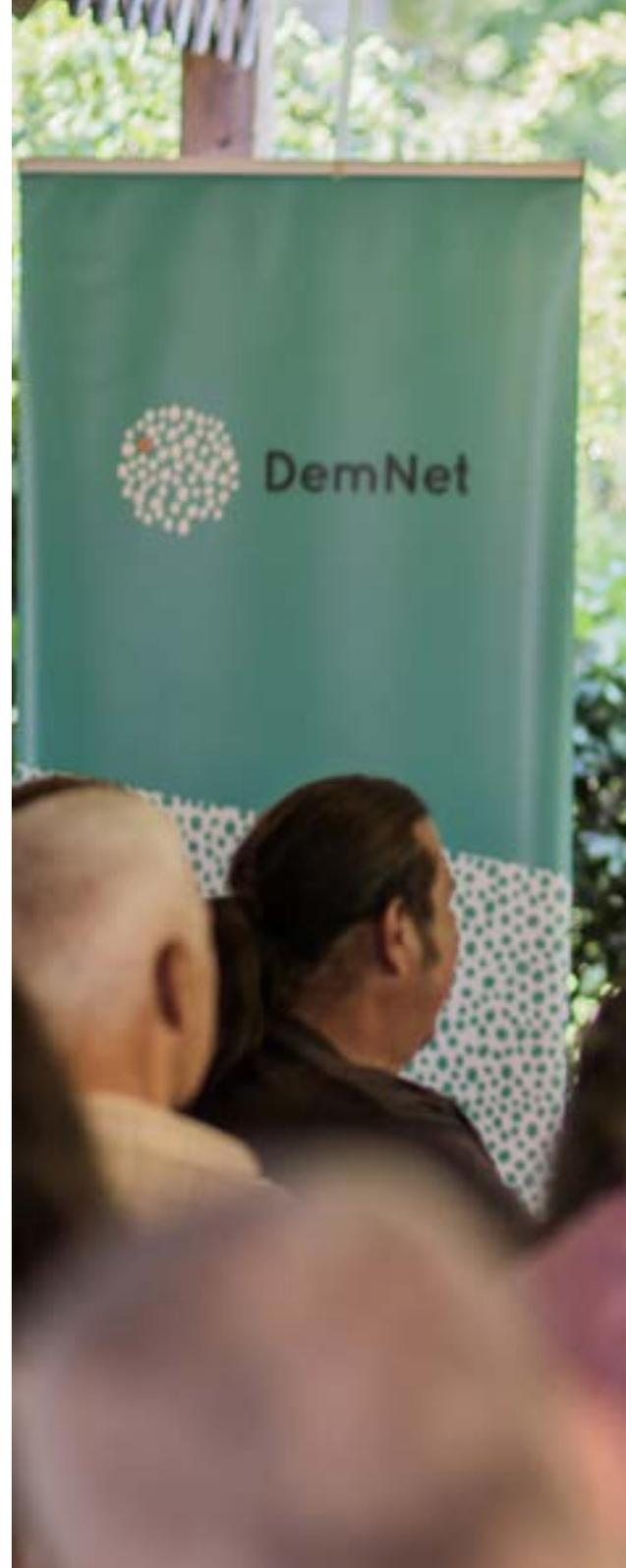
- bus transportation network. Creating bus bulbs
10. Communication (campaign) to promote better transportation culture, and proper education, both in and outside of school, including providing people with a better understanding of traffic, co-existence, water management, and all related issues
 11. The stimulation of community life by the municipal government:
 - a. promoting the creation of neighborhood communities
 - b. the creation of a major cultural center for every age group (library, (outdoor) cinema, theater, (outdoor) sports facilities, cafés, etc.)
 - c. potentially using existing neglected buildings to create practical community spaces
 12. Preserving the historical environment and improving, nurturing, and adequately maintaining the natural environment: Fundoklia Valley, Levendulás, Danube embankment (following the example of the Római Embankment)
 13. More effective action against illegal waste deposits and ragweed, increasing the number of public waste containers that are sealed to prevent scavenging, as well as promoting civic activity designed to install more public waste containers in the various neighborhoods, which would serve as a test to gauge how great the demand is for such containers and how effective they are
 14. Impeding or sealing off automobile access to nature preserves to make illegal waste dumping more difficult
 15. Creating streets with grass pavements, for a flourishing Érd
 16. Installing more public benches and tables (which can serve as the arenas of community life, such as board games)
 17. More active district representation, promoting the relations between civic groups and the municipal government, and ensuring that the exchange between them runs both ways (!): a municipal government that is actively in touch with the public/the local community by implementing regular consultations with the residents about their needs and communicating transparently about development plans and the EU funds available for these + making sure that the individual representatives responsible for each area are readily identifiable to residents, that they host consulting hours; the local newspaper is reliably delivered into mailboxes; and that a single-window information system exists
 18. More citizens' assemblies and other participation-based procedures, regular community forums!

19. Designing a progressive and globally unique incentive system within the municipality, broken down to the neighborhood level – rather than imposing penalties, this system should strive to foster enthusiasm and rewards, extend opportunities, and support community initiatives
20. Better water management: more efficient water collection and water drainage, along with introducing an incentive system for local residents to this end; regular cleaning of open trench drains and the supervision and inspection of the relevant work. The municipal government sanctions owners who fill up the open trench drains adjacent to their land
21. Increasing the number of one-way streets; in the case of back roads, only the actual residents of the street should be allowed to enter
22. Permanent radar speed traps should be installed near kindergartens and schools, increasing the number of speed bumps, the introduction of modern and automated traffic control systems
23. Diverting bus traffic from the area of the Minaret
24. The introduction of a school bus system to reduce automobile traffic within the municipality
25. Fewer prohibitions! (lawns, private roads, sealed-off areas)
26. Increasing the number of public parks
27. Increasing the number of dog parks
28. Increasing the number of public restrooms
29. Adopting a city development strategy spanning several election cycles
30. Launching several smaller pilot projects in various areas of the city: trying out things in small and collecting feedback before deciding on the final version
31. Drafting more environmental impact studies and concepts for a sustainable and cooperative city
32. Better communication of the successes, recognition of good initiatives
33. Stricter rules for building permits and a more stringent inspections regimes – condos should not be built on plots designated for family houses; below a specified plot size, the possibility of construction should not only be officially ruled out on paper but also in practice

Informal meeting

On June 19, the Monday between the two weekends, the participants had the opportunity to meet informally in the late afternoon/early evening hours. In addition to the participants, the informal session also featured experts, organizers, and municipal government representatives. The event, which was attended by nearly three-quarters of the participants, was held at the Buki Cellar.

During the Q&A session and the informal conversations, the Assembly members had the opportunity to learn more about the methodology of citizens' assemblies, the international experience, as well as the insider story behind the organization of the Érd Citizens' Assembly. They also had the chance to clarify some technical issues, discuss relevant dilemmas with the help of the experts who attended, and reflect on each other's ideas.



UTAK ÉS KIUTA... HOGYAN VÉSTUD...
ÉREDET ALVÓVÁROSPÉL... ÉLŐVÁROSSÁ?



Keretek

- ★ Légy nyitott és kíváncsi mások nézőpontjára
- ★ Járulj hozzá az idő tartásához
- ★ Zárd ki a zavarásokat
- ★ Érezd jól magad
- ★



SECOND STAGE: DELIBERATION (June 24-25, 2022)

The second weekend of the Citizens' Assembly focused on finalizing the proposals, decision-making, and, even more importantly, dialogue. In the spirit of dialogue, during the first morning of the weekend session, the participants sat down with the municipal leadership and its experts to jointly analyze the ideas that the Assembly members had come up with during the first round of brainstorming.

The mayor of Érd, László Csőzik, along with the deputy mayors Örs Tetlák and Gábor Szűcs, as well as two experts representing the municipal government, Katalin S. Bitskey and Zsolt Palkó, joined this session. The municipal government and the experts rated all the ideas based on the following criteria:

- ◀ Is there such an initiative – or a similar one – among the project proposals the municipal government is already considering?
- ◀ Does the idea mesh with other running or planned projects or initiatives or could it be adjusted to match such a project?
- ◀ Roughly speaking, how much would the given project cost and are there sufficient funds available in the budget; or is it possible to secure EU funding or other grants?
- ◀ How long would the estimated timeframe be for implementing the initiative if the city had the necessary funds?
- ◀ Would the municipal leadership support such an idea? If not, why?
- ◀ Would the municipal leadership modify the proposed idea, and what would it change if it did?

The goal of the consultation was for the members of the Citizens' Assembly to learn about considerations that could facilitate and improve their decision-making and help them draft the details of their proposals. Based on this information, the Assembly members launched another round of deliberations to further develop and refine their initial raw ideas. The considerations raised during their deliberations kept referring back to what the participants had heard in the expert presentations. However, the participants augmented this information with their own experiences and ideas. The two senior experts at the Citizens' Assembly were continuously at the members' disposal and assisted the joint thinking and brainstorming at the tables as needed.

THIRD STAGE: DECISION-MAKING (June 25, 2022)

After the second session of deliberation and jointly analyzing their initial ideas, the members of the Citizens' Assembly voted on the final compilation of their refined proposals, selecting those that they felt were the most important. As a result of the vote, the seven most popular proposals made it into the following round, where they were discussed in smaller groups. The groups worked out the details of all the proposals, exploring their benefits, the anticipated costs, the time it would take to implement them, and the potential impediments that the implementing organization(s) might face in the process.

After the deliberations were concluded, another round of voting was held to gauge the support for each proposal. The members of the Assembly rated all seven proposals on a scale from 1 to 5, and the results were the following:

1. | Rethinking the road system to promote bike traffic – 89% support
2. | Attracting environmentally-friendly businesses – 88% support
3. | Rainwater management – 86% support
4. | Creating city subcenters and community building – 84% support
5. | Creating green areas – 82% support
6. | Fostering tourism by exploiting local advantages, and historical and natural resources – 78% support
7. | Organizing a centralized parking system – 68% support

To conclude the Citizens' Assembly, reflecting on the process and evaluating it, the participants shared what they had learned from one another and about their city during the joint work and its two weekends.



THE ACCEPTED PROPOSALS



RETHINKING THE ROAD SYSTEM TO PROMOTE BIKE TRAFFIC

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Few would dispute these days that the traffic on public roads, automobile use in general, and the share of alternative modes of transportation are among the factors with the most significant impact on the quality of life in urban areas. These reflect how safe and healthy a city is and influence whether we want our children to grow up there. The issue also has major implications for sustainability. Changing our transportation patterns and reducing car traffic will be vital in mitigating the impact of climate change. However, adjusting our attitudes and lifestyles will not be enough to achieve this. It is essential to ensure that we also have the necessary infrastructure in place. If tomorrow everyone decided that they are going to use bikes to move about, that would not make a major difference since they would not be able to do so unless the necessary framework conditions are put in place first.

The issue itself (that is, the transition to alternative modes of transportation and the methods that define how we could do so) is of course the subject of many (over) heated debates everywhere – Érd included. Érd faces several dilemmas that stem from its current structural features and the conditions that prevail as a result of the infrastructural developments (or the lack thereof) over the past decades. At the same time, the lack of a properly developed infrastructure also holds out opportunities; it allows for reaping the benefits that accrue to “late adopters.” It further makes it possible for future developments to be realized with a new perspective rather than the outdated automobile-centered urban transportation planning that prevailed previously.

Keeping the above in mind, the **Érd Citizens’ Assembly proposes that the Érd municipal government rethink the road system in Érd, with greater emphasis on supporting the use of bicycles for mobility to promote safe transportation and reduce automobile traffic in the city.**

In choosing the recommended instruments for reducing traffic in the city, the Citizens’ Assembly also suggests that the local features should be taken into account. The members of the Assembly considered that given the road structure in Érd, it would be possible to designate the side-roads running parallel to the main street “as bikeways,” along with the necessary investments and upgrades, while retaining the primacy of automobile traffic on the main street.

The Citizens’ Assembly proposes that the municipal government also promote bicycle use by funding the acquisition of electric bikes and incentivizing the creation of a bike rental network. When it comes to the latter, it will be essential to take into account the city’s geographical attributes as well as the expected bicycle use patterns. In other words, it is vital to ensure that the bicycles are regularly returned to the geographically elevated areas of the city.

In addition to creating bikeways, the municipality should also emphasize the infrastructural developments necessary to accommodate and promote bike traffic. Thus, bike storage facilities should be set up in the areas where bicycle traffic is likely to be concentrated (e.g., schools, public institutions, and stores), the roads affected have to be upgraded, and signs need to be installed. The Assembly further recommended that separate bikeways be designated in certain parts of the public roads (for instance, in roundabouts).

Given that transitioning to alternative modes of transportation, thus including the use of bicycles, requires a significant shift in public attitudes, the Citizens’ Assembly proposes that the municipality accompany the necessary infrastructural developments with an information campaign. Drawing up distinct “rules of the road for bicycles” and setting up a park for practicing these rules could also be helpful.

It is important to note that initially, this proposal can be implemented on a smaller scale, as a pilot project, maybe even limited to one or two districts of the city. Then, as a next step, it could be extended to cover the

entire city after integrating the improvements deemed necessary based on the experience gathered from the pilot project.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL:

- + improved traffic safety;
- + the time spent in traffic is reduced;
- + it promotes a shift in public attitudes and a transition to alternative modes of transportation;
- + it facilitates the mobility of parents with small children who do not have a car;
- + automobile traffic is reduced and, as a result, the noise level also declines while air quality improves;
- + the burden on the public transportation system is reduced.

THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◀ the Around-Érd Bicycle Association and other NGOs;
- ◀ local residents (smaller subsegments of the city population);
- ◀ urban planners, transportation economists, and other experts.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- the geographic features are not uniformly ideal for accommodating the proposed changes;
- the prevailing traffic culture is not accustomed to this, changing our attitudes takes time and good communication;
- potential popular resistance, infrastructural challenges, and other obstacles may be difficult to overcome, and they could slow or even stop the necessary investments;
- it is necessary to involve the local residents, which can be time-consuming and frustrating;
- it is essential to provide continuous maintenance, which is resource intensive.

THE TIMEFRAME FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL:

- ◀ painting the road marks, installing signs (stop signs, signs designating residential and rest areas, etc.): within a year;
- ◀ drafting plans and studies: within a year;
- ◀ public education campaign and launching public consultations: within a year;
- ◀ creating and developing bike routes: within 1-5 years;
- ◀ a park for learning about the rules of the road: within 1-5 years;
- ◀ creation of a public bike rental system: within 1-5 years.

ATTRACTING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Owing to Érd's suburban character, many residents commute. One inevitable result of the fact that many Érd residents commute to Budapest is that Budapest has become a natural center for running errands and using administrative and entertainment services. All this leads to increased traffic and a concomitant increase in emissions. Meanwhile, many residents feel that there are too few jobs, service-oriented SMEs, and entertainment opportunities in Érd.

Although the majority of Érd's residents would presumably welcome large-scale local developments and a faster pace in the implementation of infrastructural investments, the locals are also aware that the lack of resources and cutbacks – which have persisted for years now and have only increased in scope on account of the pandemic and the subsequent crisis – massively afflict the city.

The objective of this proposal is to help Érd attract businesses that operate in an environmentally friendly manner and have a small ecological footprint. These could at the same time also boost the city's tax revenue and offer jobs to the local population, thereby simultaneously developing the city and lowering the number of those who commute between Budapest and Érd.

The members of the Citizens' Assembly stress the importance that new businesses in the city should operate in an environmentally friendly manner and with a limited ecological footprint. Their products or services should not be pollutive, and the companies themselves should also not contribute excessively to emissions. At the same time, their technology needs to be modern and sustainable.

To plan this process carefully, the Citizens' Assembly recommends that the municipal government involve experts to perform a market survey among busines-

ses, and organize another citizens' assembly to gauge what Érd residents think about the presence of major industrial corporations in general and specific business sectors in the city. This is how one can ascertain the public's wishes and preferences in this context, and under what conditions (e.g., in terms of environmental impact and regulations) they would welcome further businesses in the city.

Since the proposal is aimed at enticing Érd residents to stay in the community, the members of the Citizens' Assembly would recommend the use of financial incentives, if necessary, to motivate businesses to hire locally. They would also make it mandatory for local businesses to ensure that a designated share of their workforce comprises Érd residents.

As far as businesses launched in Érd or companies that relocate to the city are concerned, the Citizens' Assembly recommends that they be diverted to dilapidated areas (adjacent to the M6 highway, for example). Creating the necessary infrastructure is also vital, and, based on agreements between the newcomers and the city, new businesses that choose Érd as their home could be asked to make the necessary investments.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL:

- + job creation;
- + the rehabilitation of dilapidated areas;
- + local residents do not have to travel large distances to work, there is less commuting, and the children can stay in the city;
- + a service center could be established here quickly;
- + the so-called Lavender area of the city could also be included;
- + younger workers (for example, engineers) would also stay here if their profession is popular among local businesses;
- + it is easily accessible from Budapest (e.g., the office building is close to the railroad);
- + there are still vacant lots here, whereas there are none left in Budaörs (furthermore, a key piece of the necessary transportation infrastructure – i.e., the motorway exit – is already in place);
- + Érd's geographic location provides a logistical advantage (from a transportation perspective, this is the center of the country, the region is highly accessible, Budapest is close by train, and shipping by water is also an option);
- + this would give the city more options to draw on (we would not be reliant on one company, especially if we do not target industrial corporations but focus on IT and service companies instead);
- + this would generate a positive feedback loop in the local economy: people who work here also eat lunch here, which will give rise to new restaurants and more jobs;
- + by leasing the land (rather than selling it!), the city would have constant access to revenue;
- + Érd is big enough for this.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- there might be an increase in the number of commuters from other cities and a concomitant rise in car traffic, raising the following concerns:
 - . will there be enough parking?
 - . it could overburden traffic in the city center;
- green areas will be lost, and there are already too few contiguous green areas (the green areas adjacent to Érd are either protected or do not belong to the city, while most of the Danube embankment is difficult to convert to such use);
- the resistance of local residents since those in Érd do not necessarily want more life and greater traffic in their city (e.g., Xerox in nearby Diósd relocated rather than expanding locally);
- there will be competition for such investments with Budaörs, Törökbálint, and Batta
- the likelihood of an intervention by the central state increases (it might seize the relevant areas from the city);
- the infrastructure in place is not ideal or even suitable for every type of business;
- it takes a massive investment of resources from the city;
- even the existing building stock is not adequately exploited (landmark buildings could constitute a challenge in this regard, since landmark protections could impede changes);
- the level of commuting would not necessarily decline since those who commute to Budapest work for many different types of businesses;
- the increased tax revenue may be relatively minor as compared to the outlays since the rate of the trade tax that the municipal government can levy is very low;
- major corporations could siphon off the workforce that local businesses need.

THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- businesses that track grant programs;
- the creation of specialized municipal groups that seek out businesses and attract them here – the municipality needs good recruiters or salespersons;
- another citizens' assembly;
- experts.

THE TIMEFRAME FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL:

- the timeframe of the potential grant programs that could be used is vital;
- it depends on the sector, but the long-term implementation could range between five to ten years;
- the survey of the market and the possibilities can be implemented quickly;
- based on the former, the conditions for welcoming new businesses could be in place within five years.



GONDOLKOZZ
KIS LÉPÉSEKBEN!

LÉGY TURELMES,
PRÓBALD KI KICSIBEN!



A VÁLTOZÁS ALAPJA
A KÖZÖSSÉG!



MAGYAR SZAKÉRTŐK!
MAGYAR PÉLDÁK!



TEGnap SZÁMOLGATÁS!
VAGYAD LÉGY A VÁLTOZÁS,
AMIT LÁTNÍ SZERETNÉL A VILÁGBAN!

TMA GANOMI-



GONDOLKODTUNK
EGYÜTT!

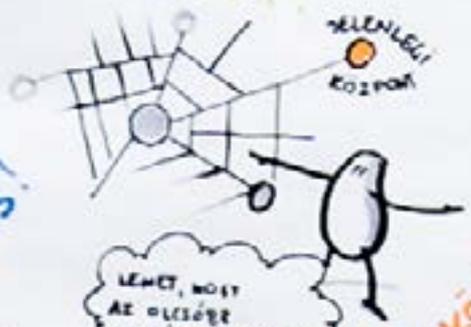


KEVÉS FORRÁS,
RENGETEG FELADAT



LEGYEN FOLYTATÁS!

STRATÉGIAI TÁMOGATÁS



ESZTÉSI CIKLUS!

ÚJ ALKÖZPONTOK
KIÉPÍTÉSÉN GONDOLKOZUNK



VIEGYÜK TOVÁBB
A LÁNYGOT!

MEG KELL TALÁLNI A CSALÁDI-
ÉS TÁRSASHÁZAK HELYÉT!



8 ZEBRA KÉSZÜL MOST
TÖBB, MINT 400 KELLENE

DES BALÁZS
ISTVÁN

HASZNOSÍTOTTA TÖK AZ ELŐADÓK
TANÁCSAIT A KÖZÖS ÖTLETELESBEN!

RAINWATER MANAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

It is undeniable that global climate change is taking place. We increasingly experience its impact in our everyday lives, for example in the form of heatwaves or sudden massive, flood-like rains.

This is especially true of urban environments. In urban areas, we are changing the share of green surfaces, increasing building density (we cover too much in concrete), and interfering with the natural climate. Energy from sunshine is either transformed into heat or water vapor. Which of the two forms it takes depends on the surface it encounters. The heat absorbed by paved surfaces will be emitted, thus further heating the surrounding air. Solar energy absorbed by green areas that retain water, by contrast, will turn into water vapor, which cools the air. In other words, built environments transform solar energy into heat, while most areas without built surfaces tend to vaporize it. Similarly, the respective share of paved or green surfaces can either exacerbate or alleviate the problems of rainwater management. The extent to which rainwater can drain depends on the type of surface: where large segments of the ground are paved, flash floods will be more frequent. Green areas, by contrast, will be better able to absorb and retain valuable rainwater.

That is why in addition to increasing the share of green areas (see Proposal No. 5), **the Citizens' Assembly proposes that to improve water usage in Érd, the entire infiltration trench system in Érd be reviewed and that an effective rainwater collection system be created. It further proposes that the municipal government launch a communication and awareness-raising program to support residential buildings in procuring the necessary rainwater collection systems.** Correspondingly, the members of the Assembly believe that digging new trenches and restoring the trenches that have been filled in is essential. To achieve this, a comprehensive review of the entire Érd infiltration trench system is necessary.

The Citizens' Assembly would introduce a strict ban on filling infiltration trenches in natural water catchment areas, and it would involve the local Neighborhood Watch and the Office of Public Safety in monitoring the implementation of the ban.

The Citizens' Assembly also suggests that a comprehensive rainwater management concept (urban water management plan) be drafted. The members of the Citizens' Assembly further recommend that the municipal government set up a non-profit corporation (the Rainwater Collection Ltd.) to help the public collect rainwater (procuring the necessary containers, pumps, technologically suitable solutions, etc., at a favorable price, while complying with the Local Construction Code), and provide a one-window system to administer their relevant needs. In the framework of a pilot project, the municipality could also subsidize residential buildings, helping them procure equipment to collect rainwater, or it could launch a residential rainwater management model program that focuses on a smaller concentrated area of Érd. This would be especially worthwhile if local residents were to participate in the program together and the water retention measures were integrated into a network.

The members of the Citizens' Assembly further call on the municipal government to launch a new voluntary community program called A Day for the City. Those Érd residents who apply to volunteer for the program would be assigned relevant tasks for a day (not limited to work on the infiltration trench and rainwater collection systems), coordinated by the Rainwater Collection Ltd., the municipal government, or an NGO. Ideally, they would work in the neighborhood where they live. It would also be worthwhile to consider incentivizing participation by offering some form of benefits.

Water management and rainwater collection also need to be the subject of a public education campaign involving local youths and the relevant municipal bodies and institutions.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL:

- + protection of real estate;
- + more usable and accessible roads and safer traffic;
- + simpler and potentially faster administration;
- + reducing the burden on emergency relief services;
- + local recycling of rainwater;
- + cost reduction;
- + lower potable water consumption when it is not used for watering;
- + community building;
- + stronger sense of local patriotism if we can take pride in creating a solution that serves as a best practice for others;
- + flood protection;
- + local rainwater collection can also reduce the burden on infiltration trenches;
- + thus, we prevent the problem from emerging in the first case rather than trying to fix it subsequently;
- + a pilot version could motivate other districts to follow suit.

THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◀ the local population;
- ◀ the non-profit company that is to be created as part of the proposal;
- ◀ municipal institutions;
- ◀ volunteers;
- ◀ students;
- ◀ workfare program participants;
- ◀ representatives of local civic groups;
- ◀ NGOs;
- ◀ potentially the Érd and Environs Waste Management Nonprofit Corporation (ÉTH).

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- clashes between individual and community interests;
- expanding the infiltration trench system will narrow roads further;
- the integration of the new trenches into the current system could run into difficulties;
- there may be places where the prevailing situation may be difficult to fix, e.g., opening up the trenches that have been filled up could be a challenge;
- lack of resources;
- lack of capacity at the Érd Street Maintenance Institution (ÉKFI);
- the municipal government lacks the authority to perform inspections since that power has been transferred to the so-called government offices, regional branches of the central government;
- lack and insufficiency of communication channels;
- a pilot version could generate a lot of tension as to why the given area was selected.

THE TIMEFRAME FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL:

- ◀ creating a comprehensive infiltration trench and rainwater collection system throughout Érd: at least 5-6, but more likely 10 years;
- ◀ setting up the non-profit company: 1 year;
- ◀ inspection and survey: 1-2 years;
- ◀ launching the One Day for the City program: 6 months;
- ◀ launching the education and information program: 3-4 months;
- ◀ procurement of rainwater collectors: 1-2 years.

CREATING CITY SUBCENTERS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Despite its dynamically growing population and vast area, to this very day Érd lacks an actual, planned city center. Some segments of its population lack an identity as Érd citizens, and local communities or initiatives either do not exist or are not widely known; they are often unaware of each other's existence. This prevents bottom-up community-based developments, as well as the emergence of an emotional connection and attachment to the city.

Despite the obvious difficulties, Érd's territorial structure holds numerous possibilities and allows for easily implementable developments. By implementing the concept of the 15-minute city, for example, local demands could be better met, thus also promoting population retention and reducing transportation needs within and outside the city.

The Citizens' Assembly proposes that several subcenters be created within Érd by rethinking the structure and use of the city's public spaces, augmented by community-building processes.

According to the members of the Citizens' Assembly, 3-4 (or maybe even 7-8) subcenters could be created, in the following areas or near them, for example:

- ◀ Érdliget (Érd City Park): Topoly Street, near the Fördő Street;
- ◀ Érdparkváros (Érd Park City): Fundoklia Square;
- ◀ Érdparkváros (Érd Park City): Bem Square;
- ◀ Tusculnanum - Szent László Square;
- ◀ Parkváros (Park City) in the square of the old community building;
- ◀ in the area of the Zápportározó;
- ◀ at the end of the Tárnok Road;
- ◀ in Ófalu;
- ◀ and in Fenyves Parkváros (Fenyves Park City).

It is vital to ensure that there are also proper possibilities for pedestrian traffic in the subcenters and sufficient green areas and playgrounds. The members of the Citizens' Assembly also believe that creating more medical practices and public administration offices would help the residents of Érd considerably, although such facilities are not needed in every subcenter.

The members of the Citizens' Assembly would like to see more cultural programs in the public areas. It is not necessarily the municipal government's responsibility to provide the funding for all of these. Still, it could extend financial assistance to those who organize them and help increase the visibility of such programs. The municipality might also need to provide the necessary infrastructure in some areas, such as a stage or projector. These could substantially facilitate events where the members of the community can meet. Moreover, the municipal government would have to perform a survey of local needs based on the distinct needs of various target groups.

The construction of public community buildings in certain areas, or, alternatively, the renovation of existing buildings, might be necessary to achieve the goals outlined above.

The members of the Citizens' Assembly further recommend that the municipal government create an Office for Participation to stay in touch with local residents and coordinate or support the realization of individual events through this agency. Furthermore, local groups could also turn to this office with ideas and initiatives. At certain designated times, these offices should also be open to individual citizens, so the latter can receive information about the programs that interest them. The Office could also coordinate other civic engagement and community development programs.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL:

- + more opportunities for locals to meet;
- + community life will flourish, and Érd residents will have a more livable, lovable, and humane city;
- + the strengthening of local identity could be the basis for community-formation and regional organizations;
- + a genuine partnership can develop between the municipal government and the residents, and if they work together on improving the city, that will contribute to reducing the strain on the municipality while at the same time it can boost the impact of the municipal government's work;
- + ongoing communication about opportunities and the existing or emerging best practices would not only serve to highlight new directions but could also inspire the public to do more;
- + the strengthening of local civic organizations;
- + people would have access to the most vital services without having to use a car, which would reduce automobile traffic.

THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◀ the municipal government;
- ◀ local NGOs;
- ◀ the local public;
- ◀ entrepreneurs;
- ◀ schools and other cultural institutions.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- a concept of active citizenship is not widespread;
- it might be hard to find the potential key players who could serve as the local engines behind individual initiatives;
- it is not easy to ascertain the best method for ensuring a two-way communication between the municipal government and the local population/ NGOs;
- party politics should not be a factor in such initiatives to avoid politicization and polarization;
- there is a need for ongoing communication both online and offline (people tend to be unaware of existing community spaces and local cultural centers);
- some programs and initiatives may be too expensive (both for the municipality and the residents);
- the proposed changes could be perceived as troublesome by those who live in the newly designated subcenters – it is necessary to involve the stakeholders.

THE TIMEFRAME FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL:

- ◀ The timeframe of the individual elements varies; some are medium-term projects while others can only be implemented in the long run. The implementation of the entire project overall is typically mid-to-long term.

CREATING GREEN AREA

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Numerous studies have shown that the proportion and quality of green areas are among the most important indicators of local life quality. Parks and areas covered with trees and flowers are beautiful to behold and significantly improve people's sense of well-being – not to mention their vital role in preserving biodiversity.

A higher share of green areas will also improve water retention, which will in turn result in improved irrigation.

Consequently, the Citizens' Assembly proposes to significantly increase the proportion of green areas in the city, thereby promoting the creation of a more livable, sustainable, and resident-centered Érd.

The Citizens' Assembly recommends that the decision-makers consider the following areas and action items as part of a new program to create new parks and green areas in Érd:

- ◀ create a pedestrian mall between Érd and Nagytétény;
- ◀ line the street across the new post office with trees, make it green;
- ◀ close the parking lot on Buda Road, and then turn it into a park;
- ◀ open up the closed areas (for example, those that belong to the Reformed Church);
- ◀ creating a camping site on the Danube Embankment;
- ◀ creation of a recreational center on the Papi Grounds.

The members of the Assembly also recommend that the decision-makers create community gardens. These could be used for various community programs, including sustainability and environmental education, which serve all generations.

Creating an even more livable and resident-friendly city would take more outdoor seating facilities and equipment (e.g., benches, tables, and street furniture). To foster community life, installing facilities that serve community entertainment (e.g., outdoor chess and lawn bowling facilities) would be recommended.

The members of the Citizens' Assembly also felt that the city needs more dog parks. One proposal to consider is that separate dog parks may be designated for smaller and larger dogs to prevent conflicts.

To satisfy the needs of the younger generations, the Citizens' Assembly also recommends the creation of an outdoor gym and an adventure sports facility.

To facilitate the lives of families with small children, one priority should be to make sure that a tree-lined modern playground with benches is available within a walking distance of ca. 15 minutes anywhere in the city. As a symbolic gesture, the Citizens' Assembly also proposes that the municipality plant a tree for the birth of each new child in Érd (ideally, a tree native to Hungary).

If the proposal were implemented, the city would become more hospitable to the community, more sustainable, and healthier, thereby promoting the retention of Érd residents.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL:

- + a more livable city and an improved city landscape;
- + lower property taxes;
- + fostering local communities, community-building;
- + scaling back automobile use;
- + increasing climate awareness;
- + increasing oxygen production;
- + promoting rainwater management and draining;
- + more shade in the city;
- + the possibility of implementing it with a limited budget.

THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL:

- ◀ local residents (especially in the areas affected);
- ◀ experts;
- ◀ NGOs;
- ◀ the neighborhood watch;
- ◀ dog owners.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

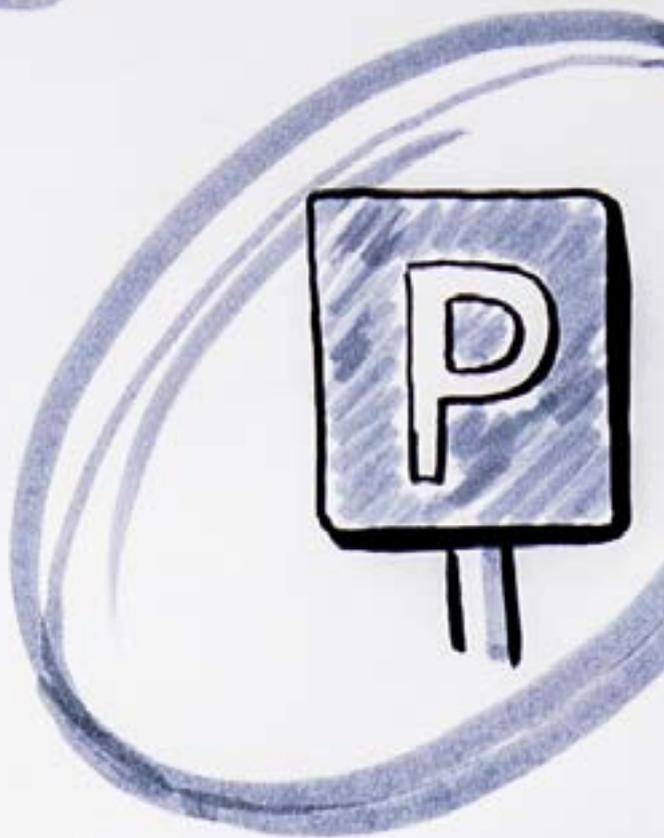
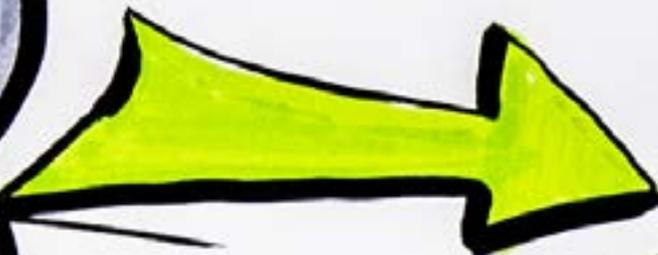
- lacking resources for maintenance and upkeep;
- lacking support (every change has its opponents);
- the prevailing ownership structures are not necessarily conducive or amenable to such changes.

THE TIMEFRAME FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL:

- ◀ Some elements can be implemented in the short term (within a year), but for the entire project to be realized, we must allow for a more extended timeline (1-5 years).

KÖZÉRDEK
KEZELESE

BEVÉTEL!



PARKOLÁS

A BEVÉTEL KÖVETHETŐSÉGE!



TISZTA

KOMMUNIKÁCIÓ

VAN
FORRÁS
FEJLESZTÉSRE!

ELADOM A
2. AUTÓT,
ÉS VESZEK
BRINGÁT!

FOSTERING TOURISM BY EXPLOITING LOCAL ADVANTAGES AND HISTORICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Érd has numerous natural treasures and boasts many exciting places that even locals often have yet to discover. Improving and promoting the local attractions (a process in which local residents could play an active role) would provide an excellent opportunity for fostering the residents' attachment to Érd and strengthening their local identity. The areas thus developed – which could function as venues for various community experiences and events – could also serve as excellent spots for hiking or programs for families in Érd while simultaneously stimulating tourism from nearby areas.

The Citizens' Assembly proposes that the municipal government develop and upgrade the local attractions, thereby stimulating tourism in the city and creating more leisure opportunities for Érd residents.

The Citizens' Assembly believes that the implementation of this proposal would increase the city's tax revenue, which is in turn necessary for funding other developments needed in Érd. As a result of the proposals below, additional jobs could be created in the city. Furthermore, local investments could also help citizens stay and work in town, thus resulting in less commuting and traffic.

The members of the Citizens' Assembly recommend that the municipal government implement the following developments:

The area of the Danube Embankment and Ófalu

The Citizens' Assembly recommends the comprehensive development of the current leisure areas, with due consideration of the island's flora and fauna, as well as the protected status of the Natura 2000 preserve and its resources.

The Citizens' Assembly envisions the development of this area to follow the model of the Római-part (the so-called Roman Embankment) in Budapest: In addition to opportunities for recreation, this includes a line of uniformly designed stalls that house snack shops and eateries, as well as venues for hosting festivals, outdoor music programs, theater performances, and cooking competitions. The members of the Citizens' Assembly suggest that the restaurant operators in the Érd region be involved in the planning process to ascertain whether they see any business potential in the Danube Embankment. The Citizens' Assembly would also give restaurant operators tax benefits to launch businesses in the area.

The Citizens' Assembly further recommends that Érd become part of the Danube hiking trail. Furthermore, in addition to the above, the creation of an outdoor gym and bike rental possibilities at the end of the dam should also be considered. Public restrooms and garbage cans are also needed in the area. A souvenir coin machine and coin-operated scopes should be installed on Kakuk Mountain.

The Citizens' Assembly also sees major potential in restoring the Szapáry Chateau's cellar system, which could be used to host events (one idea was to bring back the discotheque, and another was the creation of a historical/traditional restaurant).

The members of the Citizens' Assembly recommend that a special permit be required to access the so-called Pincesor (wine cellar row) area by car, thus banning transit traffic. To allow public visits to the Minaret, the currently used key-based system should be replaced with a different method of access. The Citizens' Assembly's position is that the ownership of the spa should revert to the municipal government, and the facility should be opened up to the public.

Linking the Danube Embankment with Budafok to ensure better accessibility is also a worthwhile project. One solution could be for the Érd municipal government to petition the Budapest Transport Company (BKK) to extend the route of bus line 33 from its current final stop at Nagytétény-Ipartelep all the way to Érd. A further recommendation is to create a parking lot along Route 6 near the supermarket to help those who arrive by car while keeping vehicular access to the area restricted.

It would be further important to connect Ófalú and Érdliget to the mass transit system, for example, by extending the route of bus line 746 to Érdliget.

Fundoklia Valley

The Citizens' Assembly recommends that signs be set up along the hiking trail, trash cans be installed, and regular waste collection and other maintenance activities be initiated in this area. Creating a discovery trail for educational purposes – allowing visitors to read about the local natural features by scanning QR codes installed along the trail – might also be a good idea.

The Assembly members said it would be important to protect the area's boundaries using a fence and a camera system to forestall illegal waste dumping. The Citizens' Assembly stressed that construction in the area needs to be restricted by amending the Local Zoning Code.

Papi Grounds

The Citizens' Assembly recommends that the leisure park established here be made accessible from every direction by opening all the gates. Furthermore, the area needs better shading from the sun, which could be achieved by installing shade sails near the trees that have been planted, as well as by planting more trees and increasing the park area. The Assembly members further believe that more public restrooms, water fountains, aquatic playgrounds, and snack bars would be desirable. Another idea proposed was that the venue should be suitable for hosting concerts and other events that could attract families.

Acknowledging the lack of resources, the Citizens' As-

sembly recommends that the municipal government make an effort to solicit external funding to develop the park further and generate the revenues that can cover its operating costs.

LevenDuna hiking trail

The Citizens' Assembly proposes to create resting areas, connecting the hiking trail with Biatorbágy, and linking it to the local public transportation system to allow hikers to return from the end of the trail without having to walk back all the way.

Őslewendulás

The Citizens' Assembly recommends that the municipal government buy back the area and consider the possibility of re-planting the original vegetation. Creating a discovery trail that follows a path made of wooden boards elevated from the ground would be desirable; fining local property owners who destroy lavender would be reasonable, and the municipality should do so.

The following related ideas also came up during the deliberations:

- ◀ in order to be able to unearth the ancient artifacts hidden in the city, the municipality ought to offer a scholarship to aspiring archeology scholars in higher education. Cooperation with the Museum of Geography as a potential exhibition organizer is also recommended;
- ◀ the creation of a single-center tour to the various attractions, starting from the Museum of Geography;
- ◀ giving the Téglyagyár (brick factory) area a new name;
- ◀ installing information boards that contain information about local attractions in the main square and/or painting a three-dimensional map of Érd onto the square;

- ◀ placing boards commemorating local history in the relevant historic locations, the organization of local history tours across the city;
- ◀ we need to have an outdoor pool in Érd again! A survey must be conducted to assess which area might be suitable for creating a pool.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL:

- + an upswing in tourism can turn Érd from a quiet commuter town into a living city;
- + attracting businesses to Érd will generate revenues for the city;
- + new jobs will be created;
- + the tourism-related investments will increase the value of real estate in the area;
- + investing in aspects of the city that strengthen its identity will also boost local patriotism;
- + programs that offer entertainment opportunities for local youths are more likely to help keep the younger generations in the city;
- + improving access to tourist attractions will also facilitate the transportation of local residents.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- opposition to the investments from those who live nearby because of the expected traffic, noise, and potential waste;
- the entire population might actually be opposed if they are concerned that the quiet they enjoy on account of Érd's character as a commuter town will be disturbed and that the areas being developed as part of the project could be subject to „overuse;“
- the resource needs of the developments are rather high;

- in addition to tourism-related developments narrowly understood, it would also be necessary to develop the road and public transportation networks and increase schedule frequency to make sure that the areas affected are accessible;
- the spa is currently privately owned and overpriced, its reconstruction would cost a lot of money, and it is unclear whether the investment could be recouped.

THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◀ The local population, especially the owners of the real estate in the immediate vicinity of the areas to be developed, and the communities that currently use the target areas;
- ◀ the municipal council representatives of the affected areas;
- ◀ investors, business figures, and enterprises that operate tourist attractions or services attached to the latter;
- ◀ the ship operator MAHART PassNave Ltd., to assess whether the creation of a port is feasible;
- ◀ the coach company that operates the local and regional busses (VOLÁN or its contractual successor);
- ◀ the public authorities that set the rules concerning the operation of the sites;
- ◀ the Authority for Historical Landmarks;
- ◀ the Hungarian Museum of Geography;
- ◀ NGOs (especially those that focus on environmental issues);
- ◀ the city of Biatorbágy in connection with the LevenDuna hiking trail – with the goal of extending the trail;
- ◀ local public education institutions, especially in the context of teaching students local history.

THE TIMEFRAME FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL:

The following can be realized within a year:

- ◀ drafting the implementation plans and feasibility studies;
- ◀ arranging the issue of vehicular access to the Pincesor (only cars with permits may enter, transit traffic is banned);
- ◀ establishing a bike rental at the Danube Embankment
- ◀ placing a coin scope at Kakukk Mountain and a souvenir coin machine at the Danube Embankment;
- ◀ increasing the number of trash cans and public restrooms;
- ◀ placement of information boards (indicating the direction and distance of other tourist attractions) in the Főtér (main square), in other areas that are relevant in terms of local history, as well as the Danube Embankment and the Fundoklia Valley;
- ◀ promoting the LevenDuna hiking tour trail;
- ◀ opening up all the gates of the leisure park on the Papi Grounds;
- ◀ linking Ófalu and Érdliget by public transportation by extending bus line 746 to Érdliget.

The following can be realized within five years:

- ◀ renovating the cellars of the Szapáry Chateau and opening them to the public;
- ◀ making the operation of the leisure park on the Papi Grounds economically sustainable and making all its functions accessible through targeted investments;
- ◀ the structural renovation of the Minaret if that is necessary to ensure its stability;
- ◀ the creation of a port for cruise ships if the feasibility studies are successful.

The following can be realized within ten years:

- ◀ Building a shipping port that is suitable for processing freight traffic if a logistical center is successfully established;
- ◀ making Ófalu directly accessible from Budafok;
- ◀ opening the spa to the public.

ORGANIZING A CENTRAL PARKING SYSTEM

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Among the critical problems in Érd are traffic jams stemming from excessive car use and continuously deteriorating air quality. However, for fewer Érd residents to rely on cars to move about, it is essential to create the infrastructure which enables alternative transportation methods to gain ground, along with introducing measures that disincentivize car use. Introducing a paid parking system – at least in some areas – could be a solution (and an effective one, too, based on the experience of other cities) to this end.

That is why the Citizens' Assembly proposes comprehensively reconceptualizing and transforming the central parking system in Érd and introducing paid parking in certain cases, creating distinct parking zones, a guarded B+R system, and improving traffic conditions near schools and kindergartens.

The members of the Citizens' Assembly believe that it is vital to designate the boundaries of the paid parking zones with the involvement of experts based on criteria specified by the latter. Since the introduction of paid parking is likely to trigger public resistance, it must be preceded by a communication campaign. It is further recommended that for the first 2-6 months after the introduction of the paid parking system, those who fail to purchase a ticket do not get a fine but are provided with information materials instead. The members of the Assembly propose that the first test zone could be created in the Budai Road and the Stop Shop area, with 1-2 hours of free parking.

There needs to be an online option for paying the parking fee. The revenue from the parking fees must be handled transparently by the municipal government, and it must be spent on further improving the city's infrastructure.

The new system must be introduced with special care in certain areas (e.g., medical offices and schools). Where reasonable, streets could be temporarily turned into one-way streets for a few hours a day, for example, at the time when school starts. Drop-off zones should only be created

near the schools, and the first test should be at the Kőrösi School (where the garden next to the gym could be used for cars to turn around). It may be necessary to involve human assistance in coordinating the traffic (for example, someone from the police force, the neighborhood watch, or the municipal government). This person would manage traffic and parking near the kindergartens and the schools in the morning hours – at least initially.

It is also vital that the system of parking spaces for persons with reduced mobility be reviewed, as well as to ensure through ongoing inspections that these spaces are used in compliance with the relevant rules.

The members of the Citizens' Assembly would also welcome P+R parking further away from the city center, e.g., a bigger facility than the one currently constructed at the Nagy Érd station and a newer one than Tétényliget. If the P+R lot is going to be fee-based, then making passes available to commuters may be a good idea. Ideally, the B+R parking should be a "closed box," forestalling the possibility of someone peeking inside. It should feature a guard and access should only be granted to those who have a pass or an entry card (be it a physical card or one installed on the smartphone app). A survey and an information campaign should precede the relevant investments to gauge the actual needs, while the implementation itself needs to be gradual, broken down into stages.

In light of the anticipated public opposition, the members of the Citizens' Assembly believe that if a paid parking system is introduced, parking should remain free after 16-18 o'clock and on weekends.

There should be either free parking or a discounted pass for one car per house/apartment in the district where the address of the owner is registered; this is especially necessary near the housing project.

Implementing this proposal would massively improve the quality of life in Érd. It would reduce traffic jams, which would benefit the entire city. Thanks to the parking fees, the city would generate more revenue, which could be used for further infrastructural investments.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL:

- + paid parking could be a major additional source of revenue for the city;
- + it would incentivize automobile users to drop their cars;
- + the streets and boardwalks could be better used if fewer cars parked on the curbs;
- + the time spent on errands and shopping would be reduced;
- + the P+R in Tétényliget would alleviate some of the strain that the city center is experiencing as a result of parking;
- + facilitating bicycle traffic with B+R parking would reduce congestion, traffic, and air pollution, and it would leave people healthier;
- + a community could emerge among the users of the B+R facility;
- + public safety would improve as a result of the use of the B+R facility;
- + if a guard is employed, we would also be creating a job;
- + thanks to the drop-off zones, there would be a drop in the number of traffic accidents, traffic would flow more smoothly, and fewer parking spaces would be needed;
- + the quality of life near the educational and childcare institutions would improve if traffic was smoother and more parking spaces were available.

THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◀ organizations representing cyclists and car users;
- ◀ experts in urban planning and transportation;
- ◀ neighborhood watch and police;
- ◀ the Hungarian State Railway Corporation (MÁV).

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- paid parking will be unpopular with the public.
- currently, there is often no alternative to cars since public transit or bicycle infrastructure is underdeveloped or nonexistent;
- there is too little space available for parking;
- if P+R is only available for a fee (if it is too expensive), by extension, public transportation is going to become more expensive, too, and fewer people are going to ride the train or bus;
- the municipal government of Tétényliget might object to the creation of a P+R in their municipality;
- another impediment may be that the suburban trains currently do not stop there. It would be necessary to consult with and involve the Hungarian State Railway Corporation (MÁV) – for the time being, their position on this issue is unknown;
- an impediment in the way of designating drop-off zones may be the lack of the will to do so or the fact that it is physically unfeasible.

THE TIMEFRAME FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL:

- ◀ Introducing paid parking in several stages, including planning: 1-5 years;
- ◀ B+R with planning and survey of needs: 3-4 years;
- ◀ drop-off zones adjacent to kindergartens and schools: 1-5 years (certain elements can be implemented immediately, however).

THE ÉRD CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY IN NUMBERS

The participants' opinions and impressions provide one of the best indicators for evaluating the effectiveness and functionality of an initiative based on participatory methods. We asked the members of the citizens' assembly to fill out a survey questionnaire before and after the Érd Citizens Assembly to ascertain how they felt about this new democratic instrument. The responses were provided voluntarily and processed anonymously.

A good indicator of the desire of Érd residents to have a say in local public affairs is that when asked about their reasons for applying to join the Assembly, the participants were most likely to cite a sense of local patriotism rather than the per diem compensation. The desire to do something for the city was mentioned by 28% of respondents as the top reason in the survey, while 22% ranked it second. The relevance of the topics discussed in the Assembly was mentioned as the top reason by 20%, while a further 17% designated this as the second most important motivator for them to join. Twelve percent of respondents mentioned an interest in the citizens' assembly as a new method as their main reason for joining, and 10% said it was the second most important driver of their decision. A mere 8% said that the per diem compensation was the most important reason, and only 4% mentioned it in second place. Only 16% of respondents mentioned the per diem at all among the significant motivators.

Another strong indicator of the citizens' desire to have a say in public affairs is that on a scale from 1 to 5, the respondents ranked the importance of politicians listening to the citizens as 4.5. Similarly, two-thirds (67%) of the Assembly participants agreed with the statement that in a democracy, citizens need to have a say in the decisions regarding the most vital issues, while 60% also agreed with the claim that in a democracy, it is important for a compromise to be reached between the representatives of differing views.

Nevertheless, an overwhelming majority (64%) of the responding Assembly participants felt that the prevailing political arrangement in Hungary does not allow for the average citizens to have a say in public affairs.

A central element of the citizens' assembly methodology is to broaden the knowledge of participants with the help of expert feedback. Ninety-five percent of the participants of the Érd Citizens' Assembly said that their knowledge about the transportation situation in Érd has expanded thanks to the information they picked up during the Citizens' Assembly. This was further supported by the participants' high level of satisfaction with the work of both, the experts and the senior experts involved (they graded the latter's work at 4.8 on a five-point scale).

Another piece of evidence showing that the participants came away with positive impressions is that 92% of those involved in the Assembly would join again if another event of this kind was held, while 96% would tell their friends to join if they have the chance to participate in such an event.

Based on the feedback, the participants gave the organization of the event an overall satisfaction score of 4.6, and they had the same assessment of the communication between the organizers and the participants. They graded the work of the facilitators even higher, giving it an average score of 4.8.

The survey also revealed that the participants had a positive view of the Assembly overall: 70% assessed that the event was better than they had anticipated, while a further 25% indicated that it was in line with their expectations – in other words, 95% were pleased with the event.

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“This is not about people just complaining and listing all that’s wrong; they actually come up with ideas on how to make things better.”

/Piroska, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

“We witnessed and were part of a very lively and dynamic process. The ideas and proposals that emanated from the assembly are really vital for the life of the city. It demonstrated that people not only have a desire to unite and to do something together for our future, but that they are also actively willing to engage in this. So this was a really great process, in my opinion!”

/Kata, sustainability expert at the municipal government of the City of Érd/

“I love planning and implementing processes that involve the community, and the citizens’ assembly provides a very good way of doing this. It was fantastic to see how within the blink of an eye the participants, who just before had been strolling about in confusion and were expecting a classic townhall type of meeting, immediately adapted their mindset to this model and fully immersed themselves in the joint work, throwing out new ideas with starry eyes! Because finally someone was interested in what they had to say. And at the same time, this gave them an opportunity to discover the possibility and beauty inherent in diversity!”

/Szilvia Zsargó, one of the facilitators of the Citizens’ Assembly/

“I’ve been seeing the streets in a completely new light since the assembly!”

/Klára, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

“The Citizens’ Assembly has definitely fostered a new type of thinking about the way we perceive the problems.”

/Anikó, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

“The most important thing for me would be if this was not the end of it all, but instead if we could somehow continue it!”

/Peti, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

“I had a great time and learned a lot of new information. I feel that Érd was in dire need of such a citizens’ assembly, for bringing people together to develop the community further.”

/Vencel, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

“I had a good time, and I view many issues differently now based on what I learned here.”

/Márton, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

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“It was a pleasant surprise, I had a good time. If another assembly is held, I’d be glad to join again.”

/Zsolt, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

“The neighbors pushed me to join, they said this was an opportunity to have a say in how things should go. I went home after the first weekend and talked to my neighbors and asked them what they think I should say at the Assembly, what their opinions are. I’ve been home for roughly a decade now because of the children, and it was great to get out and meet people and talk to them, I had an excellent time.”

/Szilvia, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/



“Having joined despite my skepticism, I came away pleasantly surprised. Facilitation and coaching interest me very much, that is one reason why I was curious. I had a good time and I’m curious whether all this will ultimately have a real impact.”

/Zsuzsa, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

“I had a great time, and I learned a lot from the presentations about Érd and new topics. If this project continues, I’d be glad to become involved even at the level of coordinating it.”

/Gábor, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

“I had a great time even though I initially only came because my parents pushed me, saying I wasn’t doing anything worthwhile at home. I felt this was a major responsibility for me as the sole representative of the under-20 generation. I learned a lot about Érd; for example, I had no idea previously that there are Érd residents who have to stave off flooding.”

/Sándor, a Citizens’ Assembly participant/

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THE ORGANIZERS' CONCLUSIONS

Managing the problems of suburban areas is one of the greatest urbanistic challenges today. Even in this fraught context, the case of Érd is special. The processes of suburbanization manifest themselves and affect the city with increasing intensity – and they create difficulties that the community must contend with. Although generally it is a good thing when many people want to make a city their home, when this trend is not followed by infrastructural developments that keep up with the growing population, the end result will be a situation that benefits no one.

The local public increasingly feels the difficulties stemming from these changes, and for many years now, the city appears to have been lagging behind in terms of implementing the necessary infrastructural developments. Everyone, be it the current or future residents of Érd, as well as the current or future leaders of the municipality, have a stake in preventing this situation from escalating.

It is commonly said that a citizens' assembly is especially useful when it comes to issues that are particularly difficult to get a grip on. In the case of Érd, the need for this type of collective brainstorming was very palpable.

Following the initiative of the city leadership, the participants of the Érd Municipal Assembly spared neither time nor energy and fully immersed themselves in this process; they were genuinely keen to find out what their neighbors think about the problems confronting their municipality and how they

could jointly find the best (or at least acceptable) solutions for everyone.

We learned a lot from the experts and each other during the two weekends of the Assembly. Many realized that enacting even seemingly small changes could constitute a difficult challenge, while they also became aware that ultimately the capacity to create a city that was a better place for everyone was in the hands of the community itself. The result of this process was a package of proposals that holds out the possibility of achieving significant progress in several areas, which will hopefully end up benefiting the entire city.

We are confident that these carefully thought-out and intensely debated proposals will serve as a point of reference for numerous positive changes in the future, while the Citizens' Assembly itself will be the starting point of many similar community initiatives. The city leadership now holds a compass in its hands; a compass that reflects the priorities of local residents and can help foster a more livable, greener, and community-centered Érd. The Assembly has at the same time also shown that there is enormous potential in the wisdom of crowds and that the citizens genuinely enjoy a process in which their ideas and experience (that is they themselves!) matter – not only every four years but all the time.



ÉRD CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY, 2022

Roads and Routes for Relief- How to transform Érd from a commuter town into a vibrant, green suburb?

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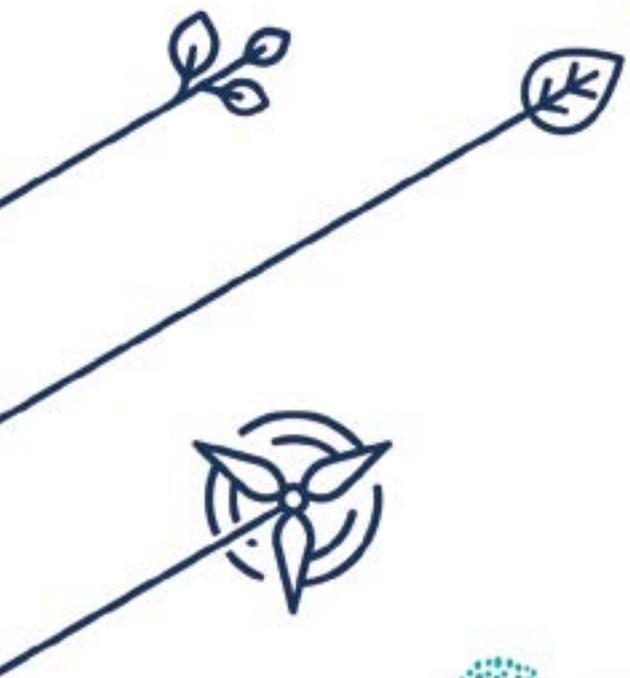
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