

Solutions for greener cities The city of Érd, Hungary

Suburban area

„garden city” with a common border with Budapest
ten of thousands commuting on a daily basis (car, train, bus)

Young city

approx. 35 years average age (75.000 inhabitants) > sharply increasing population
43 years old city rank (before that: Europe’s largest village)
city with county rank since 2006

Program of Modern Cities

nationwide development program in Hungarian big cities (cities with county rank)
inaccurate goals, plans and implementation

Urban heritage: lack of infrastructure, institutions and income

300+ km unpaved road
100+ families on the nursery’s waiting list
critical state of water utilities (nationwide problem) > Érd’s hilly terrain

Malfunctioning financing model of local governments

green areas vs industrial parks and economic zones
crucial role of local business tax (HIPA) > trap situation



The Hungarian Geographical Museum
and the Tree of Life

Efforts for a greener city



Traffic and public transport

- Car-centric transport system
- LIME (foot driven electronic scooter) – logistical issues: where to leave, how to recollect
- ShareNow (car sharing) – first steps taken
- Electronic bus trial runs (ISUZU, Mercedes) – local public transport to the train stations (reduction of car traffic)
- New bus lines – towards and around a new public school center
- BlinkCity, eBike – because of the terrain conditions traditional cycling is a bit restricted -> Érd Körbe („Critical Mass”)
- Lack of cycling routes

Air pollution measurement system

- Six spots in the city (mainly on kindergardens, soon to be 12)
- Online data constantly available - LUFTDATEN Community Sensor
- Cooperation with a local environment protecting association

Citizens' Assembly

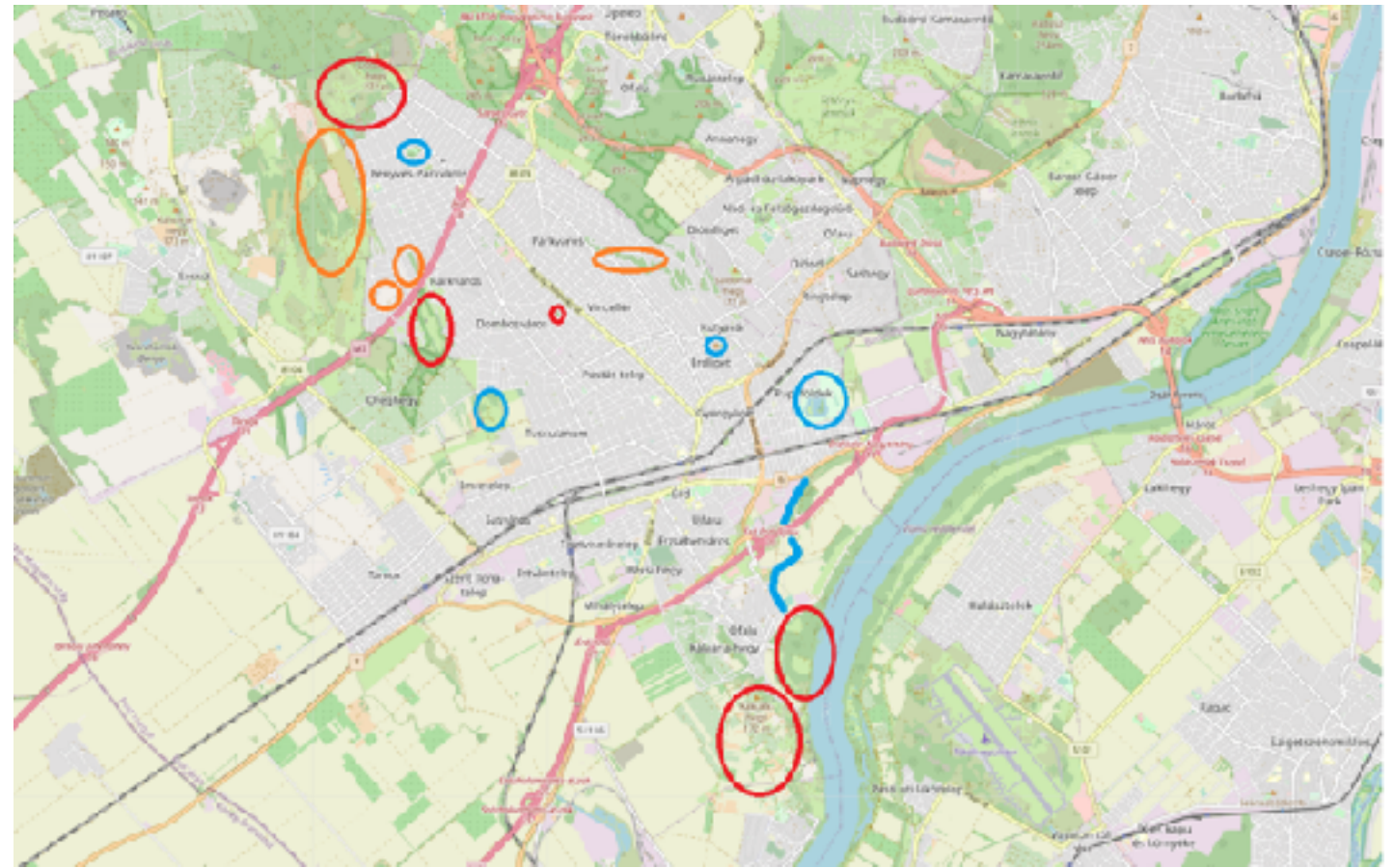
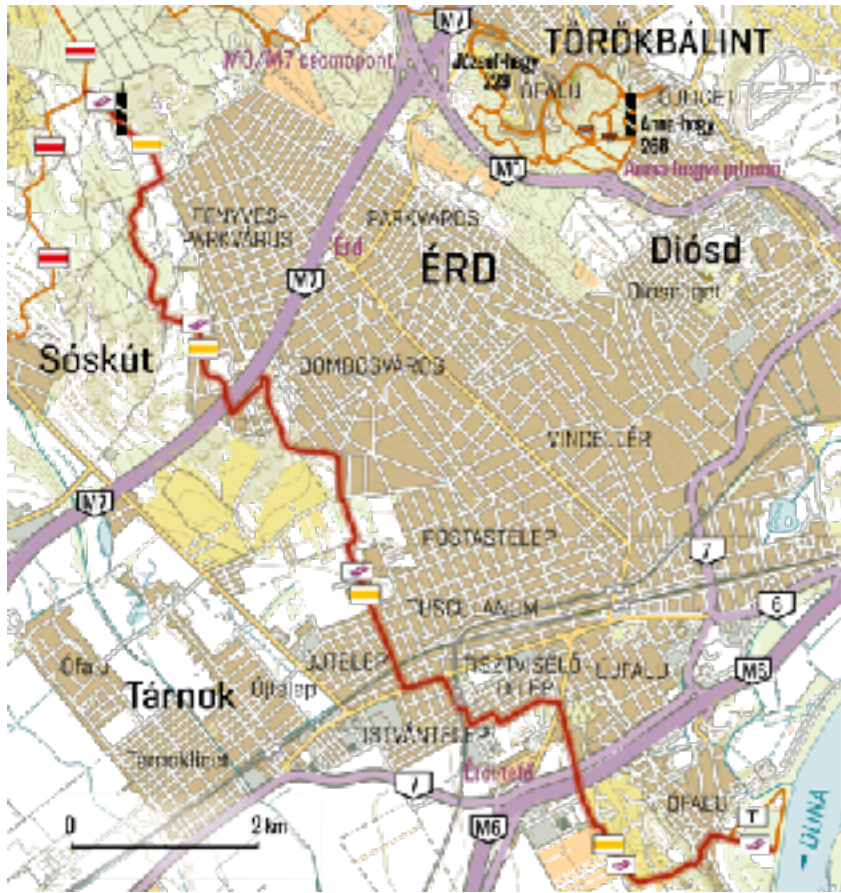
- Joint planning and decision preparation with 50 randomly chosen local residents




Green areas

- Nature Based Solutions (NBS) like LevenDuna hiking trail or the Climate-friendly Park
- Increase of the territory of protected areas in and around the city
 - Gyöngyvirág str. forest patch, Plum Tree Park, Fundoklia Valley
- Park building program – recreational areas within 15 minutes
- Revitalization of streams (90+ springs)
- Elvira manor: Europe's largest gene bank of hard-shell fruits > 670ha agricultural area vs industrial development



Sour cherry harvest at Elvira manor



-  Existing protected areas
-  Planned protected areas
-  Recreational areas (existing and planned)

Efforts for a greener city

Buildings and constructions

- „Multiapartment Stop”
 - Former construction company-friendly local regulation
 - Highlighted role of the building industry in the national economy
 - Lack of authority – since 2020 belongs to the district office (instead of the settlements)
- Tightening of construction regulations – lower urban density and smart growth
- Protection of particular areas like „Levendulás” (lavender field) or Elvira manor
- Sub-centers – 15-minute city as reality
- Tree and plant cadaster, register of protected plants

Strategies

- Climate Protection Strategy - months-long educational program > 1000+ schoolchildren involved
- Sustainable Urban Development Strategy
- Review of the Municipal Environmental Protection Program is under construction
 - Questionnaires
 - Continuous education and attitude formation
- SECAP, SUMP - waiting for EU resources

Selective waste management

- Paper
- Plastics and metals
- Glass
- Garden waste – city-owned composting factory > premium category products from sewage sludge and garden waste
- Mixed (municipal solid waste)



Composting factory in Erd

What about the recent energy crisis?

The party statements match the local challenges and efforts

- First steps towards geothermal heating (renewables instead of fossils) – taking over the best practice
- Independency from any great power (Russia, USA) = local energy production
- National, social-based deep renovation and insulation program – for citizens, local governments and small business sector
- Unmanagable overhead costs - VAT decrease (27% to 5% or 0%), price limitation
- STOP PAKS 2

Solar power

- City-owned public clinic – under procurement
- Local waterworks company (partly city-owned) – under procurement
- City-owned complex social care center – looking for resources (one of the inherited messed up projects, 4000m²)

LED exchange program

- accomplished by a private company with our logistical support (financed by the state)

EU funds

- Dedicated 4.5 billion HUF (11 million €) from Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)
- LIFE ReCoRiver: consortium partner in a tender related to natural habitat protection and foodplain management
- Looking for opportunities to get involved in Horizon 2020 projects
- Interreg cooperations mainly with sister cities – Kolín, Lubachow, Levice (Léva), Subotica (Szabadka), Reghin (Szászrégen)



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Obstacles

Political and regulatory environment

- Highly centralized illiberal state, aka hybrid regime of electoral autocracy (probably misspelled)
- Opposition-led cities (and districts in Budapest) at disadvantage
- Technical / administrative ban of wind power
- Environmental impact fee on solar panels, restrictions on backfeeding
- Lack of appropriate regulation of energy communities and multiapartment buildings

Financial background

- Permanent crisis management since 2019 (COVID, war in Ukraine, energy crisis)
- Lack of financial resources (investments and professionals: „green office”, energy management, traffic expert, etc.)
- Messed up financing method of local governments
- „Overhead reduction” as headlining policy ruined development (and maintenance) of public utilities
- Apartment and building stock in neglected state

Recent dilemma

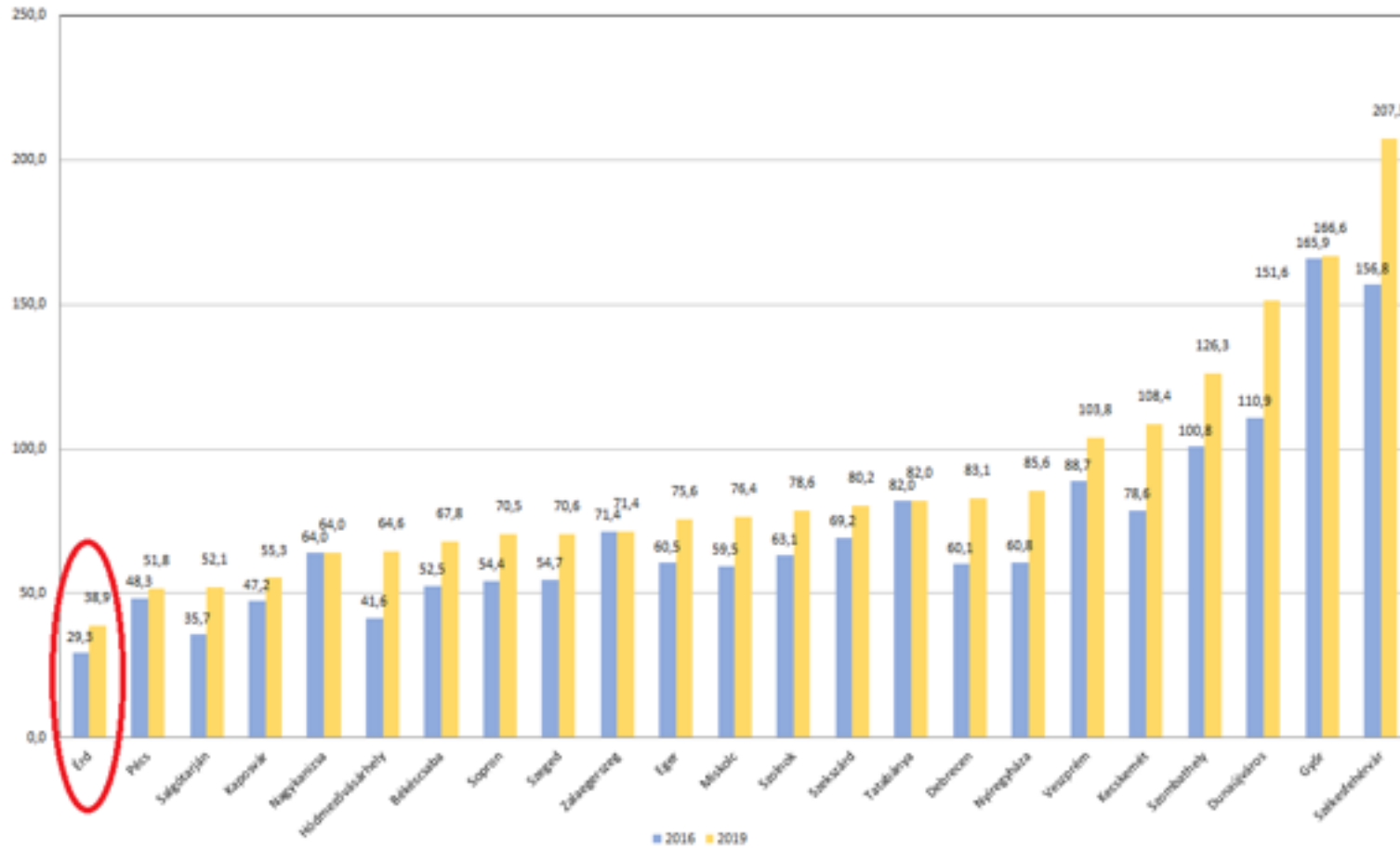
- Battery factories vs security (environment, water supply, industrial accidents)
- Over-supported multinational companies
- „Investment of special importance from a national economic view” and „special economic zone”



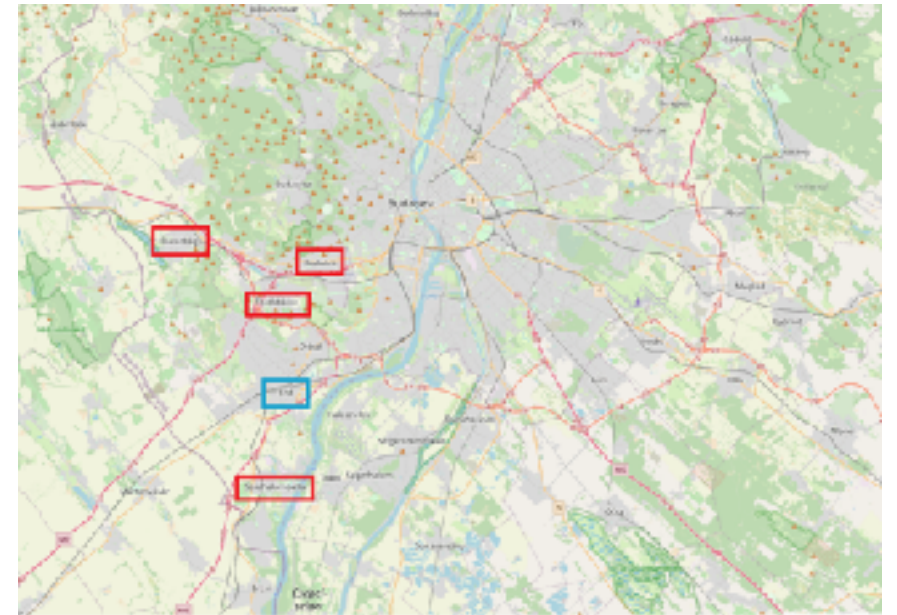
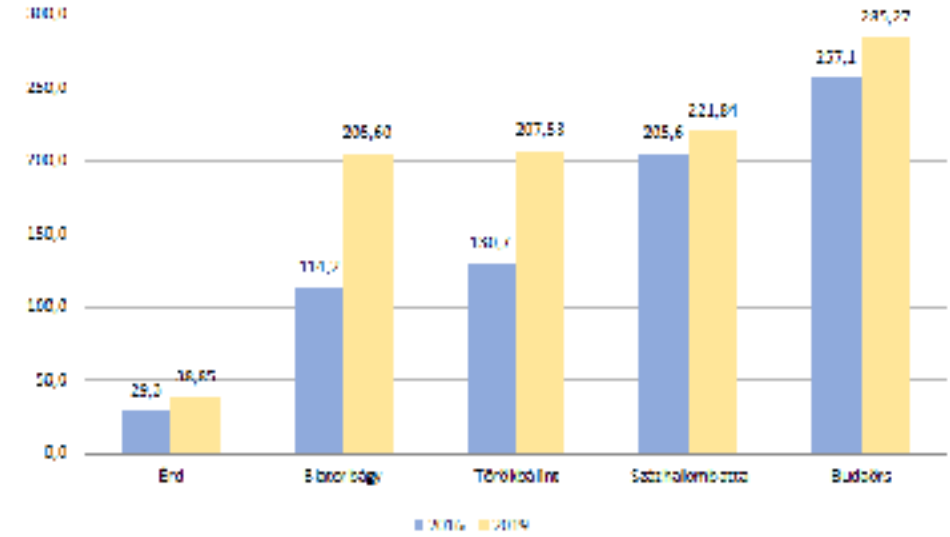
Town hall in Érd

Local business tax / capita (in thousand HUF)

Hungarian cities with county rank



Érd compared to some neighbouring cities



Summary and the focus of a green „city manager”

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Strategic planning

Low hanging fruits

Conservation or restoration of green areas

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We bleed out without incomes of our own

Infrastructural lag

Revenues don't follow the population growth

Two members (out of 18) of **LMP – Hungary's Green Party** in city council

Green transition and close cooperation with the inhabitants of the city

- Protection of natural habitats
 - from a floodbasin forrest to the meadows and pinewoods of a limestone plateau
- Water management
 - drinking water, natural waters, water utilities
 - flash floods vs temporary and permanent reservoirs and complex rainwater management
- Financial opportunities
 - direct funds, networks, domestic and local taxes

Unfortunately the government is busy with a XIX. century-style accumulation of capital, and hasn't arrived in the XXI. century yet



The plateau



Fundoklia Valley



Danube - riverbank