

Summary Report

**Pre-Citizens' Assembly
Education Day
27 September 2025**

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Introduction

The Municipality of Budapest District XVIII, Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre, is among the few municipalities in the country that, in a forward-looking manner, involves residents in uncovering the district's problems and planning its future through the method of an organised citizens' assembly — a method not yet widespread even at the European level. The Municipality of Budapest District XVIII, Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre was the 5th locality in Hungary to organise a Citizens' Assembly, and also the first Budapest district to do so. This summary contains the experiences of the first education day preparing for the citizens' assemblies.

Venue: 1184 Budapest, Üllői út 400, Municipality of Budapest District XVIII, Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre, Assembly Hall

Date: 27 September 2025

Objectives and implementation

The aim of the full-day residents' education event held in District XVIII was that, in preparation for the citizens' assembly, participants should gain a comprehensive, synergistic and holistic picture of the connections between urban development, green-space and transport planning. The event was built on the ethos of community participation and sought to give the population a deeper understanding of the meaning and purpose of decision-making processes and the practical benefits of participatory methods.

The day took place in three thematic blocks (community urban development, green spaces, transport), in each of which 20–25-minute presentations introduced the local research findings related to the given theme, international good practices, and the professional methodology of planning. The presentations were given by invited experts, researchers and practising planners, who offered insight into how the developments planned in the district fit international trends and how they can contribute to a more liveable, greener, more sustainable urban environment. Each thematic unit was followed by interactive programme elements and joint tasks aimed at problem identification, joint thinking, and the development of map-based, visual planning skills. During the small-group work carried out in

eight groups, participants shared their local experiences, observations and proposals with one another, thereby laying the groundwork for the discussion topics of the later citizens' assembly.

Methodology of the citizens' assembly

On 27 September 2025, the InnoK Tudásmenedzsment Intézet Nonprofit Kft. held District 18's first citizens' assembly in the official meeting hall of the District 18 Body of Representatives.

A citizens' assembly is a special occasion where the district's residents can think together and voice their opinions on our shared affairs. The citizens' assembly is a form of participatory democracy: here your voice truly matters, since participants can share their thoughts in a place where the elected representatives decide on the district's future.

Nearly five hundred people indicated that they would gladly take part in the citizens' assemblies; from among them we selected the participants anonymously, in line with international methodologies. We paid attention to gender, age group and place of residence, so that the participants truly provide a representative picture of the population of District XVIII.

The citizens' assembly makes it possible for the opinions and experiences of those living in the district to genuinely appear in the district's decisions, and for every participant to actively contribute to shaping the shared future.

It was an important consideration for InnoK that the group of invitees be representative by age, gender and part of the district — and this was achieved.

The topics of the assembly included the presentation of the assembly's objectives, the issue of the climate crisis and green spaces, as well as the theme of transport and transport development.

As a result, it can be stated that participants shared pivotal information regarding the district's key questions. These facts and opinions provide guidance and contribute to the district's development and to making it even more liveable in the future.

General experiences and methodology

Qualitative – Focus Group – Research

On 10 September in Pestszentlőrinc, on 11 September — for the first time in the life of our district — in Havanna, on 17 September in Pestszentimre, and furthermore on 18 September the

Gyorsforgalmi (expressway) area was in focus. A total of 50 people took part in the four city-district focus groups; the discussions took place in a good atmosphere, and a wealth of valuable thoughts, experiences and proposals emerged. Participants spoke openly about everyday difficulties, while many positive examples and community initiatives also came to light. Although each part of the city has its own characteristics, a common message emerged: the importance of community spaces, the need to strengthen local cooperation, and the desire to improve the environment. Building on these, we will be able to shape the future of District XVIII together.

Quantitative – Questionnaire – Research

The Municipality of District XVIII works to make our part of the city as liveable, green and friendly as possible. But this can only be achieved if we work out and discuss together what our beloved district should be like. Because developments are worth nothing if they do not serve the interests of those who live here. That is why we devised a social research study; as its first step, the municipality turned to the district's residents with a complex questionnaire. We were curious about their opinions and experiences.

We launched the quantitative — questionnaire — research in spring 2025, and it closed on 9 September.

What have we done so far?

Nearly 1,700 residents completed our questionnaire.

We held focus groups in four parts of the city, where more than 50 participants shared their experiences and ideas.

After these come the citizens' assemblies, at the centre of which are joint thinking and joint decision-making.

After analysing the collected data and opinions, we compiled a package of proposals that designates the main topics of the citizens' assemblies. This document will be the basis of the district's comprehensive development map.

For us, urban research is not only about numbers, but also about residents actively shaping the future of their own environment. That is precisely why we apply a hybrid method in the research: we work by combining quantitative and qualitative tools, in order to obtain a more complete and more credible picture of the district's needs and opportunities.

While completing the online questionnaire, nearly five hundred people indicated that they would gladly take part in the citizens' assemblies; from among them we selected the participants anonymously — and in line with international methodologies. In the selection we took into account the applicants' gender, age group and place of residence, so that the selected representatives of the citizens' assembly truly provide a representative picture of the entire population of District XVIII. In this way we could ensure that the district's diverse community speaks up in the discussions, and that the shared experiences and ideas reflect the voice of local people as well as possible.

The drop-off resulting from the difference between those who pre-registered for the education day and those who actually attended is approximately 20%, a ratio that can also be applied to the further occasions of the citizens' assemblies. In the selection and pre-registration of participants, territorial, gender and age-group representativeness played a role — that is, the representative selection of the district's population.

The selection of participants was carried out, for the first time in Hungary, on the basis of a uniquely developed methodology. Indeed, we later also depart significantly from Fishkin's model of small-group discussions: according to the Fishkin model, participants debate the topics in randomly formed small groups, with a moderator leading the discussion so that everyone has the chance to speak and the debates remain balanced. Here we changed only this: we arranged the participants who attended into residential neighbourhoods based on the parts of the city. Among those who attended, however, some difference appeared in the actual willingness to participate between certain parts of the district. This may be valuable

information for the district leadership regarding which parts of the district have a stronger willingness for civic activity and which have a weaker one.

In the case of the participants, a greater geographical concentration can be observed in the following places:

- The Havanna housing estate – Szent Lőrinc housing estate (former KISZ estate) – Bókaytelep – Gloriett telep quadrangle
- The Erzsébettelep – Lakatos Úti housing estate – Rendessytelep triangle
- The Újpéteritelep – Belsőmajor – Erdőskert triangle

In addition to the above, participants also came from the following parts of the district:

- Alacskai Úti housing estate (former Krepuska Géza estate)
- Ganzkertváros
- Ganztelep
- Szent Imre garden suburb
- Szemeretelep

Presentations

The opening presentation introduced the conceptual world of the citizens' assembly, emphasising that community participation is not merely a democratic gesture, but one of the most effective sources of knowledge for urban development. Participants learned that the aim of the assembly is not to replace decision-makers, but to incorporate residents' experiences, values and proposals into the district's development processes. During the presentation, the experiences of earlier domestic and international citizens' assemblies were presented, with particular regard to the positive resident feedback and the results born of cooperation, dialogue and interest reconciliation. The emphasis was that community participation strengthens local identity, increases trust in municipal decision-making, and contributes to developments being built on real social needs. At the event we highlighted that the methodology applied in District XVIII was not created on the basis of a general template, but is a district-specific participatory toolkit tailored to local needs, specifically adapted to the experiences and environmental characteristics of the population of Pestszentimre and Pestszentlőrinc. The education day thus served not only a knowledge-transfer purpose, but also conscious preparation for active participation in the citizens' assembly: residents understood that their opinions and proposals play a key role in shaping the district's future. The first block therefore

laid the conceptual and methodological framework of the event — making it clear that the aim of community participation is a partnership-based, joint creation of knowledge that links local experiences, professional knowledge and planning expertise.

At the event, in preparation for the later citizens' assemblies, participants could hear presentations on urban-planning questions affecting the district as well, on various topics, since according to the methodology participants must be in possession of certain basic context. In the "Green spaces and climate crisis" block, participants analysed the district's natural endowments, green infrastructure, and the heat-island and water-retention problems. In the afternoon section, transport problems, data and development opportunities came into focus.

Professional topics discussed during the event:

- The diversity of Budapest District XVIII, its urban-development attitudes, presentation of the results of large-sample research
- The perception of the district's green spaces and the attitudes and problems related to the district's green spaces
- Urban green and blue — the role of vegetation in the city, domestic and foreign good practices
- Urban ecosystem services, the role of ecosystem services and their planability
- Functions of urban green areas and green-area planning
- The district's transport problems, ideas and attitudes related to transport. Traffic data, noise and vibration load, air pollution, accident data
- Transport organisation and planning in practice
- Urban sub-centres and the 15-minute city concept in practice
- Tactical urbanism — shaping the micro-environment with residents' ideas (in the framework of an online presentation)

Practical tasks

This event was essentially an education day, but methodologically it corresponds to a pre-citizens' assembly. As preparation for the next citizens' assembly, and with the aim of observing the initial willingness to cooperate and the group dynamics, two practical tasks

already took place on the education day, during which the district's residents could experience, in a first round, the power of discussions and teamwork.

First practical task: On the basis of their own problems and experiences, participants mark on the map, with coloured stickers, the condition of green spaces and the ecosystem services, then decide together on the most important development points.



Second practical task: Within the task, the groups identify transport problems on the map (accident hotspot, noise, poor accessibility), then together make proposals with coloured stickers for improvements, new services and traffic-reducing interventions. Already during the execution of the two practical tasks, several outstanding resident insights could be observed.



During the joint tasks, **the problems related to green spaces can be arranged into three main groups:**

1. Maintenance and cleanliness deficiencies:

- Compared with the general average, there are more neglected parks and public spaces (e.g. Halmierdő, Ferihegyi forest belt)
- Regular littering, illegal waste dumping, safety and biodiversity problems due to lack of care

2. Underused or abandoned areas:

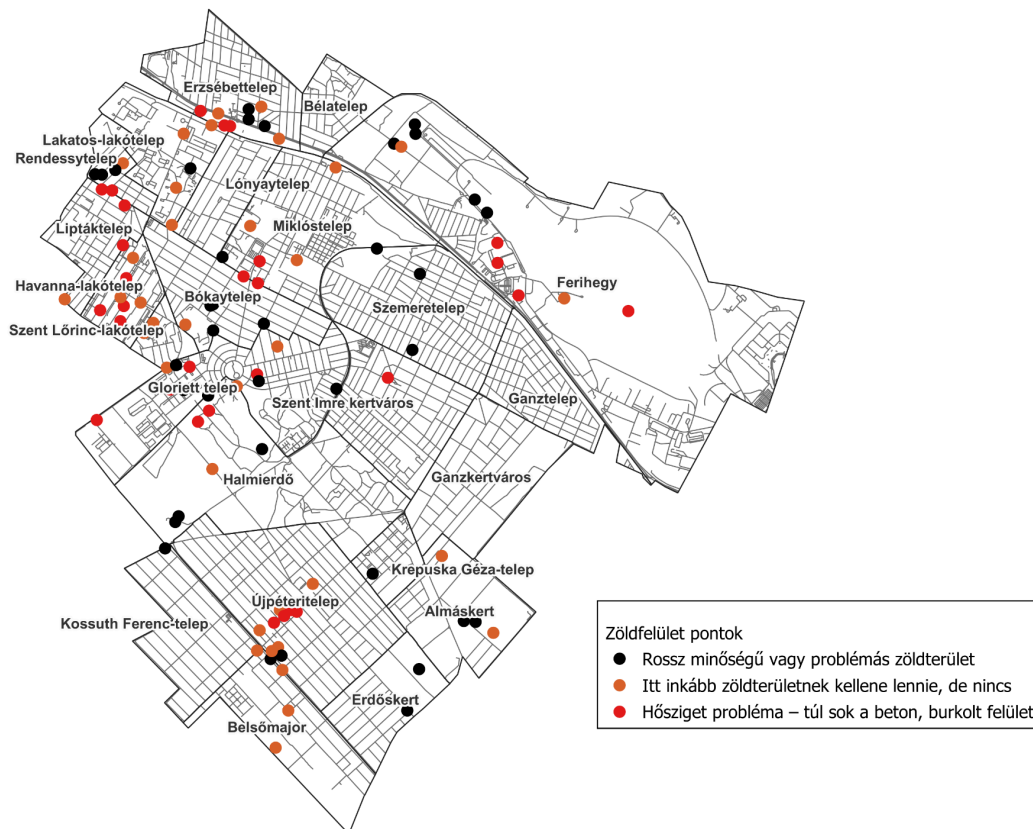
- Undeveloped plots suitable for greening (former military areas, empty zones between housing estates)
- Partial appropriation of public spaces (by small businesses, by residents), the retreat of community functions

3. Missing green and recreational functions:

- Few shaded, tree-covered areas at transport junctions and around markets (e.g. Üllői út, Nagykőrösi út)
- Several entries mention that in summer it is noticeably warmer on the asphalted areas (e.g. markets, main roads, housing-estate centres).

- The high proportion of paved surfaces, an increase in heat load especially along Üllői út.

Key problem: the basic green infrastructure is aged, deficient and unevenly distributed across the district. The deterioration of the microclimate — the urban heat-island phenomenon affects an increasing number of residential areas. The use value of the existing green areas shows a declining tendency due to maintenance and community control and the withdrawal of governmental funds.



II. Recognised opportunities

1. Creation of new community and recreational spaces

- Several proposals concern the development of *Bókay-kert*, *Kondor Béla promenade and brownfield areas*.
- Participants consider it desirable to establish *sports grounds, community gardens, dog runs, playgrounds* or indeed *outdoor climbing walls* (the latter in *Bókay-kert*).
- They support the expansion of spaces providing *recreational ecosystem services* (e.g. rest, exercise, community life).

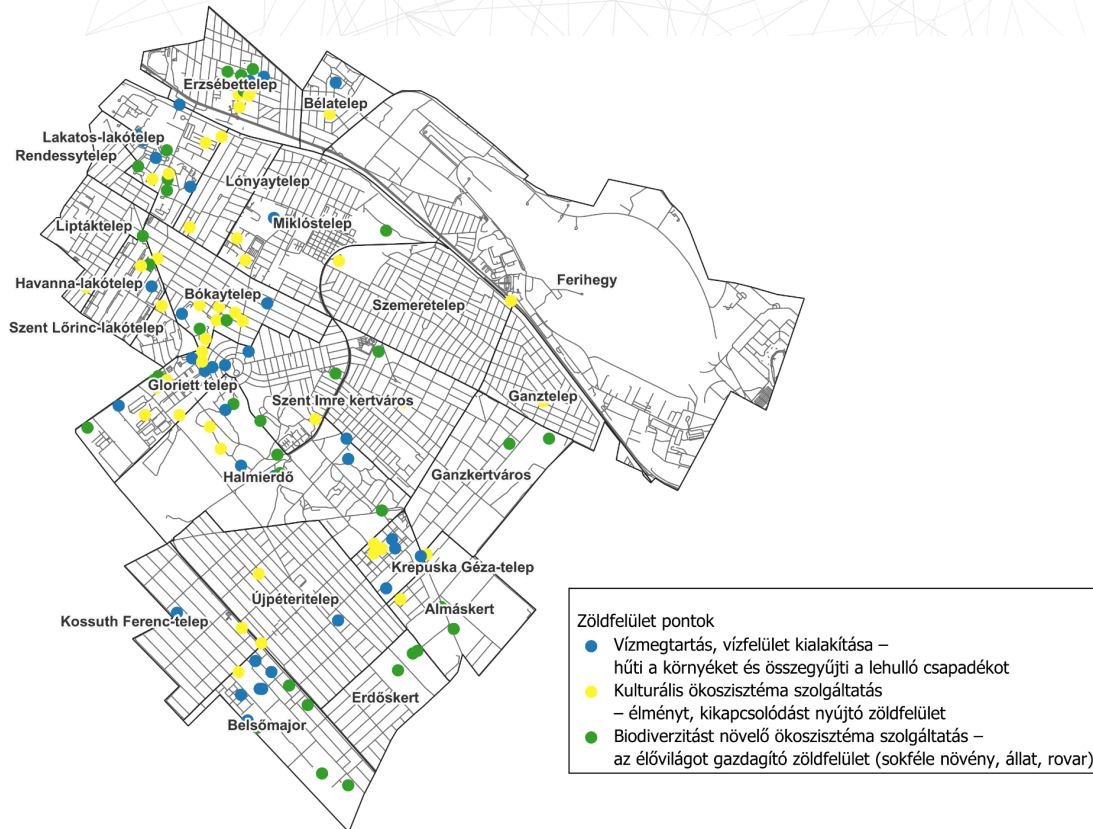
2. Developments increasing biodiversity

- There is resident demand for *tree planting, wildflower meadows, the preservation of natural forest belts* (e.g. Halmierdő, Kiserdő, former military zones).
- Residents would like to achieve the *enrichment of the flora and fauna* in this part of the city.
- Some proposed mini-greenings and tree-planting actions *in the immediate vicinity of schools and housing estates*.

3. Development of water retention and cooling infrastructure

- There were few but firm proposals concerning *the arrangement of wetlands, ponds, stream banks and the creation of new water surfaces*.
- Several referred to *keeping rainwater on site, as well as shading and cooling elements* (trees, drinking fountains, shade canopies).

Key opportunity: increasing the community experience and quality of life through the development of local recreational green spaces. Development of climate-adaptive green infrastructure, strengthening of the ecological network, a more nature-like urban image.



In the afternoon block, participants identified the problems, challenges and opportunities related to transport. As a result of the group work, participants took part not only in identifying the problems but also in **prioritising the solutions**. The joint thinking strengthened local participation and trust in the planning process.

Infrastructural deficiencies and dangerous traffic points:

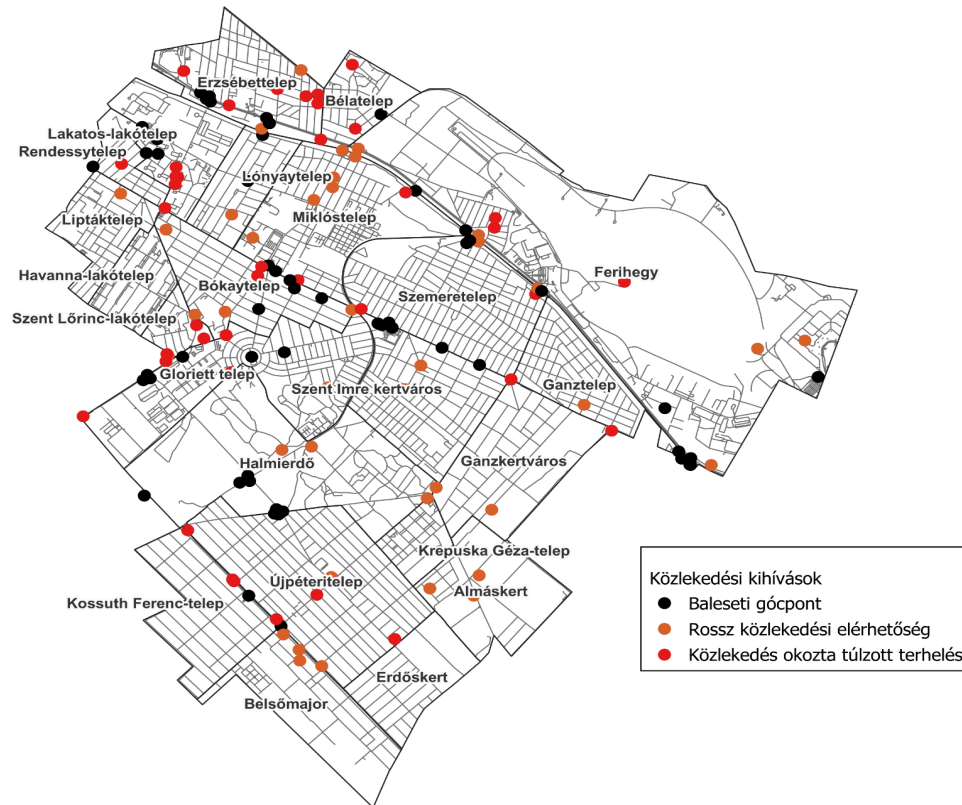
- Petőfi utca, Gyömrői út, Méta utca, Üllői út – busy and accident-prone junctions
- Tram and railway crossing is cumbersome, pedestrian crossings are deficient

Noise and vibration load, traffic overload

- Along the main axes (Üllői út, Nagykőrösi út) noise, dust and vibration are the main complaint
- Congestion also diverts traffic into the side streets

Poor public-transport accessibility

- On the peripheral areas of Pestszentimre and Pestszentlőrinc, infrequent services, deficient connections
- Lack of night-time transport, limited accessibility of the Ferihegy area



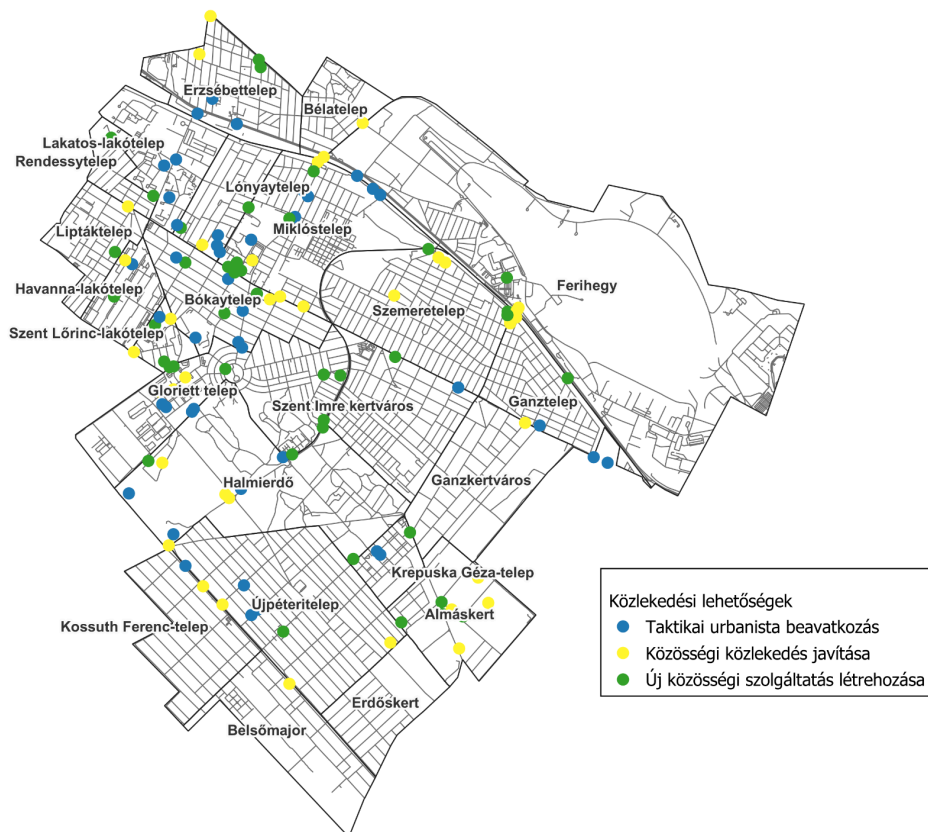
Opportunities formulated

- Traffic calming and development of micromobility: cycle- and pedestrian-friendly streets, regulation of scooters, pedestrian islands (Üllői út, Gillice tér)
- Improvement of public transport: more frequent services, better transfer connections, new micromobility points
- New transport sub-centres and strengthening of the "15-minute city" concept
- Building reuse and the combination of transport functions (e.g. reopening of abandoned service units)

- In the field of transport, the main areas for development are the axis of tram line 50, the Gloriett-telep, and the area around the Ferihegyi expressway / Gyömrői út.

Of course, the observations also concerned areas that are not under the district municipality's management but, for example, under MÁV's management; even so, the residents' needs cannot be disregarded. A few characteristic statements:

- At the Ferihegy railway station, the creation of K+R (Kiss & Ride) and P+R (Park & Ride) parking would be necessary
- There is also demand for P+R parking in other areas
- Traffic reduction on Ráday utca is recommended
- At the end of Üllői út, the railway crossing is dangerous
- The quality of Nagykőrösi út is very poor
- On the undeveloped green area of the Alacskai Úti housing estate (former Krepuska Géza estate), the establishment of public furniture and community spaces is recommended



Participant feedback

Summary

Based on the feedback, the lessons of the education day are mixed; however, a few main conclusions can certainly be drawn from the written and the in-person on-site experiences.

- **Finding:** For some participants it was not clear that the first occasion was an education-oriented, exploratory day — a so-called pre-citizens' assembly — so there were those who already expected the elaboration day, i.e. the citizens' assembly to be held on the October weekend, where group work and the development of local proposals will truly be in focus.
- **Finding:** It is not clear to every participant that the citizens' assembly is not a town-hall hearing and not the consultation / socialisation phase of the planning of a given municipal / state project. At the same time, there is resident demand for involvement in the latter cases as well.
- **Finding:** In the case of an event lasting as long as or longer than a standard working day, the chance of negative feedback increases. The education day slightly overran the optimal limit; this is too tiring especially for the pensioner age group. The presentations were too long.

Recommendation: On other occasions it is worth making the professional language even more understandable, while recognising the merits of the efforts made so far in this direction. It is worth capping the length of presentations at 15 minutes, and in addition inserting one or two more short breaks into the day.

Feedback - paper-based, anonymous, dropped into a ballot box.

(In brackets are the interpretive notes of the staff member carrying out the processing.) We publish the feedback below without alteration, even in cases where the participant may have been mistaken. The reaction to the observations takes place in a separate discussion / document.

Satisfied:

- Professionalism
- I think theory and practice were in equal proportion. At the presentations I heard a great deal of new information... Thank you.

- Such a good atmosphere at the next occasions too 😊
- A content-rich day of similar standard.
- This forum was a great idea, with excellent presentations! Thank you for your work, and also to those helping in the background!
- I will be wanting the help next time too!
- Good atmosphere and thinking together. Understanding / accepting the other person's opinion.
- An appropriately similar good team, excellent information (next time too).

Point/need for development:

- This day was very theoretical, which in itself would not be a problem, but it is not what I expected. At the start of the day it would have been good to present an agenda showing the schedule of the day.
- Let us deal with Pestszentimre as a priority! Presenting ideas, putting them to a vote (we should).
- There should be more quiz games.
- On 11–12 October, if possible, let there be experts from the district municipality here, from whom concrete things can be asked.
- The voicing of proposals, possible changes regarding transport. (the participant would like this)
- Let us deal with community topics. Next time let there be no professional topics; it was 2×30 minutes for what we came for, we did not expect it to be this theoretical.
- Perhaps about concrete plans in urban development (it would be good to hear) that we have a say in.
- In the afternoon there was no food only for those with gluten allergy, even though this need had to be indicated in advance, and it was not posted at the earlier

gluten-free section that it too may contain gluten. According to the advertised programme: "the district's residents can think together, learn from one another and seek solutions together for local affairs." Despite this, out of 9 hours we spent 2x30 minutes (on local affairs), which is quite a big disappointment. It was very theoretical and a lot.

- The framework was not announced at the beginning, so the breaks and the schedule could not be known -> the official professional position: "after 90 minutes the listener becomes an enemy" -> there were too few breaks, the theoretical parts were long. They did not start on time, there was a lot of waiting, unnecessary trimmings. Many irrelevant examples that are not feasible here at home.
- Involvement of religious communities.
- The following would be needed: Detailing of the ideas and projects in the planning phase that are under way in the district, such as the renovation of Gyömrői út, the express railway, the renovation of Bókay, etc.
- After the awareness-raising/motivating/informative presentation, let there be some group task right away. It can even be a random group each time, so that we get to know the residents of other parts of the city better.
- I would like feedback on the results of the groups' work.
- Parking situation, tree planting.
- May the submitted proposals be fulfilled in as large a percentage as possible in the coming years.
- Since only 1 solution is needed per team, many good ideas may be lost 😞
- Fuller information about the renovation of Gyömrői út and the expressway (we should have it). Detailed, professional presentation from beginning to end, presentation of the planned schedule. Description of the areas planned for expropriation/purchase.
- It was good this way too, but individual justification is also needed alongside one's own decisions.
- Putting up for debate the common matters outlined on the basis of the first occasion, analysing and presenting feasibilities, and, where there is already a municipal intention on the given question, presenting it. Thank you! 😊

- I feel the focus-group discussion advanced the community thinking-together better. Next time too I would like to experience that, along shared interests, we can shape the district's future through joint thinking. Today was very theoretical for me, rather than practical.
- More knowledge, more information about our possibilities; I, as a resident, gladly take part in programmes of this kind.
- More quizzes, voting
- Active feedback (would be needed) on the feasibility of the proposals we have made.
- A shop or grocery store is missing in Erzsébettelep
- The compilation and presentation of the listed larger-scale development needs — if any were named — and of municipal possibilities — short-, medium-, long-term

Other – the message cannot be decided:

- transport, community organising
- Concrete proposals for tactical urbanisation, proposals for brownfield areas

Feedback – in the form of an online evaluation sheet.

After the event, participants filled in an evaluation sheet, the main quantifiable questions of which were as follows:

- How useful was the event for you? (1: not at all, 5: very useful)
- Please rate the following (1: not good at all, 5: very good)
 - Venue
 - Organisation, running
 - Catering (meals)
 - Compilation of the professional programme
 - Implementation of the professional programme
- How satisfied were you with the event overall? (1: not good at all, 5: very good)

The averages of the aggregated results are illustrated in the following table.

Aspects	Average of the scores given by participants
How useful was the event?	4.8
Venue	4.9
Organisation, running	5
Catering (meals)	4.2
Compilation of the professional programme	4.8
Implementation of the professional programme	4.9
How satisfied were you with the event?	4.9

The event **successfully fulfilled its dual objective:**

1. it prepared the thematic days of the citizens' assembly (green spaces, transport),
2. it strengthened the involvement of the population and interest in participatory decision-making.

The majority of participants **appreciated the practical and interactive approach**, especially the map-based and playful tasks, through which the complex urban-development questions became more tangible. The programme **provided a strong community base and valuable feedback** for the decision-makers, on which the citizens' assembly and the later strategic planning can also build.

