



MAGYKÖRÖS  
BLOOMING TOWN 2019





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## Mayor's Greetings

Dear Visitor,

The value creator residents of Nagykőrös are proud of their town. We are aware of the fact that our strength arises from our predecessors, and we also know that we shall leave their heritage to our descendants by preserving and enriching it. Besides our environmental, architectural and cultural legacy we also believe that the attitude inherited from generation to generation, a life led with thoughtfulness and care, furthermore appreciation of knowledge and achievements and being grateful for God's presents are great treasures.

For this reason, for us Nagykőrös, the country town in the Hungarian Plain, shaped by us and our predecessors is the most beautiful home. We love living here and we cherish our city as much as we can. We proudly present our values to others and it makes us feel great when our success and achievements – accomplished with the providence of God – are also welcomed by residents of other cities and countries.

We are aware of that we own unique values that give us special duties. However, preserving and enriching them provides opportunities to strengthen our community spirit and find new partners as well.

We believe that the principle 'Value attracts more value' will stand up in the future as well and we can enrich our current values with the help of partners in a way which ensures that the environmental treasures, green parks and civic atmosphere of Nagykőrös will be able to provide a safe, family-friendly home for our present and future residents, furthermore acquire pleasant days to our visitors for a long time.

May God bless the work of the Entente Florale Europe jury. I hope they will get acquainted with Nagykőrös and close our blooming and green town into their heart.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Szabolcs Czira'.

**Dr. Szabolcs Czira**  
Mayor of Nagykőrös

# I. Planning and development



## SPATIAL STRUCTURE

According to archaeological finds, the area of Nagykovács, positioned in the middle of Hungary, more exactly at the Sand Ridges of Danube–Tisza Interfluvium, has already been inhabited 7000 years ago.

Due to its urban structure, Nagykovács represents a remarkable value in national basis. It has been also mentioned in the most outstanding technology university's curriculum. This peculiar structure is called 'kétbéltekés' in Hungarian which means that residents possessed a lot inside and outside the town boundaries as well. Residential buildings and a small vegetable gardens were established in the inside lot, also smaller animals were kept there as well. Workstocks (e. g. horses and cows) and winter forage were kept in the bigger lots outside the town boundaries. The inner area represented a neat, rustic yet civic image while the outside lots possessed irregular street structures and plot features. This special settlement structure is still can be found in the town's Tabáni district. Preserving these unique structural features is an important objective of both the residents and the city administration. Another unique characteristic of the settlement structure is the chain of squares located in the town center which consist several connected squares.



# I. Planning and development

## URBAN PLANNING

Core documents of development, building and value-creating processes:

- **Municipal Development Concept**  
Prominent field professionals, representatives of local significant enterprises, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions were involved in the creation process.
- **Urban Structure Plan and Local Building Regulations**  
These documents are tools used for urban planning. For the sake of implementing a widespread community consultation each plan is published in the local press, at the Mayor's Office and on the town's website. Furthermore, in the framework of residential forums concerned parties can have a discussion about future plans. The operative town planning tools are available on the Local Government's official website and available in the national legislative register as well. Moreover, the colleagues of the Mayor's Office providing information in person to everyone who is interested or has further questions. For the sake of protecting town image, the Municipal Image Handbook and the Municipal Image Decree no. 25/2017. (XII.1.) on townscape protection of Nagykőrös have been created.

All of these regulations based on the community consent that Nagykőrös shall be a city which preserves its values, contributes to a green and healthy environment, it is family- and business-friendly, and provides the basis of an eco-driven development for the upcoming generation.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The green infrastructure of Nagykőrös shows an exceptionally colorful picture. Public parks, gardens and institutions with large green spaces are the most significant green elements of the urban area. As it is presented on the Urban Structure Plan, the town is surrounded from North and West by a green forest belt which is the most immense continuous woodland of the Hungarian Plain. This area is the home of our pride, the Plain Oak Trees, which is one of the sources of our title: 'Green town'.



# I. Planning and development

The city's most important ecological corridor runs in the East-West direction along the Kőrös-rill which almost touches the town center in the so-called Dam (Gát) area and dives into the built areas. The rill also receives rainwater from the built drainage network.

In terms of land use the settlement displays concentrated and concentric aspects. In the innermost area residential buildings with institutional and commercial spots, also significant public and recreational spaces are situated. The outer rim contains nearly 4000 small gardens (around 1500 m<sup>2</sup> area each) which build up a ring of allotments considered to be one of the main characteristics of a country town.

Outside the residential area, patched within allotments, agricultural and industrial sections are located, being planned to be expanded to the current roads and the future bypass road surrounding the town. Besides the above-mentioned lots, farm buildings with agricultural lands and forest areas can be found.

The most intense sections of the residential area in terms of built up area and building height are located in the historical town core and along main roads. Less intensive urban areas with smaller townhouses and suburban-styled buildings are also dominant, with a constantly higher green space ratio driven by local regulations.

In the last few years, great emphasis have been put on the refurbishment of public parks and green areas which resulted in serious quality improvement. Besides the comprehensive projects which affected the town center, the Cifra Garden, the Rowing Lake and the park in front of the railway station, residents also play great role in improving our public spaces. They participate in tree-planting and pathway renovation programs, also take part in the 'Flowery Nagykőrös' competition as well. These movements contribute significantly to the development of a neat and green town image.

Another positive change that worth mentioning is the road building program implemented in the last few years. Within the framework of the project several roads got dust-free solid coverage. Residents also started to improve green spaces along the refurbished roads.

## ROAD NETWORK AND TRAFFIC

Two national main roads run across Nagykőrös, playing important role in the life of the city. Road no. 441 which is loaded with heavy traffic can be relieved from the congestion by a bypass road in the future. The project has already had the necessary building permits, and the town is currently lobbying for the implementation. In 2010 a new ring-road was built in the 'Temetőhely' district, located in the South part of Nagykőrös, to bypass traffic from the town center. The town manages approx. 646 km public roads both inside and outside its boundaries.

The town's accessibility will be affected significantly by the long-awaited M8 (Szolnok-Veszprém) speedway which will border the city from South and East. Motorway no. M44, that will connect Transylvania with Western Europe, is planned to stem from the above-mentioned M8 speedway. The construction of the Southern section is currently in progress.

Nagykőrös is an administrative district center and also considered as a school town in the neighboring cities. In terms of rail transportation the town is connected to the Budapest-Szeged main railway line. Public transportation is used mainly for long-distance travels. Locally the most popular means of transport are walking and biking. Overall the town possesses a 150,7 km long pathway network. The length of the built cycling road is 8,3 km.

## GREEN BUDGET

In 2018 Nagykőrös allocated 54,5 million HUF for green space management. 6,3 million HUF was used for tree replacement, 2,4 million HUF was spent on mowing grass in the outskirts of the town, furthermore, numerous plants species were purchased for 4,2 million HUF.

## II. Sustainable environment

The residents of Nagykőrös are strongly connected to nature and environment. During the development of the country town, the local citizens' soul became one with the life-sustaining soil, water and air. The provident and well-economized mindset, stemmed from citizenship in the Calvinist town, is still present in everyday life, providing opportunity to progress further and further. The values of our predecessors still affect the present generation and live on in every fields of life, not only in the soul of residents but also in the town's strategies and plans.

### AIR

Nagykőrös belongs to cities which possess clean air. Air quality is mostly affected by pollution stemmed from traffic, fire-heating and industrial activities. Main traffic lines have constant negative effects on air quality, which can be experienced most intensely in the town center at the main road junction. In order to decrease the amount of air pollution a new ring-road have been built in the 'Temetőhegy' district, furthermore, during the town center rehabilitation a roundabout have been constructed to replace the double junction of main roads previously controlled by traffic lights. Great emphasis was put on promoting cycling as well. To provide cyclers more safety, cycling paths were established along roads with high traffic. We contribute to decrease the pollution stemmed from fire-heating by providing information to residents about the matter.

In the last 5 years 67 roads have received solid coverage which decreased the concentration of airborne dust in the affected areas. In the past not properly treated sewage was poured into Kőrös-rill which resulted in stinking at the affected areas. The source of smell was eliminated when the local waste water treating plant had been built and started its operation in 2013. In the plant with an average 3600 m<sup>3</sup>/day hydraulic capacity complete mechanical, biological and chemical treatment of waste water can be implemented.

### SOIL

Characteristic soil types in Nagykőrös are limestone plaque chernozem (fertile black soil), chernozem-featured sand, humus sand and brown forest chernozem. For decades the main source of soil pollution used to be the leaking residential waste water. A great step forward to deal with the issue was a program carried out between 2006 and 2012 which aimed the improvement of waste water management and was implemented with the support of the European Union and with a collaboration between residents and the Local Government. Within the framework of the project the previous 30% coverage rate of waste water system became 100%.



## II. Sustainable environment

Another pollution source was the uninsulated public waste landfill which is located outside the town boundaries and it used to provide waste disposal for the whole town. The waste dump has been closed down as today waste is collected regionally by DTKH Kft. and it is placed to eco-friendly disposal stations located in other cities.

After the change of regime in 1989 most of the arable lands were privatized. Large-scale agricultural lots were abolished also the usage of fertilizers and pesticides was dropped.

### WATER PROTECTION

The improvement of the town's sewage management positively affected water protection. Nowadays the previously leaking waste water is collected in a sewer system and gets treated in a mechanical, biological and chemical waste-water treatment plant. The project was awarded with Hugo Lampl Prize by field professionals. However, the most important acknowledgement was received from the nature itself as life returned to the section of Kőrös-rill which was once polluted with waste water.

In the last two decades significant improvements have been made regarding the city's drinking water system. The network's coverage inside the town boundaries successfully reached 100%. However, the drinking water provided by the water plant didn't meet the required criteria regarding ammonium, iron and manganese content. The matter was solved with the support of application funds, however the quality of drinking water is constantly under monitoring and future improvements have to be made to provide sufficient service which meets the strict requirements.

The town's only constant watercourse is Kőrös-rill. Still water location inside town boundaries is the Rowing Lake, also on the outskirts of the city the privately owned Tőzeget Lake. Besides the improvements mentioned earlier, the project titled 'Rain-water drainage of the most critical areas of Nagykőrös' also had a positive effect on the condition of Kőrös-rill. The project was implemented in 2009 with the support of the European Union. Constant maintenance of the system is an important task carried out in cooperation with residents.

### WASTE MANAGEMENT

Nagykőrös has joined to the regional ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession) project. Within the framework of the program, the local landfill, situated in the outskirts of the town, have been closed down and got recultivated in 2010. Monitoring of chemical and physical processes inside the recultivated disposal site is carried out constantly.



Former waste collection islands have been exchanged by door-to-door collection of selective and green waste. Green waste is delivered to a locally-based regional waste management site and being reverted to nature as nutrient. Collection of unused electrical devices is held twice a year, also the cooperation of commercial sector has appeared as stores offer exchange events to motivate residents to get rid of old, non-functioning and unused devices. Several battery collection spots were established in the town. Household hazardous waste and rubber waste are collected in the local waste collection yard.

In order to meet the target numbers of the National Waste Management Public Service Plan (OKHT) the improvement of the present regional system is currently in progress with grant support provided by the KEHOP 3.2.1. project. The amount of the EU fund is 7.849.150.000 HUF, the aid intensity is 89,95%.

## II. Sustainable environment



### ENERGY

Within the framework of public building renovations implemented with grant support, great emphasis was put on investments aiming energy efficiency. This factor is especially important in the case of educational institutions as energy awareness can be a good example to follow for the upcoming generation and their families. Besides improving the insulation of buildings, modernization of heating systems and luminaires also resulted significant energy saving. As an acknowledgment for its efforts, the Local Government of Nagykőrös was awarded with the Energy Efficient Municipality Prize in 2019. Also the town's economical approach can be noticed in this field as well since the most inexpensive and eco-friendly energy is the one that we don't have to produce at all!

Another crucial issue besides energy saving is the matter of energy production. Not only the Local Government but even business investors and local residents are investing to solar energy utilization both inside and outside of the town boundaries.

A great example in the field of energy-aware approach is the local market hall which was inaugurated in March, 2019. The hall's basic energy supply is provided by solar panels built on the top of the building.

Green energy is also produced in the biogas plant situated at the Northeastern boundary of Nagykőrös.

The Local Government of Nagykőrös plans to implement a program aiming to utilize geothermal energy. If we take the available geologist expert opinions into consideration and the fact that several successful excavations have already been carried out in the neighboring area, then there is a high possibility that approx. 800-912 m under the town a thermal water source with a nearly 50 C° temperature can be located. In case of a successful grant application, this thermal water would be perfectly suitable to use for heating in institutions and residential flats or to produce hot water while making the present system more environment-friendly.



# III. Built environment



Our 651-year-old town owns an incredibly unique and rich built environment, which can be led back to historical and economic reasons. The lords of the township were ruling Nagykőrös from a distance instead of living in the settlement. For this reason neither representative buildings, nor significant lordships, or manors were built.

Right after its appearance, Reformation started to spread widely in Nagykőrös and its mentality carried the tendency of civic advancements. Residents were gradually taking up Calvinistic religion. For this reason the town's temple, which is a significant landmark of the townscape even today, became the house of both of the Catholic and Calvinistic congregations. Later it was used only by the Calvinist Church which gained majority in Nagykőrös. The new Catholic temple is also located in the central core. In the outer rim of the town center a fully operating synagogue can be found which was rebuilt in 1925, after the former building had been destroyed by an earthquake.

The residents of Nagykőrös tried their best to claim their independence long before the revolutions of 1848. For this reason the obstacle between citizens and civic development had already been overcome by that time. The locals were entitled to use surrounding lands where they ran agricultural production and stock-raising. Animals were driven on foot even to the far regions of Europe. These activities essentially contributed to civic development and local prosperity.

As a result of the above-mentioned social and ecological changes, the townscape transitioned from being a country town to a civic settlement in the second half of the 19th century. This development got displayed in residential buildings as well. Following historical trends, buildings with classicist, eclectic and art nouveau styled facades were built. The image of Nagykőrös significantly changed until it eventually achieved today's appearance and developed its small-town atmosphere which is considered to be a crucial factor in the settlement's life.

The country-town features of Nagykőrös held great significance during the town center's development as local agricultural and other products used to be sold in the marketplace established in this location. The area of the marketplace gradually expanded with the growing population and the increasing demands. In the end of the 50's the marketplace was moved to its current location, the Kálvin square. Also, block of flats, carrying the characteristics of the socialism, were built between civic buildings. In the course of the town center rehabilitation project in 2011, restoration of the original, civic atmosphere of the chain of squares held great significance.

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND ITS PROTECTION

The settlement structure and its unique buildings, which highly determine the townscape, in proportion to their notability are under national or local protection. The protected settlement structure is located inside the city's current historical core and its protection is provided by the Municipal Decree no. 25/2017. (XII.1.) on townscape protection of Nagykőrös. Plot structures and street alignments also fall under the authority of this decree.

Another type of special protection covers buildings with unique and valuable local characteristics defining the townscape of Nagykőrös. Today 26 nationally listed monument buildings can be found in Nagykőrös, also the town center is under special protection. Moreover, 319 buildings are under obliged and 148 buildings are under advised local protection.

These numbers present our architectural prosperity well, also prove the rightness of the title 'Town of mansions'. Our built heritage provides spectacular sight to our visitors. Hopefully we can add presentations to this protec-



## III. Built environment



The Town Council of Nagykőrös supports the renovation of listed buildings with non-refundable financial support to compensate extra costs connected to restorations. As a result of the incentive system, approx. 60 refurbishments have been supported so far. Interesting fact that even an almost symbolic amount of support means incredibly much to people who are proud of the beautiful buildings inherited from their ancestors.

### **STREET FURNITURE AND STATUES**

During the implementation of main square rehabilitation project, appropriate types of benches, trash bins and outdoor candelabras were selected in order to make them match for the town's atmosphere as much as possible. Outdoor advertising boards fitting to the set requirements were also produced and can be rented from the town's municipal company. In order to let protected architectural values to prevail, basic requirements and regulations were also set in connection with façade advertisements.

Besides outstanding the figures of the Hungarian history, several unique statues can be found in our public spaces. We put great emphasis on placing them to the most appropriate locations, also the title, the name of the sculptor and the date of placement are marked on every monuments.



tion to raise residential awareness, increase local identity by acknowledging our legacy, furthermore, to guarantee that our built treasures can be kept intact. Based on our experiences, introduction of practical examples can greatly help to convince people who doubt that these buildings with prudent improvements can be capable of meeting today's expectations. In the case of locally listed buildings, protected status can be recorded onto the national land registry as well.

### **TOWNSCAPE PROCEDURES**

The Local Government, besides putting great emphasis on preservation of the above-mentioned values, bears the importance of improvements in mind as well. Basic requirements against new buildings that they have to represent the settlements atmosphere and to be fit into the townscape. For this reason special townscape procedures must be carried out. Within the framework of the process the buildings are got inspected and evaluated in connection with their match with the neighborhood, mass creation, façade style, surface cover, doors and windows and the shape of the roof.

In order to provide appropriate protection for our built values, special procedures must be made regarding the establishment of advertisement surfaces as well.

Good practices were collected and got published in the Municipal Image Handbook, furthermore, they have been also regulated by the local townscape decree.

### **SUPPORT AND INCENTIVES PROVIDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

In order to preserve buildings with unique characteristics, a local built heritage protection system came to life in 2007.

# IV. Landscape

Nagykőrös is geographically located in the Hungarian Plain, within the Danube–Tisza interfluvium. The sandy region of Kiskunság greatly defines the area's natural characteristics. Nagykőrös has been established here, approx. 115 m high from sea level. Even the highest point of this plain field is a sand dune called 'Strázsa hill' which is only 11 m high. The former swamp and lake areas have been dried out in the last few centuries and nowadays sandy grounds can be considered as typical features. The town's only constant watercourse is Kőrös-rill, while the nearest river is Tisza, which is 30 km far from the settlement.



The area is situated in a temperate warm climate zone where the annual hours of sunshine from North to South are increasing from 2040 hours to 2070 hours. In summer the typical amount of sunshine is 830-840 hours, while during winter it is around 200-210 hours. The annual average temperature is 10,2-10,3°C. The average annual maximum temperature is 34,2°C while the minimum is -17,0°C. The average annual rainfall is between 530 and 540 mm, while in the vegetation period it is around 300-350 mm. The annual average of snow-covered days is between 32 and 35 days. The dominant wind directions are Northwest and East-Southeast. The average wind speed is around 2,5 m/s.

## LAND USE, FAUNA AND FLORA

In Nagykőrös, the town which grew from the sand, the most frequently used land types are agricultural plots. 38% of the township lands are used as arable lands, while another 38% is covered with forests. Grasslands and orchards also occupy a significant area.

### Land classifications in Nagykőrös:

Class	Area (ha)	Ratio (%)	
Total	22820,3	100,0	
	Not cultivated	2224,4	9,7
	Crop land	20595,5	90,3
	Reeds	8,9	0,0
	Forest	8717,4	38,2
	Agricultural land	11869,6	52,0
	Arable land	8782,8	38,5
	Orchard	836,0	3,6
	Grassland	2029,2	8,9
Garden	112,5	0,5	
Vineyard	109,0	0,5	

High quality arable lands occupy 73,7% of the total agricultural land capacity. The highest quality areas are located in the Southern section of the city. 8,5% of the agricultural lands are plantations, orchards and vineyards. Regarding vinery, we have to commemorate Ferenc B. Tóth who played pioneer role in viticulture developed on sand. Also we should not forget about those fruits that brought the name of Nagykőrös to the markets of several European countries. One of the quality product provider family worth mentioning is the Benedek family, whose company outgrew the Hungarian borders. Remarkable area of the township is occupied by forests. Most of them are forestries, also in the Northwest area protected forests can be found.

## PROTECTED AREAS

In Nagykőrös two Natura 2000 nature reserves are located, which are the following:

### 1. HUDI20035 Plain oak trees - 3302,06 ha

This is the last continuous and extensive plain forest of the country, furthermore, what makes this area more important is that this habitat type reaches its Western end in Hungary. This area offers a wide variety of forest and bare habitats in a near-natural state. Various human impacts left their marks on the pattern and dynamic of the vegetation. Dominant habitat types are plain oaks and oaks lilies of the valley, which create a mosaic with sand plains, limestone marshes, willow marshes, tussocks, sand grasslands and planted forests (acacia and pines). In the last few decades the level of groundwater had been decreasing by several meters, and caused the plain oaks to decay starting from the 80's. Into their place structureless foreign and native tree species were planted. The above-mentioned issue in the Natura 2000 area have changed within the framework of LIFE Program.

Within the framework of LIFE06-NAT/H/000098 program, aiming the preservation of plain oaks, invasive plant species were forced back in 418 hectares of the Natura 2000 area.

#### Indicator habitats:

- Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) (6410)
- Pannonic sand steppes (6260) - priority habitat type!
- Alkaline fens (7230)
- Euro-Siberian steppic woods with (Quercus spp.) (9110)

#### Indicator species

- Lycaena dispar
- Bolbelasmus unicornis
- Cucujus cinnaberinus
- Barbastella barbastellus
- Myotis myotis
- Myotis blythii
- Myotis bechsteini
- Myotis emarginatus
- Dianthus diutinus- priority species!
- Colchicum arenarium
- Irishumilis ssp. arenaria
- 



### 2. HUDI20022 Alongside Gógány and Kőrös rills - 817,73 ha

Gógány and Kőrös rills are surrounded by fens, willow woods and ash forest patches. Swales left by former peat exploitation could be found in several locations. The area is dominated by wet meadows, presenting significant variety of species.

In order to achieve a favorable conservation status, great emphasis was put on stopping the spread of invasive species and decreasing their population. Developing a grazing/mowing system which aligns to the present environmental condition in indicator grassland areas was also an important factor in order to prevent under/overutilization. Placement of species that provide continuous forest coverage (or species that are closest to this function) had to be prioritized in the indicator habitats. Furthermore, the composition of canopy, shrub and herbaceous layers based on age and type had to approximate to natural conditions.



## IV. Landscape

### **Indicator habitats - priority habitats included in Natura 2000 form**

- Pannonic sand steppes (6260) - priority habitat type!
- Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) (6410)
- Alkaline fens (7230)
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) (91E0) - priority habitat type!

### **Indicator species - priority species included in Natura 2000 form**

- *Cirsium brachycephalum*
- *Lycaena dispar*
- *Cobitis taenia*
- *Bombina bombina*

Successful grant applications not only provided opportunity to carry out the planned programs but worked as excellent tools to shape organizations, raise awareness for environment-friendly thinking and establish professional activities which followed the implemented projects.

Further prioritized nature reserves are the ex-lege protected Gógány field (27,8104 ha) and the locally preserved Strázsa hill (33,77 ha).

Preservation of our natural treasures is provided by the synchronized work of organizations operating in different levels and having distinct forms of ownership. Based on the Act LIII of 1996 on Nature Conservation in Hungary, the nature conservation manager in Nagykőrös is the Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate which operates nature conservation watches, provides protection and monitoring for habitats and protected species, furthermore exercise official authority. On the outskirts of Nagykőrös 4 hunting associations operate, protecting and controlling wildlife. Thanks to the nest boxes placed to public spaces and institutions by the local ornithologist association, nowadays various bird species inside the town boundaries are common sight, just like the opportunity to listen to their songs.

KÖVA-KOM Nonprofit Ltd. is responsible for maintaining and operating the extant 3 educational trails in Pálfája Forest Park, managing the educational center established within the framework of LIFE-Natura project, receiving visitors and organizing guided tours along the educational trails.



# V. Green Spaces

The town is situated in a region with one of the lowest precipitation rate, however in both inside and outside of its boundaries, the city owns excellent green coverage. In the urban area extensive and continuous green areas are located. We put great emphasis on the scheduled and rationale refurbishment, function-improvement and revitalization of these areas.

## GUIDELINES OF GREEN SPACE REFURBISHMENT:

The main target locations of improvement are the town's main square, green spaces prioritized by urban planning, and green corridors connecting these areas. We put great emphasis on preserving elder trees during refurbishments and plant care activities. Besides renovating public parks, tree planting in residential areas also holds great importance. Within the framework of tree planting programs, compatible species are provided by the Local Government for residents.

In the urban area more then 340 000 m<sup>2</sup> of park area is registered, being managed by the Service Center of Nagykőrös.

Park areas are classified based on their management level to the following categories:

Plant type	Area
Intensively maintained green area in the main square	37.400 m <sup>2</sup>
Shrub surfaces	6.964 m <sup>2</sup>
Perennial herbaceous	2.903 m <sup>2</sup>
Seasonal plants	1.200 m <sup>2</sup>



# V. Green Spaces

## GREEN AREA IMPROVEMENTS

The square in front of one of the town's symbolic gate, the train station, was refurbished in 2009. In 2011, during the first stage of function-improving rehabilitation in the town center and the renovation of the Rowing Lake were implemented. Renovation of the historic Cifra Garden, as well as the planned reconstruction of Hero's Square, which made the town center renovation complete, was carried out in 2017. The refurbishing of the Town Museum and its green surroundings, furthermore the roundabout leading in to the city took place in 2018. This year the area of Kecskeméti Street between the town center and the market hall will be renovated.

Within the framework of the projects, new visual elements were placed e. g. water-architectures, sculptures, installations supporting city events and new street furniture.

## PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS

The town owns 8 public playgrounds which were expanded with outdoor fitness elements in order to promote healthy and useful leisure opportunities for several generations.

As a part of the renovation project in Cifra Garden, a roller hockey track was built in order to fulfill exercising demands of younger generations. The Garden's sport facilities will be soon expanded further by the establishment of a running track.

Next to the Rowing Lake, in union with the scenery, several clubs operate sports fields. Reconstruction of the local football field and its service units is expected to start in 2019.

Another popular sports facility is the 'Junior Sports Field' which is located between the Cifra Garden and the Town Museum. It offers jogging, Nordic walking and basketball opportunities, also the local rugby team hold its trainings and tournaments here.



## CEMETERIES



In Nagykőrös 3 cemetery areas are located, all of them are operated by denominational institutions. The Calvinistic cemetery is one of the country's most beautiful graveyards with its idyllic atmosphere, shady elder trees, crypts representing architectural value and rhymed epitaphs of János Arany, being remained intact on tombstones.

## STREAMS, PONDS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

The area surrounding Körös rill is a protected nature reserve that engages to the town's welfare and recreational life. The watercourse receives the city's rainwater and treated waste water as well. After the sewage system renovation, a significant growth of

species was experienced, also new species appeared, making the area a real water habitat.

The city's artificial lake is the Rowing Lake which possesses an approx. 1 hectare water surface. The pond does not have any recharge from watercourses. Since the area's rehabilitation in 2011, even on summer days low on precipitation, the water surface level stays permanent, providing habitat to reptiles, amphibia, fish species and waterbird population.

# VI. Planting – Permanent and/or Seasonal

Size of seasonal flowerbeds have been gradually decreased through the years. In the spirit of sustainability, ligneous plants, which endure urban conditions, and drought resistant native herbaceous plants are preferred for planting. Bulbous plants (e. g. Tulipa, Narcissus, Muscari Hyacinthus), highly acknowledged by locals and visitors, are also used in order to provide higher decorative value and diversity. We try to use domesticated plants as far as possible. In autumn the place of seasonal plants is taken by biennials and bulbous plants. Irrigation is provided in every prioritized area.

Amount of plant types used during 2018/2019:

	Year 2018/2019
Bulbs	13.350
Biennial plants	10.400
Seasonal plants	14.440



## TREES AND SHRUBS

The town's green spaces contain a remarkable amount of trees. Typical tree species is *Fraxinus ssp*, which is also the shield tree and name giver of Nagykorös (5400 trees, furthermore shrubs and perennials in a 1700 m<sup>2</sup> area). Another native species is *Quercus robur*, mostly common outside of town boundaries due to its size.

During new plantings we take the plants' endurance for urban conditions into consideration, since a unified, aesthetic tree avenue cannot be imagined without this factor.

In regard to dry climate and the extreme weather conditions experienced in the last few years, choosing species with detailed background knowledge is another crucial aspect.

Another important point worth mentioning is the register of our green values. We have already started to record the town's tree avenues, which is filed within the local geographic information system as well. Management of urban green spaces are regulated by a municipal decree.



# VI. Planting – Permanent and/or Seasonal

In the year 2018/2019, in sync with road construction projects, tree avenues were established along the newly built roads. Within the framework of the program 549 pre-raised young trees (90 pcs *Pyrus calleryana* Chantileer, 90 pcs *Fraxinus ornus* 'Mecsek', 69 pcs *Prunus fruticosa* Globosa, 32 pcs *Acer platanoides* 'Raywood', 142 pcs *Tilia tomentosa* Silver Globe, 44 pcs *Catalpa bignonioides* Nana, 82 pcs *Acer platanoides* Blobosum) were planted. Furthermore, a 10050 m<sup>2</sup> lawn area was implemented as well. The Local Government announces tree planting program for residents and supports restocking with pre-raised species every year.

Industrial areas have also joined to the afforestation movement. Last year 55 *Pyrus calleryana* Chantileer trees were planted in the Attila József Street. The trees are taken care by a company nearby.

## MAINTENANCE

Regarding public space maintenance, Nagykőrös possesses a local regulation which contains tasks prone to be changed due to weather conditions. During park maintenance work, most of the activities are carried out mechanically. For the sake of sustainability, we cover shrub and perennial surfaces with mulch. Irrigation of prioritized areas is provided with automatic irrigation system while taking water-saving measures into consideration as well e. g. drip irrigation and night irrigation.

In the case of new investments, we collect rain water right from the ground with an established leaking layer. After that, rain water is get returned to plants. This system have been used at the refurbishment of the marketplace and the Hero's Square.

## PEST CONTROL

Besides providing aesthetic experience, we strive to use species which require the least pest control. (e. g. in case of restocking *Aesculus hippocastanum*, we use less sensitive plant types). We put great emphasis on preserving the condition of previously planted species. In these areas we use chemical control against pests, while trying to reduce environmental impact as much as possible. Pest control is needed against *Cameraria ohridella*, *Corythucha ciliata*, *Erysiphales*, *Aphidoidea* and *Auchenorrhyncha*, also we encounter new challenges every year.



# VII. Environmental education

In fields of environment protection and preservation of our living space's sustainability, great emphasis is put on habits. These acts, sometimes happening unconsciously, have great impact on our life just as significantly as our conscious decisions. For this reason, it is important to plant the seeds of good habits in every phases of life to live in harmony with our environment. Besides governmental and religious institutions, the town's public service provider company and the non-governmental sector, the local rehabilitation hospital also performs significant tasks regarding good examples.

## KINDERGARTENS

Kindergartens are operated by either the Local Government or various churches. However, regardless of their controlling authority, each kindergarten puts great emphasis on creating a base for healthy lifestyle and environment awareness, also to establish good habits. For this reason they developed close cooperation with partner institutions, the local public service provider, the Miklós Toldi Secondary School and the local police office.

Kindergartens maintain their yards and its environment with great responsibility, since positive examples are crucial in terms of establishing good habits, furthermore, this way the attention of children and their family can be also directed towards preserving and creating a neat, healthy environment.

Children are common visitors of Pálfája Education Center, local parks and the Rowing Lake - locations where they can receive direct impulses. In cooperation with Miklós Toldi Secondary School children are introduced to the beauty of planting and plant care as well.

World Days such as World Water Day, Earth Day or Birds and Trees, day aiming to raise awareness and preserving natural values borrowed from our grandchildren, are carried out with thematic programs. On No-Car Day the local police office joins the kindergarten's educational program to direct the attention of children and their family toward safe and environment-friendly transport. During World Cleanup Day, the tidiness of kindergartens and their environment gets into the spotlight. On this day children can be active participants of everyday tasks and chores.

Family days play important role in environment-aware education. Events organized in Cifra Garden, Pálfája Park Forest or our green parks provide a carefree and joyful leisure time, also create a great base for habits which can guarantee that our green locations can welcome visitors in their full beauty and health not only today but tomorrow as well

One of the kindergartens has already been awarded with the 'Green Kindergarten' title which will be renewed this year. These type of acknowledgements can greatly motivate other institutions as well to take environment-friendly measures.

## SCHOOLS

Primary schools put great emphasis on continuing the awareness-raising activity started in kindergarten. Regardless of their controlling authority, an environment-friendly education is essentially part of their program. Besides world day events children receive new impulses according to their age on thematic weeks, library events, paper-collecting programs or while participating national movements such as "You Pick!" ("TeSzedd!"). The most preferred school trip destinations are the ones that can contribute to promoting environment-awareness. Local competitions organized by the local Calvinistic primary school provide good opportunities to measure children's knowledge about environment protection as well.



# VII. Environmental education

## OUR SPECIALTIES

Pálfája Education Center is an important location of environmental education. Not only institutes and families from Nagykőrös visit the organized and free programs but residents from other cities have already closed the center into their hearts as well. To complete the strategic goals of our environmental education program which was compiled in 2019, while introducing nature with playful and experiential methods, we also teach self-knowledge and adaptation.

Our motto is: “What you get to know you will start to love. And what you love you will protect.”

Summer camps play important role in the center’s annual program. During these events the importance of environment-awareness can be learned through lifelong experiences.

At the town’s boundary 34 sign trees can be found which are mainly *Quercus* species. Along Kőrös and Gógány rills *Fraxinus* species are also located - the most significant is *Fraxinus angustifolia* ‘Pannonica’. *Fraxinus* species make up a remarkable population at the urban area as well, e. g. the 120-130 years old Pannonic ash population in the Museum Garden. Starting from 2000 the Miklós Toldi Secondary School has established a tree avenue with 20 different native types of ash trees (which is also the city’s shield tree) in order to create the country’s most complete ash tree collection. This national value have been also recorded in the town’s value table.

Besides natural values, Nagykőrös also owns a professional knowledge treasure represented by the local rehabilitation hospital. On a yearly basis 3500 patients are treated here, 60% of them lives with disability. In order to disabled people could be placed back into their family, workplace and natural living space, on the one hand people with reduced mobility shall be adapted to their environment. On the other hand, the extant personal and material resources shall be adapted to the personal demands and needs as well. Achievement of this goal is supported by ergotherapeutic sessions which aim to improve damaged functions to the highest level as possible, also to provide and maintain the maximum social and personal independence for disabled people. In order to pass leisure time usefully and prove that people using wheelchair can also enjoy gardening, a high-bedded garden was established within the framework of the program. Patients plant and grow kitchen garden crops, herbs and flowers with the help of therapists. The program creates opportunity for participants to take care of other living beings which can increase patients’ confidence and self-worth. Tending flowers and plants also has great biological impact on physique and body e. g. improving fine and gross motor skills, sense of balance, stamina, mobility and range of motion, not to mention that fresh air also has positive impact on human body.

According to studies in-patients who did garden works during their rehabilitation, recovered faster than fellow patients. People whose hospital window had garden view, spent less time in hospital and suffered from less pain. Garden therapy sessions are suitable for every generation and can be adjusted to any skill levels.



# VIII. Effort and involvement



The Local Government of Nagykőrös considers important that residents and local organizations shall regard the protection of our values and the implemented developments as common causes. For this reason, the Local Government provides information about these matters through forums, local press, internet platforms and office hours. In order to support organization activities, separated financial frameworks have been established in the town budget which can be applied by associations. Besides local press, the town's Elder and Youth Councils also support the acknowledgement of organization and institution activities.

Within the framework of pathway building and tree planting programs, building materials and saplings are provided by the Local Government, while citizens carry out the actual constructing and planting activities. Financial support aiming facade restoration of listed buildings also motivates owners to make improvements in their environment.

Local press also plays important role in raising attention to positive initiatives of institutions, organizations and individuals.

## NON-GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES

Arany Híd Association, the local Ornithologist Association and the Equestrian Association play important role in spreading useful knowledge. Equestrian association - thanks to its directors - is deeply connected with water protection in the town and its region. The association, which teaches its visitors to love and respect animals as real competition partners, plays an active role in keeping Kőrös-rill clean. As a result of their activities, the rill can be rediscovered by residents and can become a nice recreational and hiking location, making citizens to take care of the area's tidiness.

## IMPROVING RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY

'Flowery Nagykőrös' competition, organized by the Local Government, motivates residents, institutions and businesses to embellish the town together. This year 120 applications arrived to the competition, where 9 prizes will be handed out to winners.

Another good example which represents the cooperation between the Local Government and residents is the road building program being carried out in the last few years. The investment also promote environment improving movements positively. In the case of the almost 70 roads, that received solid coverage during the recent years, the improved surroundings motivated building owners to embellish their own environment as well.

## PARTNERSHIP

Young professionals have been also involved in local developments. For instance, sample plans for the new market hall were created by St. Stephen University Architect and Urban Systems Engineer Department within the framework of their summer apprentice program. These plans were introduced to residents in forums, also an exhibition was organized where citizens could choose their favorite idea and make their suggestions as well. Information gathered from the feedbacks was used to create the final plan of the market building. The hall which serves as the town's pantry, offering fresh and healthy products, and also functions as an important forum and public space for communication, represents a unique architectural value.

Based on agreement, the gardener students of Miklós Toldi Secondary School cooperates with KÖVA-KOM Nonprofit Ltd. on maintaining the green areas of Rowing Lake. Regarding Pálfája Park Forest, professional support is provided by Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate. Improvement of housing estates' environment is planned to be implemented by involving neighboring universities to the project (e. g. János Neumann University, St. Stephen University).

# IX. Tourism and leisure

## ATTRACTION

Increasing the town's touristic attractiveness is an important task for us. Acknowledging its importance, regarding tourism, the Local Government carries out regulation, coordination and management tasks in collaboration with enterprises and non-governmental organizations. Town regulations adhere to the professional guidelines and vision of the Hungarian Tourist Agency and relevant government regulations.

The city correspondingly improves infrastructure, public security, tourist development, cultural heritage, protection of natural and built environment, also social and environmental sustainability. In order to accelerate tourism, visitors' overnight stays are free from taxes. Taking the last 3 years' average into consideration, we estimate the visitors' overnight stays around 24.280 person/year. Our visitors are mainly Hungarian, Dutch, Italian, German, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak and Polish tourists.

To attract more tourists, an approx. 1 billion HUF worth renovation, which was far beyond the town's capability, was carried out in János Arany Museum. The former cavalry barracks used to be in terrible condition, also the renewal of exhibitions was utterly necessary. By renovating the whole building from top to bottom, we were able to save its precious architectural value. As a result of the refurbishment carried out in exhibition rooms, the museum's valuable exhibits could receive modern and worthy representation. Besides raising awareness among younger generation, the installed interactive devices also provide opportunity for the periodic change and renewal of exhibitions which can motivate visitors to visit the museum next time as well.

Important tourist attractions are the plain oak trees and Pálfája Educational Center, visited mostly from the neighboring cities. Interesting fact that the center is a frequent destination for cyclist arriving from Kecskemét via the cycling path that connects the city with Nagykőrös. Further opportunity to improve in this field could be a cycling path connecting our city with Cegléd. Nagykőrös is currently managing the above-mentioned project as an authorized (gestor) Local Government.

## EVENTS

Nagykőrös is home to several national conferences, the Carpathian Basin János Arany Ballad Recital Competition, and a traditional equestrian day created by a non-governmental organization as well. Local main events are the St. George's Day Flower Fair, the Sour Cherry Festival and the Arany Days. Tens of thousands of people visit our national livestock and open fairs, organized 10 times a year. Our country town traditions have great impact on present fairs as the most popular fair events are St. George's Fair (connected to driving out animals to the fields) and Michael's Fair (indicating when to drive in animals from the pasture).



## ACCOMMODATION

Development of accommodation opportunities shall progress altogether with the improvement of touristic attractiveness. Besides local enterprises fulfilling accommodation demands, new businesses are starting to appear, also the current accommodation establishments are improving in quality and capacity.

Our present accommodations are adapted to the previous year's demands. Hotels established from civic buildings with around 8-12 rooms and 76 beds, farmhouse pensions with 28 beds, private accommodation with 10 beds, furthermore secondary school and college dorms with 466 beds are available for visitors. Regarding accommodation, quality improvements can be observed, furthermore, innovative proposals have been also launched in order to increase current capacity.

Thematic program packages, compiled by the local travel agency, also contribute to make Nagykőrös a destination where visitors can spend more days.

## A NEW MILESTONE

Establishment of a balneotherapeutic center, which is currently waiting for implementation, is considered as an important investment in order to increase the town's touristic attractiveness. A lot next to the rehabilitation hospital has already been marked for the future construction. The local hospital could be a great partner organization for the complex as the investment would provide further therapy opportunities for the institution. The Local Government is currently looking for investors to launch the project. We hope that our participation in the Entente Florale Europe competition may be able to help us in this field.

# X. Communication



Nagykőrös proudly accepted the opportunity to represent Hungary in the Entente Florale Europe competition. The first prize won in Flowery Hungary competition means a great acknowledgement for our value-creating community which is always working on improving and embellishing the town.

Furthermore, this award is a feedback which means that we are on the right track. After the János Arany Memorial Year, the national success and the international competition put Nagyköros into the center of attention again in national media.

We are aware of that we shall repay this trust. We are looking forward to welcome the jury during its visit and we are preparing for the evaluation with great excitement. We believe that the heritage received from our ancestors and the essential values found in Nagyköros will be able to introduce to the experienced international jury the value-creating work which has been carried out in the last 15 years. We still have not finished our work, however its present results already make people wonder about how a small town could improve this much in a short amount of time.

Our competition success and the international challenge gave further boost to our motivation, which already could be sensed during the prize giving ceremony of Flowery Hungary in 2018. The event was hosted in Nagyköros, and mayors and horticultural specialist from 324 cities were invited to the ceremony which is considered to be one of the most prestigious horticultural event. The program's reputation was proved well by the series of reports published in national and local media platforms. Regarding local written and online communication, besides town development, green area and environment protection information, we put great emphasis on introducing opportunities for community involvement. A good example worth mentioning in this field is the town's Entente Florale competition logo which was created within the framework of an art competition for students. The winner logo, which is published in every platforms, was created by a secondary school student. News in connection with the Entente Florale competition are constantly published on the town's weekly paper (printed on recycled paper) and online platforms.



After Nagyköros won the first prize, the media interest towards the town has greatly increased. We believe this is a good opportunity for us to present our values to a wider range of audience, also we try to utilize this attention to strengthen tourism.

## In the last few years Nagykőrös have been awarded with the following titles and prizes:

- The rehabilitation hospital was awarded with the 'Hospital of the year' title in 2006
- Safe settlement of Pest County - 2007
- Family-friendly Municipality - 2009
- Elder-friendly Municipality - 2010
- Cycling-friendly Municipality - 2010
- First prize in Cultured Town Environment Award - 2010
- The rehabilitation hospital was awarded with the 'Hospital of the year' title in 2010 as well
- Award for Excellence in Public Space Improvement 2012
- Golden Rose Prize - Flowery Hungary Competition - 2012
- Special Prize on Tourism - Flowery Hungary Competition - 2013
- János Hild Award of the Hungarian Urbanist Association - 2014
- The Most Beautiful Main Street of Hungary Special Prize - Flowery Hungary Competition - 2014
- 'Provident Town' title - 2014
- Hugo Lampl Prize - 2015
- For the City of Tomorrow Prize - Green City category - 2016
- Investor-friendly City Certificate (HIPA) - 2016
- First prize of Flowery Hungary Competition - 2019
- Energy-efficient Municipality - 2019



*Nagykőrös owns several administrative, service, educational health and cultural functions that also serve the neighboring settlements. Regarding development, investments can be considered as the engine of local economic life and the long-term guarantee of progress which affects all economic actors. The town's attractiveness roots from its natural and cultural-historic values, the monuments of old ages, and renewed public squares. In the future, these values together with services related to health tourism can become the main breakthrough points of the settlement.*

*Following development strategy based on 'The value attracts more value' principle, over the past decade the most significant investments connected to economy stimulation, green space management, infrastructural and public space rehabilitation have been implemented along with widespread social discussions. These projects can be a good development pattern to follow for other mid-sized cities.*

*There have been many professional debates on the role and opportunities of mid-sized town development. Nagykőrös as a great example can help to settle such disputes while proving that the prosperity of human-scaled cities can be provided with permanent and coordinated work.*

- Quoted from the laudation presented at the prize giving ceremony of János Hild Award.

(Source: <http://www.mut.hu/?module=news&action=show&nid=204629>)