

Public space developments of Szeged



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What is the relevance of public spaces?



- o Their historic role (Roman forum, Greek agora)
- o Recent urban development movements
- o Problems of some public space developments in Szeged
- o Dilemmas



Background



- o Whose the space is, who has the right to it, who can have a voice in the developments?
- o Mainly top-down interventions
- o Construction-oriented developments
- o City management ↔ Civil and social groups
- o Too many expectations are linked to the urban spaces

Main questions



Functions and their handling?

Communication and actors?

Handling conflicts?

Is the „Top-down“ method efficient?

What roles do the public spaces have in the city?



What is needed for a successful public space development?

Methodology



o Content analysis

- o Foreign and Hungarian literature
- o Development documents
- o Media analysis (reviews from internet)
- o Discourse analysis (forum comments)

o Questionnaire (n=100 in each public space)

o Interviews (2 merchants)

o Field survey

o Participant observations

Results: the roles of public spaces in urban development

- o Definition of public space
- o Public space is important part of the city
- o Many actors, many (and conflicting) interests, many aims

Users of the public space

Municipality

Utilizing EU supports

Profit

NGO-s

Entrepreneurs

Political stability

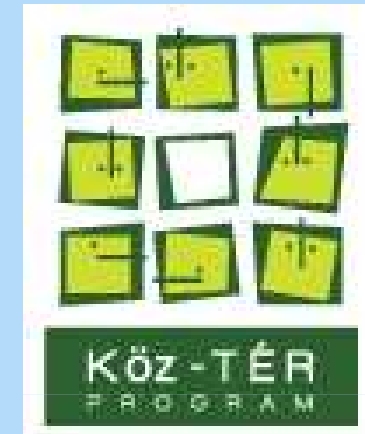
More useful, nicer place

Made by Katalin Vedrédi

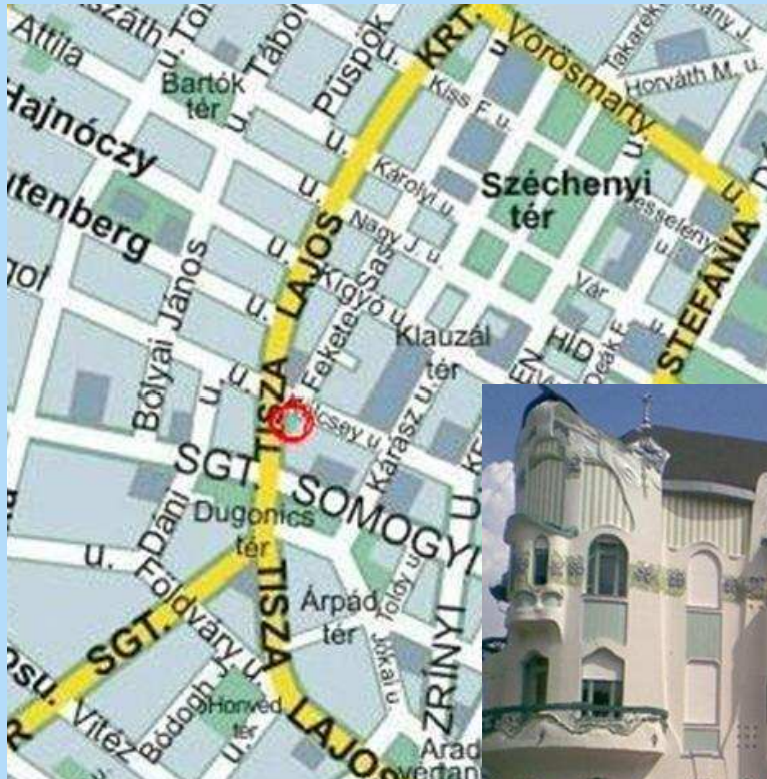


Results: the role of public spaces in urban development

- o USA: PPS for 36 years
- o Many successful examples
 - o Seattle, Occidental Square
- o Overdue in Hungary,
in the last few years:
 - o Budapest, Mátyás square
- o The public spaces are not only to serve as the physical part of the city, but they are also important in shaping the people's identity



„Lófara”



Development of „Lófara”

- Between 2008-2010
- The aim of the city: aesthetization, tourism attraction, Downtown Rehabilitation Program
- Problems:
 - Mainly in connection with the sculpture
 - Green area
 - Business interests (REÖK Cafe)
 - Car parkings
- Civilians proposal: compromise
- City government's response: open discussion



„Lófara” in pictures



Opinions about „Lófara”



o What people like: The square is modernized, but it seems like it's not for use

„Of course the design was first again, then the complains... Couldn't it be prevented? Of course it could...”

„Why is it good to create such bleak, empty, featureless spaces?...”

„boring”

„bare”

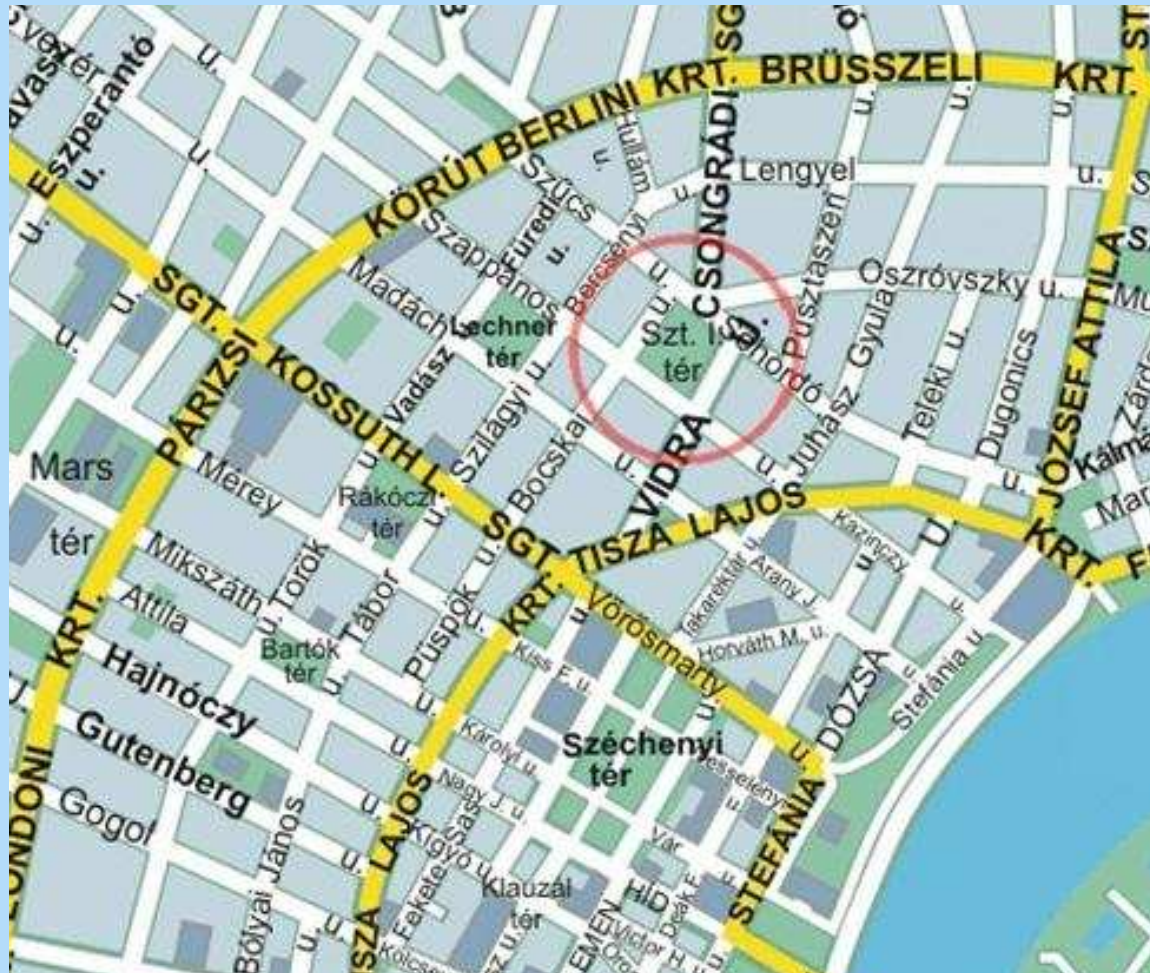
„depressed”

Results of the surveys of „Lófara”



- A questionnaire or other survey before the developments, plannings could/should reflect the needs well.
- The respondents would like to participate in the process of design and implementation.
- Possible future conflicts could be prevented with these kind of cooperations.

Saint Stephen square



Development of Saint Stephen square

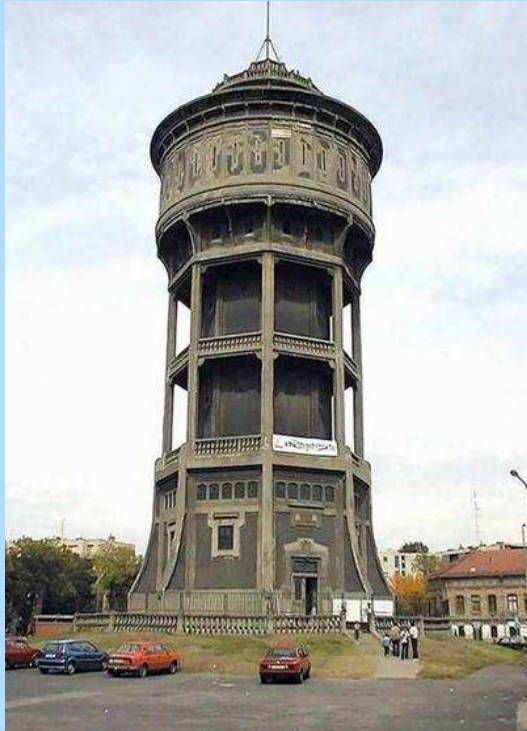


- 2005-2006: by the initiative of the municipality and the waterworks of Szeged
- The aims of the city: creating more aesthetic square, tourism attraction
- The water tower and the square is completely renewed, fountains, plane lining, bicycle path, surveillance cameras, sculptures
- Earlier there was a marketplace that was kept in another form → conflicts because of the reducing of the market function

Saint Stephen square in pictures



Saint Stephen square in pictures



Raising problems



- o Changing function by the renewal: the market is nearly disappeared
- o The respondents would re-establish the old market

„Every city is protecting their flea markets, why can't Szeged do the same?“

- o New booths
- o Hidden, extinct

„The square would need bigger propaganda, in case more people come.“

Raising problems



- The vendors are satisfied with the conditions required for trading
- BUT since the square renewal:
 - The trade flows have reduced
 - The costumers have disappeared
 - Less sparkling and busy
 - Tourists are not visiting the square
 - The costumers are complaining, they are missing the old offer and atmosphere

Opinions about Saint Stephen square



- o The new square's appearance is more attractive
- o The majority is willing to move in the neighbourhood
- o It is not centrally located, so mostly it's visited purposefully due to the local services
- o In spite of surveillance cameras, the visitors are fear of homelesses and crime

Summary



o The common in the two squares:

- o The peoples's and square users' revulsions
- o The square users would like to participate in the works
- o Everybody agree that the developments are necessary

o BUT:

- o The physical renewal is not enough, a content one is needed too



Summary



- The survey of the squares' functions is necessary and keeping them if it's needed
 - It doesn't come true in the analysed squares
- The communication is weak (or non-existent) between the actors, and the city government doesn't really pay regard to the other demands
- Too many demands, interests, aims, and these are not tried to harmonize



A public consultation could help to anticipate the conflicts

Summary



People need a reason to use public spaces



Public spaces could change to interesting places with identity



They could allure all kinds of people



They could create a more vivid city





Thank you for your attention!

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