



Québec Roadmap: Towards a New Urban Project (2022-2024)

PRIORITY THEMATIQUE (1): Greening Public Spaces

Pilot City: KRAKÓW

Synthesis of the Thematic Worksheet (Step 3.1.2) - version of 10 May 2023

In line with the Quebec Roadmap Strategic Axis 2 – “Resilient cities boosted by the enhancement of their heritage resources”, the *Priority Thematic* presented by the City of Kraków advocates that nowadays a city should all the more serve its residents and face climate change related challenges, and therefore it aims to find alternative solutions and new approaches to introduce greenery in the historic core area.

Kraków is facing an important and historic challenge. The aspiration to introduce more trees to the surface of the Main Square, considered Europe's largest medieval market square and the city's most important public space, has been troublesome; the recent construction of an underground museum located beneath its surface has also causes additional difficulties for interventions in the area. A place where functions and interests intersect, it is the site of demonstrations and events treated as a prestigious space and a source of pride, nevertheless, in the perception of residents it is an unfriendly place due to its over tourism effect, extensive concrete surface, and lack of shade. In light of the dispute between the will of the residents and the will of the preservationists, the city authorities are facing the challenge of finding a compromise that will satisfy both parties.

This debate, which could potentially encompass the entire city, can become a source of innovation through constructive dialogue. The resilience of the historic city is a reconciling factor. The approach to heritage in the face of current challenges must make it possible, through a rigorous analysis of the situation, to embrace different points of view and make proposals for intervention carrying a renewed vision of the role and use of the market. Choices must be made to pacify this space, which is overburdened with different uses, and which does not meet the expectations of residents.

Associated matters

The city of Kraków proposes to form a Collaborative Network gathering experiences and collective research efforts on different interrelated issues, *inter alia* the following:

- Identification and planning of trees that adapt to the diverse weather conditions in harmony with the local urban ecosystem and biodiversity.
- Use of innovative techniques for the greening of public spaces without impacting the occupied or safeguarded underground areas;
- Mitigation of visual impact in the landscape values, axes views and perception of the space;
- Conciliation of diverse uses while protecting the area from exploitation and overuse by large scale events;
- Ensure the dialog between all actors and establishment of a satisfactory compromise between preservation and urban rehabilitation;
- Strengthen the sense of belonging and appropriation of public spaces by the local citizens.