

**Summary report of the research findings,
produced under the INTERREG DANUBE
Programme (project code DRP0200519),
“The Future of Factory’ard and its Surroundings
in Veszprém”**

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1) INTRODUCTION

This summary report presents the results of research carried out by the Faculty of Economics at the University of Pannonia, commissioned by Municipality of Veszprém (hereinafter: VMJV Municipality) (based on a contract dated 30 April 2025) as part of the INTERREG DANUBE Programme – NONA research project, on the future development of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings. The research ran from May 2025 to May 2026.

The report summarises and analyses, in an integrated manner, the results of structured interviews with key stakeholders, a public questionnaire survey and focus group research, which form the basis for the future development of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surrounding area. The aim of the document is to outline consensus-based development directions for the Municipality of Veszprém, grounded in the principles of the New European Bauhaus on the Danube (hereinafter: NEBOD). The Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings represent one of Veszprém's significant opportunities for inner-city development, offering both significant potential and complex challenges.

Located in the immediate vicinity of Veszprém's city centre, at the end of Kossuth Street, and nestled between Jutasi Road and Budapest Road, Factory'ard and its wider surroundings **have played a unique transitional role** in the city's spatial structure over the past decades. Following the cessation of its former industrial and institutional functions, the area became a brownfield site for a long time – a partially isolated, underutilised zone – which disrupted the continuity of the city centre's fabric both in its physical presence and on the mental map of residents and visitors alike.

The Veszprém–Balaton European Capital of Culture 2023 (hereinafter: VEB2023) programme marked the first significant turning point in the life of the former furniture factory site. The temporary opening of the site for cultural and community purposes highlighted that Factory'ard is not merely a 'problem heritage' site, but a **city centre space with significant urban development potential**. Through concerts, events and community gatherings, Factory'ard quickly became one of the city's key public spaces; at the same time, however, this increased use has also brought new conflicts to the surface.

This duality – the coexistence of a vibrant, attractive community space and the burdens associated with noise, parking and overcrowding – made it clear that the future of Factory'ard cannot be determined by ad hoc decisions. The development of the area requires a **strategic approach, long-term thinking and broad public consultation**.

The research examined these development needs, opportunities and ideas using various methodologies and from the perspective of three stakeholder groups: (1) structured interviews with city decision-makers, (2) questionnaire-based public survey, and (3) focus group interviews with experts and stakeholders to be involved. The organisation and implementation of the research tasks, as well as the preparation of the research (interim) reports – in constant consultation with representatives of the Municipality of Veszprém – were carried out by staff from the Faculty of Business & Economics at the University of Pannonia: Dr Katalin Lőrincz (research lead), Dr Zsuzsanna Banász, Dr Judit Sulyok, Zsolt Neu and Renáta Szabó.

2) THE REPORT'S FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVE

Within the urban fabric of Veszprém, the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings represent a long-underutilised inner-city area whose future use extends beyond a single property development decision. From the perspective of the urban spatial structure, the area functions as a transitional zone: it is simultaneously influenced by the historic city centre, densely populated neighbourhoods, and the effects of transport and commercial infrastructure.

The temporary opening of the site as part of the VEB2023 programme made it clear that the space can function as a **community, cultural and urban meeting place**; however, its intensive use also brought to light the area's structural, functional and social conflicts. This duality justifies the development of Factory'ard and its surroundings being examined on a pilot basis within the framework of the NONA project, underpinned by a comprehensive professional foundation.

The aim of this summary report is to provide a **well-founded, integrated professional basis, grounded in empirical data**, for the future development of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings. The document is not a specific architectural or investment plan, but a strategic summary study which:

- aims to explore the views and expectations of the stakeholders concerned,
- identifies areas of consensus/common ground and areas of disagreement regarding development,
- provides a framework for making long-term, sustainable city development decisions.

The document contains a consolidated analysis of the results of three research components: structured executive interviews (with decision-makers from the city administration), public questionnaire survey (involving more than two thousand respondents), and thematic focus group discussions with target groups comprising city management and urban development & industry experts and young people/generation Z. The study aims to **present the views of these stakeholder groups** and to identify the points and potential directions where the city administration's strategic goals and public expectations intersect, as well as the issues where managing differing perspectives becomes necessary.

In the case of Factory'ard and its surroundings, it is not merely a question of a single area, but of what **urban values Veszprém wishes to prioritise in the future**. This summary report aims to provide a professionally sound, socially sensitive and forward-looking basis for this decision, which will facilitate the long-term sustainable and consensual development of the Factory'ard and its surroundings.

3) RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Due to the complex nature of development issues relating to the future of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings, an examination of the area can only be properly grounded in multi-faceted, empirical research. The research was built on three methodological pillars: interviews with managers, a public questionnaire and focus group analysis. Accordingly, the aim of the research was to explore, in relation to the development of Factory'ard and its surrounding:

- the strategic objectives and visions of municipal decision-makers;
- the experiences, needs, and expectations of residents and users from the wider urban region; and
- the perspectives and recommendations of professional stakeholders, with particular attention to the youth segment.

3.1. Research component 1: structured interviews with professional stakeholders

The aim of **the structured interviews**, conducted with the participation of the city administration and local government decision-makers, was to explore strategic thinking, long-term urban development visions and development constraints. The methodology for the city decision-maker interviews was developed, the questionnaire was agreed upon with the local authority's technical representatives, and the interviews were then conducted in May 2025 with the specified interviewees (10 people), in person, lasting 35–60 minutes.

Based on the structured management interviews, thematic areas relevant to the wider community and the general public emerged, which were included in the questionnaire for the public survey, as follows:

The interview data suggest that municipal officials and local government decision-makers in Veszprém consider the Factory'ard area and its surroundings to constitute a **strategically important urban development zone** within the city centre. The majority of interviewees emphasised that the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings are not merely a development site, but **one of the last large, contiguous, transformable elements of the city centre's spatial structure**, which could determine Veszprém's urban character and liveability in the long term. The city administration views the cessation of the Factory'ard's former, closed industrial function **as a historic opportunity**.

According to several interviewees, the temporary opening implemented as part of the VEB2023 programme 'brought the area back' into the city's consciousness and made it clear that the Factory'ard is capable of functioning as an **urban forum** and a community meeting place. At the same time, decision-makers emphasised that the VEB2023 programme was not intended to, nor was it suitable for, establishing a definitive land-use model. In the perspective of the interviewees, the development of Factory'ard and its surroundings is a **process** that should be understood as **spanning** at least **5–10 years**, rather than as a **one-off investment**.

3.2. Key results of the structured decision-maker interviews regarding Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings

- **Priority of green space and public park functions:** the majority of interviewees envisage Factory'ard as an **urban space dominated by green space** in the long term. Although Veszprém's provision of green space is favourable on a city-wide scale (Veszprém Valley, Green Campus, Elisabeth Park, Gulya Hill), the role of a larger, contiguous public park is particularly valued in the immediate vicinity of the city centre. According to decision-makers, Factory'ard is suitable to function as a **recreational buffer zone** for densely populated neighbourhoods ('Újtelep', the area around Jutasi Road).
- **Accessibility and urban integration:** a recurring theme in the interviews with leaders was that the current use of Factory'ard **does not resolve the issue of urban isolation**. Pedestrian links between the city centre, Balaton Plaza, the market hall and transport hubs are lacking. Decision-makers agreed that the development of Factory'ard and its surroundings is only justified if it creates **genuine connectivity** and does not result in yet another dividing zone.
- **Provision of basic infrastructure:** the city administration defined the provision of basic infrastructure (public toilets, drinking water, street lighting, benches, security) **not as an extra development element**, but as a minimum requirement for the usability of the area. Several interviewees emphasised that the current event-focused use temporarily masks these shortcomings, but in the long term, without addressing them, the area cannot become an everyday urban space.
- **Divided views on the concert and event function:** one of the most striking findings from the interviews with managers is the **division of opinion regarding the concert function**. Although all interviewees acknowledged the cultural success of Factory'ard during the VEB2023 programme, there were significant differences in the extent to which this function should be maintained at the venue. One view is that Factory'ard could remain suitable for hosting **larger-scale events** in the long term, provided they are organised within a regulated timeframe and with noise management in place. Other decision-makers, however, explicitly emphasised that, due to its city-centre location and the residential areas surrounding it, events attracting large crowds generate **structural conflicts**. This division suggests that the issue of event hosting cannot be treated as an isolated spatial decision but must be integrated **into a city-level cultural and transport strategy**.

3.3. Research component 2: resident questionnaire survey

Public demands regarding the use, perception and future development of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings were quantified and made comparable through a Hungarian-language **questionnaire, available both online and on paper**. The final version of the questionnaire was compiled in several stages: pilot testing, with the involvement of the management and project staff of the commissioning client, VMJV Municipality, members of the working group collaborating within the NONA project, and experts in tourism and statistical analysis.

The questionnaire was available online **between 25 June 2025 and 30 November 2025** and could also be completed in person at several summer events held in Veszprém in 2025, as well as at the Bakony Expo in November; sampling at these events in Veszprém was carried out with the involvement of university students on scholarships. A total of 2,180 online and 74 paper-based responses were collected. As participation was voluntary, respondents had the option to skip individual questions and could stop completing the questionnaire at any time, which resulted in some partially completed questionnaires. The **evaluable sample comprises the opinions of 2,254 people**, of which less than 4% are partially completed questionnaires; in other words, the success of the survey is also indicated by the fact that over 96% of the questionnaires can be considered complete responses.

3.4. Perceptions of Factory'ard and its surroundings and the most supported development needs based on the resident survey

Based on the representative sample, it can be concluded that the Factory'ard and its surroundings are an area **known to and used in some form** by the overwhelming majority. A significant proportion of respondents visit Factory'ard and its surroundings regularly or occasionally for events, when passing through, or to use the surrounding amenities (e.g. shopping centre, market). At the same time, it can be observed that the function of the Factory'ard **is not firmly established** among the population, as it is perceived simultaneously as a cultural venue, a transit space and a potential public park. However, this uncertainty regarding its function can be interpreted not as a shortcoming, but as **an opportunity for development**. The **most widely supported development needs among the public** can be summarised as follows:

- **Greening and climate-adaptive solutions:** most respondents would like to see more trees, shaded rest areas, green spaces and more natural paving in Factory'ard. Reducing summer heat stress, improving the microclimate and creating conditions for relaxation emerged as key expectations.
- **Recreation and community use:** a strong demand emerged among respondents for the park to function as a public space equipped with benches, picnic tables and other facilities suitable for outdoor use. Based on the responses, Factory'ard could be used not only as a destination but also as an **everyday urban space**.
- **Basic infrastructure:** the need for public toilets, drinking fountains, litter bins and adequate lighting appeared in the responses not as a development idea, but as an **expectation**. According to many respondents, the lack of these currently limits the area's independent use, separate from events.
- **Public division regarding the event function:** in the public responses – similar to the results of the structured executive interviews – the event and concert function emerged as a **strongly polarising factor**. A significant group explicitly values the Factory'ard as an important venue for the city's cultural life and supports the holding of events, including pop music concerts that attract large crowds. At the same time, for a similarly sized group, the noise, parking pressure and overcrowding are perceived as negative experiences. An important lesson is that public opposition is **not directed against the existence of events**, but rather objects to their scale, frequency and timing. This reinforces the need for a **balanced, regulated approach to the event venue**.

3.5. Research component 3: focus group discussions

Taking into account the results of the structured management interviews and public questionnaires conducted earlier as part of the research project, a set of different but thematically identical scenarios was developed for a group of young people and a group of professionals. Based on these, **six focus group discussions were held** in November 2025 and April 2026. The aim of the focus groups, happened with the involvement of professionals, secondary school pupils and international university students (hereinafter: youth segment), was to explore deeper, more nuanced interpretations, with particular regard to points of conflict and possible compromises.

The final number of participants was 23 experts – specialists in city management, urban development and city marketing; local councillors, deputy mayors, architects, and representatives from public transport, housing, nursery schools, environmental protection, business advocacy, sport and tourism – and 18 young people. The focus group discussions lasted between 1.5 and 2 hours. During the focus groups, all participants were able to express their views on the given topic; for several questions, additional aids (inspirational photos, maps, community budget tokens) were also used.

3.6. Key findings of the focus group research

- **Factory'ard as an ambivalent urban space:** during the focus group discussions, participants described Factory'ard and its surroundings as a **highly ambivalent area**. The site is associated with both positive experiences (concerts, community events) and negative experiences (noise, overcrowding, disorder). It emerged clearly from the discussions that the area's current state is **transitional** and cannot be regarded as a permanent urban solution.
- There was a **strong consensus on limiting development:** focus group participants – regardless of whether they belonged to the professional or youth group – clearly rejected **high-density development** and single-function development models. The reduction of green space and large-scale residential or commercial development were viewed in a distinctly negative light.
- **Support for the public park and moderate size events/concert venue:** one of the most important lessons from the focus groups was that there is widespread support for a **dual, but not equal, division of functions**. Primarily a public park and community space, and secondarily, limited-scale use for events. According to the participants, this model is best suited to managing conflicts between residents and urban planning, whilst preserving the cultural function of Factory'ard.

The survey paid particular attention to future urban users. Based on the views of the youth segment of the generation Z interviewed in the focus groups, the future of Factory'ard is envisaged as a **year-round, multifunctional, experience-based urban space** that serves entertainment, community life, recreation and cultural experiences simultaneously. The responses can be grouped into three main areas: event- and festival-focused developments, the integration of innovative technological experiences, and the strengthening of community functions.

The strongest expectation is the creation of a **high-intensity entertainment centre operating all day long**. Young people of the generation Z envisage Factory'ard as a venue that:

- provides space for large-scale, **festival-style programmes** (e.g. events divided into themed zones, international performers, continuous live music),
- offers both **indoor and outdoor experiences** (main stage, clubs, even underground or unique venues – e.g. 'elevator' clubs),
- has **regional or even international appeal**, enhancing the city's image.

However, based on the proposals outlined, Factory'ard can be interpreted not only as a local meeting place but also as a **tourist destination**. The constant musical and cultural offering, as well as the presence of various genres, indicates a strong sense of inclusivity: it would offer programmes *"for all generations and tastes"*.

Alongside its entertainment functions, there is a strong demand for the creation of a **more tranquil, community-oriented space**. Young people believe that developing community and recreational functions is a key priority; to this end, Factory'ard will in future:

- also function as a **city park** (rest areas, picnicking, walking trails, green spaces),
- offer **cultural and light-hearted programmes** (open-air cinema, small concerts, experimental theatre),
- be active all year round, with seasonal features (e.g. Advent market, ice rink),
- provides opportunities for gatherings with friends (*"music, food, picnics"*).

A key message is that young people want a place where *"you don't always have to consume, you can just be"*. This attitude points to a strengthening of the community space's function and encourages people to stay for longer.

The need to address the needs of different target groups in a differentiated manner also featured prominently in the young people's responses. In their view, there are currently few suitable spaces available for university students, yet they consider it important that Factory'ard should be **attractive to multiple generations**. Based on the responses, young people envisage an **inclusive, flexible space** that is equally suitable for meeting friends, family outings, cultural events and a vibrant nightlife. In their view, the city's current *'quiet'* character also presents a strong opportunity for development towards a **permanent, year-round programme offering**.

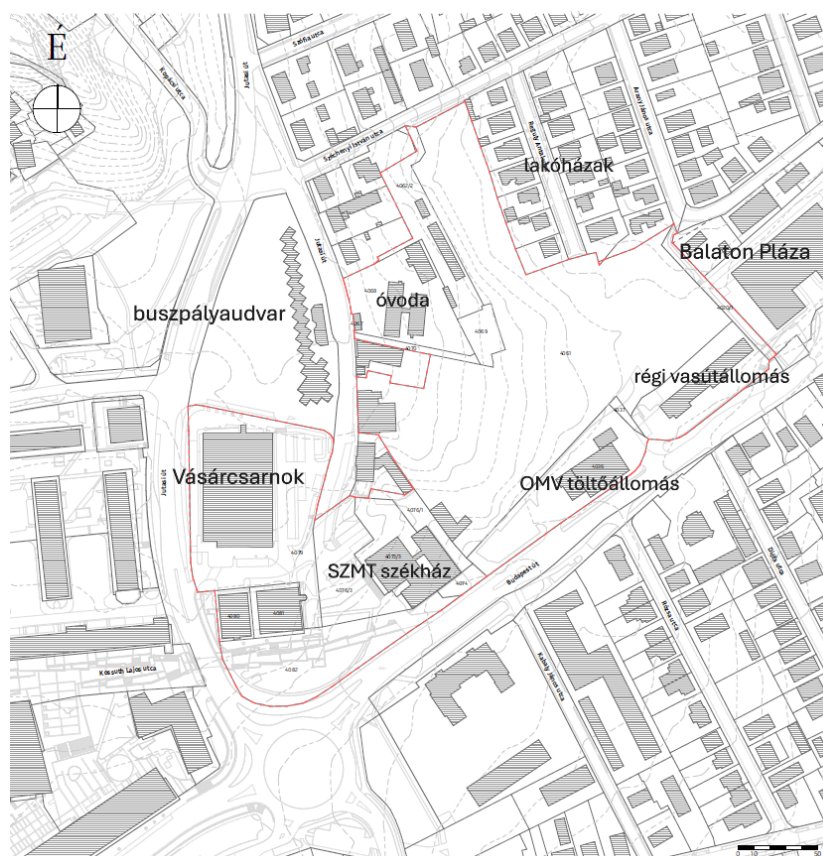
The need for infrastructure development was also evident in the young participants' responses. Young people highlighted the need for well-equipped facilities (toilets, car parks), as well as **accommodation facilities (capsule hotels)** and improved transport links (e.g. more long-distance night bus services with later departure times), which would make the area suitable not only for daytime but also for night-time use.

4) URBAN STRUCTURE AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the second half of the 20th century, the Factory'ard area primarily served industrial and institutional functions, which gradually ceased with the transformation of the city's economic structure. Following the loss of these functions, the area remained **closed and in a transitional state** for a long time, which disrupted the continuity of the urban fabric in both physical and psychological terms.

The unique situation of Factory'ard and its surroundings stems from the fact that it is directly connected to the city centre yet is surrounded by busy transport routes and large-scale infrastructure (Figure 1.). This situation simultaneously offers opportunities for connection and creates a sense of isolation. Research has highlighted that one of the main challenges for the development of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings is **urban structural integration**, that is, integrating the area into the pedestrian and community-based urban circulation. The VEB2023 programme marked a turning point for the Factory'ard. The temporary opening of the area demonstrated its inherent potential, whilst also bringing to light the conflicts arising from the lack of long-term development.

Figure 1. The area covered by the NONA research project



Source: VMJV Municipality

5) CROSS-SECTIONAL SYNTHESIS: COMMON FOCUSES AND DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES

A combined interpretation of the results of the structured interviews with decision-makers, the public questionnaire survey and the focus group discussions enable a **cross-sectional examination of opinions and expectations** regarding the future of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings. The three methods approach the area from different perspectives; however, numerous points of convergence can be identified which could form a **stable, consensual basis** for development decisions.

The city administration views the area primarily from the perspectives of strategy, urban structure and long-term liveability; residents approach it from the standpoint of everyday use, comfort and the need for green spaces; whilst the professional reflections of the focus groups highlight the tensions between the two and the possible compromises. Based on this synthesis, it can be concluded that differences lie **not in the necessity of development, but in its form and intensity**.

5.1. Elements of consensus in the research

- **Demand for green space dominance:** the research findings clearly indicate that the future of Factory'ard is inconceivable without an increase in green space. The city administration interprets greening as a strategic value, the residents as a condition for quality of life, and the focus groups as a necessity for climate adaptation. The emphasis is not merely aesthetic but functional: shade, cooling, rest, and recreation.
- **Public park as a core function:** the character of a public park appears as a recurring element. Factory'ard is envisioned not as a space designed for a single target group, but as an **open urban space usable by multiple generations**. The event function – where accepted – plays a supplementary role; it does not become the primary land use.
- **Accessibility and urban connectivity:** the current sense of isolation is seen as a problem by the city administration, residents and professionals alike. The success of the development of the Factory'ard and its surroundings is closely linked to whether it can be made a natural part of the city centre's pedestrian and cycling network.

The research clearly shows that increasing green spaces is not an aesthetic choice, but a **means of adaptation**. Based on residents' responses, there is a significant demand for shaded spaces, trees with large canopies, natural paving and rain garden solutions. From a technical perspective, the focus groups added the aspects of increasing biodiversity, water retention and mitigating the heat island effect. From the city administration's perspective, all this is in line with sustainability and liveability/live quality goals, so the development of green infrastructure can be interpreted as a **key common development direction**.

5.2. Divergent viewpoints and points of conflict

- **Scale and frequency of events:** whilst some in the city administration emphasise the role of major events in building the city's image, a significant proportion of the public and focus groups would prefer a reduction in scale. It is not the existence of cultural events that is disputed, but their **volume, impact on land use**.
- **Relationship to development:** among decision-makers, the idea of cautious development (functional buildings, services) is emerging, whilst responses from the public and focus groups tend to support **minimising development**. This difference draws attention to questions of development priorities and proportions.
- One of the fundamental dilemmas of Factory'ard's current operation stems from the fact that the area is **optimised for temporary functions**, whilst it is increasingly being used as an everyday urban space. The infrastructure developed during the VEB2023 programme period was primarily designed for event use, which does not fully meet the requirements of a public park. This transitional state represents both flexibility and risk: the area is easily adaptable, yet it lacks the stable system required for long-term operation.
- Based on the research, the most striking functional conflict in Factory'ard lies between **those seeking quiet relaxation** and **those requiring intensive event use**. A significant proportion of the local population envisages Factory'ard as a daytime leisure and recreational space, whilst evening and night-time events do not always fit in with this purpose. This dilemma cannot be resolved by regulatory measures alone; it requires **a reorganisation of space and time**, in which the priorities of the various functions are clearly distinguished.
- The development of the Factory'ard cannot be understood in isolation **from the effects of climate change**. Summer heatwaves, intense solar radiation and rainwater management issues all indicate that the area's current state is **not adequately adapted** to the changed climatic environment. Current land use relies heavily on paved surfaces, which is justified from the perspective of events but is difficult to reconcile with the park's public function. Based on feedback from residents and focus groups, **the proportion of paved surfaces** is perceived as **excessive**, contributing to the area's barren, transitional character.

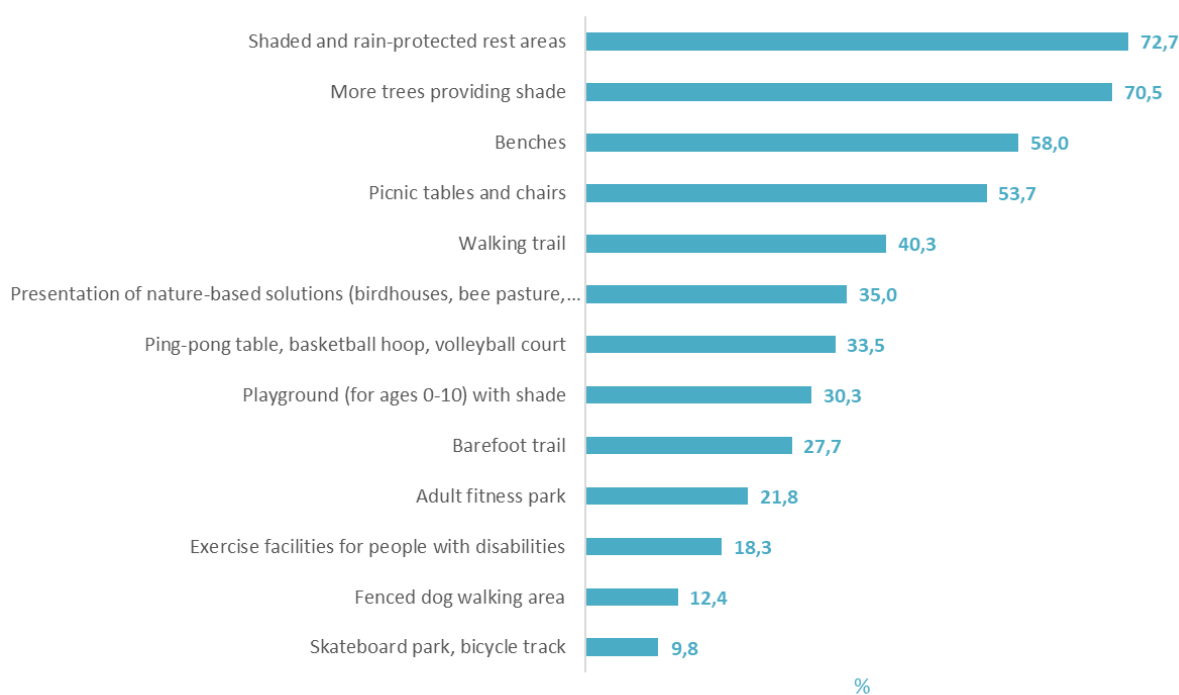
5.3. Interpreting the functions of public parks and community spaces

The clear conclusion of the research is that the future development of Factory'ard and its surroundings should be based on **the function of a public park for everyday use**. In the resident questionnaire survey and the focus group discussions, a significant proportion of respondents emphasised that the area should function as an urban space not merely during occasional events, but also in everyday life. In this sense, the concept of a public park does not refer to a passive green space, but **to an active yet tranquil urban environment** suitable for relaxation, socialising, spending time, short walks and informal community interaction. In this role, Factory'ard could be of particular recreational importance to the densely populated neighbourhoods surrounding it.

The research also highlighted that **ensuring intergenerational coexistence** is a key issue for the future of Factory’ard. The needs of the local population encompassed the differing usage patterns of families, the elderly, young adults and students. As a community space, Factory’ard must offer a spatial structure that does not force individual groups to take up space at the expense of one another. During the focus group discussions, the expectation that the park should become **a segmented, multi-functional space** where quieter zones, meeting points and smaller activity areas can be found, whilst retaining its unified character, was raised on several occasions.

The existence of basic infrastructure is a fundamental prerequisite for the authenticity of a public park’s function. Based on feedback from residents, **public toilets, drinking fountains, shaded seating areas, adequate street lighting and ensuring cleanliness** are seen not as optional extras but as **basic requirements** (Figure 2). Interviews with city officials also reinforced the view that Factory’ard must not become ‘merely an event venue’, which is non-functional or underused outside of events. To this end, the development of physical and operational infrastructure supporting the use of the public park is essential.

Figure 2. If Factory’ard Culture Park and its surroundings were a public park, what improvements would residents like to see here (n=2,254)

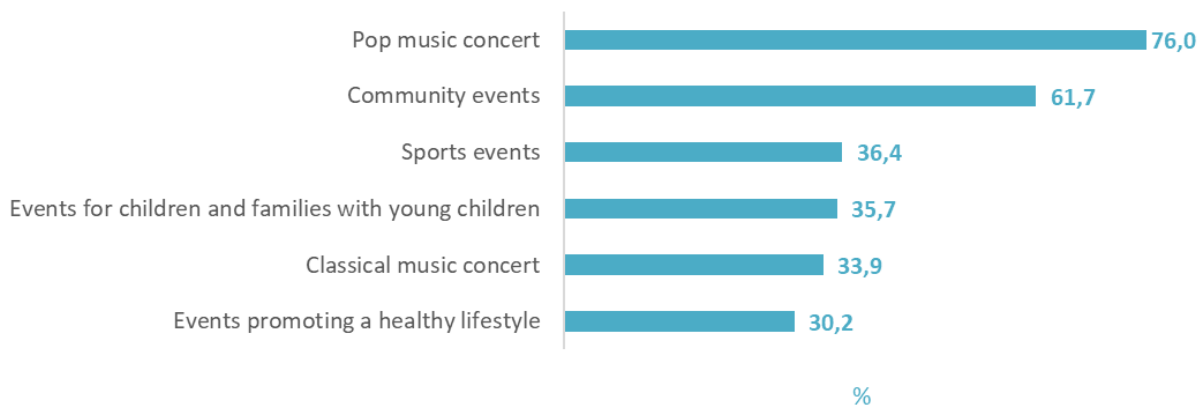


Source: Compiled by the authors based on the public questionnaire survey

5.4. Event function: opportunities, conflicts and constraints

One of the strongest elements of Factory'ard's current identity is linked to cultural and (pop) musical events. The concert venue function established under the VEB2023 programme brought the area to the attention of both the local and national public and was remembered as a positive experience by many respondents. However, the surveys made it clear that this element of identity **is not exclusive** and cannot become the area's primary long-term function. The use of the site for events is seen as a value, but only if it fits in with the environmental and social conditions (Figure 3).

Figure3. If the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings were also an event venue, what kind of programmes would residents be keen to attend here (n=2,254)



Source: Compiled by the authors based on the public questionnaire survey

The research has successfully identified the main sources of conflict regarding the event function. Noise pollution is primarily a problem for the surrounding residential areas during concert set-ups and in the evening and late-night hours. Based on residents' responses, the conflict stems not from the quality of the cultural content, but from the **temporal and spatial extent of the noise**. Overcrowding and vehicle traffic associated with events also emerged as recurring negative factors. These problems can be attributed to the area's urban planning characteristics and cannot be addressed solely as organisational issues.

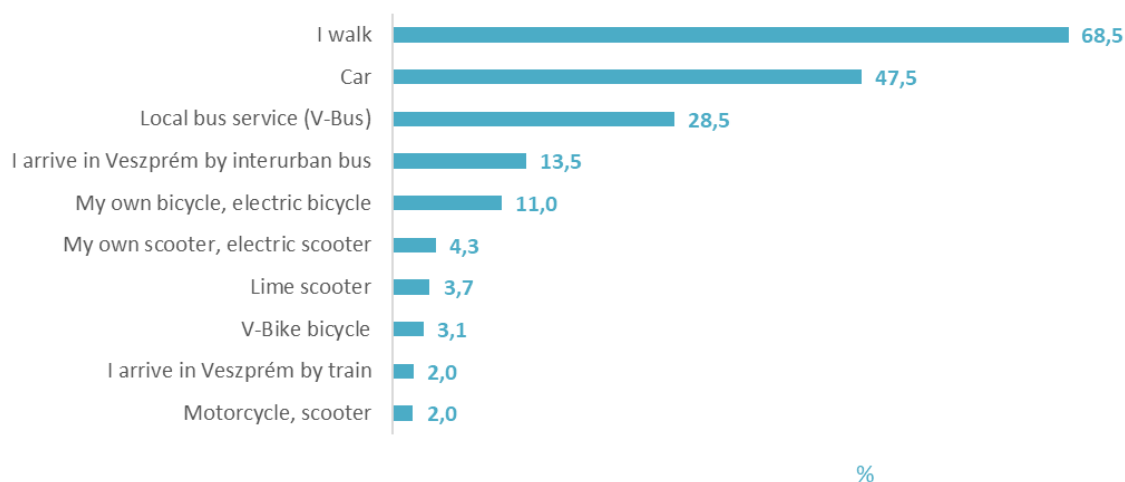
Based on the focus group discussions and residents' responses, a **consensus compromise** has emerged, which envisages a **reduction in the scale and intensity of event use**. The majority of respondents consider the presence of smaller-scale events in limited numbers to be acceptable, particularly if they take place during the day or in the early evening. This approach is consistent with the NEBOD-based development logic, which defines community experiences not by mass participation but by the **quality of space utilisation**.

5.5. Accessibility and connectivity (parking, micromobility, public transport)

A recurring theme in the research is the current **isolation of Factory'ard within the urban fabric**. The busy roads surrounding the area, the bus station, and the proximity of commercial and service facilities have created an infrastructure that primarily serves car traffic, whilst pedestrian and cycle connections have been sidelined.

It was repeatedly stated in the interviews with city officials that the key to the development of Factory'ard is for the area to function **not as a terminus** but as a passable urban space. Based on the results of the resident questionnaire and the focus groups, improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists is **a primary development priority** (Figure 4). A significant proportion of respondents would already like to be able to pass through Factory'ard, particularly on routes between the city centre and the market hall, and Balaton Plaza. Prioritising micro-mobility (cycling, scooters, walking) is not merely a transport issue, but also **a matter of quality of life and the environment**. Factory'ard, with its predominance of green spaces, could logically be linked to such a sustainable mobility network.

Figure 4. What mode of transport do residents generally use when they want to get to the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings (n=2,254)



Source: Compiled by the authors based on the public questionnaire survey

The issue of parking has also regularly arisen in connection with Factory'ard; however, research has made it clear that this is **not primarily a local problem**, but one on a city-wide scale. The majority of residents and stakeholders do not support expanding parking capacity within Factory'ard, as this would contradict the objectives of public park and green space development. Instead, solutions emphasising the development of public transport, micromobility and a city-wide parking system have come to the fore. During the interviews with decision-makers, several emphasised that the difficulties of city centre parking are long-standing issues, the resolution of which cannot be expected from the redevelopment of a single area. In this sense, Factory'ard is **not a source of the problem**, but rather an area where existing tensions become particularly visible, especially during events.

Based on the results of the resident questionnaire survey, the issue of parking is viewed with mixed feelings. Some respondents express convenient accessibility as a legitimate expectation, whilst the majority opinion is that expanding parking capacity within the Factory'ard area is **not a desirable direction for development**. Furthermore, during the focus group discussions, there was almost complete consensus that increasing parking spaces would contradict the objectives of public parks, green spaces and climate adaptation. According to the participants, increasing parking **would structurally perpetuate the dominance of car use** and, in the long term, would impair the area's liveability.

Based on the research, it can be concluded that, in the development of Factory'ard and its surroundings, the issue of parking should be addressed **not through local solutions** but by integrating it into a city-wide strategy. The city administration has proposed P+R schemes, the strengthening of public transport, and the development of micro-mobility links as long-term solutions. In this context, the role of Factory'ard and its surroundings is not that of a parking hub, but rather that of a **pedestrian-friendly city centre space that calms car traffic** and supports the use of sustainable modes of transport.

5.6. Built environment: the future of the SZMT headquarters and the locally listed building

One of the most striking common findings of the research is the question of the future of the **SZMT headquarters**. The view that the building's current condition is **unworthy of both its surroundings and its city centre location** emerged in the decision-maker interviews, focus group discussions and public feedback alike. At the same time, the majority of those interviewed did not advocate complete demolition but emphasised the **possibility of adaptive reuse**. In this sense, the SZMT headquarters is not an obstacle, but could be a **key element** in the long-term development of Factory'ard and its surroundings. Based on the research, several potential functions can be identified in relation to the SZMT-building:

- community and cultural spaces,
- creative and innovation (incubation) functions,
- educational or civic use,
- services supporting the operation of Factory'ard as a public park.

During the focus group discussions, it became clear that the conversion of the SZMT headquarters should **not be designed around a single dominant function** but rather should incorporate several complementary uses. This development direction, like the functions of the public park, is in line with the NEBOD principles, particularly the principles of inclusivity and the reinterpretation of local values.

In the wider vicinity of Factory'ard, there is a locally listed building (its façade is currently covered, not many people even notice it) the future of which was also raised in the focus group and executive interviews. Based on the research, there is a clear expectation that the future and utilisation of this building should be addressed as an **integrated planning issue**, rather than as an isolated heritage conservation problem. According to the participants, preserving the historical layers and infusing them with new functions can contribute to **deepening the identity** of Factory'ard and its surroundings, and prevent the emergence of a space that could 'appear anywhere in any city'.

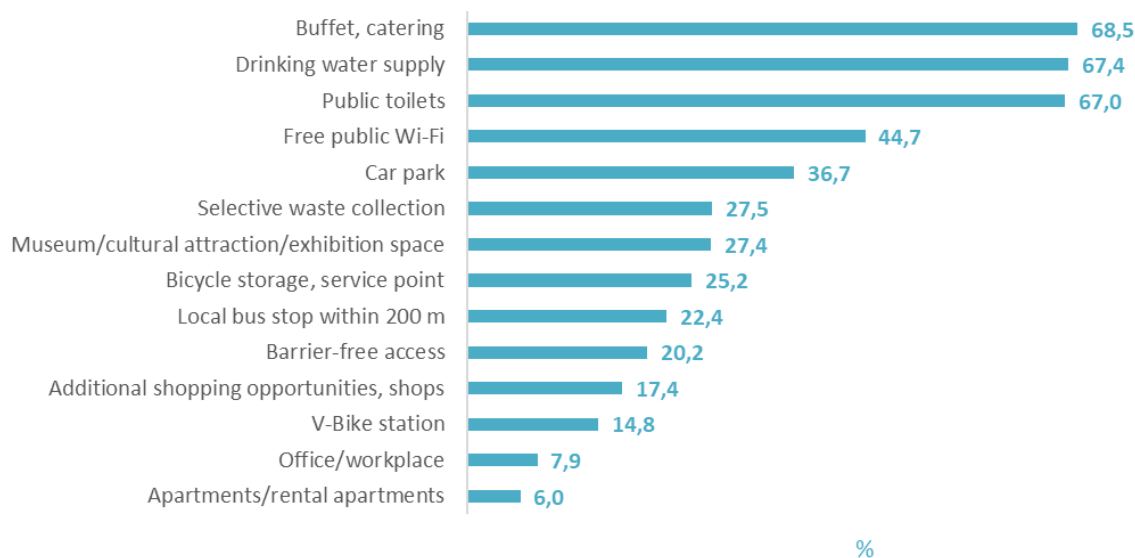
5.7. Potential economic and service functions

The interviews with municipal leaders and key stakeholders consistently underscored that the development of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings must not become merely a cost-driven urban project. At the same time, based on the results of the public and focus group discussions, it is clearly indicated that the respondents believe that the area is **not suitable for large-scale, conventional commercial development**. The consensus view is that economic functions should only be present to the extent and in the form that **supports** public park and community use and should not become a dominant land-use category.

One important lesson from the research is that the demand for services arose primarily not from a commercial perspective, but **from a usability perspective** (Figure 5). There is a need for functions that can enhance the viability of Factory'ard, whilst not jeopardising its fundamental character as a public park. Based on the research, both the public and professionals consider catering and service facilities of this scale to be acceptable, which:

- encourage longer stays,
- fit in with the character of the park,
- do not place an excessive burden on the surrounding residential areas.

Figure 5. In relation to the future development of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings, what services would respondents use in this area? (n=2,254)



Source: Compiled by the authors based on the public questionnaire survey

It also emerged in the focus group discussions and executive interviews that Factory'ard and its surroundings, particularly the SZMT headquarters, could be suitable for hosting **creative, cultural and innovation activities**. These are not traditional office or economic functions, but rather community and professional activities that reinforce Veszprém's character as a 'living city'. These functions fit well with the NEBOD philosophy, which interprets economic value creation not in isolation, but **within a social and environmental context**.

In the context of the Factory'ard development, the issue of housing emerged during the research as a **secondary yet sensitive topic**. In the interviews with city officials, the possibility arose that, due to the location's proximity to the city centre, the introduction of certain residential functions could be justified from an urban planning perspective. At the same time, however, the results from the public and focus groups indicate significant caution. The majority of respondents do not rule out the introduction of housing in principle, yet there was strong resistance to **large-scale, intensive residential estate-style development**. In the case of Factory'ard, housing is not a primary development objective, but can at most be interpreted as a **supplementary, specialised function**.

During the focus group discussions, the rejection of excessive development emerged as one of the strongest common grounds. Participants clearly emphasised that the value of Factory'ard lies precisely in its **openness** and **character as an open space**. The mass introduction of residential functions would jeopardise this value and cause irreversible changes to the character of the area. The fear that Factory'ard would "lose its park-like character" if development increased also appeared repeatedly in the text responses of the resident questionnaire. A significant proportion of respondents fear that residential functions would generate additional traffic, parking and noise pollution, whilst reducing opportunities for community use.

Based on the findings of the research, a consensus approach can be formulated that is consistent with the NEBOD principles; this approach regards balance in land use, as the primary value, and states that, in the development of Factory'ard and its surroundings, **housing must not become the dominant element**. Should a residential function nevertheless emerge in the future, it must be:

- be on a small scale,
- in an integrated manner,
- and in a manner that is subordinate to the public park function.

5.8. Operation, safety and noise management

In relation to the development of Factory'ard and its surroundings, the issue of operation emerged as a **key factor** during the research. Based on feedback from residents and focus groups, it is not the diversity of functions in itself that poses a problem, but rather their **unharmonized** and **uncoordinated operation**. Under the current temporary arrangements, operations are primarily based on an event-driven approach, which is not suitable for the long-term maintenance of the public park's character. Respondents thought that the Factory'ard and its surroundings can only function as an everyday urban space if operations are continuous, predictable and transparent.

The issue of public safety, meanwhile, emerged primarily **at the level of perception** in both the public questionnaire and the focus groups. Respondents cited not overt crime, but disorder, poor lighting and a lack of supervision as risk factors.

Interviews with city officials highlighted that the issue of safety is closely linked to the intensity of use of the area: a well-maintained, actively but not overcrowded public park in itself increases the subjective sense of safety.

Managing noise pollution remains one of the most sensitive issues at Factory'ard. Based on the research, it can be concluded that noise is not solely a technical problem, but also an **operational and conceptual one**. Residents primarily voiced criticism regarding events held in the evening and late night. The main approach here focused primarily on how to reduce the impact on residents without completely driving cultural events out of the area. Consequently, the consensus view is that noise management must be based on the following three pillars:

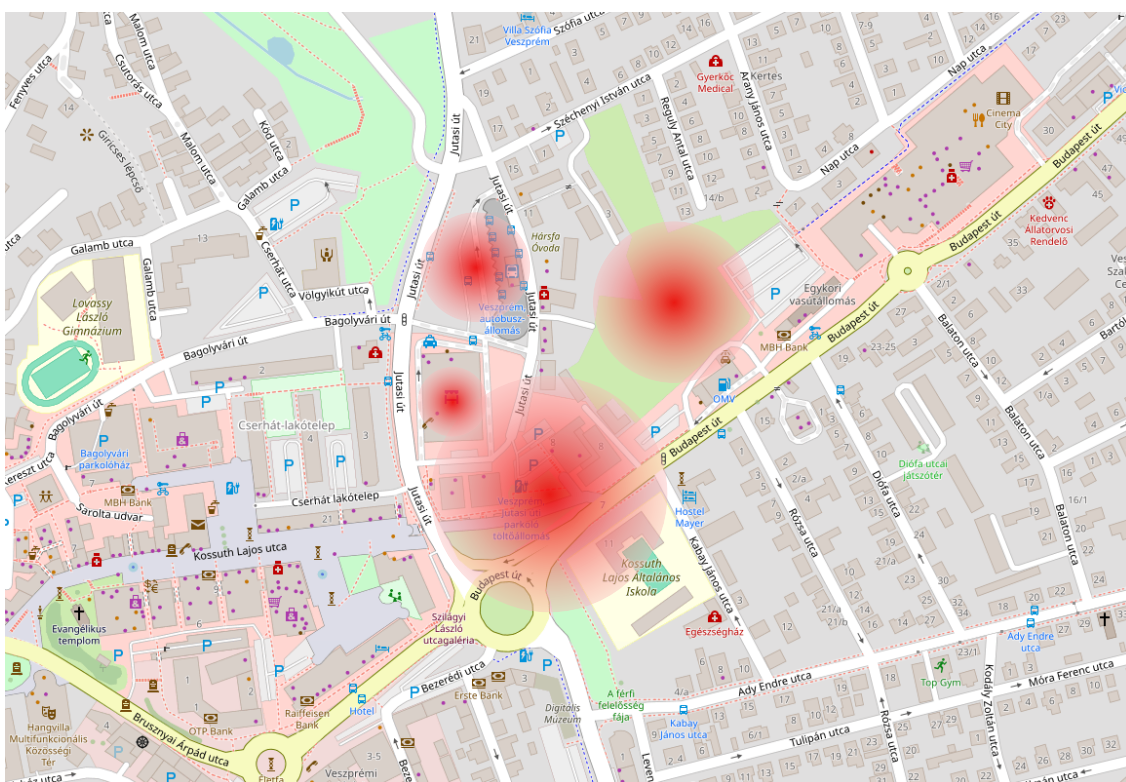
- time restrictions on events,
- the conscious regulation of event/concert scale (number of visitors),
- and the spatial division of the area.

6) FRAMEWORKS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FACTORY'ARD CULTURAL PARK AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

6.1. The role of stakeholders, interested parties and public engagement

An extremely wide range of stakeholders can be identified in relation to the development of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings: residents of the city centre and the surrounding area, event visitors, civil society organisations, economic actors, cultural and educational institutions, as well as the city administration and municipal service providers are all affected by the decisions. Based on the research findings, it is clear that the interests of these stakeholders **do not carry equal weight or appear on the same timescale**. This makes conscious and structured engagement processes particularly necessary.

Figure 6. Main points of intervention according to focus group respondents (n= 23)



Source: Compiled by the authors based on the focus group interviews

The public questionnaire survey can be interpreted not merely as a source of data, but also as a tool for legitimisation. Respondents expressed a strong desire for decisions regarding the future of Factory'ard and its surroundings to be made **not behind closed doors, but in a transparent manner**. It was repeatedly mentioned during the focus groups that a significant proportion of the conflicts stem not from the content of the developments, but from the way decisions are made. A lack of prior consultation, information sharing and feedback can lead to mistrust.

The New European Bauhaus on the Danube (NEBOD) approach places a strong emphasis **on social co-creation**. Based on research, the Factory'ard and its surroundings may be suitable for establishing a pilot area where the local authority, residents and professional stakeholders work together to shape the future of the space (Figure 6). The partnership approach is not merely a communication tool, but **a quality factor in development** that can contribute to long-term acceptance and sustainable use.

The future models developed during the focus group interviews paint a strongly positive yet realistic picture of the state of Factory'ard and its surroundings in 2036. The keywords – “green oasis”, “community space”, “accessibility”, “innovation”, “liveability” – describe an **integrated urban environment** capable of simultaneously meeting **the needs of local residents, visitors and economic actors**. The sense of pride evident in the narratives (“a real success story”, “we can be proud of it”) suggests that participants interpret the project not only as a physical transformation but also as an identity-forming process. This is supported by the following quotes and statements:

“The revitalised Factory'ard and its surroundings opened in 2036. This is what the city's residents say about it...”

“A pleasant green oasis in the heart of the modern city centre. Great street food in a shaded park. A brilliant way to spend time with the kids, with an exciting playground featuring water features.”

“The city centre is ours; we love being here.”

“We attended a concert with an amazing atmosphere with our family and friends, under the shade of trees by the wonderful fountains. The right time, the right place, the right company. Come to Veszprém!”

“The new urban square, created as an extension of Kossuth Street, has opened up the previously cramped space around the market and bus station, breaking up the barrenness of the main street with wonderful green spaces, thereby enhancing the liveability of the city centre.”

According to the vision of the youth segment (generation Z) interviewed during the focus group sessions, Factory'ard is a **dynamic, multi-functional experience centre** embodying the following key values:

- **experience and entertainment** (festivals, music events),
- **community and participation** (interactive programmes),
- **technological innovation** (innovative solutions),
- **recreation and relaxation** (park and community space functions),
- **continuous operation and renewal** (day and night use).

Ideally, Factory'ard will become both a **vibrant event venue**, where programmes focus on encouraging social interaction (e.g. themed meeting places, playful networking concepts), and a **peaceful community space** capable of meeting the needs of local young.

Young people’s vision for the future places a strong emphasis on the **integration of innovative, interactive and digital solutions**. They also put forward several ideas based on combining technology with the community experience. These include, for example, serving robots, AI-based interactive elements, headphone parties (*“silent disco”*) or programmes organised based on social media polls. According to the participants’ wishes, Factory’ard should offer a constantly evolving, *“always different”* experience, in which visitors are not merely consumers but active shapers of the programmes. Interactivity, **participation and personalisation** emerged as key expectations.

Overall, young people envisage a Factory’ard that is **experience-focused, dynamic and multifunctional**, serving simultaneously as an urban meeting place, a cultural centre and an entertainment space with regional appeal. The most important keywords are *“music”, “experience”, “community”, “technology”, “participation”* and *“multifunctionality”*. Based on the responses, Factory’ard could ideally become a venue that functions as a community park by day and a vibrant cultural and entertainment hub by night, whilst offering a constantly evolving experience for locals and visitors alike.

6.2. Development timelines and possible scenarios, financing

A recurring theme in the structured interviews with local government decision-makers was the emphasis that the development of Factory’ard and its surroundings **is not a short-term project**, but an urban development process spanning several cycles. The majority of decision-makers think in terms of a 5- to 10-year timeframe, which allows for gradual intervention, learning and adaptation (Figure 7). This timeline is also aligned with the expectations of the public and focus groups, who prefer **incremental, testable developments** over sudden, large-scale transformations.

Figure 7. Short- and long-term development opportunities

Short-term interventions (1–2 years)	Medium- and long-term interventions (3–10 years)
<p>Interventions that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve day-to-day usability • reduce conflicts • do not require significant structural changes <p>Examples of such elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvements to basic infrastructure (restrooms, drinking fountains, shade structures) • increasing the proportion of green spaces through temporary solutions • clarifying the regulatory framework for event use 	<p>Medium term (3–5 years):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transformation of the built environment (particularly the adaptive reuse of the SZMT headquarters) • structural improvements to accessibility <p>Long term (5–10 years):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing Factory’ard and its surroundings into a fully-fledged, integrated urban space • establishing a stable operating model • operating with broad public acceptance

Source: Compiled by the authors based on research findings

During the focus group discussions, participants also articulated their ideas for the development of the area under study **by selecting visual associations and inspirational photos** (Figure 8), from which a complex vision of the future emerged.

Figure 8. The most frequently selected inspirational photos that fit with the area's future, as identified during the focus group interviews (n=23)

TOP1 (5 selections):



TOP2 (4-4 selections):



TOP3 (3-3 selections):





Source: Compiled by the authors based on the focus group interviews

Based on the research, the municipality's **leading and coordinating role is indispensable** in the development of Factory'ard. Even if external resources or private actors are involved, strategic management must remain in the hands of the local authority. City decision-makers have unanimously indicated that the development of Factory'ard could fit well with:

- green infrastructure development grants,
- EU programmes focusing on public spaces and climate adaptation,
- NEBOD and INTERREG-type initiatives.

An important advice is that the development concept must be formulated **not by tailoring it to calls for proposals**, but according to its own professional logic, and then the appropriate funding must be allocated to it. Furthermore, the involvement of economic actors arose primarily in relation to the SZMT headquarters and certain service functions. However, according to the results obtained from the research, private capital is only acceptable in a form that **does not jeopardise community and public park objectives**.

7) SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the study of the Factory'ard Culture Park and its surroundings, it became clear that the development of the area cannot be understood solely in terms of individual sub-functions but is situated at the intersection of complex urban systems. The combined results of the three research components – structured interviews with decision-makers, a questionnaire survey of residents and focus group discussions – show that, regarding the future of the Factory'ard area, it is not the need for development but its direction and scale that are the central questions. The area's current state is transitional; however, this very transitional nature also creates an opportunity to chart a consciously designed, long-term sustainable development path.

Factory'ard is therefore not merely a development site, but a **key element of Veszprém's future urban quality**. Research has clearly shown that the fate of the area extends beyond itself and influences the functioning of the city centre as a whole. On this basis, and drawing on the findings of the study, the following decision-making directions – briefly summarised below – are primarily recommended within the framework of an integrated development model capable of managing conflicts related to Factory'ard and its surroundings whilst preserving the area's uniqueness:

- declaring the primacy of the public park function,
- prioritising green and climate adaptation developments,
- re-regulating the use of the site for events,
- initiating the adaptive reuse of the SZMT headquarters,
- institutionalising public engagement, channelling public opinions.

The New European Bauhaus on the Danube (NEBOD) initiative, which relates to this topic, is based on an integrated approach to sustainability, inclusivity and aesthetic quality. NEBOD is not merely an architectural movement, but an **urban development paradigm** that addresses social, environmental and economic aspects collectively. Research indicates that the development issues of the Factory'ard and its surroundings as a pilot area are closely aligned with the principles of NEBOD. The demand for green spaces, the emphasis on community use and the expectation of high-quality spatial design are all factors that are consistent with the NEBOD-based approach.

Factory'ard and its surroundings may be suitable for demonstrating the practical application of NEBOD's principles **at a local level as a model area**. This may represent a new way of thinking about the use, development and community management of urban spaces. Taking NEBOD's framework into account, the research findings indicate that:

- there is a strong demand for green spaces and climate adaptation in the thinking of both the public and decision-makers,
- there is widespread support for the expectation of community-oriented, open and inclusive urban spaces,
- the demand for quality use of space goes beyond purely functional or economic considerations.

In this sense, Factory'ard and its surroundings are not merely a development area or greenfield investment, but a **potential pilot site** through which the local, practical application of NEBOD principles can be tested and demonstrated. A complex model of land use that combines sustainability, social inclusion, and aesthetic and functional quality. In the case of Factory'ard, the NEBOD approach takes shape in concrete, tangible interventions such as prioritising nature-based solutions, creating green spaces that regulate the climate, or establishing an inclusive spatial structure that can be used by people of all ages.

The development of Factory'ard and its surroundings can only be successful if it is implemented **not as a series of forced compromises**, but as a carefully crafted, long-term urban strategy. The most important message for the municipality is that the development of Factory'ard should not be defined as a single, final state, but rather treated as a **phased, adaptive process**. Development steps that build on one another, are testable and rely on feedback allow the needs of the various stakeholders to be continuously integrated (Figure 9), ensuring the area's development remains on a sustainable path in the long term.

Figure 9. Messages that should be included in the final development guidelines according to focus group interview respondents (n=23)



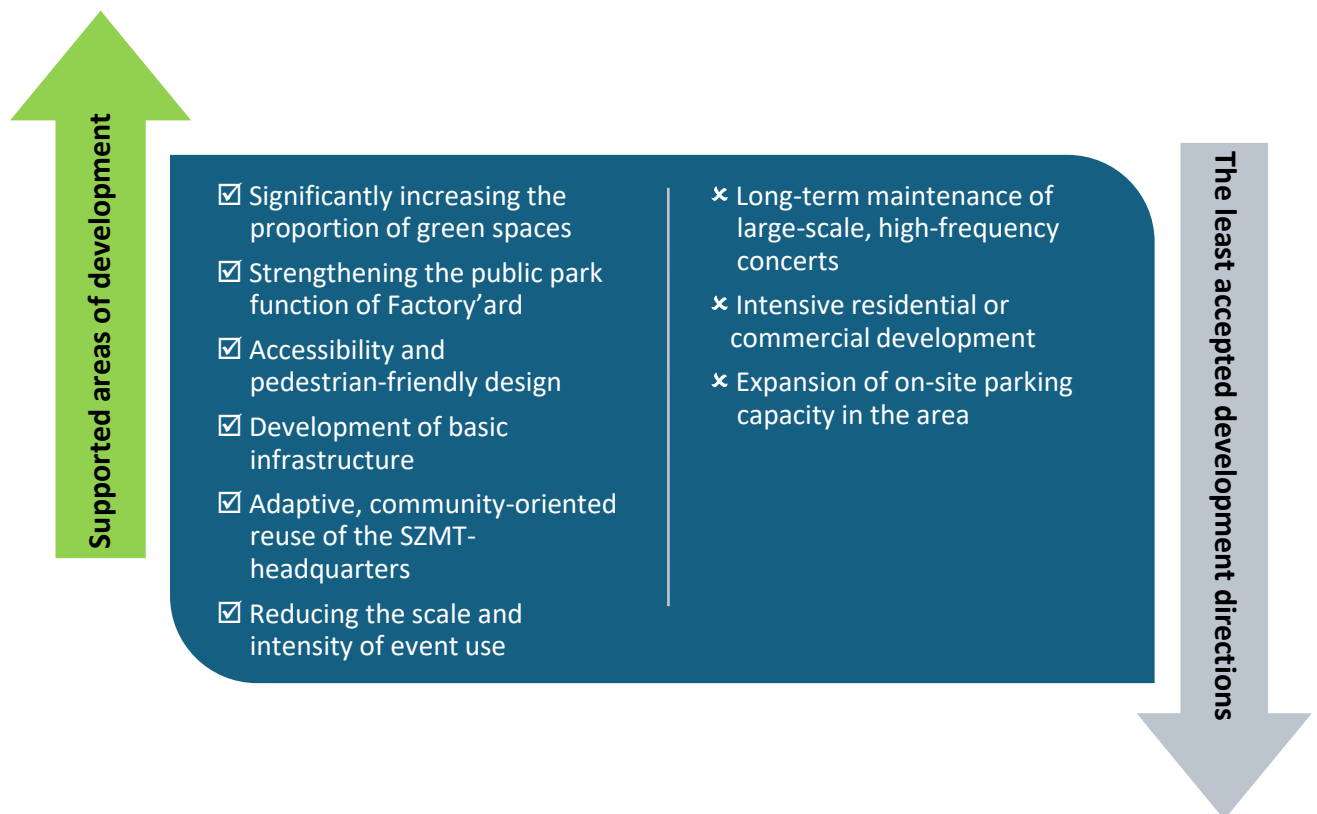
Source: Compiled by the authors based on the focus group interviews

The responses from the focus group interviews also highlighted what must be avoided during the development process. Based on the responses, there was almost complete agreement that the greatest risks lie in **excessive development** and the making of **irreversible functional decisions**.

The need to avoid “*overdevelopment*” and a “*concrete jungle*” was highlighted, driven by previous negative urban experiences: excessive development results in inflexible, hard-to-modify functions in the long term, limiting the area’s adaptability. Monofunctionality, single-function design, was identified as a similarly significant risk, with the emphasis that Factory’ard must not become exclusively a residential or office area, as this could lead to a reduction in diversity of use and even underutilisation. In addition, the problem of a **lack of social engagement** was strongly highlighted: according to the participants, the involvement of the local community is essential for successful and accepted development. Finally, the issue of **sustainability** also emerges as an important caveat, in both environmental and economic terms, as unsustainable projects can result in vacant buildings and, in the longer term, the devaluation of the area.

Based on a summary of the research findings, a **broad social and professional consensus** can be identified around the following development objectives. Together, these objectives form the **stable professional core** of the development of Factory’ard and its surroundings. At the same time, it is worth mentioning those topics where **lower levels of support or division of opinion** can be observed. These development directions can be treated as secondary priorities at most, subject to strict conditions (Figure 10).

Figure 10. The most supported and least accepted development directions



Source: Compiled by the authors based on research findings