CITY AS YOUR LIVING ROOM

Squares, parks, streets, and other public spaces can be seen as the city‘s living room. How can we design high-quality public spaces where people enjoy spending time?

MAPPA!!!

Can we have
more trees
in the streets?

How does
a shared street work?

Do you feel
safe in parks?

What makes up
the **atmosphere**
of the city?

Can I park
on the square?

Why is there
asphalt instead
of paving?

When will this area
get additional benches?

What is our thought process when designing public spaces?

Squares, parks, streets, and other public spaces can be seen as the city's living room—a shared space open to everyone. We pass through them and spend time in them playing, exercising, or simply relaxing. Caring for these spaces and transforming them is one of the city's key responsibilities.

We help design well-thought-out spaces across Ostrava. Our goal is to create inviting and safe public areas that encourage active movement and relaxation. When people feel comfortable in a space, they naturally spend more time there, bringing activity, and vibrancy to the city.

Well-planned public spaces are not only visually appealing and functional but also sustainable. That's why we carefully consider both construction and maintenance costs, to ensure they align with the city's financial resources.

Every location has its own character, requiring a unique design approach. But certain principles always apply.

How can we design and maintain public spaces that feel welcoming and remain sustainable over time? This brochure provides the answers, along with a look at 7 locations soon to be transformed.

Public space is a human right, just like access to decent healthcare, food, education, and shelter. Everyone should be able to see a tree from their window, sit on a bench or in a square, and walk to a park where they can stroll, play, or experience the changing seasons. A city that fails to provide this cannot truly call itself civilised.

Richard Rogers
British architect

Framing

What shapes the character of the spaces we enter? How they look, how we perceive them, and how they make us feel depends on key factors: size, proportions, and the way the space is framed. This includes the placement and height of surrounding buildings, as well as whether they feature groundfloor shops and storefronts (active frontage) instead of blank facades without windows (passive frontages). Windows, shops, and displays act as the "eyes" of the street, bringing life, attracting people, and fostering a sense of safety through social control.

Public spaces in historic city centers differ from those surrounding housing estates. That's why their design or renovation must take location into account. Each space should reflect its surroundings with the right scale, style, amenities, and artistic elements.

Have you ever wondered why we feel so comfortable in the hearts of historic cities, such as Olomouc, Old Town Prague, Rome, or Venice? It is because of their characteristic narrow streets, lined with houses that are taller than the width of the street. This creates a sense of coziness and safety, while also being pleasantly cool on hot days.

According to Danish urban planner Jan Gehl, a welcoming street frontage is not a blank facade. Instead, it features entrances to buildings paced every 7 meters. Along a 100-meter stretch of street, this would mean 10 to 14 doors.

Surface

The quality and character of surfaces in public spaces influence whether we find them inviting or unappealing. Factors such as scale, structure, materials and how they make us feel, along with their durability and well-maintained condition, all play a role. Surfaces contribute to the city's identity and serve as a reflection of how well public spaces are maintained.

We can find different types of surfaces in squares and parks, but even within a single public space, multiple surfaces can coexist. These surfaces aid in navigation, communicate a space's significance and purpose, and encourage us to engage with it in various ways—whether playing, exercising, or relaxing. In doing so, they contribute to a positive atmosphere and enhance the unique character, or genius loci, of a place.

Ideally, a surface should not distract us as we walk. We should be able to move effortlessly without watching our step and simply enjoy the experience. The choice of surface plays a key role in the overall design of a public space. For pavements, factors such as color, format, and tile arrangement are important considerations. A well-coordinated design is visually appealing and helps make the public space feel clearer, tidier, and more inviting.

Did you know there is a Public Space Design Manual that specifies the exact types of pavement surfaces and their correct placement? We developed it for the 28. října – Opavská boulevard, but its principles can be applied to most areas in Ostrava. This manual serves as a resource for the Ostrava city authority and its districts, guiding them in selecting the most suitable materials for street and square renovations.

Where possible, public spaces should include both impermeable and permeable surfaces, such as permeable paving, lawns, and packed gravel.

Snow, rain, frost, and scorching sun—the materials chosen for the city's surfaces must withstand all of these conditions.

Do you remember playing as a child, inspired by the surface beneath your feet? Like the game where stepping on a line meant losing?

Mobility

When planning public spaces, we need to consider how people will move around them: by what means, in which directions, and how intensively. Where will people walk, where will they cycle, and where will they drive, whether the place is their destination, they pass through, or deliver goods. Every form of movement has its place in a public space. Ideal layout should let people choose and combine different types of transport. For example, after getting off a tram, someone might walk to a nearby bike-sharing rack. Each mobility option is interlinked, but at the same time, people don't end up in each other's way.

It is essential for frequently used walkways, especially those leading from public transport stops to popular destinations, to enable smooth and effortless walking. This means minimizing poorly connected sidewalks, unnecessary railings, or traffic signs and poles placed in awkward spots. There should also be gathering places where people enjoy spending time, taking walks, or engaging in spontaneous play and creativity. When we plan Ostrava's public spaces, these are the details that make a difference.

The sustainable city is strengthened generally if a large part of the transport system can take place as "green mobility," that is, travel by foot, bike, or public transport. These forms of transport provide marked benefits to the economy and the environment, reduce resource consumption, limit emissions, and decrease noise levels.

Jan Gehl
Danish architect and urban planner

Did you know that Ostrava is taking steps toward becoming a more bike-friendly city? According to the new cycling transportation plan, riding a bike is not just seen as a sport but also as a means of getting around the city. To support this, the city is planning to build infrastructure that allows cyclists to ride safely and intuitively on every street.

Shared zones are public spaces, such as squares or streets, where there is no traditional separation between pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Everyone moves through the space together, with a speed limit of 20 km/h. A key principle of shared zones is mutual respect, where users rely on non-verbal communication to move naturally.

Water and Vegetation

Water and vegetation make cities feel more welcoming and comfortable while enhancing the visual appeal of public spaces. At the same time, they serve a crucial purpose—helping cities cope with the impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat and heavy rainfall. That's why, when designing or revitalizing public spaces, we incorporate vegetation and rainwater management, a concept known as blue-green infrastructure.

Blue-green infrastructure (BGI) captures and retains rainwater, slowing or preventing it from immediately entering the sewage. Water stored in the soil supports plant growth, while some of it evaporates, helping to humidify and cool the air. BGI also plays a role during heavy rainfall by preventing excessive runoff, reducing the risk of overwhelming sewage systems and nearby rivers.

Green spaces in cities offer many benefits—from capturing dust and emissions to reducing noise and providing a refuge for wildlife. Vegetation also enhances urban biodiversity. That's why, from the very start of planning new public spaces or revitalizing existing ones, greenery must be a key consideration. Only then can we create the right conditions for it to thrive, especially by providing sufficient underground space for tree roots.

Did you know that Ostrava uses a blue-green infrastructure methodology that defines rainwater management steps? This approach is applied by the city authorities, urban planners, and investors. In addition to this, we are working on a Green Spaces Strategy that will help identify areas for cultivating and enhancing green public spaces. Another goal of the plan is to create a seamless connection between the city and its natural surroundings.

Do you know why Ostrava has so few trees along its streets? The main reasons are the large amount of hard surfaces, poorly planned underground utility networks, and unfavorable soil conditions, all of which make tree planting difficult. The requirements for planting new trees are much stricter than those for removing them, and once a tree is cut down, replacing it can be a challenge. That's why, when renovating streets, we recommend consolidating underground services and allocating as much space as possible for trees.

It's better for rainwater to be absorbed into the ground rather than ending up in the sewage system. One way to achieve this is by designing sloped hard surfaces that direct runoff toward lawns, garden beds, and other vegetation.

Street Furniture

Just as we furnish our living rooms with sofas and other furniture, we also enjoy sitting on a comfortable bench and using various amenities in the urban living room. These include bike racks, trash cans, picnic tables, and swings. Thoughtful placement of urban furniture—such as seating, play areas, and dining spaces—encourages people to spend time in public spaces. On the other hand, a lack of amenities or their poor placement can make a space uninviting, leading people to avoid it or simply pass through without a reason to stay.

Significant or representative public spaces that attract many people—such as important squares—place a greater emphasis on design and also deserve higher-quality, more aesthetically refined urban furniture. In contrast, for other public spaces, we use simpler, more durable, and cost-effective furniture that prioritizes practicality and longevity. Easy maintenance is a key factor when selecting urban furniture. This includes the ability to repair or replace worn-out parts and ensure effortless cleaning. Long-term upkeep should be both efficient and cost-effective.

Amenities are not just practical necessities; they also give public spaces a deeper meaning. In significant locations, we often find artistic elements such as memorials, plaque columns, or statues that reflect our history and help shape the identity of the space. Statues, in particular, often serve as landmarks—popular meeting points for people. Lastly, public art enhances our mood, sparks inspiration, and invites us to pause and think.

The functionality of public spaces can be enhanced with flexible seating options. It's always pleasant when, in addition to traditional seating, people can also use movable furniture.

Where appropriate, it's important to consider seating options beyond just benches, such as stairs, steps, and low walls.

At times, when we're outside, we would appreciate the convenience of our homes—access to free drinking water, a place to wash our hands, and the ability to use the bathroom. Without these amenities, people tend to leave public spaces earlier than they intended. That's why ensuring their availability is essential.

Atmosphere

People feel comfortable in places that are not only functional but also welcoming—spaces that evoke positive emotions. A pleasant atmosphere emerges from a blend of various factors, including proportions, layout, the surrounding architecture, surfaces, greenery, and available amenities. This is further influenced by lighting, climate, the balance between activity and calm, overall cleanliness and air quality. The important final touch is added by the people who bring the space to life.

To improve the atmosphere and visual appeal of a place, it is often enough to clear public spaces of unsightly elements like overgrown greenery, structures that don't fit, and visual pollution (advertising).

It's natural for every place to be different, as various spaces can feel welcoming in their own way. What matters is that the city forms a mosaic of public spaces, offering a diverse range of environments for different groups of users. For example, families with children seek different spaces than students or the elderly.

Our goal is to create public spaces that are safe, functional, and responsive to the needs of citizens while also being aesthetically pleasing. We set quality standards for each public space. When planning, we take a holistic view of the city, identifying the types of public spaces that complement the area and fill the gaps. We strive to ensure that public spaces are diverse, catering both to active individuals and those seeking relaxation.

Did you know that noise in public spaces can be reduced by strategically adding buildings, by varying surface materials, and through incorporating trees, bushes, and urban furniture?

Ostrava aims to be clear and visually appealing! That's why, in 2020, the city introduced regulations to reduce visual pollution, along with a manual on proper outdoor advertising practices. The manual provides guidelines and examples to ensure advertisements are harmoniously integrated into the urban environment.

Can you think of a place nearby where you enjoy spending time, simply watching city life unfold before your eyes?

Since ancient times, the genius loci, or „spirit of a place," has been recognized as the concrete reality man has to face and come to terms with in his daily life. Architecture means to visualize the genius loci, and the task of the architect is to create meaningful places, whereby he helps man to dwell.

Christian Norberg Schulz
Norwegian historian
and architectural theorist

We perceive atmosphere through our emotional sensibility — a form of perception that works incredibly quickly, and which we humans evidently need to help us survive.

Peter Zumthor
Swiss architect

When a public space functions well, people see it as their own and actively use it.

7 public spaces soon to be transformed

Edvard Beneš Square

INFO

The role of MAPPA:
Organizer of the architecture and urban design competition and consultant for project documentation

Timeline:
Competition: 2021
Design work: 2022–2024
Transformation begins: 2025

Authors:
Jiří Mika, Martin Materna
Markéta Káňová, Petr Svoboda,
Adéla Kudlová, Vendula Bažová

The authors work independently in the studios Mika Svoboda Architekti s.r.o. and WMA Architects (now Opus Architekti).

CURRENT STATE
Nowadays, Edvard Beneš Square is more like a park that people pass through rather than a place where they would gather. However, it remains an important and frequently visited space, situated between the historic core of the city and the developing Nová Karolina area. The square is framed by the Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz town hall, the Hotel Imperial, the former Ostravica-Textilia department store, and Nádražní Street.

FUTURE
The development concept aims to completely revitalize the space, turning it into a more presentable gateway to the city center and a welcoming environment for public use. The area will be organized into three seamlessly connected sections: the space in front of the Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz Town Hall, a park square in front of the Hotel Imperial, and the section along Nádražní Street, where the former German House once stood. This site is reserved for future development, with its unique character highlighted through the use of distinct paving materials.

The square will bring a new type of public space to Ostrava's city center, addressing a current gap in urban design. Pedestrian movement will be guided by paved walkways along key routes, such as the path from the Elektra tram stop toward the city center. Beyond these paths, packed gravel will be used instead of grass, ensuring long-term durability in varying weather conditions. This design will allow the square to host markets, fairs, and community events.

The space will be revitalized with new or replaced trees, flower beds, and water features, including a rounded fountain, misting system, and a public drinking fountain. These elements will contribute to biodiversity and improve the local microclimate. The plan also features a unique lighting design, benches in various shapes, and movable street furniture, allowing for a dynamic and variable space. Additionally, the original Trojice Mine strike memorial statue will be relocated to a more suitable position within the square.

Project visualization: view from Nádražní Street looking towards Hotel Imperial

Project visualization: view from Hotel Imperial looking towards Nádražní Street

Site plan – finalized competition proposal

Did you know that packed gravel surfaces were historically used for pathways, squares, and in courtyards of châteaux and monasteries? Today, they are making a comeback because they are made from natural materials and can be used in areas where high-quality grass wouldn't thrive. These surfaces are permeable and composed of crushed and mechanically compressed stone.

Current site photo

Milada Horáková Park

INFO

The role of MAPPA:
Organizer of the landscape-architectural competition

Timeline:
Competition: 2022

Authors:
míza architekti

CURRENT STATE
The current state of the Milada Horáková Park does not reflect its significance. It is located near several frequently visited public institutions including the city hospital, cultural center, shopping mall, and regional council offices. Other significant buildings, such as the new concert hall, will soon be constructed here. As a result, the park is likely to see increased foot traffic in the future. Revitalizing it is essential to creating a high-quality public space that encourages people to visit, linger, or entice them to pass through.

FUTURE
The concept for the park's revitalization was developed through an architectural competition. It builds on the park's existing strengths while seamlessly incorporating new elements. At the heart of the park, the water feature will be restored, with a promenade leading to it. A café will be built near the existing playground, and fruit trees will also be planted near it. Additional spaces for play, seating, and relaxation will be introduced along the 28. října Boulevard.

The park will provide a welcoming and representative setting for the new concert hall. A gazebo will be built behind the concert hall, providing a venue for cultural and community activities. In their design, the architects have carefully considered all key aspects of the site—its history, the number of artworks within the park, and the current state of its vegetation. The former Jewish cemetery will be commemorated through vanishing walkways, reinforcing the site's memorial significance.

Project visualization: A look at the water feature

Project visualization: A look at the park with the gazebo

Site plan - competition proposal design

Did you know that the park was originally established as a cemetery? That's why it contains only a few types of trees, all typical for cemeteries. Unlike traditional parks, where trees are usually more spaced out, these were planted very close together, and they are all of a similar age. Their gradual renewal and diversification is therefore essential.

Current site photo

Plesná Recreational Area

INFO

The role of MAPPA:
Conceptual draft author

Timeline:
Conceptual draft: 2023

Authors:
MAPPA

CURRENT STATE
The site of the former distillery and its surroundings in the Plesná district are currently vacant, offering no practical use for local residents. The strategic location is in the valley of the Plesná stream, and the area benefits from flat terrain—an advantage in an otherwise hilly landscape. It is also important due to the nearby cycling path that connects the town of Hlučín with the Poruba district. This space has the potential to serve as a public gathering place, not only for the residents of Plesná but also for visitors from surrounding areas. It could host cultural and community events, such as the Plesná Folklore Festival. Additionally, the site presents an opportunity for the construction of a new fire station and a public services building, as the current facilities lack both adequate quality and capacity.

FUTURE
The new plan for the site envisions how the space could be transformed. It explores the optimal locations for key elements, such as a stage for cultural events, the new fire station, and the public services building. It also considers the placement of seating areas and the best routes for cyclists and pedestrians. The document will serve as a guide for the next steps, including acquiring available land and conducting an architectural study.

The overall character of the site located at the edge of the Plesná urban forest should remain closely connected to nature. New recreational elements will be introduced, along with seating areas, and the Plesná stream will become more accessible. A well-maintained lawn will cover most of the site, with gravel added in high-traffic areas for durability. To enhance the park's natural feel, wildflower patches will be incorporated into its open center. The goal is to create a space where visitors can experience a connection to nature while enjoying a well-kept environment—whether attending a concert, relaxing on a bench, or gathering around a campfire.

Did you know that an urban forest is a space that blends elements of both a natural forest and a city park? Unlike traditional forests, where the primary function is economic, urban forests are designed mainly for recreation. They typically include more pathways, benches, gazebos, artworks, and recreational sports facilities. In Ostrava, besides Plesná, other urban forests include Bělský les and Porubský les.

Current site photos

Site plan with examples of how individual elements could look

Church of the Holy Spirit Surroundings

INFO

The role of MAPPA:
Organizer of the landscape-urban design competition

Timeline:
Competition: 2022
Design work: 2023–2024
Transformation begins: 2025

Authors:
M2AU atelier

CURRENT STATE
At the heart of a modern neighbourhood in Ostrava-Jih, the public space around the Church of the Holy Spirit is framed by the Kotva Mall, a former hotel of architectural significance now serving as a lodging house, along with Výškovická Street and a nearby housing estate. Today, the space is primarily used for parking and lacks the visual appeal necessary to highlight its spiritual importance.

FUTURE
The goal of the project is to create a representative public space that reflects the significance of this highly regarded sacred building. The design will introduce a pleasant and pedestrian-friendly environment that seamlessly connects key surrounding areas and serves church visitors, Kotva Mall customers, and local residents alike.

The design features a large shallow pool, trees, and a space for occasional community events, such as markets and concerts. Parking capacity in the area will be preserved, with designated spaces planned between Volgogradská Preschool and Primary School, along Kotlářova Street. A children's playground and an outdoor parkour gym will be created between the church and Kotva Mall. Inspired by the geometric shapes of the modern church's windows and openings, the urban furniture will include benches, community table, and other elements providing a comfortable and inviting space for relaxation in the square.

Project visualization: view from Výškovická Street

Did you know that the design of the Church of the Holy Spirit was selected through an architectural competition organized by the Catholic Church? The winning design was created by architect Marek Štěpán. Construction took three years, from the site's blessing in 2004 to the church's consecration in 2007.

As part of the presentation of the competition results for the transformation of the area surrounding the church, we organized a guided walk through the site in March 2023.

Current site photo

Site plan – finished competition design

The design of the concrete urban furniture is inspired by the openings of the church

Slovenské národní povstání (SNP) Square

INFO

The role of MAPPA:
Assignment creator for the urban planning study

Timeline:
Urban planning study: 2023
Design work: 2025–2026

Authors:
MAAUS atelier

CURRENT STATE
SNP Square in the Ostrava-Jih district has long been a recognizable landmark for Ostrava residents, largely due to the Akord House of Culture, which serves as both its architectural and cultural centerpiece. As one of the three key public spaces in the city's most populated district, it holds significant urban planning value. However, its current state does not reflect its importance, as the space is often empty and primarily used for parking.

FUTURE
The project aims to revitalize the area and create an inviting space for gathering and leisure. The parking spaces, which currently occupy a significant portion of the square, will be relocated to the surrounding areas. Vehicle access to the square will be restricted to drop-offs and deliveries, with only short-term parking available in front of Akord. The surface of the square in the area surrounding Akord will gradually rise along the adjacent buildings. This elevation change will eliminate the problematic terraces in front of building entrances, ensuring accessibility. The resulting difference in height will allow for the construction of a semi-circular amphitheater-style seating area, designed not only for community events but also for everyday use.

In the section where Čujkovova Street runs through the square, dividing it into two parts, the road will be elevated. This change will help slow down traffic and make crossing safer for pedestrians moving between the two sections of the square. During public events, this section of the road can be temporarily closed, with traffic rerouted along the northern part of the square, allowing the space to function as a single, unified area.

As part of the park's renovation, new trees will be planted, and rain gardens will be introduced. The nearby market, which is still operating today, will be moved to the square. Reintroducing benches will help make the square more inviting and lively. In the future, new developments in the area could provide quality housing, essential services, and job opportunities.

Project visualization: view towards the Čujkovova Street

Project visualization: view towards the Akord House of Culture

Did you know that SNP Square and the surrounding housing estate are considered highly valuable from an urban planning perspective? During their construction, they underwent significant changes due to shifts in the political regime. As a result, the area showcases both a modernist approach to street planning and a socialist influence, particularly reflected in the socialist-realist design of SNP Square itself.

Current site photo

Site plan – proposed layout from the urban planning study

Former City Slaughterhouse Surroundings

INFO

The role of MAPPA:
Design coordinator and consultant, project supervisor

Timeline:
Concept study: 2020
Project documentation: 2021
Construction: 2022

Authors:
garden zoning: Tadeáš Goryczka, Robert Konieczny and KWK Promes

vegetation and permacultural elements: Denisa Tomášková

CURRENT STATE
The historic former slaughterhouse has been transformed into the PLATO contemporary art gallery following a renovation by Polish studio KWK Promes, led by architect Robert Konieczny. The surrounding space was revitalized based on a concept by the same studio, further refined with a permaculture design by Denisa Tomášková. The approach respects the site's organic layout, incorporates salvaged historical materials, and introduces new greenery to enrich the environment.

FUTURE
The public space design honors the layout of the historical slaughterhouse complex while adapting to the gallery's vision and functional needs. Sustainability and climate resilience are at the forefront, reflected in the integration of greenery, pathways, a water biotope, ornamental flower beds, and unique features like seating areas and a bird feeder. The design also preserves the traces of the former slaughterhouse complex, seamlessly blending the heritage site with its urban environment, while avoiding large asphalt surfaces and physical barriers.

Current site photo

The concept was developed by Denisa Tomášková, a permaculture designer and the author of the garden's planting scheme, and Edith Jeřábková, the author of the overall garden concept and its development, in collaboration with the PLATO team. Under their guidance, a 9,000 m² plot was transformed into what is known as the Garden of the Present. The garden embraces the practical principles of permaculture, integrating not only ecological considerations but also ethical values. The space is arranged meaningfully for both people and wildlife to create a thriving natural water biotope, which is not a common sight in an urban environment. The full impact of their work will become apparent in five to seven years, with continuous development shaping its future.

In partnership with the PLATO Gallery of Contemporary Art, we hosted a lecture by Robert Konieczny, the architect behind the revitalization proposal. The event took place in May 2022, marking the first public opening of the municipal slaughterhouse.

Current site photo

Did you know there's a reason the area around the municipal slaughterhouse isn't paved like squares or spaces in front of significant buildings? After discussions with the PLATO Gallery, it was decided to keep the surroundings close to nature, and unconventional, or even experimental.

Preliminary plan of the Garden of the Present (For more details, visit the PLATO website)

Černá Louka District

INFO

The role of MAPPA:
Spatial plannning study author

Timeline:
Spatial planning study: 2023
Design work: 2024–2025
Transformation begins: 2026

Authors:
MAPPA

CURRENT STATE
Adjacent to Ostrava's historic center and near the confluence of the Ostravice and Lučina rivers lies the former exhibition grounds of Černá Louka. It is a heterogeneous and chaotically arranged space, currently serving as a venue for exhibitions, cultural events, and a parking lot for visitors to the city center. In recent years, its surroundings have seen significant development, including the construction of the University of Ostrava's City Campus and the Nové Lauby residential complex. These new additions are bringing more residents and public space users into the city center, creating a strong motivation to revitalize Černá Louka and introduce new functions to the area.

The previous study, prepared by the former department of the Lead Architect, was based on a design by the Dutch studio Maxwan, which won a conceptual urban design competition in 2010. However, the original concept for the public space and planned developments were never realized, and the options and circumstances in the city have significantly changed. This has ultimately led to the decision to create a new spatial planning study.

FUTURE
For Černá Louka to evolve into a high-quality urban park and an inviting relaxation zone, it is essential to establish clear guidelines for its development. According to the new spatial planning study, the green core of Černá Louka is set to expand by a quarter. It will be framed by a ring of existing and new buildings, with ground floors dedicated to services, retail, and places to eat.

A promenade loop will be built around the green core, composed of existing and newly introduced greenery. At its center, a recreational meadow will feature solitary trees and tree clusters with a shrub layer, designed to enhance biodiversity within the public space. This area will provide a setting for relaxation as well as various activities. Two new playgrounds, one for younger children and another for older ones, will be built, along with a designated space for an urban market. Meanwhile, the community garden will be relocated to a new site. Both within and around Černá Louka, new public spaces will be developed, including a small museum square, each with a distinct composition and unique character.

Project visualization: bird's-eye view

Project visualization: view from the Ostravice River embankment

The public had the opportunity to explore visualizations of the revitalized Černá Louka on-site. In the summer of 2023, we presented our spatial planning study on outdoor displays and organized guided tours of the area.

Did you know that Černá Louka once had a 420-meter-long roller coaster? Built atop coal waste heaps in 1928, it was the first of its kind in Czechoslovakia. A ticket for the ride cost 2.40 Czech Crowns.

The concept for the future transformation of Černá Louka illustrates a ring of buildings, including existing ones (white), already planned developments (yellow), and those proposed by the study (red).

Exhibition

The topic of City as your living room was explored in the exhibition space Beyond the Window. From May 24 to November 20, 2024, visitors could learn about the principles of public space design and discover seven urban projects in Ostrava. As part of the exhibition, they could sit in a symbolic city living room, which also served as a photo booth. The experience was enhanced by an ambient audio track featuring city sounds and a collection of photographs showcasing well-designed public spaces.

Education

For elementary school students, we prepared an educational program based on the theme City as your living room. During the 90-minute session, children ventured into the city itself, experiencing firsthand how different elements shape their perception of public spaces. Back at MAPPA, they then put their observations into practice by designing their own ideal urban space.

GLOSSARY

architectural competition a process for obtaining an architectural design proposal for a new building, renovation, reconstruction, public space improvement, or a technical or transportation structure. Competitions focus on quality, ensuring transparency and objectivity. Proposals are assessed by an expert jury that selects the most suitable design. For this reason, significant public buildings should result from architectural competitions. Having multiple proposals to choose from ultimately leads to cost savings for the competition commissioner. In addition to architectural competitions, when the focus extends beyond individual buildings, it is also possible to organize urban, landscape, or combined design competitions.

atmosphere (place/location) the emotions and impressions a person experiences in a specific location, such as a square, street, or city. This perception is subjective, yet it significantly impacts both individual well-being and collective behavior. The atmosphere of a place is dynamic, shifting with the seasons, time of day, weather, or the presence and absence of people.

barriers (in the city) besides physical barriers such as water, railways, interchanges, or guardrails, there are also obstacles that prevent people from using the city comfortably. These include missing crosswalks, pathways that don't connect, or poorly lit areas.

biodiversity the variety of living organisms. Supporting biodiversity in cities can be achieved by planting trees, creating perennial flower beds, or incorporating wildflower patches along streets.

genius loci the spirit of a place. Its distinctive character and irreplicable energy. The term refers to the unique and enduring essence of a location, deeply connected to its history, culture, and identity.

climate change the primary cause of current climate change is the rise in greenhouse gas emissions due to human activity. This leads to warming, which causes glaciers to melt, sea levels to rise, long-term droughts, more frequent heat-waves, and other extreme weather conditions. In urban areas, the climate change manifests through extreme heats, negatively impacting the health of citizens and the urban greenery. Additionally, cities must contend with more frequent storms, hurricanes or flash-floods.

conceptual draft outlines potential changes within a given area, helping to shape a clear vision for future development. It defines possibilities for new buildings, public spaces, and broader territorial expansion. This framework may include background research, findings from public participation, alternative design solutions, and phased development strategies. Serving as a foundation for urban and spatial planning studies, investment plans, and regulatory guidelines, the conceptual framework provides a structured approach to guiding development within a specific area.

packed gravel a traditional surface that closely resembles natural terrain, composed of a mixture of compacted rocks and stones. It is commonly used in parks and, depending on the materials and construction methods, can vary in color and texture. This type of surface requires regular maintenance.

street furniture amenities that expand the functionality of public spaces for citizens. They ensure comfort, enhance the aesthetics of urban environments, and can improve safety. They include benches, trash bins, public drinking fountains, bollards, bike racks, play elements, and even grilling equipment.

blue-green infrastructure (BGI) a system for managing rainwater in urban areas that combines nature-based and technical solutions to reduce the negative effects of urbanization and climate change. By capturing and reusing rainwater, it supports urban greenery, improves the city's climate, and helps mitigate the impact of heavy rainfall and droughts.

park square a public space designed for lingering, predominantly shaded by tree canopies. Unlike a traditional square, it features more permeable surfaces that help enhance the city's microclimate by absorbing water runoff.

frontage a section of a building that directly connects to a public space, typically at ground level. However, a building's frontage can extend across multiple floors. In what is known as an active frontage, you'll often find shops and services that bring life to both the building and its surroundings.

permaculture an approach to agricultural management inspired by natural ecosystems, emphasizing sustainability, self-sufficiency, and harmony with nature. It promotes efficient use of natural resources, soil regeneration, energy conservation, and waste reduction. In urban environments, this concept is often seen in city and community gardens.

GLOSSARY

gathering place a place intended for lingering rather than just passing through. It provides opportunities for relaxation, play, creativity, seating, or strolls.

regulatory conditions the rules and requirements that define how buildings and land can be used and developed. They determine aspects such as where buildings can be constructed, their maximum height, and their design to ensure they blend harmoniously with the surrounding environment. The goal of regulatory conditions is to ensure that new developments contribute positively to the area and complement the existing built environment.

shared zone streets or squares where there is no traditional separation between pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Everyone moves through the space together, with a speed limit of 20 km/h. A key principle of shared zones is mutual respect, where users rely on non-verbal communication to move naturally.

underground utility networks the installation of utility networks within a dedicated tunnel or conduit, known as utility tunnels. This approach simplifies maintenance, minimizes the underground space used by the infrastructure, and preserves more room for tree roots to thrive.

passive frontage a building's wall that lacks windows, doors, or active functions. When situated along a public space, it contributes to a less dynamic environment by missing opportunities for shops, services, and pedestrian interaction.

social control the natural oversight of public spaces by residents and visitors, ensured by their presence.

spatial planning study a plan for a specific location that examines how the area can be utilized. It applies to both built environments and landscapes. This type of study is primarily used when general land-use regulations are not sufficient, and more detailed guidelines are required. It focuses on the spatial and functional organization of the land, establishing comprehensive conditions for its intended use. As a government-issued document, a land-use study must comply with legal requirements and be approved by the relevant authorities.

urban study similar to a spatial planning study, an urban study is a plan for the development of a specific location. However, unlike a spatial planning study, an urban study considers a much broader context and addresses more complex issues. It focuses on analyzing the spatial, functional, aesthetic, and social aspects of an area to propose the most optimal arrangement and use of space. Unlike a spatial planning study, an urban study is not bound by building regulations. Therefore, it serves as an expert assessment rather than a legally binding document. It can either precede a spatial planning study or complement it by providing additional context and details for urban planning solutions.

public spaces squares, streets, markets, walkways, green spaces, parks, and other publicly accessible areas, intended for use by all, regardless of ownership.

public space it consists of all accessible public spaces, including the interiors of public buildings. At the same time, the term also refers to intangible spaces encompassing relationships, ideas, stories, media, and more.

visual pollution visually unappealing objects and advertisements that clutter public spaces.

DOCUMENTS

Ostrava Cycling Transportation Plan a plan to enhance Ostrava's cycling infrastructure, making it a practical and safe mode of transportation throughout the city—not just for recreation. This document was authored by MAPPA in 2024.

Ostrava Green Infrastructure Plan a document aimed at ensuring the effective upkeep of Ostrava's green public spaces and suburban landscape while thoughtfully introducing new greenery where needed. Authored by MAPPA, it is currently in progress and expected to be completed in 2025.

Public Space Design Manual a manual for the city and its districts to help with selecting materials, designing layouts, and arranging amenities during the revitalization of streets and squares. Authored by MAPPA in 2023 for the 28. října – Opavská boulevard, its principles can be applied to most areas in Ostrava.

BGI Methodology approved by the city in 2023, this methodology for blue-green infrastructure was developed in partnership between Ostrava's Department of Strategic Planning and MAPPA. It also provides guidelines on integrating BGI elements into the city's investment projects.

Visual Pollution Regulations rules outlining outdoor advertising practices in Ostrava, effective from 1. 1. 2020.

CONTENTS

PRINCIPLES

Framing	**2**
Surface	**4**
Mobility	**6**
Water and Vegetation	**8**
Street Furniture	**10**
Atmosphere	**12**

LOCATIONS

Edvard Beneš Square	**16**
Milada Horáková Park	**20**
Plesná Recreational Area	**24**
Church of the Holy Spirit Surroundings	**28**
Slovenské národní povstání (SNP) Square	**32**
Former City Slaughterhouse Surroundings	**36**
Černá Louka District	**40**

FOR PUBLIC	**44**
GLOSSARY	**46**

Published by:
Ostrava Studio for Urban Planning
and Architecture (MAPPA)

Concept and preparation:
Vendula Benešová, Zuzana Kotyzová,
Lenka Hochová, Ondřej Vysloužil, Pavel Řihák

Graphic design and text layout:
Lenka Rymiecová

Translation:
Martin Mikuláš, Tomáš Zetek

Photos:
Roman Vlachynský, MAPPA archive,
Ostrava city authority

Print run:
100 pcs

Print:
MORAVAPRESS

©2025

ISBN 978-80-908946-8-6
9 788090 894686

„The good city has many similarities to a good party: the guests stay on because they are enjoying themselves.“

Jan Gehl
Danish architect
and urban planner

Ostrava Studio for Urban Planning and Architecture

Nádražní 942/17
702 00 Ostrava, Czech Republic
E info@mappaostrava.cz
W www.mappaostrava.cz

MAPPA Ostrava