

Public debate on transport developments

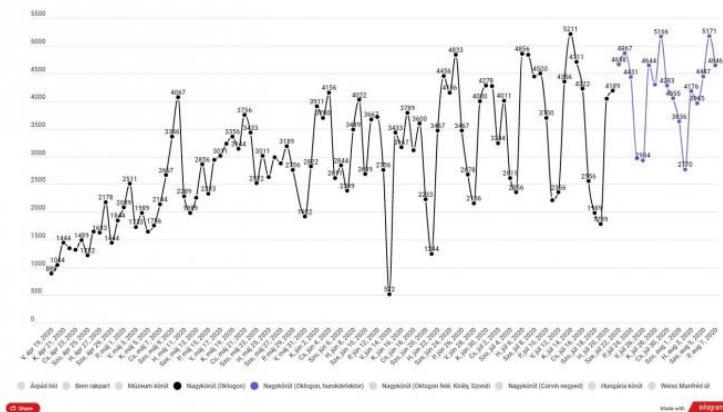
The last few months have brought very significant changes in our lives, and this has also brought changes in urban transport. Positive and negative effects on health, hygiene issues, and thus walking and cycling issues came to the fore. Experimental measures were taken, which were accompanied by lively interest and mixed echoes.

As part of the measures, bicycle lanes were established on Bartók Béla Avenue, Tétényi-, Üllői-, Villányi Avenue and Grand Boulevard (Nagykörút). **Since May, walkers and cyclists have recaptured the Pest Danube shore** between Margaret Bridge and Freedom Bridge on weekends. The weekend quay opening lasts until the end of September.



Danube riverbank at Parliament in May of 2020. Foto: Miklós Marton

The traffic changes generated strong debates. These affected almost exclusively the new Grand Boulevard bike lane, where cyclists have received one of the previous two-way lanes for about 3 kilometres. Many see bike lanes as unused, rarely see cyclists on them, and this is out of proportion to how significantly they hinder car traffic. Contrary to this, Centre for Budapest Transport (BKK) traffic count data shows that **bicycle traffic of Grand Boulevard increased six fold in three months**, thus becoming the second most popular cycling route in Budapest.



Bicycle traffic at Great Boulevard between 19.04 – 07.08 2020. Source: Centre for Budapest Transport https://kerekparsklub.hu/ibikebudapest/nagykorut_jovoje_eloadas_kerekparsav_forgalmiadatok

In early August, eighteen NGOs - working in urban development, community management, local affairs, transport and sustainable development - wrote a joint letter to the leaders of the capital and inner districts. They are asked to start a process involving the population and a wide range of stakeholders for the complex redesign of the Grand Boulevard; for a real urban promenade with bustling life, Pest's main street, an attractive destination, a community space for people living nearby. be. As they put it: "The Grand Boulevard should not be the axis for through traffic, but the main cultural, commercial and catering street of Pest; the green, shady promenade, the main meeting place of the area between Hungária Boulevard and Little Boulevard (Kiskörút). To this end, future traffic and public space design must guarantee the safety of road users, ensure a significant reduction in air and noise pollution and

promote the cultural, economic and environmental renewal of the area." **NGOs see the question of bicycle lane as part of a comprehensive joint urban development system.** (Source: Hungarian Cycling Club: initiative of 18 non-governmental organizations for the flourishing of the Grand Boulevard. August 14, 2020 <https://kereparosklub.hu/18-civil-szervezet-kezdemenyezese-a-nagykorut-felviragztatasaert>)



Source: Hungarian Cyclists' Club/ Facebook

Article from 22nd of August (Source: HVG: 56 percent of Budapest residents support the new bicycle lanes. 22 August, 2020. https://hvg.hu/itthon/20200822_A_budapestiek_55_szazaleka_tamogatja_az_uj_kerekparsavok) states that the **issue of the experimental bicycle lanes badly divides the society.** The writing cites a representative opinion poll which found that 32 percent would definitely support bicycle line perpetuation, while 23 percent would support it only if a majority of stakeholders supported it. So 55 percent of people tend to stay with painted bike lanes. In contrast, 17 percent finds it as too much of a problem for motorists, while 32 percent support the creation of separate lane for bikers.



Foto: https://hvg.hu/itthon/20200822_A_budapestiek_55_szazaleka_tamogatja_az_uj_kerekparsavokat

Centre for Budapest Transport (BKK) is waiting for opinions on this issue until the 31st of August (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdYsYi6815-7mg8svmZ7L1eaCdn1UxaDLUOMd260Yy3P0zYhw/viewform>). At the same time, it can be seen that **the issue is not purely a transport management question.** The way we drive, cycle, walk on the Grand Boulevard has a strong impact on retail, tourism and even property prices in the area. We hope for finding answers that are acceptable to everyone.



Foto: Bertalan Soós <http://enbudapestem.hu/2020/08/kozelebb-a-dunahoz-atalakulo-rakpart/>

Previous articles in the issue (in Hungarian language):

- Conference on Urban bicycling (Városi kerékpáros konferencia <https://eionet.kormany.hu/varosi-kerekparos-konferencia>)
- Livable streets and social capital (Élhető utcák és társadalmi tőke <https://eionet.kormany.hu/elheto-utcak-es-tarsadalmi-toke>)
- Eurovelo-, and eco-tourism developments in Austria (Eurovelo-, és ökoturizmus fejlesztések Ausztriában <https://eionet.kormany.hu/eurovelo-es-okoturizmus-fejlesztsek-ausztriaban>)
- Transition into sustainable transport - conference (Átmenet a fenntartható közlekedésbe – konferencia <https://eionet.kormany.hu/atmenet-a-fenntarthato-kozlekedesbe-konferencia>)
- Basic changes are needed for sustainable transport (Alapvető változások kellenek a közlekedés fenntarthatóságáért <https://eionet.kormany.hu/alapveto-valtozasok-kellenek-a-kozlekedes-fenntarthatosagaert>)
- Riding towards the green economy (Biciklivel a zöldgazdaság felé <https://eionet.kormany.hu/biciklivel-a-zoldgazdasag-fele>)