

Bratislava: European pioneer in fostering biodiversity

Despite the urban environment of the capital, the city and its surroundings offer good conditions for biodiversity (huge amounts of animal and plant species) within a structure of protected areas. A new concept intends to further strengthen the City's activities of improving Biodiversity in the next years (2019-2023).

Initial situation

- Environmental issues were not of interest; cut-off river sidearms, fortified river banks, unmanaged overgrown xerothermic habitats, unsecured key stakeholders, underground water pollution.
- Responsible local communities and municipalities, self government region and the state government were initially not really interested in environmental issues: they didn't identify them as important. Often, they were even taking active harmful steps, e.g. shore vegetation cutting, plantations of hybrid poplars, land use plan and further more.
- NGOs took an important role in first implementations of certain steps within local nature conservation activities. Eco activists were gradually successful in local elections which led to a change of local policies.

Objectives

- Climate change adaptation measures such as change of grass cutting regime, establishment of first city grazing herd, planting of 10 000 trees in the next 3 years, reconnection of river side arms, restoration of natural Danube river banks, water infiltration structures, model of underground water contamination, smart air quality monitoring, change of forest management, waste incinerator reconstruction to a non emission one, complete trees passportization of approximately 250 K trees, new manual for the creation of public spaces and regulation of parking in whole city, three new ecocentres, improvement of energy efficiency on 121 city buildings, improvement of the status of certain species (Otis tarda, Falco vespertinus, Haliaeetus albicilla, Nyctalus noctula, Apus apus)
- Circular economy-based City
- Which challenges are taken up and dealt with in the project? Lack of financial resources, insufficient time for implementation — election period

Implementation

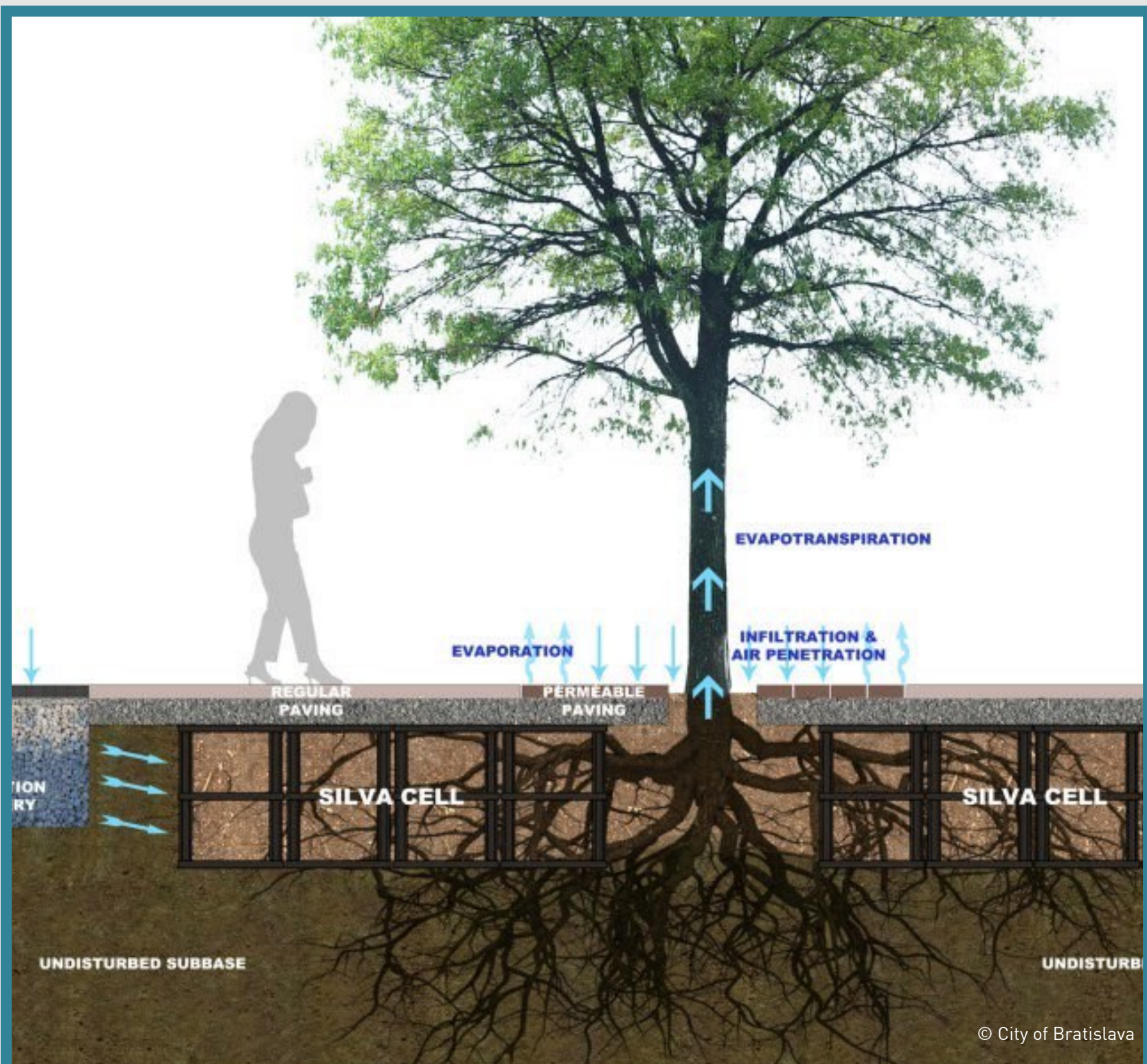
- Key elements of the concept: Integration of a climate change adaptation strategy in the law, biodiversity support in key development strategies
- Actors involved and working structure: Municipality of Bratislava, members of the local parliament, state forests, Bratislava City forests, state waterprise company, Ministry of environment, local NGOs, local communities
- Funding: City and state budget, individual external donors, EU project fundings
- Land use change preparation in regard to biodiversity improvement (e.g. only nesting site of Great Bustard in Slovakia)
- Timeframe 2019—2023

Achievements

- Two Danubian sidearms have been reconnected to the Danube
- First new ecocentre opened, two econcentres are just being formed
- City forests are out of any commercial logging from 2019, increased level of tree care in the city from 2019
- New city herd (sheep and goats) just founded for management of rare xerothermic biotops
- 'Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava' created
- New parking policy and Low Emission Zone (LEZ) have just been approved
- Glyphosate usage has been banned



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