



Breka: Green Square of Togetherness

A Participatory Transformation of a Post-Socialist Neighbourhood Space through Bauhaus4MED



**Interreg
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Foundation**



Regione Toscana



Project Overview

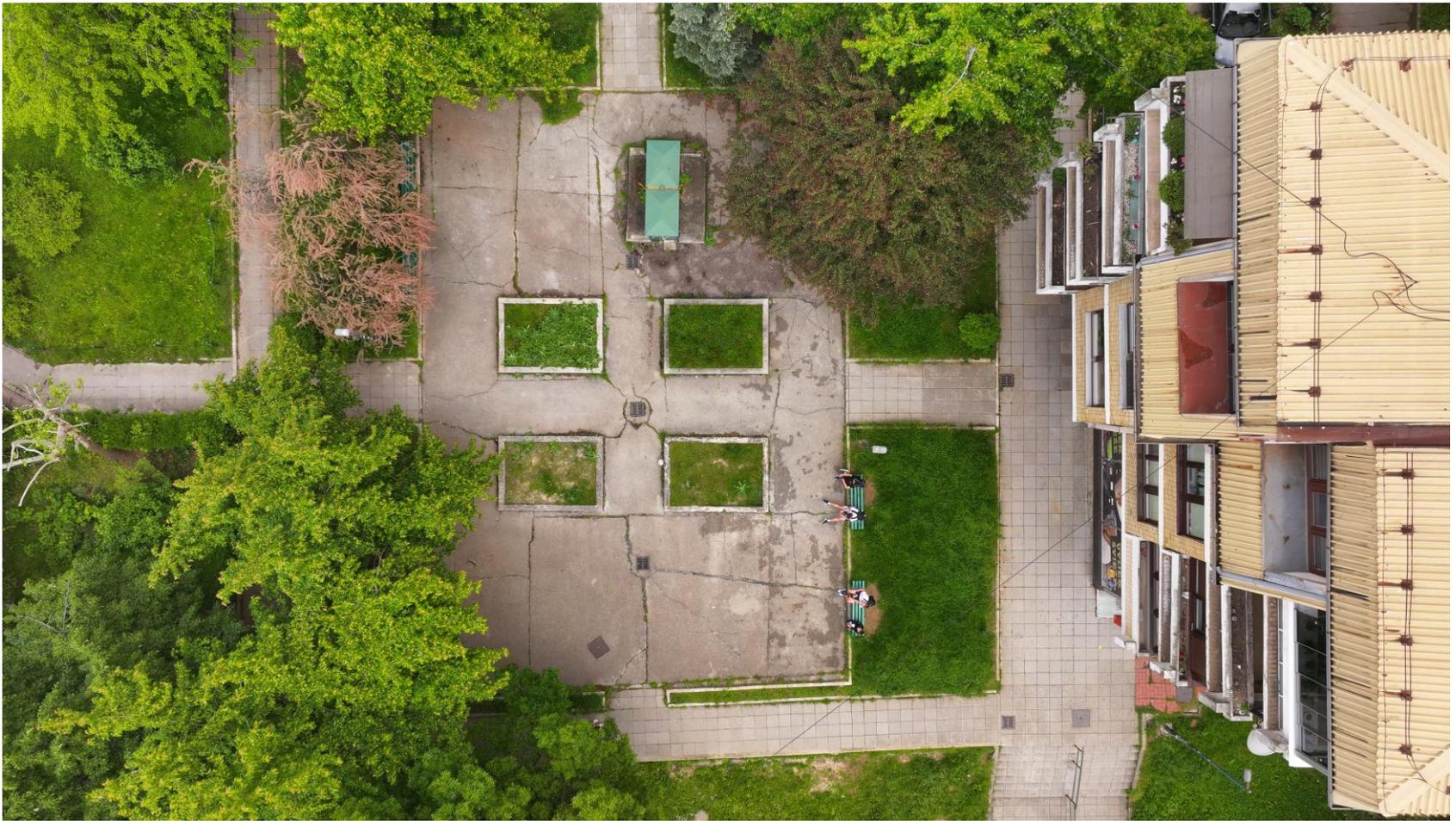
Breka: Green Square of Togetherness is a participatory urban regeneration pilot in Sarajevo that will transform a long-neglected green common space within a 1980s residential complex into a functional, inclusive, and climate-responsive public space.

Once designed as a shared social courtyard, the site gradually deteriorated over four decades, losing infrastructure, quality greenery, and community ownership.

Through the Decidim Sarajevo participative platform, public workshops, surveys, and a design competition combining expert jury (60%) and citizen voting (40%), the City of Sarajevo co-created a new vision for the space.

The selected project reimagines the area as a neighborhood “urban living room” with play areas, seating, a local square, and strong identity elements. Breka becomes a prototype for how public spaces within post-socialist housing complexes can be reactivated through design, participation, and New European Bauhaus values.

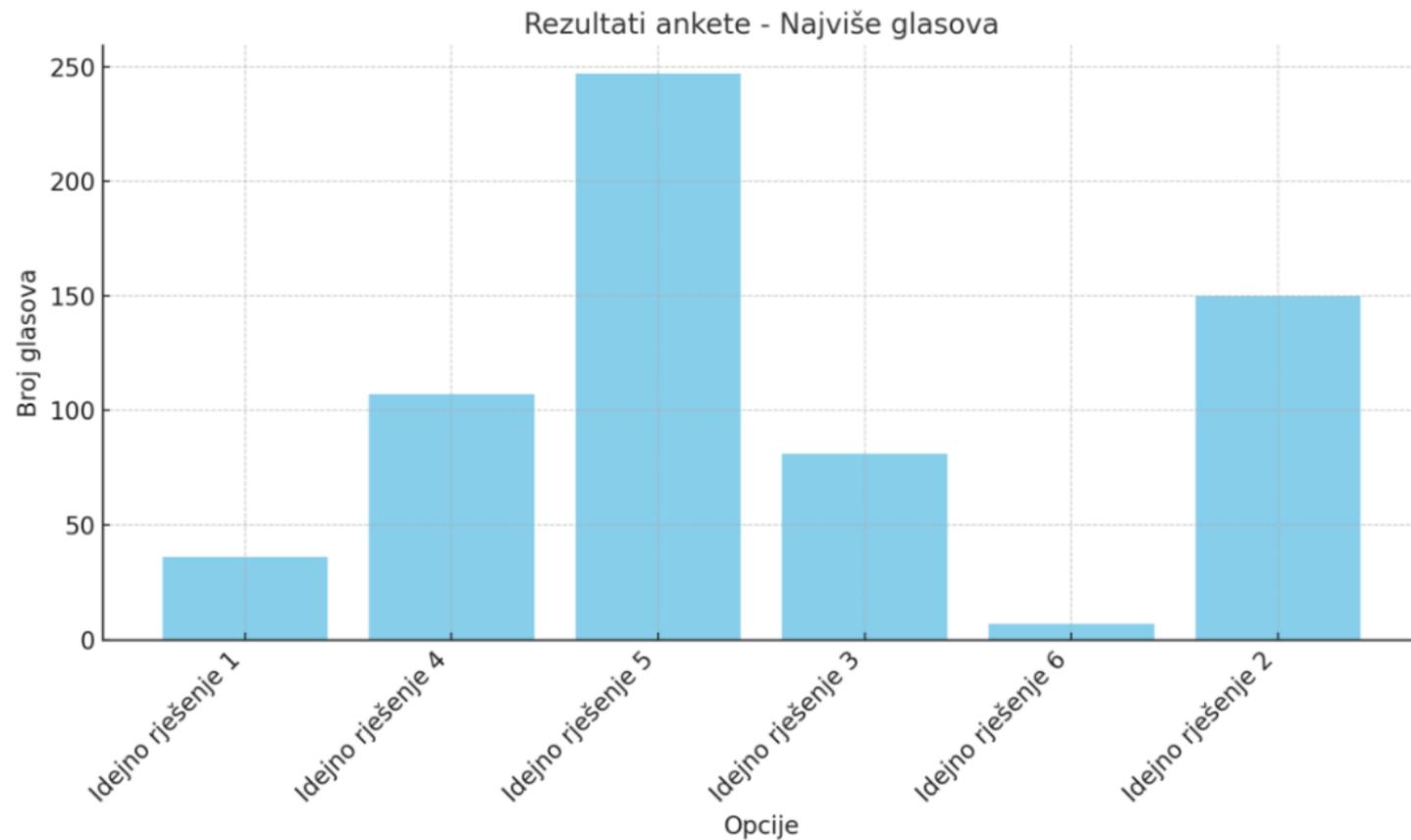




The Pilot Site, selected for its centrally located position within the neighbourhood, and current neglected state.



The participative process was initiated through a series of workshops on the pilot site, to understand the needs of the community and form the input for the Public Call. The process was facilitated by experts from the Association of Landscape Architects in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Online voting results:

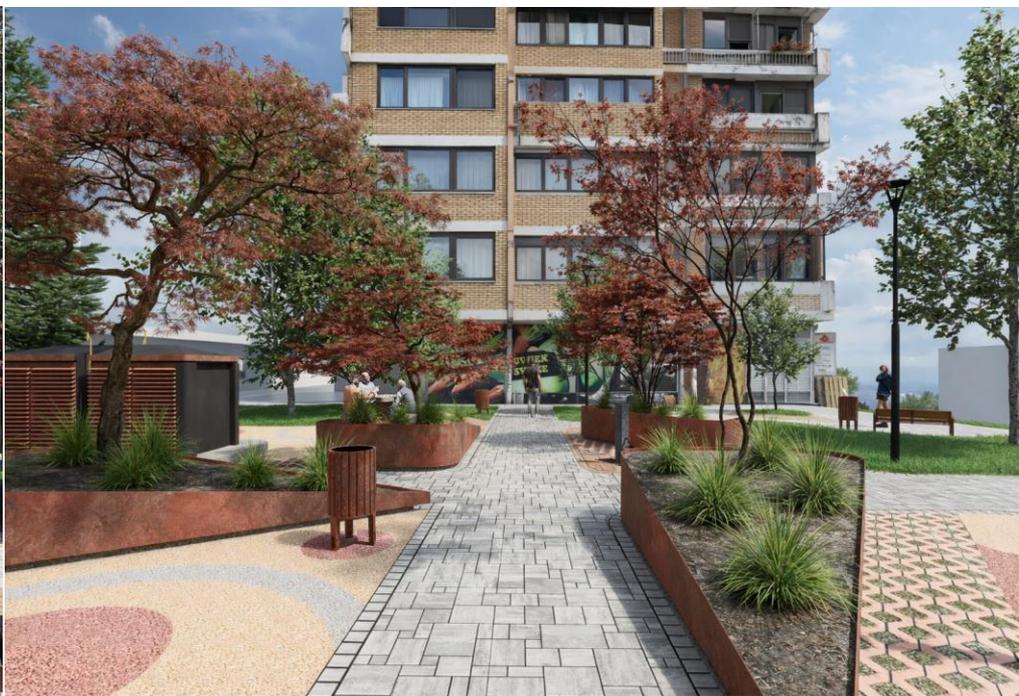
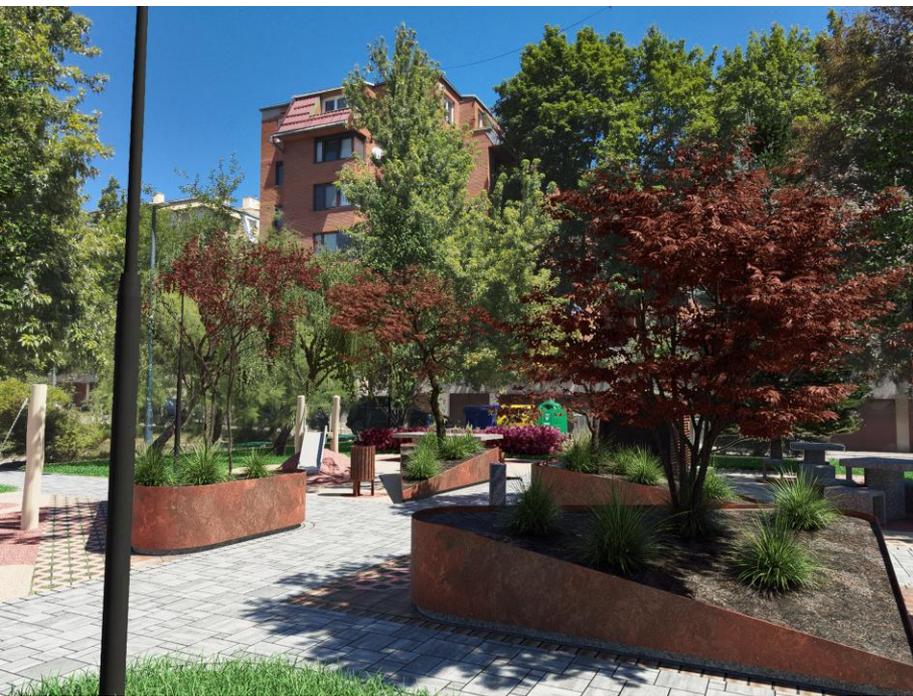


SKPV2025	IDEJNO RJEŠENJE SANACIJE I UREĐENJA PROSTORA U NASELJU BREKA	08.2025.	LEGENDA:		PRILOG: izometrija	STR. 10
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The winning proposal, selected by the expert jury and citizens, created by young architects Marko Vlasisavljević and Ammar Akšamija.



The final project, refined according to suggestions from the expert jury and in coordination with the Municipality and the utility providers, to ensure long term maintenance and sustainability of the space.



The final project, refined according to suggestions from the expert jury.



The final project, refined according to suggestions from the expert jury.



The final project, refined according to suggestions from the expert jury.



The final project, refined according to suggestions from the expert jury

Problem Statement

Residential complexes built during the socialist era were designed with shared green courtyards meant to foster collective life. Decades of limited maintenance and unclear ownership responsibilities led **to deterioration, underuse, and loss of community attachment.**

These places have become ugly, unsustainable, and unwelcoming. This has to be changed!

Breka reflects a wider territorial challenge: neglected urban common spaces, weak culture of shared responsibility, and fragmented governance between city, municipality, and utility services.

Turbulences

- Technical coordination with multiple utility providers
- Administrative procedures and procurement requirements
- Budget constraints
- Rebuilding trust and engagement among residents
- Balancing expert vision with community expectations

Bold Vision

- To transform a forgotten residential green space into a model for participatory urban regeneration of common spaces, where design, climate resilience, and community ownership reshape everyday neighbourhood life.
- Breka pilot aims to demonstrate that reclaiming shared spaces can rebuild social cohesion and inspire similar transformations across Sarajevo.

Where We are Now:

Estimated Duration from design process to implementation phase: **2024–2026**

Pilot status: Final design completed; public procurement for implementation underway, together with the Municipality (shared costs of construction). Construction to commence in late March/early April 2026.

How did we get here?

- Community workshops and surveys
- Digital participation via Decidim Sarajevo
- Public design competition
- Expert + citizen weighted voting (60/40)
- Final project development and multi-utility coordination



What if...

What if...

What if as a: resident / child / elderly neighbour / parent

I could: spend time in a safe, green, well-designed public space within my own neighbourhood

With: a co-created, accessible, climate-responsive public courtyard

So that: I feel ownership, connection, and pride in my community, and actively participate in maintaining and activating the space.



Who will benefit?

Who are we doing this for?

- **Local residents of Breka:** As a revitalised space for daily interaction, rest, play, and neighbourhood events.
- **Children and youth:** Safe play areas and gathering spaces within walking distance of home.
- **Elderly residents:** Accessible seating, chess area, shaded rest zones.
- **Municipality and City:** A scalable regeneration model for similar housing complexes.
- **Local businesses and service providers:** Increased footfall and community activity.
- **Engagement demonstrated through:** Public workshops, Decidim voting records, design competition participation, stakeholder meetings, and community centre consultations.

Key Learnings

What to remember for the next time?

- Residents engage strongly when they see **transparent decision-making**.
- **Digital tools** combined with physical workshops increase participation.
- Clear identity elements strengthen **emotional attachment**.
- **Coordination of utility providers** must begin early in the process.
- Small-scale pilots can **catalyze wider neighborhood transformation**.

NEB Values reflected in Breka

BEAUTIFUL

Ambition: To Restore Dignity To Everyday Spaces

Achieved through coherent material palette, dynamic spatial geometry, seasonal planting, and a strong identity feature that transforms a neglected courtyard into a recognizable public landmark.

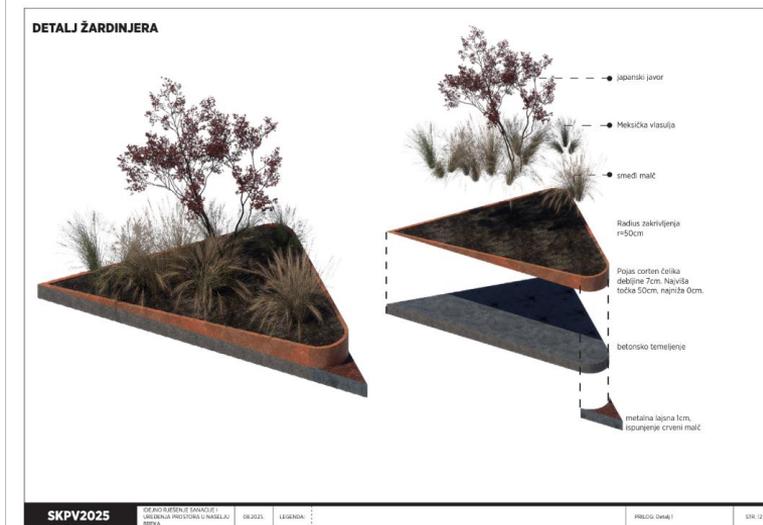


NEB Values reflected in Breka

SUSTAINABLE

Ambition: To Regenerate Urban Common Spaces Responsibly

Achieved through the use of durable local materials, preservation of existing mature trees, introduction of permeable surfaces, climate-resilient planting, and appropriate LED lighting. Reduced asphalt, improved microclimate, and long-term maintenance planning.



NEB Values reflected in Breka

TOGETHER

Ambition: To Rebuild Culture of Ownership and Responsibility

Implemented through participatory design, citizen voting, inclusive spatial design, accessible paths, and continuous engagement with neighbourhood community.



NEB Working Principles applied in Breka

Participatory Process ***Ambition: to Co-Decide***

Accomplished via Decidim platform, community workshops, public voting system (60% expert / 40% citizen), and transparent communication.

Multi-Level Engagement ***Ambition: to Coordinate across Governance***

City of Sarajevo (lead), Municipality of Centar, utility companies, architects, local community centre, and residents.

Transdisciplinary Approach ***Ambition: to Integrate Expertise***

Architecture, landscape design, participatory governance, climate adaptation, public utilities coordination, and community development combined in one pilot.

Common Themes

- Post-socialist housing common spaces deterioration
- Climate adaptation in Mediterranean urban areas
- Rebuilding culture of shared responsibility
- Participatory governance innovation
- Urban identity and social cohesion



Lessons Learned



- Reclaiming physical space requires reclaiming trust.
- **What surprised us:** Strong resident willingness to engage when given real decision-making power.
- **Obstacles:** Administrative complexity and inter-institutional coordination.
- **Resolution:** Clear leadership by the City and structured stakeholder meetings.

Sharing for the Future

B4M Toolbox

Breka offers a replicable model for:

- Participatory regeneration of common public spaces.
- Combining digital democracy with spatial design.
- Small-scale urban interventions with high social impact.
- Rebuilding ownership culture in post-socialist contexts.
- It contributes to the Bauhaus4MED Toolbox as a governance-driven urban space pilot demonstrating how co-creation can catalyze neighborhood transformation.



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Grad Sarajevo
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