

# Survey on Residents' Needs in the Pilot Urban Regeneration Zone

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## Analysis

### #1 Introduction

The survey questionnaire was disseminated among the residents of the urban regeneration pilot area during the field work undertaken in cooperation between CAC and the pilot municipality. Some twenty four condominium buildings were visited and the package of survey questionnaire and project newsletter was distributed among the residents. The survey questionnaire was also published on the web-site of CAC.

The filled in survey questionnaire were received within 4 weeks by the end of March '09.

The survey analysis is based on the replies of 20% of the residents in the pilot UR zone. The survey analysis is supported by additional empirical information provided by the pilot municipality.

### #2 Residents' Profile

The respondents' profile shows that the most active in participating in the survey are the elderly people (80%) with 1-2 member/s households and without children in the household at the moment of the survey. Most of respondents live for more than 40 years in the UR pilot zone (see #7).

### #3 Typology of built environment

The UR pilot zone consists of two main building types – limited number of high rise large surface shuttering system condominiums and predominant share of four-floor monolithic construction condominiums. According to the respondents (80%) the common parts of the buildings are in a relatively good condition. However, the respondents replied that some partial or major repairs are needed:

Type of repairs needed	% of respondents*
Roof insulations	60%
Staircases	40%
Other common parts	20%

\* The sum is more than 100% because the respondents selected more than one of the provided options in the questionnaire

According to 60% of respondents the maintenance of common parts is satisfactory and if any problems they are mainly due to the lack of funds (40%) and lack of maintenance culture (20%). In the same time, the survey revealed that there is no in any of the condominiums a properly established maintenance fund but simple collection of installments for the everyday maintenance.

### #4 Profile of living environment

The UR pilot zone is predominantly residential and is located on the edge of Oborishte District Municipality bordering with one of the main city boulevards that is a source of permanent noise and pollution. This fact was raised in the survey as a problem for the quality of the living environment in the neighborhood by 20% of respondents. They claimed for the provision of shrubby vegetation as a noise protection tool for the upgrading of the existing living environment in the area.

Only 40% of respondents consider the area maintenance as satisfactory. The respondents mentioned as insufficient the playgrounds for children (60%), the sport facilities (100%), the parking place (80%), and the everyday services (60%). According to all respondents there is a need for repairs and

replacements of existing amenities. Additionally, all respondents took the opportunity to describe the needed measures for upgrading the existing living environment:

Type of repairs/ replacements needed	% of respondents*
Disappearing children playgrounds	40%
Damaged pavements	40%
Missing sport facilities	20%
Missing small gardens	20%
Missing equipment for public cleanness	20%
Damaged street surfaces	20%
Insufficient parking places	20%

\* The sum is more than 100% because the respondents selected more than one of the provided options in the questionnaire

According to respondents the main reasons for the insufficient maintenance of the area are the lack of maintenance culture (80%), the lack of municipal attention (60%) and the lack of public funds (20%).

## #5 Level of organization at building and community level

The survey analysis shows that only 20% of the respondents replied that there is an elected chairman/chairwoman of their condominium buildings. In fact, according to the preliminary information from the pilot municipality this percentage is higher. Possible explanation of this fact is the formality and the lack of proper functioning of this organizational form at building level. In fact, no one of the elected chairmen/chairwomen of condominium buildings in the pilot UR area took place in the survey in providing feedback through the questionnaire.

Still, the individualistic approach is prevailing. In the same time, the residents know their neighbors from the same staircase (100%) and the same building (40%). The respondents replied that common activities are organized among neighbors only in case of urgent problems (100%) and never as part of existing tradition. In fact, no organization exists at neighborhood level in order to represent and protect common needs and interests. The above conclusions are supplementary supported by the analysis of the answers of the last question regarding the readiness of residents to participate in the preparation of a plan for improving the living environment of the UR pilot zone:

Type of resident' participation	% of respondents*
Public discussions	80%
Trainings	20%
Residents' platform	40%

\* The sum is more than 100% because the respondents selected more than one of the provided options in the questionnaire

## #6 Communication with district municipality

40% of the respondents confirmed that they have regular contacts with Oborishte district municipality:

Reason for regular communication with district municipality	% of respondents*
To obtain information about municipal plans	40%
To get the municipal support in regards to their interests	40%
Other reasons	20%

\* The sum is different than the reported percentage of positive answers because the respondents selected more than one of the provided options in the questionnaire

## #7 Assessment of residents' needs

According to the survey results 100% of respondents confirmed that they like living in the area by choosing 'yes' from the four scaled range of possible answers.

The Pilot Municipality has provided the project team with a copy of an official complain addressed to the Mayor of Oborishte District expressing the residents' objection to the municipal plans to build a small sport playground for street ball on the municipal land within the pilot urban regeneration area. The petition from 1 April 2008 is signed by 63 residents from the residential buildings situated on Cherkovna Street No. No. 89 & 93 and on Kalimantzi Street No. 2. However, one year later when the survey questionnaire was disseminated among all residents from the pilot UR area no one of those residents did not answer and send a feedback in order to show the actual needs for regeneration of the area. This gap of communication is to be filled in via mediation but first, the proactive real participation of residents in the process of discussing and planning is to be stimulated in order to avoid the easy and simple objection of municipal plans afterwards.

In the same time, the Pilot Municipality has provided empirical data about the number of children in the pilot UR zone:

Street	No.	Age 12-18		Age 3-12		Age < 3		Total
		boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	
Zemen	1-3	3	5	7		3		18
Sitniakovo	50-58	4	3	4	3	1		15
Cherkovna	> 75	11	11	20	17	4	1	64
Kalimantzi	2-7-9	2	2		1			5
Popova shapka	1, 5, 2-10	3	3	1	1			8
Sultan tepe	10-22, 1-23	8	7	4	9			28
<b>Total</b>	<b>Quart. 164-166</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>138</b>

The above empirical data shows that the main almost equal as number age groups of children are the 3-12 years old and the teenagers 12-18 years old. There are two playgrounds for children and no recreation/ sport facility for teenagers except the school sport playground situated at 200 meters from the UR pilot zone.

The data about the number of children is in conformity with the results of the survey that the population of the UR pilot zone is predominantly aging.

Period of living in the area	5-10 years	>20 years	>40 years	>60 years
% of the respondents	20%	20%	40 %	20%

The assessment of residents' needs reveals the following:

Type of needed new premises	% of respondents*
Recreation facilities	60%
Playgrounds for children	60%
Sport facilities	80%
Parking facilities	80%
Upgrading of places for garbage collection	80%
Small facilities for everyday services	40%
Safety facilities	40%
Places for elderly to meet	40%
Public green spaces	80%

\* The sum is more than 100% because the respondents selected more than one of the options provided in the questionnaire

The provision of sport facilities is among the top priorities of residents' needs. This conclusion seems to be in contradiction with the official objection of the residents in three condominium buildings in regard to the municipal plans. However, it is important to mention that these are the residents of the buildings that are in the nearest proximity to the municipal land parcel that was dedicated to this purpose one year ago. In the same time, no one participant from those buildings was registered in the conducted survey.