For households that moved, the main problems come a few years after they sold their original flat. When the money from the sale runs out, they again face the same financial problems and at the same time are living in worse locations with a much lower market price for their property. What they need is old building in a lively district, which some among them can help make livelier.

New residential buildings are not an unadulterated good for the city since they bring many disadvantages. The value placed on various advantages, or the penalties accruing from certain disadvantages, are given different weights by different people. Some people prefer more space for the money or equal space for less money to apartments in new houses offered by developers. Some people would rather pay for improvements in their living conditions by selecting which improvements are most important to them, instead of being forced to buy a variety of improvements which all cost a lot of money.

High price housing developments cause social segregation and gentrification when the public sector does not intervene in housing issues. It is regrettable that in such a situation there is no governmental policy on housing and lower income groups are not provided financial mechanisms to be able to improve housing conditions. The housing sector should be a higher political priority. A national housing policy needs to be elaborated and the concept of social housing should be introduced.

About the Author:
Irakli Zhvania is an architect and urban manager in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Public Green Space in Armenian Cities: A Legal Analysis

By Arsen Karapetyan and Anush Khachatryan, Yerevan

Abstract
This article examines the state of urban green spaces in Armenia. Overall, the amount of land devoted to green space is shrinking as a result of new construction. Armenia’s existing legislation dealing with this issue is inadequate and should be updated to encourage more inventories of existing areas, monitoring of development, and participation, particularly by local government officials and the public.

Overview
Armenia’s population is distributed unevenly across its 49 cities, as Table 1 on p. 8–10 shows. At one extreme is the small town of Dastakert with 300 people; at the other is the capital Yerevan, with 1.11 million people. The level of economic activity also varies significantly across cities. Some urban areas have a high level of economic activity, which requires new construction that inevitably fills up increasingly scarce urban land plots.

The price of urban land is rising from year to year in Armenia, making the land currently devoted to green space particularly valuable. Since this green space is considered communal property, the municipalities control it and they are willing to issue construction licenses to build on this space. Typically, the municipalities permit construction of temporary buildings in these areas, which in practice become permanent structures. Ultimately, of course, it does not matter, whether the building is temporary or permanent—the green space is destroyed once the construction takes place. The most important losses of green space are taking place in the central parts of cities as a result of in-fill construction.

The existing legal framework in Armenia regulating procedures and methodologies for maintaining green space does not meet the minimal requirements for preserving these sites. Similarly, the implementation of measures to compensate for damage to green space is inadequate.

Since the quantity of green space is constantly shrinking in Armenian cities, the situation is critical. In many cities (Yerevan, Gjumri, Vanadzor, Hrazdan, Sevan, etc.), park lands and squares are being converted to other uses. As a result, the state of the environment and the quality of life for townspeople is deteriorating.

Statistical Analysis
To develop a systematic picture of the situation, we examined the existing statistical data on Armenia’s green
The following legal acts are important for policy-making in this area:

- the Republic of Armenia Law "On flora",
- the Land Code of the Republic of Armenia,
- the Republic of Armenia Criminal code,
- the Republic of Armenia Law "On administrative offenses",
- and Governmental decree #1318-N "On the statement of the law and order for technical requirements for the sizes of green zones in urban areas", issued October 30, 2008.

Our analysis of these texts shows that there are a variety of terminological errors, contradictions among points in the different laws, discrepancies in the formulations, and loopholes that allow local governments to use the land at their own discretion.

To address the problem of preserving the green space within Armenia’s cities, it is necessary to:

- adopt a republican law "On green spaces in cities and settlements";
- expand the powers of the regional department state inspectors of the Ministry of Nature Protection so that they can function like an ecological police;
- conduct an inventory of green spaces among the communities of the republic, to make a catalogue of each tree, bush, and lawn with data about their specific features, measurements, and conditions, including photos;
- specify the borders of green spaces, and map them;
- conduct regular monitoring of the green spaces;
- establish adequate penalties for damage caused by local authorities, citizens and legal bodies to urban green spaces, taking into account the categories of green spaces to which the damage has been done;
- conduct an economic assessment of the land areas occupied by green spaces to establish rents and land taxes for using the territories;
- involve the population by establishing community gardens, and in the maintenance and protection of green plantings in yards;
- support social movements that work to protect urban green spaces;
- provide the public easy access to information concerning the expenses required for carrying out environmental activities and community gardening programs at various levels;
- discuss with local governmental bodies, the population, business structures, and experts gardening questions, such as reconstruction, uprooting, restoration;
- create midterm and long-term communal target programs on the preservation and development of territories protecting planted trees and shrubs;
- form an ecological fund regulating financial streams in this sphere, which will collect receipts from fees for removing plantings, penalties (transferred by the state), voluntary payments and so on. These funds will be used for other expenses except gardening;
- exert public control over the creation of green zones, including use of a hot line to ensure quick reaction
to legislative infringements, using the “Aarhus centers” as a model;

• create public precedents for the full implementation of legal mechanisms through the mass-media, public hearings, and different types of information centers and other actions;

• print and disseminate a management guide for townspeople on “How to protect green spaces”;

• and demand that deputies in the National Assembly raise the question of protecting urban green spaces.

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Legal Texts