



group play on a swing

Back in 2007, the area was first in a row to be cleared of illegal gardening in the Municipality of Ljubljana to demonstrate new urban development and management policy. The clearing of gardening beds and sheds was announced and executed in a close cooperation between mayor's office, municipal officials and public companies.

This most delicate action was carried out with a lot of concern for the gardeners and the gardening in Municipality as well as for the area future development. The gardeners were able to get explanations from the mayor on site, the vice mayor gathered a professional team on site to mark all the existing trees to be left on a site, and a new gardening policy was publicly announced. Rehabilitation was discussed and planned along with field work and the findings led working team to an idea of minimal intervention. After clearing the area of gardens, only a flowering grass mix was sown in the first season.

After the area was open to public use, process of programming and designing started. The nearby local communities were consulted about their needs and they needed a new Public Park with a playground. The area was to become a public park in a new master plan and a road that was cutting the area was to be omitted from the plan. New park was to be named Šmartinski Park after a road nearby.

Due to its vast dimension (nearly 13 ha) and the fact that it was a novelty, the transformation of the area into a park was to be gradual, starting the process in 2007, step by step reaching its climax in 2015 by building one of the city's biggest and most exciting playgrounds. In the first phase of park development only two basic walk-through paths were built, the terrain was modulated and new large trees were planted while remnants of old fruit trees were left on site. The playground was established in 2015 upon many of its user's requests.

The initial playground design idea was to provide a play area for all, no matter the age, physical or mental ability. The playground location was allocated carefully, with a proper relation to the cemetery, behind a gas station and out of impacts of main road and power lines. The design team's previous experiences with school and nursery kids participating in various play projects were used as most valuable baseline for a new design concept.



parents relaxing while children are playing



channeling water



aerial view of west part of playground