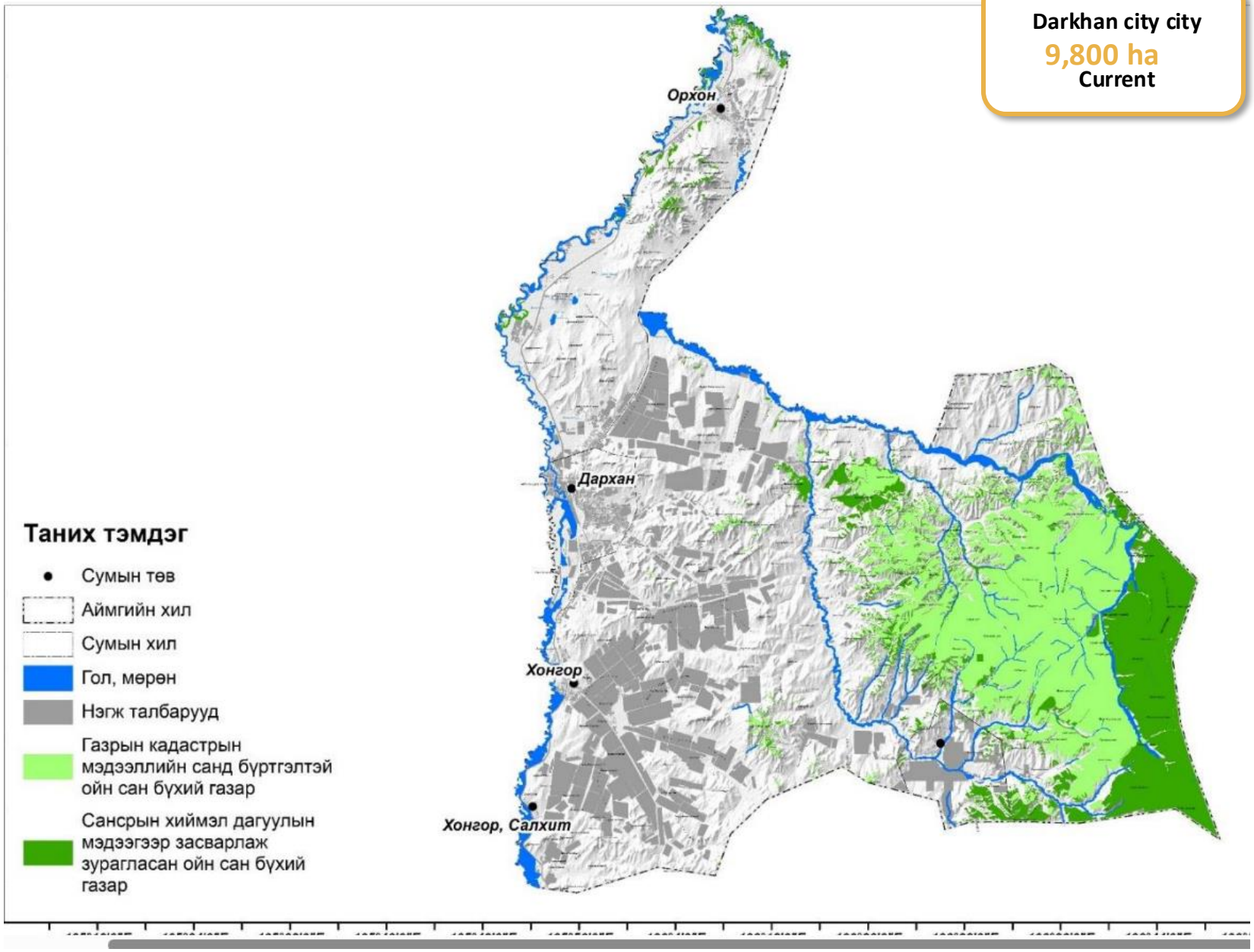
MONGOLIA: DARKHAN CITY

Darkhan city city
9,800 ha
Current



Darkhan City Land and Population Overview

•**Establishment**: Darkhan was founded in 1961 as a construction materials production center.

•**Population**: The city has about **92413 residents**.

•**Size and Location**: Darkhan is the second largest city in Mongolia, located **240 km north of Ulaanbaatar**. It is a central hub for roads and railways in the Selenge region.

•**Environment and Activities**:
Visitors enjoy fresh air, blue skies, a peaceful atmosphere, and plenty of open space for outdoor activities like hunting and fishing.

•**Nearby Attractions**:

- **Zulzagiin Gol**: A beautiful natural area 30 km east of Darkhan.
- **Amarbayasgalant Khiid**: One of Mongolia's largest and most important monasteries, about a 3-hour drive to the west.

SLIDE 1: KEY CHALLENGES

CITY: Darkhan · COUNTRY: Mongolia — a northern industrial and agricultural city with the Kharaa River.

- **Disconnected green–blue assets.** Parks, the Kharaa River, the green belt and cropland are run project-by-project, not as a network.
- **A degraded, flood-prone Kharaa corridor.** The city's best nature-tourism asset — neither restored nor leveraged.
- **GI as amenity, not infrastructure.** No framework ties green–blue assets across scales or into the budget cycle.

CONVENTIONAL (GREY) — planned & budgeted

Kharaa River — 6.4 km channel rehab	**$2.1 M**
31st district — flood dyke & channel	**$0.5 M**
Citywide — storm / road drainage	**$0.5 M**

≈ US$3.1 M (MNT 10.8 bn) · 100% state

2026–30 Guideline adds: more flood-protection structures, hazard mapping, early warning (no budget)

Grey infrastructure only · dykes, channels, drains

GICM GREEN OPPORTUNITY — add a green layer

Restore Kharaa riparian floodplain — 30 → 200 ha

Green corridors, wetlands, permeable surfaces

Flood-risk mapping built into the city master plan

Finance: green–grey hybrid · green bonds / PPP

Co-benefits: nature tourism · biodiversity · livability — at lower long-term cost

Green + grey hybrid · multiplies the benefits

SLIDE 2: KEY TAKEAWAY FROM THE ACADEMY

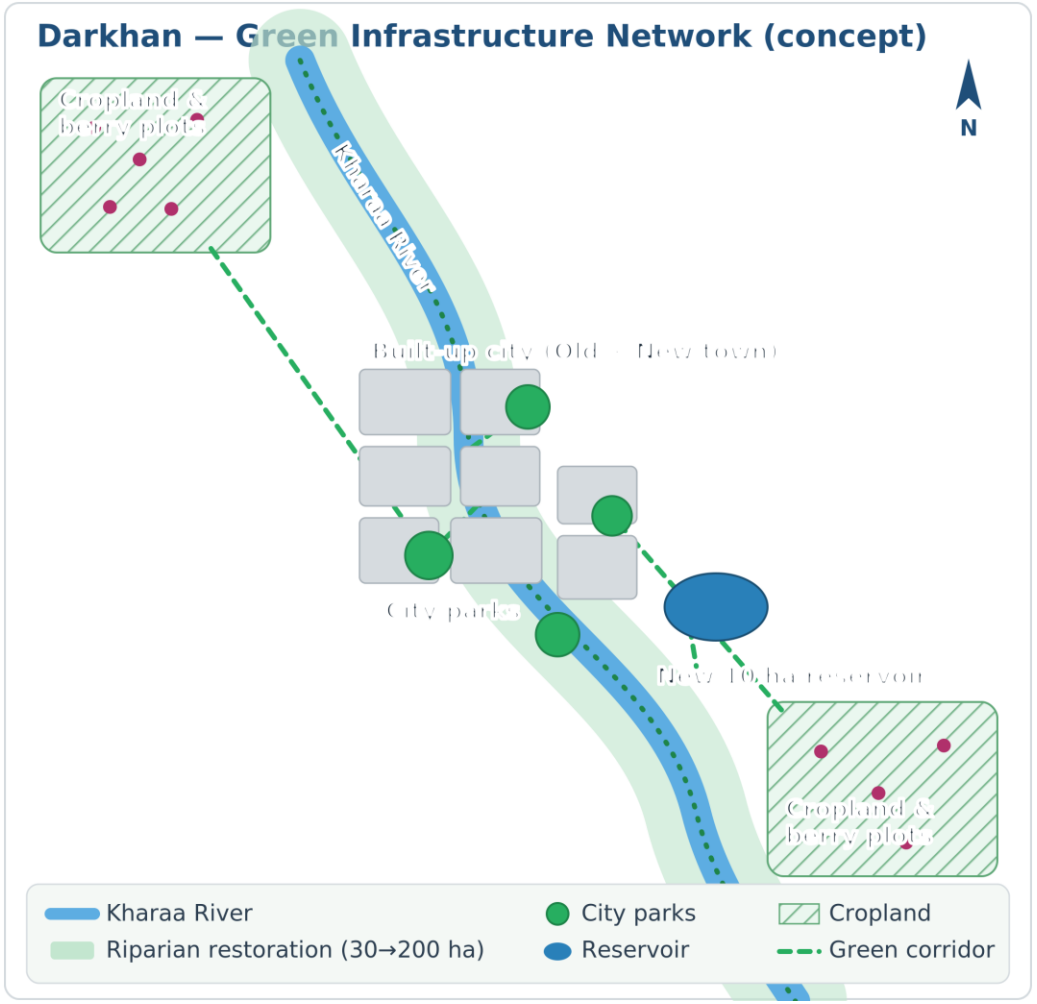
CITY: Darkhan · COUNTRY: Mongolia — a major northern industrial and agricultural city on the Kharaa River, and a GEF-8 Green Cities target city.

- **GPSC GI Network Planning Handbook (Day 1).** Plan green (parks, rivers), blue (water) and orange (active mobility) as ONE connected system, scaled from neighborhood to region — with financing (green bonds, stormwater fees, land-value capture) and O&M costs built in from the start.
- **Curitiba — river-basin park (Day 1).** Flood-prone riverbanks became the city's flagship green corridor: residents kept in place, 500,000 trees in three years, and a dedicated municipal unit to plan and maintain green works. A direct model for the Kharaa River.
- **Chengdu greenway + UNESCO & Singapore (Day 2).** A connected greenway funds its own upkeep through tourism, culture and sport, and restoring degraded or industrial land creates nature-tourism draws — a blueprint for linking Darkhan's corridor to tourism. (maraphon, CSR,)
- **Application to Darkhan.** Use the Handbook to plan a Kharaa-anchored GI network, Curitiba's institutional model to deliver it, and Chengdu/Singapore's approach to finance it through nature tourism

SLIDE 3: PRIORITY ACTIONS

Three priority actions Darkhan will pursue following the Academy:

- **1 · Darkhan Green City Action Plan + GI Network Map (Year 1–2).** Apply the GPSC GI Handbook to map green–blue–orange assets and embed a connected GI network into the updated Darkhan spatial and land-use plan and City Development Plan, piloting the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) mechanism.
- **2 · Restore the Kharaa River corridor as the network spine (Year 1–3).** Restore 30 ha of riparian zone (scaling toward 200 ha), integrate flood-risk management into the master plan, and connect parks and a new 10 ha reservoir via green corridors and active-mobility links — designed as a nature-tourism and recreation greenway.
- **3 · Build institutions and financing to sustain it (Year 1–2, ongoing).** Stand up an Integrated Urban Development Steering Committee, a Green Citizen Advisory Board and a dedicated green-space unit (Curitiba model); pilot green-city tax reform, municipal green-bond readiness and PPPs (parks, berry plantations) to fund GI capital and O&M.



SLIDE 4: IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT NEED

- **Technical support.** GPSC / World Bank guidance to apply the GI Network Planning Handbook to Darkhan, plus peer exchange with Curitiba, Chengdu, Guangzhou and Singapore on river corridors, greenway O&M financing and nature-tourism design.
- **Financing & coordination.** Green-city tax reform and municipal green-bond readiness; blended GEF grant and co-financing; cross-sectoral coordination through the Steering Committee; capacity building for municipal staff on GI planning, budgeting and O&M.
- **Knowledge & positioning.** A Darkhan Green City Knowledge Hub linked to the GPSC peer-learning network — positioning Darkhan as a cold-climate, secondary-city anchor for green infrastructure and nature tourism.
- **4. Ulaanbaatar's winter traffic congestion**—driven by parents transporting children—drops by 30–40% during school breaks, highlighting the need to study green corridors' potential to reduce congestion, air pollution, and associated health costs.