

Sheet XLVI: Spatial development framework for the city of Łódź, part 1. General principles of urban space engineering and use

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Introduction. The spatial management system in Poland – pursuant to the spatial management law of 7 July, 1994 and in line with the principle of sovereignty of local and regional governments – separates the responsibilities of the state and local administrations and cancels the hierarchical nature of the planning process. The state’s spatial policy is executed by having local plans reflect the central government’s responsibilities being part of the programmes that serve to attain translocal public purposes, which programmes are determined against *concept proposals concerning the spatial policy of the state and regional spatial development plans*. The binding documents directly related to the state’s spatial policy implementation are *registers of the central government’s responsibilities*.

The local legal acts, commonly in place on borough (gmina) territories and serving to attain the spatial policy’s objectives, are to be the *local development plans*, adopted under the Spatial Development Law of 7 July, 1994. The validity of such local spatial development plans adopted pursuant to the Spatial Development Law of 12 July, 1984 is subject to time limits. With a view to defining their own spatial development policies, boroughs are obligated to execute *spatial development frameworks*. These frameworks are subject to arrangements with state administration bodies, however, they do not cause any institutional obligations, nor do they constitute part of the local laws and regulations. The frameworks, considered to be the initial stage of the planning process, in particular serve to estimate the borough’s strengths and weaknesses, define the ongoing internal processes, their dynamics and tendencies, and to accurately determine the purposes and principles of the local spatial development policy. *Local spatial development frameworks*, with their functions of „internal management laws” are, therefore, the essential and comprehensive thematic bases for local planning. The exceptional circumstances – unique political transformations – caused the *Framework* to become both a summary of the consequences resulting from the centrally planned economy and an opening balance for development processes under the circumstances of democracy, local self-governance, and market economy. The challenge was extraordinary in view of the necessity to accurately define the state of affairs at „zero point” – the starting point for spatial management in line with the legal principles. Essentially, the „zero point” is a shift in the „philosophy” of developing local plans, whose basis should be a conclusion of the existing state of affairs that would inform the principal procedures to be designed so as not to contradict the desired future state of affairs, rather than a model of the projected future state of affairs that would serve to define the tasks necessary for its implementation. Therefore, *the Framework’s* content is in the first place reduced to conclusions derived from an analysis of the existing state of affairs (including an analysis of the actual implementation of previously binding plans), rather than a balance sheet of items that – despite being planned – have not been realised.

Obviously, the *Łódź City’s Spatial Development Framework* reflects the principles of sustainable development, in line with the – commonly accepted and binding – international community’s so-called „integrated environmental management” (IEM) procedure comprising the environmental impact assessment (EIA), environmental risk assessment (EnRa), and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) – which entails the necessity to verify the planned measures by defining the environmental consequences.

The Łódź City’s Spatial Development Framework was adopted under the Łódź Assembly’s Resolution no. LXXVII/1793/02 of 3 April, 2002.

Łódź’s spatial development factors; spatial policy objectives (content as per the annex to the Łódź Assembly’s Resolution no. LXXVII/1793/02).

Essential diagnostic elements of the existing spatial development and the city’s functioning (values as per the balance sheet of the existing land uses): 1) Łódź’s development structure, 2) current image of the city’s zonal structure, 3) technical infrastructure – roads and streets system, 4) technical infrastructure – utilities, 5) building development, 6) greenery, 7) cultural environment – the city’s physiognomy, 8) public space, 9) the city’s surroundings – non-urbanised zone, 10) ambitions.

Development structure in Łódź. The actual basis for formulating the spatial policy’s purposes is the diagnosis of the city’s development and functioning status, as presented in the documentation of the Spatial Development Framework, and the spatial structure image of the forms of land development and uses in Łódź which reflects both the identified zonal development of the city, and the primary division into the urbanised zone (urban investment zone – U) and non-urbanised zone (natural – N).

Within the city’s spatial structure distinctive are: 1) the central urban complex comprising the oldest and spatially best crystallised and formed central part of the urbanised zone, 2) the inner zone of the city, delimited by the ring railroad, comprising the areas referred to as the “old Łódź” within the 1939 boundaries, 3) the zones of new housing microdistricts, industrial and warehousing compounds, and single-family developments lying outside the ring railroad, 4) as strongly as extensively developed areas of the non-urbanised zone.

The urban zone (U) covers an area of 12 857 ha (44% of the city’s territory, of which 10 890 ha of compact area and 1967 ha of extensively developed areas – peripheral and dispersed). The universally accepted urban characteristics are only fully met by the central urban complex – the oldest part of the zone and located within the ring railroad. Retaining the character of a simple 19th c. spatial regulation, it forms a unique urban and architectural complex of the „city of four cultures” and is one of Łódź major assets. The area of the most fully formed parts of the central district (718 ha) represents approximately 2,5% of the overall city territory and less than 6% of the urbanised zone. Together with other, almost likewise developed areas, however, with a lower share of urban characteristics (3597 ha in aggregate) and urban greenery areas located within the urbanised zone (1114 ha), it represents 42% of the urbanised zone surface. The remaining 58% of the zone are taken by sites with unfinished urbanisation processes and random development forms.

The non-urbanised zone (N) covers 16 465 ha (approx. 56% of the city’s entire territory), of which smallholding sites – 551 ha (over 3% of the N zone). The extensively built-up areas lying outside the compact urbanised zone (U) (peripheral and dispersed sites of the urbanised zone and various other forms of dispersed development) and greenfields and degraded areas, in overall cover nearly one-fourth of Łódź’s open areas.

Technical infrastructure – roads and streets system in Łódź. Out of the overall length of roads in the city approximating 1600 km: approx. 678 km are bituminous surface roads,

112 km other hardened surface roads (in aggregate 790 km – hardly a half – of roads with hardened or bituminous surfaces), 437 km (over 27%) of non-registered roads, 372 km (over 22%, which accounts for nearly one-fourth of the city’s roads) of dirt roads. Dirt roads – with street status – represent one-fifth of the roads within the urbanised zone and one-third of the roads within the city’s non-urbanised zone.

Transport and travel. The transport system infrastructure in Łódź is characterised by the absence of fully-formed routes connecting the primary parts of the city’s development structure, absence of system specialisation, exhaustion of traffic throughputs on the routes, low technical parameters within the central zone, and low technical parameters of most of the outgoing roads. The system’s capacity is particularly low in the central and inner zones. On the routes where tramway tracks are not in separated lanes, there increase the conflict between vehicle and tramway traffic. Curb parking further reduces the streets’ throughputs.

The railway node in Łódź does not ensure – both with regard to national (e.g. Wrocław – Łódź – Warszawa) and regional services – sufficient passenger and freight service standards. The share of railways and tramways in suburban public transport is decreasing. The proportion of bus transport is on the increase.

The modernised Lublinek Airport only allows for domestic and Central European flights; further international flight connections are only provided by the Okęcie Airport in Warsaw.

Technical infrastructure – utilities. Urbanised zone. In aggregate, within the entire urbanised zone (compact and dispersed), the areas with full utility networks retrofit cover 7593 ha (over 59% of the U zone – less than 26% of the city’s entire surface), the areas with utility networks but with significant deficiencies (absence of sufficient network density, low technical standards) – 2 463 ha (over 19% of the U zone – over 8% of the city’s entire surface), and the areas with insufficient retrofit (devoid of the sewerage system or with no retrofit at all) still cover 2 801 ha (less than 22% of the U zone – less than 10% of the city’s entire territory).

Technical infrastructure – utilities. Non-urbanised zone. The areas with no access to the sewerage system within the range of the water supply network still cover 3175 ha, and 945 ha within the range of the gas supply network. Out of the 165 ha of the areas that can be fitted out with the sewers (however in a limited form as regards the service standard), water supply utility is provided to 47 ha, mains gas is supplied to 40 ha. The areas that can be fully sewerised – occupying approx. 137 ha – 16 ha have no access to the waterworks, and 98 ha have no access to the gas network.

The city’s retrofit is still characterised by many deficiencies, some of which are either quantitative or qualitative insufficiencies, some are linked to the difficult-to-remove structural factors, and some reflect even more intricate phenomena (e.g. the level of energy consumption is lower than the similar “civilisational” indicator in large Polish cities). The key problems, however, ensue from the absence of harmonised development of each system and the diversified territorial range and completeness of each of them. The urbanised zone does not have – within its entire area – a complete communication and utility infrastructural retrofit that would meet the generally accepted standards and all requirements applicable to development sites. With the access to the electrical grid being available within the entire city, the foregoing criteria are in approximation met by the areas fitted out with at least a complete waterworks and sewerage network, and gas and/or heating network. In the meantime, within the urbanised zone there still exist incompletely retrofitted areas (beyond the range of the complete retrofit – without one or more kinds of utility networks), while within the non-urbanised zone – the dispersed urbanised areas only boast a partial retrofit.

Development. Nearly the entire old Łódź – the city centre, the former suburbs (today the city’s inner zone), and a part of the latest industrial complexes – is an area with largely obsolete developments. The outstanding developments – primarily housing microdistricts representing a half of Łódź’s built-up area – were built in the recent 50 years. Their technical conditions and cultural values are diversified. The structures and complexes built in the first 10–15 post-war years are characterised by a distinct “style”, frequently combining modernism and socialist realism. Built in the traditional technology, they generally remain in a satisfactory technical condition. The microdistricts that represent the majority of the city’s new housing resources – built with the use of prefabricated components from the end of the 1950s until the early 1980s – are characterised by significant architectural monotony and average technical values. The historic developments that constitute Łódź’s key assets (also including the interwar developments) occupy a small part of the city’s territory. A large percentage of the developments built before World War I represent a meagre technical value. Most of them – outhouses, peripheral developments – were usually built to low technical standards and for decades have been waiting for some serious refurbishment and modernisation works.

Urban greenery. Utilises the elements of the original forest environment, and is part of the city’s highest quality structure. The sites of organised parks and cemeteries (1 114 ha within the entire urbanised zone) are complemented by a significant quantity of dispersed greenery – inside urban quarters, and even in the very city centre – which, however, are poorly emphasised in the townscape. Urban greenery is an important, but insufficiently exploited asset of Łódź. A complex issue are the allotment gardens, with their high social importance and negligible economic function, which frequently occupy disproportionately valuable locations.

Cultural environment – the city’s physiognomy. Łódź is comprised of an extensive and loose conglomerate of recently developed functional areas with undeveloped system of public spaces concentrated around also incompletely formed historical city centre, and with little modified – frequently spontaneously formed (and in the living memory – suburban) – intermediate zone and chaotically (including the entrances to the city) built-up outer exurban zone. The relatively compact developments in the historical city centre is particularly contrasted the loose tissue of housing microdistricts. Such a wasteful use of the land – especially outside the inner city – forms a landscape that is clearly „functionally specialised”, but not urban. With vast spaces, but little scale. The „old” and „new” landscapes do not show any similarities, or even the slightest affinity. The entirety – apart from the central zone and a few exceptions – is devoid of architectural and spatial cohesion, and rather represents an incoherent image.

Public space. Łódź’s spatial layout remains rather poor and is devoid of grand scale and metropolitan character. Apart from the city’s one and only transparent spatial composition – the axis of Piotrkowska Street that ends with an octagonal square – and a few partially completed attempts to create complexes with individualised and harmonious character, the townscape values of the urban solutions are negligible – there exist no exes or layouts that would organise the urban space, highlight the landmarks, or define the directions.

The shape of the public space (or rather its absence, which has its source in the modernist principles of creating urban environment), apart from the central zone, does not properly fulfil the function of a community life framework, nor does it ensure privacy for the residents in those districts. Given the scale of new developments, this is true of the majority of the city’s territory, also including the interface between the old part of Łódź and its new microdistricts.

The city’s surroundings – non-urbanised zone. While the city’s urbanised zone has insufficient development concentration and deficient urban characteristics, the non-urbanised zone decreasingly sustains its natural character. The degrading urbanisation pressures are

affecting subsequent areas excluded from agricultural use; the extent of exploitation of non-renewable spatial resources is increasing, which is reflected in the progressing environment and landscape degradation. This process – within the entire territory of the city – is caused by expansive “spot urbanisation” and chaotic development. From the point of view of public interest, this is indicative of insufficient regulation of the economic mechanisms that drive land management.

General development purposes in the sphere of socio-economic policy (...); General development purposes in the sphere of spatial management (...);Circumstances of attaining general development purposes in the sphere of spatial management – issues concerning the city’s development and improvement of its spatial structure quality: 1) opportunities and assets for the future and in the light of the city’s and region’s integration with the European Union, 2) improvements in the living conditions and standards, and development dynamics recovery, 3) sustainable development – concentration and restoration of the city’s spatial cohesion, 4) spatial quality improvements – restoration of spatial order and “urban nature”, 5) environmental threats elimination, environmental protection, and improvements to the non-urbanised zone, 6) coordination of development of subsystems and urban areas, 7) needs with respect to the city’s modernisation and restructuring, 8) planning effectiveness and essential principles of the city’s development and restructuring, 9) spatial planning and management quality – primary values and essential principles of spatial policy;

Opportunities and assets for the future and in the light of the city’s and region’s integration with the European Union. Łódź – a city located in the centre of Poland but remaining, for historical reasons, outside the network of major domestic and regional road and railroad connections – is standing a great chance of becoming the main focus of the state’s projected undertakings in respect of the primary transport infrastructure. A strong developmental impulse has also been generated by the decisions to change the country’s administrative divisions. A large region (województwo) may also help Łódź to significantly develop its metropolitan functions, both for its central geographical location and the administrative and cultural infrastructure necessary to function as a regional capital. The sizeable benefits of concentration ensue from the fact that Łódź already boasts an 800 thousand population and relatively well-developed technical infrastructure, with some reserves of supply sources – especially sufficient water supply and energy sources – and is close to resolving the key issues concerning liquid waste neutralisation and drainage, and has the potential to solve the solid waste management issues. If the arising opportunities are properly exploited, the city’s size and potential will enable further development – quantitative and qualitative – of its economic, research/academic, cultural, and service functions. The city’s current spatial development shows land reserves (to a large extent the land has the technical infrastructure that is insufficiently used or needs rearrangements) that are sufficient to build – as part of internal transformations – both the desired multifamily (urban) housing facilities and service and production facilities. Also, within and without its urbanised zone the city boasts considerable areas which, if appropriately equipped and used, may satisfy any increase in demand for single-family housing developments. The city’s another asset is the realistic potential to prepare well equipped and perfectly communicated sites for the development of new activity zones, including areas with high environmental and landscape values. Finally, the most important – in terms of the European civilisation – of the city’s assets is its 19th c. surviving original architectural and urban “entirety” occupying an area of 1500 hectares. Łódź – which with the other conurbational towns forms a truly unique 19th c. architectural compound – is facing a great challenge of developing this cultural heritage. The most important and fruitful piece of work will be to create, with natural reference to the historical threads, a meeting place for the various cultures that brought the city into being. Łódź – the regional capital – cannot afford, also for the region’s sake – to remain just a “regional” centre. Participation in and creation of culture are the key measures of „urbanity” and in the long perspective this sphere will be considered as the fundamental „city-forming” factor on par with the economic sphere.

The essential opportunity for Łódź still ensues from its favourable location, while the major developmental stumbling block is the absence of sufficiently strong transport and economic bonds with the closer and more distant surroundings. Therefore, Łódź’s raison d’être – apart from the unquestionable need to reinforce its regional connections, so important for the city’s metropolitan functions – is to make good use of the prospects ensuing from the projected A1 and A2 motorways junction, and the S14 and the S8 express roads (including the connection with the Łask airport). Adequately extended and modernised local railway node with a view to ensuring the possible railroad connections – including the European TGV network – could open for Łódź an opportunity to become a European-level logistic hub. The third opportunity – reciprocally beneficial cooperation with Warsaw – may help build a fast direct railway service between the two cities (with the travel time of up to 40 minutes), that would also ensure (together with the motorway connections) efficient service of the international airport (Okęcie or a new one proposed to be located between the two cities). The foregoing programme – essentially with no good alternatives – must require, for the second time in the city’s history, the state’s intervention and national level coordination.

Essential development-oriented spatial policy targets; Essential programme objectives – tasks serving the spatial policy implementation.

Essential development-oriented spatial policy targets.

The city’s generally defined development targets should include, in line with its nature, the overarching objective to build a civil society sharing common purposes, and the need to improve the living conditions in the city. This means, e.g. the need to make the city more attractive – comfortable, friendly, and safe and beautiful; a city that is accepted and bonding. The road to this goal leads through improvements to the quality of life – upgrading the existing conditions, improving the functionality of structures and systems, continuously adjusting them to the changing circumstances – and through development of science and culture. On the verge of the new century, the most important civilisational challenge for the local community and its future development ensues from the importance of the need to offset the entire development process and put in order the spatial development status in Łódź, and create, in harmony with the natural environment, a quality living framework. In the light of the identified key factors and issues concerning development and improved functionality of the city’s spatial structure, it is assumed that to accomplish the socio-economic policy targets, solve the development issues, and satisfy the needs and aspirations of the local population it takes to:

1. Take on the challenge of transforming Łódź – on its 600th anniversary (and 200th anniversary of industrial Łódź) – into a European metropolis. Take advantage of the far-reaching union of the city’s interests with those of the region’s boroughs and the conurbation, and the capital city of Warsaw, to expedite implementation of government programmes

so as to generate strong bonds with the city’s environs and open it to external communication connections on road, railway (in particular with Warsaw) and by air which, by providing opportunity to create an international logistic node, give a chance of fully exploiting the favourable location and the city’s other assets for the development of metropolitan services and functions of the region’s capital city.

2. Recover Łódź’s developmental dynamics – ensure attractive working and living standards and conditions conducive to a continuous process of creating higher spatial quality in the city and increasing its public acceptance levels.

3. Balance Łódź’s spatial development – stop the urban sprawl and subordinate future actions to the necessity of rebuilding the city’s cohesion. With a view to facilitating rational problems solving, delimit within the city area and fill with the content that would meet the commonly accepted standards two primary zones: the actual urbanised zone (U) to have a full infrastructural retrofit and provide opportunity for unrestricted investments in conformity with the spatial policy targets, and non-urbanised natural zone (N) to be protected against building developments.

4. Coordinate and upgrade the urban infrastructural systems and urban development zones – remove the developmental inconsistencies in the city’s „problem areas”, equalise the development levels of transport systems and service standards – and provide conditions for infrastructural development in the non-urbanised zone (NA and NBA zones) delimited with a view to providing opportunity for future growth of the urbanised zone.

5. Provide conditions that would stimulate and regulate the modernisation and restructuring processes in Łódź, including the conditions of obtaining any and all public support – whether from the state budget or the European funds – to refurbish and revitalise the historic urbanised areas and amalgamate them with the rest of the city. Ensure conditions conducive to exploiting Łódź’s historic urban and architectural complexes for the purpose of creating the city’s new metropolitan functions and services.

6. Create high quality of the urbanised environment – ensure adaptation and protection of the city’s most valuable cultural heritage and acknowledge the primary need to form a legible and rich public spaces configuration and the need to improve the city’s appearance. Take immediate measures to continue and broaden complex restructuring and refurbishment works in the entire central zone whose community integrating impact cannot be overestimated. Create a contemporary symbol of Łódź, being a comprehensive and spectacular architectural and urban form, that would illustrate the local community’s determination in building a new quality of life.

7. Harmonise the development of the city’s most valuable natural heritage, eliminate the threats, ensure favourable environmental protection conditions, and bring spatial order to the non-urbanised zone’s undeveloped greenfields being invaluable public benefit areas, and organise quality landscape parks in the open areas, and put in order the surroundings of the entrances to the city.

8. Implement and consistently consolidate the system of values that serves the purpose of building the civil urban community and forms the spatial policy basis – including the principle and criteria of balancing the benefits, and the principle and criteria of balancing the natural and cultural environment development – which also reflects the need for a particular focus on the category of public benefit and complete public consolidation around the city’s development programme.

9. Implement and consistently apply – in the process of urban planning and spatial policy implementation – the essential principles of the city’s development and restructuring – including the principle of focused actions and the principle of amplifying the effects of simultaneous and multidirectional actions. Improve – also utilising better spatial planning effectiveness and impact on the legal environment – the quality and effectiveness of the spatial policy tools. Consistently include the entire territory of the city in the local spatial development plans (being the commonly binding local legal regulations) to ensure conformity of the development process with the spatial policy targets and the formal and legal requirements.

10. Ensure that the participants in the development process are accurately assigned their respective scopes of responsibilities and formulate the tasks and programmes that serve translocal and local public purposes. The list of such tasks and programmes – including priority actions – must be coordinated with the entirety of the city’s planning issues and spatial policy, neighbouring boroughs, and responsibilities ensuing from the national programmes.

Essential programme objectives – tasks serving the spatial policy implementation. In the sphere of the socio-economic and spatial policy, one condition for a comprehensive harmonisation – in line with the overall objectives – of the city’s development process is to stop and reverse the unfavourable tendencies and maximally exploit the opportunities to eliminate the weaknesses and threats and develop the city’s assets. To achieve such state of affairs will be tantamount to accomplishing the key programme objectives (tasks) formulated based on the identified (favourable and unfavourable) circumstances of the city’s development.

Respectively to the established spatial policy targets, a list of specific programme targets has been adopted with regard to: 1) shaping the external and internal bonds, 2) balancing the spatial development – equalising and coordinating the development levels within the zones and restoring the city’s spatial cohesion, 3) equalising and coordinating the infrastructural systems’ development levels – with respect to utilities and transport systems infrastructure (public and individual transport), 4) modernising and restructuring the city, 5) creating quality urbanised environment and protecting the cultural heritage, 6) harmonising the development of the city’s natural heritage, bringing spatial order to the non-urbanised zone and providing favourable conditions for environmental protection, 7) implementing and consistently consolidating the system of values that serves the purpose of building the civil urban community, 8) spatial planning and current implementation (9) and the municipality’s future policy (10).