

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING AND TRANSPORT IN ROMANIA

- Alba Iulia Case Study -

CONTEXT FOR URBAN PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Romania is located in the South-Eastern part of Europe, facing the Black Sea and bordering Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Ukraine and Moldavia. The total area of the country is 237,500 sq. km, being ranked from this point of view as a medium sized European country. The population of Romania is over 21 millions inhabitants, the degree of urbanization reaching almost 53%.

The Romanian territory is crossed by the following **Pan-European Corridors** : Corridor IV – Roads and Railroads, Corridor VII – Danube River and Corridor IX – Roads and Railroads.

The context for urban development planning in Romania refers to the national, regional and local policies and also to the social-economic situation of urban areas within the national and international perspective.

According to the **Law no. 350/2001 regarding the Territorial and Urban Planning**, the spatial administration of the country territory is compulsory, continuous and for a long term, being managed for the communities' interests, according with the society's values and aspirations and with the requirements for integration in the European Union.

The territorial administration is achieved through *territorial and urban planning*, which comprises complex activities of general interest, contributing to a balanced spatial development, to the protection of buildings and natural environment and also to the improvement of life conditions in urban and rural areas.

According to the provisions of Law no. 350/2001, the *central and local public administration authorities are responsible for the territorial and urban planning activities*. The relationship between the central and local government has strong implications for the nature of planning and its degree of local independence.

At *national level*, these activities are coordinated by the Central Government that establishes priority programmes, directives and sectorial policies. The specialized authority of the Central Government is the **Ministry for Transports, Constructions and Tourism**.

According to the law, the territorial planning documentation is:

- The **National Plan for Territorial Planning**, of which until now the following sections had been approved: Section I – Communications Network, Section II – Water, Section III – Protected Areas, Section IV – Settlements Network, Section V – Natural Risk Areas; to these five sections Section VI – Tourism and Section VII – Rural Development will follow
- The **Zonal Territorial Planning Plans**
- The **County Territorial Planning Plans**

For zonal specific problems of some territories – such as inter-communal or inter-urban territories, (comprising basic administrative-territorial units - towns and communes), inter-counties (comprising parts or whole county territories) and regional (comprising several counties) – distinctive documentation for Zonal Territorial Planning would be elaborated and approved.

At *local level*, the Local Council is the public administration authority that coordinates and is responsible for the entire activity of urban planning carried on the administrative-territorial unit area. The Councils ensures the compliance of the provisions included in the approved territorial and urban planning documentation, in order to work out the urban development planning programme for the component localities. In this respect, the local public administration authorities remit the **Urban Certificate**. This is a compulsory informing act containing the juridical, economic and technical building conditions and the necessary terms for investments, immobile transactions etc.

The urban planning documentation refers to the urban and rural localities and regulates *land using* and the conditions for building on the plots of land. The documentation issued by the local government regarding the urban planning activities are:

- **The General Urban Plan** (Master Plan) is the main document for the locality and has to be updated every 5-10 years, being the legal base for all the programmes and actions for development. The afferent **Local Regulations for Urban Planning** comprise and detail the provisions of the General Urban Plan.
- **The Zonal Urban Plan** that ensures the correlation between urban development and the General Urban Plan of a defined area in a city, being compulsory for the central and protected areas. The afferent **Local Regulations for Urban Planning** comprise and detail the provisions of the Zonal Urban Plan.
- **The Detailed Urban Plan** that is worked out only for the detailed settlements of the stipulations from the General Urban Plan and the Zonal Urban Plan.

In order to provide safe traffic conditions, the urban planning regulations refer mainly to compulsory ensure:

- direct accesses from public roads and alignments/retreats for the new constructions,
- buildings conformation for ensuring proper visibility at crossroads,
- protection areas for public roads (depending on their category),
- parking spaces outside public roads.

When public authorities propose new areas for urban development, the documentation is based on traffic studies as well as on studies approaching the environmental impact, social-economic context.

The local authorities may also establish local policies for transport, for example forbidding traffic for certain urban roads for a determined time (weekends or a few hours a day).

The Local Council *approves* all types of urban planning documentation.

The local authority cooperates with and it is supported by the County Council in the territorial and urban planning activities. In order to work out the urban development planning programme, the Local Council cooperates with other institutions, companies, bodies and non-governmental organizations that are of national, county or local interest.

The **territorial and urban planning activities are financed form the local budgets of the administrative-territorial units and also from the central budget** through the Ministry for Transports, Constructions and Tourism (30 %) and also by companies or persons interested in a locality or area development.

Thus, due to the local authorities efforts and with important support from the central authority, both financial and logistic, **more than 80 % from the country localities and 100 % from the important localities presently have approved General Urban Plans**, essential instruments for a coherent and rational spatial development.

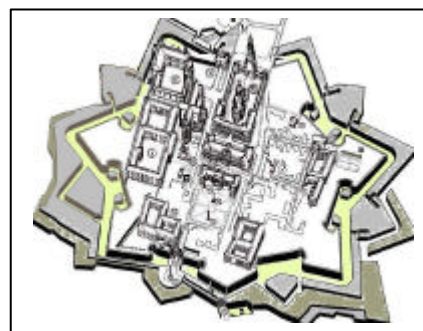
Following the national policy, local governments must organize and coordinate the development of cities through a better management of the resources and creating a framework for an harmonious *integrated sustainable development*, balancing the actual demands and needs with the long term objectives and durable development.

In this respect, a pilot-study representing a **Zonal Urban Plan** for the inner city area of a historic city – Alba Iulia will be presented below.

ALBA IULIA CASE STUDY

Alba Iulia is the capital city of Alba County, situated in the center of the country, crossed by the E80 road and by the IV-th Pan-European Railroad Corridor (see *Fig. 1* in Annex).

With a present population of 66,400 people and a total administrative area of 10,000 ha, it represents the natural intersection of roads which connected organically the surroundings, rich in precious metals, salt and famous vineyards, which sustained its demographic, urban and economic growth. Alba Iulia dates from ancient times (the



archaeology proving the existence of a settlement dated back in 5000 B.C., as well as the importance of a Thracian, Dacian, later a Roman urban center) and part of its long history is still preserved in the structure of the Vauban fortress nuclei, surrounded by the modern city.

Important moments marked its history: 1541 - the year when Alba-Iulia became the capital of the autonomous Principality of Transylvania (until 1690), 1599, November the 1st - the triumphal entering of Michael the Brave, who unified the historic principalities of Moldavia, Muntenia and Transylvania, Alba Iulia becoming the capital of the new state.

The downtown will be built starting in the XVIII-th Century, new craftsmen districts appearing around the new churches. The new fortress was built between 1715 and 1738, its fortifications following the model of those built by Vauban at the frontiers of France.

Alba Iulia is also the city of the Great Union of Transylvania with Romania of 1918, on the 1st of December, and the city of the crowning of King Ferdinand and Queen Mary in the Cathedral of Reunification of People.

With this historical background, the interest for the city is more than justified.

The pilot-study, doubled by a pilot-study on the Management of the operations for the functional re-conversion of the built protected zone, focuses on the fortress area (see *Fig. 2* in Annex) and its immediate neighborhoods, approaching in an integrated manner the land-use of the site and inner traffic policies (see *Fig. 3* in Annex). This is the reason for which the pilot-study is considered a good example, even it is not possible to speak yet of implementation, due to specific circumstances, such as the recent changing of the juridical status of the fortress, previously occupied in a great proportion by military functions and owned by the Ministry for National Defense.

The Ministry for Transports, Constructions and Tourism coordinates and finances both studies, thus supporting the efforts of the local authorities in view of a better operation of their heritage and its potential, preserving and developing the value and the status of the buildings.

The Zonal Urban Plan approaches refer to the central area of the citadel (CZ), with relative continuous fronts and a higher degree of occupation of land, the inner adjacent zone (IAZ), comprising mostly free plots, others than those belonging to the Vauban fortifications and the external adjacent zone (EAZ), comprising free plots belonging to the external fronts of the citadel, now cultivated by the residents and the backyards of the individual dwellings oriented to the surrounding streets. The total area of the studied zone is of 94.14 ha, of which CZ is 21.063 ha, IAZ is 17.753 ha and EAZ is 55.321 ha. Each zone had been divided in reference territorial units (UTR), analyzed from the point of view of character of urban tissues, major compositional axis, architectural guide marks of cultural, historic and symbolic value, urban function, alignment of existing buildings, height, open spaces and vegetation, accesses and revaluation of the potential.

In the area, representing an important part of the total area of the city, there are around 2,000 residents occupying the dwellings located within the fortress.

The analysis highlighted – among other problems – specific access and traffic aspects (see *Fig. 4* in Annex), especially for the supplying transports and in connection with the outer neighborhoods. Thus, for the CZ, the regulations stipulate keeping car traffic on those streets not particularly mentioned in the study and forbidding it between 06.30 and 07.30 – except for the residents, while on this streets it is no more necessary to separate car-traffic from pedestrian traffic. The regulations also refer to replacing the existing pavements with specific materials to facilitate walking and relaxing, installing lamp posts, benches and flower stands. It is also forbidden to locate even provisory individual constructions for garages and the collective garages and parking should be provided with accesses designed not to interfere with the general traffic. For the IAZ, the regulations specify that access should be ensured for emergency interventions (firemen cars, ambulances etc.) and recommend intensive usage of the basements for parking.

Based on the analysis, the proposed regulations refer also to: permitted activities (public administration, services – offices, hotels, banks, small trade, restaurants and bars, university, culture and religious, *loisir*, housing and complementary activities), forbidden activities (industry and other activities not related with the permitted activities generating air pollution, noise and overloading of networks, storage and en-gross trade, parking, camping, storage of recycling materials etc.), protection of the built framework and historical heritage, conditions for the location, equipment and conformation of the buildings (characteristics of the plots, the

location of buildings relative to the alignment, location of the buildings relative to the lateral and backyard limits, location of the buildings within the same plot), absolute and relative height of buildings, equipment (water supply, domestic sewerage, pluvial sewerage, gas distribution network, garbage disposal), façades: general rules, rules regarding the restoration and maintenance of the existing buildings, specific rules for trade activities, fences (only transparent permitted), open green and free spaces, and maximal land occupation.

The study contains a Regulation regarding the green and open spaces (see *Fig. 5* in Annex), subscribed to the vision of a “**A Great Garden in Motion**”, structured in two parts: *Natural flow, controlled accesses* and *Strictly regulated areas*. For the first part, the concepts applied are: the Upper Gardens, Open Corridor, Folies, Belvedere, while for the second part, they are: the Vegetable Gardens, Guard Walk (Promenade), Shop-window Gardens, Inner Green Spaces, Special Connections. This Regulation details the concept for each area, setting access conditions during the daytime, public lighting, differentiated to increase the visual effects (see *Fig. 6* in Annex), traffic and activities restrictions.

The pilot-study on the Management of the operations for the functional re-conversion of the built protected zone aims to formulating the criteria for the selection of the appropriate functions in order to increase the value of the site and its attraction, also identifying:

- the Institutional Plan: structure, the administrative form of coordination, the management of the heritage, the financial management, programmes and projects,
- the Marketing Plan: objectives, structure, promotion policies, programmes and projects,
- the Communication Plan: objectives, participating groups, categories of activities on participating groups,
- the Development Plan: audit, development trends, SWOT analysis, vision, strategic objectives, development policies regarding the spatial development, site preservation, urban design, public spaces, economy, cultural development, education and training and housing.

This pilot-studies are part of the Action Plan for 2003 included in a programme developed on the bases of a bilateral agreement signed between the Ministry for Transports, Constructions and Tourism of Romania and the Ministry for Culture and Communications of France.

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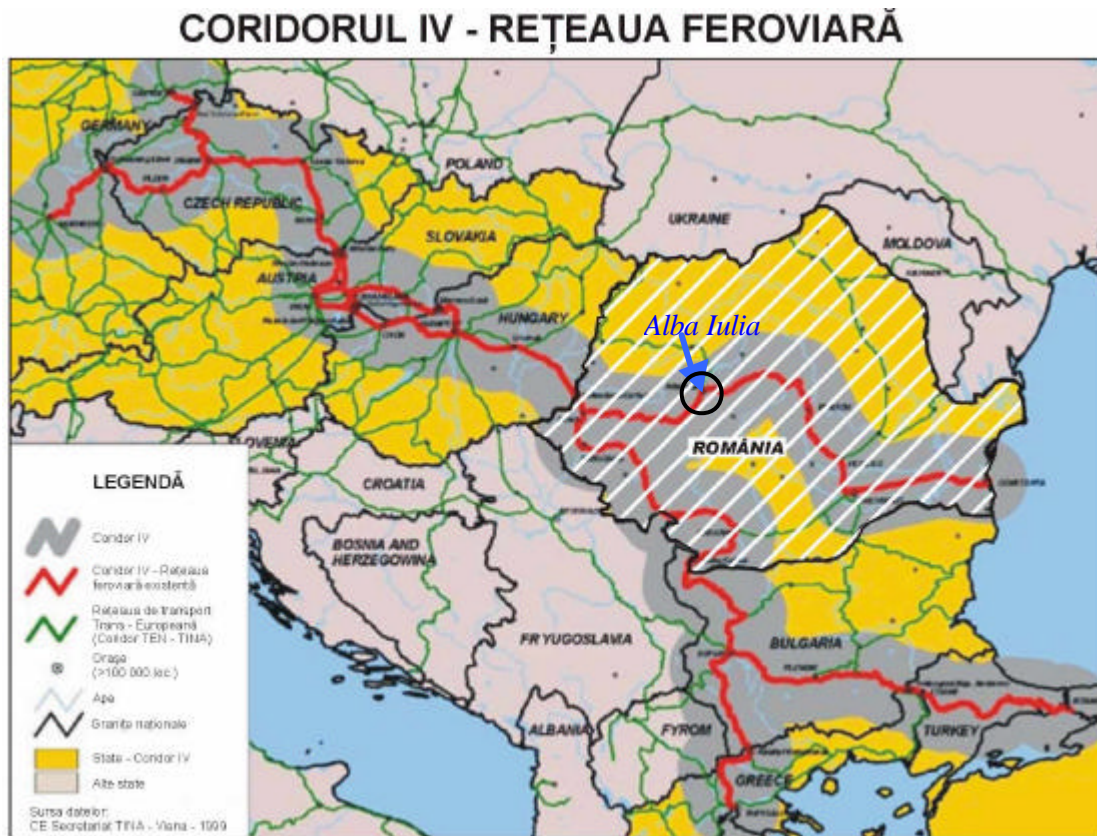


FIGURE 1 – PAN - EUROPEAN CORRIDOR IV - RAILROAD



FIGURE 2 – ALBA IULIA. Aerial view – Fortress area

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FIGURE 3 – ALBA IULIA. Pilot Study. Relation between inner city and city area

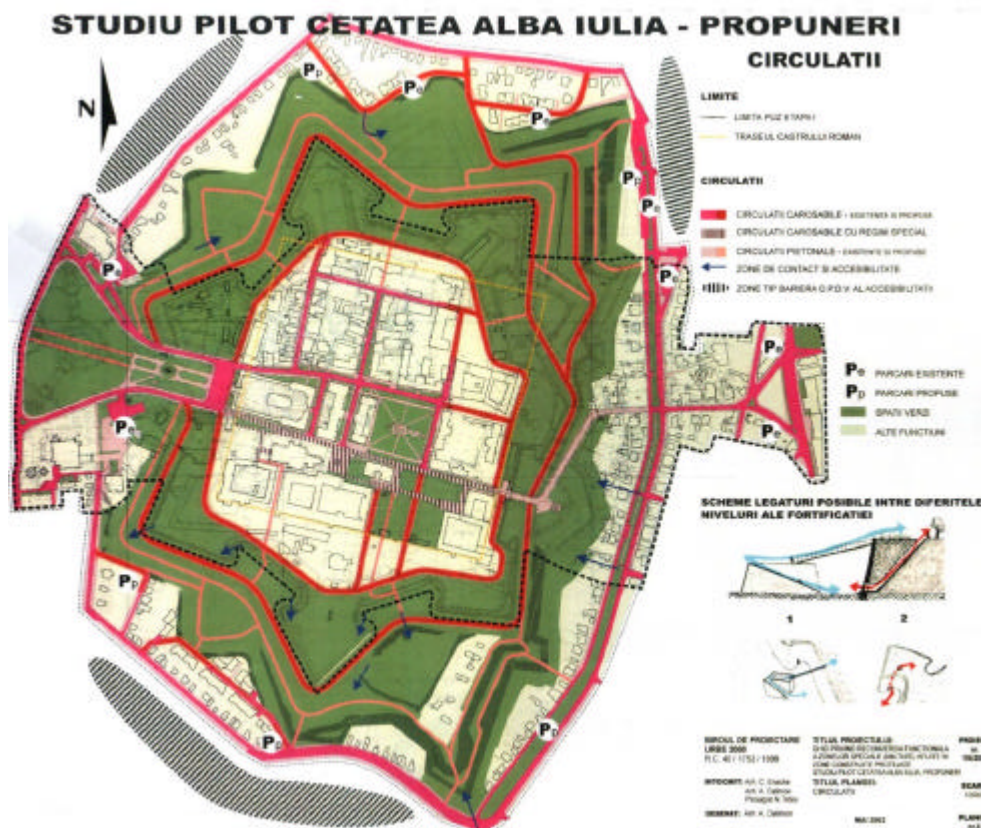


FIGURE 4 – ALBA IULIA. Pilot Study. Traffic flows (roads and pedestrian walks)

