

## LUBLIN – TO FUTURE WITH HISTORY IN LUGGAGE

Bo Larsson

Lund University, Sweden  
Uniwersytet w Lund, Szwecja  
e-mail: bo@planochbyggnadskonst.se

**Abstract.** In connection with the international conference in Lublin in November 2008 “Architecture without frontiers – the limits of modernism” I was asked to write an article on my views of the future of Lublin. This article is mainly based on my own impressions of Lublin, after altogether four visits in this interesting city. During these visits I have enjoyed the beauty and qualities of the Old Town and the adjacent central area, mainly to the west and south and been impressed by the rich built cultural heritage. I have, however, also noticed that the outskirts of the city centre to a great extent appear as un-finished and temporary. There is a striking contrast between urban area of high quality and areas of low urban quality. Several areas of Lublin have an immense potential of urban improvement. During my walks through Lublin I found many such areas. Such urban improvement will give the city image a generally higher quality. Also existing historic districts will benefit on surroundings of higher quality. On the following pages I will discuss the potentials of Lublin and give some examples how to improve the city environment. I will also discuss the general future urban structure and transportation system.

**Key words:** town-planning, urban improvement, Old Town in Lublin

## THE HISTORIC HERITAGE IN THE IDENTITY OF LUBLIN

Every city has its own special identity and traces of historic memories. The city development is, however, highly impacted by general conditions at national and international level, with a tendency to make local conditions less important. This also means that cities tend to be more alike each other, adapting to a more universal city concept. The competition between cities then changes character. Most cities of similar size compete with similar level of service and facilities and they are “put on the map” with modern hotels, conference centres, spectacular buildings, cultural events, attractive new residential areas and improved transportation systems. As long as these competition parameters are of the same type from town to town, they are tending to lose importance, provided that a certain level is guaranteed. This increases the importance of a strong identity of the

place, the “genius loci”, the local cultural heritage and the urban image as attraction factors. These urban environmental factors, promoting an urban life and atmosphere of high quality might be the most important competition parameters.



Fig. 1. Brama Krakowska, The Old Town in Lublin

Ryc. 1. Brama Krakowska, Stare Miasto w Lublinie

For many decades cities have competed with large industrial sites, rapid road connections and modern commercial centres. However, these competition factors have mostly been quantitative, lacking much of urban environment qualities, and often ignoring or even destroying historical and cultural values that could be more or less unique for the city and its identity. Another tendency has been the functionalist urban planning, trying to optimise the conditions for different urban functions, but separating them from each other to avoid conflicts between them. This lead to split and dispersed urban areas with many “between zones“ difficult

to use, frequently having barrier effects. At the same time, growing motorism and planning for car traffic lead to urban sprawl, larger distances, increasing need of car traffic and also destroying landscape qualities outside and between the cities.



Fig. 2. Lublin in 1783. The old urban structure and its relations to the topographic conditions can clearly be seen  
Ryc. 2. Lublin w 1783 r. Struktura urbanistyczna Starego Miasta i jego relacji do warunków topograficznych

With this general background I will try to give some general impressions of Lublin, its actual urban planning problems but also its potentials for future development. Lublin is an important city in Polish history, not least because of the Lublin Union between Poland and Lithuania in 1569. Lublin has traditionally been a gateway between central and eastern Europe, today only 70 km from the Ukrainian border, Although Polish lands have historically extended far east of the present border, there has also been Ruthenians almost as far westwards as Lublin. During the partition of Poland from 1795 to 1918, Lublin mostly was under Tsarist Russian rule, which left its marks in the city fabric. Very important was the Jewish population until Holocaust. There were also other ethnic groups, altogether giving Lublin a rather multi-ethnic character. After restoring Polish independence after 1918, several traces of the Russian regime were eliminated, such as the Russian Orthodox at Plac Litewski. Today a new view is emerging

concerning multi-ethnic cultural heritage: Traces of all periods and ethnic groups should be preserved for the future. They have all something to tell about the history and culture of the city and contribute to an openminded society.



Fig. 3. Lublin in 1912. The city has been extended to the railway station in the south  
 Ryc. 3. Lublin w 1912 r. Ekspansja miasta do stacji kolejowej na południu miasta

In Lublin the Nazi occupation led not only to the extermination of most of the Jewish population but also to destroying of most of the traditional Jewish neighbourhoods, including the large synagogue. The memory of the Jews is well preserved in institutions like Teatr NN and its Brama Grodzka Museum. Very important is the model at the museum of the old parts of Lublin before World War II. This shows very exactly the former mainly Jewish neighbourhood below the Castle Hill. This area was much changed after the war destructions but it might be of value to reconstruct more historical traces than existing today.





Fig. 4. The area around Lublin Castle before World War II. North and south of the castle there are built-up areas, now vanished. At the north side (to the right) is the main synagogue. Model photo from the Brama Grodzka Museum

Ryc. 4. Przestrzeń dookoła wzgórza zamkowego w Lublinie przed II wojną światową. Północne i południowe części wzgórza zamkowego niegdyś zabudowane obecnie nie istnieją. Na północnej stronie (do rogatki) widoczna Główna Synagoga. Zdjęcie modelu pochodzi z Ośrodka Brama Grodzka, Teatr „NN”

A very important feature of cities is their specific topographical setting, which in most cases also has historic impact. In Lublin the old town has a characteristic and magnificent setting at the top of a hill. The city early extended westwards, along today's Krakowskie Przedmieście, following a small ridge, situated higher than the areas towards the north and the south. This can be clearly experienced today in the city environment. Other characteristic features are the valley along the small river (Czechówka) north of the castle, and the more or less open lowland east of the castle. Old maps show a more clear structure than today. The river north of the castle was more evident than today and combined with small lakes. The city also extended northwards, along Lubartowska Street crossing the river and continuing towards the hills in the north. East of the castle, however, there were empty swampy lands and a large lake. This area could be regarded and watched from the old town at the hill. There was also an extension southwards, along the Zamojska Street. This extension direction was promoted by the location of the railway station. However, urban growth towards the station was not quite complete. There is a small, city-like urban area at the station, but it does not continue to the old city centre.

Postwar planning and development of Lublin has to a great extent focused on new urban districts and roads, as well as preserving and restoring of the medieval town centre. However, new roads have also cut the city into different parts, acting as barriers. The new east-west road north of the castle, along the small stream, is an example of this. Although the bus station and its adjacent market place is really a functional centre of the city, it is experienced as a “between zone“, lacking an urban image equivalent to its importance and taking no notice of its historic importance, neither to the old city structure as such nor to the Jewish heritage of the area. There is a need for a thorough reconstruction of this zone. Below I will give some ideas of this. Another problem is the low area east of the castle and old-town, now traversed by a large road. It is still rather open, but lacks both water surfaces and landscape treating. Small industrial and other buildings without any architectural values have been constructed here and there, weakening or destroying the landscape qualities and the view towards the Old Town, but not contributing to any values for the city image. The Zamek square, constructed after World War II is a beautiful urban space, in a magnificent co-existence with the castle, although not historically based. This urban image should be preserved, but this could be combined with restoring and improving other features of the area.

Lublin has a relatively small city centre, but a large suburban area. From the western to the eastern, as well as from the southern to the northern limit of the built-up area the distance is more than 10 km. Within this city area, there are large green spaces and other open areas. The vast extension of the city creates a large need of transportation. The suburbs are to a large extent structured as separate neighbourhood units connected with large roads, cutting through the urban landscape. On one hand these roads form barriers between suburb districts, on the other hand they promote car traffic. To ensure a more sustainable development, the built-up area of Lublin should not be further extended. Instead there should be a growth within the existing city, especially in its central and half-central areas.

Based on these comments I will below give some general proposals for improving the urban structure and feature:

- The Podzamcze area.
- The area east of the old town.
- The axis to the railway station and its adjacent areas.
- The main urban structure.

### THE PODZAMCZE AREA

The area beneath the Castle, along the main east-west throughfare Aleja Solidarności, is a most important traffic node with a high development potential, but is almost totally lacking visual urban qualities. Aleja Solidarności is designed as

a broad motor road at a distance from the buildings. The car driver hardly notices that central and historic parts of Lublin are passed. In order to give this important part of Lublin a higher dignity the following development is proposed:

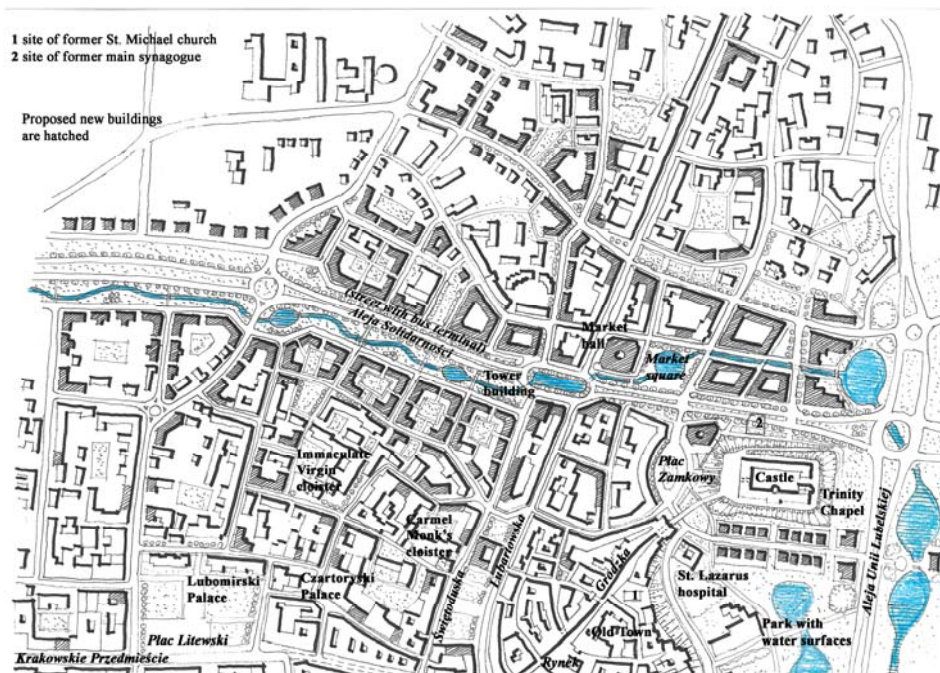


Fig. 5. Illustration map showing possible urban improvement in then Podzamcze area, around Aleja Solidarności. Note that this street will be surrounded by buildings, forming a well-defined urban space. There would be possibilities for establishing tram lines along Aleja Solidarności and long the Lubartowska and Świętoduska streets. The villas south of the Castle correspond to an earlier built-up area. The illustrations on this and the next sides is not a “ready” proposal, only illustrations showing what is possible. The pace of the future growth of Lublin is not known, but sooner or later the growth will correspond to the maps shown.

Ryc. 5. Ilustracja przedstawiająca możliwy rozwój urbanistyczny na terenie Podzamcza, dookoła al. Solidarności. Widoczna ulica otoczona budynkami uformowanymi poprzez dobrze zdefiniowaną przestrzeń urbanistyczną. Istnieje możliwość wprowadzenia linii tramwajowej wzdłuż al. Solidarności, ulicy Lubartowskiej i Świętoduskiej. Zabudowa w część południowej wzgórza zamkowego nawiązuje do wcześniejszej zabudowy. Ilustracja ta i następne nie są gotowymi rozwiązaniami, jedynie propozycjami. Tempo rozwoju Lublina nie jest znane, lecz wcześniej czy później będzie korespondował z przedstawionymi ilustracjami

Between Dolna 3. Maja and Aleja Unii Lubelskiej, Aleja Solidarności is changed to a green, urban city boulevard, edged by dense buildings. Between Aleja Kompozytorów Polskich and Dolna 3. Maja the boulevard park zone is wider, and edged by smaller buildings. The whole section of Aleja Solidarności through central Lublin forms a distinct urban space, gathering its surroundings instead of separating them. The small Czechówka river is transformed to a winding stream with small lakes, included in the park zone along the boulevard.

The crossing with the Lubartowska and the Świętoduska axis is marked by a tower building and a central water surface. The present open market and mar-

ket halls (*targ*) are replaced by a new, representative Market Hall and a Market Square around a water basin. The bus terminal should be better integrated in the urban context. A possibility could be a series of bus stops along a street parallel to Aleja Solidarności. Another possibility could be an underground terminal underneath the Market Hall or some of the new urban blocks.

An additional commercial building could be erected at Plac Zamkowy in order to make this urban space better limited, and south of the castle a series of urban villas could have contact both with the Castle Hill and an open park terrain in the south and east. This area was earlier built up, to a large extent populated by Jews. The main synagogue north of the Castle Hill is different to reconstruct, because this ground is used for Aleja Solidarności, but it could be marked by surface material.

Generally the area around Aleja Solidarności should be given more distinct urban spaces, by completing existing structures with new ones and extension of the area with dense, closed or semi-closed urban blocks. Empty or little used grounds could be filled in by new buildings. Also north of Aleja Solidarności, around Lubartowska street, the urban image should be more city centre like.

#### THE AREA EAST OF THE OLD TOWN

A very important image of Lublin is the contrast between the dense Old Town at the hill and the open flatlands to the east – although this open area is limited by built areas east of the Bystrzyca river. This former swampy area had never been developed with buildings. The area between the Old Town and Aleja Unii Lubelskiej is proposed to be designed as an open park with rather few trees and with water surfaces. East of Aleja Unii Lubelskiej the open, unbuild flatland should be maintained, possibly with water surfaces. On one hand this will preserve the unique view from the open landscape towards the Old City and its towers. On the other hand this preserves the unique view from the Old City towards the open landscape. To improve the visual quality of the area, Aleja Unii Lubelskiej should be transformed to a *chausée* (not a boulevard), edged by trees.

#### THE AXIS TO THE RAILWAY STATION AND ITS ADJACENT AREAS

There is a clear axis along Kardynał Wyszyński street, Zamojska street and 1. Maja street to the main railway station. Parts of this important axis have a dense, well limited urban space, while other parts give a dispersed, unfinished impression. The old bridge over Bystrzyca river is closed for car traffic, which follows a deviation via Aleja Unii Lubelskiej. The important road junction south of the old bridge lacks landmarks and limited urban space.



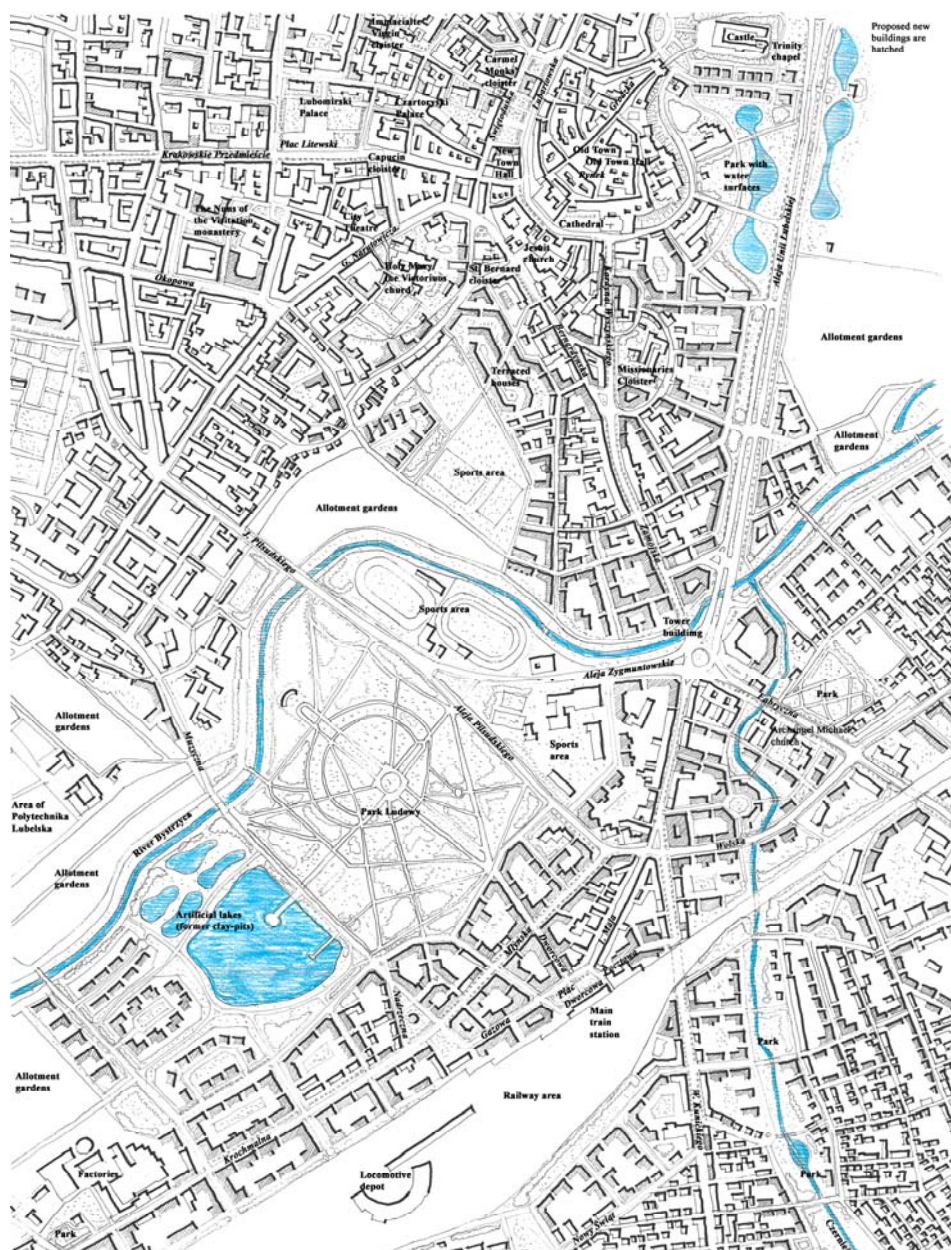


Fig. 6. Proposal for urban development along the axis from the Old Town to the railway station. New buildings are hatched. Note that this is an illustration example, showing the character of the proposed urban improvement. Of course an elaborated plan would to a great extent look otherwise, but nevertheless this illustration shows some of the potentials for development. Parts of the railway area might also be changed for other use.

Ryc. 6. Propozycja rozwoju urbanistycznego wzdłuż osi od Starego miasta do stacji kolejowej. Nowo powstała zabudowa jest zakreskowana. Przykładowy rysunek ilustruje charakter proponowanego rozwoju urbanistycznego. Omawiany plan jest alternatywą. W części terenów kolejowych może być wprowadzona nowa funkcja

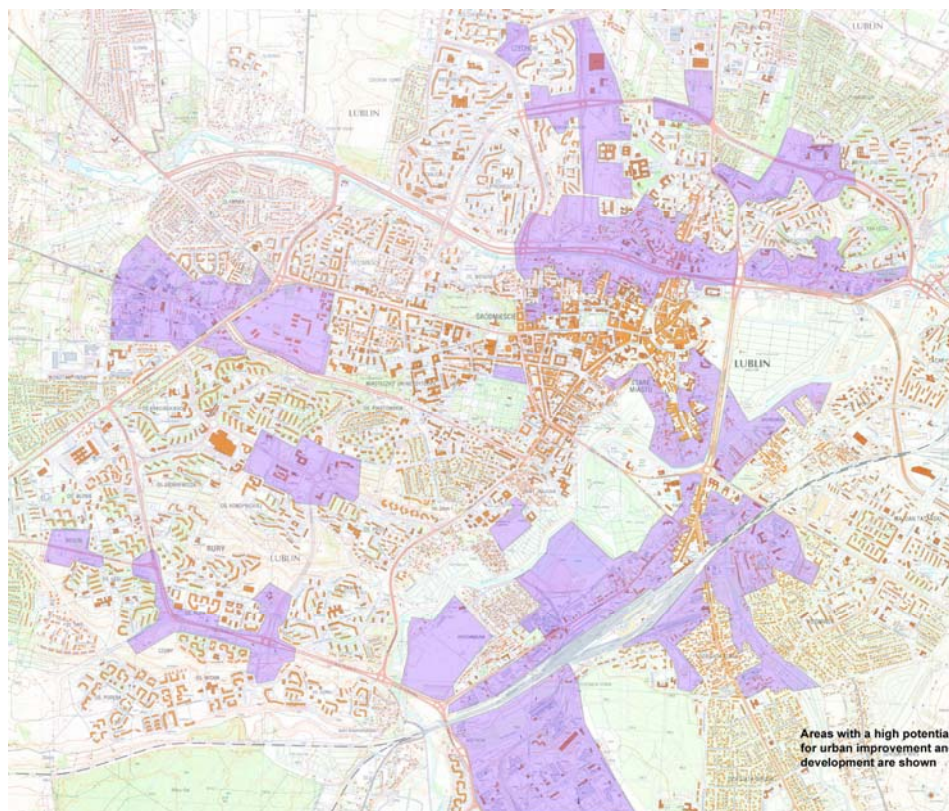


Fig. 7. This map shows areas with a high potential for urban improvement and development

Ryc. 7. Mapa pokazująca tereny o wysokim potencjale dla rozwoju urbanistycznego

The proposal is to upgrade the whole axis, by new buildings on empty or little used grounds and landmarks at important nodes. The old Bystrzyca bridge should be restored and open to at least public transportation, bikes and pedestrians. The southern part of the Zamojska street, close to the old bridge, should be developed with new dense blocks of flats and a tower building, marking the south entrance to the city centre. The whole area between the sports ground to the west and Aleja Unii Lubelskiej to the east should be developed as dense urban blocks, with new buildings supplementing old ones. The southern part of Aleja Unii Lubelskiej will this have an urban boulevard character, edged by dense blocks on the west side, and partly by buildings also at the east side – an area that also earlier has been built up. The buildings facing the sports area to the left could have a more garden city character. On the slopes west of Bernardyńska streets terraced houses could be built.

At the road junction south of the old bridge new buildings at the corner 1. Maja street / Aleja Piłsudskiego should give the area better visual limits. To

the north the urban space will be limited by new blocks along the Bystrzyca river including the tower building, South of this junction supplementary urban blocks will dense the area on both side of 1. Maja street. The small river Czerniejówka will be better integrated in the urban composition.

The main railway station is today the end of the axis. An aim of the proposal is to give the railway station a more central place in the visual urban composition. This could be done by a city development with dense urban blocks north of the railway, along Młyńska street and Krochmalna street, partly on earlier brownfield and industry areas. Młyńska street and Krochmalna street should be upgraded to city boulevards, edged by urban blocks between the railway and Park Ludowy and its adjacent the green areas. The former clay-pits could be transformed to artificial lakes in park surroundings. South west of these lakes garden city development could form an attractive residential neighbourhood. The whole area between the Bystrzyca river and the railway will successively be transformed to an attractive urban district, close to the main railway station.

South of the railway area the mixed city district should gradually be renewed and improved. In this connection the possibilities of decreasing the track areas should be investigated, and open parts of existing railway terrain for new urban development. The possibility of concentrating freight handling to the existing freight terminal east of the city should be investigated.

## THE MAIN URBAN STRUCTURE IN THE FUTURE

As written above, further expansion of the city area should be avoided and replaced by a more intensive use of existing urban areas. This also gives possibilities to save the open cultural landscape around the city.

There are several open or little used areas with high development potential, e.g. along Aleja Solidarności, around the main railway station, along the Bystrzyca river, and west of Spadochroniarzy street. Large industrial and brownfield areas could be redeveloped as attractive mixed urban districts. However, it is important to adapt the urban structure to the topographical conditions and to save valuable green areas and to use the potential along rivers for park areas with water surfaces. The contrast between dense urban areas and green areas and landscape wedges is of crucial importance to the atmosphere and identity of Lublin.



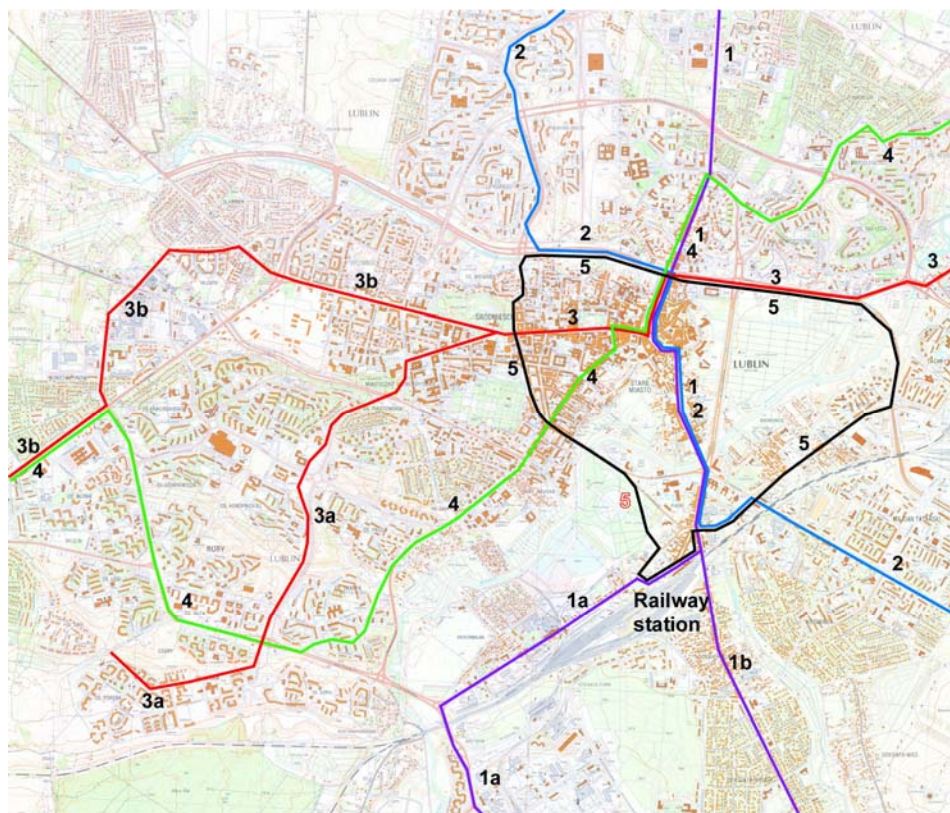


Fig. 8. This map shows a possible tramway system in Lublin

Ryc. 8. Mapa pokazuje możliwą sieć tramwajową w Lublinie

Future development of Lublin and the adjacent region should be structured along means of public transportation, especially by rail. This should replace growth along the main motor roads. Within the city of Lublin a system of tramways or light rails could connect the urban districts. There could be a main north-south line (passing the main railway station) and a main east-west line with some branches in the outskirts. The lines should meet in the city centre. If possible, they should follow old arteries in the city centre, e. g. Lubartowska, Zamojska and G. Narutowicza street and Krakowskie Przedmieście, but also larger streets like Aleja Solidarności could be used.



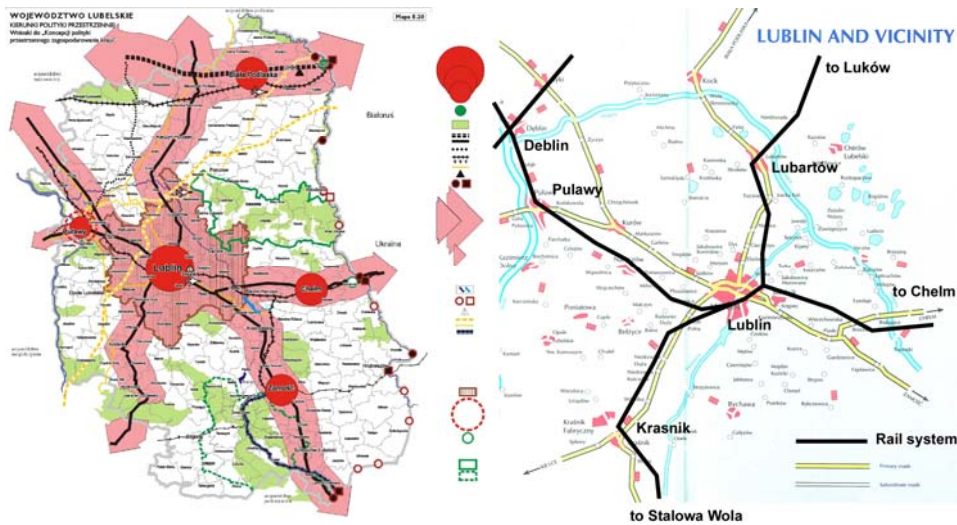


Fig. 9. To the left: The regional development plan of the Lublin area. The development mainly follows the large roads. It would be better to use the railways as primary structure for regional development. Right: The present railway system around Lublin

Ryc. 9. Rysunek po lewej: regionalny plan rozwoju przestrzeni Lublina. Rozwój następuje przede wszystkim wzdłuż głównych dróg. Lepszym rozwiązaniem jest stosowanie kolei jako środka promocji rozwoju regionalnego. Po prawej obecna sieć kolejowa wokół Lublina



Fig. 10. A possible future high-speed railway network of Europe

Ryc. 10. Możliwa przyszła sieć szybkiej kolei



Fig. 11. Krakowskie Przedmieście

Ryc. 11. Krakowskie Przedmieście Street

The regional train system should be developed. Convenient, frequent and rapid trains should connect Lublin with Chełm and Zamość in the east/southeast, Puławy and Dęblin in the west/northwest, Kraśnik and Stalowa Wola in the south and Łuków in the north. From rail stations connecting buses could serve villages and small towns at a distance from the railway.

#### LUBLIN – KU PRZYSZŁOŚCI Z HISTORIĄ W BAGAŻU

**Streszczenie:** W nawiązaniu do międzynarodowej konferencji „Architektura bez granic – granice modernizmu”, która odbyła się w listopadzie 2008, zostałem zaproszony do napisania artykułu dotyczącego przyszłości Lublina. Artykuł jest w głównej mierze oparty na moich własnych wrażeniach, zgromadzonych podczas czterech wizyt w tym interesującym mieście. Podczas moich pobytów podziwiałem piękno i jakość Starego Miasta oraz sąsiadujących terenów, głównie zachodniej i południowej części Śródmieścia, ze względu ich na bogatą spuściznę kulturową. Zauważyłem także, iż architektura terenów granicznych miasta w stosunku do centrum sprawia wrażenie niedokończonyj i tymczasowej. Daje się zauważyć wysoki kontrast pomiędzy terenami o wysokiej i niskiej jakości. Kilka terenów Lublina ma olbrzymi potencjał urbanistyczny, kwalifikuje się do rewitalizacji. Podczas moich spacerów po Lublinie znalazłem wiele takich przykładów. Rewitalizacja tych przestrzeni podniesie jakość wizerunku miasta. Równocześnie istniejące historyczne dzielnice będą odnosiły korzyści wynikające z wyższej jakości otoczenia. Na poniższych stronach przedstawiam potencjał Lublina i prezentuję kilka przykładów, jak można poprawić środowisko miejskie Lublina. W niniejszym artykule poddam również dyskusji przyszłość struktury urbanistycznej Lublina i systemów komunikacji miejskiej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Lublin, urbanistyka, rewitalizacja, Stare Miasto