

Strategy of the city of Solin for the transformation of the fringe in Srednja strana - Sveti Kajo

English summary of the Integrated Action Plan in the framework of the URBACT network *sub>urban.Reinventing the fringe*

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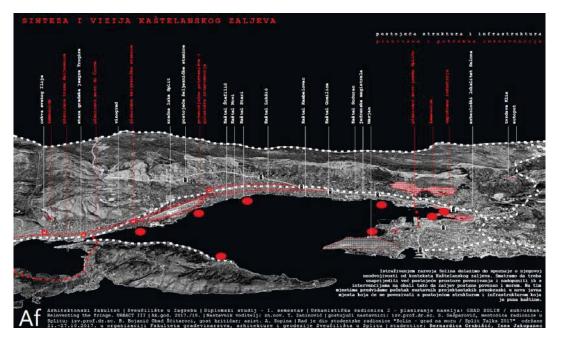


1. INITIAL SITUATION

Solin is one of several small cities within Split's functional area - the second largest urban agglomeration in Croatia. With numerous archaeological sites and monuments, it holds a significant place in national history.



** Solin's location1



** Split's functional area



Pilot site

¹ ** Maps, plans and diagrams are produced during student workshop "Solin – seaside city" by students and mentors of architectural faculties from Ljubljana, Split and Zagreb.



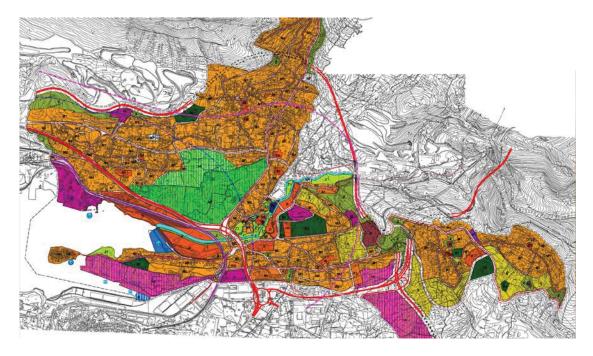
The current image of the city is the result of a rapid industrialisation that occurred during 20th century and challenging topography that forced much of the agglomeration's infrastructure into the territory of Solin. In terms of population and land use, Solin is considered a growing city. Being demographically the youngest city in Croatia, the city faces population pressure, especially from young families. Most of the housing are private family houses partly built illegally. There is a great difference in the density, some parts are extremely dense, and others are not. The main reasons for this are the vast archaeological site of Roman Salona (not a building zone), huge industrial and brownfield areas, distant areas with poor transportation infrastructure and preserved green belts.



Split's functional area zoning plan 1951

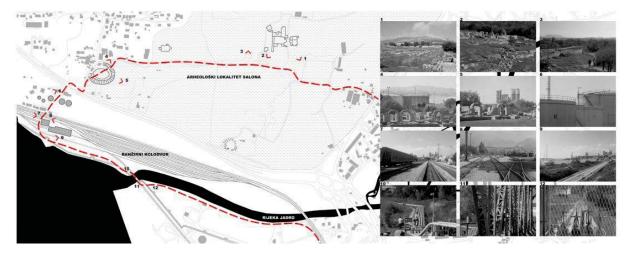
Being a small city with nearly 28 000 inhabitants, composed of several smaller settlements, Solin doesn't really have a fringe in the usual sense of the word, though we can identify some parts that can be related to the fringes in other cities of the sub>urban network. Looking 50 years back, it is obvious that Solin was planned as an industrial and infrastructural zone of Split. This can be seen on the Split's zoning plan from 1951 (Image 4). During this period, Solin was considered a fringe of Split. Some of the industrial segments and all of the infrastructural segments of this zoning plan were retained and remain a part of Solin's zoning plan even today. (Image 5). This means it has not been changed much during the years, and this represents the biggest issue for the further development of the city of Solin. The stagnation of the development of the zoning plan is relatable to many fringe areas in other cities.





Solin's zoning plan today

The chosen pilot site for implementing programme activities and future transformations is a strip cutting through three different layers of Solin's urban tissue: the settlement of Srednja strana with lots of illegal and unplanned private housing and poor public spaces and facilities; part of the archaeological site of Salona; and the industrial and infrastructural (brownfield) zone that is preventing the connection of the city to the sea.



** - Map of the pilot site





Archaeological site of Salona



Industrial and infrastructural zone



Illegal and unplanned private housing

None of the parts of the pilot site were unplanned; they were defined and articulated by different influences over time. Since there were no urban and design directions, the fringe area has no public spaces and poor infrastructure and public facilities. There are also areas and buildings that have not been in use for the past few years. The aim for the transformation of this site is to improve everyday living conditions, to increase the number of facilities and to make use of the overall potential of the (under)used spaces. Working on the pilot site together with ULG, we detected two main goals for the transformation; better connections with the wider area and re-evaluation of Salona's importance, presentation and potential of urban transformation. Although these two goals exist on different scales and time scopes, they influence each other and must be considered as a common issue.

During the past few years, the city has started to rethink its position in the wider metropolitan area and how to approach further plans for its urban development. Good examples of new methodologies - for example workshops, surveys, festivals held at a different site (mainly

developed by EU funded projects) - strengthened the city and encouraged the people involved to test new methods and models in developing new approaches and ideas. We used a model that not only discussed and detected issues, but also acted on a small scale to present the possibility of real change to the public. In that sense, small interventions were made at several locations in the pilot area: site-specific graffiti was drawn in an unused and uninviting pedestrian underpass to make the space more lively and inviting; the first steps in renewal of an old unused beach were taken; an old railway bridge was put in spotlight with the installation of illumination; a workshop at an archaeological site was organised in collaboration with a school of art to get a modern view of history; and a student workshop on the most important brownfield area in the centre of the city was held.





Site-specific graffiti



Illumination of the unused bridge



Workshop at an archaeological site

Thanks to the work within the sub>urban network, the complex issues of linking these three areas and improving their qualities and common influences were approached and tackled with an interdisciplinary and participatory approach for the first time, positively motivating different



stakeholders to work together for the common good. By focusing on one specific site and the actions that have been undertaken there, the city is and will be (re)thinking its methodology of urban development on a small and a larger scale.

While describing the initial situation, it is very important to present the current situation in the administration of the city (especially in the comparison to the other cities in the network). The City administration consists of three departments with about 50 employees. The section for urban planning (that employs only one person) takes care of procedures and legislation related to the development and implementation of spatial and zoning plans. In the last several years, spatial and zoning plans have changed several times, which has proven to be challenging for long term planning. The reason for these changes can be changes in the legislation, changes in the vision of decision makers or changes in the potential of the space. The city never had a department for urban planning or an urban planner as an employee, as all other cities in the sub>urban network do.

	Size (ha):	150	[ha]
Sveti Kajo - Srednja stranaNr. of current inhabitants: 6500Proximity (distance to centre): 1		00 [nb.]	
		tance to centre): 1.65 [km]

Location

Solin is a town in Dalmatia, Croatia. It is situated northeast of Split, on the coast of the Adriatic Sea and the bank of the river Jadro. Solin developed on the location of the ancient city of Salona, which was the capital of the Roman province of Dalmatia and the birthplace of Emperor Diocletian. In the 7th century, the town was destroyed, and its refugees moved to a settlement located in and around Diocletian's Palace, "Spalatum" (Split). In the 20th century, intensive industrialisation of the Split basin practically turned Solin into a suburb of Split. Today, with its independent municipal status, Solin is part of the Split conurbation and is well connected with other towns. Besides industry, tourism has also started developing lately owing to numerous archaeological sites and Solin's distinctive image that features a multitude of urban parks along the river Jadro.

The western part of the city was chosen as the pilot area as it unites historical development, currently underused space and perspective for future development. It was a unique opportunity to test the overlapping of the historical sites, industrial and infrastructural areas and inhabited parts on a relatively small area.

Function, physical conditions and connection

The pilot site is divided into three functional areas: housing, archaeological sites and infrastructure and industry. The biggest population growth occurred in the last quarter of the twentieth century and in the early 21st century. During this period, Solin underwent extensive construction activity, mostly of residential buildings. Unfortunately, however, some of these building activities were illegal and unplanned, which made a lasting impact on the urban tissue. Some of the parts are extremely dense, with poor infrastructure and public spaces.



Salona was an ancient city and is situated in the heart of today's town of Solin. After it was conquered by the Romans, Salona became the capital of the Roman province of Dalmatia. The early Roman city encompassed the area around the Forum and Theatre, with an entrance (the Porta Caesarea) on the northeast side, and walls that were fortified with towers during the reign of Augustus. The early trapezoidal shape of the city was transformed by eastern and western expansion of the city at the end of the 2nd century AD. The city quickly acquired Roman characteristics: walls, a forum, a theatre, an amphitheatre (the structure that is the most visible above ground today), public baths, an aqueduct and early Christian basilicas with baptistery and graveyards with churches. All these sites are well preserved and, if properly maintained and managed, can serve as an inspiring public space.

After WW II, the development of industry continued in the region of Split. Since Solin was part of Split's metropolitan area, it was planned as an industrial zone of Split. Industry was dominated by cement production and later expanded with steel, chemical, wood, food production and transport facilities. Most of the buildings and infrastructure built in that period still exist, but only a small percentage of them are maintained. Nowadays, there are vacant industrial buildings with no clear ownership that possess a great potential for renewal. The process of industrialisation led to a large influx of working-class population, which increased the demand for accommodation and resulted in a huge amount of self-invested buildings throughout the Solin territory.

Land owner group(-s)

Most of the land is owned privately or by national companies. Houses are mainly private family houses. There are few buildings built by local developers that are now privately owned. In the industrial zone, most of the land is owned by national companies (the highway, railway and oil industry are in possession or use of the land). A part of the industrial zone is owned by a private cement industry corporation. In the archaeological zone, the archaeological sites are owned by the government or the Archaeological Museum of Split. Archeologically un-researched land is privately owned.

Main local stakeholders

Most important representatives of the city administration:

- Mayor
- Deputy Mayors
- President of the City Council
- Head of Department of Public Utilities, Economy, Spatial Management and EU Funds
- Head of Department of Legal and General Affairs
- Head of Department of Budget and Accounting
- Representatives of 8 Local councils

Stakeholders that by law or regulations have influence on the areas:

- Representatives of the Conservation Department of Split



- Representatives of the Archaeological Museum
- Tourist Board of the City of Solin

Associations that are active in Solin:

- Association "Life" improving quality of life
- Association "Friends of the Environment"
- Association "My Child" parents of children with special needs

The biggest land owners in the pilot area:

- "INA" Croatian oil industry
- Croatian railways infrastructure
- Croatian railways passenger transport
- Cemex Croatia

Challenges & Potentials

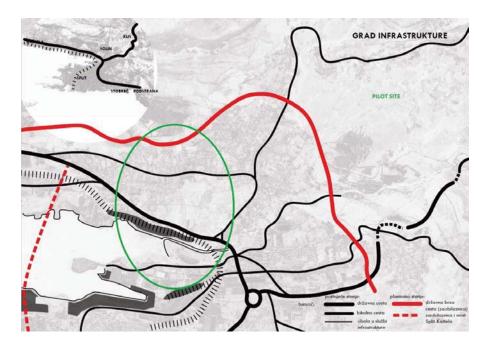
The city of Solin is a growing city when it comes to the number of its inhabitants and land use. The city is dealing with population pressure, especially that of young families. Housing is cheaper and therefore more attractive than in the agglomeration centre and the neighbouring city of Split, which is a long-term trend. Some parts of the city have a high density, while others do not. Being highly aware that options for further sustainable urban development are limited due to administrative and natural boundaries, the city grasps for the chance to change the physical, sociological and economic trends in the city to curb the urban sprawl. This is also an opportunity to work on defining the identity of this small city within the bigger functional area. The city hopes to make progress in different local dimensions. This will be the first time that the complex issue of growth by reconversion is tackled in a systemized, interdisciplinary and participatory manner. The participation of the EU could have a positive and encouraging effect that would be able to motivate, include and engage different stakeholders that are not used to working together. The city hopes to lay down strategical guidelines and articulated actions that could be transformed into EU projects by 2020, and this methodology would be applicable in other parts of Solin, as well. Population pressure inside the cities and municipalities around Split has been recognized as an important challenge for sustainable integrated urban development.

The pilot area is lacking in the area of public infrastructure and transportation. The only means of public transportation is bus, which drives only through the main roads. Some parts of the settlements are quite distant from public transport, and for this reason car use is very widespread. There are families that own more than two cars but have no private parking space on their plot, so their cars occupy space on the streets.

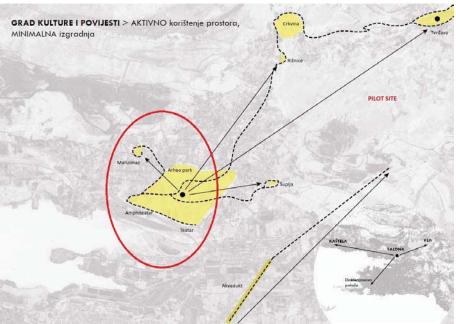
Features

- A city on the sea without connection to the waterfront
- A city on the crossroads
- Huge archaeological green area in the heart of the city
- A city overpowered by illegal settlement

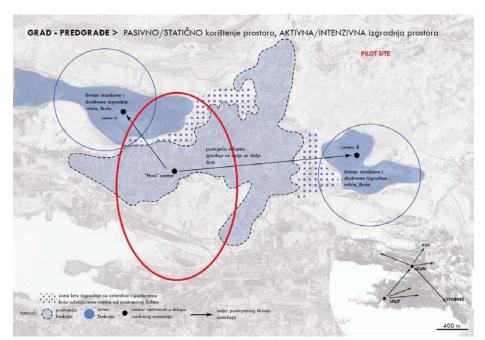




** Traffic infrastructure analysis



** Archaeological sites analysis



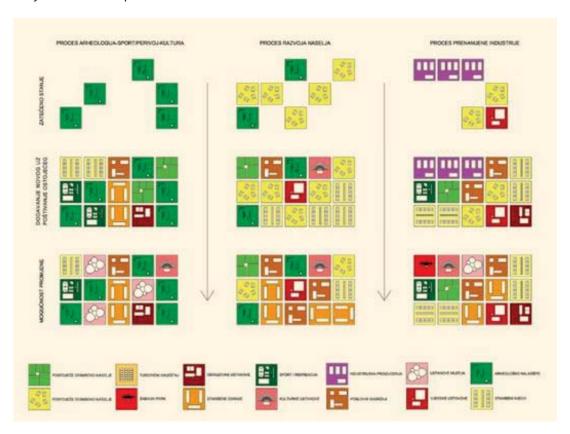
** Residential areas

2. OBJECTIVES FOR THE TRANSFORMATION

OBJECTIVES & INTENDED ACHIEVEMENTS

1. TRANSFORMING PLANNING

In past several years, city development planning was based on current legislation and partial involvement of the public. While working on IAP Solin, testing new innovative procedures with a creative approach and bigger involvement of the public was planned. This new model should continue the collaboration with the University of Split, which has been proven as a valid capacity builder for small local administration, and also the collaboration should be expanded to the other universities of Croatia and Europe, as well as other research-oriented institutions. Future planning of the city should also include frequent contacts with stakeholders and the transparent inclusion of the public. Flexible planning will be tested as a tool for activating stakeholders as constructive participants in achieving common goals, as everyone has up to this point been primarily focused only on their own problems and needs.



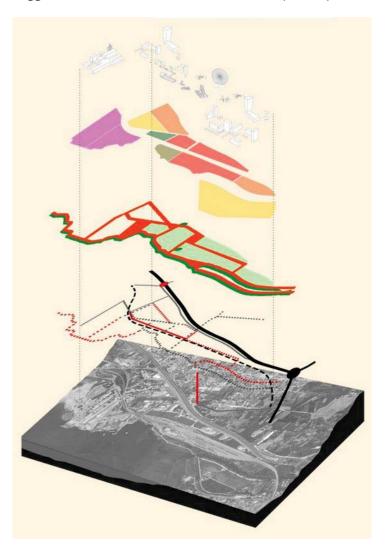
^{**} New model of planning

Benefits

The involvement of multiple stakeholders in different parts of the planning process, regardless of their respective origins and agendas, and with different aims and approaches, could result with overlapping ideas and the discovery of the best possible solutions for common issues. Inclusion of the public in the planning process makes them more sensitive of their surroundings and its potentials and gives them a feeling of belonging and working for general benefits. In this manner,



the city administration is able to get better feedback from the citizens and incorporate the suggestions of stakeholders in future development plans.



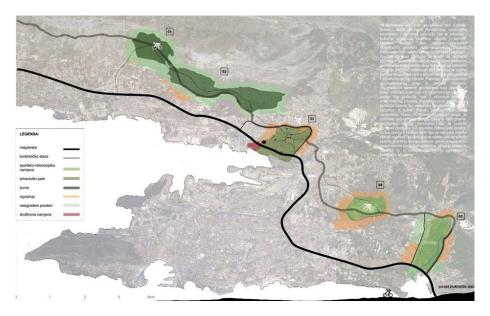
** Multilayer planning

2. TRANSFORMING FOR INTENSIFIED USE OF (UNDER)USED SPACES

The city of Solin will focus on transformation for intensified use through two important segments: public space and underused space. Its relatively dense and somewhat chaotic settlements lack public spaces while, on the other hand, there are huge green archaeological areas that remain largely unused. The city and the pilot site are intersected with infrastructure corridors and industrial sites that are blocking possibilities for development.

The objective is to change the current situation and to make better use of archaeological sites as articulated and active public spaces, as well as to overcome the infrastructural barriers to better link the settlements with the newly planned public space on the seafront, thus increasing the quality of life and use of the fragmented areas.





** Connected green and recreational areas in the region

Benefits

Archaeological sites are often considered as an obstacle and places reserved only for tourist visits, but they can serve as a public space and as a venue for cultural and other public events. This could also lead to the better maintenance, preservation and new research of the numerous sites.



** Map of a potential public areas around Salona



3. TRANSFORMING PRIVATE SPACE

The planning of private spaces is the single biggest challenge of spatial planning in the 21st century. While on one hand we have the narrative of private property rights and individualism, on the other hand we have the common good narrative and the imperative of saving the spatial resources that are growing scarcer day by day by implementing rules and regulations. One of the most important models of transforming private space is to constantly question, analyse and map the demands for certain types of uses. Providing this information to the public is also of great importance. Valuable data is no longer available exclusively to the large stakeholders and investors, but also to ordinary people to allow them to make small investments and plan better. It also makes them more interested in the process of spatial planning.

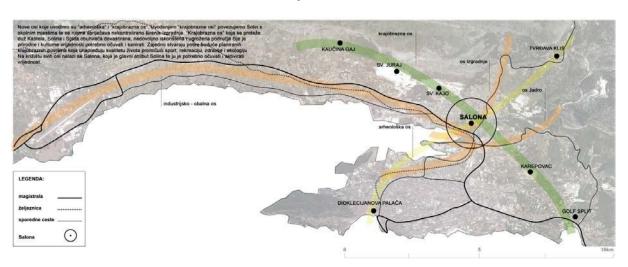
Solving illegal building problems and utilising the potential of private space can be achieved by rebalancing the strict limitations and broadly applicable rules regarding the size and use of buildings (especially private houses).

Benefits

An inclusive and transparent planning process has been shown to be the best way of transforming private spaces, as it turns citizens into interested and active participants of the city's economy.

4. TRANSFORMING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REGION

Cities in the Split agglomeration rarely plan and work together. The higher-level County plan defines the framework of global strategies and infrastructure, but the development plans of individual cities are focused only on issues within their own administrative borders, without taking into consideration how this reflects on the neighbouring cities and wider region. The objective to change the current situation by transforming the relationship with the region involves mitigating the negative consequences of past planning. Split's entire agglomeration should work together as a whole in the terms of common development and regional functions, while respecting the specific circumstances and individual needs of each city.



^{**} Wider region development trajectories



Benefits

Transportation between cities in Split's wider area is currently based on car traffic. Although many cities are connected by railway, it is not used for public transport and inner-city connection. Also, most of the cities are situated on the coast but have no sea transport connections. The airport can only be reached car or bus. Both railway and sea connections hold vast potential for improving connectivity and decreasing car usage.

5. TRANSFORMING FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION TO IMPROVE EVERYDAY LIVING CONDITIONS

When thinking of social inclusion, it is usually considered as the problem of inclusion of immigrants, ethnic or national minorities. But there is also another component of social inclusion/exclusion that involves problems related to gender, age, income, disability and unemployment segregation, which is more relevant to Solin case. If we think of social exclusion within these terms, we arrive at the conclusion that each city should provide methods for achieving social inclusion. As the youngest city in Croatia (by criteria of population age), Solin should provide a variety of activities that involve the population under the age of 18. The objective to transform social inclusion must be applied to all socially excluded groups by providing better participation, regular public events and better understanding of the problems and goals of all stakeholders.

Benefits

Different aspects of social friction (age, unemployment, locals vs. newcomers, residents vs. tourists etc.) should be implemented into the participatory planning process. Collecting the input of needs and ideas, evaluating results and rethinking decisions should be used not only as bonuses, but as mandatory steps in the planning procedure.

3. ACTION PLAN & TRANSFORMATION TIMELINE CONNECTED WITH THE MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

During work on the sub>urban.Reinventing the fringe network project, five themes of transformation were detected and addressed. Here we will focus on three of them that represent the most significant topics of the transformation of the pilot site.

As the first step in transformation, changes in the organization of the City administration should be made. This transformation should be set as a short-term action. A new department should be formed – a department for urban planning and regional cooperation, and the department for EU funded projects should be strengthened. The transformation and all the actions depend on these two departments. The current number of employees working on the positions necessary for the achievement of all the objectives isn't sufficient to ensure the proper development of the needed

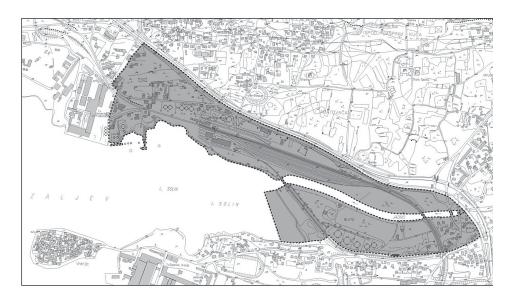


actions. In terms of economy, the City of Solin is a small administration with not a very high income, so most of the forces should be put on applying for EU funded programs.

In the context of action planning and the timeline, most of the actions are planned as short (2 years) or medium (max 10 years) term actions, although 5 years would be optimal. The reason for this lies in the current state of mind related to the planning process, which is mainly based on planning one year ahead.

TRANSFORMING PLANNING

The implementation of the results of the international student workshop should act as both a short-term and long-term action in transforming planning, starting with rethinking the potential use of space and raising public consciousness, and finally leading to the actual implementation of physical change of fractured space. The results of the student workshop should be implemented in future plans for the development of the area by the sea. The results of participatory and analytic processes will create a base for future development. Based on the results of the student workshop, the Department of Public Utilities, Economy, Spatial Management and EU Funds should prepare an urban development tender for the brownfield on the coast of the estuary of the river Jadro. The urban development tender should be done in a year or two.

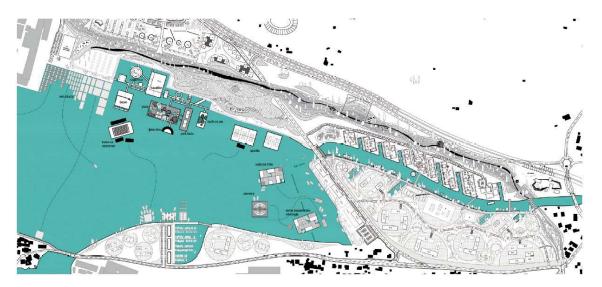


Site of the student workshop

The Department of Legal and General Affairs should, according to the results of the tender, present the plan for the repurchase of the privately-owned land and for the regulation of the proprietary relations. Both these departments, together with the Department of Budget and Accounting should adopt a plan for financing the repurchase. A 5-year period should be the final goal for the property management and involvement of potential developers. If all of the aforementioned actions were to be completed successfully, it is to expect that, within a period of10 years, we will be able to see the first transformation and improvement of unused space. In the process of transforming Solin's coast, the main stakeholders that should be involved are "INA" – Croatian oil industry, Cemex Croatia and HŽ – Croatian Railways as the main users of the area. Also, the Conservation Department of Split and the Archaeological Museum should participate in the



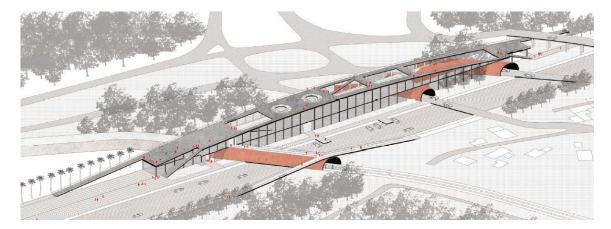
planning process since the transformation has a direct influence on archaeological sites. All other stakeholders and users of the surrounding space should participate through public discussion and vote for the best proposal of the tender.



** Proposition of the future development 1



** Proposition of the future development 2



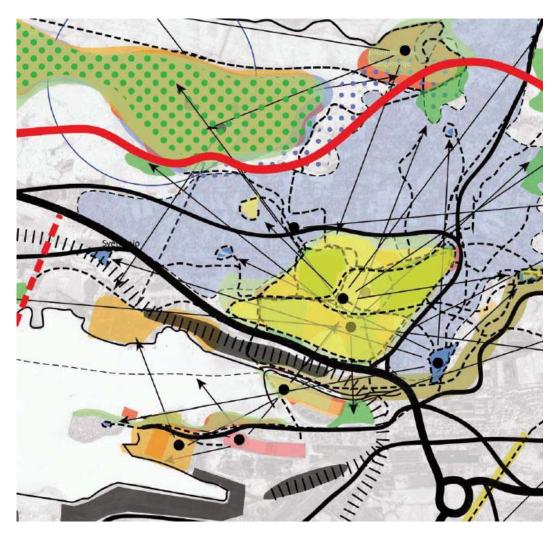
** Proposition of the future development 3

To be able to communicate better with the wider public, residents and users of the space, digital tools should be developed in order to improve the participation of citizens and their involvement in decision making. The Department of Public Utilities, Economy, Spatial Management and EU Funds and the Department of Legal and General Affairs should provide the necessary data and information, and a common digital platform should optimally become operational within a period of 2 years. A new employee should be appointed to work with this tool, and to update the system and gathering the information from different users.

TRANSFORMING FOR INTENSIFIED USE OF (UNDER)USED SPACES

Within a period of 2 years, the Department of Public Utilities, Economy, Spatial Management and EU Funds, together with Archaeological Museum in Split as land owners and in cooperation with the Split-Dalmatia County, should provide the plans and documentation for Salona. The activities for the preparation of the documentation are supervised by Conservation Department of Split. All archaeological sites and connections between the sites will be documented, and plans for future improvement, conservations and development will be drafted, as well as a plan for branding and management of Salona in its entirety. These plans will be financed by EU funds and by own contribution. The documentation that will be a result of this process should serve as a base for transformation of Salona as an improved space for intensified public use, one that is more attractive to both residents and tourists. The transformation of Salona, considering the specific type of work the vast area of the site, will represent a long-term process that requires significant funds. Concurrently with the development of the transformation, the plan for the future management and solving the problems of land ownership should be adopted, since many smaller parts of the land in Salona are privately owned.





** Salona as a centre

Managing the site is also problematic. Currently, the site is managed exclusively by the Archaeological Museum of Split. This type of managing includes a wide range of activities - from research and conservation to site maintenance, organization of visits, admission fees, etc. For many years, Salona has not undergone any systematic archaeological research, but only occasional (protective) research during major infrastructure projects. Neither any of the archaeological institutions in the region, nor the state have shown interest in exploring this site, which is surprising given its potential. In this sense, the site is stagnating. It would therefore be necessary in the future to separate the following two activities at the site: research/conservation and management in "economic" terms! This is a process which the City of Solin, Split-Dalmatia County and the Archaeological Museum of Split must also enter together.

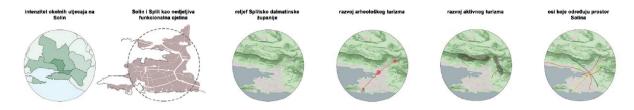
Because of its significance for Croatian history and its importance for the entire region, all future developments and plans will be supervised by the national government. The first steps in communication and cooperation have already been done. As a short-term action and as a collaboration process, a common action strategy for the overall development of Salona should be made. The main role of lead partner should be assumed by the Ministry of Culture, and all the



bodies mentioned previously should participate. According to this strategy, the assignments should be divided among all the partners and set as a long-term process, 20 years probably.

TRANSFORMING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REGION

The archaeological site of Salona and the infrastructural site by the sea present a great potential for improvement of the whole region. Although Salona is one of the most important symbols of Croatian archaeological heritage, its regional importance is often neglected. It is highly important to rethink the position of Salona within a wider context and to ensure connections and accessibility from all surrounding cities. The best way of reaching this goal would be to use the existing infrastructure and transform it in new ways of public communication. Split, Solin and Kaštela have a railway used mostly for transport and public transport to the capital city. If parts of existing railway infrastructure could be used by metro (Split agglomeration does not have metro) with several stations along the route which could be linked with the airport, Solin and Salona would have an easy, fast and well-organized connectivity with surrounding cities. This new, quick way of public transport would represent a great tourist opportunity for Solin, but it would also, which is even more important, improve the quality of life of the residents of the pilot area and of all the citizens of Solin. Some of the actions that must take place in short-term planning and cooperation should lead to long-term transformation.



^{**} Step by step regional development planning

The initiator of this transformation should be the City of Solin, bringing all the mayors of the surrounding cities and the county mayor together, discussing the plan for the transformation together. When common goals are set, city departments have to prepare an action plan and the documentation for the transformation. The process should also include HŽ – Croatian Railways as a main stakeholder, as well as the Conservation Department of Split. The timeline for this process is 2 years for developing the action plan, and 5 years for the implementation. The budget for documentation and action plan should provide for all the cities involved and the county. The budget for the implementation could be divided among all the stakeholders involved in the transformation and from EU funded programs.



4. GENERAL IDEA REGARDING THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ENTIRE FRINGE IN THE FUTURE

Transformation of the fringe focuses on specific sites in the area that are of the greatest importance and with the best potential for future development and improvement.

The position of Solin in relation to its surroundings is very interesting. It is almost a family suburb of Split, and on the other hand it is also Split's brownfield.

Although many young families choose to live in Solin because of lower prices of housing, they lack the city's amenities which, in turn, leads to an increase in prices. On one hand, Solin facilitates most of the large infrastructural corridors of metropolitan area and is called the "infrastructural victim" of Split, but it also uses all of the publicly funded amenities of Split (hospital, culture, leisure, public transport).

This problem is almost entirely political, and as long as this problem remains divided among three or four municipalities, a strategic planning solution cannot be reached.

As written in the beginning of this document, Solin doesn't have a distinct fringe area. All the processes tested on the LAP site could be implemented on many other sites throughout the city. A new planning process implemented not only on the LAP site, but also on the entire city area should be a basic transformation tool with the best chances of achieving improvement.

It is important to implement a different methodology in spatial planning procedure so that the stakeholders are involved from the beginning. With this procedure, it is crucial to differentiate between the scales and objectives of different plans. For instance, small plans that relate to one part of the city, or even an existing neighbourhood should implement something like "revised bottom-up" design, while large (intercity) plans that mostly deal with infrastructure and zoning should take "overtly top-down" design. Also, it is almost self-explanatory that the larger plan should be done at first whilst defining all the smaller plans and their correlations and main objectives.

Revised bottom-up process

The idea of this process is to define 4 crucial steps in making small vital plans:

- 1. Poll with locals and geospatial mapping of the area
- 2. Defining problems and goals (basically SWOT analysis)
- 3. Enactment of a plan with all its administrative barriers and obligations
- 4. Executing a plan in form of small acupunctural interventions with locals, architectural tenders, student workshops

Overtly top-down process

Large-scale zoning plans have the power of defining cities in the long term, therefore openness and transparency are imperative in this process. Gaining trust from the locals is crucial in implementing plans for long-term solutions.

- 1. Defining the goals and strategies of large-scale plans
- 2. Cooperation between neighbouring administrations to minimize costs and avoid overlapping



- 3. Defining infrastructure as the most important objective of long-term planning
- 4. Informing all the stakeholders during the process via interactive plans and public discussions



5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Along with the work on the pilot site, the City of Solin started to work on two important policy documents: The Strategy for the Development of the City and The Strategy for the Development of Tourism. Since most of the stakeholders that were included in the process and work on the pilot site are included in the creation of these two documents, hopefully all lessons learned and necessities for improvement will be implemented in these strategies and provide even bigger leverage for next steps of improvement.

