

Tihomir Jukić<sup>\*1</sup>, Kristina Perkov<sup>1</sup>

## Zagreb Fair Transformation model and its inclusion in the area of Novi Zagreb

<sup>1</sup>University of Zagreb, Faculty of Architecture, Zagreb, Croatia

### Abstract

Through different thematic units, the presented research relates to Zagreb's urban development and planning with reference to the Zagreb Fair and a potential model of its transformation as well as its inclusion in the area of Novi Zagreb. The implemented research should offer answers to the following questions: What is a city project?; How is it defined in the urban and planning records of the City of Zagreb?; How is it implemented in practice? – And all of this based on the example of the Zagreb Fair as a protected site. In line with positively assessed urban practices in other European cities, a potential transformation model has been proposed regarding the area important for the City and its future development. Using new technological achievements, a smaller portion of the site has been intended for the main fair, exhibition and congress activities (roughly 1/3 of the surface). The amenities and the structure would be transformed into the remaining two-thirds of the surface. It is precisely the vision of this new space, organisation concept and the programme of amenities which are the subject of this article.

**Keywords:** Zagreb Fair, transformation, Novi Zagreb, city project

### 1. Introduction

Urban planning trends have stemmed from sustainable development and circular economy since the beginning of the new century. In practice, this implies the city's

completion and reuse of partially or wholly abandoned sites, with the Zagreb Fair as one of the most important ones. This area is a brownfield, one awaiting its structural and functional transformation [1]. This site has been neglected for decades. It is technologically obsolete

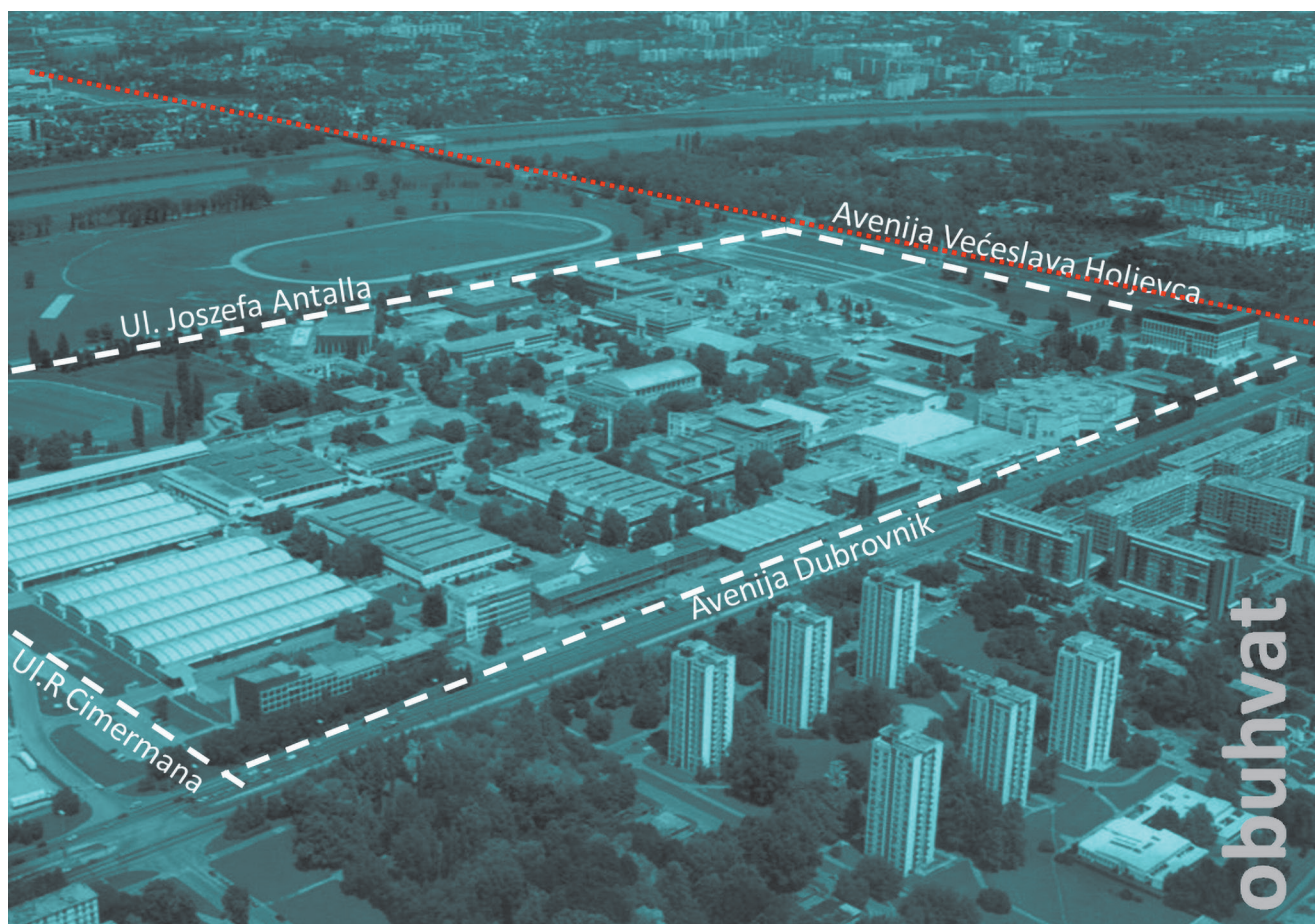


Fig. 1. Border and surface catchment area – Zagreb Fair City Project

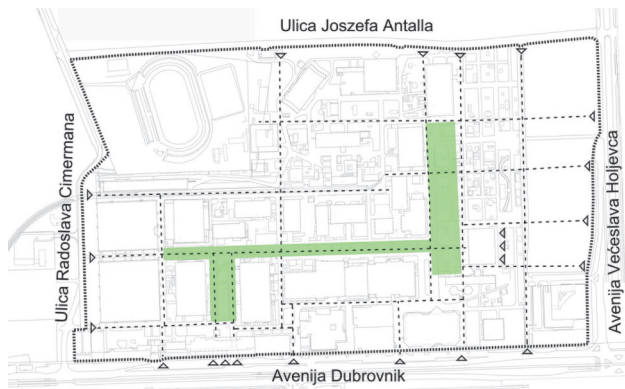


Fig. 2. Zagreb Fair City Project- protected urban matrix and possible entrances to the complex

and closed, which is contrary to the new concepts of fair and exhibition sites. The largest number of exhibition Halls is over 50 years old and in poor condition.

The main part of the existing public space is Aleja nacija (eng. the Boulevard of Nations), Velesajmska promenade (eng. Zagreb Fair Promenade), and ample central space of the square with the designed landscape.

On October 30th, 2006, the Ministry of Culture protected the Zagreb Fair site as a cultural and historic site, and it was enlisted in the Register of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia. After a conservatory analysis of the existing state of a cultural good – cultural and historical site of the Zagreb Fair [2], elaborated protection measures were defined to preserve the urban matrix and the construction fund of monumental (8 pavilions) and ambiental value (5 exhibition Halls) [3]. The text investigates the site's potential and significance, past research, implemented workshops, spatial and planning documentation (GUP), the theme of the city project implementation as well as activities based on the transformation model and programme for determining the amenities of the Zagreb Fair.

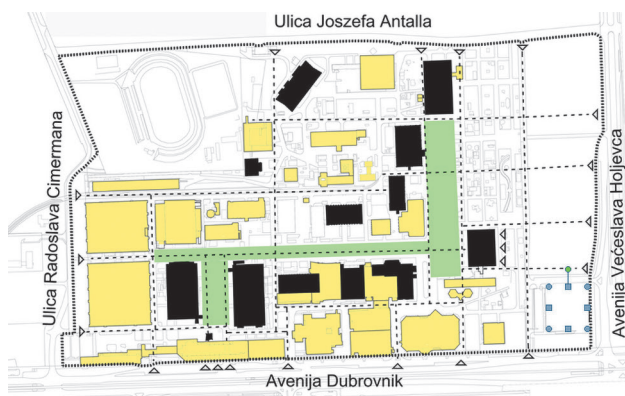


Fig. 3. Zagreb Fair City Project – protected exhibition Halls and protected matrix

## 2. Potential and significance of the Zagreb Fair space

The space of the Zagreb Fair has excellent potential considering its location in the City, good traffic connections,

public transport and the vicinity of the airport. Furthermore, the resolved property rights relations between Zagrebački Holding, the City of Zagreb and the Zagreb Fair contribute to a relatively speedy transformation. The potentials include traditional business exhibitions, fairs and congresses as well as quality public space with designed landscape, sculptures of famous artists and a developed utility infrastructure for the existing needs. Moreover, around 100,000 people live in its vicinity – all potential users of the future centre of Novi Zagreb. From an economic perspective, this is one of Zagreb's highest potentials in terms of promoting business competitiveness, completion procedure of the City and raising life quality. All interventions must be planned in compliance with its significance, and three requirement levels should be met during the planning process of the site and its amenities:

- *local* – particularly public and social facilities for the residents of Novi Zagreb
- *urban* – business, central and other facilities used by all citizens and the City's visitors
- *regional* – amenities vital for regional positioning of the Zagreb Fair site and the City.

## 3. Up-to-day research, workshops and studies

Besides the research published in scientific and professional journals related to the spatial genesis of the Zagreb Fair and Novi Zagreb, many workshops were held, and some researches were published in studies. The workshops (2005-2017) were conducted in order to develop the best possibilities and define the transformation concept of the Zagreb Fair, as well as to test the procedures and participants in the process of decision-making, planning and project financing:

- In 2005, the City of Zagreb Architects Association organised a workshop lead by architect Peter Wilson
- The City Office for Strategic Planning and Development held the Co-operative Urban Planning Approaches (CUPA) international workshop from July 3 to July 5, 2013. The workshop was led by the City of Vienna, Municipal Departments 21B and 27; Vienna Business Agency (VBA) EU team, TINA Vienna public planning institution and the Dutch International Intervention Institute.

Other studies, proposals and projects which should be highlighted include the ones specially developed for the Zagreb Fair transformation, and they are:

- Development of the Zagreb Fair for the Croatian economy (Zagreb Fair, 2011) – a programme developed by Zagreb Fair professionals; Zagrebačka mreža (2014) – project developed by a team of the Zagreb Fair experts, 2014 [4]

- Bearing Office developed a Pre-feasibility report for the development of the Zagreb Fair Site and Innovation Zagreb. The Bearing study proposes creating economically dynamic and environmentally friendly urbanization-developmental elements of the Third Generation of Innovative Environments [5].

It is necessary to highlight more relevant studies and presentations relating to innovation strategies and economic development, such as:

- Triple helix Innovation Partnerships (2013) – Private Sector Development – policy guidelines developed by OECD [6]
- Proposal for Innovation Strategy of the Republic of Croatia 2014 – 2020 [7]
- Development and Economic Competency in Zagreb (2014), Mreža znanja
- Programme guidelines and programme of the amenities of the Zagreb Fair strategic city project (2015) as the first part of the Zagreb Fair strategic city project. An expert team developed a study from the City Office for Strategic Planning and Development of the City of Zagreb [8].

#### 4. Zagreb Fair through Spatial-Planning records [9]

In the *General plan of the City of Zagreb (GUP)* from 2016, the Zagreb Fair site is categorised as two city projects with a note that it is required to implement a public architectural-urban tender. Their locations are determined, but their exact catchment area is not. According to this same plan, both sites – the site of *the Zagreb Fair* project and *the Zagreb Fair East* carry the same K1 mark – business purpose (business, administrative, office, trade, hospitality amenities, city shopping malls, eco-friendly production, utility sites, and the accompanying warehouses).

#### 5. Zagreb Fair City Project in legal documents

As in the case of many other European larger cities, the procedure or the GUP implementation model through the city project in Zagreb is a necessary planning tool enabling the City's interests to be realized in strictly controlled conditions with planning and commercial projects specially prepared in advance. The planning procedure of the Zagreb GUP, implemented in the City of Zagreb, dates from 2003.

“City project consists of the complex activities for developing a City special interest Site, or the City is the main actor in its realisation, whether acting as property



Fig. 4. Zagreb GUP – organisation and size of sites to be developed as city projects

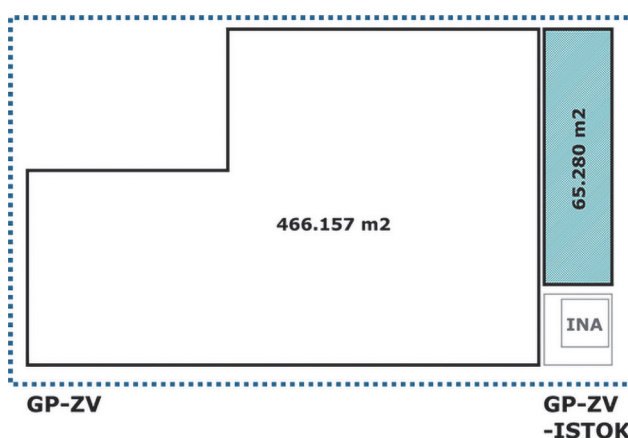


Fig. 5. The relation between the areas of the Zagreb Fair City Project and another city project – the Zagreb Fair East. Both for commercial use (K1)



Fig. 6. Programme guidelines and contents for the Zagreb Fair City Project (2015)

owner, former or future investor in the new city infrastructure or a new city quality (buildings of public or social use, parks, infrastructure, etc.)”. In various spatial strategies and urban plans, city projects are conceived in entirely different ways. The Croatian language uses expressions such as *gradski projekt*, *strateški projekt*, while in English the terms are: *city project*, *city devel-*



Fig. 7. Zagreb Fair City Project Programme developed in December 2017 and presented to the City Offices representatives in February 2018

opment project, city-controlled project, target area, etc. [10].

By adopting the Zagreb GUP, the Assembly of the City of Zagreb made a decision according to which the sites of highest importance for the city's development should be realised in accordance with the procedure called "city projects" [10]. In February 2015, the Institute for Urbanism, Physical Planning and Landscape Architecture with the Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb and the City Office for Strategic Planning of the City developed Programme guidelines and amenities of the strategic Zagreb Fair City Project (SGP ZV) as well as work material presented to the public (exhibition) city administrative entities. That was the first phase of the research, which assessed the possibilities of the Zagreb Fair site and which proposed the implementation procedure of the city project.

Based on the Programme guidelines, the same organisation developed the Zagreb Fair City Project (2017/18) [2].

The observed area encompasses two city projects defined by GUP:

1 Zagreb Fair and 2 Zagreb Fair – East (unbuilt area along the Većeslav Holjevac Avenue). For the comprehensive observation and planning it was proposed to merge the two projects and resolve the sites as a unique city project – the Zagreb Fair.

## 6. Activities for the transformation model and defining the Zagreb Fair programme

Upon observing and analysing the broader scope of Novi Zagreb, it can be concluded that Novi Zagreb, together with over 100,000 residents, does not have sufficient or diverse use or the capacities for cultural or sports amenities. It is precisely the planned transformation of the Zagreb Fair site as an innovative city area with mixed and different uses, which could include these amenities

either in the existing pavilions or newly built buildings. They represent one part of the realisation concept of an innovative district whose diversity and offer could raise the general quality of life in Novi Zagreb [2].

A monofunctional landuse of the Zagreb Fair site could not be replaced by another monofunctional landuse, except in case of the primal one (exhibitions, fairs, congresses). It should not exceed 15-20% of the total City Project site area, as to avoid creating large monofunctional zones. According to the research, the new Fair and its exhibition, fair and congress activities would take up roughly 1/3 of the present the Zagreb Fair area, and the remaining 2/3 could be envisaged for an "innovative city district".

- INNOVATIVE CITY DISTRICT, approximately 2/3 of the existing area with a technological park, innovation incubator, business centre and other economic amenities, trade and hospitality services, entertainment park, concert-media hall, cultural amenities, colleges and science institutes, hybrid polyvalent public facility, hospitality facilities with accommodation (hotel, hostel, student boarding or similar), hybrid public facilities, etc.
- FAIR EXHIBITION FACILITY WITH CONGRESS HALL, approximately 1/3 of the existing area.

The hi-tech Fair and exhibition facility on a smaller surface would contain the following amenities: fair-exhibition space, multifunctional halls, other accompanying services and hybrid public facilities.

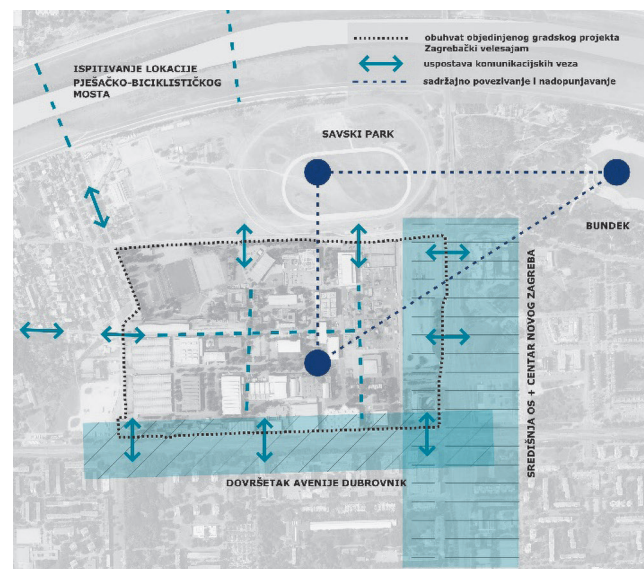


Fig. 8. Zagreb Fair -problem map / broader situation – transformation guidelines for the site

The new space could also have a congress centre, open-type hotels as well as offer business and hospitality services. It would be desirable if all these were accompanied by locations for hospitality facilities offering accommodation (hotel, hostel, student boarding, etc.) as well as education services, which would bring the site to

life. The pre-feasibility study for the congress centre was developed by the Tourism Institute (2018) [11].

Throughout history, the Zagreb Fair has always been a place for promoting and exchanging state-of-the-art technologies and new products. It has always been characterised as innovative. Therefore, the process of its planned transformation must include state-of-the-art technological solutions. That is why special attention is paid to low-carbon development [13] as well as production and rational use of eco-friendly energy resources.

## 7. Discussion and recommendations

The programme for *the Zagreb Fair* transformation should be clear and distinctive; that is, it should have a recognisable identity; it should be real and measurable, obtainable, and timely defined. It was developed in compliance with the Zagreb GUP [9] and the Development Strategy of the City of Zagreb\_Zagrebplan [12]. The transformation concept of the Zagreb Fair as an innovative district and new centre of Novi Zagreb should start from the following starting points [2]:

- The transparent and open process of site programming and planning must from the very start include in all of its phases total public and primarily the profession and the public
- The site should be approached as a whole, not in fragments and realisation phases should be determined
- New spatial preconditions should be created for implementing contemporary fair activities (up to 1/3 of the entire site), sustainability should be increased as well as the chances for business success of *Zagrebački velesajam* d.o.o.
- The existing fair and congress facilities of modern urban and architectural, functional, technical and technological features in compliance with world fair standards should be transformed, and new ones should be built
- The use of the site should correspond to the purpose of the Zagreb Fair, and good presentations of the protected cultural property – Cultural-Historic complex of *the Zagreb Fair* should be enabled
- Long-term economic and ecological sustainability, as well as site vitality, should be ensured

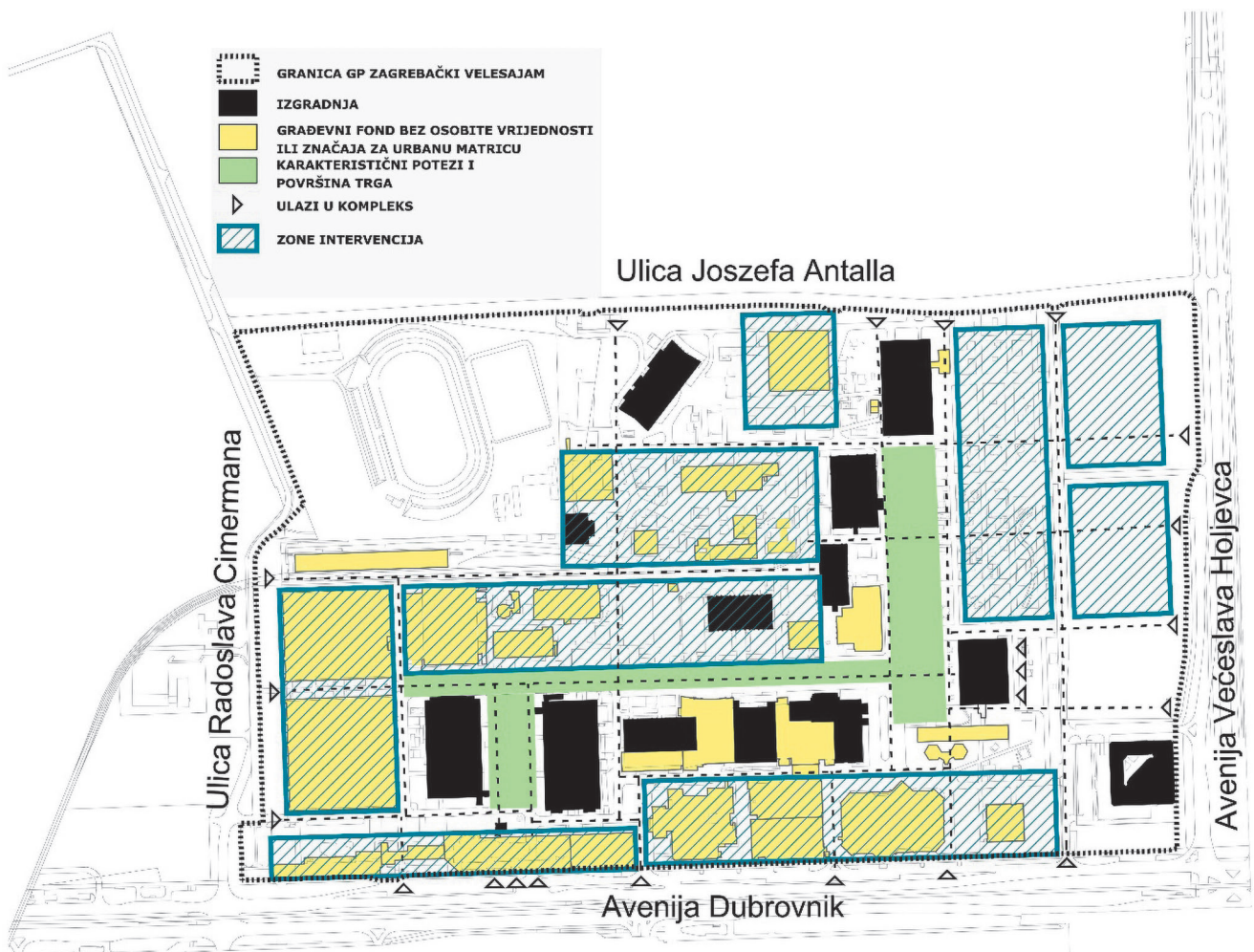


Fig. 9. Zagreb Fair – transformation guidelines of the site

- New vacancies should be created, and employment should be increased with new amenities and economic activities
- The site should be open to the surrounding sites and permeable in all directions
- The public and democratic character of the site should be created and realised.

## 8. Conclusion

In terms of content, economy, construction and infrastructure, the site requires urgent transformation, funds, and interventions. *The Zagreb Fair* site should be transformed into an innovative district. By opening this site and with new economic concepts, new amenities and structures, this site should become attractive to citizens as well as investors.

It is precisely the Programme of the City Project, published by the Faculty of Architecture in cooperation with the City Office for Strategic Planning and Development of the City, which is the starting point of its transformation to follow. The basis of the existing public space (landscape design with sculptures) is sound, and it should be accepted and included in the new comprehensive design concept. The system of traffic and parking is not organised or sufficient.

Upon observing and analysing the broader scope of Novi Zagreb, it can be concluded that *Novi Zagreb*, together with over 100,000 residents, does not have sufficient or diverse use or the capacities for cultural or sports amenities. The planned transformation of *the Zagreb Fair* site, as an innovative city district with mixed and different uses, could include these amenities either in the existing pavilions or new buildings. They represent one part of the realisation concept of an innovative district whose diversity and offer could raise the general quality of life in *Novi Zagreb*, which would be a significant contributor to the city's identity.

**Note:** *Novi Zagreb – concept of a new city* is an excerpt from the text prepared for *Prostor*, scientific journal for architecture and urbanism in which the genesis of *Novi Zagreb* will be prepared in presented in full

## References

- [1] Jukić, T; Butina Watson, G. (2018), Reuse and Revitalization of the Contemporary City Areas: Structural and Functional Transformation of Brownfield Sites. // Cultural Urban Heritage Development, Learning and Landscape Strategies / Obad Šćitaroci, Mladen; Bojanić Obad Šćitaroci, Bojana; Mrđa, Ana (ur.). Cham: Springer, 2019. str. 245-261
- [2] ----- (2018), Program gradskog projekta Zagrebački velesajam, Grad Zagreb, Arhitektonski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu i Gradski ured za strategijsko planiranje i razvoj grada
- [3] ----- Zagrebački velesajam – Konzervatorska dokumentacija, Grad Zagreb, Gradski zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture i prirode, Zagreb, 2003
- [4] ----- Zagrebačka mreža, Zagrebački velesajam (veljača 2014.)
- [5] ----- Two Pre-feasibility Studies for Zagreb Fair (Zagreb Network) and And Innovation Ecosystem in Zagreb, Bearing-consulting LTD, 2014
- [6] Structural Funds, Cohesion Fund and Instrument for Pre-Accession [Vodič za analizu troškova i koristi investicijskih projekata: Strukturni fondovi, Kohezijski fond i Instrument za prepristupnu pomoć]. Directorate General Regional Policy. Brussels.
- [7] ----- Inovacijska strategija Republike Hrvatske 2014. – 2020.
- [8] ----- (2015), Programske smjernice i program sadržaja strateškog gradskog projekta Zagrebački velesajam, Grad Zagreb, Arhitektonski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu i Gradski ured za strategijsko planiranje i razvoj grada
- [9] ----- GUP grada Zagreba (sl.gl. 16/07, 8/09, 7/13, 9/16, 12/16)
- [10] Jukić, Tihomir; Smode Cvitanović, Mojca (2011) Zagreb – Gradski projekti., Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Arhitektonski fakultet, Gradski ured za strategijsko planiranje i razvoj Grada, 2011
- [11] ----- (2018), Studija predizvodljivosti za kongresni centar, izradio Institut za turizam
- [12] ----- (2011), Grad Zagreb – Razvojna strategija Grada Zagreba – ZAGREBPLAN
- [13] ----- Strategija niskougličnog razvoja Republike Hrvatske za razdoblje 2030 s pogledom na 2050. godinu