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121-133 **RENATA ROŽEK
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CREATING *BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL AREAS* IN *URBAN/PHYSICAL PLANNING*:
LINKING THE IDEAL CITY CONCEPT WITH CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN STRATEGIES
AND CROATIAN LEGISLATION

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CREATING *BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL AREAS* IN *URBAN/PHYSICAL PLANNING*: LINKING THE IDEAL CITY CONCEPT WITH CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN STRATEGIES AND CROATIAN LEGISLATION

KEYWORDS

BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL AREAS
IDEAL CITY
PHYSICAL PLANNING
URBAN PLANNING

ABSTRACT

In this article, the authors explore the historical development of the business/commercial area concept in the ideal city, from the earliest utopian visions to contemporary sustainable urban and physical planning. The study analyzes how different urban theories, from the earliest periods of antiquity and Renaissance ideal cities, through 19th-century industrial utopias, to modern and postmodern concepts, have influenced the consideration and implementation of business and business

and commercial functions (production, crafts, services, trade, etc.) within the urban fabric. Particular emphasis was placed on identifying continuities and discontinuities in the approach to integrating economic functions into urban and physical planning. Using the Croatian legislative framework as an example, the authors aim to demonstrate how the principles of utopian thought and sustainable development have been implemented in the physical planning of these areas.

INTRODUCTION

Business functions have always been the driving force of urban development. Since ancient times, the location and organization of business and commercial activities within the urban fabric have profoundly shaped cities and residents' lives (Kostof, 1991; Hall, 2014). Business/commercial areas have significantly influenced the city's sustainable development¹ achievement and its Identity. As technology advanced, urban functions-trade, crafts, manufacturing, and large-scale industry evolved as well. The Code of Hammurabi (c. 1750 BCE) undoubtedly represents the earliest land-use legal framework initiating institutional urban management. Under the Code, the so-called grey zones (sources of pollution and noise) had to be located outside the city limits, specifically *at the city gate* (King, 1915, art. 58). Business/commercial areas' location has been a major issue in urban planning ever since.

Therefore, this research² and the article aimed to explore the reasons for the emergence of business/commercial areas within city limits over time. The physical and urban planning of these areas should not be considered just a technical process, but also a reflection of socio-economic and philosophical views on how a sustainable city³ should function. Correct planning of business/commercial area locations within city limits is crucial for the city's progress, the quality of citizens' lives, and environmental protection. If well-planned

and strategically located, these areas drive urban growth and development, becoming key factors in the city's attractiveness and livability. Using historical experience and a sense of responsibility, planners can (and *must*) create spatial conditions to provide incentives for investors (Lipovac, 2014: 207 [1027]) in new, environmentally friendly, aesthetically pleasing, and profitable business areas.

Inadequate planning in these areas undoubtedly leads to traffic congestion, environmental pollution, social inequality, and inefficient use of space. In his Ph.D. dissertation, "Planning as a Function of Preserving the Identity of Place", Prof. Lipovac has noted that many planners overlook the meaning of *Place Image* and *Sense of Place* in the planning process, primarily under pressure from business investors. Such planning neglects the importance of Place, which inevitably leads to uncontrolled business expansion, creating placeless Places and limiting the city's future spread (Lipovac, 2000).

As cities are dynamic and complex organisms, city planners must continually seek a balance between business efficiency, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. Therefore, the planned expansion of business areas should consider curtilage values and residents' needs. Planners need to recognize these values and needs and prepare physical and urban plans in the context of sustainable urban planning. Irresponsible planning, which often results in the irreplaceable loss of fertile agricultural or forested land (Lipovac, Rožek, 2020: 21), renders these areas unsustainable and creates drosscapes that would be difficult to restore to their original condition. Speaking about the connection between business areas and urban structure, Prof Šimunović has raised an important question: *How can we ensure balanced spatial development so that new trends are guided by planners and the urban community rather than by market-driven entrepreneurial forces* (Šimunović, 2018: 144).

This preliminary research examines the relationship between business areas and the ur-

¹ Sustainable development of a city is a dynamic and long-term process of planning and managing urban space and resources, the goal of which is to meet the current citizens' needs for prosperity, quality of life, and a healthy environment, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This process necessarily ensures a balance between environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

² This research is part of the doctoral dissertation *'Planning Criteria and Models for Zagreb Business Areas within Physical Planning Documents'*.

³ A sustainable city is one that functions as a healthy ecosystem, whereby economic development

ban fabric, which should be examined from multiple perspectives, as no single framework provides a comprehensive understanding. To understand their transformation, this paper will explore the origin and meaning of the key term (business area) through an analysis of historical issues, presenting a chronological methodology for the development of physical and urban planning ideas on the *ideal city* and its structure. In terms of the scientific methodology employed, this research is designed as an analytical review, drawing on scientific literature, legal documents, and official strategic documents as primary sources. In this context, this paper will provide a historical and theoretical elaboration through comparative analyses of planning business areas throughout history.

HISTORIC AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – ORIGIN AND DEFINITION OF A BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL AREA

In ancient times, the term *economics* (originally used by Aristotle as *oikonomia*) referred to the management of the household and its *surrounding estate*, including all property. Today, the term “industry” is more commonly used, but it refers only to the production of goods. One of his earliest writings on the term “*economics*” is “*Politics*” and “*Nicomachean Ethics*”. According to him, the purpose of *economics* was to acquire and rationally use goods to meet the needs and desires of family members (Aristotle, 1988b: 6). That is why he considered *economics* as a starting point for understanding city organization: business activities and relationships that shape urban space and social structures. Before considering political, social, or cultural aspects, the planner must understand how the city lives, how its population is fed, and how it produces and exchanges goods and services.

In his book, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle states that every activity has its purpose. Thus, the purpose of *economics* is to gain wealth (Aristotle, 1988a: 1). With this statement, he questions the ethics of *economic*

is achieved through careful use of space while ensuring a high quality of life and environmental protection.

4 Philosophers deal with the *ideal city* on an abstract level, thinking of a perfectly ordered society and state (*polis*). Therefore, the *ideal city* serves as a metaphor for an ideal political and social community.

5 Sociologists and political science researchers analyze the *ideal city* as a social experiment. They are interested in the social and political consequences of such urban plans and how life would unfold within the imagined structure. Thomas More, one of the founders of utopian socialism, and his visions of the *ideal city* were of significant influence on later reflections on society and the city.



FIG. 1 BUSINESS ZONE JANKOMIR, ZAGREB (2010)

activities, pointing out that the meaning of the term *economics* is not neutral, suggesting that the way wealth is acquired and utilized reflects the values of the community. This is the primary meaning for this term.

If it is possible to establish analogies between Aristotelian *oikonomia* and contemporary economy, the term *economy* encompasses all processes related to the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services within a particular society. On the other hand, the term *area* has multiple meanings, depending on its context. In the context of *Space*, the term *Area* denotes a portion of *Space* or a bounded territory. When we combine these two terms, the resulting new term denotes a specific, geographically bounded part of a space that is purposefully organized and equipped to carry out certain business activities (production, crafts, services, trade, etc.), which drive its economic/business development. The significance of these areas is reflected in the functional organization of space, ensuring efficient resource management, economic development, and urban stability while simultaneously meeting social needs. These are the essential physical planning elements that directly affect a city's quality of life.

Since antiquity, the complexity of urban structures has demanded a holistic approach to planning that enables one to observe the city as a unique entity. European policy itself requires that Cities of tomorrow *adopt a holistic model of sustainable urban development* (EU Regional Policy, 2011: VII). Despite this tendency, a fragmented approach remains prevalent in planning practice, particularly when planning business/commercial areas. Throughout history, this urban planning approach has been described by many philosophers⁴, social theorists⁵, and urban

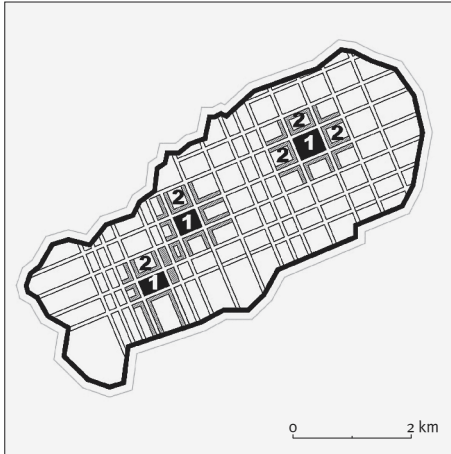


FIG. 2 FICTIONAL ANCIENT CITY LAY-OUT SCHEME, 1 MARKET AREA (AGORA), 2 CRAFT AREA (WORKSHOPS ALONG THE STREETS)

planners⁶. Drawing on historical concepts of the *Ideal City*, this paper examines the evolution of business area positioning through a literature review and historical analysis. The objective is to establish a chronology of functional zoning as a foundation for future scientific research.

HISTORY OF URBAN (PHYSICAL) PLANNING OF BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL AREAS WITHIN THE IDEAL CITY THEORIES

EARLY BEGINNINGS AND UTOPIAN VISIONS (FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE RENAISSANCE)

A significant work that contributes to understanding the impact of business activities on urban space is Lewis Mumford's *The Story of Utopias* (1922). The author emphasizes the importance of planning business/commercial areas that balance human needs with environmental considerations, while accounting for natural values. Analyzing Plato's *Republic*, he highlights the danger of uncontrolled expansion of (city's) boundaries due to the multiplication of needs (Mumford, 2008: 35). In *Christianopolis*⁷, Mumford recognizes the precursors of modern zoning through the division into 'heavy' and 'light' industry (Mumford, 2008: 81).

In the example of Cabet's *Icaria*⁸, he notes the strategic placement of industrial areas along railways and canals (Mumford, 2008: 142). The author criticizes the capitalist system for the uncontrolled spatial expansion of business/commercial areas and environmental

pollution, maintaining that economic development must be subordinated to social well-being (Mumford, 2008: 221).

Historically, business and commercial activities have been integral to the urban fabric. The Greek *agora* and the Roman *urbs* had clearly defined spaces for trade – the *agora* itself – and for artisanal activities, with workshops situated along the streets (Fig. 2). Still, these spaces were permeated with residential and public functions (Kostof, 1991). The city functioned as a whole, and market activities were a visible part of everyday life.

The first concepts of the ideal urban form emerged in Ancient Greece. Plato's concept of the Ideal State helped shape the initial principles for planning commercial areas⁹ within cities. He was aware of their potential for destabilization if not contained within strictly defined boundaries; his ideas gave rise to the concept of dividing the city into functional zones (Platon, 2002).

In the book *De Architectura Libri Decem* (c. 27 BC), Vitruvius¹⁰ focused on an interdisciplinary approach to planning, emphasizing the importance of microclimatic conditions and topography for the sustainability of the Place (Vitruvius, 1999: 18). Although he was primarily concerned with public buildings and temples, his principles also aid in planning business areas.

FIG. 3 FICTIONAL MEDIEVAL CITY LAY-OUT SCHEME, 1 MARKET ZONES, 2 CRAFT ZONES, 3 CRAFT AND TRADE ZONES (E.G. SHOEMAKERS' STREET, BLACKSMITHS' STREET), 4 LARGE MANUFACTURING WORKSHOP ZONES



⁶ Architects and urban planners have been dealing with the ideal city since the Renaissance, creating designs and plans for the creation and management of such a city. One of them is the architect Filarete and his city of *Sforzinda*, where he sought symmetry, harmony, and functionality. In recent history, planners have envisioned the ideal city, as seen in the works of Le Corbusier (*Radiant City*) and Ebenezer Howard (*Garden City*). Both tried to solve the problems of industrialization through radical new planning.

⁷ *Christianopolis*, written by Andreä Johann Valentin (1586-1654), describes an ideal Christian City-State, conceived as a model for the future social and religious reform, whereby every single part of life, including work, would be carefully planned and controlled.

⁸ Cabet, Étienne (1788-1856), French utopian socialist, described his views on the *Ideal City-State* in his book "The Voyage to Icaria" (*Le Voyage en Icarie*, 1840).

⁹ According to the European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT, 2006) Glossary (which was signed and accepted by all European countries, including Croatia), there is a substantial difference between the two key terms: Physical Planning and Spatial Planning. *Physical Planning* is closely linked to land-use planning, urban design, transport planning, landscape planning, building design, and related fields. It addresses activities that immediately affect and program the physical structure and environment of cities and neighborhoods (as opposed to economic planning or social planning activities). By contrast, Spatial Planning refers to the methods used by the public sector to influence the distribution of people and activities across space at various

Medieval cities continued the tradition of ancient cities through guild quarters and marketplaces, while the first 'industrial zones' were established outside the city walls solely due to noise and pollution (Fig. 3). These cities were built according to the natural terrain, defense needs, and historical settlement structures (Milic, 1995).

In contrast to medieval cities, Renaissance ideal cities placed new emphasis on geometric perfection, symmetry, and defensive functionality. Renaissance artists and architects¹¹ sought harmony, symmetry, and proportion (Rosenau, 1983). Economic functions are often subordinated to aesthetic and defensive concerns. Markets were again located in central squares, while roads were planned to facilitate the efficient flow of people and goods. Zoning for economic functions (such as manufacturing) had not yet been planned in detail (Fig. 4).

In the early Renaissance, a key contribution was made by Leon Battista Alberti and his book *De re Aedificatoria*¹² (1452), in which he emphasized the exceptional importance of urban planning and city functional zoning. He proposes relocating 'dirty' trades to the periphery and grouping shops according to their affinity, thereby laying the foundations for the modern spatial organization of business zones and commercial areas (Milic, 2002: 44). Alberti's understanding of the

scales, as well as the siting of infrastructure, recreation areas, and natural areas. These activities are carried out at different administrative or governmental levels (local, regional, national).

10 Vitruvius Pollio, Marcus (1st century BC), Roman architect and engineer.

11 The most prominent Renaissance artists and architects who were engaged in creating plans for the Ideal City and establishing theoretical foundations are: Alberti, Leon Battista (1404-1472) Italian builder, sculptor, painter, writer and mathematician; Filarete (Antonio di Pietro Averlino) (c. 1400-1469) Italian sculptor, builder and theorist, Sforzinda; Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) Italian painter, sculptor, builder, engineer and writer; Scamozzi, Vincenzo (1552-1616) Italian builder, engineer and theorist of architecture, the oldest example of a realized Ideal City is Palmanova.

12 This book served as a comprehensive manual for numerous architects and urban planners, representing a combination of classical principles and the spirit of the Renaissance.

13 Thünen, Johann Heinrich von, (1783-1850), German economist

14 Utopian socialists criticized capitalism and developed plans for the operation of new, more just societies. Their most prominent representatives are: Robert Owen (1771-1858), British utopian socialist and social reformer known for his work "A New View of Society" (1813) containing the philosophy of social reforms; Charles Fourier, (1772-1837), French philosopher and economist known for his work "Le Nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire" (1829); he introduced the "phalange" community model; Étienne Cabet (1788-1856).

city's functional zoning set the foundations for defining conditions for urban/physical planning of economic areas in the later period of industrialization.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND RESPONSES TO ITS CHALLENGES (19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

The first structured theory of location was introduced in the first half of the 19th century by Johann Heinrich von Thünen¹³ through the concept of locational rent, the value of land that depends on the distance from the market (city) and transportation costs. Although this theory primarily concerns agriculture, it offers a historical explanation for why distance governed initial patterns of spatial organization prior to industrialization (Thünen, 1910).

The Industrial Revolution, while driving technological progress, also generated acute social issues – notably poverty and inadequate housing. In response, utopian socialists¹⁴ were the first to propose an alternative, advocating social reform through the creation of ideal, self-sufficient communities that balance life and work (Mumford, 2008). Early theorists also conceived of health-oriented cities, such as Papworth's *Hygeia* (1827), which proposed zoning and relocating industry to the periphery. These proposals preceded later principles of functionalism (Share, 1982).

With the development of industry in the 19th century, the creation of business zones on the outskirts of cities, along roads, railways, and rivers began (Fig. 5). During this period,

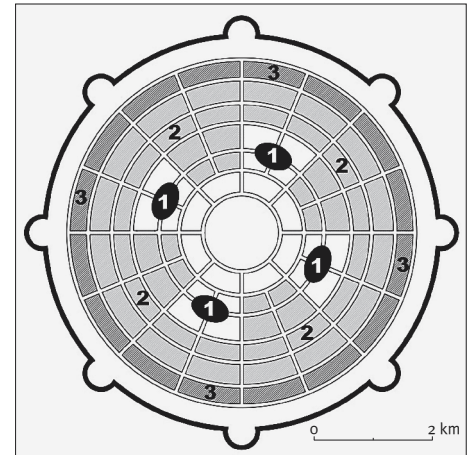


FIG. 4 FICTIONAL RENAISSANCE IDEAL CITY LAY-OUT SCHEME, 1 MARKET ZONES, 2 CLEAN CRAFT ZONES, 3 DIRTY CRAFT ZONES

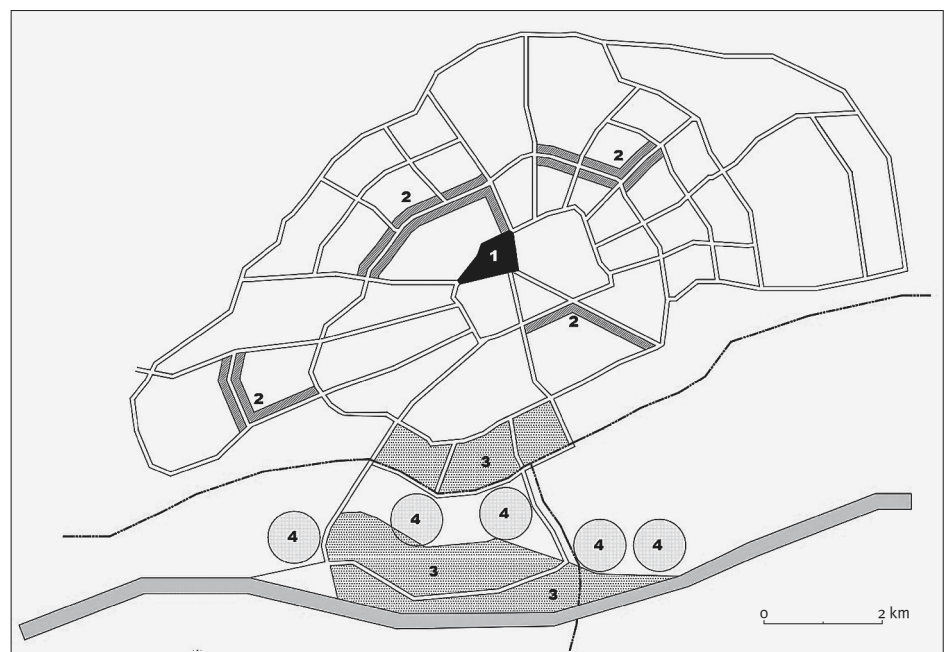


FIG. 5 FICTIONAL INDUSTRIAL CITY AREA, 1 MARKET AREAS, 2 CRAFT AREAS, 3 INDUSTRIAL AREA, 4 WORKERS' HOUSING ESTATES

architects began to be engaged in urban zoning, focusing on systematic planning and a more deliberate organization of the city. In his book *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, British architect and critic Kenneth Frampton provides a comprehensive overview of the history of planning the ideal industrial city, emphasizing how technological progress directly dictated the choice of locations to facilitate the transport of goods and access to energy and raw materials. Due to the constant need for workers, residential settlements were created, mostly unplanned, around these areas (Frampton, 1992).

The *Industrial Revolution* radically transformed cities, creating overcrowded, polluted districts where factories were intertwined with housing (Hall, 2014). Movements like *Port Sunlight*¹⁵ introduced planned zoning to separate industry from housing, aiming to improve the health and morale of the working class through the control of urban form (Beeson, 1911; Hubbard, Shippobottom, 2005). Simultaneously, the *City Beautiful Movement* in America focused on monumentality and the aesthetics of public spaces, indirectly encouraging the relocation of 'dirty' industry from city centers to create a more attractive urban image (Wilson, 1989).

These efforts shaped the principles of spatial separation and economic organization, laying the groundwork for later urban experiments. Soria y Mata¹⁶ developed the *Linear City (Ciudad Lineal)* along a central transport axis, strategically siting industry near railways to balance economic efficiency and residential planning, a concept that remains relevant in contemporary debates on urban structure (Ángel, Rubio, 2017). A similar principle of rational planning was advocated by Edward Bellamy¹⁷ in his utopia, *Looking Backward* (1888), which argued that social equality and economic prudence could be achieved only through centralized social organization (Decker, 2018).

The most effective response to the problems of the industrial city was Ebenezer Howard's 'Garden City' concept (Vernet, Coste, 2017; Nabila, 2021; Hugo, Bhanye, 2022: 42). He proposed deurbanization through self-sufficient communities with ring-zoning, integrating housing and agriculture with industry located on the periphery near railways to protect residential areas (Howard, 2007).

The first example of modern functional zoning is represented by Tony Garnier's¹⁸ *Cité Industrielle*. The city is divided into industrial, residential, and public spaces, with industry situated along railway and water routes, separated from housing by a green belt (Frampton, 1992: 112-116).

With the transition from agriculture to industry, a key shift in the determination of business location was the *Industrial Location Theory* set by Alfred Weber¹⁹ (Hugo, Bhanye, 2022: 42-43). This planning model was dominant until the mid-20th century and was based on minimizing costs through three key factors: transportation, labor, and industrial agglomeration (Weber, 1909).

MODERNISM AND FUNCTIONAL ZONING (FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY)

The 20th century was a period in which modernism prevailed, leading to the belief that all urban problems could be solved by city functional zoning. The International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM), founded in 1928, played a key role in developing a new theory. Concurrently, the radical visions of Antonio Sant'Elia²⁰ (1914) shaped the ideal modern city, emphasizing movement, vertical structures, and the clear separation of industrial and commercial areas from residential ones (Birolli, 2018).

Fifteen years later, the fundamental *New Urbanism* document, the Athens Charter (1933), was adopted, establishing strict functional zoning as the primary planning principle (Le Corbusier, 1973). The city is strictly divided into four functions (housing, work, recreation, and transport), with factories relocated to the periphery to ensure healthy living conditions. This vision was epitomized in Le Corbusier's *La Ville radieuse* (1935) (Fishman, 1982; Frampton, 1992).

Subsequently, the core of functional zoning was developed under international influences, notably the *Bauhaus* principles of functionalism, which shaped urban planning, particularly by separating industrial from residential zones, thereby laying the groundwork for the rational organization of space (Wingler, 1976). The *New Frankfurt Project*, led by Ernst May (a German architect and urban planner), applied Garden City and zoning

¹⁵ *Port Sunlight* represents a combination of exemplary industrial housing, which provides workers with decent living conditions, with architectural and landscape values of a "garden suburb".

¹⁶ Soria y Mata, Arturo (1844-1920), Spanish urban planner and engineer

¹⁷ Bellamy Edward (1850-1898), American publicist and writer

¹⁸ Tony Garnier (1869-1948) French architect and urban planner

¹⁹ Weber, Alfred (1868-1958), German economist, sociologist, and geographer

²⁰ Sant'Elia, Antonio (1888-1916), Italian architect and theorist

²¹ Some of the most prominent contemporary architecture theorists are for sure: Jane Jacobs (1916-2006),

principles to rationalize the industrial city by *separating housing from industry* (Elder, 2014; Zapatel, 2017). Similar principles are evident in Soviet urbanism, where, under the influence of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus, ideas for the ideal socialist city were developed and organized in a modular manner along transit routes (Miliutin et al, 1975). During the 1930s, all new Soviet industrial cities were built according to the same planning regulations, regardless of local conditions (Meerovich, 2014).

Frank Lloyd Wright offered a different vision through his *Broadacre City Project*, based on total decentralization and individual freedom in harmony with nature. This concept envisioned family plots for housing and food production, with crafts and trade integrated into the landscape and cars and telephones as key means of connectivity (Fishman, 1982; Frampton, 1992).

After World War II, Le Corbusier's *Chandigarh* became a prime example of modernism, blending classical concepts with the garden city model. Despite its strict functional zoning, this project laid the groundwork for the contemporary '15-minute city' by introducing self-sufficient sectors. By relocating industry to the periphery and reducing the need for movement within neighborhoods, it aimed to ensure a high quality of residential life (Rodríguez-Lora, Rosado and Navas-Carrillo, 2021).

POSTMODERNISM AND THE CRITIQUE OF FUNCTIONAL ZONING (THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY)

With the development of postmodernism and critical urban theory in the mid-20th century, earlier modernist ideals of comprehensive solutions and functional land zoning came under scrutiny. Contemporary architecture theorists²¹ focused on specific challenges and values, with the main starting points be-

ing the connection of functions, strengthening local resilience, sustainability, and social equity. Critiques of the functional zoning began within the CIAM profession itself, through the activities of the Team X group, which rejected Le Corbusier's rigid rationalism in favor of an 'open society' and a more human scale (Pedret, 2001).

During the last decade of the 20th century, Jane Jacobs²² offered a radically different approach to urban planning. In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs criticizes the consequences of functional zoning and advocates mixed-use spaces in which housing, retail, and small-scale industry are intertwined. Her ideas marked a turning point in urban thought, emphasizing that life cannot be separated from the economy without damaging the fabric of the city (Jacobs, 1993).

Building on these ideas, Christopher Alexander²³, in his publication 'A City is Not a Tree', made a significant contribution to the critique of *modernism*. He pointed out that real cities do not function as hierarchical, isolated entities, but as a complex, interconnected network, criticizing the sterility and inhumanity of modernist plans (Alexander, 2013).

These theoretical foundations led to the development of postmodernist practices, including *New Urbanism* – a movement promoting a return to traditional building forms, walkability, mixed-use development, and public spaces (Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck, 2000). Today, this trend is amplified by the digital economy, which blurs the boundaries between work and home (Garde, 2020). Simultaneously, the emergence of the *footloose industry*²⁴ concept, such as IT and creative industries, enabled the integration of business activities directly into the urban fabric, adapting the city to contemporary needs (Allen, Stone, 1989).

CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES AND CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (21ST CENTURY)

Contemporary approaches to European physical planning in the 21st century focus on sustainable urban development, which emerged in response to criticisms of postmodernism. While postmodernism strives for mixed-use development, it often neglects broader social and environmental concerns. Based on these principles, the new physical planning goal should be to create business areas that are ecologically, socially, and economically acceptable (UN-Habitat, 2016). The main instruments for achieving these goals are contained in 3 key initiatives: the *European*

American-Canadian journalist and activist; Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), French philosopher and sociologist; and David Harvey (1935-), geographer and Marxist theorist.

²² Jacobs, Jane (1916-2006), American-Canadian journalist and city activist

²³ Alexander, Christopher (1936-2022), British-American architect, design theorist, and professor

²⁴ The term describes a business that isn't tied to a specific location because it doesn't heavily rely on local resources, labor, or transport of any kind. This business can be situated nearly anywhere with good transit networks, skilled labor, or market access. Examples are software development, computer chip manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and call centers, often characterized by high-value, low-weight products and eco-friendliness.

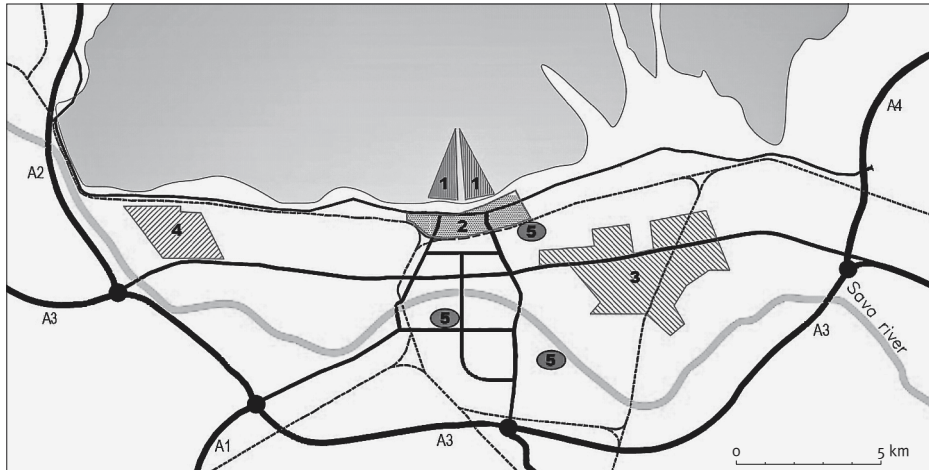


FIG. 6 ZAGREB BUSINESS AREAS LAY-OUT SCHEME, 1 SMALL CRAFTS, 2 DOWNTOWN (SMALL BUSINESS AND TRADE CENTERS AND BUILDINGS), 3 ŽITNJAK (INDUSTRY AND TRADE CENTERS), 4 JANKOMIR (INDUSTRY AND TRADE CENTERS), 5. BROWNFIELD LOCATIONS

*Green Deal*²⁵, the *Urban Agenda 2030*²⁶, and the *New European Bauhaus*²⁷.

These frameworks steer planners away from linear production models toward regenerative practices. The principles of *circular economy*²⁸ require business areas to be treated as hubs for recycling, renewable energy, and resource reuse (Geissdoerfer et al, 2017). Parallel to this, the '15-minute city' model (Moreno et al, 2021) encourages the development of smaller manufacturing and logistics activities within short distances, challenging the traditional separation of housing and work.

Rather than expanding into new greenfield sites, the focus should shift toward the revitalization of abandoned industrial brownfield sites and environmental preservation. It is necessary to incorporate circular economy principles to reduce waste and promote the use of renewable energy and 'green' industry. Due to changes such as the growth of e-commerce, strict zoning is being replaced by flexible frameworks that permit mixed-use functions and the transformation of older zones into logistics, R&D, or creative hubs. The goal is to create sustainable business zones that are integrated into the urban fabric and aligned with the EU's socio-economic and environmental standards.

PHYSICAL PLANNING OF BUSINESS AREAS AND CROATIAN LEGISLATION

Following theoretical reviews of utopian and sustainable concepts of the ideal city, it is essential, using content analysis, to examine how these principles have been applied in practice in Croatian legislation. The Croatian context is highly relevant to the broader European framework as it represents a post-socialist country transforming its planning system while simultaneously integrating con-

temporary EU norms and strategic policy frameworks (e.g., the *Green Deal*).

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, urban (physical) planning in Croatia was based on the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia Building Acts (Smrekar, 1902). The modern legal framework was established by the *Physical and Regional Planning Act* (1961)²⁹ and further defined by the *Spatial Planning and Building Land Use Act* (1973)³⁰. Historical analysis indicates a strong influence of CIAM and the Athens Charter over the domestic practice. During the socialist period, these principles led to the adoption of strict functional zoning, resulting in the development of large industrial zones on the urban periphery, such as Žitnjak and Jankomir in Zagreb.

That approach embodied the modern ideal of total separation of work from residential areas. This functionalist legacy continues to exert a strong influence on planning today. Although contemporary plans have evolved to respond to new social demands, the core principle of spatial segregation between residential, recreational, and business areas has remained virtually unchanged.

The *Physical and Spatial Planning Act* (1980)³¹ had a profound impact on the physical planning practice (until 1994) in the independent and sovereign Republic of Croatia. Although it was adopted during the Yugoslav period, urban and physical planners applied its legal regulations in the years following Croatian independence. The planning goal of that time was to harmonize planning with socio-economic interests and to protect/improve the human environment. Although this Act provided specific legal stability, its foundations, imbued with the utopian ideals of socialism regarding social planning and spatial development, could not fully respond to the new challenges that emerged with Croatia's independence.

New Croatian laws have gradually moved away from the strict zoning model. The *Spa-*

²⁵ The European Green Deal (2019) sets the course toward climate-neutral economies, requiring the application of circular economy principles and the promotion of industrial symbiosis in spatial planning.

²⁶ The Urban Agenda 2030, guides cities toward the integrated planning of functional and socially cohesive zones.

²⁷ The New European Bauhaus (2021), redefines purely functional industrial spaces, linking sustainability with aesthetics and social inclusion through co-designed urban spaces.

²⁸ The World Economic Forum defines a *circular economy* as "an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design."

²⁹ Zakon u urbanističkom i regionalnom prostornom planiranju (*Narodne novine* br. 21/1961, 40/1964, 29/1966, 18/1969)

tial Planning Act (1994)³² and the *Spatial Planning and Construction Act* (2007)³³ have introduced greater flexibility and decentralization, thereby strengthening the role of local authorities in planning their own spaces. However, the basic division into zones has been retained. These laws have established a hierarchical system of physical planning (state, county, and city/municipal) that enables the implementation of broader strategies at the local level. The approach has evolved from idealistic visions of controlled and organized urban growth to address real-world needs. The selected example is the City of Zagreb (Fig. 1), where a dynamic compromise is evident in the General Urban Plan (GUP) and its implementation decisions. Idealistic visions often clash with the specific interests of the market and investors, leading to a persistent conflict between the goals of sustainable development and the demands for rapid economic growth.

A schematic presentation of Zagreb's main commercial areas and business zones indicates that the central area has greater sustainable potential (brownfield redevelopment) than faster, more profitable peripheral development (Fig. 6). This spatial pattern reflects the continuity of functional zoning and the persistent challenge of a sustainable integration of business/commercial areas.

The most significant breakthrough occurred with the adoption of the *Spatial Planning Act* in 2013³⁴, which retained the hierarchy of physical and urban plans and zoning while emphasizing sustainable development, integrated planning, and environmental protection. Rather than utopian ideals, it represents a practical approach developed in response to the real challenges and needs of modern Croatian society. It regulates the procedures, obligations, and responsibilities of various participants (the state, counties, cities/municipalities, planners, and residents/investors) to ensure legality and efficiency in the implementation of physical and urban plans.

30 Zakon o prostornom uređenju i korištenju građevinskog zemljišta (*Narodne novine* br. 14/1973, 15/1979)

31 Zakon o prostornom planiranju i uređivanju prostora (*Narodne novine* br. 54/1980, 16/1986, 18/1989, 47/1989, 34/1991, 61/1991, 49/1992, 26/1993, 59/1993, 14/1994, 29/1994)

32 Zakon o prostornom uređenju (*Narodne novine* br. 30/1994, 68/1998, 35/1999, 61/2000, 32/2002, 100/2004)

33 Zakon o prostornom uređenju i gradnji (*Narodne novine* br. 76/2007, 38/2009, 55/2011, 90/2011, 50/2012, 55/2012, 80/2013)

34 Zakon o prostornom uređenju (*Narodne novine* br. 153/2013, 65/2017, 114/2018, 39/2019, 98/2019, 67/2023)

Although it is not a utopian vision, legislative development demonstrates a continuous effort to apply planning and urban theories in practice through the preparation and adoption of physical and urban plans. The goal of this legislative framework is to create functional, economically sustainable, and environmentally acceptable areas for the development of business areas that will benefit all space users.

The planning of business/commercial areas is carried out through a hierarchy of physical and urban plans. At the highest level, there are two planning documents: the Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia and the National Physical Development Plan, which establish general guidelines and locations for business/commercial areas at the state and county levels of interest. At the county level, the County Physical Plan determines the locations of business/commercial areas of county importance, considering specific characteristics, environmental values, and each region's potential. The most detailed development of business areas is carried out at the local level. The City or Municipality Physical Plan determines the primary land use of space within an administrative boundary, including zoning for business/commercial areas. For more detailed planning within these areas, physical and/or urban planners are responsible for preparing Urban Development Plans. These plans precisely define the boundaries of business/commercial areas, the road network, the locations and sizes of building plots, and the planning conditions for their construction.

Thus, through this complex planning and environmental protection system, utopian ideas about functionality have been transformed into a set of rules that ensure the region's development is and will be in accordance with environmental and sustainable conditions, preserving the identity of Places (Municipalities, Cities, Counties/Regions).

Despite the modernization of the law, challenges typical of the post-transition period arise in practice. An analysis of business/commercial areas in Istria (Čok, Kavaš, and Zimmermann, 2016) shows how the legal goals of sustainable development clash with market needs. In Istria, planning has resulted in an excess of space allocated to business/commercial areas, due to unplanned, fragmented planning driven by short-term and political interests rather than strategic market needs. The authors emphasized that, despite the hierarchy of plans, the lack of transparency in data regarding the purpose and infrastructure of these areas has made zon-

ing an ineffective tool for managing spatial and business development.

Furthermore, the lack of explicit incorporation of European investment and policy mechanisms (e.g., funding for circular-economy projects or incentives for brownfield regeneration linked to the *Green Deal*) into physical planning documents weakens the potential for strategic, sustainable growth.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted so far has confirmed that the history of planning business and commercial zones near cities is a very complex process, interwoven with utopian ideas of the *Ideal City*. From the organic integration in ancient and medieval cities to the functional zoning of modernism and contemporary aspirations for sustainable development, physical and urban planning is a testimony to social changes that have occurred throughout history.

The central research problem addressed in this paper is the persistent conflict between the historical legacy of strict functional zoning, inherited from the modernist era (CIAM), and the contemporary drive toward integrated, sustainable, and aesthetically cohesive urban development, as defined by European policies. In Croatia, despite the legal framework supporting sustainable development, practice is often constrained by numerous obstacles. Despite well-defined legal regulations and guidelines that are crucial to sustainable spatial development, the law remains vague regarding physical and urban planning, as well as the future sustainable development of business/commercial areas. The law has not recognized business/commercial areas as a distinct category; instead, the emphasis is on the term “economy” and on ensuring spatial conditions for business development as a primary goal of physical planning. This interpretation enables planners, local self-governments, and investors to determine other spatial conditions for economic development themselves, thereby primarily pushing goals into the background. The actual planning process is often influenced by the interests of short-term investors and by the fulfillment of general planning conditions derived from legislative Acts, which undoubtedly leads to unplanned built spaces.

The key findings of this study highlight a pronounced continuity of functionalism within Croatian legislation. The Croatian spatial planning system, established during the post-war development period, has maintained strict functional separation in line with CIAM principles. This historical framework continues to determine the location of large business zones today. At the same time, there is a significant lack of explicit mechanisms for incorporating European strategic frameworks, such as the *Green Deal*, the *New European Bauhaus*, and *circular-economy* principles, into domestic spatial plans. This prevents effective brownfield regeneration and the transformation of business/commercial areas into mixed-use models or ‘15-minute cities,’ as economic zones are integrated into residential areas without clear criteria, undermining the quality of urban development.

This paper’s overall contribution lies in establishing a comprehensive historical and theoretical framework that connects the evolution of planning ideas about the *Ideal City* with contemporary challenges in physical planning for business/commercial areas within the Croatian legislative context. By identifying critical discrepancies between historical planning ideals (functional zoning) and contemporary needs for sustainability and mixed-use development, this research provides the necessary theoretical foundation for future planning processes and policy making. The main application of the research results is to guide planners and decision-makers in the thoughtful planning of business areas by prioritizing social, environmental, and economic values to address practical problems identified in the Croatian planning environment.

The primary limitation of this study is its reliance on legislative and theoretical review. The beginning of this (wider) research provided a historical overview of the planning of business/commercial areas, envisioned through urban planning theories and the implementation of principles for utopian and sustainable cities within the Croatian legal framework and physical planning practice. Future research will focus on a more detailed analysis of practical examples from existing planned economic areas, aiming to identify the best practices and potential improvements in the planning process.

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FIG. 3 Drawing by authors, 2025

FIG. 4 Drawing by authors, 2025

FIG. 5 Drawing by authors, 2025

FIG. 6 Drawing by authors, 2025

