

**PART 3**

**WROCLAW**

**GROUP**

**3**

**SHARPEN THE EYE**



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**ANALYSIS OF THE CITY**

> A pragmatic look at the city highlighted its green – blue assets. Like many cities, Wrocław was located on its river for its livelihood. The river system continues to play a prime role as a symbol and a nature reserve in the city structure, although its economic functions such as navigation have declined. Its propensity to flood has turned the river into a risk and has impaired its accessibility, safe for speculative developments in flood planes contradicting plans. Rivers present also obstacles to traffic flows due to lack of crossings. Wrocław's large amount of green areas, agricultural land and allotments is a historic accident which endows the city with unique assets. Disliked by planners and developers allotments provide a sense of belonging and a socialising platform for their users. Continuous car based suburbanisation has worsened traffic and pollution and threatens Wrocław's considerable heritage.

**EXPECTED GROWTH**

> These salient features are put into the perspective of Wrocław's development dynamic and considered from a demographic, economic, ecological and competitiveness point of view as the basis for our proposed interventions.



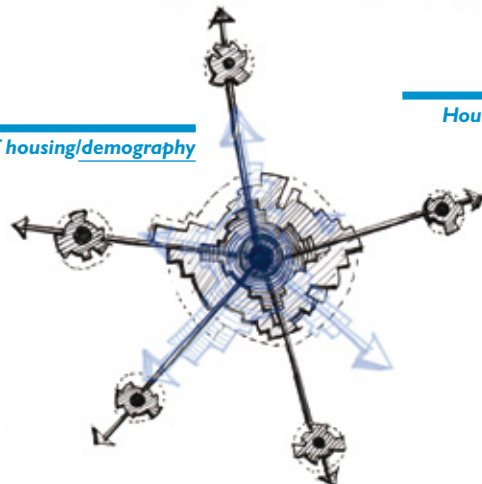
Wrocław's demographic dynamic leads us to think that it is undergoing a trend to suburbanisation with sprawl along the main radials and a set of higher density clusters in the short term. This may reverse in the longer term due to aging population and investment potential in inner city housing. Competition for tourism is fierce and Wrocław would have to emphasise its niche offer also for local tourism to sustain current levels. It is already diversifying to business and cultural tourism with the refurbishment of the Centennial Hall, the bid for European city of culture and the regeneration of its historic centre. While local transportation is still viable, except for car traffic and the planned expansion of the airport, but wider connections are weak and investment in regional links would be important.

Large scale shopping malls seem to exceed demand, especially without better regional connections. They are also displacing local businesses and reducing local services which harm the local economy and quality of life while generating more car traffic with all its adverse effects. They are also encroaching on the public realm despite their offer of public activities. Judging from widespread experience such malls tend to become early brownfield sites and represent an environmental and economic loss for the city. It could be argued that Wrocław may be prone to climate change with its large flood plane and poor flood defences. Giving in to development pressures on allotments would also reduce soil permeability which contribute to a better water management, heat island reduction and a lower CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. The same is true for agricultural land. Increasing car ownership and use are degrading air quality, besides contributing to greenhouse gases.

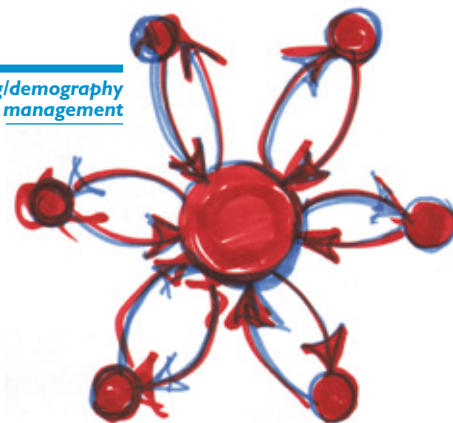
**PROPOSALS**

In the light of current 'organic' development pressures and the planned spatial strategies we are making some concrete sectoral proposals to steer Wrocław towards a more sustainable future.

*Expected growth of housing/demography*



*Housing/demography management*



- > For us, population movements and housing constitute the main challenge and both inward and outward movements could be managed through incentives and guidance to achieve a compact urban fabric. While managing outward flows may help to containing sprawl, managing inward flows should pay attention to gentrification and the need to preserve public spaces. Possible interventions are improving centrally located services, refurbishing and making existing modernist housing more attractive, introducing mixed uses, and providing realistic information on urban fringe living.
- > Transportation and tourism have a great impact on the city's economic wellbeing. Better uses of the river for recreation and mobility would bring benefits to the city as a whole, as would improved public transport links with other tourist attractors, such as Prague, Warsaw and Krakow, together with the provision of facilities for business tourism. Possibilities are bidding for international events such as hosting Capital of Culture in 2016, or finding further international uses for the Euro 2012 football installations.
- > The speculative increase of shopping malls is threatening existing small enterprises and single-person businesses, which are supposed to innovate

and drive the economy. Public-private-partnerships could be encouraged to make small businesses more attractive in their localities and valorise their presence as an important contribution to the local economy.

Green-blue issues should be addressed in a genuine sustainability strategy, dealing with all environmental aspects and involving all stakeholders. Detailed plans with risk assessments, should be established for the most significantly heritage sites. This should include the use of flood planes, the designation of no man's land allowing temporary structures to enhance green blue corridors through the city. Allotments are a sensitive political issue and need careful balancing between their social cultural values, their potential for urban agriculture and development pressures which are not very justified in a city with a large number of brownsite fields and a lot of open land. Reorganising tenure to protect their natural heritage value and provide security to those who invest themselves into them should form part of this approach. Wrocław's extensive river system has great potential for reducing dependency on coal by introducing micro hydro plants and harnessing nature sustainably with dams and polders.

