



spatial development

From a monocentric Prague to a polycentric one

Prague wants to reach a position where it can alleviate the centre and make more balanced use of all its territory.

In an effort to realize this strategic vision the city administration (elected bodies, authorities and city organizations) in co-operation with the public and private sectors and the people of Prague are pledged to do the following:

- Develop system of city-wide, district and local centres that are easily accessible for the people from all parts of the city.*
- Do what it can to see that selected parts of the city are transformed in a sensitive way to becoming new centres by making them pleasant and attractive localities with a rich selection of job opportunities, services and public facilities.*
- In developing these new city centres, follow the resulting relief of the historical centre and preservation of the genia loci.*
- Do its best to improve the spatial structure and the architectonic quality of Prague.*



A balanced development

Prague has been able to preserve a comprehensive and varied spectrum of buildings and urban structures; emanating from various ages from Prague's thousand year old history. This dynamic balance and at the same time, joint tension between: unity and variety, between the permanent and the changing, between the physical structure and the on-going activities which are the basis of Prague's *genia loci*. The quality of urban management and Prague's architecture, namely in the historical core, must continue to be one of the keys to development potential in the future. Effective use of this potential requires a joint and clear general overview of city spatial development and definite implementation policies. The reason is clear; rising demands on current limited space which create pressure for change. If Prague succumbed to this pressure it would result in cultural and historical devastation and the consequential economic losses. Prague cannot, however, bring in tough limits to aid the development, because Prague would then lose its attraction within the European framework. The solution is to offer attractive locations for development outside the historical centre.

The change over from a heavily monocentric system to a polycentric one is also an opportunity for the poorly equipped local boroughs of Prague to acquire a full range of facilities with an important selection of job opportunities. This long-term transformation from monocentric to polycentric structure requires support and resources from both the public and private sectors. In meeting these strategic aims, the authorities are going to balance public interest with that from the private sector as necessary.

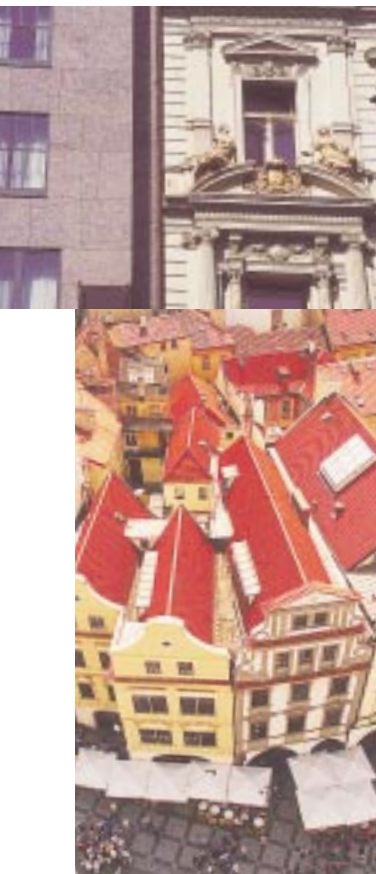
It is in the public interest to develop this new city-wide centres which will have city-wide and still wider importance as they will be well-served by public transport, mainly by the underground. Any other location of these centres would bring on, if successfully developed, a rise in car use which is at odds with the aims of the overall strategic plan.

At present and in the near future it is safe to say, that, in terms economic feasibility; the most viable projects are those that invest into office buildings and large-scale business facilities. Concentration on this type of private investor is leading to the emergence of two types of facility: commercial administration centres or large shopping centres of regional importance. Such shopping centres have already emerged on the outskirts of Prague (Černý Most, Letňany, Zličín) and also in the surroundings (Čestlice), but here there is the problem of inadequate public transport connections. At the moment the rise of commercial administrative centres is mainly in areas or premises of the proposed new city-wide centres: – in Smíchov, Pankrác and Karlín. Currently, Smíchov and Karlín have the best chance to become full functioning city-wide centres in the near future because they already offer housing and temporary accommodation along with a strong network of smaller business interests, restaurants, cafes and recreational facilities. The attraction and growing popularity of large shopping parks on the edge of the city has already started the process of the creation of the city-wide centres but has impeded the rise of other proposed district centres like: Opatov, Hostivař, Nový Dvůr, Nové Butovice, Dejvice and Libeň. These district centres could attract some activities of city-wide importance and should become fully functioning centre of its area and borough. The whole process needs to be thoroughly thought out on both a local and city-wide scale, including from an ecological point of view.

A harmonious town area

To reach such a harmony is dependent on how far and how successfully the strategic aims, of the 5 areas described earlier, will be linked to the spatial development activities. The basic strategic aim in the spatial development of the city is the change over from a monocentric to polycentric structure. In connection with this it is necessary to pay attention to the city areas which lie without the historical core, and also outside the new city-wide, district and local centres.

In order to reach a harmonious city environment it is necessary to respect the interrelationship of the functions and individual places. The basis for systematic maintenance and development of these links is a new urban policy founded on a balanced use of the three historically created belt areas – the centre as a whole, compact centre and the outer belt.



The city-wide centre is serviced by the historical core at the moment. The offer of attractive sites in the new city-wide centres are reducing the demands made upon the historical centre which in turn is opening up new opportunities for the preservation and how to make suitable use of its unique qualities. It will be possible to renew and improve those public spaces currently overwhelmed by traffic.

The extent of the compact city was limited by the original Prague suburban areas with its council housing in garden cities dating from the pre Second World War era and also limited by the construction of Prague housing estates. There are no plans for extensive measures to be taken into the spatial structure of the original Prague suburbs. The emergence of district centres within the compact city can have a great positive influence on the current disproportionate use of areas throughout the day and inefficient use of specialized housing zones (housing estates) and industry. The current situation has improved a lot where there was a great distance between home, workplaces and the centre. This resulted in a disproportionately high demand on public transport, which is concentrated on one way rush hour traffic. For this reason for the current changes on the monofunctional urban structures should not be aggressive unification with the character of the city centre buildings, but should be based on finding their own identity and spatial order.

The outer belt is dominated by the suburban landscape with its original rural settlement. All new construction should sensitively tie-in with these traditions. The outer belt provides the best conditions for the extensive development of green areas and for reaching ecological stability system by linking up with selected green areas and water elements. It is possible to reach the aims of balanced development only through effective co-operation with the Central Bohemia Region.

The nature of development along the city boundaries – Central Bohemia Region – will make a great difference to the spatial and functioning structure of the city and will influence the importance of the historical centre and the change over process to a polycentric structure.

Strategic aims

C 1 A more balanced use of town space

C 1.1 Access to the centres, public facilities and services

C 1.2 Sensitive completion of the development of those city parts set aside for the new city-wide and district centres.

C 2 Develop the quality of the spatial structure and architecture in Prague

C 2.1 Preserve, where necessary complete the creation of, the local parts of Prague

C 2.2 Better access and more attractive public areas

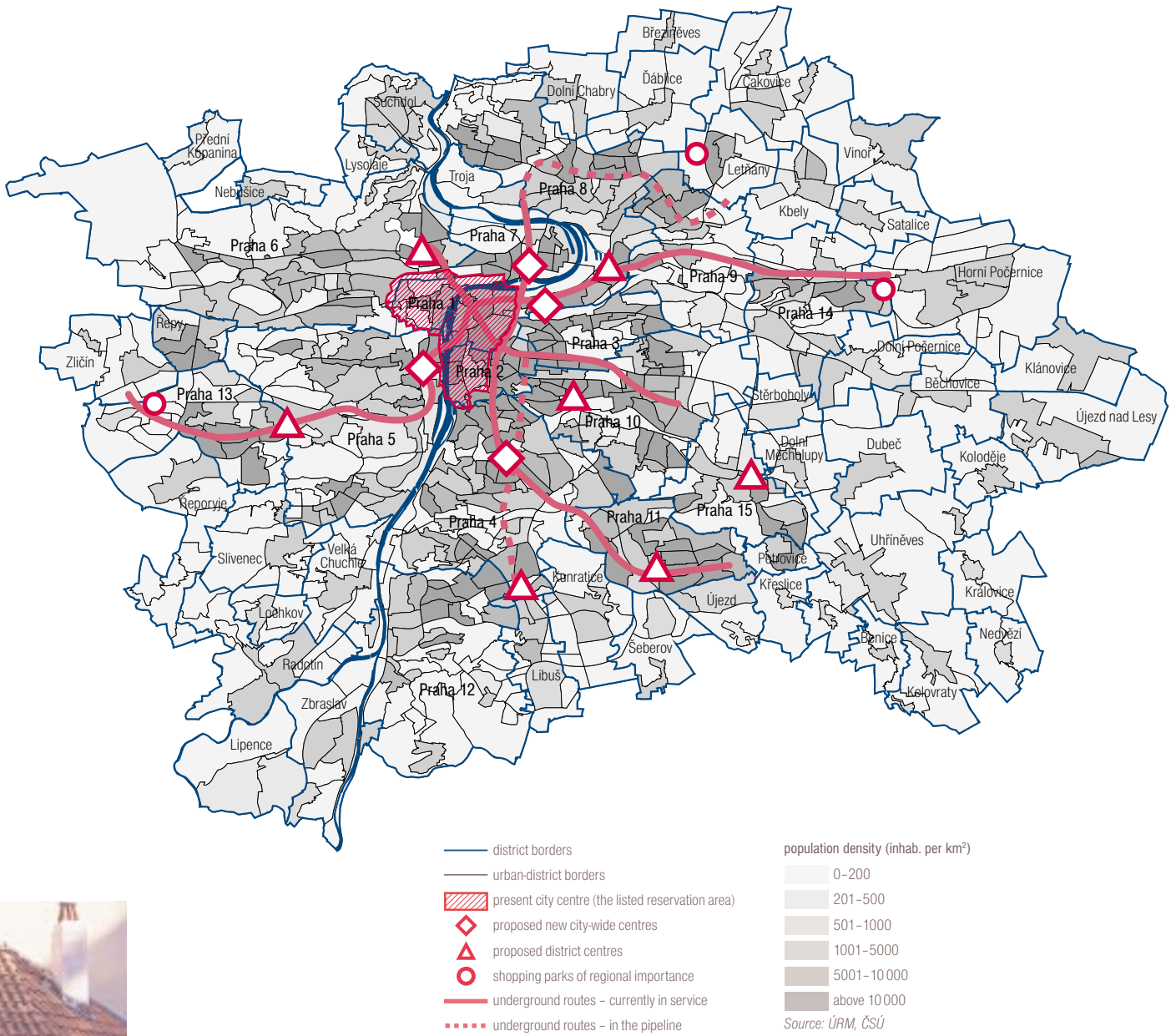
C 2.3 Strengthen the key advantage points that give Prague its present quality in architecture and its urban management

C 2.4 Improve communication channels and awareness among all players in the spatial development process

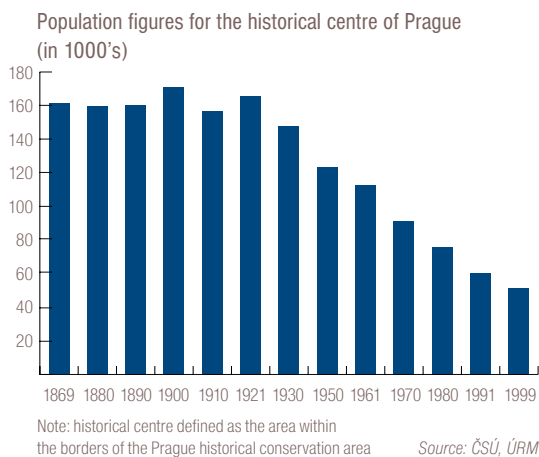




Distribution of population and proposed centres in Prague



C 1 A more balanced use of city space



Concentrating on providing job opportunities, services and public facilities in these new district centres will bring them closer to their most important local housing estates. It will make them more accessible and will improve the spatial demands on the city (i.e. reducing over crowding etc). The arrival of these new city-wide centres on the scene (Smíchov, Pankrác, Karlín, Holešovice-Bubny-Zátory) is resulting in a decentralization of commercial activity which, in turn reduces the traffic congestion in the town centre. The peripheral centres can also take over some other functions which will reduce the number of commuters.

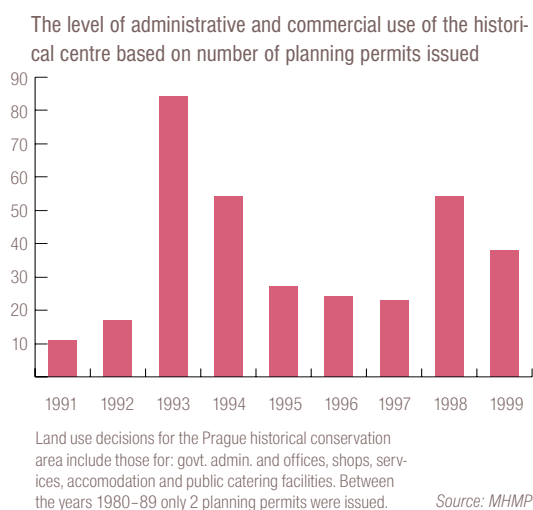
Selected activities and policies

C 1.1 Better access to centres, public facilities and services

- By using its legal powers and public investments the city will direct new city centre development to make the best use of public monies possible and to make sure these centres will be as effective as possible from the point of view of city needs and public expenditure.
- Actively support the realization of the proposed new city-wide centres.
- Relocate state and town bodies so as not to impede housing, but on the contrary to compliment it.
- Favour these new city-wide and district centres by securing a good public transport service and connections (mainly underground). Enforce this idea when relocating more frequently used public offices out of the city centre and encouraging tram or local rail connections.
- All round support of the fulfilment of the urban concept which takes on board all of the above mentioned points.

C 1.2 Sensitive completion of the development of those city parts set aside for the new city-wide and district centres

- In those areas set aside for new city-wide centres (Smíchov, Pankrác, Karlín, Holešovice-Bubny-Zátory) locate city offices and organs of the state, institutional head offices, banking and commercial centres, shops, cultural, social and educational centres and suitable sporting and recreational facilities.
- Where necessary locate these facilities in the new district centres, too.
- Formalize the order of development of the individual new city-wide and district centres and define the construction phases.
- No support to continue development of new city-wide and district centres will be given until the current stage has been finalised or before securing sufficient demand for the plots as necessary for the proposed new areas.
- Define the basic and vital functions that the individual new city-wide and district centres, must fulfil in their daily running.
- Set up capacity limits for the new city-wide and district centres based on market analysis and appreciation of new building capacities effects on current serve and public amenities.
- Regulate the maximum aggregate sales space for each new city-wide and district centre.



C 2 Develop the quality of urban structure and architecture in Prague

Prague has traditionally treated town planning as an important instrument for preserving and developing the qualities of spatial management in the city. The city has made only little headway in this direction over the last few years. There is a lack of support of city development policy, at present, ineffective communication with the Central Bohemia Region and the fact that the public areas are overwhelmed by traffic. These faults, dating from the post-war, are difficult to eradicate and hinder the realization of the new urban concepts. Furthermore, in the nineties Prague was lacking a new Master Plan that would resolve all her territorial problems, especially the use of areas suitable for development or the completion of construction on the individual localities with regard to the new



business, political and social conditions that had emerged. The Master Plan for Prague (passed in 1999) along with the strategic plan, can be considered the building blocks for an active development policy in future years.

Selected activities and policies

C 2.1 Preserve, where necessary complete the creation of, the local parts of Prague

- Strive to achieve the most effective and co-ordinated teamwork with the neighbouring Central Bohemia Region concerning spatial development as well as with the boroughs and regions, too. This means; consulting on important decisions, united decision making regarding matters that involve development of the main traffic corridors, co-ordination in locating new shopping parks in an effort not to let demand for services and plots in these localities fall below critical limits. It also means working together on any projects where necessary.
- Complete the process to create Prague's character in line with the strategic aims and urban planning (Master Plan and regulation plans). Direct and assign new projects to appropriate development plots according to their demands on available land.
- Insist on adequate greenery levels when developing the local areas of the city and in existing areas refuse permission for their use without first securing replacement green areas of the same value and having easy access.
- Fortify the spatial structure by clear formulation of central public places with a network of attractive and pleasant walkways and routes, but in keeping with the original character of the area.
- In the historical suburbs and post war housing estates respect and develop the web of town avenues with stress on development near underground stations.
- Respect and update the original land concept for the high-rise estate housing while keeping open the possibility of their regeneration and repair.
- Reduce their single sided nature by supporting the emergence of new job opportunities in these areas.
- Avoid the interference of elements that would be out of place into former rural manor estates that still exist within city limits.
- Encourage the transformation of current areas orientated around production and warehousing into modern complexes that offer a variety of job opportunities and workplaces.

C 2.2 Better access and more attractive public spaces

- In relation to the location and attraction of public places for the people and visitors alike; ensure the appropriate reduction of car use within those areas.
- Regenerate, nurture and complete pedestrian and walking routes and form them into a comprehensive network.
- Make the microclimate more pleasant in public areas by planting more greenery, making use of existing surface water resources and bring in new water features.
- Encourage more all round use of certain parts of these public places (occasional markets and fairs or public events, etc.).
- Regulate unsuitable use of these areas by the public (through a fine system, legislation and possible legal proceedings against violators).
- Thoroughly enforce a disability friendly access policy in public places.
- Insist on the creation of pleasant public places to be included in new projects or reconstruction (e.g. passages in the centre of the town).

C 2.3 Strengthen the key advantage points that give Prague its present quality in spatial architecture

- Preserve the visual quality of Prague's views and panorama in the Prague basin which add to the basic value of Prague as a whole.
- Improve the aesthetic value of the Vltava river banks including the contiguous buildings.
- Preserve the spatial management of the urban whole, especially the historical centre.
- Secure effective conservation of the historical centre and sights lying within the historical reservation area, under those projects which could upset the nature of these protected sights and building by their use of space, visual features or consequences on traffic.



- Preserve the variety of functional uses that the protected sights have as a whole while appreciating the individuality and specifics of the separate components.
- Regulate the proportion between built up and green areas – avoid the spilling over of construction into these green areas which are surrounded by existing housing or industrial estates. Avoid intensive building work on slopes or valleys, but cultivate the green areas and gradually integrate them into the related systems.
- Demand that new projects answer to high urban and architectonic standards that are appropriate to the city's values and merits.

C 2.4 Improve communication channels and awareness among all players in the spatial development process

- Move over from a passive stance towards investors regarding development issues to a more active development approach.
- Create an objective and operational system of information concerning spatial development opportunities, including economic feasibility studies and future projections of the effect of individual projects, their co-ordination aimed at the welfare of the historical sights and nature preservation.
- In preparing bigger projects include and encourage the public in the decision making process in the form of public presentations and discussion.
- Present the public with a clear and formal set of regulations governing; public, land and building planning.
- Reach an appropriate level of partnership between the public and private sector in developing the new local centres, set out the rules for connecting landowners.





Prague – from monocentric to polycentric city structure

- new city-wide centres (with reduction of current pressure, new opportunities for development)
- district centres (revitalization of inner and outer city, less pressure on centre)
- local centres (amenities for each borough)
- ▲ shopping parks of regional importance (shops, leisure activities)
- large development areas (extensive and major projects)
- major commercial activity outside Prague (co-ordination necessary)
- underground routes (support of city public transport as the backbone of development)
- inner ring-road (protection of the centre from heavy car traffic)
- outer ring-road (protection of the city from heavy car traffic)
- motorways
- major roads
- railways of inter-regional importance
- future high-speed rail routes
- ✈ airport
- important green areas (harmony of urban and natural environment)
- city-wide centre (protection of cultural and historical heritage, sensitive development)
- inner-city (renewal and support of borough character)
- periphery areas (housing estate regeneration and opportunities for further development)
- regional surroundings (co-ordination and teamwork with region, protection of landscape)
- Prague historical conservation area boundary
- Prague administrative boundary

