

# THE ROLE OF THE STUDY OF CONDITIONS AND DIRECTIONS OF SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNE IN THE GROWTH OF DEVELOPERS' ACTIVITY BASED ON THE ŁÓDŹ EXAMPLE

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## Abstract

The importance of local plans for developers and negative consequences of issuing a large number of decisions on building conditions are usually discussed in literature, with the role of the study of conditions and directions of the spatial development of the commune somewhat diminished in this respect. The question therefore arises whether the study itself is important for the growth of developers' activity and, if so, whether its provisions are adhered to.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to assess the impact of the study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune on developers' activity based on the example of Łódź. The author formulates a hypothesis that, from the point of view of developers' activity, it is a document of little importance, because its decisions are not abided by entities issuing BC decisions. To achieve the assumed goal, the following research methods were used: desk research analyzing the studies of conditions and directions of the spatial development of Łódź from 2010 and 2018, as well as gathering information on development investments from various online sources, and a comparative analysis of the location of development investments in the context of both mentioned documents.

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**Key words:** *residential market, development activity, spatial planning.*

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## 1. Introduction

There are many definitions of spatial planning (Cullingworth & Nadin, 2006, p. 91; Saey, 2002, p. 95-122; Nichersu & Iacoboaia, 2011, p. 67-68; Acheampong, 2018, p. 11). However, by summarizing them all, it can be assumed that spatial planning is a key instrument of medium and long-term management of spatial development, promoting the rational use of space. The purpose of planning is to balance demand for investment areas with socio-economic needs (Stead & Nadin 2008, p. 1). Rational spatial planning in a given area ensures investment stability and improves investor confidence in the authorities of a given commune, facilitates the process of making investment decisions, generates demand for real estate important for the commune's development, guarantees the economically rational distribution of functions in the city, and improves the quality of space, which, in turn, increases the value of real estate, etc. (Krajewska et al., 2014, p. 52-66). Some studies, however, indicate that spatial planning has a negative impact on certain types of economic activity. Production and warehouse activity can be indicated as examples of this. These activities require significant space, while local plans effectively limit the supply of land that can be used for these functions (Ploegmakers

et al., 2018, pp. 3253-3254). In Poland, spatial planning is bottom-up, i.e. the municipality is the level with planning authority. All solutions adopted at a higher level must later be reflected in documents prepared by the municipality. The Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development introduced two basic planning documents prepared at the municipal level:

- study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune (the study), which is obligatory and is prepared for the entire commune, and
- local spatial development plan of the commune (local plan), which is optional, but is an act of local law. In the absence of a local plan, it is necessary to apply for a decision on building conditions (*Act of 27 March 2003...*).

Pluta (2016), after Izdebski et al. (2007) and Ścibor (2007), recalls the weaknesses of the Polish spatial planning system that prevents rational and effective shaping of space. Among these weaknesses, the following could be included: no strong correlation between spatial planning and socio-economic and investment planning, and too far-reaching powers of the relevant authorities to make planning decisions. What is more, studies of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune is not local legal acts, which means that their provisions are not binding; decisions on building conditions are not consulted with the local community, the number of local plans is small on a national scale, and the existing ones usually concern recreational, green, and protected areas, suburbs, or communication routes. In turn, decisions on building conditions contribute to the dispersion of housing. In addition, it is not specified in relation to areas intended for development plans for buildings what costs will have to be incurred to provide them with the appropriate infrastructure. The range of symbols for individual functions is very narrow, which means that municipalities must enter their own designations. Therefore, this does not ensure the comparability of the documents in question between individual territorial units. These documents are rarely introduced into spatial information systems, which would significantly facilitate decision-making processes for investors (see: Pluta, 2016, pp. 162-163). The literature also indicates the fact that the use of land for housing does not guarantee the demand for flats that will actually be realized there (Yakob et al., 2012, p. 581). This observation draws attention to the importance of social participation in the process of adopting any planning documents.

The topic of the impact of local plans and decisions on building conditions on the process of urban development and the investment process is raised by many Polish scientific publications (Raźniak & Grochal, 2014, pp. 98-109; Gorzym-Wilkowski, 2016, pp. 223-232; Hajduk & Baran, 2013, pp. 117-129). However, the role of the study in the growth of developers' activity seems to be underestimated in these publications. That is why this document became the subject of the author's reflections.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to assess the impact of the study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune on developers' activity based on the example of Łódź. The author puts forward a hypothesis that, from the point of view of developers' activity, it is a document of little significance, and its provisions are not observed. To achieve the assumed goal and verify the hypothesis in this article, the analysis of literature on the subject, the *Studies of conditions and directions of spatial development of the city of Łódź* from 2010 and 2018, and data on the location of developers' investments in relation to the functional and spatial structure specified in the *Studies* were used.

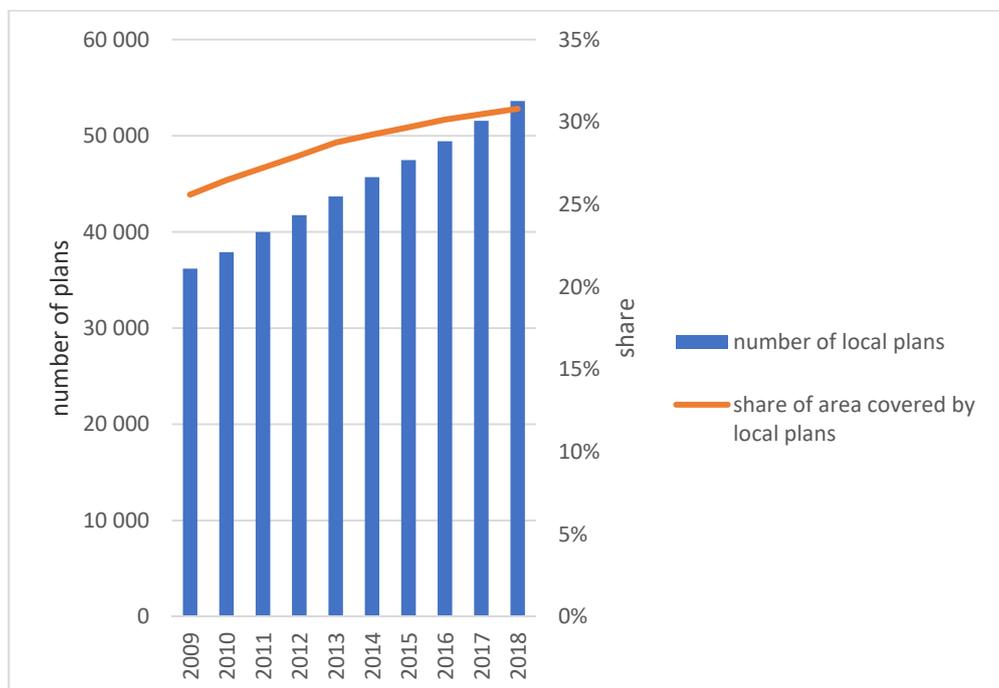
## **2. The study of conditions and directions of spatial development as a source of information for developers**

The study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune is a document defining its spatial policy. In the part devoted to development conditions, it contains information on the current use of land and utilities, the state of spatial order, the environment, the state of cultural heritage and monuments, as well as modern cultural goods, conditions and the quality of life of the residents, the needs and possibilities of the commune's development, the legal status of land, the occurrence of objects and protected areas, the occurrence of areas of natural geological hazards, documented mineral deposits and groundwater resources, the state of communication systems and technical infrastructure, and tasks serving the implementation of supra-local public purposes, etc. (*Act of 27 March 2003...*). However, what is particularly important from the point of view of developers' activity are development directions. If the developer already owns the property, and the study indicates that it should be built over with industrial buildings or that these are green areas, then it may turn out that it will not be possible to obtain decisions on building conditions for this location

allowing for the implementation of housing projects. However, as practice shows, such decisions are sometimes issued despite everything. In relation to development directions, the study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune defines directions of changes in the spatial structure of the commune and land use, directions and indicators regarding land use, including areas intended for development and land excluded from development, areas and principles of environmental protection and its resources, nature protection, landscape protection, cultural heritage protection, directions of communication systems and technical infrastructure development, areas where public purpose investments of local and supra-local significance will be located, areas for which it is obligatory to draw up a local spatial development plan, areas for which the municipality intends to draw up a local spatial development plan, directions and principles for shaping agricultural and forestry production space, areas of particular flood risk and areas of landslides, areas of monuments of extermination and their zone areas that need transformation, rehabilitation, reclamation or remediation, degraded areas, etc. (Act of March 27, 2003...).

The study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune is therefore the first document signaling information for property owners about potential functions that can be implemented on a given property and in its vicinity (Foryś & Putek-Szeląg, 2015, pp. 62-65). For this reason, this is the basic document that developers should pay attention to when looking for the right location for their project.

It would therefore seem, that the study should play a greater role in the spatial planning system, due to the fact that, having a holistic nature, it contains a vision of the city's development - how it should be managed to meet the needs of the population in an effective way, and at the same time ensure the rational use of limited land resources. It should therefore be a reference point for investors looking for real estate appropriate for achieving their goals. Local plans, in turn, are a tool for the implementation of the spatial policy enshrined in the study, therefore they only specify the conditions for the development of individual properties that the investor intends to transform (local plans must comply with the provisions of the study, decisions on building conditions do not) (Act of March 27, 2003...). This system would be extremely effective if all municipalities were 100% covered with local plans. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Poland.



**Fig. 1.** The number of local plans and the share of the country's area covered by plans in 2009-2018.

*Source:* own elaboration based on LDB.

According to the data presented in Figure 1, the number of local plans in Poland is increasing from year to year, but the pace of this growth seems relatively low. Over the period of nine years, nearly 17,500 local plans were adopted. Considering the data on the percentage of the country's area covered

by plans, it can be clearly seen that these are rather plans covering small areas. Since 2009, this share has increased by only 5% and, in 2018, it was 31%. The low level of coverage with plans means the growing role of decisions on building conditions, which have become the rule in the Polish planning system, although the intention of the creators of the Act was for these decisions to be an exception. In addition, it is emphasized that, in practice, BC decisions are not always issued in accordance with the provisions of the studies. In fact, the Act on planning and spatial development is criticized due to its low rank, seeing as how, in the absence of local plans, it does not guarantee the implementation of the directions specified therein (Brzeziński, 2013, p. 106).

The above-presented theoretical considerations lead to the conclusion that in those cities where there are few local plans, the study is losing importance and developers and other investors are, in practice, responsible for developing the city, quite easily obtaining favorable BC decisions, uncritically issued by relevant authorities.

### 3. Data and Methods

In the empirical part of this article, the following research methods were used: desk research in the field of analysis of *Studies of conditions and directions of the spatial development of Łódź* from 2010 and 2018, as well as gathering information on development investments from various online sources, and a comparative analysis of the location of development investments in the context of both mentioned documents. The desk research method is based on the use of existing data: statistics and public summaries, official documents, results of social and marketing research, data and information available online, etc. Such data primarily helps to obtain a broad context of knowledge on a given topic, but also allows the researcher to collect and analyze data on a specific topic (Bednarowska, 2015, pp. 18-26). Comparative analysis allows us to collate and analyze similarities and differences between two or more objects. Thanks to this, attempts can be made to identify the cause-and-effect relationships of the studied phenomena (Bukhari, 2011).

The city of Łódź was adopted as the research area in this article. The reason for this is that Łódź is one of the voivodship cities with the lowest level of coverage with local plans, and thus characterized by a large number of decisions on building conditions issued, which, according to applicable law, do not have to take into account the study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune. Secondly, it is the city best recognized by the author, due to previous research conducted in the city.

The study was carried out in five stages:

- 1) analysis of determinations in *the Studies of conditions and directions of the spatial development of Łódź* from 2010 and 2018,
- 2) identification of developers' investments that were on sale in May 2019 (both during implementation and commissioned). Many of those projects were at the stage of initiation and concept preparation during *the Study* of 2010,
- 3) identification of areas in *the Study* of 2010 where developers' investments were carried out in 2019,
- 4) identification of areas in *the Study* of 2018 where developers' investments were carried out in 2019,
- 5) detailed comparative analysis of the location of individual development investments in the context of both *Studies of conditions and directions of spatial development in the city of Łódź*.

Information on investments on sale has been obtained from popular real estate market portals such as: rynekpierwotny.pl, noweinvestycje.pl, gratka.pl, otodom.pl and others, as well as websites of individual developers. The location of these investments in the context of *the Studies* from 2010 and 2018 was possible due to the introduction of their graphic attachments to the InterSIT (Municipal Area Information System), which allows for interactive location analysis.

### 4. The importance of study conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune in the growth of developers' activity in Łódź – research results

In the years 2002-2010, the spatial policy of the city of Łódź was conducted based on *the Study of conditions and directions of spatial development in Łódź* of 2002, i.e. created on the basis of the no longer binding Act on spatial planning in 1994. The entry into force of the Act on spatial planning and development in July 2003 meant the necessity of taking further actions aimed at adapting *the Study* to the provisions of the new Act. The NIK audit, carried out in 2006, however, pointed to numerous

problems related to, among others, the lack of design practice and appropriately qualified human resources (Information on the results of the audit... 2011, p. 7), which contributed to the extension of its preparation time to 8 years. In addition, at the stage of public consultations in 2010, public protests emerged regarding the adopted directions of the city's development. The functional structure of the city presented in *the Study* seemed to lack coherence. Areas of Łódź focused on the development of single-family housing were located almost everywhere: in the central parts of the city (this resulted from the already existing buildings), among multi-family housing estates, in the immediate vicinity of industrial and warehouse areas, and in green or agricultural areas (Study of conditions and directions of development ... 2010). There were moreover far too many of them, more than required by the needs of a city characterized by an outflow of the population. This approach favored the spread of the city, which also contributed to the increase in the costs of maintaining the technical infrastructure in Łódź.

The growing interest in sustainable development and the growing awareness of the city's authorities contributed to undertaking work in 2013 on a new *Study*, which was adopted in 2018. The new *Study* provides for the density of urbanized areas, taking into account the development rights granted so far (Justification under Article 42, point 2...). This means that no conflicts arising from the non-compliance of issued building condition decisions with the provisions of *the Study* should occur, or if they do, they should be significantly reduced. Unfortunately, the conducted research still indicates that the provisions of *the Study* are not respected by the entities issuing the above-mentioned decisions also in the context of developers' activity conducted in Łódź.

#### 4.1. Changes in the designations as well as functional and spatial structure of *the Studies* from 2010 and 2018

Reflections on the role of the *Study of conditions and directions of spatial development of Łódź* in the growth of developers' activity should begin with discussing the changes that were introduced in 2018 compared to the document in force since 2010. Particular attention should be paid to two issues, namely: the change of designations in those *Studies* that have been clarified, and the location and size of individual functional areas in Łódź.

**Table 1**

Changes of the designations in the *Study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the city of Łódź* from 2010 and 2018

<i>The Study</i> from 2010		<i>The Study</i> from 2018	
Symbol	Description	Symbol	Description
<b>SZ</b>	Downtown buildings	<b>W1a,</b> <b>W1b,</b> <b>W2a,</b> <b>W2b,</b> <b>W3b,</b> <b>W3c</b>	Multifunctional areas W1a (multi-family and services) W1b (multi-family, service + with restrictions: industry, single-family housing and commerce) W2b (multi-family, service + with restrictions: industry, single-family housing and commerce) W2b (multi-family, service + with restrictions: industry and commerce) W3b (multi-family, service + with restrictions: industry, single-family housing and commerce) W3c (multi-family, service + with restrictions: commerce)
<b>UC1</b>	The functional area of Piotrkowska Street	<b>W3a</b>	Service buildings along the W-Z route (multi-family, service + with restrictions: commerce)
<b>UC2</b>	Areas of the modern W-Z service axis	<b>WZ</b>	Multifunctional buildings (service, multi-family and single-family housing + with restrictions: production and commerce)
<b>UC3</b>	Areas of the implemented New	<b>M1</b>	Areas of large housing complexes (multi-

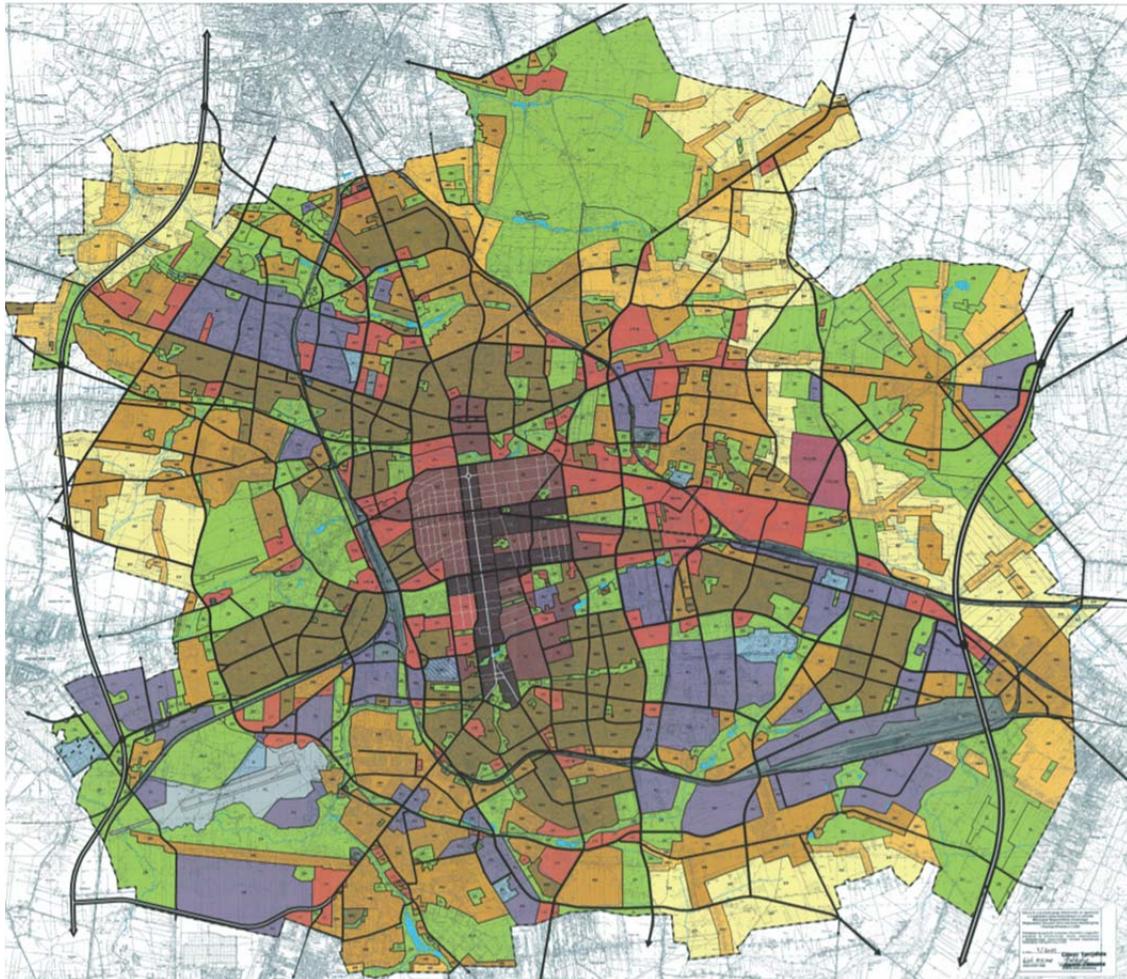
<b>UC3*</b>	Center of Łódź program * With large commerce area		family and service buildings + with restrictions: single-family housing)
<b>UC4</b>	Intersection areas of the main communication axes	<b>M2</b>	Single-family and multi-family low development areas (single-family, service, multi-family up to 8 apartments + with restrictions: commerce)
<b>UC</b> <b>UC*</b>	Areas of service concentration * With large commerce area	<b>M3</b>	Single-family housing (single-family, service + with restrictions: multi-family and commerce)
<b>MW</b>	Areas with a majority of multi-family housing	<b>M4</b>	Single-family housing on large plots (single-family, service + with restrictions: commerce)
<b>MN</b>	Areas with a predominance of single-family housing	<b>PM</b>	Housing development in street systems (farm, single-family, service buildings, agricultural production + with restrictions: commerce)
<b>MNU</b>	Areas with a predominance of single-family and service buildings	<b>U</b>	Service buildings (broadly understood services + with restrictions: production, multi-family, single-family housing and commerce)
<b>MN1</b>	Single-family and service buildings, transformed from rural areas	<b>O</b>	Environmentally active areas used for agriculture (agricultural, recreational and leisure areas, allotments, mine areas + with restrictions: agricultural production and housing development)
<b>MR</b>	Residential development areas	<b>Z</b>	Green areas arranged in the urban zone (green areas, recreation, leisure and sports + with restrictions: commerce and allotments)
<b>ZL</b>	Forest green areas	<b>D</b>	allotment areas, individual recreation, greenery + with restrictions: recreation, leisure and sport facilities
<b>ZP</b>	Green areas arranged with a service program	<b>RW</b>	Recreation areas
<b>ZD</b>	Allotments		
<b>ZN</b>	Natural green areas and river valleys		
<b>RP</b>	Agricultural land		
<b>UM</b>	Areas of metropolitan services		

Source: own elaboration based on the *Study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the city of Łódź* from 2010 and 2018.

It should be emphasized that the analysis of the designations covers only those areas where developers' investments were carried out or completed in May 2019. The former areas of downtown buildings (SZ) were replaced by multifunctional areas (W), which were, however, divided into smaller parts, introducing restrictions regarding the implementation of specific types of buildings for their individual subcategories (see: *Study of conditions and directions...*, 2018, pp. 44-69). Currently, this category also includes the former areas of the functional area of Piotrkowska Street, the New Center of Łódź, and areas along the main communication axes, which slightly increases the transparency of the *Study*, due to the smaller number of Main categories. Such an action seems to be beneficial for the future development of the city in the context of spatial order. From the point of view of developers' activity, however, this may constitute a certain difficulty in accessing individual properties (unless decisions on building conditions are still issued regardless of the provisions of the study). In some cases, the changes introduced in the area designations are insignificant, e.g. the former ZN and RP areas have been combined into naturally active (O) areas, although they seem to have been more

specific. Quite basic and at the same time positive, according to the author, changes occurred in relation to single-family housing. In *the Study* from 2010, the areas with a predominance of single-family housing as well as the predominance of single-family and service buildings were distinguished, which created quite a lot of interpretative freedom, and, in fact, enabled a fairly free implementation of multi-family housing in these areas. In *the Study* from 2018, areas where multi-family housing can be implemented among single-family housing are more precisely distinguished, but with the restrictions that such a building cannot include more than 8 apartments (M2) or it needs to be constructed as an addition to existing buildings (M3). In other areas, multi-family housing cannot be built.

Quite significant changes can also be observed in relation to the size and distribution of individual functions within the city.



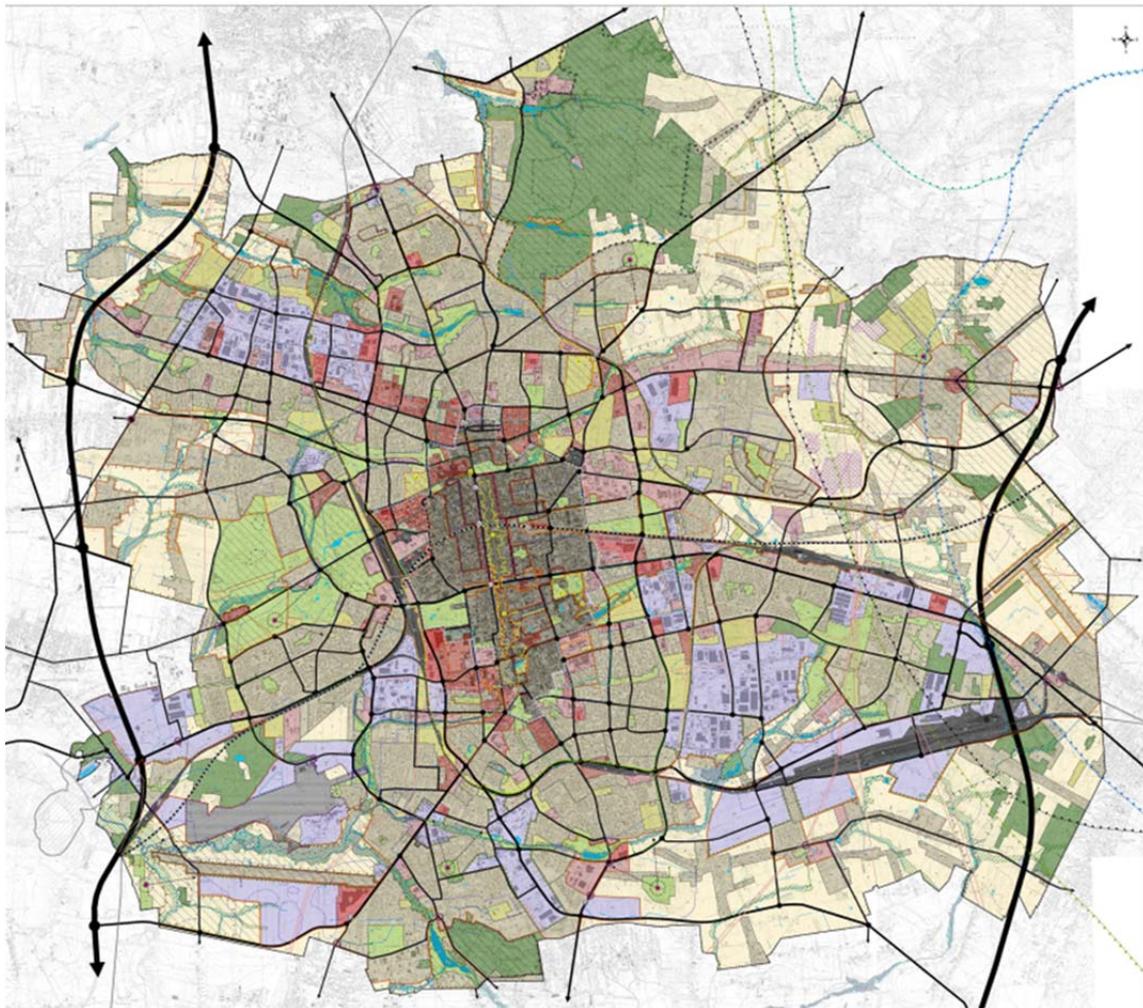
**Map 1.** Functional and spatial units according to *the 2010 Study*. Source: Study of conditions and directions of spatial development in the city of Łódź from 2010.

The basic difference that can be observed in the graphical appendices to *the Studies* presented above concerns the area of undeveloped areas. In Map 2, there are many more such areas than in Map 1. Unfortunately, this is not only the effect of reducing the area designated for housing but also replacing the areas indicated in *the 2010 Study* as green areas, with naturally active areas which, however, with some restrictions can be used for housing or recreation and leisure. However, this only applies to supplementing existing buildings, most often located along existing communication routes, which should contribute to the development of more compact buildings.

#### **4.2. Location of developers' investments within individual functional areas of Łódź**

To determine whether the *Study of conditions and directions of spatial development in Łódź* has an impact on the growth of developers' activity in this city, the location of developers' investments included in

the sale offer in May 2019 was analyzed in the context of the results of both *Studies*. In total, 124 developers' investments were analyzed.



**Map 2.** Functional and spatial units according to the 2018 *Study*. Source: Study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the city of Łódź from 2018.

**Table 2**

Structure of developers' investments implemented in May 2019 in relation to the directions of spatial development specified in *the Studies* from 2010 and 2018

<i>The Study from 2010</i>		<i>The Study from 2018</i>	
Designation of directions of spatial development	Number of investments (stages)	Designation of directions of spatial development	Number of investments (stages)
MW	43	M1	39
MN/MN1	30	W3b	25
UC2	9	WZ	10
UC	8	U	3
SZ	15	M2	8
UC1	4	M3	18
ZD	4	M4	1
UM	3	PM	5
UC3	2	O	4
MR	1	W3c	2
ZN	2	W2a	4

ZP	1	W1a	1
RP	2	W2b	2
		RW	1
		D	1
<b>Total</b>	124	<b>Total</b>	124

Source: own elaboration.

The above-presented comparison shows that the development directions of some areas have changed. The same development projects were subject to consideration. According to the no longer binding *Study* from 2010, there were 43 development projects in the multi-family housing areas in May 2019, while in the M1 area (which, as previously agreed, means almost the same) there are already 39 such investments. This means that 4 locations in *the 2018 Study* have changed their function. Interestingly, the multi-functional downtown area has been increased. 38 investments were located in the former SZ, UC, UC1, UC2, UC3 areas, while according to the new designations (W) in multifunctional areas, including WZ, there are 44 investments. Although the fact that the area of single-family housing as a direction of city development was reduced in favor of active nature areas is a positive phenomenon, several investments have unfortunately already received BC decisions in the meantime, and ultimately 4 investments are located in such areas. According to the *Study* from 2010, 4 investments were located in green areas and areas designated for arable crops, with 6 such investments already present in areas with similar functions according to the *Study* from 2018.

The detailed location analysis presented in Table 3 allowed us to demonstrate investments carried out in places not compliant with the directions specified in both *Studies*.

**Table 3**

Location of developers' projects from May 2019 in the context of development directions included in *the Studies* from 2010 and 2018

No	Type of buildings	<i>The Study</i> 2010	<i>The Study</i> 2018
1	Multi-family	MW	M1
2	Multi-family	UC2	W3b
3	Multi-family	MW	M1
4	Multi-family	MW	M1
5	Multi-family	MN	M1
6	Multi-family	MN	M1
7	Multi-family	MW	WZ3
8	Multi-family	MW	U
9	Multi-family	UC	M1
10	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
11	Multi-family	UC1	W3b
12	Multi-family	UC	W3b
13	Multi-family	UC	W3b
14	Multi-family	UC	W3b
15	Multi-family	ZD	M1
16	Multi-family	ZD	M1
17	Multi-family	ZD	M1
18	Multi-family	MN	M3
19	Multi-family	MW	M1
20	Multi-family	MW	M1
21	Multi-family	MW	M2
22	Multi-family	MW	M2
23	Multi-family	MW	M1
24	Multi-family	UC2	W3a/W3b
25	Multi-family	UC2	W3a/W3b
26	Multi-family	UC2	W3a/W3b
27	Multi-family	UM	M1
28	Multi-family	UC	WZ2
29	Multi-family	UC	O
30	Single-family	MN	M3
31	Multi-family	MN	M3
32	Multi-family	MW	M1
33	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
34	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
35	Multi-family	UC3	W3c
36	Multi-family	UC2	W3b
37	Multi-family	UC2	W3b
38	Multi-family	UC2	W3b
39	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
40	Multi-family	MW	M1
41	Multi-family	MW	M1
42	Multi-family	MW	M1
43	Multi-family	UC1	W2b
44	Multi-family	MW	M1
45	Multi-family	MW	M1
46	Detached single-family	MR	M2/M4
47	Multi-family	UM	W3b
48	Multi-family	SZ	W3b

49	Multi-family	MW	WZ3
50	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
51	Multi-family	MW	M1
52	Multi-family	MW	M1
53	Multi-family	UM	W3b
54	Multi-family	UC	U
55	Multi-family	MW	M1
56	Multi-family	MW	M1
57	Detached single-family	MN	M3
58	Multi-family	MW	M1
59	Multi-family	MW	M1
60	Multi-family	MW	M1
61	Multi-family	MW	M1
62	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
63	Multi-family	MW	WZ2
64	Multi-family	MN	O
65	Multi-family	SZ	M1
66	Multi-family	MW	M1
67	Multi-family	UC1	W2a
68	Multi-family	SZ	W2a
69	Multi-family	MN	M3
70	Multi-family	MN	M3
71	Multi-family	UC3	W3c
72	Multi-family	MN	U
73	Multi-family	MW	M1
74	Multi-family	MW	M1
75	Multi-family	MW	M1
76	Multi-family	MW	M1
77	Multi-family	MW	M1
78	Multi-family	MW	WZ2
79	Multi-family	MW	WZ2
80	Multi-family	MW	WZ2
81	Detached single-family	MN	M3
82	Detached single-family	MN1	PM
83	Multi-family	SZ	WZ1
84	Multi-family	MN	M2
85	Multi-family	ZD	D
86	Multi-family	ZN	M3
87	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
88	Multi-family	MN	M2
89	Semi-detached	MN	M3
90	single-family	MN	M3
91	Detached single-family	MN	PM
92	Detached single-family	MN	PM
93	Detached single-family	MN	M3
94	Semi-detached single-family	ZN	O
95	Semi-detached single-family	MN	PM
96	Multi-family	MN	M3
97	Multi-family	MN	M1
98	Multi-family	MW	M1
99	Multi-family	MW	M1
100	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
101	Multi-family	MN	M4
102	Multi-family	UC1	W1a
103	Detached single-family	RP	M3
104	Multi-family	UC2	W3b
105	Multi-family	ZP	RW
106	Multi-family	MN	M3
107	Multi-family	UC2	W2a
108	Multi-family	SZ	W2a
109	Multi-family	MN	M3
110	Multi-family	MW	W3b
111	Multi-family	SZ	W3b
112	Multi-family	SZ	WZ1
113	Multi-family	MW	M1
114	Multi-family	MW	M2
115	Multi-family	UC	WZ2
116	Multi-family	MW	M1
117	Multi-family	MW	M2
118	Single-family	MN/UC	M3
119	Single-family	RP	O
120	Single-family	MN	PM
121	Multi-family	MW	M2
122	Single-family	MN	M3
123	Single-family	MN	M2
124	Single-family	MN	M3

Note: highlighted areas mean significant changes in the directions of spatial development in Łódź and the way buildings are in conflict with their findings

Source: own elaboration.

Based on Table 3, several interesting conclusions can be made. First of all, some areas that had already been used by developers in some way for housing development, despite different findings of *the Studies* (decisions on building conditions were not always issued in accordance with the provisions of the study), were transformed. This applies, among others, to the areas along Falista St., which,

according to the 2010 study, was located in the MN area - with a predominance of single-family housing, whereas currently, according to *Study* from 2018, these are already areas of large residential complexes. Secondly, an unfavorable change is that some green areas have unfortunately been transformed into residential areas. This was done because a housing investment was already being implemented there before the change of *the Study*. The most negative phenomenon observed based on this study is the implementation of housing projects in areas with a completely different function. Such investments were recorded in the number of 12. They are related to the implementation of multi-family housing in areas specified in *the Study* from 2018 as service, single-family and low multi-family housing (up to 8 apartments), naturally active and agriculturally used, allotment areas, single-family housing in street layout areas, etc. Such activity indicates a very limited role of the *Study of conditions and directions of spatial development in the spatial policy of the city of Łódź*, as well as its small impact on the location of developers' activity. Decisions on building conditions are not always issued in accordance with its provisions.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

In conclusion, the presented study allowed us to positively verify the hypothesis set out in the introduction stating that the study of conditions and directions of spatial development is of minor importance in the progression of developers' activity. Although the basic goal of spatial policy is the rational use of space to meet the specific needs of society, municipalities are not always able to achieve this goal. First of all, this results from legal regulations which, without making the provisions of the study of conditions and directions of spatial development binding, have meant that their role in urban development is insignificant. Decisions on building conditions are not always issued in accordance with the study, which is confirmed by the data presented in this article. It can even be argued that developers and other investors themselves have a great impact on shaping urban spatial policy, as demonstrated by the changes made in *the Łódź Study* from 2018, where some of the areas have been transformed, due to the fact that the developer had already built something in the given area. Therefore, the problem with discretionary issuing of BC decisions is still visible. This would perhaps be partially eliminated if Polish cities were more extensively covered with local plans. However, the costs of preparing such plans are very high, and the procedures for adopting them too long. Therefore, it seems that a better solution to increasing the rationality and efficiency of the spatial policy would be to introduce provisions that would prevent the authorities from issuing BC decisions contrary to the study's provisions into the Act on spatial planning and development. Otherwise, the fight against phenomena such as urban sprawl or urban chaos will still resemble the proverbial "tilting at windmills," and developers' investments will be located in places convenient for the developers themselves, and not appropriate from the point of view of the objectives and directions of spatial development assumed by the city.

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