



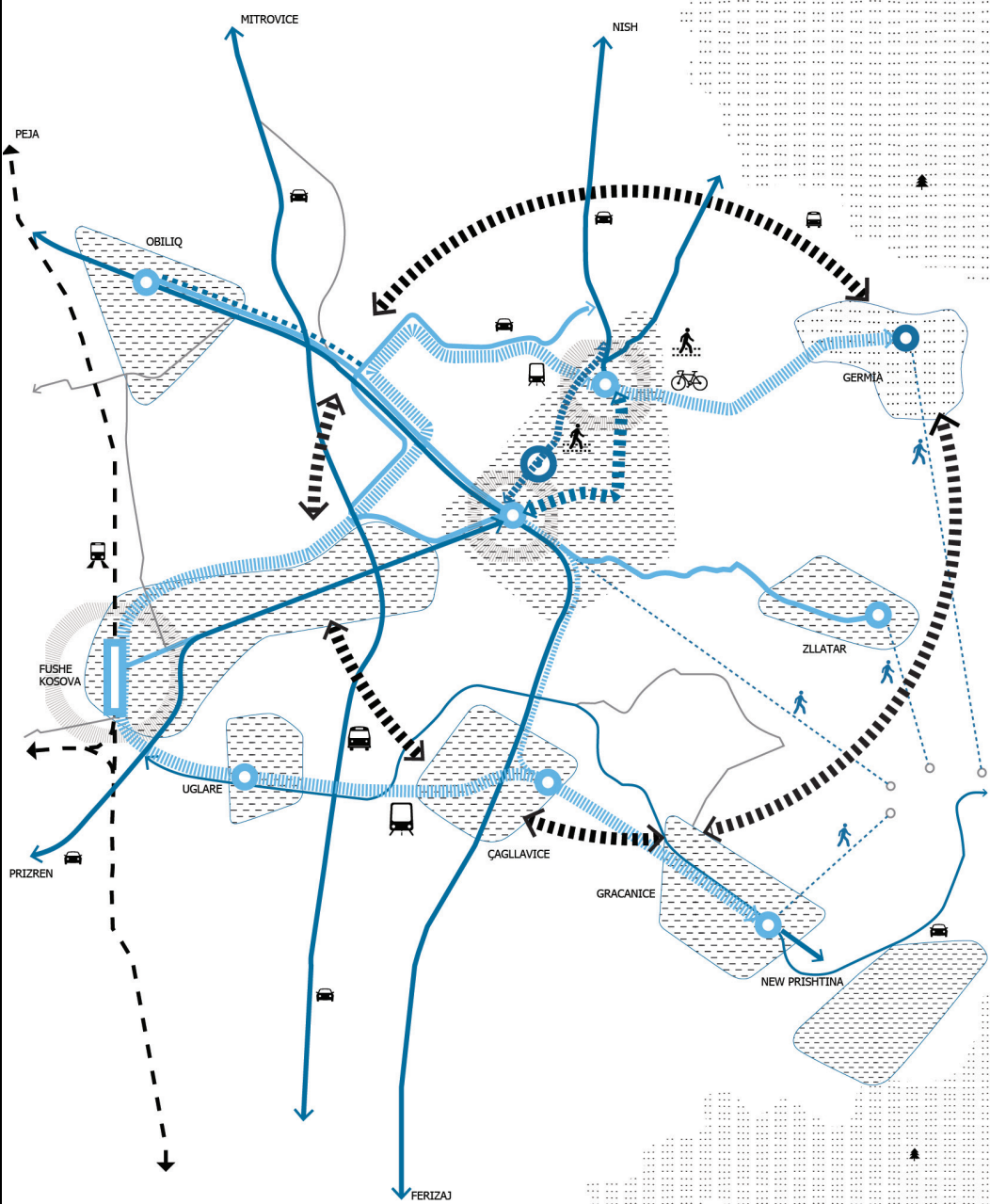
Observatory of the Mediterranean Basin

Prishtina New European Capital

Images of a city to be discovered

A Project of the
Joint International PhD Program IDAUP

POLIS University Albania / University of Ferrara Italy





Università
degli Studi
di Ferrara

DA
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The book "Prishtina new European Capital, the image of a city to be discovered" to improve the state of art on urban planning and the work is very precious because taking case study of Prishtina and Kosova region ten years after independence, revealing a territory that is still unpublished in Europe. The multidisciplinary and multi-scale approach is important allowing different visions of the case study and restoring the strong historical stratification of the city that faces with a new protagonist in the Balkan area. This book represents significantly contribute of OMB to the international debates of planning and design for resilient cities.

Prof. Nicola Martinelli
Polytechnic of Bari, ITALY

Antonello Stella describes Prishtina as a city that is anything but dense and devoid of a single polarity but with different and multiple internal polarities, in many cases more connoted as empty than full urban ones. Prishtina can be very inspiring because it is a city that has never been made, a place where every beginning ended up in failure before ever reaching its accomplishment.

All the attempts in this book make a point on what is Prishtina as a city and what could or should be done. This could be like Dorina Papa 's attempt to shape the future of Prishtina with the idea that large-scale event-buildings and experience-spaces can be a tool for revitalisation or biophilic design of Sara Pouryousefzadeh as natural landscape restoration. Other writings explore large-scale strategies or micro possibilities for Prishtina.

Prishtina being a city of contradictions, through the writings that follow make us question how this city of impossibilities could become a city of possibilities.

Arch. Gëzim Paçarizi

Preface

I belong to the generation of Albanians born and raised in Albania during the years of self-isolation and extreme centralized economy. Kosova has been always a very popular theme among us, not only because of what we heard in the media, in schools, or what we read in books of history and ideology, but it was highly attractive for the fact that it was the second country with the biggest number of Albanian habitants. Imagination was projecting: well, it could have been one country, and for us imprisoned in self-isolation, it meant that one could travel, visit and move there, if things were different. However, for some reasons, on both counts, fate decided it should end in two different states. Practically we could not exchange or travel among ourselves, even those that had families and relatives there. For us, the border in Kukës city, up in northeastern Albania, seemed to be the end of the world, part of the "iron curtain" and the Berlin wall.

By the early 90's Albania entered in a phase of transformation and freedom, but we still could not travel to Kosova. Often tensions were raising there, which also produced tension in Albania as well. Both countries were like twins that never met together, up to the spring of 1999 when NATO troops intervened to stop another escalating bloody war for the Balkans. I still remember NATO airplanes flying over above the capital, Tirana, and heading towards Kosova. Soon we faced waves of 1 million war refugees that suddenly entered Albania via Kukës and Macedonia. At that moment, 1 in 4 people living Albania, was a newcomer from Kosova. We practically met each other in the most difficult time for both countries: the war in Kosova, and the collapse of pyramid schemes in Albania. However, it was a time of survival, great solidarity and national upgrade. Mine and my friends' immediate reaction, today colleagues at POLIS University and Co-PLAN Institute, was how to help these war refugees to settle.

End of June 1999 brought the liberation of Kosova and a great opportunity for me to enter for the first time in the "forbidden" country. A dream that became true! This time as an expert of the Co-PLAN Institute, and on behalf of FAO and World Bank, we undertook a 6-months

countrywide survey on war damage assessment, which later on helped the international donor community to channelize first-ever aid and finances for post-war Kosova. This is a work I am highly proud of. It gave my Co-PLAN colleagues and me the possibility to see for the first time Kosova's reality, the same way they saw Albania during the escapes from war massacres. I visited every city and village, almost all communities and minorities, working passionately with more than 300 students and professors of the University of Prishtina, which I praise for joining us in very difficult but inspiring moments of post-war. I still cannot forget my first contact with organic-modernist Prishtina. That was my highlight. We entered from Kacanik to Lipjan and to the hills of Cagllavica. I could clearly see the silhouette of the small beautiful capital, nowadays swallowed by the growth of radical urbanization. At that moment, I had a vision that one day I would be working to envision Prishtina as the newest European capital, a dream that any city planner would have in such specific moments in history.

Twenty years later, together with our students and staff of POLIS University, as well as with the researchers of our International Double Degree Program of PhD (jointly organized in cooperation with UNIFE, University of Ferrara, Italy), we prepared this vision through a 1-year research project focused on such inspiring theme. The coordinators of the project have been also cooperating and exchanging information and ideas with many local professionals, intellectuals and (municipal central) institutions in Kosova to whom we are grateful. Such exchange symbolizes the real liberation of Kosova and Albania from the dark days of our pasts. We strongly believe that it is also the way to lead for a useful regional cooperation and Europeanization in the near future. It is the moment to reconsider the re-foundation of Prishtina, now as the newest European capital. We must all contribute and prepare for that!

Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj
Rector of POLIS University, Tirana

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3 workshop

Renew-moving Prishtina

The Kosova Capital as a multimodal transportation hub returning obsolete facilities to people

keywords / Neglected Infrastructures, Identity, Urban Renewal, Social Inclusiveness

Laura Abbruzzese
PhD researcher / Ferrara University

Abstract

The impact of infrastructures within regional geographies, settlements and environmental issues is crucial for neighbourhood integration and social inclusiveness, especially in “drive-through-cities”, where uncontrolled growth up to progressive abandonment affected regions deprived of development direction. Bearing in mind main renewal policies, the investigation focuses on the case study of Prishtina as a national polarity for Kosova and its internal structure, according to the core international corridors and the rational spatial development planning as a European capital.

Prishtina has undergone a role of connection for South-East Europe, energy exploitation and a sequence of domains and regimes, worsened by a total absence of planning. As the capital of a newly recognized country, its current unsolved condition of chaos and instability is producing debates in the European framework: the existing inefficient, contaminated and congested infrastructures up to the detriment of land consumption, greenery and accessibility between districts leave the region in a state of emergency.

Prishtina as a multimodal transportation hub (re)shaped as a liveable city is a feasible long-term goal, starting from the recovery of infrastructures as a connective network: accessibility, multimodality and appropriation processes could identify challenges and opportunities towards a “Sustainable Renewal Movement” as a future metropolitan city. Likewise, the perspective of (re)using the obsolete facilities as a resource leads to the discussion of possible overlapping strategies proposed by a low environmental impact approach and a human-scale vision of the city, avoiding, minimizing and managing the urbanization in compliance with international agreements.

Moving into chaos

Living a “drive-through-city” in Kosova and the places of regimes.

The image of Prishtina is apparently far from identity, due to its traumatic transition from rural structure economy to uncontrolled growth post 1999 and the constant contention of its strategic regions for the Balkans’ equilibrium. A bridge-crossing city between territories is recognizable as a sequence of spaces for passage, a settlement on the edge – both in the verbatim and metaphorical sense

of “limit” – made of contrasting features and disorder, based on exploitation of land and resources along main transport connections. Prishtina historically rose as an attractive core intersection for trades and mobility surrounding Kosova’s regions and a great employment, education and service hub for the recently independent country: a “drive-through-city” in terms of goods and people movement, non-human scale dimension, uncertain policies and transformations, miscellaneous

landscape compromised by regimes interests and informal construction, striving to reach the western Europe average of forward-looking progress since the independence of Kosova was possible¹.

The Kosova favourable geographical position in the Balkan Peninsula made the region attractive for land trade routes, making the commercial system strictly related to the identity of urban settlements like Prishtina, developed as a trade and transport connection in the Eastern Europe since the Medieval Age. For the same strategical reasons, the Yugoslavian regime before and the Serbian interests later left limited powers to Kosova as a province under control of central governments.

The post-war modernization slogan according to the principle "Destroy the old, build the new" describes the ideological climate: the new socialist Yugoslavian doctrine based a centrally driven process of industrialization and urbanization, within a visionary city planning² embodying progress and prosperity (1945-1980³) with main avenues and modernist administrative buildings, a low urban profile and modest layout of public spaces to keep community life under control.

The infrastructures were the routes of power's landmarks connecting socialist regions: the new image and

identity for Prishtina reflected the Yugoslavian values, demolishing the old centre even if the radical urban plan was never completed⁴.

The later conflict Albanians-Serbs, culminated in the war of Kosova⁵ (1996-1999) and the NATO-led intervention, abolished any tradition of urban planning and, since then, a barely controlled and uncorrected liberalism seems to have grasped the development of the built environment.

Nowadays, often completely uncontrolled and purely privately initiated urban expansions (as informal settlements) and Prishtina's attempts to regulate urban development were exacerbated by ineffective post-war governance that allowed squatting and usurpation of public and private property by informally dominating gangs.

The UNMIK recalled a flood of foreign masters (ruling officially) and workers of international organizations, followed by a real estate boom for rental properties.

The architect Rexhep Luci had tried in vain to prevent Prishtina's uncontrolled development and to shape citizens awareness, also organizing the elusive conference "Vision for Prishtina, 2000-05" focused on new ordered planning opportunities for the capital:

¹ / Most of the socialist modernism in Yugoslavia replaced a former set of Ottoman settlements concentrated in the southern Balkans, organized around the core function of the mosques surrounded by services and trading spaces along historical routes. The public sphere and the civil society were based on crafts and commerce, where the bazaars, çarshias and the streets corresponded to the community's space, urban dwellings were based on rural-Albanian patterns and the water was linked to mobility and economy as a blue transportation infrastructure. The later industrialization process led to exponential urbanization, and the interventions of urban (re)shaping justified widespread demolitions for main transport axes organized in regular grids: the small-size and organic urban system was replaced by the communist system, running the pre-war destructions against cities like Prishtina, with a strong Ottoman identity aiming at flourishing.

² / The post-world war communist period led to the General Urban Plan (1953) by Dragutin Petrovic (Belgrade) for the construction of a "new city", guiding the destruction of most of the urban fabric to create open spaces and the first residential blocks through wide demolitions. Unaware of the consequences but enthusiastic for the change towards a new era, the people took part to the demolition of the city. The next urban plans and interventions are all isolated proposals without a unique vision for the image of a city, that grew up as a collection of different architectural influences (modernism, brutalism...) and political powers.

³ / 1945: post-war period; 1980: death of Marshal Tito.

⁴ / A Brotherhood and Unity socialist square was developed as part of the new urban core of Prishtina, combined with a network of perpendicular streets and landmark architecture buildings, replacing the old centre and leaving only few historical buildings, like the mosque and the hammam.

⁵ / Prishtina and Kosova came out of a gruesome war burdened by the Serbian domination with the land's post-Ottoman imperial rules, reclaiming these regions as part of the Old Realm's rightful heritage after the fall of Yugoslavian socialism, by direct colonization by Serbs and Montenegrins. Belgrade governed the newly conquered Kosova, engaging a series of policies for expulsion of Muslim Albanians and Turkish speakers as unwanted elements, with the cooperation of Kosova's Albanian land-owning elite.



Fig1 / Some views of the scattered abandoned spaces of Prishtina: (from the top) the Adem Jashari square and the monument to Brotherhood and Unity; the view of the urbanized hills from the Youth and Sports Centre; the inner spaces of the Palace of Youth and Sports (2018)
Source / author, Prishtina PhD International Workshop

his death marked the end of an era followed by a “wild” expansion and massive disruption in the urban fabric. This disturbance was worsened by the tidal wave of people from rural areas escaping from homes destroyed by the war and local economies ruined by cheap, imported food undermining agriculture.

Former industrial engines, as Mitrovica and Gjakova, collapsed causing the ruin into deep poverty of Kosova’s other urban centres.

People from Kosova carry the marks of a chaotic and suffered urbanization:

the obsolete and dismissed infrastructures in Prishtina – one of the core centres of protest, activism and education of masses against imposed powers – are mostly part of a *damnatio memoriae* since Kosova gained its independence⁶, throughout an abandonment phenomenon concerning buildings, services and spaces symbolizing imposed political regimes (fig. 1).

The city centre has a rather modern disordered urban core, based on an overcrowded road network, lacking in pedestrian pathways, fragmented green, and some communist and ottoman landmarks close to each other: such broken collection of elements throughout a city grown along trade routes and transportation infrastructures creates a confused spatial order, calling the identity into question (fig. 2).

New perspectives

The National Spatial Plan for a European comparison.

The Sustainable Urban Development

approach⁷, concerning Kosova’s further vision of taking part to the European round table discussions, is based on an integrated, cross-sector and user perspective to work in a complex urban context in compliance with the 2030 Agenda⁸.

The National Spatial Plan for Kosova 2010-2020 is the first step towards the goal: is a key document for the country’s planning strategies, made by cooperation between local and international actors, leading independently to the development, regulation, protection and rational use of its regions.

Essentially, the Vision Statement of the NSP is based on four specific and transversal aims:

- Integration of the country in the European Union as a democratic State;
- Sustainable socio-economic, infrastructural and technological development, education opportunities and decentralized health accessibility for all, qualified labour force capacity for growth and competitiveness;
- Resources awareness in agriculture and industry, preservation of natural and cultural heritage of its regions and neighbourhoods for sustainable and well-balanced urban development;
- Promoting diversity, exchange of ideas and respect of communities’ rights within an open society.

Inside this development concept, Kosova is spatially organized in qualified and differentiated functional regions, leaded by Prishtina as a politic-administrative “harbour”, within a network system and corridors of transportation facilities development, to make Kosova closer to Western

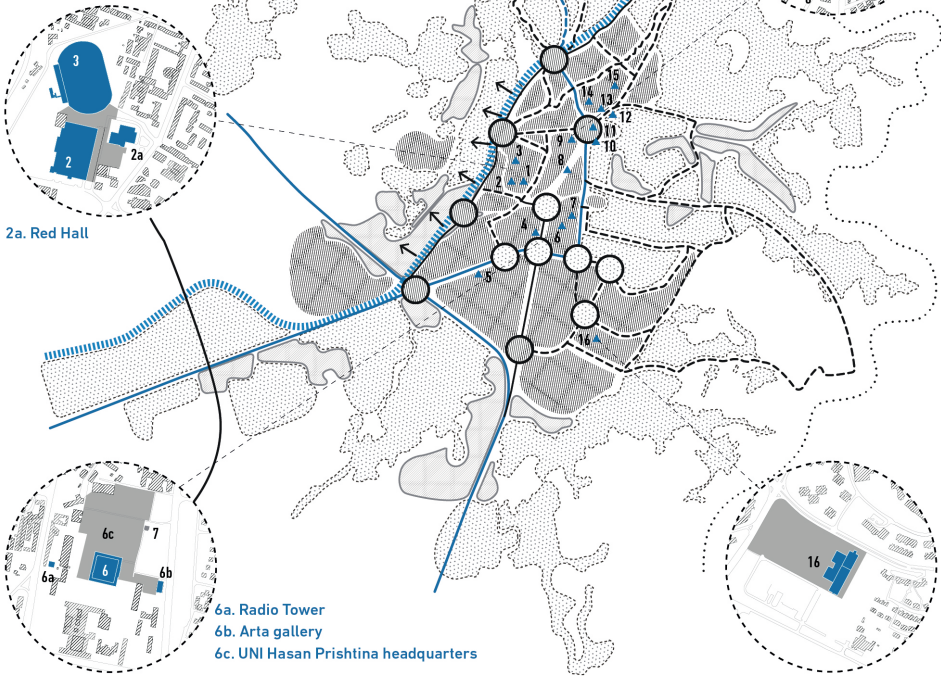
⁶ / The withdrawal of Serbian armed forces and the establishment of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosova in 1999 lead to the election of Prishtina as the capital city of the newly self-determining Republic.

⁷ / It is referred to as a multi-, trans- or interdisciplinary method working by sensing the city, designing metropolitan solutions and integrating and testing results in urban settings.

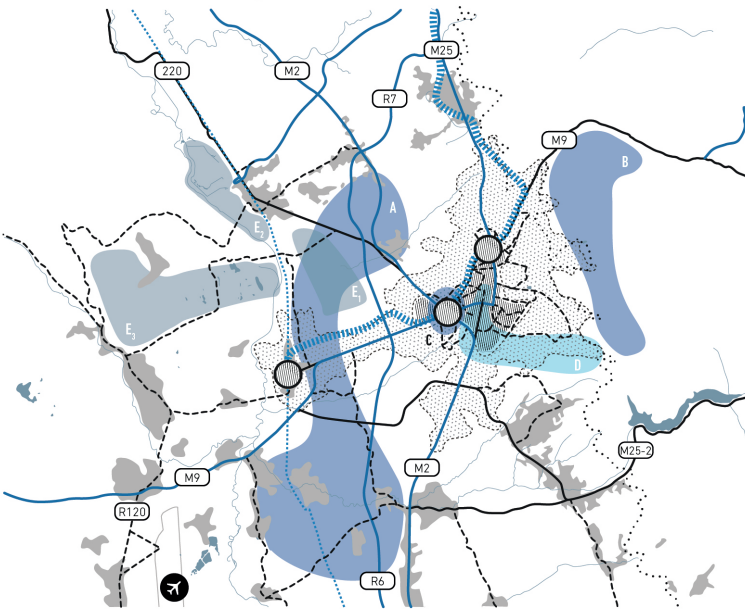
⁸ / The UN international agreement approved in September 2015, based on 17 objectives (OSS/SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals) and 169 sub-goals, aims at ending poverty, fighting inequality, enhancing social and economic development, tackling climate change and building peaceful societies by the year 2030. Among the strategies to be developed, a specific position is given to the Stand-Alone Goal on Cities, focusing on “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (source: <https://unhabitat.org/un-habitat-for-the-sustainable-development-goals/>).

The image of Prishtina and Socialist architecture

- 1. Newborn monument
- 2. Youth and Sports Center
- 3. City Stadium
- 4. Mother Teresa Cathedral
- 5. Clinton statue
- 6. National library
- 7. Orthodox church
- 8. Mother Teresa Boulevard
- 9. Monument of Brotherhood and Unity
- 10. Carshi mosque
- 11. Kosovo museum
- 12. Clock tower
- 13. Sultan Mehmet Faith mosque
- 14. Green market
- 15. Ethnological museum
- 16. Faculty of Engineering



The mobility system, energy exploitation and land consumption



- A. Economic development zone/direction
- B. Development of rural economy
- C. Highrise economic development area (Regulation Plan "Ulpiana")
- D. Backbone zone from Strategic Plan 2004

- E1. Coal plant Kosova A
- E2. Coal plant Kosova B
- E3. Kosova B power plant depot

- ▲ Landmark
- Main motorway
- - - Main road
- ▬ Abandoned railway / urban scar
- ⋯ Railway connection
- Traffic corridors
- ⋯ Natural boundary
- ▨ Core districts
- ▨ Urban sprawl
- ▨ Voids / green areas
- ▨ Rural settlements
- Main node
- Secondary node
- Major development areas
- Urban backbone zone
- Zones of energy exploitation

↓ Air + soil pollution



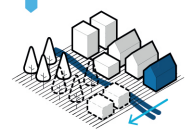
↓ Traffic congestion



↓ Identity / Identities



↓ Land consumption



↓ Lacking accessibility



Fig2 / The image of Prishtina and its structure built as a mental map. Source / author

European countries (fig.3)⁹.

The attention to the concept of accessible, connected city and multimodal mobility system comes in parallel with the present debates in the European Commission, especially concerning the Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (SUMP) as one of the tools for a forward-looking development of a city: the experiences of Lisbon (Portugal) for its public space available to pedestrians; Malmö (Sweden) and its main focus on bicycles as sustainable means of transport; or Skopje (Macedonia) choosing the car-pooling system for residents' savings and environment protection (to mention a few).

In fact, the possibilities for livable habitats in Prishtina and other Kosova urban regions are already compromised by war damages, dangerous emissions and noise pollution, fragmentation of natural areas or public spaces and land exploitation. On the one hand, traditional models of infrastructure based on single-layered flows of people and goods on autonomous paths are gradually showing their

inability to cope with environmental pressures and growing demands, defining the anachronistic paradigm of modern development. On the other hand, it is even clearer the need to rethink urban development patterns of Kosova as catalysts of value and prosperity, starting from the impact given by existing infrastructures and facilities.

The paradigm changes in the design of infrastructure and public space according to the "green-blue" system¹⁰ could make the difference in the image (and urban life) of Prishtina and Kosova .

Actually, the existing local pollution is an effect of energy production with highly polluting systems, impacting on air, water and consequently soil quality. Before talking about possible (re) infrastructure interventions through these Low Impact Development systems¹¹, it is necessary to modify the energy paradigm of the whole country. The exploitation of hydroelectric, wind or geothermal energy could build the vision of a more sustainable and

⁹ / According to the strategic point of the Blue Area of development and the city of Prishtina as a "harbor", the capital should go forward specific objectives as follows:

- Enhance the development of the city in relation to the region, tending to achieve the level of regional and European capitals, creating a functional vehicle and railroad system;
- Aim the construction of a ring road to support development of links, and simultaneously linking this zone with the region, through Corridor VIII and X.
- Urban regeneration must be considered as a mean for solving economic and social problems, for improvement of built spaces in unplanned area. These actions should bring quality physical changes, in the manner of making Prishtina comparable with other regional capitals in the sense of life quality.
- Define precise boundaries of municipal territory.

Development and integration of infrastructure and communication means integration into regional and European network of transport (TEN), improving transportation within the territory of Kosova , sustainable supply of electricity for local and regional requirements and provide sufficient quantity of drinking water, agriculture and industry. Development of infrastructures will affect into reduction of unemployment, will contribute to more equitable development in different regions of Kosova and will offer a better quality in rural development and infrastructure to enable access of all.

¹⁰ / Within the context posed by these two pathways, a three-year international research project "Green Blue Infrastructure for Sustainable, Attractive Cities" in the framework of Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe Projects is being developed by a consortium of European universities, led by TU Delft. It focuses on the development of knowledge and tools required to seize the opportunities arising from future challenges and sustainable development of cities. The aim is to manage water resources to create strong, synergistic and multi-functional green urban infrastructure. The so-called "green-blue solutions" are regenerative systems or technologies that make use of or mimic nature such as constructed wetlands and corridors. They can be integrated into urban areas to achieve potential economic profit from recycling and prosperity for all citizens with better living conditions closest to nature.

¹¹ / The term low impact development (LID) refers to systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of storm water in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat. EPA currently uses the term green infrastructure to refer to the management of wet weather flows using these processes, and to refer to the patchwork of natural areas that provide habitat, flood protection, cleaner air and cleaner water. At both the site and regional scale, LID/GI practices aim to preserve, restore and create green space using soils, vegetation, and rainwater harvest techniques. LID is an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage storm water as close to its source as possible. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat storm water as a resource rather than a waste product. There are many practices that have been used to adhere to these principles such as bioretention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels and permeable pavements. By implementing LID principles and practices, water can be managed in a way that reduces the impact of built areas and promotes the natural movement of water within an ecosystem or watershed. Applied on a broad scale, LID can maintain or restore a watershed's hydrologic and ecological functions'. (source: United States Environmental Protection Agency, <https://www.epa.gov/nps/urban-runoff-low-impact-development>)

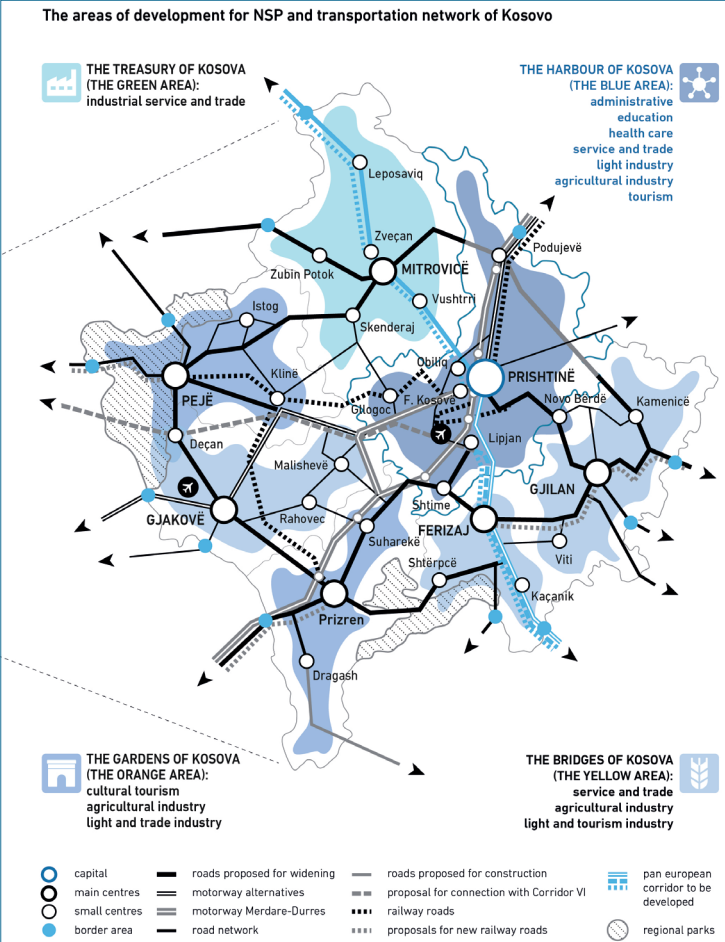


Fig3 / West Balkan major freight corridors. Source / author, developed from: the Western Balkans intermodal study (Study on Orient / East-Med TEN-T CNC 2nd Phase – Final Western Balkan Report of the European Commission); REBIS (Regional Balkans Transport Infrastructure Study. A report for the European Commission, 2003); The Spatial Plan of Kosova (2010)]

pollution-sensitive city, in compliance with the main international agreements on climate, environment, health and economy.

Concerning the mobility infrastructure development in Kosovo, the road network is aligned to the local economic progress, the European corridors and strongly linked to the districts' urban sprawl¹².

While most of the investments concerned the main road connections since Yugoslavian domain, making the region one of the main "channels" for trade and mobility throughout Balkan Peninsula towards Europe, the railway system¹³ of Kosovo is a result of an under-developed infrastructure: mostly single and slow lines (maximum speed in some parts is 80 km/h), with lack of maintenance, damages by illegal level crossings, illegal construction along the lines and garbage disposal close by.

Main mobility infrastructures in Prishtina's region create barriers, boundaries and "grey axes" along which municipality's land is developed

in an unsustainable way, evading the requirements and the expectations for a capital city defined by the Prishtina Strategic Development Plan 2004, in terms of the mobility hierarchy and connections needed to overcome the congestion, especially in the core zone of the city (fig. 4)¹⁴.

Left-apart infrastructural spaces

An opportunity for landscape and people. In a newly recognized-country, renewed opportunities offered by dismissed infrastructures could assume a strong meaning of redemption, basing the future development of the city on a more efficient metabolism, accessibility and closeness of people as a community, making the citizens active part of a transformation process. Restoring certain artefacts as resources rather than barriers – creating corridors for soft mobility, linear parks and public-service paths – is the present political and planning challenge¹⁵.

Apart from the Germia city park, scarce green areas in the collective

¹² / Kosovo is crossed by two main international highway corridors, both passing by the capital: Route 6 - Eastern Europe, from Corridor VIII in Skopje through Ferizaj, Prishtina and separated into two directions: one towards Mitrovica and the border of Ribariq in Montenegro, connected to Route 4; the other direction goes through Peja, then Cakorr in direction of Montenegro. Route 7 - South East Europe, from Durres through Morine border, Prizren, Suhareka, Prishtina, Merdare border in direction of Serbia and connected to Corridor X.

¹³ / The non-electrified network connecting Prishtina originally consisted of two lines crossing in Fushe Kosova Railway Station: a main line goes from Kraljevo, in western Serbia, via Mitrovica and Polje to Skopje, in Macedonia, and a branch line in east-west direction goes from Nish, in southern Serbia, to Prishtina railway Station, with one branch leading to Pec and another to Prizren. Of these lines, the Prishtina-Pec and Kosova Polje-Macedonia connections are still served by passenger trains. A few parts of the network are occasionally served by cargo trains, as Kosova Polje-Obiliq, while the others are currently unused. For years, there have been plans to extend the branch from Prizren to Albania, to link the Kosova network to the Albanian Railways.

¹⁴ / -An incomplete central ring road should be concluded, creating a belt to direct the traffic towards the peripheral urban zone and solve the big traffic jams of the main axes crossing the centre;

-Connections of the satellite neighbourhoods, as new economic developing districts, with the central ring road should be improved in order to secure better distribution of traffic flows. The main connecting streets, planned with Regulatory Plans developed for each district should be implemented;

-Introduction of exchanger parking spaces within strategic points and traffic management tools should prevent the vehicular accessibility to certain areas of the central zone;

-It is highly needed to improve main connections from the centre to the ring road for a better distribution of traffic flows throughout the city;

-The pedestrian and cycle accessibility, compared to the European perspective of slow mobility systems, providing choice of transport and enhancing public mobility, is lacking the most since Prishtina had recently been mainly developed according to tire transport system;

-Public transport is scarce and fragmented. Since the explosion of urbanization from the rural areas, the "new-born" city days reaches 200.000 residents and commuters during the working, suffering in catching the needs of mobility;

-There is a need to regulate by law (and plan) the protection of the natural resource of Regional Park Germia (East hillsides) and create a green belt around the inner ring road in order to protect the City boundaries and the agricultural lands for developing rural economy.

¹⁵ / The possibilities of conversion for neglected infrastructures are expected in a wider international discussion for structural urban transformation opened in the 1970s, due to the tertiary and post-industrialization process in developed countries. Over the last forty years, the role of transportation facilities in urban morphology and functional-quality asset has also been redefined, for growing needs of urban environmental quality. In response to these issues, sustainable design provides an alternative way to conceive next-generation infrastructure and the built form, essentially defined by a greater sensitivity to the context. Environmental and urban resources – in terms of energy, environment, functional containers and goods/people's flows – are shared across different systems and, as a result, costs are reduced and benefits extended following two pathways: the first recalibrates the existing infrastructure, redefining spatial strategies to retrofit soft technologies in the existing urban fabric capable to metabolize



Fig4 / Some views of the streets of Prishtina: (from the top) the Medresa neighbourhood; the "NEW-BORN" site (2018). Source / author, Prishtina PhD International Workshop]

residential neighbourhoods, small squares adjacent to public buildings and the pedestrian boulevard "Mother Teresa" in the administrative area – a few chances inside an archipelago of inaccessible islands surrounded by traffic jam –, the development of other potential spaces throughout the city

is necessary to enhance the values of Prishtina as a young capital:

- Existing scattered abandoned spaces/ buildings should be regenerated and maintained as public spaces of high quality, in order to provide better accessibility for citizens and soften

the high-density problem wherever possible in the city (e.g. the Adem Jashari square, the Youth and Sports Centre or the generic constructions, parking lots and voids in Quendra, Lakrishtë and Dardania);

- New public spaces should be created including tools of tax incentive or relief for landlords in order to provide parks/squares in privately owned properties, especially in the central areas and high-density regions covered by regulatory plans according to a proper distribution between the districts (e.g. from Medresa, Tophane or Qafa neighbourhoods up to the new developing regions in the city outskirts);

In terms of physical impact, strong connections through pedestrian paths and public transportation is important to make those spaces qualitative.

For instance, and immediately identifiable, the inner abandoned railway creates a border between the western residential zones of the city and the urban centre to the East, the dense fabric of the Ottoman quarter to the North and the agricultural areas opposite to the regional park.

The track in direction of Serbia is a linear extended "buffer zone" surrounded by unmaintained open spaces, between the controlled centre of the international organizations, the main facilities as symbolic places of domain and the residential uncontrolled development expanding between the

main roads and the farmland. The opportunity of a systematic connection between the existing neighbourhoods and the "Palace of Youth and Sports" gives new pedestrian and cycle pathways throughout the abandoned railway, which could become a central node for leisure time and practicing sport activities and a linear route crossing different realities.

The streets themselves become the new common ground for local and elective community, making people part of the process out of the socialist and post-capitalistic rhetoric¹⁶.

Even though a shared strategy to recover dismissed transportation facilities still is not developed, it is clear that action plans on urban mobility had already been used for a neighbourhood scale action of renewal around Europe. They return space to the community, converting urban scars that divide people and places rather than connect them.

"Sustainable renewal movement"

A step-by-step integrated process. The sustainable changes asked by international agreements are not a matter of fashion: is a matter of making cities liveable and accessible in facilities to everybody, respecting the land as primary resource and the community needs.

Accessibility, multimodality and appropriation processes could identify challenges and opportunities for Prishtina towards a "Sustainable Renewal Movement" as a future

flows and their management costs for greater climate resilience and liveability; the second takes the opportunity of a new city master plan to advance research and practice, designing new spatial processes where natural areas and the built form are systematically integrated, offering higher levels of social and ecological performances and urban resilience according to climate changes.

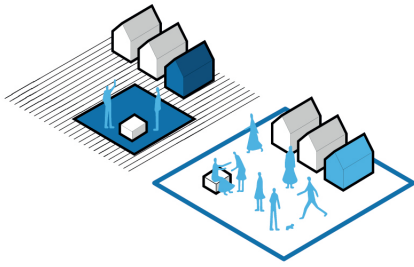
- cities should be reconfigured to ensure multimodal and active movement, with the least possible use of the private vehicles, and decentralized polarities for spread and accessible services;

- new uses and functions can be given to obsolete structures, according to a sustainable urban perspective of (re)using the existing as a resource;

- the urban recovery of infrastructure axes could offer corridors of services, spaces and greenery, especially in contexts where public spaces are lacking the most;

- shared guidelines in a wider region turn isolated cases into a new paradigm of good practice, bringing people closer to forgotten areas of the city, providing a valid alternative to what they are deprived of.

¹⁶ / *A possible strategy shows the path of the socialist architecture in Prishtina, mostly located in the city centre, as Adem Jashari Square, the Stadium, the Cultural and Sports Centre, the National Library and the Electrotechnic faculty. Some socialist buildings are used for governmental purposes, cultural and other institutions and provide much unused public and green space. The many building sites suggested that more and more of the public space will be asphalted, while at the same time people are asking for more green spaces. The green spaces that are present now are not well maintained and need some extra care.*

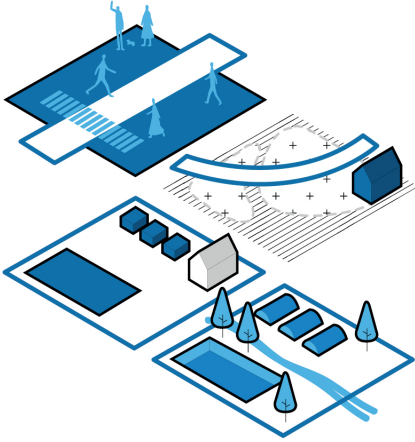


PHASE 0: APPROPRIATION

Deactivation / Recovery

temporary regulated concessions of obsolete spaces/buildings

integration of professionals and associations for events/activities



PHASE 1: STITCHING

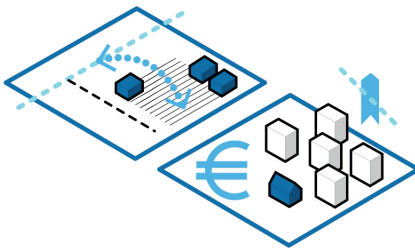
Connections / Accessibility

road system set up according to a human scale accessibility

choice of strategic transition areas connecting neglected spaces

definition of the specific uses for the obsolete structures

use of the "green" and "water" elements as fixed features of the renewed system



PHASE 2: EXPANSION

Neighbourhood / Public spaces

recovery of the further degraded elements affected by a specific neglected infrastructure

moderation of the property speculation effects in renewed districts

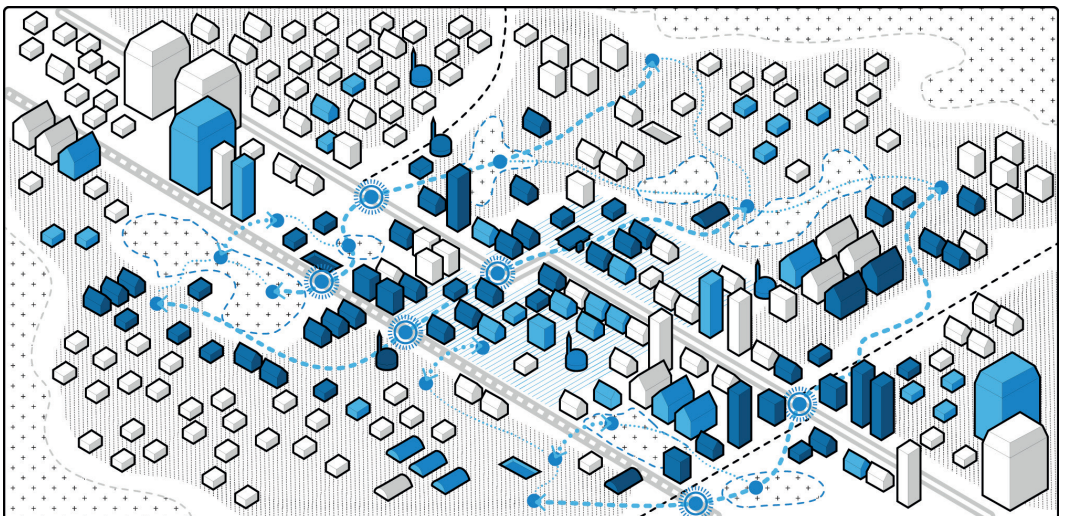


PHASE 3: ATTRACTION

Promotion / Uses

creation of thematic paths fostering a continued use of the renewed infrastructures

Fig5 / Concept and Phases of the "Sustainable Renewal Movement" strategy.
Source / author



metropolitan city¹⁷. In fact, the priority for citizens is not for Prishtina to become a worldwide success (as it may be for its administration), but a place where everyday life favours those conceiving urban space as a dialectic between domestic and public besides democracy as physicality, as proximity, staying above all functions as “urban laboratories”¹⁸ (La Cecla, 2014).

As a young capital, Prishtina needs to innovate its identity for future perspectives and reevaluate its underdeveloped potentials for a stronger sustainable ground and competitiveness, throughout site-specific urban planning processes able to make Prishtina a unique and liveable city.

A shared strategy, a cross-sector method of approach and flexible tools must be chosen, coordinated by a supranational program through specific funding and awards assigned to virtuous governances. Within this vision and following the international agreements, participative instruments are essential to make people protagonists of an appropriation process, giving a new image of the city starting from the formal or informal uses of non-defined public spaces.

The Renewal Agenda suggested for Prishtina is based on regaining the abandoned infrastructures and transforming unused areas to create neighbourhood public spaces, within an osmotic system that exceeds the urban scared edges – as infrastructural axis, void and building in state of obsolescence – involving the surrounding districts. The urban strategy is defined from the opportunities and local needs, identifying the critical issues and

opportunities to be evaluated, to find actions promoting the (re)use and urban renewal of neglected areas, according to a Low Impact Development approach (fig. 5-6):

- Formalize an appropriation process through deactivation/recovery phases for obsolete infrastructures (starting from the abandoned railway system and the most compromised spaces and buildings such as the Palace of Youth and Sports), introducing temporary regulated concession of its spaces to integrate professionals and associations for events, workshops or any other activity. This process could be attained per phases, integrating the metropolitan public transport to enhance the networks between the site and its surroundings;

- Create as many physical connections as possible between the site’s margins and its surroundings. While redesigning the road system according to a human scale strategy, it is necessary to choose transition areas in strategic points of the route joining neglected spaces (including multimodal transportation hubs), in order to deal with the “stitching process”.

Once the specific uses for the obsolete structures are defined, the “green” and “water” elements become fixed features of the renewed system as a whole, based on green-blue infrastructures, conservation and implementation of on-site natural features;

- Through an expanding process, it is important to recover the further degraded elements affected by a specific neglected infrastructure, as a secondary project level for neighbourhood public spaces (including unused lots, parking areas and inadequate public spaces between

¹⁷ / The promotion of strategies useful for better urban livability requires a planning that goes from the public administrations – main interlocutors of a shared program at national and supranational level – to the specialists of the sector interested in the realization, as well as to the providers of services for the mobility and private (especially builders) interested in triggering a virtuous process on a territorial scale. Utilities that make use of such structures are additional beneficiaries to consider, and with respect to this target, both the project and the communication of its intentions must be calibrated (in a broader vision of a healthier, more active, accessible and sustainable city).

¹⁸ / The social aspect and the users are considered to be fundamental in the process of creating the idea of redevelopment of an infrastructure obviously creates very strong real estate interests. It is necessary to consider a social mix, as well as the importance of maintaining as much as possible the pre-existing communities within the redeveloped area, which risks being expelled from a possible gentrification of the site.

Scattered abandoned spaces and facilities | Urban scale strategy

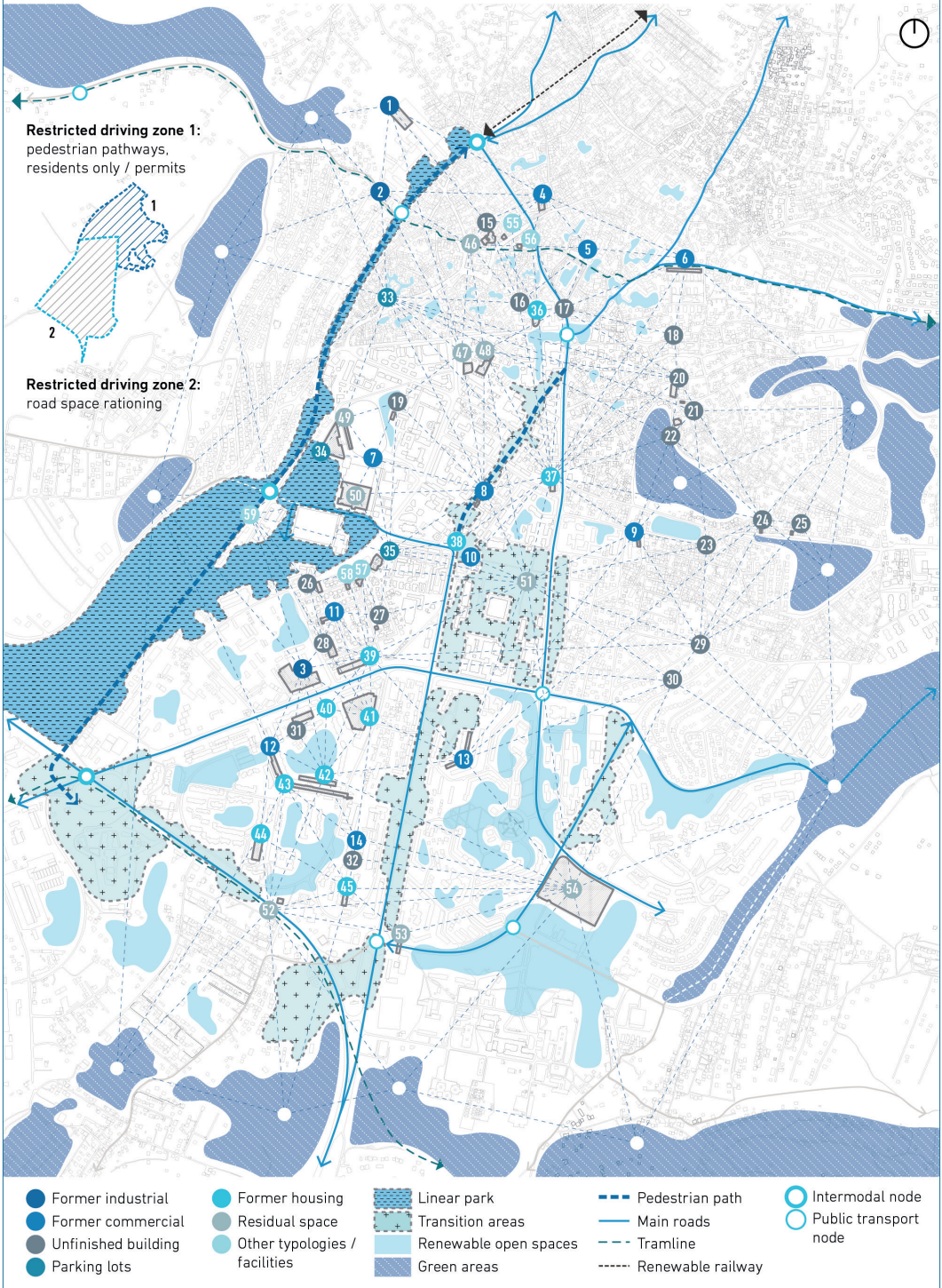


Fig6 / Urban scale strategy for a "Sustainable Renewal Movement": starting from the abandoned and compromised spaces inside the city.

Source / author, developed from: Prishtina – Dynamic city (Archis Interventions, 2009); Common Ground Laboratory Prishtina. Town Planning Design Workshop (PoliMi and University of Prishtina, 2013-2014); What Happens to the Streets of Prishtina? Prishtina International Summer University (PoliMi and University of Prishtina, 2013)]

residential blocks). At the same time, it is necessary to moderate the possible effects of property speculation in renewed districts, according to the incentives and benefits attracting private investment and support actions.

This turn-based expanding process could go as far as the need of

decontamination and conversion exists inside the districts;

- Promote the attractive function of the renewed infrastructure, by creating thematic paths that allow its continued use during the day starting from sport and leisure uses, starting from the prior qualities of the sites (for instance, the sport activities could be enhanced

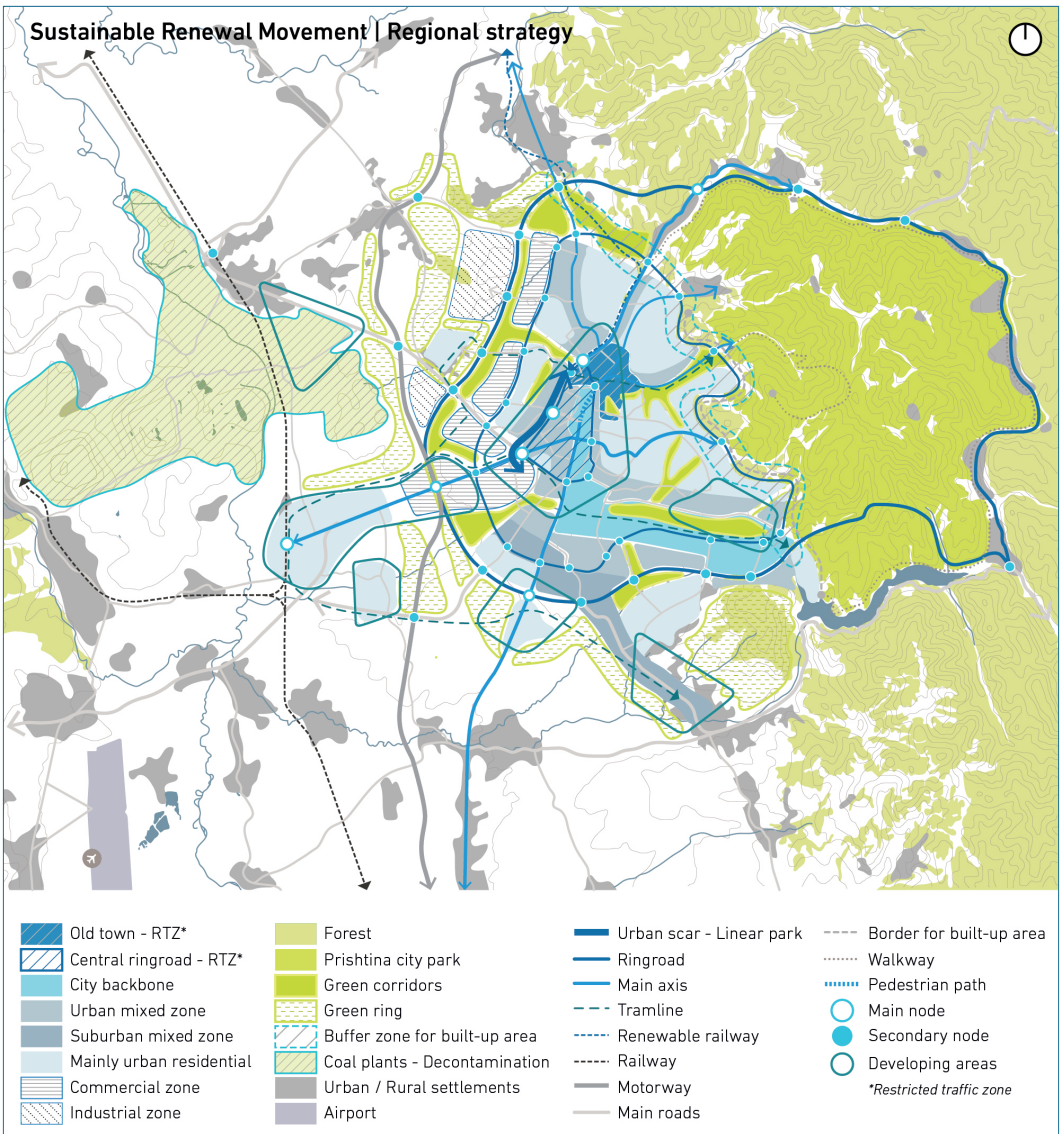


Fig 7 / Regional scale strategy for a "Sustainable Renewal Movement": a new relationship between infrastructures, land consumption and broader connections
 Source / author, developed from: Prishtina – Dynamic city (Archis Interventions, 2009); Common Ground Laboratory Prishtina. Town Planning Design Workshop (PoliMi and University of Prishtina, 2013-2014); What Happens to the Streets of Prishtina? Prishtina International Summer University (PoliMi and University of Prishtina, 2013).

even outside the buildings of the Youth and Sports Centre along new planned pathways and renewed green spaces). The whole strategic plan can be stressed at regional level (fig. 7) in order to take advantage of the main corridor between Europe and Balkans, which Prishtina belongs. Therefore, this city can be a new European capital outlining a system which would be accessible, multi-modal, human-scaled and energy-cleaned according to an appropriate infrastructural development.

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