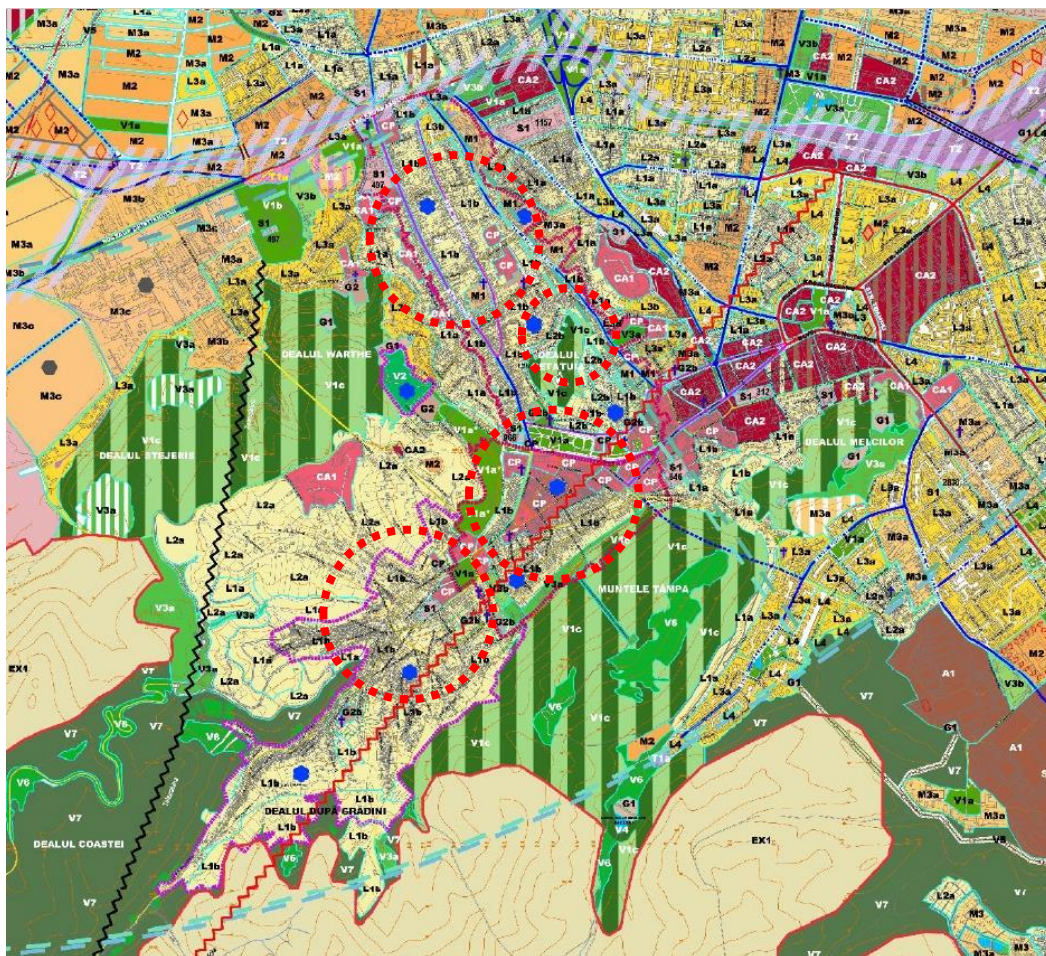


Overall assignment

The study area

The city's Historical Centre - Citadel area (14th - 17th century) is classified as a monument of national importance by the Ministry of Culture and is included in the Protected Built Area "Citadel Architecture Reservation area". This area contains various architectural monuments, including the "Black Church" (built between 1383 - 1477) and the former City Hall ("Casa Sfatului" - 1420, 1770 now a museum).

Besides the Citadel area, characterized by a high density of tourism-related services, the central area of Braşov has another three architectural and urban ensembles listed as historic monuments: the residential neighbourhoods of "Scheii Braşovului" (located to the west of the citadel) and "Braşovul Vechi" (located to the north of the citadel, along Strada Lungă), as well as the "Blumăna - Dealul Cetăţii" ensemble (containing the "Little Citadel" and the residential neighbourhood located at its feet).



The General Urban Plan of Braşov - with the four areas marked as historic ensembles (from north to south - Braşovul Vechi, Dealul Cetăţii, Citadel, Scheii Braşovului)

After 1990, there have been several significant projects aiming to protect and conserve of the built heritage, mostly focused on the Citadel's area: pedestrianization of streets, renovation of the main public spaces and rehabilitation of architectural monuments. Nevertheless, recent large-scale residential projects (especially in the Dealul Poienii area) have been regarded as having a negative impact on the historical city's image.

As a result, the municipality of Braşov is planning to update the Zonal Urban Plan for the Historical Centre of Braşov (Citadel and Braşovul vechi areas) to impose new building regulations that would ensure a better protection and valorisation of the city's built-up and cultural heritage. The Urban Thinking Festival is thus seen as an opportunity to discuss strategic elements, going beyond the normative scope of urban planning in Romania, that might be included in this future Zonal Urban Plan for the historical area of the city.

The preliminary proposal for the updating of the Zonal Urban Plan for the Historical Centre of the city starts from the premise that the historical area is a catalyst for urban development. Among the objectives stated for the updating of the Zonal Urban Plan are:

- the reduction of car traffic (including reduction of surfaces occupied by parking areas) and the extension of pedestrian areas;
- the conservation of the existing plot system (avoiding division into smaller parcels);
- establishing an action plan regarding the conservation and rehabilitation of built protected areas;
- developing a best-practice guide of public and private interventions in built protected areas.

The new Zonal Urban Plan will have to address the following elements in order to preserve and valorise the historical urban morphology: buildings, economic activities, mobility, public spaces and green areas.

Challenges:

- a) **Mobility and connectivity:** The historical area of Braşov (the Citadel area and Schei neighbourhood) is located eccentrically, with few connections to the modern part of the city and to the region - *can this situation be improved, considering the need to protect the existing heritage and the difficult topography?*
- b) **Social inclusion and urban culture:** While the Citadel area is well-known, the other protected areas in the city are less present in the mental image of both citizens and tourists, and have consistently less investment directed towards

them - *how can these areas be valorised, without inducing the negative impacts associated with the gentrification of historical neighbourhoods?*

- c) **Real estate development and the need of a balanced development:** Recent large-scale residential developments have already altered the urban image of the city's historical area - *what is the right balance between the development of under-used land in areas under no special regime of protection (but visibly impacting the image of the city) and the risk of museification of the city's historical areas?*
- d) **Best matching of cultural and historical values of the city:** The “Cerbul de Aur” music festival is taking place once again in Braşov between the 29th of August and the 2nd of September (the festival's latest edition was in 2009). It is a traditional festival at national level, organized in the Council Square (Piata Sfatului) in Braşov, with the first edition hosted back in 1968. *What is the relation (in city marketing and city branding terms) between immaterial and material heritage in the historical areas of medium-sized cities? What are the risks and potential areas of conflict? Which could be the measures to reduce / mitigate them?*

Objectives:

The Urban Thinking Festival participants will devise a **strategic concept** regarding the capitalization of the historical ensembles located in the central area of the municipality of Braşov, considering the following core-ideas:

- The role of public spaces in the urban regeneration of historical city centres.
- Architectural and urban image as a significant component of city branding.
- Innovative methods for capitalizing on cultural heritage in the digital era.
- Sustainable development principles applied to medium-sized cities in mountain areas and their cultural heritage.
- Governance pacts and transparent planning processes as a prerequisite for development.

The participants will be working in teams of 4-5 people, with each team focusing on a particular sub-area within the defined study area. The coordination between teams will be ensured through daily presentation and feedback sessions, with all teams needing to consider the wider context they are working in (city of Braşov and its metropolitan area).

A general overview regarding the state-of-the-art in each of the three sub-areas will be given to the participants in a presentation on Sunday morning, with additional information regarding the current development trends in Brașov's historical area given during the site visit on Sunday.

Team 1 - connecting the Citadel and the Old city to the City



Team 1 Study Area, with the “Little Citadel” at its centre

The team will focus on enhancing and improving the connections between the north-eastern part of the historical centre and the rest of the city, by analysing, identifying and considering the possible articulation points and changes that can be made to existing public spaces around or nearby important landmarks /

institutions: the City Hall, the County Council, the Theatre, the STAR Shopping Centre, the “Unirea” high-school. A particular attention will be given to the relationships between the “Brașovul vechi” area (Strada Lungă - possible evolution of the urban tissue), Civic Centre, Small Citadel (Cetățuia) and University Hill aiming to define the most appropriate approaches and policies to foster coherent, integrated and sustainable development.

Team 2 - the Citadel



Team 2 Study Area

The Citadel team will consider possible strategic approaches, policies and interventions within the protected area of the Citadel, based mainly on possible requalification of existing public places (especially north-south connections), while

ensuring their cohesion and inclusiveness, on fostering development of high added value activities and cultural services, on smart use of the existing endogenous heritage and cultural potential. Attention will be given to developing of possible concepts, approaches and solutions for planning and designing new public spaces (Sf. Ioan place, connections within the medieval urban tissue between Str. Mureșenilor - Piața Sfaturului and the northern-wall promenade). The relationships with the natural elements (Tâmpa and Poienii hills) will also be discussed aiming to a more integrated approach of historic and valuable cultural landscapes.

Team 3 - the Schei neighbourhood (4 people)



Team 3 Study Area

Schei neighbourhood is a lesser known area of historical Braşov, located outside the former medieval walls and, consequently, outside the protected area. The main challenge for this area is to identify its valuable cultural, historic, urbanistic, architectural and landscape elements and possible capitalization strategies and policies that could take advantage of its position in close vicinity to the Citadel area and to outstanding natural places. The team will be asked to develop ways, ideas and solutions to make the Schei area more well-known, visible and attractive and, by that, rounding-up the valuable heritage assets of the city.

Deliverables (outputs):

By the end of the Urban Thinking Festival (31st of August), the participants will submit and defend their ideas in the form of a Powerpoint presentation (20 minutes / maximum 30 slides) containing:

- A general vision for the defined sub-area, based on 3-5 strategic objectives for its development;
- A detailed description of maximum 10 indicative actions to be realized on a short and medium term (up to 4-6 years): these can include both soft interventions (related to policies, innovative planning instruments including principles for building regulations, governance arrangements) and hard interventions (renovations, public space interventions etc.);
- Illustrations of possible design solutions to be adapted to the local context. These could include best-practice examples from other European cities.
- The final presentation will be delivered based on a support written document of 3-5 pages containing a short statement and description of the proposed concept, policies, interventions.

The final product realized by the participants will be based on: the guided tour of the Braşov historical area, the theoretical and practical aspects stemming from the lectures delivered by the international experts, the understanding of the local context and current trends discussed during the Round-Tables and other public / professional / cultural events taking place during the Urban Thinking Festival, the individual assignments received during the workshops coordinated by the international experts.

Follow-up (results and outcomes)

The materials prepared and achieved by the teams as well as the various ideas and conclusions coming out from the round tables, discussions, comments and recommendations of the international and national experts will be gathered, processed, correlated, synthetized in a final document which will be circulated to the participants and partners and also made accessible to the large public. A short report with basic ideas, recommendations and proposals will be handed to the local authority.

A feedback questionnaire will be sent to the UTF participants in order to assess their perception regarding the UTF expectations and results and include ideas regarding possible improvement areas for the Festival's next editions.