

Serbia	88'361Km2	* Inhabitants	7'500'000
Urban Region	322Km2	* Inhabitants	1'575'000

Belgrade, merging Balkans with Europe,
schizophrenic nightmare of the city

Who owns the city? The question related to transitional circumstances and rooted in the contradiction of the shift from inherited so called “social” ownership of urban land, to the new possible configurations of ownerships, marked by the variety of patterns of articulated sets of rights. The differentiated categories of “public” and “private” domains should involve the formation of patterns suitable for the specific local situation of the new urban dynamics. The dynamics is shaped by heritage of hidden contradictions of Belgrade which marked the process of present search of “Third Belgrade” in an attempt to find its place within the global-city network, involving also the search for its own identity as “Genius Loci” suited to new democratic circumstances. The noted paradigm switch described in popular language as the shift “from Wall to Mall”, in the case of the City of Belgrade signifies the shift from inherited hidden contradictions of Tito’s modern utopia of “Capital of Balkan Federation”, and in a chronic clash with the historic City. There is also a search for the social movement to initiate and amplify the changes from “below” and not from “above” as used in the past.

The urbanization process in ex-YU very much determined by the circumstances of the specific Yugoslav self management brand of socialism, the framework of social ownership of building land and the contradictions of “elimination of state” (odumiranje drzave) in totalitarian setting. The rapid expansion of Serbian (yugoslav) cities into the surrounding fields the “illegal building” tolerated by authorities formed the trademark of the urban identity even of contemporary Serbian towns and cities. The state of lawlessness in transition and the during the

war the process even more intensified as the source of new identity which represents transmittion of traditional cultural codes to space and to urban context marking the shift from patriarchal authoritarian - rural to suburban and urban context forming the specific cultural identity.

Belgrade has reconfirmed the position and role of the capital of the now much smaller state, maintaining the function of the centre of the state administration, although the relations between the state and local competences in terms of functioning and financing and managing certain systems (railways, river banks, parts of the road network, etc) have not been fully settled yet.

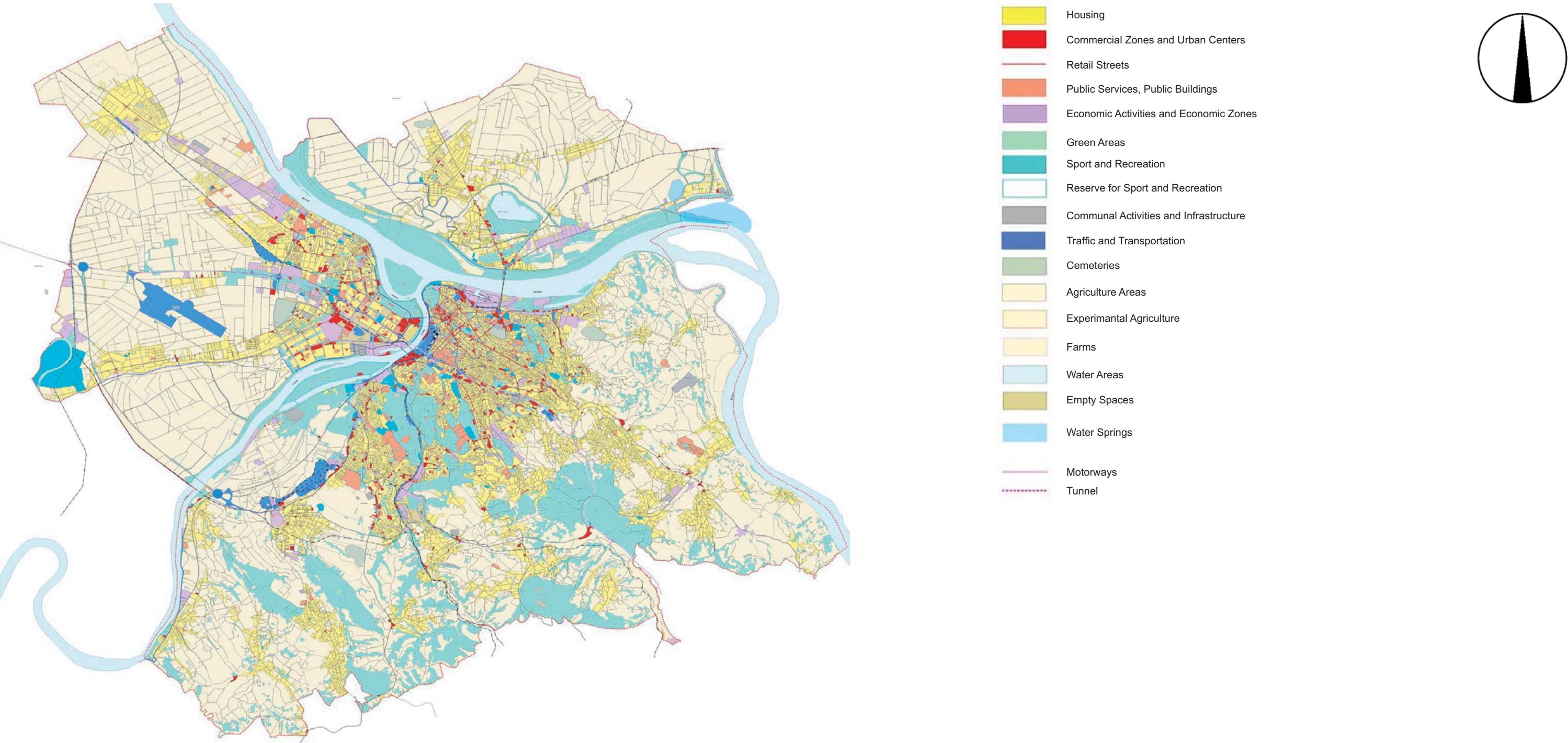
The City has considerably changed the demographic and social image, through dynamic changes in the City population structure, with a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as immigrants from impoverished parts of Serbia, which has a considerable impact on the urban setting and identity of the City and its individual parts. The funds the City allocates for this purpose still considerably overcome the effects achieved, which is most visible in still undeveloped image of the City, illegal construction, social slums, city street development, city cleaning, attitude towards utility systems, etc.

Insufficient control of utilisation of the utility system, failure to observe the environmental and functional capacities of the physical structures of the City, vulnerability of surface and ground waters and air, inappropriate noise in certain parts of the City, pollution and poor development

of the river banks, polluted agricultural land and other phenomena, call not only for full engagement of the City institutions, but also for the absolutely necessary awareness of all the development stakeholders and citizens of the City.

The territory of the City of Belgrade occupies the area of 322,268 hectares, out of which 2,766 ha are rivers and river banks. This territory has the population of 1,576,124 inhabitants (the 2002 Census), thus the density of population is 489 inhabitants/km2, i.e. 5 inhabitants per hectare. They live in 586,889 flats with 567,325 households. As many as 98% flats are in private ownership. The narrower City area, included in the Belgrade Master Plan (2003) occupies the area of 77,600 ha and includes 10 town municipalities

Belgrade - Land Use Map



Belgrade - Neosurbia (illegal settlements)



