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THE DEVELOPMENT OF LVIV REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS BORDER LOCATION

Urban development of Lviv region¹ in the post-war Soviet period (1945–1990) was determined by planning tendencies prevailing at the time. Region was regarded as a unit of so-called ‘settlement system’, in which two major hierarchical levels were distinguished, that is the local and regional level. Local level was identified using the criteria of commuting (15–60 km) and recreational connections (up to 80 km). The regional level was identified on the basis of general migrational links and contacts with respect to science and information exchange (up to 300 km) as well as intensive rail freight traffic (up to 500 km).² Priority was given to local development (also in the 1980s), that is to the Lviv agglomeration (Fomin, 1986).

With such an approach, issues relating to international co-operation and pertinent infrastructure development, on account of the region’s border location and common border with Poland 250 km long, were regarded as matters of minor importance.

Following political changes in the former USSR and the emergence of Ukraine as an independent state, the location of Lviv region became a major factor determining its development.

The Lviv district extends over 21.8 thousand km² (3,6% of Ukraine’s area) and has a population of 2776.9 thousand (1 January 1993, i.e. 5,3% of Ukraine’s total population) (*Geografiya...*, 1994). The district encompasses 41 towns and

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¹ In planning documentation the terms ‘region’ and ‘district’ (*oblast*) are generally synonymous.

² In this context the term ‘region’ is considered in the scale of the whole USSR area. Currently the term ‘West Ukraine region’ has come into use, to denote an area embracing 7 districts (Lviv, Rivne, Volhynia, Ternopil’, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Transcarpathia).

urban settlements, and 1871 rural settlements, Lviv being the capital city (810 thousand – 1 January 1993). The whole district is divided into 20 subdistricts (*rayons*). Major cities of the region are: Drokhobich (78 thousand) Chervonokhrad (former Krystynopol, 72 thousand) Striy (67 thousand), Borislav (42 thousand) and Sambir (40 thousand). Urban population constitutes 60%; population density in the district is 127 people per km², which is above the national average in Ukraine (Kvasnytsia, Khlichov and Fredyk, 1994).

Larger towns of the region may be classified into several groups according to predominant economic functions: multifunctional (Lviv, Drokhobich, Striy), industrial (Chervonokhrad, Noviy Rozdil, Novoavorivske, Stebnik), recreational centres and health resorts (Truskaviets, Morshin, Veliki Ljubin, Nemiriv, Slavske). A number of folk crafts centres are still found in the region: weaving, embroidery and wood processing (Javoriv), ceramics (Khavarechchina, Potelich), weaving (Gliniani) (Kvasnytsia, Khlichov and Fredyk, 1994).

The Lviv district has a relatively well-developed (as compared to other parts of Ukraine) transportation system. Total length of railway lines is 1312 km, including 763 km of electrified lines, which gives a ratio of 60 km per 1000 km². The distance from railway lines is less than 10 km in most parts (Kvasnytsia, Khlichov and Fredyk, 1994; *Geografichna...*, 1990). Major railway lines are: Kyiv–Lviv–Striy–Chop (Hungarian border), Kyiv–Lviv–Mostiska (polish border), Lviv–Chervonokhrad–Volodimir Volynskiy–Yakhodin (Polish border).

Roads for motor traffic in the region total 7.9 thousand km, including 7.6 thousand km of asphalt roads, which makes 366.9 km per 1000 km². Major international routes are Kyiv–Rivne–Lviv–Striy–Mukachevo–Chop and Mostiska–Lviv–Ternopil’–Chernivtsi–Porubne (Romanian border) (Kvasnytsia, Khlichov and Fredyk, 1994; *Geografichna...*, 1990).

The Lviv district has considerable potential as regards recreation and health restoration, which includes favourable climatic and geographical conditions and rich cultural heritage (places of historical, architectural and ethnographic interest). Natural curative resources are mineral waters in Truskaviets, Morshin, Nemiriv, Shklo, Skhidnitsya, Veliki Ljubin, (217 mineral water sources in all). Truskaviets and Morshin have a relatively well-developed infrastructure, and so have Slavske and Tisoviets – winter sports centres, where the number of foreign visitors over the last few years has been increasing.

Nearly all towns of the district boast numerous architectural monuments (1985 in Lviv and 1437 in other towns of region) and relics of the past of archaeological interest (over 750 objects have been registered in the district).³

³ Number of places of historical interest is quoted after a register of the Office for Architecture and Building of the Lviv District as of 1 January 1994.

Lviv is a major cultural and educational centre. It has 6 theatres, 12 museums, the Western Centre of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and 6 higher education establishments.⁴

The above information are indicative of a fairly rich and diverse urban potential of the Lviv district. Until very recently the factors mentioned above (and other, too) favoured the prominent role of Lviv and stimulated first of all its development as the centre of the agglomeration and the main city in the western part of Ukraine. During the past decade the population of the city increased from 680 to 810 thousand. In 1991, an additional 130 thousand people commuted every day to work in Lviv, mainly from the west (Lviv–Mostiska) north (Lviv–Zhovkva) and south (Lviv–Striy direction) (Rusanova, Shulkha, 1993). This is evidence of the ‘internal’ orientation in the region’s development, considering the fact that the western and northern directions coincide with major transportation routes to Poland.

After the regaining of independence by Ukraine the situation started to change gradually. The collapse of the centrally-steered economic system of the former USSR resulted in a sharp decline of production in major industrial plants in Lviv and other towns. These plants were controlled directly from Moscow, as they provided for the military needs and employed thousands (in Lviv even tens of thousands) workers (mainly oscillatory migrants). The resulting unemployment which occurred in industrial towns led to a relocation of a part of the labour force from cities to small towns and rural areas.

Progressive legalisation of private trade and services allowed to create new jobs in addition to former ‘plan targets’. The above mentioned factors ‘forced’ in a way the activation of small towns in the district in recent years.

Elimination after 1991 of restrictions in the field of one-family housing resulted in rapid development of small towns, especially those situated along major communication routes and in suburban areas round large cities. Illustrative examples are areas situated on the axes Lviv–Mostiska, Lviv–Sambir, Lviv–Zolochiv, Lviv–Zhovkva.

The international factors mentioned earlier were accompanied by a very important external factor, that is ‘opening up of Ukraine to the West’. In comparison with the year 1990, in 1992 the number of persons crossing the Polish–Ukrainian border grew by 33%, the number of motor-cars increased by 29%, and trucks – by 55%. In June 1992 the waiting time in a queue for customs clearance for trucks at the Medyka–Shegini (toward Lviv) border crossing was 120 hours – 5 days (Komornicki, 1993). This oddity is evidence of an insufficient number of border crossings and their inefficiency as regards capacity. For over 40 years there was only one railway crossing in Mostiska and

⁴ The largest of them, Lviv Technical University, celebrated in 1994 150 years of its activity. Urban Studies Department in Lviv Technical University started work in 1913.

an adjoining crossing for cars in Shegini; another crossing for motor traffic was opened in Rava-Ruska in 1992. Currently construction works are being carried out on the crossing in Krakoviets (the shortest distance from Lviv) and two new points for motor traffic are planned in Smolnitsa and Nizhankovichi. Railway crossings in Khiriv and Rava-Ruska are being rebuilt, too (figure 1).

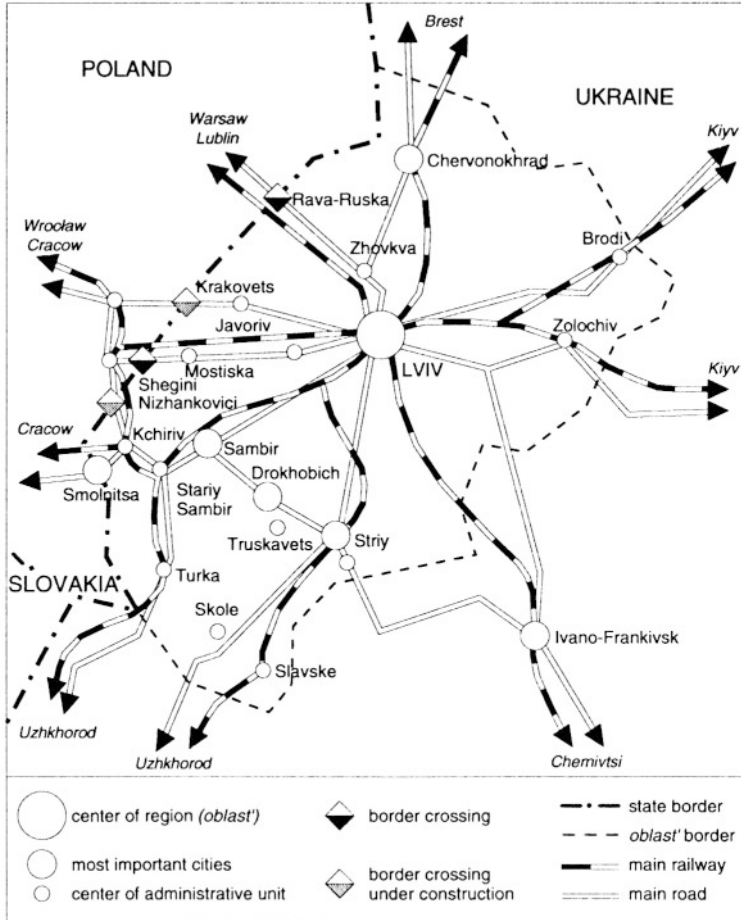


Fig. 1. The most important transit connections in Lviv region (*oblast'*)

The opening of new frontier crossings has significantly affected urban development of Lviv region. Three groups of towns and urban settlements may be distinguished in this regard:

- 1) border towns and settlements directly connected with the crossings;
- 2) towns and settlements situated along the developing transit routes;

3) towns and settlements which are destinations for the incoming transborder traffic.

The first grup, which includes Shegini, Mostiska, Krakoviets, Javoriv, Rava-Ruska, Nizhankovichi, Smolnitsa and Khiriv, is experiencing the development (rather slow, so far) of an infrastructure for servicing the transit traffic, that is the catering industry, shopping centres, filling stations, warehouses, etc. Former military facilities are sometimes used for that purpose.

In the second group of towns (Sambir, Stariy Sambir, Turka, Gorodok, Zhovkva, Drokhobich, Striy, Brodi, Zolochiv), stimulation of infrastructure development is expected due to the construction or planned opening of new frontier check-points which will direct part of the transit traffic to new routes and will shorten the route from Poland to Romania and Hungary by some 100–150 km (Posatskij, 1993).

The third group includes first of all Lviv, and besides it such health resorts as Morshin, Truskaviets, Veliki Ljubin and other localities. Slavske and Tisoviets, winter sports centres, are presently enjoying increased popularity. Services infrastructure is definitely better here than in the other two groups, but nevertheless its further improvement is desirable.

International links of Lviv region call for solving a number of urban problems. Modernisation of road and railway networks is one of most important tasks. In order to improve transit traffic it is necessary to build detours passing by towns located along main transit routes. Such detours have already been constructed near Brodi, Zolochiv, Sudova Vishnja, Zhovkva, Javoriv, Skole, Turka and Morshin. Similar solutions are urgently needed in Mostiska, Rava-Ruska, Sambir and Kulikov. Curently under construction is the last section of the motorway encircling Lviv and Gorodok. Road surfaces and side-spaces also need to be modernised so as to meet the requirements of the transit of heavy freight trucks and tourist motor-coaches. Until now only two two-lane sections have been built on the roads Lviv–Striy and Lviv–Brodi; the next section between Lviv and Gorodok is currently under construction.

As regards railway traffic, building a European railway line (Przemysł–Lviv) is being considered, as well as construction in Lviv of a new railway station, capable of servicing international passenger traffic.

Another problem to be solved urgently is modernisation of the functional and spatial arrangement of towns. It will involve changes in urban land-use structure, restructuring street networks, construction of new housing and renovation of the old housing stock. Changes in the location of infrastructure for the provision of services, also those aimed at meeting the needs of growing transit traffic, are necessary as well.

Street networks in nearly all towns need to be modernised so as to increase their traffic capacity. Designating pedestrian traffic zones in town centres seems vital, too.

Land reserve to be used for development is very scarce in most towns of the region, which points to the necessity to regenerate urban areas built up before mid-20th century. Transfer of trade and services from the state sector to the private sector is an essential factor stimulating the desired changes.

One more urgent problem to be dealt with is the issue of cultural heritage conservation and making it accessible to the public, also as tourist attractions. In the Soviet period the list of historical and cultural monuments was intentionally limited. Until today the attitude prevails that objects of architectural value and their preservation are matters of secondary importance to be dealt with some time in the future when the situation improves.

Objective analysis of urban and architectural elements in towns of the region, carried out in 1991–1994 by the Institute Ukrproyektrestavratsiya, resulted in a significant expansion of the list of objects of historical value, and helped realize the scale of the problem. Regrettably, apart from Lviv only a few historical monuments, like for example a castle in Olesko, are in adequate state of repair and may be visited by tourists. Numerous historical centres, such as the ones in Zhovkva, Brodi, Gorodok, or places and garden complexes in Pidkhirtsi and Chervonokhrad are in urgent need of all-round restoration.

To sum up: after forty years of channeling development efforts to major urban centres of the region, 1991 marks the beginning of the functional-spatial decentralisation process, based on the network of small towns. An essential factor stimulating this tendency is the border location of the region.

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