

# Bucharest Central Area Integrated Urban Development Plan

**1. Recovering the urban identity for the Central area.** Today, for many inhabitants, the historic center means only the Lipscani area, which is a simplification of history. We are trying to revitalize and reconnect the different areas which constitute the center of Bucharest, from Victory Square to Carol Park, having the quality of urban life for city residents as a priority and trying to create a city brand for tourists and investors.

**2. Recovering the central area located south of the Dambovitza river.** Almost a quarter of surveyed Bucharest residents had not heard of areas like Antim or Uranus, a result of the brutal urban interventions of the 1980s when, after intense demolitions, fragments of the old town have become enclaves hidden behind the high-rise communist buildings. Bridges over Dambovitza disappeared, and whole areas south of the river are now lifeless. We want to reconnect the torn urban tissue and redefine the area located south of Dambovitza. recover this part of town by building pedestrian bridges over the river and reconstituting the old ways of Rahovei and Uranus streets as a pedestrian and bicycle priority route.

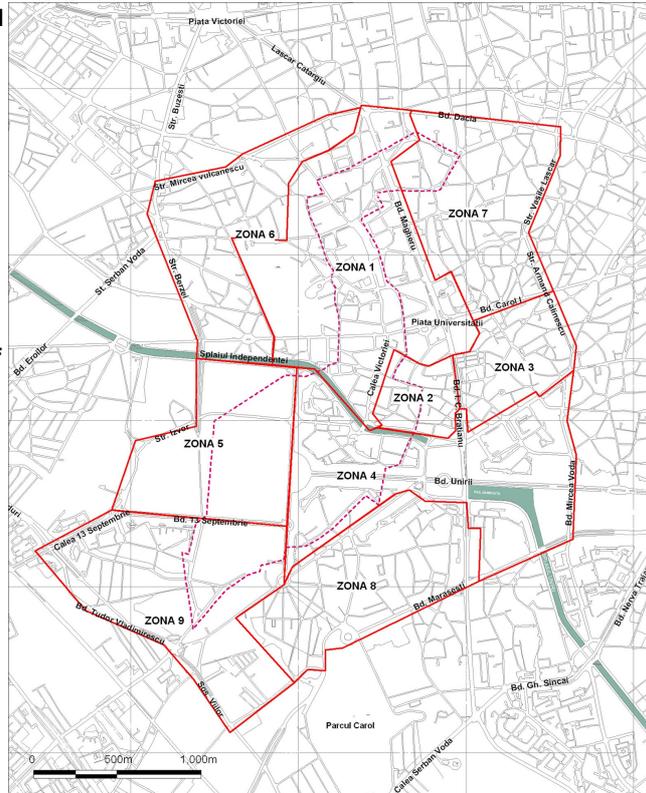
**3. Model of sustainable alternative transportation.** Traffic is a major problem for the Bucharest city center. The center should not be a transit area through Bucharest and by encouraging the development of rings and the outside belt, car traffic in the downtown area can easily decrease. We should prioritize alternative forms of transportation - for decades used on a regular basis by most European cities: improve transportation connections and establish a network of streets with priority for cyclists and pedestrians to cross the Center.

**4. Integrated parking in the downtown area.** We encourage a parking system with integrated management of small and medium size, connected to public transport nodes and the main road network, creating the premise for giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists. We are against the building of big capacity public parking in the central area (of over 1000 spots) because such car parks themselves generate traffic. With the construction of small and medium underground parkings the public space will be freed of cars and streets, squares and sidewalks can become the new infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

**5. Recovery of public spaces.** We aim to give the public spaces back to the pedestrians. Today, they are unfriendly, occupied by cars or lack facilities and are inoperational. By rethinking public spaces, rearranging the streets giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists and restoring over 20 squares and markets, we want to create proper public spaces. We focus on dynamic design with a high quality standard for smart mobility and relaxation.

**6. The urban regeneration of degraded traditional neighborhoods.** Traditional trade routes, such as Mosilor, Grivița, or Rahova streets now suffer from pronounced degradation of buildings, but also the low living conditions of local residents. We want these streets and neighborhoods to enter into a process of urban regeneration. Revitalization of urban infrastructure and public space indirectly encourages economic development and attracts investments into the area. We propose an architecture and urban infrastructure in contemporary language but which respects and highlights the historical context and specifics of each identified *Urban Chamber*.

**7. Boosting economic activities.** The Integrated Urban Development Plan combines urban space interventions with actions that are a catalyst for economic activity. A number of historic buildings will be refurbished to become museums and support for creative industries and revitalize both modern and traditional crafts. The envisioned



pedestrian and bicycle route will be beneficial for the local economy as it will support the commercial activities of stores, restaurants and service units located on the route and in its vicinity.

**The most important public spaces and the most interesting turistic bench-maks of the central area were discovered and linked in a 2 hours walking route or ½ hour bike route, starting from the concept of URBAN CHAMBERS, community public spaces with well defined activities, integrated at city level:**

- The Classical Culture Chamber (Revolutiei Square-Sala Palatului area)
- The Academic Chamber (Universitatii Square area)
- The Chamber of Ambiance (Gradina Icoanei- Romana Square area)
- The Alternative Culture Chamber (Uranus-Rahova area)
- The Contemporary Culture Chamber (The Palace of Parliament-The National Contemporary Art Museum area)
- The Entertainment Chamber (Unirii Square area)
- The Historical Chamber (The Historical Center area)
- The „Touristic Market” Chamber (Amzei Market area)
- The Bridge Chamber (Izvor – Mihai Voda Bridge area)
- The Public Space „At the Fountains” (Unirii Blvd-Constitutiei Square)

**The Classical Culture Chamber (Revolutiei Square-Sala Palatului area)** includes the public space from the Revolutiei Square to the Sala Palatului area and contains the important Bucharest cultural institutions: the Art Museum – the Royal Palace, the Central University Library, Romanian Atheneum, the Palace Hall. The cultural character of the area turns it into the main destination for artistic performances and events and represents a synthesis of modern and recent history both for Bucharest people and for tourists, a must visit when exploring the centre of the Capital.

**The Academic Chamber (Universitatii Square area)** is defined by the University Square, hosting nationally prestigious institutions of education and culture: the University of Bucharest, the University of Architecture and Urbanism, „Ion Mincu”, the I.L. Caragiale National Theatre.

The „spiritus loci” is strongly impregnated by historical and cultural charge. Due to the important pedestrian flow, the square is rather perceived as an important joint of circulation. The Academic chamber is a dynamic urban space. The leisure areas are intensely frequented by young people, becoming traditional meeting points. From the urban point of view, it is a diverse space but however cohererent as a whole, being the result of the architectural and urbanistic interventions of the last century. This chamber is exemplified through the Academiei Street segment of the Pedestrian and bicycles route and the adjacent squares.

#### **The Chamber of Ambiance (Gradina Icoanei- Romana Square area)**

This chamber takes the visitor into a typical area of individual houses, located in the next proximity of the big boulevards, Magheru, Dacia and Eminescu. While the Magheru Bvd is the expression of inter-war development and at the same time a major axis of circulation and commerce, near it we find an uban tissue dated since the Borroczyn plan (1846–1852).

The counteposition of the Magheru commercial area with the Gradina Icoanei recreational area, together with the Buleandra Theatre, creates the potential of public interest for this chamber, made of isolated individual houses, of high cultural value. The presence of the Gradina Icoanei and Ion Voicu Parks fully contribute to the green sensation of the area. The intervention of Cantacuzino Square creates a pedestrian bridge between the two parks, while the intervention in Lahovary Square turns an inaccessible isle into an attractive pedestrian space.

**The Alternative Culture Chamber (Uranus-Rahova area)** aims at integrating the southern area of the centre, now isolated by the 13 September street and the Unirii Boulevard. The Uranus-Rahova area has to potential to become a pole of attraction for alternative cultural activities, of specialized interactions, of organizing diverse unconventional events, or of the projects that seek a cultural and urban regeneration. Also, it is the suitable location for temporary markets. The features of the area consist in the presence of some representative buildings for Bucharest and in the contrasting atmosphere of a multicolored world. The Romanian Academy, the Bragadiru Palace, former building of the Goods Exchange and Flowers Market offer individuality to the place through their position and historical value.

Reconnecting this area to the center is important not only for the development of the area but also will have a strong influence on all the neighbouring areas.

**The Contemporary Culture Chamber (The Palace of Parliament-The National Contemporary Art Museum area)**

The spaces created by the '80s urban systematization of the area are the suitable scene for exhibitions, events, show of contemporary artistic installations and others as such. The presence in the area of the National Contemporary Art Museum, a welcomed architectural parasite inside the Palace of Parliament defines from the beginning the character of the urban chamber - a space dedicated to contemporary culture.

The Contemporary Culture Chamber occupies a vacuum in the urban tissue, resulted from the huge demolitions in the 80's, done in order to raise the Palace of Parliament. The old configuration, dominated by the Spirii Hill was levelled and the street scanning field disappeared leaving instead an unbuilt area, covered with wild vegetation.

The entire space is presently dominated by the Palace of Parliament, the second largest building in the world.

The adjacent terrain is demarcated with a fence-type border, which clearly separates the public urban space from the one that belongs to the Palace of Parliament. This new public space is marked with a signal element – the „Tornado” observation tower which becomes an urban icon.

**The Entertainment Chamber (Unirii Square area)** is a stage for the city. A node in the city tissue, the Unirii Square was always a space of interaction, of exchange, of intercrossing. A place where the most diverse entertainment shows take place, the Unirii Square can function as a huge stage in the centre of the most complex intersection of the city. The area has an ambiguous character, a place without past, located at the intersection of



such different urban tissues. Its large scale, the complexity of the traffic net that crosses it, its inter-jointure character make Unirii Square a transit area with little character.

Its consequent remakings, the most brutal being during the 80's demolitions, created an area from which history is excluded: the Patriarhiei hill was almost totally covered with blocks, the Halelor complex has completely vanished and Hanul lui Manuc remained the only witness of the changes of the latest centuries, on the northern limit of the square. Surrounded by blocks from the last years of the 80s and by the Unirea Shopping Center, a building from the 70's rebuilt in the last years of the communist regime in order to be integrated in the new assembly, the Unirii Square affords an abrupt passing from the Bucharest old urban tissue of the historical centre or of the old Jewish district to an attenuate urban tissue, whose characteristic is monumentality – the new civic centre and its main axis Unirii Boulevard. The 90's brought with them a series of light boxes on the Unirii Square facades, contributing to the chaotic impression. The central park in the Unirii Square is actually a green isle, surrounded by intense car traffic.

**The Historical Chamber (The Historical Center area)** partially corresponds to the traditional center of Bucharest. A district which begins to be gradually discovered with a big touristic and pedestrian potential, the Historical Center has become an area populated by cafes, shops, theatres, galleries. The historical chamber invites to a raid in the history of Bucharest, to a relaxed stroll on the streets full of charm of Lipscani area. It is an area with a dense and compact urban tissue with continuous fronts, interrupted only by a few blank lots. By far the traditional commercial area of the city, the Historical Center asks for the judicious occupancy of the terrains, which resulted to the high density of the buildings, in opposition to the other older districts of Bucharest. The buildings are historically and architecturally valuable, but in an advanced state of degradation. The diverse juridical problems are still making the rehabilitation of the Lipscani area a troublesome process.

**The „Touristic Market” Chamber (Amzei Market area)** is an important commercial point in the centre of Bucharest. The market naturally attracted an important flux of inhabitants in the area, on its border appearing many shops, banks, restaurants and cafes. The remodelling of the market is an ongoing process. The urban chamber of the touristic market proposes to generate a short raid into what was the specific local commerce, which involved direct interaction with the little producers and also with the inhabitants.

**The Bridge Chamber (Izvor – Mihai Voda Bridge area)** is an important point of jointing of two important axes defined by the Dambovitza river and the newly proposed route, predominantly pedestrian and for bicycles. It accents a strategic point of the city, having the potential of becoming an urban landmark, a new symbol for the central area. The project creates three types of spaces – an urban lounge towards the Lipscani square, a green amphitheatre which offers a beautiful perspective of the Parliament Palace and of the Izvor Park and the Bridge itself, a space which directly interconnects you to the river, from whose cafe you can watch the sunset above the water surface.

In this spot existed until 1977 the Mihai Voda bridge, later replaced with by a temporary wooden pedestrian bridge, which in time also disappeared. Reconnecting the Brezoianu area and the Izvor Park, where once existed the Mihai Voda district, a prosperous merchants district, is a natural and necessary gesture. Thus, the two shores, so different as urban tissues, unite – on the one side, the Brezoianu area, with continuous fronts and buildings with great patrimonial value, commercial functions and public alimentation, effervescent at the ground level and on the other side, a continuous front of blocks from the 80's.

**The Public Space „At the Fountains” (Unirii Blvd-Constitutiei Square)** is the chamber which presently, by the impressive dimension (cca 800 m length and 100 m width) and through the particular elements which compose it (fountains, generous plantations) has all the means to become that classic meeting place and promenade of the city. Today, that can not be done because of some major disfunctions at accessibility level and of circulations organisation. The space of the chamber has also an extraordinary potential due to the association with the image of Parliament Palace building – whether we like it or not, it is the main identity mark of the city. The spatial amplitude created by the Constitution Square make this space the stage for some major shows, concerts, fairs. By placing an accesible belview tower at the end of the boulevard, towards the Unirii Square, that „icon” element is introduced, important in the given context, of creating a new character, while enhancing the old one. The area is liberated from the parked vehicles by moving them in a large underground parking.