ON THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN BRAŞOV AND ITS SURROUNDING AREA, FOCUSED ON THE REAL ESTATE PROJECTS BETWEEN 2000 AND 2010

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Abstract. The after 2000 period has brought up with itself many changes in the spatial planning field and also, in the Braşov county’s cities and towns landscape. These urban metamorphoses are due to the new structural and functional trends, which are specific for the modern European towns; on the other hand, they are a consequence of the urban development projects implementation at local and regional level. Regarding the urban renewal (considering towns as an optimal environment for investments), it is aiming more segments as the residential, industrial, commercial and business space, together with the suburbs development and the appearance of new urban development areas. The real estate companies have an important role in the space re-structuring and they’re becoming a seething vector in the urban space modeling. The reorientation of Romanian economy to the market one, has favored the investor's appearance, the cities and towns being looked upon as a real environment for investments. It is generated by the strong points of the county as the favorable position in the centre of Romania at the intersection of major transport axes, the airport availability by 2008, the large market from this area, the high industrial tradition and the presence of the qualified labor force. One of the hold-backs can be represented by the significant distance to the western border (ca. 450 km). However, the investments fluxes are continuous because they’re often carrying real gains in the financial field, in the urban functionality and finally, in the urban evolution on the sustainability direction. The paper, definitely, presents the urban development projects from Braşov and its surrounding Area under the stress of the investors, general planners, developers and real estate manager’s involvement. Concretely, this work presents the unfurled projects by Zoltim Trading Agency from Braşov in the latest years and some foresights for future concerning the planning of the urban space.

Rezumat. Asupra dezvoltării urbane din Braşov şi zona sa înconjurătoare din perspectiva proiectelor de dezvoltare imobiliară între 2000 şi 2010. Perioada de timp scursă după anul 2000 a adus cu sine numeroase schimbări în dezvoltarea spaţială a localităţilor din România şi, implicit, în peisajul aşezărilor umane din judeţul Braşov. Aceste metamorfoze se datorează noilor tendinţe structurale şi funcţionale care sunt specifice oraşelor europene; în acelaşi timp, ele reprezintă o consecinţă a implementării proiectelor de dezvoltare la nivel local şi regional. Cu privire la împrospătarea şi regenerarea urbană (având în vedere faptul că oraşele constituie un mediu optim pentru investiţii), proiectele vizează mai multe „segmente” ale spaţiului urban cum sunt cel rezidenţial, cel industrial, cel comercial şi de afaceri, cel turistic etc, determinând astfel apariţia unor noi zone de dezvoltare urbană. Companiile imobiliare au un rol semnificativ în ceea ce priveşte restructurarea spaţiului urban devenind un vector real în dezvoltarea sa. Reorientarea economiei româneşti spre cea de piaţă a favorizat apariţia investitorilor. Aceasta este susţinută de oportunităţile pe care le oferă judeţul Braşov, între care se remarcă poziţia favorabilă a sa în centru României la intersecţia unor axe majore de circulaţie, prezenţa aeroportului care se preconizează a fi funcţional în această parte a țării, specificul şi oportunităţile pieţei, tradiţia economică recunoscută la nivel naţional şi nu numai, prezenţa forţei de muncă disponibilă etc. Alături de aceste avantaje există şi elemente
restrictive cum ar fi distanța considerabilă față de granița de vest a României; cu toate acestea fluxul investițiilor a fost constant și continuu datorită feed-back-ului pozitiv materializat prin câștig financiar din partea investitorilor și antreprenorilor, și prin dezvoltarea de ansamblu a localităților din perspectiva durabilității. Această lucrare prezintă în mod concret câteva aspecte cu privire la dezvoltarea așezărilor umane din Brașov și din zona sa înconjurătoare sub impulsul și prin implicarea investitorilor, a celor responsabili cu dezvoltarea și planificarea urbană și a managerilor din domeniul imobiliar. Concret, sunt expuse, începând cu anul 2000, proiectele de dezvoltare imobiliară ale firmei Zoltim Trading din Brașov, care s-au finalizat, care se află în fază de derulare în prezent sau care urmează a fi desfășurate în perioada imediată, cu scopul de a contribui la dezvoltarea social-economică din această parte a țării.

**Key words:** urban development, real estate projects, Brașov

**Cuvinte cheie:** dezvoltare urbană, proiecte imobiliare, Brașov

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The real estate experts consider the real estate investments as a certain gain for the investors and more of that for the human settlements social-economic environment. In our days the real companies have an important role in the urban development because "the real estate market is inducing the activities locating” (Ianoș, 2005, p. 38). The real companies become, from the ordinary transactions, serious actors on the urban development scene at the local level and the regional one too. Their fusion with investors, general managers, developers, local and regional authorities, and at the same time with the experts from the planning activity is focused on the same objectives concerning the local and regional development. In this context, Short, J. R., (1984, p. 189) states that „planning is very important, since it determines which land is to be used for particular users. By indicating where residential development can take place, for example, the land use planning process favors some sites and hence some landowners more than others.” And more of that, the planning actions are important because through its particularities there can be solved „specific urban problems” (Spates, Macionis, 1987, p. 405).

The urban development projects, through its typology, aiming the structure and the functionality of the urban settlements, but more of that, the development of the urban systems and, at the same time, its rural surrounding space. These projects are in connection with the contemporary requests that are particular for sustainable development in the social-economic context. Also, they are in concordance with the urban space structure and its planning concerning the residential areas (habitable space), the industrial areas, the commercial zones (the retail and the commercial space), the touristic areas (the recreation and entertainment space), the business space (offices and business parks) and finally, the logistic areas.

The opportunities for investors offered by Brașov and its surrounding area are: the old traditions in the socio-economic field, the favorability of the geographical position, the fluxes convergence, the nearness from the Romania capital Bucharest, the high specialized labor force and the availability of it and the suitability of the local and regional market. Also important are the statute of the city of Brașov in Romania, it being municipality of national importance with influence potential at European level, rank I municipality (Popescu, Irina, 2007, cf. Legea nr. 351/2001, p.274). In the latest years, the investment process in Brașov and its surrounding area was continuous and constantly. So, „on the multiple signs assets of
a general amelioration that is specific for the XXI Century in Romania” (Ray, Violette, Groza, O., Ianoș, I., Pătroescu, M., 2006, p. 131) the investments in this Romanian space has known a progressive increase, especially in the real estate field (after 2000). The structure of them is illustrated in figure 1. So, we can, easily, observe that the major percent of the total amount of investments is represented by Germany with 42.7%.

Due to the strong economic development fundamentals, Brașov has attracted significant foreign direct investments, particularly in developments for residential and holiday, retail, logistic and in the value added service industries. The most important international retailers such as Metro, Selgros and Carrefour are present in Brașov with outlets ranging from 10 000 sq. m up to 20 000 sq. m and are currently continuing to add the number of outlets due to the attractiveness of the local and surrounding market. During 2005, 3 new and 10 refurbished hotels have been developed, 4 additional residential districts are planned and 4 commercial complexes constructed. All the international and local banks of Romania are present in the city. A wide range of European companies have established factories and logistic centers in the industrial areas of Brașov (Haller, 2008).

Brașov is one of the most targeted cities of Romania for foreign investments due to the following reasons (cf. Haller, 2008):

- developing as one of the foremost economic and commercial destinations in Romania, strategically connecting the commercial routes and due to networking effect of the currently, rapidly developing service and light industry on the region;
- the new international airport which is recently contracted by the Canadian company Intelcan; construction started in the summer of 2007 for a period of three years. It's design is conceived for a minimum one million passengers per year with connections with all major cities of Europe;

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excellent location for leisure, holiday and residential developments due to the surrounding mountains and the adjacent premier mountain holiday resorts and growing demand for these properties from increasing local and regional disposable income;

highly attracting location for logistic and production centre due to the geographical position of Braşov in centre of Romania with convenient access to all major economic centre from Romania;

a city with medieval roots, located in the centre of the county surrounded by the Carpathians Mountains, one of the most visited sights in Romania.

Braşov city has been for centuries one of the most important, powerful and flourishing cities in the area and in the country. Due to its privileged geographic position and to its current infrastructure, it allows the development of several economic and cultural activities.

2. URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN BRAŞOV AND ITS SURROUNDING AREA

This work presents the real estate projects that are unfurled by S. C. Zoltim Trading from Braşov between 2000 and 2010, local actor in the urban development which, in connection with the local authorities has an important contribution in the urban development of the town. The projects are aiming the following development fields: residential, tourism, office, retail activity, industrial and logistic.

2.1 Residential Projects

The projects from the residential field are destined for the people living and they are in the city of Braşov, but more of that, in the localities situated in the proximity of it. At the same time, they are aiming the development and the restructuring of the urban and the rural space of the county.

The most representative projects are: Irish Habitation, Primavera, Residential Complex Bressan, De Mijloc (Middle) Residence, Piatra Mare Residence, Mountain View Residence, British Village, Harman Residence and Forest Smile Residence.

Irish Habitation. The residential project will be developed on a 22,22 ha area, being located in Bod Locality and having an impressive view over Bârsei Country, as well as over the mountains surrounding Braşov. It disposes by easy access from Braşov-Bod main road, but also, from relief road to be built near the development area, rendering the advantages of an ideal area to the Irish neighborhood, an area in which everybody have the possibility to purchase a house or a flat in the villas. The project also comprises a neighborhood centre and the total number of buildings will be over 340, having a height regime of ground floor, floor and attic, each house being built on a 6000 sq. m lot.

Primavera Residence. Is a project composed by block of flats that are extended on a 13618,66 sq. m. (total built area without terraces and gardens these ones occupying a separately area of 2330,96 sq. m. The total build area is about 15949,62 sq. m. In its structure are projected 8 studios with 67,36 sq. m., 32 one bedroom apartments, 24 apartments with 2 bedrooms and 14 apartments with 3 bedrooms. The build apartment area is between 80,26 sq. m. and 152,90 sq. m.
**Bressan Private Residence.** The reasons to purchase a house in this complex are: the peaceful and safe area, the clean environment, the private access, the recreation possibilities, the distance of the urban traffic, the green set-up areas, the elegant lifestyle and the presence of its own commercial centre. It is located in Stupini District and it dispose by three types of houses which are built of ceramic block-type bricks, insulated on the exterior with 5 cm. thick polystyrene.

The beams over the ground floor are of concrete while the tile is made of Bramac-type tiles. Type I house comprising ground floor and first floor and also garage with a surface of 130 sq. m. Type II house disposes by the same structure with a surface of 180 sq. m. while the III type house has a surface about 230 sq. m. The complex has 51 villas, a commercial emplacement and its own careful management endowments (Jucu, 2006).

**De Mijloc Residence.** It is a project offering to buyers the possibility of purchasing a luxury apartment located in the central area of Brașov city at an old apartment's price. It comprises a number of 19 flats having one, two and three rooms and also each of it having a parking place in the underground garage. The building will have a total surface of 2500 sq. m. being finalized until 2010.

**Forest Smile Residence** is spread over a 1.83 ha area, located in the town of Sâcele, near the wood side. It has easy access from Brașov - Ploiești main road. The project comprises the realization of 96 flats in buildings that have a height regime of basement, ground floor, 1st floor, 2nd floor, 3rd floor and attic.

**Piatra Mare Residence.** This residential project is spread over a 2 ha. area being located also in the town of Sâcele, locality of Brădet, its access being the same with the Forest Smile Residence. The project comprises approximately 30 lots, 600 sq. m. each of it, the service area being included in the neighborhood centre.

The occupancy percent is regulated at 45% while the field usage coefficient is of 1.2, the height regime being represented by basement, ground floor, 1st floor, 2nd floor and attic. The constructions will be independent or a duplex type.

**Mountain View Residence.** It is spread on a 10 ha area being located in Stupini neighborhood and allowing the future owners to benefit from an independent house that have ground floor, 1st floor and attic. The access from and into the city centre is easy, as well as developing the city's infrastructure, respectively the relief roads ensure mobility to house owners, and the advantage of owning a property in a clean and peaceful area.

The project comprises approximately 120 lots, 600 sq. m. each, a service area and a neighborhood centre. The occupancy percent is regulated at 45%, while the field usage coefficient is about 1. The constructions can be independent or duplex type ones and it dispose by a height regime with basement, ground floor, 1st floor and attic.

**British Village** is spread over 3.2 ha being located in Stupini neighborhood and it has a direct access from Brașov - Sighișoara main road. It comprises approximately 45 lots of 600 sq. m. each, a service area and a neighborhood centre. The occupancy percent and the height regime are the same with the previous project.

**Harman Residence** is spread over 2.22 ha and it is located in Harman, in the locality development area having a facile access from Brașov – Sfântu Gheorghe national road. The project comprises the realization of 35 independent houses and the regulation of the occupancy percent is about 40%.
2. 2 Projects in the touristic field

*Trei Brazi - Predeal Terraces Residential Ensemble* is the most complex residential project built in Prahova Valley in the Predeal - Trei Brazi Area. It is the unique combination of holiday apartments, being comprised of a 49 standard villa neighborhood, having 822 apartments together with a commercial and recreation premises area. This space means the opportunity of a unique view over Bucegi, Postăvaru, and Piatra Craiului Mountains. It is represented by 6 types of villas. Type I has 14 buildings, 8 apartments and 10 studios, type II are disposing by 11 buildings, 12 apartments and 6 studios, type III has 4 buildings and 18 apartments, type IV 10 buildings and 18 apartments, type V 6 buildings and 16 apartments and type VI has 4 buildings, 2 apartments and 4 duplexes.

*Wooden Houses Residence* is located at 5 km from Bran Castle, at 5 km from Poiana Brașov and at 1 km far from Râșnov Citadel. It includes the recreation facilities and, at the same time, the all utilities as water, gas and electric power. Also this project offers for its residences a fascinating view and a beautiful landscape. In this category of complexes are integrated *The Mountain Village Project* and *Râșnov Glajerie Project* that are integral composed by wood houses.2

2. 3 Projects in the office and retail field

The most important projects from this field is represented by *Brașov Business Park*. The complex will be formed out by A classes office buildings, having a height regime -basement, ground floor, attic and 6 floors. Also it will have open subdivisionable spaces of a minimum 250 sq. m. The central body has a height regime of ground floor and attic, an area about 15000 sq. m. and it will comprise a retail area, conference rooms and a central hall. The total space for parking contains 600 places underground and over-ground. It is located in Bucharest Highway, the most important commercial artery from Brașov. Here are placed representatively supermarkets, hypermarkets, show-rooms and car master agencies. The access is easy by means of public transports from all corners of the city.

The office spaces will have the highest comfort degree, being endowed in an A type class style, while the retail agencies, hotel, restaurants, coffee-shop, nursery school, laundry, conference rooms and nonetheless parking lots will complete the services range offered both to collaborators and to their clients, mainly national and multinational companies.

Another important project in the retail field is Ro Retail, it being a logistic, business and retail centre situated in the commune of Reci with access from 11th National Road. In the commercial and retail area it will dispose by hypermarket and supermarket, Mall, Food Court, Entertainment Centre and an Amusement Park. The business area includes an office building, a hotel, a business centre and a sport and recreation area. Finally the logistic area includes buildings and storage premises, a hotel, a greenhouse and office buildings.

2. 4 Projects in the logistic and industrial field

*Hărmanc Logistie* is located at 7 km distances of Brașov. This project is spread on 12, 5 ha area having al necessary utilities in view of developing an industrial activity. The

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special concept of the project allows the construction of 9 industrial sheds each of 8000 sq. m. in surface. The access is realized from the existing main road.

Ro Logistic represents a logistic area which disposes by storage premises and buildings, a hotel, greenhouse and also, office buildings.

Ring Road Logistic allows building a logistic centre, as well as, a retail centre. It is located near the future small relief road of Brașov and has well set urban coefficients. The project allows building a several function building to the developer, accesses from several parts and a generous parking lot for the clients. Total constructed surface is about 24957 sq. m., total developed surface about 42088 sq. m. and the resulting lot surface about 43869 sq. m.

Airport Logistic is located near the future airport. The project involves building five premises modules to comprise a showroom and offices (having a height regime of ground floor and floor). Behind these buildings here are storage sheds.

Spanish Logistics is located at 10 km from Brașov, the project is spread on a 2, 3 ha area having all utilities necessary viewing the industrial activity development.

Narciselor Logistic is also located near the future airport and it involves building five premises modules to comprise a show room and offices. The height regime is ground floor and floor. Behind the modules are projected storage sheds with a ground floor height regime.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In the municipality of Brașov and its surrounding area from the county of Brașov, in present, are unfurling over 20 projects in the residential, business, industrial, logistic and retail field due to the collaboration between the foreign investors, local authorities and the real estate companies. The last ones, through its managers, can be real actors in the local and regional development.

All the real estate projects are influencing and, at the same time, are changing the landscape of the human settlements in our contemporary period. In the same context, they modify the structure of the urban and rural space, ensuring the functional viability of it. These projects are promoting the green space and the ecological constructions as, for example, the wood houses. The investments in the real estate field, generally, are ensuring the sustainable development of the localities but more of that, accenting the development of the rural space from the cities and towns proximity.

In the contemporary period, this type of actions on the human settlements represents a real development practice offering new values to the landscape, to the space structure and to the human settlements functionality. Maybe the real feed-back of this kind of development will be get in time, after the all projects will be finalized and they will be catching in the concrete, serious and proper urban and rural activities, in the functionality of the human settlements.

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