

CASE STUDY 4 // VIDIN, BULGARIA

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Vidin inherited a significant built stock during socialism – public service areas doubled by area, retail and regional trade sites tripled, while sports and leisure zones territorially increased nearly four times. However, since the beginning of the post-socialist transition, the population significantly contracted, from 63,000 inhabitants in 1992 to just 40,000 in 2021. Thus, the city infrastructure has become a problem for maintenance and revitalisation.

In this inevitable situation, the city authorities refocused from a traditional industrial city image to culture-driven tourism based on visitors along the Danube Route and rich cultural heritage – Vidin historic centre along the river and with an ancient Baba Vida fortress. The main problem in this approach has been the necessity of the proper renewal and resource-demanding regeneration of Vidin central spaces, both physically and functionally.

To address this gap, the Vidin government adopted an essential general urban plan in 2008, which determined the main objectives of further development. Two main development corridors were planned: along the beltroad of the city and the riverfront (LSP, 2008). The first corridor targets the aforementioned industrial-business (re)development (Fig. 404_41). The main objectives were revitalizing the city brownfields at the southern and western peripheries and a new free business zone at the north-eastern edge of the urban zone, towards the New Europe Bridge and Romania, completed in 2013.



The second development corridor is directly related to the renewal of the Vidin centre and riverfront area through culture, tourism, and supplement leisure services (Fig. 404_41). Aside from the main square as a traditional and the most vibrant urban node, three new nodes were proposed for this new development – the main node is the Fortress on the Danube Riverfront, plus two other ones related to the contact positions between the historic centre and the rest of the city. The main heritage sites in the zone between these four nodes have been refurbished last few years, such as the Vidin synagogue (Fig. 404_42) or old city walls with gates (Fig. 404_43). Aside from these key projects, the other smaller ones have been implemented: new pedestrian walkways, innovative urban furniture, lighting fixtures, etc.

Fig. 44_42 / The development map of the City of Vidin (Author: G. Georgiev)



Fig. 44_43 / The refurbishment of Vidin synagogue on the Danube riverfront historic promenade (Author: G. Georgiev)

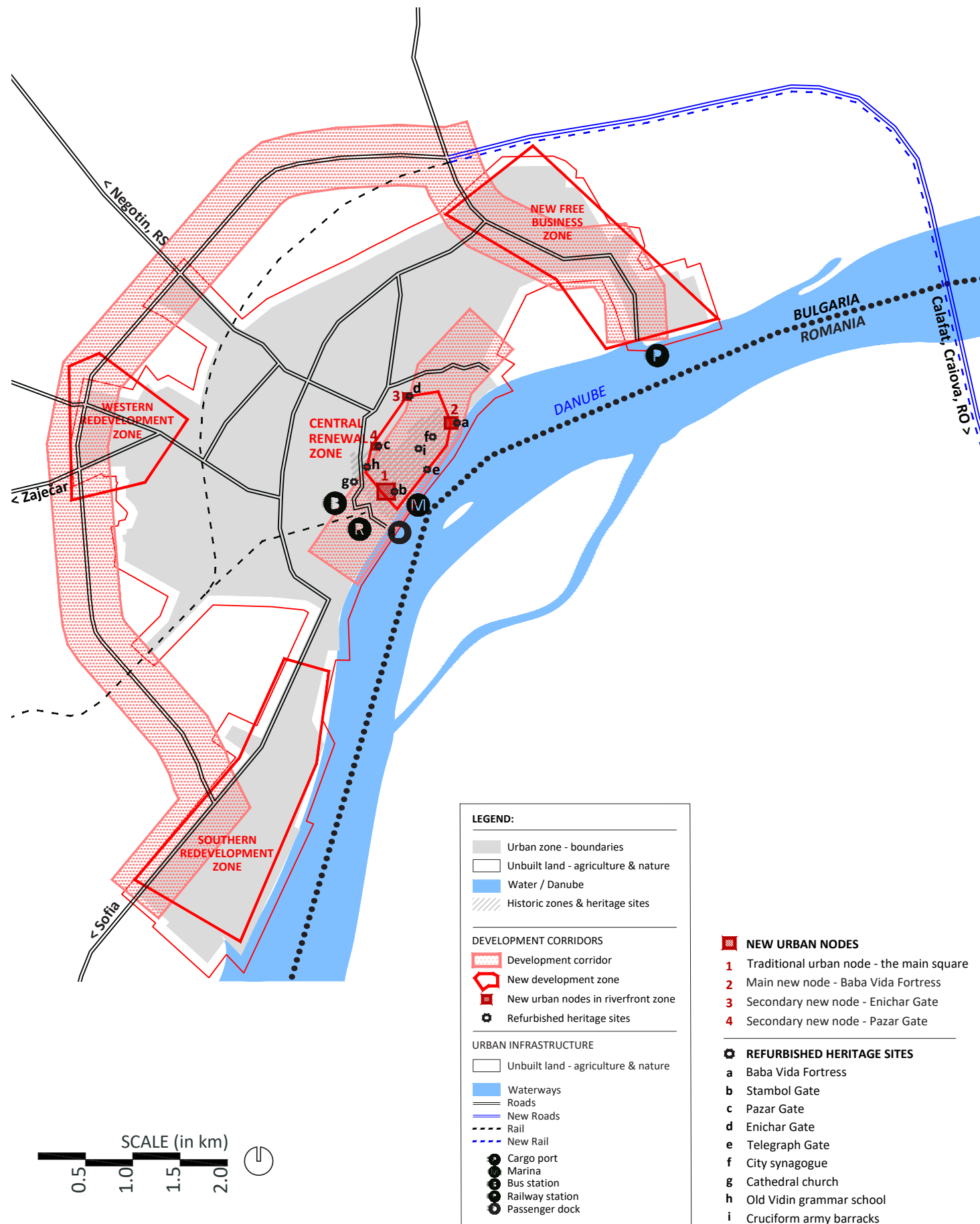


Fig. 44_41 / The development map of the City of Vidin (Author: G. Georgiev)