

Airport in Tourist Regions on the Example of Kłodzko Valley and Karkonosze

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The author introduces the concepts of tourist regions pointing out their variety and attractiveness. Development of tourism requires good connection network which may be provided by airports designed especially to serve tourist regions.

The article presents two examples of such airports i.e. Kłodzko and Stara Kamienica near Jelenia Góra. The completion of the above mentioned airports is being delayed because of planning procedures connected with building permit. The new act of highest importance which is valid until 30th December 2015 should positively influence the completion of tourist airports network in Poland.

1. THE DESCRIPTION OF TOURIST REGIONS, POINTS OF THEIR MAIN ATTRACTIONS, AND THE NETWORK OF CONNECTIONS

A tourist region is a general term. In order to specify its scale, we need to know its cultural predispositions. It is characterized¹ by landforms, attractive overlooks, and extraordinary types of flora and fauna. Next to these natural features, a tourist region is also a monument of cultural values that create on region's potential.

From the point of view of the landscape tourist regions in Poland may be divided into two groups: mountainous and near-water areas.

The third group consist, of historical and cultural areas that are characterized by a large amount of monuments (of different classes), and interesting urban architecture. The additional group can be named as health-resorts attractive because of their microclimate and health water springs.

In tourist regions classification, the most eye-catching are those where, on a small area, one can observe a concentration of tourist attractions from

the above mentioned groups, for example good lay of the land, rich cultural heritage, and microclimate with health water springs.

In European countries with moderate climate, mountainous areas have bigger chances to succeed than near-water ones, because of longer tourist season (which lasts almost 10 months).²

Regions which are significant for recreation and tourism, offer a wide range of attractions such as: health-resorts with interesting urban architecture, unique places with monuments and/or exclusive landmarks.

These tourist attractions should be routed by an attractive network of roads with landscapes and landmarks. These roads should have speed limit. As such type of roads combine pedestrian and car traffic functions, they ought to have separate cycle paths. Land development of these roads should be as much important as developing tourist attractions since both of these elements create one system, one tourist region.

¹ Balińska G., *Uzdrowiska dolnośląskie*, Wrocław 1991.

² Ashworth G. J., *Heritage, Tourism and Europe: a European Future for a European Past?* [in:] *Heritage, Tourism and Society*, D. T. Herbert (ed.) Londyn 1995, p. 64-84.

2. COMMUNICATION AVAILABILITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

According to Athens Charter, both work, rest, as well as habitation places should be characterized by an optimal communication availability based on the shortest possible communication time.

Due to social and economical development, the aspect of leisure time becomes a very important element of life, which influences work productivity, success, and people's aspirations. Simultaneously, the importance of services connected with tourism and recreation are becoming now a significant factor, because they create new work places, and are beneficial for other branches of market development. The tourist branch is constantly developing, offering various types of leisure, especially at weekends.³

The time of travel to tourist regions is now becoming more important for people who decide on their recreation place and it has an impact on tourist offer competitiveness. In the age of frequent but short excursions, which now dominated the tourist market, an important factor is not only destination's attractiveness, but also its access to different types of communication, and the time of travel. Especially weekend excursions require comfortable, in terms of time, communication links.⁴

There is a tendency to shorten the time of travel between large metropolises and tourist destinations. Therefore, there is a strong need to develop air communication as the fastest way of transportation.

Civilization development and increasing number of wealthy societies, especially in the Western countries, causes so called tourists' choosiness. A large number of potential tourists are willing to spend their free time in new places.⁵ Therefore, it is possible to foresee that traveling repeatedly to the same leisure destinations may become less popular than it was in the past – even in relation to weekend excursions. This may be connected with the fact

³ Węclawowicz-Bilska E., *Zdrojowiska w strefie wpływu dużego miasta i aglomeracji. Zagadnienia programowo-przestrzenne*, Monografia nr 226, Politechnika Krakowska, Kraków 1998.

⁴ Bagiński E., Litwińska E., Zipser T., *Próby symulacji problemowej rozkładu przestrzennego ruchu turystycznego w Polsce*, Wrocław 1995.

⁵ Ashworth G. J., *Is there an urban tourism?* Tourism Recreation Research, 2 1992, p. 3-8.

that the interest in owning second house is decreasing. It is often much more expensive than traveling with travel agencies offering attractive and diverse services.

3. AIRPORT NETWORK AS SOLUTION FOR TOURIST REGIONS

The demands for better and quicker access to tourist regions are now increasing. Due to longstanding failures on the ground of building the road communication, and the increasing number of cars during last few years, tourist regions in Poland have rather poor communication access. It takes a lot of time to get there. The building of roads in the country is insufficient in comparison with the needs. Therefore, the roads' capacity is continuously decreasing. National roads, also used by farming vehicles, are characterized by extension of time travel. Presently, tourist regions are difficult to access, because it takes a long time to get out of the city – even for a weekend. Moreover, due to the lack of good road communication, tourist regions are neither visited by the locals, nor by foreigners.

In this situation the idea of building airports in tourist regions seems to be not only an appropriate, but also a necessary solution. Moreover, the costs of building airports in comparison to building many kilometers of new roads, are fully justified from the economical point of view.

Due to environmental protection and costs, such airport ought to be small, and designated only for small to medium size planes. The number of transported people should amount to 55-60 persons, which is equal to number of places in a tourist bus that transports people to the nearest tourist resorts.

Nowadays researchers try to delimit small planes' level of noise, to increase their range (up to circa 5000 km), as well as the speed, and to decrease the landing space and take-off time. Such planes may connect large airports such as Heathrow, and the airports in Polish cities with small tourist airports for transporting foreign passengers and tourists.

The idea of developing small airports in tourist areas in Poland is based on private capital and funds. It has its supporters among huge investors who are interested in developing such communication in Kłodzko Valley and Karkonosze Mountains. Building these airports will be

beneficial for future region's development, as well as for dynamic health-resorts and leisure destinations renewal.

4. THE CONCEPT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN WAŁBRZYCH AREA AND KŁODZKO VALLEY BASED ON AIR AND ROAD NETWORK OF CONNECTIONS

The idea of building the airport nearby the Kłodzko city, came into being in 1991 in the Government's Assignee Office of Restructuring Wałbrzych region. It is where the project of spatial development of the region that would enable to create new work places was created.⁶

This project was the answer to the investment proposal of three US cities represented by the local government of Pittsburg. The proposal of the US cities was presented during the international conference held in June 1991 in Smardzewice (Lodz area), and organized by CUP, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and Lodz Voivodship Office.⁷

This concept assumed a complex revaluation and revitalization of so called tourist points of attractions, i.e. health-resorts, connected by networks of roads that would run through the most attractive regions in Kłodzko Valley and Wałbrzych region⁸ (figure 1).

According to preliminary declarations, the major investor of this enterprise would have been the largest American travel agencies and private capital. Foreign investors noticed that Wałbrzych has huge tourist potential. A relatively small area allows the Americans to see the region in a week time. The historical and natural attractions can be seen in such places as: Szczawno Zdroj, Książ, Jedlina Zdroj, Bardo Śląskie, Kłodzko, Polanica Zdroj, Duszniki Zdroj, Kudowa Zdroj, Wambierzyce, Radków, Łądek Zdroj, Bystrzyca Kłodzka, Długopole Zdroj, Międzygorze, Miedzylesie, Złoty Stok, Paczków, Kamieniec

⁶ Pustelnik R., *Koncepcja tworzenia nowych miejsc pracy w Regionie Wałbrzyskim*, „Kurier Wałbrzyski” 1991, nr 1-2.

⁷ Pustelnik R., *Usługi turystyczne w procesie restrukturyzacji województwa wałbrzyskiego*, [in:] Planowanie przestrzenne. Zarys metod i technik badawczych, (ed.) Bagiński E., Wrocław 1994.

⁸ Chief designer – Romuald Pustelnik

Zabkowicki and others. Also such mountain ranges as Góry Stołowe, Śnieżnik, and Zieleniec are worth seeing.

The most important condition for this proposal to be fulfilled, was an airport near Kłodzko, which would connect large European airports, directly connected with New York, Chicago, and Pittsburg. American investors declared to cover all costs of full revaluation and revitalization of both the cities as well as tourist strips between them. In return they would like to rent those objects and grounds for 20-25 years.

This attractive offer had to be accepted by the local officials. Despite the huge contribution, and the approval of the government (such a few Ministries, Marshal of Wałbrzych Voivodeship) local government rejected the contract and the foreign investors had to resign. It is worth mentioning that in that time the majority of objects and grounds belonged to the country and/or region.

The idea of spatial development of Kłodzko Valley (including the airport area) was developed during the conference in Polanica Zdroj in 1993.⁹

The idea of activating economic development of Ładek Zdroj and Stronie Śląskie was created in 1995. The project contained tourist development of Śnieżnik, Czarna Góra and south part of Kłodzko valley and was based on their attractive road and air access availability¹⁰ (figure 2). Access to these regions would be based not only on building expressway between Poznań – Wrocław – Brno – Wieden, but also on developing the potential airport near Kłodzko.

The project assumed creating the international centre of hill walking tourism in the area of Śnieżnik and Czarna Góra. Such cities as Ładek Zdroj, Stronie Śląskie, Potoczek, Miedzylesie, Długopole Zdroj, Bystrzyca Kłodzka provided

⁹ Rola i miejsce planowania przestrzennego w procesach restrukturyzacyjnych (na przykładzie Dzierżonowa i pasma Kudowa Zdrój – Złoty Stok), Pustelnik R. (ed.); papers for regional conference, Polanica Zdrój 1993, p. 111

¹⁰ Pustelnik R., *Przekształcenia struktury przestrzennej miast w kontekście aktywizacji gospodarczej obszarów problemowych na przykładzie Łądka Zdroju i Stronia Śląskiego*, [in:] *Społeczno-gospodarcze i przestrzenne przeobrażenia miast*, Opole 2000, p. 273-291.

tourist accommodations. Road communication ended at two large parking places from where the tourists were transported further by electric

caterpillar rail to the main stations of gondola railways.



Figure 1. Wałbrzych region layer-point plan of complex revitalization from tourist perspective.

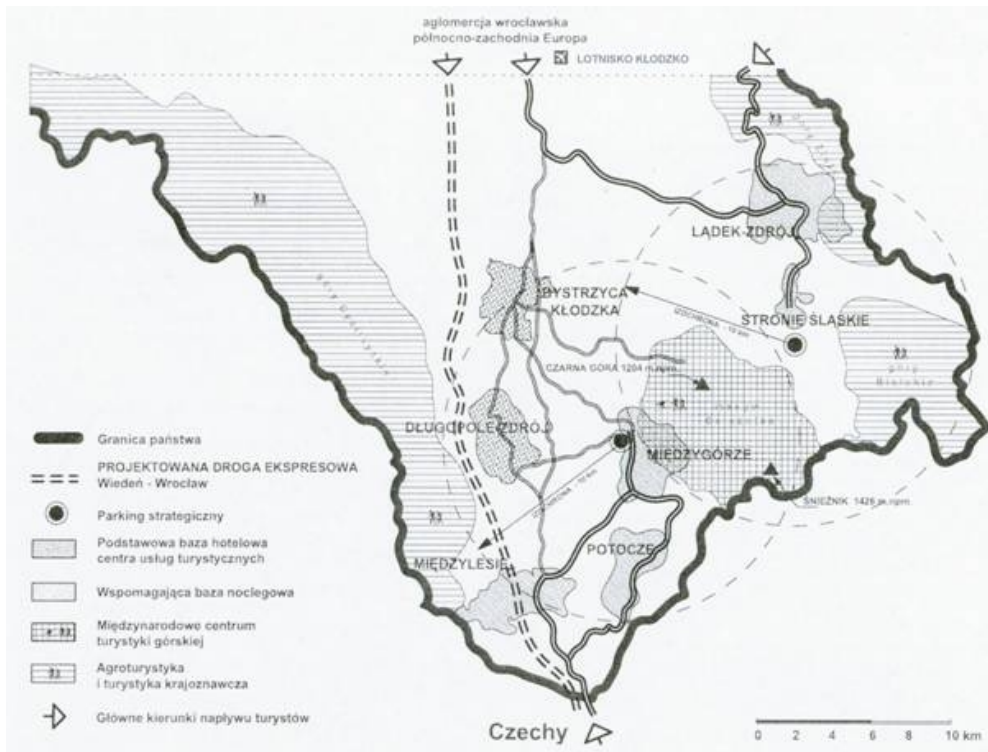


Figure 2. The plan of space-funtional structure redefinition in the sub-region of Kłodzko Valley: Bystrzyca Kłodzka – Łądek Zdrój – Stronie Śląskie.

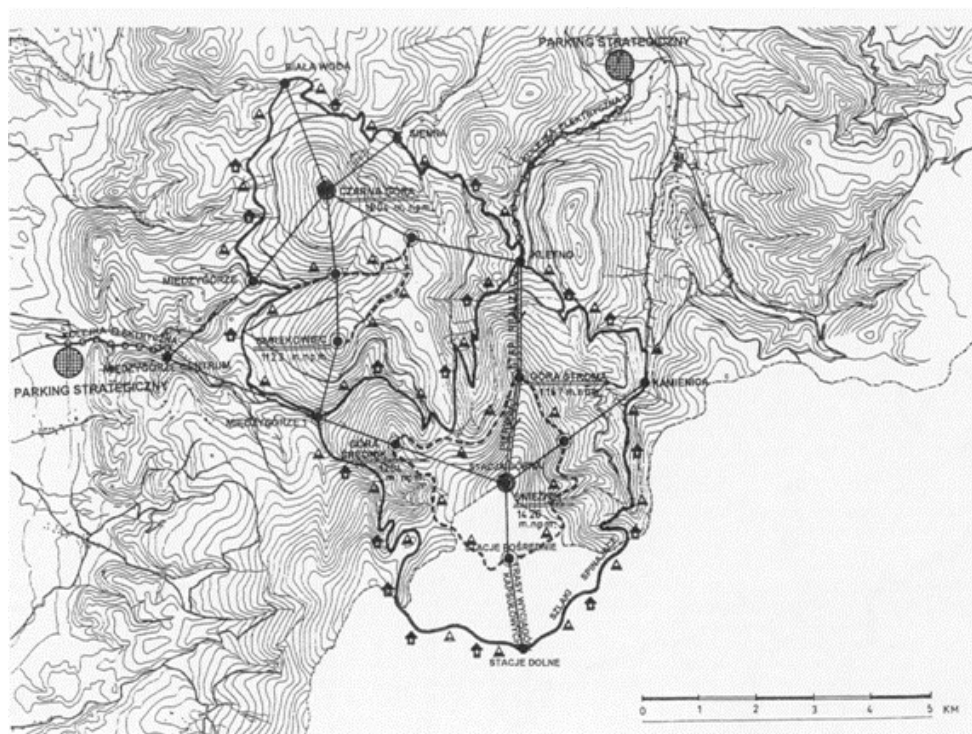


Figure 3. Tourist Development Plan of Śnieżnik Mountains and Czarna Góra is based on the triangle structure binding together focal tourist attraction points.

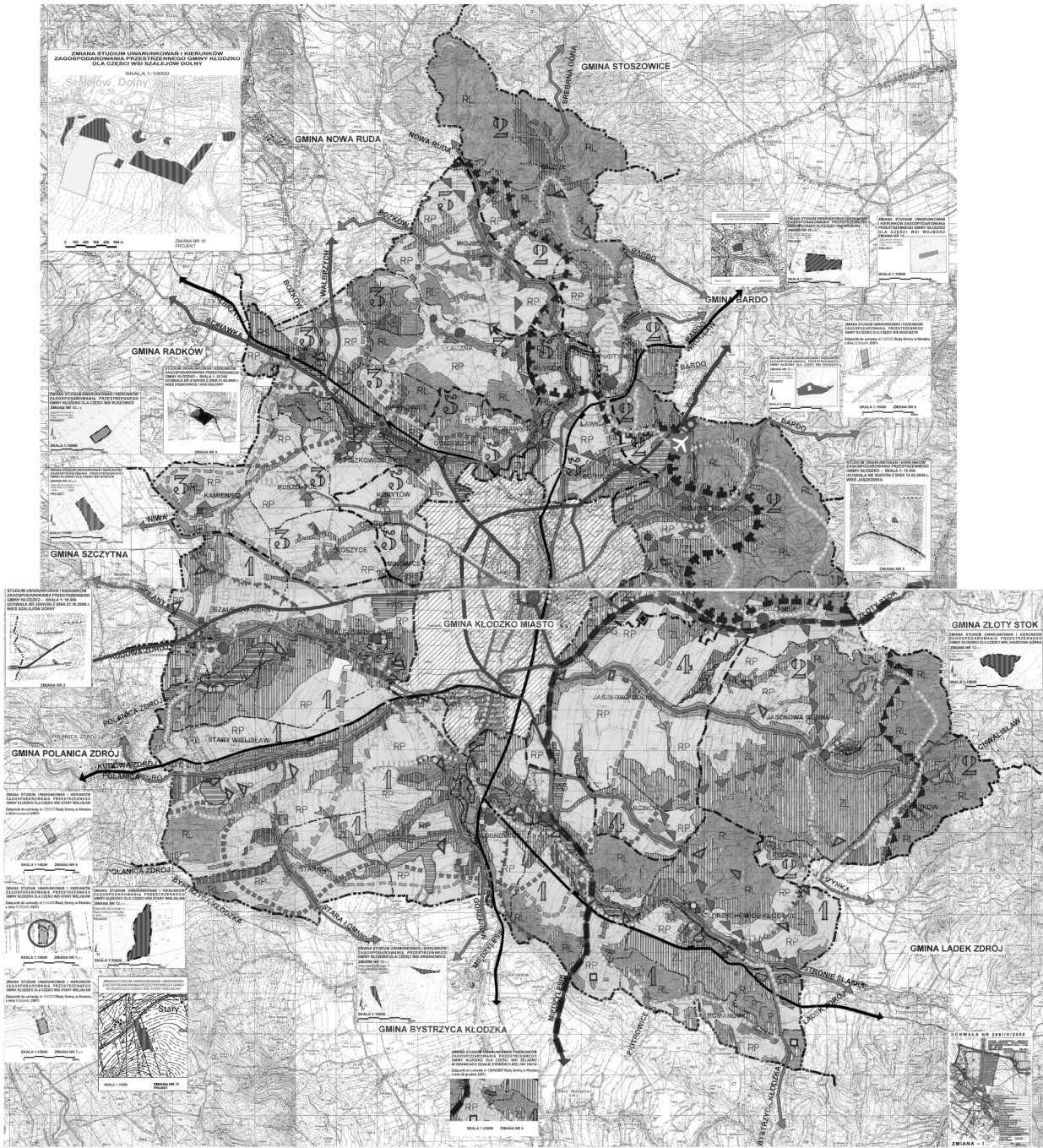


Figure 4. Current zoning plan of Kłodzko local community.

After building the airport in the region of Kłodzko, the road communication would end at Miedzylesie and Stronie Śląskie from where tourists would be transported by electric caterpillar rail to the main stations of gondola railways. The closed system of funicular railways could then be presented as quadrilateral built between Miedzylesie, Czarna Góra, Kletno, and Śnieżnik. This quadrilateral was cut by funicular railway connecting northern-east part of Miedzylesie with Czarna Góra. Czarna Góra is also connected by

funicular railway with Biała Woda and Sienna. In a similar way, Śnieżnik was connected with Kamienica and Czech Republic. The system of gondola funicular railways is connected with bicycle and horse riding paths used during winter for ski running. These routes are supporting hill hostels and mountain foot paths alternatively. The system of funicular railways has several stations around Śnieżnik at the height of 1100-1200 meters. This enables tourists to ski even in April and May.

The routes of funicular railways are used as ski lifts during winter (figure 3).

Unfortunately until now, from the presented conception only the Sienna - Czarna Gora railway connection and few ski lifts in the region of Czarna Gora were built. For many years now the government and local authority agencies stopped the preparation of development plans of funicular railways on such routes as Kletno-Snieżnik, Kletno-Kamienica and Międzygorze- Czarna Gora blocking these investments without any justification. This fact enables the development of similar investments on the Czech side according to EU law.

5. AIRPORT IN KŁODZKO VALLEY IN THE STUDY OF CONDITIONS AND DIRECTIONS OF SPATIAL DEVELOPING THE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT OF KŁODZKO

According to Polish law Community Office in Kłodzko began to prepare in 1988 the case study of conditions and directions of spatial development. It was approved by Kłodzko authorities in 2000 (figure 4).

This case study was based on earlier strategy concerning the region's spatial development finished in May 1977. This strategy paid attention to huge natural and cultural benefits of the region. A special attention was paid to development of rivers: Biała Ladecka, Nysa Kłodzka, Bystrzyca Dusznicka. The reservoirs and river routes were designed to protect the region from floods.

Different analyses showed that the best area for the airport would be Boguszyn with its localization near to Kłodzko and Bardo Śląskie. This localization has three major advantages:

- ground configuration and wind direction
- attractive landmarks
- good connection with existing and planned network of roads

What is really special is the region's landscape. When leaving the airplane passengers can see almost all of the Kłodzko Valley. It is a special viewpoint on Śnieżnik, Bystrzyckie Gory, Gory Sowie and Bardzkie (figure 5,6,7).



Figure 5. Boguszyn – landscape visible from the potential airfield.

The airport is located next to the main road that connects Wrocław with Duszniki Zdroj, Nachod, and Prague. In the nearest future these roads will be connected with expressway from Poznan to Wrocław, Kłodzko, Brno, and Wieden. The designed airport lays in central part of Kłodzko Valley with the same time isochrone to most attractive tourist and health resorts.¹¹

¹¹ At present the tender for creating the local development plan of such airport was won by BAU-Project company.

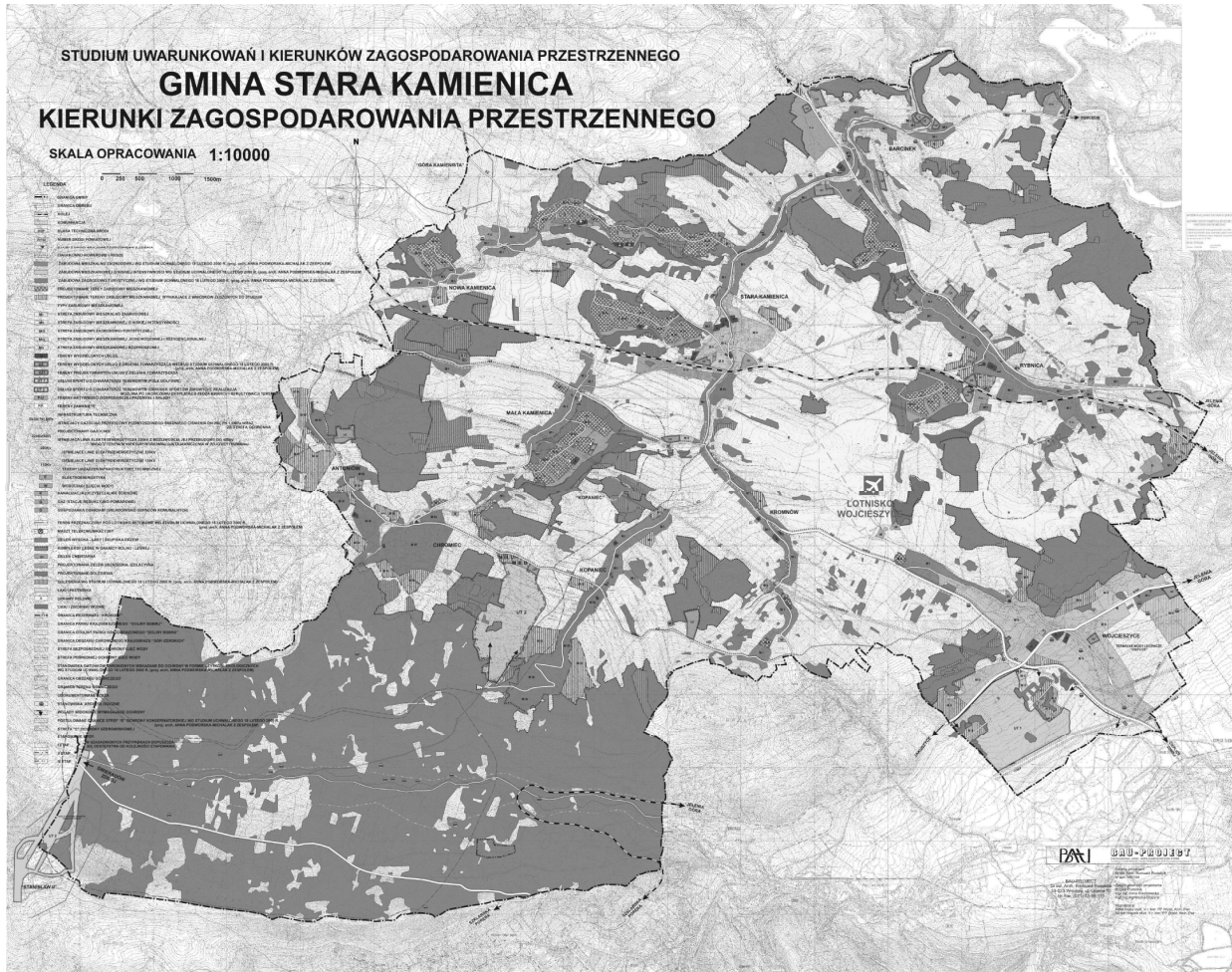


Figure 6. Current zoning plan of Stara Kamienica local community.

6. THE AIRPORT IN THE TOURIST REGION OF KARKONOSZE IN THE STUDY OF CONDITIONS AND DIRECTIONS OF SPATIAL DEVELOPING THE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT OF STARA KAMIENICA

Beside Klodzko Valley another attractive tourist region in this part of Sudety mountains is Karkonosze. Its attractiveness is connected with unique landscape of mountain tops and such tourist towns as Szklarska Poreba, Karpacz, and Swieradow Zdroj. Recently built gondola rail enabled Swieadow Zdroj to enlarge its status and importance as tourist and health resort. What also makes the region attractive is its localization near Jelenia Gora – the city of many historical monuments. This region has a comfortable road and rail connection with Wroclaw, and lays on the crossroad of two truck roads – one leading to Czech Republic through Szklarska Poreba, and second

leading to Germany through Gorliz. It has also access to Wroclaw-Gorliz A4 highway. The development of mountain and spa tourism for both regions – Karkonosze and Kotlina Klodzka – is connected with building tourist airports that would have air communication with the biggest European cities. The detailed analysis of spatial conditions in this region gives the opportunity to state that the best place for such airport in Karkonosze region is the district of Stara Kamienica¹² (Figure 6).

During Second World War this area was destined to be a grassy airport and since that time it hadn't been used. This airport gives an opportunity to build an over 800 meter long airstrip. Proper area, winds, beautiful landscape of Karkonosze makes this place ideal for airport's reactivation.

¹² BAU-Project introduced a change in their project and in 2006 chose a place for tourist airport. This place will be Wojcieszycze near Jelenia Gora.

Moreover, the airport is located near truck road to Szklarska Poreba and Czech Republic, and to Górlitz and Germany. It is also a sort of gate to Karkonosze (Figure 7).



Figure 9, 10. Wojcieszce – landscape visible from the potential airfield.

Investors are interested in building the airport and therefore the locals of Stara Kamienica began to prepare the land development, which will enable the building of the airport in Wojcieszce.

7. OBSTACLES IN BUILDING PRO-CESSSES

The realization of the airport project in Kotlina Kłodzka and Karkonosze may meet with many obstacles that are connected with local decisions concerning land development. According to the Bill from March 27th 2003 in order to build an airport it is crucial to state the land's function in development plan. The procedure is in half way, because the function of the airports is only local plans are in accordance with the airports regions. Also local societies think that building airport will decrease the value of estates because of high and inconvenient acoustics especially during take-offs.

In Wojcieszce, a cubic meter costs 100 zł because of unique landscape and comfortable road connection. Therefore, there is an anxiety that the estate owner will be against the project and will influence the decisions of the locals in Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

However, it is possible to use the Bill from February 12th 2009 concerning special rules of preparing and fulfilling the investments in the area of public airports. According to this Bill, there is a possibility to get the acceptance of constructional project without describing the special development. The area may be bought from the owner without his permission. Moreover, it is possible to build the airport without the permission of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

8. SUMMARY

Building the network of airports in tourist regions is necessary in the process of regions' development. However, fulfilling the projects may be hindered by procedures connected with the Bill on planning and special development. A new Bill on extraordinary necessity should influence the realization of airports for tourists. Their localization should be planned on the most attractive tourist areas, improving their landscapes as places that a potential tourist will come to see again.

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