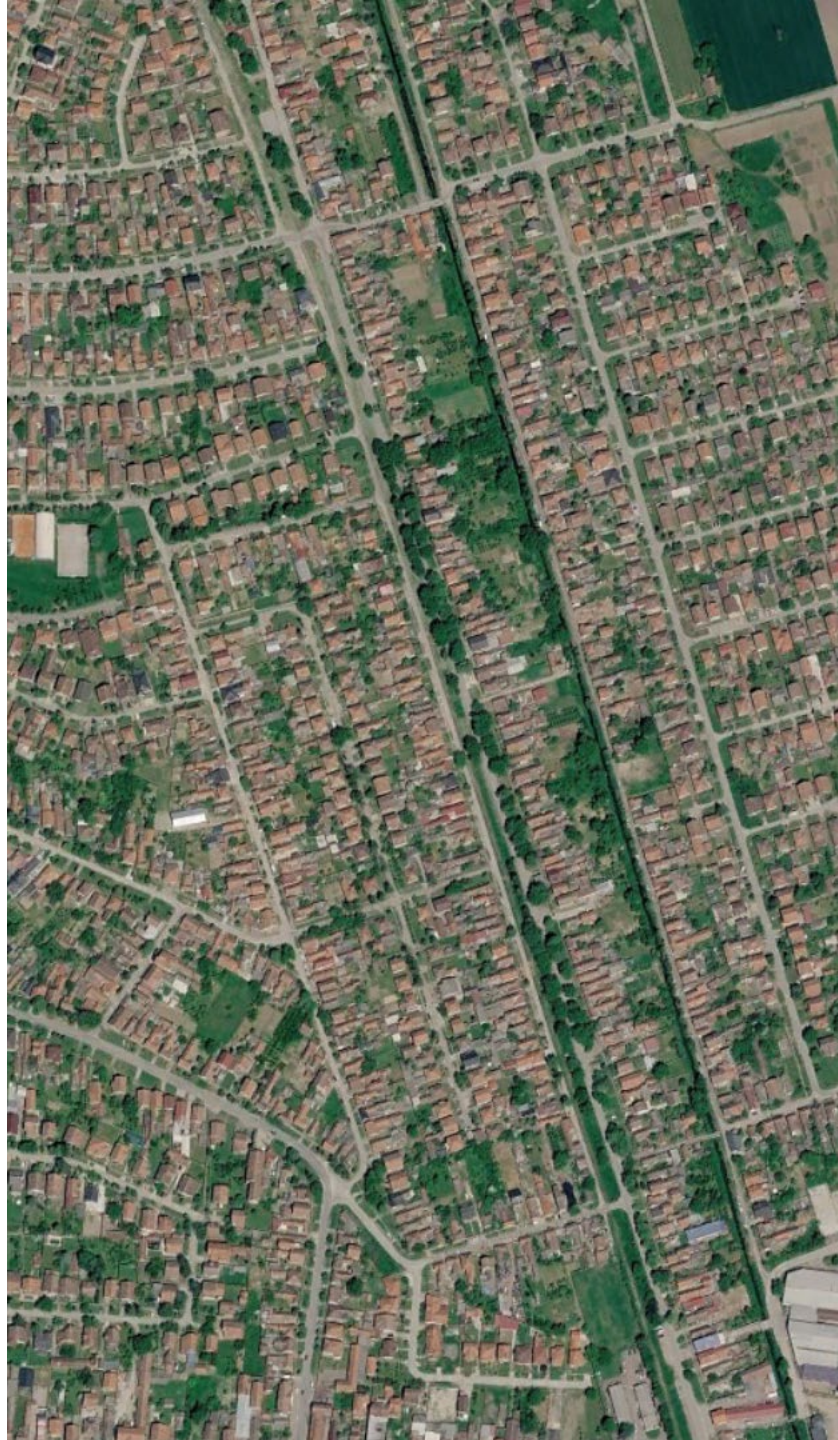
SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING IN MID-SIZED SERBIAN CITIES: NEW DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRAINTS, AND SOCIAL-HOUSING MEASURES?

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INTRODUCTION

A **radical shift** from single- to multi-family housing development in Serbian cities during the last 35 years of the post-socialist transition.

A new development trajectory **since the COVID-19 pandemic** and related lockdowns and the restriction of people movement.

Research question – how national level should address this new trend?



Three new residential buildings in Sremska Mitrovica (north)



A new residential building in Novi Pazar (south)

INTRODUCTION

A quite **opposite trend** in Serbia and the region comparing to most of other post-socialist countries in Europe.

These countries are usually in the problem with **urban sprawl** through the development of **single-housing projects** at urban edge.





Urban sprawl in Gdynia, Poland



Suburbanisation of Timisoara, west Romania

CONTEXT

A **shift in housing policy** from socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1992) to post-socialist Serbia (2006-).

Housing policy in the former socialist Yugoslavia > support to single-family housing during the late socialism.

Single-family housing rarely made less than **75% of housing stock** everywhere except the largest cities at the end of socialism.

This type of development was fuelled by three "**powerful elements**":

- Stimulative credits from Yugoslavian banks,
- Support from "employer"/ state company – in cash, in building material, etc.
- Support from relatives by physical work during construction.

Plus, there was the **unplanned construction** of single-family houses.


Housing from late socialism – Zrenjanin


Housing from late socialism – Čačak


Housing from late socialism – Vranje

CONTEXT

The 1990s – this very **turbulent period** (Yugoslavian crisis) was in many means a transitive period.

"**Urban growth without development**" > the 'boom' of unplanned single-housing development

This policy approach strikingly shifted to (the construction of) **multi-family housing** in the post-socialist Serbia after 2000.

Multi-family housing **labelled as attractive** to live > Intentional promotion of this type of housing!

Even legislative and strategic frameworks have **given preferences** for this type of housing development.



A new residential building in Pančevo



A new residential building in Sombor



CONTEXT

For example:

1) Young people (up to 40 years old) can get a tax write-off for a **residential unit up to 40 km²** – no one will buy a house of this surface!

2) Now obsolete law on social housing labelled the "purchase of single-family houses" for urban poor as an **alternative**, i.e., not normal procedure, even in cities and towns with fast depopulation and underused housing fund.

3) Many **administrative procedures** (e.g., for energy passports) is the same for all, regardless the size and complexity of a residential building.

…



The point is that multi-family housing construction is **exceptionally lucrative** in Serbia, where nobody checks the origin of invested money.

It is also lucrative for **public sector** – taxes for local budget.

Therefore, both laws and strategies are customised to **systematically support and promote** multi-family housing.

CONTEXT

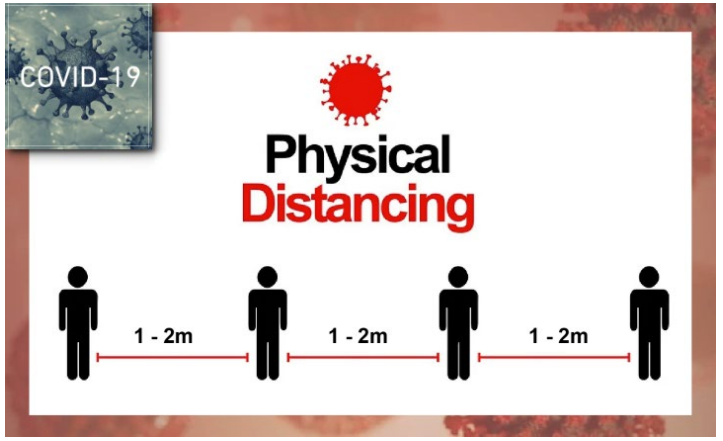
In the last 15-20 years, new single-family housing was **rare in Serbian cities** and without a proper policy - for example, to consolidate land for new houses.

The only exceptions have been major cities, Belgrade and Novi Sad, where **unplanned single-family construction** has been still active at urban fringe.

COVID-19 pandemic, related lockdowns and movement limitations – a **new stimulus** for single-family housing.

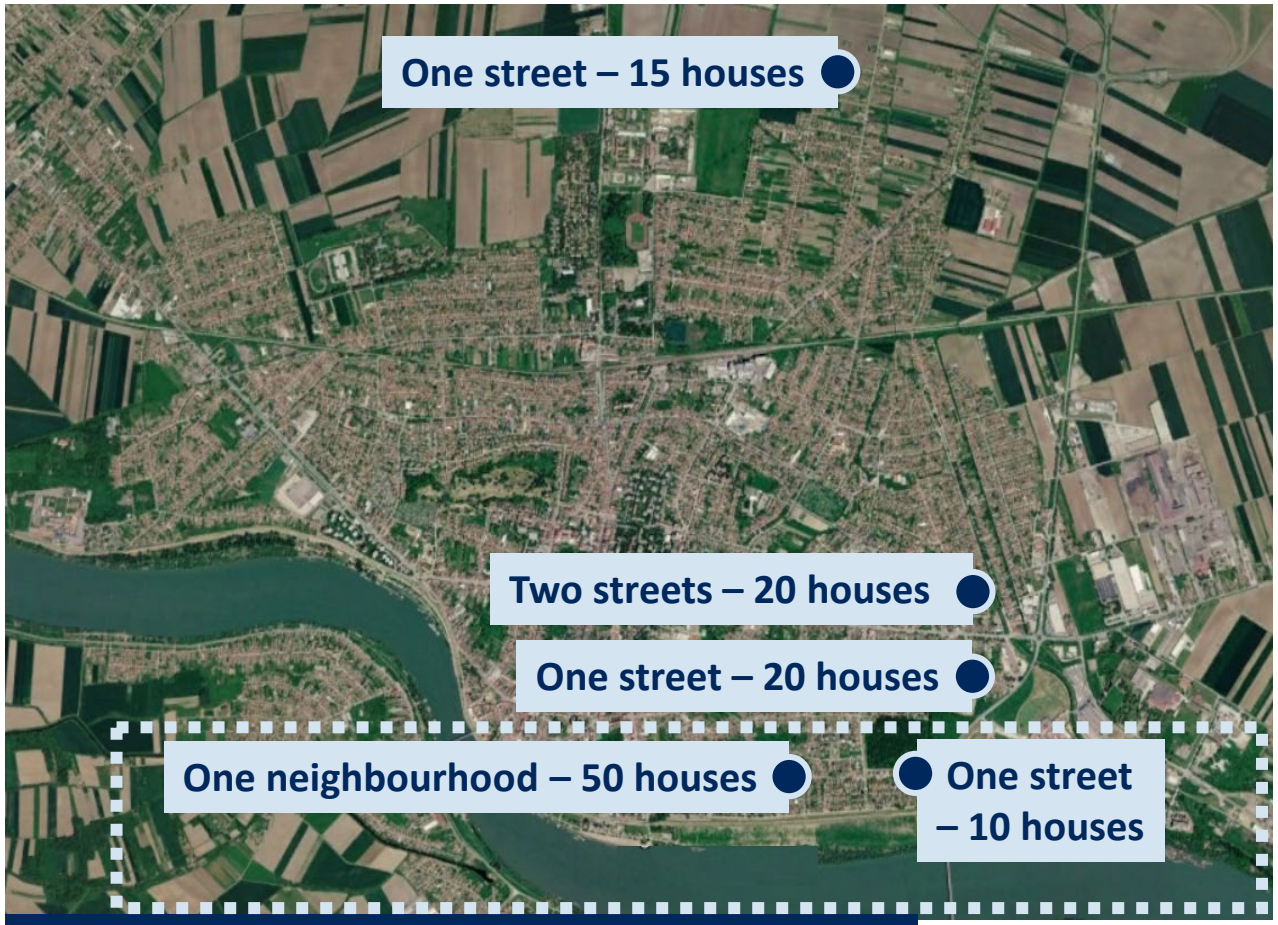
Younger families rediscovered the appeal of living in a house with a garden, especially in mid-sized cities with a revived economy.

"**Oldish" legal, planning and strategic documents**, as well as related bank procedures, are inadequate for planning and designing single-family residential areas.





CONTEXT



Single-family development in the City of Sremska Mitrovica (40,000 inh.) for the period 2005-2025





NEW PROJECTS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT







KRAGUJEVAC, Green Hill Project

NEW PROJECTS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT





VELIKO GRADIŠTE, combined residential and micro-tourist urban development



NEW PROJECTS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT





NOVI PAZAR, new loosely controlled single-family construction in the protected zone of cultural landscape



NEW PROJECTS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT





ŠABAC, “Panorama” residential project, 5 ha

THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS …

1) There is a need to address this new trend at **national level** – housing law, national urban strategy, spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia, etc.

2) To develop **"local-level mechanisms"** (plans, projects, etc.) at national level to guide and overview these new trends, especially regarding the possibility of **uncontrolled urban sprawl.**

3) **Planning documents** (e.g., general urban plans) – new or harmonised ones – had to mitigate this new demand in a proper way – new zones for this type of housing.

4) To check if single-family houses are purchased or built for the **purpose of living in them**. Or, much like many new apartments in Serbia, do they often become a "save harbour" in real estate.

5) To study if the programmes of renovating **existing, well-built houses**, such as those from the 1970s and 1980s are a viable alternative instead of simple new construction.



THANK YOU! ХВАЛА!

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