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# SPATIAL ISSUES IN POLISH CITTASLOW TOWNS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHANGES IN THE SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEM

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## Abstract

The aim of the article is to analyze spatial issues in 36 towns belonging to the Polish network of Cittaslow, the most dynamically developing network of all 33 countries in the world and second in terms of size, after the founding Italian network. The main spatial analyses were preceded by an analysis of the literature on the Cittaslow network, especially in the context of research on Polish towns. The analyses concerned (1) certification criteria in the context of the spatial directions of the town's development; (2) spatial structure of member towns and (3) local spatial development plans in force, which, as a rule, are the main spatial planning documents in Poland.

## Key words

Cittaslow, small town, spatial planning, local plans, Poland.

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## 1. Introduction

The Cittaslow movement was founded in 1999, when the mayors of four Italian towns (Orvieto, Greve in Chianti, Bra and Positano) proposed to extend the idea of the Slow Food movement, created in 1986, to the way of managing the city, i.e. to protecting the environment, taking care of the cultural and architectural heritage and introducing modern solutions to make people's lives more comfortable. For many years, researchers of various professions and nationalities have been analyzing the phenomenon of the Cittaslow movement, and three general phases can be distinguished in the research approach: from general considerations on the Cittaslow network, through case studies of individual member towns, to research on various

issues in all or selected Cittaslow towns. In the first stage, when the Cittaslow movement was established, it was a subject of general considerations about the founding idea, the certification process and its tourism aspect (Blazy, 2016; Farelnek, 2020; Galibarczyk, 2017; Górski et al., 2017; Knox, 2005; Nilsson et al., 2011; Parkins, Craig, 2006; Pink, 2008; Presenza et al., 2015; Sukiennik, 2014; Zadęcka, 2016; Zawadzka, 2017b). In the second stage, case studies of Polish and foreign (Irish, Australian, Dutch, Turkish, British and German) Cittaslow towns listed by A.K. Zawadzka (2017c) were also described.

The research of Polish towns concerned, among others, Bisztynek (Poczobut, 2010), Lidzbark Warmiński (Poczobut, 2010 and nine other researchers in Strzelecka (ed.), 2017), Murowana Goślina (Kaczmarek, Konecka-Szydłowska, 2013),

Nowy Dwór Gdański (Zawadzka, 2017a), Prudnik (Twardowska-Jania, 2017), Reszel (Poczobut, 2010), and Ryn (Poczobut, 2010). In the third stage, since 2018, the scientific research of Polish Cittaslow has focused not on an individual town, but on the different issues common for all towns belonging to Cittaslow in the year in which the research was conducted: (1) population and the economic dimension (Konecka-Szydłowska, 2017); (2) the tourist and recreational dimension (Konecka-Szydłowska, 2017); (3) differences in the residents' standard of living (Janusz, 2018); (4) transport and information accessibility (Zawadzka, 2018); (5) the potential of religious-cognitive tourism (Zawadzka, 2019); (6) the socio-economic potential (Farlenik et al., 2021).

In addition, various issues were examined in selected Cittaslow towns, such as: (1) the shape of the market square in twenty-two Cittaslow towns from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship (Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Braniewo, Dobrze Miasto, Działdowo, Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Jeziorany, Lidzbark Warmiński, Lidzbark, Lubawa, Nidzica, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Olsztynek, Orneta, Pasym, Reszel, Ryn, Sępole and Wydminy) (Zagroba et al., 2021); (2) cycling as a sustainable transport alternative in the same twenty-two towns listed above (Jaszczak et al., 2020); (3) architectural and urban attractiveness of three Cittaslow coastal towns (Braniewo, Nowy Dwór Gdański and Sianów) (Zawadzka, 2021); (4) overcoming socio-economic problems in crisis areas through revitalization in fourteen towns which are associated in the

Polish Cittaslow Towns Movement and which joined the Supralocal Program of Revitalization of Cittaslow Towns in 2015 (Barczewo, Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Dobrze Miasto, Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Lidzbark Warmiński, Lubawa, Nidzica, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Olsztynek, Pasym, Reszel and Ryn) (Zielińska-Szczepkowska et al., 2021); (5) the social and cultural role of greenery in the development of twenty towns (Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Dobrze Miasto, Działdowo, Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Jeziorany, Lidzbark Warmiński, Lidzbark, Lubawa, Nidzica, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Olsztynek, Orneta, Pasym, Reszel, Ryn and Sępole) (Jaszczak, Kristianova, 2019); (6) transformation of green areas in central squares after revitalization in four Cittaslow towns selected by authors (Bartoszyce, Biskupiec, Lidzbark Warmiński, Olsztynek) (Jaszczak et al., 2022). This article fills the gap in the study of spatial issues in all Polish Cittaslow towns.

## 2. Accession criteria to the Cittaslow network

Currently (as of July 2023) the Cittaslow network brings together 291 towns from 33 countries. There are also 20 national networks. The Polish network of Cittaslow towns has 36 members and is the second in terms of size after the founding Italian network with 88 towns. Germany is in third place with 24 towns (Fig. 1).

As a rule, access to Cittaslow can be applied for by towns with a population of less than 50,000. In order

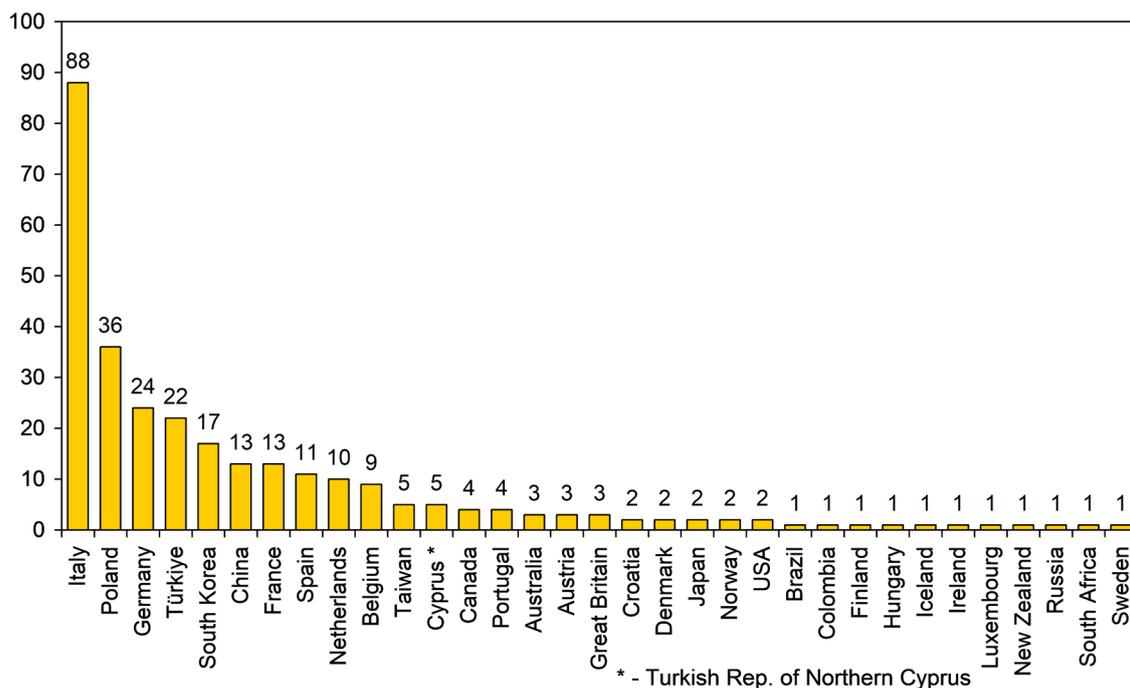


Fig. 1. Numbers of towns belonging to the Cittaslow network in individual countries.

Source: Own study based on: <https://www.cittaslow.org>

to join the network, apart from the size criterion, the town needs to meet a minimum of 50% of 72 criteria grouped into seven categories; fulfilling at least one criterion in each category. The detailed rules of membership are defined by the "International Statute of Cittaslow Towns".

These categories are as follows: (1) energy and environmental policy; (2) infrastructure policies (3); quality of urban life policies; (4) agricultural, touristic and artisan policies; (5) policies for hospitality, awareness and training; (6) social cohesion; and (7) partnerships. The accession criteria include mandatory and prospective requirements (Table 1). The analysis of the criteria indicates that 89% of the

criteria directly relate to the principles of sustainable development (Table 1) – the fundamental concept of town management (Zawadzka, 2017a). On the other hand, almost 49% of the criteria refer to spatial issues and include, among others: reduction of visual and public light pollution, removal of architectural barriers, planning for urban resilience, recovery/creation of social green areas with productive plants and/or fruit trees, urban livableness, promotion of private and public sustainable urban planning (passive house, material, construction, etc.), recovery and creation of productive green areas, increasing the value of rural areas, public housing (Table 1).

Tab. 1. Accession criteria in the certification process for the Cittaslow network.

Category	Criteria	O/P	Sustainable development	Spatial issue
Energy and environmental policy	1.1 Air quality conservation	O	✓	–
	1.2 Water quality conservation	O	✓	–
	1.3 Drinking water consumption of residents	–	✓	–
	1.4 Urban solid separate waste collection	O	✓	–
	1.5 Industrial and domestic composting	–	✓	–
	1.6 Purification of sewage disposal	O	✓	–
	1.7 Energy saving in buildings and public systems	–	✓	–
	1.8 Public energy production from renewable sources	–	✓	–
	1.9 Reduction of visual pollution, traffic noise	–	✓	✓
	1.10 Reduction of public light pollution	O	✓	✓
	1.11 Electrical energy consumption of resident families	–	✓	–
	1.12 Conservation of biodiversity	–	✓	–
	1.13 Energy communities	–	✓	–
Quality of urban life policies	2.1 Planning for urban resilience	P	✓	✓
	2.2 Interventions of recovery and increasing the value of civic centers (street furniture, tourist signs, aerals, urban landscape mitigation conservation)	O	✓	✓
	2.3 Recovery/creation of social green areas with productive plants and/or fruit trees	P	✓	✓
	2.4 Urban livableness (house-work, nursery, company hours, etc.)	–	✓	✓
	2.5 Requalification and reuse of marginal areas	O	✓	✓
	2.6 Use of ICT in the development of interactive services for citizens and tourists	O	✓	✓
	2.7 Service desk for sustainable architecture (bio architecture etc.)	O	✓	✓
	2.8 Cable network city (fiber optics, wireless)	O	✓	✓
	2.9 Monitoring and reduction of pollutants (noise, electrical systems, etc.)	O	✓	✓
	2.10 Development of telecommuting	–	✓	–
	2.11 Promotion of private sustainable urban planning (passive house, material, construction, etc.)	–	✓	✓
	2.12 Promotion of social infrastructure (time-based currency, free cycling projects, etc.)	–	✓	✓
	2.13 Promotion of public sustainable urban planning (passive house, material, construction, etc.)	O	✓	✓
	2.14 Recovery/creation of productive green areas with productive plants and/ or of fruit within the urban perimeter	P	✓	✓
	2.15 Creation of spaces for the commercialization of local products	O	✓	✓
	2.16 Protection /increasing value of workshops- creation of natural shopping centers	O	✓	✓
	2.17 Meter cubes of cement (net infrastructures) in green urban areas	–	✓	✓

Tab. 1. Continuation.

Category	Criteria	O/P	Sustainable development	Spatial issue
Infrastructure policies	3.1 Efficient cycle paths connected to public buildings	–	✓	✓
	3.2 Length (in kms) of the urban cycle paths created over the total of kms of urban roads	O	✓	✓
	3.3 Bicycle parking in interchange zones	–	✓	✓
	3.4 Planning of eco mobility as an alternative to private cars	O	✓	✓
	3.5 Removal of architectural barriers	O	✓	✓
	3.6 Initiatives for family life and pregnant women	O	✓	–
	3.7 Verified accessibility to medical services	–	✓	✓
	3.8 “Sustainable” distribution of merchandise in urban centers	–	✓	✓
	3.9 Percentage of residents that commutes daily to work in another town	O	✓	✓
Agricultural, touristic and artisan policies	4.1 Development of agro-ecology	P	✓	✓
	4.2 Protection of handmade and labelled artisan production, (certified, museums of culture, etc.)	O	✓	✓
	4.3 Increasing the value of working techniques and traditional crafts	O	✓	–
	4.4 Increasing the value of rural areas (greater accessibility to resident services)	O	✓	✓
	4.5 Use of local products, if possible organic, in communal public restaurants (school canteens etc.)	O	✓	–
	4.6 Education of flavors and promoting the use of local products, if possible organic in the catering industry and private consumption	O	✓	–
	4.7 Conservation and increasing the value of local cultural events	O	✓	–
	4.8 Additional hotel capacity (beds/residents per year)	O	✓	✓
	4.9 Prohibiting the use of GMO in agriculture	–	✓	–
	4.10 New ideas for enforcing plans concerning land settlements previously used for agriculture	–	✓	–
Policies for hospitality, awareness and training	5.1 Good welcome (training of people in charge, signs, suitable infrastructure and hours)	O		✓
	5.2 Increasing awareness of operators and traders (transparency of offers and practiced prices, clear visibility of tariffs)	O		–
	5.3 Availability of “slow” itineraries (printed, web, etc.)	–		–
	5.4 Adoption of active techniques suitable for launching bottom-up processes in the more important administrative decisions	–		✓
	5.5 Permanent training of trainers and /or administrators and employees on Cittaslow slow themes	P		–
	5.6 Health education (battle against obesity, diabetes, etc.)	–		–
	5.7 Systematic and permanence information for the citizens regarding the meaning of Cittaslow (even pre-emptively on adherence)	O		–
	5.8 Active presence of associations operating with the administration on Cittaslow themes	–		–
	5.9 Support for Cittaslow campaigns	O		–
	5.10 Insertion/use of Cittaslow logo on headed paper and website	O		–
Social cohesion	6.1 Minorities discriminated	–	✓	–
	6.2 Enclave /neighbors	–	✓	✓
	6.3 Integration of disable people	–	✓	–
	6.4 Children care	–	✓	–
	6.5 Youth condition	–	✓	–
	6.6 Poverty	–	✓	–
	6.7 Community association 6.8 Multicultural integration	–	✓	–
	6.8 Political participation	–	✓	–
	6.9 Public housing	–	✓	✓
	6.10 The existence of youth activity areas, and a youth center	–	✓	–

Tab. 1. Continuation.

Category	Criteria	O/P	Sustainable development	Spatial issue
Partner ships	7.1 Support for Cittaslow campaigns and activity	–	–	–
	7.2 Collaboration with other organizations promoting natural and traditional food	–	–	–
	7.3 Support for twinning projects and cooperation for the development of developing countries covering also the spread philosophies of Cittaslow	–	–	–

O – Obligatory requirement

P – Prospective requirements

Source: Own study based on: <https://www.cittaslow.org>.

Based on certification criteria, R. Blazy (2016) formulates the following eleven spatial actions in the movement of Cittaslow towns: (1) preserving of cultural values of urban space; (2) preserving the cultural values of the natural space around the towns; (3) bringing out and displaying unique regional features in the architectural detail of the town; (4) reparation of suitable places for festivals and meetings of the urban community (including care for community centers); (5) creating an appropriate – homogeneous spatial image of the town; (6) avoiding globalization and architectural unification in newly designed spatial forms; (7) preparation of model forms of regional development; (8) implementation of urban spaces dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle traffic, such as places: separated from vehicular traffic, parks, squares, squares, a system of bicycle paths; (9) traffic slowdown in the town; (10) preparation of a uniform tourist information system of graphic signs in the town; (11) combination of sloweating and slowcity systems through the possibility of places of food appearing in public space.

Filling in the long list of criteria for joining Cittaslow is accompanied by reflection on the current situation of the town and the directions of its development. This is long-term development, because every five years, in the recertification procedure, each member city is held accountable for the actions it has taken to become a real town<sup>1</sup> “where living is good”.

### 3. Spatial structure of Polish Cittaslow towns

Polish Cittaslow towns are located in various regions of Poland, with the largest number of Cittaslow towns, 27, located in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship (Reszel, Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Lidzbark

<sup>1</sup>Although the name «INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF CITIES WHERE LIVING IS GOOD» appears at the top of [cittaslow.org](https://www.cittaslow.org) website, for example, the Manifesto on this page uses the correct English translation for small towns, which reads «Towns where living is good».

Warmiński, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Lubawa, Olsztynek, Ryn, Barczewo, Dobre Miasto, Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Nidzica, Pasym, Bartoszyce, Działdowo, Lidzbark, Orneta, Sępólno, Jeziorany, Braniewo, Wydminy, Morąg, Olecko, Szczytno, Węgorzewo, Kisielice); two (Głubczyce and Prudnik) are in the Opolskie Voivodship, and one in each of the following voivodships: Pomorskie (Nowy Dwór Gdański), Zachodniopomorskie (Sianów), Śląskie (Kalety), Wielkopolskie (Murowana Goślina), Lubelskie (Rejowiec Fabryczny), Łódzkie (Rzgów), and Mazowieckie (Sierpc). There are three general types of communes in Poland: urban, urban-rural and rural communes. Cittaslow includes 11 whole urban communes, 11 whole urban-rural communes, 13 towns within urban-rural communes, and one rural commune (Table 2).

There is a clear trend in which, initially, both entire communes and towns in urban-rural communes were registered in accession resolutions, and since 2017 – only entire communes have been registered. The Polish network of Cittaslow is growing dynamically: new towns have joined the network almost every year since 2010. The certification process lasted from several months to over two years, which is visible in the time difference between the date of adoption of the accession resolution to the year of joining the Cittaslow network (Table 2).

### 4. Spatial planning in Cittaslow towns in Poland

For 20 years of binding of the Act of 27 March 2003 on Spatial Planning and Development (Ustawa..., 2003), until 2023, when its radical change came into force, spatial planning in a commune, in principle, was based on two planning documents. The first was (1) a study of the conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune, on the basis of which (2) local spatial development plans were drawn up. However, regardless of the decisions of the study, decisions on development conditions were issued on a large scale, and their lack of competitiveness

Tab. 2. Structure of Polish Cittaslow towns.

Year of accession to Cittaslow	Town according to accession	Voivodeship	Type of commune	Part belonging to Cittaslow	Accession act (in Polish)
2007	Reszel	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała Nr XXII/133/2004 Rady Miejskiej w Reszlu z dnia 12 lipca 2004 r.
	Biskupiec <sup>2</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr XXXVIII/285/06 Rady Miejskiej w Biskupcu z dnia 30 marca 2006 r.
	Biszynek	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała Nr XXXI/149/06 Rady Miejskiej w Bisztyнку z dnia 27 kwietnia 2006 r.
	Lidzbark Warmiński <sup>3</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała nr L/306/06 Rady Miejskiej w Lidzbarku Warmińskim z dnia 14 czerwca 2006 r.
2010	Murowana Goślina	Wielkopolskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała Nr XL/380/2010 Rady Miejskiej w Murowanej Goślinie z dnia 26 kwietnia 2010 r.
	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie <sup>4</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała nr LXIII/282/10 Rady Miejskiej w Nowym Mieście Lubawskim z dnia 20 kwietnia 2010 r.
2012	Lubawa <sup>5</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała Nr XVI/170/2012 Rady Miasta Lubawa z dnia 27 czerwca 2012 r.
	Olsztynek	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała nr XII-127/2011 Rady Miejskiej w Olsztyńku z dnia 29 grudnia 2011 r.
	Ryn	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała Nr XVIII/155/12 Rady Miejskiej w Rynie z dnia 5 marca 2012 r.
2013	Barczewo	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała nr XXXVIII/2013 Rady Miejskiej w Barczewie z dnia 25 lutego 2013 r.
	Dobre Miasto	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała Nr XXXVII/262/2013 Rady Miejskiej w Dobrym Mieście z dnia 21 lutego 2013 r.
	Gołdap	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr XXX/192/2012 Rady Miejskiej w Gołdapi z dnia 28 listopada 2012 r.
2014	Górowo Iławeckie <sup>6</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała Nr XLVII/235/2013 Rady Miasta Górowo Iławeckie z dnia 11 grudnia 2013 r.
	Kalety	Śląskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała NR 279/XXXI/2013 Rady Miejskiej w Kaletach z dnia 22 sierpnia 2013 r.
	Nidzica	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała Nr XLII/574/2013 Rady Miejskiej w Nidzicy z dnia 30 grudnia 2013 r.
	Nowy Dwór Gdański	Pomorskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała nr 313/XXXVI/2014 Rady Miejskiej w Nowym Dworze Gdańskim z dnia 30 kwietnia 2014 r.
	Pasym	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała nr XXIX/191/2013 Rady Miejskiej w Pasymiu z dnia 26 listopada 2013 r.
	Rejowiec Fabryczny <sup>7</sup>	Lubelskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała Nr XLI/196/13 Rady Miasta Rejowiec Fabryczny z dnia 24 czerwca 2013 r.

<sup>2</sup>The urban-rural commune of Biskupiec Cittaslow is located in the Olsztyński County (in the Nowomiejski County, there is the rural commune of Biskupiec which is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>3</sup>The urban commune of Lidzbark Warmiński is surrounded by a rural commune also named Lidzbark Warmiński (the rural commune of Lidzbark Warmiński is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>4</sup>The urban commune of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie is surrounded by a rural commune also named Nowe Miasto Lubawskie (the rural commune of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>5</sup>The urban commune of Lubawa is surrounded by a rural commune also named Lubawa (the rural commune of Lubawa is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>6</sup>The urban commune of Górowo Iławeckie is surrounded by a rural commune also named Górowo Iławeckie (the rural commune of Górowo Iławeckie is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>7</sup>To the west of the urban commune of Rejowiec Fabryczny there is a rural commune also named Rejowiec Fabryczny, and to the east there is the urban-rural commune of Rejowiec (the rural commune of Rejowiec Fabryczny is not a member of Cittaslow network).

Tab. 2. Continuation.

Year of accession to Cittaslow	Town according to accession	Voivodeship	Type of commune	Part belonging to Cittaslow	Accession act (in Polish)
2015	Bartoszyce <sup>8</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała nr XXXIX/297/2014 Rady Miasta Bartoszyce z dnia 27 marca 2014 r.
	Działdowo <sup>9</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała Nr VII/51/15 Rady Miasta Działdowo z dnia 26 marca 2015 r.
	Lidzbark	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała nr VI/39/15 Rady Miejskiej w Lidzbarku z dnia 12 marca 2015 r.
	Prudnik	Opolskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała nr LVI/872/2014 Rady Miejskiej w Prudniku z dnia 30 kwietnia 2014 r.
	Orneta	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała nr BRM.0007.7.2015 Rady Miejskiej w Ornece z dnia 25 lutego 2015 r.
2016	Głubczyce	Opolskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała nr XIX/151/16 Rady Miejskiej w Głubczycach z dnia 27 kwietnia 2016 r.
	Sępólno	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała Nr VIII/38/15 Rady Miejskiej w Sępólnie z dnia 29 maja 2015 r.
	Jeżorzycy	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	only town	Uchwała nr XIV/80/2015 Rady Miejskiej w Jeżorzycach z dnia 30 grudnia 2015 r.
2017	Sianów	Zachodnio-Pomorskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr XXXI/182/2016 Rady Miejskiej w Sianowie z dnia 26 listopada 2016 r.
	Rzgów	łódzkie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr XXXI/237/2017 Rady Miejskiej w Rzgowie z dnia 1 lutego 2017 r.
2019	Braniewo <sup>10</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała Nr II/4/18 Rady Miejskiej w Braniewie z dnia 28 listopada 2018 r.
	Wydminy	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr VLIV/304/2018 Rady Gminy Wydminy z dnia 21 czerwca 2018 r.
	Sierpc <sup>11</sup>	Mazowieckie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała Nr 60/VIII/2019 Rady Miejskiej Sierpca z dnia 13 marca 2019 r.
2020	Morąg	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr IV/56/19 Rady Miejskiej w Morągu z dnia 22 lutego 2019 r.
	Olecko	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr ORN.0007.12.2019 Rady Miejskiej w Olecku z dnia 25 stycznia 2019 r.
	Szczytno <sup>12</sup>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban	whole commune	Uchwała nr V/50/2019 Rady Miejskiej w Szczytnie z dnia 28 marca 2019 r.
2021	Węgorzewo	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr V/43/19 Rady Miejskiej w Węgorzewie z dnia 27 lutego 2019 r.
2022	Kisielice	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	urban-rural	whole commune	Uchwała Nr XVII/165/2020 Rady Miejskiej w Kisielicach z dnia 14 sierpnia 2020 r.

Source: own study.

<sup>8</sup>The urban commune of Bartoszyce is surrounded by a rural commune also named Bartoszyce (the rural commune of Bartoszyce is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>9</sup>The urban commune of Działdowo is surrounded by a rural commune also named Działdowo (the rural commune of Działdowo is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>10</sup>The urban commune of Braniewo is surrounded by a rural commune also named Braniewo (the rural commune of Braniewo is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>11</sup>The urban commune of Sierpc is surrounded by a rural commune also named Sierpc (the rural commune of Sierpc is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

<sup>12</sup>The urban commune of Szczytno is surrounded by a rural commune also named Szczytno (the rural commune of Szczytno is not a member of the Cittaslow network).

in relation to the local plan (e.g., in terms of time and the mode of preparation) meant that, contrary to the legislator's intentions, they became the main planning tool in Poland shaping its spatial disorder (Zawadzka, 2017d).

The fundamental changes introduced by the amendment to the above-mentioned Act relating to the structure and content of planning documents in the commune are as follows: (1) a study will be replaced by a general plan while will be an act of local law (the study was not an act of local law; consequently, decisions on development conditions did not have to refer to the decisions of the study and could be issued in areas that were not intended for development according to the study); (2) the general plan will constitute the basis not only for local plans, but also for decisions on development conditions; (3) the decision on development conditions will expire after 5 years from its validation (it was previously issued indefinitely); (4) the decision on development conditions will set the limits of the maximum analyzed area at a distance of 200 m from the boundaries of the proposed area (previously, the boundaries of only the minimum analyzed area were determined, which in the absence of the definition of the neighboring plot contributed to the location of dispersed development).

The spatial structure of Cittaslow towns discussed earlier affects the acquisition of statistical data. The presence of an entire commune in the Cittaslow network allows for conducting research on its

development in various fields, due to the fact that most often statistical data are aggregated for entire local government units, omitting data for the unit of "a town within an urban-rural commune". Therefore, the share of local plans in the area of 13 towns (Reszel, Bisztynek, Murowana Goślina, Olsztynek, Ryn, Barczewo, Dobre Miasto, Nidzica, Nowy Dwór Gdański, Pasym, Lidzbark, Sępólno, Jeziorany) refers to the area of the entire urban-rural commune, despite the fact that only towns belong to Cittaslow (Table 2). The latest available data, i.e. from 2021, was used for a comparative analysis of local plans. They refer to the currently binding local spatial development plans adopted on the basis of both the Act of 27 March 2003 on Spatial Planning and Development (Ustawa..., 2003) and the Act of 7 July 1994 on Spatial Development (Ustawa..., 1994). This is because pursuant to art. 87, para. 1 of the Act of 27 March 2003 on Spatial Planning and Development (Ustawa..., 2003), "studies of the conditions and directions of spatial development of communes and local plans adopted after January 1, 1995 shall remain in force", and those adopted before that date shall expire. These are both local plans and amendments to these plans, because according to art. 27 of the Act of 27 March 2003 on Spatial Planning and Development (Ustawa..., 2003), "an amendment to the study or local plan takes place in the manner in which they are adopted". The analysis of the share of local plans in the total area shows that this share is very diverse (Fig. 2).

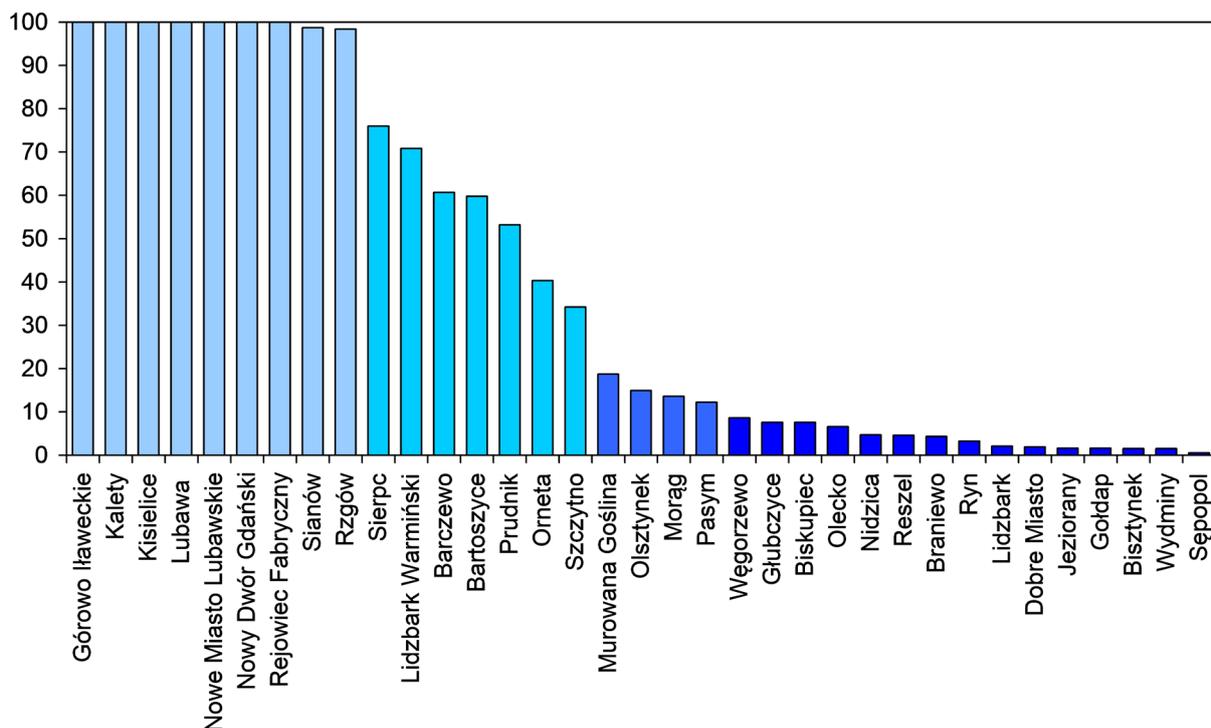


Fig. 2. Share of local plans in the area of Cittaslow towns.  
Source: own study based on <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl>.

In 10 Cittaslow towns (Działdowo, Górowo Iławeckie, Kalety, Kisielice, Lubawa, Nowe, Miasto Lubawskie, Nowy Dwór Gdański, Rejowiec Fabryczny, Sianów, Rzgów), it is close to or equal to 100%, but in 15 towns it does not exceed 10%, and in four it does not exceed 20%. In the remaining seven towns (Sierpc, Lidzbark Warmiński, Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Prudnik, Orneta, Szczytno), this share is between 34 and 74%.

It is worth emphasizing that the superiority of a local plan in relation to the decision on the conditions of development in the Act of 27 March 2003 on Spatial Planning and Development (Ustawa..., 2003) was clearly emphasized twice: for the first time, in art. 4 para. 1 and 2 in the following wording: "defining the purpose of an area, the location of public purpose investment and determining methods of land development and conditions of building development takes place in the local spatial development plan. In the absence of a local spatial development plan, defining methods of land development and conditions of building development takes place by way of a decision on the conditions of development and site management"; for the second time, in art. 50 para. 1 and in art. 59 para. 1 of the above-mentioned Act in the following wording: "the public purpose investment is located on the basis of a local plan, and in the absence of it – by means of a decision on defining the location of the public purpose investment" and "a change in land development in the absence of a local plan, consisting in the construction of a building (...) requires determining, by way of a decision, of development conditions". Also, the structure of the above-mentioned act clearly showed that the decision on development conditions is not a tool for shaping space in the commune. The above-mentioned act was made of the following chapters (as of June 2023):

- Chapter 1 General provisions;
- Chapter 2 Spatial planning in a commune;
- Chapter 3 Spatial planning in a voivodeship;
- Chapter 4 Spatial planning at the national level;
- Chapter 5 Location of the public purpose investment and determination of development conditions in relation to other investments;
- Chapter 5a Spatial data sets;
- Chapter 6 Changes in the applicable regulations;
- Chapter 7 Transitional and final provisions.

Therefore, it is clear that the decision on development conditions was not included in the chapter on spatial planning in the commune, but was outside the system, at the very end of the substantive content of the act. Apart from the numerous problems and weaknesses related to decisions on development conditions (Kopeć, 2011)

causing spatial disorder (Zawadzka, 2017d), one should also mention the problem with the database of issued decisions on development conditions. This results, for example, in the lack of information in the Local Data Bank. For this reason, it was impossible to conduct a comparative analysis of the issued decisions on development conditions in the Polish Cittaslow towns.

## 5. Conclusions

Among the Polish Cittaslow towns, there are all local government units at the municipal level (except for the city with poviata rights), i.e. urban communes, urban-rural communes (including only the town) and one rural commune, which is unique, because the Cittaslow network brings together "towns where living is good". The accession criteria to the Cittaslow network relating to spatial issues account for almost half of all requirements. They can significantly imply sustainable development of a small town based on modern technologies, while respecting local tradition, cultural heritage and natural values. Among the certification criteria, there are no strictly planning documents, and participation in the Cittaslow network does not correlate with a high share of applicable local plans. Although there is no unambiguous translation of the high share of the area covered by local plans into the high quality of spatial planning in the commune, this was a good direction of spatial policy due to the fact that in areas covered by local plans, in principle, destructive spatial decisions on development conditions could not be issued. The amendment to the Act of 27 March 2003 on Spatial Planning and Development (Ustawa..., 2003) from mid-2023 organizes many spatial issues, including replacing a study with a general plan, which will constitute the basis for both local plans and decisions on development conditions. Since January 2026, it will also introduce the Electronic Urban Register, which will collect all types of information and data in the scope of spatial planning and development, including applications and issued decisions on development conditions, to which access is currently heavily limited.

Lessons that can be drawn from the Cittaslow model can be applied to other small towns or even larger cities striving for sustainable development/ the broader implications of findings for small towns in general. This knowledge can inspire integrated approaches to urban planning that balance multiple dimensions for a more sustainable and harmonious life in urban structures. The interpretation of the results and their broader implications are as follows: (1) impact on sustainable development (the

accession criteria related to spatial issues impact sustainable development in Cittaslow towns, the practical significance of the Cittaslow movement in fostering sustainable small-town development, the role of planning documents in shaping the spatial development of Cittaslow towns/ the presence of local plans contributes to more organized and sustainable development, sustainable spatial planning contributes to the overall quality of life for residents); (2) the expected impact of the upcoming legislative changes (how legislation can further enhance the quality of spatial planning and sustainable development or is expected to impact the spatial planning landscape in Cittaslow towns/ the potential challenges or opportunities associated

with these changes); (3) digital platform impact (the accessibility and transparency of spatial planning information and data/ ensuring effective spatial management); (4) specific policy recommendations or suggestions based on research findings directed toward local governments, urban planners, and policymakers to help enhance spatial planning and development in Cittaslow towns and potentially in other contexts; (5) research continuation (areas where further research is needed/ can include exploring specific challenges in the implementation of Cittaslow principles, conducting long-term impact assessments, or examining the experiences of residents).

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