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## The environmental strategic assessment

*Ugo Baldini*

Regarding the variante Masterplan for south Verona, the municipality decided to commission the environmental strategic assessment (Vas). Why? It has been a matter of a caution suggested by the great territorial, environmental, social and economic importance of the variante. The Vas already prepared for the urban Masterplan (Pat) details the sustainability evaluations in one of the most significant and critical area, both at a metropolitan and regional scale.

The first element to be assessed is the critical environmental aspects (social and economical too) to which the Masterplan applies the strategies, the politics and the actions to contrast them, to compensate them.

For the area of south Verona the principal negative aspects regard the settlements, the inadequate systems of water collection, the impacts on the hydrogeological system, the lack of green spaces, the traffic badly distributed and however important with the consequent acoustic and air pollution.

Within a process of integrated assessment, the map of the critical elements, central point in the diagnostic phase of the appraisal, is connected to three main groups of topics, object of specific analysis, in consideration of the variante Masterplan contents.

The *mobility system*: analysis of the characters and impacts of the infrastructural and technological choices at a city scale and at the level of the local communities (quarters) in terms of congestion, safety, quality of the air and acoustic climate; the *water integrated cycle*: analysis of the impacts on

the geologic and hydrogeological system in a context of elevated vulnerability; the *green system*: analysis of the role in the city ecosystem and in the ecological net also to aim to an urban regeneration.

### The issue of the alternatives

Task of the Vas is also to analyse and to estimate the alternatives that carry to a 'sustainable plan'. The programming of the variante therefore has made in progress appraisals of alternative scenarios of transformation of the area, in particular as far as: the technological alternatives for the local public transport; the alternatives of configuration of the *Cardo massimo*; the alternatives in the configuration of the water collectors system; the presence of the big sale structures; the movement plan of the door highway of south Verona; the parking and the green spaces.

As method of analysis and appraisal, it has been chosen to analyze a limited set of pointers of state (S) and of pressure (P), 'sensitive' because they concur to verify with effectiveness and immediacy the answers introduced with planning and programming measures.

Naturally, like all the mental schemes, also that one here told is debatable. It is however proposed mainly for two reasons: for its simplicity and because it puts in evidence the systemically and structural nature of the conflicts between objectives and priorities, all of them legitimate, equally own of one community.

This representation helps therefore to remember as every programming action has collaterals effects not always expectable neither desirable; as the pointers have intrinsically ambivalent meaning, they must be used like comprehension and

assessment instruments within an apparatuses articulated oriented to the search of complex equilibriums between opposite requirements. Therefore: pointers are to be intended as instrument of social communication and of political appraisal, rather than of presumed 'technical optimization'. The guideline is to select few pointers particularly significant, because strongly connected to the characteristics of the plan and of the context, omitting the long lists where it is easy to lose the essential things. In particular the environmental pointers have been chosen in order to analyze in integrated way the various aspects of the sustainability.