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**Services plan: the experience of the municipality of Reggio Emilia***Maria Sergio*

Planning the system of services, no longer focused on quantity but on quality, must be regarded as "an element integrated with the planning process which, together with the other elements (the environment, housing quality and mobility), guides the contents of the town-planning policies of the various homogeneous territorial sectors towards improving the existing critical factors and not creating new risks".

The central idea behind the Services plan is that the future of the city depends on its capacity to offer urban vitality. The provision of services becomes basic for the constitution of links, relations and opportunities, to identify centres of social life, places constituting the very identity of persons. In such a complex social reality as ours, it is in the local dimension of the district that the opportunity to create a real sense of community can mainly be grasped.

The challenge was to draw up a plan able to interpret phenomena and cause critical elements and needs to emerge in terms of overall quality, and then to develop objectives and strategies, based on present potentials and opportunities.

The Services plan can be a reference for measuring the environmental and social sustainability of planning strategies and actions: the transformations of the Poc (Municipal operating plan) and the strategies of the Rue (Town planning building regulations) can be assessed in terms of benefits induced on the surrounding fabric and of the quality seen and hoped-for in the districts.

*Method of work and participation*

Traditional analysis focuses on demographic, social and economic macro-phenomena, at municipal or even larger scale. The Services plan proposes a closer look at places in the city: the historic centre and the districts, to assess their inner dynamics, their peculiarities and their opportunities.

In order to pinpoint shortcomings, needs and potentials, the territory was subdivided into 57 sectors, with recognizable historical, morphological and functional elements.

The first study phase was subdivided into an analysis of the actual state and an interpretation of the places. The reference context was first examined, analyzing for each neighbourhood the evolution of the population composition between 1997 and 2005 and the transformations of the territory. Next came an audit of the services, followed by a summary thematic analysis broken down into six categories: educational services, public sports facilities, and so on.

The design of the system of services becomes the making of the framework on which to upgrade the city, to find a new coherence among the elements of the urban structure and to articulate the city in parts, without losing a sense of the whole.

The project included both generalized and detailed measures, aimed at resolving both widespread situations or specific problems.

Recurrent themes, for instance, were upgrading the roads in the districts backed by the *Via Emilia* and the restoring of the services of difficult access and poorly connected. Moreover, analysis of the presence or absence of services led to the identification of areas for the construction of collective equipment, outlining a new

urban layout responding to the real and future settlement situation.