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1991-2001: from the Local Plan to the Strategic Plan Alessandra Marin

The nineties have been a period of great changes affecting Trieste but also the wider context of cross-border areas in the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. Hand in hand with the innovations produced by the changes in the geopolitical context went the need to renovate planning tools. In this period, the municipality worked at the creation of a series of projects, programmes and policies: general planning and guidance tools, schemes and projects for the restoration of the historic city and minor historic settlements, actions for the regeneration and functionality improvement of the consolidated city. The outcomes of that work are today visible in the image and physical structure of the city. They testify to an effort which was able to produce a new urban image, based on the regained European dimension of Trieste, no longer surrounded by a problematic border, but again a Central European city and gateway to the Balkans. The definition of a new layout for Trieste's urban planning situation started with the drawing up of the general Variant to the Master Plan, no. 66, aimed to adjust the agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors to the Regional Plan. This was the chance to provide the city with a real new plan; the last one was approved in 1969. The planning project had to tackle some strategic objectives: the end of demographic expansion (already visible long before), the progressive replacement of traditional productive functions with the service industry, the changed geopolitical situation of the

border. Each of these gave rise to guidelines (the invariants of the plan for the following decade) on the most important themes for the future of the city: from the road network to port functions, from the role of research to the strategies aimed at improving living and service standards. The development process of the plan was marked by a strong innovation in the way choices were made. It was organised by the municipal planning office and was drawn up as a joint document, in its different aspects, by those who were in charge of its preparation and management. In the same period the Building Regulations were changed and simplified into a straightforward document: a light guide with a glossary, urban planning parameters and a few rules. The themes of protection, restoration and enhancement of the historic heritage were constantly tackled over that decade. The context is that of a decaying centre undergoing a strong demographic and economic crisis. The first step involved restoration plans. The Town Council identified a strategic area to be restored and drew up the urban regeneration scheme. The plans elaborated by the administration envisaged the strengthening of the service system and public facilities, the fulfilment of housing needs, services and productive activities located within the historic fabric, the protection of social, cultural and historical values of buildings. These plans were followed by other measures, like those included in the Traffic Plan and car parks, with the aim to solve very critical situations. But the most interesting experience, still in progress today, is the implementation of the first 'Urban' EU programme, the Tergeste

Project, an experimental project integrating urban planning tools with local development and urban regeneration programmes. The target area is the Cittavecchia quarter, built on the original core of the Roman city. It is an important part of the historic city and lies in a bad state of physical, economic and social decay. The Urban initiative was seen as the chance to realise the preconditions to repopulate and revitalize this area: re-settlement of people, improvement of social and welfare services, upgrading of facilities, restoration of collective spaces and public green areas, promotion of economic development, enhancement of tourism and cultural resources. The policy protecting cultural, historic and environmental resources has been extended to the historic villages on the Karst, with specific detailed Plans aimed at ensuring the conservative restoration and functional upgrading of buildings, spaces and sites of historic and architectural interest, the attention to a unique landscape but also the social recovery and restoration of the villages. In the middle of the nineties, a redevelopment strategy of many derelict areas took place. These processes involved production sectors and large public facilities which are an extraordinary resource for Trieste, where scientific and technological research can be developed as well as port activities and cultural and tourism enhancement. An overall vision of these transformations is provided by the Prusst (Urban regeneration and territory sustainable development plan) of 1999, *The reconquest of the waterfront*, which proposes to restore the relationship with the sea, limited today to the presence of port

activities. The last planning instrument drawn up in 2001 is the Strategic Plan for the city. This tool, which is now being revised by the administration, places the plan for Trieste, realised over ten years, into a system, through a visioning operation, in order to make it as much as possible sharable. The plan aims at enhancing Trieste's attractiveness, improving first of all the quality of life offered to its citizens. This objective can be reached by giving stability to the population, favouring economic growth, strengthening social cohesion, promoting an apt policy of services, stimulating innovative businesses, supporting tourism and trade development, fostering port activities, improving city mobility and the road system, upgrading urban quality, regenerating derelict and decaying areas, and giving urban centrality to suburbs. The plan acknowledges the definition of "gateway to Europe" proposed for Trieste by the European Spatial Development Perspective and is linked to the Vision Planet project which, out-lining the strategies for an integrated spatial development of the area included between Central Europe, the Danube and the Adriatic, assigns to Trieste the function of bridge town within the system of international economic relations.