



Urbanistica n. 126

January-April 2005

Distribution by www.planum.net

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The governance of a city in action
Carola Gattorna

The new strategic plan of the city of Genoa, which was presented to its citizens at the end of a complex path in January 2002, represents an important part of the change in city government and in the management of the city's transformation process. Besides implementing the objectives set out in the current Municipal Urban Plan, which was approved in July 2000, the plan is an important tool to present the goals of the town council. Further it represents a sort of urban agenda where detailed initiatives can be laid down for the development of Genoa in the medium to long-term, and for the establishment of a shared vision among the different urban players. The innovative aspect of the governing and territorial transformation tools, which have been experimented with in Genoa as well as in many other post-industrial cities, does not lie so much in the simple identification of the issues of urban policy, as in the acknowledgement of the existence of a multiplicity of participants, belonging to or outside the community, whose relevance is essential to give rise to internal growth processes and to enhance local resources. The important aspect to the processes of localization and social economic development is not so much linked to the simple accumulation of a territory's knowhow and facilities, as to the ability to share the purposes and to redefine the value of resources. This is possible through processes which include learning from within and from outside the community, bringing to the fore conflict situations, negotiating interests and reorganizing the skills of the city's various players.

In this perspective, the City Plan, intended as food for thought for the whole community, selects a series of choices which are in line with objectives of territorial, social and environmental rebalancing. The aim is to specify aspects concerning implementation and actual feasibility which are consistent with the strategic lines that were defined for the development of the city within a given time frame, and which originate from the exchange of ideas with urban players with an economic and social background. The Municipal Urban Plan is a necessary presupposition, as with some important agreements reached with the Port Authority, with the approval of the Port Regulatory Plan (June 1999). However, there is the need for an instrument capable of organizing, defining and coherently guiding the planning, development and design, in an effort to bring about an economic recovery which is compatible with available resources and with the environment, in order to revive Genoa through the creation of a new idea of the city. The current European integration and the new active involvement of cities, which are undergoing processes of selective re-urbanization and economic regeneration, on the one hand, and are faced with a progressive widening of the social gap and fragmentation on the other, stimulate the City government to develop an urban plan capable of having long-lasting results. Such a plan should, first of all, create a system for decision-making, planning and management capable of mobilizing a comprehensive strategy that involves all of the city participants.

Structure of the strategic plan

In this scenario, the City Plan, drafted by the Genoa

municipal government for the years 2004-2010, is in effect also the final report of the achievements, the criteria and methods adopted by the public administration. It is made up of three books.

The first one is dedicated to the city budget of the town council, today at its second mandate, and gives an outline of the prospects for the city. It identifies the main topics concerning government action, and defines the priorities and the purpose of the selected policies. The second book contains the synoptic chart of the objectives and individual actions for the seven strategic lines: a city for everyone (education and solidarity); a city of qualities (urban development and territorial redress); a city for business and work (economy and employment): a superb city (communication and promotion of the city); port capital (Port and infrastructures); capital of culture (city of art in 2004); city management (organization and economic resources).

Each action is described in specific sheets highlighting the critical and relevant aspects of the initiatives and operational projects for each single action, outlining the players involved, the estimated (financial, human and instrumental) resources as well as the implementation times so as to evaluate the real feasibility of the proposals. Lastly, the third book contains images and statistical information which, without intending to be fully comprehensive, form a sort of visual 'historical memory' of a transformation process not yet concluded: Genoa 'before and after'.

An articulated and incremental process

The attention given to the creation of a shared image for the future and of a cohesive, feasible project is proven by the drafting

process of the City Plan. This process is characterized by different stages in order to allow for moments of communication, proposal and working together: a laboratory, enriched by external input, which emphasizes the need to create a common vision involving a cross-section of town councilors.

The first stage was characterized by the organization of a series of workshops and conferences and of different public hearings on many specific topics (November '98-February '99). This process, called *Towards a Strategic Conference*, involved both individuals and social groups, with varied levels of organization, who were invited to put forward proposals and projects and to discuss the policy for the instruction of city government.

The second stage was characterized by the definition of the strategic guidelines and preparatory work for the Strategic Conference titled *Genoa: from the Mediterranean to Europe*, held in May 1999. This represented a focal point for the communication and structural arrangement of the City Plan and it involved all of the city players. Faced with rapid social and economic development in the city, the aim was to give rise to a common culture among the different actors (politicians, experts, active forces and citizens) in order to redesign an urban identity and to create a far-reaching partnership which could work together to identify the problems and to contribute to the political projects for the city.

In the same period, Genoa's chances as a prospective venue for the G8 summit and as European Capital of Culture for 2004 became stronger. This under-lined the possibility of experimenting with a different role for the city, that of new 'collective

player' for local development. In this dynamic framework, the remarkable events of the G8 and 2004 were another occasion to launch the image of the city and to gain access to special governmental funding. However, both were an occasion to pool common goals from the different bodies and private players involved in carrying out the necessary work to prepare the city for the great event. This consisted of major maintenance and restoration works, and not just urban refurbishment, which tangibly contributed to the concrete transformation process of the city, to its revival as a tourist destination and to the overall improvement of the quality of life of its citizens. In a new balance between strategic vision and individual actions, Genoa has been able to put into practice an effective public production, which has redesigned the relationship between public and private and developed an ability to integrate policies and resources as well as physical, social, economic and environmental projects.

Plan management and urban policies implementation

Between 2002 and 2004, the administration launched the "Program for a computerized management of the City Plan". Its purpose is to assess the consistency between policies and actions, activities and guidelines of the Management Working Plan and of the Triennial Program, to create a comprehensive archive of all on-going activities and to finalize the activities of the different administration services, according to integration and effectiveness guidelines. The work is still in progress and should contribute to develop an internal information network within the administration capable

of supporting new forms of governance together with a new tangible 'urban management' linked to the monitoring and assessment capability of the different policies involved. Each Office is called upon to test updating and monitoring of their own activity in relation to the objectives of the City Plan and to improve their interaction with other municipal services on the fundamental issues of city governance, from the point of view of 'internal governance' and of factual integration among sectors. Thus, this program, which is also called a "general management control panel", brings the focus of the experimentation of the city of Genoa back to the issue of Municipal Urban Plan implementation and to the need for innovation of the operational instruments. All this occurs against a background which is increasingly marked by a lack of public resources and by the changing role of a multiplicity of public and private participants, according to a governing style which differs from simple hierarchical control and from a kind of bureaucratic and administrative vision.