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*Federico Oliva*      The new plan

*ed. by Sauro Moglie, Claudio Centanni, Marcello Gidoni  
 Fabio Sturani, Enrico Turchetti  
 Claudio Centanni, Sauro Moglie  
 Sauro Moglie  
 Marcello Gidoni  
 Paolo Pasquini  
 Anna Teresa Giovannini, Patrizia Piattelletti  
 Maria Emilia Faraco  
 Sandro Simonetti, Carlo Galeazzi  
 Claudio Centanni, Sauro Moglie*

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*edited by Giovanni Ginocchini, Chiara Manaresi  
 Sergio Cofferati  
 Virginio Merola  
 Giacomo Capuzzimati  
 Patrizia Gabellini  
 Francesco Evangelisti  
 Giovanni Ginocchini  
 Pier Carlo Palermo  
 Nunos Portas*

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 Alessandra Baldin  
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 Simona Petraccia  
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## The plan's public process *Giovanni Ginocchini\**

The re-launch of the process for drafting the Bologna Municipal structural plan, following the change of administration in June 2004, has seen not only the revision of the general objectives governing the city's transformation, but also a desire to try out new forms of communication and public involvement in the choices that relate to the territorial policies. The programme takes the form of a process for communicating and listening to a wide range of stakeholders, associations and individual citizens. The mixture of methods and instruments for interaction has assured that the procedure has the necessary flexibility as well as the possibility of calibrating the degree of interaction possible, alternating information and consultation with project development that involves public participation. A great deal has been done to combine information and consultation, in particular in the renewal and re-launch of the Urban center Bologna, which is dedicated to communication and transformation of the city and which has also held public discussion forums. In the other hand, the progressive activation of neighbourhood workshops has made it possible, in particular situations, to carry out a more in-depth consultation between citizens, experts and administrators. From the very first stages and during the entire process the administration has paid great attention to defining the parameters of discussion. Transparency in relation to the decisions already taken (and therefore non-negotiable) and those that still remain open, and therefore subject of debate, is a distinctive feature of the

experience. From the 'technical' point of view the first stage of the public forum has produced interesting results. The full and comprehensive statement with attached map of all contributions collected and 'georeferenced' in a territorial database have made it possible to examine the questions and places that are at the centre of public debate. This contribution is useful not only in reviewing the Preliminary document but also for the successive stage of developing the plan. The neighbourhood workshops have provided a second line of action aimed at dealing with the development of certain specific areas of the city from the project point of view. These areas are places that provide important opportunities at urban and metropolitan level and, at the same time, opportunities for regenerating 'depressed' districts where living conditions are poor. The workshops activated so far have dealt with questions currently at the centre of discussion: the reuse, with safeguards, of stretches of urban countryside, compensating transport infrastructures with new parks, construction of new centres commencing from public spaces, new residential districts orientated towards mixed uses and sustainability. The passage from Preliminary document to structural plan has been marked by a far-reaching operation of 'selection' of objectives to which the results of the forums and workshops have contributed. The structural and strategic proposals contained in the Municipal structural plan have sought to embody the proposals that emerged from the public consultation process, integrating them into the system of general choices made.

The strategies identified (see for example the City of the bypass) as well as the proposals for the 'micro cities' (collections of situations) make best use of the results obtained from the public discussion process for the plan and projects. Special space is set aside in the illustrative report as well as in the Regulations, Legislative framework of the Municipal structural plan for 'Public participation and involvement processes' as instruments for implementing the plan. The report emphasises how the structure assumed by the plan can become a guiding factor in subsequent processes of public involvement and examination, thus confirming the circularity of the process. Article 40 of the framework regulations adopted confirms various basic choices in relation to what has taken place in Bologna (opening discussion to all citizens, the voluntary nature of processes being launched) and it limits itself to setting out certain inalienable conditions. Following the plan's approval by Bologna Council, preparations have been started for a new phase in the consultation process which centres upon the requirement for communicating and examining the contents of the new measure. From its title 'Bologna in seven cities' there is a clear relationship between the programme and the structure of the plan, in particular the seven 'territorial figures' which describe its structural and strategic component. For each of the 7 Cities, the programme arranges a public meeting in order to present and discuss the policies and projects, as well as a guided tour, on foot or by bus, organised in collaboration with the Districts involved on each occasion and with the associations operating in

the area. With regard to the Thursday afternoon meetings at the Urban center, it is interesting to emphasise the particular attention that is placed on visual communication. On the other hand, the seven Saturday morning guided tours take a closer look at the area and in particular those places which are affected by the main developments, whether proposed or already taking place.

\*Consultant of Bologna Municipal Authority.