

To Cesare Cesari, time-honored resident of the Bolognina neighborhood and active participant into the Laboratorio Mercato, or Market Lab

A Tale of Urban Regeneration: The Market Area and Bologna.

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Foreword

This book tells part of a story. Urban renewal begins when a place is no longer in use and ends when something new is built. The Market project in Bologna is but one episode of a long regeneration process involving different actors and subjects, aimed at tackling sometimes contradictory scenarios and expectations, via different technical means and methodological tools.

The specific episode is about the most “invisible” chapter of the story, a somehow fleeting and ephemeral phase (or at least this is how, as a rule, outsiders perceive it). Between abandonment and the physical transformation of places, a stage occurs when choices are made and general goals to be achieved are set. At the same time, while actual situations are yet to change, some fragmentations, splits, and deep-cutting transformations, which traditional town-planning tools cannot keep under control, come about within the community life and social fabrics.

The urban Market project successfully got through such a period of change. However, we do not merely consider it as a most fortunate occasion for participation or a successful combination between project and process. It rather appears as a model case within which different actors got together and tried to overcome abstractions in order to positively face any problem stemming from transformations.

The Market project – through the arrangements it adopted and the participatory process it developed – is aimed at dealing with the residents’ quality of life with a view to advantages to be gained and not just as a mere way to make town-planning forecasts come true. The project includes and develops several concerns on a number of issues, such as the management of public spaces as areas devoted to civic and community life in a city; connecting people so that they may interact, hence establishing a link between existing and future places, that is between current and future residents; encouraging mixité among future end-users, i.e. celebrating the diversity of spaces; building an environment-friendly district especially as far as energetic supplies are concerned; outlining a slow and light transportation network that may privilege bicycle/people rather than vehicle traffic.

The Relemcom project, funded by the European Grow Project, not only made it possible to carry out a comparison with other cases, but it also underlined which course the project would follow and the range of the choices that were made. The project revolved around the concept of

landscape in its broadest sense, therefore not only as far as nature or geography are concerned, but rather as a new status for landscapes, that is daily living environments, as well as the social and economic panoramas of the districts where people live. The Market project reckoned with such a three-dimensional issue by seeking a balance between the three involved components (people, environment, economy) in order to ensure the only possible way to talk about sustainable development.

Following a multidisciplinary outlook, the book was devised and written as a team work, and the result is a sort of inclusive tale, a broad-ranging spectrum of factors that outlined the context into which the project fits.

The photographic introduction deals with places and their original purpose and their discontinuation. The story is then told through three stages: the background, the actual facts – which in turn are subdivided into three instances, i.e. an investigation that begins as a lab survey and leads to a full-fledged project, each commented from an “expert” perspective – and the conclusion, which, in this particular case, coincides with the beginning of transformation. The interviews collected depict some of the different characters that came into play as the events unwound. Also, they portray, albeit only in part, the framework of problems and expectations that the project had to tackle. Finally, faces. The portraits of Bolognina residents complete the book, as they represent both the starting point and the final destination for the choices adopted by the project.

The Market project, therefore, does not merely involve drafting a town-planning design, but also developing such a scheme according to an overall concept of city growth and of new housing patterns that may enhance the opportunities for better living standards.

A new phase will now open up, devoted to physical transformation and the building process. The future situation must also meet with the expectations of the actors involved in the project, i.e. citizens, associations, public administrators, entrepreneurs, technicians, planners, and the needs of those who did not actively partake in the process. It all leads to a great challenge, yet to be met. After defining a project which absorbed suggestions and suggested new outlooks it is now necessary to develop a district capable to take in, by anticipating them, the fluctuations and variations occurring in society, that is to create common city spaces featuring unquestionable architectural and environmental qualities.

That is why the authors go so far as to state that the Market project

is a model plan that the city of Bologna must take into account, in that it adopted up-to-date patterns as its major trait. In conformity to such consideration, it is therefore necessary to inform and report to whomever took part in the first chapter of this story.

The background / 1889-2004

The 1889 town plan

The Bolognina neighborhood is located in the immediate outskirts of Bologna, north of the old town and of the surrounding ring-road, beyond the tracks departing from the main train station.

The Bolognina, which actually translates as “little Bologna”, was built between the late 19th and the early 20th century, on the basis of the first town-plan drafted in 1889, that outlined a proper extension of the city onto the northern flat land. The 1889 town scheme, like other contemporary European town-plans (one example for all: Ildefonso Cerda’s Barcelona), foresaw an expansion via a regular grid with 100x140 meter blocks, where buildings averaged four stories, and the road network was to be divided into a four-order hierarchy, according to the relevance and role of the different streets. The built-up areas, that is the blocks, each surrounding its own inner courtyard, were to regularly alternate with open spaces, such as squares and gardens, that is public areas serving the apartment buildings. The works, according to the plan, were to last approximately forty years.

Today the “original” Bolognina, the district, that is, that followed the project drafted in 1889, is the city section covering the area between the via Matteotti, via Carracci, via Bolognese and via Fioravanti. Therefore, a small portion only of the project was carried out and constructed close to the railroad tracks, whereas the same planning tool envisaged an area to be left void in view of an extension of the railway station, between the via Carracci and the via Tiarini. Such a proximity is still disadvantageous to the livability and urban quality of the blocks flanking the via Carracci, a street planned and built according to the features dictated by the third of the four orders regulating the Bolognina road network (16 m width), and that today is instead the main East-West crossing in the city. The via Bolognese itself, that is the northern ring-road that was to host the urban extension, i.e. the so-called “1889 axis”, was not built as a 30 meter section but was instead downgraded. The same was true for the gardens and squares included in the plan, that never saw the light, except for Piazza dell’Unità, which was anyway to be four times as large as it actually is. Furthermore, the northern branch of the railroad tracks finally broke up the continuity of the 1889 axis and, along with it, the implementation of the overall project.

“Little Bologna”

Unlike the farmlands surrounding the city, since the early 1900s the Bolognina neighborhood was notable for a number of railroad-connected proto-industrial concerns, handicraft, and transformation activities. It was also the gathering place for streams of migrants who at first came from the areas surrounding the city and then from other Italian regions. The main public residential buildings were

constructed in the shape of blocks surrounding inner courtyards to be used as half-private areas, by the residents of that specific building and by the people living in contiguous structures. Courtyards, now transformed for the most part into street-level parking lots and/or into areas for technological equipments, were actually meant as neighborhood areas for the whole community, as a place for transition from the public sphere to the private one, a feature that always typified the popular nature of the Bolognina neighborhood. It appeared therefore as a densely populated working-class neighborhood, a closely packed town under all aspects. The district still keeps this trait, thus allowing a wealth of associations and communal activities, all deeply rooted in the social fabric, to become established and fully working in the course of time.

The fruit and vegetable market

By the 1930s, the westernmost area of the historical Bolognina, in turn bound to the west by the Bologna-Venice railroad, running north-south, was designed to host the fruit and vegetable market. It was in fact quite strategic as a storing place and warehouse for foodstuffs, given its closeness to the station and, more specifically, to the Arcoveggio railway yard. In fact, its proximity to the railroad most certainly conditioned the urban layout and developments in the area. Being so easily reached and accessible – once to wholesale commodity dealers, today to train passengers – it always proved extremely desirable in terms of the specific and outstanding urban functions that it could host. Such a relevant city-related feature – or, even more so today, metropolitan and international characteristic – clashes with two typical aspects of the deep-set urban nature of the Bolognina neighborhood. On the one hand, its physical and morphological situation cuts it off, or better excludes from, the rest of the city, due to the interruption represented by the very presence of railroad station. On the other hand, old residents wish to recover their typicality, or even their identity, and demand compensation in the form of urban supplies and services for the damages brought by the heavy activities that always existed in this limited section of the city grounds, i.e., industrial plants and military centers, in addition to the market. The building works for the fruit and vegetable market were completed in the late 1950s, after the heavy WWII bombings. Some examples remain of the original structures, such as, in particular, the Rationalist-inspired building on the via Fioravanti facing the via Bolognese, with its watchtower/water reservoir in the middle, which was to act as an entranceway to the market for vehicles and pedestrians, and the large covered central shelter¹, originally meant as a storing place in line with the axis of the via Albani. Any town-plan must take the two above-mentioned pre-existing structures into account and outline new cityscapes around them.

The 1985-89 town-plan and the railroad station

The delocalization of the market was first envisaged by the 1985-89 town-plan, in order to transform the market area into a space for sizable upgrading and “mending” of the suburban built-up fabric. The design of

the compartment, called Zona Integrata di Settore R5.2 Navile Mercato Ortofrutticolo, must be designed according to the Detailed Plan for Public Projects following a unitary line of thought that may keep into account the important, crucial neighboring structures, such as the main train station, soon to be connected to the High Speed Rail, and all the bordering railway areas in need of revitalization.

The connection between the two sections of town, up to that point unlinked, the Bolognina on the one side and the old town on the other, is likely to take place by way of the foreseen fast-flow North-South axis – a new road infrastructure alongside the railway west of the compartment, due to connect the 1889 axis to the ring-road. This course of action will release all station activities and the station-related burden from the regular streetscape of the district. It will also be necessary to re-plan the main train station, a true challenge per se, with a view to link again the 19th century city to the north with the built-in settlement south of the ring-road.

Following the August 2, 1980 terrorist attack on the Bologna train station and the attendant destruction of its western wing, the Bologna City Council announced a competition for building plans concerning the new train station and the related connection to the market area, for which a relocation in the CAAB area north of the city had already been envisaged. Five projects came equal first and ten more were considered worthy of mention, but, due to political ups and downs, nothing came of such plans.²

Bofill's plan

Starting with the discontinuation of the market in the mid-1990s, a number of plans and projects were drafted mainly aimed at overcoming such an age-old breach. In order to re-arrange and organize the network of road infrastructures it was necessary to develop new synergies which were to combine with the recovery of an area always meant to fill a gap in services and to mend an entrenched lack in mobility within the city, within the neighborhood, within the metropolitan area.

The DUC Disegno Urbano Concertato by the Catalan architect Ricardo Bofill was devised in the early 1990s. It was an impressive plan that, in addition to the station³, re-shaped the whole northwestern section of the city, including the filling of the former market via an extension of the orthogonal grid of the 19th century Bolognina, thus again suggesting the pattern of buildings with inner courtyards.

Following the DUC, a detailed project was developed by Tecnicoop to be submitted to approval in 1999. However, as it often happens, the recovery of a whole neighborhood is neither complete by nor cannot be limited to the mere carrying out of a design but instead sets several processes in motion (administrative, economic, political, and even cultural rather than technical actions). Such processes do not end with preliminary surveys, since they involve actors, subjects, corporations and people who often play a crucial role in the real transformation of cities. Should the situation of all the above said components be unfavorable, the recovery and the actual positioning of building yards will have to be postponed indefinitely.

An additional aspect will weigh upon the future of the area, i.e. the

proprietary set-up: 57% belongs to private owners (more specifically, 49% is owned by a bank⁴) and the remaining 43% belongs to the City of Bologna. The City Council was thus always in a position to choose a specific destination for the whole area, which represents a repository for public building capacities, a unique feature for the city of Bologna in terms of both "quantity" and strategic position.

The 2004 detailed plan

In the Summer of 1999, Bologna witnessed a political earthquake: after fifty years of left-wing government, the city administration went to the center-right alliance, with Giorgio Guazzaloca as Mayor. The new City Council initiated an overall survey of the urban layout in the area. The first move was the decision to build the new venue for municipal offices (the so-called variante Sede Unica, that is one building only for all offices) exactly where the former market stood. Then, a new design was envisaged for the railway junction, also in view of the forthcoming works for High Speed Trains, of the new mobility patterns foreseen by the infrastructural master-plan, and of the international design competition to be announced for the new main train station.

A new planning procedure began, which in March 2004 led to the adoption of a different detailed plan drafted by the planning team of the Studio Scagliarini. Their hypothesis was substantially different in that it did not re-propose the regular fabric that had characterized the Bolognina district. It endorsed instead a diagonal housing pattern that distributed volumes available for constructions over the whole compartment, alternating the built-up strips with open spaces styled as city parks with recreational facilities. The project included various housing types, from low to high density, as opposed to the uniform 19th century fabric, as well as various solutions for open spaces that do not recall the traditional square – spaces where different urban situations alternate at close range. It was indeed a radical and innovative design favoring the viewpoint of future residents and meeting only in part the expectations that the recovery of the former market has long since aroused among residents in the surrounding areas.

The situation, as well as conflicting political opinions, prompted a radical opposition to the project on the part of citizens, regarding the choices made, first and foremost the student residence planned as a barrier building along the via Gobetti, marking the northern compartment boundary, a sort of extension of the 1889 axis⁵. Citizens and associations promoted several initiatives and 4,000 people signed a petition drafted by the Fuori le mura [literally, outside the walls] committee against the project. Public meetings were organized to illustrate specific cases and shared urban plans. The conflict almost reached a point of no return.

At the same time and in the years that followed its dismissal, the former market area became increasingly degraded. Street crime, mostly connected to drug pushing, spread quickly, so that this section of town has grown increasingly unsafe and turned into a breeding area for social conflicts.

Towards the Laboratorio Mercato [Market Lab]

In June, 2004 local elections marked the return of a center-left city government, headed by Mayor Sergio Cofferati. Even during the electoral campaign, the keyword "participation" was applied to the main issues and goals of the Mayor's platform as a cross-cutting concept aimed at making an open assessment and a comparison between different points of view the core topics of local policies. In January, 2005 a resolution by the town council formally established the shared town-planning lab for the former market area, thereafter called Laboratorio Mercato, in order to revise the plan adopted in 2004, while keeping some of the choices that were already approved and settled, such as the building capacity and the infrastructural layout. A new story thus began with a higher number of major characters and greater virtuous processes of mutual legitimation.

- 1/ The shelter design was attributed to PierLuigi Nervi.
- 2/ The equal first plans were drafted by: S. Crotti, O. Piacentini, G. Polesello, M. Porta and E. Zacchiroli.
- 3/ The Bofill design for the station, too, was not implemented, after several changes to the original project and a city referendum that voted down some of the choices made. A new international planning contest is now underway for the new building complex within the area of the main train station. The winner will be announced by the end of April, 2008.
- 4/ In 1933, the Cassa di Risparmio in Bologna, owner of part of the concerned grounds, in accordance with the City Council took up the commitment to build the Fruit and vegetable wholesale market (see Oikos ricerche, Studio di Impatto Ambientale - Disegno Urbano Concertato DUC Zona integrata di settore R5.2 Navile, Bologna, 1996) [nota 5]

The facts The lab / January-May 2005 The local framework: not just conflicts

The Laboratorio Mercato/Market Lab was promoted on the basis of a deep-felt need by local actors, such as mutually coordinated associations, committees and citizens' groups, together with the District Council, willing to promote debates aimed at modifying the plan adopted by the Bologna City Council in the Spring of 2004. The various projects for the transformation of the area that were submitted over the years had fuelled an increasingly intense conflict. Citizens' associations and the District Council went into action against the 2004 plan not only to oppose the way in which the planning choices had been outlined and "imposed from above", but also to voice new proposals for the plan, envisaging a true involvement of the Bolognina community into the debate. The official comments¹ to the adopted plan, filed in the Municipal records, represented the endpoint of a "pro-active" process which unwound through debates and meetings; mobilization and signature collecting; drafting and distribution of a questionnaire to all district residents. Many people filled out the questionnaire and the

associations felt there was a widespread interest for debating the plan.

The Laboratorio Mercato / Market Lab

In January, 2005 a resolution by the Bologna City Council² established the workshop for participatory re-planning and at the same time set some initial conditions – and the Laboratorio Mercato started off. By this deed the City Administration chose the lab as a tool to test some aspects of the plan being publicly discussed, a crucial moment in the whole process. The resolution in fact assigned an institutional character to a lab that had been boosted by the local community and was thus formally acknowledged. During and following the first assembly to launch the lab the response by citizens was quite impressive. In fact, over one hundred residents, dozens of experts, three committees from the Navile District³ and fifteen associations⁴, at the local and city level, enrolled for the various activities⁵. The group of local associations included various mixed subjects, from residents' committees (Fuori le Mura) to parish groups, from trade unions to co-ops, from a recreational senior citizen center (Katia Bertasi) to sports teams (Dojo Equipe, martial arts) to a self-managed sociocultural center (xm 24). Among city-level associations, the Collegio costruttori edili Provincia di Bologna [corporation of building firms of the Province of Bologna] was noted for the not always conspicuous but quite attentive participation of some of their representatives in a number of meetings⁶.

Actors at play

The Market Lab thus included quite diverse actors and bodies, each representing different and sometimes conflicting needs and suggestions for city developments.

On the one side the city government voiced a twofold goal: the area concerned was to be a first test bench for new low-cost housing policies⁷ and at the same time its capability was recognized as the venue for city and district multifunction centers.

On the other side, the local actors, i.e. the Bolognina residents, had for a long time envisaged the transformation of the former market area into new service sections and green open spaces. The neighborhood underwent deep changes in recent years, due to the economic activities and the people it houses, as well as to the intense flow of traffic going through it. It proved thus necessary not only to lessen the likely effects of transformations already into being, such as the forthcoming new unified venue for municipal services and the planned new High Speed Train station, but also to ensure a proper revival. The local community expected an increase in livability and in quality of life, that might enhance and strengthen the sociability features that had always typified the neighborhood.

Finally, private owners and developers-to-be voiced their desire for profit and clear-cut schedules. The 1985 General City Plan assigned the area a high building suitability index and such a wealth, after two decades, is still locked up.

Market Lab: the challenges

The actors involved had different, albeit all legitimate, expectations and, as it is often the case, found it very difficult to mutually communicate.

The Market Lab operation aimed at addressing a double challenge: debate and argue on the various expectations and help all actors, even the least expert ones, communicate among themselves.

The City Council asked a group of independent professionals, namely Valter Baruzzi, Giovanni Ginocchini, Monia Guarino, to run the Lab. The tasks of such so-called "facilitators"⁸ was to make the discussion easier and to coordinate activities; they would assist the professionals in charge of planning, i.e. Corrado Scagliarini's architect studio. While the process was underway, all opinions were heard. However, reflecting on how the lab came out and developed, it cannot be denied that the local perspective would be privileged. Giving voice to those who lived and resided in the area, and knew it well, with a view to an exchange of expertise with the Municipal administration (expressing the public interest) and with professionals (holders of technical capabilities), was the main added value that the lab would supply to traditional urban transformation processes.

A well-structured program

The debate started off on two issues: first, the rules of the game, together with limits and decision-making patterns; second, the program, the schedule and modes for works and the means of communication. It could already be detected that different actors wished to be heard on such topics. Through various resolutions, the city government laid down conditions and outlined the limits of the field of action; local promoters accepted such conditions but in turn were keen on exerting their own control on the program and on being directly involved in communicating results.

The debate on the calendar of works was also interesting. In fact, as is often the case in such circumstances, city administrators suggested short-term (too short) schedules, while participants-promoters had long-term (too long) works in mind.⁹

After a preliminary debate (with an assembly, meetings with the coordinated group of associations, a district committee) a program was jointly drafted foreseeing two time-related macro-subdivisions: I. The early stage of the completion procedure of the detailed plan foresees an assessment, jointly drafted with citizens, with social and economic actors in the district, and with other bodies and institutions involved, of the project features that aroused comments and therefore require consideration. The idea is to apply a new response pattern to remarks and objections, via a shared in-depth analysis of the issues concerned and a joint debate within the framework of special meetings II. It is instead suggested to point out some standards and guidelines that, after the planning stage, could be of use in drafting the subsequent more detailed phase of the project. Considerations will concern issues involving the public services and spaces typifying the new compartment. It will thus be possible for those who are to use and/or run some district areas, those who are to live their daily life in the neighborhood (including children and teenagers), those who are to

study and/or work there to be heard and to be able to participate in the pre-planning stage as well.¹⁰

The whole process was structured so as to deal with and focus on the debate on subsequent goals, to elicit and gather in an orderly and effective way the opinions of such a large and varied audience on a difficult topic that also involved complex technical aspects.

First goal: revising the plan

The first stage of the Lab began in March, 2005 and was divided into three main sections, with clear-cut goals, i.e. mutual listening, debate on proposals, testing.

1. In-depth analysis and discussion of the plan.

Four theme meetings for in-depth analysis and discussion of the issues highlighted by comments on the plan. Such working occasions are meant not only for different involved actors to participate, but also to listen to experts such as those in charge of the project, the ones working for the city government, those belonging to other bodies and institutions and so on. The purpose is to share information while underlining the various possible changes that can be brought to the plan, with special attention to compatible or, conversely, alternative options. [...]

2. Re-definition of the plan.

Three meetings aimed at summarizing all the items coming out from the four previous labs, and providing a most valuable occasion for administrators, experts and participants to debate the various planning hypotheses, to single out all possible alternatives, to suggest the preferred options, to carry out, if needed, a closer examination of legal and technical aspects that may prove useful to test the feasibility and sustainability of proposals. The labs are meant to share as much as possible the final decision made through the plan but, to sum up the above, they must also deal with all aspects of disagreement and conflict that might still be unsettled.

3. Testing of the plan.

The revision stage is completed by a final hypothesis drafted by the planners in charge, after careful consideration of the previous long debating period – a final occasion to test the version of the plan in response to comments¹¹

The early phases of the lab clearly proved the relevance of the process enacted in previous years and aimed at strengthening relationships between different groups, i.e. the District Council, the associations, etc., and at gradually building up capabilities.¹² Local actors, in fact, were immediately willing to interact, showed no leniency, and did not seem especially confident towards the City Administration, while being definitely open to confrontation.

Such a "capability", a crucial factor for the successful outcome of the process as a whole, had already surfaced when the official comments to the adopted plan had been analyzed.

The topics of the first four meetings - risky moments when the public debate started anew - were chosen on the basis of a detailed survey of

the comments expounded:

- The Market and the City. Links, boundaries, train station junction.

- The Market and the District. A new "downtown" for the Bolognina neighborhood.

- Living in the Market area 1°. Environmental sustainability and cityscape.

- Living in the Market area 2°. Social sustainability and economic concerns.

The topics were chosen when re-reading and aggregating the criticisms voiced "from below", and the four meetings began with a brief introduction of the topic by the plan designers, followed by group discussion. Thus the habit was formed since the beginning to view the Lab meetings as an occasion to "exchange" expertise: all the people taking part in the great "table", that is citizens, administrators, professionals, were there to voice their opinions but also to listen to other people's ideas.

"Shared" communication

Within such a framework, great relevance must be ascribed to the means of communication that went with the Lab, both for "insiders", i.e. local people, and for "outsiders", i.e. citizens as a whole:

- an information point with a temporary exhibition, updated after each meeting, at the Centro Katia Bertasi, where the meetings took place¹³, close to the former market area;

- a newsletter on paper distributed by the District and the participating associations in the busiest public places in the neighborhood;

- a website in the City Net promoted by the Bologna Municipality, to file documents to be used as a reference tool.

Such tools are quite common for this sort of experiences but in this case they were quite peculiar in that they were thought and produced by an "open" editorial board. The "shared" drafting – especially so for the newsletter – was quite functional especially in the early phases,¹⁴ but experimenting information tools stemming from a joint drafting significantly marked the internal and external image of the lab, as well as its whole working process.

Listening and discussing

The atmosphere of the first meeting was tense, as the conflicting patterns experienced in previous years came to the fore again, also because the topic concerned, i.e. mobility, was an extremely "hot" issue, hard to tackle. Tensions softened in subsequent meetings, thanks to a painstaking communication and coordination process and, above all, thanks to the willingness of all participants to positively interact, with an increased disposition to listen to one another. Interesting views were offered as far as planning went – not only between residents and experts but also among residents themselves.¹⁵

This early phase already highlighted the role of the project as the "playing field"¹⁶ for debate: actually, the exchange of views did not take place in general or abstract form. Instead, it was inspired by the explanation of the hypotheses that had already been drafted

concerning the area.

Within such a well-structured framework it was quite important that planners be extremely willing to take part in this "table". The Lab in fact required professionals to adopt a working mode that might integrate the need to work within multi-sector work groups (a typical feature for contemporary professional activities) with the ability to listen to other actors, who brought along with them their direct experience in the daily running of places that elicited a widespread awareness.

The stage of mutual "listening" ended in June, 2005 and produced two documents summarizing the outcomes. The first report, drafted by the Lab facilitators, tried to highlight the "strategic" issues and the overall revision goals that had surfaced during the process. The second document, drafted by the coordinated associations, stated the latter's position at the end of the "first round" of debates. It is interesting to compare the two documents, in that, although stemming from partially diverging points of view, they show that there are many points in common on "what is to be done".

1/ Three of the six comments to the plan adopted in 2004 were submitted by local actors, and the Navile District also expressed one opinion.

2/ Deliberazione di Giunta e Consiglio, no. 8/2005, Jan. 18, 2005.

3/ Committees: "Pace, Partecipazione, Riforma dei quartieri", "Mobilità, Assetto del Territorio, Casa, Attività produttive", "Ambiente, Salute, Formazione alla cittadinanza". Committees are permanent workgroups promoted by District Councils and coordinated by a District Councillor, open to non-elected residents, to intervene in major areas of interest.

4/ A.s.d. Dojo Equipe Bologna, Centro culturale parrocchia S. Cristoforo, Centro sociale Katia Bertasi, Cgil, Collegio costruttori edili Provincia di Bologna, Comitato acqua Bacino del Reno, Comitato commercianti progetto Bolognina, Consulta delle Lame, Eikon s.a.s., Associazione Fuori le mura, Gruppo ambiente zona Bologna 2 di Coop Adriatica, Servizio di mediazione di comunità, Spi-Cgil Bolognina, xm24.

5/ "Enrollment" here means a recording of personal data in view of future communication as well. Enrollment is not binding. However, participants were invited to attend as much as possible in order to make debates more productive.

6/ At the end of the whole process the Collegio costruttori voiced their overall positive opinion on the experience, while expressing criticisms on some issues.

7/ It was also on the list of goals for Mayor Cofferati's City Board.

8/ "The assembly will be supervised by an independent professional in the field who will listen to citizens. Final decisions will be made by the City Council but shared solutions will stem from the debate", said Virginio Merola, councilor in charge of town-planning, to the daily "La Repubblica" (Repubblica Bologna, Thursday, January 20, 2005, p. V). Independent professionals are usually called "facilitators", a somewhat reductive term that nevertheless successfully sums up one of the major features of their role during the process.

9/ *Sharing the work schedule with all actors taking part in the project was necessary for a sound start of the Lab. It was especially important, during this particular stage, to jointly agree on an effective process, since too-short-terms hinder the debate, while too-long-terms waste efforts and weaken participation.*

10/ *From the Programma per l'accompagnamento sociale del piano e la ri-progettazione partecipata del comparto ex Mercato ortofrutticolo [Program for social debate on the plan and the shared re-planning for the fruit and vegetable market area], February 2005. As a general rule, the program will be respected but will over time undergo a number of adjustments, especially because of the need to re-start the institutional procedures, since the plan will go through heavy transformations.*

11/ *From the Programma per l'accompagnamento sociale del piano e la ri-progettazione partecipata del comparto ex Mercato ortofrutticolo, February 2005.*

12/ *Some "leaders" come from long years of political activity not necessarily connected to town-planning. In November, 2003, some of them took part in a meeting organized by the District together with the INU and the Architects Association, by the title of Progettare con gli abitanti. Dagli USA al Navile, esperienze di progettazione partecipata [Planning with residents. Shared planning, from the USA to the Navile neighborhood].*

13/ *The members of the Centro Katia Bertasi are also most active within the Coordinamento delle associazioni della Bolognina [Bolognina coordinated associations] and therefore within the Lab.*

14/ *It is most specifically the young people who referred to "Teleimmagini", a neighborhood TV station launched by the self-managed social center xm24, a self-defined "place for producing culture, political and social participation from below", who suggest such patterns, also on the basis of open TV programming adopted by neighborhood TV stations (www.telestreet.it) and by indymedia, international independent information network (www.indymedia.org).*

15/ *During this stage a sort of discontinuation of roles came about, thus allowing the various actors to briefly leave their own opinions aside and be better disposed to listening, by identifying at least partly with their own interlocutor.*

16/ *The relationship between participatory processes and project outcomes is a greatly relevant topic rooted in mid-1900s experiences and only in part addressed by contemporary thought.*

The facts From the lab to the project March-November 2005

Five strategic goals

When the "listening" stage ended, a report was drafted, presented, debated, amended, and validated during a special meeting. The remarks that came out can be summarized into five strategic goals, five guidelines in the re-planning stage:

1. *the plan is a unique opportunity to allot a new public central role to the*

district, making it accessible and recognizable, at the disposal of the different people who do and will reside there, and open to several functions;

2. *the plan must overcome the limits of the district: its transformation is an opportunity to revitalize the whole neighborhood and the border between the old and the new district must be carefully assessed in order to promote new links;*

3. *the grounds are quite extensive and can host different types of green areas, i.e. compact or widespread, "urban" and "naturalistic", etc.¹;*

4. *with reference to the city as a whole, the new district must be an example of new sustainable planning, with special attention paid to environmental issues by experimenting energy-saving and water-saving techniques, etc.²;*

5. *the new compartment is devised as an integral part of the urban system and as such it must try not to be an additional burden on territorial mobility. Within the new district special attention must be paid to traffic regulation, privileging slow mobility patterns.*

Towards a new plan

While moving on, from the "listening" stage to a phase of elucidation and discussion of a new planning proposal, the different actors will be compelled to reconsider their own goals and each of them will have to, so to speak, gradually work through this sort of bereavement.

The first reassessment concerns the planners. As a matter of fact, changes in infrastructures and a closer look at the local framework made it obvious that a mere revision of the plan would prove extremely difficult. Soon afterwards the need was clearly felt for a veritable new plan.

An attendant change in scenarios directly affected the city government: drafting a new plan implied that the goals and the limits set for a possible revision of the plan, as expounded in the resolution establishing the Lab, had to be clearly overcome. Which essentially meant that it was necessary to start the administrative procedures again.

Lab participants and local promoters, too, were bound to act in a new situation. As mentioned above, they had accepted since the beginning some of the "conditions" set by the Administration, more specifically the ones concerning the presence within the future layout of the area of the new municipal office building, which was perceived at the local level as an item imposed from above, and as an added load in town-planning terms. And they had also accepted the terms about the impossibility to cancel building rights – a large number of residents had in fact hoped for and envisaged the market area transformed into an uninterrupted "big park". It was during this phase that great difficulties arose. More specifically, two questions were brought up that, as the lab went on, would eventually lead to a gradual withdrawal on the part of some of the original promoters. The first issue focused on the willingness to treat also as "projects" some aspects that had nothing to do with the compartment, in particular mobility within the district as a whole.

Secondly, participants demanded to have more say and a major role during the planning stage – that is to say, to co-plan with designers.

Analyzing the new lay-out

The plan dealt with part of the first issue, i.e. proposals outside the compartment, and suggested some transformations beyond the area borders, while many of the demands on mobility that had been raised during the works of the Lab were technically tackled by the Municipal Administration in the subsequent draft of the Piano generale del traffico urbano (General Plan for City Traffic - PGTU) and of the Piano strutturale (Structural Plan - PSC).

The second issue attached to co-planning was indeed a delicate and debatable one. With respect to established models of planning consultations with the local community,³ the example under consideration referred to an extensive, complex project and therefore an original multi-faceted pattern was deemed more applicable, as follows:

1. *public proposal of a new lay-out drafted by planners in which the broad-ranging strategic options voiced by the Lab would be acknowledged and creatively interpreted;*
2. *a number of "bilateral encounters" between the planners and, in turn, associations, the District Council, various sectors of the city government;*
3. *public simulation of a number of options in the arrangement of planning items and clear explanation of the options that the experts deemed as most advisable;*
4. *representation of the new plan via different tools, as understandable as possible to lay people;*
5. *debate on the new lay-out with the people concerned, in small groups or even individually, in order not to leave out any detail.⁴ The tools used to help mediate between different languages were quite relevant during this stage as well: lay-outs and ideograms, a constantly changing hands-on model, three-dimensional renderings, direct on-site simulation of some choices, on a 1:1 scale.⁵*

A surprise: the outcome of shared work

The description of the whole process and of the tools used helps understand how, in going from the Lab to the actual plan, the roles of the various actors at play were redefined. Planners gained more room and directly interacted with the local community and with the Municipal Administration, while facilitators gradually withdrew from their debate-leading role, although they kept the coordination of the whole process under control and the hard task to keep up the flow of information between different actors, even while the latter thought about and autonomously developed contents and documents. In view of the debate on final outcomes, it was in fact crucial not to break communication at any point in order to preserve and enhance the open confidence and the custom to exchange views that were acquired in the previous phase. Unlike what had been foreseen when the Lab began, the planning proposal radically reviewed some features of previous hypotheses and outlined a thoroughly new project.

The planning choices implied by the project interacted with the Lab, not so much in reacting to all individual requests received, in a seemingly detached manner, but rather as they tried to accept and systematically work out, within the framework of a new outline, the deep-felt needs and suggestions that came from participants.

Statement and improvement

The concluding meetings ultimately recorded an agreement⁶ on the hypotheses suggested by planners.

Some choices were especially appreciated, more specifically the new position chosen for the green park area and for the recreational social center, together with the larger amount of space allotted to public usage and services – all technical choices that granted the new settlement its experimental features in terms of environmental sustainability.

The outcomes that were deemed as positive concerned therefore the urban layout, the technical solution, the volumes and the usages. As to the latter item in the list, the result was as follows: residential: + 18%; other usages (offices, trade, other): - 41%; accommodation facilities: - 80%; total compartment: - 6%; public usage and services: + 43%. The initial expectations of different actors, as listed in the first chapter, were matched by the above mentioned figures.

It was during this phase that the foundations for the second part of the Lab were laid, in view of a more in-depth study - involving a new participatory model - of public space planning and also in view of sharing this experience at the international level by joining the European Grow Project.

In March, 2006, the project for the former market area stemming from the process and dialogue carried out by the Lab, was again adopted and, on July 10, 2006, it was endorsed by the City Council.⁷

1/ *The pattern and possible use of open spaces is a frequently debated issue between planners and citizens, as well as among residents themselves.*

2/ *In this specific case, citizens acknowledge the innovative technical features of the plan under consideration and require that such features are maintained and extended. Full agreement is expressed on the issue by planners and residents alike.*

3/ *The best known is no doubt Planning for real, a community consultation model born in UK and subsequently applied and re-interpreted at the international level, but other models are available, as described by several handbooks (available mostly in English) and in the Net.*

4/ *On the Maratona mercato [Market Marathon] day, planners were available for explanations and debates during group or individual half-hour meetings.*

5/ *In this specific case the "town-planning" walk was not the usual initial inspection but rather an occasion to test "from life" the signs marked on the maps, especially the extension of the new park area and of the "covered square" shelter.*

6/ *Of course, some were disappointed or only in part happy with the results, but it can be said that the general climate was one of satisfaction. The positive outcome was also supported by a test questionnaire distributed during the final meeting.*

7/ *After a decade during which hypotheses and projects had followed one another, the new plan for the market area was launched, thanks also to the involvement of the local community. Once again, the commonplace that "participation slows down the pace" was disproved.*

The facts

The project November 2005-June 2006 Listening

The very first stage in drafting any project, involving reading, interpreting, and listening to the concerned physical, social, economic, cultural contexts, plays a major significant role in defining and constructing the planning framework.

Quite often, planning in a participatory environment might end up with commonplace solutions to basic, albeit legitimate, problems and needs. The project for the former market area meant to provide, on the basis of current requirements, and in order to recover its civic aspects and value, a feasible "development with a future", as expressed in careful detail by its environmental prerequisites and by the structure of its public spaces.

Pre-existing structures, context, and infrastructures

The preservation of pre-existing structures, the former entrance and the shelter, strongly influenced the urban project that would subsequently become the proper final planning tool. More specifically, the large shelter, a vaulted reinforced concrete structure covering almost 5600 square meters, acquired a special meaning during the Lab and within the project, and it became the symbolic venue for public activities.

The two above-mentioned items were quite significant in that the former was an integral part of the neighborhood cityscape and the latter provided great opportunities in terms of space and aggregation. In addition to them, the plan was related to three additional relevant areas: the Villa Angeletti park and the open park space along the Navile waterway, two important green environment-friendly areas unfortunately detached from the community's day-to-day life; the train station, a major junction for all public mobility networks at the local city level (light railway and busses), at the metropolitan level (metro-trains and people-mover to the airport) and at the national level (High Speed Trains. Estimates for the year 2020 foresee ca. 180,000 passengers a day as compared to today's 97,000); the municipal office building that, as of 2008, will bring new people to the Bolognina neighborhood and once more will mark this area out with a unique role. Moreover, the changes in infrastructures around the district, also a result of Lab activities, deeply affected the shape of the plan and fixed its organization and nature. As a matter of fact, the idea for a section of the central part of the via Gobetti (ca. 200 meters) to run underground and for a trench pattern for the North-South axis to link to the ring-road, would lower the environmental and acoustic impact of infrastructures and would allow a "seamless" built-up fabric with no breach between past and future structures.

Even though it implements an assessment included in the 1985 city-plan, the project concerning the ex market area falls thoroughly under the Municipal Structural Plan, then underway. It actually fits into the so-called "railway city", a wide-ranging urban strategy linking the most important city facilities, such as the fairgrounds, the airport, the train station, the new university venues, the Maggiore Hospital, etc., with some strategic areas for upgrading, i.e. the former fruit and

vegetable market venue, aimed at defining the metropolitan, national and international character of the city, in that they are devoted to external trade, relations and connections.

General goals

On the basis of the said obligations and of the demands put forward during the Lab works, the planning process defined standards and strategies while focusing on two main goals: the social – or, more generally, urban - sustainability and the environmental and energy sustainability of the new settlement.

The first item required the construction of a section of town that could be a natural extension of the well-established Bolognina neighborhood, currently experiencing a number of problems and outdated features that brought about the loss of the original values that shaped the 19th century neighborhood. The lack of open spaces, of places for socializing and for community life, the problems attached to mobility and to intense traffic, the decay of the neglected former market area, the arrival and/or transit of new residents, all shape the reference frame necessary to better understand the situation. Therefore, social sustainability felt like a new supply of public spaces for which the plan would serve as a control and management tool. The topic of the public city and its diversity and accessibility repeatedly surfaced in the Lab, due to the general feeling of danger that Bolognina residents nowadays experience and to the chronic lack of public spaces and of places allowing a collective recognition. The project endorsed such requirements and proposed an established housing pattern (compact and densely inhabited blocks, with inner appurtenances to serve the residents). Such pattern would develop into a model replacing the city we already know, and its predominant feature would be an "all inclusive" livability, that is "living" public and private spaces, as compared to mere residentiality.

As far as environmental sustainability was concerned, it was deemed necessary to create an environment-friendly neighborhood, that is to realize planning choices based on compatibility and, even more so, on their power to self-produce the energy that would prove necessary to run the new settlement. The plan added to the motivations of urban design as such a number of environmental values and priorities, by devising a framework of active and passive energy choices strategically aimed at achieving high environmental standards and at qualifying as energetically sustainable.

The central 'urban park'

The core of the plan frame is a midway empty space behind the via Fioravanti, surrounded by a densely inhabited fabric. It will link the new and the old settlement, thus filling a chronic lack of green areas in the neighborhood. The park and its recreational facilities will be geometrically shaped by the street network and by pre-existing and newly-built fronts, the latter hosting the main public activities foreseen by the plan. The area will revolve around the shelter, to be read as a covered multi-function plaza. It will indeed be a novel pattern, a sort of "out-of-scale" item as compared to the urban – as

well as genetic – codes of the historical Bolognina.¹ It is precisely for this reason that it will provide special opportunities for public use, as well as reveal unexpected urban situations.²

The continuity of paths

Promoting continuity with existing items is a basic feature of the plan. The empty area of the park in the middle lays on an uninterrupted grid of plotted courses. A comprehensive project was thus outlined from existing items in order to fix a set of rules for organizing new volumes, extending within the compartment the courses of the Bolognina street network (in the shape of streets and/or pedestrian and cycle paths) which would ensure the continuation of the urban and relational fabrics. The mobility system was designed by completing the existing pedestrian/cycle track network while bounding the vehicle road system, as well as combining the different mobility carriers and creating a special framework for them to coexist. The pedestrian/cycle track network is uninterrupted and widespread while vehicle mobility and parking are controlled and regulated according to a "hierarchical" splitting of traffic flows. Categories go from traffic crossing the area through vehicle traffic catering for individual built-up blocks, thus reversing the pattern now in use and established in the old town, where automobiles prevail over pedestrians.

In particular, the traffic flow onto the via Gobetti will be directed towards the central underground strip, while slow traffic serving the neighborhood will move above ground, thus creating a local "shopping" street. The new North-South axis will free the whole compartment from transit functions. The numerous private parking lots will be necessarily underground, thus limiting the number of public ground level ones, positioned either along the compartment borders and linked to relevant activities by specific courses, or on the commercial roads. "Border" parking lots will reduce traffic through the area and will also serve the surrounding areas, currently lacking in public parking facilities. A large multi-story public parking lot, combined with the municipal office parking facilities, to be accessed only from the North-South axis, will serve the adjacent civic activities.

Building and monitoring public space

The plan focuses on public areas, that is spaces devoted to civic life, in terms of size, monitoring and ways of catering for them. More specifically, the types and locations of public services (particularly adjusted and fit for the area thanks to the Lab), the allotment for planned usages, the creation of a close-knit network of extremely varied public opportunities, the housing density concentrated in a narrow section of the district, will all ensure a consistent urban nature while preventing typical suburban fringe situations as well as the entrenchment of indefinite areas.

The plan foresaw no fences, as public space will be physically marked by built-up space, and established the degree of visual relation between ground level concerns and the street itself. In order

to shape the "public city", the plan dictated the terms concerning private blocks by drafting special Schede dei vincoli [Restriction files] within the framework of the Norme di Attuazione [Rules for implementation]. Positions and features of concerns affecting neighborhood life (services for residents³, non-residential use, pedestrian and vehicle entranceways, etc.) will thus be established with a view to reciprocity between built-up and empty spaces. The urban plan did not focus on morphological bounds or limits dictated by materials. It set rules for allocating public activities and spaces to specific positions within a chosen framework. Once boundaries and values of such public spaces are established and strategic and functional prerequisites are met, in addition to environmental features to be pursued, the urban plan will grant individual planners of single buildings the opportunity to customize and improve cityscapes.

New shapes for living

As to the items included in the "private city", that is the section mostly allotted to built-up structures, the plan gathered building volumes in the central part of the whole area. The ground will thus be made available for open green spaces while the relative housing density will increase.⁴ The degree of density is considered as a value to cross the threshold of suburban neighborhoods and gain the so-called "city effect" in terms of complexity. Such feature stems from – and is fostered by – a critical mass capable to host stall markets and to ensure a continuous attendance of public spaces. For all practical purposes, the settlement will belong to the proximate historical outskirts. Together with the new train station it will shape an urban continuum joined to the Northern section of the old city. Overall, the new structures will be allotted in part to affordable housing and in part to residential buildings. The plan designed integrated blocks for different types of users so as to provide the widest possible range of living units and ensure a social and economic mix to new residents.⁵ Most of the residential fabric will look onto neighborhood streets with low vehicle traffic and a prevailing cycle-pedestrian flow, i.e. the so-called "30 km/h zone".

The architectural screen formed by buildings will be 3/4 stories high, in keeping with the uninterrupted Bolognina fabric. It will also outline controlled street sections to reach a balance between "urban effect", sunlight exposure and regulated visual distance between fronts facing the streets. The towers, seen as alterations in height of the blocks, will epitomize denseness. The residential towers will be positioned so as to make the best use of passive sun inputs, reduce the shadows between buildings and respect the acoustic cone, coming from the main sources of traffic.

The planned 1200 housing units will not be submitted to restrictions in terms of types. The plan aimed instead at achieving most diversified units, from flats in the towers to semidetached houses, thus providing a variety of housing solutions meeting the different needs of residents, and also appealing to people who are interested in living outside the city context.

Positioning of facilities and urban mixité

The positioning of public utilities and facilities was outlined with an eye to avoiding single-function concentrations by firmly opposing the zoning method while pursuing an urban mixité. First of all, public central facilities (school, polyclinic, gym, social and cultural center, district offices, shopping areas) dot the park borders as catalysts of activity and “watch posts” to the non-built area, thus ensuring a widespread feeling of safety and making park fences unnecessary. The second noticeable feature was mentioned in the detailed plan as “other usages”⁶, together with services to residents and the youth hostel. Such facilities will take up part of the ground floor of buildings, in especially strategic positions, and will ensure the variety and diversity that typify an urban environment.⁷ Specific action was paid to the creation of three “focuses”, to complement residential units:

- on the via Fioravanti the “link area” will open up: a civic space par excellence, including the shelter complex and the new Katia Bertasi Center, the district offices in the former entranceway structure and the new municipal office building;
- the two blocks looking onto the underground stretch of the via Gobetti will host commercial concerns and the service industry. On average, such activities could be located on ground floors, so as to integrate them with the social fabric, with residential stories and a high-rise office building;
- the Southern front will be the square of the new train station, where vehicle and pedestrian traffic to and from the railway will concentrate, in connection with the municipal office building and all other public facilities in the neighborhood. A pedestrian area was included in the plan, the ground floors of buildings fronting the plaza will all host commercial concerns (including the multi-story parking lot) and the city’s new youth hostel will be positioned in the vicinity. A close-knit network of spaces and public structures with mixed features will thus complete a pre-existing fabric extremely meaningful for the “identity” of the neighborhood and for the quality of life of residents. It is worth mentioning, to this purpose, the local market in the via Albani, the school complex in the via Flora or the future venue of municipal offices. The closeness of urban conditions that are indeed quite different but quite consistent as well, is a value for contemporary city and a feature of similarity with the historical city, albeit applied to a narrow area.

Usages and figures

Residential use / 92,503 sqm
 Including / 6,500 sqm dormitories
 Other usages / 17,159 sqm
 Offices, commercial businesses, other
 Youth hostel / 2,000 sqm
 Total usable surface in the compartment 111,662 sqm

Public usages and services / 16,700 sqm

School / 4,200 sqm
 Polyclinic / 6,150 sqm

Judo gym / 850 sqm
 Katia Bertasi social and recreational center / 1,300 sqm
 Former entranceway structure (offices, local police, XM24) / 3,000 sqm
 Other usages to be allotted / 1,200 sqm

Public parking areas / 19,100 sqm
 Ca. / 750 car parks
 Public green spaces / 106,000 sqm
 Density / 0,45 sqm / sqm (buildable surface / territorial surface)

Territorial continuities and diversification strategy

Naturalistic elements will also feature in the new settlement, through different modes and processes. They will establish a direct connection, a sort of territorial continuity, between the eco-friendly course along the Navile waterway and the new main train station. A succession of spaces, landscapes with different shades and hues, will form a green-space system. To the North, the topography of the “territorial” green leading to Villa Angeletti was designed with its functional macro elements in mind, i.e. the overpass hill, the hollow formed by the lamination basin, the acoustic embankments, as a naturalistic area for a microclimate readjustment. Other spaces will include the linear connecting green between the central park and the Northern park, a 32-meter wide green cross-cutting area flanked by residential buildings, which will safely cross the neighborhood streets open to vehicle traffic; the central park equipped with recreational facilities; the tree-lined promenade leading to the station square. According to the plan other open spaces will combine with the above-mentioned system, within a short distance range, to be read as an added value to the quality of living.⁸ In fact, any new housing unit will be positioned within at most 100 meters from a tree-lined boulevard with shops, from a tree-lined neighborhood street almost exclusively open to pedestrian traffic and equipped with facilities for residents, from an urban park, from a residential garden inside the built-up blocks that can be “seen and accessed”.

Environmental sustainability and energy components

Investigations on energy issues were implemented for the first time via special Energy Regulations for the plan. They were also analyzed with reference to the economic feasibility of the choices made, in view of a fair balance between compulsory and suggested prerequisites, and with regard to public economic resources and the building industry that will carry out the new settlement. Given its extension and the issues involved, the plan appeared as a pilot project in terms of city regeneration and urban transformation policies from an environment-friendly perspective. In general, the plan set the following technical and engineering standards:

- a natural-gas fired co-generation station supplying the whole community with plant networks located in technological shafts. The station will be fitted for the compartment net of the energy savings attainable through the scheduled energy requirements;
- optimized transportation of soil from the excavation of underground

areas, to be used as material for the hill connecting with Villa Angeletti;

- energy certification of buildings based on Casaclima standards, as already implemented by the Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano. In particular, all private buildings must be classified at least as class C (70 kWh/sqm-yr), all public buildings as class B (50 kWh/sqm-yr), except for the school which must classify as class A (30 kWh/ sqm-yr)⁹;
- exploitation of passive solar inputs via an adequate orientation of buildings, the qualification of “warm sides” for daytime rooms, the increase up to 1/5 of the lighting ratio and use of special solar screens;
- flat green roofing for all buildings in order to lower the re-irradiation of heat into the atmosphere, to increase the heat inertia of structures and to check the visual impact of such roofing on the top floors;
- production of warm water for household fittings through solar panels on all buildings;
- pre-setting of photovoltaic fixtures on all buildings in order to encourage private owners to acquire an installation that will allow them to sell energy, besides using it for their own homes;
- pre-setting of a dual network for collecting rainwater to be recovered and recycled for watering public green spaces, thanks to two underground reservoirs and to the lamination basin, which drains into the Navile Canal;
- provide for a permeable stretch of land (both public and private) covering approximately 35% of the area surface and for a semi-permeable (30% permeability) covering 25% of the surface;
- solid waste collection in underground waste management precincts. The above-mentioned compulsory elements will together produce savings topping over 50% in terms of the overall energy requirements of the whole settlement, as compared to traditional buildings. Such requirements are no mere technological and technical obligations meant for the building body. They instead affect the plan as a whole. The plan did not prescribe shapes and/or materials but read such clearly environment-friendly prerequisites as some of the values that should be at the basis of architectural designs. It can thus be said that such planning choices will also, and above all, affect the shaping of the architectural nature of the development.

1/ See p. ... “The built-up areas, that is the blocks, each surrounding its own inner courtyard, were to regularly alternate with open spaces, such as squares and gardens, i.e. public areas serving the apartment buildings.”

2/ See p. ...

3/ Services to residents have evolved from a “common room” pattern. Such rooms for small educational groups, children’s recreation centers, venues for associations, etc., would be ground floor spaces in areas not particularly appealing to businesses but nevertheless in need of a social purpose

4/ A sample of the Bolognina historical fabric indicates a density of 1,66 sqm/sqm

5/ Affordable public housing is a pressing issue for the city and it can no longer be postponed. The city government recently entrusted private businesses, through a public call for tenders, with the

construction and management of part of the planned buildings (ca. 22,000 square meters or approximately 300 units). The purpose is to build residential units for people with intermediate income levels who have no access to the free rental market. Part of the units will be rented indefinitely, part with time contracts. Planning regulations also require that private concerns must reserve 20% of their building capacity to affordable housing, while the share of public property reserved for the same purpose is 50%.

6/ “Other usages” include: offices, commercial businesses, sports and healthcare facilities

7/ Facilities for residents, covering 2% of the usable area, will be positioned on ground-floors along the neighborhood streets where cycle-pedestrian traffic prevails, while “other usages”, also at street level, will be found along the new district road axes, where vehicles can park

8/ Such specific planning choice is taken from the previous 2004 project

9/ When the plan was being drafted, Law no. 192/2005 on the implementation of Energy Performance Regulation no. 2002/91/CE was not yet foreseen

Prospects. Towards transformation 2007 - ...

Prospects and town-planning outcomes

The continuation of the Lab even after the plan was endorsed was announced in the starting program and confirmed by the demands from the associations that took part in it. As a further confirmation, the implementation rules¹ of the approved plan foresaw a second “leg” of the participatory process focused on the planning of the main foreseen “public usages”, to be addressed on a smaller scale than town-planning. Such choice led to several outcomes. First of all, the different social and technical components could still fruitfully interact as they did during the first stage of the Lab. It also became possible to take part in the competition for the European Grow Project, that some Lab participants brought to the local government’s attention. The inclusion of the final Lab report in the plan files was a further positive result of the whole process, and especially interesting in town-planning terms. Indeed, the outcomes of an “experimental” and “non-codified” process are thus included (albeit as attachments) in the official papers of a basic planning tool.

The public space planning lab

The second part of the Laboratorio Mercato opened up a totally new chapter that cannot be fully reported here as it is still ongoing. Some features should, however, be underlined for a full picture of such experiment.

Special attention was devoted to proposals for the new school building, the new park and other green spaces, the shelter/covered square and the recreational/senior citizens center.

The process unwound in early 2007 through talks, meetings and labs, held at the Federzoni nursery and elementary school also.²

The very first remark concerns the partial change in the actors involved, as compared to the first part of the Lab. In fact, the issue was different, tools were better structured, the interest towards participation expressed by the various actors had changed. Moreover, the school and more specifically children joined the major figures into play. Children deliberately were not involved in the planning stage – too abstract, too complicated for them. But they did provide basic inputs as far as available spaces and the activities they should host were concerned.

Implementation time & continuing information

During the second part of the Lab another question arose that again had to do with the time factor. The long wait for visible, tangible results risked in fact to hinder the long process – developed during the first stage of the Lab – aimed at reviving confidence between the community and the institutions. Time-plans for bureaucratic and implementation deeds do not match the citizens' schedule. This represents a typical crisis factor when citizens and institutions directly interact on long-term choices. Difficulties can be tackled only through the support of albeit small indications as well as via a continuing flow of information on how the process develops.

The need for and the claim to widespread and transparent information on the process of transformation of the market area was a leitmotif still on the agenda even during the second part of the Lab.³

The recent joint signing of the urban planning agreement by the various owners was a preparatory move in view of the establishment of a consortium of implementers. Such consortium will be charged with primary urban works, i.e. public spaces. The signing of the agreement was the first real step towards a physical transformation of the whole place.

A model case

"Relemcom" (Reclaiming Land Empowering Communities) is the name of the project submitted by the Bologna City Council, in partnership with Dutch, English and Polish – as well as Italian – organizations and agencies.⁴ As to the European project, the partner of the Bologna local government is the Katia Bertasi recreational and cultural center. Relemcom was recognized and co-funded (for the Italian part) by the European Commission, the Ministry of Infrastructures and by the Regione Emilia-Romagna. Its main goal is to outline innovative processes for the upgrading of dismantled or environmentally decayed industrial areas while ensuring the social, environmental, economic sustainability of transformations.

The plan is part of the GROW – People-Planet-Profit project, supporting strategic cooperation across regions in such specific fields as "Green Growth" (environment), "Business Growth" (research, technology, entrepreneurship), "Inclusive Growth" (human resource management and social inclusion), in view of a joint implementation of the Lisbon and Göteborg agendas.

Bologna joined the Relemcom project with its Market Project, which aroused great international interest. The experiment in fact combines, among other things, two basic issues in the related subject matters, i.e. the need to involve the community, as residents and

users, in the choices concerning the future of the area, and the necessity to plan and build with the utmost consideration for natural resources and the environment. Great attention is being paid to the whole issue not only by the European project partners, but also by other Italian and international local government agencies and research centers, who apply for information and visit Bologna. Following the Market experience, the Bologna City Council decided to proceed in the same way in several other neighborhoods, through a general use of the Lab. A specific item was devoted to the issue in the Regulations of the new Municipal structural plan,⁵ now being approved.

Mercato si nasce, Bolognina si diventa [Markets are born, but the Bolognina was made ...]

The Lab ended on June 23, 2007 with a lively festival by the title of "Mercato si nasce, Bolognina si diventa".

It was a way to display the new project for the Market area to both the neighborhood and the city. It also represented an occasion for cooperation and self-promotion, for all the actors, associations and individuals who helped realize the long-ranging course of the Lab and will most likely run the future public spaces. Last, but not least, it was an occasion to test the many possible re-usages of a large space such as the shelter, which will probably become a covered square as well as an entrance to the big park. In general, together with other public-use structures foreseen by the plan and with the municipal office building, it will help create a new lived-in city center.

On the occasion of the festival, from early afternoon to late night hours, the Bolognina residents – children and young people, adults and elderly people – for the first time took "possession" of the shelter and of the adjacent streets, where the associations set up stall markets, shows, dances, sports events and many other happenings.

The occasion marked the early stages of a metamorphosis, a long period of transition headed towards total transformation. The immediate challenge concerns the "provisional" nature of a space that needs to be managed for the whole duration of the long-term works (10-15 years). And the issue will perhaps draw the attention of the Lab and the efforts and energy of those who took part in it.

1/ See Plan Layout no. 31, i.e. Technical and Energy Implementation Regulations, Item A, ch. 8 "Public usages and secondary urbanizations", on planning issues developed by specific labs for public buildings.

2/ An overall report and some early considerations at the end of the Labs held at the Federzoni school can be found in the June 2007 issue of "Camina News", on Bologna.

3/ Such a need for a further effort in spreading information on Lab outcomes was at that stage evidenced especially by neighborhood shopkeepers, who represented a preferential territorial observatory.

4/ Partners in the Grow project: Brabant Environmental Federation, Telos, Malopolska Agencja energia i Srodowiska sp, Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Oczyszczania sp, Comune di Bologna, SEEDA, University of Brighton, English Partnerships (www.relemcom.org).

5/ The regulatory coding of participatory patterns is much debated

by experts. On the one side it is deemed as an institutional recognition of such processes, while on the other side it is clear that it could easily become too bureaucratized and standardized. The new Municipal structural plan for Bologna acknowledges the relevance of inclusion processes for urban transformation developments and only lists some of the features that cannot be renounced (www.comune.bologna.it/psc).