

Redeveloping the City Structure – the Case of Lodz ‘New City Center’

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1 ABSTRACT

The increasing interest in the strategic urban planning observed worldwide is connected with the development of tools of urban revitalisation and engagement of local authorities into concerted dialogue with the key stakeholders and actors, taking into account their role in the implementation process. The *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*, approved 24 May 2007, by the Member States Ministers responsible for Urban Development, underlines the role of the urban strategic planning, among others strengthening the role of the coordination and spatial focus of use of funds by public and private sector player, as well as forming of coalitions or partnerships as the source of financing for urban redevelopment. The integrated redevelopment policies are considered the best way for solving the current urban problems, i.e. for improving the quality of life and creating the lively, sustainable and resilient urban scapes.

The paper analyses the case study of the redevelopment project called 'the New City Centre', which is currently realised in Lodz, Poland, connected with the construction of the new underground railway station and cross town rail line allowing for introduction of fast speed railway junction Warsaw – Wrocław and its passage through Lodz.

The paper addresses the assessment of the process constituting the project framework in terms of strategic planning, verifying the presence of main features present in this sort of enterprises with the aim to assess and improve the redevelopment strategy. The author of the paper is engaged in few students projects realised for the unit managing the redevelopment, in this way providing some professional support and expertise. The revitalisation processes of few European cities central districts of similar characteristics are examined as reference cases.



Fig. 1: New City Center of Lodz extent - on the left first stage, redevelopment of railway station neighbourhood, on the right - extent of the whole project. Source: EC1 website and introductory presentation

2 INTRODUCTION

The strategic planning is described as recognised and acknowledged in developing countries where stakeholder participation and joint development are considered crucial to develop sustainable planning solutions (de Graaf et al. 2010). At the same time they are considered difficult to introduce in developed countries, i.e.. European, where the chief coordinating role of the authorities is broadly accepted. Some authors advocate the view that the factors which limit the possibilities for strategic urban planning, both in developed as well as in developing countries are connected with current institutional characteristics.

The analyses of revitalisation processes which took place in different European cities prove successful usage of strategic planning tools, which fulfil all the requirements considered clue for such processes, i.e.: (i) the political will of the local authorities; (ii) the participatory processes applied; (iii) the concentration of resources and actions in the concerned area. Steinberg (2005) indicates also the role of (iv) “*the institutional framework of key actors*”; (v) “*the thematic focuses*”; (vi) “*the technical capacity of those involved*”.

Process integration is indispensable to achieve sustainable outcomes in planning. “‘*Planning for sustainability*’ inherently implies *planning for the future*” (Tippett et al., 2007). Analysing the ecological planning implementation, Tippett et al. addresses the importance of “*new and more effective ways to incorporate participatory processes into ecological planning*” (2007). Bhabha (2009) points at the same inherent component of ecological planning - it must include 4th dimension, that is time.



Fig. 2: Figure -ground map of the railway station neighbourhood and city centre. The project extent is marked grey. On the left Lodz main street - ul. Piotrkowska and Plac Wolności - main city square (upper left corner).

3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

3.1 General characteristics

The New City of Lodz project area covers the direct neighbourhood of the railway station Łódź Fabryczna (as shown in *Fig. 1* and *Fig. 2*), containing former industrial fringe with few heritage edifices (among others the EC1 electric factory shown in *Fig. 4*), some XIX century tenement housing of poor quality – in terms of technical maintenance and presence of socially excluded citizens groups - as well as few already revitalised facilities - mainly public institutions.

The redevelopment plans of 90 ha in the centre of Lodz, between streets Sienkiewicza, Narutowicza, Kopcińskiego, Tuwima, in the framework of New Lodz Centre, assume creation of city district of dominant “*cultural*” function. The current railway station is to be hidden underground as the new fast railway connection Warsaw-Wrocław is planned. The most important components are to be: EC1 West - Centre of Science and Technic, EC1 East, EC1 South-East - Film Studio SE-MA-FOR, Special Art Zone - spaces for art exhibitions and Cultural Congress Centre (distribution of zones as shown in *Fig. 3*, Gałuszka *in press*).

According to the information contained in the project leaflets: “*The aim of the New Centre of Łódź program is to stimulate the economic and social revival of the central part of the city, creation of a new, functional city centre with a variety of public spaces, and transformation of Łódź into an attractive metropolis - all achieved through fine architecture, interesting cultural events , a wide array of services and a good transportation system*”.

The investment is considered occasion for revitalisation of bigger downtown area which should be managed as strategic undertaking. The central location and direct proximity of the main street – ul. Piotrkowska - provide further opportunities and challenges.





Fig. 3: Schematic drawing showing the general disposition of development in the project area, drawing by Rafał Józwiak, quoted after Gałuszka (*in press*)

The new development should inscribe into the local conditions, following the *genius loci* and local potentials, i.e. social, cultural and scientific values, as well as provide the innovative environment for new investments, also by looking for synergy with the surrounding housing and services urban areas. The project goals assume creation of innovative and integrated economical, business, marketing, environmental and technical frameworks for the district development.



Fig. 4: EC1 - old electric factory currently redeveloped into cultural centre. Photo: M.Hanzl

The process of redevelopment implementation is conducted by the municipal unit EC1 - City of Culture. The stages of the process are as follows¹: redevelopment of the multimodal transportation node and construction of the underground railway passage allowing for future fast railway connection Warsaw - Wrocław, revitalisation of valuable heritage edifices of former power station factory EC1 (*Fig. 4*) into cultural and exhibition centre, construction of Special Zone of Arts following the results of the architecture competition. The first stage of the redevelopment project follows the general disposition from the conception plan by Rob Crier, approved by Municipal Council of Lodz in August 2007. The Municipal Council of Lodz approved also the Master Plan procedure opening which is currently worked out for the second stage of the project area.

¹ After the EC1 site: <http://www.ec1lodz.pl/>

During the project preparatory phase a series of consultations with local citizens were conducted, there were several publications in local press on the subject and few open door of EC1 power plant factory. The edifice guested also many cultural events (concerts, exhibitions, etc). Few of the former ideas by Fundation Sztuka Świata, like design of Festival and Congress Centre (preliminary conception was prepared by Frank Ghery, who came to Lodz at this occasion) are currently not continued.

3.2 Social environment and need for social revitalisation

The direct neighbourhood of the project area poses serious problems in terms of social deprivation of its inhabitants. According to the research of the 90s by the team guided by W. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska there are 17 poverty enclaves in Lodz, of which 12 located in the city downtown. One of them directly neighbours the New City Center area (Fig. 5, photos of this neighbourhood Fig. 6). Poverty concentrations are inhabited by social groups of lower incomes then elsewhere. The phenomena described as social pathology and exclusion are connected with these areas as well. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska points also at the poverty inheritance in these areas. The former research results are confirmed by the most recent research (Warzywoda-Kruszynska et al., 2009). The general situation of deprivation hasn't changed, the problems are increasing also because of subsequent getting older of Lodz society and problems of emigration (mainly to the capital).

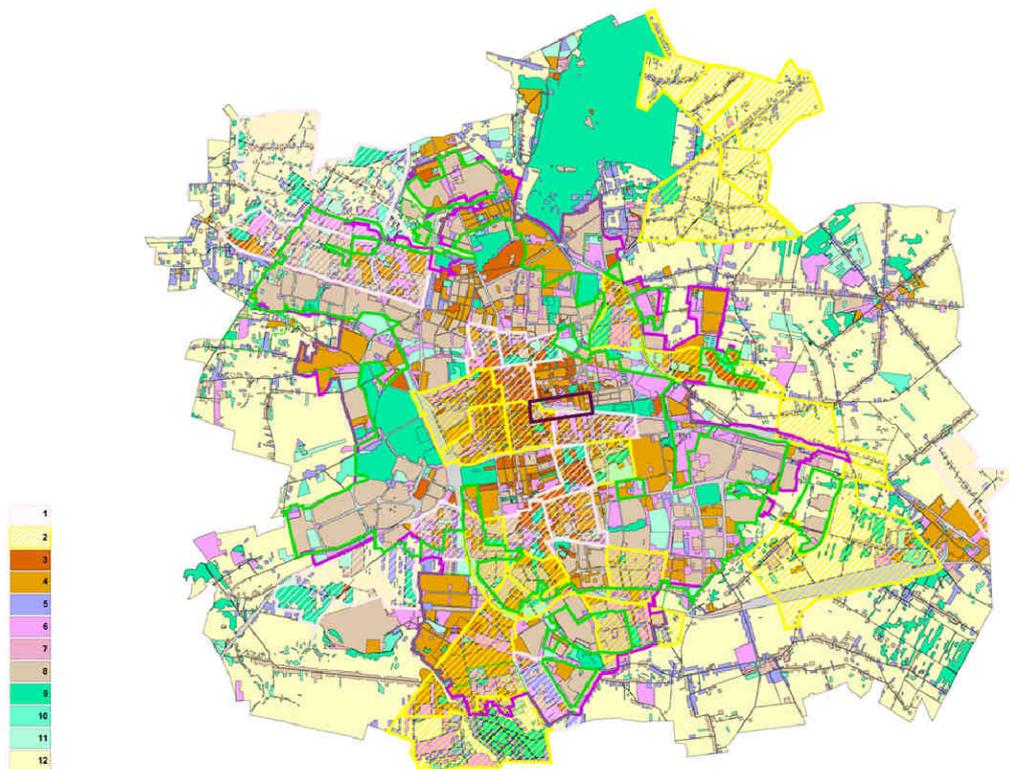


Fig. 5: Map of the poverty distribution overlaid on the map of the spatial structure.

Source: Study of Conditions and Directions of Lodz Development, Volume IV (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska et al. 2002)

The location of the project area is marked with dark violet².

Most of the authors agree, that: *“the main subject of all the revitalisation projects is the local society”* (Czyżewska 2010). In this case the social revitalisation hasn't been started in the regular way, although there are some singular activities mainly by NGO, and they meet increasing support from the part of the municipality. The expectations connected with the undertaking assume rather changing of the general image of the district and thus attracting of new dwellers who will change the current social structure. Serious hopes are also connected with creation of the multimodal transportation node and thus obtaining good connection with Warsaw (30 minutes to get to capital centre) and Wrocław. As Carmona (2009b) proves in the description of Isle of Dogs case, ameliorating of the general economic situation also influences positively the situation of socially excluded groups. The general improvement of public spaces appearance and the

² Author took part in the drawing preparation.



expected increase of the notion of safety connected with the location of new investments is also considered as the factor which should alter the local environment perception, eg. by young people, arriving to Lodz for their studies. Currently most of them leaves Lodz after finishing of education, mainly for Warsaw (Piątek, 2010).



Fig. 6: Direct neighbourhood of the project area: Kilińskiego Street (on the left) and Tuwima Street. Photo: M. Hanzl

3.3 Environmental conditions, physical structure

3.3.1 Urban structure

The NCL project area is located in Nowa Dzielnica (New District), conceived in 1840, as the extension of dynamically developing former parts of the city.

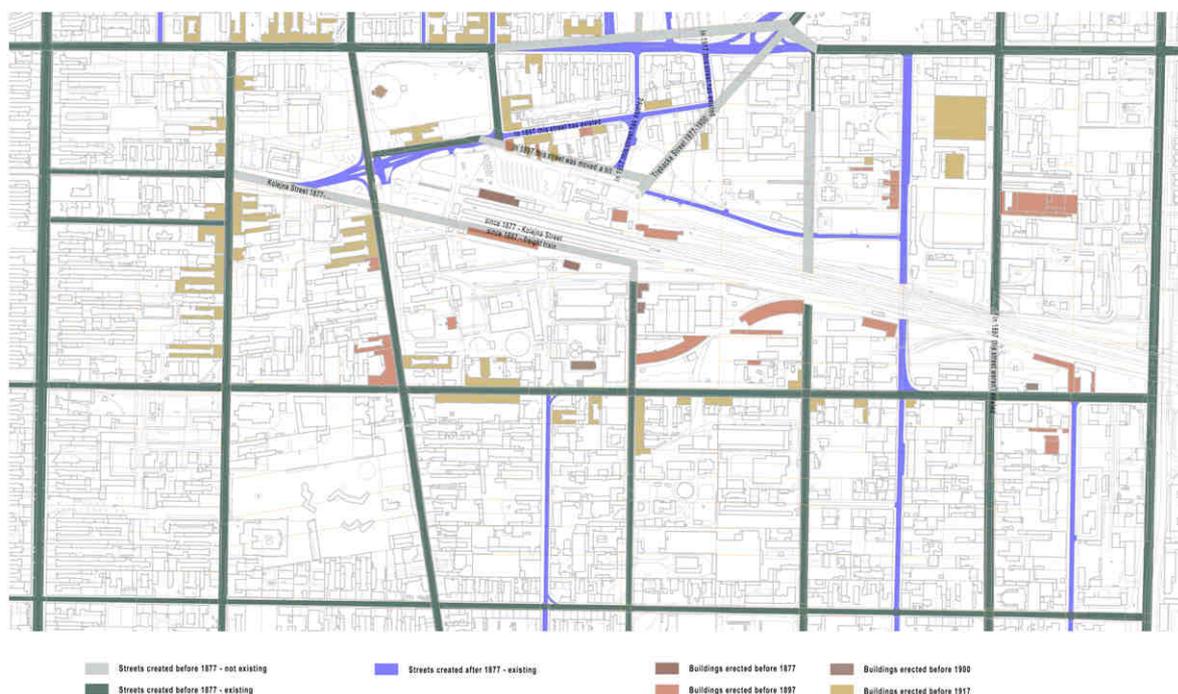


Fig. 7: Historical analysis of city structure of 'the New Centre of Lodz', illustration prepared by students of Institute of Architecture and Town Planning of Technical University of Lodz: Kubiak Magdalena, Jarzębska Agata, Bubas Maciej, for their project realised as part of European Project Semester work, in cooperation with EC1 Lodz. Source Ginsbert (1962),

Project supervisors: Hanzl Małgorzata, Gałuszka Jakub

Nearby city structures is characterised by the presence of the mix of tenement houses, industrial plants, residential buildings and public edifices. The average size of the quarters, defined by the regular gridiron of parallel and perpendicular streets, is about 200m x 300m. The elongated plots with their narrow dimensions contiguous with the street, were typical for the time when agricultural uses were necessary element of urban life (Kostoff, 2006, Fig. 7).

The regular gridiron of streets was disrupted by formation in 1865 of railway switchboard to Koluszki, with a blind end on Sienkiewicza Street. It resulted in division of district into two parts. Currently the railway ends at Kilinskiego Street and the only passage under is provided by the Tramwajowa Street.

As the examples of Berlin and Paris prove the continuation of former morphological structure occurs the best solution in redevelopment of downtown areas (Broadbent 1996). Continuation of urban morphology is the best solution when caring about the continuation of identity of urban planning (Gospodini 2004). Adding consecutive values to formerly existing urban elements remains the traditional way for achieving the naturally growing, continuous city scape (Rowe, Koettler 1979). The structures which form background for culture and public edifices play an indispensable and equally important part in the well defined city scape creation (Hanzl, *in press*). Contemporary urban design again promotes the tenement as best solution for housing in the city (Thompson-Fawcett 2004, Broadbent 1996).

Current considerations on climate resilient urban scapes point at the necessity of limiting the height of buildings (Roaf et al., 2005). Another perspective of looking at buildings of limited height provides Carmona et al. (2005) who discusses the concept of “*landscapers*”, proving their economic capacities, and advantages over skyscrapers.

3.3.2 Streets characteristic

Typical street width in the area neighbouring the project from the North is 14-16m, south to the project area the values are higher, eg. 27m - Narutowicza Street, 18m - Kamińskiego Street, 20m - Wierzbowa Street, and more street greenery is present. The district, which neighbours the NCL project area from the South, was mostly constructed in the period between the World Wars, in modernism style, and it is perceived as the most attractive housing in the city centre. The tenements of 4 to 5 stories assure proper lighting conditions and notion of “*human scale*” of the streets corridors, which remain one of the most important elements of the city structure (Lynch 1960).



Fig. 8: Part of the analysis of streets sections in region of New Centre of Lodz, illustration prepared by students of Institute of Architecture and Town Planning of Technical University of Lodz: Kubiak Magdalena, Jarzębska Agata, Bubas Maciej, for their project realised as part of European Project Semester work, in cooperation with EC1 Lodz, project supervisors: Hanzl Małgorzata, Gałuszka Jakub

3.3.3 Conclusions for future redevelopment

Underdeveloped structure neighbouring the railway station may be easily reconverted into the attractive housing and mixed-use areas, assuming continuation of existing structures scale, and introduction of

necessary open spaces, parks, green areas and greenery within streets, assuring the possibility of recreation and improving environmental housing conditions.

Vegara et al. (2009) list the following criteria of “ecocities” design: “Sustainability and compactness, shared mobility, public transport, responsive dialogue with surroundings, diversity of public realm, interconnected places of encounter, combining living, working and leisure, architectural diversity, social cohesion, communal infrastructure, bio-climatic architecture and urban design, use of renewable energy source, complete water cycle management, sustainable waste management and treatment, integration of new and clean technologies, identity of place.”

Some of the qualities listed above are integrated into the typical structure of Lodz downtown development. Huge quarters which use to be treated as constraints for the development of local services may provide additional qualities, if discussing the introduction of private parks and gardens.

Assuming continuation of current intensity of development, as in the neighbouring areas, the presence of multimodal transportation node may occur really beneficial for the revitalisation of former “Nowa Dzielnica” and neighbouring district within the pedestrian access radius. Such approach is accepted by Lodz citizens as the results of social consultations prove.

3.4 Culture-led redevelopment

“The specifics vary, but culturally led urban redevelopment tends to include the following: the insertion of a flagship cultural institution in a post-industrial zone, often a waterfront site, to lever private-sector investment in the surrounding area and attract tourism; the designation of a neighbourhood as a cultural industries quarter for small- and medium- size businesses in the arts, media and leisure.” (Miles 2005)

The New City of Lodz is envisaged to be the culture investment, which is understood as location of several buildings of cultural function within the deprived areas. They help in introduction of the image of “the city of culture” along with regular cultural festivals and events (Gałuszka, *in press*). The cultural and entertainment function of the district determines land use planning and design, which follows the specific city profile in competition with other centres.



Fig. 9: Mural of Gregor Gonsior (aka Bombalino) in Lodz, Jaracza Street, metaphor of Lodz redevelopment. Photo: M.Hanzl

Implementation of “(...) cultural economies - [provides] new areas of consumption trading on cultural identities—rather than a regeneration of local cultures.” (Miles 2005) It attracts new customers, thus diminishing the scale of existing problems rather than solving them. Landry (2008) remains one of the main proponents of the cultural redevelopment of former industrial cities. He states that culture-led reconversion, that is location of new cultural institutions and improving the quality of urban environment in terms of aesthetics, helps to provide the “creative milieu” in which the creative industries may develop successfully, thus providing the driving forces for the whole of the revitalisation process.

Although such policies are also criticised, e.g.: “*Cultural policy can be divisive. Culture-led regeneration is only representative of a wider constituency and wider culture of the city when it is developed alongside a social policy that stems from a vigorous and democratic political process. This demands a political system that has the confidence to take on and discuss the bigger and longer-term problems affecting the city*” (Hewitt + Jordan, 2004, p. 29) after Miles 2005. Aestheticisation as only way of changes in cities is questioned. Miles (2005) sets together the following statements by Landry - great proponent of “*urban design*” which he treats as something, which “*is essentially about knitting together different parts of the city into a coherent artefact*”³ and Jane Jacob’s remark that “*a city cannot be a work of art*” (Jacobs, 1993, p. 373; original emphasis). Although “*the arts are perceived as catalysts to the solution of social problems*” (Miles 2005).



Fig. 10: Old railway station which is going to be redeveloped and hidden underground. Photo: M.Hanzl

Miles (2005) opposes designing things to the “*informal traces of occupation which constitute a familiarity of urban spaces*” for their inhabitants. There is true in this sentence and it is closely connected with the considerations of Holston (2008) on “*the right to the city*”. Public participation and bottom-up planning and designing of urban spaces allows for avoiding these threats. Current practises of designing public spaces with people proves that (Dobbins 2009, Carmona 2009a, Gehl 2010, activities of Project for Public Spaces team, etc). The point is not in avoiding design but in doing that skilfully, i.e. with the citizens participation and using strategic planning methods. Miles (2005) points also at the chance to use culture and arts in the process of social revitalisation, which nota bene happens already in Lodz⁴. Referring to the general guidelines of the process of the social revitalisation of deprived neighbourhoods pointed out by Zielenbach (2003), the positive influence of project realisation on the excluded districts, located around, may be envisaged.

4 EVALUATION, DISCUSSION

4.1 Qualitative evaluation

Zielenbach (2003) provides the following set of factors which influence creation of the milieu favourable for the revitalisation process development, and thus improvement of the environment: demographic factors, spatial and usage factors, transportation, characteristics of the ownership / type of construction, educational opportunities for people living in the area of the city, security, NGO operating in given part of the city and thus the presence of social capital. Completing this list the presence of attractive public spaces and among others public greenery, like parks and squares influence the environment conditions and thus ameliorates the local living conditions (Jenks et al., 2010), influencing the environmental sustainability and providing meeting places for citizens. Jenks et al. (2010) addresses the following “*dimensions of sustainable city*”: urban form, travel and mobility, environment and biodiversity, social acceptability, energy use, adapting the city (following the former structure patterns), neighbourhood design and sustainable lifestyles, urban green spaces as providing ecological and psychological values.

Jane Jacobs (1992) in her fundamental book develops the thread of spatial conditions: the spatial structure of the city (and appropriate density of streets), the indispensable mix of uses necessary to keep necessary level of attendance of public spaces to get safe space, the heritage preservation indispensable also for the

³ after LANDRY, C. and BIANCHINI, F. , *The Creative City*. London: Demos 1995, p. 28, after Miles (2005)

⁴ Projects of this kind, realised as bootom-up: Lipowa od Nowa, activities of Fundacja Białe Gawrony



necessary provision of cheaper spaces for developing services and industries and the necessity of high densities. Taking all formerly enumerated factors into account, the following evaluation matrix may be applied to assess the redevelopment project compliance with current urban trends (*Tab. 1*)

cultural heritage preservation	spatial structure continuation □	sustainable development	climate resilience	social revitalisation	public participation	transportation policies
+	questionable - assumed intensities difficult to achieve with the traditional structures	partly achieved - introduction of new parks and green spaces	-	-	partly realized, started	multimodal node and mass transport assessed in +, overdevelopment of individual transportation: -

Table 1: Evaluation matrix - qualities included in the process.

4.2 Process evaluation

The evaluation of the strategic planning process may be done following many principles. Taking into consideration the inclusion of the public participation of citizens three main phases may be distinguished: preparation to participation (which should last until getting of the state of participation readiness, from several weeks to few months), consultations, distribution of participation effects and monitoring of the results implementation (Wates 2000). Assuming the above approach the activities already undertaken by the unit managing the project are currently close to the stage of participation readiness (the quantity of press articles, level of consciousness about the project importance and implementation plans). For setting up further activities plan and strategy and theirs constant updating the real many-part communication process between main stakeholders is indispensable.

The information concerning the economic assumptions of the project is not accessible to the public. The project part which is realised currently, ie. the redevelopment of the railway station has the financment guaranteed from the state/ European Union funds. This part of the project is realised by the railway company in the cooperation with the local authorities.

5 CONCLUSION

Lodz 'New City Centre' project still remains at its beginning phase. The first stage elements (construction of multimodal node and redevelopment of EC1 power plant), which are socially accepted are realised or enter the phase of realisation. The further actions which should happen in the framework of revitalisation processes remain in the sphere of plans. The political situation which strongly influences the decisions undergoes constant changes - recent local elections took place in November 2010.

The master plan which is envisaged for the second phase area is currently worked out, although its assumptions are strongly criticised by local NGOs and press, mainly because of very high intensity factors and overdevelopment of car transportation infrastructure. As many examples prove, complex issues of huge impact on the redevelopment and vision of the whole city need more sophisticated tools and much more social legitimacy (Beauregard et al. 2011, Commission 2009, Newman 2008, Wiek 2009). The stakeholders represent different interests and as they usually do not meet easily some of the possible goals cannot be achieved without careful planning and "the organisation of interconnectivity" between engaged actors and processes from the public authorities part (Salet 2008). The planning in restrained time and space need communicative activities, both top-down and bottom-up (Healey 2007) in achieving of common vision. As Kölbl et al. (2009) states the main objective of strategic planning, regardless of the field of application, remains "to integrate these different issues consistently in a single schema and which can be followed and monitored stringently over the years."

The local development strategy including the opinions of wide public, and thus of great social legitimacy, would help in such changing situation. As most of the authors underlines designing with public participation requires strategic thinking and process planning. This *sine qua non* condition is indispensably inscribed in every theoretical or practical guidance covering the public participation methodology (Dobbins 2009, Sanoff 2007, Wates 2000). The preparatory phase for such process has already started and it should be continued within the framework of future actions.

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