



The Sustainability of Urban Heritage Preservation

The Case of Verona, Italia

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1. Introduction

The city of Verona is situated in the northeast of the Italian peninsula in the Region of Veneto. It is the capital of the Province of Verona, which borders the Province of Trento to the north; the Provinces of Vicenza and Padua to the east; the Province of Rovigo to the south; the Province of Mantua to the southwest; and the Province of Brescia to the west. Veneto is among the most economically advanced regions in Italy. The agricultural activities, characterized by the presence of small and medium size businesses, specialize in the production of grains—in particular corn and soy—and fruits. The cultivation of grapes and the production of wine are centuries-old traditions in the area. Moreover, the raising of cattle, pigs, and poultry are fundamental to the economy of the region, as are saltwater fishing, saltwater fisheries in the lagoon, and the shellfish culture.

Figure 1. Italian Provinces



In the Province of Venezia (which is particularly specialized in the production of energy) the industries specialize in thermoelectric plants, petroleum refineries, chemicals, synthetic fibers, and shipyards. The Provinces of Rovigo and Verona are home to food-based industries and Vicenza specializes in cloth, furs, leather, and gold. The Province of Padua focuses on the metal and mechanical industry, while the Province of Belluno is a world leader in the production of eyeglasses. Lastly, the Province of Treviso produces household appliances and furniture, as does the Province of Verona. Today a good part of the agricultural and industrial products of the Veneto region are destined for exportation. Among the numerous and varied activities included in the services sector of this region are commerce, banking, insurance, and—of major importance commercially—tourism.

2. The City of Verona

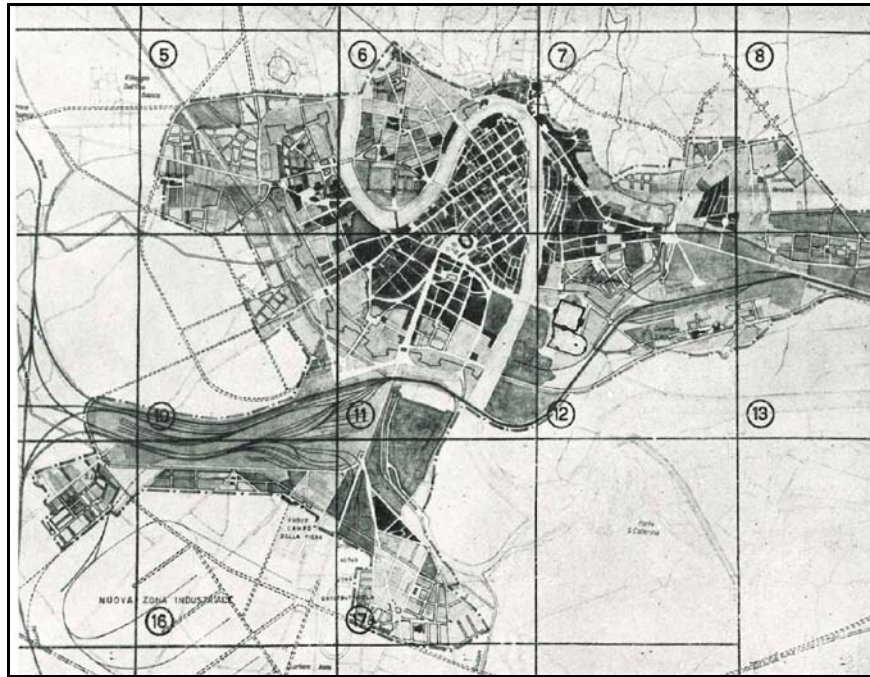
Verona is a splendid example of a fortified city that has developed progressively and without interruption over 2,000 years, integrating artistic elements of great quality from each of the successive periods of European history. The city has had a complex development process. The

Roman walls that surround the heart of the city between the Borsari and Leoni gates, the walls of Gallieno, and the internal ring—with Renaissance blockhouses (completed under the Austrian occupation)—marked the division between the Roman part and the modern part of the city until the end of the 1800s. The urban plan of Verona is based on the Roman city whose remains, which developed over diverse periods of European history, are still visible in the urban structure. It is still possible to distinguish the medieval city center, even though it contains more recent buildings (from the Renaissance and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries); the Veronetta and San Zeno Districts, composed entirely of buildings from the low medieval period; some areas outside the walls with villas and buildings built in the Baroque era; the industrial area of Borgo Roma, built in the turn of the last century; and the modern city, which developed without effecting this urban structure inherited from previous periods.

Verona still has five sets of visible walls built in different periods. Until the 1800s, the city grew cramped within its walls; however, with the arrival of the nineteenth century and industrialization, Verona slowly began to lose its role as a fortress. The first modern quarters of Verona were Borgo Trento, which were constructed in the meander of the Adige River and Borgo Roma to the south, where the first industries started. The other district began to develop only after World War II, without touching the historical urban structure but using the available vacant land.¹ At the end of the war, Verona was partially destroyed (about 40 percent of its structures were damaged) and was therefore included in the list of cities that had to adopt the Reconstruction Plan (Greggo, 2002). In 1947 this plan was approved with the mandate of rapidly rebuilding the demolished areas.

¹ Wikipédia.

Figure 2. 1947 Plan, Verona

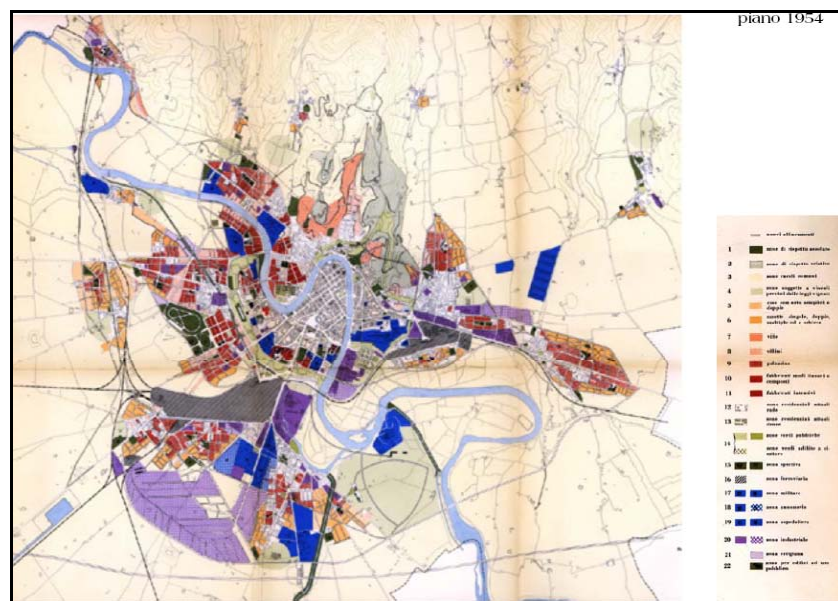


In a short time—and with significant investments—homes, streets, aqueducts, and electrical lines were restored, and new bridges replaced the short-term gangways erected over the Adige. Plans were implemented for social housing and a master plan was developed and entrusted to the architect Plinio Marconi. The plan promoted the relocation and development of the industrial zone to the south of the city, and the large public works were a significant stimulus for the revitalization of the city (Comune di Verona). The plan had provision to transfer certain activities out of the center, such as the fairgrounds, the stockyard, and the slaughterhouse. These were moved from the Cittadella Quarter to the area south of the city, where, since 1924, warehouses were located. Thus the area was designated as an Agro-Industrial Zone (AIZ). Simultaneously, the plan included the transfer of public and private offices to the vacant areas in Cittadella. This made it possible to move the business center of the city from Piazza delle Erbe (located in the most historic part of the center) towards Piazza Bra and Piazza Cittadella. Lastly, new access roads were planned for the Cittadella Quarter, in particular a street that connected the train station of Porta Nuova to Piazza Bra (via Valverde).

The 1947 plan considers the historical center an integral part of the city to be conserved in its functional and physical structure. To this end, the plan redirected new construction to other areas of the city. The themes contained in the plan foreshadow the urban development principles

contained in the 1958 General Regulatory Plan (GRP) (Occhionero and Raimondi, 2002). The process of formulation and approval of the GRP began in 1954. A key objective was to control the disorderly urban expansion in the periphery.² By the end of the 1950s, the postwar phase of reconstruction ended. Between 1951 and 1961, the population of the city increased by 23.4 percent, and 20,000 dwellings were built. The most significant change concerned the economic structure, which expanded as a large number of people moved from the agricultural to the industrial sector. This followed the renewal of the market, the modernization of factories and infrastructures, and the development of essential services for residents, a further pull factor for the rural urban population drift (Comune di Verona).

Figure 3. 1954 Plan, Verona



The GRP focused on the solution of three problems: 1) guide the future growth of the city, structuring the expansion areas (residential or other); 2) organize traffic through the city; and 3) rehabilitate the historic center. With the institution of the AIZ contemplated in the plan, the direction of city growth turned southward; the public and private offices moved to a section of

² Piano Regolatore Generale 1954 redatto nel periodo 1949/51 dall'arch. Plinio Marconi adottato dal Consiglio comunale con deliberazione n° 88 del 08.04.1954; approvato dalla Giunta Provinciale amministrativa il 03.06.1954 n° 16431/4; approvato con decreto 19.12.1957 del Presidente della Repubblica; notifica Ministero LL.PP. 14.02.1958; registrato Corte dei Conti il 04.02.1958 reg. 6 LL.PP.

the Historic Center of Verona (HCV)—the Cittadella district—, which consolidated the transfer of the business center from Piazza delle Erbe (in the Citta Antica district) to Piazza Bra (towards the Cittadella district). This reduced the development pressures on the oldest and most valuable part of the city.

The objectives of protecting and conserving the HCV were an integral part of the urban plan for the city, which proposed major streets that connected various parts of the area (Mediana in the southern part of the city and Torricelle Galleria to the north). In terms of the plans for the old center, the intention was to facilitate the flow of traffic towards Piazza Bra—the new heart of the city. The various interventions for the old city were conceived with the intention of not altering its structural and architectural character. The proposals carefully intervened the Roman East-West “damero” opening spaces, taking advantage of the massive demolition of buildings that occurred in the areas that were heavily damaged during the war to widen the important streets that cross the area (such as via Cappello and via Stella) and to build parks and parking lots (Corte Nogara and Piazza S. Nicolo). Lastly, various projects for the Veronetta Quarter opened up a ring wall to create a direct connection between the Campofiore zone (where the university is situated) and the Ponte Navi Bridge, and to open a galleria between the upper part of Veronetta and the Borgo Venezia Quarter.

The plan to protect and conserve the HCV are entrusted to a system of regulations and monitoring institutions, with the main objectives of developing interventions to cut down on traffic—redirecting it beyond the cramped and inadequate Roman street pattern—, establish self-sufficient areas for expansion, and construct backup roads in the outskirts. Within this plan it is important to mention the creation of a new “central space” in the Cittadella Quarter – Piazza Renato Simoni. The direct connection between the Porta Nuova train station and Piazza Bra with Corso Porta Nuova or via Valverde encouraged businesses, such as those offering banking and insurance services, to locate on these streets. The designation of the Cittadella Quarter as the business hub (both public and private) and the creation of the AIZ in the south part of the city are responsible for the growth of the residential neighborhoods in that direction (Occhionero and Raimondi, 2002).

Later, changes were made to the plan. The first was the general variant (*Variante Generale*) to the 1958 GRP (1966–1975), which originated from the need to adjust the plan to Law no. 167 of 1962 and to the social, economic, and physical changes that Verona had undergone. Between 1951 and 1961, Verona experienced one of the greatest economic and industrial booms in Italy, which led to an enormous increase in the population.

Figure 4. 1975 Plan, Verona



The expectations of the 1958 GRP were made obsolete both by the increase in population and by the construction of large infrastructures (the Brennero and Serenissima freeways), which significantly impacted the city's structure. As a result of the general improvement of the economic conditions and the income during the 1950s—people had been moving out of the old, decaying center—the original Roman city—and from Veronetta.

Between 1951 and 1971, the population of the old quarters decreased, and the buildings were used as shops, offices, and other work places. The move of the population to the urban growth areas in the outskirts led to the rapid exhaustion of the developable land in the new residential areas designed in the plan, promoting the search for new building areas and a steep increase in their prices (the areas destined in the regulatory plan for industrial use were practically used up by 1962). Briefly, the general variant had provisions that consolidated the

development of the city southward and introduced the Economic Popular Building Plan (EPBP) zones, while answers to the questions regarding the HCV were put off to a future safeguarding plan for the center.³

In 1984, the city passed the “Variant 33 for the Historical Center” with the objective to allow, on a case-by-case basis, the rehabilitation and reconstruction in the HCV by private parties. It loosely defines the intended use of public buildings, but offers very little guidance in terms of the intended use of private buildings, other than the instruction that, in case of a change in use, the residential use of the building should be favored. Moreover, nothing is mentioned regarding the problems of roads, pedestrian access, and parking, which are fundamental issues in defining the new role for the HCV.

3. Verona, World Heritage Site

The historical city, founded in the first century B.C., experienced periods of expansion in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries under the Scaliger family and from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries under the Republic of Venezia. Verona, an exceptional example of a fortress town, has retained a significant number of ancient monuments, as well as those from the medieval and Renaissance periods, and is a city rich in culture and art. On November 30, 2000, the HCV was inscribed into UNESCO’s World Heritage List (WHL) based on Criterion ii and iv.

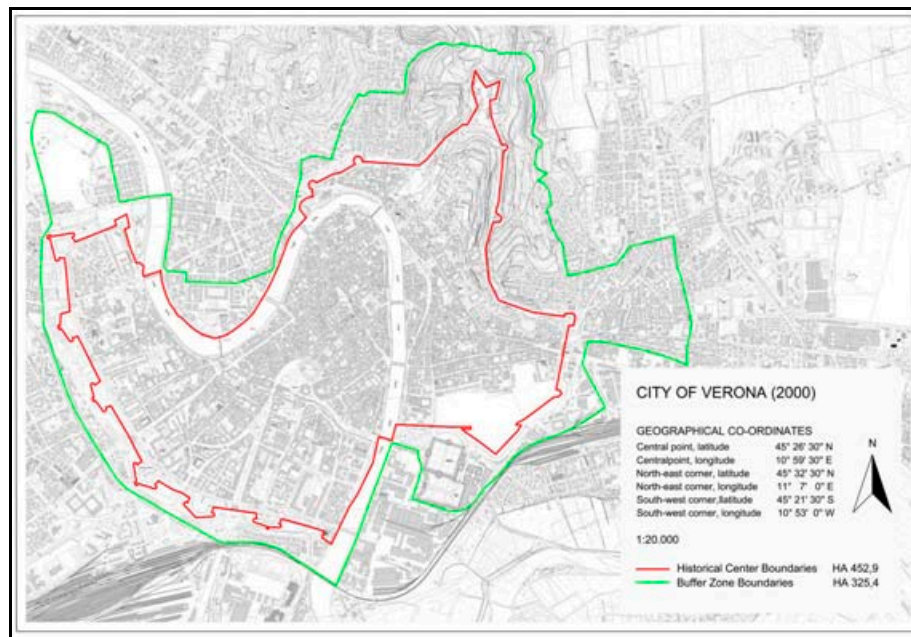
- Its urban structure and its architecture; Verona is an outstanding example of a town that has developed progressively and uninterruptedly over two thousand years, incorporating artistic elements of the highest quality from each succeeding period; and
- Verona represents in an exceptional way the concept of the fortified town at several seminal stages of European history (UNESCO, 2000).

Verona was the 29th Italian site listed on the WHL—the fourth in the Veneto Region—, and was listed three years after the Botanical Gardens of Padua. There are a total of five sites from different provinces in the Veneto Region listed on the WHL. The recognition by UNESCO is certainly understood as an element of prestige on an international level, and one of pride for the local community. Above all it indicates a clear responsibility of all citizens—from the public

³ Piano Edilizia Economica Popolare.

administration at the various levels of government, to the informal groups that live and work in the territory—to preserve, carefully use, and strengthen the coherent uniqueness of the site so that present and future generations may enjoy this heritage, which is closely linked to the cultural and identity roots of the city’s inhabitants.

Figure 5. City of Verona, 2000



4. The Evaluation of the Impacts

The HCV has been the vibrant core of the economy and social life of the city for a long time. This function is complemented by the contribution of the UNESCO recognition to the identity of the citizens. The most important impact of this recognition is the stimulus that it gave to renew the urban planning tools for its preservation and development. The plan has as its starting point the understanding that Verona is the nucleus of a developing “metropolitan area.” The details of the plan will be discussed in detail later in this paper, but it is important to underline the fact that the value of this heritage is recognized not only by the resident population but also by the rest of the world. However, this recognition does not shield the site from the criticism about how its heritage is administered and protected. The control of the “rush” to finance the restoration by private investors and foundations lies in the hand of the Councilor's Office of Culture, which is

run by a single person. The limited capacity of this office to inspect the works shows in the limited quality of some of the rehabilitation completed.

5. The New Development Model

After World War II, Verona became aware of its growth potential and attempted to direct its urban development in a radial pattern along the roads to Bologna, Mantua, Milan, Trento, and Venezia. The roads that shaped the city and turned it into an important strategic pole are no longer those near the river and the historical center, but the two freeways that cross the city: the Milan-Venezia (A4) east/west and the Brennero-Modena (A22) north/south. This makes the city a crucial logistic junction, a role that is reinforced by the installation nearby of infrastructures of national and international importance.

Over the years, the Verona hinterland has registered a sustained demographic, economic, and physical growth, as it has taken advantage of the nearness and the strong connections to the city. However, this development has produced negative effects as well. Some towns (particularly those near Southern Verona) have not developed sufficient services and infrastructures (“dormitory” communities), as they have taken advantage of their nearness to the wide variety of services in the city. This contributes to the traffic problems; in fact, in recent years there has been a significant demographic, urban, and industrial development that has increased the traffic (both trucks and cars) on the main roads, where it was already quite heavy. This is evident in the area to the east, where the settlements along the main roads (industrial and residential) are concentrated. The East Bypass, recently constructed, provides an example of the problems faced by those people traveling on the roads within the first and second growth rings of the main city; within two or three years of its opening, it was already swamped with traffic from neighboring towns.

In March of 2003 the city council presented an idea for a strategic plan for the city of Verona. The initiative came from the need to involve the people and groups interested in the preservation efforts (associations and institutions, both private and public), who until this point had not been able to discuss the future of the city around an institutional table. The objective for these groups was to draw up a strategic document, *Verona 2020*, an ambitious long-term project

that, in reality, begins a new process of shared governance. In brief, the objectives of the plan are the following:

- Create a greater cohesiveness among the social “actors” in the territory so each can contribute to redefining the identity of the community;
- Identify shared ideas regarding options for physical, economic, and social growth, and establish a learning processes to strengthen awareness and local identity;
- Launch, based on these shared ideas, processes to attain common goals and include them in the plan; and
- Define the strategic priorities on which to guide medium and long-term development.

The methodology includes:

- Draft a plan with the participation of the citizens;
- Set up the “Urban Center,” a permanent exhibit regarding the strategic program, in the “Gran Guardia” building;
- Create a Web site and blog dedicated to the plan;
- Organize regular meetings with the associations and those involved in the implementation of the plan so they can discuss the main issues and options.

This development model—based on a strategic plan agreed by the community—inverts the practices of the past based on “top down” programming mechanisms. It also uses planning methods typical of the 1990’s and later based on the involvement of the citizens in defining the long-term (2020) shape of the city. Verona’s strategic plan is considered a national and international “best practice.” The cost of the plan, estimated at about 600,000 EUR, was entirely financed by the local government. An initial meeting—which involved about 80 local people—determined the policy areas in terms of strategic planning, which led to the definition of the following goals for the strategic plan of Verona:

1. **Environment and Territory:** To make Verona a metropolitan city with a sustainable development through a multiyear program focused on energy saving; developing a city public transit system; and setting up a series of parks to create a “green belt” around the city.

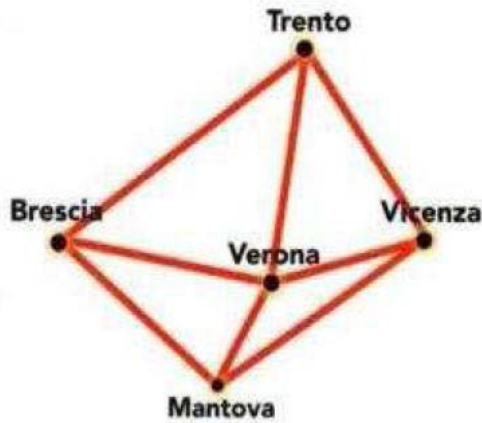
2. **Economy:** To develop an economy of knowledge and high-level services, promoting the localization of industries of excellence; foster the creative interaction between firms and the university to favor research and innovation; create a concerted system of work related training; and attract creative manpower.
3. **Culture:** To make Verona a European city of culture, creating new places for cultural production and consumption for youth and increasing the cultural offer with new initiatives and a web of new “spaces.”
4. **Welfare:** To create a new welfare system for a supportive city that increases the social capital, implementing protection services for the elderly and other vulnerable groups; creating interpersonal and social networks to create a welcoming city that prevents urban loneliness; and put in place mechanisms to support local families, especially those with single parents.
5. **Laboratory of Youth Policies:** To involve public and private agencies that deal with youth in the metropolitan area, strengthening the connection between the programming and implementation of interventions and the activities dedicated to youth.

Initially, the fifth axis was different. In fact, it had been chosen to address the strategic area regarding the “Network of Cities” with the intention of developing and consolidating systems of cooperation and territorial alliances with other provinces and regions. Later, however, the city council decided that such a project should be followed up outside the strategic plan, due to its complexity, and required its own study and programming. It was substituted with the Laboratory of Youth Policies, while the administration (through the mayor) initiated dialogues with provincial institutions of the surrounding cities of Brescia, Mantua, Trento, and Vicenza to establish a polycentric network of “variable geometry” with centers of equal importance (Figure 6).

The idea was to create “a wide area” composed of medium size cities in a territory containing a total of about 3.5 million inhabitants—larger than the Turin area or the central Veneto area (PA-TRE-VE) (*Padua, Treviso, Venezia*) and second only to Milan (Figure 7). This would promote a “territorial system” that integrated a flow of people, merchandise, economic resources, culture, and tourism within the cities with the use of resources such as railways, freeways, ports and airports, that link universities, fairs, and the natural artistic heritage areas.

Figure 6. The Network of Cities

Figura 1: La rete di città.



Fonte: Città in rete l'Area Adige-Berico-Garda (2005).

Source: Cities in the Adige/Berico/Garda Network (2005)

Figure 7. The Adige/Berico/Garda Area

Figura 2: l'Area Adige-Berico-Garda.



Fonte: Città in rete l'Area Adige-Berico-Garda (2005).

Source: Cities in the Adige/Berico/Garda Network (2005)

The most important factor is that the city council began to speak of Verona's future for the first time as a metropolitan area defined as "reticulated structure"; that is, a connected network of settlements located in the cities' first and second suburban "rings." The area had a population of 500,000 inhabitants, equal to about 55 percent of the entire Province. In this network, Verona would be the central core, reinforcing its role through urban planning and the integrated use and development of its cultural heritage, transportation systems, and services. The council of mayors assumed a fundamental role in the implementation of the strategic plan—reaching an agreement signed by the City of Verona and the surrounding 22 communities. This became the instrument to develop the plan, examining in advance all the propositions and projects regarding the policy areas previously identified. The implementation of the development plan unfolded in the following eight phases:

1. **“Hearing the city”:** A series of roundtable discussions and interviews, and use a blog and other means to communicate with the citizens;
2. **The “vision” document:** A draft, prepared at the third month into the process, comparing the priorities and setting of goals.
3. **Choice of the strategic areas:** The five areas—culture, territory, welfare, economy, and network of cities (subsequently substituted by the Laboratory of Youth Policies)—were addressed by five programming tables, each with a coordinator chosen from leaders in the industry, the academic world, and the third sector. Each table had to delineate the future scenario regarding their theme and its macro objectives. At the same time they had to identify the most crucial projects (flag projects) that represented a series of concrete initiatives to achieve the goals of the strategic axes of the plan;
4. **The record of agreement:** Several institutions agreed to participate in the various phases of the work to draw up, within the year, a general document as a basis for the strategic plan for the city (2003–2020). The signatories included: l’Aeroporto Catullo, Apindustria, Associazione Industriali, Artigiani Riuniti, Azienda Ospedaliera, Ulss 20, Confcommercio, Confcooperative, Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori, Confederazione Nazionale Artigianato, Confesercenti, Consorzio Zai, Consorzio per gli Studi Universitari, Diocesi di Verona, Ente autonomo Fiere di Verona, Federazione provinciale coltivatori diretti, Fondazione Arena, Lega Cooperative, Unione Provinciale Artigiani, Università degli Studi, organizzazioni sindacali Cgil, Cisl, Uil e successivamente anche dalla CCIAA;
5. **Working groups:** Using their experiences and abilities to find solutions and define future scenario, these groups, which included experts on the key issues, drafted and completed the program document.
6. **Elaboration of the program document:** A document containing the strategic actions and the project chosen by the working groups. The 100 project ideas were filtered to identify 18 flag projects; implementation of these concrete actions by the City of Verona started in February 2004, thereby giving the strategic plan an immediate validation in the eyes of the citizens;

7. **Conference on the strategic plan:** A two-day conference (January 23–24, 2004), open to the public, in which the program document and a file with the flag projects were presented. The conference also stimulated formal agreements with other Italian cities to form partnerships at a national level.
8. **Administration and implementation of the plan:** The last phase of the strategic plan began with the implementation of the 18 flag projects presented at the conference.

The implementation of this plan represented a milestone in urban planning in the city of Verona. The plan presents the concept of a “metropolitan area” and influences the other planning documents such as the Territorial Plan (PAT), changing in fact the GRP, which is out of date. The flag projects include the following:

- **Polo Finanziario (financial pole):** Birth of “Polo Finanziario S.p.a.,” the operative company that will create the financial center in the area of the former fruit market of the city in Verona Sud.
- **Veronetta:** Inauguration of the *Casa di Ramia* (Ramie House), a multicultural center dedicated to the women who live in Veronetta; presentation of the project of the socio-urban rehabilitation of Veronetta within the “Bando per Contratti di Quartiere II (call for Contracts in the Neighborhood II); realization of the Metropolitan Art Crew project (MACART), a project of territorial animation aimed at 14- to 18-year-olds in the Veronetta Quarter.
- **Contracts for Quarter II Borgo Nuovo:** Subscription of the agreement with the minister for the disbursement of the funds established in the program Contracts for Quarter II.
- **Alzheimer Project:** Inauguration in Borgo Roma of the operative center of the Alzheimer Project, to give assistance to those who suffer from this disease.
- **Local society, school, and education processes:** The implementation of training courses for teachers of the new Comprehensive Institutes of Verona about the transformation process set up by the Plan; activation of experimental Internet services for the institutes.
- **Agenda 21:** Creation of the Forum of Stakeholders that contributed to the elaboration of the Agenda 21 Plan of Local Action,

- **Youth productions:** Establishment of the “Fund for Youth” to support creativity and productivity in young persons; realization of a festival of productions by youth,
- **Urban Museum of Verona:** Formulation of an Administration Plan for the historic center.
- **Experimental project for the absorption of graduates by industry:** Joint program by the University of Verona and the Office for Labor Policy of Verona to supplement the traditional classroom formation of graduating students with training and one-year work contracts at local industries and business.
- **Corporate social responsibility:** In 2004 the City of Verona signed an agreement on corporate social responsibility with key industries and institutions created under the sponsorship of the local Committee of UniCredit, which unites some key participants (AGSM, AMIA, AMT, APTV, AGECE, Aeroporto Catullo Verona, VERONAFIERE - Ente autonomo per le Fiere di Verona, il Consorzio Z.A.I., la Fondazione Arena di Verona, VERONAMERCATO, Università di Verona, Comune e Provincia) to implement a joint project of sustainable development at a local level. The project has the sponsorship of the local Committee of UniCredit. Furthermore, the City of Verona implemented a system to support the four agencies involved in promoting social responsibility in industry and government (Ags, Amia, Agec e Amt).
- **Development of e-government:** The projects “Demoracolo” and “E-democracy,” together with the strategic plan, obtained co-financing from the Ministry for Innovation and Technology to implement e-government initiatives.
- **Arsenal project:** In 2006 the city council approved the master plan for the rehabilitation of the old Austrian military arsenal.
- **Verona, City of Peace, City of People:** City support for initiatives directed to the development of human and social capital in the city (cooperation, international solidarity, culture, and educational development).
- **Territorial marketing:** Participation in the MIPIM in 2004 and 2005; creation of the show “Verona in Love.”
- **Verona, the city of children:** Creation of the Council of Boys and Girls.

The priority axis and projects of the Strategic Plan are coordinated with the urban planning proposals contained in the PAT, which the city council approved in April of 2006. The vision of Verona as a metropolitan area strengthens the role of the HCV and was supported by one of the 18 flag projects (Urban Museum of Verona).

6. The Demographic Situation

The flow of population out of the HCV into the outskirts between 1989 and 1995 (Figure 8) follows the classic pattern of cities expanding through the construction of new buildings in the periphery. In fact, this flow stopped in 1995, and the population of the HCV has stabilized in recent years (2002–2008) to 12.1 percent of the total city population (Table 1). In 2008 the most populated neighborhood was Veronetta, with 10,659 inhabitants, followed by the Citta Antica zone with 9,165, Cittadella with 7,161, and San Zeno with 4,800.

Figure 8. Residents in the HCV, 1989–2008

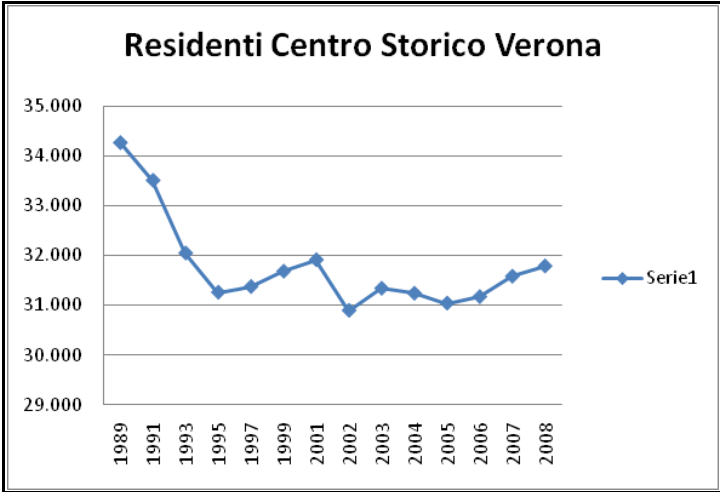


Table 1. Percent of Verona Population Living in the HCV by Neighborhood, 2002–2008

Neighborhood	2002		2008		Variation (residents)	Percent
	Total residents	Percent of Verona population	Total residents	Percent of Verona population		
Citta Antica	8,981	3.5%	9,165	3.5%	184	2.05%
Cittadella	7,040	2.8%	7,161	2.7%	121	1.72%
San Zeno	4,633	1.8%	4,800	1.8%	167	3.6%
Veronetta	10,235	4%	10,659	4%	424	4.14%
Total HCV	30,889	12.1%	31,785	12%	896	2.9%
Verona	255,673	100%	265,368	100%	9,695	3.79%

6.1 Daily Movement of Residents and Tourists within the HCV

Using data from different sources, it is possible to illustrate the movement of people in and out of the HCV on a daily basis. The data shows that the HCV is heavily used to a point that may become problematic for its sustainable preservation. Data on residents and average daily nonresident users confirm the situation of overcrowding in the city, and especially in the HCV. As of December 31, 2007, there were about 31,500 residents living in the HCV; on a daily basis, they share this space with an average of 11,400 tourists and 17,200 other citizens (i.e., shoppers and workers from other areas). The flow of tourists to the HCV continually increased between 1997 and 2008; an average of 55 percent of this flow was made up of foreign travelers (Table 2). About 48,000 people move around the HCV per day. However, it must be remembered, the figure calculated for tourists is based on an annual average, and when there are big events in Verona the ratio reaches 2.3 tourists per one resident.

Table 2. Tourism in the HCV, 1997–2008

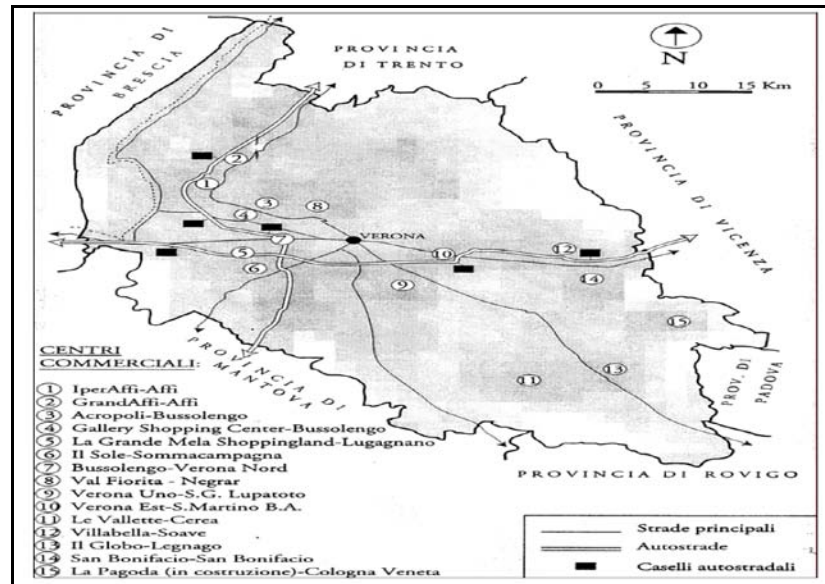
Year	Italians			Foreigners			Total		
	Arrivals	Percent of total visitors	Average stay (days)	Arrivals	Percent of total visitors	Average stay (days)	Arrivals	Total people	Average stay (days)
1997	206,861	44%	2.35	267,170	56%	2.18	474,031	1,066,988	2.25
1998	204,821	42%	2.31	282,294	58%	2.22	487,115	1,100,659	2.26
1999	225,861	43%	2.30	298,484	57 %	2.19	524,345	1,174,781	2.24
2000	231,618	42%	2.32	316,511	58%	2.21	548,129	1,236,475	2.27
2001	235,293	40%	2.44	346,103	60 %	2.32	581,396	1,377,164	2.38
2002	222,905	46%	1.83	265,055	54%	2.13	487,960	972,714	1.99
2003	243,990	47%	2.40	277,818	53%	2.70	521,808	1,334,789	2.56
2004	244,904	45%	2.61	304,081	55%	2.36	548,985	1,356,985	2.47
2005	243,412	45%	2.66	297,921	55%	2.56	541,333	1,409,187	2.60
2006	275,580	46%	2.53	320,462	54 %	2.48	595,042	1,490,065	2.50
2007	276,033	45%	2.45	342,138	55%	2.30	618,171	1,464,005	2.37
2008	278,390	45%	2.36	334,313	55%	2.19	612,703	1,388,119	2.27

6.2 The Concentration of Commercial Businesses

The building of large commercial areas began in the 1970's, and the tendency has continued to grow over the years. These areas are in the outskirts, although closely connected to the historical center and easily accessible. These structures (malls) have become not only centers for shopping but also for socializing and recreation. The city of Verona has always been the point of reference for the area, both socially and commercially; therefore builders of large chain stores prefer the city. In 2000, in the Province of Verona, there were more than 152 square meters of commercial space to each 1,000 inhabitants (the Italian average is 60 square meters to each 1,000 inhabitants).

From the point of view of “supply,” the big food distribution chains seek to gain economies of scale, particularly in logistics, and to supply the growing demand originating from the higher buying power of the local consumers in the Verona metropolitan region. In this region per capita income is 1.2 times that of the average Italian, consumption is 30 percent higher than the national level, and rate of development is 17 percent higher than the nation average.

Figure 9. Commercial Centers in the Province of Verona



As seen in Figure 9, the depopulation of the HCV has had a direct impact on commerce. In the 1980's, there were about 1,000 shops in the old city; by the beginning of the 1990s, there were 800; and in the period between 1998 and 2000, there were over 200 closures of retail shops (many shops took advantage of the financial advantages granted to closures through the so-called “scrapping” of licenses).

The old part of the city has seen a slow but sustained drop in its role as the “commercial heart” of the province, maintaining only a strong function as a financial, political, and administrative center, while at the same time retaining (and strengthening) its cultural and recreational vocation. In 2008 there were 1,424 businesses for a total of more than 7,000 citizens, a density of 3.14 businesses per hectare compared to 0.36 in the rest of the city.

According to the ATECO classification (activity and economical code), the HCV has a significant presence of professional offices, insurance companies, information related business, and consulting firms, which together represent 61 percent of the total number of businesses. Out of a total of 3,097 businesses, 2,346 are professional offices. There are 911 offices that offer legal and notary services, 419 focused on taxes and accounting, 391 that provide health care

services, and 378 that specialize in architecture. There are also 343 freelance consultants, 267 offices in the banking, insurance, and telecommunication industries, 118 administrative consultants, and 47 licensed street vendors who open their stalls from Monday to Friday, particularly in Piazza delle Erbe, for tourists. There are 51 hotels in the HCV—out of 65 total in the city—150 restaurants, and 310 bars (there are 24 ethnic “take-out” places, mainly in Veronetta).

7. Quality of Life in Verona

Verona was selected for the *Survey on perception of quality of life in 75 European cities* (European Commission, 2010), a survey conducted in November of 2009 to measure local perceptions in 75 cities in the EU, Croatia, and Turkey.⁴ In each city, 500 randomly selected citizens (aged 15 and older) were interviewed. In Verona, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the health services (80 percent), and only 4 percent were not at all satisfied. In terms of job opportunities, only 27 percent were satisfied, while almost 60 percent stated that it was difficult to find a good job. Regarding housing prices, 64 percent considered it difficult to find good housing at a reasonable price, compared to 18 percent who agreed that finding good housing was easy.

In terms of financial conditions, 56 percent of the respondents stated that poverty was a problem in their city. In regards to feelings of trust, 68 percent of respondents stated that most people in the city could be trusted, compared to 27 percent who stated the opposite. In terms of safety, 90 percent of the citizens surveyed declared that they felt safe in their city, and 92 percent felt safe in their own neighborhoods. In terms of the major issues facing their city, the following were the three most mentioned issues by respondents: air pollution (48 percent), jobs creation (42 percent), and urban safety (29 percent).

On a positive note, 80 percent of the interviewees agreed that Verona was clean and 85 percent felt it was a healthy place to live. In terms of Verona’s resources, 55 percent believed that they were spent in a responsible way, while 25 percent disagreed. In regards to Verona’s cultural facilities (e.g., concert halls, museums, and libraries), 73 percent of the respondents were

⁴ The European Commission (DG Regional Policy) has been using such surveys for several years to get a snapshot of people’s opinions on a range of urban issues.

satisfied. Also, 68 percent of those surveyed were satisfied with the green spaces in the city; 66 percent were satisfied with the sports facilities; and 65 percent were satisfied with the beauty of streets and buildings in their neighborhoods. Even though 46 percent of the interviewees declared that they were satisfied with public transportation, only 11 percent stated that they used it every day, 15 percent at least once a week, and 12 percent at least once a month. In fact, 65 percent responded that they used a car or motorbike to go to work or training places, compared to 17 percent that said they used public transportation and the same percentage that said they travelled by bike or foot. Regarding the length of time to commute to their work or training places, 26 percent of those surveyed took less than 10 minutes, 39 percent took between 10 and 20 minutes, and 19 percent took between 20 and 30 minutes.

8. Conclusions

The problems that strongly affect the efforts to preserve the HSV can be divided into two groups:

- 1) The public entity managing the heritage site has administrative and financial limitations. In the administrative arena, the strongest criticism concerns bureaucracy and the instability of the local political system. A resolution by the city council (number 31 of February 2006) set up the UNESCO Office within the Office of Culture. At present, the office has one employee with limited powers and duties, quite inadequate for the size and importance of the task to manage the HCV and the value placed by residents and the rest of the community on the UNESCO listing. The policies for managing the site try to balance the preservation needs of the HCV with the need to sustain residential and economic activities, but err on the conservative side.
- 2) From the financial point of view, the major constraint emerges from the structure of the public organizations, which cannot receive and administer funds from outside, and, therefore, cannot supply suitable lines of financing. The direct consequences are the absence of a plan for rehabilitation and development for the site consistent with the need to protect the heritage. Obvious examples are the frescos on the buildings in Verona, which tend to fade but are not restored by private philanthropy (such as foundations and other donors) because they are private property.

To offset this criticism, it must be said that Verona is a city that functions well, with citizens that react to, and participate in, the solutions to urban problems. If it were not for the slowness in carrying out the interventions, the case of Verona presents characteristics of “best practice” at the organization and administrative levels. Tourism, seen as a panacea for the preservation and development of a heritage site, has limits. Verona is the fourth most visited Italian city in terms of cultural tourism (evaluating tourism as overnight stays in hotels, without considering, therefore, those who make day trips only), yet local and EU see many risks of social and environmental “pollution” in the massive development of cultural tourism. The large flows of tourists tend to isolate the historical and cultural context of the HCV from the rest of the city, creating open but static museum-like public spaces. This process distances the citizens from their city (specifically the historic center), discouraging local investment to the advantage of outside investors.

Certainly, this impact in Verona is mitigated both by the presence of offices and other dynamic activities in the historical center and because the buildings are owned mainly by the residents. Citizens of other important heritage cities in Italy, such as in Florence and Venezia, show a strong opposition to tourism. The main reason is that the inhabitants see themselves slowly becoming dispossessed of their own cities, which—though representing a great historic and cultural value (to promote and render the visibility of Verona to the entire world)—if depopulated lose their identities.

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