

**PROCEEDINGS**  
of the  
**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
on  
**CHANGING CITIES IV**  
*Spatial, Design, Landscape & Socio-economic Dimensions*

Department of Planning and Regional Development, University of Thessaly  
Laboratory of Urban Morphology and Design

**in collaboration with**  
School of Architecture, Technical University of Crete and Regional Authority of Crete.

**Under the aegis of**  
THE GREEK MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

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## PREFACE

Dear colleagues,

The 4th International Conference on “*CHANGING CITIES: Spatial, Design, Landscape & Socio-economic Dimensions*”, Chania, Crete Island, Greece, 24-29 June 2019, is now a reality and a big academic event. The conference has been organised by The Laboratory of Urban Morphology & Design, Department of Planning & Regional Development, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece, in collaboration with School of Architecture, Technical University of Crete and Regional Authority of Crete, and under the aegis of The Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy.

The series of *CHANGING CITIES international conferences [CCC]* has started in 2013 by The Laboratory of Urban Morphology & Design, Department of Planning & Regional Development, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece, and has so far delivered three conferences:

- *CHANGING CITIES I: Spatial, Morphological, formal and socioeconomic dimensions*, 18-21 June 2013, Skiathos Island, Greece.
- *CHANGING CITIES II: Spatial, Design, Landscape and socioeconomic dimensions*, 22-26 June 2015, Porto Heli, Peloponnese, Greece.
- *CHANGING CITIES III: Spatial, Design, Landscape and socioeconomic dimensions*, 26-30 June 2017, Syros Island, Greece.

All three conferences have been welcome by the academic community of planners and architects worldwide attracting over 300 presenters from more than 50 countries.

The CC conferences are always taking place in Greek venues with characteristic urban or/and natural landscape like the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. The 4th conference has been decided to take place in Chania, Crete Island, since Chania is the most attractive town in Crete Island exhibiting a well-preserved Medieval and Renaissance historical core with a unique Venetian harbour, built between 1320 and 1356.

The series of CC conferences covers a vast spectrum of fields related to the present and future challenges of cities. In the last decades, we have all witnessed a series of dramatic, universal changes and developments affecting cities – their morphology, environment, economies, and societies. Global new conditions such as economic globalisation, European integration and the creation of urban networks and hierarchies; post-industrial economies of culture and new technologies; consciousness of environmental degradation and the necessity of green design, sustainable development, and resilient cities; the development of informational societies, the increasing mobility of individuals, 'space-time' compression, and the emerging smart cities; growing terrorism attacks and new security infrastructures of public spaces; increasing migrations and cultural diversity of individuals, and coexistence in multi – ethnic and multi-cultural urban societies. In this new milieu, cities change themselves to ad hoc adapt into new conditions while simultaneously scholars and practitioners in urban planning and design, and urban policy-makers attempt to change cities so as to better fit into new conditions.

The series of CC conferences aspires to bring together urban planners and designers, spatial planners, architects, landscape designers, urban geographers, urban economists, urban sociologists, and urban policy makers, and investigate all together new challenges concerning cities and their future. The main aim is providing an international forum of transaction of ideas on changing cities.

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The 4<sup>th</sup> CC conference focuses on two topics:

1. **“SMART CITIES; Smart Environment, Smart Mobility, Smart Economy”**
2. **Planning and Designing new cities in China.**

First, strategic development of smartness in cities is a fast growing field of great academic and policy-making interest, based on the development of new technologies in the services of inhabitants, visitors, tourists, entrepreneurs, et al. Therefore, it is a big challenge for all urban planners, designers, urban economists, and urban policy makers.

Second, China is a huge country with fast growing economy in the industrial sector. This gradually fuels national migration flows of millions of people from agrarian Chinese regions to urban districts, creating a large demand of housing. New large cities are planned, designed and developed in China in the last decade. Since Europe has been shrinking in demographic terms during the last three decades, there is no need for new cities. In this framework, all new schools of thought in urban planning and design are applying new ideas in China – attracting the interest of academia. The Organising Committee is proud to have arranged for the 4<sup>th</sup> CC conference, important special sessions devoted to Chinese cities:

- (a) **“Planning & Designing new cities in China”**, pre-organised by Dr. Huang He, Associate Professor, School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China,
- (b) **“Chinese Cities: Urban development, socio-economic transformations, policy challenges and comparisons with the European experience”**, pre-organised by Prof. G. Petrakos, University of Thessaly, and Prof. Geoffrey Qiping Shen, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

The conference thematic fields include the following:

- *Urban Design in Planning,*
- *Sustainable Urban Planning & Development,*
- *Urban Landscapes, Landscape Planning & Design,*
- *Urban Cultures & Public Open Spaces,*
- *Historical Centres & Built Heritage Management,*
- *Environmental Urban Planning,*
- *Cities & Health*
- *Resilient cities,*
- *Transportation Planning and Policy in cities,*
- *Urban Planning Laws, Real Estate & Property Rights,*
- *Urban Economies & spatial impacts,*
- *City Branding and Urban Tourism*
- *Shrinking cities,*

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- *Divided cities,*
- Migration, multinational and multicultural societies & Urban Planning.

The 4th CC conference has initially attracted 485 abstracts, and 186 research papers (optional submission to the conference E-Book of Proceedings). In the final conference program, there are 328 oral presentations and 22 poster presentations from all over the world; from Greece and the Balkans, Northwest Europe, USA, Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico), Middle East and North Africa, Asia, Far East (China and Japan), and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea). The 4th CC conference is really international since 42% of the presenters are Greek academics and 58% of the contributors are from global academia.

I would like to thank

- the Organising Committee;
- the keynote speakers;
- the scientific Committee of the conference for reviewing work, and especially the colleagues who pre-organised special sessions for the conference;
- the academic supporters of the conference: University of Thessaly; Technical University of Crete, School of Architecture; and The Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy.
- the financial sponsors of the conference: Regional Authority of Crete, Green Fund of The Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy;
- and especially, all of you having contributed to this big academic event.

Aspa Gospodini, PhD

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# Urban regeneration processes in the recent territorial policies of the Emilia Romagna region\*

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\* The essay is the result of the shared approach of the two authors. In particular, we owe: to Michele Ugolini 2. Materials and methods, 2.1/2.2; to Stefania Varvaro 2. Materials and methods, 2.3/2.4.; to both Authors: Abstract, 1. Introduction, 1.1, 3. Results and discussion and 4. Conclusion.

## Abstract

It is proposed to read a project strategy with reference to the participation in a funding call of the Emilia Romagna Region (region of northern Italy, located within the Po valley) which interprets a need for renewal of territorial policies by financing choices that accept as priorities a sustainable urban regeneration that has wide social implications and different scales of intervention.

There are three levels of reading proposed in this paper, concerning the processes of urban regeneration: that of regional policies, through the interpretation of Emilia Romagna's 2018 funding call; that of the proposal presented for this call by a group of six municipalities; finally, that of the specific project drawn up by one of the municipalities constituting the grouping. The prospective cross-scale reading allows us to reason about the theme of regeneration starting from the more general reflections on the territory to verify it to the size of the single project.

*Keywords: urban and social regeneration, cross-scale reading, public spaces, sustainable mobility*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The reference context: the project proposal and the *Via Francigena*

The interest lies in the motivations for which the regional administration has promoted urban regeneration actions focusing on a revival of cities and their social cohesion through integrated planning on public space systems. These are part of the urban fabric that, regenerated in a coherent and continuous design, also from the point of view of cultural and social inclusion, links the many individual building-architectural episodes that need redevelopment in all our cities. In the case brought to the attention, the *Via Francigena*, (also called *Via Romea*, a set of historical tracks that in the Middle Ages carried pilgrims from Canterbury to the Holy Land via Rome) takes on the role of a significant connector that has united and unites, historically and physically, the urban agglomerations intercepted by it.

Starting from the planning policies developed after the publication of the European Landscape Convention of 2000, the landscape is assumed among the programmatic aspects of territorial government. "*The Via Francigena must be structured as one of the axes of the slow-mobility European network, with the idea that the corridors are not only fast mobility, but also a slow mobility green way*". (...) We agree with the fact that the landscape must, in turn, be considered as one of the values of sustainability. "*Sustainable landscape is one of which is able to maintain the outputs of eco*

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*system goods and service that people value or need, and that the key research focus for Landscape Ecology is to understand the biophysical, social and economic boundaries of the space in which this is possible*” (Potschin, Haines-Young, 2006) (Bettini, V., Marotta, L., Tosi, S.S., (ed) 2011).

The importance of promoting a widespread sustainability conceived in this way is a fundamental part of the regional policies of Emilia Romagna which are described below and which are also analyzed with an in-depth analysis linked to a specific case.

## 1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 First level of reading: territorial policies of Emilia Romagna Region, interpretation of funding call

The funding call of the Emilia Romagna Region, called “Rigenerazione Urbana 2018” (“Urban Regeneration 2018”) is of particular interest for the interpretation of the political strategies underlying the government of the territory in one of the most advanced regions of Italy, a region whose administration has always been mindful of the social and common good. The tool outlines a normative premise that accounts for a line of coherence carried out over time and which is certainly representative of good governance, or at least expresses a positive intentionality in this regard. It is briefly highlighted how in Emilia Romagna the implementation and management of Urban Redevelopment Programs introduced by the LR. n. 19/98 “Norme in Materia di Riqualificazione Urbana” (“Norms in matter of Urban Requalification”) have involved the use of conspicuous resources and investments activated in the period between 2000 and 2017. In concrete terms, the loans that have been made have allowed, with regard to recovery and new construction, the construction of almost 5000 housing units for public residential buildings and social housing and over 300 interventions, divided between infrastructural works (37%), territorial services and facilities (14%). With LR. 6/2009 “Governo e riqualificazione solidale del territorio” (“Government and solidarity requalification of the territory”), urban redevelopment was accompanied by a social housing policy, thus enhancing the relationship between urban planning and social development.

In 2018 Regional call it is written: *“at the center of the regeneration strategies is the re-launch of the public city, not only to reconnect the reasons of sustainability, equity and strengthening of social capital, but also as a reference matrix that allows to model organizational and management forms of processes that are more responsive to fragmentation and discontinuities inherent in regeneration practices, compared to the more established models of urban recovery and redevelopment. The notice intends to represent a policy that supports the re-use and adaptation of public and private assets with targeted, durable and sustainable projects over time; the achievement of a diffused urban, territorial, socio-economic and environmental quality that is a response to phenomena of spatial and environmental degradation combined with functional decline and poor social cohesion, to the dismissal of activities and improper spatial uses, congestion and settlement disorder; as well as securing and improving the efficiency of the widespread heritage, the redevelopment of marginal areas with a specific focus on reducing land consumption.”* (Call for funding-Emilia Romagna, Urban Regeneration, april 2018)

The new trend is therefore to attribute to regeneration a strategic and propulsive role towards a growing demand for transformation that requires an integrated approach for the various sectoral policies.

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The text of the call refers to the absence of a state strategy and explicitly adopts some of the principles introduced by the European Union through the 2007 Leipzig Charter and the 2010 Toledo Declaration (assuming the integration of environmental policies and sustainability as fundamental factors for the attractiveness and competitiveness of cities) and the objectives of the European Agenda for sustainable development. The term "widespread" used to describe the demand for regeneration lies in identifying the relationship between urban spaces, buildings and structures to be redeveloped, activity plans and management programs as the foundation. In short, the public space, be it open or inside a building envelope, and its inhabitants. The term "widespread" also indicates the need to emphasize a cross-scale character, from the municipal or supra-communal dimension to the size of the neighborhood, the square, the building, with the specific request to reason by systems, never in a specific way. The single intervention assumes value if included in a broad regeneration program that involves a complexity of factors and has positive and lasting repercussions over the years. *"These innovations, inherent in urban regeneration practices, have prompted changes in the structure and form of the urban plan, which are incorporated in the recent L.R. 24/17 "Disciplina Regionale sulla Tutela e l'Uso del Territorio" ("Regional Rules on the Protection and Use of the Territory") with the accentuation of the strategic dimension and the strengthening of the implementation dimension"* (Call for funding-Emilia Romagna, Urban Rigeneration, april 2018)

## **2.2 Objectives of the funding call**

The objective is to finance a strategy for urban quality with a view to "relaunching the cities of Emilia-Romagna".

*"On the part of the municipalities, are expected proposals that can express regeneration in different contexts and in response to different needs, activating the construction of processes and intervention programs made up of actions linked to the involvement of the local society, with the forecast of socio-economic returns in the medium term such as to produce effects at the urban and territorial level with a view to sustainability."* (Call for funding-Emilia Romagna, Urban Rigeneration, april 2018)

The indications of the call, although leaving ample room for choice, identify in some areas of reference, preferential fields for the development of medium-term strategies, with far-reaching repercussions.

The proposed case that sees the involvement of projects in 6 small municipalities in the province of Piacenza, linked to the *Via Francigena* is of particular interest in this sense because it intersects more areas.

In fact, it stands out for being part of the context of historical centers and consolidated urban fabrics, weakened in the social structure and in functional decline, in which, with low environmental impact interventions and re-use of the existing one, we can promote the strengthening and integration of territorial and landscape system; of the context of systems of access to urban centers and functional poles that must be rethought in terms of urban quality and environmental sustainability; of the context of fragmented urban fabrics and marginal spaces contiguous to the perimeters of urban or peri-urban areas, suited to the definition of "urban edges", to the creation of green infrastructures of connection between urban and extra-urban (green belts, ecological networks, etc.) and the implementation of regional projects for the protection and enhancement of the landscape.

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The funding call aims to structure an urban analysis and a diagnostic reference framework, synthesis of knowledge and identification of critical issues and opportunities; an action plan based on the analyzed context; the definition of the consequent interventions, meaning with this the realization of public works, networks, infrastructures etc., and actions, referring to a system of light operations, mainly intangible, which operate primarily on the social, cultural and economic context and finally with a feasibility and governance program with technical, administrative and financial proposals. The choices of management and government of the territory are further specified in identifying as rewarding those projects capable of using the term "widespread" also in the integration of cycle and pedestrian network systems within urban planning, even more if of regional interest. This aspect strongly directs the design choices in view of a slow mobility, in the definition of stations and points of intermodal exchange and push the proposals towards a now more than near future, where it is hoped that the car is destined to be no longer a priority. The consistency and effectiveness of the proposals is also measured by evaluating the responses to the suggestions provided by the call such as consistency, integration, complexity, attractiveness, safety, health and well-being and quality in terms of urban design and architectural design.

### **2.3 Second level of reading: the proposal of the six Municipalities on the *Via Francigena***

The regional policy and its values of sustainability, attractiveness, quality and feasibility have been interpreted in the proposal drawn up by a large team of designers, led by the architect Vito Redaelli. The case study examined is interesting as it does not concern the main regional cities but a set of municipalities characterized by small built-up areas (between 4,000 and 15,000 inhabitants) in the province of Piacenza (Municipalities of Calendasco, Gragnano Trebbiense, Pontenure, Cadeo, Fiorenzuola d'Arda e Alseno) that find as a regenerative common denominator a historical identity element of extreme importance: the *Via Francigena* (set of historical routes that in the Middle Ages brought pilgrims from Canterbury to the Holy Land via Rome). *“Object of the strategy is the transversal enhancement of the Via Francigena as a common thread of social, urban, historical-cultural, economic and landscape regeneration of the territory, in parallel with the recovery of abandoned buildings and public spaces made available to the Municipalities along the network and whose revitalization generates new services able to bring attractiveness and historical-cultural awareness of the places: both for local citizens and for tourists / pilgrims, that move by foot or by bicycle along the historic route”*(from the general project report, arch. Vito Redaelli).

The scale of intervention is plural both in the territorial dimension (local and supra-municipal) and in the infradisciplinary approach, involving the different aspects of urban regeneration: the collaboration of the 6 Municipalities represents a methodological peculiarity of the proposal that well interprets the regional requests by building a system in to which the individual project proposals are specified up to the detail scale. Five of the six Municipalities insist precisely on the *Via Francigena* from the Po river towards the South; the reactivation of another historical route, the "Cammino di San Colombano", allows the involvement of the sixth municipality, Gragnano Trebbiense and the virtuous connection of the two slow-moving routes characterized by a consolidated historicity.

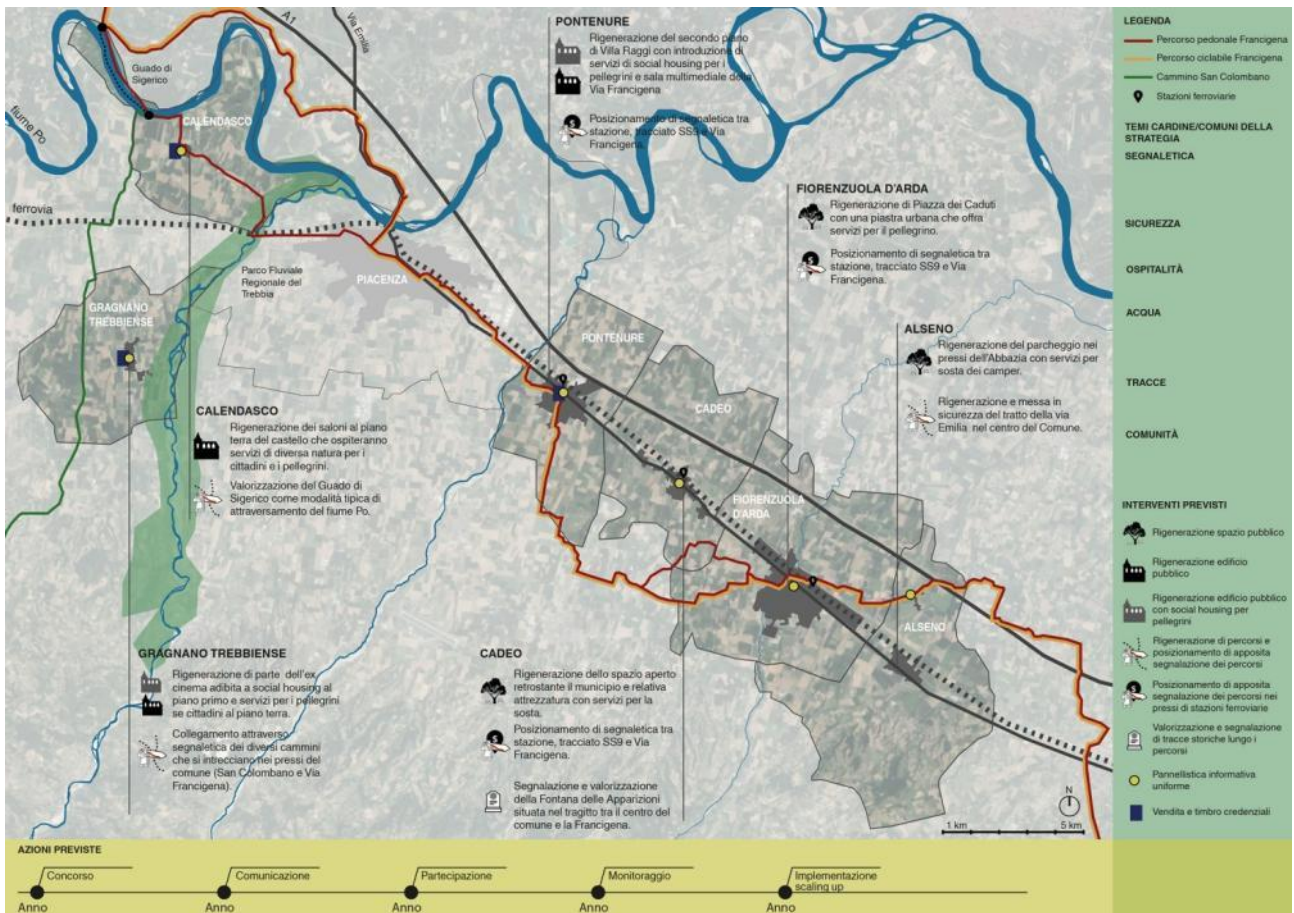
The landscape of the *Via Francigena*, in the stretch of the six municipalities, is particularly interesting because it involves an alternation of country spaces and highly urbanized and infrastructured spaces, placing itself entirely in the horizontal landscape of the lower Emilia plain and coinciding for a stretch with the ancient Roman road of the *Via Emilia*.

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**Figure 1.** *Via Francigena*, the system of the small cities involved into the proposal for participating to the funding call and the main topics (hospitality, safety, traces, community, water) with planned interventions. (edited by arch. Vito Redaelli)

#### 2.4 Third level of reading: Fiorenzuola d'Arda and Piazza dei Caduti

The third level of reading consists not so much in the punctual description of the square of Fiorenzuola that has been chosen as a pilot project of the municipality, but in bringing out the characters of coherence with the proposal as a whole, in highlighting how these become systemic in grafting with the axis of the *Via Francigena*, all its connections and its historical, cultural and socio-economic aspects that give it value. The historical urban fabric of Fiorenzuola is characterized by a more ancient nucleus enclosed within a quadrilateral that approaches the *Via Emilia*. This original core is in turn inserted into a first historical expansion of rectangular shape. The historical ambit of Fiorenzuola is drawn by an articulated road network, set on a matrix of streets mostly parallel and perpendicular to the *Via Emilia*. There are numerous spaces with a square vocation and green spaces with urban relational value. These categories include piazza Caduti with its gardens, the neighboring park Lucca and the pedestrian and cycle avenue leading to the station, which have become the theme of the pilot project of Fiorenzuola. The regional funding call expresses an important intention in inviting the participating municipalities to involve projects that are the subject of calls that have before remained

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unspoken due to lack of funds or administrative difficulties. Piazza dei Caduti has exactly this characteristic: it was the subject of a call for ideas in 2003, but the square was never built. The construction of the guidelines of the competition once again proves to want to remedy one of the most widespread problems in Italy: that of not having implemented what had emerged from the competition, wasting time and resources.

The Caduti square, in addition to this, represents a strategic place for its position within the urban fabric of Fiorenzuola d'Arda and for its vocation of public reception space characterized by the presence of numerous bars and clubs (even in the immediate nearby) and the scenic presence, with historical value and memory, of the War Memorial with its flagpoles. On the edge of the historic center of Fiorenzuola, already partially redeveloped, Piazza Caduti is in asphalt and is entirely used for parking cars, which deny adequate use of public space. Piazza Caduti, as part of the overall urban regeneration project, plays a particularly interesting role as a potential significant space of relationship along the *Via Francigena*, as well as a connection to the most important railway station of the six municipalities taking part in the call.

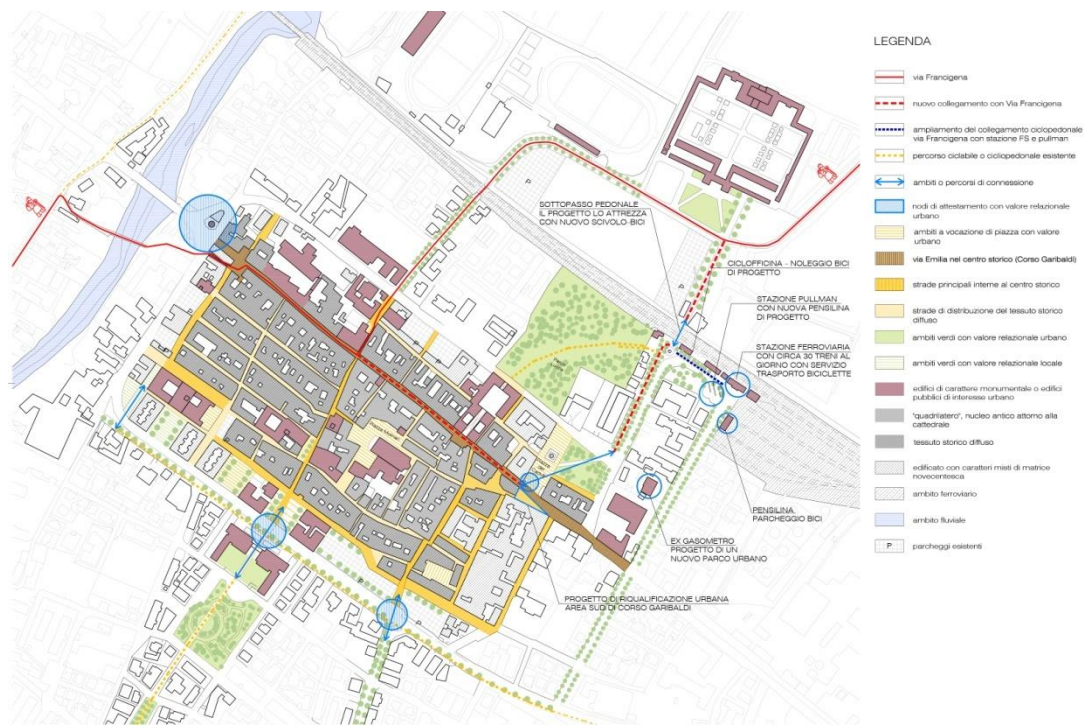
The project aims to highlight the great potential of this area, enhancing it within an overall long-term municipal strategy that involves the activation of various projects. It is thus that the project of the square is framed in a wider urban design that from the *Via Emilia* involves the whole space in front of and behind the monument and leads, crossing the public garden, along the great tree-lined cycle-pedestrian path of the avenue, to the railway station and to the quay for extra-urban buses. The intermodality that is promoted with the proposal of the municipality of Fiorenzuola is supported by the presence of the railway station located on the Milan-Bologna national axis, with over 30 daily connections that guarantee the possibility of transporting the bicycle in tow (wagon equipped for transporting bikes). In addition to this, the small size of the city of Fiorenzuola makes it easy for tourists to move around on foot or by bicycle. The presence of large green spaces near the Piazza Caduti and the railway station is a topic of interest in the perspective of a slow mobility, sustainable tourism, of a promotion of small historical centers. The affinity of these issues with the requirements set by the regional funding call acquires even more value if read within the redevelopment of the *Via Francigena*.

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**Figure 2.** Fiorenzuola d'Arda strategies map. The interventions possibilities around piazza Caduti.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The municipalities affected by the proposal signed a framework agreement, which represents a memorandum of understanding within which competences and levels of financing have been established and their potential has been put in place to enhance the territory. *“This supra-municipal collaboration contrasts one of the critical points highlighted: the lack of awareness on the part of public institutions of the added value that the cultural itinerary of the Via Francigena and the Cammino di San Colombano have in civil society and the fragmentary nature of the interventions that are not very coordinated. The co-design involved both the political component of the Municipalities and also that of the municipal technicians who were partly responsible for the preparation of the technical-economic feasibility studies of the interventions: non-trivial institutional learning.”* (from the general project report, arch. Vito Redaelli)

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The enhancement of historical paths, starting from the Via Francigena, constitutes one of the strongest territorial levers to generate new socio-economic development and sustainable urban and cultural regeneration in Italy, especially in marginal areas, mainly rural, less developed from the tourist point of view, with the presence of historical and artistic heritage not always valued. The Emilia-Piacenza section of the Via Francigena presents numerous factors of fragility to which the overall strategy tries to respond, through the individual pilot projects of the 6 Municipalities involved. The excellences of the territory (heritage network and historical buildings, the existing intermodality, Piacenza city, food and wine values) are not valued in relation to the network of historical paths. This aspect responds to

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the criterion of attractiveness on which regional policies have strongly focused, together with a perspective of a widespread and network project through which the whole proposal was conceived.

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