

Pilot Project of the City of Torino

Turin 2025. Toward a metropolitan spatial strategy

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Abstract

The document “Verso la strategia territoriale metropolitana” (“Toward a metropolitan spatial strategy”) is one step in the broader strategic planning process ongoing in the metropolitan area of Turin. The process will lead to the third Strategic Plan “Torino Metropoli 2025”, and will deal with the complex process of institutionalization of the Metropolitan City of Turin, which will be formally created according to the Law 56 of 2014.

“Verso la strategia territoriale metropolitana” aims at opening up a reflection regarding the possibilities, the building and sharing of a spatial strategy for the metropolitan area of Turin. The document derives from a structured interaction with the Municipalities, which actively contributed to the definition of the first draft of the Strategic Plan through the “Territorial Committee”, and it is a move for triggering further the informed debate among public administrations, social actors and

economic interests, the civil society, research, etc... For these reasons the document cannot be considered a thorough draft for the strategy and some issues, central for its spatial grounding at the metropolitan scale, are not taken in consideration in this document, because they need further development through interaction with relevant actors.

The main objectives of this document are:

- showing the good reasons pushing for a spatial strategy for the metropolitan area of Turin, benefitting a number of actors and population strata;
- reflecting on the possible contents of the strategy by highlighting the specific characteristics of the metropolitan region;
- focusing the actors' attention on specific issues sustaining the vision and on the tools for intervention;
- supporting the interaction with Local Authorities and showing the visions, issues and questions that have emerged in the process;
- outlining a path for incremental strategy building and implementation.

Today Turin is a complex metropolitan region, which is connected to short-and-long-range networks of both material and immaterial nature. It is a plural city, lively and used by multiple populations; it has a significant articulation of landscapes and great ecological variety which generate value, but are quite fragile and require constant care. The region has recently had great land consumption trends. Despite the efforts in supporting public transportation, the use of automobile prevails.

Since 1990s, Turin moved from a traditional industrial model toward a more diversified economic base: tertiary, tourism and culture-related activities. It regenerated central and peripheral areas as well. Today it faces the crisis by leveraging both long-standing economic activities and innovation.

Turin, the future "City of opportunities" for citizens and enterprises.

In 2025, Turin will offer to its citizens, city users and entrepreneurs a lively and livable city, open to innovation and with high environmental and social quality.

In 2025, Turin will have managed a paramount change in its history, having fostered manufacturing and makers' entrepreneurship, having favored the start-up of new local firms and clusters connected globally, guided an ecological transition and increased urban resilience, having put green and water infrastructures at center stage as they are fundamental assets for urban and environmental quality. It will have promoted social innovation and inclusion.

In 2025 Turin will have invested in urban re-use, recycling and regeneration, avoiding land consumption and starting new and more sustainable economies. It will have

started a great process of retrofitting for its building stock and promoted the development of cultural heritage and landscape, beyond mere growth.

In 2025, Turin will be a hub for a greater region, supported by the East-West infrastructural corridor along the Alps to France, down to the Po River valley to Venice. The region will articulate along the UNESCO Langhe Roero Monferrato hills and toward the Liguria shore, to Genoa and Savona and to the Apennines, and to Nice along the Tenda railway. It will be a node for a transnational link beyond the Alps (with Grenoble, Chambéry, Lyon, Geneva), thanks to both long-range and short-range railway that will make the regional and interregional environment accessible and fully integrated.

In 2025, Turin will be a smart city, where technological devices increase the quality of life for all; where social innovation will groove given that a city of opportunities is able to enhance wide-spread social intelligence, to improve individual and social capacities, enabling their skills to become connected, gain visibility and ground in the public realm.

Turin in 2025 will have explored new fields of know-how, by directly linking research, development and production, by structuring innovative relationships between places and enterprises, supporting new ways of experimenting with co-working spaces, fab-labs and living labs. It will have increased the services enabling start-ups and incubators - both private and public - also thanks to the strong role of the University of Turin and Politecnico di Torino.

By 2025 the Metropolitan City of Turin will have a new rationale for investment: supporting processes rather than products: before investing in public assets and infrastructures, it will enable people. It will invest in research, education and capacity building; improve public administration which will serve citizens and enterprises. It will have intensively appreciated its environmental assets and parks by transforming them into open-air sport facilities where young as well as aged people can practice sports, favoring in this way active aging and new employment opportunities.

In 2025 Turin will have affirmed and consolidated a strong democratic citizenship at the metropolitan scale. The Metropolitan Railway Service (Servizio Ferroviario Metropolitano) will support territorial mobility and cohesion, access to service and work. The Corona Verde will connect paths and ecological networks at the metropolitan scale for the people to use. The pilot projects for enhancing the quality of public space will be the occasion for learning and disseminating similar quality across the region, in city centers and in the outskirts. The housing policy will cover the metropolitan region, and will be fine-tuned for a large range of promoters and users.

At the heart of Torino 2025 project one can see the city's nature and geology, water systems and parks, governing the ecological transition and an intelligent management of environmental and hydro-geological risks.

In Turin of 2025 one will travel on public transportation, which will be frequent and accessible for all. The Metropolitan Railway Service will have changed the geographies of metropolitan central places, not only for the exchange stations of the first belt around the city, but also in other stations which in 2015 are still peripheral. Bicycle lanes will be widespread and well connected, secure and integrated with other public modes of transportation. A vast car sharing offer will allow any sort of movement in the region. The widespread electric automotive engines will dramatically lower the polluting emissions.

This vision suggests a future which is possible but not simple to reach nor obvious. Change requires re-setting development problems, a new insight and political agenda, innovation.

In order to achieve this vision, Turin needs a metropolitan spatial strategy: to gather actors and projects around a shared vision, to start the projects that can root the metropolitan culture down into practice, for the fact that they affect service provision and performance for citizens (health, housing, mobility, quality and use of public spaces) and for stakeholders (business innovation, simplification of the public administration/enterprise interface, smart infrastructures).

The issues to be faced in this vision are known: the spatial organization of the health and the research/higher education clusters, the design of a policy for new production settlements and for housing; transportation policy and green infrastructures; intervention for the quality of public space and the smart city. The next step toward the vision is to share a priority agenda and set actual projects to be implemented in the mid-term.

The construction of this spatial vision involves multiple actors: the Metropolitan City authority, the Municipalities of the metropolitan area, the Piedmont Regional government, Torino Strategica, the actors in the research cluster (e.g. Universities), economic and social stakeholders, metropolitan citizens.

In order to be effective, the spatial vision needs to be selective. This implies that the agenda will be self-contained in time and limited in terms of priority issues and questions, in relationship to the emerging problems for Municipalities and the other social and institutional actors to be involved. According to this core agenda, a limited set of project arenas will be opened up at the metropolitan level, each one identifying a specific policy coalition for support, the resources to be brought concretely into play, the policy devices for enacting and implementing these projects.

The strategy-making process requires a number of more or less formalized policy devices such as fora or agencies. This is expected to generate diverse outputs (e.g. strategic actions, pilot projects) and it is nurtured by different governance schemes (agreements, networks, local coalitions, ...). Some governance activities are already in place and can be quickly be put at work for promoting and managing the spatial strategy-making: the agency for metropolitan mobility, the one for green areas. In other cases the Metropolitan City government will be required to generate new devices, such as an agency for territorial cohesion and spatial policy, cooperating with Municipalities, monitoring and evaluating actions and supporting local administrations in the management.

The positioning of the spatial strategy (and plan) in the current planning system should be reconsidered. Today one should avoid the multiplication and complexification of institutional tiers, planning tools and administrative functions. A simple rationale can connect the spatial strategy to ordinary local planning activities which will continue to manage regulation, while spatial visioning, guidelines and strategic projects will be managed at the metropolitan scale.

The strategic plan will envision the development for the metropolitan region of Turin and the governance tools to achieve it.