

# Case study summary report – Catania

## 1.1 History and context

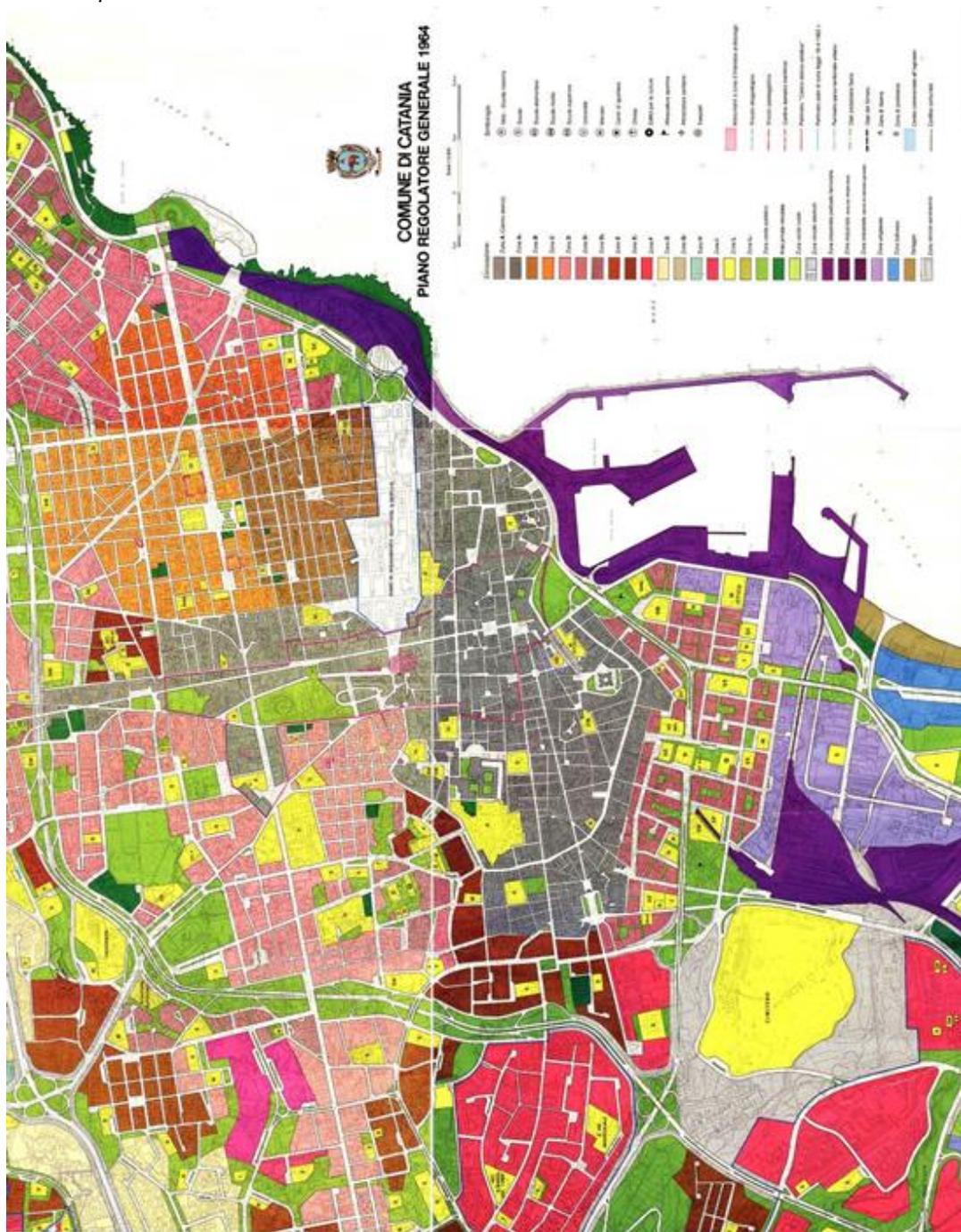
Catania is the second largest city of Sicily after Palermo, located on the east coast facing the Ionian Sea. It is the main city of the Metropolitan City of Catania, one of the ten biggest cities in Italy, and the seventh largest metropolitan area in Italy. The population of the city proper is 320,000 while the population of the city's metropolitan area, Metropolitan City of Catania, stood at 1,116,168 inhabitants (ISTAT census 2011).

Catania was founded in the 8th century BC by Chalcidians from Naxos. In 1434, the first university in Sicily was founded in the city. In the 14th century and into the Renaissance period, Catania was one of Italy's most important cultural, artistic and political centres.

Despite occupying the central position of the Gulf of the same name, the city of Catania does not have a secure natural harbor. The frequent and violent storm surges eliminated any attempt to artificially protect the current site, since the project of King Alfonso De Aragon. In the period of the beginning of the great international trade the fury of the sea was added to that of Etna. The very large front of the 1669 lava flow reduced the surface of the narrow port area, making the hopes of the citizens who wished that the lavas formed a sort of loop, to make up for the lack of a natural harbor, but it was a vain hope. Only at the end of the arduous process of reconstruction of the city, razed to the ground by the earthquake of 1693, the problem of the construction of the port was faced in a modern way.

The implementation by the Bourbon government, starting from 1792, of the "Zahara" project made it possible to build a first arm of the outer dock. The competition induced by the increased demands of commercial traffic, following the development of steam navigation, led, in 1872, to the realization of the "Fiocca" project which was completed in the early 1900s when the local administration faced the landfill problem, which cannot be postponed due to the increase in cabotage. The construction of the "south pier" (molo di mezzogiorno in Italian), built for this purpose since 1912, was completed starting from 1933. With the great works undertaken over the years between 1933 and 1938 the port of Catania took on its present appearance. The relocation of the fishing port allowed the connection by rail of the new Crispi pier with the Central station.

Figure 0.1: Comune di Catania, Piano regolatore generale, edited in 1964: in dark violet the industrial areas and in violet the port area.



Source: Comune di Catania (2019)

## 1.2 Visions, goals and plans

No visions for relocation or regeneration have been formulated, and the port has continued to perform commercial functions, and the industrial areas that were abandoned in the 1980's have not been subject to regeneration except for a few specific modifications. No systemic policy has been approved with the aim of changing the functions of the port of Catania, but only punctual integrations for new projects and functions.

### 1.3 Laws and regulations

The town plan of Catania, (PRG) was drafted in the 1960's and approved in 1969. It is now being revised by the Planning Office of the municipality of Catania. The masterplan for the port district was approved in 1978, many years before the establishment of the Port Authority of Catania in 1994. The Catania Port Authority started the preparation of a new port regulation plan (PRG) in 2002 and submitted it to the Catania City Council for administrative approval in 2013. However, it was never approved due to the large amount of buildings in the plan. The process of drafting the PRG stopped here.

The Port Authority draws up statutory three years operational plans (POT), and the last one was drafted and approved in 2017. It covers transformation activities over the coming three years period, but interventions of the POT are only implemented, if they are consistent with the masterplan from 1978, or by derogation by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport.

In 2011 the province of Catania, today a Metropolitan city administration, approves the territorial plan that takes note of the waterfront transformation projects where these are relevant from the territorial point of view and represents the general framework of the theme on the metropolitan scale.

The regional urban planning law provides for a regional territorial plan, but this instrument has never been drafted.

The regional transport and logistics plan in 2004 defines the port system, describes the functional specialisations and balances the roles of the ports of Catania and Augusta.

### 1.4 Stakeholders involved

The main stakeholders are the following public actors and the large number of private companies in the Catania port.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Institutional competence</b>
Comune di Catania	Urban planning and policies
Città Metropolitana di Catania	Large scale and metropolitan territorial institution
Autorità di Sistema Portuale	Port management
Rete Ferroviaria Italiana – RFI	Railway infrastructures
Trenitalia	Carrier for railway service
Ferrovia CircumEtna – FCE	Metropolitan transport system (subway, local railway and transport by road)
Azienda Metropolitana Trasporti - AMT	Urban public transport carrier by road
Regione Siciliana - Soprintendenza Beni Culturali di Catania (BCA)	Cultural Heritage protection
Regione Siciliana – Dipartimento infrastrutture, mobilità e trasporti (DIMT)	Transport system
Marina Militare - Capitaneria di Porto	Navy activities and SAR
Società Aeroporti Catania - SAC	CTA airport management company

No visions have been formulated concerning the interaction between the port and the city in the previous plans, there has been no vision or plan for relocation or regeneration.

## **1.5 From visions to realisation**

There is no formulated and formally approved vision for a regeneration. Currently the existing plans envisage continued conventional port activities in the port of Catania. In the absence of the approved plans for the redevelopment of the waterfront, this will continue to be implemented through individual projects the approval of which depends on negotiations between the involved stakeholders, who are generally public actors.

Some regeneration steps have been taken. None of them have yet been completely implemented, but we can identify some seeds of development:

- a new metro station in Piazza Giovanni XXIII, opposite the central station, has created an urban space that makes one imagine how the area will look like after the regeneration of the central station;
- Vacant industrial areas in the north are being transformed, without coordination or plans, into various purposes, including the new Judicial Offices in Viale Africa (former Poste Italiane building) and a transformation of the "Archi della Marina" viaduct into an urban walk towards the Ursino castle and in front of the UNESCO site buildings;
- a ZES (*Zona Economica Speciale* – Economic Special Zone) which could increase the production capacity of the area on the southern border of the commercial port.

## **1.6 Overall results and outcomes**

There has not been any policy or intention to regenerate in the port of Catania, and only a few developments have been seen. On this background, we cannot talk about results or outcomes. The active decisions to regenerate have been based only on political agreements without any concrete regeneration policies, and only a few developments have been seen, in particular in railway and urban underground lines development driven by national government.

## **1.7 Social and identity impacts**

No impacts can be described, as no regeneration policies or plans have been implemented or completed.

The city, anyway, demands regeneration and relocation of activities along the waterfront, because the current impasse situation brakes the development of the city-port.

All the interviews confirm the need for regeneration and are waiting for a solution in terms of a clear municipal strategic plan.

## **1.8 Main barriers and drivers**

The main barriers are the lack of an appropriate planning, the availability of public funding, and the total reliance on public stakeholders. Archaeological, historical-artistic and environmental impact assessment are required in connection with new infrastructure along the waterfront, which may also work as a serious barrier for the regeneration.

The main driver of the development is, in fact, the new underground railway line Catania Centrale - Catania Acquicella, which will definitely change the face of the "Archi della Marina" viaduct area: All the other transformations seem to be consequences of this new railway project. All the stakeholders hope that the railway project will brake the impasse.

In connection with the railway line Catania Centrale - Catania Acquicella, project procedures, a good practice in terms of shared governance has been applied. A round table of the public stakeholders take planning and design decisions and realize shared solutions, waiting for drafting of new coherent masterplans incorporating the new needs and market trend.

Round table are based on the institution so called "Conferenza di servizi" (by Italian law n. 241/1990), that can decide shared solutions for specific projects of services and infrastructures.

## **1.9 Status of the case study work**

Currently the case study activities have been undertaken:

- ten interviews were completed to public stakeholders, services managers, urban designers and people engaged in social empowerment activities (although we could identify new subjects to interview by June);
- site inspections and photo collections have been made;
- we have collected a specific bibliography on the city and the transformations of the waterfront;
- we have developed maps (presented in draft versions) useful for understanding the status of possible transformations described in interviews and drafted in official documents (approved or on-going).

The draft report will be shared with the municipality of Catania for further analysis of barriers, drivers and outcomes and for evaluation of the trasferibility of the applied governance model."