

Cultural master plans and middle cities: the innovative experience of Sarzana in Italy

The paper reflects on the case of the cultural master plan of Sarzana, a small city in Italy, starting to impose itself as the cultural magnet in the region, thanks to an intelligent planning of cultural activities and new infrastructures. The case is particularly relevant on the Italian scene, as it is the only middle city working on such a big scale and complex project. The cultural master plan, resembling the traditional master plan, focuses on culture as the driving force of a local and non local urban development, promoting economic growth, community cohesion, visibility at different scales, and physical revitalization. Promoted by local governments but sustained by a network of multiple stakeholders, the cultural master plan is a project aiming at developing the urban setting, creating active or future policies, activating cultural activities and spaces, integrating resources and involving public and private actors at different levels.