

Marconi District: Public Spaces in Prati dei Papa, Roma

Viale Guglielmo Marconi, Via Oderisi da Gubbio

Located on the edge of the historic city, the area of intervention affects a quadrant of the city in which high building and population densities represent one of the most recognisable features of the urban structure.

Several urban expansions, which were planned in the 1931 Master Plan, but began in the 1950s, have contributed to the layout of the area today. It is characterised by a mesh of regular blocks that occupy the entire flat river bend extending south of the Trastevere station in the Municipality XI territory.

The station borders the northern edge of the intervention area. The railway embankment, which delimits the alluvial plain at the foot of the Portuense hill to the west, defines the western boundary of the district.

Viale Marconi is located along the area's western border, beyond which the settlement stops at the Tiber.

The investment allocated to the maintenance of public spaces and services is barely sufficient to guarantee standards for residents. The area is also burdened by a heavy load of through traffic from the southern quadrants of the city.

This area of the city lacks quality public spaces, despite being one of the gateways to the city's historic centre. To enhance its 'gateway' role, the area which needs to be enhanced by neighbourhood public spaces must be improved, in addition to sustainability and resilience measures to mitigate the impact of the changing socioeconomic and climatic conditions the city is experiencing.



Approx. site area

The area of approximately 72 ha is characterised by a predominantly flat terrain that slopes down to the south to the bank of the Tiber River.

Key information

The area is densely populated, with 25,737 inhab/km². There is a high elderly population and the number of foreigners has grown in the last 10 years in line with the municipal figures (11.6%).

Priority areas & main expectations:

The project must aim to restore relations between the area and the local community. This can be achieved by reviving the central importance of public spaces (focusing first on the existing services and squares) by reorganising the road network and the concentration of cars, to create environmental islands, soft connection networks, which will enhance historical-environmental resources, permeability and soil forestation.

Site Presentation and Development Expectations



The area is characterised by morphological and functional inconsistencies; the area's strong local identity, combined with its urban and metropolitan dimension, makes it one of the main gateways to the city. This dual arrangement can be used by projects to enhance public spaces and pedestrians along ancient routes (via di Pietra Papa, via dei Prati dei Papa); however, these interrupt modern urban fabric has become another identifying characteristic of the area.

Another strong identifying feature of the Marconi district is its extensive path network. The main boulevard, which the area is named after, is a fundamental axis for urban mobility and is one of the best routes for connections between EUR, Trastevere and the Lungotevere system.

This avenue also connects the two bridges to the north and south, which allow the railway and the river to be crossed. Two squares (p.le della Radio, p.zza A. Righi) open in correspondence with them and, although of different sizes, form two of the main accesses to the district. Towards the west, a third access, with another square (p.zza A. Meucci), connects the neighbourhood with the southern area of Magliana and further on with Fiumicino airport, and conveys the flows towards piazzale della Radio through via Oderisi da Gubbio, a street with a strong commercial attraction on which, like the main viale Marconi, local functions overlap with the needs of urban crossing. Approximately halfway through the area of intervention, a further axis (via F. Grimaldi) cuts through the minute network of local distribution and, crossing the two longitudinal axes transversally, heads towards the Gianicolensi hills according to the route of the via Olimpica that was built for the 1960 Olympic Games.

The area is also served by regional railways through the Trastevere station, including the FL1, FL3 and FL5 lines (FL1 in connection with Fiumicino international airport) and national level connections. The selected area is more accessible due to a bus service that runs along all the main axes of the district, guaranteeing direct connections with EUR, San Paolo (Metro B) and Magliana to the south and with Monteverde, Aurelio and the historical city to the north.

Soft mobility also makes a significant contribution to the area's accessibility; the Dorsale Tevere cycle path runs along the riverbank at pedestrian urban level.

The area's main shortcomings that can be noted are the **low quality of public spaces**, **excessive vehicular through-traffic** and an **insufficient level of integration of the bicycle and pedestrian network** with services and the core network of mass public transport.

However, the district is very lively due to the widespread presence of commercial activities and public services (schools, market, parish services, post offices, etc.). There is still a lack of green and leisure time spaces, which are mainly concentrated in the squares and along the river, where sports centres alternate with recently built urban parks (Marconi overlook park).

Single-use vehicle parking is the main contributor to the physical and environmental degradation of the area. Public relational space is besieged at all hours of the day and night by continuous demand for parking, which also limits pedestrian and bicycle circulation.



Figure 1 - The scope of intervention. Source: Google Earth



Figure 2 - Piazzale della Radio. Above left the incomplete areas towards the railway embankment.
Source: Google Earth



Figure 3 - The archaeological area of Pozzo Pantaleo near the Porfina bridge on Via Portuense.
Source: Google Earth

The proposed intervention programme must be able to improve the quality of the environment and landscape by promoting its use by residents, and integrating the 'proximity' urban model.

The area's transformative potential lies in its abundance of plazas, buildings and historical relics. For example, centrally located public spaces, the Tiber River and its embankments, the Pozzo Pantaleo archaeological area or the ancient paths of the Prati dei Papa and Via della Magliana are ample redevelopment opportunities. In addition, squares, wide open spaces, existing public services and their external spaces represent a widespread resource deserving of a radical redevelopment, to create a new vision for the city.

The main objectives for the transformation of this area can be summarised as follows:

- Create a network of integrated public spaces accessible to all according to the '15-minute city' model.
- Redesign border areas to become better connected to the river basin and the existing urban fabric. Redevelop these areas in a way that enhances their environmental value, and potential to become more widely used public meeting spots.
- Enhance unbuilt buildings through energy-efficient retrofits; create new destinations that are integrated into the existing fabric.
- Expand cultural, educational and leisure activities in existing facilities, and ensure their maximum flexibility of use.
- Overcome physical and infrastructural barriers through solutions that favour pedestrian connectivity and soft mobility, accessibility and sustainability.
- Enhance and expand outdoor public spaces of services and squares as well as existing historical and environmental resources.
- Reorganise the road system, to create environmental islands by concentrating cars and creating soft connection networks and pedestrian spaces, soil permeability and forestation.

The 'regeneration' path envisioned for this area represents an opportunity to implement the guidelines of the Giunta Capitolina; this has directed policies and interventions that rethink the urban ecosystem according to a vision of a polycentric, accessible and sustainable city, with neighbourhood units equipped with proximity services that can be reached on foot and by bicycle within 15 minutes. This vision for the area will add to the plurality of functions/roles the area is already characterised by.

Interventions that improve soil quality by recovering green and permeable spaces will help contain the heat island effect, and will reorganise the area's routes, so that paths are more favoured. Interventions should also boost safety and accessibility to the area's main activities, particularly those of a commercial nature. In this sense, numerous projects have already been planned by the Capital Administration, ranging from the creation of new riverfront parks, the construction of new cycle routes on the main axes (cf. PUMS), and the expansion of the tramway network towards San Paolo.



Figure 4 - Historical resources: the arrangement of the archaeological area of Pozzo Pantaleo. Source Google street view



Figure 5 - Historical resources: degraded industrial archaeology in Via A. Meucci. Source Google street view



Figure 6 - Historical resources: the route of Via dei Prati dei Papa. Source Google street view



Figure 7 - Historical resources: Via della Magliana vecchia detaches from Via Portuense near the Porfina bridge.

City climate priorities and specific environmental challenges

In the context of the climate neutrality objectives that the European Union has established in the [European Green Deal](#), Roma Capitale, with the updating of its [Action Plan \(PAESC\)](#), has committed itself to achieving the goal of a zero-emission city as soon as possible, no later than 2050. This objective will be pursued, not only by continuing and reinforcing the actions planned up to 2030, but also by implementing innovative strategies and solutions (see [PAESC](#) and in particular Section 18.3). These include the most relevant for the area, such as:

- **energy-environmental efficiency** of the entire public and private building stock;
- building practices and urban regeneration **without new land consumption**;
- **zero-emission** mobility and facilitating walking and the use of local or shared public transport;
- local production and storage of energy from renewable sources;
- **forestation and renaturation** of all suitable, vacant or degraded areas in the city;
- transformation of the city into a **Smart City** and smart working as the preferred working mode for all citizens for activities that can be performed remotely;
- Widespread use of **Nature Based Solutions (NBS)**, including infrastructure and spatial planning, for increasing city resilience to climate change.

Efficient and intelligent buildings, low environmental impact mobility systems and the re-naturalisation of urban land appropriately linked to new welfare policies and the enhancement of the historical and cultural heritage are therefore the pillars of the new city regeneration strategy.

In spite of the recent pandemic and financial shocks at a global level, Rome is continuing its renewal drive through numerous urban and territorial regeneration projects, including the drafting of the Ambito Tevere Strategic Operational Programme, which, while lapping up the scope of intervention, proposes a set of objectives and actions aimed at rediscovering a new relationship between the city and its river on the basis of three guiding principles: **development of green and blue infrastructure, energy efficiency and sustainable mobility.**

The selected area lends itself to becoming an urbanistic laboratory within which to experiment sustainable interventions in an urban space where 'hard' and impermeable built materials have definitively eroded natural space. The design solutions are called for to recover as much public space as possible to serve residents, integrated with a new network of relations that privilege cyclists and pedestrians. The buildings, new and/or recovered, must be highly energy efficient (NZEB) and guarantee maximum flexibility of use.

In particular, due to the high building density and concentration of traffic flows, the area is affected by the heat island phenomenon and the effects of air pollution. Proposals must take into account the above-mentioned risks and adopt suitable design solutions to counteract the effects of these risks, mainly due to the progressive levels of sealing of the urban soil under consideration.



Figure 8 - Services and public relation spaces: the local market besieged by parked cars. Source: Google street view

Specific planning rules and regulations

The western edge of the intervention area falls within the **Strategic Planning Area Railway Belt**. The Strategic Areas identified by the General Regulatory Plan concern some "signs" (natural or anthropic, completely or partially preserved) that have marked the development of the city and its transformation plans over time. The cartography attached to the Regulatory Plan has a **guiding** character for the **purposes of planning** interventions and can be consulted at <http://www.urbanistica.comune.roma.it/prg/elaborati-indicativi/i8.html>.

In particular, the Charter of Objectives defines a series of actions that, through different types of intervention, contribute to the construction of a strategy capable of enhancing places, urban fabrics and open spaces within the framework of a unitary programme aimed at strengthening and integrating the areas close to the railway ring, which often have not reached the levels of consolidation and fulfilment that characterise the identity of the historic city.

Prescriptive elaborate Systems and Rules 1:10,000

Some of these places are also classified in the prescriptive elaborations of the PRG as Areas for the Enhancement of the Historic City (NTA, art. 43), "constituted by fabrics, buildings and open spaces, characterised by inconsistencies and imbalances of a morphological and functional type, in which to operate with completion/transformation projects capable of achieving new conditions of morphological-environmental quality, oriented to the consolidation/relaunch of residential use and of the functional complexity of the contexts".

Specifically in the project area are:

1. Development Area A5 Via Portuense
2. Area of enhancement B11 Piazzale della Radio
3. Area of enhancement B13 Piazza A. Meucci

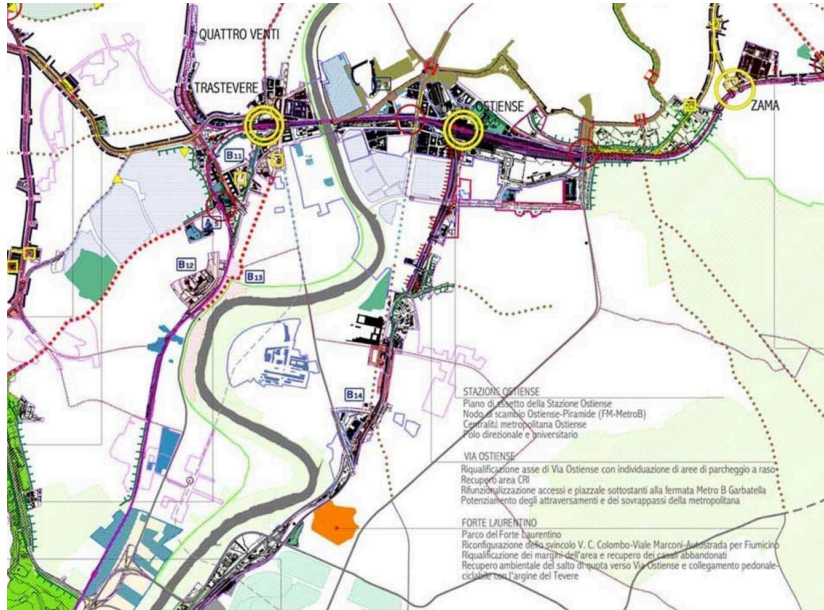


Figure 9 - Extract Table of Objectives of the Strategic Planning Area Railway Belt

Prescriptive draft Ecological Network 1:10,000

With the exception of the presence of a Completion C component of the Ecological Network (art. 72 NTA) delimited in the area of Piazza A. Meucci square, the area of intervention is not affected by other components of the Ecological Network.

Completion component C concerns elements that complement and further connect the Ecological Network and this to the 'settlement system' and for them, actions must be developed aimed at the preservation or extension of natural values and integration with the other components according to criteria of sustainable mobility with a prevalence of cycling and walking.



Figure 10 - Services and public relation spaces: the garden in p.zza A. Meucci, completion area of the Ecological Network. Source Google street view

Language requirements

Proposals must be submitted in Italian or English.

City-specific awards

In addition to the provisions of the Common Rules of the Call for Proposals, a public event organised by the City with a presentation and exhibition of the best projects is planned.