

DEFINITION OF THE URBAN PROXIMITY SYSTEMS

First result of the research

LEGEND

In these schemes it is important to represent the process that give the opportunity to arrive to the final solution of the generation of the urban proximity systems. A lot of different solutions were tried in order to understand which of these satisfied and enabled the identification of a project area. I conceptualised the area with the use of some colors and forms:

	Area of the system		Project area		Residential area
	Landscape value area		Health area		Lake
	Core of ancient formation		Commercial area		Infrastructures

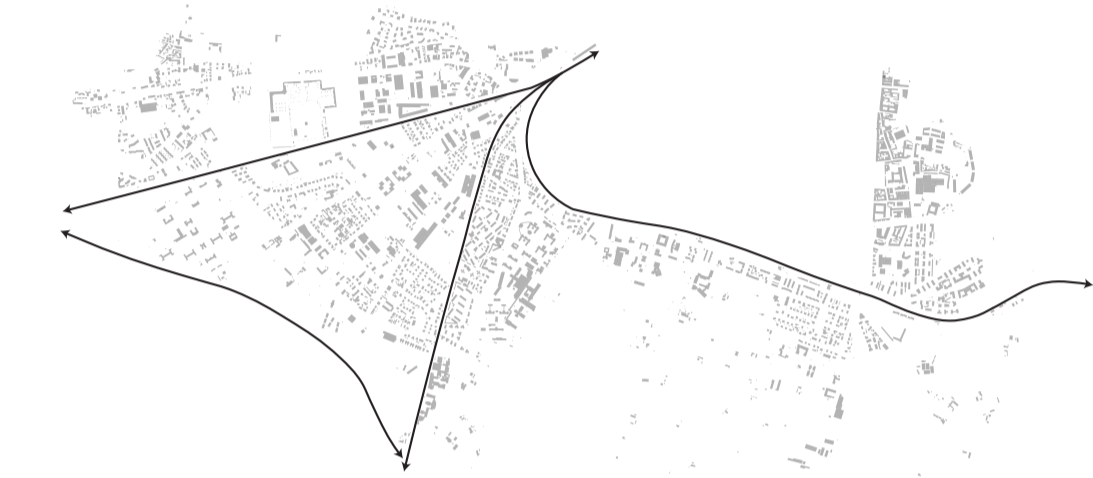
NIL'S EXAMPLE

The same process was carried out for the city of Milano and the creation of NILS, i.e. nuclei of local identity. They represent some territorial urban areas that are not delimited by rigid boundaries, but by variable borders capable of changing, overlapping and trespassing into each other. In these, it is possible to see the different single entity that are then put together in order to define the new conformation of the city of Milano.



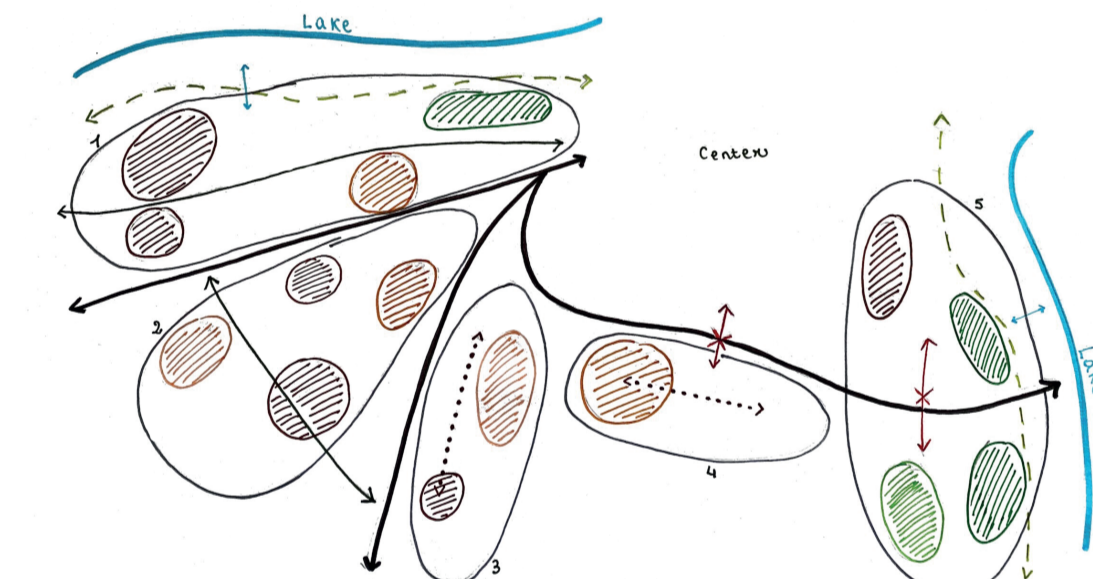
CONCEPTUAL IDEA

In the case of the southern periphery of Mantova, before arriving at the definition process of the six urban proximity systems, a series of sketches were made in order to understand which were the main characteristics of the area and which connections, weak or strong, had to be stressed within the suburb in order to define new urban areas. The idea is to identify centralities that are already present within the territory and that can become polarities inside it, capable of reactivating the periphery by making it autonomous and independent. In fact, the creation of these urban proximity systems aims to create centralities that no longer gravitate, like satellites, around the centre, but which have everything they need to be autonomous and easily reached by all. The sketches were made from the map of the southern periphery of Mantova and take into account the most important elements that characterise it.



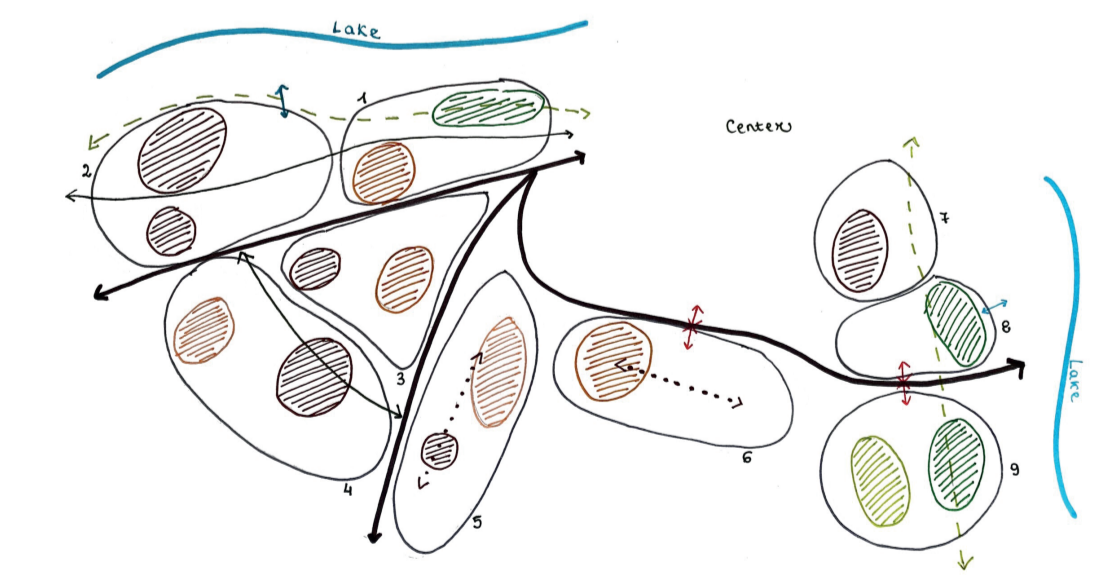
FIRST SKETCH

The **first representative sketch** tried was one that started from the permanences of the territory and defined areas between these traces of the past. It was considered inside also all the relations that are present, such as: strong connections, i.e. roads that link several entities, which are marked with a continuous line; weak connections, i.e. roads within the systems, which are marked with a dotted line; green connections, i.e. cycle paths that have a landscape value and connect with natural elements and the lake. Also the different centralities of the districts were highlighted.



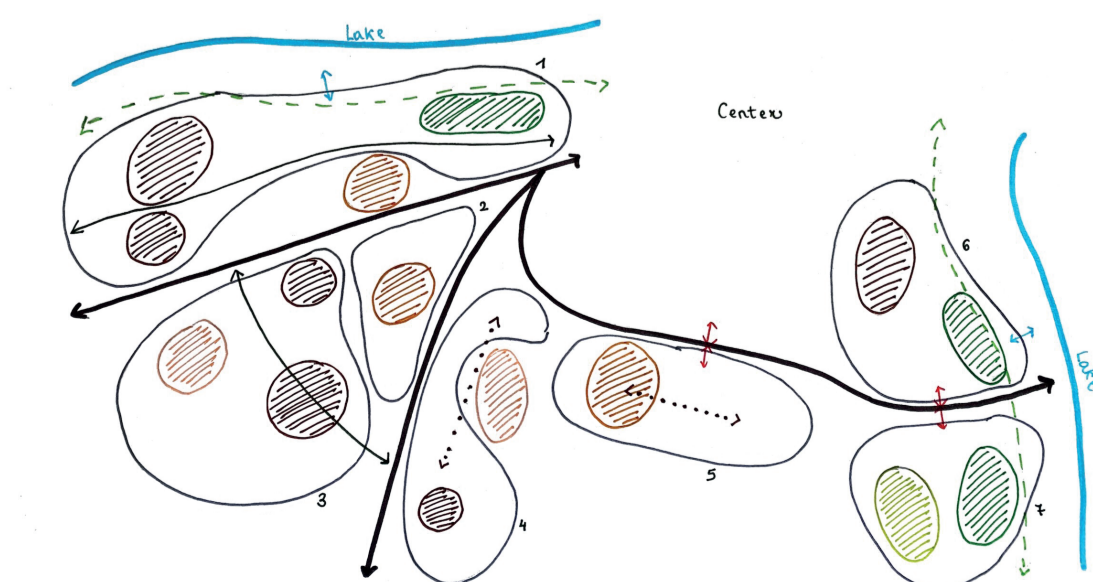
SECOND SKETCH

The **second representative sketch** is an attempt that was made to fragment all the elements that made up the urban proximity systems in the previous proposal, in order to include another possible conformation of the urban settlement. In this case, the idea is to identify at least one area of special interest within each local area to ensure the possibility of creating new centralities. These centralities provide the possibility of creating new urban proximity systems capable of functioning both autonomously and in connection with other systems, which contain other functions.



THIRD SKETCH

In the **third representative sketch** it was decided to define urban proximity systems that could reflect the new conformation of the Mantovan periphery. Compared to the previous two, some changes have been made in order to make the areas of interest more homogeneous to each other. In this case, it was decided to consider some entity, like the hospital of "Carlo Poma" and the commercial area of Te Brunetti as a single centrality in its own right that can be reached by all the other neighbouring systems. Also in this case, it was considered the different types of connections between the new urban systems.



a FOLLOW THE PERMANENCES

The diagram described here represents the first hypothesis for the definition of urban proximity systems within the territory of the southern suburbs of Mantova. As the first step of the process, it was decided to start with some of the elements that were already present in the area and had characterised it for years. It is possible to talk, in particular, of the **infrastructures**, which represent the real permanences and traces of the past that have determined the growth and evolution of the periphery, as shown in the previous tables. Indeed, the buildings adapted to the terrain and developed mainly along the main communication routes in order to be close to the main roads and railways. Thus, for the first hypothesis of the definition of urban proximity systems, it was decided to start from infrastructures, which already determine the conformation of the territory. In this first outline, they are considered as elements of the territory that cannot be overcome and passed, but constitute limits within which geometries must be defined; they cannot be assimilated to any geometric form as they are characterised by edges that are flexible and that want to adapt to the characteristics and peculiarities of the territory. In this first schematisation are obtained, therefore, **five urban proximity systems**, each characterised by the presence of different activities and services representing centralities that can be enhanced in the territory. It should be considered that this first conceptualisation is very similar to the current urban situation in the southern periphery of Mantova, characterised by the division within neighbourhoods. In this case, however, it is not possible to talk about administrative units because it is necessary to try to define new poles and centralities that are capable of functioning.

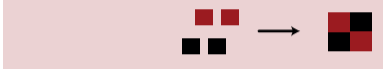
The first stage of the process involves the action of **following** and respecting the signs of the historical permanences of the territory, which in this case is the railway infrastructure.



b COMPOSING THE URBAN PROXIMITY SYSTEMS

The conceptually represented fourth scheme mainly considers the third one, described before, and defines the new urban proximity systems that can be identified in the territory. Based on my reasoning shown in the diagrams above, there are **seven urban proximity systems** that can be identified in the area in my opinion. They are made up of all the elements and components that the urban settlement has to offer and relate them to each other, in order to delimit new systems that can be interconnected and related, and that can determine new polarities within the southern periphery of Mantova. They are defined in an articulated manner by trying to bring together different functions and activities to improve the functionality and thus the proximity of the Mantovan area. As has already been described in the previous diagrams, infrastructures are described as urban limits and margins that are never exceeded in any of the hypotheses, as they are considered important historical elements and permanences to be preserved. The railway lines and roads, however, provide an opportunity to rethink the spaces they delimit, in order to make them more efficient in terms of proximity. Again, some of the areas in the space were not considered necessary to characterise urban proximity systems, as they create real polarities and centralities in their own right that do not represent or determine new situations or opportunities for the city. It is possible to speak in particular of the commercial and industrial area of Bellone and the "Carlo Poma" hospital in Pomplio, both of which are completely separate from the residential part of their respective districts. Also the green part under Te Brunetti's neighbourhood is not considered because it is very different from the other spaces identified.

The fourth stage of the process involves the action of **composing** new urban proximity systems that represent their own characteristics that can be enhanced in the territory.



c FRAGMENTATION OF THE TERRITORY

The second scheme represented in a conceptual way derives from the interpretation of the first, above, and its subsequent division into small fragments and units that can be assimilated as they share the **same functions** and characteristics within the territory. Again, the fragments that are defined are bounded by the infrastructure of roads and railway lines that represent urban limits and define the edges of the neighbourhood urban systems. So, in this second scheme, the idea was to understand how the territory of the periphery is constituted by considering its current land use and the different activities that can be identified in it, which may represent the new polarities of the neighbourhood systems. In fact, through the use of colours and different hatchings, it is possible to recognise specific functions: areas, public and green spaces, health-related services and, finally, areas dedicated to the residences. This diagram shows that **these functions and elements** are evenly distributed throughout the territory. In fact, they are not all concentrated at one point, but are well distributed inside it. So, in this way they can be enjoyed by several people and that they characterise and influence the conformation of the territory. It is then to be considered that each of these fragments resulting from the division of the territory, represents an element and an aspect of identity that must be valorised with pro-seismicity policies as it represents a potential for the project. In this second phase, therefore, no new urban proximity systems were identified, but an attempt was made to accurately identify all the units that characterise the territory in order to understand which of them can be stressed to define new urban polarities for the urban systems.

The second phase of the process involves the action of **fragmenting** the territory into small pieces in order to define peculiarities and new identities to be appreciated.



d DEFINING THE URBAN PROXIMITY SYSTEMS

In this last scheme, the fifth, it was possible to **define** which kind of new conformation is envisaged for the southern periphery of Mantova. Starting from the previous scheme that tried to compose and put together all the centralities, functions and activities identified within the area, in this phase it is possible to understand which are the real urban proximity systems that are needed to reactivate the area through the proximity theme and policies. Compared to the previous scheme, only **six urban areas** were considered in this last scheme; in fact, the Pomplio area has not been included in this group, as it is mainly characterised by green spaces and sports facilities (including the helicopter zone); areas that are completely different from the other urban systems in which instead residential, commercial, production and health areas are located. Even the area under Te Brunetti, which is predominantly green and of naturalistic value, has not been considered as a neighbourhood system, as it represents a separate entity and centrality that deviates from the neighbourhood policies of the additional units. All the other urban proximity systems identified, on the other hand, have very similar functions and activities and therefore actions and interventions that can be envisaged for one of them apply to all of them as they are homogeneous. Therefore, all these new local areas that have been defined must come into contact with each other, even if divided by infrastructures, in order to envisage a polycentric vision of the periphery. Only in this way, it will be possible to connect urban systems with each other, generating relationships and connections that can promote proximity and avoid the suburbs becoming isolated from the rest of the city.

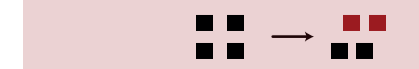
The fifth stage of the process involves the action of **defining** the new urban conformation of the territory in order to promote and enhance the policies of proximity.



e COMBINING THE FRAGMENT

The third scheme, represented in a conceptual way, starts from the analysis of the previous two and tries to comprehensively **compose urban proximity systems** that can meet the new needs of the city and new policies. Unlike the first scheme in which urban systems were defined simply by considering infrastructures as margins, in this case, although always remaining within the limits defined by the territory, an attempt was made to define new combinations between the elements in order to constitute urban situations and opportunities. The effort, in this case, was to systematise areas of the territory that contained different services and activities in order to create not only homogeneous local areas, but which also had heterogeneous components and elements that could characterise them and make them identifiable. It has to be considered that the centralities and the polarities, previously defined through fragmentation, that already exist within the territory are taken into account. In fact, no element is added that to date constitutes the urban situation of the periphery; the purpose is to try to put together what is present in order to make it functional in the territory. In this third phase of composition, as shown by the diagram, an area remained outside the margins and fluid edges of urban systems, as it already represents in itself a part that characterises and influences the territory and where it is difficult to create new opportunities and situations for the proximity; this last consideration refers to the area of the hospital Carlo Poma which today occupies an important part of the Pomplio district and does not allow its expansion.

The third stage of the process involves the action of **composing** the different fragments obtained previously in order to create systems that have their own identity.



f CONCEPTUAL SCHEME OF THE FINAL SOLUTION

The final scheme is conceptualised in this last step, as it is considered necessary to understand what these new urban proximity systems are and how they can be identified in the territory. Thus, the **first urban system** identified is that comprising the Borgo Angeli and Bellone districts. The most important characteristic of this local area is that it overlooks Superior's lake on one side and is limited by the railway line on the other. In this system, it was considered appropriate not to include the commercial area and the cemetery one because they are already established areas to which it is not possible to add new services and, particularly in the case of the cemetery, it is not possible to consider in the neighbouring area because there is a restriction. The **second and third urban systems**, on the other hand, were obtained by fragmenting the neighbourhoods of Bobichiano and Dosso Corso. Both local areas are characterised by the presence of similar activities and functions, and in particular residential, commercial and health completion areas and zones subject to implementation instruments. These two systems represent a real challenge in the southern periphery of Mantova as they are bounded on all three sides by infrastructures (railway lines and the Southern bypass), which provide an opportunity to rethink the territory within these boundaries. The **fourth urban system**, on the other hand, is the one that links the Pomplio and Due Pini districts. In this case, the "Carlo Poma" hospital was not considered as it already represent a settling centrality that cannot be modified and, therefore, only influences the territory. Instead, it is possible to work on proximity in the residential part of the neighbourhood and in particular in Due Pini. The **fifth urban system** is the one that includes the Te Brunetti district; it is almost the same as the current solution in the periphery as it is already a system capable of functioning autonomously. Finally, the **sixth urban proximity system** is that of Fiera Colono and Valletta Valsicchi. This is the only area beyond the railway that it is near to the centre and, therefore, already has some proximity intrinsic characteristics that have to be explored. Also in this case, it is near the lake.

