Terrassa Old Town Integral Plan (Spain)

Description

In 1992, Terrassa - an industrial town with 200,000 inhabitants - started to redesign its old town with the aim to turn it again into a meeting, walking and shopping place and to recover it for the people.

Background & Objectives

In the last few years, old towns in our cities have undergone common problems, such as urban landscape and housing degradation, traffic congestion, population ageing, etc.

In the 90s, it was decided to analyse these problems and to set up an appropriate atmosphere in order to reach a solution. It was not only a urban development problem. The habits and thoughts of the different stakeholders who had an impact in the city centre, such as owners, traders, customers, drivers, should also be changed. A strong collaboration among them all led to designing an Old Town Integral Plan.

The new policies were defined in this Plan, i.e. the recovery of the social and commercial centre. This Plan aimed at giving back the centre its function of a citizens’ walking and meeting place, as well as its commercial nature, at eliminating the urban barriers, at fostering the cultural activities and at encouraging the renovation of homes and special spaces.

Implementation

In the Integral Part, the most emblematic intervention is the walking area, which consists of 22 streets and squares -20,000 m2- where traffic and parking are only allowed in the loading and unloading times.

In the Plan, only one type of paving and furnishings is described. For example, the brick red ceramics colour was selected as the background colour for the paving, as the Anglo-Saxon traditional material as well as the material of Terrassa in the 19th century.

Two criteria were applied to set up the urban furnishings. On the one hand it was decided to homogenize the items. And, on the other hand, great attention was paid to the design and distribution of items in order to suppress architectonic barriers. Comfortable benches, with a vertical back and armrest were selected. Lined-up trees and lights outside of the walking areas, as well as resting platforms in streets with important slopes were set up, etc.

A traffic plan defined the old town in and out doors, as well as the ideal location for temporary and resident parking lots.

Conclusions

The key issue for the Plan success has been the participation, that has been designed at 3 levels:
Institutional participation. The Generalitat of Catalonia and the Terrassa Chamber of Commerce have been crucial to promote the trade. The Blind Persons’ National Association (ONCE) and the Social Services National Institute (INSERSO) have been crucial to suppress urban barriers.

Cooperation among the municipal areas, in order to apply the same technical criteria about the new project operation and maintenance problems.

To plan with citizens. All the projects have been set up in collaboration with a monitoring commission made up by the traders and owners’ representatives, as well as by cultural, social and financial associations.

No new updates as of 2011.