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The development and promotion of the inland areas of the metropolitan city of Reggio Calabria through the enhancement and restoration of the Calabro-Lucane railway line - The greenway project, train-hotel and valorization of former railway stations

Immacolata Lore^{a,*}

^aMediterranean University of Reggio Calabria ,Salita Melissari, Reggio Calabria 89100, Italy

Abstract

The idea of recovery of a railroad section of the Calabro-Lucane railways is based on trying to reuse neglected and now useless structure, with the intent to promote a railroad which is the identity of the local communities. The main objective is the re-appropriation by the community of its cultural heritage in order to support sustainable processes of endogenous growth and improve the quality of life in rural areas. The paper, using a multidisciplinary approach, hypothesizes the possibility of the railway enhancement. Choosing among alternatives by proceeding lexicographically through a sequence of criteria is a common description of practical decision-making.

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Keywords: Greenways; lexicographical order; analysis costs and revenues; financial economic plan.

1. Introduction

This project proposal is part of a broader research program which aims to demonstrate a potential system of conveniences and opportunities for the territory. The future metropolitan city of Reggio Calabria is a subject crucial

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +0- 339-429-7029;
E-mail address: immacolata.lore.444@studenti.unirc.it

to the development of the surrounding territories, and an opportunity to rationalize and to network various aspects; including economical services for citizens and businesses by improving competitiveness and the 'attractiveness' of the territories, involving all the productive, cognitive and innovative capital in this wide area.

The new institutional entity may delegate, from the municipal level, the wide area programming functions, able to interpret the new needs of the economy and society and to boost new and expanded projects (*LaborEst* n°9 - www.laborest.org).

The project considers, therefore, the need to tie-in to the strategic plan for the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria. It intends to do this by providing realistic forecasts on the impact of future operations, which are coherent with the plans aims and expected strategic axis.

The study includes an estimate and identification of necessary resources, which may help to ensure the successful execution of operations. It is the hope of this study that such an awareness will prove vital in the selection and prioritization of actions going forward.

The idea of the valorization project was born, not by attempting to hide an infrastructure in a complete state of neglect, (which had in time become unusable and unproductive.) Instead it arose from the intent to promote and upgrade a railroad which has become a source of identity for the local communities. This railway possesses a special beauty in its contrast between, the engineering solutions of steel bridges and tunnels in stones and bricks, made in the early XX century, and on its location, nestled within the unspoilt natural environment; an area suited to agriculture and to the use of local resources.

The Calabro-Lucane railways, designed in the first decade of the 1900s and built, reduced gauge, in a period between 1910 and 1934, ran between Calabria and Basilicata. They were constructed to meet the local demand for transport over a total distance of 764.864 km.

After several historical events the Calabro-Lucane railways become Railways of Calabria, with an overall outcome, in the province of Reggio Calabria, of two lines, which connected the inland areas through the routes: Gioia Tauro-Cinquefrondi (Km. 32) and Gioia Tauro-Sinopoli (Km. 26). Especially significant is the Gioia Tauro-Sinopoli route, reduced in size in 1994 and finally closed in 2011. It passes through an area with a natural and cultural heritage of particular interest, closely connected to the local economy. The main objective of its restoration is the re-appropriation by the community of its cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) and its identity in order to promote, encourage and support sustainable processes of endogenous growth. It is hoped that the project will ultimately also improve quality of life in the rural areas. This study, through a multidisciplinary approach, wants to contribute to the hypothesis' for the development of the railway line through five stages:

- 1. An analysis of the Local Development Plan proposed by G.A.L. Ba.Ti.R. - Local Action Group of the Lower Tyrrhenian Reggio (a local development agency committed to promoting, encouraging and supporting endogenous growth processes and improving the quality of life of rural areas - *LaborEst* n°10 - www.laborest.org). This will mainly focus on the exploitation of existing environmental, cultural and social resources, with the aim of structuring a rural system suitable for the eco-sustainable development of the area. Investment in environmental and cultural tourism will be included in this;
- 2. The study of various possible re-uses of the abandoned railway, which can become an innovative means of developing and valorizing the territory. This could incorporate telling the story of the region's places and the production of local specialties;
- 3. The identification of an evaluation system that can evaluate not only the tangible benefits but also intangible ones through even the qualitative criteria;
- 4. The use of techniques of conservation of the built heritage, consistent with the historical importance of the artifacts that have now become part of the local population's identity;
- 5. The application of a system of valorization and management of the project hypothesis, which only through the integration and participation of the population and local institutions can restore the old ways of the train. The line, which runs through territories of considerable importance in terms of agricultural production and of exceptional natural beauty, can be revived through an integrated system of tourist development and promotion of local products.

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