

# Cantù (IT)

The future of traditions for  
an center town to live!

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**Team representative:** architect

**Location:** Cantù - center town

**Population:** City 40.063 inhab.

**Reflection site:** 100 ha

**Project site:** 8 ha

**Site proposed by:** City of Cantù

**Cooperation and Tutoring:** Order of Architects PPC of  
of Como Province

**Actors involved:** City of Cantù, DUC (Commerce Urban  
District)

**Owner(s) of the site:** City of Cantù

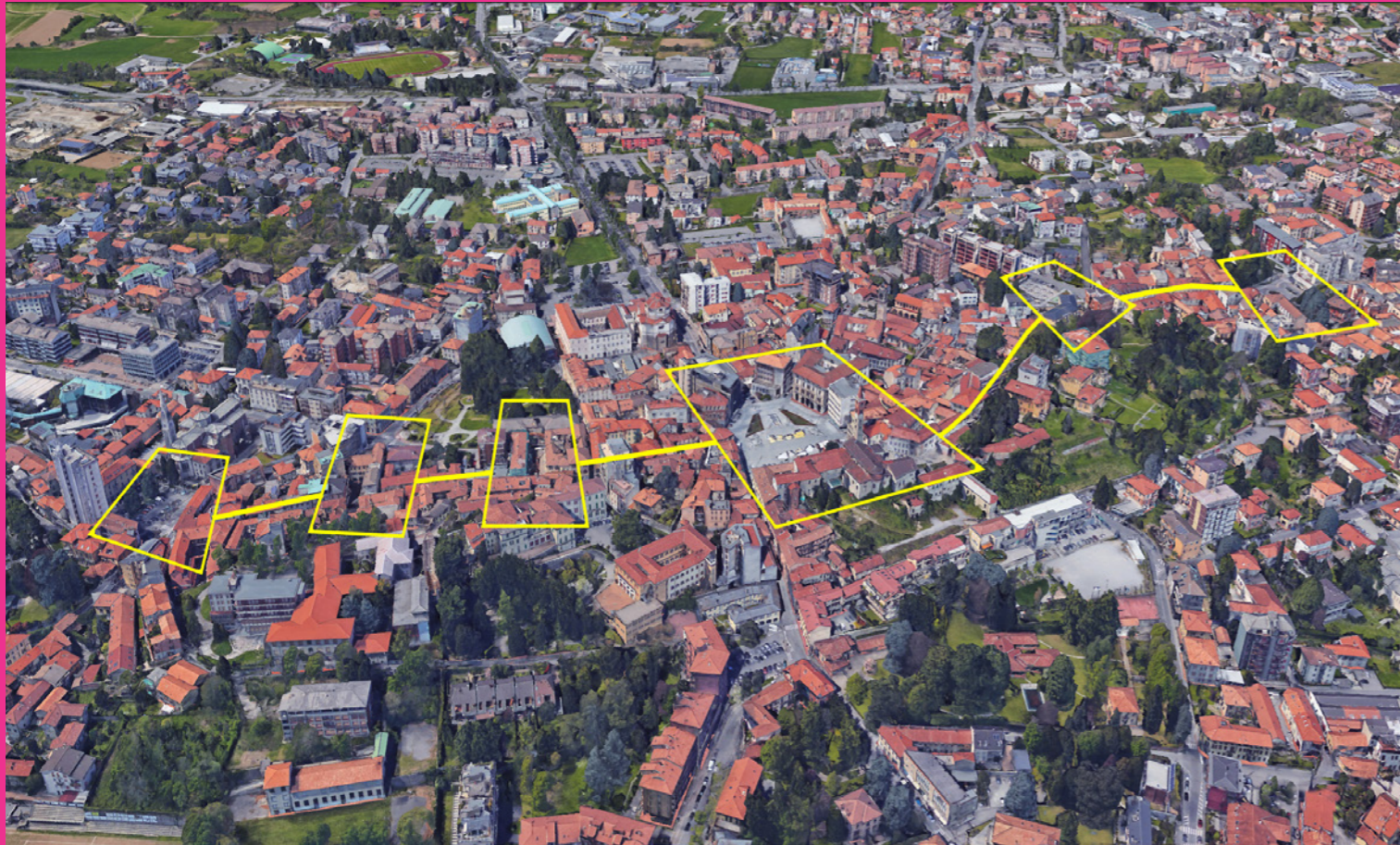
**Commission after competition:** The ideas, typologies  
and/or approaches developed by the awarded designers may  
be commissioned by the City or other partners. On the occa-  
sion of the national results event, a workshop will be orga-  
nized for the definition of the project/process guidelines.



## INHABITED MILIEU'S CHALLENGES

Cantù is a medium-sized city, in the center of the furniture industrial district, located in a hilly and strategic position, between the two branches of Lake Como and near Milan. It borders two international corridors, corridor VI, the Milan-Como-Chiasso railway lines (Cantù-Asnago station) and Como-Lecco, single-track (Cantù station close to the city centre, but currently underused.). It is also served by the nearby Malpensa-Milan and Orio al Serio-Bergamo airports and is at the center of important international exhibition centers (Cernobbio, Erba and Fiera Milano fairs). Cantù is known throughout the world for its important heritage linked to the production of furniture and the famous lace, but also in the sports field, with the award-winning Cantù basketball team. Despite being active with these important activities and enjoying a complex infrastructural system of territorial connection, it has lost its vitality and identity over the years and the latest historical events have affected commercial development in the city centre. The Municipality has put in place various actions to strengthen connections and reduce the road traffic in the central areas, together with an efficiency improvement of the belt parking system. The theme of urban public space is crucial for the revitalization of the city which has to face the challenges of commercial desertification. The city center coincides with the large Piazza Garibaldi, where the urban arteries converge. From the mid-nineteenth century it was the place for commerce and the center of city life. The redevelopment and pedestrianization of the square requires its redefinition. The City has identified the European site on the north-south axis, approximately 1 km across Piazza Garibaldi and which represents the heart of the Urban District of Commerce (DUC), launching the challenge to rethink spaces, buildings and routes, with particular regard to architectural barriers, to improve the quality, livability, attractiveness of the urban context in which the activities of the DUC operate and enhance the artisan cultural heritage and know-how of the city.

**HOW TO DEVELOP A PROJECT THAT SET UP THE CITY'S VALUES BY ACTIVATING NEW WAYS OF LIVING THE CITY CENTER IN SYNCHRONY WITH ITS RHYTHMS?**



**WHICH ELEMENTS TO PUT IN THE FIELD TO CREATE NEW LIVING, ACCESSIBLE AND SHARED PROXIMITY SPACES CONNECTED TO THE TERRITORY AS A PLACE OF COMMERCE AND OPEN-AIR CULTURE?**



**QUESTIONS TO THE COMPETITORS**

Some important projects will transform the City in the next few years, offering an opportunity to relaunch it at an international level. The “FULAWIM - Widespread Museum of Furnitures and Laceworks” project, identifies a system of buildings that will host exhibitions, events and activities related to these important traditions. The project was the only winner in Italy of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) European Programme. The first interventions are planned on Villa Calvi and the former Church of Sant’Ambrogio, and, subsequently, on the other areas. In addition to the buildings involved in the NEB, some of which are public property, some private individuals are willing to open their spaces to the city. The Palasport «Arena Casa del Basket» dedicated to the well-known basketball team, with 5200 seats, just 1 km from the centre. With the European site, located in the city centre, along the commercial axis, between Piazza Volontari della Libertà and Largo Adua, involving Via Matteotti, Via Roma, Largo XX Settembre, Piazza Garibaldi and Via Dante, the City is asking candidates for a project reactivate and characterize the commercial axis and the pedestrian area of the city centre, intervening on open spaces, with particular attention to slow mobility and the elimination of architectural barriers.

The new programs of the City, in synergy with the EUROPAN project, will be an opportunity for the design of a new City and its public spaces, enhancing its cultural and productive resources. In the European project, these elements must interface to create an identity-defining urban landmark connecting public cultural places, paths, green areas and the commercial system of the DUC. How to make the urban center of Cantù alive, sustainable and inclusive through new forms of mobility, relationships with the natural landscape and new commercial strategies? It is necessary to activate the meanings closest to everyday life, such as, for example, the pleasure of what is walk-accessible, of common spaces for a new sociality and coexistence.

