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Sustainable development provides a transectoral vision of urban phenomena, from a perspective of intra- and inter-generational justice and equity, also a global and anthropocentric orientation towards human settlement development processes. This perspective has revealed the importance of the systematization of information via indicators, recognizing the utility of these tools for decision-making in urban planning processes (Borja & Castells, 2004). In this context, this paper generates a diagnostic with regards to the role of systematized information in planning processes in the Santiago Metropolitan Region (RMS).

Through this case study, the use of systematized information in two planning processes that shape the development of the RMS is analysed. These instruments are the Regional Development Strategy (ERD) 2000-06 and the Metropolitan Regulatory Plan for Santiago (PRM) of 1997 and its modifications. The latter instrument defines land use and building controls for activities in urban areas, while the former identifies areas for strategic orientation and investment.

The objective is to know to the extent to which urban information constitutes a resource for planning. The study involves a retrospective analysis of relevant documentation generated by the planning processes, also an analysis of the finalized instruments. This enables the paper to establish: the planning strategy used by the actors, the sources of information (data base size, information managers, periods of updating), the role of public institutions, and the generation of objectives and sources to determine the type of information required, as well as the planning process itself: definition of the relations between sources; actors involved; and the coherence of their discourses.

The paper looks at what information is required and how it is used to draw activities together and optimize resources, rather than the creation of more and more information in the planning process per se. This is only possible once there is greater clarity regarding the information administered in the development of the RMS, the type of information produced and the monitoring and updating of this information.

This research is a contribution to the generation of indicators of sustainable development since it provides insights into indicators as a source of information in development planning processes. From this, specific contributions in terms of knowledge transfer and the optimization of activities in decision-making processes can be established.

Key words: Santiago, information, indicators, decision-making, planning