

Networks for Needed Public Space: Intervention around the Circunvalación Road of the Cerro de Santa Catalina, Jaen (Spain)

Juan Luis Rivas Navarro, Belén Bravo Rodríguez

Prof. Dr. Juan Luis Rivas Navarro, Universidad de Granada, Laboratorio de Urbanismo y Ordenación del territorio (Universidad de Granada), Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingenieros de Caminos, Canales y Puertos, Planta -1, C.P.: 18071, Granada (Spain), 0034646218357, juanluisrivas@ugr.es

Prof. Belén Bravo Rodríguez, Universidad de Granada, Laboratorio de Urbanismo y Ordenación del territorio (Universidad de Granada), Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingenieros de Caminos, Canales y Puertos, Planta -1, C.P.: 18071, Granada (Spain), bbravo@ugr.es

ABSTRACT

This presentation intends to reflect on the need to relocate certain concepts commonly used in current urban planning practice: scale, public space, neighbourhood, heritage, etc., Trying to contribute with a cartographic and operative dimension to this deconstructive process, and guide the design of space of human being, independly of scale.

Obviously, words are conventions that try to capture a reality that is almost always multiple, specific and conjunctural. Therefore, to encourage this mobilization of terms can and should mean a methodological mobilization as well.

On the other hand, we assume the conviction that this instrumental dimension is a very important source of knowledge. If we approach observables, that is, distinguish elements, read urban and regional entities, we will get a fundamental feeder, with the objective of deciphering behavior laws and we will be able to load the process with findings and uncertainties.

The urban fabric as an object of intervention is a historic area of the city of Jaen in Spain, within the old walls. Because of the strong topography of Cerro de Santa Catalina, where the city of Jaén is founded, it is difficult to relate different areas, and the presence of the roadway Circunvalación, which crosses from east to west and provides access to the Castle, gives character of border or urban edge.

The city ordered its major "urban assets" in other more accessible central locations: malls and tourist, cultural and administrative functions, emblematic public spaces, etc.. Thus, the structure formed by a capillary road, broken and steep, was based, exclusively, in a residential function. Over

time, aging population, lack of maintenance, internal migration in a difficult economic atmosphere, were the cause for a existing situation that urgently needs ideas to reverse this dynamic and bet on its revitalization.

The main objective should be to strengthen the social esteem, as a way to bring the rest of dynamics: emergence of activities and initiatives themselves and improving their urban landscape with participatory efforts and from administration; increasing its attractiveness for investment in financial and human capital, increasing their environmental conditions and levels of integration with the rest of the city, etc.

It is formulated a new meaning of the space that Giuseppe Dematteis would call "renewed territorial crossroads", consisting of a triple net: social, environmental, and urban, able to understand the current situation and to plan in relation to the crisis, improve space, ambience and scenery from social participation and citizen interaction and public and private economic pulse.

The cartography of a future network of collective spaces, the association between neighborhoods and the park's historic castle hill, the establishment of an environmental and discontinuous classroom that is interlaced with both urban systems, create a new distribution of taxes under the frame of the planning for these depressed central areas, or convert the urban infrastructure in a collective and symbolic place ... these networks would intertwine around the area of the road.

KEYWORDS

Collective space, urban infrastructure, network, urban regeneration, territory

1. INTRODUCTION

The urban territory needs to bring together the theoretical dimension and operative action of urban design. The theoretical resources, the extrapolations, the lessons learned and the traditions within the field as well the instrumental/methodological advances have to be applied to both planning and project. What's more, they should be implemented in both project and design, tried and contrasted for viability and adjusted. Our university and professional experience in recent years demonstrates that the bridges between planning and project and the advances made in science and academics are still weak and occasional.

Moreover, it is precisely in common spaces, where frequent social or human/city interaction takes place, the greatest need for theoretical compromise in the act of planning and project development is demonstrated. It is as if planning time and project efficiency were, in a way, incompatible with the profound reflection and the methodological experimenting on the area of intervention, with respect to the future processes or mechanisms, etc.

This paper is an attempt to bring these spheres of urbanism together, that are considered and are sources of knowledge, on their own, but are especially important when they are integrated into a work process. First, we try to reflect on the multiscale and multitemporal condition of city public spaces, that make the distinct networks that comprise it comprehensible, both in the present and potentially in the future (both transformed and possible). To do this, we propose to reformulate conceptual dimensions of public and urban space, adding certain variables that are considered fundamental in deciding about its actual conditions and, most importantly, to influence the decision making and planning of a project.

Secondly, in an effort to identify a starting point and the difficulties of treating urban fabric and spaces that demand a solution, we present a specific proposal for the city of J  en (Spain) developed in the context of an architecture and urbanism ideas contest. This project represents an effort, in the verification of theoretical suppositions in the academic field to amplify the conceptual borders of the spaces being treated, the necessity for their spacial redistribution, the exploitation of environmental resources, the strengthening and the expansion of the social fabric, etc.

2. FOCUS OF THE INVESTIGATION

2.1. The investigations objectives

We try to reflect on the necessity to delocalize certain general concepts currently being used in the practice of urbanism: scale, public space, neighborhood, patrimony, etc., to add a cartographic and

operative dimension to this deconstructive process, permitting us to orient the project towards human space, regardless of its scale.

We also start with the conviction that this instrumental dimension is a source of knowledge in itself. If we approach the observable, that is, distinguish the elements, read the urban and territorial entities, it turns into a fundamental source, always with the objective of deciphering laws of behavior and adding to the process of discovery and uncertainty.

This project investigates specific problems of the historic capillary network: the spacial and urban dimensions of infrastructure elements, like a highway bypass that severs urban relationships in a specific zone, the lack of symbolic conscience and a need for connection between a park and important elements of patrimony. But beyond these concrete circumstances, the possibility of constructing public or urban space as a multirelational system, the creation of internal territorial crossroads and the creation of multivalent functions that permit the friendly coexistence of urban, infrastructural and natural media is an argument for a methodological and disciplinary discussion that permits us to extrapolate solutions and study the conception of universal urban elements.



Fig. 1 Area of intervention. Image of "Paseo de Circunvalación" road.

2.2. The project area

The project presented is a proposal entered in the Public Call for Ideas for a Dynamic Recuperation Strategy of the Historic Center in Jaén (Spain) in June 2012. The first prize was awarded to the "Parkway" proposal, which focused on the future urban park on the hillside under the Santa Catalina Castle and the re-urbanization of the "Paseo de la Circunvalación", which is the artery that separates this natural pine forest from adjoining historical neighborhoods.

In Jaén, both government and neighborhood associations have worried about how to remediate the deterioration of the historic center, its depopulation and the poor state of the building fabric. These factors have resulted in a large number of empty lots and deteriorating buildings.

The relationship of this urban fabric, integrated in the historic area of the city into the Santa Catalina hillside is very difficult because of the aggressive topography and the presence of the “Paseo de la Circunvalación”, which cuts from east to west, converting the public space into a fringe area. This situation makes this hillside space, one of the most important in the city and the metropolitan area, virtually unavailable to the people of Jaen on a daily basis.

Other problems are the lack of different activities and the unemployment in the population, which shows how marginal and disconnected this area is when compared to the dynamics of the rest of the city.

3. METHODOLOGY

Developing an urban project means conforming to a number of standards that have proven successful during successive investigations and experiences of urban projects in diverse territories. Concentration on the particular characteristics of the object of study; the views and the field work that compile the maximum amount of information about the real state of the urban spaces, the interpretation of ortofotographic material and the capture of images of the urban and territorial landscape of the area studied, are some of the standard obligated instruments.

In the same way, to operate on a new territory we should reformulate the significance of the cartography, we should have the ability to mix the instruments at our disposal. Then, what is learned from the architectural language and its extensive possibilities can be used to read the urban territory. Most importantly:

- The capacity to read and write about the place, to identify the image obtained with the project, its actions with implied objects, and its potential uses with the space.
- The characteristic movements within subjective complex spheres that filter, select and direct the territorial information and construct purposeful diagrams.
- The ability to explain the relationships between the distinct pieces that formulate urban space.

The representation of the city and its urban territory could move much more in the field process in the field of the products, using the triple conception of A. Corboz (1983), in the production phase of significant and comprehension of the urban phenomena (detection of its spacial characteristics, its opportunities for transformation, its conflicts, etc.) as in the formation phase of ideas or projects.

To avoid the production of images-objects of closed products and to contribute to an enrichment of the criteria for possible interventions, we must increase the sensibility of the project in different scales and contexts.

In this attention to process, deconstruct the cartography to signify:

- The observation and comparing of the different times of the observed space.
- The decomposition of the elements in the map according to synchronic or functional connections.
- The directional juxtaposition of distinct elements, the mix of the interaction of these components.

In the following, we try to formulate this methodological attention that nourishes the production of the cartography that reads the territory, capable of constructing the Networks for the projection of public space, identifying shortfalls, dysfunctions, weak relationships, etc., but also local strengths and opportunities.

3.1. A mutiscale public space

A general problem in our territories is that a large part of the failures in urbanism in all types of urban entities: cities, agglomeration, intermediate projects, sectorial projects (water, highways, environment, ports, railways, historic patrimony), have been developed without an interiorized multi-scale analysis.

This leads to many plans and projects that have respected political economics on a regional or national level but have ignored the relationships on a local level and the continuity with the city; self-centered plans with the exclusive interests of the local investment community without taking into account of large scale elements like infrastructure or watersheds.

The multi-scale condition of the urban reality is manifested in all places, but also within urban “objects” (Solá-Morales, 2008), they can possess this relationship capacity with short, medium and long distances.

Since Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown began focusing on the mutable elements more than the stable ones in the incipient suburban city, passing by other contemporaries (Ito, Holl, Libeskind, Himmelblau, Koolhaas, MVRDV, Sejima, Laccaton y Vassal, etc) there has been elevated attention to the possibilities of interactions and relationships between elements and spaces – a concentration on the processes and the mutiscalar actions more than on the objects themselves.

Some consequences of this attention to the overlapping relationships between diverse scales are:

- 1 The construction of a continuous public space, lacing various spaces not necessarily of the same range.
- 2 Greater attention to the fringes, and by logical extension the interior as well, that for the contents of the space, an urbanism more strategic and less based on design of the interior.
- 3 The integration of systems and urban uses different in the project of public space: commercial use, residential use, the collective functions in closed spaces etc.

3.2. A public space that utilizes time as an operable variable.

Time is a variable that multiplies the urban reality for centuries, decades, years, months, etc. ; or rather it qualifies it in relation to concrete temporary phenomena that mark a determined period (the periurban territory, urban or posturban) (Soja,1999). Time also polarizes elements and figures of the plan, forms of the territory according to types of culture or types of mobility associated to a period: the city of roads, the city of highways, the city of freeways, etc.

In a temporal network, the nodes transform in temporary interexchange, they are spaces of fusion of different temporal networks that mix together. In them, the architecture continues to be involved in the forms of integration. Between support and anthropization (Sabaté, 2000), continue projecting spaces as constructions that tie preexisting and logic functioning, logic in inherited; contemporary and future necessary renovations of places without losing their sprit and erasing their natural behaviors.

Urban spaces that project the temporary cartographic base would present the following qualities:

- Complex from a relational point of view, which means attending to distant questions in a same space, assume the condition of multi-temporal urban space, product of the historic sediment.
- They establish filters or limits that assure the continuity of a certain atmosphere of urban rhythm, of certain “urban ages”, registered in the constructed landscape.
- Incentive sharing spaces of distinct times.

3.3. A public space integrated into the networks.

“Territory as a system intensely interrelated remains an objective that demands with force the plan of the networks (Pavia, 1997)’

In urban space, most spaces are similar. All of the spaces, including some non-urban spaces can be understood in the measure that forms a part of the urban network or not, that which represents the actual specialty of the urban habitant. The relational work, therefore, the only work possible, is defined by a hierarchical wager for some relational system or another through some determined networks or others.

The territory is a network space that needs to be undone and semantically disentangled. We need to understand the sum of the different described elements as one total inseparable element that conserves all of the internal differences but that, more and more, generates mechanisms for complex relationships while it produces new activities and urban or pseudo urban forms. And for this we need to construct and compose networks.

To understand cities, also immersed within these territories in network, we establish orders that qualify the group and give a hierarchy to the relationships, which end up determining the identity of the group and its individual parts. We thus discover natural spaces that depend on the urban or vice versa; interior places of the city strongly linked to open landscapes, etc. Natural and artificial geography fuse together in a new type of extended urban geography (Rivas, 2012), and in it the collective urban spaces again become understood in terms of their real possibilities for transformation, immersed in processes that change, but which often impose a strong historic footprint; in this sense they are considerably fragile.

Urbanism and architecture should reflect on their own capacities to represent these territorialities (Dematteis, 1999). Networks can then be created that represent urban reality at present and what it can become, detecting its distinct landscapes apart from historical, conservationist and functional positions, adapting more of a critical posture about the existing situation. It is a search process for social and economic logic that hides behind what we perceive. This process is unveiled through identifiable forms and constructions.

To decipher the territorial network and construct networks for the creation of urban space, we should understand architecture as a tool for “tying” spaces. It would act like a recognizable crossroads of spacial, thematic relationships of different directions within them. In the territorial context as such, the area or the space is more of a crossing: ports or passageways become fringes or borders. Architecture, seen as a condenser that relates unknown discoveries, a relational construct, makes sense of a system of frictions of the reality that paradoxically, are closer to the identity of the space than the space itself.

The possible methodologies implicated in this work with networks will be to:

- Balance both places and specific contexts and the sole dimensions of each landscape in which we are intervening.
- Create nodes that interexchange modes, systems, scales and time.
- Localize architectures, constructed or based in the intermediate space, that integrate identity and change, environment and function, housing and activities, mobility and slow time, inheritance and contemporary necessities.
- Work the complexity of networks that construct clear projects that utilize the resources and illuminate the way of
- Reformulate the feeling of the existing and renegotiate its significance to be able to question its borders without destroying its essence.

4. INTERVENTION AROUND THE CERRO DE SANTA CATALINA BYPASS IN JAÉN (SPAIN).

4.1. The actual situation of the area

The site of this proposal is at the feet of a monument considered BIC¹, in a dominant geographical position of the city. Its territory, however, maintains an unusual closeness to the historic city, in terms of distance and accessibility by car and foot. Finally, its cohesion, size and grade of transformation make it an unquestionable natural public space.

However, the city of Jaen has center its “urban actives” in other areas of the center, more accessible because it is the part of the hillside with fewer slopes: Commercial and tourist centers, administrative and cultural places, emblematic public space, etc. In this way, the fabric, already formed by capillary roads, broken and constantly obligated to change levels, had its only base as a residential function. As time passed, the aging population, abandon in maintenance, the interior migration and the population loss, as quell as social marginality and its levels of rent in a difficult economy, have provoked a situation that is urgently calling for ideas to invert the dynamic and improve, protecting the social fabric, betting on a vitalization and enrichment, and putting into value the urban and architectural fabric.

The principal problems detected in these neighborhoods under the Bypass for an urban point of view, would be:

¹ "Bien de Interés Cultural" which is the highest type of heritage protection under the Law of Historical Heritage of Andalusia 14/2007.

- There is an elevated number of lots, especially around Plaza de Santiago, as well as a very deteriorated, sometimes to the point of ruins, residential areas and, as a consequence of this, loss of many blocks and a deteriorated urban landscape.
- The levels of urbanization are very low except in some renovated streets in the latest years, the streets and plazas are much abused from a spatial, environmental and architectural point of view.
- Parking is not regulated to be able to obtain the rationality necessary in these historic contexts and obtain a quality urban environment. There is a lack of collective parking structures that liberate pressure on the minor streets.
- The fabric is profoundly mono-functional, which entails an indiscriminate use of the space, a lack of singular spaces or recognizable central itineraries, collective spaces or spaces that communicate with the exterior. There is a lack of commercial and small labor uses that animate and naturalize the fabric, as well as public uses and urban services that tie the neighborhood to the city and make people feel part of it.



Fig. 2 Territorial dimension of park Cerro de Santa Catalina. Composition of historical layers.

4.2. The proposal

We formulate what Giuseppe Dematteis would call a “renovated territorial crossroad”, formed by a tripple network: social, environmental and urban, capable of understanding the actual situation and

plan in times of economic crisis, better the space, the environment, and the social landscape from the participation and the interaction of citizens and the economic pulse of public and private sectors.

With respect to the Cerro de Santa Catalina hillside, its transformation into a public park should suppose, as a principal objective, an intervention that revindicates it as an important territorial space, both functionally and visually, and that brings to it transit and the use of the inhabitants, situating it, at the same time, in the partimomial and identity network of the city.

On the other hand, the urban revitalization of historic fabric next to the freeway or the bypass, should promote the following general planning actions:

- 1) Architectural remodeling
- 2) Construction and strengthing of the social fabric
- 3) Environmental recuperation and innovation
- 4) Territorial and patrimonial integration

These interests come from or are recognized in general in the process of the project, in which the methodologies and the cartographies created happen according to a diagrammatical cycle that verifies the hypothesis of the project, after periods of intense searching for information, to come back again to try open solutions to be verified. (Ricciutti, 2009). This work can all be understood through a prism of three converging networks in the space, that delocalize it at the same time that they deepen in it. We will now demonstrate individually the elements and actions that determine the networks that weave through the space of the highway, the central axis of the space of the project and the double frontier of the natural and urban systems that are within it.

Fundamental Actions	Priority in Network			Interaction
	SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	URBAN	
Increase the connection between the Park (Cerro de Santa Catlina)-“High Neighborhoods”(The fabric object of the contest)	High	Medium	High	*
Area of integral Rehabilitation	High	Medium	Very High	**
Environmental hall	High	Very High	High	***
Centers of the neighborhood	Very High	Medium	Very High	***
Planning inovations	High	Medium	Very High	**
Transformation of the Bypass	Medium	High	High	*
New Park	Medium	Very High	High	**

Fig. 3 Table of fundamental actions of the proposal

4.2.1. The Social Network

In the context of this area and given the economic and social situation, you could say that one of the principle objectives is to strengthen the social fabrics' self esteem, which will kick start the rest of the the dynamics. Thus, the way that the neighborhood sees itself would change, as would it's image to the whole population of Jaen. This would bring with it the development of activities and initiatives within the neighborhood as well as in the urban landscape with participative and administrative efforts, opening itself to intelligent low cost solutions. It would also become more attractive for capital and human investments, improving environmental conditions and the levels of integration with the rest of the city.

To achieve this, following an exhaustive search for the conditions of the real estate fabric, as well as the state of commercial activity and locating both groups, whether they are built or public spaces, we propose the creation of an Integral Rehabilitation Area that, in conjunction with the rest of the projects' actions, will renew and revitalize the area.

This collective construction, based on administrative initiative but fed and believed in by the citizens and by private investors, should aspire to dignify the neighborhood, by means of a essential positive shock: Cleaning, fixing up empty lots, stabilizing abandoned buildings or ruins, repairing deteriorated group housing, etc. In an area with a social fabric characterized by a certain maginality and a strong sense of belonging, it is necessary for the population to feel a sense of participation in the changes. To involve the active agents of the neighborhood we propose a series of actions in existing lots that would create artisan workshops, small business or neighborhood meeting spaces.

To achieve this, taking into account the levels of rent in the neighborhood and the regional socioeconomic context, politics of fiscal innovation would help to create investment: the lowering of construction and housing taxes in "historic areas in rehabilitation", the inscription to the General System of the Cerro to receive funds from the investment of urban growth, etc.

Channeled by the (Area for Integral Rehabilitation) A.I.R., and through the participation of neighbors and social agents, other means that directly affect the construction of the social network of the project would be:

SOCIAL NETWORK ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	DETAILS
Fixing up empty lots	Treating dividing walls, cleaning of the lot, constructing walls on the bottom floor with access.	Cost co-financed by private investors and public administration.
Network of temporary Public spaces	Fixing up lot and to rent by the administration to establish temporary collective public spaces	Possible uses: workshops, education, association meeting places, nursery and environmental hall, recreation and play
Buildings or large lots, with priority for construction or rehabilitation	Public investment for position and relative urban situation	Singular residential use and/or community resources
Smaller buildings with priority for rehabilitation	Politics of public-private co-financing for reactivation and promotion of functions.	Single family residential or Multi-family and small commerce

Fig. 4 Table of Social Network Actions.

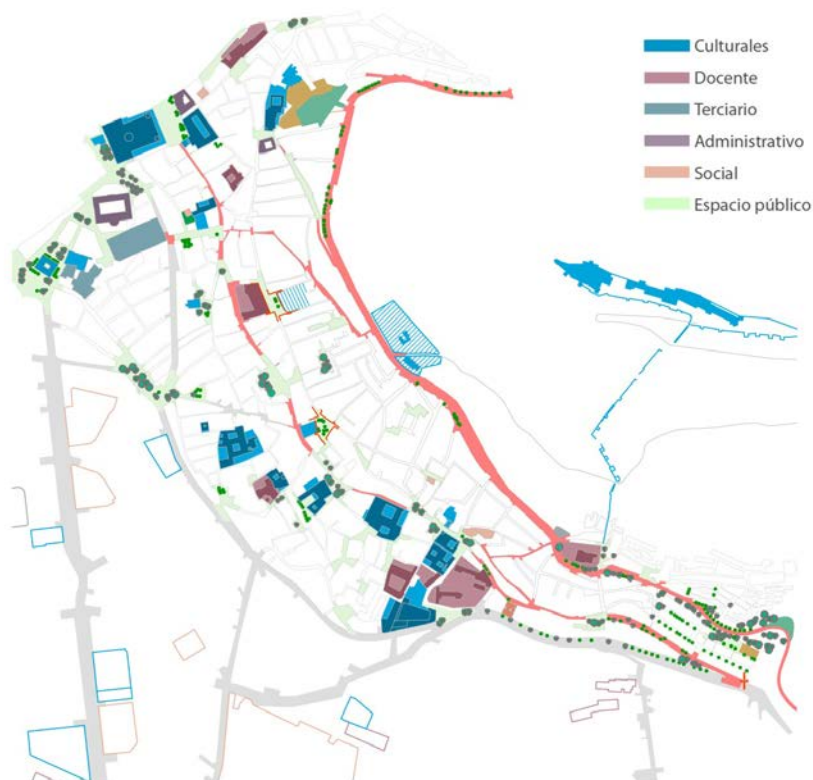


Fig. 2 Project of centrality within the neighborhood, condenser of activities and sociability. Craft market, community workshops and participatory spaces.

4.2.2. The Environmental Network

The detection of places of opportunity, regardless of size, in the urban fabric under the Bypass, the acceptance of the central condition of this urban artery, the disfunction detected in the hillside of Santa Catalina, are, definitively, the arguments that seem to demand a more integrated state between the natural environment and the historic patrimony that is the right margin of the highway and the historic urban landscape of the neighborhoods on the left margin.

The transformation of the highway into a “long plaza” with spaces representative of the citizens, the creation of a system of “collective spaces” that could be the construction of a workshop or environmental hall, or the way that this could relate to the consolidation of the hillside as an urban park are, on the other hand, the principal actions that determine this environmental network.

With respect to the park, the creation of pausing spaces, grading the surface, increasing the internal circulation through a network of paths that connect certain natural features of the hillside, the increase in the diversity of plants, spaces of light and shade, open and closed spaces, are consequences of the need to convert the hillside into a healthy, environmentally active and socially used space.



Fig. 6 Environmental network.

4.2.3. The urban network

The tourist and ethnological potential of the space is truly elevated, **XX** the social and environmental “activation” must be accompanied by real physical remodeling of the spaces, streets and architecture. This improvement should be made with consciousness of the difficult situation in beginning, in many cases, from solutions of self-management, but also from the wager and the push by the administrations of a higher rank, promoting its landscape qualities and its cultural and social richness.

The current conditions of a failing architectural fabric, urbanization deficits, lack of spatial quality in places, abandon of the urban landscape, etc., obligate a design process on an initial phase of possible intervention that should involve the citizens, improve the interaction of the private, collective and public spheres, and do it with reduced costs. We could call this first step towards urban regeneration “Phase 0” or the “urban minimum phase.”

Other subsequent actions that strengthen the urban cohesion, of recuperation of the urbanizing dynamic of its spaces – plazas and streets-, of construction of references for the space and centers of activity for the small business, etc., could be:

URBAN NETWORK ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	DETAILS
Make certain streets singular	“narrative itineraries” of internal communication and relationship with the rest of the Historic center of Jaen and the acces to the Park of the Santa Catalina Hillside and the Castle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritize public transport - Lessen the presence of the automobile and Street parking - Adapt leisure spaces and lookouts.
“Hearts” of the neighborhood	Areas of interior reform r singular urban projects, that reutilize obsolete spaces, create new centralities and revive collective urban spaces of relation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Santiago Plaza (Parking, market and workshops, cultural and youth, technical office and urban garden) - C/Concepción Vieja and Paseo de Circunvalación (cultural, resident parking, public space) - Raudal de la Magdalena (Singular residential, sociocultural)
Transforming the Bypass	General circulation system, connected to urbanizable land of the P.G.O.U.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase foot traffic - “calm” the traffic that passes - Increment sidewalks and reduce parking - Incorporate Bike Path - promover actuaciones en su borde de equipamientos y cierta actividad comercial Activate actions of Equipimeinto and certain comercial activities in its border.
Pedestrian access to the Park and castle	Improve Access to the park and the castle, with surface parking, control station, security and information point.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dote the rest of the access area with a pedestrian character - network of pedestrian paths to the park - network of pausing spaces in the park - recuperation of the natural singularities of the hillside

Fig. 7 Table of Urban Network Actions.

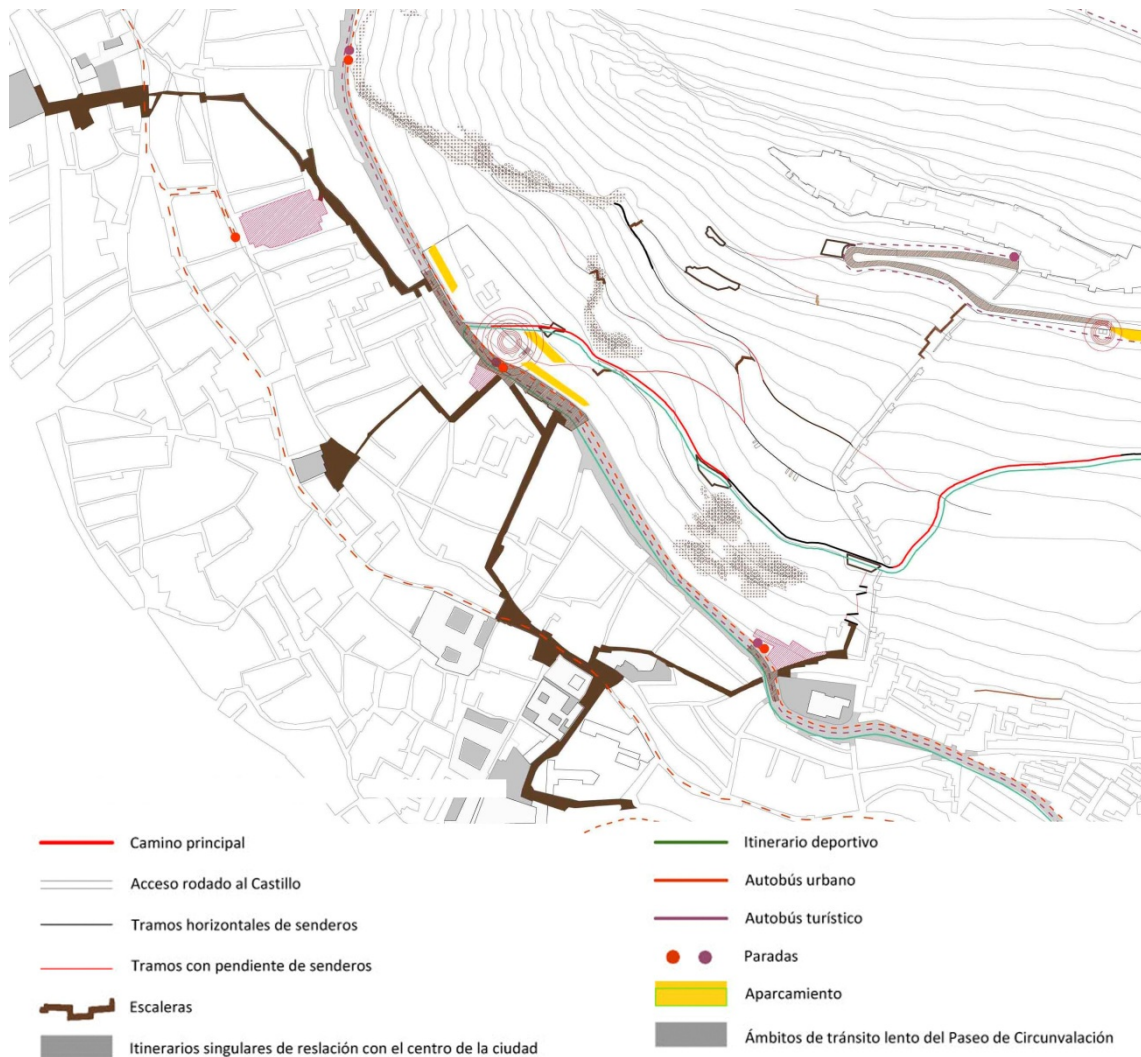


Fig. 8 Flow network.

5. CONCLUSIONS

There is a clear possibility to gather a great deal of information about the state, form and preexisting process of the study area, systemizing it in the exhibited networks. At the same time, we intend to make it a source of knowledge to discover a repertoire of simple solutions that can be broken down into smaller actions, all of them necessary or, in any case, usefull, but also independent.

We have also tried to demonstrate the production of an urbanism that profoundly explores the mutiscale and multitemporal relationships of the territorios of the project, and that, at the same time, fixes a series of priorities or tries to localize certain “key demands”, in relation to the moment and the present space.

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fixes a series of priorities or tries to localize certain “key demands”, in relation to the moment and the present space.

The future network of collective spaces, the association between historic neighborhoods and the Castle Hillside Park, the establishment of an intermittent Environmental Hall that connects both urban systems and strengthens the social relationships, the creation of a new fiscal distribution in the planning field for these depressed central areas, or the converting of the roadway infrastructure into a collective and symbolic space with greater spacial comfort and increased intermodality...these are some of the actions of the project that stand out.



Fig. 3 Detailed cartography of the project area. Access to the park.

„...and let nature run its course, so that the history of places can reveal itself, and the citizens of Jaén, and its historic neighborhoods, or thos that come from other territories, can be introduced to a new landscape of networks, to use it and enjoy its diverse forms of urbanity.”²

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² Text taken for the memory of the ideas contest.