

Best Practice: Pedestrian Priority Program

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CITY: BUENOS AIRES

**POLICY AREAS: TRANSPORTATION;
CITY PLANNING; ENVIRONMENT**

BEST PRACTICE

As Mayor of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Mauricio Macri has maintained the **Sustainable Development** policy since assuming office. The **Pedestrian Priority Program** emerged from this policy and is part of the Healthy Mobility initiative sponsored by the City of Buenos Aires Ministry of Urban Development. The aim of the program is to promote pedestrian traffic with the intention of encouraging a more active lifestyle for residents and improving environmental conditions in the city.

ISSUE

The City of Buenos Aires is a metropolis of over 13 million people and serves as a center to the region. Current transport systems threaten to weaken the city center unless upgrades are made to various transportation networks.

There are several signs of deterioration caused by the current transport system in the city center:

- Increased traffic congestion caused by all types of transportation – private vehicles, taxis, public transport, and commercial vehicles
- Absence of traffic controls, including a lack of marked parking promoting the misuse of public space as an area to park vehicles
- Air pollution
- Noise pollution
- Risk to pedestrians as many vehicles drive on sidewalks and spaces intended for pedestrians
- Corrosion and congestion of sidewalks

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the program is to increase pedestrian movement, discourage car use and dependence, and reclaim public spaces for pedestrians.

Additionally, the program aims to meet other short and long term goals.

Short term objectives:

- Guarantee spaces for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists
- Incorporate trees on the sidewalks
- Incorporate equipment, such as waste receptacles, benches and motorbike parking, on the street
- Create incentives for residential use
- Promote multifunctional use of public spaces
- Improve environmental conditions through urban and environmental compliance standards
- Implement gradual control system, based on dynamic programming to monitor improvements for pedestrians. This control system is a way to measure improvements and analyze the results of implementing the plan.
- Improve resident interaction with historic landmarks such as the Plaza de Mayo, Post Office, and Old Town

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Medium/Long term objectives:

- Adapt public road space in the city center to encourage pedestrian circulation, including more sidewalks and pedestrian walkways between urban centers and transport nodes
- Continue to respect agreements outlined in the 2004 Mobility Pact which designates use of certain lanes to specific vehicles, such as bus lane for buses
- Promote clean vehicle technology
- Enforce rules to protect pedestrians from traffic hazards
- Regulate street equipment (benches, waste receptacles, etc.) on public roads
- Incorporate the Pedestrian Priority Program into the larger Urban Transport System Integration plan for the greater metropolitan area

IMPLEMENTATION

There are several components involved in the development and implementation of the program:

- Street renewal: widen sidewalks; install lighting and pedestrian traffic signs
- Dock regulation: distinguish dock position and combine dock loading and unloading with the Waste Collection Basin
- Trees: incorporate more trees for a public promenade character
- Crosswalks: give pedestrians priority at specific crosswalks
- Equipment: installation of street signs to regulate traffic flow and pedestrian circulation
- Waste: existing waste collection system is replaced with centralized waste receptacles on street corners to facilitate the movement of garbage collection vehicles.

COST

To date, the approximate cost of the program is \$5,660,235 USD.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Several outcomes of the program achieved the desired results, including:

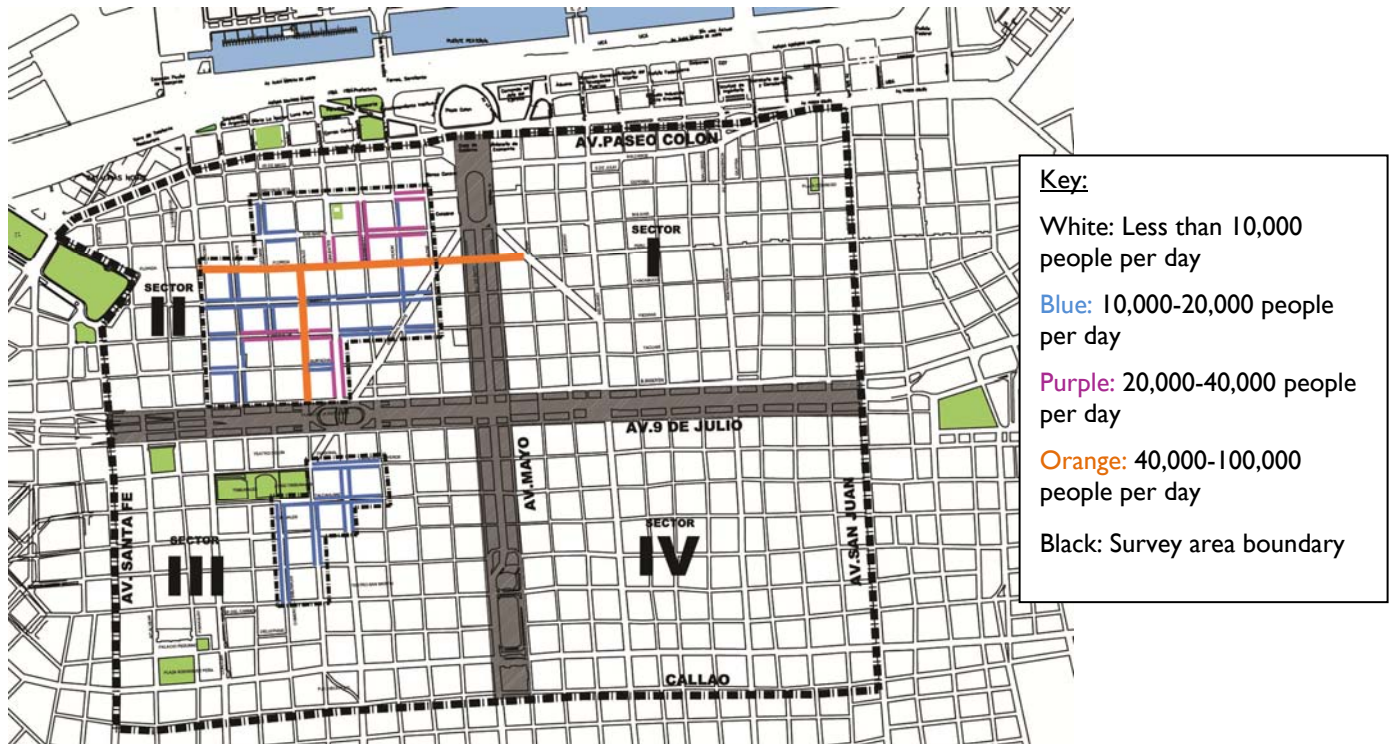
- Reduced noise pollution, air pollution, and accidents
- Revitalization of commercial areas and services
- A recovery center for pedestrians
- Increased incentive to walk
- New use of urban spaces

A few unexpected outcomes were also achieved, including:

- Changes in land use
- Changes to businesses
- Movement of environmental conflicts and transit difficulties outside the periphery of pedestrian areas

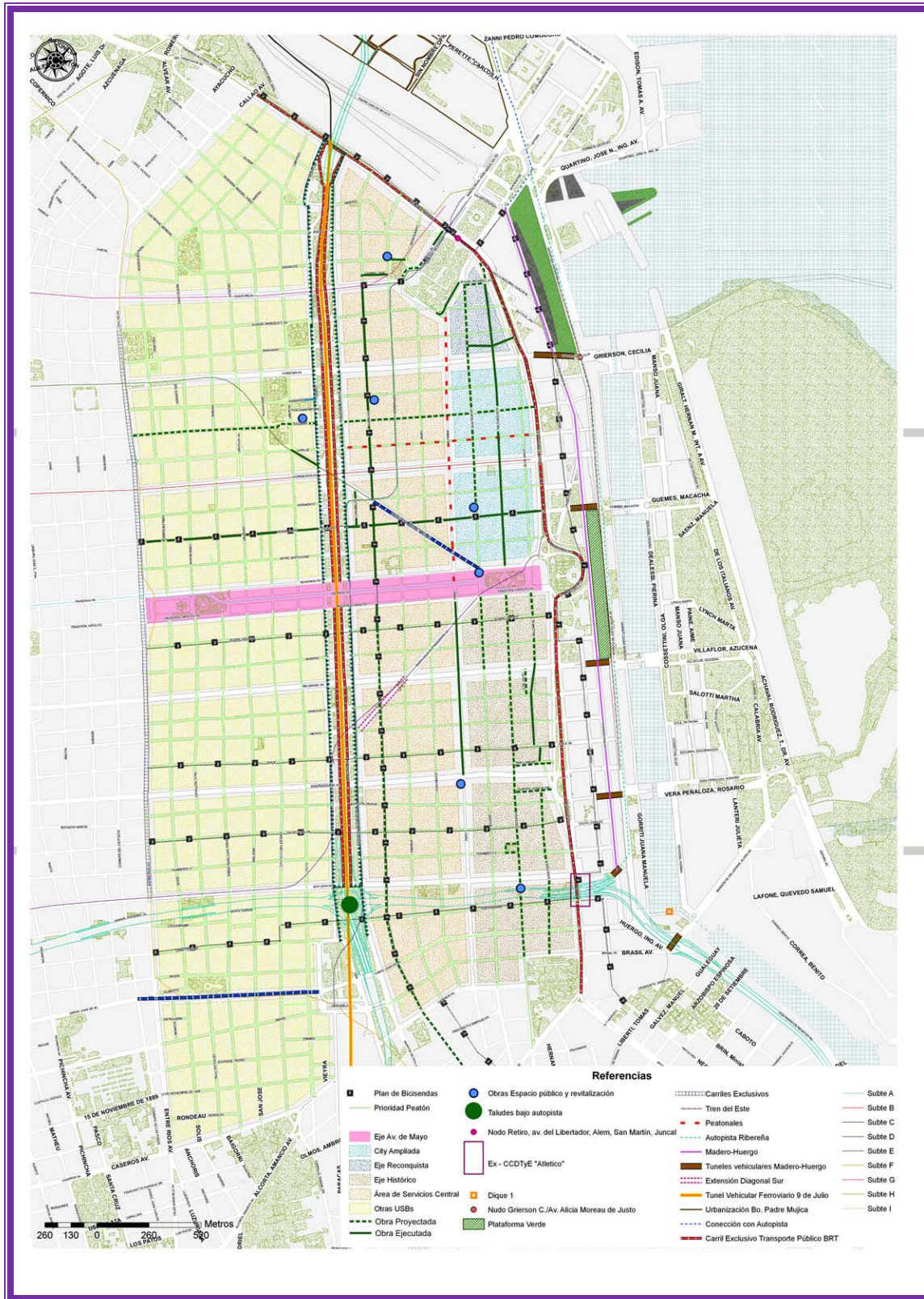
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Please see the graph below depicting the results.



Photos of Reconquista Street in Buenos Aires

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TIMELINE

May 2008: Street Renewal process began

Late 2008-Present: Continued expansion of street renewal throughout the city center

LEGISLATION

Several laws pertain to the Pedestrian Priority Program:

- Act 1356 (10/05/2004), Protection of Air Resources and Prevention & Control of Atmospheric Pollution
 - Section 33: Authorizes the implementation of authorities to limit traffic on noisy streets
 - Article 45: Directs the Environmental Protection Agency to promote the use of clean energy
 - Article 46: Directs the Environmental Protection Agency to maintain and gradually reduce air quality in the City
- The Mobility Pact (2004), designates certain areas for zones of public transport
- Act 1540 (12/2/2004), Control of Noise Pollution in the City of Buenos Aires
 - Article 11/16: Establishes a transport corridor as an especially noisy area
 - Article 22: Determines areas of acoustic sensitivity in regards to transportation
 - Directs the Secretary of the Environment to create a noise map of the city
- Law No. 962 (12/5/2002), Physical Access for All
 - Enacts building codes to allow accessibility for all residents of Buenos Aires

LESSONS LEARNED

Strengths

- Transformation of urban road space into pedestrian centers
- Promote high environmental standards
- Reinforce social coexistence
- Improved traffic flow and congestion by increasing the segregation between pedestrians and vehicles during high foot travel
- Reduced noise, emission and the risk of accidents
- Create quiet spaces, contributing to the general welfare of the residents and visits

Weaknesses

Some concerns may include:

- Discrepancies with local residents and adjacent neighborhoods due to higher volume of pedestrians
- Higher number of parking violations as well as vandalism and crime incidents
- Increased accumulation of dirt and garbage (although there will be a lower quantity of carbon and other gas emissions)

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TRANSFERABILITY

Street renewal that encourages pedestrian traffic in cities is very transferable.

CONTACTS

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Facts, photos and figures in this report were provided by the highlighted city agency to New York City Global Partners.