

# Urban Project And Ideas Competition In The Northern Area Of Greater Resistencia (Argentina)

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## ABSTRACT

The Urban and Regional Planning Institute Brian A. Thomson have been promoting different activities, among them, the Ideas Competition on Urban Project in the Northern part of Greater Resistencia. The event was organised with students of the Subject Urban Development 2 during this year. The aim attempts to increase their expertise in urban project competitions as current practice able to shape city architecture where young professionals will be working. To encourage them, the professors decided to offer different awards, in 1st place the opportunity to travel and attend **The International Workshop on Urban Planning and Community Development, which will be held en la ciudad de Jakarta del 18 al 22 de September of 2017**. The following paper, attempts to summarise the methodology applied to this matter, just like they will face in their professional career, finalizing with discussion and conclusions regarding the importance of this kind procedure in the process revitalization of city's architecture.

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## 1. Introduction

Currently, cities must allow people to live in harmony with nature, improving their quality of life in the framework of sustainable development. In this sense, public spaces are an important tool in urban planning that is said to be sustainable. We are referring to those free and public spaces, as key elements of urban intervention, which order the landscape, bringing environmental and social benefits to the population.

The north of the city, there is a valuable landscape of the Río Negro is forming beautiful wetland area, which is under protection of different Regulations for further urban development. The river valley offers natural green spaces. This unique landscape must be including nature into the city,

associating urban wetlands, taking advantage of flood areas, connecting leisure activities, sports and mobility.

The city of Greater Resistencia grows by mixing land uses with unique landscape units. The extension of the northern urban area, is having urban growth pressure in the last few years, increasing considerably today. For that reason, it is essential to incorporate urban planning oriented to the landscape in a flexible regulatory framework, integrating the urban landscape into the current and potential activities of the population, understanding the symbolic and environmental value of the landscape in our society.

Therefore, public space is a key factor in this process, driving force that involves the

preservation of nature, taking account the water restrictions in wetland area, associating sports-recreational path, roads and cultural identity of the city, connecting those spaces in common area.

In this framework, the Subject URBAN DEVELOPMENT II-FAU-UNNE have been tackle landscape and urban issues, seeking to promote urban-environmental planning strategies, aimed to have better use of land and natural resources of the study city. This year, the institute of Urban and Regional Planning Brian Alejandro Thomson (IPUR-BAT) has been invited to International Workshop in Indonesia through the participation of lectures and students.

Therefore, in the framework of the "Seventh International Seminar on Urban Policies, Land and Environmental Management for Local Development" and Research Project "Process of Metropolization of the Greater Resistencia. Policies and Strategies", the researchers and lecturers from Institute of Urban and Regional Planning Brian Alejandro Thomson (IPUR-BAT) organized, the Ideas Competition on Urban Design in the Northern Area of Resistencia-Chaco. The event was launched only for students of 5th year that were studying the Subject URBAN DEVELOPMENT II in current academic year, with the task to design the "SPECIAL URBAN PLAN FOR CORRIDOR FACUNDO QUIROGA".

The proposals submitted, were focus on the improvement an urban area located in Facundo Quiroga Corridor by developing a project on urban-landscape intervention. The proposals should been tackle some aspects of the "designated urban area" such as the landscape, land uses and amenities planned for the sector and, link green spaces, facilities, roads and activities available in the area and connecting them with rest of the city.



Figure 1. Facundo Quiroga Corridor and The city of Greater Resistencia

Source: Malena Perez, 2017 (Left)- Google Map- [www.google.com.ar/maps](http://www.google.com.ar/maps) (right)

The objectives of this study are:

- To enhance sustainable urban development in Northern Area of Greater Resistencia
- To train students in Urban Project and Architecture competitions which is one of the most common job opportunity for professionals in Argentina.
- To encourage students of Urban Development II Subject (FAU - UNNE) to tackle real urban issues of the city through ideas competition
- To involve students, into a competition to increase their skills in develop car corridor by using landscape, urban, and architecture design concepts, including social and educational facilities.

## 2. Material and Methods

The Competition required promotional activities and preparation of key-document named "Guidelines of the Competition" in order to have a document containing: Introduction / objectives; competition rules, design aspects to be considered; presentation guidelines and elements of delivery; schedule of the competition and day of submission; awards ceremony; attached documentation like backgrounds and registration forms.

### Promotion Activities

The promotional activities were lunched at "Seventh International Seminar on Urban

Policies, Land and Environmental Management for Local Development" and Research Project "Process of Metropolization of the Greater Resistencia. Policies and Strategies". Besides, the competition guideline's presentation were also explained during class period of the Subject Urban Development II in order the increased the audience.



Figure 2. Presentation of Ideas Competition Guidelines in "Seventh International Seminar on Urban Policies, Land and Environmental Management for Local Development"

The key document were elaborated and published in the current web page of the Subject Urban Development 2 and, were also used, to receive enquires and to socialized the answers during the competition period. The Academic Jury was chosen for its knowledge on the topic and representativeness, such as Academic Authorities with expertise in the topic and sponsoring Institutions. The work, were received by the Competition Advisor, as planned and were exposed for days that the Academic Jury were in session. The jury, have met for three days, organizing their assessment in a table to ensure equal appraisal, concluding

with the Final Statement containing order of merits. The activities of the competition were published in graphic and digital media. The outcomes of the competition were introduced in public ceremony with Authorities of the University, managers and organizers, sponsors, advisers and participants, concluding the event with delivering the award to the winners.

### Key Factors Considered For The Assessment By Academic Jury

In the Competition guidelines were exposed some key factors which should be considered regarding the objectives of the competition.

#### Location / Surface

The design must consider the chosen area, the natural conditions of the site and its urban environment, the demand for road, facilities for health, education, social, sports and recreational activities.

The designated Area is focused in Car Corridor known as Facundo Quiroga, stretching section between the Sarmiento Avenue to Coronel Falcon Avenue, with an extension of 3.200 meters, in a width of 500 meters, involving a Surface of 1,600,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### Urban Strategies

The proposals must taking to account: the connectivity and identity of the sector to strengthen one of the main circulatory routes of the "Northern Area", considering the preservation and recovery of the natural resources, promotion of cultural and recreational heritage, considering key amenities and activities. These factors will lead the participants to proper interventions towards a conservation and sustainable land management.

## **THE PLOTS**

Will consider different types of land uses depending on density allowed, this must be ordered regarding the delimitation of Districts and their criteria of building, allowed height, predominant use.

### **Open Spaces**

Design of streets, sidewalks and recreational spaces. Considering scales of green spaces linked to the "green corridors" and "linear parks" typology, urban furniture and any strategy that could be relevant in order to promote the use of public space and sustainable mobility.

### **Public Facilities**

Assignment of plots where buildings of public interest activities will be planned in the sector.

### **Cultural and Recreational Activities**

Spaces foreseen for recreational purposes such as open spaces; areas for public events and community meetings; Routes, sidewalks, landmarks, water mirrors and areas with wide flexibility of use. It is suggested to associate them with the system of Free Spaces.

### **Sport and Recreational Activities**

Will place in open spaces for practicing activities that require a more or less effort, sports, that do not involve professional training such as sidewalks for aerobic exercises, or suitable for rollers, bicycles and skates, playground sectors and areas for sports with kind of special equipment and sectors for free play.

### **Parking Zone**

Absorbent and shaded surfaces is preferred. The location of these areas will rely on the

proposal. The designers must consider the compatibility with other sectors, intensity of land use, and level of natural soil's intervention.

### **Allocation of Activities**

The proposal must established the identification of areas and facilities according to their intensity of land uses (periodic, weekly or occasional) in order to enable, if necessary and for safety reasons, to delimit their use in certain time zones.

### **Planning Code And Regulation Of Land Uses**

- Planning Code of Resistencia City Council
- Construction Code of Resistencia City Council and in particular please see sidewalks regulations
- Plan Proposal for the Northern Area of Greater Resistencia. Resistencia City Council
- Water Management Authority, see Resolution # 121/2014 and 303/17
- Regulation regarding accessibility for disable citizens Law # 24.314

### **Design Criteria**

The Competition Advisors and members of the Jury considered special interest in proposals assessment, the relation between objectives and reasons that motivate the urban project.

- Sustainable design: Ecological concepts, techniques, technologies or processes applied to the design that allow to take advantage of natural resources with the lowest energy consumption.
- Lowest environmental impact: Use of the natural conditions of the chosen area, avoiding structural modifications of the landscape.
- Design factors: such as formal consistency of the set, readability, space composition,

proposal strength, and spatial structure, design main idea, among others.

- Accessibility of people: Alternatives to ensure the use of spaces by disabled people.
- Urban area and linkage with the city: Strategies that allow incorporating the proposal into the city.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### The Importance of Urban Design Competition

In opinion of Larry Neil, former judge with the Liverpool Architecture and Design Trust, in his article "Just as important as World Heritage Status is the confidence to kick out poor schemes" criticized the quality of Liverpool's Architecture.

The city of Liverpool have won the rare distinction of being inscribed on the list of World Heritage Sites puts Liverpool alongside some of the wonders of the world, the Pyramids in Egypt, the Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China.

It took years of discussions and persuasion to convince UNESCO to add a name to the list, and, in 2004, Liverpool made it onto that list. Nevertheless, little has been constructed in living memory that would go anywhere near the city being celebrated for its modern architecture. Therefore, he wonders "...when did Liverpool turn its back on high quality, stunning architecture?"

The city has rich cultural maritime legacy created mainly in the 19th century. Then, in the post war austerity years, when there was little in the way of investment in Liverpool, the civic decision makers could be at least forgiven for accepting any buildings chucked their way. Beggars could not be choosers. Some of those ugly structures from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s still scar the city scape.

As a former judge with the Liverpool Architecture and Design Trust, he stressed how difficult is to find enough half decent

buildings to deserve gongs in the annual awards for architecture.

He concludes: "...whether Liverpool retains or loses its WHS status, it will make little difference unless the city aims for and insists upon a much higher level of design aspiration. Another opinion comes from Professor Andreas Schultz Bäing from Manchester University, he points out: "...It would be good if Liverpool city council would embrace the concept of architecture and where necessary urban design competitions. These are common practice in other European cities; these allow public debate about the merits or poor aspects of different designs at an early stage. The city of Leipzig for example has a whole team dedicated to organising such competitions."

Despite the wide range of economic and cultural situation among regions, we believe he certainly made a good point: competition can contribute to revitalize the current image of any city with high quality of architecture.

#### Urbanism from landscape's vision

The objective of ideas competition has tried to tackle current issues of the city: the linkage of green spaces, as opposed to a fragmented urbanism as consequences of cities in fast growth. In his book "The garden of the metropolis", Enric Battle states that: "...At times when urbanism is dead", we have to look at new strategies to generate new ideas to solve problems of cities. Therefore, we decided to develop an Ideas Competition as a mechanism through which innovative proposals are obtained, integrating the city and the landscape.

#### The competition ideas

Through the competition ideas, we seek to find the best answers to current issues in urban design. To carry it out, we use The Guidelines as a framework that includes the conditions of project's location, design's objectives that

addressed the students involved and the jury in the process of proposals assessment.

In our example, the competition was carried out in partnership with organizers, advisors and promoters through an intense exchange of opinions related to the topic.

As organisers, we found that this was the right path not only for the quality of the winning project but also for the set of projects presented.

The process of the ideas competition contributes relevant knowledge as background for future projects in the area. It is the baseline that shows innovative and creative actions in front of a real problem, that matter for the urban development of the city.

"Heterotopia" is what Foucault point outs as "...The skill to change the real meaning of a space through the imagination." In the example of architectural competitions, through the design practice, we are encouraging the students involved to imagine the space in different side, to propose a positive change in the environment, to "see beauty where there is apparently no."

### The Outcomes

Wall and Waterman in his book Architecture of the landscape indicate that "Projects that go beyond the mere possibility to speculate on the new cities of the future, are essential both for the science of urban design and for the life itself of the cities. These are concepts that promote the debate and set the baseline for future projects, some of which will be done in practice.

In the city of Resistencia, as background we can refer to the case of the Democracy Park Ideas Competition. As results, the winning proposal achieved an Urban Park, using a language cutting-edge architecture, in accordance with the strategies proposed by the

project, considering the flooding condition of the area and recreational activity on vehicular traffic areas of great danger.

The winning project was implemented with some modifications and today this space is a positive example of the holding of competitions, given that the park has become a meeting and recreation open space, according with citizen's identity and image of the city.

While we consider this and other successful bidding practices in the city as the rehabilitation of the former Central Market, we find out there are several opportunities to revitalize the city that still wait for further intervention under competition. In addition, it is also several constructions of large public projects, isolated, without prior competition, which do not contribute to identity to the city.

### The Desired City

The urban is the framework of humankind existence, the area where man develops in community, in interaction with land, its design will be the one that shapes the spaces where he lives, will be the key factor that allow or prevents relationships, the use and the enjoyment of spaces.



Figure 3. The three awarded proposals of urban projects

Source: Instituto de Planeamiento Urbano y Regional – FAU-UNNE

The city is the mirror in which a community is reflected, the image that identifies its culture and its desires, for which it is important to strengthen, by promoting design competitions where organizers, advisers, promoters and also citizens get involved to produce a meaningful and desired image.

#### 4. Conclusion

The designs submitted, have great value, which will contribute significantly to the development of the city as a background for further developments.

The commitment of students has shown a great interest in the chosen intervention area, trying to overcome poor environmental situation of the area, working on a current issue of great importance in the growth of the city: by turning into an area socially friendly, linked to the city, with ecological proposals, making the city more livable.

Each different proposal has taken its own path, trying to achieve a singular and meaningful whole idea, applying inclusive and creative concepts that will guide its action as designers in all its dimensions.

In relation to the urban strategy, the proposals have tried to link the development of an isolated area, which is under urban pressure demands for further development, through different rank of land use intensities ranging from hierarchy of roads, to the treatment of public spaces. Urban articulations are proposed, linking preexisting areas and areas of new activity.

The proposals also promote: the new definition of natural green areas through the design of recreational spaces and its link with Institutional facilities and areas of residential and commercial activities.

In relation to the architectural design, the proposals shows different technological and constructive approaches for construction process focus on in ecological strategies for the best use of the materials.

In summary, the outcomes of this Competition have shown different urban design options considering landscape, physical, environmental and cultural aspects, enhancing planning proposals for the development of the Resistencia city.



Figure 4. The award ceremony.

Finally, as result from our discussion, competition is one of the best option that managers and decision makers to choose between good quality of designs and discard poor schemes. The authorities can revitalize derelict areas and buildings, by choosing best option, contributing to renovate current architecture of any city.

Furthermore, architecture competition will be the first opportunity that young professionals will find in the market for apply the concepts acquired during graduation period and to tackle real issues. As professors, we strongly believe we must encourage them into this practice, considering as a good way to increase

their creativity and enhance the architecture and urban design of the city.

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