

City limits at work: planning facing metropolitan challenges

International workshop
Sabadell, 16th – 26th July 2017.

1. Introduction and presentation

The dimension and territorial scale of urbanization processes in the metropolitan region of Barcelona is one of the most relevant challenges for local urban planning at the present moment. The city of Sabadell, a main urban centre articulating functional relationships and integration in the Barcelona region, is specifically concerned about this main challenge which simultaneously underlines some problems but also some potentialities in regard with future urban local planning when defined on a metropolitan basis.

2. The metropolitan context

Sabadell is a metropolitan city accounting a global population of 208.246 inhabitants in 2016. It does constitute a main urban fabric and urban centrality in the context of the Vallès, in the north area of the Barcelona metropolitan region.

Regarding local urban planning today, the nature of so many different urban phenomena, such as mobility, economic location of activities, collective use of open spaces, and new urban projects, is going to be progressively defined on the basis of the centrality of the city when defining its functions and roles in the metropolitan scale.

The opportunity for rethinking the city challenges and on-going projects both in an urban and metropolitan scale is on the basis of the workshop approach and proposal.

3. Projects orientation

The workshop will be oriented following 5 main inspiring ideas:

- The emerging values of the city limits as an analytical and projectual laboratory for rethinking urban policies and strategies defined on a metropolitan basis.
- The potentialities of the existent empty spaces (urban and metropolitan voids) located in between the more compact urban fabric and the city limits for hosting urban collective uses and redefining the typology and role of facilities when conceived in a metropolitan basis despite the fact of their urban location.
- The opportunity represented by new issues such as 'metropolitan agriculture' or 'climate-proof urban policies' to incorporate new urban functions in specific locations in the urban limit fringe.
- The public capability of landscape ('landscape publicness') constituting a new value to be identified regarding the city open spaces system. In this sense, open spaces will be considered as future catalyst of urban life.
- The capability of the 'ordinary landscapes' characterising the areas in between the city limits as potential containers of new metropolitan uses and activities.

4. Main goals to be achieved by the workshop projects

Taking into consideration these aforementioned ideas, the definition of the projects to be developed by the international groups participating in the workshop would be defined as follows:

The projects to be developed during the workshop will activate different urban values regarding city limits considering both the relationships between different inner areas and the urban fringe in-between the more compact urban fabric and the open spaces system.

The projects will also explore new possibilities for economic and social development based on innovation and creativity, understanding urban landscape and the open spaces system as containers, drivers and catalysts for defining new up-dated urban and metropolitan strategies for the city.

5. Main issues for the projects definition and proposal

After the consideration of the main challenges and risks defined by the urban agenda characterising city planning in Sabadell at the present moment, 6 main issues to work with have been identified:

Issue 1. The urban-agricultural fringe connectivity and management:

The project deals with the future redefinition of the 'Nacional 150' road in terms of traffic management and pacification. The necessity for rethinking the future urban role and functions of some facilities located in-between the city limits and the Sabadell Agrarian Park also offers a very wide range of options for designing urban strategies in terms of creative urban landscape intervention and management.

Issue 2. Rethinking the open spaces system at the urban boundary:

The project faces an area in which some important infrastructural elements related with mobility and water management, such as the C-58 highway and a very important water collector, define a city limit accounting both risks and challenges. The definition of potentialities and new urban strategies are related with the proximity to the open spaces system surrounding the Sec River and the possibility to propose a new bicycle itinerary connecting the city with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Issue 3. Redefining transport infrastructures in the local urban scale:

The project for covering a whole section of the train infrastructure gives the city the opportunity for completely rethinking an urban area in the Gràcia and Can Feu neighbourhoods. In this sense, the connection of the streets network with the urban downtown and the management of some strategic heritage spots in terms of new urban catalysts and facilities, such as the Can Feu Castell, represent main future local urban challenges.

Issue 4. Recycling urban industrial areas on an urban-metropolitan basis:

The necessity for recovering some plots and miss-used industrial buildings in the Gràcia industrial district offers the possibility for proposing a particular program for industrial urban recycling. The project is based on the recognition of two different industrial areas, with a very diverse urban fabric structure, and the possibilities for defining a specific treatment of the urban boundaries in-between Sabadell and the city of Sant Quirze del Vallès.

Issue 5. *Climate-proof* planning facing *low-carbon* urban local challenges:

A whole new strategy based on different dimensions of urban climate-proof policies is included in the local urban planning agenda for the forthcoming decades. This local *low-carbon* urban approach deals with improving the energy efficiency of the urban fabric; defining new sustainable mobility schemes in different areas; or introducing 'smart-city' protocols regarding urban planning action and monitoring. Projects dealing with this general framework are welcome.

Issue 6. *Stand-by* city limits: re-starting the urban process on new basis:

The city of Sabadell accounts some urban sites in which urbanization has not been completed because of the effects of the economic urban crisis since 2007. However, these unfinished urban projects could also be considered as creative labs in terms of defining new planning principles and ambitions, different to those which inspired their proposal before the economic breakdown. In the case of Can Gambús area, the proximity to a main road (Ronda de Sabadell) and the location by the city boundaries are important elements defining the urban context and inspiring new uses and programs that can eventually be proposed.

6. Workshop program

Sunday 16th July.

10h-19h. Participants arrival (during the day depending on flights).

19h. Wellcoming dinner (at the hostel).

Monday 17th July.

10h. Presentation of the workshop.

11h-14h. Introductory lectures I.

The city of Sabadell: urban/territorial context.

16h-20h. Fieldtrips I (visit to the project sites).

Tuesday 18th July.

10h-14h. Introductory lectures II.

Key facts about the projects sites.

16h-20h. Fieldtrips II (visit to the project sites).

Wednesday 19th July.

10h-12h. Tutorial session on the workshop specific issues and objectives.

12h-14h. Organisation of the different work groups.

16h-20h. Fieldtrips III (visit to the project sites).

Thursday 20th July.

10h-12h. Conference I.

City planning today: new visions (guest speaker).

12h-14h. Conference II.

City planning today: on the city boundaries. (guest speaker).

17h-20h. PPCEL event in Barcelona. 1st Rafel Llussà Prize celebration.

Friday 21st July.

10h-20h. Groups work.

Saturday 22nd July.

10h-14h. Groups work.

14h-20h. Visits (Sabadell urban highlights).

Sunday 23rd July.

Free time.

Monday 24th July.

10h-14h. Groups work.

16h-18h. Preliminary presentations.

18h.20h. Groups work.

Tuesday 25th July.

10h-20h. Groups work.

Wednesday 26th July.

10h-11.30h. Discussion panel with guest speakers.

City limits at work.

11.30h-12h. Coffee-break.

12h-14h. Projects presentation.

14h-14.30h. Final comments on the projects and closure words.

14.30h. Workshop closure final lunch.

7. Workshop logistics

Students attending the workshop have all their expenses regarding accommodation and breakfast covered by the organization. Also, the welcoming dinner (Sunday 16th July) and the closure lunch (Wednesday 26th July) are covered by the organization.

Students must assume their expenses regarding lunches/dinners during the workshop.

Accommodation: Molí de Sant Oleguer hostel.

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