



# Revitalizing La Florida

# **The future of public space in La Florida**

The ideas for developing public space in La Florida are introduced by outlines and a development concept, followed by planning and design proposals for the streets and the centre and thereafter suggestions to planning and design guidelines.

## **Outlines**

Planning and design of public space in La Florida are determined and developed out from some essential possibilities, opportunities and limitations. The outlines, presented in the following section, constitute the frame and base for the public space revitalization and development proposal. The intention is to propose a development concept that generate planning proposals and concepts for design. The design proposals are put at a concept level, without going into the details or presenting a static design proposal. The idea is to leave options for design alternatives open, within the frame of the overall planning proposals and design concepts. For these, the theory framework presented in *Planning and design of public space*, along with the study of La Florida work as sources of ideas and motivation.

In a process of revitalizing public land in La Florida the overall aim is to use municipal land more efficient and for multiple functions and uses, as an arena for strengthening community identity and interaction between community members.

## **Diverse, efficient and flexible use of public land**

The goal is to optimize the use of available public land for different purposes through efficient land use. Space can be used for various functions at the same time, or have different functions during the day. Time, in addition to spaces and boundaries, can be used as means for separating activities in public spaces.

Generous space, that allows changes, is flexible and dynamic and creates the grounds for a developing and robust community. However, although spaces need to be diverse and flexible there is always a need for spaces of different types that serves for different purposes. The intention is to develop different spaces for different purposes, such as spaces for meeting, market places, green spaces, recreational spaces and spaces for refuge and privacy, which at the same time are adaptable for future and alternative changes and development.

## **Relations between spaces, functions and connections**

The spatial setting has certain significance for how facilities will or could be used. The nature of functions and their internal connections greatly determine the use of space. Spaces with clusters of functions and facilities and their adjacent spaces are naturally used more frequently than those that have few functions and facilities or services.

The benefit of proximity to facilities, as to attract people and movement to and within the centre in La Florida, is to work as a base for development of the centre area. Planning of spaces, both indoor and outdoor spaces, are to be done integrated and simultaneously.

### **Public space as an arena for stating the community identity and identity of space**

Planning and design as tools for strengthening the public identity and pride, are principally limited to issues concerning the physical environment. The intention is to find an open space layout and design of spaces that encourage social interaction between citizens and enhance the uniqueness of the physical environment in La Florida. The revitalization of space can also generate a renewed image of La Florida, which in turn can prosper positive spirit and citizen pride among the locals and the community as a whole.

### **Contextual planning and design with human dimensions to space**

The goal is to develop an open space system and space types that refers to the local urban typology, architecture and culture in La Florida, which is described in the chapter La Florida. In La Florida most building types and streetscapes are bound to Guatemalan architecture, design and construction traditions. The proposals are to be based on the environmental context and conditions, such as the surrounding landscape and neighbouring areas, and also to the human dimensions. The human dimensions refer to social and human needs within the public space. The proposals are to concern safety issues and requirements of different groups of people within the public open spaces. A safe environment is not only prospering public space, but could also contribute to an image of La Florida as a secure and hospitable area and thereby also become to be a part of the community pride.

### **Introduction of public functions**

La Florida currently has two public facilities or institutions; the public school and the social centre for mothers and children. In order to increase the standard of public services and thereby also the quality of living, the proposal will also deal with development of public functions and facilities, such as public institutions for health, daycare, education and safety. Public functions or facilities in connection to public open spaces often help to populate and generate life to the open spaces. The combination of public open space and public functions will also be a favourable base for centre development.

### **Streets and traffic organization**

The development concept and proposals base on a redesign of street space and reorganization of traffic, which is the focus in the forthcoming diploma work by Martin Heidesjö<sup>46</sup>. This is where our diplomas overlap and connect to each other. Streets and traffic organization will therefore not be further developed in this study.

### **Development concept**

The revitalization of public space in La Florida starts with conceptualizing development of the public open space system. Existing public open space

## Development concept

### public open space system

- development of centre located public open space
- public green park La Guacamaya
- connections between public open spaces

### connections

- plaza Florida - centre - Parque La Guacamaya; green and pedestrian prioritised 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenidas

### public facilities

- community centre; library, public meeting space/auditorium, public information/exposition space
- police sub-station
- new social institution for mother and children
- better public lighting - enhances safety at night
- other public functions, such as public health care located in centre and yet undeveloped sites/lots



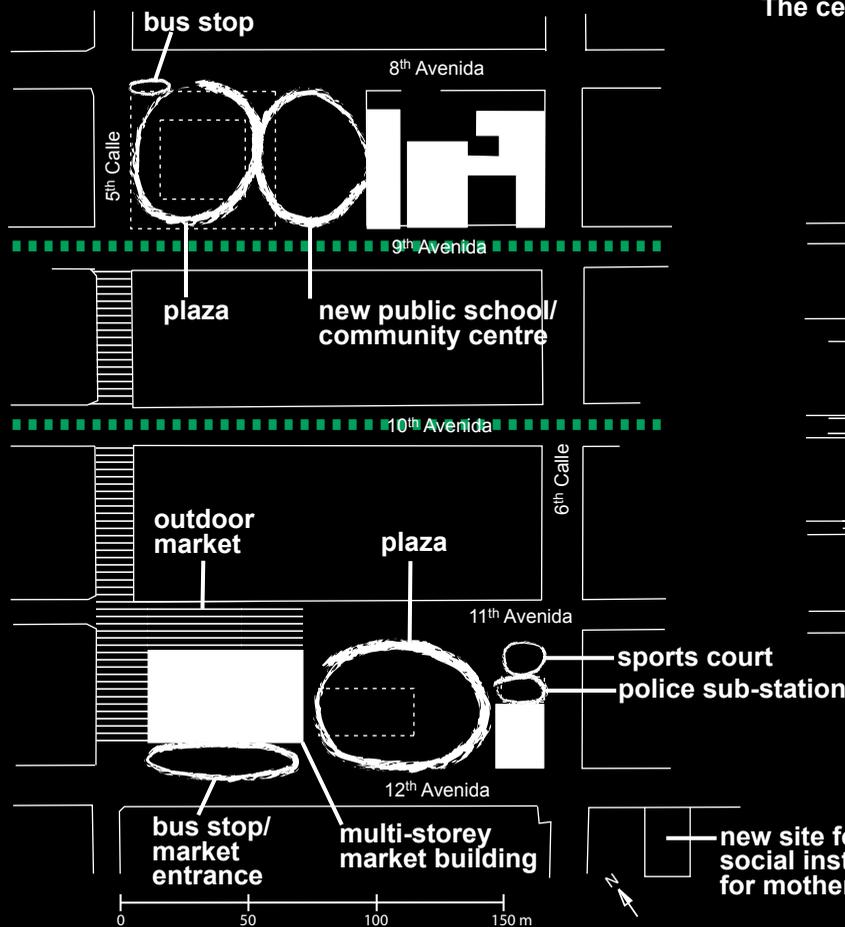
### centre development/revitalisation

- incorporation of municipal land or public open space
- 2 central public open spaces; Plaza Floridiana and Plaza del Mercado
- reconstruction of public school Panamericana - vertical redevelopment gives more public open space
- relocation of existing public park (outdoor sport court)
- relocation of social institution for mothers and children (new building)
- relocation of EMPAGUA storage

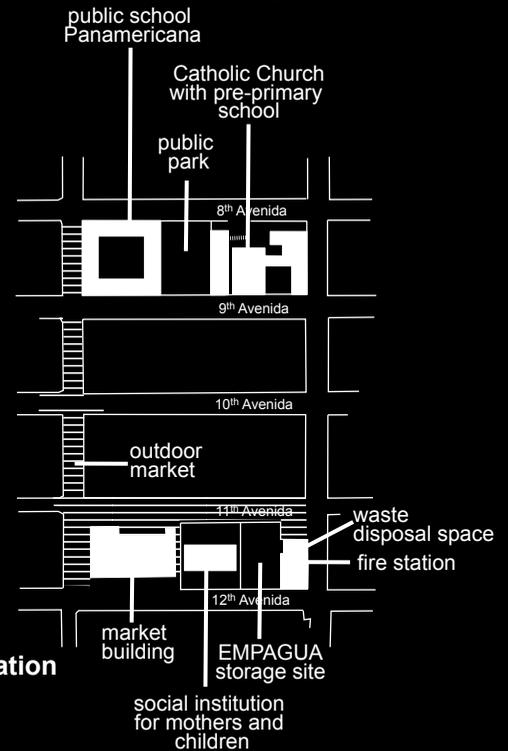
### La Guacamaya

- revitalize area around ravine score for development of a public green park - quiet and active recreational activities for both locals and other city dwellers with view over the ravine
- relocation of settlers to secure area- improvement of housing conditions, health and safety
- stabilize and reinforce ravine for preventing erosion and land slide - make inaccessible as to prevent squatter and create biodiversity

## Centre development proposal



## The centre area as today



together with proposed public open spaces form the open space system, which are the street spaces and the sites with potentials to become public open spaces, namely the municipal land in the centre and around ravine La Guacamaya. Together with a focus on these areas, the concept idea also aims towards development of existing and new public facilities. In the following sections development proposals for these areas are presented.

### Public open space system

The focus of open space development is put on the centre and the area around the ravine La Guacamaya. The two municipal sites in the centre and around ravine La Guacamaya are to be redeveloped as to supply for new public open spaces. There are several reasons to that. First, the only land within the zone that is owned by the municipality, is located to these sites. Second, the centre could gain from being accentuated as a centre for the community, rather than just a centre of commerce. Third, due to their location and qualities, these sites have potentials to become well-developed public arenas.

The *avenidas*, with an emphasis on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenida, work as connections between the centre and La Guacamaya. These connections tie these areas with the commercial area around Calzada San Juan Sacatepéceez. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenida are the central axis. By strengthening their character the character of La Florida will be enhanced.

### **Centre development**

In Guatemala villages and towns are often laid out around a centrally located plaza, that functions as a focal space for the community. Plazas are common and well-known types of open spaces. Therefore they also, most of times, correspond to people 's perceptions of urban open space. Their qualities are their capacities to serve for a wide range of uses and purposes.

The idea is to gather the centre and the heart of the community around the two centre-located municipal sites that will function as plazas - Plaza Floridiana, with the civic centre Centro Panamericano, and Plaza del Mercado that will be adjacent to the municipal market.

The two plazas will differ in character and function. Plaza Floridiana will have more of a civic function with a recreational character, meanwhile Plaza del Mercado, to a large extent, is to function as a casual space and a space for commerce, designed for many visitors and activities.

### **Plaza Floridiana and Centro Panamericana**

By redeveloping the site on which the public school Panamericana and the park next to it is situated, new open space can be gained. The idea is to reconstruct the public school Panamericana as a multi-storey and multi-functional building that also will house a community centre. The new school will be located to the park site adjacent to the existing school. Thereby space for a plaza will be released. The park that today mainly functions as a sport court, will be relocated to a spot next to Plaza del Mercado.



Current view

Plaza Floridiana and Centro Panamericano from 9<sup>th</sup> Avenida



# Plaza Floridiana and Centro Panamericana

## multi-functional plaza

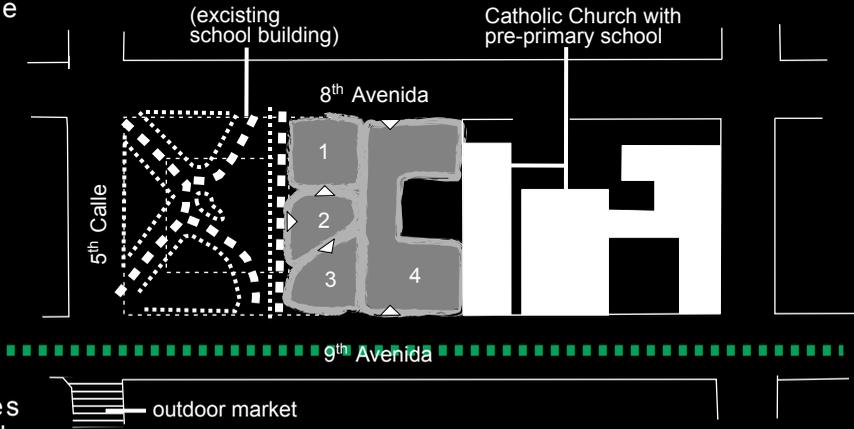
- relax space
- seating space
- waiting space
- play space
- gathering space
- watch space
- event space

## connections

- plaza - streets and outdoor market
- plaza - community centre
- community centre - public school
- paths and entrances
- indoor - indoor spaces

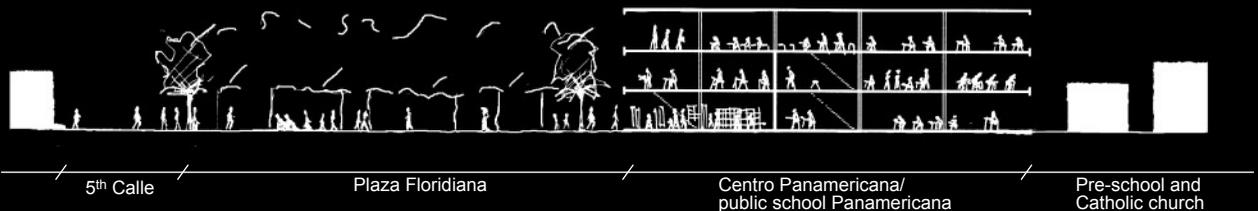
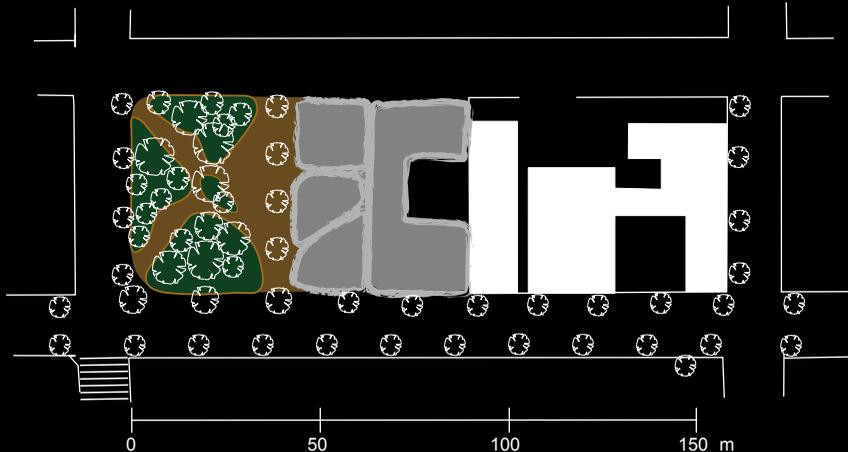
## edges/boundaries and sub-spaces

open - enclosed sub-spaces  
edges/boundaries defined by trees, buildings, paths, ground materials



## multi-purpose public building

- library (1)
- information/exhibition hall (2)
- auditorium (3)
- new public school Panamericana (4)



The new plaza will be the formal and civic core of the centre. It will be the one that gather public celebrations, ceremonies and other civic and community “get together “ in public. The community centre, at the one side of the plaza, with the public library and facilities for public meetings and public information, will emphasize its position as the civic plaza.

The plaza space will be generous and able to act dynamical for public gathering, meetings, festivals and performances as well as for recreation and relaxation. The space must have the capacity to supply for spaces to meet, gather, sit down and observe the surroundings or just pass through. The connections to the community centre Centro Panamericana, the outdoor market, the *avenidas* and *calles* and also to the school are important for how the plaza will function.

The proposal for Plaza Floridiana, illustrated on the previous spread, is one possible layout and spatial design for achieving the desirable functions and use of the plaza.

The proposal suggests a plaza that is divided into four sections separated by levelled edges and paths. One section, the one closest to the community centre, will be fully open and flat. This section offers space for spontaneous gathering for a fair number of people. The other sections are tree planted with hard or soft-surfaced areas that are defined by, hard edges. The edges can serves as seating spaces, but more comfortable seating will be offered on benches attached to these edges.

The levelled section is a feature that is related to the regional open space typology. The levelled section is a design feature borrowed from the colonial style plazas. It is common in parks and squares in Guatemala and Latin America. The levelled section is usually covered by grass and bound by a curd or an edge of stones. The section layout on Plaza Floridiana will be irregular with organic shaped forms rather than geometrical, as common at colonial plazas.

Between the plaza sections are hard-surfaced paths that intersect in the central part of the plaza. The paths, trees and levelled sections create small spaces on the plaza. The tree canopies give shade and create a ceiling to the sky, while the tree trunks create edges and boundaries in the space on the ground level.

One important part is the transition zone between the plaza and the community centre. The transition zone is defined by a path and a tree line. It forms an entrance space and a path along the façade. In the same manoeuvre, tree lines will define the plaza space towards the adjacent streets.

The paths that connect to 9<sup>th</sup> Avenida and 5<sup>th</sup> Calle will be at the same level as the sidewalks, which means that the street space will emerge

and partly become a part of the plaza space and also make the plaza easy to access for disabled.

The site is sloping towards east and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenida. The largest part of the plaza will be flattened so that the grade change is located towards 8<sup>th</sup> Avenida as currently. Connections to sidewalks on this side require low steps and ramps. Earth masses that might be removed will be used as filling in the ravine as presented under La Guacamaya. A bus stop next to the north-west corner of Plaza Floridiana is a node that knits the bus routes on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenida to the plaza, the community centre and 5<sup>th</sup> Calle.

### **Plaza del Mercado**

If the social institution for mothers and children and the EMPAGUA storage are relocated more than half of a block will be released and used for public purposes. The EMPAGUA storage site is hardly used at all, which makes the storage easy to relocate. The social institution for mothers and children will be relocated to a private vacant lot at 12<sup>th</sup> Avenida between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Calle. Since the land is private the municipality has to buy it. The institution will be housed in a new multi-storey building, which will allow space for a backyard or garden. The new social institution could at the same time expand when constructed as a two or three storey building.

The released open space will make space for a plaza. An outdoor sport court will be located in connection to the plaza and 6<sup>th</sup> Calle. Adjacent to the plaza and the outdoor sport court, a new sub-police station will be housed next to the fire station, in a building section that separates the plaza from 6<sup>th</sup> Calle. The waste deposit space that is there today will be replaced with a new waste deposit system attached to the market building.

The plaza proposal for Plaza del Mercado on the following spread illustrates a possible spatial disposition and design of the plaza. As opposed to Plaza Floridiana, this plaza will be a casual and generous space for the outdoor market, but also for spontaneous activities.

The idea for the plaza is to divide the space into parallel sub-spaces for different uses. The sub-space that is closest to the market building will function as an outdoor market space for mobile and temporary market vendors. Therefore it has to be open and easy to access. After hours when the market vendors have finished the businesses for the day, wares on display and market stands are removed and the open layout enables the space to absorb different types of activities.

The other part of the plaza will be a space that will function as a social space and buffer to the market space and also as a wide path for movement. This will be a space for spontaneous meetings and a space to view the market, people passing by or maybe a football or basketball game that is performed on the sport court.

Both the market and the surrounding streets will largely determine the character of the plaza. Its quality to serve as a generous and dynamic space suggests a subtle but at the same time distinct definition of sub-spaces as to define a boundary for the sprawl of the market space and an edge towards the sport court and the police and fire station. The sub-space should be easy to cross and therefore be of rather visual character than physical.

The sub-spaces will be divided by parallel tree lines. The plaza floor will be a hard surfaced carpet of gravel or materials with similar qualities that covers the whole plaza floor and the sport court, in order to unite the sub-spaces and mark the plaza as a continuous space. The material should not be too coarse as to not restrict access of disabled.

Additional, sporadic and sparse tree plantings will bring the plaza space down in scale and create a similar effect as pillars in a pillared hall. A tree line along the building section with the police sub-station and the fire station will create a transition zone towards the building in the same way as at Plaza Floridiana. The sport court will be fenced in as to prevent escaping balls.

The market sub-space will not be furnished but the other sub-space could be furnished with benches and low-growing shrubs. The market space will be equipped with public water taps or water fountains with taps that facilitate sanitary, cooling and refreshing. The parking spaces in front of the market building will be removed as to make space for a bus stop. A bus stop, facilitated with shelters and benches, in front of the market building will bring order to the "jumping on and off" the buses. The entrances to the market building and the outdoor market on 5<sup>th</sup> Calle together with the bus stop and the proximity to the plaza will make the space a node. Alternative parking spaces could be organized along one side of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenida, parallel to the plaza.



Current view

Plaza del Mercado from 12<sup>th</sup> Avenida



# Plaza del Mercado

## multifunctional-plaza and sport court

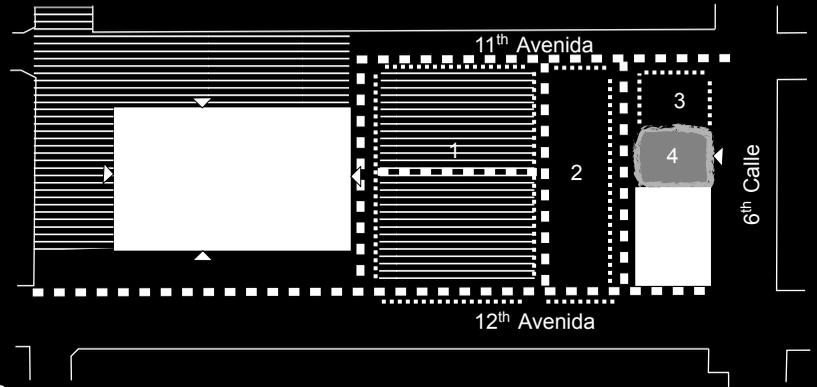
gathering space      play space

commercial space  
waiting space

watch space

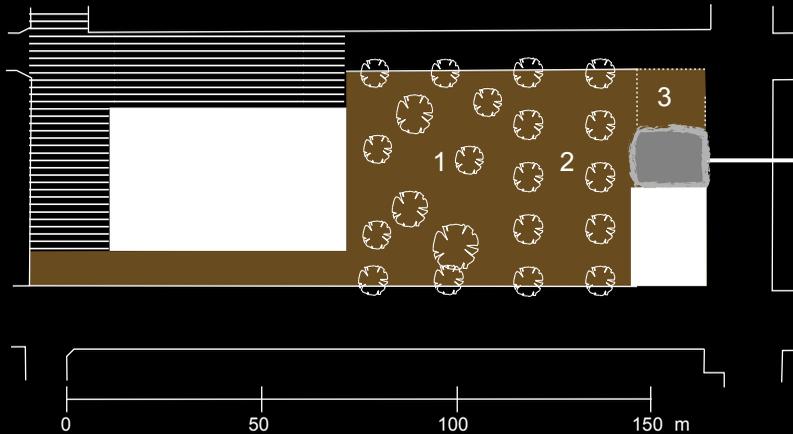
## connections

plaza - streets  
plaza - market  
indoor - outdoor spaces  
paths - entrances

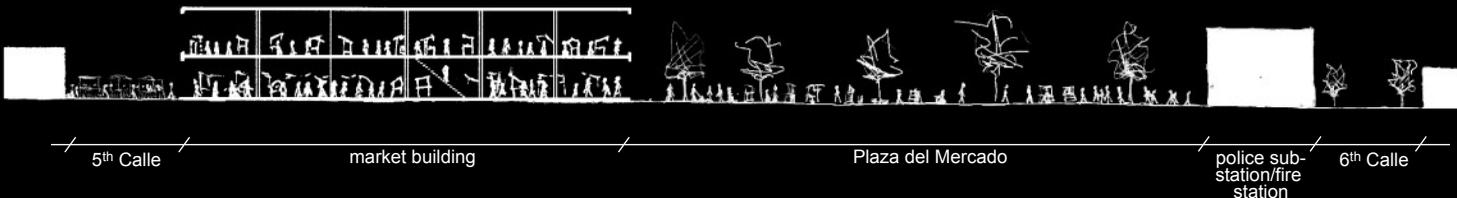


## edges/boundaries and sub-spaces

visual and penetrable boundaries  
edges/boundaries defined by trees, buildings, ground materials,  
subspaces - market space (day-time) (1),  
gathering and pass through space (2),  
sport court (3)



police sub-station (4)



## **Connections**

The idea is to design 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenidas as streets that could be used as comfortable and recreational paths for strolling. A large part of the street section will be for pedestrians, bicyclists and tree planting. Crucial is that these two *avenidas* connect the area around Calzada San Juan Sacatépécez with the centre and Parque La Guacamaya through a linear axis. The connection to Parque La Guacamaya requires a safe crossing of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenida.

Their design and their qualities as connections will emphasize the civic importance of both the *avenidas* and the nodes that they connect. The *avenidas* will have their individual character. The suggestion is to establish the character through tree planting. The two *avenidas* will be planted with theme tree specie - one species for each street. The tree species will emphasize the character of the specific *avenida* and also state a symbolic and green structure connection to Parque La Guacamaya. The theme tree specie will work as a signature for the *avenida*, by which the *avenida* also will be recognized and identified, in the same manner as the streets themselves signifies La Florida. To make a mark the species needs to have a significant or distinct character, for example species with flowers or colourful blooming.

## **La Guacamaya**

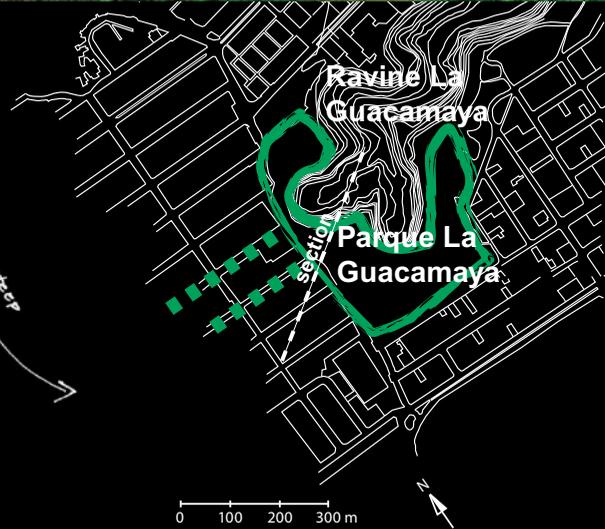
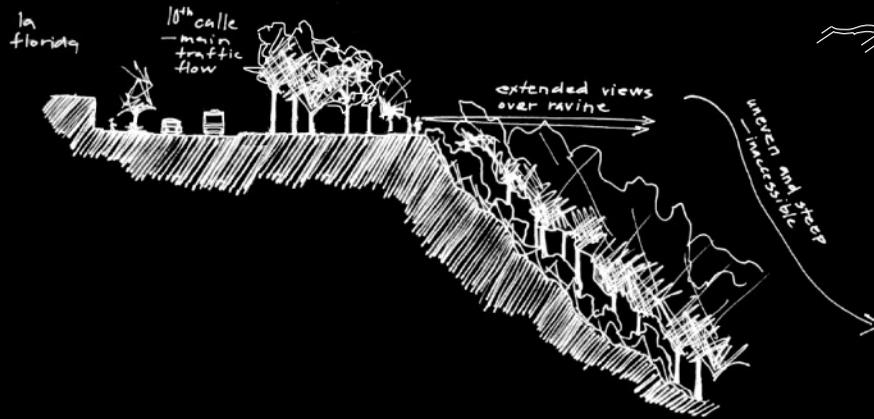
The space around the ravine La Guacamaya opens up towards the ravine. Although partly used as a dumping place for garbage, the views are dominated by the picturesque and lush ravine landscape. The site is favourable, but also hazardous. The objective is to take advantage of the qualities of the site in a way that will not cause a permanent risk for people 's life and health.

## **Parque La Guacamaya**

The third proposed public open space, a public green open space - Parque La Guacamaya, will be located adjacent to the ravine. The park site includes the site of the informal settlement La Guacamaya. The site is classified as a high-risk area which means that the area is too unsafe to use for housing. According to the municipal Plan of Emergency, all housing in high-risk areas should be relocated.

The proposal is to find alternative location for housing for the settlers. This can only be done if housing in safe areas can be offered on conditions that the settlers can handle financially. Instead of being a housing area the site is better used as a public green open space that is less hazardous for people 's lives and health, since then no one will stay on the site on a permanent basis. Risks will be further reduced through fillings in the innermost part of the ravine score, described further under Ravine La Guacamaya.

The public green open space will serve as a recreational area of a fairly considerable size. It surrounds the inner part of the ravine score. The green open space will be designed as a nature park, with paths and flat turf



sections that can be used for passive and active activities, such as relaxation and games. The location will give the park a large and extending view over the ravine. The attractive landscape and the large public green open areas would be qualities that attract visitors not only from La Florida, but also the surrounding areas and other parts of the city.

Access to Parque La Guacamaya from La Florida will be located in connection to the crossing of 10<sup>th</sup> Calle, with 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenida. 10<sup>th</sup> Calle might, in the future as the street system is developed, have an increased traffic flow and therefore the crossing has to be secure for pedestrians.

To decrease the risk for erosion, plantings and fillings will create a slope of what today is a ninety degree drop to the ravine ground. A barrier or railing is necessary to prevent park visitors from falling into the ravine. The existing playground that is situated in the north part will be relocated to the other side of the ravine, to the inner part of the new park, which is more protected, quite and further away from the street.

#### **Ravine La Guacamaya**

In order to stop the erosion of the ravine, the inner section of the ravine will be filled so that a slope is created. The erosion will be reduced by the filling together with trees, shrubs and rocks. By doing so, a bio-diverse and lush

greenery can be established. The intention is keep the ravine inaccessible as to preserve it and prevent land invasion in the ravine.

### **Public services**

Public services could be enhanced in many aspects. The area lacks many basic public facilities. The proposal will only deal with those that directly connect to the development concept.

The focus of development of public services is put on the centre with the development of Centro Panamericano and the relocation and reconstruction of the public institution for mothers and children. The community centre is an investment for cultural and educational development in La Florida. The centre will be a centre for community information and learning with a public library, a new public school, an information/exhibition hall and an auditorium, that will serve for both the public and for the school. The new school and the library will stand for the community 's symbolic notion for development and knowledge.

The establishment of public services, with a focus on the community centre, Centro Panamericano, at the Plaza Floridiana, will help to strengthen the foci of the plaza. The location is well suitable for a community centre since the surrounding streets have large flows of people, which will ensure that the plaza will be populated.

The library will offer possibilities to learn about information technology through establishing public access to computers and the Internet. Library-based adult education and literacy programs can be offered, as a way of encouraging learning. The library could partly be financed with literature and magazines from book fundraising projects.

The proposal suggests relocation and reconstruction of the social institution for mothers and children that today is situated next to the market building. The institution is housed in a one floor building that, when relocated, will release plot space for the proposed plaza. The institution will be relocated to a vacant lot in the proximity, on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenida close to 6<sup>th</sup> Calle. The institution will be housed in a new building. The new building has to be built in two or more floors as to replace the old one with equal or a larger amount of indoor space. A vertical building would leave space for a backyard or an open court space.

Facilities for sports and children recreation is proposed in the centre, as the outdoor sport court beside Plaza del Mercado, and in Parque La Guacamaya as the play ground that will be relocated to the inner part of the park and at the same time improved as playground. The playground provides with different sorts of facilities for children 's play.

For enhancing public services, and also for enhancing public space, development of better public lighting, with a special emphasis to public lighting on and in connection to the plazas, is proposed. The intention is to

enhance safety around the plazas and also on the streets. The improvement can be done with additional lighting on the streets.

Besides the public services within the centre, development of public healthcare is to be highly prioritized. La Florida has a number of undeveloped plots and plots of industrial character that are not yet built. These plots are potential sites for development of public a healthcare clinic or several.

### **Implementation and investment alternatives**

The development proposals as presented, require a solid financial source for putting them into effect. Currently it is hard to see where funding will come from. The public authorities have limited financial resources and it is unlikely that the public will be able to finance the kind of investment that the proposals suggest. Therefore different levels of investments are proposed. The investment levels and investment alternatives together with implementation strategies are described in the following sections.

The investment levels are divided into three. The investment levels could also be seen as a gradual implementation of the development proposals in a process of succession. The first investment level is put on a level that only requires low-cost investments. Small changes that require small financial

inputs can have large impacts. The aim is to prioritize inputs that result in improvement of significance for the community and that also are realistic financially, from a municipal point of view.

The second level aims at investments that require a more solid financial input. These investments are necessary when aiming towards a development that prevents degeneration and generate positive changes within the community. The required financial input, when putting the proposals into effect, will most likely have to come from alternative sources, such as non-governmental organizations or other private funding.

On the third level the intention is to make large-scale investments. The investment on this level aims at generating future development towards a prospering community. The required financial inputs are high.

The first level of investment is suggested to include improvement of public lighting, organization of the waste disposal site on 6<sup>th</sup> Calle, the arrangement of bus stops and the revitalization of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenida, in order to establish a renewed community image and improve public space. The planting of trees should be done carefully. If trees are planted at inappropriate sites they can harm buildings and overhead lines as they grow. When possible overhead lines and poles should be moved to make space for the trees to grow. Trees in pots, is a temporary solution. Trees in pots cannot grow properly and require more maintenance than trees planted in the ground.

Improvement of public lighting should be done with special emphasis on public lighting in the centre area, the park beside the school and also around

10<sup>th</sup> Calle, where public lighting is very poor. Public lighting can be improved by adding light poles on to the streets.

The waste disposal site next to the market is highly prioritized to organize and clean up. The task is to hinder others than the market vendors to use it, since it is dimensioned for them. Residents are supposed to have individual garbage cans for which they have to pay a fee. Many however run away from this fee and throw their waste by the market. The ideal is to construct a new waste deposit storage attached to or close to the market building. The waste needs to be collected everyday, considering the number of market vendors that use it, rather than three times per week as currently.

The second level of investment focuses on issues of higher cost, but nonetheless important investments. On this level, the relocation of the informal settlement La Guacamaya to secure areas together with the development of Parque La Guacamaya and the renovation of the public school, are proposed. The latter investment is not presented as a proposal in the development concept, but will here be discussed as an alternative to building a complete new public school.

The public school facilities and the building are in need of renovation. The school also needs new classroom facilities as school benches, sports equipment and school material. Together with the renovation, additional classrooms can be built if the some of the schoolyard space is taken. The schoolyard is a generous space, which makes such an approach possible.

The area around ravine La Guacamaya is defined as a high-risk area. Relocation of the La Guacamaya settlement must be accompanied with the offering of alternative housing for all settlers. Then the site can than be used for the park, Parque La Guacamaya, as in the presented proposal. Alternative locations for the settlers will not be discussed here, as the issue requires a more in to depth analysis.

The third level proposes development of the plazas and the community centre, together with reconstruction of the public school Panamericana. The construction of the plazas, the community centre and the new public school together with the maintenance of the new public functions and services require a large financial input. As presented, these investments are proposed as a continuation of the community development. This also means that these investments are currently not necessary for preventing degeneration, which will likely happen if the investments on the first and second level will not be put into effect.

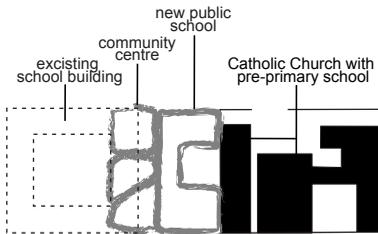
In the following section strategies and alternatives for implementation of the third level investments, the plazas, and also for Parque La Guacamaya are presented and discussed. Strategies and alternatives for implementing parts of the proposals or how to precede the development in strategic steps are described.

Development of the sites will be made in a “step-by-step” process. The intention is to find a strategy that enables the development to proceed step-by-step to make the solutions work if development cannot continue due to lack of finances. This enables options with development of parts of the proposals only, but will nonetheless fulfill the main goal - to revitalize the public space.

### Plaza Floridiana and Centro Panamericano

As to find a strategy or course of development steps, I have to ask; what is important to obtain? What will be prioritized if prioritization is required when developing this site? The questions will be answered by looking into which investments are in most needed and which will be of the largest benefit for the community. The following sections will discuss strategies and prioritization.

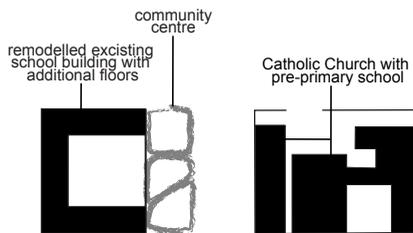
A



When generalizing, the development proposal has two main objectives for this site. Those are creating the public open space, the plaza, and developing the public functions and facilities.

The development of the plaza according to the proposal implies development of the new school building and community centre, since the plaza will be located to the site of the current school building. If the intention is to complete the development according to the development proposal the first step is to start building the new school. Since the existing school will be in use while the new school is being built, teaching can proceed as normal. The construction of the community centre will come gradually during the later stages. Successively the teaching will be moved in to the new school, the old one could be taken down and the plaza could be developed. The procedure is illustrated in figure A.

B

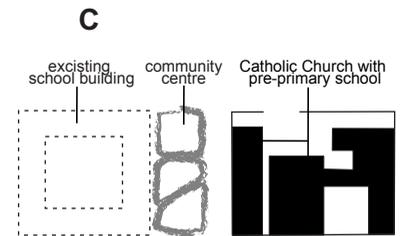


Nevertheless there are other options that suggest a more gradual development procedure. As an alternative to building a new public school from the ground, the existing one could instead be restored and expanded. Regardless of the decision to restore the existing school or build a new one, an investment in building the community centre, or parts of it could be done. Since La Florida already has a school, which, despite its condition, is functioning as a school, there are reasons to start or prioritize the investments for the community centre. If the choice is to do so, two options are presented.

One option would be to build the centre according to the development proposal and thereby be forced to make structural changes on the school building since the community centre is partly located on the site of the existing school building, as shown in figure A. The north-east section of the school building will then be taken down in order to make space for the community centre. A possible scheme is shown in figure B. The benefit with this scheme is that it leaves the option open to build the new public school, as proposed, in the future.

If restoring the existing school, with or without the community centre, new classrooms can be added on a new and additional floor to the existing school building. Building additional floors on the school building requires a thoroughly worked out stabilization of the building. The additional floor could be accessed through stairs towards the schoolyard. If the investment is put to restoring the existing school building, the new school and the plaza are not likely to be developed in the near future, since the restoration of the school is a high cost investment.

The second option is to locate the community centre beside the existing school building and restore the existing school building without changing the structure and design of it, as shown in figure C. This option follows another development procedure as the one presented in the development proposals. This option also means that the new public school will not be built on the site, due to lack of space. The public open space that is left over is small, which restricts possible uses. An alternative would be to find another location for a new school, which will probably mean higher costs since land has to be obtained.



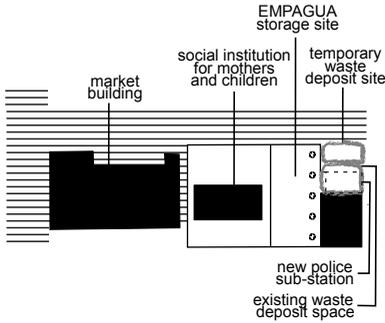
Regardless of the choice of location for the community centre, its development could be done gradually. The library, which will be of most use for both the community and the school, could be built as a first unit. Successively, the other parts, the information/exposition hall and the auditorium, will follow. The purpose with following a step-by-step development procedure is to enable development over a longer period of time. Also, by doing so, the proposal will not have to be fully completed. The one step does not require the next. For example, if it will only be possible to finance the construction of the library, the library will be built so that it can be a part of the community centre but also function independently, in case the whole community centre is not to be built.

If the library is constructed according to the development proposal as the first unit to the community centre, the solution requires a flexible design. The entrance will be towards 9<sup>th</sup> Calle, as an entrance to and from the information/exposition hall is proposed in the development proposal. In the full proposal the wall towards north-east is an indoor wall. In the first step this wall will be a façade. The façade could have windows, which could be removed later when it becomes an internal wall. The opposite façade lies towards the existing school building. Despite of this the suggestion is to design the façade as a front façade with the purpose of enabling further development in the future.

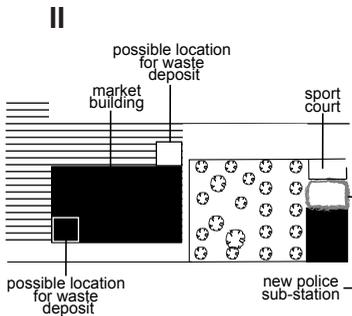
### **Plaza del Mercado**

Coming to the proposals for the site, two measures are prioritised - organization of the waste disposal space and development of a police sub-station adjacent to the fire station, as shown in figure I. In order to be able to develop the police sub-station the waste disposal space has to be removed. Today there is no alternative location in close connection to the market building that allows access to collect the waste. If the plaza will be

developed as proposed, the waste disposal is best attached to the market building towards 11<sup>th</sup> Avenida or located inside the market building, at the corner towards 12<sup>th</sup> Avenida and 5<sup>th</sup> Calle. In both places waste collecting trucks have easy access to the waste disposal.



The first step is to temporarily relocate the waste disposal site as in figure I, in order to make space for the police sub-station. As to organize it, the proposal is to collect the waste more frequent and use containers to prevent the waste from flooding on to the street, as currently when waste is thrown directly on the ground. When the police sub-station has been built and the plaza is successively developed, the waste disposal site can be relocated to one of the proposed sites as in figure II. This will make space for the outdoor sport court. Due to the outdoor market sprawling along the whole block on 11<sup>th</sup> Calle today, the waste disposal site cannot be located to the sites proposed in figure II.



The location of a police sub-station in the centre of La Florida is a measurement to support reduction of crime within the community. The sub-station will enable the police to work on a local level and establish a communication with the community members. Both the police and community members have expressed wishes of a permanent presence of the police in the area. The police sub-station will work as a sub-station under the police station at Calzada San Juan Sacatepépez. When constructing the police sub-station the tree row along the north-east side of the proposed Plaza del Mercado could be planted at the site of EMPAGUA, as to give the trees more time to establish if the Plaza del Mercado will be developed as proposed (figure I).

If investments are put into developing the plaza, some alternative strategies and development steps are proposed. The first step is to relocate the EMPAGUA storage site so that the site could be used as a public open space. The proposal is to relocate the storage site to public land in the periphery of the city. The next step is to relocate the social institution for mothers and children, followed by the development of the plaza as proposed.

Regardless of whether the relocation of the social institution and the development of a police sub-station is to be done or not, there are possibilities to establish the EMPAGUA site as a public open space. In that case the site should be used as a plaza space, without the intention of using it as an outdoor market space.

In an order of prioritization, the least prioritized investment is the one for building additional floors to the market building with the new waste deposit space in connection to or within the market building. The waste disposal space needs to be accessible for waste collecting trucks. A possible solution would be to locate it connection to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenida, as shown in figure II. Another solution would be to make space for a waste disposal within the market building, in the corner towards 12<sup>th</sup> Avenida and 5<sup>th</sup> Calle. This spot has good possibilities for easy access for waste collecting trucks from 12<sup>th</sup>

Avenida. Collection of waste is, in both cases, recommended to early morning or after business hours, when traffic and business are low.

### **La Guacamaya**

Implementation of the proposals for the La Guacamaya site presupposes relocation of the La Guacamaya settlement. As mentioned before, I will not go into studying possible locations or strategies for finding alternative housing, since this requires an in depth analysis and investigation on potential sites and finances. The offering of alternative housing for the settlers will probably be the most cost-generating investment of all development proposals. Nevertheless, a relocation of the La Guacamaya settlement has to be done, since the risk for disasters is high.

When the settlement has been relocated, then the first step is to add filling to the ravine. The waste that has been thrown into the inner part of the ravine should be cleaned from toxics and covered as to improve sanitation. The following step would be to develop the green park. A railing towards the ravine will be put up and paths and lawns will be established. Benches could be placed in connection to the paths and views over the ravine. An entrance path will connect to the crossing of 10<sup>th</sup> Calle. Finally the playground will be relocated to the inner part of the ravine.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Madanipour, Ali (1996, p. 10).
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid (pp. 4-30).
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid (p. 23).
- <sup>4</sup> Massey, D. Space, Place and Gender (1994) in Madanipour, Ali (1994, p. 23).
- <sup>5</sup> Källa
- <sup>6</sup> INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, The National Department for Statistics), Guatemala.
- <sup>7</sup> INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, The National Department for Statistics), Guatemala in Gellert, Gisela (1995, p. 87).
- <sup>8</sup> The metropolitan area is further on referred to as AMG (Area Metropolitana de Guatemala).
- <sup>9</sup> INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, The National Department for Statistics), Guatemala.
- <sup>10</sup> Gilbert, Allan (1996).
- <sup>11</sup> JICA (1995). The average production year of the buses is 1976.
- <sup>12</sup> Bastos, Santiago and Camus, Manuela.
- <sup>13</sup> Metrópolis 2,010 - Plan de Desarrollo Metropolitano, La Planificación Integral de la Ciudad.
- <sup>14</sup> FOGUAVI (Fondo Guatemalteco para la Vivienda or the Guatemalan Housing Fund) is the autonomous governmental department for housing.
- <sup>15</sup> The vision of a polycentric city is not described in the development plan. However, it is functioning as a concept base for the planning department. Interview with architect and urban planner Susana Asensio.
- <sup>16</sup> The categorization is made by myself as a conclusion of reviewed literature.
- <sup>17</sup> Carr, Francis, Rivlin and Stone (1992, p. 71-76).
- <sup>18</sup> Based on Gehl, Jan (1996) and Carr, Stephen, Francis, Mark, Rivlin, Leanne G. and Stone Andrew (1992).
- <sup>19</sup> Gehl, Jan (1996). Gehl argues that necessary activities take place in the space regardless of its physical condition, layout and design. One cannot exclude the fact that the occurrence, even of these activities, to some degree depends on the physical condition, layout and design of space.
- <sup>20</sup> Carr, Stephen, Francis, Mark, Rivlin, Leanne G. and Stone Andrew (1992, p.26).
- <sup>21</sup> Marcus, Clare Cooper and Francis, Carolyn (1998, p. 21).
- <sup>22</sup> Carr, Francis, Rivlin and Stone (1992).
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Marcus, Clare Cooper and Francis, Carolyn (1998, pp. 20-21, 29-30).
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 19.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 20.
- <sup>28</sup> Hughes, Bob (1992, pp. 58-64).
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 58-64)
- <sup>30</sup> Rivlin, L.G. & M. Wolfe. Institutional settings in Children's lives. New York: Wiley. 1985, in Carr, Stephen, Francis, Mark, Rivlin, Leanne G. and Stone Andrew (1992, p. 193).
- <sup>31</sup> Trancik, Roger (1986). So-called non-spaces are spaces without clear ideas for space and structure, which are often found in spontaneously developed areas.
- <sup>32</sup> Interviews with locals and professionals.
- <sup>33</sup> Based on interviews and observations in La Florida and Guatemala City. Also see Marcus, Clare Cooper and Francis, Carolyn A. (1990, p. 21).
- <sup>34</sup> New urbanism is a planning movement that promotes a re-ordering of the built environment into the form of complete towns. New urbanism refers to an urban form created from the same components as conventional development with diverse, walkable, compact and mixed-use development, composed in a more integrated fashion, in the form of complete communities ([www.newurbanism.com](http://www.newurbanism.com)).

- <sup>35</sup> Alex (1967).
- <sup>36</sup> Spanish word for a corner store or small grocery shop.
- <sup>37</sup> Spanish word for tortilla (a type of corn bread) bakery.
- <sup>38</sup> The population density in most major Latin American cities varies between 100 and 130 persons per hectare (Gilbert, Allan., 1996, p. 94). In La Florida, based on a population of 35,000 inhabitants, the population density is 350 persons per hectare. This figure has to be considered in a situation in where La Florida has a higher amount of land devoted for housing than counted for a whole city i.e. less traffic areas, industries, recreational areas and so on.
- <sup>39</sup> Interview with locals and Beata Drexler, landscape architect at the Municipality of Guatemala and who used to live in La Florida.
- <sup>40</sup> Ladino or mestizo are definitions for a Central American person of mixed indigenous and European ancestry.
- <sup>41</sup> Alex (1967).
- <sup>42</sup> Coordinadora Nacional para la Reduccion de Desastres (CONRED) is the National Coordinator for the Reduction of Disasters.
- <sup>43</sup> Interview with José Vicente Santizo, police officer at the police station at Calzada San Juan Sacatepéceez, close to Plaza Florida.
- <sup>44</sup> Tortilla is a bread made on corn flour.
- <sup>45</sup> JICA (1997).
- <sup>46</sup> The overall concept in Martin Heidesjö's forthcoming diploma work is to make street spaces more available for pedestrian and recreational activities and a street hierarchy that direct vehicle traffic to certain streets is suggested.

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<http://www.iadb.org>

Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)  
<http://www.ine.gob.gt>

New Urbanism - creating livable communities  
<http://www.newurbaism.com>

United Nations, UN Statistics Division  
<http://www.un.org/Depts/unsd/social/hum-set.htm>

## **Interviewees**

**Aletta Koster**

Urban Planner, Metrópolis 2,010 Planning Department, Municipality of Guatemala

**Beata Drexler**

Landscape Architect, Development of Centro Historico, Municipality of Guatemala

**Carlos Humberto Roldán González**

Resident of La Florida

**Casilda Roca de Morales**

Resident of La Florida

**Francisco Vasquez García**

Police officer

**José Vicente Santizo**

Priest and Resident of La Florida

**Mario Roberto Pedrosa**

Manager of municipal markets, Municipality of Guatemala

**Rodolfo Federico Azpuru**

Architect and Urban Planner, Metrópolis 2,010 Planning Department, Municipality of Guatemala

**Sandra Drummond**

Architect

**Silvia Morales**

Architect, Metrópolis 2,010 Construction Control Department, Municipality of Guatemala

**Susana Asensio**

Architect and Urban Planner, Metrópolis 2,010 Planning Department, Municipality of Guatemala

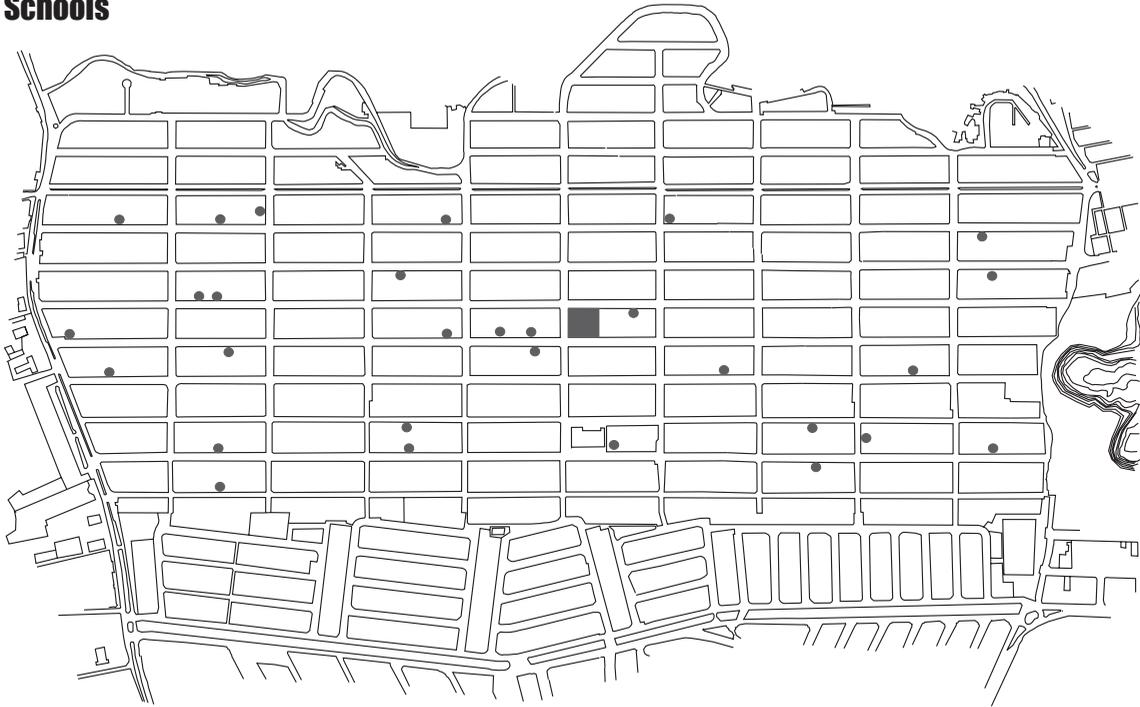




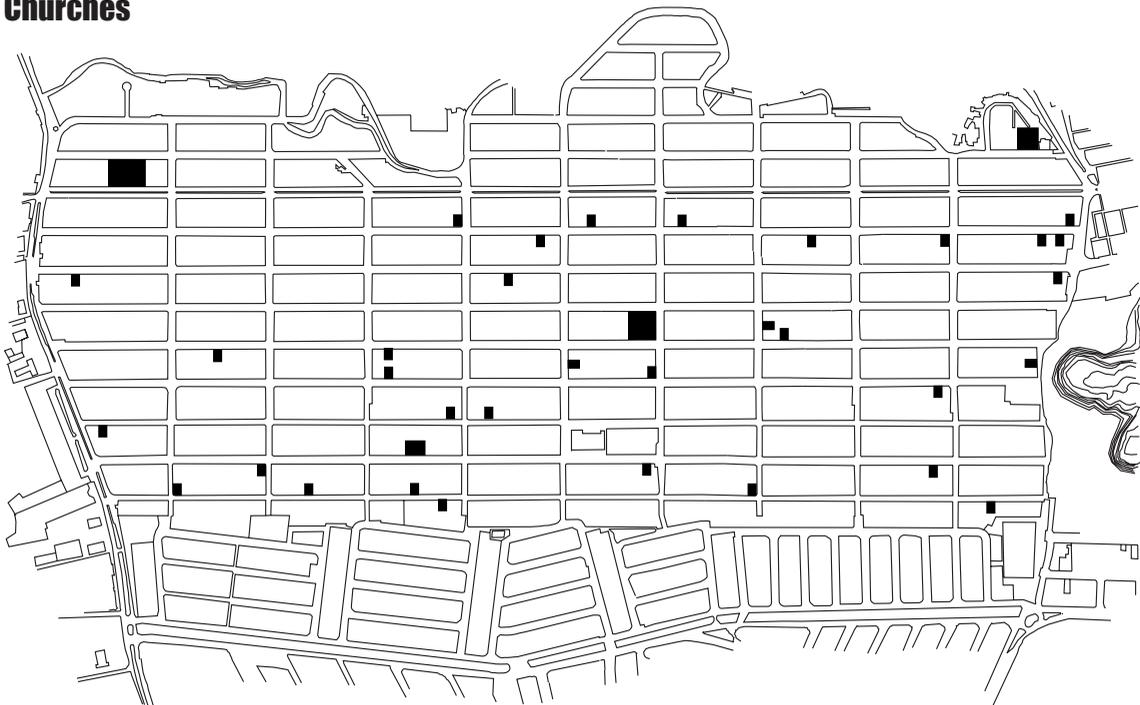


# Appendix 1 - Inventories

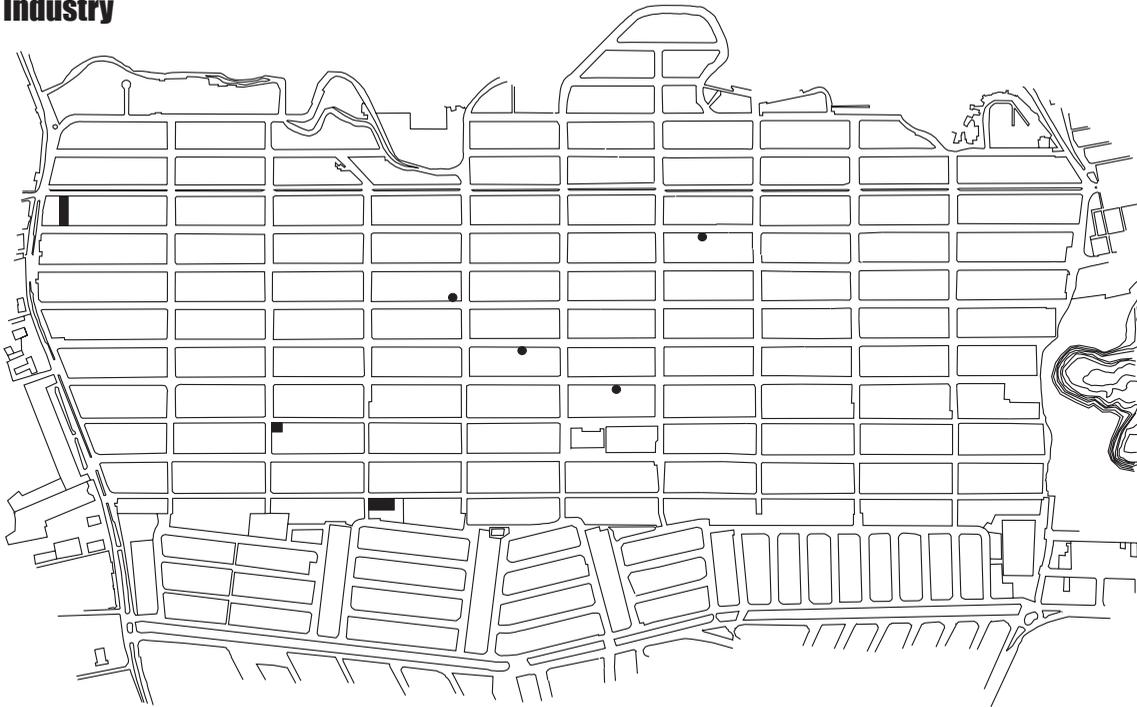
## Schools



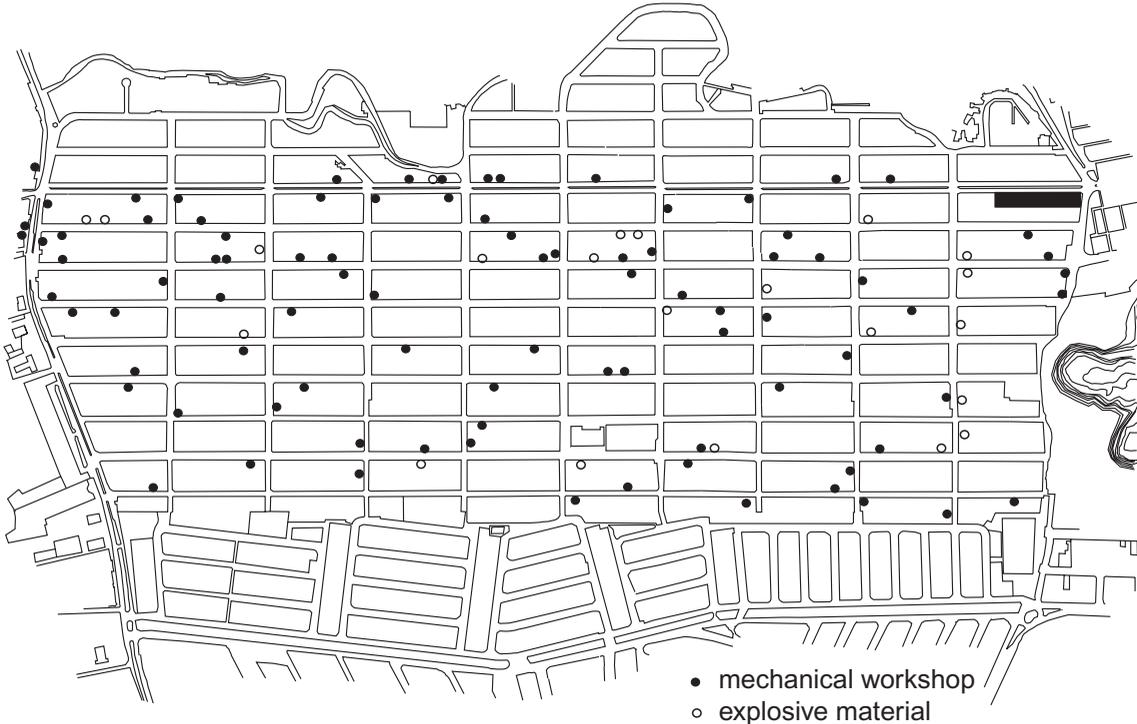
## Churches



## Industry



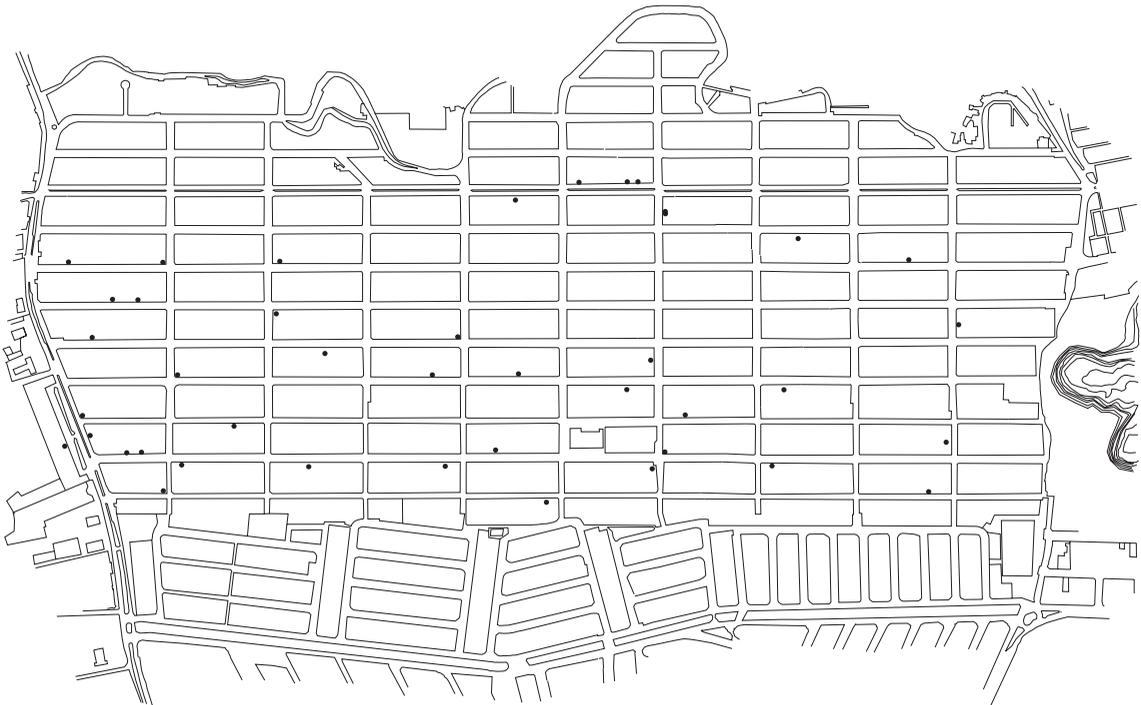
## Mechanical workshop and handling of explosive materials



## Bars and restaurants



## Health clinics







Guatemala City is a rapidly expanding city. The urban growth has during the last decades put a pressure on public open space in the city. A large amount of the public open spaces are streets dominated by traffic. Public spaces for human activities are often limited to the small spaces of sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, traffic islands and parking lots.

Public spaces are places for social interaction and movement. The public space is the scene on which public life and public activities take place. Public spaces are used for recreation and relaxation. In public spaces people are enabled to voice their common and individual needs. The public space has an important role to play in low-income areas. Many times public spaces serve as spaces in where to seek for recreation and also privacy, when this cannot be provided for elsewhere. In these areas, with their high population and building densities, the public space is used as a refuge.

This study focuses on the development of public space in zone 19, called La Florida, in Guatemala City.

# Sidewalks

