

URBAN REGENERATION AND 'CULTURAL CORRIDOR' IN MONTERREY (MEXICO)

PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOP SYNTHESIS : M2 URBAN PLANNING AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE -
GLOBAL SOUTH TRACK, from September 2023 to January 2024



" SUSTAINABLE URBAN
REGENERATION OF DOWNTOWN
MONTERREY: STRATEGIC VISION
AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES
FOR THE CREATION OF A
'CULTURAL CORRIDOR' "



EUP production

»»» THE CITY OF MONTERREY

Located in Mexico, Monterrey is the capital of the state of Nuevo León and is known for its economic vitality and industrial past. In this dynamic urban context, a number of major issues have emerged over time. Rapid population growth in the periphery and urban sprawl as well as the gradual devitalisation and depopulation of the historic center, have led to significant concerns about the city's future. The center of Monterrey also faces several urban challenges, including traffic congestion, pollution, a sense of insecurity, aging infrastructure, a lack of green spaces and a significant number of abandoned dwellings. Confronted with these challenges, the metropolitan center is the subject of the Revive el Centro program.

»»» THE MISSION

This study aims to support the City of Monterrey and the Instituto Municipal de Planeación Urbana y Convivencia de Monterrey (ImplanC) in the definition and design of a "Cultural Corridor", in downtown Monterrey, through a territorial diagnosis and strategic operational recommendations. This project was considered in the context of **sustainable urban regeneration**, with the aim of harmonizing and **integrating economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives** that are compatible with improving practices and retaining current residents.

>>> THE METHODOLOGY

1

Preliminary territorial diagnosis
(from Paris)



2

Intensive 2 weeks of data
collection and analysis in the
field
(in Monterrey)



3

Final report, including a detailed
territorial diagnosis, strategic
recommendations and
operational guidelines
(from France)



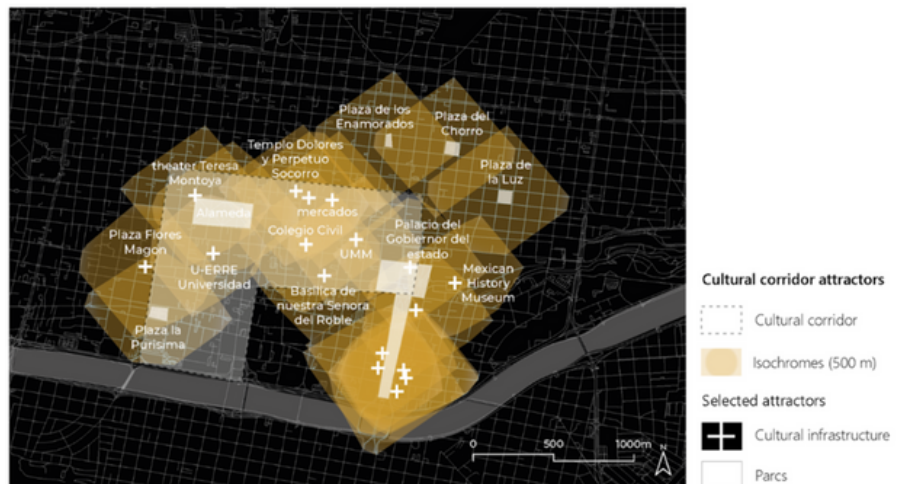
Interviews were conducted with different stakeholders during the mission in Monterrey, which enabled the EUP team to gain a better understanding of the issues at stake. Three participatory activities were organized : with leaders of resident associations, a group of street artists and visitors of Alameda Park. These activities were designed to ensure that the views and suggestions of residents, users and artists were included in the analysis and recommendations. The methodology also included itinerant observations and pedestrian diagnosis, to capture the identity and atmosphere of each neighborhood. Finally, the study was based on digital placemaking analysis, in order to explore strategies for enhancing physical places with location-specific services, products or digital experiences, to create more attractive destinations for all.

DIAGNOSIS AND STRATEGIES

AXIS 1 : A MULTICULTURAL AREA

The perimeter of the corridor is made up of several districts with different functions: the southern part of the corridor is predominantly residential, the eastern part is commercial and the center, with the Alameda, is a leisure area. Each of these areas has its own identity. But despite this distinction they all are traditional and popular neighborhoods that attract diverse populations and offer many cultural attractions.

The study identified various types of current or potential attractions according to different criteria (heritage, culture, history). As the map shows, many attractors are located within the corridor, but others are in the surrounding area, demonstrating the porous nature of the corridor.



Attractors map, EUP production 2024

Despite its many assets, downtown Monterrey has a rather negative image in the collective perception of the city's inhabitants. It is seen as empty and dangerous, especially at night. The center is punctuated by a variety of flows, both permanent and transient, but also by the changing atmosphere and population between day and night. The perception of this space varies also considerably from one social group to another. Some, such as students or groups who rarely visit the center, see it as unattractive and unsafe, while others, such as long-established residents, urban planners or artists see its qualities and potential. The main challenge for the center is how to reconcile sometimes divergent, even conflicting expectations in order to make it an inclusive and sustainable space.

>>> STRATEGY : Shaping a cultural centrality, by connecting the heritage of Monterrey's with its future ambitions



1

STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT CULTURAL ATTRACTORS AND IDENTITIES

The first recommendation focuses on strengthening the links between the different cultural identities present in the corridor. Integrating cultural attractions as key points of a tourist itinerary could attract a wide range of the public to these districts. This would not only strengthen social cohesion, but also boost the local economy through increased tourism, promote the preservation of urban heritage and offer new opportunities for local artists.

2

HIGHLIGHTING THE HISTORICAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE OF THE CITY CENTER

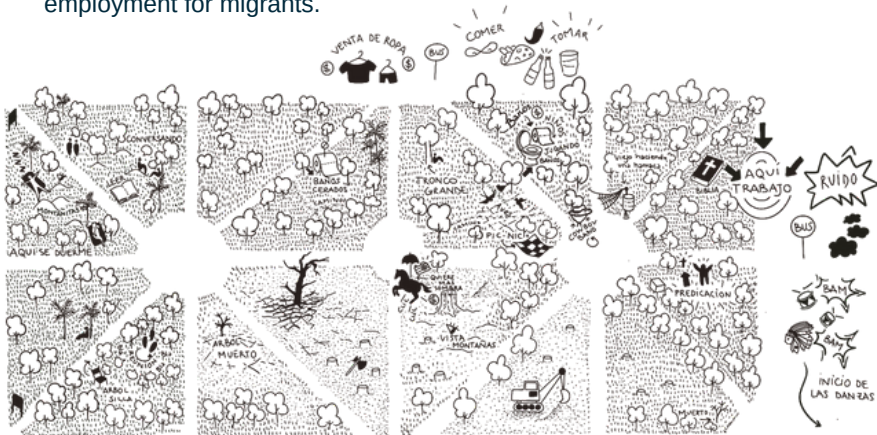
The aim is to develop a collective memory among the residents, based on the historical heritage of the town in order to forge a shared imagination of the town. Suggestions for events, such as photographic exhibitions, are proposed to collect and share memories, reinforcing residents' involvement in public events. Located in the heart of an exceptional natural landscape, Monterrey could also benefit from the enhancement of attractive viewpoints through the refurbishment of existing buildings. This initiative aims to bring the community together around the shared identity of the city's mountains.

3

TURNING THE CORRIDOR INTO A CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC HUB

The Cultural Corridor has a potential to become a dynamic cultural and artistic hub by consolidating existing initiatives and supporting new ones. This recommendation proposes the development of a Cultural Corridor conceived as an open-air gallery. Spaces dedicated to urban art could be preserved and valorised. Some new permanent or ephemeral workshops dedicated to art could take place in some strategic locations, like Alameda Park or Colegio Civil. It can enhance the sensibility and the visibility through the promotion of Monterrey's artists and the direct participation of residents. All these events can be improved through better communication.

The Alameda Park illustrates the challenges of citizen participation and diversity of views. This park has intrinsic qualities such as its centrality, economic function, cultural dynamism, heritage value, proximity to other attractions, access to green spaces, and role as a place of welcome and employment for migrants.



Sensitive map of Alameda Park, EUP production 2024

AXIS 2 : PUBLIC SPACES

The city is characterized by deteriorated public spaces with potential of attractiveness, social dynamism and reflection of urban diversity. However, they concrete problems such as the deterioration of pavements, obstacles and the dominance of vehicles. It also highlights the need for integrated urban planning to improve the experience of walking in the city.

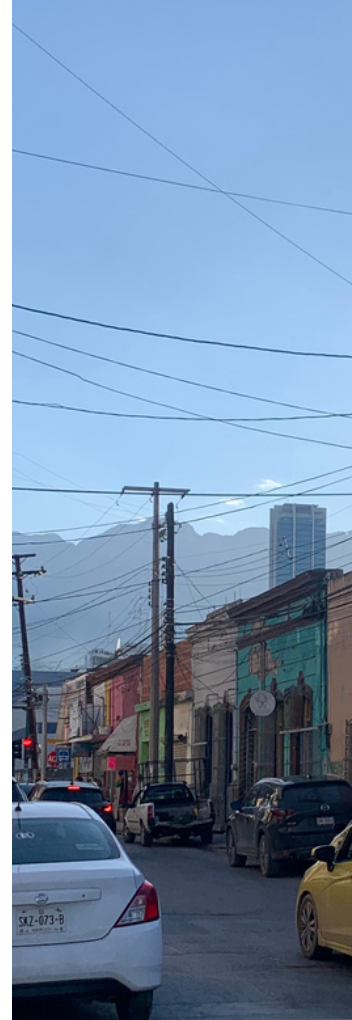
➤➤➤ **STRATEGY : Enhancing the quality, sustainability, and inclusivity of public spaces**

Proposition 1 - Street Reconfiguration: To address the challenge of limited pedestrian space, we propose an approach inspired by tactical urbanism. Some traffic and parking lanes could be converted into pedestrian, bicycle and/or green lanes. This could be done first as a test, and then more permanently if the experience is successful, using a learning-by-doing approach. This includes creating chicanes with planters, the creation of mini parks in front of cultural buildings, and collaborating with artists for road paintings to enhance safety and create a unique identity in the cultural corridor.

Proposition 2 - Create a Family-Friendly Alameda: We also suggest focusing on making Alameda park more family-friendly, by introducing a variety of vegetation, a playground, rethinking bench placement, expanding dining areas, and incorporating Wi-Fi connectivity for a more inclusive and functional environment.

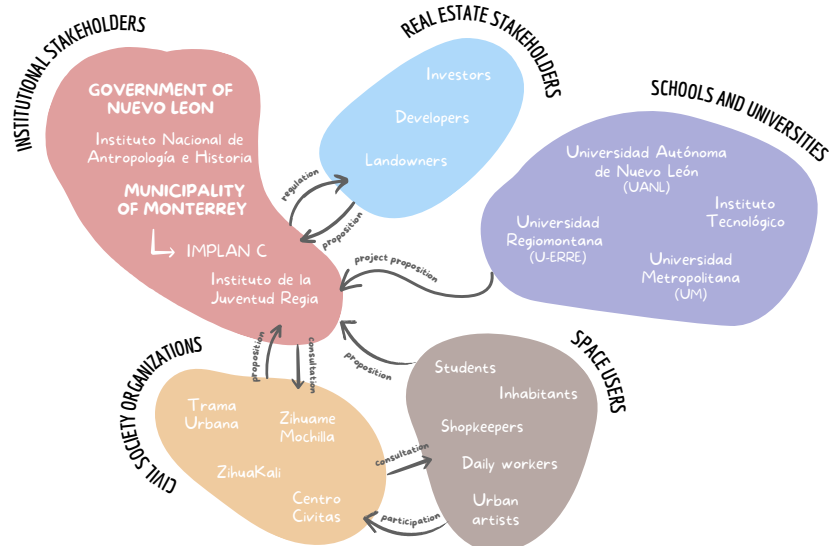
Proposition 1 - Make the corridor a model of Sustainability: We propose to replicate the green corridor's efforts on a larger scale. Implementing revegetation, soil desertification, drainage pavements, and stormwater network to address climate vulnerabilities and transform the corridor into a model of climate resilience, enhancing its attractiveness.

Proposition 2 - Solution to keep a lively corridor: Acknowledging cost constraints, we suggest interim solutions like modular green spaces, transitory pedestrian precincts, and green roofs. These cost-effective measures, including shade structures and the conversion of private parking lots into green spaces, combat urban heat, address heat island effects, and ensure a more sustainable and appealing Cultural Corridor.



AXIS 3 : A COMPLEX URBAN GOVERNANCE

The area under study hosts a large number of actors such as public institutions, universities, real estate agents, but also civil society organizations and users of the area, who are involved in various projects. This is a considerable asset for the city Center. However, there is no common governance body to share information, coordinate and build synergies between these initiatives .



Scheme of proposed groups of stakeholders, EUP production 2024

Nowadays, the Corridor's stakeholder system is complex. There is a lot of back and forth between administrations due to an unclear division of responsibilities, which makes it difficult to work together. There is also a climate of mutual ignorance between departments and projects, which can lead to tensions and misunderstandings. This lack of dialogue hinders the creation of a shared vision for the Cultural Corridor. It also affects the link with the residents of the area and limits their participation.

➤➤➤ STRATEGY : Establishing a shared governance framework to ensure the sustainability of the Cultural Corridor

To ensure the sustainability and enhance the potential of the Cultural Corridor, this recommendation advocates the establishment of formal governance for the area under study. This would involve both strengthening governance by creating a platform for dialogue between all relevant stakeholders and encouraging communication and citizen participation.

The creation of a strategic stakeholder committee is a way of formalizing a time for meetings between the various high-level bodies. In this way, these decision-makers could share their methods and expertise in a coordinated way, with an emphasis on multilateral dialogue between actors from the administrative, academic and real estate sectors. However, this body must also provide a space for citizen participation.

Encouraging resident participation is a lever for strengthening the stakeholder system. This involves recognising residents as active contributors to the urban space. To enable meaningful citizen participation, we must focus on opening a dialogue with citizens, using tools such as regular and active communication through identified and formalized channels. Another tool is participatory budgeting, which must also be carried out transparently and ensure real access to information. Openness to exchange and dissemination of information on current projects can be achieved through meetings between representatives of the neighborhoods. This space could become the place for public consultations, so that institutions can better identify and support community-led initiatives. It would be beneficial to further integrate the Lab as it promotes and stimulates the development of citizens' projects.

By emerging as a new urban centrality, the influence of the Cultural Corridor would extend beyond its immediate boundaries. This offers the possibility of the Corridor's integration into metropolitan projects and the affirmation of its position within a wider network of actors. It is also intended to promote a new image of the city center among citizens throughout the metropolitan area, strengthening its influence and promoting a wider dynamic of attractiveness.

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Concluding map of the proposals, EUP production 2024