

Initiative Report

Impressions on Rosario's Metropolitan and Buenos Aires's Metropolitan Area governance and urban renewal project

During March 31 and April 01 the Metropolis Initiative on Metropolitan Governance promoted a group visit to Argentina. The purpose of the field visit was to approximate our partners to the Buenos Aires' and Rosario's metropolitan governance cases and their urban operation projects presented last year during the our annual meeting at São Paulo. The Initiative coordination considered both interesting cases, as much for its atypical metropolitan governance format as for its process on the elaboration of urban operation projects

Representatives from different Brazilian metropolitan regions attended the mission: Ms. Lucelena Melo, Secretariat of Metropolitan Development of Goiânia, Iara de Macedo, Institute of Public Administration of Curitiba and Mr. Reinaldo Azevedo, Coordination of Metropolitan Affair at São Paulo municipality. On behalf of the São Paulo State Government and Emplasa (São Paulo Company of Metropolitan Planning), and also representing the Initiative coordination, were present Ms. Rovena Negreiros, Planning Director, Ms. Maria Lucia Camargo, Economic Studies Coordinator and Mr. Raphael Camargo, international cooperation advisor.

Rosario

At the Palacio de los Leones, House of Rosario Government, the mayor Mónica Fein received the Metropolis Initiative delegation with her team for metropolitan development, Mirta Levin and Sol Mina, and Foreign Affairs Office, Sergio Barrios and Silvana Turra.



Figure 1 - Visit at Palacio de los Leones

The Rosario Metropolitan Area (AMR) is a no institutionalized arrangement composed by 23 local governments with a total population of 1.400.000 inhabitants in an area of 324.450 hectares.

Considering the Argentinean conjecture for metropolitan regions, the unusual format of metropolitan governance developed in Rosario has revealed itself as a positive experience. The Initiative partners could observe during the meeting organized at Metropolitana (office in charge of the metropolitan projects inside the Municipality of Rosario) the progress made on the coordinating of regional development projects such as the elaboration of guidelines for land use planning (directrices de ordenación territorial – DOT)) and the creation of the Entity of Metropolitan Coordination (ECOM).

The municipality of Rosario plays an important role on the leadership of this metropolitan governance dynamic. The mayor of the city, Ms. Mónica Fein, welcomed the Initiative delegation and emphasized the metropolitan issue as one of the priorities of her administration. Ms. Fein said that Metropolitana accomplished a lot in a short period of time. Mirta Levin, the office coordinator, stated that the key point of all their work is related to a good relationship with the other municipalities, “The voluntary adhesion format facilitates the

generation of consensus inside the group and does not interfere on the local government autonomy, considering that they can stop collaborating whenever they want”.

In the present moment, the office of Metropolitana is working in partnership with ECOM and academic institutions in order to implement a guideline for land use planning (DOT) in the AMR. The municipality of Rosario is also evaluating the possibility of implementing a metropolitan transportation system, since the current municipal contract will end shortly.



Figure 2 - Initiative meeting with Rosario's mayor, Ms. Mónica Fein.

“The way we established our metropolitan governance does not mean that we reject legal frameworks. On the contrary, this is the way we found to coordinate our regional planning from the Argentinean legal system scenario. From the bottom up idea, with the voluntary adhesion system, we discuss with other municipalities which could be the best legal framework to attend our needs”, explained the mayor.



3 Figure 3 – Initiative partners discuss metropolitan governance with Rosario's mayor, Ms. Mónica Fein.

With regards to urban development project, the municipality of Rosario presented the *Puerto Norte* case. This is a private area where the regional harbor used to operate in the past. After becoming an abandoned spot in the city, the Planning Secretariat decided to promote a land-

use change in the area and launched an international competition to define density, use of public space and other urban aspects.

The project did not receive public financing “...it was all about public management”, affirmed Mirta Levin, Metropolitana coordinator. In the negotiation process with the private sector (land owners and entrepreneurs) that obtained a new land use normative to build and operate their developments, the municipality requested 40% of all area of *Puerto Norte* to be destined to public space. In that case, after an articulation process between government and private sector, it was agreed that the entrepreneurs should build and maintain squares, parks and pedestrian circulation – never blocking public access to the Paraná River as seen in the images below.



Figure 4 – Puerto Norte illustration. TGLT image credit.



Figure 5 – Puerto Norte urban renewal process in 2012. Image credit Arquitectura de calle.



Buenos Aires

Brief historic of Parque Donado Holmberg:

The requalification project of Parque Donado Holmberg is being developed in the southern part of the city. Object of several expropriations in the 1980s, a period when the military government wanted to build a highway in the neighborhood, the region underwent a process of irregular occupation and consequent degradation after the withdrawal of the road project. The highlights of the Parque Donado Holmberg program are the Housing Plan to reintegrate and develop social competences for families living in the area and the Urban Renewal Plan that prioritizes public spaces and neighborhood improvements.



Figure 6 - The Initiative partners with Mr. Diego Sadowski and Julian from the Secretariat of Planning of Buenos Aires City visiting the social housing units at Parque Donado Holmberg

Main topics of discussion:

- ✓ The small scale urban renewal can be considered as a laboratory for other more complex urban development projects planned for the city of Buenos Aires. The process used in this case can also be applied to other regions in the world;
- ✓ The general idea of the project consists on the sale of public land bought in the 1980's, when the government expected to build a highway in the area. The revenue earned from the auctions, which is divided by different phases in order to gain real state appreciation, is now directed to a Fund that had already financed urban improvements such as the construction of two tunnels, a school, a community center, a police station and 500 social housing units that benefited the local families;



- ✓ For the 500 units, the government decided to break a paradigm of affordable housing typology, offering a new concept for the families and also implementing a dynamic of mixed-use developments that include low income, middle and middle-high income families. The area also contains retail and public space as cycle-ways, a 17 square meter linear park, and recreational spaces;
- ✓ The price of the social housing units does not exceed 25% of the families’ income and the middle income families can buy small units through open market offer with subsidized credit;
- ✓ “The gain owned with the sale of public land exceeded our initial expectations. The Buenos Aires city still holds an important asset: 40% of our original land properties” affirmed Fernando Alvarez de Celis, planning director of Buenos Aires Autonomous City. The chart below shows the surroundings land value dynamic from 2007-2011.

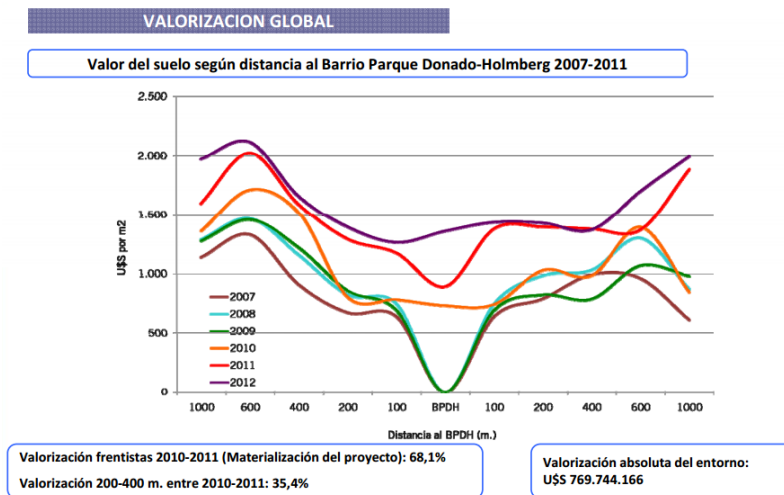


Figure 7 – Appreciation of Parque Donado-Holmberg surroundings 2007-2011.



Figure 8 – Before and after of Parque Donado-Holmberg urban renewal



Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area - AMBA

The Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area is considered as the most important economic area of Argentina, concentrating more than 46% of the country's GDP. The Greater Buenos Aires hosts a population of 15 million people (30% of the Argentina's inhabitants) inside a territory that represents 1% of country area.

Besides of being the capital of Argentina, Buenos Aires hosts the Central Government Headquarters and is considered as an autonomous city. Added that to the region economic and voters' concentration, the AMBA offers a relevant empowerment to its politicians, which are frequently looking for a prominence on the national political scene, making governance a challenge for metropolitan projects.

Taking that into consideration, the dialogue across the different municipalities faces a barrier for a metropolitan consensus. The Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (AMBA) is a not institutionalized region, as stated by the undersecretary of AMBA at the Buenos Aires City, Diego Valenzuela, "...the cooperation exists when most of the local governments share the same matters". In that scenario, some municipalities of AMBA are initiating a cooperation project in major metropolitan debates such as solid waste, transport and sanitation. The mentioned metropolitan dynamic indicates that the Buenos Aires city is developing mechanisms to overcome the current fragile governance structure at the AMBA.

Quotes from Initiative Partners for the Initiative

- ✓ Networks are very beneficial for cities and regions with low financing capacity – Lucelena Melo
- ✓ The opportunity of bringing pioneering experiences to our city reality refreshes our work and also improves public management – Iara de Macedo
- ✓ Network platforms help on legitimizing our actions from the outside vision – Iara de Macedo

A short overview of our partner metropolitan regions

Goiania, represented by Lucelena Melo

Metropolitan Region of Goiânia, that concentrates 2/3 of the regional government population, is launching a metropolitan master plan in partnership with the Federal University of Goiania. Until the present moment, the only program that involves most of the municipalities of the region is a Consortium created to manage the transportation issue.

Curitiba, represented by Iara de Macedo

The municipality of Curitiba is developing a capacity building network aiming at improving the technical team abilities of other cities of the Metropolitan Region. The next step is the elaboration of a Metropolitan Master Plan. It is worth noticing that in this situation the actions are lead by the main municipality of the region, Curitiba, in a partnership with the state government.



"It is crucial that the metropolitan issue gains an importance at the government agenda".

Municipality of São Paulo, represented by Reinaldo de Freitas Azevedo

The Metropolitan Region of São Paulo has 19 million people, considering that 11 million of this population is allocated in the city of São Paulo. As an example of its dimension, the Region is divided in 5 sub regions. The mayor of São Paulo is currently in charge of the presidency at the São Paulo Region Metropolitan Council. In order to develop its work, it has created a metropolitan office at the municipality that is coordinating the debate through 5 consortiums presented in each sub region.

