



CHÚUKA'AN:

ACTIVATING **PUBLIC SPACES** IN GRID SETTLEMENTS

CHÚUKA'AN: Activating public spaces in grid settlements

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Thesis project for the MSc in Sustainable Urban
Design

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CHÚUKA'AN:

[*tchuuk-a-án*] **Adjective**

1. Complete

2- Whole

ABSTRACT

Throughout the years, Mérida has been subject of an outstanding growth, economically, socially and spatially.

Starting from being a major Mayan civilization city, to a colonial Spanish settlement that grew into being the capital of the peninsula, it has always gone through changes and innovations according to the necessities of its inhabitants. By being the most secure and safe city in Mexico today, there has been a substantial increase in migration to the peninsula.

This gave the government and society the advantage of innovation and growth, welcoming new investments, both national and international. Mérida is now one of the leading cities in sustainable future design in the country, with big projects like the Mayan train, the IE tram, which is the first 100% electric transport route in the southeast of the country, and numerous commercial developments.

The increase in migration, both from outside and within the city, comes with a plethora of housing developments. These promise the best quality of life, regardless of localization, users, vicinity and more important the disorganized urban sprawl it is creating. By putting the residential needs first, (prioritizing economic benefits), at some point in time the importance and use of public spaces became a secondary privilege, and the grid of the city became very individualized, creating the “apartment effect” in neighborhoods, with car prioritized streets and no public interaction.

On a bigger scale, this opened the door for more problems; uncontrolled urban spread, decreased quality of life, major heatwaves, marginalization and neglected areas.

AIM

This master’s degree project aims to relink the old neighborhoods of Mérida, which now face marginalization and abandonment. With the adaptation of new ways of transport, mixed used housing and commerce, combined with recreational and public spaces it jumpstarts a new sustainable way of living in a much less car centralized neighborhood, prioritizing always the needs of the user.

Completing the circle of prosperity and quality of life that it promises to have, it shows that both big and small investments and changes can be made in any part of the city, specially where it needs the most.

MOTIVE

Having the privilege of living in Sweden for the past two years has showed me how urban design and public spaces can increase your life quality, even by having the smallest change in your life, such as biking comfortably and safely for day to day activities or having a mixed lively street around the corner with all your necessities. How i wish that was the case in my hometown. Also having worked for the last 5 years in private architecture offices, doing mainly private housing and developments, I see the difference between social sectors in the city. How the south of Mérida faces marginalization and no access to new investments, innovations and let alone dignified way of living. With my current studies I wanted to find the missing link so my city can start paving the way to a more sustainable and inclusive life.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Why area there so few public spaces in Mérida?

What does it take for a neighborhood to work in a sustainable way, when all the city is car prioritized?

How can an already car centralized city rearrange and activate public spaces?

How to promote economic and social growth but fight the sustainable crisis in Mérida, especially urban sprawl?

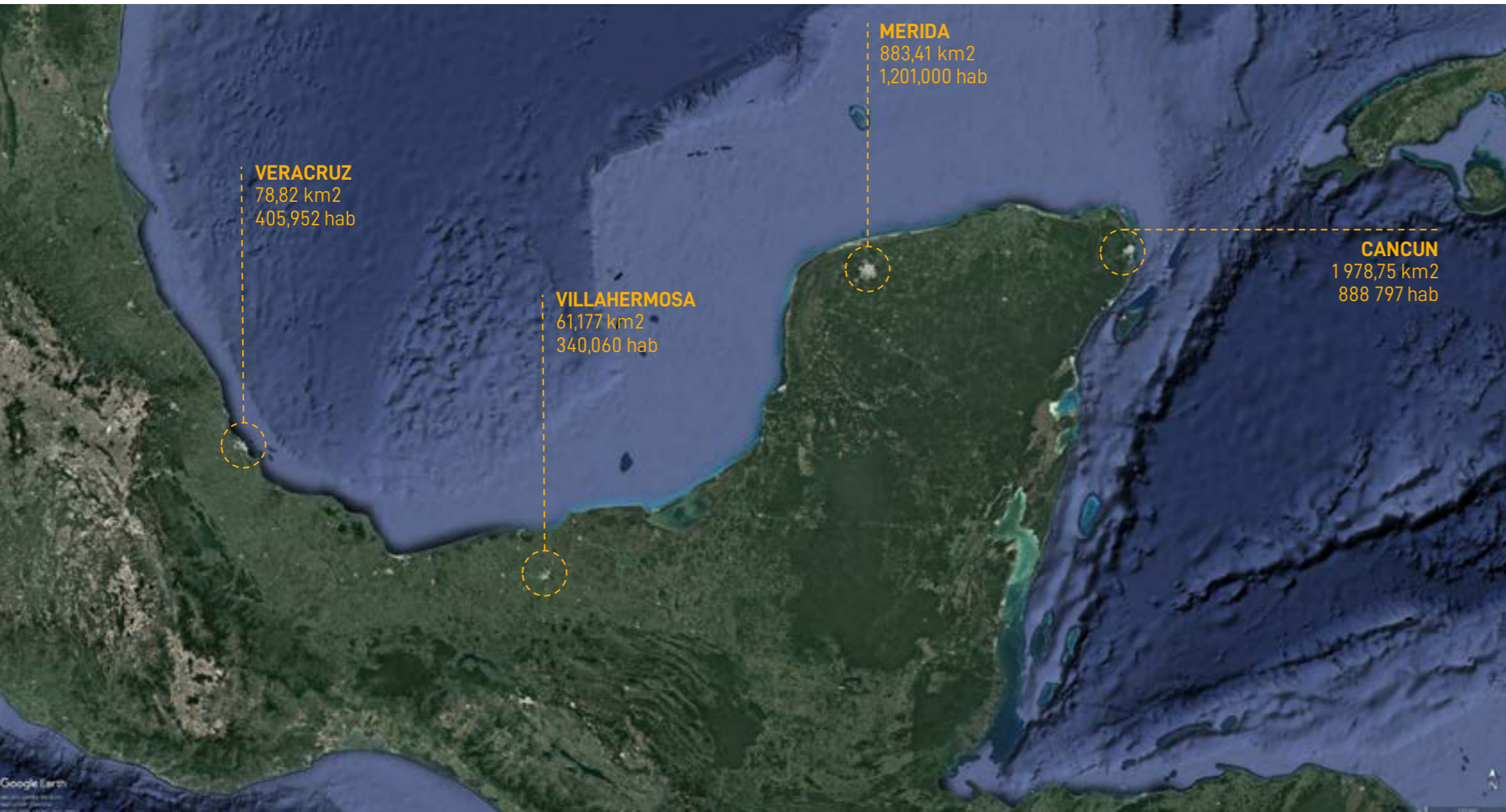


Introduction



**Located in the Yucatán Peninsula,
while surrounded by low density jungle,
Mérida stands out for its contrasting
concrete plank appearance.**

SOUTHEAST MÉXICO 1,500 KM



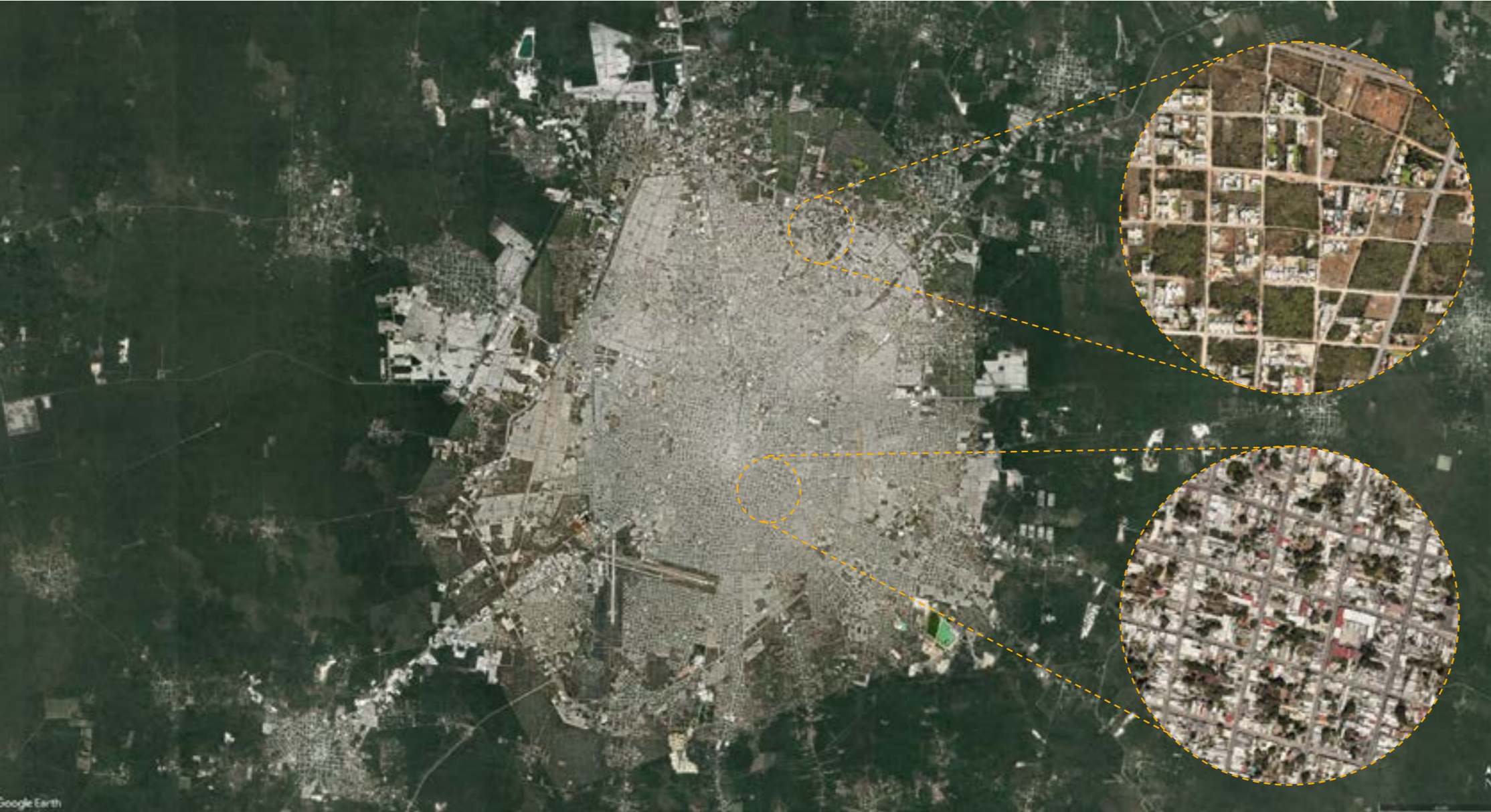
It also has the largest population in the southeast of México, which corresponds with the biggest ports and first cities both prehispanic and after colonization.

SKÅNE 80 KM



Spatially it occupies about the same area within Malmö and Lund.

MÉRIDA 40 KM

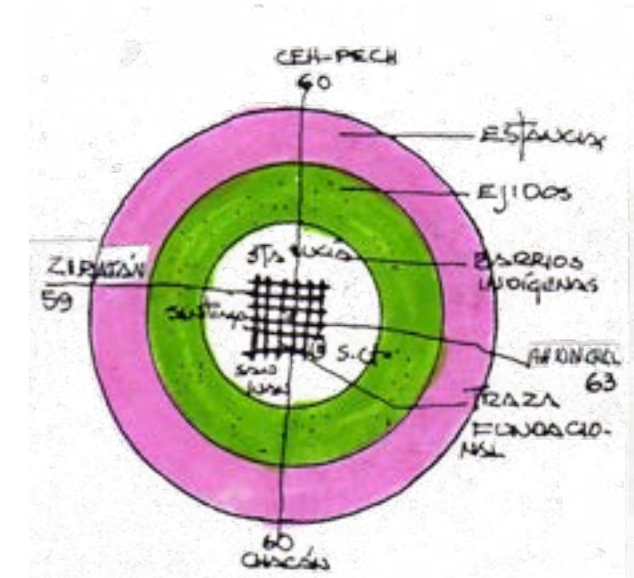
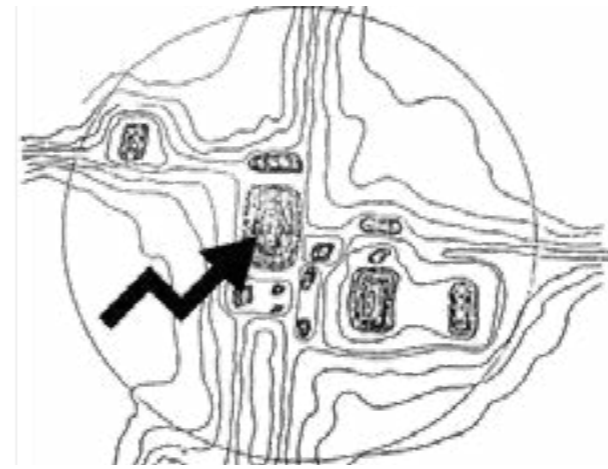


The city is expanding in an unorganized way, at an alarming rate where the density of the people is displayed not as a “concrete jungle” but huge concrete plank, spreading more into the jungle, and bulldozing the green areas.

HOW DID WE GET THERE?

Context

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: ANCIENT MAYAN CITY ICHCANZIHÓ/COLONIAL MÉRIDA



Since sometime around 500 a.C to the spanish arrival, Merida was known as Ichcanzihó, the city of the 5 tribes that lived within the area. It was a vivid city with plenty ceremonial buildings in the center of the settlements, surrounded by living areas connected by "sacbé" which were the paths were people walked from and to this ceremonial buildings, often pyramids.

There's not much plans and registry of the city, since after the colonization and Mérida was founded, it was actually built on top of these ceremonial buildings, and traced according to the sacbés. With time passing by these ceremonial buildings were lost but we now we have the city center, enticed with noth history and architectural wonders.

The first spanish settlements built over Mayan constructions were the most important ones, the house of the Conqueror, the cathedral and other catholic ceremonial and political buildings, with the main square as a green public area.

The area was divided in a reticular grid of 100x100 meter blocks, divided by a few hundred spanish settlers.

Even though the grid wasn't completely populated, the streets were traced from the beginning, leaving the stencil for easy expansion. This marked the precedent of what would be the urban planning of the city that is still followed to this day.

While the spanish residents were living in what it was the city center, the indigenous neighborhoods and "peasant lands" were left on the outskirts of the city, not being part of the social, political and economical life. The city center was surrounded by gates that delimited the city and provided a sense of "hierarchy" and privatization. Still today the city is colloquially referred to as "The white Mérida", which people think is about the architecture style of the buildings, or the linen/cotton clothes people wore, but in reality was an adopted name referring to the lack of indigenous people in the city, in contrast to other cities in Mexico.

This type of spatial marginalization still exists today.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: COLONIAL MÉRIDA 1542-1864



Indigenous neighborhoods on the outskirts were still traced but not urbanized, so the grid could keep growing, so the spread of infrastructure depended on who owned the land. Eventually as the city kept growing it kept expanding and urbanizing more, following the same rules, urbanizing the closest to the city center, and people going further from the city center for more cheaper land.

Arches delimited the entrance to the city, that was very enclosed and private to its highest societal residents.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: COLONIAL MÉRIDA 1542-1864: TRAIN AND INNOVATIONS



Autor: H. F. Schlattman
Visita del Gral. Porfirio Díaz
a Yucatán - Febrero 1906
Entrada de la comitiva a Mérida.
Paseo por la Plaza de la Independencia.
Yucatán Ancestral.com

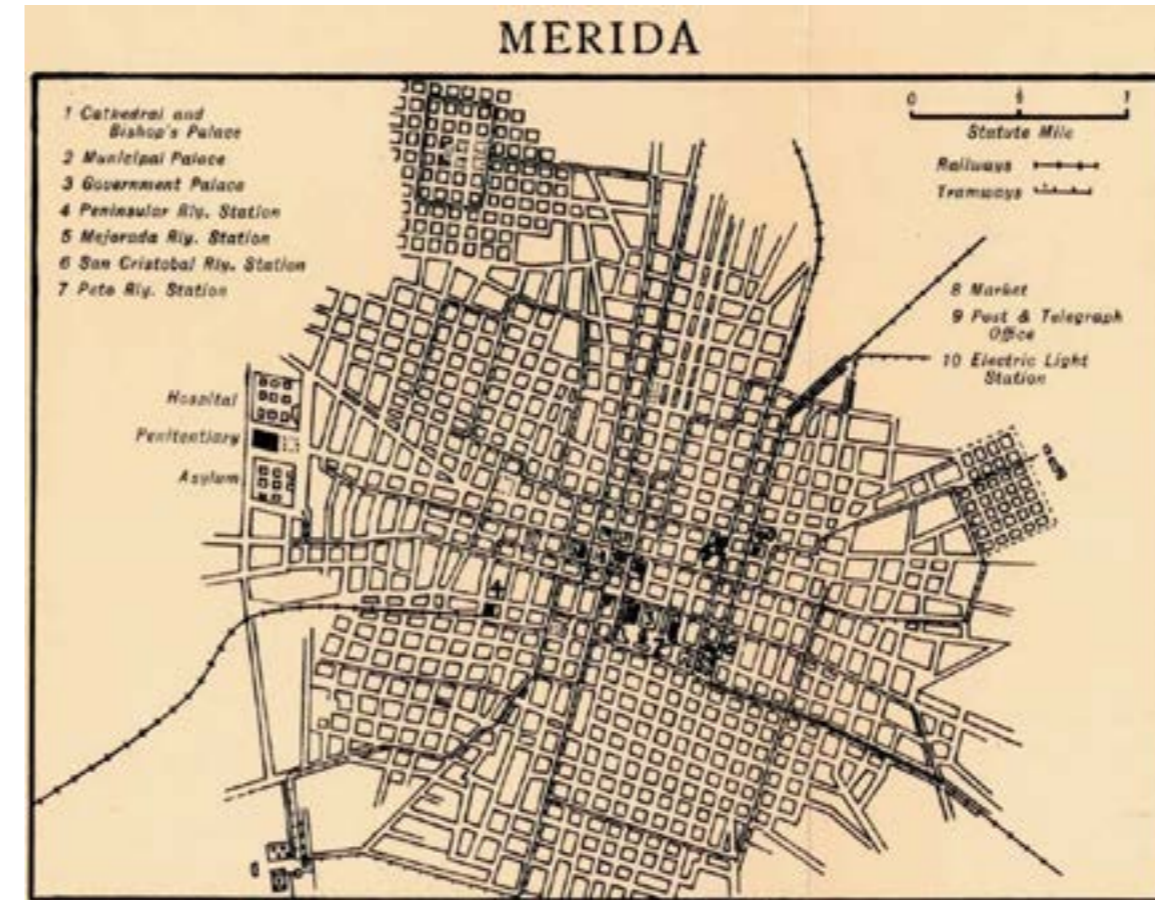
HISTORICAL CONTEXT: COLONIAL MÉRIDA 1542-1864: URBAN LIFE



Urban life consisted of lively streets, where back in the day (and still) the car or trolley was prioritized, even when the larger population walked throughout the streets.

Main public park existed, as an oasis among the streets and buildings.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: MÉRIDA AND NEW NEIGHBORHOODS 1900-1920



Map of the city and its original trace, 1900



Map of the city and its new neighborhoods in 1920.

With all the innovations brought and new cutting edge constructions, the city became the it city in a few decades, with people from the outskirts of the city and from other states searching for that promised innovations.

In only 50 years Mérida grew 110% due to increase in innovations and the promise of a new modern and attractive city

Neighborhoods densified, adjacent towns and farms con urbanized, creating different microenvironments, for different socio-economic aspects.

The city just kept expanding...and still is.

SOCIAL CONTEXT: MERIDA TODAY

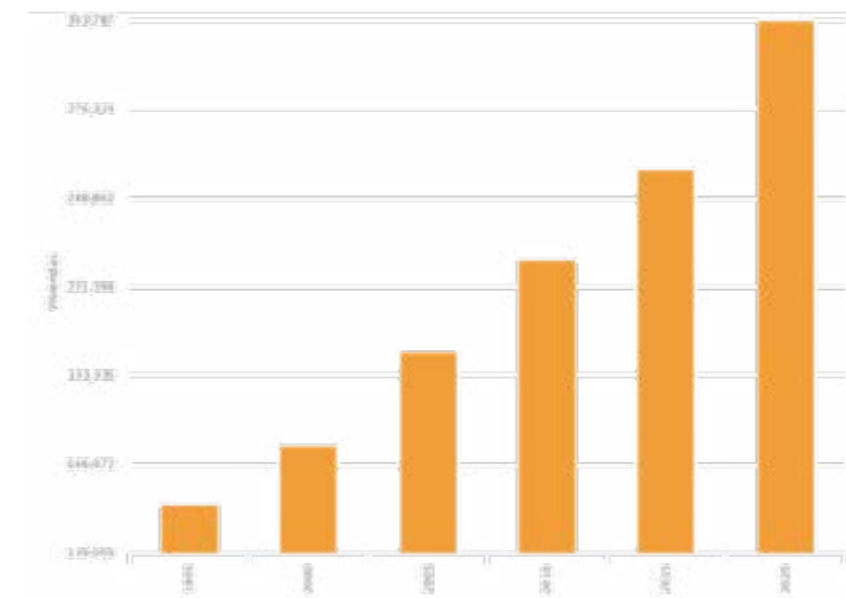


SOCIAL CONTEXT: POPULATION GROWTH

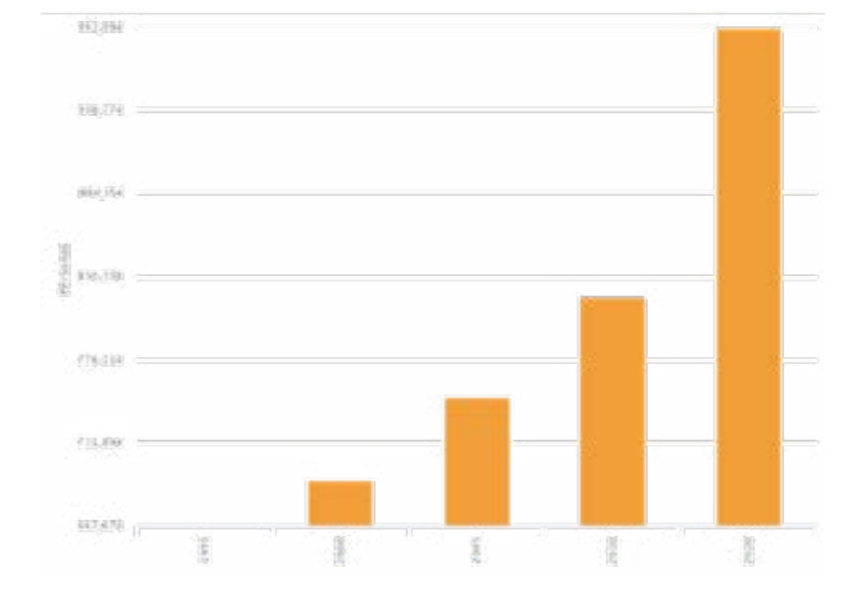
Headlines, Merida, News, Peninsula

Mérida is number 21 in the World's Safest Cities Ranking 2019

By Yucatan Times



HOUSING CENSUS. INEGI 2020

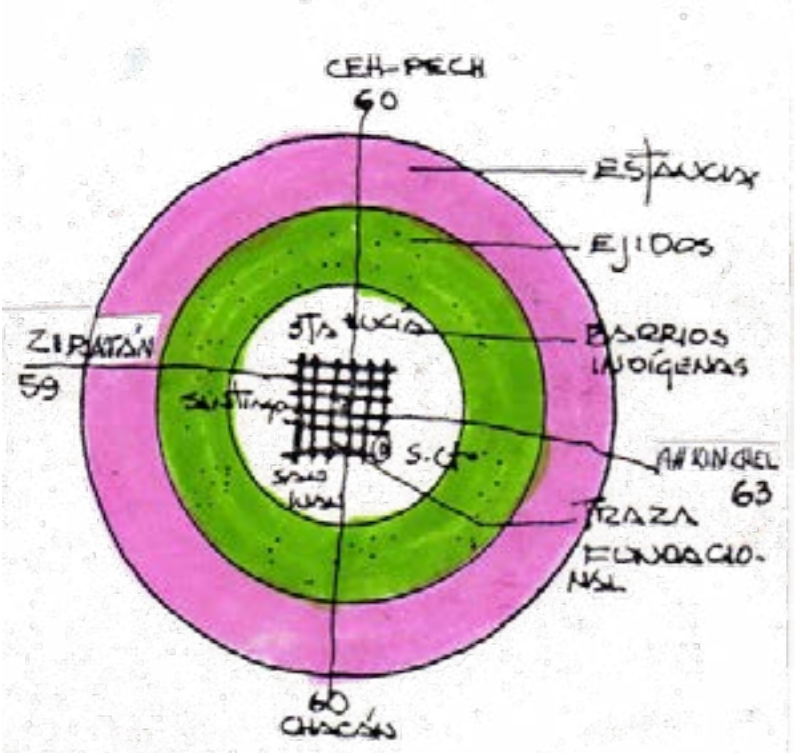


POPULATION CENSUS. INEGI 2020

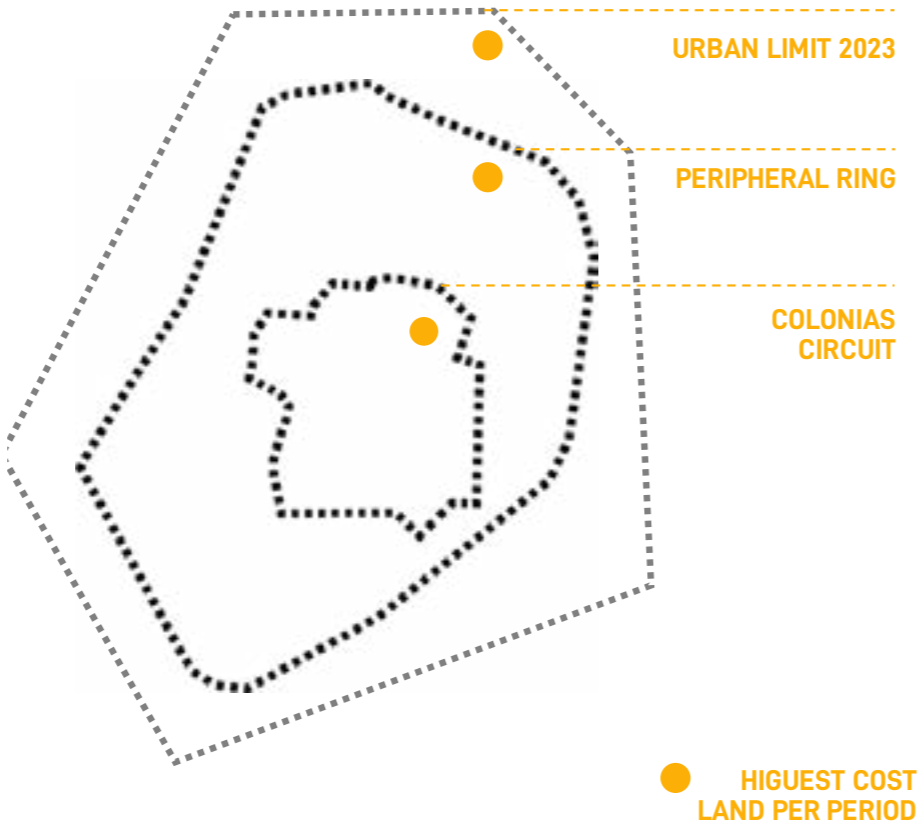
Merida to this day is one of the safest cities in México, and the world. People from all around the country and the globe come to this city looking for high quality life, with safety in the top of their minds. That in addition to the surrounding natural environment of cenotes, beaches, close experience to mayan settlements such as Chichen Itza and Uxmal.

All together it creates the perfect environment for a city, and that translated into a major population growth, but the housing numbers were not adding up according to the need of the new comers.

URBAN CONTEXT: PERIPHERAL RINGS

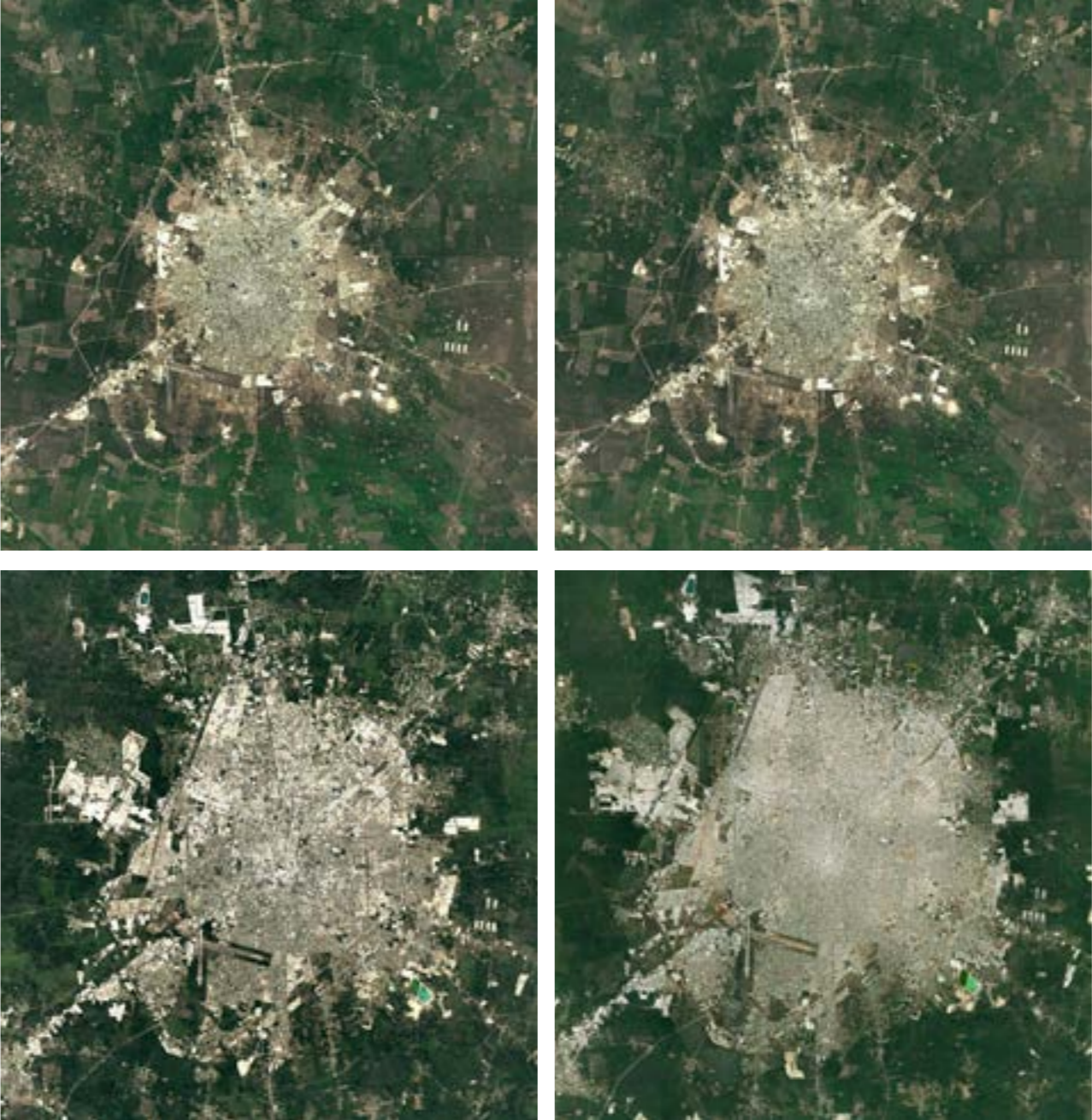


Enclosed city, outer rings for lower class non urbanized



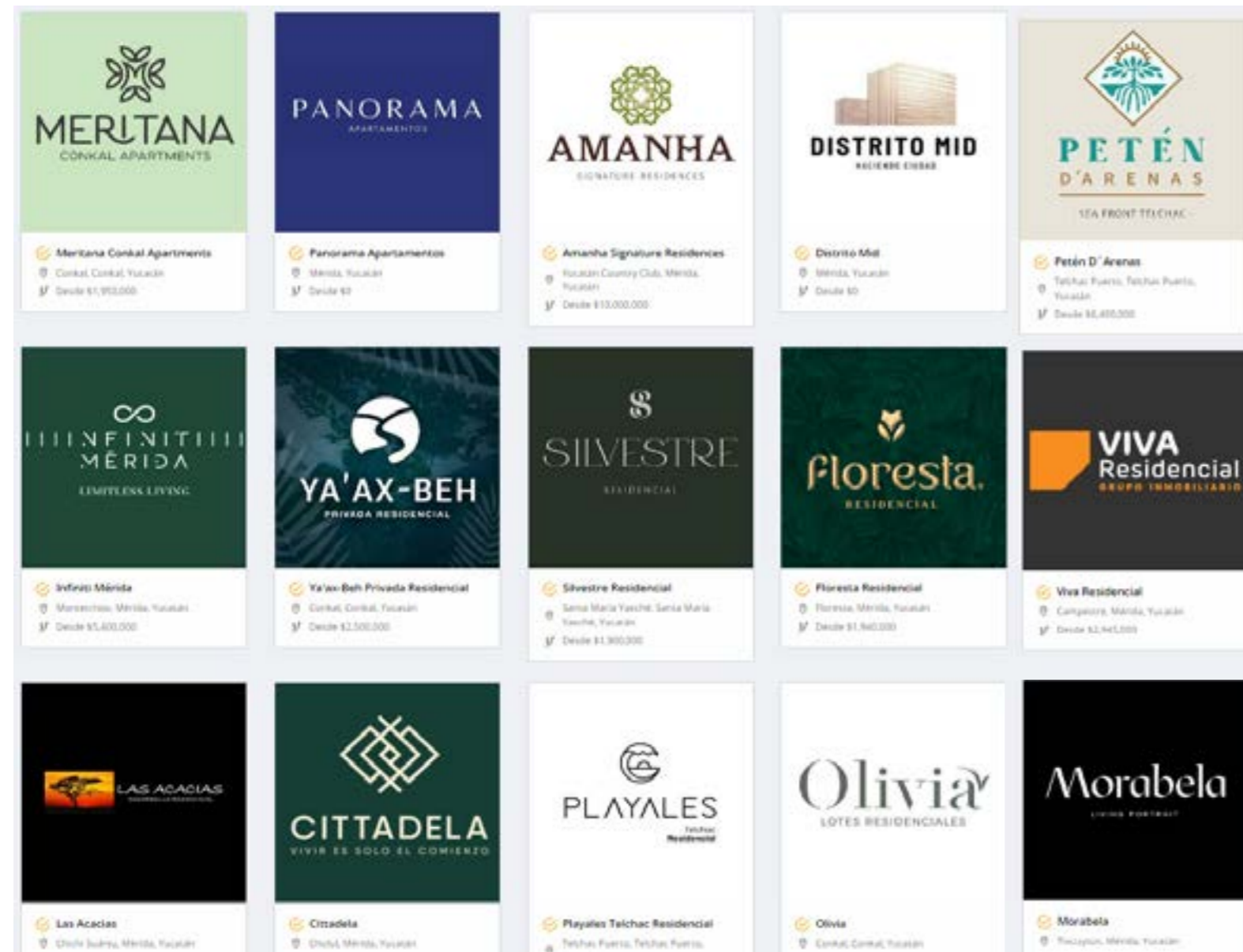
Urban sprawl, northeast for higher class in new rings

URBAN CONTEXT: URBAN SPRAWL



- Most urban areas are catalogued as residence areas (by permit)
- There's no control over urbanization of rural areas
- In 20 years, the urbanization of rural areas in Yucatán increased 6 times.
- 1/3 of urban expansion is concentrated in Mérida. In the peninsular region, the urban sprawl grew from 27,000 ha in 1990 to 75,000 in 2019.

URBAN CONTEXT: NEW DEVELOPMENTS



Due to the increase of migration and the opportunity of expansion, there has been an arise of new developments, varying in price range and commodities, promising from closeness to the beach, open public spaces and the opportunity for "everyone" to own their own property.

URBAN CONTEXT: INVESTMENT LOTS



Mérida. R. 1343 (hipotético) trazado sobre el de 1864.

These investment lots not only contribute widely to the urban sprawl, but create a lot of problems in the inside urban fabric where there is no respect or culture for the use public spaces, creating more and more the apartment effect in those neighborhoods.

What once was the center of a settlement, public areas are now forgotten...

URBAN CONTEXT: URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGIES



HIGHER CLASS-COUNTRY CLUB



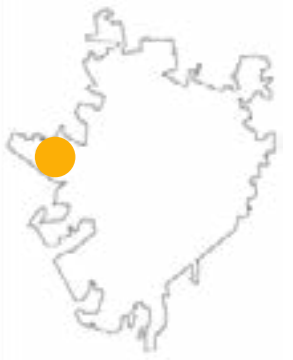
While still car centralized, these high end developments focus in privacy, safety and close to nature, while they are at the outskirts of the city, the density is very low comparing to other areas of the city, prioritizing wide green areas.



- 2,150 RESIDENTS
- 600 PRIVATE RESIDENCES
- 3,33 KM2
- EXTENSIVE GREEN AREAS
- LOW-MID DENSITY
- PRIVATE CAR DEPENDANCY 100%
- NO ACCESS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT
- \$3,000,000 MXN - \$20,000,000 MXN
- 1,675,442 SEK - 11,169,618 SEK

Life quality is as best as it can get in Mérida, with great semi public areas but at a very high price, and not very sustainable.

URBAN CONTEXT: URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGIES



MIDDLE CLASS-CIUDAD CAUCEL



- 164,000 RESIDENTS
- 40,000 PRIVATE RESIDENCES
- 10,6 KM2
- ABSORBED MUNICIPALITY WITH LOWER DENSITY, NON URBANIZATION
- HIGH SPREAD DENSITY
- PRIVATE CAR DEPENDANCY 60%
- PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN MAIN AVENUES
- DORM ROOM EFFECT ONLY HOUSING

\$300,000 MXN - \$1,000,000 MXN
167,540 SEK - 558,480 SEK

-50% NON OCCUPIED

URBAN CONTEXT: URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGIES

LOW CLASS, SOCIAL HOUSING- GRAN SANTA CRUZ



SOCIAL AND URBAN CONTEXT: CITY PROSPERITY INITIATIVE



How to make cities prosperous? This question states a common concern of many cities globally. In 2012, UN-Habitat became this concern a priority through the Prosperous Cities Initiative. The initiative promotes an approach of the prosperity of cities and offers support to national and local governments to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were established that favor decision-making based on evidence. UN-Habitat's prosperity approach encompasses dimensions of productivity, infrastructure of the development, quality of life, equity and inclusion, environmental sustainability, governance and legislation, all this to enhance a city's prosperity.

While being the country's city with the best quality of life, it is one of the last places in prosperity (14 of 16) (cities with more than 1 million inhabitants), were the areas in most need of improvement were urban expansion and economic inequity.

This means that there is a causal relationship between the two, which implies to recognize that, although Mérida has very solid indicators of urban prosperity related to quality of life, the model of urban expansion in Mérida is creating and reproducing new patterns of poverty, social exclusion, environmental deterioration and economic inefficiency, which are replicated on a larger scale in its urban agglomeration... just as before.

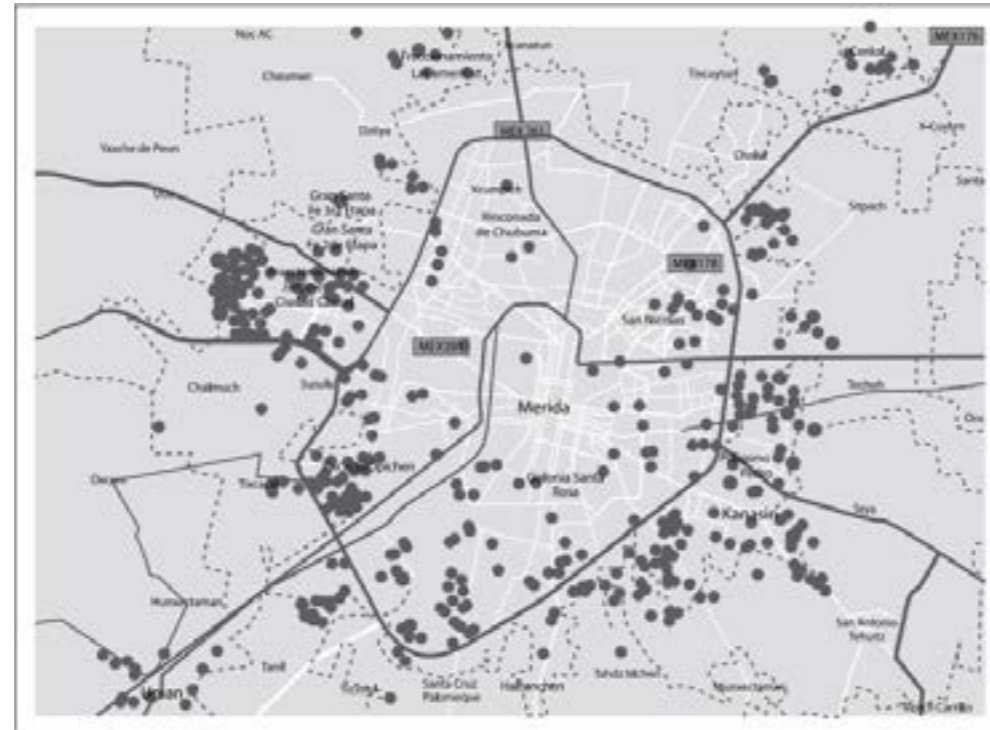


Figure 2. Availability of subsidized social housing, Mérida metropolitan area (2018). Source: CDNAVY (<https://naxiv.cdmex.gob.mx/olofers/mapa.aspx>).

- INEQUALITY
- FUNCTIONAL DIFFERENCES IN URBAN SPACES
- LACK OF ACCES TO URBAN SERVICES AND HOUSING
- INEQUALITY IN ECONOMIC GROWTH
- UNEQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND PROSPERITY

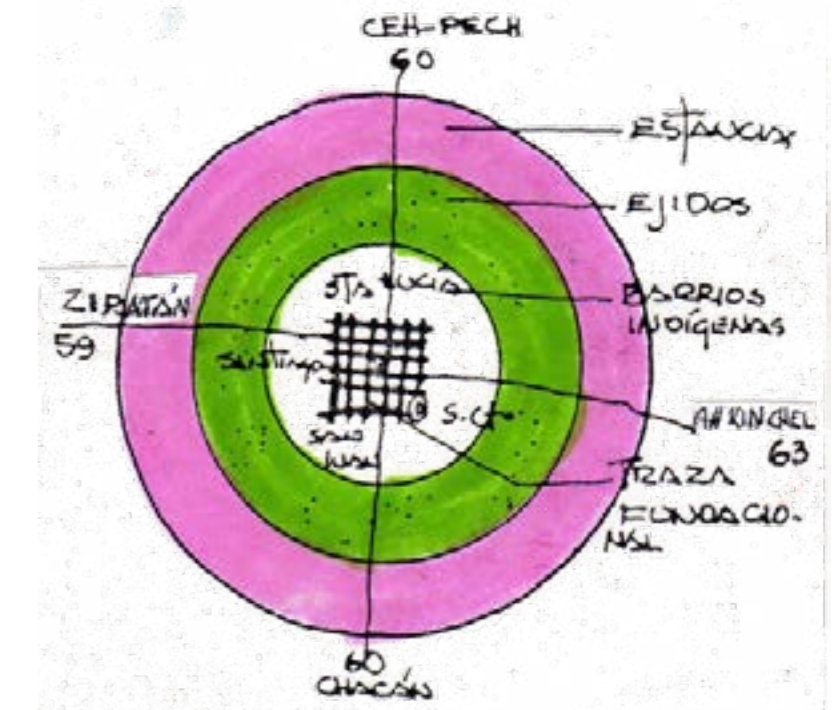
\$300,000 MXN - \$500,000 MXN
167,540 SEK - 279,240 SEK

- Urban poverty and social exclusion
- The urban structure of Mérida has continued to grow with a clear economic and social differentiation.

How?

- Non urbanized streets
- Clean water access
- Cheap lands on floodable areas
- Lack of urban diversity
- Commerce and services being displaced to the north of the city
- Spacial difference in residence quality.
- Life quality gets worse with poverty.
- Durable and quality residences are focalized on the north, whilst the south gets anchored to peripheral municipalities where indigenous homes are.

...If these differences persist, the city will continue to reproduce historical conditions of urban poverty and social exclusion...



URBAN CONTEXT: GRID TYPOLOGY



- Grid in the northeast of the city
- Green areas=empty lots
- 100 x 100 mostly regular depending on the street
- Individual lots 20x35 mts
- Regular blocks with more widely varied individual lots.

- Grid in the city center (original)
- 120 x 120 mts (mostly regular)
- Individual lots varied, but very long and narrow, with more area in the back for private gardens

- Grid in southwest of the city (Ciudad Cauce)
- 140 x 40 mts.
- Individual lots 10 x 20 mts
- Blocks more long and narrow, with regular lots and varied construction areas

MOBILITY CONTEXT: IE TRAM



- 100% electrical routes which majority uses the on site train tracks
- 130 km of routes that will connect with another 100 public transport routes in Mérida
- Connection to Mayan train
- Connection to Airport
- Connection between 137 neighborhoods
- First electrical bus/tram in southeast in Mexico**

URBAN SUSTAINABILITY THOUGHTS

Yucatan is the fifth state in the country where it is estimated to apply greater investment of resources for the **development of projects** during 2023 and 2024 equivalent to 18 billion pesos that would generate 147 thousand 118 jobs in the entity.



WHERE DOES THE INVESTMENT GO?

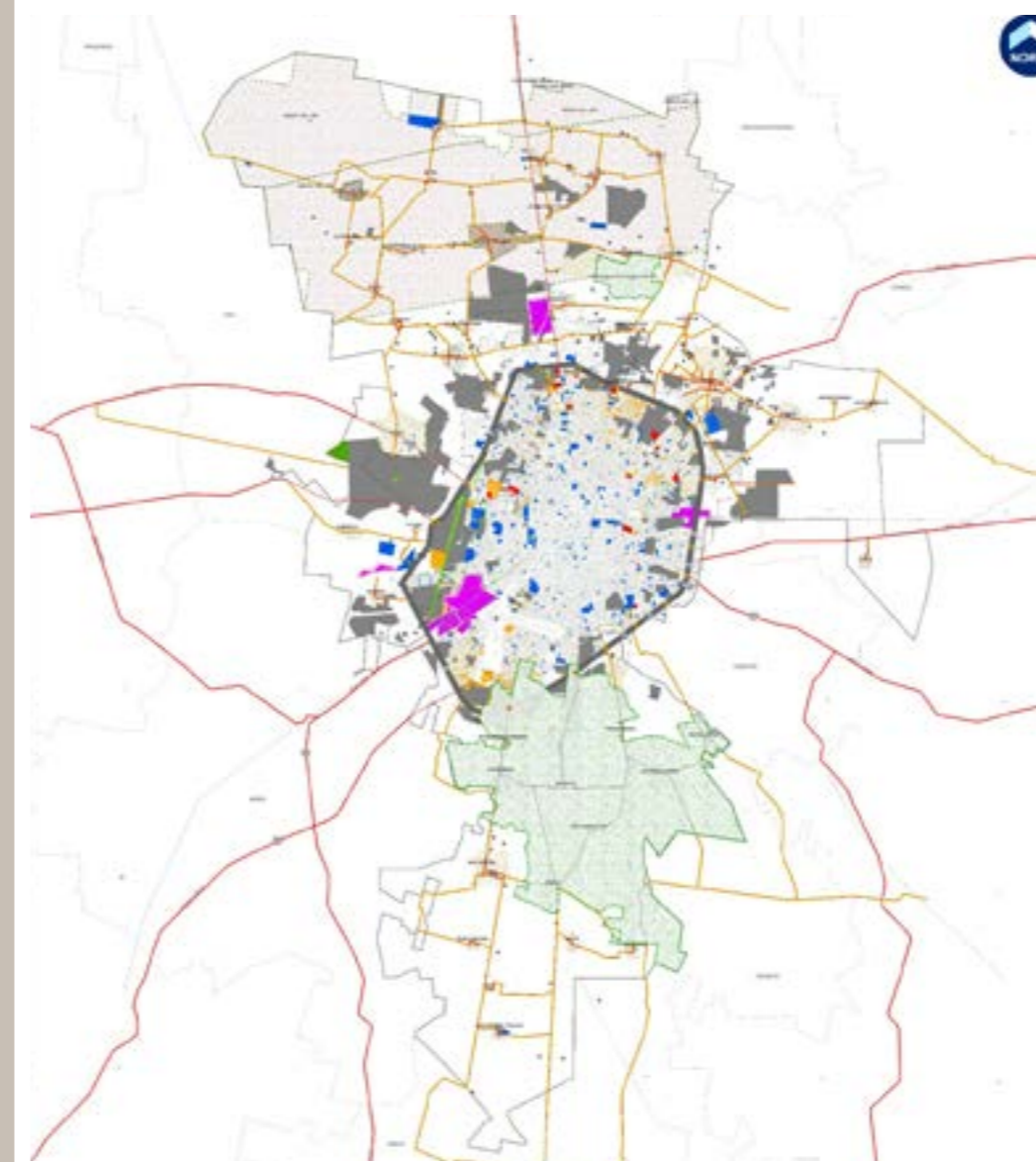
URBAN SUSTAINABILITY THOUGHTS: LARGE SCALE PROBLEMS



**RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS=
NO PUBLIC SPACES**

Site selection

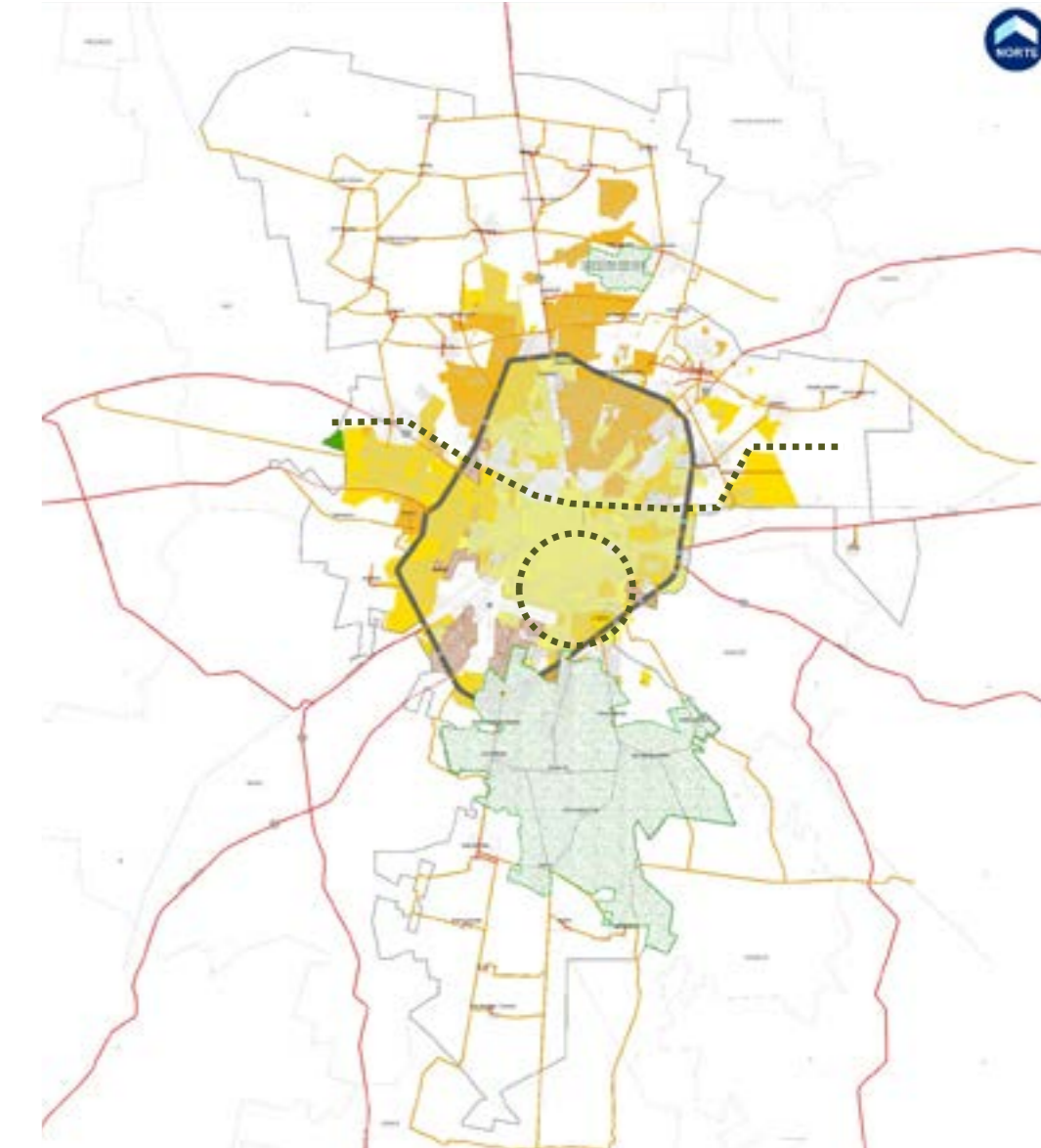
URBAN STRUCTURE



- SPORTS
- INDUSTRY
- HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS UP TO 2016
- GREEN AREAS
- COMMERCIAL
- BROWNFIELDS
- RESIDENTIAL

While studying the city and thinking where could we start fixing sustainable problems in Mérida, you can see what is a real issue in the city, the majority of the area are residential areas. This not only affects directly on the grid system and how people move around it, but also on the lack of public spaces, giving the city a very individualistic feeling of a private housing concrete plank.

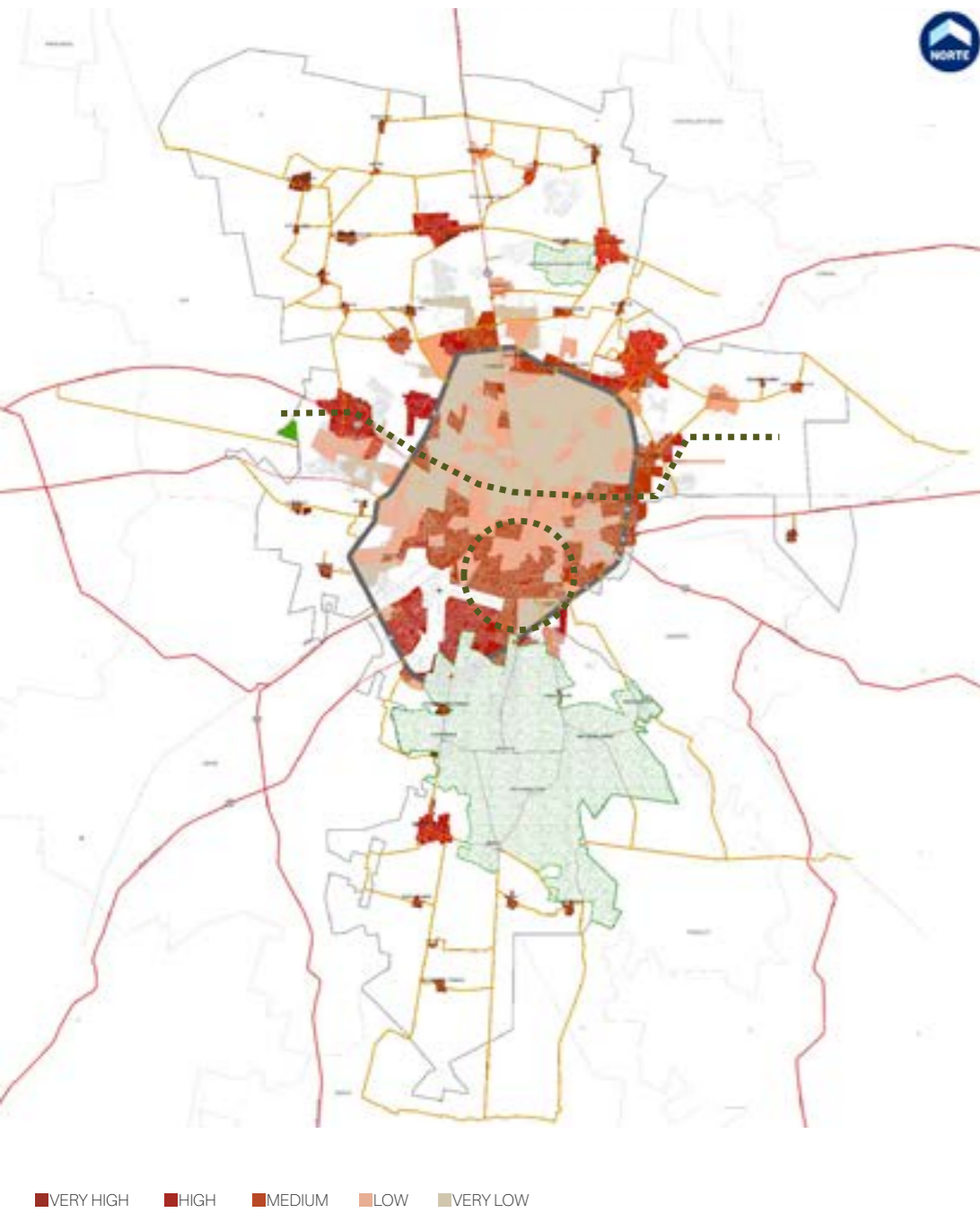
HOUSING TYPOLOGY



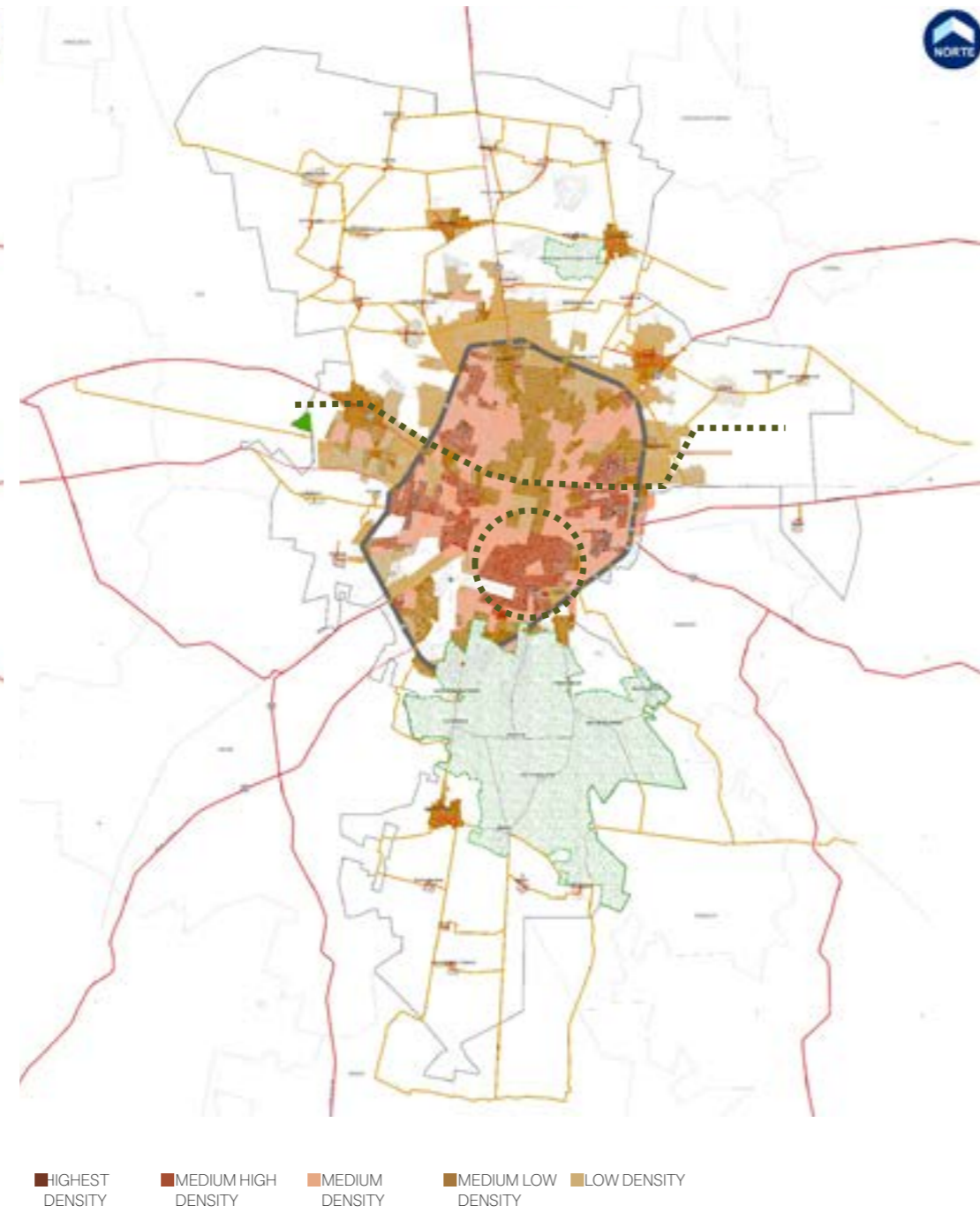
- RESIDENTIAL HOUSING
- LOW INCOME HOUSING
- SOCIAL HOUSING

Knowing that all new investments and technologies are focused on the north of the city, is very noticeable the contrast between housing units, with the majority of private residential areas on the north east, while the south east has the majority of social living.

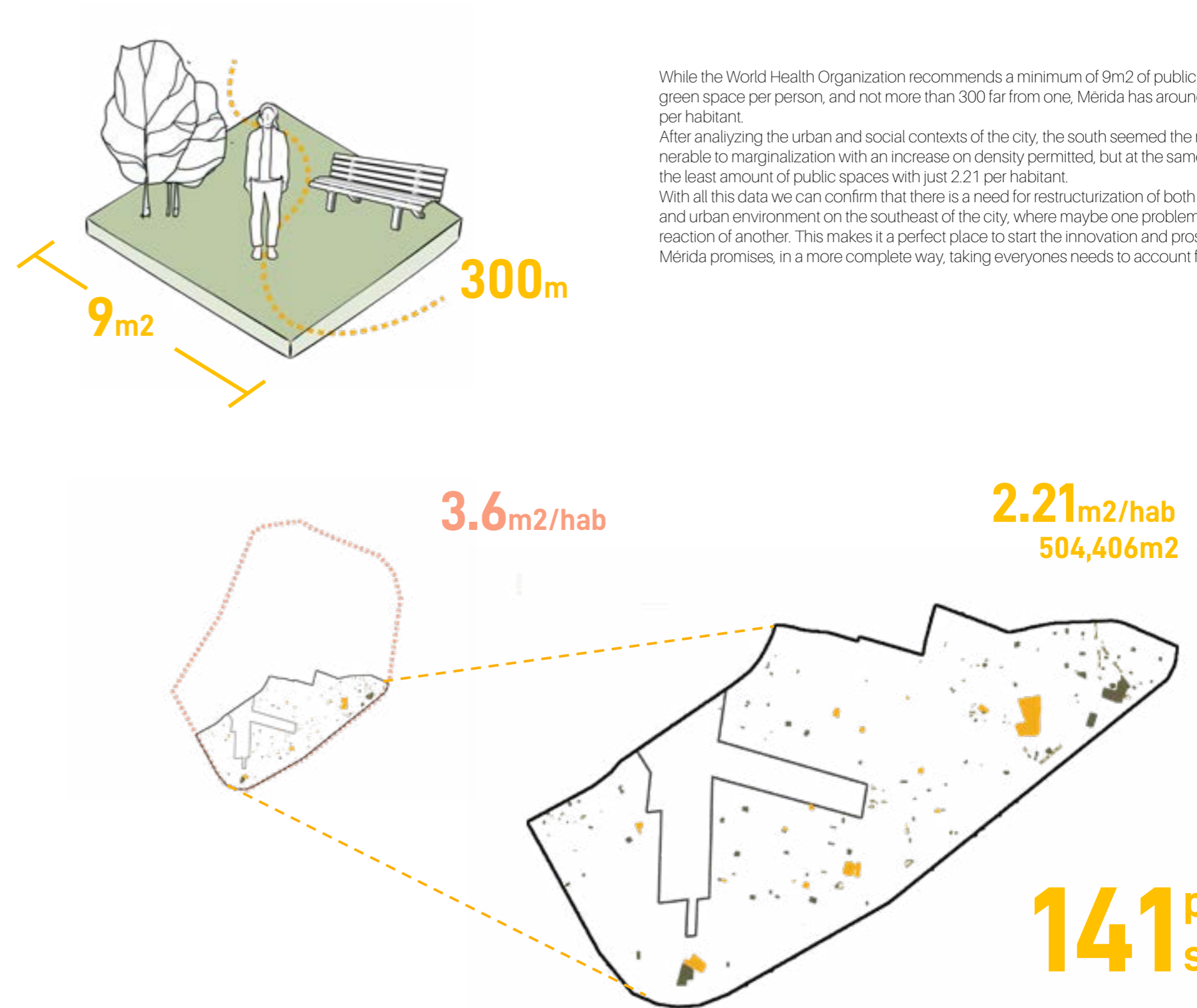
MARGINALIZATION



POPULATION DENSITY



PUBLIC SPACES



While the World Health Organization recommends a minimum of 9m² of public open green space per person, and not more than 300 far from one, Mérida has around 3.6 m² per habitant. After analyzing the urban and social contexts of the city, the south seemed the most vulnerable to marginalization with an increase on density permitted, but at the same time has the least amount of public spaces with just 2.21 per habitant. With all this data we can confirm that there is a need for restructurization of both social and urban environment on the southeast of the city, where maybe one problem is a direct reaction of another. This makes it a perfect place to start the innovation and prosperity that Mérida promises, in a more complete way, taking everyones needs to account for.

At the same time, there's a huge contrast on marginalization, with again the northeast having the least amount of marginalization among the city, and the south east having the most. We take a focus area that has a range between low and high, to see what is happening in there that can have a variety of marginalization among the same neighborhoods.

Taking that same focus area we can see that it also has the biggest population density permitted, that means that it is possible to have more density in the more marginalized areas, in an attempt of balancing the city and occupy the whole area instead of spreading more.

PUBLIC SPACES



PARKS

98



GREEN AREAS

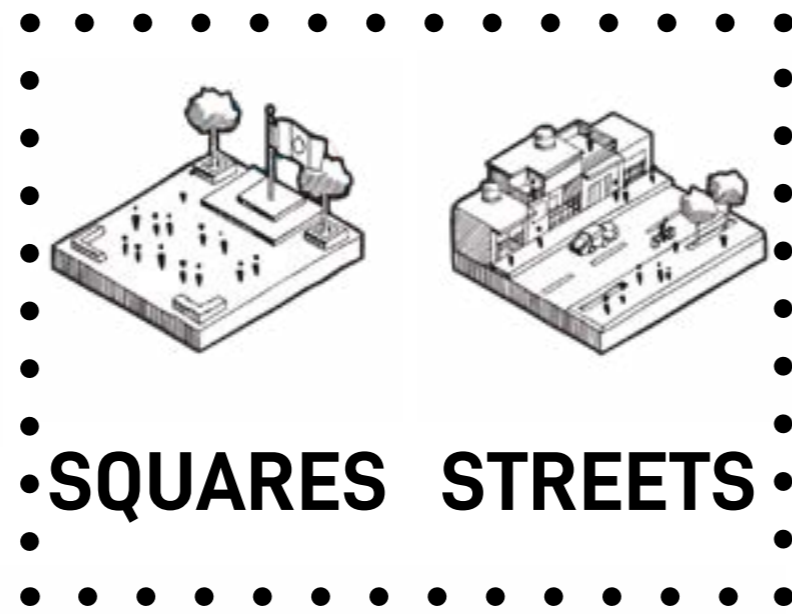
20



SPORTS

20

MISSING



SQUARES STREETS



With an analysis of public spaces provided by IMPLAN and PDU, we can see the quantity and quality of public spaces now, which divide in parks green areas and sports. There is a lack also of squares and the streets currently are car focused, which makes them only transport and not livable.

PUBLIC SPACES ON SITE



PARKS



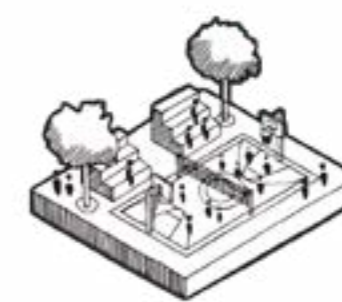
Parks currently are mostly gated, with no permeability or welcoming feeling. Most are sports units with few playgrounds



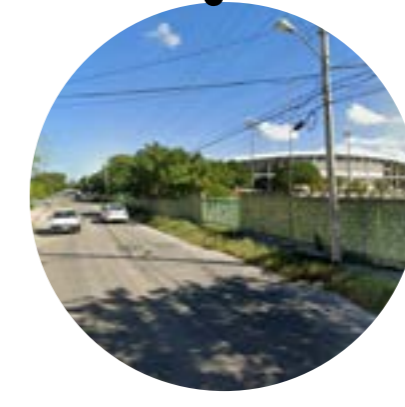
GREEN AREAS



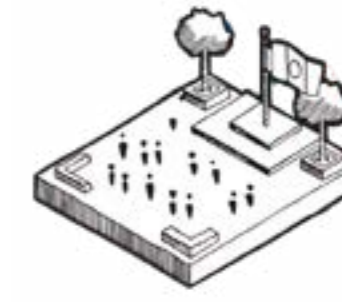
Green areas are remaining unutilized land, either because of size and its not profitable or in case of the bigger areas, just abandoned because lack of money and government attention.



SPORTS



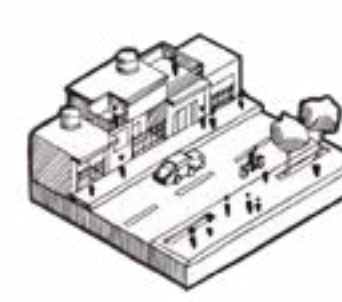
Sports units are completely gated, on site there is the biggest and most important sport center in the city with both football and baseball stadiums, but remain "hidden" and part from the surroundings.



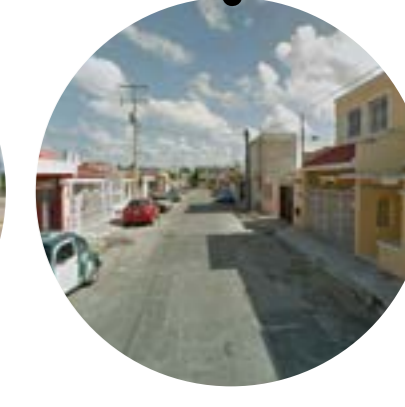
SQUARES



There's no such thing as a "square" or gathering places, but plenty of areas could be utilized as a place of reunion and community reas such as extensive parking lots.

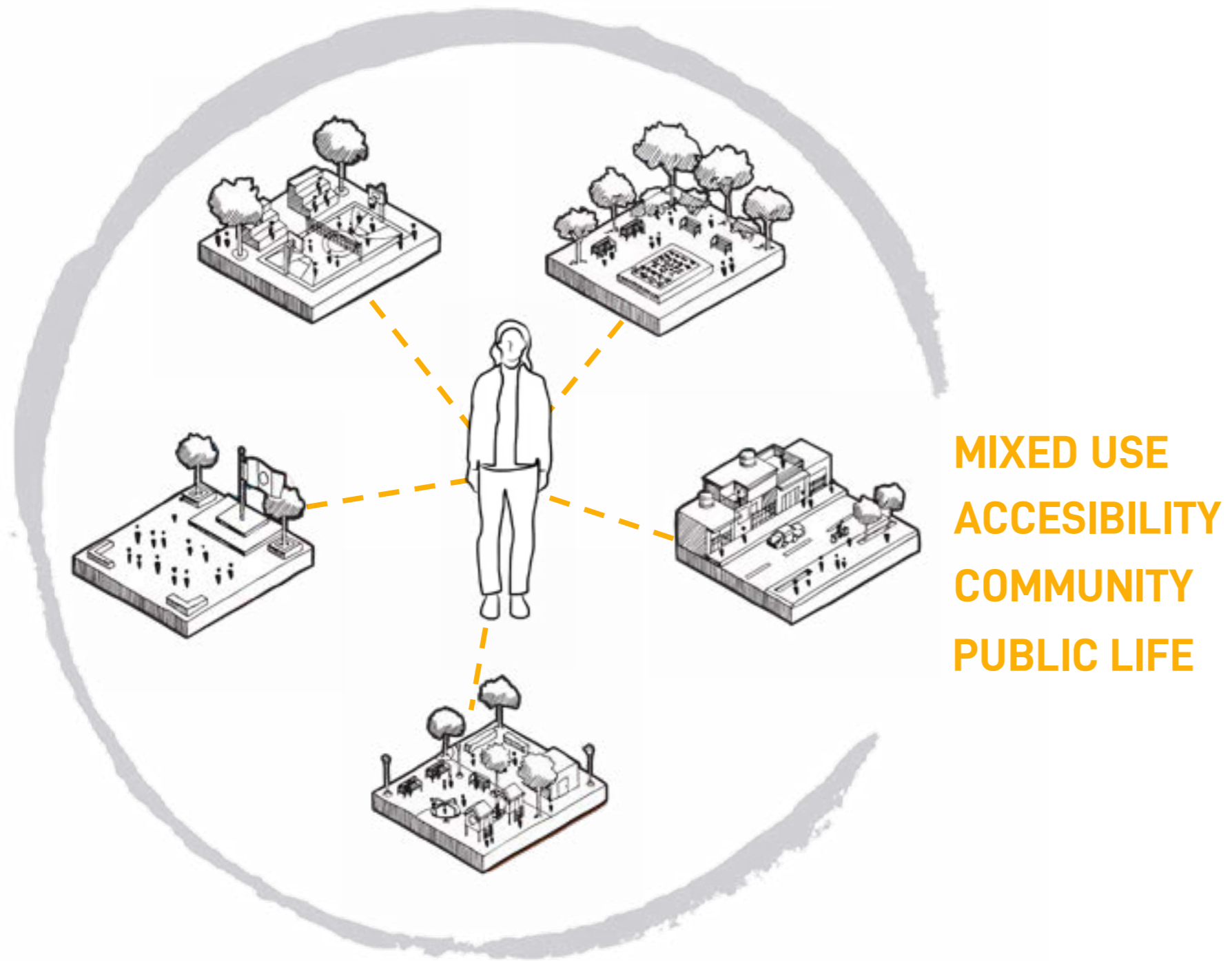


STREETS



Streets area car prioritized, from all hierarchies, leaving the residents and users without a public domain feeling. Streets are filled with either parked cars or free roam for all car users, with no respect for pedestrian users, creating barriers between neighborhoods.

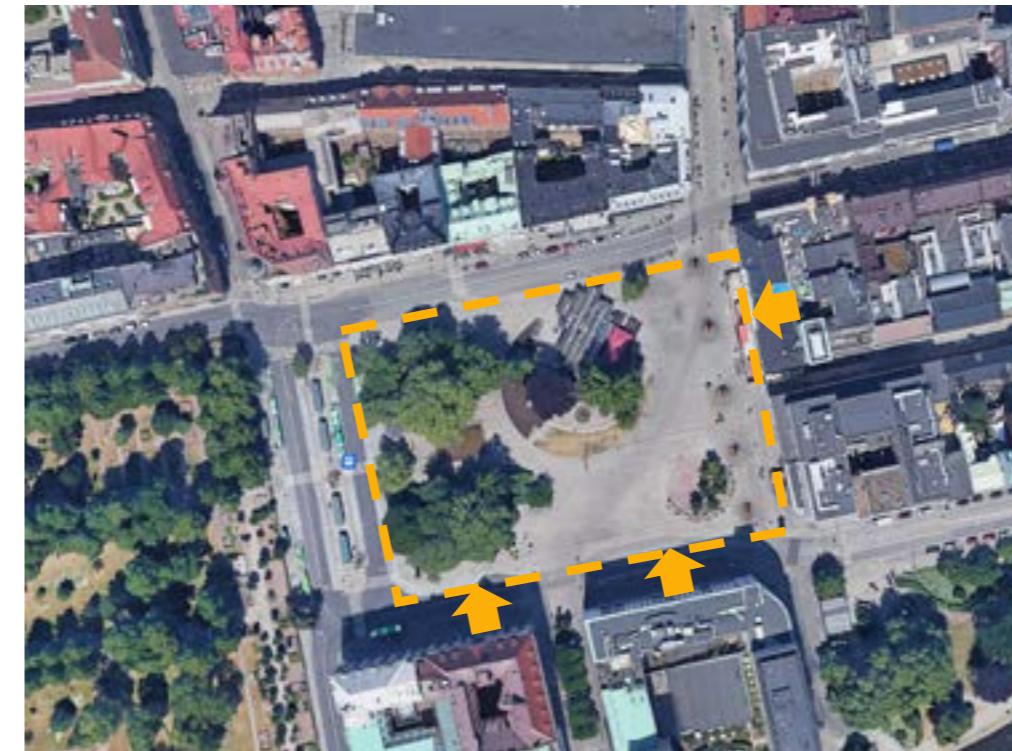
PUBLIC SPACES



In order to revitalize and regenerate the current public spaces and the proposed, they must be a part of the community, with flexible multi use open areas, that welcome public life in various occasions and necessities, as well as every day life.

PUBLIC SPACES: MALMÖ

GUSTAV ADOLFS TORG



One very good example of a studied public square, Gustav Adolfs Torg, where permeability and public life is the main attract, sustained by the location next to the park, the numerous bus stops that transit throughout the city, making it a very vivid city square where both commer/work and housing coexist in a very attractive and useful way.

PUBLIC SPACES: MÉRIDA

PLAZA MAYOR



Given that the public spaces and squares in Mérida are not currently prioritized, the few ones that exist are actually very well maintained, but lack flexibility and permeability since they are oasis in the middle of high traffic jams. This translates on a lack of open flexible place, so when major events happen the streets are the only flexible

PUBLIC SPACES: PEOPLE SPACES



Stationstorget, Hylle



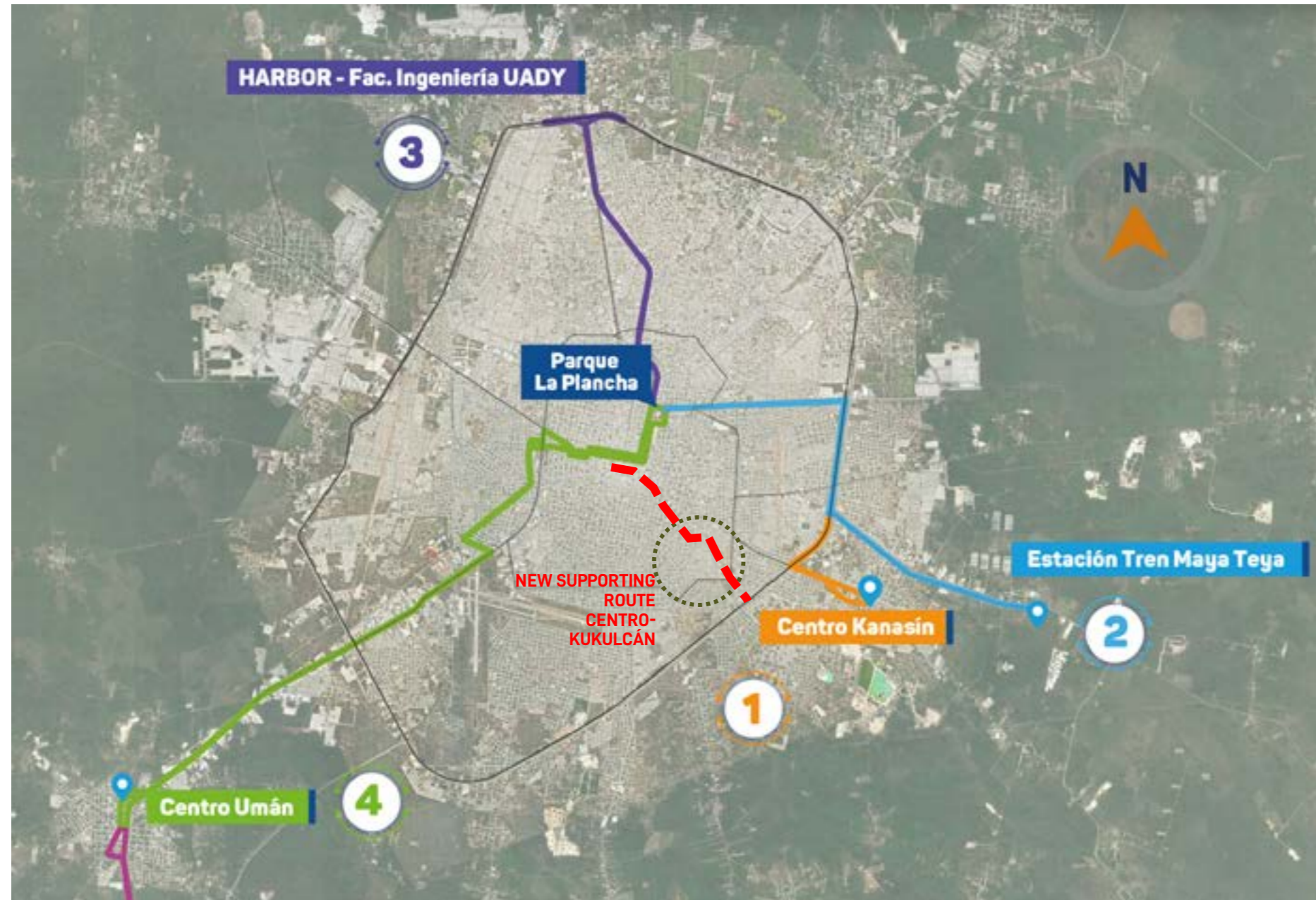
Stationstorget, Hylle



Plaza Mayor, Mérida.

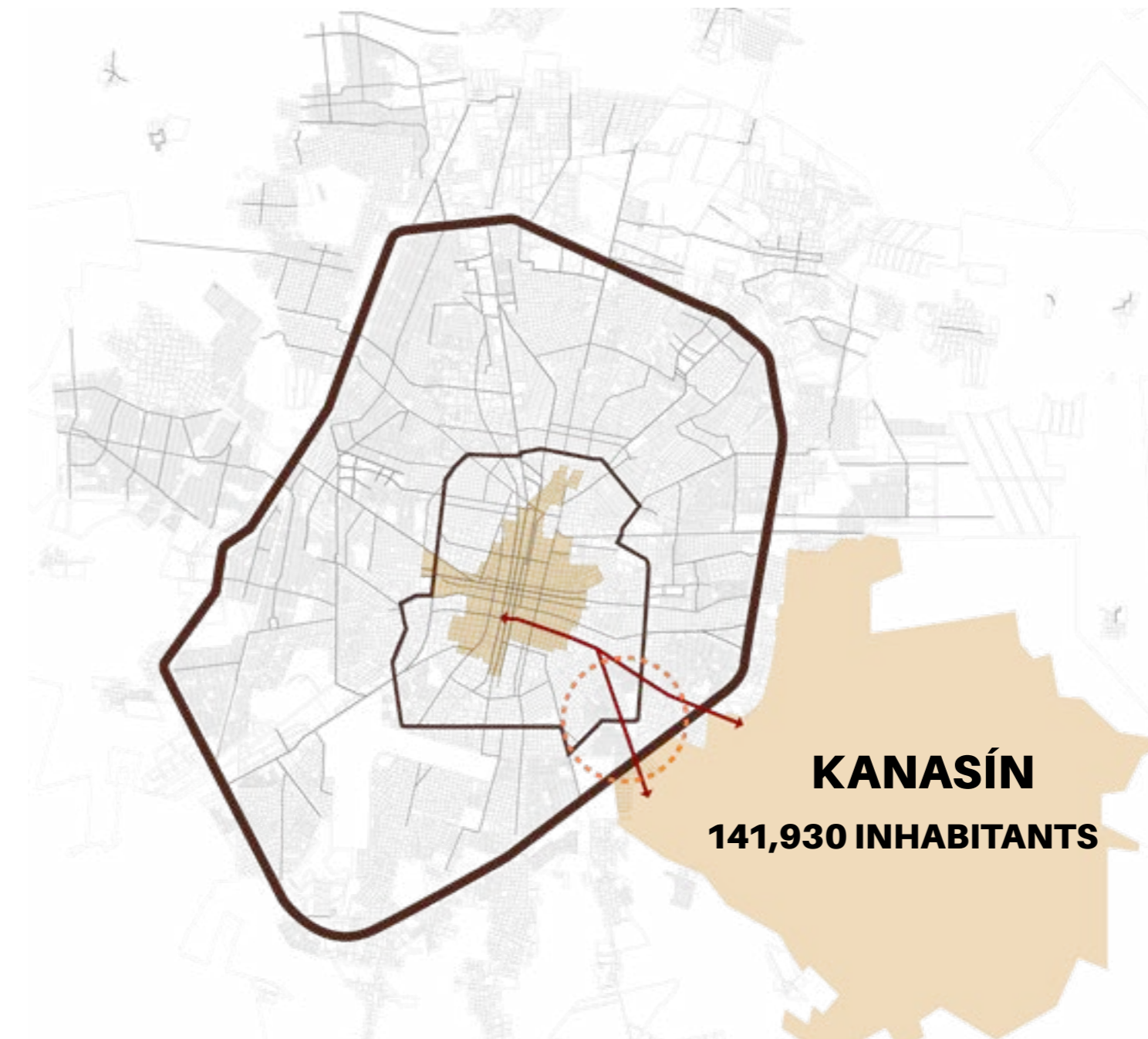
Malmö has very good public spaces, the people gather were you give them the opportunity to. One thing we could learn from this city is that if you give people the opportunity to appropriate a space, they will, and the space will evolve into something useful. In Mérida there is a lack of public spaces, so the culture of gathering outside is not so common because of lack of opportunity.

SITE SELECTION: IE TRAM



The new IE tram lines promise new sustainable and accesible mobility from the city centre al the way to the outskirts f the city, where most of the people live and go to work. After the study of the social, economic and urban aspects of the south of Mérida, i noticed that there is a huge opportunity to connect the south east of the city to the rest, so a new tram route is proposed passing through the area that could work as a complimentary route to the proposed Kanasin one, a more direct way to it without changing buses.

SITE SELECTION: KANASIN ROUTE



Kanasin is the second biggest municipality in Mérida, with 141,930 inhabitants by 2020. Since the urban sprawl with all new migration and displacement, Kanasin increased its inhabitants y 80%. To this day many of the residents in Kanasin travel to Mérida for work or studies, with multiple routes going to and from the city center, where the Mercado of San Benito is the transport hub where all main bus routes too the south begin. There is an actual proposed IE tram route that goes to Kanasin, but changes the original routes used today, which go through the various attractions like Kukulcan park, sports center and most importantly the connection with Circuito Metropolitano route, which goes around the Circuito colonias ring.



Queue for public transport in City Center



San Benito Market and bus stop.

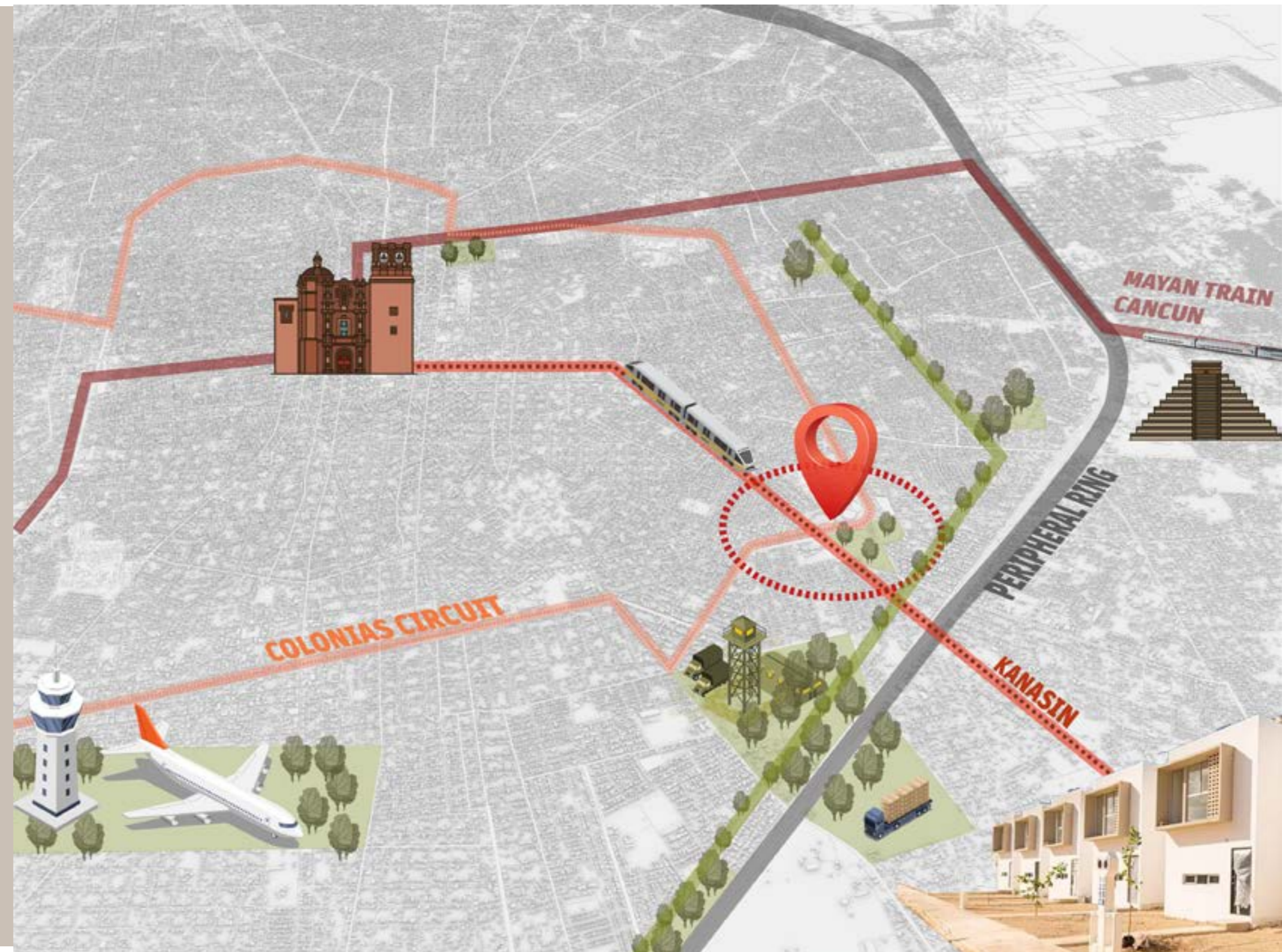


Estadio Kukulcán bus stop.



Parque Kukulcán bus stop.

CHÚUKA'AN



The new proposed IE tram line would pass through both main peripheral rings in Mérida, that surround the whole city. Most bus stops pass by this area, while not having a proper bus station. This area is also home of the biggest sports unit in the city, Kukulcan park that includes both the football and baseball stadiums. Besides having an abandoned park which could connect to a bigger green belt near the periphery ring, the remaining areas are just various neighborhoods that don't seem to connect between each other, that blend in a very well connected area but with a missing link, its not being used in a way that benefits the users directly.

SITE ANALYSIS: TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS



The site is very well located, in a critical connected area in the city, the intersection of the Peripheral Ring and Colonias Circuit, the two most transited streets in the city. The 28th street is what we would call the intersection between these two, also the one who extends all the way into Kanasin, and a complementary street for one of the cities most important "nodes", the Kukulcán Sports Center. This avenue, while not being as heavily transited as the Circuito Colonias nearby, is key to mobility from and to Kanasin, with more than 5 routes going from the city center, passing through the same street, creating various stops, making the street more heavily trafficked and not pedestrian friendly. While being very important to enhance and support mobility, the idea of having just one bus/tram route on the street seems more attractive to the area.

SITE ANALYSIS: HUMAN CONNECTIONS



The intersection between the two rings creates a very unorganized grid in comparison to the rest of the city, where more than 5 different types of grids/blocks encounter, in a very spacious public space which is the sports center and the abandoned park, that naturally creates a big wayfinding point and focal point for these different neighborhood grids. But in reality these spaces are not as permeable as you will want a node to be, and quite unutilized. These public spaces should be a magnet not just for the residents in the neighborhoods nearby, but for the rest of the city, given the very well connected area they are located in.

Activating a public space is not only about regenerating the area itself, but including also the nearby users, making good transport connections and having mixed used activities and much more to attract people to the area.

SITE ANALYSIS: PUBLIC AREAS



The main focus of the site is the Kuklcán Sports center, which houses both state football and baseball stadiums, where the majority of the area is utilized for parking lot spaces or car facilitation. Despite its large area, it's not permeable nor easy access from nearby points, making the area not pedestrian friendly or inviting, resulting in very low life and social quality. Right across from the center we have an abandoned park that could easily be a green lung not only for the area but for the city, it even has a very special quality, there's more than 60 Mayan ruins on site. Because of lack of outside interest and budget, the park is constantly underseen and abandoned, while the neighbors show plenty of interest in renovating the area into a park. This park also is directly connected to the green belt next to the Peripheral ring, where the government and locals aim to create a linear park. These areas are one of the few big green untouched areas in the city. In front of the sport center and next to the park is what now is called Plaza Kukulcán, which consists of an extensive parking lot area with few banks and restaurants. While the need of banks and restaurants next to the sports center and the many residences on site, the extensive parking lot creates even more heatwaves on the area, and currently it doesn't reach full capacity, only during sporting events. Given the fact that there are plenty of intersections of different grids, it creates various dead spaces, which are now currently unused concrete planks inside neighborhoods or multiple unused streets.



Commercial areas and street intersections.



Concrete pocket plank areas.



Concrete plank parking lots.

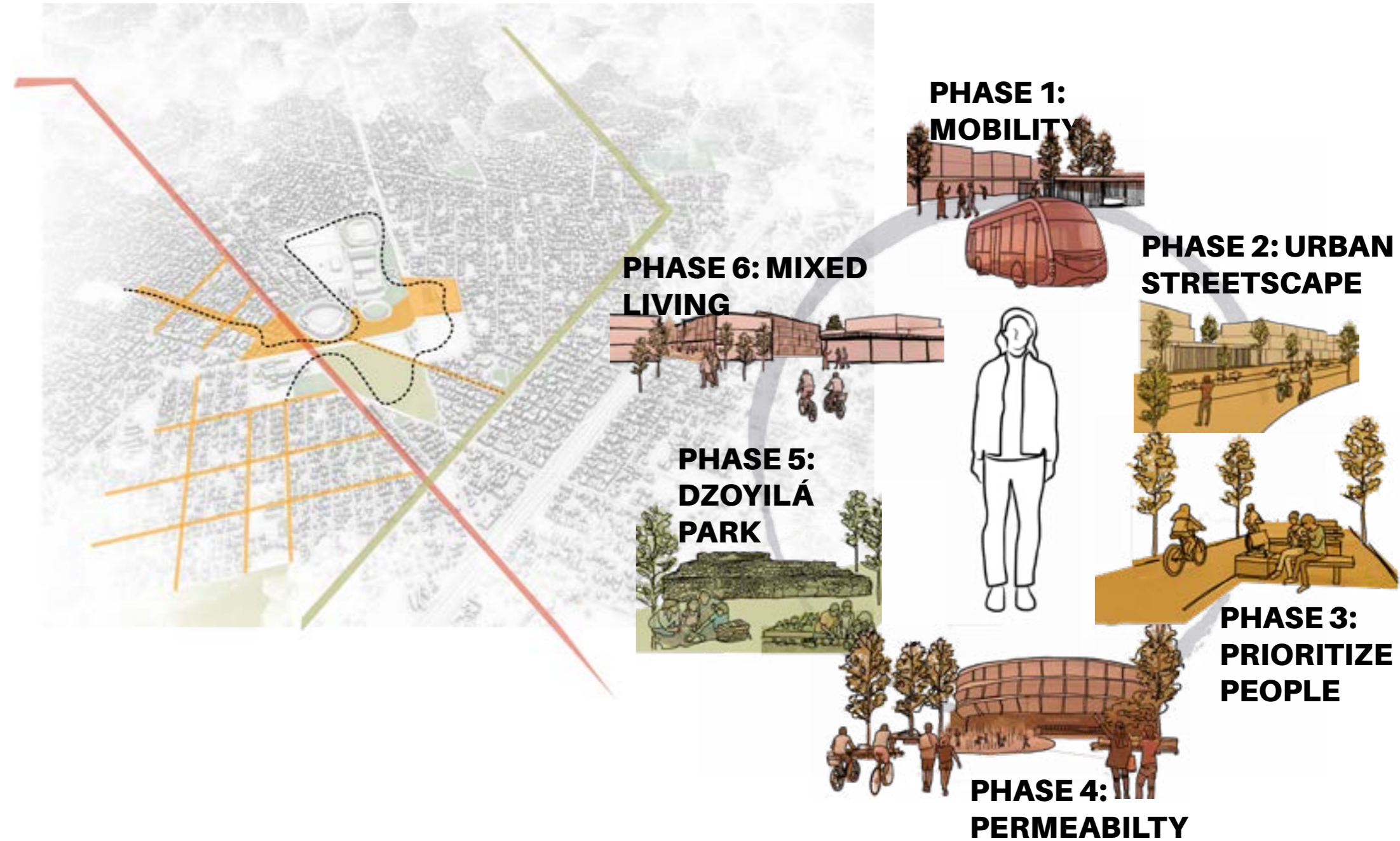


Not pedestrian friendly intersection.



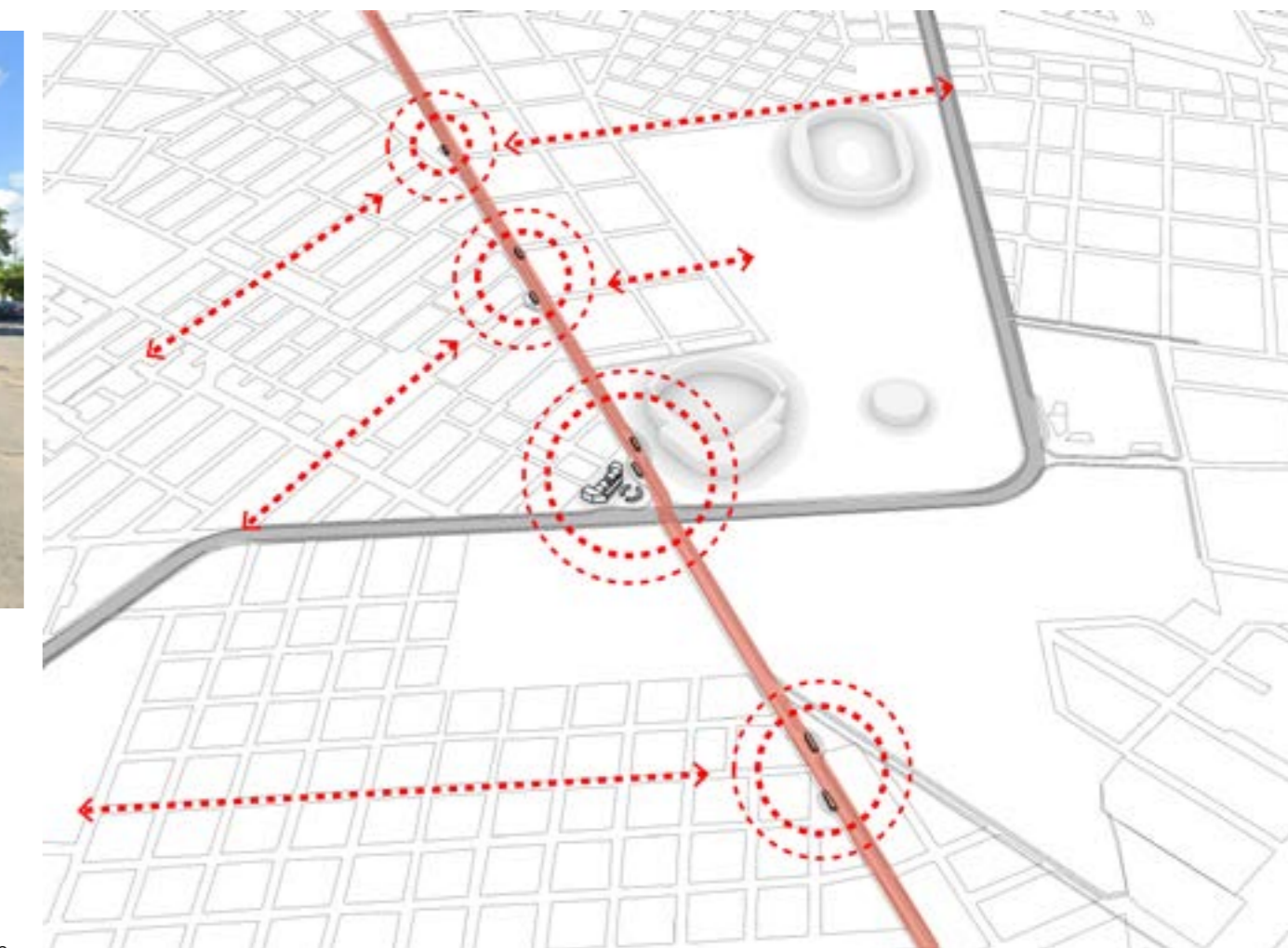
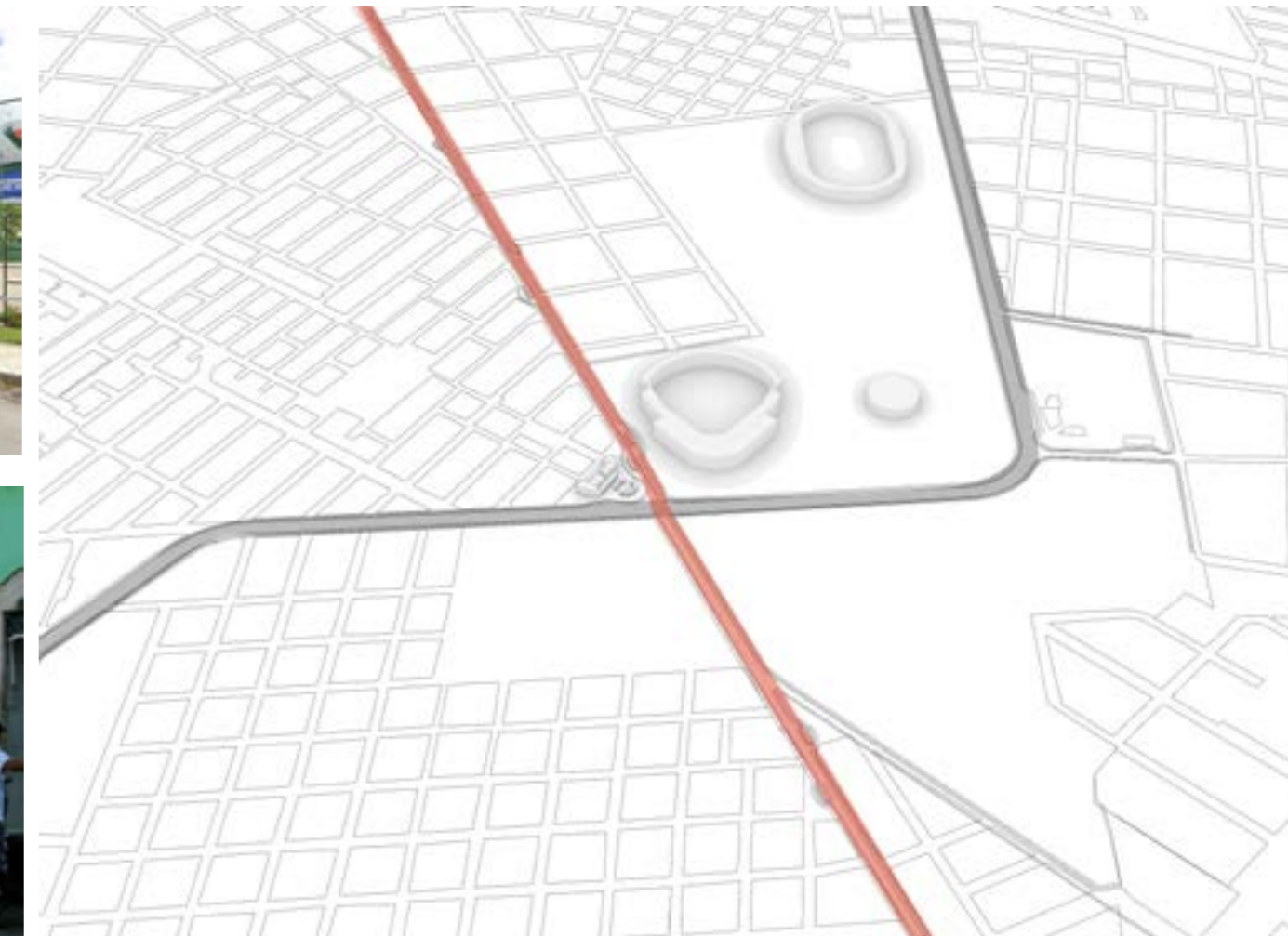
Abandoned park.

CONCEPT: ACTIVATING PUBLIC SPACES FOR A COMPLETE WAY OF LIVING



The concept of this project is having a complete, or a full regeneration of an area to improve life quality. Is permeability, connections, a more active lifestyle, prioritize people over cars, better life quality, and all through mainly activating public spaces. Complete because as much as the city is expanding, and creating more neighborhoods that promise all the things said before, there's always something missing, something not making it whole. But instead of creating yet another new area promising everything, the aim of this project is to regenerate one of the busiest areas in the city, and making it whole. Attracting people to live, work and play here and improving the residents' life quality. The area already has public spaces, sports activities, schools, hospitals, commercial areas. It's just in need of activating and blending everything into one.

PHASE 1: MOBILITY



By creating a new fast bus/tram line, it gives the possibility to a more sustainable mobility option, reducing the most car usage at possible and still giving the residents a more fast, accessible and enjoyable way of transportation.

28th street is very heavily transited, since its direct connection to both colonias circuit and peripheral ring, so its the perfect street to start implementing a more green mobility.

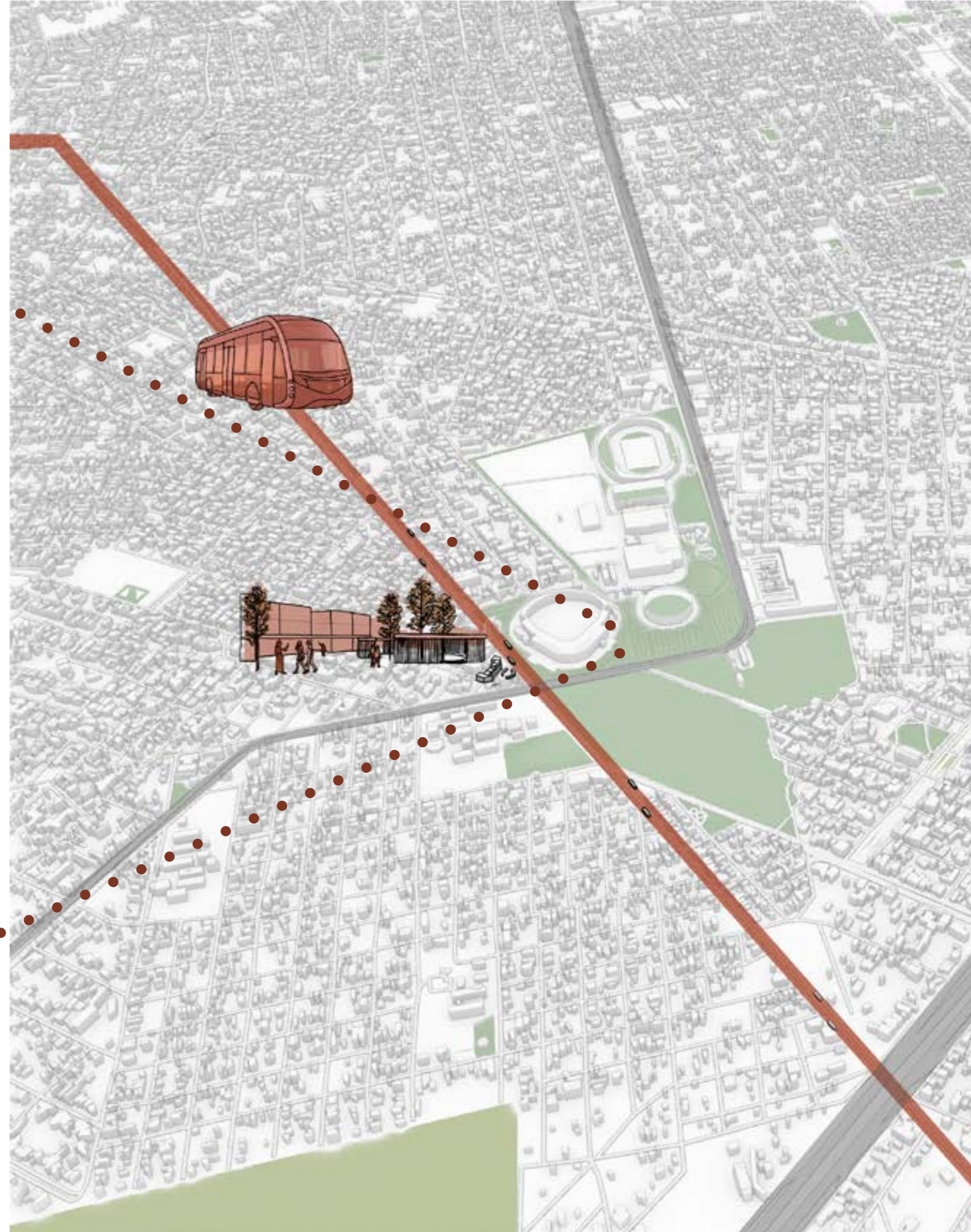
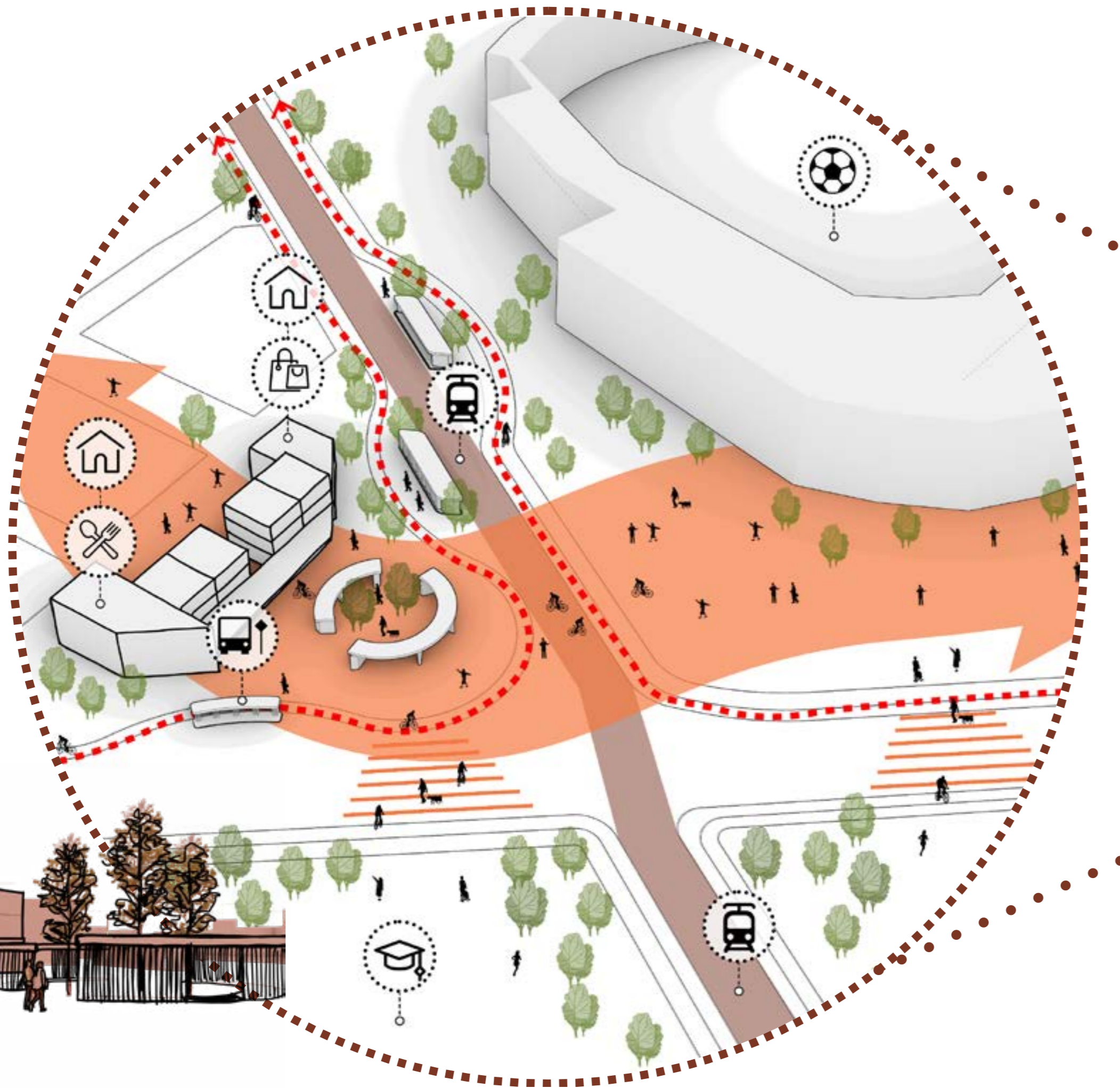
Since the street will be mainly for the lettram, it need to reduce the stops, but still be close enough for a fast bus. From 10 stops very close to each other, instead 4 stops around every 300-400 meter apart in specific locations, with easy access from neighbors and public spaces.

The natural intersection of the new tram line and the Colonias circuit creates the need of a mobility hub station, where public access and permeability to the surroundings is the main priority.

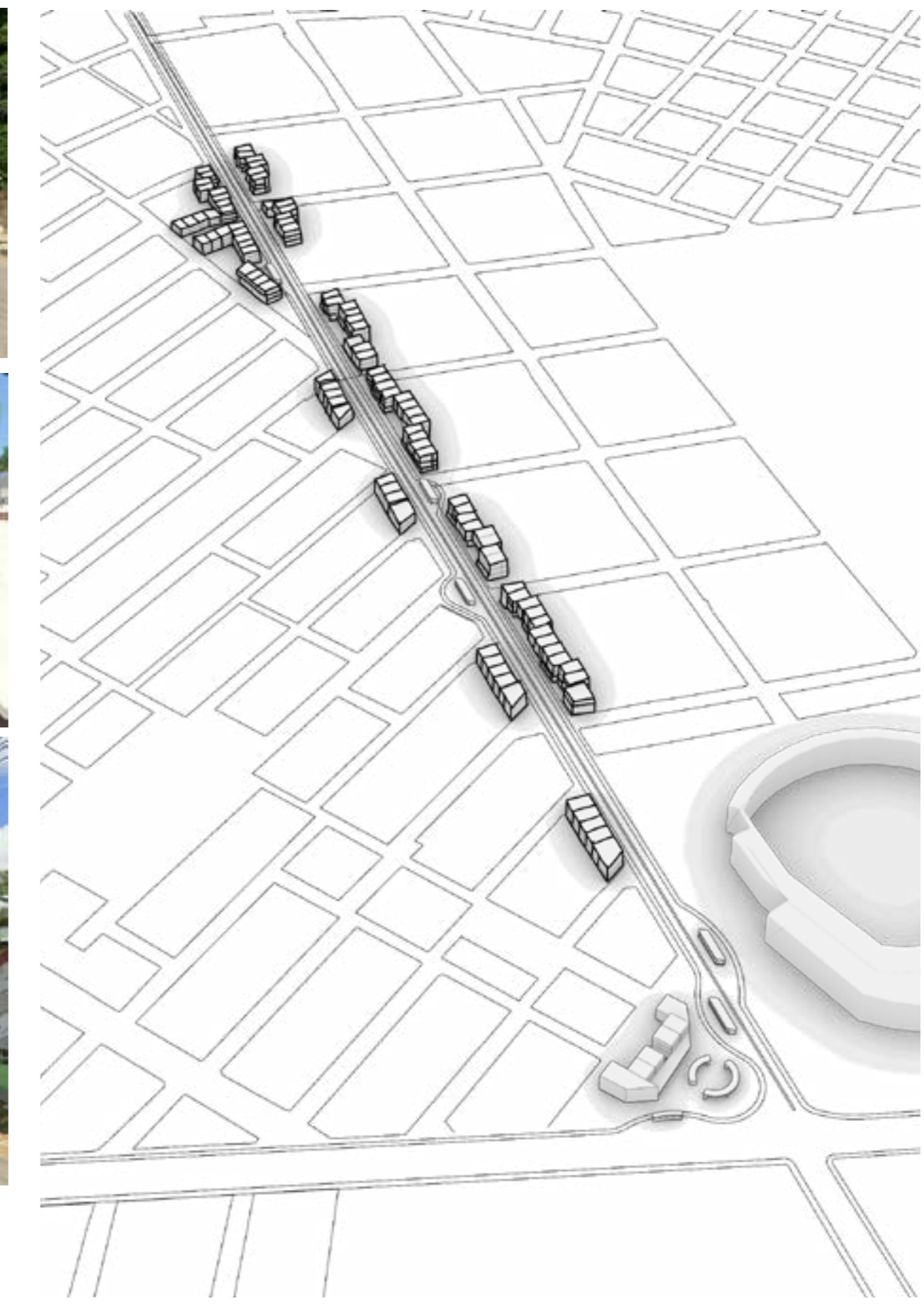
The aim is to create gathering points between bus stops and more importantly the mobility hub, which could start the flow towards other public areas, such as the elementary school, the sports center, nearby parks etc...

This mobility hub includes the tram stops, bus stops from colonias circuit, direct connection with bike lanes with the opportunity of bike rentals and bike parks.

Since its still in residential area, there should be a winding down from such public area to the private neighborhoods, so mixed used buildings with commerce and residential could serve as a great funnel.

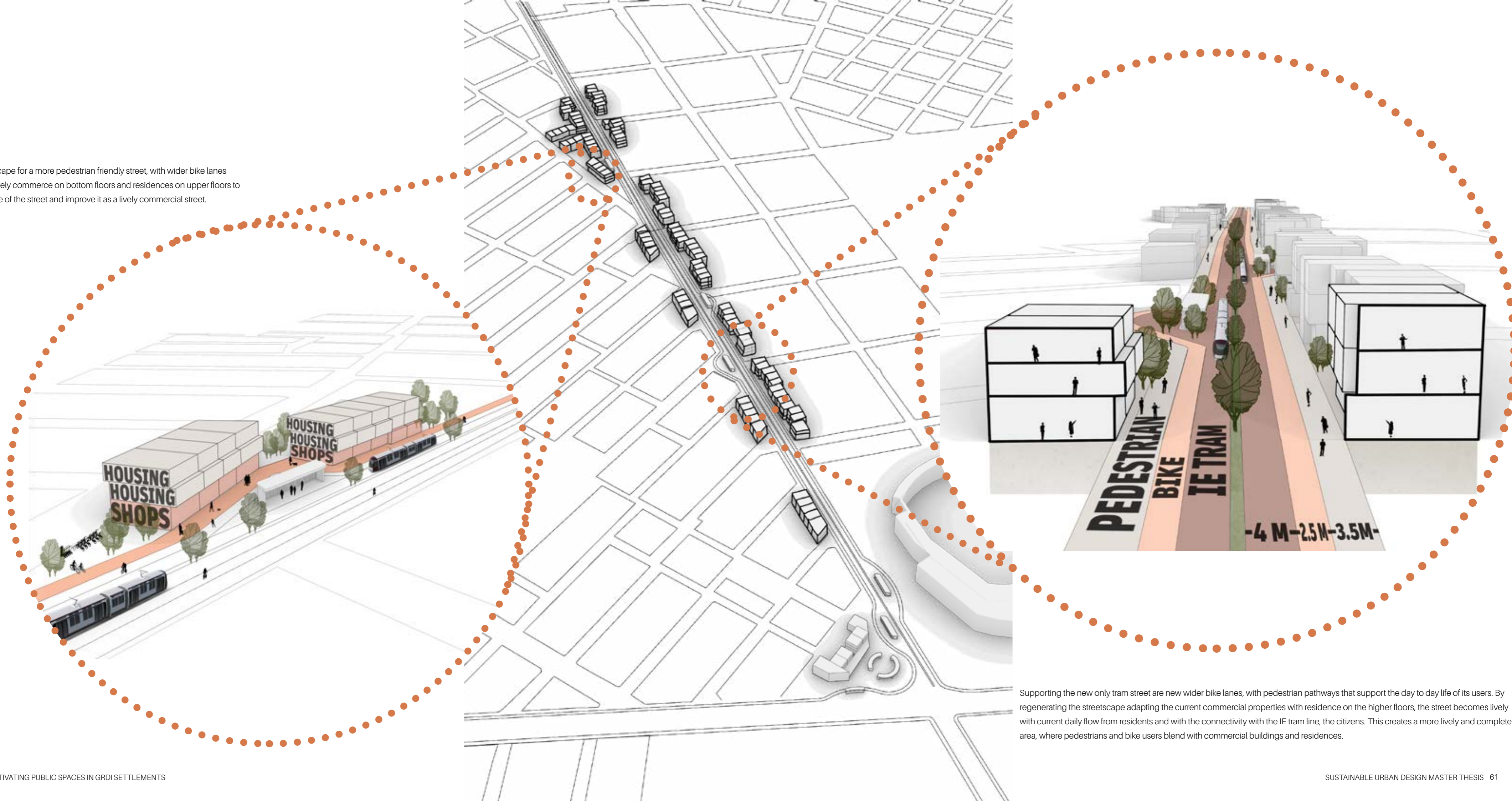


PHASE 2: URBAN STREETScape



Currently the street is lined up with commercial buildings, that respond to the users: cars. Looks like people are just living on cars and buildings, not using public spaces. These type of commercial buildings are usually the avenue facing side of a two lot house, owned by the family living on the back, or next, creating confusing sense of belonging, where you have private homes next to small convenience stores, creating an uncomfortable environment and not a lively street with public domain.

Redefining the streetscape for a more pedestrian friendly street, with wider bike lanes and walk lanes, with lively commerce on bottom floors and residences on upper floors to support the current use of the street and improve it as a lively commercial street.

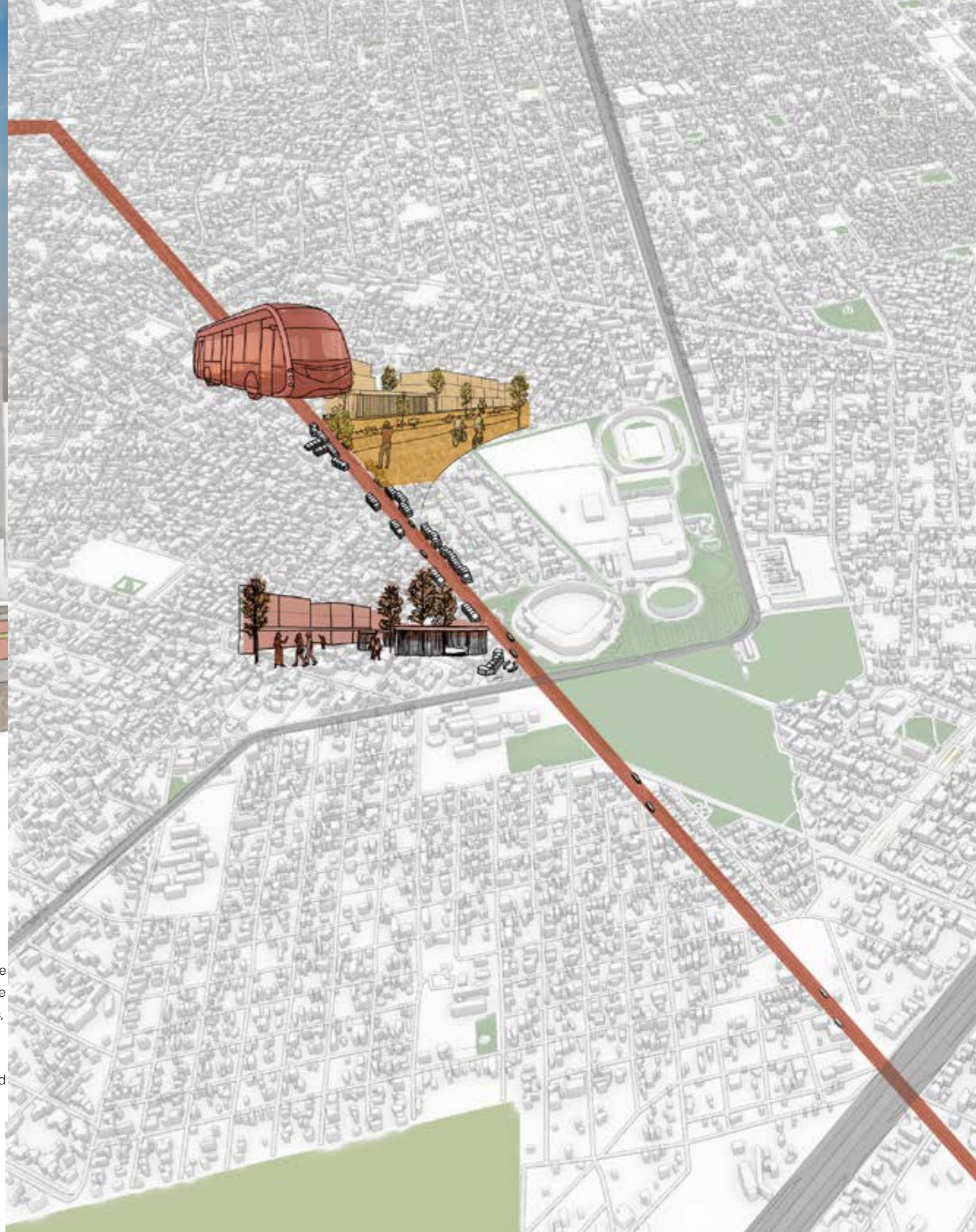


Supporting the new only tram street are new wider bike lanes, with pedestrian pathways that support the day to day life of its users. By regenerating the streetscape adapting the current commercial properties with residence on the higher floors, the street becomes lively with current daily flow from residents and with the connectivity with the IE tram line, the citizens. This creates a more lively and complete area, where pedestrians and bike users blend with commercial buildings and residences.



By having mixed used buildings the street is now completely used, by pedestrians and bike users, attracting people from other areas of the city with easy access to commercial buildings, and also privacy in residences instead of the usual gated houses on the main avenue that people tend to avoid because of car traffic and noise.

The new traffic would be clean, fast and useful, creating a flow that modern cities have and Mérida is still far behind with the use of individual cars and parking lots on main avenues.



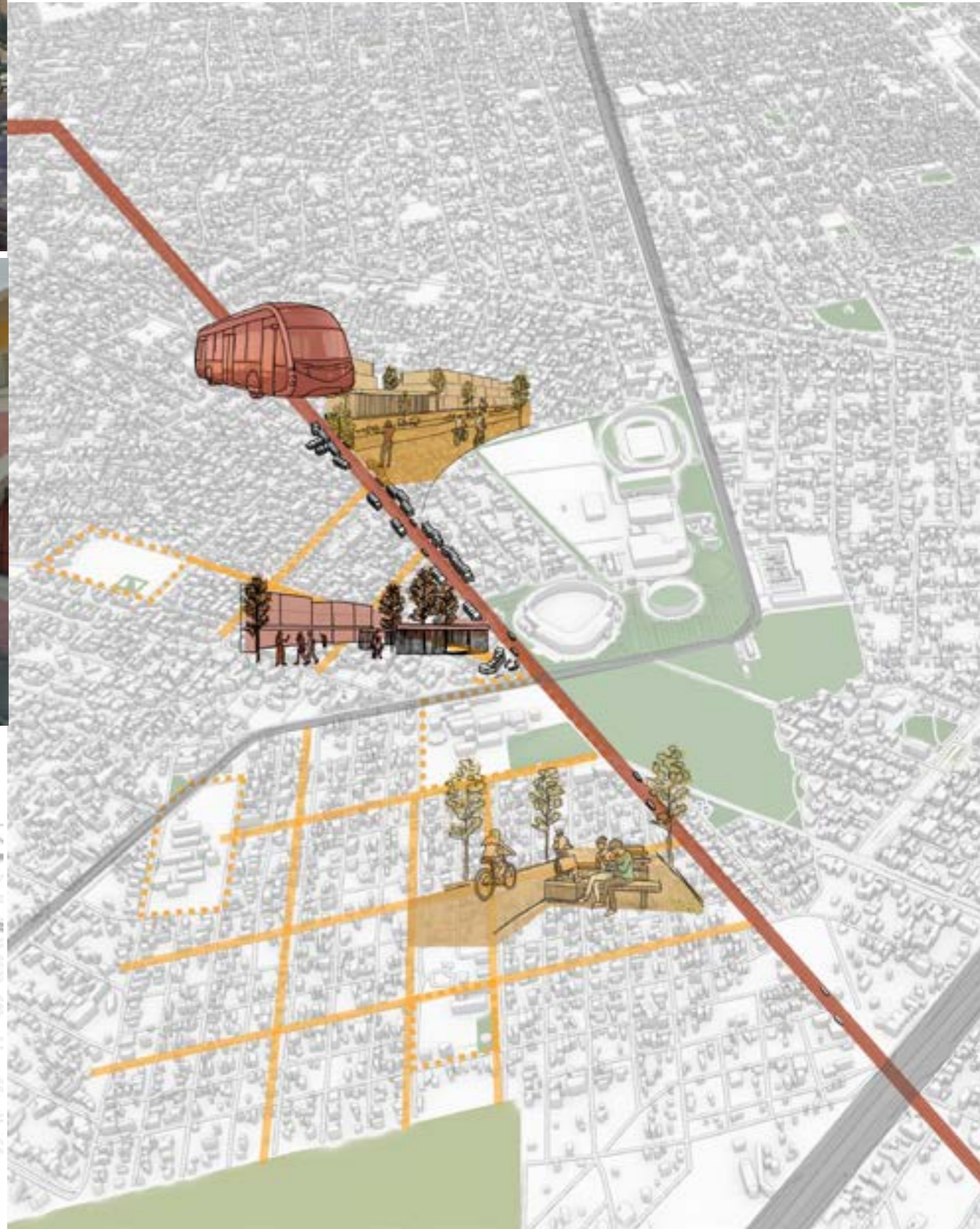
PHASE 3: PRIORITIZE PEOPLE



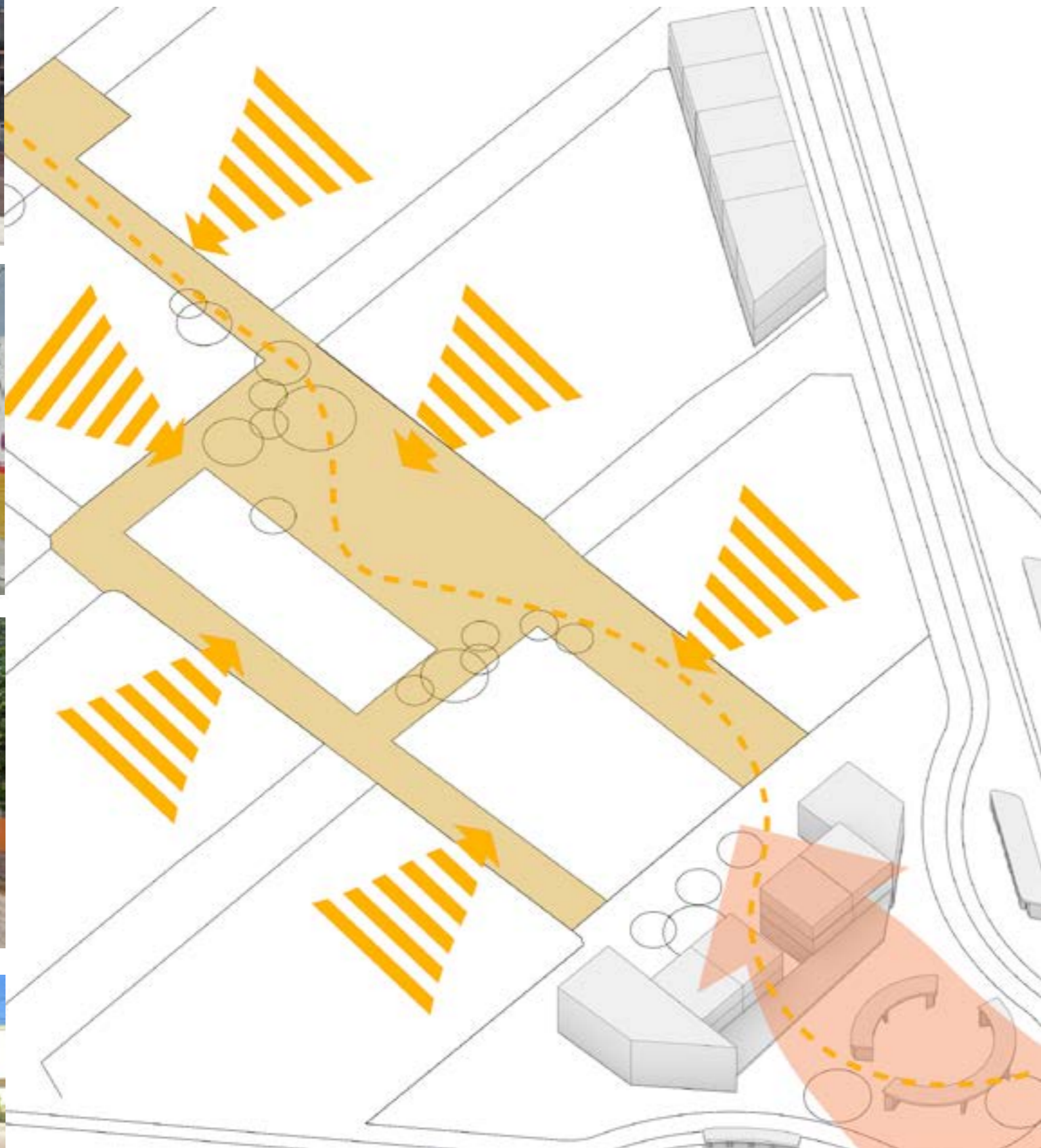
The site street on site lack privacy, since they work as a very reticular grid, streets are mainly used as parking spaces or an alternative to the trafficed avenue, regardless if they are residential streets, making them as noisy and unsafe as a main avenue.



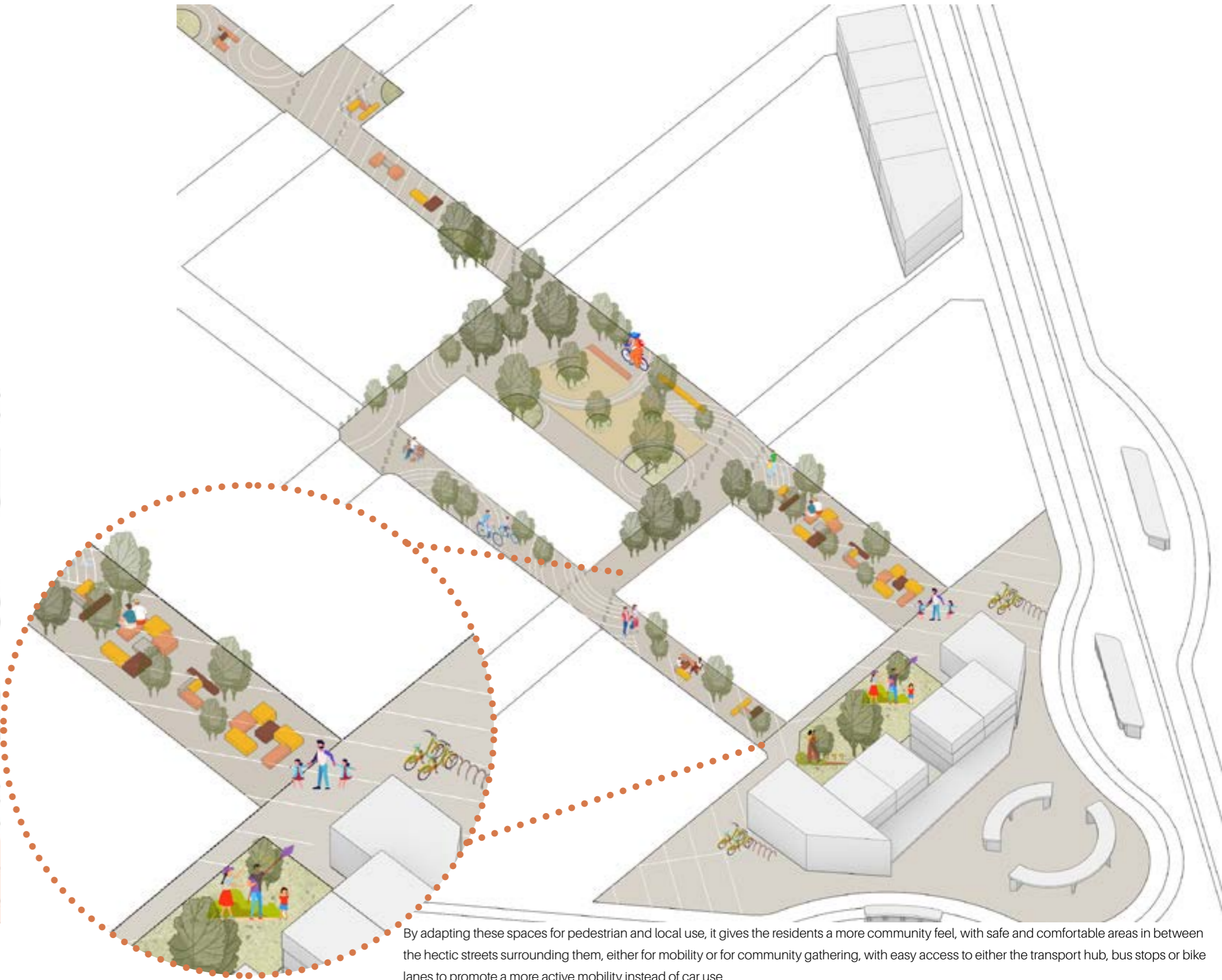
By reclaiming the streets with "reverse superblocks" the car use is decreased severely and people can start using them in a much sustainable and healthy way, noting that only residents can access the area, it welcomes a more community neighborhood. Lively streets and pocket parks are replacing dead spaces to promote pedestrian operability, where these streets end up in a major node, just like sacbés were once.



Locating nodes as parks, schools and religious areas, streets surrounding them can become living streets, with more recreational spaces where there are not. One of the problems with grid layout like Mérida is that all streets lack of hierachy in an unspoken way, people try to evade traffic in avenues and resort on free circulating between neighborhoods, creating the streets non safe or pleasant to the residents



The site has various dead spaces, responding to the reticular grid. These spaces not only damage unnecessarily the area, but contribute to major heatwaves and bad life quality. The majority of these areas are just used as parking lots or temporary meeting points since they don't respond to the need of a public meeting space, with urban furniture, plants, pedestrian free accessibility, etc.



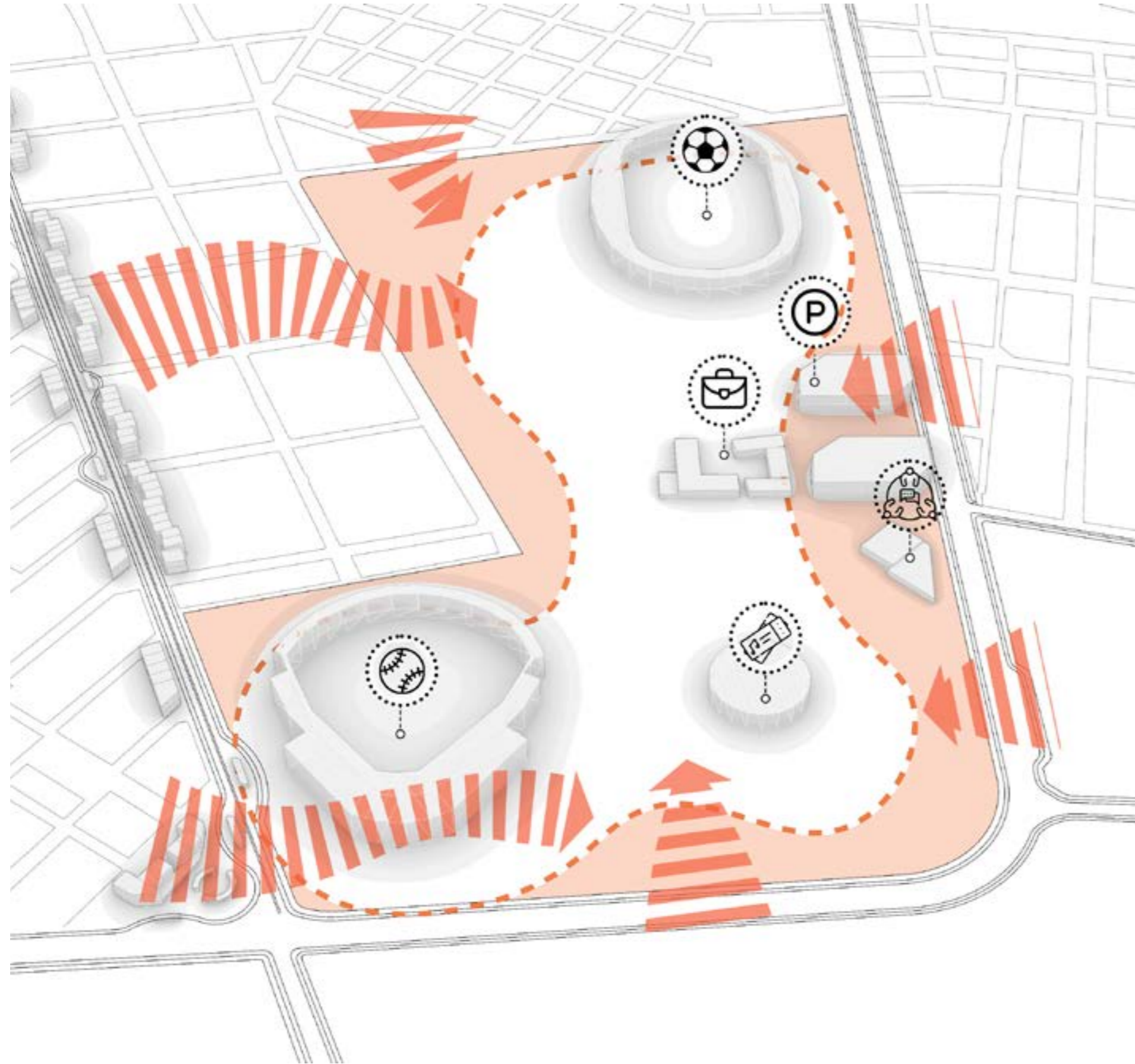
By adapting these spaces for pedestrian and local use, it gives the residents a more community feel, with safe and comfortable areas in between the hectic streets surrounding them, either for mobility or for community gathering, with easy access to either the transport hub, bus stops or bike lanes to promote a more active mobility instead of car use.

PHASE 4: PERMEABILITY



Opening acces both from public areas with heavy traffic and more private streets can give the sports center the use of a park, where people are invited.

Kukulcan sports center despite bei the biggest and most important in the state, lacks accesibility and permeability. Its surrounded by walls and gates, non inviting the users to the free areas, and being once again, an oasis enclosed by the car lanes.

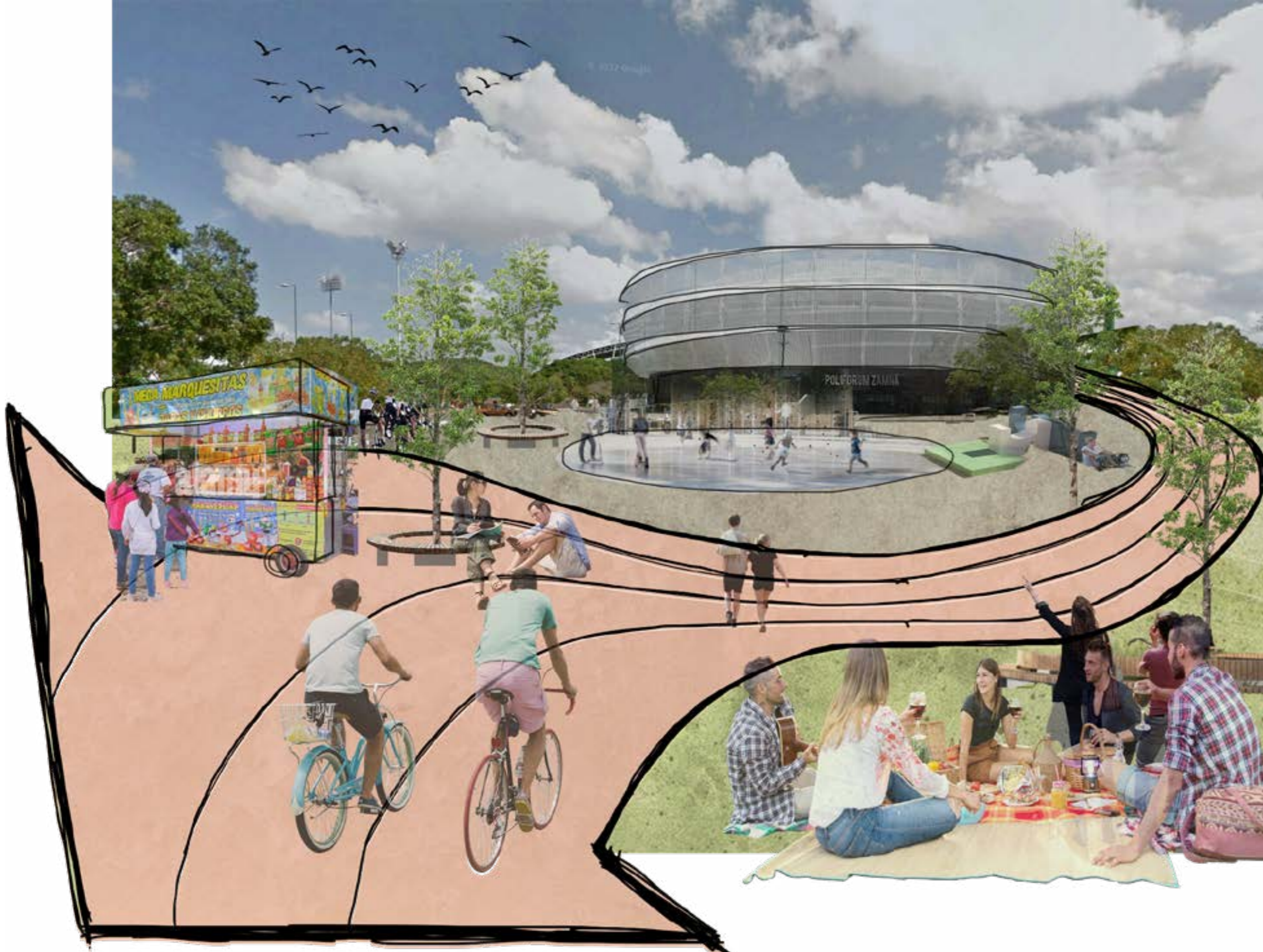


Regenerating the area and upgrading its use, connecting it to its own very important surroundings, the park, the new mobility hub and all the small commerce, gives the opportunity to the area to be used as a main node, not only in the neighborhood but the city as well. The current parking lots which occupy the whole frontal area are repurposed now as a public plaza, serving both the sports center, the intersection of main avenues and the mobility hub, with proposed parking lot buildings on the area.

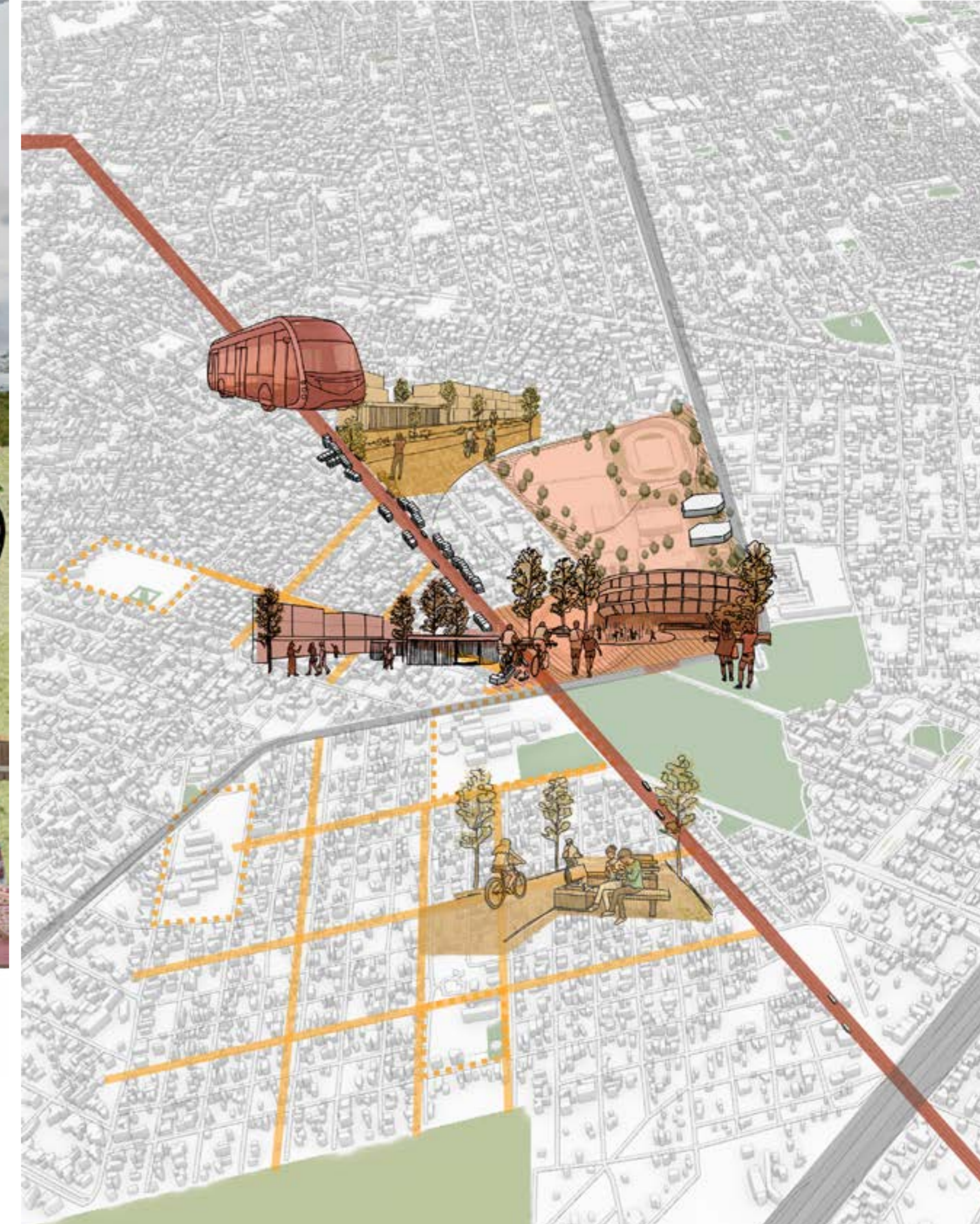



Given the lack of main central squares in the city, the huge parking lot can be repurposed for multi use activities, such as markets, ephemeral activities and stands, and the remainign areas of the complex could be completed with more active spaces, like playgrounds, community areas, open air theatres and parks.

By reforming the existing bike lanes it creates a flow of users from outside and within, converting the space into a lively used public area, where sports and community are the main focus with easily access and defined routes for people, not cars.



By creating new social permeable areas, the huge sports center becomes a node for the city, with easy access from the transport hub or the many bus stops from Colonias Circuit or the nearby Peripheral ring. Residents living nearby can easily access through the living streets and newly defined bike lanes. This creates a more complete permeable area that works with and according the surroundings.





PHASE 5: DZOYILÁ PARK



The Dzoyilá park despite being one of the biggest in the city, because of lack of government support and outside investments, is currently abandoned, with it being just unused green areas subject to unsafe activities.



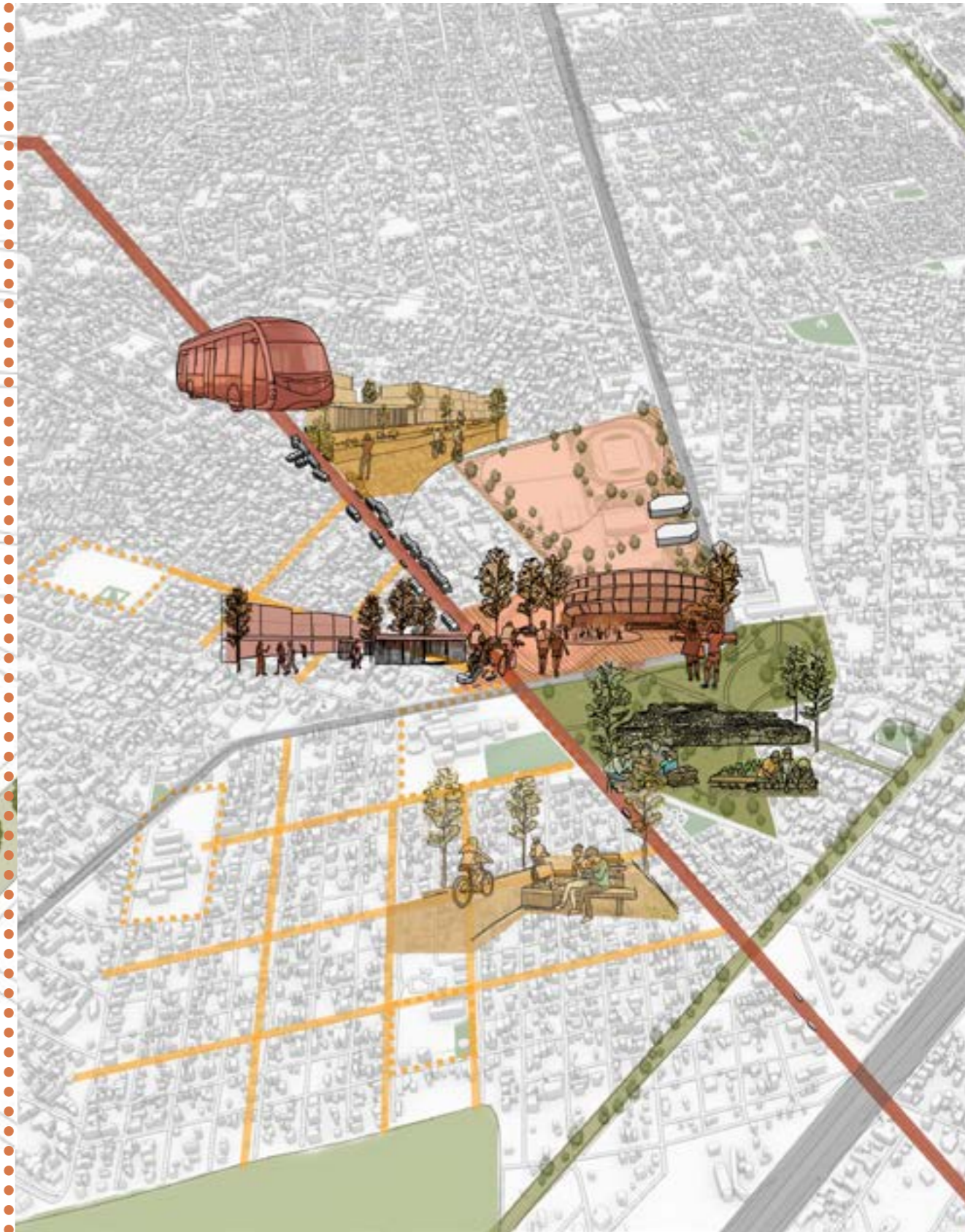
It has also over 40 discovered mayan ruins and few sacbes, including a cenote and several entrances to it. Currently its abandoned and prohibited entrance, but locals have being looking forward to raking care of it in hopes of having it as a neighborhood park, or archeological park.



Ruin excavations map by the INAH (National Institute of Anthropology and History)



Aerial view of the site, with visible ruins and sacbés.



First step into activating the park is opening it up. At the moment it has not very prominent pedestrian connection between the green belt and the sports center, which neighbors feel like unsafe and avoid it most of the time. By widening it and creating spaces for more activities like community gardening, playgrounds it invites for not just crossing but space appropriation. These areas, plus bike and running tracks are planned surrounding the ruins, in hopes to maintain untouched and rescue as much as we can of the ruins and sacbes that are located on site, which help create a more natural feel.

By regenerating the park and making it public access with facilities such as bike and hike trails, community gardening, playgrounds and outdoor gyms, connects public city dense life to nature, as its well needed in the city. Connecting this park to the surrounding greens areas that create a green belt around Mérida is also key to promote smart and green mobility.



PHASE 6: MIXED LIVING

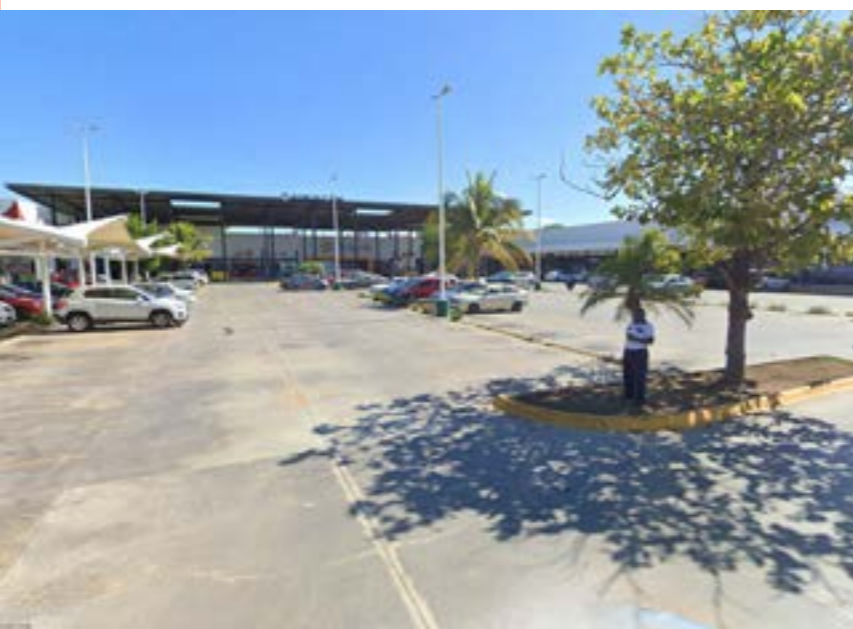


Next to the sports center there is a plaza that shares its name. This not only responds to the commercial need next to big stadiums, but also has numerous bus stops from all the lines that go through colonias circuit. This is a main node and is now currently used 50% by parking space and a few shops plus cinema.

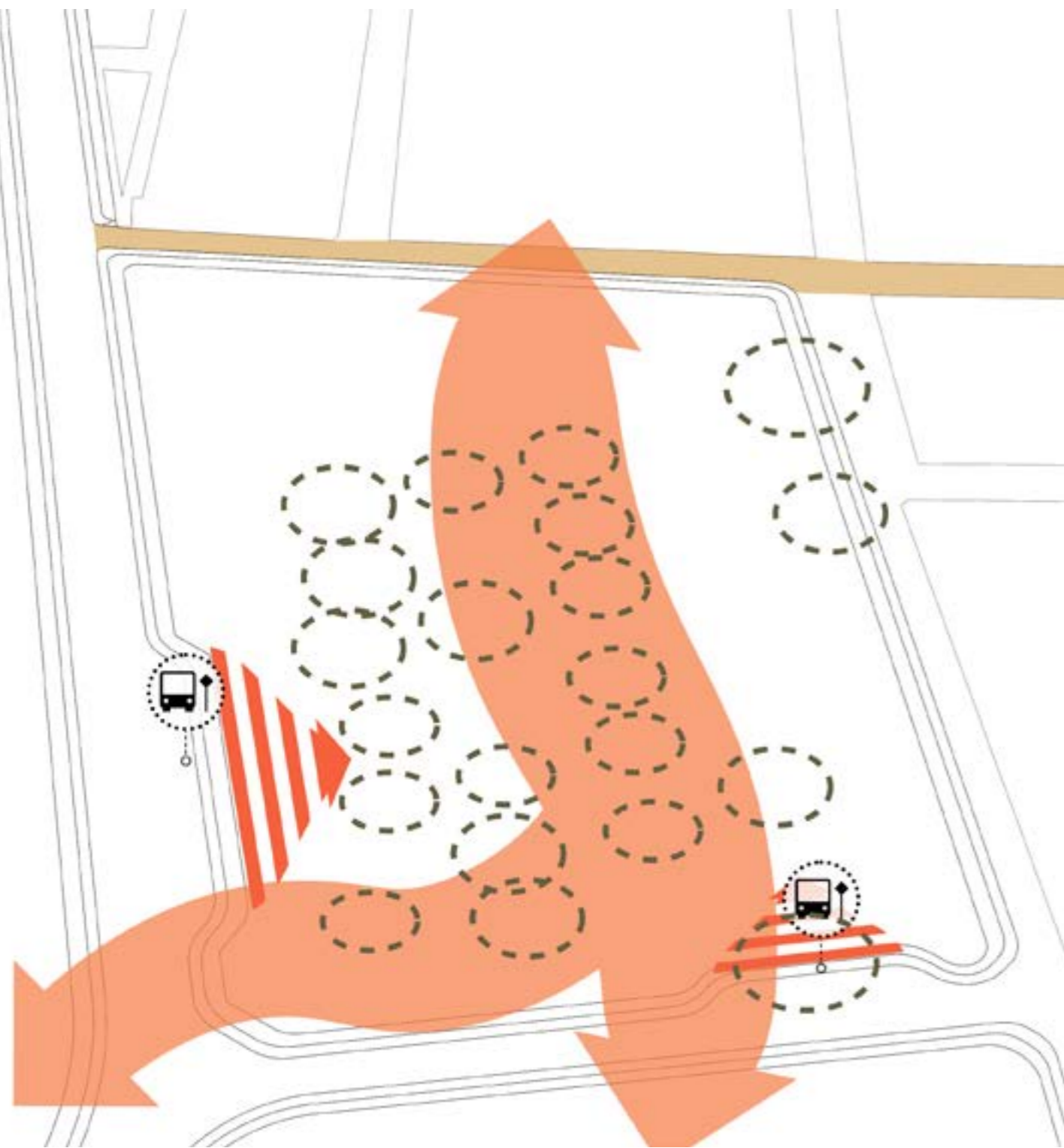
Since this is not a sustainable way of shopping and living, and currently its not used on its totality, its proposed to use this area for a new mixed use neighborhood or mega block, that contrasts the grid type of neighborhood nearby and reponds to the direct connection to the strategic localization, next to the new well comunicated sport center with mobility hub, renovated archaeological park with extensive public areas and most important, the easy connection to the new IE tram route.



Access to Kukulcán plaza from Colonias Circuit and view from extensive parking lot.



Houses on surrounding neighborhoods occupy most of the area, making the area mostly private. A new densified area will bring a new way of living, with no fences, community feeling and better spe maangement, prioritizing life quality. Reutilizing an almost empty lot into a mixed use way of living.



Since the plaza is mainly parking lot, there is not much greenery to rescue, but the few trees that are for parking spaces can work as a route connecting the new regenerated sports center and the park, with easy connection with this area. By respecting those trees we can decide where we can build something new.

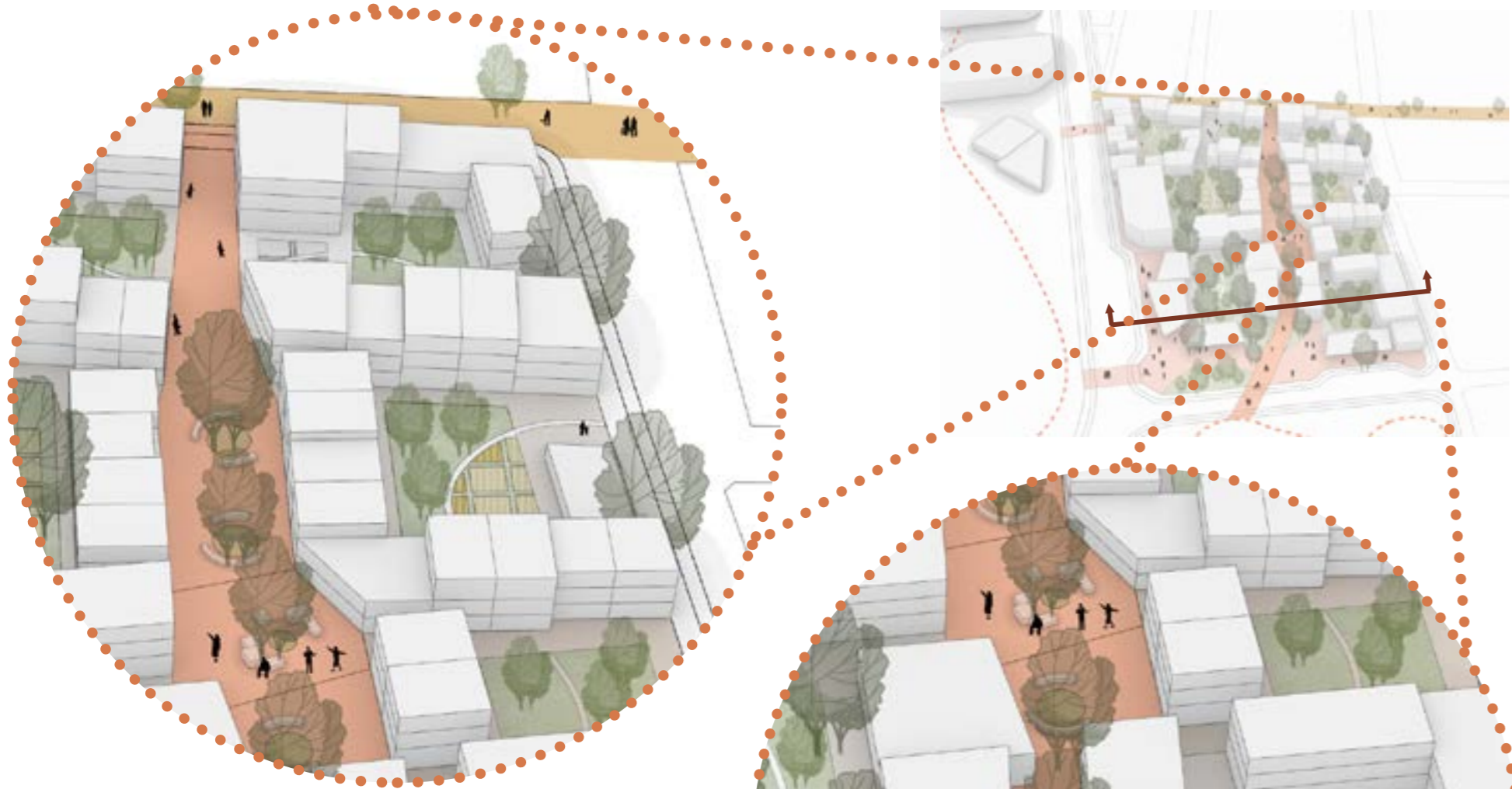


Now with the main pedestrian street as a route, new mixed use buildings, where mainly commerce and offices are facing the street and/or new connection, and the more inwards the area is, the more "private" with semi public courtyards and small cafes and shops on lower levels.

A parking building is proposed to ensure next to the bus stops to promote public transport use, but the possibility to switch, and also as a support for the sports center and residents.

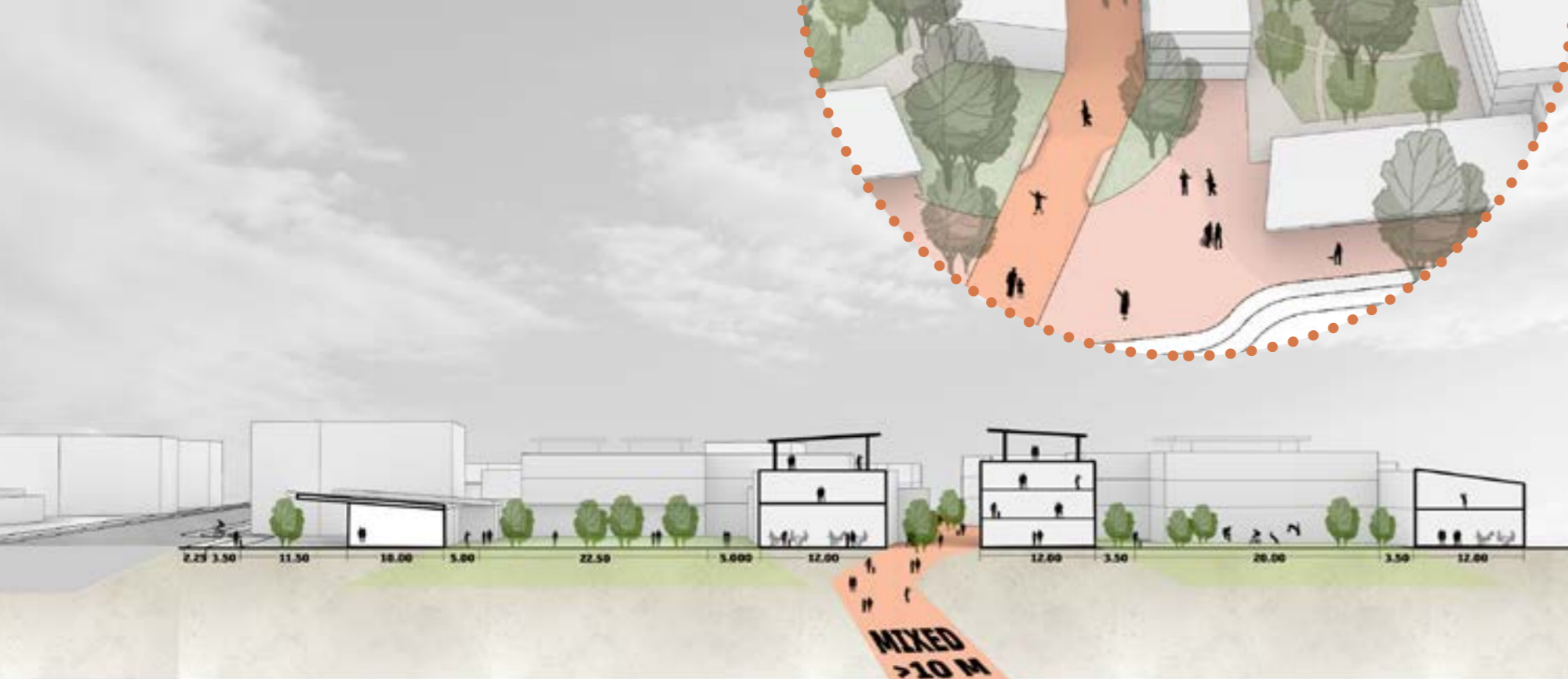
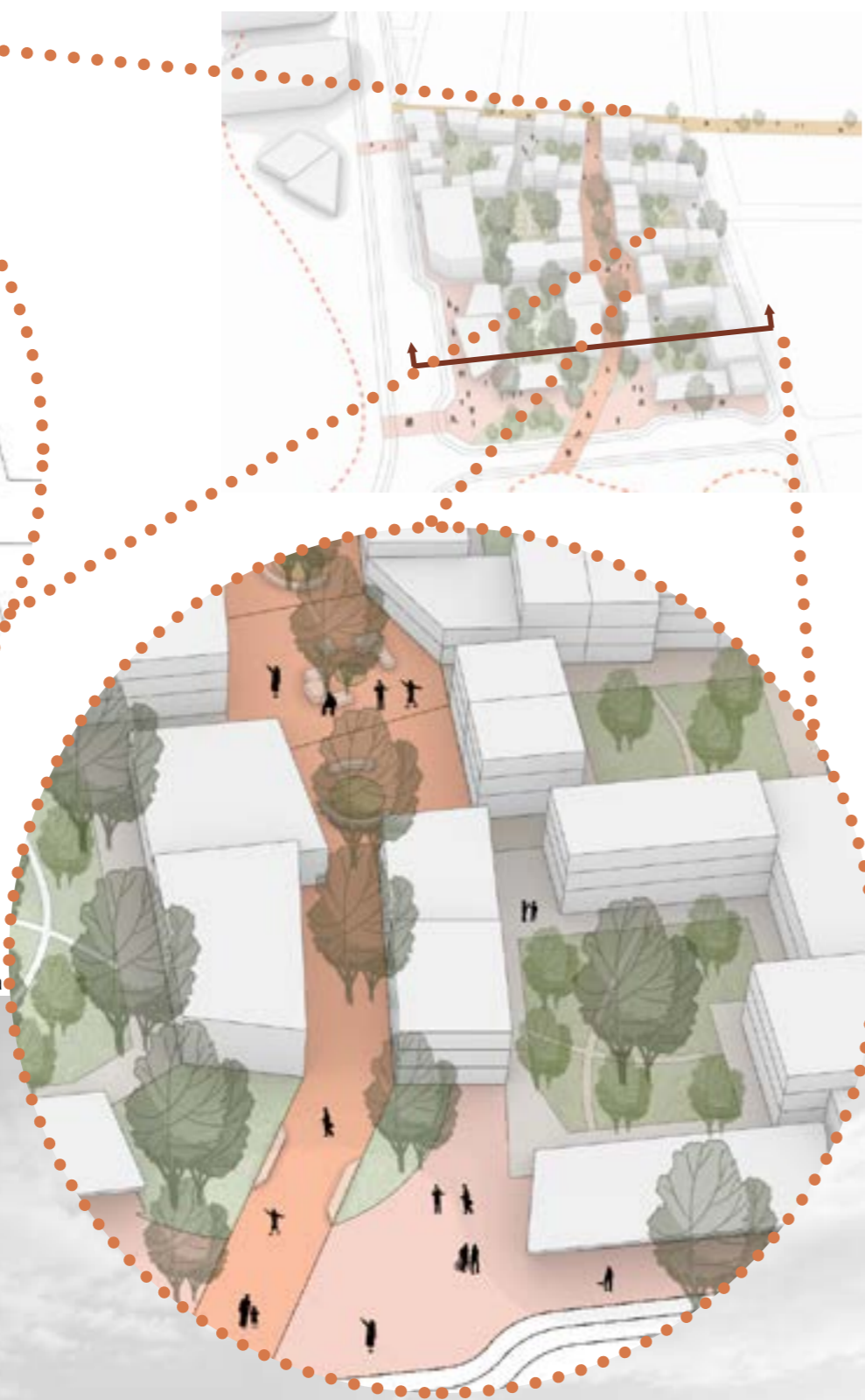


With the new regenerated sports areas, community archaeological park, mobility hubs, new transport system, there is a chance to implement a new form of living in the city, community living, where streets are for people and courtyards are for everyone. It could be a meeting place for residents, outsiders, nearby visitors, everyone.



Zoom in, courtyard typology and hierarchy.

Zoom in, pedestrian street and gathering area

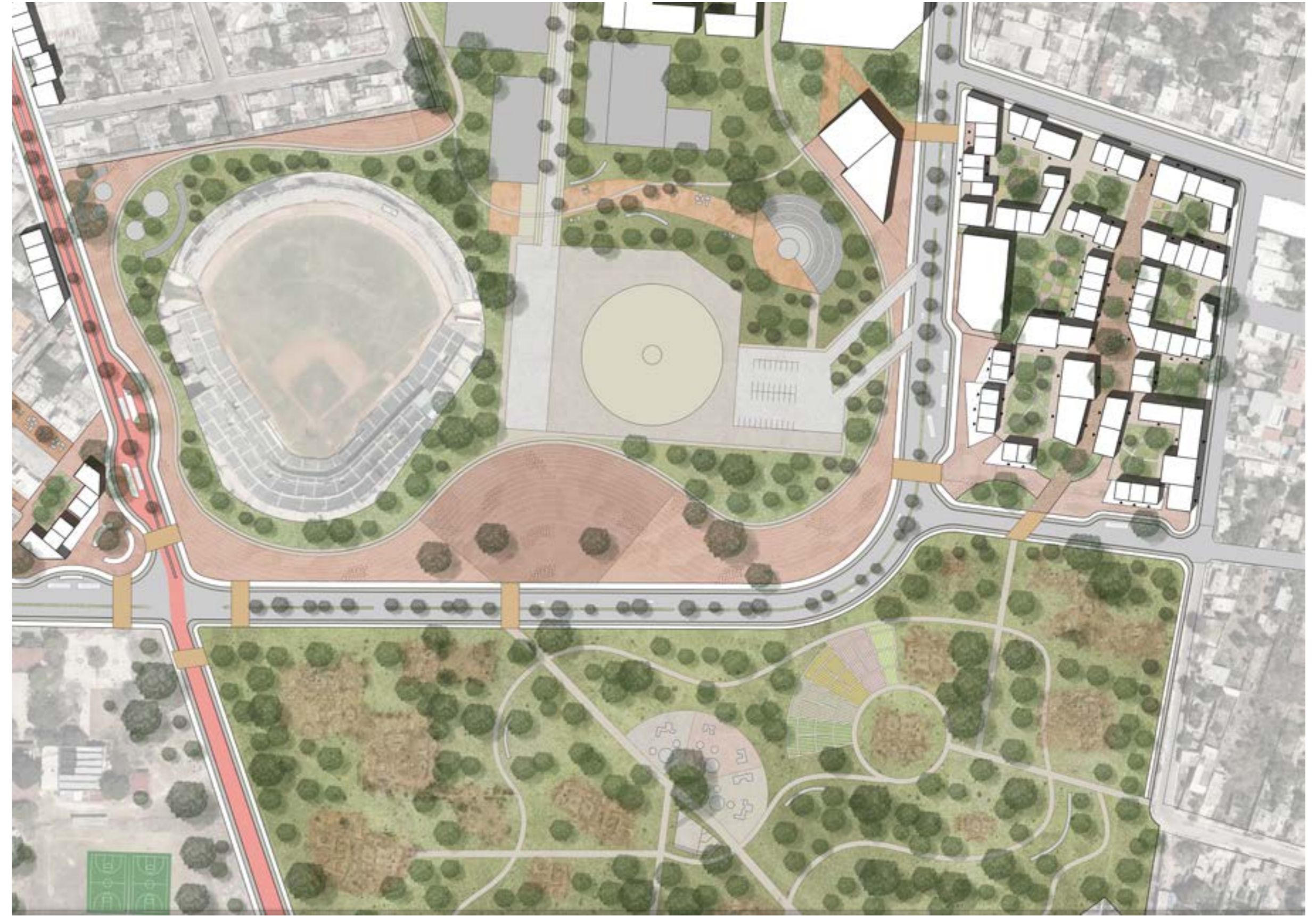


Section bus stops with commercial buildings



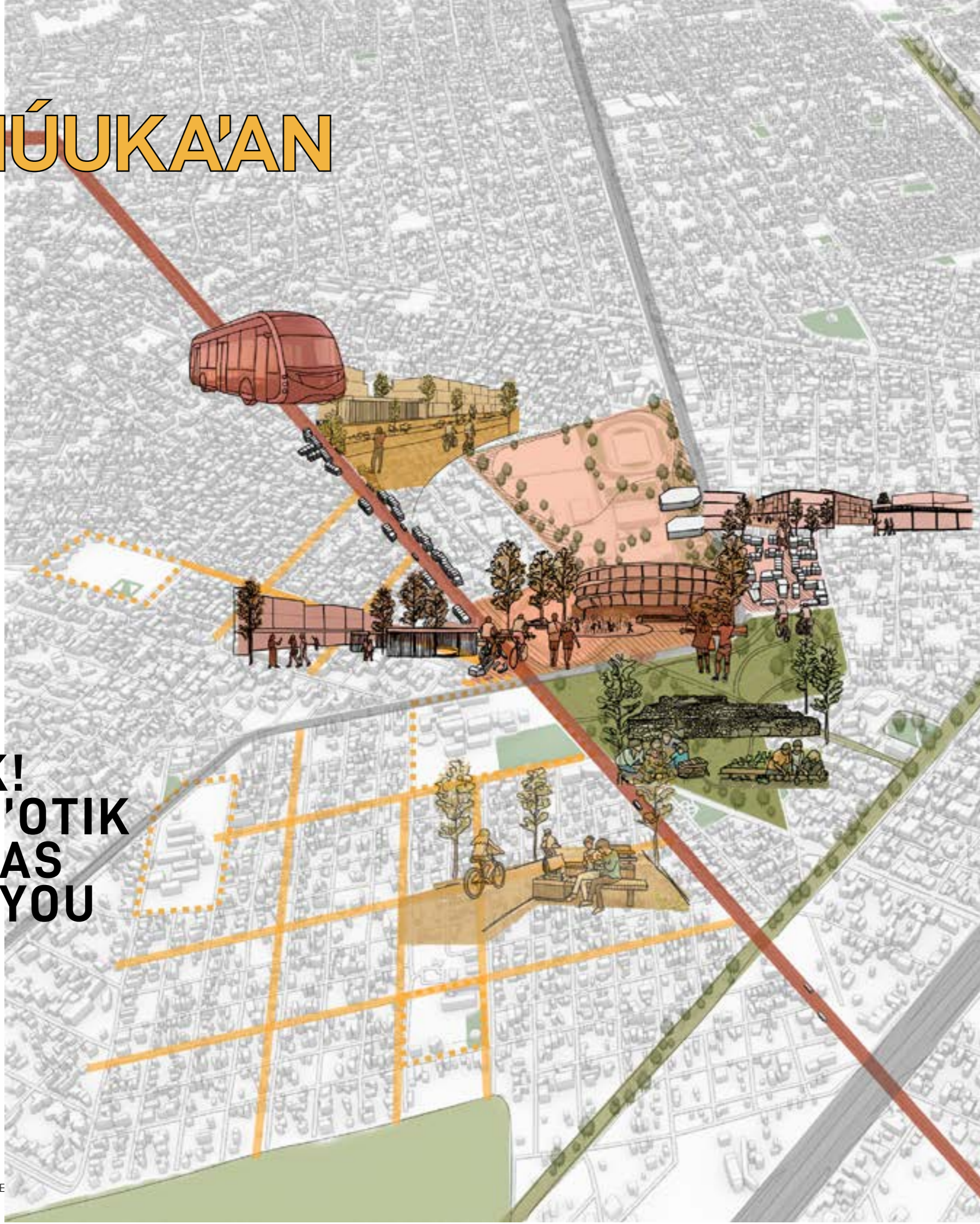
With the new regenerated sports areas, community archaeological park, mobility hubs, new transport system, there's a chance to implement a new form of living in the city. community living, where streets are for people and courtyards are for everyone.

Master plan



Detail plan

CHÚUKA'AN



TACK!
YUUM BO'OTIK
GRACIAS
THANK YOU



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