How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?
- A minor field study in Costa Rica

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Hur kan stadskärnan i San José bli mer attraktiv?

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Abstract
San José, the capital city of Costa Rica, has had a rapid urbanisation rate during the last 60 years and are now facing problems of urban sprawl and traffic congestions. During all of this the population of the city core is decreasing and the centre is becoming lifeless if no action is taken. This study examines the situation for pedestrian people and public spaces in the city and suggests measures to be taken in order to bring more people into the city core and densify it to counteract the urban sprawl. The biggest challenge is to change the negative attitude among the population toward their own city. The authors suggest for example to construct more pedestrian streets in the city core to link the public spaces and nodes together and thus make the city core more attractive. The bus system needs to be improved and the different authorities need to co-operate more. It is also necessary to bring more safety into the city, for example more light during night and less places for people to hide.
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Summary

Costa Rica is located between Nicaragua and Panama in Central America and consists of about four million people, of which over 60% live in cities today. Urbanisation contributes to more people moving into the cities and despite a lack of jobs and housing, a life in the city is more attractive where a hope for a better life attracts more than the countryside. San José is located in the middle of the country and together with its five surrounding towns are all constructed in the same way. The cities were planned in 1737 by the Spanish and the structure is constituted by a square and a church in the centre surrounded by a grid pattern. These six cities are now fused along access roads and are called Gran Area Metropolitana (GAM).

With the great growth of the urban population in the latter part of the 1900s San José and GAM area grew tremendously in size. The trend of today in the GAM area is unfortunately that almost no one wants to stay in the centre. The inhabitants choose to move to the outskirts of the city and add to the already much outspread urban sprawl. This leads to destruction of the nature and puts great strain on the infrastructure to be expanded. The suburbs are divided into clusters, which houses various status groups and creates segregation between welfare groups. The city centre of San José consists largely of offices and commercial properties, but also residential buildings. However, many houses are empty and statistics show that the population density in the central area is decreasing every year.

With the help of Jan Gehl’s and Kevin Lynch's theories, the most central part of San José has been analysed. A traffic analysis has been carried out and surveys among the local population. Both municipal and state authorities were interviewed to find out the plans for the city. The purpose of the analysis was to find out what qualities and problems the city has, and what should be changed in order to bring people into the city core and make it more attractive.

There are some existing plans at the municipal and state level to make San José centre more popular as a residential place and as a destination, but not much is being implemented. The interviews performed showed that the reason is a lack of cooperation between different authorities, in conjunction with poor budget and finance. The surveys show that as many as 64% of respondents are willing to stay in the centre, either as it is today or with minor measures carried out, which indicates that the city has potential to be repopulated. Security in the city is the factor that most desired to improve and the surveys show that the fear of staying in the centre is high.

The traffic situation in San José is a big problem. All roads lead to the centre because there is no transverse infrastructure in the current situation. This would help if travelling between two suburbs by public transport, today everyone must enter the city.
centre first, leading to traffic becomes too heavy in central parts and many streets serve as thoroughfares. Avenida 2, a five lane road which crosses the city brings huge traffic and is a major barrier for those moving by foot. Our research shows that more than 80% of all private traffic that runs through the centre consists of 1-2 passengers indicating that traffic has the potential to be reduced if the focus is put on public transport. The city's seven pedestrian streets demonstrates a degree of focus on walking, a focus we advocate to emphasise more.

A conclusion of this report is that the inhabitants are in need of a major change in attitude. Attitudes towards living and staying in the centre and using public transport must be improved in order to succeed in getting a more attractive city. Other proposed measures are divided into short and long term visions, like introduce road tolls in the centre, better road signs that lead traffic around the city, link public spaces with pedestrian streets, make Avenida 2 two-way directed, building more beltways to facilitate transversal movement and densify the city core.
Sammanfattning

Costa Rica är beläget mellan Nicaragua och Panama i Centralamerika och består av cirka fyra miljoner invånare varav över 60 % bor i städerna idag. Urbaniseringen bidrar till att fler flyttar in till städerna och trots brist på bostäder och jobb lockar ett liv i staden mer än på landet med hopp om ett bättre liv. San José ligger mitt i landet och är tillsammans med sina fem omgivande städer alla uppbyggda på samma sätt. Städerna planerades 1737 av spanjorerna och strukturen är utgjord med ett torg och en kyrka i centrum omgiven av ett rutnätsmönster. Dessa sex städer är nu hopväxta längs tillfartsvägarna och går under det gemensamma namnet Gran Area Metropolitana (GAM).


Det finns en del befintliga planer på kommunal och statlig nivå som syftar till att göra San José centrum mer populärt som bostadsändamål och destination, men det är inte mycket som genomförs. Våra intervjuer tyder på att anledningen är det bristfälliga samarbetet olika instanser emellan, i samband med dålig budget och finansiering.

Att enkätundersökningarna visar att så många som 64 % av de tillfrågade kan tänka sig att bo i centrum som det ser ut idag, eller om någon åtgärd utförs, indikerar på att staden har potential att återbefolkas. Säkerhet i staden är den faktor som flest önskat förbättras och enkäterna visar att rädslan för att vistas i centrum är hög.

Trafiksituationen i San José är ett stort problem. Alla vägar leder in mot centrum, eftersom en transversal infrastruktur inte existerar i dagsläget. Detta bidrar till att om man vill resa mellan två förorter med kollektivtrafik måste man först in till staden för att byta, vilket
leder till att trafiken blir alltför tung i centrum och många gator fungerar som genomfartsleder. Femfiliga vägen Avenida 2 som korsar staden tillför enorm trafik och är en stor barriär för de som vill röra sig i staden till fots. Våra undersökningar visar att mer än 80 % av all privat trafik som kör genom centrum består av 1-2 passagerare vilket indikerar på att trafiken har potential att minskas om fokus sätts på kollektivtrafiken. Stadens sju gågator visar på ett viss mått av fokus på gående, ett fokus vi förespråkar ska lyftas fram mer.

Slutsatsen i denna rapport pekar på att en stor attitydförändring behöver ske hos invånarna. Attityden till att bo och vistas i centrum samt använda kollektivtrafiken måste förbättras för att lyckas få en mer attraktiv stad. Andra förslag på åtgärder är uppdelade i kortsiktiga och långsiktiga visioner. Några av förslagen är: introducera vägtullar i centrum, bättre vägmarkeringar som leder om trafiken runt staden, binda samman de offentliga ytorna med gågator, dubbelrika den trafikerade Avenida 2, bygga fler ringvägar för att underlätta transversal förflyttnings och förtäta.
Resumen

Costa Rica se localiza entre Nicaragua y Panamá en Centroamérica; se compone de cerca de cuatro millones de habitantes, de los cuales más del 60% viven en las ciudades. La urbanización contribuye a que un mayor número de personas migren a la ciudad con la esperanza de tener una mejor calidad de vida que en el campo; a pesar de la falta de trabajo y viviendas, la vida en la ciudad es más atractiva. San José está situado en el centro del país y rodeado de cinco ciudades construidas de la misma manera. Las ciudades fueron planificadas en 1737 por los españoles y están constituidas cada una por una plaza y una iglesia al centro con una estructura de bloques. Estas seis ciudades están ahora fusionadas y se conocen con el nombre de Gran Área Metropolitana (GAM).

Con el gran crecimiento de la población urbana a finales de la década de 1900, San José y la zona GAM crecieron de manera sorprendente. Actualmente, la tendencia en el área GAM muestra, desafortunadamente, que casi nadie quiere vivir en el centro. Los habitantes deciden mudarse a las afueras de la ciudad e incrementar la ya muy extendida expansión urbana. Esto conlleva a la destrucción de la naturaleza y estimula el desarrollo y expansión de nueva infraestructura. Los suburbios están divididos en grupos, que alberga diversos grupos y crea segregación entre grupos sociales. El centro de la ciudad de San José se compone principalmente de oficinas y locales comerciales, pero también de edificios residenciales. Sin embargo, muchas casas están vacías y las estadísticas muestran que la densidad poblacional en la zona central está disminuyendo cada año.

Con la ayuda de las teorías de Jan Gehl y Kevin Lynch, se ha analizado la zona más céntrica de San José. Se ha llevado a cabo un análisis de tráfico, así como encuestas entre la población local. Tanto las autoridades municipales y estatales fueron a su vez entrevistados para conocer los planes para la ciudad. El análisis se enfocó en descubrir qué cualidades y problemas tiene la ciudad, para posteriormente definir qué es lo que se debe cambiar con el fin de que la gente encuentre atractivo el centro de la ciudad y desee residir en dicha área.

Existen algunos planes a nivel municipal y estatal para hacer del centro de la ciudad de San José un lugar residencial y como destino, pero hasta el día de hoy no se ha avanzado mucho. Las entrevistas realizadas muestran que esto se ha debido a la falta de cooperación entre las diferentes autoridades, en conjunto con el bajo presupuesto y finanzas.

Las encuestas muestran que hasta un 64% de los encuestados están dispuestos a permanecer en el centro, se realicen o no cambios para incentivar el crecimiento en dicha área, lo que indica que la ciudad tiene potencial para ser repoblada. La seguridad en la ciudad es el factor más crítico que se desea mejorar y coincide con las
encuestas que muestran un nivel alto de temor de residir en el centro de la ciudad.

La situación del tráfico en San José es un gran problema. Todos los caminos llevan al centro porque actualmente no se cuenta con infraestructura transversal. Ésto mejoraría la situación, ya que actualmente si se viaja entre dos barrios en transporte público, siempre se debe cruzar por el centro de la ciudad causando tráfico pesado en las áreas centrales y muchas calles sirven como vías alternas. Avenida 2, una avenida de cinco carriles que cruza la ciudad, tiene una enorme carga vehicular y es una gran barrera para los peatones. Nuestra investigación muestra que más del 80% de todo el tráfico privado que corre por el centro consta de 1-2 pasajeros indicando que el tráfico tiene el potencial de ser reducido si la atención se centra en el transporte público. La ciudad cuenta con siete calles peatonales, lo cual demuestra que se está enfocando de cierta manera al beneficio de las personas, sin embargo, es necesario enfatizar e incrementar el enfoque en éste rubro.

Como conclusión de este informe, se encuentra la necesidad de un cambio de actitud en los habitantes de la ciudad. La actitud hacia la vida y permanencia en el centro, así como el uso de transporte público debe ser mejorada con el fin de hacer de San José una ciudad más atractiva. Algunas otras medidas que se proponen, están divididas en propuestas a corto y largo plazo. Algunas de ellas son: introducir peajes en el centro, mejores señales de tráfico alrededor de la ciudad para reducir el congestionamiento, conectar espacios públicos con calles exclusivas para peatones, Avenida 2 debe funcionar como una avenida de doble sentido, construcción de más cinturones de circulación para facilitar el movimiento transversal y densificar el centro de la ciudad.
Foreword

Thanks to a Minor Field Study Scholarship sponsored by the International Programme Office via Sida we were able to go to Costa Rica for ten weeks to carry out our field study in San José. This is our final thesis in Master of Science in Engineering, Surveying and Land Management completed autumn 2012.

With this report we finish our studies in Lund and want to thank everyone that made our five years unforgettable!

pura vida!

Lund, 11\textsuperscript{th} of December 2012

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**Acronyms**

**B.C.** – Before Christ

**BOT** – Build-Operate-Transfer

**BRT** – Bus Rapid Transport

**GAM** – Gran Area Metropolitana. The five cities outside the original San José were planned with the same rules when the Spanish invaded. They are now all connected in a large region with habitation along the access roads.

**GDP** - Gross Domestic Product

**INVU** - Instituto Nacional de Vivienda y Urbanismo, the institute for national living and urbanism in Costa Rica.

**MOPT** - Ministerio Obras Públicas y Transportes, the Ministry of public work and transports

**NGO** - Non-Government Organisation

**POT-GAM** – The government’s own suggestion of Urban Planning in San José

**PRU-GAM** – A program made about Urban Planning in GAM and the Central Valley in Costa Rica with suggestions about future plans

**SETENA** - Secretaría Técnica Nacional Ambiental, the Technical National environmental Secretariat in Costa Rica

**Sida** – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

**UN** – United Nations
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Definition of words and translation

Avenida – Spanish for Avenue

Barrio – Spanish for district within the city

Calle – Spanish for street/road

Canton – Spanish for Municipality

Informal settlements – an area with a group individuals living in the same house located in the city, but lacking at least one of following five subjects: a sustainable building, sufficient living space, access to water, access to a toilet, security of tenure

Parque – Spanish for park

Plaza – Spanish for square

Urban gentrification – the change that occurs when wealthier people move to areas with inhabitants of lower incomes or working classes. This drives up the rents within the area.

Urbanisation: People move from the rural areas to the cities and its outskirts and the population growth is increasing in the urban areas. It is due to that living in cities permits the individual to take advantage of the opportunities of nearness, diversity and marketplace competition.

Urban sprawl – When a city spread out from the city centre to the outskirts. The city often has a low density, both in the centre and in the periphery. The city often gets subject to this when the planning is poor and there is a lack of regulations. This often led to a city focused on cars and transports.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction
Costa Rica is located in Central America, neighbouring Nicaragua and Panama with a population of about four million people. With the rapid urbanisation of the last century Costa Rica now has more than 63% urban inhabitants (Landguiden 2012). With a third of the country’s total population living in the capital city San José and surrounding areas, a great pressure is put on the planning and structure of the city. Many people move to the city in hope of a better and richer life, but ends up in the outskirts in informal settlements, struggling to find employment.

The core of San José city is planned on a hierarchal street system with avenues and streets. Avenida 2, from east to west through the core, is the main road for all motorised traffic and creates a noisy and crowded barrier in the centre of the city. The city core is mixed with local offices, housing and commerce. A variety of buildings ranging from 20-story glass buildings to one floor tree houses occupy the area. Outside the centre, San José is divided in homogenous agglomerations with barriers in between, like rivers or infrastructure. Every cluster has its specific structure and settlements, which give them their different status.

A large number of people have migrated from the city centre to the periphery of San José and an urban sprawl is dominating the area. The traffic is chaotic and it is difficult to move around the city as the infrastructure is not well planned. Increased land prices in the city centre makes it harder for individuals to afford land to build a new house and therefore areas outside the city are being developed with new settlements for less wealthy people.

Since there is a trend of moving out from the city centre, creating a reputation that the core of San José is quite lifeless, we wanted to find out if this is true and what can be done o fix the problem. There are a lot of empty buildings and the centre is uninhabited. Some buildings are deteriorating because of worn-out infrastructure and neglected maintenance. When the city is growing the middle-incomers choose to move out from the city to find a bigger property. In many cases they keep the apartment or building in the centre and rent out the ground floors to commerce or businesses. This covers the expenses and there is no interest in renting the upper part of the building, which is why the upper floors remain empty. The more buildings that are vacant the more lifeless the area will be. A vicious circle has started. Many buildings are not built for the purpose of housing tenants and therefore these buildings demand extensive reconstruction and capital expenditure. Some authorities in San José are interested in developing the city centre, but there is a lack of cooperation, communication and financial resources between the different instances. (Åstrand 2012-08-20)
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To change this trend in San José and to entice people to use the centre again we would like to examine what the main problems are. What qualities are currently absent and could be introduced to bring the people back into the city? We would like to make a proposal with practical steps that can be taken to ensure that a lively and functional city can be encouraged.

The trend of moving out from the city centre can be found in all other cities in Costa Rica, it has to be stopped before it is too late (Mario 2012-09-21). The urban regeneration is very important to repopulate the city and make the centre more attractive and liveable again.

1.2 Aim of the study

The overall purpose of this study is to critically analyse whether the city centre of San José is dead, and if so, propose solutions to change that perception.

1.3 Issue questions

- Our preparation research indicated that the city centre is totally dead, is this true and why are the city planners not doing anything about it?

- Which qualities are absent and what factors need to change in order to attract people to the centre?

- How can motorised traffic be reduced in the centre?

1.4 Course of action and methods

The target group of this thesis is other students of the engineering course surveying and land management as well as all the interviewees in San José that are active workers in the field. The thesis is divided in three timeframes. The first one is a literature review prepared in Lund. The second is the survey in San José where we made both qualitative and quantitative data collections (Alvesson 2011, Trost 2005). The last part is Vision and Conclusions, compiled in Lund, where we made some suggestions on how to create knowledge about making the city centre of San José more attractive. Read more about this in chapter 2.

All photos in this report are taken by Maria Haraldsson and Camilla Kerrén during autumn of 2012, unless stated otherwise. All maps with drawings are taken from OpenStreetMap (2012) with modifications by the authors.

While referring to time in the report, all hours are written in a 24 hour format.

1.5 Disposition

Following is a conclusion of the different chapters in the report, divided in the three timeframes.
1.5.1 Literature review
In this part we are initializing the project and undertaking the theoretical research required.

Chapter 1 – Introduction
Introduce the reader to the issues and aims of the project. Background, issues and aims of the study and how the report is outlined.

Chapter 2 – Methodology
The introduction is followed by the procedures and methods of which this thesis was carried out and put together. The chapter also includes a brief explanation of the analysis used.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework
This chapter compiles the existing literature in the subject. Urbanisation in general and Central American urbanisation in particular is discussed. The chapter tells how urban sprawl arose and what western countries do to support and help developing countries with the fast growing urban migration. Research about lively and attractive cities for humans is also presented. What measures can be taken to improve the qualities of the city and successful examples of this.

1.5.2 Field study in San José, Costa Rica
This part is where all the information and data at site are being collected and put together. The outcome of interviews and surveys are presented in combination with our own observations in San José.

Chapter 4 – The City San José
Chapter 4 includes a presentation of Costa Rica with a closer look at the city of San José and its surroundings. The history of how San José has been planned and the existing legal and administrative structures are laid out.

Chapter 5 – San José – Housing
Reasons why people do not want to live in the centre are obtained. Bureaucracy, laws and complicated ownership structures are reasons why there are buildings vacant in the centre, contributing to the growing spatial boundaries of the city.

Chapter 6 – San José – Transport
The chapter describes the transportation network in the city of San José and clarifies its problems. Both private and public transport is studied.

Chapter 7 – Inventory of Public Spaces
A large section of the chapter is designated to pedestrians and the pedestrian network of San José is thoroughly illustrated. All the parks and squares within the case study area are outlined and analysed briefly.
Chapter 8 – Case Study
This chapter is going deeper into the city core and the selected area for study. The four different surveys are being presented and analysed; Kevin Lynch, Gehl, traffic counting and surveys made in the city.

1.5.3 Vision and Conclusions
The results of the case study are taking into consideration when creating a vision and making suggestions for the future of San José.

Chapter 9 – Vision
Suggestions are presented divided in short-term and long-term plans. They are also separated depending if it is on a comprehensive level or on a detailed level, where the detailed level is within the case study area.

Chapter 10 – Discussion and Conclusion
Some last words about the project, what we learnt and what we think could have been different if we were faced other conditions.

1.6 Limitations
We had eight weeks in total undertaking the field work which limited the collection of data in Costa Rica. It was hard to prepare before leaving Sweden since we did not know what to expect when arriving in San José and we had never seen the city before. Barriers in language and culture were challenging, but at the same time that was a part of the experience in undertaking project in a country different than Sweden. The supervising was a bit difficult since our Swedish tutor was in Sweden, with a different time zone, and our local tutor was very busy with important projects.

The decision to focus only on the city core of San José was reached in part because of the time limits, and in part due to the easy availability of public transport to the centre, since all buses lead to the core. The city centre is the core of the city which we consider to be the most important part to investigate with town renewal. Our classes in Lund have been a lot about the city core and our prerequisites are focusing on the centre.

1.7 Source of error
We have done our best with the language, even though our skills in Spanish are at a basic level. When necessary we have obtained assistance from translators to get everything out of the conversation.
2 Methodology

San José, the capital city of Costa Rica, is an interesting city to make our thesis about since the city planners of San José are in need of a fresh view of how to proceed in the development of the city. We both wanted to go to Central America and through our Swedish supervisor Johnny Åstrand who has done a lot of work in Latin America; we got in contact with Mario Rodríguez and his company, Rodríguez y Asociados, in San José. We have mainly been working with the core of the city centre but a thorough view of the whole urban area has also been obtained. A scholarship from the International Programme Office via Sida made the project possible.

2.1 Preparatory studies in Lund, Sweden
July – August 2012

We prepared for the field study by reading all significant literature about city planning and town renewal. Books by Jan Gehl and articles about lively and attractive cities, thesis about studies in Latin America and books about urbanisation were read. Literature and facts about the country have also been gathered, as well as previous urban studies in San José. In addition we have talked to people who have been in San José and worked with Costa Rica before. This was all collected in the first part; literature review. All secondary data collection was critically examined before being printed.

2.2 In San José, Costa Rica
September – November 2012

The first step in San José was to get to know the city, walking around in the city core to get an orientation of the different functions. Where do people spend their time and what are the feelings different locations initiate. During the first day we were shown around in the city by a local guide to get to know the city faster, for example pedestrian streets, main squares and bus roads. The remaining days were spent to explore more on our own, take photos and find all the pedestrian streets and parks in the city. We also had a walk around in the university area to see the differences in structure there. Our tutor Mario Rodriguez also provided us with a lot of information about the city and took us to different parts of the city. Later on we decided what areas we wanted to study more and did a more thorough inventory in those parts.

The next step was to meet with different public authorities and professional people in the area of study. An open ended semi-structured method was used for the interviews, with a translator in attendance when necessary. All the primary data from the interviews was controlled by a second source for validity. When all information from the interviews was assembled, it was sent to all
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the interviewees for feedback and control to give them the opportunity to approve of what was written with reference to them. The intention with the interviews was to find out how the city has been planned, what aims have been in focus, what has been put into action, what projects and detailed plans exist, what has gone wrong and if there are any suggestions of measures to take to make the city lively again.

To get a better view of the situation it was also important to find out the opinions of the inhabitants in the city. To do this a questionnaire was prepared and undertaken (Appendix 3) at three selected locations in the city. Since our Spanish was not good enough to perform interviews, sheets were prepared in Spanish with multiple-choice answers. Since the beginning of our stay in San José we have been collecting information about what people think and suggest for the improvement of the city centre; pedestrians in the streets, owners of the hotels, families and friends we have met, all to open our minds and discover more ideas and suggestions. Further, inventories in the city were carried out by using Gehl’s method in the three different spots in the city centre. Lynch’s method was also used to analyse in the city centre. Surveys were performed to analyse the traffic situation in the city. These were all done to obtain the inhabitants views and habits in the city centre.

2.3 Completion in Lund

November – December 2012

In Lund we went through the field study with fresh eyes and some distance from San José. We put the information we had gathered all in the right order and went through everything with our supervisor Johnny Åstrand to evaluate what we had produced in Costa Rica. The vision was made with our suggestions and ideas, mostly in written form and with a map over the suggested pedestrian streets.

We decided to divide the suggestions in two sections, what can be done in the short term and what needs longer time to proceed. The suggestions are also separated into a comprehensive or detailed level, where the detailed level refers to the city core.

2.4 Theories

We have mainly used two theories in the report.

2.4.1 Kevin Lynch analysis

Kevin Lynch, the well-known American urban planner, discovered a method to analyse how city users perceive and organise the spatial information when they are using the city space.

2.4.2 Jan Gehl analysis

Jan Gehl is a Danish architect working to improve public spaces and the life between buildings in cities. The method of analysis founded by Gehl that we are going to use is referring to the feeling you get in the selected spots in the area. The three elements Protection, Comfort and Delight are the main subjects.
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3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Urbanisation
The urban migration from the country side to urban areas is increasing. Since 2008 more than 50% of the global population lives in urban areas (figure 1) (Sida 2010). People from poor areas hope and search for a better life in the city but unfortunately often arrive to informal settlements due to a lack of land and housing availability. Work opportunities are not always better in cities, which leads to informal employment. 60% of the urban population increases in developing countries due to natural growth such as childbirth. 30% of the urban population is attributed to immigration from other cities and rural areas while 10% is a result of boundary changes (Tannerfeldt & Ljung 2006).

Urbanisation cannot be stopped nor reversed (Tannerfeldt & Ljung 2006). Urbanisation is strongly connected to economic development. Countries with higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are often more urbanized. (Tannerfeldt & Ljung 2006)

3.1.1 Urbanisation in the world
Every human being has the right to basic needs such as food and water, medical help, accommodation and social services. It is incumbent upon the government to be responsible to provide these needs (Tannerfeldt & Ljung 2006).

Urban growth in developing countries in the world is much faster than the growth has ever been in Europe. Cities in developing countries have difficulties to oblige the population with infrastructure, accommodation and services and a continued trend will lead to 1.4 billion people living in informal settlements in 2020 (Tannerfeldt & Ljung 2006). Calculations and statistics indicate that in the year 2030 almost 4 billion people will live in big cities in developing countries, which accounts for 60% of the world’s total population (Sida 2010).

Figure 1. Urban population (%) in the world 1960 - 2010. (World Bank 2010)

Illegal settlements are often not seen by municipalities and the Government which is why they do not get any access to crucial public services which can lead to an infringement of human rights.

Globally, urbanisation is increasing the fastest in Africa; however the number of people living in cities is not comparatively that high due to HIV/AIDS, since the number of sick people in African cities
is very high. Asia is a continent with a large urban population, comprising almost 50% of the world’s urban population. In Europe the human migration to cities has been slow and consequently Europe does not have as severe problems with housing as the developing countries have today. There are even some countries in Europe where urbanisation is negative. (Tannerfeldt & Ljung 2006)

Between 1975 and 2005 the urban growth in big cities in developing countries grew from 813 billion to 2,266 billion. In the same time period developed countries had negative urban growth from 704 billion down to 344 billion. (Sida 2010)

### 3.1.2 Central and Latin America

In 1950, the population of cities in Latin America started to increase rapidly (figure 2). Lack of land is seldom a problem. It is more often the inadequate land ownership that is the problem, being lack of secure tenure. In most of the Latin American countries the land ownership is concentrated in certain parts of the country and this is so also within the city regions. Land ownership issues are dividing the inhabitants and creating status tensions between the neighbourhoods (UN-Habitat 2005).

Costa Rica is one of the countries in Latin America with lower urbanisation. The percentage of urban inhabitants in the country was 68.3% in 2009 (Landguiden 2012), about 3,000,000 in 2010 (figure 3).

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![Figure 2. Urban population in Latin America 1960-2010. (World Bank 2010)](image1)

In the periphery of the capital city of Costa Rica urbanisation forces the newcomers to stay in informal settlements or planned areas for the poor. (Grundström 2009)
3.1.3 How does the western countries and Sweden contribute

In the mid 1980s, Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) took the political decision to support international social and political forces and organisations within Central American countries living under authoritarian and repressive regimes, and not necessarily to exiled organisations. Oscar Arias was elected the president in 1986 in Costa Rica. He was playing a key role in seeking a peaceful and negotiated solution to the military conflicts in the region and in 1987 he won the Nobel Peace Prize for this. Sweden was very eager to support him and a housing program for low-income families. For ten years Sida was helping FUPROVI, a Non-Government Organisation (NGO), by financing a part of their work about housing questions and informal settlements. (Stein Heinemann 2010)

Another way Sweden has helped Costa Rica through Sida is by building the program PROMHESA between the years 1995-2009. It was aimed to improve the ability with different authorities such as NGOs, municipalities, professionals, communities and decision makers (Magnusson 2010). This was carried out by holding seminars with all involved from different countries in South America and has led to those networks and professional contacts being established between different groups.

Today Sweden is no longer financing projects in Costa Rica through Sida (Sida 2012).

3.1.4 Urban sprawl creates dead city centres

The expression urban sprawl arose in the 1930’s when the English tried to stop the suburban growth in the country. The reason for attempting this was that the English wanted to keep valuable farmland for agricultural use and because the rural areas created an ugly impression. (Rådberg 1997)

Urban sprawl is what is generated when the areas around the city are growing more than they should be relative to the population growth. This is what happens when land is easier to find in the external areas of the city. Here the prices for properties are usually lower, and it is easier to find a bigger place that suits all the members in the family with an area that can be used as a garden or social area.

The trend of migration from the city centre to the outskirts is something that is repeated in most cities in the world. Urban sprawl occurred in London and Paris before the First World War, and in Stockholm a few years after the Second World War. The principal reason for this, at least in Europe, is that welfare has increased and people are becoming less and less willing to live in overcrowded conditions. (Rådberg 1997)
3.1.5 Law of the Indies
The Spanish planned San José in 1737 where they applied the “Law of the Indies”. This law was invented in Spain in 1573 and consists of the planning rules which were used in Spain at this time. This planning system was applied to oppress the Indians in the country and to advocate the Christian religion. (Grundström 2009)

The Spanish both built new cities and applied their planning on top of already existing cities in the country. The planning was applied in quadratic grids with a central square where the church and public buildings could be found in the middle (Grundström 2009). The centre of San José is subdivided into small neighbourhoods with unclear boundaries (McNeil 2011).

San José was planned in the same manner as the five surrounding cities; Heredia, Alajuela, Santa Ana, Escazú and Cartago, which are all part of an area called Gran Area Metropolitana (GAM). These cities are now all connected through informal settlements along the access roads (Grundström 2009).

3.1.6 How to handle the urbanisation?
A large migration to the city leads to unsecure living situations. When the informal settlers are afraid to be evicted they are unlikely to be willing to invest, or put any economic finance investments in the housing conditions and as a result the neighbourhood is likely to remain at in a low standard. If it is possible to ensure the people invest in their housing, a side-effect of this investment is that they also invest in the local economy which in the end also affects the national economy (Payne 2002).

Since the problem not often refers to a lack of land, a good pro-planning system that is well regulated becomes necessary. Advices from Tannerfeldt and Ljung (2006) are that the local authorities should buy land areas in the cities and sell to builders and developers when the price has increased. The profit should then go to housing for the poor. An agreement could also be entered into which provides that the builders must build houses for the poor or otherwise in the community´s interests.

3.1.7 A compact city
A compact city means a city with a higher density of population. There are many benefits that have been proven to come from high density. The spatial and ecological footprints are less affected since the efficiency of land use increases. A denser city means that people are less in need of cars, agricultural land is not taken for city development to the same extent, and less non-renewable energy is used. More benefits of a compact city are: higher accessibility, better conditions for an effective public transport system, agglomeration benefits for commercials, less time and money is spent on travelling since distances are shorter and mixed-use areas creates less social segregation, fewer greenhouse gas emissions. Also people come closer to work places and other functions that gives quality of life and if someone needs to have their business in
the home it is easier to create a street network and it is a lot cheaper to transport by foot, which should be possible in a compact city. (UN-Habitat 2012)

Despite all those benefits, most cities in the world become less and less dense. This creates urban sprawls, congestion and segregation. At this moment half of the world’s population are living in urban regions, but this number is estimated by UN-Habitat to rise to two thirds by 2050. The trend of building low-density cities is threatening the earth’s capacity. When agricultural land is taken in favour of developing more housing areas, the possibility and ability to supply food for the city is decreased. Figure 4 demonstrates how the densities in cities all over the world have decreased during the last 100 years. (UN-Habitat 2012)

Some countries, like the United States, have had low density in the cities for a long time, while most developing countries have had high density but are now following the trend of urban sprawl. The increasing urban sprawl in developing countries is not planned like it is in the United States. The cities in developing countries are also the ones with most rapid population growth and in most cases the ones with least capacity for growing spatially. In San José for example, the volcanoes surrounding the city put a limit to the suburb formations.

The most critical environmental problem with a crowded city is lack of clean and drinkable water. Unsanitary neighbourhoods lead to unsafe contaminated water and air. The biggest problem with urban sprawl is the infrastructure that has to be increased to all areas in the periphery. (UN-Habitat 2012)

When building a new construction it does not differ too much in price if the building is a few floors taller. Some specifications are required regardless of the number of floor levels, which is why it can be more economical and efficient to build higher than build wider. The ultimate height of the building should be determined by identifying where the marginal cost meets the marginal benefit. Here the building profit is maximized (O’Sullivan 2009). In Sweden new, buildings between 4-12 floors high has the same frame, which means almost the same cost (Skanska 2011).
also has to be considered is the elevator, since the regulations in different countries demand an elevator for a certain number of floor levels. In Sweden the most economically efficient height is therefore 12 floors since it is equally expensive regardless of the number of floors up to this level. All countries have different regulations and costs, so it is difficult to opine on which number of floor levels is the optimal number in Costa Rica. Important when considering building heights in Costa Rica to take into account the frequency and magnitude of earthquakes in the area.

3.2 An attractive city for people
An attractive city is a city where people go because they want to, not because they need to. To create an attractive city core it is important to focus on the needs people have and to invite the people to come to use and enjoy the city.

3.2.1 Different types of activities
There are three types of activities going on in the city; necessary, optional and social. The necessary activities are those that are going on no matter what happens. For example go to work, go to the bank, and buy groceries. The optional activities are those that are performed if there is an invitation to it, if the person feels tempted to do it. For instance, sitting somewhere to enjoy the weather, or walking through a shopping street. The social activities are the activities a person does in order to meet people. (Gehl & Gemzøe 1996)

The necessary activities will always be there, but it is the optional and social activities that create a lively city. In order to obtain those it is important to create the right conditions and invite people to the city so that people choose to come to the city even though they do not have an errand. Those invitations will create an attractive city, where people can come and enjoy themselves in their free time. A successful place where this has been accomplished is the street Strøget in Copenhagen, Denmark. Since this street was transformed into a pedestrian street in 1962 it has now turned into “a place to go rather than a street to walk through”. Though, when it first was converted very few people had positive beliefs about it, they thought such a big pedestrian street would never work. (Gehl & Gemzøe 1996)

3.2.2 Sensory impressions
An invitation to the city could be creating a place where it is possible to hang-out without being disturbed by traffic. It is important to be able to hold a conversation without needing to scream or being interrupted by recurrent noise. A good city for this is Venice (Gehl 2010). However, total silence is not good either; there are also sounds that are good. The sounds of purling water or singing birds give a good sensory impression that adds more to the city experience. Impressions from the other senses are also essential for a good city experience, for example vision. In Melbourne, Australia, the municipality has put up art from local artists at strategic places all over the city so that people will get a
nicer and more varied view (Gehl 2010). It also strengthens the social feeling in the community.

3.2.3 The four key objectives
Gehl (2010) puts out four key objectives that are important for a good city. The city should be lively, safe, sustainable and healthy. All those four aims can be supported by having a concern for the city life and the movements made by foot and bike. If more people are invited to walk in the city it will as a consequence become livelier. When more people move around it also feels safer to do so. If more people walk or bike rather than use a car, the energy consumption level will decrease. This will also lead to fewer emissions and lower noise levels in the city. When walking and biking becomes the natural way to move around, the people will also become healthier.

3.2.4 Living areas
The greatest contribution to a lively city is residence. Where people live there will be light in the windows during the dark hours of the day. Humans are social creatures and want to be together. Therefore people come to where other people are (Gehl 2010). When making people aware that there is some life at one place, the effect will be self-reinforced and more people will appear at this place. The streets and the public spaces should be used as a second living room, where people can spend their free time and enjoy life. To achieve this, the barrier of closed walls and covered windows between private and public spaces must vanish. If isolation is to be obtained, you can always reach this by pulling down the curtains. (Jacobs 2005)

The design of open spaces also has to be appealing, there has to be nice and interesting things to look at. A lot of details in the surroundings will make the experience of being there richer and it also contributes to less damage in public spaces. The buildings should be narrow so that the façades are varied (Gehl & Gemzøe 1996). This gives more to look at when walking down the street. When the details are in a vertical direction you will pass through more, in the same time when walking or biking alongside, than if the details were horizontal. The distance seems longer with horizontal lines, which in turn makes the movement more boring (Gehl 2010).

3.2.5 The different types of cities
According to Gehl and Gemzøe (2000) there are four different types of cities:

- The Traditional City, where the traffic is balanced with meeting points and public markets
- The Invaded City, where everyone is dependent on the car and the streets in the cities are adapted to motorised vehicles
• The Abandoned City, where no one is moving around if not absolutely necessary. All public life in public areas is gone and distances are too long to walk on foot; and

• The Reconquered City, where the city has been one of the two last examples above, but is now being changed to make a good balance between cars and pedestrians again.

The focus of the last type of city mentioned above is to recreate a liveable city.

3.2.6 Structure
To move from one place to another in a pleasant or efficient way, we need good infrastructure. Infrastructure includes public spaces such as streets and parks. Streets and parks are the grammar of the city (Gehl 2010) and are needed for the rest to work smoothly. With a lot of traffic in a city, most of the public spaces will be used as parking lots, such as squares and open areas (Gehl & Gemzøe 1996). Since a parking lot for 20-30 cars occupies the same site as a square it is an important issue to decide where the cars should be parked (Gehl 2010).

It should not matter if you are a local resident or a temporary visitor, the readability and ability to understand the structure and find your way should always be the same (Klasander 1999).

Different types of structure
There are different types of city structure. According to Listerborn (2000), the grid system is the best. It does not have to be totally quadratic; the important factor is that it has short blocks and a lot of intersections where meetings can take place. In the branchlike structures it can be difficult to orientate, which in turn leads to discomfort and insecurity. It is also easy to change route in a grid system in case a road has been shut off for some reason. Gehl (2010) on the other hand says that the type of structure does not matter; the important feature is that it has a good visual character and easy to be overviewed. It is essential to be able to identify the main roads and passages and it is also vital to have clear and easy to understand signs telling you which street you are on.

3.2.7 Human Dimension
When planning a city, the human dimension has to be taken into consideration (Gehl 2010). The public spaces should be adjusted for people and not for vehicles. Big structures, great posters and enormous streets might look good from inside a car, but it is not a friendly environment to stay in outside the car. When travelling in a vehicle the speed is much greater and the place might appear more varied than it actually is. Walking along the same road could be very tiring and experienced in a whole different way. It is hard to get social interactions while driving. The walls of the car are barriers to the social life going on in the city. You are enclosed by the vehicle and the surroundings are cut off by closed
windows and most often also radio. It is hard to notice small things and the driver is focused on one thing, the destination (Gehl & Gemzoe 1996)

**How to design**

The city is in constant change, people design the city, and then the city shapes the people (Gehl 2010). The focus must lie on making places designed for the use of people. Jacobs (2005) wrote that if the city would only consist of high individual free-standing buildings, the city would die, there would not be any life and there would be a huge absence of people. When, on the other hand, having the buildings lower but denser, more small-scale areas will turn up and those intimidating big walls will vanish. There is a close connection between the quality of public space, care for the human dimension and the people’s use of the spaces (Gehl 2010).

Cobblestone for example has a lot of character but is not of great use for the elderly, wheelchairs, people with high-heels and baby proms. The public space must be design so that everyone is able to use it and in case of cobblestone there should also be a passage with flat stones. (Gehl 2010)

People adapt very easily to changes in the environment. For example, if a road is widened there will suddenly be a lot more cars there and the time is short until congestion is yet another problem. In the same way people will adapt when roads are closed or more pedestrian areas are created. It is a response to the invitation and the invitation should be aimed for people, not for vehicles. (O’Sullivan 2009)

**Staying in the city**

In Copenhagen a lot of invitations exist to walk, sit and stand in the public areas and consequently the behaviour of the people has changed. A lot more people are now staying in the city (Gehl 2010). Walking in a city is so much more than just walking, it is; making contact with others, getting out in the fresh air, gathering information and experiences and enjoying life (Gehl 2010).

**3.2.8 Soft edges**

The edge is the area where the open space and the buildings meet. A hard edge is where there is no transition phase between those, where street just meets a high bald wall. A soft edge is more active, where there are more details and interesting things to look at. The edge is a very important place. This is where people stay; it feels safer to stand next to a wall than right in the middle of a big open space when for example waiting for a friend. The softness of an edge is also an important factor in how long a person may want to stay there. Activities do often grow from the edge toward the middle of the street, which means that areas without good edges lead to less lively spaces (Gehl 2006). When there are more details to look at, narrower façades with a lot of variation, shopping windows and stores, people tend to stay for a longer time. Many different property owners will create a narrow and varied façade. In
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Copenhagen a study that has been carried out showed that seven times as many people walked pass or stayed next to an active façade than a passive façade (Gehl 2010). Not only in daytime are the edges important. When less people are moving and the sun is gone it is even more important to secure the area by soft edges. To make it possible to see what is inside the shops and houses also at night-time gives you a more safe feeling. Never close and bury the shops and storefronts behind steels and sheet metal. (Gehl & Gemzøe 1996)

3.2.9 Safety
There is more life where people feel secure to be. You want to be where others are, it is like a confirmation that a place is good and secure when other people are there. It is hard to distinguish this though, since a place with a lot of unknown people can be scary as well. It is good to mix the functions of building and put housing in business areas to give life and a sense of security all day around (Gehl 2010). To have shopping windows and activities going on in the ground floor of residential buildings can also be a good idea in housing areas (Listerborn 2000).

Street watching
Natural surveillance occurs when the design facilitates the view over an area so that offenders can easily be spotted and caught. This is achieved by placing and designing windows and landscapes so that there is a good visual connection between houses and public spaces, but also within the public space. The lighting is also a vital aspect for the vision. Do not create blind spots, where people can hide. Put the room where most activity is going on to face the public area and locate windows on all facades. This natural surveillance might prevent a lot of crimes. (City of Virginia Beach 2000) It is the insecure feeling rather than the actual statistics that make people feel anxious (Gehl 2006). So the more eyes looking out from the window makes a better street watching and a more secure area (Jacobs 2005).

Light
Light really affects the sense of vision. It is crucial with good light in the city for the people who walk and bike. It is important to see where to go, which way to take, but also to see the surroundings and to feel safe. If the visibility over the area is poor, it is even more important to have light (Listerborn 2000).

Recognize yourself
When moving around in the city it is important to know where you are, so you do not have to hesitate and wonder if you took the right way or not. Because of this there should always be signs on the streets to tell you where you are or in what direction you should go. Pedestrian pathways and bicycle streets should not be drawn through tunnels or beside dark shrubberies and fences. (Listerborn 2000)
The convenient field of view
The social field of vision is up to 100 meters. This is the maximum distance from where figures can be seen as human individuals. The closer you get the person the more you can perceive and survey the situation. (Gehl 2006) This is the reason to why a town square and open public space should never be more than 100 metres in diagonal.

3.2.10 Private or public
Where the buildings stretch up from the street with absolutely nothing in front of it, the change from private to public space is obvious. When you walk out of the door from that house you find yourself directly placed in the common space. There is no transition stage. This can be a barrier and a motive not to leave the house. The semi-private space is more comfortable. Here you can have a view of what is going on in the public space before you enter it. Such places can be a little porch or a strip of garden in front of the house, maybe an area that is defined by a line of small plants. In a study carried out in Canada, it was found that 81 % of the life on streets happened in the semi-private area. The life is not counted on the amount of people walking on a street but rather the time people consume there. (Gehl 210) According to Gehl (2006) the optimal depth of the front yard is 3.25 metres, with the possibility to avoid undesired contact and back off if wanted but also communicate and take part of the activities in front.

Include everyone
The challenge is to make people want to stay in the common space so that it does not become empty (Listerborn 2000). It is important that everyone feel that they are welcome, not only people that live in the area, but all people should be included and anonymity should not be a problem (Klasander 1999). To do this people need to feel that they are a part of the city; this is done by taking away the barriers to make it easier to move between the private and public. For this it is essential to focus on designing good common areas. Buildings with four to five floors are optimal for encouraging city life; it is easy to see what is going on in the street from the inside of the house. The feeling of being integrated in the life on the street disappears after this height, and the journey to get down there gets tougher (Gehl 2010).

3.2.11 Green areas
Green areas are good for relaxing and recreation and to bring a harmonious feeling into the city (Johansson & Küller 2005). It gives beauty and it is good for sustainability. Even though parks are very important to have, it is essential that they are not too big so that the choice of walking around when it is dark remains an easy option to take (Listerborn 2000).

3.2.12 Walking and moving around
If going from one place to another is a necessary activity, it still makes the trip more enjoyable if there are things to look at.
Eventful walks
Placing restaurants and shops along passages where people walk anyway makes the transportation seem shorter. People also rather take a detour to walk on a populated street than take the shortest route on a deserted street. (Gehl 2010) Buildings that are not facing the street are unattractive and create a boring and insecure environment (Gehl & Gemzøe 1996).

The usual radius of action and the distance people are willing to walk on foot is limited to 400-500 meters (Gehl 2006). This means that all needs should be possible to find within this circle.

Universities in the city
A university in the city contributes a lot to the social life in the city. The students move back and forth between different places during the day and their economy usually does not allow them to go by car. The effect of this is that they use public transport, and also the free options of walking and bicycling. The amount of activity and movement in a university city can be related to lunch breaks and breaks between lessons. Even at night the movement is high due to different lifestyles and daily rhythm. The university in Copenhagen for example is very spread out and therefore makes the students move around in a great area in all different times in the day. (Gehl & Gemzøe 1996)

Total time spend in the city
Pedestrians move slower than people who travel by other modes of transportation, which means that they remain in other people’s vision of sight during a longer time period. This gives a sense of life to pedestrian streets. A large amount of people walking around in the city does not necessarily mean that the city has good qualities. It can be an effect of inefficient transport transits or that it is far between the different activities one has in a day. Since life should be counted in time spent instead of number of people moving, a city like this has very poor city life. A good city is a city where people do not walk around so much, for example Rome, where most people just sit or stand still. It is a response to good quality and welcoming invitations. The connection between good qualities of city spaces and how often their spaces are used are very close. (Gehl 2010)

Making efforts to improve the quality of one single space can change the patterns of use totally. Providing better conditions for walking will entice more people to walk instead of using the car. The invitations can also be focused to bring out opportunities for other physical activities, like skateboarding, rollerblading or dancing. Campaigns are an excellent tool to bring awareness to people about the advantages of using your own energy for transport and to make this a part of everyday life. Walking gives you exercise, but also energy, fresh air, pleasure and experiences, and
above all, it adds to your social life by bringing interactions between people. (Gehl 2010)

**Focus on pedestrians**
Pedestrians should be prioritised and the cars should be guests in the pedestrian sphere (Gehl 2006). A lot of times it is hard to cross a street and where stoplights are used they usually have a very short green period for the pedestrians. The short time period makes it stressful and often forces you to run across the street. There are statistics that shows that less accidents happens if the different transport modes have to share the space (Gehl 2010). Movement in the street departs not only from traffic rules but also the social behaviour (Hydén 2008). A shared space is where it is not only the pedestrians’ responsibility to watch out, but where it is a mutual liability for access, where cars, bicycles and walking people all have the same rights to move.

One way to decrease the cars in the city is to have road tolls where you have to pay to use the roads. When London doubled their charge to drive in the centre they used the profit to improve the public transport which today transit more people and the cars have decreased. (Gehl 2010)

Sidewalks are for pedestrians and should not be occupied with technique and signs for the cars. It has been the place to put parking machines, stop signs etcetera, because they are not in the way for the motorized traffic there. What nobody realized when the technique was installed was that they are a lot in the way for pedestrians who have to squeeze in between them and (for example) a wall. Pathways need to be continuous from one function to another without obstacles in order to be attractive for use. People often take the route that is the easiest accessible, even if it is not the shortest one. We choose the route that takes less effort. If there is an escalator next to a staircase, the staircase is almost always empty while there is a queue to the escalator. In the same way people choose the ramp, if there is one, instead of a staircase. To make people use the staircase it needs to have character, for example a bend. If you can see the end of a long staircase where it starts, you can get a feeling of that it will never end, it needs to happen something on the way up. (Gehl 2010)

### 3.2.13 Invitations to sit and stand
In order to make people want to use the city open spaces, climate conditions have to be considered. Most of the people consider it impossible to stay where it is windy, too cold/hot or rainy (Gehl 2010). Depending on how the houses are located, the micro climate is varying. High buildings have the tendency to attract the wind, and with a house located in the wrong direction, the wind can increase four times the actual speed. For an open-air café it can be smart to have a portable roof to roll out in case of rain. Trees can work as shade during hot days and smaller open spaces assist to keep the wind out. (Gehl & Gemzoe 1996)
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**Benches in public space**

People want to sit where other people sit, but not too close. Primary seating such as benches should be arranged so there is a sense of community but not intrusive. If they are placed in a wide open angle with a table between, users can choose to talk to each other or be alone. Most important is that there is a view. People want to look at other people and see what is going on, rather than look into a wall. Sitting is preferred where the back is protected, for example along a wall (Gehl 2006). If the chairs are movable, like at Times Square in New York, people can sit where they want to and move to shade or sun accordingly to the mood and temperature. (Gehl 2010)

Even secondary seating should be found in public spaces; stairways, pedestals, steps, low walls and boxes when other options does not exist. A good rule is to place a bench or multipurpose city furnishing every 100 meter. (Gehl 2006)

**3.2.14 Biking in the city**

Bicycles are the means of transport that requires the least space per person. A lot of cars are occupied with only one person, and in that case the difference in space is huge. But a person is not as protected on a bike as in a car; therefore it is needed to take extra consideration for the safety of bikers. Both the real safety and the perceived safety are important, the biker needs to feel that he or she is safe while biking. In Copenhagen, measures have been taken to improve the quality of transport for cyclists for example:

- designated spaces for cyclists in front of the cars at crossings, designated lanes and stoplights that go green some seconds before the cars’ stoplight, signs that remind the occupants of the cars about bicycles and the requirements for buses and trucks to have special bike mirrors. They have also established bike lanes with a row of parking next to it, which gives the bikers protection from the cars. All of this together with a lot of campaigns to promote safe cycling has led to a great cycling culture. (Gehl 2010)
- Other campaigns can be car free days. This is the reality in Bogotá where they have a program called Ciclovia. The city streets (120 km) are closed for cars 7 am to 2 pm on Sunday, thus that providing temporary bicycle streets. (Gehl 2010)
- Another action to take in the favour for cyclists is to install green waves for bikers. These have been provided for cars for a long time and it means that when going at a certain speed you will not have to stop for a red light, because the stoplights are synchronized to minimise annoying stops. To provide rental bikes in the city will also encourage biking if they are easily accessible and not too expensive. They should be placed at many and strategic locations and be easy to rent at one place and leave at another. The advantage of renting a bike is that you do not have to buy and repair your own. (Gehl 2010)
- In some American cities it is permissible to turn right even though the light is red. This would be impossible in a city customised for
cyclists. In those cities that are not adapted for bicycles it can be very dangerous to have inexperienced cyclists out on the road (Gehl 2010).

3.2.15 Public transport
People are more sensitive to changes in time than changes in prices according to O’Sullivan (2009). When choosing a method of transportation, the paramount considerations are to ensure that the trip does not take too long and that transit should be short or none at all. The maximum distance a person is comfortable walking to the bus stop is about ten minutes, which is why a connection point should appear with a radius of 800 meters (O’Sullivan 2009). With a denser city this is financially easier to achieve since it has better absorption. In areas with low density, like in cities with urban sprawl scenarios, the distances will be longer and it is harder to reach everyone.

Another important aspect of the public transport is how tiresome the different phases of transport from one to another are experienced. If being transported with a place to sit is referred to a factor 1, being transported having to stand up might be twice as annoying, the time it takes to walk to the bus stop five times as hard and each minute having to wait at the bus stop might feel like ten minutes on the bus. The different phases should be multiplied with its factor to obtain a measure of what sacrifice is done in favour for the public transport compared to travelling by car which has the factor 1. (Hydén 2008)

3.2.16 Bus Rapid Transit
Both Curitiba in Brazil and Bogotá in Colombia are using the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. Bogotá had great problems with congestion and the priorities were to improve the roads for the cars. In 1998 however this changed since 80 % of the population did not own a car the priorities were now changed to focus on them and BRT was implemented (figure 5). (Gehl 2010)

Figure 5. BRT in Bogotá (Sustainable Cities Net 2009)

BRT is a system that makes it possible for the public transport buses to serve the people quicker and also allow a greater amount of passengers than usual bus systems. Features for making it quicker are for example that passengers have to pay at the station before entering the bus; the buses get their own lanes with exclusive right not having to compete with the cars; buses have
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more and wider openings allowing a faster boarding. Other characters are that the platform stations are in the same height as the floor of the bus making it easy for wheelchairs to enter and that the platforms have shelters protecting from elements. This system also contributes to less use of fuel, in 1991 it was estimated that 27 million car trips, meaning 27 litre fuels, were saved annually in Curitiba. (Goodman, Laube & Schwenk 2006)

BRT is like a subway system above ground that a lot of developing countries are using. It reduces traffic and smog very effectively to a low cost. (Rosenthal 2009)

3.3 Integrated city

Every city is unique and every city has its own unique image (Lynch 1964). When visiting a new city or place you can find characteristics that you have never thought about. Different parts of the city have their own unique function, history and social meaning which is part of Kevin Lynch’s analysis. Kevin Lynch is a well-known American urban planner who discovered a method to analyse how city users perceive and organise spatial information when they are using the city spaces. He has created and undertaken a survey in three cities in the United States, all with different characters to use his theories and analysis. According to Lynch (1964) the city image can be classified into five different elements:

**Pathways**

People observe the city while moving through it which is why this element is the most dominant way for people to get their image of the city. Travel corridors for pedestrians, bicycles and motorised vehicles are an easy way of discovering the city. It includes streets, sidewalks and trails.

**Edges**

Boundaries that are found within the area, either real or perceived, such as walls, overcrowded streets, buildings, shorelines or topographic changes are called edges. These may obstruct movement in the area and separate the land uses. It is important to see how the edges are working, if it is possible to cross them easily, or if they are dividing the area into two separate parts.

**Landmarks**

External reference points to refer to in the area, well known and easy to find, like monuments and historic buildings. The landmarks are an important identity of the area.

**Districts**

The district is a distinct area with a unique quality, character or land use.

**Nodes**

Locations where many people gather together, or cross the same path, like in intersections, are called nodes.
This analysis shows how people see the city, how they experience it and what they notice. In Kevin Lynch’s study (1964) he found out that people who came to the city for the first time described and analysed it in different terms than the ones that have lived there for a long time. Probably because long term residents know how to find their way without thinking of the appearance, and landmarks and districts are easier to find and distinguish when moving around in the area frequently.

When the five different elements are distinguished it is possible to see how the city is structured and how the network is working, if it is easy to move around and how easy it is for the city user to find what he or she is looking for. The orientation easiness or difficulty will create the first impression for new visitors and may even be the only impression for some. It is interesting to see where people are moving a lot, and then analyse that area to see what is working well and what needs to be improved and discovering if this element is popular because of its appearance or just because people have to move here (Lynch 1964).

Continuity in path networks is important to simplify the movement and the connection between paths should be ordered in a functional way. A good layout makes things easier to locate in the area and increase the potential to move from point A to point B without delays and confusion. A good propensity with paths helps to tie the city together (Lynch 1964). The individual character is important to create an individual city. (Lynch 1964)
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Survey in San José, Costa Rica
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?

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4 The city San José

4.1 Costa Rica in brief

Costa Rica is located between Nicaragua and Panama in Central America and is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and Caribbean Sea to the east. Large differences in altitude create diverse climates in the small area of 51,000 square kilometres (Landguiden 2012). In 2010, the total population of the country was counted at approximately 4,730,000 people (World Bank 2010) with a population growth of 1.5 % annually. (Landguiden 2012).

The seven provinces of Costa Rica are: Guanacaste, Alajuela, Heredia, Limon, Cartago, San José and Puntarenas (figure 6). The provinces capital cities of San José, Cartago, Alajuela and Heredia are all clustered in the valley in the centre of the country.

Most cities are clustered around the capital city San José or along the coast line. More than 50 % of the country consists of forest, and the country has many National Parks (Jiménez 2012-09-25). The city of San José is surrounded by rivers and mountains in all directions.

Bananas and coffee are Costa Rica’s biggest export goods. About 2 million tourists visit Costa Rica every year which contributes greatly to the country’s income and has led to a big focus on the ecological environment and eco-tourism. (McNeil 2011)

4.1.1 History of the country

When Christopher Columbus and the Spanish found Costa Rica in 1502 the 27 different local groups had lived there since about 10,000 B.C. In 200 years the local population decreased from 80,000 to 1,000 people and today the inhabitants of Costa Rica consist of only 2.5 % natives. In 1823, Costa Rica won independence from Spain, however this led to a civil war and consequently the capital city changed from Cartago to San José. (McNeil 2011)

Laura Chinchilla is the current president of the republic of Costa Rica, which is the oldest democracy in Latin America (Landguiden 2012). Since the country does not have an army they have more resources to put towards education and health. The health service in Costa Rica is the best in all Central America and since 1869 the country has had compulsory and free schooling. (Jiménez 2012-09-25)
4.1.2 Migration to cities
The big migration from rural to urban areas did not start until the 1950’s in Central America (Tannerfeld & Ljung 2006). Costa Rica has had a great urbanisation rate ever since, and the transition from being a rural country to having a majority urban inhabitancy happened about 25 years ago (figure 7 and 8). In the 1960’s the urban population in Costa Rica was around 30 %, this doubled 60 % in just 40 years (Grundström 2009). In Figure 8 the rapid growth can be studied. It illustrates how urbanisation exploded between 1973 and 1997.

![Figure 7. Statistics of urban growth in Costa Rica between 1960 and 2010. (World Bank 2012)](image)

Today more than half of the total population in Costa Rica lives in GAM. Those that do not reside in GAM, lives either in one of the port cities of Puntarenas or Limón, or in small towns (Morgan Ball 2007).

![Figure 8. Urban migration in San José from 1927 to 1997. (Vega 2012-10-18)](image)
The United Nations calculates that in the year 2025 the urban population in Costa Rica will be about 1.2 million more than in 2007, as table 1 shows. If the urban growth continues as the UN expects then the urban areas will have almost twice as many inhabitants in 2050 as in 2007.

This is why the use of land areas should be maximized within the city and good planning and structure is demanded. A denser urbanisation requires less area of land for the same amount of people.

Table 1. Population in 2007 and expected population in 2025 and 2050 in Costa Rica. (United Nations 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban (thousands)</th>
<th>Rural (thousands)</th>
<th>Percentage urban</th>
<th>Average annual rate of change (per cent)</th>
<th>2007-2025</th>
<th>2025-2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2.864</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>0.781%</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
<td>1.964</td>
<td>1.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>3.075</td>
<td>0.535</td>
<td>0.814%</td>
<td>2.54%</td>
<td>1.964</td>
<td>1.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>3.301</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>0.827%</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
<td>1.958</td>
<td>1.958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Poverty

Almost 20% of the population in GAM lives in poor conditions (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-25). Most of them stay in informal settlements which lack either a sustainable building, enough residential floor area, access to water, access to a toilet or security of tenure (Grundström 2009).

When people are living illegally in the country and do not have the right to stay in their houses, the Government pretends that they do not exist on the map where the settlements are just a grey area. The country does not invest in functional infrastructure and social services in poor areas resulting in the existing bad conditions remaining the same without improvement. NGOs have taken responsibility to take care of and try to improve the living for the poor. FUPROVI, for example, is an NGO that was earlier supported by Swedish Sida. They aimed to put order into the poorer areas and teach the inhabitants how to develop the land in the best way. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-21)

According to the UN the informal sector in Costa Rica covered 60 to 75 percent of the land in 1999 (UN-Habitat 2005).

4.3 San José and GAM

San José is the name of three different parts of Costa Rica. It is the name of one of the seven provinces in Costa Rica, the name of one canton (municipality) and also the capital city in Costa Rica. The former name of the city was Nueva de la Boca del Monte but it was changed in 1737 (McNeil 2011). The capital city is located in a valley surrounded by mountains and volcanoes in all directions. There are more than 100 rivers flowing through the city and there are also a lot of ravines, which constitutes a risk area for flooding (Grundström 2009).
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Figure 10. GAM and the canton San José (Municipalidad de San José 2010).

The surrounding cities; Heredia, Alajuela, Santa Ana, Escazú and Cartago are now connected to San José city and are together called GAM (figure 9 and 10). In figure 10 it can be seen which part of GAM belongs to the province San José and respectively the canton San José.

The part of the province of San José within the GAM area consists of 14 cantons with one of those cantons also called San José.

The municipality San José has 11 districts of which four of them are downtown; Carmen, Merced, Hospital and Catedral (Vega 2012-10-18). The different parts can be seen in figure 11.

Table 2. Area, population, amount of men and woman and density per square kilometer in 2009 (Municipalidad de San José 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Area en Km²</th>
<th>Total de Población</th>
<th>Densidad de Población</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>51,100.00</td>
<td>4,509,392</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAM</td>
<td>3,064.44</td>
<td>2,652,121</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM SJ</td>
<td>2,975.51</td>
<td>1,388,128</td>
<td>1,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantón San José</td>
<td>44.62</td>
<td>346,298</td>
<td>7,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Carmen</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>2,786</td>
<td>1,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merced</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>12,098</td>
<td>5,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>21,568</td>
<td>6,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catedral</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>11,326</td>
<td>5,185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total population of GAM was 2,512,121 inhabitants in 2009 (Municipalidad de San José 2010). The municipality San José consists of 346,298 inhabitants of which 47,889 lives in the city centre (table 2) with El Carmen by far the lowest inhabited district downtown.

The total density in the municipality is higher than in the central districts. It demonstrates that the surrounding districts in San José municipality have more inhabitants per land area compare to the central areas, the density is higher outside the city than inside.

4.3.2 San José today

The core of San José is based on a hierarchal street system with avenues and streets (figure 12 and 13). Avenida 2, from east to west through the core, is the main road for all traffic which creates a noisy and crowded barrier in the centre.

Since the city centre has been reconstructed and built in different time period the building stock is very varied. You can find beautiful houses with wonderful facades but also neglected degenerated buildings in need of maintenance.
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The centre is a mix of local offices, houses and commercial buildings with a variety of 20 story glass buildings and one floor wooden houses occupying the area. In some places high buildings are under construction, especially in the southwest and west, although most buildings are between one and four stories high in the centre.

In general, the surroundings of the city of San José are characterised by one-level buildings.

4.3.3 A segregated city

When the city was growing out of the grid pattern, which it did with a high speed, it was uncontrolled and had no structure (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26). On account of this, the outskirts of the city centre are made of small islands with homogenistic agglomerations with natural barriers acting as dividers. The area’s structure and settlements are diverse from other clusters with different statuses (Grundström 2009). Almost all development is given with priority to the wealthy people with the poor people distanced to their own city.

While poor people live in informal settlements in the outskirts, the more wealthy of the population stay within gated communities. These areas behind gate and guard did not exist in the same amount many years ago. Back in the days they all lived and worked side by side, and social gaps were much smaller. Gated communities create dysfunctional suburban areas and segregation, where there is no opportunity to communicate between barriers. Even the new built
houses are closed off and private, with no communication within public spaces since everyone comes and leaves in cars. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

The areas south of San José seem a bit more poor and dilapidated. This is where the Nicaraguans first settled down in informal settlements when they immigrated to Costa Rica, which is why there is no good water sanitation in the current situation (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-26). Entire suburbs in the southern areas of the core are rather old ones in need of regeneration policies. This has influenced families to move toward the periphery and thus increase the segregation (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26).

4.4 Institutes for urban planning
The institutes for urban planning in Costa Rica are divided into two levels. One of which is at the national governmental level, which is financed by the country’s taxes through Ministerio de Hacienda (Ministry of Finance). National taxes on income are at least 9 % which is managed by INVU, Instituto Nacional de Vivienda y Urbanismo (the institute for national living and urbanism). INVU are in charge of planning on a more advanced level and have the aim to make the expansion of the cities evenly distributed by balancing the development of town and countryside, making effective developments in the cities, and guiding investments in public improvements (Mora Protti 2012-09-25).

The second level of urban planning is on a local level, ruled by the municipalities with income from land taxes. In addition, due to a new law, the municipalities also receive investment intended for transport from the national budget. (Mora Protti 2012-09-25) All power and all decision making for the transport sector lie within the central government’s authority (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24).

The local authority plans and controls the town’s development. They have to make sure that the safety, health, comfort and aesthetic needs of the town are met. Maps, detailed plans and directions for land use are in the hands of the municipalities to produce, as well as maintenance and renovation of town areas. (Mora Protti 2012-09-25)

Every local plan is supposed to be updated and renewed every five years, but this is not the case in all municipalities, where a plan can remain for 20-30 years without review. Before the new plan can go through, it needs to be examined by the INVU who control the regulations and agreement with the comprehensive plans. The INVU do not have any control over the municipalities to force them to review the plan every five years (Mora Protti 2012-09-25). Laws and regulations for planning in Costa Rica is the same in the whole country, except at the seaside where the coastal planning regulates the 200 metres next to the sea (Viales 2012-09-19).
Every fourth year when a new government is elected, there is reluctance to use old plans and ideas about urban planning and other issues. Instead the Government start to investigate their own ideas to create a new plan and before anything can happen it is time for a new election which is the same as if nothing had ever happened. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

4.4.1 Cooperation between the authorities
The cooperation between the two levels, governmental and municipal, is not working properly. Communication does not always exist and the institutes are often working on different projects and ideas with different strategies. MOPT, Ministerio Obras Públicas y Transportes (the ministry of public work and transports) is an institute on the national level and it has a committee together with the municipality to discuss and agree on important issues about transportation (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24).

4.4.2 The GAM plan and its requirements
Since the country lacks a regional planning system there is often a gap between the municipalities and the Government. However, the most populated cities in the centre of Costa Rica have a combined plan, the GAM plan. In 1975-1982, a plan for this “region” was arranged by the INVU. Costa Rica consists of 81 municipalities in total, of which 31 are within the GAM-area (4 % of the total land area). This means that every municipality within GAM has their own plan, but they always have to follow the higher plan with opportunities to give suggestions and proposals for changes. (Mora Protti 2012-09-25)

The INVU has, when it comes to GAM, five primary requirements to supervise. They are: Land Division (Fraccionamiento), Construction (Construcción), Official Map (Mapa Oficial), Zoning (Zonificación), and Urban Renewal (Renovación Urbana). (Mora Protti 2012-09-25) The requirements of Land Division controls the division of property units and aims to achieve rational development and to make sure that the plots are not created too small. The construction requirements apply to the building of houses and include laws regarding minimum roof heights, minimum room size and windows. The Official Map shows where the different governmental buildings are located and where they should acquire land to reserve for green areas and other public functions. The zoning has an overall view of the different functions of land use, such as industrial, commercial and housing. Urban Renewal manages the restoration projects and has the aim to extirpate the informal settlements and rehabilitate bad areas in the town. (Mora Protti 2012-09-25)
4.5 Environment in San José

The green and natural areas are important for the human sense of well-being. It is essential to integrate those into the city and public spaces. Unfortunately those areas are well hidden in the city of San José and are not possible to use for recreation. There are some parks in the city, of which some are green. Another environmental aspect to consider is that all rivers in the city are built-in or used in the wrong way and there is nowhere to enjoy them. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26).

Today the law provides that you have to leave at least 10 meters (some places up to 50 meters) between the river and the new property. Those metres that are left are not accessible for the public. They are just hidden behind the houses and the toilets are flushed right into the rivers. A suggestion is to integrate the greeneries into the city to enlarge the area between river and building and to open this up for public use. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

Lack of water treatment, bad air quality, health issues and other urban diseconomies cost a lot every year. It would be better to use this money to assist in prevention of these problems instead. For example, there is no treatment plan for wastewater. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

4.5.1 Pollution in the city

The air pollution in San José is bad. When seeing buses, trucks and cars on the street, the exhaust coming out from them is black and voluminous. Industries are mainly located in the outskirts of the city which is why their pollution is not directly affecting the city centre locally.

Almost all energy used for transport in Costa Rica is non-renewable (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24) this is why it is important to see where the energy is used and if there is some conclusions to be made.

Figure 14. Gas and diesel use from different vehicles in Costa Rica 2007. (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24)

Figure 14 shows that private cars stood for 45 % of the total energy use in transport, and they used almost only petrol. Trucks used 37 % of the total energy, almost only diesel. Private cars and trucks used 82 % of the total petrol and diesel while the public transport, with 2 % to taxis (petrol) and 8 % to buses (diesel), used only 10 %.
4.6 Criminality in San José

Whoever you talk to in San José, everyone will tell you to be careful, never take the bus alone, never be out after dark, always go in big groups and never bring any valuables with you. The city has a very bad reputation, and it does not become better when everyone keeps spreading the rumours and, in addition, the newspaper only focuses on telling the bad news. Every day you can read in the paper of someone who got stabbed or robbed.

Due to legal prostitution in the country there are a lot of unsecure areas in the cities at night. Many prostitutes are standing waiting just in front of buildings and with this comes a lot of drugs and criminality. The core and its public spaces are filled with cars, buses, street vendors, pollution and noise, giving a rather crowded city during the day but an empty and uninhabited city at night. This emptiness of the public space has created a suitable atmosphere for social pathologies such as: beggars, prostitutes, drugs, crime and insecurity, all of them affecting the quality of life in San José. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26).

Criminality is a problem in San José. It is however not even close to the situations of the northern countries of Central America; Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. In Honduras for example, 82 murders per 100,000 inhabitants were committed in the year 2010, this was the highest number of murders in that year, in the whole world (Lobe 2012). Costa Rica is a relatively safe country compared to its neighbours, and inhabitants of San José should not be as scared as they are.

In the 14 different cantons in the Área Metropolitana of San José, the most central one, also named San José, stands for almost 50 % of all reported criminality in the whole area. This statistic has been the same the last three years and can be seen in table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Reported crimes in 2009, 2010 and 2011 in the 14 different municipalities of The Metropolitan Area of San José (*per 10,000 inhabitants). (Municipalidad de San José 2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Área Metropolitana de San José:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Población</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San José</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escazú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desamparados</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alajuelita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heredia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the municipality of San José, three of the four most violent districts are Merced, Hospital and Catedral with 11.7 %, 16.6 % and 13.4 % of the reported assaults respectively. The four most central districts stand together for 48.8 % of the reported crimes in San José with a total number of 1,613 assaulted people in 2011.
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When reports calculated per 100,000 inhabitants, the four most central districts are in top with Carmen as many as 873 (table 4).

Table 4. Reported crime rates within the municipality of San José in 2009, 2010 and 2011 (*per 10,000 inhabitants). (Municipalidad de San José 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cantón</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merced</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardenal</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zapote</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uraba</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Redonda</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rancho</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hato</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Carlos</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Comments and summary

With the continuing urbanisation of Costa Rica, it is important to plan the land area properly. Since the urban sprawl is growing and the mountains surrounding the city are a barrier, it is an idea to focus on the city centre where the main heights of the buildings are between 1 and 4 floors. There is a potential for densification in the centre and this area should not be abandoned.

The segregation in the city is a problem and should be addressed in urban planning questions. The welfare gaps are more obvious when one is moving to the part of the outskirts where groups of the same socioeconomic status live. With the boarders between the different clusters it creates clear indications as to who belongs where with the differences well pronounced. With more protected areas only available to the ones who can afford it, those who cannot afford protection are subject once again to poorer living standards.

As soon as a problem appears, everyone is blaming each other. Better cooperation between the different levels should be a priority. Although the GAM plan is a good start this only connects the plans within GAM and not for the rest of the country. Both the governmental and the local municipal authorities should work towards this. A well functioning communication system between the private sector and the Government is also important. Good collaboration decreases the work each organisation does and will create more time for other matters.

Pollution is one reason to put focus on the public transport. The environment and the air in the city centre would be much fresher and the non-renewable oil is a big issue for the future.
5 San José - Housing

The housing situation in San José is problematic. People are moving out from the city with high speed to start a life in the suburbs or outskirts of San José. In the city centre there are many possibilities to stay with opportunities to condense population via the construction of housing. If this was the trend a lot of housing problems would be solved.

5.1 Informal settlements

Due to urbanisation many people move to the capital city with expectations of better lives and better job opportunities. However, about one million people from Nicaragua have immigrated to Costa Rica with no work or place to stay (Grundström 2009). With no money or possibilities to rent or buy properties they end up in informal settlements, with no legal right to build houses or gain employment.

The biggest and one of the only informal settlements today in San José is La Carpio, which houses more than 30,000 people. Because of ignorance from the government and the local municipality this place does not exist on the map and has no good functional infrastructure. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-21)

5.2 Moving out from the city

The trend in Latin America of moving away from the city centre started in Montevideo in Paraguay. The urban gentrification process in San José started in the 1950’s when people wanted to move out from the city to buy or rent properties in the periphery of San José. Here the land is cheaper and it is possible to have a bigger property with opportunities for a garden or an outdoor area. This leads to an urban sprawl that is hard to regulate. Not only in San José is this problem escalating, but the trend can be found in all other cities in Costa Rica. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-21)

Figure 15 shows the movement of people in the Metropolitan Area of San José. The pink area, the most central part including the city centre, has negative immigration, which means that more people are moving away from the area than moving in.

The former inhabitants of the centre are now also leaving the outer part of the central city to start a life in the very outskirts of San
José (Viales 2012-09-18).
Many people that move out of San José city choose to move to the neighbouring canton as can be seen in figure 16 with quite a few also moving much farther away.

![Figure 16. The movement within the Metropolitan Area of San José in 2002, with arrows in the direction where they move. The darkest parts are those with most inhabitants (Vega 2012-10-18)]](image)

5.3 Empty houses
Because of the trend to move away from the city centre a lot of houses are uninhabited. The owners keep the buildings and lease them for commercial use, which often covers most of the expenditure. The top floors of the buildings are used as storage or are vacant. Shops and offices are mostly only open during the daytime, which makes them unsettled during the night when no tenants are present in the building. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-21)

When the owner moves away, the maintenance is neglected leading to dilapidated houses and buildings.
One of the reasons as to why the owner keeps the building and does not sell it is because of the financial crisis (Viales 2012-09-18).
Even though land price is quite high in the city centre, the proprietor expects the present value of the land to be even higher than the actual market value is. This is why they often do not agree to sell the property to (for example) new projects, even if the building is on its way to lapse and will be demolished. Because they believe any other approach would be an economical loss. (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20)

Many buildings in San José city are built for commercial use. They are often built as deep apartments with bad lighting and no functional ventilation (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20). To make the buildings suitable for housing people, many large scale renovations are needed, and with this, good finances, which makes the situation hard to change.

Due to a lack of inhabited houses during the night and the high criminality rate, the owners of the shops and commercial businesses decide to close and lock in everything they have at night. Consequently, shop openings have steel security shutters while they are not open to secure the premises (figure 17). This gives a very negative appearance. At night almost all building openings are closed like this, with some so even during the day.
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?

Haraldsson & Kerrén

5.3.1 Unattractive city centre
Due to a feeling of insecurity and with all the empty houses, San José is not an attractive destination. Streets can be filled, but everyone who comes there comes because they have to, not because they want to. The main reason is that the design of the transport system directs everyone to the city centre as this is the only depot. No one goes to San José just to enjoy the city and if you see someone sitting in a café it is usually a tourist. (Viales 2012-09-18)

The criminal situation in San Jose, heightened during night time, repels most families from residing in the city centre. Consequently, most people live in the suburbs, where many American-style shopping malls and plazas have been built.

5.3.2 Not learning the lesson
The problems that exist with San José centre also exist in all the other cities in Costa Rica. The people in charge of planning have not learned from poor planning decisions and in 15 year’s time the other cities will be just like San José. When planning, they are not looking forward. Maybe they will have solved the problems of today in 20 years however then there will be new problems because the population would have doubled. (Rodriguez, M. 2012-09-21)

5.4 Ownership and rebuilding properties
The city blocks in the centre of San José often have many different owners. This occurs as ownership of the building is divided as part of inheritance with all children owning a part of the building with different opinions as to how to develop, but also when a city block consists of many small properties split between several owners. Consequently, it is not unusual for one block to have up to 20 owners. This makes it difficult to rebuild, for example, one or two houses since there are a lot of regulations and restrictions that must be followed by all houses and owners in the block. The different owners do not often agree on what to do with the building either, which delays any potential renovation. (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20)

A lot of the buildings in the city are not designed for housing, they are meant for offices. To make these appropriate for living extensive remodelling is required which is very expensive. The easiest way to renovate blocks where many owners are involved is to tear down the buildings of the owners who agree, and divide the rights so that everyone has a percentage of ownership in a new construction with equivalent shares in the new property as in the old ones. (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20)

The responsibility for common areas in houses for apartments is very hard to deal with between Costa Ricans. There are many disagreements among the tenants, who should be responsible for maintaining the common areas et cetera. Some kind of property
manager should monitor these kinds of problems to make it possible to share buildings and common areas in the city. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-21)

5.4.1 Expropriation and conservation
One way to maximise the use of the city blocks and land areas in the city centre, even though it is quite difficult, is to expropriate the properties by law. To do this the municipality or developer needs to verify why the land area is better needed for public benefit. This process is however very long and bureaucracy makes it complicated, making it hard to apply. Because of this the property owners can take advantage of the situation and overcharge on the acquisition amount. (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20)

Land prices are more expensive in the city centre as can be seen in figure 18. This shows the land prices for land tax purposes from year 2000. In the centre the municipal square metre price can be $1,000 (Vega Mauricio 2012-10-18) American Dollars; the market value is even higher, depending on the demand, trend and surroundings of the property.

Costa Rica has an institute that puts cultural labelling on buildings and housing in the country that should be preserved and not demolished. When the institute labels a building the responsibility of maintenance is in the hand of the owners, who are no longer allowed to demolish the house. This is a way to retain beautiful and old architecture adding cultural value to the country. Unfortunately, the owners cannot always afford to maintain a building’s good condition and in many cases they flatten the house just before it has been labelled. Due to a bad economic situation, one of the solutions the owner can afford is to build a parking lot on the property after this incident. This is why there are a lot of parking spaces in former residential areas everywhere across San José. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-25)

When foreign people buy properties with empty houses in Costa Rica to use for businesses such as restaurants, they often do not know about this preservation rule. They may find their building is being labelled, the house suddenly burned down and a new building for the business can be built. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-25)

5.4.2 Complicated bureaucracy and ignorance
Even though many buildings are built for office use in San José, it is not that popular to have the business inside the city centre
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?

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anymore. When the idea by private companies and NGOs was to rebuild the offices to apartments some years ago the municipality made it very hard to implement. They invented complicated bureaucracy and many restrictions to worsen the transformation. But now the local government has realised there is a problem of a dead centre in the city and simplified the restrictions. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-25)

The land access in San José and GAM is not unlimited anymore because of the urban sprawl and the surrounding mountains and volcanoes. Developers are however only interested in their own matter and see the greenery and nature as potential construction sites. Even if the areas are not suitable for buildings in the general plan they sometimes succeed in developing housing areas in the mountain slopes and natural areas nearby because of pressure on the real estate market and municipal ignorance. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

5.5 New trends

The elderly population is growing with life expectancy increasing and birth rates decreasing, creating a great opportunity to repopulate the city centre with the older generations. Today there is no trend of living in the city, a trend that needs to change! The general opinion of living in houses with more than one or two floors is negative and should change, thus making it possible for the city centre to house a larger population. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-21).

5.5.1 New buildings in the city centre

The city government wants to build apartment blocks in the city. At the moment there are a few high buildings under construction located mostly in the west, more wealthy area. These are quite expensive and only suit the middle-income population (Viales 2012-09-18). The areas where they develop new housing are often already good areas where the new constructions are not needed to the same extent (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20). When living on a higher floor there is often a problem when the tenants want to expand their apartments, for example when the family is growing (Grundström 2009).

When building new high-rise blocks issues like public transport, infrastructure, water pipes and so on should be organised as a prerequisite (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26) as not to overcrowd existing public services in the area. Since the new buildings are adjusted to the upper economic classes, the parking areas need to be taken into consideration as the new tenants probably will be able to afford one or two cars (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20).

A building of mixed use should be a preference. It is then possible to cut down on costs for the residential tenants on the upper floors as commercial and office spaces, which can pay higher rents, can balance costs. In this scenario the businesses pay a bit more to
substitute for the apartments used for housing. (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20)

Clean water pipes, health institutions, good public transportation and infrastructure all exist inside the city centre, but make the average price of land in the area a bit more expensive. However, these qualities do not exist in the periphery of San José, and are needed when developing a new area far away. This is another good reason why areas in the city should be developed instead. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-21).

When building a new house, the charge or rent for the new tenant is often high due to the cost of a new construction and suits the families with higher income better than the poorer. However, when constructing new buildings for the richer part, they will release their old home for a group with a lower income and then their old house will be available for another group of incomers and so on. With this Filtering and Quality Stepladder the new building will create opportunities for all income classes to find new homes in the end. (O’Sullivan 2009)

San José has a lot of areas in the city that are not used properly such as degenerated houses, parking lots and overgrown empty grass areas. A way to overcome these dead areas is to compact the centre and rebuild all of these areas.

5.5.2 Development in the outskirts

When new areas are developed in the outskirts of San José there is often no real public infrastructure to support new urbanisations, nor urban services or jobs sources. The old, poorly maintained roads from rural areas going into San José city are usually already overused by existing neighbourhood areas. When a new community is built all these new families add to the existing movement on the roads which makes it even more crowded to go in to the city (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26). To minimise the transportation from the periphery to the city centre, Brenes Mata’s (2012-09-26) suggestion is to foster compact and multifunctional urban areas based on current centres providing them not only with residential areas in the urban sprawl. It should also be possible to find all you need within a short distance, such as jobs, schools, grocery shops and health services. Nevertheless, improving mass transport is essential to all urban scales.

5.6 Existing ideas

In 2008, the Plan PRUGAM 2008-2030, financed by the European Union and the Government of Costa Rica, was handed to national authorities, including INVU. The Government refused to approve and apply the plan. Instead, a new proposal was quickly developed changing PRUGAM’s central idea on developing compact and multifunctional cities within current and potential urban areas (according to the environmental studies approved by SETENA, Secretaría Técnica Nacional Ambiental (the Technical National
environmental Secretariat)). INVU came up with their own ideas, called POTGAM, which promotes more of an urban sprawl model, favouring developers and increasing a risk for the natural environment. (Eduardo Brenes 2012-09-26)

PRUGAM has many interesting suggestions; all gathered in huge documents that since they got turned down, are not in use anymore. They focus on the green areas such as parks and how they influence the rest of the city as well as traffic.

The municipality’s ideas and plans are more about developing areas for living outside the centre, than to build housing in the core of the city. Although, they say they have worked for ten years with creating incentives for people to live in the centre. The problem is that the laws do not allow the municipality to build anything. They can only show opportunities and facilitate them for private investors. One of the things they have done to facilitate is that now there are no limits on height for buildings in the city. However, it has been hard to market and it takes time to change people’s minds and opinions about the city. The culture is to live on the ground and it is difficult to promote housing higher than five floors. (Alvarez Cartin & Klotchkov 2012-10-10)

### 5.7 Comments and summary

Many immigrants come to GAM and San José from rural areas but also from other countries. To house all these people and give them an appropriate standard of living, land should be used in the right way. The urban sprawl is growing faster than communal services, and the infrastructure is not adapted to the heavy traffic the new suburbs create.

By building houses with higher standard for those who can afford it, the move to these houses creates empty buildings behind for others. This process creates a better overall standard for housing and opens up opportunities for all groups on the welfare scale. This is done in San José by develop new buildings in the western part of the city, suitable for the wealthier part of the community.
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?

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6 San José – Transportation

During the daytime the city is crowded with people in transit. The streets are filled with long lines of vehicles, many without satisfied standard of exhaust purifiers. Although the streets usually only have two lines, the traffic is very heavy and many cars pass through every day. In 2007, as many as 626,000 vehicles were moving in San José on a regular working day. This number has probably increased even more in the five years since (PRU-GAM 2008). All suburbs around the city are connected to San José, but with bad connections within a circular radius of the suburbs. Due to this, more than 40% of trips are just passing through the city, without the city itself being the destination. They are all travelling through to change direction (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24). Two people are killed each day in traffic accidents inside GAM (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26). The need for good infrastructure and planning is therefore essential.

6.1 The road network

The streets in San José are still the same as 60 years ago. The difference is that it is now used by 30 to 40 times more vehicles than was originally planned (Rodríguez, J. & Rodríguez, J.M. 2012-09-17). In the 1970’s three beltways were planned around the city to reduce the traffic inside the centre and make it easier to move without passing through San José. Today only one of these planned roads has been built with only two thirds of this road completed (figure 19). (Rodriguez, M. 2012-09-25)

Figure 19. Traffic pattern in San José city with the half-finished beltway (La nacion Mapas 2012).

6.1.1 Street orientation and lack of addresses

The orientation map in San José centre consists of Avenidas and Calles. Avenidas go from east to west and Calles from north to south. It starts with Avenida 0 and Calle 0 in the core of the city and thereafter follows even numbers in the north and east respectively, and uneven numbers in the other directions. Since this is a quite easy way of naming the streets, the problem is they almost never have any street names displayed. Even outside the grid pattern this system is continuing which creates confusion since the streets are not straight.
Further out from the centre they use the area or region as the address, together with a reference point nearby, such as an old tree or a statue. Beyond this information you also need to know how many metres north or south you should go, and how many metres east or west from there. The reference points are not always still existing which can create even more confusion. For example, an address can look like this:

_San Rafael de Montes de Oca, Del Cristo de Sabanilla, 300 meters to the west, 50 meters to the north, San José._

San Rafael symbolises the area in the municipality Montes de Oca, and Del Cristo de Sabanilla is the reference point.

Due to the lack of proper street signs the population lacks the ability to read and use maps (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20).

**6.1.2. Problems to move**

All roads around San José go to the centre. The main roads in the urban sprawl are not connected to each other, and a network to move sideways does not exist, thus everyone has to first go in to San José and then continue out in another direction. The roads coming from Panama, Nicaragua and Caldera (a city in western Costa Rica) are all highways that all have their end in the city with no way out. This puts heavy pressure on the infrastructure in the city and should be relieved as much as possible with new roads between the suburbs. (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24).

In the city centre there is a mix of blocks surrounded by one-way streets and chaotic traffic.

If the distance between a point A and a point B is ten kilometres, then the trip there between should take 10 minutes. In San José this trip could take up to 60 minutes because of bad traffic. This is called urban diseconomy. Due to the urban diseconomy in San José, a lot of money is wasted since it leads to bad roads, congestion, lack of water treatment, bad quality of air and consequently bad human health. In 2005, 4.2 % of the gross national product of Costa Rica was spent on urban diseconomies, money that could and should have been used to improve the city’s qualities instead of repairing problems that could have been avoided. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

**6.1.3. Why is everyone travelling by car?**

50 years ago, because of the state of national development, it was almost impossible to buy a car in Costa Rica according to Brenes Mata (2012-09-26). Policy regarding the purchasing of cars seems to be properly coordinated between the car private agencies, the public and private banks and the Government itself, when providing users with all kind of facilities to buy their own private car. Loan facilities and instalment time facilitates are increasing the easiness of a private car. The time to cancel the debt on the car has increased from 3 to up to 7 years. Today almost one million vehicles are registered in GAM. The use of cars is increasing every year by 7 % in Costa Rica (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24). In 2007 there was a ratio of one car per 1.65 families in GAM (PRU-GAM 2008). In 2030 it is estimated to have about two million
vehicles in GAM if nothing changes the trend (Benes Mata 2012-09-26).

Concurrently with the growth of traffic in the city centre, shopping malls were popping up in the suburbs since no one wanted to add to the congestion. This has increased the use of cars in the suburbs, where people have chosen to shop in the outskirts despite the fact that they may be in the city centre every day for work or to change bus. (Rodríguez, M. 2012-09-25).

As in many other countries it is a sign of status to own and drive a car. With this in mind it can be hard to change the trend from car driving to other more environmentally friendly ways of transportation. Since public transport is not so well organised it often takes more than two times longer to travel in buses and trains, if not more. A better education in schools would also help to raise the question as to why the car is not always the best means of transport to move around the city (Rodriguez, J. & Rodriguez, J.M. 2012-09-17).

The ministry of transportation in San José is not focusing on any projects that decrease transportation in cars; instead they are working on public transport so more people can travel communally (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24).

6.1.4. Measures performed by the Municipality

The half-finished beltway that is surrounding the city centre of San José has one special regulation to reduce cars in the centre in weekdays. It prohibits cars from driving in the centre once a week during a certain time of day, with the license plate deciding which day applies to that vehicle. As can be seen in figure 20, cars with registration number ending in 1 or 2 are not allowed to drive on Mondays while those ending with 3 or 4 are not allowed to drive inside the beltway on Tuesdays.

If caught by the police the fine is $500 American Dollars (Rodriguez, M. 2012-09-25). The exception is buses, taxis and rental cars in order to favour public transport. Since everyone needs to get to their job and the alternative way of moving is not always perfect, this can lead to families choosing to have more than one car or the family would change cars between themselves depending on where they are going for that day.
6.2 Public transport

The most common form of travel by public transport in San José is by bus. The train system linking the Caribbean and Pacific coast in Costa Rica was closed in 1990. Both the Atlantic Railway and the Ferrocarril Eléctrico al Pacífico joined together at GAM area, providing cargo and passenger services at regional level. Once this system was cancelled, local urban and transport planners have seen the possibility of reinstalling an interurban train using the old existing railroad, that now and after many years is placed right in the middle of the urban sprawl of GAM, connecting the whole GAM from east to west. On the 15th of September 2012 the railroad reopened and is now moving passengers again (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26).

With the train running in the city, there are a lot of crossings between vehicle roads and the railroad. Often these crossings are not supervised with trains making sounds to alert traffic when approaching these areas indicating that cars and other traffic should stop so not to be hit. Figure 21 shows an unattended railway crossing, with cars and pedestrians crossing at will.

In 1990, the statistics showed that 70-75% of people travelled by bus in San José, which has decreased to about 54% in 2005. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

A survey in GAM (table 5) shows what kind of transportation was used in peak times in 2007. On average 48.5% travelled by bus in peak hours in GAM, and 24.8% moved by car.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Modality of transport</th>
<th>Tasa de costo percibido para un viaje de aproximadamente 7 km a mayo de 2007 (US violently)</th>
<th>Porcentaje de viajes movilizados en el periodo pico de la madrugada</th>
<th>Porcentaje de viajes movilizados durante el periodo pico de la tarde</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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</table>

Table 5. Percentage travelling by different transportation modes in GAM, 2007 (PRU-GAM 2008).

Since there are no streets or accessible roads that connect the urban sprawl sideways all buses head strictly to the city centre of San José. Wherever you are going, you first have to go to San José centre and from there change to another bus. So even if there are a lot of buses moving and never more than 15 minutes between departures, the problem is that the city centre gets crowded with all of these buses (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20).
The long distance buses from San José all have their bus stations spread around the city. Depending on what direction they are heading, they have chosen a location in the same cardinal. The timetables for the buses and finding information is often quite well indicated when moving further away in the country, however, there is no connecting network information with the local buses in San José and no buses travelling between depots. To come to the terminals you either have to go by private car, taxi or walk, although this last option is often not recommended due to the high rates of criminality.

6.2.1 Why not travel by public transport
There are no timetables for the public buses inside San José, and to find your way from one place to another with public transport is not that easy. The best way is to ask around, since there are no maps showing the connecting bus lines and the drivers are not always willing to help you to plan your trip.

“Those who plan the public transport system in San José are definitely not travelling by these means themselves. They do not know much about it and have plans to remove the buses since the planners think the buses are in the way of the cars.” (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20)

Taxis are very common and are; in comparison quite cheap. A taxi within the city costs about 2,000 colones (25 – 30 SEK). Although, this is still not as cheap as it is to travel by bus.

The price to travel one way by bus in the city is between 150 to 450 colones (2 – 6 SEK) depending on what company you travel with. Even though this price is not very high, it is still more expensive than in other Latin American cities since the public transport in San José is not subsidised by the government (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20). This is one reason why fewer people are travelling by bus.

From the interview with Randall Viales (2012-09-18) his answer as to why he is not travelling by public transport to his work was: “Then I have to change buses three times. There is also the possibility to take the train, but then I have to leave home around 5 o’clock and arrive at 8, since there is only one train departing in the morning. Because the distance by car is only 1 hour and 20 minutes I prefer to drive on my own.”

6.2.2 Mass public transport
The starting point of the current bus system was the need of linking the city centre of San José to the surrounding small towns, most of them capital cities of municipal governments (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26). When a new suburb is created, one bus company starts to operate from this area into the centre. When another suburb is being developed nearby they also commission a bus company to operate from this area into the city, along the same road as the other suburb since there are no transversal roads connecting the suburbs with surrounding areas. This is a continuous cycle
resulting in the road becoming a competing speedway among different bus companies. One road from the suburbs to San José centre can contain up to 30 different private bus companies which all run every 15 minutes consequently crowding the road with too many half full buses, making the traffic even worse. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

There is a bus that completes a loop of the inner city but since the road networks are not designed for going around this the resulting route is a zigzag. This means the bus service is slow and frankly irritating so people do not choose to utilise this service. (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20)

The Local Government owns the streets and roads within the municipality however, they do not have much input in planning discussions regarding public transport. It is the Central Government that has the last word in this area and often they do not have the same ideas with more often than not a lack of money to implement ideas. (Alvarez Cartin & Klotchkov 2012-10-10)

In total the buses are owned by 50-60 different companies, of which most do not cooperate at all (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20). In recent years some companies have been acquired by other bus companies operating in the same areas, however this still has not resulted in fewer buses or better logistics (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26). Additionally, bus companies must pay to operate on the municipalities’ roads. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26, Morgan Ball 2012-09-20)

When talking to inhabitants of the city, many do not travel by public transport due to security concerns. They all have stories about people that were victims of crime while travelling which is why they now do not dare to go by bus or train.

6.3 Priority pedestrians

Only 20% of the population in GAM owns a vehicle (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26). These statistics show the surreal truth that 80% of the population are without a vehicle and so must rely on public transportation and pedestrian footpaths. Public transport needs to be prioritised.

In 1995, Brenes Mata published the book “Peatonización, una opción para el rescate urbano”, a book that advocates for pedestrians in the city and the rescue of the public realm of the Capital city. This book, his ideas and his many published articles later became the foundation for the pedestrian streets in San José. The municipality established Plan director Urbano in 1994 (Municipalidad de San José1994) which lays out a plan for a continuous pedestrian street network. The intention is for this plan to be fully implemented by 2015. When it is complete, there will be a 1km of streets with no cars. It is the municipality that will finance this project and it has been very expensive. The project is also
dependent on transport solutions that the Central Government
decides on. (Alvarez Cartin & Klotchkov 2012-10-10)

Car ownership has increased in the last years. According to PRU-
GAM, car users increased from 19% in 1994 to 24% in 2007 in
GAM. The average use of buses reduced from 75% in 1980 to 54%
in 2007 in GAM and the number of passenger entering San José at
rush hour (between 6 and 8 am) varied from 66% in 1995 to 41%
in 2007. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26).

6.3.1 Pedestrian only streets
Since 1993, Brenes Mata proposed the pedestrianisation of San
José through a pedestrian network of streets and avenues
connecting main commercial, office and cultural areas of the
Capital with the idea of returning public space to people and the
need to humanise it. The proposal was linked to the idea of hiding
all the aerial electric system of San Jose by an underground system,
giving place and opportunity to the public space to show off after
many years hiding behind the electric cables and
making it a more liveable
space. The project was
finally built starting in 1994
covering 315 blocks of the
city core.

These walking streets are prohibited for cars and are designated
only for pedestrians, except at night between the hours of 12:00
and 04:00 when cars will have to pay a certain amount to drive
here (allowed mostly to facilitate shops and markets). One odd
exception to this rule is that many of the parking lots that existed
before the streets were changed are still in use, resulting in cars
driving on the walking streets to reach the
parking lots, even during the day (figure 22)
(Rodríguez, J. & Rodríguez, J.M. 2012-09-17).

Other issues pedestrians face is the quality of
the pavements. There are many barriers and
potholes in the road which make it hard to walk
smoothly. Streets similar to that which is
displayed in figure 23 make it very difficult for
people with disabilities, the elderly, wheelchairs
and baby carriages to move around.

6.3.2 Biking in the city
Moving by bicycle is not a great option, since the topography is
very hilly and the traffic is very dangerous for cyclists. The
unreliable climate also makes it hard with a lot of heavy rain.
However it is not impossible to see people moving by bike, though
they share the streets with cars and do not have any protective
clothing or helmets on at all.
6.4 The great barrier
Avenida 2 crosses the city centre and divides it into two parts. There is constantly a great flow of movement. Cars, buses, taxis, trucks, motor bikes and even sometimes bicycles pass through here. Mostly these vehicles use the road to do just this, passing through the centre on their way somewhere outside of San José. While walking on some of the existing pedestrian streets, one has to cross the large Avenida 2. Pedestrian crossings exist; however the time allocated to cross is always very short and without pressing the button at the lights you can wait for long periods of time. In all San José, except in the university area San Pedro, the motorised vehicles have priority in the traffic. The attended crossings for pedestrians are located far apart, and if wanting to cross the street in between, you run the risk of running across the road and must be cautious in trusting the driver coming towards you.

6.5 Existing ideas
The Mayor of the municipality of San José wants to build a tram line in the city. According to an Anonymous person it is not sure that this proposal is in place for the right reasons, or appropriately researched and explored. Sometimes ideas like this can be a tool that helps the Mayor to become more popular. Other ideas from the Mayor, President and the Municipality are to create a sky train or a subway in San José (Viales 2012-09-18).

The municipality wants to build the tram from just west of Parque Sabana, along Avenida 2 through the city’s core, up north passing Parque Morazán and then continue east. They want to promote San José as a modern clean city and consider that establishing a tramline is the best solution compared with BRT (Bus Rapid Transport) even though it will be expensive. They believe it will add value to the land in the city and that it has a better look than buses. The Municipality says the intention is to be finished with this project in 2017, but there is a big “if” in terms of funding. They say that the Central Government will support the project and the aim is that this will solve the mobility problems in the city and thereafter attract private investors to the city’s core. (Alvarez Cartin & Klotchkov 2012-10-10)

MOPT do not agree with the idea of creating a tramline in San José since it is not the solution to the bigger scale problems, and believe buses are a better solution as they cover a greater area (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24)

Brenes Mata (2012-09-26) does not either consider building tramlines is a good decision right now. San José is the centre of attraction of the GAM, solving traffic jams and congestion problems in the city core are depended on how mass transport is provided in the surroundings toward the capital city. What must be considered is that GAM generates 1,600,000 private vehicle/trips every day and 626,000 of them come toward San José or cross the
city. By the year 2030, this traffic will increase up to 4,000,000 cars/trips per day (PRU-GAM 2008).

The interurban train connecting west-east in GAM could release San José from thousands of cars every day. In terms of linking the suburbs, buses with exclusive bus lanes will be the best solution. They are estimated to have larger passenger capacity than trams. With trains and buses properly integrated, they will together cover most of the GAM area. A tramline system on the other hand, in the way it has been planned, will cover only 10 kilometres from west Pavas to Estación del Atlántico, leaving one of the most important sectors (San Pedro and Curridabat). It would be a difficult task to cover the demand approaching from everywhere towards the tram by only one route. There is no doubt the tram is a much better aesthetic solution and would enable the city core’s public space to look better, but the mass transport users need a solution that covers the whole region. Furthermore, the cost for one kilometre of tramline is about $20 million American Dollars, while constructing the same distance for a BRT is only $3-4 million American Dollars. What is demanded is a greater solution that addresses larger problems rather than just one tramline in the city. (Brenes Mata 2012-09-26)

The interurban service by train from east to west should be integrated to the bus system under PRUGAM’s and MOPT’s proposal. What the government is doing right now is fostering old trains and making some improvements to the railway to help at least a little bit with traffic congestion. Old heavy trains and some refurbished ones are already running between San José, Heredia, Cartago and Belén. However due to population needs, the government should be fostering a new electrified two lanes interurban train integrated to the bus system mentioned above according to Brenes Mata (2012-09-26).

Busses should not park on the streets in the city and there should exist areas where they can park. A suggestion from Morgan Ball (2012-09-20) is to create ten different bigger stops in the centre. Activity should be concentrated in these stations.

To create congestion charges in the city core would not work according to the Municipality, since the people would be furious and could create a civil suit against the city. (Alvarez Cartin & Klotchkov 2012-10-10)

The Municipality wants to install a bike lane in connection with Parque de la Merced. To do this they have to agree with MOPT whom are in charge of transport in the city. The Municipality also want to move all the bus stops from the park, since it can be dangerous with so many people around. (Alvarez Cartin & Klotchkov 2012-10-10)

Due to MOPT’s plan; “The Plan Nacional de Transportes de Costa Rica 2011-2035” the first beltway is a project for the future. The problem is that it is very expensive and in addition houses currently
occupy the area where the road would go. The cost of expropriation to buy this land from the owners is expensive and a difficult process. Because of the mountain there is no more land accessible in the south to develop. The plans of a second and third beltway no longer exist because of these problems. However, instead of continuing with the planned beltways MOPT has a plan of a half circle formed beltway called “anillo periferico” in the northern part of GAM.

Many trucks are running between the coastlines and they all pass San José. According to “The Plan Nacional de Transportes de Costa Rica 2011-2035”, the suburbs should be connected sideways, and the roads passing San José from long distances, should not go through the city but instead around to decrease heavy traffic. (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24)

Figure 24 shows the Government’s plan of public transport in San José which should be finished in 2018. The 9 different areas around San José should have one principal road into town where big buses could pass frequently. These buses will take more than three times as many passengers as the existing services and reduce the bus traffic in the city centre by 75%. They plan is to have integrated buses connecting the bus stations at various points in the city with some of these buses able to cross the centre and connect to the opposite side of the city. At the bus stations in the outer parts of the city, smaller buses should run in the area to transfer the passengers to the big “city bus”. (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24)

Another project at MOPT is to create two levels at the existing roundabouts around San José, to decrease traffic jams in rush hours and open up the roads for more cars to be in circulation (Arguedas & Flores 2012-10-24).

6.6 Comments and summary

The problem of moving around the outer rim and between the suburbs of San José is complex and large. People are now passing the city centre to go to another suburb or part of San José. A network between buses does not exist. When changing from one bus to another, you sometimes have to pass through the whole centre by foot or taxi to reach the station on the other side. The tram is a good idea, although it is very expensive to build and would only suit the movement in one part of the city. But as a start of something bigger it could be a solution. Another question about
this is whether roads would accept and be able to share with a tram. The newly reopened train is a good and popular way of moving people in and to San José. However, security at crossings with roads is not good given almost all crossings are unattended. The connection between the bus stops and the pedestrian street is important to simplify commuting by bus. One of the best parts of the city is the existing pedestrian streets. Better cooperation between the different institutions would ease the planning and help the city to move forward. Many questions are answered with: “it is too complicated”. The inhabitants of the area are also confused as to who is ruling and controlling what. We have even noted ourselves that even people working in the same line of business do not know what is happening in the city. Everyone is blaming each other without having a good reason. This creates conflicts and a bad atmosphere in the city.
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7 Inventory of Public Spaces

According to Jacobs (2005) should the public spaces be like a second living room for the people. Some parts in the city centre have good qualities and is the underlying reason which is why we decided on focusing on the public spaces in the city; pedestrian streets, squares and parks. We have made an inventory of those (figure 25) to analyse and understand them better and to be able to give suggestions for the future.
7.1 Pedestrian streets in San José
Following is an inventory of the existing pedestrian streets in the city core of San José. We have studied them to examine how they function and what their qualities and faults are.

7.1.1 Avenida Central
Avenida Central was the first street to be pedestrianised in San José. In 1994, 6 blocks in Avenida Central changed from a busy vehicular street to a pedestrian street, first with small changes during the day to later excluding vehicles all together (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20).

Today the pedestrian street consists of 12 blocks from Calle 14 in the west, with San Juan de Dios Hospital and Parque de la Merced nearby to Calle 9 in the east where it transits to an overcrowded bus street (figure 25). The street is paved to suit pedestrians but because of the parking lots that still exist some cars may drive by sometimes, especially in rush hours.

Along this street a lot of shops and restaurants can be found, though none of them are using the outdoor space. There is a lot of movement here, however very few are actually stopping to sit or stand here. 

Figure 26. A mix of pedestrians and buses in the end of Avenida Central.

not even stopping outside storefronts. The more hectic part of the street is in the west, where a lot of street vendors are using the area illegally and the noise level is very high.

From west to east in the pedestrianised Central Avenue some important buildings and places can be found; the central market (between Calle 8 and 6), the central Bank and Post office where the Central Avenue crosses another pedestrian street (Calle 2) and Plaza de la Cultura (between Calle 3 and 5). The walking path is crossed with vehicle roads at almost every crossing which slows down the flow of the pedestrians’ and increases insecurity. At the end in the east where the walking street meets traffic again, the pavement is filled with pedestrians coming from the walking friendly part of Avenida Central which continues to a noisy overcrowded road with buses (figure 26).

7.1.2 Avenida 4
In 2009 this avenue was changed from a crowded vehicle street to a pedestrian street (Morgan Ball 2012-09-20). The avenue consists of 12 blocks; Calle 14 in the east, near Parque de la Merced and Calle 9 in the west ending in Plaza de las Artes.

Avenida 4 is one of the most recent pedestrian streets in San José. The ground floors have relatively new businesses to make use of the large flow of people. Unfortunately, this is only found on one side of the street. As can be seen in Figure 27 and 32 the left side...
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Avenida 4 has a closed façade with a big bank taking up the entire section resulting in functional space not being optimised. This street does not have as many shops and restaurants as Avenida Central, and many buildings are closed down behind steel gates, giving a bad impression.

In two corners it crosses other pedestrian streets (figure 28), except for these, all crossings are on streets where cars are present.

Since the street is relatively new the amount of people moving here is not as great as in Avenida Central, although the movement is not bad. The street is passing the Parque Central (Calle 2) which is a landmark in the city centre with the nearby Catedral Metropolitana.

Along Avenida 4 we found one restaurant with an area to sit outside. Although the inside was crowded, very noisy, and dark with trapped air, almost everyone chose to sit inside even if the outdoor tables were free and very well located (figure 29).

As mentioned above, some parking lots are still in use along the street, which brings moving cars moving in from time to time.

Possibilities to find somewhere to sit down are limited, although some benches can be found along the street as seen in figure 30. However, unfortunately they are not being used much.

Avenida 4 ends in the east with Iglesia de la Soledad (figure 31), which also is the beginning of the pedestrian street in Calle 9.

Figure 27. Avenida 4 has a closed facade on the left hand side in the picture.
Figure 28. The crossing between Calle 2 and Avenida 4.
Figure 29. Pedestrian Street in Avenida 4 with its outdoor tables.
Figure 30. Sitting possibilities in Avenida 4.
Figure 31. The east end of Avenida 4, Iglesia de la Soledad.
Figure 32. Calle 2, with only one soft façade.
7.1.3 Calle 2
A five block long pedestrian street stretches from Avenida 3 in the north to Avenida 6 in the south passing the Post Office, the Central Bank and Parque Central. This street acts as the passage between Avenida Central and the Avenida 4 for pedestrians crossing the hectic and crowded Avenida 2.

The open public space outside the Post Office is popular and has presented some well used benches and street vendors (figure 33). Although it is supposed to be a street for pedestrians only cars find some reason to come down here anyway sometimes.

South of Parque Central the street only has one active façade since the east is covered with a big wall. The photo in figure 32 shows what side of the street pedestrians choose to walk on. The closed façade to the left is not as popular as the shops and open buildings to the right.

7.1.4 Calle 3
The pedestrian street in Calle 3 starts in Avenida Central at Plaza de la Cultura and goes south, crossing the pedestrian street Avenida 4 and ends in the next crossing.

In the south end of Calle 3, the pedestrian streets end up in a crowded, dead-end car street, with deserted properties which have not been used for a long time along the sides (figure 34).

This street is mostly used to transport pedestrians from Avenida Central to Avenida 4 or vice versa. Possibilities for seating are found in Plaza de la Cultura, but none along the street. The crossing of Avenida 2 is not very good as can be seen in figure 35. When crossing the street, there is a chain that stops cars from using the street which pedestrians must, take note of so as not to fall over it.
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7.1.5 Calle 15
Two pedestrianised streets are surrounding Plaza de la Democracia at Calle 15, between Avenida Central and Avenida Segunda.

Since both these streets are shielded from other pedestrian streets in the city centre there are no good connections and paths to come here except via the bad pavements next to the chaotic car streets.

In the east side of Plaza de la Democracia a small walking path has been constructed (figure 36) where almost no one is moving. The one to the west is filled with small shops and vendors (Mercado Calle Nacional in figure 37) however, you can walk on the outside if you are not in the mood to go shopping.

7.1.6 Calle 17
In the east of San Jose centre stretches a 4 block long pedestrian street, which ends in the National Park in the north and the Supreme Court and hospital in the south. This street is very cosy with palms surrounding some outdoor restaurants and cafés where a few benches are also found (figure 38 and 39). However when we were here, almost no one was using the outdoor space.

Although this pedestrian street is not being used much and was a mistake according to Morgan Ball (2012-09-20), since it is not connected to other pedestrian streets or important areas in the city, it is still one of our favourite streets in the city. The focus on outdoor activities gives a nice atmosphere and a feeling of security.

South of the Central Park, Calle 17 crosses the wide Avenida 2 where massive
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amounts of traffic are present (figure 40). Since the crossing is not in favour of the pedestrians the passage is not very smooth except near Avenida 2. The atmosphere in this street is very quiet and calm with less noise from the surroundings and a lot of lawyers moving around next to the Supreme Court.

7.1.7 Calle 9
The pedestrian street in Calle 9 starts in Avenida 2 (figure 41) and goes south 6 blocks, although the street is still under construction and it is not all completed yet. This area is supposed to be the new China town, even if the area does not inhabit more Chinese people today than previously. Near the entrance at Avenida 2, the Iglesia de la Soledad stands and connects to the pedestrian street in Avenida 4.

Since this pedestrian street is an on-going project, several differences can be found in comparison to the other streets. The shape and design is smooth and nice and the human crossings with the car streets are at an elevation (figure 42).

7.2 Squares and parks in San José
When looking at a map over San José it looks like there are quite a few green areas. Green on the map does not necessarily mean green in real life. The two main squares in the city centre, Parque Central and Plaza de La Cultura, are both green on the map but not in reality. Parque Central has some trees though. According to Alvarez Cartin (2012-10-10), all the parks in the city have undergone restoration during the last five to eight years and there are at this moment no plans of doing any further renovations. Below is a study of all the parks and squares within our area of study.
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7.2.1 Parque Central
Avenida 2/4, Calle Central/2

This is the major square in the city. It has Pedestrian Streets on two sides (Avenida 4 and Calle 2) and vehicle roads on the other two sides of which one is the large Avenida 2 with a lot of traffic. This large road is a big barrier and also creates a lot of noise in the area.

A project to restore this park was started in 1994. The purpose of the restoration was to make the park a meeting centre. The intention was also to connect it with Melico Salazar Theater (north of the park) and the Metropolitan Cathedral (east of the park). (Morgan Ball 2011)

The attempts to connect the park with Melico Salazar Theater and the Metropolitan Cathedral for pedestrians have not succeeded. Avenida 2, with its five lanes, is running between the park and Melico Salazar Theater and is a bit difficult to cross. Calle Central is also a quite trafficked road and is running between the park and Metropolitan Cathedral.

In the middle of the square is a bandstand for music performances (figure 43) and on the side to the pedestrian street is some local art (figure 44). The facades facing the park are active. The cathedral and the theatre have very nice architecture and the rest of the facades are shops and fast food restaurants.

There are also some benches made of concrete to sit on to enjoy the area. Though, almost all the sitting opportunities are located on the edges and near the pedestrian street and nothing in the middle, but it are possible to sit on the stairs of the bandstand.

As can be seen in figures 45, 46 and 47, the square has a lot of activity both during day and evening. Most of the activities in weekdays are at midday, but the use is intensified at weekends. At night, the amount of people spotted in the park is reduced to half (Morgan Ball 2011) even though the light is very good in the area.
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7.2.2 Plaza de La Cultura
Avenida Central, Calle 3/5

This is the most accessible square and is almost in the centre point of the city. It has Pedestrian Streets on two sides (Avenida Central and Calle 3), a big building (National Theatre) on one side and a small road for cars (Calle 5), which is mostly used by taxis and they often have to stop because of the many people walking on Avenida Central and thus crossing Calle 5.

The park was finished in 1982. The intention with the design was to promote cultural activities and allow mass public demonstrations. (Morgan Ball 2011)

The square is a very open space with a lot of benches on a row along the sides. Since the benches are not grouped together in angles it is hard to sit down together with a group.

People are glued to the safety edges, more to the north edge where their backs are being protected when using the seats (figure 48). Not much activity is going on the middle and there is not much interesting to look at other than the large amount of birds. It is more of a shortcut space, walking through because it is the shortest way.

There are no trees in the whole area that can work as shade on a hot day. Some plants on the south side are the only foliage, but they are not large enough to generate shade (figure 49).
In 1996, a remodelling was performed at the Plaza. The most notable changes of this are the colour and texture of the floor. (Morgan Ball 2011)

The square is divided in three height levels, the highest in the west which is on the same level as Calle 3. In the underground of the Plaza a museum is located. The area closest to Calle 5 is on the lowest level and works as entrance to the museum (figure 50). This design makes it impossible to overview what is going on in the rest of the square and discourage people, through physical and psychological barriers, to enter Plaza de La Cultura from this side (Morgan Ball 2011). Since the level of this area also is lower than Calle 5, no one enters this space if they do not intend to visit the museum.

Morgan Ball’s (2011) observations showed that a lot of people were entering the square at the southeast to exit in the southwest, and vice versa. The natural way to walk would be on the sidewalk of Avenida 2, but people are clearly put off by all the traffic and narrow sidewalks. Most activity is however diagonal over the square.

The square also has other destinations like the National Theatre, three big hotels, casinos and a cinema. There are also a lot of fast food restaurants and shops in the area, and the tourist information centre is placed on Calle 3 facing the square. The facades across Calle 5 are quite boring and do not attract people. The other facades are good, the hotels and theatre are very beautiful but the theatre is not accessible due to a fence and it does not have any entrance facing the square. There are less people here at night, but the difference is not huge (figure 51 and 52) and the lighting is sufficient. However, on weekends there are a lot more activity (figure 53). At night the side facing Avenida Central is a very popular place to hang out. There are no primary seating possibilities, but people find other opportunities to stay there.
7.2.3 Plaza Juan Mora Frenández

*Avenida 2, Calle 3*

This square is connected to Plaza de La Cultura, by Calle 3. It is very small and right in front of the National Theatre. The function is mostly pedestrian transport between Avenida Central and Avenida 4 since Calle 3 on the other side of Avenida 2 is also a pedestrian street (figure 54). The area is also a meeting point and a lobby for the National Theatre.

In the south end of the square is the frightening Avenida 2 with its five lanes of motorized traffic. This is a big barrier for continuing south on Calle 3, since the green periods for pedestrians are very short.

The Plaza was renovated in the late 1980s due to the establishment of Plaza de La Cultura. During the renovation most of the trees were taken away in favour for the view of the National Theatre building. (Morgan Ball 2011)

To prevent the cars from entering this area a big chain is put up which all the pedestrians have to jump over or walk around. It can be tricky if you are not paying attention since the chain is not always easy to spot and the entrance is not suitable for disabled people at all.

The activity at this square is quite evenly distributed over day and night and also at the weekend. There are just a few more people in the area during the day (figure 55, 56 and 57).
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7.2.4 Parque Nacional
*Avenida 1/3, Calle 15/19*

All the green parks are clustered in the north-east of the centre point in the district El Carmen (figure 58). The largest and furthest to the east is Parque Nacional.

This park is located right in front of the National Library (Biblioteca Nacional) surrounded by vehicular roads. The park is quite big so the cars do not derogate from the serenity of the area. In the middle of the park is a huge statue (Monumento Nacional) which symbolizes the independence of all Central American countries from Spain. It features one man from each of the five countries (figure 58). This statue is in the centre of the passage through the park from the library down to the pedestrian street Calle 17.

The rest of the park is very green and has a calm atmosphere. Lots of benches are placed along the winding walkways. People having picnics in the grass can be seen, suggesting it is a good place for recreation. The place invites private conversations and large trees produce shade when the sun is too hot.

Figure 58 also shows almost the only place with water we have found in the city centre. It is a very natural and peaceful space where you can hear birds singing in the trees. In the middle of the pond is also an island with stools and table.
7.2.5 Plaza de la Libertad Electoral  
_Avenida 1/3, Calle 15_

This small square is placed west of Parque Nacional. It is not very frequently used though it has some areas to sit. The square is dominated by a large statue and the area is used as a wide sidewalk (figure 59). The surrounding buildings in the west of the square consist of a big bank office and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones).

7.2.6 Parque España  
_Avenida 7, Calle 9_

Parque España offers a lot of possibilities to sit on the edges. Although, the paths within the park feels too wide and there is no corner where you can sit separate from the crowd for a private conversation. The seating areas are not overly inviting, which is evidenced by the groups of people who have chosen to sit in the grass instead. The design of the seats makes it impossible to sit more than two abreast and still see each other (figure 60).

The park creates a passing-through feeling, rather than a destination. It is very dark and damp with a lot of high trees.

This area in the south west of the park is very isolated from the surrounding area. It is on a higher level and there is only one way to go up and down. It is a round space with some benches on the sides and a fountain in the middle (figure 61). The place feels abandoned and there is no reason to take the stairs up here.

The view is only over a heavy trafficked road.

7.2.7 Jardín de Paz  
_Avenida 3/5, Calle 9_

Squeezed in between four heavy trafficked roads is this little garden. It is difficult to come here with no crossings or traffic lights for pedestrians. The park is also surrounded with a fence that only has one entrance, at the north side opposite the entrance of a school “Escuela Graduadas” (figure 62). The fence of the east side...
is however quite low and traces on the ground show that many people are entering the park over this fence. This is not an option for disabled or elderly persons.

It is a very pleasant area with a lot of flowers and a fountain in the middle to look at. If we were to ignore the traffic passing the park it would be a quite calm place here. There is a lot of traffic on Avenida 3 (south) and Calle 7 (west). Avenida 5 between the park and the school is quite calm. All the roads are one way roads.

In the west end are some big trees that both give good shade on a sunny day and distance the traffic a little bit. The only building that can be seen from the park is the school in the north, which is a very beautiful old building. Many benches give plenty of opportunity to sit, but they are not very nice in concrete with graffiti.

Despite the lovely features of the park there are very few people here, which probably can be attributed to the poor accessibility.

**7.2.8 Parque Morazán**

*Avenida 3/5, Calle 5/9*

This is a quite big park with just a little bit of greenery. There is a large pedestrian street running through the park with an alley of trees on the sides. In the middle is a huge scene (Templo de la Música) which offers seats with a view of the passing people (figure 63).
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There are quite a lot of people here, but most of them are just passing by. It seems to be the place to go and sit with your lover and there are also a lot of younger people hanging about in this area.

It is very open and windy, but in case of rain you can find shelter under the big scene. Since it is open though there are no darks spots for anyone to hide and it is easy to overview the area. The most negative aspect of this park is that is it surrounded by trafficked roads which make it hard to come here. The roads are used frequently by buses that emanate a lot of disturbing noises.

7.3.9 Plaza de la Democracia
Avenida Central/2, Calle 15

This square is located in the east of the centre point in the district Catedral right in front of the National Museum. To the east of the square, right between the museum and the square is a pedestrian strip, which is an extension of Calle 15. West of the square is also a pedestrian street. This is with market booths and roofs along the whole strip and is thus not used as a normal street. In the area just to the west exists only very bad houses and others are demolished, which now makes up an area of parking (Morgan Ball 2011). In the north is Avenida Central and in the south of the square is Avenida 2. Buses drive on both of those avenues and both are one-way roads.

Plaza de la Democracia was constructed in 1988 and has been restored with new design three times since then, the latest one finished in 2008. Oscar Arias’ government (president 1986-1990 and 2006-2010) held a competition for designing the area to celebrate 100 years of democracy in the country. The winning proposal wanted to strengthen the value of the museum and make a neutral place. (Morgan Ball 2011)

It can be divided into four different areas; the area in the east with the entrance to the museum and an amphitheatre, the north area with sitting opportunities and shading trees, the stairs in the middle facing south-west, and the open triangular area below the stairs.

Except for the north areas, the whole square is very open and empty and it is not inviting to stand in the middle of this open space (figure 64). The stairs are not the best choice for sitting as there is no shade.

The main functions in the close neighbourhood of the square are institutional mostly law and justice with the courts only a few blocks away to the south-east. Those do not generate many pedestrians to the square. With most bus stations located on
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Avenida Central to the west of the square and most people coming with bus aim for the commercial streets that are further to the west, not much activity is going on in the square. (Morgan Ball 2011)

Very few people are staying in this square both during day and night; it is almost empty (figure 65 and 66). Weekends are not much of a difference to this (figure 67).

7.2.10 Parque de la Merced
Avenida 2/4, Calle 12/14

This park is situated in the west end of the pedestrian street Avenida 4 in the district Hospital. On the other three sides are car roads, with one being the crowded Avenida 2. Across Calle 12 is a church and on the other side (figure 68), across Calle 14 is a big hospital located.

The first impression of this park is that it is very crowded, that it is a popular place. It has greens and people are frequently using the sitting opportunities. Although, general view of this park is this it is not a safe place. It is the meeting place for the immigrants from Nicaragua, who often are unemployed and just sit here all day. Compared to other public spaces in the city, this park houses a greater number of homeless people (Morgan Ball 2011). In a survey carried out in La Carpio (the biggest informal settlement in San José), Parque de la Merced was pointed out as a great recreation destination (Morgan Ball 2011).
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The park was remodelled in the beginning of the 1990s (Morgan Ball 2011)

It is placed very strategically with the boulevard connecting it with the city and being the starting point of the city centre in the west. It is also an area with a lot of bus stations. The bus stop for buses to Alajuela for example is just across the street on Avenida 2. It is also relatively close to the area called Coca-Cola, where a lot of bus stations are located. In Figure 28 some of the bus stops on Avenida 2 can be seen in the background.

The hospital on the west side does not have any entrance facing the park that is open for the public. The one that exist is only used by a few of the staff. (Morgan Ball 2011)

The facades facing the park from east and west are attractive but to the north you can just see buses and not the houses behind, and the façade to the south is inactive.

There are eight entrances to the park, and between there are benches looking over the street. Within the park there are seven circular or semi-circular independent areas, with greenery between and paths that connect them together. The greatest movement through the park is north-west to south-east (Morgan Ball 2011). This is the passage seen in figure 69. There are some long benches in the park but compared to how many people use the park there are too few. This means that people start to use the retaining walls for seats.

Figures 70, 71 and 72 can be compared as in these figures you can see that there is a difference in the activity going on in the park at night compared to day time, however not a very big difference, but on the weekend the activity is heavily increased.
7.2.11 Plaza de las Garantía Sociales

*Av 4/6, Calle 5/7*

This square is located in the east end of the pedestrian street Avenida 4, which borders the north side of the square. The other three sides have roads for motorized traffic with bus stops on the ones in the west and south. Since the topography here is in an inclined plane the square has been built in six different levels. Between those levels there are railings (figure 74) which make it very difficult to cross the area on the diagonal.

It was constructed in 1990. The buildings in the close neighbourhood are the Social Security Office, a girls’ school and a big bank office, but those do not generate much life to the area. The area also has a lot of public parking, which is frequently used. What gives life to the area is that there is something on each side, bus stops in south and west, pedestrians in north and shopping windows at the east side. (Morgan Ball 2011)

The north end of the square is very nice with trees, plants and some benches (figure 73) there are many more people here than within the square.

There is very little activity within the square and it is fairly even distributed over the day and also on the weekend (figure 75, 76, 77).
7.2.12 Plaza de las Artes

Av 4, Calle 9

This is situated in the very east end of Avenida 4 and right in front of the church Iglesia de la Soledad. The square is very small and the area around here is undergoing a lot of construction right now since Calle 9 is being converted into a pedestrian street and the whole area is intended to become San José’s Chinatown.

7.3 Comments and summary

The trafficked streets are always a bit tricky to cross. When finding a pedestrian crossing with traffic light, you only have a short time with the green light to cross the street.

Parque Central also has two connecting pedestrian streets, but to enter from north you have to cross the big Avenida 2. Parque de la Merced is also connected to the boulevard of Avenida 4, but it would be natural for this park to also be connected with the end of the boulevard of Avenida Central, which it is not. If taking the bus to Parque de la Merced with the intention to go to Avenida Central, you have to cross the busy Avenida 2 in all cases.

The parks in the north east are all clustered together and it feels like they have a connection even though there are big barriers (vehicular roads) in between them. This group of parks does however not have much of a connection with the rest of the city core and there is no obvious route to Avenida Central.

What gives life to the area is that there is something going on in each side of the park or square, like bus stops or well visited buildings, connected with other parts of the city by pedestrian streets or easy accessible roads. Squares like Plaza de la Cultura are though drawing visitors on its own, especially by those with children, to play with the birds or take part in the face painting activities that are popular here.
8. Case Study

We have chosen to focus on the city centre in San José because we have found many interesting issues there, and to solve the problems in the centre we also have to clarify the problems in San José on a larger scale. Our chosen area is about 1 square kilometre.

8.1 Inventory of San José

Since most people live in the suburbs of San José the movement of traffic heads from the outside to the centre every day, to change direction and travel out to another part of the city. This means that wherever people come from they all cross paths in the centre, regardless of whether people travel by public transport or private cars. Although the beltway surrounds the centre most people choose to drive through the centre due to habit and because on the map this is the shorter way. Rush hour is very hectic both in mornings and evenings all around San José.

Communities with housing are scattered all around San José. The structure is not connected to the rest of the suburbs, it looks like small islands dotted wherever there had been a space empty.

8.2 Inventory of our chosen area

All areas in San José are very interesting but we have limited the area of study as can be seen in figure 78. This is the area we consider the core of the centre. All existing pedestrian streets are within the area, so even the parks we find most interesting.

![Figure 78. Our chosen area marked with the red line. (Google Maps 2012)](image)

8.2.1 Physical conditions

Our chosen area is divided in four districts; El Carmen, Merced, Catedral and Hospital, which all have different characteristics. Each one is known for its church, and they have a clear division by Avenida Central and Calle Central. Figure 79 shows the cross in the middle of our area. In reality the Second Avenue is the barrier that divides the area in to two parts. The wide street with its five lines crosses the centre with a lot of traffic and noise, and creates an obstacle when travelling from the north to the south. The pedestrian streets provide shops, restaurants and businesses, although they are all mostly used at daytime.
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The green areas in the city core are restricted to the parks, although some of them are more grey and covered with asphalt and concrete then lined with trees and plants.

Property owners in the area

Most land is privately owned but some properties are owned in other ways as can be seen in the figures below. The same legend is used for all maps.

The district El Carmen in the north east used to be a rich area and this can be seen in the environment. The architecture is mainly Victorian style (19th century) and a lot of parks can be found, which is a result of the good financial support from the former neighbourhood. Except for the transparent areas (in figure 80) with private properties the district El Carmen has many governmental buildings.
Some schools are located in the middle of the area surrounding some of the parks. A church, a bank, an embassy and a small health centre can be found too.

Merced houses the Central Market and some banks close to the pedestrian street in the south east. The Government owned buildings are the Post Office and the Ministry of Finance. Two small areas of greenery exist in this area and the rest is privately owned properties (figure 81).

The poorer district in the city centre is Hospital in the south west, where the buildings are more dilapidated. The western part consists of hospitals and a park in front of the church. Three governmental owned buildings, a park and two banks are found in the north east part (figure 82).

Catedral, the area in the southeast, has a lot of empty lots. However, this district is the one with most different property owners. The area has many Government owned buildings and a lot of schools. The church stands in the middle and two banks can be found in either end of the area. Catedral houses the big Plaza Democracia, which is big, empty and lonely and even two small greeneries. Two communal properties and a security building are found here too (figure 83).

8.2.2 Use of spaces

Links and connections between key points in the centre do not exist. Roads are built to the advantage of motorised vehicles like cars and buses, making it a hazard to cross the street on foot. Some pedestrian crossings can be found supervised by traffic lights, but not at all enough to make it easy to navigate by foot. Avenida Central, Avenida 4 and Calle 2 are all pedestrianised and are well
used by walkers. But from there the connections to the rest of the centre are bad. Calle 15 and Calle 17 stretch alone in the east of the core, around Plaza de la Democracia, and are not connected to any other pedestrian street. Parks in all ends of our area are well maintained and very nice, though it is a rough way to walk to come here from the core of the city, by crossing heavy trafficked streets and walking along small, broken pavements.

There is a lack of suitable bus terminals, almost all buses stop along the street wherever they have access to drive, and this creates chaos with different buses pushing to get a spot to stop at. It is also confusing for the passengers to know where to wait for the right bus.

Most buildings have a mixed land use, with housing, commercial and businesses, at least along the pedestrian streets.

8.3 Problems and qualities in our area of study

The existing pedestrian streets are definitely an asset to the city. The number of people seen moving here every day is huge and it is hard to believe that this streets did not exist some years ago. Although people are mostly “on their way” to somewhere, there is a movement that gives these walking areas a lively atmosphere. Parks in the centre are good both for reducing the air pollution but also to create a relaxed atmosphere.

8.3.1 Staying

Most people travel to San José to change buses. The reputation says that hardly anyone goes there to enjoy and hang around in the city. The city is not built to entertain that number of people since there is a lack of outdoor activities. In the parks and squares it is possible to find benches to sit down, however they are not orientated in the ultimate direction and are often just lined up along the wall or at the sides. Although in Calle 17 one can find outdoor restaurants and cafés to participate in the street life and be a part of what happens outside, this is not the case in the other streets. Residences are locked in behind fences and guards which do not give the occupants the opportunity to enjoy their gardens fronting the street.

8.3.2. Security

Even though we (the authors of this report) have not been victims of crime in San José, and we have never experienced any security related issues, almost everyone you talk to in the city is scared of being in the centre, especially alone and at night time. To ensure the area is secure, there are a lot of policemen walking around the city, on foot, on bicycles, on horses and in cars. You can find booths in many corners with police monitoring the areas. Since the roads are primarily built for cars, the pavements are often narrow and crossing the street is often fatal. The fear of being hit by a car is high. So is the fear of becoming a victim of robbery.
since many parts are hidden in the dark or behind parked cars and buses.

8.3.3 Living
With continuing urbanisation in Costa Rica, the use of the land area is important. The increase of the population in the urban areas lead to a bigger urban sprawl since there is a trend of moving out from the city centre. The surroundings of San José consist of mountains and volcanoes which make it harder to use the land there for residential purpose. The many immigrants from other countries and the rural areas often have to live in bad conditions due to a lack of proper standard of living and a bad housing situation.

The city centre has a lot of empty buildings and land plots, not being used because of different reasons. It is hard to rebuild houses and the bureaucracy of expropriation and implementing change is difficult.

The trend of moving out of the city centre does not favour repopulation.

8.3.4 Air pollution and the public space
With a lot of traffic in the centre the air is much polluted. The centre has some parts with greenery and parks, which is good to transform the pollution; however it is not enough to clean the air. Many parks and squares are hard to enter since they are badly connected with the rest of the city. They are often surrounded by heavy trafficked streets and no network for pedestrians. Some public spaces are possible to reach by buses, although not all of them. Most parks and squares have some kind of bait, although not enough. All corners in the areas should have something to draw the attention to make people want to come there.

8.3.5 Traffic
The big barrier dividing the city centre in two is a problem. There are a few opportunities to cross this street (and many of the others in the area) and only with good planning in your walking, with long detours and luck, will you find the pedestrian crossings with traffic lights.

Since there is a problem moving sideways in the outskirt of San José all vehicles pass through the city to come to another suburb or part of the city. The urban sprawl is growing faster than the communal services and this ensures the infrastructure is left behind in the development compared to how much it is used.

In rush hour the traffic jams are very bad and this creates long lines with frustrated commuters.

8.3.6 Pedestrian streets
The existing pedestrian streets are good quality in San José. As a result, a signal is sent that it is possible to move in the city without the car and makes it easier for those who want to be in the city without the noise and distraction of the traffic.
However, the network between the streets is not connected in a well functional network. The distances between the bus stops are not always easy to make since a lot of barriers are in the way, like heavy trafficked streets. The commuting by public transport should be simple, not hard work. The connections between the parks and public spaces are not there. Some parks are excluded from the city without any good way to reach them. The pedestrian streets are sometimes only a line on the map, not possible to use in a functional way.

The trafficked streets are always a bit tricky to cross. When you are lucky to find a trafficked pedestrian crossing, the time to cross is often very short.

Many pedestrian streets only have one open façade, with a closed or steel fenced other side.

The new pedestrian street in Calle 9 has a lot of good qualities, the one we like most is the way it meets the vehicle street with a level divided circle to slow down the speed.

8.3.7 Public transport
The city centre is full of buses, most of them coming to the centre as a final destination. The network between the different buses does not exist. Since the public buses are owned by many different private companies they are all working on their own and it can be very frustrating and hard to find the connecting buses. Even the bus stops are hard to find, sometimes they are marked with a pole saying with small letters that it is a bus stop or with a small shed, but to find what buses go from where is almost impossible.

8.3.8 Segregation
Even in the city centre the segregation can be found. The welfare gaps are obvious in the city centre because the living here is very expensive, it suits the families with a higher income. However, the qualities here are not what these families demand and therefore these families choose to move to the country side where it is possible to buy a bigger property. Accordingly, the centre stands empty.

With the protected buildings and stores, the gap is noticeable since the ones that can afford choose to hide behind the closed gates and those who cannot live closer to the street. The segregation and welfare gap gets bigger.

8.3.9 Cooperation between authorities
As soon as a problem appears, everyone appears to be blaming each other. The cooperation between the local government (municipality), the central Government and the private authorities is not working smoothly. Many plans and ideas are shared, although since there is no good communication the plans are not connected to each other and the different authorities are often working hard on one idea, only to get a rejection when presenting it to the higher levels.
Even workers in the same line of business sometimes stand outside the plans and have no idea what is going on.

### 8.4 Different spots in the area

The three spots in figure 84 are carefully chosen to immerse ourselves in. We have chosen one spot from the west part, one from the middle and one from the east. We believe these three areas have great potential which is why we would like to create some analysis and questionnaires here. They are interesting nodes with great connections to the surrounding city centre. While working in the areas we have focused on the park itself with the surrounding streets. In Parque Nacional, the focus of our study is in the north part, since this is the corner of our chosen area.

**Parque de la Merced** in the western part is today one of the worst areas for crime in the chosen area. Since everyone tells us not to go here, and to be very careful if we are there, we want to investigate it more closely. This part of the centre is where many immigrants from Nicaragua gather, especially in the park. Nearby is the Hospital San Juan de Dios, although it does not have a main entrance located facing the park. In the north, east and west parts of the park, vehicle streets are located, the one in the north has much heavier use than the others. The pedestrian street on Avenida 4 starts here in the south of the park and thus runs along the south border of the park. Two blocks away the pedestrian street in Avenida Central has one end.

**Plaza de la Culture** is situated along Avenida Central, in the centre of our chosen area. Through this square, the pedestrian street in Calle 3 connects between Avenida Central and Avenida 4 (both pedestrian streets). Only the east side of the plaza faces a trafficked street, although one of the two lanes of the street is possessed by taxis. This area is very busy with people moving all day long. Nearby the plaza, the National Theatre can be found, so even the Tourist Office, Costa Rica’s Grand Hotel and Museum de Oro Precolombino.

**Parque Nacional**, located in the north east of our area, has a great flow of people and is surrounded by the National Library, The National Art Gallery and some Government buildings. From here
the Paseo de la Damas pass to the west, and the pedestrian street in Calle 17 starts its way down south. Many buses pass by here and so even the train line with its Train Station nearby, which is today closed. North of the area the Hospital Calderon Guardia is situated, which draws many people. All streets around the park are used by vehicles, although the most trafficked street is the one in the north.

8.5 Analysis
The methods we have chosen to study works as a base for our suggestions later on.

8.5.1 Kevin Lynch analysis
In our chosen area we have done analysis with Kevin Lynch’s theories.

Pathways
Except the red lines which are used only by pedestrians and the yellow lines that are used only for trains, the pathways in San José are a jumble of streets which are all used both by pedestrians and motorised vehicles. The movement in the city is more or less constant and homogenous everywhere. Buses, cars and taxis are moving everywhere where it is possible, and pedestrians move in all direction whether it is built for them with sidewalks and trafficked crossings or not. Many streets are one-way streets. (Figure 85)

Edges
Avenida 2 from west to east in the map below shows a big edge. It is dividing the area in two parts and the opportunities to cross this border are difficult with few crossings and a constant flow of motorised vehicles passing. In the north east part more edges can be found surrounding Parque Morazán, Jardín de la Paz and Parque España. Here the focus lies on cars, taxis and buses and creates a huge barrier while moving between the three parks. The small spot south of the parks is where the pedestrianised main street ends very abruptly into a chaotic bus and car street. (Figure 86)
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**Landmarks**
Some different landmarks we spotted are seen as stars figure 87 below. It is mostly historic buildings and monuments and places with frequent use such as the central bank and the central market.

The parks with many users are also marked as well as the National Theatre and the National Museum.

**Districts**
We have experienced four different distinct areas in the city core (figure 88).

The area around Parque de la Merced is very occupied and busy with people that have nothing to do or waiting for the many buses to La Carpio. The most central park and square, Parque central and Plaza de la Cultura, distinguish a district that is hectic and people are pushing to come forward and seem to be in a hurry. This also includes the main area for shopping. The northeast district is in spite of the many buses very calm and green. The area in the southeast is the calmest area, which is also the reason to why almost no one is here.

**Nodes**
The most popular parks draw many visitors and create nodes in the city centre. Spots where buses stop and start count as nodes since many people gather here waiting for connections and transport. In all intersections the movement is high, although nothing out of the ordinary. The city centre of San José is dominated by paths (figure 89). However they are blocked by edges and barriers and do not have a well-connected network.
The nodes streets are very confusing in the city centre and without a map it is very difficult to find the correct way if not used to the city.
Many streets are very similar with no distinguished individual characters and identity, although the pedestrianised streets in the centre have nice architecture around and the area in the northeast has well preserved buildings.

8.5.2 Jan Gehl analysis
When we did the Gehl analysis in the three different areas we chose to look from a scale including the surroundings of the parks and square. Considered in this survey is the possibility to move into and away from the park.

The three elements Protection, Comfort and Delight are the main subjects in this method (figure 90) and are used to get a better view of the area. Twelve different criteria are considerate, which can be viewed as twelve circles that are, depending on the quality of the criteria, coloured in different shades. White means that it is good, black means that it is bad and grey is neither good nor bad.

Figure 90. Gehl analysis pattern
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Parque de la Merced

In this area of the city, a lot of Nicaraguan immigrants stay. It was not very comfortable to be in this park. A lot of staring people and small groups of drinking men gave us a bad feeling. However this park is full of life and people enjoying the park and a lot of persons are moving through.

Parque de la Merced is surrounded by three roads, of which one is the beginning of the heavy trafficked Avenida 2, which creates an insecure protection against the traffic when going into or out of the park. The staring and unpredictable men in the park create a bad and insecure feeling, although the area is very open and there is nowhere to hide which helps a bit.

The comfort is mixed between all three different colours (figure 91). It is easy to walk in the park and the paths are very well marked. The park is very easy to overview and there are good opportunities to sit, although it is mostly secondary sitting since a lot of the benches are in the direct sun light. For those who want to play and use the park for exercise, some green spots can be found, but mostly without sun protection. No barriers like steps are putting back the activities and even those with mobility problems can make it through here. Availability to stand and stay in the area is not good, some trees are used for standing and leaning against, but the sun can be very intense and the greenery does not invite you to walk or use it. Since the motorised traffic does not drive very fast just next to the park, the opportunities to talk and hear are still there, but it is not quiet.

The delight and enjoyment is good having regard to the scale, the park is not too big and the surroundings are in a good human scale. The design could have been a bit better though, the benches are not inviting and the details are quite ugly, although the shape of the park and its paths is very nice. The trees create some protection from the sun and the rain, but it can be hard to be here in intense sun or heavy rain.

Plaza de la Cultura

Plaza de la Cultura is located within the walking district in the city centre. There is a mix of people, locals as well as foreigners and two blonde girls are not as uncommon here as in Parque de la Merced.

The area is protected and the secure feeling is good. Since only one street is used by cars it is secure to walk around. The movement is huge and there are always police nearby to increase the feeling of safety. The square is not too big. Though the area is divided in
three different levels, the poor overview of the square creates many places for the “bad guy” to hide.

The opportunities to walk, stand and sit are ok, but not good. The different levels make it hard to move for the disabled. The lack of objects to lean against gives no locations for standing. Sitting opportunities are mixed between primary and secondary seating and are used quite frequently. However the benches are located in lines with less availability for socializing and the small stools do not protect the persons back while sitting.

The different levels make it hard to overview the area and it is hard to see what is going on in the other parts of the square. However, the opportunity to talk and listen is very good since there are almost no cars, and play and exercise is good with a big open space and different objects in the corners.

The scale is very good in the area, no distances are too big and it is well suited for the human size. To enjoy the climate the weather has to be good, since the area does not provide any shelter for rain, sun or wind. The sensory experience of the place is ok, the ground is very beautiful but the benches look old, uncomfortable and dirty and the design of the lower level is not at all inviting.

**Parque Nacional**

This park is situated in the east of our focus area and except for Calle 17, that starts across the road south of the park and goes south, it is disconnected from the pedestrian network. We focused more on the north end of the park where the bus stops and the library are. It is a mix of all different people and the majority is a bit younger, which made us feel comfortable.

The National Park is surrounded by roads for motorised traffic. However, the sidewalk on Avenida 3 going west is quite wide and in our opinion the best sidewalk in the city. The roads are not very big, only two lanes and all the roads are also one-way-roads. Avenida 3, which flows from east to west, have a pedestrian crossing with stop lights in the east. The fact that they are one-way-roads means that when it is red for motor traffic, it creates a whole road for pedestrians to easily cross.
There are a lot of people moving in this area and in the rest of the park which gives a secure feeling and there are lights to light it up in the night. Nevertheless, quite a few bushes and big trees creates a lot of hiding places for criminals. When sitting on the benches you never have your back protected and always have to be attentive in all directions.

It is easy to walk in the park and stay in the park. The paths are wide enough, but still on a human scale and not too wide. There are a lot of paths on the diagonal so you never get the feeling of walking a detour and there are no steps that discourage handicapped persons. Even though there are a lot of opportunities to stand and stay, for example next to the statue or one of the trees, few people are doing it. Sitting opportunities are plenty, though old people can also find it a bit hard to sit since most of the benches are very low. There are a lot of things in the area to look at but the park is quite big and all the trees make it hard to get a good view over the whole area. The noise level is low and a lot of green grass invites to play and exercise.

Even if the park is quite big there is a feeling of human scale and the many trees gives good protection against the sun and rain, though heavy rain can be difficult. The design of the park is nice, lots of nature, lamps to give light in the dark. Yet, like in the other parks the benches are a bit old and dirty.

Conclusions of the Gehl analysis
Parque de la Merced has many black and grey spots in the analysis; although this park is the most used and has a lot of people moving all day around. It is located next to many bus terminals and is the start of the pedestrian street Avenida 4 which can explain that many people are moving in this area.

Plaza de la Cultura is the place with most grey spots in the analysis, and is also the area that has most movement in the surroundings. The movement in the square is although not as high as in Parque de la Merced, even if the attractiveness of the square is better and the connections to the rest of the centre are very good.

Parque Nacional, with its many white spots in the analysis it does not have much to change to make it more attractive, although it is not as actively used as Parque de la Merced and Plaza de la Cultura. However, the connection to the rest of the city centre from this park is not very good, which can explain the lower activity by people.

Protection, comfort and delight are important elements to make the area attractive. If lacking any of these, another element like location or status has to weigh up. Especially the connections to the centre and other nodes are important to create movement in the area.
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8.5.3 Questionnaire Survey

Our survey questions and the raw data from these can be seen in Appendix 4. We made 100 questionnaires in total, divided evenly in the three areas; Parque de la Merced, Plaza de la Cultura and Parque Nacional. The surveys were carried out day time just before or just after the lunch rush. The diagrams with the results are showing how big percentages answered yes on each option. Since many people choose more than one option in some cases, the total percentage is more than 100.

We tried to get a fairly even distribution of people who were sitting, standing or walking in the area. It was harder to ask the walking people though since those often were in a hurry. We also wanted to ask all different ages, but a lot of the older people did not want to answer the questions. We had three different age groups; under 30, 30-55 and over 55. The respondents were distributed in the groups by 46, 35 and 19 percentage respectively. The gender of the people who answered were; 52 men and 48 women.

Since we have heard that everyone comes to the city just to change bus we wanted to ask the people ourselves why they come to the city. In this question many persons answered more than one alternative. However, only 18% answered that they were there because change of bus/train (figure 94). It might be that the people who are there to change bus are the ones that are in a hurry and do not have time to stop for the questionnaire. Something interesting is that 31% came to the city for shopping and 17% for entertainment/socializing. These are two groups we thought would be much smaller.

![What is the main reason for you to come or pass here?](chart)

Figure 94. Why people come to the city.

Some differences can be seen in the answers from the three different locations. A trend that can be seen is also that more people at Parque de la Merced choose more options than others where we got 65 answers from 33 people. At the two other places we got 48 and 47 answers respectively.
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Work is the most common reason for coming to or by the locations and at Parque de la Merced and Cultura this is the distinct reason. A significantly greater amount of the people at National are there for studies compared to the other locations and the same thing for Parque de la Merced in terms of bus change and exercise. Plaza de la Cultura distinguishes itself with half or fewer percentage that come there for socializing compared to the other places, but have a high proportion of shopping people. (Figure 95 and 96)

Figure 95. Answers from Parque de la Merced, why do you come here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Work</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. School/University</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Shopping</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Restaurant/Café</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Exercising</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. entertainment/Socializing</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Change of bus/train</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. other</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 96. Answers from Plaza de la Cultura, why do you come here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Work</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. School/University</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Shopping</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Restaurant/Café</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Exercising</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. entertainment/Socializing</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Change of bus/train</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. other</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 97. Answers from Parque Nacional, why do you come here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Work</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. School/University</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Shopping</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Restaurant/Café</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Exercising</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. entertainment/Socializing</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Change of bus/train</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The distribution over the different modes and the different locations were quite even. A few less were using car to come to Parque de la Merced, which also had a few more walking. In the question regarding whether participants owned a car or not, only 19% said yes. 47% said that someone in the family does have a car (figure 97).

Family is a great term in Costa Rica and also includes uncle/aunts and other extended family relations, which does not mean that they necessarily would have access to that car.

Coming to the city can require more than one mode of transport and therefore we got 121 answers on this question. By far the most used mode of transport is the bus, which was used by 81 of 99 persons. Only one said to be using bicycle and only three had used the train. (Figure 98)
In figure 100 it can be seen that 64% can imagine themselves living in the city centre. Either as it is today or if something changes. The biggest if is the security (figure 101). The factors people want to have changed in order for them to move to the city are quite simple to arrange, which indicates there is a potential for densifying the centre.

**Figure 100. If people can see themselves living in the city centre**

Responses to the question of whether or not people are scared of being at the different locations were fairly evenly distributed. There are a few more that are scared at night at Parque de la Merced and the percentage of people who are not worried are half the number at Plaza de la Cultura than at the other two places, 6% compared to 12% and 15% (figure 102).

**Figure 101. If this is changed they can see themselves living in the city centre.
49 answers from 42 people.**

**Figure 102. If people are scared in the area.**
8.5.4 Survey of cars in the city centre

The five-laned one-way street Avenida 2 that crosses the city centre makes a big barrier between the north and the south part of our area. Since this is the biggest street and most crowded in the centre we wanted to find out what kind of vehicles were moving here. By making a survey here we wanted to find out the frequency of vehicles moving through the centre, how many different kinds passing every minute. Both surveys were made by counting passing vehicles in ten minutes periods.

Table 6. Vehicles passing the city centre in day time – not rush hour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle at day time</th>
<th>Amount vehicles per minute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private cars</td>
<td>17,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor cycles</td>
<td>3,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buses</td>
<td>2,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxis</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini buses / vans</td>
<td>1,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucks, big and small</td>
<td>2,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>0,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the week day between 11.30 and 12.00 the frequencies of different types of traffic passing Avenida 2 can be seen in the table 6. Outside rush hour and just before lunch, the absolutely most frequent vehicle is the private car, followed by taxis. What we did not expect to see is that more trucks pass the city centre than buses used for public transport in daytime. The survey in the rush hour at night, around 18.00, shows that the difference in private cars is not that big compared to in day time when there is no rush hour, table 7. However private cars are still the biggest part of the total transportation. In rush hour more buses pass the centre, 4 per minute compared to 2.7 in day time. Trucks have a much lower frequency too, as well as the taxis. Taxis, buses and motorcycles pass with almost the same frequency in the rush hour, around 4 per minute.

Table 7. Vehicles passing the city centre in night time - rush hour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle at night time – rush hour</th>
<th>Amount vehicles per minute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private cars</td>
<td>19,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor cycles</td>
<td>4,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buses</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxis</td>
<td>4,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini buses / vans</td>
<td>1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucks, big and small</td>
<td>0,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>0,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very rare, but not impossible to see are the bicycles, 0.1 passing in day time and 0.2 passing at night time.
The most interesting part from this survey is the outstanding frequency of using of the private car. The number is much higher than all the other modes of transportation. What we found very interesting is the high frequency of trucks in day time. It is even higher than the public buses in the day which we did not expect. All taxis passing by are worth noticing. In day time their frequency is more than double of the passing buses.

Of all those private cars passing the city centre, our next survey was to see how many passengers every passing car carried. The first survey was done outside the rush hour, a regular week day just before lunch time, table 8. By counting the passengers in 100 passing cars with no break we could calculate an average. Another survey was done at night time, in rush hour around 6 o’clock, also in a regular week day, table 9. From this survey we can see that both in day time and in night time at rush hour more than 88 % of the cars passing carried not more than 2 passengers.

In both non rush hour and rush hour, more than 50 % of the cars carried only a single person. Rare, but existing, are cars with 4 or 5 passengers, this two categories represents only 6 % both in day and night time. Cars with 3 passengers are not common, only 6 % of these too, both in day and night time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of passengers in the car at daytime</th>
<th>Percentage of total amount (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of passengers in the car at night time – rush hour</th>
<th>Percentage of total amount (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?

Haraldsson & Kerrén

Vision
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?

Haraldsson & Kerrén
9 Vision

The preparation and introductory work to this report showed that the city centre in San José is dead and lifeless. The information from our preparatory study in Sweden about San José told us that no one is moving around in the city centre, no one wants to go there, no one lives there and the traffic is dominating the city. Our preparations also showed that no one in San José is working properly with changing and improving the city. Also, throughout our time in San José, the locals told us about the dead and lifeless centre.

During our field study in San José we have found out and realised that the situation in reality is not as bad as the picture we had been presented with beforehand. We found out that the reputation of the city is not the truth although everyone seems to believe in it. We consider that the attitude is an important factor that affects the city in all various ways.

Another aspect we noticed was that the country is very ecologically conscious when it comes to the international level, with tourism and export of goods. Costa Rica has a lot of National Parks and is known for their eco-tourism. Tourists can come and stay at ecologically friendly hotels and do eco-tours with coming close to the nature. There is also a wide range of ecologically produced coffee, which is one of the two biggest export goods.

On the local level however, the environmental awareness is much lower and we believe that more sustainable thinking is necessary in the planning of the city. Costa Rica needs to think environmentally for its own good as well as for tourists.

After studying and making surveys in the city we came up with many thoughts and ideas. During the interviews with different authorities we noticed that many of our thoughts already existed in different plans. Although, nothing has happened since the cooperation and regulations makes the ideas hard to apply. Things are being developed in the city however, they are not always developed according the plans.

Our goal is to find out how to put back life into the centre, to make it more attractive to go there and to repopulate the city core again. To do this we have drawn up some suggestions on how to change San José both in a general level and in a detailed level. Our suggestions are divided in a short-term and a long-term vision. We are aware of the consequences of our ideas, and reflect upon them in all suggestions.

9.1 Suggestions

San José has to be prepared for the urban population growth. An increase in the urbanisation in the future demands a good land use planning of the city where every space is used in the core and the city’s potential emerges. This is to reduce the urban sprawl and the informal settlements in the outskirts and open up opportunities for these people who chose to live in the city.
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?

Haraldsson & Kerrén

Of Gehl and Gemzøe’s four city modules, San José is the Abandoned City today. Although, it is not as bad as it could have been. What is needed to do with the city is to change it into the Reconquered City to make it more attractive and create a city core with a better balance between cars and pedestrians.

To improve the city some key objectives have to be enhanced to make the city more attractive; the liveliness, safeness, sustainability and healthiness. To make this happen a lot of elements in the city need to be considered. The circle in figure 103 shows the parts in the city that needs to be improved to lift the attractiveness of the centre. These steps go together in a chain where they all need to be enhanced separately to progress the next step in the chain. They all depend on each other and it is not enough just improving one of them.

![Figure 103. Every part has to be changed to help the next to be improved.](image)

It is important to create an environment that invites people to stay in the city. Places to sit and stand simplify the staying, together with outdoor activities. Open and active facades and fewer hard edges create a more friendly area. When people get to know that there are people at one place, the effect will be self-reinforced and the liveliness will attract more people to go to this place. The more people staying in the area the more eyes can watch what is going on and the security will be improved. The street watching will increase the sense of security, and since it is the feeling rather than the actual statistics that make people feel anxious the area will feel more secure and more people will be willing to live there. Since our survey shows that 19 % are willing to live in the city centre if the security is improved, there is incitement to improve the centre to attract a bigger part of the population. In addition, 7 % of the people in the survey answered that they are willing to live in the centre if there are more activities going on during night. A higher density in the centre will result in less empty land plots and the environment will be more inviting and lively.

During the surveys a lot of people told us that they do not want to live in a city with too much air pollution due to their health. To decrease the air pollution parks and greeneries should be put into focus and the traffic should be reduced to maintain the sustainability. The possibility to move from one suburb to another should be improved both for private vehicles and public transport to reduce the traffic in the city.
The safety while crossing the streets in San José is very bad today. It could easily be increased if the crossings are given better structure and the pedestrians are put into focus. **Less traffic** in the city will lead to more free space that can be used for public spaces such as open squares and more parks. More pavements and streets in favour of the **pedestrians** can be created which make the city more inviting to move around in by foot. If the nodes, landmarks and districts in the city would be connected with friendly and easy accessible streets, it will create more life in more parts of the city. With less traffic the sensory impressions will increase which is a way of attract more people to the public spaces.

When reducing the traffic in the city the **public transport** has to be improved to facilitate those who want to go to the centre. As can be seen in our survey most people go to the city centre by bus but still the traffic is very heavy which indicates that most cars moving in the city are just passing through. The fact that more than 80% of the passing cars in the city are only occupied by one or two persons shows that some kind of cooperation or change of attitude is required.

The Municipality seems afraid that if changes were implemented, the inhabitants would get angry and sue them. A change in the city often provokes some people, but in the end they will usually adapt to the new idea and change their attitude. As long as the change is done step by step so the population can grow with the idea the result will probably be better than no improvements at all.

Since the urbanisation is growing and statistics show that more people will move to and get born in the GAM area in the future, it is important to take care of the land. The area needs to be well planned and developed with sustainability in focus. As it is today, most want to live in the urban area, but not in the city centre since there is a lot of traffic, criminality, expensive housing and not very much nature. Therefore they settle down in the suburbs, which have spread out rapidly. The GAM area has reached its limits in terms of spatial use, now there are only mountains and volcanoes left for urban development. Measures have to be taken to give people a decent living situation in the future. It is better to repopulate the city centre, which has a negative migration today, and stop the urban sprawl to use all the land in the best way.

The repopulation is a long process and has to be done step by step. The big challenge is to change people’s view of and attitude towards the city centre and make them change their habits. It is important to have a long-term thinking and planning not to forget the future. Some things can be done immediately while other projects will take some time, maybe 10 to 20 years, to implement (table 10).

### 9.2 Short-term

The changes in a short-term level can be made without too much preparation; however some suggestions are solutions for the short term and need to be further improved in the long-term.
On the comprehensive level we mostly have suggestions for the administrative issues while on detailed level, which is within our case study area, we have more suggestions for the physical design.

9.2.1 Comprehensive level – San José

The attitude is a big issue in San José. The reputation of how everything is working is more often just a reputation; it is not the truth. The attitude to travel by bus, to live in the city centre, to stay in the city during the day but mostly during the night, and to be outside after dark are things everyone has their own opinion about. Those are all examples of bad attitude due to rumours and reputations, even though most of the population has not been in situations that can approve that the thoughts are correct, they have just heard from someone who heard that this or that happened.

▸ A change of attitude

The newspapers are often focused on the problems and informs about all bad things that have happened in the city and around the country, which is scaring the inhabitants more than necessary. In some cases the inhabitants do not know the consequences of their habits and trends. For example the awareness of the impacts on the environment when driving a car instead of travel by public transport is not widespread among the population. Campaigns to increase the awareness should be included in the education in schools and when taking driving license tests. This can change the trend of driving personal vehicles and put more focus on the environment and more ecological friendly way of transport.

A good way of reaching young people is to make them aware of the issues and problems by putting it into a game for computers and technical gadgets. This way they will learn how to act, work and cooperate to proceed and will hopefully take this with them to real life. One example today is the existing game Minecraft, where the players work to create a world to survive intruders of different kind.

▸ Better education and information

A way to reduce the traffic in the city is to put up road tolls when entering the city. To pay a fee when passing the beltway into the centre will hopefully change the pattern of the car users to drive through San José centre when going from one side of the outskirts to another. This will also make more people travel by public transport when visiting the centre. For people living in the centre an exception should be made to facilitate transportation to their home. One way of making it smoother is to install a receiver in the car so when passing the toll, an electric system can register who is moving. Consequences of this will be that more people will travel by public transport, which is why the profits of the tolls should be invested in improvements for public transport.

▸ Road tolls
A way to facilitate when driving from one side of the periphery of San José to the other is to improve the road signs. Today it is hard to know how to drive from one side to the other without passing through the city centre. The roundabouts in the beltway should have clear and easy to read signs that clarify what direction is the best one to take.

- **Improve road signs**

Less traffic in the city is the goal. Although, there will still be traffic and to reduce the air pollution a restriction of the vehicles’ emissions should be introduced. We suggest all vehicles, both private and public, to be environmentally qualified and that only those that manage to stay under a certain level of pollution will be allowed to enter inside the existing beltway. This will lead to an improvement of the vehicles. Since we want the centre to become more attractive this is an important approach to make the quality of the city better. The license conditions are easy to put up, but it requires a will from the municipality.

- **Regulate emissions**

Regulations regarding the running of buses are necessary today, but there is no structure and too many different operators, and there are no regulations concerning the environment. To facilitate easy commutes the bus stops have to be better indicated and marked. Where the stop is, what buses stops at this place, and when you can expect the bus to come. Since many buses are owned by different companies they all have different ways of indicating their routes. A common way of showing their destinations should exist, to simplify for all kind of bus travellers, even those without any knowledge of the city.

- **Indicate the bus stops and schedules**

The cooperation between the Local Government (Municipality), the Central Government and the private authorities are not working smoothly. More often it is the economy that is the issue behind no action; once they do have knowledge about the problems in San José they cannot do anything to counteract them without money. What we would like to suggest is a better communication and cooperation where everyone should be involved in what is going on and ideas and thoughts should be including all different parts. This could be scheduled meetings with the different parts or a common committee.

Since most of the land areas in the city centre are private owned, expropriation has to be done in order to make new plans. The expropriation process is hard and complicated, which makes it very difficult. Also here the cooperation between the private and public part would improve the development.

- **Better cooperation between authorities**
9.2.3 Detailed level – Case study area
We would like to reduce the traffic in the city centre, primarily by reducing the private traffic and put focus on public transport.

A suggestion to make this happen is to make Avenida 2 directed in two ways. The five lanes of today would be changed into four, one in each direction for buses only plus one in each direction for the remaining traffic. The extra space that will be released from the fifth lane will be used in widening the pavements on both sides. Since the city is crowded with buses today we want to make it smoother for the buses to move and reduce the delays for commuters. This together with a road toll would release space on the roads in favour for the buses and those who actually have to drive in the centre.

- Two-way directed Avenida 2

In a short-term view a solution for the pedestrian crossing have to be made. The existing crossings on Avenida 2 are today very few with a focus on the motorised traffic. More supervised crossings together with a longer crossing time would make it easier to move by foot in the centre.

- More supervised crossings with longer crossing time

Many pavements are dilapidated and not suited for smooth walking. The only pavements in the city core we consider being good is the ones of Avenida 3, going from Parque Nacional to Parque Morazán. The problem here is that even though the connection between those parks is good for walking people, when reaching Parque Morazán and the two neighbouring parks it is almost impossible to enter them. Traffic and fences prevent the accessibility. We suggest putting up more pedestrian crossings here and stoplights to ease the crossing.

- Better pavements

To attract more people to visit the centre, more events and activities should take place. We suggest introducing a city festival to San José each year to bring out a greater public community, something that the people of San José can work on together and become proud of. Though, when creating an event it should be easy to take part and get the information about it. Having this festival in the parks and squares, where every part has its own show or character, they should be used as nodes of activities and during the festival the streets between them have to be closed to ease the transportation on foot between them. This will show the inhabitants the possibility of walking around the core and ease the transformation to pedestrian streets. If people would become aware of that other people are staying in the centre, more would be attracted to go there and probably change their attitude.

- Events and activities, a festival
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?

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When using the public spaces in the city it is important to have good opportunities to stand and sit, which is why we suggest a renovation of benches and sitting possibilities in all parks and squares. Focus should be to create benches with protections in the back and locate them in a good social position. They should be located unified but not intruding on the others sphere. The pedestrian streets lack areas to sit, which is why we suggest putting comfortable benches along the streets. This will increase the staying in the street and not only welcome fast moving people.

- More benches

To create a safer environment in the city, the lighting has to be better in all streets and parks. If the lighting is better, more people dare to move there and if more people are moving there, more eyes are watching what happens and the area feels even safer.

- Better lighting

All closed walls and covered windows between public and private space must vanish, such as street shops with steel gates in fronts. They should be changed to transparent gates or none at all to lighten up the area with windows and a cosier surrounding.

- Open up the facades

The hideouts, especially in the parks, should be removed. Too many bushes and trees create blind spots and should be taken away both in Parque Nacional and Parque España. However, it has to be considered that some greenery needs to stay to create shade for the sun and the rain, which many public spaces lack.

- Less hideouts

9.3 Long-term

9.3.1 Comprehensive level – San José

Since infrastructure in a city tends to stay for a long time the authorities and city planners should invest in good and effective streets from the very beginning. This has not been the reality in San José, but by buying up land now some of the damage can be recovered.

First of all then, the laws for expropriation have to be reviewed and updated so that it is easier for the Government to acquire land. Land should be obtained to build more beltways around the centre.

According to the Government, they have plans for constructing a half second beltway in the north, but in the south all the land is already developed so it is not possible, there are only mountains left. This is why we believe the laws considering governmental acquisition need to be changed.

Another reason for improving the expropriation laws is that it will be easier for the Municipalities to buy land for future development. When the land price has increased they can sell it to developers and put the profit into housing for poor like Tannerfelt and Ljung.
To manage the costs of constructing new roads, a program called Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) can be applied. In this form of financing project, the Government launch a project that private developers compete to receive. The Government will then help the winner to get a bank loan to finance the construction. When the construction is finished, the private company will have the responsibility for it, operate it and take charge of the use; this money goes to the company. When the loan is paid off, both maintenance and ownership of the construction fall in the hands of the Government.

This financing form has been done in projects all over the world and also with the Öresund Bridge. We think this could be an appropriate option when building the beltways around San José to facilitate for the Government economically.

➢ BOT for the beltways

There is no reason for all the buses to terminate in the city centre. There need be a better cooperation between buses so that one can go from one end of the urban area to another without always having to transit. We also suggest the buses to go in between the suburbs and not only to and from the suburbs. And therefore the public transport is in need of the beltways. A regulation of the bus companies with more specific routes and schedules would help to decrease too many buses on the same route and create a better network spread in the city.

➢ One or two more beltways
How can the city centre of San José be more attractive?
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The government does have a good plan for this (see figure 24 on page 74) where they also suggest to concentrate the bus routes with buses that are able to take three times more passengers. Again, it is important to change the attitude towards public transport. The tram has the capacity to move many people at once, however to create the lanes for tram in the city will be very expensive and as said before it is not a solution in the bigger scale which is why we do not consider this as our suggestion.

➢ Better cooperation between buses – less transit

Quality, frequency, safety and simplicity have to be considered to obtain a good public transport service that is attractive for use. Even though a lot of people are using the buses, there are still many people that have never even been on a bus. The busses have a reputation of being filthy. To counter this, more focus should be spent on the quality of new, modern, and clean buses. A crowded, dirty bus is not attractive and is a reason to why some people are not using the bus.

➢ New and better buses

It should also be easier for those that still need to change buses, the bus stops need to be bigger and to be better organised. With a better structure it will be possible to operate more routes and higher frequency of departures, making it possible for more people to use the bus as the daily transport mode without it being time consuming and complicated, since the waiting time is more trying than the actual travelling time.

➢ Better organised bus stops

Another city in South America that earlier had the same problem with the crowded traffic in the city core is Curitiba in Brazil. They introduced a BRT system which is working very well. The system improves the operating speed and reliability. For example, stations where the passengers have to go inside to wait for the bus and pay for the ticket beforehand makes the boarding quicker and to give the buses their own lanes gives them the ability to reach the destination quicker. Since we found Costa Rica’s inhabitants very good in queuing while waiting for the bus and consider this as a good suggestion in San José. By eliminating the delays some of the buses are able to run every 90 seconds. This provides a huge capacity for transportation and should be used in San José as well.

➢ BRT for better service

To changes people’s attitudes towards public transport it is also crucial that the buses are safe. A lot of people are scared of using the buses because they think they are going to get robbed. They are especially scared during the dark hours of the day. We suggest the buses to be more spacious with more mirrors for the bus driver to keep control, lights inside the buses and bus stops with a good structure and lighting to bring an improved sense of security.
Safety on buses

In the long run we suggest most of the motorised traffic to vanish within the beltway that exists today. We would like to banish all private motorised transport from there. This will of course have consequences and has to be done in steps. One alternative is that only those who live within the beltway will be allowed to drive there. In the beginning this would probably make it attractive to live within the beltway. It will help the process of repopulating the centre and after some additional years when the private traffic is totally closed off, the centre will already be a lot denser with more life in the public spaces. The public transport will have had time to develop for the better. This is of course dependent on a change in attitude, and that the wish should be to live central.

City core closed for private traffic

Other consequences that need to be taken care of before closing all the roads within the beltway to private traffic, is that all those cars and trucks have to drive somewhere else. This is what the beltways will be used for and therefore they have to be constructed before closing off the centre.

To introduce this gradually we suggest having car free days in the city core, like the Ciclovia program in Bogotá. The streets would be closed off for private motorised traffic for a certain time period on Sundays for example. As it is today, each car has one day when it is not allowed inside the beltway. So the problem of having one day banned for driving your car already exists. Only today most have the option of taking another car instead. With the car free days people will find out how the city works with no cars and get used to the idea. Of course this puts a lot of pressure on the public transport to improve which is why it is a long-term vision. The car free day can start with just two hours to step by step, over some years, become a whole day. This can then be expanded to two days after some years.

Car free days

Not many people are bicycling in San José and we suggest promoting this mode of transport with campaigns. A terrific opportunity to use the bike and practice biking skills are those car free days.

Bicycle campaigns

A suggestion we have is to relocate some parts of the university, or a whole private university, to the city centre to create more life all day around by students. The atmosphere is totally different in San Pedro than in the centre of San José. Here the pedestrians have the priority when moving in the area and all cars have to give way for the students, which is an idea to create in areas around places with students in the city.

University buildings centrally located
9.3.2 Detailed level – Case study area

We want the connectivity between the different functions in the core to be more apparent. Some of the parks have great quality already today and we want the inhabitants and tourists to use them more. The accessibility, of the park or square, is more important for the use than the design. Depending on from which direction you are entering the city you can go by bus to all the parks and squares in our case study area. The problem today is that there is no pedestrian street connecting the parks in the north and the east with the rest of the core. We suggest establishing an integrated city and having clear pathways between different nodes.

- Connection between nodes

Parque Morasán manages to attract some people in spite of the lacking connection, and Parque Nacional has a big bus stop and the National Library that attracts people. However, Plaza de la Democracia has practically nothing that attract. It is out of the pedestrian network, which makes people not pass, and the museum next to it does not attract many people to the area. First of all it needs to be connected, and then the design should be improved to make it on a more human scale and improve the micro climate. Plaza de las Garantia Sociales also needs to be improved to create an atmosphere worth visiting. Parque de la Merced is surrounded by traffic in two directions which gives the area an unsecure feeling. With a better connection to the rest of the city and less traffic, the park will attract more people and the park will as a consequence, feel safer (figure 92).

- Parks and squares that attract

As already mentioned, parks and squares are accessible with bus only depending on from which suburb you are travelling. Buses should also continue around the core so that it is easy to get to wherever you want with the same bus or without transit in between transports.

- Accessibility with bus

In general, we suggest focusing on the pedestrians, who are the ones that bring life to the city. We want them to come to the city for all kind of activities; necessary, optional and social and not to forget; living. We advocate the conditions for the pedestrians to be optimal and the motorised traffic to be inferior to the pedestrians and cyclists. It is important to have safe crossings for the pedestrians to make them feel comfortable. The most favourable would be to have all crossings like the existing one between Avenida 4 and Calle 2 (figure 28 page 75) where the walking people is in charge. These are two pedestrian only streets that are crossing each other and it would of course not be the same with one being motorised. However since we suggest the motorised traffic to decrease to finally, maybe in 25 years, only consist of the
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necessary transportation types like buses, taxis and goods, intersections like the one above would be possible.

- Focus on pedestrians

Calle 9, going five blocks south from Avenida 2, has just been constructed into a pedestrian street. It has a lot of good qualities. The quality we like the most is that in intersections with motorised streets, there is a circular speed bump so that the vehicles have to slow down and adapt to the pedestrians. Crossings in smaller streets should take inspiration from this new pedestrian street crossing. We recommend this kind of intersection to be implemented in more places.

To solve the problem of safety regarding intersections on Avenida 2, the lanes of traffic could go down in tunnels under the pedestrian crossings. In any case we do not advocate the pedestrians to change level in height difference to cross the streets; it should be the vehicles.

- Intersections where pedestrians are in charge, inspiration from Calle 9

For those streets where vehicles will still go, the pavements need to be renovated and widened. As it is today, the pavements are crowded and full of obstacles like holes and cracks. They are also very narrow and street vendors’ booths take up a lot of space creating bottlenecks.

- Widen pavements

In the first step of closing down the streets for motorised traffic, we suggest to transform Calle 7, from Avenida Central to Parque Morasán, to pedestrian only. We also suggest doing this for Avenida Central in the east end of the existing pedestrian street to Calle 17 so that Parque Nacional and Plaza de la Democracia becomes connected to the core. Today a lot of buses have their stops on this strip, but since Avenida 2 will be directed in two ways, the buses will be moved to here. (see names on parks in figure 25 page 73)

Furthermore, in the first step we suggest to extend Calle 9 one
block in the north, connecting it with Avenida Central (figure 104).

As mentioned, Avenida 3 west of Parque Nacional already has good pavements, but in the second step we also suggest this to be a pedestrian only street. Parque Nacional got very good results in the Gehl analysis, which indicates that the park is a good asset to the city and everyone should be able to make use of it. To connect this park to the centre, the pedestrian streets should come true and facilitate for the city users.

With a two way directed Avenida 2 (figure 105), it is not necessary to have both Avenida 1 and 3 as one-way streets going east. In the second step we also suggest Calle 12, between Avenida 4 and Avenida Central to become a pedestrian only street so that the pedestrian network becomes closed. The reason why people are not taking Calle 14, in the end of the pedestrian strips, is because of the entering of Avenida 2 would then be blocked.
A third step in our vision would be to convert Avenida 6, between Calle 9 and 17, to pedestrian only. There is no pedestrian connection here today, and even with the streets constructed in step 1 and 2 there will be no clear route for pedestrians to reach this nice area of restaurants from Avenida 4.

- Construct more pedestrian streets – step 1, 2, 3
- Redirect some car streets

To make all the pedestrian streets more lively and attractive we also suggest to make the facades more open with soft edges. Some of the streets currently only have interesting things on one side.

- Open facades with soft edges

When the beltways are constructed and more and more streets in the city become pedestrian only with improved public transport, there will be fewer cars in the city. This also means that less parking space is needed. Therefore we want to gradually remove a lot of the parking areas.

- Remove parking space

Repopulate the city centre; by for example put housing on top of parking houses and businesses creates a movement of people all day long. All empty land lots in the centre should rebuild for the same reason. With a higher density in the city the area will inhabit more people that create life. When building new houses the focus should be to inhabit as many as possible why buildings with more levels should be developed. However, too high buildings are not to recommend since the tenants should have a connection to the public spaces on the ground even when in the apartment and vice versa.

- Housing on top of Parking and build more levels to increase density

To improve the safety in the public spaces, a better overview when in Plaza de la Cultura has to be invented. Today the square has a lot of blind spots mostly because of the three different levels. One cannot see from one level to the other which gives an unsecure feeling. Our suggestion is to make the transitions between the levels smoother and create openings where it is possible to overlook the whole square.

- Better overview within Plaza de la Cultura
Table 10. Summary of suggestions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of suggestions</th>
<th>Short-term</th>
<th>Long-term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Comprehensive level** | ➢ A change of attitude  
➢ Better education and information  
➢ Road tolls  
➢ Improve road signs  
➢ Regulate emissions  
➢ Indicate the bus stops and schedules  
➢ Better cooperation between authorities | ➢ Better expropriation laws  
➢ One or two more beltways  
➢ BOT for the beltways  
➢ Better cooperation between buses – less transit  
➢ New and better buses  
➢ Better organised bus stops  
➢ BRT for better service  
➢ Safety on buses  
➢ City core closed for private traffic  
➢ Car free days  
➢ Bicycle campaigns  
➢ University buildings centrally located | |
| **Detailed level** | ➢ Two-way directed Avenida 2  
➢ More supervised crossings with longer crossing time  
➢ Better pavements  
➢ Events and activities, a festival  
➢ More benches  
➢ Better lighting  
➢ Open up the facades  
➢ Less hideouts | ➢ Connection between nodes  
➢ Parks and squares that attract  
➢ Accessibility with bus  
➢ Focus on pedestrians  
➢ Intersections where pedestrians are in charge  
➢ Widen pavements  
➢ Construct more pedestrian streets – step 1, 2, 3  
➢ Redirect some car streets  
➢ Open facades with soft edges  
➢ Remove parking space  
➢ Housing on top of Parking to density  
➢ Better overview within Plaza de la Cultura | |
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**10 Discussion and conclusion**

Due to the time limits and experiences along the way we decided to suggest ways in which the city can make the centre more attractive in San José instead of creating a complete idea.

The way of living and habits in Costa Rica are different from Sweden, but we are very grateful and found it interesting to be part of another culture and country. It was hard to imagine how it really is to live in our area of study and afterwards we think maybe it would have been better if we would have been able to live in the city core to experience the city at all times of the day. However, this was not possible for security reasons. This would also not have given us the great experience of travelling by bus in San José and the suburbs.

Along with the different culture, their way of using the streets is not what we are used to. The more aggressive way of driving in Costa Rica needed to be considered while doing our surveys and making up the suggestions.

We noticed that some areas have a bad reputation due to rumours and many people are scared to come to these areas. When we analysed and interviewed at those places, we got the impression that the reputation was false. For example when we were told it was too dangerous to stay in the city centre after dark and we were never allowed to do this. In the end when we one day passed the centre at night time, we experienced a different atmosphere than expected, with a lot of people enjoying the squares and streets.

We were warned in many different situations, even to travel by public transport which is almost a must while staying in San José without a car. In those eight weeks we used the buses every day, we were never even close to a bad experience.

When interviewing authorities we were in all cases, except one, referred to talk to men. We thought about if we could have done this differently, but since most well educated academics are men in Costa Rica it was hard to change.

When done with the field study in Costa Rica we found out that to make San José an attractive city many implements need to be done. We have come up with a lot of suggestions, they are all important on their own, but to create a city where everyone wants to go all ideas and suggestions should be part of the future plans in San José.

**10.1 What can we contribute with?**

We hope to inspire those who work with planning in developing countries by publishing this report. Some tools and ideas are collected in the project which we hope can be used in the future in Costa Rica.

Our goal was through the whole project to make up suggestions of how to make San José attractive for both inhabitants and
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foreigners, and while working with this we found out many other important and interesting issues we wanted to work with but were limited by the time.

Issues we found interesting, and hope to inspire others with are:

- A suggestion of a better structure of the public transport in San José
- A deeper survey and investigation of the expropriation laws in Costa Rica
- Build a cooperation concept between different authorities in Urban Planning

10.2 What did we learn?

We have learnt how to continue when facing a problem and difficulty, which we did quite often. For example when our pre-studies in Lund did not show the same result as the field work did, when we had meetings and consultations with different people and it did not go as planned, when the language was a barrier to get the information that we wanted.

What we would like to remember in our next time we do a study like this is to form our own opinions and experience on our own before listen to what everyone else says.
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Appendix 1. Interview guide
The interviews were proceeding with the questions in the interview guide below. The questions were open and it was up to the interviewee to talk free about the subject and we asked follow up questions along the way.

- What is your role in the Urban Development in San José?
- Have you been involved in urban projects in San José?
- Are you involved with any projects in San José right now?
- Do you or your company have any future plans for the city?
- What instances and companies are you cooperating with, regarding urban development?
- What is your personal opinion about San José with emphasis on your field of study?
- Do you see any qualities in San José today?
- Do you see any problems with San José today?
- What is your personal opinion about other’s ideas right now or in the past and future for the city?
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Appendix 2. Interviews

The selections of interviewees were made together with our supervisor Johnny Åstrand in Sweden and Mario Rodriguez in Costa Rica. They knew who had the best expertise in our field of study and we tried to make the selection as wide as possible, with authorities both from the local, governmental and private sectors. Professionals, both that were working with urban planning at the moment and those who did in the past, and have made impacts, were interviewed. Some were interviewed more than once. We used an open ended semi structured method for the interviews, which were more performed as discussions, with an attended translator (Spanish – English) when necessary.

Below can be found:

What date we made the interview, at what time, the location, the name of the interviewee, his profession and the main topic of the meeting.

- 2012-08-20 at 9.00. in the office of Housing Development Management, Lunds Tekniska Högskola, Sweden
  Johnny Åstrand, Director - Housing Development & Management, Lund University
  He explained the problems in the city of San José.

- 2012-09-17 at 9.00. in the office of Rodríguez y Asociados at San Pedro district, San José.

  Mario Rodríguez, civil engineer and Chief executive officer of Rodríguez y Asociados, San José and former project director and cofounder of FUPROVI.
  He explained how Town Renewal is a big subject in San José at the moment and the discussion gave a lot of ideas of who we should talk to for further information.

- 2012-09-17 at 11.00 in the city centre of San José.
  Jorge Rodríguez & Jorge Mario Rodríguez, architects in Rodríguez y Asociados, San José.
  We were looking at the town centre, were showed problems and opportunities which we observed and noted. History of the centre and problems about the traffic were discussed.

- 2012-09-18 at 9.00 in Barrio Amón.
  Randall Viales, lawyer, expert in coastal planning and good knowledge about legislation for building houses.
  He told us about the law system in planning and housing in Costa Rica. Main problems in the city core and public transport were the main topics.

- 2012-09-20 at 10.00 in University of Costa Rica, architectural faculty, San José.
  Daniel Morgan Ball, Architect and Coordinator of Masters Program in Housing and Social Infrastructure, School of Architecture, University of Costa Rica and author to “Los Espacios Públicos en el Centro de San José”
  Main topic was the problems with traffic in the city centre.
He told us about previous works and surveys made by him and his students in this area and got a lot of good ideas and suggestions. The repopulation of the city was also a big topic.

- 2012-09-21 at 10.00 in the office of Rodríguez y Asociados at San Pedro district, San José. **Mario Rodríguez**, civil engineer and Chief executive officer of Rodríguez y Asociados, San José and former project director and cofounder of FUPROVI
  *Reasons to why the city centre is dead were the topic, such as the trend to move out from the centre and the way the local and governmental municipality is handle the situation.*

- 2012-09-25 at 8.00 in the office of INVU (Instituto Nacional de Vivienda y Urbanismo), San José **Francisco Mora Protti**, Director and Manager in Urban Planning INVU, governmental.
  *The regulations and plans about town renewal in San José and GAM were explained. The responsibilities for different instances and the regulations for the GAM-plan were discussed.*

- 2012-09-25 at 11.00 in the city centre, San José **Mario Rodríguez**, as above.
  *We were introduced to areas in the centre we had not seen before. Parking lots were shown in the pedestrian streets and in many unbacked areas. We saw many empty houses and buildings in the centre and were discussing some of the reasons for this.*

- 2012-09-25 at 14.30 at the National Geographic Institute, San José **Jonathan Jimenéz**, Geographer at IGN (Instituto Geográfico Nacional), San José
  *He showed maps and related material to use in computer programs. The different regions in GAM and Costa Rica were discussed.*

- 2012-09-25 at 11.00 in the city centre, San José **Mario Rodríguez**, as above.
  *We were introduced to areas in the centre we had not seen before. Parking lots were shown in the pedestrian streets and in many unbacked areas. We saw many empty houses and buildings in the centre and were discussing some of the reasons for this.*

- 2012-09-26 at 10.00 in the house and office in San José **Eduardo Brenes Mata**, former director and architect of PRU-GAM, San José and author to “Peatonización, una opción para el rescate urbano”.
  *Public transport and the infrastructure in San José were discussed. Many ideas of how to solve the traffic problem and to increase the pedestrian streets. We took part in the work PRU-GAM had done and got a lot of good information.*

- 2012-10-08 at 13.00 in the Universidad Veritas in Zapote, San José **Randall Viales**, same as above.
  *More specific questions about different areas in the centre of San José, what the potential is in the two areas we have chosen to immerse ourselves in.*
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- 2012-10-10 at 14.00 at the Municipality office of San José
  Vladimir Klotchkov, Head of Departemento Gestión Urbana (Urban Management), San José
  Royé Alvarez Cartin, architect in Departemento Gestión Urbana (Urban Management), San José
  Got involved in the plans of the city from the local side.

- 2012-10-11 at 9.00 in University of Costa Rica, architectural faculty, San José.
  Daniel Morgan Ball, same as above.
  Talked about the parks in the city centre and how the pedestrian streets are connecting and NOT connecting different landmarks in San José.

- 2012-10-18 at 9.00 in Municipality office of San José
  Mauricio Vega, Geographer at the Cadastral and GIS department, San José
  Discussed material and maps of San José; for example land uses, road networks, different regions in the area and urbanisation in the 2000’s.

- 2012-10-24 at 14.00 in MOPT (governmental department of public transport) San José
  Joyce Arguedas, civil engineer at MOPT, and Flores Ronald, Director at MOPT, San José
  They explained their ideas and plans about the public transport in San José, both inside the city centre but more focus on GAM and the surroundings.
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Appendix 3. Survey

Questions to be answered at Parque Merced, Plaza de La Cultura and Parque Nacional

1. How often do you come to or pass this place?
   a. Less than one day per week
   b. 1-2 days per week
   c. 3-5 days per week
   d. 6 or more days per week

2. What is the main reason for you to come or pass here?
   a. Work
   b. School/university
   c. Shopping
   d. Restaurant/cafè
   e. Exercising
   f. Entertainment/socializing
   g. Change of buss/train
   h. Other

3. Can you imagine yourself living in the city centre?
   a. Yes
   b. Yes, if the area is secure
   c. Yes, if it is not too expensive
   d. Yes, if it has a lot of green areas around
   e. Yes, if there are a lot of activities during night time
   f. No

4. How did you travel to the city today?
   a. Walking
   b. Bus
   c. Train
   d. Car
   e. Taxi
   f. Bicycle

5. Do you own a car?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. No, but someone in the family does

6. Are you worried about getting victim to crime here?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Sometimes

7. If yes, why?
   a. I have been exposed for crime here before
   b. I know someone that has been exposed for crime here
   c. The area is dangerous

8. If no, why?
   a. It has never happened to me or anyone I know
   b. It is a safe area

9. What is your age?
   a. Under 30
   b. 30-55
   c. Above 55

10. What is your gender?
    a. Man
    b. Woman
Somos estudiantes de la Universidad de Lund de Suecia con especialización en topografía y planeamiento urbano. Estamos realizando un estudio en San José. ¿Podría por favor ayudarnos a llenar este formulario?

1. **Que tan frecuente usted vienes o pasa por este sitio?**
   a. Menos de una vez por semana
   b. 1-2 días por semana
   c. 3-5 días por semana
   d. 6 o más veces por semana

2. **Cuál es la principal razón por la que pasa por aquí?**
   a. Trabajo
   b. Estudios
   c. Compras
   d. Ir a comer
   e. Hacer deporte
   f. Entretenimiento/Salir con amigos
   g. Tomar bus o tren
   h. Otros

3. **Cómo viaja a la ciudad hoy en día?**
   a. Caminando
   b. Autobus
   c. Tren
   d. Tren
   e. Taxi
   f. Bicicleta

4. **Tiene un carro?**
   a. Sí
   b. No
   c. No, pero un miembro de la familia si

5. **Se imagina usted viviendo en el centro de la capital?**
   a. Sí
   b. Sí, si fuera seguro
   c. Sí, si no fuera muy caro
   d. Sí, si existieran bastantes áreas verdes alrededor
   e. Sí, si hubieran mayores alternativas de actividades nocturnas.
   f. No

6. **A usted le preocupa ser asaltado por aquí?**
   a. Sí
   b. No
   c. Sí, en la noche
   d. Alguna veces

7. **Si su respuesta es sí, por qué?**
   a. Me han asaltado antes por aquí
   b. Conozco a alguien que ha sido asaltado por aquí.
   c. La zona es peligrosa.

8. **Si su respuesta es no, por qué?**
   a. Nunca me ha ocurrido, ni a nadie que conozca.
   b. Es una área segura.

9. **Qué edad tiene Ud.?**
   a. Menos de 30
   b. 30-55
   c. Más de 55

10. **Sexo?**
    a. Masculino
    b. Femenino
Appendix 4. Raw data from Questionary Survey

Compilation of answers from the questionary. The numbers in yellow boxes represent how many answered the question. In some questions more than one option has been answered, those are indicated with blue boxes. The numbers in green boxes represent the total answers at the different sites.

1. How often do you come to or pass this place? (Qué tan frecuente usted viene o pasa por este sitio?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parque de la Merced</th>
<th>Plaza de la Cultura</th>
<th>Parque Nacional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Less than one day per week</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1-2 days per week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 3-5 days per week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. 6 or more days per week</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What is the main reason for you to come or pass here? (Cuál es la principal razón por la que pasa por aquí?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parque de la Merced</th>
<th>Plaza de la Cultura</th>
<th>Parque Nacional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Work</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. School/University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Shopping</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Restaurant/Café</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Exercising</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. entertainment/Socializing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Change of bus/train</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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3 How did you travel to the city today? (Cómo viaja a la ciudad hoy en día?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parque de la Merced</th>
<th>Plaza de la Cultura</th>
<th>Parque Nacional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Walking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. bus</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Train</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Car</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Taxi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Bicycle</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Do you own a car? (Tiene un carro?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parque de la Merced</th>
<th>Plaza de la Cultura</th>
<th>Parque Nacional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No, but someone in the family does</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Can you imagine yourself living in the city centre? (Cómo viaja a la ciudad hoy en día?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parque de la Merced</th>
<th>Plaza de la Cultura</th>
<th>Parque Nacional</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
<td>Yes - IF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Yes, if the area is secure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Yes, if it is not too expensive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Yes, if it has a lot of green areas around</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Yes, if there are a lot of activities during night time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. No</td>
<td>SUM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Are you worried about getting subject of crime here? (A usted le preocupa ser asaltado por aquí?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Parque Nacional</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Yes, at night time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Sometimes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 If yes, why? (Si su respuesta es sí, por qué?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Plaza de la Cultura</th>
<th>Parque Nacional</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. I have been exposed for crime here before</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I know someone that has been exposed for crime here</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The area is dangerous</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. If no, why? (Si su respuesta es no, por qué?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Plaza de la Cultura</th>
<th>Parque Nacional</th>
<th>SUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. It has never happened to me or anyone I know</td>
<td>Man 5 Woman 2 Total 7</td>
<td>Man 4 Woman 6 Total 10</td>
<td>Man 2 Woman 1 Total 3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. It is a safe area</td>
<td>Man 1 Woman 2 Total 3</td>
<td>Man 3 Woman 1 Total 4</td>
<td>Man 1 Woman 0 Total 1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. What is your age? (Que edad tiene Ud.?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Parque Nacional</th>
<th>SUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Under 30</td>
<td>Man 8 Woman 9 Total 17</td>
<td>Man 5 Woman 6 Total 11</td>
<td>Man 7 Woman 11 Total 18</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 30 - 55</td>
<td>7 Woman 4 Total 11</td>
<td>9 Woman 6 Total 15</td>
<td>3 Woman 6 Total 9</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Over 55</td>
<td>3 Woman 2 Total 5</td>
<td>5 Woman 2 Total 7</td>
<td>5 Woman 2 Total 7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>18 Woman 15 Total 33</td>
<td>19 Woman 14 Total 33</td>
<td>15 Woman 19 Total 34</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. What is your gender? (Sexo?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Plaza de la Cultura</th>
<th>Parque Nacional</th>
<th>SUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Man</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Woman</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>