

# BARCELONA (ES)

## WE ARE CITY - SOM CIUTAT

The Besòs i Maresme neighbourhood, the subject of a design competition, is characterised by very generous but poorly designed open spaces that are underutilized by its residents due to various factors such as degradation, a feeling of insecurity and lack of facilities. Moreover, the predominantly impermeable ground promotes negative effects like the Urban Heat Island. The houses, built between the 1950s and the 1960s, exhibit poor architectural quality, low thermal performance, and cramped spaces. By a social point of view the area is very poor, with one of the lowest medium incomes of the city.

On the other hand, the district has great natural resources, and many associations providing social aids to disadvantaged people.

First of all the project aims to improve the neighbourhood's connection with the rest of the city, requalify it from an urban and social perspective, with a strong focus on individuals as active and participatory protagonists of their city-neighbourhood. The focus is on dynamics of public, semi-public, and private spaces that ensure essential human needs, such as public spaces for socializing and recreational activities, as well as work and commercial activities; semi-public spaces promoting neighbourhood life and private spaces enhanced through building improvements.

"We are city" is a project based on the idea of living the city as an extension of one's own home - a sensitive theme in a neighbourhood like Besòs i Maresme, which faces degraded living condition - and public spaces designed to reflect community identities. The project is human-designed and discourages individualistic means of transport like cars, encouraging a comfortable life on a human scale, providing access to services and the well-being of a re-naturalized environment. On a broader dimension, the project area directly connects with the Forum area, recently renovated, and the southern seafront, with the La Mina neighbourhood and the Besòs River to the east, Av. Diagonal to the west, and the La Verneda i La Pau neighbourhoods to the north. These areas collectively constitute a resource for our site, situated at the crossroads of a network of recreational, sports and commercial routes. For instance, the Rambla de Prim directly links the project area with the Forum, extending cycling and pedestrian routes and existing sports facilities.

Additionally, the expansion of Barcelona's cycle path network, foreseen by our project, will enable quick movements within the neighbourhood also providing access to facilities and natural spaces within the urbanized area, such as the Parc Fluvial del Besòs, Parc Besòs, and Parc Diagonal Mar.

The proposed interventions in the area align with and enhance the Superillas plan of Barcelona. The project integrates the objectives outlined in the competition requirements and further explores documents such as "Pla de Barris del Besòs i El Maresme", "Agència d'Ecologia Urbana de Barcelona", "Plan del Verde y de la Biodiversidad de Barcelona 2020," "Superilla Barcelona," and "Pla de Mobilitat Urbana de Barcelona PMU 2013-2018."

Moreover, the project is committed to addressing global issues like the "SDG 2023 Sustainable Development Goals" with the "17 Goals to Transform Our World." Some of these points are integrated into the proposal for intervention.

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The main goals of the project are summarised below:

## SOLIDARITY



**2 Zero Hunger.** The neighbourhood is currently involved in social projects such as the “Menjador Solidari Gregal,” a volunteer association providing meals to the most vulnerable individuals. To ensure decent dining conditions and to promote a sense of community and conviviality, a large, equipped area with tables will be placed near the new central amphitheatre square, the “Menjador”, and the commercial hub.

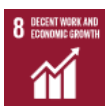
## NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITIES



**4 Quality Education.** Education is a right and the most effective way to guarantee a decent future for the young people in the neighbourhood, giving them a chance at social redemption. From this starting point, attention is given to provide quality spaces for post-school study, imagining a neighbourhood sensitive to this theme. Ground floors of the new residential complexes will be transformed into study rooms, allowing less fortunate children to have access to tools for studying in a safe environment, fostering socialization and group learning dynamics.



**5 Gender Equality.** The documentation collected revealed the absence of neighbourhood activities engaging specifically girls. By analysing public spaces and studying sports areas, the proposal deliberately incorporates spaces tailored for both women and men, ensuring equal opportunities for neighbourhood recreational activities. The new residential spaces will facilitate a broader involvement.



**8 Decent Work and Economic Growth.** The competition emphasizes the revitalization of ground floors. The proposal involves rehabilitating currently residential ground floors facing public streets by converting them into spaces for entrepreneurial activities. These spaces will cater to young creatives, providing ateliers as well as traditional commercial spaces, all concentrated in what is referred to as the project’s social focus areas.

## GREEN ENERGY / SUSTAINABILITY



**6 Clean Water and Sanitation.** Residential complexes will be grouped to create a large garden for interested residents. This operation not only frees up land oppressed by asphalt but also creates water collection ponds to be used by inhabitants.



**7 Affordable and Clean Energy.** Suitable roofs will be equipped with new photovoltaic panels to enhance homes energy self-efficiency. Additionally, public lighting can be replaced by energy-efficient LED lighting or, even better, by solar-powered lighting.



**11 Sustainable Cities and Communities.** The excellent local public transportation within the neighbourhood will be supplemented by connected cycling paths linking the neighbourhood to key points in the city. For instance, a connection between Av. Diagonal and Parc Central del Poblenou and Rambla de la Mina, continuing towards the Besos River and the centre of Badalona. Sustainable mobility will be promoted by closing some

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roads to fast traffic, emphasizing their role as civic commerce streets, with a unique platform and reduced speeds up to 20km/h. Priority will be given to pedestrians, real authors of social life and true protagonists in the neighbourhood's social reactivation. Additionally, to enhance security in the neighbourhood, some residential buildings will be aggregated to avoid dispersal, creating primary and secondary facades, compacting public spaces, and reducing so-called dark alleys to increase safety.



**Climate Action.** To counter climate change, the proposal suggests the adoption of green infrastructure to mitigate heat islands and regenerate soils by increasing the percentage of permeable surface through permeable pavements and larger green areas. Public green spaces will be expanded, with neighbourhood gardens and vertical green walls on buildings.



**Life on Land.** The project reduces the impermeable ground percentage by 70% through greening the two main axes of the neighbourhood: Rambla de Prim and Carrer d'Alfons el Magnànim. Additionally, by intervening in the residential area's layout, green gardens are created within the buildings, enhancing the recreational space by adding greenery. Infrastructural elements include large green axes that act as green outlets for the natural environment along the Besos River. The introduced vegetation follows Mediterranean climate guidelines. The Rambla will host non-accessible vegetated areas, featuring species like *Mespilus germanica L.* (attracting aphids, which birds feed on), *Pyrus calleryana Decne* (attracting aphids, which birds feed on), *Quercus robur L.* (attracting various insects, which birds feed on).

In summary, our project for the Besòs and Maresme neighbourhood reimagines public and collective spaces through three main strategies:

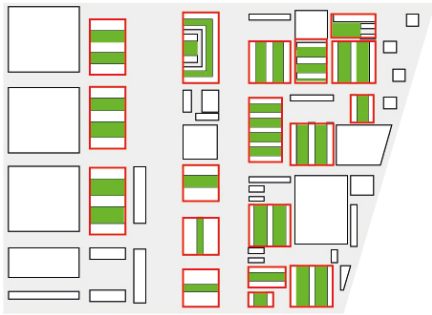
1. **Densify and Diversify:** Enriching spaces between built structures and ground floors with activities and amenities, creating highly diversified spaces based on permeability and intimacy levels.
2. **Re-naturalizing:** Horizontal and vertical surfaces are re-naturalized through actions such as depaving and creating green walls, fostering the development of new ecosystems.
3. **Requalifying:** Buildings are requalified through facade retrofits and shading systems and public spaces are renovated, enhancing the residents' quality of life in the neighbourhood.

The result is a masterplan based on four primary figures, differing in practices, scale, speed, and intimacy degree, all modifying the ground on which they are situated:

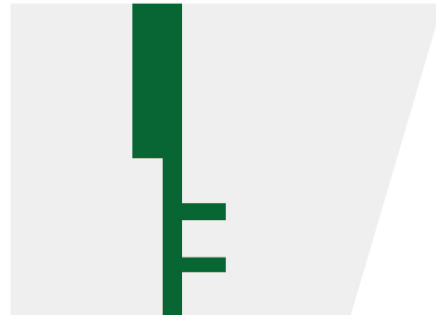
- The semi-public Space of courtyards and terraces
- The Spaces of Proximity
- The Rambla as an Urban Sports Forest
- The Network of Commerce and Social Life

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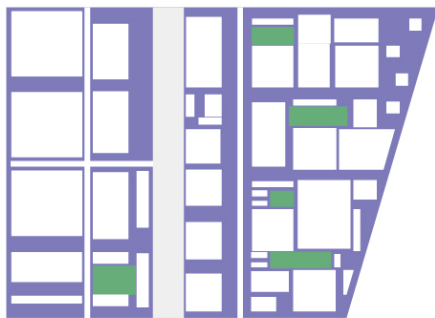
## FOUR DIFFERENT FIGURES



1. The semi-public Space of courtyards and terraces



3. The Rambla as an Urban Sports Forest



2. The Spaces of Proximity



4. The Network of Commerce and Social Life

In conclusion, the project aims for a city-neighbourhood-community revival in a sustainable way, emphasizing inclusivity and not excluding any of its inhabitants.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

According to our project, the implementation process will develop in 3 main phases:

1. Participatory planning. First, we will ask the people living in the neighbourhood their needs and problems in order to adapt the intervention to their different necessity and priority. We plan to organise workshops and public debates to discuss the project with inhabitants and with the social stakeholders active in the neighbourhood.
2. Awareness activity. In a second phase, we will organise awareness-raising activities to involve inhabitants in the project and make them aware of climate change issues. An area will then be developed where people can plant and cultivate trees that will be used in the future public spaces of El Maresme I Besòs.
3. Pilot project. Thanks to the dialogue with locals, we will be able to build a prototype of intervention on the two scales: architectural and urban.