

## La Paternal, Buenos Aires

### *The East, Industrial Sector of La Paternal Neighborhood*

Located slightly northwest of the city centre, the selected area of interest is made up of a large section of La Paternal neighbourhood, located in Comuna 15, the city's 15<sup>th</sup> district. The site is surrounded by large-scale infrastructure, such as the Chacarita Cemetery, the San Martin Elderly Home, La Paternal Train Station, the informal settlement La Carbonilla, as well as the San Martin railway tracks (recently raised above ground level) and BRT corridors on Juan B. Justo and San Martin avenues.

Around 12,000 people live in 100 hectares (1 km<sup>2</sup> or 100 city blocks), which is equal to a population density of 12,000 people/km<sup>2</sup>, well below the city average of 15,156 people/km<sup>2</sup>. Low and middle-density residential buildings are

intertwined with industrial and factory uses, some of which have been abandoned over time. The main strengths of the area are its proximity to a refurbished train station and two BRTs, fairly good security and low population density, which makes it quite liveable and pleasant. A weakness in terms of accessibility is the aforementioned urban barriers and the externalities produced by industrial uses (presence of trucks, loading and unloading of goods, and concrete facades), in addition to the lack of green spaces. The city's main expectations are to improve and integrate the residential and industrial uses of the neighbourhood. Measures to improve the quality of life of the La Carbonilla population are also necessary.

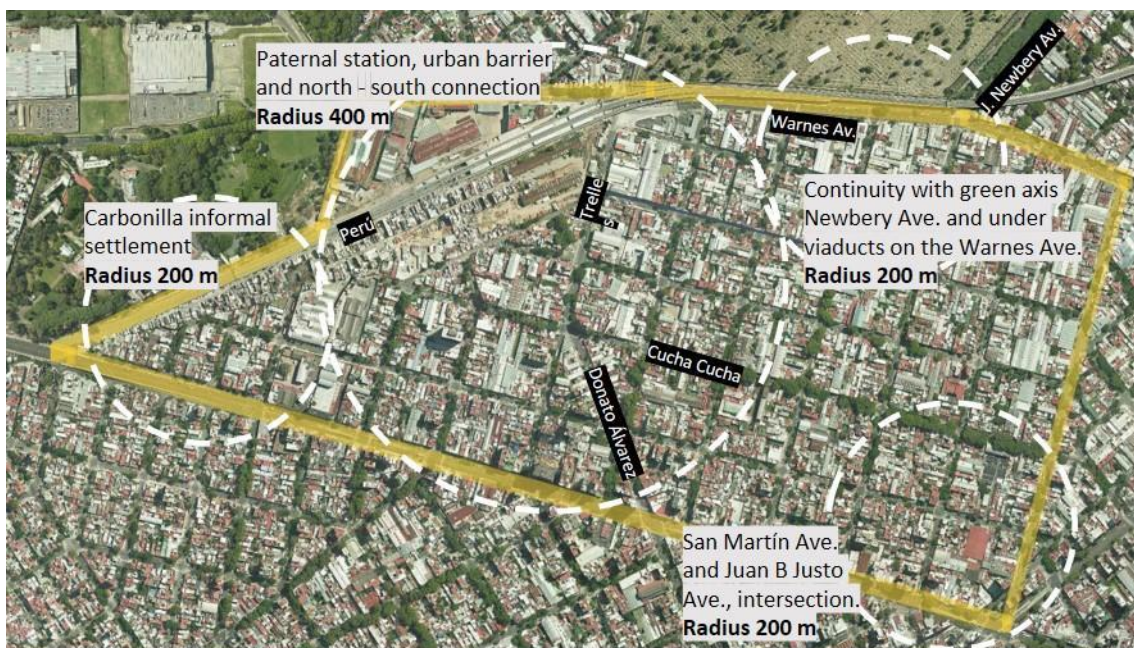


Figure 1) 2021 aerial view of the site. Source: Urban Anthropology Office

#### **Approx. site area:**

The site covers approximately 100 hectares, enclosed by San Martin Ave., the San Martin Railroad tracks, Paysandu St., and Warnes Ave.

#### **Key Information:**

The site is made up of mainly middle-class households and a lower-class population which resides mainly in La Carbonilla, an informal neighbourhood which began to form in 2001, south of the railroad tracks, with a growing estimated population of 4,000.

#### **Priority areas & main expectations:**

Lessen the harsh industrial characteristics of the area, by better integrating existing infrastructure.

Increase liveability of the area by improving its walkability and access to green spaces.

Better integrate La Carbonilla settlement into the rest of the neighbourhood.

Students should consider solutions for the neighbourhood as a whole. However, they may also wish to concentrate on specific interventions for any of the abandoned buildings illustrated in Figure 2.

## Presentation of the site and development expectations

### ***Location and transit***

The area is located south of the Chacarita Cemetery and the San Martin Elderly Home. It has a low to mid demographic density that coexists with industrial uses, including wine cellars, which historically appeared due to the proximity of the railroad. In 1984 a law that required wine to be packaged in its place of origin led to the closure of many of the wine cellars, which were converted into warehouses for other purposes.

The General San Martin Railroad (La Paternal Station) is located next to the neighbourhood, with connections to the Retiro Transport Hub. There are approximately 10 different bus lines accessible via nearby stops (some of which circulate on the BRT on San Martin Ave.). The closest metro station (Dorrego - B Line) is a minimum of 1 km away.

Rent prices in the city are rising. Thus, this area is important to the city because it holds opportunities for increasing population density by providing new homes to middle-class households which are having difficulties in housing access. Furthermore, there is a project for converting the southern triangular section of the Chacarita Cemetery into a public park, enabling the development of new buildings and homes on its borders, and allowing a better integration between both sides of the railway tracks.

### ***Urban characteristics***

The Urban Anthropology Office of the Secretariat of Urban Development of the Buenos Aires City Government developed the [Daily Needs Proximity Index](#), made up of subindexes and dimensions that measure proximity from each city block to urban amenities and services. The Index shows us that the area has a high deficit of Government services, green spaces and recreational facilities (bars, theatres, bookstores, and markets).

The area is undergoing a transformation process in which abandoned warehouses are being turned into collective ateliers for artists, who rent them out and subdivide the spaces for independent use. This offers a different urban landscape to the area, that isn't visible looking at the buildings from the outside,

Warnes Ave. and the nearby streets are populated by car repair shops and spare parts stores, generating an excessive amount of illegally parked cars on streets and sidewalks of the north section of the site.

### ***Accessibility and urban barriers***

La Paternal neighbourhood has 78,168 m<sup>2</sup> of green space, just 3.5% of its total area and an average of 4.3 m<sup>2</sup> per inhabitant. Only 24% of residents can access it by walking five minutes or less; however, pedestrian accessibility presents unfavourable conditions that make daily use difficult. The study area - the Southern part of the neighbourhood - does not have any green space for leisure, recreation or outdoor gatherings, and on the contrary, vehicular space predominates.

As such, it's clear to see that La Paternal has two obvious flaws: a lack of green spaces and poor connections between the north and south of the neighbourhood, due to multiple urban barriers fragmenting it. Therefore, students are advised to develop innovative strategies which promote walkability and outdoor gatherings, making use of tools that can measure/observe the impact of proposed interventions.

## Users

It's important to consider the diverse number of users and activities operating within the area. Thus, proposals must consider the needs of current users of the area, making sure to take these into account and mitigate the effects of gentrification.

## Technologies

We understand that innovation can be present both in the implementation of new devices related to electronics, computing, automation, robotics and similar; but strategies for waste mitigation, reuse of materials and revaluation of local production may also be innovative. Thus, we invite participants to propose nature-based solutions, articulation with local production for materials, furniture, and all strategies that may contribute to the circular economy.

## New urban model

In light of climate change and the challenges of urban life, it is increasingly necessary to rethink the importance of public spaces, both in terms of their accessibility and their quality. Based on some of the recent city models (ecosystemic urbanism, human-scale city, relational city, City of Proximity, etc.),

**Participants should identify solutions and urban models that will best suit the study area, with the potential to be replicated in other parts of the city. Students' proposals should consider solutions that can be applied to the neighbourhood as a whole. However, they may also wish to concentrate on specific interventions for any of the abandoned buildings illustrated below.**

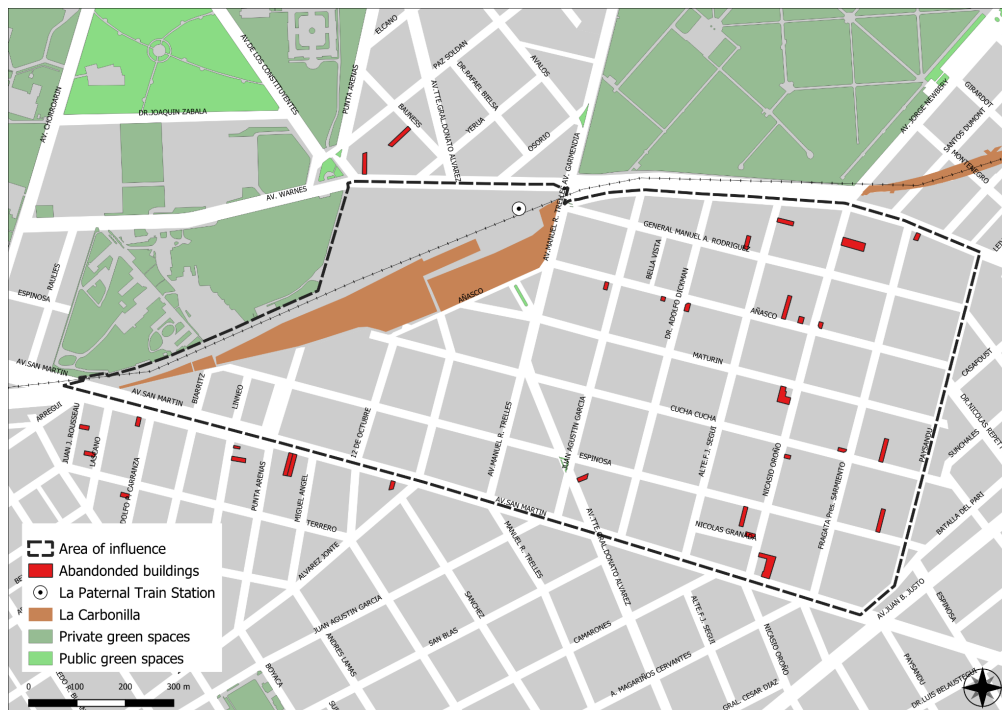


Figure 2) Street map and abandoned buildings. Source: Urban Anthropology Office





Figure 3) 1940 aerial view. Source: <https://mapa.buenosaires.gob.ar/>

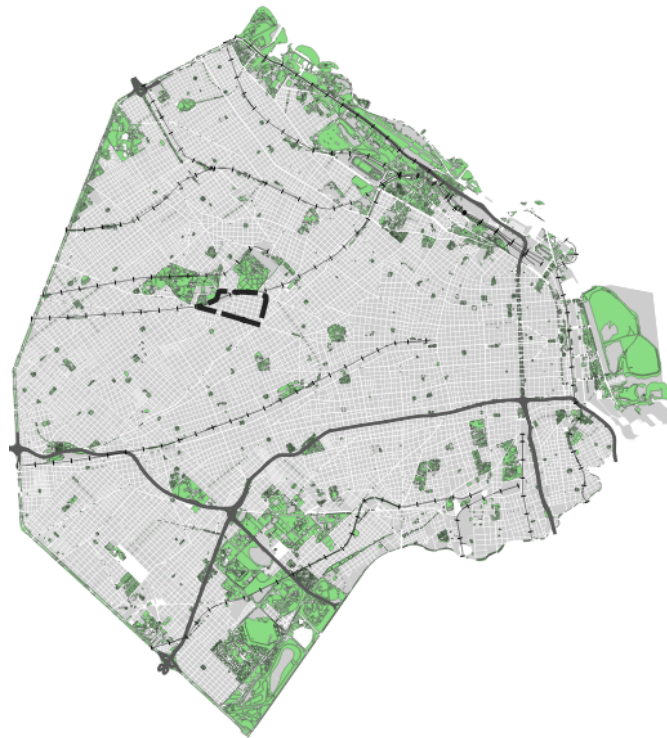


Figure 4) Location of the site within the City of Buenos Aires. Source: Urban Anthropology Office

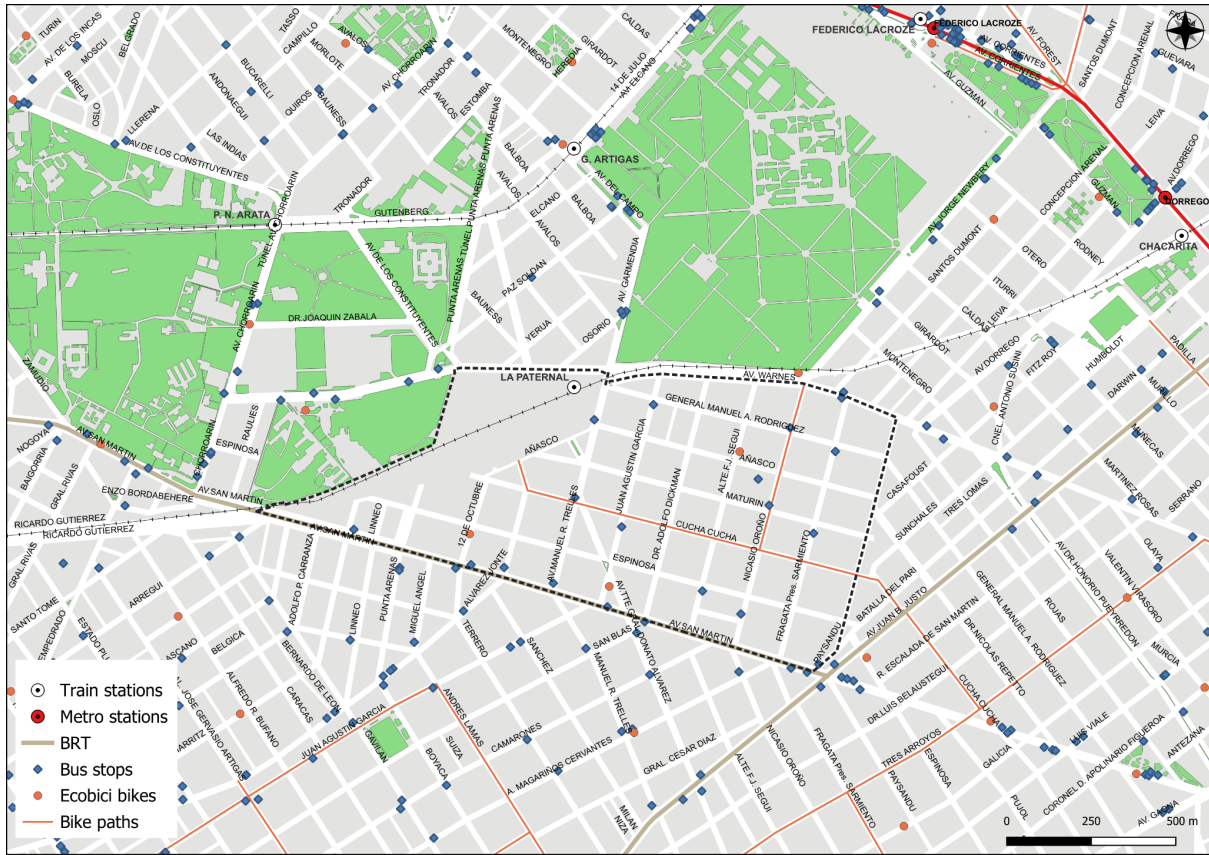


Figure 5) Transit Map. Source: Urban Anthropology Office



Figure 6) A typical warehouse in La Paternal. Ph: María Emilia Persico.





Figure 7) Low density buildings are common in the neighbourhood. Ph: María Emilia Persico.



Figure 8) The train has been recently elevated, but the urban barrier persists. Ph: María Emilia Persico.



## City climate priorities and specific environmental challenges

Buenos Aires is a coastal metropolitan city with roughly 14 million inhabitants (in the city and surrounding metropolitan areas). The city is located in the phytogeographic region of *Provincia Pampeana*<sup>1</sup> (Cabrera, et A.L.) and in the subregion of *Pampa Ondulada*. Prior to industrialisation, the area consisted of various ecosystems, including rivers, meadows, and forests, which have since been lost. A rather flat topography characterises this territory, with the presence of gentle gullies in the direction of the watercourses, nowadays most of them culverted underground. The prevalent ecosystems used to be meadows, on the slopes there were forests of Tala (*Celtis ehrenbergiana*), and on the banks of the main rivers and streams a gallery jungle.

The urban sprawl generated high-density residential living in Buenos Aires, where the major socio-environmental challenges are related to mitigation and adaptation to heat waves, floods, biodiversity loss, and noise pollution. Although La Paternal is mostly a low-density neighbourhood, the effects of these problems remain relevant and the site also presents a lack of blue-green public spaces in proximity. In this sense, the incorporation of new absorbent surfaces for naturalization could foster a transition to a more liveable environment for human communities and connect them with nature in everyday life.

Many of the main socio-environmental challenges could be addressed by creating an urban forest that would also provide the community with a wide range of co-benefits beyond the initially established objectives. It is expected that the planning and design of urban trees promote a canopy coverage such that parks, streets, sidewalks, and buildings are provided with shade during the summer season. In this regard, it is advisable to follow the parameters of the recently updated [Tree Master Plan of the City of Buenos Aires](#).

In the city, there are several informal settlements that face critical basic needs such as a lack of coverage of infrastructure and housing services. These vulnerable neighbourhoods are also the most affected by heat waves and in most cases by water and soil pollution. Addressing environmental problems in these territories is especially challenging because sometimes blue-green infrastructures are not directly perceived as basic needs. La Carbonilla has a relatively small surface compared to other informal settlements but the challenges remain the same.

## Specific planning rules and regulations

The City of Buenos Aires has two main planning regulations that must be taken into account when developing any urban or architectural project:

[Plan Urbano Ambiental](#) (*Urban Environmental Plan*): Approved in December 2008, it contains the main guidelines and principles regarding urban mobility, urban heritage, public space, employment and economic development, habitat and housing.

[Código Urbanístico](#) (*Urban Development Code*): Approved in 2018, establishes the parameters for determining the building morphology (maximum height and land use) and the historical buildings and areas that must be protected. A 3D version of the Code can also be consulted on the ["Ciudad 3D"](#) website.

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<sup>1</sup> Cabrera, A.L. (1976). Regiones fitogeográficas argentinas. Acme, Buenos Aires. 85 pp. En: Kugler WF (Ed) Enciclopedia argentina de agricultura y jardinería. Tomo 2. 2º edición. Acme. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Although not required, it is advisable to consult the following documents:

[Plan de Movilidad Sustentable 2030 \(Sustainable Mobility Plan 2030\)](#): It sets out the objectives to be achieved in terms of urban mobility by 2030.

[Plan de Acción Climática 2050 \(Climate Action Plan 2050\)](#): Defines actions, instruments and strategies for adapting to and mitigating climate change in order to reduce the vulnerability of human and natural systems.

## Language requirements

Proposals must be submitted in Spanish or English.

## City-specific prizes

The winning team will have the opportunity to present their project to officials of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires.