
6

**LOCAL SPHERE
AND PARTICIPATION**

40 years, 40 reasons
Point 6 — Local sphere and participation
INCASÒL 40th anniversary
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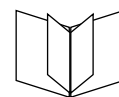
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THE BIRTHPLACE OF POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY IS THE POLIS, THE CITY, AND IT HAS HISTORICALLY CREATED INSTRUMENTS TO REGULATE PUBLIC LIFE AND GUARANTEE THE RIGHTS OF CITIZENS AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT. THE ROLE OF TOWN COUNCILS IS KEY TO CITIZEN WELLNESS. SO MUCH SO THAT THE UNITED NATIONS HAS PUT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE HANDS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS, THOSE WITH THE MOST IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S QUALITY OF LIFE.

The plans laid out by local and regional government to achieve these goals are called the 'urban agendas' and Catalonia, led by the Ministry of Territory and Sustainability, is drafting one of its own: the Urban Agenda for Catalonia.

In Catalonia's territorial model, medium-sized cities are spread around the territory and connected in a network, each acting as the centre of reference for smaller towns nearby, for which they provide services. The big argument in terms of Catalans' standard of living over the past 40 years is tied to the role town councils play in providing all sorts of services based on proximity, reversing situations of vulnerability through the mammoth task of ensuring all neighbourhoods in Catalan towns and cities have the right facilities. To make this possible, several levels of government and public companies like INCASÒL support town councils on specific aspects, such as enabling and promoting more efficient management of public services for citizens. One of the main purposes of INCASÒL is to support town councils on issues associated with urban planning, housing, and land management.

One of the responsibilities of town councils is to plan their territory, both the urban centre and the open spaces within their municipal limits, and to plan for coherent future growth. The practice of urban planning is increasingly complex and poses huge challenges from a social, economic, and environmental standpoint, and with the advent of new technology. Catalonia has 946 towns, including 484 with under 1,000 inhabitants, and some of them have to manage extensive swaths of territory, a challenge that can overwhelm their management capabilities. Plus, the fact that each town council has the power to plan its own territory can make coordination complicated, with incoherencies and duplications, making us lose sight of the overall territorial logic. Therefore the Catalan Ministry of Territory and Sustainability establishes mechanisms for coherent, global territorial planning, and works with INCASÒL to support town councils and carry out more costly or complex projects.

In this regard, town councils face challenges that sometimes stretch beyond their municipal limits or their financial or management capabilities. Therefore, the Institute also acts where it is necessary to plan fragments of the territory through the coordinated efforts of several towns by drafting supramunicipal plans, setting up consortia with the various administrations and stakeholders involved or signing collaboration agreements.

Getting citizens involved in transforming the city is a way to make it more democratic and reduce inequalities, incorporating more diverse points of view into the design. It is also a commitment to a more efficient, transparent government that is and is seen as being completely at the service of citizens and, in short, generating urban spaces that residents feel are their own by getting them involved in the physical and social improvement. Social media helps mobilise citizens and allows them to self-organise outside of the classic participation spaces.

To sum up, collaboration, participation and transparency must be the three principles on which city and territorial governance is based over the coming decades.

NEIGHBOURHOODS, RESIDENTS AND DEMOCRACY

Neighbourhoods, residents, and democracy (Barris, veïns i democràcia) is the title of a book in which Marc Andreu Acebal analyses the role the citizens movement played in the social and physical reconstruction of Barcelona in the late Franco era and the first years of democracy. In Point 1, we saw how urban planning became more socially orientated towards the end of the 20th century and how social sciences made the city one of their main focuses of analysis and hypotheses. There is a movement that has run parallel to it that has also had an enormous impact on raising awareness of the social dimension of the city and how we now understand the processes of urban transformation: the role of associations and social and resident activism in urban transformation. Today there is a confluence of interests: on the one hand, architects and planners use the principles established in social sciences and act less unilaterally to transform the city; and on the other, new political movements and awareness, above all in municipal politics, have made social activism a real part of city decision-making through the citizen participation paradigm.

Today, we believe it is unacceptable to kick off any urban transformation process without citizens having

a say. However, participation must also be structured and organised; useful methods must be established, and citizens must be educated on participation to make it effective and not an impediment that makes transformation processes longer and more complicated. In the coming chapters, we will look in depth at what citizen participation means today and how it can develop in the future. First, however, want to look back on the role that society and, later, social entities have played in the urban transformation of our towns and cities.

“¡Abajo las murallas!” (Take down the walls) was the first known slogan of a social campaign calling for a transformation of the city. It can be found in numerous articles in newspapers of that time. This was the rallying cry of a desperate society faced with far-off political powers that systematically ignored their situation. Meanwhile, the population of Barcelona was strangled by the lack of space and hundreds were dying from endemic diseases and successive epidemics. The citizens’ economic activity and progress was also seriously limited by the lack of space. Faced with this desperate situation, Barcelona residents took their slogan from the title of a study by doctor and member of the social hygiene



Protests during the 1951 tram strike in Barcelona



movement Pere Felip Monlau, a call to look at the evidence at a time when political decision-making power was far away and had turned its back on the day-to-day reality of the people.

When the project to build a modern Barcelona was finally able to begin, perhaps due to the expectations built up over nearly 20 years waiting, intense social debates arose regarding the project: not only among the intellectual elites who, as is well known, rejected the Eixample project imposed by Madrid, but also among the general population, who joined in the architectural debate on the new city and new architecture. “Pâtisserie Barcelone” is the title of a chapter in the book *Humaredas. Arquitectura, ornamentación y medios impresos*, in which Juan José Lahuerta takes a humorous look back at the intense debate that accompanied the first ‘signature’ architectural works in the Eixample and how Modernisme architects became famous figures and celebrities. In the end, it is symptomatic of a society that no longer considers itself provincial, is starting to feel European and cosmopolitan, and understands the city and its architecture as the maximum expression of this fact. Some authors have called it a ‘new culture of space’.

“Modern architecture and architects have become social figures, and people discuss the façades going up on the streets as if they were paintings in a museum. When the Barcelona City Council launched the award for the best building of the year, it was merely following the example of Brussels and Paris.”

Juan José Lahuerta, *Humaredas. Arquitectura, ornamentación y medios impresos*, 2010

The people now will never stop looking critically at constructed environments and, particularly with the Olympic transformations, urban regeneration will become a central topic of debate. It is difficult to know whether, in Catalonia, the debate on architecture and transformation of the city is on a larger scale than in our neighbouring countries, but what is sure is that one bad decision regarding public space or an important street can take down municipal governments and unleash rivers of ink in the general press for weeks, generating

an intense public debate in which, luckily, everyone is welcome to their own opinion.

Incorporation of the towns on the Barcelona plain, when the wave of the Eixample threatened to gobble them up, came with a series of tumultuous citizen-opposition processes. In the 19th century, the first neighbouring towns were incorporated into the city: in 1836, the neighbourhood of Hostafrancs, which was part of Sants; in 1848, some parts of Sant Martí de Provençals to create the new Poblenou cemetery. So, some streets in the Eixample wouldn’t have to snake around the borders between Gràcia and Barcelona, a new border was established following the straight line of the future Carrer de Provença. Later, some land from Gràcia would also become part of Barcelona, for Hospital Clínic i Provincial. Other land had to be incorporated to build the facilities that went along with the Eixample, for example the underground drainage tanks. It was one thing, however, to annex partial plots and unoccupied land and quite another to incorporate the village centres into the rest of the municipal territory. It must be noted, moreover, that there was no longer space for factories inside the Barcelona city limits and villages like Sant Andreu and Sants had become prime industrial towns, growing rich and prosperous thanks to taxes that the capital had progressively lost as industrial production moved outside of its limits. The first attempt to annex a village on the Barcelona plain came in 1883, when some landowners and industrialists in Sants agreed to become part of the city of Barcelona at a meeting of the Sants City Council. Unexpected opposition from residents forced them to make an about-turn. From there, the Barcelona City Council took the initiative, proposing annexations, although it came up against strong social opposition that took shape with the creation of the Junta Antiagregacionista dels municipis del pla (Association of towns against annexation). Social pressure from residents of Horta, Sant Andreu and Sant Martí impeded construction of a new cemetery in 1881, which ended up being built on Montjuïc. Protests and demonstrations against annexations were ongoing: in 1889, 40,000 people demonstrated in front of the Civil Government building. The first forced annexation decree came in 1897, with the administrative integration of the villages of Gràcia, Sant Gervasi, Sants, Les Corts

and Sant Andreu (joined years later by Horta and Sarrià). The partial annexation of areas of Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Molins de Rei and Hospitalet de Llobregat would continue through 1933. The whole process led to important resident mobilisation against these political desires, which in the end prevailed.

The Barcelona of expansion and annexation was also the city where a new form of city politics was ushered in: with the incorporation of the former villages, the city had to be reunited and 'sewn up', a new centre of representation had to be established a new culture of urban space created, based on adapting and changing the existing city. In short, the beginning of public institutions leading the organised, non-spontaneous transformation of the city, and of public involvement in this transformation. For the first time, municipal governments began to look to instruments to transform the consolidated city, moving beyond a strictly expansionist view of urban growth and introducing highly ambitious city-building projects, such as the Universal Expositions. Urban transformation, when led by public powers, must establish dialogue and find consensus with existing realities, and consider the impact of the transformation on residents. This is the true starting point for the bilateral process to transform the city that, in Barcelona, was laid out in the Pla d'Enllaços (Plan Jausseley), chosen through a public tender process by a panel of judges. The project, which was never fully implemented, sought to achieve two goals: reach an agreement on the city's growth with the urban footprints of the towns on the Barcelona plain (which had not stopped growing since the approval of the Cerdà Plan) and make the city more monumental with new, emblematic spaces that could establish hierarchies in the city model materialised through the isotropic Eixample. The result of the project was presented in 1907, at a spectacular public exhibition prior to approval. The project was also shared in specific publications and in newspapers and magazines of the time. For the first time, publications included drawings, aerial and street views, that sought to show what the spaces resulting from the project would look like. So, they tried to find drawings that would convey the project better than simple blueprints. The authorities believed that citizen consensus on the urban project must precede its approval or imposition.



Image of the opening of the Via Laietana, one of the first major urban reform operations in the city consolidated in modern Barcelona. 1908-1909. Between the port and Plaça de l'Àngel, under the direction of Lluís Domènech i Montaner. 1909-1911. Between Plaça de l'Àngel and Carrer de Sant Pere Més Baix, by Josep Puig i Cadafalch. 1911-1913. Between Sant Pere Més Baix and Plaça d'Urquinaona, by Ferran Romeu



Years later, the huge operation to open up Via Laietana, although traumatic, was preceded by a significant campaign justifying the need to clean out and modernise the old city centre, incorporating the concept of ‘urban regeneration’ into the people’s vocabulary. Nevertheless, execution of the project left many dark spots and showed residents that urban transformation can be used for speculation and to line the pockets of companies and individuals when it is done without taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable or destroys collective heritage. This method, unfortunately, would end up prevailing for most of the past century.

In the years before the Spanish Civil War broke out, there were still large democratic processes that got citizens involved in the transformation of the city. In an article in the newspaper *La Veu de Catalunya* from 1905, Puig i Cadafalch called on people to “Vote! For the Universal Exposition”, tying municipal elections to a programme for urban regeneration for the first time, justifying the Exposition as an opportunity to implement the renovations laid out in the Plan Jausseley and, to some extent, this was the case in certain areas of the city. Political changes in the 1930s also encouraged large social classes to get involved in Catalan political life, particularly in Barcelona, and it became clear that the leadership of the industrial haute bourgeoisie that had marked municipal politics had not resolved issues like workers’ housing, facilities, or infrastructures, all in a context of population growth due to large waves of immigration. With the declaration of the Republic, a series of new social issues associated with the city and housing would finally be dealt with, and the metropolitan dimension of the city was accepted. As we’ve seen in nearly all the points, this trend towards innovation was sharply curtailed with the outbreak of the War.

During the Franco regime, the expression ‘developmentalism’ defined a city-building method that took place in the shadow of speculation and corruption, in which social participation was not welcome in the transformation of the city. It wasn’t until the tail end of the Franco regime that residents’ movements began to take on significance and the ‘rebel neighbourhoods’ appeared, calling for democracy, environmentalism and social improvement, rising up as a great force to

transform Catalan towns and cities. Before the easing of the political climate began to create more openings, a climate that encouraged resident activism had been brewing in Barcelona. The most significant episode may be the tram strike of 1951, which took place during the most autocratic period of the Franco regime. People were unhappy with the public transport fare hike (and couldn’t express themselves publicly), leading to a massive boycott of trams in the city: people simply stopped taking them from 1 March. This undercover protest grew until a general strike was called on 12 March, extending to Terrassa, Mataró, Manresa and Badalona the following day. The harsh repression of the protest, now expressed publicly, lasted until 15 March, when the Army infantry disembarked at the port of Barcelona. Although the protests were quashed, the people’s triumph was widely noted, and the civil governor and mayor of Barcelona were both dismissed. A second boycott in 1957 also ended with the dismissal of the city’s mayor, but paradoxically opened the door to a key chapter in Barcelona’s contemporary history with the appointment of his replacement, Josep Maria de Porcioles.

Many towns and cities are compiling and sharing their residents’ movements and beginning to become more aware of the huge influence they have had on building our urban environments. Lately, for example, the Sabadell History Museum has collaborated to produce a documentary and book titled *Història del moviment veïnal de Sabadell. Cinquanta anys de lluita* (History of the Sabadell residents’ movement. Fighting for 50 years), by Antonio Santamaría, that shows the importance of these organisations and looks back over the successes they have achieved: access to education, care of public spaces and paving streets, etc. The federations of residents’ associations are still very alive today in the main Catalan cities, especially those with an industrial past and the most blatant shortcomings at the end of the Franco period.

“Democracy was won by these men and women street by street, tree by tree. Democracy is something you can touch, and these people held it in their hands for days on end and throughout the nights. Getting a public school in a neighbourhood that didn’t have one; building a health clinic where

there were no doctors; leaving a square as open space so children could play; creating a sports centre so the only sport wasn't throwing rocks at dogs; getting a bus route through an area that had no public transport or a metro line where it was needed so people could get to work without walking through puddles, without having to bear the pre-dawn cold and rain, without walking across the open fields that separated the neighbourhood from public transport. This is the democracy these people made happen, locking themselves in the spaces where their residents' associations met, chaining themselves to fences, blocking traffic, protesting on the street, fighting. Democracy is something you can see and touch, and if you can't, it's because it isn't there."

Javier Pérez Andújar, *Paseos con mi madre*, 2011.

These histories of the residents' movements are often seen to stem from the climate created by the May 68 movement in France. Jordi Borja, for example, lived in Paris during this time and returned a year later to Barcelona, invited by Manuel Ribas Piera, to teach at the Barcelona School of Architecture, which would become one of the epicentres of the pro-democracy students' movement. Many Catholic organisations that, as such, were tolerated by the Regime went much further than confessional and charity activities, pushing the limits of political activism: Mare de Déu del Port parish, just off Passeig de la Zona Franca, was the voice of support for the slum-dwellers on Montjuïc; the parishes of Sant Medir, in Sants, and Mare de Déu de Montserrat in Guinardó were also very active in defending residential rights. Around Barcelona, parish groups and some religious congregations took advantage of their legitimacy in the eyes of the authorities to step in on behalf of nearby communities. If you look strictly at residents' associations, however, the first was set up in Terrassa in 1968, under the protection of the Franco-era law on associations of 1964 (which gained final approval in 1965). This doesn't mean that there was no resident activism before that, even under Franco, but the law gave these associations legal cover and allowed one thing that would become key: for these associations to have a

space to meet. Even though the law expressly excluded organisations "contrary to the Principles of The Spanish National Movement", associations like Òmnium Cultural found their place. Hundreds of organisations were made legal, but the Regime was especially distrusting of residents' associations that didn't focus on a specific sector, as they could expand their interest to cover spaces that the authorities did not want to have a voice. The Barcelona Federation of Residents Associations (FAVB) gained legal recognition in 1972, but its counterpart in Madrid didn't until the regime change.

The FAVB website features an exhaustive compilation of the 130 most spectacular residents' battles won in its nearly 50 years of history, labelled on a map of the city. Before these specific fights, however, the FAVB was key in bringing an end to the reign of Porcioles. The touchpaper that unleashed the end of his way of managing the city was a series of gas explosions that, in 1972 and 1973, coincided with the process to switch the city's gas service to natural gas. They caused 32 deaths in neighbourhoods all over Barcelona. Although Porcioles acted quickly to compensate the injured and minimise incidents, these events and the mass panic that spread as a result were what gave self-organisation of social and residents' movements the final push in Barcelona. Pressure from Catalana de Gas (which relentlessly defended its interests before the Civil Government) led the City Council and the Civil Government to forcefully repress residents' protests. They had invested a lot of money in replacing gas service and there were many public and private interests in these works, which they did not want stopped at any cost. But police actions and the continuous explosions (which they couldn't manage to stop) generated an uncontrollable climate that scared the authorities: despite the repression, demonstrations spread, growing in number and volume of participants, calling out and badly bruising the City Council.

The second act in this story has to do with the people's opposition to new urban planning for the Vallbona, Trinitat and Torre Baró neighbourhoods. In this case, for the first time, urban planners and architects made clear their support for the residents' complaints and drafted, on their own initiative, an alternative urban-development plan. The City Council made a mistake then that it would repeat years later, during the Democratic period, in the well-known episode to renovate Avinguda Diagonal: to quash residents' protests, they put together a tender (for the Diagonal project, it was a referendum) allowing participants to submit an alternative plan, with the intention of throwing it out thanks to a panel of judges. The alternate plan not only won, but the process was a humiliating defeat for the political team that had put the tender together.

Parallel to these two episodes, an urban-planning battle lasting years was resolved. After being contested more than 8,000 times by leading professional associations, particularly the architects and building engineers, the Pla de la Ribera was finally brought to a halt. This way, civil society won the battle it had waged since 1965 and the municipal government was once again left humiliated. All of this, plus the proof of poor living conditions on the housing estates, brought media focus to the issue (often seen on the front page of newspapers) and, finally, the proliferation of pro-Catalan and pro-democracy events, which couldn't be controlled or repressed, brought an end to the Barcelona of Mayor Porcioles.

From the arrival of democracy, the strength of the FAVB in the city was unstoppable and often got the democratic governments of towns and cities involved. The first socialist government in the Barcelona City Council, in addition to dismantling the Franco-era structure and client politics that had been deeply embedded, brought about (not without effort) a progressive confluence among the political and residents' movements. First with Narcís Serra and above all under Pasqual Maragall, Barcelona began the largest urban transformation in its history, not always with total approval from the residents' movements but, at least, much more based on mutual agreement than in previous decades. Beyond the capital, many other cities in the metropolitan area and beyond kicked off growth and transformation processes that



Neighborhood mobilizations to demand the construction of public schools on the site of La Pegaso, in the neighborhood of Sant Andreu. AAVV Sant Andreu Archive



were equally ambitious in terms of size, and INCASÒL helped these transformations happen: Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Granollers, Sabadell, Mollet del Vallès, Ripollet, Manresa, Cerdanyola and many others.

The residents' associations waged many battles and Catalan cities cannot be understood without them. Today, the Catalan Confederation of Residents' Associations (CONFAVC) has 461 member associations and 23 member federations from all over the territory. Their main battles are housing, healthy cities, inequality, and gentrification. They also tackle specific problems, like getting young people involved, who didn't experience the vibrant moments of the end of the Franco era.

"Many are the battles our grandparents and parents won to get us where we are today. From Franco through the transition and beyond, residents' organisations spearheaded the fight for improvements, such as paved roads and sewer systems in some neighbourhoods, or essential facilities like schools, hospitals, and primary care centres. And today there are many battles we still have to win to ensure a decent lifestyle in our neighbourhoods.

The residents' movement in Barcelona is a common good that we too often take for granted. Thanks to them, many of us have grown up healthy and happy in popular neighbourhoods in a somewhat cohesive city. Many countries don't even know what the residents' movement is; they don't have it, it doesn't exist. Here we are lucky to have this tool to defend ourselves, a tool that balances the scales between economic interests and the interests of the people.

Considering the economic and social changes European capitals and world metropolises are facing, in Barcelona we have the duty and the capacity to be a global example in walking back anti-social processes and policies imposed by the globalised economy. They are processes that privatise and monopolise public space for commercial uses, to the detriment of social cohesion and quality of life. They are processes

of gentrification and elitification that many neighbourhoods are suffering due to the huge stock of housing being used for tourism and real estate investment, which has made the Catalan capital a benchmark for profit-thirsty investors. And, on the other hand, we have the precarious employment situation that the majority of young, and not so young, people experience because the economy is based on unqualified, seasonal jobs that are often tied to the service and hospitality sectors. The problem is that jobs, divided, outsourced and tertiarised, are no longer the epicentre of socialisation and organisation of our battles. Today it is neighbourhoods that must play this role.

Many young people don't identify with residents' associations, possibly because of the language or perhaps a generational barrier we haven't been able to break, or maybe it is because these don't deal directly with the problems young people are facing: precarious jobs, rising housing prices and a lack of roots in the community."

Iru Moner, Associació Veïnal Assembla de Vallcarca, La força dels barris, 2017.

The 15-M movement, now celebrating its 10th anniversary, was born out of the people's spontaneous response to the role the administrations played in managing the serious crisis that hit Spain in 2007. The housing problems, the mortgage and repossession crisis, and the bank bailouts (as we saw in Point 2) were some of the main flashpoints. Another reason was the feeling that political corruption had spread like wildfire and urban development, commissioning contracts and speculation were in the crosshairs. One of the movement's main demands was for a 'real democracy'. From the protests on 15 May 2010, organised social movements and anonymous citizens camped out in the city's main squares, organising themed assemblies, in a self-organised, democratic movement, outside the government structure, that was unprecedented in this country. New political parties were created as a result, but, above all, 15-M was the first step towards a new culture of public governance that is still being developed. It was also the first large-scale demonstration of the

power of social media in organising and getting people involved outside of the established channels. After 15-M, new ways of participating have broadened spaces for citizen involvement in politics and management, through participatory budgeting, primaries to choose candidates and decision-making processes regarding urban projects. The effects of the movement will continue to be felt over the coming years and, beyond the consolidation of the new parties that arose out of those mobilisations, 15-M changed how politics is done, with a very clear effect on local government. In short, another step forward in the democratisation of political decision-making, on a path we must continue down in the years to come.

Mobilizations of March 15 and the "outraged" in the Plaça de Catalunya in Barcelona in 2011





Local and regional governments came on the 2030 Agenda scene through a shift in how the United Nations works. Taking advantage of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the organisation got all sub-national levels of administration involved in working to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals on the 2030 Agenda. This coalesced at the historical Conference on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development (Habitat III) held in Quito, Ecuador, in 2015. At this conference, an extensive document called the 'New Urban Agenda' was approved.

The main purpose of the New Urban Agenda was to push towards achieving SDG 11, which calls to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. During the conference, the local and regional governments that were signatories to the document committed to carrying out actions to implement the seven targets under SDG 11, which encompass aspects that affect cities and regions, such as housing, transport, urbanisation, cultural and natural heritage, reducing the impact of effects of natural disasters, reducing the environmental impact of cities, and providing inclusive public spaces.

But the scope of the New Urban Agenda goes much further than this SDG. Although it was drafted by the member states and not directly by local and regional governments, it is the first UN resolution to delegate responsibility to entities other than the states. The real breakthrough isn't that the New Urban Agenda promotes SDG 11 for its intrinsic value, but that it acts a means to reinforce the principles of the other 16 SGD. The New Urban Agenda recognises, for the first time, the leadership of sub-national governments in areas such as ending poverty, climate change and inequality, and calls on cities to leverage the agglomeration benefits of well-planned urbanisation to generate prosperity and promote environmental, economic, and social sustainability in tangible terms. So, it provides strong arguments to conclude that well-planned and

-managed cities and regions are key to the proper functioning of human societies and it is mostly through cities that we will achieve the promising future laid out in the 2030 Agenda.

The New Urban Agenda shows the need for a practical approach based on empirical data to incorporate innovation and build solid ties between science and politics for urban and territorial planning and in political decision-making. To do so, each town, each city and each region must find the best way to improve citizens' lives, through their own plan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In short, their own Urban Agenda, which must adapt the general principles of the New Urban Agenda to their specific realities. The Urban Agenda also calls for mechanisms to share and exchange information, expertise and experience, emphasising the need to build new capacities based on cooperation. In terms of sustainable urban development and the means to achieve it, the New Urban Agenda lists three main priorities: governance, planning and finance. It takes into account the need to build coalitions of governments and multiple stakeholders to implement the Agenda and recognises the need to update and expand the science of cities by generating and sharing practical and empirical knowledge.

Some of these aspects that stem directly from SDG 11 are expanded through SDG 17, which is partnership for the goals. SDG 17 looks to strengthen the means for implementing and revitalising the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, with the New Urban Agenda as one of the main frameworks for action. The SDG involves all of humanity and no one can remain on the side lines if we want the programme to have the desired scope and effect. Achieving these goals requires a firm global commitment through international cooperation and partnerships to create new dynamics for fair, lasting, equitable relationships. SDG 17, therefore, focuses on the means for achieving the other goals.

Catalonia, through the Urban Agenda for Catalonia, recognises 'good governance' as one of its six focal points. This point calls for the city to "ensure better management of urban policies by listening to and being aware of citizens' needs; review financing given to local and regional governments in order to provide citizens with better public services; and achieve more responsible governments that are more ethical and efficient."

It also recognises the need to "foster decision-making by citizens, establishing tools and processes for their co-participation; promote transparency in governments and administrations; establish mechanisms to control corruption; provide and facilitate public access to the administration; and improve the control channels of public spending and accountability."

The Urban Agenda for Catalonia, in the same spirit as the New Urban Agenda, recognises the involvement of local levels of government, "guaranteeing the principles of decentralisation and subsidiarity in managing urban policies; strengthening and structuring administrative areas in accordance with citizen proximity and public needs; and establishing financing mechanisms at local and territorial levels to articulate urban policies."

MUNICIPALISM IN CATALONIA

In all six focal points, we have attempted to put into context and explain the political and social climate that accompanied the establishment of the Catalan Land Institute. The context and forces that shaped the Institute, over 40 years ago, were the same ones that reinstated democracy in the country. The Institute represents a direct response to that complex yet hopeful climate and that point in time gave it a positive spirit, drive and hard-working nature that remain to this day. However, INCASÒL is an institution working in a very specific sector, urban planning, housing and land management, which had been particularly mismanaged under the Franco regime and, therefore, it is also a response to the dysfunctions generated over the long period of the dictatorship. The Institute's first task was to resolve the most blatant situations, which had to be tackled urgently, but its DNA also drives it to do away with past ways of working, establishing a new style in line with the principles of democracy; in short, a new public governance of urban planning that is and is seen as benefiting citizens.

Explaining the history of the Catalan Land Institute is also explaining the triumph of a desire to modernise that

encompassed all areas of Catalan society and infused all levels of public political life. With this goal, one of the reasons INCASÒL was founded was to act as a tool for the Government of Catalonia to support town councils in urban planning, housing and land management. Therefore, the history of the Institute is closely tied to Catalonia's Municipalist administrative structure and the way it is organised and operates. INCASÒL actions must bolster the leadership of the democratic town councils, which truly understand the situation and needs of their territories and citizens. With its actions, the Institute has worked to ensure urban transformations are done in line with the people's interests, taking citizens into account and making the institution serve them. The spectacular evolution of Catalan towns and cities, many times, has been thanks to this partnership between the Institute and town councils.

The city has historically created instruments to regulate public life and guarantee the rights of citizens and their participation in government. The city has also historically been a place of personal and collective freedom, a place for dialogue and living together, and town councils, the institutions closest to the people,



Inauguration of the Popular Library of Valls, work of the Mancomunitat de Catalunya, year 1918



are the best option for reflecting this need to regulate collective public life and for having an impact on quality of life. The local administration, in a way, is also the most democratic because it is the closest to incorporating direct citizen participation in decision-making.

From the advent of the urban haute bourgeoisie in Catalonia, in the late 18th century, the dynamic nature of industrialised cities required ways for the people to self-organise in order for their needs to be addressed. From the beginning, when cities were backed by large industrial families, as the industrial economy moved forward it would also see the birth of new political groups representing broader swaths of society and, in many cases, the playing field for this new representation would be urban. In a way, this proto-Municipalism was one of the reactions to absolutism and the state models of the Ancien Régime.

“The city constitutes in its core a complex, independent whole. It is a nation in miniature. It has its religion, its laws, its government, its administration, its courts, its army; it has its organisation, its State [...] it is the political society par excellence and will never allow itself to be enslaved. Under every type of government, even under absolutism, it strives to govern itself, like in the early days. It hates foreign authorities; it isn’t happy away from the warmth of its own customs and the shade of its magistrates. It wants to be, shine, stand out, and it doesn’t want anyone to hinder that, even under the guise of protection.”

Pi i Margall, 1877.

The advent of Municipalism in Catalonia and its role in organising the territory is closely tied to the restoration of the first self-governance structures in the early 20th century. The Commonwealth of Catalonia was established in 1914 as a place for the provincial governments to come together and unite. It was therefore developed under the traditional provincial divisions with significant limitations in terms of powers. Nevertheless, it was an institution based on local action and Municipalist convictions. The Commonwealth carried out its task with help, especially from local governments as the body that brought its aid to the people. The Commonwealth,

as is the case with provincial councils, helped and supported the towns and cities, but in this case, under its own programme of actions: as institutions with a certain autonomy, they brought the work of the Commonwealth and its programme to the people, conveying the guidelines of its social and political programme.

The Commonwealth had support structures but no management power, so it used towns as the executive branch for its policies, which mainly focused on improving social services and the infrastructures that bring them to the people.

Under Franco, the dictatorship meant a return to the centralised, non-democratic model in which local governments didn’t have political autonomy and other levels of regional government were eliminated. Mayors were appointed and power was shared among members of the military and oligarchs with ties to the regime. The town councils generated a network of client politics in which the ability to govern depended on affinity with the authorities and civil servants were replaced to prevent any sort of oversight of the power wielded autocratically. This way, local businesspeople coalesced into coalitions of interest around regime leaders (often with ties to industry) that would help them build their businesses. Many decisions that affected the municipal sphere were made based on the leaders’ ability to do business.

With democracy came talk of ‘Municipalism’, meaning the delegation of decision-making power to more local governments. In Spain, for many years and to this day, this process has been highly marked by a new, very powerful level of government: the autonomous communities. This Spanish version of regions comes on top of the French style system of provinces and provincial councils (France doesn’t have regional government as we understand it here) and brings more complexity to governance, which now instead of three levels (central government, provincial councils and town councils) has four (adding the Government of Catalonia), or more if we count the county councils. This complexity means that the distribution of resources and powers varies over time and between communities. The financial side of the system isn’t clear, nor is it exactly transparent, making for many claims and accusations vertically (from the autonomous communities to the central government) and laterally, between autonomous

communities, which see that, despite being on the same administrative level, there are huge differences in their financial situations, which depend in many cases not on an equitable system but on the ability of regional representatives to influence and defend regional interests with the central government. As a result, the system is in constant negotiations that often take the form of haggling and make it more difficult for the various levels of government to cooperate. Although it has been applied to the whole country under the pressure of homogenisation from the various territories, in practice the system is asymmetrical with a framework of competencies that is neither homogeneous nor implemented based on equity or real financial need.

“In the modern context, characterised by the hegemony of the Nation-State as the form of territorial organisation, a broader definition of Municipalism is based on understanding as such the series of political proposals that are based on a model of governance where the weight of decision-making falls to the towns, and that they have an appropriate budget to execute those decisions. Defined in this way, Municipalism isn’t a specific political doctrine; it can be adapted to different ideologies as long as they seek decentralisation of the state and to give greater decision-making power to the municipal level. This model can be promoted from various levels of government: from the towns themselves, rolling out a series of governing actions and building relationships with other administrations; or from other levels, facilitating the actions of municipal governments, giving them more funds, technical aid and/or powers.”

Marc Pradel, *Catalunya, xarxa de ciutats*, 2016.

The political context of the first decades of democracy was marked by a distribution of political parties that saw left-wing forces concentrated in the city councils in the metropolitan area and the autonomic government in the hands of the Catalanist parties. This situation complicated consensus on some aspects, such as creating an effective metropolitan government for Barcelona, which was seen as anti-establishment by the autonomous authorities. Institutions like INCASÒL, which has also tackled huge projects in cities in the metropolitan area from the very beginning, prove that, despite the difficulties, it is possible to create spaces for consensus and collaboration. The various levels of government often represent opposing interests that are difficult to align. In fact, one of the ways the Institute works is by creating collaborative spaces for various administrations or levels of government through consortia or agreements. This makes it possible to tackle projects with highly complex management, that go beyond the strictly municipal scope or management capabilities, or that are significant on a municipal, county, or regional level. These management bodies also make it possible to bring significant social and economic stakeholders on board, outside of the government, which can be key in defining and promoting urban and territorial projects.



The Plaça d’Europa project has been made possible thanks to the urban consortium Consortium for the Reform of the Gran Via in Hospitalet de Llobregat with the participation of INCASÒL





REASON 34 – WE TAKE PART IN CONSORTIA TO MOVE FORWARD WITH HIGHLY COMPLEX PROJECTS

Beyond administrative divisions, how our territorial model really works is clear: while in other countries the territory is occupied in a less orderly way, in Catalonia towns and cities are compact nuclei, of various sizes, that are hubs for the services in the surrounding areas. A country's territorial and urban model is key for ensuring territorial balance and Catalonia's model is based on a network system of mature, medium-sized cities that are the reference and hub for services in the surrounding areas. This is very different from other territory occupation models based, for example, on sprawling growth without clear hubs. As facilities provide services to the city, you could say that cities are the facilities of the country, providing services to their surrounding territories.

The town councils play a key role in the workings of this territorial model, which provides citizens with services of all sorts based on proximity. As such, they also play an important role in our welfare model. The consolidation of this welfare system, over the past 40 years, has been spectacular. Public spending on education has gone from €500 million in 1980 to €8 billion today, with 108,000 primary and secondary teachers. Since 1980, the life expectancy of the Catalan people has increased seven years, thanks in part to one of the pioneering healthcare systems in Europe, on which we spend €25 million a day, and which employs 100,000 professionals. The quality of public social services has an impact on citizens' daily lives and plays a key role in their quality of life throughout their existence: from healthcare services to schooling, access to culture and university education; from employment support to sport and aid for the elderly, among many other aspects. To make this possible, the town councils receive support from the provincial and county councils and the Government of Catalonia, which acts through agencies and companies focusing on specific

areas like waste management, water, mobility, power, culture or urban planning, in addition to providing the shared infrastructures that make the country work.

INCASÒL is one of these organisations, established as a sector-based public company, that provides services to the town councils: carrying out actions, in conjunction with them, to use land in line with general public interest, hampering speculation and promoting citizens' right to decent, appropriate housing. INCASÒL also works to foster economic activity and housing, create and manage public facilities, help redevelop town and city centres and neighbourhoods, create green areas and manage open spaces. INCASÒL has collaborated on and carried out actions in nearly half of all Catalan towns over these 40 years, always with the desire to serve and boost its management skills in land management, urban development or housing. However, beyond its main task, when commissioned by other levels of government, INCASÒL builds or refurbishes facilities that help local administrations provide a variety of services to their people.

REASON 35 – WE CONSTRUCT BUILDINGS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES IN TOWNS AND CITIES

Chapter II of the Municipal Law and Local Regulations of Catalonia of 2003, governs the services town councils must provide. This law establishes the minimum services that every town must offer citizens, with additional services added as the size of the population increases. The basic services cover a wide range of issues, such as safety, regulating traffic, urban development, protecting the environment and heritage, abattoirs, cemeteries, etc. Furthermore, it obliges the organisations providing health and education services to participate and cooperate, as stipulated in the law. Finally, the law is very clear in its mandate that these services must be provided in a way that ensures equal access by all citizens.

In addition to providing the basic services, towns with more than 5,000 inhabitants, for example, must by law have a park, market, public library and waste treatment service. Other services (like emergency plans, fire-fighters, or public sports services, among others) come into play for towns of over 20,000, 30,000 or 50,000 inhabitants. For towns that are the county seat, the law requires services comparable to those required of a town with 50,000 inhabitants, regardless of the population (Falset, for example, is home to only 2,800 people).

The town councils are responsible for providing citizens with all these services, but Catalonia is a country that is highly fragmented administratively. There are 946 towns in our country, each with its own responsibilities: from Barcelona with 1.6 million inhabitants to Gisclareny with 26 residents. Many have an administrative structure that allows them to tackle these responsibilities without problems, but some don't.

Catalonia has 66 towns that can be considered large, with over 20,000 inhabitants. 90% of the population lives in towns with more than 5,000 inhabitants. Nevertheless, there are 484 villages with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, all of whom would fit inside one block of Barcelona's Eixample district. Villages like Tremp or Naut Aran have to manage territories larger than Barcelona. Currently, there are 336 micro-villages in Catalonia with under 500 inhabitants and they make up nearly 35% of the territory, although they are home to less than 2% of the Catalan population. Many of them don't even have full-time mayors: 96 Catalan mayors are unpaid, and some don't have any other public employees.

As, under the law, all citizens must be guaranteed access to the same public services, some small villages choose to join forces to provide services as a consortium and, above these levels, the provincial and county councils work to ensure, as far as possible, that services reach all towns equally, even the tiniest ones.

The provincial councils govern at the province level, according to historical administrative divisions of Spanish territory dating back to 1836. With the

creation of the autonomous communities, this level of administration was eliminated from single-province communities or autonomous cities. The provincial councils provide technical, economic and technological support so town councils can provide quality local services homogeneously throughout the territory. They are governed by the mayors and municipal councillors of the province. They coordinate municipal services and organise supramunicipal public services.

The county councils, created in 1987, govern and administrate at the county level. The Municipal Law and Local Regulations of Catalonia states that, when it is impossible for a town council to provide the legally required services, the responsibility falls to the county. Therefore, the function of county councils is to encourage cooperation, provide guidance and coordinate town councils at the county level, and they are the framework for discussing and organising services to be provided through a consortium of several towns. The law that regulates their functions refers directly to the provision of services:

“The county councils must make sure the towns in their territorial scope provide, to a homogeneous level of quality, all the services, activities and benefits that articles 66 and 67 of Legislative Decree 2/2003 approving the amended text of the Municipal Law and Local Regulations of Catalonia, establish as local purview. The effective provision of homogeneous services and the execution of activities and benefits on a local level is governed by the principles of local cooperation and subsidiarity, complementarity, substitution, association, partnership and citizen participation, which must be laid out in the county action programme.”

Law on county-level organisation of Catalonia, 2003.

In Catalonia, there is also a series of companies and public services that fall directly under the purview of the Government of Catalonia and that, in their field of action, provide services to towns related to issues like

water, waste, culture, health and education. INCASÒL is one of these public companies, serving the town councils, dedicated specifically to land management, public housing, land development for new growth and refurbishing heritage and urban centres.

Despite all these levels of government and companies serving the towns, many of them still struggle to meet their obligations. In the field of urban planning and within their town limits, a high degree of fragmentation means that sometimes the unit of municipal planning doesn't correspond with how the territory really works, and this is where INCASÒL can help. Nevertheless, Catalonia could benefit from a more rational municipal administrative division, grouping smaller villages together to improve the management and efficiency of their governance. Even in the least densely populated counties, municipal division is highly fragmented; while in the more densely populated areas, the divisions are even more contrived, including situations when one side of the street is in one city and the other, in another. In areas like Barcelona, establishing a metropolitan body has historically been difficult, but we still need to recognise the real city in such basic aspects as citizen safety (metropolitan police force, not municipal), street cleaning and rubbish collection, in addition to hundreds of regulations that could be standardised. While the Community of Madrid has 179 towns with 6.6 million inhabitants, the province of Barcelona, while smaller in land extension and with 5.6 million inhabitants, has 311 towns. The provinces of Girona and Cordoba are similar in land extension and population, but the former has 221 towns and the latter only 75. In recent years, the number of towns has only increased, even creating new ones. One case even reached the Constitutional Court of Spain, which refused to recognise town number 948 in Catalonia: Medinyà (Girona).

“The pressure on the various Catalan democratic governments to create new towns has been an outlet for many situations or claims, creating new decentralised municipal entities. (...)

This atomisation is clear. We have 947 towns, plus 66 decentralised municipal entities (which have

From right to left: Tortosa Exhibition Center, Sant Llützer School-Institute (Photo: Adrià Goula), Sorolla Market and the Ferreries Civic Center (Photo: Camps-Felip Architecture)



roughly 80% of the powers of a town, including budgeting), comprising a mosaic that is highly complex, made up of minuscule tax bases and difficult to govern.

Rationalising the municipal map isn't on the country's agenda, the Parliament of Catalonia approved a new Moianès county by a huge majority, so we must have ideas for profound change on the horizon, respecting history and a sense of belonging but also integration through territorial structures that promote a rational balance in Catalan territories for the future."

Jaume Miranda, former director of the Cartographic and Geological Institute of Catalonia, *La mètrica territorial com a eina de govern, 2015.*

Of all the tasks town councils must carry out, one of the most noteworthy is planning their urban and municipal territory, which is precisely one of the areas of action of the Catalan Land Institute. The law that establishes municipal powers in Catalonia expresses it as follows: "Municipalities have their own powers over urban-development planning, management, execution and restrictions; housing development and management; parks and gardens, paving of public urban roads and conservation of rural roads and paths." In practice, since 2010, this means each town council, no matter how small, must have a Pla d'ordenació municipal (general town planning), although the law does allow for the possibility of these planning instruments encompassing more than one town. The law also clearly establishes how these plans must be drafted and the procedure for approving them; although drafting them falls under the purview of the towns, they must be approved by the Territorial Urban Planning Commission of the Catalan Ministry of Territory and Sustainability (for towns with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants) or directly by the Minister of Territory for larger towns and cities.

HOW ARE CITIES PLANNED?

Urban development is one of the main tasks of the town councils: each of them is responsible for planning their own territory, growth, use of public space, green spaces and facilities; for maintaining and managing public space and regenerating and refurbishing their urban spaces. This is laid out in the general town planning instruments. But what are these plans and how do they work? How are cities and their municipal territories planned?

The first thing that must be established is the structure and infrastructure that defines the shape of the city, and this urban structure is defined in three areas.

Firstly, the road structure that governs mobility, connects the city to the territorial network of motorways and delimits the blocks that will be occupied by the other elements, such as parks, housing, shops, facilities, etc. The street is a city's main public space and is also a place for infrastructures to pass, such as water, power, sewer, telecommunications and public lighting. They can be designed to include trees or gardens to make the city healthier and increase its biodiversity. In addition to being the main public space in a city, in Mediterranean cities, beyond their urban planning, the streets are a place that, through their design, can foster citizen life

and urban quality with the proper balance of their various uses and functions: public and private vehicles, pedestrians, outdoor cafés, rubbish bins and other services, green spaces, etc. More and more, the streets of our towns and cities are being pacified, limiting traffic, and putting pedestrians back at the centre of their design. This process, however, is not exempt from tensions and controversy. The functioning, coherence and fluidity of the road structure also plays a key role in city use and citizen health, as they can facilitate walking, soft mobility and public transport or generate traffic problems due to private transport and the resulting pollution. Beyond specific street design (which is done at a later stage), the coherence of the general road system is key for having an environmentally responsible city that is pleasant for citizens.

The second element that defines the urban structure is its facilities. These provide citizens with all sorts of services and are located on public land. Ensuring they are properly distributed around the urban space helps mitigate inequalities and guarantee the rights of all citizens. Libraries, theatres, museums, schools, nurseries, day centres for the elderly, medical centres and hospitals, sports facilities, municipal markets and stations are just

some of the facilities cities must have and plan as centres of services in the territory and to ensure territorial cohesion. This urban system also expects larger cities to provide services for the population in neighbouring towns. Beyond their territorial role, ensuring all citizens have equal access depends on the proper distribution of services within the urban territory. This was far from the case in the late Franco period: many neighbourhoods had severe shortcomings, and this meant fewer opportunities for their residents. Alleviating this situation was one of the battles waged by the democratic town councils and INCASÒL took an active role in it. However, striking a balance in the distribution of public services is still complicated. For example, a recently created neighbourhood has a lot of public facilities, which attract and generate private activity around it, such as complementary services or retail activity. In this case, the vitality of this new neighbourhood could lead people to abandon other parts of the city, like the historical centre, leading to deterioration. Likewise, if all the facilities are in one neighbourhood, without considering the need to combine them with housing or other functions, it will lead to an impoverished urban life, as this part of the city will only be alive during the time periods and on the days that these facilities operate. This could lead to unsafe areas in the evenings or at night, for example. Another key aspect in how a city works is the distribution of public or subsidised housing: if it is only found in one area of the city, a homogeneous pocket will be created that may be more disadvantaged, leading to imbalances and inequalities concentrated in certain urban areas. Therefore, planning is necessary and can't be taken lightly; it must be done by applying objective, scientific criteria.

The final element that defines the urban structure of a town is its network of public parks and gardens. Point 1 focused specifically on this issue and, given its importance, it must be planned to take responsibility for all the functions we require today and to improve the environmental quality of urban settings and citizens' health. More and more, urban green space is considered a key element in the urban shape: overlapping the road structure, or not, the green structure must act as a network, like transit, and is therefore a structure that can connect public spaces to the landscape, just



Orthophoto of the city of Tortosa



like roads connect the city to motorways. Connecting the green structure within urban settings to the green spaces around it brings health and biodiversity from the periphery into the city and is one of the most decisive elements in terms of urban quality.

This role of green spaces is key today and, with global warming, will be increasingly so. While in the late 20th century roads were the most important element of urban structure, prioritising private vehicles, today green space is becoming increasingly important. In fact, ecosystemic urban development proposes a new city model based on a structure that addresses new requirements, through assessable scientific criteria:

“A compact morphology in order to reduce land consumption. The density of population and activities provide proximity and a certain critical mass that generates public space in order to make public transport viable, to make sense of the existence of urban facilities, to generate the diversity of legal entities necessary to make a city, etc.

A balance between urban compression and decompression; that is, a balance between creative uses of organization and urban functionality, on one side, and the uses of relaxation and green areas, on the other.

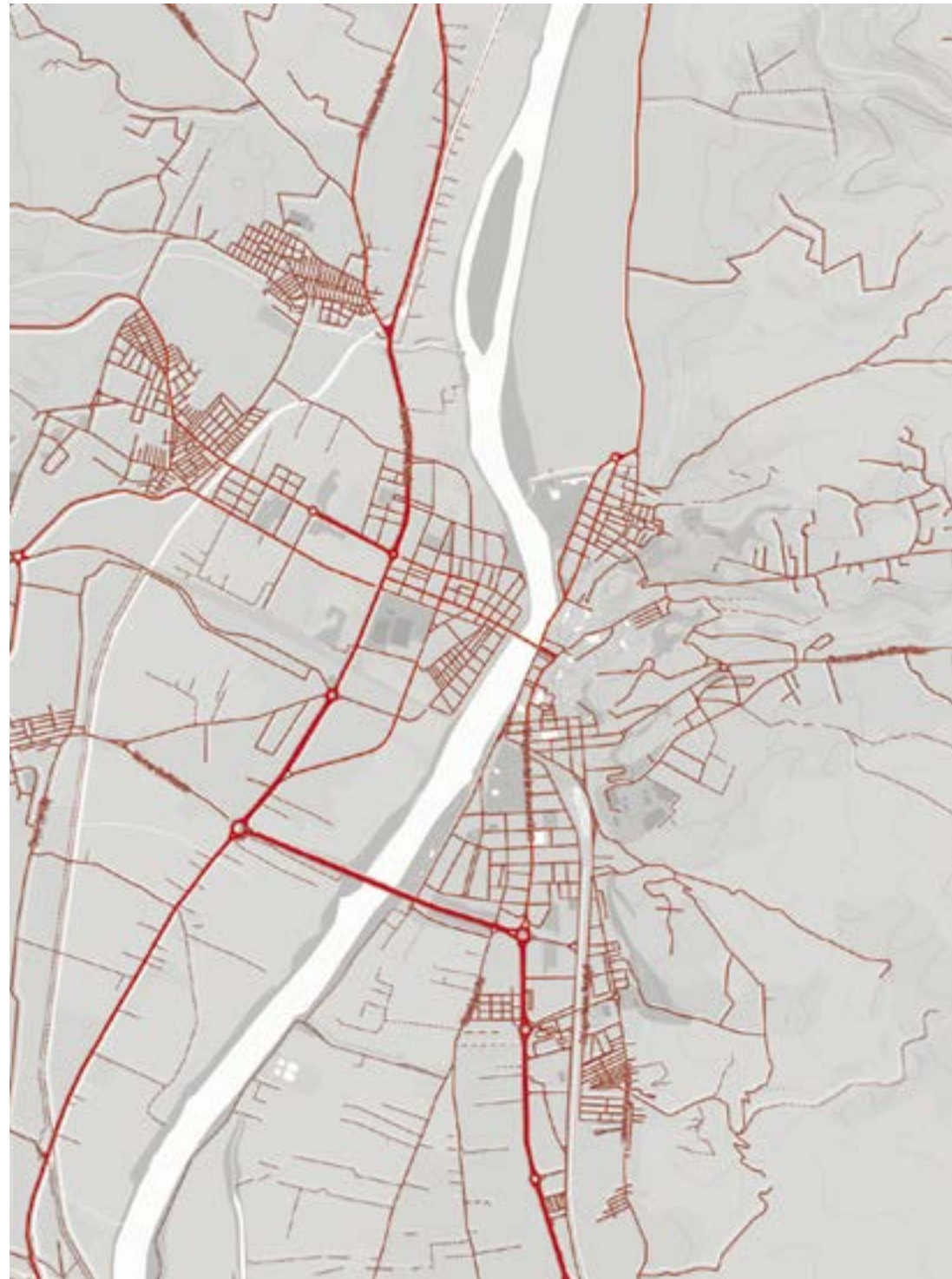
Most trips are carried out on foot, by bicycle or by public transport. The appropriate infrastructures will be built to achieve a real reduction in the circulation of cars.

People are citizens who can exercise their rights to exchange, culture, leisure and entertainment, and expression, as well as the right to travel, in public space.”

Salvador Rueda, *Regenerating the Cerdà Plan*, 2020.

Once the basic structure of the city has been established, land use must also be zoned, planning which functions and uses are allowed in each space (residential, retail, industrial, etc.). The structure of roads and public and green spaces generates a series of spaces or blocks that can be occupied by private activities. Defining which functions are allowed in these spaces and how they should be set up is called 'zoning'. Within these spaces or plots for private functions, when the activities take place inside buildings (as is common), various aspects must be established, such as the height, combination of functions allowed in one building, volume, and alignment of the buildings, etc. If not, the city would be chaotic, with each owner constructing, with no rhyme or reason, buildings as tall they wanted to make the most of the land. Volumetric and functional zoning of the city regulates its density, meaning the number of people who can live there, and this density must be coherent with the planned capacity of its structure and infrastructure, roads, open spaces and services such as power, sewer, water and telecommunications. Density isn't the only aspect defined by volumetric planning, many others such as alignment, façade composition and preservation of heritage buildings and elements must also be established to protect the identity of the urban space. All these aspects help define the image of the city, its beauty and harmony, and aim to give each neighbourhood a personality of its own.

The final aspect, though no less important, that the Urban Master Plan must establish is the town or city's need for space to grow in the future. This need can be determined by combining aspects such as estimated population growth, increase in industrial or business activity, and demand for new housing, etc. It is also important to see if growth is possible in the territory available or whether it is infeasible in terms of impoverishment of landscapes, preservation of natural or agricultural spaces or biodiversity, or availability of resources like water and power. Growth must be balanced itself, and with the whole urban grid or territory and neighbouring towns. Sometimes, considerable growth of the urban footprint requires rethinking its whole structure. Establishing which spaces will be set aside for future growth, meaning the land that will become urban areas within the town or city over the coming years, is what we call 'planning' the land.

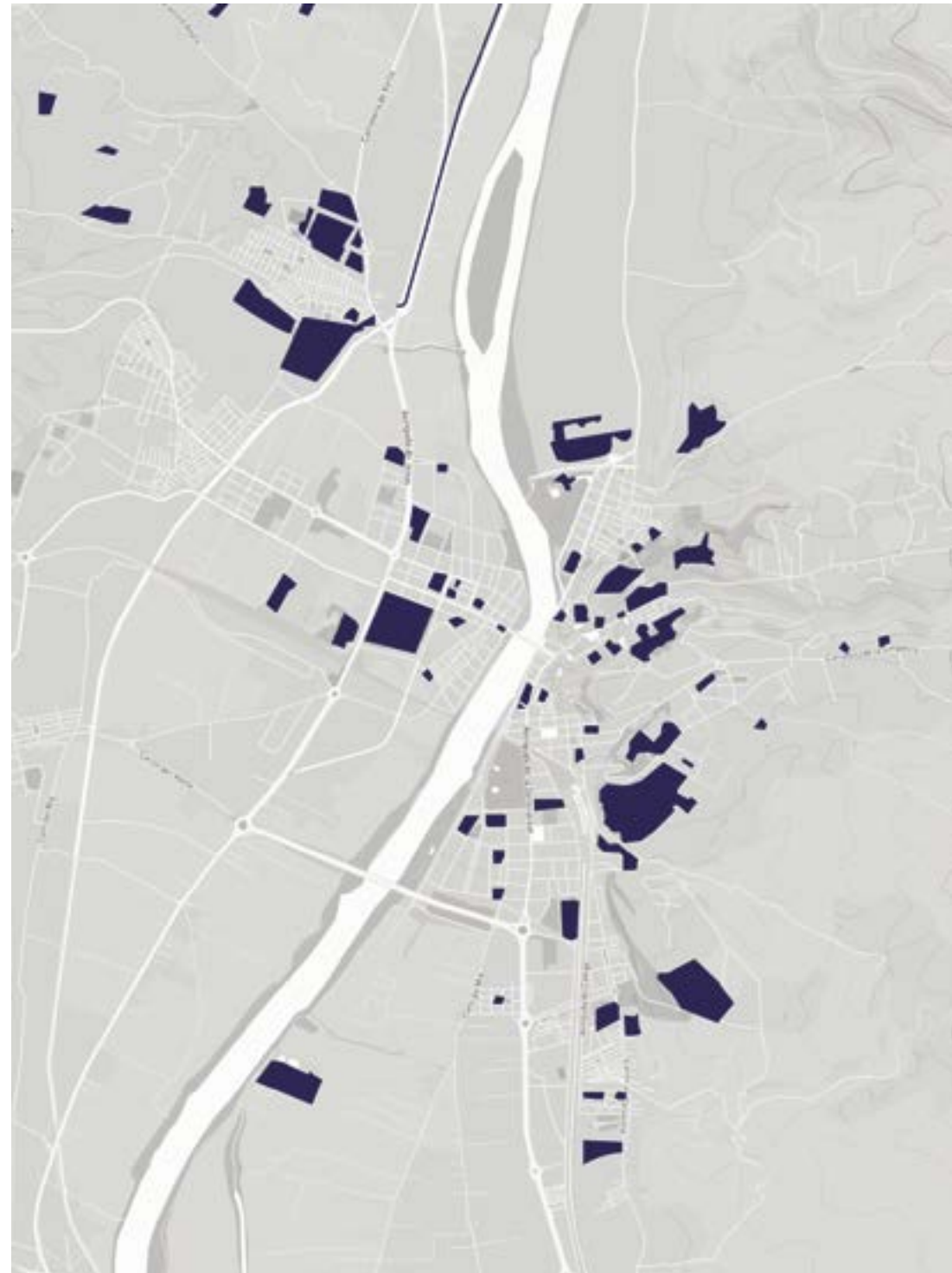


Road structure of the city of Tortosa

It is important to note that plans don't only regulate the growth of towns and cities, they also increasingly focus on managing change in established urban areas, improving and updating how they work. Through these instruments, on top of the others that allow for management, town councils can improve the urban structure, for example by creating new streets, changing the layout of streets (making them into pedestrian areas or adding cycle paths, etc.), create new facilities and public spaces and parks, changing the layout and density of buildings, etc.

Once the plan has been approved, it must be put into action through the urban-development management in place. This practice can become highly complex, especially when it involves consolidated situations and many new instruments used by the urban planner (expropriation, compensation, capital gains, exchanges, etc.). Sometimes, the municipal zoning plans leave areas of the city to be determined, in some respects, in later stages through specific or derived plans (like the partial plans). Finally, when it is a question of expanding the city through new growth, the city council must bear the cost of building the basic structure (roads, green spaces and facilities, and services). This is the skeleton on which private buildings can be constructed and can only be carried out through public funding (as is most common) or, in some cases, public-private partnership. This is one of the most important tasks involving land: taking into account the town council's zoning rules, building the streets, services and infrastructure needed for private occupation; what we in the sector call 'developing' the land.

Planning and managing cities is becoming increasingly complex and can overwhelm the financial and management capacities of many town councils. Striking a balance among all the aspects that affect this task, in order to achieve a properly functioning space in social, economic and environmental terms, requires organising a complex reality in which many objective and subjective aspects must be weighed up carefully. To do so, there are more and more factors to consider, and multidisciplinary teams are required: architects, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, historians, environmental scientists, biologists, engineers, conflict-



Distribution of public facilities in the city of Tortosa

management specialists, social workers and experts in housing, the environment, biodiversity, new technology and data management, health, mobility, energy, waste, water management, gender politics and more. All these elements must be taken into account for the planning to truly address the complexity and challenges of urban spaces.

New sensor technology and big data can help give us objective data to take a more objective approach to the various aspects involved. The New Urban Agenda encourages us to improve urban policies by properly applying this huge amount of data. The data obtained from all sorts of sensors or from mobile phones (which also act as sensors) will only increase in the future, as will the capacity of computers and artificial intelligence to analyse and cross-reference it. Using this data and data analysis tools to improve how cities are designed and managed, and the systems involved, has come to be known as 'smart cities'. Although the term has been used haphazardly and often isn't properly explained, taking advantage of all the data that new technology has to offer to improve how urban spaces and public services are designed and managed can go a long way over the coming decades. However, this technology adds another layer of complexity in conceiving and designing cities, as well as significant ethical challenges in terms of guaranteeing people's privacy and using data fairly and for the general good. Data use must be publicly led to ensure it is done properly, but today the reality is that data is mostly in the hands of large private corporations that don't necessarily have the public good as their main business goal.

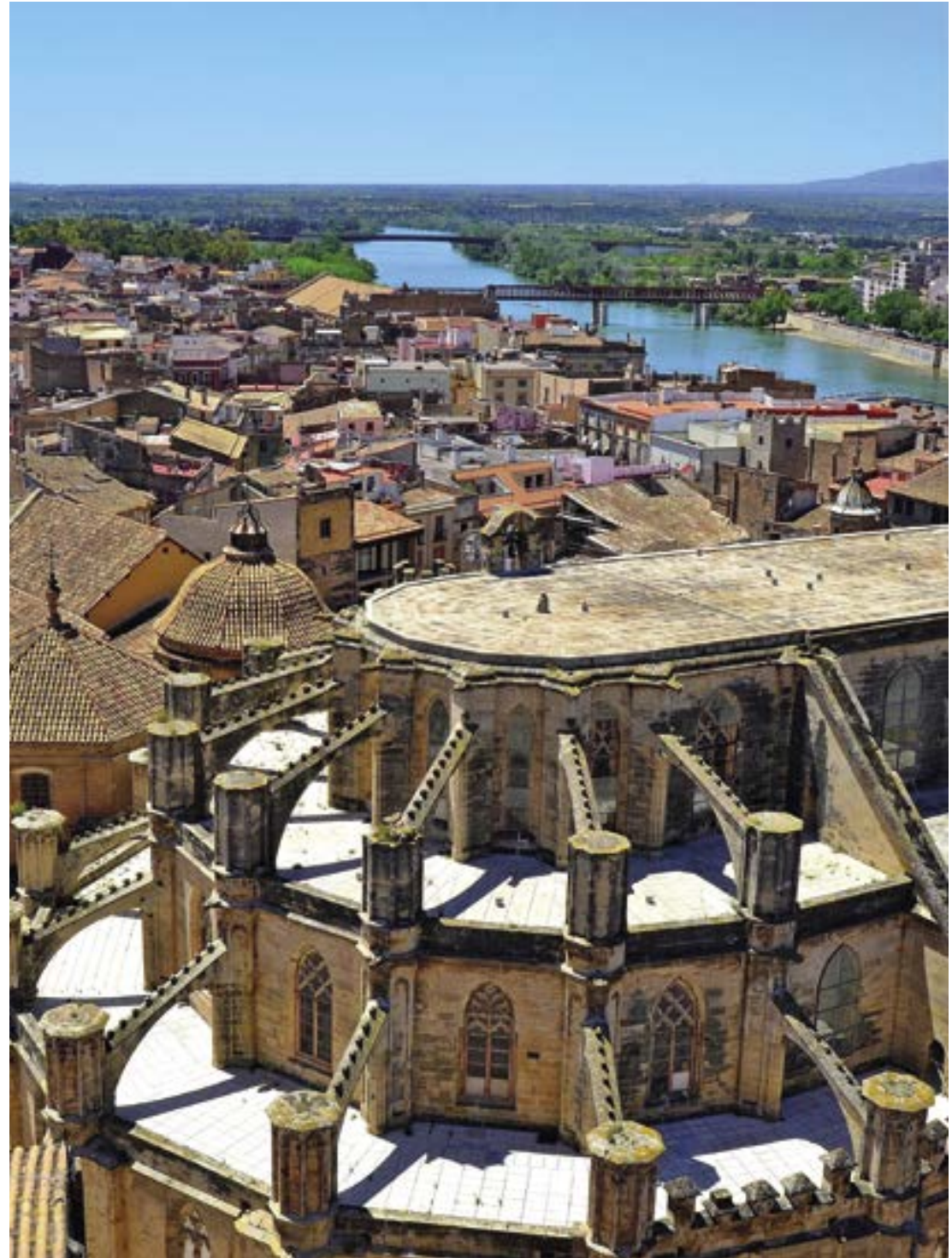
Supporting town councils in managing all aspects of urban planning is one of the main purposes of INCASÒL. The Institute has the capacity, expertise, and experience (as well as the ability to mobilise the necessary resources) to help them with urban management, both at the strictly municipal level and through coordination among several towns. The Government of Catalonia has also established a series of mechanisms to control municipal planning in order to ensure territorial logic and coherence is maintained in all towns and for the whole of urban growth in Catalonia. One of these mechanisms is the supramunicipal plans (such as partial territorial plans or urban master plans), which coordinate



Distribution of green areas and parks in the city of Tortosa

several towns regarding operations and growth, or to regulate specific or sector aspects, such as proper distribution of spaces for economic activity (with the right scale and optimal connections to infrastructures to make them viable and competitive), landscape preservation and management of open spaces, generating clean energy, etc

REASON 36 – WE DRAFT SUPRAMUNICIPAL URBAN PLANNING



Aerial image of the city of Tortosa

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, DECIDING ON THE CITY

As we have seen, the practice of urban planning is increasingly complex but no matter how much data and how many objective criteria are used, the proper functioning of towns and cities ultimately depends on getting citizens involved. For a town or city to work properly, it must meet residents' needs, allow for economic progress, guarantee people's health and safety, provide spaces for leisure activities and socialising, etc. Apart from that, residents are the ones who have a profound understanding of how their towns and neighbourhoods work, their shortcoming (visible or invisible) and their values in terms of memory, history and identity. Collaborating with residents in defining landscapes or urban environments is invaluable, as the information they can provide cannot be replaced by scientific analysis. Therefore, when starting an urban transformation process, it is essential to get the people involved, both for the knowledge they can contribute to diagnosing the situation and for their contributions in making sure the solutions meet their needs and expectations.

Municipal democracy is still on a lower level than national politics. Town councils are proximity governments that have limited manoeuvrability and are often beholden to national political parties. Town councils were also responsible for many episodes of political corruption in the years before the real estate bubble burst and have done the most to integrate the waves of new politics and to work towards being more transparent and democratic. A truly democratic city

holds its local government accountable for its actions and considers residents' opinions in the processes that transform and shape it.

At the beginning of Point 6, we saw how citizens' spontaneous involvement, through protest and calls for change, to improve urban environments has been happening for centuries. Now, institutions have seen their contribution is necessary and irreplaceable. In the end, urban planning should be an instrument to serve the people and their participation is key for easing the private interests that put pressure on co-existence in urban spaces by seeking private or business profit. The democracy of cities, if properly exercised and truly representative, faithfully reflects the meaning of the common good and public interest more than any partisan policy, and any new governance of towns and cities must follow this principle.

Historically, INCASÒL has carried out long, complex processes in highly sensitive spaces, from a social standpoint. This has required a lot of work to be done in establishing methodologies to help the most vulnerable during these processes. Urban development, when taken from planning to reality, especially in areas already built-up, is a highly sensitive process that is very difficult to manage. So, when the Institute carries out its actions in established neighbourhoods, it always takes into account citizens' opinions and needs during the process, even sending Institute staff out to the neighbourhood where it is taking place and opening up local offices there.



Process of urban renovation and replacement of the old houses of the Colònia Castells in the district of Les Corts, Barcelona. INCASÒL accompanied the residents throughout the transformation process through a specific care office for them.



REASON 37 – WE CREATE LOCAL MANAGEMENT OFFICES TO HELP RESIDENTS IN COMPLEX URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Getting as many citizens as possible involved in transforming the city is a way to make it more democratic and reduce inequalities, incorporating more diverse points of view into the design and, in short, a commitment to a more efficient, transparent government that is and is seen as being completely at the service of citizens. Participation is a way to ensure residents feel towns and cities are their own and a means for getting them involved in physical and social improvement.

Therefore, what administrations must now do is to incorporate, guarantee and organise this participation, educate the people and public managers, and establish a mechanism to make it effective and functional and to prevent excessive bureaucracy, sluggish progress or specialisation of those involved when they are not part of the government. The participation space must also reflect the baggage and contribution of experts in the various subjects that converge in urban development, defining the role of each player in the process. So, new architecture studios or cooperatives have taken responsibility for establishing effective methods to regulate, facilitate and educate on participation, and the Catalan Land Institute has also taken this up as one of our tasks.

REASON 38 – WE PROMOTE PROJECTS TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ON PARTICIPATION

The current situation calls for us to delve deeper into formulas that improve governance and citizen-government relations, both to address people's growing demands to be more involved in public affairs and to make better decisions that use collective intelligence and the resources available in society as a whole. Citizen participation allows us to move in this direction and incorporates a diverse cross-section of stakeholders in public deliberations, building a stronger society and more cohesive social fabric. It is, therefore, a tool with enormous potential to improve the quality of democracy. However, if we want participation to be a tool to improve democracy, these processes must be designed and managed with the utmost rigour and quality. New architecture studios and cooperatives have specialised in studying and perfecting participation methods, and the administration is also generating more and more expertise and experience as participative processes become more widespread, establishing stable spaces for this topic such as participation boards, which materialise as advisory boards, national or sector panels, advisory councils, etc.

Citizen participation today is conquering spaces that go beyond urban transformation. Citizen participation allows for structured deliberation on issues of strategic importance associated with public services and policies. So, the process of making decisions that affect public management is enriched through the vision of the citizens themselves, both individually and collectively. Citizen participation and open government bring about better governance. It is increasingly common for town councils to put their budgets up for participative processes, giving citizens the power to decide where and how they want to invest their money. The actions proposed for using the budget can be of all sorts, some involving public space and others for grants and investment in private arenas or economic stimulus.

REASON 39 – WE GET CITIZENS INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING TO TRANSFORM TOWNS AND CITIES

Governing the city is an increasingly complex task: social and environmental challenges overlap in a physical space that can foster inclusion and quality of life or, to the contrary, heighten inequalities and become an environment that is detrimental to life. New tensions take shape and, sometimes, emerge in the form of protests and, unfortunately, outbursts of violence. Social movements and political tensions become visible in cities, and Catalan towns and cities have seen mass mobilisation of citizens, particularly since 2012 when movements were organised calling for a change in our country's political status. But in recent years we've also seen violent episodes erupt in response to these and other political tensions, although surely these flames have been fanned by frustrations with the increasing, persistent inequalities: in the 21st century, the life expectancy of someone born in Torre Baró, Nou Barris, is ten years shorter than one born in Pedralbes.

The city offers a space for dialogue and place to come together that amplifies these calls for change and the fact that these flagrant inequalities persist, or continue to increase, shows that it is still necessary to create participation spaces outside the established ones. New technology allows for new levels of self-organisation that can also help structure participation, but also to create new ones and feed dissidence. Both things, when non-violent, must be allowed within the framework of the city if we recognise that the progressive waves of civil rights achieved have always started with protests before they were incorporated into the established governance mechanisms.

From the administration, we can take advantage of the new IT revolution to improve governance and do so in a

Workshop with children from schools in Roda de Ter for the design of a play area in the economic activity sector of Puig Vell in Roda de Ter.



way that is collective, fair, and democratic, making sure to protect citizens, their privacy and their interests. But data also poses ethical issues: we have to guarantee that the digital revolution in the city protects and is done in favour of the citizens; and, as a government, we must protect at all costs the privacy of data, ensuring information that can truly improve people's lives is universally accessible. To sum up, collaboration, participation and transparency must be the three principles on which city and territorial governance is based over the coming decades.

The Catalan Land Institute, as a company devoted to social housing or urban-development management, has always incorporated dialogue with residents into its daily work. Today, encouraging participation to decide on the future of the city is one of the expressions that defines the corporate responsibility of INCASÒL as a public company, but there are others and new ones must be incorporated in the future. The Institute's social responsibility drives us to support projects that are important to society, encouraging those that are closest to our fields of action. This may be in education, by disseminating urban development and architecture, or fostering architectural quality. Above all, however, the return on our actions to society is achieved through their positive repercussions and the important social benefit they have had over the past 40 years. It is these positive effects we have tried to share through the 40 reasons in this book.

REASON 40 – WE FOSTER SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROJECTS WITH ADDED SOCIAL VALUE



Presentation of an event organized by INCASÒL in the framework of the 2016 Architecture Congress of the College of Architects of Catalonia





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