



Fewer cars

Pontevedra

more city





Pontevedra

- ▶ Compact urban center 65,000 residents
- ▶ Municipality 83,000 residents
- ▶ Area of influence 400,000 residents
- ▶ Province 900,000 residents
- ▶ An economy based on commerce and administrative services
- ▶ 71 motorized vehicles per 100 residents
- ▶ 70% of displacements are on foot or by bicycle
- ▶ 81% of children go walking to school
- ▶ 67% reduction in CO2 emissions
- ▶ Average speed: 25.3 km/h
- ▶ 91% of vehicles do not enter the city center
- ▶ Zero road deaths after the intervention
- ▶ Top speeds of 30 km/h citywide
- ▶ 223 different species of tree
- ▶ 40 km of footpaths



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A DIFFERENT URBAN SPACE IS POSSIBLE

One of the nicest feelings in the city of Pontevedra today is the realization that the men and women who reside here are proud of the place in which they live. What started as an aspiration at the turn of the century has become a reality over the last few years. The face of Pontevedra has changed quite dramatically in a relatively short period of time and now distinguishes itself from other cities whose future was left in the hands of routine.

Pontevedra has managed to domesticate traffic, abide by the strictest environmental protection guidelines to achieve sustainability, open its public spaces to foster cohabitation and social cohesion, reduce road violence radically, and help to protect the elderly, children, cyclists and pedestrians so that they can enjoy themselves moving around safely and leading healthier lives. The air is clean, there is almost no noise pollution and people have regained their city to transform it into a stimulating hub that has received the highest international recognition.

Our urban model has emerged from participation and consensus and the great majority of the population advocates for steady but marked changes, placing natural mobility over motorized transport.

The evolution of the city of Pontevedra is the result of political initiatives supported by the most dynamic sectors of the social fabric, who set the course of action and braved the storms that were to come.

Each city should search for its path and find it, a path that is coherent with its history, as well as with its sociological and territorial features. There is no single prescription to ensure a safe journey, but there are certainly some inescapable essentials: we must build cities by keeping our surroundings and the environment in mind, holding our own through passing fashions.

The present publication describes this gradual process of regeneration, providing the reader with relevant references and clarifying data derived from the principles of urban and environmental quality, thus showing that a different urban space is possible.

We hope that you enjoy it and come to visit us if you want to know more about this eye-opening experience.

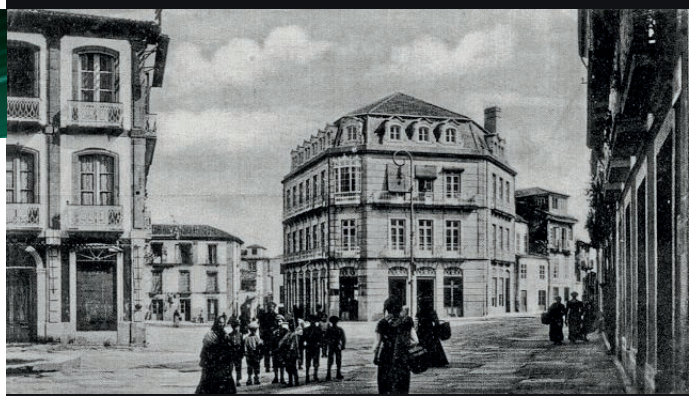
Miguel Anxo Fernández Lores. Mayor of Pontevedra

URBAN REFORM

▶ In 1999, the city of Pontevedra was starting to show signs of severe decline. It was a time when residents decided to drive a truly transformative change that would come to be known as “urban reform”, a great shift whose aim was to give the city back to the people, to become more integrative and to restore the local feeling of pride.

▶ An alternative city model and a transformation of this scale required a clear set of objectives, which consisted in improving urban quality, increasing accessibility, reaching higher levels of environmental balance, boosting human and economic dynamism, as well as fostering social cohesion and equality. Pontevedra had expressed its wish to become a comfortable and kind city, contemporary, attractive and capable of offering its residents and visitors the best opportunities.





This old picture of Curros Enríquez square, dating back to 1910, helps us see what the city was like before the invasion of motorized vehicles. The image on the left, from the late 1980s, is very representative in this regard. The remaining pictures, also of Curros Enríquez, show how beautifully the original appearance has been recovered.





*The same streets and squares where,
not so long ago, hundreds of cars used
to park are now spaces for leisure,
walking and a bustling social life.*

- Compostela square, above
- Andrés Muruais street, left
- Riestra street, below





THE TRANSFORMATION

From the center to the outskirts

The urban transformation took shape gradually, starting with the heritage site of the capital, its Historic Center, from which motorized vehicles were progressively withdrawn and its appearance modified. Residents received the change with open arms, since parking spots were replaced with spaces devoted to leisure and city life.

Much more than reducing the number of cars

This initiative went much further than withdrawing motorized vehicles from the center after traffic density became unmanageable, it was also about redistributing public space. In addition, pavements were renovated, as were sewerage systems, public lighting and street furniture. This shift was not circumscribed to heritage areas; it reached urban and municipal areas too.

An encompassing view

These changes affected the whole city, not just the center. All interventions have shared the same basic philosophy: understanding public space as a continuation of the private sphere. Such spaces should be friendly and safe, hassle-free and allow for the normal development of everyday life.

Closer to the environment

Some cities have managed to transform themselves into welcoming places where residents spend most of their lives. When we talk about environmental policy, there is a tendency to focus solely on rivers, landscapes and natural parks. However, the urban environment is equally important for much of the population. Caring for this urban environment should be the main objective of the transformation of our cities, so that they become attractive and appealing places to lead a healthy life.







This picture illustrates the before and after stages of urban reform in several key streets and squares. In the past, as it may be observed, the space devoted to motorized vehicles was overwhelming compared to that intended pedestrian use. Today, this proportion has been inverted.

- Gutiérrez Mellado street (above)
- Cobián Roffignac street (left)
- A Verdura square (right)





CITY MODEL

Public space

The city should recover its original role as a forum and transform its streets and squares into spaces for cohabitation and personal interaction. Before, most public spaces were invaded by motorized vehicles. Now, people occupy their place at the center.

Urban dynamism

The city never stops. Its evolution knows no bounds. It should find new reasons to improve from the economic, territorial, landscape, immaterial and environmental points of view. It must respond to contemporary demands, adapt to changing times and reach its full potential.

Social cohesion

The city widens public spaces and expands urban quality criteria to the surrounding areas, thus putting forward the essential conditions for social equality, preventing suburbanization and promoting balance between different urban areas.

Integrative city

It is the city itself that determines the conditions according to which space is employed. It should think about people who confront more difficulties by becoming accessible for all, more welcoming and more useful, with the aim of allowing people with different levels of ability to lead independent lives.

Historic memory

A city aware of its past is better suited to address future challenges. It should aspire to achieve the highest levels of wellbeing, respect its heritage and apply its collective intelligence to everyday situations.

The city as a learning experience

The city is a classroom without walls for schoolchildren, who can walk and play safely and freely, but also for visitors and residents alike, who find reasons to develop their sense of citizenship and live fuller lives in the public domain.

Neighborhood participation

The city gathers support from its most dynamic sectors with the objective of kick-starting significant changes, overcome reticence and face new challenges. These features are particularly characteristic of a model that is deeply democratic and would not work without this participatory approach, which proves essential in ameliorating collective intelligence.

Democratic city

This transformative model opted for equal accessibility without privileges or exceptions. Multifunctional streets and squares have avoided segregation and fostered personal interactivity, regardless of socio-economic background.

More examples of the rational use of space

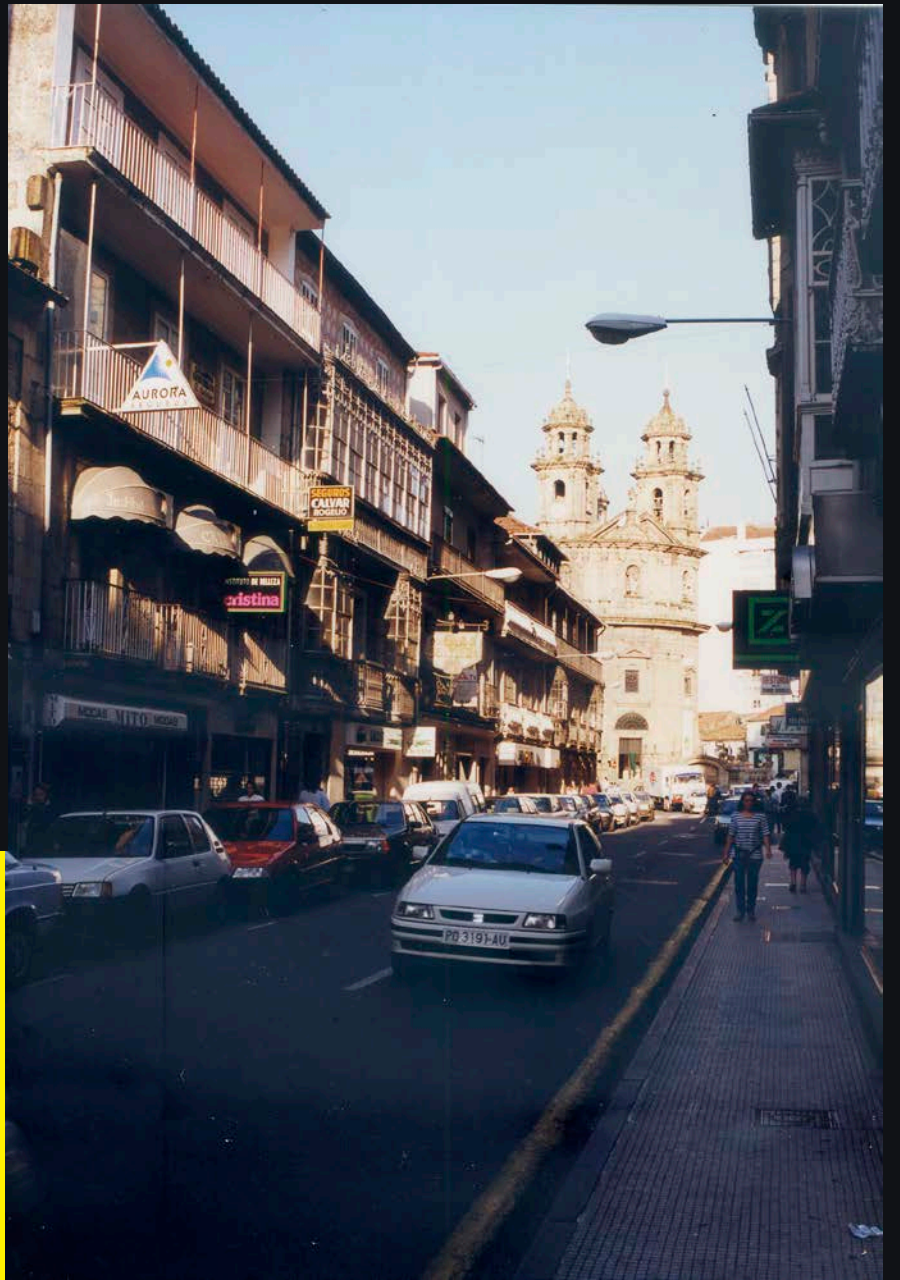
– San Xosé square (above)

– Benito Corbal street (below)

– A Ferrería square (right)

– Michelena street (further to the right)







- **Urban centers of interest**

One of the key aspects of the regeneration of the Historic Center heritage consisted in introducing public and private equipment to foster local activity.
- **PUBLIC EQUIPMENT**

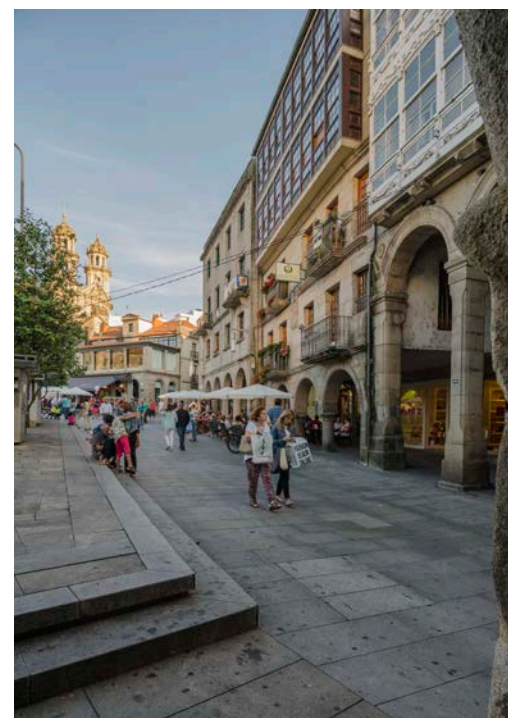
 - Teatro Principal
 - City Council
 - Municipal Market
 - Tourist office at Pazo das Mendoza
 - Promotional center at Casa da Luz
 - Social action center Casazul
 - Vice-Rectorate at Casa das Campás
 - DO Rías Baixas at Pazo de Mugártegui
 - Museum of Pontevedra (6 buildings)
 - Parador de Turismo
 - Trade union building

► **OTHER CENTERS OF INTEREST**

 - Liceo Casino
 - Casino Mercantil e Industrial
 - Church of San Francisco
 - Soup kitchen
 - Church of San Bartolomé
 - Santa María Basilica
 - Official Association of Technical Architects
 - Water management company
 - Various hotels



The restoration of the remains of the medieval city walls, the archeological site of Ponte do Burgo and the Bishopric Towers Interpretation Center (CITA) stand as a perfect complement to the most remarkable Gothic and Renaissance buildings in the Historic Center. After the withdrawal of motorized vehicles, pavements and streets were completely renovated to guarantee universal accessibility to public spaces.



RESTORATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Historic memory

As Patrick Geddes put it, “[...] a city is more than a place in space, it is a drama in time”, which perfectly condenses what the main priorities of a city should be. A legacy of hundreds of years presented to us in the form of streets, squares and buildings should be understood as a stimulus to create new values.

A contemporary take

Reinterpreting the local heritage from a modern perspective considering modern-day needs presupposes the adaptation of shape and matter to a language and functionality that is compatible with very demanding quality standards.

Respect for the substance and service adaptation

The restoration of the Historic Center gave a new life to streets, squares and public buildings, equipping them with the best services: substitution of water and waste pipelines, installation of fiber optics and gas conductions, etc. with the objective of improving the quality of economic and domestic life required by the times.

Global regeneration

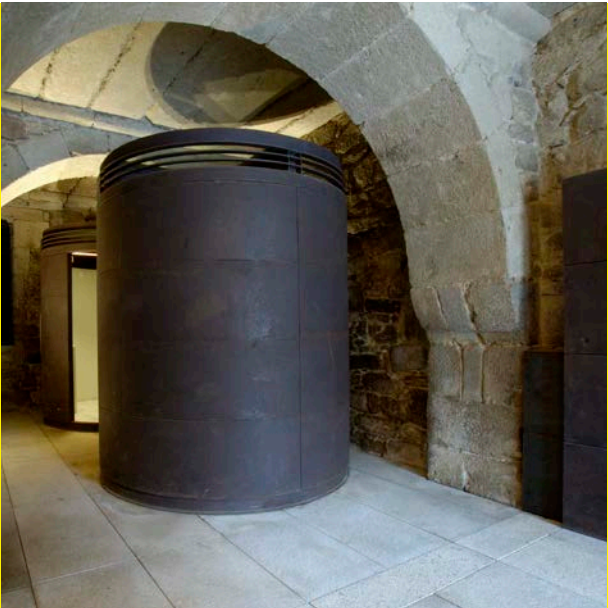
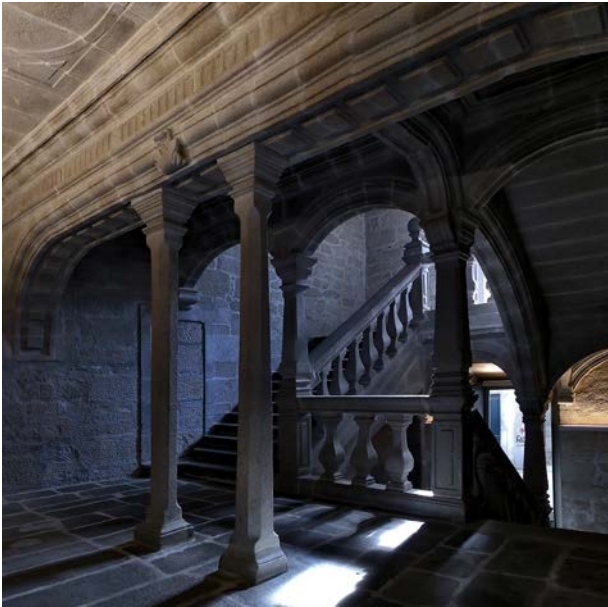
An adequate restoration of public spaces and infrastructures led to a stronger commitment on the part of private businesses to get involved in the regeneration of residential spaces and the revitalization of commercial areas. The Historic Center, which had formerly been regarded as degraded and marginal, became a major point of interest for work, leisure, tourism and shopping.

Economic vitality

One of the most important interactions in this process of restoration took place between the city council and the urban shopping center which comprises the whole monumental district. The result was an interesting public-private collaborative partnership that strengthened commercial and neighborhood links, transforming the Historic Center into a large-scale retail space.



Pictured here: Museum of Pontevedra, municipal market, Méndez Núñez square, Casa das Campás, Pazo de Mugártegui, Feira Franca, Santa María basilica, Official Association of Technical Architects, O Burgo bridge, Santo Domingo, Bishopric Towers Interpretation Center (CITA) and Curros Enríquez square.



A NEW IMPULSE FOR THE OLDEST PLACES

▶ Giving a new life to the city center

Rather than adopting a narrow conception of the Historic Center as a museum, this revitalizing approach has managed to transform a marginal space previously devoted to indiscriminate parking for over 500 motorized vehicles into a commercial, business and hospitality industry hub with an incomparable touristic and residential appeal.

▶ The power of memory

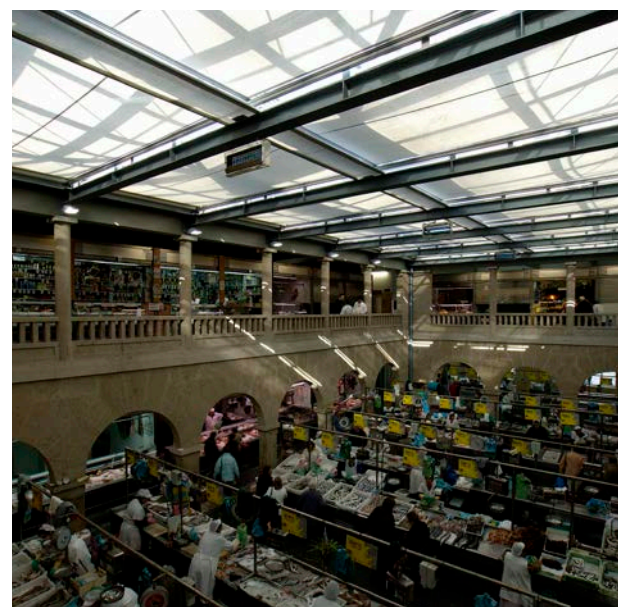
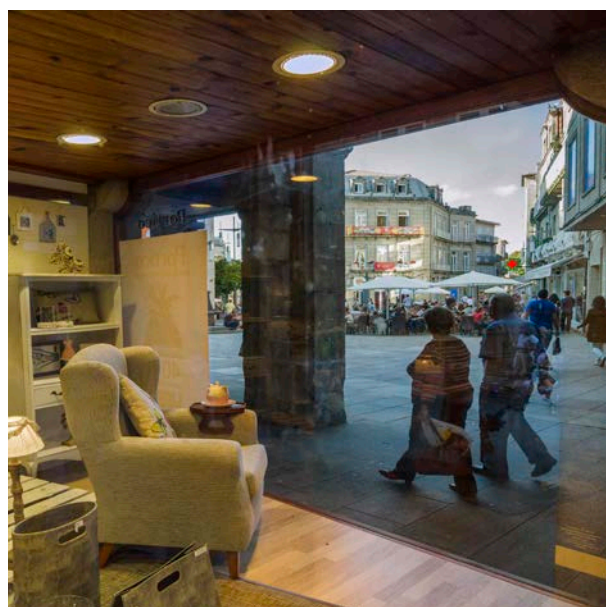
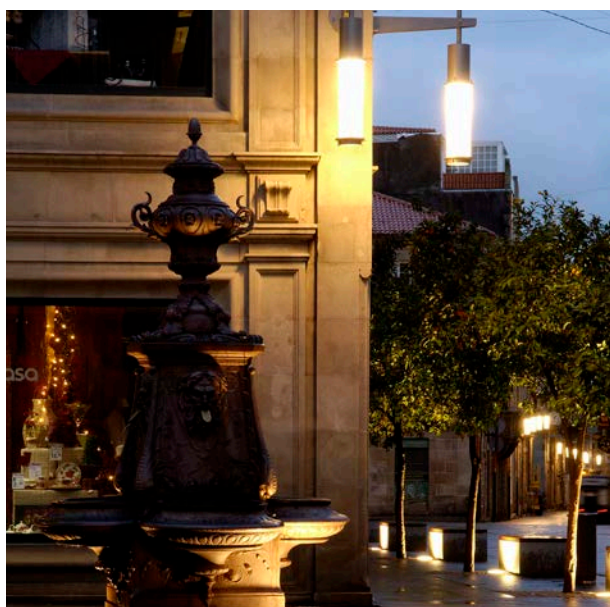
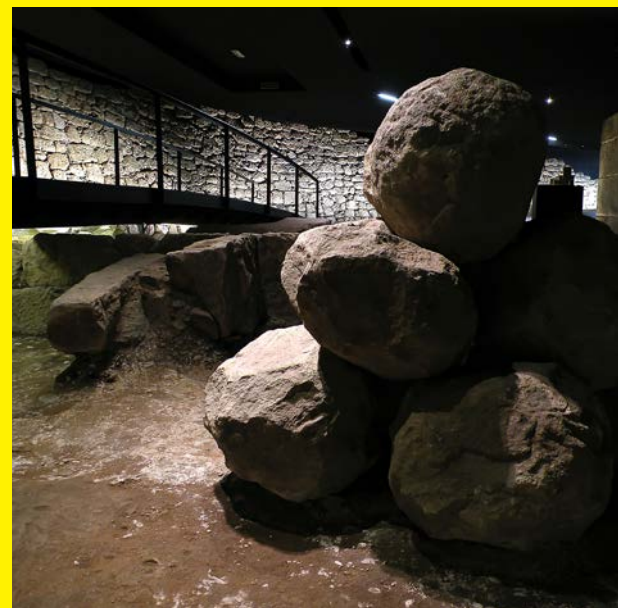
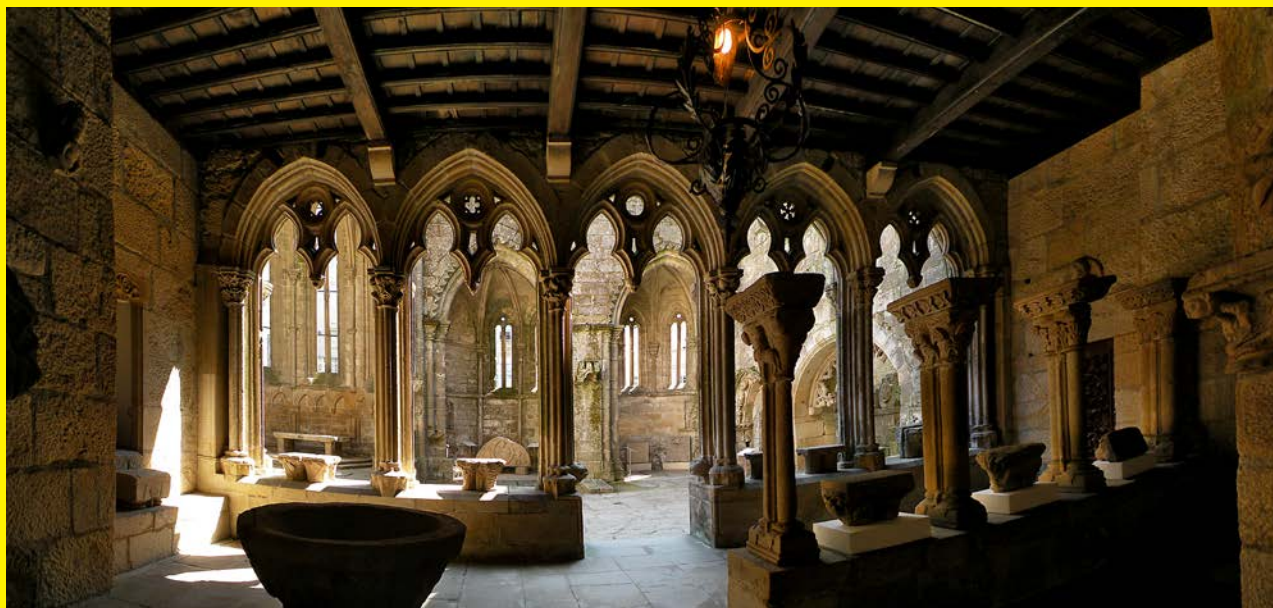
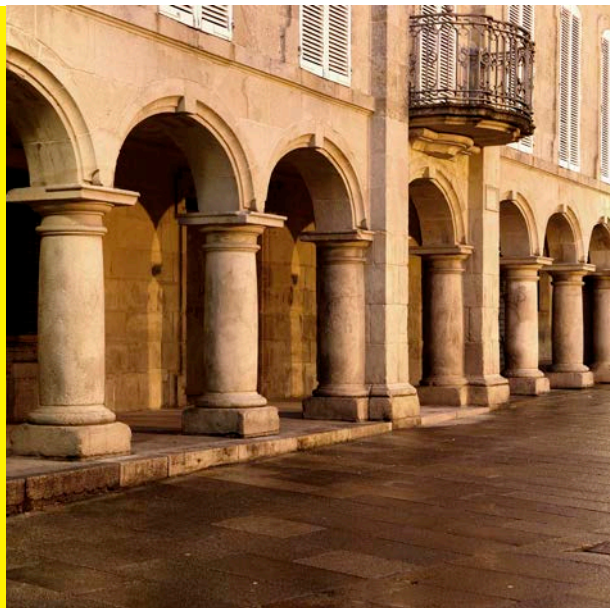
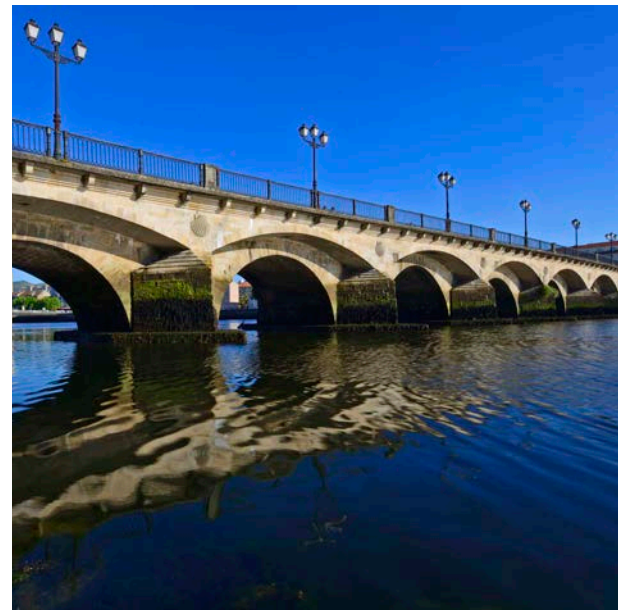
The role of memory, a collective cultural inheritance and the local artistic and historical heritage has a long way to go in the current economic climate; for this reason, it was considered strategic in the process of renovation, in parallel with the architectural reconstruction.

▶ Forms of today and always

A radically new system of public lighting was one of the most perceptible initiatives, both in terms of the high quality of the light and the design of streetlamps, made specially in Pontevedra for Pontevedra. Street furniture, together with the elements for architectural restoration, pavements, etc. are also part of the renewed Historic Center.

▶ Leisure, festivities and the economy

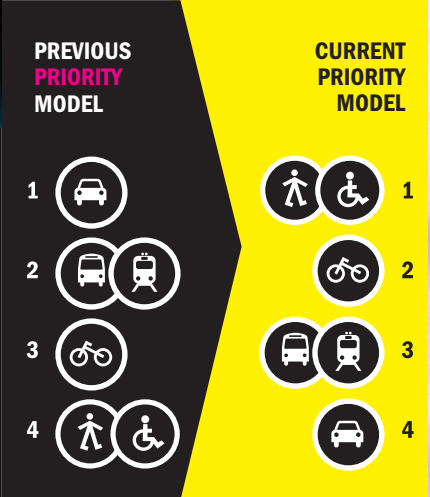
Feira Franca, a multitudinous festivity which started back in 1999 is the most patent manifestation of the success of the Historic Center as the main stage to host activities where memory, leisure and the local economy interact to become business drivers. Other celebrations also profit from the spaces which have been made available throughout the year, since the festive season is intense and full of opportunities for all.



THE NEW PRIORITIES



MOBILITY



Better on foot

Pontevedra has adopted walking, the most natural form of transportation, as the best formula to solve its persistent mobility problems. Today, the city of Pontevedra is universally accessible, almost barrier free, economically dynamic, ideal for shopping, leisure, hospitality and tourism; not to forget public administration, the launching pad of urban development.



Car free

The city has dramatically reduced the abusive presence of motorized vehicles, which had come to dominate the Historic Center, where more than 500 cars were parked for days on end, as well as the outer rings. The establishment of car free areas and the enforcement of new mobility priorities have boosted the local economy, particularly the services sector.



Not just the Historic Center

The outer rings have not been left aside in this process of transformation aimed at the achievement of urban quality and universal accessibility; quite on the contrary, special attention has been paid to shopping high streets and areas of coexistence between pedestrians and motorized vehicles. Collective public spaces are placed higher in the mobility hierarchy than private motorized vehicles, which are considered secondary.



Healthier and more natural

Walking is the most natural means of transportation for the human being. In addition, it is healthier and most efficient in densely populated urban areas. Any displacement within a three-kilometer radius –about half an hour– should ideally be covered on foot. This attitude contributes to healthy living, environmental balance and caring for the planet.



The idea behind the rehabilitation of Gutiérrez Mellado street consisted in connecting As Palmeiras park –a leisure area designed in the early 20th century– with the Historic Center to form a unified whole by expanding the palm tree garden beyond the park itself.



► **People before cars**

In the not so distant past, the car was king and its preeminence was enshrined in a mobility model which gave priority to motorized vehicles. Today, the situation is quite different: people always go first.

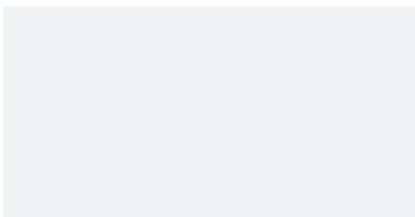
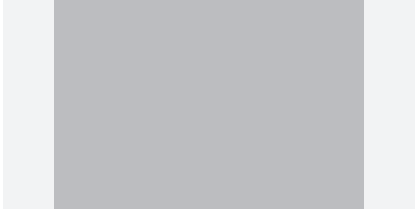
► **The city that walks**

Agreeing on the consideration of people as the most important of all the elements which have an impact on mobility marked the beginning of Pontevedra's great urban reform: pedestrianization, footpath creation, wider sidewalks, life-saving speed bumps, narrower car lanes, etc. Each major intervention provided new solutions for local residents, who saw the water distribution network renovated and their immediate surroundings refurbished.

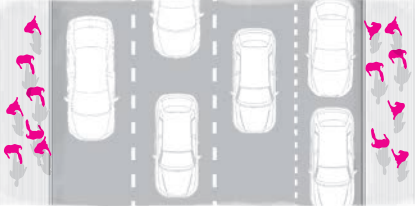


Benito Corbal street as the paradigm of change

Space for vehicles



Until 2000



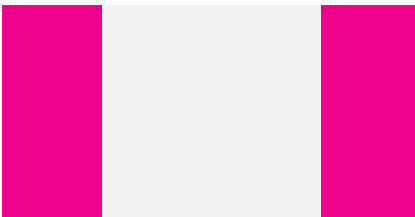
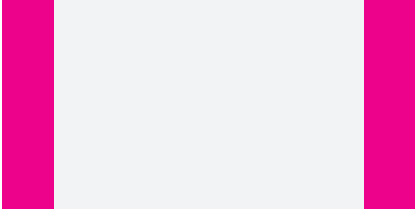
From 2000



From 2014



Space for pedestrians



How a street changes

Benito Corbal street is a top-tier commercial axis and stands as a paradigmatic model of urban transformation beyond the Historic Center: traffic has been reduced slowly but surely and pedestrians can now enjoy the space they urgently required.

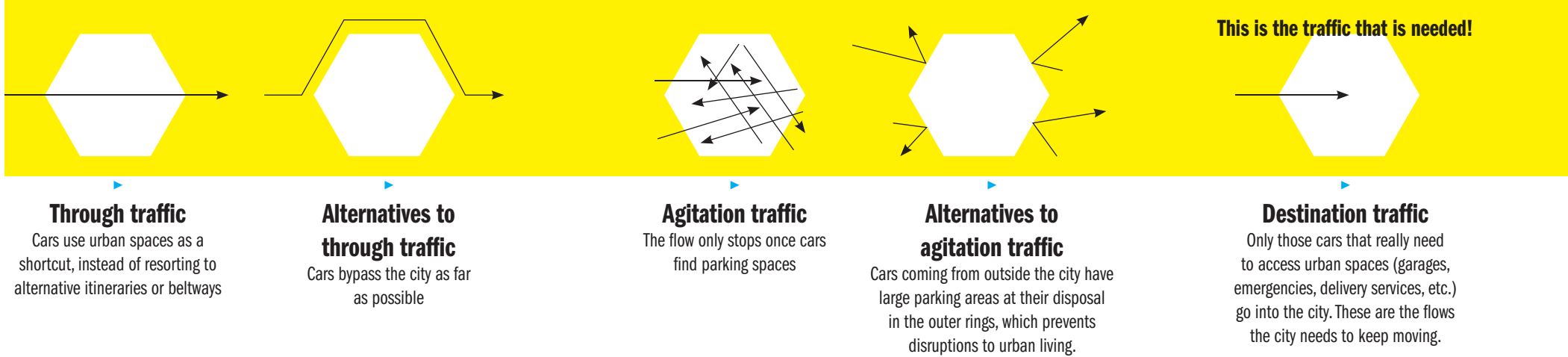
WHAT EACH STREET IS LIKE

Street design determines what the city looks like. The way space, pavements and street furniture are distributed, together with a quality finish of the work, are all influential elements in urban living.

The streets we have are part of our local heritage, part of the historic memory of the city, regardless of its relative youth. Each street may present different dimensions –which is a particularly relevant aspect, especially in terms of width– but also play different roles within the urban system. Streets may be intended for pedestrians only, for vehicle traffic, for regulated coexistence, but also single platform or clearly segregated depending on the mobility priorities in force. Street furniture design should respond to environmental needs.



Types of urban motorized traffic



Types of streets according to the urban model



ESSENTIAL VEHICLES ONLY

Traffic flows respond to people’s needs

The question that kick-started the transformation tried to determine the number of motorized vehicles that would be necessary for the city to keep functioning efficiently. The result: very few. Non-essential cars should remain either in the parking areas located in the outer rings or in private garages.

Park and then walk

People coming from outside the city may park their car within walking distance, as close to their destination as any local resident.

Better on foot

Residents in the city center have no need to take their cars out, since they can get anywhere they want walking or cycling.

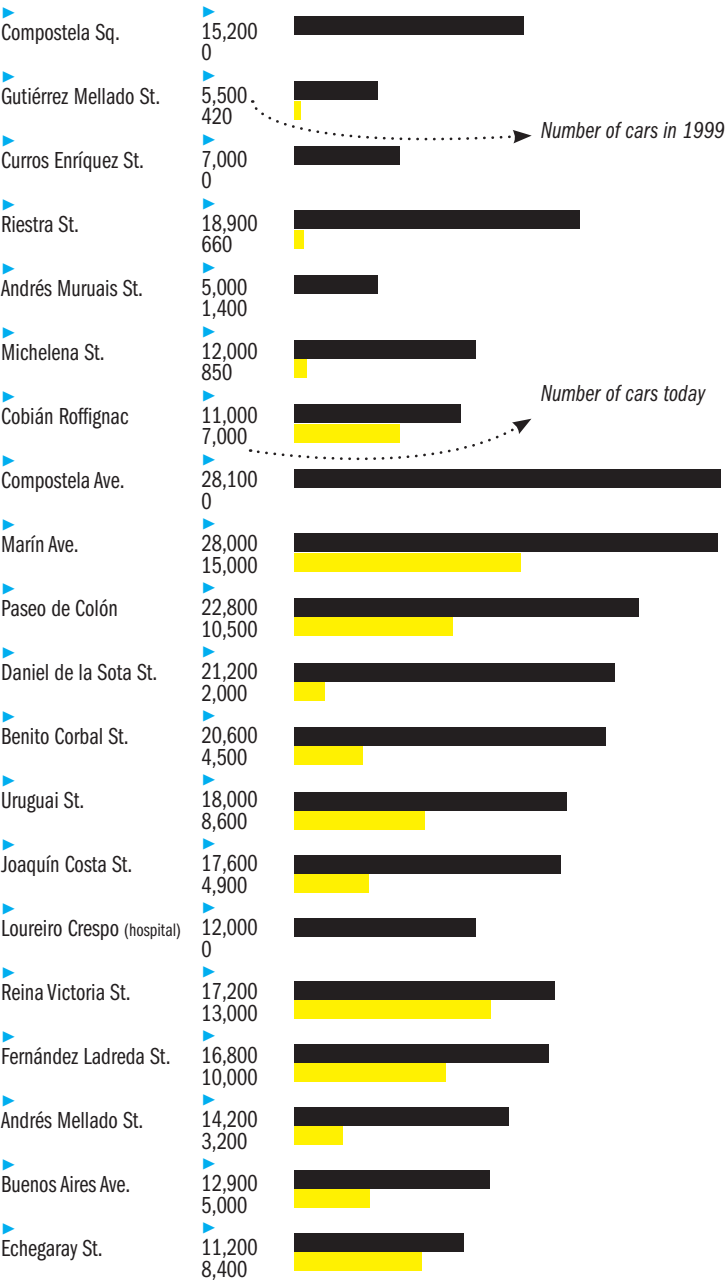
CIRCULATION ALLOWED ANY TIME OF DAY OR NIGHT

- Emergency services and public safety
- Public services (waste collection, water management, etc.)
- Private garage access
- Transport of people with reduced mobility

CIRCULATION ALLOWED ONLY AT SPECIFIC TIMES

- Commercial supplies
- Home deliveries
- Transport of bulky items, removal services, etc.

The impact of car-free policies



Before and after. Paseo de Colón, one of the entry routes from A Barca bridge. It was transformed following the fundamental rule for the whole city: inverting the priority between the space available for pedestrians and that at the disposal of motorized vehicles.



FEWER CARS

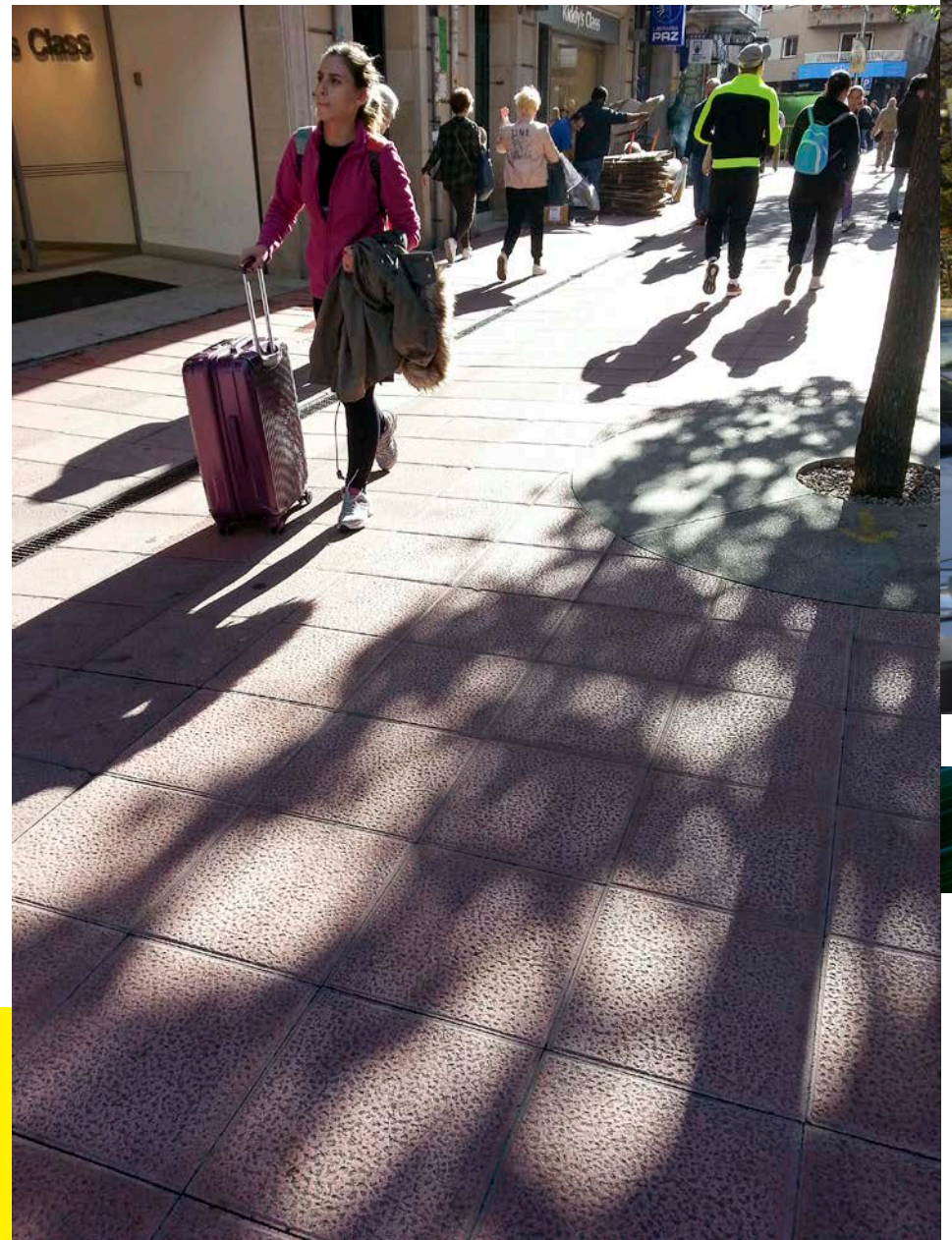
1999



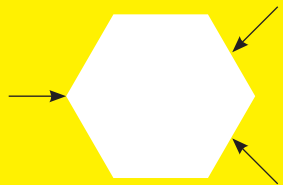
Today



This diagram shows the streets with higher motorized traffic density in 1999 and today, after the implementation of car-free regulations in urban spaces.



If you live outside the city and drive
Park and then walk

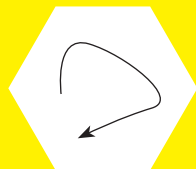


Cars coming into the city

In 1999, 83% of cars entered the city
Today, only 9% enter the city

In 1999 it took 36 minutes to stop
Currently 17 hours

If you live in the city
Better on foot



Internal displacements

In 1999, up to 52,000 cars a day started their engines
Today, the figure is down to 17,000

In 1999 it took 18 minutes to stop
Currently 7 hours

Where are the remaining cars?

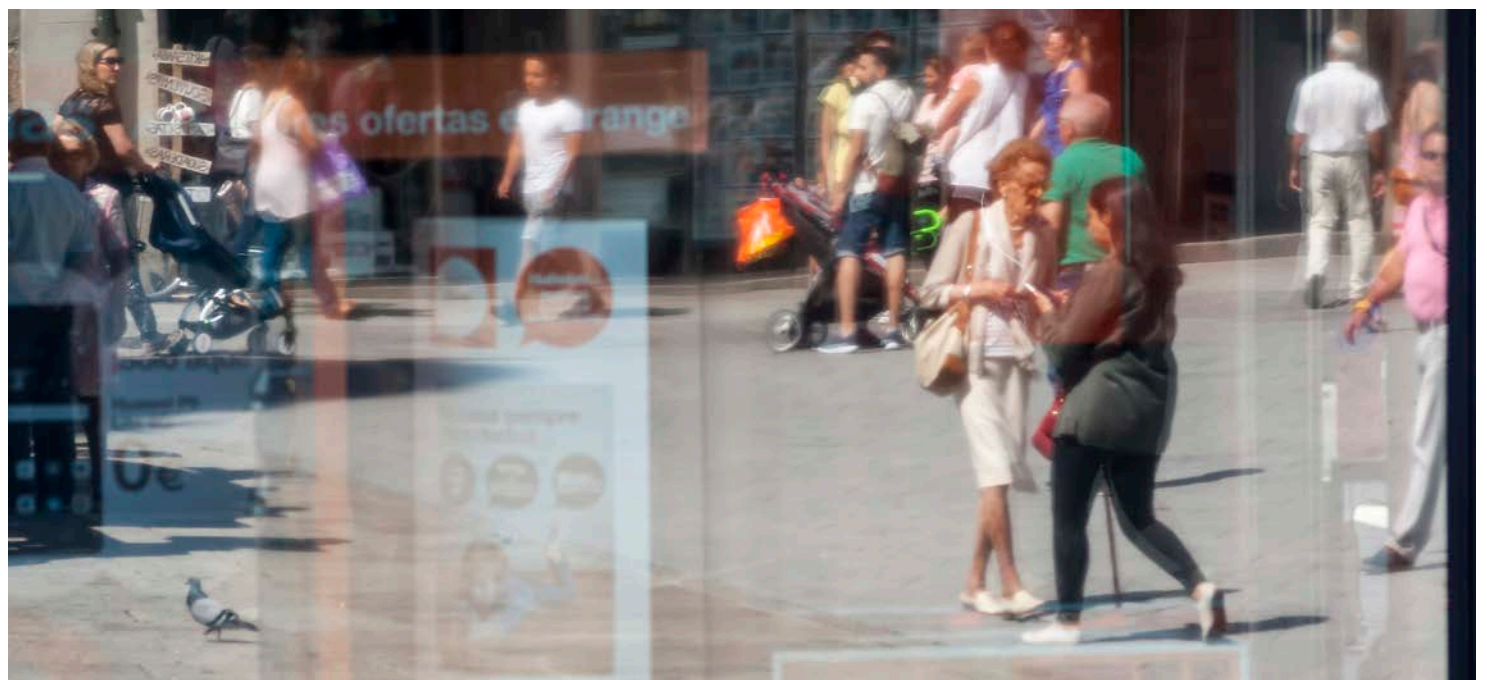
There are now fewer cars entering the city, but it is still equally efficient and much more appealing than before. What happened to these cars then?

Motorized vehicles coming from outside the city find ample parking areas in the outer ring (close to the sports pavilion, the exhibition center, Corvaceiras, Mollavao, A Parda, the string bridge, etc.) or any other free parking spaces. The attitude is: “park and then walk”.

Other motorized vehicles that were also entering the city from the outside had no choice but to pass through. Recent improvements in infrastructure have made it possible to present drivers with plenty of alternative itineraries.

New traffic designs applied to the flow of motorized vehicles have managed to dissuade drivers from entering the city center.

Most cars whose origin and destination were within city bounds no longer start their engines. Back in 1997, up to 52,000 motorized vehicles inundated city streets. Today, “better on foot” policies have brought the numbers down to 17,000.



Reduction of motorized traffic





TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

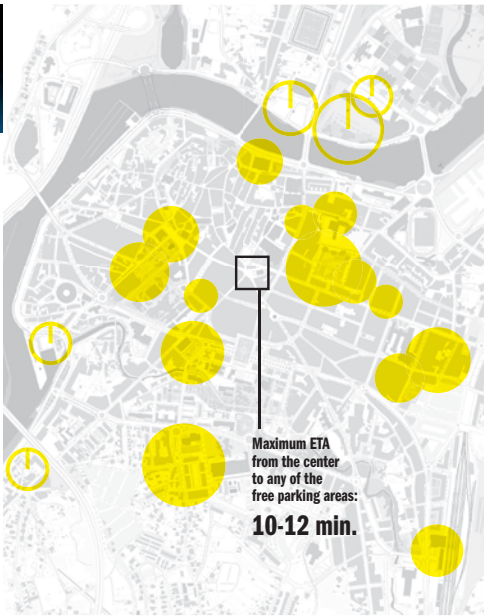


- ▶ All non-pedestrian streets have been or are currently being improved following the principles of traffic calming.
- ▶ Life-saving speed bumps and roundabouts are two of the most evident and efficacious obstacles to create safer and more welcoming spaces.
- ▶ There are various other measures being implemented: reductions in traffic density, car lane narrowing and speed limits of 30 km/h throughout the city.



INTELLIGENT PARKING

- ▶ Buying a car does not give anyone the right to park it in the street, privatizing public spaces for hours or days on end.
- ▶ Pontevedra has created a genuinely efficient parking system in which four different modalities are contemplated, thus allowing drivers to choose the one that suits them best.
- ▶ **1. Service Free** parking spaces to complete small chores in the city center.
- ▶ **2. Border Free** parking without time limits located in the outer rings, within walking distance of the hustle and bustle.
- ▶ **3. Free Some streets**, particularly those with the lowest traffic density, have continued to use the traditional parking system.
- ▶ **4. Paid Parking lots**, frequently underground, distributed across the city. They charge according to the length of stay (from minutes to months).
- ▶ The tax ordinance regulating parking in certain areas (ORA) was discontinued, after proving ineffectual.



▶ Free parking	1,686 spots
Exhibition center	700
Sports pavilion	275
Corvaceiras	160
Mollavao	150
Pasarón stadium	100
A Parda	85
Torrente Ballester	120
Grecia	30
String bridge	66
▶ Paid parking	
Barcelos	600
Alameda	366
Plaza de España	317
Central	415
Mercado	220
Campolongo	709
Vialia	282
Santa Clara	203
Véteris	406
Venezuela	250
Benito Corbal	120
Cobián Roffignac	120
México Barcelos	200



TIME TO WALK

Pedestrian based intermodality

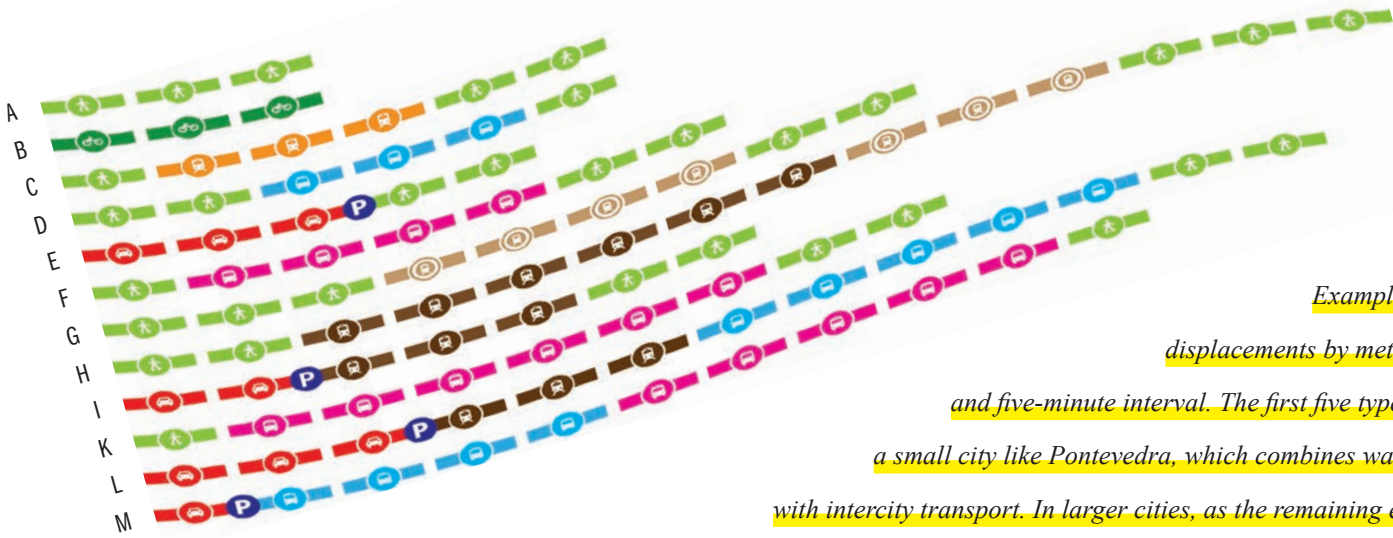
- Walking is the most natural way of moving around. The World Health Organization recommends walking between 7,000 and 10,000 steps a day, particularly in more developed societies, which have a tendency towards individualism and sedentary life.
- Responsible mobility should be as natural as possible, which is why walking and biking are some of the key habits of urban mobility.
- Intermodality in transport consists in an intelligent and sustainable combination of different forms of displacement which gives preeminence to natural mobility.
- Pontevedra was presented with the European Intermodos award in recognition of its promotion of pedestrian based intermodal mobility, becoming a model to be followed by other cities.
- The “city without cars” promotes a mobility hierarchy in which only the essential motorized vehicles are allowed, those vehicles that are necessary for the city to function appropriately. Everyone else should rely on natural forms of mobility.



Examples of intermodality

When we choose to move around using several complementary methods of transport we are putting intermodality to work. In small cities, the choice of transport is not that varied. The larger the city, the most developed and diverse its transport networks may be.

- On foot
- Bicycle
- Intercity bus
- Train
- Private car
- City bus
- Tube
- Commuter train
- Parking



A few examples of intermodal itineraries

- A ▶ 15 min on foot
- B ▶ 5 min bike
- C ▶ 5 min on foot + 15 min train + 10 min on foot
- D ▶ 10 min on foot + 15 min intercity bus + 5 min on foot
- E ▶ 15 min private car + 10 min on foot
- F ▶ 5 min on foot + 20 min city bus + 10 min on foot
- G ▶ 15 min on foot + 20 min tube + 10 min on foot
- H ▶ 10 min on foot + 30 min commuter train + 15 min tube + 15 min on foot
- I ▶ 10 min private car + 15 min train + 10 min on foot
- K ▶ 5 min on foot + 30 min city bus + 10 min on foot
- L ▶ 15 min private car + 15 min commuter train + 25 min intercity bus + 10 min on foot
- M ▶ 5 min on foot + 20 min intercity bus + 25 min city bus + 5 min on foot

Examples of intermodal displacements by method of transport and five-minute interval. The first five types correspond to a small city like Pontevedra, which combines walking and biking with intercity transport. In larger cities, as the remaining examples reflect, the number of possible combinations increases, as do commuting times.

City size

- Responsible mobility places pedestrians at the top of the priority scale and celebrates natural forms of displacement (walking or biking) by dedicating more space to them than to motorized vehicles.
- Pontevedra has gradually developed traffic calming initiatives combining physical, normative and informative measures which have contributed to boosting residents' walking habits and dramatically reducing the use of motorized vehicles to move around the city.
- Larger cities may apply identical principles, bringing together traffic calming and density reduction measures, as well as implementing district by district interventions to withdraw private cars from those public spaces that should be enjoyed by pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport.
- In metropolises where the bus and tube networks leave passengers within walking distance of their destination, “better on foot” policies are similarly applicable.





METROMINUTO

A celebration of walking

The idea behind Metrominuto, a synthetic map featuring the times and distances which separate the city's main points of interest, was to make clear that walking is both more practical and healthier than choosing to start the engine.

The initiative was followed by various other cities and has become part of the services offered by the Network of Cities that Walk, an organization of Spanish and Portuguese local authorities dedicated to the promotion of natural mobility.

Metrominuto is only one of several city mobility maps that provide residents and visitors with quick facts, such as diagrams of the intercity transport network, free and paid parking and practical information concerning buses and trains.

Metrominuto shows 30 points of interest in the city and establishes the time and distance relationships between them. It also signposts parking spaces, public transport stations, parks –such as that alongside river Gafos– and the footpaths that start in the capital.





UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY

Pontevedra integrates

- ▶ Transformative policies create spaces for all and respond to the challenges of the new mobility regardless of physical condition.
- ▶ The city should be able to adapt to the needs of people with functional diversity –reduced mobility, senior citizens, young children, new parents, etc.– so that it becomes a kinder and more welcoming space for everyone.
- ▶ Universal accessibility is perhaps the most overwhelming challenge in a transformative model, but today it has been almost completely implemented in urban public spaces.
- ▶ Tangible steps are being taken to involve private spaces in the adoption of such fundamental measures, making use of regulatory mechanisms to transform businesses, hospitality services and residential communal areas, among others.

ROAD SAFETY

Zero deaths

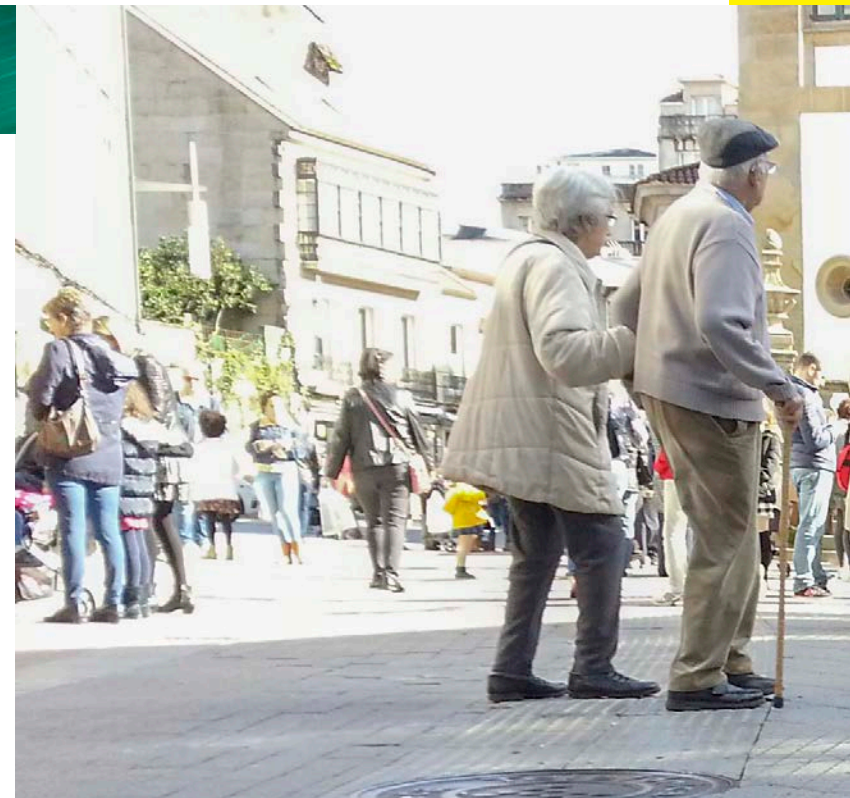
- ▶ Fighting road violence is a prime objective of public policy.
- ▶ Speed limits of 30 km/h citywide are being enforced since 2010. The installation of almost 300 life-saving speed bumps, as well as several roundabouts in dangerous intersections remarkably increased the efficiency of these physical measures.
- ▶ With the new system of responsible mobility, which followed urban reform, Pontevedra reached the objective of bringing the number of road deaths down to zero in all the areas where the intervention was completed.
- ▶ Some relevant data: between 1997 and 2006, a total of 30 deaths were registered in urban areas. From 2007 to 2013, there were only 3 fatalities. None of these events took place in the transformed spaces.
- ▶ Serious accidents have been going down year on year. While 69 people sustained permanent injuries back in 1999, there were only 4 cases in 2015.

ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK



Chasing efficiency

- ▶ Mobility policies should respond to a collective effort from a global approach, where each component is perfectly coordinated with the others.
- ▶ There is little point in isolated branches of the general scheme to function smoothly while others remain passive or do not share the same fundamental principles. The entire municipal framework must be at the service of urban mobility.





INTEGRATED BICYCLES

Few cycle paths

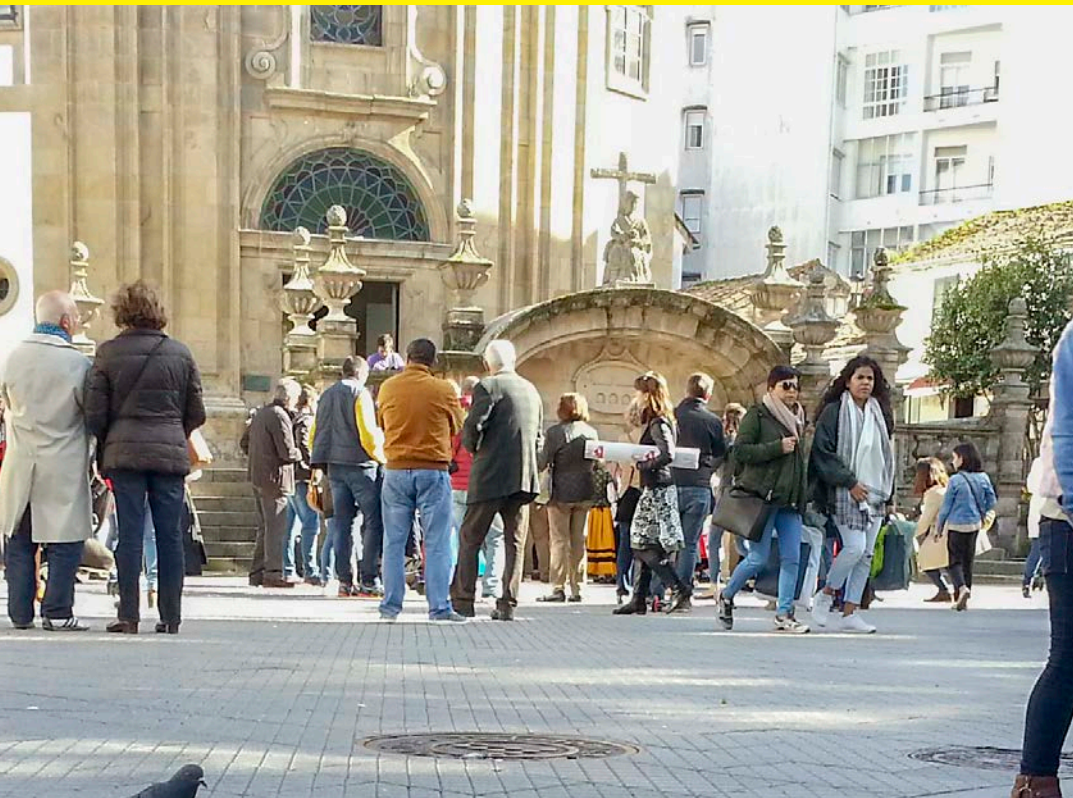
After the implementation of traffic calming measures throughout the city, threats for cyclists are minimal and they may now use the roads freely, without any risk of collision.

Pontevedra has opted for a model based on the integration and cohabitation of bicycles and pedestrians, particularly because, given the size of the city, most distances can be covered on foot and cyclists do not need to be placed at the top of the mobility scale.

Caution and respect for others are two essential principles synthesized in the motto: "Cars be aware of bikes; bikes be aware of pedestrians".

There are various cycle paths in the avenues alongside river Lérez, where intersections could present potential traffic flow issues both for cyclists and pedestrians.

There are also exclusive parking spots around the city to leave bikes safely, which are complemented by numerous awareness-raising campaigns aimed at promoting responsible mobility.

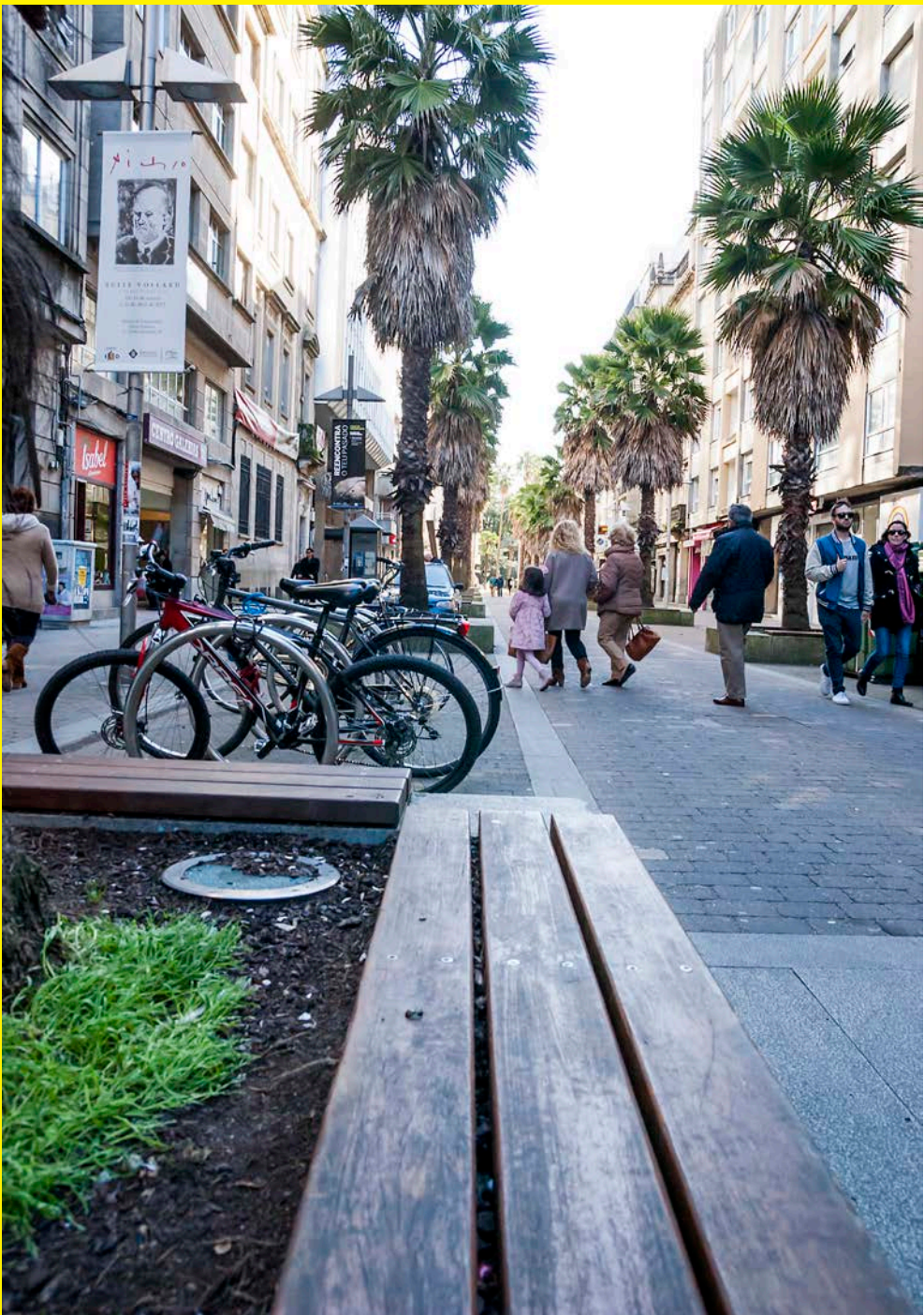


POWER SAVING

66% less CO2 than in 1999

One of the most advantageous consequences of the new mobility system has been the dramatic reduction in fuel consumption. Data show that CO2 levels have gone down by 66% between 1999 and 2014.

Emissions are now half a ton less CO2 per resident, which means that the city of Pontevedra can meet the strictest international energy saving standards, thus making its contribution in the fight against climate change.





OTHER POLICIES

Many other relevant decisions made at the municipal level are just as important as mobility policies, especially at the time of fostering urban quality.

These are only some of the public-sector actions which supplement those connected to mobility. A few are strategic and long term measures, while others are key in day to day management:

- Public space
- Economic factors
- Business relocation
- Compact vs sprawling city
- Street furniture
- The city of children
- Festivals and popular culture
- The city as a learning experience
- Equality, gender, diversity and cohesion
- Health policies
- Nature
- Non-urban environments
- Public participation





We share the thinking that public spaces should be a continuation of private spaces; the point of departure for rational urban management.

PUBLIC SPACE

The 2009 municipal ordinance

Back in 2009, ten years after the urban transformation started, a municipal ordinance was passed to regulate the use of public spaces. It contained specific guidelines to foster dynamism in the capital, provide more space for pedestrians and encourage a gradual reduction in motorized vehicle dependence. Here are some of the essential concepts it compiled:

On motorized mobility

Individual and collective motorized mobility will be organized to reduce their impact on the majority and to make them compatible with other uses of public space.

Priorities pursued by public local policies

- Suppression or reduction of road safety problems
- Elimination of noise and inconvenience
- Harmonization between residential activity and the enjoyment of public spaces

Measures adopted, once their efficacy has been confirmed

- Limitation of top speeds to 30 km/h throughout the city
- Suppression of through traffic and agitation traffic in the city center
- Elimination of heavy traffic in high-density residential areas, offering appropriate diversions
- Withdrawal of through traffic in high-density residential and business areas
- Establishment of areas of pedestrian preference, reducing unnecessary traffic when it does not provide a service in that area
- Introduction of cohabitation areas with heavy restrictions to the indiscriminate flow of motorized vehicle traffic
- Provision of easier access to motorized service providers in residential or business areas, dissuading opportunistic uses of surface parking spaces

Necessary uses to promote residential and economic dynamism

Certain mobility uses are essential to foster residential and economic activities. These uses are permitted within the city limits and respond to the demands of a modern society, such as access to private parking spaces, justified displacement of motorized vehicles, freight loading and unloading, home delivery and courier services, transport of heavy objects by passenger car, removals and hotel services.



Benito Corbal street is the main commercial hub of the Pontevedra high street, although it has progressively become a mixed area where franchise stores share a space with supermarkets, a rare occurrence in urban shopping areas



ECONOMIC FACTORS

Services sector

As happens in most provincial capitals, Pontevedra boasts a very stable economy that is strongly related to the services sector: public and private management, health, defense, commerce, hospitality and culture generate most of the local employment.

Despite the aftershocks of banking and real estate restructuring, the private services sector kept growing in parallel with the implementation of urban reforms, which led to a 7% increase in the number of jobs on offer between 1997 and 2015. In addition, there was a remarkable increase in population and economic activity during this same period.

A few relevant parameters



The revitalization of the Historic Center allowed for the recuperation of traditional economic activities, such as those pictured below in A Verdura square.



WHERE DO WE BUY?

Business relocation

Concentrating most of the commercial activity in the city center is one of the fundamental priorities of the new model, which contributed to the constant reappraisal of the Historic Center immediately after the interventions started to take shape in public spaces.

Many cities have displaced their commercial areas to the outskirts, thus creating very intense competition between new and traditional models. Pontevedra preferred to promote cohabitation so that both approaches kept being compatible.

Business relocation can be easily perceived in the food sector, with an increased availability of supermarkets citywide, as well as in those outlets where chains of stores and independent shops predominate.

Back in the 1990s, a large shopping mall was opened in Pontevedra and a smaller one located close to the city center, in the neighboring municipality of Poio.

The economic vitality of the city center today is undeniable: lively streets, high competitiveness and prevalence of small businesses over superstores. Local streets have remained the focus of attention, not shopping mall corridors.





COMPACT VS SPRAWLING CITY

Compact means sustainable

Pontevedra is a compact city in an environment where the population tends to be very dispersed. For this reason, the city, although small, is the powerhouse of a 200,000-strong hinterland where they come together daily.

Urban policy decisions, especially those connected with city expansion have endeavored to maintain its compact character, moving the limits outwards when new neighborhoods and districts emerge, promoting rational mobility initiatives and activating local commerce in the center.

Some cities grow exponentially and sprawl, encompassing very large surfaces where population density is kept low, thus making it difficult for residents to move around on foot. Other cities relocate services and equipment withdrawing them from the city and enshrining motorized vehicles as the sole means of transportation.

Over the last few years, Pontevedra has adopted several key decisions to prevent the city from sprawling, such as discouraging the construction of large shopping malls in its surroundings, rebuilding the football stadium in its original location –and therefore rejecting proposals which involved moving it away from the center–, as well as strengthening public transport networks and infrastructure, taking advantage of the proximity between the bus and train stations.

Beware of suburbanization

Promoting the compact city model has led to an increased awareness of the dangers of suburbanization, poorly interconnected districts and problems derived from urban isolation, which may generate ghettos of very low environmental quality.

Pontevedra has clearly defined its strategic growth so that its streets, squares and buildings continue to form a coherent whole, allow for natural mobility to take place and prevent the emergence of low urban quality areas.

When new business hubs start sprouting in the outer circles, the more traditional forms of exchange face very serious competition. By discouraging the installation of peripheral shopping malls, the city center is enhanced, thus remaining vital, human and economically viable. In the picture below, Cobián Roffignac street.



DESIGN. STREET FURNITURE

Substance and form

▶ A city in constant transformation also needs to be appealing, since the functionality and form of spaces and objects should become expressions of the times we are living and identify themselves with the trends that surround us.

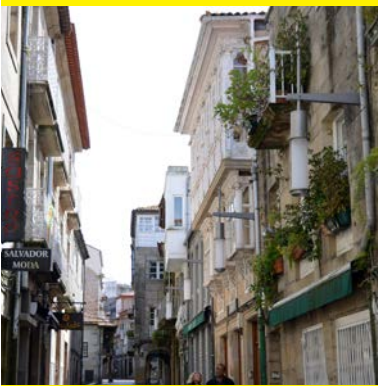
▶ A beautiful city is a useful and functional city. As Pontevedra gave public spaces previously inundated with cars back to the people, streets and squares progressively became a continuation of homes and businesses.

▶ One of the strategies used to renovate the city was to invest in the enhancement of public spaces. On that basis, many property owners have gradually upgraded their estate, which expanded the city's residential offer and put an end to urban neglect.

▶ Pontevedra is now a space for local businesses –several of which have gained international relevance– to thrive and experiment in aspects as important as quality assurance, public lighting or street furniture. Almost every single element in sight has been designed and manufactured in the city.

▶ The fundamental principles that govern public space design are universal accessibility, stylized forms and operability. Spaces should be multifunctional and allow for the coexistence of different forms of mobility, making it easier for people to reach their destination efficiently, for companies to receive their supplies on time, as well as for leisure, play, celebration, culture, art, sport and political activism to take place.

Urban design is never limited to installing beautiful street lamps (although this should not be forgotten either). Public spaces should be attractive and functional. Beauty is not enough if the demands of both substance and form are duly met.





Santa María avenue, at the heart of the Historic Center, has witnessed the invasion of children after motorized vehicles were withdrawn. Children can now play and share a space with adults and older children. There is no need for them to be secluded in specially designed parks to enjoy themselves in the open air.

Good for children, good for everyone

- ▶ Young children should be offered various alternatives to play and express themselves freely close to their homes, in areas where motorized vehicles are not a threat.
- ▶ Francesco Tonucci and his book *La città dei bambini* (The City of Children) were very influential in the transformation of Pontevedra into a space of experimentation and discovery for the young.
- ▶ Playing and exploring around the city are essential ingredients for learning. The city stands as a favorable environment for education beyond the classroom.
- ▶ Children are the main protagonists of a space that is welcoming for them. In Tonucci's terms: the city should be conceived in a way that thinks of children as active participants; the city itself works better when everyone is included.
- ▶ At one point, the local council was called to testify before the Galician Ombudsman after someone sued the city for allowing children to play in the street unsupervised. The council's winning argument presented Pontevedra as a cohesive network of streets and squares where pedestrians, and specially children, received protection and the maximum mobility priority.

THE CITY OF CHILDREN

The School Path

▶ The School Path is a program organized by the local police department to respond to the new mobility strategy: a city in which traffic calming measures have devolved public spaces to pedestrians and cyclists.

▶ The whole school community was involved in the implementation of this collaborative effort. Seven primary schools and the residential estate in Monteporreiro act as coordinators of a network of volunteers, who take turns controlling traffic flows in the busiest streets, to ensure that schoolchildren feel safe crossing the road.

▶ Most business owners also take part in the School Path and play the role of supervisors if any help is needed. Schoolchildren are aware that they can ask for assistance in any shop or café in the area. The staff would know which school to contact and who to speak to.

▶ The great majority of children (80%) choose to go to school walking on their own or with a group of friends.



The School Path features a Children's Council, whose periodic meetings are a unique opportunity to speak directly to the local authorities and exchange impressions.



Schoolchildren know that, wherever they see this symbol, they may ask for help.

The city can easily adapt to highly complex events, such as the numerous sports competitions it has hosted over the last few years.



Cultural industries, collective vitality

Public spaces, which have finally been returned to residents and visitors, have given way to new uses and this revitalization is taking place daily in every single street and square.

Celebrations, cultural events and sports competitions work as a driving force of the services sector: the city's dynamism contributes to industrial growth.

The annual cycle of festivities (Carnival – Easter – Summer – Christmas) marks the key dates in the social calendar, which is complemented by theatre performances and musical events all year round.

The activities on offer welcome the participation of public institutions and private businesses and respond to the demands of a population that comprises up to 200,000 people.

International sports competitions have become a common sight in Pontevedra, owing to the city's urban ecosystem and natural appeal, as well as world-class infrastructures (a Sport High Performance Center, an Olympic swimming pool, an international center for canoeing, etc.).

Sports such as triathlon, swimming, taekwondo, athletics, canoeing, gymnastics, wrestling or table tennis frequently hold their national, European or world championships in Pontevedra.



Theatre performances and street entertainment for children give a new life to the city squares.

FESTIVALS, CULTURE, SPORT





EQUALITY. GENDER. DIVERSITY. COHESION



Bursting with energy

- ▶ The urban transformation propitiated a remarkable improvement in equality, since social standing values associated with car use which are constantly being promoted by the automobile industry were progressively replaced with more natural forms of mobility, such as walking.
- ▶ The absence of large shopping malls in the area buffers the impact of excessive consumerism fostered by these establishments, where every single element –temperature, light, sound, product placement– works as a powerful stimulus to entice shoppers. In the city streets, people still behave like citizens, while in the context of a shopping mall they are simply consumers.
- ▶ Social cohesion and diversity are promoted through integrative urban planning, which creates public spaces where the main stakeholders, regardless of their economic power, are treated equally.



Feminist city

- ▶ The basic principles of urban transformation consist in generating public spaces where family and work can be reconciled, as well as complemented by social interaction, leisure and culture.
- ▶ The feminist city weakens the dominance and preponderance of motorized vehicles and favors a universally accessible mobility centered on pedestrians rather than cater exclusively for the needs of cars.
- ▶ Sidewalks mark a transition from the public to the private sphere. Sidewalks are safe for children to play, behave autonomously and improve their health. Sidewalks are an expression of freedom for walkers.
- ▶ Pontevedra is a gender-sensitive city in which pedestrians are placed at the center of mobility policies. Any measures designed to bring advantages to women benefit society at large.



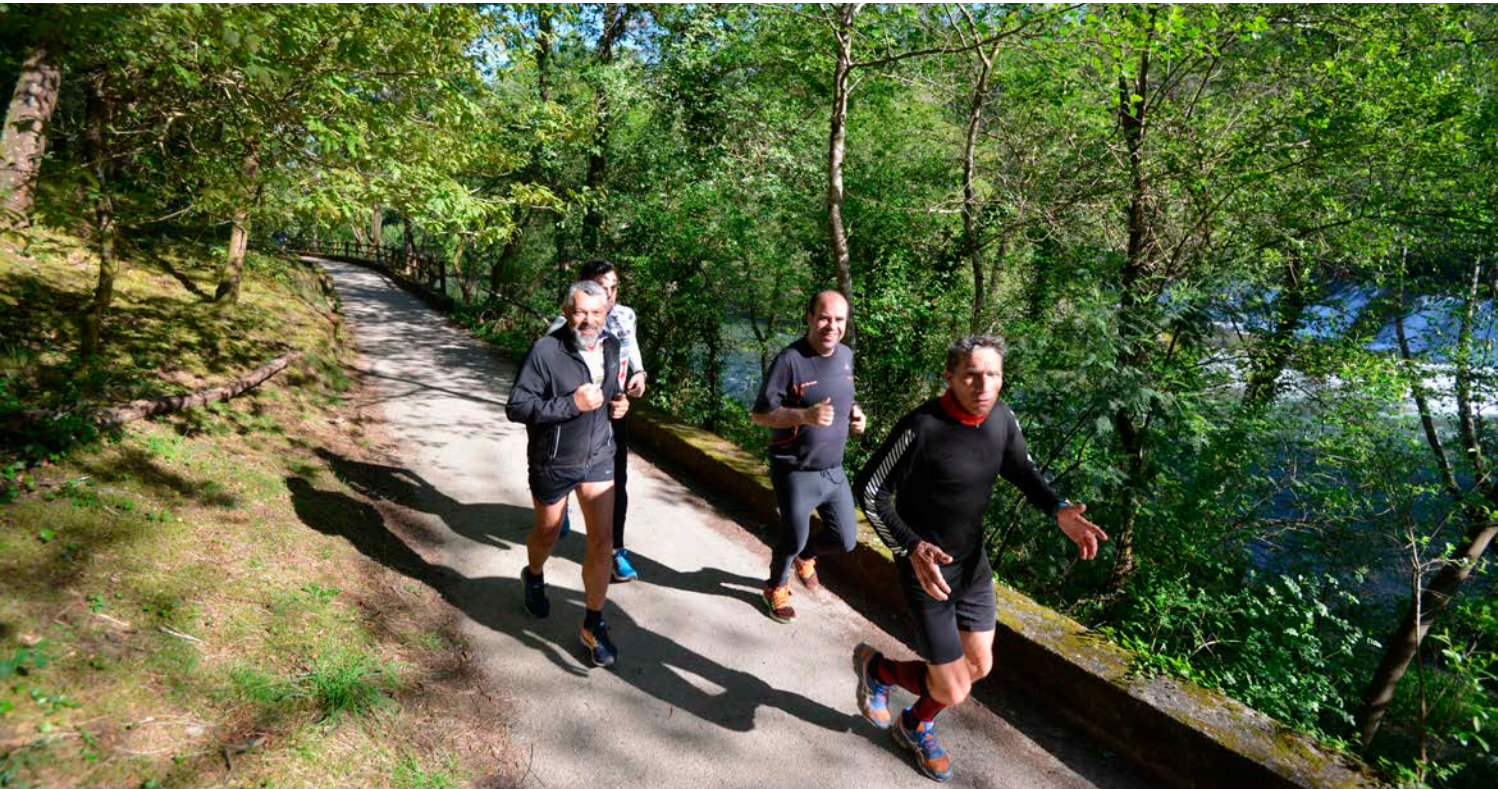
A lively forum

- ▶ A public space where people are considered the most important asset is one step closer to becoming an educating city, a concept derived from the comprehensive development of individuals and communities in a harmonious and sustainable environment. Pontevedra meets the basic criteria of the International Association of Educating Cities, shares the principles of its founding charter and has been a very active member for more than a decade now.
- ▶ Informed by the philosophy of Local Actions, Global Values, the educating city advocates the right to learn, leisure and development both through formal and informal education, as well as the promotion of relations between generations, cohabitation, diversity, identity, democratic citizenship, active involvement of individuals and associations, and the protection of public interest.
- ▶ The inclusive and cohesive city model presents the city as a space for dialogue and the constant exchange of experiences, which is why streets serve the purpose of lively forums that people need to express their ideas and strengthen their social ties.



Some schools, like San Xosé and Barcelos, make use of public squares during recess.

THE CITY AS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE



HEALTHY LIVING

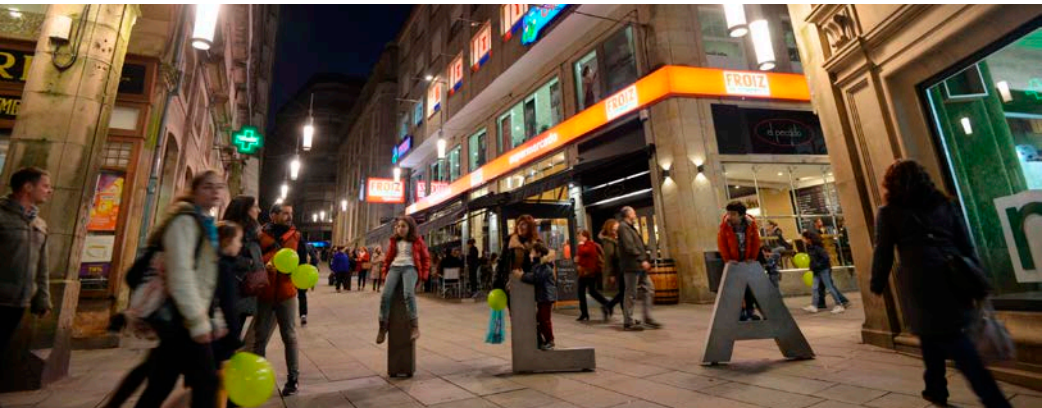
Physical culture

Living a healthy life is an absolute priority in the contemporary world, and prevention of diseases is as important as healing.

A relevant factor in quality of life consists in fighting sedentary habits, which requires action on two separate fronts: developing infrastructure and encouraging the practice of physical activity.

The extensive network of tracks and footpaths surrounding the city has already reached the 40-kilometer mark and will continue to expand when the main routes are progressively interconnected. Three of the itineraries depart from the city itself, alongside rivers Lérez, Gafos and Rons.

Local sociocultural centers also play an outstanding role in the promotion of more active lifestyles through self-organized activities, particularly for the very young and senior citizens.



Pasominuto

This route map, which bears the motto “I move, therefore I am”, follows the same principles of Metrominuto and provides useful information about the times, distances, number of steps and calories burnt while moving around the city. In addition, it includes insightful advice from the World Health Organization.

Some 40 combinations of sections compiled from 17 major itineraries, ranging from 390 to 17,100 steps, or from three minutes to more than an hour and a half.

One of the features that characterizes the new city model is the dense local network of small markets and supermarkets, making distribution, sale and delivery of goods much more efficient and comfortable.



NATURE



Recovering biodiversity

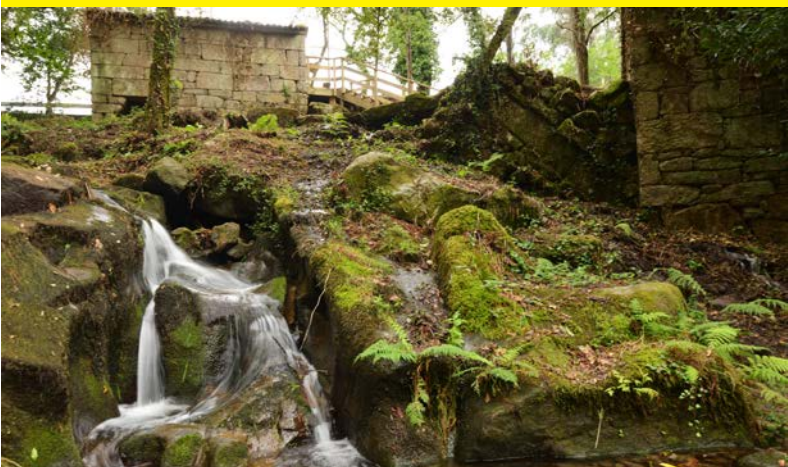
One of the primary aspirations of the city of Pontevedra for many years has undoubtedly been the integral recuperation of its coastline, most of which is occupied by polluting factories still today.

In addition, city authorities have endeavored to halt the trend towards eucalyptus monoculture in wooded areas by reaching joint agreements with estate owners and promote the plantation of species native to the Atlantic forest through "Monte Vivo" programs and direct interventions in parklands.

Even so, the city has left a distinctive mark in terms of care for biodiversity with more and more attention being paid to preserving the natural conditions of the most significant public spaces along the river banks, in parklands and in urban green areas.



The spread of environmental values is a continuing need in environmental management.





The Social Center in Salcedo, also known as the Green House, was built quite recently keeping in mind the needs of the parish and its surroundings. There are more than 30 open public spaces of this kind throughout the municipality.



RURAL AREAS



Territorial values

- ▶ Fifteen parishes conform the natural space in the outskirts of the city, whose habitat has been shifting gradually from agricultural to residential activity.
- ▶ Each parish has catalogued its cultural and historical heritage with a view to preserving and improving it. Some parishes have decided to start innovative campaigns aimed at showcasing their traditional values and historic memory.
- ▶ Parish councils give a voice to public interest entities and lay down appropriate investment priorities, promoting self-management.



Parishes are developing focal areas to provide more efficient services and equipment, as well as implementing traffic calming measures to guarantee road safety.



Neighborhood assemblies decide on the convenience of transformative initiatives and set key performance criteria.



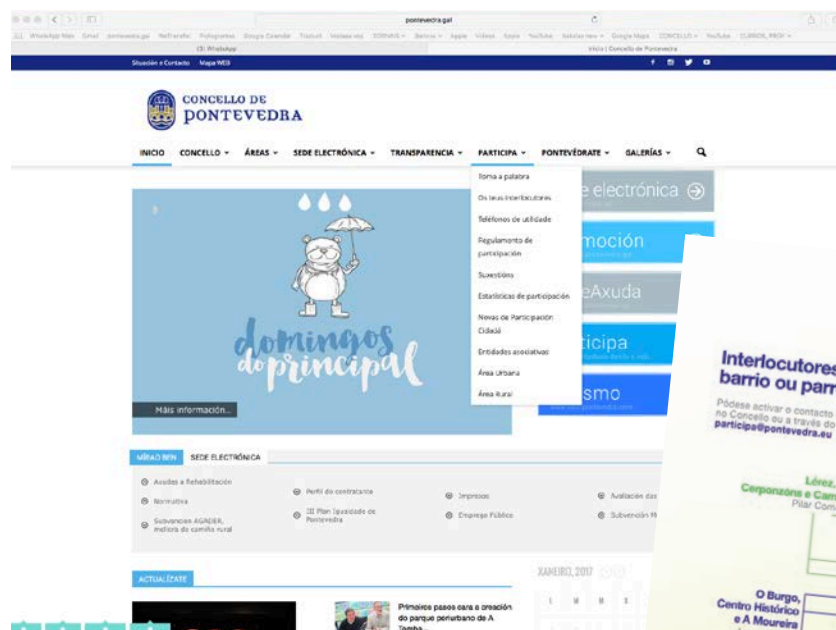
POPULAR PARTICIPATION

A city built in unison

Daily management relies on the participation of residents in transformative processes.

Without losing sight of the democratic, participatory and integrative nature of the council, local authorities improve social dialogue with all sectors, whose input helps to cater for the residents' needs.

In rural settings, parish councils were introduced as forums for discussion and participation to set the main investment priorities in each region. Parish councils represent all kinds of social entities: cultural and neighborhood associations, sports organizations, forest and water communities, local schools, etc.



A few examples of the way the city is changing

Changes in mobility and infrastructure are quite diverse. Here are some instances of the context, the measures being taken and the transformations achieved.

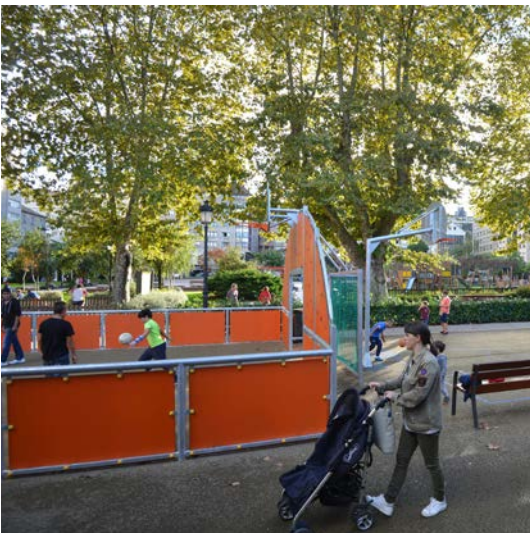
DYNAMIC TRANSFORMATIONS



Barcelos square: freer children

One of the main squares in the city, very close to the high street ▶ Underground parking (700 spaces) ▶ Above ground, indiscriminate parking ▶ Open areas created false expectations for city center motorized vehicles ▶ The local primary school had no playground for recess ▶ A group of schoolchildren developed a project to pedestrianize the square ▶ Students and teachers refined the proposal and sent it to the council for consideration ▶ The council reconfigured space allocation in the square ▶ Space for motorized vehicles is reduced by one third ▶ Plans for reform receive final approval ▶ One side of the square remains car free ▶ New mobility priorities designed ▶ The north side of the square will allow cars to access garages and a health center ▶ Children will use the newly pedestrianized spaces ▶ Playing fields installed for common use

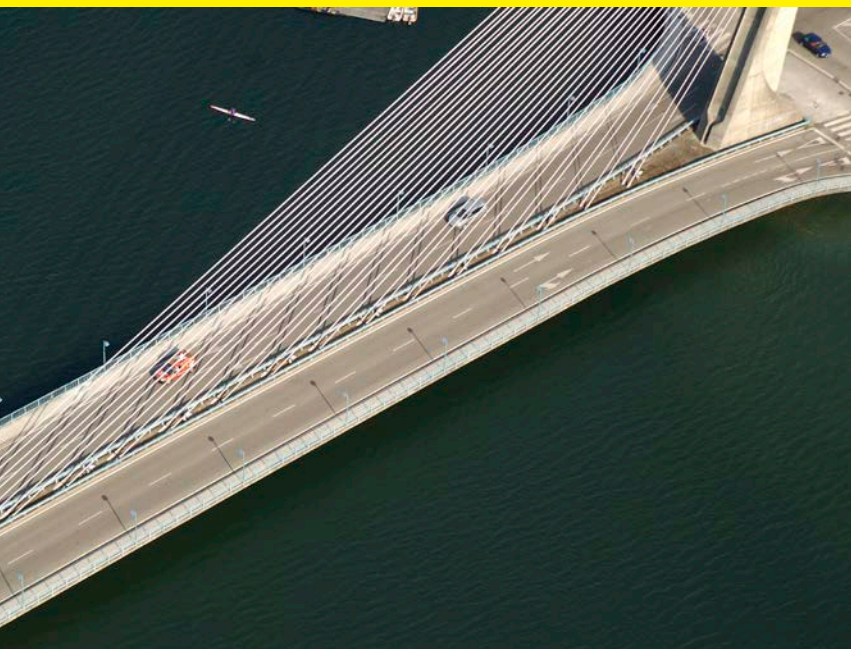
Indiscriminate parking is suppressed and services-only parking is regulated instead (15 minutes only, free of charge) ▶ Traffic flows from the underground parking are improved ▶ More space for bicycles and motorbikes ▶ Children have a space of their own to meet and play, also after school ▶ Traffic density is now much lower in Barcelos square and its immediate surroundings ▶ The whole process of transformation took less than a year in 2016 ▶ The involvement of the school community was crucial for the initiative to succeed ▶ The city center today is healthier and more efficient ▶ All stakeholders have taken part in the establishment of an alternative mobility model ▶ Remarkable traffic reduction: from 6,000 to 2,000 vehicles per day.





Daniel de la Sota: more space to walk

One of the first streets to be pedestrianized in the early stages of urban reform ▶ Traffic density peaks of 17,000 vehicles per day ▶ Extremely narrow sidewalks and constant traffic jams ▶ The council's proposal included a single lane for motorized vehicles ▶ Residents argued that the street should be fully pedestrianized, as there were no garages around ▶ The popular assembly chose the pedestrian-only option ▶ This was the first step towards the urban garden: a boulevard plus a green area ▶ Single platform: walkers, bicycles and trees ▶ This same design was implemented in 8 de Marzo square and the section of Peregrina street leading to Compostela square ▶ Eventually, the number of pedestrians was so high that the flowerbeds needed to be replaced with stone floors to respond to the new mobility needs ▶ In its current state, the street has become a lovely space in the business district.



Bicycles alongside the river: expansion to the detriment of unnecessary traffic

▶ In the inner rings of the city, bicycles can now coexist with cars, after the implementation of traffic calming measures ▶ Both banks of the river are more densely interconnected: Xunqueira de Alba, O Covo island, river Lérez footpaths and the Corvaceiras-Marín Ave. coastline ▶ One of the three car lanes in the string bridge was repurposed for bikers and runners, preserving the original size of the sidewalk ▶ In the right bank of the river, the cycle path was expanded and new speed bumps introduced along Compostela Ave., creating an uninterrupted, coherent and safe itinerary that joins the river with its estuary ▶ Several bridges connect both sides of the city: the string bridge, O Burgo bridge and As Correntes bridge, of recent construction ▶ The routes alongside rivers Lérez and Rons have become a favorite among walkers and bikers.



Hospital square: from a place of transit to a space for cohabitation

Traffic density at the top of Loureiro Crespo street was reduced gradually after mobility changes came into force ▶ The conventional street of old, with over 20,000 motorized vehicles per day, is under much less pressure today and has preserved its original structure ▶ On the council's initiative, resident support was gathered to transform a large stretch into a car free square ▶ Neighbor reception being positive, the procedure was started ▶ Medical emergencies still needed to be granted priority access ▶ The old street was turned into a large, open public space ▶ The former transit point, conceived as an indiscriminate parking space, is now a lively pedestrian street, full of young children and grandparents.



SOURCES

Inspiration for a transformative model

Most of the fundamental concepts behind the great transformation the city of Pontevedra has undergone were inspired by renowned works of smart urban planning. These are some of the key authors whose critical approach to mainstream ideas paved the way for greater quality of life in modern cities.

Here is the essential bibliography to provide some initial impetus to initiatives like those Pontevedra has employed.

The Neighborhood Unit

Clarence Perry. 1929

This New York town planner and sociologist identifies the “neighborhood unit” as the 5 minutes on foot that may be used to define distances in large metropolises. The city should be conceived for a plurality of uses, schools should be located within an 800-metre range from students’ residences –shops within a 400-metre range– and motorized vehicles should be diverted to the outer rings, while city center streets should guarantee pedestrian safety and discourage unnecessary traffic.

The Death and Life of Great American Cities

Jane Jacobs. 1961

A well-known activist and writer, Jacobs attacks the predominant city specialization policies of the 1950s (administration, health, shopping, leisure...) which force residents to use private vehicles to move around, to the detriment of public transport and more natural forms of mobility. Her proposal includes multiple uses and smaller blocks designed with pedestrians in mind. Sidewalks and public spaces should be at the heart of the city; the best places for children to play outside.

The Traffic Problems in Towns

Reuben Jacob Smeed. 1961

The director of the British Transport Research Laboratory relates the number of victims of traffic accidents with traffic density and shows that the number of drivers –and therefore congestion– increases when new measures are introduced to relieve it.

Cities of Tomorrow

Peter Hall. 1988

This professor at Berkeley and University College London wrote a history of town planning in the 20th century where he advocated that it was much more than physical design and suggested that the economic, social and political dimensions should be carefully integrated.

Livable Streets

Donald Appleyard. 1981

The Berkeley professor stated that urban spaces should work as areas of coexistence. Together with Buchanan, he established that each street should not exceed 2,000 to 3,000 vehicles per day in residential areas (Benito Corbal in Pontevedra registered peaks of up to 20,000 vehicles per day back in 1997). Recent studies (Chesterman, 2009) recommend only 1,500 to 2,000 vehicles per day.

Recommendations for Urban Network Projects and Designs

Juan A. Santamera and Felipe Manchón. Ministry of Public Works, Transport and the Environment. 1995

These engineers published the first complete and meticulous guide to rationalize the use of urban public spaces to maximize residents’ enjoyment. It contains numerous examples and visual material for town planners.

Guidelines for Urban Design

José Martínez Sarandeses. Ministry of Public Works. 1999

This architect from Pontevedra combines urban and architectural reform with environmental quality to generate useful, comfortable spaces and redress the mobility imbalances derived from motorized vehicle priority models, which alienate walkers and change the public nature of streets and squares.

Calming traffic: Steps for a new culture of urban mobility

Alfonso Sanz. Ministry of Public Works. 1998

A digest of pioneering European experiences (most of them Dutch and Danish) aimed at introducing alternative mobility models in cities where traffic was excessively dense and applying them to the Spanish context. A different approach to age-old problems.

Traffic in Towns

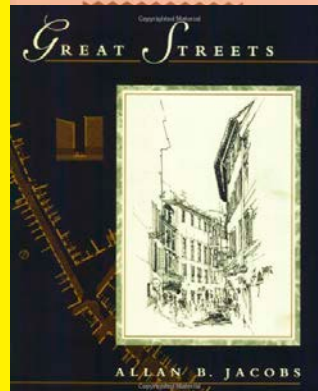
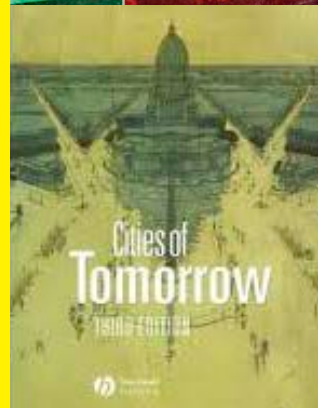
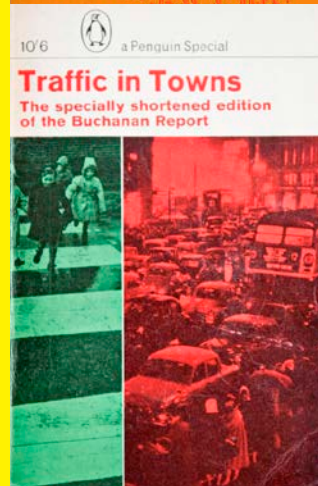
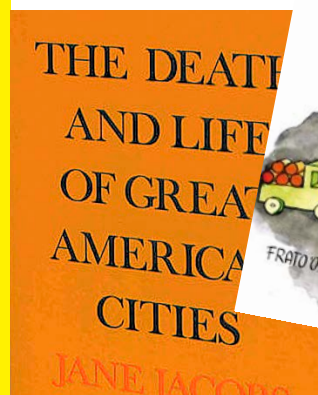
Sir Colin Buchanan. 1963

British civil engineer and author of one of the most remarkable and generally accepted reports about city traffic. He introduced the concept of “environmental capacity”, which characterizes a street depending on the amount of traffic it can accept without affecting residents’ quality of life.

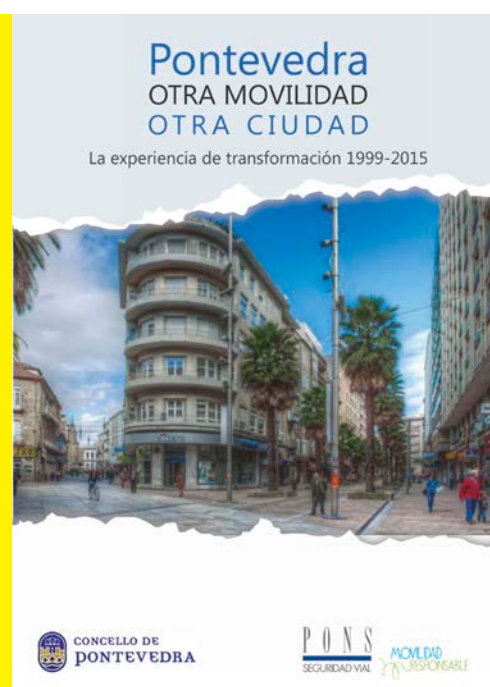
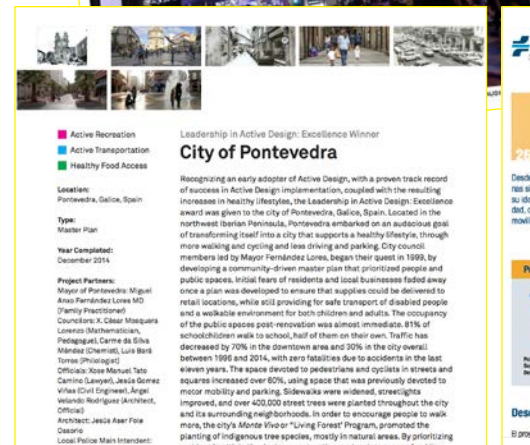
The City of Children

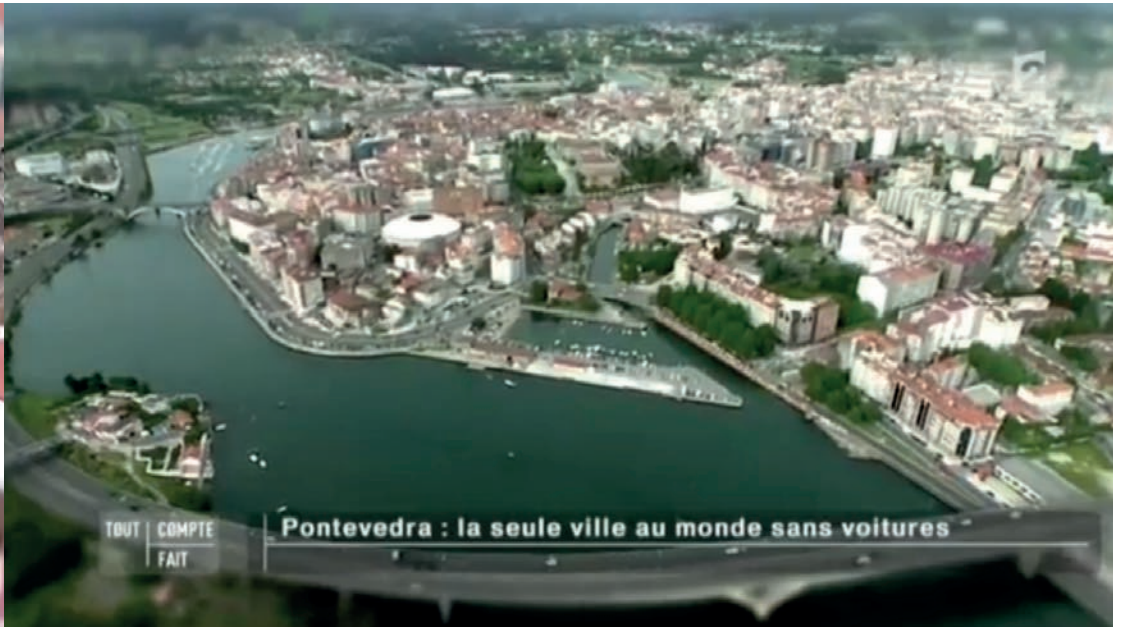
Francesco Tonucci. 1991

This Italian educational psychologist revisits and updates Jane Jacob’s theories. Children should be allowed to explore their cities and play outside in the streets and squares. Children should be regarded as the adults of tomorrow: if they learn to respect public spaces, they will become responsible individuals and teach coming generations to do the same.



Pontevedra has a special relationship with Frato (Francesco Tonucci), whose “City of Children” inspired the new mobility model. A local publisher has prepared a Galician translation of his work.





France has taken a great interest in the Pontevedra city model, judging by the press coverage this transformative process has been given. After receiving the 2013 Intermodes Award in recognition of pedestrian based intermodal mobility, many reports in TF2 and We Demand magazine have featured Pontevedra as an example to be followed.

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT US

A transcendent model

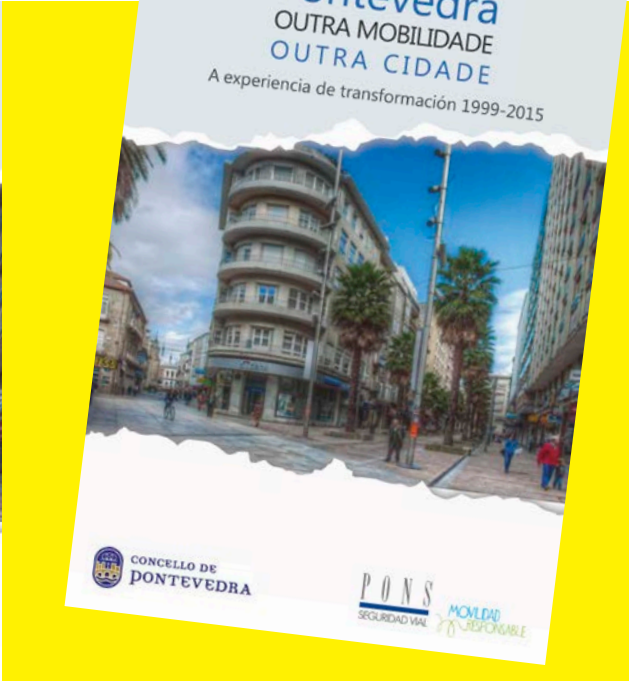
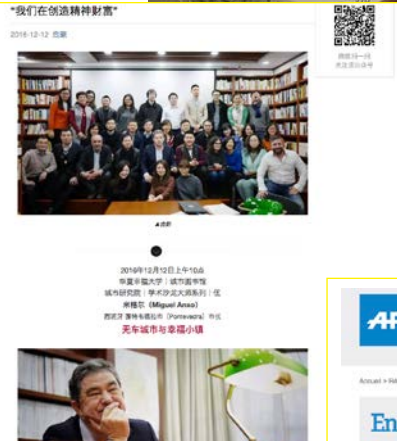
Both traditional and online media have reported on some aspect of the urban city model, describing what they tend to designate as “the city without cars”, which, despite being a simplification to fit an idea into a headline, frequently grabs the readers’ attention.

Television and radio channels, paper based and digital newspapers as well as magazines, blogs and online video broadcasters around the world have reviewed the Pontevedra experience.

For more information and regular updates, go to ok.pontevedra.gal



A Chinese social network has disseminated the Pontevedra model across Asia. After reading about it, CFLD, one of the largest real estate developers in the country, invited a committee of representatives to share their experience over the last decade to help design high quality cities throughout mainland China. Xinhua, the country’s official news agency, dedicated a major story to Pontevedra and its innovative transformation.



“A different mobility for a different city”

Grupo Pons Madrid, one of the main publishing houses on the topics of road safety and mobility, started a new collection entitled Movilidad Responsable (Responsible Mobility) with a monograph dedicated to the Pontevedra model, which was later followed by two more reports on cycling mobility and cities to visit on foot.

The Spanish and Galician editions of the monograph are available online at the Pons Editorial virtual shop.





RECOGNITION

Disseminating the experience

Over the last few years, after the Pontevedra model gained popularity worldwide, invitations to participate in conferences, seminars, workshops and congresses have increased exponentially, particularly in the areas of urban design, town planning, traffic management, road safety, universal accessibility, child mobility and heritage preservation, both at the national and international level.

Pontevedra has taken part in numerous events to disseminate the experience. Here is a synthetic list of the most remarkable:

- Lisbon. Portugal. 1st Conference of Cities for Road Safety
- Aveiro. Portugal. City and Sustainability Congress
- Córdoba. Spain. 2nd Conference of Cities for Road Safety
- Rome. Italy. Conference of Cities and Childhood. Istituto di Scienze e Tecnologie della Cognizione
- Seville. Spain. 1st Conference of Cities that Walk
- Munich. Germany. Walk21, one of the most important international forums of alternative mobility. Pontevedra signed the Walk21 International Charter for Walking.
- Madrid. Spain. DGT Conference on Road Safety and Intelligent Cities
- Florence. Italy. ECONN. European technical conference on mobility matters
- New York. United States of America. FitCity10. NY Academy of Medicine
- Torrevieja. Spain. 3rd Conference of Cities for Road Safety
- Hong-Kong. China. Euro-China Association Smart Mobility Seminar
- Almada. Portugal. International Congress of Educating Cities
- Torres Vedras. Portugal. Meeting of the Network of Educating Cities
- Shenzhen. China. Euro-China Association Smart Mobility Seminar
- Beijing. China. CFLD Technical Meeting

Cities like Jaca, Barcelona, A Coruña, San Sebastián, Bilbao, Segovia, Málaga, Valencia or Valladolid in Spain, as well as Porto, Loulé and Guimarães in Portugal, among many others, have taken an interest in the Pontevedra model as a case study to be applied completely or just partly in their local contexts.

Many representatives from other cities have come to visit Pontevedra to learn more about the experience in person, particularly from Portugal, such as Braga, Guimarães and Torres Vedras. Delegations have also come from places as different as Santiago de Compostela, Ferrol, Carballo, Lugo, Puerto del Rosario, the Intermodos European Agency, the Spanish Directorate General of Traffic (DGT) and the Child Mobility Group of the National Environmental Education Center in Valsaín (Segovia).

Several videoconferences have been held with study groups from Latin America, Hong-Kong, Mexico, Korea, Brussels, Leuven, Rouen, Grenoble, New Orleans and Bastia, whose committees wanted to know more about the Pontevedra experience.

Ciudad de Piedra O Porriño 2006

The first award the city received from the Galician Association of Granite Stonemasons, in recognition of its skillful use of this rock in the restoration and revitalization of public spaces.

Nacional da Cultura Galega Santiago de Compostela 2008

Instituted by the Galician autonomous government, Pontevedra was awarded the first prize for its masterful preservation of historical and architectural heritage in the city center, implementing an innovative model to build an active city for the future.

Cermi Madrid 2007

The Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities, which brings together all the agencies whose aim is to improve universal accessibility statewide, gave Pontevedra a prize and officially endorsed the local government's efforts to redress the mobility imbalances through intelligent town planning.

Irrespective of the practical usefulness of such events, the city of Pontevedra was represented in the 2015 Paris Climate Summit with mayors from all over the world who were committed to reducing the emission of harmful gases. Pontevedra pollutes today 66% less than in 1999.





Fesvial Madrid 2010

► This organization supervises road safety and comprises private insurance companies, academic institutions and government agencies. The city's dramatic reduction of traffic accidents won the prize.

Seguridad Vial Córdoba 2011

► The 2nd Conference of Cities for Road Safety held in Córdoba (Spain) in 2011 under the auspices of the Spanish Directorate General of Traffic, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, as well as the Catalan and Basque government agencies in charge of traffic regulation presented Pontevedra with an award in recognition of its sustainable mobility model and the dramatic reduction in road violence. It was highlighted as the best practice in matters of road safety.

Intermodes Brussels 2013

► In recognition of its model of pedestrian based intermodality, which advocates that walking is the most natural form of transportation. This European agency dedicated to the promotion of smart transport chose Pontevedra as an example to be followed within and beyond Spain.

ONU-Habitat Nairobi-Dubai 2014

► A transferable urban model that places people at the center. A total of 4,500 submissions were received from 195 different countries, out of which 406 were pre-selected in Nairobi. Dubai narrowed the choice to just 50 candidacies and chose 6 best practices to improve quality of life in global cities. Pontevedra was presented with one of the awards.



Center for Active Design New York 2015

► Connected to Bloomberg Philanthropies, this organization promotes architecture and urban planning solutions to foster more active lifestyles, fight sedentary habits and design open spaces to improve public health. Pontevedra was selected as a model of smart urban management.

Ciudades que Caminan Torres Vedras 2016

► This group of Spanish and Portuguese cities and provinces advocate walking as the most natural form of mobility. They considered Pontevedra deserved an award for its progress in this field.

Smart Mobility Hong-Kong 2015; Shenzhen 2016

► Euro-China Smart Mobility City Award granted by the French association Prospective et Innovation to distinguish global smart mobility initiatives. Pontevedra has received two of these awards so far in the category of Urban Design / Urban Planning, focused on new city experiences, ecological neighborhoods and low emissions areas.



Visits to the city are a common sight, especially by representatives of Galician and Portuguese local authorities, although Spanish and European partners are gradually becoming more and more involved. Technical sessions tend to be organized first and then field research is done to see how the system works first hand.



Pontevedra. Fewer cars, more city



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