

NMM in Granada

Granada is a medium metropolitan area, which according to the Spanish growing process in the last 15 years it has been strongly affected by NMM.

Tourism and real estate are two of the main activities, and the NMM are also related to them. Concerning tourism events a proposal to hold the Winter Olympic Games after the celebration of the Ski World Championship in 1995 (one year later then programmed due to the lack of snow that year) is still in discussion. In close relation with this event, a recurrent proposal for increasing the area of the Ski Station, even though it is surrounded by a National Park, is still active. In April 2010 a new project arose to produce more artificial snow in the ski station, increasing further the water consumption for its production and reducing further the amount of water for agriculture. There is a great movement against this water robbery, including farmers (for the first time), ecologists, and people from the University. Other mega-project related to the Olympics is the chairlift from Granada City to the Ski Station, but after an important movement against the project the environmental administration banned this project, but not the project for a huge shopping mall in the place where they wanted to have the starting point for the chairlift. A motorway is also designed in order to increase the road capacity to the Ski Station (see the case study). Finally Granada has not been selected for the Olympics, however we have the 2015 Winter University Olympics (la Universidad de Invierno). An Olympic city with around 3.000 apartments and an ice dome (including a business area with two skyscrapers) is projected for this event, even though there is

no need for new housing or business space.

Real Estate has produced an enormous increase in housing prices in the city as well as the gentrification of the city center, affected by the growth of hotels and commercial uses. The renewal of the Albayzin (traditional muslim neighbourhood) is an extraordinary example. A strong neighbourhood movement has achieved to create a Neighbourhood Office (Regional Government) that controls the heritage areas and buildings. In a common contradiction, this office promoted the renewal of houses (some of them to serve as social housing) but this process appears to be weak and useless in relation to the price increase, the tourism invasion and the following expulsion of poor inhabitants according to a gentrification process (see the example of la Casa del Aire).

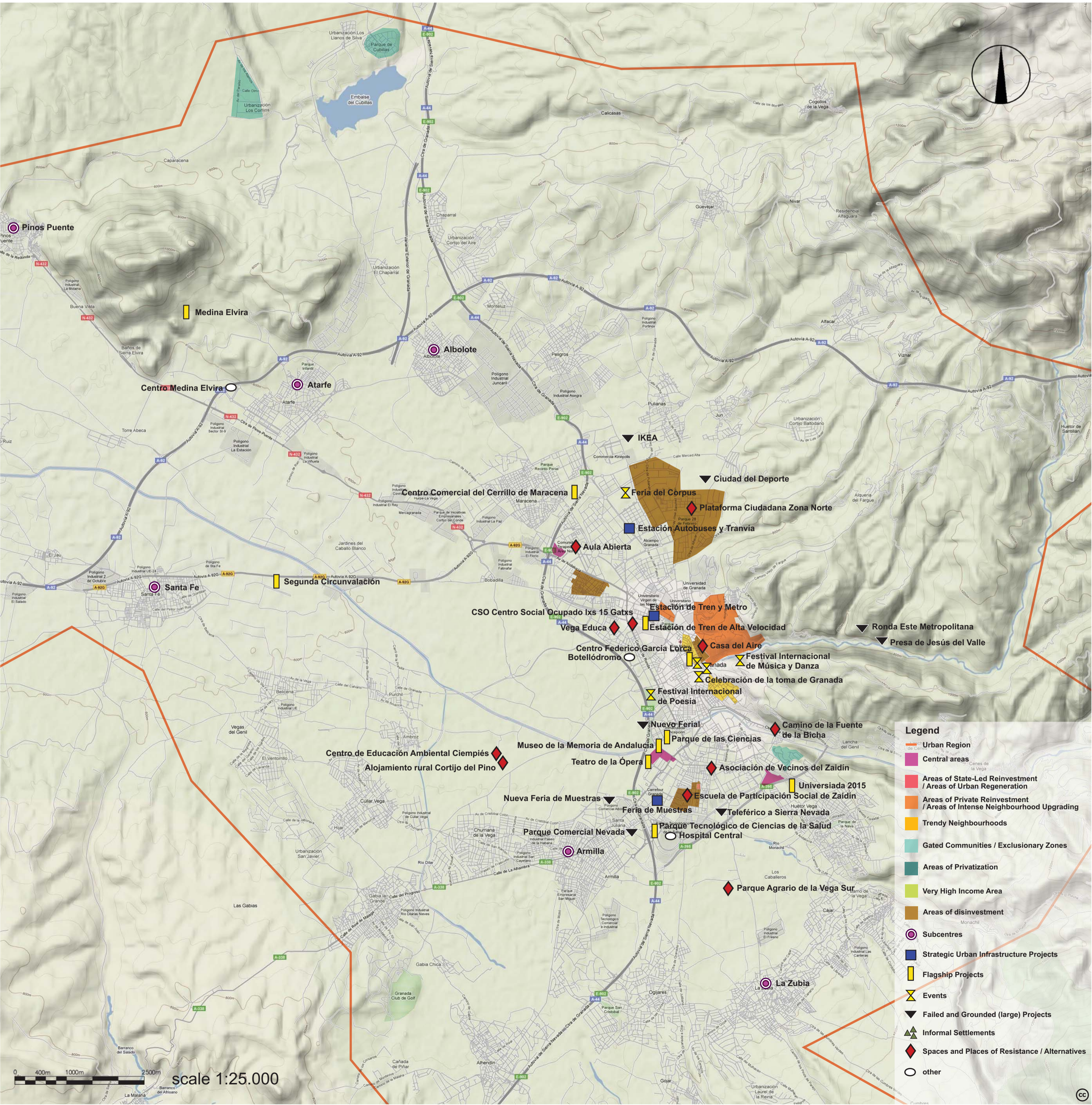
In addition to this, the new motorways of the 90s and the quick economic growth, have also created the usual and chaotic sprawl in the metropolitan area, destroying the identity (and sometimes the heritage) of the surrounding villages and crushing the highly productive land of La Vega. An important social movement has stopped many projects in this area, we have also promote diverse plans and proposals, forcing the administrations to be proactive in this area (see the case study of La Vega).

Finally, urban regeneration of suburbs is another key question. In Santa Adela the administrations have rebuilt part of a deprived neighbour-

hood, but ignoring the needs of inhabitants. In the most deprived area (the North of the city) many plans have been promoted by the administration but they have failed because of the political interest and the lack of participation in an area where unemployment arrives to 50% these days.

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Spain 504'782Km2 * Inhabitants 46'951'532
Urban Region 25'156Km2 * Inhabitants 499'085



Alternative project: La Casa del Aire

Purpose: neighborhood-based organization to address the speculation processes affecting a traditional house and the neighborhood in which it is located, the Albaicín.

Dimensions: From the seventeenth century and classified by a double typology, crossing house and tenement house.

Project costs: EUR 332.953.24

Investors: The property Edivara-Varasol, so far they have not requested funding.

Architects: Francisco Sarabia Nieto



DESCRIPTION

La Casa del Aire is located in an emblematic neighborhood of Granada, the Albaicín, a neighborhood that after a period of carelessness by owners and institutions, has entered a process of great change, exacerbated since it was declared World Heritage by UNESCO in 1994, and characterized by strong public and private investments. The denounce campaign "The Albaicín is for sale" started from the neighbors of the La Casa del Aire (threatened by speculators with expulsion) and others in the same situation, makes visible the consequences of this process: expulsion of people with less purchasing power, real estate mobbing, complicity of governments and others. And their struggle has led them to be an emblem of resistance to the city of Granada.

ROLE IN METROPOLITAN TRENDS

This process of real estate speculation of Albaicín is part of a widespread and broader process of gentrification, from which the conversion of the neighborhood into tourist icon through hotels, hostels, luxury apartments and tourist shops, among others, breaks the existing social fabric, characterized by older people and fewer resources. Seeing those displaced by others with greater purchasing power, as in the case of La Casa del Aire. Changes are accentuated in trendy places, central and with a special charisma acquired over the years.

THE PARTIES AND THEIR INTERESTS

There have already been several real estates companies who have owned the Casa del Aire, with the same interests to drive the residents away and demolish the building to build luxury apartments, supported by the City Council which declared the building in ruins to favor the expulsion. Among the practices that have carried out the speculators and governments are, the eviction attempt of the regular contracts, complaints and breaches of the responsibility for maintenance. By the neighbors, while spreading the conflict calls for immediate rehabilitation and even called for the expropriation of the building to City Hall.

POLITICAL AGREEMENTS

After monitoring the local organization of administrative processes has shown that both the legislation and bureaucratic processes in place to regulate the processes of rehabilitation benefit the landowners. The fraudulent activities are conducted under the auspices of the City Council, whose concern is focused on tourism than in the population living in the neighborhood.

IMPACTS

On the one hand, gentrification processes generate spatial segregation, loss of Identity and insecurity to resentment

existing social networks. It shows a change in the character of a neighborhood rich in diversity and expression, becoming more restricted, and even dangerous. Otherwise, in terms of administrative processes re given soil, irregular granting of licenses for construction, sale and destruction of public property and encouragement of the use of private transport.



Flagship project: The Millenium Park - Plan Especial de la Vega de Granada (institucional) / Plan de Dinamización Sostenible de la Vega de Granada (social)

Purpose:

A) Spatial planning, open spaces, recreation, agriculture.

B) Local development, public involvement, sustainability, agriculture.



NMM AND SPATIAL IMPACTS

The highly productive land of "La Vega" is being destroyed, even though it is protected by a Metropolitan Spatial Plan from 1999 and also constitutes an important environmental area which links the National Park of Sierra Nevada with the Genil Valley, generating an extraordinary view from the Alhambra (the mostly visited monument in Europe). As well as other areas, this part of the metropolitan area is affected by the agricultural decline and is the area of main interest for real state investors and the local authorities that focus always on urban growth (including golf courses) and infrastructure development; the Airport (built in "La Vega") has been modernized, and they are building a high speed train and a second bypass of Granada, destroying the beautiful landscapes and introducing as much as possible the Granada Metropolitan Area in the space of capital flows.

FROM RESISTANCE TO ACTION

From the middle of the 90s, an important socio-ecological movement called "Salvemos la Vega" has stopped many projects in this area, as well as: a new congress center, a new place for the Feria (Andalusian Festival area), or a Recreation Park. In 2007 more than 60 organisations produced a Sustainable Development Plan for La Vega (www.otragranada.org), and as a result of the social pressure in 2010 the Regional Government is now preparing an Urban Plan to create an Agrarian Park in La Vega (called The Millennium Park). It is another challenge for the movements to convince the Regional Administration to design this plan in a participative way and following the main guidelines of the Sustainable Development Plan for La Vega and according the model of the Agrarian Park of Baix Llobregat in Barcelona (www.agroteritori.org).

In addition to this, other actors are being involved in the La Vega Movement: from one side, more than 100 primary, secondary and professional schools alongside with the University and other associations have promoted the VegaEduca Project (<http://ieshlanz.com/>), and on the 22nd of April 2010 mobilized more than 1000 students for the first Vega Eco-March that finished in the first Vega Exhibition in the Science Museum of Granada. From the other side, irrigation organisations, farmers, and rural tourism are generating an alliance to protect the agrarian landscape and to develop innovations such as organic agriculture.

CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY

Finally, some of the projects in "La Vega" that have not been stopped by the movements are in trouble: the Nevada Mall (one of the biggest in Europe) is in court because of illegal dimensions and corruption, while the Health Campus cannot grow in dimension as much as the companies want since the laboratories are surrounded by the protected area of "La Vega" and most of the area selected for this campus has been used for high standing housing. In addition to this, urban growth is almost zero because of the economic crisis, so we have another opportunity to reclaim our territory promoting local agriculture, local trading, and a multifunctional land use of the Vega.



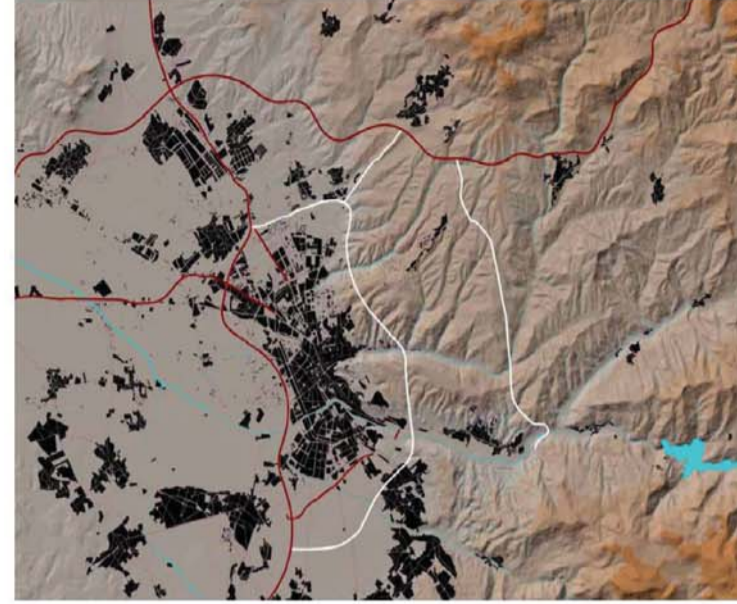
Failed project: Eastern Metropolitan Ring Road Vs. Granada Tram

Purpose: A) Motorway, private transport, environmental impact. B) Public transport, urban renovation. Data: Presupuesto...

Dimensions: A) Motorway of 11 Km length (2 km of bridges and tunnels). B) A Tramline of 15,923 Km length (2,737 km of tunnels) and 26 stations.

Data: A) 147.000.000 € for an estimation of 62.221 cars/day. B) 400.000.000 € for 35.254 passengers/day.

Developer: A) Junta de Andalucía (Regional Government), Central Government, City Council. B) Junta de Andalucía (Regional Government), Central Government, City Council.



NMM AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACTS

As we have established before, tourism and real state are two of the main activities, and NMM are also related to them. One of the main issues is the winter sports. There are several mega-projects related to this question but the most important is the motorway designed (but not planned in our spatial planning) in order to increase the road capacity to the Ski Station; this motorway will be a part of the Eastern Metropolitan Ring road, which surrounds our city between the Alhambra and Sierra Nevada, two of main pieces of our heritage (that is why we call this project The Alhambra Motorway). Fortunately, the Alhambra Authority and the actual crisis, alongside with another social movement (not very strong but influent) have stopped this mega-project. The impacts were huge in a project that includes many tunnels and bridges to overcome a mountainous area with big slopes, several valleys and other important ecosystems. In addition to this, actually there is no traffic demand for this infrastructure because there are not many people living in the area (there are only small rural villages with less than 10.000 inhabitants) and the ski station is only used a third of the year (and all the winter activities will be reduced according to the effects of climate change in a southern area like Granada).

FROM RESISTANCE TO ACTION

From the other side, after a long fight by the associations that are promoting sustainable mobility, the regional government is constructing the Granada Tram (as well as in other eight cities of the region). After the dismantling of the tram network in the Granada Metropolitan Area in the 60s and the 70s (there was also a tram to go to some rural villages of Sierra Nevada), public authorities included a new tram network in the Metropolitan Spatial Plan of 1999. Now line 1 is being developed in order to connect the north and the south of the Metropolitan Area, traversing the city, including the bus station and the train station.

Nowadays social concern is on how they are going to renew the city while they are constructing this infrastructure. New public spaces for people and bicycles and less private transport is a key question to improve the environmental quality of the city.

CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY

The economic crisis is reducing the pressure to build new infrastructures, mainly those very expensive such as the Alhambra Motorway. Some other projects are also under question as a network of motorways connecting the different nucleus of the metropolitan area: an important movement of land owners has also produced a lot of problems to this project.

The question now is if the administration is going to make an effort to build new tram lines, a new public transport restricted areas or a cycling network (also demanded by the social movement) in order to reduce private traffic which is the main pollution source in the Metropolitan Area.



Failed project: Plan Integral de la Zona Norte. / Rehabilitación Integral de Barriadas: La Paz, Cartuja, Almanjáyar

Purpose: Rehabilitation of excluded neighbourhood: A) Integral interventions. B) Rehabilitation of social housing.

Dimensions: A) Geographical extension of the excluded areas: 34,5 ha, in which lives 14% of population of the city. B) 5.000 Social Housing.

Developer: A) City Council, Junta de Andalucía, Central Government. B) Junta de Andalucía.



DESCRIPTION

The "Zona Norte" (North zone) of Granada – consisting of the residential neighbourhoods "La Paz", "Cartuja" and "Almanjáyar"- was created like a ghetto from the beginning, constituted for the construction of 5.000 social housing between 1960-1991, destined for the poorest population in the city. This implantation at the northwest periphery, guaranteed the territorial and physical exclusion, promoting difficulties that urban planning was not able to solve, and neither promote the minimum standards of habitability, depressed over time in a deep decline. Residential ghettos created from the 60's represent a great challenge in the NMM of Granada and other Andalusian cities.

ROLE IN METROPOLITAN TRENDS

To reverse more than thirty years of neglect and isolation for an area which lives 14% of the Granada population, in 2006 the Empresa "Pública de Suelo de Andalucía", formed the "Office of Rehabilitation Cartuja", "La Paz" and "Almanajayar", to undertake the management, rehabilitation and regulation of social housing within the area. The Integral Plan for the Zona Norte adopted in 2010, raised issues to combat the various problems including: the recovery of neighborhoods trying to articulate the resources and actions which incited the deterioration and degradation of urban habitat (housing, urban planning, environment), social exclusion and poverty (health, education, employment), failing urban (transport, territorial cohesion) and citizen participation (security, citizenship, culture).

IMPACTS

Without underestimating the potential role of the Office of Rehabilitation in the social transformation of the neighborhood, in the context described we believe that there performance is insufficient since it doesn't raise an coordinated action with other governments and sectors of social intervention. Regarding the Integral Plan, despite the declaration of intentions, it can not be seen to be participated or built-in. To summarize it is a catalog of unrelated actions to carry out in the neighborhoods from different areas, but not integrated with each other.

In order to deal with this situation in which the deterioration of neighborhoods (physical and social) is growing every day and revindicating of the lack of commitment, understanding and action by different governments, the "Coordinadora Andaluza de Barrios Ignorados" was created in 2009- linking together most of the social partners in the districts of Andalusia having the same situation. In the "Zona Norte", much of the social movements are integrated into a platform named "Plataforma Ciudadana Zona Norte", whose main struggle is the demand for a sustained strategy in time, integrated and participated, as the only effective response to the complexity of the problems in the area and the best way to break the "vicious circle of exclusion."



Synthesis over all four projects and outlook

THE BIGGEST ECONOMIC CRISIS IN A CENTURY IS PRODUCING THE FOLLOWING CHANGES IN GRANADA METROPOLITAN AREA:

There is inertia in the NMM tendency, but most of the projects are under question because of the lack of funding, which means a slow down in the construction processes but not a renounce of all projects.

Deals are mostly related with the space of capital and speculative models than with the needs of people and with new local economies.

There are many empty houses, mainly in the suburbs. Huge unemployment and other social problems are overcoming the capacity of underfunded social services, that do not arrive to every suburb. Many other problems are expected due to the

increase of the crisis and the reduction of public funding following neoliberalism.

Projects of social housing have disappeared from public budgets. Infrastructures under construction suffer a slow down and some mega-projects have been frozen (fortunately).

Renewable energies and a reduction on energy consumption are being promoted by regional and national administration. Some flagship projects are still considered by local, regional and national administrations. Only the scale of the projects has been reduced (in theory).

Most of the infrastructures, many urban plans and some of the mega-projects (Health Science Campus...) are designed to attract investments and qualified labour.

Following and promoting the NMM that have produced an enormous crisis, will turn into a much deeper crisis. Base problems are not being considered, innovations and social involvement are not strong enough.

Grass roots movements are increasing their influence, including rural-urban nets of agroecology and food sovereignty. Ecologist are very active against mega-projects and speculation, and are also proposing proactive and alternative projects. In some neighborhoods there are social movements resisting and claiming for citizen rights and public investment in their areas.

Unemployed associations have appeared with the crisis (there are six in the Metropolitan Area). They are claiming for help and public responses but they are mostly generating

alternative projects (including in some cases funded by public administration) to solve their situation and questioning the NMM. There is also a platform against the crisis with trade unions and left-wing collectives trying to generate a mobilization process in the future.