

ALVALADE.



An analysis of Lisbon's urban qualities along with urban design and policy recommendations for Alvalade, Lisbon.

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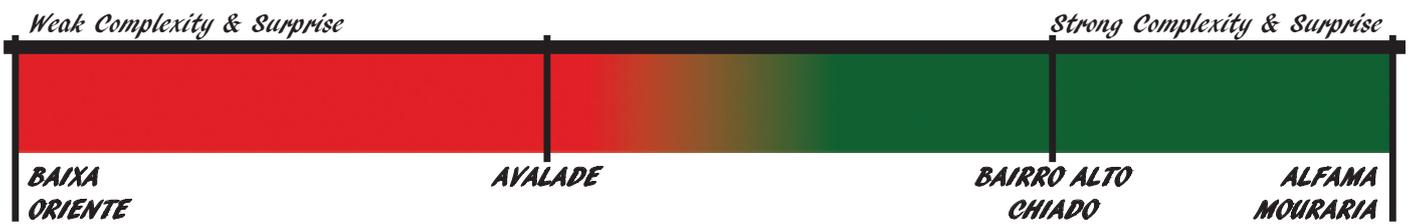
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WALK TO PLAN.

The team's first task was to walk the city of Lisbon to familiarize themselves with the Portuguese culture and the city's distinct neighborhoods. As the group explored the seven most prevalent of the twenty-four districts of Lisbon, they analyzed each place according to ¹Vicente del Rio's seven principles of urban design: Complexity and Surprise, Vitality and Robustness, Enclosure and Linkages, Transparency and Linkages, Legibility and Coherence, Architectural Richness, and finally, Personalization and Community Values. The findings are organized by principle on the following pages. The team also included a rating bar at the top of each page to summarize the text.

COMPLEXITY AND SURPRISE



Although the neighborhoods of Oriente and Baixa are from different times in history, they have a similar level of complexity. Each location has a well-defined plan of streets and landscape. For instance, a pedestrian in Oriente will constantly see the same patterns of the river, the garden, the residential blocks and by the main street along all the way no matter where he stands within the districts. Even Baixa located in the historic district, well known by his many little streets, it has the same patterns, same building characteristics and same road's width, which makes the flaneur feel the same sensation in different points of both locations.

Alvalade stands at the lower of the scale when it comes to complexity and surprise. Most of the streets in the area straight and give away what is at the other end, thus, giving no surprise to pedestrians walking through. Although there was not much element of surprise, Alvalade's buildings contain architecture from the 1920s to the 1960s and gives one the feeling of walking through time.

Bairro Alto and Chiado are naturally influenced by their locations. These two areas of Lisbon's historic core have a complex topography. The hills and slopes of the land contribute to the creation of the steep, winding streets found throughout the area. Pedestrians walking in the area will not know what building, plaza, or any sort of monument awaits them at the end.

The Alfama and Mouraria districts' morphology provide a wide variety of stimulants to the roaming flaneurs. Their fluctuating topography greatly influenced the organic development of the historic street network. On flat land, streets are usually placed within a single plane, the compass directions. The roads of these two districts have an additional plane, vertical direction, therefore infinitely more variable paths. This left the Alfama and Mouraria neighborhoods with many branching, snaking connectors. This complexity in the morphology contributes to the pedestrian surprise. The short visibility allows little opportunity for the pedestrian to predict what lies beyond each bend.



Alfama district.

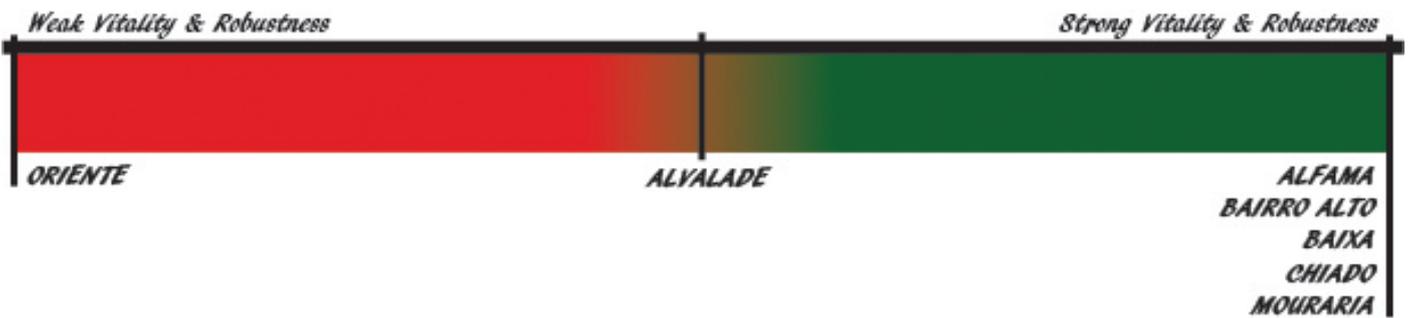


Mouraria district.



Alfama district.

VITALITY AND ROBUSTNESS



Of all the neighborhoods that were studied, Oriente lacked the most vitality. The continuous avenues, walkways, and parks were nearly empty and faint of any activity. Very few commercial spaces were occupied, which can be attributed to the Vasco da Gama Mall. It seems as if this mall has sucked out any potential businesses and customers from the surrounding areas. This is disappointing because Oriente has some of the most robustness. There were plenty of bike lanes, park spaces, seating areas, and other public recreational utilities that were not being used to their full potential.

Measuring Avalade's vitality and robustness was difficult. On one hand, the neighborhood is just that, a majority of residential developments with a few parks and businesses scattered in-between. Naturally, Alvalade therefor lacks the variety of uses found elsewhere in Lisbon. However, relative to its purpose, that is to provide livable housing, Avalade's level of robustness may be considered adequate. Similarly, the vitality level is impressive for being less of a touristic destination. However, when the fact that this district is designed for people to live in is equated Avalade's vitality seems, again, adequate. The few formal and informal spaces between the residential blocks and the hustling of the residents walking to the metro or driving on the roads to get to work makes Avalade's level of vitality and robustness appropriately mediocre.

It doesn't matter what hour of the day you go to the historic district, it's plenty full of people from different cultures, lots of restaurants, cafes and kiosks. Because the tourism is so strong, it makes this Lisbon area so alive, with also enormous public spaces to gather people for celebration, events or simply to hang out. Praça Camões, Praça do Comércio, the public market and other historical locations are examples of the vitality in this neighborhood. Furthermore, these robust spaces also provide a place for social interactions. As an example, a wine tasting fair in the heart of Rua Augusta.



Oriente district.

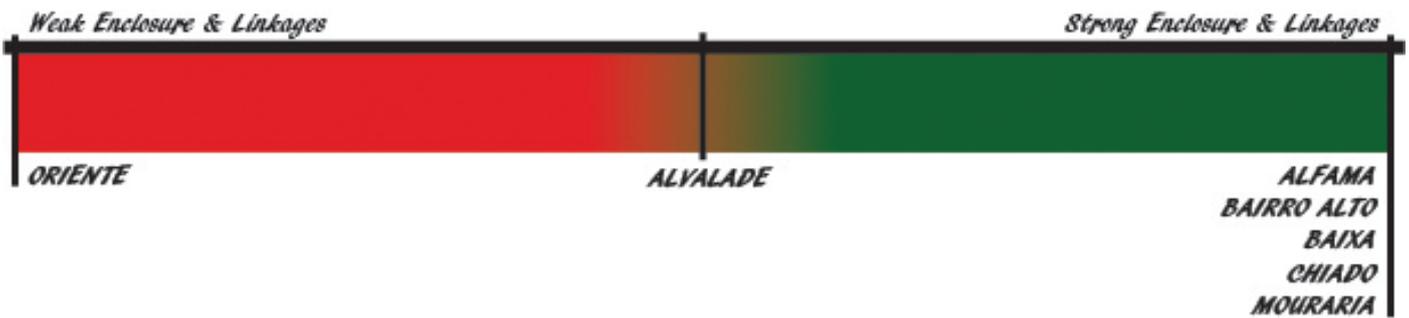


Baixa district.



Oriente district.

ENCLOSURE AND LINKAGES



The monumental scale on which Oriente was built, with intentions of hosting millions of visitors on its streets, is now one of the reasons the district's level of enclosure and linkages is weak. It is true that Oriente has many strong axes which run parallel to the river, however, these paths have few connectors to allow the pedestrian to travel north and south between them. Furthermore, these allees are extremely wide and therefore void of any sense of enclosure.

In Alvalade a flaneur could see Le Corbusier in a variety of modernist building. In other words, because of the pilotis, there's even an area called Paliteiro, in reference to the plenty of that architecture which brings so many permeability, connection and openness that you can't define what is public than what is private. However, in some places of Alvalade a flaneur can also identify enclosure in smaller buildings that has little portals to pass through (street encroachment), and between this way in and out, you find a quiet and pleasant place to walk, contrasting the noise and the hit on the avenues. Alvalade has a mix of architectural styles, dated from 20's to 60's, that makes this location very plural and with uses diverse.

It is no coincidence that the historic core neighborhoods have the strongest amount of linkages and enclosure. Their older design of having buildings closer together offers the best enclosure when walking in the streets, versus the newer building codes that state that buildings must be apart from each other at a 45 degree angle. Alfama and Mouraria's intricate web of roads offers multiple ways a pedestrian can travel up and down to the Castelo de Sao Jorge. Baixa's grid-like street structure offers even more linkage throughout the area and gives it more of a defined edge, especially along the commercial strip on Rua Augusta.



Chiado district.



Chiado district.



Oriente district.

TRANSPARENCY AND VISTAS

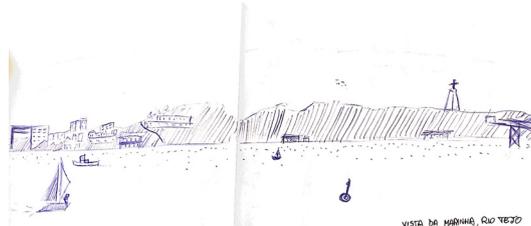


The two newer neighborhoods, Alvalade and Oriente, offered the least transparency when compared to their counterparts. Although Oriente had many glass front stores, most them were blocked by large walls and columns. This poor design does not come off as inviting to a flaneur, nor does it truly show what the neighborhood has to offer. The transparency of buildings in Alvalade varied in their transparency. Some residential buildings have stores located on the first floor that have large clear windows, while other residential buildings had an open first floor. A large proportion of the facades were blank, especially the ones facing the main avenues. The topography of these two areas are flat for the most part and do not offer an overall view of the city, but Oriente does offer some decent views from the Tagus riverfront.

The level of transparency and vistas in old Lisbon neighborhoods (Alfama, Bairro Alto, Baixa, Chiado, and Mouraria) is impressive. The Portuguese architecture, consisting with many doors, windows, and balconies make for a blended line between the private homes and the public street. Residents will compromise a view into their house to be able to lay their eyes on the lively happenings below. When the window shutters are opened and the doors of the shops and balconies swing wide, smells, music, and life floats freely between the artificial barriers dividing public and private spaces. This is how old Lisbon is. The parks, the streets, and buildings are filled with tourists and locals alike who have gathered in this city to enjoy the geographic beauty of the mountains, architecture, and the river. While the streets are busy with many people who share no relation other than their appreciation of the city, old Lisbon feels safe and predictable thanks to the transparency offered by the shops, plazas, and many windows.



Oriente district.



Chiado district.
Sketch by Amauri Ranos.



Mouraria district.

LEGIBILITY AND COHERENCE



The lack of robustness and weak vistas makes for an illegible Alvalade. Many of the buildings in this district are similar in height and architecture, offering no waypoints when navigating the streets. With minimal signage, even a map would be of no use. Alvalade's development history throughout the 40's-60's makes for a collage of residential block types creating a lack of order or organization in the area's layout. For these reasons, it would be difficult for a pedestrian to create a mental map of Alvalade.

Alfama and Mouraria are very similar. The amount of legibility in these conjoined neighborhoods is average. There are many routes available to get a pedestrian up down the hilly area but it not easy to navigate when traveling to a destination that is in between. The winding roads, many with dead ends, can make it difficult for a flaneur to navigate the depth of the area. There are open spots that offer a view of different landmarks such as Arco da Rua Augusta, Convento do Carmo, and the Tagus River. The roads are the same width and the buildings are the same height, which contributes to the neighborhoods higher coherence.

It's so impressive how different times neighborhoods can be related. Baixa and Oriente, again, have similarities because both are easily navigable. Due to their less complexity and their quarter forms, these neighborhoods can be mentally mapped and they have a certain coherence of patterns. For example, the residential blocks in Oriente has the equivalent high and same utilities, even the public furniture are equal, providing the same idea of visual order. Beside that, in Rua Augusta and their parallels streets, the buildings have same pattern, also in Praça do Comércio even with same colors.



Oriente district.



Baixa district.



Alvalade district.

ARCHITECTURAL RICHNESS



After the 1755 earthquake, flood, and fires destroyed the historic Baixa district, the city engineer made a decision to rebuild using a single building blueprint and list of materials. This way, the heart of the government and financial district would be quickly rebuilt. While there is great architectural detail in the facades, there is little variety of building framework itself.

Unfortunately for the residents of Alvalade, the level of architectural richness is poor and uninteresting. The large cubes of dull color stand in rows at similar heights throughout the district. While there are a few developments in Alvalade which may offer some attraction to the eye of a pedestrian, they are overshadowed by the monotonous structures around them.

This neighborhood is historic; however, it does not rank the highest for its architectural richness. There are few variations in building designs since they were mass produced after the earthquake. It can make the flaneur feel like they are walking through the same area over and over. The only distinction between the buildings were their colors and azulejos.

The old center of Lisbon surrounding the Baixa (Alfama, Bairro Alto, Chiado, Mouraria) is filled with architectural richness. From the old religious buildings to the historical quintas to the modern architecture to the wide variety of tiles and red roofing covering the facades of most homes. This wealth of interesting sights makes every street a beautiful vista and positively affects all other urban design principles.



Mouraria district.

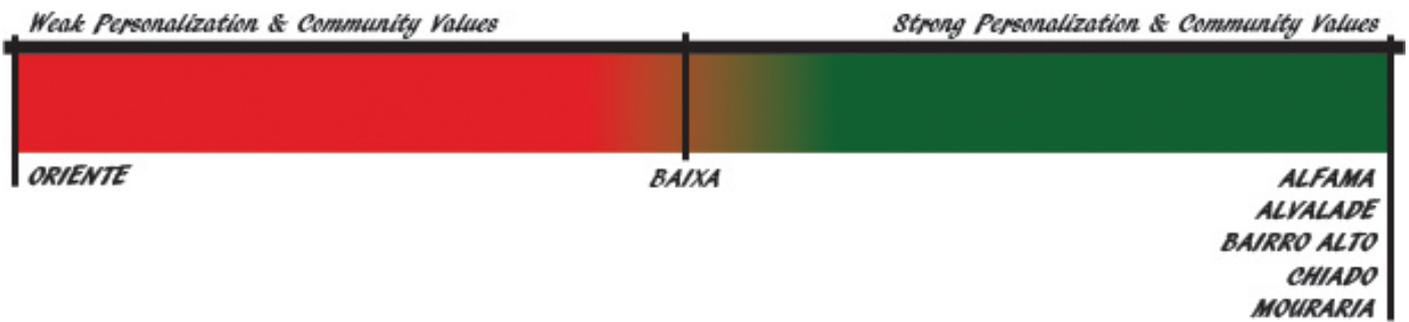


Baixa district.
Sketch by Amauri Ranos.



Oriente district.

PERSONALIZATION AND COMMUNITY VALUES



Being a district designed to every last centimeter, Oriente, has little room for informal modification. The residents of Oriente do not hang out their windows to watch the activities below as seen in Alfama. Nor does each apartment have plants, streamers, and flags of Portugal. The city exists as built twenty years ago; but now the life which once filled the streets and public spaces during the Expo has disappeared. There is a community library where residents can share books at no charge, but even this seems to have been placed there by the government means to try to foster a stronger community bond. Oriente is a ghost town, only is it brought to life when there are many visitors for a concert or sports game in the stadium.

There is some difficulty witnessing the personalization and community values in Baixa. The area is engulfed by tourists and tourist-oriented commercial spaces on the street level. Few windows have hanging clothes or decorations. These factors make one question who actually lives in this neighborhood.

From Praça do Camões and its celebration's public space till Mouraria and its colorful clotheslines, a flaneur may see lots of personalization at the entire historic district of Lisbon. For instance, a cool bar called Café Alfaca Hall (clearly a reference to the Lisbon citizens) showed how alive this area can be and how connected they are with their culture. These neighborhoods are way more than the historic buildings, traditional sidewalks and narrow passages, it is a possibility to feel, taste and live an experience of that community. Therefore, drink your ginguinha during a summer day walk, sketch or take a picture of Praça do Comércio as a remembrance, walk by Rua Augusta to see the restaurants and stores, take the elétrico to go up the hill and have a good taste of Lisbon.



Chiado district.



Bairro Alto district.



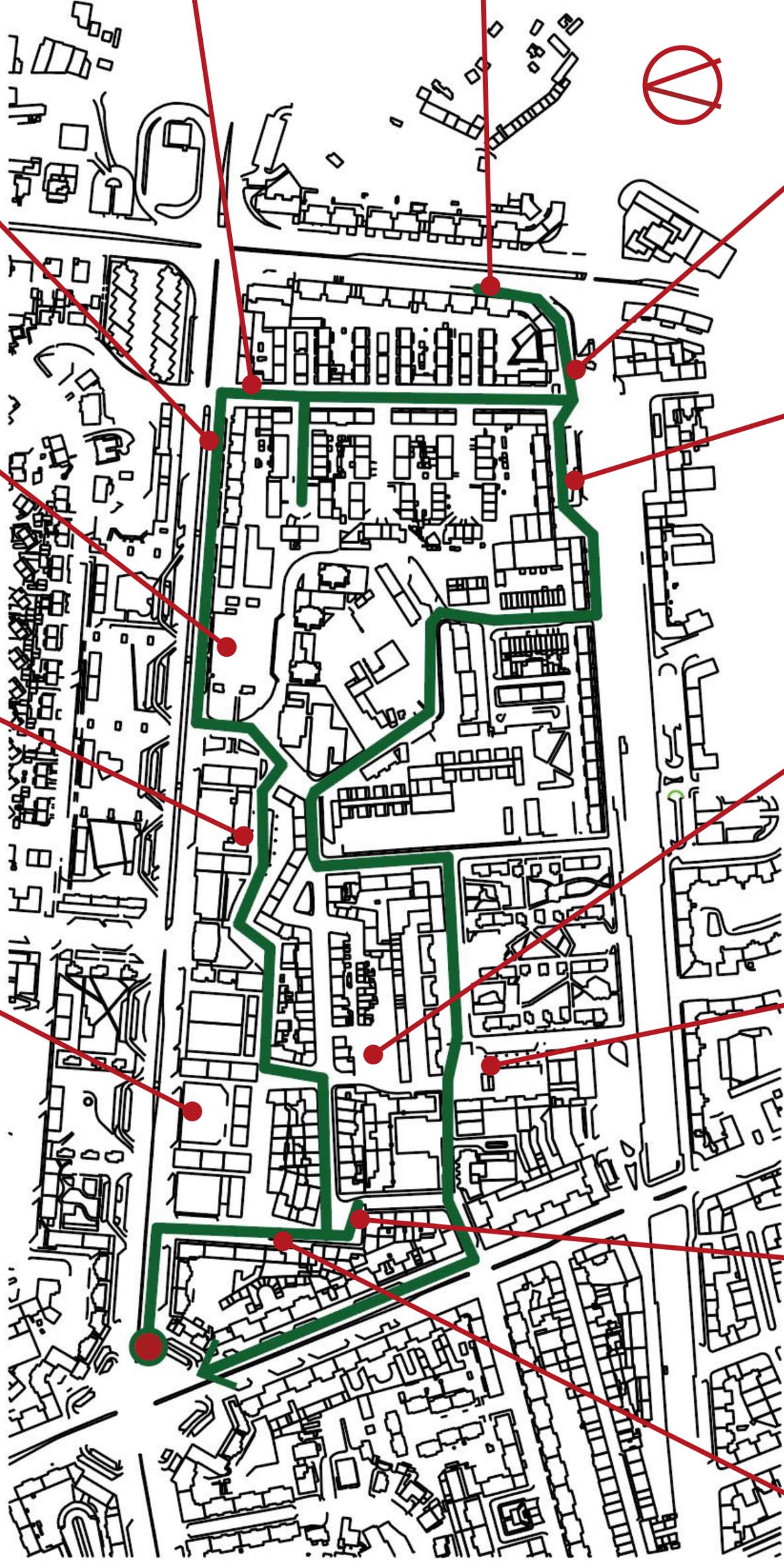
Oriente district.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROJECT AREA.

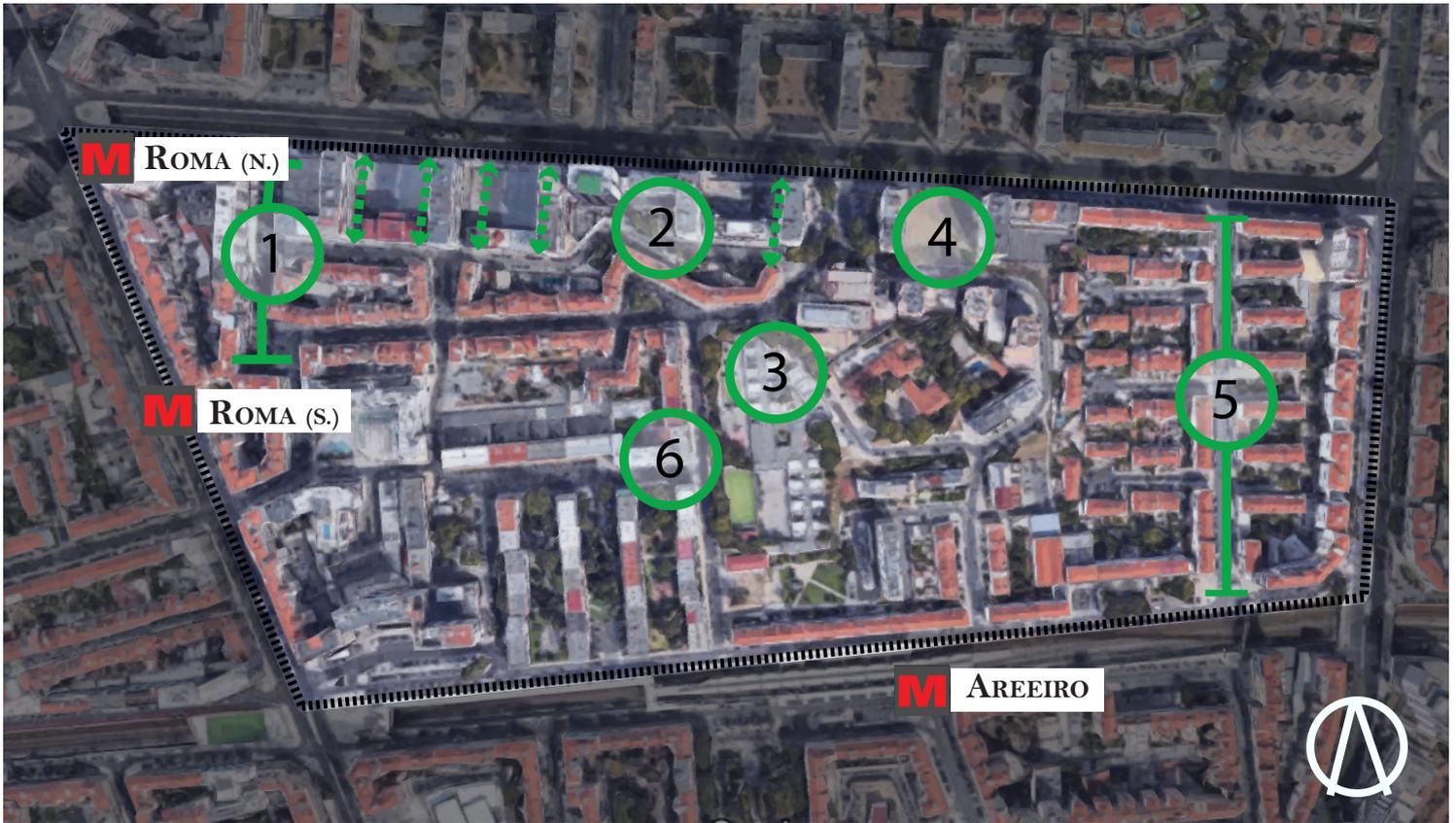
The second task the team performed was an in depth site analysis of the project area; the district of Alvalade. First, they accompanied a local government representative, from the Freguesia, on a tour of the neighborhood. They then walked the streets of Alvalade on their own and noted opportunities and constraints for urban design improvements and policy recommendation. The investigation of Alvalade takes thought from the seven urban design principles used in task one. Below are the findings, organized into maps, photos, and text.

SITE WALK- THROUGH

Below is a site map of Alvalade depicting the path our team walked in our analysis of the site. Starting at the red circle at 10:00, we finished at the green arrow at 13:00. Pictures are linked to the path to represent views from the street level.



Opportunities



1

Corridor along Conde Sabugosa street is accessible by two metro stations, Roma, and connects Av. Estados Unidos to inner-Alvalade. The street is lined with street lights, street parking, and mixed-use developments. Small parking lost at south end of corridor and wide sidewalks pose opportunity to be developed into a vital public space.

2

Intermediate connections between Av. Estados Unidos and Bento Roma street. Many vacant retail spaces facing Bento Roma street. Wide sidewalks and mature trees pose opportunity to develop public space which could help reestablish businesses along this corridor.

3

High level of pedestrian traffic due to proximity to large church and schools. Complete tree canopy over Maura Girau street.

4

Large empty space between residential buildings and market. Locals use space as an informal dog park. Signs of regular north/south pedestrian traffic through parcel.

5

Vital retail strip with street parking, mature trees, lighting, and many residential buildings along Ruta Guilhermina Suggia street.

6

Wide sidewalks, mature tree canopy, street lights, mixed-use buildings, arcades providing shade and enclosure along northern sidewalk. Opportunities for beautification measures to make space more attractive, in-turn helping the local retailers in this area.

Constraints



1

Obvious parking shortage which may keep nearby businesses from reaching potential profits. Apartment complex private plaza is a very poorly designed and under-utilized.

2

Complications with mix of privately and publicly owned parcels. The largest public parcel in this mix has a public parking lot which is inefficiently designed.

3

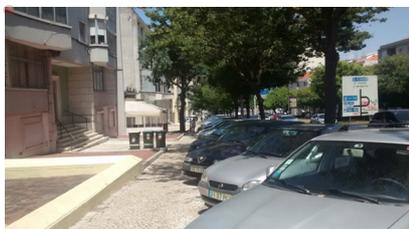
Need for versatile green spaces to support the many family units in the area. However, area is completely built out, no empty lots available for development. Current green spaces can not be used for any activities or recreational purposes.

4

Housing setbacks create awkward private space intruding sidewalks and lowering attractability on this busy street. Space can better be utilized for the much needed parking.

5

Plans by the Freguesia for redevelopment may pose threat to successful, existing cafe and its outdoor seating which makes this public space vitalized.



PLAN TO WALK.

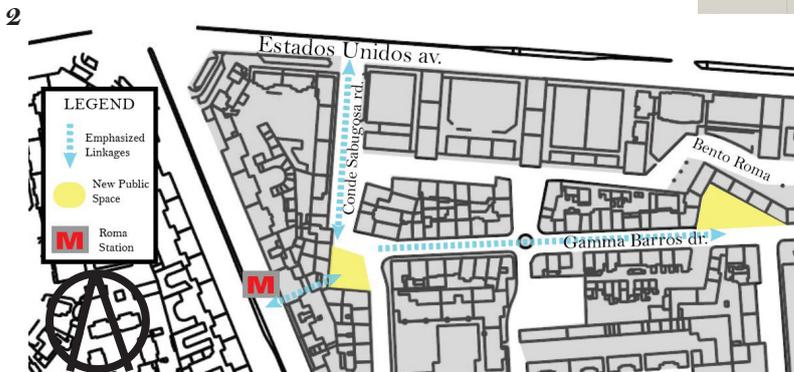
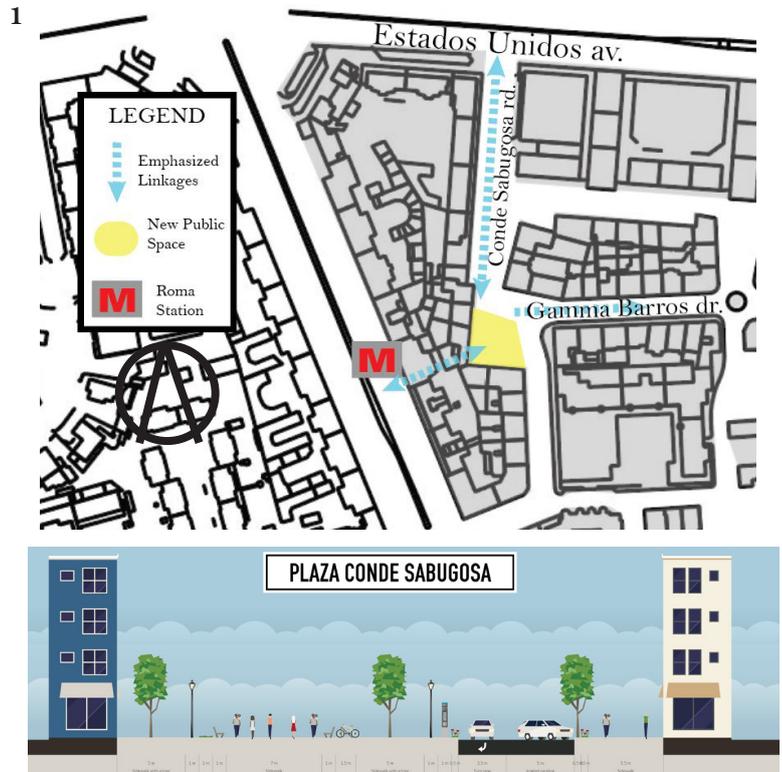
Following the *Walk to Plan*, *Plan to Walk* methodology being taught at the University of Lusofona, Lisbon, the team took analysis performed in task one and two then translated it into public space design and urban policy recommendations for the Freguesia of Alvalade. The team focused their efforts around a vision for the neighborhood which was drafted: **“Alvalade. An accessible, attractive, neighborhood with thriving local eateries and specialized retailers. A walkable district designed for new families and the retired alike. With many public spaces to enjoy, markets to explore, and a strong community to connect to, Alvalade is the hidden gem of Lisbon”**. From here, they worked to develop three main goals, if achieved, would validate the vision above. For each goal there are four design or policy ideas, two short-term solutions and two long-term solutions, aimed at achieving the main goals. The following pages present the three goals and the respective design and policy ideas.

Goal 1

MAKE STRONGER LINKAGES THROUGH THE EDGES OF THE SITE WITH STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN ORIENTED FOR PEDESTRIAN NEEDS.

By 2030...

1 Public space development at the intersection of Gamma Barros dr. and Conde Sabugosa road. This investment will attract people into the site from the busy Estados Unidos av. Furthermore, this location is conveniently adjacent to the south Roma Metro Station. When in place, this public space will activate the encompassing businesses as well as link pedestrians on the edges to the many retailers and eateries on Gama Barros dr. To the right, is a street elevation looking into the new plaza from Gamma Barros dr.



2 A complementing public space development west of the proposed space above, will draw the pedestrians along the Gamma Barros corridor further into the heart of Alvalade. This space will attract more visitors and residents to the streets, creating opportunity for community and economic development. Below is a design proposal for the space identified in image 2.

3 The strip of road that wraps around an existing park on Ruta Gama Barros will be closed off to traffic and converted into an open pedestrian walkway. The grassy area will extend out from its original placement, and park benches will be added in the center and perimeter of the space. The extra walkway space will have two trees with wrap around benches to allow pedestrians to sit in the shade as they stroll through the neighborhood. The patch of grass will be perfect and convenient for citizens to gather or to walk their dogs. A canine/feline waste bag dispenser and bin will be located on the edge of the sidewalk to ensure that the space remains free of droppings.



Goal 1

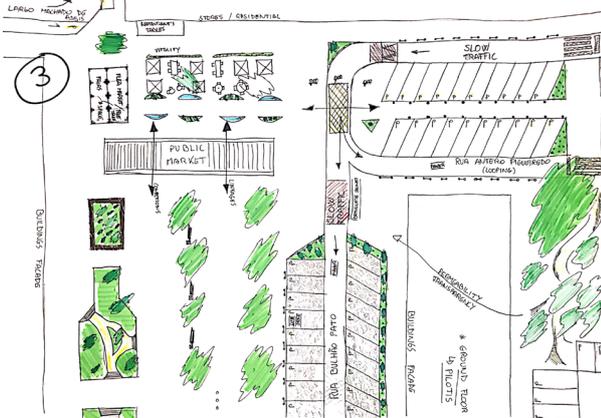
MAKE STRONGER LINKAGES THROUGH THE EDGES OF THE SITE WITH STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN ORIENTED FOR PEDESTRIAN NEEDS.

By 2050...

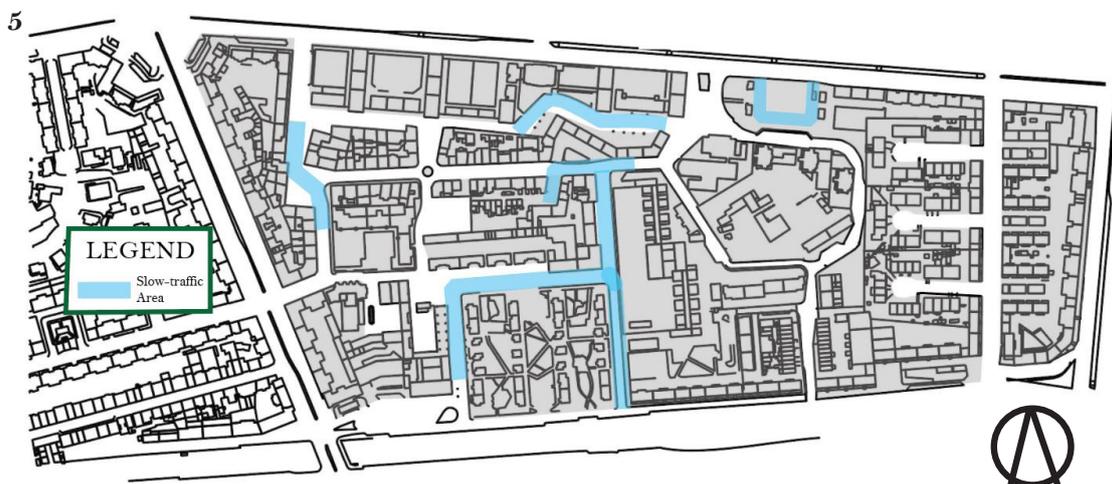
4 On this page are two long-term solutions to achieve goal 1. First, depicted in the image to the right is the conversion of the publicly owned land on José Pinheiro de Melo rd. into a community bike repair and storage space. With many weather protected bike locking spots and a station to perform repairs, the residents of Alvalade will have less of an excuse to not ride more frequently. Understanding the government's desire to edge away from vehicular traffic and encourage pedestrian and bicycle modes of transit, this development aimed to support the movement while fostering Alvalade's bicyclist community. Centrally located and highly accessible, which strong connections to the edges of Alvalade, this site is a great place for such a use. Furthermore, a proposed bikeway would run along the new bike plaza and connect José Pinheiro de Melo rd. with Gamma Barros dr.



5.1



5 The second long term solution identified is to strategically select portions of streets to make into slow traffic zones. To do this, paving can be changed, adjusting plane heights of street, parking, and sidewalk, designing chicanes, or adding a raised crosswalk are feasible answers. Below is a map showing pedestrian priority corridors as well as a 5.1 pedestrian oriented design near the new public market at the end of Antero de Figueiredo st seen on the left.



Goal 2

REFORM CIRCULATION PATTERNS AND PARKING STRATEGY TO BETTER SUIT THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST WITHOUT COMPROMISING PARKING AVAILABILITY.

By 2030...

6 The short-term design proposals work hand in hand to accomplish goal 2. The first initiative would be to reform vehicular circulation patterns inside the Alvalade street network to mostly one-way streets. Seen below is a proposal created in the *ring road* methodology to maximize accessibility at all points in the neighborhood for the residents while increasing exposure potential and drive-by capture of foreign commuters. Note that this proposal does not take into account official traffic modeling data or traditional trip counting/capacity analysis.



7 The second circulation reform is to begin the process of displacing parking to the edges of the site while increasing pedestrian and bicycle priority throughout the inner areas of the Alvalade street network. To accomplish this, a plan to re-paint and re-distribute the street parking is below. Much of the street-side parking has been converted to angled parking which has a multiplier affect of 1.5 angled spaces to 1 parallel. Thanks to the adopted one-way street plan, the number of parking spaces actually increase; supporting the city's projection and hope to provide more parking in the near future. The figure following this text suggests appropriately adjusted, angled parking spaces.

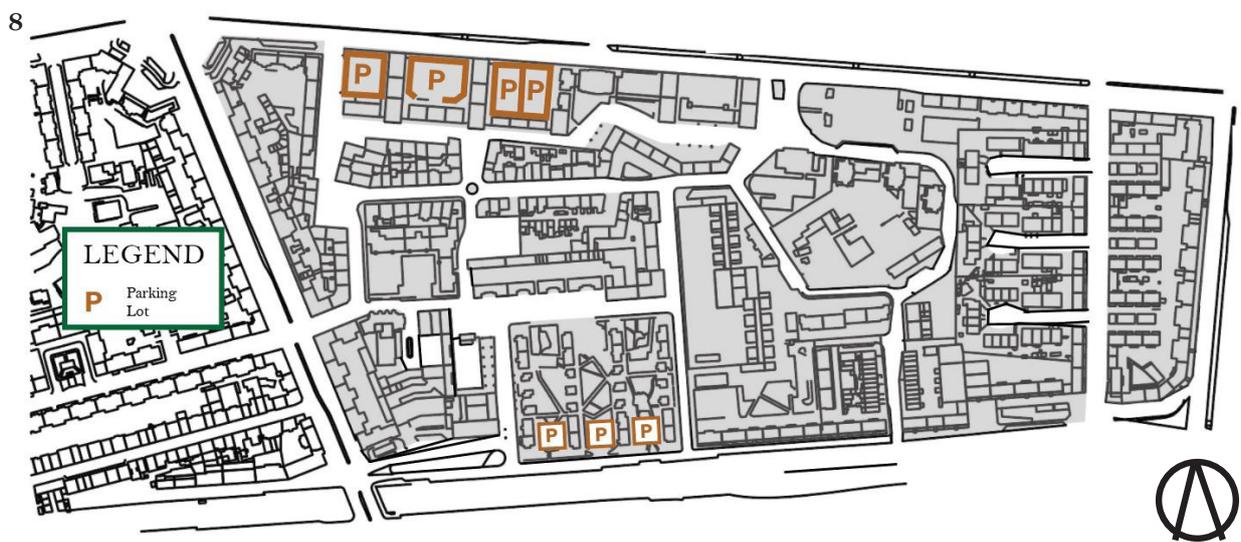


Goal 2

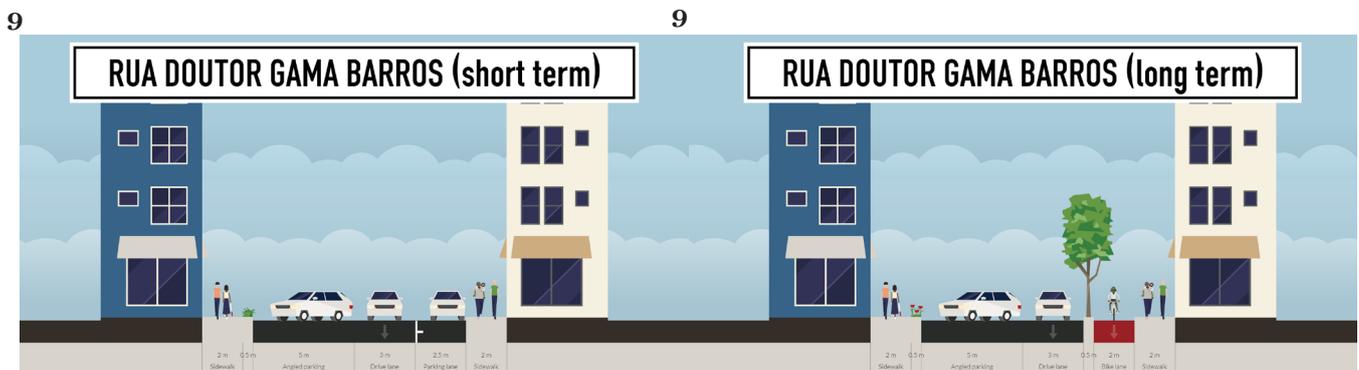
REFORM CIRCULATION PATTERNS AND PARKING STRATEGY TO BETTER SUIT THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST WITHOUT COMPROMISING PARKING AVAILABILITY.

By 2050...

⁸ With the ultimate goal of moving most parking to the edges of Alvalade, and transitioning the inner public street network to be more convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists, it is important to take advantage of the under-used spaces on the fringes of the site. Below is a map depicting the spaces identified as options to explore for parking solutions. Assuming the short-term initiatives were successfully implemented, concentrating resident parking should be relatively easy. Of course, the parking lots identified on the north end of the site are empty roof-tops of private buildings; this is where a private-public partnership may have to be developed. With this in mind, developing the edge parking lots is designated as a long-term initiative.



⁹ As parking lots are being secured for the Alvalade residents on the edges of their neighborhood, it will create a great opportunity to further develop public spaces and create more walkable/bike-able streets. By 2050 it can be expected that owning a car will become less fashionable as technology develops and will therefore lighten the parking space demand, making this initiative even more rational. Public space development can come in form of parkettes, sidewalk widening, or converting parking spaces into bike lanes. The later solution is demonstrated below using the online program StreetMix.

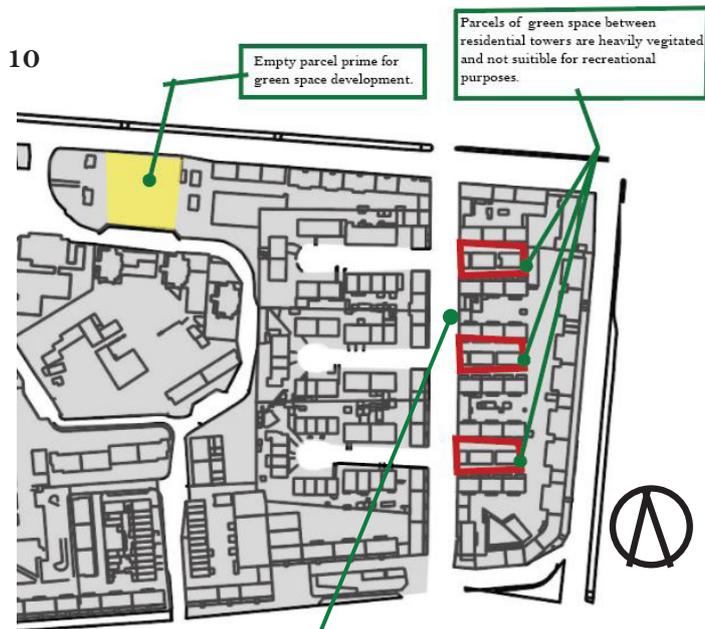


Goal 3

INCREASE VITALITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY IMPLEMENTING VARIOUS SOCIAL PROGRAMS WHICH FOSTER GREATER PUBLIC SPACE USE.

By 2030...

A short-term solution to attract more people to the streets and public spaces is to initiate a beautification program which aims to gather and designate funds towards greater vegetation, more public art, and street furniture. This simple idea can have profound affects on a community's activity as well as identity. Adding a variety of public amenities can be done incrementally to better suit the government's budget.



10 Another, it is essential to revitalize dead spaces in the neighborhood. Noted in chapter two was the fact that many of the public spaces and green spaces specifically were not being used or not suited to the residents' needs. It is important to perform public outreach to determine what green spaces should be designed to best benefit the public. In Alvalade's case, a dog park or futbol field would be appropriate. The map to the left depicts an adequate undeveloped space which could suit many use options. It also shows green spaces that are not being used regularly or do not fit residents' needs.



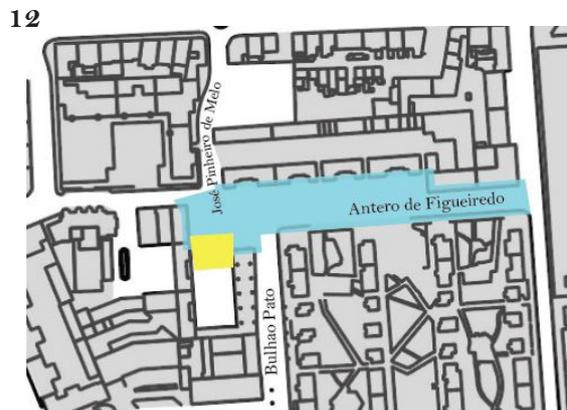
11 The image to the left is an example of residents needing specific green spaces. The left half of the picture is green space in between residential towers; heavily vegetated and overgrown. On the sidewalk are the only two subjects in this picture, a father and son playing soccer. These two residents would rather play pass on the uneven hardscape and be in the way of passersby than use the green space three meters away.

Goal 3

INCREASE VITALITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY IMPLEMENTING VARIOUS SOCIAL PROGRAMS WHICH FOSTER GREATER PUBLIC SPACE USE.

By 2050...

12 A long-term solution to build a stronger and more active community would be to foster opportunities for gatherings. One way to do this is to provide space for a local farmers market or flea market. Being that the fair culture is strong with the Portuguese, it only makes sense to provide an area that can serve at certain days of the week, times of the day, or everyday-every hour as a market place. It is clear which street in Alvalade should act as such a space, Antero de Figueiredo. With the new market being built at the end of the street, the street trees, the wide sidewalks and road, and the retailers lining the corridor, this is the best option to host street fairs. To the left is a map showing the location of the proposed road closure in blue and the new market in yellow.



The second long term goal is to develop a program to maintain public spaces and better instill pride of community shared places. There are many forms in which this kind of program may take place. It could be an *Adopt a Neighborhood* program where a larger company will build a relationship with the city by providing funds for maintenance of public spaces. In return they would get advertising to the residents of Alvalade as being the company who has helped their neighborhood. A similar relationship may be formed between the district and a conglomerate of local small businesses; again providing advertisements and titles to participating retailers and eateries. Another, organizing community groups of good-doers in Alvalade to periodically have park clean-up days will not only make the residents feel that they are contributing to their neighborhood, instilling identity, but it will also provide community development by having people working together and interacting to make their community a cleaner and better place.

