



Puebla, Mexico; April 2024.

Integral Intervention of the "Corridor of 16 de Septiembre Street, between 17 Poniente-Oriente and Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza Avenues, Historic Center of Puebla".

Executive Summary

With almost 500 years of existence, the city of Puebla has played a fundamental role in the history and culture of Mexico since its founding in 1531. Its design and urban layout, influenced by the Renaissance, marked a milestone in colonial urbanism and served as inspiration for other cities in the New World. It is also famous for its architecture, characterized by the extensive use of tiles that cover the domes of the churches and the walls of the buildings, giving unity and authenticity to the urban landscape.

In 1987, UNESCO inscribed the Historic Center of Puebla on the World Heritage List, recognizing its Outstanding Universal Value. The urban planning of the colonial city and the baroque architectural style meet criteria (ii) and (iv) of numeral 77 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and are part of the culturally transcendental elements for humanity.

The designation of a city as a World Heritage Site brings international recognition of its cultural value and historical legacy. However, this distinction also poses a series of urban challenges today. The deterioration of the built heritage, progressive depopulation coupled with the competitive real estate offer in the periphery of the city, excessive motorized traffic, outsourcing, heat island concentration and insecurity are urgent issues that must be addressed in a comprehensive manner to ensure the preservation and sustainability of these emblematic sites.

World Heritage Cities find themselves in a constant dilemma where it seems that the need to adapt to contemporary changes clashes with the imperative task of protecting their cultural heritage. It is therefore essential to find a balance between heritage conservation and the implementation of innovative urban policies that address the challenges of the 21st century and ensure a sustainable future for these historic cities.

Puebla, as part of the Organization of World Heritage Cities, adopted the "Quebec Roadmap" in 2023, addressing current urban issues with a focus on sustainability, active mobility and cross-cutting and multidisciplinary work. In this way, clear objectives have been established to improve the livability and quality of public spaces in the historic center, emphasizing the inclusion of green infrastructure and the creation of safe and dynamic pedestrian zones. An outstanding example of the work led by the current municipal administration under these principles is the recent intervention of "16 de Septiembre" street, a project that included improvements in urban infrastructure, the reordering for road safety and the promotion of the local economy.



Project description: 16 de Septiembre Street corridor.

In recent years, our city has undergone a series of interventions aimed at the arrangement and improvement of public space, in line with the 2030 international agenda. In line with the priorities of this administration, the intervention of "16 de Septiembre" street was undertaken with the objective of guaranteeing the safety of locals and visitors, reactivating the local economy and preserving the cultural heritage.

This intervention also responded to various problems in the area, such as the deterioration of the pavement, the lack of renewal of drainage and rainwater networks, and the encroachment of sidewalks for vehicular parking, which resulted in recurring traffic incidents.

The project was not limited to a superficial renovation, but involved a significant transformation of the Historic Center. From 7 Oriente to Juan de Palafox y Mendoza Avenue, the street became a completely pedestrian corridor, offering a safe and vehicle-free environment. Simultaneously, the section from 17 Oriente to 7 Oriente was reduced to a single lane for vehicles, with the installation of strategically located service bays to facilitate commercial operations and the supply of services (gas, water, etc.) for the inhabitants of the area.

The change of road configuration in this corridor allowed for various improvements to be made in the area, including the installation of devices to control vehicular traffic and ensure road safety in accordance with the mobility pyramid, new street furniture, integration of tactile footprint on sidewalks and the incorporation of vegetation and rain gardens, creating an aesthetically pleasing and functional environment that in turn allows for the refreshment of the city. Substantial improvements were also made to the subway infrastructure, with the replacement of drains and household outlets.

In addition to its immediate impact on mobility and the urban experience, this initiative responds to the interest of preserving the city's cultural heritage and providing the community with friendlier and more accessible spaces for everyone to enjoy. The project was the result of a participatory and cross-cutting process that involved different municipal agencies and citizens, ensuring that it was backed by solid analysis and concrete data.

From the first day of its inauguration, residents and visitors alike have not hesitated to use the benches and stroll peacefully along each stretch of this emblematic corridor, which has contributed to revitalizing urban life and promoting the enjoyment of the city's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Along this corridor, there are spaces and monuments of great importance, on the one hand, the Zócalo, which has a high occupancy, life and cultural activities; and on the other hand, the Cathedral, the most important monument of the State of Puebla, and the most visited in terms of tourism and culture. This corridor ends in the Carmen Park, one of the limits of the historic center, and at the same time a public space with a significant occupation by children.



This project is a collective achievement that represents the recovery of space for the transit of people in a comfortable and safe way, integrating now a network of pedestrian streets more connected and more meaningful for the city.

Its success is reflected in the continuous presence of cultural activities in the area, such as open-air exhibitions, musical events and demonstrations by urban artists, which have revitalized the public space and strengthened the link between the city and its inhabitants. This intervention has enhanced the use of the public space on 16 de Septiembre Street, turning it into a vibrant and lively place in the heart of Puebla.

The intervention in the "16 de Septiembre" street has generated positive impacts in the historic center of Puebla. These results reflect Puebla's commitment to building a more resilient future and preserving its heritage, ensuring continuous work in the implementation of policies and projects that improve the quality of life of its inhabitants and strengthen its cultural identity.

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