

# Rural Bogotá

*Inhabiting Colombia's Asymmetrical Territory*

by

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout the twentieth century, rural Colombia experienced a series of forces which acted as catalysts for the inequalities found within the territory and instigated the agrarian and armed conflicts – two national crisis that precipitated the implosion of the countryside and the explosion of the urban. This shift in the spatial organizational model of Colombia produced an asymmetrical perspective towards the evolution of the urban-rural landscape and caused an extensive number of farmers to be displaced, either voluntarily or by force. As a result, cities, such as Bogotá D.C., began to proliferate in the countryside, forming an urban-rural dichotomy where governmental authorities directed the implementation of planning strategies geared towards the evolution of the urban, at the expense of resolving the rural issues. Consequently, the agrarian and armed territorial conflicts created tensions over the contemporary and potential use of Colombia's landscape and in turn impacted the environmental and social structure of the countryside. This change in structure is particularly heightened in regions constituting an urban-rural fringe, such as Usme, a region situated in the Capital District of Bogotá. However, in 2016, the internal armed conflict ended, presenting an opportunity to include the farmers as social and productive agents in the transformation of the countryside and the future development of Colombia. This has become especially important since the national government began implementing a restitution program for victims of the conflict. As a result, this thesis seeks to seize the opportunities offered in post-conflict Colombia to instigate the transformation of the countryside beginning at the contested urban-rural edge. Furthermore, this thesis analyzes the evolution of the Colombian territory and the planning strategies that led to the urban-rural dichotomy within the nation to create a development strategy that recognizes the potential of the countryside as an agent to generate a productive exchange between the farmers and city-dwellers.

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*For my family.*



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# Introduction



Figure 01 | Rural Colombia

Colombia's countryside is at the frontline of transformation. After decades of turmoil, the end of the armed conflict positions the territory at a crossroads with regards to the future agrarian and urban landscapes. For Colombia, this transition could represent the necessary agency to initiate a new model of development, especially when considering its historical pattern of development. Today, development builds upon pre-existing spatial patterns which define the countryside as a peripheral and marginal character. This disposition is embedded in social, economic, political, and environmental challenges, which together have exacerbated its spatial decomposition.

Throughout the twentieth century, a series of forces catalyzed inequalities in rural Colombia, instigating the agrarian and armed conflicts – two national crises that precipitated the implosion of the rural and the explosion of the urban. In cities such as Bogotá, an urban-rural dichotomy was created where governmental authorities directed the implementation of planning strategies geared towards the evolution of the urban, at the expense of the rural areas and population. The effects of the territorial conflicts created tensions over the contemporary and potential use of the landscape; these tensions in turn impacted the environmental and social structure of the countryside. This change in structure is particularly heightened in regions constituting an urban-rural fringe shaped by competing interests. Therefore, these fringe zones generate a dynamic wherein an understanding of the existing conflicts and interests of both communities can produce a sustainable development with a future without conflict.

Usme, a region situated in the Capital District of Bogotá, embodies the urban-rural dichotomy established by the spatial evolution of the Colombian territory. It is a region characterized by agricultural and ecological resources adapted to the emergence of urban growth at the city's edge, creating tensions for the communities living within the interface. Furthermore, the expansion of the urban into the countryside devalued the quality of life in Usme through the introduction of undesirable 'urban' infrastructures: a penitentiary, proximity to the city's landfill, and ongoing construction of informal settlements. These characteristics have made Usme seem undesirable within the Bogotá region, neglected both spatially and socially. I personally experienced this reality while conducting onsite thesis research; where most of my family and friends expressed their aversion to visiting the site because of growing concerns that Usme was a dangerous place affected by the armed conflict. However, on the bus to Usme, I observed how the landscape



Figure 02 | Map of Colombia

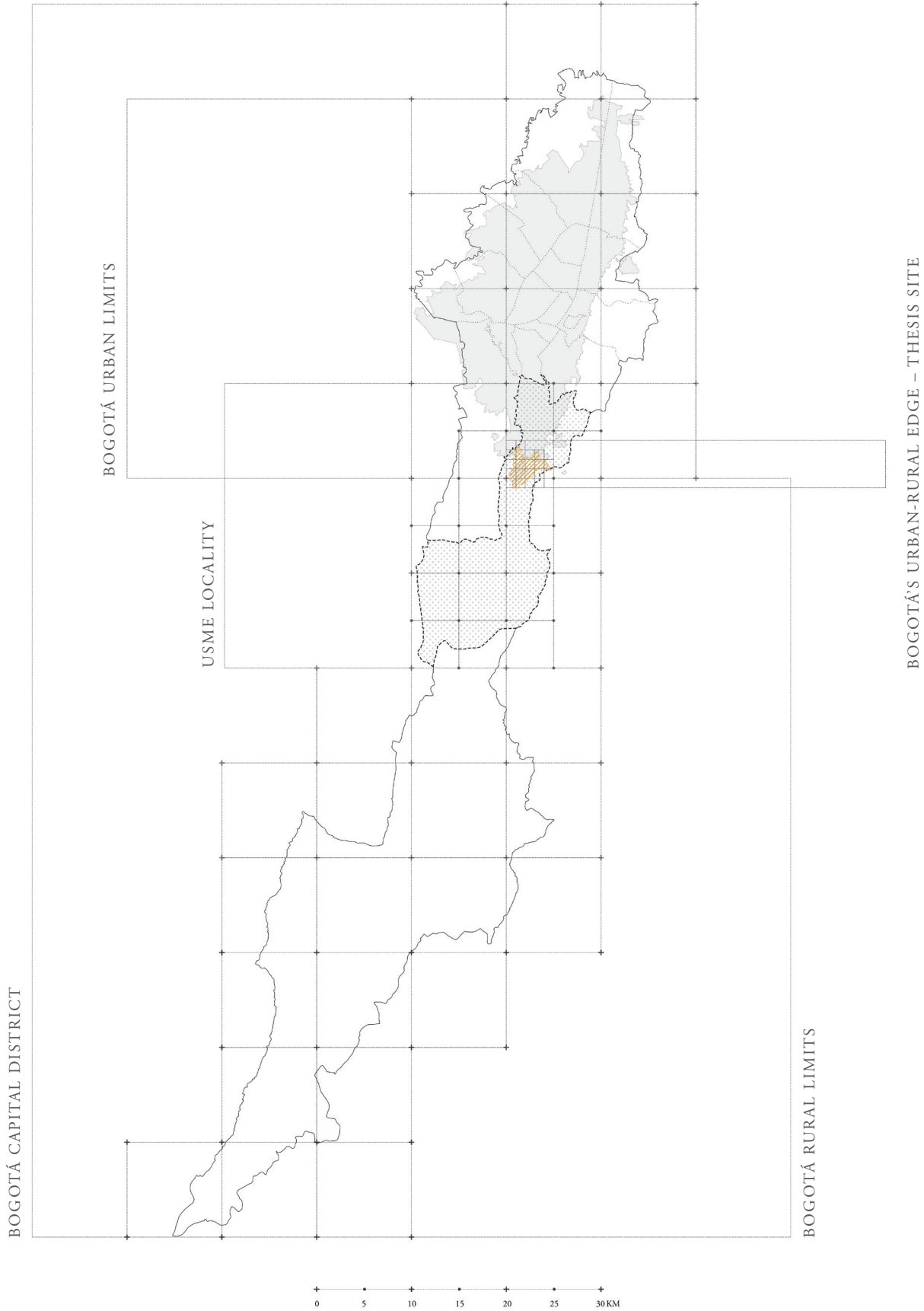


Figure 03 | Thesis Working Scales

transitioned from an organized urban fabric to the spread of informal settlements to open fields of wild ecosystems and agricultural farms forming the urban-rural edge of the Capital District. This drastic assemblage of spaces culminated at the downtown of Usme. There, Usme did not yield to the shortfalls of its landscape; rather, the landscape offered the potential to grow into a valuable resource for Bogotá. Despite Usme's landscape resources, it is defined by an urban-rural edge whose territory is contested between a future urban expansion and maintaining the existing rural identity. Furthermore, the process in which the urban expansion is to take place creates a different set of political, economic, social and spatial dynamics that affect the future development of the site. These dynamics place the territory in a deadlock situation because it prevents the existing population in the area to sell the property or build within their own lots and allows the city to acquire parcels for land banking for future development. This spatial dynamic creates tensions between the planning department and the farmers because it propels the territory into a state of poverty, while the city finalizes and implements the zoning plans for the region and in many cases the execution of the master plan continues the pattern of displacement of rural populations.

**The thesis asks how to exploit the potentials of the rural landscape, especially at the urban-rural edge. How can this edge become a model of rural-urban development with a collection of productive rural and urban assemblages which overcome the reproduction of social, economic, political, environmental and spatial challenges formed by the national conflicts?** The thesis positions Usme as a test site where a new model of development could be established, one that provides the tools and opportunities to create a “progressive social inclusion and recognition of the peasantry as a social, productive and political agent for the transformation of rurality in Colombia.”<sup>1</sup> This new model creates a pilot project that begins to acknowledge the urban-rural frontier as a viable development strategy that can be applied to the undeveloped countryside of Colombia in two separate cases; at a local scale of Usme's urban-rural edge and at a national manifestation in regards to the future implementation of the victims of the conflict restitution program.

The thesis analyzes the evolution of the Colombian territory and the objectives of the planning strategies, at a national, regional and local scale, to create a proposal that redefines the meaning of Usme's urban-rural border;



Figure 04 | Usme, the Essence of the Urban-Rural Dichotomy in Bogotá

postulating that the contested landscapes become a productive interface to improve the living conditions of both urban and rural communities. Furthermore, the thesis explores the impact of the future development of Usme through the driving forces responsible for the national conflicts and transformation of the territory – land use and distribution, land ownership, and governmental rural development strategy – to understand how the relationship among these forces can evolve to become agents in developing the urban-rural landscape.

Chapter 01, **The Asymmetrical Landscape**, traces the forces behind the conflicts that shaped the rural and created the urban, leading them to become recurring themes affecting the evolution of the territory. Chapter 02, **Re-positioning Bogotá**, uses the planning strategy to stage the surfaces of various layers of infrastructure in order to weave a cohesive urban-rural fabric. Chapter 03, **Living between the Urban-Rural Interface**, addresses two design strategies with one proposed by the city and the other by the farmers, which has already been developed for the site. Finally, Chapter 04, **Rural Bogotá**, becomes the counter-proposal that sets new possibilities for the urban-rural border.





Figure 05 | Usme's Countryside with Bogotá's Exploding Urban Boundaries



The  
Asymmetrical  
Landscape



# *SHAPING* Rural Colombia

The agrarian and armed conflicts that took place in Colombia throughout the twentieth century can be attributed to the unfolding pattern of the disputes around **1. Land Use and Distribution, 2. Land Ownership, and 3. The Absence of a Governmental Rural Development Strategy**. This chapter of the thesis seeks to understand how the relationship among these driving forces behind the territorial conflicts in the region can evolve to become the agency developing the urban-rural landscape of Colombia.

## BACKGROUND ON THE AGRARIAN + ARMED CONFLICTS

Colombia transitioned from a predominantly rural society in the nineteenth century to an urban culture by the twenty-first century. The country's spatial, economic, social and cultural conditions were dramatically affected by this transformation and further accelerated by a series of agrarian and armed conflicts that took place throughout the twentieth-century. The first agrarian conflict began with the introduction of a new model of agricultural production, the *latifundio* system, "consisting of large concentrations of land and ample supply of inexpensive labor."<sup>1</sup> This agricultural system became

popular among the elite and soon dominated over the traditional model of the small-scale family farm – the primary agricultural production typology at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result, the shift from small family farm to large corporately owned concentrations of land radically changed the distribution and use of land; this transition in ownership structure within the landscape generated tensions between the *Campesinos* [a term used to define the farmers of Colombia] and landowners.

For many peasants, the family farm characterized a lifestyle and offered cultural and economic sustainability. It relied on “producing food for home consumption and sale in the domestic market.”<sup>2</sup> By contrast, large-scale agricultural production promoted the concentration of crops, such as rice, cotton, sugar, coffee, and among others within one larger area. These estates replaced the farms previously owned by local farmers and produced food for sale at the global scale in addition to that sold on the domestic market.<sup>3</sup> In order to find economic stability within these changes to the agricultural sector, many farmers were forced either; [i] to become wage-labourers in their existing farms or [ii] to be displaced and migrate towards public agricultural land at the periphery of the large-scale agricultural zones. As these migrating farmers settled on new lands, the move offered a temporary continuation of the traditional farm model. However, many farmers were unable to acquire ownership rights to the lots, which in turn allowed the elite landowners to buy the land and continue their acquisition of the countryside. Furthermore, to prevent farmers from settling or claiming the land, large-scale owners took expansive areas of agricultural land and converted them to pasture for less labour-intensive cattle grazing.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1930s, the lack of access to land for local farmers accentuated the inequality in the land distribution and the poverty found in the rural territory. The absence of the state and its failure to resolve the land disputes in the agricultural sector intensified the agrarian conflict in the countryside. As a result, a land reform proposal was put forward which attempted to provide clearer land distribution and reduce land disputes between the farmers and the elite.<sup>5</sup> However, the reform failed to gain support from the local governments and the growing power of the landowners prevented resolution to the land disputes. This led to further land concentration in the hands of the elite and the first wave of urban migration.



Figure 06 | Newspaper article on Colombia's Civil War after the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán

Figure 07 | El Bogotazo; Events that sparked the decades long civil war in Colombia

In the following decades, the country remained predominantly rural and the agrarian conflict continued to escalate. It was further aggravated by the confrontation between Liberal and Conservative parties, which escalated into the events of La Violencia [1946 - 1964].<sup>6</sup> This period of violence was instigated by the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9, 1948, the leader of the Liberal party and presidential candidate.<sup>7</sup> The combination of violence and previous agrarian conflicts in these regions increased the displacement and marginalization of peasants. By the end of the violent period, the countryside was left vulnerable to new land disputes. To provide stability to the rural territory, other attempts at land reform were established by the state, such as Law 135 of 1961. This law created the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform [INCORA], an institution designed to protect and assist the small-scale family farm model and to increase food productivity. However, its impact was minimal because it failed to expropriate and redistribute the land designated to the farmers.

The effects of La Violencia and the unresolved agrarian conflicts catalyzed an uprising within the rural citizenry, which eventually evolved into the Colombian Armed Conflict. Driven by this violent period, farmers' organizations, known as the Guerrilla, initiated a movement with strong beliefs in land reform and equity for the farmers. Their movement increased in power with the rise of drug-traffickers and with the cultivation of illicit drugs, which only amplified the existent agrarian conflicts. The farmers relied upon them "to protect their interests against the large landowners, cattle ranchers, and drug-traffickers."<sup>8</sup> The state's lack of visible and active presence allowed the Guerrilla to expand their control throughout various rural zones and secure economic stability through extortions from landowners, drug-traffickers and agri-business owners. In response to the growing Guerrilla influence, self-defense paramilitary groups emerged, known as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia [AUC], emerged to protect economic interests and ensure security within the rural region. The paramilitary presence in the rural territory "often involved attacking the local population and members of the political establishment who were deemed supportive of the guerrillas."<sup>9</sup> The paramilitaries' influence increased and the monetary support from drug lords allowed them to gain control of the territory. The war between Guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug lords, the state, large landowners and others created an unprecedented inequality of the rural territory. The thirst for control of the territory saw approximately 6.6 to 8 million hectares of land, including the most fertile, be abandoned or stolen throughout the internal conflict.<sup>10</sup>





Figure 08 | Farmers' uprising against the inequality in Rural Colombia

The internal conflict displaced much of the rural citizenry. According to the IDCM, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, over 6 million farmers, Afro-Colombians, and indigenous populations have been forced to migrate to other areas of the country. This displacement count comes second only to recent displacements in Syria.<sup>11</sup> Most of the displaced fled to other rural areas or neighbouring urban centres, while others returned to their place of origin.

The armed conflict lasted more than half a century and what initially began as a movement to resolve the agrarian conflict became a contested landscape for control and power between different actors. These disputes have altered the urban-rural dynamic of the country up until today. However, as of June 2016, the leaders of the FARC and President Juan Manuel Santos signed a peace agreement to end the armed conflict. The results of this peace treaty provide hope to a country that has suffered greatly and that has the ambition to resolve the asymmetries of its territory.



Figure 09 | President Juan Manuel Santos and FARC leader Signing Peace Agreement

Figure 10 | End of Conflict Memorial at Plaza de Bolivar on 23.06.2016

## ANALYZING THE CONFLICTS

### Land Use and Distribution

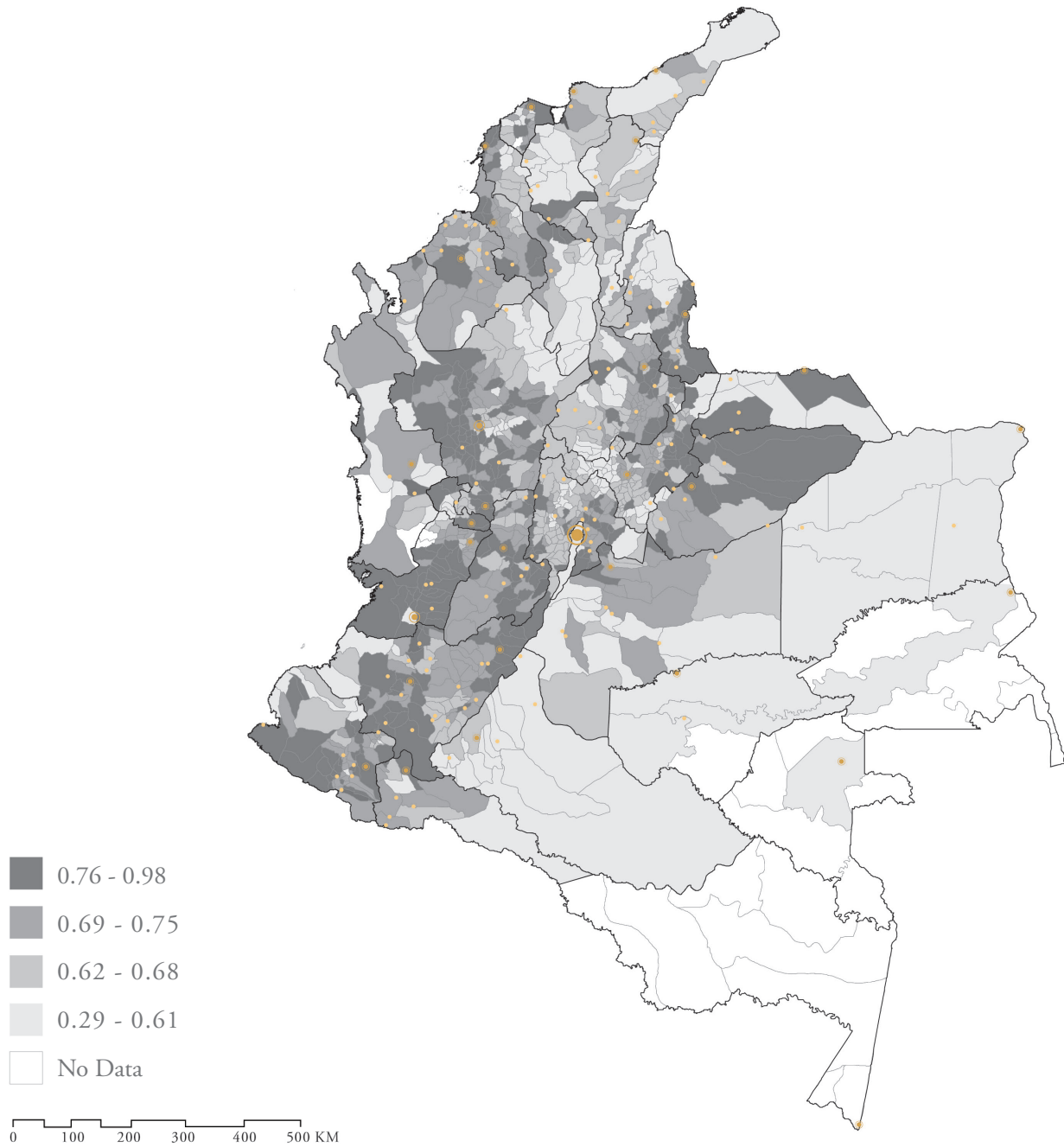
Colombia is a country with great diversity in its landscapes; from a total of 114 million hectares of coastal landscape, prairie pastures and mountainous regions, 42 million hectares are suitable for agricultural production.<sup>12</sup> Despite the abundance of arable land, the land use and distribution of the Colombian territory tends to be underutilized or neglected. According to the article, *Peasants, Land and Rural Development*, 65 percent of the population lives in impoverished conditions with the remaining 33 percent living in extreme poverty.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, as the concentration of land escalated with the events of the conflict, the Gini Index worsened from 0.841 in 1960 to 0.885 in 2009,<sup>14</sup> a figure that puts Colombia in almost complete inequality in terms of land distribution [where the Gini Index categories it at 1].

### Ownership - Who Has Rights to the Land?

The family farm was the dominant form of ownership at the beginning of the twentieth century, a model in which the property rights were passed down through generations in the shape of verbal agreements between neighbors, which constituted a form of ownership. However, many farmers did not have a legal form of ownership which allowed large-scale landowners to acquire vast concentrations of land quickly. Much of the territory affected by the conflicts was left without apparent owners. In an attempt to resolve the ownership question, President Juan Manuel Santos introduced Law 1448 in 2011 called “Victims and Land Restitution”, which sought to reduce social disparity among the displaced people affected by violence in rural zones through the return of land currently under the control of the armed groups. However, during my research for this thesis, it became evident that many victims do not have proper documentation, and as such, the redistribution of ownership proves to be a difficult task.

### Absence of a Governmental Rural Development Strategy

Throughout the twentieth century, the majority of the problems in Colombia have been amplified by an absent government, both at a national and local level. The failure to implement a sustainable rural strategy for maintaining the small-scale family farm caused the rural citizenry to live in



The Gini Index is measured on a scale from 0 to 1, where the closer the number to 1 equals a higher concentration of land resulting in greater inequality of the territory.

poverty. The state often prioritized improving the infrastructure and services of the agribusinesses, over those of the public sector, such as mobility, water, energy access and improved farming techniques. Experts have noticed shortcomings in the recently developed infrastructure. The International Committee for Agricultural Development [CIDA] suggests, “The investments made in services and infrastructures in the rural zones tend to reflect the arrangements made by local political leaders with their friends and clients rather than the basic needs of society.”<sup>15</sup> According to economist Alain de Janvry, “The location of new roads tends more often to reflect the interests of large owners than small ones ... [and] agricultural research has been directed primarily toward the crops and [various] types that could be used by the large farmers.”<sup>16</sup> Yet, the small family farm has the potential to be a successful strategy that helps the local economy due to its efficient land productivity.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, this thesis argues that the family farm model provides stability to much of the population by contributing a source of employment, economy, and food security that benefits the social and economic structure of the country more than corporate farms. The lack of support for rural development also fails to improve education and employment conditions in the countryside leaving the population ill-prepared to adapt to changing economic conditions.



Figure 12 | Who has rights to the Land? Guerrilla Members Overlooking the Landscape

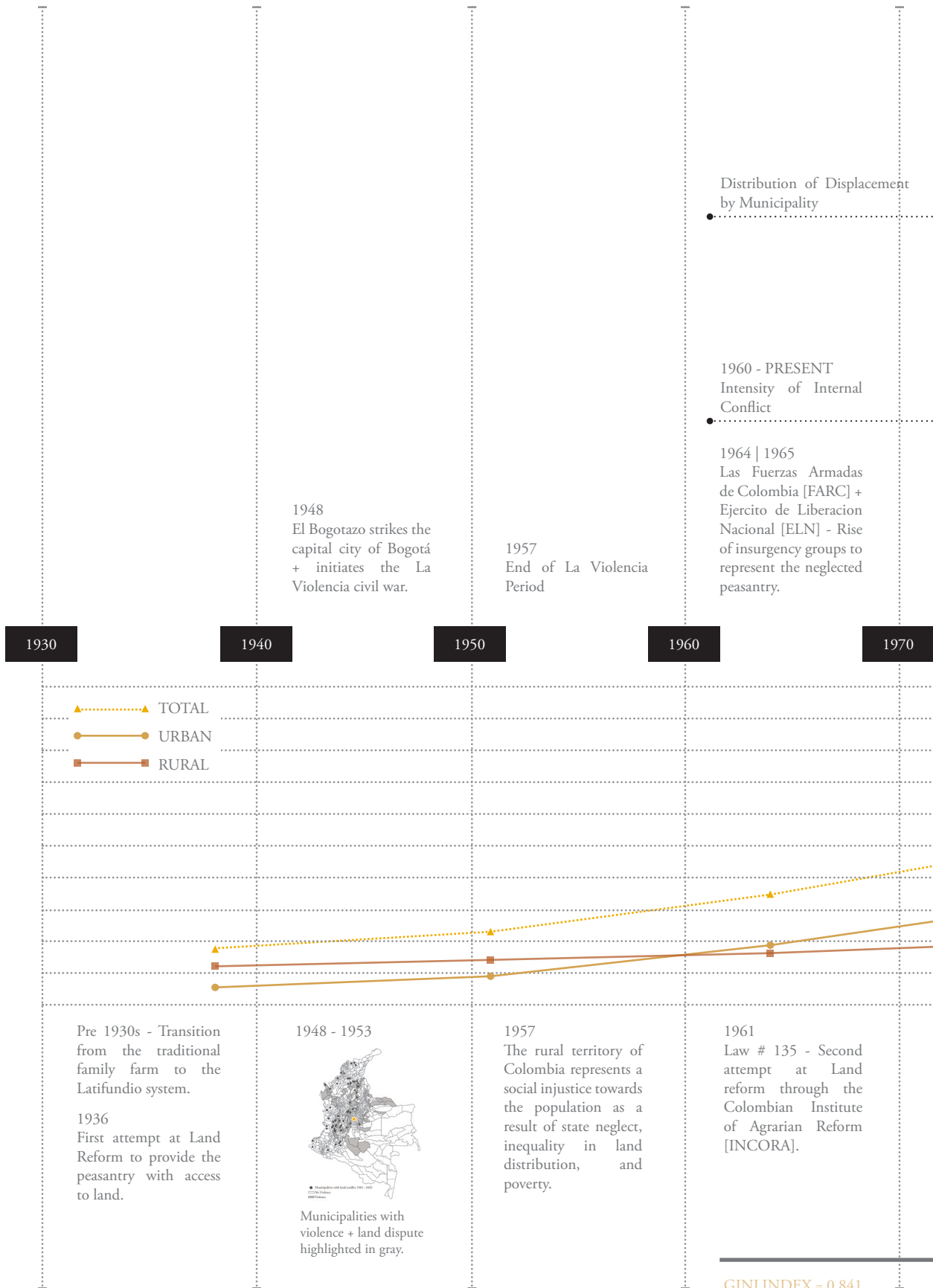
Figure 13 | Abandoned Farm House Result from the Agrarian and Internal Conflicts

Figure 14 | Colombia's Conflict Timeline ▷

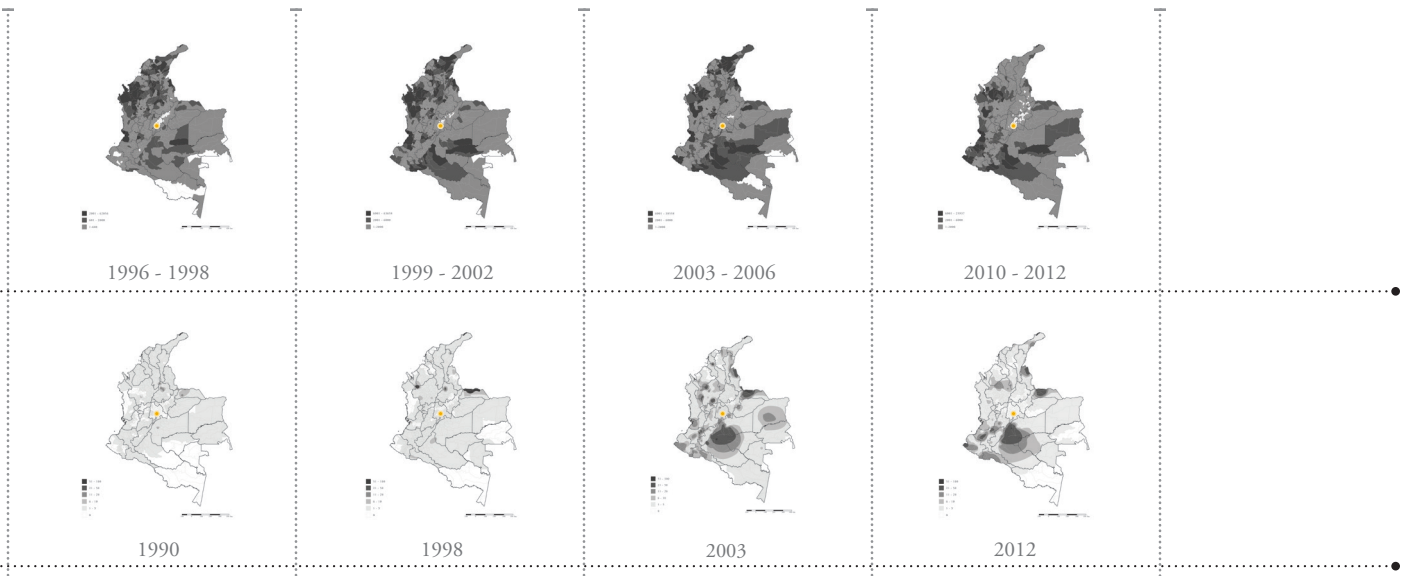
INTERNAL CONFLICT

EVOLUTION OF URBAN + RURAL POPULATION

AGRARIAN CONFLICT





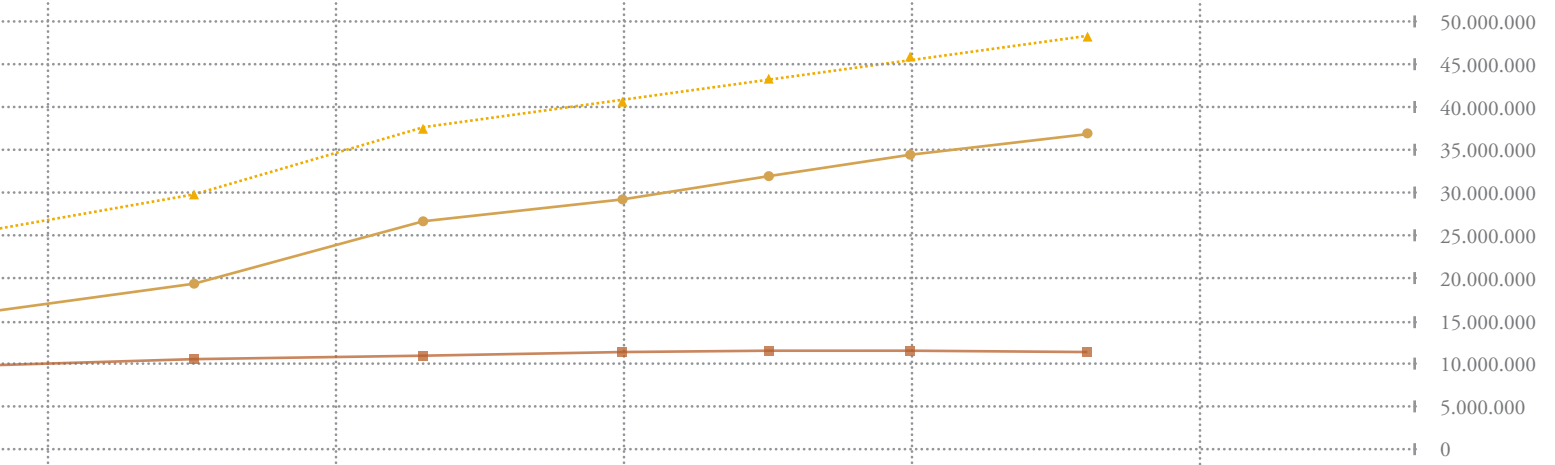


Climax of the Armed Conflict in Colombia; LEADS TO THE DISPLACEMENT OF 6.213.989 PEOPLE + THE ABANDONMENT OF 6.65 MILLION HECTARES OF LAND.

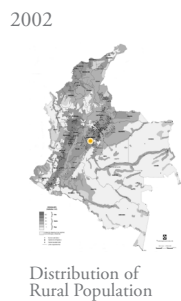
1980 -1990  
Introduction of the Paramilitaries heighten the violence within the Colombian territory.

2011  
President Juan Manuel Santos initiates peace talks with FARC leader in Cuba.

June 2016  
End of the Armed Conflict in Colombia + Demobilization of FARC guerrilla begins.

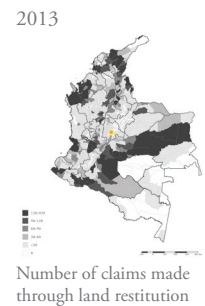


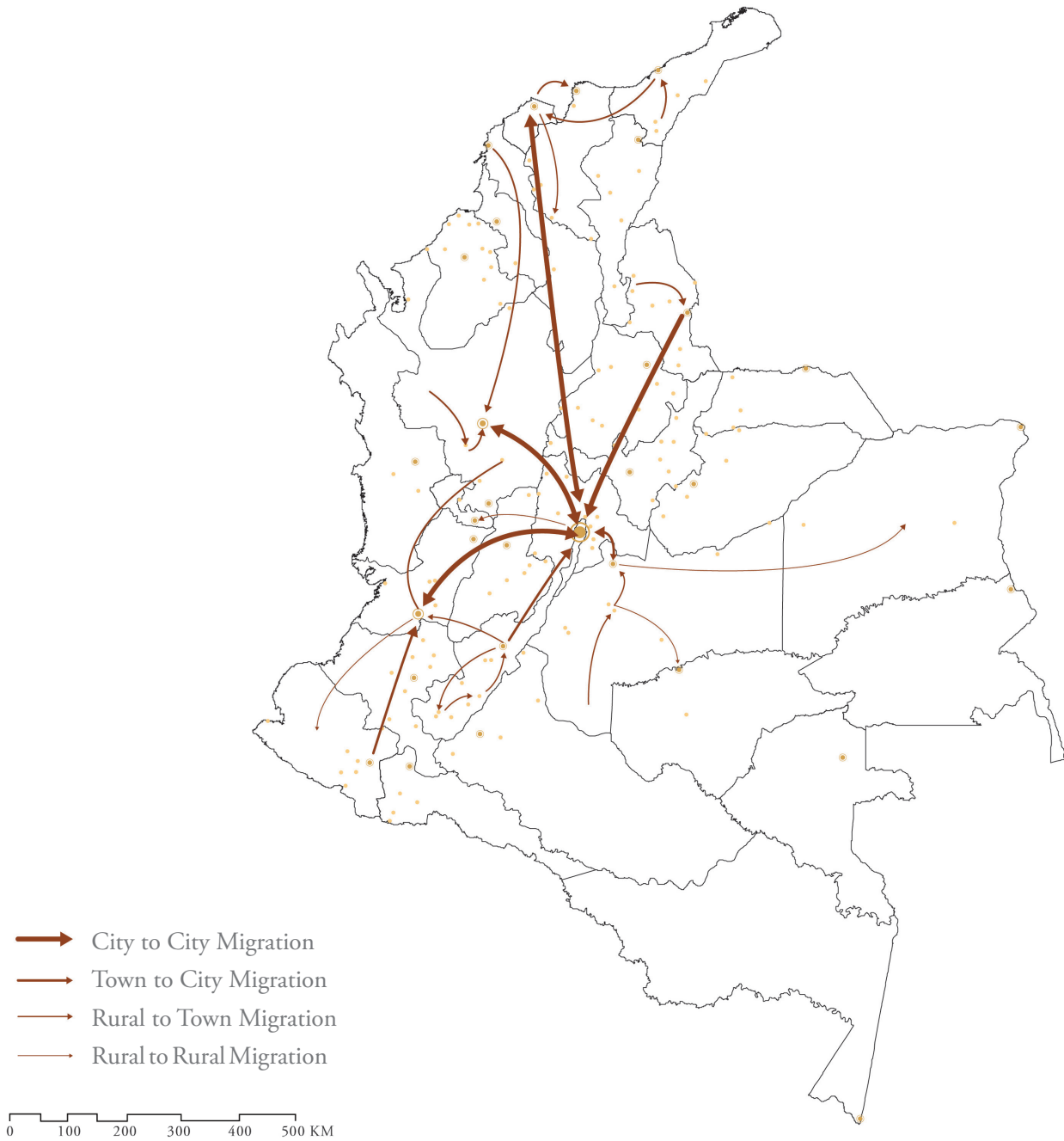
RURAL TO URBAN  
MIGRATION



GINI INDEX = 0.885

2011  
Law #1448 - Victims and Land Restitution Law is introduced to aid the return of Internally Displaced People [IDPs] to their original area of displacement.  
2013  
36.908 claims of land reform have been processed = 2.581.553 hectares of land.





## *CREATING* the Urban

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the urban model in Colombia was relatively small. However, cities grew in tandem with the development in service and manufacturing industries and the agrarian conflicts in the 1930s.<sup>18</sup> Despite this first wave of urban migration, the population remained predominantly rural. According to the 1951 census data, 61 percent of the population continued to live in the countryside.<sup>19</sup> This number would change with the introduction of capitalist agriculture and violence in the country, which caused large migrations to the cities, such as Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, and Barranquilla – with Bogotá becoming the primary centre.

## BOGOTÁ: AN ASYMMETRICAL CITY

At 2600 meters above sea level on an Andean plateau, the city of Bogotá is defined by the unique spatial and topographical conditions of the Andean Cordilleras. Here an arable Savannah yields to a Paramo ecosystem possessing an abundant water network. These landscape characteristics formed the basis a foundation for settlers to inhabit the land and take advantage of the high concentration of rich resources, such as agriculture, water, and gold. This allowed Bogotá to become the country's dominant political and demographic territory. However, the spatial region's evolution developed in a dispersed pattern of urbanization, attributed to the first settlers from as early as the pre-Hispanic period. The Muisca community of the Chibcha language was the first to inhabit the territory in the form of dispersed settlements.<sup>20</sup> Their community settled throughout the region, in the Savannah and Paramo ecosystems, where high altitudes and lagoons of the Paramo became their sacred ground. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish conquistadores colonized the area, and made it the central site for political, social, and economic exchange in the country.

During the period of colonization, the settlements remained relatively small and had distinct urban-rural spatial dynamics and boundaries. The composition of the urban was designed to follow a dense grid network with a central plaza, which included the political, social and religious centre of the city. On the other hand, the rural consisted of a variety of haciendas or farms - the first representation of the latifundio system - that propelled the agricultural and artisan production of the region. The surrounding countryside became the breadbasket for the city by providing a variety of crops, such as potatoes and peas, as well as dairy and meat from livestock.

Despite these fair conditions, the founding of several towns at the perimeter of the colonial city began to blur boundaries. A belt composed of neighbouring municipalities situated at the edge of the city emerged; among them is the town of San Pedro de Usme, founded in 1650 and located south of the city towards the Paramo ecosystem.<sup>21</sup> These towns provided an urban centre to the vast countryside that surrounded the main city and, like the larger cities, included a plaza with a political, social, and religious centre. The founding of San Pedro de Usme [and other towns like it] at the periphery of the colonial centre allowed the countryside to have urban anchors separate

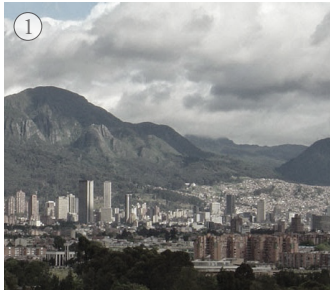


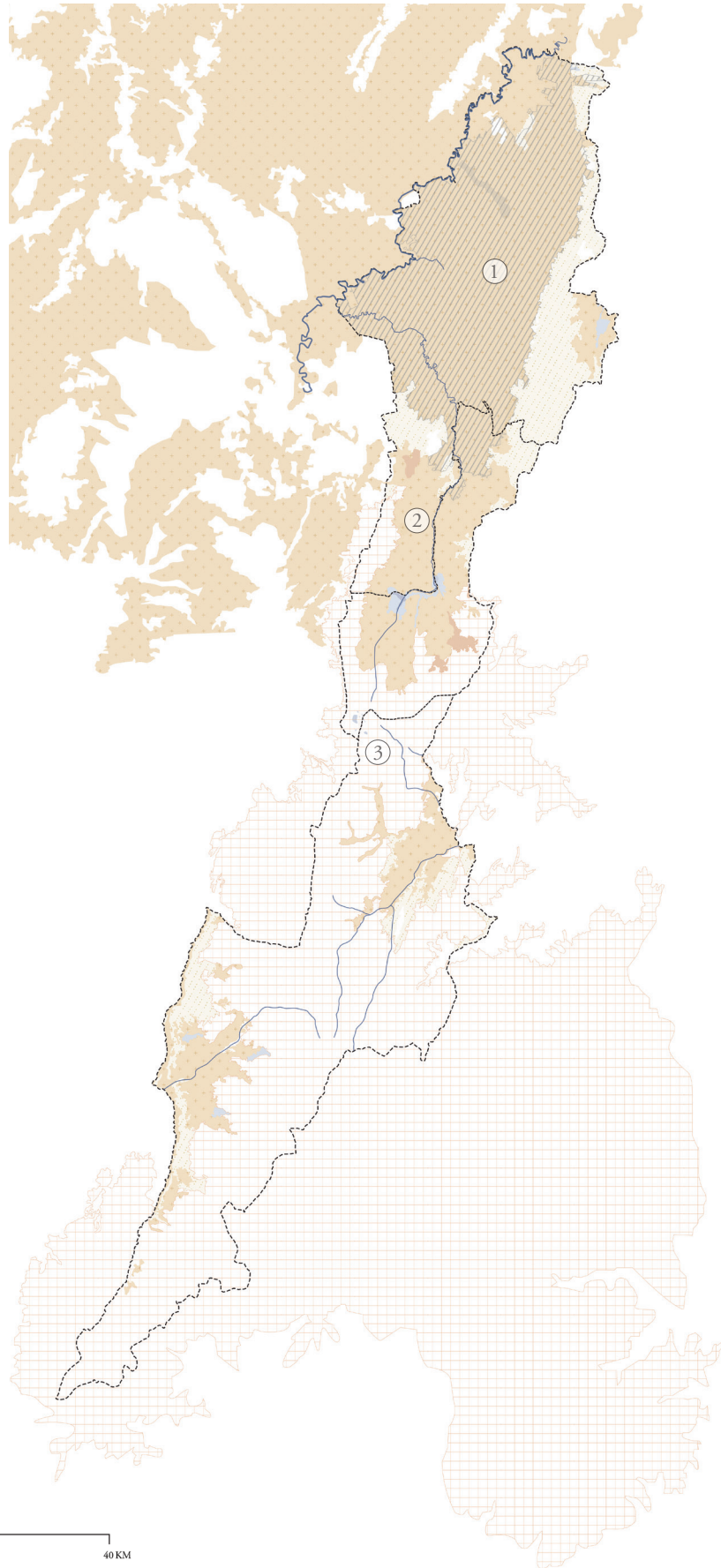
Figure 17 | Bogotá's Cordilleras







Figure 18 | Bogotá's Savannah



Figure 19 | Sumapaz Paramo



-  Bogotá Savannah
-  Cordilleras Ecology
-  Sumapaz Paramo
-  City of Bogotá

0 5 10 20 40 KM

from the formal city. They depict the first forms of urban encroachment towards agricultural lands.

The town of San Pedro de Usme and surrounding hinterland, annexed to the District of Bogotá in 1954, forms the southeastern part of the peri-urban region. Its territory is composed of the second largest extension expanse of rural territory and water resources behind the neighbouring locality of Sumapaz, whose spatial model consists only of rural landscapes. Furthermore, its ecological structure forms a gorgeous composition of landscapes ranging from abundant productive terrain, a Paramo ecosystem to a forest reserve formed by the Cordilleras, which merges topographical elements to become an important nature reserve for the city of Bogotá. Along with the abundant resources available in the region, Usme connected the district to the Colombian East. Despite being an essential ecological landscape to the region, Usme's vast and open territory and transitional zone between the city and other parts of Colombia enabled the population's settlement, beginning with the Muisca and ending with the informal settlements and farming population of the twentieth century.

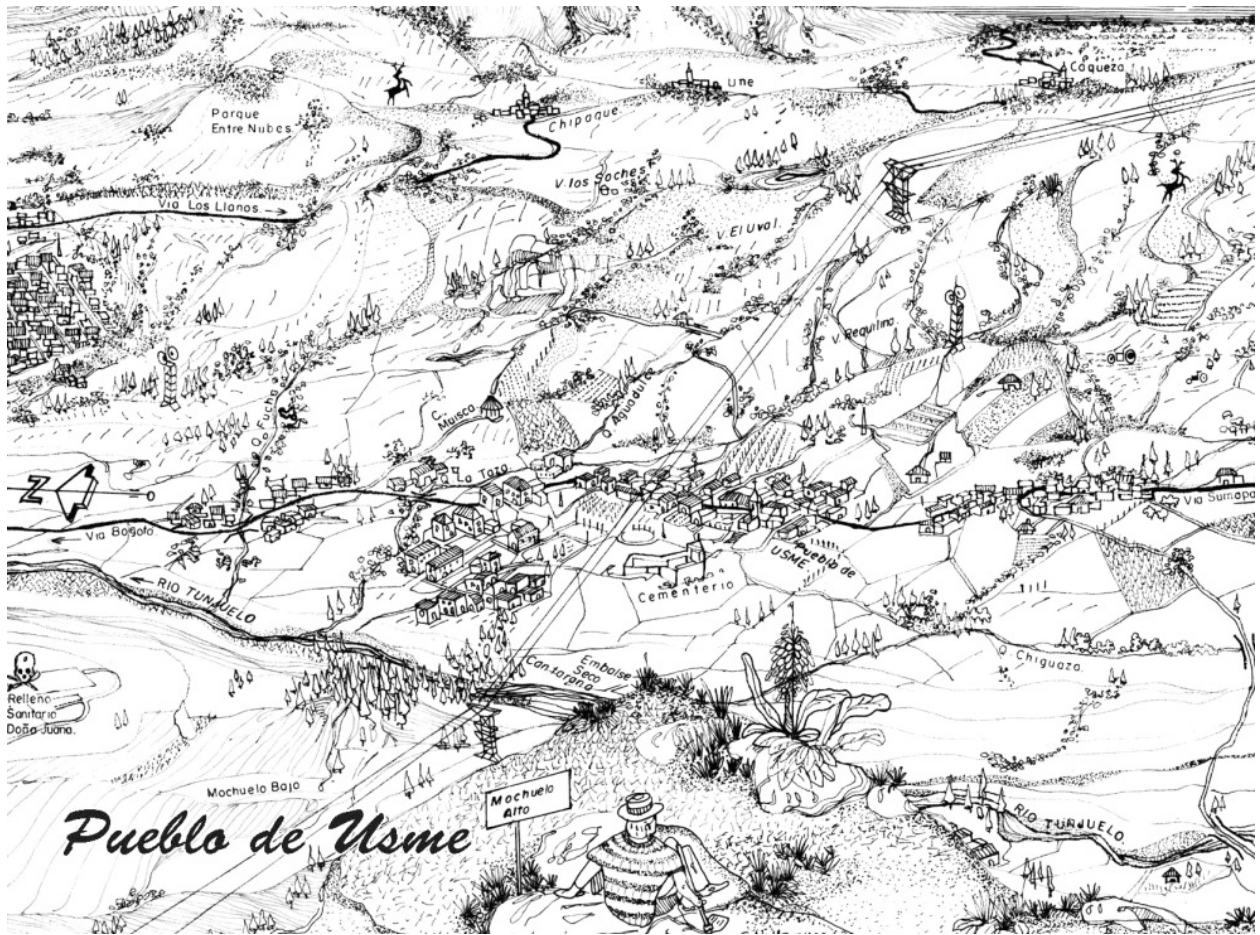


Figure 20 | Illustration of Usme Pre-urban Expansion

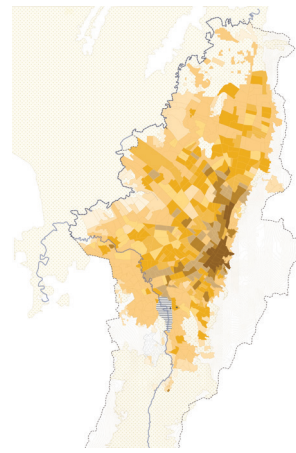
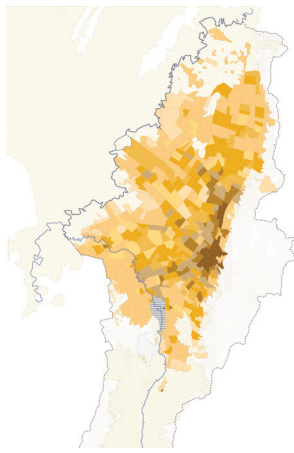
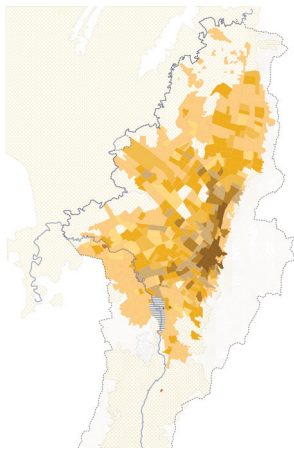
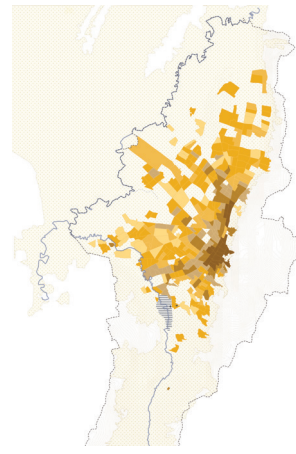
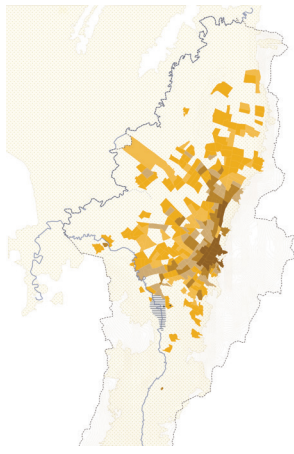
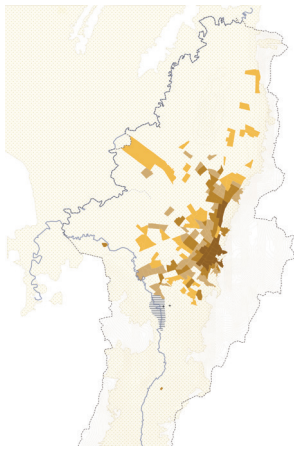
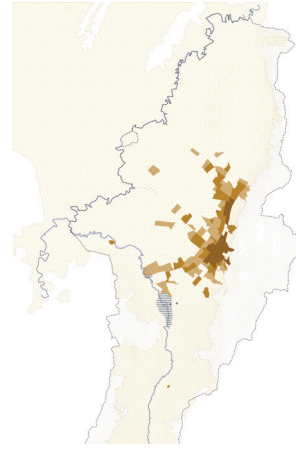
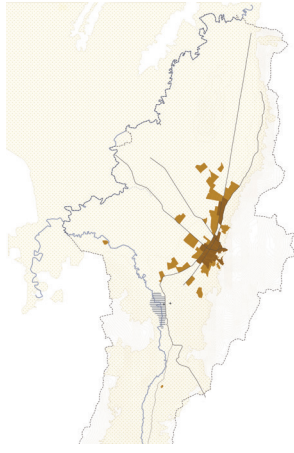
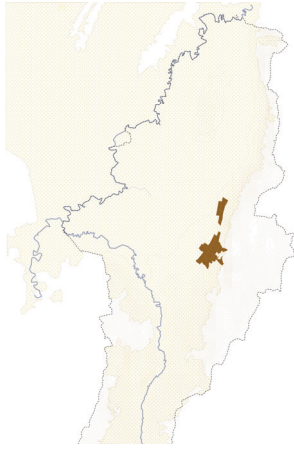
## RURAL TO URBAN MIGRATION

If the 1930s to the 1970s saw industrial urban growth, the 1980s onwards saw residential development become a priority for the city's evolution.<sup>22</sup> During the first migratory episode, the introduction of hard uses and services, such as mining and residential construction, into the urban context contributed to the construction of different infrastructure, such as dams and roads, especially in the area between Bogotá and San Pedro de Usme. This infrastructure provided access to remote areas and enabled the construction of the city's 'undesirable' projects, such as landfills and penitentiaries, and eventually the informal settlements. Bogotá became the largest centre for manufacturing jobs creating newfound economic and employment stability.

## EVOLUTION OF THE PERI-URBAN BELT

The city's boundaries imploded after the second diaspora of incoming population created the informal settlements known as the *Urbanizaciones Piratas* [Pirate Urbanizations]. Farm lots located at the periphery of the city were broken into smaller plots, either by the owner or a farm land promoter, and sold at a low market value. They came without "public services, proper streets, transport, urban planning or building permits."<sup>23</sup> By the 1990s, the informal settlements occupied nearly 25 percent of Bogotá's peripheral area<sup>24</sup> and surpassed 3.5 million inhabitants, which was close to 50 percent of the city's total population.<sup>25</sup> These pirate urbanizations are located at the urban-rural or Peri-urban edge. A zone described as an interface that "constitutes an uneasy phenomenon usually characterized by the loss of rural values or the deficit of urban attributes."<sup>26</sup> This circumstance represents the contemporary evolution of the Colombian territory where the urban was swallowing the countryside. The shifting boundaries of the urban edge created "complex zones in terms of land tenure, security, land use, access to services, and other measures of social, economic and political integration."<sup>27</sup> The local government and city planners failed to control the spread of pirate urbanizations and implicitly authorized it "because they represented a way of resolving the city's social and urban dynamics."<sup>28</sup> This split Bogotá's spatial organization and socio-economic stratification into two separate areas, the North and the South. The North materialized from the original colonial grid becoming an organized city structure that housed the upper middle class and the wealthy. The South developed into a chaotic agglomeration of pirate urbanizations,





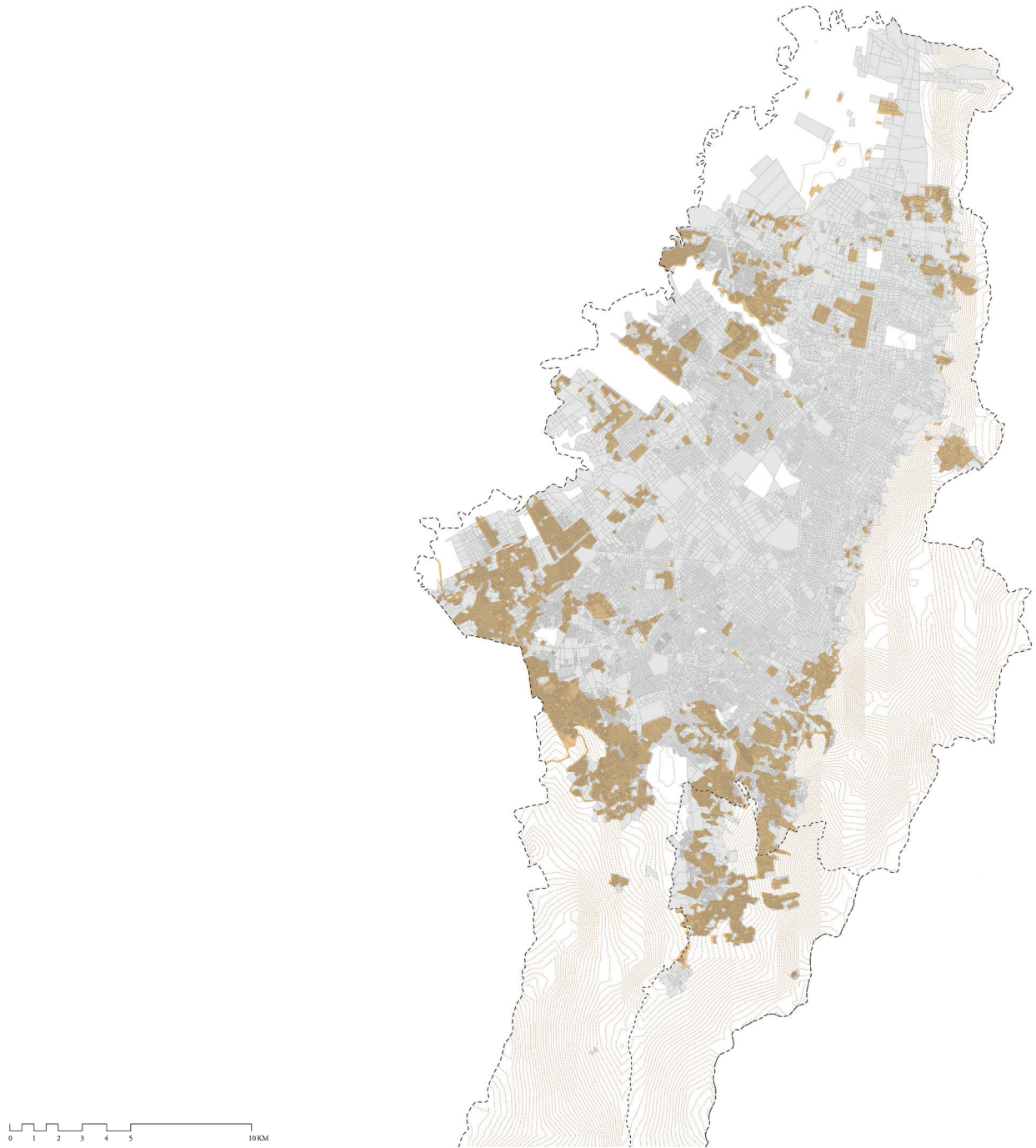


Figure 22 | Informal Settlements in Bogotá

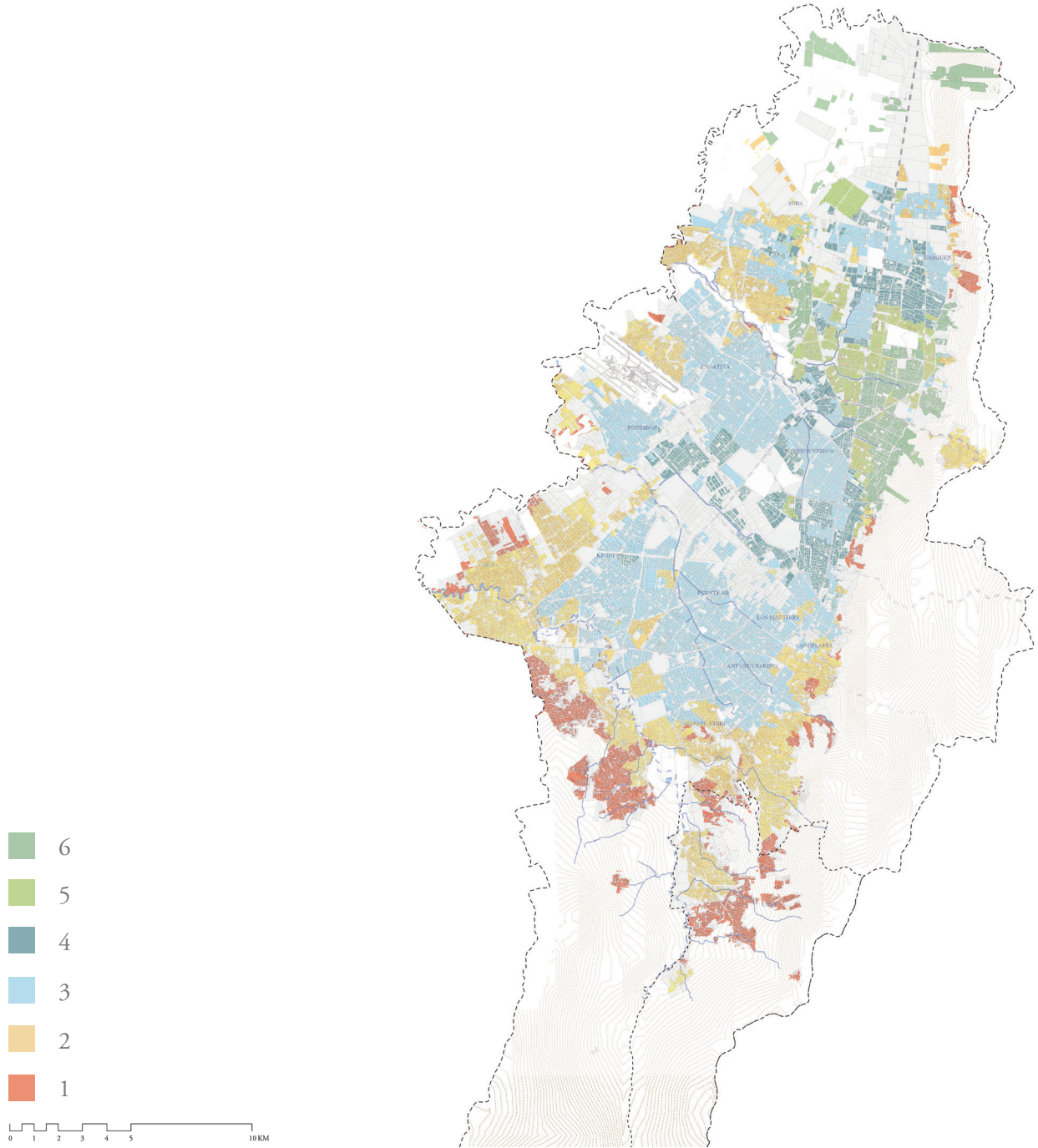
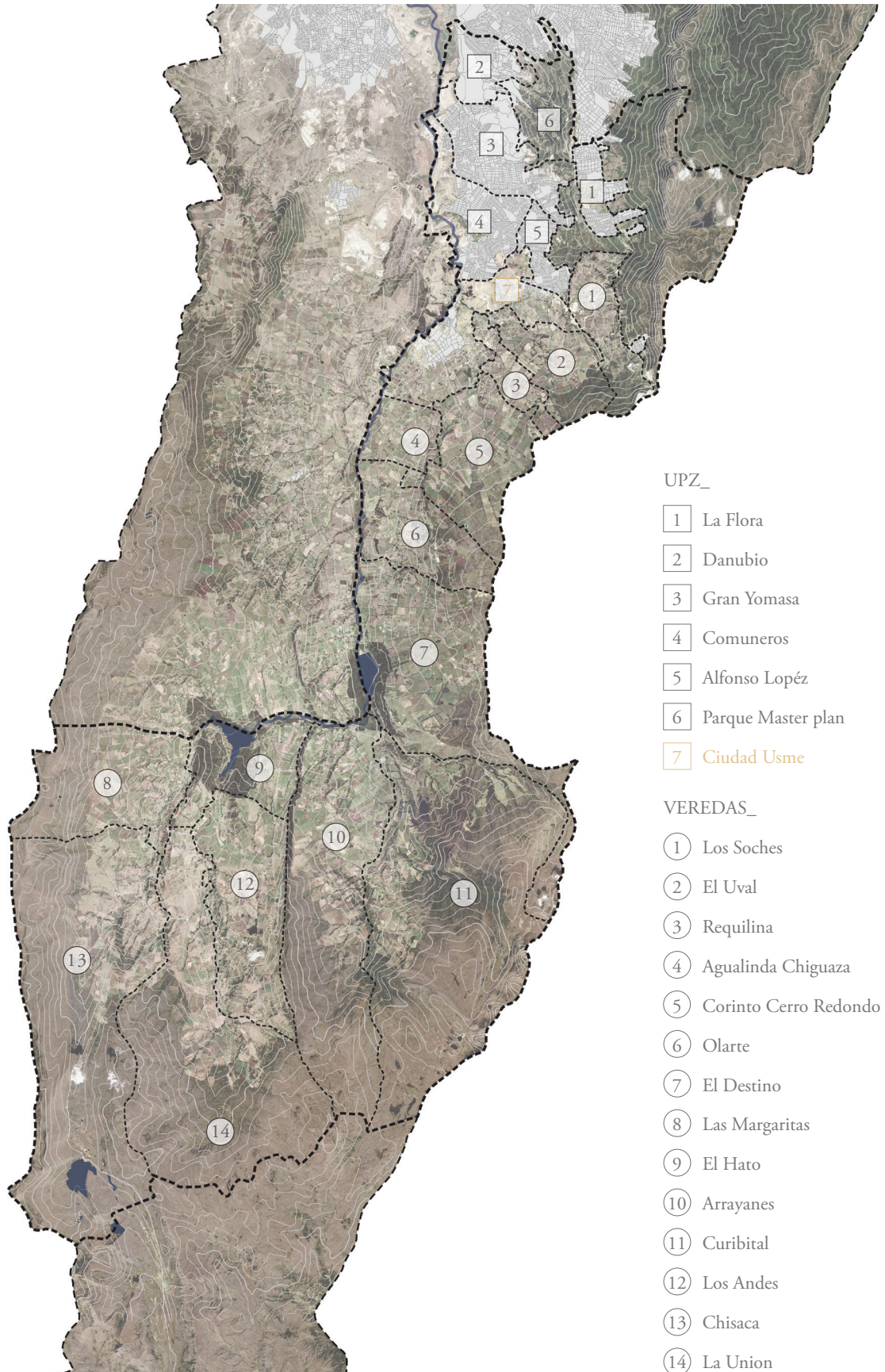


Figure 23 | Bogotá's Social Economic Stratification

industries, and nearby countryside creating a territory defined by poverty. As such, this city divide through the regional structure and socio-economic strata highlighted the complexity and inequality found in the Peri-urban region, and the state's failure to develop a working master plan to mitigate the impact of the internal population migration. The region of Usme, southwest of Bogotá, exemplified what was happening at a national scale: it became a place of settlement for the migrant and displaced low-income populations which replaced the existing agricultural land and water resource for the city.

Today, Usme comprises 21,506 Hectares of the Capital District, in which the urban consists of 2,120 Hectares and the rural of the remaining 19,386 Hectares.<sup>29</sup> The locality is constituted of 7 Zonal Planning Units [UPZ], which comprises 89 neighbourhoods that form the urban territory and 29 Veredas [a term used by the planning authorities to subdivide part of a municipality in Colombia] that form the rural area.<sup>30</sup> The UPZ and Veredas subdivide the locality into a grouping of neighbourhoods or smaller areas within the locality to implement the city's urban-rural plans. Despite the big significant difference in the distribution of the landscape, the urban development has had a greater impact on the evolution and definition of the territory. The rural, on the other hand, has been marginalized and neglected by the district and local administrations, as well as the urban population. Usme's population grew exponentially throughout the process of urbanization. Before the urban growth of the locality, Usme counted approximately 4,000 inhabitants, with the majority living in the rural context.<sup>31</sup> However, by 2011, Usme's total population consisted of 382,000 people with much of this population concentrated in the city.<sup>32</sup> Migrant or displaced victims from both phases of the agrarian and internal conflicts compose much of this demographic. However, during my research trip to Usme, it became evident that the populations' origin and reasons for settling in the area are difficult to track because many migrants cannot verify if they were victims of displacement or if they migrated for other reasons. Regardless of the reason for relocating, the population consists mostly of a rural campesino background – a community that should have co-existed without tension because of the abundant access to the productive agricultural landscape. However, the accelerated urban growth and elimination of farm land for informal settlements prevented any available opportunities to cultivate the ground. Furthermore, the native farmers living in Usme's countryside lost their status as Bogotá's food suppliers. As a consequence, much of the citizenry, both rural and urban,



live on, or below the poverty line. Some of the population transitioned from migrants to urban native; they created an urban identity that departs from their family's rural background. This new population became dependent on the city's opportunities, which did not happen with previous generations. On the other hand, the rural people continue to have ancestral ties to their community, because its territory has not grown at the same rate as that of the urban. Consequently, the demographics of Usme can be analyzed as a melting pot of migrant farmers, displaced victims, farmers and city dwellers whose aspirations vary, dependent on their position in the territory.

Usme established an urban-rural dichotomy defined by the multiple needs of its population as well as the limitations of the region. Much of the city's northern population considers Usme's territory as dangerous and unpleasant, despite its natural beauty and potential. Usme was one of the localities least impacted by Bogotá's re-positioning, since many of the implemented projects failed to affect the region's spatial dynamics. From the perspective of Bogotá's planning department, the territory of Usme does not have a set urban-rural border because it anticipates urban expansion which will continue to shift the boundary. Furthermore, the urban expansion creates a different set of pressures, such as economic, political, social, and cultural conditions, on the existing population and territory because the planning process prevents the continuous development of the territory until the city's planning department finalizes the zoning master plan of the area. Thus, Usme faces an uncertain future regarding the evolution of its landscape – a territory living between the urban and rural interfaces.

In these asymmetrical landscapes at the urban edge, the peripheral areas become places of adaptation; where this landscape's purpose is dependent on the needs of the population. This thesis focuses on the edge condition of Bogotá, asking how the relationship between city and countryside can be rethought in order to ensure an alternative planning model for the transformation of rural Colombia.



Figure 25 | Usme's Urban-Rural Dichotomy



CITY OF BOGOTÁ



INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS





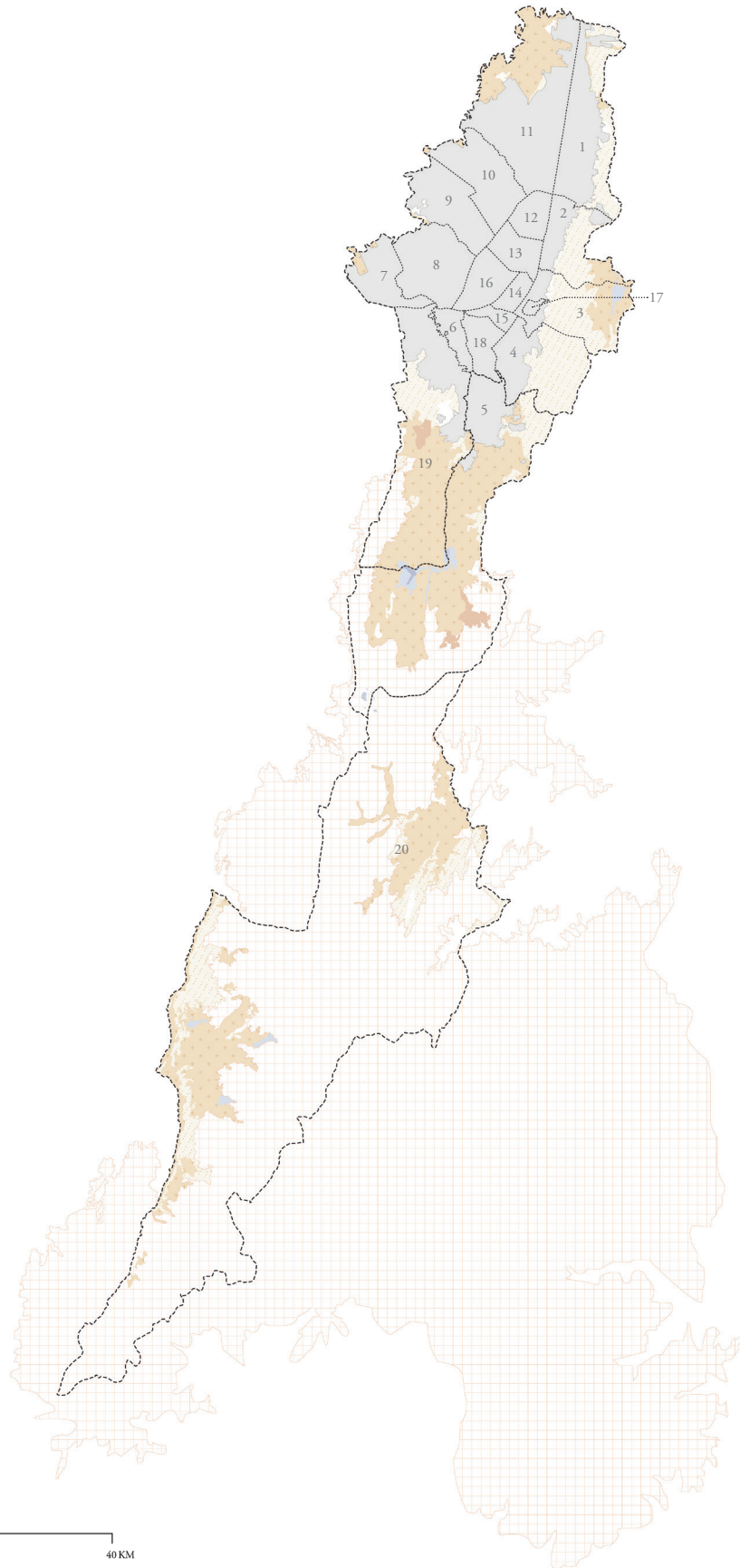
Figure 26 | Bogotá District Urban to Rural Composition



# Re-positioning Bogotá

*Rural Bogotá*

- 1 Usaquén
- 2 Chapinero
- 3 Santa Fé
- 4 San Cristóbal
- 5 Usme
- 6 Tunjuelito
- 7 Bosa
- 8 Kennedy
- 9 Fontibón
- 10 Engativá
- 11 Suba
- 12 Barrios Unidos
- 13 Teusaquillo
- 14 Mártires
- 15 Antonio Nariño
- 16 Puente Aranda
- 17 Candelaria
- 18 Rafael Uribe
- 19 Ciudad Bolívar
- 20 Sumapaz



## the *POT*: The City Panning Model

This section of the thesis re-positions Bogotá through the implementation of an urban-rural planning strategy that seeks to form a cohesive fabric across the two landscapes and improve the living conditions of the affected population.

By the end of the twentieth century, Bogotá's spatial organization was unplanned and disorganized, yet continuing to expand. In response, the *Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial* [Territorial Planning and Land Use Plan] [POT] became the guiding instrument to plan Bogotá. The federal government proposed the POT in 1997. It was a plan that required the local governments to assume responsibility for the future development of their territories via an organized and structured regional planning strategy to be completed within ten years' time.<sup>1</sup> The plan, as a technical and political structure outlines the use and occupation of the territory with regard to spatial, economic, and social policies.<sup>2</sup> **The ultimate goal of the POT is to address the challenges of Bogotá and its population with the aim to create a “balanced, efficient, and fair territory”<sup>3</sup> for the city as well as to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants, and guarantee access to essential services throughout the region.**

Bogotá implemented the POT strategy in 2000 but faced the unique challenge of consolidating many lands within one geopolitical boundary; which included several municipalities, such as Usme. At the end of the twentieth century, these municipalities annexed themselves to the District of Bogotá. The Bogotá District consisted of 20 percent urban and 80 percent rural area. The POT purports to eliminate the territory's existent fragmentation and allow the rural and urban landscapes to develop under the same governing and planning structure. This new structure would help direct government support towards rural development of land within its boundaries.

The POT was administered by each locality. They supervised the provision of local services and infrastructures, such as roads, schools, hospitals and recreational facilities, while the overall planning strategy oversaw the development of large-scale infrastructural and service networks to support the city-region. This shift in planning authority will likely trouble future developments because it depends on a hierarchical political structure with different visions for the city.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE POT

To define the spatial structure and objectives for the urban, rural and ecological landscapes in the district, the POT categorized the planning strategy into three categories: general, urban, and rural. Each classification aims for a consolidation of the territory at different scales and landscapes.

### General:

This category delineates the land distribution of the capital district as rural, urban, and for urban expansion in order to **stabilize the territory through one spatial strategy**.<sup>4</sup>

### Urban:

The urban consolidates the metropolitan centre to **one urban fabric through the implementation of infrastructure and public spaces to create a network of mobility, public support, and social housing**.<sup>5</sup>

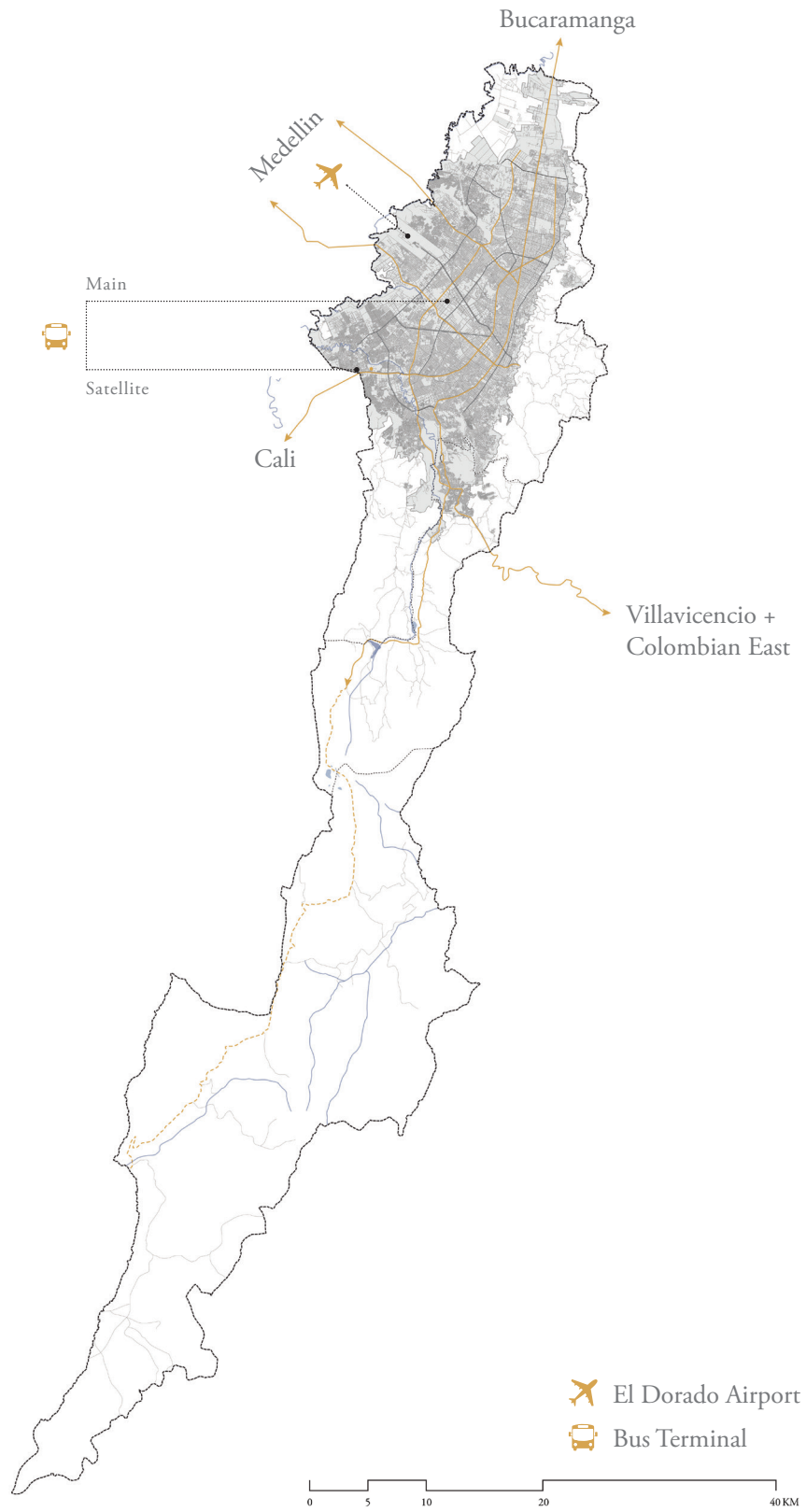
### Rural:

The first rural objective is to **consolidate the region as a series of scenic, productive, biotic and water landscapes with the goal of reserving and preserving the rural identity** through a network of protected and productive areas, as well as an organized development of human settlements. Secondly, the POT proposes to **promote a socio-economic and environmental exchange between urban and rural zones**, reciprocally enriching and, per the existing characteristics, **creating a working border condition within the urban-rural interface**.<sup>6</sup>

The POT has the following objectives:

- Consolidate the formal and informal city
- Control the urban expansion
- Achieve a diverse city-region model that ensures balance and territorial equity for social benefit
- Protect the ecological and rural landscape of the district
- Most importantly, create a functional urban-rural interface.

The POT established several projects including interventions in mobility infrastructure, public and green spaces, social housing, future master plans for areas of expansion, and rural development strategies.





## MOBILITY + INFRASTRUCTURE

To provide a cohesive urban fabric throughout the city, Mayor Enrique Peñalosa worked with the policies and goals of the POT to design the *Integrated Public Transportation System* [SITP] whose aim was to provide an efficient network of transport services to different areas of the city-region. The SITP consists of a primary line of red buses, called *El TransMilenio*, which runs along major arteries of the city, assisted by complementary feeder routes in areas which lack access to the main network. The system also includes bus stations, bicycle paths, designated pedestrian access platforms, and end terminals or portals, where the main bus line transfers to the supplementary routes to facilitate patron's use of the system.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, this mass transportation network created a new spatial model of organization for Bogotá because it revitalized and expanded the city's road fabric and developed an innovative strategy to connect the fragmented city. In doing so, it replaced the existing network of privately owned buses and micro-buses that were offering an uncomfortable and expensive mode of transit for the population and helped eliminate the use of private cars, reducing traffic jams and pollution in the city.

To further relieve the pressure in different areas of Bogotá, the city also proposed a metro network to work alongside the mass transportation which failed to be realized due to the high costs and location of the infrastructure. In its place, the planning department established a network of cycling paths to run along the TransMilenio trunk corridors and other main roads, known as the *Cicloruta*. The design of this system was inexpensive, easy to construct, quick to implement, and provided a green initiative to alleviate the pollution of Bogotá, all the while reinforcing the bus network. Furthermore, the cycling network provided a safe recreational space for the population through new infrastructure and access to residential areas, parks, and facilities throughout the city.

Despite the TransMilenio and Cicloruta networks' importance to the city's mobility, they are not implemented in the peri-urban region of Bogotá – areas in need of better, less expensive mobility systems. Such interventions could have a greater impact in said regions, as well as provide access to the ecological zones to the South of the city, like Usme. However, the locality of Usme fails to be fully integrated to the primary infrastructural mobility

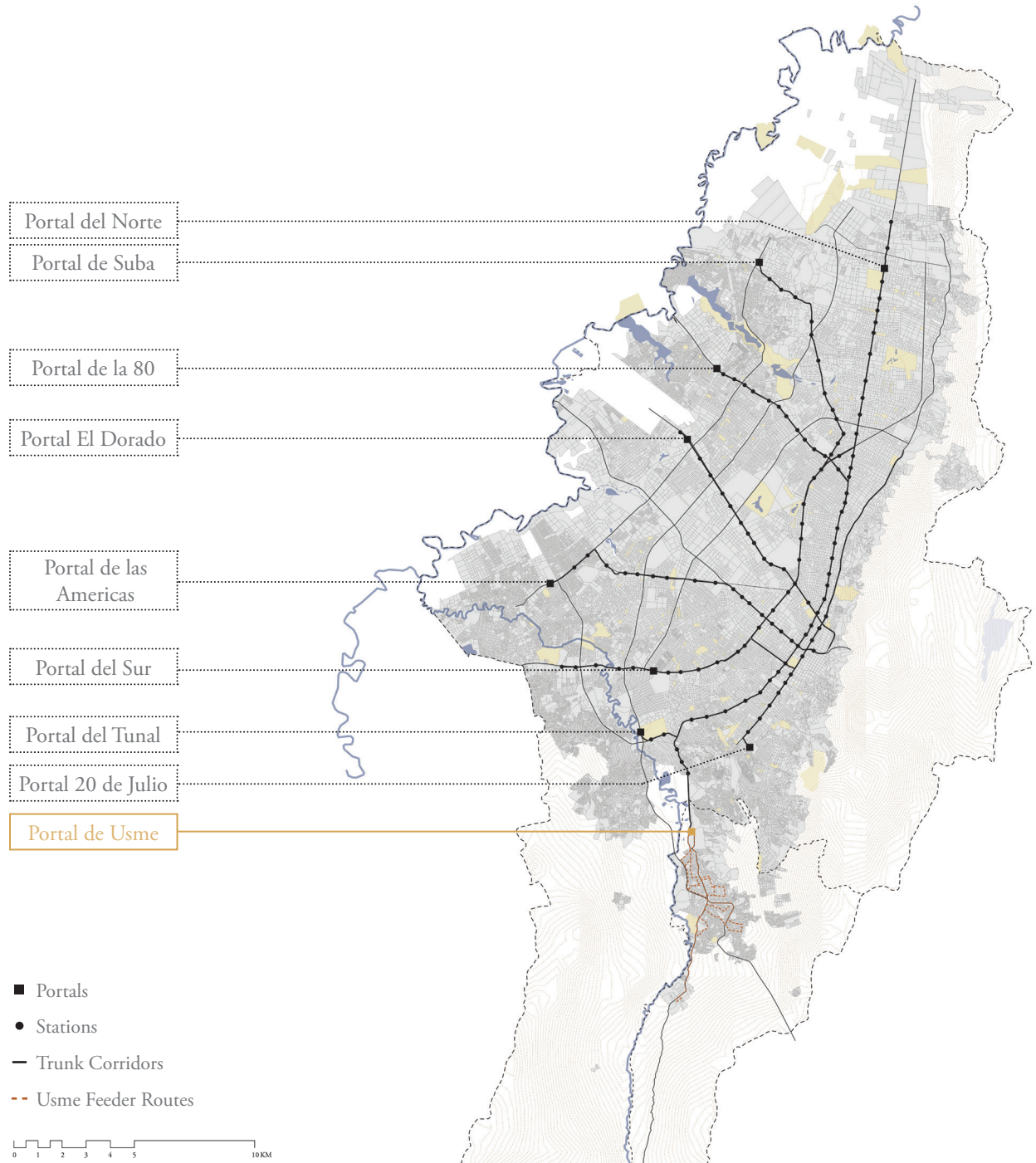


Figure 29 | TransMilenio Transit Network



Figure 30 | TransMilenio Trunk Corridor + Station



Figure 31 | Portal de Usme



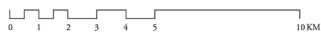
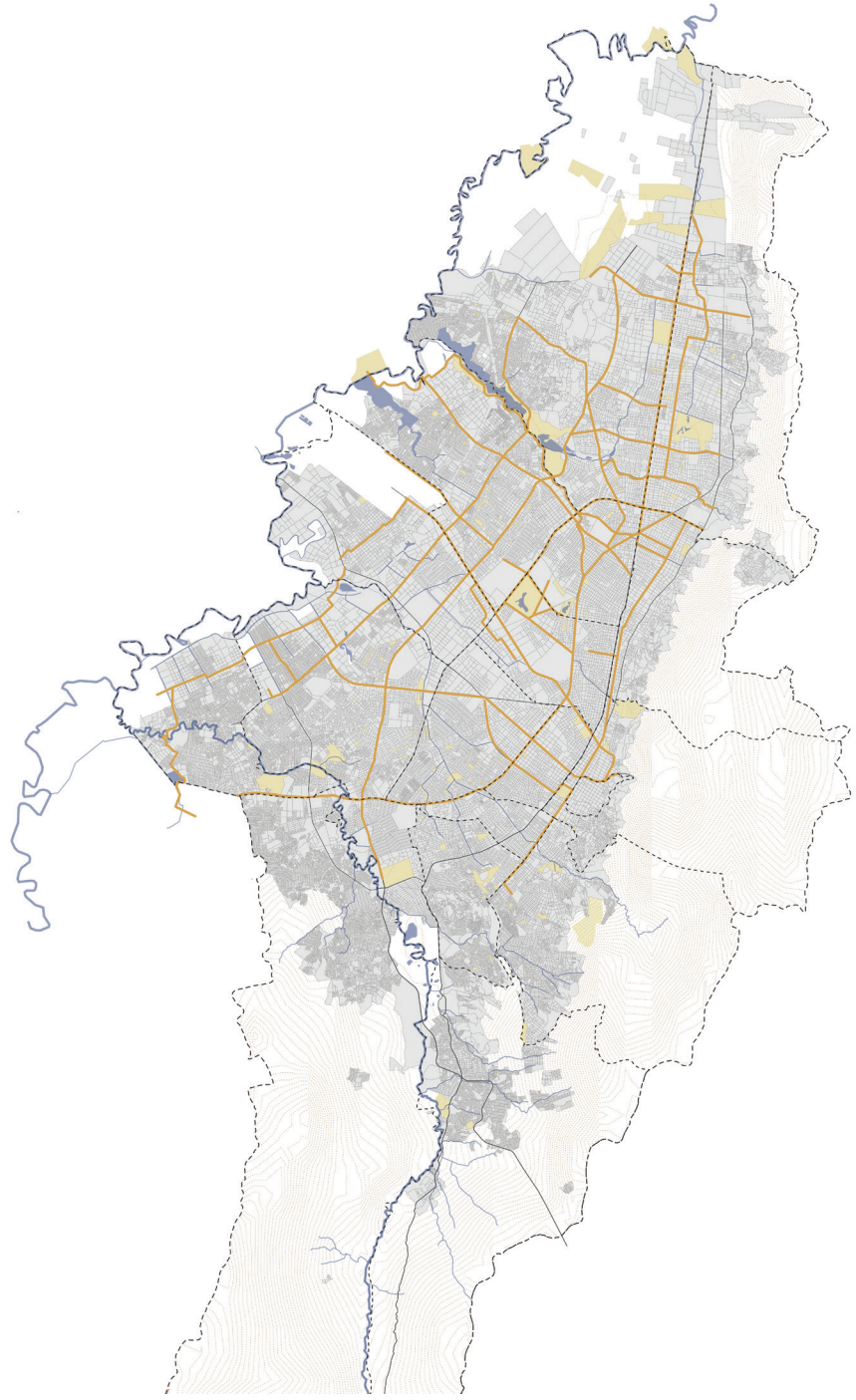
Figure 32 | TransMilenio Feeder Buses

system because the portal stops at the northern edge of the region, leaving the area to be serviced by secondary routes. These routes leave much of the urban and rural areas without any access to public transportation, leaving inhabitants dependent on unpredictable private bus companies. Ultimately, the mass transportation system implemented by the city and POT improved the greater metropolitan area but cease in the southern parts of the city which lead towards the rural territory.

Besides mobility infrastructure, Bogotá's peri-urban areas faced problems with municipal infrastructure such as water and electricity. The POT aimed to control the expansion of informal settlements by legalizing them into formal neighbourhoods and supporting the construction of aqueducts and electricity lines to provide core infrastructure to the community. Since the establishment of the POT local administration, new settlements are constructed daily and the infrastructural problems continue to persist at the urban-rural boundary.



Figure 34 | Bogotá's Cicloruta



## PUBLIC AND GREEN SPACES

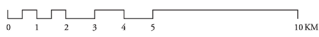
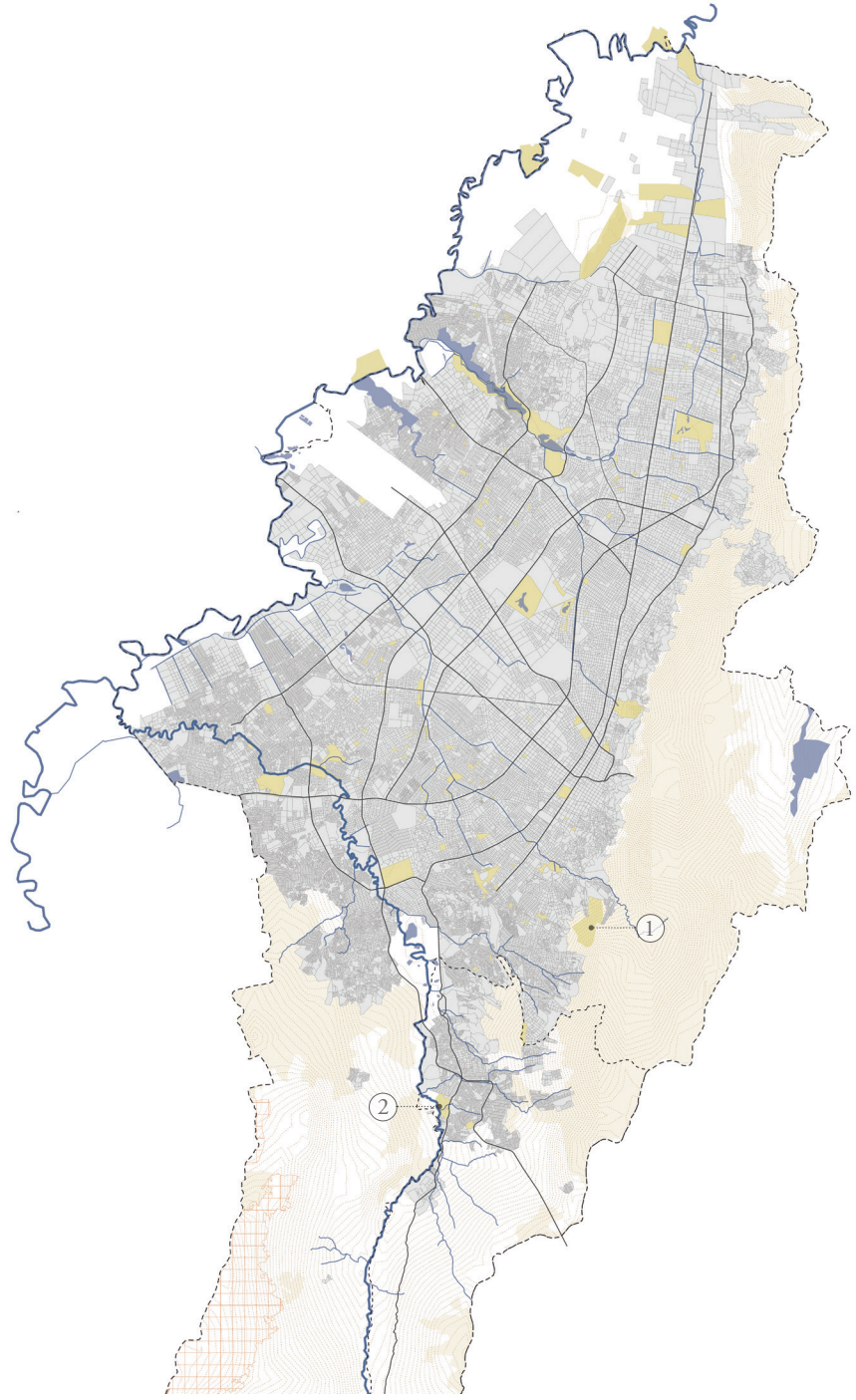
Open and green spaces in Bogotá were important in shifting the city from a condition of violence and chaos, to one that is public and accessible. Up until the 1990s, the city developed in a violent and unsafe way. However, during the political periods of Antanas Mockus [1995-1997] and Enrique Peñalosa [1998-2000], the city experienced a form of urban regeneration with the development of public spaces, such as plazas and parks to be enjoyed by the local citizens. In the past few decades, public libraries, parks, and plazas have been built in vulnerable areas to provide safe access to public amenities for the population. In other sectors, parks and ecological landscapes, such as wetlands, were revitalized or constructed to eliminate the city's pollution, protect the green landscapes, and control the informal expansion. In Usme, the Entrenubes Park at the Cordilleras and the Cantarrana Ecological Park at the Valley introduced green zones within the informal settlements. These two parks included vast green and ecological spaces and recreational zones, such as cycling paths, children's play areas, sports fields, scenic lookouts, outdoor theaters, etc. The construction of these parks promoted a safe community in these vulnerable areas.



Figure 36 | Entrenubes Park



Figure 37 | Cantarrana Park



## THE RESIDENTIAL QUESTION

Bogotá faces a housing problem in which there was a lack of affordable housing available for the city's rising population, especially for the lower socio-economic strata. The informal settlements provided an easy and rapid solution to the housing deficit of the city and, by the end of the twentieth century, they proliferated across the peri-urban region of Bogotá. According to the city's data, between 1987 and 1998, 1450 hectares from over 3000 hectares of urbanized land belonged to the informal development, with the majority concentrated in the localities of Usme, Ciudad Bolívar, Ciudad Kennedy, and Bosa.<sup>8</sup> However, Bogotá's population increases every day and this extends the construction of pirate urbanizations towards the countryside and ecological territory, mainly towards the Cordillera hills. The effect of these informal settlements causes environmental damage to the land, which puts the newer settlements at risk of flooding, mudslides, and earthquakes. As well, the construction and location of the newer settlements continue to lack access to basic infrastructure. Despite these repercussions, pirate urbanizations continue to be the leading choice for low-income housing, increasing the formal housing deficit in the city.

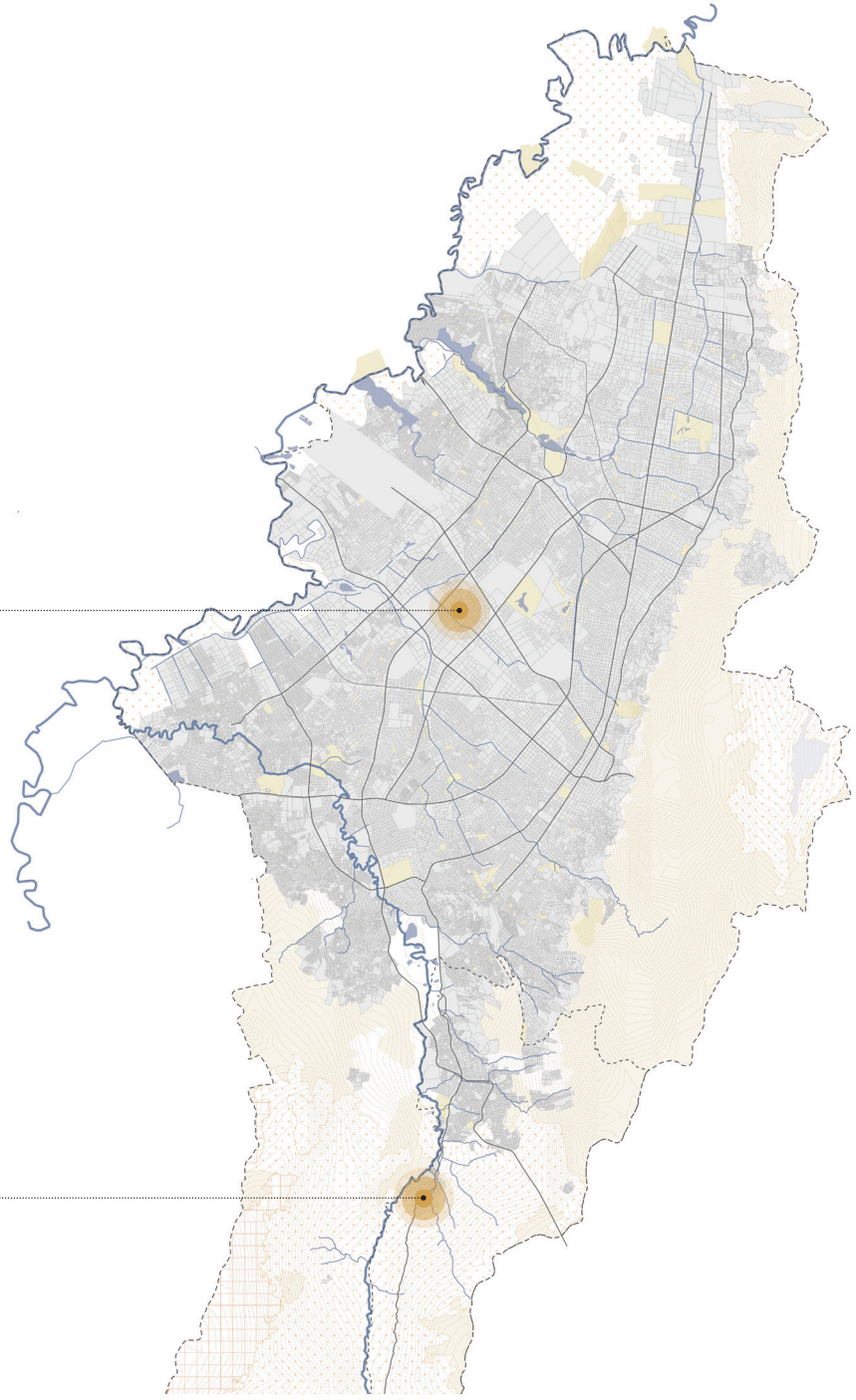
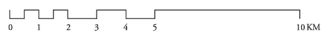
In response to the lack of affordable housing and growing informal settlements, the POT enabled the legalization of pirate urbanizations, bringing with it the attendant infrastructure services and the establishment of social housing to control the informal expansion. In 1998, the mayor of Bogotá, Enrique Peñalosa, proposed the creation of a land bank to facilitate the construction of social housing in lower socio-economic strata areas. Subsequently, after the approval of the proposal, the city developed Metrovivienda. This public company aims to act as a land bank, with the capability to acquire and dispose of land in the future with the objective to guarantee a continuous supply of land dedicated to low-income housing projects.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, these projects develop through the establishment of master plans where the urbanizations include the design of several housing blocks supported by educational, religious, and commercial infrastructures, as well as public and green spaces. In other words, Metrovivienda creates **A City within The City**, a concept originating from the 1960s modern architecture movement that aims to provide all the desirable urban elements required to offer a better quality of life to its inhabitants within a smaller concentration of land in the city.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 38 | Location of Ciudad Salitre and ▷  
Usme's Social Housing



Ciudad Salitre

Usme



The most prominent example of 'A City within The City' urbanization model is Ciudad Salitre because it exemplifies an agglomeration of public and private development where the state acts as the developer and financier to prepare and construct a master plan with the goal to build housing, institutions, services and road infrastructure, and utilities in harmony with the rest of the city.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the design and location of Ciudad Salitre aimed to provide housing, both of social and private interest, to keep up with the housing demand and control the urban expansion towards the west of the city into the Savannah landscape. The proposal aimed to generate an urban-rural border at the west of Bogotá and create a high-density city by re-utilizing the existing territory and developing a new area.<sup>12</sup> The focus to develop an organized and well-constructed master plan with a distribution of various land uses allowed the 'mini city' to become a major centre for Bogotá's development. Ultimately, Ciudad Salitre became an example of an urban operation for the city with an extensive range of land uses, both public and private, setting a precedent for the transformation of Usme.

This model of urbanization reflects the POT and district administration's efforts to resolve the housing and infrastructural deficits in an urban setting offer a better quality of life for its inhabitants, promote the planning of the city edge, and control urban expansion. This planning model has become a desirable strategy for the city because it provides a fair distribution of the area and controls the ambiguous ownership found in the informal settlements. This is particularly true in Usme, and other areas located on the periphery, because it provides the tools necessary to resolve the challenges brought on by the informal settlements.



Figure 39 | Ciudad Salitre



Figure 40 | Social Housing in Usme

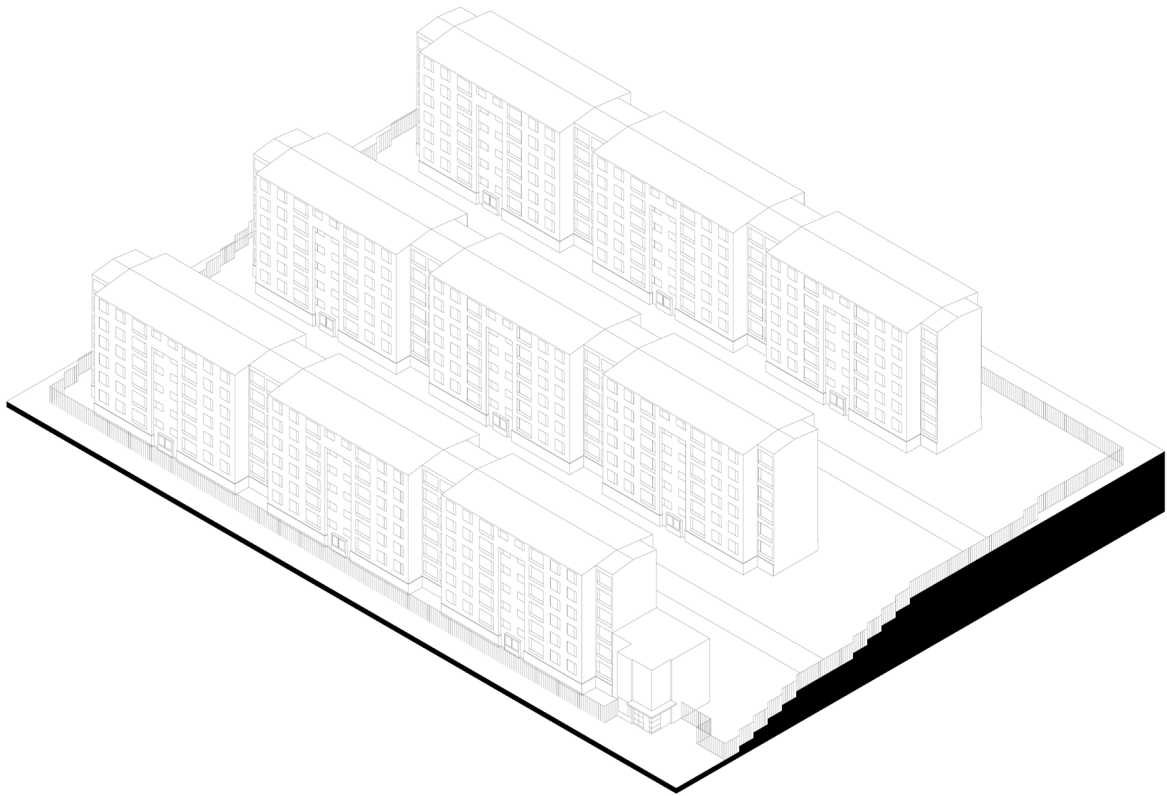
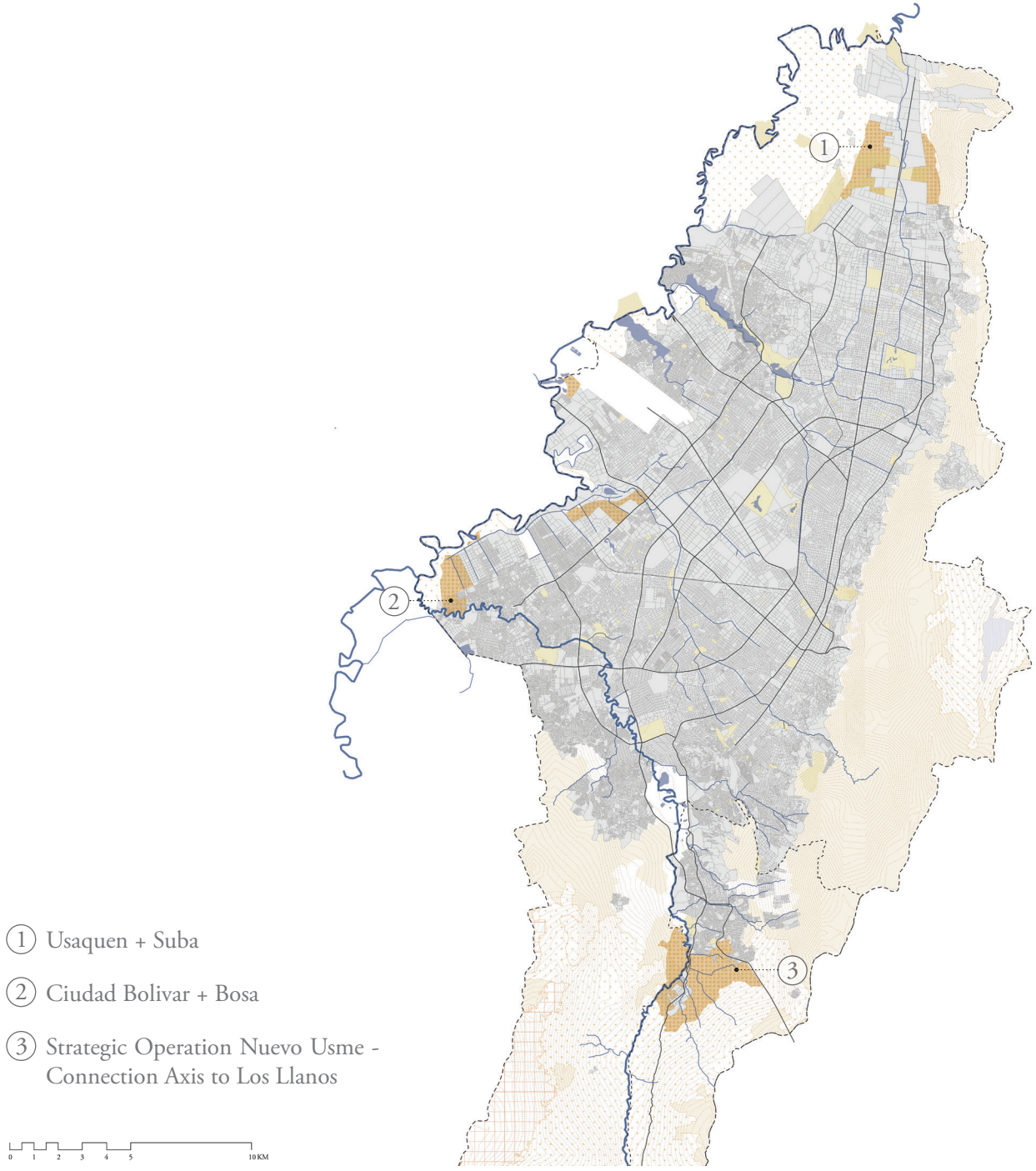


Figure 41 | Typical Linear housing Block in Usme

This is a typical social housing block built in Usme. The buildings are compact to maximize the floor plate into 2 to 3 bedroom units in order to provide housing to high number of people.

## AREA OF EXPANSION

The POT's mandate designates areas of urban expansion appointing three areas of urban development to be located in the North, West, and South of the city. Each of these sectors fluctuates in size and objectives depending on the location and purpose of the expansion. The southern area of expansion is the most important and critical intervention because of its key location and attributes. It is the southeastern access and connection between Bogotá and Villavicencio, an important centre in eastern Colombia, as well as the entrance to the National Park of the Sumapaz Paramo. Altogether, the POT's criteria for the area, as well as demand to generate a city edge in the South, forms the territory of Usme - The Future City implemented by the *Operación Estratégica Nuevo Usme – Eje de Integración Los Llanos* [Strategic Operation Nuevo Usme - Connection Axis to Los Llanos] master plan. It is an area of urban expansion consisting of a total of 938 hectares of residential, infrastructural, recreational, educational, and other land uses to construct the southern city edge. Thus, this expansion will become the most significant future construction in Bogotá.



## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The absent rural development in the Capital District of Bogotá can be attributed to the city's planning department's tendency to view the development of the District as two separate entities. The city planners presume that it is their responsibility to develop and plan for the urban areas, while the rural is the responsibility of the CAR [Autonomous Regional Corporation of Cundinamarca], a jurisdiction of the regional's planning department. The CAR is an institution seeking to exercise maximum environmental authority in its jurisdiction via the execution of environmental policies, plans, programs, and projects. It aspires to construct a social fabric that contributes to the sustainable and harmonious development of the rural region within the Department of Cundinamarca.<sup>13</sup>

During my research trip, the local government in Usme explained that the dynamic of the different planning authorities was the primary reason for the countryside's stagnation, and concurrent urban expansion.

- Farmers were unable to acquire permission to build on their lots because either the city's planning department, or the CAR was responsible for the future development of the land. Thus, many farmers were forced to build illegally in their own territory, while the city could at any moment ask to demolish the newer construction that did not meet the zoning requirements.
- Failure to improve or provide infrastructure, services, and other basic needs to the countryside including markets, technical education, etc., to strengthen the farming identity.
- Despite the farmers' ownership of the land, the immediate landscape of the city is un-zoned by the planning department, which allows the city to redevelop and zone the area depending on the future needs of the city.

The countryside continues to be affected by the Bogotá's informal expansion and absent rural development strategy continues to affect and marginalize the countryside, despite the city's efforts to promote its development. Thus, Bogotá is a living paradox that enhances Colombia's asymmetrical landscapes.





Figure 43 | Bogotá District's Area of Rural Development



Living  
Between the  
Urban-Rural Interface

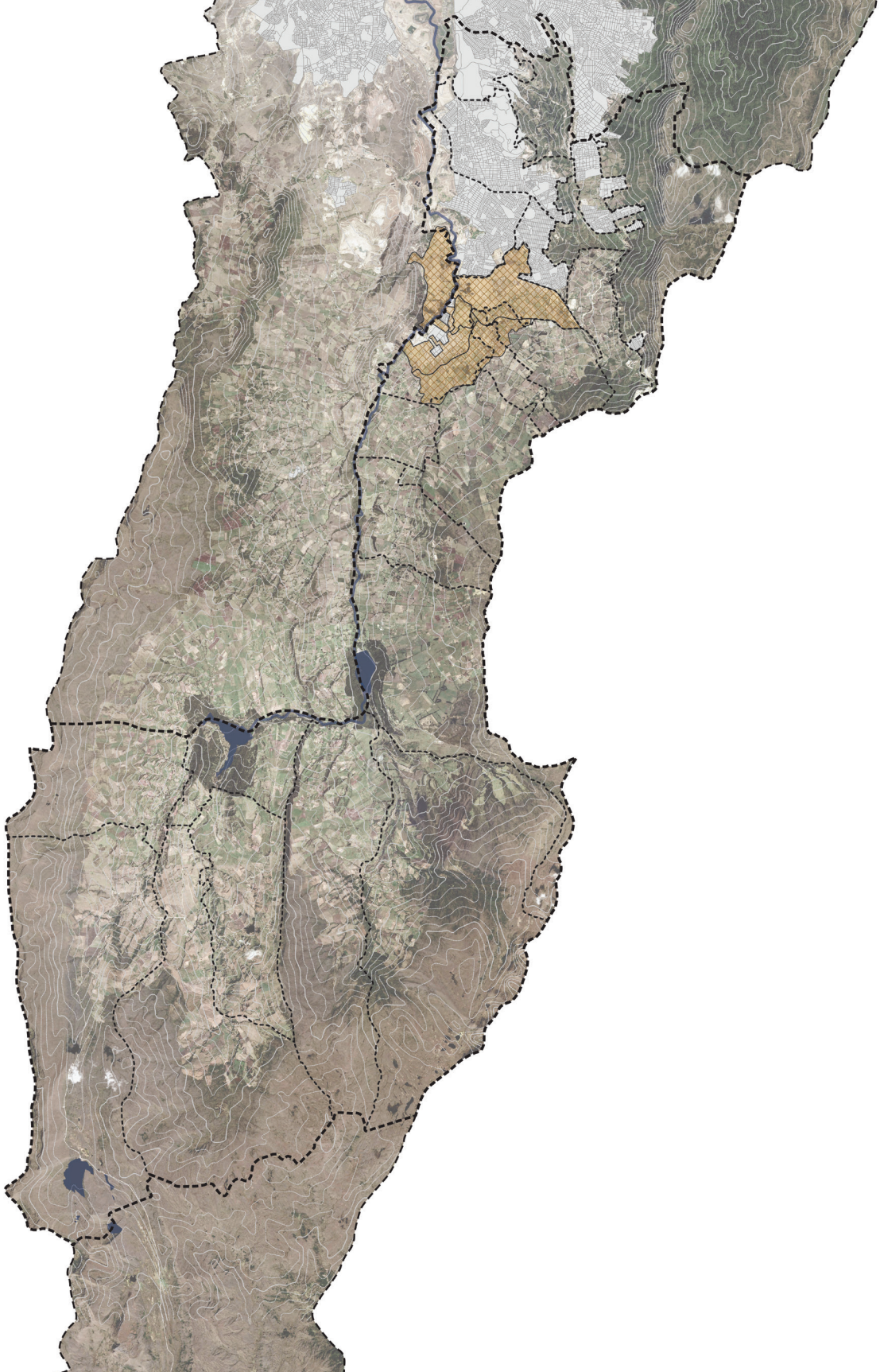


## *USME:* a territory of expansion

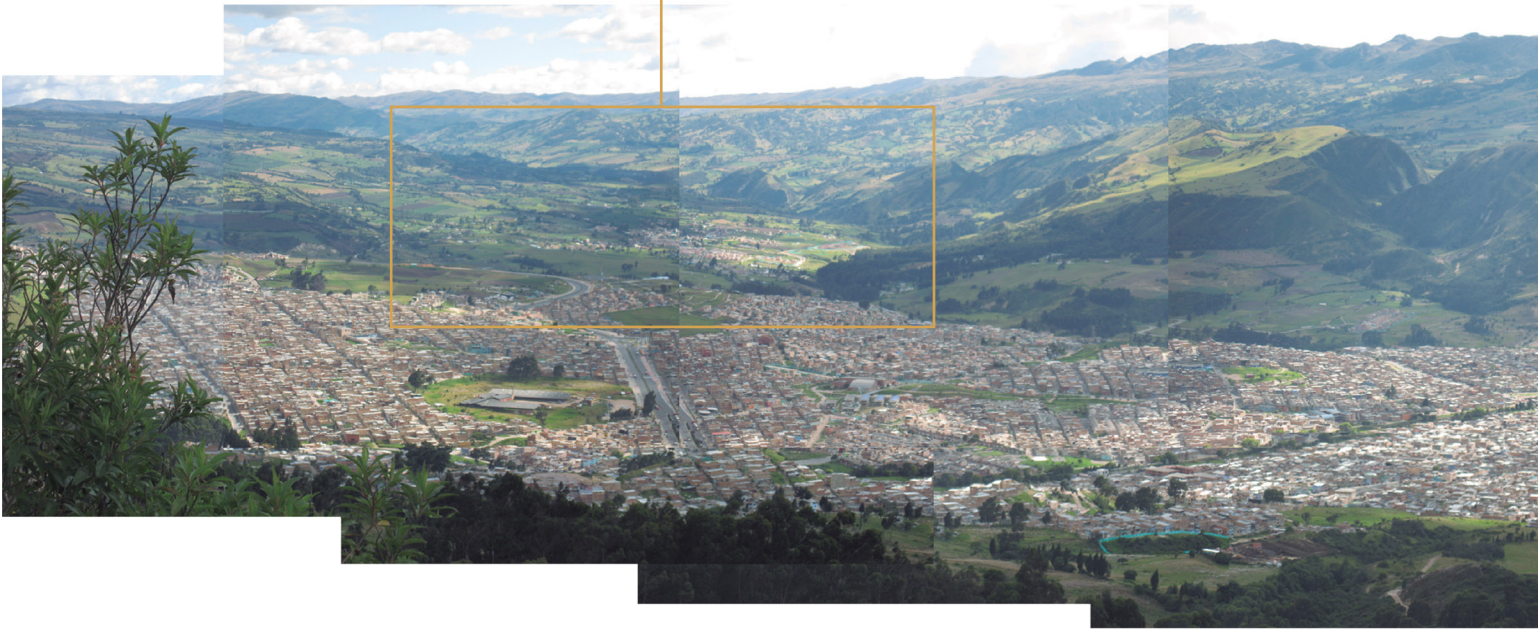
The city's territorial planning and land use strategy proposed a series of projects to engage in the future development of Usme. These projects targeted different conflicts of the territory through ecological, urban, and rural perspectives. The first intervention is *Operación Río Tunjuelito*, a general strategy restructuring the community from an environmental, infrastructural, and urban point of view. This project aims to recuperate the Tunjuelito River as an ecological structure supported by the allocation of a road network and services connecting Usme in all directions. The second project, *Operación Entrenubes*, dictates the environmental conservation of the natural resources through an urban boundary delineating the protected ecological zones. *Operación Nuevo Usme* is the third project whose primary objective is to incorporate a new land assignation for the building of both social and private housing and service infrastructure. This proposal designated the construction of the southern highway that crosses the two southern localities of Usme and Ciudad Bolívar and connects the two southern entry points to the Capital District. The final project is *Operación Puerta al Llano*, which reconfigures the access from Bogotá to the Colombian east allowing the exchange of commercial and economic activities, as well as localizing the urban services in the region.<sup>1</sup> Each of these projects' application targeted the locality individually but failed

to have success in the territory. Therefore, through the revision of the POT in 2003, the District's administration consolidated these four projects into *Operación Estratégica Nuevo Usme – Eje de Integración Los Llanos* [Strategic Operation New Usme – Connection Axis to Los Llanos], per the Decree 190 of 2004.<sup>2</sup> This new proposal designates Usme as a wide area of urban expansion composed of a zone that delimits the urbanization of the territory through the realization of a spatial model that simultaneously generates an urban-rural boundary to prevent further urban construction. This model also preserves the environmental conditions of Usme towards the Sumapaz Paramo. The culmination of these projects into one master plan represents the city planning authority's intent to restructure and exploit the resources of Usme through a formal strategy. Furthermore, the proposal manifests the first step towards defining the urban-rural edge condition of Bogotá, which initiates the dialogue concerning the countryside's transformation.

Figure 44 | Operación Estratégica Nuevo Usme - Eje de Integración Los Llanos Site ▶



THESIS SITE







◁ Figure 45 | Usme Panorama

# *A CITY WITHIN THE CITY:* Operación Estratégica Nuevo Usme – Eje de Integración Los Llanos

After the revision of the Territorial Planning and Land Use Strategy in 2003, the District's administration appointed the Plan de Ordenamiento Zonal Usme [Zonal Regulation for Usme], the POZ Usme, per the Decree 252 of 2007. The POZ constitutes the intermediate scale for a depressed and marginalized zone and proposes to transform it into a productive urbanization that, as designated by the POT's objectives, integrates through social, economic, and urban interventions with the rest of the city and region. Therefore, Usme represents a critical axis for the city, with great opportunities for development of urbanization for the low-income strata of the population and connection points for the Capital District.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

### 1. Planning the urban growth

- Attend to the housing demand by prioritizing the design of social housing in partial plans 1-3.
- Minimize the impact on the rural area and control the urban expansion.
- Control and minimize the environmental deterioration.
- Improve infrastructural network and connect the city's southeastern entrance to the Colombian east.

### 2. Political and Social Structure

- Improve institutional coordination and development at a District Scale.
- Reinforce the planning process through community participation and social networks, both urban and rural, at a local scale.
- Provide technical and financial assistance for the development of social and public driven projects.

### 3. Environmental Conservation

- Use the water network as a potential axis throughout the territory.
- Recuperate the hydrological equilibrium of the watershed.
- Sustainably use the non-renewable resources found in the area.

### 4. Economic Strategy

- Promote commercial activities and services to support the Llanos highway to generate employment and to help the economy coming from the Eastern Plains.
- Provide a variety of economic activities throughout the POZ design, including a transit terminal for the movement of goods and people, a node for food supply, and cultural, educational, and recreational facilities.

### 5. Construction of a Border Pact as a Transition Strategy Between the Urban and the Rural

- Propose models of territorial occupation and construction of residency that meet the requirements of the population, generate an adequate urban environment, and facilitate the economic development of housing.
- Support rural modes of production.
- Control the construction of illegal urbanizations.
- Strengthen the forms of a community association, urban and rural,

parallel to the development of the overall project.

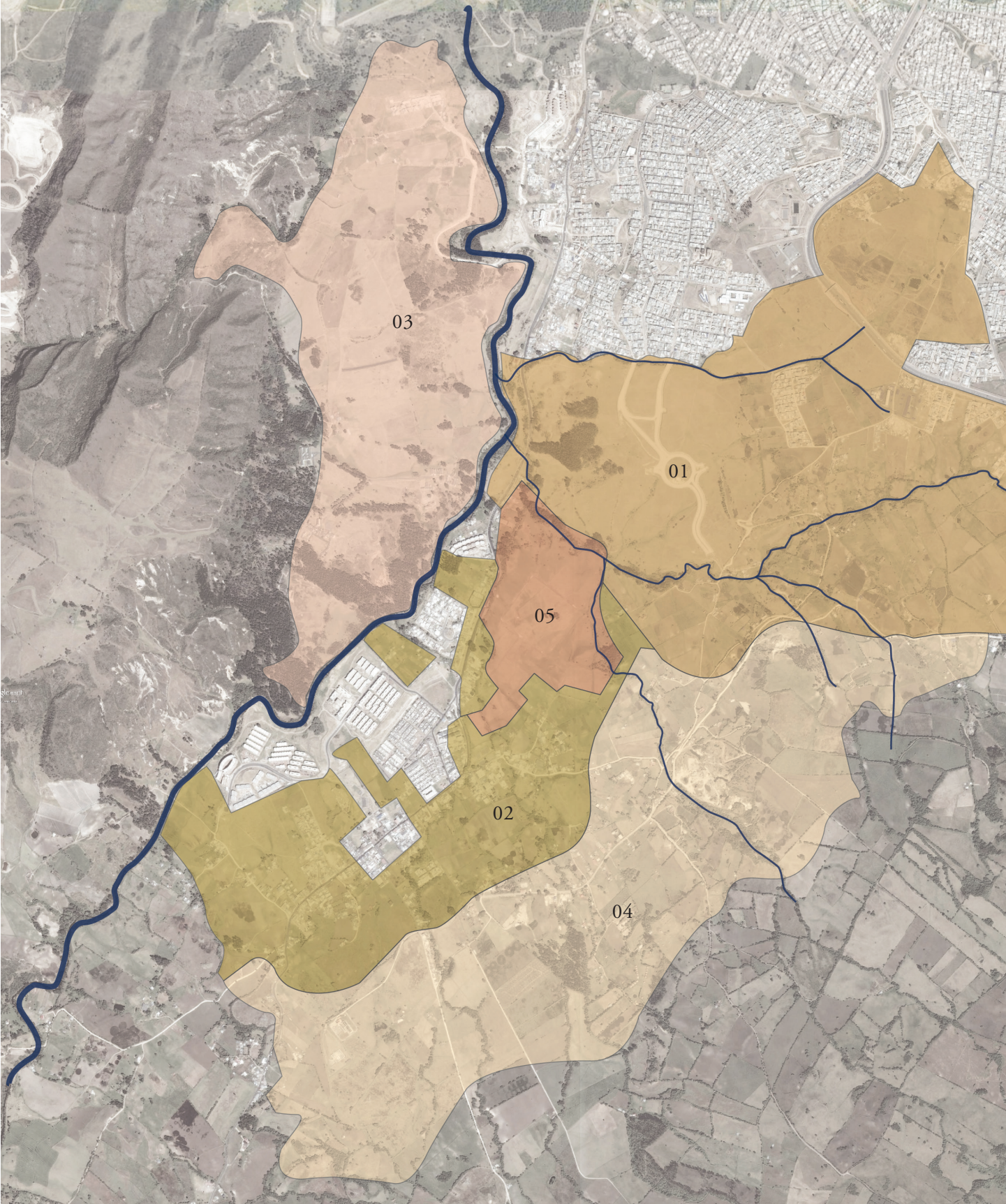
- Restore the sense of belonging, social networks, and spaces of participation to generate a new relationship between the population, the territory, and the state that fosters the legitimacy of the decisions and sustainability of the POZ.

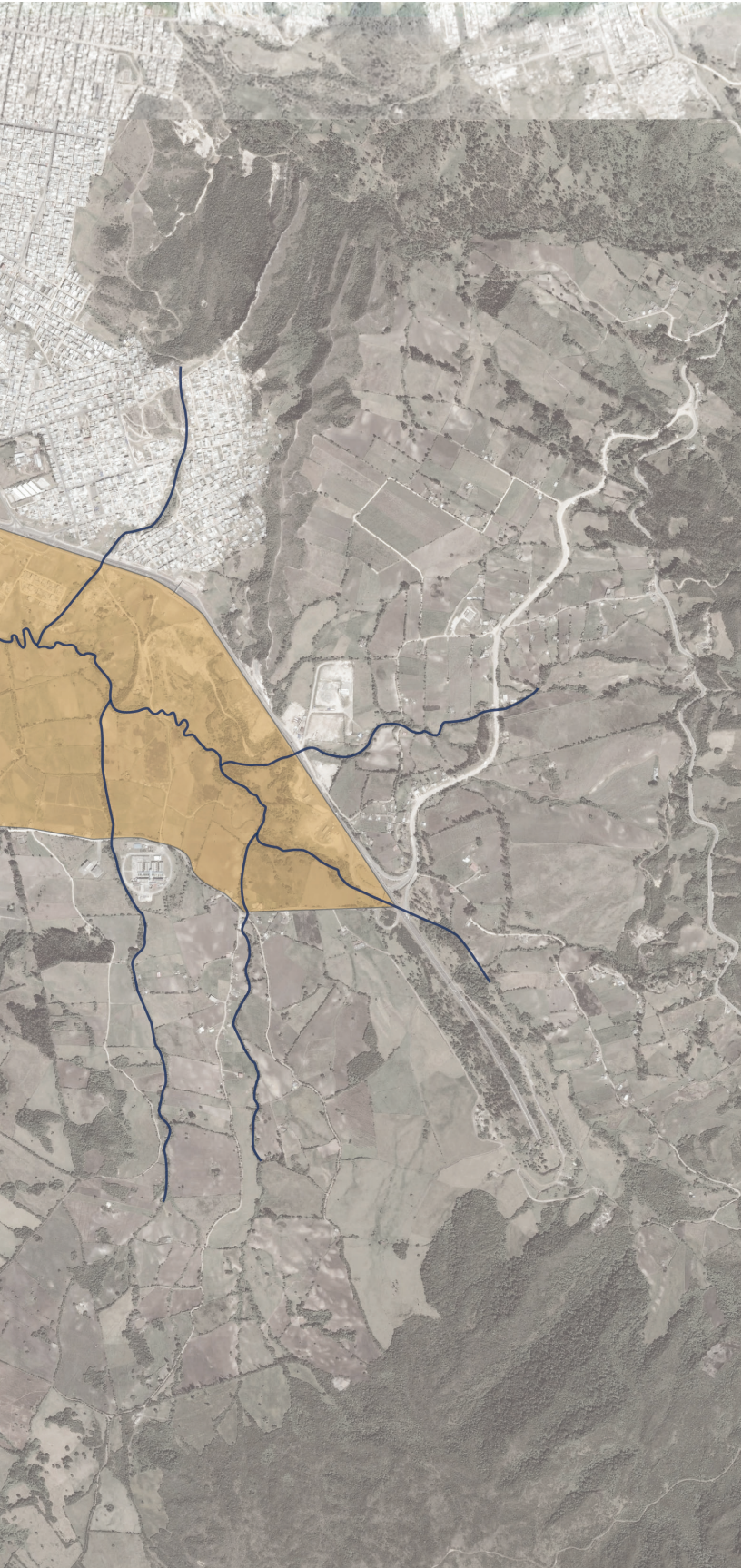
#### 6. Rural and Farming Strategy

- Support the peasantry culture in the region.
- Create a resettlement program to help the existent farming population affected by the urban expansion relocate on other rural sectors, and preserve the agricultural identity.
- Support an agricultural and commercial network and supply, benefiting the District and nearby regions.
- Provide technical assistance to the farming community to support the productivity of the land.<sup>3</sup>

### MASTER PLAN STRUCTURE

The Strategic Operation New Usme appropriates the ‘A City within the City’ model used in other areas of Bogotá to implement its master plan proposal in Usme. The area of expansion centralizes the Usme centre, originally San Pedro de Usme, and the surrounding veredas of El Uval, La Requilina, and Corinto Centro Redondo, into a total area of 938 Hectares.<sup>4</sup> The primary objective for this urbanization is to concentrate the urban growth in the area so as to promote a region that improves the living conditions of Usme, as well as to adapt the space for the growing needs of the city and population. The proposal includes the allocation of several land uses such as social housing, health, educational, recreational, commercial facilities, and green spaces and zones, as well as the improvement of the road and service networks. Furthermore, the proposal aims to create an urban-rural boundary, to prevent the construction of new pirate urbanizations, and protect and recuperate the environmental qualities of the territory. Lastly, due to the size of the expansion, the structure of the master plan consists of 5 partial plans, each of which targets a different sector of the overall project.





### A CITY WITHIN THE CITY PARTIAL PLANS

01 - Tres Quebradas [311 Ha]



02 - Citadel Usme Centro [125 Ha]



03 - Health, Education, and Regional  
Services Node [153 Ha]



04 - Urban-Rural Boundary [224 Ha]



05 - El Carmen [29 Ha]

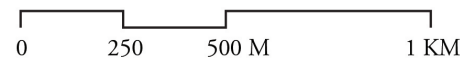
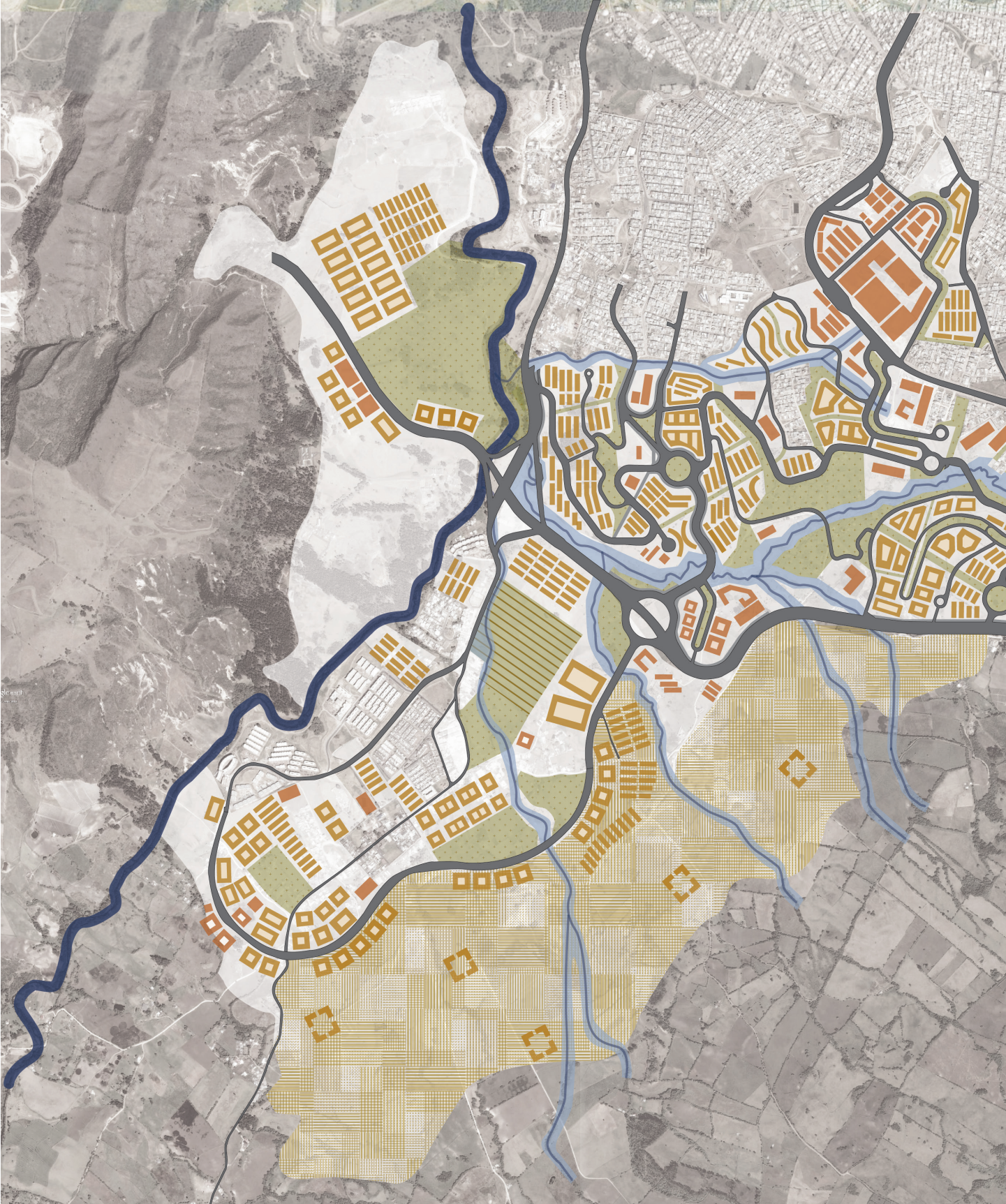


Figure 46 | A City Within The City Partial Plans  
Structure

\*See Appendix for detailed description.





### A CITY WITHIN THE CITY MASTER PLAN



- Residential
- Services
- Parks
- Archaeological Site
- Existing Farm Fields
- Ravine Flood Plain
- Ravines

Density of the project estimates the construction of 57,000 units to house approx. 250,000 inhabitants.



Figure 47 | A City within The City Master Plan

## CRITIQUE: THE 'A CITY WITHIN THE CITY' MODEL ON USME

The city's master plan project includes a set of objectives driven by the POT. These objectives outline a strategy to consolidate and produce an interactive urban-rural interface, which seeks to improve the social and economic conditions in Usme, while at the same time capitalizing on its importance within the Capital District. In the written document, it outlines a set of directives aiming to solve the main challenges in the area, such as to improve mobility infrastructure, construct commercial land uses, and resolve the residential problem to control spread in the area. All of these use precedents implemented in the city from a 'City within the City' model in low-income areas and the creation of new infrastructure and parks to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Bogotá. Along with these solutions in the urban context, the POZ aims to improve and preserve the conditions of the countryside and to prevent any further urban expansion on the territory in the future. The master plan proposes to do this by designating an urban-rural border within the parameters of the POZ.

Despite having a clear objective in writing, the master plan's execution fails to exploit its potential and, most importantly, it fails to create a productive urban-rural border; a border that could define a new spatial occupational model for the communities living on its contested edge. Instead of clarifying the urban-rural edge condition, the city proposes to build a series of social housing projects with supporting amenities to double the population of Usme. This urban expansion plans to appropriate a significant extension of arable land utilized by the local farmers for food production. The effects of the urban development will change the ownership and land-use of the area, especially because of the site being organized and planned by a series of partial plans. The partial plan acts as an instrument that articulates in a very specific manner the planning objectives of the territory through the land management with specificities in legal, economic, and urban design conditions that create the necessary support system for the new urban site. In other words, the partial plan puts a hold on the entire site to organize and order the existing private lots and transform them to the necessary land use as directed by the zoning plan. However, to achieve the future development the existing lots can neither be sold nor bought until the city is able to assign a land-use or buy it through a land bank, such as Metrovivienda. The modification of the spatial

conditions of the territory exposes the farmers' vulnerability and the risk of eventual displacement from their land because many of the farmers still living within the area of expansion are unable to foresee change within their own lots because they are locked in until the master plan is finalized or the partial plan is lifted, which could take years or decades to resolve. This is especially true for the city's master plan proposal because of its failed implementation within the time suggested by the POZ.

Furthermore, the appointed 'urban-rural border' region will become a semi-urbanized area that supports the relocation of the displaced farmers but does not genuinely design a rural development strategy to maintain the agricultural character of Usme. Consequently, *A City within The City's* plan prioritizes the construction of the urban over the protection of the rural identity present in the region; conceptually it magnifies the marginalization farmer's face with respect to conserving their rural lifestyle. Ultimately, the lack of a firm outline for the transition between urban and rural landscapes yields to the probability of the urban expansion grows past the described edge and to continue south towards the paramo ecosystem.

#### A City within The City - Land Use and Ownership Distribution

The land use and ownership conditions of the area of expansion for 'A City within The City' master plan propose to change the existing conditions affecting the local farming communities of Usme by displacing them from their lots to a designated region in the Partial plan 4. Furthermore, the agricultural uses of the land will be eliminated to accommodate the growing urban population and execution of the master plan. Thus, the planning authorities performed an in-depth analysis of the Tres Quebradas site to determine the current ownership and land uses. The study concluded the following land uses with the corresponding property assignation:

##### FEEDER LOTS

These areas do not have any use or have actual constructions within the boundaries of the parcel. Most of these lots are owned by Metrovivienda for the future development of social housing projects as outlined in the master plan. The areas, belonging to Metrovivienda, represent the first phases towards the implementation of the POZ. Previously, the land use of these parcels was for cultivation; today they are empty, waiting on approval for construction.

The other plots belong to city inhabitants who are waiting for an increase in land price to sell their property. In the Tres Quebradas sector, there are 64 feeder lots, corresponding to a total area of 140.66 Hectares.

#### FIELDS

These are parcels used only for agricultural production, with no built edifices. The ownership of these lots belongs to city inhabitants that exploit the land, but do not reside in it, nor do they produce the majority of their income via the land parcel. In the first Partial Plan, the fields constitute 78 parcels totaling an area of 65.52 Hectares.

#### FARMS

Parcels used for agricultural production and housing, representing the traditional family farm model. Thus, most ownership for farm type belongs to families who used the lot as their sole economic income. These lots comprise an area of 106.68 Hectares or 108 parcels.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL

The discovery of the Muisca cemetery affects one parcel, which was a feeder lot owned by Metrovivienda. This area is now owned by the city and deemed a protected historical site.

#### PIRATE URBANIZATIONS

Most of Usme's urban context is composed of legalized informal settlements that are now formal neighbourhoods of Bogotá. However, within the area of expansion, new settlements were built making up 18 percent of the total area. Thus, the POZ will recognize these communities as neighbourhoods of the new city.

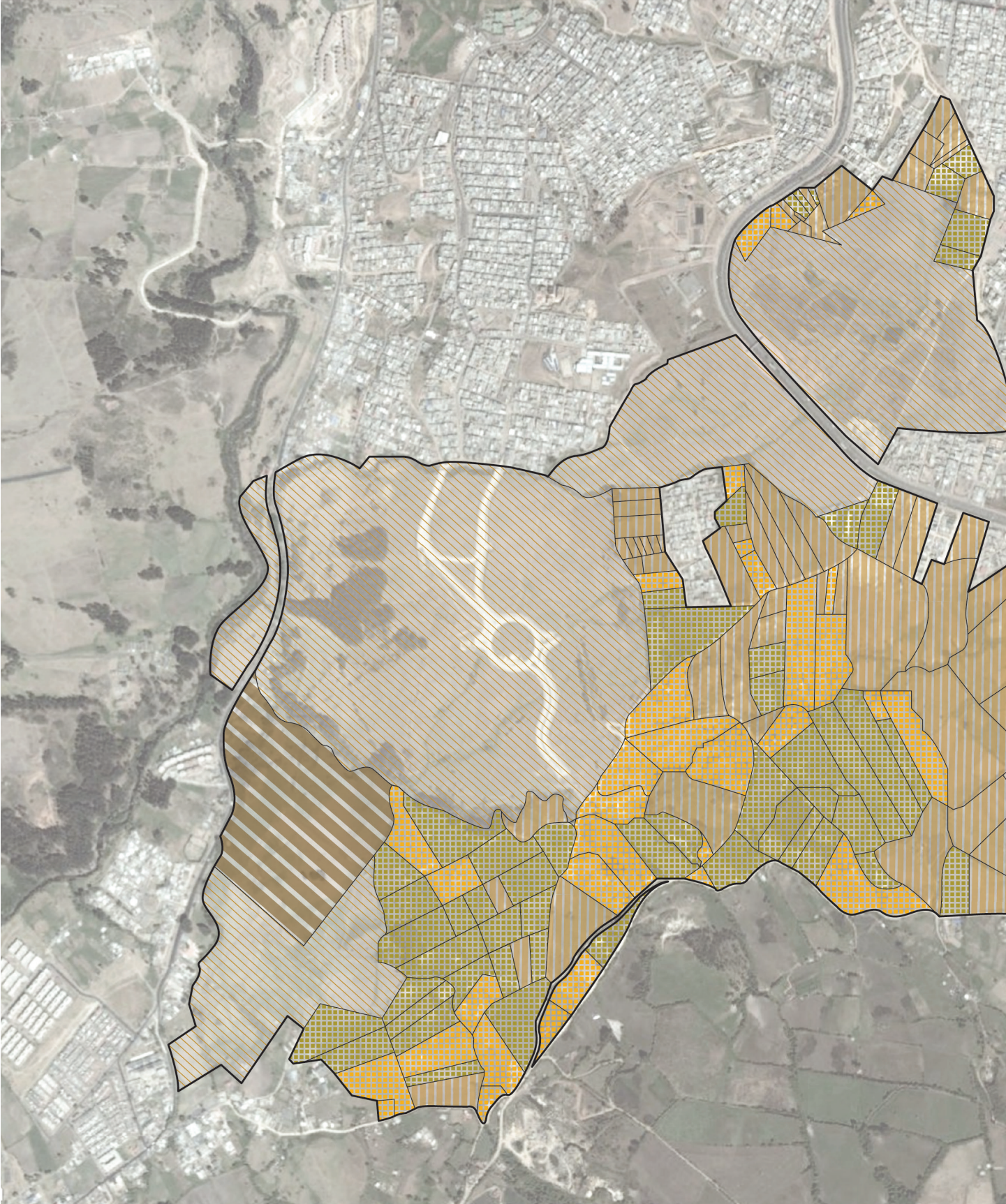
#### OTHER USES

These parcels represent land allocations other than for agricultural application [for example housing and commercial activities] and compose a total of 50 lots [14.43 Hectares]. Most of the owners of these properties are unknown.<sup>5</sup>

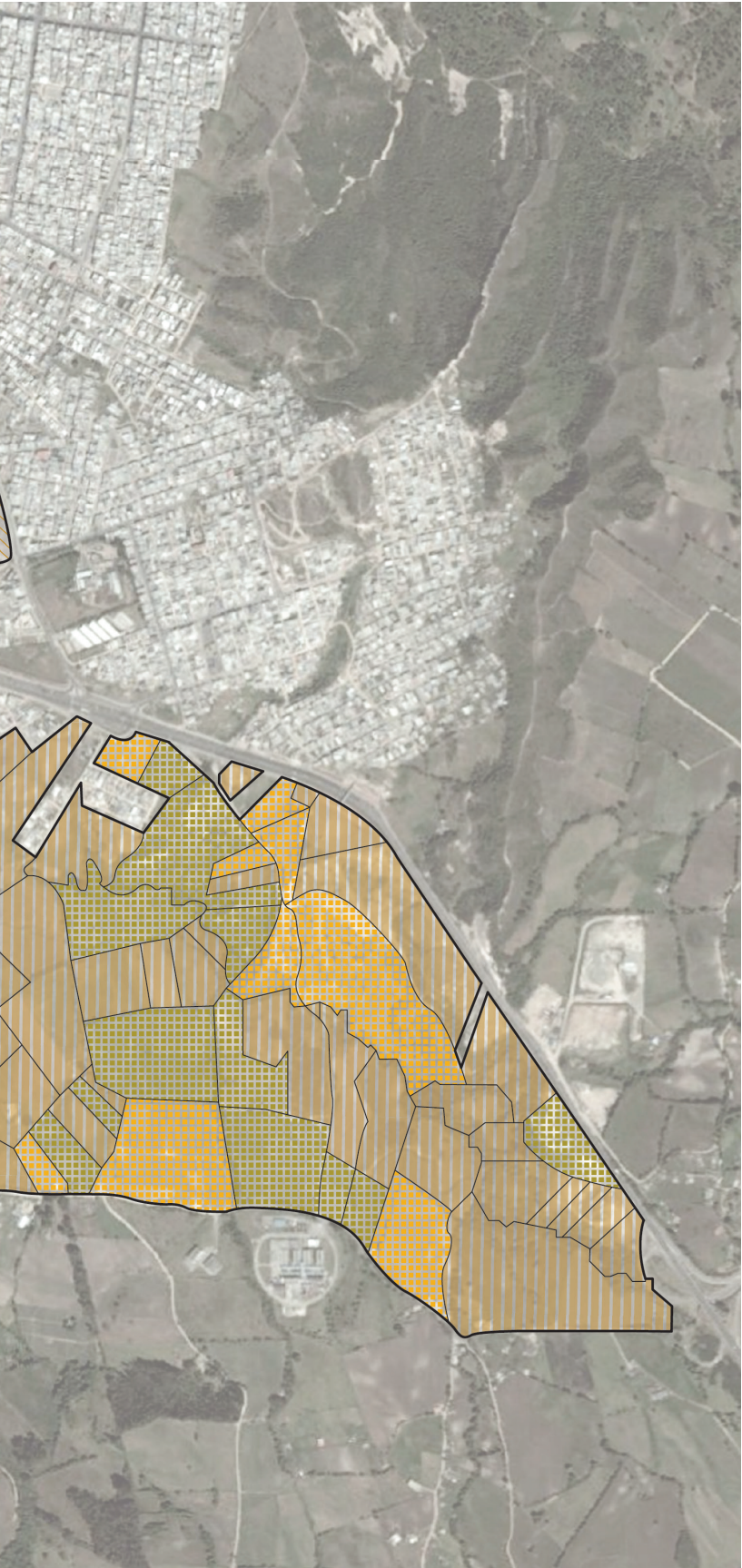
These land uses and property divisions represent the existent distribution of the Tres Quebradas Partial Plan. Although most of the composition of the area corresponds to parcels which are not used for residency, the remaining

lots within the farm and field category are currently occupied by local farmers who either own or rent the property. These parcels will be the most affected by the Nuevo Usme project because it is easier for the city to rezone the area without benefiting those who reside on them. A problem that is further aggravated by the planning process of the partial plan where it instigates the process of exchange of private land to the public sector, usually land acquired by Metrovivienda and which becomes the feeder lots that create a rise in the land value. This process affects the economic stability of the site and the people inhabiting the other lots, such as the fields and farms, because the locked-in aspect of the partial plan prevents them from selling it and the maintenance of their lots increases with the rise in land price. As a result, the farmers are left frustrated and helpless by an urban expansion planning process that forces them to continue living in poverty and at risk of displacement due to the inability to adapt and change their lots to succeed despite the urban expansion, in particularly when the implementation of the project has not been implemented.

The city's proposed master plan for Strategic Operation Nuevo Usme describes the development of the site as an area of interaction between urban and rural activities to promote a working interface through projects of urban agriculture, low-density housing, and supportive amenities, such as recreational, educational, and health facilities, and urban parks. All of these activities will replace the existing agricultural activity in the area and transform the ownership and land-use structure of the site. Metrovivienda and the public sector will be responsible for the development and construction of most of the different social housing projects, ranging from 6-storey apartment buildings to one or two-story house complexes. Per the proposal, Operación Nuevo Usme will construct approximately 57,000 homes to double the population of Usme to approx. 550,000 inhabitants.<sup>6</sup> The incoming population includes a low-income community composed of migrants and victims of the agrarian and armed conflicts, most of whom likely have a farming background. The shift from farm to apartment building affects the rural community the most because the construction of these edifices forces the displacement of the existing peasantry. To provide a new area of settlement for the farming population, the city established a productive resettlement program to relocate the affected farmers within the boundaries of Partial Plan 4 - the proposed Urban-Rural Border. This program provides the displaced farmer a new parcel of equal or lesser value than their existent plot. However, if the farmers do



### EXISTING OWNERSHIP OF THE TRES QUEBRADAS PARTIAL PLAN



-  Farm
-  Field
-  Other Uses [Unknown]
-  Feeder Lots
-  Archaeological

Figure 48 | Existing Ownership of Tres Quebradas Plan

not want to participate in the program, many will be forced to relocate into the new social housing projects. As a result of this housing shift, the social behaviour of the farming community is impacted by forcing them to adapt their lifestyle; such a change results in the loss of the agricultural identity.

#### A City within The City - Urban and Rural Development Strategy

The rural development strategy for the city's master plan stems from the objectives of the POT to consolidate the countryside as part of the city structure through the protection of farming identity. Therefore, the city's master plan promotes agricultural lifestyles and agricultural production. Furthermore, the edge will be supported by environmental corridors to improve and recuperate the native ecosystems and hydrology network. The area for the border connects to the mobility and service infrastructure implemented throughout the entire area of the expansion site. Overall, the border works as an urban element which promotes strengthening the life and production model of the farmers.

In the city's master plan, the border lands are designated to medium-density residential zones, coupled with areas of urban agriculture that promote the cultivation of local products. However, the city's proposal does not advocate for rural growth for the remaining rural areas located south of the expansion. Along with the failure to develop a working rural development strategy, the problem of food security arises. Usme has been known to be the agricultural mainstay for the city but due to urban growth and lack of protection or rural land, the farmers in Usme cannot cultivate the land to its full potential. Furthermore, many farmers cannot compete with corporate farms causing their products to go to waste or be sold at an extremely low price. Therefore, this current economic state cannot sustain the family farm and its ability to provide a constant food supply to the city. Usme's failing agricultural system is an example of other areas in the country where capitalist agriculture has changed the food supply dynamic at a domestic level by decreasing the food supply available, while increasing food prices. Thus, these changes do not only affect the farmers but the greater population, especially those on or below the poverty line. Note however, that the food scarcity question could be resolved if areas such as Usme utilized their agricultural potential to develop a model that takes advantage of the family farm as a source of food security for the city-region.



“What is ironic is that we are going to be displaced by the district to build housing of social interest for the vulnerable population affected by the national conflicts. THEIR PROPOSAL IS ‘SELL, OR WE WILL DISPLACE YOU’”

— Ana Otilia Cuervo Areval,  
Leader of the Rural Area of Usme,  
Resident at the Vereda La requilina

Ultimately, Operación Nuevo Usme suggests an appropriate response to the challenges of most of the problems in the area but other responses exacerbate certain problems. First, the design of social housing provides a solution to the domestic problem because it supplies shelter to the incoming migrant and displaced population, but its implementation will displace the local farmers of Usme. Second, the POZ plans to protect the ecological structure of Usme but the construction of hard uses, such as residential development, produces further soil contamination and changes in land use and distribution. Lastly, the city's master plan promotes the opportunity to create an urban-rural border to establish a working interface, but this 'border' does not work towards generating a productive exchange between the two landscapes; rather, it intensifies the production of an urban identity, over supporting and maintaining Usme's rural character.



Figure 49 | Usme's Urbanization

**LA QUINTA** PERIÓDICO INSTITUCIONAL DE LA ALCALDÍA LOCAL DE USME  
MEJOR PARA TODOS... USME MEJOR PARA TODOS

PERIÓDICO INSTITUCIONAL DE LA ALCALDÍA LOCAL DE USME / prensaalcaldialocaldeusme@gmail.com

MESA TERRITORIAL VEREDA EL TESORO:  
CONSEJO DE SEGURIDAD EXTRAORDINARIO

**USME: LA ARMONÍA DE VIVIR ENTRE LO RURAL Y LO URBANO**  
La Alcaldía Local trabajando por más de 400.000 corazones



**Usme la localidad verde de Bogotá. Cuidarla es un compromiso de todos.**

Campaña de la Alcaldía Local de Usme para la austeridad en el gasto:  
**"Ahorra o Nunca"** 

**CONOCIENDO USME**  
Página 3  
Centro Local de Artes para la Niñez y la Juventud (CLAN) Cantarrana

**ENCUENTRO CIUDADANO**  
Página 8  
Rendición de Cuentas de Policía Usme

**Página 5**  
Taller de diagnóstico contra la vulneración de los Derechos Humanos

**Página 2**  
Ciclópeas por Usme: nuestro destino es movernos!!

Figure 50 | A local newspaper from the Usme's local government promoting Usme as the place to live in harmony between the rural and the urban

# *USME: LIVING BETWEEN THE URBAN AND THE RURAL*

After the implementation of the POZ in Usme, there is minimal to no progress in the implementation of the city's master plan. This section showcases the present conditions of the territory.

Figure 51 | Usme's Current Site Conditions ▷







### AVENIDA USMINIA

Avenida Usminia is the only construction finalized by the city after the implementation of the POZ. Today, the access to the road is off-limits and lays on a vacant field.

Figure 52 | Avenida Usminia





## SOCIAL HOUSING

Despite Partial Plan 2 and 3 not being officially planned by the city's planning authorities, Metrovivienda and other social housing construction companies have built several housing projects at the urban-rural edge of Usme.

Figure 53 | Social Housing Construction at Partial Plan 2, Usme Centro



### THE AGRICULTURE OF USME

Many farms in Usme cannot keep up the maintenance of their crops because they don't have access to new farming techniques and fences to protect their fields. Furthermore, the contamination from the construction of the informal settlements affects the soil conditions of their farms.

Figure 54 | Farms and Fields of Usme



### MARKET TYPOLOGIES

Usme does not have a farmer's market or market plaza to allow farmers to sell their products, instead the majority of the exchange happens on the road to Usme and the downtown through the means of their own vehicle or food stand.

Figure 36 - 41 | Collection of Market Stalls



## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Usme's public transportation systems in Usme consist mainly of feeder routes and private buses because the main TransMilenio trunk corridors stop at the north of the Locality. Thus, it leaves the majority of the site without access to public transportation.

Figure 61 | Feeder route and Bus Stop in Usme



## WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE

Since Usme does not have a cohesive infrastructural network, the communities are forced to create temporary collection centers for waste collection.

Figure 62 | Waste Collection for the Countryside of Usme



### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

After Metrovivienda began construction for a social housing project, it found an archaeological cemetery for the Muisca Culture located within the Tres Quebradas Plan. Today, the site has become its own partial plan dedicated to its preservation.

Figure 63 | Muisca Cemetery in Usme



### ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

The ecological structure of Usme has been affected by the construction of informal settlements and other urban uses, where the water network is impacted through the treatment to the ravines that run throughout the region.

Figure 64 | Conditions of the Ravines in Usme





## *THE BOUNDARY:* a farmer's war

The farmers of Usme have experienced neglect and marginalization since the creation of the urban began to take shape in the twentieth century. Their territory within the Capital District slowly adapted to support the need for urban growth, especially in the form of pirate urbanizations which chipped away at the valuable agricultural presence in Bogotá. Through the documents of the POT and the POZ, Bogotá's planning aimed to implement a master plan to formalize the urban structure in the area and create an urban-rural border pact to protect the community's agricultural identity. However, the territory continues to be polarized by conditions such as 'A City within The City' proposal's failure to be implemented and prioritization of the urban over the development of the urban-rural border defined in the master plan. Consequently, tensions arose from the proposal resulting in the formation of an Urban-rural Border Concentration Board composed of the local farmers to generate a counterproposal to the city's master plan, which I have identified as **The Boundary**.

Due to the eventual urban expansion and continuous disintegration of the countryside, the Boundary design proposal has been a farmers' fight since the implementation of the POT in the year 2000. Therefore, the farmers'

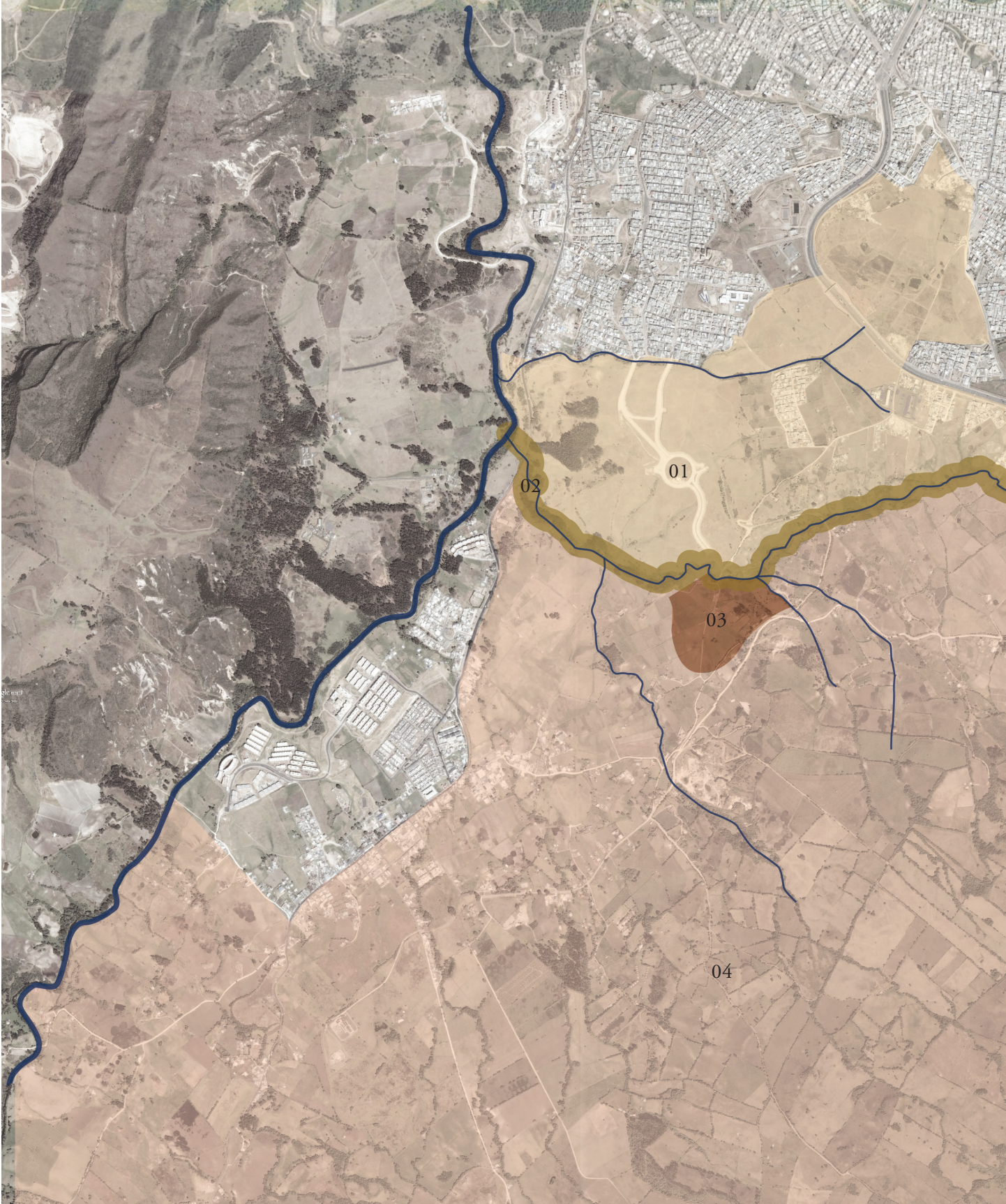
committee, with the help of the local mayor's office and the ULATA, visualized a land-use plan for Nuevo Usme that allows for some of the urban development but stops at an urban-rural boundary located at the La Fucha Ravine within the Tres Quebradas Partial Plan. According to Ana Otilia Cuervo Areval, one of the leaders of the Border Pact Concentration Board, the area south of the boundary is described as an agro-park to showcase the agricultural possibilities of Usme. The agricultural park concept stems from the Vereda Los Soches who successfully changed its rural landscape politically from area of urban expansion, to one of protected territory, a region that can take part in any future urbanizations of the city. Therefore, the farmers hope to turn the existing rural landscape into a protected zone that guarantees the preservation of the countryside.

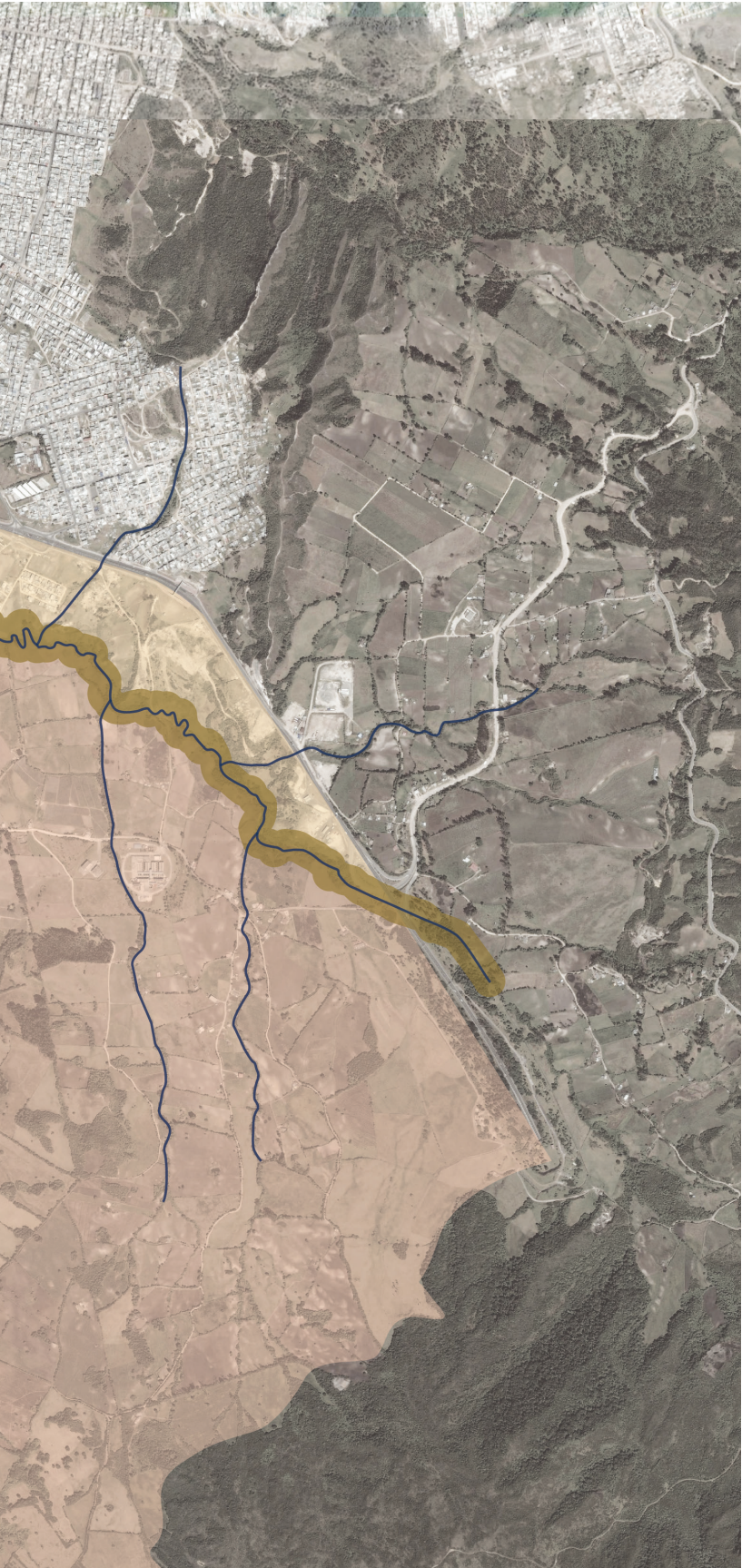
Besides the design of a new master plan, the farmers have initiated an agro-touristic route to promote the agricultural economy of Usme. The route operates by a certain number of farms who showcase the food, crafts, and the countryside of Usme to the visiting population. Along with agro-tourism, the ULATA and the farmers initiated a technical and veterinary assistance project to help the farmers learn new techniques and improve their cultivation of the land and animals. However, these initiatives have had minimal impact on the community because they cannot reach the many farmers in the area. Consequently, Ana Otilia Cuervo Areval describes the hopes for the establishment of a convention centre, a collection centre of local farming products, a pasteurizer, and a hotel – all of which would be administered by the local farmers in the region, improve the economy in the area, and support the rural identity of Usme.

After negotiations with the city's mayor and planning authorities, the farmers' counterproposal adapted the POT's regulations to provide a new territorial policy protecting the countryside, which allows for changes to be made to the POZ. Thus, the farmers accomplished changes to the master plan so that a portion of the partial plan was adjusted to limit social housing construction to an area bound by the agro-park; as such the infrastructure worked toward rural benefit. The new proposal will result in the remainder of the territory to be designated only for peasant occupation and not for future urban expansion. Regarding the infrastructure, the farmers' proposal seeks to maintain the implementation of the new highway which will connect the South from West to East. Despite successful modifications to the city's master

“ NO TO THE URBAN EXPANSION.  
Being a farmer is our culture and our life,  
which has been passed down from generations,  
from our parents to our grandparents, and lastly,  
this is what we know and love to do. Our roots  
and our families are from here, El Uval.”

— Hector Chipatecua,  
Farm in the Vereda El Uval.





### THE BOUNDARY SITE DISTRIBUTION

01 - Urban Expansion [? Ha]



02 - The Boundary



03 - Rural Amenities



04 - Usme's Agro-park

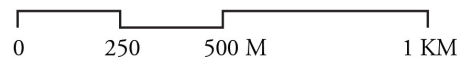
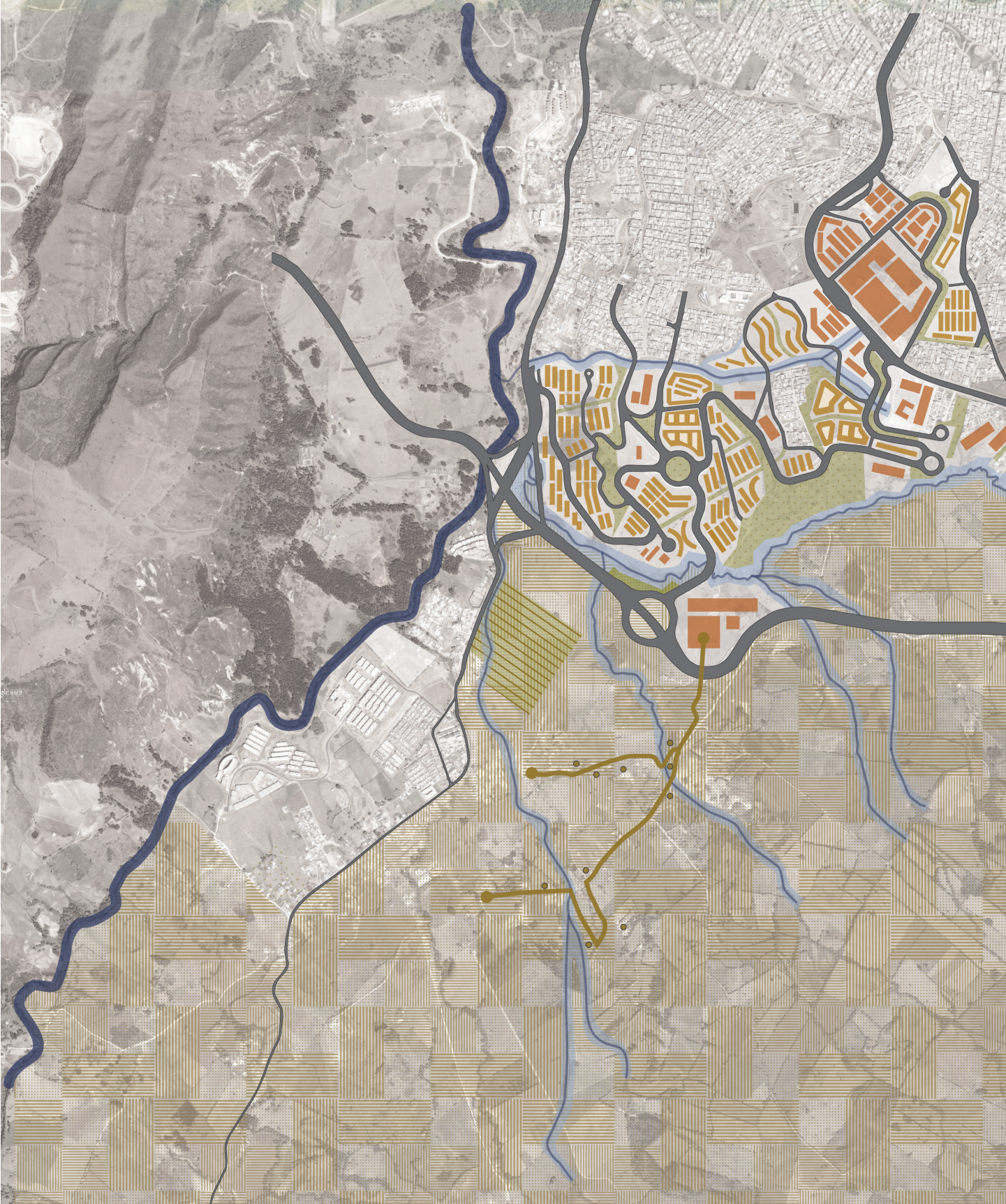


Figure 65 | The Boundary Site Distribution



### THE BOUNDARY MASTER PLAN



- Residential
- Services
- Parks
- Archaeological Site
- Existing Farm Fields
- Ravine Flood Plain
- Ravines
- Agro-touristic Route

Density of the project estimates the construction of 3,500 units to house approx. 14,000 inhabitants.

0 250 500 M 1 KM

Figure 66 | The Boundary Master Plan

plan, the farmers face a new fight against the political turmoil of the city. The mayor who approved the new proposal was suspended for illegal activity causing all his projects to be at risk. The farmers are currently in a waiting game, hoping that the new mayor will continue to support their proposal.

### CRITIQUE: THE BOUNDARY MODEL ON USME

The Boundary proposal suggests a strategy tailored to the improvement of the social, economic, and political conditions of the countryside and the farmers' lifestyle, while keeping a zone for the development of social housing to accommodate for the growing city. In theory, the Boundary master plan provides a bounding strategy through the agro-park to prevent any future urban expansion. The implementation of the supporting farming amenities supplies the rural and urban communities with technical and economic support. Overall, the plan includes a combination of land uses, such as residential, recreational, and commercial, to generate a working community. Despite the benefits achieved by the rural community, the boundary proposal does not create a productive interface between the urban and the rural. The reason for this failure is because the "boundary is an edge where things end; the border is an edge where different groups interact."<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, the proposed agro-park prevents the necessary interaction between the two communities.

#### The Boundary - Land Use and Ownership Distribution

Unlike the multiple changes towards the land-use and ownership strategy, the Boundary does not make a significant change to the existing allocation of the territory. The master plan proposes to maintain the property and land use of the existing farms and allows the lots already owned by Metrovivienda to continue with its plans for social housing. The only change to the area consists of the 20 hectares of land assigned to the supporting amenities situated just south of La Fucha ravine. The lack of change benefits all the farmers in the area as they would not be forced to sell nor be displaced to accommodate the urban expansion. However, to genuinely improve the conditions of the countryside, the existing models of land use and ownership must change, as they acted as catalysts in creating Usme's present conditions.





Figure 67 | Small Nursery at Ofelias's Farm to Maximize the Lot's Potential

### The Boundary - Urban and Rural Development Strategy

As for the rural development in the area, The Boundary proposal includes the implementation of new infrastructure, commercial, and technical services to the region, which provides a solution to the lack of rural development strategy for the area immediate to the urban edge. However, the creation of the boundary does not foresee any development to the countryside located further south in the locality. This lack of development means that many of the farms located deeper within the rural territory will benefit at a lesser scale from the improvements at the urban-rural edge. Lastly, the boundary prevents the growth of agricultural production in the area, because it insists on maintaining the conditions of the declining farms.

Another challenge faced by the city's master plan, and now the farmers' proposal, is the lack of governmental support towards a successful implementation of the project on the site. The political structure of the Capital District consists of a change in Mayor every three years, which hinders the execution of the proposals approved. Since the implementation of the POZ in Usme in 2003, the master plan's was expected to be completed within ten years. However, the only construction on the site was the Usminia Avenue located on the Tres Quebradas plan, along with other social housing projects located on partial plans 2 and 3. This happened despite the planning authorities' lack of official preparation. Thus, the institutional failure to implement a project creates tensions in the community because it leaves the area vacant, neither servicing the urban nor the rural. Ana Otilia Cuervo Areval states, "It is necessary that there is a policy or an institutional regulation, so that the urban-rural edge can function." The thesis cannot change the political structure of the city or the policies in which ideas are implemented because it is a problem too great to overcome. However, the thesis proposal provides a minimal solution towards a new self-sustaining strategy that can help the community become autonomous to foresee new initiatives that can help the countryside succeed at the urban-rural border.



Figure 68 | Signage at One of the Farms Taking Part in the Agro-touristic Route

“ The City does not take into account that the farmer is supporting the health and environment of the population by not cultivating with chemicals, and not contaminating the water network and native ecosystems. USME IS THE LUNG OF THE CITY, AND WHEN THE COUNTRYSIDE NO LONGER EXISTS, THEN THEY WOULD BE AFFECTING NOT ONLY US, THE FARMERS BUT ALSO THE PEOPLE OF BOGOTÁ AND THE COUNTRY.”

— Ofelia, El Pentane Farm



Figure 69 | Mural Depicting Usme's Agricultural and Ecological History and Culture



# Rural Bogotá





## a border *NOT* a boundary

The proposal, Rural Bogotá, suggests a pilot project that offers a new model of urban-rural development through a border, not a boundary. A proposal that considers the larger territorial flows of the site by improving the mobility, residential, ecological, economic, and social interactions between the urban and rural landscapes. The master plan acts as a vehicle to diversify the land-uses and activities in Usme to create a cohesive fabric and to improve the Campesino culture and heritage in an urban context, while taking into consideration the history of the site.

The new spatial model seeks to design an interactive interface where the border facilitates the porosity of multiple systems and flows of the site. It creates a liminal space,<sup>1</sup> enabling the construction of urban attributes, while preserving its rural identity and supporting the production of an agricultural economy. Consequently, the site operates through a multiplicity of thresholds. These behave as zonal gradients transitioning from an urban to a rural context to stabilize a “highly dynamic and complex system of land use, constituted by a singular mosaic of ecosystem [and] rural-urban interactions, which include considerations of flows of people, goods, income, capital, natural resources and waste.”<sup>2</sup> The zones establish programmatic and density uses ranging from

a high density urban zone, a semi-dense urban development that engages with agriculture and green spaces as part of its organizational model, and a low-density countryside. Although each threshold targets a different planning purpose, the site is connected through a series of mobility, ecological, and working corridors to foster the synergy between communities. This includes the development of designated elements of agricultural fields, market, and learning facilities to improve the social and economic development of the site. As well, the inclusion of the TransMilenio, construction of a new bus terminal, the Cicloruta cycling paths, and construction of the southern highway from the city's proposal improve the mobility within the site and connect Usme to the rest of Bogotá and nearby regions.

## THE THRESHOLDS – LAND-USE AND OWNERSHIP DISTRIBUTION

### 01 – The Urban

The first threshold is composed of the 6-storey buildings proposed by the city and farmers' master plans, along with an industrial and commercial zone to support the high density population of the site. This zone is situated adjacent to the informal settlements and the existing social housing projects within the Usme downtown to promote a high density urban corridor. The urban zone provides the space required to supply housing to the locality of Usme, while becoming the end of high-density urban construction on the rest of the site. The buildings are located on feeder lots owned by Metrovivienda and will provide access to housing for displaced victims of the armed conflict, new migrants to Bogotá, and low-income families living in the informal settlements of the city.

### 02 – The Productive Interface

The productive interface focuses on the second threshold of the site to develop a new spatial model for Bogotá and Usme that recognizes agriculture as the agency to appropriate the site and generate a productive exchange between the peasantry and city-dwellers. Using agriculture as the connection between the urban-rural border, the thesis project establishes a network of production that allows farmers to grow, collect, distribute, and sell, fostering an economic and social autonomy for the farming community through a composite of farms that work towards a common goal of promoting and preserving the Colombian farming culture. This threshold acts as the transition zone between the high density urban corridor and the low-density countryside becoming a highly interactive area within the site. The region is composed of a series of sub-thresholds, including medium density housing, agricultural fields, and recreational green spaces, to produce a cooperative approach to the spatial organizational model. On the other hand, the new 'agriculture park' becomes a recreational complex for the urban context and an agro-touristic site for Usme and Bogotá.

### 02A – The Co-op corridor

The co-op enables the construction of 2-storey medium density housing which uses the compact design of the 6-storey buildings and the aesthetic of the farm house typology to create a second layer of urban development on the site. However, it functions in relation to agricultural fields and learning facilities to promote the site's farming production. The goal of the co-op is not only to be the transitional housing density between city and countryside but to become a temporary housing project for farmers to return to their place of origin. Furthermore, living in the co-op will act as a training and learning period for them to develop their farming skills in order to instill the necessary tools and opportunities for sustained success upon returning to rural Colombia. Simultaneously, this will be a source of economic stability during their time in the city. Lastly, the ownership and development of the farming co-op corresponds to the public sector but will be managed by the local farmers of Usme to provide continuous support to the peasantry of Colombia.

### 02B – The Agriculture Corridor

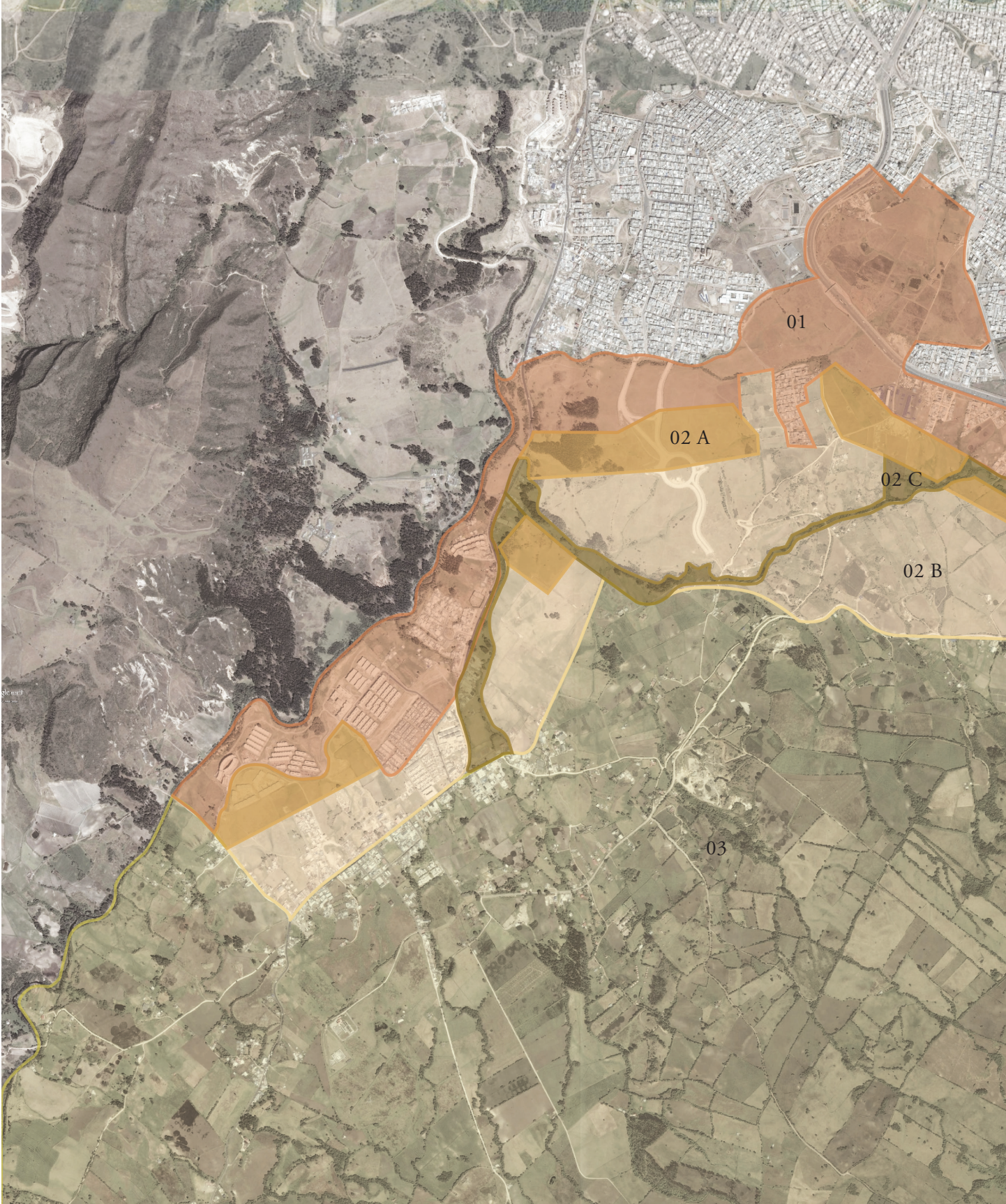
The agriculture corridor constitutes an agro-park that becomes a productive center for farmers, while acting as a recreational and learning park for the city dwellers. Furthermore, the fields of the agro-park comprise the production of intense farming, starting from a nursery and greenhouse, extending to the larger fields in order to develop and provide a diverse selection of crops. Also, the field includes stand-alone service hubs providing access to workshop spaces, equipment, water, waste collection, and storage, which sustain the intensive agricultural production of the site.

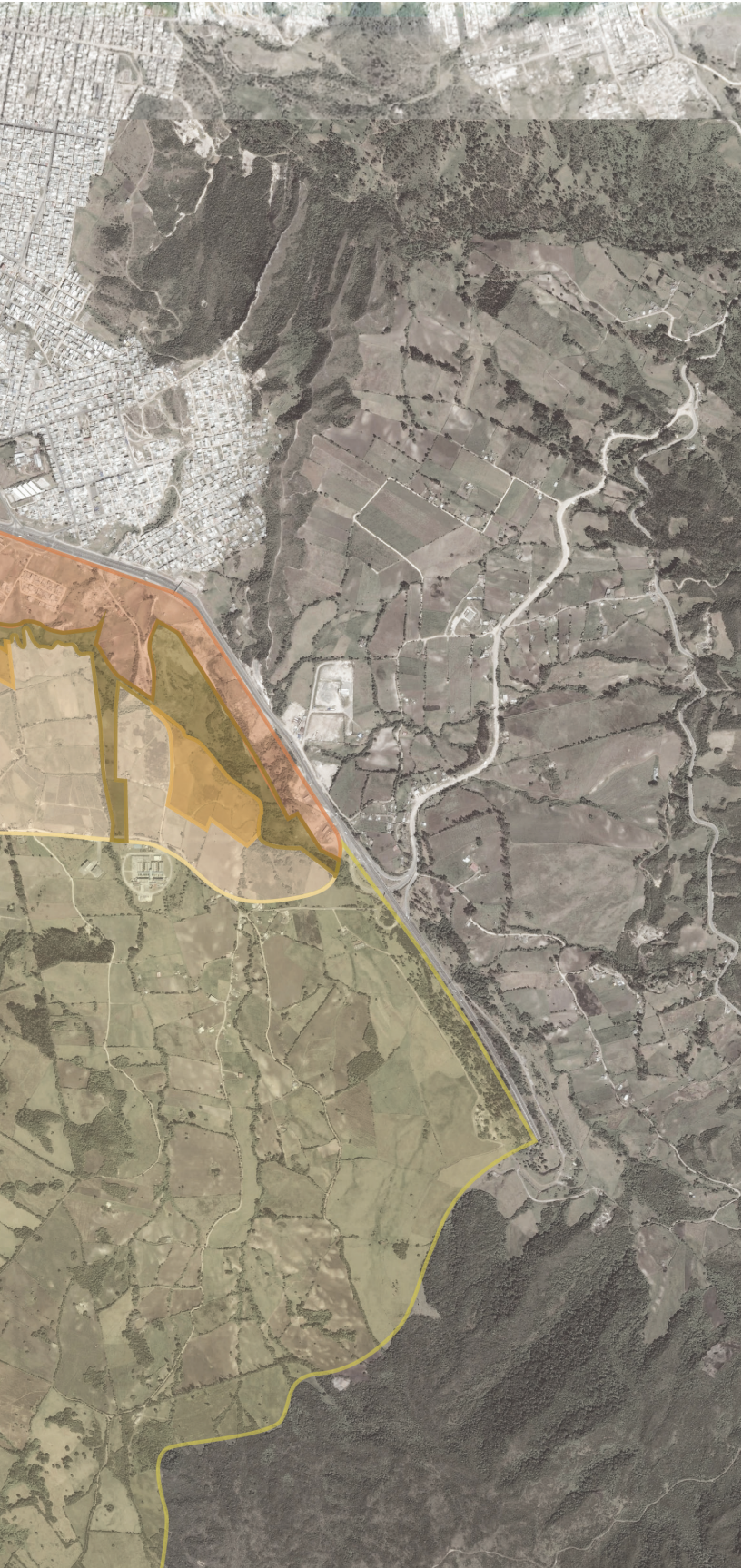
### 02C – The Recreational Corridor

The recreational corridor constitutes the extent of La Fucha ravine. This water feature crosses the site and becomes an ecological boundary between agriculture and park space; it also connects a series of park spaces, such as soccer fields, playgrounds and others, through a cycling network. This network of bike routes and park systems becomes the mobility and recreational system for the farmers inhabiting the interface and diversifies the land-use distribution of the site.

### 03 – The Countryside

The final threshold is the existing countryside comprised of low-density housing and preserved agricultural and paramo landscapes. In this zone there is no further construction besides the strengthening of the agro-touristic route proposed by the farmers' proposal.





# RURAL BOGOTÁ SITE DISTRIBUTION

01 - Urban



02 A - The Co-op Corridor



02 B - The Agriculture Corridor



02 C - The Recreational Corridor



02 - THE PRODUCTIVE INTERFACE

03 - Rural

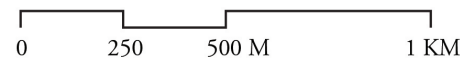
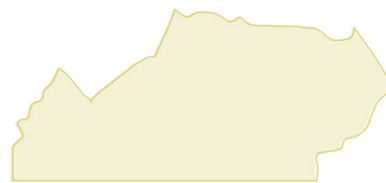
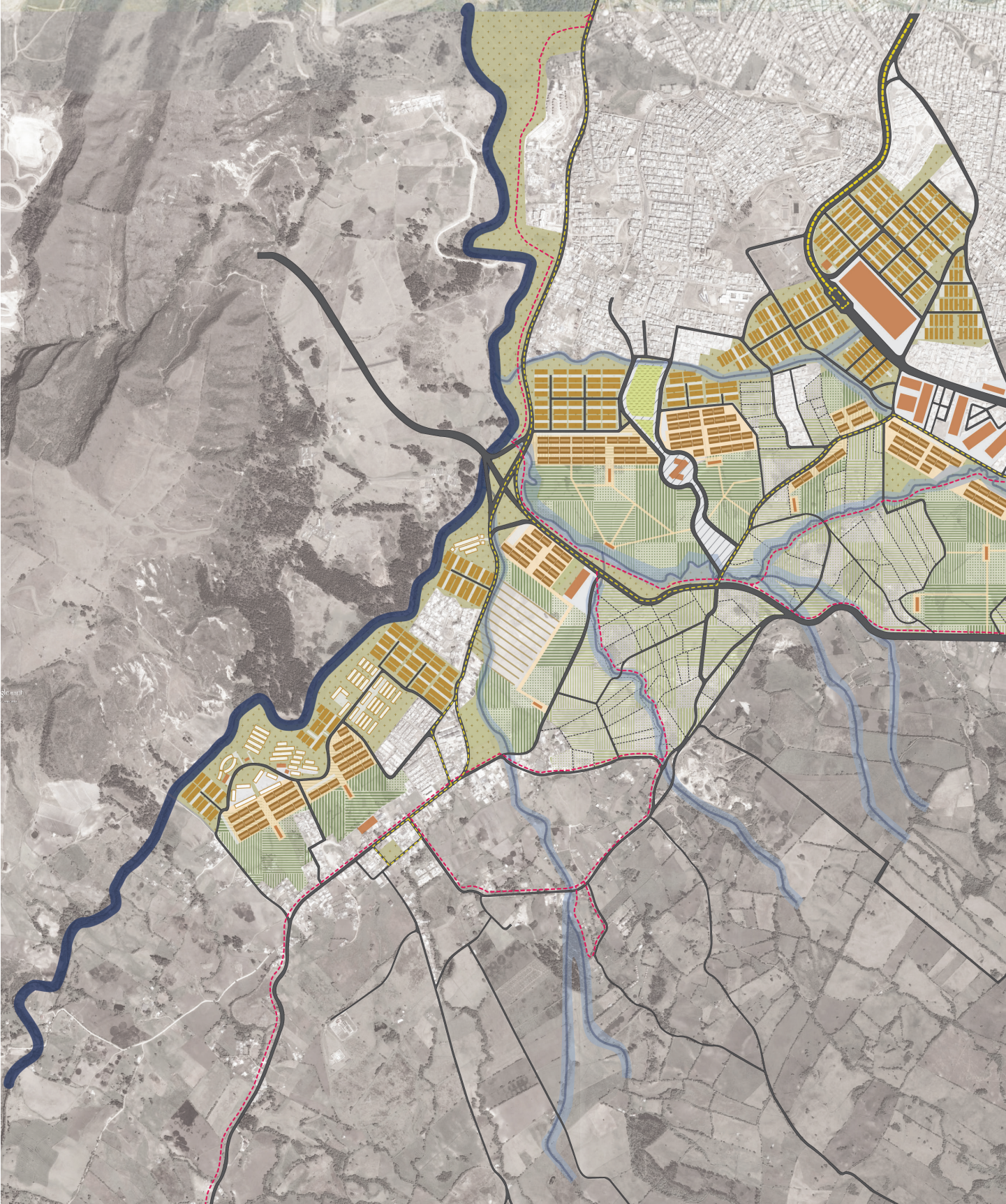


Figure 70 | Rural Bogotá Site Distribution





RURAL BOGOTÁ  
MASTER PLAN



-  Existing Linear Residential Block
-  Linear Residential Block
-  Co-op Block
-  Services
-  Parks
-  Archaeological Site
-  Co-op Fields
-  Existing Farm Fields
-  Nurseries + Greenhouses
-  Pedestrian Corridors
-  Ravine Flood Plain
-  Ravines
-  Cycling Routes
-  Bus Routes

Density of the project estimates the construction of 10,752 units in 6-storey buildings and 1,776 units in co-op houses to house approx. 50,104 inhabitants.

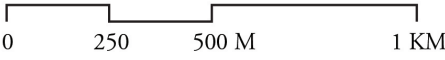


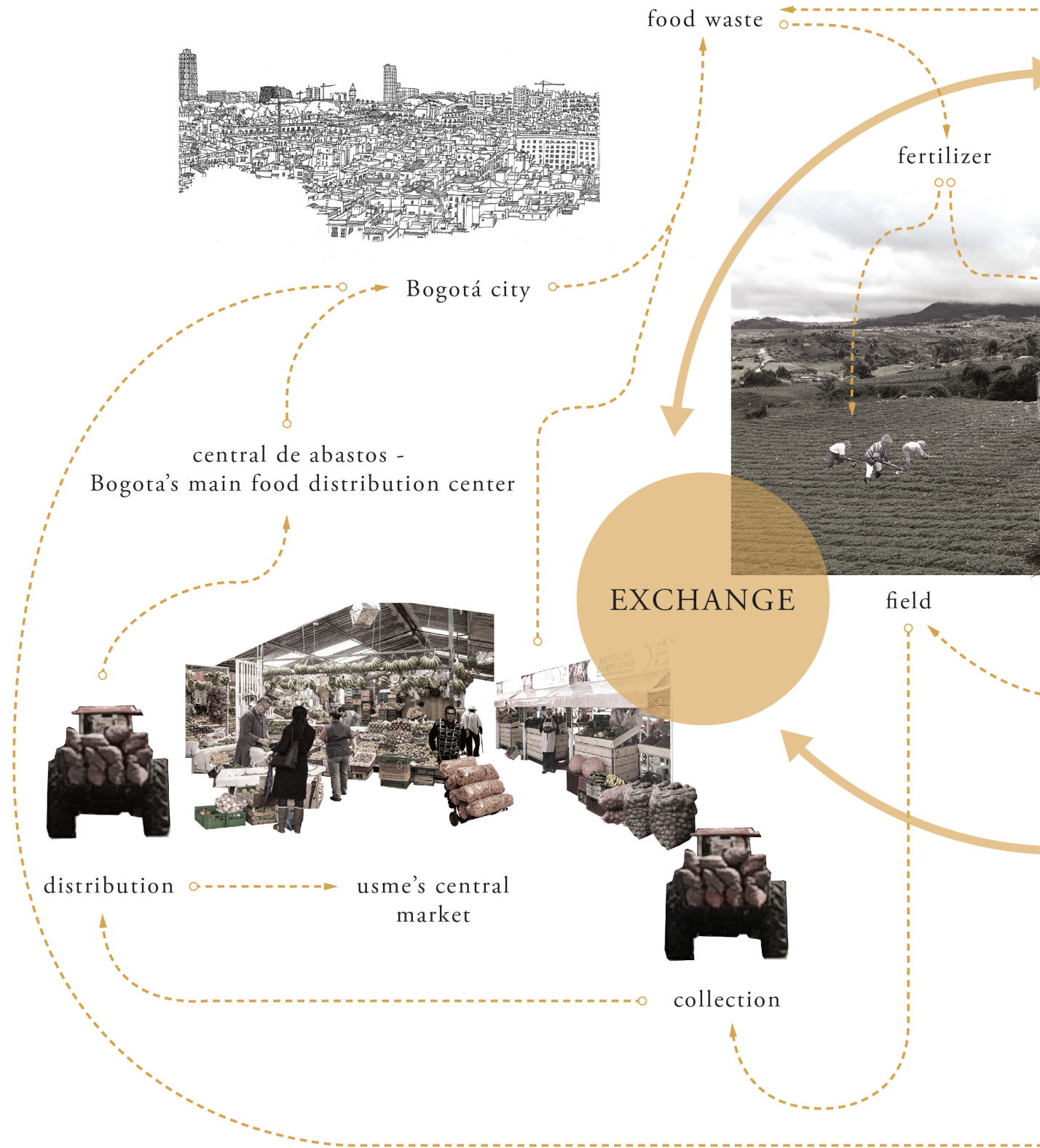
Figure 71 | Rural Bogotá Master Plan

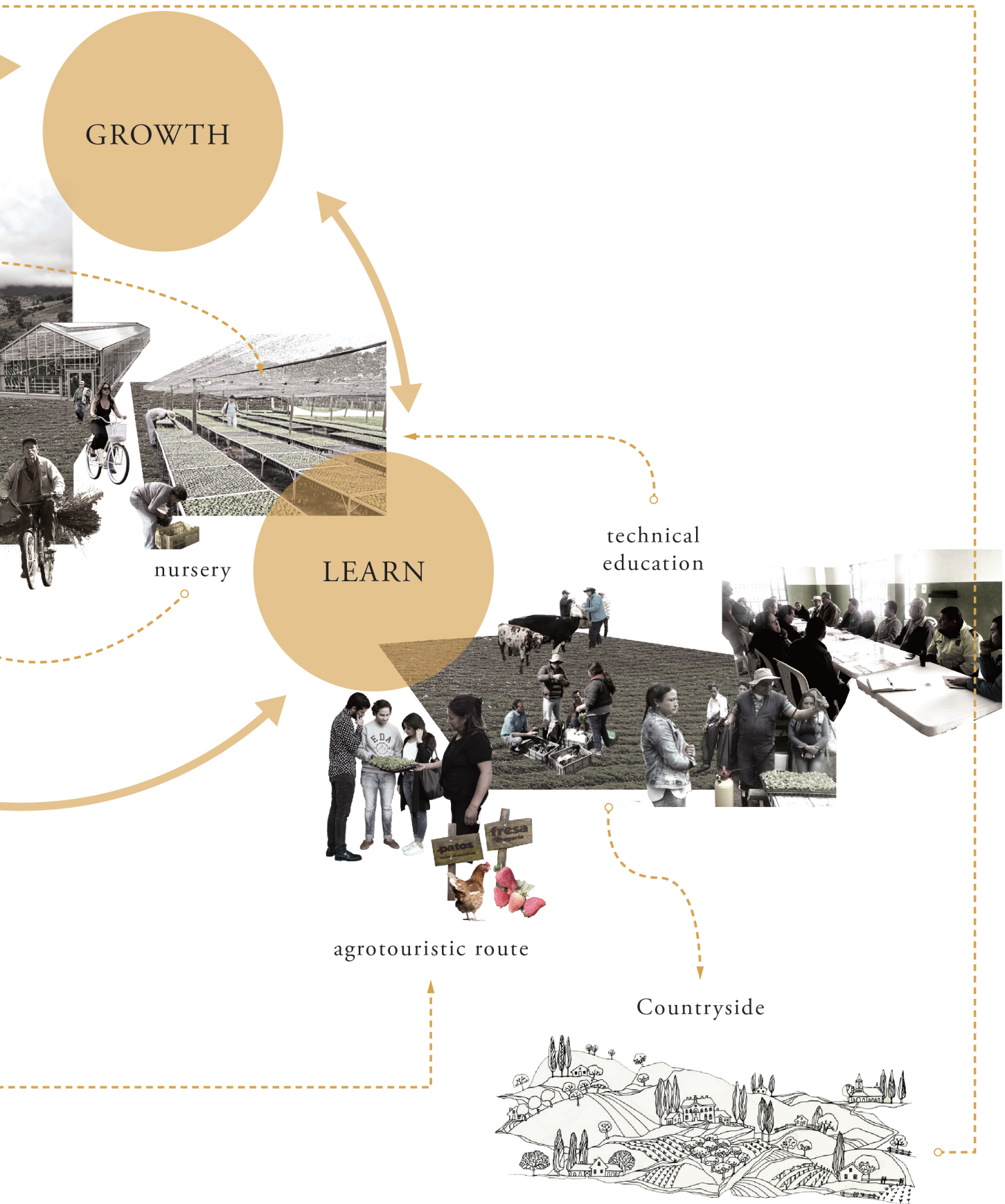


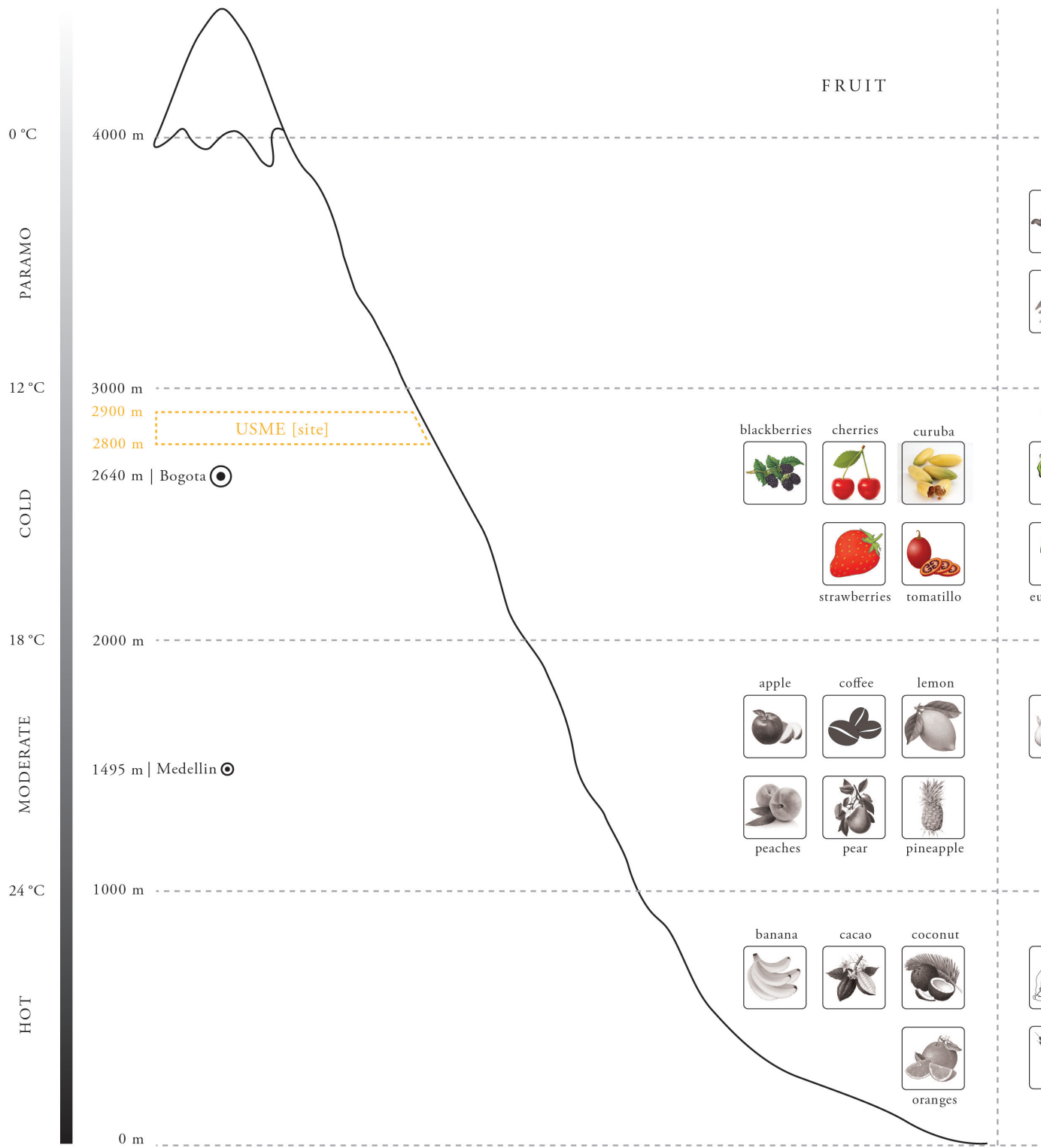
## the *PRODUCTIVE* *INTERFACE* of rural Bogotá

Rural Bogotá's productive interface instigates a **LEARNING, GROWTH,** and **EXCHANGE** cycle of production, which fosters a self-sufficient model of development. A strategy that advocates an agency to learn new techniques and ways to farm, grow, and cultivate a variety of crops and collect, distribute, and sell the harvest in a zone that produces social and economic exchange. The cycle is strengthened by the development of an exchange corridor, consisting of a market and distribution center, and a learning corridor, composed of technical and service facilities, promoting the continuous education of the farmer. These two corridors act as anchors on the site to cultivate the production cycle but also become a designated entrance and passageway to bridge the urban to the countryside. Furthermore, the agricultural cycle induces the agricultural park concept as a touristic site because it encourages people to learn about the farming community and processes that supply food to their tables. Therefore, the productive interface does not only constitute the evolution of agricultural production in the region as a source of food security but also encourages a green and recreational initiative for the city. Overall, the objective of the proposal is to create a duality in performance and develop a zone that benefits both urban and rural communities through different activities, as well as a self-sustaining and socially cohesive community.

Figure 72 | Rural Bogotá Growth, Learn, Exchange ▶  
Process Diagram







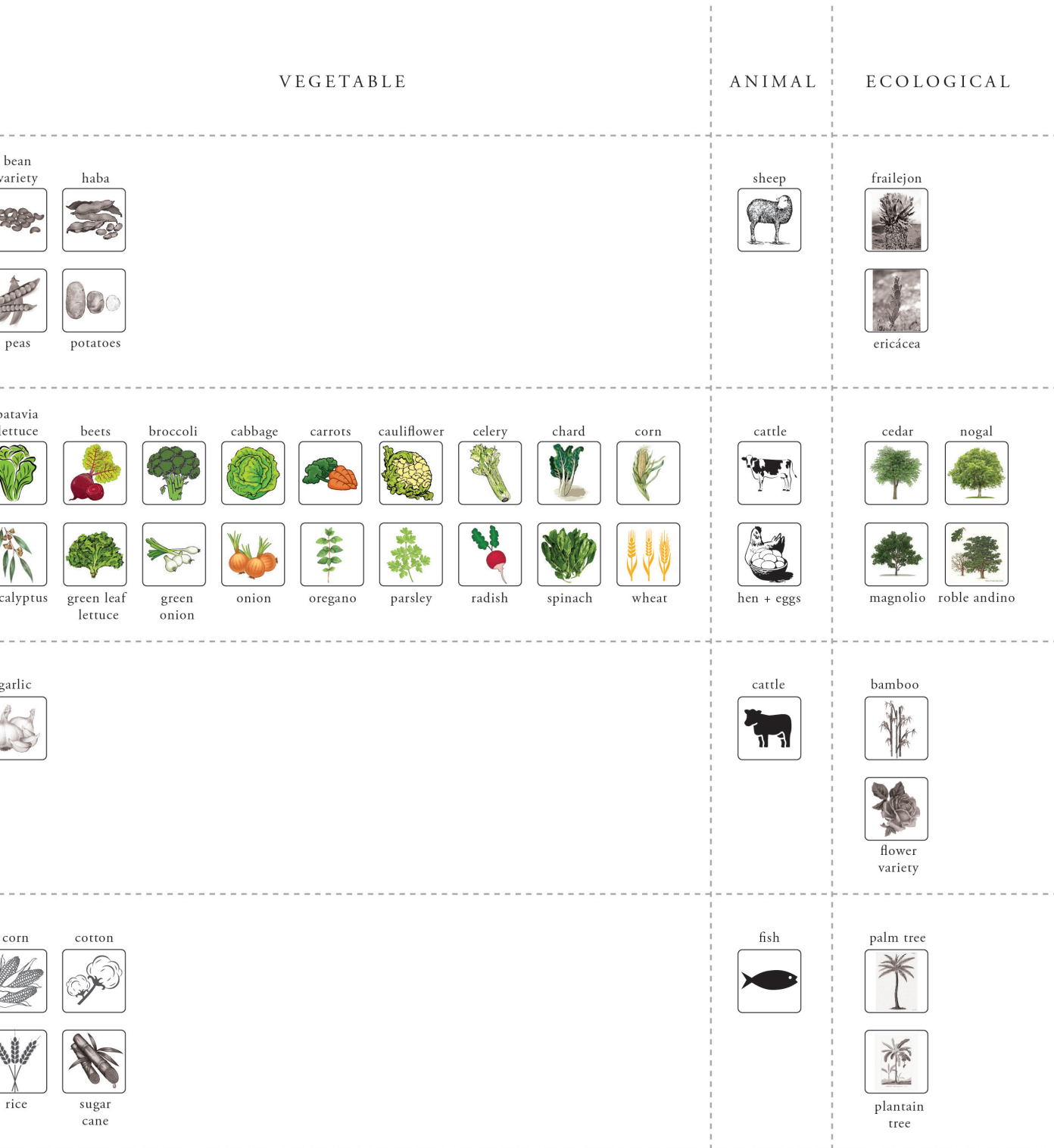


Figure 73 | Usme's Altitude, Climate and Crop Variety

RURAL BOGOTÁ SITE PLAN

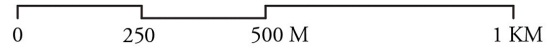
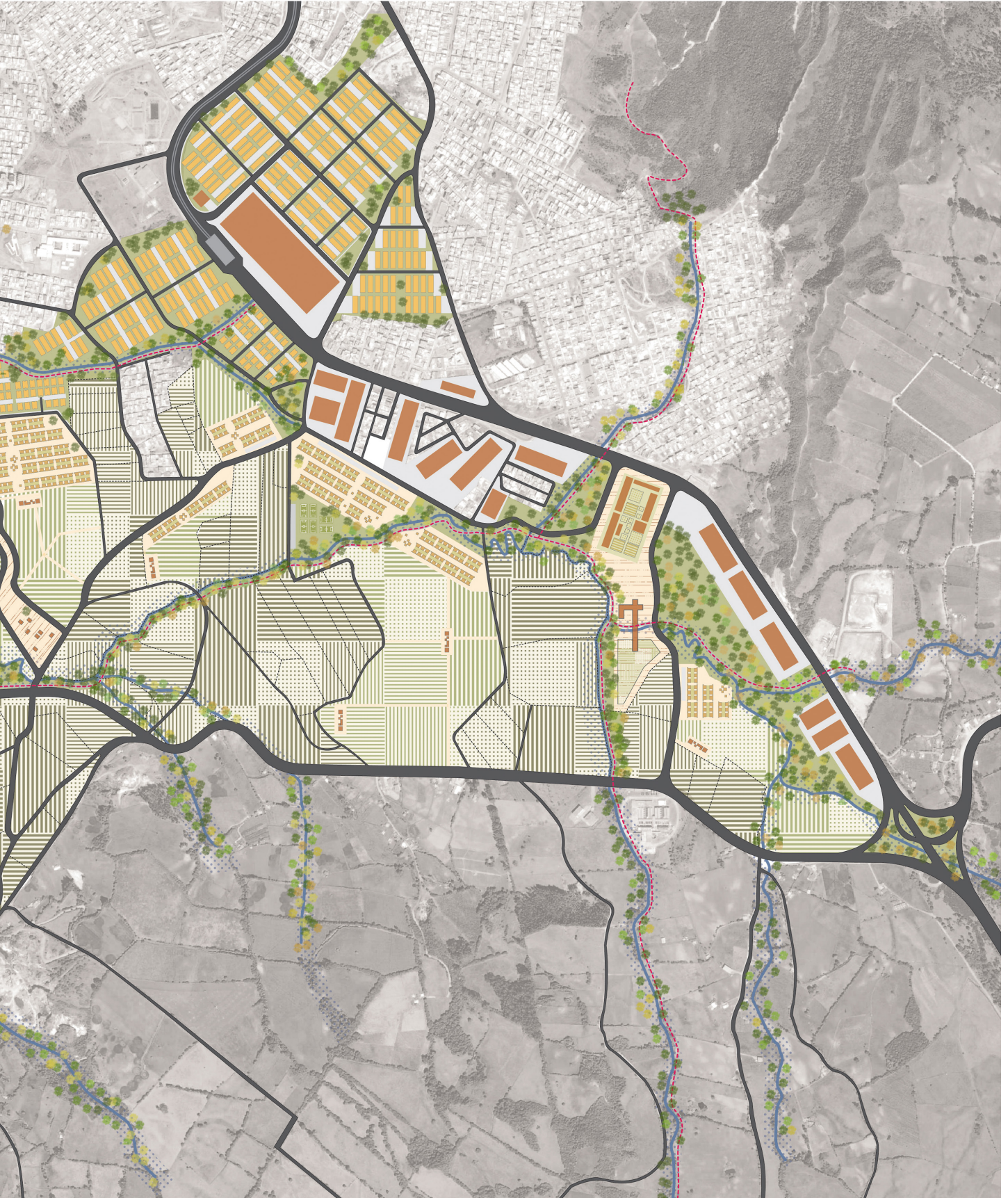


Figure 74 | Rural Bogotá Site Plan









## EXCHANGE CORRIDOR

The exchange corridor uses the existing Avenida Usminia and transforms it from vehicle centric to a pedestrian driven with the aim to improve the economic and social conditions of the site by proposing a central collection, distribution and market dynamic.

Figure 75 | Rural Bogotá Exchange Corridor



## LEARNING CORRIDOR

The learning corridor promotes technical and educational assistance to the rural communities to expand their agricultural knowledge and grow their vocation to improve the socio-economic conditions of Usme.

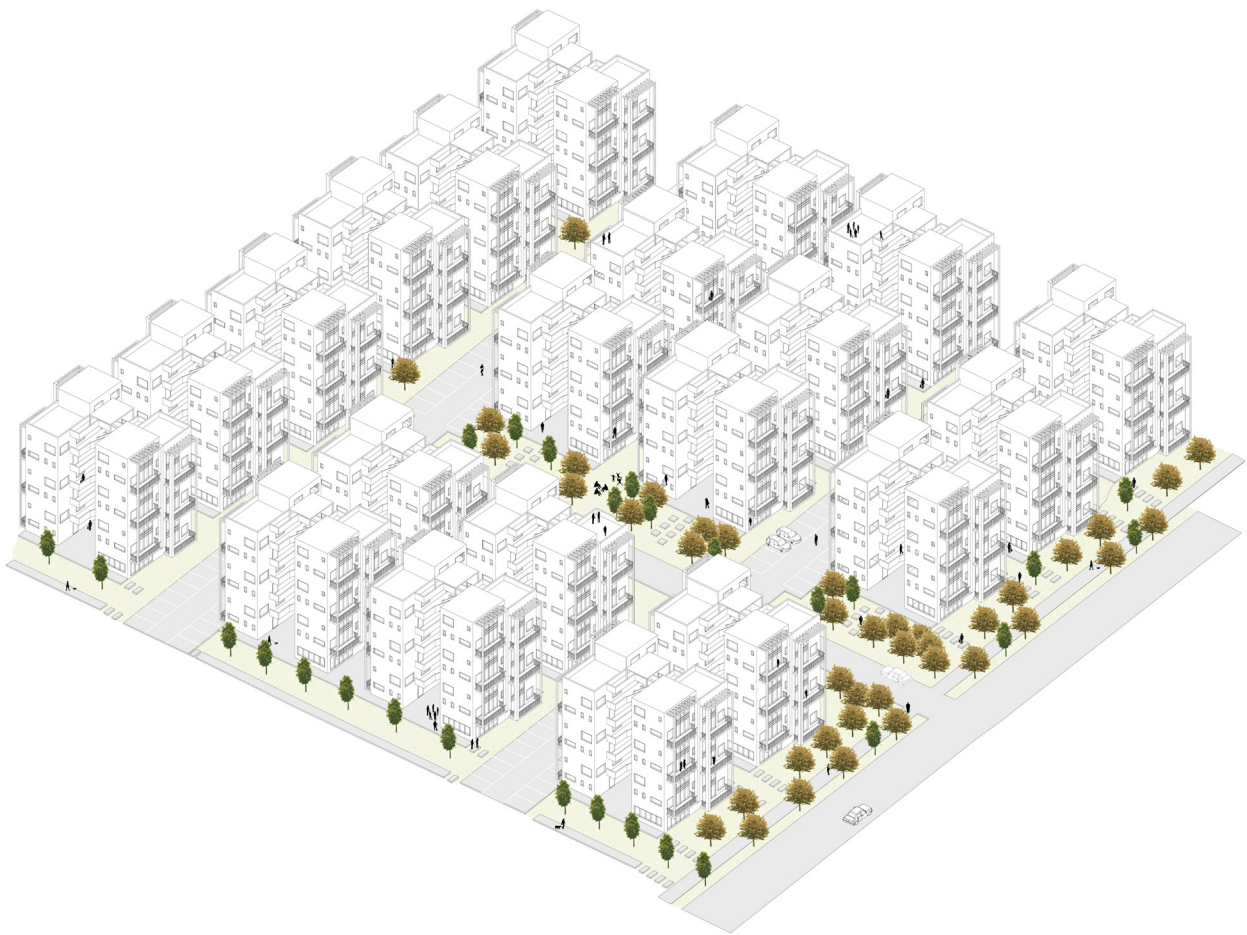
Figure 76 | Rural Bogotá Learning Corridor



## THE COOPERATIVE FARM

The co-op farm offers a compact 2-storey residential housing units for victims of the armed conflict to work and learn new techniques prior to returning to the countryside. To support the learning aspect of the co-op, the complex counts with working courtyards that provide access to workshop areas and gathering spaces to learn skills other than farming, such as craft making. Furthermore, the co-op's are located in proximity to the service hubs.

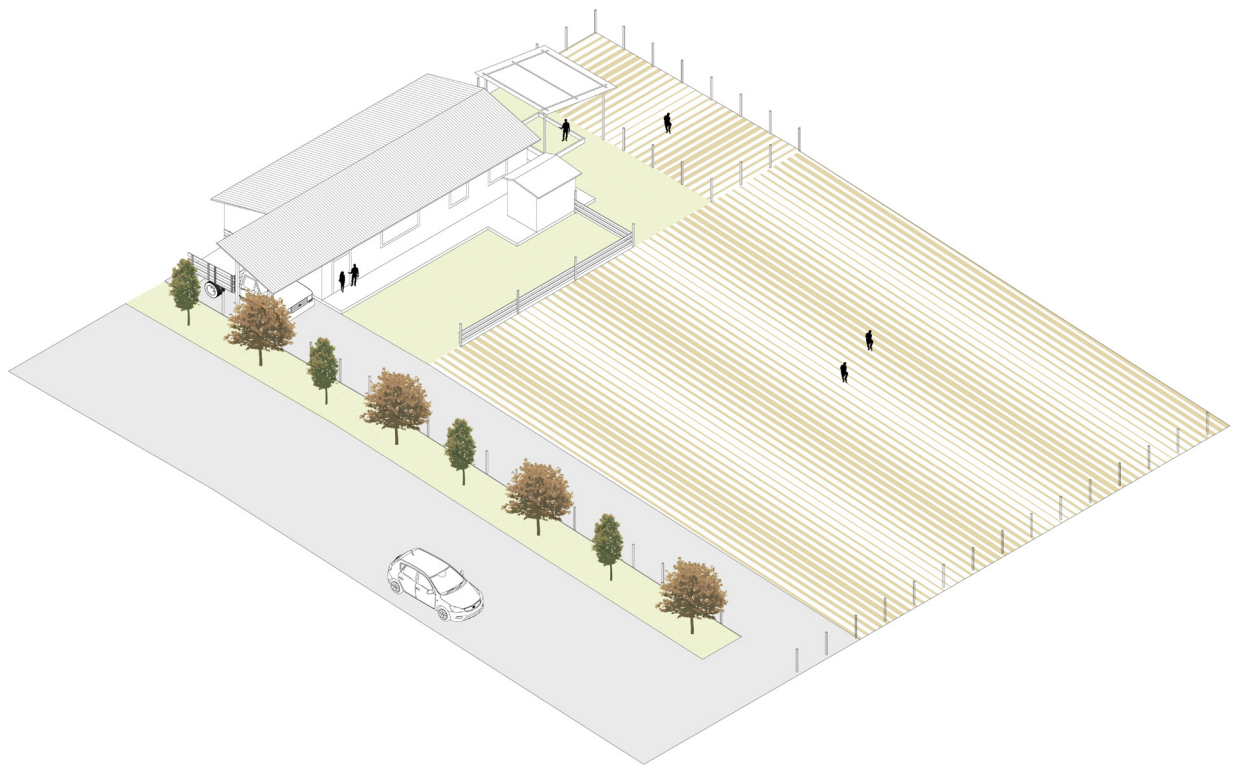
Figure 77 | The Cooperative Farm



## 6-STOREY RESIDENTIAL TOWERS

The 6-storey residential towers provide the high-density housing required to meet the city's demand for urbanization. Although these towers follow similar design guidelines to those of the existing social housing projects, these buildings offer a compact housing unit with access to a balcony, which allows the people living in these towers to have access to the outdoors. Furthermore, the buildings provide access to workshop areas in each building to emphasize the learning concept of the productive interface.

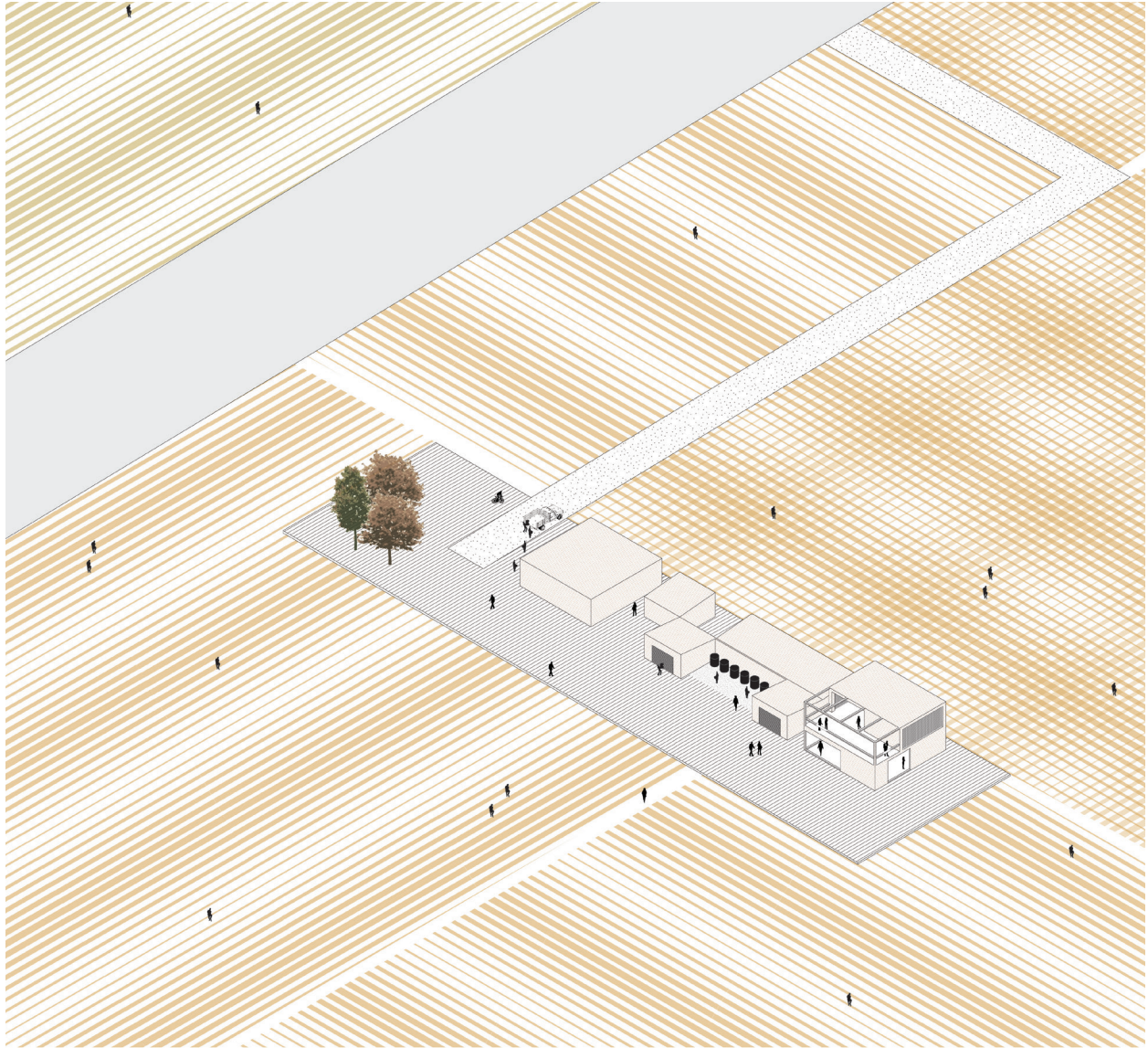
Figure 78 | 6-storey Residential Towers



## THE FARM

The farm is the existing housing model of Usme's countryside. Each of the existing farms will be included in the productive interface in an effort to prevent the re-victimization of the peasantry.

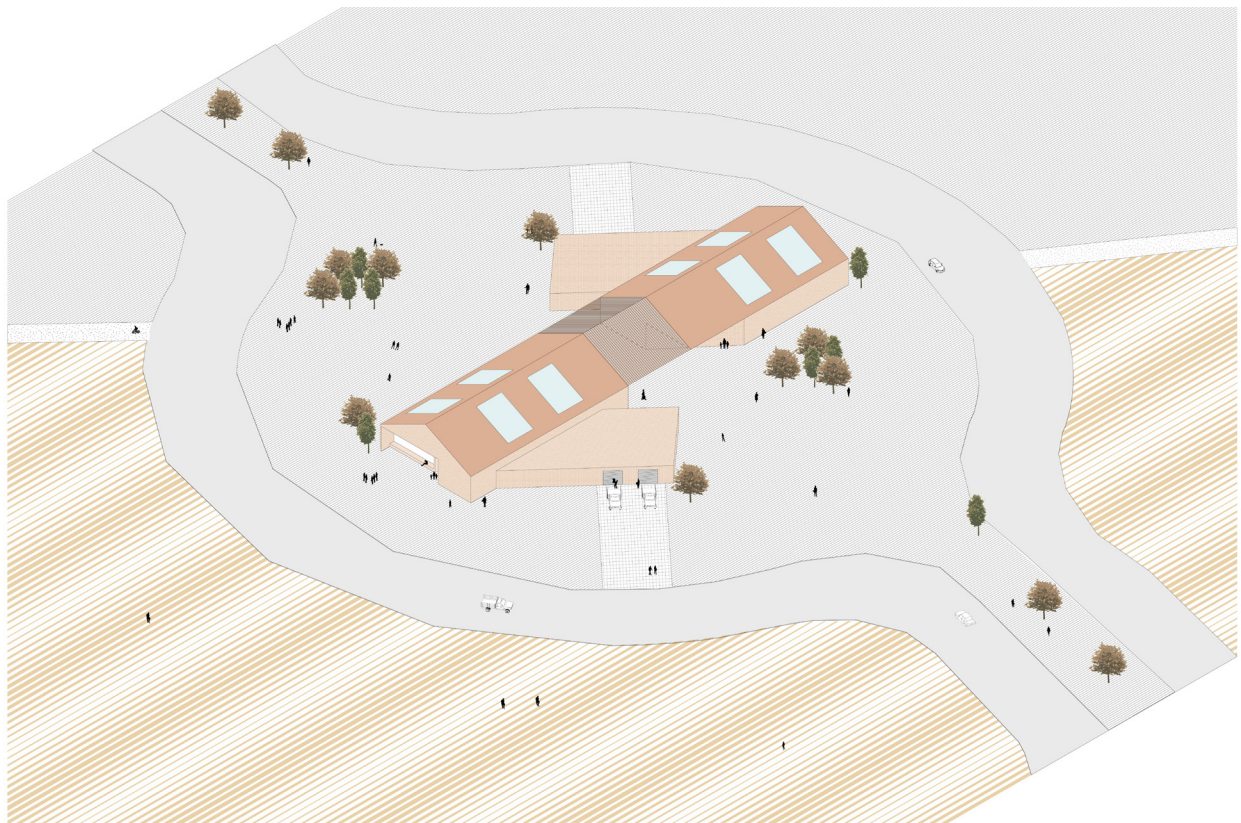
Figure 79 | The Farm



## THE SERVICE HUB

The service hub provide access to workshop spaces, equipment, storage, water, and waste collection, which can be used for the production of organic fertilizers to be used in the fields. Furthermore, they provide a harvest collection and distribution zone.

Figure 80 | Service Corridor



## THE MARKET

The market includes both an indoor permanent market and a temporary outdoor market that encourages different set-ups and variety of markets; as well as it can become an outdoor gathering space for urban and rural communities. Furthermore, the market is the central collection and distribution center for crops harvested in the area.

Figure 81 | The Market

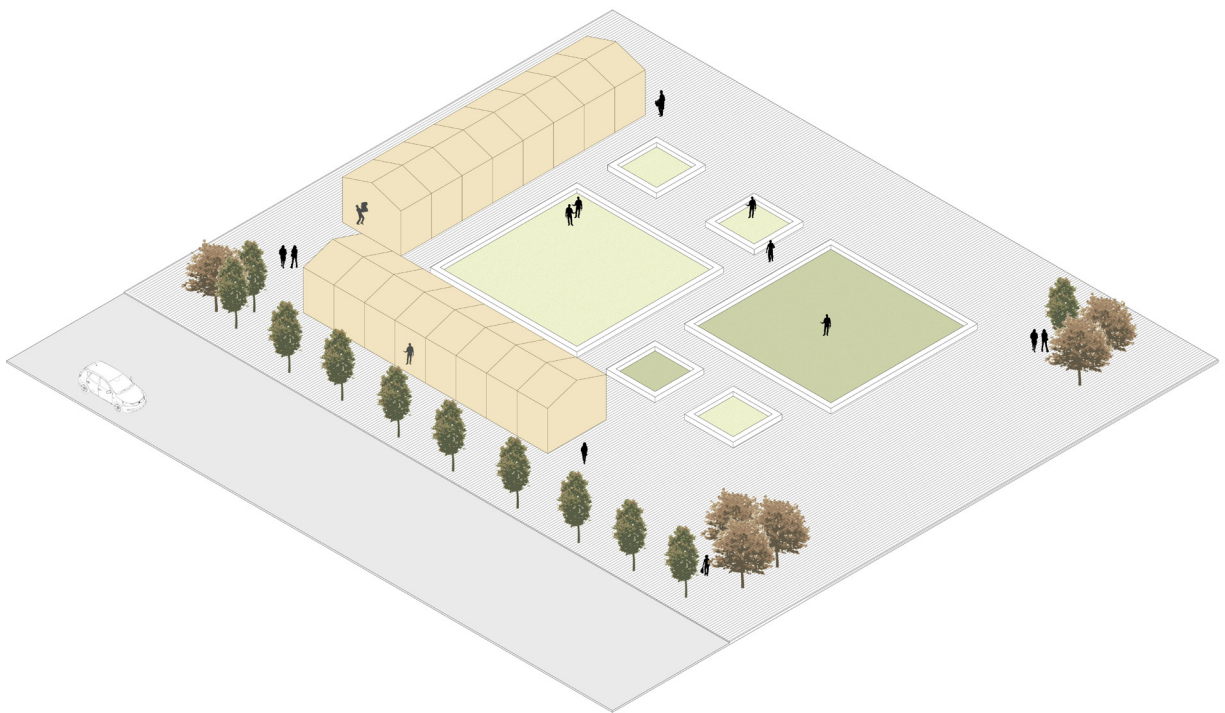




## THE LEARNING CENTER

The learning center provides technical education to local farmers to improve their knowledge on farming skills. The center also provides access to veterinary assistance. Furthermore, it acts as a community center for the urban community and as a center for the farmers' board.

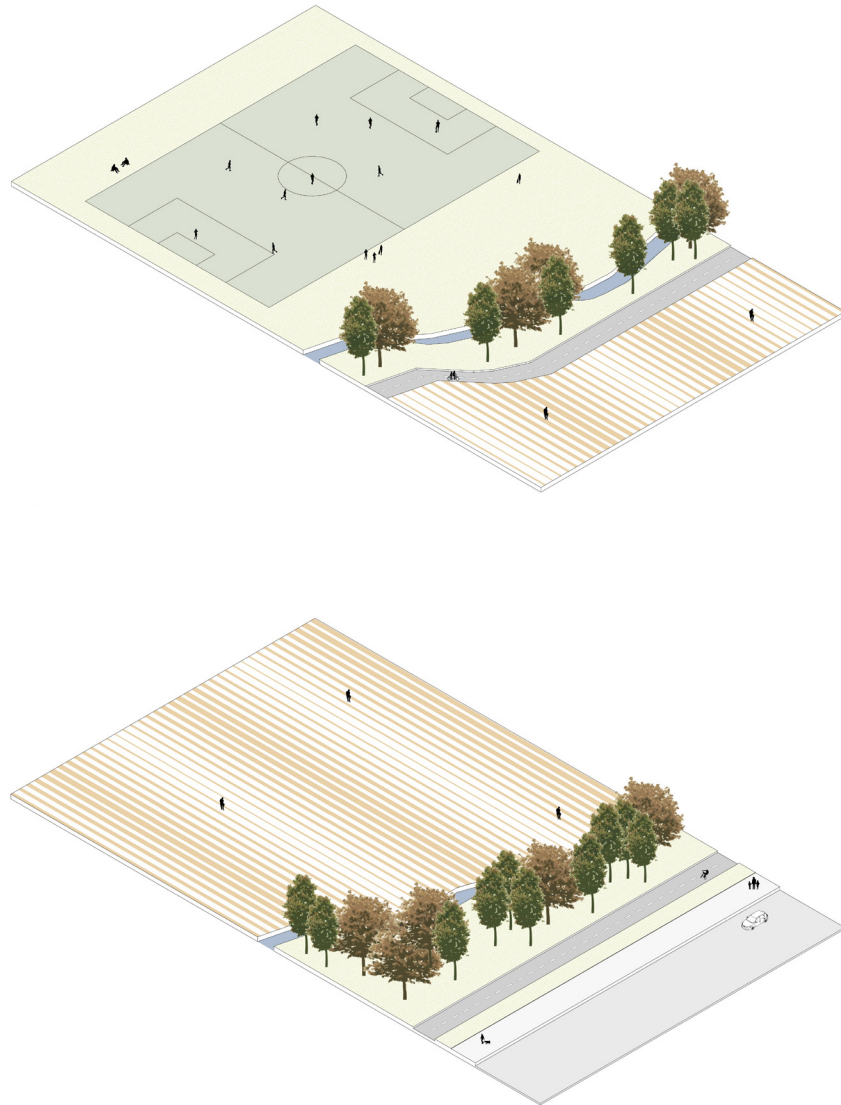
Figure 82 | The Learning Center



## NURSERY + GREENHOUSES

The nurseries and greenhouses provide the space to grow the crops prior to cultivation in the larger fields. Furthermore, they offer areas to experiment on new crop varieties. Lastly, the nurseries can be used to grow garden vegetables and other crops for local consumption.

Figure 83 | Nursery and Greenhouses



## ECOLOGICAL + MOBILITY + RECREATIONAL LANDSCAPES

The bike paths are mostly located alongside the ravines that cross and connect the site from the downtown, to the residential areas, fields and recreational spaces. These paths connect and improve the mobility of the site by allowing farmers to cross the area by bike, since many do not have access to a private vehicle. Furthermore, the cycling routes are a recreational area for urban dwellers to experience the site and the agro-touristic route.

Figure 84 | Ecological, Mobility, and Recreational; Landscape

In addition, the project of Rural Bogotá proposes a model of economic and social development based on strengthening the farming production of Usme at the urban-rural border, which with time can be applied to other rural areas to improve their own development. The thesis proposes a series of secondary agricultural centres strategically placed within the territory of Usme to connect the farmers region. These centers operate through a hierarchical approach, where the central exchange area is located within the parameters of the productive interface and the other centers operate as satellite nodes situated within the third threshold. Also, it provides a learning tool for the farmers to grow and develop their vocations and return to the Colombian countryside as part of the restitution program.

The satellite nodes are similar to the service hubs in the agricultural corridor but operate at a larger-scale to provide service to farmers in the extent of the Usme countryside. They carry basic equipment for cultivation and collection and are connected through the new mobility network. Furthermore, the satellite nodes provide access to basic infrastructural services, such as waste collection, which can be used for the production of organic fertilizers in the agricultural process. In conjunction with the farming services, the nodes will act as recreational anchors to support tourism to the area and take advantage of the ecological zones available there, such as the natural wonder of the National Park of the Sumapaz Paramo.

Lastly, the thesis project creates a new dynamic for the rural-urban edge by working at a local scale, but it has the aspirations to become an adaptable strategy that works in the open countryside in an effort to support the restitution program designed by the federal government. The project's elements of the productive interface, from housing, the service hub, market and others, act as the tools that allow farmers to continue to grow and develop in order to take advantage of the restitution program and a post-conflict Colombia, and reinforce the family farm typology as an active model of agricultural production.

Central Node

Satellite Node #1

Satellite Node #2





Figure 86 | The Farming Co-op



Figure 87 | The Exchange Corridor



Figure 88 | The Learning Corridor





Figure 89 | Agriculture + Recreational Corridor



Conclusion:  
Equilibrium  
in the Asymmetry ?



Figure 90 | Fringe Zone of Usme

Colombia experienced a violent and conflicting past but, as of 2016, the country looks towards a new future without conflict, in which its rural territory finds itself at a time of transformation. This change can occur by using the POT and the POZ's objectives as a framework for the future development of the territory. By working together, these planning strategies can develop a new perspective in terms of architecture and urbanism to support the changing landscape and provide equality to both urban and rural territories. The thesis aims to offer, through Rural Bogotá, a new model of development for the countryside and positions the farmers an agency of change and productivity for the country through the family farm typology. This agricultural model of production, which was lost through the agrarian and armed conflicts, must be embraced to sustain the rural identity of the country. It is also the method in which the nation can provide food security to the growing population. Therefore, the thesis utilizes a new form of the farm typology to create a self-sustaining community that generates a productive and successful lifestyle for the neglected farmers of the country at the city's edge. The urban-rural interface provides the space for change by supporting local farmers as well as the victimized farmers that now live in urban settings. However, for the restitution program to be successful in a post-conflict Colombia, the government must prioritize the farmers and resolve the forces that catalyzed the transformation of the territory in the twentieth century. Lastly, the thesis hopes to find equilibrium in the asymmetry by reducing the rural inequalities because as Enrique Peñalosa stated, "One of the requirements for happiness is equality ... maybe not equality of income, but equality of quality of life and, more than that, an environment where people don't feel inferior, where people don't feel excluded."<sup>1</sup> A statement that supports the farmers' plea for the countryside to become a viable and important resource for Colombia's economy and culture.



# End Notes + Bibliography





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# Appendix



## POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF BOGOTÁ

Bogotá's designation as a city-region aimed to organize the region under one administration to implement a unified development strategy for the Capital District of the Republic. The "Amendment number 1421 of 1993 or the Organic Statute of Santafé de Bogotá, which defines its political, administrative and tax regime for the District,"<sup>1</sup> established a hierarchy of jurisdictions for the government and administration of the city, and was necessary since the District of Bogotá's composition constitutes a subdivision of 20 localities. The amendment's hierarchy of jurisdiction reads as follows:

### *District Council:*

The city's leading authority which oversees the development of the District's administration, as well as evaluates and approves the proposal for each Mayor's mandate.

### *The Mayor:*

The representative for the District of Bogotá oversees the administration and development of the District throughout a term of three years.

### *The Local Administrative Assemblies:*

An assembly composed of no less than seven members who represent each locality. Its primary objective is to monitor and control the provision of services within the locality, as well as the investments made in the locality with public resources.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Local Mayors:*

They are the representatives for each locality nominated by the local administrative assemblies and selected by the City Mayor.<sup>3</sup> Each Local Mayor oversees the development of the locality and proposes a set of strategies to enhance the quality of life for the locality's population.

The formation of this hierarchy allows the District to target specific and general developments strategies for the District and the localities. Besides, each of these jurisdictions provides a way for the District to develop a city-region and carry on the objectives of the POT at various territorial scales.

## OPERACIÓN ESTRATÉGICA NUEVO USME - PARTIAL PLANS

Due to the size of the area of expansion, the master plan proposal divides it into 5 Partial Plan, with each targeting a different sector of the project. Each partial plan determines the boundaries of urbanization, and assigns the land uses applied on a specific area. It takes into account the needs and limitations of the community inhabiting the specific territory. The implementation and design of these plans will take place through a phasing strategy, in order to allow for changes and different adaptations as the area of expansion undergoes continuous development. The partial plans are:

### 01 - Tres Quebradas [311 Ha]

At 311 hectares with an agglomeration of 26,000 housing and a population estimated at over 100,000 inhabitants, the first sector consolidates the 'idea' of a city to a region composed of informality and future expansion, for an area with the largest extension of the POZ. In addition to the complementary projects of housing, the master plan for this region articulates the existing informal city, and the future city. It does this by incorporating and designating an area of regional activities and services, to concentrate industry, commerce, and services within a central node. This area will also situate the transport terminal to connect Bogotá to the Colombian Eastern Plains.<sup>4</sup> Lastly; the Partial Plan Tres Quebradas is the only master plan to officially be designed and approved for construction by Bogotá's planning department and administration through Decree 438 of 2009.<sup>5</sup>

### 02 - Citadel Usme Centro [125 Ha]

By becoming the central node for the locality, this plan aims to improve the historic character of the existing urban landscape as a nucleus for Usme's future city. The implementation of this master plan includes the construction of social housing and the maintenance of the existing infrastructure, such as the local government office, central plaza, and church, roads, and services.<sup>6</sup>

### 03 - Health, Education, and Regional Services Node [153 Ha]

This plan intends to locate the supply infrastructure of regional and local scale in the areas of health and education in order to support the new city. Also, it will provide more residential land use.

**04 - Urban-Rural Boundary [224 Ha]**

The fourth partial plan seeks to create the urban-rural boundary for Bogotá along 224 hectares of land, which will prevent any future urban expansion. This area acts as a transitional between the urban and rural territories including the resettlement program that relocates the farmer population from partial plans 1-3 into productive and low-density housing, with the infrastructural assistance located along the Uval Avenue. This plan also includes technical support to design a sustainable area for agriculture.<sup>7</sup>

**05 - El Carmen [29 Ha]**

The designation of this partial plan happened after a Muisca cemetery discovery during the excavation for the construction of the Tres Quebradas Plan. The archaeological discovery required the District's administration to reevaluate the composition of the POT to include the area within a protected boundary. Therefore, the city approved Decree 574 of 2011 to appoint the area as the fifth partial plan of the POZ. In a gross area of 29 Hectares, the plan will preserve the historical landscape, and build an archaeological museum that emphasizes the importance of the Muisca culture in the region. Furthermore, the area will include the construction of social housing on 8.4 Hectares, which forms part of the non-archaeological zone.<sup>8</sup>

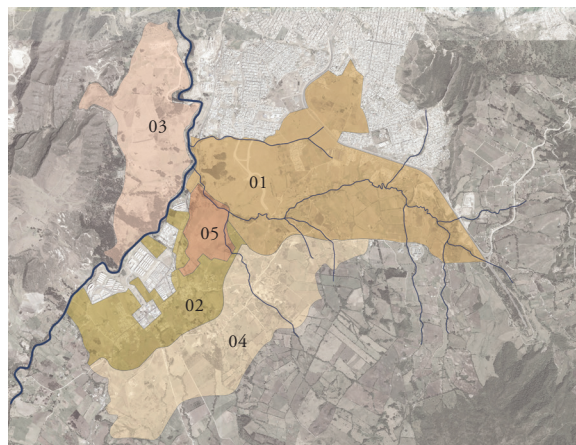


Figure 91 | A City within The City Partial Plans





# Glossary

## GLOSSARY

### **Campesino**

A farmer or farm worker in a Latin America country.

### **Localidad | Locality**

A concept used to designate an administrative and geographically a territory characterized by having some features in common. The locality can vary in terms of area, number of inhabitants, geography, etc., but they are always considered an integral part of other administrative forms such as the special districts of Colombia.

### **Paramo**

A tropical mountain ecosystem that is found at an altitude of 3000m.

### **Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial | Territorial Planning and Land Use Plan [POT]**

A technical and political structure that outlines the use and occupation of the territory with regard to spatial, economic, and social policies for a municipality or district territory. The objectives of the POT constitute a guide to order the urban and rural land of the territory bound by the plan, in order to consolidate a city model in the long term and with this purpose design a series of subsequent planning strategies at smaller scales to contribute and designate its development.

### **Plan de Ordamiento Zonal | Zonal Planning and Land Use Plan [POZ]**

A planning strategy that defines and specifies the urban development for areas of expansion and in urban areas with extensive expanse of undeveloped land. The POZ establishes the criteria for the infrastructures, public spaces, and collective facilities to harmonize the urban uses and treatments assigned to an area within the framework of the Territorial Planning and Land Use Plan [POT].

**Unidades de Planeamiento Zonal | Zonal Planning Units [UPZ]**

A planning instrument that works at an intermediate scale, smaller than a locality and bigger than a neighborhood, to establish the urban development for a set of neighborhoods with common urban characteristics, as well as their prominent land uses and activities within the framework of the POT. Its objective is to specify and complement the urban norm of the city from a more local perspective which takes into account citizen participation.

**Vereda**

A term used in Colombia to define a type of territorial administrative subdivision of the municipalities of the country. This subdivision comprises mainly rural areas, although it can contain a micro-urban center.