Transitions Between Town and Metropolis:
Planning Strategies for Development and Conservation of Colonial Zacatecas

by

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Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

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Abstract

This thesis examines the planning strategies critical for the conservation and development of cities full of historic, traditional and cultural value. The colonial city of Zacatecas in central Mexico, was chosen for this study because of its large and considerably well preserved historic center, and because, as a state capital city and primary city in its region, Zacatecas endures intense development pressures which transform it from a colonial town into a Mexican metropolis.

As the urban population of Zacatecas grows, and urban pressures erode its historic center, it becomes crucial to tie government efforts and policies not only to the solution of urban problems in this area, but also to the conservation and development of those districts that give form and have an effect on the urban heritage of the city.

This thesis, therefore, focuses on the urban pressures, institutions and regulatory frameworks that affect the historic center and those districts immediately around it, and identifies which government actions are critical to promote their development while ensuring the conservation of the historic, cultural, and traditional elements of their unique urban environment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This project derives from a deep personal concern about the loss of Mexico’s urban heritage. As the country continues its process of economic and urban growth, and of uncensored modernization of its culture and society, its urban centers are losing important traces of their identity, personality, beauty, and character. Day by day, the urban appearance of the capital and provincial cities undergoes a process of slow but constant erosion through which urban areas of historic and cultural heritage are replaced by modern architectural ideals and foreign design schemes, a process that contributes to the net loss of the urban heritage of the country.

The urbanization process taking place throughout Mexico is speeding up the growth of provincial urban centers, and contributing to the erosion of their urban heritage as it transforms them into large metropolitan areas. The evolution of provincial towns into large metropolises not only implies the transformation of the undeveloped rural land that surrounds urban areas, but it also places intense development pressures on the central districts of provincial urban centers. As urban growth takes place, central districts compete with suburban developments for economic and urban activity. Their historic fabric is being transformed and, in many cases, destroyed in order to make way for new developments.

The transformation and erosion of historic urban areas further increases the need to identify city-level development strategies to guarantee that, the solutions to urban problems and social needs do not occur at the expense of those elements that shape urban environments of historical and cultural value. The direction that these strategies should follow, however, is not easily determined. The conservation of historic centers with rich heritage is an urban problem which cannot be limited to architectural and physical interventions on a building-by-building basis. It requires careful consideration of the economic and social transformations that result from urban development and population growth. A clear identification of these transformations is necessary to adapt cities to the rhythm of modern times and urban needs, while ensuring the preservation of their historical roots.

Similarly, the conservation of urban heritage requires an understanding of the relationship between the various districts that form urban areas. Historic districts are often considered as isolated and static enclaves within decaying urban areas. These districts, however, endure development and change just as any other urban district. Their physical environment and urban character evolves and transforms as cities develop. Furthermore, historic sites and monuments are often considered, if at all, as “passive” elements of real estate markets, and not as resources for the economic and social development of cities. The strong relationship between the well-being of historic districts and the successful development of adjacent urban areas increases the need for the conservation of these districts. Their maintenance should be tied to the overall urban development plans for the city.

The complex interrelationship of the elements needed for conservation and development of urban areas makes it hard to pinpoint a single development philosophy that all cities undergoing evolution and change should follow. This thesis, therefore questions how is it that government policies and actions can integrate the dominant dynamic changes occurring in society’s economic, political and cultural spheres, into areas of historical value, while achieving a balance between tradition and innovation. It explores the urban pressures, regulations and institutions that affect the historic and cultural elements of Zacatecas’ urban environment, to identify those strategies needed to simultaneously promote the development and conservation of the city’s unique environment.
After a discussion on the historical development of Zacatecas in section II; section III sets the boundaries of the study area, and describes its two main components: Zacatecas' historic center and transition zone. While section IV examines the current development pressures and issues concerning the area under study, section V describes the role that legal and government factors have played in its development. Finally, section VI presents recommendations for future planning strategies and identifies government actions that are critical to promote the development of the city while ensuring the conservation of its unique urban heritage.
II. THE CITY OF ZACATECAS

Zacatecas\(^1\) is the capital of the State of Zacatecas, and functions as the seat of its government. It is reached via a major railroad and highway that link Zacatecas with Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, and El Paso, Texas, 1213 kilometers to the north, and Mexico City, 602 kilometers to the south (see Fig. II.1). In addition the city’s airport accommodates national flights. While its population in 1980 was 80,088 inhabitants, by 1990 it had increased to 100,051 inhabitants.\(^2\) In terms of Zacatecas’ economic base, much of the city’s main economic activity and income have traditionally been linked to silver mining, but cattle raising, meat processing and agriculture are also important. Similarly, manufacturing is also present but limited to the reduction of mineral ores, the extraction of rubber from guayule, the refining of sugar, and the manufacture of rum pulque and mescal.

![Political Map of Mexico](image)

Fig. II.1. Political Map of Mexico (Scott, Ian. World Bank Publication)

II. 1. A City of Unique Urban Heritage

The colonial city of Zacatecas, as a recent entrant to Mexico’s accelerated urbanization process,\(^3\) represents a relevant case for study. It is a fine example of a Mexican provincial city where recent urban development has not completely been at the expense of the character and spirit of its cultural and historical areas. Zacatecas, unlike many Mexican colonial cities (see Fig. II.2),\(^4\) still possesses large segments of its unique historic center, an urban environment that was begun during the Spanish occupation in 1546, and has evolved since with such a rich architectural and urban character that it was declared a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1994 (see Fig. II.3).\(^5\)

Zacatecas is a particularly interesting colonial city in terms of its development. Its name means “place where grass grows.” and comes from the ndhuatl ZACATL zacate, which means grass, and TECATL gente, which means people. This city did not develop as a typical colonial city created by Spanish conquerors.\(^6\)

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1 Throughout this thesis, “Zacatecas” will refer to the city. when referring to the State of Zacatecas, I will use the term “State of Zacatecas.”
2 1990 Census Statistics from the Instituto Nacional del Geografía e Estadística (INEGI)
3 The fact that Zacatecas is a smaller city in terms of population, especially when compared to border cities, and cities closer to the nation’s capital, and that its location is somewhat isolated in the center of the country, rendered it less prone to federal policies of urban growth and industrialization.
4 The city of Puebla is a good example of a historic city with clearly lost important parts of its urban heritage. (See Fig. II.2).
5 This title has also been given to such cities as Venice and Rome, both cities with rich and unique historic environments.
6 This city does not follow the traditional grid-within-a-square layout, and does not have the typical central plazas. See Documents of Indies, guidelines for city layout and distribution. Map of Puebla
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

Zacatecas' long process of formal and functional adjustment started on September 8, 1546, when members of a military expedition commanded by the Spaniard Juan de Tolosa established in Zacatecan territory to complete the subjugation of Jalisco Indians who rebelled against the Spaniards in 1541. Their military camp was located at the foot of la Bufa hill, where a small group of Zacatecan Indians were taking shelter, and where considerable traces of silver beds were first discovered. This camp became the first Spanish settlement in the area, where Tolosa and his countrymen Cristóbal de Oñate, Diego de Ibarra, and Baltazar Treviño founded the first mining settlement in 1548. After this, similar discoveries took place in areas around Zacatecas which later were consolidated into what was called the Silver Belt, the most important mining region of the colonial period, which extended from Guanajuato and Zacatecas in the Mesa Central to Chihuahua in the Mesa del Norte, and San Luis Potosí as an eastern outpost.

After the foundation of Zacatecas as a mining town, more mines and urban settlements started to appear in the region in response to the abundance of silver deposits, and the availability of cheap labor provided by the different groups of Indians of the region. As new mines were created, urban settlements grew along the ravine located between the two main hills in the area, and Zacatecas grew into a cluster of small villages such as Barrio de la Pinta (site of the Capilla de Bracho), Barrio de Bracho, and Barrio de Mexicapan. These settlements were formed by rudimentary houses built close to rich silver mines, and were located on the northern-most section of the ravine formed by the Stream of Silver, Arroyo de La Plata, an area that now constitutes the northern portion of the city. From there, small developments sprouted up southward as they followed the path of the stream. Their irregular location along both sides of this wavy north-south axis shaped what currently is the main axis of the city. This axis became the region's main circulation spine which connected the settlements along its path, and became the reference element for the location of different temples, convents and palaces. As settlements grew, urban blocks and street layouts followed ravines and topographic needs; their design was based on practical needs and topographic conditions of the site, rather than on geometrical or aesthetic principles.

Fig. II.2. Historic Center of Puebla

Although the authors are more talking about Mexico City, Guadalajara, Guanajuato, Puebla, Monterrey, Mérida, San Luis Potosí, and Veracruz.

7 Mexico, John Wibel and Jesse de la Cruz, in Morse: The Development of Latin America, 1750-1920
By 1585, the group of settlements which converged around a small parish was finally given city status. Until then, the area had no name and was only called the Mines of the Zacatecas, or the Mines of Our Lady of the Remedies of the Zacatecas, Minas de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios de Zacatecas. During the sixteenth century several religious orders including the Franciscans, Jesuits, Agustinians, Mercedarians and Dominicans settled in the region. With the help of wealthy miners, they constructed convents and temples. Through their efforts, the city flowered with religious and civic monuments. They were responsible for the construction of the Cathedral of Zacatecas, the city’s most important cathedral which was started in 1612,
and finally completed in 1752 (see Fig. II. 4). These joint efforts of priests, miners, merchants and secular clergymen “extracted out of Zacatecan soil the architectural jewels that we now enjoy.”

II. 2. A City of Ups and Downs

Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries the city developed at full speed, and became the second most important city in New Spain (see Fig. II. 5). This status, however was not easily achieved. The development of Zacatecas was always tied to its economic situation, and, as can be seen in the historic center of Zacatecas, took form through long periods of inactivity and a few bonanzas. Zacatecas, like most of Mexico’s mining centers, experienced “the most erratic growth because its size and prosperity depended so completely on one activity.” The seventeenth century, for example, began with problems in many orders, especially those of food-supply and public safety which were caused by the war with the Chichimecas Indians. During this period, Guanajuato, as part of the Silver Belt, was by far the largest producer of silver, but Zacatecas, soon afterwards started to prosper.

The eighteenth century, however, was one of the most favorable periods for the development of the city. During this century and well into the next, the mines around Zacatecas supplied 20 percent of the world’s silver demand, and a small handful of houses grew into a city whose streets meandered and flourished as they followed the contours of the landscape. The city witnessed a transformation with the marriage of abundant and beautiful construction materials and the imagination of craftsmen and artisans. Along with this flowering, European architectural currents brought the carving of the locally-mined pink sandstone, cantera rosada, to almost celestial heights. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, mining and metallurgical activities moved northward as they followed discoveries of richer mineral deposits. This migration benefited Chihuahua, Saltillo, and Durango at the expense of Guanajuato and Zacatecas. Between the 1940’s and 1950’s, the city experienced new urban growth as a result of a reappearance of mining activities. During this time the economy became active again as lead was extracted in mines near Zacatecas, and sold to the United States who needed it for its military which was actively engaged in W.W.II.

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9 Name usually given to the Mexican territory during the Spanish occupation.
10 Morse 1971
11 (see Fig. III.6)
Today, the central districts of the city still enjoy an aura of almost medieval characteristics, an image that is reinforced by the many meandering narrow paths and labyrinths of the area, as well as by the irregular arrangement of important buildings and open spaces. This image, however, is only present in the central districts of the city, thanks to the active preservation efforts which are constantly threatened by rapid development. Indeed, Zacatecas is no longer a small mining town grown out of the colonial period. Its historic center is now surrounded by a wide area of residential and mixed-use districts that formed after the 1950’s in response to the development pressures of the city, and occupied those areas that offered vacant land free of the strict preservation regulations that govern the historic district.
II. 3. A City of Urban Growth

While preservation efforts have focused on Zacatecas’ historic center, rapid development has transformed the surrounding areas of the city. Zacatecas is no longer a small mining town grown out of the colonial period. Its historic center is now surrounded by a wide area of residential and mixed-use districts formed as a response to population growth and development pressures of the city. According to the latest development program for the metropolitan area formed by Zacatecas and Guadalupe, the total population of the metropolitan area in 1990 was 158,356 inhabitants. The formation of these districts also responded to the availability of land, and to the lack of the regulations which characterize the historic center (see Fig. II. 7).

During the 1970s, decentralization efforts endorsed by governments caused a new wave of urban growth. The new urban areas that resulted from these policies engulfed those districts which were once located on the outskirts of the city, and started the transition of Zacatecas into a large metropolitan area. As the city continues growing, new developments are now being built on the western and eastern sections of the city.

12 State Urban Development Program for the Metropolitan area of Zacatecas and Guadalupe
The new urban growth has consolidated a large metropolitan area that in 1990 area covered 2,955 hectares of urban land, and now incorporates the adjacent city of Guadalupe. In addition, tourism has become an important economic base for the city as Zacatecas is a popular destination for national and international tourists. This new economic activity has once again influenced the development of the physical environment of the city. New hotels are being constructed, and arts and crafts shops are sprouting up in the commercial district along with other trades that target the new tourist industry.

The growth of Zacatecas from a small town into a large metropolis is not an isolated phenomenon in the Mexican landscape. Many cities, either in the central region, or at its Northern border with the US, are experiencing similar development patterns where urban growth causes cities to become “two cities in one.” Through this process, a new urban center with schools, hospitals, modern shopping malls, retail areas and American-style residential subdivisions has developed outside of the older urban districts that comprise the center of the city. In the case of Zacatecas, ever-growing population and the expansion of the city are the underlying factors that drove the construction of the new city center on the eastern outskirts of the city. This new center contains a country club, a vehicular bridge, suburban housing districts, schools, franchise restaurants, offices, and modern-type retail developments.

The State Development Program for the Metropolitan Zacatecas-Guadalupe, under current implementation, further promotes the expansion of the city towards its suburbs, and contributes to its urban sprawl. This program is based on the creation of two primary circulation axis which will increase the transportation between Zacatecas and Guadalupe. The idea is that these two roads will consolidate these two cities into a

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13 State Urban Development Program for the Metropolitan area of Zacatecas and Guadalupe
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single metropolitan area, and provide this twin-city area with great potential for urban growth, through which the supply of adequate amounts of public services and the generation of urban sub-centers will help de-congest Zacatecas’ historic center. If this plan is implemented, its future challenges will be to maintain the city’s historic center through strict land use regulations and density controls.
III. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

While Zacatecas’ historic center should be the focus of the conservation and development strategies to maintain the city’s urban heritage, the urban districts around its perimeter are also important, and should be included in these planning strategies. These districts, however, are not easily identifiable. The historic center is located at the heart of the large gully that also houses the central districts of the city (see Fig. III. 1).

Fig. II.1. The City of Zacatecas.

THE CITY OF ZACATECAS

Study Area

SOURCE: INEGI (Digital Map of 1990 Census)
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

In addition of the historic center, these central districts are formed by a series of commercial and residential developments which, in spite of being more recently developed than the historic center, share many of its urban characteristics. Their urban fabric, for example, blends into the historic center almost seamlessly, and forms a continuous area that starts at the historic center and extends toward the outskirts of the city. The gradual transitions in urban fabric from historic to contemporary buildings makes it hard to clearly identify where the edges of the historic center end, and where the edges of its surrounding areas start, and contribute to the lack of clear physical boundaries of the historic center (see Fig. III. 2. Study Area).
- **Similarities of Building Types**

This lack of clear physical boundaries of the historic center also results from the many similarities in building type present in the historic center and its surrounding districts (see Fig III.3). These similar urban characteristics occur at several levels. On one side, there are typological similarities between the buildings in the historic center and the buildings of more recent development. While these similarities commonly occur in terms of scale and proportions (where buildings share similar heights, widths, and number of levels), they also occur in terms of parcel size and interior layout (where buildings share similar size and arrangement of important elements such as courtyards, staircases, and kitchens), as well as in terms of the buildings' relationship with respect to streets and open spaces (where buildings share similar frontage to streets and build-to lines, as well as a lack of setbacks).

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Fig. III.3 Building Types of Zacatecas
Similarities of Urban Forms

The historic center's lack of well-defined edges is also caused by the similarities of urban form shared by the historic center and its surrounding districts. These similarities occur because most of the newer districts share the same origins as the historic center. These districts, just as those settlements that once surrounded the old mines of the city, also sprouted out of self-help housing settlements (see Fig. III. 4. Urban Forms). As they evolved, their meandering paths and irregular street-plaza connections developed similar patterns as those of the historic center, where the arrangement of streets and the orientation of buildings, were determined by the contour lines of the surrounding topography and the predominant natural features of the area. Today, this irregular and almost medieval-like arrangement of structures, streets and open spaces is still present in the central areas of the city, its unity is further reinforced by the progressive superimposition of old and contemporary buildings that climb the sides of surrounding hills.
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• **Similarities of Architectural Elements**
The similarities in architectural elements featured in the central districts of the city also contribute to the lack of clear delineation of the historic center. The abundance of low-scale residential structures in both the historic center and its surrounding areas share architectural and decorative elements (window and door openings, doorways, balconies, friezes, etc.) similar in scale, proportion and placement, which, in addition to the predominant use of local construction materials, and the lack of ‘loud’ commercial advertisements, contribute to the almost seamless urban fabric of the city’s center, an area which, when viewed from any of the vantage points provided by the city’s steep slopes, or by the sharp reference point of the Bufa Hill, reads like a single entity, and offers few clues for the identification of its newest and oldest districts to the untrained eye. Indeed, the crowded buildings, meandering streets and irregular open spaces covering the city’s central areas form a uniform blanket of urban activity, full of venerable monuments, and unpretentious housing districts—the essence of the urban heritage of Zacatecas.

III. 1. **Boundaries of Area of Study**

In spite of the difficulties to accurately delineate the edges of the historic center of Zacatecas and the areas around its periphery, the area chosen for study is divided in two zones: The historic center, and the transition zone (see Fig. III. 2. Study Area). In terms of the historic center, and due to the lack of a better option, this study departs from the boundaries set by Article 2c of the 1965 Law for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones of the State of Zacatecas (see Appendix VIII. 1). This law is the most widely recognized among the few government efforts that define boundaries for the historic center of the city. In terms of the transition zone, an area that has never been singled out (and therefore delineated) in any government planning efforts, its boundaries follow two principles. On the inside, the boundaries of the transition zone start right where the boundaries of the historic center end. On the outside, the transition zone is composed of those districts immediately around the periphery of the older parts of the city, and extends as far as to include the most relevant districts for study, without extending so far as to risk the efficient use of (planning and policy implementation) resources on an area too large for the conservation and development of the urban heritage of Zacatecas.

While the creation of the Law for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones was one of the greatest achievements of the early preservation efforts in the State of Zacatecas, this law was not specifically created for the city. Instead, its mandates apply throughout all urban centers of the state. Its creation is of particular relevance because it precedes any national-level efforts related to the preservation of historic urban areas. This law did not particularly specify ‘historic centers’ as the main areas to preserve, instead it was based on ‘Typical Zones’ or areas with “buildings, streets, plazas, gardens, decorative elements, etc. whose overall and particular architecture, character, tradition, artistic or historic value, or any other circumstance reflect a typical or traditional character and should be conserved and protected.”

In the case of Zacatecas this ‘Typical Zone’ is located at the heart of the historic center of the city. Its boundaries follow an area circumscribed by streets and plazas which are distributed throughout the oldest districts of the city and include most of the structures built before 1940, and particularly those historic buildings that were built before the nineteenth century.

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16 *Ley de Protección y Conservación de Monumentos y Zonas Típicas del Estado*. These boundaries were also ratified in Article 9 of the 1987 version of this Law which was also enacted by the government of the State of Zacatecas.

17 The 1965 Law was in fact the only document where official boundaries for the historic center were found.

18 The selection of these boundaries follow practical purposes and were chosen as a staring point. Further analysis in terms of form, building type, land use, and historical significance need to be conducted in order to accurately define their location.

19 These efforts, in fact, did not happen until 1972, when the federal government, through the National Institute of Anthropology and History, *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (INAH), published the first Federal Law of Archeological, Artistic and Historic Monuments and Zones, *Ley Federal Sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicas, Artísticas e Históricas*. A law more general in scope than that of Zacatecas which focused on the preservation of archeological sites built before the Spanish occupation. This law, through its 4th transitory article gave the law of Zacatecas even more importance. Through this article, the federal law acknowledges and “respects all rights granted by previous laws,” which in the case of Zacatecas, occurred since 1965.

In terms of the transition zone, its inner boundaries start right where the historic center ends, and its outer boundaries have been located at the Gustavo Díaz Ordaz Boulevard, the Bufa Hill scenic road, and the Adolfo López Mateos Boulevard (see Fig. III.2). The location of these outer boundaries is based on the clear delineation of edges provided by these three main thoroughfares, and by the fact that while this zone is large enough to include the closest, and most influential, residential and commercial districts that surround the historic center, it is also small enough to warrant the efficient use of government planning efforts. Its name, transition zone, derives from the fact that this zone sits between the oldest part of the city and the new developments being built on the eastern, western, and southern sectors of the city, and between the oldest part of the city and the vastly undeveloped areas of natural land which are located directly across the Bufa Hill scenic road in the northernmost part of the city.

III. 2. The Historic Center

Despite the many similarities between the historic center and the transition zone, there is no doubt that the historic buildings located at the bottom of the ravine of the historic center have traditionally encompassed the city’s center of activity. As Zacatecas developed through time, its oldest districts consolidated into one area that became the most important commercial, cultural, institutional, and civic center of the city. It is an area with the highest concentration of government offices, churches, shops, museums, open spaces, schools, and urban services in the city (see Fig. III.5), an area that in addition of acting as a magnet for tourism, civic, religious, educational and cultural activities, is one of the most dense residential areas of the city (see Appendix VIII. 2).

Fig. III.5 Sample of Institutional Building Within Historic Center

While the northern section of the historic center retains its predominantly residential character, the opposite is true for its southern counterpart where increasingly expanding commercial and institutional activities have created a growing district of shops and mixed-use buildings. As commercial activity increases and residential areas decrease in the center, the area is losing its liveliness and sense of community at night and

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during non-business hours. This situation is further caused by the increase of day time suburban population characterized by business people and office workers who live outside the historic center and use it only during a limited number of hours a day. As this population finishes their business, and goes home to the suburbs in the outskirts of the city, they take away the human activity which used to be provided by the previous users of the center--its residents.

- **A Variety of Building Types**
The unique urban environment of the historic district of Zacatecas is undoubtedly an area worthy of study and preservation. It is an environment where the exterior walls of buildings fronting the irregular network of streets, alleys, and plazas show evidence of the economic and cultural ups and downs that have affected the historic center of the city, and where the buildings’ scale, proportion, parcel size, interior layout, and relationship with respect to streets and open spaces give form to its unique urban fabric. It is an environment where historic typologies of significant civic, religious, and institutional buildings are as important as those of low-scale commercial and residential buildings.

Fig. III. 6. Plaza de Armas

In terms of typologies of significant buildings, the historic center of Zacatecas offers many churches, convents, and government offices, as well as large residential structures. These significant buildings reflect the economic and cultural factors that affect the city through its development, and range from large eighteenth century houses which were remodeled with neoclassical facades during the nineteenth century to reflect the economic status of their occupants, to the Cathedral of Zacatecas (see Fig. II. 4) which, besides being the most important site for religious activity of the city, is also significant for its highly carved portico, and for its location right next to the Plaza de Armas which is the main civic space of the city (see Fig. III. 6).
While significant buildings are scattered across the historic center, their irregular arrangement responds to the topographic conditions of the area, where the voids in urban fabric, produced by significant buildings and open spaces, are held together by a continuous sea of low-scale commercial and residential structures. The urban fabric produced by these continuous typologies is just as important to the overall appearance of the historic center as its significant buildings (see Fig. III.7). The vast areas of shops, and single and multi-family houses act like the meat of an organism where the skeleton formed by the large buildings is held together by the repetitive superimposition of small cells that climb and descend with tenacity over the hilly contours of the surrounding landscape (see Fig. III.8), an organism worthy of study and preservation.

- **Unique Urban Form**

In addition to the variety of building types of the historic center, its irregular and almost medieval-like urban form also renders this area worthy of preservation and study. Zacatecas' historic center did not follow the typical town planning conventions prescribed by the Law of the Indies which were implemented by Spanish colonial administrations (see Fig. III.9). Its unique urban fabric evolved from the irregular arrangement of structures and open spaces that followed the meandering streets, and pathways of the city. This is an environment whose unique urban form results from practical needs and topographic conditions, rather than from geometrical or aesthetic principles (see Fig. III.10).

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22 While the continuity of urban fabric resulting from the similarities in building height, width, number of levels, size and interior arrangement of courtyards, staircases, and kitchens, as well as location with respect to streets and build-to lines of these structures, a more detailed study should be conducted in order to fully depict the similarities and differences of these building types.

23 Under this law, towns were created with a rectangular urban form, and had a street network laid out in a gridiron lattice. This network radiated outward from the main open space located at the center of the town and was oriented according to the cardinal directions.
As important elements of the urban form of the historic center, the wide variety of streets and alleys were constructed to human scale rather than that of the motor vehicle. These circulation elements range from main vehicular thoroughfares like the Hidalgo Avenue, the main axis of the city that grew out of the Ravine of Silver, to the small pedestrian pathways that climb the hills that surround the historic center. They have
an abundance of sharp twists and abrupt bends that only allow short views, and are unexpectedly changed as sudden openings occur within the urban fabric, where small and large open spaces, rarely with parallel surfaces, cause the depth of perspective to appear strangely modified (see Fig. III.11).

In terms of the scale and urban form of the different plazas, squares and gardens of the historic center, Zacatecas offers a wide variety of civic and recreational open spaces for human interaction. These areas play an important role in traditional outdoor activities of the city. People have traditionally used them as outdoor markets, playgrounds, bus stops, and cultural arenas i.e.: for music concerts, art displays, etc. They range from the Plaza de Armas which is the most significant civic open space of the city and accommodates many levels of human use and interaction, to the small neighborhood squares which, due to their secluded location and small size, are more private and are distributed across the urban landscape of the historic center (see Fig. III.12). The arrangement of the large and small spaces, public and neighborhood squares and gardens, are another special element of Zacatecas' urban heritage which require attention if the urban form, history, culture, and tradition imbedded in the historic center are to be preserved.
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

Fig. III.11. Pedestrian Alleyways

Fig. III.12. Small Neighboring Square
III. 3. The Transition Zone

While the transition zone contains urban characteristics similar to those of the historic center, this zone is not homogeneous. Its diverse urban environment accommodates a mixture of land uses, and a combination of historic and contemporary building types, urban forms and architectural styles that differ across the northern and southern section of the transition zone (see Fig. III. 13).

Fig. III. 13. North and South Sections of Transition Zone

The City of Zacatecas

Transition Zone

[Map showing the transition zone with a legend indicating North and South Sections]

SOURCE: INEGI (Digital Map of 1990 Census)
- **A Zone of Residential Districts**
The northern section of the transition zone is formed by residential districts distributed along the Díaz Ordaz Paseo. These districts sit in stark contrast from the vast extensions of undeveloped land immediately across from them (see Fig. III. 14), and follow, with the exception of the Ruiz González public housing district, similar development patterns to those of the residential districts of the historic center. Where residential districts started as self-help settlements and consolidated into residential areas after a slow and gradual development process. This similarity in development pattern is further accentuated by the similarity in building type, scale, grain, density, and building height offered by the residential districts in the northern section of the transition zone, and by the fact that the small flat-roofed, two-to-three stories, concrete houses that form these districts also follow the contours of the landscape, and are interspersed with winding roads, irregular public spaces, and undeveloped sites, and therefore contribute to the continuous effect of the urban fabric of the central districts of the city.

Fig. III. 14 North Section of Transition Zone

The similarities, however do not occur throughout these northern districts, in spite of the presence of similar building type. The northern districts are less developed than the rest of the transition zone, this is expressed in the differences in materials and architectural continuity present in this area, where the use of stone is substituted by the predominant use of stucco, and a large number of houses have exposed brick finishes and tin and cardboard roofs, and where the architectural detailing is more austere and more modern architectural attitudes to window treatment and color are present. This lack of development can also be seen in the large amount of vacant land and underutilized sites distributed along the Paseo de la Buñita. These underutilized sites, as well as the many one-story non-consolidated houses offer great potential for new development.

- **A Zone of Intense Commercial Activity**
The southern section of the transition zone is where the transitions in function, urban form and building types occur between the historic center and the new development areas of the city. This section is

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34 This section is composed by the following districts: Col. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1st, 2nd and 3rd Sections) on the north, the Fracc. amón López Velarde, Col. Fco. García Salinas, Col. Margaritas on the northwest, the Fracc. Mercedes on the northeast, the Barrio del Reventón, Lower part of Cricket hill (Cerro del Grillo y Motel del Bosque), Barrio de la Palma, Col. Bancomer, Fracc. Loma Barroca, Col. Camionera, and Col. Lomas de la Soledad on the West.
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

predominately characterized by commercial and mixed-use districts which are interspersed with some middle-to-high-income residential districts, such as: Apartamentos Sierra de Alicia, Col. Sierra de Alicia (characterized by its high-income population), Col. Ursulo E. García, and Col. Lomas de San Fernando. While all these districts are located due south inside the transition zone, other districts are distributed along the southeastern section of the Paseo de la Búfa, and are Central Camionera, Fracc. La Búfa, Fracc. Primavera, Col. Marianita Elías Rodriguez, Col. Agrónoma, and those neighborhoods at the bottom of the Búfa Hill.

In addition, the character of the transition zone on the south shows a wider variety of uses. The southern districts accommodate a vastly developed commercial and mixed use zone, where the amount of commercial uses has increased to such an extent that this area now contains a higher percentage of commercial activities than the historic center. This is particularly taking place along the Ventura Salazar, Arroyo de la Plata, García de la Cadena, Prol. Arroyo de la Plata streets, and on part of the Morelos avenue, as well as along the Adolfo López Mateos boulevard (see Fig. III.15).

Fig. III.15. Commercial Activity along Arroyo de la Plata Street

26 This boulevard is one of the main urban corridors of the city, and the principal link between Zacatecas and the city of Guadalupe, the second largest city in the region which has now been incorporated into the metropolitan boundaries of Zacatecas. The important role of this regional circulation element, and its close proximity to the southern districts of the transition zone, is probably the main cause for the predominant commercial character of this area.
Fig. III. 16 View Along González Ortega avenue

Fig. III. 17 Modern Architectural Styles within the Transition Zone
The southern portion of the transition zone has developed more intensely than rest of transition zone, and presents more recent development and more diverse architectural styles. This is especially true along the only two streets within the transition zone that have a landscaped median-- the González Ortega avenue south of the Hidalgo avenue, and the Ramón López Velarde avenue, (east of the Guerrero avenue) (see Fig. III. 16), where the diverse environment produced by the mixture of uses in the south section of the transition zone, is further diversified by the presence of several contemporary structures of modern architectural style and construction techniques (see Fig. III. 17). The differences in scale, type, architectural style, etc. offered by these buildings, and their close proximity to historic structures render this section with a more controversial urban appearance than that of the historic center. Here, the forces of rich urban legacies and modern urban ideals coexist and fight with each other, and contribute to the creation of an area that truly combines the urban elements of both urban fabrics of the city--the historic center and the modern developments.
IV. URBAN PROBLEMS OF STUDY AREA

The material discussed in this section derives from interviews with government officials and intellectuals from Zacatecas, and is reinforced with material obtained during field visits conducted in December of 1995 and February of 1996. This section is also based on information obtained from printed material, development plans, and preservation articles that in one way or another relate to the urban context of Zacatecas, and examine its development pressures and conservation needs.

As seen in the description of the previous section, Zacatecas is a fine example of a Mexican provincial city that has managed to preserve a large amount of its historic character in spite of the large amount of development that has occurred in the city. This development is the result of the country's rapid urbanization process which started to influence the urban context of Zacatecas since the 1950s. Its effects on development patterns, the urban environment, and regulatory and administrative contexts of the city are particularly visible in the transition zone, but are also becoming apparent in the historic center, in spite of the preservation efforts of government agencies and institutions that attempt to slow down the process of urbanization and preserve the historic buildings and monuments. It is due to these efforts that Zacatecas' urban heritage did not suffer the extent of urban degradation experienced by many other cities in the country. This situation, however, does not mean that the historic center is not at risk of being destroyed or severely altered by the strong development pressures faced by the city. These pressures in some cases, and as will be seen below, have already affected the urban heritage of the historic center and its surrounding transition zone.

IV. 1. Urban Pressures Erode the Historic Center

As the metropolitan growth of the city continues its movement toward the eastern and western sections of the city, the vast flat plains of undeveloped land that surround it transform into new residential subdivisions, roads, office complexes, shops and sub-centers of activity. This urban growth, fueled by an increasing urban population, increases the development pressures that speed up the erosion of the urban heritage of the city. These pressures increase the demand of housing, shopping centers, public services, urban utilities and infrastructure, and raise several questions regarding the city's capacity to accommodate them. A situation that is particularly critical when considered in the realm of the historic center where the historic urban fabric offers limited opportunities to accommodate the growing number of automobiles and their related parking needs, as well as the higher demands for commercial districts, schools, hospitals, cultural buildings, and community centers. This pressures, however, already affect the historic center, and erode its historic urban fabric when they...

- Destroy and Transform Historic Building Types

The development pressures that result from the birth of suburban sub-centers of commercial, residential and institutional activity erodes the appearance of the historic center in spite of the strong preservation efforts in the area. It is because of these development pressures that the integrity of Zacatecas' old urban fabric has been altered to accommodate modern urban needs which often result in the destruction of old building types and the creation of new ones. The effects of these transformations are best seen when historic buildings are torn down or converted as merchants within the historic center compete with new commercial developments, and continuously try to provide new amenities for their clients. In Zacatecas, the interior of historic buildings has been demolished in order to accommodate parking garages and shopping arcades (see Fig. IV. 1, and Fig. IV. 2). This type of development intervention results in buildings that retain their historic facades but integrate completely new interiors based on building types atypical to the historic

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27 The historic center of the city of Puebla, for example, has been transformed by the intense development pressures endured by the city (see Fig. II. 2).
28 This limited capacity results because the historic center no longer has vacant parcels, and all new development puts an irreversible strain in its historic structures and unique open spaces.
center, and convey an almost stage setting effect toward the urban landscape of the city which causes the loss of urban integrity of the area.

In addition, a large number of properties within the historic center belong to, and are occupied by, old residents who sometimes lack relatives, economic means, and physical strength, and the ability to upkeep their properties. This situation has also eroded the historic center since it has contributed to the gradual decay of old majestic houses and institutional buildings, a process which is further accelerated as these structures lose their owners and become vacant, only to become part (after a long legal process) of the public sector's real estate portfolio. At this point, buildings are already in advanced states of disrepair. And many elements of their original structure and architecture are destroyed, transformed, or adapted as these buildings are renovated to accommodate new social, economic or cultural functions (public offices, libraries, cultural centers, banks, shops, etc.). The advanced state of disrepair of these structures, and the expensive cost of their renovation mandates that these buildings be renovated in the most practical and economic ways as possible and results in the loss of the original elements of these structures, and with that the erosion of the historic center.
Similarly, the increase in commercial activity in the historic center has resulted in a slow and almost ‘ant erosion’ that transforms residential and institutional buildings of historic significance and further contribute to the erosion of the historic center and the loss of the urban heritage of the city. This is particularly true in Zacatecas where the rigid framework which is characteristic of historic structures offers a fixed and limited amount of space for the expansion of businesses. This expansion, however, does take place as time passes by, and merchants transform their properties by modifying (through infill or demolition) their interior layouts and exterior walls along their respective decorative elements. Although the immediate effects of this slow transformation are not easily discernible, its long-term effects are obvious and can be devastating for the preservation of the city’s urban heritage (see Fig. IV.3, and IV.4, demolition process of a historic building).
Transform the Function of the Historic Center

As the city grows, the birth of commercial districts in the newer parts of the city creates development pressures that transform the function of the historic center, where the amount of commercial activity increases as merchants compete with the new commercial zones of shops and large department stores in the outskirts of the city. While the historic center is one of the most dense residential areas in the city, the increasing commercial activity within its boundaries has resulted in the displacement of residents from the central areas of the city. The reduction in the number of residents as commercial businesses start to take over the residential stock is created because the historic buildings within this area offer a fixed amount of space, and can only be expanded at the expense of their historic structural elements, and because the number of structures available for new businesses or business expansion is limited in this area. This transformation of the historic center from commercial to residential is decreasing the liveliness of the historic center, especially during non-business hours, and is contributing to the loss of the original character of the district and therefore the erosion of the urban heritage of the city.
In addition, the decreasing residential opportunities in the central districts further increase the erosion of the area. As commercial activities increase, so does the demand for residential uses, and, with it, the prices of housing rent and real estate escalate. This situation makes living in the city’s center a lot more expensive than living in the outskirts of the city, and results in the migration of residents to the outskirts of the city where the population density is becoming just as high as that of the historic center (see Appendix VIII. 2). As these residents are displaced, some of the structures they leave behind are not immediately occupied. A considerable number of structures are intentionally kept vacant by their owners because this provides them with greater flexibility to take advantage of potential investors or sudden economic opportunities. As a result, many structures are left idle, and erode as they remain unattended and lack maintenance therefore contributing to the slow process of urban erosion of the city’s historic areas.

Similarly the increasing number of tourism oriented stores that sell arts and crafts as well as souvenirs, and the increasing number of hotels that take over historic structures within the historic center are also changing the function and character of this area. As these new activities take over residential stock and change the activity patterns in the district they take away pieces of the city’s urban heritage.

**Decrease the Supply and Increase the Demand of Public Services**

29 At the beginning of the year, the monthly rent of a 150 sq. meter house downtown was 1,000 pesos, and the rent of a comparable structure in the suburbs would cost 800 pesos. Zacatecas Ministry of Public Works. (Secretaría de Obras Públicas del Municipio de Zacatecas).
The growth of the city towards its suburban edges has increased the demand for urban services throughout the city. As a result, the historic center is forced to compete with the new developments for the city’s limited amount of resources and public services: sewage, electricity, street lighting, drinking water, health clinics, schools, markets, parks, and others. This situation is also quite critical in the case of the historic center since it often results in a decrease in the quality and quantity of services and resources that are invested in the area, where the infrastructure, especially sewage and piped water, is increasingly becoming obsolete, and historic buildings are damaged whenever sewage systems overflow or water pipes burst.

Furthermore, as the services decrease in the historic center, and the quality of life decays in this district, residents start to leave in search of better living conditions which they find in the suburbs of the city. As they live they take away another important piece of the historic center elements--its residents, and therefore contribute to its erosion.

- **Degrade the Physical Environment of Historic Center**

While historic buildings in Zacatecas have eroded in spite of the preservation efforts enforced in the historic center, these efforts have managed to conserve almost all of its historic urban form. In this area, characteristic narrow roads, and irregular open spaces have not yet given way to the increasing parking needs, traffic problems and urban pressures. This situation, however, is changing. As the population grows, it increases the already large number of vehicles that crowd the insufficient and saturated road network of the historic center, a network that is connected to the rest of the city by a limited number of access points. The limited number of roads with connections to the main urban corridors of the city results in the concentration of vehicular traffic on a limited number of roads within the historic center, and therefore concentrates the vibration, and noise on these streets and on the historic buildings and open spaces fronting them. This increases the decay of the urban heritage of the city (see Fig. IV. 5).

![Fig. IV. 5. Vehicular Traffic Crowds Streets of Historic Center](image)

Furthermore, a lack of parking areas accentuates the pressures on the open spaces and streets of the historic center, and also contribute to the erosion of the historic center. The lack of off street parking offered by public and private buildings results in an overuse of sidewalks, open spaces and streets for parking purposes. This situation increases the decay of the historic plazas which were designed for pedestrian use and not for the automobile, and therefore erode as their function continue to change (see fig. IV.6).
Finally, deficiencies in public transportation service also abuse the streets and open spaces of the historic center and present an increasing threat to its historic structures. The concentration of routes only on the main arteries of the historic center also concentrate the vibration and pollutants produced by the large buses on a limited number of the main roads of the historic center, and continuously affect the structural strength of the historic structures that front those streets. This situation also increases the erosion of streets and open spaces used by these buses. This increases the need for a redistribution of transportation lines to other streets within the historic center and its surrounding districts in order to stop the decay of the unique environment of the city.

IV.2. Urban Development Corrupts the Transition Zone

As the city continues to develop into a large metropolis, the transition zone has experienced several transformations which not only corrupts its urban environment, but also contribute to the problems, and erosion, of the historic center. The understanding of the urban pressures that affect the transition zone is, therefore, quite influential to the situation of the historic center. The great majority of urban pressures that affect this zone also usually have an effect in the historic center, especially since in Zacatecas the transition zone sits in close proximity to the historic center, and the topographic conditions of the area increase its visibility when viewed from the center of the city towards the higher elevations, or from the high vantage points offered by the Buffa Hill, and surrounding mountains.

- **Disrupts the Continuity of Urban Fabric**
  Although the presence of new building types that disrupt the continuing urban fabric of the area is more common in the southern sections of the transition zone, buildings of this type are also starting to appear in the northern and eastern districts of the transition zone, and usually take the form of 5-to-6-story apartment buildings which due to their location on the high elevations of the hills around the zone, stand out from the rest of the continuous urban fabric, and due to their visibility from any point in the city, not only erode the image of the transition zone, but also destroy the overall effect created by the continuous urban image of the historic center. An example of these building types is the apartment building located on the northwest of the transition zone (see Fig. IV. 7). This building presents different typologies in terms of height, materials,
colors, architectural detailing. Its presence in the continuous urban landscape of the transition zone not only destroys the overall, unpretentious image of this part of the city, but that of the historic center as well.

As the northern residential districts of the transition zone offer a large amount of vacant and underutilized sites, and an abundance of low-scale housing stock that can be easily purchased and transformed by potential investors, the risk of development that promotes building type that disrupt the continuous urban fabric of this area is greatest, and requires effective government action to ensure that as the transition zone develops, its development does not erode the image of the historic center of the city.

In addition, the presence of new buildings in the southern section of the transition zone has been more common and is less obvious than in the northern section. These buildings are usually located at lower elevations and have managed to weather down since their construction occurred earlier than in the transition zone (1950's, 1960's, 1970's and 1980's). These building types are usually represented by commercial or mixed use buildings 5-to-6-stories high which usually occupy two or more parcels of the original urban fabric of the transition zone (see Fig. IV.8). The large size of these buildings as well as their modern construction and finishing materials and colors don’t always blend well with the context of the transition zone and historic center, and therefore disrupt the continuous urban fabric of these two districts. For this reason, it is important to develop a strategy that will determine where is it that the location of new building types and architectural styles will make most sense in terms of the economic distribution of activities within the city, and where is it that these buildings will prove less detrimental to the urban image of these areas.
Changes the Function of the Transition Zone

Just as the increase of commercial activities is occurring in the historic center, this change of activity is also occurring in the transition zone, specially in those districts located south of the historic center. In this area it is common to find 3-story buildings which have been converted to include more rental space on their second stories. Most of these buildings used to be occupied and owned by one family which ran a business in the lower levels and lived in the two higher levels, but as commercial activity has increased these families have realized that they can increase their income by moving to the top floor of their properties (or by moving out of their properties altogether) and therefore lease their properties for commercial, retail or residential use.

The reduction in the amount of owner-occupied property within the transition zone often results in the increase in commercial activity in the area and contributes to the unplanned and uncontrolled change in function of the transition zone, a change that increases the strain on the historic center as it increases the concentration of commercial activity on the southern section of the transition zone and accentuates the already crowded situation of the historic center. In addition, this increase in commercial activity further increases the loss of character of the historic center. As this activity increases, night and non-business-hours activities are displaced, and these areas increasingly become a place for tourists and day time visitors. A situation that highlights the importance of a balanced relationship between the different activities that can
be accommodated in the transition zone, especially because of the great influence of this zone in the well
being of the historic center of the city.

- **Increases Urban Conflicts**

Similarly, the increasing concentration of commercial activity in the transition zone is not always
accompanied with solutions to the urban problems in this area or in the historic center. Instead, the growing
commercial activity increases the amount of development pressures that affect both areas. As commercial
activity increases in the transition zone, so does the amount of traffic and parking problems in the area,
which due to its proximity to the historic center not only erode the physical environment of the transition
zone, but that of the historic center as well.

In addition, the urban pressures that affect the city also increase the unbalanced distribution of development
intensity within the transition zone. This unbalanced distribution of development interventions usually
cause the south section of the transition zone to develop more intensely than the rest of the area, and
promote an unequal distribution of public services and activity as these concentrate only in a small area of
the transition zone. This situation increases the problems in the northern section of the transition zone,
where the lack of markets, drugstores, child care centers, schools, etc., force its residents to travel long
distances to solve their needs, and promote, even further, the erosion of the transition zone as residents
move to the better serviced residential areas in the suburbs of the city.

- **Erodes the Natural Environment**

As the higher demand for housing promoted by the increases of population are not sufficed by public and
private housing projects, squatter settlements are sprouting up in the vacant parcels and undeveloped land in
and around the transition zone. In these areas, ecological preservation efforts should prevent the
development of districts like the Lazaro Cardenas and Frente Popular (see Fig. IV. 9). These two self-help
settlements are located across the Diaz Ordaz Paseo, northwest of the transition zone. Their location at
elevations higher than the rest of the city not only erode the natural landscape of the area, but also make it
impossible to supply them with the same level of infrastructure and urban services (piped water, electricity,
trash collection, health clinics, etc.) as the rest of the city.

![Fig. IV. 9 Self Help Settlements](image-url)
As settlements like these appear at such uncharacteristic elevations in the realm of the urban landscape of the city, their constant state of disrepair becomes very apparent and visible from any point in the city. This situation disrupts the urban image of the transition zone even more, and therefore further erodes the urban image of the historic center. In addition, their location on undeveloped land in and around the periphery of the transition zone also destroys the urban heritage of the city. These settlements take over the already few areas of natural landscape that still remain in and around the transition zone, and decrease the already limited opportunities for open spaces within this area. Their control and relocation on areas less influential to the well being of the historic center is imminent for the preservation and development of the urban heritage of the city.

As the urban pressures discussed in this chapter continue to erode the urban environment of the city in spite of the conservation efforts invested in the historic center and the transition zone. The need to reinforce conservation and development efforts is imminent in order to stop the erosion of the urban heritage of the city. The following section examines the government policies and institutions that are most influential to the urban heritage of the city, and identifies how is it that urban pressures are affecting the conservation and development of the historic center and transition zone.
V. FAILURES OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS IN STUDY AREA

As seen in the previous section, the historic urban environment of Zacatecas is increasingly being affected by the urban pressures of the city, a situation that will continue, and intensify, as the city and its population continue to grow. This situation highlights the need to reevaluate the current regulatory and institutional frameworks related to the transition zone and historic center of the city, in order to determine why they are failing to counteract the negative effects of the urban pressures of the city, and to identify what kind of additional government action is required to ensure the conservation and development of the urban heritage of the city.

This section, therefore, examines the current government institutions, development plans and regulatory efforts that in one way or another affect the transformation of the historic center and transition zone in order to identify their main failures, and to set forth the foundation for the improvement of the situation.

V. 1. Undefined Area of Intervention Undermines Government Efforts

In addition to the urban pressures that affect the historic center and transition zone of Zacatecas, the unclear identification of elements that form the urban heritage of the city, and the lack of understanding of their location across the urban landscape, represent another main problem for conservation and development of the urban heritage of the city. This problem is present in Zacatecas in spite of the noble intentions behind the official designation of the historic center or ‘Typical Zone’ provided by the 1965 Law for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones of the State of Zacatecas. This law, and the method used to delineate the boundaries of the historic center, fail to convey an area that clearly covers the historic center of the city,30 and therefore contribute to the erosion of the urban heritage of the city as efforts are not targeting all areas that are important to the preservation and development of this important asset for the city.

- **Contributes to Inaccurate Distribution of Government Efforts**

While the law specifies streets and plazas as the elements that define the boundaries of the ‘Typical Zone’, some of the streets provided in the law don’t always connect with each other to enclose a defined area. In addition, the law does not clarify whether the facades of buildings, whole buildings, or blocks of buildings, that front the streets named in the law, rather than the streets themselves, are the elements that constitute the ‘typical zone.’ The law’s “street and plaza” delineation fails to provide a clear boundary of the ‘Typical Zone,’ especially on those streets that do not connect to enclose defined areas (see Fig. IV. 1), and therefore contributes to the inaccurate distribution of conservation and development efforts of Zacatecas’ urban heritage.

In addition, Article No. 8 of the 1987 version of the Law for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones of the State of Zacatecas also contributes to the ambiguity of the boundaries of the historic center and to its erosion. This article provides the definition for “typical monuments,” and describes them as “those structures whose relationship to the history of the country after the Spanish conquest, or whose artistic or architectural value, makes them important elements of history of Zacatecan culture.” Since these types of structures do not fall neatly within the boundaries of the historic center or ‘Typical Zone’ specified in the law, the clear delineation of the historic center becomes even harder to obtain,31 and the efforts that target its preservation don’t always reach all the elements of the urban heritage of the city that should be preserved.

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30 These boundaries and method for their delineation were later ratified by the 1987 revision to the same law, and remain unchanged up to the present time.
31 Especially those monuments located on the Bufa Hill, an area of extreme historic and cultural significance for the city.
Another element that contributes to the ineffective distribution of government efforts is the lack of recognition of the important role of the transition zone with respect to the urban heritage of the city. While government development plans and regulatory efforts have never singled out the transition zone as an area that is influential to the development and conservation of the historic center, the transition zone is the closest area to the historic center, and offers a vast amount of vacant land and flexible regulatory environments where new development can take place. If the urban heritage of the city is to be preserved, strategies that recognize the opportunities presented by the transition zone to solve the urban pressures that affect the historic center become necessary.

At the same time, government efforts and institutions need to be revitalized in order to ensure that as the transition zone develops its transformation does not destroy the urban heritage of the city, but contributes to its development. The similarities in building types, urban forms, and architectural styles, shared by the historic center and the transition zone, and the high visibility of the transition zone from any of the many vantage points of the city, further highlight the importance of this area as an element of the urban heritage of the city (see Fig. V.1). This relationship increases the need for more effective government regulations, guidelines, and actions that include this area in their efforts to preserve the urban heritage of the city. Through these revitalized efforts, the negative effects of public and private development on the physical appearance and urban structure of the transition zone can be prevented.

V. 2. Inefficient Distribution of Government Efforts

In spite of the many triumphs in the preservation of the historic center, the increasing erosion of the urban heritage of Zacatecas caused by urban pressures and population growth, make it necessary to direct development and conservation efforts to pay closer attention to the historic center and transition zone. This strategy is necessary in terms of the distribution of conservation and development efforts that relate to these two areas. While detailed conservation efforts target the historic center of the city they have no control over the areas surrounding it, and therefore prove ineffective in the preservation of the urban heritage of Zacatecas. Similarly, development efforts are carried out at the metropolitan level without any special consideration to either the historic center or transition zone, and therefore are insufficient in the preservation of the unique urban environment of the city.
Conservation Efforts Fail to Target Appropriate Area of Intervention

While the number of institutions and regulations related to the conservation of the historic center outweigh the efforts and institutions involved in the development of the area, their inefficient distribution contributes to the flaws in the preservation of the urban heritage of the city. In Zacatecas, conservation efforts are either concentrated in the historic center, and therefore too specific, or carried out at the city and metropolitan level, and therefore too general. The lack of focus of these efforts on the most important areas for the urban heritage of the city (the historic center and transition zone) result in the ineffective implementation of conservation efforts, and therefore allow transformations that as seen before have affected the historic center and transition zone of the city.

The conservation of the historic center has traditionally been a preoccupation of government institutions and efforts in Zacatecas since early times. While these preservation efforts are carried out by federal and state institutions that overlap in the historic center (see table V.1), these institutions have no jurisdiction over the transition zone—an important aspect of the urban heritage of the city, and become ineffective in dealing with the conservation of the historic center.

At the federal level, the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), through its regional center located in the city has been quite involved with the preservation of the historic center of the city. The role of this center derives from the Federal Law of Archeological and Historic Monuments and Zones which was enacted by the federal government in 1972. This law gives INAH the capacity to “overview the conservation and preservation of Historic monuments and sites.” This capacity, however is limited. The powers of the INAH only extend to religious and institutional buildings (schools, convents, hospitals, etc.), the majority of which, are located within the historic center of the city. This limitation of powers curtails the effectiveness of the INAH in the preservation of the urban heritage of the city.

The situation at the state level is somewhat familiar. Here conservation efforts are carried out by the State Board for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones (BPC). This agency resulted from the enactment of the 1965 Law for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones of the State of Zacatecas, its principal mandate is to “conserve, protect, and improve the historic environment of the city, as well as the harmony of its constructions.” As the most active and effective agency in the preservation of the historic center of Zacatecas, the BPC only has jurisdiction over the historic center or ‘Typical Zone’ described earlier in this thesis. Since this agency can not influence the kind of development that takes place in the transition zone, the effectiveness of its controls are inefficient for the conservation of urban heritage of the city.

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Target Areas of Influence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH)</td>
<td>Historic Center, Transition Zone, City Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>State Board for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones (BPC)</td>
<td>Historic Center, Transition Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>Department of Public Works and Services</td>
<td>Historic Center, Transition Zone, City Level, Metropolitan Level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Documentation from Federal, State and Municipal Governments.

32 The only exception being that the INAH is only limited to religious and institutional buildings and has no legal power over private buildings.
33 Federal Law of Archeological and Historic Monuments and Zones.
34 Law for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones of the State of Zacatecas.
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

At the municipal level, conservation efforts do not particularly pertain to the preservation of the historic center or transition zone. Instead, they pertain to the whole city, and therefore are too general for the conservation of these two areas. The Regulations of Urban Image, drafted by the State Ministry For Urban Development and Ecology in 1994, are the main vehicle for the preservation efforts of the city. While these regulations were drafted at the state level, they fall under the control of the city’s Department of Public Works and Services, and apply to all areas of the city except those under the perview of the State’s CPDCH mentioned above. Even though these regulations control the image or type of construction that occurs in the city (including the transition zone), they have no jurisdiction over the historic center, and therefore are not effective in the preservation of the urban heritage of the city.

Furthermore, the level of detail of these regulations is not specific enough to deal with the large number of new problems that are starting to affect the transition zone. These regulations were drafted by a state agency to cover the whole city, and therefore lack detailed zoning, land use, density and height-limit regulations required to stop the loss of urban heritage of the city. As seen in the previous section, the lack of focused conservation efforts has allowed transformations that affect the historic center and transition zone of the city. Therefore, conservation efforts require regulatory and enforcement strategies that are more specific to the realities of these two areas in order to be more effective in the preservation of the urban heritage of the city.

As an effort to solve the lack of effective conservation efforts, the municipal government, through its Department of Public Works and Services, is getting ready to devise a limited-scope plan that centers around the historic center of the city. Although this plan has not been carried out up to date, it will increase the level of detail and implementation of efforts that target the urban heritage of the city. As this plan calls for the redistribution of conservation efforts, and the increase of cooperation between the different institutions involved in the conservation of the heritage of the city, it will increase the involvement of local, state and federal institutions in the preservation of the urban heritage of the city, and therefore contribute to a more efficient implementation of government efforts.

• Development Efforts are Few and Dispersed

In addition to the ineffective distribution of conservation efforts, the lack of development plans and programs that concentrate on the historic center and the transition zone of Zacatecas also contributes to the erosion of the urban heritage of the city. Up-to-this-date, development plans and programs have not been carried out for areas smaller than the metropolitan region. This results in the lack of detailed understanding of the problems that currently affect these areas, and therefore contribute to the loss of urban heritage of the city, as government efforts become insufficient in directing the development of the historic center and transition zone.

In Zacatecas, the involvement of government institutions and efforts in the development of the historic center and transition zone is limited. The state government, and not the municipal government, through its Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology, has traditionally been the main--and only--agent responsible for planning and implementing the urban development of the city (see table V. 2). Its development efforts are based on the State Development Plan and the State Urban Development Program, and are currently being implemented through the Urban Development Program for the Zacatecas-Guadalupe Metropolitan Area, a program that has become the main--and only--tool to achieve and direct development in the region.

Although this program is not meant to affect the historic center and the transition zone. It incorporates decentralization strategies in the historic center as a tool to promote urban development in the metropolitan region. This program, however, does not take into consideration the differences of function and character particular to the historic center and the transition zone, and does not specify detailed land use or density controls that will ensure that these two areas will not erode as the metropolitan region develops as such decentralization takes place.
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Historic Center</th>
<th>Transition Zone</th>
<th>City Level</th>
<th>Metropolitan Level</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Ministry of Development and Ecology</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>State Ministry For Urban Development and Ecology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>Department of Public Works and Services</td>
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</table>

Source: Official Documents from Federal, State and Municipal Governments.

In addition, this program is also insufficient since it fails to stop the erosion of the urban heritage of the city, and because it fails to recognize the development opportunities offered by the transition zone which can help stop the erosion of the historic center. This program, for example, is not based on a good understanding of the development opportunities provided by the vacant and underutilized parcels located in the transition zone, as this program does not incorporate development strategies that use these parcels to accommodate the parking structures or commercial activity that erode the historic center, it fails to stop the erosion of the urban heritage of the city.

At the same time, the development strategies provided by this program are not specific enough to counteract the increasing urban problems of the city. This task requires more specific and localized study and implementation in order to accurately target the historic center and transition zone, this closer level of detail can only be achieved through the decentralization of development efforts from state to municipal government, a strategy that becomes possible as the local-level institutions increase their administrative and technical capacity and become more capable in planning and implementing the development of the city. This decentralization is quite critical in Zacatecas since municipal-level efforts can aid state government efforts to enforce and implement the required changes to preserve the unique urban environment of Zacatecas.

The decentralization of development efforts suggested above is already taking place in Zacatecas, where the city’s Department of Public Works and Services is in the process of creating a limited-scope plan in order to concentrate development strategies on the historic center of the city. This plan will involve the cooperation of conservation and development agencies from the three levels of government and will provide the first step towards the solution of the loss of urban heritage of the city.

V. 3. Government Efforts Contribute to the Loss of Urban Heritage

Besides the lack of appropriate distribution of efforts mentioned above, the lack of coordination of preservation laws, regulations, development plans and programs also contributes to the erosion of the urban heritage of the city. This can be seen in Zacatecas where the lack of coordination of development and conservation efforts, and the institutions in charge of their creation and implementation, are divorced from each other, and sometimes even pursue opposite goals. As a result, conservation and development efforts cancel each other out, or increase the obstacles institutions should overcome in order to conserve or develop the historic environment of the city. This situation can be seen below, as the lack of coordination of development and conservation efforts, and the lack of institutional coordination contribute to the loss of the urban heritage of the city.
- **Conservation and Development Efforts Undermine Each Other**

Zacatecas regulatory environment is characterized by development plans that have traditionally been divorced from conservation efforts carried out by federal, state and local institutions (see table V.3). These efforts, however, are not only scarce, the current laws and regulations, and development plans and programs enforced in the city only concentrate either in development or conservation without ever simultaneously integrating these two goals in their efforts. The lack of coordination of efforts that result from this isolation of efforts contributes to the loss of the urban heritage of the city.

The lack of coordination between government conservation regulations and laws and development plans and programs is clearly seen in the decentralization efforts of the historic center that are promoted by the Urban Development Program for the Zacatecas-Guadalupe Metropolitan Area. Besides the fact that this program is not detailed enough, this program increases the problems that erode the historic center, and undermines the conservation efforts in this area instead of reinforcing them. This plan, for example, does not provide detailed density controls, land use regulations, or any other mechanism to ensure that the level of residential activity does not decrease to such an extent that it erodes the historic center. In fact, and as seen above, the historic center is already losing activity as residents move to suburbs, a situation that degrades the urban heritage of the city. This situation requires a strategy that coordinates the decentralization of the historic center with the conservation efforts currently enforced in the area. This type of relationship is critical in order to prevent the decay in activity in the historic center and transition zone, and with that the erosion of the urban heritage of the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Law, Regulation, Plan, Program</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Conservation</td>
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<td>Federal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Federal Law of Archeological and Historic Monuments and Zones</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National Development Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National Urban Development Program</td>
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<td>State</td>
<td>Urban Development Law for the State of Zacatecas</td>
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<td>State Development Plan</td>
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<td>State Urban Development Program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Urban Development Program for the Zacatecas-Guadalupe Metropolitan Area</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Law for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones of the State</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Regulations for Signs and Advertisements</td>
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<td>Regulations for Awnings and Marquees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>Urban Image Regulations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Documents from Federal, State and Municipal Governments.

Just as the incomplete relationship between development and conservation efforts affects the historic center, the lack of coordination of municipal conservation efforts and state development programs also contributes to the erosion of the transition zone. While the Urban Development Program for the Zacatecas-Guadalupe Metropolitan Area causes an increase in the commercial activity of the transition zone, neither this plan, nor the Urban Image Regulations, enforced by the city government, provide land use and density controls or building type guidelines that take into consideration the different characteristic of this area (residential in the north, commercial and mixed-use in the south). As a result, management related problems, created by the lack of direct conservation and development policies for this area, allow a chaotic distribution of building types and development intensity that erode the urban fabric of the city. Joint preservation regulations and development programs should implement specific zoning, land use, density and height-
limits regulations according to the different characteristics of the transition zone, so as to ensure that new
development takes place in these areas that bring the most economic benefit to the historic center and
transition zone, and at the same time are the least detrimental to the urban heritage of the city.

In terms of the federal conservation efforts involved in the city, the lack of coordination with development
efforts is also present. These conservation efforts derive from the Federal Law of Archeological and
Historic Monuments and Zones are not matched by any type of federal development efforts carried out
specifically for the city.\textsuperscript{35} Instead, this law overlaps with the Law for Protection and Conservation of
Monuments and Typical Zones promoted by the state government, a situation that, as will be seen below,
further contributes to the erosion of the urban heritage of the city since it is paralleled with a lack of
institutional coordination.

- **Conservation and Development Institutions Conflict with Each Other**
The lack of coordination of efforts discussed above results from the few cooperation efforts that exist
between institutions dedicated to the development and conservation of the urban heritage of the city (see
table V. 4). This lack of coordination of efforts, however, does not only happen between institutions
dedicated to conservation and development, it also occurs between the institutions that only target the
conservation of the historic center, where the current preservation efforts carried out by state and federal
agencies rarely interact with each other and instead contribute to the erosion of the historic center.

In spite of the potential for institutional cooperation caused by the overlap of institutional jurisdiction in the
historic center, the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and the State Board for
Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones (BPC) rarely cooperate with each other in
their efforts to preserve this area. This lack of cooperation can be seen in the categorization of significant
structures that have been separately carried out by these two agencies, as well as in the disagreement in the
methods used, and extent of transformation caused, during the preservation or conservation interventions
implemented by these two institutions. Besides the disagreements and conflicts, the lack of a single
intervention philosophy--agreed upon by these two agencies, has caused a dispersion of efforts that delays
the conservation of the historic center, increases uncertainty and speculation, and therefore promotes the
erosion of urban heritage of city.

In addition to the lack of cooperation between the INAH and the BPC, neither one of these two institutions
interacts with the State Ministry For Urban Development and Ecology, a situation that is reflected in the
lack of coordination of efforts discussed in the previous section. It increases the urban pressures and
problems that affect the historic center, and further contributes to the loss of the important characteristics of
this urban area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table V. 4: Distribution of Institutional Efforts</th>
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<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
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<td>Federal</td>
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<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
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Source: Official Documents from Federal, State and Municipal Governments

\textsuperscript{35} The National Development Plan and National Urban Development Program are carried out for the whole country in general and do not make consideration on a city-by-city bases. Instead they set national development policies upon which state and municipal development strategies are based.
Similarly, the cooperation of development and conservation institutions in the transition zone has never taken place. The development plans and interventions endorsed by the State Ministry For Urban Development and Ecology have failed to recognize the importance of the transition zone, and do not take into consideration the conservation efforts promoted by the city’s Department of Public Works and Services. As a result, conservation efforts carried out by this institution, which is meant for the development of the city, not its conservation, explains the lack of capacity of this agency to counteract the increasing urban pressures that erode the transition zone. In addition, this situation increases even further as the large number of urban problems which are sometimes new in nature outmode the enforcement efforts of this municipal agency, and the number of non-complacency cases that disrupt the transition zone increase and contribute to the loss of the unique urban environment of the city.

As seen in this section, the coordination of institutions that center around conservation and development is critical for the preservation of the urban heritage of the city. This is specially true in Zacatecas, where, the current legal and institutional framework has proven insufficient towards the achievement of a goal that will not occur unless an entity that coordinates all institutions and efforts is put together. Such an organization already appears within the legal blueprints of the city where the current municipal administration is in the process of integrating it, especially since the urban image regulations are meant to be implemented by this agency; the Municipal Commission for Urban Development. As an entity meant to be an advisory commission with privileges for the improvement of the urban image of the city, as well as for the promotion of its development, the commission incorporates representatives from the various levels of the public and the private sector, and provides another step towards a more active and efficient preservation of the urban heritage of the city.

These efforts, however, are still in the process of being implemented, and as seen in this section, will not be enough unless a more detailed set of conservation and development strategies and a more coordinated institutional network is incorporated into government policies and actions. The following section provides the strategies needed to reinforce current government efforts, and as it will be seen below, ensure a more effective preservation of the unique environment of the city.

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36 The commission is formed by the city Mayor who functions as its president, a Technical Secretary—the Director of Public Works, sixteen vocals or representatives from public and private institutions within the city: one from the State Board for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones, one from the National Institute of Anthropology and History, two from the Federal Government, three from the State Government, four from private associations and chambers, one from environmentalist groups, two form the academic sector, and two from municipal regencies.
VI. STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN HERITAGE

Even though the urban development of Zacatecas is seen as a positive sign of growth and progress by the inhabitants of the city, this development has started to destroy the urban heritage of the city. As the city grows and continues its transition from a provincial town into an urban metropolis, the need for strong and effective government efforts and institutions that direct the effect that urban growth has on the unique urban environment of the city becomes crucial. This situation is particularly important because, as discussed earlier in this thesis, the increasing urban pressures of the city have outmoded the current government preservation efforts, and have started to erode the physical environment of the unique and representative areas of the city—the historic center and transition zone—, a process that needs to be stopped if the evolution of Zacatecas is to retain the special quality of the city’s unique urban environment.

While the preservation of the urban heritage of Zacatecas is possible, it will not occur on its own. It needs to be reinforced by government strategies that, in addition of promoting the conservation of historic and significant urban areas, also promote their development. To this goal, this section identifies the key steps that need to be incorporated by those institutions involved in the conservation and development of the city in order to become more effective in their efforts, and ensure that the preservation of the city’s unique urban environment takes place. Although these strategies build up from the current urban and regulatory context of Zacatecas, they can be used as an example for similar efforts in other cities within the country. They are based on two principles: the reinforcement of government policies and actions and the improvement of government implementation efforts. These two principles, as will be seen below, are the most important steps that need to be taken to ensure that the conservation and development of the urban heritage of the city is achieved.

VI. 1. Strategies to Reinforce Conservation and Development Efforts

In order to reinforce the government conservation and development efforts currently taking place in the city, it is necessary to clearly identify the area that contains the most representative urban elements of the city and, therefore, should become the target of government conservation and development efforts. In addition, these government efforts, in order to be effective within the urban and institutional context of Zacatecas, need to be coordinated among conservation and development institutions from three levels of government, and should concentrate on the preservation of the urban heritage of the historic center and transition zone.

- Identifying an Accurate Area for Conservation and Development

The first step to reinforce the conservation and development of the urban heritage of Zacatecas is the clear identification of an accurate area for government action. If government efforts are restricted only to zones of historic significance, their scope and effect, become too narrow, especially since many of the problems that affect the historic center are also present, and can be better accommodated, in the transition areas around its perimeter. Similarly, if the efforts that conserve and develop the urban heritage of the city are conducted at a city-wide scale, their scope and their implementation become too general, and promote solutions that are not effective enough to solve the conservation and development problems of the historic center and transition zone, where planning efforts sometimes require actions on a building-by-building basis.

In Zacatecas, the accurate identification of an area for government preservation efforts requires the creation of a comprehensive typological and morphological catalog of the buildings, streets, and open spaces that compose the urban heritage of the city. This is specially true in this city because the current cataloguing and inventorying efforts carried by government institutions are few, dispersed and have voids, and not only fail to accurately direct resources and efforts of government institutions, but also create conflicts as
institutions base their interventions on their own, and sometimes conflicting, criterion. For this reason, it is important that this catalog is created before an area for government intervention is defined, with the only premise that its creation be jointly undertaken by those institutions involved in the conservation and development of the city. Through their cooperation in the creation of this catalog, these agencies will ensure consensus and the creation of a more educated result.

While the catalog of relevant building types in the historic center and transition zone should cover all significant structures with architectural, historic, and cultural value for the urban heritage of the city, this catalog should not exclude those building types that particularize its urban environment. In Zacatecas building types of traditional domestic and production architecture also have historical significance and add to the urban wealth offered by the city’s unique physical environment. Through this catalog, those urban elements which are relevant to the urban heritage of the city and have not been taken into consideration can be identified, thus increasing the effectiveness of future government preservation efforts and actions.

Just as the catalog should include building types present in the historic center and transition zone, this catalog should also incorporate all types of streets, pathways and open spaces that give form to the urban environment of these two areas. While this catalog should point out the differences in form and size of civic and recreational spaces, and vehicular and pedestrian pathways, it should also document the relationship between streets, buildings and open spaces that particularize the urban environment of Zacatecas. A catalog of urban form, for example, will include those street intersections that are commonly marked by open spaces which are created by the intentional lack of buildings (see figure VI. 1). Particularities in street relationships like these shape the unique form of the urban heritage of Zacatecas, and should be further documented and incorporated into the city’s preservation efforts.

Fig. VI. 1. Street Intersections Give Form to the Unique Urban Fabric of Zacatecas
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

Once a clear identification and delineation of the elements and areas that have historic and urban significance for the urban heritage of Zacatecas is achieved, and a complete catalog of building types and urban forms is created, this catalog should become an integral part of all development and conservation efforts undertaken by public and private organizations in the city, and should be the main element used to identify the criteria for future preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation interventions, as well as the density and land use policies, needed for the development and conservation of the unique urban environment of the city.

- Coordinating Government Efforts and Institutions

In addition to the accurate delineation of a representative area for the urban heritage of the city, the strengthening of government efforts also requires that these efforts, instead of conflicting, build upon each other and make the most efficient use of resources. This task calls for the coordination of the institutions and efforts related to the conservation and development of the city, especially since, as discussed earlier in this thesis, development efforts are not only few and inappropriate (too general in terms of the study area), but also obstruct and undermine the efforts of those agencies involved in the conservation of the city; and conservation agencies not only overlap and conflict, but rarely cooperate with each other.

This coordination however, is not going to occur on its own, and will not happen correctly unless an institutional environment that is conducive to the joint participation of institutions is created. To this goal, and as discussed earlier in this thesis, the city’s Ministry of Public Works is in the process of integrating a Municipal Commission for Urban Development. A commission that integrates members from local, state and federal government agencies, as well as from private organizations. The creation of this entity represents a great opportunity to ensure the interaction and coordination of institutions dedicated to the development and preservation of the city. Through this commission, institutions can take advantage of each other strengths and increase their effectiveness in preserving the urban heritage of the city.

Through the coordination of the conservation efforts carried out by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and the State Board for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones (BPC), for example, the preservation of the urban heritage of the city will be more effective. As these institutions that target the conservation of monuments and sites cooperate in the creation of a uniform criteria for conservation (a catalog of relevant building types and urban forms, for example), conservation criterion, regulations and legal procedures dispersed in the different federal and state agencies can be reduced to a single agreement that, when continued across institutions, will not only help prevent future conflicts, but will allow institutions to take advantage of each other strengths and expertise in their quest to a shared goal--the preservation of the urban heritage of the city.

While the commission can procure an environment in which the INAH and the BPC--the two most technically capable conservation institutions in the city--can work together in the creation of a catalog, and in the definition of a criterion for preservation, these efforts should also be complemented with the coordinated participation of universities and non-profit organizations. The participation and technical and practical expertise offered by these entities can make a difference in the efforts to obtain information and catalog properties, and can increase the quality of their product. In addition the fact that the commission is meant to promote public participation in the production and implementation of development efforts, will guarantee that the decisions, taken by educated bodies at federal, state and local levels, are not only taken at an administrative or technical level, but respond to the needs of the users of the city, and provide another step towards a more coordinated and efficient preservation of the urban heritage of the city.

In addition, the creation of the commission will also ensure that institutions involved in the development and conservation of the city coordinate their efforts, and, therefore, reinforce one another. This situation is

37 As mentioned before, the commission’s membership breaks down according to the following distribution. The city Mayor who functions as its president, a Technical Secretary--the city’s Director of Public Works, sixteen vocals or representatives from public and private institutions within the city, one from the State Board for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones (BPC), one from the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), two from the Federal Government, three from the State Government, four from private associations and chambers, one from environmentalist groups, two form the academic sector, and two from municipal regencies.

38 Through joint efforts institutions will define their jurisdiction and responsibilities and therefore clarify accountability.
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis particularly possible as government procedures are coordinated, and bureaucratic processes are simplified. A simplification of government procedures can occur, for example, as the slow and inefficient bureaucratic process that is currently endured by those individuals requesting construction permits is simplified. The coordination of institutions into a single commission provides an opportunity to establish a one-stop point where permits and licenses can be obtained. Through this one-stop point applicant builders will no longer have to go from one institution to another in order to clear all administrative requirements and obtain construction permits;39 a process that discourages participation as it often proves time consuming and expensive, not to mention frustrating. As institutional procedures are coordinated, new developments that affect the historic center and transition zone will not take place unless they also meet conservation criterion, a situation that increases complacency to conservation efforts, and contributes to the protection of the unique urban environment of the city.

VI. 2. Strategies to Improve the Implementation of Government Efforts

The effective preservation of the urban heritage of the city also requires the improvement of the current government efforts that concentrate on the development and conservation of the city. This improvement can best be achieved through the creation of a structured plan that focuses government policies and actions in the achievement of a single goal—the conservation and development of the unique urban environment of the city, and through the identification of the mechanisms that make the implementation of government efforts more effective in achieving such a goal.

- Creating a Plan for Conservation and Development

As the urban growth of Zacatecas increases the pressures that erode the historic center and degrade the urban environment of the transition zone, the organization of government efforts, and their concentration on the most effective strategies for the preservation of the urban heritage of the city becomes necessary. Therefore, in addition to the creation of the Development Commission mentioned above, the institutions and efforts that target the preservation of the urban heritage of the city also need to follow a structured plan of action. Through this plan government institutions can coordinate their efforts, and make more efficient use of their resources by concentrating the implementation of their conservation and development efforts in the areas most relevant to the urban heritage of the city—the historic center and the transition zone.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, such a plan is already in the process of being created by the Department of Public Works and Services of the municipal government of Zacatecas. This plan centers around the development of the historic center of the city, and increases the level of detail and effectiveness of the implementation of government efforts. This plan, however, is only being carried out by the city’s Department of Public Works and Services, and runs the risk of not being comprehensive enough to guarantee the effective preservation of the urban heritage of the city, specially since it focuses on the historic center, and fails to incorporate another important element of the urban heritage of the city—the transition zone. As this plan has not been carried out up to date, its execution should be postponed until the Municipal Commission for Urban Development, mentioned above, is created.

Through the participation of this commission in the creation of the limited-scope plan, the Department of Public Works can benefit from the input of conservation and development agencies from the three levels of government, and therefore make better use of resources and produce better results. As development and conservation institutions coordinate with each other, a better distribution and balance of conservation and development efforts throughout the historic center and transition zone will be achieved. A plan that simultaneously considers both areas for joint development and conservation strategies, will ensure that the solution to urban pressures in these two areas, and their transformation, occurs with the least sacrifice of their urban, cultural and historical significance.

39 At the present time, the state’s Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology controls the distribution of activity within the city through letters of land use approval. This letter is the main requisite for property owners in order to obtain a construction permit from the city’s Department of Public Works and Services.
In addition, the continuing evolution and transformation of the historic center and transition zone also increases the need for a common vision for the future function of these two areas. The active participation of the Urban Development Commission in the creation and implementation of the limited-scope plan can also ensure that the vision set in this plan becomes the only guideline through which government institutions activate the historic center and transition zone. This plan can ensure that the new functions of these two areas are agreed upon by all institutions participating in the commission, and that these new functions, even when different from the original ones, are compatible with their historic urban structure, and contextual urban fabric that give form to the urban heritage of the city.

Through this plan, new functions for the historic center and transition zone that improve the distribution of cultural, commercial, institutional, and residential activity within them, should also be considered as good alternatives to the tourism development currently being promoted in those areas. The integration of a variety of functions for these two areas can be instrumental in achieving a level of activity that ensures an appropriate evolution of the urban heritage of the city. Tourism development, even when considered as the most important activity for the historic center of Zacatecas, should not be promoted to such an extent that it becomes more important than the residents of the area. A plan that explores alternate functions, should, instead, strive to improve the quality of life of the residents of the historic center and transition zone. By providing the residents of these two areas with sufficient amenities such as markets, schools, health clinics, community centers, museums, art academies, etc., the plan can ensure that these residents are not forced to immigrate to the suburbs of the city, and that this important type of activity for the traditional urban character of the city remains and evolves as the city continues to grow.

- **Defining Tools for the Implementation of Development and Conservation**

In addition to promoting the coordination of government efforts and institutions, the creation of the limited-scope plan should also include the identification of the most effective mechanisms for the implementation of government policies and actions. Through these mechanisms, government institutions, especially those that form the Urban Development Commission can not only solve the urban pressures that affect the historic center and the transition zone, but can also ensure that development and conservation policies and actions effectively reinforce the unique urban environment of the city.

In addition to the involvement of the members of the commission in the creation of the limited-scope plan, their participation in the identification of the tools needed for its implementation, can also promote the institutional consensus that is needed to protect the urban heritage of Zacatecas. Through such a consensus, the sometimes contradicting goals pursued by development and conservation institutions can be reconciled, and institutional roles and responsibilities can be more clearly defined. In this manner, the enforcement and implementation of government plans, policies and actions can become more effective and the preservation of the urban environment of the city can be truly achieved. The five tools for the implementation of government and actions identified below depart from the institutional consensus that agencies, like the Urban Development Commission, can provide, and illustrate how is it that effective implementation mechanisms can preserve the significant urban elements of Zacatecas.

**Regulations and Standards**

Even when the regulations and standards currently provided by the State Conservation Law and the City’s Urban Image Regulations fail to stop the urban erosion of Zacatecas, this type of mechanism can be one of the most effective ways of ensuring that the implementation of government efforts takes place, and should be further developed so as to ensure that the implementation of government policies and actions effectively promotes the conservation and development of the urban heritage of the city. As members of the commission become involved in the creation of a limited-scope plan for the historic center and transition zone, their efforts should also identify the regulations and standards that are needed to reinforce the current regulatory environment of the city. These new

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40 Especially since the profits derived from this activity can be applied to the revitalization and rescue of the historic heritage of the city.
regulations, however, need to be more detailed and comprehensive than the existing ones, and should therefore be based on the catalog of building types and urban spaces that was mentioned earlier in this thesis. By encompassing all the elements that constitute the unique urban environment of Zacatecas in the new regulations, a more comprehensive and efficient preservation of the unique urban heritage of the city can be achieved.

At the same time, the fact that the regulations currently enforced in the city have never been integrated in a single government effort that focuses in the conservation and development of the historic center and the transition zone, highlights the need for the creation of a limited scope plan that simultaneously focuses in these two areas, and on the mechanisms needed to direct their transformation. The creation of such a plan, therefore, offers a great opportunity to upgrade the current regulations in the city, and ensure that their enforcement conduces to a better distribution of development and conservation interventions within the historic center and transition zone. As new regulations particularly cater to these two areas, the distribution of development intensity and urban activity (residential, commercial, institutional, etc.) within them, will be improved, and the degradation of their important physical environment will be decreased.

In addition, the creation of a more detailed and complete set of regulations by the Urban Development Commission can also ensure that the effective enforcement of government policies and actions further contributes to the conservation and development of the urban heritage of the city. As new regulations, and the institutional and legal frameworks needed for their enforcement, are created and agreed upon by all the institutions that affect the historic center and the transition zone, the enforcement of these regulations can be based on a single criterion that is consistently carried out by development and conservation institutions involved in these two areas. In this manner, new constructions can be regulated against development intensities and building heights that are based on the contextual building types and urban character of these two areas, and government enforcement efforts can become more effective not only in preventing the construction of buildings which do not fit their urban context, but also in promoting a new urban environment that builds upon and reinforces the unique urban environment of the city.

A Framework for Conservation and Development

The creation of the Urban Development Commission and the Limited-scope plan will inevitably require--and cause--a re-organization of the city's current legal environment. This situation represents a great opportunity to strengthen the role that government institutions have in the implementation of government development and conservation efforts, and to truly procure the sound evolution of the urban heritage of the Zacatecas. As a stronger legal framework is procured and officially recognized by public an private entities in the city, new mechanisms for government implementation such as Design Review can be integrated to increase the role of government institutions in controlling and directing new development in the city. By having the ability to review, approve and disapprove new projects on a case-by-case basis, that is provided by Design Review, government institutions can increase their legal role and capacity to control the type of development that takes place in the historic center and transition zone, and to stop the urban erosion of these two areas while ensuring the most appropriate evolution and transformation of the urban heritage of the city.

In addition, the coordination of government conservation and development efforts and institutions in a single plan, offers a great opportunity to create a legal framework that, on top of decreasing the negative effects of the urban pressures that erode the urban heritage of the city, can also contribute to its development and conservation. By procuring a legal framework that contains new implementation mechanisms such as the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's), government institutions like the Urban Development Commission can ensure that all new development that

41 Design review provides a mechanism that evolves and keeps up with new urban development and architectural currents, and therefore constitutes a flexible tool upon which new developments can be measured.
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

takes place in the historic center and the transition zone follows the conservation and development goals set by the Limited-scope plan. Through TDR’s, new development in the transition zone can, for example, decrease the decay of historic structures. As investors purchase development credits assigned to historic properties, and transfer them to develop properties located in the transition zone, the new legal framework provided by TDR’s creates an environment within which owners of historic buildings can get access to financial resources to maintain their properties, and to stop the erosion of the urban heritage of the city.

Similarly, by updating the legal framework of the city, public institutions can also create a legal environment where the erosion of the urban elements that form the historic center and transition zone is not only controlled, but is also compensated. A legal framework that targets the conservation and development of these two areas, provides the legal foundation upon which such mechanisms for government implementation as Development Impact Fees (DIF’s) can operate and obtain a just and predetermined compensation from new developments that in one way or another affect the urban heritage of the city. Through DIF’s, developers pay a pre-established sum as they negotiate and obtain a variance on building regulations (an increase in building height, for example). As developers obtain variances of regulations, their payments become part of alternate sources of financial resources (i.e. development and preservation trusts), and can later be used in the revitalization and maintenance of the significant building types and urban forms that compose the unique urban environment of the city.

**Distribution of Information**

The distribution of information that identifies and describes the unique urban elements of the historic center and the transition zone, is another important implementation mechanism through which the government institutions of Zacatecas can conserve and develop the urban heritage of the city. Through the distribution and marketing of information about the city’s unique and traditional urban elements (urban grain, street and building scale, architectural style, construction materials, street patterns, etc.), a more informed and conscious constituency can be created, and the active participation of public and private entities in nurturing an urban environment that continues to be unique and special can be achieved. By publishing information that endorses urban interventions (new constructions, restoration, reuse, and rehabilitation projects) that successfully contribute to the urban environment of the historic center and the transition zone, government institutions can not only stop the erosion of historic and significant structures and spaces, but can also encourage new projects that more consciously explore and evolve the elements of the city’s unique urban environment. (see Fig. VI. 2).

As modern technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) develop, and the management and distribution of information through digital networks becomes easier to achieve, the distribution of information becomes a more feasible implementation tool for the preservation of Zacatecas’ unique urban heritage. As GIS systems continue to be incorporated into the administrative capacity of the city’s public sector, geo-referenced computational systems, like the one being developed for the State’s tax assessor’s office, can be adapted, and used, for the creation, management, analysis and distribution of information, and the dissemination of information across public and private institutions throughout the city can be further increased, with the goal of ensuring the conservation and development of Zacatecas’ urban heritage.
Incentives and disincentives are another implementation tool through which government institutions can ensure that public and private interventions stop the erosion of the urban heritage of Zacatecas. By providing fiscal incentives (tax breaks, preferential loan rates, bank credits, and other) to owners of historic structures, government institutions can promote the conservation and restoration of significant buildings and sites. As property owners take advantage of fiscal incentives and use them to maintain, upgrade and rehabilitate historic and significant structures, they become active agents that slow down the decay of the urban heritage of the city.

In addition, the use of incentives that increase people’s interest in the city’s significant urban elements, can also contribute to the development and conservation of Zacatecas’ historic center and transition zone. By granting incentives (special awards, publicity, tax breaks, preferential utility rates, etc.) to exemplary projects, government institutions can promote interventions that more effectively explore the local architecture and unique urban character of these two areas. Through this tool property owners are indirectly encouraged to ensure that their projects fit better within the urban context of the city. As they invest in more conscious interventions their efforts result in a sounder and more interesting evolution of the urban heritage of the city.

Furthermore, incentives can also ensure that the function of the historic center and transition zone follows the vision promoted by government plans of the city. This type of tool, in fact, can best be used once a plan for conservation and development of urban heritage is created. Through incentives, key sites for development (identified through an inventory of underutilized and vacant properties), can be promoted as catalysts for new development, and, in turn, lead to a better distribution of activity within the historic center and transition zone (see Fig. VI. 3). By providing financial or fiscal incentives to projects that promote residential use in the historic center and transition zone, or projects that create urban sub-centers of commercial activity in the transition zone, government institutions can, for example, decrease the high density of commercial activity in southern part of the historic center and transition zone, and ensure that the distribution of activity within these two areas follows the limited-scope plan and reinforces the unique urban character of the city.
**Government Intervention vs. Government Building**

Another—and most direct—tool through which government institutions can implement their policies to preserve the urban heritage of the city is the direct investment of government resources and efforts to direct the urban evolution of the historic center and transition zone. Government-sponsored rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures (for museums, schools, government offices, etc.) as well as the construction of new government buildings can be used as a testimonial example through which Zacatecas’ public sector can save the city’s historic urban stock, and promote the conservation and development of the historic and unique urban character of the city.
This type of tool, in fact, has already been used in the historic center of the city. The State Congress building, built in 1985, was designed to reflect and reinforce the urban characteristics of the unique urban environment of the city (see Fig. VI. 4). It incorporates a replica of the frontispiece of the no longer standing Real Caja, the city’s main treasury building which was built in 1763. The incorporation of the frontispiece into the facade of the new building, was carried out as a “testimony to what once was an important monument of old Zacatecas as well as to preserve the harmony of its urban landscape.” Through efforts like this, government institutions can send a strong message to the public, and promote examples that reflect local architectural and urban traditions, and, therefore, reinforce the unique urban environment of the city.

In addition of setting an example for the type of development that should take place in the city, direct government intervention and investment can also be an effective implementation tool to stop the erosion of the physical environment of the city. Through direct government intervention, government institutions can, for example, acquire land according to a plan of key sites, and distribute parking facilities throughout the transition zone and areas that are not typologically and historically significant to the urban heritage of city. As these sites are publicly or privately developed, the need to demolish historic structures to create parking facilities within the historic center can be eradicated, and the constant use of open spaces and plazas for parking purposes can be reduced. This tool of government implementation, therefore, not only achieves the conservation of the urban environment of the city. It also accommodates the creation of urban elements that are needed for its development (see Fig. VI. 5).

Finally, the investment of public funds can also be crucial for the effective preservation of the urban heritage of the city. As government institutions invest according to a vehicular circulation plan and increase the number of roads that connect the historic center and transition zone with the rest of the city, the high concentration of vehicular traffic on a limited number of roads can be reduced, and the erosion of the physical environment of the historic center and transition zone can be avoided.

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43 These urban elements being parking structures which, as they are located in the transition zone, are no further from the historic center than 1.5 kilometers away, a location not far for a comfortable walking distance.
be decreased. Similar results can also be achieved as government interventions promote the use of smaller and lighter public transportation vehicles within the historic center and transition zone. By increasing the number of this type of vehicles, government institutions can reduce the amount of vibrations and fumes that destroy the historic center and transition zone, and with that, ensure the conservation of the urban heritage of the city while improving the urban services which are needed for its development.

As the five tools for government implementation which were mentioned here are further developed and expanded, the cooperation of all public institutions involved in the conservation and development of the city, as well as the integration of public participation should be pursued and truly obtained. If the political will and institutional capacity needed for the creation of a limited-scope plan and for the integration of the Urban Development Commission are not present, the effective conservation and development of the urban heritage of the city will not be achieved. Current and future government and private entities, therefore should work together, specially in the identification of and development of implementation tools that, as illustrated above, are crucial for the sound evolution of the urban heritage of the city, and can absolutely benefit from the joint efforts of all those concerned.
VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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VIII. APPENDICES

VIII. 1
Law for Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Typical Zones
Article 2c. Boundaries of Typical Zone of Zacatecas. Law of 1987
Transitions Between Town and Metropolis

cruce del arbotante, callejón de la peña; Jardín de las delicias, crucero de Venustiano Carranza, Crucero de Tampico y Plazuela del Tepoztán.

Calle de Juárez, crucero de Venustiano Carranza, Callejón del Quijano; Calle Insurgentes (antigua Manjarrez) hasta el punto denominado "La perla".

Calle alameda en toda su longitud, Plaza de la lazo en todo su perímetro, callejón del tráfico, plaza Independencia en todo su perímetro, calle de la Exclusión, calle Libertad. Av. Morelos en toda su longitud, y los callejones transversales de: El Rayo, Chinchávar el del enano, del Portillo, de los perros, de las carretas y de Rúa, Callejón de San Benito. Av. Rayón en toda su longitud, y los callejones transversales de: El Trabajo, crucero del Moral, callejón del Restabal, del Turquito, Palomares o de San Marcos, Del Chino, del Moro, del Triunfo y Plaza de las Carretas en todo su perímetro.

Calle de Juárez (antigua del angel), hasta la esquina con la calle primera de mayo; calle primero de mayo con toda su longitud, calle Venustiano Carranza, incluyendo la antigua calle de San José viejo, hasta dar acceso al nuevo fraccionamiento de La Búfa.

ARTICULO 9.- Se declaran zonas típicas, las actuales zonas urbanas de las ciudades de: Sombrerete, Pinot, Jerez, Nochistlán y Villanueva. En la ciudad de Guadalupe se declara zona típica la constituida por la plaza principal y las calles Independencia, Constitución, Madero, Luis Moya y los callejones sin nombre entre la plaza y el arroyo.

En la ciudad de Zacatecas, se declara zona típica la constituida por las siguientes calles y plazas:

De Jesús, Plaza del F. García, en todo su perímetro; calles que desembocan en esta, a saber: Calle de Lopez Velarde, Calle de Santa Veracruz, Calle del Progreso y Calle de San Diego; Calle de Abasolo y los callejones transversales de El Morante y Callejón Ancho; Callejón de San Francisco y Calle de Matamoros, desde la esquina formada con aquel, hasta la Fuente de los conquistadores; Avenida Juan de Tolosa en toda su longitud y los Callejones que desembocan en ella, que son: Vecindad de Gómez, Callejón del Moral, Callejón del Indio Triste y callejón 4 de julio; Av. Hidalgo en todo su desarrollo, y las calles y callejones transversales siguientes: callejón de Luis Moya, Callejón de las campanas, callejón de Osuna, Jardín Hidalgo en todo su perímetro, Callejón de Veyna, Calle de González Ortega (COSTADO NORTE DEL MERCADO PRINCIPAL), Callejón del Santer, costado sur del mercado principal, calle de La Palma, calle de la Caja, calle de Rosales, calle Allende, Callejón de la Bordadora y Callejón de Cuevas; Av. Juárez en toda su longitud; Jardín Morelos en todo su perímetro, callejón del Espacio, Av. Torreón en toda su longitud, Alameda Trinidad García de la Cadena en todo su perímetro; Plaza de Santo Domingo en todo su perímetro y las calles y callejones transversales siguientes: Calle del Estudiante, Callejón de Lauro, callejón del Cornejo, calle del Ideal, calle de San Agustín, Calle de Martires de Chicago, Callejón de Lancaster, calle de la moneda, calle de los estudiantes, calle de los estudiantes, de la Junta.

Los interesados en llevar a cabo las obras a que se refieren los dos artículos anteriores, solicitarán de la juntita autorización correspondiente, acompañando su petición de planos, fotografías, levantamientos y demás detalles técnicos que la Junta les solicite, de acuerdo con el caso, para que esta dicte, dentro del término de 30 días, las resoluciones que procedan, las cuales podrán ser concediendo o negando el permiso, o bien concediéndolo en forma condicionada.
VIII. APPENDICES

VIII. 2:
Map of Housing Density in Metropolitan Zacatecas
1992 Urban Development Program for the Zacatecas-Guadalupe Metropolitan Area
Zacatecas State Government

Map of Urban Population in the Metropolitan Area of Zacatecas
INEGI: Sistema para la Consulta de Informacion Censal
1990 Census
ANTECEDENTES

A FRESNILLO
A CD. JUAREZ
A LA JOYA
A VETAGRANDE

A SAUCEDA DE LA B

A GUADALAJARA

IEDIO NATURAL
PARTEAGUAS
ARROYOS
LÍNEA DE COND DE AGUA POTABLE

VIVIENDA
A BAÑUELOS

ALTA DENSIDAD
MEDIA DENSIDAD
BAJA DENSIDAD

A MÉXICO
A CD. GUAUHITA
Unidad Geográfica: W0560001  Total de ageb: 35
Indicador Censal: Población Total

INEGI Sistema para la Consulta de Información Censal (SCINCE)
IX. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my Parents
X. ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

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