



# Torrelavega (ES)

Scale

L/L

Team representative: Architect, Urban planner

Location: Torrelavega.

Population: 51,042 inhabitants.

Reflection site: 29,72 ha.

Project site: 5,74 ha.

Site proposed by: Cantabria Regional Government.

Actors involved: Cantabria Regional Government + Torrelavega City Council.

Owner(s) of the site: ADIF, MITMA and private owners

Commission after competition: Special Plan for Internal Reform (PERI).

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS



### INHABITED MILIEU'S CHALLENGES

The natural boundary of the river and the road and rail infrastructures condition mobility in the town, especially in the central area of the city, historically fragmented by the rail corridor that isolates several neighbourhoods from the rest of the city, dividing it in two.

These neighbourhoods are composed of a very interesting plurality of residential typologies; they combine single-family and collective housing in open blocks, like part of one of the city's traditional colonies (Sniace) which used to group together the urban life of the workers (workers and managers), with patches of incomplete closed blocks and isolated industrial structures: a complex yet diverse fabric juxtaposed without any apparent order, with the exception of the Sniace Colony, structured by two roads: Pablo Garnica and the Paseo del Niño, which are precisely the axes that bypass the railway to merge with the central administrative city.

The weight of the infrastructures in the functioning of this area of the city is enormous; they are understood as physical and perceptual borders that isolate part of the city, an area that is located in a strategic position in terms of access to the city, in terms of its proximity to the administrative centre, and from the point of view of the urban landscape with significant potentials such as the Saja-Besaya River that runs through it, forming its western, northern and eastern limits.

The removal of the roads should undoubtedly improve mobility in this area of the city, which will have to accommodate all modes of travel, implementing measures to promote a rational and sustainable mobility system where priority is given to pedestrians and to modes of transport alternative to road traffic.

It is important to highlight the great potential of its two structuring roads, as the Paseo del Niño extends towards the Ronda Bulevar and Pablo Garnica goes into the heart of the central city.





17

# How to integrate consolidated neighbourhoods of the city, prioritising pedestrian transit and other alternative modes to motorised traffic?



# How can the urban reorganization of the railway space contribute to the integration of the city with the river?



## QUESTIONS TO COMPETITORS

**The character of the barriers, to break or to sew?** The intention is to remove the railway border that has been a constant feature of urban life in the city for many decades, isolating neighbourhoods from the rest of the city, preventing permeability with the river that runs tangent to the urban fabric, with the possibility of reinforcing its banks, renaturalising them, opening them up to urban transit. In the process of suppressing the railway border possible courses of action open up, which involve generating new buildable volumes, rethinking the road system; these actions should in no case constitute "new borders". In conclusion, sewing the city together by the integration of a large area recovered with the undergrounding of the railway.

**Typological diversity, chaos or complexity?** The integration of fabrics as a project element. From typological diversity to chaos, as opposed to the conformation of a complex urban scene that intertwines and complements each other, absorbing diverse uses.

**The connection with the banks of the river, physical or perceptive?** Actions in the built-up city, in the heart of the consolidated fabric, when there are significant natural elements such as the tracing of the River Saja-Besaya, open up the hope of imagining a new urban conformation that brings the river corridor closer to the heart of the city. The suppression of roads can promote this connection, the kind of links to be established, how far it should or could go, the importance of reinforcing parks and leisure areas, overlooking the natural and artificial landscape, the establishment of new perspectives, taking advantage of the conformation of new volumetries; how far and how to materialise it.

**Historic traces, from oblivion to renovation?** Historical traces have been defining the city throughout its life, however, many urban renewal actions break them and even make them disappear; how far should we go with interventions in processes that have become traumatic, such as a railway crossing that fractures, separates. In these cases is it plausible to wield oblivion to heal the open urban wound?

