

## **Upper city planning and development: the Juiz de Fora growth vector**

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### **Introduction**

Juiz de Fora is the largest city in the Zona da Mata region, in the state of Minas Gerais. It is currently undergoing a strategic expansion process in its western vector. Among the expansion projects, there is the federal road known as the BR-440. The BR-440 construction is foreseen in federal law, the road purpose is to connect two other important federal roads: the BR-040 and BR-267. According to the plan, the BR-440 will have nine kilometers in length that will connect the Upper Town (RP West) to the Northeast of the city, affecting about 27 neighborhoods, condos and housing developments. The highway will have three viaducts and two lanes, besides shoulders, walks and pedestrian walkways, flower beds and security tracks, according to data provided by the City Hall.

According to the Director Development Urban Plan of Juiz de Fora (PDDU / JF, 2000), a public bodies major concern was to seek new avenues for the city growth and expansion, focusing on the transport infrastructure question, namely, the channels and flow paths creation.

### **Methods and Materials**

For this article development, deep research on the related event was needed. For a better comprehension, it was created a chronology, which means, a line time where the events were punctuated. These were put together, separated by theme and then, the data were crossed. For better knowledge of the facts, primary sources as pictures, processes, laws, season books and newspapers were surveyed, as well as many related bibliography references.

## **Discussion**

The Juiz de Fora settlement occurred as a result of a road, the Caminho Novo (New Way), connecting Ouro Preto to Rio de Janeiro, built in the eighteenth century. The population growth and urban development were set because of this road and others which were subsequently drawn.

The railway is the oldest route, it dates from the nineteenth century when it was called Dom Pedro II Railroad. The BR-040, BR-267 and the MG-353 make support for the intercity transportation. The Rio Branco Avenue is the oldest among this kind, having emerged with the village, then called Santo Antônio do Paraybuna camp, also in the nineteenth century. The JK and Itamar Franco avenues support the city growth in the north and south directions, respectively; and the most recent among the listed roads is BR-440, a federal road plan designed to cut the urban center and several neighborhoods. There is now a growth trend towards the western region and the BR-040. This area is the Upper City, the São Pedro Planning Region.

The centrality of Juiz de Fora is changing, the current downtown area is running out and the "new center" seems to be the Upper City; which, incidentally, is already being re-signified. The Mall Independência is located in the Cascatinha neighborhood, this shopping demand density, circulation and services. The current central area will become only a commerce space and later on, will suffer gentrification. There is still lack of services in Juiz de Fora when compared to larger cities, but these services are already appearing on the BR-040 axis and specialized services are been the main attraction. The area for "services" is highly valued, the 'trade' is far less. Around this area is already happening a gentrification process and the higher income people is occupying the space.

The BR-440 will generate a heavy traffic that will transit through it until reach other roads: BR-040, BR-267 and MG-353. For its implementation, the BR-440 will cut neighborhoods and regions with worrying ecological problems, besides the Dam, the São Pedro Stream, the Borboleta Stream and scattered green areas. Second of all, in NAGEA's technical opinions, the route hurts several environmental codes prepositions that pertain to waterways and basins minimum clearances and permanent preservation areas implementation.

In addition to the environmental issue, there is a problematic case of the unwanted traffic that will pass through a dense neighborhoods at high speeds, condemning them to the a road marginal condition; these neighborhoods with often irregular occupation, subject to economic enticement generated by the services needed to respond to this size road movement and forced evictions. For the legally accepted road implementation, it needs to be 50 meters wide in its entire length, considering, collector lanes, lanes, medians and sidewalks, as well as a safety margin. It is evidently that the paths and streets where this road is meant to pass is extremely smaller than it has to be.

### Results

There is no natural need for suburban expansion, all these activities are driven by the real estate market and its land speculation need. As the land price in suburban areas rises with new buildings proliferation, the land relative price in central areas falls (Smith, 2007). For the investor, apply capital in more appreciated real estate areas is much more advantageous, that is why there is so many land for sale in the Upper Town. Nowadays,. Juiz de Fora is in 25th position in the best city to invest in real estate ranking in Brazil, way ahead of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia; and behind Niterói, Florianópolis and Vitória, according to Infomoney (2015).

In most cases, large public investments helps to strengthen the urban land value, by the great builders and businessmen beneficitation. In this way, it creates an unequal city, where the best infrastructure and equipment are installed in accordance with the capital interests. Before the recent decades accelerated growth, the Upper City was way less dense, the commerce was less, and the greater economic value buildings were usually farms, used by non residents as rest areas on weekends. This was all replaced by a thickening, more residences and refined commerce.

The Director Development Urban Plan of Juiz de Fora emphasizes the Upper City spatial structure that for decades has been identified as a great growth potential area because of its strategic geographical position, coupled with an outstanding natural beauty presence (PDDU / JF, 2000). In spite of the green areas presence, the whole justification around the real estate speculation in this area is based on the districts traditional inhabitants life quality. With the region growth, the population density was

followed by below normal character agglomerations, in other words, informal settlements. Roads such as BR-440, not only qualify access to the area, but also has its works linked to the illegal residents eviction, either forcibly or through the "white removal".

### **Conclusions**

Juiz de Fora is going through the real estate valuation process, while some areas such as the city center suffer from the devaluation, other areas go through the reverse process. Investments are increasing and the city walks firmly towards neoliberalism and the city-merchandise station; and how Otilia Arantes (2000) once registered, the market city is the privileged minority city.

The city expansion axis, toward a new centrality development still have many challenges. Combine everybody's interest will be a battle to win. The hope underlies in this current Director Plan with participatory meetings and workshops that aims to reach the population.

The BR-440, the main speculation process axis of real estate valuation and centrality expansion, is a large and important connecting cord between the neighborhoods of the Upper City from the Monte Cristo, through the University and surrounding neighborhoods up the São Pedro dam. The important thing is to turn this cord into a multi-purpose equipment, adding not only life quality for local residents, as well as enhancing its tourist potential and connecting to other major roads that should receive the same treatment as the Interbairros and the Coletora.

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