

LATITUD  
est. 2012

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Medellin, Colombia

# RÍO MEDELLÍN

Category: contemporary master plans

Location: Medellin

Project Year: 2013-present



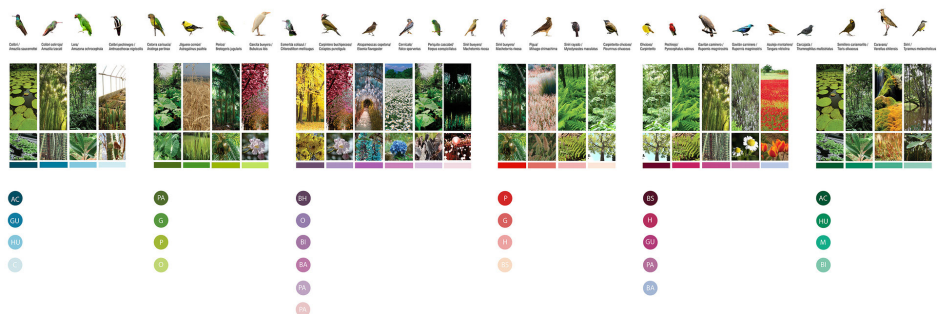
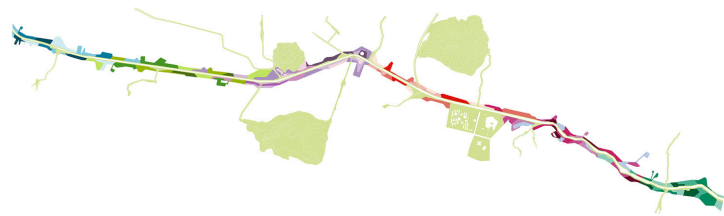
dms 6.2442° N, 75.5812° W  
elevation 1,495 m / 4,905 ft



We are obsessed with the landscape of our country,” says Sebastian Monsalve of Latitud, an architecture firm based in Medellin Colombia and winner of the Río Medellín design competition, a 17 kilometer river revitalization master plan. “As an architect, you have to be humble, and realistic in your own city, with a sense of responsibility.” As a firm made up of young architects all from Medellin, there was a sense of imbedded knowledge of the terrain, vegetation and wildlife as well as an personal investment in the future of the project that drove this winning proposal. The project began as a multi-stage competition and is currently under construction. The proposal seeks to promote the river as a structural axis, to reconnect the river to the surrounding green spaces, to revocer and re-integrate the tributary waterways, and create a system of public space that works both autonomously and as a cohesive whole.

The project was designed as a series of modular prototypes that can be built independently and pieced together over time. One of the prototypes has become a pilot project to be built first, and the rest will follow. These pieces are able to function as parts, meaning that the project does not have to be built in its entirety to achieve the desired effects. Monsalve claims that the modularity of the process was purely for pragmatic reasons of speed, thrift and buildability. He suspects that the team won the competition because of the financial feasibility of the project, as well as the project’s inherent resilience: Even if it is not finished, the independent pieces will still work as autonomous and coherent projects unto themselves.

*Plan diagram with program, species and vegetaion*



*Plan with Icons*

Monsalve says that it has about the same area as New York City's Central Park, but because of its linearity, the project is almost completely edge condition. The river spans neighborhoods from Medellín's most wealthy to the most impoverished. The contextual analysis of each intervention must be rigorous, since there is so much interface with the various surrounding communities.



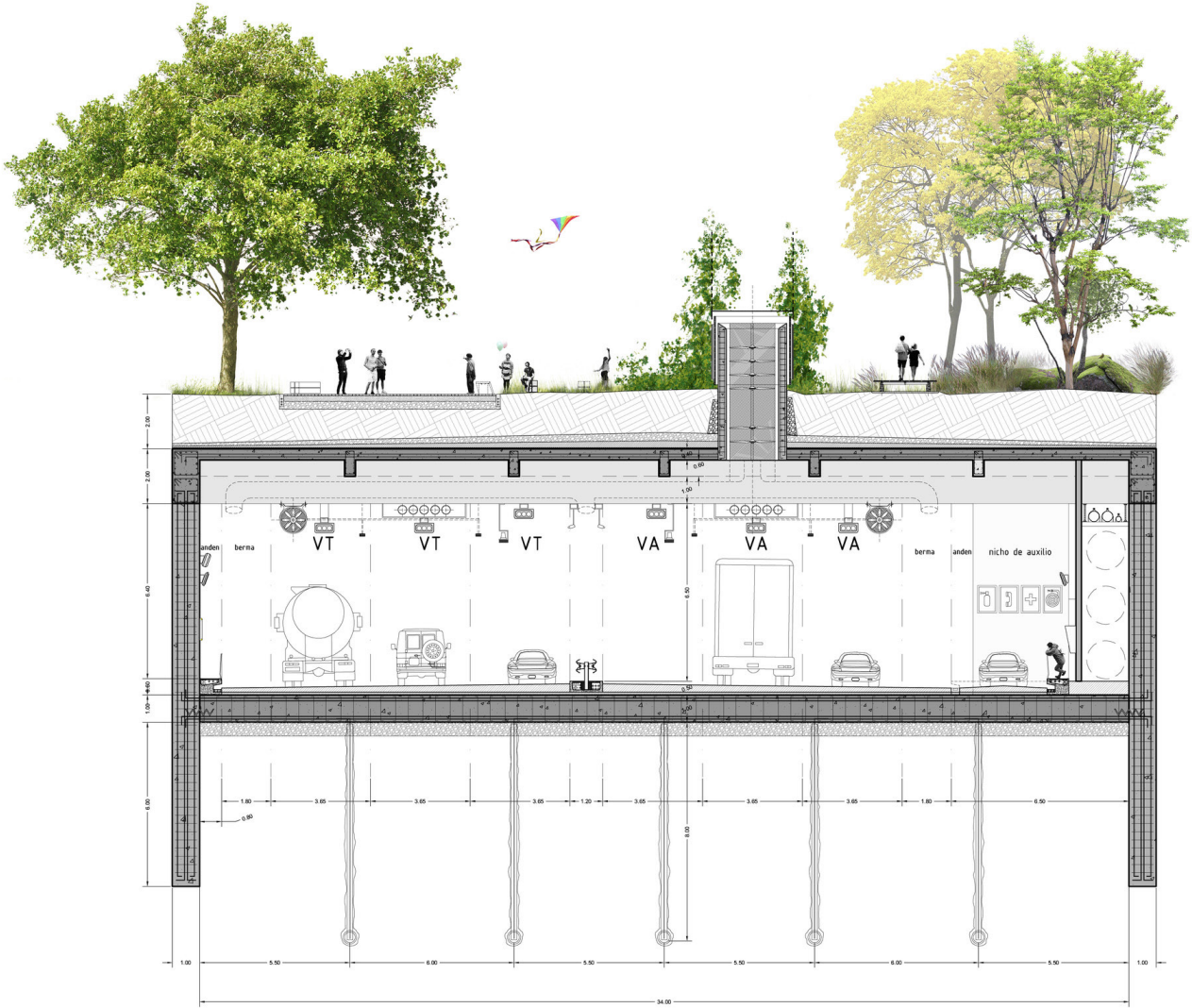
*Context Diagram of Nodes and Connections*

Because of the territorial scale and incredibly fast pace of the project, the design process consisted of identifying, designating and designing for “hot spots” – points on extreme conditions at which a design intervention could have the largest social, environmental or infrastructural effect. These were chosen by making a multi-matrix of criteria to be addressed by the design. These were also areas that the designers knew well. The most detailed design was done in the hot-spots.

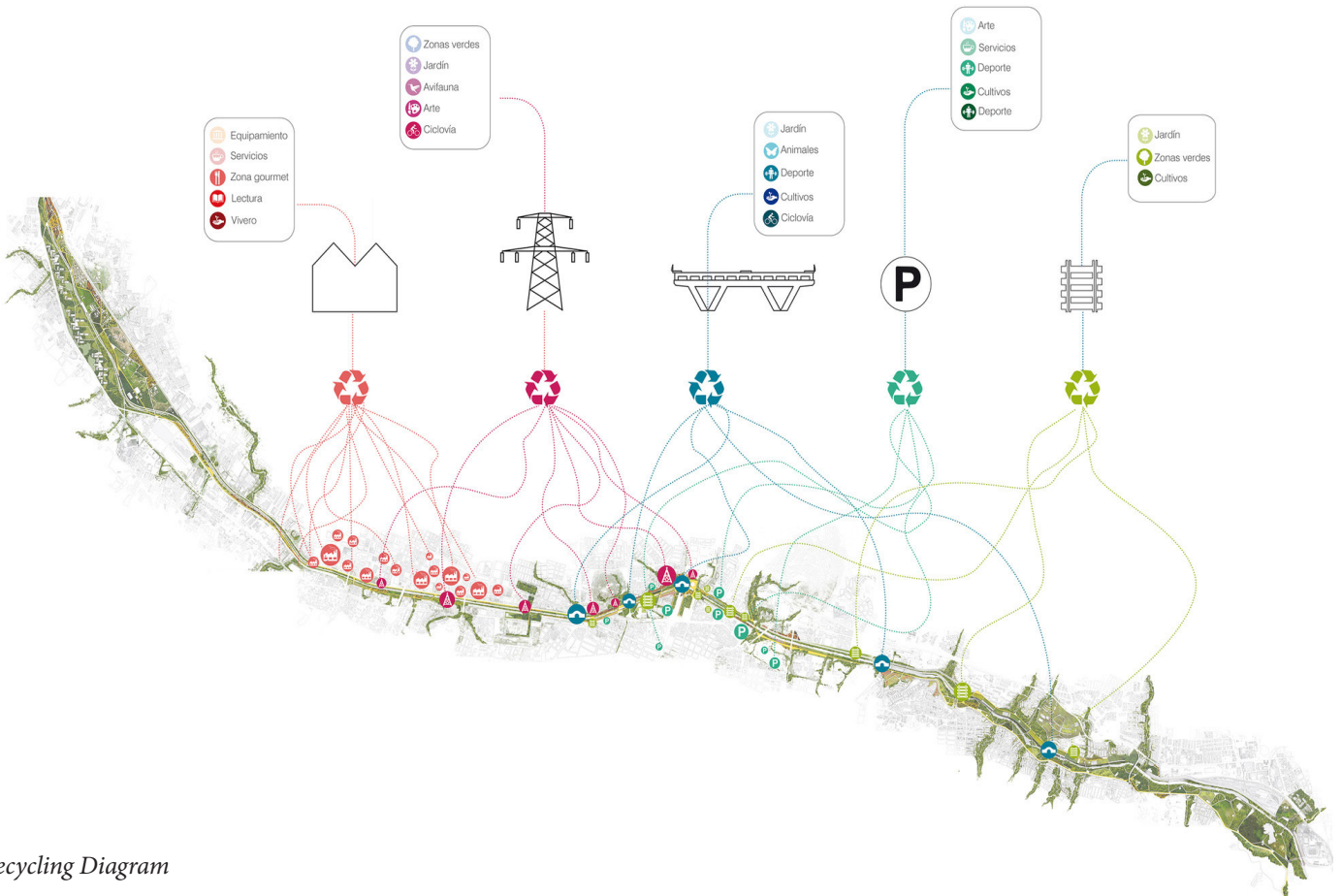
Monsalve says, “We have interdisciplinary work and I believe in that. The most important thing I learned on this project is that I am limited as an architect. So I surround myself with people that I know what I don't know. We've work with at least 12 technicians on this project. The most important thing to know to make architecture at this scale is how to collaborate. A good architect is one that understands how to work with biologists, foresters, landscape architects. The future of architecture is collaborative work.”

*Aerial view*





Tunnel section



Recycling Diagram



