

NY (23-4-08)

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THANKS

- Good evening ladies and gentleman.
- I would like to thank the organization for the invitation to present Bilbao in such and important event.
- Our Mayor has told me to transmit his congratulations for this forum and his willingness to keep working for a more sustainable Bilbao.
- For me it has been very interesting to listen to all the cases that I have heard today.

INTRODUCTION

- I think that you all know Bilbao as the city where the Guggenheim Museum is.
- But today I am not going to talk you about Frank Ghery´s Museum, even if it is a very important

question for Bilbao, because a lot more things has happened in Bilbao during the last years than the museum.

- There has been a complete process of transformation that, among other things, has made of Bilbao a more sustainable city. Still I must confess that the main reason for the change has been the absolute need to change our economic system because of the situation in which we were at the end of the 80's.
- I am going to talk about environment, infrastructures and urbanism and about our way to try to create a more sustainable Bilbao.

SITUATION

- Bilbao is 700 years old and the main capital of the Basque Country. It is situated in the north of Spain by the Atlantic Ocean and in the south west of Europe close to the French border.

- It is a city with 380.000 habitants within a metropolis of 900.000 habitants.
- From its beginning, Bilbao has been developed along the river Nervión which has been the core of our life especially of our economic activity.
- As you can see it is a very linear metropolis.
- Since the middle of the XIX century Bilbao became a prosperous industrial city that kept growing till around 1975.
- As you can see all the industry was situated close to the river.
- Unfortunately our industry was too specialized in steel factories, shipyards and the port.
- So Bilbao was a very prosperous city but also very non sustainable, because we did not care about the environment and we were slowly consuming our natural resources.

- Then came the big world crisis of the 70's and everything collapsed:
 - Enterprises were closed
 - Unemployment went up till 30%
 - It was a very tense social time with big workers strikes and demonstrations
 - Industrial ruins begin to appeared along the river banks

- And with this situation, in August 83 we had the big flood that devastated all Bilbao city centre.

STARTING POINT

STRATEGIC PLAN

- Things could not be worse, so we thought that we needed to make a radical change. Our economy was derelict and our metropolis was in very bad conditions from the environment point of view.

- In 1990 a Strategic Plan was the starting point of the change. The Plan urged for a global transformation

and looked upon a lot of things, but the main issues were:

- Environmental regeneration
 - Public transport
 - Urban regeneration
 - Culture and leisure
 - Education (new skills)
 - Social integration
- As I have said, we did not make the change because of sustainability but because of the extreme need.
- For the physical change two elements were strategic to create a new structure for the territory and to allow the further urban regeneration projects:
- Environmental regeneration
 - Public transport

Environmental regeneration

- Our main asset the river was absolutely polluted due to industrialization and to the lack of interest at that time in our environment. So in fact we have been

living without looking at the river. In this field there has been 3 elements:

- One of the big investments has been to set up a new sewerage system, so dirty waters did not go to the river, and the water treatment plants.
- Once the river was clean we were ready to create promenades and to live closer to the water.
- So for the first time we have started to live looking to the river and using it for recreation.
- The third element was to create parks and green spaces in all the new developments.

Public transport

- The investment in public transport has been enormous. The objectives being to increase the accessibility, but reducing the use of the private car, and to improve quality of life.
- In this area we have worked with 3 ideas:
 - To create a new infrastructure: Metro
 - To reorganize the existing railway lines
 - As a complement, to build a new tramway line to serve the new areas

Metro

- The new Metro is the key of the new Bilbao because it has integrated the metropolis.
- The Bilbao Metro was designed by Norman Foster and it has been the first example of international architecture in Bilbao.
- The first line of the Metro was opened in November 95 and still is considered the best project by the citizens of Bilbao.
- We can see the success of Metro and how quality is rewarded.
- For me it is a good example of the importance of quality in public works.

Existing railways

- But also we had to take advantage of the existing railway lines. They have been reorganized and connected with Metro.
- In some cases, the railway has been covered.

- Here we can see how a freight line is transformed into one for passengers.
- And here is the new boulevard created on top of it.

Tramway

- To complete the scheme and to serve some of the new urban projects a tramway line was built.

EXAMPLES

- You have seen the problems that we had, but some of these problems have become opportunities for Bilbao.
- The land used by the former steel factories and shipyards and also by railways and port become the land for the new urban projects.
- Since the industry was mainly situated along the river, the new projects are in the centre of the metropolis.
- You can see in the slide the number and situation of the areas.

- All the projects that we have developed follow some common patterns that have to do with sustainability:
 - Reuse of the existing city
 - Density
 - Mixed uses
 - Global approach, including environment and transport.
 - In the transformation of Bilbao the “tools” have been very important. To develop most of the urban projects a public company was created in 92. It is called BR2000 and owned by all the administrations, from the federal to the local. This company has been and still is the image of the consensus.

- And above all there was a vision: to recover the river as the centre of the new metropolis.

- To give you an idea of these urban projects I am going to show you to end my presentation 2 projects:

the first we made and the last, the one that we are developing now.

Ametzola

- This was the first project we started and was developed by BR2000.
- It has 100.000m² and is situated in the south of the centre of Bilbao within an industrial surrounding with no green spaces.
- It was a former freight railway station.
- The idea is a residential project (1.000 dwellings) with a park (36.000m²).
- We covered the railway and create a station for passengers so the area will have a good transport system.

Zorrotzaurre

- It is the last project and we are trying to make of it a model of sustainability for Bilbao.

- In this case instead of using BR2000, the public company, we have chosen a different model: a public-private partnership.
- It has 670.000m² and was a port installation with industries around.

- Elements:
 - Waterfront
 - Now it is a peninsula, that is going to be transformed in island because of the flood prevention.
- Like the other projects in Bilbao:
 - Reuse of the existing city. You can see how central it is.

 - Density, 5.600 apartments
 - Mix uses:
 - 74/26
 - 50/50

- Tramway

- Architecture

- New things:
 - Reduce the use of the car
 - Urban Technological Park dedicated to environment industries
 - Energy design:
 - Central District Heating
 - Buildings
 - Cleaning the polluted land

 - Preserving the memory:
 - Residential
 - Industrial

- Jane Jacobs

- But still we have a lot to do.

- Thank you for you attention