



Visiones de Renca

Visions of Renca

Urban Planning Studio
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i. Acknowledgements

We would first and foremost like to thank the Municipality of Renca for inviting us to share in the wonderful history, experiences, and hopes of Renca. Thank you to Maria de la Luz Loboz Martinez, Antonieta Isabel Bustos Neumann and Mayor Claudio Castro Salas for welcoming us, allowing us to ask many questions and develop our studio recommendations for Renca.

We would especially like to thank Valentina Gaido Lasserre (GSAPP '16) and graduate students from Universidad de Chile and Universidad Catolica de Chile for joining us in conducting community outreach. Without you all, we would not have been able to speak and listen to Renca residents and gather the data we needed during the trip. Thank you Camila Paz Zúñiga Berrios, Gloria Rojas Piña, Ignacio Ebensperger Escalona, Juan Opazo Aravena, Mario Nicolás Arriagada Pinto, Matías Valenzuela Zenteno, Mauricio Ignacio Pérez Parra, Miguel Uribe Rubilar, and Tomás Andrés Robert Serrano, for making our goals for community outreach a reality.

Thank you to La Fábrica for hosting us. Coffee and water kept us going most days, and we thank the staff for allowing us to use the space and host our formal engagement there. In addition, we thank all of the stakeholders who took time to share with us their knowledge, research, and experiences so that we would be better able to develop our recommendations.

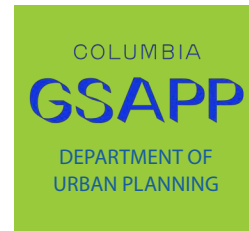
Most importantly, thank you to the residents of Renca for sharing your stories, your homes, and your lives with us. Being in Renca and working on this project was a life-changing experience for many of us. We are so honored to have had the opportunity to visit Renca and meet you. We hope you see your visions reflected here and in Renca in the years to come.

Last but not least, thank you to our studio professors Jose Luis Vallejo, Ryan Devlin, and Jim Lammers. We felt extremely lucky throughout this semester to receive your guidance and feedback. You all made us sharper and do our best. For that and the lessons we learned throughout this semester, thank you.



Visiones de Renca
Visions of Renca

ii. Executive Summary



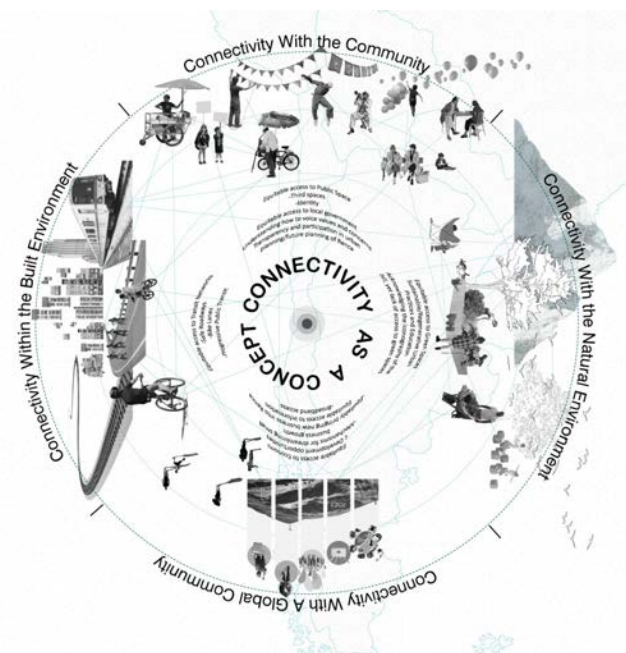
- With our goal of supporting the municipality and its constituents alike, we ask ourselves, what strategies can we, as planners, use to promote connectivity to help navigate change?

Renca, a municipality to the periphery of Santiago, has long experienced disinvestment and inequality throughout its history. Identifiable by its iconic hills, it is marked by residents' shared history of forced displacement and stigmatization. It is structurally disconnected from the rest of Santiago, but with the expansion of Metro Line 7 in 2028, Renca will be connected to the rest of Santiago by metro for the very first time.

Our studio, commissioned by the municipality of Renca, gathered socio-spatial data through community engagement, surveys, and interviews. In conjunction with spatial data, we identified key issues that residents face while living in the commune. Thematically, these are perceptions of safety and stigmatization, disconnection, spatial inequality, and access to funding for community development. By using an asset-based approach, we developed recommendations that would allow Renca to build on its existing strengths to address these issues and ultimately make Renca more safe, environmentally sustainable, offer economic opportunities, and become a place where people would want to stay.

As the issues affecting Renca residents are interrelated, so are our recommendations. First, we recommend that Renca deploy **street activation** strategies such as tactical plazas, community-led street art, and youth programming in the area east of the new metro stations and west of Plaza de Renca. This will enable residents to gather and carry out activities in public space, reframing residents' perceptions and encouraging eyes on the street for the community to look out for one another. To provide much-needed shade and connect young people to their natural environment, we propose **green sustainability networks** throughout the commune, starting from eco-school programs in the most vulnerable neighborhoods, as well as investments to plant trees and create pocket parks.

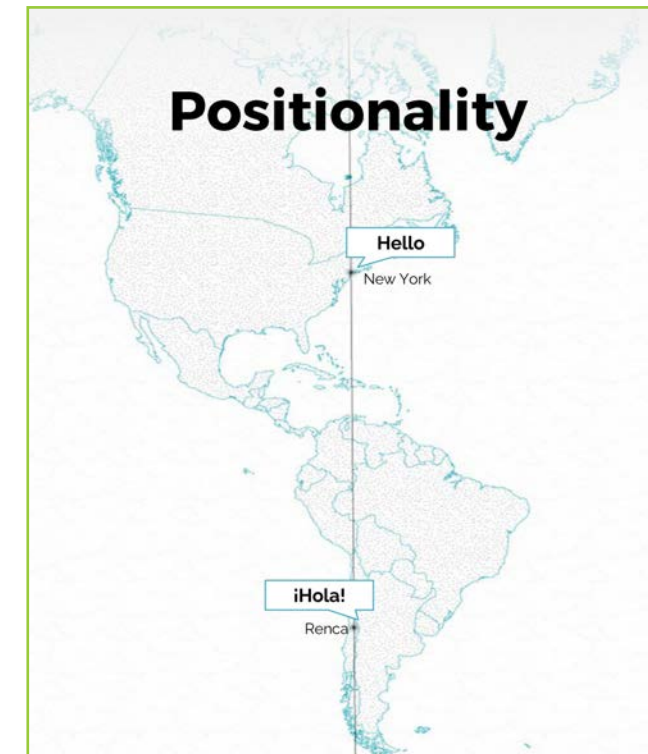
In order to encourage economic activity at the scale achievable to Renca residents, we recommend **mixed-use development** along arterial roads, starting with place-based businesses and complemented with public amenities like plazas and pocket parks. Last but not least, we recommend a new financing mechanism through the **Renca Urban Development and Investment Corporation**, which will inclusively fundraise for capital projects and govern collectively to decide where and how projects, such as our recommendations, will be carried out in Renca.



So how can planning support that same kind of connectivity – ensuring that Renca's transformation strengthens rather than weakens community ties?

1. Introduction / Context

■ Posicionalidad / Positionality



expertos externos que imponen soluciones, buscamos amplificar las voces comunitarias, respetar los sistemas de conocimiento local y fomentar un diálogo colaborativo que valore las experiencias vividas de los residentes de Renca.

Además, reconocemos que la planificación urbana ha sido históricamente cómplice en la reproducción de desigualdades sociales y espaciales, privilegiando con frecuencia perspectivas tecnocráticas sobre el conocimiento comunitario. En respuesta, nuestra metodología se fundamenta en enfoques participativos y orientados a la justicia que desafían estos paradigmas dominantes. Nos esforzamos por adoptar prácticas de investigación reflexivas, interrogando constantemente nuestros propios sesgos y suposiciones, y asegurándonos de que nuestro trabajo contribuya al desarrollo urbano equitativo y sostenible, en lugar de reforzar las disparidades existentes.

En última instancia, nuestro objetivo es promover un proceso de investigación transparente, inclusivo y mutuamente beneficioso, que reconozca nuestro privilegio y, al mismo tiempo, ponga nuestros recursos académicos al servicio de las prioridades autodeterminadas por la comunidad de Renca.

Español

Como estudiantes de posgrado de Planificación Urbana de la Universidad de Columbia, reconocemos nuestra posición como investigadores de una institución de influencia global que trabaja con la comunidad de Renca, de Santiago, Chile. Reconocemos las dinámicas de poder inherentes a esta relación, moldeadas por nuestro privilegio académico, la distancia geográfica y las desigualdades estructurales que históricamente han definido las interacciones entre investigadores y comunidades marginadas.

Somos plenamente conscientes de los riesgos de la investigación extractivista, en la que el conocimiento, los datos y las narrativas se extraen de las comunidades sin reciprocidad significativa ni un compromiso a largo plazo. Nuestro enfoque se basa en un compromiso con una investigación urbana ética, que prioriza la coproducción de conocimiento, la escucha activa y la responsabilidad ante los actores locales. En lugar de posicionarnos como

English

As graduate students of Urban Planning at Columbia University, we recognize our positionality as researchers from a globally influential institution engaging with the community of Renca, in Santiago, Chile. We acknowledge the inherent power dynamics at play, shaped by our academic privilege, geographic distance, and the structural inequities that often define relationships between researchers and historically marginalized communities.

We are acutely aware of the risks of extractivist research—where knowledge, data, and narratives are taken from communities without meaningful reciprocity or long-term engagement. Our approach is guided by a commitment to ethical urban research that prioritizes co-production of knowledge, active listening, and accountability to local stakeholders. Rather than positioning ourselves as external experts imposing solutions, we seek to amplify

community voices, respect local knowledge systems, and engage in collaborative dialogue that centers the lived experiences of Renca’s residents.

Furthermore, we recognize that urban planning has historically been complicit in reinforcing social and spatial inequalities, often privileging technocratic perspectives over grassroots expertise. In response, our methodology is rooted in participatory and justice-oriented planning frameworks that challenge these dominant paradigms. We strive to engage in reflexive research practices, continually interrogating our own biases and assumptions, and ensuring that our work contributes to equitable and sustainable urban development rather than reinforcing existing disparities.

Ultimately, our goal is to foster a research process that is transparent, inclusive, and mutually beneficial—one that acknowledges our privilege while leveraging our academic resources to support the self-determined priorities of Renca’s community members

1.1 History of Chile and Santiago

The legacy of Chile’s dictatorship under General Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990) profoundly shaped the urban landscape of Santiago, particularly in the city’s government and spatial organization. One of the key outcomes of this era was the fragmentation of Santiago into a puzzle of separate municipalities, each with its own administration, budget, and political leadership. This structure was a deliberate strategy implemented during

the dictatorship to decentralize governance, reduce the power of urban movements to prevent uprising and protests, and reinforce social and spatial divisions (Gonzalo de la Maza, 2000).



Prior to the dictatorship, Santiago functioned more as a cohesive urban entity, with greater centralized planning and control. However, during the dictatorship, the military regime enacted a series of neoliberal reforms that reshaped the structure of local governance across the country. The 1979 Municipal Reform Law created new municipalities, many carved out from the formerly unified



unified Santiago, and gave them considerable autonomy. These changes aligned with the broader neoliberal agenda of the regime, which emphasized privatization, deregulation, and reduced state intervention. By splitting Santiago into multiple communes (comunas), the regime effectively undermined collective organizing and made it more difficult for demands of services or infrastructure to gain traction across the city (Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, 2018).

This municipal fragmentation has had lasting impacts. Today, Santiago is made up of over 30 different municipalities, with vast disparities in wealth, infrastructure and services. Affluent areas in the east operate with large budgets and high-quality public services, while poorer municipalities in the south and west of the city, such as Renca, often struggle with underfunding and limited resources. The legacy of dictatorship-era policies thus continues to shape urban inequality in Santiago, reinforcing class-based

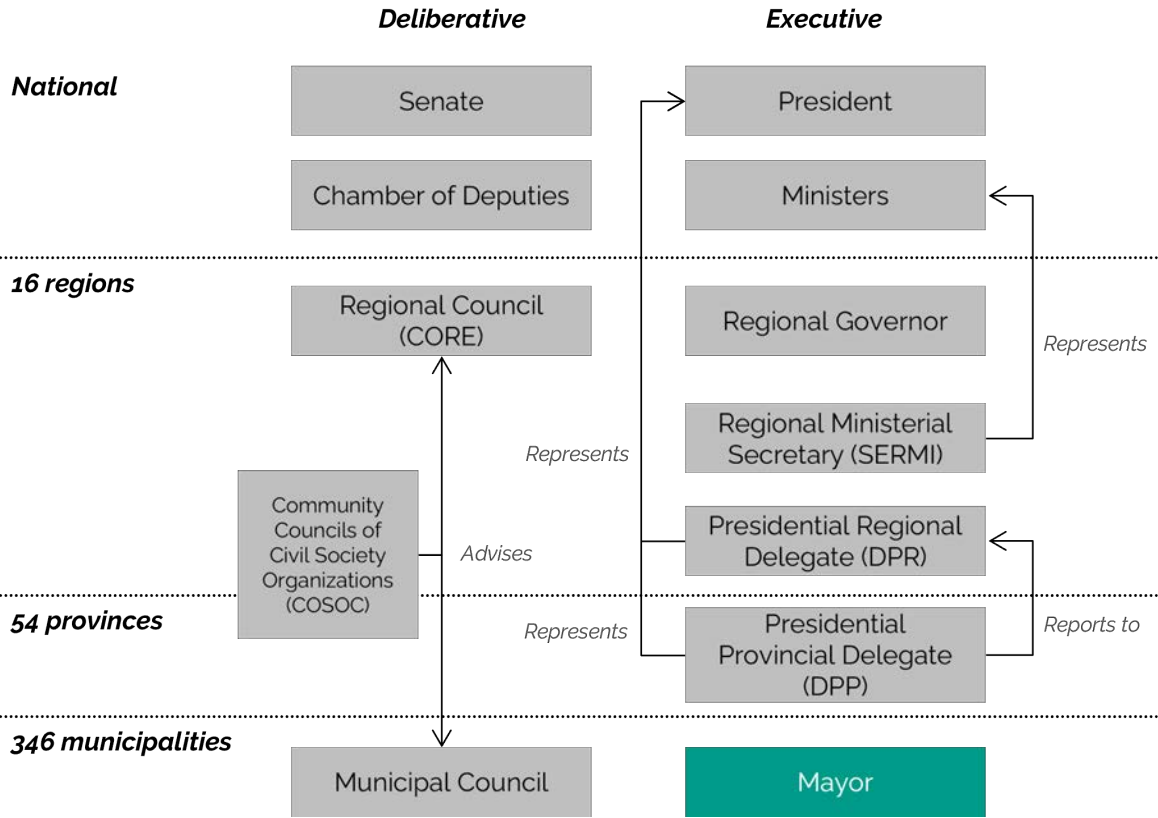
segregation and complicating efforts to develop cohesive metropolitan-wide solutions for transportation, housing, or public services. The fragmented nature of Santiago reflects not just urban planning choices, but deeper political and historical forces of the dictatorship.

1.2 History of Renca

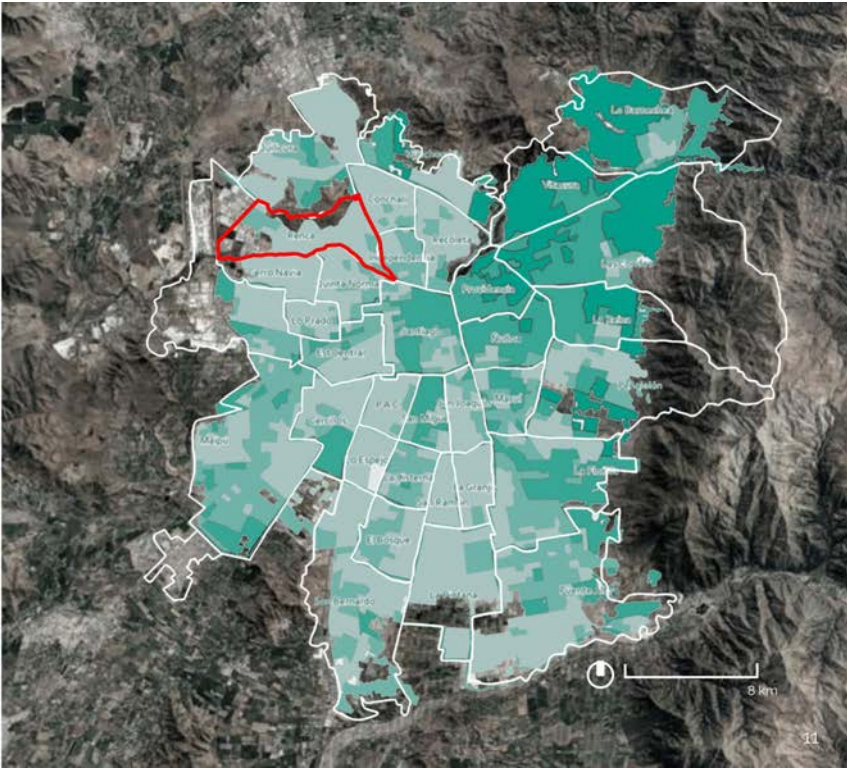
Renca is one of Santiago’s oldest communes—founded in the early days of Chilean independence. Once a rural area on the periphery, Renca has grown into a dense, working-class municipality home to over 150,000 people. But despite its size and history, Renca has long been treated as an afterthought in Santiago’s urban development. Its story is one of strategic neglect—rooted in the broader fragmentation of the city.

In the early 20th century, rapid industrial growth in Santiago attracted a significant influx of rural migrants seeking employment opportunities. The population increase outpaced the city’s capacity to provide adequate formal housing, leading many people to establish self-built, informal settlements on the urban periphery, including areas like Renca. In the 1960s, Chile’s government launched the Operación Sitio program, which allocated land plots with the size of 9 meter by 18 meter to low-income families with the expectation that they would construct their own homes. Many of these self-constructed houses on the provided plots from this era still exist in Renca today.

Under the Pinochet dictatorship, Chile’s cities were carved into independent communes. Power and resources were decentralized, but not evenly distributed. Wealthy municipalities like Las Condes or Vitacura thrived. Others, like Renca, were left behind—given responsibility but



Urban Inequality in Santiago



without the means to act. This fragmentation hardened existing inequalities. Besides that, housing policies shifted towards privatization, emphasizing market-driven solutions. This approach made formal housing increasingly unaffordable for low-income populations. Moreover, many low-income families, particularly those in informal settlements or slums were forcibly relocated from central Santiago. through slum clearance programs. These families were placed in poorly constructed, small social housing projects in peripheral areas like Renca (Rojas-Ampuero, 2022)

During post-dictatorship (1990s-2010s), Renca was affected by public policies relating to its development, but which may have continued to exacerbate inequality. In the 1990s, Santiago implemented the Plan Regulador Metropolitano de Santiago (PRMS) to limit urban sprawl. However, developers often bypassed these regulations, leading to unequal housing conditions and continued expansion into peripheral areas. In addition, the government constructed extensive social housing projects during this period, which were frequently situated far from employment centers, exacerbating unemployment and poverty among residents. Despite urban expansion, Renca remained disconnected from

key services and lacked improvements in public transit, resulting in social and economic isolation for its residents.

Today, Renca still lacks the infrastructure, services, and political power found in Santiago's more affluent areas. Public investment is limited. Access to green space, quality transit, and education remains uneven. But Renca is a vital, resilient community shaped by decades of organizing, struggle, and resistance. Understanding Renca means understanding the deeper logic of urban inequality in Santiago—a city where where you live often determines what rights and opportunities you have.

1.3 Expanding Metro Line 7

Prior to our trip and our engagement, we focused on examining the Metro Line 7 expansion into Renca and the expected effects on the community. Our initial research question was, "How can Renca navigate the impacts of top-down changes like the arrival of Metro Line 7?"

The future Line 7 will open two new stations in the western part of Renca, connecting Renca to the rest of Santiago to the metro for the very first time. It is meant to reinforce the capacity of Line 1, which has a lot of demand because its route passes through the metropolitan center.



Source - Metro De Santiago (<https://www.metro.cl/nuevos-proyectos/linea-7>)



Source - Metro De Santiago (<https://www.metro.cl/nuevos-proyectos/linea-7>)

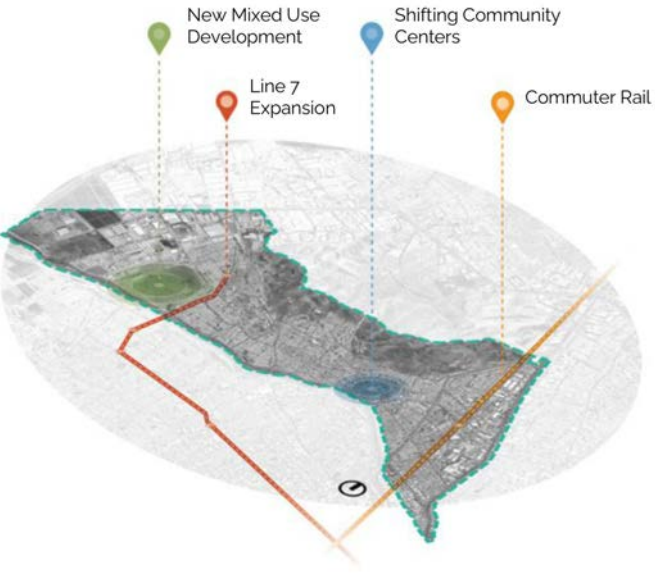
Line 7 will connect eight communes of Santiago's Metropolitan Area, from Renca, Cerro Navia, Quinta Normal, Santiago, Recoleta, Providencia, Las Condes, to Vitacura respectively (Metro de Santiago).

Atiba Urban Studies and Projects (2017) highlight densification and social integration as two potential benefits of the new Line 7. Densification potential depends on the availability of regulations and urban planning instruments, which include limits on the height and density that can be built in each commune. Therefore, the study recommends that municipalities accelerate the formation of regulations that are compatible with the potential for densification. On the other hand, the potential for social integration in this context is in the increasing access that peripheral communes have to opportunities and services in the metropolitan center. For communes like Renca, Cerro Navia, and Quinta Normal, the arrival of Line 7 could increase social diversity and attractiveness, which in turn could open access to better salaries for newer generations.

In 2018, the Municipality of Renca began the process of revising Renca's urban planning instruments, the Communal Regulatory Plan or Plan Regulador Comunal (PRC). The previous PRC was made in 1984, which no longer reflects Renca's current conditions. Therefore, the PRC revision was carried out considering incoming changes, such as Metro Line 7 and the Santiago-Batuco regional rail line. In this new planning instrument, the area around the two future stations of Line 7 in Renca is newly planned to be mixed-use and residential, with higher density than the rest of existing areas in Renca. This is accommodated through a land use plan and a local ordinance, as parts of the PRC 2022, that allows for more mixed-use buildings and higher building heights.

However, in our first meeting with the representative of the Urban Planning Department of Renca's Municipality, Luli Martinez revealed that the Municipality of Renca and local residents did not participate in determining the location of the Line 7's future stations in Renca. The channels available for public participation were limited to station naming only. Consequently, questions have arisen regarding the position of the Line 7 stations which are considered far from Renca's current civic center, Plaza de Renca. At the initiation stage of this project, we focused on helping Renca manage future changes that were beyond the direct control of the municipality and local residents.

Incoming Changes



Clients asks



Population
Retention **01**



02 Mixed
Redevelopment of
Industrial Sites



Funding
Mechanisms **03**



The Municipality of Renca



Mayor

Claudio Nicolás



Urban Planning
Department
(Asesoría Urbana)



Urban Planning
Department
(Asesoría Urbana)

1.4 Client's Asks

Our client is the municipality of Renca, currently led by Mayor Claudio Castro Salas, and its planning department. When meeting with our clients, we learned more about the context of Renca and the dilemmas of the municipality. They presented us with a four urban challenges that could help guide the direction of our project:

- **Civic center:** According Renca's 2020 Master Plan, the municipality aims to improve the accessibility to services and commerce around the current civic center.

- **Mixed redevelopment:** The municipality is looking to transform underutilized industrial land, mainly on the eastern and western edges of Renca, into mixed-use areas with housing and services. They want to explore incentives for developers while assuring the creation of quality neighborhoods.
- **Land Value Capture:** In a rapidly developing city, the municipality wants to understand opportunities and strategies to capitalize on property value.
- **Growth center:** With the arrival of a new cultural center to the south of Renca, the municipality sees an opportunity to establish this location as a possible fourth communal subcenter – the three other subcenters being the civic center, the Metro Line 7 stations and near the new Santiago Batuco rail station.

Along with these urban challenges, our clients also mentioned their goal of population retention. The municipality of Renca is seeking strategies to help strengthen local identity and improve material conditions in order to retain its younger population, who tend to leave Renca – often in search of education or broader opportunities in Santiago. Our team approached this project with these insights in mind, taking careful consideration to come up with recommendations that incorporate elements of the clients' asks.

2. Methodology

- With this context, our initial research question was, "How can Renca navigate the impacts of top-down changes like the arrival of Metro Line 7? To answer this, we believed that meaningful planning should be grounded in the lived experiences of the people who call Renca home – a value that shaped our entire approach.

Our team sought to conduct research that would humanize quantitative data and bring out the experiences of Renca residents. While we gathered plenty of rich, important data that informed how we approached the trip and built up the groundwork for this project, some gaps in the data remained.

- What makes Renca special?
- What are some of your memories of Renca?
- What is the most important thing to you in Renca?
- How do you envision Renca's future?

In addition to these questions, we investigated how residents feel about living in Renca now. These questions guided the development of our recommendations to make sure that residents' voices and needs were at the forefront of our work. To do this, our team used formal and informal engagement methods on our trip to gather information that would fill the data gaps from our initial research.

Goal

To understand how
the future Metro Line 7
extension would
impact Renca

We were interested in finding out how Renca residents felt about the introduction of Metro Line 7 and its location in the commune, and if they even knew about the project. In addition to this question, which guided our initial pre-engagement research, we came up with some exploratory, open-ended questions as a way to gather a broader breadth of data and possibly shift the direction of our recommendations. These questions included:

Value

To ground planning
strategies in the lived
experiences of
Renca's residents

Centering the Lived Experience



To ground our analysis in the lived experiences of residents and the information we collected, we built an interactive map that served as a tool for our analysis. This map is layered with local stories and observations, centering the human experience within Renca.

Data Collection Through Engagement

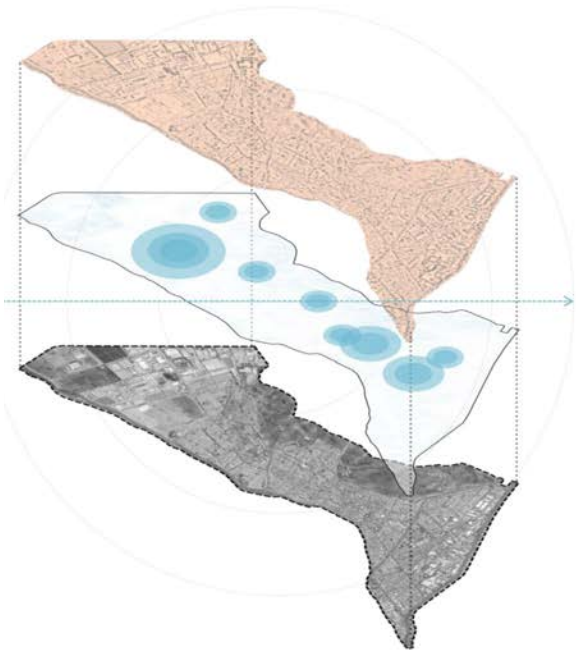


As we mentioned, we conducted community engagement events to collect data on Renca residents' memories, present experiences, and hopes for the future. By having participants mark these experiences on maps, we also gathered spatially specific data.



Images of residents in Renca taken throughout engagement events

Human-Centered Data & Interactive Map

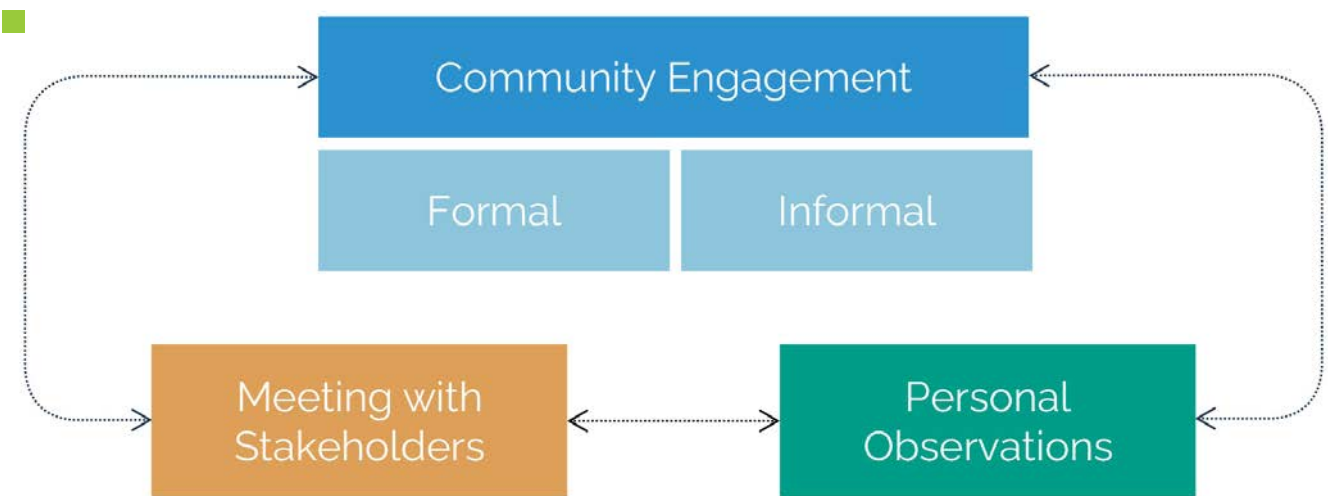


- 01 Goal of **gathering data** to form this interactive map
- 02 Tool for **data transparency** to prioritize human-centered recommendations
- 03 Incorporating **views of and views from** Renca to support community's vision
- 04 An artifact for allowing **collected experiences & stories to live on**, and in terms of data governance, share back the data

Link to site:
<https://lucasjseibold.wixsite.com/miradas-desde-renca>

2.1. Overview

During our trip, we aimed for a diverse array of data collection methods to ensure a well-rounded view of the city from multiple perspectives and scales. These methods included meetings with stakeholders, in-person community engagements, surveys, and personal observations.



Monday, March 10	Tuesday, March 11	Wednesday, March 12	Thursday, March 13	Friday, March 14
Renca-Santiago, Chile	Renca-Santiago, Chile	Renca-Santiago, Chile	Santiago, Chile	Renca-Santiago, Chile
9:30am: Meeting with La Fabrica Staff - What is La Fabrica and what do they do?	9:00am: Hiking Cerro Renca with Felipe Abarca - Director of Experiences of Cerro Renca	8:00am: Visit Metro Operations Control Center in Moneda Station	8:30am: Welcome meeting with U Chile Dean	10:00am: Talk with Paola Jiron - President of National Council for Territorial Development and U Chile Faculty
11:00am: Meeting with Renca Mayor	11:30am: Meeting with Juan Pablo Orellana at La Fabrica - Executive Director of Bjusin ess District Corporation	9:30am: Aland Castro - Community Leader, Maetranza Ukamau neighborhood Visit	9:00am: Juan Pablo Urrutia, U Chile Arch. Director - Talk on cooperative housing	Additional Renca visit to learn from arpilleras women
12:00pm: Walk to Plaza De Renca & Municipality Office		12:00pm: Pop-Up Community Engagement, Interviews at the local Renca Farmers Market	Talk with Juan Correa, Research Coordinator of Housing Foundation	Talk with Liliana de Simone - Director of Culture, Consumption & society Observatory, Coordinator of Gender of Gender & City Network at Universidad la Catolica
Met with Equipo Comunitario (Community Engagement Team)	2:00pm: Renca Housing Tour and Community Engagement Interviews	5:00pm-7:00pm: Formal Engagemnt Event at La Fabrica	12:00-1:30pm: U Chile panel discussion on participation in planning with "Quiero Mi Barrio" director Claudia Bustos, Columbia Professors, and Luli from Renca	Meet Petchakucha Renca Studio at U Chile
Met with Secretaria de Planificacion: Asesoria Urbana, Vivienda, Diseño de Proyectos, Planificacion y Estudios			4:00pm: Talk with Luis Valenzuela - Director Centro Inteligencia Territorial	
3:00pm: Pop-Up Community engagement in Plaza de Renca				

2.2. Meetings with Key Figures

While in Santiago, our team met with key figures across both local and national government, academia, and grassroots organizations.

Local Insights

Local Government



Mayor Claudio Castro



Equipo Comunitario



Urban Planning Department



Asesoria Urbana, Vivienda



Parque Metropolitano Cerros de Renca



Francisco Walker



Juan-Pablo Orellana

National Government



Paola Jiron



Juan Correa Parra



Juan Pablo Urrutia

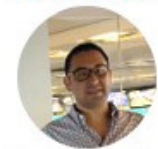


Luis Valenzuela



Liliana De Simone

Infrastructure Provider



Metro Operation Control Center

Academia

Community & Civil Society



Aland Castro-Ukamau

Mayor Claudio Castro Salas

At the local level, Mayor Claudio Castro shared his journey – growing up in Renca, leaving for school, and eventually returning to serve the community he loves. He spoke about the municipality’s ambitious plans and efforts to shift perceptions of their commune and the steps being taken to make Renca a more desirable place to live. He also discussed Renca’s challenges as a result of taxes being centralized and a still-evolving governance structure with the Governor of Santiago. He spoke about the need for public investments to bring about private development, increasing jobs in Renca for Renca residents, and the municipality’s plan around education completion.

Parks Department:

Our studio had the opportunity to hike up Cerro Renca with Felipe Abarca, the Director of Experiences at Cerros de Renca Metropolitan Park. On this hike, we learned about the municipality’s current master plan for the hill, which includes increased recreation and programming along with plans to plant more trees. We also learned that there are challenges with maintaining and irrigating the trees.

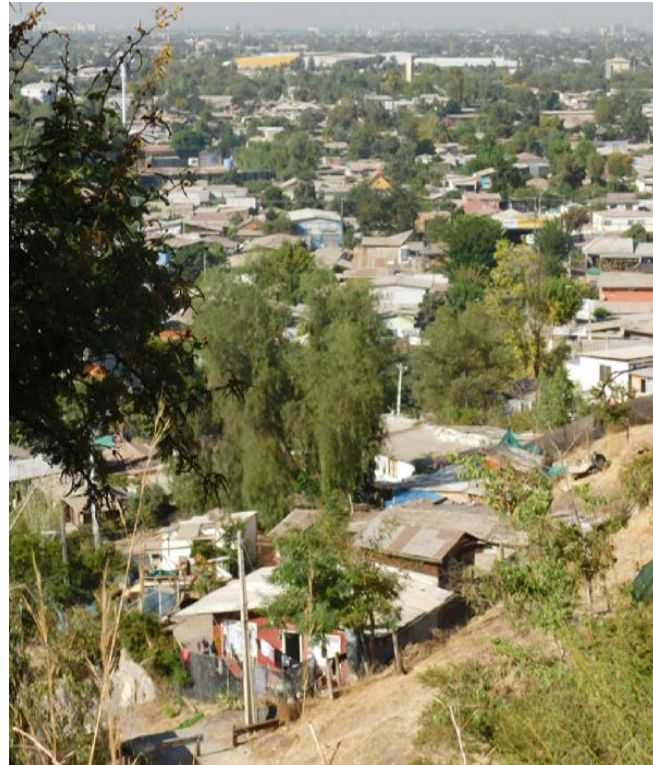
From high up on the hill, we got a sweeping view of the city and informal housing that was constructed at the

foot of the hill. Informal housing was not unusual in Renca, and would encroach on park land, revealing the challenges the municipality faced in maintaining the hills and managing housing insecurity at the same time.



Public-Private Partnerships

Francisco Walker, head of Urban Agenda and Investments in the municipality, spoke of his efforts to attract private investments and ensure those actors are more deeply



Examples of auto-construction and water scarcity in Renca

involved in municipal affairs, and not just “football jerseys.” Some difficulties lay in coordinating cross-sector, so he would have to coordinate each industry separately. However, he emphasized the municipality’s ambition and vision to change the idea that Renca’s “destiny means poverty.”

Business Improvement Districts:

Juan Pablo Orellana, the Director of the first Business Improvement District (BID) in Renca, spoke of disconnect and tensions between the industries in Renca and the general public. He spoke about how part of the BID’s work was to address security concerns, which they would through by coordinating surveillance through online networks that would keep more eyes on the neighborhood. He also mentioned that there were challenges bridging the public-private divide especially because so few residents live in the western industrial area. He spoke about the social unrest during the 2019 protests, and how this only heightened tensions. He also shared about Mayor Claudio’s efforts to bridge these divides and work together to see private investment in public spaces in Renca. However, he acknowledged: “change of society is long term” and “it’s a lot of conversation to change mindset.”

Academia:

Academics in Santiago helped contextualize what we were seeing – highlighting housing trends, spatial inequality, and gender dynamics in both Renca and the broader metropolitan region.

Juan Correa Parra, an adjunct professor at the University of Chile School of Architecture, gave a visually compelling lecture on spatial inequality in Santiago using a series of maps. Through this presentation, we learned about Renca in relation to the rest of Santiago. Though Renca is deemed dangerous by the broader Santiago communities, the data Juan presented does not match with this sentiment. Renca is safer than a lot of other communities in Santiago. Juan expressed his theory as to why this may be – the social fabric in Renca is stronger than in other communities, a trait that may have been formed as a result of the forced relocation during the dictatorship. He also shared that he does not believe the expansion of Metro Line 7 will not cause gentrification or displacement in Renca, due to a similar situation with the expansion of Metro Line 6 in a poor commune in Santiago.

This sentiment was echoed by fellow academic, Liliana de Simone, a professor and researcher at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. To substantiate her claim, she referred to the opening of Metro Line 6 in 2017, which connected the affluent commune of Los Leones in the northwest to lower-income communes in the southeast of Santiago, like Pedro Aguirre Cerda. Despite initial concerns, those southeastern communes have yet to experience gentrification or further development following the line’s arrival.



We also spoke to Paola Jiron, a professor at the University of Chile and president of the National Council for Territorial Development. She spoke about the lack of shared policy and ideas among Santiago’s various ministries – an echo of the fragmentation inherited from the dictatorship. Through her work, she aims to integrate different sectors of urban development and implement national policies with more comprehensive urban regulations that foster more connected territories.

Link to site:

<https://lucasjseibold.wixsite.com/miradas-desde-renca>

2.3. Community Engagement

Our primary goal through community engagement was to hear from residents about their hopes, concerns, and day-to-day realities. Our activities were open-ended so that the community’s responses could shape the project, not the other way around. For this reason, we did not lead with the incoming Metro Line 7, and asked multiple questions to gauge people’s perceptions and priorities for change. The community engagement consisted of a Pop-Up Engagement where we asked residents “What Makes Renca Special?”, a walking tour accompanied by informal interviews, surveys, and a formal engagement table where we asked participants to reflect on their past, present and future.



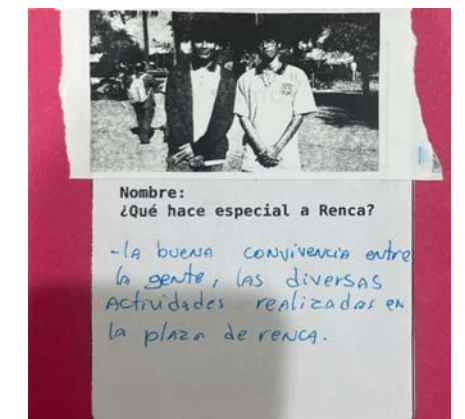
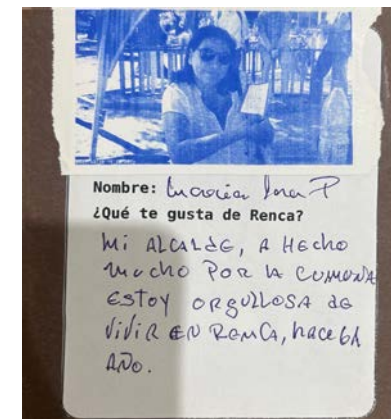
Monday, March 10th Pop-Up Engagement: What Makes Renca Special?

On our first day, we set up a tent at Plaza de Renca around 3 p.m. to do our first outreach event, “What Makes Renca Special?”. We chose this time intentionally, hoping to catch the after-school crowd. For the activity, we prepared slips of colorful paper with the prompt: “What Makes Renca Special?”. Residents were invited to write their responses, take a Polaroid-style photo, and hang their card from a clothesline strung between the canopy’s legs. We were joined by graduate students from the University of Chile and Universidad Católica de Chile, who generously supported us with translation and interviews throughout the afternoon.

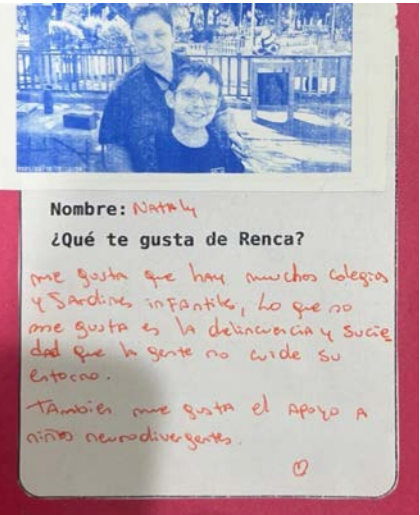
Over the next few hours, we engaged with at least 50 residents as they passed by, asking what makes Renca special, and listening to their reflections. Many spoke fondly of the municipality and their efforts, public programming and recreation, the hills, and the sense of community. Concerns about safety were brought up as well. While the mayor had mentioned security challenges, meeting with the residents during this activity confirmed that safety was a topic on many people’s minds. This activity allowed us to hear from the most diverse crowd from our engagements. We collected a total of 31 cards – from 24 women and 7 men – spanning all age groups. The largest demographic represented was teenagers.



Plaza Pop-up: What Makes Renca Special?



Monday Engagement Gallery





Walking Tour: *Conversations and Observations*

Tuesday March 11: Cerro Renca and Street Interviews

On Tuesday, we began the day with a hike up Cerro Renca, followed by walking tours through the rest of the commune. Once again, we were accompanied by graduate students from the University of Chile and Universidad Católica, who supported us with interviews and translation throughout the day.

During the hike, we learned about the municipality's plans to revitalize the hill, including tree planting and future public programming. As the day progressed – and the sun intensified – we walked through residential neighborhoods and social housing complexes, learning more about Renca's housing history, from residents' shared history through forced displacement to resident-led efforts to build community-owned social housing.

As we moved through different areas, we conducted street interviews, asking residents about their history in Renca, what they liked about it and what they would change. One of our first stops was in front of a local elementary school as children were let out. We spoke to parents and street vendors.

When we walked through various social housing complexes, we were warned by some of the Chilean graduate students that our team should be extra careful, as this was an area that was not perceived as safe. We came across one of the plazas that had been built under Mayor Claudio Castro Salas. Here we interviewed two elderly women who were chatting underneath the shade. They told us that they met at a senior group they attend weekly and how they have been like sisters ever since.

They explained that the plaza used to be seen as dangerous, but ever since the municipality upgraded the plaza, it became much more utilized.

Survey Collection

In order to fill in some data gaps from our initial research to better understand resident concerns, our team created an online survey for Renca residents to complete (See Appendix). Our goal was to keep the survey short, ideally under five minutes, though the average completion time ended up being closer to eight minutes. The questions were developed based on three main criteria: the ease at which residents could understand and answer them, whether the responses could help fill in data gaps, and their relevance to our main research interests. Specifically, we wanted to understand the day-to-day

challenges residents were facing, what they liked about life in Renca, how they viewed the future of Renca and their likelihood of staying, and their perspectives on the new transit lines. While we also sought some quantitative data for our analysis, many questions were open-ended, allowing conversations to shift direction. This gave us a broader perspective on problems, suggestions, and aspects of life in Renca we might not have otherwise considered. This was especially helpful for us in modeling the direction of our recommendations.



Tuesday Engagement Gallery





La Fabrica: *Formal Engagement*

Our survey collection process was both online and in-person. We collected responses in real time with residents while at the Renca feria (outdoor market) in the afternoon before our formal engagement event. With the help of our UChile and Católica graduate students, we engaged in casual, candid interactions that began with conversations about life in Renca. From there, we gradually moved towards asking residents if they'd be willing to answer a few questions for the survey. We asked the questions out loud and filled out the survey on our own devices, which allowed residents to expand on some of their answers and gave us a better understanding of their perspectives. Filling out the surveys ourselves instead of having the respondent do so also made for a smoother conversation and for residents to shape the direction

of the conversation based on what was most important to them. Additionally, we invited some residents to participate in video-recorded interviews to further explain their responses. In total, we received 12 online responses and two written survey responses.

Wednesday March 12th: Formal Engagement

On Wednesday evening, our team held a formal engagement event and invited local community members to La Fábrica to share their experiences living in Renca. The workshop was split into three sections: past, present, and future, designed to help us learn valuable information about life in Renca while gathering geographically specific data. We heard from 11 women in total.

Past:

For our past engagement activity, community members shared memories that took place within the comuna. They wrote each memory and its general location on a slip of paper before pinning it to a large map of Renca. This gave us knowledge of emotionally significant locations within Renca.

Present:

For the present activity, residents were tasked with describing how they experience Renca today. They did this by highlighting areas on a map of Renca with different colors that represented various meanings.

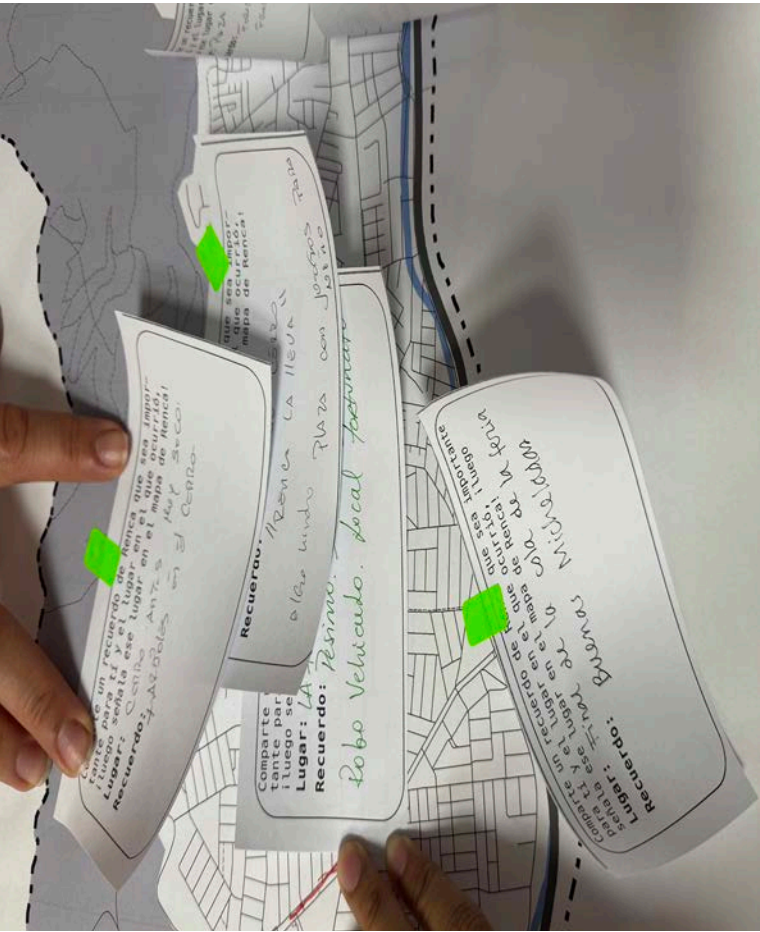
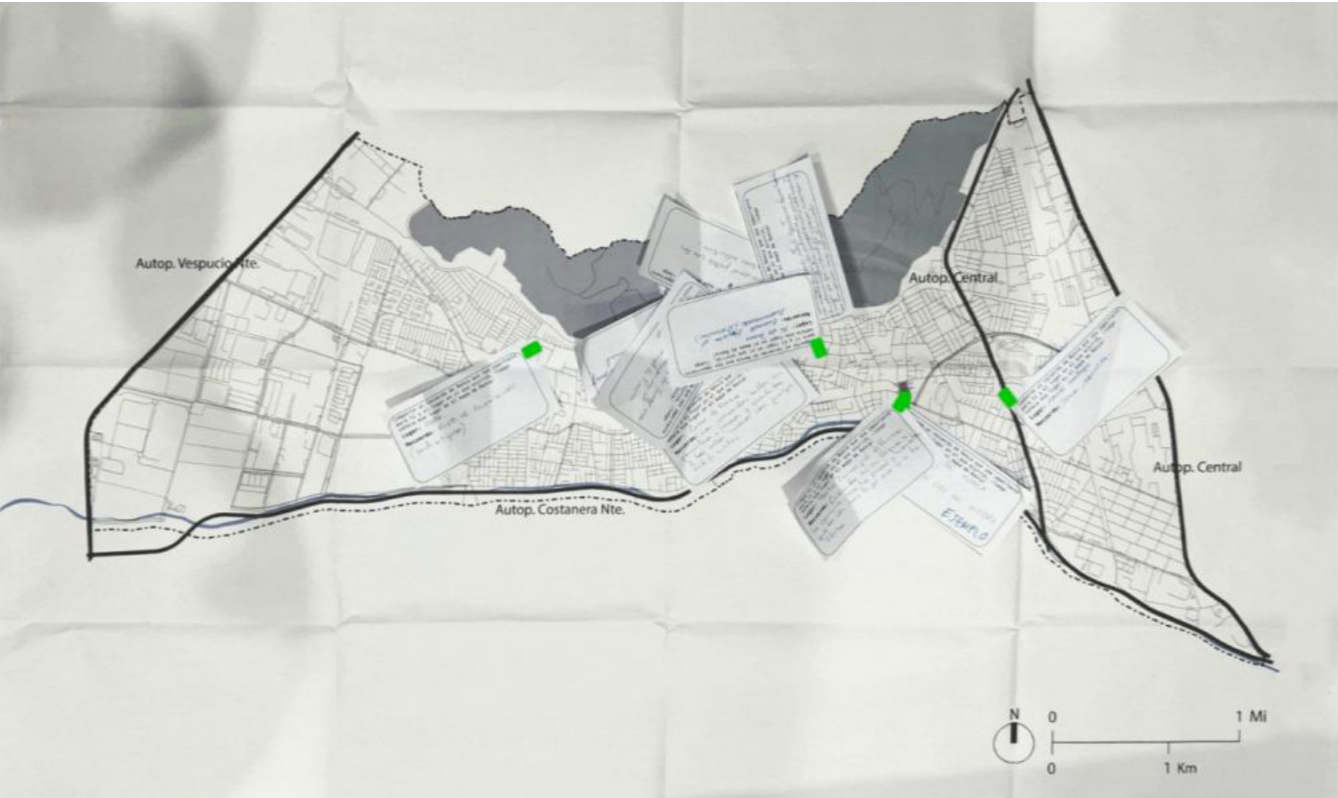
- Red: Areas residents don't like
- Green: Areas residents do like
- Blue: Areas that are significant to the resident

This helped us understand the current perceptions within Renca and how residents currently feel about their community.

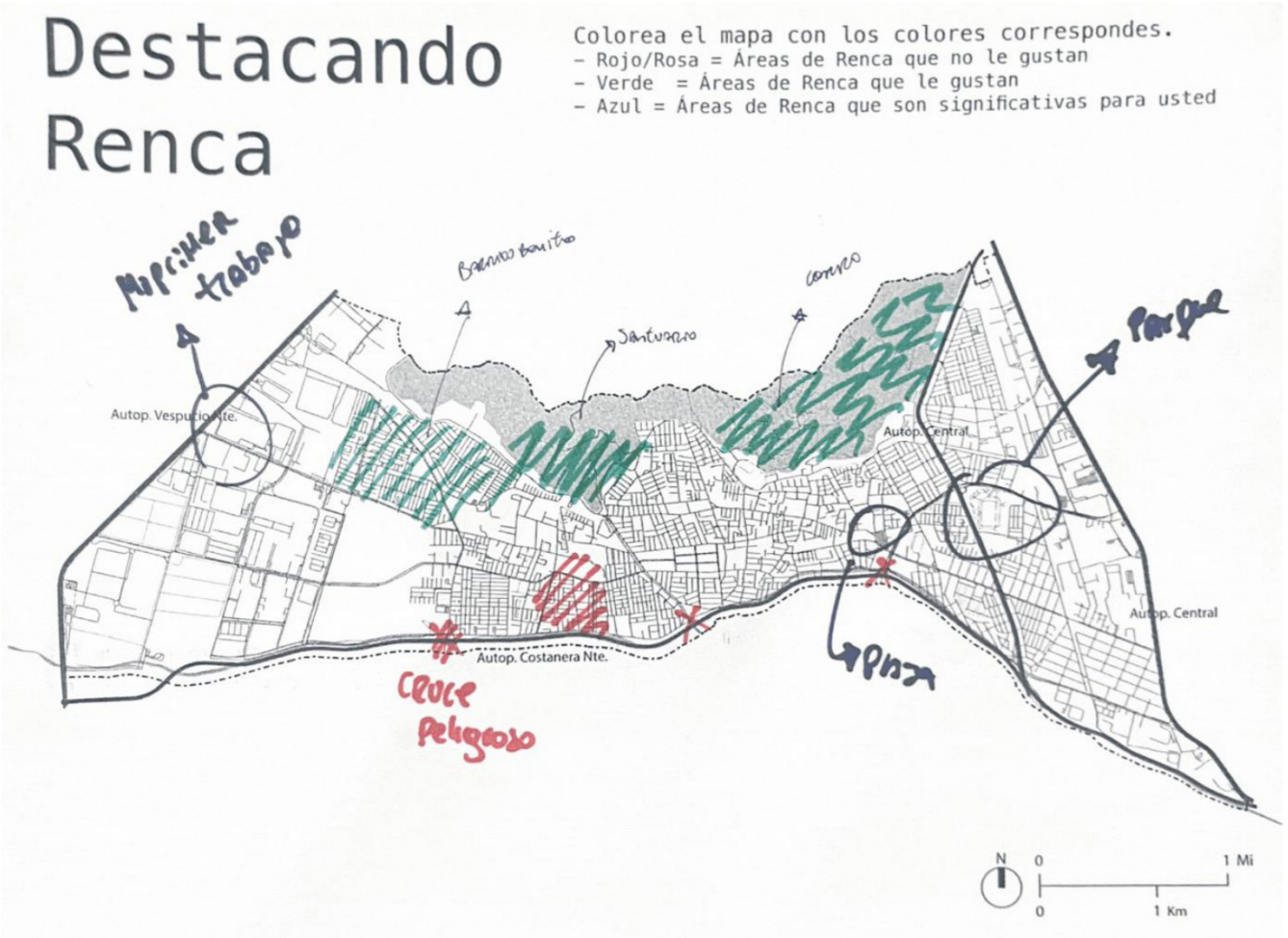
Future:

The future activity had residents envision what Renca could become. By placing icons representing various services, such as schools, safety, parks, etc., on a map, they created a shared vision for the future. This input helped us identify what residents want for the future of the comuna and what we should prioritize in our recommendations.

Formal Engagement: “Past” Memories



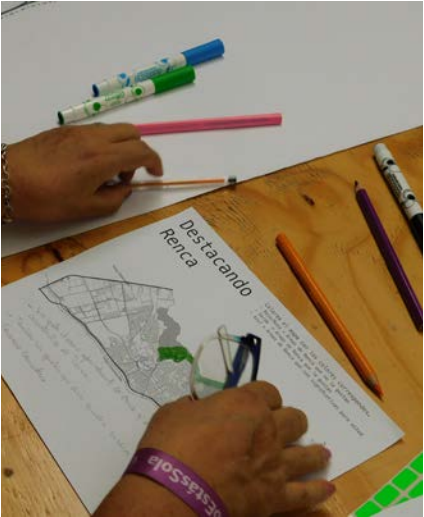
Formal Engagement: “Present” Highlights



Formal Engagement: “Future” Hopes



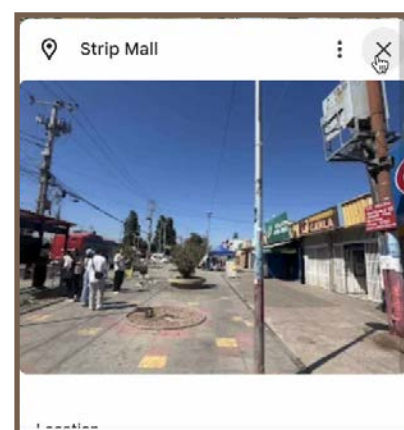
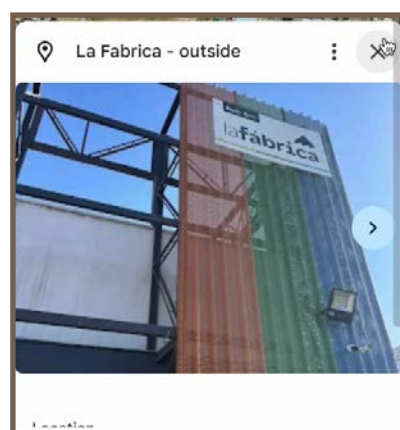
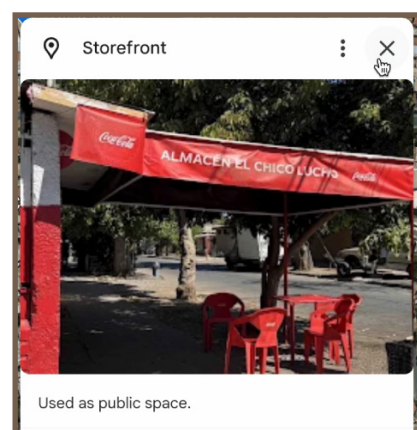
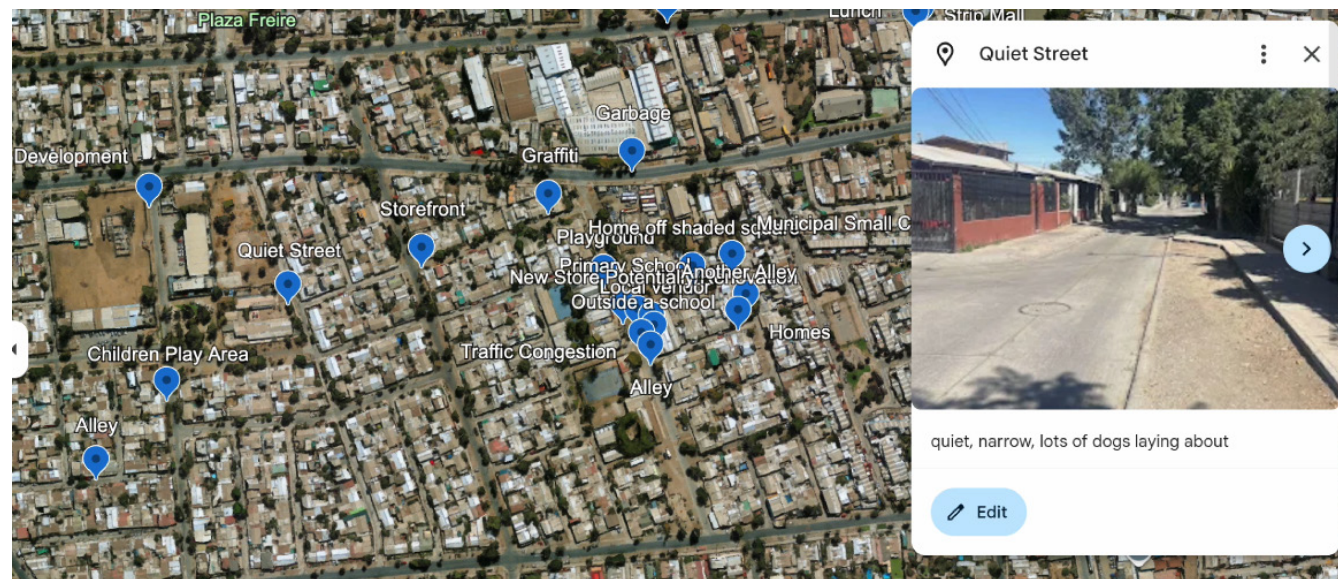
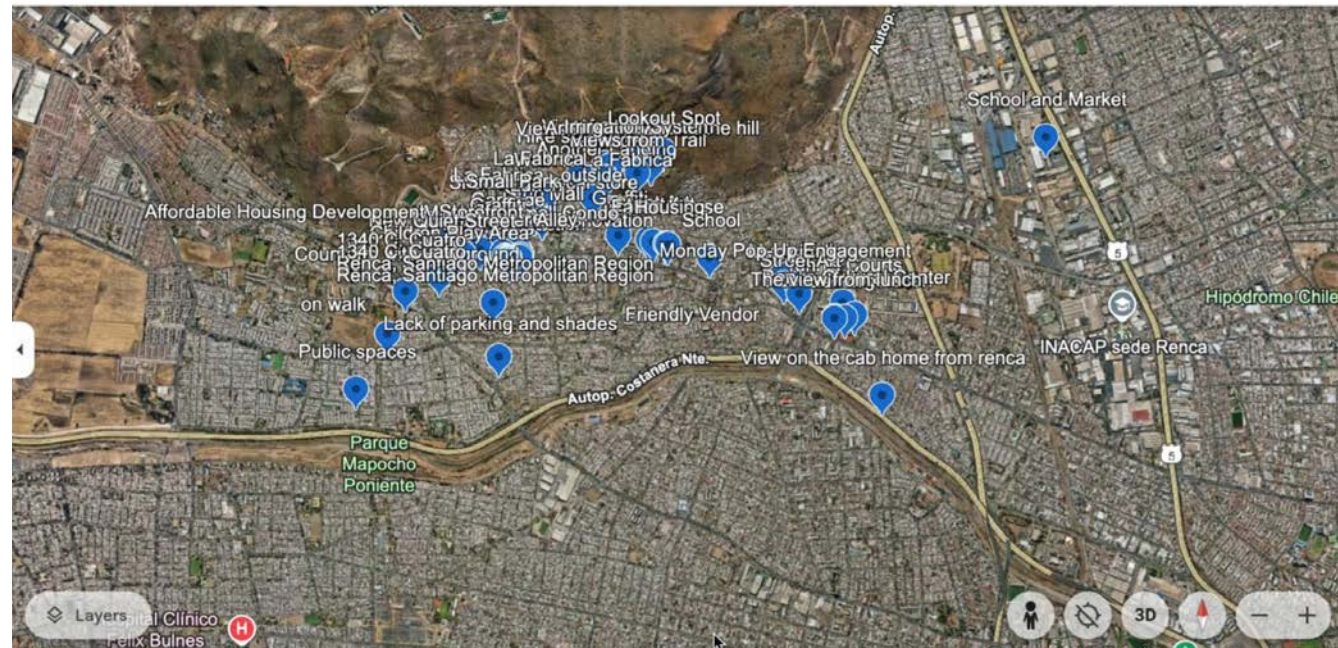
Wednesday Engagement Gallery



2.4 Google Earth Project

During our time in Renca, our team also tracked our observations using a shared Google Earth project.

This allowed us to keep track of notes and photos with locations in real time as we made our way through the commune, for transparency of what we did and saw while we were in Renca.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | Renca Spring 2025

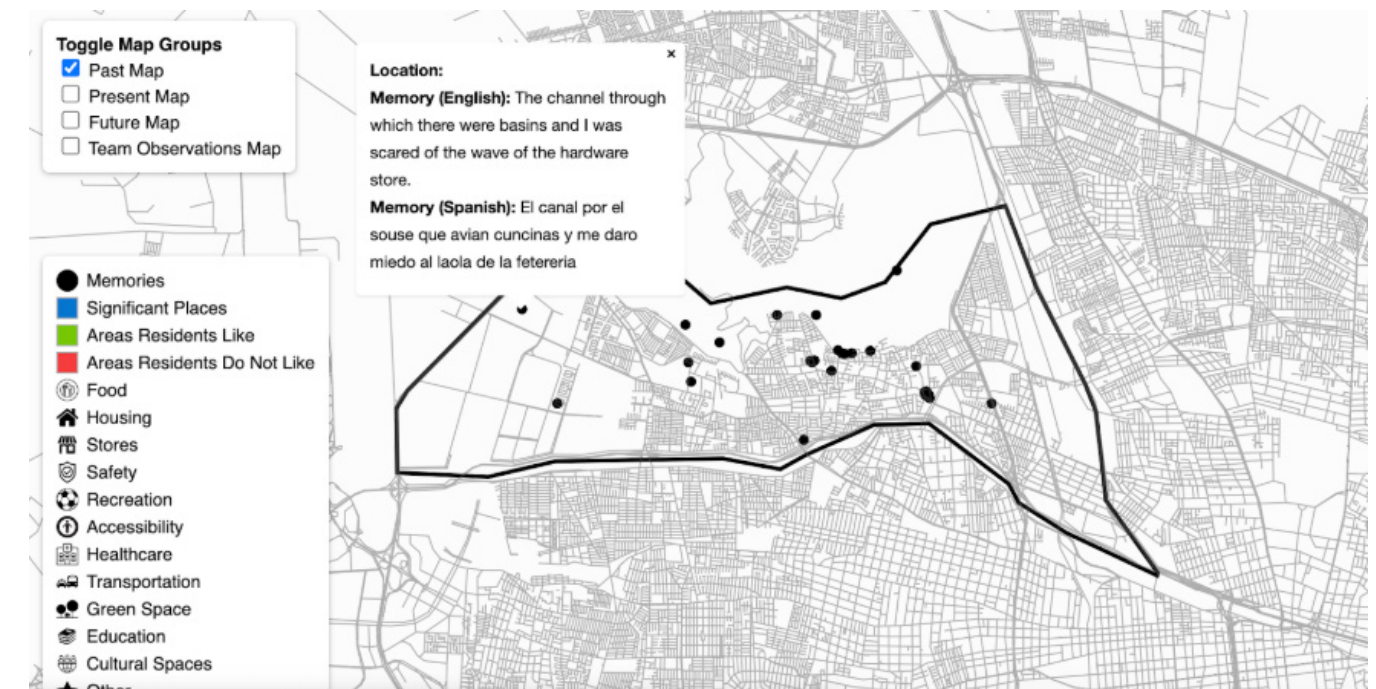
2.5 Interactive Map

The data collected from the formal engagement activities was all geographically specific to assist with our data analysis. To ground our analysis in the lived experiences of residents and the information we collected during our engagements, we built an interactive map to serve as a tool for our analysis. This tool will be provided to the municipality for further use, should they want to make the data useful in their planning process.

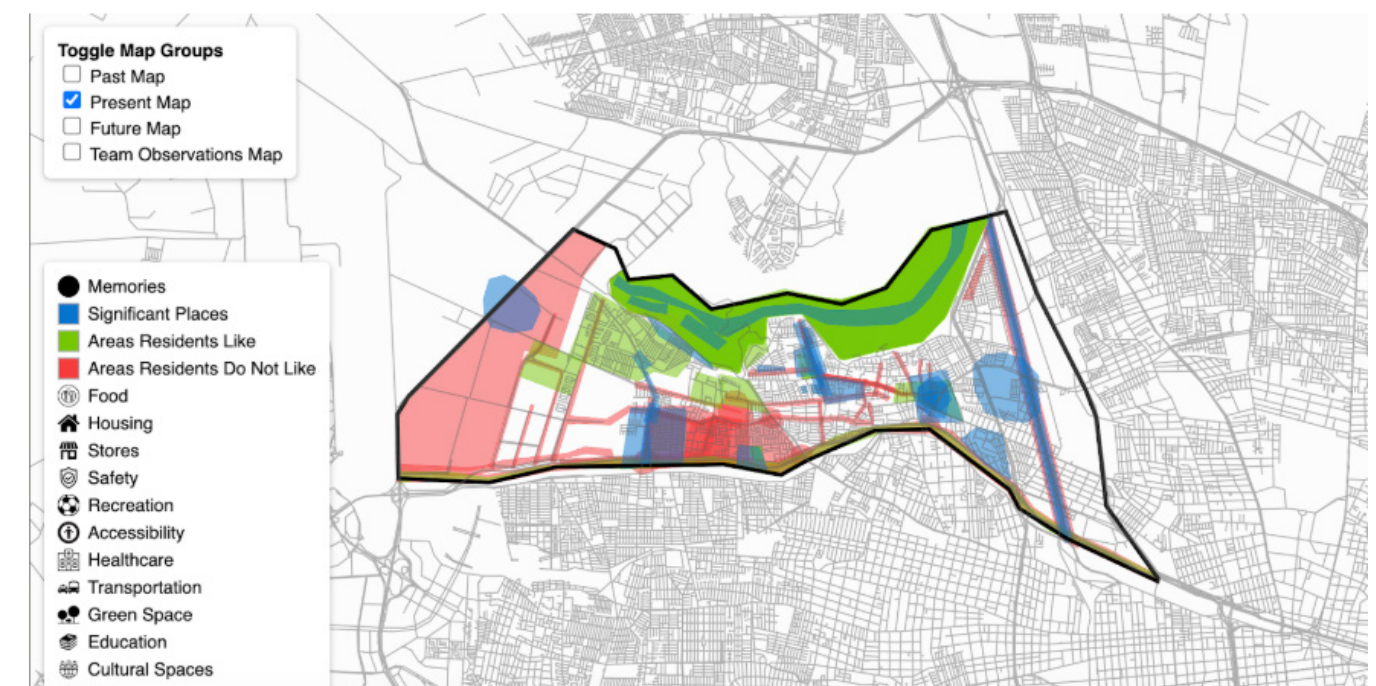
After all of the data was digitized, using ESRI ArcGIS Pro, the spatialized data was exported to build the interactive map in MapBox. We then used this interactive map as an analysis tool to understand how residents remember and perceive various places in Renca and where interventions are needed.

The map is made of four layers:

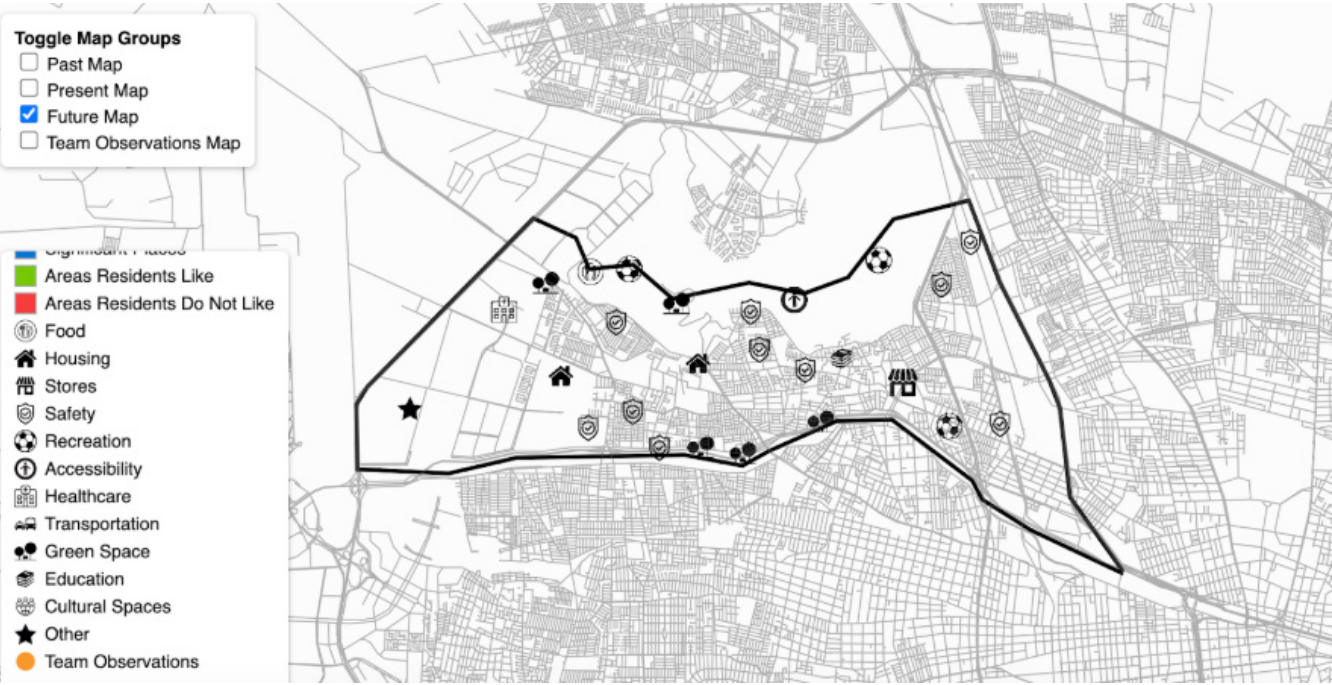
Past: From the past engagement activity



Present: From the present engagement activity



Future: From the future engagement activity



Team Observations: From our Google Earth Project, our observations



The tool is named “Miradas Desde Renca” or “Views From Renca” as it represents both residents’ views of the comuna from within and our team’s observations of the comuna as outsiders visiting. The map is embedded on a website that features other information from our project, including photos, data, our recommendations, etc.

Link to site:

<https://lucasjseibold.wixsite.com/miradas-desde-renca>

Preview of live site: Data is accessible in both English and Spanish



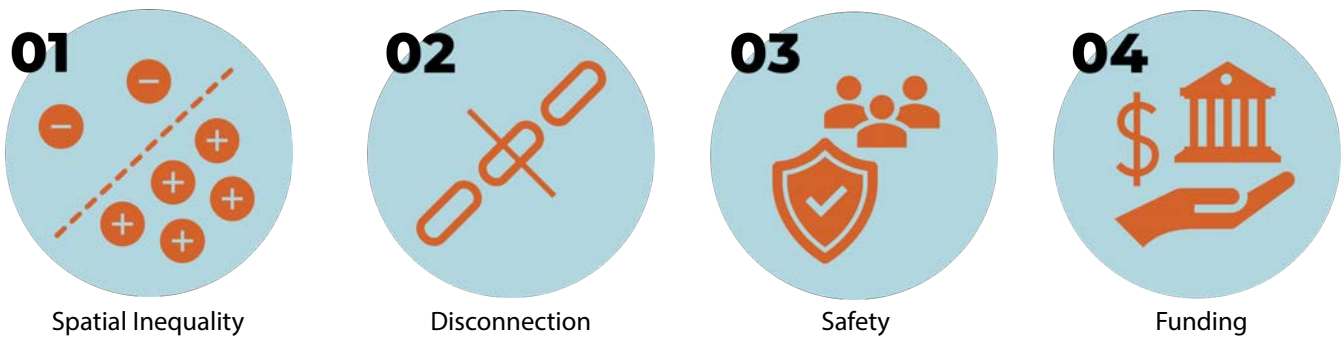
3. Data and Problem Analysis

■ We used data collected from our engagements, including those that were compiled onto our interactive map, interviews, stakeholder meetings, municipal data, and our own field observations in order to perform our data analysis.

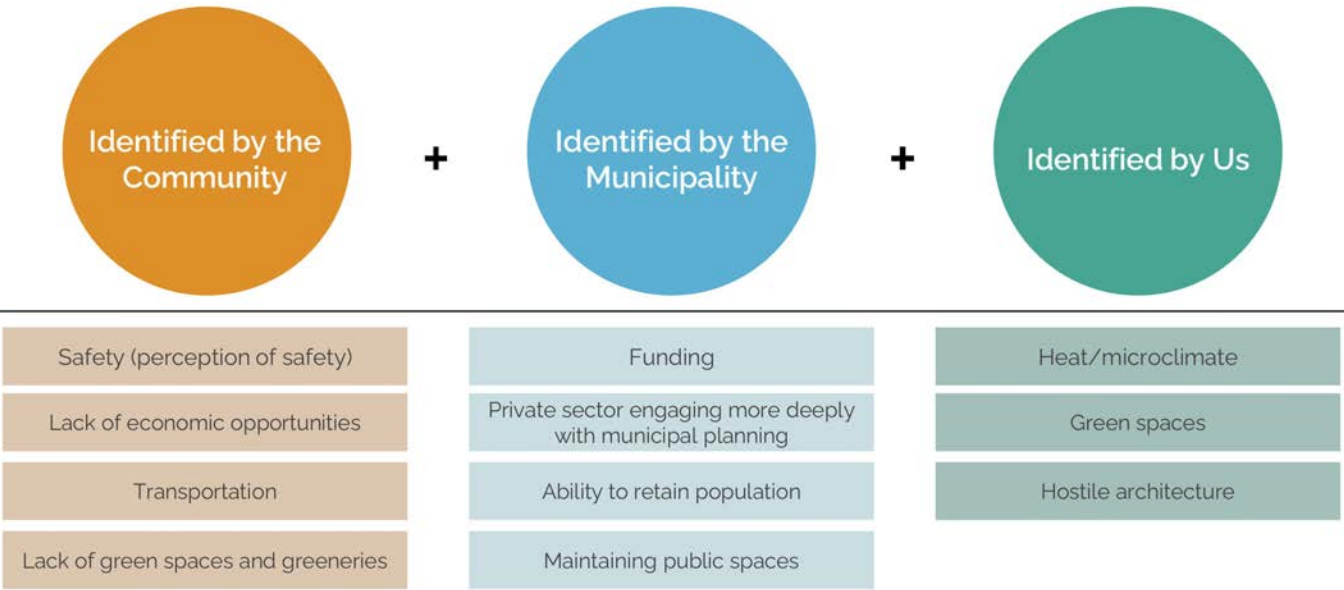
We also incorporated Matriz BHT (2025) data and indices for several of our analyses. We met with the Matriz BHT team to better understand their methodology and data processing practices. Many of the data used in these indices are from census data. These data benefit in their ability to compare regions across Santiago, and provide

very granular spatial estimates, which was particularly useful for citing our recommendations.

While different stakeholders and groups had different priorities, we identified four key categories of issues that Renca faced. These were:



Integrating concerns across different stakeholders.



3.1. Spatial Inequality

Firstly, we noticed spatial inequality between Renca and other regions in the greater Santiago area. When comparing Renca to wealthier comunas in northeast Santiago, stark visual and infrastructural disparities

emerge. Renca's streets and public spaces reflect a lack of sustained investment, in contrast to better-resourced areas elsewhere in the capital region.



Common streetscape in Renca, with less greeneries and unclear pedestrian sidewalk.

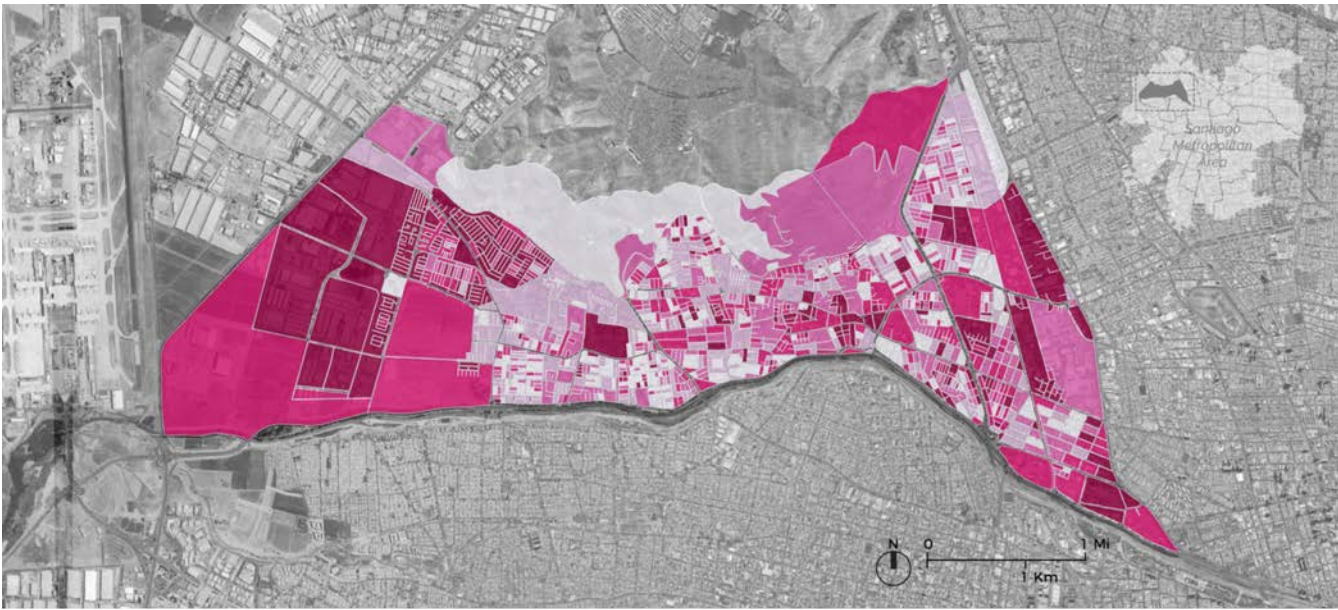


Streetscape in northeastern of Santiago, with more greeneries and maintained pedestrian sidewalk.

Socioeconomic Inequity within Renca

Within Renca, economic inequality was also evident. As of 2022, around 19.5% of the population lives in poverty (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, 2024). Higher

socioeconomic index scores are evident at the edges of the comuna, which are more industrial districts, but minimal population actually resides in these areas.



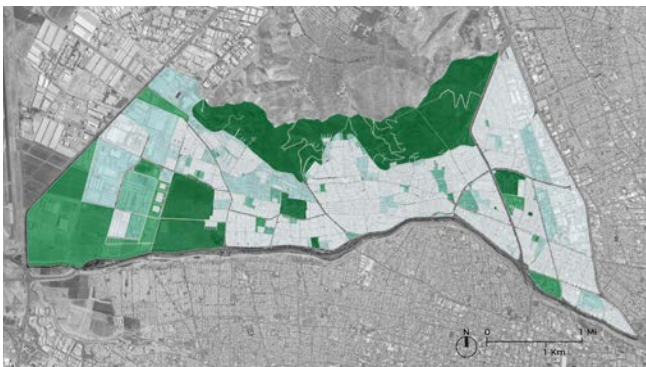
Socioeconomic Index Score: High Low

Land Use in Renca

Land use within Renca contributes significantly to these disparities. The eastern and western edges are dominated by farmland and industrial/logistics operations, while most residents live in the central zone. Despite economic activity on the periphery, few residents are located in these regions, and the residential areas ultimately remains under-resourced.

Green Space Accessibility

Green space in Renca is limited and unequally distributed,



Green spaces across Renca

Vegetation Indicator Score

High Low

Access to Basic Services

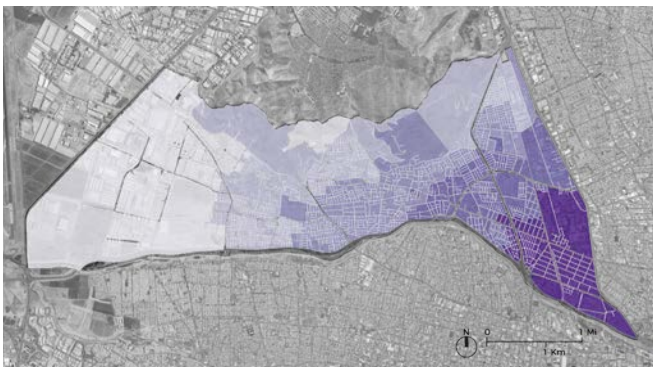
A broader pattern of inequality exists in the distribution of public resources. As referenced in the above map, a composite index score of accessibility, including variables such as access to educational institutions, cultural centers, and sport centers, highlights a strong spatial pattern of inequality (Matriz BHT, 2025).

Services and infrastructure are concentrated in wealthier, eastern parts of the comuna, leaving the central and western residential areas underserved. Taken together, these spatial inequalities significantly affect residents' quality of life and highlight a need for targeted investment in the central area of Renca.

One of our initial research questions/concerns at the beginning of this project was the possibility of gentrification as a direct effect of the opening of Metro Line 7 stops in Renca. Our positionality as planners in New York City predisposes us to assuming that neighborhood improvements or improvements to connectivity within/ to an underserved area is directly correlated with gentrification. For example, the Second Avenue subway extension into East Harlem, New York caused major concerns of gentrification in the area (de Freytas-Tamura, 2019), as residents expressed their concerns that when

and Renca scores much more poorly in vegetation coverage compared to the Santiago average (Matriz BHT, 2025). This is one of the starkest differences Despite some green areas existing, they are largely located far from the central residential neighborhoods.

Our field visits in Renca highlighted the difficulty of finding shaded or vegetated areas. In addition, due to the fact that Renca is surrounded by highways on the east, west, and south sides, and the hills are a physical boundary to the north, Renca has higher rates of air pollution. This lack of green space and structural causes of pollution exacerbates the urban heat island effect (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2023).



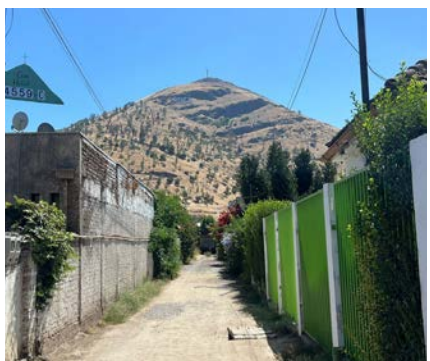
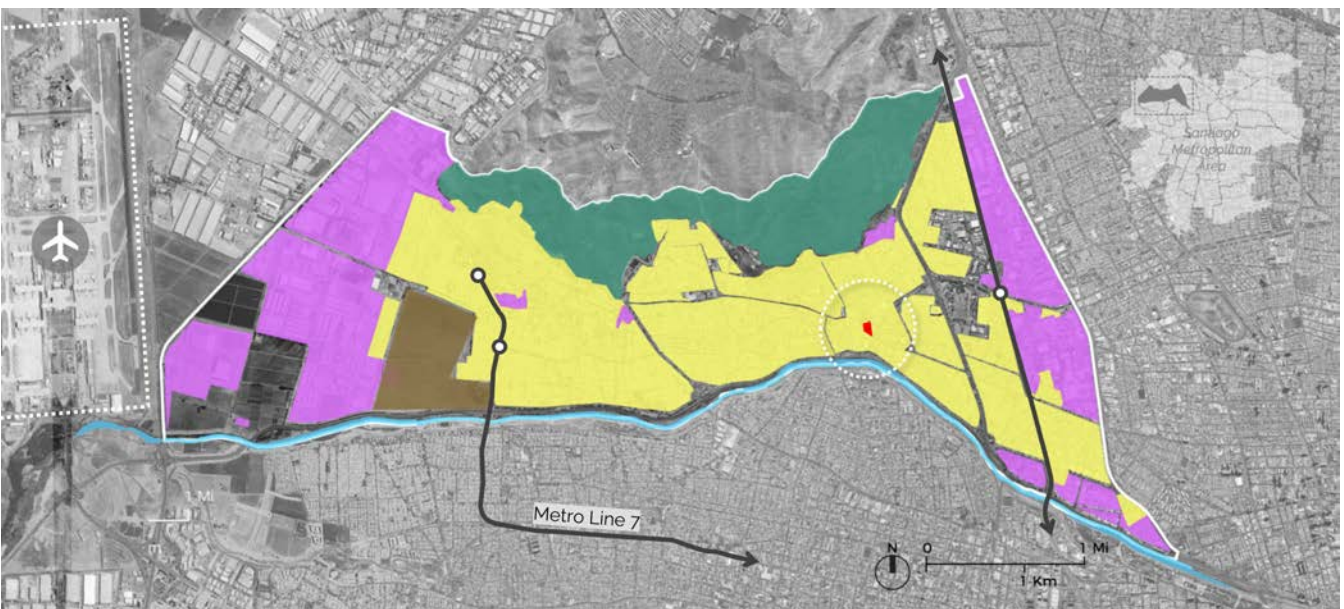
Unequal access to resources and services in Renca

Access Index Score

High Low

the subway extension is finished, rents will rise and they won't be able to afford their apartments anymore.

During our trip, our diverse array of stakeholders and experts shared with us that gentrification is not a concern in Renca. Territorial stigmatization is much more powerful in Santiago than stigmatization based on one's physical characteristics, race, or gender. Liliana de Simone of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile shared with us that when the Metro Line 7 extension was initially proposed, people called it the "nana line," or the housekeeper line—referring to the domestic workers from Renca commuting to the wealthy households in the East of Santiago to work. This stigma that Renca carries is powerful enough to invalidate the concern of gentrification. Additionally, there is precedent for a new Metro Line in Santiago failing to bring gentrification. A similar concern arose with the 2023 implementation of Metro Line 3 into Quilicura (Delgado, 2023), a socioeconomically segregated municipality in the North of Santiago facing territorial stigmatization, similarly to Renca. Despite its newfound connectivity, the municipality hasn't seen gentrification or a significant de-stigmatization in the two years since its opening, according to the accounts of our stakeholder partners and the Santiago residents we spoke to.



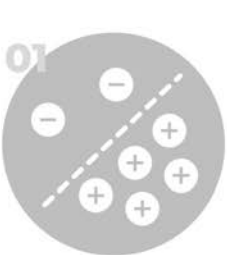
Hill Plan as main green space in Rencana, but needs improvement in accessibility.



Irrigation is one of the main challenges in maintaining green spaces in Renca



Common streetscape in Renca, especially the pedestrian paths lacking greeneries and shades.



Spatial Inequality



Disconnection



Safety



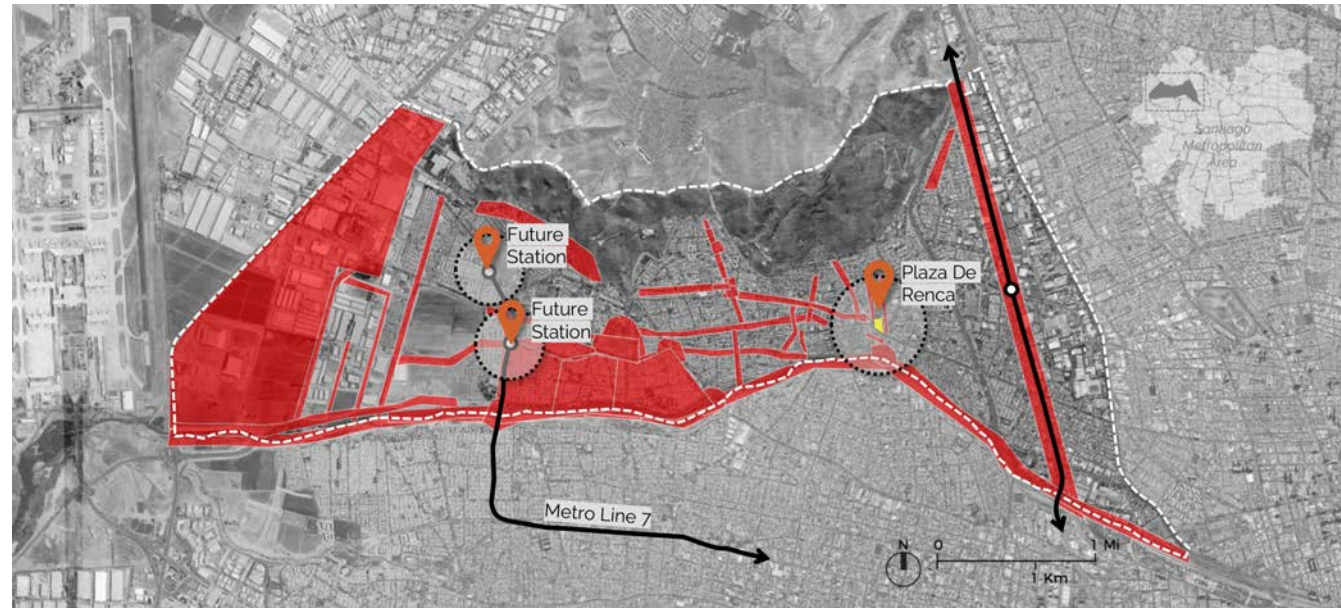
Funding

3.2. Disconnection

In Renca, 40% of trips in Renca are made by walking, 30% use public transit, and 20% rely on private vehicles (Centro de Políticas Públicas UC, 2017). Residents described some challenges in getting around within Renca, however, the greater concerns related to commuting outside of Renca.

Traveling beyond the comuna is essential for many residents of Renca, as connectivity is tied to employment.

While there are 100,000 jobs in Renca, Mayor Castro shared that only 14,000 are occupied by Renca residents. Thus, many Renca residents must commute outside of the comuna for work, meaning access to the greater Santiago area is even more important. For instance, a 17-year-old resident described regularly driving his mother over an hour to work each way due to limited transit options. Survey results also indicated Renca residents held positive sentiments related to the new Line 7.



Residents' perspective on areas in Renca and key transit hubs in Renca

However, one of the most discussed issues was the placement of Metro Line 7, which is being constructed in the western industrial part of Renca, far from the central residential hub around Plaza de Renca. Residents expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of community input into the station locations.

While Line 7 could help improve mobility, its effectiveness is undermined by its location. The western zone where it is being built is not only physically distant from many residents, but also socially stigmatized. The residents we heard from often referred to it as the "bad" part of Renca, furthering their dissatisfaction with the placement of the

new line. Territorial stigmatization is extremely powerful in Santiago, showing up as more of a driver of social inequity and stigma than race, gender, age, or ability. This type of stigma is when a particular area carries a negative stereotype, associating its residents with undesirable characteristics, harming and marginalizing residents (Wacquant, 2014). Where a person is from within Santiago is one of the most visible and important parts of others' perception of them. If connectivity is to be improved in Renca, addressing the stigma associated with the areas around the new stations and increasing connectivity to those stations is necessary.

lines. These neighborhoods were associated with crime, stigma, and disinvestment. However, perspectives on safety were not unanimous. Several residents challenged this narrative, arguing Renca broadly is not unsafe, and that the negative reputation may be exaggerated. Other residents who lived in the "bad" areas of Renca by the new transit line, expressed these areas were not as bad as they were made out to be, and rather that the problem was these areas are stigmatized. To assess these perceptions, we analyzed a safety index based on a security index from Matriz BHT (2025).

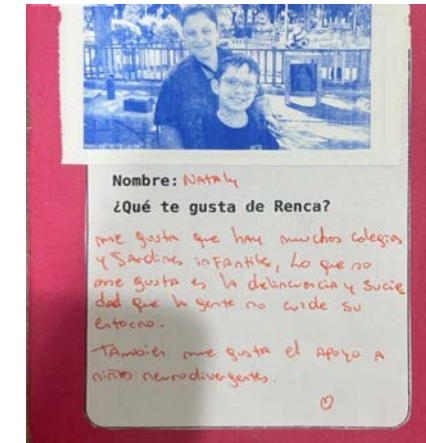


3.3 Safety

Safety emerged as the most commonly voiced concern during community engagement. Safety came up in most of our discussions with residents and in our surveys. It also permeated discussions even when the topic was not raised by our team. For example, in our engagement activity when we asked, "What makes Renca special?", we received the following answers displayed in the

engagement cards.

Residents' concerns were also concentrated to specific areas within the comuna, oftentimes overlapping with the so-called "bad" areas of Renca. The areas where residents wished to see improvements were especially common in the center-west of the comuna and near new transit



An engagement photocard with a saying, "... what I don't like is the crime."



An engagement photocard with a saying, "... I would like that there is no crime so that we can walk in the streets safely."



An engagement photocard with a saying, "... what I don't like is the thieves."

most concentrated in the residential center-west areas. Renca does score slightly worse on severe crimes against people, which may also contribute to fear in the community about rising crime. Even if rare, these may be more likely to be reported on, and heighten community anxieties. However, using the overall security composite score, security in Renca overall is very similar to the rest of Santiago—a city recognized as one of Latin America's safest big cities.

This suggests a disconnect between crime statistics and how residents feel about their safety, raising important questions about perception. Research shows that perceptions of safety are closely linked to environmental conditions such as poverty, overcrowding, and lack of housing.

Studies show that perceptions of safety in a neighborhood are deeply influenced by both the physical conditions of the environment and residents' subjective experiences. According to Austin, Furr, and Spine (2002), deteriorating neighborhood conditions are closely linked to heightened concerns about safety and decreased satisfaction with the physical environment.

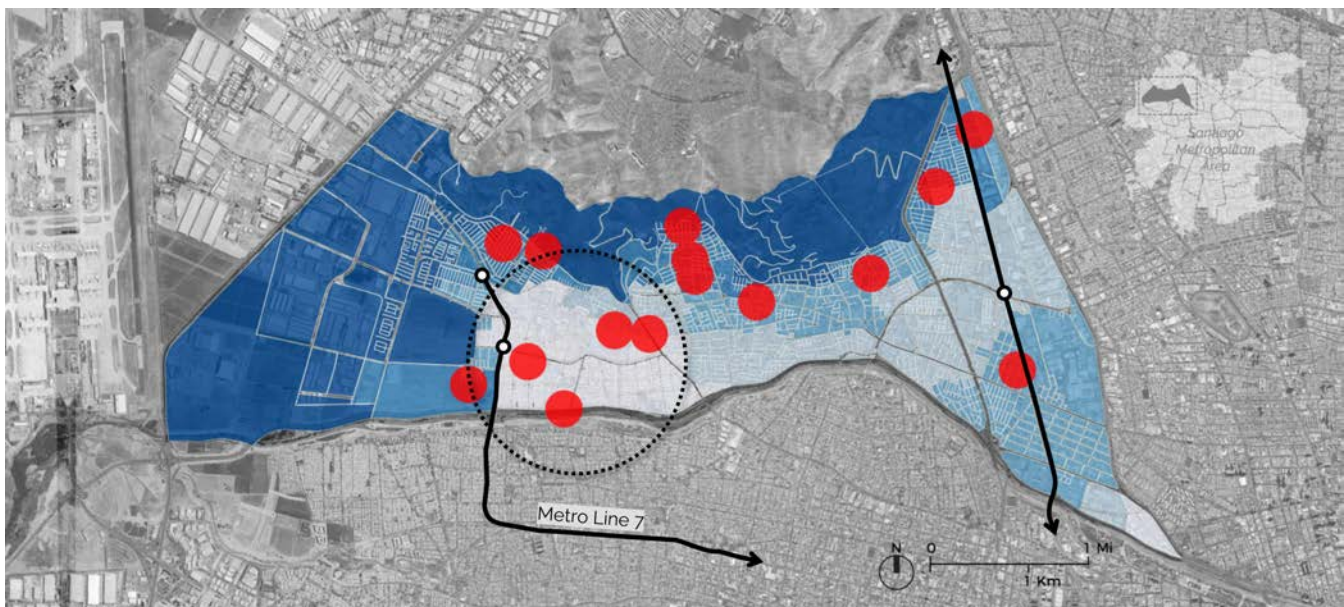
The composite security score indicates crimes are



Common house fronts in Renca, with tall and solid fences, signifying common perception of safety.



Other street with common tall and solid fences in front of residences in Renca.



Areas where residents' wanted more safety and safety index score all across Renca.

Areas where safety were asked for

Security Index Score

High

Low

These perceptions are shaped not only by objective factors, such as poor lighting, dilapidated housing, and neighborhood layout, but also by subjective elements like residents' satisfaction with their environment, feelings of control, and social cohesion. Fear of crime is particularly correlated with actual and perceived neighborhood disorder, while also exacerbated by "neighborhood incivilities" such as vandalism or neglect. More specifically, Varela, Alfaro, Melipillán, and Muñoz (2020) found a link between perception of home or neighborhood safety and life satisfaction through satisfaction with the neighborhood among Chilean adolescents. They also highlighted that trust, cohesion, and positive interactions among community members were related to the perception of safety in the city of Santiago.

Moreover, the perception of safety is intertwined with broader symbolic and economic dimensions of neighborhoods (Austin, et al., 2002). When a neighborhood falls into despair, it not only diminishes its economic worth, but also erodes residents' sense of identity and support, leading to a greater sense of vulnerability. This emotional insecurity may prompt calls for increased policing, as residents experience a perceived loss of control over their surroundings. Consequently, Austin et al. (2002) emphasize the importance for urban policy makers to prioritize neighborhood maintenance and rehabilitation, not only for aesthetic or economic reasons, but also to foster a safer, more psychologically secure living environment.

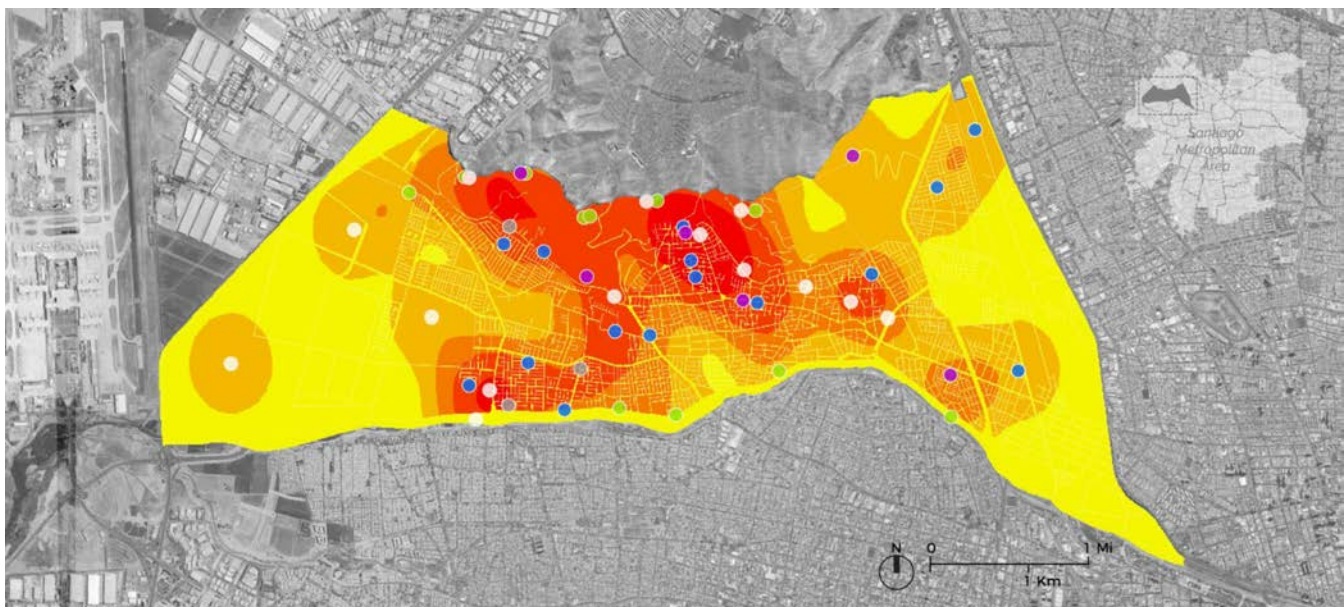
This link between perception of safety with neighborhood conditions is in line with what we found from engagement activities with Renca residents. When asked about changes they wanted to see, residents overwhelmingly prioritized safety, along with green space and recreational areas. These priorities signal that interventions aimed at

improving safety, both perceived and real, are essential to fostering community wellbeing. Further, with this understanding of safety, we expect other areas of improvement voiced by the community, such as sites they wanted to see more greenspace and recreational programming, would also help improve perceptions of safety. Thus, areas where residents want improvements are areas residents want investment.

3.4. Funding

Finally, our analysis identified limited municipal funding as a structural barrier preventing Renca from addressing the concerns described above. Despite a clear vision from local leadership for a more inclusive and secure Renca, budgetary constraints limit implementation. Municipal budgets are initially centralized and then redistributed by the central government. Municipal budgets rely heavily on local revenue from commercial and property taxes, which disadvantages lower-income comunas like Renca (PuentesUC, n.d.), which have lower rates of commercial activity compared to wealthier comunas.

This structural underfunding limits the municipality's ability to maintain green spaces, expand public services, and improve safety. It perpetuates cycles of spatial and economic inequality, even as community needs grow more urgent.



Areas where the residents asked for improvements in the future.

Density of Suggestions

Most

Most

Most

Types of Suggestions

Safety

Recreation

Green Space

Transportation

Other

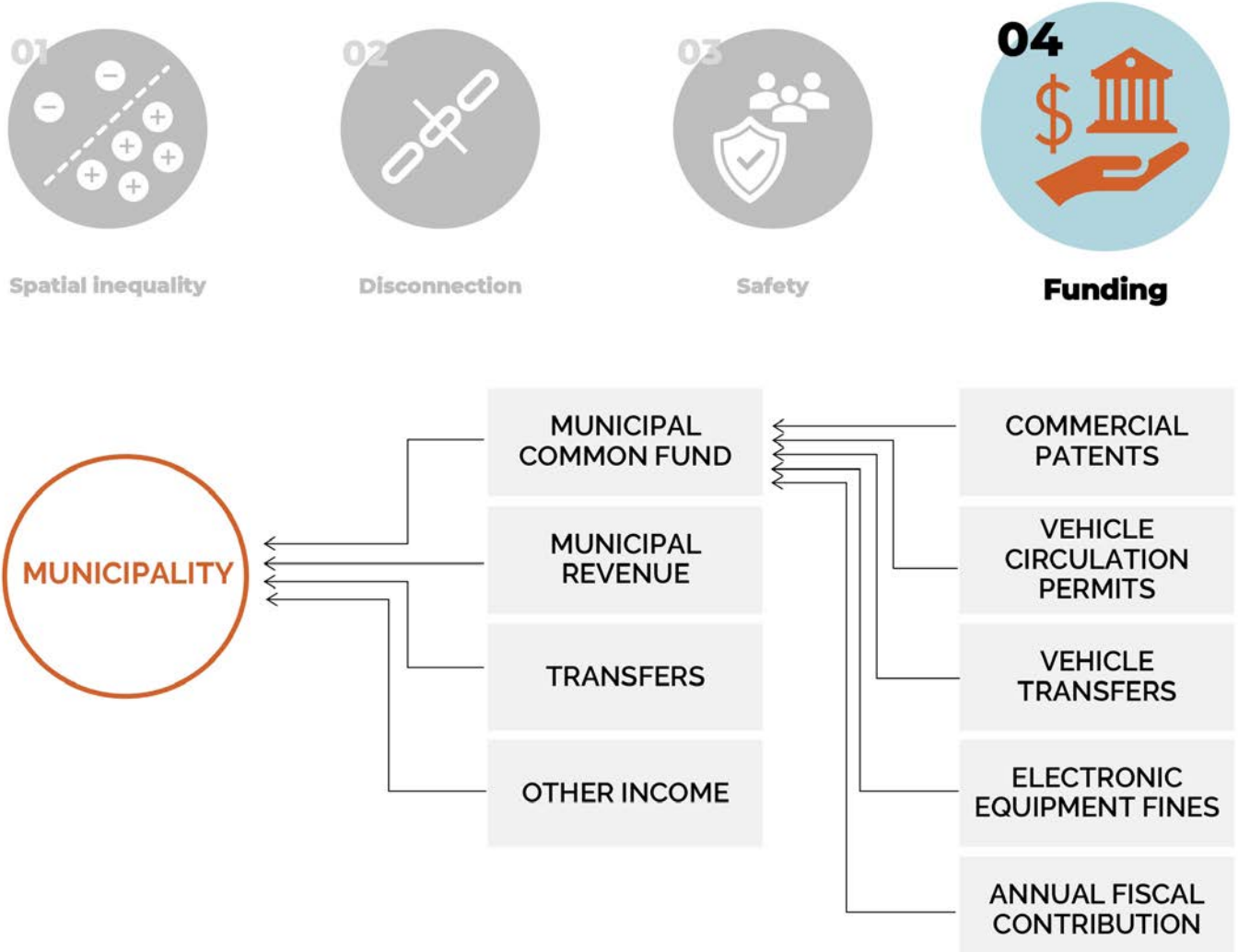
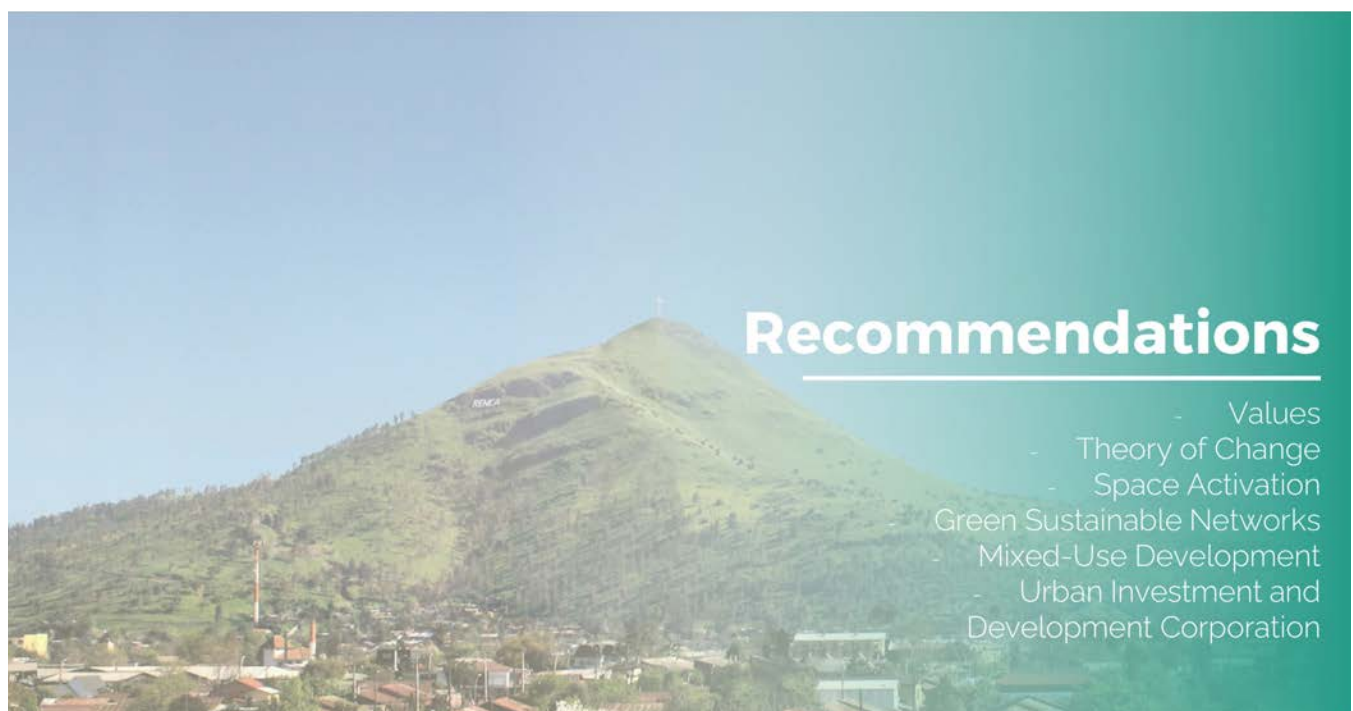


Diagram of how municipalities in Chile get funded.

4. Recommendations

- The issues facing Renca: spatial inequality, disconnection, safety, and funding are interconnected due to decades of disinvestment and cycles of poverty that could not be remediated through the municipality. Our team believes that these issues require holistic solutions. Thus, we recommend the following: space activation, green sustainability networks, mixed-use development along arterial roads, and the Urban Investment and Development Corporation.



Through our recommendations, we are seeking to address what Renca residents have discussed as changes they would like to see. Our goals are to:

- Increase perception of safety
- Create connected green spaces
- Expand economic growth and opportunities, and
- Retain Renca's younger population.

4.1 Criteria for Recommendations

Before developing our recommendations, we came up with criteria that would provide the framework for our recommendations. Our criteria are rooted in an asset-based planning approach that assumes that safety comes

from community investments, not more policing, that bottom-up planning is the most sustainable form of planning, that we should center people's place-based experiences, and that instead of focusing on what Renca lacks, we believe building on Renca's strengths will actually bring about long-term change for an equitable future.

Asset-based planning empowers residents by emphasizing what they have rather than what they lack. Our team used this approach because we had heard of so many things that made Renca special, and we wanted to build on those strengths rather than developing solutions top-down. One of the major successes of asset-based planning is that it builds stronger social cohesion and long-term self-sufficiency, particularly in marginalized communities.

Our Values

Criteria for policy recommendations



Safety through community investments, not more policina



Bottom-up participation



Center people's place-based experiences



Asset-based planning

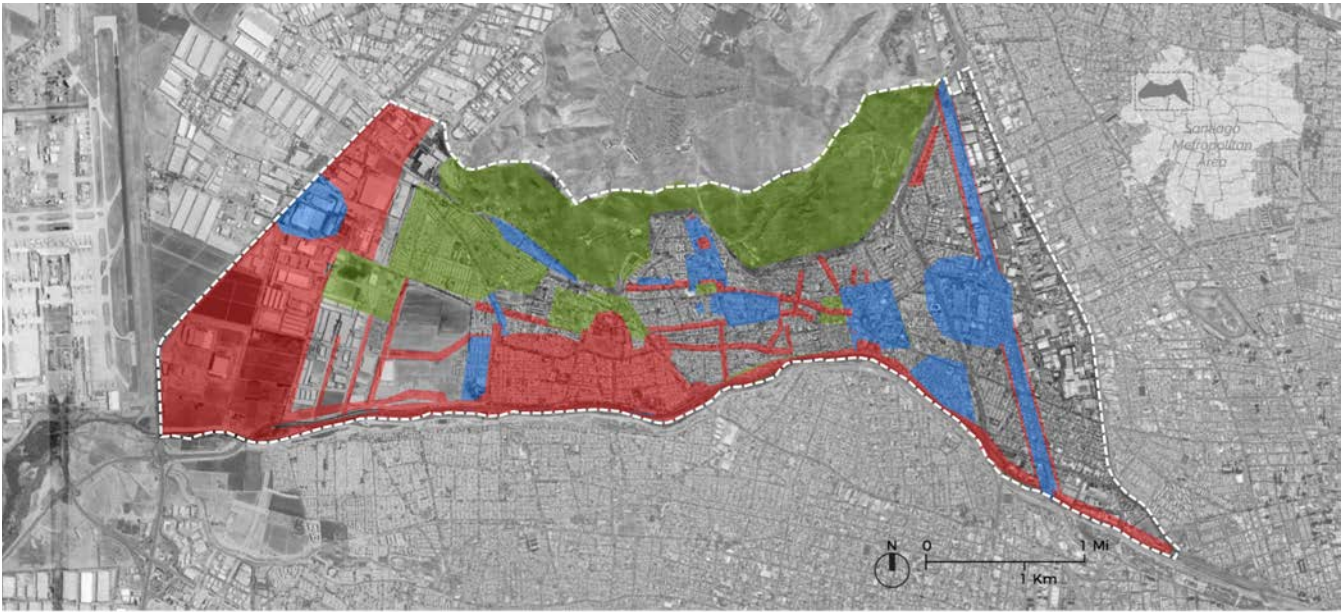
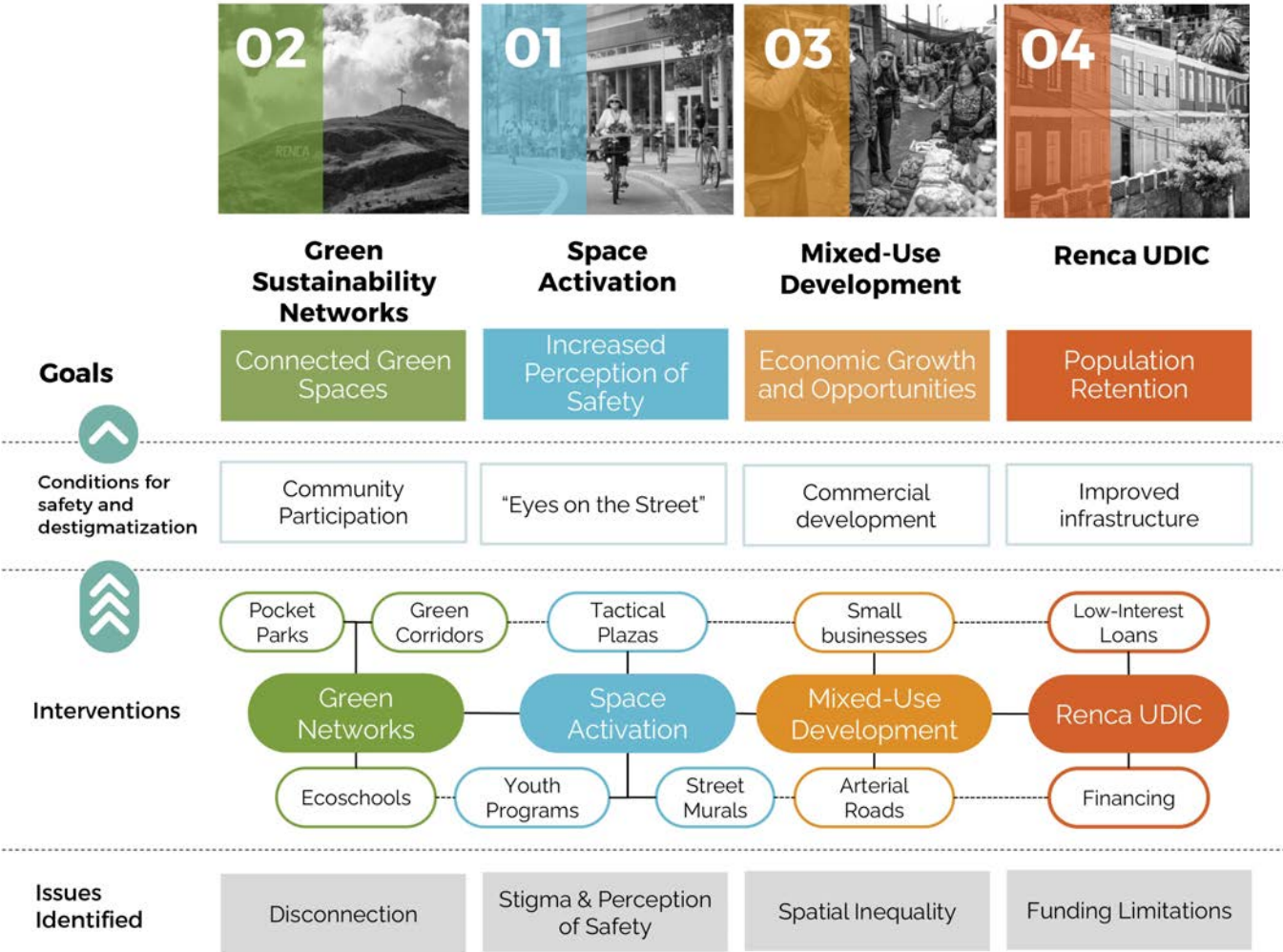
Although safety and prevailing stigma were one of the top issues to Renca residents, we did not wish to approach community safety with more surveillance or policing, as research shows that the safest and most resilient communities are those with the most resources—such as quality housing, schools, health services, green spaces, and economic opportunities. A study by Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) on “collective efficacy” in Chicago neighborhoods found that communities with

stronger social networks and shared expectations for social control had significantly lower rates of violence. Others have emphasized that investment in social infrastructure, including libraries, parks, and youth programs, plays a critical role in enhancing safety and community well-being, particularly in those areas where policing and incarceration have damaged social networks (Sharkey, 2018).

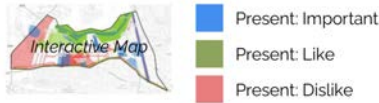
Planning from Renca's Strengths



Recommendations



Spatializing where to make recommendations



Theory of Change

In order to increase safety and destigmatize Renca over the long-run, we recommend investing in the aspects of Renca that make it special by engaging all stakeholders: grassroots, the municipality, and the private-sector. Their participation and investment are crucial to the sustainability of these recommendations, and have

shown proven success in cities like Medellín, Colombia, where crime rates decreased through inclusive planning processes (Brand & Dávila, 2011). Thus, all of our proposals are interconnected, with each recommendation addressing multiple issues. They are meant to be a holistic and broad set of interventions that will bring about true safety.



4.2 Space Activation

Space activation is a creative urban intervention strategy aimed at reclaiming underutilized areas and transforming them into plazas and public spaces. It has successfully been implemented in cities such as Valparaíso, Antofagasta and Santiago, Chile, as well as Xochimilco in Mexico City. Given residents’ love for Plaza de Renca and youth programming, we developed this recommendation to foster more “eyes on the street” and create visible, programmatic transformations of areas people wanted to see more safety.

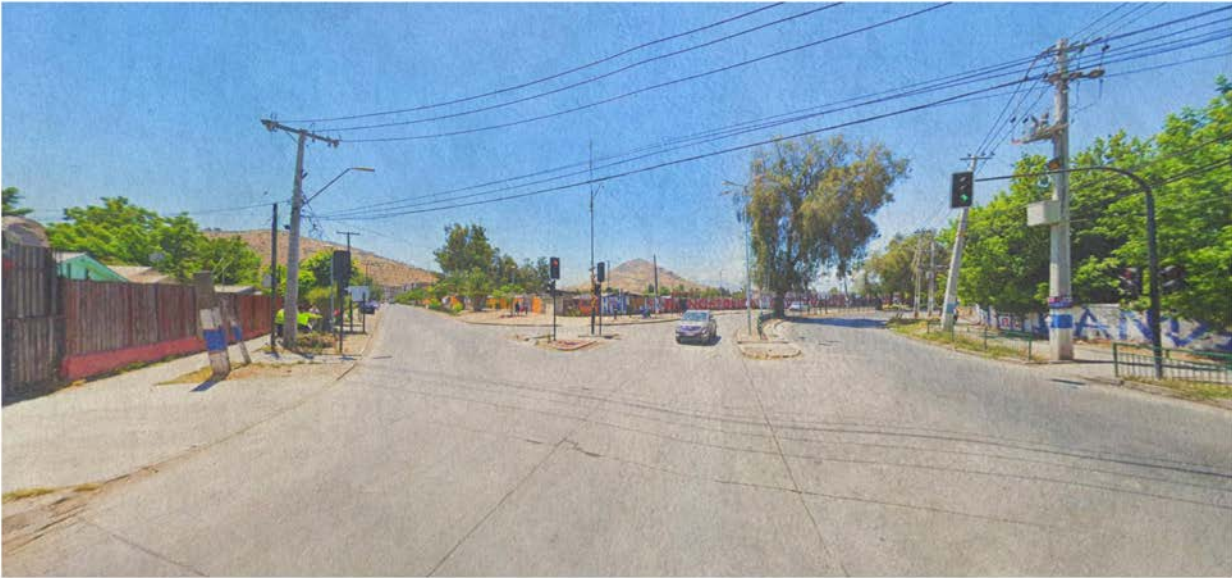
These interventions were also rooted in tangible environmental challenges we observed and documented on site:

- Fences directly adjacent to sidewalks that limit accessibility and create visual blind spots, posing safety concerns.
- Lack of street lighting and traffic signage that reduce visibility, especially at night.

- Damaged and cracked road surfaces that compromise both vehicular and pedestrian safety.
- Sidewalks that lack accessibility features such as ramps and tactile paving, which exclude people with disabilities.
- A shortage of urban furniture and recreational facilities, limiting space for rest, interaction, or play.

Our recommendations build upon the municipality’s ongoing initiatives and the PRC. We aim to transform Renca’s streetscapes into vibrant, inclusive, and accessible public realms and propose three types of space activation interventions:

- tactical plazas
- community-led street art, and
- youth programming.



Before Intervention

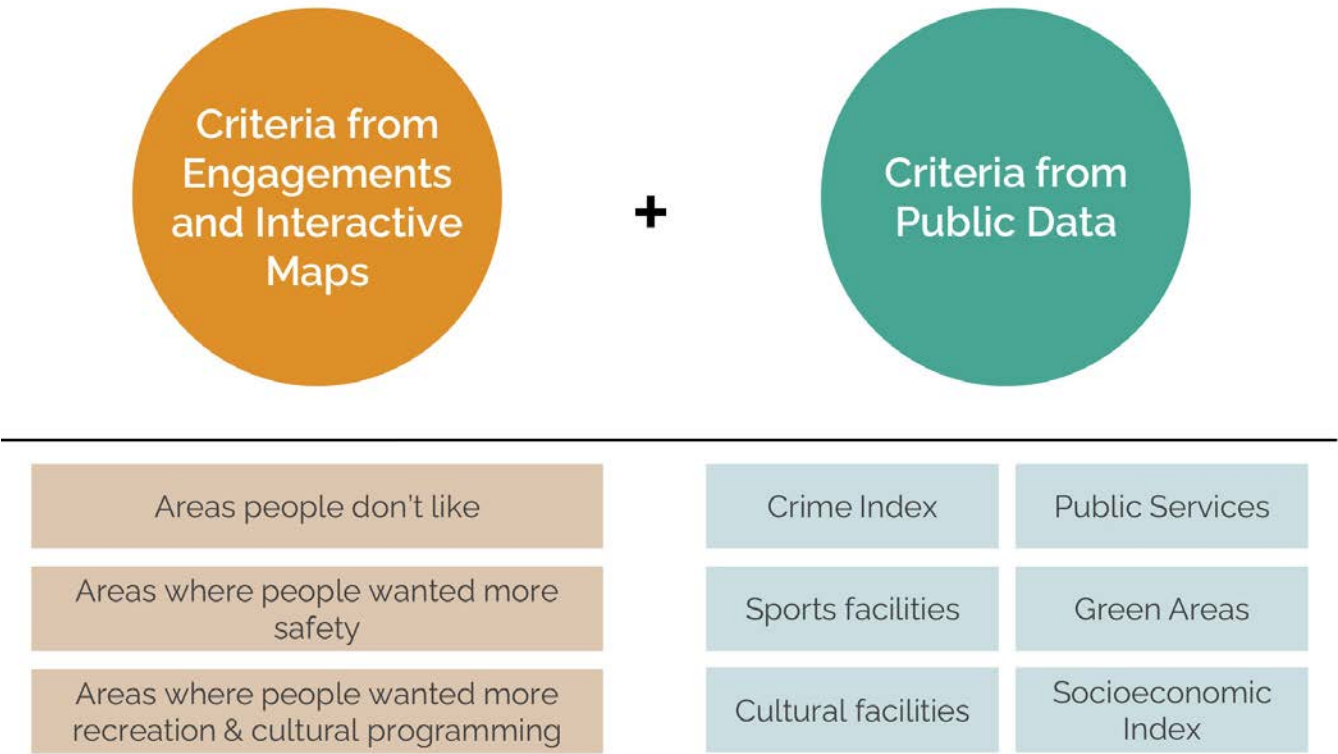
A street view of a typical urban area in Renca, Santiago, Chile

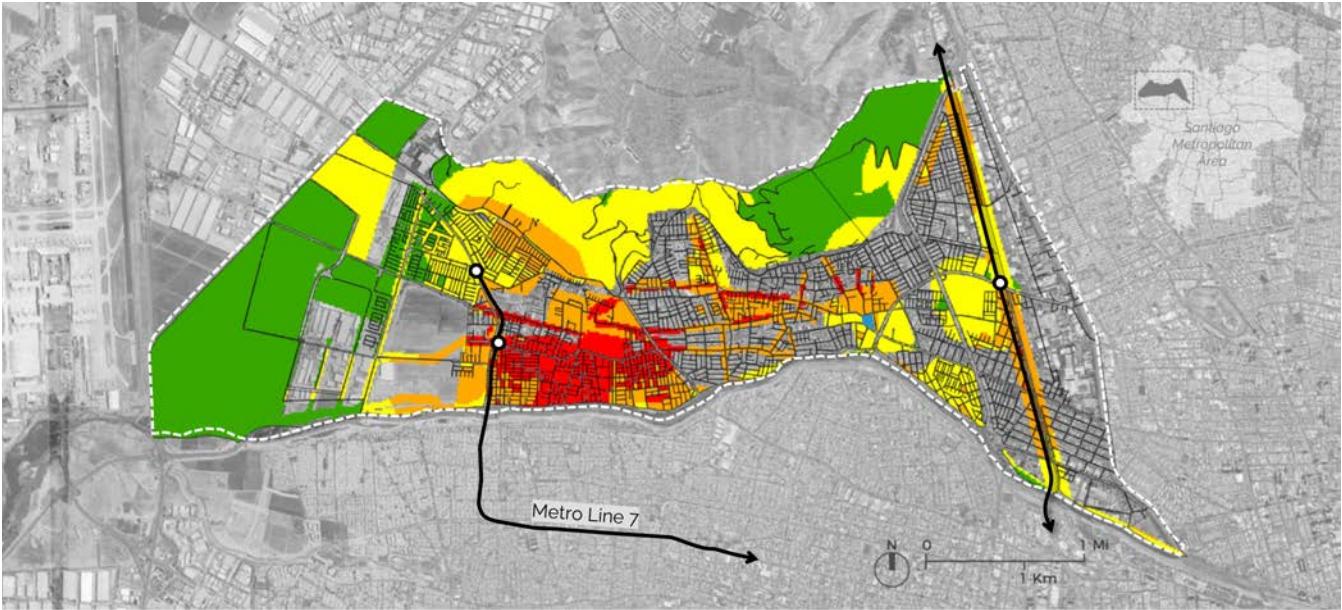
Where to activate?

In order to identify where we should activate space, we used a Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) technique with data collected from our engagements, as well as Matriz BHT (2025) data. Areas that residents did not like, wanted more safety, and more recreational/cultural

programming were weighed as areas needing more activation. Similarly, areas that scored more poorly on the security index, socioeconomic index, and access to resource indices, were all weighed as areas that would benefit from activations.

Where to activate?





Focus Area Mapping for Space Activation

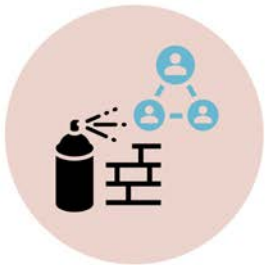
The results of this analysis can be seen on the map. Areas in red represent the top priority areas identified by our analysis, and were therefore the priority areas for space

activation. Given many of the areas in red are also located by the new metro lines, these areas were given additional prioritization for activation.

Space Activation Interventions



Tactical Plazas

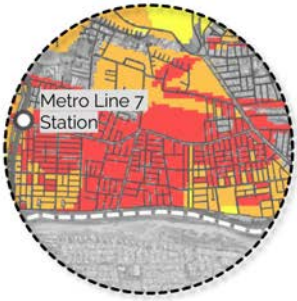


Community-Led Street Art



Youth Programming

Current Projects in Renca



A sample site for Tactical Plazas



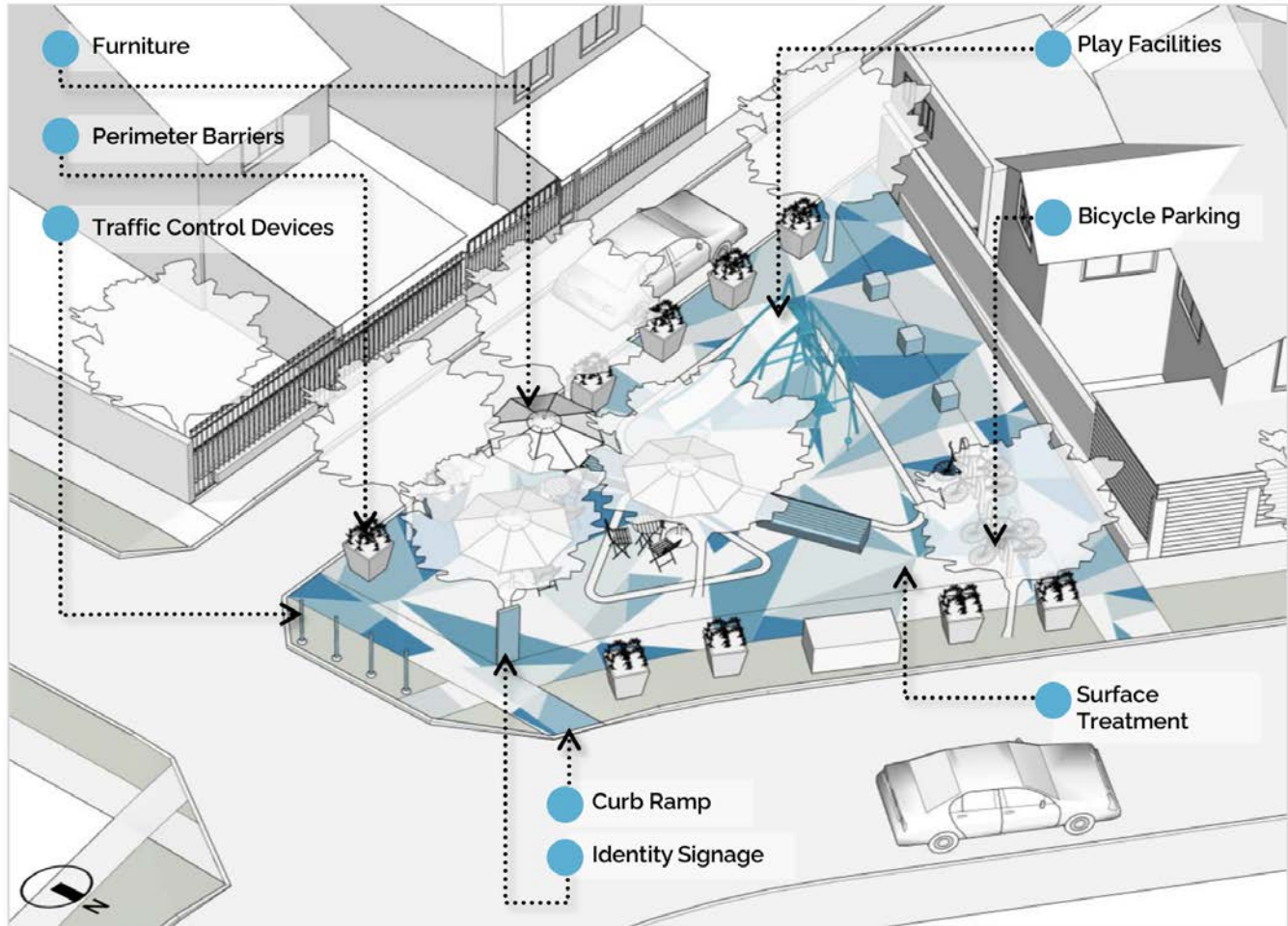
Tactical Plazas

Tactical plazas are temporary yet impactful public space interventions that reimagine street segments and vacant areas as community gathering spots. These spaces serve multiple functions: they host activities like outdoor education, games, or performances, and act as resting points for pedestrians.

Our proposed tactical plazas are guided by planning documents from Renca's transportation and urban

consulting departments. These proposals replace defensive infrastructure—like barbed wire and tall fences—with more inviting features such as low fences, street murals, enhanced lighting, shade, and seating. By choosing underused areas near Line 7 metro stops and layering them with minimal but strategic infrastructure, tactical plazas are meant to enhance walkability and connectivity. They are also designed to be organic gathering spaces for community members.

Components of Tactical Plazas



Community-led Street Art

Tactical plazas in Renca can be enhanced with community-led street art to beautify spaces. Murals and temporary street art have already proven effective in Renca and instill neighborhood pride. Building on this foundation, we recommend scaling up community-led street art projects, especially in areas adjacent to the new Line 7 metro stations.

These art projects should involve local youth and artists to ensure they reflect community identity. Beyond beautification, these artworks contribute to shifting public perceptions of safety and ownership, creating a sense of belonging and welcoming new users into spaces previously avoided. By fostering creative expression and civic participation, community art becomes both a cultural asset and a safety strategy (Stern et al., 2008).



Illustrations of Community-led Street Art Intervention.

Youth Programming

Our engagements with residents highlighted a local social norm: spaces with children are considered safer and often respected as violence-free zones. Children themselves expressed enthusiasm for recreational activities in Renca such as soccer and skateboarding. Parents expressed support for municipal programming for children and youth. We would like to build on these strengths as a catalyst to curb crime by creating and designating safe public spaces. By investing in youth programming and designating safe, children and teen-friendly public spaces, we can help reinforce this protective dynamic in the parts of Renca that need it the most, aiming to reduce crime through design.

To build on this, we recommend investing in structured youth programs in newly activated public spaces.

These programs would not only animate these areas but also reinforce local norms around safety and care. For instance, organizing weekly sports events or seasonal skateboarding workshops can establish a consistent, youth-friendly presence in the public realm (The State of Public Space in 2025, 2025). We drew from "Safe Places, Active Spaces" in New York City to encourage the municipality to also develop a community playbook for Renca, so that while the municipality may invest in infrastructure, community organizations and neighborhood associations may take the lead in transforming public spaces in their neighborhoods. This playbook was developed to decrease crime in marginalized neighborhoods in New York City and change the framework around public spaces (NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, 2019).



After Intervention

A street view of a typical urban area in Renca, Santiago, Chile, after Space Activation interventions are implemented.

Case Study: Paseo Bandera, Downtown Santiago

As an example, we reference Paseo Bandera in downtown Santiago, Chile (Caldera, 2025). In this case, the municipality put forward a series of space activation strategies and tools to respond to street closures caused by the construction of a new metro line. Located approximately 20 minutes from Renca, this scenario presents strong parallels to the ongoing development of Metro Line 7 in Renca, offering valuable insights into beautiful and relatively low-cost large-scale infrastructure projects.

To address street closures and the temporary loss of public space, the intervention introduced street murals and the construction of temporary urban furniture and structures. These interventions not only mitigated the impact of construction but also initiated a broader discussion about the prioritization of public street space, emphasizing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and

small local businesses. While the project extends for four blocks and cost around \$550,000 USD, the municipality fundraised all of it from businesses in the corridor in exchange for brand placement (Rogers, 2018). Given the degree of big industries that are in Renca, we believe that this model could be replicated in Renca albeit at a much smaller scale.

Together, these interventions form a comprehensive approach to space activation in Renca. Tactical plazas, street murals, and youth programming are low-cost yet high-impact tools that can catalyze positive change (Tactical Urbanism, 2025). When strategically implemented in coordination with municipal planning, community input and youth participation, these measures will not only enhance safety, but also re-energize public space as a foundation for long-term, equitable urban development.



Green Sustainability Network
Interventions



Eco-Schools



Green Corridors



Pocket Parks

4.3 Green Sustainability Network

While we recommend space activation to encourage people on the streets, we know that being outside will not be as enjoyable if Renca is not shaded to mitigate the hot, dry summers, as well as high rates of air pollution. However, Renca has only 4.11 square meters of green space per capita, less than half of the 9 square meters recommended by the World Health Organization (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2023). Many residents do not have parks or plazas within walking distance. But what Renca does have are its iconic hills. The hills are a source of pride and strength. Thus, in this next section, we recommend Green Sustainability Networks to connect people to the hills and to each other, addressing disconnection within the commune and shading the paths people take to work, school and other activities.

Green sustainability networks will be anchored by the following interventions:

1. Eco-schools
2. Green corridors
3. Pocket parks

We outline the mechanism for each intervention and key considerations when implementing in Renca.

Eco-Schools

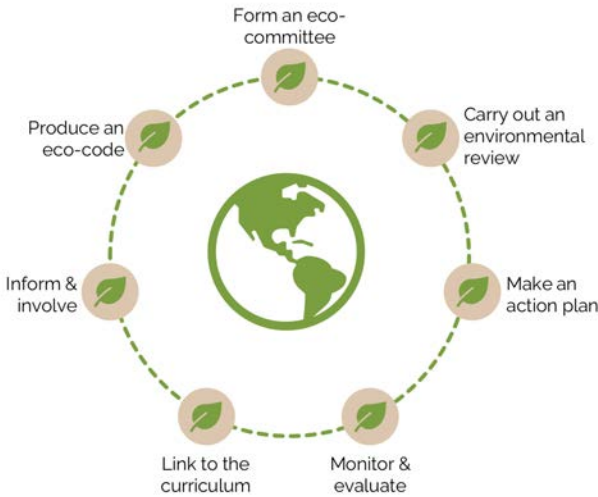
Eco-schools are programs that teach students about the environment and transform school or neighborhood environments into green, sustainable spaces that serve students and the wider community. In Renca, “greening” a campus or a plot of land in the neighborhood can provide new public green space. These small-scale, local activities can be scaled up in partnership with other community organizations in order to promote local sustainability initiatives in line with the other interventions we outline to green Renca, address heat island effects, and foster environmental stewardship.

Eco-school Models

Renca could join a pre-established Chilean or International EcoSchool program, or establish its own model. We outline the different options below, and key considerations we have identified for launching this type

of program in Renca.

There is an existing Eco-schools Chile by Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in Chile, which Renca would be eligible to enroll in. The program has its own model and staff to support development of curricula not only in biodiversity and nature, but energy, waste, transport, and more. The benefit to enrolling in a pre-existing program would be access to technical support, connection to a wider international community, and certification that is internationally-recognized. Renca can explore their guides for more information (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2025).



Eco-School Models.

While most aforementioned programs allow for tailoring of Ecoschool programming to fit the local context, should Renca wish to establish its own model, we recommend incorporating the following:

- The establishment of this type of program in Renca should build upon Renca’s pre-established sustainability goals. Other successful organizations have aligned their Ecoschool programming activities with Sustainable Development Goals.

Where to launch Eco-Schools?



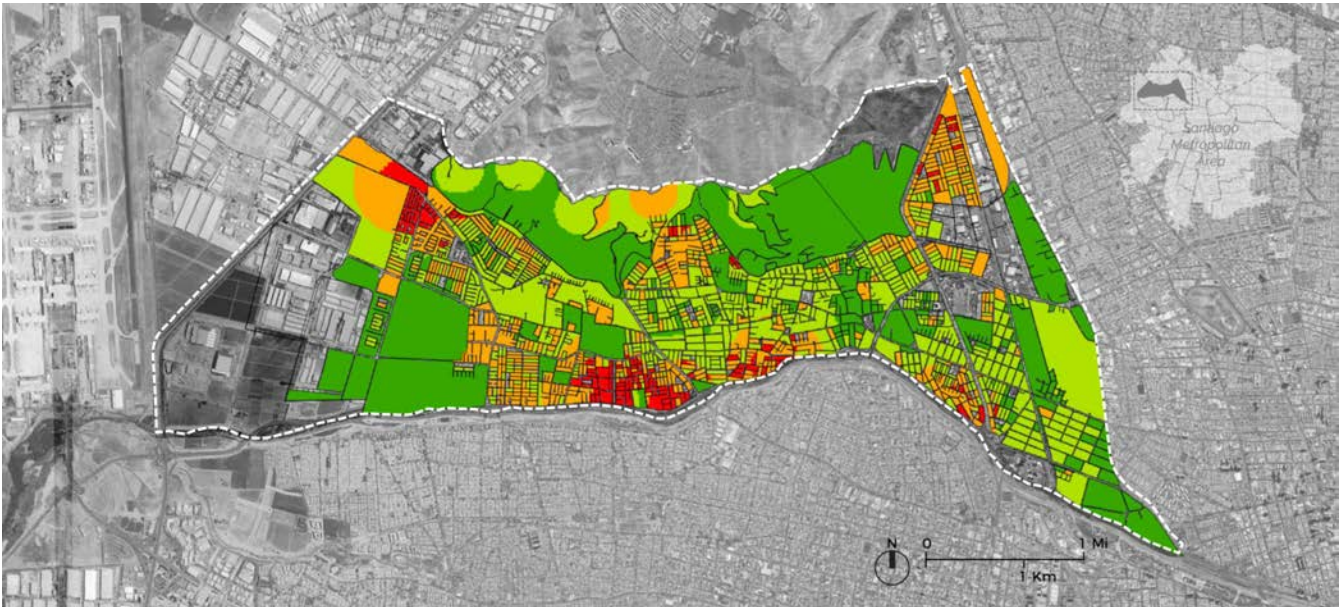
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Future – Areas where people wanted more green space

Education Access Index
Vegetation Cover Index
Socioeconomic Index

- Schools create Action Plans of green activities that count towards their certification as an Eco School. A guide of approved Actions could be modeled off other programs (see Eco Schools Canada, 2024). Actions can remain flexible, and could range from students helping create a pollinator garden to establishing composting programs or hosting a community clean-up event.
- Certification levels should be established, where a minimum number of Actions must be completed in order to be certified as a Eco School participant, and higher levels of certification could be created for schools who perform additional actions, incentivizing involvement.
- Create friendly competition between schools for tree planting, creation of pocket parks or community gardens, while encouraging consistent maintenance of such activities.
- Interested schools can create teams to lead their schools. This should include a mix of administrators, teachers, and students (of different ages). These volunteer representatives can lead activities for their school.
- Create a forum for connecting participating schools. From this, schools can share information and resources, and build upon initiatives.
- Partner with local organizations with expertise in



Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis for Eco-School Locations

Priority Regions
Top
High
Medium
Low

environmental programming.

- Partner with Renca’s Parks Department to facilitate trips to the Hill and other green areas in Renca. Given the Parks Department already engages in robust community outreach, the department can benefit from this network. Approved Actions for the Eco Schools program could include participation in the Parks Department
- Work with private-sector partners to help sponsor such initiatives to help build relationships between corporations and residents. A fund could be established to offer schools the opportunity to apply for small grants to carry out these initiatives.
- Ensure data collection on participating schools, types of initiatives, people involved, and reach of impact is foundational to the program. This type of data collection is more easily designed from the outset, and the ability to conduct program evaluation will allow for modifications of the program as needed, and importantly, use for applying for grants and

various funding streams.

In addition, the government could use other successful models as a starting point. Eco-schools Canada is a very successful and award-winning program that began locally and has expanded across Canada. They have built robust infrastructure for data collection, activity options, and using competitive certification levels as incentives. Their guide provides instruction from funding and how-to’s on various activities (Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 2018). Due to geographical difference, some activities might not apply directly, but if Renca wanted to create its own ecoschool model, we recommend creating a similar how-to guide with guidance on which native plants the municipality recommends, watering schedules, and more. Alstom’s Quillanue eco-school in Chile was created for students with intellectual disabilities. Alstom Foundation also funds independent projects through their foundation (Alstom Foundation, 2025). Finally, the United States also has an EcoSchools program that also focuses on conservation and climate action (National Wildlife Federation, 2025). See EcoSchools Canada (2025)



Candidates for Eco-School Locations

Where to Launch Eco-Schools?

We analyzed where eco-schools can be launched in Renca by using data from our community engagements where people wanted more greenspace, as well as Matriz BHT (2025) pre-processed census data to locate areas that would most immediately benefit from improvements in education, vegetation, and social interventions.

With these data, we conducted a Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA). We used this to rank regions by priority in order to help establish a pilot program. Schools in areas of higher importance (i.e., orange or red) could be prioritized for establishing an Eco

Schools program, i.e by receiving priority for initial small-grants funding.

Within these top and high priority regions, we identified 12 schools that, based on our analysis, would be strong candidates for the Eco-Schools pilot program based on their location and attributes.

These candidates are:

1. ESCUELA BASICA 2270 MI SONRISA
2. ESCUELA BASICA LO VELASQUEZ
3. ESC.PART. TALLERES PREVOCACIONALES PADRE HURT



Green Corridors sprouting from Eco-Schools

4. ESCUELA JORGE ALESSANDRI RODRIGUEZ ANEXO
5. CENTRO EDUC. GOYENECHEA
6. ESC.MUNIC.DE PARVULOS HERNAN DEL SOL
7. ESCUELA N° 1365 R.P. GUSTAVO LE PAIGE
8. COLEGIO PARTICULAR HELENICO
9. COLEGIO PART. SOCHIDES RENCA
10. ESCUELA DOMINGO SANTA MARIA GONZALEZ
11. ESCUELA GENERAL ALEJANDRO GOROSTIAGA O
12. LICEO POLITECNICO PARTICULAR ANDES

Green Corridors

From these Eco-School locations, we recommend building out green corridors. While Renca already is working to green streets, building out from Eco-Schools would help with their maintenance and benefit the youth.

Green corridors are linear green spaces that connect parks and neighborhoods, usually tree-lined streets, vegetated trails, or riparian parks. They reduce the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and create routes for walking or biking. In cities like Renca, green corridors can connect currently isolated green spaces (such as Cerro Renca or larger parks) with neighborhoods that lack greenery, bringing nature directly into the street space. More importantly green corridors could connect to Renca’s hills, providing an enjoyable pathway.

**Designing a Green Journey:
From City to the Hills**



Bike & Pedestrian-Friendly Pathways



Visual Guidance & Wayfinding



Interactive & Functional Nodes

Corridors can be as simple as planting rows of trees and gardens in the existing right-of-way, or as comprehensive as redesigning the street with new bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and planted medians.

Successful cases for Green Corridors have been carried out across Latin America, including Medellín, Colombia. Beginning from 2016, Medellín’s award-winning “Corredores Verdes” created 30 green corridors (18 along roads and 12 along creek edges) covering 20 km of the city (Moloney, 2021). Tens of thousands of native trees, palms, and 2.5 million smaller plants were planted along sidewalks and medians. The initial investment was \$16.3 million USD (about CLP 12–13 billion), which averages

roughly CLP 650 million per kilometer of corridor (Varga, 2024). Medellín allocates approximately \$625,000 per year (≈ 500 million Chilean pesos per year) to maintain the corridors (Thomson, 2024), which involves ~150 gardeners pruning, watering, and replanting as needed. But in Renca, some of this work can be piloted in target areas and maintained through Eco-schools and private funding at a much smaller scale. The project’s success is attributed to strong city support and community buy-in – the city even trained local unemployed people as gardeners to maintain the new green corridors (Thomson, 2024).

In line with Renca’s needs, green corridors with street

Streetview before Planting Native Vegetation



Streetview after Planting Native Vegetation



tree planting and landscape beautification offer relatively high cost-effectiveness. Based on the experience of the Medellín project, the cost per kilometer of corridor is approximately ~CLP 600–700 million. This cost includes significant planting and initial construction expenses. Costs can be further reduced by scaling down the project (e.g., for narrower streets or reduced use of large trees) or adopting alternative design solutions. Additionally, a maintenance budget should be allocated to ensure the long-term sustainability of the green corridor—based on Medellín’s experience, annual maintenance costs per kilometer are approximately CLP 250,000–300,000.

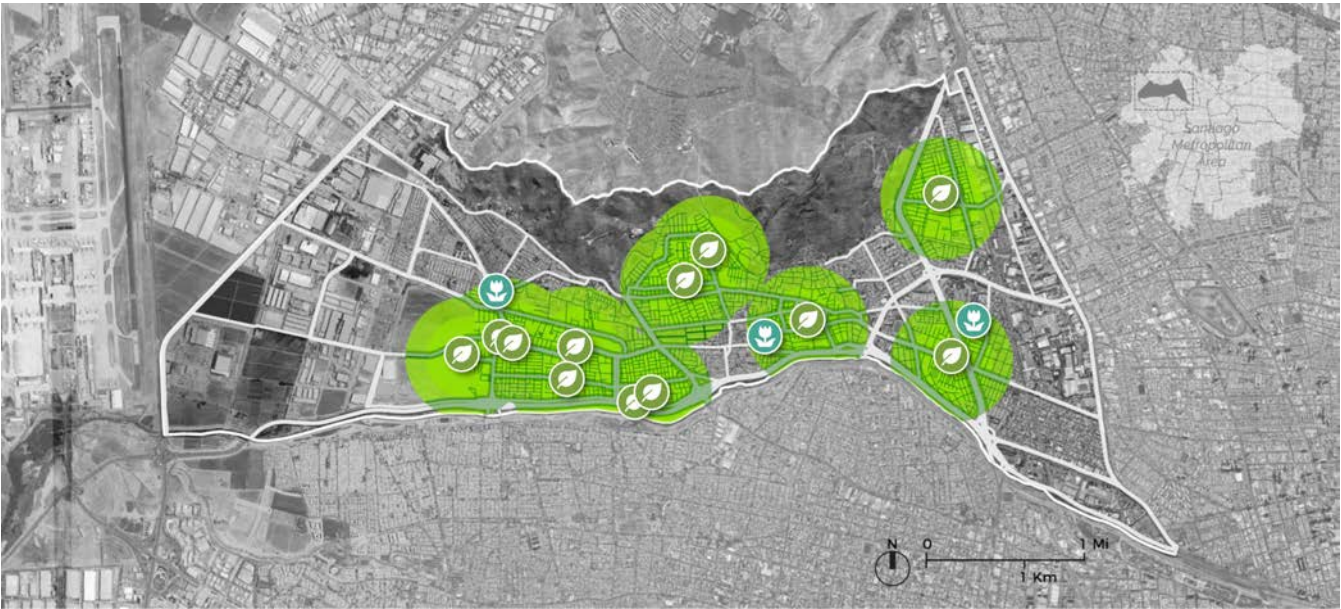
Key Components to Budget for Green Corridors:

Plants and planting: Trees should be planted typically one every 5–10 meters, focusing on species that provide ample shade. Understory shrubs, ornamental plants, and groundcover or grass for medians and verges. Costs include the plants themselves plus soil, compost, tree grates or stakes, and labor to plant them (often the largest expense).

Drought Tolerant Regional Plants (Scientific name / Common name)

- Baccharis linearis / Romerillo
- Puya chilensis / Chilean Puya
- Quillaja saponaria / Soap bark tree
- Neltuma chilensis / Chilean mesquite
- Vachellia caven / Aromo criollo
- Schinus molle / Peruvian pepper tree
- Salvia microphylla / Baby Sage
- Achillea millefolium / Yarrow
- Rhamnus alaternus / Italian buckthorn

Infrastructure: Due to Chile’s extreme dry season, irrigation systems may be the most effective way to water new vegetation. Renca could install automatic drip irrigation or at least watering points. Sidewalks or median strips may need to be modified by widening the median strip or creating bio-pools, creating tree pits, installing curb extensions at intersections to plant vegetation. We are also recommending new visual guidance and wayfinding infrastructure, which are additional costs.



Expanding Green Corridors with Pocket Parks as Nodes



Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small green spaces, typically less than 2,000 square meters, sometimes only a few hundred square meters, constructed on urban vacant lots or underutilized plots. They serve as quick, low-cost interventions to add a touch of greenery to densely populated neighborhoods. In Renca, pocket parks can be built on municipal vacant lots or streetscapes where larger parks are not feasible. Our vision is to utilize pocket parks as anchors for green corridors to transform Renca’s streets and provide seating, shade, and vegetation. A clear example can be found in Santiago, where the

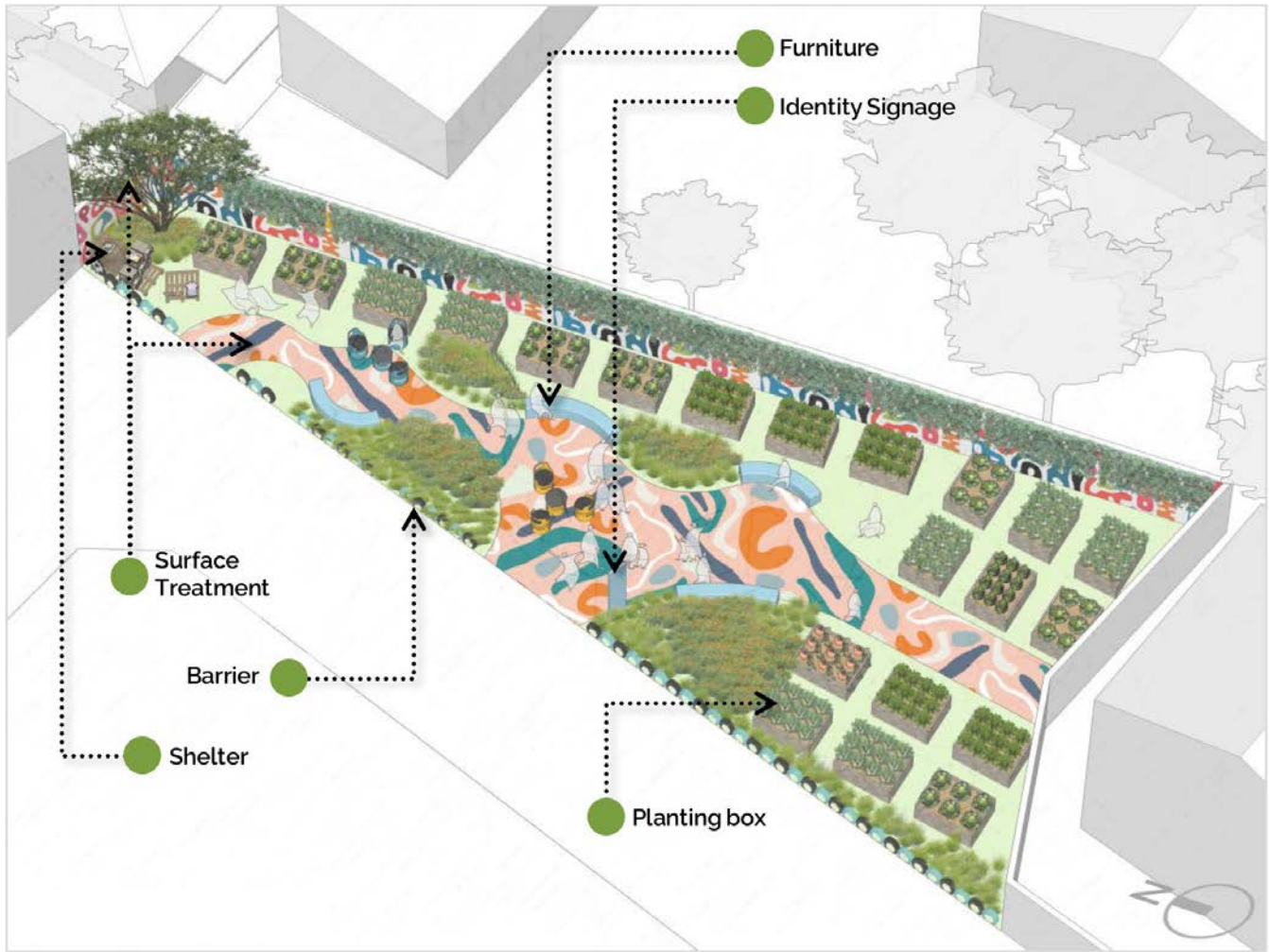
Metropolitan Government of Santiago launched “Plazas de Bolsillo” in 2016–2018 as a way to revitalize vacant urban lots. In the first stage, 9 pocket parks were implemented across Santiago’s center, on undeveloped plots between buildings. These featured movable furniture, planters, urban gardens, and food trucks, and were designed to be temporary (Egger, 2020). The total cost of the nine parks was CLP 216 million, averaging 24 million CLP (~\$25,460 USD) per park. In one example, the Plaza de Bolsillo Cumming (next to a metro station) required CLP 70 million (~\$74,000 USD) in site preparation

by the landowner for cleaning the lot, installing basics like pavement, lighting, bathrooms, and more. However, the regional government contributed just CLP 7 million or around \$7,400 USD for mature trees, planters, and terrace furniture (Acuña, 2018). This illustrates that if base infrastructure is already present or provided by others, the greening components themselves can cost on the order of only 5–10 million CLP or approximately \$5,000 to \$10,500 USD.

Pocket parks cost less than half the cost of a traditional public space and take less than a quarter of the time to implement (Egger, 2019). Based on Santiago's experience,

a basic pocket park typically requires approximately 20 million to 50 million Chilean pesos, depending on the park's size and facilities. On average, for a smaller site, the budget for each pocket park is approximately CLP 30 million. If the land is already public property, minimal preliminary preparation is required, potentially reducing costs. The Renca Municipal Government can collaborate with foundations, industry, and neighborhood associations in order to sustain pocket parks. Chile's Mi Parque Foundation, which specializes in community park development, is a potential partner that would co-fund these projects (Fundación Mi Parque, 2025).

An example typology of Pocket Parks



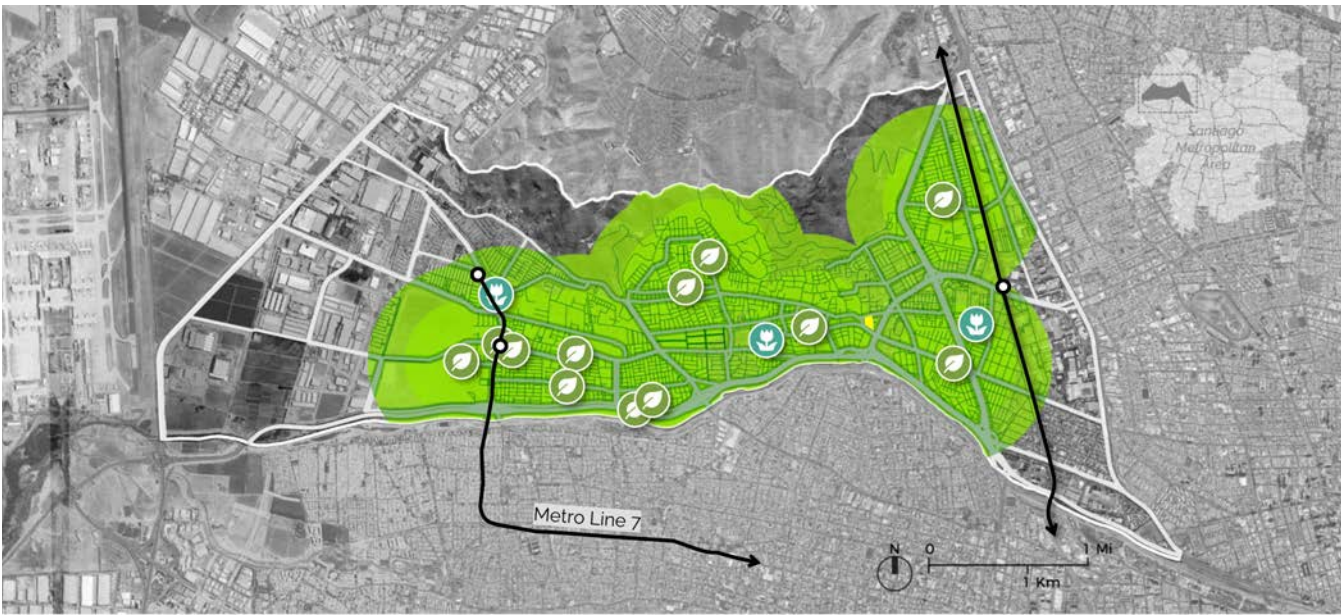
Key Components to Budget for Pocket Parks

Site preparation: This includes clearing debris or trash from the lot, leveling ground, and possibly adding a simple gravel or mulch ground cover. If the lot has no utility connections, we might need to install a basic water connection to water plants and minimal electricity for lighting or potentially later on, food carts.

Greening elements: Pocket Parks require soil, plants and planters. Trees that are planted directly into the ground will provide shade but may be more expensive. Shrubs, ornamental flowers, or even edible garden boxes will brighten the area. Santiago's pocket parks, for example,

prominently feature colorful planters with native plants and small trees.

Furniture and amenities: Seating is an important element of pocket parks. These can include benches, picnic tables, and chairs, which are often lightweight and moveable to ensure flexible configuration. Especially in initial stages, shade infrastructure like umbrellas or small pergolas improve comfort. Trash bins, bike racks, and perhaps a drinking fountain are other possible additions. Some pocket parks include playground equipment for young children or outdoor exercise equipment if space permits,



Connecting Renca with a Green Network

though this increases cost. In Renca, amenities should align with what the community needs in that area.

Labor and Maintenance: In order to make our green initiatives as cost-effective as possible, we are recommending that neighborhood organizations, eco-schools and non-profit organizations be mobilized to adopt a park and maintain it over the long-run. The municipality and Renca's Urban Investment & Development Corporation (Renca UDIC), as proposed later in the report, can sponsor green initiatives, but its sustainability will be ensured through community participation. In larger areas, the UDIC may contribute to hiring maintenance workers, especially for areas that are hubs and focal points for revitalization.

Eco-Schools, Green Corridors, and Pocket Parks offer

scalable, cost-effective solutions to Renca's spatial inequality and disconnection, while connecting Renca youth to the environment, Renquinos to each other, and activating areas that need investment. Eco-schools will be hubs for community greening and education, fostering long-term connection for youth to Renca's natural environment. Green corridors connect neighborhoods with shade and mobility, as well as providing enjoyable pathways to connect Renquinos traveling within the commune and to the hills. Pocket parks anchor these networks by providing shade and places of respite in Renca's streetscape. These networks address concerns related to public green space accessibility and disconnection between the east and west, as well as the north and south of the comuna. Together, these strategies can create a more resilient, equitable, and livable Renca.



After Interventions

A street view of a typical urban area in Renca, Santiago, Chile, after Space Activation and Green Sustainability Network are implemented.



4.4. Mixed-Use Development

To build on the momentum of space activation and emerging green networks, mixed-use development offers a strategic pathway for Renca to cultivate vibrant, inclusive, and economically resilient neighborhoods from its existing inhibited economic forces. This approach leverages the municipality’s underutilized spatial assets to generate local employment, expand neighborhood-serving commerce, and retain population, all while ensuring the rhythm of transformation is incremental and moves at the pace of economic activity.

Spatial Analysis of Mixed-Use Development

Initially, our research pointed us to transit-oriented development around the new Metro stations, given that the municipality is already seeking mixed-use development around the stations and courting companies to locate to Renca (PRC, 2022). With our MCDA analysis, we identified that the region to the east of Renca, while residential, was a top priority region for activation given

its safety index and prioritization for intervention by participants.

The streetscape in this area is mostly residential with little to no greenery on sidewalks, and tall gates that separate people’s homes and the streets. While homes have front yards and/or garages, those are also closed off from the street. Due to the perception that the area is unsafe, people appear reluctant to allow any vulnerabilities between their properties and the street, which fosters a closed, inaccessible environment.

However, this does not mean that Renca residents are closed off to economic activity. Within the focus area identified above, there is a bustling market where people sell all sorts of wares. While there are not many large stores in Renca, it is not uncommon to see small shops, street vendors, and farmers’ markets. In order to build on this existing economic activity at the scale that is appropriate for Renca residents, we recommend that the municipality promote place-based entrepreneurship.



Existing retails and small businesses in Renca



A street vendor in Renca



Existing retails and street vendors in Renca



Focus Area Mapping for Mixed-Use Development

Key Transit Hubs
— Rail Lines
— Plaza De Renca
Priority Regions
— Top
— High
— Medium
— Low

Place-Based Entrepreneurship

Place-based entrepreneurship centers on incremental, resident-led improvements to their own properties. In order to incentivize this incremental development, we recommend that the municipality offer time-limited property tax credits, low-interest loans, and technical support toolkits to gradually formalize these businesses. Given that the municipality has a stake in collecting commercial taxes, and since Renca’s property taxes are generally lower, we recommend that these tax credits be time-limited so that the municipality will be able to collect commercial taxes over the long-run. Low-interest business loans for conversion should be sponsored through the UDIC. Entrepreneurship toolkits will outline the steps to apply for a commercial patent, health and safety protocols, as well as information on how to join a business association.

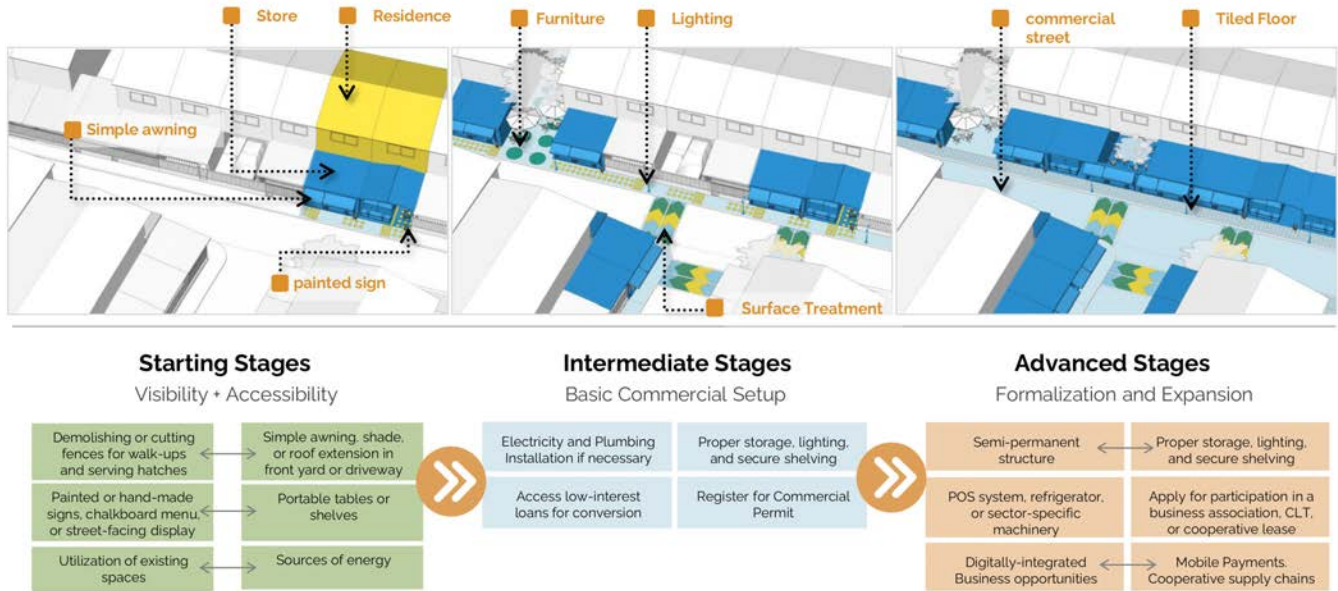
From Visibility to Viability: A Phased Implementation Model

This intervention allows Renca’s mixed-use development to develop at the pace of Renca residents’ initial small-scale investments, while allowing room for continued expansion. Beginning with tactical upgrades, such as curb ramps, store signage, awnings and portable tables, will allow for accessibility and visibility of these businesses. Once these businesses are set up, residents can repurpose gated lots, front yards, and driveways into street-facing businesses. Gradually, with the help of low-interest loans if necessary, entrepreneurs will be able to invest in semi-permanent structures with proper lighting, storage, energy, and more. Below, we outline the costs associated with materials that may be required for place-based businesses. Price ranges were based on web-based searches on Yapo, Falabella, Mercado Libre, and Sodimac, and may vary based on quantity and location.

Place-Based Entrepreneurship



Incremental Implementation of Mixed-Use Development



Phase 1 Starting Stage: Visibility & Accessibility

Cost: CLP \$150,000–\$350,000 (USD ~\$160–\$370)

Timeframe: 1–2 weeks

Improvements: Make informal or home-based activity visible, accessible, and customer-ready.

- Modify gates or fences for walk-up access (CLP \$80,000–\$150,000)
- Metal cutting and hinges from ferreterías or informal labor
- Install tarps or awnings (CLP \$40,000–\$100,000)
- Signage / chalkboard menus (CLP \$10,000–\$30,000)
- Folding tables or crates for display (CLP \$20,000–\$50,000)
- Solar or plug-in LED lighting (CLP \$30,000–\$50,000)

Phase 2 Intermediate Stage: Basic Commercial Setup

Cost: CLP \$800,000–\$1,500,000 (USD ~\$850–\$1,600)

Timeframe: 3–5 weeks

Improvements: Build foundational infrastructure for legal, hygienic, and safe operation.

- Electric installation (breaker box + wiring): CLP \$250,000–\$400,000
- Plumbing for food/hair businesses: CLP \$100,000–\$200,000
- Storage & lighting (metal shelving + LED strips): CLP \$200,000–\$400,000
- Commercial permit registration & SII activation: CLP \$30,000–\$50,000
- Servicio de Impuestos Internos (SII)
- Paint, tiles, or minor surface treatment: CLP \$100,000–\$300,000

Phase 3 Advanced Stage: Formalization & Expansion

Cost: CLP \$2,000,000–\$4,000,000 (USD ~\$2,100–\$4,200)

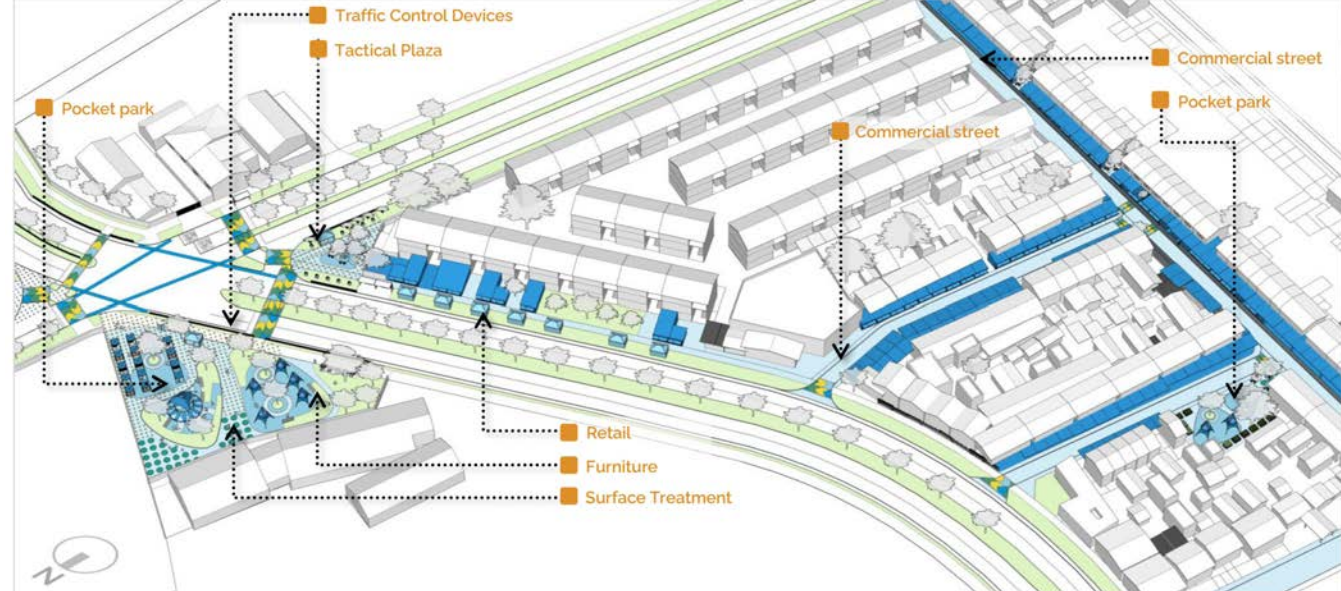
Timeframe: 1–3 months

Goal: Secure full legal recognition, improve branding, and scale services/products.

- Build semi-permanent kiosk/storefront: CLP \$1,000,000–\$1,800,000
- Typical works listed under “Obras Menores” on Yapo
- Install POS system, fridge, or tools: CLP \$500,000–\$1,000,000
- Join business association / CLT lease: (Potential Member Fee)
- Create digital presence & mobile payments: CLP \$300,000–\$600,000
- Branding: signs, uniforms, packaging: CLP \$100,000–\$200,000
- Connecting Economic Growth to Public Realm Enhancements

Mixed-use development is not just about adding commercial functions—it’s about creating active, safe, and welcoming public spaces where economic and social life intersect. With the development of place-based entrepreneurship, we envision that the arterial roads towards the new train stations will be complemented by tactical plazas, pocket parks, and connected through green corridors fostering environments that promote walkability, safety, and everyday interaction. In this way, physical upgrades also enhance the collective experience of neighborhood identity and pride. Mixed-use development in Renca is not an end in itself, it is a catalyst for broader, coordinated urban transformation. To effectively scale these efforts across the municipality, an integrated institutional vehicle is required: the Urban Development and Investment Corporation (Renca UDIC).

An Overview of Mixed-Use Development Components



4.5. Urban Development and Investment Corporation (Renca UDIC)

To be able to finance and drive the implementation of our recommendations, we recommend the creation of a municipally-operated Urban Development and Investment Corporation (Renca UDIC). This entity will function as the institutional engine behind a long-term vision of inclusive growth, embedding values of affordability, participation, and sustainability into the heart of its operations.

Unlike conventional development bodies that often operate top-down and are detached from local needs, the Renca UDIC is structured to integrate community stakeholders and organizations directly into its

governance and implementation. Through active partnerships with and establishment of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Community Land Trusts (CLTs), Business Associations (BAs), and Neighborhood Associations (NAs), the UDIC will consolidate land use planning, infrastructure investment, and local economic development under one accountable institution. Recognizing the financial constraints of the municipality, the UDIC is designed to maximize existing public assets and retain economic value within Renca. This structure responds directly to urgent challenges such as population retention, the need for quality jobs, and inclusive neighborhood revitalization.

Legal Foundation and Institutional Design

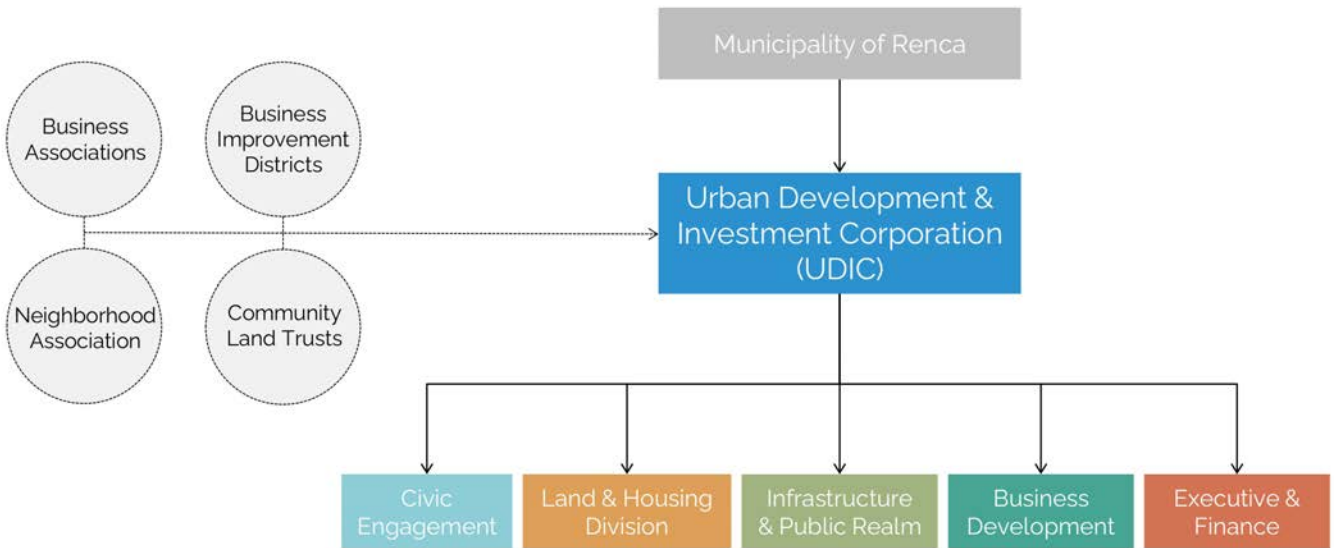
Renca UDIC’s managing board of directors will be composed of representatives from the Municipality of Renca, community land trusts, business improvement districts, business associations, and neighbourhood associations, each with defined authority and voting rights. This shared governance model guarantees checks and balances between technical, economic, and social interests. No major project or investment decision can proceed without consensus across these sectors.

Policy Objectives and Expected Impacts

The creation of Renca UDIC will allow the municipality to:

- Deliver high-quality infrastructure and housing without relying exclusively on private developers
- Retain public control over land and long-term affordability
- Promote existing local business ecosystems and reduce economic displacement, providing job and population retention potential.
- Institutionalize participatory planning and community oversight
- Integrate inclusivity and sustainability into every stage of development

Structural Organization of Urban Development and Investment Corporation (UDIC)



Integrated Functional Divisions

To deliver equitable and adaptive urban transformation, the Renca UDIC will operate through five interlinked divisions. Each division is designed to guide and support inclusive mixed-use development—particularly the incremental evolution of home-based enterprises and micro-commerce along arterial corridors in the regions we have identified.

1. Land and Housing Division: This division is responsible for acquiring and stewarding land under community-controlled models such as Community Land Trusts (CLTs). This division structures long-term ground leases that protect land from speculation, support incremental mixed-use development (e.g., residential-commercial hybrids), and ensure permanent affordability for housing and small business use. It also facilitates cooperative housing and helps regularize informal land use into secure tenure.
2. Infrastructure and Public Realm Division: This department leads the phased upgrading of sidewalks, lighting, setbacks, public-facing frontages, and greenery improvements. This division focuses on converting underutilized right-of-way and gated

facades into active public edges that encourage walkability, street-level enterprise, and safety. It delivers low-cost interventions such as modular kiosks, seating, and micro-retail platforms while planning long-term improvements for vibrant commercial corridors.

3. Business Development Division: Supports the full entrepreneurial lifecycle from informal start-up to formal integration. This division coordinates business literacy workshops, technical assistance, cooperative models, and access to public microgrants or crowdfunding. It fundraises for low-cost interest loans to businesses seeking to convert their properties and also negotiates land use for companies seeking to locate to Renca. This division supports and facilitates the existing economic activities in Renca.
4. Civic Engagement and Social Monitoring Division: Provides community input and oversight throughout the planning, implementation, and operation of UDIC projects. This division leads participatory design processes, facilitates neighborhood assemblies, and develops impact monitoring frameworks that track affordability, displacement risk, and local

satisfaction. It also promotes co-creation of public spaces and integrates community feedback into phasing and design revisions.

5. Executive and Financial Operations Division: Serves as the fiscal and legal backbone of the UDIC. This division raises capital from diverse sources within the municipality. This division will manage lease revenues and public-private co-investment funds. It ensures the legal structuring of projects. It oversees risk management, inter-division coordination, and long-term reinvestment strategies to sustain incremental corridor transformation across multiple sites.

Renca UDIC Operations

The funding model for the Renca Urban Development and Investment Corporation (UDIC) is designed to maximize the use of municipal assets while fostering community-driven investment and multisectoral partnerships.

1. Leverage Public Assets: The funding process begins with the Municipality of Renca contributing existing public assets—most notably, land and budgetary allocations—to initiate urban development projects. These assets act both as financial incentives and structural anchors for future development. These should be combined with private capital and crowdsourcing in order to derisk initial funding.
2. Community-Led Project Identification: Key community stakeholders, such as Community Land Trusts (CLTs), Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Neighborhood Associations (NAs), and Cooperative Organizations, play a critical role in identifying

priority projects. These groups can access capital funding to develop proposals rooted in local needs and aspirations.

3. Institutional Formation and Early Investment: Using public land as an incentive and initial budgetary support, the municipality facilitates the creation of CLTs or Small Business Associations, which act as the foundation for development proposals and long-term stewardship.
4. Public-Private Co-Investment Models: Once a project is structured, the UDIC coordinates two main channels of co-investment:
 - Commercial Co-Investment: Partnerships with private or mission-aligned commercial entities to fund business corridors and job-generating infrastructure.
 - Residential Co-Investment: Collaborations with public or non-speculative residential partners to ensure long-term affordability and population retention.
5. Targeted Project Outcomes: All financed projects must contribute to a mix of physical and social improvements, including those listed as our recommendations. These include tactical plazas, street art, green corridors, pocket parks, commercial development, and urban public realm enhancement.

This hybrid funding strategy allows the Renca UDIC to balance financial sustainability with equity-focused development, ensuring that public value remains at the core of every project.



After Interventions

A street view of a typical urban area in Renca, Santiago, Chile, after all of the recommendations are implemented.

5. Conclusion



While structural changes are coming to Renca, there are existing issues concerning safety, stigma, disconnection, and inequality that affect Renca residents today. Through our research, we identified the interplay of these issues and identified where potential interventions may be carried out to meet the goals of green networks, increasing perceptions of safety, economic growth and opportunities, and population retention. To meet these goals, we recommend street activation strategies such as tactical plazas, street art, and youth programming, green

networks via eco-schools, green corridors and pocket parks, as well as mixed-use development through place-based entrepreneurship along Renca's arterial roads. All of this could be financed and implemented through the Renca Urban Development and Investment Corporation, which will be a more flexible funding mechanism that allows community participation at all levels to raise capital and carry out priority projects. Renca is a commune that already has so many existing assets, which can be built upon to carry out these sustainable changes.

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Appendix

Survey questions in Spanish.

LA VIDA EN RENCA - INVESTIGACIÓN ACADÉMICA

Somos un equipo de investigadoras/es urbanos compuesto por 11 estudiantes de posgrado de la Escuela de Arquitectura, Conservación y Planificación urbana (GSAPP) de la Universidad de Columbia en Nueva York. Nuestro proyecto busca comprender cómo viven los habitantes de Renca y conocer su opinión sobre los desarrollos futuros planificados en la Comuna.

Esta encuesta ha sido diseñada para completarse en aproximadamente **3 a 5 minutos** y se utilizará exclusivamente con fines académicos para informar nuestra investigación.

Su participación es completamente **voluntaria**. En cualquier momento, puede optar por no continuar, enviar solo las respuestas que haya completado hasta el momento o retirarse por completo sin enviar ninguna respuesta. Este estudio ha sido diseñado para garantizar el anonimato de los participantes. A menos que desee ser contactado por nuestro equipo para recibir información sobre el resultado de la investigación, no se le solicitará su correo electrónico ni ningún otro dato de contacto. Si tiene alguna pregunta, no dude en comunicarse con un miembro de nuestro equipo en em3929@columbia.edu

Le agradecemos de antemano su tiempo y participación.

1

¿Le gustaría completar esta encuesta? *

☐ Sí

☐ No

2

Correo electrónico (opcional, solo si desea que nos comuniquemos con usted para enviarle actualizaciones del proyecto)

3

¿Cuál es su edad?

4

¿Género?

5

¿Vive en Renca?

☐ Sí

☐ No

6

¿En qué barrio de Renca vive?

7

¿Qué le parece vivir en Renca?

8

En cinco años, ¿tiene pensado seguir viviendo en Renca?

Muy probable

Indeciso/a

Muy improbable

9

Explique brevemente la respuesta anterior

10

Ordene, de mayor a menor importancia, las dificultades de la vida en Renca

Vivienda

Empleo

Acceso a áreas verdes

Alimentación

Transporte

Conexión con la comunidad

Otro, especifique a continuación

11

¿Quiere añadir algo más?

12

¿Hay algo que le gustaría cambiar en Renca? Si es así, ¿qué cambiaría?

13

¿Trabaja en Renca?

☐ Sí

☐ No

14

¿Con qué frecuencia se desplaza...?

	Nunca	Rara vez	A veces	A menudo	Siempre
Caminando	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bicicleta	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Auto	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transporte público	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15

¿Se siente seguro/a en Renca cuando está...?

	Sí	A veces	No
En parques	☐	☐	☐
Usando el transporte público	☐	☐	☐
En las calles	☐	☐	☐
En tiendas	☐	☐	☐

16

¿Qué es lo que más le gusta de Renca?

Nuevas Conexiones Llegan a Renca



17

¿Está al tanto de los siguientes proyectos de desarrollo en Renca?

	Nada familiar	Poco familiar	Algo familiar	Moderadamente familiar	Extremadamente familiar
1. Tren Santiago - Batuco	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Línea 7 del Metro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Ciclo vía La Chimba	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18

¿Qué opina sobre los cambios planificados?

	Muy satisfecho/a	Satisfecho/a	Ni satisfecho/a ni insatisfecho/a	Insatisfecho/a	Muy insatisfecho/a
1. Tren Santiago - Batuco	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Línea 7 del Metro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Ciclo vía La Chimba	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19

¿Tiene algún comentario adicional sobre los desarrollos planificados en Renca?

20

¿Cómo se siente respecto al futuro de Renca en general?

21

Este es el final de la encuesta. ¿Hay algo que le gustaría añadir?



Visiones de Renca

Visions of Renca

Urban Planning Studio

Spring 2025

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