

**Equitable Urban Development in Mexican Cities: Assessment and Implications of Interstitial Vacant Land**

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**Main land reserves in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara**



Source: *Proyecto de Plan de Ordenamiento de la Zona Conurbada de Guadalajara, 2000.*  
(Master Plan for the Conurbation of Guadalajara)

- Urbanized area
- Great open spaces
- Interstitial land reserves
- Peripheral land reserves
- Transition areas

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**Different types of vacant land**



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**Improving vacant land's knowledge by:**

1. Reviewing conceptual framework and definitions within institutional language
2. Agreement on common (or comparative) methodologies for data gathering and treatment
3. Associating qualitative variables (type of property, land's owners, land use allowed, time of vacancy, legal constraints...).
4. Defining criteria and parameters to qualify land use intensity
5. Transparency regarding vacant land information; enhance accountability on public land

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**Clearly establish the criteria supporting urban renovation programs (to qualify land use intensity):**

- Urban infrastructure and services available vs. population or activities in the area
- Zoning parameters: land use, construction densities and urban form
- Economic efficiency: best and high use
- Social inclusion / life quality

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**Urban vacant spaces: main analytic headlines**

- Spaces' physical characteristics / the surrounding urban area
- Land and real-estate market dynamics: cycles and trends
- Urban policies, land regulations and taxation
- Socio-cultural and political aspects: stakeholders and behavior expected.
- Urban growth and the environment: green spaces, air quality, urban boundaries, loss of agricultural land, etc.

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**Different development and assembly processes of city portions...**

- Central areas, old neighborhoods and historical cores
- Peripheral ancient towns
- Informal settlements
- State's low cost housing
- Medium and high income housing private production
- Industrial parks / zones / corridors
- Commercial centers / zones
- Grand equipments and main infrastructures

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**...leads to substantial differences in urban life quality...**

- Land consumption per person, land use patterns
- Uneven densities, open (public) spaces and urban form
- Phase of evolution of urban areas and time involved (consolidation, expansion, declining and revitalization)
- The availability of urban equipment and infrastructures; the provision of public services.
- Different priorities of urban policies

**...that should be taken into account to judge urban spaces vacancy**

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**Typological characterization of urban vacant spaces in Guadalajara.  
Basic analytical criteria:**

- **Physical characteristics and position within urban structure**
- **Legal constraints regarding property, use, construction, taxes, etc.**
- **Type of owner and ideology expected vis-à-vis property**
- **Specific urban development process of the surrounding area (to diagnose vacancy time)**

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**Typological characterization of urban vacant spaces in Guadalajara.  
Six principal types of vacant spaces**

1. Vacant plots and constructions under-utilized in historical centers
2. Vacant plots in housing urbanizations (for popular, medium and high income sectors)
3. Vacant terrains and constructions designated for industry, commerce, services. Possible sub-types depend on real-estate location: corridors, areas stated by zoning, enclaves (like industrial parks or commercial centers).
4. Vacant land resulting after subdivisions or urbanizations.
5. Interstitial land reserves (usually registered as rural)
6. Land not designated for urbanization or construction (because of ecological protection, environmental risks, public use...): latent vacancy.

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**Landowners profile in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara:**

- Individual private property*
- 1. Owners of single urban plots
  - 2. Owners of rural parcels in the periphery
  - 3. Medium and grand landowners: local bourgeoisie, entrepreneurs, politicians, speculators, swindlers, drug dealers
- Corporative private property*
- 4. Enterprises, real-estate or commercial societies (sometimes including foreign capitals)
  - 5. Corporations or enterprises related to financial sector (banks, investments' societies, international firms)
- Collective (social) property*
- 6. Ejidots and communities of peasants (or indigenous groups)
- Public property*
- 7. Diverse public institutions (federal, state or municipal government)

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**Vacant land policies should not disregard:**

- Various forms of speculation associated to local power groups
- Owners, users, investors, politicians, social groups, etc. reflect dissimilar values to urban vacant spaces.
- Contradictions between values implicit in: urban liberal paradigms, national laws defending property's social role and rigid local planning practices.

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