

# Urban Development in São Paulo

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Brazil Study Abroad, Spring 2018, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

## INTRODUCTION

During my stay in Brazil, I took an in depth look at the urban development issues and goals in the city of São Paulo. As the largest city and financial center of Brazil, there are many different aspects of urban development the metropolis needs to account for.

### Why I Chose This Topic:

I have always been interested in the characteristics of what makes a city unique. I have a great deal of knowledge regarding cities within the United States, but less of an understanding about international urban areas. This trip was the perfect opportunity to gain insight on one of the largest cities in the world.

### General Information About the City:

São Paulo was founded in 1554 and is named after Paul the Apostle. With 12.1 million people, São Paulo is the largest city in both the western and southern hemisphere. To put this in perspective, New York City has 8.5 million inhabitants, almost 4 million less than São Paulo. Most of the wealthy population lives near the city center. The further away from the city, typically the higher the poverty rate. This pattern is the opposite of what we see with most urban areas in the United States. The GDP of São Paulo is \$477 billion USD, which ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the world among cities. The GDP of São Paulo alone would be ranked 24<sup>th</sup> globally among countries. The city has seen rapid population growth, with an increase of almost 4 million people since 1980. Because of this, officials have the challenge of meeting the demands of an ever increasing population.

## Urban Planning Challenges

The urban sprawl of São Paulo extends horizontally. Because of this, many protected environmental areas have been affected or destroyed. Most of the extensive suburbs are low income areas with little to no infrastructure. High income communities are also starting to pop up in the suburbs. Because there are some wealthy people are leaving the city center, the best urbanized areas are seeing a decrease in population.

As the city continues to expand, owning a car becomes more and more important. This poses a problem for lower income individuals that cannot afford one. The district of República has 600 jobs for every 100 people. Areas of the far East Zone have only 8.

There are also zoning issues in the city. It is not uncommon to see luxurious high rises next to underdeveloped housing. We saw this issue in the Vila Madalena neighborhood. This is becoming more prevalent as gentrification is becoming increasingly common.

The city is seeing more buildings becoming vacant. With shacks along the railway being left behind, land that could be used for public transit is being wasted.

## São Paulo's Neighborhoods

**Jardins:** Mainly upper class neighborhood

**Vila Madalena:** Upper middle class neighborhood in Pinheiros district

**Liberdade:** Largest Japanese population outside Japan

**Vila Olímpia:** Home to offices of several multinational companies (Google, Unilever, Yahoo!...)

**Bixiga:** Known for being colonized by Italian immigrants

**Brooklin Novo:** One of the major financial centers of the city

**Interlagos:** Middle class neighborhood in south region

**Vila Zelina:** Home to most of the city's Eastern European immigrants

**Paraisópolis:** Second largest favela in São Paulo

**Heliópolis:** Largest slum population in the city



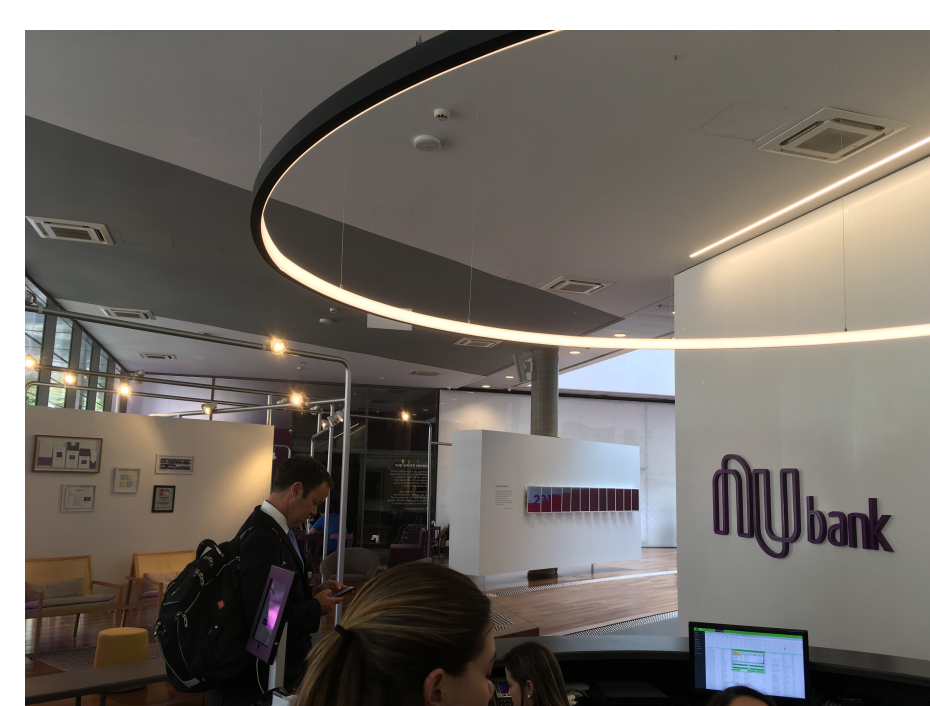
Jardins Neighborhood



Batman Alley in Pinheiros



Iconic Architecture on Paulista Ave.



Nubank Headquarters in Jardim Paulista

## Urban Development Goals

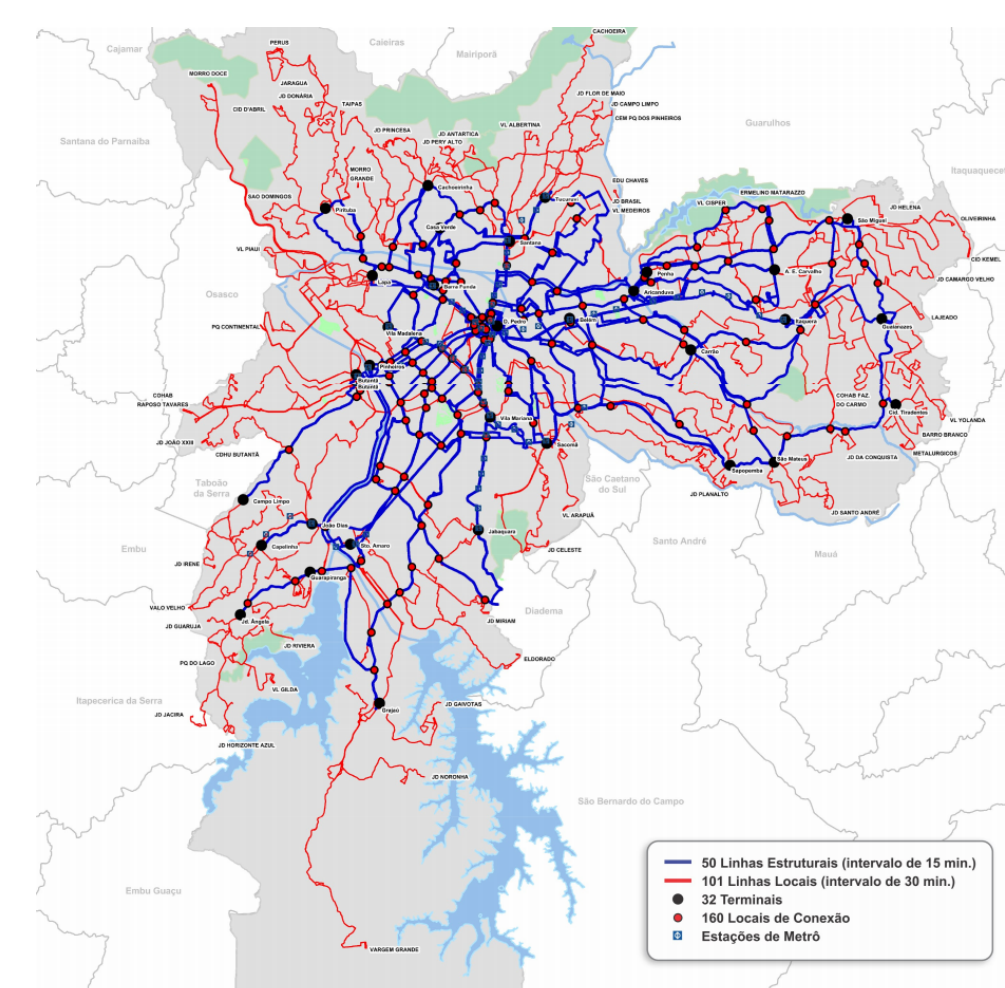
The Strategic Master Plan of the Municipality of São Paulo (PDE), approved in 2002, gave locals hope of progress. This plan addressed the issues of social function of property, right to housing, and recovery of real estate through public investment. At the time, it was considered to be one of the most advanced master plans implemented in Brazilian history. Implementation of the plan began in 2003 but was interrupted in 2005 because of a change in administration.

The PDE established goals to restructure the city. These goals were to address eight challenges facing the city. The challenges were:

1. to curb the horizontal expansion process of the city
2. reducing the need to commute by bringing the workplace closer to home
3. restructuring public transport and encouraging its use
4. rehabilitate and repopulate the metropolitan center and consolidated neighborhoods (with the goal of reducing population flight)
5. regularize, urbanize, and qualify irregular lots and slums located in the outlying areas
6. Create new centers and stimulate job growth in areas with few jobs
7. Curb construction increase and stimulate population growth in a consolidated area
8. Value and enhance public spaces and green areas

The new master plan, which was implemented in 2014, put more emphasis on reducing motorized transport and encouraging public transit. Although the plan addresses the issues of education, housing, health and the environment, the main focus is urban mobility. The new master plan is expected to dictate the city's urban development for the next 20 years.

The adoption of a progressive property tax in 2002 aimed to reduce urban inequality and segregation. This change led to higher taxes on more expensive properties and tax exemptions for less expensive properties.



São Paulo's new 24 hour bus map

## Images



High rises overlooking a favela



Traffic is a serious issue that the city suffers from

## The Impact of This Trip

My experience in Brazil soared above and beyond my expectations. This was no doubt one of the most memorable experiences of my life. I accomplished my goal of learning more about an international city, while also gaining exposure to a unique and fantastic culture. My growth from this experience will stay with me all my life. Shaped by the visits throughout the trip, my understanding of the Brazilian economy will have tremendous benefits. The first hand, real world experiences from this class resonated with me in a way that a traditional class would never be able to. I'm grateful to have had this opportunity and will always remember it.

## Sources

TheCityFix.com

SciElo.br

BBC Brasil