

Burgos Today

October 2007 scripts



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THE BOULEVARD AT THE RAIL CORRIDOR

Thanks Pria. It's official now, after months of cleverly-designed marketing strategies and hot public debate as to the project feasibility the long-awaited announcement was at long last made. We won't have to wait until 2020 or 2030. The redevelopment of the railway corridor which will be renamed the Boulevard might come about much much sooner.

You heard it. Mayor Juan Carlos Aparicio insists and wants to reassure everybody that the transformation of the area will kick off as soon as the re-routing of the railway is completed and the rails running through the city removed.

Many people gathered for the occasion. The money people from the Consortium, the bureaucratic side of the project, the Strategic Action Plan for Burgos Executive Committee, the media and of course Christine Biswanger escorted by her team of experts.

This hugely ambitious streetscape improvement project seeks to build a real sense of community along a rail corridor and revitalize the areas on either side by enhancing residential and retail activity.

However, we cannot ignore that this rail corridor has been the subject of vicious criticism because of the number of fatalities it can be blamed for. The last two, two 14-year-olds, still lingering on very vividly in our minds.

This very morning we wanted to see first-hand what it is like being at one off the black spots along the rail corridor, very soon turned into the Boulevard, the spot with the highest death toll.

We are at the barriers of the level-crossing at the spot where Madrid Street in the San Agustín area runs through the rail tracks. This is a particularly sensitive spot as it allows through more than 50 cars every five minutes and more than 40 pedestrians at busy times. Many of those who are walking through today will have the mayor's words in mind, the rails, these metal bars on which dozens of freight and passenger trains run every day, will be taken away from these people's everyday life some time in the near future.

We got clear implementation dates as everybody wants to make sure that the immensely challenging cost of the redevelopment is rightly grasped. We were told that this future landmark for Burgos city will materialize but inevitably in small chunks. The redevelopment of the area will be undertaken in stages, the most fortunate stretches or sections being the ones adjacent to the build-up areas as the tracks run

by within metres of the Human Evolution Complex, San Agustín area, by the old station that will be preserved because of its historic and emotional value.

But let's allow mayor Juan Carlos Aparicio to speak for himself.

Voice-over

Good afternoon and welcome. Thank you for coming today. Special thanks should be given to Christine Biswanger and her team of experts among whom we are privileged to have experts in landscaping, that's Ana, in design of street furniture, mobility and transport, which are the areas that will be discussed today.

A project of great magnitude. Over 11 km of rails will be affected, so it would be a project that would rank among the most iconic projects such as la Castellana in Madrid. It is also a project of great financial magnitude. It will run into 95 million euro. At this stage, we have to bear very much in mind that some budgeted items for public transport which had not been included initially as it's been only today that we've learned specific details as to how that public transport will effectively materialize.

This is just a proposal. I need to be quite clear about this. It's a proposal as opposed to an agreed action. Some other elements on the street furniture front might also be subject to reshaping so that there's deeper blending with local features.

But as you could well do with a change of spokesperson please welcome Christine Binswanger and her team. They will outline the core elements within the project so that we realize the magnitude and impact they are bound to have.

(The presentation by C.Biswanger has not been transcribed)