

TRANSPORTATION AS A SOURCE OF REVITALIZATION

It wasn't until the decade of the 1960's that Puerto Rico started to grow in its vast ways. From that time the island discovered the great advantages that highways and roads of massive transportation bring to a nation, from easier ways to get to our job to improving the economy of a country. But although a new area of transportation began one was left behind. The train, which consisted on one of the most important ways of transportation on the island was destroyed and forgotten. Since then a numerous quantity of expansions have been made around highways, transforming the urban core into barren regions. Economy and people started to move from the center of the cities to its surroundings. Mega-stores destroyed small businesses and people abandoned the city to find more privacy and bigger spaces to live. This caused an enormous growth on highway construction and people became dependent of the car. The situation became so serious that the government decided to take action and develop new ways of transportation. They implemented a system of buses on one of the most affected zones: the metropolitan area. But the quantity of vehicles grew so much that they decided to go to their old ways and construct a train to attract a small percent of drivers, but big enough to minimize the traffic congestions and try to revitalize the urban core.

This is why I'm interested in participating in this program, specially on the topic of " Strategies for future developments on areas nearby the stations of Tren Urbano ". I believe that Tren Urbano and ATI can make a difference on the actual lifestyle of the urban centers and in some way change our society and environment for better. Also this program will help me to have more experience on my concentration and be more efficient on future jobs.

My main motivation for this topic is my interest on the areas of transportation and environmental engineering. Both become very important topics at the time of design of Tren Urbano and ATI. In some way one complements the other. The implementation of transportation systems like Tren Urbano makes a country improve in great ways to more technological and safer ways of transportation and at the same time reduce the contamination by lowering the amount of cars driven per day.

Some previous skills and job experiences that I have and are very helpful for this program are, the analysis and design of the PR-22 highway and analysis and conversion of PR-2 to an express as a requirement of the course of transportation engineering. In this project I learned all the factors related on the process of constructing a source of transportation, from the economical effects of expropriation of land and small businesses to the environmental impact of construction. This project also helped me to improved my skills in team work. Also my job experiences on the environmental laboratory of the department of civil engineering at RUM have helped me understand the different characteristics of the variety of soils in Puerto Rico witch is a very important factor at the time of constructing a road or train. It has also helped me improved my skills on data recovery and analysis and design of engineering problems. But one of the most important learning experiences that I had was the redaction of a research paper, “ Sprawl vs. Smart Growth ” witch basically analyzed the same topic that I’m interested in working. In this paper I analyzed how urban centers can be revitalized threw the implementation of a diversity of transportation methods, from very complex methods like trains to very easy methods like bicycles. The paper discusses a variety of topics all related to the revitalization or urban centers. Threw the knowledge that I acquire from

this work I can say that the implementation of subways, buses, taxis and other sources of transportation can only have a positive effect on a society and a country.

I think that implementing systems like Tren Urbano to our society helps us improve in many ways, but I still think that we could do so much more by exploiting all the benefits that systems like this give to us. It is necessary to bring the economy and people back to urban centers so people will regain the confidence on this areas. This can be done by creating urban centers with a variety of small businesses, schools, housing areas, parking areas, all of them at walking distances so that people will lose their dependency on the automobile and become more comfortable with sources of mass transportation of people like Tren Urbano and AMA. I believe that my knowledge and experience will be very helpful on this program as well as the program will give me a numerous quantity of skills that will help me to become a better professional.