THE OFFICIAL URBANIZATION PLAN FOR THE CITY OF SANTIAGO FROM 1939:

COMMON TRACES BETWEEN THE MODERN CITY AND THE PRECEDING CITY
By drawing the limits between public and private, the architectural definition of the city through a plan generates precise ways of common life (unlike a master plan which only defines general conditions). Through an in-depth reading of Brunner’s *Official Plan of 1939*, this article analyses a proposal that, through lines that defined blocks’ and streets’ form –the common space–, managed to establish a new idea of urbanity for Santiago.

**Keywords** - Brunner, urbanism, drawing, street, block

The *Plano Oficial de Urbanización de la Comuna de Santiago* ([Official Urbanization Plan for the City of Santiago]) from 1939 is the first transformative plan that was implemented and approved by the city and remained in effect for fifty years (fig. 1). On the horizon of modernization in the capital, the plan centered its attention on a rational approach to the grid by opening streets and new plazas, subdividing blocks and introducing green space, and new developments in the peripheries. In the urban historiography of this plan and its precedents, it is worth noting the contributions of Andreas Hofer (2003) who complemented the important work done by academics of the Urbanism Department of the Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo of the Universidad de Chile among which the studies of Alberto Gurovich stand out, who framed them in a cultural context associated with the figure of Brunner, and the plan by María Isabel Pavez specifically its application in the current municipality of Independencia (Pavez, 2009-2010). This text studies the plan from the Official Plan as a primary source, i.e. in the specificity of its representation allowing us to distinguish the effective role that Karl Brunner played in the process.

**A COMMON PLAN**

As a single image of a new order and organizational logic for a modern city, the *Official Urbanization Plan for the City of Santiago* was not the

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1 This article forms part of the FONDECYT project n°1140882 “Santiago 1939. The idea of ‘the modern city’ of Karl Brunner and the Official Urbanization Plan for the City of Santiago in its 50 years in effect” by the researchers José Rosas, Wren Strabucchi, Germán Hidalgo, Pedro Bannen. 2014-2017. José Rosas appreciates the support of the Center for Sustainable Urban Development, Cedeus, through the CONICYT/FONDEF program n°15110020.

2 In this regard, see Revista De Arquitectura 8 (1996). Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the Universidad de Chile. Special edition in tribute to Karl Heinrich Brunner.
result of an extraordinary act. It was part of a collective effort that grew as a consequence of a group of longstanding circumstances and facts among which the previous urban conditions were fundamental to the understanding of the proposed change. This requires going back to Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna’s transformative initiative towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century from which the process of modernization was initiated and later crystallized in the Official Plan. Likewise a series of laws, ordinances and regulatory provisions that addressed urban space improvement were essential; also a set of public works and previous works to provide road infrastructure and service networks appropriate to the phase of metropolization, and also the Transformation Plans (Hidalgo y Camus, 2007; De Ramón, 2011; Almandoz, 2013) from the beginning of the twentieth century that advocated for the vision of a great city, or at least an updated city. Even the same ambiguity over the authorship of this plan and the diversity of participants of this process –led by a committee in 1929, continued by Brunner in 1934, incorporated by Muñoz Maluschka in the Greater Santiago Regulatory Plan of 1936, and concluded by a municipal official like Roberto Humeres in 1939– describes the formation and institutionalization of capacities that make a project like this possible and highlight the complexity of this transformation.

This continuity of efforts from various authors, offices, teams, technical organisms, and laws throughout this period of urban modernization allows us to clarify the story—until now fairly unknown—behind the Official Plan of 1939 and place it within the complex context that shaped it.

The proposal contained in this plan should be understood within the conceptual and instrumental context of the creation of a new urban landscape of the modern city from the first quarter of the twentieth century. However, its application should be read with a different emphasis compared to other large plans recorded in the region (Hofer, 2003) in the favorable context of typological expectations offered by the geometry of the existing urban fabric, and where the recorded land division and building are another layer of the project. The Viennese urbanist himself points out some ideas that guide Santiago’s transformation from the preceding traces: the consideration of historical city plans and the detailed, individual study of all the constituent parts; the maintenance of important buildings characteristic of the neighborhoods within the area; the understanding of a ‘modern city’ project from the regulation and adjustment of the existing urban area; and the strong conviction that the changes should not come from the presentation of a new, ideal project (Brunner, 1932). In this context, no form was better suited to the changes and operations of the proposed urban project than organizing by blocks, which for almost four centuries had been the basis for urbanizing the territory and whose urban fabric had been adaptable to different types of occupation, more so if the grid had already been consolidated through the layout and installation of a modern water and plumbing system that followed the orthogonal principles of the foundational urban fabric (Pérez et al, 2005).

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3 The Official Urbanization Plan for the City of Santiago of 1939 is derived from a scientific and pragmatic conception of the modern urbanism of the Städtebau, of which Brunner shared its focus with the objective of transforming the existing city from the city block as a compositional unit. In Latin American urbanism, the modernization of the urban grid through the reconfiguration of the city block was a strategy used in other proposals, among which those of Hegemann, Forestier, Agache, and Rotival stand out. This approach was even recorded in proposals closer to the CIAM’s urban planning. In this context, we must mention the Plan Director by Le Corbusier with Jorge Ferrari Hardoy and Juan Kurchan in 1937 that— as pointed out by Liernur and Pschepiurca—advocated similar principles: a molecular transformation from the cities with a grid and orthogonal fabric, a new block superimposed over the existing grid and recasting the urban center through urban condensation. See Liernur and Pschepiurca (2008), Gutman and Hardoy (2007) and Torrent (1995). This notion of an ‘inward’ growth model in the grid is complemented by the conference “The future of past metamorphosis: Le Corbusier’s plan for Buenos Aires” given by Ana María Rigotti in the Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Studies of the PUC on August 20, 2014, where she addresses the regeneration of the Buenos Aires’ grid and the reinterpretation of the city blocks through superblocks. With regards to the form in which this approach is formalized in the transformation plan for Santiago in 1939, and how it was characterized in the historiography, see Almandoz (2013).

4 The authors of this article have developed studies over these materials in successive FONDECYT projects in collaboration with the Ilustre Municipalidad de Santiago.

5 In this article we refer to this work by its cover title Santiago La Ciudad Moderna.
Indeed, the regular continuity of the urban layout of Santiago, organized by the street and block, along with highlighting these elements’ values of permanence and adaptation to change, reveal the common condition that this morphological pattern has had on the materialization of the city in different periods of history. With the Official Plan of 1939 driven by Brunner, despite new determining political and technical circumstances and the principles that reformulated the order of the urban fabric from the street in the block, one might say that by simply starting with these elements they are revealed and hierarchically organized.

All of this allows us to propose that both the outlines of the existing city as well as the readings of a modern city project come to establish a common plan, in which a plan (idea) is superimposed over a plan (drawing) on which the future suburbs would be added on.

**THE OFFICIAL PLAN OF 1939 AND KARL BRUNNER**

It is impossible to understand the Official Plan of 1939 without Karl Brunner. But neither can one completely attribute it to his authorship as it is later executed and approved by the architect, Roberto Humeres (De Ramón, 2011). That is, without being oblivious to the influences of the Viennese urbanist, the Official Plan of 1939 has its own autonomy.

As it is known, Brunner visited the city of Santiago on two occasions. The first between the end of 1929 and the beginning of 1932 to assume the general study of the capital city – commissioned by the national government– and to give an Urbanism Seminar in the School of Architecture at the Universidad de Chile. The second during the last months of 1934 to leave the fundamental guidelines established for the urban plan for the municipality of Santiago, a commission appointed by the municipal government. On the first visit he recorded his thoughts in the text, *Santiago La Ciudad Moderna*, published at the moment of his departure. On the second, the guidelines for the capital city were laid out in his survey study for the city plan echoed in the *Manual de Urbanismo* (Brunner, 1939), a key text written in Bogotá. One must note that in the book, *Santiago La Ciudad Moderna*, Brunner on many occasions uses the word ‘modern,’ in an attempt to characterize the future work of the urbanists over the city plan. Summarizing, his approach can be understood in two ways: as a long-term transformation process and as a scientific application of the new discipline of urbanism (Brunner, 1932).

There is a single underlying intention in all of his writings, proposals, and projects: the will to give Santiago the conditions to assume a new urban state from its original condition, to become a modern city. That is, a plan for a new scale and size according to the new urban moment and future population growth. These were not large transformations or radical denials of past phases for building this new city, but the intelligent, pragmatic, exhaustive work on understanding the existing conditions and their possibilities for change.

**THE 1934 ZONING PLAN PROJECT FOR SANTIAGO BY KARL BRUNNER**

The Zoning Plan Project for Santiago of 1934, as named by Karl Brunner, can be considered as the first draft of the Official Plan of 1939. It is very important to make this distinction and separate the two of them, understanding them as independent incidents. But it is also pertinent to

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6. In addition: “Brunner’s first trip is triggered by the earthquake in Talca in 1928, the outcome of 1939 is the result of another earthquake earlier that year that devastated the cities of Chillán and Concepción, somewhat south of the Chilean central valley.” “Brunner’s second visit to the country, much shorter than the previous visit, occurred in 1934 and pertained to the commission of elaborating the Urban Dossier for the Master plan for the municipality of Santiago, work continued by the architect, Roberto Humeres, collaborator and promoter of the master’s ideas. This achieved the definitive approval of Brunner’s work in 1939 under the threat of Le Corbusier’s imminent visit to take on a new plan for the same city of Santiago” (Bannen, 2015).

7. “The contract between the Municipality of Santiago and Karl Brunner in which the official commission of the "Proyecto del Plano Regulator" was outlined was published in the Municipal Bulletin of the City of Santiago n°2.686 September 28, 1934, Year x, pages 3059-3060.”
note their continuities and divergences and consider the similarities with the plan by Luis Muñoz Maluschka for the Project for Greater Santiago of 1936.8

The Zoning Plan Project for Santiago of 1934 is a little known document, and as such its role has not been recognized throughout this process. In fact we know of it only from periodical publications from the time outlining its main features.9

First, we must recognize that this project rests on the city studies made by Brunner during his first trip to Chile, where he first experienced the city from a variety of perspectives: as a passerby and a sensitive, cultured foreigner; as an aviator and photographer who produced the first aerial images of the capital;10 and as a professional urbanist specializing in these matters. That first experience in the city can be considered as a counterpoint to his later behavior when just four months later he had to carry out and concretize an important proposal capable of driving the urban transformation of the capital. On the second occasion he applied –for the first time in Chile– a disciplined, systematic method and recognized that the project of the future city can and must be organized around its main structural dimensions: road network, business center, residential zones, green areas, industrial sector and others.

The Zoning Plan Project prepared by Brunner in 1934 is specifically limited to the municipality of Santiago. This project was preceded by preliminary and complementary studies whose precedents are worth noting: “a plan that graphically indicated the traffic census, a building categories plan, a green area plan, a population density plan and one of industrial locations” (Prat, 1935:23), among other aspects. This first draft of the municipality of Santiago was integrated by Muñoz Maluschka in the inter-communal project for Santiago in 1936 (Pavez, 2003).

According to Alfredo Prat, the Zoning Plan Project “is a deep study of the current characteristics and problems of the city” (Prat, 1935:23). Prat served as a collaborator for Karl Brunner in the Zoning Plan for Santiago proposal, and after Brunner’s departure, he continued to collaborate for the Municipality of Santiago with the architect, Roberto Humeres, who was in charge of the definitive concretion of the Official Plan that was finally approved in 1939 (Pavez, 1996: 44).

It was in relation to the preliminary studies mentioned previously that Brunner proposed different urban projects. They were maintained in the 1939 Official Plan proposal and could be classified in three categories: urban projects of a metropolitan hierarchy like the Central avenue (Bulnes avenue today); the Diagonal located on the corner of the Alameda and Carmen (the current Diagonal Paraguay) (Prat, 1935);11 urban projects of a local scale –downtown or on the outskirts– like the residential area defined by the Alameda, Brasil, Amunátegui and Catedral avenues (Brunner, 1939);12 and strategic interventions that connect and support the future development of the city towards the new residential suburbs like the development located behind the Cementerio General, the Diagonal Ochagavía, and the Diagonal Oriente to Macul.13

In sum, the Master Plan of Santiago of 1934 was characterized by the representation of large interventions or projects that have metropolitan scale effects. In fact, the study for a residential neighborhood project close to downtown, later reflected in the 1:1000 scale drawing of sector 5 and published as an example in the Manual de Urbanismo [Urbanism Manual], established the basis for a reasoned block subdivision, considering its interior plazas and new streets, being partly implemented in the Official Plan of 1939 (Brunner, 1939).

The 1934 plan, unlike the Official Plan of 1939, incorporated the municipalities of Providencia and Ñuñoa, demonstrating the role of the suburban projects as articulators between the consolidated city and its future

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8 The plan was published in María Isabel Pavez R., En la ruta de Juan Parroquia. Premio Nacional de Urbanismo. Chile. 1996 (Santiago: Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, Universidad de Chile, 2003), 169.
9 One of the most comprehensive reviews was found in the article written by Alfredo Prat Echaurren titled “The Master Plan of Santiago” (Prat, 1935).
10 Several of these photographs were published in the book, Santiago de Chile. Su estado actual y futura formación (Brunner, 1932).
11 The group of projects noted is much larger.
12 This project study for the residential neighborhood was published by Brunner in his Manual de Urbanismo, Volume 11, page 11 (Brunner, 1939).
13 Today, built in part over the current Santa Isabel street, between Miguel Claro and Manuel Montt.
expansion. In relation to both plans, there are other differences in specific projects like, for example, the omission of the diagonal in the southeast sector of the Alameda in the 1934 plan.

From this, it can be said that the different scales of thinking and intervention are interwoven in a series of proposals and projects to provide quality urban responses for everyday life. Thus, the city is understood as the most democratic expression of a society and the treatment of its body as “a single synthetic organism” (Brunner, 1932:83). However, in fact, this first draft of the greater Santiago of the future was only partially received.

THE PRIMARY SOURCE

The Official Plan of 1939 consists of a series of maps composed by a general plan at 1:5000 scale\(^{14}\) and 50 sheets of details at 1:1000 scale\(^{15}\) corresponding to the 51 sectors in which the municipality of Santiago was divided. There is an accompanying index plan that shows these sectors as a whole. Moreover, the set of plans is accompanied by a regulatory text: the Local Building Ordinance for the City of Santiago approved with the Official Plan that same year.\(^{16}\) The set of plans with the corresponding ordinance can be considered as a representative synthesis of a modern project. It was also the first time that a proposal was presented with this degree of detail and clarity in its operations, being approved as a single indivisible whole.

The plan, at 1:5000 scale, synthetically and accurately incorporates the lines of intervention over the existing city and is characterized by showing the limits of the municipality of Santiago with the adjacent municipalities.\(^{17}\)

The document we have used as a source is a photocopy, possibly taken from a reproduction of the original\(^{18}\) – drawn in black and white and whose location today is unknown – (fig. 2). The photocopy is blurred and difficult to read and belongs to the archives of the Department of Works of the Ilustre Municipalidad de Santiago.\(^{19}\)

As indicated in the legend, the plan represents the following elements with three types of lines (Rosas et al, 2015): existing streets, proposed streets, new gardens, streets designed in the interior of the blocks, and city limits. The plan contains the totality of the municipality of Santiago, considering all the streets that connect it to the greater metropolis, incorporating those that continue to the neighboring municipalities with the exception of Providencia and Ñuñoa. The plan incorporates the San Cristóbal, Blanco and Santa Lucía hills as well as the outlines of the Cousiño, Quinta Normal, Forestal, Hipódromo Chile and Club Hípico parks.

Looking at the plan, it can be said that this form of representation accentuates or gives hierarchy to the project allowing one to distinguish the interventions in sharp detail. In effect, the designed parts were drawn with a more intense line while the existing city is represented with a weaker line. That is, the arrangement of lines with different codes and intensities over the urban fabric and subdivision’s footprints recorded in the grid seek to establish a clear understanding of the operation of the project on the different parts of the city.

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\(^{14}\) Two separate pieces, 149 × 195 cm each.

\(^{15}\) The sizes of the sheets vary between 66 × 85 cm and 122 × 2280 cm.

\(^{16}\) It is possible that this series of maps has been larger, but this has not yet been determined.

\(^{17}\) In the context of the Fondecyt n°1141084 “Santiago 1939. La idea de ‘ciudad moderna’ de Karl Brunner y el Plano Oficial de Urbanización de Santiago en sus 50 años de vigencia” of the researchers, José Rosas, Wren Strabucchi, Germán Hidalgo, Pedro Bannen, this plan has been assembled and digitally transcribed to permit a complete reading. As a general idea, in the rescue and preservation of these materials and documents the following criteria have been adopted: 1. Prioritize the detail of the information contained in the 1:1000 plan over a reissue of the 1:5000 plan over new street widths and new block forms (official and building lines). 2. Incorporate the topographical context, the large green areas and the extramural context of the 1:5000 plan that are not present in the sheets at 1:1000 scale. 3. Incorporate the regulatory text that complemented the poucs of 1939 to one side of the plan. 4. It was decided to represent the plan through a line drawing according to a black and white nomenclature, bypassing the use of the color in the original plan at 1:1000 scale (red, brown, and green).

\(^{18}\) It is possible that the reproduction has been an interpretation or, directly, was an original drawn on an organic-based paper.

\(^{19}\) This documentation has been provided to use as part of a collaboration agreement with the team of professionals from the Department of Works of the Ilustre Municipalidad de Santiago composed of Miguel Saavedra, Gustavo Carrasco and Ignacio Corvalán, to whom we extend our thanks for their continued collaboration. Moreover, we know that a similar photocopy exists in the archives of the Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo of the Universidad de Chile. In fact, this version of the Official Plan is that one most published in articles and texts.
On the other hand, the 59-sheet set represented at 1:1000 scale, with a symbology based only on three lines (continuous, dashed, and dash-dot) show the superimposition of the project and the consolidated city in detail and by area (fig. 3). This series of sheets is characterized by the accuracy of its measurements with the definition of the outlines of blocks and streets as its main goal. These 59 sheets address 51 sectors which are completely framed within the corresponding sheet.

The original way to present this information, considering the three, black and white linetypes permits a simultaneous reading between the project guidelines and the existing city lines, which allows us to observe the transformation, materialization and configuration of the new order on every street and block.

**The Official Plan and the Transformation Plans of Santiago**

The Official Plan of 1939 can also be understood as a moment where the convergence of different technical instruments was allowed, thus putting the rigorous drawing records of Santiago that had been previously made into play. In effect, in propositional terms the Official Plan was able to activate some records of the preexisting city. On one hand, we refer to the survey by Alejandro Bertrand in 1890 as a base plan for recording the state of the streets at the time, and the project that incorporated the infrastructure networks of basic urban services; and, on the other hand, the block record of 1910 done by the municipality itself with similar purposes but on its extension to the private domain. Both instruments coincided as

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20 A single copy of these sheets has been conserved although the series is not complete. There are five missing.

21 A fact that deserves to be mentioned is that these fotocopies were colored. Without an explanatory legend and assuming an equivalence with the 1:5000 scale plan, a similar symbology has been assumed: in brown, official existing line; in red, the proposed official line; and with green, the front and back yards.
fundamental data in the elaboration of the Official Plan of 1939.\footnote{We know that Brunner occupied the sheets of the block survey of 1910 and the Alejandro Bertrand’s street survey in the 1934 plan, because part of this work was published in his Manual de Urbanismo (Brunner, 1939).} Without a doubt, Karl Brunner must have had knowledge of these materials since from the beginning they were intensely utilized by municipal management in their
activities. By using these instruments the urbanist could fully understand the form and conditions of the existing city; but even more interesting is that they offered him two clear categories from which he could systematically consider the modern city: the reformulation of the existing streets and blocks (Figs. 4, 5).

Therefore, Brunner’s First Draft in 1934 and the definitive Official Plan of 1939 were conceived through the manipulation of these elements and installing on them a new idea of urbanity embedded in the general morphological order. Brunner treated the blocks and streets as the elements from which to create the image, identity and order of the city’s urban fabric. The modern city project introduced a wide variety of formal cross-ordination solutions for the sections of the road network. The preferred operation was the penetration of the block and the singling out
the main roadways—in which the widths, perimeters, and building folds vary—and certain accents in the intersections or squares.

Brunner’s proposal in the interior residential area attempted to make a more efficient use of the existing blocks’ area, taking advantage of the lot interiors, and creating areas for parking with central widenings in the form of interior plazas to satisfy the new demands of the modern residence. Thus, the operation over the streets of the existing grid through widening, diagonal lines, and the inclusion of interior alleys within the block became the resources for generating the image of a modern city. In the downtown he proposed a dense building area, following the trend of some blocks that had interior streets, corridors, and galleries, selecting a set of main arteries and avoiding widespread street widening.

The majority of the interventions proposed in the Official Plan recognized in the First Draft of 1934 the principles of street transformation which were
formalized in expansions and new alignments according to a spatial sequence composed of road medians and centered around facade and height continuity, with recognizable intersections and corners. All these operations tended to build a new urban morphology of elongated or rectangular blocks, with a new building typology and a high number of stories, including natural light in the center, and creating the possibility of a new vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the existing road network. As is known, the passages are interior, shorter streets practically the length of the block it penetrates and whose objective is to facilitate a smaller subdivision of land.

In this context, Bertrand’s survey was key to understanding and designing the possible configuration of the new streets – as the public space par excellence – as it was the base for the street widening and new alignment. Similarly, the block survey of 1910 was fundamental for exploring their possible partitions and generating a new kind of public space in their interiors because the property subdivision was part of the essential data.

THE OFFICIAL PLAN AND THE PUBLISHED PLAN
The 1:5000 scale plan in a fold out format that accompanies this issue is an unprecedented construction. We affirm that it is a construction because it is based on the transcription and assembly of the 59 sheets at 1:1000 scale. And it is unprecedented because they have never been published.

The decision to emphasize the proposed blocks in light gray helps to maintain an independent reading of the represented elements. Its condition of construction is due, as such, to the incorporation of dissimilar information coming from the sheets at 1:1000 and from the 1:5000 scale plan. From the later comes the extracomunal area, the residential suburbs, the geographical elements and the public spaces that are not present in the 1:1000 sheets.

The differences between the official plan at 1:5000 scale and the recomposed plan enclosed are minimal. If the former has a degree of schematicism that allow its reading, the second is dependent on the narrowest relationship established between the order of the streets and city blocks (Rosas et al, 2015).

Respecting the representation of the 1:1000 sheets based on of the three aforementioned linetypes means that their assembly at the 1:5000 scale makes the relationship between the existing city and the projected modern city even more evident.

The plan drawing is where the ideas of modern city construction are synthesized, and where the provisions laid out in his Manual de Urbanismo are implemented to achieve “a unified image of a new order and organizing logic of the city” (Brunner, 1939).

For all this, the plan published here can be read from both the order of the street as well as from the order of the blocks, to confirm that it is the point of contact between these two where Brunner’s proposal for Santiago can be debated.

23 This format can be folded out as a wall plan or studied with the proximity permitted by the individual drawings.
24 The 1:5000 plan, on the contrary, has been published many times albeit in greatly reduced images that impede the clear understanding represented here.
25 This construction is only possible since we have digital imaging systems that allow such montages.
26 However, the first does not propose the front yard that in the 1:1000 drawings are extensive in different parts of the city. It is mainly an operation that characterizes the peripheral areas of the central municipality that, in part, exemplifies the aforementioned.
27 For more on the change from a logic of city blocks to that of a radiocentric city (streets) in Santiago see Pérez and Rosas (2012).
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LECTURAS 93 READINGS

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