



# ACILIA

## PLACEMAKING IN THE PERIPHERY

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# Abstract

Acilia is a *frazione* (a territorial subdivision of a comune) that lies between Rome's historical center and Ostia, and is part of the Comune di Roma. A relatively young neighborhood that was incorporated in 1916, its history has been marked by informal development surrounding the main commercial district along Via di Acilia. Because of its large size, a focus area was identified for its unique features and importance to the community. This focus area, the enlarged *borgo* (a settlement outside city walls) of South Central Acilia, is the site of this report's investigation. Through the use of street surveys, statistical and demographic data analysis, and both informal and formal interviews, we determined the three priority themes for our project: identity, connectivity, and functionality. Using these as guiding themes, we aspire to present a vision that makes living and working in Acilia a more pleasant and social experience that takes advantage of the neighborhood's dynamic history and unique location. Street surveys assisted us in the formulation of maps detailing figure-grounds for buildings and streets, building typology, street hierarchy, lost space, and green space, among others. Demographic data was obtained from The National Institute for Statistics, and revealed similarities and differences between Acilia and Rome. Meanwhile, a combination of informal and formal interviews gave personal and first-hand accounts of life in Acilia from the perspective of those who live there.



# Table of Contents

1. History	7	7. Public Space	47
1.1 Background		7.1 Activity Centers	
1.2 Historical Progression		7.2 Public Spaces	
1.3 Historical Comparisons		7.3 Green Spaces	
		7.4 Lost Spaces	
		7.5 Summary	
2. Methodology	12	8. Citizens Perspective	57
2.1 Focus Area		8.1 Interviews	
2.2 Demographic Data		8.2 Mapping	
2.3 Street Survey		8.3 Summary	
2.4 Mapping & Interviews			
3. Statistics	17	9. SWOT	63
3.1 Age & Gender		9.1 Strengths	
3.2 Population		9.2 Weaknesses	
3.3 Housing & Residences		9.3 Opportunities	
3.4 Immigration		9.4 Threats	
3.5 Employment & Education			
3.6 Summary		10. Design Framework	67
4. Buildings	23	10.1 Vision Statement	
4.1 Buildings Figure-Ground		10.2 Design Guidelines	
4.2 Buildings Typology		10.3 Design Framework	
4.3 Building Height		10.4 Methodology	
4.4 Summary		10.5 Design Masterplan	
5. Streets & Infrastructure	31	11. Design Proposals	75
5.1 Streets Figure-Ground		11.1 Stazione Acilia	
5.2 Street Hierarchy		11.2 Bottleneck Gateway	
5.3 Pedestrian Navigation		11.3 Piazza San Leonardo	
5.4 Sidewalk Width		11.4 OVS Square	
5.5 Connectivity		11.5 Vacant Lot	
5.6 Public Transit			
5.7 Traffic Intensity		12. Policy Proposal	91
5.8 Parking			
5.9 Waste Disposal		13. Conclusions	95
5.10 Summary		13.1 Conclusions	
		13.2 Acknowledgments	
6. Land Use	43	Works Cited	
6.1 Land Use		Mapping Resources	
6.2 Private Space		Figures, Cover Photo, & Icon Credits	
6.3 Summary		Appendices	



# HISTORY



Acilia's development is the result of a history of Fascism and political struggle, with the poor and working-class sidelined from accessing the 'right to the city'.

# 1.1 Background

Formerly known as Monti di San Paolo, Acilia took its current name after Acilii Glabrones, a member of the ancient aristocratic family that historically owned a large agricultural estate in the area on which the town rests today. Acilia's land was originally marshy and affected by malaria, which was addressed in the 1920s in order to prepare the land for development. During the World War I era, Acilia became officially recognized by the City of Rome, signaling the beginning of its development. In a strategic location that connects Rome and Ostia, the first buildings of Borgo Acilia (now known as South Central Acilia) were constructed and, by 1921, the area had approximately 180 residents.

In order to construct the Vittorio Emanuele II monument, the City of Rome relocated residents from what is now the Piazza Venezia area to Acilia in 1924 (Painter, 2005). Acilia was the first area outside the city walls to which residents were relocated by the Fascist regime making it the first Roman development classified as a *borgata*. This term characterizes the peripheral towns in the Agro-Romano that are neither the city nor the countryside (Berlinguer, 1976). Acilia's development throughout the 1920s and 1930s was bolstered by the construction of the Via del Mare and the Roma-Lido train, which made the critical connection between Rome and Ostia. The construction of the elementary school and consecration of Parrocchia San Leonardo Da Porto Maurizio (Church of San Leonardo) also occurred during this period, both of which remain important features of the town. As Acilia became more developed, the triangular pattern of Acilia Sud and the grid pattern of Acilia Nord also became more distinct. In the late 1930s, the official plan for Acilia was drafted featuring the *Casette Pater*, single floor duplex homes rented to families displaced by Fascist demolition in the historic Roman core (Comitato di Quartiere Acilia Centro Sud). On April 21, 1940, Acilia was inaugurated by Mussolini and promoted in Fascist propaganda, such as *La Città di Mussolini*. Borgo Acilia and Acilia Nord were not connected until the late 1980s when a single bridge was built over the railways.

There is significantly less information on Acilia's modern development, and our interpretation is that it is indicative of Acilia's fragmented development, in spite of its rich history and function within the region. Today, Acilia continues to be characterized by a low-density, mixed-use development pattern.



# 1.2 Historical Progression

**1910**

Law 941 of the Ernesto Nathan municipal administration in Rome identifies Acilia for rural development, alongside 3 other sites.

**1924**

Acilia becomes Rome's first borgata.

**1928**

Via del Mare highway between Rome and Ostia opens.

**1936**

Triangular grid pattern evident in Acilia Sud. Rectangular grid pattern in Acilia Nord.

**November 7th, 1936**

Church of San Leonardo di Porto Maurizio consecrated.



**April 21, 1940**



Mussolini inaugurates 'New Acilia'.

**2000s**

Acilia station rebuilt for the Roma-Lido train.



**1912**

Township established.

**1916**

Borgo Acilia (Acilia Sud) is constructed over 36 hectares, featuring 12 farmsteads.

**1929**

Elementary school opens.



**1939**

Fascist Plan for Acilia drafted.

**1940**

Casette Pater constructed in Acilia Nord.



**1988**

Bridge built between Borgo Acilia & Acilia Nord over the railway.

**2012**

Piazza in front of Acilia train station built.



# 1.3 Historical Comparisons



1950



2016



1950



2016



1961



2016



1961



2016

# METHODOLOGY



This study deployed a series of spatial and inventory analysis mechanisms to study South Central Acilia, including demographic data, street surveys, and interviews. To ensure a comprehensive field study, we conducted weekly to biweekly visits for data collection.

# 2.1 Focus Area

## Identifying a Focus Area

Acilia is the second largest *frazione* in Rome, just after Ostia (Comune di Roma, 2008). As such, we chose to study a small focus area for the following reasons:

1. It is contained within Acilia's original planned infrastructure, including the original triangular grid and street plan for Via di Acilia.
2. It contains Acilia's train station, and its parking lot. This parking lot is considered a location for intervention.
3. It contains the key community area of the Parrocchia San Leonardo Da Porto Maurizio and its front-facing park.
4. It contains the key commercial district along Via di Acilia.
5. It contains an open space area that has a possibility for urban development.

## Administrative Hierarchy



## Regional Context

Acilia is located within the Lazio region in Italy, the second most populated region in the country with a land area of 44,641 square kilometers and nearly 5.9 million people.

## Metropolitan Context

Acilia is located within the tenth administrative district of comune Roma Capitale (Municipio X), which formed in 2013 after replacing Municipio XIII. Municipio X has a population of about 229,267 and is divided into 10 urban areas: Malafede, Acilia Nord (Acilia North), Acilia Sud (Acilia South), Casal Palocco, Ostia Antica, Ostia Nord (Ostia North), Ostia Sud (Ostia South), Castel Fusano, Infernetto, and Castel Porziano. Acilia is 16 km away from central Rome.

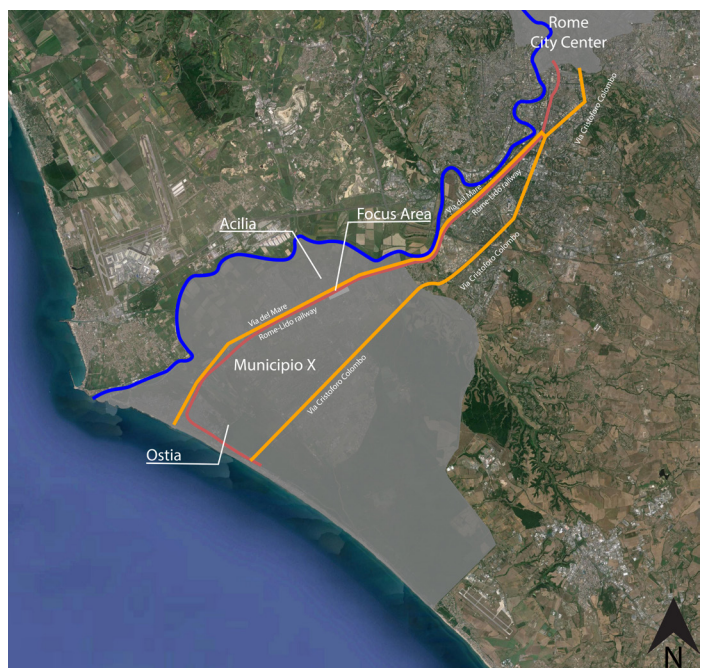


Figure 2.1.1 National and Regional Context

# Neighborhood Context

Acilia is divided into Acilia Nord and Acilia Sud. Our site is located in the center of Acilia Sud.



Figure 2.1.2 Neighborhood Context Map

## 2.2 Demographic Data

We obtained demographic data from The National Institute for Statistics (ISTAT) for pertinent information regarding gender distribution and socio-economic conditions. Data from 2001 and 2011 was analyzed between Acilia and Rome to understand how Acilia's demographics compare to Rome's.

## 2.3 Street Survey

To begin the spatial analysis of our focus area, we developed a comprehensive base map from the existing AutoCAD file to use as the basis of our street survey and block mapping processes. Using a data collection matrix which can be found in Appendix A, we recorded information on variables such as street width, traffic direction and intensity, sidewalk quality, and the presence of trees in teams during our visits to the site. We also mapped thirteen individual blocks, through which we recorded parking patterns, building typology and height, land uses, and the location of features such as public spaces, transit stops, and waste receptacles. Synthesizing the data from these two complementary methods enabled us to produce the following series of maps, which enrich our understanding of the existing urban fabric of Acilia.



Figure 2.3 Group members examining the empty lot at the Southeastern corner of our focus area

## 2.4 Mapping & Interviews

Statistical data analysis and street surveys can only provide a technical understanding of a neighborhood. Three different interview models were used to capture the lived experience of residents in Acilia: narrative mapping, Lynch mapping, and formal interviews.

### Formal & Street Interviews

The street interviews we conducted were usually passing and brief, according to the availability of passersby. However, some of these became more structured if the interviewee was receptive to our questions, occasionally including Lynch and narrative mapping exercises. Our goal was to gain a diversity of perspectives, including those of shop employees, elderly residents, immigrants, and young people. Additionally we targeted three significant community stakeholders for formal interviews to gain an understanding of the key institutions in Acilia. These allowed for more in-depth questioning within a comfortable setting, as opposed to the spontaneous nature of street interviews.

### Lynch Maps

In his influential book *The Image of the City* (1960), Kevin Lynch uses an innovative mental mapping exercise dubbed as “Lynch mapping”, in which a researcher asks a local resident in a neighborhood to quickly draw their community, while focusing on five elements of the city: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. This exercise informs a planner or researcher’s understanding of crucial elements of the neighborhood they are studying through the lens of the resident. What is included or not included in a Lynch map is equally important, and can often be surprising. Lynch maps are contextualized by an individual’s experience and his or her own understanding of and relationship to their surrounding environment.

In Acilia, some residents on the street were asked to produce Lynch maps. While it is clear that these maps are informative and subjective, it should be taken into consideration that their interpretation of a map could be influenced by many factors, including but not limited to memory and hesitations to draw certain items due to difficulty drawing.



Figure 2.4.1 Young people making a Lynch map



Figure 2.4.2 Formal interview with Comitato

### Narrative Maps

Narrative mapping was employed as a method of critical cartography which adopts the model used by Annette Kim (2015) at the Spatial Analysis Lab at the University of Southern California. Drawing on her work, the Acilia Team used a similar framework to ask residents about their daily journey through Acilia. This is not meant to be a direct representation of their world nor does it claim to possess the external validity to extrapolate a narrative to the general population; rather, narrative maps are meant to provide a quick snapshot of an Acilian’s resident’s permeation through his or her neighborhood. While as planners we study spatial design and create maps on spatial developments, we can overlook the most important actor in the city: people. As such, narrative maps tell how these people interact or not interact with their space, and how they do so.





# STATISTICS

A photograph of a crowded subway escalator. The escalator is moving upwards, and a large number of people are riding it. The people are dressed in winter clothing, including jackets, hoodies, and backpacks. The escalator has blue handrails and a white metal frame. The background is dark, suggesting an underground station.

Analyzing census data from both our focus area and greater metropolitan Rome gives us a better grasp of the social composition of Acilia, including characteristics such as family size, age group distributions, renting and ownership rates, and employment.

# 3.1 Population

Population (Focus Area):  
2272 residents

Population Density:  
75.1 residents/hectare

Due to its self-built character and a grid street pattern designed to accommodate vehicle traffic, Acilia has a low density compared to Central Rome. Spatially, the low density of our focus area is reflected in the various building typologies which are typically less than three stories. The greatest density we encountered was 267 residents per hectare (r/H) near the commercial corridor of the focus area, Via di Acilia. There were census tracts covered in our analysis that did not have any population, thus had a density of zero. According to data from 2011, the most populated sections of the neighborhood are demonstrated by the Figure 3.3.

# 3.2 Age & Gender

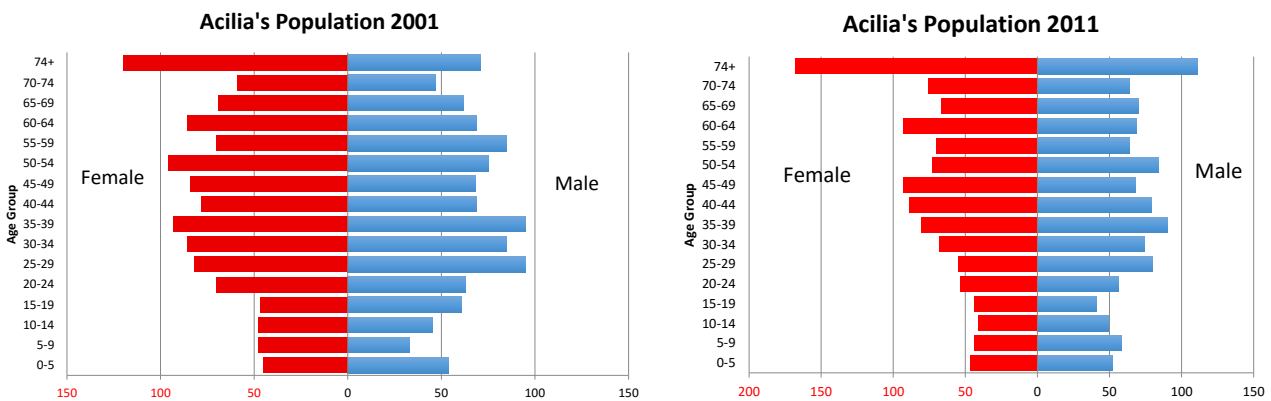


Figure 3.2. Acilia's Population in 2001 and 2011

In the 2001 census, Acilia reflected a similar age and gender composition to that of Greater Rome. The percentage of residents that were under fifteen in Acilia and Rome were nearly identical at 12.1% and 12.8%, respectively. Similarly the population of elderly people, those sixty-five years of age or older, were the same at 19%. The figures for those between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five were similar. As with Rome, there is an aging population in Acilia, which can be seen by the significantly higher number of elderly people as compared to children. The percentages of female residents in the population were nearly identical at 52% and 53%, with the 2011 census indicating that the percentage had gone down slightly in Acilia from 52% to 51.5%.

## 3.3 Housing & Residences

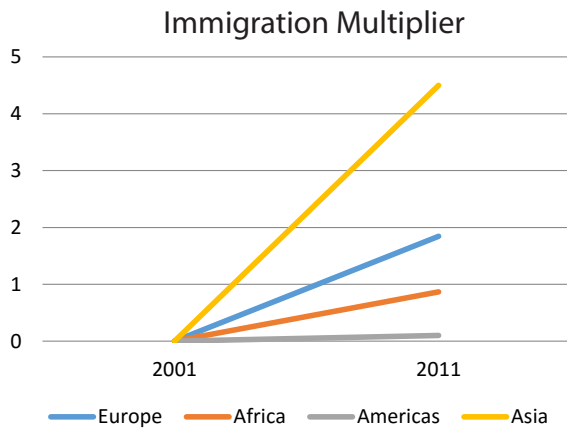


Figure 3.3 Population Density in Acilia

According to ISTAT in 2011, there were 962 occupied dwellings in our focus area, of which 71.6% were tenant-owned, and 21.1% were rented. The percentage of owners is higher than that of Rome's, with 65% ownership and 19% rental rates. It can be assumed that the remaining percentage not covered under the first two categories are either public housing or foreclosed.

## 3.4 Immigration

Acilia’s immigrant population in 2001 was similar in composition to Rome’s, with the vast majority of immigrants hailing from other European countries, mainly in Eastern Europe at a rate of 3.9% for both Rome and Acilia. There were only 88 documented immigrants in Acilia in 2001. In 2011, there were 266 immigrants, or 11.7 percent of South Central Acilia's population, which represents more than a 300% increase. Between 2001 and 2011, the percentage of immigrants from the Americas, Africa, and Europe declined, while the percentage of immigrants coming from Asia drastically increased. Most of these immigrants are from South Asia, particularly Bangladesh. These figures however, are only for the documented immigrants. There may be additional undocumented immigrants in the area.



	2001	2011	
Europe	45	128	185.5%
Africa	15	28	86%
Americas	10	11	10%
Asia	18	99	450%

Figure 3.4 Immigration Increase for Acilia

## 3.5 Employment & Education

The proportion of Acilia’s population with a university degree was significantly lower than the figure for Rome; Rome had almost two thirds more college graduates per capita than Acilia.

The labor force in Acilia differs from Rome as compared to the population statistics previously discussed. In 2001, the workforce in our focus area consisted of 988 individuals. Of this, 855 people were employed, for an overall unemployment rate of 13.5%. The number for Rome was calculated to be 11% for Rome as a whole; however, the unemployment rate differed between men and women. Of 41.1% of workforce eligible women in Acilia, 16% of them were unemployed compared to 11.6% for men. Regarding the breakdown of professions, the majority of Roman residents, Acilia included, are dependent employees, working for a company or organization where they are part of a structure of authority. For both Rome and Acilia, the number of dependent workers hovers around 80%.

The next most prominent form of employment is self-employment. In Acilia, the share of able-bodied workers who are self-employed is 12.4%, compared to 11.1% for Rome. In Rome there is a significant professional class, making up 9.1% of the population. The figure is roughly half of that in Acilia: 4.3%. The rest of the workforce is made up of domestic workers or unaccounted for other professional categories. Overall, the sectors in Acilia with the highest employment include manufacturing, construction, hotels and restaurant workers, and public sector workers.

Male Unemployment Rate in Acilia: 11.6%  
 Female Unemployment Rate in Acilia: 16%



Rome Workforce: 43% female  
 Acilia Workforce: 41.1% female

Acilia Workforce: 988  
 Total employed: 855



Unemployment in Acilia: 13.5%  
 Unemployment in Rome: 11%



Acilia		Rome
4.3%	Businessmen and Professionals	9.1%
12.4%	Self-employed Workers	11.1%
1.9%	Domestic Workers	1.4%
80%	Dependent Workers	78.6%
1.4%	Unaccounted for	1.6%

Figure 3.5 Employment breakdown for Acilia

## 3.6 Summary

Like Rome, Acilia's population has grown minimally over the ten years between the previous two censuses, at only 0.04%. This presents an opportunity to make Acilia's existing amenities more functional and fitting for the current population, rather than further developing new and potentially unnecessary development. It is apparent that Acilia is primarily a residential neighborhood, and properties are overwhelmingly owned rather than rented, creating a complicated tapestry of private, semi-private, and public spaces that inhibit rather than promote a sense of identity and community. Acilia is becoming an increasingly aged, but ethnically diverse, neighborhood. This increase of immigrants, many of whom are younger in age, could help offset the negative impacts of an aging population (Warner and Morken, 2013), so it is necessary to provide well-planned networks and amenities that can attract and retain these populations, while meeting the needs of current residents.



# BUILDINGS

Due to their exclusion from political processes and formal plans many residents of Acilia built their own homes without facilitation from authorities, in contrast with other centrally planned Fascist developments.

# 4.1 Building Figure-Ground



Figure 4.1 Building Figure-Ground throughout Acilia

Acilia's history as an original borgata of the fascist program, in addition to its proximity to the Leonardo da Vinci Airport in Fiumicino, influences its exceptionally low density profile compared to other neighborhoods in the periphery of Rome. The eight building typologies we have identified emerged from three distinct phases of development: initial settlement of the Borgo Acilia in the early 1910s, resettlement of urban residents from Rome in the late 1930s under Mussolini, and sustained growth and redevelopment from the 1950s through today, including the contemporary commercial core around Via di Acilia.

Buildings in the historic core of Borgo Acilia were centered on Piazza dei Sicani and Largo Girolamo da Montesarchio, surrounded by twelve farmsteads on the former marshland south of the Via del Mare between Rome and Ostia. The Clinic, the bookstore, Centro Anziani, and the mixed use building behind Piazza dei Sicani are almost all that remain from this period. Slow growth was aided by connection to the Rome-Ostia railway and the opening of the Via del Mare, conveyed by the construction of the Mario Calderini Elementary School and Parrocchia San Leonardo church during this time.

The famous *cassette pater* (duplex homes made of compressed fiberboard) made to house the evicted residents of Rome's historic center were concentrated in the area north of the highway. The presence of single family homes, duplex homes, and small-scale palazzine surrounded by walled gardens and accessed by private drives are indicative of the 'self-built' homes that were historically constructed. The fascist plan divided the land into plots that were developed by individual residents, leading to a fragmented and stylistically varied streetscape that has persisted through time.



Many of the mixed-use buildings in our focus area were developed privately between 1950 and 1980, composing a clear and coherent central commercial corridor along Via di Acilia which anchors our focus area. Large blocks of mixed-use buildings with continuous, ground floor storefronts characterize the main commercial core. These buildings complement prior stages of growth in terms of location and programming, but represent a clear departure of scale and style. The most recent stages of development in Acilia have expanded the mixed-use building type at increasing density (up to six stories) into residential areas along Via Francesco Ingoli and Via di Saponara.

The building figure-ground diagram not only maps out these three stages of development but also the open and lost spaces in Acilia. Comparing the areas on either side of Via di Acilia, the figure-ground highlights the contrasting compactness of the east versus the west.

## 4.2 Building Typology



Figure 4.2.1 Building Types throughout Acilia

## Single Family Homes



Figure 4.2.2

These are detached or semi-detached single dwelling units, usually one to two stories in height. This building type demonstrates the lowest density present in Acilia. Most single family homes do not front the street, but are accessed by private drives or dead-end interior roads.

## Duplex Family Homes



Figure 4.2.3

These are one or two story buildings which house two dwelling units, either side by side or with one on top of another. A garden with a fence or wall separate this building type from adjacent properties. Like single family homes, most are accessed by private drives or dead-end interior roads.

## Linear Multifamily Homes



Figure 4.2.4

These buildings feature a series of attached dwelling units arranged linearly, two to three stories in height. Homes are accessed by individual entrances that may include a private garden. This building type occurs most frequently in the eastern section of Acilia and front private drives or dead-end interior roads.

## Mid-rise Multifamily Palazzine



Figure 4.2.5

These are the most common residential buildings in Acilia, varying in height from two to six stories and housing a minimum of four dwelling units. This building type may face the formal street or an interior road and often features an underground parking area for the private use of residents. A wall or fence separates the garden from adjacent properties.

## Low-Rise Commercial Buildings



Figure 4.2.6

These buildings contain a single floor of retail or office space that directly fronts the street. Some are attached to larger mixed-use buildings or palazzine, while others are freestanding on individual parcels with a small parking area.

## Mid-Rise Commercial Buildings



Figure 4.2.7

These buildings are not common in Acilia, but contain two or more floors of retail or office space.

## Mid-Rise Mixed Use Buildings



Figure 4.2.8

Another very common building type in our focus area, these compose the central corridor of Via Acilia and occur in other locations directly fronting the street. These typically feature retail space on the ground floor and one to five stories of residential units above, with a surface or underground parking area.

## Institutional & Semipublic Uses



Figure 4.2.9

These are buildings which have a civic, religious, medical, educational, transit-related, or other community oriented use. This building type is not consistent in style, size, or height, but many (such as the San Leonardo church, Centro Anziani, and Clinic) have historic character. They are located prominently in the most central section of our focus area.

## 4.3 Building Height



Figure 4.3 Building Heights by Stories

To complement the building figure-ground, building height can provide more insight into the density of Acilia. While three-story mixed use buildings compose a consistent, compact level of density along the Via di Acilia, newer buildings on the edges (particularly in the western portion) of our focus area push up as high as six stories, with the most recent construction being the tallest. High-density development favors the larger lot sizes which can be found west of the Via di Acilia over the highly fragmented parcels to the east. This trend risks creating a decentralized visual landscape where landmark structures such as the church tower are lost among high-rise residential development which stands over the historic core.

The low density of our focus area in the Italian context is reflected in the small building footprints of the figure-ground and a layout composed of large blocks and dead-end streets. The combination of these elements supports a historically informed image of the area as a 'small town' suspended between the urban centers of Rome and Ostia, featuring building types that are characteristically low in density and private in nature. This diversity of building types, along with the particular orientations of buildings on individual lots, are results of informal development by private landowners. However, new development patterns are increasing in height and promote a conflicting image of the area as an extension of the nearby urban centers, decentralized from the traditional core of the neighborhood.

## 4.4 Summary

The low density of our focus area in the Italian context is reflected in the small building footprints of the figure-ground and a layout composed of large blocks and dead-end streets. The combination of these elements supports a historically informed image of the area as a 'small town' suspended between the urban centers of Rome and Ostia, featuring building types that are characteristically low in density and private in nature. This diversity of building types, along with the particular orientations of buildings on individual lots, are results of informal development by private landowners. However, new development patterns are increasing in height and promote a conflicting image of the area as an extension of the nearby urban centers, decentralized from the traditional core of the neighborhood.



# STREETS & INFRASTRUCTURE

The urban fabric of Acilia is defined by two distinct systems: the public, formal street grid and the many private, dead-end streets which are used to access individual residences. A unique triangular plan unites our focus area and will continue to spatially structure its growth into the future.

# 5.1 Street Figure-Ground

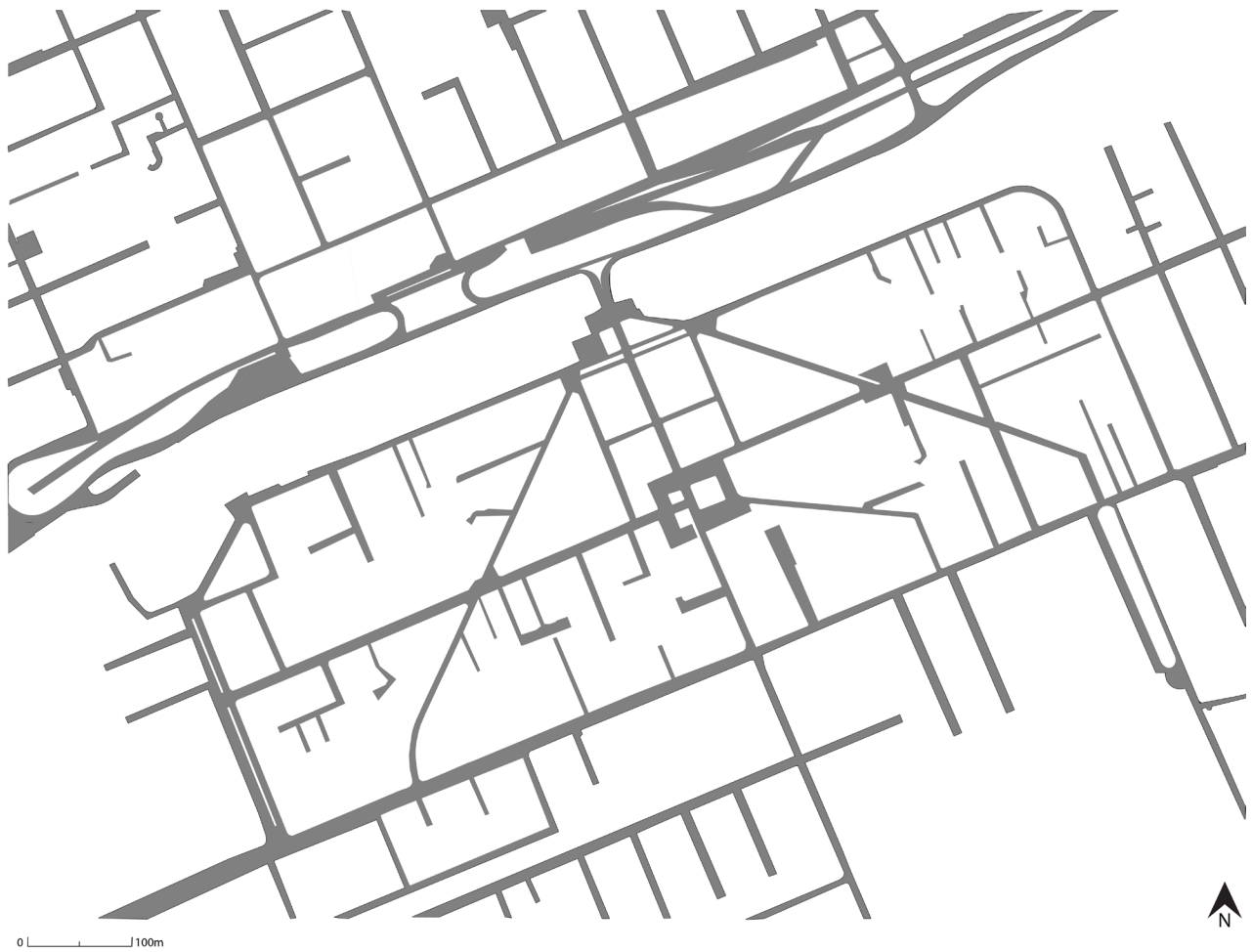


Figure 5.1 Street Figure-Ground of Acilia

Unlike the organic Medieval street pattern found in Central Rome, South Central Acilia possesses a radial pattern originating from 1939. This unique street configuration influences Acilia's infrastructure, street hierarchy, traffic flow, pedestrian navigation, parking, and public transit systems. The bottleneck road, built in 1988, is the only entrance point for cars from Via del Mare into Acilia. The street figure-ground map also highlights the multiple interior (tertiary) streets that enter into the blocks, connecting interior residences to the secondary streets.



## 5.2 Street Hierarchy



Figure 5.2.1 Street Hierarchy of Acilia

We identified four distinct street typologies present in our focus area based on the characteristics of their design, traffic capacity, and connectivity. As a network, the streets of South Central Acilia form a coherent grid of perpendicular and diagonal streets which spatially distinguish it from the piecemeal development of the surrounding area. The northern terminus of Via di Acilia serves as the neighborhood's sole vehicular entrance from Acilia Nord and the Via del Mare, creating a 'bottleneck' through which traffic is dispersed into the symmetrical diagonal one-way streets (Via Francesco Ingoli and Via Antonio da Gaeta). Studying the street hierarchy allows us to better understand the 'bones' of our focus area, and how that structure facilitates the relationships between different elements of the built environment as well as the movement of people and vehicles.

## Central Corridor



Figure 5.2.2 Via di Acilia

The central corridor corresponds exclusively to Via di Acilia, an axial street that bisects the center of our focus area and serves as the spine of its central business district. Additionally, it serves an important arterial connection between the Cristoforo Colombo and Via del Mare highways and between the northern and southern portions of Acilia, Acilia Nord and Sud. The central corridor is characterized by two lanes with two-way, moderate speed traffic and high volume, with no space allowed for on-street parking. The narrow design, numerous crosswalks, and presence of street trees along the central corridor make pedestrian passage between the east and west neighborhoods possible.

## Primary



Figure 5.2.3 Via Daniele da Samarate

Primary streets are characterized by two lanes of low-to-moderate volume traffic at moderate speed with parallel on-street parking available along both sides. With a few exceptions, wide sidewalks and occasionally street trees are also present on the street; however, crosswalks are less common and crossing as a pedestrian can be intimidating. The network of primary and secondary streets define the block morphology of our focus area. The primary typology corresponds to Via Giovanni Boldini, Via Daniele da Samarate (Via Giuseppe Fagnano), Via di Saponara, Via di Valle Porcina, Via Giuseppe Maria Zampi, and Via Francesco Saverio Altamura.

## Secondary



Figure 5.2.4 Via Francesco Ingoli

Secondary streets are characterized by a single lane of low volume, and low-to-moderate speed traffic with parallel on-street parking on one or both sides. These streets compose the triangular plan of our focus area and the core grid around the Via di Acilia axis. The secondary typology corresponds to Via Angelo Zottoli, Via Costantino Beschi, Via Francesco Ingoli, Via Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, Via G. Coletti, Via Pietro da Mazzara, Via Antonio da Gaeta, Via Ludovico Antomelli, and Largo Cesare Bertolla.

## Tertiary



Figure 5.2.5 A typical dead end

Tertiary streets are exclusively dead-end streets characterized by a single lane of low volume, low speed traffic and the presence of some on-street parking reserved for residents. In some cases, these streets are named and are publicly accessible, while others are gated, labeled as private, or accessed by a curb cut. This typology corresponds to the Via Michele Nau, Via Vittorio Faccin, Via Francesco Brancati, Via Giovanni Fattori, Via Raeffele de Grada, Via Ernesto Allason, Via Vincenzo Cabianca, and a range of other minor residential streets which provide access to the interior of the blocks defined by the street types described above.

## 5.3 Pedestrian Navigation

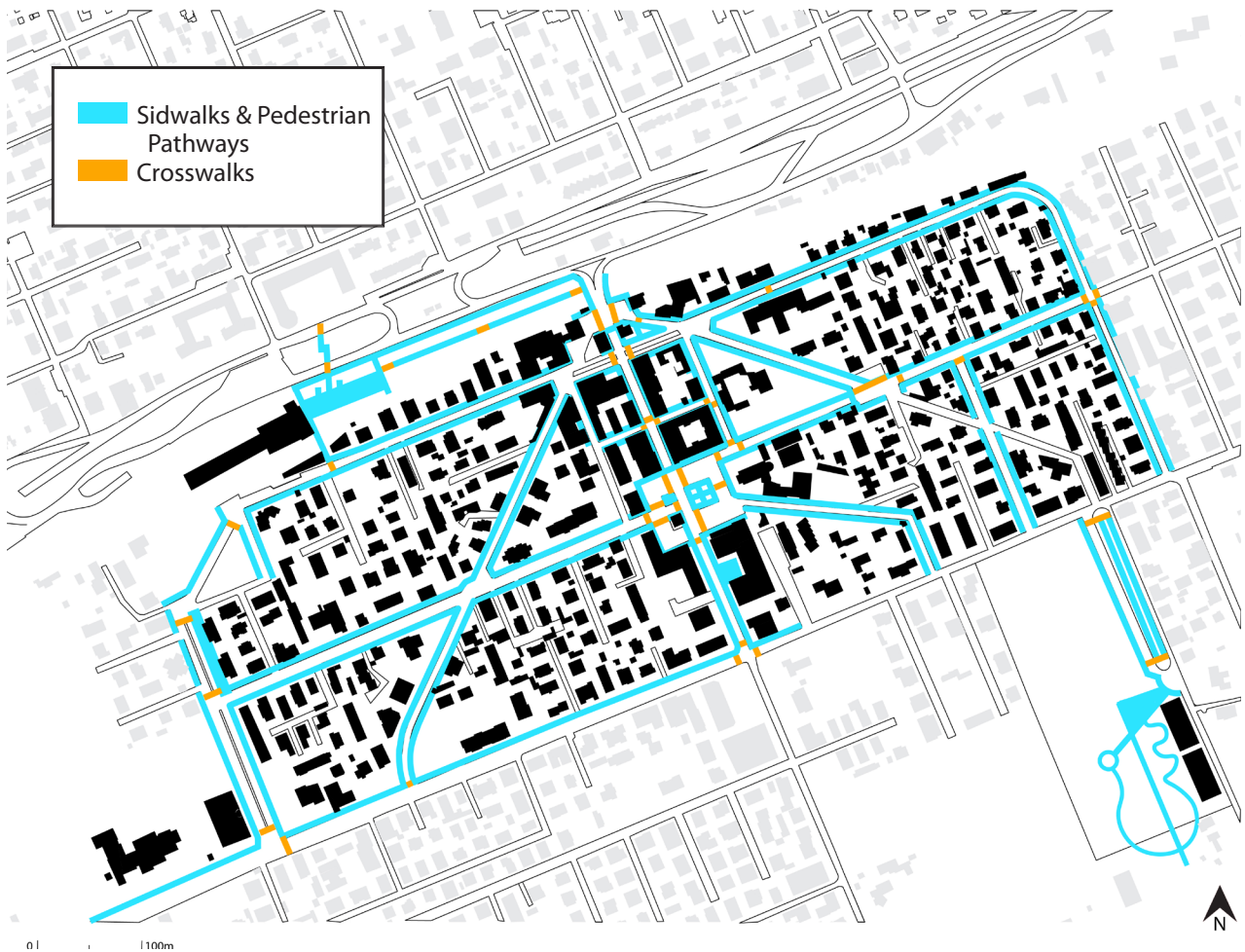


Figure 5.3 Sidwalks & Crosswalks

Pedestrian navigation is a key component of the functionality of our focus area. The transit node composed of the train station and nearby bus stops are removed from the central business district, necessitating many visitors, commuters, and residents to navigate the streets by foot. While the pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, crosswalks, and pathways) is well-provided in some parts, such as along the primary roads, it is not consistent or reliable throughout our focus area.

Figure 5.3 illustrates the presence and continuity of the pedestrian infrastructure in our focus area. Notable holes in this network include the southern portion of Via Antonia da Gaeta to the east and Via Giovanni da Pian del Carpine in the center. However, variation in width primarily dictates whether a pathway is actually usable or not. Accordingly, Figure 5.4 classifies sidewalks by width in order for us to understand how easily people are able to utilize the infrastructure provided.

# 5.4 Sidewalk Width



Figure 5.4.1 Sidewalk Width

Sidewalk width varies, with some streets as wide as three meters but others as narrow as one meter. These sidewalks are not wide enough for elderly residents to walk through the neighborhood comfortably, pushing many of them off the sidewalk and on to the street, where it is better paved and wide enough to handle walkers and wheelchairs. On-street parking blocks passage on the sidewalks along some one-way streets, and some (such as along Via Giuseppe Fagnano) are so narrow they barely accommodate a single person walking. For this reason, elderly people and those with limited mobility are the most disadvantaged by this discontinuous system. We witnessed how the absence of curb cuts and the placement of obstacles like trees, fountains, and signage in the pedestrian right-of-way forces some people to use the street instead.

In addition to varying sidewalk widths, some areas are completely lacking in sidewalks. Although the presence of sidewalks may be an indicator of walkability, if maintenance is not kept and cracks and holes are present, handicapped, elderly, and anyone with a stroller will have the most difficult time walking around. Even the most physically fit walker may not see a crack and trip, injuring themselves.



Figure 5.4.2 Sidewalk Conditions

## 5.5 Walkability



Figure 5.5 Walking Distance in Acilia

Acilia is flanked by two main thoroughfares into Rome, Via del Mare and Via Cristoforo Colombo. Our focus area ends at Via di Saponara/Via di Valle Porcina. Vehicles can only access the commercial core of Acilia through the bottleneck into Via di Acilia. Pedestrians have an additional entrance point into South Central Acilia through the alleyway connecting the Acilia train station to Via Angelo Zottoli.

As indicated by the street figure-ground and hierarchy map, tertiary roads are the only route to access particular residences. These roads are usually gated; if not, they possess a 'Private Property' sign. However if a pedestrian does enter, he or she will most likely encounter a dead end. Looking at the street figure-ground, some tertiary streets almost cut through the entire block to reach the main roads; however, there are typically barricades blocking vehicles from passing through.

## 5.6 Public Transit

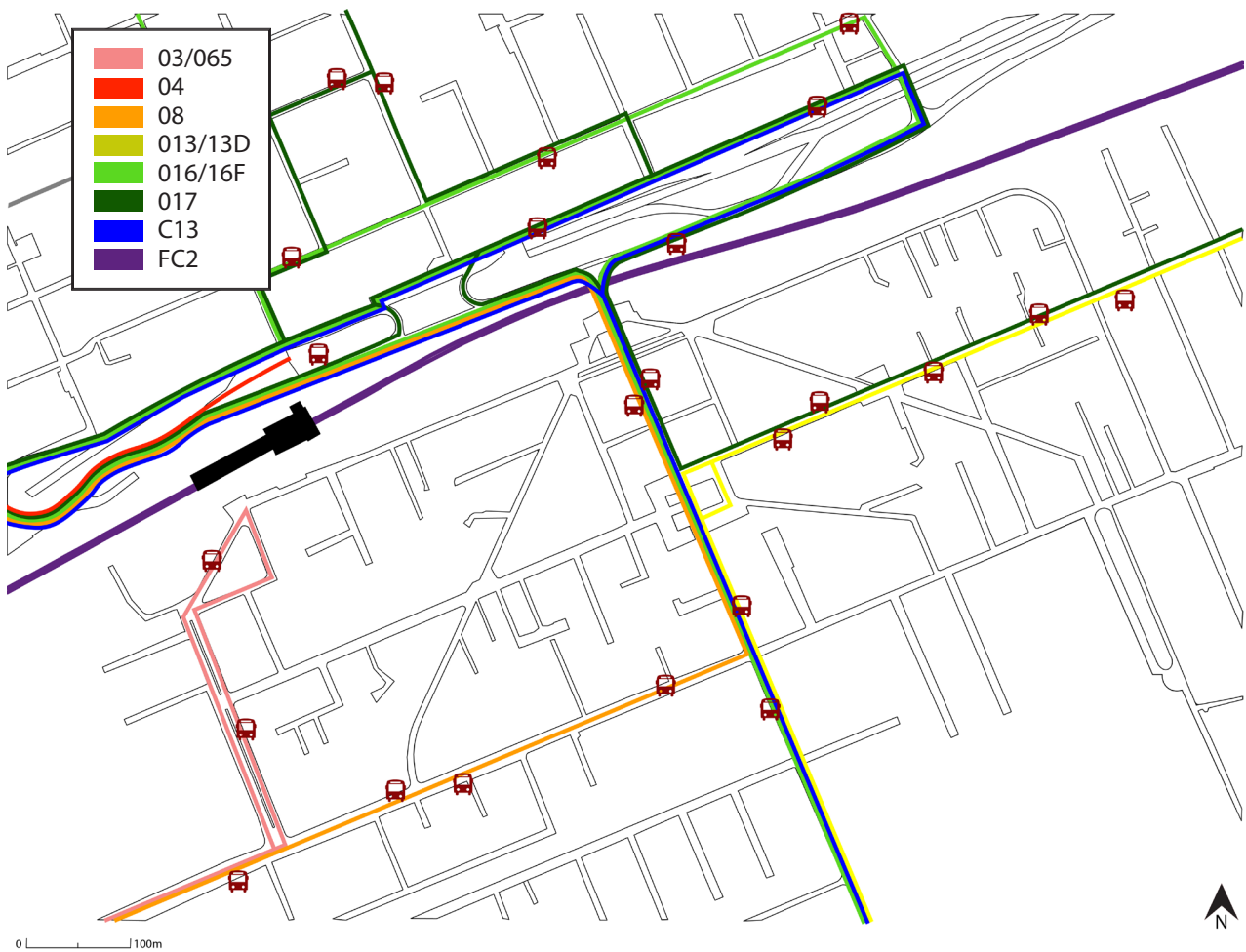


Figure 5.6 Public Transit in Acilia

Acilia's only public transport connection to Central Rome is by the Roma-Lido railway (FC2). This line connects Acilia to EUR and Piramide, where the Metro B and many bus lines go even further into Central Rome. This train station is one of the main transport options for residents of Acilia Nord and Acilia Sud to reach Central Rome. The parking lot right outside the station also allows residents to drive to the station and take public transport to finish their journey.

Bus stops are located throughout the focus area, which can bring riders to Acilia Nord, further down to Acilia Sud, east to Casal Bernocchi, or west into Ostia Antica. Within Acilia, three lines, 016, 016F, and 017, run through Via di Acilia, connecting Acilia Nord with Acilia Sud. Two lines, 03 and 04, run from Acilia towards Ostia Antica.

## 5.7 Traffic Intensity



Figure 5.7 Traffic Count in Acilia (10AM-Noon)

Points along Via di Acilia demonstrate the highest traffic concentration in our focus area. Similarly, the streets running orthogonally to Via di Acilia experience a significant number of vehicles. The diagonal streets, those running northeast to southwest or southeast to northwest are less congested as many of them only have one-way traffic. The traffic flow also varies greatly between streets in Acilia due to the presence or lack of medians or ample street parking. Traffic was relatively slow in the streets off of the main square along Parrocchia San Leonardo due to the high amount of parked cars. Unlike the center of Rome, the vehicles were almost all private cars as opposed to buses, taxis or motorbikes, and scooters. The majority of the cars we saw had no passengers other than the driver, illustrating the car-dependent culture of Acilia.

## 5.8 Parking



Figure 5.8 Parking in Acilia

As a predominately residential neighborhood, many homes have private driveways/roads for their vehicles. Some mid-rise multifamily complexes possess underground parking. There are three public parking facilities, two in front of the train station holding 235 cars and another that can hold 44 cars. A parking area in the residential neighborhood is two minutes away from the train station, which can hold 135 cars. In all three of these lots, however, parking is not regulated. This means drivers can park their cars however they want and in any free space, leading to informally parked cars. Throughout the focus area, there are multiple private parking lots owned by businesses. The biggest is a manned private parking facility on the corner of Via di Saponara and Via Francesco Ingoli. Another lot closer to the commercial core is right off of Via di Acilia, on Via di Valle Porcina.

On Via di Acilia, the central corridor, parking is not allowed. This overwhelms the immediate surrounding streets with parked vehicles. Some high traffic roads, our primary streets, within the focus area do not allow parking on the street. Piazza Largo Girolamo da Montesarchio and Piazza San Leonardo, become informal parking lots. Parking is found on the main roads only if the street width is large enough. Of the streets that are used for parking, street width does affect whether one or both sides of the street are utilized. However, street hierarchy plays a much larger role in determining which sides of the street are parked on as well as number of cars.

As one moves further away from Via di Acilia, street parking is easier to find. If a street only has one-sided parking, drivers may still park cars on the other side, blocking the sidewalk with half their car. Most of the time these sidewalks are already narrow, forcing pedestrians onto the street when cars restrict them even further.



# 5.9 Waste Disposal

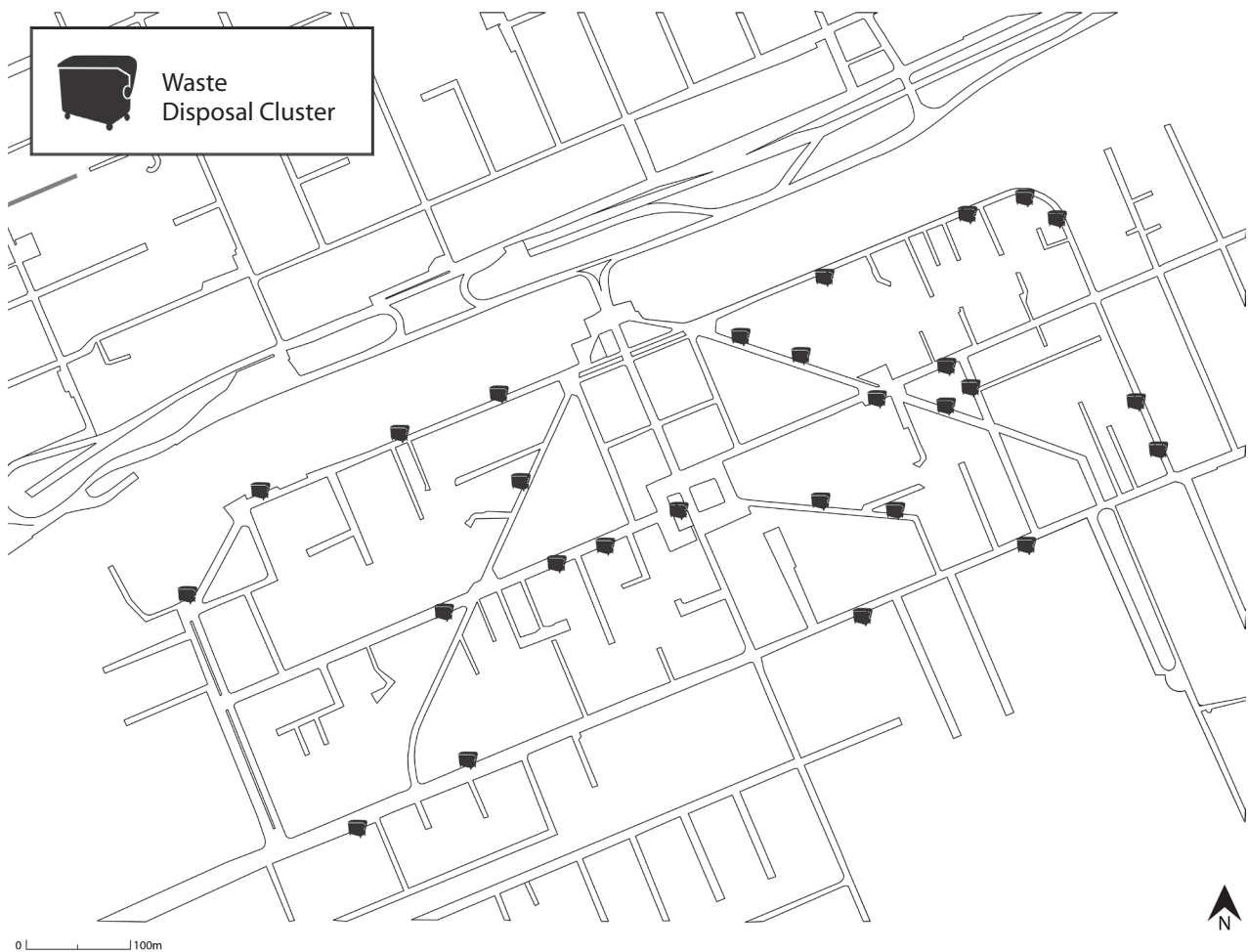


Figure 5.9.1 Waste disposal locations throughout Acilia

Like many neighborhoods in Rome, littering and waste disposal is a notable issue in Acilia. Because residential building typologies in our focus area are relatively small in scale, waste disposal receptacles are located in clusters along the street, usually displacing on-street parking. Figure 5.9.1 shows the distribution of these clusters, which consist of five receptacle categories. A high concentration can be identified in the eastern section, while the southern and southwestern portions of our focus area seem to have more limited access. A higher occurrence of mixed-use and commercial land uses in this area may contribute to this disparity through the use of private disposal methods.




Figure 5.9.2 A typical waste disposal setup

## 5.10 Summary

The streets of Acilia serve as great connections between the residential area of Acilia and the main commercial street, providing both privacy and access to fresh food, bars, restaurants, and other commercial enterprises. The pedestrian experience, however, is ignored with most sidewalks outside of the commercial street damaged or too narrow for more than one person to walk on, presenting especially critical accessibility concerns for the elderly and disabled.

# LAND USE



Acilia's spatial configuration is primarily residential, although it has a strong commercial profile along Via di Acilia and surrounding streets. Keeping this identity is integral in future development.

# 6.1 Land Use Map

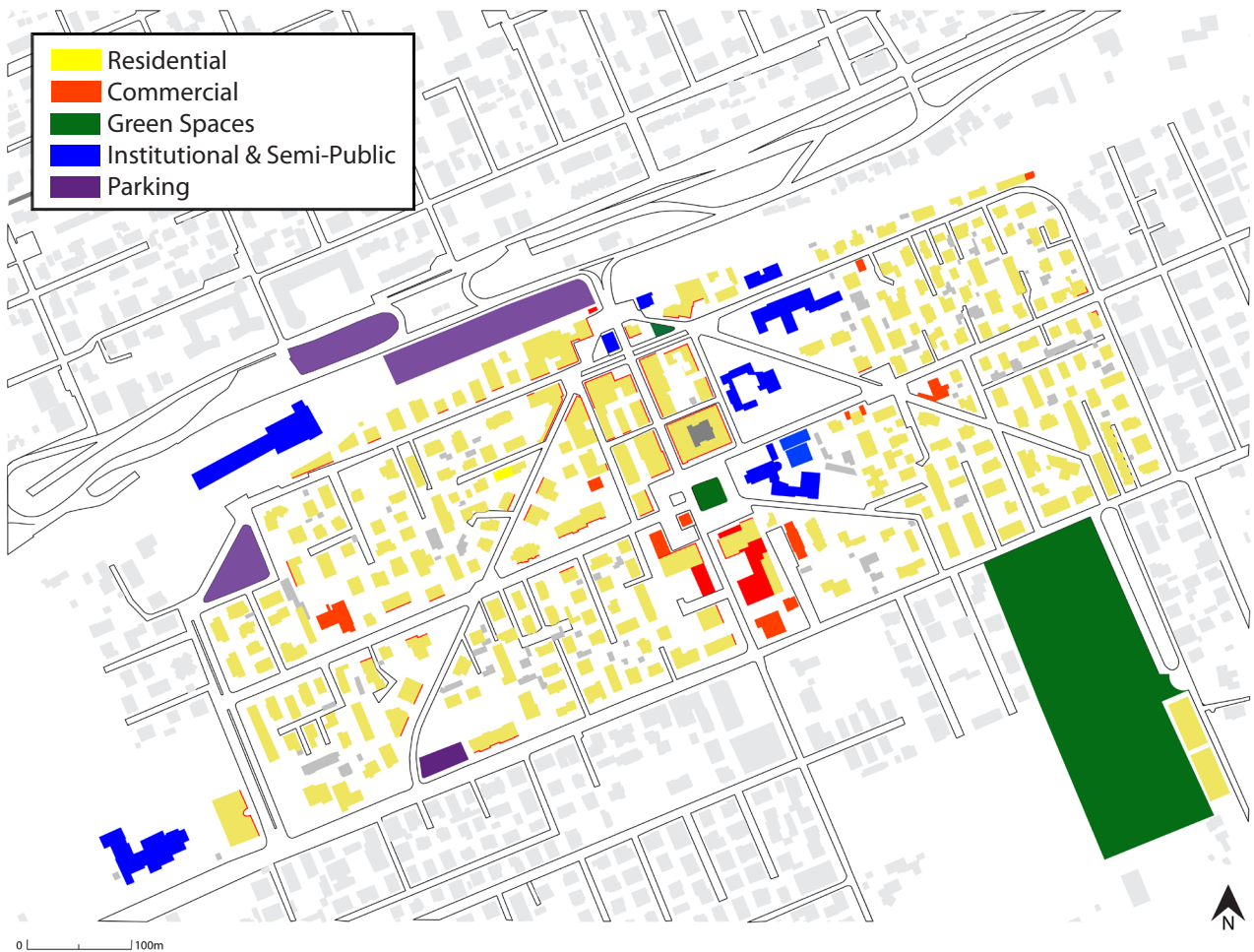


Figure 6.1 Land Use

Our focus area is characterized as a residential area with a central commercial corridor. Via di Acilia is the main commercial artery of the neighborhood containing ground floor stores with apartments above. Mixed use buildings also line Via Angelo Zottoli, from Via di Acilia to the Acilia train station. Three educational facilities and a church are grouped together east of Via di Acilia near the original elementary school that was built in 1929. Beyond the southwest corner of the focus area is a vocational high school, IPSCT Giulio Verne. There are few public green spaces in the center of the neighborhood. The green space at the southeast corner is difficult to reach from most areas of the neighborhood. The mixture of residential and institutional land uses, and the absence of industrial land uses, implies this neighborhood is residential and family-oriented.

# 6.2 Private Space

## Fences



## Private Property



Figure 6.2 How Acilians denote private property

Almost every private property, especially single family and linear multi-family buildings, is surrounded by a fence. Visibility into private front gardens are minimal from the street, with fences as high as eight feet. Privacy is also insured for dwellings that can only be reached through a dead-end road, which is typically fenced off. Residences along Via di Acilia possess interior courtyards not accessible to the public with entrances on side streets and not on the main road. Some residences also possess dogs that dog their property.

## 6.3 Summary

Land use in Acilia is varied, containing all the amenities necessary for daily life. The lack of industrial land uses and the abundance of institutional services, especially education, makes Acilia a functional neighborhood for a family but less so for other lifestyles and age groups.

# PUBLIC SPACE



While public spaces are present in Acilia, some are not well maintained or utilized by community members. Revitalization of these spaces can build a system of nodes that improves the daily experience of residents.

# 7.1 Activity Centers

Through our analysis and observations we have identified four major nodes or 'activity centers' characterized by a high intensity of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, access to transit, presence of public space, and proximity to key community institutions. In two of these cases (Piazza dei Sicani and Largo Girolamo da Montesarchio), spaces that were formerly dedicated to pedestrians have been usurped by the movement and parking of cars over time.



Figure 7.1.1 Activity Center throughout Acilia

## Stazione Acilia



Figure 7.1.2

Stazione Acilia represents the gateway to Acilia by foot, featuring access to the train station below grade, a series of bus stops on Via del Mare, parking areas for vehicles and motorcycles, a pedestrian link to Via Angelo Zottoli, and the Municipio X complex surrounding Piazza Capelvenere. This space is dominated by a vast paved public plaza that was installed over the Rome-Ostia railway in 2012 but currently has no explicit function other than connecting commuters to the parking lot in the east. Though many people pass through this space at all times of the day, it bears clear signs of neglect with deposits of trash and a pool of stagnant red water.



## Largo Girolamo da Montesarchio



Figure 7.1.3

Named for a 17th century Catholic friar and missionary to the Congo, Largo Girolamo is one of two original public spaces around which the Borgo Acilia was constructed. Historical photographs indicate that Largo Girolamo used to feature wider pedestrian spaces on each corner of the Via Angelo Zottoli/Via Francesco Ingoli intersection. Today, it is the location of significant friction between vehicle and pedestrian traffic negotiating access to the Clinic and the multitude of businesses nearby, with ten cars frequently parked in the middle of the intersection obstructing passage.

## Piazza dei Sicani



Figure 7.1.4

Piazza dei Sicani, named after ancient inhabitants from central Sicily, is connected to Largo Girolamo by a short, wide boulevard with tall poplar trees lining central median. Narrow sidewalks and four lanes of parallel parking, however, make the linkage difficult to navigate. Piazza dei Sicani is the other of the two original public spaces in Borgo Acilia and still features a small triangular park with a minimally landscaped war memorial, but few people seem to interact with this monument. Access to the Centro Anziani, Mario Calderini Elementary School, Giardino di Sara Nursery School, a supermarket, and the businesses along Via di Acilia make this another node of concentrated activity for both people and vehicles.

## Piazza San Leonardo da Porto Maurizio



Figure 7.1.5

Piazza San Leonardo is the definitive public space of Acilia and serves as a focal point for both the central commercial corridor and neighborhoods beyond. Tall pines, ample seating, and decent maintenance make it an attractive space, though it is surrounded by parked cars on three sides and is often occupied by drunks and vagrants (according to local residents). Access to the Parrocchia San Leonardo church, Tuodì supermarket, Gran Caffè Laura, and a variety of other businesses along Via di Acilia make this the most significant node in our focus area, and it is also one that experiences a high volume of vehicular traffic that interferes with pedestrian passage. A minor square west of the piazza seems intended to complement it, but instead offers an unused island of seating completely surrounded by constant vehicle traffic.

## 7.2 Public Spaces

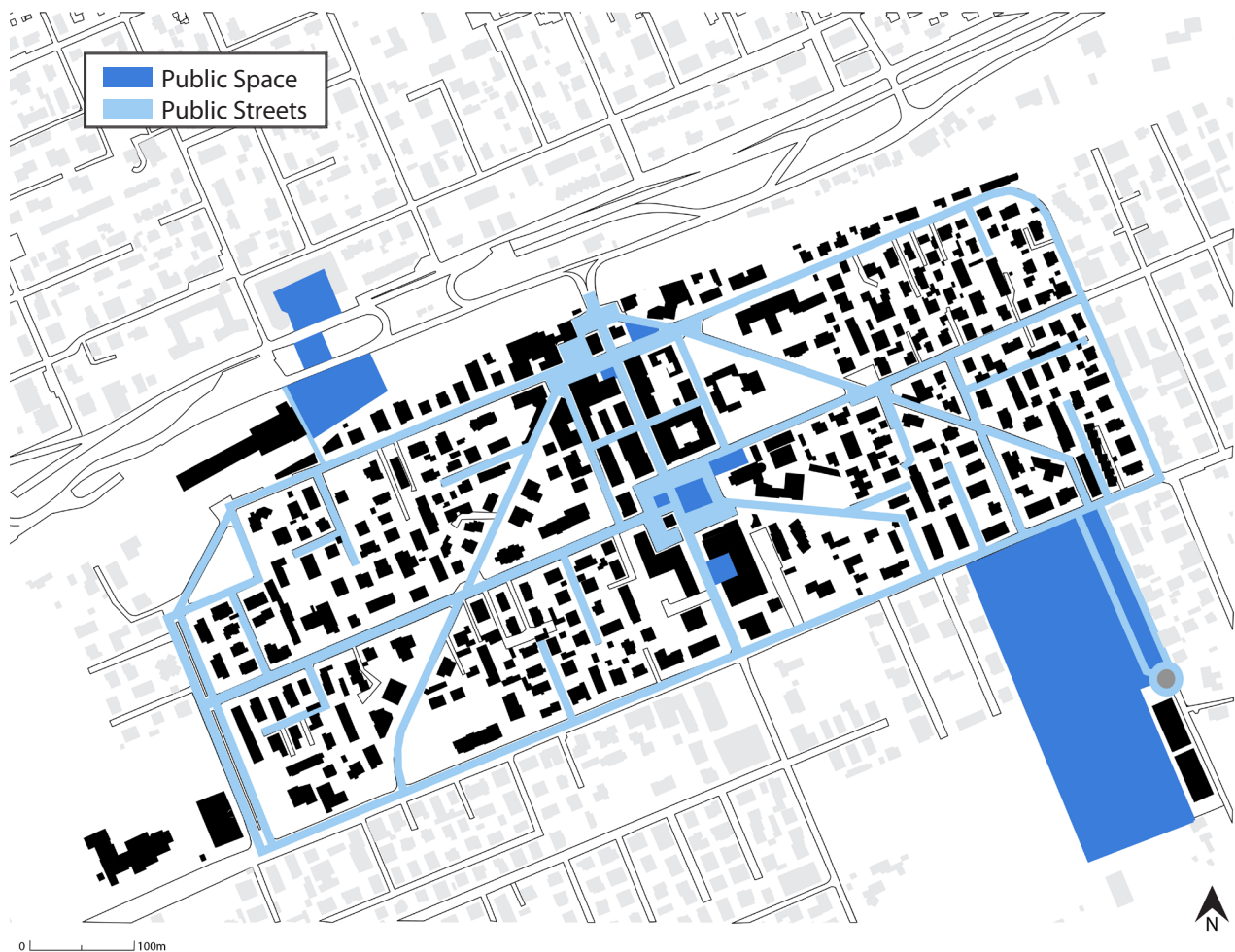


Figure 7.2 Public Spaces

There are four distinct clusters of public space within or adjoining our focus area. Each of these, with the exception of the Fitness Park area, also serve as important nodes. Piazza Capalvenere and the plaza at Stazione Acilia connect to form a wide public hardscape bounded by the train station and Municipio complex. However, poor maintenance and lack of coherent programming commonly reduce this area to a purely transit-oriented zone. Piazzas San Leonardo and dei Sicani are characterized by intimate, formally planned spaces with natural features, which regularly serve as meeting points and opportunities for passive recreational use. In contrast, the fitness park and adjacent vacant land were devoid of users during each of our visits and appear to function foremost as an informal soccer field for the surrounding neighborhood. Interestingly, the playground and fitness equipment at the entrance to the fitness park is in a state of disrepair, visibly neglected while the playground beside the Parrocchia San Leonardo church is often being used. Each of these clusters are connected by a public street network that occasionally includes tertiary interior streets in addition to central, primary, and secondary typologies.

## 7.3 Green Spaces



Figure 7.3 Green Spaces

Green spaces in Acilia can be categorized in three ways: parks, informal green spaces, and private green spaces. There are three formal parks in our focus area which coincide with the public spaces of Piazza San Leonardo, Piazza dei Sicani, and the Fitness Park. While the fitness park is dominated by a vast overgrown landscape, the other two are more urban in nature. Informal green spaces which are publicly accessible include the marginal lawns surrounding the plaza at Stazione Acilia and the vacant property adjoining the fitness park. Additionally several significant privately-owned green spaces lend natural features to the public domain, even if technically off limits.

The presence of trees beautifies the street, creates a more comfortable environment for pedestrians, and provides much-needed greenery to the neighborhood. The use of street trees in Acilia draws inspiration from the tree-lined lungotevere of central Rome by placing plane trees along significant thoroughfares such as the southern portion of the Via di Acilia and Via Angelo Zottoli, which most likely occurred during development in the 1930s. Mediterranean pines are planted monumentally in each quadrant of the Piazza San Leonardo. A striking lack of street trees in the eastern portion of our focus area may be attributed to narrower sidewalks, an outcome of the self-built development process. Additionally, we found the trees along Via Giovanni Boldini had been severely cut and no longer contributed to a favorable street environment.

## 7.4 Lost Spaces



Figure 7.4.1 Lost Spaces

In *Finding Lost Space* (1986), Roger Trancik defines 'lost space' as "undesirable urban areas that are in need of redesign - antispaces, making no positive contribution to the surroundings or users" (p. 4). Trancik denotes these spaces as opportune parcels for redevelopment and creative infill. Using a parking lot as an example, we know that it provides a use for a space and that it gets parked cars off the street. However, we wonder whether a space can serve more than this singular function-- is there a possibility for revitalization? Lost space does not need to remain lost, but has the opportunity to be utilized for a new and higher purpose.

We have identified a total of twelve 'lost spaces' in our focus area which are currently underutilized and may afford urban design opportunities for enhancing the existing built environment of Acilia. Many of these spaces are either vacant or informally dedicated to vehicles.

## 1. Stazione Acilia Plaza + Parking Lot



Figure 7.4.2

Without a spatially articulated function, this plaza remains unused by residents for any purpose other than accessing transit. The adjoining parking lot is heavily used, but compounds the barrier between the neighborhoods of Acilia Nord and Sud.

## 2. Vacant Parcel 1: Via di Valle Porcina



Figure 7.4.3

This vast, publicly accessible vacant parcel occasionally serves as an informal soccer field, but is otherwise empty and is avoided by most residents. It is currently co-managed by the Comitato di Quartiere and the municipal government.

## 3. Vacant Parcel 2: Via Francesco Saverio Altamura



Figure 7.4.4

This fenced-in vacant parcel sits opposite a new mixed-use tower and contains several abandoned outbuildings.

## 4. Vacant Parcel 3: Via Francesco Ingoli



Figure 7.4.5

This fenced-in vacant parcel serves as an overflow parking area for the trattoria to the south.

## 5. Fitness Park



Figure 7.4.6

This private 'park' is equal in scale and adjacent to Vacant Parcel 1, but contains a dilapidated playground and various scattered fitness equipment. When we visited this space on a sunny weekend, there was only a single (adult) user in the entire area.

## 6. Piazza dei Sicani



Figure 7.4.7

The corners of the intersection of Via Costantino Bertolli and Via Antonio da Gaeta are occupied by parked vehicles, obstructing the historic entrances to Mario Calderini Elementary School and the war memorial pocket park.

## 7. Largo Girolamo da Montesarchio



Figure 7.4.8

The corners and center of the intersection of Via Angelo Zottoli and Via Francesco Ingoli are occupied by parked vehicles, obstructing the historic entrances to the Clinic and former Cinema.

## 8. Piazza San Leonardo



Figure 7.4.9

Paved areas on the margin of this piazza allow multiple layers of parked vehicles to accumulate and obstruct access to the central green space and surrounding businesses.

## 9. OVS Complex



Figure 7.4.10

A wide, paved private plaza surrounded on three sides by the OVS mixed-use complex on Via di Acilia sits devoid of function despite its central location.

## 10. Eastern Bowtie



Figure 7.4.11

Two surface parking areas at the corners of Via Daniele da Samarate and Via Antonio da Gaeta contribute to an unusually wide paved area that discourages pedestrian movement eastward.

## 11. Largo Cesare Bertolli



Figure 7.4.12

This parking lot serves a bus station in the northwestern corner of our focus area, and like the other near Stazione Acilia it has the potential to serve a purpose beyond accommodating vehicles.

## 12. Disconnected Streets



Figure 7.4.13

A series of residential access streets (Via Ernesto Allason, Via Giovanni Fattori, and Via Francesco Passi) were passable in the original plan of Acilia but are now blocked to both pedestrians and vehicles.

# 7.5 Summary

There are three scales at which 'lost space' is present within our focus area: large vacant parcels, small vacant parcels, and marginal spaces around street intersections. The vacant parcels in particular are indicative of Acilia's history of piecemeal development and possible instances of land speculation. Additionally, there are two prominent parking lots in the northwest corner of our focus area which we will also investigate as 'lost spaces', though they serve an important function for a car-dependent community. In the design portion of our neighborhood study of Acilia, these lost spaces will be the subject of proposed design interventions which could enhance connectivity, reinforce identity, and improve the functionality of public space.





# CITIZENS PERSPECTIVE

Interviews from local residents provided integral information about the needs and priorities for their community that became central to our report.

# 8.1 Interviews

## Informal Street Interviews

Stopping to talk to community members informally while conducting street surveys was an important part of our process. Though brief, these conversations allowed us to speak with a wide variety of people and capture snapshots of how people thought of Acilia in that moment.

Common positive themes from the informal interviews were...

- The sense of community within Acilia: its small size as a nice contrast to the center of Rome
- No indication of tension between the immigrant and Italian communities; in fact, the relationships seemed quite positive
- The location of Acilia as a pull factor: the proximity to Rome, Ostia, the airport, and the sea make recreation, exercise, and nightlife easily accessible
- More affordable housing than the center of Rome
- Acilia's many amenities, allowing it to operate as a small hub between two larger centers

The main complaints were...

- Transit reliability: the buses and Roma-Lido train are not always on time or functional
- The poor maintenance of public space
- A lack of nightlife and specialized leisure or social activities (e.g. cinema) within walking distance
- The loss of business on Via di Acilia due to indoor malls
- Chaotic traffic and parking, making driving a frustrating experience

## Formal Interviews

The formal interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of Acilia beyond brief livability questions. We met with three community groups to conduct formal interviews: the Islamic Center, the Centro Anziani, and members of the San Leonardo Church and Acilia's neighborhood committee, the Comitato di Quartiere di Monti San Paolo e Acilia Sud.

### Islamic Center

Our interview with Imam Mohammed Hafiz and two members of the Acilia Islamic Center revealed the Islamic Center's strong bonds within their own religious community and their cohesive relationship with the Acilia community as a whole. We learned that the center's location was not selected simply because Acilia has a large immigrant community, but also because the population is growing and the main goal was to fill a gap between the Islamic Centers in Rome and Ostia. Many of the center's users come from areas outside of Acilia, though we did not learn which mode of transportation people take to reach the Islamic Center. Most importantly, this interview helped us to understand how well-integrated the Muslim community is in Acilia. They are included in dialogue with politicians and the Comitato alike, have a friendly relationship with the other tenants of the building and surrounding area, and even work with one of the local churches to provide language classes to members who are learning Italian.

### Centro Anziani ("Centro Antichi Ragazzi")

The president of the Centro Anziani, Domenico Bucci, has lived in Acilia for most of his life working as a public bus driver. He moved to Acilia in the 1960s and built his own home. Today, he and one of his two sons remain in Acilia. He defines the historic core of Acilia as the original building of Centro Anziani (the former Casa di Facismo) and area surrounding the center, specifically Piazza Sicani, the old bar, and the Clinic.

Bucci's typical path is from his house to the Centro Anziani, with a stop at the pharmacy or grocery store along the way. Because there is no hospital in Acilia, he occasionally has to go to Ostia for the hospital or Casal Bernocchi's aftercare center, but can usually find anything else he needs (the doctor, the store,

his friends) in Acilia. In the eyes of Bucci, the main issue in Acilia is the lack of discipline and personal responsibility for maintaining public amenities, citing the people who drink outside of the Church and those who do not properly sort their waste as examples. More tangibly, he believes parking and public services also need improvement. He mentioned the increase in the immigrant population, but does not think they are associated with the problems in Acilia. He sees the real problem lying within the municipio, but some residents would rather use immigrants as the scapegoat.

## Church & Comitato

For our most comprehensive interview, we met with the president of Acilia's neighborhood committee, Ezio Pietrosanti, a representative from San Leonardo church, Biancamaria Bonanni, and Dr. Ettore Baldi, a retired entrepreneur. Dr. Baldi summarized Acilia's settlement history in juxtaposition to the story of his parents meeting in Acilia in 1928 while working for the Fascist government. Baldi was born in Acilia in his family's self-built home. At the time, the Casa del Fascio, now the Centro Anziani, was the center of development in the area and what is now the bookstore near San Leonardo Church is one of the only original buildings that remains in Acilia.

According to Pietrosanti, the "Comitato", or neighborhood committee, Comitato di Quartiere di Monti San Paolo e Acilia Sud, was formed in 1970 to support residents of Acilia who, at the time, had no political power. Since Acilia was historically a self-built area, creating one cohesive sense of community was not a priority. Today metal gates still surround the houses of Acilia, a tradition passed down from medieval times illustrating the importance placed on family life over the community at large. For many years, the Church was the only service available to the community, and although this is no longer the case the Church still offers a variety of religious services and social activities. Some of these services serve people living in poverty, such as free meals, and Sunday dinners open to all residents, especially the elderly.

When Acilia's Comitato chapter was created, one of its most important functions was to build community. The Comitato is a volunteer-only organization with a €10 membership fee to help fund projects and activities. There are about 2,000 members in Acilia, with about twenty who are regularly active. To the president, the most important project they have organized recently is the "Controllo del Vicinato" campaign, similar to Jane Jacobs' 'eyes on the street' idea, as a way to limit criminal activity. The Church and the Comitato have a close relationship and the Church often hosts Comitato activities to help them avoid paying for spaces only available through Municipio X. The Comitato also has a supportive relationship with AMA, who they are hoping will help with cleanup and beautification efforts in the bottleneck area connecting Acilia Nord and Sud.

Today, Municipio X currently has no political leader because of mafia infiltration, so the Comitato now helps with electricity, sewage, and maintenance of some public spaces such as the vacant green space in the southeast section of our focus area. Municipio X is one of the largest and lowest density in Rome, and they would like to embrace this asset, but execution can be challenging. For example, the Municipio granted the Comitato joint control over the vacant lot, which was designated as a "tertiary area" by the plan of Rome, but there was no developer interested in buying the land.

In the southern part of Acilia (outside of our focus area), Madonetta park, a former "lost space", is a successful and well-used space complete with a play area, coffee bar, and activities organized by the Comitato. In spite of its success, the Comitato still would eventually like to renovate the vacant lot in our focus area because Madonetta park is not always accessible for people such as mothers with strollers. The Church and Comitato have worked together to put some uses to the lot by installing benches, but even though the space has a lot of potential there is still a stigma of criminal activity



Figure 8.1 Team Acilia meets with the Church & Comitato

occurring in this space. Instead, the piazza by the Church continues to be the most popular area to linger despite the traffic and parking issues.

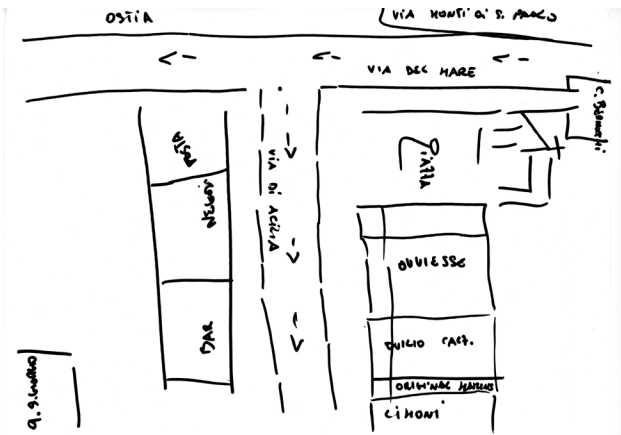
The president of the Comitato believes the main issues in Acilia are...

- Redeveloping depressed or underused areas of the town
- Improving connection to the airport

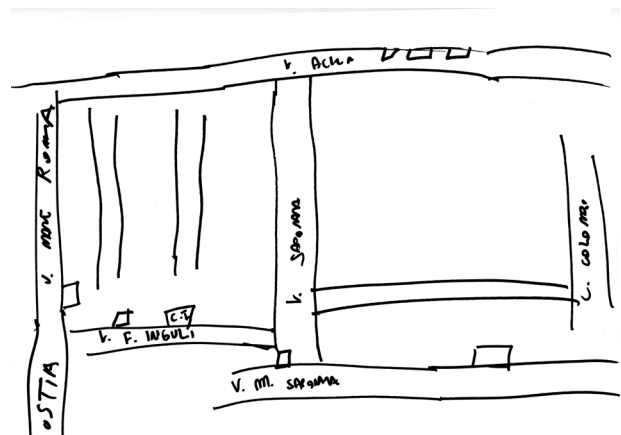
## 8.2 Mapping

### Lynch Maps

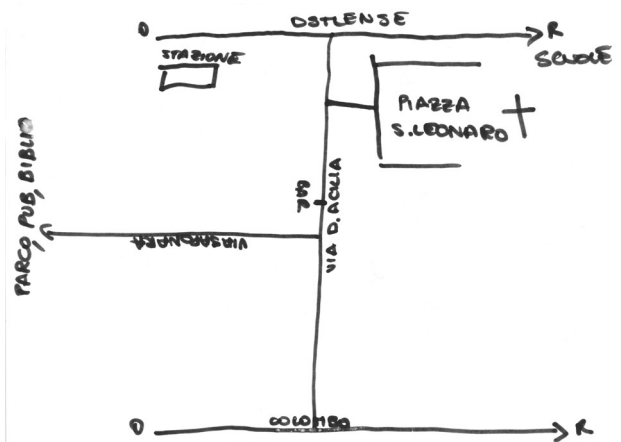
We gave minimal instructions while community members completed the Lynch exercise, but tended to see a similar pattern of how people perceived Acilia. Most maps included paths, edges, nodes, and landmarks, but did not necessarily include districts, likely because of the size of Acilia. The notable path in Acilia was Via di Acilia and the edges were Via del Mare and Cristoforo Colombo. No clear districts were identified but the interviews implied that Via di Acilia was the main shopping district within Acilia, and Ostia served as the true shopping/nightlife/hospital district. San Leonardo Church and its piazza was an almost universal landmark and node among the interviewees, with the exception of the member of the Islamic Center who marked the Islamic Center as his primary landmark



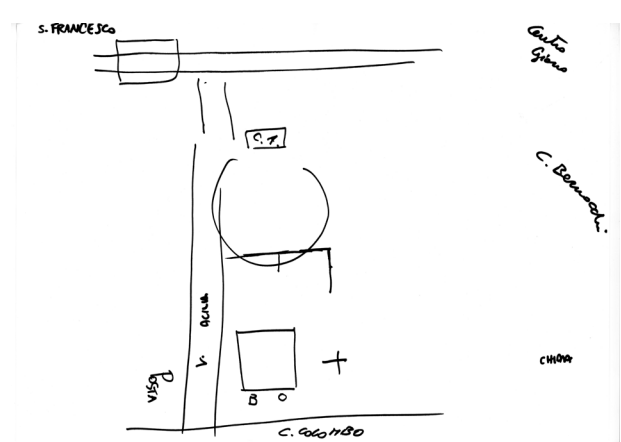
Veneziano



Mohammed



Matteo & Giorgia



Chiara

Figure 8.2. Lynch Maps by the community members

## Narrative Maps

Though we collected fewer narrative maps, they still revealed an important detail: of the people we spoke to, they choose to spend a significant portion of their time outside of Acilia, and especially outside of the focus area of Acilia. Many passed through the focus area, but chose to linger in other areas of Rome and Ostia. This particular narrative map illustrates the journey of a young woman and her friend who came together one morning to have coffee at a bar along Via di Acilia.

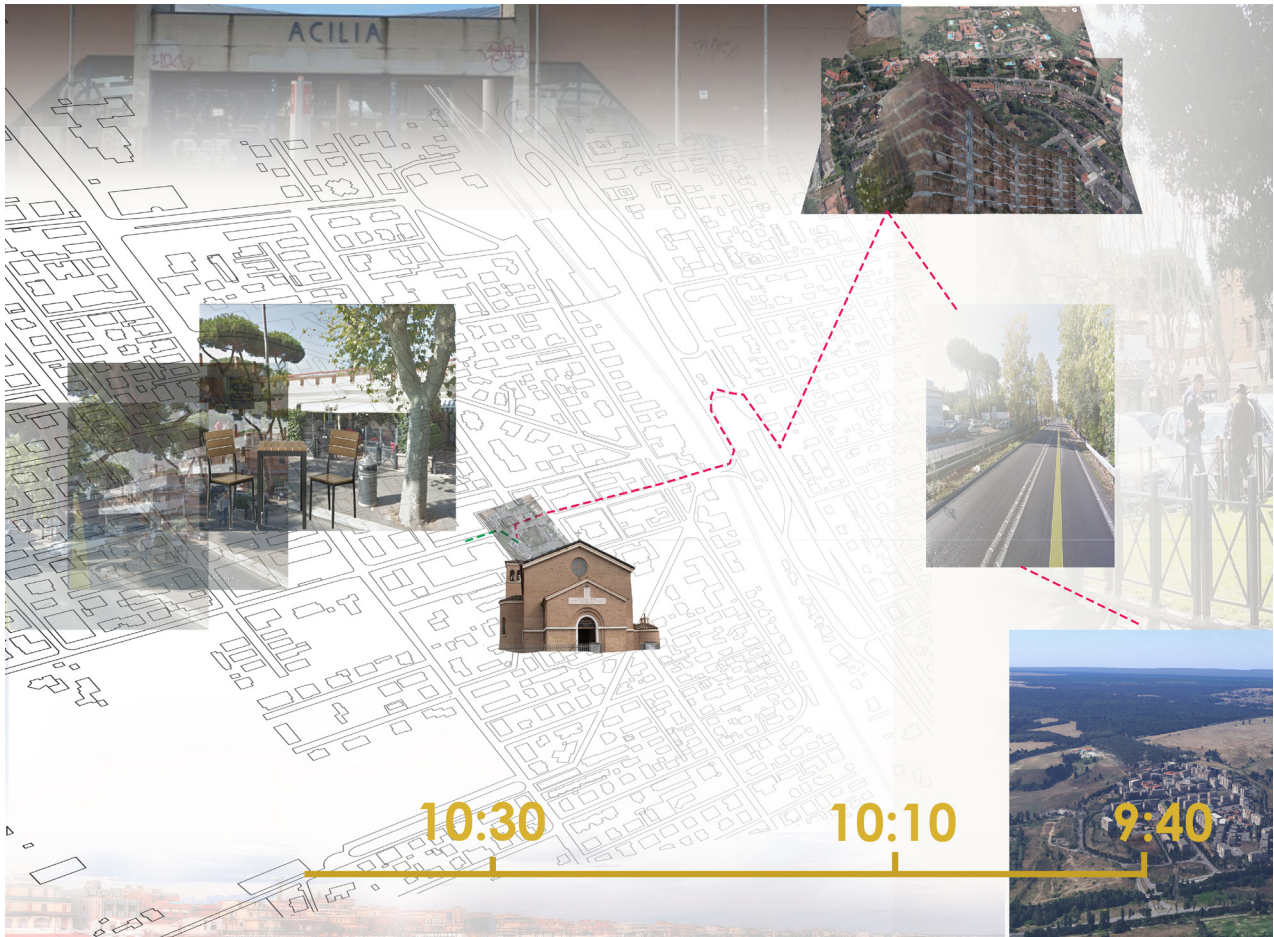


Figure 8.2.2 Narrative map

## 8.3 Summary

Our community interviews disproved some of our assumptions about the issues in Acilia and reinforced the need for more well-maintained public spaces that fit the needs of the community. The interviews also helped us understand the how a lack of identity within the context of Rome affects Acilia-- it is not as memorable or imageable as it has the potential to be in light of its uniqueness and small-town atmosphere that is not found in the center of Rome.



# S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS



Examining Acilia's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) allows for a critical analysis of current resources, while anticipating courses of action for the future.

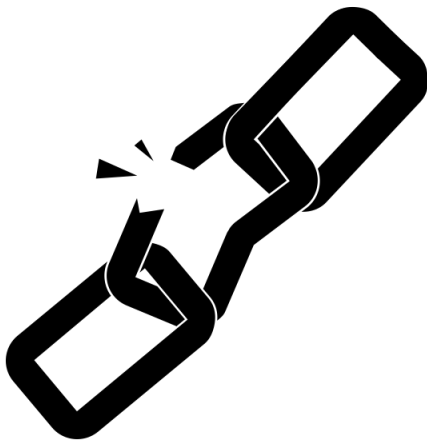
## 9.1 Strengths



Acilia's close-knit community and strategic location between Rome and Ostia stand out as key assets. While speaking with community members, there was a positive sentiment of Acilia as a place where you know your neighbors, even among people who wanted to move. The town's location was also an important positive factor because residents are close to the center of Rome, Ostia, the airport, and the sea. Acilia also has a plethora of businesses and institutions, which allow people to meet the majority of their needs within a small radius.

Acilia's affordable homes, low density, and train station further strengthen its desirability, especially for families and older people looking to settle down. The makeup of the community is relatively diverse and the relationship between residents of all origins is peaceful and cohesive.

## 9.2 Weaknesses

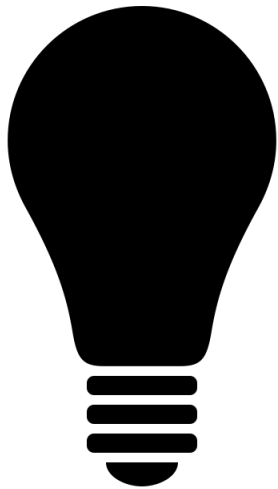


Acilia's prominent weaknesses include the lack of reliable public transportation, parking, well-maintained public spaces, and leisure activities. Many community members complained of buses and trains frequently not showing up on time or breaking down. In addition, Acilia lacks sufficient parking relative to the number of drivers in the area, which becomes particularly chaotic on the streets. Another common complaint, especially among younger residents, is the lack of leisure activities in Acilia. Though residents can meet their basic needs in Acilia, they must leave for activities such as seeing a movie, going to a nightclub, or shopping at a mall.

Of the few public spaces in Acilia, many are poorly maintained. The areas have not been weeded, there is graffiti and tagging, and some even lack seating. Similarly, a significant number of the sidewalks have holes, are uneven, and are littered with trash presenting public safety concerns, especially for the elderly and disabled. In some areas, there are no sidewalks at all.

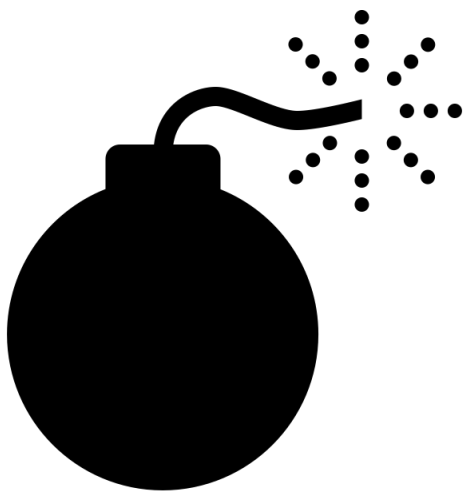


## 9.3 Opportunities



As our themes denote, we see the potential for more functional, well-connected, and identity-reinforcing design interventions throughout our focus area, and especially in a select number of locations. The piazza near the train station, the fitness park, and the parking lot in the northwest present great opportunities to create more spaces for parking and quality public green space. Via di Acilia is already quite a successful commercial corridor and can be improved by making practical design changes, such as increased parking, signage, beautification efforts. Additionally, Acilia lacks a sense of place but its close-knit community, location, and fascinating history make for great passages into cultivating a unique sense of identity within the community. Acilia's comitato is quite active and their leadership will be crucial in bringing these improvements to life, possibly using tactical urbanism as a strategy.

## 9.4 Threats



The main and most concerning threat in Acilia is the organized crime that has infiltrated Municipio X, rendering it ineffective at the moment. There currently is no government official responsible for the area or local government point of contact. This is concerning because many public spaces may not be able to change without governmental permission or support. In addition, there are a few areas in the commercial corridor that resemble small public spaces but are actually privately owned, such as the OVS complex. This means their maintenance and improvement may be solely at the discretion of the business owner. If these business owners do not have the time, money, or desire to improve these spaces, then changing the quality of Acilia's "lost spaces" will become much more difficult. Finally, the relatively recent increase in indoor shopping malls is an external threat to Acilia's small businesses owners and therefore a threat to the longevity of Via di Acilia as a commercial hub of the community.





# DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Our strategic vision for Acilia seeks to address community issues with an approach that builds on existing assets.

## 10.1 Vision Statement

*Walking out of the Acilia station after a long ride on the Roma-Lido train, you look up from your phone and pause. Instantly, you feel at home...*

Acilia is a community where all members feel a bond with their environment as the most **memorable, well-connected,** and **pedestrian-friendly** peripheral neighborhood in Rome.

With high quality **public spaces,** pleasant and walkable **pathways** to popular destinations, and ample **greenery,** the daily experiences of a resident or commuter are unparalleled.

As a hub situated between two major centers, Acilia boasts the services of a city in a **friendly, compact neighborhood.**

# 10.2 Design Guidelines

## Citizen Concerns / Issues (from SWOT)

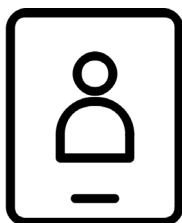
Drawing on lessons from our interviews and SWOT analysis, we see that Acilia already has many public spaces, but many are underutilized, in need of maintenance, or do not match the desires of the residents. Similarly, many residents enjoy Acilia's connections to Rome and Ostia, but find driving and walking within Acilia a frustrating experience. We seek to address these concerns by making strategic interventions on a connected pathway through Acilia in order to address present concerns and galvanize future revitalization throughout the rest of the neighborhood.

Our work draws inspiration from the ideas of place-making and urban acupuncture. Both techniques use small-scale interventions to make positive changes in a community. Place-making specifically focuses on pride, identity and "creat[ing] a sense of belonging through place" (Silberberg, 2013) while improving the quality of a neighborhood. Examples of place-making include but are not limited to: strategic seating and beautification, community art projects, cleanup efforts, visually representations of community history, and festivals.

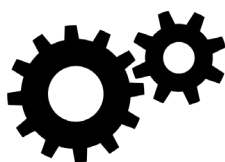
Urban acupuncture is a similar concept, though it is less concerned with identity and more with using strategic "pinpricks of urbanism" to address pressing neighborhood concerns that inspire more long-term changes in the future (Lerner, 2014). With both of these techniques, we have created design interventions that are practical, incremental, connected through walkable pathways, and present the opportunity for continued development throughout the rest of the neighborhood.

Furthermore, by applying our themes of identity, connectivity, and functionality to public space through design and tactical interventions, we seek to make living and working in Acilia a more pleasant and memorable experience. Acilia's residents like the fact that they have a plethora of business and institutions, connections to two major city centers, a close-knit community, and active neighborhood groups, so we would like our designs to compliment those existing features.

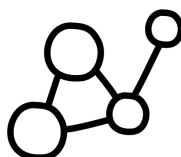
## Key Themes



**Identity** - Kevin Lynch describes identity as feeling a distinction from other places but a sense of belonging to a community (Lynch, 1981). Our understanding of identity also includes the idea of imageability. An imageable neighborhood is unique and has a memorable character with landmarks and recognizable districts. Many of the residents we spoke to feel that Acilia is not a memorable place. It exists but others do not seem to know where or what it is in spite of its rich history. While planners cannot impose an identity on a place, we propose to improve public spaces and use smaller, more tactical approaches as a way to create spaces that inspire the community to engage with their place identity. This also extends into incorporating Acilia's history into our design, creating opportunities for memories to be made.



**Functionality** - Based on Lynch's concept of fit, which is "how well its spatial and temporal pattern matches the customary behavior of its inhabitants. It is the match between action and form in its behavior settings and behavior circuits" (Lynch, 1981). Acilia has public and social spaces, they just need better maintenance and matching with desired activities. Functionality also relates to policy, how can the community function and resolve its own issues in the absence of the Municipio's assistance?



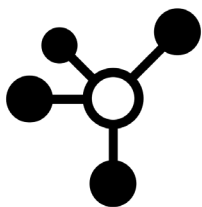
**Connectivity** - Connectivity manifests in design in two ways: 1) Addressing accessibility challenges by improving sidewalks, intersections, and signage and 2) Creating clear pedestrian and vehicular pathways to key local nodes, decongesting traffic, and reworking street parking. In making these improvements, we hope to create a more continuous urban fabric. (Ruggeri, 2014).

# 10.3 Design Framework

Our design proposals aim not to change the character of Acilia, but rather enhance what is already there by letting our key themes guide our interventions. We will accomplish this by creating a more welcoming experience upon entering Acilia’s gateways, improving pedestrian mobility, decongesting traffic and parking, creating more cohesive pathways to Acilia’s key nodes, and using both design and programming to create opportunities for Acilia to cultivate its own sense of identity. In other words, our key themes will physically manifest as design proposals for Acilia’s gateways, pathways, and nodes.

Most of the spaces that we have chosen for redesigning, we characterized as lost space. Our designs will revitalize spaces that are important within Acilia, but may currently not be used to their highest potential.

To categorize each lost space, we are incorporating elements Kevin Lynch defined in *The City Image and Its Elements*: gateways, pathways, and nodes. For the sake of clarity, although nodes can also be understood as “the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter” (Lynch, 1960: 47), we have observed that certain entry points into our focus area that may not fulfill the complete definition of nodes for many of them are not ‘cores.’ Due to this difference in definitions, we have specified gateways as entry points and nodes as gathering points



## Nodes

“Nodes may be simply concentrations, which gain their importance from being the condensation of some use or physical character” (Lynch, 1960: 47).

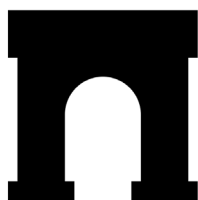
- Piazza San Leonardo
- Vacant Lot and Fitness Park
- OVS Complex



## Paths

“Paths are the channels along which ... people observe the city while moving through it” (Lynch, 1960: 47).

- Via Angelo Zottoli
- Via di Acilia
- Via Ludovico Antomelli
- Via di Valle Porcina



## Gateways

Gateways “are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter” (Lynch, 1960: 47).

- Stazione Acilia
- Bottleneck
- Intersection of Via di Acilia and Via di Valle Porcina
- Intersection of Via Costantino Beschi and Via Landi Fabiano

Categorizing our spaces by city element allows us to create a journey through Acilia with two gateways as starting points: Stazione Acilia and the Bottleneck. Stazione Acilia, its adjacent piazza, and parking lot are the main gateway for those who are taking the FC2, which connects Rome and Ostia by train. From there, passengers can take the bus or access their personal vehicles. The bottleneck road at the historic Borgo Acilia is the only vehicular entrance for automobiles to enter Acilia Sud from Acilia Nord and Via del Mare. Our proposed renovation can create new informal public spaces and may one day become a node for Acilia, though for this plan it is mainly a gateway into Acilia for cars and pedestrians who have parked their vehicles in a parking lot.

As the pedestrian travels down Via di Acilia, they will reach what community members already consider an important node of the neighborhood. Currently frequented by community members, there are opportunities for a better layout and more scheduled programming. We want the design to reflect that this piazza is not meant to be the end point for the pedestrian, but rather a gathering point that leads to other enjoyable destinations within the neighborhood. With Via Ludovico Antonelli, there is an opportunity to connect Piazza San Leonardo with the vacant lot at the southeastern corner of our focus area. Moreover, Via Ludovico can become an important connection to a more formal green space for the community. This piazza can also draw the pedestrian to travel further down Via di Acilia where an abundance of shops, restaurants, and caffès can be located. Our next proposed node is the OVS complex, an empty slab of concrete along the Via di Acilia pathway. This area can be revitalized into a community pocket park with seating for people walking who want a break or customers of the adjacent caffès. The proposed design would include greenery to beautify the area and provide shade on hot summer days.

The final node on our path is the vacant southeastern lot that holds many possibilities for future use. Our main proposal is a park that hopefully will become a node for Acilia's families.

These gateways, pathways, and nodes define the journey we want to bring the pedestrian through our focus area. However there are still many more gateways, pathways, and nodes, some listed as lost space, that can still be targeted in later interventions.

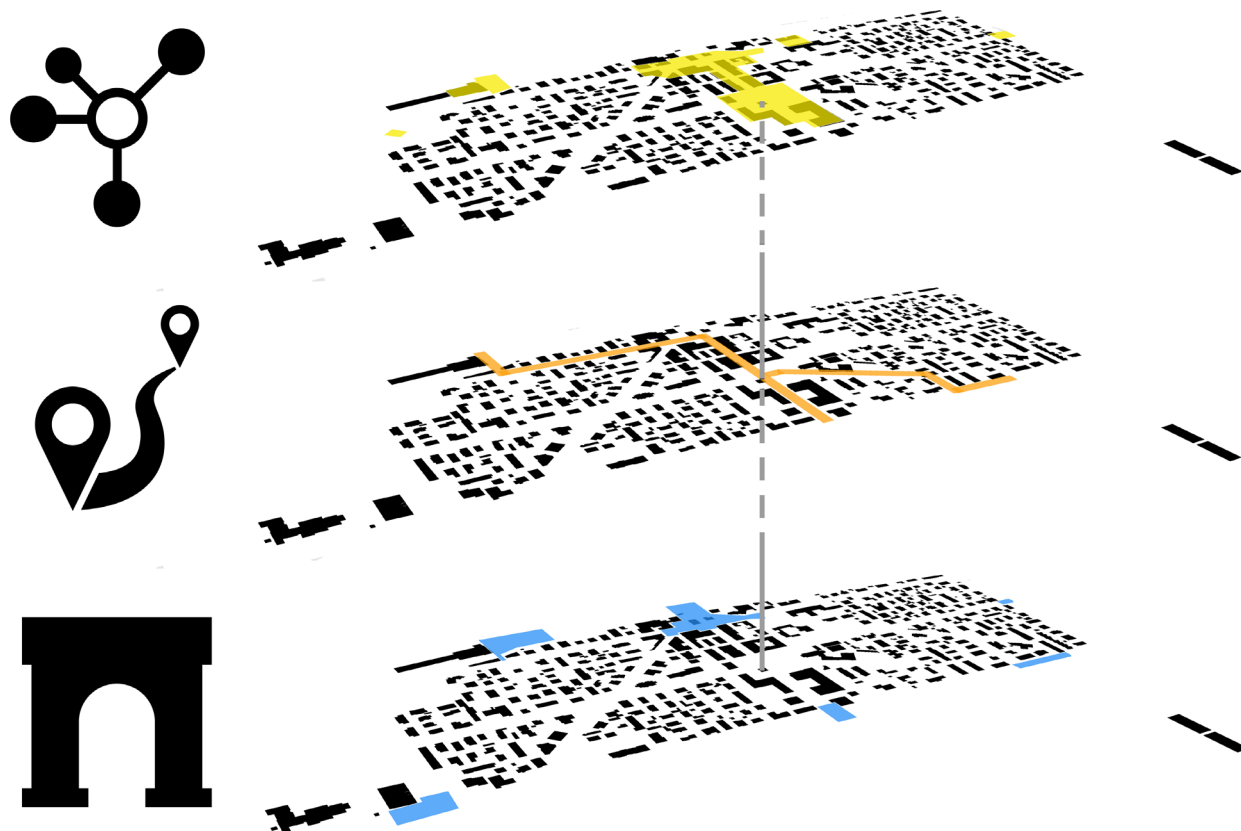


Figure 10.3 Nodes, Pathways, Gateways

# 10.4 Methodology

The first step in our design process was a design charrette with Paul Saporito, an architect and urban designer from Boulder, Colorado (US). Using tracing paper and a large printed figure-ground map at 1:1000 scale, we sketched out an approximate system of public spaces and interconnecting paths that could be woven through the existing fabric of our neighborhood. This exercise guided our adoption of an 'urban acupuncture' approach, favoring a series of targeted, small-scale improvements that build on, rather than replace, the existing urban structure of Acilia. It also helped us identify the three design elements listed above: gateways, pathways, and nodes.

The next step involved mapping out the locations of existing gateways, pathways, and nodes in order to determine which specific areas were the most suitable to focus on in our design proposal. This exercise revealed a thread of activity and movement that begins near the Stazione Acilia and bottleneck road and moves south through the central corridor. Because we felt that the large vacant property to the southeast could not be ignored, and could be a primary feature of our design, we developed the concept of a 'walk through Acilia' as the vantage point from which new improvements could be experienced. This walk begins at the train station, moves east toward the historic center of Borgo Acilia, comes down the central corridor into Piazza San Leonardo, and then meanders toward the vacant property along Via di Valle Porcina. As a narrative tool, it puts the pedestrian at the center of our proposed designs. With this journey in mind, we selected five specific sites to focus on in detail (Figure 10.5).

Based on our own varying interests in each of these locations, we assigned one site to each team member, with the vacant property originally split between two. Each of us were then tasked with thinking of how our site could be improved over three different time scales: immediate interventions, short-term interventions (five years), and long-term interventions (ten years). This strategy is intended to provide the community with a range of options that can be adopted according to priority and variables such as perceived need, visibility, and available funding. It also challenged us to think of ways that a space can be activated or modified during the time it takes to get more significant changes underway, based on the 'tactical urbanism' framework presented by Mark Lydon and Anthony Garcia in their book of the same name (2015). Taking the element of time into consideration, we hope to bridge the gap between existing conditions and the urban environment described in our vision statement.



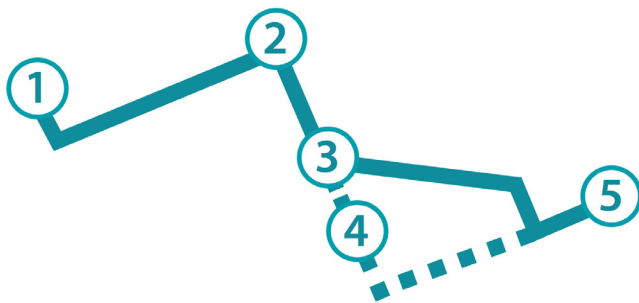
Figure 10.4 Process Image



# 10.5 Design Masterplan



Figure 10.5 Masterplan and Planned Pathway of Renovated Acilia





# DESIGN INTERVENTIONS



Physical interventions are focused in five areas identified as crucial nodes, which will work together to create a 'green' system in Acilia.

# 11.1 Stazione Acilia



## Existing Conditions

Despite efforts to revitalize this newly constructed space, the train station piazza is currently in a deteriorating condition and has no practical function. The piazza is dominated by a large swath of concrete leading from the exit of the train station to the huge expanse of parking. It is surrounded by overgrown grass on both sides, and there is no seating except for the informal seating available on the edge of a small fountain that is often filled with red-colored water. Cars speeding quickly on the north side of the station furthers the unpleasant experience one has at the piazza.



Figure 11.1.1 Existing state of Stazione Acilia

## Intermediate Proposal

The immediate changes to the site focus more on functionality than the other two themes, specifically relating to the environmental, social, and cultural functionality of the space. In order to change the space from a large, empty swath of concrete, we propose large square planters that are slightly raised to discourage people from stepping on the plants. There will be eight in total, with two sets of four plots that make a square and shape paths separating each set of four plots. In half of the plots there will be drought resistant plants and shrubs native to the Mediterranean biome. The other half of these plots will house a variety of herbs and flowers that will complement the garden patches proposed for the large grass lot in the south of our focus area. The herbs and flowers will be from the various countries that reflect the population of Acilia, and people will be encouraged to grow plants from their own home country, which could be symbolic of them planting their roots in Acilia. We also plan to add seating around the new garden plots and in the grassy area to the south of the pavement.



Figure 11.1.2 Garden plots at Tiburtina Station in Rome

Another immediate plan will be to return the grassy area to the north of the paved area to its natural state, covered in Mediterranean shrubs and plants. Additionally, we want to create a community event where children in the neighborhood can decorate tiles that will adorn the walls of the pathway between the train station and the street that runs alongside it, which is the most commonly used entrance to the station used by the neighborhood's residents. The Outdoor Symbolic Memorial in Oklahoma City, OK (US) designed by Butzer Design Partnership is an example of a wall with tiles decorated by children to show their support and commemorate their local history.



Figure 11.1.3 Outdoor Symbolic Memorial Children's Wall Oklahoma City, OK (US)

## 5-Year Proposal

We plan to make the train station more well-connected to the rest of Acilia, as well as to the rest of Rome, by emphasizing and increasing its bikeability. We have added two bike rental stations outside of the station and signage relating to how Acilia fits into the broader network of bicycle pathways throughout the greater Rome Area (Piste Ciclabili di Roma). Bicycle racks will also be placed along the pathway between the newly paved path by the parking area and the main piazza, which will have a striped pattern to further decrease the visual monotony of the space that currently exists. There will also be a shift in the paving and the grassy areas so that the piazza is aligned with the façade of the train station, as it is currently off-centered. The design also includes possible statuary by local artists that could be added to the space between the sets of garden patches, which is envisioned to bring a much needed visual art presence to the area while giving exposure to the talented artists of the Rome. Additional seating in the grassy area to the south has also been included.

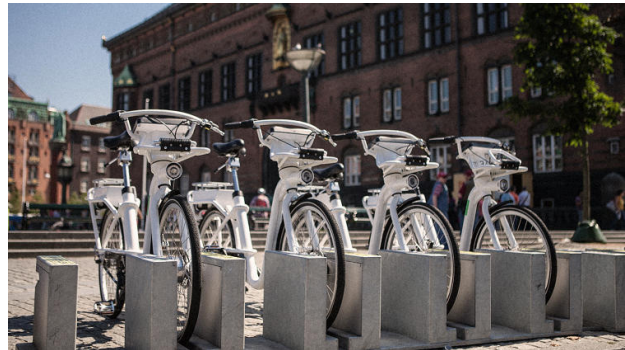


Figure 11.1.4 Bike Share in Copenhagen



Figure 11.1.5 The Swimmer by Agostino Iacurci in Ostiense

## 10-Year Proposal

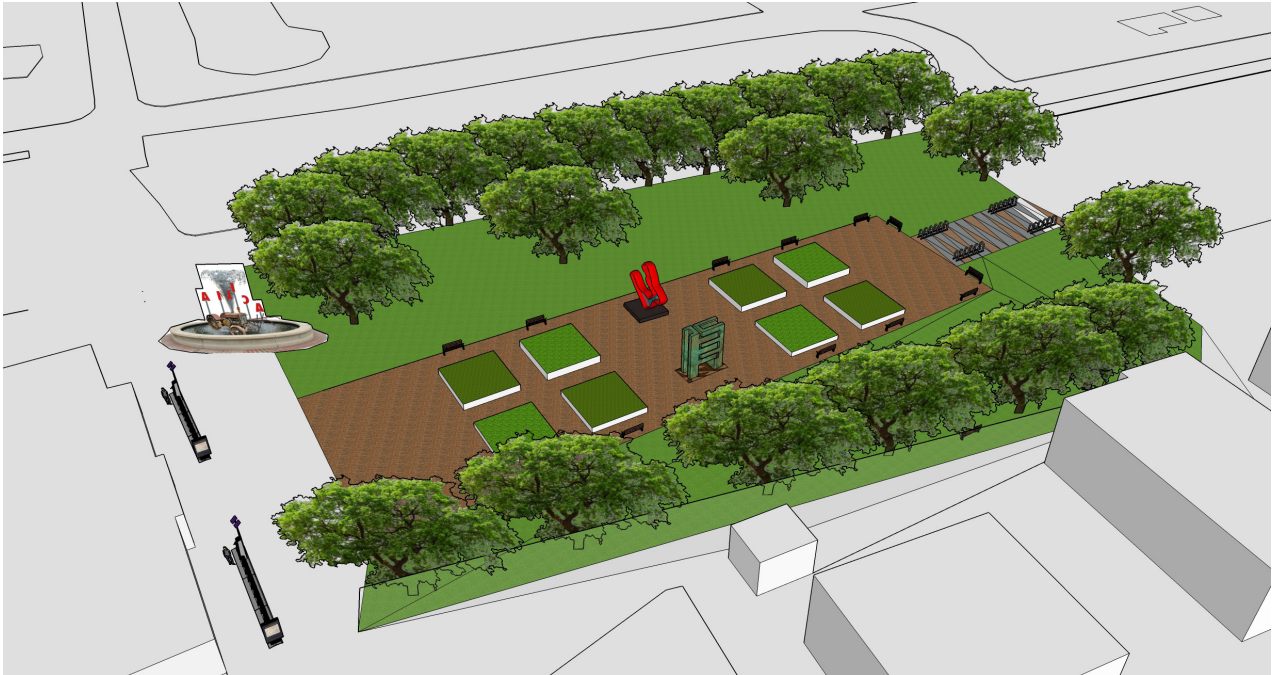


Figure 11.1.6 Proposed Stazione improvements

The long-term vision for the station piazza has a line of Holm Oak trees (native to Italy and the Mediterranean coast) on three sides that will visually and tangibly set it apart from the busy street to the north, and the buildings to the south. It will make the space appear less overwhelming and vacuous than it currently is and more pleasant than the five year plan. We suggest transplanting mature trees in order to create a barrier between the street and the piazza so that people can feel like they are in a more secluded and natural setting, and better enjoy the space.

In order to further address the theme of identity, there will be a large fountain added to the space closest to the train station's entrance and to the north. This fountain will have a center art piece made out of old farm equipment, an ode to Acilia's agrarian past. Stemming from the middle of this large statue, "Acilia" will be spelled out to let people know where they are and help distinguish Acilia as a destination rather than somewhere people simply pass through on their way to Rome or Ostia. Another large addition that will ideally be completed by the ten year plan is the addition of multiple decks to the eastern half of the parking lot, which will be used for commuter parking. The portion without the deck will be designated as three hour parking that daily visitors can use. This will help free up traffic from the neighborhood as a whole because people would not need to park near the church. On the weekends, the decked parking area would be open to all, and the non-decked area could be used to house events such as fairs and farmers markets.



Figure 11.1.7 This fountain highlights Acilia's agrarian heritage

## Pathway: Via Angelo Zottoli

The business employees we spoke to felt that the increase in indoor malls is negatively impacting business activity on Via di Acilia. The indoor malls are an attractive alternative because they are social spaces, comfortable regardless of the weather, and provide a greater number of shopping options. One employee felt that although they have experienced a loss of customers, Acilia's small size means they have the advantage of "regulars" who come back to the shop. Still, another argued that improving Via di Acilia physically would attract more shoppers in the long run.

# 11.2 Bottleneck Gateway



## Existing Conditions

The trident-like convergence of Via di Acilia, Via Francesco Ingoli, and Via Antonio da Gaeta in the north-central section of our focus area comprises the only vehicular entrance to Acilia Sud from the Via del Mare and the neighborhoods on the north side of the railway. It is also the historical core of the original Borgo Acilia, with four of the area's oldest buildings arranged around two formerly public spaces known as Piazza dei Sicani and Largo Girolamo da Montesarchio. We have labeled this area as the 'bottleneck' of Acilia because of the high volume of moving and parked cars which choke each of its four intersections. The highway entrance road which Via di Acilia connects to at its northern terminus contains high-speed, one-way eastbound traffic, which is funneled into the central corridor and one-way radial streets of our focus area by a design which facilitates rather than discourages speed. Because there are no stop signs, stop lights, or other traffic signals in the bottleneck, often a car is not required to slow or stop until a person or other vehicle directly crosses its path.



Figure 11.2.1 Existing gateway into Acilia



Figure 11.2.2 War Memorial

As discussed in our analysis, we identified two nodes in this section of our focus area that correspond with Piazza dei Sicani and Largo Girolamo. Highly-used features of these nodes include the Centro Anziani (senior activity center), a clinic, a popular bar/caffetteria, a supermarket, a chip stand, the public elementary school, a daycare center, and a series of small businesses (many of which are medically related, presumably because of access to the clinic). People accessing these places on foot must navigate knots of traffic, poorly demarcated crosswalks, and narrow or nonexistent sidewalks, making it an intimidating and somewhat unsafe experience. Parking patterns are chaotic and disorganized, with multiple rows of cars accumulating in front of buildings, along street edges, and occasionally in the center of intersections such as Via Angelo Zottoli and Francesco Ingoli. This arrangement often leads to 'friction' among motorists negotiating complicated intersections and between pedestrians attempting to pass through them.

Presently, the bottleneck serves as the most prominent vehicular gateway into our focus area and its historical anchor. However, it is used almost exclusively as a space for traveling because of the important linkages it contains, which include access to a large park-and-ride lot. Despite being well maintained, our observations indicate that most people do not interact with the pocket park between Piazza dei Sicani and Via Costantino Beschi except to pass through it. Through our design proposal, the bottleneck could be incrementally transformed from a 'non-space' associated with congestion to a sequence of well-defined public spaces which highlight its architectural assets, improve safety for pedestrians, and provide the residents of Acilia Sud with a coherent, memorable gateway into their community.



Figure 11.2.3 Historic Clinic Building

## Immediate Proposal

The initial phase of this design intervention would be focused on reclaiming public space from informal parking. This can be done in a variety of ways following the framework of 'tactical urbanism': though set in a vastly different context, the case of converting pavement (for vehicles) into plazas (for people) at Times Square in New York City provides an applicable model, wherein temporary objects are employed to contain traffic and expand space for pedestrians (Lydon & Garcia, 2015). In the San Lorenzo district of Rome, which is notable for its high concentration of illegally squatted and occupied buildings, activists have replicated this model by carving public space out of parking space with a porous barrier of potted plants and utility spools.

Barriers, like Figure 11.2.4, could be placed along the edges of each intersection to guide traffic flow and establish a more assertive pedestrian presence. These spaces could be populated with street furniture for use by members of the senior center, patrons of the chip stand, parents waiting to pick up their children at school, and employees of the clinic and other businesses during their breaks.



Figure 11.2.4 Tactical urbanism in San Lorenzo, Rome

## 5-Year Proposal

The intermediate phase of implementation would make permanent the tactical interventions above by raising pedestrian plazas to grade with the sidewalk and installing fixtures such as benches, trees, and tables in those spaces. In doing this, it is important to address the needs of residents who are at different stages in the life cycle. In *Planning Neighborhood Space with People*, Randolph Hester points out that families with very young children and/or elderly members experience a lack of mobility which makes them more dependent on spaces in their neighborhood. Making sure that these spaces are 'usable', or have specific programmatic purposes for each of these age groups, is essential to their long-term success (Hester, 1975). For example, the British guide to *Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors* recommends that public seating include armrests and a minimum height of 19" to accommodate elderly users (IDGO 2012). Additionally, the short stretch of Via di Acilia that lies between the clinic and the old building that houses a popular bar/caffetteria could be blocked off temporarily to test the effects of diverting traffic along the radial streets and away from the Piazza San Leonardo at the center of our focus area. The existing tree-lined median would be extended east to create a micro-roundabout to regulate and slow traffic flow



Figure 11.2.5 Specially designed seating activates public space for elderly residents



## 10-Year Proposal



Figure 11.2.6 Proposed Bottleneck Improvements

The long-term proposal for the bottleneck will necessitate major modifications to existing street infrastructure and the possible addition of two new commercial buildings and a parking structure. In this scenario, the entrance road would be straightened along a north-south median that permanently diverts traffic to the two intersections that terminate the existing east-west median. Both intersections would be made coherent and safer for pedestrians by installing a circular system of crosswalks that connect each of the five converging blocks, allowing for the restoration of public space in front of the old cinema building, which we know previously existed according to historical photographs.

Currently, the space between the senior center and the access road to the Via del Mare is vacant, but is in fact a green 'lid' over the railway that runs underneath it. By appropriating space from the parking lot to the west, a pair of two-story commercial buildings could be built to create a more definitive gateway into our focus area. Similar projects have succeeded in the United States, such as the Columbus, Ohio 'cap' over an interstate freeway.

The building to on the west side of the street would also serve as a pedestrian entrance into a two-story decked parking garage at its rear. Because of a change in elevation, this structure would be adequately concealed by other existing buildings and satisfy the parking needs of motorists removed from the street by earlier interventions.

The eventual goal of this design is to unite the historical core of our neighborhood core around a series of small, interconnected public spaces which serve as a gateway that is accessible by multiple modes of transit and aesthetically coherent.



Figure 11.2.7 Cap Corner in Columbus,, OH (US)

## Pathway: Via di Acilia

The northern portion of Via di Acilia links the bottleneck to Piazza San Leonardo, the central 'town square' of Acilia. It is currently lined with three-story mixed-use buildings that host a variety of vibrant businesses such as bars, clothing boutiques, pizzerias, and small food markets. Keeping in mind that this street could be pedestrianized on a temporary basis for special purposes in the future, we recommend that it be resurfaced with permeable pavers to distinguish it visually from the rest of the street network. Automatic bollards might also be installed to block traffic from Via di Acilia during such events. Existing trees could be supplemented with linear planters to add greenery without sacrificing valuable sidewalk width. Lastly, the simple addition of suspended lighting between buildings across the street could improve illumination at night while adding ambience reminiscent of many streetscapes in Rome's historic center. As a visitor entering from the north, these added elements would invite you to down the central corridor and toward the heart of Acilia.

# 11.3 Piazza San Leonardo



## Existing Conditions

The center of our focus area, Piazza San Leonardo, is composed of three pedestrian islands in what can be considered the central and busiest intersection, in terms of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In our traffic count, we recorded 94 vehicles driving through the intersection in a span of five minutes. Throughout our analysis of street hierarchy, sidewalk condition analysis, and interviews, Acilia’s physical conditions prioritize cars and scooters over pedestrian.

The main grassy area in front of the Church is well used by residents, with many congregating throughout the day to chat or people watch. Across the street is Gran Caffè, a coffee bar that has significant amounts of traffic in morning hours. On weekends, especially Sunday after church, these two locations are heavily used by community members, ranging from families to the elderly. Because of the importance of this node, however, parking is also very heavy in this area throughout the week. Outside of Gran Caffè, cars park in rows of two with more scattered throughout the piazza.



Figure 11.3.1 Piazza San Leonardo

The other two islands are considerably smaller and used for different purposes. One holds a flower shop that is connected to the sidewalk of Via di Acilia. This island and its connecting sidewalk create an internal space that serves as a parking lot for the area, only holding around 20 cars. The other island is a space that has seating but no trees, and is used as more of a traffic island for pedestrian safety rather than a gathering space. When residents do gather in this space, it is only for short periods of time.

Although the overall space is well used by pedestrians as a node and due to its location on the main axis of Acilia, Via di Acilia, it does not mean that pedestrians ‘own’ the area. In order to give the pedestrian a space they feel they own, our final design proposal is to connect all three islands to create a public space for the center of Acilia’s commercial core. Through multiple stages and interventions, we believe it is best to test out how Acilia reacts to these changes before beginning on the final design.



Figure 11.3.2 Existing Conditions

## Immediate Proposal

To begin creating a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood, we believe first we must inform citizens and let them experience what a car-free zone can be like. Similar to Streets Alive in Ithaca and NYC Summer Streets, all beginning from Ciclovía in Bogotá, Colombia and the Paris Plage in France, we want to bring a car-free festival event to Acilia. This will not only be a great introduction and testing ground for a pedestrian only street, but also bring out members from all the different parts of the community for one day.



Figure 11.3.3 Streets Alive in Ithaca & Ciclovain Bogata

## 5-Year Proposal

After making this an annual event and gauging how receptive community members are to the idea of a pedestrianized street, it can be possible to begin limiting parking on certain streets. Instituting new parking regulations every few months can begin to prep residents and commuters for the new pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor. This method will also help the municipio to understand the parking needs and whether our proposed decked parking system will be enough to handle the parking numbers.

As parking around Piazza San Leonardo is being limited, the beginning of creating safe pedestrian pathways is crucial. Abundant on-street parking is only about 300 meters away from Via di Acilia, the next few blocks over. To promote drivers to get out of their cars and walk, however, it is crucial to instate well maintained sidewalks. The five major streets entering Piazza San Leonardo all boast relatively wide sidewalks, except for Via Ludovico Antomelli. Here sidewalks will need to be widened on at least one side. All other sidewalks must be maintained, and in some cases can be creatively retrofitted to integrate services such as waste disposal. A cluster of waste receptacles like this one in Sperlonga (Lazio) hides bins underground, improving the streetscape above.



Figure 11.3.4 Sperlonga Waste Disposal Receptacle

To further differentiate Via di Acilia as a pedestrian street, a change of road textures and materials provide a visual cue to the driver that they are entering a pedestrian zone or a shared zone. This use of textures originate from the Dutch woonerf, a street where pedestrians, cyclists, and cars share the street. We do not want to completely eliminate the car, but raise the status of the pedestrian.



Figure 11.3.5 Dutch Woonerf

## 10-Year Proposal



Figure 11.3.6 Proposed Piazza

In order for the commercial corridor to provide the pedestrian more free range to travel, Via di Acilia will be limited to traffic due to the creation of the larger piazza as well as the bottleneck road. Traffic will disperse onto other streets that are not as heavily used, alleviating Via di Acilia as the main road to the bottleneck to Via del Mare.

The new piazza will serve as the new community gathering space, with both formal and possibly informal seating areas. To attract children and families to the space, a separate gate connecting the church playground to the piazza will be opened. This gate is so the playground space and the church can become be accessed separately and demonstrate that the playground is not only for members of the parish. This connection should not deter those who do not follow Christianity from the space for visual cues such as fencing and tiling will indicate that they are two different spaces.

Focusing on the theme of identity, we want to create a space that community members can call their own and identify as their center. We hope beautification projects that involve community members such as public art installations can connect the younger generation with the older in Acilia. Similar to the train station proposal a possible programming option can be having children paint a tile or have plaques with Acilia's history implemented as part of the groundwork for the center piece.

## Pathway: Via Ludovico Antomelli

This pathway will connect Piazza San Leonardo with the Vacant Lot. The existing conditions of this pathway are terrible for pedestrians. There are sidewalks on both sides of the street, but they are no wider than a meter. Because they are so narrow, we have witnessed multiple elderly residents walking on the street with their walker or in their wheelchair. Because the street does not have a high vehicle traffic, they can walk on the street relatively safely, but this does not mean that they should be.

Removing parking from the street, similar to what will be done to the piazza, will free up the street. This allows for the possibility of the sidewalk to be extended at least on one side. This will make it easier for those with walkers, wheelchairs, or baby strollers to travel through the pathway easily. However, if parking is to be removed, precautions will need to be taken in order to ensure no illegal parking. Throughout Acilia, many cars park on the sidewalk if there is no space to legally park, so bollards can be used as a preventive or prohibitive measure on streets like Via Constantino Beschi, where the public school is located.

# 11.4 OVS Complex

## Existing Conditions



Figure 11.4.1 Existing OVS Complex conditions

The empty space in front of Acilia’s OVS is situated at the beginning of Via Di Acilia if entering from Via del Mare. The space is created by the setback of the surrounding angular “C” shaped mixed-use building complex, and the empty space is cushioned between the stores, Alesi, OVS, and Calzature Duilio. The other businesses in this complex are Ottica Baroni, Baroni & Gioielli, Gran Caffè, Profumerie Limoni, and a clothing store. The mixed-use complex is connected to apartment buildings with roof gardens and is across the street from a caffè and casual restaurant.

There is parking underground directly below the complex, and the roof of the parking garage is the floor of the empty space, which explains the lack of greenery. The empty space is currently not used for anything and there is no seating in this space. Despite its lack of use, this space is in a heavily-trafficked location, by foot and vehicle, at the beginning of Via di Acilia, near two popular caffès, a grocery store, apartments, and Piazza San Leonardo.

## Immediate Proposal

Drawing inspiration from the *Tactical Urbanism* handbook, we recommend the community to start with exercises to beautify and “reclaim” this ambiguous space as public. Seating, low-maintenance potted gardening, and fun public events are simple and inexpensive ways to get people to begin to use the area. “Chair bombing” is a method that has been used in American cities from New York to San Francisco to create more public seating and put underused spaces to use. Techniques from “guerilla gardening” can be used to beautify and create greenery in a space that is almost completely paved, possibly with support from the residents of the complex who have beautiful private gardens. Hanging string lights or flags can even be a consideration in this phase, a simple but effective way to create a more memorable space. In addition, owners of the two surrounding caffès can consider hosting pop up events in which they bring some of their seating outside and allow overflow into the space, or even serve food and drinks outside. (Lydon, 2015)



Figure 11.4.2 String lights make a public space intimate.



Figure 11.4.3 Using green space to reclaim the street.

## 5-Year Proposal

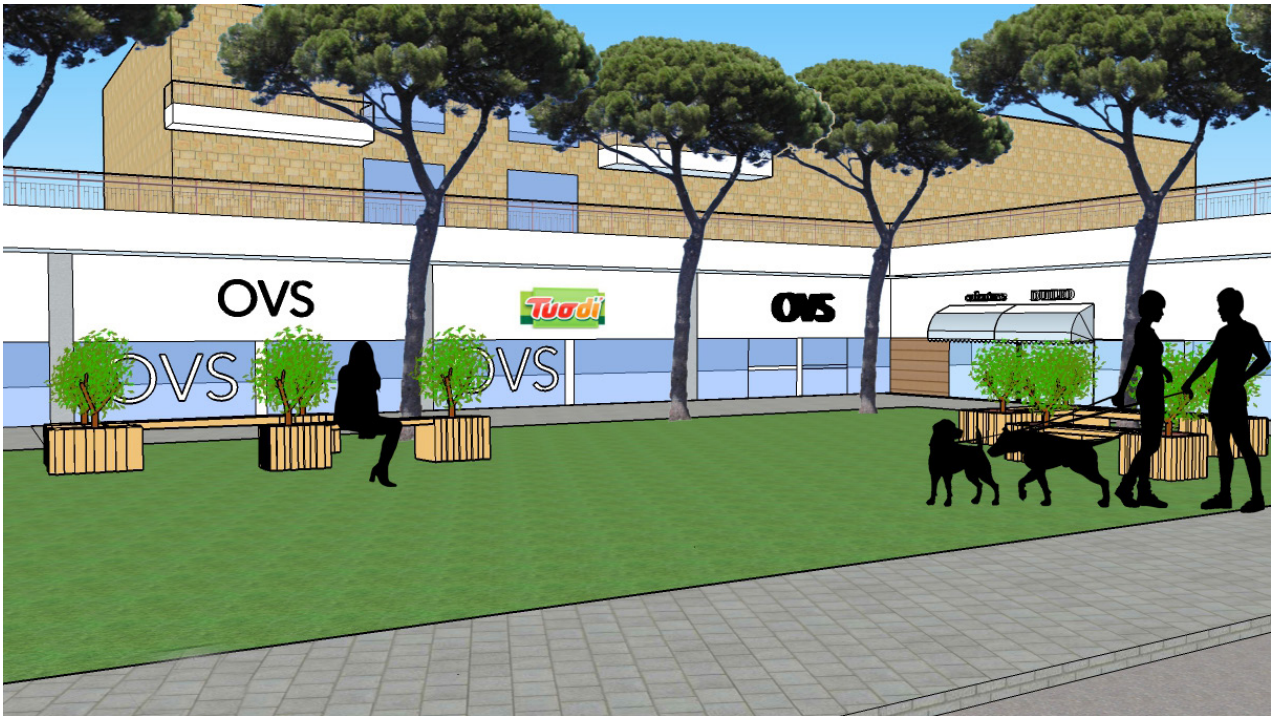


Figure 11.4.4 Proposed OVS Complex improvements.

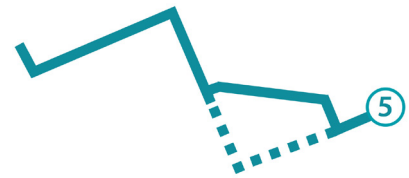
Once the community has begun to see this space as public and they have also determined who owns the space, with permission if necessary, the community can begin to invest and create a permanent pocket park. This phase of development focuses on the physical design of the park as well as experimentation with programming. Drawing inspiration from Paley and Greenacre parks in New York City as well as piazzas in Rome and southern Italy, design elements include a grassy lawn and tree border to provide shade and greenery. We included benches that have planters attached to them, but chose to leave the bulk of the lawn empty to provide space for children and dogs to play. Extra seating and a water element similar to Paley or Greenacre Park, or Museo dell'Ara Pacis can be considered for aesthetics and climate control in the summer.



Figure 11.4.5 Paley Park in New York City (US)

Other suggested design elements include low maintenance potted plants for additional greenery and beautification and string lighting, which are not only beautiful but also make for a space that can be used comfortably at night. Stakeholders in the park project (e.g. municipio, complex owner, comitato) should experiment with what attracts people most to the space: casual seating, community events, OVS-hosted events, outdoor caffè seating, or something else. In the long-term, the area surrounding the complex can be considered as a site for the development of gelato shop, or the space itself can become formal spillover for adjacent caffès with sufficient seating available for customers and non-customers alike. Since this area relatively small and limited by the surrounding shops, a five year plan is a sufficient amount of time to phase development.

# 11.5 Vacant Lot



## Existing Conditions

The empty lot located in the southeast corner of this focus area has many opportunities for intervention. Despite its appeal as a green space, it is underused and subject to strong stigma due to its orientation next to a social housing project. This area is currently divided into two parts, where one section is completely empty, while the other was developed into a playground and fitness park. Although this attempt to make this space functional is well-appreciated and serves as an indicator of Acilia's willingness to make the neighborhood a more livable space, the playground and fitness park is in dire need of improvements and maintenance.



Figure 11.5.1 Existing Vacant Lot conditions

## Design Considerations

Parks are becoming increasingly popular public spaces for recreation, given their tremendous appeal in economic growth, environmental contributions, and health benefits (Harnik and Welle, 2009). In history, however, parks have served many purposes, among them being platforms for experimentation of nature and for political propaganda (Dumpelmann 2005). While their values are variegated in nature, it is necessary to keep in mind the disproportionate gender and race inequality in park access and usage, particularly for women and the elderly (Madge 2008). Designing parks with these populations in mind can better encourage usage, and as Jan Gehl repeats in his own manifesto, "people attract people."

In the Madonetta district, towards which official plans were established to direct development and improvements for Acilia, there is an elongated park that exists in a form of a green space with paths. Residents interviewed in this study have mentioned that they use this park for recreational purposes, although the distance is considerably far from the focus area. It is because of this that the idea to develop the existing empty lot into a completely green park was formed. Rather than replicate the design of the Madonetta park, this study looked to other European and international park designs for inspiration. A park, rather than another type of development, will continue the "green" identity of Acilia, as it is bordered by a nationally protected green area. Furthermore, this empty lot offers many advantageous opportunities because of its size and locational continuity in a populated and attractive residential and commercial area.

This empty lot's size is comparable to that of Square Des Batignolles in Paris. The Square Des Batignolles is 16,615 square metres, compared to this lot's available 33,111 square metres. Because of this,

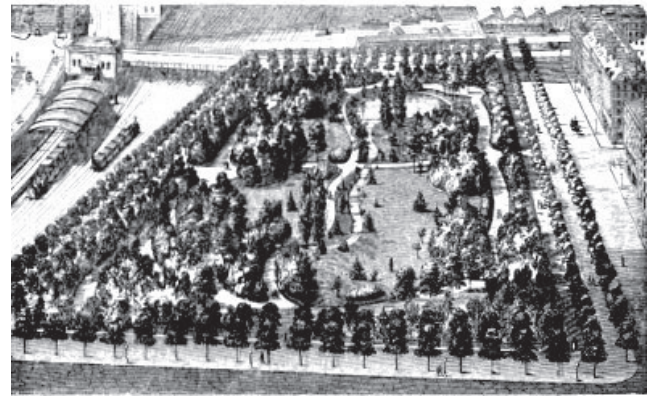
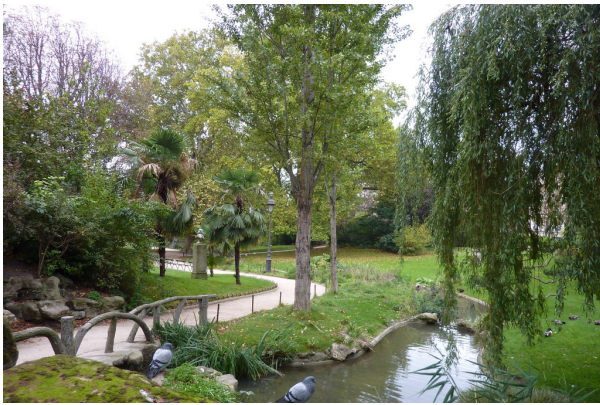


Figure 11.5.2 Square Des Batignolles, Paris (France)

it is possible to replicate many design elements of this 17th arrondissement Paris park into this space with similar complexities. The inspiration is to have this empty lot have a secluded and fantasy-like element through bordering the lot entirely with trees, so that once inside, a visitor will enter a completely new environment and escape from the 'city'.

Similarly, looking internationally to the famed Central Park in New York City, it is easy to compare the similar shape of Central Park to this empty lot, although Central Park itself is 341 hectares large while this empty lot only has 3 hectares. While its designs cannot be as easily implemented in Acilia, the similar progression and orientation of Central Park could be used to design pathways.

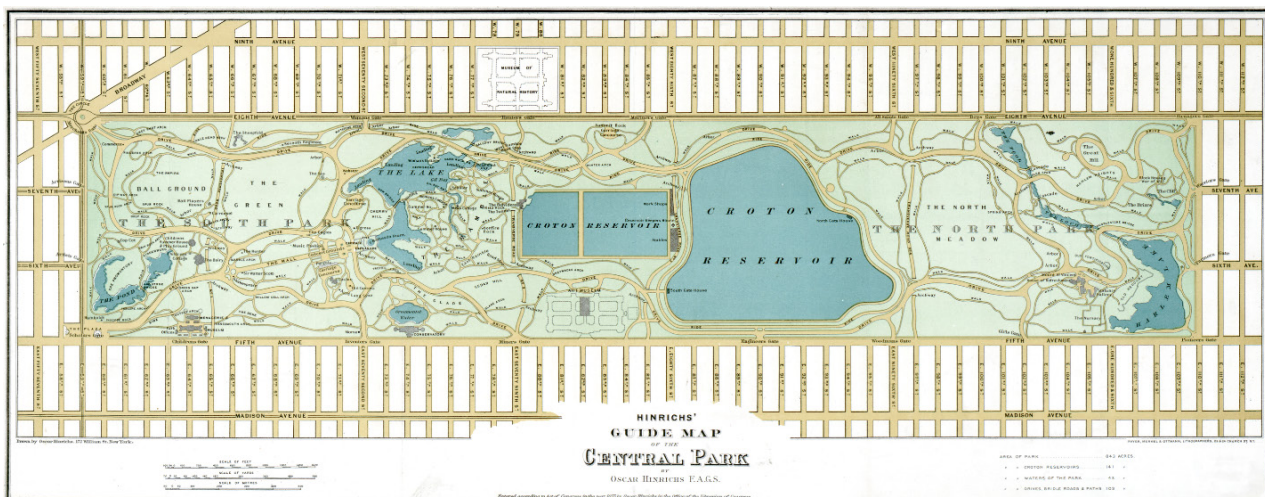


Figure 11.5.3 Central Park, New York City (US)

Because this lot is almost entirely empty, with the exception of the existing playground, there are many opportunities for design interventions. Figure 11.5.4 is an example of what this space could look like, based on a photo previously taken during one of the visits. Not only will trees and flowers be necessary for this park's new design, it is also important to have a water element that can add to the environment and help cool the park when the weather is warm. Furthermore, while there are many opportunities for entry, two logical locations exist: one entry point facing Via di Valle Porcina and perpendicular to Via Giuseppe Maria Lampi, and one next to the entry point of the parking.

Due to the size of this vacant lot, the design and development process will take some time to complete. However, given the increasing recognition of the importance of functional public spaces in promoting quality of life, it is necessary for Acilia to take an aggressive and pro-active approach towards place-making. In the United Nation's newest set of Global Goals in which Italy is a signatory of, there is a specific goal to "By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities." While public space options in Acilia do exist, their full utility is not being realized due to the use of automobiles. The design proposals in this report will address this issue, although none of the designs can replace what a large park can offer.



Stages for this event can include initial community consultation and stock-taking (first year), followed by project proposal to leaders and financial mechanisms nationally and regionally (second year), and project implementation (following years):

**Immediate**

A series of community roundtable events inviting all residents of Acilia, especially ethnic minorities and those outside the focus area, is needed to garner civic support for this project. This will also be an opportunity for Acilians to introduce ideas and themes that should guide the design phase of this project.



Figure 11.5.4 Proposed improvements to the Vacant Lot

**Second Year**

This second year should be devoted to finding a firm to design this park, and a bid should be sent out to find most cost-effective contractor. This firm should continue to design the project and be tasked with arranging regular public forums to engage citizens.

**Third Year**

Immediately following completion of the design phase, the project should be officially accepted by the city and follow formal legal procedures. This is also the period when Acilia should look for possible funding sources from private and public organizations. The budget should take into consideration possible unanticipated costs and reserve 10% of budget funds for this purpose.

**Fourth Year Until 2030**

Once funding is secure, project execution should begin immediately to avoid delays and additional costs. Citizens should be encouraged to become builders of this new public space, by helping with the greening of this park. Similarly, programming should be created to encourage citizens to help with the continual maintenance of this park upon completion.



# POLICY PROPOSAL



A strong policy framework can address both structural and physical limitations while making possible an environment that maximizes Acilia's opportunities.

# 12.1 Policy Proposal

Acilia is a frazione that is part of the Comune of Roma, lying between Rome and Ostia within Municipio X. As the first borgata, and similarly to the borgate that followed it, Acilia's identity is marked by a history of informal land and housing development that took the form of self-designed and self-built homes in a "village-like configuration" (Zanfi, 2008; Coppola, 2013). This "parallel" land market was accessed by the internal lower-class migrants and natives who were excluded from urban planning processes and by the private and public housing market that could not adequately accommodate their needs. As a result, this sizeable population opted in this informal housing market through the illegal capitalization and development of land not intended for private development, without legal facilitation and with no adherence to housing regulations. These developments were victim to tenure insecurity, with basic infrastructures and little sophistication (Berlinguer and Della Seta, 1976). One of the outcomes of this history is Acilia's strangely configured private streets that cut half-way through 'blocks' but does little to help with traffic and circulation. Nonetheless, this enclave of post-war informal development widened to accommodate the middle class and include legal and professional facilitation in this parallel market.

Urban policies covering the Comune of Rome have historically been failed ventures resulting from wide ranging factors, among them lack of political leadership and real strategies for implementation that take into consideration political and economic realities. The Master Plan of Roma Capitale emerged in 1883, shortly after Rome became the capital of a unified Italian state. At this time, this plan only encompassed the area within the Aurelian wall, and it was not until 1909 that development outside this wall was considered in the new Plan. This vision that followed in 1931 during the Fascist era brutalized the poor population and destroyed a significant portion of Rome's urban fabric. It is this Fascist planning that resulted in Acilia's development as a borgata. Continuing an established trend of failed implementation, the Master Plan of 1962 was subject to political debate and revisions up to the current master plan of 2008. Even more than a century after its first plan, Rome is still unable to effectively implement its vision. This is not to say that changes did not occur; changes such as public housing were implemented at a slow pace, while others such as transportation planning fail to deliver, much of which had to do with political contestation, feet dragging, and fiscal austerity (Morassut 2005).



Figure 12.1 Aerial image of the neighborhood demolished by Fascist leaders to construct Via dei Fiori Imperiali.

Perhaps due to lack of attention and support from political leadership and institutions, the informal housing market took over development in Acilia. As mentioned in the analysis portion of Acilia's report, lack of maintenance and leadership is a major concern. Policies will be ineffective if there are no enforcement mechanisms or leadership apparatus that can be held accountable. This evident reality is reflected in Acilia's lack of public space maintenance. A crucial part of this discussion is subsequently the role and value, if any, of master plans and their contributions to urban interventions. Marcelloni (2001) stated that in that in the Italian state, master plans fail to reasons of a disconnect in time, elitist experimentation that is disconnected from reality, and political struggle blockading plan realization. Foreboding normative theories of urban design, as rightly noted in Jacob and Appleyard (1987), urban planning should be epistemologically re-oriented to focus on human-scale designs that emphasizes livability and human conditions, rather than physical outcomes. As such, they identified the following goals that are suitable for "the future of good urban environment: livability; identity and control; access to opportunity, imagination, and job; authenticity and meaning; open communities and public life; self-reliance; and justice." While their essay was published nearly 30 years ago, the elements of what make 'good' urban environments remain the same.

To address the wide ranging opportunities areas in this focus area, both structural and tactical interventions were developed. As saliently addressed by Neil Brenner on multiple occasions, many project-based urban interventions have been victim to broader and more powerful economic forces of the post-Keynesian and neoliberal economy, resulting in gentrified neighborhoods and despite good intentions by critically-minded designers (Brenner, 2013). Brenner critiqued the site-based focus of projects such as the Highline in NYC, and many other projects around the world, that fail to take into consideration the larger urban 'problematique' and the historical power relations between the elite and the working class. As such, Brenner calls for urban interventions that extend beyond a project's focus area and incorporate the "urbanism of injustice, displacement, and exclusion" that have been "unleashed" through neoliberal forces and work to challenge the rules of urban governance, including market force, through critical observation of a project through the wider view of power, control, and social justice. Sites that empower citizens through a bottom-up approach, in what Henri Lefebvre calls 'autogestion', can truly secure the right to the city.

Despite the increasing appeal of tactical urbanism in popular discourse and practice, Brenner (2014) holds a more skeptical of its real values. While tactical urbanism can empower and provide bandage appendages to physical problems in the city, its role must be viewed under the broader scope of the right to the city. Brenner suggests that tactical urbanism emerged not as a response to 'contemporary urban condition...nor the inefficiencies of postwar, modernist-statist urban planning' that created the conditions in which tactical urbanism is trying to address. At its core, contemporary tactical urbanism is the result of historical antecedents that have been facilitated ('ruptured and reshaped') by neoliberal forms of urban governance that prioritize the elite, while "restricting 'the right to the city'". As such piecemeal projects resulting from this new trend may offer temporary solutions, but they do little to challenge the broader scope of injustice because they fail to address institutional failures and instead 'camouflages' the outcomes of neoliberal forces and briefly exonerate responsible parties from consequences. New projects should be considerate of site-specific considerations, as well as the broader scope of inequitable urbanism.

While concerns on proper site planning are extensive, and for good reasons, Acilia is in a strategic location that offer many opportunities to improve socially and economically through urban interventions in forms of sustainable physical planning and social programming. Plans may be ineffective in achieving desired goals due to a foray of possible reasons, but they do serve particular purposes. This includes plans possibly serving as a democratic and participatory inventory of resources, while being a platform for analysis of limitations and opportunities for interventions. Specific to this project, numerous individuals and stakeholders were interviewed for their opinions. These served as a foundation for many proposed projects, including but not limited to the area in front of the train station and the empty lot.

Using the theories and critiques from Allan and Jacobs, while keeping in mind critical perspective of other scholars, the following policy goals and indicators, were developed.

1. Fix and maintain existing sidewalks and connect existing pedestrian pathways.
  - a. Fix all under-maintained sidewalks by 2020.
  - b. Connect all existing pedestrian pathways through new sidewalks by 2020.
2. Expand existing retail and support services.
  - a. Promote the filling of empty storefronts along Via di Acilia.
  - b. Line Via di Acilia with green infrastructures.
3. Improve recreational and entertainment opportunities through multi-generational programming.
  - a. Ensure consistent and regularly planned programmes.
4. Develop a neighborhood infrastructure maintenance program that empowers citizens to be active stewards of the community.
  - a. Create a community task force together with the schools, church, and Islamic Center by 2019.
5. Provide a new neighborhood park to augment quality of life and brand Sud Acilia as a competitive development district.
  - a. Create a park in the existing empty green lot in the southeast corner of Sud Acilia by 2030.
6. Improve key neighborhood public spaces and transform lost spaces into community assets.
  - a. Extend current piazza of Parrocchia San Leonardo Da Porto Maurizio and re-develop the piazza by 2027.
  - b. Develop the parking lot in front of Acilia's train station into a two-level parking garage.
  - c. Redevelop the empty space facing Acilia's train station into an attractive and multi-functional piazza through social programming and green infrastructures.
  - d. Enhance and develop an entrance corridor into Via di Acilia.

# CONCLUSION



# 13.1 Conclusions

Design interventions proposed in this section of the report address many limitations--especially the issue of lost space--within our focus area, which were revealed through our initial analysis, consisting of interviews, in-person data collection and observations, and data analysis from ISTAT. They are unified under a proposed "green" system and gateway framework that capitalizes on Acilia's strengths, while tangibly reconciling its range of challenges. Among these challenges include poor connectivity, lack of maintenance, and lack of identity, as outlined by our themes. These three issues work in tandem to reduce the quality of life in Acilia, which is only further perpetuated by the persistent use of automobiles, which make the pedestrian experience a secondary concern. As well, several programming ideas were articulated to complement physical interventions, rightly recognizing the important role of civic education and engagement in community place-making and development. Although the proposed ideas in this section vary in nature, we recognize the crucial role political realities and structural barriers have in making or breaking envisioned social and physical interventions. To complete this trifecta, a policy paper was constructed to offer ideas on how to secure a policy environment necessary to implement the various design proposals and social programs.

Interviews held during the course of this study have shown that residents of Acilia have tremendous pride for their town. While the designs featured in this report have varying underlying philosophies and theories, they all endeavor to positively augment the quality of life for the residents of Acilia by, among other considerations, reducing the weight and presence of automobiles. In the process, the human factor is reintroduced into urban space through practical designs that maximizes social and cultural function, while enhancing environmental conditions. Because these designs originate from citizens' perspectives, adopting these proposals and keeping them in line with the proposed completion dates will begin to create the Acilia that residents envisage.



## 13.2 Acknowledgments

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From left to right: Olivia So, Hung Vo, Cole Norgaarden, Marlana Zink, Matthew Harband, & Viviana Andriola  
Photo by Lena Trancik

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# Mapping Resources

Geoportale Nazionale (Ministerio dell'Ambiente)

Geo.On-line: Il Portale per la diffusione di servizi geografici (Regione Lazio)

Google Earth Pro

## Figures Credit

### Part 1: Analysis

Figure 1.2	Historical Progression timeline graphic. Images from Roma Sparita, Roma Post, and Olivia So	Figure 5.2.2	Via di Acilia. Photo by Olivia So
Figure 1.3	Historical comparison photos. Images from Roma Sparita, Google Earth, and Olivia So	Figure 5.2.3	Via Daniele da Samarate. Photo by Olivia So
Figure 2.1.1	National and regional context map	Figure 5.2.4	Via Francesco Ingoli. Photo by Olivia So
Figure 2.1.2	Neighborhood context map	Figure 5.2.5	Dead-end interior street. Photo by Olivia So
Figure 2.3	Group members examining the empty lot at the southeastern corner of our focus area. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 5.3	Sidewalks & crosswalks. Pedestrian navigation map
Figure 2.4.1	Young people making a Lynch map. Photo by Viviana Andriola	Figure 5.4.1	Sidewalk width map
Figure 2.4.2	Formal interview with Comitato. Photo by Marlana Zink	Figure 5.4.2	Sidewalk conditions. Photos by Olivia So
Figure 3.2	Acilia's Population in 2001 and 2011. Data from ISTAT	Figure 5.5	Walking distance in Acilia. Walkability map
Figure 3.3	Population Density in Acilia. Data from ISTAT	Figure 5.6	Public transit in Acilia
Figure 3.4	Immigration Increase in Acilia. Data from ISTAT	Figure 5.7	Traffic counts in Acilia (10am-noon)
Figure 3.5	Employment breakdown for Acilia. Data from ISTAT	Figure 5.8	Parking in Acilia
Figure 4.1	Building figure-ground map	Figure 5.9.1	Waste disposal map
Figure 4.2.1	Building types throughout Acilia	Figure 5.9.2	A typical waste disposal setup. Photo by Cole Norgaarden
Figure 4.2.2	Single family home. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 6.1	Land use map
Figure 4.2.3	Duplex family home. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 6.2	How Acilians denote private property. Photos by Olivia So
Figure 4.2.4	Linear multifamily home. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 7.1.1	Activity Center graphic by Cole Norgaarden
Figure 4.2.5	Midrise multifamily palazzine. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 7.1.2	Stazione Acilia. Photo by Cole Norgaarden
Figure 4.2.6	Lowrise commercial building. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 7.1.3	Largo Girolamo da Montesarchio. Photo by Olivia So
Figure 4.2.7	Midrise commercial building. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 7.1.4	War monument at Piazza dei Sicani. Photo by Olivia So
Figure 4.2.8	Midrise mixed use building. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 7.1.5	Piazza San Leonardo da Porto Maurizio. Photo by Olivia So
Figure 4.2.9	Scuola elementare Mario Calderini. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 7.2	Public space map
Figure 4.3	Building heights by stories map	Figure 7.3	Green space map
Figure 5.1	Street figure-ground map	Figure 7.4.1	Lost space map
Figure 5.2.1	Street hierarchy map	Figure 7.4.2	Stazione Acilia plaza. Photo by Olivia So
		Figure 7.4.3	Vacant parcel #1: Via di Valle Porcina. Photo by Olivia So
		Figure 7.4.4	Vacant parcel #2: Via Francesco Saverio Altamura. Photo from Google Maps
		Figure 7.4.5	Vacant parcel #3: Via Francesco Ingoli. Photo from Google Maps
		Figure 7.4.6	Fitness Park. Photo by Olivia So

Figure 7.4.7	Piazza dei Sicani. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 11.3.5	Dutch Woenerf. Photo from Zak in London
Figure 7.4.8	Largo Girolamo da Montesarchio. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 11.3.6	Proposed Piazza. Graphic by Olivia So
Figure 7.4.9	Piazza San Leonardo. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 11.4.1	Existing OVS complex conditions. Photos by Olivia So
Figure 7.4.10	OVS complex. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 11.4.2	String lights make a public space intimate. Photo by Alan D. Poff
Figure 7.4.11	Eastern bowtie. Photo from Google Maps	Figure 11.4.3	Using green space to reclaim the street. Photo from Williamsburg Tactical Urbanism
Figure 7.4.12	Largo Cesare Bertolli. Photo from Google Maps	Figure 11.4.4	Proposed OVS complex improvements. Rendering by Marlana D. Zink
Figure 7.4.13	Via Raffaele de Grada. Photo by Olivia So	Figure 11.4.5	Paley Park in New York City (US). Photo from Project for Public Spaces
Figure 8.1	Team Acilia meets with the Comitato. Photo by Ezio Pietrosanti	Figure 11.5.1	Existing vacant lot conditions. Photos by Olivia So
Figure 8.2.1	Lynch maps	Figure 11.5.2	Square Des Batignolles, Paris (France). Photo from Sudio Flat in Paris and Gardenvisit.com
Figure 8.2.2	Narrative map	Figure 11.5.3	Central Park, New York City (US) Photo from Wikipedia by Oscar Hinrichs
<b>Part 2: Design</b>			
Figure 10.3	Nodes, Pathways, Gateways	Figure 11.5.4	Proposed improvements to the Vacant Lot. Graphic by Hung Vo
Figure 10.4	Design process images	Figure 12.1	Aerial image of the neighborhood demolished by Fascist leaders to construct the Via dei Fiori Imperiali. Photo from Folia Magazine
Figure 10.5	Design Masterplan		
Figure 11.1.1	Existing state of Stazione Acilia. Photos by Olivia So		
Figure 11.1.2	Garden plots at Tiburtina Station in Rome. Photo from Roma Repubblica		
Figure 11.1.3	Outdoor Symbolic Memorial Children's Wall, Oklahoma City, OK (US)		
Figure 11.1.4	Bikeshare in Copenhagen. Photo from Co.Exist		
Figure 11.1.5	The Swimmer by Agostino Iacurci in Ostiense. Photo from Wanted in Rome		
Figure 11.1.6	Proposed Stazione Acilia improvements. Rendering by Matt Harband		
Figure 11.1.7	A fountain which highlights Acilia's agrarian heritage. Graphic by Matt Harband		
Figure 11.2.1	Existing gateway to Acilia. Photo by Olivia So		
Figure 11.2.2	War Memorial. Photo by Olivia So		
Figure 11.2.3	Historic Clinic building. Photo by ?		
Figure 11.2.4	Tactical urbanism in San Lorenzo, Rome. Photo by Cole Norgaarden		
Figure 11.2.5	Specially design seating activates public space for elderly residents. Photo from Velopa.		
Figure 11.2.6	Proposed bottleneck improvements. Rendering by Cole Norgaarden		
Figure 11.2.7	Cap Corner in Columbus, OH (US)		
Figure 11.3.1	Piazza San Leonardo. Photo by Olivia So		
Figure 11.3.2	Existing Conditions. Photos by Olivia So		
Figure 11.3.3	Streets Alive in Ithaca & Ciclovía in Bogota. Photo from WHCU Radio and Bike Auckland		
Figure 11.3.4	Sperlonga Waste Disposal Receptacle. Photo by Cole Norgaarden		

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# Appendix A: Street Survey Matrix

Block and/or Street Name	Type			# of Lanes	Median?	Traffic Flow		Width	Sidewalk Maintenance			Parking on Street?		Car Traffic (# per _____ minutes)			# of Trees
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary			1 Way	2 Way		Good	Moderate	Poor	Yes (#)	No	Low	Med	High	
Notes (e.g. monuments, peculiar street features, stark differences between the left and right side of the street)																	
Notes:																	
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Notes:																	
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# Appendix B: Formal Interview Questions

## Centro Islamico di Acilia

- To start, could you tell us about yourself, and how you found your way to Acilia?
- Could you tell us about the history of the Islamic Center? When was it founded?
- Who founded it?
- How did the community decide to start an Islamic center?
- How many members do you have with the center?
- Do you know why there are so many Islamic Italians living in Acilia? Why here as opposed to somewhere else?
- What sort of services do you provide (prayer, community activities, etc...)
- How often do you provide these services?
- Was it difficult to open this center? Did you encounter any issues along the way?
- How do you finance the maintenance and costs of keeping this center open?
- Do most of your members live in Acilia, or do they travel from nearby neighborhoods?
- Do you host any activities with the rest of the community? Is there interaction between the Islamic center members and the church parishioners (etc...)?

## Centro Anziani di Acilia

- Can you tell us about yourself and how you found your way to Acilia? How long have you lived here? How do you like living here?
- How has Acilia changed during your lifetime? What changes have been most significant?
- What sets Acilia apart from other neighborhoods in Rome? What are the best and worst parts?
- What do you think is important for us to know about Acilia (especially as foreigners)?
- Are there changes you'd like to see in your neighborhood? How can/should changes come about?
- Are there aspects of the environment that make getting around the neighborhood difficult? (e.g. sidewalks, public transportation, safety)

**Parrocchia San Leonardo da Porto Maurizio  
& Comitato di Quartiere di Acilia Centro Sud e Monti di San Paolo**

- Can you tell us when your organization was formed and what its purpose is?
- Are there any community events which occur in Acilia?
- What kind of people attend these events?
- Who organizes them?
- What is your organization’s relationship with the Municipio? Has there been any shift in responsibilities because of the governance problem?
- Church: Are there any community services that you provide (i.e., free meals)?
- If so, for how long? Has there been a change in the need for these services?
- Church: What is your relationship with other churches in the area (Parrocchia San Giorgio, San Francesco)?
- Do you coordinate any special activities, events, or services?
- (Ask only if appropriate) Recently, in the news we heard about an arrest in Acilia for drug possession. Is this an issue in the community?
- To you, what are the defining characteristics of Acilia? What is its identity?
- What are the main successes?
- What are the main problems?
- Church: What facilities do you own?
- Comitato: How often do you convene? Where do you meet?
- How do you reach out to the residents of Acilia?
- What opportunities do you see for improving the built environment in Acilia? Do you have specific recommendations?
- How do you envision Acilia in the future?

## Appendix C: Raw Statistical Data

Demographic Category	Acilia focus area 2011	Acilia focus area 2001	Greater Rome 2001	Greater Rome 2011
Total population	2272	2258	2.55M	2.62M
<15 y.o	291 (12.8%)	273 (12.1%)	.327M (12.8%)	.352M (13.4%)
Population 15-65	1425 (62.7%)	1557 (68.9%)	1.74M (68.2%)	1.70 M
Elderly Pop.(65+)	556 (24.5%)	428 (19%)	.485M (19%)	.572M (21.8%)
Avg. Family Size	2.31	2.59	2.42	2.4
% Female Residents	51.50%	52%	53%	53%
Resident Immigrants	266 (11.7%)	88 (3.9%)	98, 427 (3.9%)	224,493 (8.9%)
% With Secondary School Diploma	36%	31.50%	32%	33.90%
% With University Degree	10.40%	5.60%	14%	19.10%
Properties Rented	21.10%	19.00%	28%	N/A
Properties Owned	71.60%	72.50%	65%	N/A