

## PIETRALATA: POTENTIAL SITE FOR ROSSI & CORCIA DEVELOPMENT

Rossi & Corcia is an established developer of recreational facilities.<sup>1</sup> In addition to its national reputation for building and managing world-class, luxury-market establishments in Italy, the company has long valued its tradition of providing recreational facilities to low-income neighborhoods. Currently, Rossi & Corcia would like to offer its considerable expertise in design, development, and management to disadvantaged neighborhoods in Rome. Many communities in this city are in dire need of safe, clean, public spaces to meet, assemble, and spend leisure time. This research report evaluates the neighborhood of Pietralata as a potential location for a Rossi & Corcia development project.

Pietralata is located east of Rome's historical center. The neighborhood is connected to the City of Rome via Metro Line B and four main urban bus lines. Pietralata is primarily a residential area, and many of its apartment buildings are public housing or cooperatives. Furthermore, the community's economy reflects its working-class nature. Commercial activity in Pietralata is primarily in the form of neighborhood-oriented retail and services, which are located in three main business districts. These commercial areas, as well as most residential zones in the neighborhood are physically unattractive. For example, litter is prevalent in most areas, while walls and street signs throughout the community are defaced with graffiti. Also, there are several public parks and green spaces in the neighborhood, but they are not well maintained. Although Pietralata is in poor condition physically, residents enjoy a strong community life, and they are very active in neighborhood institutions.<sup>2</sup> Overall, it is evident that there are no central public structures or spaces that effectively facilitate community interaction and recreational activity in the area.

In order to determine whether or not Pietralata is suitable for Rossi & Corcia development, the neighborhood's population, economic activity, social services, transportation systems, and physical environment were assessed.<sup>3</sup> Rossi & Corcia seeks to invest in a disadvantaged community that can support the addition of a new recreational facility. The company intends to fulfill the needs of residents, while profiting from the project. Economic success is possible for Rossi & Corcia if the neighborhood's population

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<sup>1</sup> A recreational facility is defined as a building open to the public, which is used for the purposes of leisure and enjoyment.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Vice President of Municipio V. February 10, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Appendix A. *Terms of Reference* and Appendix B. *Research Design*.

provides an adequate and sustainable client base and if the community's economic environment and physical infrastructure are appropriate for new development. In evaluating these qualifications with respect to Pietralata, the following feasibility criteria were evaluated.

### **Rossi & Corcia Feasibility Criteria**

#### *Demographic Qualifications*

- The neighborhood's population should be stable.
- A variety of age groups, as well as equal numbers of males and females should be present for future sustainability.
- Data portraying low levels of education are necessary to indicate that the neighborhood is indeed disadvantaged, and attractive for national or local government funding.
- Neighborhood employment levels should demonstrate economic disadvantage to enable project support from government sources; however, resident purchasing power must be adequate to sustain a neighborhood recreational facility.

#### *Commercial & Public Service Qualifications*

- Competing recreational services should be limited.
- Services catering to a varied clientele should be present to draw outsiders into the neighborhood.
- Geographic concentrations of services should be present to create community nodes of interaction and good locations for a recreational facility.
- The neighborhood should lack recreational, social, and cultural services, demonstrating a need for a new public-private community facility.
- Residents of Pietralata should support the development of a new recreational facility in the neighborhood.

#### *Environment & Infrastructure Qualifications*

- The neighborhood should be easily accessible to many areas of Rome through several modes of transportation.
- Circulation routes within Pietralata should facilitate easy access to potential development sites.
- The neighborhood should not contain an abundance of high quality public spaces, because this would indicate no need for a new recreational facility.
- The neighborhood should contain unused open spaces, providing opportunities for redevelopment.

- The majority of buildings in Pietralata should be in fair condition.<sup>4</sup> Such a physical environment implies that the neighborhood is need of some investment.
- The neighborhood should not be in poor condition<sup>5</sup> because this implies that Rossi & Corcia will have high maintenance expenses in sustaining a recreational facility.

*Construction & Development Feasibility*

- Government programs should exist to facilitate profitable development of a public – private facility.

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<sup>4</sup> *Fair Condition* - See Appendix C. *Building Condition* for detailed definition.

<sup>5</sup> *Poor Condition* – See Appendix C. *Building Condition* for detailed definition.

## GENERAL METHODOLOGY

Information regarding the neighborhood of Pietralata was gathered through several formal and informal methods. For example, all visual observations of the locality were noted, community leaders were interviewed, residents were surveyed, census data was collected, and secondary sources were consulted. This section explains the research methodology for each analysis presented in this report.

*Demographics: Characterizing the Neighborhood.* Census tract data for Pietralata was collected from ISTAT – the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica in Rome, Italy – for the years 1961, 1971, 1981, and 1991. The neighborhood studied does not, however, comprise the entire Pietralata census district. To obtain data for only the study area, information from the individual census tracts within the area was gathered and combined. Each year, the census tract numbers and boundaries shifted, hence between 1961 and 1971 the exact research area changed slightly. The perimeter of the study area remained the same thereafter, but individual tracts shifted inside the area. Comparisons were possible of the entire study area between census years, but it was impossible to observe trends in individual tracts over time. Furthermore, some 1991 data is not available by specific census tracts, and thus information referring to the entire Pietralata census map area was used in the analysis. These numbers cannot be compared to tract-specific data.

*Services in the Neighborhood.* Commercial services present in the area were observed through extensive foot surveys. Pietralata land uses were directly observed, and all retail and industrial establishments present in the neighborhood were quantified. Additionally, because the presence of public services is not easily identifiable through only visual observation, an interview was conducted with Don Francesco of Parrocchia S. Michele Arcangelo, the neighborhood's oldest religious center. Don Francesco provided insights concerning the availability of social services in the neighborhood.

Lastly, in order to assess which services are used and desired most by people in the community, Pietralata's residents and workers were informally surveyed.<sup>6</sup> Eighty-one surveys were collected. Willing participants of the survey were found near Pietralata Metro and bus stations, as well as in local public parks, churches, bars, and pizzerias. These sites were visited on weekends and weekdays during morning and afternoon hours, and all passing people were encouraged to complete the survey. Individuals were asked about their

preferences regarding the potential services provided by the recreational facility, the feasibility of costs for usage, as well as the location and design of the construction project.

*Visual & Environmental Analysis.* This section of the paper includes data regarding transportation, building conditions, and open spaces in Pietralata. Transportation data was also gathered through general observation, but information regarding bus schedules and routes was found on the ATAC web site. Urban design and building condition information was collected by observing all structures in the study area, as well as mapping the edifices and green spaces in the neighborhood. Also, to supplement the visual observations, census tract data for Pietralata was collected from ISTAT regarding the dates of building construction, as well as the presence of proper and improper housing, along with vacancies in the neighborhood from 1971 to 1991.

*Construction & Development Feasibility.* To assess the feasibility of investing in Pietralata, applicable Roman zoning and development laws were identified and applied to Rossi & Corcia's construction project. Information on zoning and development laws was found in the 2003 Nuova Piano Regolatore Generale documents, as well as provided by Silvio Susi, President of the Associazione Costruttori Edili. English explanations of technical zoning terms were taken from *Urbanistica*, a publication created by the Roman Comune.

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<sup>6</sup> Survey enclosed in Appendix D. *Surveys and Results*.

## DEMOGRAPHICS: CHARACTERIZING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

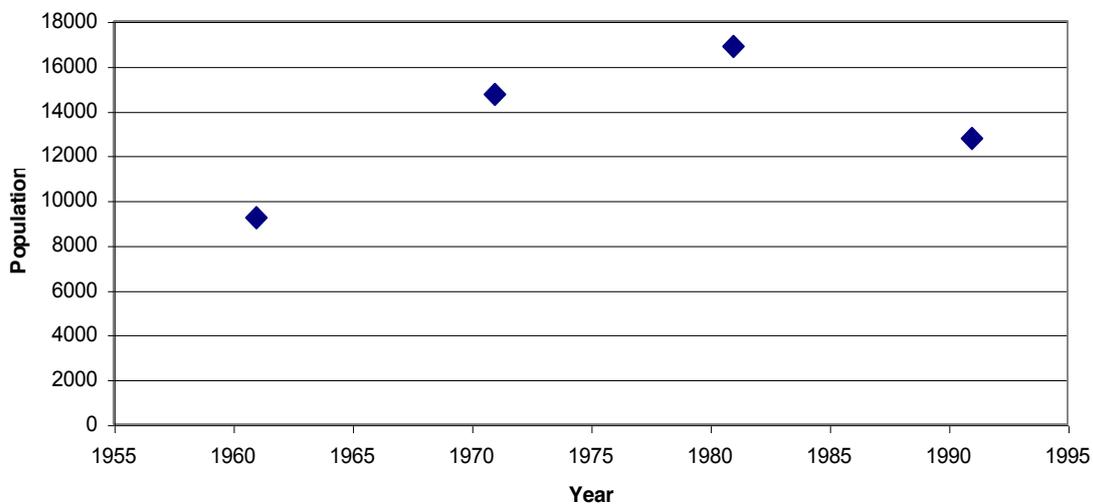
The demographic study of Pietralata presents population data, and illustrates who has lived in the neighborhood from 1961 to 1991. It defines the age and sex of past and current residents, as well as depicts the changing trends over time in these categories. Such observations ultimately demonstrate whom the recreational facility would need to serve. Next, this demographics research focuses upon the education and employment levels of Pietralata residents. The most recent education and employment data available is examined from 1981 and 1991. These values are compared to the overall City of Rome to determine the economic context of the neighborhood. These particular data illustrate the general purchasing power of Pietralata residents, indicating the economic feasibility of a recreational facility in the neighborhood.

### Population: Age and Sex

#### *Rossi & Corcia Feasibility Criteria*

- The neighborhood's population should be stable.
- A variety of age groups, as well as an equal amount of males and females should be present for future sustainability.

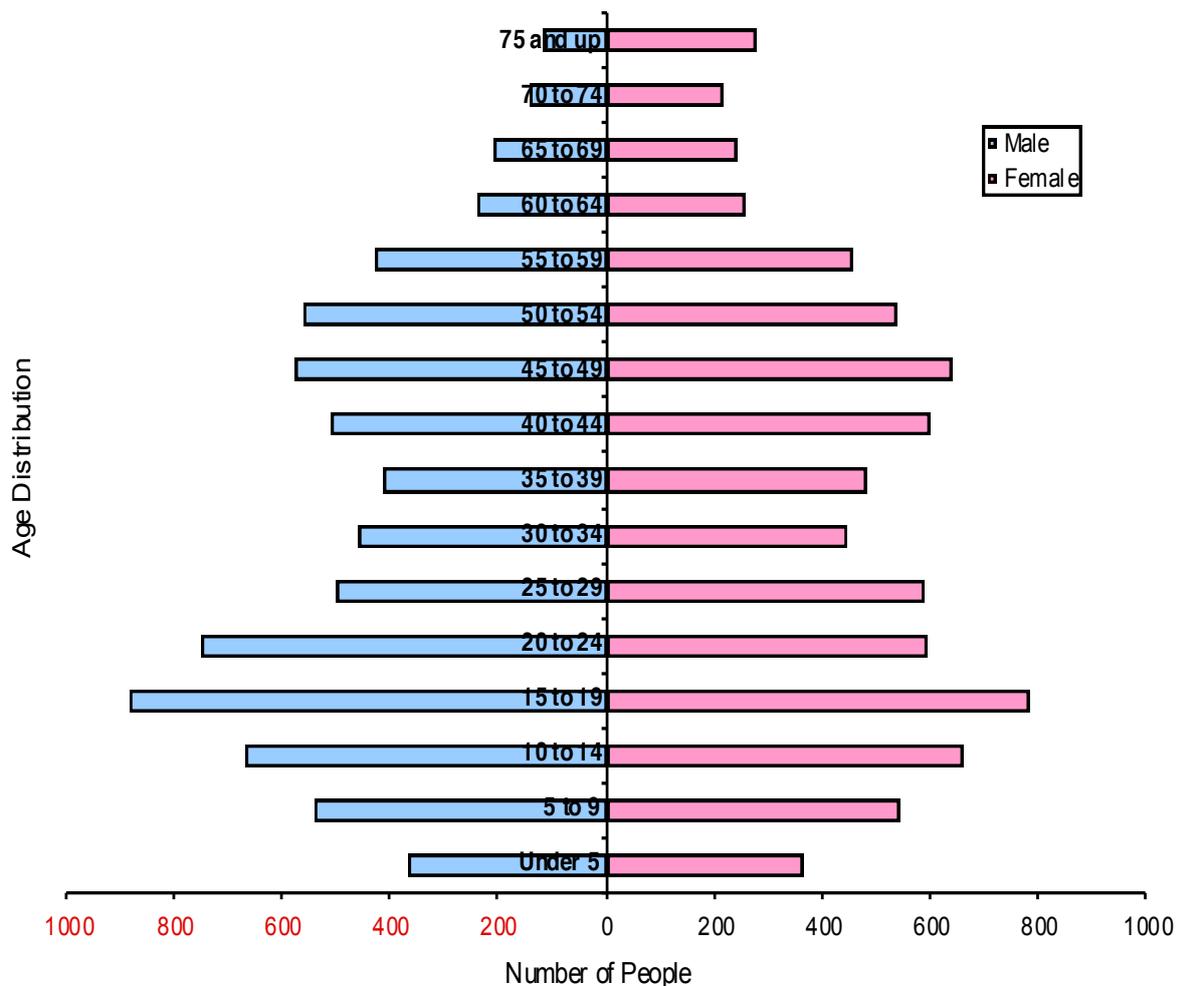
**Figure 1. Pietralata Population Change between 1961 and 1991**



Year	Population	% Change
1961	9237	
1971	14729	59.46%
1981	16878	14.59%
1991	12757	-24.42%

According to the data presented in Figure 1, the population of Pietralata, after growing rapidly between 1961 and 1981, dropped severely over the next ten years. During the 1960s, the population swelled from 9,237 to 14,729, an almost 60 percent increase, as nearly 5,500 new residents moved into the new housing constructed during that period.<sup>7</sup> In the 1970s, Pietralata’s population growth slowed, but it was nonetheless increasing. During that decade, the neighborhood gained 2,149 new residents, an almost 15 percent rise. Finally, in the decade between 1981 and 1991, the population of the neighborhood declined by over 4,100 residents, a number representing more than half the population increase of the previous 20 years, and a drop of almost 25 percent from the 1981 level. The population of Pietralata in 1991 was thus 12,757, or about two thousand residents fewer than in 1971.

Figure 2. 1981 Male and Female Age Distribution



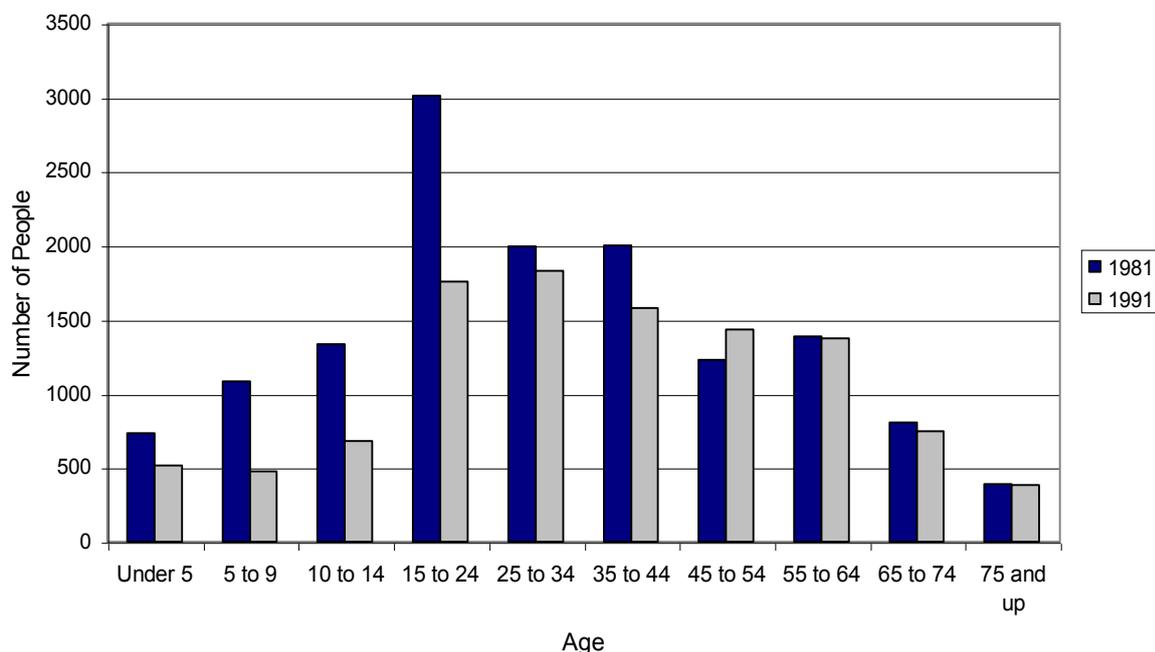
Age distributions suggest that this drastic population swing was the result of a neighborhood “baby boom” shortly after much of the housing stock was constructed in the

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix E. *Land Use* for a detailed analysis of building construction dates.

1960s and, subsequently, an aging trend. A population pyramid graph (Figure 2) of Pietralata in 1981 has a clear hourglass-shaped bimodal distribution of ages. The largest group consists of children and young adults approximately 10 to 24 years of age, with an average age of about 17. The second largest is composed of adults ranging in age from 40 to 54, with an average of approximately 47. Children below 10, adults 25 to 39, and individuals over 54 years of age are less prevalent. It can be assumed that in 1981 there were many families in Pietralata consisting of middle-aged adults and older children. These families were young in the 1960s, when the area was growing rapidly. It thus appears that during that decade, many new families moved into Pietralata, and either brought very young children with them, or had them soon afterwards, at an average age of 30. As the community continued to grow in the 1970s, but at a slower rate, fewer new families moved into Pietralata and brought young children to the neighborhood, thus explaining the smaller, but still substantial, numbers of residents less than 10 years old.

The data presented in Figure 3 depicts the 1981 and 1991 population in Pietralata by age distributions. Between 1981 and 1991, the children of the 1960s “baby boom” reached their 20s and 30s, and began to search for new homes. Either because Pietralata was seen as an undesirable place to settle, or because there was no housing available, many of these young adults left the neighborhood. In 1981 there were just over 3,000 residents between the ages of 15 and 24, but by 1991 there were only 1,755. These residents did not simply grow older and join the next age bracket; the 25 to 34 and the 35 to 44 age brackets both shrank

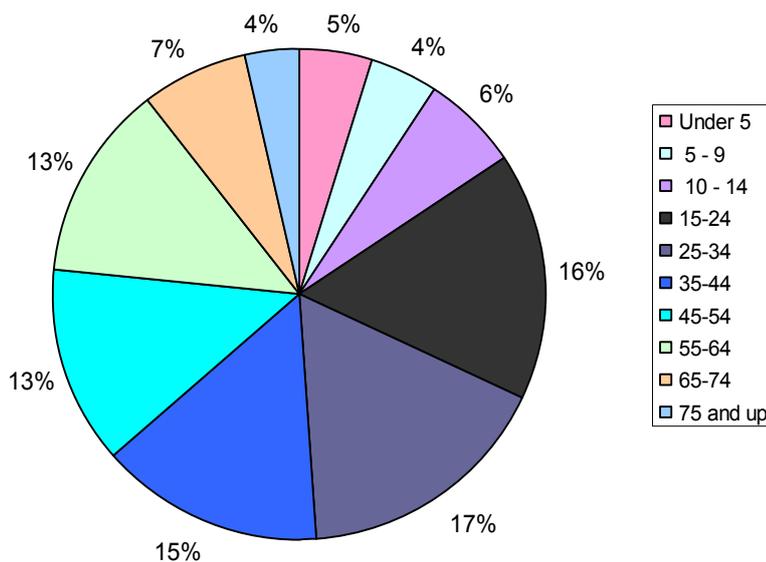
Figure 3. 1981 and 1991 Pietrala Population by Age



during the same time period. Thus, the dramatic population decline of the 1980s was, in large part, due to the natural dispersal of the 1960s “baby boom” children.

A more ominous trend, however, was also present. Not only was there a dramatic drop in the population of young adults in Pietralata in the 1980s, but also residents of nearly all age groups were moving out of the neighborhood. The difference between the 1981 and 1991 bars for each age distribution represents the net number of people moving out of the community. Each age cohort in the earlier census would remain in the neighborhood, becoming the next-oldest age cohort ten years later. Yet, in Pietralata, all but one age cohort shows a significant population decline. The group that was 45 to 54 years old in 1981 had grown by the time its members reached 55 to 64 in 1991. The population of the two most elderly cohorts declined significantly and quite expectedly. Substantial population declines of 10 to 20 percent in the cohorts whose members were, in 1981, aged from 25 to 34 and from 35 to 44 were quite unexpected, as were the declines in the populations of children’s cohorts. These groups are, of course, interconnected; children move out of the neighborhood only when their parents do. This data indicates that, for one reason or another, people of nearly all age groups were choosing to move out of Pietralata in the 1980s.

Figure 4. 1991 Pietralata Age Distribution



The data presented in Figure 4 demonstrates that in 1991, Pietralata had a shrunken, middle-aged population. It appears that the 1960s "baby boom" generation remained in the neighborhood to make it the most significant age group. Only 15 percent of the Pietralata

residents fell into the fifteen-year age span of zero to 14, while the ten-year age cohorts of 15 to 24, 25 to 34, and 35 to 44 each comprised 15 to 17 percent of the population. Each of the next two age brackets, 45 to 54 and 55 to 64, represents 13 percent of residents, and the population drops off significantly among older residents. The differential rates at which residents of different age groups left the neighborhood during the 1980s appear to have had an equalizing effect on the middle age brackets. The population of Pietralata, then, was in 1991 distributed fairly evenly across these brackets, with fewer old and young inhabitants.

The sex ratio in Pietralata is nearly identical to that of Rome as a whole, with slightly more females than males. In the greater Pietralata area, 51.6 percent of the 1991 population was female, as compared to 52.2 percent in all of Rome. The proportion has remained nearly constant over time. In 1961, 1971, 1981, for which census tract data are available, the percentage of females in the population was always between 50 and 51 percent. It thus appears that this pattern can be expected to remain consistent.

**Implications of Population, Age, and Sex Analysis** This analysis demonstrates that Pietralata's population is somewhat unstable because of the dramatic decrease in residents from 1981 to 1991. Furthermore, although a variety of different aged people live in Pietralata, the most recent data available indicates that the biggest population group is comprised of 1960's baby boomers. Thus, it can be assumed these now elderly residents still live in the neighborhood. Recent visual observations also indicate that a significant number of young families reside in Pietralata. If Rossi & Corcia decide to develop a recreational facility in Pietralata, it must serve the neighborhood's diverse age groups. Because the male-female ratio is approximately 50-50, Rossi & Corcia must cater to the needs of men and women equally.

### **Education and Employment Analysis**

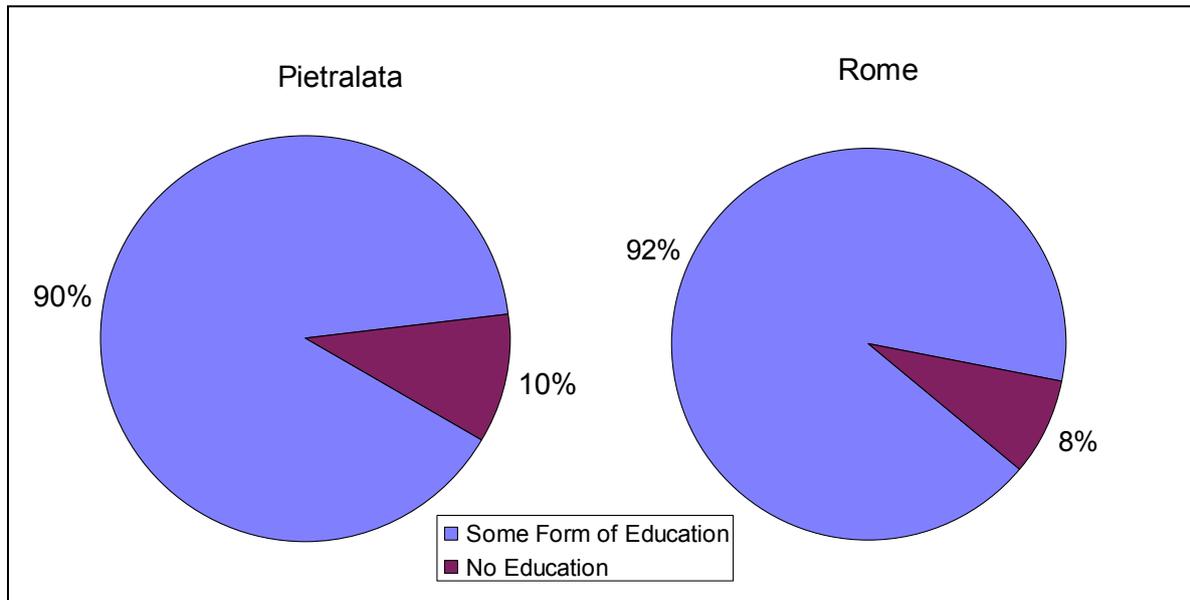
#### *Rossi & Corcia Feasibility Criteria*

- Data portraying low levels of education are necessary to indicate that the neighborhood is indeed disadvantaged, and attractive for national or local government funding.
- Neighborhood employment levels should demonstrate economic disadvantage to enable project support from government sources; however, resident purchasing power must be adequate to sustain a neighborhood recreational facility.

Public education is a crucial investment for all neighborhoods because it gives people the necessary foundation to continue learning and contribute positively to society.

Furthermore, there is a significant link between the level of academic degree received by a person and his or her economic standing.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the neighborhood's education levels were assessed in order to understand the economic context of Pietralata.

Figure 5. Educated Residents versus Non Educated Residents in Pietralata and in Rome (1991)



The number of educated residents present in any neighborhood is a key indicator of that neighborhood's economic activity. According to 1991 ISTAT data represented in Figure 5, 10 percent of Pietralata residents were completely uneducated, whereas 90 percent of inhabitants had at least some form of an academic degree. Nonetheless, the label "Some Form of Education" includes individuals from all academic backgrounds - elementary school, middle school, high school, or college. In 1991, 8 percent of all Romans were completely uneducated, whereas 92 percent of the city's populace had completed some level of schooling. The data demonstrates that the percentage of educated Pietralata residents is slightly lower than the overall percentage of educated inhabitants in the entire City of Rome. Different social norms within various neighborhoods influence school culture and education prioritization, thus causing the difference in percentages.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cornell University: American Cities. Lecture, Professor Goldsmith. Fall 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Don Francesco of Parrocchia S. Michele Arcangelo, March 15, 2005.

Figure 6. 1991 Education Levels in Pietralata

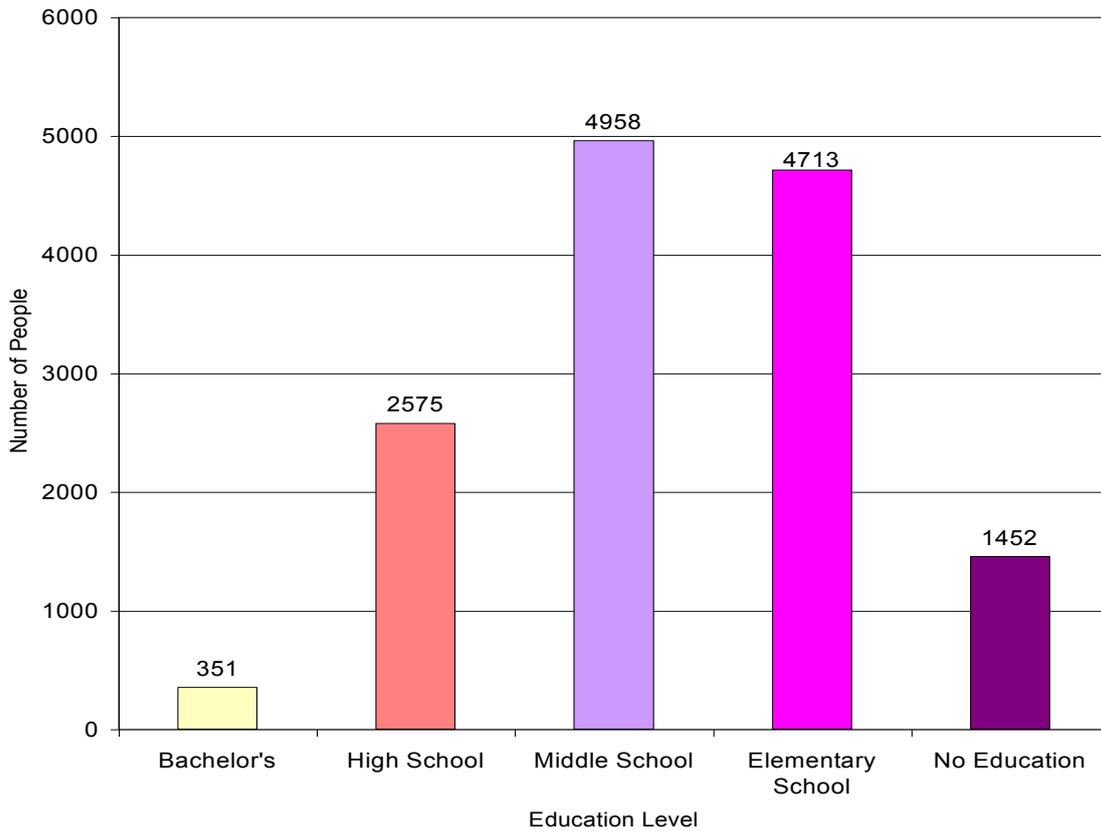
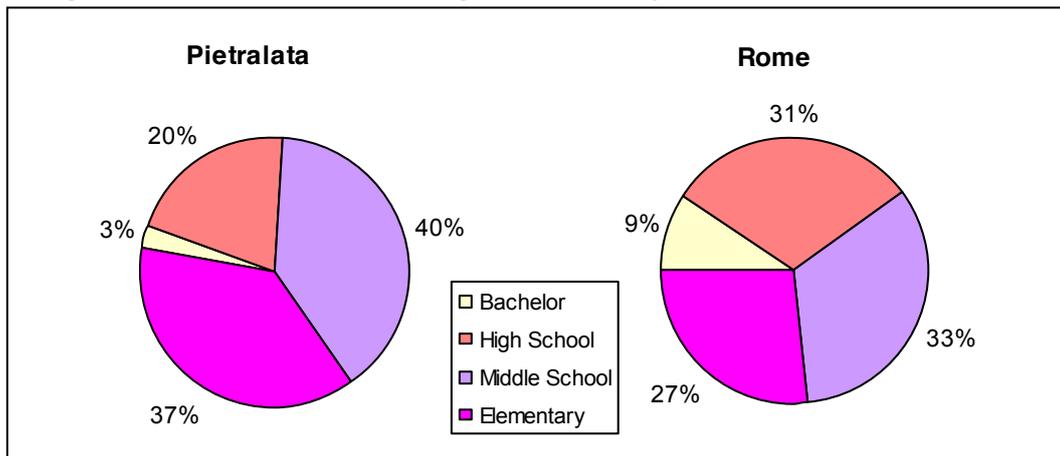


Figure 7. Pietralata and Rome: Degree Received by 1991



These graphs (Figures 6 and 7) depict the 1991 percentages of Pietralata and Rome residents who have achieved each level of schooling. The data illustrate that in Pietralata, 37 percent of the educated populace only completed elementary school and 40 percent of educated inhabitants received a middle school education. Thus, 77 percent of the neighborhood’s educated population did not even finish high school. It is important to note that public schooling is only mandatory until the age of thirteen in Italy. The impact of this

law is reflected in Pietralata’s huge decrease from middle school to high school graduates. Only 20 percent of educated Pietralata residents completed high school, and just 3 percent received a college bachelor’s degree. Meanwhile, in the entire City of Rome, 31 percent of educated inhabitants completed high school and 9 percent received a college degree.

Once again, the data demonstrate that the education levels are slightly lower in Pietralata than in Rome as a whole. According to Don Francesco of Parrocchia S. Michele Arcangelo, higher education is not a main priority for residents of Pietralata. Different societal expectations within various neighborhoods influence attitudes toward education. In Pietralata, a “negative” attitude exists towards higher schooling, ultimately contributing to the low yield in high school and college degrees. Students would rather find a job and earn money than complete their schooling.<sup>10</sup>

Public education data<sup>11</sup> can accurately portray the economic framework of neighborhoods. Because the majority of Pietralata residents have not completed high school or college, it can be assumed that very few academics or professionals live in the neighborhood or enhance the area’s economic activity.

Figure 8. 1991 Pietralata Employment Status Compositor

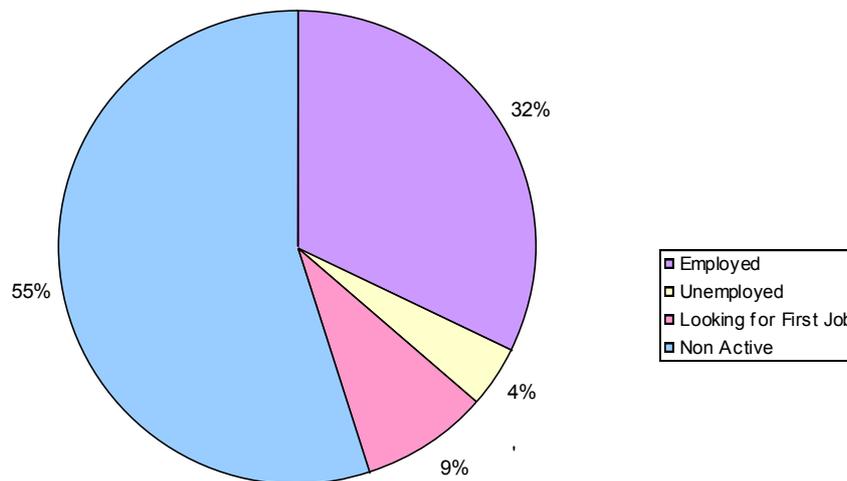
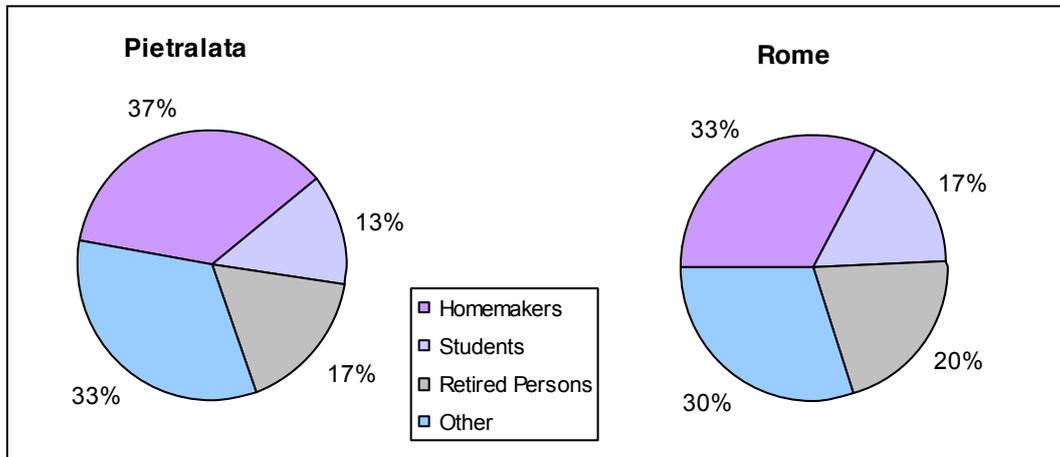


Figure 8 illustrates the economic activities of Pietralata residents in 1991. Fifty-five percent of Pietralata inhabitants were non-active, meaning they did not contribute to the neighborhood’s workforce. Thirty-two percent of residents were employed, 4 percent were unemployed, and 9 percent were searching for their first job.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Don Francesco of Parrocchia S. Michele Arcangelo, March 15, 2005.

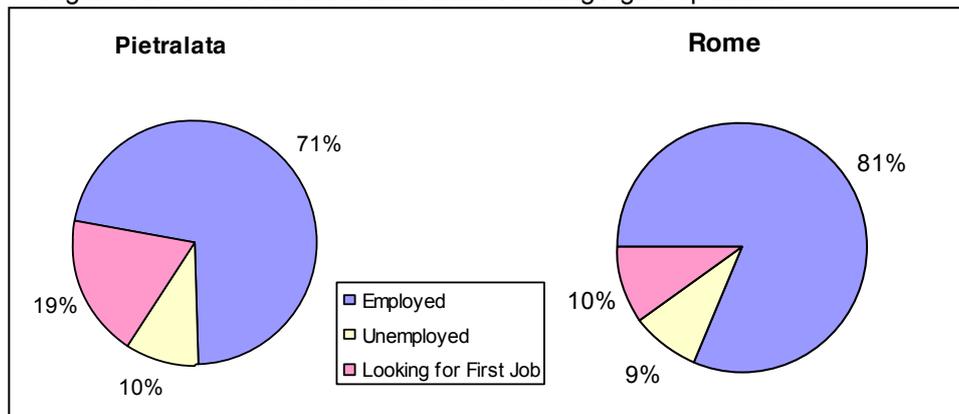
In analyzing this data, it is crucial to assess the non-active and working populations separately with the aim of understanding the needs of Pietralata residents. By categorizing people, and analyzing the specific categories, Rossi & Corcia can better serve the neighborhood's inhabitants.

Figure 9. Pietralata and Rome Non Active Population Composition, 1991



According to Figure 9, the segment of Pietralata's population that did not contribute to the labor market was primarily composed of homemakers, retired persons, and students. Thirty-six percent of the inactive population consisted of homemakers, 17 percent was composed of retired persons, and 13 percent of the populace was students. Finally, one third of the inactive population was listed by the census as an undefined 'other' group. Overall, the composition of inactive residents in Pietralata was similar to citywide figures. The most significant difference between the two sets of data is the lower percentage of students and retired persons, as well as higher percentage of homemakers in Pietralata.

Figure 10. 1991 Pietralata and Rome Working Age Population



<sup>11</sup> See Appendix F. *Literacy Rates* for extended data on literacy rates in Pietralata.

In 1991, 10 percent of the working age Pietralata residents were unemployed, and slightly fewer, exactly 9 percent of working age Romans were unemployed. Also, in Pietralata, 71 percent of the populace was employed, and in Rome, 81 percent of the residents were employed. Interestingly enough, 19 percent of working age Pietralata residents were looking for their first jobs, while only 10 percent of working age Romans were looking for their first jobs. This indicates that a large proportion of unemployed, working age Pietralata residents is composed of younger generations.

Table 1. Education and Employment of School Age Population in Pietralata

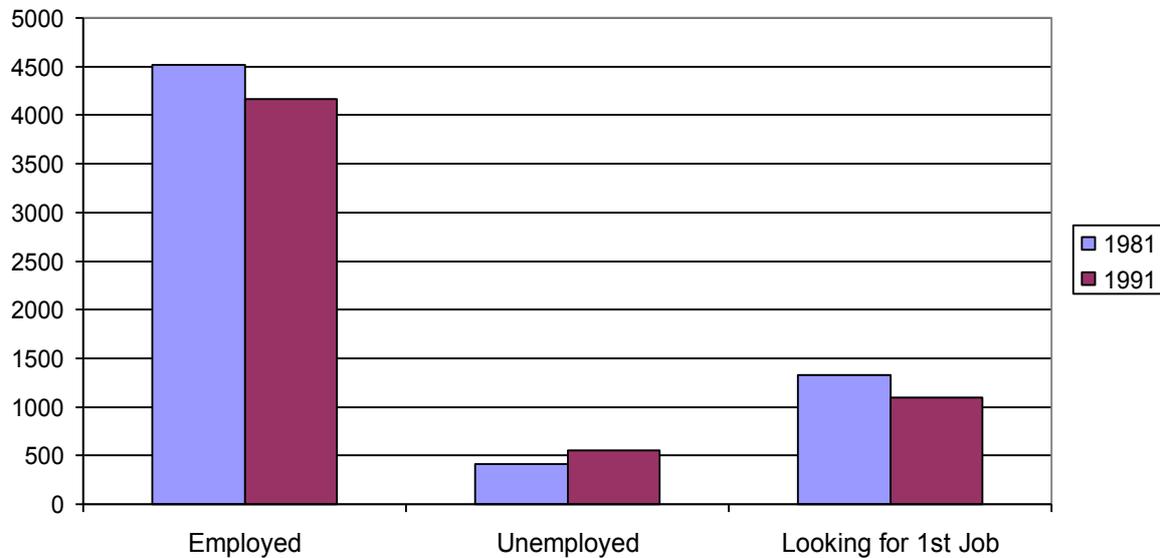
	Population below 30 years old		Percentage of School Age			% Non Active Youth, 14-29 years old	% Employed Youth, 14-29 years old
	% children and youth 0-13 years old	% youth 14-29 years old	Pre-school 3-5 years old	Elementary School and Middle School 6-13 years old	High School and Higher Education 14-19 years old		
Pietralata	11.3	27.1	52.8	98.2	35.7	27.0	29.9
Total Quartieri	10.8	24.5	52.5	97.5	39.8	21.4	30.1
Total Generale	12.3	25.4	53.5	97.6	37.5	22.3	30.5

As depicted in Table 1, the percentage of youth attending secondary schools, vocational schools, and universities was slightly lower in Pietralata than in the larger metropolitan area of Rome. This further demonstrates that residents of Pietralata are somewhat less educated than the overall Roman population. In Pietralata, 36 percent of young adults, ages 14 to 29 attended secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, while in the entire metropolitan area, the figure was 38 percent. Meanwhile, the employment level of this age group in Pietralata was about 30 percent, the same as in the city as a whole. The level of unemployment within this age group, however, is much higher in Pietralata than in Rome as a whole.

In order to predict the economic feasibility of Rossi & Corcia development in Pietralata, the employment and unemployment rates were compared over time. The above graph, Figure 11, and Table 2 evaluate the composition of Pietralata's working age population between 1981 and 1991. The data demonstrate that employment decreased by 7.9 percent, unemployment increased by 34.1 percent and the number of people looking for their first jobs decreased by 17.4 percent. Employment decreased and unemployment increased in 1991 partially due to small businesses including a wool factory, car factory, and specialty

clothing stores deciding to leave the neighborhood.<sup>12</sup> These ominous trends suggest that the economic future of Pietralata is headed in an undesirable direction.

Figure 11. 1981 & 1991 Working Age Population Composition



**Implications of Education and Employment Analysis** The data demonstrate that Pietralata education and employment levels are slightly lower than those of the City of Rome, signifying that Pietralata is indeed an underprivileged neighborhood. If Rossi & Corcia chooses to apply for government funding or competitive grants, data illustrating Pietralata’s economic disadvantage is essential to receive such support. However, the education and employment data indicate that the residents of Pietralata have low purchasing power. Because most of the unemployed population is comprised of young adults who are searching for their first jobs and also not attending an educational institution, it is evident that this population may be unable to afford high usage costs for a new public-private facility. These economic data are crucial to consider when implementing admission fees and costly maintenance plans. Lastly, the education and employment data demonstrate how Rossi & Corcia should tailor the services offered by the recreational facility. For example, because 55 percent of Pietralata inhabitants were not active in 1991, the recreational facility should provide services during working hours for these potential users. Also, because 13 percent of residents were searching for employment in 1991, Rossi & Corcia can assume there are potential recreational facility workers available in the community.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Vice President of Municipio V. February 10, 2005



An extensive foot survey determined that economic activity in Pietralata is primarily in the form of neighborhood-oriented retail and services. This activity is concentrated in three areas: along Via di Durantini, near the Pietralata Metro station, and in the market area on Via di Michelotti (Map1).

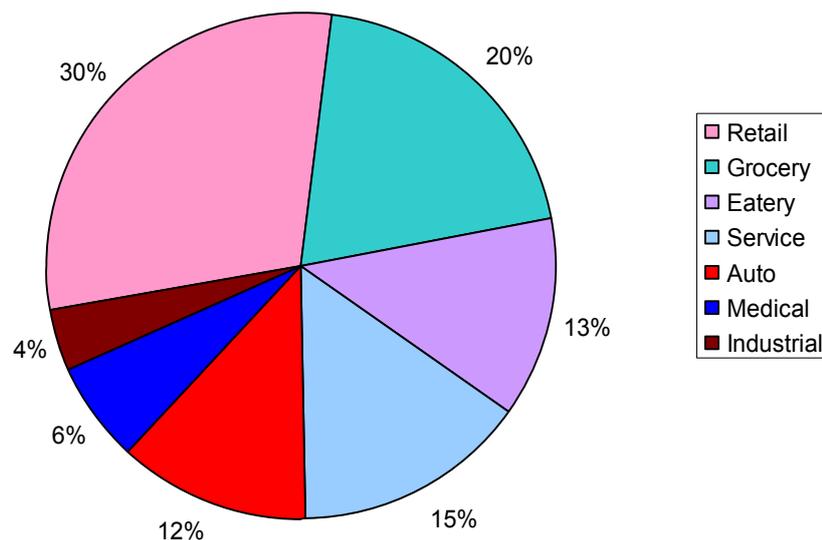
According to Table 2, approximately half of the 155 individually housed businesses in the neighborhood are located in the Via di Durantini area, and almost one quarter around each of the other two activity nodes.

Table 2. Location of Pietralata Business

Location	Via di Durantini Area	Pietralata Metro Area	Market Area	Other	Pietralata Total
Total Business	75	75	35	10	155
Percentage	22.6%	22.6%	48.4%	6.5%	100%

**Retail Businesses.** Pietralata is primarily a residential neighborhood, creating high demand for grocery stores and other retail.<sup>13</sup> To serve this high residential demand, retail services are located conveniently throughout the neighborhood. Almost all enterprises in

Figure 12. Pietralata Economic Activity



Pietralata are neighborhood-oriented, with the important exceptions of Panorama, numerous auto shops, and several micro-industries. As shown in Figure 12, one in five businesses is a grocery store, including specialty food shops like bakeries and butchers. Several of the supermarkets' prices and selection indicate that these stores cater specifically to a working-class clientele. For example, many of the vendors in the market on Via di Michelotti offer

horsemeat, which provides a cheap source of protein. Clementines observed at the local grocery stores were generally cheaper and lower quality than in Rome's Centro Storico.

Another 30 percent of establishments are small retail stores, selling primarily useful, everyday items. The selection includes clothing, drugs, appliances, computers, paper products, clothes, fabrics, and magazines. Given that Pietralata is an economically disadvantaged neighborhood, the products and prices of the stores' offerings indicate that commercial services are tailored primarily for local neighborhood needs.

While most retail in the neighborhood is neighborhood-oriented, outside shoppers are attracted by Panorama, a two-level grocery and department store, which offers a wide variety of both grocery and household items. It is located adjacent to the Pietralata Metro stop and Via Tiburtina, and numerous shoppers have been observed boarding the Metro and local bus lines carrying bags of merchandise from the store.

*Food Service Establishments.* Eateries are scattered throughout Pietralata, and they account for 13 percent of the neighborhood's businesses. All of these establishments are quite modest; no sit-down restaurants exist in the neighborhood. The category thus consists primarily of bars and pizzerias, with several other types of food to eat on the go. Clearly, these establishments are neighborhood-oriented, and their low prices confirm the working-class nature of the area's residents as well as the residential character of the area. No outsider would travel to Pietralata specifically to enjoy one of its eateries.

*Service Sector Businesses.* Commercial services are fairly plentiful, comprising 15 percent of businesses in Pietralata. Most are in retail storefronts located in the three major commercial areas of the neighborhood. The services category includes such business types as banks, dry cleaners, and hair salons. Like the area's retail establishments, services in Pietralata are oriented toward serving the community's needs. The diversity of these businesses indicates that various neighborhood needs are fulfilled. A large concentration of a single service type would signify that those businesses serve an outside-neighborhood clientele.<sup>14</sup> There are also several commercial entities that offer lessons in dancing, boxing, and soccer.

Other types of offices, not directly service-oriented, are located in various areas throughout the neighborhood. Medical facilities, which account for a small minority of economic activity in Pietralata, are accessible to most residents. Two clinics are located on

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix E. *Land Use*.

Via di Pietralata, while independent doctors' offices are in the storefronts of each major commercial area. In addition, there are two medium-size office complexes in the community.<sup>15</sup> Two large public facilities also provide employment in the neighborhood. Fort Pietralata and the National Cancer Research Center are both located on the northern edge of the neighborhood, but neither has any noteworthy social or economic impact on the community.<sup>16</sup>

*Auto-Oriented and Industrial Businesses.* Blue-collar activities are a more significant component of economic life in Pietralata than white-collar offices. Automobile-oriented commerce and industry comprises the vast majority of these activities, and is far over-represented in the neighborhood. Auto cleaning, repair, and sales enterprises represent 14 percent of business structures in Pietralata.<sup>17</sup> Most of the auto shops are located in the northeast quadrant of the neighborhood, with the largest concentration in the retail area around Via di Durantini, where 21 percent of businesses are automobile-based. Some of these are small enterprises located in storefronts under apartment buildings, while others operate in somewhat larger, more run-down warehouse structures. There are clearly more auto repair shops than would be necessary to serve the residents of Pietralata; therefore, the

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<sup>14</sup> Although most of the service offerings were oriented towards cost-conscious consumers, a spa and a travel agency stood out as possibly catering to a population with some disposable income.

<sup>15</sup> One of the office complexes is a six-story building off Via di Durantini. The second larger office development consists of two buildings, each three to four stories high, undergoing renovation. A neighboring complex of one-story buildings on Via Pomona, two blocks from the Pietralata Metro station is also part of this commercial office center. Businesses in these structures could not be included in the neighborhood's commercial tally because the number of firms in the complexes could not be determined. Nevertheless, the number of businesses in these two complexes is small, and services still remain a minority of commercial activities in Pietralata.

<sup>16</sup> The historic Fort Pietralata, located in the northwest corner of the area under study, was probably located next to the Aniene River for strategic defense. Heavy army traffic into and out of the complex indicates that the fort remains well used. However, little interaction appears to exist between the installation and the surrounding community. Similarly, the National Cancer Research Center is one of the largest institutions in Pietralata, but it also appears to have very little economic impact on surrounding area. Built in the 1970s, the center is located on the northeastern outskirts of Pietralata, near the Ponte Mammolo Metro station. It is physically separated from the rest of the community by the Metro station's large park-and-ride lots and the Aniene River nature reserve. No employees of the facility were observed moving to and from other areas of the neighborhood. In addition, the Vice President of Municipio V, under which Pietralata falls, noted that the research center was largely vacant and that very little activity took place there. Like the fort, it appears to play a very small part in the economic life of Pietralata.

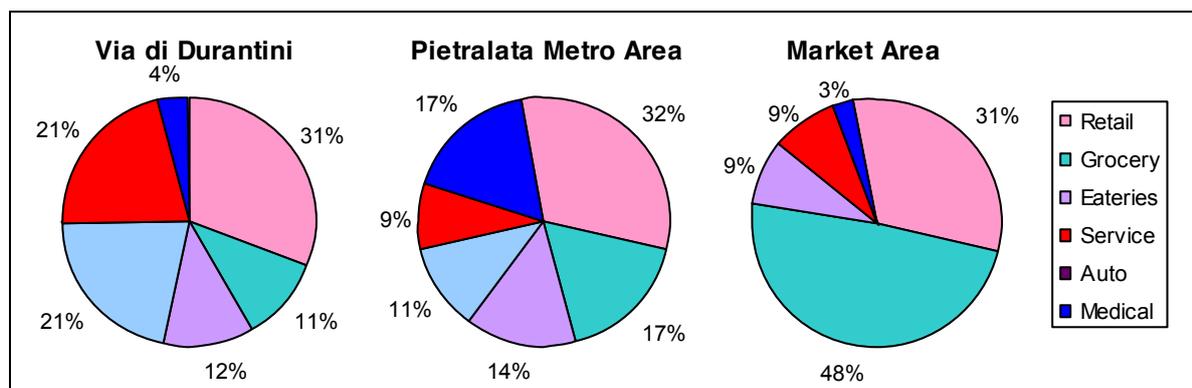
<sup>17</sup> Most of the auto-oriented businesses in the neighborhood provide repair services; only one is a dealership. In addition, two auto junkyards, which fall into the category of industry, are located in the area. The largest vehicle maintenance facility in the neighborhood is the ATAC bus-cleaning shop located on Via di Pietralata near the Metro station.

area must attract a larger audience of motorists who come to the neighborhood to have their vehicles repaired.

Industrial activities comprise a small minority of economic activities in Pietralata, only 3 percent, but they are scattered throughout the neighborhood. As previously mentioned, two junkyards are located along the upper part of Via di Pietralata, one of which is particularly visible and large. Three abandoned industrial facilities are also located in the area. The remaining micro-industries in the community are, like the auto-repair shops, concentrated in the northwestern area of the neighborhood. These include a small mattress manufacturer, an appliance-maker, and two lots selling various heating fuels. Together with auto repair businesses, these commercial activities represent a significant presence of fairly undesirable land uses in the area. According to zoning maps, most of these structures were constructed illegally and are in need of requalification.

**Commercial Activity Nodes in Pietralata.** A comparison in Figure 13 between business types in the three major commercial nodes of Pietralata shows the various activities concentrated in each of the neighborhood’s business district.

Figure 13. Pietralata Commercial Activities by Areas



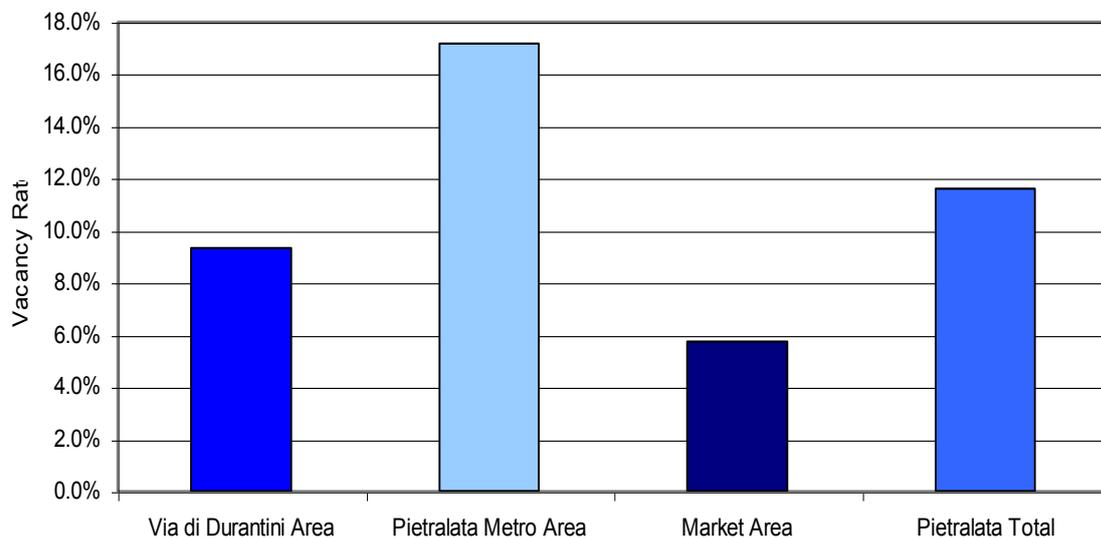
*Via di Durantini.* This is the largest of the three commercial areas, with approximately twice as many businesses as either the Pietralata Metro station area or the Via di Michelotti market area. Although all firm categories are represented, commercial activity around this node is largely auto- and service-oriented. One in five businesses is in the auto industry, including numerous repair shops, two dealerships of motorini and used cars, and several gas stations. These auto businesses attract customers from an area significantly larger than the boundaries of Pietralata. Service enterprises catering to the local area are also present here, including a bank, a post office, two construction contracting offices, and several barber shops and hair salons.

*Pietralata Metro Area.* This is the most diverse of the three commercial centers, as it includes an average proportion of nearly all business categories. Only medical facilities are over-represented, with more than four times as many businesses as are present around the other nodes. Also, although there are many fewer grocery businesses than in the market area, the six grocery stores that exist are quite large; the area is thus important for serving the grocery-shopping needs of residents. This node is also the location of Panorama, which significantly alters its clientele by attracting numerous shoppers from outside the community.

*Michelotti Market Area.* This retail area is dominated by the small grocery vendors of the market. Nearly half of the businesses in the retail area are grocery vendors, while this category represents fewer than 20 percent of stores around the other two nodes. Many of the building storefronts around the market are occupied not by commercial establishments, but by political party offices.

**Vacancy Rates** The vacancy rate of Pietralata business structures is high, at 12 percent of all available spaces, as shown in Figure 14. This total includes a number of retail storefronts, as well as three abandoned industrial facilities. The two largest of these spaces are located near the Pietralata Metro station: the first is directly across the street, and the second is in the park a block away, and is currently occupied by gypsies. The third is a historic wool factory, which is protected by the Roman zoning code. Vacancy rates of commercial spaces vary between the three major retail nodes. They are lowest in the Michelotti market area, where much of the space is occupied by political party offices. Vacancy is fairly high, 9 percent, in the Via di Durantini area, but it highest near the

Figure 14. Pietralata Business Vacancy



Pietralata Metro station, where the rate is 17 percent. These vacancies, particularly of the large industrial spaces, would provide ideal spaces to locate a new public-private facility and thereby increase traffic and demand in the surrounding area.

**Implications of Commercial Services Analysis** Businesses in Pietralata are primarily neighborhood-oriented retail; minimal recreational business competition is present. The retail stores and services in the neighborhood are diverse, allowing residents to fulfill most commercial needs within the community. The auto repair shops and Panorama, meanwhile, bring outsiders into the area. Most commercial activity in the neighborhood is located in three concentrated nodes of activity. Together, these factors indicate that a recreational facility would be able to attract a large clientele, including both neighborhood residents and outsiders.

This analysis of business types and locations is also critical in the selection of a building site for Rossi & Corcia development. The facility should be located near one of the three commercial nodes to attract the greatest number of users. The Pietralata Metro station and Durantini areas would be the best centers to locate a new facility in order to draw people from outside the neighborhood. The Michelotti market area serves primarily the food supply needs of the local community, and would thus be an attractive location for many local residents, but fewer outsiders. The Metro area also has the highest vacancy rate of the three major commercial nodes, indicating both the need for rejuvenation and the availability of space for reuse as a new facility.

## **Public Services**

### *Rossi & Corcia Feasibility Criteria*

- The neighborhood should lack recreational, social, and cultural services, demonstrating a need for a new public-private community facility.
- Residents of Pietralata should support the development of a new recreational facility in the neighborhood.

The Catholic Church appears to be the biggest service provider in Pietralata. Thus, social services provided by all four churches in the neighborhood were researched. For example, the four churches provide community activities for different subgroups of the population including handicapped individuals, immigrants, children, and the elderly. Furthermore, the churches provide soup kitchens for the homeless and have established a Center of Listening for people to express their emotions and problems. Aside from the

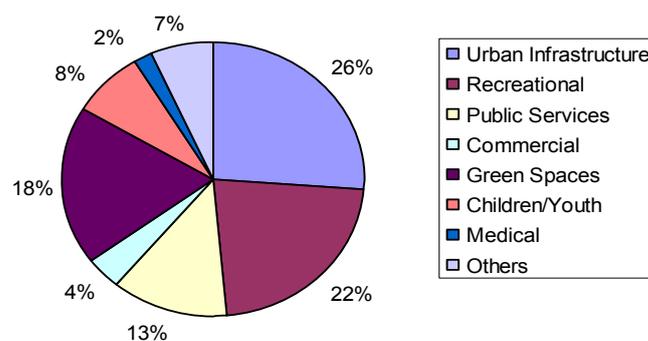
Church, the Commune also assists Pietralata residents by offering job searching advice, tutoring services, and extracurricular activities. In addition, the Commune has established two family clinics in the neighborhood, as well as a nursing home for the elderly.

Even though the four churches offer social assistance for the inhabitants, the area is not well serviced because the neighborhood is segmented into different groups based on the location of the church, as well as age, income level, and sex. Each of the four churches serves their respective community, but the four communities are not integrated, mainly because they are stratified by geography. This is because Via di Pietralata is the only connector-street in the neighborhood. Also, there is a lack of central gathering points in Pietralata for residents to gather and intermingle.

**Implications of Public Services Analysis** This analysis demonstrates that the neighborhood is lacking a central indoor, non-religious facility where all residents can gather. Services provided by faith based organizations may not be preferable to all residents. Thus, Pietralata would benefit from a common community center accessible to all, providing services and activities that encourage inter- and intra-neighborhood integration. Surveys distributed throughout the neighborhood reflect the community’s preferred choice of services and improvements.

**Survey Results**<sup>18</sup> Ninety-two percent of the respondents think that Pietralata is in need of improvement, as shown in Figure 8. When asked what improvements the neighborhood needs (question II), the respondents listed various answers. Most participants noted several aspects of Pietralata, which require rejuvenation. Hence, there were more responses to this question than there were surveyed participants. In analyzing the survey results, each answer for desired improvement in the neighborhood was tallied into one of the

**Figure 15. Respondants Preference of Improvements**

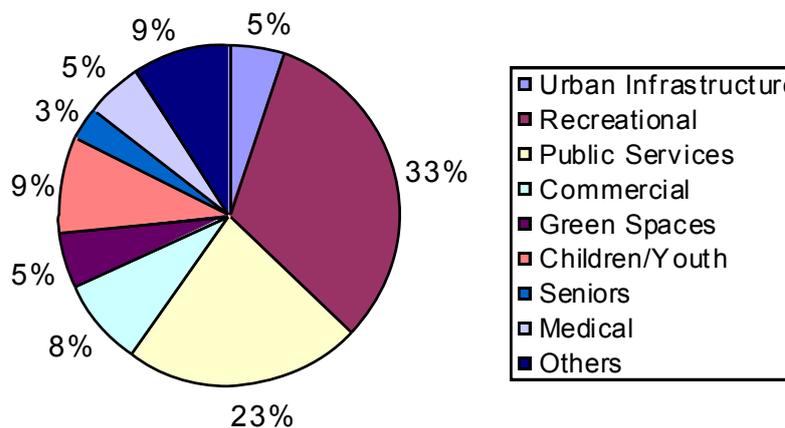


<sup>18</sup> See Survey Appendix D. *Survey & Results* for further details.

following appropriate categories: urban infrastructure, recreational facilities, public services, commercial activities, green spaces, youth activities, medical facilities, and ‘other’ improvements. As shown in Figure 15, 26 percent of survey responses indicate a preference for improvements in urban infrastructure such as better transportation and safer sidewalks. Twenty-two percent requested new or improved recreational facilities such as sport centers, cinemas, and theaters. Another 18 percent of responses state a need for more green spaces and parks, while 13 percent stated a desire for public services such as a new police station or post office.

The responses to question III, inquiring what services are desired most by residents are very similar to the results of question II, which addressed what improvement residents want to see occur in Pietralata. Answers for question III were thus categorized in the same manner as those for question II. The results (Figure 16) show that 33 percent of the respondents prefer recreational services, and another 23 percent prefer public services. Meanwhile, 9 percent of the respondents requested services for youth and children. In addition, another 8 percent of the responses stated preference for improved commercial services in the area.

Figure 16. Respondents' Preferences of Services in Facility



**Implications of Survey Results** Most importantly, the results of the surveys demonstrate that there is community support for a new recreational facility. Residents not only want a central activity point in the neighborhood, but they also desire improved green spaces and public services. Therefore, if development takes place in Pietralata, Rossi &

Corcia should construct a mixed-use, public-private recreational facility. The facility needs to supply a combination of charged activities and voluntary services. Through this model, not only will Rossi & Corcia profit from development, but also contribute positively to the Pietralata by serving the needs of residents. It is also important to note that many of the neighborhood improvement responses focused upon urban infrastructure enhancements, indicating that a top priority of many residents may not be fulfilled by a new recreational facility. Because Rossi & Corcia only specialize in recreational facility construction, the company cannot fulfill these requests. Fortunately, given the strong support for recreational, open space, and public service improvement among most survey participants, it is unlikely that supporters of public infrastructure upgrades would oppose Rossi & Corcia development.

## ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS

The environment and infrastructure analyses examine the accessibility and physical surroundings of the neighborhood. For example, the effectiveness of Pietralata's transportation systems is evaluated. This research depicts where personal automobile routes, pedestrians, bus lines, and Metro stations intersect – forming natural community nodes of activity and interaction. Such locations are important to consider as sites for Rossi & Corcia development. Then, a building and open space condition analysis illustrates the community's physical backdrop. A graphical history of construction and development in Pietralata will be discussed in order to visually realize the neighborhood.

### Transportation

#### *Rossi & Corcia Feasibility Criteria*

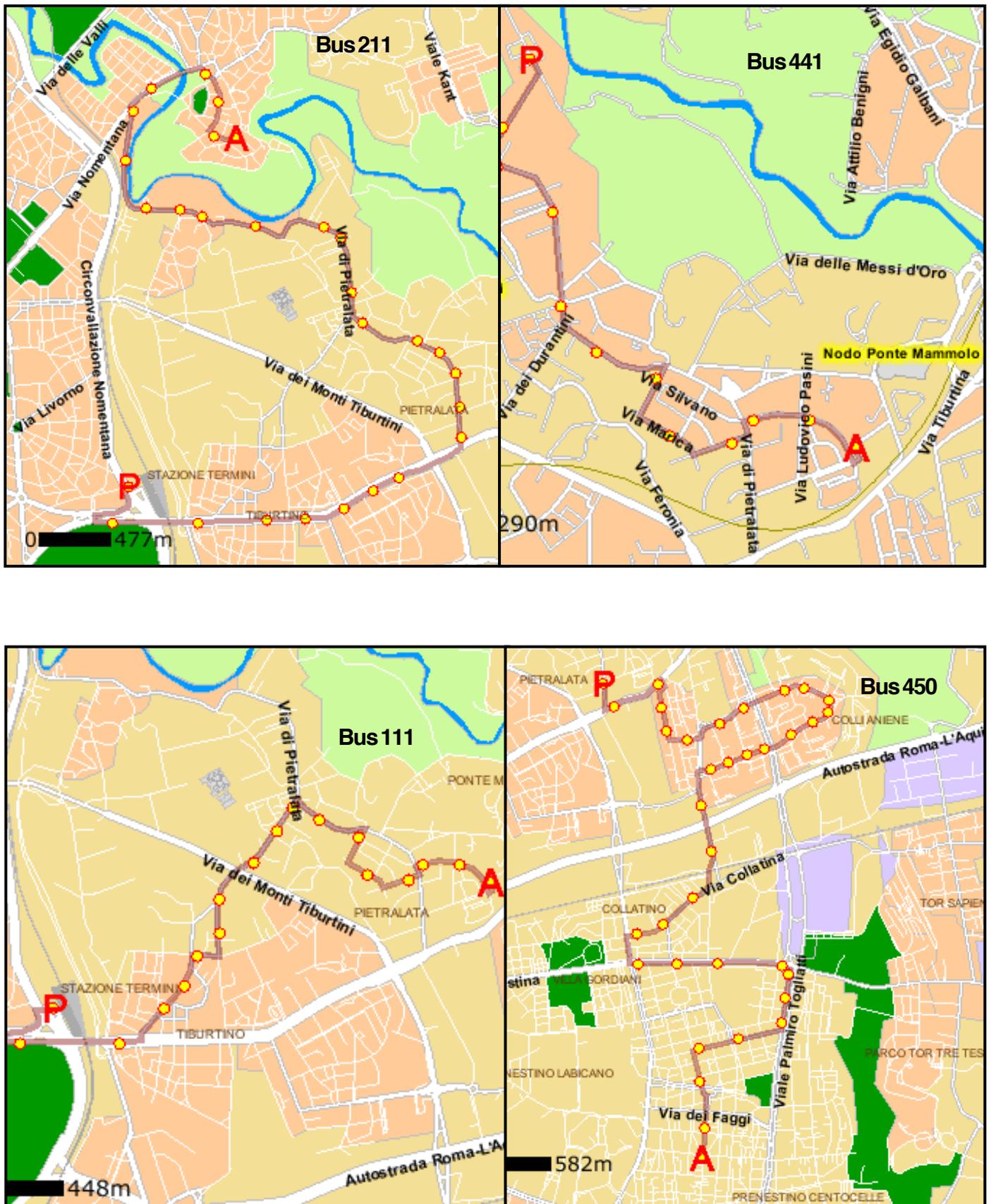
- The neighborhood should be easily accessible to many areas of Rome through several modes of transportation.
- Circulation routes within Pietralata should facilitate easy access to potential development sites.

**Bus Routes**<sup>19</sup> Four bus routes - the 211, the 441, the 111, and the 450 serve the Pietralata community regularly. This section will describe the service and usage of each bus line, and indicate along which routes a facility would best be located. The bus maps are shown in Figure 17.

*Bus route 211.* Facilitates travel along the central commercial spine of the neighborhood, and serves as a connector to Stazione Tiburtina and other communities to the northwest and southwest. Within Pietralata, it travels directly along Via di Pietralata, serving the Metro station area, as well as the Via di Durantini commercial node. Also near the route are the elementary school and Fort Pietralata. Riders on the route use it primarily to enter and leave the neighborhood. Because it does not venture onto side streets, the bus moves through Pietralata fairly quickly. Although it is scheduled to run very frequently, observation indicates that the reliability of the bus line is poor. Nevertheless, it is well used by both residents and outsiders.

*Bus route 441.* Functions as a neighborhood circulator, connecting different areas of Pietralata and its surroundings with the Santa Maria del Soccorso Metro station. Along its

Figure 17. Pietralata Bus Map



<sup>19</sup> Refer to Appendix G. *Transportation* for a more detailed description of bus routes.

route are the Via di Michelotti market, the residential areas on the eastern side of the neighborhood, churches, schools, the Acacie Park, and the Via di Durantini commercial area. Service on the route is limited; it ends early in the evening, and the bus runs in each direction only once every half an hour. However, due to its limited route, it is very reliable. Low ridership was observed on the line.

*Bus route 111.* Facilitates travel around the residential and commercial areas of Pietralata and also connects the neighborhood with Stazione Tiburtina, serving the communities located southwest of Pietralata. Within the neighborhood, bus 111 serves the Santa Maria del Soccorso Metro station, the Michelotti market, the major church, the Acacie Park, and the Durantini commercial zone. Route 111 has extended hours of operation and was observed to be fairly reliable; it is scheduled to arrive approximately every 15 to 20 minutes. The route is popular both for neighborhood circulation and travel to outside areas.

*Bus route 450.* It links Pietralata with the neighborhoods to the south and southeast. It also provides a neighborhood circulator function, connecting both the Pietralata and Santa Maria del Soccorso Metro stations, as well as the Michelotti market area, Panorama, and the major churches in the community. The line runs fairly frequently, but was observed to be unreliable. Because it connects many community nodes, the service could be an important asset in the future. Nonetheless, ATAC reports that bus 450 is only a temporary trial route. For this reason, it will be not be crucial in deciding where to locate Rossi & Corcia development.

Overall, Pietralata is well served by the bus system; it allows both the circulation of residents through the community, and easy access for inhabitants of surrounding neighborhoods. Due to their high rider-ship, and the many destinations they serve, locating a new public-private facility along the routes of busses 111 and 211 would facilitate access from a large number of people.

**Metro Stations.** Three main Metro stations exist in the Pietralata neighborhood.<sup>20</sup> These transit points are valuable assets to the area, and allow for a convenient commute to and from central Rome. The Pietralata, Ponte Mammolo, and Santa Maria del Soccorso

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<sup>20</sup> Lastly, according to the City Council, the Roman Metro system is cognizant of the problems regarding the care of public areas around its stations. Therefore, the Roman Metro is currently developing a regeneration and re-evaluation project for the areas surrounding the Pietralata and Santa Maria del Soccorso stations. The maintenance staff of two stations will also be responsible for sustaining the public areas adjacent to the specific stations. This project will be financed by Rome's City Council. Apart from this specific project, the maintenance of urban areas is dependent upon other City Council efforts, private organizations, and conscientious residents.<sup>20</sup> Improving the Metro stations may increase utilization of the subway, spurring local commercial development. Rossi & Corcia should coordinate their re-qualification efforts with Pietralata Metro stations.



function as the commercial district for the adjacent neighborhood of Santa Maria del Soccorso. People are able cross the street from the station by way of an overpass. Additionally, the market place and political parties along Via di Michelotti, the vocational school, and the Parco Pubblico are nearby.

**Roadways and Parking.** Roadways in Pietralata can be categorized into three groups: those with light, medium, and heavy traffic. Most of the smaller and narrower streets that intertwine throughout the residential areas have fairly light traffic. The medium traffic roadways are the main axes in the neighborhood. Via di Pietralata provides the main spine through the neighborhood, and has a northwest to southeast orientation. It provides access between the various commercial and residential zones of the neighborhood, and to the Panorama department store, which adds significantly to the amount of traffic. Via di Durantini is another medium-traffic corridor, which connects the retail districts along the neighborhood's western edge. Via di Tiburtina, the only highly trafficked corridor in the area, does not enter Pietralata but only passes along the edge of the neighborhood, connecting central Rome with a series of peripheral neighborhoods. Locating new recreational facilities along one of the medium or high-traffic corridors would provide greater visibility and access to the complex, thus ensuring its success.

Parking areas in Pietralata are generally of three types: very large lots around the Metro stations and the Panorama superstore, small lots near other commercial facilities, and underground lots accompanying residential complexes. Two of the largest parking lots in Pietralata are near the Metro stations Ponte Mammolo and Soccorso.<sup>21</sup> Both parking lots remain full during the day. Romans from the neighborhood and from the periphery park their cars at the stations and travel into central Rome for work. Fees to park in these lots are charged by the hour, unless the driver holds a long-term Metro pass. Few cars park in these lots at night.

A large number of Pietralata residents appear to use automobiles to fulfill at least some of their travel needs. Many use their vehicles for purposes other than commuting to work, as indicated by the prevalence of cars remaining in their parking spaces during the daytime. Small commercial and on-street parking areas are generally filled to capacity throughout the neighborhood. Most middle- and high-income residences include an underground parking garage, likely encouraging greater car ownership. The public housing

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<sup>21</sup> The Ponte Mammolo parking lots contain 1,536 spaces, including 36 handicapped slots. Furthermore, the Soccorso Station includes a large parking lot of 550 spaces, 6 of which are for handicapped individuals.

in the neighborhood, however, does not offer such amenities, so residents of these buildings park on the streets. Aside from the number of cars parked in the neighborhood, the presence of automobile repair shops throughout the area indicates the popularity of cars as a means of personal transport.

**Pedestrians & Sidewalks** Pedestrian activity, while seemingly limited in Pietralata, is concentrated around neighborhood bus stops, as well as the central outdoor market along Via di Michelotti and the Pietralata Metro station area. Very few pedestrians visit most streets outside the center. Streets along housing complexes are mostly utilized by its residents and are quiet throughout the day. Sidewalks on the highly trafficked streets like Via Tiburtina, however, do not have many pedestrians.

**Transportation Analysis Implications** Overall, this transportation analysis demonstrates that it is feasible to construct a successful recreational facility in Pietralata. The variety of public and private transportation modes provides many means of access to the community. It will be convenient for residents within Pietralata to reach the facility because of these various transportation options. Also, it is possible for non-residents to reach the facility due to the neighborhood's four main bus lines, three metro stations, roadways, and parking capacity.

## **Building Condition & Building Construction**

### *Rossi & Corcia Feasibility Criteria*

- The majority of buildings in Pietralata should be in fair condition.<sup>22</sup> Such a physical environment implies that the neighborhood is need of some investment.
- The neighborhood should not be in poor condition<sup>23</sup> because this implies that Rossi & Corcia will have high maintenance expenses in sustaining a recreational facility.

**Years of Building Construction.** The data portrayed in Figure 18 represents the year of construction for each building present in Pietralata since 1991. This graph does not account for any demolished structures, and only includes the dates of buildings, which still stood in 1991. Pietralata was not a very developed neighborhood prior to 1919, given that only thirty structures were built before this year. Another possibility explaining this data is that all structures built before this time were demolished and not accounted for in the 1991 building survey. Nine hundred and ninety-three structures were built between 1919 and

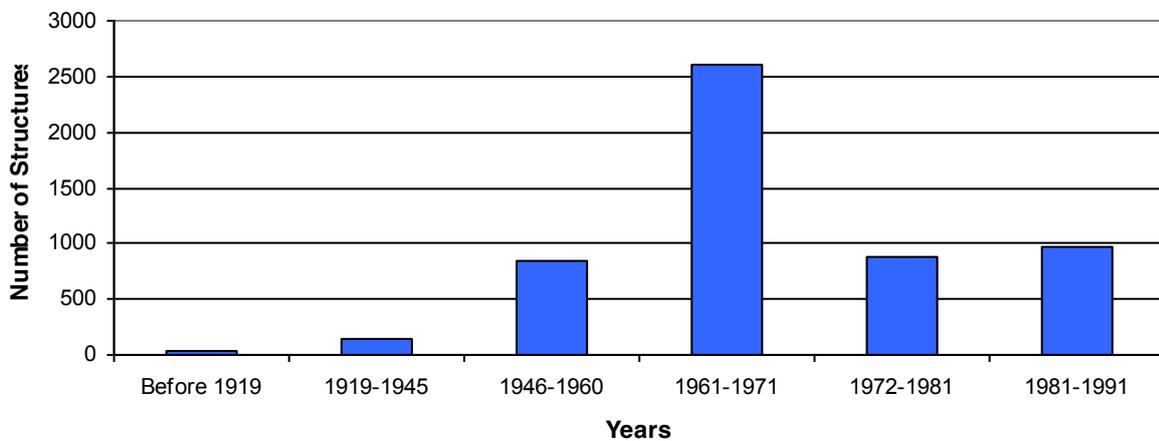
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<sup>22</sup> *Fair Condition* – See Appendix C. *Building Condition* for detailed definition.

<sup>23</sup> *Poor Condition* – See Appendix C. *Building Condition* for detailed definition.

1960, but most of the buildings present in 1991 Pietralata were built during or after the 1960s. According to the graph, 2,065 edifices were constructed between 1961 and 1971, 884 buildings were erected between 1971 and 1981, and 973 structures were constructed between 1981 and 1991. Because the majority of Pietralata structures were built between 1961 and 1971, most buildings in the neighborhood are 30 – 40 years old.

**Figure 18. Years of Structure Built in Pietralata as of 1991**



**Map 3. Pietralata Building Condition Map**



Pietralata’s aging building stock was further analyzed in a building conditions survey, which categorizes all current edifices in the outlined area by the state of their exterior and surrounding environment. As shown in Map 3, red indicates that the buildings are in poor condition, while black depicts structures in the best condition. Green buildings are those of

fair quality, and are also most plentiful on the Pietralata map shown in Figure 19.<sup>24</sup> Based on field observations, these green buildings are mostly structures built between 1961 and 1971.<sup>25</sup>

**Building Condition & Building Construction Implications.** Because the majority of buildings in Pietralata was built between 1961 and 1971, and are in fair condition, the neighborhood is in need of new physical improvement and innovative architecture. Rossi & Corcia can enhance neighborhood pride, and further build their reputation by creating a new complex, which will stand out in an environment lacking competing architecture. Furthermore, maintaining a building in Pietralata seems feasible seeing that few buildings are in extremely poor condition.

## Open Spaces

### *Rossi & Corcia Feasibility Criteria*

- The neighborhood should not contain an abundance of high quality public spaces, because this would indicate no need for a new recreational facility.
- The neighborhood should contain unused open spaces, providing opportunities for redevelopment.

*Largo di Pietralata.* Largo di Pietralata is situated on Via di Pietralata, and it was constructed as part of the citywide Jubilee 2000 initiative. Although it was built recently, it is not well maintained, and its neglect is clearly visible. For example, the Largo di Pietralata sign is shattered and graffiti is prevalent. The piazza is uninviting, disconnected from the main street, and residents do not frequent this public space. Thus, Largo di Pietralata fails to fulfill its function as a point of social interaction for the community.

*The Nature Reserve.* The Nature Reserve is a protected green area that stretches along the Aniene River. It borders the Cancer Research Center and Fort Pietralata on the northern edge of the neighborhood. It was observed that some of the land is used for agriculture and squatters occupy other areas; thus, much of the area is not accessible to the public. Although this space is under government protection, it is not well maintained and litter is widespread.

*Parco Pubblico.* The Parco Pubblico is situated on Via M. Tondi, near the Michelotti market area. The residents of nearby apartment complexes primarily use the park, and people of all ages congregate with their families in the area. This small public space offers a playground, as well as benches and well-maintained grassy areas.

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<sup>24</sup> See Appendix C. *Building Conditions* for detailed definitions.



residents who are members of the church.<sup>26</sup> Because the field is owned by a private organization, and is physically disconnected from the street, it does not lend itself as a community gathering point.

**Open Space Analysis Implications.** It is evident that Pietralata lacks sufficient public open space. Residents do not have many options in where to assemble outdoors. In fact, many of the open spaces present in Pietralata are in need of re-qualification and redevelopment. This analysis indicated a need for Rossi & Corcia investment in Pietralata's recreational infrastructure.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Don Francesco of Parrocchia S. Michele Arcangelo, March 15, 2005.

## **SHOULD ROSSI & CORCIA DEVELOP IN PIETRALATA?**

Based on the demographic, social, economic, political, and environmental analyses of Pietralata, it is feasible for Rossi & Corcia to invest in and profit from a recreational facility in this neighborhood. Although the research highlighted possible disadvantages of development in Pietralata, many of these aspects are in fact opportunities to serve the community. This section outlines those opportunities, and ultimately presents a project recommendation.

The demography analysis demonstrates that Pietralata's population may not necessarily provide an adequate and sustainable client base because of the huge decrease in residents from 1981 to 1991. Nonetheless, because various age groups and many young families currently reside in the neighborhood, it is likely the community's population will remain stable or grow in the future. The education and employment data indicate that the residents of Pietralata have low purchasing power. Thus, many Pietralata inhabitants may be unable to afford usage costs for the recreational facility. Although this is a disadvantage, hindering Rossi & Corcia profits, it is also a significant advantage. If Rossi & Corcia choose to apply for government funding or competitive grants, data illustrating Pietralata's economic disadvantage is essential to receive such support.

While identifying the available commercial and public services in the neighborhood, few competing recreational services were found in Pietralata. Furthermore, after surveying Pietralata residents, community support for a new recreational facility was confirmed. The environment and infrastructure analysis reveals that Pietralata is a well-connected neighborhood served by various modes of transportation; hence, a recreational facility located in the community would be easily accessible to residents and outsiders. Additionally, maintaining a building in Pietralata seems viable seeing that few buildings are in very poor condition. Rossi & Corcia can enhance neighborhood pride and further build their reputation by creating a new complex, which will stand out in an environment lacking notable architecture or public spaces.

Given the varied demography, social needs, and low purchasing power of the neighborhood, the development project should be a mixed used facility supplying a combination of charged activities and non-profit services. Through this model, not only will Rossi & Corcia profit from development, but also the company will contribute positively to

Pietralata. A structure containing a ticketed movie theater, along with multi-purpose rooms would be ideal for the neighborhood. These multi-purpose rooms would be open to individuals and community organizations for hosting meetings and other events. The rooms should be administered on a non-profit basis, but may include minimal fee for their operation and maintenance. The building should also be surrounded by well-maintained green spaces open to the public free of charge. Given that 22 percent of survey respondents stated that the neighborhood needs additional recreational and cultural facilities, and 18 percent suggested a need for improved public parks and spaces, a new movie theater and multi-purpose rooms located in a green complex will fulfill resident needs.<sup>27</sup> The cinema will provide a constant source of revenue for Rossi & Corcia, while the additional public spaces will provide Pietralata with a central community gathering point.

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<sup>27</sup> See Appendix D. *Survey & Results*

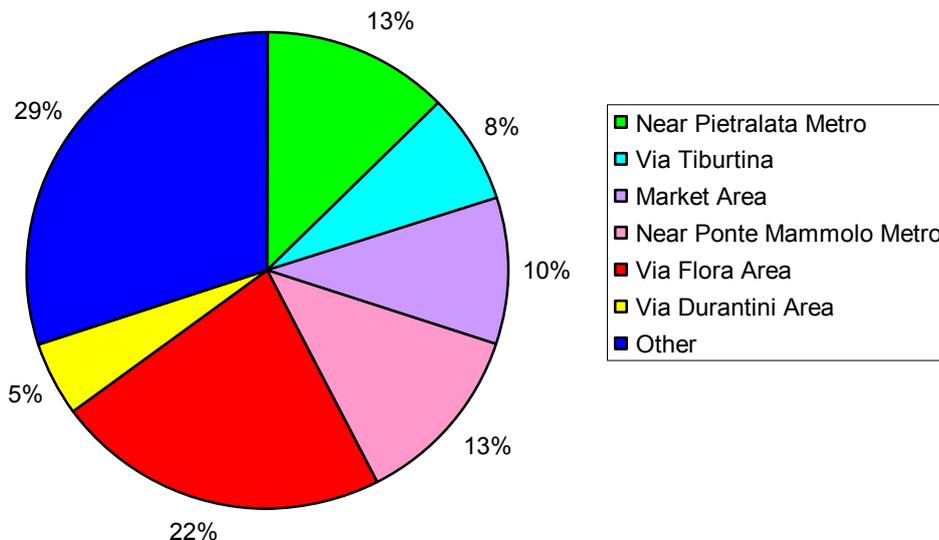
## POTENTIAL LOCATION SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Five possible development sites were selected for consideration based on the transportation and commercial analyses:

- Gray warehouse complex across from Pietralata Metro Station
- Industrial complex surrounded by Parco Acacie
- Aniene River Nature Reserve
- Historic Wool Factory
- Via di Pietralata Junkyard and Open Space

**Preferred Location Survey Results.** The selection of these five sites for further consideration was then confirmed by neighborhood surveys. Fifty-one percent of survey participants responded to the question regarding location preferences for a new facility, the results of which are depicted in Figure 19.

Figure 19. Respondents Preferred Locations



Exactly one-quarter of respondents indicated that they would prefer a facility to be built near the Pietralata Metro area, in the center of the neighborhood. Another 25 percent prefer sites in the eastern half of the neighborhood; 10 percent favor the market area, while 13 percent chose areas near the Ponte Mammolo Metro station. Eight percent selected sites

along Via di Tiburtina and to the south of the neighborhood. Finally, 15 percent indicated a preference for areas in the western half of Pietralata; 10 percent near Via Flora and 5 percent in the Via Durantini area. A large proportion, categorized as ‘other,’ did not select a specific location within the study area of this research report. No area of the neighborhood was selected by a majority of residents for a new facility, and responses were fairly equally divided between the major areas of the neighborhood. Overall, a preference was shown for sites near Metro stations. Most participants also indicated areas near the community’s major commercial nodes. Residents’ opinions are in agreement with the results of the service and transportation analyses, as well as the five site selections.

Thus, a new mixed-use facility should be easily accessible by transit and located near one of the three major commercial nodes. Development of each site is ultimately contingent upon favorable zoning regulations. The New Master Plan of Rome classifies Pietralata within the 11 city zones that require a substantial reorganization, revitalization and improvement. Those areas are regulated by special provisions of the plan, including the Integrated Programs of the City (*Programmi Integrati*) and Urban Reclamation Programs (*Programmi di Ricupero Urbano PRU*) under the Law 493/93 Article 11.<sup>28</sup> Overall, four aspects of each selected site were analyzed to determine the feasibility of their development:

- Transportation access.
- Proximity to important commercial and community nodes.
- Survey respondents’ preferences.
- Zoning codes and development potential.

**Site 1: Gray warehouse complex across from Pietralata Metro Station.** This large complex of unsightly gray warehouses is located directly across the street from the Pietralata Metro Station and Panorama. A mixed-use facility located in the commercial zone near the Metro station would best be able to attract users from outside the community. The area has the best transit access in the neighborhood, and is already frequented by shoppers from both inside and outside Pietralata. The Metro area also has the highest vacancy rate of the three major commercial nodes, and would thus benefit from new investment. Furthermore, a plurality of respondents, 25 percent selected the Pietralata Metro area as a preferred location for new development.

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<sup>28</sup> Ricci, Laura. *Urbanistica* (250-254). English Translation of Nuova Piano Regolatore Generale.



In the Roman zoning code,<sup>29</sup> the warehouse complex is incorporated in the City to be Restructured, and its use is defined as “primarily for business activity.” As part of this “third city,” rebuilding is encouraged both to improve the site itself and to serve as a catalyst for the rejuvenation of surrounding areas. The site is also part of the Integrated program, which allows twice the usual allowable building density if its edifices are reconstructed for business or public use, as well as an expedited project approval process. Buildings constructed after 1930, including those on the site, are permitted to be demolished. In addition, the complex is a high priority project according to the neighborhood requalification map. Finally, the site is surrounded by buildings of the Consolidated City, which are far more orderly in construction and somewhat better maintained. However, the building has an unattractive presence in the neighborhood, which is particularly important because it is located at a key entry point into Pietralata.



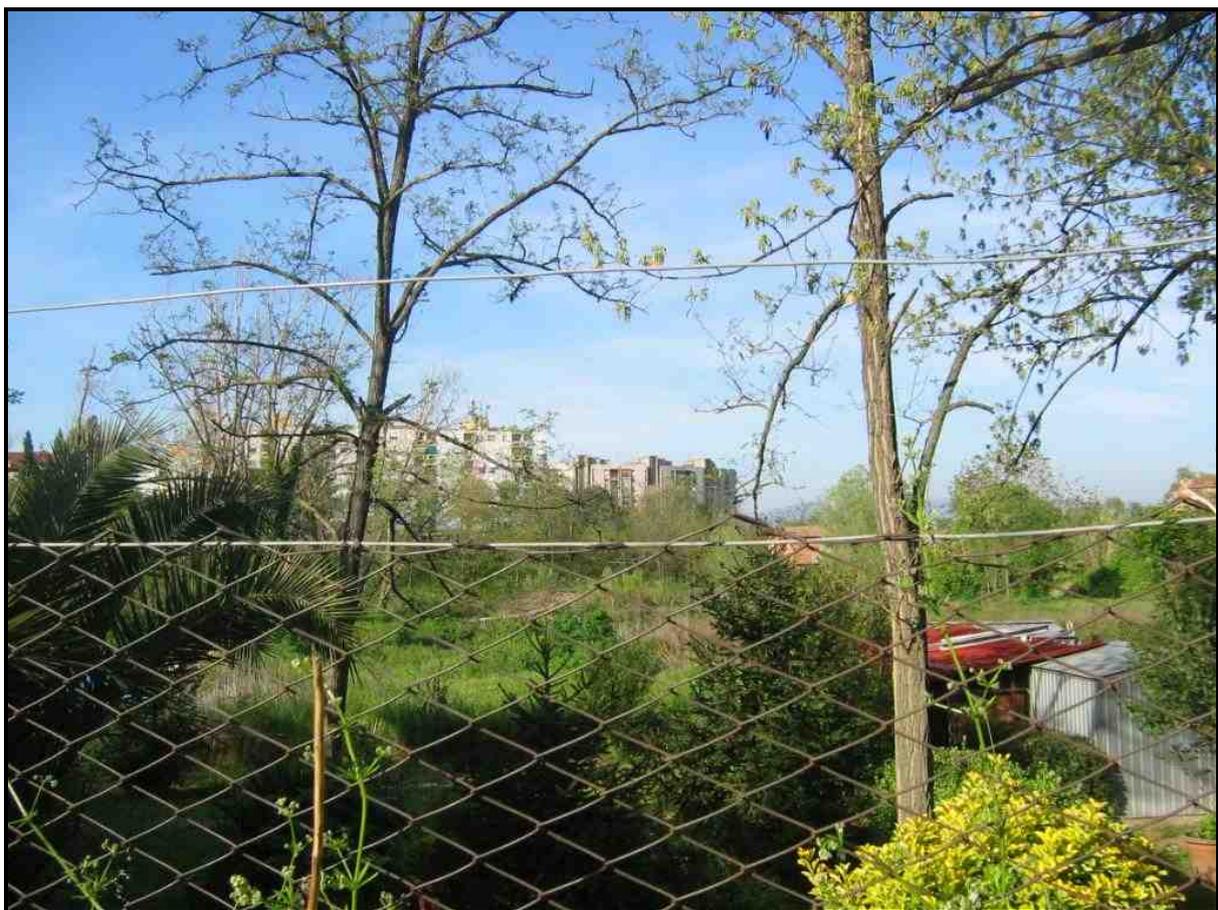
Picture 1. Abandoned Gray Building

It was determined upon discussion with neighborhood residents that the warehouse complex, although it initially appeared abandoned, is owned by Peugeot Automobiles. It is connected to the neighboring Peugeot dealership on Via Tiburtina and is used as a storage

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix H., *Pietralata Zoning*.

and distribution center for all Peugeot dealers in Rome. Redeveloping this site with a new mixed-use recreation facility would thus require displacing this economic activity. However, if a more suitable nearby site could be found to relocate the business, the warehouse would provide an ideal location for the development of a recreation facility because of its proximity to transit infrastructure and commercial activity, as well as its popularity among residents.

**Site 2: Industrial complex surrounded by Parco Verde.** The second site under consideration is the squatter-occupied industrial facility surrounded by Parco Verde. It is located one block away from the Pietralata Metro station, and would thus be easily accessible to outsiders via mass transit. Also, the location is close to the Metro station's important commercial node and is also in residents' most preferred area for development.



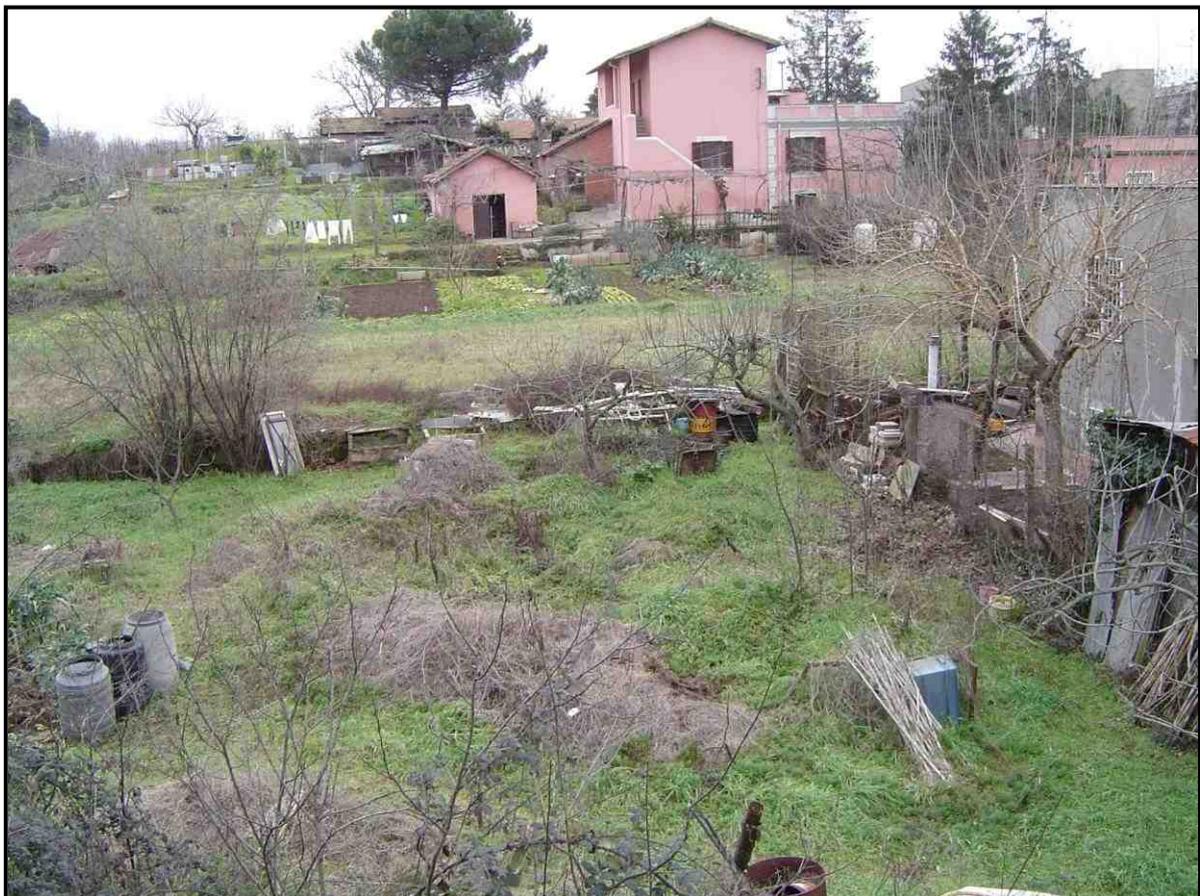
Picture 2. Industrial Complex surround by Parco Verde

Like the gray warehouse complex, the site is considered part of the City to be Restructured by the zoning code. It is defined as “primarily for residential use,” because it is surrounded by a public park and apartment complexes. Similar to Site 1, this location is part of the Integrated program, providing additional building potential for a public-private facility. Its buildings also appear to be post-1930, allowing for their demolition if necessary. The zoning code, then, also facilitates construction on this site. The residential areas in proximity

to Parco Verde not only received poor scores on the building conditions survey, but also are part of the City to be Restructured and Integrated zone. This signifies that improvement of the industrial facility site may encourage neighboring landowners to take advantage of their development incentives, and improve the appearance of their properties, thus further improving the visual quality of the public park.

Unfortunately, despite its location in the easily accessible Pietralata Metro area, the site itself suffers from a lack of adequate visibility and direct access routes, which are necessary for a successful cinema business. The only street bordering the location is Via Feronia, a narrow, one-way road with little traffic. If Rossi & Corcia chooses to develop this site, enhancements would be necessary to facilitate pedestrian approach from the nearby Metro station area and vehicular access from Via D. M. Tiburtini.

**Site 3: Aniene River Nature Reserve.** This site is located near the Ponte Mammolo Metro stop on the northeastern edge of Pietralata. Transportation access via the Metro is very convenient, and the large number of parking spaces present nearby is a positive attribute for the location; both transit and automobile users could easily arrive at the facility. However,



Picture 3. Nature Reserve

the reserve site is not in close proximity to any nodes of commercial activity or community interaction, and thus a recreational facility in this area would be somewhat isolated from the rest of the neighborhood. The area is on the edge of the eastern part of the neighborhood, which was chosen by 25 percent of survey respondents. Yet, this particular location's distance from commercial nodes reduces the popularity of the site itself.

Locating a large new facility, such as a cinema, in the Aniene River Nature Reserve might also harm the environment. Rossi & Corcia development in this area would require negotiating additional regulatory barriers, given the legally protected status of the reserve. Utilizing the site would provide a picturesque location for the green space enhancements of the new recreation facility, but would increase the cost and regulatory difficulty of constructing a cinema.

**Site 4: Historic Wool Factory.** This site is located along Via di Pietralata in the northwestern section of the neighborhood, near the Via di Durantini commercial node. The Durantini commercial node attracts a large clientele, and houses approximately half of all commercial facilities in the neighborhood. The site is not as well served by transit as those



Picture 4. Abandoned Wool Factory

near the Metro stops, but it is easily accessible via several bus routes. Because the area includes a large concentration of undesirable land uses including auto repair shops, junk yards, and small industrial facilities – a new mixed-use facility could act as a retail anchor, increasing the value and attraction of the commercial center. However, it is located in the western half of Pietralata, which was found in the survey to be slightly less preferable to area residents.

The wool factory site would require working within strict regulatory limits. Of the two major structures on the site, one is clearly abandoned, while the other remains in use. Upon the northern end of the site, behind the factory structures, are a single family house and a cultivated field, which could be improved to create green space for community use. The complex is the only designated location of historic interest in the neighborhood, and requalifying a prominent historic complex in the neighborhood presents an opportunity to preserve and display the neighborhood's history. However, the requirement that development include the historical preservation of the property is also a significant challenge. If the existing structures could be modified to house a cinema, or new buildings could be added to the site, such a unique combination of a historic site and a modern use would enhance the neighborhood considerably.

**Site 5: Parco Acacie and Adjacent Junkyard.** The second site under consideration for development along the northern half of Via di Pietralata is located to the south and directly across the street from the wool factory. It is a property about two blocks in size, of which two-thirds is open space and the other third is a large junkyard. The site borders the Durantini commercial area, providing the same anchor effect but allowing transit access only by bus. In addition, the property is located close to the center of the community and is bordered on three sides by streets, providing high visibility. Fifteen percent of survey respondents indicated a preference for a building location in the western half of Pietralata. The junkyard and open space site currently contains only one small structure. It is part of the zoning code's City to be Transformed, in which redevelopment is encouraged. Specifically, the land use objectives of development in the City to be Transformed are to reduce the number of undesirable and incompatible buildings, requalify infrastructure, reduce residential density, and in doing so, transfer unused land to the city for public uses. Indeed, the junkyard on one side of the site represents a land use that is completely incompatible with the residential and retail character of the area. The rest of the site is open, but is not particularly picturesque: most is covered with low scrubs and brush. Some zoning maps show a large, recently-demolished building on the site, but there do not appear to be remains of a structure

there. New buildings and uses on Transformed sites must have a variety of functions, including mixed residential and commercial. In addition, the construction must be concentrated on a limited part of the land area available, preserving green space for the public.



Picture 5. Junkyard

These regulations suit the site well, since its size would easily permit a large portion to be developed as open space for outdoor recreation and public enjoyment. This site, because of its size, high visibility, and currently undesirable land use, would have a dramatic impact on the neighborhood if re-qualified. It also presents few apparent barriers to development. However, the location is somewhat less accessible and less preferable to residents than those near the Metro stations.

## POSSIBLE ECONOMIC MODELS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Developing land in the City of Rome is a complex process. This section will assist Rossi & Corcia in determining the constraints and opportunities of acquiring property, funding the project, and obtaining building permits in Pietralata. First, this section gives an overview of recent political events and their relevance to city planning in Rome. Next, the analysis will elucidate possible land acquisition programs and funding possibilities available to Rossi & Corcia. Finally, the methods of purchasing public and private land are discussed.

### **Political and Regulatory Outlook**

The New Master Plan of Rome, Nuovo Piano Regolatore was created in order to sustain, maintain, beautify, and preserve the City. Although The New Master Plan has been adopted by the City, it has not yet been approved by the regional government of Lazio. This is due to competing interests between Rome's center-left government, which authored the plan, and Lazio's center-right government. In the interim between the adoption and approval of the plan, builders have few options to obtain land and building rights from the local government. However, in the April 4, 2005 regional elections, the Lazio government was replaced with a new center-left administration. The city and regional governments now share the same planning ideology, indicating that the Plan will soon be approved. Once approved by the region, The New Master Plan will create many land acquisition and building opportunities for private developers such as Rossi & Corcia.

### **Land Acquisition Programs, Funding Options, and Eligibility Requirements**

*The Urban Reclamation Program.* The Urban Reclamation Program in Rome aims to stimulate improvement in the most deteriorated areas of the periphery. Accordingly, new construction and development projects that generate employment in the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, such as Pietralata, are eligible for partial funding from the government. The programs under Article 11 support expedited methods of building and development. Most importantly, this law is immediately applicable, whether or not the New Master Plan is approved. Therefore, it would be beneficial for Rossi & Corcia to participate the Urban Reclamation Program initiative.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ricci, Laura. *Urbanistica* (250-254). English Translation of Nuova Piano Regolatore Generale.

*Punto Verde.* Another option available to Rossi & Corcia is Punto Verde, a direct contract with the City of Rome for the redevelopment and maintenance of a particular public space owned by the City. The contracting company is given the opportunity to run a private business on public land in exchange for redesigning, maintaining, and preserving the surrounding public space. This option is particularly feasible in Pietralata because the neighborhood contains a significant amount of poorly maintained open space. In the past, this partnership was not successful because the small enterprises involved lacked sufficient capital for long term sustainability and maintenance.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, Rossi & Corcia is a well-established company, capable of focusing on a long term investment and future returns, without the need for immediate profit.

*Article 37 BIS.* This statute of the current Master Plan of Rome allows developers to propose a project to the city, if the social and economic goals of that project are supported by the Master Plan itself. If approved, the developer invests private money to construct the proposed facility upon public lands. This option is feasible for Rossi & Corcia development in Pietralata because the company intends to fulfill the needs of residents and beautify the neighborhood by providing indoor and outdoor public spaces for community interaction. The Master Plan of Rome also emphasizes these objectives. Most builders interested in this option are willing to construct upon and maintain public lands only if the City can guarantee that the development project will generate a minimum return within a specified timeframe. However, due to the lack of research funds and resources, neither the city nor private developers are usually able to estimate the prospective usage and possible profit of services offered. Therefore, private developers tend to be skeptical about investing in such projects.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, Rossi & Corcia now have a significant body of information regarding the demographics trends, residents needs, and economic resources of Pietralata. This information allows the company to accurately predict the feasibility of using Article 37 BIS in constructing a public-private recreational facility in the community.

*Public-Private Exchange Financing.* The City of Rome also provides an option for obtaining free government land in order to develop two private-use facilities in exchange for constructing and financing a public building. This option is suitable for Rossi and Corcia because it minimizes costs associated with land acquisition and optimizes the possibilities of development of both private and public facilities. The disadvantage of this program is that the development site cannot be chosen by the investor, but is assigned by the city based on

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Vice President of Municipio V. February 10, 2005.

space availability.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, there is a high risk of obtaining unattractive land for private developments, which might not comply with the strategic goals of Rossi & Corcia.<sup>34</sup>

### **Property Acquisition Costs and Procedures**

In order to facilitate cooperation between private investors and the City of Rome, the New Plan contains specific procedures for developers interested in collaborating with the City. The land or building acquisition costs and procedures are significantly different for private property and public property. The land ownership and real estate costs for the five location recommendations could not be determined due to the time and budget constraints of this research report.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, this section will analyze both public and private acquisition options and costs, which will further help Rossi and Corcia decide whether to purchase land from a private owner or obtain it from the City of Rome.

*Public Land Acquisition Costs.* To acquire city-owned land, Rossi & Corcia must submit an application for approval by the local government. This process involves a lengthy waiting period and extra legal costs.<sup>36</sup> First, Rossi & Corcia must propose to requalify a specific building or public space in Pietralata. The terms and goals of this proposal must comply with the Urban Reclamation Programs requirements of Article 11. If the City approves this proposal, Rossi & Corcia will be required to make an *onori concessori*, or an “extraordinary contribution,” in order to obtain building rights. This contribution amounts to 150 percent of the public property’s market value. Nonetheless, if the desired public land is not eligible for redevelopment, the private company is required to pay a total of 250 percent of the market price to obtain the rights to develop this site. Furthermore, only public interest facilities can be built in such areas.

*Private Land Acquisition Costs.* If the proposed development site is privately owned, Rossi & Corcia can purchase the land directly from its owner. In addition to the market cost of the property, a 20 percent *onori concessori* must be paid to the City in order to obtain building rights. It is evident that purchasing private private land is more cost efficient than acquiring public lands. Another private land acquisition option involves cost-free transfers in the areas designated for urban rejuvenation. Such compensated transfers allow developers constructing service-sector facilities to develop upon 20 percent of the acquired area, in

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Silvio Susi, President of the Associazione Costruttori Edili. March 17, 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Silvio Susi, President of the Associazione Costruttori Edili. March 17, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Silvio Susi, President of the Associazione Costruttori Edili. March 17, 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Professor Gregory Overton Smith, CRP 416: European Cities, Cornell University.

exchange for the transfer of the remaining 80 percent to the local government for public use. If Rossi & Corcia choose to pursue this option, the company would construct the cinema upon the 20 percent of the acquired land where private development is permitted, and convert the remaining 80 percent into public green space under local government control.

**Implications of Development Model Options.** Although the process of obtaining land and building permits for a new public-private recreational facility in Pietralata is costly and time-consuming, Rossi & Corcia has many viable options to realize the project. Numerous programs effectively combine the construction of private facilities with the development, beautification, and maintenance of public spaces and buildings. By cooperating with the City of Rome, and helping the local government reach its planning objectives, Rossi & Corcia will successfully benefit from development, while contributing to the community of Pietralata.

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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix I. *Application Form* for an example of the application form with a list of all the documents that need to be submitted.

## PIETRALATA: THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

If Rossi & Corcia decides to construct a public-private recreational facility in Pietralata, the neighborhood's social fabric, economic character, and physical environment will be influenced by this development. As the vice president of Municipio V asserted, "The life of a community is in the piazza."<sup>37</sup> By providing a new central gathering point for neighborhood residents, Rossi & Corcia would enhance the social and cultural life of Pietralata. Outdoor public spaces would be used by all residents for socializing, strolling, and relaxing, among other activities. Meanwhile, the provision of indoor rooms would strengthen local organizations by offering more space for their activities. In addition, the site would be more prominently located than those currently used by many of the neighborhood's institutions, and would thus be more inviting for potential new members. Because the recreational rooms are not affiliated with any particular organization, such as a church or political party, they would be a neutral and welcoming space for all residents. A cinema complex, in particular, would provide an attractive activity to residents of all ages, and give the community's youth a safe environment to enjoy their free time. Most importantly, the addition of a new central node to the community would likely increase neighborhood pride in Pietralata.

Economically, the project would have both direct and indirect impacts upon the neighborhood. Although the new facility would create some additional jobs in the neighborhood, the direct impact on employment would not be significant. New employment opportunities would include staffing the cinema, maintaining the property, and providing administration services, but most of these jobs would be low-compensation service positions. As found in the demographics analysis, many of Pietralata's young adults are currently looking for employment; thus, the complex could provide at least transitional work for these residents as they search for permanent jobs in other fields.

More importantly, a mixed-use recreational facility would provide indirect economic benefits for the neighborhood. Not only would residents spend more of their free time in Pietralata, but the cinema would attract outsiders into the community as well. Thus, the new facility would function as an anchor business; visitors to the theater would potentially find it convenient and attractive to patronize other establishments while in the neighborhood. This would assist the area's small family businesses in competing with large supermarkets and

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Vice President of Municipio V. February 10, 2005.

department stores, which are located both on the edge of Pietralata and in surrounding periphery areas. This diffusion of additional economic activity in the neighborhood would decrease the high vacancy rate of its commercial space. Finally, by improving the viability of local family businesses, the spending power of many local residents would be increased, perpetuating a positive economic cycle in the community.

Rossi & Corcia development would also significantly enrich the physical environment of Pietralata. Locating a large, attractive new facility in a visibly prominent location would improve the visual perception of the neighborhood appreciably, making Pietralata more desirable and inviting. Following the “broken windows” argument of William Julius Wilson, a well-maintained physical environment discourages misuse in the forms of graffiti, litter, and other property damage. Given the current prevalence of these elements throughout the neighborhood, the new space would suffer some ill effects. However, if this vandalism is dealt with promptly and the property remains in good repair, it is likely that these violations will diminish considerably. Also, new development is likely to encourage nearby landowners and businesses to improve their properties, and the economic benefits of the project will provide them with the resources to do so.

Investing in disadvantaged communities usually entails considerable financial risk. It is possible that, despite their expressed desire for a cinema, residents will not patronize the facility enough to sustain the complex. It is also conceivable that, although outsiders already visit Pietralata for household needs, they will not venture into the neighborhood for their entertainment purposes. However, as an established development firm, Rossi & Corcia has the necessary resources to weather short-term losses in the interest of long-term profitability. Ultimately, the success of the project would significantly enhance the firm’s reputation both locally and nationally. The complex would stand out, physically and culturally, as the center of the Pietralata community and as a symbol of positive change. This innovative project concept could be used as a case study and replicated in the future to improve other disadvantaged communities.