

The urban design of Brasília was conceived by Lucio Costa, a modernist architect and student of famous modernist Le Corbusier. A basic idea of Modernism is that unplanned development leads to a chaos, whereas totally centralized city planning could build an ideal city which in turn could create an ideal society. The planning of an ideal city was the most basic goal of Cost in his "Pilot Plan" for Brazil's new capital. The Pilot Plan was embodied the ideal qualities of a city.

The plan included four basic tenets for the ideal city:

- Well ventilated residences near green spaces
- The separation of residences from workplaces, with industries excluded from the city proper
- Exclusive space for cultural activities, near residencies
- The separation of the circulation of vehicles and pedestrians

The city was to be based on the shape of an airplane. The basis of the city is a Monumental Axis, (the fusilage of an airplane) intersecting in the center of the city with a Residential Axis (the wings of an airplane). Costa designed the city with four scales of design: a monumental scale, a residential scale, a gregarious scale, and a bucolic scale.

**THE MONUMENTAL SCALE** was intended to provide Brasília with the dignity of a capital city. This was achieved with wide avenues of six lanes in each direction, the Esplanade, where the ministries and public buildings are located, the bus station, where the two axis cross, the Cathedral, and the Plaza of Three Powers.

**THE RESIDENTIAL SCALE** contained orderly superblocks with a uniform height of six stories, no high rises, and vast motorways providing an excellent transportation system. The superblocks also had ample parking for vehicles, low population density, and plenty of wide open green space for people to enjoy.

**THE GREGARIOUS (OR SOCIAL) SCALE** consisted of the bus station, and special sectors of the city, like the entertainment, commerce, and retail sectors.

**THE BUCOLIC SCALE** showed Costa's intent for Brasília to be a park city, where everything was separated by vast green spaces and parks.

The plan for housing was to house 600,000 people, primarily in superblocks. These superblocks were large clusters of apartment buildings grouped in a very orderly manner. Each group of four superblocks was supposed to serve as a single neighborhood unit. Each group was intended to have a church, a secondary school, a movie house, a youth club, and adequate field space for children to play sports on. Between the superblocks were lower buildings for commercial businesses.

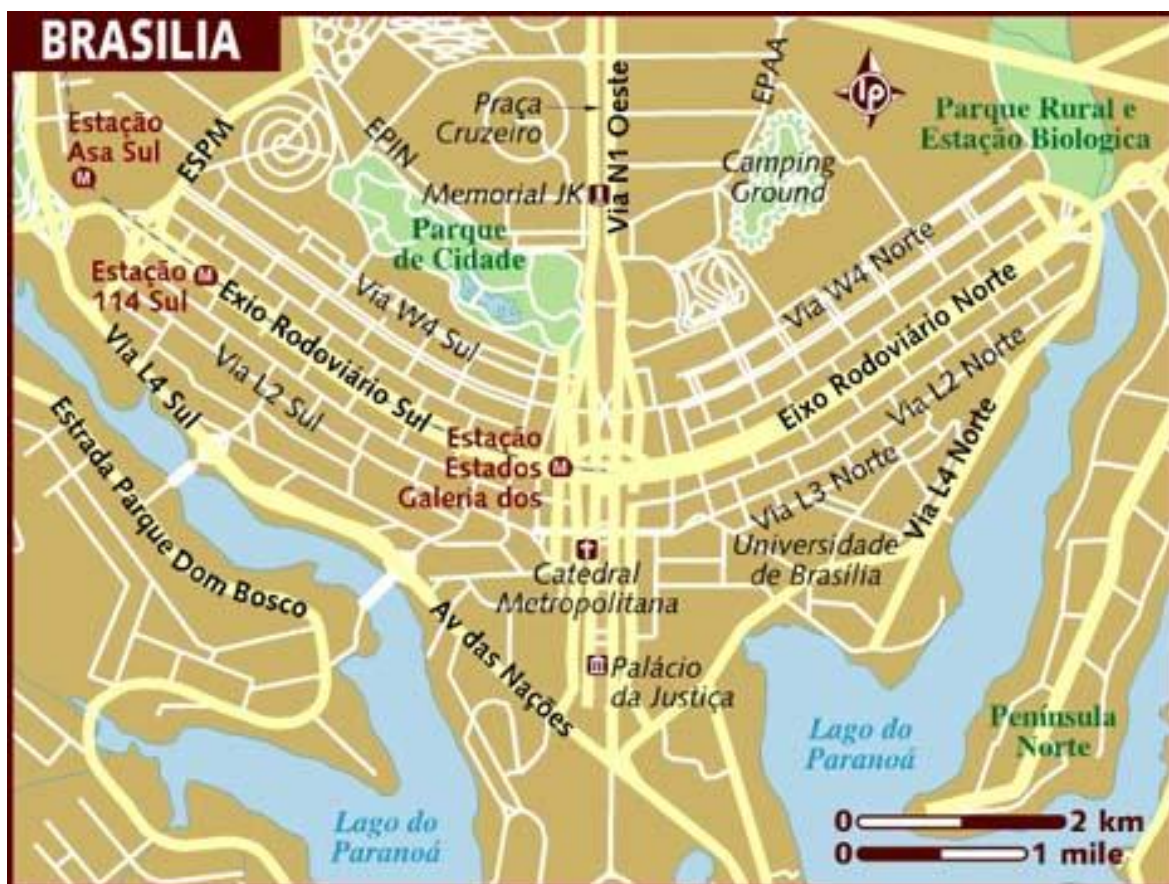
Each building was only six stories high, based on the idea that a mother would still be able to call to her child below from that height. The buildings rested on massive pillars, so there was an

open area beneath the building for free movement of pedestrians and for children to play under during inclement weather.

The intent of these superblocks was to create single neighborhood units with all the necessary services located close at hand. This would negate the absolute need for a vehicle to perform daily functions like running errands, and make Brasília a more personal, community oriented city.

Perhaps the most important aspect of these superblocks was that they were intended to be egalitarian, so that people of all income levels could live together and would interact on a personal and classless level.

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Pilot Plan was the vast highway network which was built to provide access to Brasília from practically everywhere in Brazil. The longest highway in this network is the 2,276 km Belem-Brasília highway, linking Brasília to Northeast Brazil. The construction of these highways insured that Brazil's new capital would be accessible to the entire population of the country.



Text adapted from <http://www.maclester.edu/courses/geog61/jmoersch/reality.html>  
Map source: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)