

THE METROPOLITAN FOREST

What is it?

It is a green infrastructure that will extend over 75 kilometers of the city of Madrid and will contribute to territorial rebalancing, the reduction of CO2 emissions, the fight against climate change, the ecological and landscape restoration of degraded areas and to increase the offer of pedestrian and cycling itineraries, as well as to benefit the health of the population. This metropolitan corridor, which meets the Sustainable Development Goals established in international agendas, will act as an effective barrier against desertification and will improve air quality.

The project, launched by the Urban Development Government Area through the strategy called 'Madrid, island of color' - which seeks to act against the heat island, especially in the south of the city- is the largest green infrastructure being built in Europe.



How is it done?

The metropolitan forest will be the new green lung of Madrid. The planting of 1,000,000 new trees of native species is proposed throughout the entire infrastructure. The new forest will have ecoducts (green bridges) over the R-3 or A-3, environmental interpretation centers and leisure areas. In addition, it will mean the absorption of 170,000 tons of CO₂ when the forest reaches maturity.

For its execution, an International Ideas Competition for the Metropolitan Forest was convened. 33 proposals were received from the most prestigious studios in the world. The contest consists of 5 lots, it was published in the Official Gazette of the European Union on Monday, July 6, 2020. The winners of the contest (info here) have already been selected and the projects are being developed. For now, 16.1 new hectares of the forest have already been opened to the public (the plots of Avenida del Talgo and Campo de las Naciones), in which more than 6,600 trees and more than 39,600 shrubs will grow. In addition, the first athletics track integrated into the nature of Madrid will be built on the Villaverde plot. (All the info on the latter here)

What species make up the forest?

It will be made up of autochthonous species representative of the natural heritage, adapted to the conditions of the municipality of Madrid and to the expected climate change scenarios: holm oaks, poplars, wild olives, strawberry trees, stone and Aleppo pines, ash trees, olive trees, elms, almond trees and other tree species, accompanied by broom, hawthorn, oleander, rosemary, thyme, juniper, rockrose and other shrubs and bushes. Next to the forest masses there will be some children's areas, trails for walking and sports, dog areas and other facilities. So far, more than 150,000 specimens have been planted, including trees and shrub species.

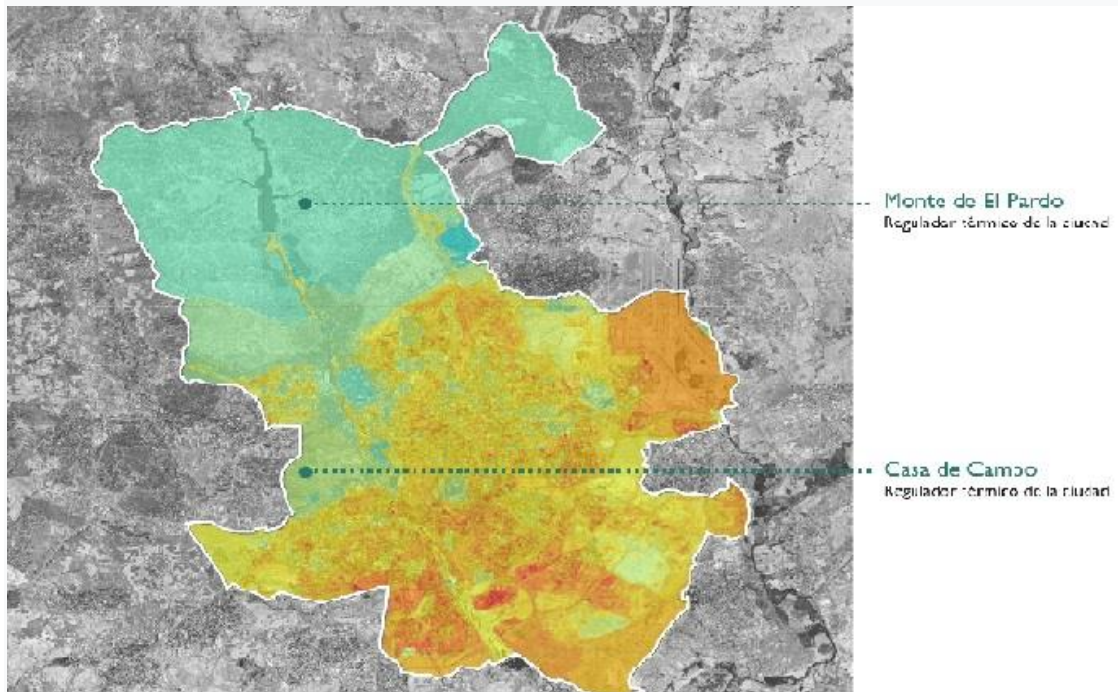
What will it do?

From the environmental point of view:

- It will improve air quality by fixing polluting particles
- It will act as a thermal regulator and will reduce the effect of the southern heat island, becoming an island of color
- It will reduce CO2 emissions
- It will prevent the risks of flooding
- It will improve biodiversity by reducing the fragmentation of enclaves

From the citizen point of view:

- It will contribute to territorial balance, by making the south a new green area that will improve habitability.
- It will create new leisure centers, environmental interpretation centers and new pedestrian and cycling routes.



Where is this forest?

It will be a metropolitan green ring around the city, but with special emphasis on the southern area. Madrid is quite well placed compared to all Spanish cities in terms of green areas, with 22.83 m² per inhabitant (above the 10-15 m² recommended by the WHO), which places it in fifth place after Vitoria, Pamplona, Logroño and Seville. But the spaces of greatest environmental

value are located to the northwest of the municipality, endowed with continuity (Monte del Pardo, Parque Regional de la Cuenca Alta del Manzanares and Casa de Campo). However, the green plot to the south and east presents fewer and less connected spaces. Given this and the large reserve of land pending development, the south of the municipality is considered the greatest opportunity to create an interconnected green infrastructure.

In what areas is it acting?

The first action has been carried out in Cerro Almodóvar, which has become kilometer 0 of the project and for which a Special Protection Plan has been made, which preserves the historical and cultural values of that enclave. In addition, it has already acted or is also acting in Campo de las Naciones, adapting the plot that will serve to connect the Valdebebas park with Juan Carlos I; in the Villaverde Green Belt, where a corridor will be created that will link the Julio Alguacil Gómez Forest Park with the Pradolongo Park; on Talgo Avenue; in the Forest Edge of Orcasitas, in Butarque and in the North wedge of O'Donell, among others.

What deadlines are estimated?

This green infrastructure is a long-term city project that includes many different actions. It is not a bet for the next elections but for the next generations. The goal is for it to be complete in 10-12 years. In the General Budgets for the city of Madrid 2021, a specific program was created for its development, Program 172.13 Renaturalization of Soil Heritage. In total, to date, the City Council has invested 48 million euros to promote the Metropolitan Forest.

Who carries out the project?

It is an initiative in which several areas of the City Council collaborate, as well as universities and companies. It is a project of Cs included in the Government agreement and that has been ratified by the Agreements of the Villa.

For further details, please see the website of the Madrid City Council (in Spanish only): <https://bit.ly/3zh4k5N>

