

= El Hatillo Municipality , Venezuela =

El Hatillo Municipality ( Spanish : Municipio El Hatillo ) is an administrative division of the State of Miranda , Venezuela ; along with Baruta , Chacao , Libertador and Sucre , it is one of the five municipalities of Caracas , the capital of Venezuela . It is located in the southeastern area of Caracas , and in the northwestern part of the State of Miranda .

The seat of the municipal government is El Hatillo Town , founded in 1784 by Don Baltasar de León , who was instrumental in the area 's development . Although the town had its origins during the Spanish colonisation , the municipality was not established until 1991 . In 2000 ? the year after a new constitution was enacted in Venezuela ? some of the municipality functions were delegated to a consolidated mayor 's office called Alcaldía Mayor , which also has some authority over the other four municipalities of Caracas .

El Hatillo preserves some of its colonial architecture , including an 18th @-@ century parish church and a unique Romanian Orthodox Church . The municipality also has a rich artistic culture , with at least two important musical festivals celebrated yearly , and numerous holiday celebrations reflecting the heritage of El Hatillo . The culture , the pleasant temperature , the rural landscape , and the gastronomy of the municipality have made it a place of interest for visitors to the city , and a desirable place to live . The municipality receives a part of its income from tourism , an activity that is promoted by the government .

Although commercial areas are growing rapidly , agriculture remains a foundation of the economy in the rural areas of the southern part of El Hatillo . The business sector remains mostly underdeveloped , causing heavy employee movement in and out of the municipality ? a problem that has made the transportation infrastructure of El Hatillo very congested .

= = History = =

In the 16th century , when the Spanish colonisation in the area began , El Hatillo was inhabited by the Mariches , an indigenous people possibly related to the Kalina ( Caribs ) . Cacique Tamanaco was the leader of these tribes , known for resisting the Spanish colonisation . As the colonisation developed , the indigenous inhabitants were killed ; by order of Caracas 's founder Diego de Losada , Tamanaco was also murdered .

In 1752 , Don Baltasar de León García arrived to El Hatillo from Cádiz , Spain , having just completed a prison term at La Carraca , Spain , for opposing ( with his father ) the monopoly rules of Guipuzcoana Company , which was in charge of maintaining exclusive trade between Spain and Venezuela . Don Baltasar founded El Hatillo Town , becoming one of the most significant contributors to its early development . Don Baltasar focused on making El Hatillo a strong , united and independent community , aiming to establish the area as a distinct parish from Baruta , on which El Hatillo depended . He accomplished this on June 12 , 1784 , when the governor and the bishop agreed to declare El Hatillo autonomous and under the direction of Don Baltasar , in front of 180 Canary @-@ descendant families ; this date is accepted as the foundation date of El Hatillo Town .

That same year , Don Baltasar and his brother @-@ in @-@ law donated their properties to the town , and an engineer assisted in the urban planning , which included grid streets and a parish church . The church was built to honor Santa Rosalía de Palermo , who Baltasar believed had saved him from a plague that killed his father in prison . In 1803 , at the age of 79 , Don Baltasar was unexpectedly killed in a horse accident .

In 1809 , landlord and Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Escalona achieved the separation of El Hatillo from Petare , another suburb of Caracas , making it a different Tenientazgo de Justicia ? a type of administrative division at the time . On April 19 , 1810 , Escalona enjoined the town to the movement of independence under Simón Bolívar , becoming another important person in the history of the municipality .

Ana Francisca Pérez García , Don Baltasar 's wife , was a noteworthy woman in El Hatillo , attending to community children , elders and ill citizens . She donated a considerable amount of

money for the construction of a hospital in Petare after the 1812 earthquake ; this hospital is currently known as the Pérez de León de Petare Hospital .

One of the most ambitious urbanisation projects in El Hatillo since its founding was the neighborhood called La Lagunita . In the 1950s and 1960s , La Lagunita S.A. constructed a " functional , futuristic and comfortable " residential zone . To encourage people to settle in the area , each parcel included a membership to Lagunita Country Club , which was officially opened in 1964 . Brazilian landscape designer Roberto Burle Marx contributed to this project , constructed on the 4 @. @ 3 million m <sup>2</sup> hacienda that once belonged to former Venezuelan president , Eleazar López Contreras . La Lagunita has since become a wealthy neighborhood of El Hatillo .

Although El Hatillo has been independent from Petare since 1809 , it later became part of Sucre Municipality , where Petare is located . On November 19 , 1991 , Miranda 's Legislative Assembly gave El Hatillo full autonomy , making it an independent municipality ; this decision was issued in Gaceta Oficial on January 17 , 1992 . In 1993 , Mercedes Hernández de Silva was elected the first mayor of El Hatillo . Since 2000 , the Alcaldía Mayor manages some of the functions of the municipality .

### = = Geography = =

El Hatillo Municipality lies at the southeast area of the city of Caracas and at the northwest corner of the State of Miranda ; it is one of the state 's 21 municipalities . El Hatillo is also within the jurisdiction of the Alcaldía Mayor , which has power over three adjacent municipalities of Miranda , and over Libertador Municipality in the Capital District . These five municipalities make up the city of Caracas . El Hatillo has a land size of 114 square kilometres ( 44 sq mi ) ? the third largest municipality in the capital .

The municipality 's natural southern boundary is the Turgua range , spanning east to west and separating El Hatillo from the Baruta and Paz Castillo municipalities . Parallel to Turgua in the north is the Sabaneta range ; the Prepo stream runs between the two ranges . North of the Sabaneta range , the Prepo stream feeds into the Tasmare stream , which ends in the Guaire river .

La Guairita stream flows into the Guaire in northeastern El Hatillo . The Guaire river is the eastern limit of the municipality , separating it from Sucre and Paz Castillo in the southeastern sector of El Hatillo . La Guairita serves as the northern boundary between El Hatillo and the municipalities of Baruta and Sucre . Limiting Baruta to the west , the boundaries of the municipality follow El Volcán , Pariaguán , La Mata and other peaks until they meet Turgua range in southeastern El Hatillo .

The tallest peak in El Hatillo is Picacho de El Volcán ( Spanish for " Peak of the Volcano " ) , at 1 @, @ 490 meters ( 4 @, @ 888 ft ) above sea level , from where radio , television and telecommunication antennas serve Caracas . Despite its name , the mountain has had no recorded volcanic history . Other significant mountains in El Hatillo are Gavilán at 1 @, @ 148 metres ( 3 @, @ 766 ft ) , Topo de El Paují at 1 @, @ 245 metres ( 4 @, @ 085 ft ) and Topo de Piedras Pintadas at 1 @, @ 196 metres ( 3 @, @ 924 ft ) .

### = = = Environment = = =

El Hatillo , at a higher altitude than the neighboring municipalities of Caracas , has slightly cooler weather than nearby downtown Caracas . The average temperature is between 21 and 24 degrees Celsius ( 70 ? 75 ° F ) . At the highest elevations , the temperature can decrease to 18 ° C ( 64 ° F ) and the atmosphere may have constant fog . The mean precipitation is 997 @. @ 3 millimeters a year ( 39 inches ) ; annual values can range from 800 to 1 @, @ 500 millimeters ( 32 in to 59 in ) . The average humidity index is 75 % ; similar to the rest of Venezuela , the rainy season is May through November , while all other months are considered the dry season . The winds are north alizé trade winds .

Concentrated near water bodies , the vegetation in most of El Hatillo is dense forests , occupying around 30 % of the surface . Smaller plants like shrubs take around 9 % and herbs occupy a similar percentage . In 1972 , the forests of El Hatillo were declared a protected zone of the metropolitan

area of Caracas .

The municipality is home to a wide range of bird species , with more than two hundred registered , including sparrowhawks , eagles , falcons , and owls . Birdwatching in the area is promoted by the authorities of Miranda , who have also supported conservation of these species .

#### = = Demographics = =

In the 16th century , the indigenous Mariches were killed by the explorers ; when the development of El Hatillo began , Spaniards from the Canary Islands settled in the area . Families from Madeira , Portugal also immigrated to El Hatillo , working largely in agriculture in La Unión neighborhood . As of 2001 , 86 % of the inhabitants of El Hatillo were born in Venezuela ; the largest group not born in Venezuela was from Colombia with 4 @. @ 2 % of the population , followed by Spain with 2 @. @ 0 % , Italy with 1 @. @ 0 % , the United States with 1 @. @ 0 % , and Portugal with 0 @. @ 8 % .

In the 2001 National Institute of Statistics census , El Hatillo Municipality had 54 @, @ 225 inhabitants , but demographics show a rapidly rising population . With the progressive demographic increase , El Hatillo 's population is no longer exclusive to any particular ethnic group . In 2001 there were 997 births in El Hatillo , equivalent to a rate of 18 @. @ 4 births per one thousand citizens . The death rate for that same year was 2 @. @ 9 per one thousand citizens . 2001 data shows that there is an average of 21 @. @ 3 years of potential life lost . The main cause of death according to 1999 data was cancer , followed by heart disease and murder .

Data for 2000 shows that the largest age group to be 15- to 19 @- @ year @- @ olds , representing 9 @. @ 5 % of El Hatillo 's population ; for every 100 females there are 94 @. @ 2 males . The unemployment rate in 2001 was 6 @. @ 1 % , ranking fourth lowest among the twenty @- @ one municipalities in Miranda .

As of 2001 , there were 18 @, @ 878 homes in El Hatillo , of which 13 @, @ 545 were occupied ; the remaining homes were either unoccupied , occasionally used , under construction , or for sale . An average of four people made up each household . Regarding wealth , 74 @. @ 7 % of the population was above poverty level , 21 @. @ 5 % was poor , and 3 @. @ 8 % were extremely poor . According to the 2001 census , each household in the municipality received an average of 1 @, @ 316 @, @ 906 Venezuelan bolívares ( 1316 @. @ 906 bolívares fuertes ) per month , equal to US \$ 1 @, @ 832 at the time , or US \$ 21 @, @ 984 per year .

#### = = = Neighborhoods = = =

Although there are no defined limits for the neighborhoods of El Hatillo , the government website divides the municipality into urban and rural . Concentrated in the northern region of the municipality , the urban neighborhoods are El Hatillo Town , El Calvario , La Lagunita , Alto Hatillo , La Boyera , Las Marías , Oripoto , Los Pomelos , Los Naranjos , Los Geranios , La Cabaña , Cerro Verde , Llano Verde , Colinas , Vista El Valle , Los Olivos , and El Cigarral . The rural localities of the municipality are located in southern El Hatillo ; these are La Unión , Corralito , Turgua , La Hoyadita , Sabaneta , La Mata , Caicaguana , and Altos de Halcón .

#### = = Economy = =

The economy of El Hatillo Municipality consists of three sectors : the commercial sector , which has been growing along with the population increase and is primarily represented by shopping malls and retail stores around the urban areas ; agricultural , in the southern half of the municipality and existing since the founding of El Hatillo ; and tourism , which contributes significantly to El Hatillo 's income and is promoted by the government .

El Hatillo is an accessible day visit destination for people from Caracas ; the municipality is only 15 km ( 9 @. @ 3 mi ) southeast of downtown Caracas but in the mountains removed from the congested Caracas valley ; thus , development has focused on day tourism . The central town square ? Plaza Bolívar ? and its surroundings are well maintained , and the municipal government

offers bus trips around the narrow streets for viewing the colonial architecture of the town . Handcrafted souvenirs and products are popular purchases , offered at local artisan shops , and there are numerous restaurants . There are at least three cultural centers in the municipality that attract tourists and residents to music festivals and art expositions .

To support the increasing population , numerous shopping malls have been built in the municipality . Neighborhoods like La Lagunita , Los Naranjos and El Hatillo Town now offer large scale shopping malls with multiplex movie theaters . Since the 1980s , the older typical houses of El Hatillo Town have been converted to shops and restaurants , while preserving their colonial architecture .

Employment possibilities within El Hatillo ? a bedroom community of Caracas ? are reduced ; businesses in the municipality are almost strictly commercial , and the economy has not expanded in other directions . Office space underdevelopment has resulted from a lack of land for large scale office construction , making it costly to locate large offices or businesses in the area . Those seeking employment in offices or larger businesses must look outside of El Hatillo , contributing to the high traffic to , from , and in El Hatillo .

= = Law and government = =

Venezuelan law specifies that municipal governments have four main functions : executive , legislative , comptroller , and planning . The executive function is managed by the mayor , who is in charge of representing the municipality 's administration . The legislative branch is represented by the Municipal Council , composed of seven councillors , charged with the deliberation of new decrees and local laws . The comptroller tasks are managed by the municipal comptroller 's office , which oversees accountancy . Finally , planning is represented by the Local Public Planning Council , which manages development projects for the municipality .

El Hatillo has had five mayors through 2014 . Mercedes Hernández de Silva was the first mayor of the municipality , serving from 1993 until 1996 . Succeeding her , Flora Aranguen was Mayor from 1996 until 2000 . That same year , Alfredo Catalán was elected mayor and reelected in 2004 . On November 23 , 2008 Myriam Do Nascimento was elected mayor . She served in that capacity until 2013 , when David Smolansky succeeded her as mayor .

The 2007 president of the Municipal Council is Leandro Pereira , supported by the political party Justice First . All but one of the seven councillors belong to political parties opposed to President Hugo Chávez 's administration . There is also a Legislative Commission , presided over by councillor Salvador Pirrone in 2007 . The commission 's job is to assist the municipality in legal matters , such as the creation of new laws and decrees .

On March 8 , 2000 ? the year after a new constitution was introduced in Venezuela ? it was decreed that the Metropolitan District of Caracas would be created , and that some of the powers of El Hatillo Municipality would be delegated to the Alcaldía Mayor , which would also govern the Baruta , Libertador , Sucre and Chacao municipalities . Each of the five municipalities is divided into parishes ; El Hatillo has only one , the Santa Rosalía de Palermo Parish , sometimes called Santa Rosalía de El Hatillo Parish or simply El Hatillo Parish .

In December 2006 , as a part of a constitutional reform , Chávez proposed a reorganisation of the municipal powers . Chávez mentioned his reform plans again in his January 2007 presidential inauguration , suggesting a new form of subdivision ? communal cities ? in which mayors and municipalities would be replaced by communal powers .

= = = Crime = = =

Relative to the other Caracas municipalities , El Hatillo has the region 's lowest crime rate . Data from 2003 shows that 53 @, @ 555 crimes occurred within the five municipalities of Caracas , but only 418 ( about 0 @. @ 78 % ) took place within El Hatillo . El Hatillo 's population is significantly lower than that of its sister municipalities ; viewing 2003 crime data relative to 2001 census data , El Hatillo had an annual rate of 7 @. @ 7 crimes for every one thousand citizens , while the average of the five Caracas municipalities was 19 @. @ 4 for every one thousand citizens . The main police

force in El Hatillo is the municipal police , sometimes referred to as Poli @-@ Hatillo . Other police forces can also intervene in the municipality , including the Metropolitan Police , and the Miranda State Police .

#### = = Education = =

The municipality has one higher education facility ? Nueva Esparta University , a 30 @,@ 000 square meters ( 323 @,@ 000 sq ft ) institution located in Los Naranjos . Nueva Esparta school was founded in 1954 , but the private university was not constructed until 1989 .

El Hatillo offers free public education , with a total of seventeen primary education schools ; eleven are public and six are private . Nineteen preschools exist : ten public and nine private . Data for secondary education is incomplete ; there are five private secondary schools in the municipality , but the number of public secondary schools is unavailable . Government data shows each educational stage separately , but an individual facility may contain preschool , primary and secondary education . The 2001 census shows enrollment of 8 @,@ 525 students during the 2000 ? 2001 school year ; by the end of the school year , 8 @,@ 149 had passed .

#### = = Culture = =

The most significant icon in the culture of El Hatillo is Santa Rosalía de Palermo . The church adjacent to the plaza in the center block of El Hatillo Town is named after this saint , and the only parish in the municipality also carries her name . The community is largely Catholic ; local shops carry many religious handcrafted products , and the municipality is the site of the Santa Rosa de Lima Seminary , formerly San José Seminary . In El Hatillo ? and throughout Venezuela ? images of Jesus and Mary are part of the art and culture .

Don Baltasar de León and his wife , Ana Francisca , are remembered for founding and developing El Hatillo . Manuel Escalona is recognised for including El Hatillo in the 19th century independence movement ; as in the rest of Venezuela , Simón Bolívar is considered a hero .

#### = = = Heritage = = =

Santa Rosalía de Palermo ? born in Palermo , Italy ? is the patron saint of El Hatillo . Rosalía was recognised in 1624 when her remains were discovered in a cave , brought to the Cathedral of Palermo , and displayed through the streets of Palermo during a plague . Within three days , the plague ended ; Rosalía was credited with saving many from the plague and proclaimed patron saint of the city .

Years later , El Hatillo 's founder also believed that Santa Rosalía had protected him from an infection . During the Guipuzcoana scandal in Venezuela , Baltasar 's father , Juan Francisco de León , and his sons were held prisoners in Cádiz . Juan Francisco died as a consequence of smallpox , but Don Baltasar completed his years in prison and then moved to El Hatillo . Baltasar brought the legacy of Santa Rosalía de Palermo to El Hatillo , believing she protected him from the pestilence that killed his father in Cádiz .

Part of El Hatillo 's culture has grown around Santa Rosalía ; she is believed to be the one who takes care of the people and protects El Hatillo from any pandemic that could hit the area . Don Baltasar 's most evident inclusion of Rosalía into El Hatillo 's culture occurred at least twice : first in 1776 , when El Calvario chapel was built and dedicated to the Saint ; and then in 1784 , when a bigger parish church named Iglesia Santa Rosalía de Palermo was constructed .

#### = = = Regional celebrations = = =

In addition to the nationwide activities celebrating Christmas , the New Year , Carnival , and Easter , El Hatillo has a number of celebrations unique to the region . Since the 1766 founding of El Hatillo , a week @-@ long festival honoring Santa Rosalía de Palermo ( Spanish : Fiestas Patronales en

honor a Santa Rosalía de Palermo ) is held in September featuring parades , Catholic masses , and traditional games , concluding with the traditional release of balloons accompanied by fireworks . On Holy Thursday , an image of the crucified Christ is decorated with flowers and paraded around El Hatillo 's Plaza Bolívar in the Jesus Christ Procession . Since 1938 , Carnival has been celebrated in El Hatillo with dancing , parades , and the election of a Carnival Queen in Plaza Bolívar . The founding of El Hatillo is commemorated on June 12 with organised activities including traditional games , mass , and balloons . A tradition having religious and agricultural significance has been celebrated every May since the beginning of the twentieth century . The third Sunday of May is the festival of Dama antañona , in which residents pay homage to the women of El Hatillo , with typical food and gifts .

#### == = Art == =

The Cultural and Social Center El Hatillo , El Hatillo Art Center , and El Hatillo Atheneum are the local centers of artistic activity . In 2006 , Dave Samuels inaugurated the annual International Music Festival of El Hatillo at the El Hatillo Art Center ; Samuels was followed by Simón Díaz , Steve Smith , Serenata Guayanesa , Mike Stern and other notable musicians . Since 1999 , the El Hatillo Jazz Festival has attracted visitors to the municipality to hear national and foreign jazz artists .

El Hatillo 's art culture is rich with handcrafted products . Pottery is a common souvenir for tourists , and there are many artisans devoted to ceramics and pottery in the municipality . The Turgua Group is an artist collective of almost twenty potters and blacksmiths , founded in 1992 by Guillermo Cuellar , an internationally known potter . The group has two exhibitions a year , which have expanded from pottery exposition to jewelry , photography , woodwork , drawing and weaving .

In May 2005 , the local government collaborated with the Japanese Embassy to organise Japan Cultural Week , an exposition held in the Art Center featuring bonsai , origami , kimonos , martial arts , anime and other manifestations of the Japanese culture . The event offered free workshops for learning these Japanese arts . Continuing cultural promotion in the municipality , the III Salón de Fotografía El Hatillo ? a photography contest for children , amateur and professional photographers ? was organised in October 2005 .

#### == = Cuisine == =

The cuisine industry in El Hatillo has grown along with the commercial development of the municipality . A September 2006 article in Estampas ? a weekly Venezuelan magazine ? described the culinary arts of El Hatillo , noting that El Hatillo offers the usual Venezuelan table , as well as new gastronomic developments . The TV chef Yuraima Blanco opened the Culinary Art Gallery in El Hatillo , where diners can enjoy a variety of food . There are also typical cachapa restaurants and cafés , as well as other restaurants with a fusion of foreign and national food . According to Estampas , a well @-@ known local restaurant called " Mauricio 's " mixes Swiss and French food with Caribbean gastronomy . El Hatillo also offers many varieties of confectionery , such as churros , pastry and ice cream . There are a variety of other restaurants in El Hatillo , offering such diverse cuisine as German and Thai food .

#### == = Sports == =

Lagunita Country Club is one of the most important sports facilities in the municipality . The club offers tennis and swimming , but it is best known for its golf course , the home of the 1974 WGC @-@ World Cup . Designed by Dick Wilson , the club began with temporary headquarters in 1959 , opening officially in 1964 . Lagunita Country Club played an important role in the development of La Lagunita neighborhood ? an ambitious urban project , which has become one of the wealthiest areas of Caracas .

Hiparión is another club located in El Hatillo ; according to the Venezuelan Census of Cultural Heritage , this equestrian facility from the 1930s was originally used for horse trips , but it later

became a place for the training and caring of horses . The Club Hiparión is internationally known for its equestrian training .

Located at the highest point of the Municipality lies El Volcan , a small mountain of about 1500 meters from sea level . This mountain has a Downhill course that has about 500 meters of vertical drop , it is used by hundreds of riders a day during dry and wet weather , mostly on weekends . The course is open to the public and riding is neither specifically allowed nor prohibited by law . The trails are also used by hikers all week long . Shuttles are about 10 Venezuelan bolivars per trip , they run from the parking lot of a Farmatodo drug store in La Boyera , up to the summit using public avenues and paved roads , taking from 15 minutes to 30 minutes depending on traffic on the area . The course apart from being used mostly for recreational purpose , also has been used for irregularly scheduled downhill races due to the lack of organisation in the riders community .

= = = Tourism and recreation = = =

The hub of activity in El Hatillo Town is Bolívar Plaza ( Spanish : Plaza Bolívar ) , a garden square encompassing the central block in the town of El Hatillo . Constructed in 1785 , the Plaza was originally called Plaza Mayor or Plaza del Mercado . In 1911 , a bust honoring Manuel Escalona was placed in the square , which was renamed in his honor . In 1952 , the bust was replaced with a statue of Simón Bolívar , and the plaza was again renamed after the Venezuelan hero . Across from the Bolívar Square is the 18th century Santa Rosalía de Palermo Church , which was declared a National Historic Monument in 1960 .

Between El Hatillo and La Lagunita is the smaller Manuel Escalona Plaza ( Spanish : Plazoleta Manuel Escalona ) , another urban monument displaying the bust of Escalona that formerly occupied Bolívar Square . Sucre Plaza ( Spanish : Plaza Sucre ) ? graced since 1915 with a ceiba tree at its center ? is in the southern part of town ; this was historically where people tied their mules while frequenting The Four Corners , and it is also known as Plaza La Ceiba . The Four Corners ( Spanish : Las Cuatro Esquinas ) was a convenient social gathering spot in El Hatillo , comprising a general store , hardware shop , gambling place and bar .

La Lagunita is the site of the San Constantino and Santa Elena Romanian Orthodox Church . The building is an architectural work from the 16th century , brought from Romania , made completely from oak and fir woods , and detailed with more than 40 @,@ 000 individually placed and carved tiles . It is one of only 15 churches of its type remaining in the world , and one of only two outside of Romania , the other being in Switzerland .

For children , the Caicaguana hacienda in La Lagunita houses the Expanzoo , where visitors can see and touch exotic animals . The zoo is recognised for offering unique employment opportunities ; the workers are from families with few resources , and the staff include the mentally ill . The Baby Zoo is another place for children to interact with animals ; visitors can feed and touch the animals , ride horses and rent the location for special events . More interaction with nature can be experienced by visiting the Morro la Guairita park in El Cafetal ? commonly known as the Indian Caves ( Spanish : Cuevas del Indio ) ? a system of 22 natural openings in the mountain , and the only place in Caracas where rock climbing is permitted . Guided tours are available , and views of El Ávila can be enjoyed while ascending the park .

= = Transportation = =

The mountainous terrain and geographic features of El Hatillo have made it difficult to extend the Caracas Metro to southeast Caracas , so the main transportation methods in the municipality are private vehicles and road public transportation . An extension of the Metro ? Line 5 ? has been proposed , but construction has not been initiated as of 2007 ; phase 2 of Line 4 is still under construction . Urban planning in the municipality has been unorganised ; news archives show that at least since 1998 , neighbors have been complaining about the dense traffic caused by new residential and commercial construction , yet new or enhanced alternative roads to resolve the traffic problems have not been completed . A south beltway suggested 25 years ago has not been

constructed due to its high cost . However , as of January 2006 , a new route that will connect La Lagunita with Macaracuay ? a neighborhood in northeast Caracas ? is under construction and is planned to be completed in 2010 ; according to Mayor Catalán , 23 % of El Hatillo 's inhabitants will eventually use this transit way . Its cost was estimated in early 2006 as US \$ 19 @, @ 572 @, @ 000 .

Local solutions ? such as the proposed Metro extension line and the road connecting La Lagunita and Macaracuay ? may improve the traffic congestion around El Hatillo , but the traffic issue affects all of Caracas . It is estimated that one million vehicles transit Caracas daily , causing a collapse of the transportation network . Automobiles travel at an average speed of 15 km / h ( 9 mph ) on the streets and highways of Caracas . There are numerous factors contributing to the traffic problem in Caracas . According to the Venezuelan Society of Transportation Engineers , a city should allocate 20 % of its public area to transportation ; in Caracas , less than 12 % is allocated . In 2004 , fifty thousand new vehicles were sold in Caracas . In 2005 , sixty thousand more were sold , and as of November , 2006 , seventy thousand more had been sold . In five years , 250 thousand more cars are circulating in Caracas on roadways that have not increased proportionally to the increase in the number of cars . Further , public transportation is not fully reliable ; an average trip in the city using mass transit takes around ninety minutes .