



NOVA ERA – PUBLIC PARK

With approximately 18,000 inhabitants, Nova Era is historically a mining town that has been settled for more than 300 years. In 1978 Artur Moreira's parents selected an empty plot of land and constructed their family house in an undeveloped area of Nova Era in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais. Artur's family home would be the first of more than 200 houses constructed in the new development named Colina lying on the western side of Brazilian highway 381. While Brazil's vast size roughly equals that of the continental forty-eight US states, it does not have the extensive network of Interstate highways that the USA has.

Brazil does however have amazing highways that are true great engineering masterpieces traversing the country's rugged mountains though complex bridges and tunnels. Route 381 is one of the twelve major Brazilian highways and links the Minas Gerais interior with the Atlantic Ocean bringing thousands of people through the small town of Nova Era each day.



18th Century Nova Era Church

The 200+ houses sit high on a hill located on the western side of Route 381 and were constructed in the late 1970's and into the 1980's on former farmland. As a new neighborhood, Colina was a desirable oasis where everyone knew each other. Part of the appeal to the neighborhood was that it was only connected to the existing town by a concrete stairs leading down to a pedestrian bridge crossing over Route 381. Over the years the pedestrian bridge and concrete stairs had become a hangout area for vagrants and strewn with letter and debris.



Pedestrian Bridge and Stairs – Early 2014

Artur was home for vacation in 2014 and wanting improvements to his community gateway, began to clean up the garbage and debris strewn around the stairs and bridge with the help of some local hired children. Little did he know that this would become an eight stage / multi-year / two-phase project that would evolve naturally to transform Nova Era's image to passing motorists, foster community pride, provide collateral real estate benefits and improve neighbor relations.

Stage 2 – Tree Planting

With immediate compliments and positive replies from the neighborhood Artur began planning a next step for improvements – planting trees. For aesthetics, noise, air quality and environmental reasons, Artur purchased and planted forty palm trees between the community and Route 381 at the top of the sloped highway cut.



Stage 2 – Tree Planting - 2014



Stage 3 – Sidewalk Construction

With the forty new trees planted along the top of the ridge, the next step involved several hundred feet of new sidewalk along the neighborhood edge to the pedestrian bridge. The new sidewalk not only created a safe pathway but it also now encourages residents to walk and interact.

Stage 4 – Bridge and Stair Painting

The original forty-year old concrete steps and steel pedestrian bridge had become faded, worn and rusted over the years presenting a dull and poorly maintained image to residents and passing motorists. To change this and create a positive impression, Artur selected a bright green color for the bridge and pink for the stairs.

The walkway surfaces were painted gray. Now passing motorists and residents are greeted with vibrant and cheery colors.



Stage 5 – Grass Planting

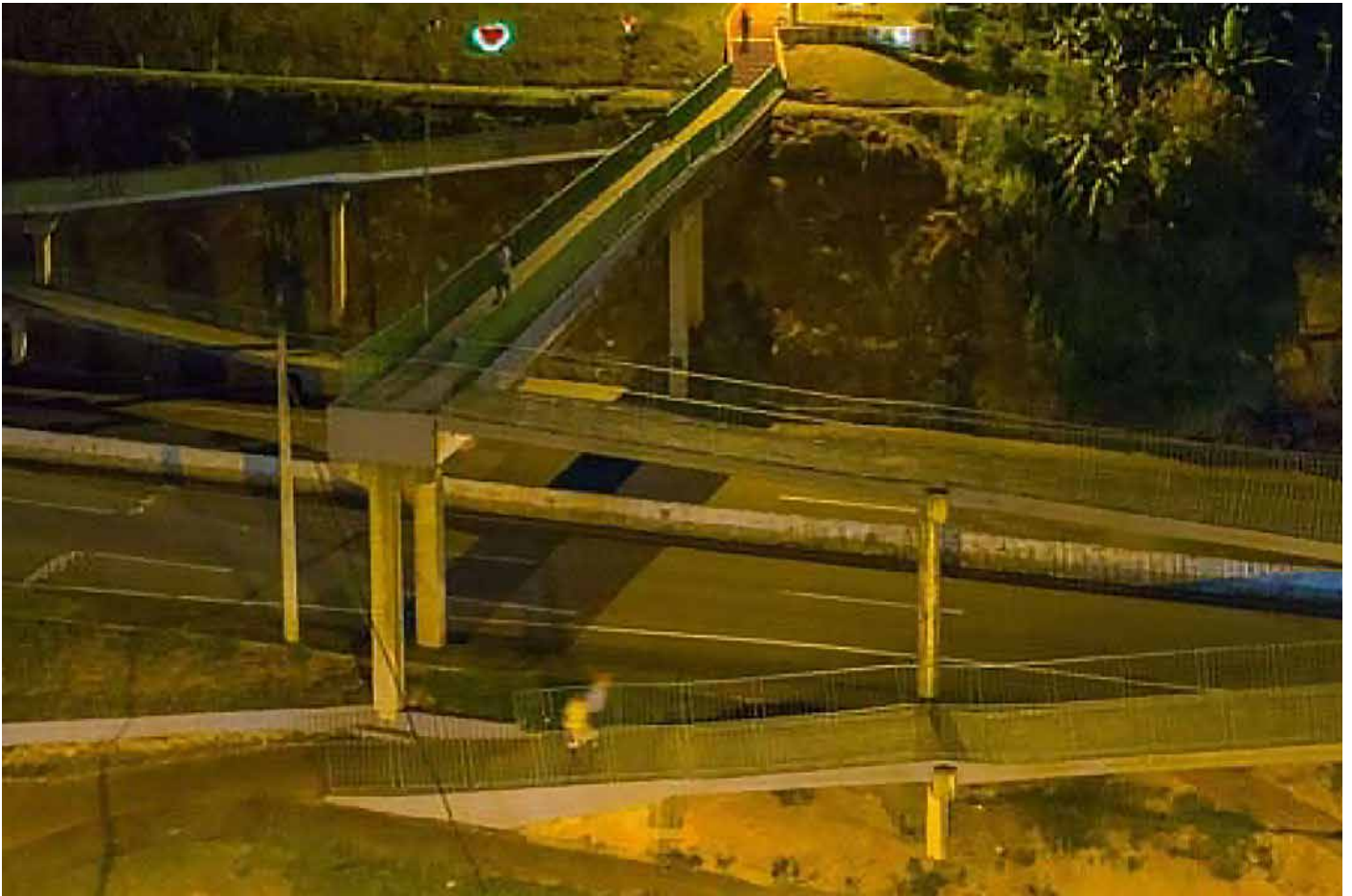
The areas along Route 381 were un-landscaped, barren and pretty much a no man's land. To beautify the environment and help stabilize the sloped soil from erosion, Stage 5 involved fine grading, importation of topsoil and grass planting. Artur continues to fund the grass maintenance utilizing local Nova Era landscapers.



Stage 6 – Arts & Signage

Art and signage next tied everything together while adding formality, information and fun to the new park-like setting. Cars passing through Nova Era now see a well-maintained and beautiful park area alongside the highway and neighborhood.





Stage 7 – Security & Lighting

Working with the authorities, Artur next added lighting and thirteen security cameras which feed live video back to the Nova Era police station. An area which was once filled with litter and unlawful activities is now transformed into a source of town pride with all Nova Era citizens and officials intending to keep it that way.

Stage 8 – Decoration & Maintenance

With the project completed maintenance and seasonal decorations continue as yearly traditions.

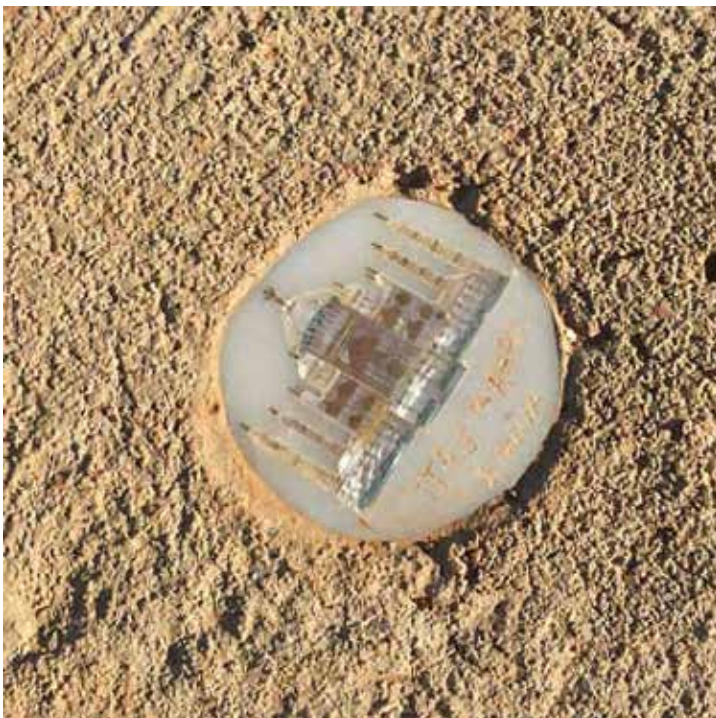


Summary and Future Park Phases

What started as a simple neighborhood garbage cleanup evolved into an artistic expression, environmental project, community anchor and source of pride for Nova Era. The completed park is an example of a literal grass roots approach to making a community better one step at a time without public funds. Artur's vision for the project grew organically with ideas from his world travels all incorporated into the new park. Some park facts:



- All cities and places on the signpost are places Artur has visited. He did this to remind people in Nova Era to see the world, follow their dreams and not forget to remember where they came from.
- Ceramic tiles from places visited around the world are similarly incorporated into the sidewalks.
- The boot and hoe welded on top of the sign post are to symbolize hard work and the land.
- Litter prevention measures were adopted from programs in Japan.
- The green pedestrian bridge color is the same color used by New York City's Department of Transportation for their pedestrian bridges.
- The highway welcome sign is written in Portuguese and English.



Plans for Phase II extending the park south along Route 381 are in the works!