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## **ABSTRACT**

The majority of studies on urban development in Colombia have concentrated in two of the biggest cities: Bogotá and Medellín (Salazar, 2007; Beuf, 2012). Meanwhile, the success of other smaller cities remains less visible. This is the case of Valledupar in the Colombian Caribbean region: although it has been highlighted by many authors as a case of successful urban planning, it remains largely unexplored (Rojas y Daughters, 1998; Maldonado, 2004). The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the different stages of urban planning in Valledupar using cartography, historical archives, newspapers, interviews, documents, and images. The period analyzed comprises from the beginning of the twentieth century to the first decades of the twenty-first century. In the aggregate, the experience of Valledupar points out the importance of formulating and enforcing urban development plans. In addition, strengthening of institutions appear to be of outmost importance for local progress.