

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY IN CO-EXISTENCE WITH THE CYPRUS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Change in the social, economic and the urban make-up of the city centre

The Limassol Municipality spearheaded the creation of the University of Technology in the centre of the city, since it believed and still continues to believe, that this would change the social, economic and urban make-up of the area around the city centre.

Despite the fact that the Municipality was aware of the problems that existed, and many of which still continue to exist in the city centre, it is however convinced that with the rational integration of the University it has secured many benefits for the academic and student community, as well as the wider society of Limassol.

- Revival of the Centre / Social and Qualitative upgrading

The major objective of the Municipality with the integration of the University was in essence the "renewal" of the people (residents) and users, with the aim basically of reviving the Centre. With the completion of the University, more than ten thousand students, academics and administrative staff, will be added to the population of the centre of Limassol, with all the positive implications on the quality and way of life, of the residents of the city

- Economic Upgrading and Revival of the City Centre

This qualitative social improvement is the vision espoused by the Limassol Municipality in its effort to upgrade the city; cost effectively opening up new horizons to new jobs in occupations associated with academia as well as in other professions, that will be supportive of and enhance the existence of University and its users. The first positive results have already materialised, as despite the crisis

plaguing the country the centre of the city is one of the very few areas of Cyprus exhibiting growth and development; for the reason that in addition to the areas of recreation and entertainment that were created due to the natural attraction of a young population, a large number of residential units have been developed, resulting in the attraction of many residents to the centre of Limassol; a trend which would have seemed far removed ten years ago.

- Upgrading of the Building Environment

As is natural, beyond the social parameters that have already been mentioned, the city centre has been enhanced with the restoration of old and abandoned buildings providing a higher level of building environment. It was very natural for the combination of social upgrading with that of the upgrading of the building environment, to bring economic recovery to the city centre, regardless of the crisis currently plaguing our country.

ACTIVITIES OF THE MUNICIPALITY

• Participation of the Municipality in the drafting of a program for the siting of buildings of the University of Technology

The Municipality was aware from the beginning that the project was difficult and for this reason it participated, in cooperation with the University of Technology, the Town Planning and Housing Department and other government departments, in the drafting of a program for the siting of buildings, while at the same time conducting traffic flow studies, the results of which with proper implementation and utilisation, will assist in the harmonious functioning of the city.

• Measures for the harmonious coexistence of the University and the City, with the implement of the objectives of the City Area Plan which has as its main objectives:

The harmonious coexistence of the University with the City was a stated objective right from the beginning. The design of two poles for the University (the city centre and in the area of the old hospital) was the result of an extensive study (even if not yet fully implemented). As a result, today, a host of other developments are being planned, which take into account the new reality of the area, under the revised Area Plan for the Centre, whose revision was deemed necessary due to the inclusion of the University of Technology.

The Area Plan provides for the functional structures, permitted use, pedestrian modules, creation of open spaces (squares), and the creation of organized parking areas; all of the above within an existing and already structurally defined area.

The general town planning strategy followed, and the objectives of the Plan are the redevelopment, upgrading and sustainable evolution of the centre of Limassol, in a unified and complex region consisting of individual functional areas, which will constitute the main commercial and service provision zones, and will maintain its own symbolism and character. The main aim is the empowerment of users, the modernization, qualitative / aesthetic enhancement, and the revival of the town centre.

The 2007 – 2013 PROGRAMMING PERIOD

Utilising European funds for the 2007 - 2013 programming period, the Municipality has secured co-financing from the Regional Development Fund of the European Union for the implementation of City Centre Regeneration Projects, the creation of a Multifunctional Coastal Park, a Linear Park along the River Garyllis, and for the Renovation of the Pattichion Municipal Theatre.

REGENERATION OF THE CITY CENTRE

The implementation of the City Centre redevelopment project as well as of other similar projects became mandatory in order to create walkways, low density traffic streets, wide pavements, squares, and a network of bicycle routes, specifically to ensure the safe movement of pedestrians.

The Municipality proceeded with the bold venture known as the Regeneration of the City Centre based upon the recommendations of the broader Area Plan. It was already known in advance that the required work would, during its course, create many problems for the existing users (commerce, recreation / entertainment, residents) but it was realized that only with such a large scale development would the final target be achieved.

Effort was made within the framework of the redevelopment project, for the organic linking of existing squares as well as the creation of new ones. The pre-existing Grigoris Afxentiou Square and the Market Square were linked with the new Saripolou Square, the University Square, the Second Municipal Market Square, and the major square of the area of the medieval castle; through walkways .

Active town planning aimed at achieving round the clock activity in the centre of the City, in essence revitalising the City, both socially as well as economically.

Following are examples from the City Centre Regeneration Project:

- PARKING SPACES

Research was undertaken, in collaboration with the University of Technology and the competent Ministries on the enhancement of

vehicle parking in the centre of the city. The Municipality had already commissioned a private company to create both underground as well as ground floor parking places, in conjunction with a public square along A. Themistocles street, directly opposite the premises of the University of Technology, following relevant direction by the Council of Ministers.

At the same time, the Municipality proceeded with the purchase of private plots, while most private parking places have been qualitatively upgraded. The enhancement and expansion of existing parking spaces in the Reclamation area served to further support the efforts to alleviate the problem.

- ORGANIZED PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Municipality of Limassol, being acutely aware that the city is not only in need of parking spaces, but is mainly in need of organized public transport, is in constant communication and cooperation with the Limassol Public Transportation Company for the upgrading of its fleet with small modern buses and for the designing of routes which will serve the citizens in the city centre on an ongoing basis, thus discouraging the movement of cars in the Centre, while at the same time also reducing pollutants.

As far as the creation of the coastal Multifunctional Park is concerned, particular attention was placed on the coastal character of the City, and especially on the functional and spatial structure of the Project Area; by creating visual and functional relationships between the coastal and the inland areas.

Following are examples of the Redevelopment of the Multifunctional Coastal Park:

As far as the establishment of the Linear Park along the riverbed of the Garyllis river is concerned, great importance was placed on the organic linking of the urban areas with the city centre and the reversal of the current situation of the marginalization of the Garyllis riverbed, through landscaped redevelopment works, the creation of bicycle routes, walkways, and the creation of a linear park with greenery.

The renovation of the Pattichion Municipal Theatre, shall inter alia strengthen the social and cultural infrastructure while at the same time servicing the great needs of the University of Technology.

Within the broader the cooperation of the Municipality with the University of Technology, use is made of sections of other premises of the Municipality by the University of Technology, such as the Fytideio Athletic Centre and the Panos Solomonidis Municipal Cultural Centre.

It should be understood that the Municipality of Limassol plans the continual cooperation with the University of Technology as well as with other universities and private companies, in order to incorporate within the City new and innovative technologies that will aim at making use of natural resources and energy, always aiming at developing the City's economy, and improving the quality of life of people living in it.

It may today seem difficult, but the Municipality in cooperation with the government and with private parties will utilise urban planning “interventions”, so that financial or zoning incentives are offered in order to achieve the above objectives. The fact of today's severe economic crisis does not mean that we should abandon the effort.

We are confident that the excellent cooperation that exists today, both with the University of Technology as well as with other City

institutions, will continue and will continuously be extended for the benefit of all concerned.

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