



International Society of City
and Regional Planners

12th Young Planners' Report

**Re-Assembling the City:
Establishing Urban Continuity in Athens**

ISO CaRP Congress 2002

**Athens, Greece
September 2002**





International Society of City and Regional Planners
Association Internationale des Urbanistes
Internationale Gesellschaft der Stadt- und
Regionalplaner
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INTRODUCTION

RE-ASSEMBLING THE CITY: ESTABLISHING URBAN CONTINUITY IN ATHENS

The 38th International Planning Congress of ISoCaRP was held in Athens from 21 to 26 September 2002. As a long lasting tradition of ISoCaRP Congresses at least for a decade, the Young Planners Workshop was held prior to the main Congress during 19-21 September 2002. The workshop was facilitated by Zeynep Meray Enlil (Turkey), representing ISoCaRP and Dimitris Karidis (Greece), representing the Local Organizing Committee.

The Workshop provided a unique opportunity for Young Planners, with a variety of backgrounds, to share their experiences in attempting to resolve complex and multi-dimensional planning problems. There was a very mixed group of 20 Young Planners from 11 different countries. (South Africa, India, Uganda/NL, Portugal, Mexico, Turkey, Italy, Poland/Bolivia; India/USA; Philippines/USA and Greece).

THEME OF THE WORKSHOP AND THE STUDY AREA

The topic of the Workshop was "Re-assembling the City: Establishing Urban Continuity in Athens." Defining the theme as such, the coordinators aimed to have the Young Planners tackle the multitude of serious problems concerning urban discontinuity that most cities face today, for which Athens is no exception. With the perspective that factors related to the process of social division of space, land-use segregation and phenomena of urban decay, mainly in central areas, tend to define the acute character of such problems, it was hoped that, in the context of the ISoCaRP Congress, Young Planners would come up with fruitful suggestions for re-assembling the fragmented parts of the city, in a project related with the above issues.

The study area was focused on a central area in Athens, close to the capital's Central Business District, with strong relations with the Industrial Zone, and crossed by some very important traffic routes, as well as railway lines. The existing land uses covered a wide variety of activities, ranging from housing, retail commerce, recreation, manufacture and industry. Fragmented by railway lines and major traffic routes, the study area was composed of three sub-areas, namely the districts of Metaxourgion, Kolonos and St. Paul's. Although, all three areas shared certain common characteristics, they had strategically different strengths and weakness in terms of re-assembling the area into a coherent whole. The study area also carried the potential of giving the Young Planners the opportunity to discuss, within the context of Athens, crucial current issues, which can be found in many major cities today. For example, it gave them the opportunity to discuss the problems associated with decaying city centers; pro's and con's of urban regeneration and gentrification; the problem of social exclusion; the problem of migrants (whether national or international) that prevails in many cities in this era of globalization.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Considering the variety and complexity of the issues involved in the study area and the variety of backgrounds, interests and experiences of the Young Planners (some of them had a background in economic development issues, others were more interested in social aspects and yet some were more urban design oriented), 4 groups were formed, each dealing with a different topic. These groups were:

- The Economic Sustainability Group
- The Social Implications Group
- The Traffic and Movement group
- The City Sense/Assessment of the Urban Fabric Quality Group

Young planners were expected to make a choice of the group they wanted to work and each group was then asked to look at the area from the perspective of their chosen topic.

Following the welcome dinner, an informative lecture was given by Prof. Dimitris Karidis, introducing Athens and the study area. A small booklet, prepared by Prof. Karidis and Stavros Mentos, also a young planner in the workshop, was distributed to the Young Planners. By giving an outline of the historical development of the study area and analyzing its existing situation (supplemented by photos, maps, drawings, statistical information), the booklet not only included useful information, but it also provided the main guidelines for the project and explained what was expected from the Young Planners.

Guided by Stavros, the Young Planners had a whole day walking-tour in the site. Stavros had been an efficient guide and helped the Young Planners to gain a better understanding of the background issues and underlying dynamics in the area they observed. The next two days were spent in the studio, each group working separately on their own topic. At the end of day 2, groups presented their work to each other. This proved to be a very informative and provocative brainstorming session, in which the participants came up with new ideas and raised new questions.

EXPECTATIONS

Young Planners were first expected to “read” the physical clues and make quick references as to what the variety of clues indicate about the nature of the study area and its dynamics within the larger context of the city of Athens. Understanding the character of the area in question was put forth as a crucial step before one could start to define and formulate the problems involved. Second, the Young Planners were expected to formulate planning problems from the perspective of their chosen topic. However, it was stressed that they should be restricted neither to the topic they have chosen nor to field of their own specialization. Instead, they were encouraged to take a holistic look at the area first; then, with that understanding at hand, formulate the problems focusing on their topic. Finally, they were expected to produce creative and even provocative ideas and proposals to solve the problems they have formulated, with corresponding alternatives of spatial re-arrangement.

It was well acknowledged that complex characteristics and problems, such as those encountered in the study area, need time to understand and analyze, to reflect upon before one could come up with viable solutions. Although the Young Planners had only very short time, we all knew the value of courageous ideas that could pour out with the creative energy of brainstorming, of producing a vision; with the freedom to dream... no matter how sketchy they might be as compared to the solutions produced by more tedious and technical methods of analyses.

This was just what was expected from our Young Planners: to unleash their most creative ideas, to visualize alternative futures, in the example of Athens, that could overcome the dreary conditions experienced in most central cities today; and to think how spatial planning can facilitate the goal of reaching cities free of barriers of all kinds.

OUTCOMES

It was a marvelous experience to see how creative and energetic our young colleagues were in producing ideas for complex and multi-faceted issues in a 3-day event. To be sure, within the short duration of time in which they had to come up with proposals, the young planners had a lot of stress. It was not an easy task to come up with sound proposals to be presented to “senior” planners. But they also had a lot of joy and fun. Above all, they had a great experience working within international teams, exchanging ideas, learning from each other, overcoming all barriers (of language, of culture and so on) and becoming friends. The tangible outcomes of this Workshop are manifest in the rest of this report; but the intangible ones are in the hearts and minds of the team of Young Planners Workshop and all those who shared this enthusiasm with us.

Acknowledgement

We have to thank ISoCaRP once again for providing such an invaluable experience for our younger colleagues; to UNESCO for generously supporting some of our Young Planners, who would not otherwise been able to participate in the Workshop; and to the Local Organizing Committee for providing all the facilities and equipment that our Young Planners needed; and of course, to our Young Planners, who are always a source of inspiration to our Society.

Assoc. Prof Zeynep Meray Enlil
Prof Dimitris Karidis

**RE-ASSEMBLING THE CITY:
ESTABLISHING URBAN CONTINUITY IN ATHENS**

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Group 1:

Sibusiso Buthelezi (South Africa)
Chrysostomos Makrakis-Karachalios (Greece)
Engela Meyer (South Africa)
Ceren Tan (Turkey)
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1. INTRODUCTION

The project's brief, given to the Young Planners, described the problems and challenges presented by the fragmentation of the urban fabric in Athens. The brief challenged us to come up with proposals for strategic intervention in order to take the first steps towards re-assembling the city and establish urban continuity in Athens. Our team focused on economic sustainability, essentially with an awareness that the city was looking for developmental ideas and design concepts which recognized the pressures of growth, yet had the ability to evolve as the surrounding community grew. In developing proposals and policies for intervention, cognizance was taken of Coccossis's vision of the major challenges that are to be faced by Greek planning in the immediate future:

“For the decades to come, major challenges are emerging in respect of the need to develop a spatial planning and management system combining strategic planning with programming and implementation at the various spatial levels. The aim of a strategy for sustainable development requires the establishment of complementarities and synergies between actions, not only at the national but also the regional and local level, implying the need for specialized spatial policies” (Coccossis 2002: 119).

The scope then for this project was to provide an overview of the existing challenges and opportunities in the study area, coming up with a vision for economic sustainability and formulating proposals in order to make economic sustainability a reality in this part of Athens.

In the established tradition of the Young Planners Workshops, our multi-skilled and multi-cultural team first had to agree on an approach to be followed. The approach followed by our team aimed to achieve the following:

- to develop proposals that are creative, but also applicable and realistic within the legal and institutional constraints faced by the local municipality and planners;
- in the spirit of the Young Planners Workshop (and most other planning projects) face the challenge of limited access to information and technology and other logistical constraints; and
- value the local experience and knowledge and be sensitive towards the unique situation as well as the local political circumstances.

2. EXISTING SITUATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Before proposals are made for intervention in the study area, it is important to view the project and the project area in a broader developmental context. Therefore the current realities were analysed and key issues identified on the regional, sub-regional and local scales.

The selected study area is located in central Athens covering an area of approximately 100 ha that faces a reality with many complexities. The study area is situated next to the historic centre and what could be called today's Athens's CBD. Although at the fringes of a lively centre, this area gives a feeling of marginalization. The reasons are multiple and related to each other. The existence of spatial barriers that hinder the urban continuity, the obsolescence of the building stock, the presence of many immigrants and ethnic or religious minorities, the co-existence of incompatible land uses, as well as the hidden potential of the area justify the need for intervention.

The whole area was divided in four sub-areas:

- The railway station (sub-area 1)
- St Paul's district (sub-area 2)
- Metaxourgion district (sub-area 3)
- Kolonos district (sub-area 4)

Sub-area 1 comprises the building of the railway station and the warehouses related to it, a metro station and part of the railway line, along with the blocks that face it. The railway is not integrated with its immediate physical context. Moreover, despite the existence of the railway station, the good linkages that it provides through the metro line to the rest of the city and its placement literally in the centre of Athens, it is striking that this sub-area has not attracted any uses that could take advantage of these potentials, such as offices and high quality hotels.

Although the Greek railway network could not be described as being well developed and the country does not rely heavily on railways, the existence of the metro station could justify by itself the attraction of such uses. On the contrary, the main uses around the station are car repair shops and a few low quality hotels, addressing mostly the needs of immigrants. Apart from its centrality, the potentials of this area rely on the upgrading of the Greek railway network that is taking place currently and the development of a suburban railway line in Athens. It has to be noted that the latter is going to provide linkages to the port area, the Olympic Village, the new airport and the suburbs and it is an objective of both the Regulatory Plan of Athens and the "Attica SOS" program for the improvement of the environment in Athens.

The 2nd sub-area consists of terraced multi-storey buildings. It is an area of high population densities with many immigrants. There is a mixture of land uses, where retail takes advantage of the ground floor and residences occupy the rest of the building. Due to the proximity to the railway station there are a few low quality hotels catering also for immigrants. Around the few small squares of the area, there are local cafes and restaurants that make them look vibrant. On the east side of the area is located the Eikostis Ogdos Oktovriou Av. (Patision), one of the most commercial roads of Athens, with the National Archaeological Museum and Pedion Areos, one of the biggest parks in Athens.

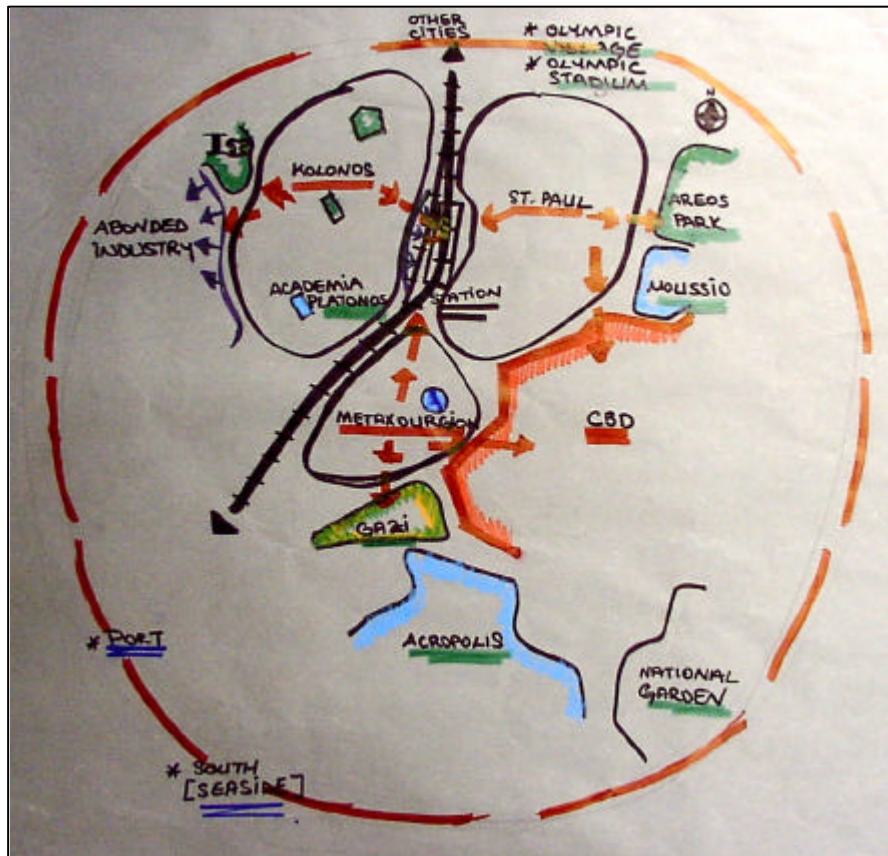
The 3rd sub-area includes Omonoia Sq., which is considered to be the centre of Athens. The image of the recently redeveloped square¹ is in contrast to the rest of the area, where there is evidence of degeneration and decay. Four (4) major roads designate the perimeter of this area. Tsaldari P. Av, better known as Piraeus Av., connects the city centre to the port. Along this road one can find high storey buildings with retail on the ground floor and offices on the

¹ This project is taking place under the supervision of the Unification of Archaeological Sites Organization (EACHA).

other floors. Iera Odos, Konstantinoupoleos and to a lesser extent Ahilleos Av. host printing houses, car repair shops and other light industries, along with commercial uses in general. Inside Metaxourgeion, there is a mixture of uses such as those mentioned above, with residential use. However, the resemblance with the neighboring areas of Psiri and Gazi, where residential use was overthrown by night-clubs, galleries, cafes and posh restaurants, reveals that Metaxourgeion is going to face similar pressures in the near future.

Sub-area 4 could be characterized as a relatively stable area. There is a higher density of activities and multi-storey buildings around squares and major roads. In the rest of the area there are lower buildings and residential use seems to be dominant. However, the general view is that of mixed land uses, where the basement and the ground floor are used for commerce and the other floors for residences. It also has to be mentioned that this area comprises the archaeological site of Academia Platonos², which seems to be abandoned and is being used currently as a shelter by immigrants.

What seems though, to be common in all four areas is the lack of any major economic investment, while it is evident that there are no clear institutional guidelines for economic development aiming at the changing economic needs of a transforming community. Moreover, there is some kind of “informal” economic activity taking place, a feeling justified by the industrial sounds coming out of the apartments occasionally, the painted shop – windows that hinder people from watching inside, the traffic congestion in the streets, all signs not necessarily evident to a common tourist. In the area of Kolonos where we managed to have a glimpse behind one of the painted shop – windows, we found out that there was a firm copying cd's, probably illegally. However, it should be clarified that although “informal” activities contain some form of illegality, the term should not be identified with the production of illegal goods. Most of the times, the “informality” has to do with the legal entity of the firm and the production methods, such as the use of low – paid workers, mostly illegal immigrants nowadays.



² Plato's Academy

3. ECONOMIC VISION & OBJECTIVES

It is envisaged that the study area will be able to sustain its economic role and to develop further through tourism industry and the tertiary sector in general. Hence, we hope that it will grow as a vibrant, mixed use, culturally rich area, by consisting at the same time a competitive economic node in the Attica basin.

Within this context, the planner should incorporate in his perspective the enforcement of the competitive advantages of the area, such as the proximity to the CBD and the archaeological sites, the upgraded transport system and the new resources that the minority groups have brought. Furthermore, there should be initiatives intervening in the cycle of physical decline, thus promoting an environment conducive and attractive to increased economic investment. Otherwise, the physical obsolescence and the insufficiency of infrastructures may result in the attraction of these investments by better served alternative locations.

The diversity of land uses that characterize the study area, promote and facilitate vibrancy and high densities, the optimal use of infrastructure and the development of economic activities. Thus, it has been our common belief that this mosaic should be maintained. Moreover, trying to regulate a system where “informal” economic activities play a significant role, might lead to the opposite result. Although, in most cases these activities do not seem to be organized and linked, the truth is that they formulate networks, which are very fragile in any kind of intervention. However, in the case of hazardous land uses, there should be provision for their removal.

Finally, another rising issue is the enhancement of the economic role and significance of the study area by facilitating its economic integration within the adjacent urban context. New activities, relative to culture, tourism and commerce should be attracted in the area and in such a case some of the competitive advantages mentioned above, could play the role of a pull factor. However, it has to be clarified that appropriate strategies should be identified in order to avoid the expulsion of the old uses, including residence, by the new ones, a phenomenon that is very evident in the adjacent areas of Psiri and Gazi.

4. PROPOSALS

Design Concept – providing linkages

Participants could identify with the issues at hand as most cities face serious problems of urban discontinuity. Factors related with the process of social division of space, with land use segregation and with phenomena of urban decay, often in central areas, tend to define the acute character of such problems. Athens is no exception and the idea behind the project was that the young planners come up with fruitful suggestions for re-assembling the fragmented parts of the city. As set out earlier, the aim to promote sustainable economic development in the study area affect and include a number of aspects and would to a certain extent require a multi-disciplinary approach. Therefore our group decided to take as our primary design concept the provision and/or enhancement of linkages.

Within the fragmented city of Athens it is relatively easy to spot weak linkages with regards to a wide variety of aspects. These (sometimes absent, sometimes weak) linkages relate to aspects such as transport, land use, tourism as well as the social and cultural life within Athens. The design concept should address this deficiency of linkages and discrepancy of planning and design. Linkages form the key role in developing and sustaining the economy of the study area.

Transport linkage

The railway line passing through the study area is a major potential for boosting the economy and should be utilized accordingly. Assuming that, through intervention from central and regional government agencies, the efficiency of the railway line will be increased by focusing on the following areas of intervention:

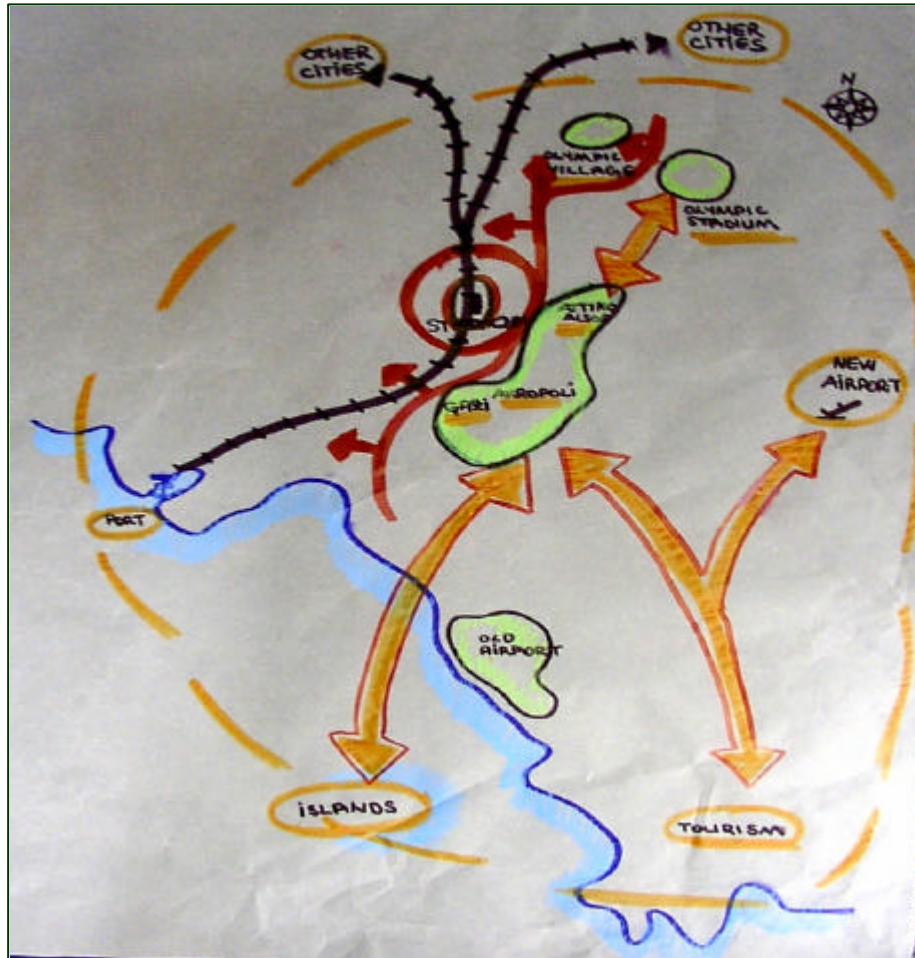
- The study area could be connected with other Greek cities in both a northern and a southern direction and specifically focusing on the linkage with the port.
- The use of subways and other forms of mass transport such as busses and trolleys should be promoted so as to connect and integrate the city as a whole.

By capitalizing on national and regional investment in the rail system, the increased accessibility to and visibility of the study area can contribute significantly to the economic sustainability of the area by creating incentives and opportunities for investment.



Land use linkage

As it has already been mentioned, the diversity of land uses in the area should not necessarily be regarded as undesirable, but should in principle be supported. However, such a mixed-use development should be directed and monitored in order to ensure the prevention of incompatible or environmentally hazardous industries. Specific attention should be given to the informal sector of the economy. An issue that is in need of further investigation is the potential role of NGOs in regulating these activities.



Social / Cultural linkage

The informal and formal social and cultural linkages that exist in the study area could be exploited in order to contribute towards the economic sustainability of the area. Specialized cultural activities such as handicrafts are to be promoted within the context of trade fairs, festivals, and the like.

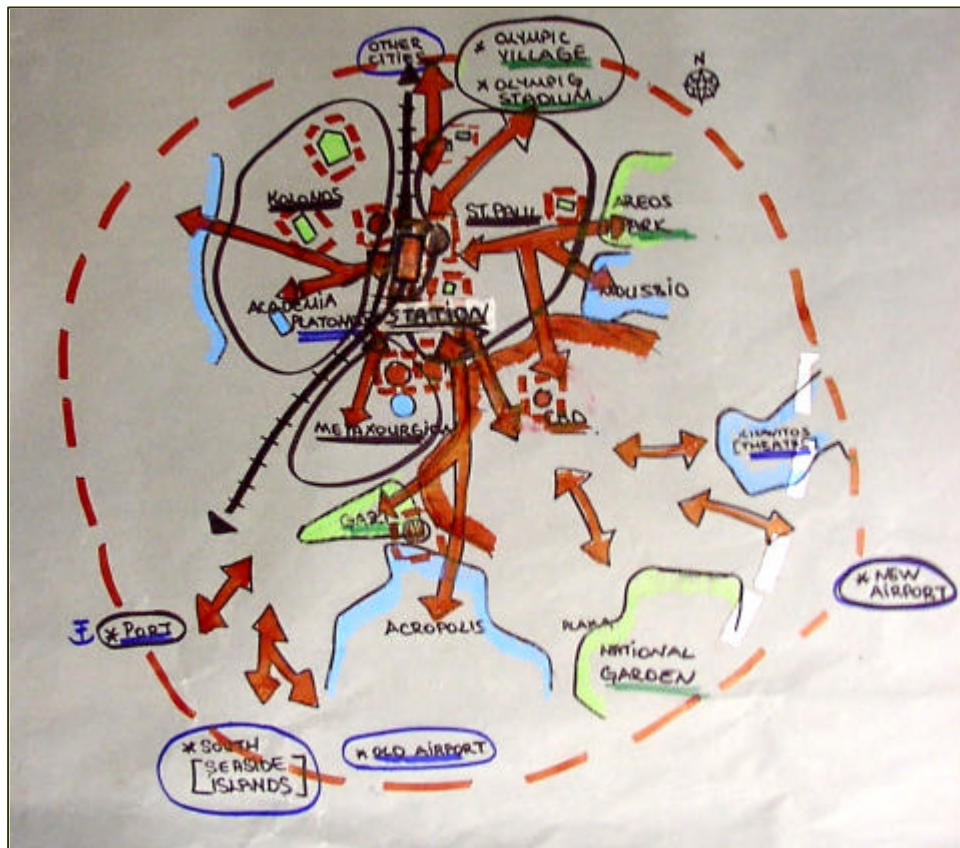
Preferential procurement policies should be put in place so as to make sure that local skills and knowledge are utilized and developed. The mobilization of private capital could take place through the initiation of public private partnerships to promote local crafts and trade. The establishment of NGOs that work with and within the community could strengthen this link and act as a boost to the economy.

Tourism linkage

As the tourism industry in Athens is perceived as being in decline, it is very important to capitalize on the forthcoming 2004 Olympic Games and the accompanying regeneration projects that are initiated from a national and regional scale.

At a more local level a specific strength of the study area is its location in relation to the centre of Athens and major archaeological sites. The archaeological sites located within the study area are of relatively less significance and should therefore not compete, but emphasize the complementary role it can play to other similar sites. These sites should be incorporated with the network of archaeological sites that is currently being promoted by EACHA.

In promoting tourism in the area, nodes, squares and corridors should be identified that could be developed as tourist attractions by the development of restaurants, recreation facilities and souvenir or special shops for tourists. These nodes could serve as points for the diffusion of development, promoting the multiculturalism of the area and enhancing its cosmopolitan nature. The eventual aim is the emergence of a social mosaic since tourists and local people come from different walks of life, different backgrounds, etc.



5. CONCLUSION

The study area currently has unique economic characteristics that are important as drivers of the economy. These, with proper planning and development, could be used to ensure that the area contributes economically to Athens and therefore help the city in reassembling and creating an integrated and continuous area.

The development pressure on the study area resulting from the influx of people in it and the possible vulnerability of economic activity will remain. Therefore the proposals are not only an attempt to respond to the immediate needs of the surrounding area and its inhabitants, but is also aimed at initiating uses and functions that may contribute to the long-term sustainability of the greater Athens area.

In our discussions to come up with these proposals, we as a group gained insight into the challenges faced by people/planners in other parts of the world. We came to realize that there are surprising similarities in the type of problems, but also specific contextual constraints. Our proposals have been informed by our own experiences in our respective countries of origin and we hope that we could thereby provide a stimulating perspective on the challenging situation in Athens.

**RE-ASSEMBLING THE CITY:
ESTABLISHING URBAN CONTINUITY IN ATHENS**

SOCIAL & CULTURAL INTEGRATION

Group 2:

Piayali Bandyopadhyay (India)
Asli Catay (Turkey)
Iram Farooq (India/USA)
Albert Mugenyi (Uganda/NL)
Karla Pagaza Prado (Mexico)

Report prepared by:
Karla Pagaza Prado

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 - 4.1 Problems
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5. Trends of change
6. Key questions
7. Strategy
8. Recommendations
9. Final remarks

1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the work of the Group 2 which was the one in charge of analyzing the present social characteristics of the study area and the social implications that an integration of it with its region would bring.

The importance of the analysis of existing problems of the social groups, as well as the social consequences of an urban re-assemble, is the possibility of establishing policies and instruments to incorporate them with the roll of the city, taking advantage of the existing diversity.

Due to the characteristics of the Workshop and the short time to analyze and propose solutions, the achievement of the project was developed considering the following phases:

1. **Field Trip.**- First of all, the team visited the study area to get general impressions of the zone. The approach of our group was directed to observe the inhabitants, their characteristics and customs.
2. **Overall Observations.**- In the second phase, derived from data obtained in the field as well as from information about the zone, it was possible to develop the analysis of the social characteristics of the study area.
3. **Sub-Area Observations.**- At the same time, also according to the field information, the social characteristics of each sub-area were defined.
4. **Problems and Opportunities.**- According to the observations of each sub-area as well as the relations and interactions among them, the problems and opportunities were defined. Afterwards they would work as a base to delimit the strategy and recommendations.
5. **Trends of Change.**- Due to its strategic location, the study area showed important pressures of change, which could be beneficial or not for the population that at the moment live there. In this phase these tendencies were analyzed as well as the influence that they have in each sub-area.
6. **Key Questions.**- This was the phase where the group defined the wished goal for the study area from the social point of view. Some key questions helped us to find the final objective.
7. **Strategy.**- In this phase, the group had understood the complexity of the social groups that live in the zone. The strategy was proposed as a guide to fulfill the required actions to obtain the wished goal.

8. **Recommendations.**- Finally in this last phase the instruments, actions and the actors to integrate the social groups with the whole Athens society were proposed.

2. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

The study area was located in the central part of Athens, in the neighborhood of the tourist zone, the Businesses District and the industrial area.

In general, this zone presents the following characteristics:

- Destination for immigrants
- Proximity to commercial, cultural and historical centres
- Low land values
- Pressures for change
- Well connected with the city and the region
- Low and middle income region and
- Strategic location.

Although this zone presents the characteristics described previously, it is conformed by 4 sub-areas: The Railway Station; Kolonos District; Saint Paul's District and Metaxourgion District. These ones present particularities. These are the reasons why it was necessary to analyze them, to be able to establish a strategy which involves the particularities of each one of them.



Figure 1. The Study Area

3. SUB-AREAS OBSERVATIONS

The specific characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, that each sub-area presents, are shown in the next lines.

3.1 Railway station

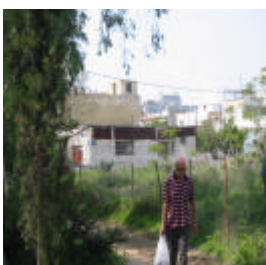
- Physical, social and psychological barrier
- Regional connector
- The rail station works as connector and divider



Figure 2. Railway station

3.2 Saint Paul's District

- Low income area
- High density
- Commercial activities near to the rail station area in terms of hotels
- Lack of open spaces as green areas
- Lowering property cost
- High rise buildings has pressure on lower storeyed buildings.
- St Paul's church acts as nucleus of activities
- More immigrants
- High population density
- Perception of social problems



Figures 3. St. Paul's District

3.3 Metaxourgion District

- Mainly immigrant inhabitants
- Poorest area
- Multifamily buildings
- Abandoned industries and warehouse / buildings
- Classical buildings
- Incompatible land uses with the new cultural role area
- Diversity of ethnic groups
- Cheap and unskilled labour availability

- Proximity with the acropolis and CBD area
- Redevelopment of urban projects
- Proximity to the rail station
- Potential area for cheap labour
- Traditional Greek culture vs multiple immigrant cultures



Figures 4. Metaxourgion District

3.4 Kolonos District

- Primarily residential
- Ground floor commercial uses
- Low density
- Plenty of open spaces
- Immigrants in the west side
- Proximity to the abandon industrial unit
- Quieter
- Areas along Lenorman deteriorating
- Middle income
- Perception of social problems
- Heterogeneous society with different income groups



Figures 4. Kolonos District

4. PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Problems

After the overall and sub-areas observations, it was possible to determine where the social problems were based mainly because, the study area works as a pole of immigrants who are excluded from the Athenian society. This is reflected in the few opportunities that these immigrants have to improve their life quality. They present conditions characterized by:

- High Density in Metaxourgion (overcrowded places to live) and St. Paul's (High storey buildings),
- Inhabitants with few knowledge of the local language,

- Low level education and,
- Railway as cheap mode of transportation encouraging immigrants.

It was also possible to define that redevelopment projects will be a challenge to immigrants, especially the illegal immigrants who are the ones with more difficulty to target through public policies.

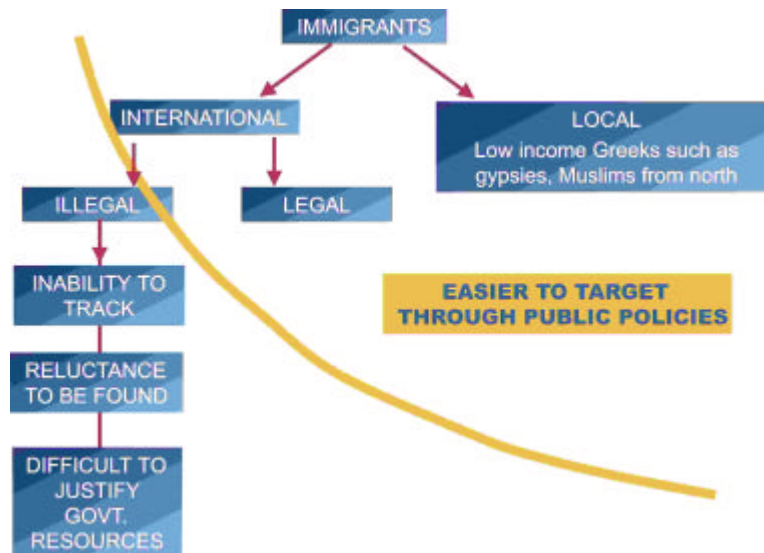


Figure 5. Immigrants problems

4.2 Opportunities

Although the zone presents important problems, they can be considered as great opportunities for the city, the zone itself and their settlers. Those that are described in the following were considered by our group as an opportunity to refund the study area favouring its actual inhabitants.

- Land prices being still low - easy to keep current residents
- Cheap labour - available for regeneration efforts
- Abandoned buildings - economic activities
- Diversity of cultures - multiculturalism
- Ethnic unions - as key to reach people

5. TRENDS OF CHANGE

As mentioned previously, due to its location the study area presents important pressures of change. Figure 6 exemplifies these pressures.

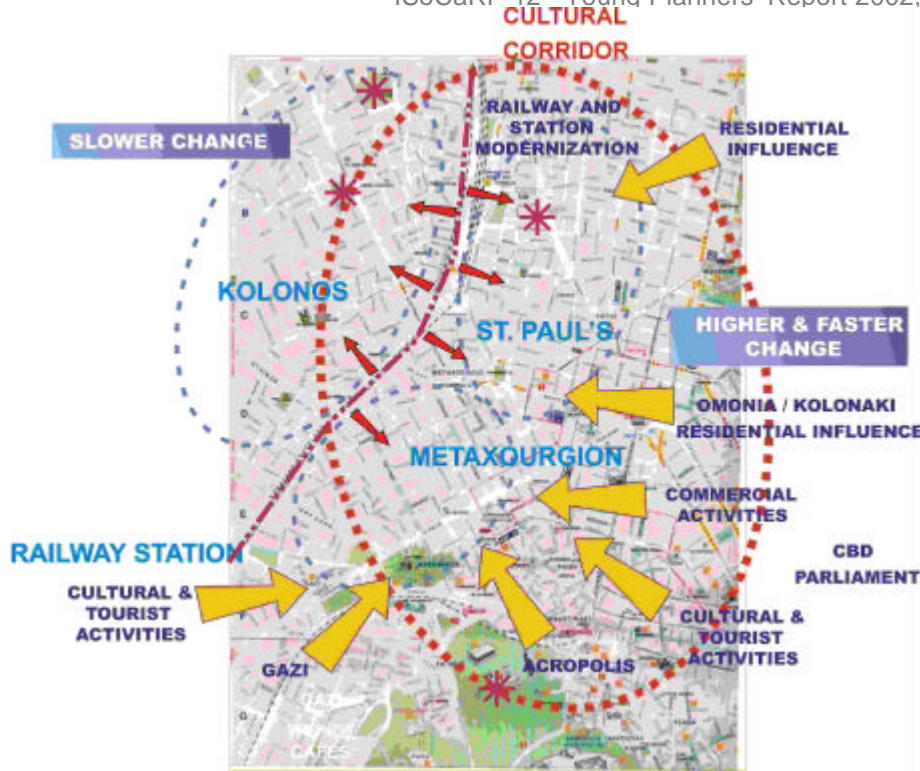


Figure 6. Trends of change

On the other hand considering that the Olympic Games Athens 2004 foment urban regeneration is the reason why the study area due to its strategic location will be prone to greater pressures. But, how do the social Olympics impact the structure in this region? Group 2 determined that the following impacts will be those that will be developed in our study area because of the Olympic Games Athens 2004.

1. Migration (legal and illegal) to feed the needs such as construction
2. Job opportunities – opportunity for economic upliftment and integration
3. Renovation of railway station enhancing access
4. Residual cultural impacts of incoming diverse input
5. Integration of archeological monuments
6. Unemployment and related social concerns post-Olympics

6. KEY QUESTIONS

In order to establish the wished goals, the group defined key questions whereupon it was possible to define the strategy and the final goal.

1. How will emerging cultural renaissance in the study area impact existing residents?
2. Where are people likely to go?
3. Is there a way to allow them to stay?
4. What will happen to unskilled labour drawn to Athens for the Olympics post-event?
5. How will the presence of potentially unemployed people affect the city?

The group agreed that question 3 was the one that defined best the goal we wished to obtain, because we were sure that is preferable that the inhabitants have the necessary tools during the Olympic event or in the post-event, to be integrated with the Athenian society as well as to have the necessary opportunities to improve its quality of life.

Having found the wished goal, "*To guarantee the integration of the study area inhabitants is necessary to provide them with the tools and necessary opportunities so they can continue inhabiting the zone, integrating them with the rest of the society*", was possible to define the strategy and propose the recommendations necessary to execute this goal.

7. STRATEGY

The strategy defined (Figure 7), is based on the opportunity for the people to have the necessary options and incentives so that they can choose the desired direction.



Figure 7. Strategy

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

NO.	RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	ACTORS
1	Cultural and social inclusion of immigrants into mainstream	Greek classes	NGOs (Supported by government policies)
2	Extend the plan for unification of archaeological sites to include Kolonos and possible St. John's Plaza and further creating a "Cultural Loop"	Link Monastiraki Gazi (through Metaxourgion Akademia Platonos Kolonos Areos Park)	Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment, Planning, and Public Works
3	Efforts to maintain housing affordability creating a vibrant mixed-income community	Credit opportunity of home purchase for low and middle-income	Banks and credit unions (may or may not be supported by government) e.g. Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC)
4	Enhance access to social infrastructure	Schools Access to higher education Healthcare Open space/ play opportunities for children Safety & crime prevention	Primarily public entities possibly supported by NGOs
5	Integration into changing economy	- Job training / skills development - Credit opportunities for business development - Enhance live-work opportunities e.g. artists studios and living space -- Soho, London, Greenwich Village, New York (sp. Metaxourgion)	- Central government or local authorities - NGOs - Banks and credit unions (may or may not be government supported) - Central government or local authorities - Private developers
6	Enhance access to other parts of Athens and the larger region – job opportunities, facilities	Proposed enhancement of railway line will make the regional connections faster and more usable	Railway authority
7	Acknowledge the informal economy	- Plaza for informal commercial activities in Metaxourgion – Monastiraki along the Cultural Corridor - Policies to support innovative self-help groups – e.g. crafts coops - Craft gallery / popular museum to showcase arts and crafts from different cultures	- Government -- municipal, federal, possibly tapping EU funds - Public –private partnership - Government policies - Action through NGOs - Public / private / NGOs / Craft coops

In addition, the social inclusion sets out through public participation and education, taking advantage of the existing social groups as:

- Unions and informal meeting groups
- Religious and/or political grassroots groups such as churches
- Schools & playgrounds

Finally, taking into account that the wished goal will have a long term effect, a constant process of monitoring and evaluation is recommended. With this evaluation it is possible to extend the effects produced by the recommended actions to some others areas in Athens providing affordable housing opportunities and enhancing social and cultural diversity in Athens. This means that if there exist opportunities to the immigrant to live all over the city, the study area could be composed by different groups, and also the rest of Athens, integrating the multicultural characteristics in the whole city.



Figure 7. The cycle

9. FINAL REMARKS

Often when an urban project is going to be developed, the technical and design characteristics are completely developed to assure that it works as desired, but sometimes we do not take into account the social implications that the project could bring about. It is important to consider that the inhabitants have the capability to adequate their environment to satisfy their needs, so in every urban project it is necessary to take into consideration the inhabitants' needs and provide them with the necessary mechanisms to involve them with the urban project.

Is important to remark that every project which is going to be developed for the Olympic Games in Athens, has social implications that must be taken into account in order not to generate negative effects after the event.

Finally special thanks to the workshop coordinators: Prof. Zeynep Enlil and Prof. Dimitris Karidis for their precise comments which helped us in our work.

**RE-ASSEMBLING THE CITY:
ESTABLISHING URBAN CONTINUITY IN ATHENS**

TRAFFIC AND MOVEMENT

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1. METHODOLOGY: TO “MANAGE” COMPLEXITY IN 3 DAYS...

The approach to transportation, accessibility and mobility issues only at the scale of the study area (neighborhood) was considered by the team to be limited in scope since its first discussion. Transportation Planning and management requires a systemic and multi-level approach. Therefore, opting for a larger territorial area of study was necessary.

Athens is a particularly complex city to manage and plan with regards to transportation, accessibility and mobility. Throughout its recent history, even today, the city has been mainly organized to serve traffic, despite the known consequences on the environment, public space design, people’s behavior and so on. Aside from this, the study area has some particularly challenging problems related with the barrier effect caused by a railway and two train stations. Considering all this, within the short time available for this endeavor (only 3 days), it was considered more appropriate to have a strategic planning approach (Figure 1).

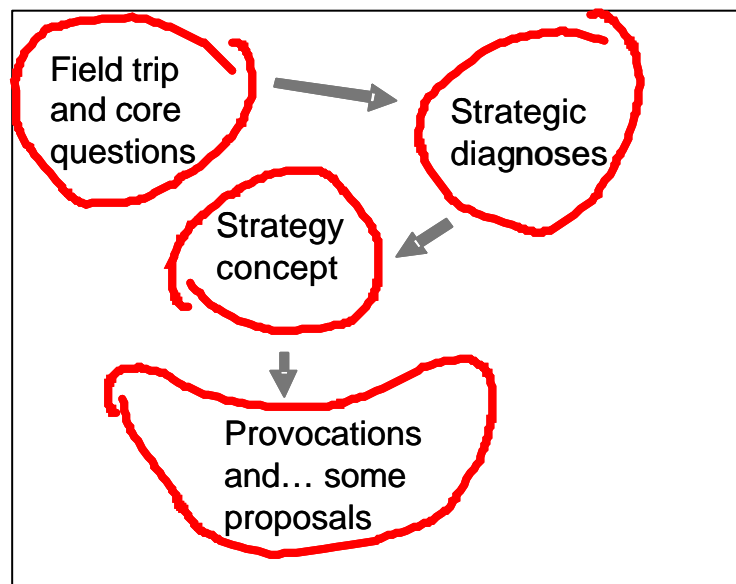


Figure 1 – Methodology

The main phases of the methodology are as follows:

1. **Field trip** to the site to collect data and build a city sense based on experience (as a visitor). This phase was considered very important in order to: (a) experience on the field the difficulties of the city users; (b) observe how the transportation system is working at the local level; (c) observe how public spaces are designed and used; (d) identify the

main urban activities and their importance as traffic generators; (e) recognize the importance of transportation, accessibility, and mobility for the local urban dynamic and its relations with the surrounding urban area.

The field trip and the analysis of some available documents concerning the city and metropolitan area transportation networks, statistical data on the population evolution and economic activities, historical and urban development information, a brain storming exercise was organized. The result of this exercise was the formulation of **the core questions** that the group should address to.

2. Starting from the evidence of existing problems in the city and identified local potentialities, the team built up a strategic diagnosis, focusing on the causes of problems and their complex relationships. At this phase, the potential key causes and potentialities that call for planning intervention were also identified.
3. A **strategy concept** was developed in order to convey a vision of the desired future and the proposed way to move on that direction. The concept is also relevant in communicating the vision, actions, policies, etc., to all the persons and institutions involved. In addition, the strategy concept also works as a mobilizing flag (marketing) towards a change for a better and desired future.
4. Finally, tangible **proposals** are presented as a result of technical and creative analyses. Some of them might look provocative or even a utopia, especially to the local authorities and some citizens, as these projects or policies diverge from the prevailing bad urban planning and transportation practices. In addition, the appearance of some flag projects creates a critical mass that builds hope and willpower which pushes for more change. Other proposals are rather progressive, as they are based on human behavior or integrated in a more complex network of relationships with other policy domains or heavy phenomena.

2. FIELD TRIP: THE CORE QUESTIONS

The result of the field trip, guided by the local organization committee, is illustrated in Figure 2. From the illustration, one can easily recognize the barrier effect of the railway, not only in the study area, but also all along the city, from North to South, in direction to Pireas harbour. The main street network, the pedestrian streets, the main public spaces and gardens, the archaeological sites and the metro stations are also marked. In relation with the barrier effect caused by the railway, there are the crossing points, which are considered of great importance. They were called links and starlinks, depending on their role on the transportation system, as discussed in greater detail further on this report.

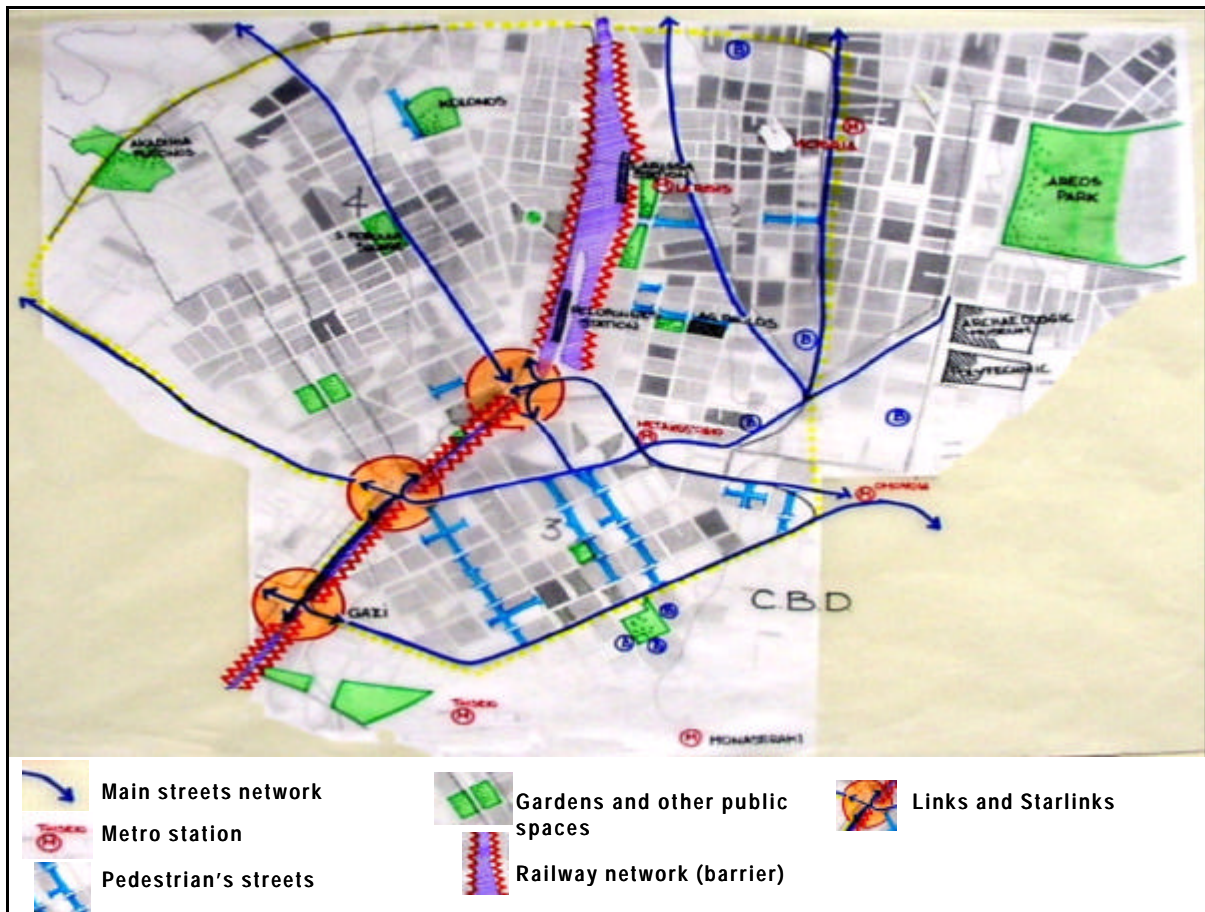


Figure 2 - Field observations and city sense on local transportation, accessibility and mobility

The analysis of some documents, such as the bus, train and metro network and their timetables; the available statistical data on the population evolution and economic activities; historical and urban development information; regional maps; provided a complementary base and framework to identify the core questions that this group should address. Therefore, in order to build a consistent, grounded and adequate strategy, we considered the following main questions that should be answered:

- What and where are the main travel generators?
- Which accessibility and interchange concept could be more effective?
- How to cope with heavy transportation Infrastructure in the urban fabric (railway, rail station)? Can we create an opportunity from this?
- How to manage hyper-flow streets for a more user friendly city?
- How to minimize or eliminate street level constraints to mobility?
- How can we use spatial perception for pedestrian and drivers to regulate circulation and improve safety?
- How can we change the aggressive circulation attitude of drivers and pedestrians?

3. STRATEGIC DIAGNOSES STRUCTURE

One of the first conclusions from the brain storming was that we are facing multi-scale and multi-nature problems and potentialities (see Figure 3). Therefore we cannot address any action without considering these three fundamental dimensions:

- The territorial scale of the problems and potentialities: metropolitan, urban (the city), neighborhood and street scales;
- The nature of problems: planning and transportation policy, organizational, mobility and accessibility, borders and cohesions, human behavior and design;
- The time, i.e., the time it takes for people and organizations (private and public) to realize and react to existing or emerging risks, problems, changes, opportunities, etc..

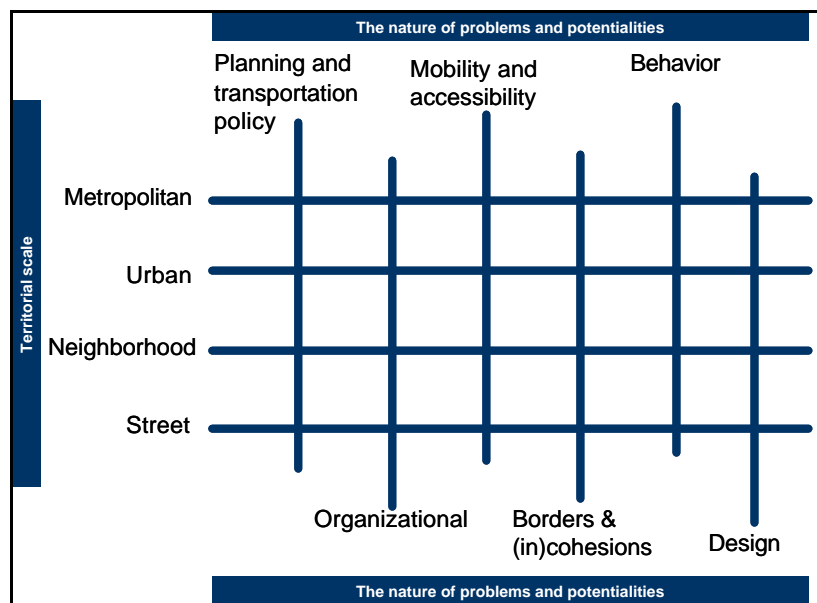


Figure 3 - Multi-scale and multi-nature diagnoses structure

According to the theory of systems, the territory, which we want to operate (region, city, neighborhood, etc.), is an open and complex system. This means that its behavior is influenced by outside events. We cannot describe the system by a finite or intelligible number of variables in order to predict its future development. Being aware of this, we should be able to understand better what we can and cannot do to enact change or to preserve something, considering a certain scale of intervention and context (resources, etc.).

The strategy must take into consideration the chain-reaction effect of any policy or action. This way, we can choose better actions and policies, as well as, increase its probability of success and reduce its eventual negative side effects or reactions.

The main conclusions of the strategic diagnoses are:

1. **Planning and transportation policy** at the **metropolitan scale**: Inadequate metropolitan transport plan and policy: priority to cars, insufficient and ineffective interchange, insufficient public transport;
2. **Organization** at the **metropolitan scale**: Need to Improve coordination between transportation modes: routes, timetables, pricing and quality control (metropolitan scale);
3. **Mobility and accessibility** at the **metropolitan scale**: Inadequate metropolitan transport system and modal split: dominance of cars, insufficient and inadequate interchange, inadequate public transport, physical obsolescence of infrastructure;

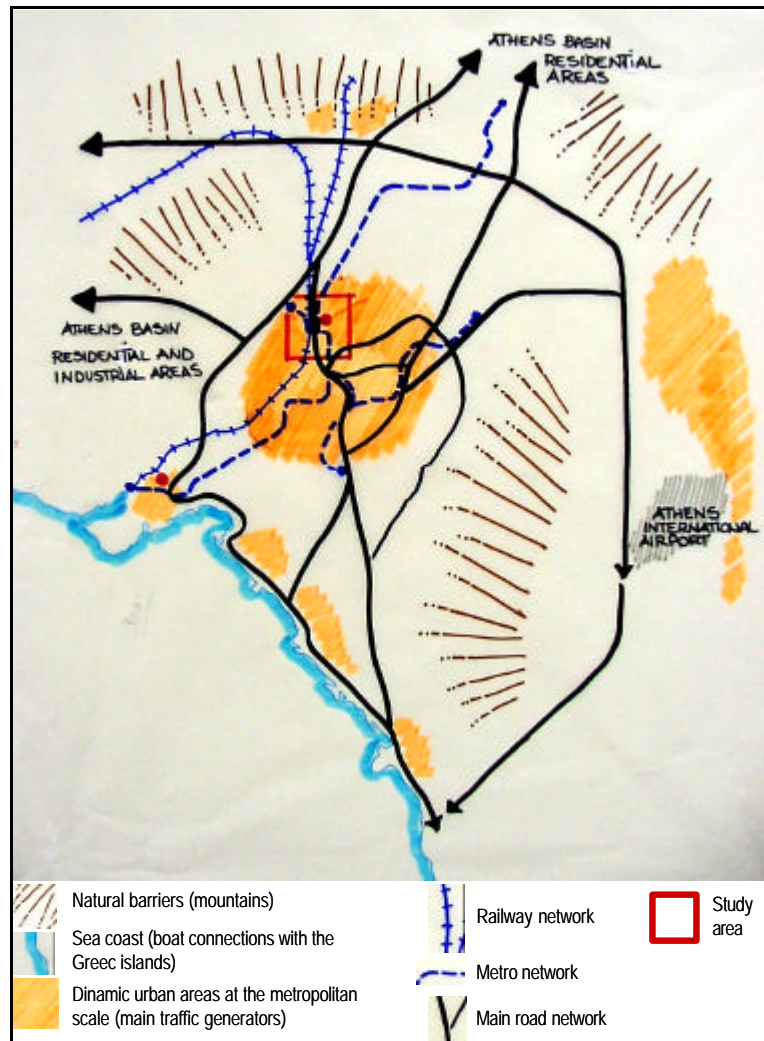


Figure 4 - The metropolitan transportation system of great Athens

4. Mobility and accessibility at the urban scale:

- Circulation dispute between bus and cars: lack of bus lanes/ bays;
- Railway barrier to city mobility with insufficient and congested intersections for traffic and pedestrian;
- Inappropriate location of parking;
- Hyper-flow streets;
- High level of conflict between traffic and pedestrians.

5. Mobility and accessibility at the neighborhood scale:

- Lack of designated crosswalks for pedestrians lead to random crossing, causing level of service reduction and safety problems;
- Rail Line/Station: Barrier to local mobility;
- Inappropriate location of parking;

6. Mobility and accessibility at the street scale:

- Obstacles to pedestrians: uneven pavement, trees and cars on sidewalk;
- Inaccessibility for pedestrians of limited mobility: handicapped, aged, people with baby carriage;
- Under-utilized street space for traffic, pedestrian, urban furniture and vegetation uses.

7. Borders & (in)cohesions:

- at the **metropolitan scale**: The mountain ring barrier effect;
- at the **urban and neighborhood scales**: Hyper-flow streets barrier effect; Railway barrier to city mobility with few and congested intersections for traffic and pedestrian, social and territorial fragmentation;

- at the **street scale**: Hyper-flow streets barrier effect (see Figure 5).
- 8. Behavior at the metropolitan scale:**
- Aggressive circulation attitude (drivers and pedestrians);
 - The importance of car ownership as a social value;
 - Illegal parking;
- 9. Behavior at the urban, neighborhood and street scales:**
- Aggressive circulation attitude (drivers and pedestrians);
 - The importance of car ownerships as a social value;
- 10. Design at the metropolitan scale:** Physical and functional obsolescence of transportation infrastructure;
- 11. Design at the urban, neighborhood and street scales:**
- Bad intersection design for train, traffic and pedestrian, causing safety problems and low level of service;
 - Lack of designated crosswalks for pedestrians lead to random crossing, causing level of service reduction and safety problems;
 - Obstacles to pedestrians (uneven pavement, trees and cars on sidewalk, "surprise" basement access, etc.) causing inaccessibility for pedestrians of limited mobility (handicapped, aged, people with baby carriage);
 - Under utilized street space for traffic, pedestrian, urban furniture and vegetation uses;
 - Non-existent or inappropriate parking design.

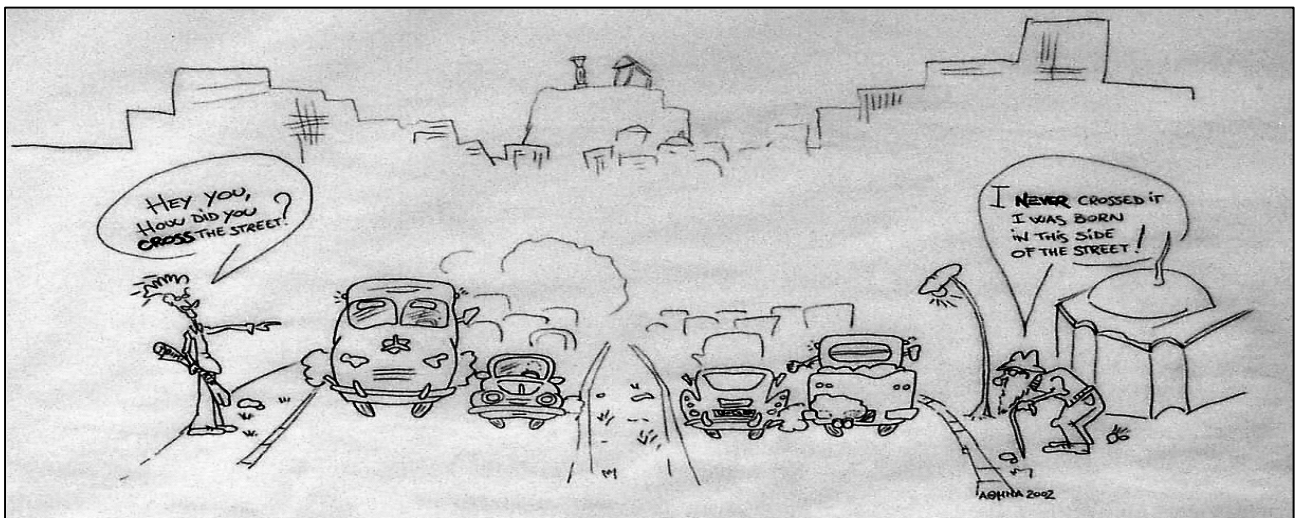


Figure 5 – Cartoon illustrating the hyper-flow streets barrier effect

4. BUILDING PEARL NECKLACES FOR ATHENS

The planning concept proposed for the study area and Athens (as urban context), concerning transportation and movement, is supported by a metaphoric image of pearl necklaces for Athens.

According to this metaphor, the pearls are the most interesting public and/or symbolic places in the area where we want to operate. The pearls were chosen in coordination with the strategy of the other groups of young planners who focused on city sense, and socio-economic issues. The pearls of Athens include:

- existing and/or new squares (to be created through the demolition of some very degraded blocks);
- archaeological sites;

- gardens (most of them needing to be renewed or properly maintained);
- museums;
- multi-cultural spaces, such as pedestrian streets or multi-use squares for music concerts, local free market (food, books, old objects, handicraft, etc.) and so on;
- the new Olympic Village, being built on the North expansion area of the city;
- the New Welcome Gateway of Athens for those who arrive by train, metro or funicular; this renovation project is proposed by this group in cooperation with the group working on the city sense; the location of the New Welcome Gateway is the main train station on the study area (please see further details in the next chapter);
- Piraeas harbour, as the South and water Welcome Gateway to Athens and to most of the Greek islands.

All these pearls (points) are proposed to be connected by pedestrian streets, public transportation networks and new visual perspectives of the city (lines). Therefore, the planning concept is based on actions on points and lines (Figure 6).

However, as previously mentioned, the city and the study area are complex systems; therefore we should not address our responses only to the physical components of the system. According to this attitude towards planning practice, we could not escape from a more systemic approach.

Therefore, the bases of the strategy are also focused on:

- **Policy and planning** changes to give maximum priority to public transportation with high level of service;
- **Organization** changes to increase the level of multi-modal coordination: routes, pricing and time-tables;
- Public campaign to **raise awareness on public transportation use**, citizenship and circulation safety;
- **Physical actions** to improve the design of transportation infrastructure and public space: points and lines (links and star links).

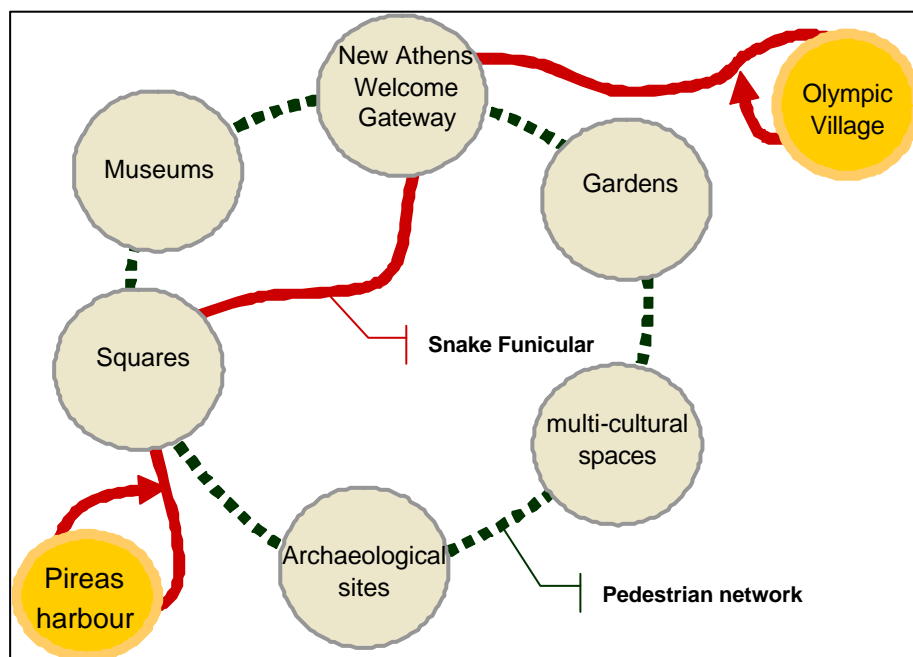


Figure 6 – Proposals concept: “the Athens Pearl Necklaces”

5. PROVOCATIONS AND... SOME PROPOSALS: THE ATHENS PEARL NECKLACES

5.1 New Athens Welcome Gateway

The New Athens Welcome Gateway is one of the flag projects for the study area, but its positive impacts are expected at the level of the city and metropolitan area. Aside from the concept developed by our group, the design of the future station was developed by the city sense group. Their sketch can be examined in Figure 9.

The New Athens Welcome Gateway is considered as an urban renovation project, based on the location of the existing main railway stations in the study area. This project includes:

- Construction of a New Rail Station;
- Creation of a momentum for urban regeneration process (new and high quality building and modern urban design);
- Creation of a new metropolitan interchange;
- Multi-media information center that enhances citizenship and can also be used to promote multi-cultural values and the use of public transportation;
- Central Station for the "Snake Funicular", accommodating the new line: Olympic Village and Pireas harbour.

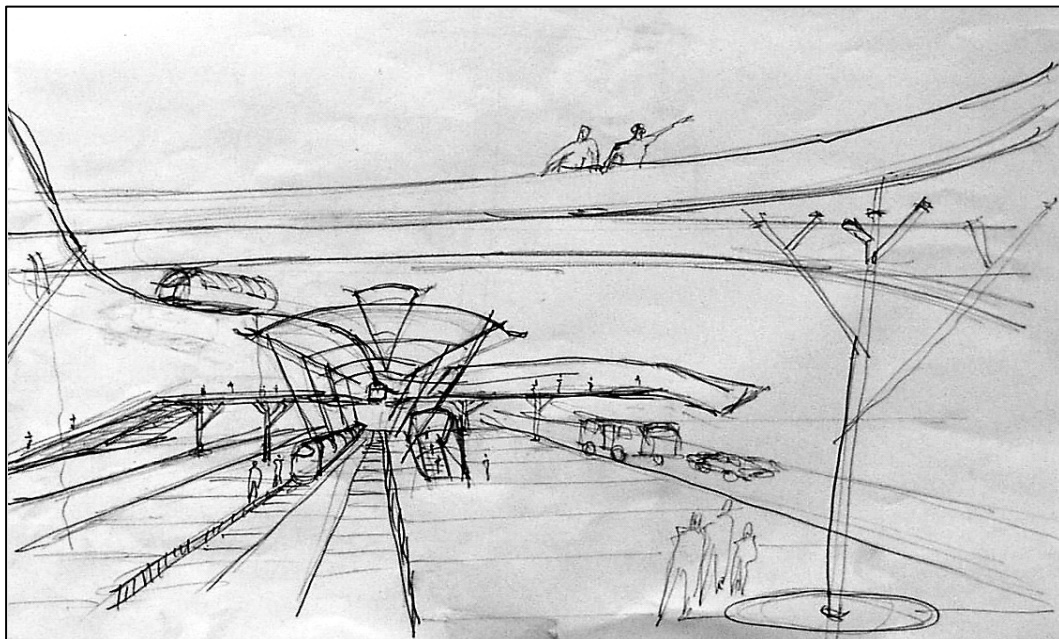


Figure 7 - A vision of the New Athens Welcome Gateway (Designed by group 2)

5.2 Snake Funicular: stitching effect

The "Snake Funicular" is another metaphoric image for a new means of transportation proposed for Athens. It should use the same corridor of the railway (inside the city) but in a suspended structure (mono-rail). The vehicle will be moved by electric power (hanging or "floating"), without creating any atmospheric or sound pollution.

The Snake Funicular gained this name because it produces a stitching effect by having frequent stops in both sides of the railway (main physical barrier in the city). This effect is illustrated on the draft presented in Figure 8. The draft also shows the longitudinal profile and a visual perspective of the stitching effect on the urban fabric, which alludes to the movement of a snake.

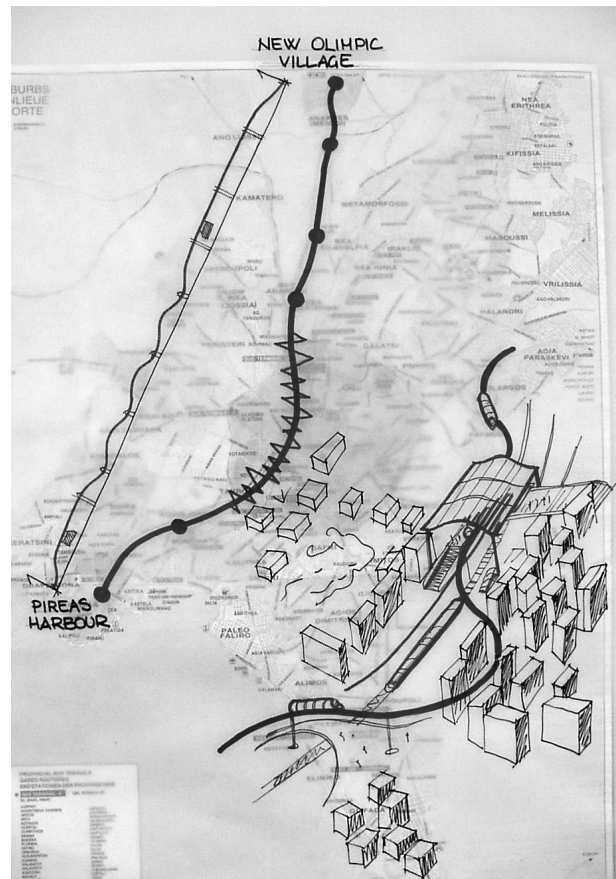


Figure 8 - Snake Funicular: stitching effect. Illustrations of the longitudinal profile and the stitching effect on the urban fabric

The project transforms the railway barrier effect from a problem, to an opportunity that introduces an additional attraction in the city, for both its residents and visitors. The suspended structure allows another visual panoramic view over the city center, giving a new look to its “pearls”. The stitching effect can also encourage new social and urban relationship and spatial perception.

Besides this stitching effect on the urban fabric, the Snake Funicular would also bring up a new connection between: the Olympic Village (being built in the North of Athens), the New Welcome Gateway (renovation project for the main train station) and the Pireas harbour (very important sea and water interchange). This link would provide a very useful connection between some symbolic and important traffic generators of the city.

This project also represents the introduction of modern and attractive transportation modes (funicular or modern tram) using the railway corridor. The development of some innovative, comfortable, efficient and affordable new means of transportation can raise the attractiveness of using public transport (marketing/image and perception).

5.3 Links and star links: stitching effect

As previously stated, links and star links are an important part of the planning concept proposed for the area. They are key elements on the effectiveness of the transportation system. In addition, they represent very important opportunities to renovate public spaces, raising the standard of quality of the design and the protection of pedestrians (against traffic). From the conceptual point of view, links, are connections built to release local circulation pressures and to encourage new neighborhood relationships. Star links, on the other hand, have a role at a larger territorial scale, in the sense that they can release neighborhood and

urban scale pressures and facilitate circulation. Star links also bring up opportunities to build new connections and to enhance the city perception for its users.

Figure 9 shows some examples of the application of these concepts to the study area. In addition, Figure 10 also illustrates the importance of links and star links in the context of the strategic concept proposed: pearl necklaces for Athens.

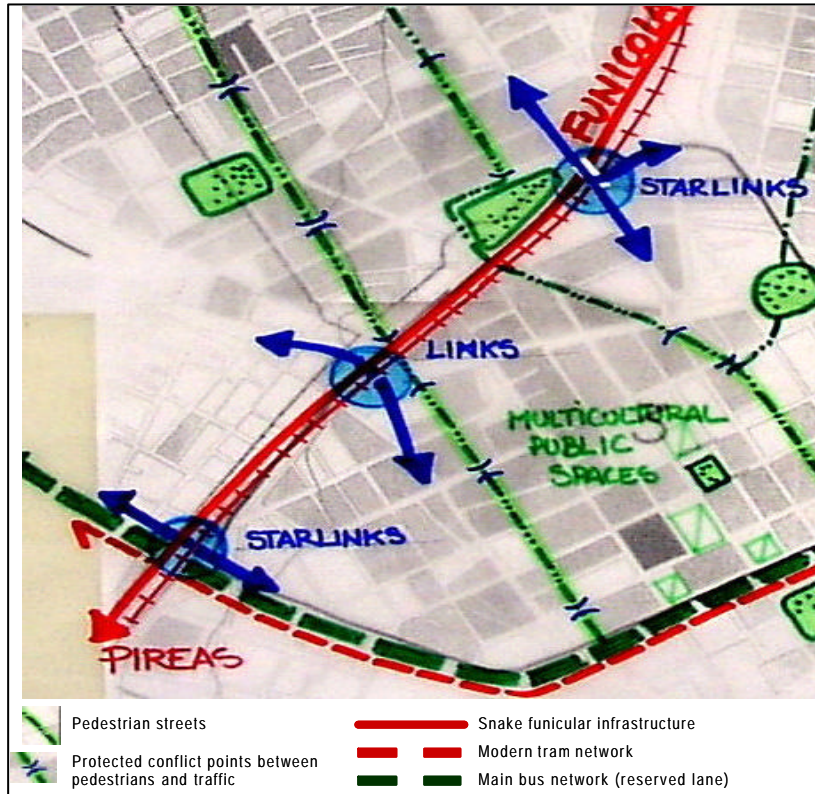


Figure 9 – Practical application of the concepts: Link and Starlink stitching effect

5.4 The Green Pearl Necklaces

Considering the strategic concept proposed for the study area, its practical application (physical actions and projects) would result in something like the Green Pearl Necklaces and The Snake Funicular Necklace, as shown in Figure 10.

The Green Necklaces are a network of pedestrian streets and modern trams, connecting some of the pearls of Athens. This project also reduces the dominance of cars at intersections and the progressive transformation of the main streets for the exclusive use of pedestrian and public transport. This would provide the chance for the return trams to Athens, in its modern version: more comfortable, less noisy and well integrated into the urban space.

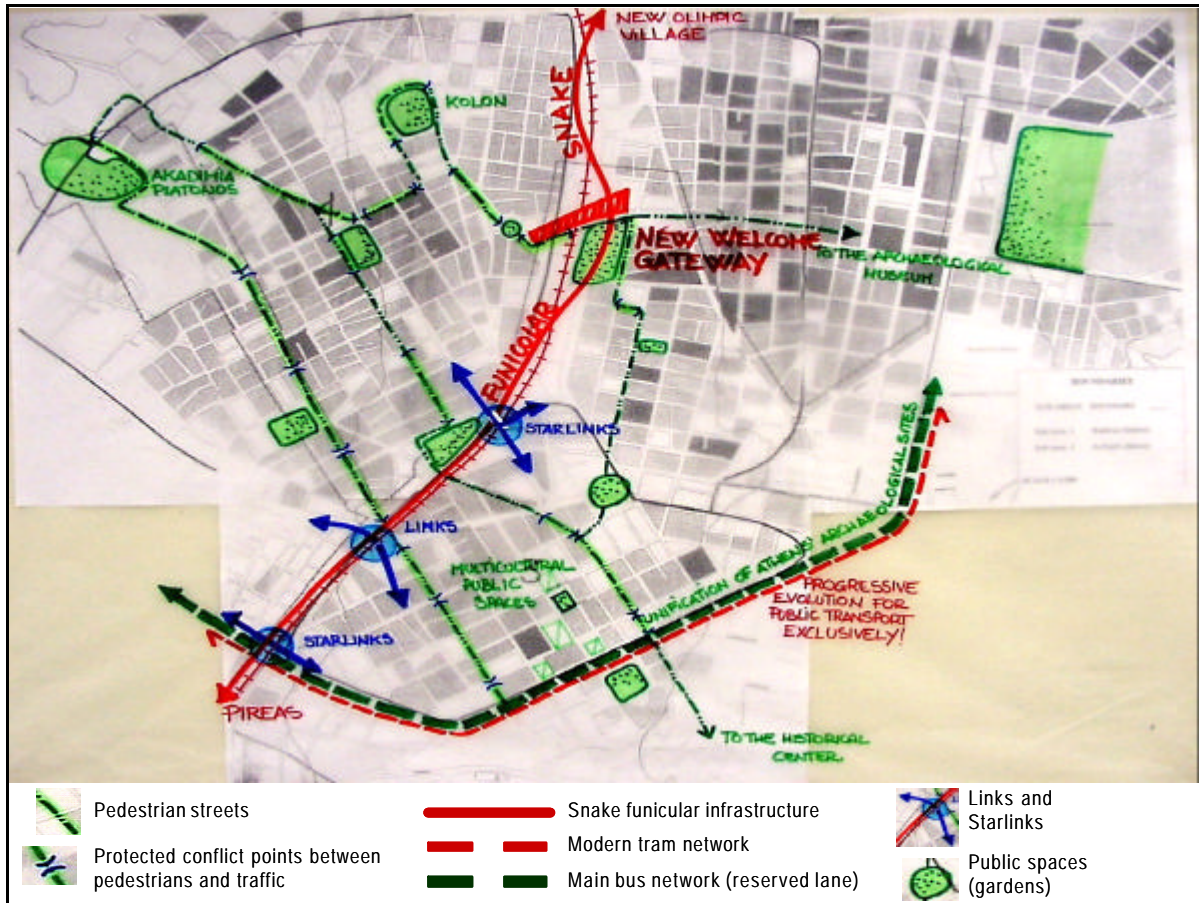


Figure 10 - The Green Pearl Necklaces concept

6 FINAL REMARKS, AS A CONCLUSION...

The final and general remarks call for the attention of local authorities, citizens and planners for the need of a systemic and creative approach on planning Athens' better future. We believe that this is of utmost priority to public transportation (modern, attractive, comfortable, effective and inexpensive) and to pedestrians.

Unfortunately, it seems that Greece is not taking full advantage of the opportunities raised by the next Olympic Games in Athens to introduce big changes at this level. With the wide range of projects it can undertake and realize, the public authorities are going after smaller and less controversial public transportation projects rather than pursuing projects that would challenge the current planning process yet would be more effective in creating a better circulation system for the city.

It was also clear for this group that a multi-scale and multi-nature response is required to address all the problems and potentialities mentioned on all the young planners' reports. Some of the problems are not at the urban and regional planning level, but should likewise be brought up to public awareness. Such as, land use based tax policies, public participation law, etc...

This report is just a snapshot of the "complexity" of Athens, based only on work developed within three days and on the personal and technical perception of the problems and potentialities of Athens as city users ("scientific tourists"). However, we believe that some of the proposals indicated could be of good use, at least as a starting point for discussion...

Special thanks to the workshop coordinators: Prof. Zeynep Enlil and Prof. Dimitris Karidis for their very interesting case study proposed to be worked on the young planners workshop and for all the background support before, during and after the workshop. Thank you.

**RE-ASSEMBLING THE CITY:
ESTABLISHING URBAN CONTINUITY IN ATHENS**

**THE CITY SENSE –
ASSESSMENT OF THE URBAN FABRIC QUALITY**

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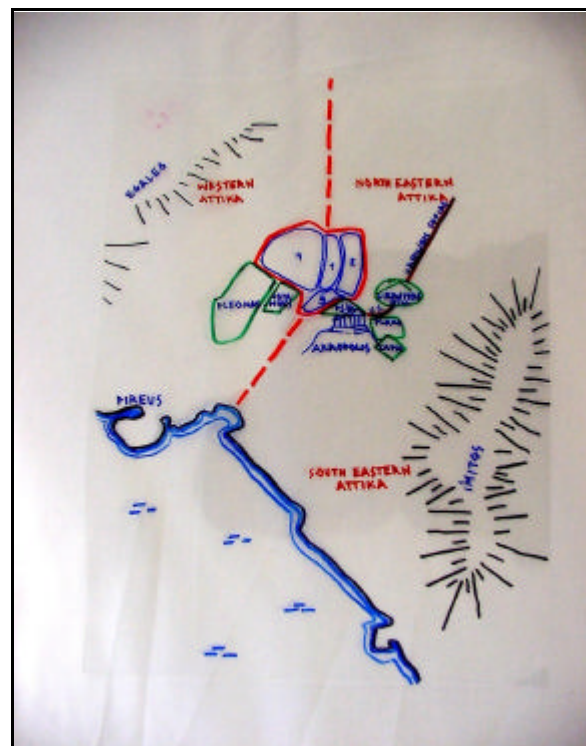
1. Introduction
2. Projects in the workshop area
3. SWOT analysis
4. Conclusion - Proposals

1. INTRODUCTION

The workshop area consists of four districts: the Railway Stations area, St Paul, Metaxourgion and Kolonos. It lies on a particularly strategic location within Athens, as it is close to the central business district (east/south) and the industrial zone (west) and it is crossed by main traffic routes and railway lines. Due to its unique location as well as other special characteristics, such as the variety of activities and land uses, the workshop area provides an extensive and interesting field of research.



The Region of Attica



The workshop area

The group's task was to highlight and evaluate the elements of the urban fabric both in the workshop area as a whole and in each of the four sub-areas. Thus, its scope was to "grasp" the sense of the city and the way urban dwellers perceive it. The approach adopted focused on the assessment of the characteristics of the urban tissue at two levels:

- *The level of a building or building block:* emphasis was placed on the buildings' morphological elements and their condition, the size of the building blocks and the land uses.
- *The level of a district:* the assessment focused on the features of each district, its strengths, weaknesses and trends of development.

2. PROJECTS IN THE WORKSHOP AREA

There are four (4) significant on-going and future ambitious projects in the workshop area that should be taken into consideration during the analysis and formulation of proposals for its development:

a) The renovation of the Railway Stations

The renovation of the Larissa and Peloponnese Railway Stations aims at converting one of them into a commercial centre and linking them by pedestrian overpasses. These overpasses will resolve the current accessibility problem, as the railway lines function as a physical barrier between eastern and western parts of the city.

b) The renewal of the Industrial Zone (Elaionas)

The Industrial Zone is a 10-km² section of land situated to the west of the workshop area and adjacent to the city centre, 1.5 km from Acropolis and the central Omonia Square. It constitutes one of the city's most profound problematic areas, exhibiting total land use anarchy, enterprise dysfunction, chaotic traffic conditions, acute environmental pollution, absence of infrastructure and facilities, etc.

The project's objectives are the removal of all polluting industries, the formulation of a sound and sustainable land use pattern, the creation of infrastructure facilities, the development of a unified extended green area and finally the adoption of a new transport plan which will minimise the travel time of heavy vehicle circulation within the area.

c) The regeneration of Metaxourgion District

The regeneration of Metaxourgion District has been considered as a continuation of a relevant project that had started from the historical centre of Athens (Plaka), the commercial triangle and the deteriorated western districts of Psiri and Gazi. The results of that project are already visible: open spaces have been created, pedestrian roads have been drawn, etc.

d) The unification of Athens' Archaeological Sites

The archaeological sites constitute without a doubt the principal element of the city's cultural heritage and the most vivid witness of its continuity through the ages. The project for their unification aims at the creation of an interconnected land network (by pedestrian zones) containing as major elements monuments and archaeological sites and also incorporating open spaces, green areas, service facilities and areas designated for cultural activities and recreation. The project's scope is also the organisation and upgrading of archaeological sites, the monuments' restoration and the development of transport and parking facilities.

3. SWOT ANALYSIS

In order to analyse the present situation in the four sub-areas and understand the trends of development, a SWOT analysis has been undertaken for each of the four districts. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats each district faces are presented below.

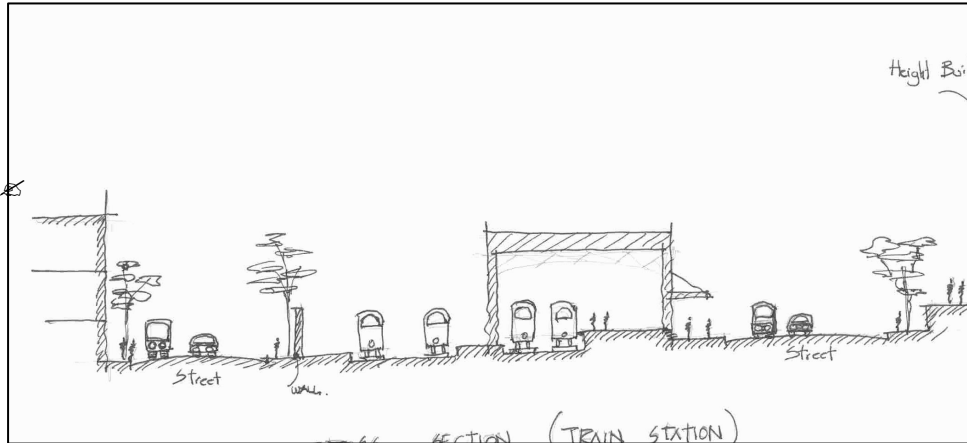
The Railway Stations

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focal point ○ Centre of local, regional, national, international communication ○ Interesting train station building ○ Interesting one- and two-storey buildings in the surrounding area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barrier (physical, social, psychological) between eastern & western parts of the city - the "WALL" ○ Interruption of circulation ○ Only 3 bridges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - narrow, high - inaccessibility for people with limited mobility - difference of height between both sides ○ Old infrastructure - unpopular in Attica Region ○ Buildings of different eras
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OPPORTUNITIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing study for the renovation of the stations ○ Concentration of transportation means – multi-level and multi-model node ○ Impact on the surrounding areas ○ Can become an important landmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can become an island ○ Its success is very dependant on the development of the surrounding areas ○ Dynamic barrier

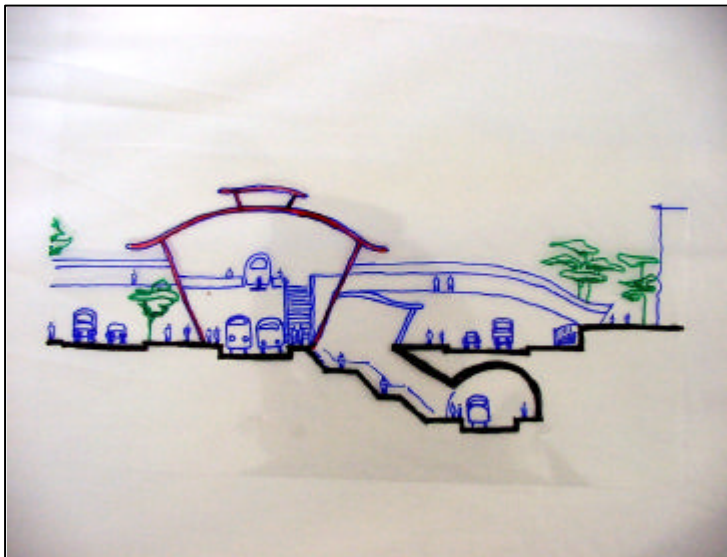
The Larissa and Peloponnese Railway Stations function as a focal point within the city. Although the train is rather unpopular as a public means of transport at the local level due to the obsolete infrastructure (i.e. old railway lines and coaches, infrequent service etc.), the train stations are still the centre of inter-regional, national and international communication. On the other hand they are perceived as a physical, social and psychological barrier between eastern and western parts of the city of Athens, interrupting the circulation of people and vehicles and cutting off Kolonos from St Paul's district. It should be mentioned that although there are three (3) bridges in Larissa Railway Station that allow pedestrians to cross safely the railway lines, these are quite narrow and high, partly due to the difference of height between the two sides of the station, and thus inaccessible for people with mobility problems. The area surrounding the railway stations is characterised by the existence of some interesting, in terms of architectural style, one- or two-storey buildings, one of which is the Larissa Railway Station building itself. Yet, the differences in the architectural elements, evident on the buildings' facades, indicate that they have been built in different eras, leading in a mixture of styles within the area. It should also be mentioned that many of them seem to be abandoned and derelict.

Overall, it seems that the railway stations can become an important landmark, a multi-level and multi-model node, which would concentrate a variety of transportation means (train, underground - which is already in place - bus, etc.). This project along with the study for the renovation of the stations that is currently being carried out could have an important impact on the neighbouring areas' character. At the same time emphasis should be placed on the integration of the railway stations area to its surroundings in order not to become a dynamic

barrier, an island of development within underdeveloped neighbourhoods. Thus, it is evident that the success of the aforementioned projects is also very much dependant on the development of the near-by districts.



The Larissa Railway Station as it is today



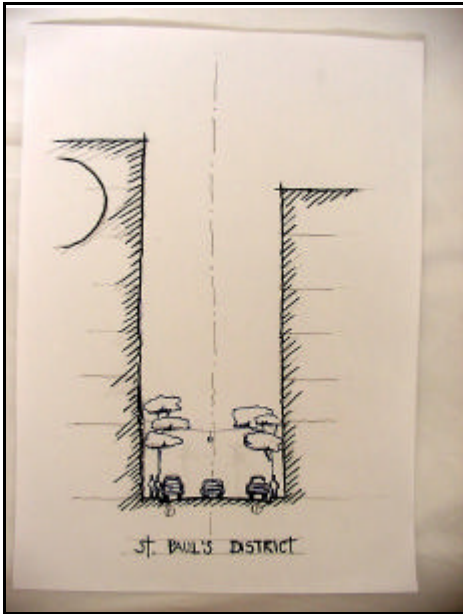
The way the group envisaged Larissa Railway Station, as a multi-level and multi-model node

St Paul's District

○ STRENGTHS	○ WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accessibility ○ Proximity to the railway stations ○ Main roads to the centre and the periphery (Liossion Str., Acharnon Str.) ○ Central square with pedestrian ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Ugliness" ○ Disparity of land uses ○ "Unhuman" scale - high buildings (boxes), narrow roads and pavements ○ High density - floor ratio ○ Lack of green areas ○ Lack of parking areas ○ No "neighbourhood" ○ Pavements not suitable for people with limited mobility (trees and pots)
○ OPPORTUNITIES	○ THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upgrading of the quality of the urban fabric ○ Commercial development due to the station's development ○ Can be part of an eastern-western pedestrian connection ○ North-south communication – commerce development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low potential of physical change

St Paul's district is adjacent to the railway stations and it is easily accessible as it is crossed by two main roads, Liossion Str. and Acharnon Str., that connect the centre of the city with the periphery. However, it is a rather "ugly" district, with quite high buildings and densities - obviously due to the high and full-exploited floor ratio - and narrow roads and pavements, which are scattered about with trees and pots further inhibiting pedestrians' movement. Apart from the central square, which is linked to the surrounding blocks with pedestrian roads, there is a considerable lack of green or open areas as well as parking lots. The area is also characterised by a disparity of land uses, as in most of the cases the ground floor is occupied by commercial or small-industrial uses, while the upper floors are dedicated to residence. Overall, a passer-by does not get the sense of "neighbourhood" in St Paul, whose rather "unhuman" scale seems to overwhelm urban dwellers.

Despite these problems and acknowledging the low potential of physical change, there are development possibilities in St Paul, especially with regard to commerce, due to the prospective development of the railway stations. Thus, the area can function as an intermediate point in a northern-southern axis of commercial communication. Furthermore, it seems that it could be part of an eastern-western pedestrian connection that has already been initiated with the project for the unification of archaeological sites and could be extended to include Metaxourgio, Kolonos and St Paul. In this framework the quality of the area's urban fabric might be upgraded in the long-term.



Sketch showing the scale of buildings in St Paul in comparison to man's height



Sketch showing the traffic load and the difficulty to cross the roads surrounding St Paul

Metaxourgion District

<p>○ STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently being redeveloped ○ Cultural / ethnic diversity ○ Proximity to the centre ○ "Human" scale ○ Interesting and "listed" buildings ○ Open spaces ○ Pedestrian roads fitting in the urban tissue ○ Cultural movement - "movida" ○ Colourfulness 	<p>○ WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Poor social infrastructure ○ Mix of architectural styles ○ Incompatible uses ○ Different heights ○ Low quality and abandoned buildings, ruins ○ "Exploitation" of public space ○ Achilleos Str. and the railway are barriers
<p>○ OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently being redeveloped (ongoing project) ○ "Movida" - cultural movement ○ Physical / economical potential 	<p>○ THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gentrification ○ Over-exploitation of the area

Metaxourgion is very close to the city centre and it is a district with a particular character, due both to its cultural and ethnic diversity, attributed to immigrants from China, Pakistan etc. who live and work in the area and to an emerging cultural movement (*movida*) that is being expressed through the establishment and renovation of buildings to serve as theatres and ateliers. The district, which is currently being redeveloped, has many interesting, colourful buildings, some of which are already "listed", and several open spaces linked with pedestrian roads that fit well in the urban tissue.

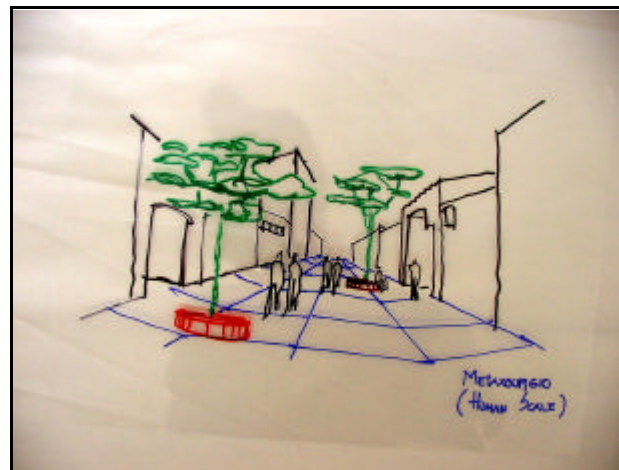
Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that despite its proximity to the centre, Metaxourgion seems to be a "pocket" within the city, as both Achilleos Str. and the railway lines segregate

it from the rest of the urban web. Despite the redevelopment efforts, a mix of architectural styles and heights is still present, while there are quite a few low-quality or derelict buildings. Another interesting characteristic, which can be seen as an aftermath of regeneration, is the growing exploitation of public space by small enterprises such as cafes and bars, which probably rent and occupy open space. Furthermore, Metaxourgion is characterised by a considerable lack of social infrastructure (schools, health centres etc.) and the existence of incompatible land uses, with manufacture, residence and recreation occupying adjoining premises or the same building.

In general, the redevelopment of Metaxourgion along with the trend of centralisation of cultural activities in the area underlines the potential of physical and economic development. At the same time the emergence of phenomena such as gentrification and over-exploitation of the area's physical resources should be taken into account during the regeneration process in order to be avoided or constrained.



Sketch showing the scale of buildings in Metaxourgion in comparison to man's height



Sketch of Metaxourgion

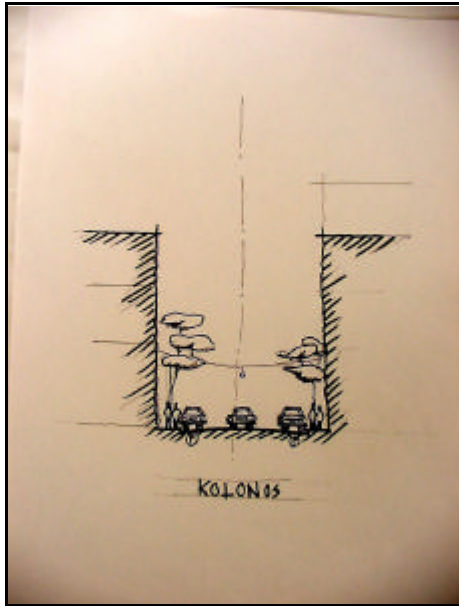
☞ Kolonos District

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ STRENGTHS ○ Cultural / ethnic diversity ○ Unification of archaeological sites ○ Green areas (hills) ○ Plato's Academy ○ Some interesting buildings (new and old) ○ Inner gardens ○ Pedestrian roads ○ Social infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WEAKNESSES ○ Poor neighbourhood ○ Close to an abandoned industrial zone - "Buffer" zone ○ Pedestrian roads do not fit well in the urban web ○ Plato's Academy seems rather derelict ○ Different heights ○ No particular character ○ Impeded circulation (buildings, kiosks, trees and pots invade the street, narrow pavements) ○ Abandoned plots
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OPPORTUNITIES ○ Gate to the western suburbs ○ Proximity to Elaionas - potential impacts from Elaionas regeneration project ○ Plato's Academy - potential pole of attraction and could be linked to Votanikos ○ High potential of physical change ○ "Demarginalisation" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ THREATS ○ Gentrification ○ "Monofunctional" area - development dependency

Kolonos, like St Paul, is adjacent to the railway stations. It is largely inhabited by people of different origins and cultures, such as Gypsies, Afghans and Pakistanis. Although it is a rather poor neighbourhood, it accommodates several social institutions (nurseries, primary schools etc.). Moreover, there are some interesting - from an architectural perspective - buildings and many dwellings with courtyards or inner gardens. There are also several recently pedestrianised roads, open spaces and parks, the most important one being Plato's Academy, whose significance has been accentuated due to its incorporation in the project for the unification of archaeological sites.

On the other hand, the fact that Kolonos is close to the industrial zone (Elaionas), makes it function as a "buffer" zone attached to the western part of the city. Hence, the district is full of empty or abandoned plots and buildings of different heights and styles. Several pedestrian roads do not fit well in the urban web, failing to link satisfactorily inner neighbourhoods or highlight urban elements while circulation is often inhibited due to trees and pots that invade the road or due to the narrow pavements. Finally, Plato's Academy seems rather derelict.

Nevertheless, Kolonos presents a high possibility of physical change and demarginalisation as it may function as a gate to the industrial zone and to the western suburbs. Its proximity to Elaionas could be beneficial in terms of the positive impacts the relevant regeneration project can have in the area, while Plato's Academy inclusion in the project for the unification of archaeological sites can render it a potential pole of attraction. Yet, the fact is that Kolonos' development is highly dependant on that of neighbouring areas and thus, it might have to respond to gentrification phenomena deriving from potential impacts of their redevelopment.



Sketch showing the scale of buildings in Kolonos in comparison to man's height

3. CONCLUSIONS – PROPOSALS

It has become evident that each of the four districts has its own particularities and problems but also certain possibilities and potentials for development. Taking into consideration that the major problem that should be overcome is urban discontinuity in the entire workshop area, the following proposals are being made:

- *The “opening” of Kolonos District to the industrial zone and to the western suburbs.*

As already mentioned, Kolonos district may function as a gate of the entire workshop area to the industrial zone and to the western suburbs. Thus, the future project for the redevelopment of the industrial zone could have a positive impact on the area. This is not the case for St Paul's district, which is a rather packed area and its upgrading depends greatly on the realisation of the railway stations project.

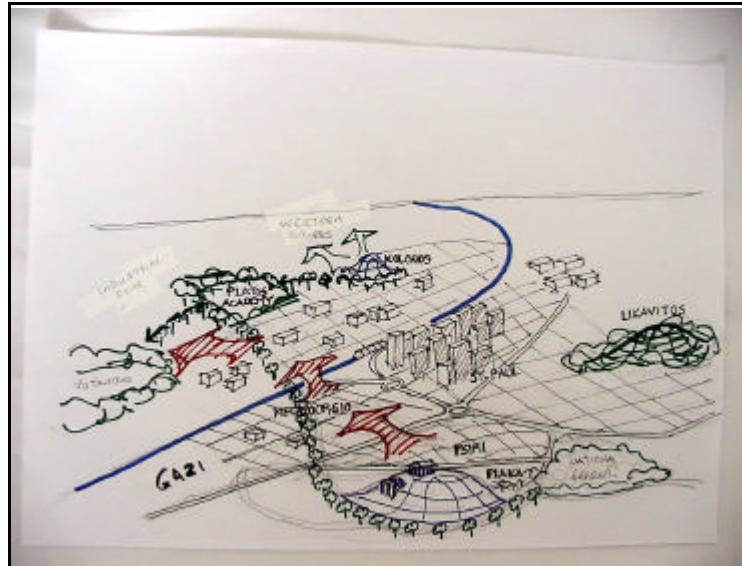
- *The transfer of the regeneration trend from Metaxourgion to Kolonos District.*

The trend of development that has already started from Athens' historical center and moves towards the western districts with the two ambitious projects for the regeneration of Metaxourgion and the unification of the archaeological sites, should definitely continue towards Kolonos (Plato's Academy), overcoming the boundaries of the railway lines and the main roads.

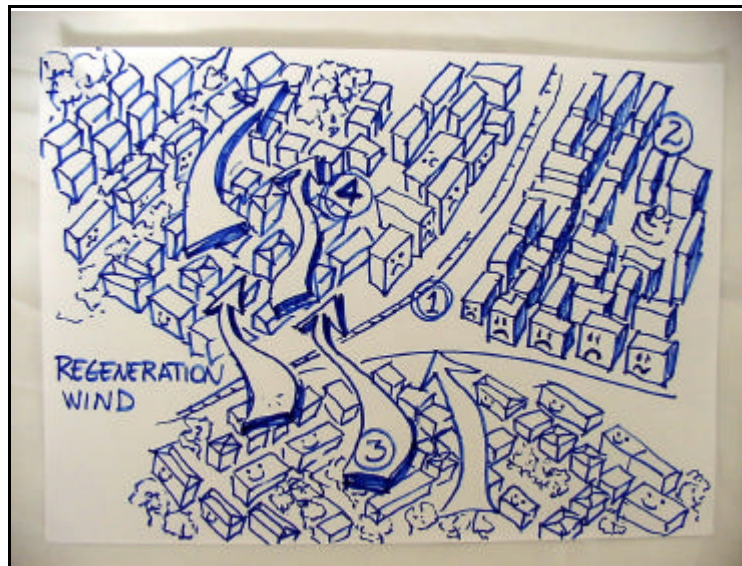
- *The unification of green areas from Kolonos District to Votanikos Garden.*

Finally, it is strongly believed that the regeneration trend should also follow a north to south direction and not only a west to east axis, which is currently the case. This could be realised through the unification of green areas, including the zone from Kolonos (Skouze Hill, Ippios Kolonos Hill & Plato's Academy) to Votanikos Garden.

Sketch of the group's proposals



Sketch showing the transfer of the regeneration trend from Metaxourgion to Kolonos



ANNEX

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The International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP) is a global association of professional planners. It was founded in 1965 with the object of bringing together recognized and highly qualified individual planners in an international network.

ISoCaRP is a Non-Governmental organisation officially recognised by the UN, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

Objectives

- improvement of planning practice through the creation of a platform for the exchange between planners from different countries;
- promotion of the planning profession in all its aspects, notably from the point of view of its identity, the services it can render and the conditions required for it to function;
- promotion of planning research;
- improvement (in theory and practice) of planning education and training;
- provision of information and advice on major planning issues.

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- annual congress dealing with a topical planning theme;
- seminars, conferences, exhibitions and study tours;
- publication of congress reports, seminar reports and case studies;
- workshops and competitions especially for young planners;
- publication of up to date comparative material on planning policies, methods, legislation, etc. on every country, whether represented in the Society or not;
- representation at major international events concerned with planning;
- evaluation of developments and trends in planning practice.

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The **General Assembly**, which consists of all members, directs the work of the Society, decides on the Constitution and controls the Administration.

The **Council** of ISoCaRP consists of the members of the National Delegations, the members of the Executive Committee and former Presidents.

The **Bureau** is composed of the heads of the National Delegations (or their deputies) together with the members of the Executive Committee.

The **Executive Committee** supervises the management of the Society. It is formed by the President, and for one year each the Past President and the President Elect, up to 9 Vice Presidents from different countries and the Secretary General.

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Planners wishing to join the Society should apply for membership to the National Delegation of their country - if there is such a delegation - or directly to the Secretariat, sending a short CV with a request for admission.

Conditions for admission and the qualifications required - experience, creativity, work accomplished, publications, professional conduct - are laid down in the Articles of Association.