

March 2011 completion date for €2 million Barrakka lift

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An artist's impression of the proposed €2 million lift.

The lift that connected Lascaris Wharf and Upper Barrakka in Valletta more than four decades ago will be rebuilt and completed before March 2011.

The project, which will cost about €2 million, was launched yesterday by Infrastructure Minister Austin Gatt. The construction of the lift will cost €1.5 million and the embellishment of the ditch and the construction of a commercial plaza will cost €500,000.

The Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation, which will handle the project, would file a development application next month and the tenders for works would be issued by the end of the year, Dr Gatt said.

The new lift will have three panoramic cabins and can take up to 1,000 people an hour. The structure will be made out of concrete with a metal framework.

The Barrakka vertical lift was built in 1905 and stopped functioning in 1970. It was dismantled by the government in 1983.

In 2006, then Roads Minister Jesmond Mugliett announced the government's €3.5 million vertical connection project for a city completely interlinked with funicular trains, lifts and escalators, and devoid of traffic turmoil by mid-2008. The planning authority had already drawn up a development brief and guidelines and approved an outside development permit. The tender was won by a consortium made up of the Gasan Group, Tumas Group and KDM Group.

In January 2008, Mr Mugliett presented a motion in Parliament, which would have transferred the sites to the Transport Authority that would then have allocated them to the Valletta Connections Consortium for the rebuilding of the Barrakka lift. However, the motion was not debated because it came too late in the legislature.

Dr Gatt explained that the government had talks with the consortium that agreed to drop the project because of the government's new plans to include the vertical lift within Renzo Piano's plans for Valletta. These include rebuilding the Royal Opera House site and overhauling City Gate.

Factbox: The lift's timeline

1905 - Vertical bridge was built by English company Macartney Elroy and started functioning in December.

1970 - The lift stopped running.

1974 - The lift was handed over to the Maltese government.

1983 - The lift was dismantled.

1998 - A planning application was submitted by the Valletta commercial community to rebuild the lift but the project fell through.

2003 - Viset applied for the construction of a cable car from the Valletta terminal to the Park and Ride site but the planning application was not approved.

2004 - The government issued a call for tenders for the construction of the vertical lift but attracted no bidders.

2006 - The government launched the Vertical Connections Project and issued another call for tenders for the vertical connection and there were two bidders.

2007 - Negotiations with the winning consortium started.

2008 - Then Transport Minister Jesmond Mugliett presented a parliamentary motion to transfer the land earmarked for the project. However, it was never debated.

2009 - The government announced the reconstruction of the vertical lift that will cost about €2 million.

Comments

H Dempster (55 minutes ago)

2011 year of completion and total cost Eu 2,000000 , so sayes Austin Gatt. I more see it as 2015 as the year of completion and final cost 4, 000000 euros, (as usual).
