

## Projects for 1,500 more parking spaces around Valletta

by Noel Grima

The dire need for more parking spaces around Valletta's entrance should be at least partly remedied if projects, which might add 1,500 parking spaces, become a reality.

The projects were announced by GRTU's newSTRING as having been identified by GRTU in talks it had with the government.

They are:

- 200 new parking slots in the vicinity of the Phoenicia Hotel
- 100 new parking places outside City Gate replacing the parking slots lost to the Piano projects
- 500 new covered parking spaces at the MCP Car Park Floriana. GRTU has already promised the developers its full support for this project
- 500 new park & ride parking slots at Floriana/Blata I-Bajda replacing the Tal-White Complex and buildings that will be removed
- 200 additional parking spaces under discussion on the bases of GRTU proposals in a number of vital locations servicing the city.

An application for the demolition of an existing structure, asphaltting and landscaping works at Hornworks Ditch as part of the Park & Ride scheme appeared yesterday in this paper's sister daily announcement of Mepa applications.

GRTU's NewSTRING stated: "A lot is being said about Valletta and the problems of parking and accessibility. Some believe that simply changing the people who speak on behalf of the business community is a good enough solution to solve real, practical problems. The truth is that if people do not have a basic understanding of how projects are developed and how they are implemented together with a practical knowledge of the dynamics of project implementation, it is almost impossible to be able to speak, let alone find solutions.

"The strength of GRTU is that we can think of a vision and then draw up

plans of action, sometimes even over a period of years, that leads to a dramatic change in circumstances.

“One clear case is Valletta. GRTU has long established representatives of the vast majority of businesses within our city and has for many years striven to cause government to implement a massive programme of development that would really restore the city of Valletta to the level of other renowned walled cities in Europe.

“GRTU is satisfied that never in the history of Valletta has so much refurbishment and upgrading work been planned and are being executed, with capital expenditures never ever imagined before. Faced with this tremendous government commitment, GRTU, which has worked so hard to make the authorities take Valletta seriously, cannot but applaud the many initiatives.

“We ask: is there anyone in his true senses in Malta who does not want government to upgrade the city? For this to be done refurbishment work has to be implemented, paving of streets has to be carried out, new buildings as projected by Piano have to be executed and general complementary embellishment programmes, as has been done in St George’s Square, are also essential. There is so much to be done. It can be done piecemeal over a period of 20 years or it can be done as quickly as possible so that the business community and the Maltese and tourists visiting can benefit sooner rather than later, but for all this to be done many people have to make sacrifices.”

GRTU is also presenting to government proposals received from members on how to improve the overall parking situation as access to Valletta remains vital for the city’s business viability.

GRTU is supporting the government to implement as smoothly as possible the new Bus Terminus and the whole Public Transport Reform. It is essential that the largest number of people possible can come to Valletta with the least efforts using public transport. Many still, however, prefer to use private cars. Individual cars need extensive parking places.

It is almost impossible to get things for free. GRTU continues to strive for the original Park & Ride parking slots to remain free of charge. There is a big issue regarding the many parking slots now free of charge on the periphery of Valletta; there is the problem of the other green boxes (residents only) appearing on the streets of Valletta. GRTU prefers to have these boxes in blue (up to 7pm available for all). There is the problem of the free parking of all the Monti vehicles, there is the problem of the increasing number of road with double yellow lines, NewSTRING says.

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