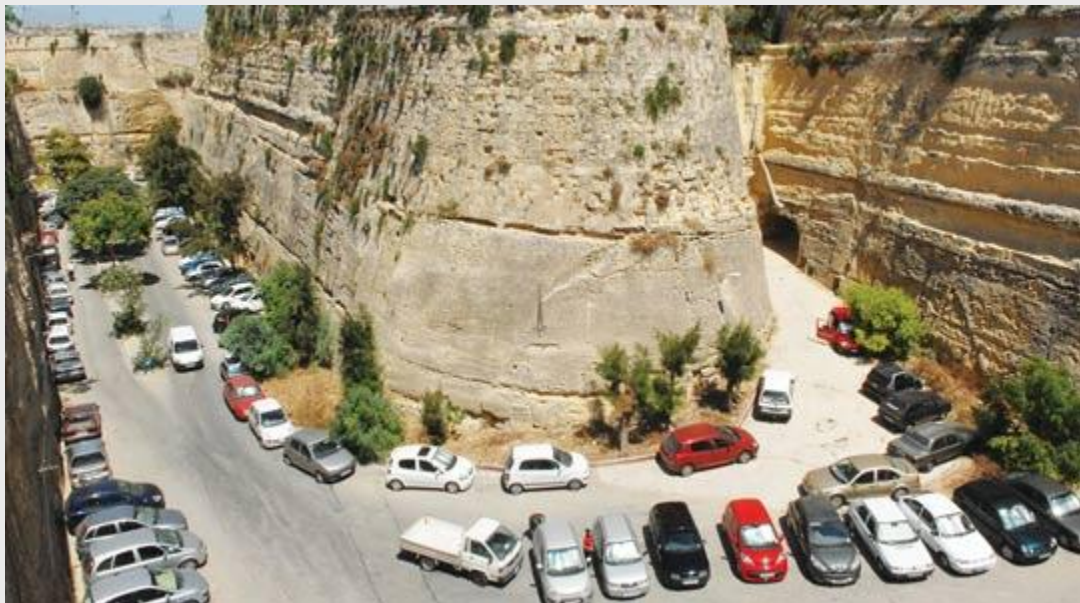


Valletta to lose 400 parking spots to Renzo Piano's plans

Park-and-ride to be expanded

Kurt Sansone



Cars will not clog St James Ditch once the Piano project for City Gate is complete. Photo: Jason Borg

City Gate's regeneration will see 400 parking spaces lost, the investments ministry said, and not 2,000 as claimed by the Chamber of Small and Medium Enterprises, GRTU.

The plans by world-renowned architect Renzo Piano will do away with the parking spaces in St James Ditch and Freedom Square, Valletta, an issue of concern for Valletta shop owners and office workers.

However, these will be replaced by an equivalent number of parking spaces at an enlarged park-and-ride facility in Blata I-Bajda, the ministry said.

A spokesman described the GRTU's claims on the number of parking spaces that will be lost as a "gross exaggeration".

"The whole of Valletta has around 3,000 parking spaces so suggesting 2,000 will be removed is equivalent to suggesting the City Gate project will be built over a third of Valletta," the spokesman said.

The ministry said it was good transport policy to create pedestrian areas in town centres while providing parking and efficient connections from the outskirts.

"This is mainstream town planning for historical town centres and consistent with the Local Plan for the area. The existing park-and-ride facility in Blata l-Bajda has proved popular and its service is deemed reliable by its users and there is no reason to believe this will not be the case once the service is extended," the ministry said.

The spokesman said there were no immediate plans for the construction of underground car parks in the environs of Valletta but she pointed out that the development plans for Grand Harbour and Marsamxett did propose underground parking in Beltissebħ, Floriana.

The Piano plans for Valletta's entrance would see St James Ditch transformed into a garden while the open space in Freedom Square would be replaced by a new parliament building.

Traffic would also be re-directed since the road that spans over City Gate will cease to exist. Access to the Marsamxett side of Valletta would have to be through the lower part.

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Comments

Antoine Vella (3 weeks, 2 days ago)

ms g hoare

"I DONT UNDERSTAND THIS MADNESS , WE NEED MORE PARKING NOT LOSING THEM .."

If you approach the whole project without the prejudice that it is madness, you'd have a better chance to understand. We don't need more parking, we need less cars.

Robert Scullion (3 weeks, 3 days ago)

Strange .. if this was already a garden and it was proposed that it should be turned into a car park everyone would be giving out. Now that the reverse is happening, and a little piece of the country becoming green again then everyone complains.

Dr. John Zammit (3 weeks, 3 days ago)

Not only the parking we are going to lose, but a place where we can shelter from the rain and sun, especially when crossing the main bridge of City Gate of Valletta to get the bus to our village back! I am sorry I prefer that city gate will remain as it is. Renzo Piano forgot that most of the Maltese use the buses to and from Valletta and so he removed the gate and the shelter next to the shops at City Gate and poor people who want to enter Valletta they are going to lose where they can shelter from the rain and the hot sun. Mr. Gonzi please note!!!

o.longo (3 weeks, 3 days ago)

can't we just give the ditch a face lift, with more organised parking (even against payment at the entrance) ? pls no more park and ride.... we have enough already. There's ample room for parking AND a garden.

John B.Vincenti (3 weeks, 3 days ago)

If the Govt really wants to spend "our" money wisely, they should invest in a decent Underground Metro System. Another investment could be a long term plan for underground Water Catchments.

We don't need a new parliament in one of the few open spaces in Valletta. Put a Garden with Shade producing trees and fix the Gate (entrance) to it's original design. the rest of the money can be spent more wisely as previously mentioned above.

ms g hoare (3 weeks, 3 days ago)

I DONT UNDERSTAND THIS MADNESS , WE NEED MORE PARKING NOT LOOSING THEM

THIS RENZO PIANO PLANS ARE MAKING ALOT OF MALTESE ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED WELL EVEN THO IM NOT FROM VALLETA AND DONT WORK THIER I SURE WOULDNT LIKE TO BE IN THIER SHOES ,WHAT I LIKE TO KNOW HOW LONG THIS IS GONNA TAKE HOW MANY TOURIST WE ARE GONNA LOSE FROM VALLETTA SHOP OWNERS DEPENDS ON TOURIST AND LENGHTEN PROJECTS CAN COST THE OWNERS MONEY AND JOBS . WORKERS HAVE TO GET TO THE PARKING EARLY TO GET TO WORK ON TIME ALL THIS STRESS IS SO UNFAIR .

John B.Vincenti (3 weeks, 3 days ago)

There seems to be a systematic and intentional conspiracy to reduce as much parking space as possible around the Maltese Islands.

One suspects, that this is a case of a long term plan to force us all into Parking lots where we will be eventually be leeched.(having no choice left where to park for free) another couple of Euros.

Parking Fees and Parking fines, are a good source of income for the Govt.

Legalised theft at it's best, I say

Galea. L (3 weeks, 3 days ago)

This is sheer madness apart from the aspect of no architect worth his salt would ever dream of having a garden in the ditch which would have prevented the city defenders from seeing their enemies. This is another of Piano's mad schemes which should not be allowed to go ahead.