

# **Partial Local Plan Reviews**

**Valletta**

**2015 Revisions to the  
Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002 (Valletta)**

**Strait Street and Old Civil Abattoir**

**Approved**

**May 2015**

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report describes the 2015 partial review of the Grand Harbour Local Plan (GHLP) for Strait Street and the Old Civil Abattoir (Biccerija) in Valletta approved in 2002 which is necessary to take into account Government's V.18 Valletta European Capital of Culture 2018 vision.

1.2 The objective of the review is:

to facilitate the rehabilitation and revitalization of this unique site and quarter of Valletta, in line with Government's Vision 2018 for Valletta, by enabling the establishment of a creativity and multi-cultural hub which enriches their cultural value both through new activities and physical interventions.

This objective was published on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2014 and representations were invited from the public until the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2014. One submission was received by the closing date of the public consultation exercise and another two submissions were received beyond the public consultation period. These submissions were taken into account in the drafting of the new policy.

1.3 The revisions were published for consultation on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2014 and a period of six weeks, up to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2015, was allowed for the submission of representations from the public. A public meeting was also held at St. Albert the Great College in Valletta on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2014 to provide further opportunity for discussion with stakeholders and any other interested third parties. Six submissions were received by the closing date of this second stage consultation and a description with MEPA responses is included as appendix B with this report. Points raised during the public meeting are also included in the appendix.

1.4 The proposed revisions will affect the following maps in the GHLP:

(i) Figure 7 – Valletta Inset Map

A new policy GV31, with an associated annex, has been added to guide the development of Triq id-Dejqa and the Biccerija. The draft new policy is included in the following paragraphs and is highlighted in bold text followed by the supporting justification. Appendix A contains the annex entitled "Design Guidelines for street furniture on Strait Street". A policy map (Map A) is also attached with this report, the contents of which shall replace those in the map quoted above. All other parts of the 2002 GHLP as further revised, (text and maps) are proposed to remain unchanged.

## **2.0 Proposed Revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002.**

2.1 A new policy GV31 is proposed to be included in the Local Plan as follows:

### **GV31 - Creativity and Cultural Hub in Triq id-Dejqa and il-Biċċerija**

Triq id-Dejqa and the site of the Old Civil Abattoir (il-Biċċerija), as shown on Map A, are designated as a Creativity and Cultural Hub to facilitate the rehabilitation and revitalisation of this unique site and quarter of Valletta into a vibrant 24-hour destination which enriches their cultural value both through new activities and physical interventions.

A diverse range of uses and activities connected to, or in support of, the promotion, teaching and practice of culture and local crafts shall be encouraged on the site of the Old Civil Abattoir and for the properties with frontages on Triq id-Dejqa, in line with the broad framework described below.

Intensive land uses and related street activities, especially those with late night operating times such as bars and music venues shall be directed towards the Core of the Hub between Triq Santa Lucia and Triq San Kristofru. Lower intensity uses such as teaching studios, independent retail and exhibition spaces or in connection with workshops, and tourism accommodation shall be guided to the upper floors (at second floor and above) of the Core and towards the Periphery of the Hub. Artists' studio flats and offices will also be favourably considered on the Periphery.

There may be scope to favourably consider the range of land uses allowed in the Core of the Hub also in the section of Triq id-Dejqa between Triq San Kristofru and Triq San Duminku in the circumstances where a single comprehensive proposal covers a significant proportion of the properties with a frontage on this section of Triq id-Dejqa and the applicant has full control over the same properties to enable straightforward implementation of the comprehensive scheme.

The expansion of established businesses, irrespective of their nature, within the Hub, even if not in general conformity with the above broad land use framework may be favourably considered provided the scale of the additions are not deemed to prejudice the overall objective of the designation of the Hub.

Interventions on the physical fabric and on the public realm shall seek to enhance the conservation value of the individual buildings and/or their context, sustain the objective of quality and strengthen a distinctive character between the Core and the Periphery of the Hub through proper (i) restoration techniques, (ii) design of architectural elements and shop-fronts and (iii) use of signage, lighting, street furniture and paving materials. Specific attention needs to be provided to the restoration and integration in the design schemes of particularly important signs or mural inscriptions/ painted adverts which evoke memory links with the history of the street. Additionally, care needs to be taken to ensure that new activities do not create unacceptable adverse impacts on the residential community of the Hub through excessive noise levels and noise mitigation measures may be required both at development and operation stages. This is of particular importance where there is a high concentration of residents in the Periphery of the Hub.

The Core area is amenable to full pedestrianisation with outdoor dining and exhibition facilities while the stepped sections may be suitable for the introduction of greenery. The free movement of pedestrians throughout the Hub and the flow of traffic through those sections where vehicular access is necessary should not be unduly hindered by street furniture.

This development framework for the Hub should not be considered as exclusive and each proposal shall be assessed taking into account this framework and any other particular

**circumstances of the proposal such as the character of the immediate surroundings, the status of the individual building and the history of land uses on the site. The heritage and other relevant policies in this Plan and any other good practice guidance for development, including design of street furniture, in UCAs in general, and in World Heritage Sites in particular, shall also be taken into account in the assessment of proposals within the Hub and on the site of the Old Civil Abattoir, where relevant.**

Triq id-Dejqa, as its name suggests, is one of the narrowest streets of Valletta barely reaching 4m in width for most of its 660m length and runs along the longer side of the grid of Valletta (north to south), parallel to Republic Street.

Labeled as “Malta’s most notorious street” and nicknamed “the Gut” by English sailors during the more recent times of its history, the street came alive at night due to the various bars and night clubs which crowded there until the late 1960s, early 1970s. Due to various socio-economic factors and historic events, the area fell in decline and most of the floor space within properties fronting on Triq id-Dejqa is now vacant. The remaining activities today are a number of shops, dining outlets and private sector offices, including a major shopping mall, and large public administrative offices. An embassy of an EU member state has also established on Triq id-Dejqa. A concentration of residential apartments is located within Vincenti Buildings which accommodates most of the 200-odd residents of the street.

In common with other Valletta streets, Triq id-Dejqa has a good number of finely-built and elegant buildings, previously the residences of Knights of the Order and of Maltese notables. A walk down Strait Street from the South Street side, the first house is an imposing building backed on to the church of St Francis of the Conventual Friars. Here lived Fra Gasparo Gabuccini, of the Italian Langue, captain of the galley 'San Nicola' in 1652, and later prior of Capua. A row of seven houses in Strait Street to the rear of the Auberge de Provence (now the Museum of Archaeology) were built by Stefano Ittar, the architect who was also responsible for the building of the Biblioteca in Republic Square. Five houses were the property of the Langue of Auvergne. Other properties belonged to the Bali of Gaspe, Fra Antonio Sans de Lallose, Bishop Tommaso Gargallo, Commendatore Fra Cristoforo Grainer, and Fra Nicol de Cintray, then of Virgilia Fioccarì.

The cultural heritage value of Triq id-Dejqa is also evidenced by the presence of eight Grade 1, one Grade 2 and one Grade 3 scheduled buildings or monuments, although, except for the townhouses on numbers 160-163, it is the back or side elevations which front onto this street. Grade 1 buildings include the Franciscan Priory, the Casino Maltese, La Cancelleria, the Hotel de Verdelin and the Monastery of St. Catherine. Vincenti Buildings is scheduled as a Grade 3 building and lies on the site of the Knights’ Bakery. Equally noteworthy is the location of six protected shop fronts or painted adverts, five of which are located on the stretch of Triq id-Dejqa between Archbishop Street and St. Christopher Street.

In recent years, the public sector has invested in the upgrading of the paving of the whole street and the establishment of a major public institution in one of the historic buildings on the street, even if the latter project was not without its controversies. There also appears to be some interest by the private sector and a major office scheme has been implemented at Palazzo Stiges, a number of dining outlets have been established and an application for a lodging house has also been approved.

However, this is still far from the level of investment required to achieve the ambitious goal set by V-18 of making the street a multi-cultural hub of artistic innovation. This policy is only a part of a much wider process of creative plan-making and project design and implementation. This process must however be completely geared up to address the problem that was identified by Harrison and Hubbard back in 1945 of how to modify a City built to serve the simple needs of the sixteenth century so that it may satisfactorily serve the complex needs of today.

The Old Abattoir is one of Valletta’s earliest buildings, but has undergone many changes since its first use as an abattoir in 1636. Grand Master Jean Lascaris Castellar (1636-1657) built eight

magazines, four on each side of the road leading to the Porta delli Giudei. By 1658 these magazines were passed to the Fondazione Lascaris. Each of these eight magazines had a window with an iron grille and four of the eight had a secondary door opening onto the street at the back. An order was issued stating that all butchering should be done near the old fountain of Valletta. This together with the present street name Triq il-Gendus, confirms the earlier existence of an abattoir. Less than ten years later, by 1667, the eight rooms were each divided into two to form a total of sixteen. By May of that year, each room started to be leased separately. At this time, the access from Old Mint Street was also closed off by a fountain that provided fresh water. Three houses were added, to the side of Auberge de Baviere, each of these being split into three with separate internal staircases.

During the early 18th century, the building was used as soldier's barracks and following that, light industrial uses were introduced, including cotton spinning and bakeries; some of the bakers' ovens still in evidence on site to this day. On the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1756, Lascaris Foundation exchanged property with the Cottoner Foundation. According to the Cabreo Cottoner, just two years after the establishment of Fondazione Cottoner, Grand Master Fra Nicolas Cottoner (1663-1680), amongst other projects built thirty-five houses on the site of the old slaughter house. This document proves that by 1676, the bucceria had already changed from its original function, and was being termed as 'old'. It also proves that the area adjacent to the bucceria had just been developed. The building was later turned into a naval bakery and this is evident from the soot on the surviving three capping stones of four chimneys.

The Old Abattoir is within an area experiencing a dichotomy between the slow rehabilitation of the housing stock within an environment of sundry commercial and light industrial units. It is this socio-economic mix that makes the building ideal for a 'hub' of activity bridging commercial, industrial and residential uses. An application for the rehabilitation of the building as a centre for voluntary organisations was submitted in 2013 but a decision was never taken.



## **3.0 Conclusion**

- 3.1 The MEPA Board discussed the revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002 during its meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 and decided to approve this document and forward it to the responsible Minister for his final endorsement.

## **Appendix A**

### **Design Guidelines for street furniture on Strait Street**

#### **0.0 Preamble**

0.1 These guidelines draw heavily from the document prepared by the Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure entitled “*Strada Stretta Tables and Chairs. Draft Policy on Street Furniture*” dated November 2014 and is applicable to Strait Street only. They are also intended to complement other design guides on street furniture in the forthcoming Development Control. Design Policy, Guidance and Standards 2014.

#### **1.0 Objectives**

1.1 The objectives of these design guidelines can be summarised as follows:

- Encourage high quality outdoor seating and standing areas for restaurants and cafes to enhance the safety, amenity and ambience of Strait Street;
- Ensure outdoor restaurants and cafes do not interfere with the safe and reasonable movement of pedestrians and vehicular traffic, and other street activities.

1.2 Well maintained outdoor tables and chairs make a valuable contribution to Strait Street’s public space. They are attractive, interactive, offer passive surveillance of the street and provide opportunities for people to participate in street life. However, the street is culturally significant and therefore only temporary furniture shall be permitted. Fixed and semi-fixed (placed in sockets embedded in the pavement) furniture shall not be permitted and must be removed outside trading hours.

#### **2.0 Circulation and Clearance Distances**

##### *Traffic Circulation*

2.1 The narrow configuration of Strait Street makes the relationship between vehicular traffic and outdoor furniture difficult. The continuous flow of vehicles poses a danger to seating and the pedestrian movement associated with it. This is mainly due to the fact that it is physically impossible to provide adequate clearances for pedestrian traffic in between the vehicular paths and the buildings. The placing of tables and chairs in the areas of Strait Street which are open to traffic shall not be permitted.

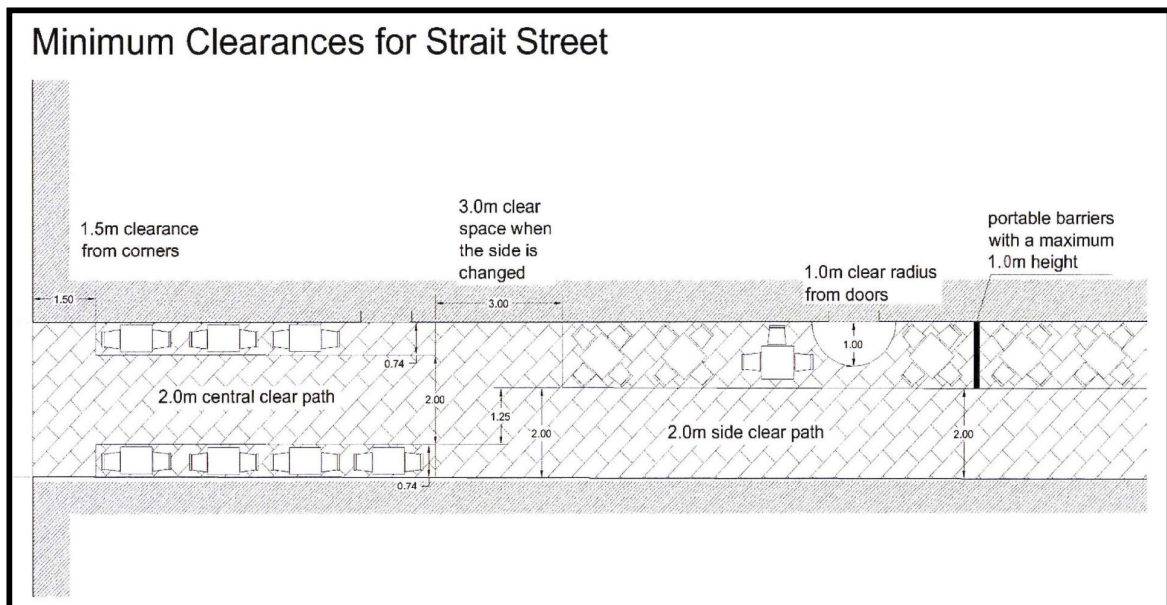
##### *Pedestrian Clearance*

2.2 Pedestrian clearances are required to ensure a clear path wide enough for wheelchairs and prams to pass each other. Outdoor tables and chairs in Strait Street shall be permitted to be placed directly against building facades due to the restrictions imposed by the small width of the lane. When the side of the street where tables and chairs will be placed is changed within the same block, no tables and chairs shall be permitted for a 3.0m section of the street to allow for easy manoeuvring of pedestrians in restricted areas. Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 1 and 2 indicate the minimum clearances required for the pedestrian passages.

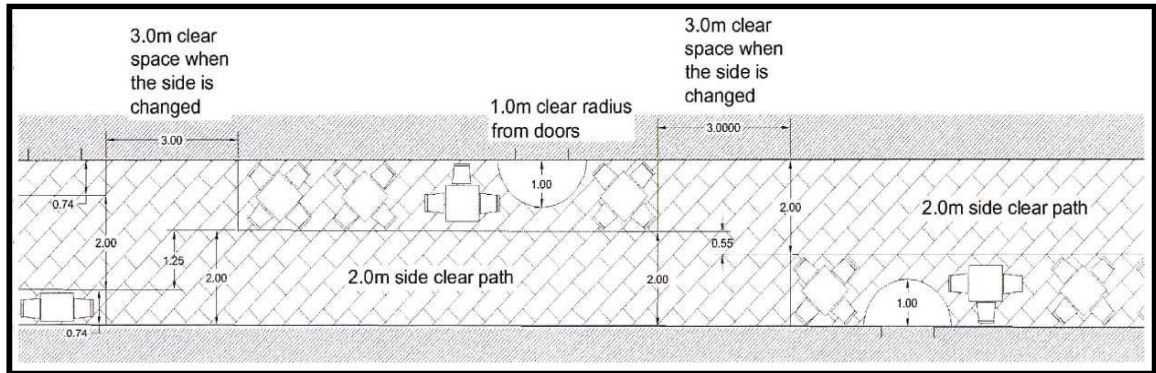
Table 1	Minimum Pedestrian Clearances in Strait Street			
	Placement	If tables and chairs are to be placed on both sides of the street	If tables and chairs are to be placed on only one side of the street	When the side of the street for placing tables and chairs is changed
	Minimum Clearance	2.0m central path (1.5m in very low pedestrian flow sections)	2.0m side path (1.5m in very low pedestrian flow sections)	The whole width of the street must be kept clear from tables and chairs for a minimum of 3.0m

Table 2	Minimum open footpath required	Part of Strait Street between
	High pedestrian flow requiring 2.0 metre minimum clearance	Triq I-Ordinanza and Triq Melita
	Vehicular traffic. No tables and chairs allowed	Triq Melita and Triq Santa Lucija
	High pedestrian flow requiring 2.0 metre minimum clearance	Triq Santa Lucija and Triq San Kristofru
	Low pedestrian flow requiring 1.5 metre minimum clearance	Triq San Kristofru and Triq San Nikola

Figure 1



**Figure 2**



*Staircases*

2.3 Strait Street is characterized by outdoor paved staircases on its sloping roads and hills. Placing chairs on outdoor staircases would pose a danger to users and would also prejudice the potential for greening these spaces and shall not be allowed. Only high standing tables which can be easily balanced on the steps can be utilized.

*Clearance distances from existing street infrastructure*

2.4 Clearances between the outdoor tables and chairs and existing street infrastructure ensures that street furniture can be used or serviced while outdoor tables and chairs are in use. Clearances from existing essential services must be maintained at all times in line with Table 3. A minimum clearance distance of 0.5m should also be allowed between adjoining settings of tables and chairs.

<b>Table 3</b>		<b>Minimum clearance from street objects and essential services</b>
	Essential service	Minimum Distance
	Exit doors	1.0m radius from centre
	Fire Hydrants	1.0m radius
	Litter bins	1.0m radius
	Public seats	1.0m from each side
	Public payphones	1.0m from each side
	Bicycle hoops	1.0m from each side
	Corners at intersections	1.5m from the corner
	Construction zones	3.0m
	Bollards	0.5m radius
	Poles	0.5m radius
	Other similar objects	0.5m radius

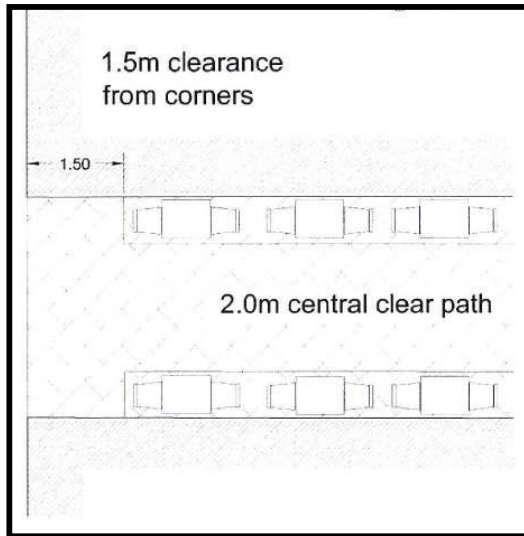
*Access to underground services*

2.5 Services such as fire hydrants, sewers, telecommunications and electricity conduits should not be obstructed by fixed elements such as awnings, umbrellas and screens. Removable tables and chairs may be placed on top of underground manholes or service boxes provided that these are structurally sound.

*Street Intersections – line of sight at corners*

2.6 Outdoor tables and chairs located next to intersections should be set back from the corners to allow a clear line of sight for pedestrians coming round the corner as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**



*Delineation markers*

- 2.7 Delineation markers may be installed in the street surface to define the permitted outdoor seating area.

*Construction zones*

- 2.8 Construction activities are often required to maintain building facades and underground services, and to repair street paving. A minimum setback as set out in table 3 from each side and the front of the scaffolding should be provided to protect patrons from possible nuisance and dangers.

**3.0 Design**

- 3.1 Sensitivity must be applied when selecting a design for outdoor furniture. The limited width of Strait Street and the World Heritage Status of Valletta call for designs which are sensitive towards urban character and enhance existing aesthetics, cultural significance and street quality. Culturally significant features and fixtures should not be removed, relocated or modified as a result of outdoor furniture.

*Materials*

- 3.2 Outdoor furniture should be unobtrusive and contemporary in style, appearance, materials, finishes and colours. Indoor style furniture is inappropriate for use in an external environment. The materials used should be practical, elegant, durable, un-obtrusive and complement the street while the design should be simple and makes best use of the public place. Fragile materials such as glass or natural wicker should not be used. All chairs and tables must have a minimum 30mm diameter rubber pad on chair and table legs to protect the stone paving surface.

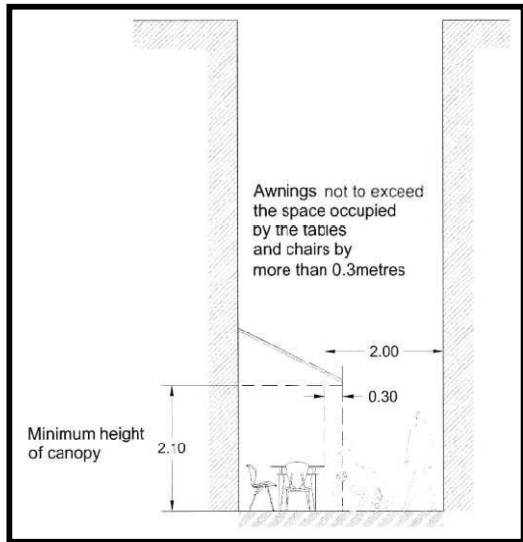
*Colours*

- 3.3 Outdoor furniture should use more traditional and simple colours such as black, grey, metallic silver, Brunswick Green or Hawthorn red.

### *Umbrellas and awnings*

- 3.4 Umbrellas and awnings may be appropriate where shelter is needed and should not obstruct views to neighbouring buildings and those on the opposite side of the street, should not physically damage the building, compromise its architectural features or obscure its facade. The awning shall have a light uniform colour. Multiple awnings within the same area shall have the same colour and design even if these belong to different establishments. Awnings must be fixed using stainless steel screws, bolts and nuts such that they do not corrode and cause damage to the facades. Freestanding awnings shall not be permitted. Figure 4 indicates the permitted dimensions for the fixing of awnings.

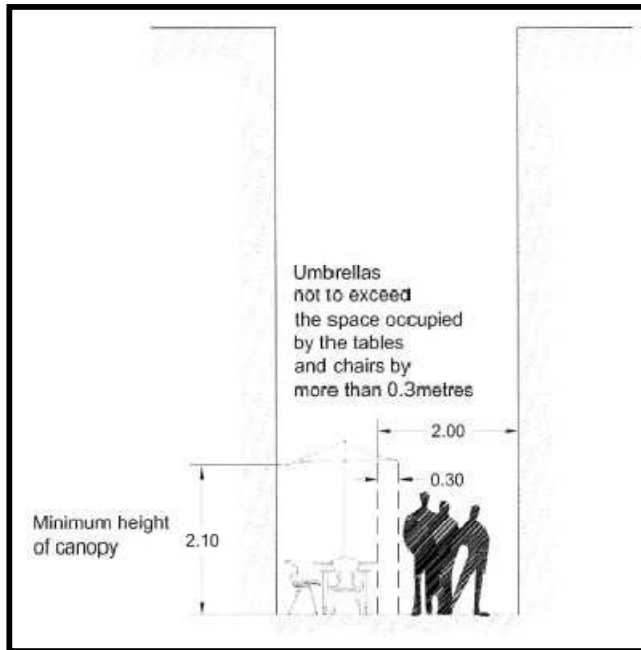
**Figure 4**



- 3.5 Umbrellas should not be used where any awning is attached, or can be attached, to the building. The use of umbrellas where an awning is present gives a cluttered appearance and detracts from the building façade and the appearance of the street. Fixed or semi-fixed umbrellas will not be allowed; umbrellas must be attached to a counter-weight at the footing. Footing sockets must be designed so as not to pose a hazard on the footpath after removal of the umbrella and without damaging the pavement surface. Any umbrella placed as a shading device must be specifically designed for streets and sturdy enough not to be effected by wind gusts. Figure 5 indicates the permitted dimensions for the fixing of umbrellas. Umbrellas must be 0.5m lower than the base of existing balconies at first or mezzanine levels.

### *Screens*

- 3.6 Restaurants and cafes are encouraged to operate without screens. In cases where glass screens are appropriate they should not exceed 1.0m in height and must be removed outside operating hours. Fully enclosed outdoor restaurant/café structures shall not be permitted as they diminish public space and reduce accessibility, visibility, amenity and safety to the public.



**Figure 5**

*Advertising*

- 3.7 Advertising shall achieve a high standard of graphic design and complement the restaurant or café and streetscape. The name or logo of the restaurant or café may be advertised on awnings, umbrellas and screens. The size of the name or logo should be discreet. Illumination contrast is recommended on the name of the establishment. Nonetheless advertising on outdoor restaurant and café furniture should not be illuminated by neon lights, unless such lights were part of the original design of the shop front. No advertising is permitted on tables and chairs, A-boards and planter boxes.

*Lighting*

- 3.8 Additional street lighting to that provided by the utility companies may be provided outside dining areas only in exceptional circumstances.

**4.0 Environmental Concerns**

- 4.1 Positive contributions to environmental sustainability can be made through more efficient use of resources including energy and materials. Proper management of outdoor seating areas for restaurants and cafes can play a positive role in reducing their impact on the environment through energy efficient lighting and outdoor heaters, noise reduction and waste management.

**Appendix B**

**Grand Harbour Local Plan 2002  
(Revisions 2015)**

**Public Submissions**



<b>Ref</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>	<b>MEPA Response</b>
GHRV/14/1	Perit Ian Zammit	1-12-14	In view of the physical restrictions in Strait Street as well as the fact that, in view of multi-ownership, tenancies, civil and inheritance issues etc, it is unlikely that much change in this very restricted area will occur in the remaining three years before V18 arrives. Hence, I am of the opinion that this policy should be extended to include all the side streets connecting Republic Street and Old Bakery Street. If similar development is allowed in the streets immediately adjoining Strait Str, it is much more likely that the buzz that this policy proposes to generate will actually materialize. Naturally, as some of these streets carry appreciable traffic, some restrictions will need to be applied but, already pedestrianized streets like South Str, Carts Lane and Old Theatre Street as well as easily pedestrianable Ordinance Street (which leads directly to the hot-spot that the Parliament Square and City Entrance are likely to become), will complement and give the necessary critical mass to the proposed activity zone.	The aim of this revision is to create a hub within Valletta with a distinctive character based on culture and creativity and inspired by its past history. Triq id-Dejqa should be a unique visitor attraction and widening the scope to such a larger area would most probably dilute its importance from the outset.
GHRV/14/2	Dr. John Seychell Navarro	14-12-14	I must congratulate MEPA for the new planning policies. Indeed a good step in the right direction.  My submission has to mention the need for urgent attention to the fountain next to the old	This submission has been noted and may be considered in more detail when the application for the rehabilitation of the civil abattoir is assessed.

			<p>abattoir.</p> <p>Back in time someone filled the baroque style basin with concrete, spoiling it and destroying the very nature of a fountain basin. Hence it is of utmost importance that this concrete is removed with extreme caution not to damage the mentioned basin.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is known that the fountain's central part that is the two intertwined dolphins that emitted water from their mouths is not there. I am not aware if these artifacts are stored, whether they were stolen or broken with time. However, to give the grandeur of this fountain back it is imperative that these are reconstructed.</p> <p>One must remember that this fountain is an integral part of the abattoir as the spring that existed was very important for the cleansing of the abattoir personnel, tools and meats. It is a solid testimony of the awareness that the knights had on food safety and disease prevention that can be associated and related to the effort in bring water from Rabat through the aqueduct, the legislation against pollution of springs and the state of the art hospital facilities of the time.</p>	
GHRV/14/3	James Wightman	20-12-14	Dear Sir or Madam;	Due to the very restricted width of the street,

	PRO Bag Malta		<p>(1) With regard to the pedestrianization of Straight Street and the Old Civil Abattior, we would strongly propose that this allows for the passage of cyclists at slow speed giving way to pedestrians, as a pedestrian priority area.</p> <p>Note if a cyclist is dismounted s/he is twice the width, and as a pedestrian should be afforded the same right of way so dismounting cyclists may be counterproductive.</p> <p>This will increase the opportunity for commercial trade by making it possible to arrive by bicycle. Such 'bike route' commercial areas have shown significant growth in other countries and cities (we suggest you research this).</p> <p>(2a) Failure to to do this we must insist that the roads around Straight street are either made bi-directional for bicycle traffic or;</p> <p>(2b) That suitable bicycle contraflows are made that allow the free and efficient movement of cyclists through the city.</p> <p>(3) That cycle wheel gutters are added to the stepped parts of Straight street, this is particularly important for pedelecs owners as these machines are heavier to carry up</p>	<p>the envisaged uses which, if successful, would attract an appreciable increase in pedestrian traffic, and potential intensification of street furniture, the objective of facilitating access and movement by cyclists may not be achievable in the creativity and culture hub.</p>
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			<p>steps.</p> <p>Note the plans to include more cycling racks will imply more bicycle traffic as will any future public bike share scheme.</p> <p>Documents entitled:</p> <p>Quantified benefits of leaving car at home; Creatig Growth, Cutting Carbon;</p> <p>Attached with submission.</p>	
GHRV/14/4	Dr Andrei Imbroli CEO Valletta Boutique Living Limited	22-01-15	<p>Valletta Boutique Living (VBL) is a major investor in Valletta real estate and its business strategy is to revitalize obsolete classic buildings into high-end, residential and commercial units, by preserving the original character of the buildings and restoring the facades and outlook of the houses into their original design and therefore contribute to the restoration and revitalization of the Valletta street views. By utilizing these buildings for tourism related purposes VBL's business activity helps attract more visitors to Valletta, increase the offering of modern residential flats and commercial units.</p> <p>We have reviewed the Public consultation document issued by MEPA dated November 2014 and entitled "2014 Revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002 (Valletta)</p>	The policy has been revised to make more specific references to this stretch of Triq id-Dejqa.

			<p>Strait Street and Old Civil Abattoir”.</p> <p>VBL Ltd, through the architectural firm Mannie Galea Design were the only entity to make a submission in time in respect to the above mentioned document and we gladly note in Appendix B that our submission has been considered favorably and in line with the proposed GV 31.</p> <p>Following the publication of the 2014 revisions, we have also attended a meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 with Mr. Joseph Scalpello and Mr. Joseph Magro Conti to discuss the document and give our feedback.</p> <p>VBL has made a further proposal for amendments to GV31 in view of several factors which place this part of Triq id-Dejqa in a unique state. These factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Over 90% of apertures in the section of Triq id-Dejqa from Triq San Kristofru to Triq San Kristofru to Triq Duminku are owned by VBL.</li> <li>- This unique ownership status will allow for a consolidated vision of the project and will smoothen the way for the rehabilitation and revitalization of this section of Triq id-Dejqa, which is the objective of this consultation and</li> </ul>	
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			<p>revision of policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This section of Triq id-Dejqa only has 2 residents which both live in VBL owned property.</li> <li>- This section of Triq id-Dejqa is considerably dilapidated and in need of immediate care. Previous MEPA documents cried for incentives for investment in this area.</li> <li>- This section of Triq id-Dejqa was previously an integral part of the nightlife area, with remnants of the past still clearly visible in outlets such as the Silver Horse, Blue Peter, Victoria Restaurant, 007 Jame Bond and several others featured in a number of publications about the street</li> </ul> <p>We are thus submitting a proposal for amendments to the proposed GV 31, which will target specifically this area of Triq id-Dejqa. We feel that this amendment is of crucial importance to the success of our project and even to the greater objective of rehabilitating and revitalizing Triq id-Dejqa, Moreover, this is crucial for the preservation and revitalization of some historic entertainment places in Valletta (e.g. the</p>	
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			<p>Silver Horuse bar). Even though MEPA commented favourably to our submission, it is our opinion that the current proposed GV31 leaves too many counter arguments open which could ultimately end up with a refusal of the entire project.</p> <p>We hop that our proposal will be treated favourably and that we will be able to present you with the positive results of our work and investments on Strait Street very soon.</p> <p><b>GV31 – Creativity and multi-Cultural Hub in Triq id-Dejqa and il-Biccerija</b></p> <p>Triq id-Dejqa and the site of the Old Civil Abattori (il-Biccerija), as shown on Map A, are designated as a Creativity and multi-Cultural Hub to facilitate the rehabilitation and revitalization of this unique site and quarter of Valletta into a vibrant 24-hour destination which enriches their cultural value both through new activities and physical interventions.</p> <p>A diverse range of uses and activities connected to, or in support of, the promotion, teaching and practice of culture and loal crafts shall be encouraged on the site of the Old Civil Abattoir and for the properties with frontages on Triq id-Dejqa, in line with the broad framework described below.</p>	
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			<p>Intensive land uses and related street activities, especially those with late night operating times such as bars and music venues shall be directed towards the Core of the Hub between Triq Santa Lucia and Triq San Kristofru. The Lower intensity uses such as teaching studios, independent retail and exhibition spaces or in connection with workshops, and tourism accommodation shall be guided to the upper floors ( at second floor and above) of the Core and towards the Periphery of the HUB. Artists' studio flats and offices will also be favourably considered on the Periphery. <u>The section of Triq id-Dejqa between Triq San Kristofry and Triq San Duminku is being considered separately as it has a unique ownership situation whereby over 90% of all apertures are owned by one entity. This will assist considerably in achieveing the objective set out, ie, that of rehabilitating and revitalizing Triq id-Dejqa. The Upper floors of this area will be dedicated to Hospitality, including the possibility of Hotels, Guest Houses, Hostels of sel catering accommodation. The lower levels, including Ground floor, Basement and Fist floor will be utilized for commercial activities such as Restaurants, Bars, Nightclubs and similar activities which are in line with the History of this part of the street.</u></p>	
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			<p>The expansion of established businesses, irrespective of their nature, within the Hub <u>and the section between Triq San Kristofru and Triq San Duminku</u>, even if not in general conformity with the above broad land use framework may be favourably considered provided the scale of the additions are not deemed to prejudice the overall objective of the designation of the Hub.</p> <p>Interventions on the physical fabric and on the public realm shall seek to enhance the conservation value of the individual building and/or their context, sustain the objective of quality and strengthen a distinctive character between the Core and the Periphery of the Hub through proper (i) restoration techniques, (ii) design of architectural elements and shop fronts and (iii) use of signage, lighting, street furniture and paving materials. Specific attention needs to be provided to the restoration and integration in the design schemes of particularly important signs or mural inscriptions/painted adverts which evoke memory links with the history of the street.</p> <p>The Core area <u>and the section between Triq San Kristofru and Triq San Duminku</u> is amenable to full pedestrianisation with outdoor dining and exhibition facilities while the stepped sections may be suitable for the</p>	
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			<p>introduction of greenery. The free movement of pedestrians throughout the Hub and the flow of traffic through those sections where vehicular access is necessary should not be unduly hindered by street furniture.</p> <p>This development framework for the Hub should not be considered as exclusive and each proposal shall be assessed taking into account this framework and any other particular circumstances of the proposal such as the character of the immediate surrounding, the statues of the individual building and the history of land uses on the site. The heritage and other relevant policies in this Plan and any other good practice guidance for development, including design of street furniture, in UCAs in general, and in World Sites in particular, shall also be taken into account in the assessment of proposal within the Hub and on the site of the Old Civil Abattoir, where relevant.</p>	
GHRV/14/5	<p>Prof Alexei Dingli Mayor Valletta Local Council</p> <p>Mr John Fenech Secretary Noise Abatement Society</p>	23-01-15	<p>Joint declaration by: Valletta Local Council &amp; Noise Abatement Society of Malta (NASoM)</p> <p>Activity in Strait Street</p> <p>Concept To facilitate the rehabilitation and revitalization of this unique site and quarter of</p>	<p>Policy has been revised to make direct reference to the need to take into account the residential community and strengthen further the concept of a “Core” and “Periphery”.</p> <p>However, it needs to be pointed out that all the uses proposed in this policy are already allowed by the current Local Plan for Valletta for the stretch of Triq id-Dejqa between</p>

			<p>Valletta, in line with Government's Vision 2018 for Valletta, by enabling the establishment of a creativity and multi-cultural hub which enriches their cultural value both through new activities and physical interventions. Intensive land uses and related street activities, especially those with late night operating times such as bars and music venues shall be directed towards the Core of the Hub between Triq Santa Lucia and Triq San Kristofru.</p> <p>Concerns: Unfortunately we have noticed that the situation is already deteriorating even though the new MEPA plans are not in force. Whilst going through the MEPA document, it also transpires that there is little or no consideration for the wellbeing of the residents. Furthermore, the plans would cause: Over-provision of pubs/clubs in this street; Excessive Patrons coming and going; Noise amplified by echoing in narrow street; Large groups congregating in street;</p> <p>The revival of historical places and other activities might be an incentive to regenerate the economical aspect in this locality and conserve the national heritage. Nevertheless, such a revival must also take into consideration the welfare of the residents in</p>	<p>Ordinance Street and Archbishop Street which is already zoned as a Town Centre and not a Residential Area. The designation of the stretch between Archbishop Street and St. Christopher Street as part of the Core was motivated by the history of this stretch and with the knowledge that the residential occupancy is very low.</p> <p>This policy is seeking to bring to the attention of investors the potential of Triq id-Dejqa to create a quarter which is more than just a "Town Centre" like any other part of the town centre of Valletta or any other urban settlement.</p> <p>The designation of the Periphery for low intensity uses may even be an improvement over current policy in terms of impacts on residential amenity.</p> <p>The imposition of operating times is not part of the remit of the Local Plan but the proper implementation of and monitoring of the effects of this policy is a key element for the achievement of the Plan's objectives.</p>
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			<p>this locality. Noise in a narrow street will be amplified by more than 10%, especially at night-time.</p> <p>It is a fact that bars &amp; clubs in residential areas often than not are a source of nuisance to the residents. The relevant causes of concern are: playing of amplified music and the behaviour of the patrons outside of the premises.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Although the permit for playing amplified music is conditional to adequate soundproofing of the premises, it is often the case that the soundproofing is of inferior standard.</li> <li>2. The patron's activity outside of the premises, unintentionally, creates a nuisance by loud conversation and other activity.</li> </ol> <p>Health &amp; Wellbeing: WHO defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, and recognizes the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as one of the fundamental rights of every human being.</p> <p>WHO guideline for community noise: For the primary prevention of subclinical adverse health effects related to night noise in the population, it is recommended that the</p>	
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			<p>population should not be exposed to night noise levels greater than 40 dB of L<sub>night</sub>, outside during the part of the night when most people are in bed. The lowest observed adverse effect level (LOAEL) of night noise, 40 dB L<sub>night</sub>, outside, can be considered a health-based limit value of the night noise guidelines (NNG) necessary to protect the public, including most of the vulnerable groups such as children, the chronically ill and the elderly, from the adverse health effects of night noise.</p> <p>An interim target (IT) of 55 dB L<sub>night</sub>, outside is recommended in the situations where the achievement of NNG is not feasible in the short run for various reasons. It should be emphasized that IT is not a health-based limit value by itself. Vulnerable groups cannot be protected at this level. Therefore, IT should be considered only as a feasibility-based intermediate target which can be temporarily considered by policy-makers for exceptional local situations.</p> <p><b>Monitoring &amp; control</b>  In our opinion physical monitor of the activity in this area after 11:00 pm, entail on the spot presence throughout the operating period. Although possible it is unlikely to happen. On the other hand electronic monitoring, either by sound data recording or CCTV entails</p>	
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			<p>effective time management for a just in time solution.</p> <p>Therefore, to satisfy the economic and social/ cultural aspect and protect the health &amp; wellbeing of the residents the Valletta Local Council &amp; NASoM suggest:</p> <p>Any Outside activity should be limited till 11:00 pm Activity and playing of music after 11:00 will be allowed only in the premise if it is soundproofed to the required standard, which would ensure that sound, will not be audible outside of the premises perimeter.</p> <p>Reference:</p> <p><a href="http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/noise/publications">http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/noise/publications</a></p>	
GHRV/14/6	Anthony Ellul obo Malta Tourism Authority	6-02-15	<p><b>Comments on the proposed revision to the Grand Harbour Local Plan – Strait Street and Old Civil Abattoir</b></p> <p>The tourism, recreational and entertainment potential of Strait Street is widely recognized and has not yet been sufficiently tapped. The actual title of the policy already indicates that the strategy is to offer a diverse product aimed at a market at the upper social</p>	<p>The reference to the “upper social echelon” in the context of this policy is not clear as the social status of owners and/or visitors is not strictly a planning consideration.</p> <p>There is no intention of creating just another</p>

		<p>echelon. Hence the policy has the intent of creating a quality experience and therefore should avoid creating an entertainment atmosphere similar to that found in the existing entertainment areas of Paceville and Bugibba/Qawra. The term 'vibrant 24-hour destination' is a contradiction in terms. Acknowledging that a level of activity in the capital city is most welcomed, nonetheless, the policy should not defeat the scope for which it has been formulated. Hence capacity, both in terms of the quality of establishments as well as the temporal factors, i.e operating hours, are crucial elements to ensure that the approved activities do not result in an overkill or degradation of the area in terms of the quality status it intends to achieve, keeping in mind the local residents as well as tourist who would seek the quality accommodation facilities which the policy itself aims to attract. The proposed use for the Civil Abattoir is agreed to. This will certainly provide a landmark for this area of Valletta and an attraction hub both for locals and tourists. There is the opportunity here to create a cultural and educational centre for youngsters and adults in the form of a library, internet centre, performance space, even a quality catering outlet as well as craft outlets. The example of the Mediateca del Mediterraneo in Cagliari where an old indoor market was transformed to a successful cultural and</p>	<p>entertainment area as evidenced by the objectives of quality and distinctiveness and the emphasis on culture and creativity.</p> <p>There are no reasons why quality and distinctiveness cannot be achieved within a 24-hour destination. The objective is to create a quarter within Valletta with an appropriate mix of uses where there is always something happening.</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging that carrying capacity is critical, it is not the intention to impose thresholds for scale or number of acceptable uses at this stage. The type of development which is attracted to the locality should be monitored and the policy reviewed accordingly.</p> <p>Support from the MTA for the proposals on the Civil Abattoir site are noted.</p>
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			<p>educational, as well as entertainment, venue could serve to generate positive ideas for the use of this premises.</p> <p>The policy is allowing intensive uses along the Santa Lucia to Saint Christopher stretch of Strait street. The proliferation of bars and music venues along this stretch may be counter to the development of tourism accommodation of a high quality since allowing inappropriate venues may result in a market/product mismatch and the quality tourism accommodation may not attract the desired market. The issue of capacity is crucial and therefore the cumulative impacts of each additional entertainment venue needs to be monitored to ensure that tolerance limits and the experience sought for this area are not compromised. The residential element is equally important and is to be taken into account since a level and type of development that goes against the interests of the local community is counter to the concept of sustainable development. One has to keep in mind that the impacts of patrons to such establishments is not limited to the establishments themselves but affects the immediate vicinity too.</p> <p>The expansion of existing businesses which use is not contemplated in the policy should only be allowed if these will not conflict or</p>	<p>The aim behind the distinction between the core and the periphery was specifically to identify the area where the more intensive uses can agglomerate while the rest of the street can accommodate less intensive uses. As indicated by the MTA this may have an impact on the type of tourism accommodation which may seek to locate within the Core but this certainly does not conflict with the overall objective of quality for the whole Hub as the Periphery, which is almost 2/3 of the total frontages, is planned to be a less intensive area. This argument also applies for the residential community. The designation of the Core, besides the consideration of the historic aspect, also took into account the residential aspect to ensure that most residents are not affected. However, it needs to be pointed out that all the uses proposed in this policy are already allowed by the current Local Plan for Valletta for the stretch of Triq id-Dejqa between Ordinance Street and Archbishop Street which is already zoned as a Town Centre and not a Residential Area.</p> <p>The policy is not intended to introduce a strict zoning regime but to flexibly guide development towards the planned aims. The</p>
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			<p>result in negative impacts to the proposed uses in the policy. The wording 'irrespective of their nature', may open up the potential expansion of uses which will defeat the vision this policy is aiming to attain, resulting in a chaotic situation where different uses which are incompatible with each other result in conflict.</p> <p>With regard to the aspects relating to the placing of tables and chairs the site may require specific provisions due to the narrowness of the street, however, provisions being proposed in the document Guidelines for the placing of outdoor furniture on public land should be noted.</p> <p>The placing of tables and chairs along this street is a crucial issue since the narrowness of the street poses a constraint to such facilities. Ease of pedestrian movement must be a priority and areas approved for tables and chairs are to be clearly delineated by markers. Therefore these ARE to be installed and not 'may be'. A block plan is to be approved with the permit which shows the exact perimeter of the encroachment respecting the parameters for pedestrian movement and other issues as stated in the Appendix A to the policy. It is important that tables and chairs and any umbrellas are stored inside the premises when the</p>	<p>policy also specifies proposals would still need to be compatible with their surroundings even if not in line with the land use framework.</p> <p>The Guidelines were prepared specifically for Triq id-Dejqa and therefore are contextual.</p> <p>This is a requirement of the policy. The imposition of markers is not desirable as they may be cases where these could damage the street surface. The approval of a block plan is a matter of detail.</p> <p>Storage of furniture when not in use is an operational matter.</p>
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			<p>establishment is not operating.</p> <p>Due to the narrow width of the street tables and chairs placed on both sides of the street should not to be encouraged. Sufficient width to ease pedestrian flow is to be allowed, particularly since the aim is to attract more people to this area. One also has to consider providing adequate facilities for disabled clientele which will take up more than normal seating space. In addition to the seating facilities, one must keep in mind the space taken up by clients waiting to be seated as well as staff serving clients. Such instances may impede pedestrian flow unless adequate width is allowed.</p> <p>Between Saint Christopher street and Archbishop street it is stated that pedestrian flows along this stretch is low and only 1.5m clearance for pedestrians is allowed. With the increased popularity of this street in future, pedestrian flow will increase so an adequate level of clearance is to be allowed along the whole stretch of Strait street, including this section.</p> <p>From the policy it is not clear how this will relate to other policies in the Local Plan that may result in a conflicting situation. For example the stretch between Archbishop street and Saint Christopher street is</p>	<p>The design guidance for street furniture was prepared in consultation and these issues were taken into account. Tables and chairs on both sides of the street can be recommended provided there is a 2m clear central path.</p> <p>The policy indicates the stretch between St. Christopher Street and St. Nicholas Street as having low pedestrian flows.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.3 indicates that this policy and map will replace the provisions in the current local plan.</p>
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			<p>designated as a Housing Improvement Action Area (GV 03) in the approved Grand Harbour Local Plan, whereas with this policy uses which are generally not permitted in residential areas will be allowed. This will create conflict as to which policy applies, unless the boundary for the Housing Improvement Action Area is not amended. The interests of residents along this stretch are to be safeguarded.</p> <p>With regard to the material used for tables and chairs it is to be stated that plastic is not allowed and materials like wood and iron are to be used. It would be preferred that no type of advertising is allowed on umbrellas and awnings. An appropriate sign along the entrance to the outlet should only be permitted. Cluttering the area with signage and advertising will reduce the quality image of this area. Permitted awnings are to be limited to the length of the establishment's façade and not overspill beyond and there should be no type of support from their edge to the street level to strengthen them during high winds. Structures which cover the entire width of the street are not to be permitted. Any umbrellas should not extend beyond the designated outdoor seating area and no enclosed structures are to be permitted along the street.</p>	<p>Rather than specifying the type of material, the performance of the material is more important.</p> <p>The document provides adequate design guidelines to enable the introduction of appropriately designed awnings and umbrellas. Issues mentioned are integrated in the document.</p>
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



			<p>All tables and chairs and any other related items are to be placed inside when premises are not operating. In addition menus and other boards (e.g. sandwich boards) should not be placed within the pedestrian passage way and ideally are to be placed on the establishment's façade without, however, creating a negative visual impact.</p> <p>Playing of music needs to be controlled. Although this is an operational issue, the period during which music is played as well as the type of music played could impact on the quality experience envisaged for this street and as expected by patrons and clients of the various establishments in the area. Some form of control is necessary. Operators are to be encouraged to self regulation in this regard since at the end it would benefit all establishments if a quality environment and experience is maintained.</p> <p>As a final comment it is the implementation of the policy and the quality of the decisions taken that actually lead to a quality product or otherwise. Therefore, the policy needs to be clearer to ensure that the decisions taken in its implementation lead to achieving the quality product expected and ensuring that other uses both existing and proposed in the area are not adversely affected.</p>	<p>This is the same issue as storage of street furniture.</p> <p>Agreed.</p>
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GHRV/14/7	Various	Public meeting held on the 12-12-2014	<p>Impacts on the existing residents by the new uses need to be addressed.</p> <p>The use of the term cultural hub is preferred to multicultural hub.</p> <p>The details of the project for the Old Abattoir site need to be discussed further.</p> <p>The meaning of local crafts needs to be explained.</p> <p>Clarification was requested on the development of tourism accommodation in strait street.</p> <p>Clarification was requested on the change of use from residential to commercial.</p>	<p>Policy has been revised in include reference to impacts on residents.</p> <p>Policy has been revised to refer to a cultural hub.</p> <p>Details were provided by the promoters during the public meeting.</p> <p>Meaning explained as falling within a specific use class which incorporates a range of light industrial activities.</p> <p>Explanation was provided during the public meeting on the scale and type of tourism accommodation allowed in strait street.</p> <p>Explanation was provided during the public meeting that change of use would be acceptable.</p>



L-Awtorita' ta' Malta Dwar l-Ambjent u l-Ippjanar  
 Malta Environment & Planning Authority

**Key**

-  GV 31
-  Core of the Cultural Hub
-  Periphery of the Cultural Hub
-  Old Civil Abattoir

**2015 Revision of the  
 Grand Harbour Local Plan  
 (Valletta)**

Date : **May 2015**  
 INDICATIVE ONLY  
 Not to be used for measurement or direct interpretation.  
 Maps to be used in conjunction with Policy Document.  
 For the detailed interpretation of alignments kindly contact  
 the Planning Directorate's Planning Control Unit.

Map:

**A**

# **2010 Revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002 (Valletta).**

**Approved Document**

**March 2010**

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 Government launched the development project for the redesign of the City Gate in Valletta, a new Parliament Building on Freedom Square with a landscaped plaza and a new open air theatre on the site of the old Opera House. The location of the Parliament building and some of the transportation aspects of this project raise issues which had not been envisaged when the Grand Harbour Local Plan was approved in April 2002 and thus necessitate a review of the Plan.
- 1.2 The objectives of this review are to take into account recent Government initiatives for the urban regeneration of Valletta specifically the new transport strategy and the development of City Gate, Freedom Square and the Opera House site. These objectives were published on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2009 and representations were invited from the public until the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009. One public submission was received but was not relevant to this Review as it requested a revision of the Kalkara Building Height Limitation.
- 1.3 The proposed revisions will affect the following policies in the 2002 Local Plan:
- (i) GV04 – Road Hierarchy
  - (ii) GV12 – Car Parking
  - (iii) GV27 – City Gate and Freedom Square
  - (iv) GV28 – Opera House Site
- and the following maps:
- (i) Figure 8 – Valletta Transport Strategy; and
  - (ii) Figure 9 – Valletta Parking Strategy.
- 1.4 The draft deleted and revised policies are included in the following paragraphs and are highlighted in bold text followed by the supporting justification. The revised maps are also attached with this report. All other parts of the 2002 Local Plan, as reviewed in 2007, (text and maps) are proposed to remain unchanged.
- 1.5 The revisions were published for public consultation on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2009 and a period of six weeks, up to the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, was allowed for the submission of representations. Two public submissions were received by the closing date of the consultation and a summary with MEPA response is included as an appendix with this report.

## **2.0 Proposed Revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan of 2002.**

- 2.1 Policy GV04 is to be deleted as the designation of a road hierarchy and particularly traffic circulation routes are not a MEPA remit. Figure 8 – Valletta Transport Strategy has been amended to reflect this amendment and is attached with this report. However, changes to paragraph 1.33 of the Plan are being proposed to indicate that transportation issues such as traffic circulation and parking will still be taken into account in the assessment of development applications supported by the necessary Traffic Impact Assessments and endorsement by the relevant transport agencies.

### **Paragraph 1.33**

The policies for Valletta therefore are geared in this direction – promoting public transport, reserving space for residents’ parking, restraining car space for non-residents, and giving greater priority to the pedestrian where this is needed. Although not directly the remit of MEPA, transportation issues still need to be taken into account in the processing of development applications. MEPA will endeavor that development proposals do not compromise both national and localized transportation strategies and objectives and are duly supported by all the relevant traffic impact and transport assessments endorsed by the relevant agencies.

- 2.2 Policy GV12 is to be amended to remove reference to the underground car parks at Palace Square, Freedom Square, and at Fort St. Elmo. The car park below Palace Square will not be built due to the discovery of important archaeological remains. It is deemed more suitable at this stage to introduce flexibility in the requirement to provide car parking below Freedom Square and Fort St. Elmo and also in Valletta as a whole to allow the detailed proposals in the Government reform of public transport announced in 2008 to develop over time. Figure 9 – Valletta Parking Strategy has been amended to reflect this revision and is attached with this report. The management of existing parking spaces is not MEPA remit and hence the references in the policy to such management are being deleted.

### ***GV12***

### ***Car Parking***

**No new public car parking provision will normally be allowed in Valletta with the exception of operational parking.**

**In conjunction with the operation of the Park-and-Ride Scheme from Crown Works Area, a programme for an increase in pedestrianised zones, as well for the widening of existing pavements in other areas will be commenced.**

**The car parks indicated on Figure 9 shall be safeguarded from development which reduces the current amount of car parking spaces on each site.**

The strategic transport planning policy relating to the Valletta/Floriana peninsula, as set out in the Structure Plan (policies TRA4; RDS7; TEM10; PTR4; PTR10) can be interpreted as generally

restrictive towards the encouragement of additional parking for private cars. This is linked to the need to provide efficient, pollution free alternative public transport, such as a circular electric vehicle transport system

A number of car parks already exist, including the new M.C.P. multi-storey facility. It is not envisaged therefore that substantial further provision will be necessary.

- 2.3 Policy GV27 is to be amended to remove reference to the development of the bus terminus as this project should not be conditional on the development of City Gate and Freedom Square. It is deemed more suitable at this stage not to have (i) the car park beneath Freedom Square and (ii) the consideration of a light rapid transit system as a policy requirement to introduce flexibility in the provision of car parking and public transport in Valletta and to allow the detailed proposals in the Government reform of public transport announced in 2008 to develop over time. The range of land uses is being widened to include institutional buildings and offices permitted as supporting uses. The policy constraints related to design elements such as the requirement to provide informal seating areas, removal of the existing arcades and the use and design of materials are being removed to allow consideration of a wider range of design options. A clarification regarding the need to establish detailed building alignments as part of the development planning application is being added to avoid the need for a further Planning Control application at a later stage.

## **GV27**

## ***City Gate and Freedom Square***

**MEPA will support the redesign of both City Gate and Freedom Square provided:**

- (i) **The proposals for Freedom Square normally include institutional (legislative) / cultural / entertainment / leisure orientated uses. Retail shall not exceed 20% of the total commercial floorspace. Office development will only be allowed as a supporting use to the main uses identified in this policy;**
- (ii) **The proposed development shall take into consideration the safeguarding of the existing ex-railway station, bridge and platform;**
- (iii) **The public open space at ground floor level shall be designed in a manner, which is conducive to public enjoyment and which compliments the design of the large open staircases leading to the main entrance of St. James Cavalier.**

**The developer shall be required to submit a Traffic Impact Assessment of the proposed project as per terms of reference established and issued by MEPA.**

**Detailed restoration method statements shall be submitted for the approval of MEPA prior to the issuing of Full Development Permission for each phase of the development.**

**A detailed landscaping scheme for the open spaces should be submitted with the full development permit application. The layout of the public open spaces should be conducive to leading the visitor into the City and should allow pedestrians to enjoy full views onto the fortifications.**

**Detailed building and street alignments will be determined as part of the relevant planning application.**

The present setting and design of both City Gate and Freedom Square do not give the message that one is about to enter or has entered an important site in the most important city in the Maltese Islands. This feeling is underlined by the discordant proportions of the existing large open space, improperly used as a car park, which does not take account of the axis presented by Republic Street. The architectural treatment of both the Gate and the Arcade is in dire need of improvement, and the square should, through building and/or landscaping between the square and Republic Street be reduced in size to respect more the human scale.

Besides these issues, the redesign of the spaces has to take into account the historical setting. This does not mean that projects of redesign have necessarily to be a copy of the baroque architecture of the past, but the Urban Conservation Area and World Heritage City status of Valletta must be respected. Any redesign also has to take into account the adjacent schemes which include the Opera House Site, the Arts Centre Project, especially in terms of vehicular and pedestrian access, and parking.

- 2.4 Policy GV28 is to be amended as it is deemed more suitable at this stage not to have the car park beneath Freedom Square as a policy requirement to introduce flexibility in the provision of car parking in Valletta to allow the detailed proposals in the Government reform of public transport announced in 2008 to develop over time. There is also a minor amendment to allow a wider interpretation of the type of physical interventions which can be considered on the site rather than strictly a “building”.

## **GV28**

## ***Opera House Site***

**The Arts Centre at St. James Cavalier and the proper reuse of the Opera House Site accords with the strategy to improve Valletta’s role as a cultural capital. The latter will include a multi-purpose theatre as part of a redevelopment project which predominantly includes a cultural use. Other limited commercial (except for non-related offices) and recreational uses, preferably with a cultural orientation, will also be considered.**

**During the interim period until the Opera House Site project is implemented, MEPA will encourage the use of the site for other cultural activities as long as these do not compromise the original objectives.**

**It will also give more detailed guidance on what is expected on the site which will take account of the following criteria in its formulation:**

- **a Traffic Impact Statement;**
- **an evaluation of projects adjacent to or having an impact on the site;**
- **the World Heritage City and Urban Conservation Area status.**

**Although it would be inappropriate to prescribe a specific architectural style, the new intervention on the Opera House Site should be treated as a strategic landmark within the entrance to Valletta. The architectural treatment would have to respond to the challenge of providing a contemporary statement befitting the twenty-first century, whilst respecting the historic legacy of Valletta as a former city of the Order of St. John.**

The first phase of transforming St. James Cavalier into an Arts Centre is complete. The second phase is envisaged to comprise the development of the former Opera House site and Freedom Square. The project itself is considered to be one of the most important and should give a clear message about the future role of Valletta as a cultural capital city. Due to its potential impact, however, it is important to ensure a co-ordinated approach to development, and proposals have to take account of other schemes in the vicinity of or having effect on the site. Therefore, other

policies in this Plan which have a bearing on Valletta are relevant.

It is also important for the traffic impact of the project to be thoroughly assessed, and impacts on access anticipated. As the probability is that the centre's peak time would be in the evenings, this would help the overall aim of increasing activity in Valletta at the most desired times.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

- 3.1 The Planning Directorate recommends to MEPA the revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan 2002 (Valletta) indicated in this report which should then be forwarded to the Prime Minister for his final endorsement.

### **4.0 Decision**

- 4.1 During its meeting in public of the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010, the MEPA Board endorsed the revisions to the Grand Harbour Local Plan 2002 (Valletta) indicated in this report.

## **APPENDIX**

# **Grand Harbour Local Plan 2002 (Revisions 2009)**

## **Public Submissions on Revisions**

**November 2009**

Ref	Respondent	Date	Summary of Comments Received	MEPA Response
GHRV01	Miriam Cremona obo Flimkien ghal Ambjent Ahjar Committee	9/11/09	<p><b>Provision of car parking in Valletta</b></p> <p>The further deletion of parking facilities envisaged by the Valletta Regeneration plans in addition to the elimination of parking spaces on St George's Square will further aggravate the parking problems in Valletta. This situation is made worse by the deletion of the 400 space car park beneath Freedom Square from the Plan.</p> <p>Parking should not be reduced or completely eliminated until other provisions are set in place or alternative modes of public transport and parking facilities are provided and functioning properly. The slow revival of the commercial outlets on which our Capital City depends for its vibrant life also depends on the availability of parking and ease of public transport accessibility.</p> <p><b>Access into Valletta</b></p> <p>Accessibility to residents especially the elderly, visitors to Valletta and the business community should be ensured before any works are undertaken. Pedestrianisation is also linked with accessibility. Although ideally all of Valletta should be pedestrianised, the impact of the redistribution of traffic due to closing off of streets to traffic on other streets needs to be assessed.</p>	<p>It is deemed more suitable at this stage to introduce flexibility in the requirement to provide car parking below Freedom Square and Fort St. Elmo and also in Valletta as a whole to allow the detailed proposals in the Government reform of public transport which should take place in the middle of 2010.</p> <p>Furthermore, the studies undertaken by Government before the introduction of the CVA in Valletta had already envisaged the removal of these parking spaces. These spaces had already been replaced by the Park-and-Scheme in Floriana, which has even been expanded following the introduction of the CVA.</p> <p>The designation of a road hierarchy and particularly traffic circulation routes are currently the remit of the ADT. The impacts of traffic redistribution as a result of the development project proposal are envisaged to be assessed through the Traffic Impact Statement that has already been requested.</p>



		<p>The Valletta Transport Strategy Map 8 fails to indicate the road hierarchy which will determine the entry and exit points of Valletta and the traffic direction of the interior roads and therefore is totally inadequate as a basis for serious and informed comment.</p> <p>A Traffic Impact Study and Assessment in conjunction with a traffic management plan are therefore essential at this initial stage in order to iron out the difficulties which the reduced parking will cause and also to ensure the eventual success of the project.</p> <p><b>Development of Bus Terminus</b></p> <p>The remodeling of the Bus Terminus Site and rehabilitation of the site just outside City Gate is a priority which needs to be undertaken concurrently with the remodeling of City Gate.</p> <p><b>Design and Use of Parliament Building</b></p> <p>Whilst the building should not be limited to the Baroque idiom, any new structure to be built on Freedom Square must respect and blend harmoniously with the raison d'être of Valletta which is that of a walled fortified citadel.</p>	<p>The development of the bus terminus should not be conditional on the development of City Gate and Freedom Square. The proposal as it currently stands does not preclude future interventions in this area if this is deemed feasible in some future date</p> <p>This is a detailed design matter on which an element of flexibility is felt to be healthy. There are examples of modern interventions in World Heritage Sites locally and abroad which are considered to be acceptable even to UNESCO. Therefore it is deemed more pertinent to assess</p>
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		<p>Importantly the new structure must not in any way compromise Valletta's UNESCO World Heritage status.</p> <p>The concept of exposing the façade of St James Cavalier and allowing pedestrians to enjoy full views onto the fortifications as established in the 2002 Approved Local Plan and as stipulated in the proposed amendments is not reflected in the actual plans as presented.</p> <p>The institutional (legislative) use of the square has been added to the cultural/entertainment uses indicated in the 2002 Local Plan and this in violation of the Structure Plan provision <b>POLICY COM 1</b> which states:</p> <p><b>“A new Government Administration Centre will be developed outside Valletta to house most Government Departments, while Parliament itself and the Ministries will concentrate in the palaces and auberges of Valletta.”</b></p> <p>In keeping with the Structure Plan POLICY COM 1, a number of buildings exist in Valletta which can be utilised as a Parliament building, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Auberge de Baviere;</li> <li>• The Mediterranean Conference Centre;</li> <li>• The Main Guard and the space above which between the 1950s and the 1980s was designated as the site for a new</li> </ul>	<p>the detailed design parameters at the development planning application stage than to spell out what could perhaps stifle creative good design at the local plan policy stage. In any case, the detailed parameters of the development planning application will also be subject to public scrutiny.</p> <p>Policy COM 1 does not state that <b>ALL</b> Ministries and Parliament should be in auberges and palaces.</p>
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			<p>parliament building.</p> <p><b>Design of Opera House Project</b></p> <p>The 2002 Local Plan and the present amendments to the Plan, both emphasise that this project is considered to be one of the most important in order to give a clear message about the future role of Valletta as <b>a cultural capital city</b>. This aim is however undermined by the fact that the predominant feature in the Valletta Rehabilitation Plans submitted by Architect Renzo Piano, is the Parliament building and as such the project is not in conformity with the proposed amendments.</p> <p>Moreover, the aim of cultural capital city cannot be achieved by means of the proposed roofless theatre which will have very limited use throughout the year.</p>	<p>This is a detailed design matter on which an element of flexibility is felt to be healthy. There are examples of modern interventions in World Heritage Sites locally and abroad which are considered to be acceptable even to UNESCO. Therefore it is deemed more pertinent to assess the detailed design parameters at the development planning application stage than to spell out what could perhaps stifle creative good design at the local plan policy stage. In any case, the detailed parameters of the development planning application will also be subject to public scrutiny</p>
GHRV02	Claude Borg Obo Valletta Rehabilitation Committee	9/11/09	<p><b>Local Plan Review to be comprehensive</b></p> <p>The Local Plan review should address the wider area and not limit itself to project proposals - carrying out a review without taking note of all other aspects could be premature. Concern was expressed on the adoption of certain changes which rely on the Government transport strategy which has not been implemented yet.</p>	<p>MEPA assessed the necessary changes to the Local Plan to bring the plan in line with identified policy developments that have occurred since its approval.</p> <p>The Government reform of public transport should take place in the middle of 2010.</p>

			<p><b>Role of MEPA in transportation planning</b></p> <p>The Committee is concerned on the justification for deleting policy GV04 and the limited role for MEPA in designating the road hierarchy and traffic circulation. Traffic issues need to be taken into account together with other issues in a holistic manner. Doing a TIA for the project after the plan has been established will fragment the process.</p> <p><b>Removal of car parking</b></p> <p>Although the Committee agrees that car parking below Freedom Square, St George's Square and at St. Elmo should be removed as stated in policy GV12, ideally traffic issues need to be studied and resolved as part of the plan and not regarded as "flexible".</p> <p>The Committee disagrees with the statement that no substantial further provision of car parking is required as it does not appear to be backed by any studies.</p> <p>The Committee has adopted a policy of introducing streets without pavements in pedestrianised zones rather than widening the pavements as stated by policy GV12.</p>	<p>Legislation spells the functions of both MEPA and ADT. ADT is the authority which is currently responsible for transport, circulation and parking matters.</p> <p>The studies undertaken by Government before the introduction of the CVA in Valletta had already envisaged the removal of these parking spaces. These spaces had already been replaced by the Park-and-Scheme in Floriana, which has even been expanded following the introduction of the CVA.</p> <p>Policy has been revised to include other areas. It was not felt sensible to include the provision on pavements as this was still allowable through the policy. Moreover, if this or a future VRP committee decides to revise its current policy, it may then be unnecessarily hindered by the</p>
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			<p><b>Offices in Valletta</b></p> <p>The Committee queried the inclusion of offices as a permitted use by the revised Policy GV27 as the parking issue has not been addressed. Does the policy imply that offices are allowed in the City Gate area but not elsewhere? If offices on this site are justified because there is no need for further car parking in the city, does this mean that offices can be allowed elsewhere?</p>	<p>revised MEPA policy.</p> <p>Policy GV27 is a site specific policy aimed at guiding development on the site. Its provisions apply only to the development on Freedom Square and to no other part of Valletta. The guidance on offices as a permitted supporting use on this site was included to clarify the situation created by the approved policy which made an emphatic statement that “No office development will be allowed”. The intention of this statement was to prohibit independent offices as even the previously permitted uses (cultural/entertainment/leisure) would have had administrative office functions. The provisions of policy GV24 will still apply for stand alone office development in all of Valletta.</p>
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Malta Environment & Planning Authority

Key

-  Pedestrianised Zone
-  Pedestrian Priority Area
-  Junction Redesign



Valletta  
Transport Strategy

Scale : 1:4000      Date : March 2010      Map:

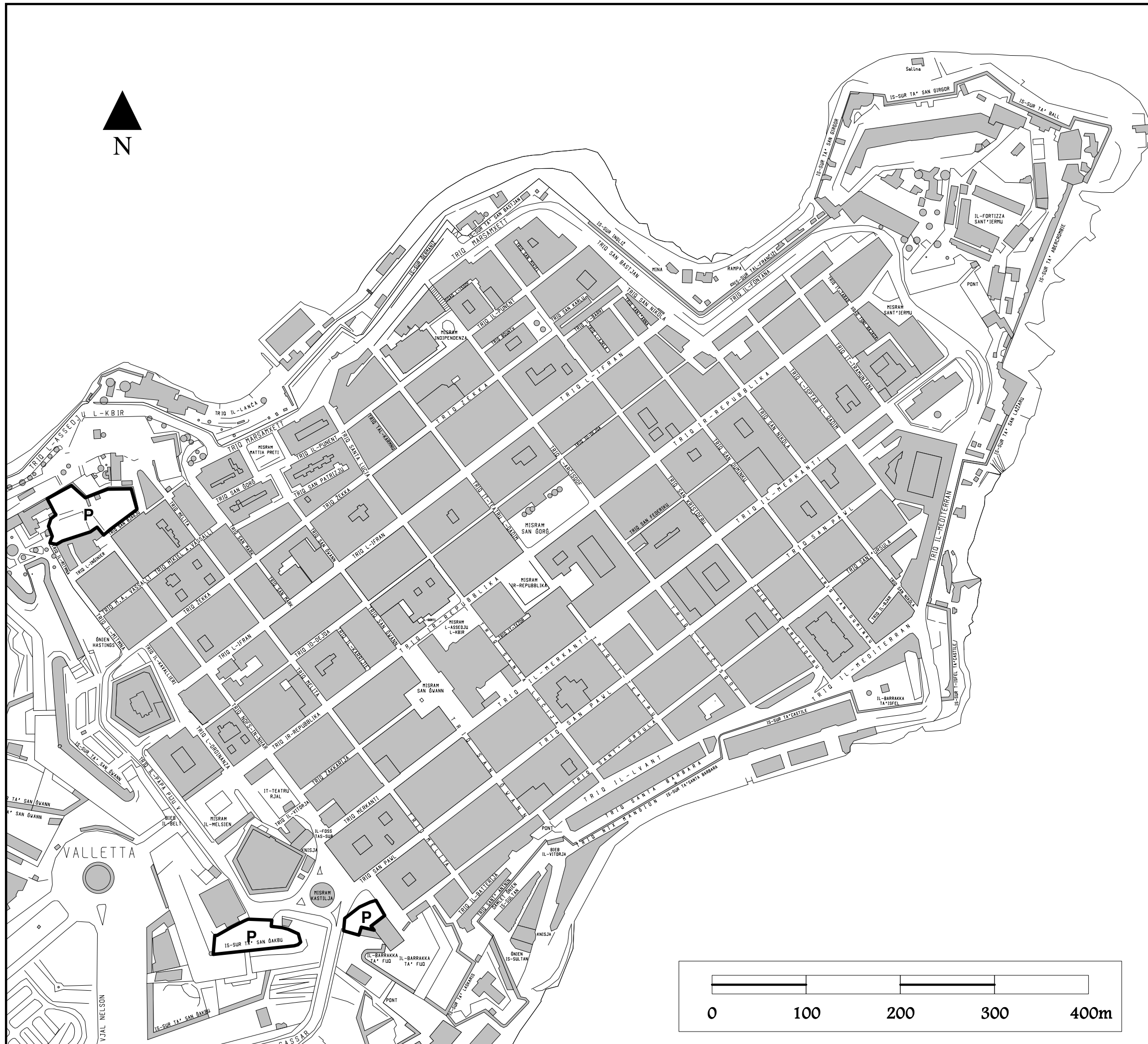
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Not to be used for measurement or direct interpretation.  
Maps to be used in conjunction with Policy Document.  
For the detailed interpretation of alignments kindly contact  
the Planning Directorate's Planning Control Unit.

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Key

**P** Safeguarded Parking Areas



Valletta  
Parking Strategy

Scale : 1:4000 Date : March 2010 Map:

INDICATIVE ONLY  
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