



COMPETITIONS  
**KONKURSE**

**gjirokastra bypass** | 2015 09

bajpasi i gjirokastrës | **ATELIER ALBANIA | AKPT**

## INTERNATIONAL URBAN DESIGN COMPETITION

For the Bypass Road in the UNESCO Protected  
City of Gjirokastra, Albania

No. 9

### ORGANIZERS

Ministry of Urban Development  
National Territorial Planning  
Agency (AKPT)  
Atelier Albania

### PARTNERS

Ministry of Culture  
Institute of Cultural Monuments  
Gjirokastra Municipality

### PARTICIPANTS

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C+S Cappai Associati + F&M  
Ingegneria Spa + SON Engineering  
& Construction  
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Atelier Albania asked by the Minister of Urban Development, Minister of Culture and mandated by the office of the Prime Minister, announced an international urban design competition to collect design proposals for a Bypass Road in the UNESCO protected city of Gjirokastra. The bypass road will influence directly the traffic in the historic center of the UNESCO heritage city, which is intended to be experienced as a car-free and pedestrianized area.



THE BYPASS ROAD IN THE UNESCO PROTECTED CITY OF  
GJIROKASTRA, ALBANIA

International Urban Design Competition  
October – December 2015



# 01

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- 10 Competition Brief
- 18 Jury members
- 22 Evaluation and Jury Decision

# 02

---

- 24 Atelier4  
*Winning Team*

# 03

---

- 44 C+S Cappai Associati + F&M Ingegneria Spa + SON  
Engineering & Construction  
*"hybrid(Cl)ty"*

# 04

---

- 76 Metro POLIS + Polis University + G&K + CHwB Albania  
*"Gjirokastra Organic Loop"*

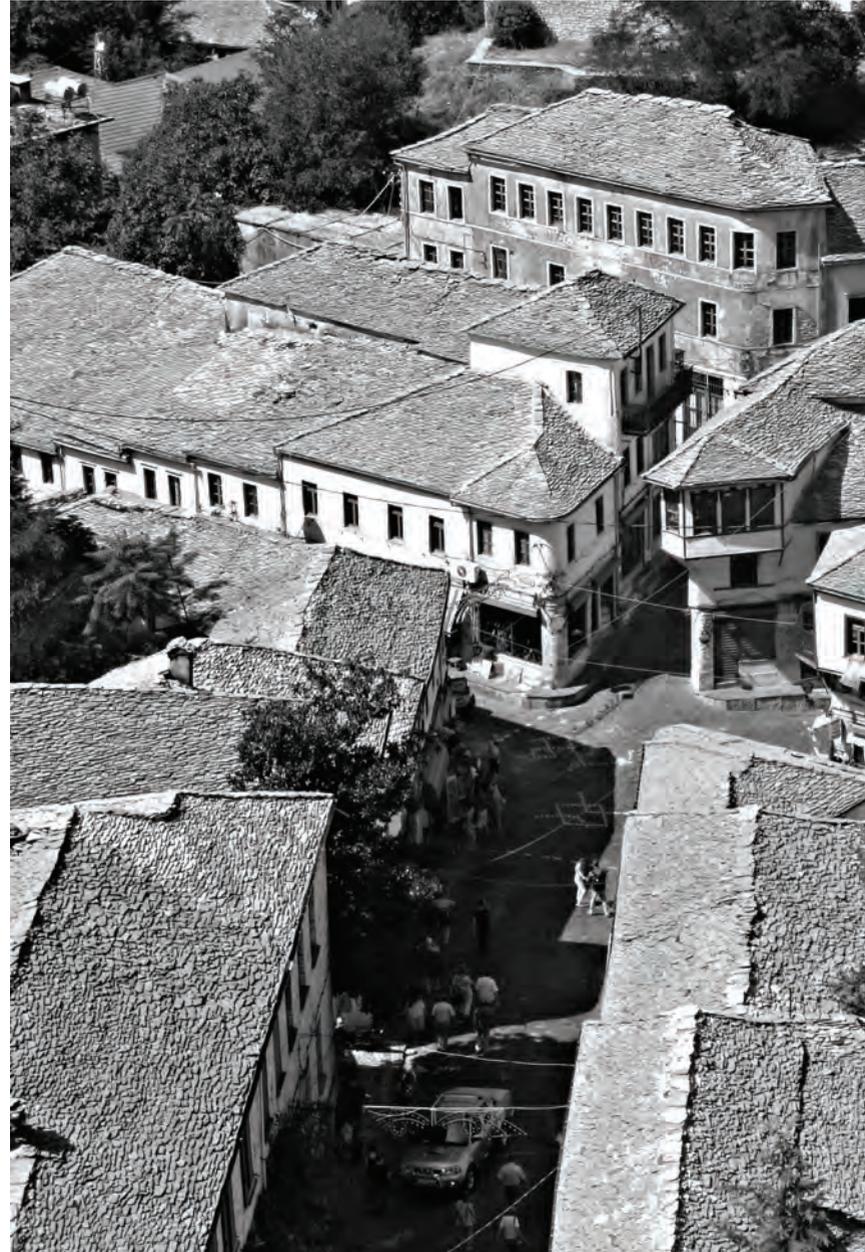
## 01 COMPETITION BRIEF

### Manifesto

The city of Gjirokastra is considered a unique city with regards to its urban and architectural composition. The main aim of this competition is to call for design proposals that will provide the Bypass Road trajectory and design, which after being constructed will take the traffic off the Bazaar area of Gjirokastra, by transforming it into a pedestrianized area. All these should be performed without tackling the character and authenticity of the area subject to this competition. This project aims at improving car mobility and returning the historical centre back to its identity.

Through this open call Atelier Albania is searching for multidisciplinary teams of architects, urban designers and planners, road engineers, transport and heritage experts that will generate tailor made and original proposals, highlighting and protecting the existing historical and cultural values of the city, while at the same time offering intelligent solutions to the traffic and mobility issues of the city.

Through this competition, that is not merely an engineering question, it is aimed for an integrated solution. Even though the main object of the design proposal is the bypass, the design question is more than an engineering one. The design question brings together designers, engineers, transport and heritage consultants to propose an integrated approach to the question of Gjirokastra bypass.





### **Beneficiaries**

It is the purpose of this competition that through the design of the Bypass Road, to make the Bazaar area a pedestrianized quarter which historical character and elements will not be threatened any longer by car traffic. Through this project and its subsequent implementation, the mobility issues of historic centre of Gjirokastra will get an answer through design and not simply by engineering solutions as it is usually the case. The construction of this new circulation ring must be well integrated with the existing road system/pattern of the city, as well as it must assure the preservation and conservation of all historical, cultural and landscape values of Historical Centre and Protected Area of the city of Gjirokastra. The bypass when implemented will serve to all citizens and visitors of Gjirokastra, as well as it will keep the historical centre activities undisturbed by the traffic.

### **Contracting Authority**

National Territorial Planning Agency is the Contracting Authority for this process, upon the request of the Ministry of Culture.

### **Area of Competition**

In 2005 the city of Gjirokastra, otherwise identified as the "Stone-City", is declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site. The castle, which dates back in the beginning of XIV century, is considered to be first nucleus of the city and forms the centre of the urban composition. The other part of the city lays in a sloppy terrain, which becomes a predominant factor in defining the dynamic character of the city. Terrain diversity has influenced the compositional design of neighborhoods as separate units.

Until XVII century the bazaar represented the economical centre of the city. Years later, it was displaced in the current area where it is located nowadays, by creating a second centre, which was empowered as the real centre of the city only after the administrative functions of the castle were diminished. The city has a radial organization scheme, where all the roads of neighborhoods converge in the centre. The area, which is subject to this competition, is displayed in the map of the competition and it comprises the Historical Centre and the Protected Zone of the city of Gjirokastra.

### Competition Questions

The competition will be built on these questions:

- Which is the trajectory of Bypass Road that has the lowest impact in the area of intervention?
- How to integrate the Bypass Road with the road system/network of the neighborhoods, Historical Centre and the city itself?
- How to design the Bypass Road following the guideline, which protects, conserves and administrates the Historical Centre and Protected Zone?
- How to design a road beyond mere engineering principles and make of it a 'best design' case?

### Objective

The product of the competition will be the Design of the "Bypass Road of the city of Gjirokastra", which is thought to be located in the surroundings of the Historical Centre and Protected Zone. The main purpose of its design is to transform the Bazaar into a pedestrianized area, accessible by the community and visitors. This competition aims at improving the mobility in the Historical Centre and Bazaar area, as well as making out of it again an economic centre attractive for businesses and other activities.

The participating teams are expected to provide creative, integrated design proposals and innovative solutions that will preserve the historical and cultural identity of the area, while facilitating mobility within and outside of it.

The competition is organised in two stages. First stage of the competition is based on the expression of interest and ends up with a short-list of best teams. During the second stage, the short-listed competitors are required the following:

- Study about the structure and urban morphology of the city of Gjirokastra;
- Study the area of the competition and its surroundings based on its space, topographic, contextual features, as well as the types of interventions allowed in the area;
- Analyse the road system/network by taking in consideration the terrain, roads' width and configuration, density of monuments, population, activities and geological formation;
- Analyse the context and propose a trajectory of the Bypass Road that has the lowest impact in the area and does not put in risk the landscape, cultural monuments, archaeological sites and public/green spaces;
- Study in particular how the Bypass Road is connected with the context,

in order to be harmoniously integrated with the area;

- Foresee possible parking areas: 'park & ride' solutions;
- Preserve and conserve the area based on the guideline of DCM No. 619, date 7.7.2015, which preserves, conserves and administrates the Historical Centre and Protected Zone;
- Well-integrate the Bypass Road with the existing road system/network, by creating a car-free Bazaar access;
- Propose a management plan of the road system nearby the Historical Centre, by identifying time intervals, types of cars, alternative accessing points;
- Propose a project idea for the pavement and width of the Bypass Road of the city of Gjirokastra;
- Estimate proposal costs;
- Present an action plan;
- Promote sustainability and innovation.

## Methodology

Atelier Albania is a unit of the National Territorial Planning Agency, mandated to identify alternative solutions and enrich architecture and planning by thinking beyond the typical planning framework. In this context, we stimulate and support the participation and collaboration of different interested groups of international and local professionals who will work closely together. We believe that this team-based collaboration will improve the way projects and research is informed with all the appropriate local knowledge as well as an international level of design standards.

Moreover, we want to think of competitions as co-creative processes, where designers and local actors are involved in an interactive problem solving process.

## Teams of Local and Foreign Professionals:

Every international team is encouraged by the organizers to partner with a local team and each local team is encouraged to partner with an international counterpart. The client believes that to get contextual and visionary projects there is an inherent need for a vision of someone who does not know the site as well as the contextual knowledge of someone who is very familiar with the terrain.

We believe that such cooperation can increase the impact of the proposal and improve implementation. In applying for the first phase it is not a pre-selection criterion to have a local or international partner; having a partnership at this stage however is positive and can help to create a more coherent and contextualized vision which of course might boost the teams' chances of selection.

## Suitability

Each team should be composed of at least:

- Architect/ landscape architect/ urban designer – TEAM LEADER
- Road Engineer – consultant
- Transport Engineer – consultant
- Heritage expert – consultant

## Evaluation Criteria

The jury will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria:

- Creativity
- High implementation factor
- Links and impact of the proposal to the context
- The cost-impact ratio (low cost, high impact)

## Final Product

The competition will end with the selection of a well-equipped team, who will be able to engage in the post-competition process. The winning team will be engaged in the next phase, which consists in the preparation of the feasibility study based on the winning proposal.

## TERMAT E REFERENCËS

### Manifesto

Qyteti i Gjirokastrës shquhet si një qytet unikal për nga kompozimi urbanistik dhe arkitektonik. Qëllimi kryesor i këtij konkursi është përfitimi i projekt-ideve të krijimit të një Bypass-i, i cili zgjidh problemin e trafikut në Pazarin e Gjirokastrës, duke e shndërruar atë në një zonë për këmbësorët, pa cënuar autenticitetin dhe karakterin e zonës së ndërhyrjes. Ky projekt kërkon të përmirësojë qarkullimin e automjeteve dhe rikthimin e qendrës historike në identitet. Nëpërmjet kësaj thirrje të hapur Atelier Albania synon të ftojë ekipe shumë-disiplinëshe të përbërë nga arkitektë, urbanistë e planifikues, inxhinierë të rrugëve, e ekspertë të transportit dhe trashëgimisë, të cilët do të gjenerojnë propozime origjinale projektimi për të zgjidhur problemet e mobilitetit në qytet, por duke vlerësuar kontekstin historik dhe kulturor të vendit.

Nëpërmjet këtij konkursi, i cili nuk është i fokusuar thjesht në një pyetje inxhinierike, kërkohet një zgjidhje e integruar. Megjithatë objekti kryesor i projekt propozimeve do të jetë bypass-i, pyetja e konkursit është shumë më tepër sesa një pyetje për zgjidhje inxhinierike. Pyetja e projektimit sjell së bashku projektues, inxhinierë, konsulentë të transportit dhe trashëgimisë, të cilët do të propozojnë një qasje të integruar kundrejt pikëpyetjes për bypass-in e Gjirokastrës.





### Përfituesit

Ky konkurs, nëpërmjet dizenjimit të Bypass-it, synon rikthkimin e zonës së pazarit në një zonë të aksesueshme për të gjithë këmbësorët, duke e përforcuar edhe më shume karakterin dhe identitetin e tij. Krijimi i kesaj unazeje të re të lëvizjes, duhet të jetë e mirë-integruar me sistemin rrugor të tërë qytetit, sikurse duhet të sigurojë mbrojtjen, konservimin e vlerave historikekulturore dhe atyre peisazhistike të Qendrës Historike dhe Zonës së Mbrojtur të qytetit të Gjirokastrës. Bypass-i, pasi të ndërtohet do të jetë në shërbim të qytetarëve dhe vizitorëve të shumtë, që e vizitojnë atë, sikurse edhe do të ndihmojë që qendra historike e qytetit të mbetet e pasqetësuar nga lëvizja e trafikut të makinave.

### Autoriteti Kontraktues

Agjencia Kombëtare e Planifikimit të Territorit është Autoriteti Kontraktor për këtë process, me kërkesë të Ministrisë së Kulturës.

### Zona e Konkursit

Gjirokastra, e ashtëquajtur ndryshe dhe “Qyteti i Gurtë” është shpallur zonë e mbrojtur nga UNESCO në vitin 2005. Zanafilla e qytetit, kalaja, e cila daton rreth gjysmës së parë të shekullit të XIV, përbën qendrën kompozicionale të tij. Pjesa tjetër e qytetit shtrihet në një terren të thyer, duke i dhënë qytetit një karakter dinamik. Larmishmëria e relievit ka bërë që nga ana kompozicionale lagjet të qëndrojnë si njësi të vecuara.

Pazari i qytetit deri në shekullin e XVII përbente qendrën ekonomike të tij. Në vitet më vonë, ai u zhvendos në vendin ku ndodhet sot, duke krijuar një qendër të dytë, e cila e pasuar nga humbja e funksioneve administrative të kalasë, u bë qendra e vërtetë e qytetit. Në qendrën e tij bashkohen të gjitha rrugët që e lidhin atë me lagjet e banuara, duke i dhënë qytetit një skemë organizimi radiale. Zona e cila është subjekt i hartimit të projekt-ideve, paraqitet në hartën e vendodhjes së konkursit dhe përfshin Qendrën Historike dhe Zonën e Mbrojtur të Qytetit të Gjirokastrës.

## Qëllimi i Konkursit / Pyetja e Konkursit

Konkursi do të ndërtohet dhe do t'u përgjigjet këtyre çështjeve kryesore:

- Cila është trajektorja që do të ndjekë Bypass-i, e cila ka impaktin më të ulët në zonën e ndërhyrjes?
- Si të integrosh Bypass-in me sistemin rrugor të qytetit/ rrjetin e lagjeve, Qendrën Historike dhe vetë qytetin?
- Si të projektosh Bypass-in e qytetit në përputhje me rregulloren për mbrojtjen, konservimin e integruar dhe administrimin e Qendrës Historike dhe Zonës së Mbrojtur?
- Si të projektosh një rrugë përtej principeve të mirëfillta inxhinierike dhe ta kthesh atë në një rast të "projektimit më të mirë"?

## Objektivi

Produkt i konkursit do të jetë Projektimi i "Bypass-it të qytetit të Gjirokastrës", i cili mendohet të jetë përreth Qendrës Historike dhe Zonës së Mbrojtur. Projektimi i tij ka për qëllim kthimin e zonës së Pazarit, në një zonë këmbësore, të aksesueshme nga i gjithë komuniteti dhe vizitorët. Ky konkurs synon të përmirësojë trafikun dhe qarkullimin e automjeteve në Qendrën Historike, sikurse kërkon të rikthejë sërisht zonën e Pazarit në një qendër ekonomike, tërheqëse për biznesin e aktivitetet e tjera.

Ekipet pjesëmarrëse pritet të sjellin projekt propozime krijuese, zgjidhje të integruara dhe inovative, që përshtaten dhe ruajnë identitetin historik e kulturor të zonës, ndërkohë që lehtësojnë lëvizjen brenda dhe jashtë saj.

Konkursi organizohet në dy faza. Faza e parë bazohet në shprehjen e interesit dhe përfundon me një listë të shkurtër të skuadrave më të mira. Konkurentët që do të vijojnë në fazën e dytë, për të dhënë propozimet e tyre të projektimit, do t'u kërkohej të punojnë për të arritur si më poshtë:

- Të studiojnë strukturën dhe morfologjinë urbane të qytetit të Gjirokastrës;
- Të studiojnë zonën e konkursit dhe rrethinat e tij në aspektin hapësinor, topografik, kontekstual dhe nivelin e ndërhyrjes që lejohet;
- Të analizojnë sistemin rrugor duke marrë në konsideratë terrenin, gjerësinë dhe konfiguracionin e rrugëve, dendësinë e monumenteve, popullësinë, aktivitetet dhe përbërjen gjeologjike;
- Të analizojnë kontekstin dhe të propozojnë trajektoren e Bypass-it që shkakton impaktin më të ulët, duke mos cënuar aspak në prishjen e peisazhit, monumenteve të kulturës, zonat arkeologjike, sikurse dhe zonat e gjelbërta dhe publike;
- Të studiojnë në mënyrë posaçme si Bypass-i lidhet me kontekstin, duke siguruar që është në harmoni të plotë me të;

- Të parashikojnë zona të mundshme parkimi dhe qëndrimi: zgjidhje 'park & ride';
- Të ruajnë dhe konservojnë zonën në përputhje me rregulloren për mbrojtjen, konservimin dhe administrimin e Qendrës Historike dhe Zonës së Mbrojtur bazuar në VKM Nr. 619, datë 7.7.2015;
- Të mirë-integrohet Bypass-i me sistemin rrugor ekzistues, duke e çliruar zonën e pazarit nga lëvizja automobilistike;
- Propozimi i një plani menaxhimi të sistemit rrugor në afërsi të Qendrës Historike duke përcaktuar intervalin, madhësinë e mjetit, mundësi alternative kalimi;
- Propozim i një projekt-ideje për shtrimin dhe gjerësinë e Bypass-it të qytetit të Gjirokastrës;
- Parashikim të kostove të propozimit;
- Propozimi i një plan veprimi;
- Promovim i zhvillimit të qëndrueshëm dhe inovativ.

## Metodologjia

Atelier Albania është një njësi e Agjencisë Kombëtare të Planifikimit të Territorit, e mandatuar për identifikimin e zgjidhjeve alternative dhe pasurimin e arkitekturës e planifikimit nëpërmjet të menduarit përtej kornizave. Në këtë kontekst ne stimulojmë dhe mbështesim pjesmarrjen e grupeve me profesionistë ndërkombëtarë që do të punojnë së bashku me profesionistë vendas. Ne besojmë se ky bashkëpunim me bazë ekipi do të pasurojë mënyrën sesi informohet projekti me të gjitha njohuritë e nevojshme locale dhe ekspertizën e nivelit të lartë të projektimit.

Për më tepër, ne duam të eksperimentojmë një proces konkursi bashkë-krijues, ku projektuesit dhe disa aktorë lokalë janë përfshirë në një proces përzgjedhës.

## Bashkimi i skuadrave vendase me të huajat

Çdo ekip ndërkombëtar stimulohet nga organizatorët për t'u lidhur me partneritet me një ekip vendas dhe çdo ekip lokal për t'u lidhur gjithashtu me një partner ndërkombëtar. Atelier Albania beson se një bashkëpunim i tillë mund të rrisë ndikimin e propozimit dhe të përmirësojë zbatimin e projektit. Megjithatë, në thirrjen për fazën e parë, nuk është kusht përzgjedhje që ekipet të kenë një partner lokal apo ndërkombëtar. Ne besojmë se ky bashkëpunim mund të rrisë impaktin e propozimit dhe të përmirësojë cilësinë e zbatimit.

Gjatë aplikimit për fazën e parë nuk është kusht përzgjedhës që ekipet të kenë një partner vendas apo ndërkombëtar; megjithatë, të kesh një partner në këtë fazë është positive dhe mund të ndihmojë për krijimin e një vizioni më koherent dhe të kontekstualizuar, i cili sigurisht mund të rrisë shancet e ekipeve për përzgjedhje.

## Përshtatshmëria

Secili prej ekipeve të Fazës 1 duhet të ketë në përbërje:

- Arkitekt/ arkitekt pejsazhi/ urbanist – UDHËHEQËS SKUADRE
- Inxhinier për Projektues Rrugësh – konsulent
- Inxhinier transporti – konsulent
- Ekspert trashëgimie – konsulent

## Kriteret e Vlerësimit

Juria do të vlerësojë aplikimet e Fazës 2 bazuar në kriteret e mëposhtme:

- Krijimtaria
- Përshtatshmëria e propozimit me funksionin e kërkuar
- Faktori i lartë i zbatueshmërisë së idesë së projektimit
- Lidhje dhe impakti i propozimit me kontekstin
- Raporti kosto-impakt (kosto e ulët, impakt i madh)

## Produkti Final

Konkursi do të përfundojë me zgjedhjen e një ekipi. Ekipi fitues duhet të jetë një ekip i mirëpajisur, i cili do të jetë në gjendje të angazhohet në procesin pas-konkurs.

Ekipi fitues do të angazhohet në fazën vijuese, e cila konsiston në përgatitjen e studimit të fizibilitetit bazuar në propozimin fitues.

## JURY MEMBERS

SOFIA AVGERINO KOLONIAS  
ARTA DOLLANI  
LORENC BEJKO  
ANDREAS FAORO  
SOKOL KIKINO  
ELISABETTA TERRAGNI  
LEAH WHITMAN-SALKIN



**SOFIA AVGERINO KOLONIAS**

Sofia Avgerinou Kolonias is currently the Director of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and of the Laboratory of Spatial Planning and Urban Development at the National Technical University of Athens (N.T.U.A)

Education and Diploma(s): 1973 - an Architect Engineer Urban Planner (National Technical University of Athens, NTUA), 1981 - M.A. Degree in History Civilization ' DEA (Etudes Urbaines, Ecole des Hautes Etudes, EHESS Paris), 1986 - Ph.D.Urban Geography (Doctorat Nouveau Regime, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, EHESS Paris).

Academic and Scientific Activity: She teaches since 1982 in the undergraduate and post graduate level, Professor and Advisor of the Greek Open University, teaching post graduate engineers for the protection of the Natural and Human Environment (2000 2003). Scientific responsible in a number of research programmes concerning Issues in the analysis and planning of historical centers, historic cities and settlements, development problems and planning in urban areas, urban tourism. Author or coauthor and editor of numerous books, monographies, articles.

Career of ICOMOS: Member (1979) and today elected VicePresident of the ICOMOS Hellenic

National Committee, she has been working for the preservation and protection of historical monuments, sites and cities (Greece, Cyprus, SE Europe, Mediterranean countries. Member, Vice President (2002), President (2010 until today) of the International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages - CIVVIHICOMOS. Coordinator of the ICOMOS Scientific Council (20062015). As member of the ICOMOS Executive Committee (2008, 2011, 2014 until today) she contributed to its demanding scientific and organizational work and she participated in the working groups for the reinforcement and coordination of the ISCs work, as well as for the contribution of ICOMOS in the field of World Heritage. As a President of CIVVIH she has recommended the Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas, adopted by the 17th ICOMOS General Assembly on 28 November 2011.

**ARTA DOLLANI**

After graduating in Architecture and Urban Planning at the Polytechnic University of Krakow in Poland, she worked for a long period of time in the Municipality of Tirana as urban planner, developing parallelly and hereinafter the academic experience in teaching at the Faculty of Architecture. Co-designer of a considerable number of urban studies, urban requalification projects of public spaces, she also owns qualitative experience in design and implementation. Currently directs the Institute of Cultural Monuments, it is co-author of numerous projects on the restoration of monuments, and revitalization of historical and museum centers. The initiator of several partnerships with the Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of History and Philology and non-governmental organizations participating in the IPA projects in the region. The Institute she leads is the focal point of UNESCO for the declared World Heritage properties in the territory of Albania and maintains regular contacts with European institutions on exchanging parallel and successful experiences. Participant and contributor in a series of international conferences and exhibitions on preservation, revitalisation and management of cultural assets. Jury member in several international architectural competitions.

**LORENC BEJKO**

Lorenc Bejko is a professor of Archaeology and Heritage Management at the University of Tirana. He has an MA in Archaeology from the Boston University and a PhD from the Academy of Sciences of Albania. He is specialized in prehistoric archaeology with a special interest in the Bronze and Iron Ages of Albania and the neighboring regions. His interests include methods and theory in Archaeology, social and comparative studies in issues of early complex societies, archaeological conservation, heritage and contemporary society, landscape archaeology, archaeological education. He has conducted extensive fieldwork in many regions of Albania and directed/co-directed over 7 multi disciplinary projects! Bejko has worked for the Institute of Archaeology of the Albanian Academy of Sciences, has served as director of the Albanian Rescue Archaeology Unit, director of the Institute of Cultural Monuments of the Albanian Ministry of Culture, and since 2008 teaches at the University of Tirana. Is member of many professional organizations among which, corresponding member of the Archaeological Institute of America and member of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management, member of the Scientific Council of the UNESCO Office in Venice, President of the Albanian Archaeological Society.



**ANDREAS FAORO**

Andreas Faoro is an architect and urban designer. After graduating at the IUAV University of Architecture of Venice, he obtained a Post-graduate Master degree in Architecture and Urbanism at the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam. His theoretical and practical work focuses on the relationship between, politics, economy and large-scale urban design issues, exploring the disputed, conflicting and often paradoxical transformation of cities and urban environments. Since 2003 Andreas has collaborated with international architectural offices (SBA - Stefano Boeri Architetti - Italy, Fritz van Dongen (NL), StudioEU Berlin - (DE) LAN (IT), OFFICE KGDVS Brussels (BE). Next to the professional activity he has experience in teaching architecture and urban design programs at different Universities and Cultural Institutions. He has taken part as coordinator, project manager and scientific advisor in several European Culture projects, EU-ROMA (EUropean Roma Mapping), W.S.E. (Welfare Space Europe), EURO.P.A. (EUROpean Public Art-architecture project) & EU-CITY a project developed with Winy Mass, and the Why Factory (TU Delft), partially exhibited at the Biennale of Venice 2012). Recently his work has been exhibited at Louisiana museum in Denmark: Frontiers of Architecture III-IV Living (2011) and in France at the 10th Biennale de Lyon: "Le spectacle du quotidien". In 2008 he co-founded "UNLAB" an international architectural office.



**SOKOL KIKINO**

Sokol Kikino (1968) is a transport planner. He concluded a MSc program in Infrastructure Planning at Stuttgart Technical University, MSc program in Economics and Program Management in San-Diego State University. He has 24 years of professional experience in transport and infrastructure planning, Mr. Kikino is specialized in Projects, Procurement, Studies, Planning, Supervision and Contracts Management with proven leadership skills and strategic solution approach to project and issues management as well as project scope, quality and schedule management. He has demonstrated project management experience on all aspects of road, highway, and port projects namely feasibility studies, business plans, preliminary and final design, supervision of construction, project management, quality and quantity control & audit etc. Since October 2014 he is a Project Manager of the World Bank Project for Power Recovery Project/MEI.

**ELISABETTA TERRAGNI**

Elisabetta Terragni is a tenured Professor at City College of New York. She is a licensed architect practicing between Italy, Switzerland, Albania and the United States. Her work extends from the analysis of hand-motion to the transformation of abandoned industrial and military infrastructures.

Terragni's work raises issues of spatial and temporal discontinuities in the design of exhibitions, the conversion of abandoned sites and disused infrastructures for new public purposes. Leftovers, abandoned places, and structures that have fallen in disuse will continue to be the sites of architectural interventions, challenging imagination and sensibility, so as to avoid heavy-handed results. In a number of places, such as abandoned highway tunnels and demilitarized zones, Terragni has installed museum venues and rededicated remaining buildings by treading lightly on the ground. She has frequent consultation with private individuals and institutions regarding projects of renovation and re-adaptation like the consultancy for Trento Province in view of the development in the area around the tunnels project, 2010 to present. Since the extensive renovation project of Giuseppe Terragni's 1937 Asilo Sant'Elia, Como, entailing an integral structural renovation and overhaul of mechanical equipment, she is frequently invited to analyze economical and technical problems of landmark buildings from 1920 to 1950.

**LEAH WHITMAN-SALKIN**

Leah Whitman-Salkin is deputy editor of Harvard Design Magazine and is co-curator, with Simon Battisti and Åbäke, of the Albanian Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale.

## EVALUATION AND JURY DECISION

### ATELIER 4 - WINNING TEAM

The jury finds that the proposal put forward by this team is both cost effective and rational. It responds directly to the brief with the aim to intervene in the city and landscape as minimally as possible. The jury considers its low-impact approach a feasible solution for the city. The presentation of multiple alternatives showed that a rigorous analysis had been made, but the team did not focus enough on the recommended proposal itself, and must do extensive feasibility studies moving forward. The engineering of the roads must be carefully considered, as well as the social, environmental, and archeological impacts. The jury strongly suggests that the landscape architecture and traffic planning proposals put forward be analyzed with more detail. Overall, the rigidity of the plan is responsive to the brief and simultaneously does not constrain the future development of the city, allowing for the necessary decongestion of the historical city center.

### METRO POLIS + POLIS UNIVERSITY + G&K + CHWB ALBANIA

The jury appreciated the thoughtful method of analysis that the team put forth but found that the ultimate goals were too focused on a touristic economy and not well balanced in terms of both cultural tourism and the needs of the citizens. The touristic links made at the regional level were, however, insightful, but the plan was too focused on the region rather than the culture of the city itself. In that sense, it distracted from the brief at hand and didn't provide sufficient responses. And, moreover, the aesthetic approaches were not sensitive enough to the fragility of the city and the impact that the "low impact" interventions would have. The addition of two kilometers of new roads is in fact a much higher investment and has a greater impact on the city than the jury views as necessary.

### C+S CAPPAL ASSOCIATI + F&M INGEGNERIA SPA + SON ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION

In many ways, the vision and systematic, phase-based implantation of the proposal were paradoxically both the strengths and the weaknesses of this plan. While the jury appreciated the visionary approach, it felt that it ultimately distracted from the brief itself. The phasing made the plan seem potentially feasible, but the timeline presented made the completion of the project too large an investment. While the presentation of the plan made explicit that the new building and program was merely an optional final phase, it in fact overshadowed the bypass road plan and introduced many new problems. The plan also proposes to widen some of the existing roads, altering the historical plan of the city. Additionally, the plan integrates the national road, which cannot be used for local traffic purposes. Most importantly, the vision presented over determines the future development of the city, and thus constrains it.

## VLERËSIMI I JURISË NDËRKOMBËTARE

### ATELIER 4 - SKUADRA FITUESE

Juria mendon se propozimi i ardhur nga ky grup i ka të kompozuar mirë elementin e vlerës së tij ekonomike me atë racional. Propozimi ka si qëllim një ndërhyrje minimaliste për qytetin dhe peisazhin e tij. Juria e konsideron këtë impakt minimalist si një zgjidhje e përshtatshme për qytetin. Prezantimi i alternativave të ndryshme janë dëshmi e një analize mjaft të mirë, por grupi duhet të vazhdojë të zgjerojë studimin mbi projektin edhe më tej. Karakteri inxhinjrik i rrugës duhet konsideruar me kujdes, po ashtu edhe impakti social, mjedisor dhe ai arkeologjik. Juria sugjeron një analizë të mëtejshme në lidhje me arkitekturën e pejsazhit dhe planin e trafikut të propozuar. Mbi të gjitha, struktura e planit i përgjigjet kërkesave dhe në të njëjtën kohë nuk pengon zhvillimin e qytetit në të ardhmen, duke lejuar kështu zhvillimin e qendrës historike të qytetit.

### METRO POLIS + POLIS UNIVERSITY + G&K + CHWB ALBANIA

Juria vlerësoi metodën e përdorur në analizën e bërë nga grupi por vërejtë se qëllimi kryesor ishte tejet i fokusuar në turizmin ekonomik dhe jo i mirë-balancuar midis turizmit kulturor dhe nevojave të qytetarëve. Pikat turistike të gjetura në nivel rajonal ishin të menduara mirë por propozimi ishte tejet i prirur drejt qasjes në nivelin rajonal sesa në vetë kulturën e qytetit. Në këtë sens, ai nuk ishte i fokusuar dhe nuk jepte përgjigjen e duhur dhe të kërkuar nga detyra e projektimit. Përjasjet estetike nuk kishin ndjeshmërinë e duhur ndaj brishtësisë së qytetit dhe impaktin që ndërhyrjet e vogla mund të sjellin. Shtimi i rrugëve të reja me dy kilometra është në fakt një investim shumë i madh dhe ka pasoja të konsiderueshme mbi qytetin, duke u vlerësuar kështu si i panevojshëm nga juria.

### C+S CAPPAL ASSOCIATI + F&M INGEGNERIA SPA + SON ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION

Në pikëpamje të ndryshme, vizioni dhe ndarja e zbatimit të projektit në faza ishin në mënyrë paradoksale forca dhe dobësia e këtij propozimi. Ndërkohë që juria vlerësoi përjasjen vizionare, pati gjithashtu përshtypjen se ky vizion e nxirrte nga fokusi vetë propozimin. Ndarja në faza e bënte planin në dukje të realizueshëm, por afatet e përcaktuara e kthenin në një investim shumë të madh. Ndërkohë që prezantimi i propozimit e tregonte qartazi që ndërtesa e re dhe programi ishin thjesht një fazë finale dhe opsionale, ato në fakt linin në hije propozimin e bypasit rrugor duke nxjerrë gjithashtu në pah edhe probleme të tjera. Planin propozonte ndër të tjera edhe zgjerimin e disa rrugëve ekzistuese duke ndryshuar planin historik të qytetit. Për më tepër, propozimi integronte rrugën kombëtare, e cila në thelb nuk mund të përdoret për trafikun lokal. Cfarë është më e rëndësishme; vizioni i prezantuar bëhet përcaktues i zhvillimit të qytetit në të ardhmen dhe për këtë arsye kthehet në element kufizues sot, në kushtet ku ndodhet Gjiroakstra; në prag të hartimit të një plani të përgjithshëm vendor dhe një plan menaxhimi për qendrën historike.

## 02 ATELIER4 - WINNING TEAM

### TEAM COMPOSITION:

#### **Architects**

Altin Premti  
Alban Efthimi  
Shpresa Prifti

#### **Transportation Engineer**

Maurizio Cerri

#### **Civil Engineer**

Aurel Xhumbi  
Ylli Gjoni

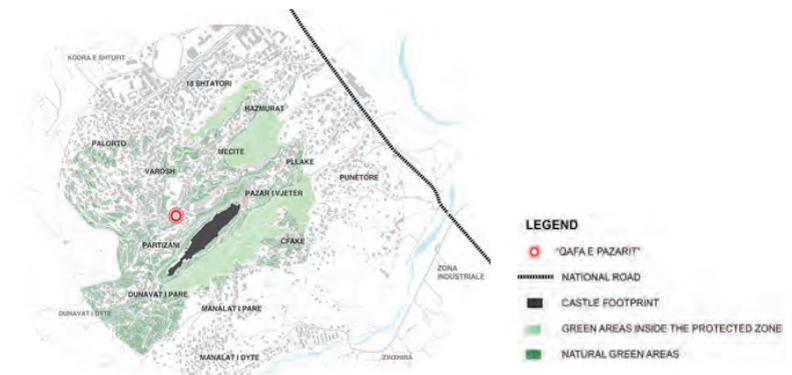
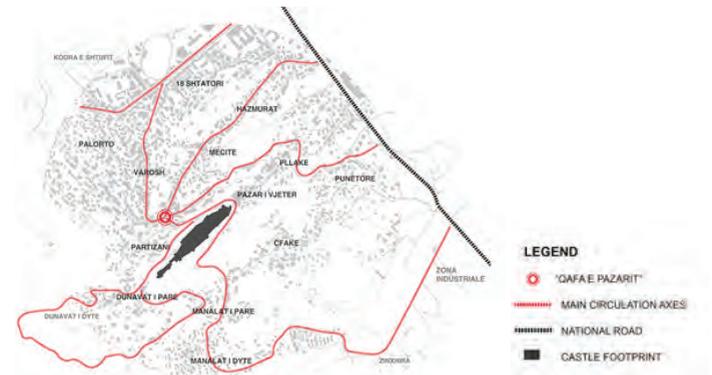
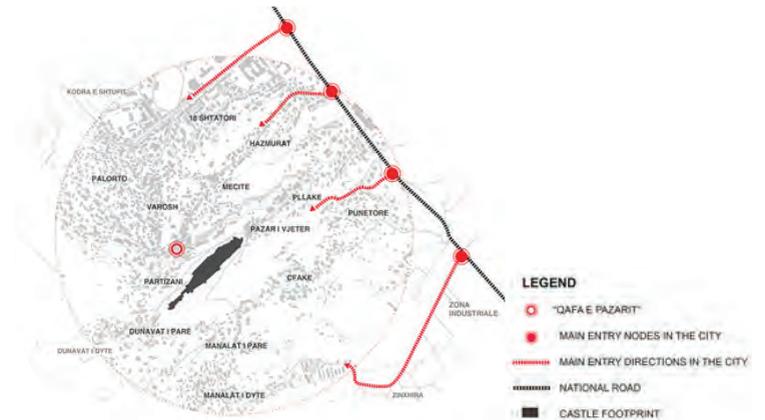


*It was a slanted city, set at a sharper angle than perhaps any other city on earth, and it defied the laws of architecture and city planning. The top of one house might graze the foundation of another, and it was surely the only place in the world where if you slipped and fell in the street, you might well land on the roof of a house - a peculiarity known most intimately to drunks.*

**"Chronicle in Stone"**  
Ismail Kadare

## GJIROKASTRA BYPASS

Main Entry Nodes & Circulation Axes



Gjirokastra was built by major landowners. Around the ancient 13th century citadel, the town has houses with turrets (the Turkish kule) which are characteristic of the Balkans region. Gjirokastra contains several remarkable examples of houses of this type, which date from the 17th century, but also more elaborate examples dating from the early 19th century.

The World Heritage property Museum-City of Gjirokastra was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005. It is a compact city with a Historical Center made by stone building one above other. A good part of the alleys are pedestrian routes because are conceived on another era. In the characteristics of these ensembles a crucial role plays the configuration of the terrain on which they arise. The most picturesque ensembles we can find in Gjirokastra are: "Pazar i Vjeter", quarters of "Pllake" and "Hazmurat" Road of "Qafa Pazarit" is part of the Museum Zone, of first category, with a width of 5-6m, high sloped and paved with stone. The circulation of vehicles is very difficult, but above all difficulties, it is the main distribution node.

## ALBANIAN LEGISLATION FOR PROTECTED AREAS

The Albanian legislation defines the objects of Cultural Heritage as follows: a) 'Archaeological Centre' is the area where monuments and archaeological objects on and under the ground are preserved; b) 'Historic Centre' is the urban or rural ensemble of historic and cultural values under protection of the state; c) 'Museum Town' (or 'Museum City') is the urban Centre protected by the state for its historical and cultural value.

Monuments are categorized according to the following criteria:

- 1st Category monuments are "constructions of distinguished values and special importance to the cultural heritage. They are preserved in the entirety of their architectonic and technical components".
- 2nd Category monuments are "all the buildings located within the museum areas and those located within the protected areas of the Museum Cities in the Historic Centres not defined as monuments of 1st category". Although according to Albanian law, "2nd category monuments are those constructions which represent salient values, mainly externally", in Gjirokastra and Berat, 2nd category monuments are all the constructions in the historic centres which are not defined as 1st category monuments.

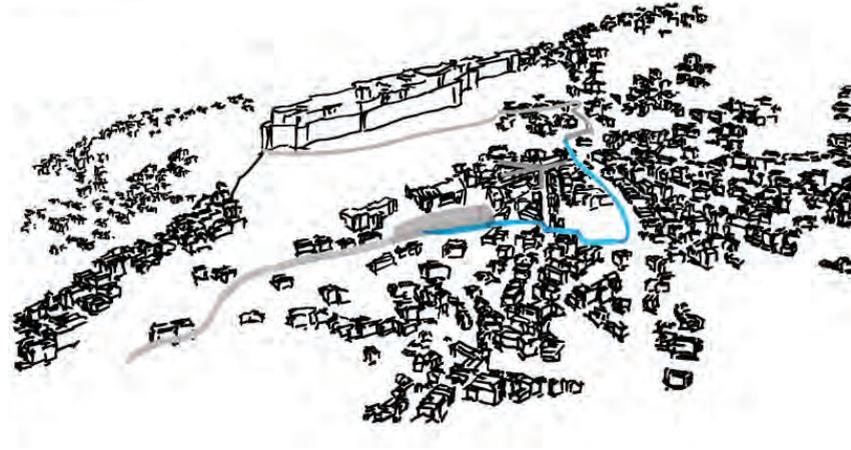
The challenge in this Monumental city with stone buildings in a very compact placement, is to find the possibility to realize a Bypass toward the Centre by fulfilling these conditions:

- Not ruin buildings because it is a Protected Zone and most of them are monuments of the 1st category and others of 2nd category.
- The road must fit in the urban morphology of the city
- Must respect the existing Landscape
- Must be integrated in the best way to the existing scheme in a natural and fluid circulation
- Must save the continuing connection between the different quarters of the city and not create artificial conditions that large areas remain on difficult communication with the city Centre.
- The Centre and each zone must have the opportunity to be visited normally by the residents also carrying their goods, tourists and the elder people, under optimal conditions.



UNESCO protection zones





### OPTION 1

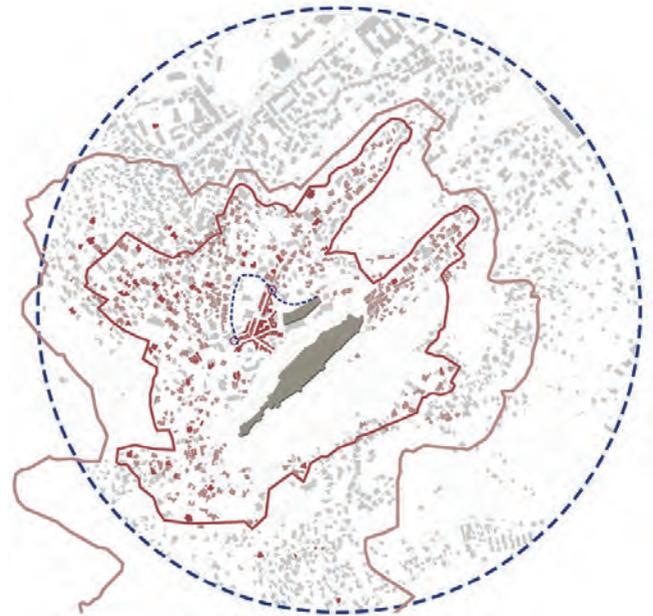
Scheme 1 is an old known "solution" thought, mentioned, discussed and overthrown by Gjirokastra's citizens and the of ICM plan that shows that two buildings of the 1st category of protection have to be destroyed. This was not the only problem of this scheme but also the involvement of very visible and yet aggressive bridge structures to sidetrack the cars from the Çerçiz Topulli plaza toward the Cultural House. It is almost a short way to avoid the Qafa e Pazarit but carrying a lot of impossibilities and certainly not an option to be considered.

#### Advantages

- Short length: 450 m
- Stable ground
- Adequate road width + sidewalk ensured
- Fast and comfortable traffic deviation

#### Disadvantages

- Construction of demanding and costly engineering works (retaining walls, estacades) required.
- Considerable slope
- High visual impact in a historic environment
- High costs (calculated value about 405 million leke) and long construction time
- Requires the demolition of two objects in the ensemble of monuments
- Damaging the protected green area





## OPTION 2

Scheme 2 had to be considered just for the sake of being economically reasonable trying to use the outmost of the city's streets. In this version, would be recognized a lot of 2m narrow points between buildings of the 1st and 2nd category of protection, proving the inconvenience of this solution.

### Advantages

- Existing road rehabilitation: 2.5 km
- Lower costs compared to other options (about 58 million leke)
- Revitalization of commercial activities in existing neighborhoods (mecite, hazmurat and varosh)

### Disadvantages

- Inadequate road standards (narrow segments, up to 2m)
- Long route
- Requires the demolition of a large number of houses (cultural monuments), amounting to an expropriation value of 50 million leke



### OPTION 3

Scheme 3 is an obvious solution at first glance, trying to make an almost straight road from the back of the castle above the bank of the stream, but it causes some substantial problems.

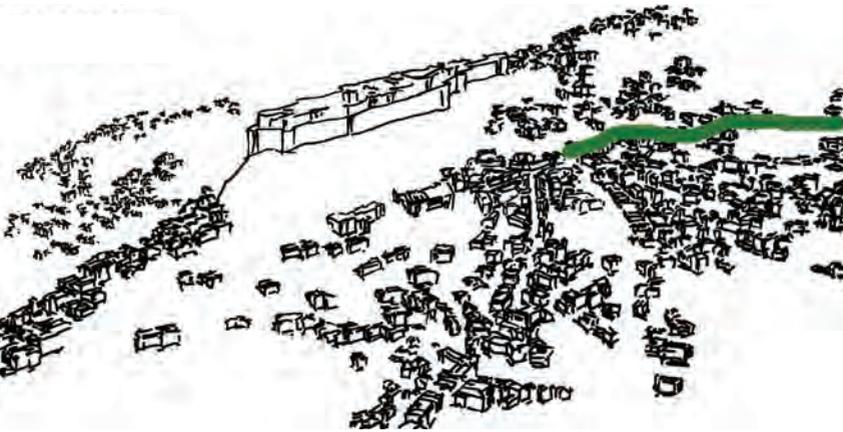
#### Advantages

- Length: 1000 m
- New proposed axis directly connected with the national road
- None of the cultural monuments is demolished

#### Disadvantages

- Major building works required (a bridge or a combined structure above the river of about 700 m with high retaining walls), which are more demanding and more costly than other options - calculated value of about 535 million Lek
- Extended axis that requires greater investments in money and time
- Sloped terrain with a significant level difference in relation to the historic centre
- Unstable slope formations on both sides of the river
- The river serves as one of the main channels of natural drainage for the upper neighbourhoods of the south slopes of Gjirokastra Castle
- Passing over a creek with relatively low flows but very aggressive during rainfall periods
- Requires a retaining structure throughout all its length
- Distance from the historic centre doesn't solve the connection of the upper neighborhoods with the bazaar area
- Damages the ecosystems of the flora and fauna in an area almost untouched by urban development





#### OPTION 4

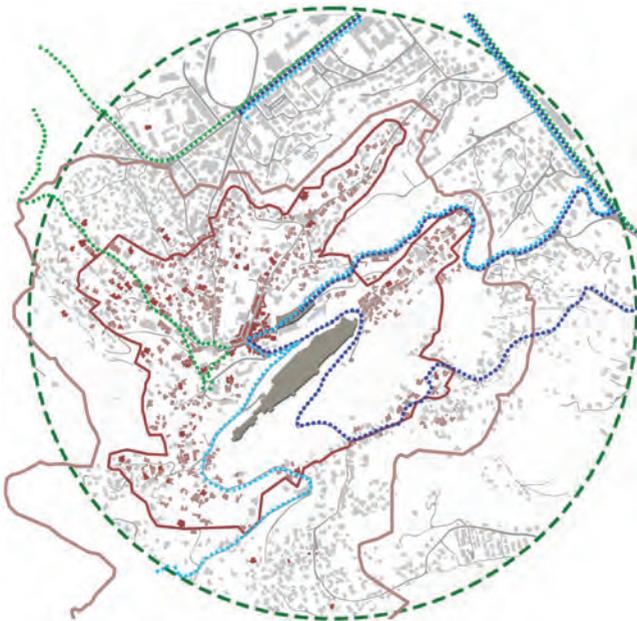
Scheme 4 provides a timetable for private cars, public circulation and deferring the way cars go from Qafa e Pazarit to other streets nearby. The public buses cross the Qafa e Pazarit every 4 minutes and by blocking this part of the street they have to be pushed too far away increasing the consumption, waiting time and also making new difficult points to pass.

#### Advantages

- No direct costs in building the bypass
- It avoids large interventions in the historic centre and the protected zone, which moreover require complex engineering intervention

#### Disadvantages

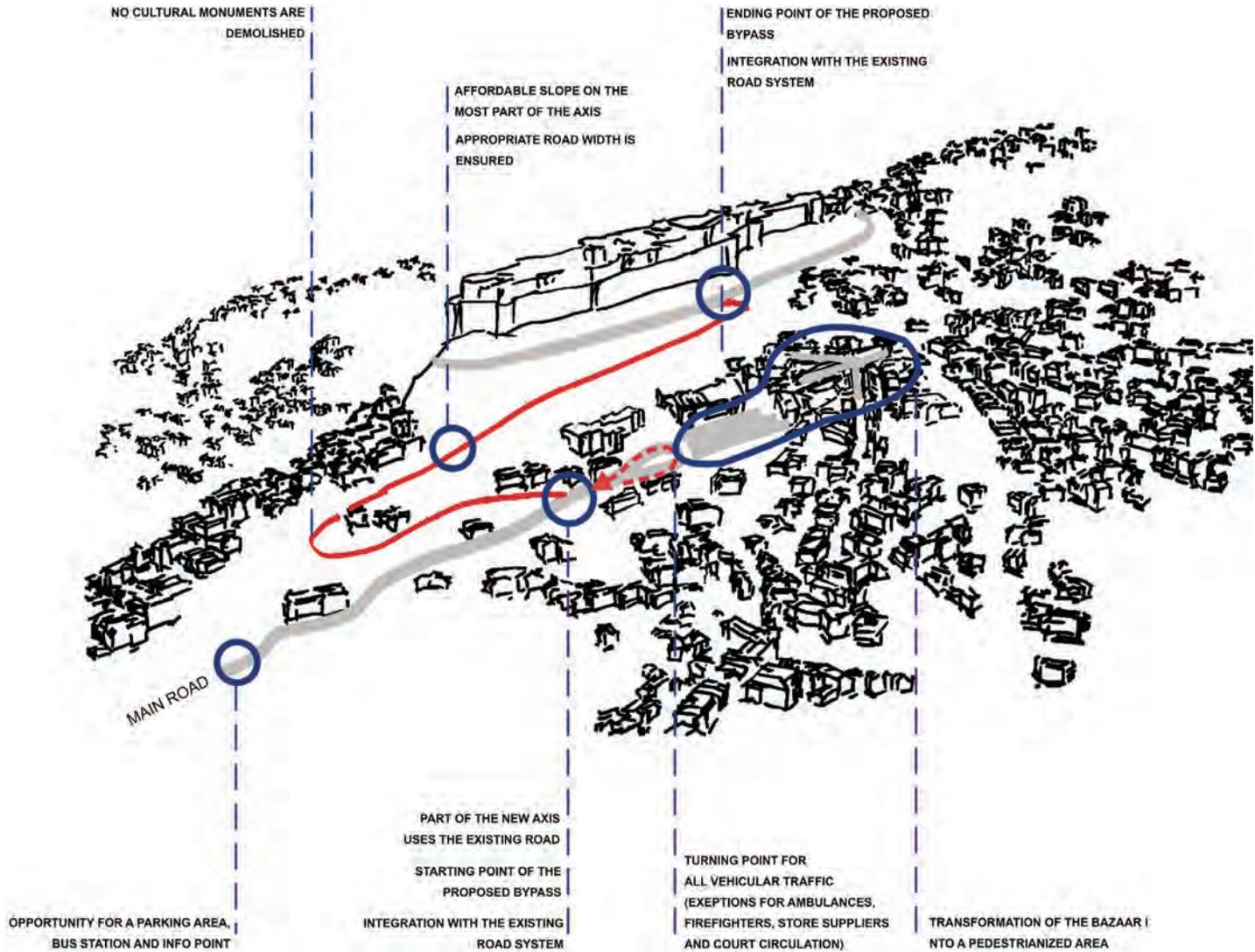
- Not a definite solution for turning the bazaar area in a pedestrianized zone
- Extends and hinders traffic in other parts
- Requires improvements in existing roads (widening, improvement of rays, high retaining walls), resulting in the demolition of several objects (almost all not cultural monuments), as well as other road works
- 2 bus lines will continue to pass the bazaar area without time restriction



### **CONCEPT PROPOSAL**

The NEW BYPASS in the Protected Area

The proposed version starts just before the Kalivopuli house and enters inclined at 13% under the castle, continuing above the Municipality and the Çajupi Hotel. It is a 2-lane and 2-way road. It connects to the existing road that brings to the castle and it divides in both directions aside the castle. This solution is the most efficient from all the above mentioned proposals.



### ADVANTAGES:

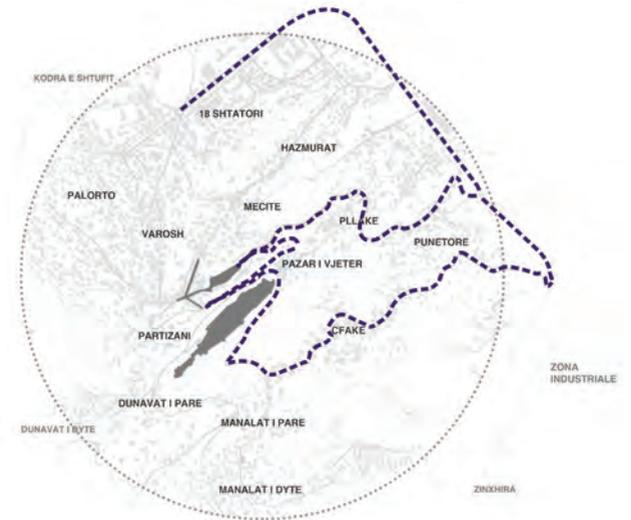
- Close to the Qafa e Pazarit
- Short (568m)
- It sidetracks the circulation as needed, from Qafa e Pazarit to just few meters more on top of the castles slope by making easier to the passengers to arrive to their inside Bazaar residents.
- It doesn't affect the everyday life by changing the habitual directions.
- Housing blocks are so tight that only few pedestrian paths can wind among them, and as a result the intervention for drafting new roads is difficult and sometimes quite impossible because of the risk it entails.
- Both roads that bring to the old city centre have no constant section, for example the road which links Gjirokastra with national road, passing from "Puntore" quarter , has a variable section from 6-1 Om depending on the urban and terrain situation.
- Road of "Qafa e Pazarit" is part of the Museum Zone, of first category, with a width of 5-6m , high sloped and paved with stone. The circulation of vehicles is very difficult, but above all difficulties, it is the main distribution node.
- Gjirokastra has alternative roads to get to the uphill dwelling area but in some sections they face a serious problem. For example quarters of Manalat I and Manalat II are linked to the national road with an asphalt paved road. It becomes narrow, getting deeper in the urban compact dwelling structure till the point of making impossible the interchange of two cars.
- For paving it is usually used the stone pattern, but are many the segments in the historic area that due to many reasons, mainly lack of budget, which are paved with asphalt; breaking in this way the continuity of traditional urban design.

The Bypass is important, not as just scenery or a backdrop, but because it links culture with nature, and past with present.

- This Bypass has many values not all of them tangible; it matters to, and is valued by, people and provides a context for people's lives.
- It puts emphasis on the whole landscape not just the 'best bits' and applies to all landscapes everywhere and in any condition - land, natural, rural, urban and peri-urban, outstanding, ordinary and degraded.
- Allows the circulation of the existing city bus of 20 people, residents cars, tours, emergency cars and the small fire fighting cars (as suggested by the Report for Mission of Protection for the Heritage Property. Eleni Maistrou 2012 Also to take consider: The fire fighting arrangements in the historic urban zone should be improved.



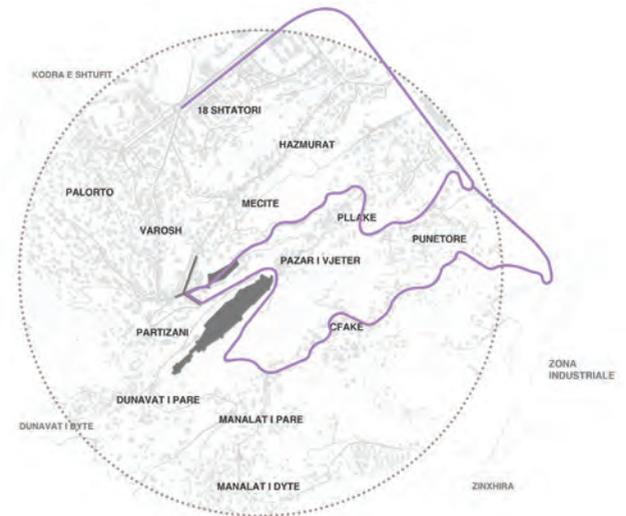
"Çerçiz Topulli" Square / Connecting stairs and bypass.  
Bypass road plan

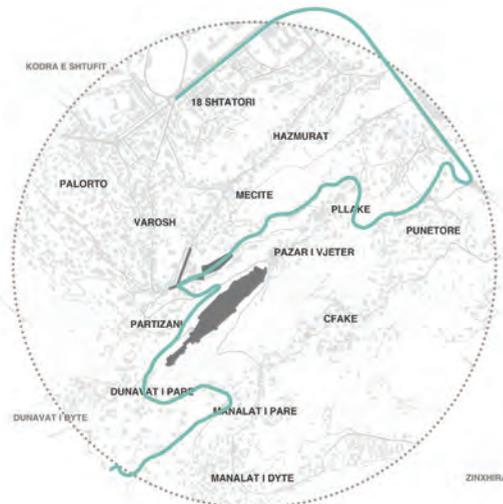
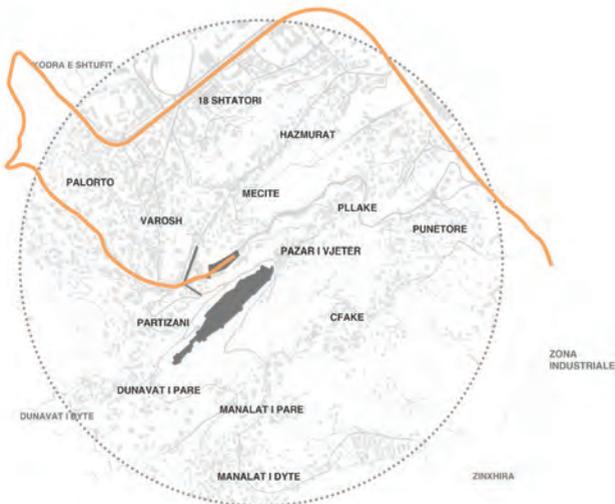


## PROJECT DATA

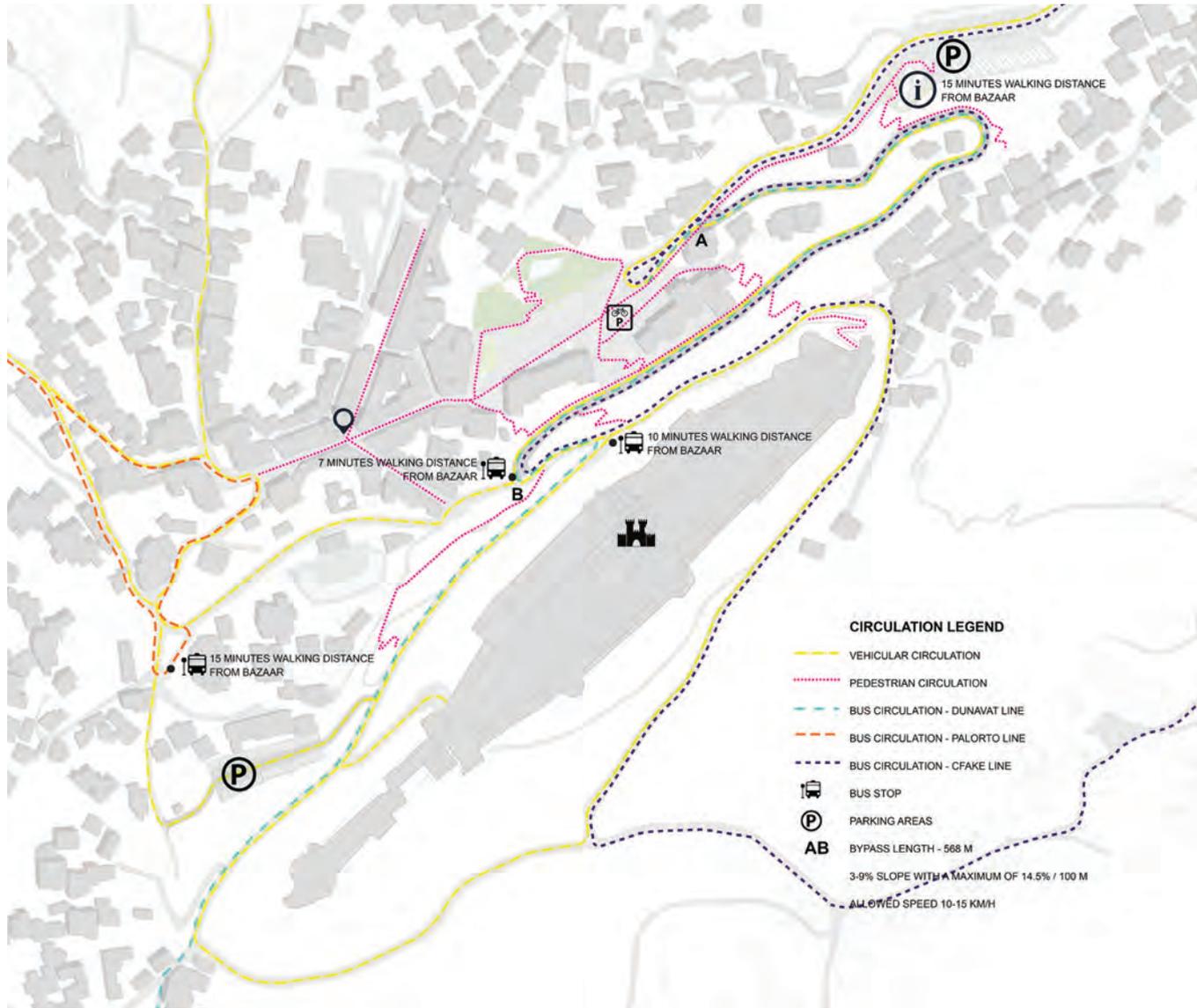
The alignment of this axis starts at “Cerciz Topulli” square, by passing in the existing road “Dr.Kalivopuli” for 180m. Since the existing road width is no more than 3.5m, it expands in the left side by using stone walls or concrete walls. The concrete walls will be dressed in decorative stones, in order to preserve the architecture of the city. Furthermore, the alignment deviates through a turning with 15m radius, by avoiding two residential buildings located in the right side of the road alignment. This is one of the most difficult points of the Project, because from one side there are situated two residential buildings and from the other side is located a high steep slope where you can find other residential buildings. In this part of the road, are conceived some solutions that consist in:

- The protection of the upper slope and the residential buildings through the construction of net piles on both sides, or only from the side of the buildings and the upper slope with anchors to guarantee the slope stability after the excavation in a very steep terrain.
- The construction of a cut and cover Tunnel with a length of 100 m to avoid the high environmental impact that causes the first solution.

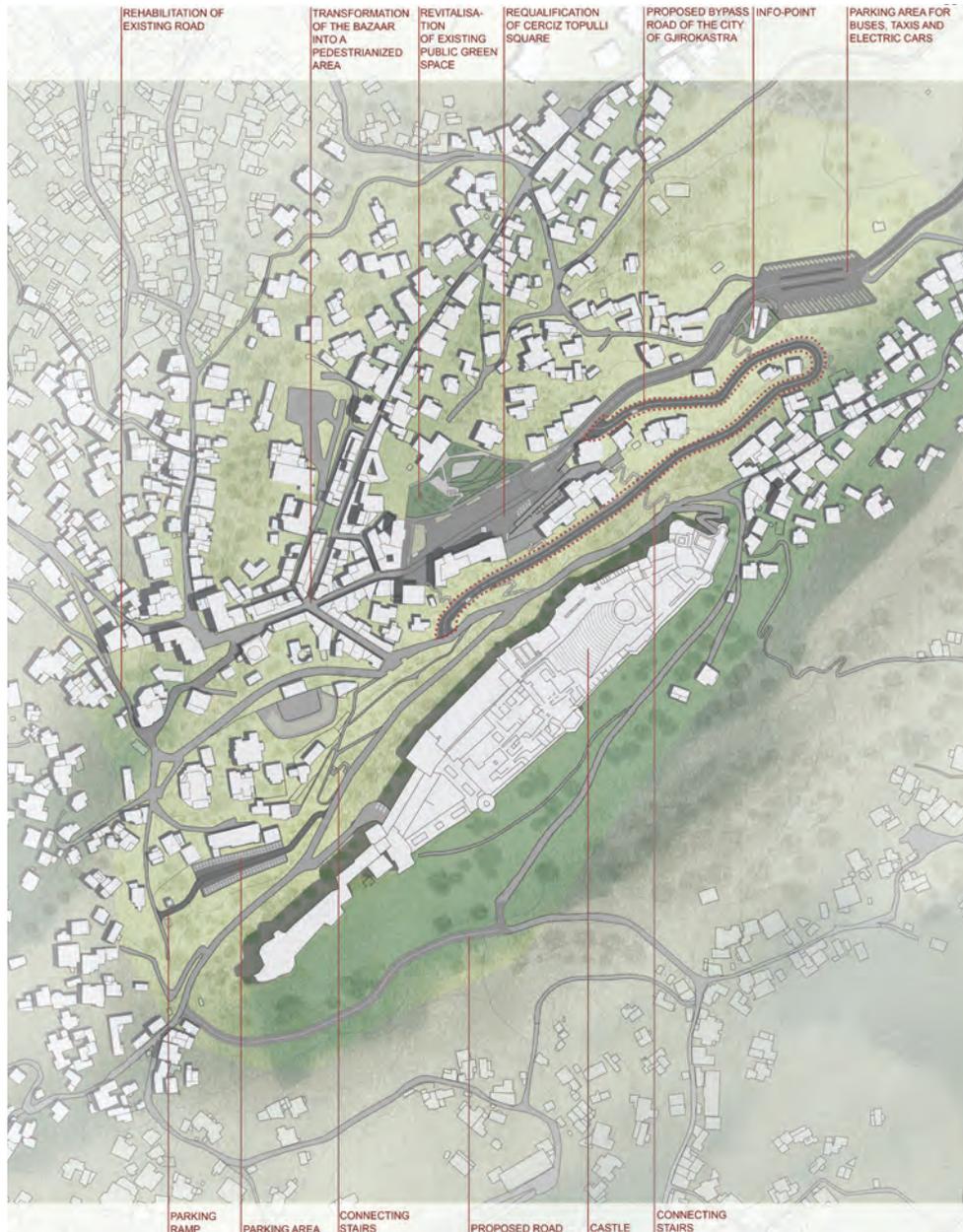




# GJIROKASTRA BYPASS



Intervention map  
The new bypass in the protected area.





Typical bypass  
cross section

After the turning alignments start to gain height, achieving the maximal inclination of the Project (14.5% for a length of 100m), the alignment continues in parallel with “Cerciz Topulli” square, passes behind the Municipality building and “Cajupi” Hotel, only 30m a far from the ending of “Qafa e Pazarit” roads. In “Gjin Bue Shpata” road passes all the vehicle traffic flow to the upper neighborhoods Dunavat 1,11; Manalat 1,11; Pazar i Vjetër; Cfaqë). In this segment, the new road passes in the green area and in very steep slopes. For this reason, it is conceived that the alignment should pass in filling, through the use of reinforced soil walls (green terramesh type) and in the areas where it is required the excavation of the upper slopes in laminated, they will be protected through the use of geosynthetic nets and anchors with a length of 3-5m. Terramesh walls and the protected slopes will be covered in vegetation through the hydro seeding methods. Engineering technique of the terramesh walls system has advantages not only in the technique point of view, due to its flexibility and its adaptation with rugged terrain and limited spaces, but also in the esthetic point of view and its interaction with the surrounding landscape. This walls and protected slopes with green vegetated geomat nets are totally integrated with the green area of the slope.



Stairs connecting the bypass to the existing road.  
Different designs for the "Çerçiz Topulli" Square.

The construction of the bypass in the proposed axis avoids the circulation of the vehicles in “Çerçiz Topulli” square and “Qafa e Pazarit” and guarantees the normal flow in the upper neighborhoods (Dunavat 1,11; Manalat 1,11; Pazar i Vjeter; Cfake; Partizani) by extending the length of the movement only in 200 meters. Meanwhile, the traffic that passes from “Çerçiz Topulli” square to Palorto neighborhood will continue the movement from the exit of the bypass to “Shezai Çomo” street and then to “Ismail Kadare” street. To keep the normal traffic flow to “Palorto” and “Granice” neighborhood, are required some interventions for the widening of a part of the alignment, in a length of 50m as well as the improvement of the turning near “Asim Zeneli” high school (showed in map). Meanwhile, the positions of bus stations that are located at “Çerçiz Topulli” square and in to exit of “Qafa e Pazarit” will change very little.

By the construction of this axis, the stations will be in the entrance of “Çerçiz Topulli” square and in the exit of “Qafa e Pazarit” only 30m away from the actual one. This ensures a natural movement of people in “Qafa e Pazarit”, by giving it a greater focus as a central point of the city (and not isolating it). This is one of the biggest advantages of this axis compared to the proposed axis in Option IV, which removes the natural movement of people, by removing the circulation of vehicles in this area. The movement of people from the upper neighborhoods to “Qafa e Pazarit” in Option IV, could be realized on foot, or in a vehicle with a unique reciprocation destination.



Castle

Bazaar Area

Bypass

Green Public Square

## 03 C+S CAPPAL ASSOCIATI + F&M INGEGNERIA SPA + SON ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION

### TEAM COMPOSITION:

**Architect & Urban Designer**

Carlo Cappai

**Architect & Heritage Expert**

Alessandra Segantini

**Local Architect & Urban Planner**

Ariela Kushi

**Local Architect & Landscape Architect**

Erind Bejleri

**Road Engineer**

Stefano Rioda

**Civil Engineer**

Alessandro Bonaventura

**Transport Engineer**

Leonardo De Benett

**Economic Sustainability**

Rade Batinica



The Rockefeller centre design team

### **We believe in processes**

*We believe that design needs to incorporate time in the process. This attitude is not aimed to deliver a final product, but instead to elaborate a strategy which ensures the process and allows adjustments and modifications, without losing the framework. Starting by mapping and territorial observations and descriptions, we elaborate a strategy, which is aimed to involve, bring together and take advantage from the different stakeholders and protagonists involved in the process, to activate economic and human energies. The urban processes of transformation are economical, physical, social and obviously political.*

## THE REGIONAL ROLE OF GYROKASTRA IN HISTORY

The old town of Gjirokastra, a small Ottoman-era city in southern Albania (now a UNESCO World Heritage site), was built with a finger-shaped distribution, which follows the topography of an impressive mountain slope, Mali i Gjere, overlooking the Drino River valley, at about 300 m above sea level. A boat-shaped fortification, the second largest in the Balkan Peninsula, caps it. On the opposite side of the valley, the town faces another dramatic mountain range, Lunxheria. With an enviable geographic position, controlling the Drino River valley and serving as a bridge between the Ionian coast and the Ioannina basin (now in northern Greece), Gjirokastra has always been sought after by local and foreign rulers.

As part of the cultural heart of the Ottoman Empire, which comprised the Sea of Marmara and the three imperial cities near it (Bursa, Istanbul, and Edirne), Macedonia, the southwestern Black Sea, and western Anatolia, the territory of Gjirokastra shares with these areas shared many urban design traits including a close rapport between city and nature, and a loose articulation of the urban space. Ottoman cities were typically defenseless, with no walls, reflecting Ottoman self-confidence. The building mass was articulated into distinctive units called mahallas organized around a mosque. Mahallas were small urban villages, which exercised strong social controls to preserve law and order. There was no division by class. The density was relatively low and cities were full of trees, which blurred the urban-rural separation. The road systems were tortuous and convoluted, with no precise hierarchical transition. Virtually all houses were single-family, reflecting a measure of individualism. No precise rules were in place to regulate house form because government, in the Western sense (i.e. charters or communes), was foreign to the Ottoman city. Citizens were only enjoined from building in such a way that threatened accepted social behavior. House construction rules were subject to the respect of custom, ownership, and privacy. The appearance towards the street being unimportant, houses were typically introverted while urban vistas were avoided. Some Ottoman urban design traits, such as house introversion, lack of formal planning controls, organic street patterns, and the presence of large, open or semi-open circulation spaces within houses were replicated in the Albanian lands of the Empire. The

defensible kule environment of Gjirokastra and some other Albanian cities and villages, with vertical sturdy houses on hilltops, radically differs from the typical open and spread out Ottoman townscape. However, it also incorporates some elements of Ottoman-style domestic comfort in the upper levels. Earlier urban fortified houses typically consisted of a regular house adjoined by a tower (sometimes two), to which the family repaired in case of danger. The house and tower formed a complex surrounded by thick walls and sometimes moats. In some cases, e.g. in the summer residences of wealthy urbanites, the house was absent and the family lived in the tower itself. These inhabitable but uncomfortable towers had a typical defensive design: compactness and vertical thrust, stone walls, simple square layout with a single room per floor, top floor machicolations, laconic façades pierced with embrasures and loopholes, and a single main entrance located on the second floor and reached through circuitous external stairs to expose visitors. In urban areas, the towers and houses gradually merged into the kule type, a device that organically integrates defensive and residential functions. Its robust structure and military appearance were designed to intimidate and ward off enemies. A taller and stronger kule signaled the presence of a more powerful clan. Several Albanian cities, including Gjirokastra, Berat, Shkodra, and Kruja, have kule houses but Gjirokastra contains the most advanced and elaborate exemplars. Therefore Gjirokastra is a place to start imagining the future development of the Region. At the same time and due to its special recognized historic value it can act as the place which can be exposed to both its citizens and to foreigner visitors.

Territorial transformation is the historic process of the construction of the landscape, by the interaction between culture and nature, which generated local identities through balanced and productive activities, in equilibrium with the specificity of the places, adapting the cultural actions to the natural order, as it is stated in the Landscape European Convention. Gjirokastra is very interesting for us as it a rare piece of preserved historic, well-preserved Ottoman town, a landscape where human being and nature are well connected and have enriched the potentials of the site.

The text is a rielaboration of the following paper: L. Mezini, D. Pojani *Defense, Identity, and Urban Form: The Extreme Case of Gjirokastra*

### TEST-CASE (FOR SOUTH-ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENT)

In the next years the Southern part of Albania, but more generally speaking the country of Albania will have to grow inside the urbanized sites. This process needs to be driven without wasting new land, but transforming, adapting, developing and consolidating the existing built parts.

As such, Gjirokastra is an outstanding example of urban and architectural designs based on:

- a culture of self-defense by individual family units, which are numerous, preserved and recognizable in the city today;
- an extraordinary material continuity between the public realm and the privately owned buildings, which allow Gjirokastra as to be recognized as an entity, with a strong historic identity;
- a preserved intersection between the natural features of the landscape and the human-made built landscape.



Simpler versions of Albanian tower houses

## GJIROKASTRA BYPASS



Within above mentioned topics, which range from the city morphology within the territory to the small typological scale, Gjirokastra can operate as a test-case for the entire Southern region of Albania to start a process for the creation of a contemporary identity in continuity with the glories of the past.



The iterwaved relationship between the natural environment and the human settlement

### UN-INHABITED USED SPACE OF THE CITY

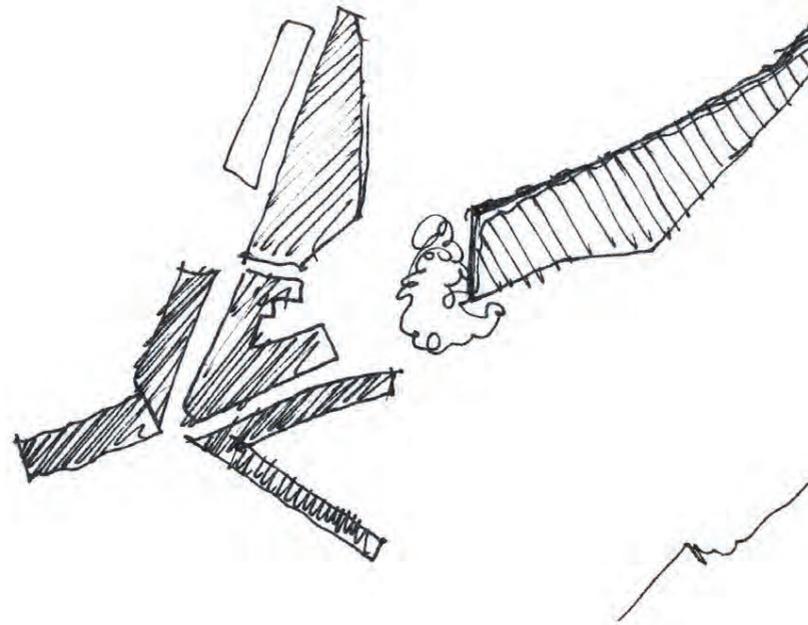
Gjirokastra is the representation of this situation, which can be synthesized in the following pathogen elements which occur to the territory/city:

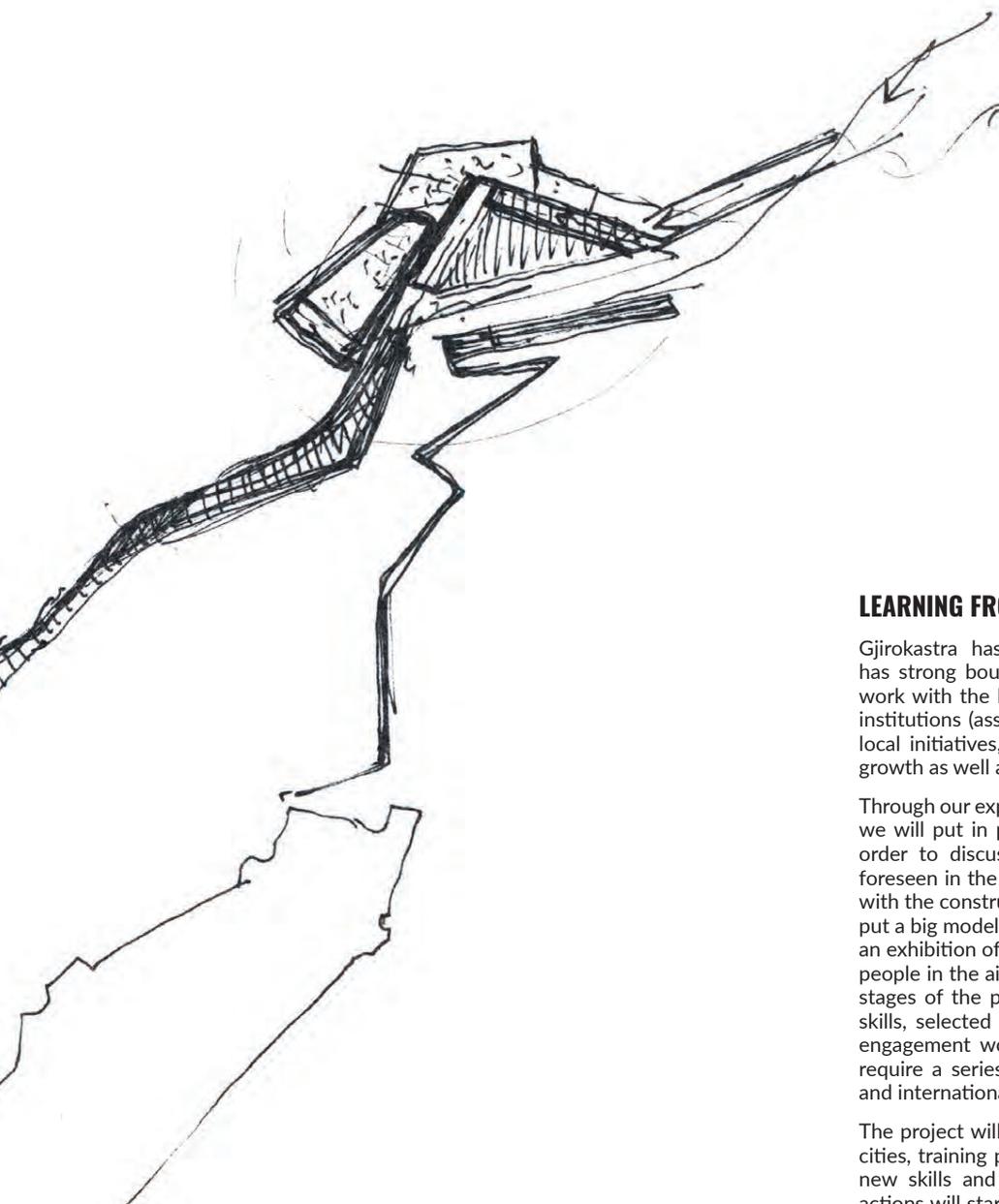
- lack of infrastructural connections (streets, IT networks);
- lack of touristic offer (if we exclude the historic value)
- lack of energy-free networks;
- lack of hospitality nodes;
- lack of cultural networks with universities and heritage institutions;

### SHRINKING

As it occurs in nature, when a disease happens, a multi-component defense-mechanism acting through a self-induced resistance, is activated to seal the systemic gap and acquire a new systemic resistance in continuity with the DNA of that body/plant. These notes will trace the process through which we understand and bridge this same concept in the process of transformation of Gjirokastra in the next 20 years, being shrinkage the disease we need to cope with. Albania was decimated by 60 years of communist regime, which had a more significant adverse effect on the Albanian economy than it did on the neighboring countries to the extent that its economy is still significantly lagging behind compared to the other ex-Soviet countries in the Region.

Albania suffered from poverty, unemployment and immigration more than the other similar countries and, whilst there are clearly signs of recovery, this happens very slowly and the lives of the ordinary people, outside the capital of Tirana, have changed little in the last twenty years.





## LEARNING FROM PEOPLE

Gjirokastra has a population of 43.000 inhabitants. The population has strong boundaries with its territory, so the aim is to intercept and work with the local communities but also civic, cultural and educational institutions (associations, schools, etc...) to learn from them and support local initiatives, which will result in a tailored proposal which improves growth as well as addressing the needs of the local community.

Through our experience in the past 20 years of engaging with communities we will put in place 'tables of discussion' with the local communities in order to discuss, understand and integrate what we might have not foreseen in the planning approach. This process of participation will start with the construction of a physical low-cost urban furniture where we will put a big model of the masterplan. This action is NOT to be understood as an exhibition of our work, but as a tool/frame to start a conversation with people in the aim of adapting and implementing our work at the different stages of the process. In order to acquire the new necessary tools and skills, selected stakeholders from key institutions will take part in civic engagement workshops. In fact the implementation of the project will require a series of roundtable discussions, conversations, presentations and international best practice involved.

The project will become a new model for urban regeneration of heritage cities, training people as well as the public authorities and disseminating new skills and shared knowledge among all the actors involved. The actions will start a strategy of communication to settle Gjirokastra on the international agenda for heritage and smart sustainable growth.

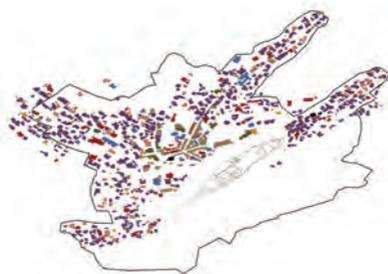
Map of potentials

-  New parkings
-  New pedestrian area (hybrid market - info point - swimming pools etc)
-  New panoramic course
-  River
-  Low bypass
-  High bypass
-  Main driveways
-  New pedestrian path in the park
-  New pedestrian roads
-  New pedestrian area
-  Buffer zone
-  Centre zone





1. Buildings' state of preservation
2. Green areas
3. Ground floor functions
4. Street pavement



The specificity of the context, its history -which is that of the stratification of human actions into the materiality of the place, but also that of the techniques of construction-, its physical features - materiality, topography, strata, climate, its socio-political expectations, its economic features and potentials are studied as different layers of the context. This initial work of mapping and analysis was necessary to create what we define the map of potentials, a tool which reveals intersections and interferences between the different layers, on one side, directing the choice of the place of intervention, on the other.

The design intervention is the ability to turn each technical solution into a soft technological structure to be activated by people and communities, the role of which is that of creating a relation with history and time stratified on the existing built and un-built landscapes, and translating those values into contemporary, combining the old and the new. The map of potentials reveals the necessary and challenging locations for the input of new visible and invisible micro-scale and macro-scale interventions (Physical, energy, flows, people), which will act as a multi-component defense-mechanism activating a self-induced systemic resistance to fight shrinkage. We define these objects the -scape adaptors.

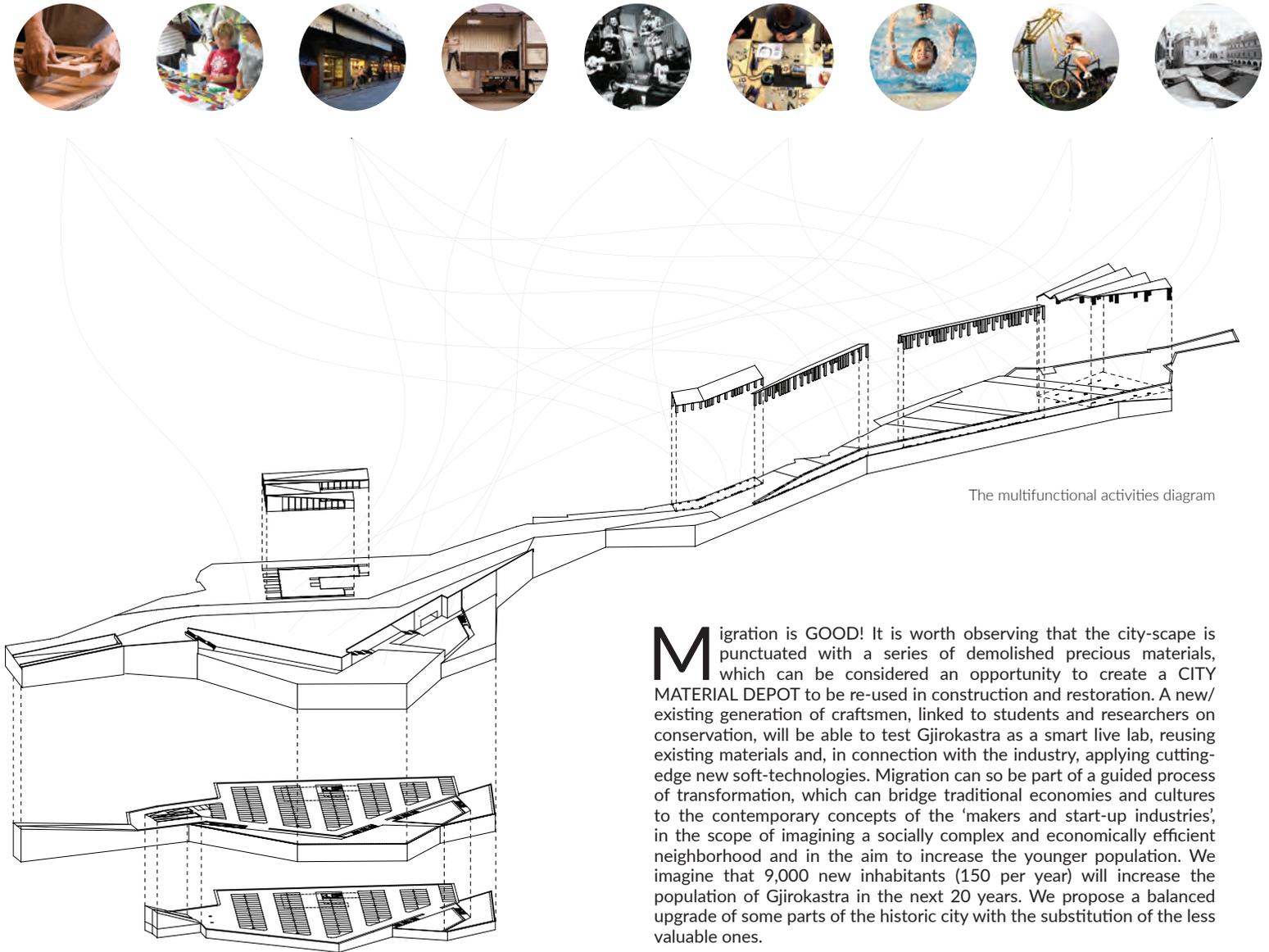
### **HERITAGE IS THE FUTURE AND NOT THE PAST!**

Conventionally speaking, the main aspect for the potential growth and transformation of cities with great historic asset (and Gjirokastra is certainly one of these) is its touristic potential. With respect of Gjirokastra, we believe this task to be more complex (and more crucial to the success of the project) than allowing the conventional way of using as much land as possible, to build big hotel structures, huge infrastructures, or the insertion of new programmes, without finding a strategy of upgrading the depleted historic fabrics, without displacing its low-income population, instead engaging with it to increase resilient growth as well.

We have listed a series of major economic areas of interventions which could touch the Albanian community with its skills and culture and which could bring a different economic perspective to the city:

- improvement of the educational network of Conservation, settling Gjirokastra as a key space where to study/test/apply heritage interventions;
- apply to European/International funding for Conservation in networking with the major Conservation Institutions (i.e. British Heritage Fund, Venetian Conservation Institution, major European universities);
- create a Recycling Material Depot to reuse for free the demolished materials in the urban realm;
- map a series of buildings which can undergo a process of renovation and can be turned into diffused hospitality;
- involve students and craftsmen in the processes of renovation as in a 'conservation live lab';
- design and build a new Pedestrian Historic Centre Infrastructure, which is a 'smart' network to use internet and energy connections for free- this will allow the potential installment of temporary or more stable activities connected with tourism (craftmanship, makers, start-ups, etc...)

It is worth remembering that a huge group of the native population of South Albania, migrated towards Greece after the Communist age to export their craftmanship. It is therefore possible to imagine a reversal of this policy, if the authorities could commit entirely to the proposed social, cultural and economic agenda. The escape happened and it is always possible to be reversed: Gjirokastra has a strong craftmanship background, which can be brought back to restore the city and create more working opportunities!

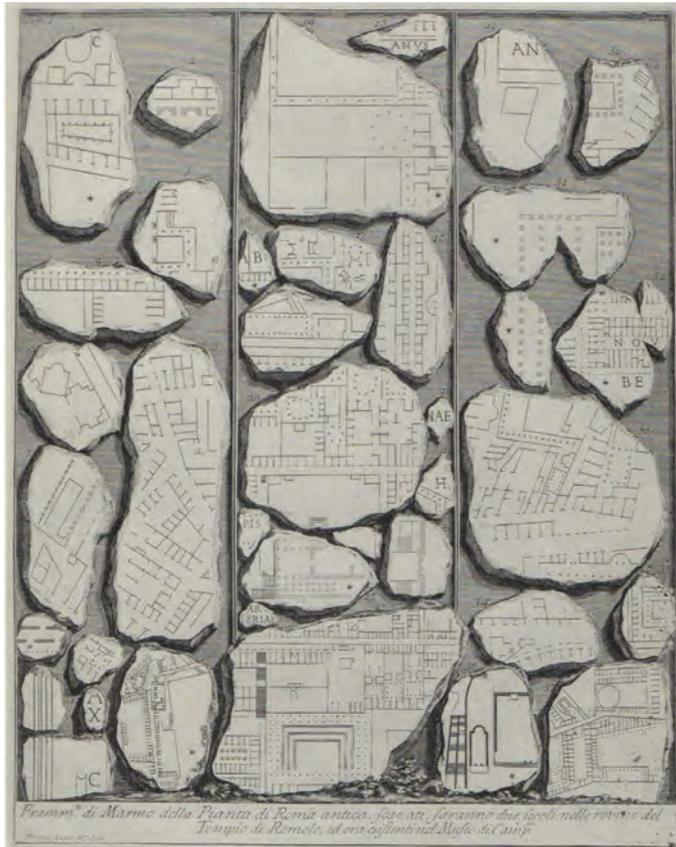


The multifunctional activities diagram

**M**igration is GOOD! It is worth observing that the city-scape is punctuated with a series of demolished precious materials, which can be considered an opportunity to create a CITY MATERIAL DEPOT to be re-used in construction and restoration. A new/existing generation of craftsmen, linked to students and researchers on conservation, will be able to test Gjirokastra as a smart live lab, reusing existing materials and, in connection with the industry, applying cutting-edge new soft-technologies. Migration can so be part of a guided process of transformation, which can bridge traditional economies and cultures to the contemporary concepts of the 'makers and start-up industries', in the scope of imagining a socially complex and economically efficient neighborhood and in the aim to increase the younger population. We imagine that 9,000 new inhabitants (150 per year) will increase the population of Gjirokastra in the next 20 years. We propose a balanced upgrade of some parts of the historic city with the substitution of the less valuable ones.

## GJIROKASTRA BYPASS

**H**istory and Heritage. Gjirokastra is a very well preserved cultural entity representing the glorious past of an Ottoman city and for this reason it has been included as part of UNESCO. For us Italian and especially Venetian, the situation is well-known, as we are used to understand and cope with heritage and consolidated urban historic settlements. Although the UNESCO recognition can be considered a positive step for Gjirokastra, we need to recognize that NOT always this is a positive fact. We will include people's stories, skills, culture and potentials!



"Frammenti di marmo della pianta di Roma antica" G.B. Piranesi

Derelict and demolished parts of the city and potential reuse through the example of the paths towards Athen's Acropolis by Dimitris Pikionis



Craftmanship and makers

## TOWARDS THE HIBRIDICITY

The preservation of the complexity of the city (the fragments) means that each intervention needs to be different and give character to a specific place. Our strategy of transformation of the city works through the construction of a series of visible and invisible networks and infrastructures, open to act as frames for different programmes and to be activated in different ways and times by the community. The main infrastructures we activate are:

1. The educational and cultural network.
2. The historic routes.
3. The meso-scale infrastructures

### FRAGMENTS

We do not propose of erase any of the existing parts of the city (surely not the preserved historic areas) but as well the more recent unglorious interventions. The concept of the fragments is a backbone for the project, which will allow only the punctual intervention on the existing urban landscape which is necessary and sufficient to exploit the economic, cultural and social potentials of the site.

### ACCESSIBILITY

The proposed vehicular accessibility is not a new big IMPOSED HIGHWAY, but a more capillary network, which takes advantage of the potential of the site and the diffused street pattern of the Ottoman framework. This solution allows a series of different beneficial outputs for the project: low impact on the landscape; small interventions with small economic expenditure; possibility to admire the built and unbuilt environment of the Region; possibility to use the car routes for tourist as well as local purposes;

### NODES

The cut of the car accessibility towards the centre of Gjirokastra creates the necessity and potential of building two nodes which can act as welcoming points for tourists who can leave their cars and be transferred towards the city centre with small bus transport. The nodes are not only in service for the tourist welcome, but are designed as hybrid potential spaces to be activated by a various range of activities such as start-up spaces to be rented, market spaces for craftsmanship, food, agricultural products and makers; big events such as the traditional ones or new; leisure spaces, such as swimming pools and skating parks.

### THE SMART INFRASTRUCTURE

Gjirokastra can provide a new model of urban development through the construction of new grafts in the landscape which will house a combination of functions. This graft can be seen as a the new 'smart infrastructure' where immediate and potential programmes can happen. It is designed as a 'smart structure' where, thanks to the thickness of its frame, different activities can be plugged in, at the beginning as temporary ones, which can consolidate in the future and offer a new backbone of economic growth to the historic layer of the city.



The physical interventions





### **WALKABILITY - THE SMART BAZAAR**

The transformation of the area will have a strong impact in the use of the existing road infrastructure. The intervention aims to create a pole, the smart Bazaar, in dialogue with the historic Bazaar, which will act to increase the intensity of the walkable spaces of the city. Public soft transports (small buses, minivans, taxis) are allowed in the pedestrian area, which will have a special character created by the use of materiality.

### **MATERIALITY FOR CONNECTIVITY**

The re-design and improvement of the connectivity spaces of the city explicit through its materiality which we have chosen to be related with the historic grain of the city, recycling the un-used materials of demolitions laying around. The operation will create a bridge connecting memory to contemporary through the public space interventions.



View of the Bazaar

## TWO BY PASS ROADS

Gjirokastra road network is made of a set of streets converging to the Bazaar, the old and traditional city core. This radial system hosts all the traffic of residents (traveling from the more hilly areas at south to the national road SH4) and visitors jeopardizing the preservation and fruition of the entire city historical centre. The proposed scheme relies on the existing road network not requiring massive interventions that may alter the character of the city. By small, punctual actions it creates an extended pedestrianized zone around the Bazaar by diverting the traffic on two bypasses:

- the inner bypass, connected to the new parking structure, provides a quick access to visitors;
- the outer bypass feeds all the settlements on the hillside at south of the castle.

## A PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

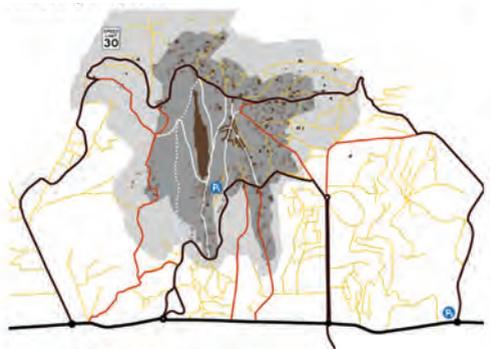
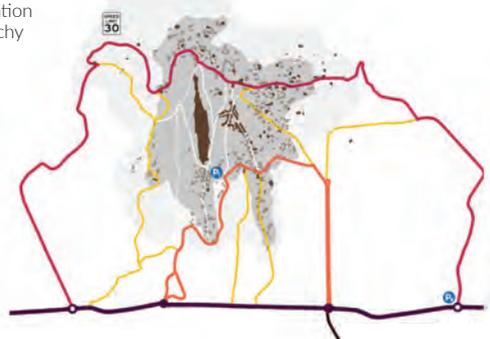
Several elements can be easily identified in Gjirokastra's streets today that contribute to creating a great pedestrian environment, such as: the organic nature of its roads that due to their narrow geometries and sloped grades moderate vehicular traffic naturally, the presence of several cultural and historic hotspots as an opportunity for touristic itineraries, and the strong presence of the surrounding landscapes with diverse green areas and panoramic views around the city.

The proposed scheme for the city gained more than 2 kilometers of pedestrian roads throughout the Historic Centre. These will now foster new activities and city dynamics and attract more visitors to the area. Taking advantage also of the previously mentioned naturalistic importance of the site the proposal has been enriched by integrating new sports and trekking trails that will allow visitors and residents alike to experience mountain and river landscapes, the castle surroundings, and the city centre. All within the safety and comfort of an integrated pedestrian network.

1. Current Scheme
2. Current Circulation
3. Current Hierarchy



- 4. Bypass Scheme
- 5. Proposed Circulation
- 6. Proposed Hierarchy



The proposed scheme rely on the existing road network not requiring massive intervention that may alter the character of the city. By small, punctual interventions it creates an extended pedestrianized zone around the Bazaar by diverting the traffic on two bypasses: the inner bypass, connected to the new parking structure, provides a quick access to visitors; the outer bypass feeds all the settlements on the hillside at south of the castle.

**D**ifferent Access for Different Users. Together with the interventions on the network a whole new approach is proposed to enhance the accessibility and appeal of Gjirokastra. In order to minimize the impact of vehicular traffic a new navigation system will drive visitors directly to the new main parking areas P1 and P2. From the new central parking structure P1, located at the edge of the pedestrian area, the main city attractions will be reachable on foot. The interchange car park P2, located out of the city, next to the coaches' bus deposit, will be connected by an electric shuttle bus. Some categories of users (emergency vehicles, servicing and maybe residents) will be able to access the pedestrian area at certain conditions. An automated control system will manage the access depending on the time and day of the week.



View of the Bazaar



## HOW TO MANAGE TRAFFIC

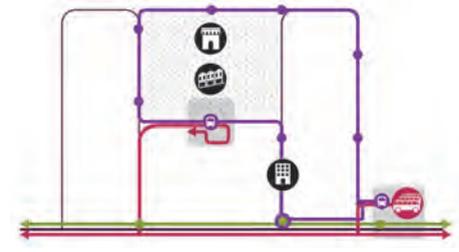
Keeping pedestrian safety in mind the proposal implements several measures that make this one of its priorities, such as: the entire historical area will have a limited speed of 30km/h, visible signage will warn drivers they are entering a pedestrian friendly area, if required traffic calming measures will be implemented (speed bumps or raised crosswalks) in order to ensure the established speed limit is maintained within the area.

The new pedestrian zone's accessibility will be controlled in the area, by establishing vehicle categories that will have access at all times (service or emergency vehicles) and restricting access to all other typologies. In order to make sure the policy is respected by the drivers the proposal predicts a system of "gates" or entries that will be controlled through an automated system, such as hydraulic bollards.

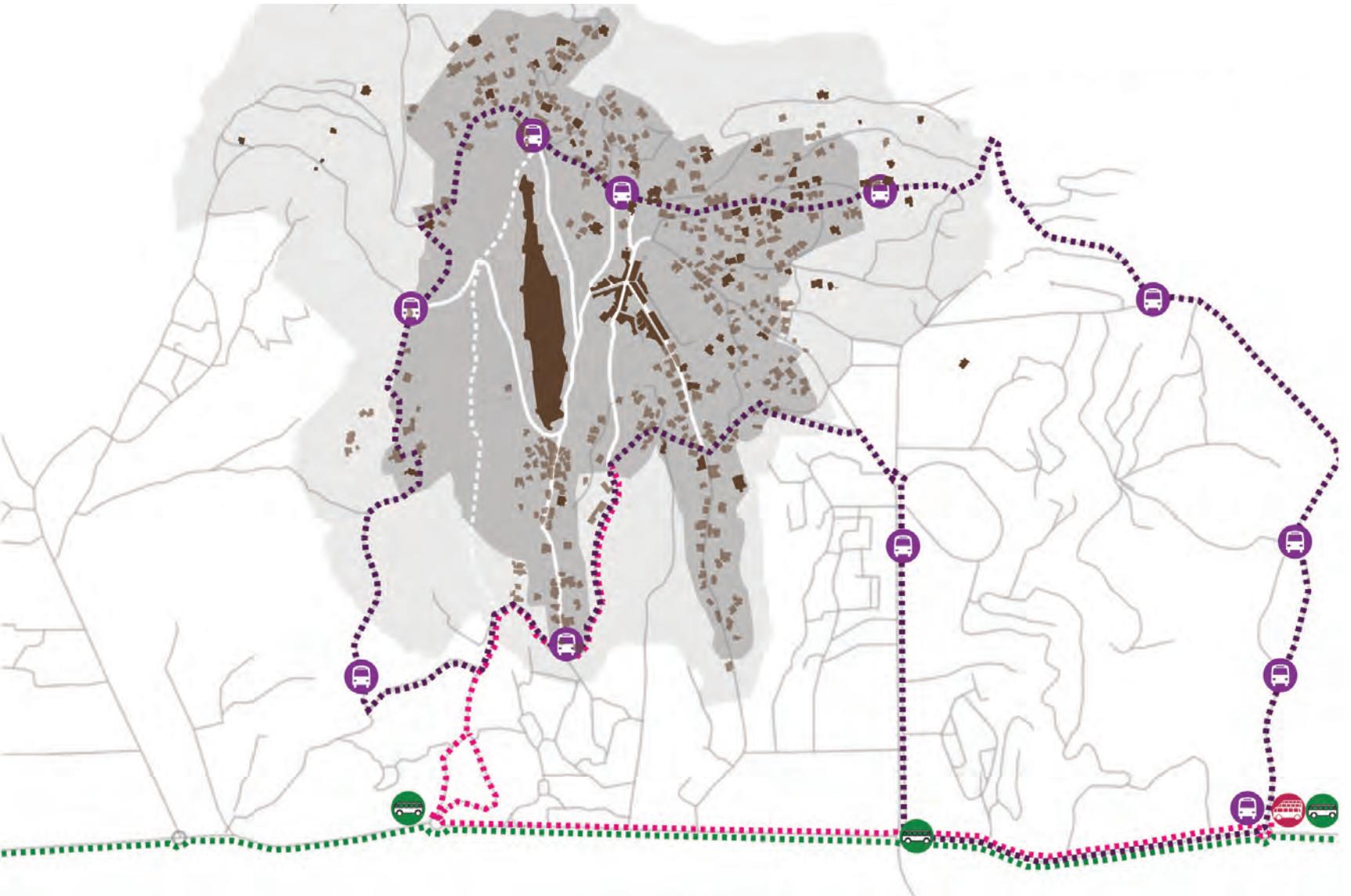
Understanding the need for these systems to be flexible and adapt to different users and situations it is foreseen that service and delivery vehicles can enter the area at certain times of the day, and that local residents especially those with disabilities can have a permit badge that allows access at all times.

### AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Access management policies will be reinforced by integrating a system of parking and public transport to the city centre network; this will minimize the use of cars and foment alternative mobility measures. In order to encourage drivers usage of the parking structures a fare and ticket cost “agreement” can be achieved, such as the following: visitors parking in P1 will pay for parking, but have access to the shuttle bus for free or at a reduced rate, while drivers using P2 will not pay for parking but instead will pay for the shuttle service. Parking location and stops comfort are key for the success of the proposal. Therefore it has been thought out that the Coach deposit will be located right next to P2 for an easier switch from private vehicle to public transport, and that all shuttle stops will be located in proximity of the city hot spots as well as in both parking structure, in order to promote intermodality within the city.



Public Transport Itineraries

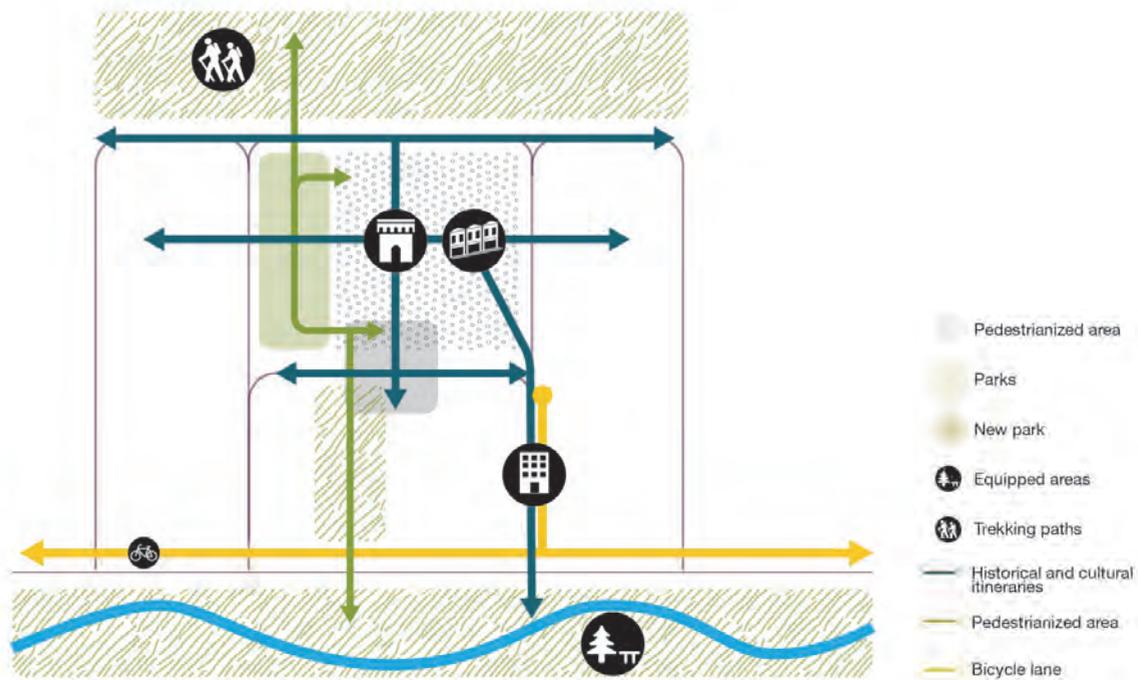


## GJIROKASTRA BYPASS

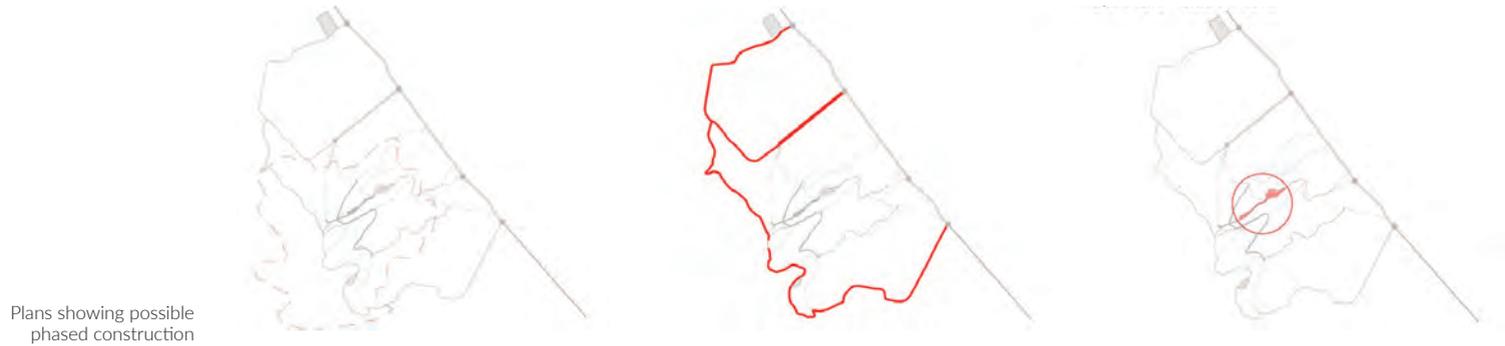
**A**ttractive and Readable Gjirokastra. Gjirokastra is extremely fortunate that two of its most important open spaces are located very close together. The Castle and Cerciz Topulli can be developed and linked as to create a continuous and compelling series of public spaces that serve both the resident community and tourists. Keeping this possibility in mind the proposal promotes an integrated system of itineraries that may help visitors orient through Gjirokastra and see all the hotspots the city has to offer. The Castle Loop, From the Old Town to the New Town Loop, and the New Bazaar to Old Bazaar Loop are three possible routes that can be reinforced through a wayfinding system that places signage, maps, and a main info point in order to guide visitors through the city in an easy a immediately readable way.



Way finding Examples



Green Network Scheme



### PHASE “0”

This phase includes historic centre “existing historic building stock” works relating to revival of existing heritage buildings. It includes refurbishment of historic buildings, using public/UNESCO/private funds, for various uses: art/conservation/architecture school, bed and breakfast, arts&crafts units, food units, private dwellings, shops.

### PHASE 1 – CONSTRUCTION OF UPPER BY-PASS

The upper by pass involves regulation of traffic circulation using mostly existing improved roads linking them into a continuous loop which creates important alternative vehicular “north-south link” around the city center. This stage could also involve the “shell and core” infrastructural works for the peripheral transport node-see phase 5, which would be used as temporary transport node facility until fully completed at a later stage.

### PHASE 2 – CONSTRUCTION OF CENTRAL SQUARE

This is the key phase of the development as it sets up strategy for redevelopment of the historic centre’s urban character and its commercial activity. It involves a spectrum of works from the set up of pedestrian and bicycle paths, development of public transport system, arcades construction, market stalls canopy and pavement repairs to car park construction, swimming pool/skating ring, information centre, sustainable energy infrastructure, wifi and open air events infrastructure. Once these works are complete the center can be closed to traffic.



### PHASE 3 – LOWER BY-PASS

The lower bypass completes the new traffic route strategy and allows for the historic centre to be fully pedestrianised. It involves setting up of vehicular, pedestrian, parking and public transport routes mostly using the existing roads and connecting them into a continuous loop connected to the main road as well as the city centre. Once these works are complete the center can be closed to traffic.

### PHASE 4 – CENTRE/CASTLE PEDESTRIAN LINKS

This phase is effectively completion of phase 2 and involves provision of the key pedestrian links between the two historical nodes: the city center and the castle.

### PHASE 5 – TRANSPORT NODE

Phase 5 involves fitting out and completing the transport node at the north part of the city, adjacent to the main road. The node was set up for temporary use previously-see phase 2- and is now fully fitted out for use as car park, bus stop, bar, future large hotel plot

### PHASE 6 – MAIN ROAD ROUNDABOUTS

This is the final phase which involves new round about improvement junctions of the main road to the newly created lower and upper by passes.

### SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT STEP 1

The proposed development is not simply a study of traffic movement and design of alternative bypass road routes. It is a comprehensive set of strategic proposals addressing the future development of Gjirokaster's urban fabric, economic sustainability, future based on the past, education, crafts, culture, language, customs and demographic growth. It is a set of subtle proposals aimed specifically at the city of Gjirokaaster but which could also be used as a model for further development in the region.

The Step 1 development involves mostly public funds/UNESCO/EU investment of €10.740.000,00 which includes a comprehensive sustainable development proposals, carried out in several stages over a period of six years and repaid as an investment in a period of 10-15 years. These works set the stage for future, more commercially significant and mostly privately funded, interventions.



Urban furniture



Traffic switch area



Site plan

## OPTIONAL LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT STEP 2

This step is seen as a natural continuation of building on the Gjirokastrers' capacity using the "heritage foundation" master plan developed as part of this competition. The works carried out in this step could involve a broader expansion of the commercial activities aimed at increasing the number of tourists and at keeping them longer in Gjirokastrer and the region. We see this as a more significant investment, as a long term activity, carried out mainly by private investors and developed on this masterplan.

The subject of the competition of developing the town center "Design the bypass road in UNESCO protected city of Gjirokastra", which involves diverting the traffic and returning the center to the pedestrians is, therefore, with the over encompassing improvements we propose, the first and the most important step in the process in a wider ranging redevelopment and re-growth of Gjirokastrer and the region.

These subtle, urban proposals looking at the overall complex social-building-history-demography-education-urban-economic fabric have the capacity and a significant role of setting the theme for further development of Gjirokastrer as well as other tourist hubs in Albania, rebuilding public and private investor confidence and generating the momentum for the future development initiatives for the whole region.

Finally, economically, on the basis of the estimates we carried out, these proposals offer full return of the public investment funds within a 10-15 year period. Demographically, the proposals provide the basis for the sustained growth of Gjirokastrer in terms of jobs, population and the living standard. In terms of urban design and civic development strategy the proposals provide a model which could be used successfully for other historic towns in the region.

Last but not least the scheme also contributes to other factors which are not easily quantifiable but are essential for maintaining quality of a society and humanity in general: factors such as revitalized more educated society, economically higher standard of living, raised art and culture awareness and building a future on firm foundations given by the history tradition.



Hybrid Market , diagram

1. Widening of the roadway
2. The underground parking, section
3. Widening of the roadway
4. Pedestrian Bridge



## 04 METRO POLIS + POLIS UNIVERSITY + G&K + CHWB ALBANIA

### TEAM COMPOSITION:

#### **Architect & Landscape Designer**

Dorina Papa - Polis University  
Etleva Dobjani - Polis University

#### **Architect & Urban Designer**

Llazar Kumaraku - Polis University

#### **Art Designer**

Sonia Jojic - Polis University

#### **Preservation & Restoration Architect**

Elena Mamani - CHwB

#### **Infrastructure Engineer**

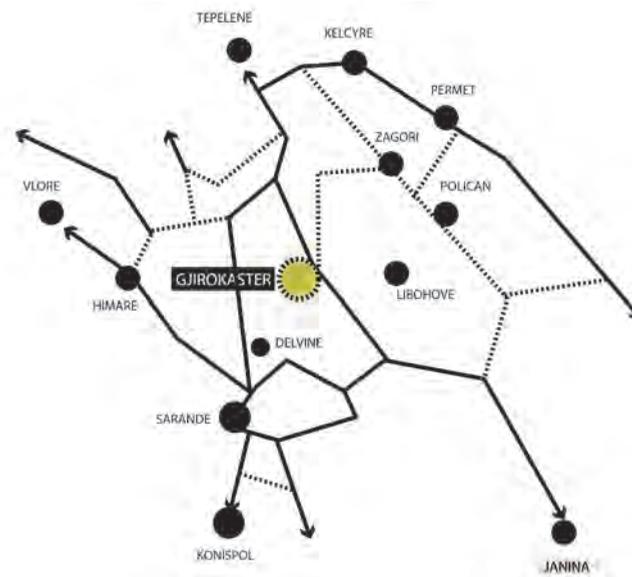
Dilaver Oshafi - G&K

#### **Constructor Engineer**

Spartak Tumani - G&K

#### **Architect & Design**

Egzon Gacaferri - intern Metro Polis  
Luard Halili - intern Metro Polis  
Kristina Rexhaj - intern Metro Polis  
Mikel Tepelena - intern Metro Polis  
Xhoana Kristo - Polis Student  
Erazmia Gjipopulli - Polis Student



The design of the new system road should completely respect the historic values of the historic city of Gjirokastra, which is part of the World Heritage List of UNESCO because of its exceptional unique architectonic ensemble and urban composition, since 2005. Because of its big values, this ensemble cannot be changed or compromised and no “visible” changes can be implemented in urban space urban by the construction of new system road. Our Objectives are: To create an infrastructure system that connect and does not exclude the neighborhoods that are closely related to the “Neck of the Bazaar”. To have a minimal intervention in the historic city, to respect and preserve the historical, cultural and landscape values. To intervene with regeneration or requalification process in areas that appear degraded

**M**ethodology. Gjirokastra, identified by its sloppy terrain which becomes a predominant factor in defining the dynamic character of the city and being part of UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2005, doesn't allow big intervention with the project and any small intervention done should have also a small impact for the landscape and also for the urban pattern. The sloppy terrain in the neighborhoods of Dunavat and Old Bazaar, or the narrow streets of Cfake, Dunavat, Mencite, old Carshia limited with the walls of the traditional houses, and the big density of the monuments in Varosh old Carshia and Dunavat, are all indicators that influence the project solution. Our proposal seeks to avoid physical intervention in central areas and at the same moment the small interventions in these areas, will be coherent with the context and with high impact in the requalification of the area.

Architectural and urban solutions proposed by us, take into consideration the Genius Loci-in Gjirokastra seen not only by its specific territory but also by its entropic values, which are closely related not only with the compositional design of neighborhoods with their pattern and the monuments inside of them, but also with the building materials such as wood and stone and the traditional handicrafts or cultural values.

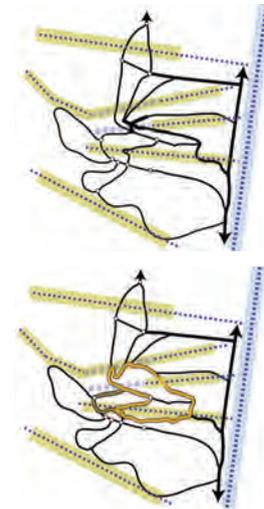




## DESIGN CONCEPT

Gjirokastra city is an important historic town which lays down between the Gjere mountains and the Drino river. It is situated in an important cross road that connects northern and central Albania with south part and west part of the sea with east. Gjirokastra city is an important node between Saranda I Konispol and Tirana or between Tirana and Janina. Its proximity to Zagori, Permet, Libohove, Tepelene, Kelcyre, Antigone, etc., Increase the values of this area nationally and internationally, not only in a touristic point of view but also because of the potential that these areas have economically, because of their local production, trade, landscape and history.

Our idea of the project is creating a “connective organic path” using some existing infrastructure and adding some new segments to create a “ring trajectory” organic loop that could connect all the fragmented neighborhoods of the city. The bypass road would make possible the creation of a pedestrian area in the center of the old city, starting from “Cerciz Topulli Square”, along the bazaar path and in the whole area around it. The “organic loop” has two alternatives, passing through Dunavat area or passing through Cfarke area. It will be one-way passing for the whole trip, departing from the new city in “Gjin Zenebisi” street, but it has also other accesses in other points along the ring. The new segments proposed by us to close the ring will be double way movements with a sidewalk for the pedestrians also included in it. The sidewalk for the pedestrians is connected also with the existing alternative paths in the city used from citizens to achieve in a short time in their destinations or for hiking purpose. Our project takes the name “organic loop”, because it respects the shape of the terrain, following its contour lines without harming the landscape, creating harmony between natural and architectural elements. The new project of the road infrastructure tries to have a minimum impact in the landscape of the city but with a big impact in the development of the city tourism, orientation, car traffic and economic development of the city.



Topography,  
Water System & Infrastructure

## INFRASTRUCTURE

As mentioned before, the sloppy terrain in the city has influenced in the compositional design of neighborhoods as separate units. Therefore, the present system circulation in the city of Gjirokastra, has a radial organization scheme, where all the roads of neighborhoods converge in the centre, in the bazaar area, which used to be the economic center of the city in XVII century and the second nucleus after the Castel. This phenomena, makes difficult to live the city center undisturbed by the heavy traffic. The roads are steep and tightly constricted by buildings, leaving pedestrians waking in the road. In rarely cases there are sidewalks presents in the roads. The old streets are paved in multicolored cobbles, arranged in geometric patterns. The black ones are the best one to walk on because of their roughness, instead of white and pink one that are slippery. Between different neighborhoods there are steep valleys left vegetated as natural drainage channels for the rain water. The roads usually are narrow and one way streets are treated as two way streets so traffic backs up and cars navigate the tight streets in reverse. The traffic is problematic in particular in the area adjacent to bazaar.



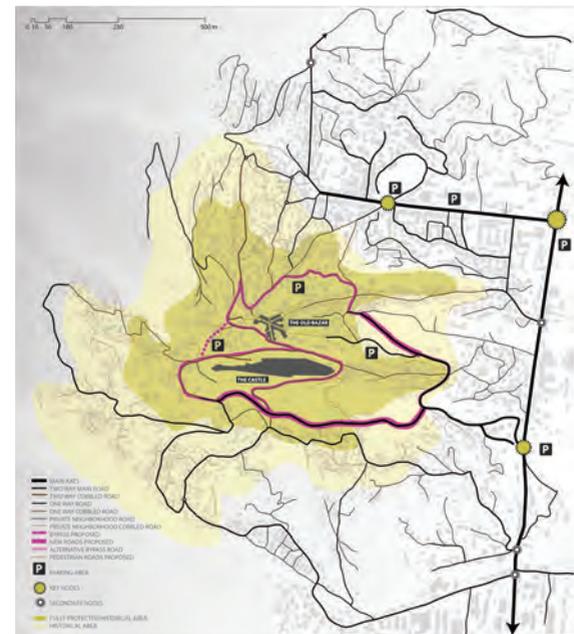
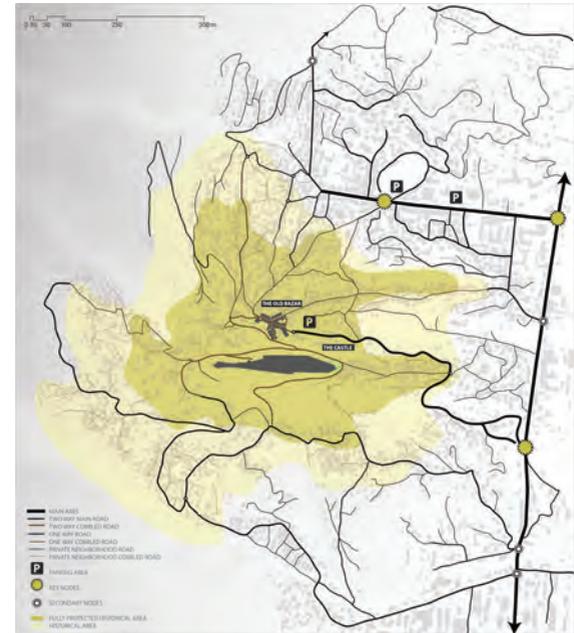
## GJIROKASTRA BYPASS

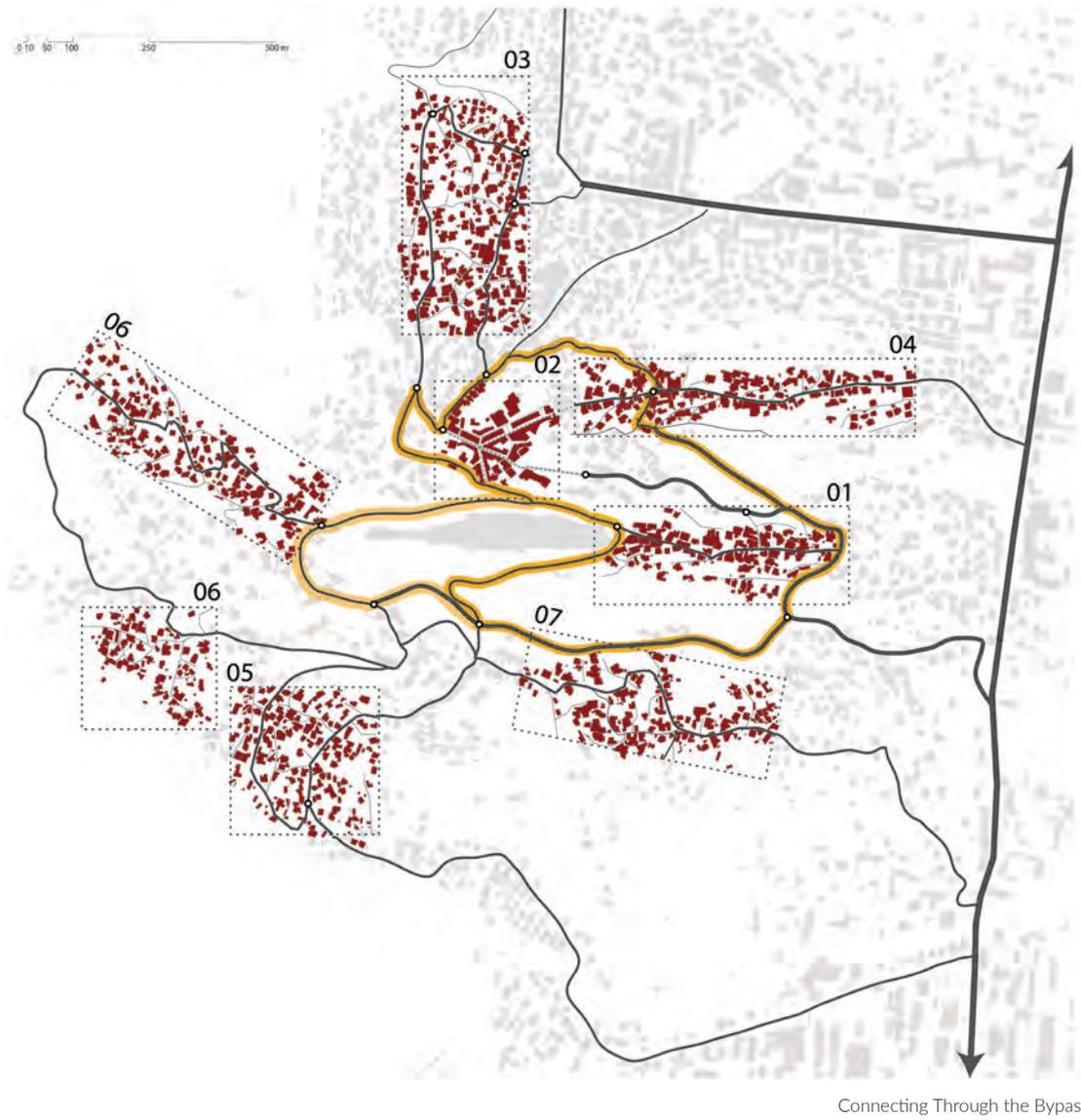
Existing Road Infrastructure  
Proposed Road Infrastructure

### PROPOSED RING

The bypass proposed by this project is a solution well integrated with the existing road system. What we designed is the creation of a ring system roads to keep the city center undisturbed by the traffic but in the same time, to connect different neighborhoods by the creation of a ring that keeps connected some external radial roads and connects the old city with the new one. The new bypass in some segments uses the old infrastructure, adding only two new transects in the segments between the Dunavat neighborhood and new city and between the area between ex-agency and 7 fountains or Hamam. The ring is proposed to be in one way sense in most of it. When the dimension of the road is large it can be used also in double way street, as it happens in the new transect proposed and the segments near the Castel area. The new segments have also sidewalks included in them which are also connected with pedestrian trails, used as shortcuts from the citizens but also from the tourists. To have a minimal impact but also minimal cost estimate we propose to maintain the existing bridges. The segment between the agency and the Hamam, is an area with the presence of streams in which we propose the use of the box culverts which allow the removal of the rain water and their functioning in the same way as in the existing situation, before the rain.

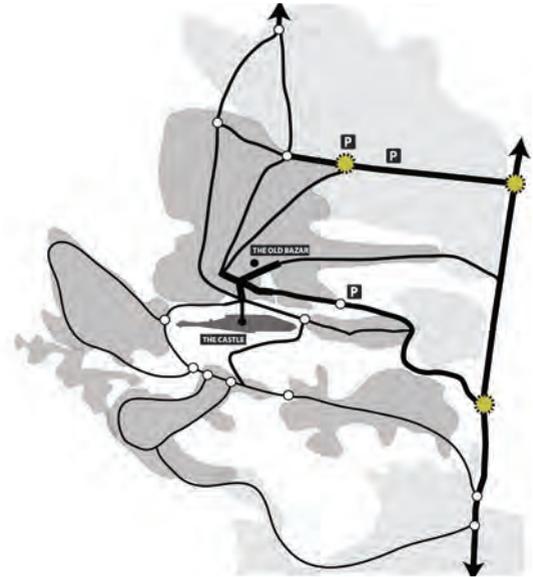
Along the new Bypass there will be different connection with existing roads that leads in other neighborhoods or to the new city. There will be also three main parking areas along the road that will facilitate the movement in the historic area of the bazaar. Tourist or citizens that need to achieve the pedestrian area or the activities in it can parch their cars and can take advantage and explore the pedestrianized area.





## GJIROKASTRA BYPASS

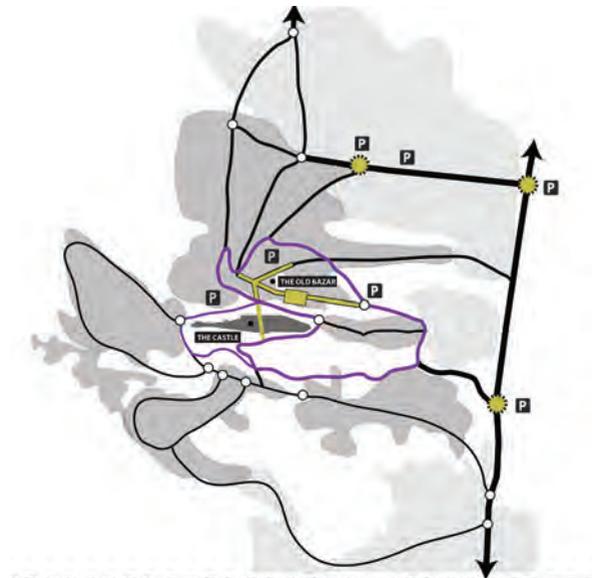
Existing Infrastructure Scheme  
Proposed Infrastructure Scheme



### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Actually there are three lines of public transport in the city which depart from the New city and permeate the old city. One of them departs from the neighborhood "18 Shtatori", passing through " Cerciz Square" goes in Dunavat and it is a two- way line for the whole trip . The second one has also the departure in "18 Shtatori" neighborhood and goes in Manalat passing through " Cerciz Square".

This is a one-way line for the whole direction. The third line, departs from the square in front of Ethnographic museum, and passing through Palorto-SMT, has the last stop in " Cerciz Topulli Square" . All of them pass in the center of the old city. With the new project which propose the center of the city to be pedestrian, the trajectory of the public transport change without influencing any of the neighborhoods that benefit from these public lines. The two lines that pass through the old bazaar and extend their trip in Manalat and Dunavat, will divert their trajectory along the bypass. The one that start from Ethnographic museum and pass in Palorto neighborhood, will stop t he trip before the pedestrian area, in the Hysen Hoxha street, before the intersection with Ismail Kadare street. The creation of the bypass ring road, would deviate the passing of the busses from the center, without excluding from its benefit the citizens of any of the neighborhoods of the old city.





Existing Public Transport Scheme  
Proposed Scheme of Public Transportation



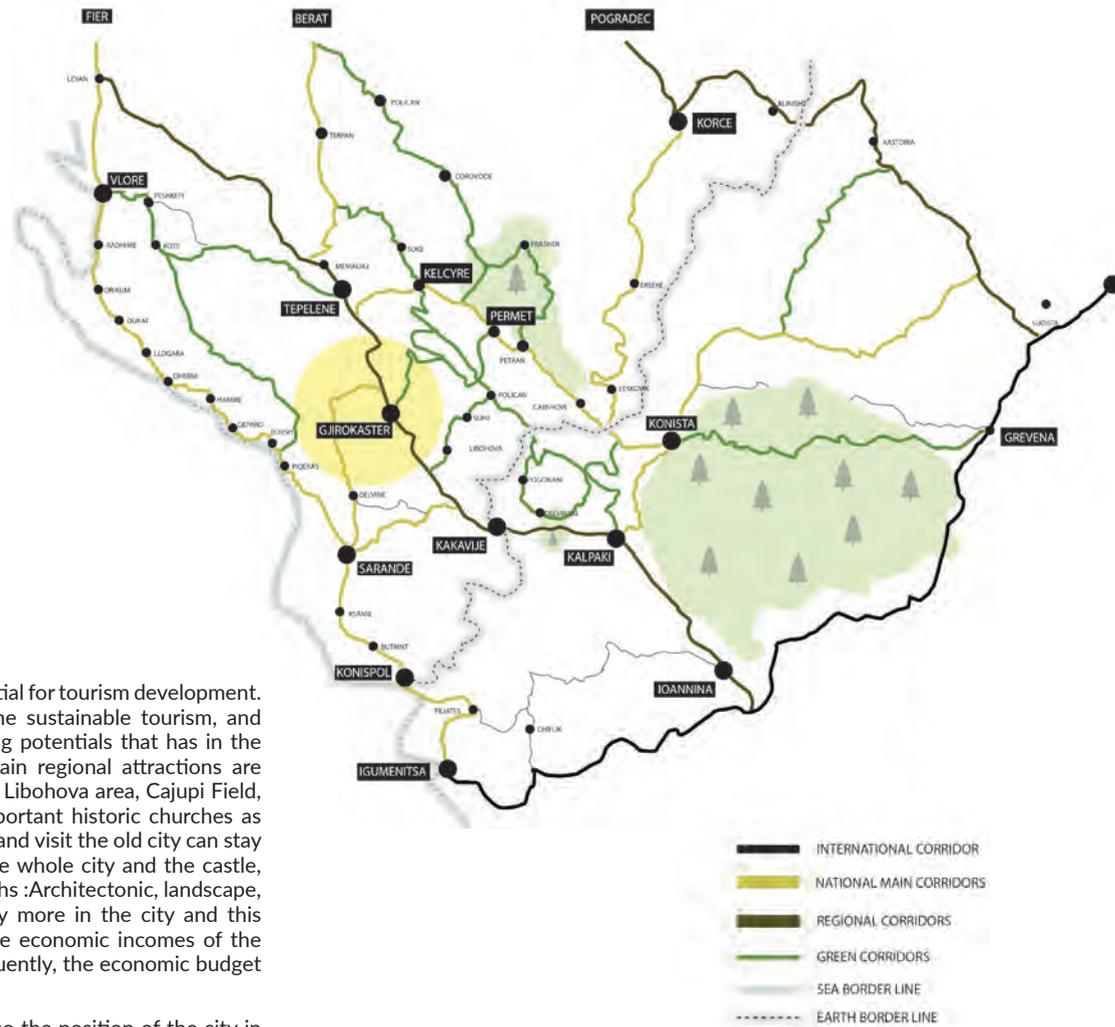
## PARKING AREAS

Although the streets are narrow and very steep, along the streets people actually do park their cars. The most potential parking area which used to afford a big number of cars in the existing situation is “Cerciz Topulli” Square. It is used for buses and for cars.

Our new propose, will eliminate the parking in “ Cerciz Topulli” Square.

The cars will come from “Gjin Zenebisi” street, and can park in the ex-agency building. The building is now unused and in bad condition but it is a second monument category, that means that it cannot be changed in the facade, can be used after e restoration as a parking building which could host approximately 60 cars inside. Outside the building, there is a place for the busses to stop for a while. The space outside the building can host 5 buses outside (or 20 cars). For long busses parking will be use the stadium area. The big tourists busses can let the tourists in the stadium area then the tourists can visit the city on foot or by taking the public transport which depart also from there. Another parking area is down the terrace of “Fantazia Square”. The access for this parking area can be from “Dr. Vasil Lavoviti” street and exit in “Aiqi Kondi” street, that descend in the new city area.

The third parking area, si close to the castle. This space is not designed as a simple parking area but also a view point to see a big part of the city and a stopping point for tourists who want to sit and relax and take something in the bar. The old building presents in the square can be restored and used as a small restaurant or bar. The space here is also connected with an alternative path accessible only for pedestrians which connect with the castle area. So in Total there are three new parking area created along the ring-road: Ex-agency area, down to the Fantazia square and near the castle.



**TOURISM**

Gjirokastra, is a historic city with a great potential for tourism development. The historic city alone is not enough for the sustainable tourism, and for this phenomena the city must use the big potentials that has in the adjacent area. Except the old city, other main regional attractions are Antigonea and Palokastra archeological sites, Libohova area, Cajupi Field, Vjosa and Permet, Termal area of Benja, important historic churches as Labova cross, S. Koll, etc. Tourists, who come and visit the old city can stay not only one day, which is enough to see the whole city and the castle, but with the propose of different touristic paths :Architectonic, landscape, archeological and sports ones, they can stay more in the city and this phenomena can influence the growing of the economic incomes of the citizens with their small business and consequently, the economic budget incomes of the municipality.

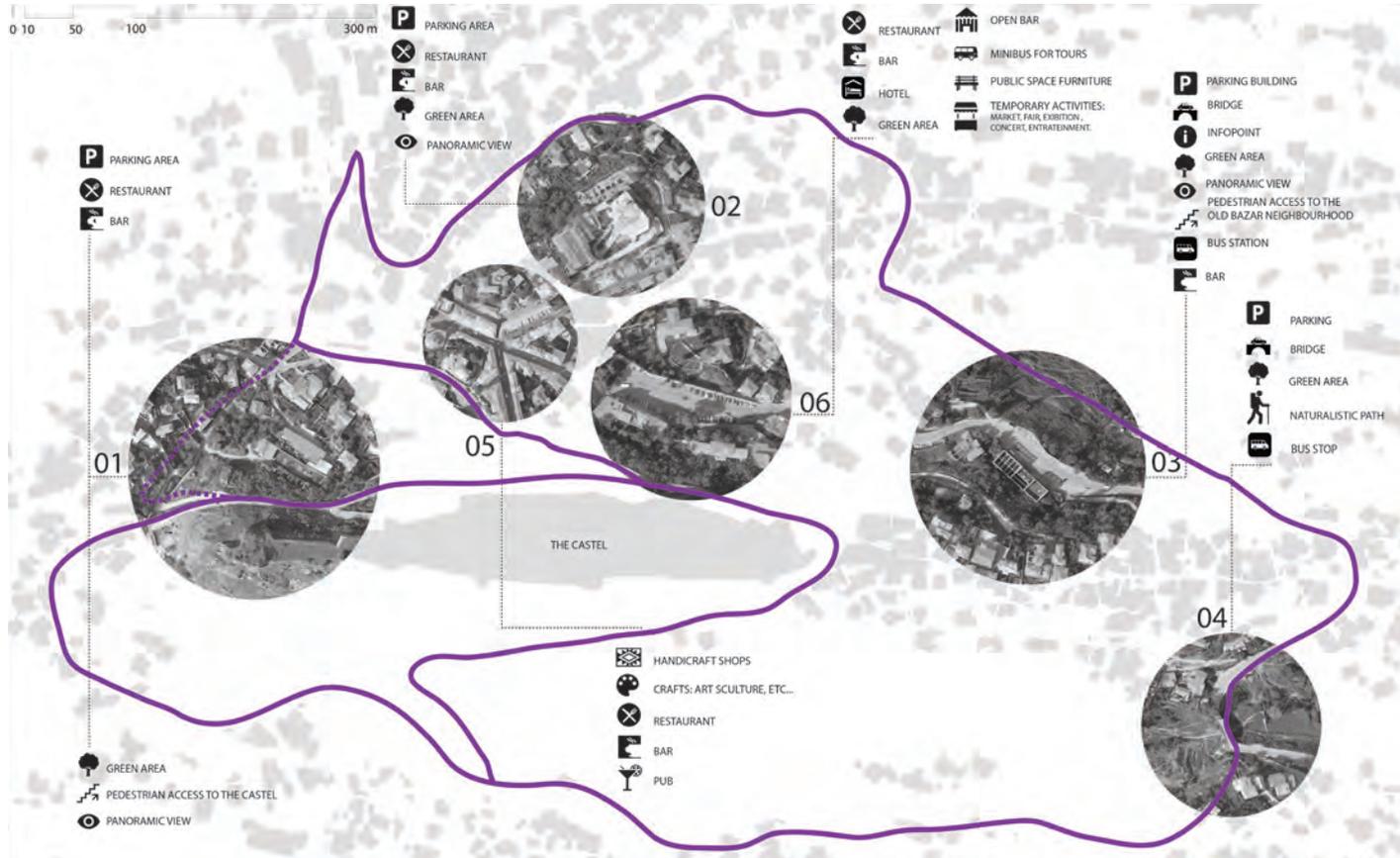
Advantageous for tourism development is also the position of the city in the vicinity of Jgumenitsa harbor or Joannina city, part of the international corridor. The national corridor that connect Fier with Saranda, or the vicinity with the sea line gives to the city a big importance with different kind of terrain and tourism. The construction of the new regional corridor that connect Fier with Kakavije and lead to the international corridor in a few hours has given a big importance to the city as an important joint to stop and visit it. The green corridors that connect also Gjirokastra city in a few hours with Frasheri fields and also Konista in Greece, create another important connection for the landscape tourism extending the local landscape path in international level.

Our project doesn't consist only in the design of the bypass and in the transformation of the historic center in a pedestrian area, but also creating some view points and parking areas to facilitate more the car movement in the city, the traffic and pedestrian movement also. We created three parking areas that will be more than only parking areas, including in them green spaces, urban gardens, view spaces or food and juice consumption. The ex-agency square will host urban gardens in it, out of which can benefit tourists and also citizens who lives in the neighborhood near there. Pocket spaces can provide different views of the monuments near there or towards the landscape of the city.

"Çerçiz Topulli" square will be simple and flexible in his function, with the possibility to host different activities in different periods of the year. It will be paved with traditional stone, illuminated with lights that creates a "shelter" that hangs relying on both sides of the square. In the border line in front of Çajupi hotel there will be focused more trees and benches for people to sit and join the view of the city, meanwhile along the border of Cajupi hotel, can be more appropriate for other different functions, as movable markets, book exhibition or handicrafts products. The square near Fantazia, is a parking square which include also a pedestrian path in it, meanwhile in the square near the castle, there are included also other functions except parking, as view space, eating and drinking in the restaurant, walking, sitting, etc.



The design of the Piazza New Activities, Agency



Areas of interest and proposed activities along the loop

## MORPHOLOGY

The steep terrain of Gjirokastra has influenced in the morphology of the city creating so six big neighborhoods: Old Bazaar, Varosh, Palorto, Manalat, Dunavat, Cfarke. Between different neighborhoods there are steep valleys which creates natural drainage channels for the rain water, characterizing also the landscape of the city and its identity.

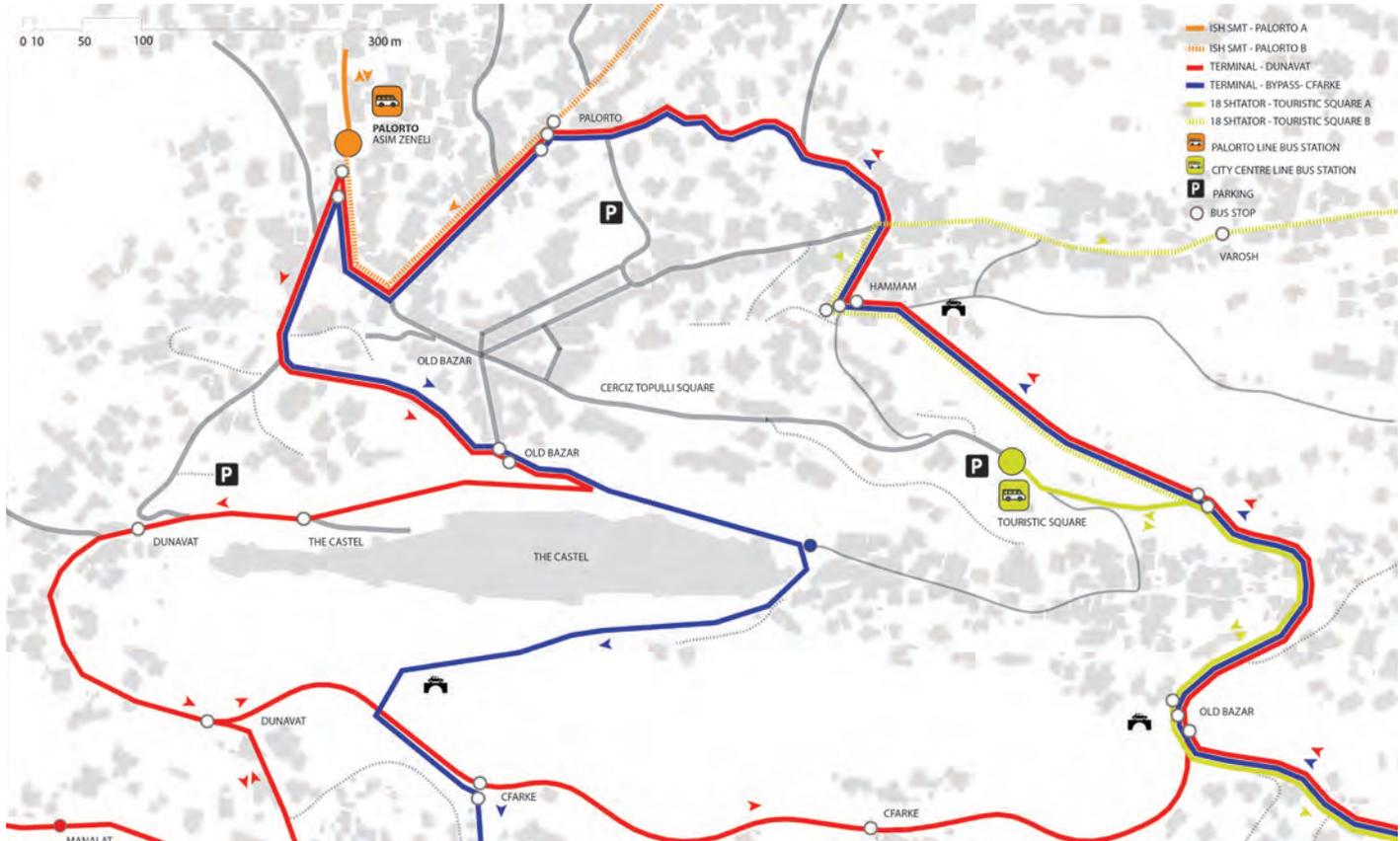


Traffic plan

# GJIROKASTRA BYPASS



Gradient of pedestrian areas



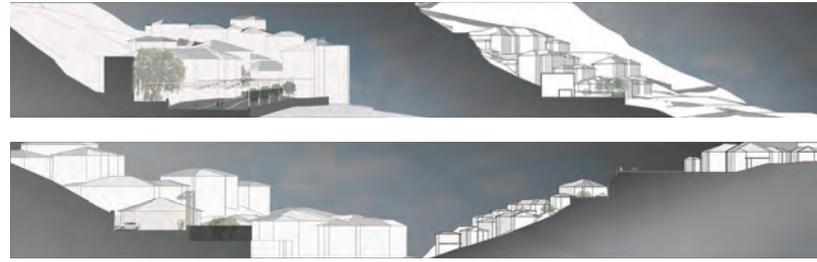
Public transportation

**C**onclusions. Our proposal is based on three key elements of the city that are: stone, wood and greenery by integrating them in our project proposal and protecting their presence as much as possible in the existing pattern. The proposed project is divided in two different scales. The first one analyzes and suggests the creation of an infrastructure which creates an organic loop that connect the fragmented neighborhoods of Gjirokastra. The connection of the neighborhoods comes as a primary necessity caused by the interruption of the circulation in the “neck of the Bazaar”, which currently functions as a main node that connect all the movement fluxes. It should be noted that the project proposal of the new trajectories in two segments DOES NOT DESTROY any actual building and does not harm the landscape where they pass.

The proposed project of the road tries to maximally exploit the current infrastructure system and creating two new tracks with a total length of 1.2 kilometers with two-way movement. The new tracks, are proposed in strategic points and beside the car movement, it hosts the sidewalk for pedestrian movement circulation large 1.5 m, protected by metal guardrail and illuminated along the whole trip, letting also different accesses to connect with actual paths in the area.



Design plan of the Bypass



Sections of Cerciz Topulli Square

Second scale intervention, improves the proposal by suggesting several key points, along the organic connective loop. These points will provide various services that range from panoramic to those used for car parking. In all these points the intervention is focused in the requalification and regeneration of the area with simple and attractive smart design, without proposing radical transformation for these spaces that would increase the costs and also would have a negative impact by harming the beautiful landscape of the city. The motive that has led us to this decision was having a minimal intervention in the historic context, respecting all social, cultural or physical inheritance of the city. Our goal is enhancing the quality of life of the inhabitants of the country economically and psychologically by regulating the car movement, improving the orientation and increasing the variety of attractive activities in the city to make the tourists stay more time there and consequently, spend more money.

Special attention is devoted to arrange public vehicular traffic in a very large scale with the propose of the Terminal area which can be transformed in an important focal point for the transport exchange which will serve as a liaison to the national node, as well as small scale of the public transportation lines inside the city. Regarding the three main lines of public transport which permeate the old city, passing through the Neck of the Bazaar, will match their circulation with the new bypass road.



View of Cerciz Topulli Square



Fantazia Hill



# INTERNATIONAL URBAN DESIGN COMPETITION

For the Bypass Road in the UNESCO Protected  
City of Gjirokastra, Albania

No. 9



**AKPT**  
AGJENCIA KOMBETARE E  
PLANIFIKIMIT TE TERRITORIT



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National Territorial Planning  
Agency (AKPT)  
Atelier Albania

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Ministry of Culture  
Institute of Cultural Monuments  
Gjirokastra Municipality

### *PARTICIPANTS*

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