Eastern Mediterranean University
URDC Urban Research and Development Center

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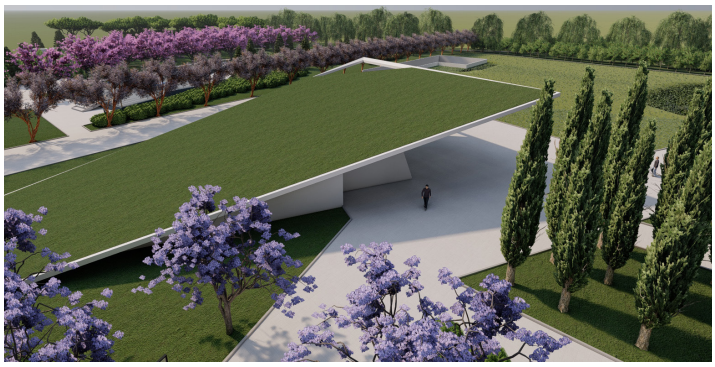

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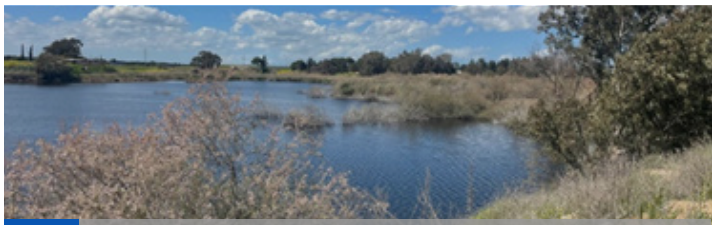

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EMU Campus Master Planning 2025

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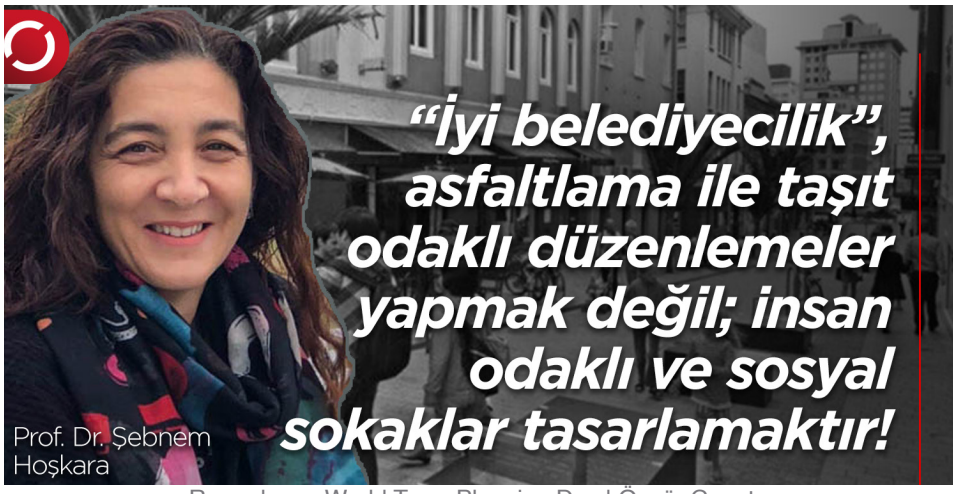
The URDC team is updating the EMU Campus Master Plan to create a safer, more inclusive, and sustainable campus with pedestrian and bicycle-friendly mobility, modern transport, active public spaces, and accessible areas for all.

"We Can Succeed Through Planning and Urban Design!"

Prof.Dr. Şebnem Hoşkara's World Town Planning Day statement, originally published in Turkish on 8 November 2025 in a local newspaper: https://ozgurgazetekibris.com/yasam/198576-hos-kara-planlama-ve-kent-sel-tasarim-ile-basarabiliriz.html

Streets should be designed primarily for pedestrians, not just for vehicles. Through planning and urban design, this goal can be achieved.



Remarks on World Town Planning Day | Özgür Gazete

Recently, many municipalities have announced their "asphalting" projects on inner-city streets under headlines like "good municipal governance" or "we are doing very good work." Yes, resurfacing urban roads may be necessary in our cities. However, the most basic requirement of modern cities is not just vehicle-focused road repairs but instead human-centered, comprehensive, and sustainable street designs.



Ludo Campbell-Reid

Many municipalities equate street improvement solely with asphalting and road-widening projects. Although this approach may ease vehicle movement temporarily, it leads to greater automobile dependence, weakens social interactions, and conflicts with sustainability objectives over the long term. The uniform asphalting practices carried out by municipalities "improve" streets mainly for motorized vehicles, yet offer no real benefits for pedestrians and cyclists, who are the main participants in public life. Such interventions reduce streets to simple transportation routes by ignoring the social, ecological, and cultural aspects of urban space.

In contrast, modern urban design views streets not just as traffic routes but as shared spaces in daily life. Especially in residential neighborhoods, streets are places where children play, neighbors meet and socialize, people can walk or bike safely, and green infrastructure supports the urban ecosystem. Therefore, street design should prioritize pedestrians, cyclists, and community life over vehicles. Sustainable mobility is best achieved through planning that focuses on walking, cycling, and public transportation, rather than private cars.

In neighborhoods with mainly residential uses, it is very important to adopt design approaches described in the international literature as "residential streets." This approach aims to "improve" streets not only for mobility but also for living, through shared arrangements, traffic calming, safe crossings, wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes, seating and gathering areas, tree planting, and child-friendly features.

Therefore, genuine urban improvement—what can truly be called "good municipal governance" or "successful

street design”—is achieved not through vehicle-focused asphalting practices, but through human-centered street designs that enhance social integration and prioritize ecological sustainability. This approach forms one of the core principles of modern urban design theory. In other words, contemporary urban design emphasizes that streets are not just infrastructure for vehicle movement, but vital parts of social life, social cohesion, and ecological health. In this context, the following recommendations arise for creating sustainable and modern street designs.

1.Pedestrian and Bicycle Priority: In street design, priority should be shifted from motor vehicles to pedestrians and cyclists; wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes, safe crossing points, and accessible pedestrian facilities should be provided.

2.“Residential Street” Approach: Especially in residential areas, street layouts designed according to the “residential streets” concept, featuring low speed limits, pedestrian- and child-friendly environments, integration with green infrastructure, and opportunities for social interaction, should be widely adopted.

3.Strengthening Public Transit: Pedestrian- and bicycle-focused interventions at the street level should be supported by a strong public transportation system at the city level; accessible and dependable public transit policies that decrease reliance on automobiles should be implemented.

4.Green and Ecological Integration: Streets should be recognized not only as transportation corridors but also as ecological systems that control microclimates, store carbon, and promote biodiversity; shade trees, rainwater management, and green space integration should be prioritized.

5.Participatory Planning: Street designs should be created with the active involvement of residents at the neighborhood level. Users’ daily needs, socio-cultural practices, and local experiences should be included in decision-making processes.

Groningen, Netherlands — IMM DesignLab

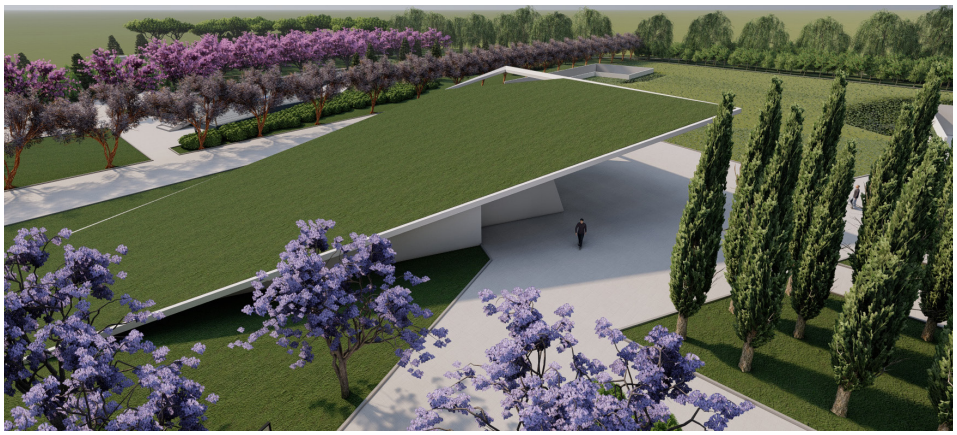
6.Sustainability Criteria: Municipal street improvement initiatives should be assessed not only within the framework of engineering services but also through social, environmental, and economic indicators aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, “good municipal governance” is not about implementing vehicle-focused solutions like asphalting, but about designing human-centered, accessible, and ecological streets that foster social connection. Redefining streets in this way is crucial for the sustainable future of our cities and societal well-being. As part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, there is a commitment to creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban environments; in this context, it is vital that our streets are designed correctly—prioritizing people over vehicles.

By approaching the 2025 theme of World Town Planning Day, “We Can Do It Through Planning!”, from this perspective, it is part of our professional duty to reexamine the vital role of planning and, by extension, urban design in creating sustainable, equitable, and resilient cities and communities. Additionally, we must prioritize this issue on the agendas of all local governments and actively monitor its implementation.
As Fred Kent, a leading expert on urban revitalization, and a notable thinker on livability, and the future of cities, states, “If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.” Therefore, streets should be designed to prioritize pedestrians through proper planning and design.

The Rauf Raif Denktaş Mausoleum and Republic Park Environmental Design Project

The Rauf Raif Denktaş Mausoleum and Republic Park Environmental Design Project was designed and supervised by the Eastern Mediterranean University Urban Research and Development Center (KENT-AG) within the framework of a protocol signed between the TRNC Deputy Prime Ministry, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Environment, and Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU).



Design Visualizations by Amirhossein Karimizadeh (Research Assistant at EMU-URDC)

The project was designed and realized through the collaborative efforts of Prof. Dr. Şebnem Hoşkara, Chair of KENT-AG; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevter Zafer Cömert, member of the KENT-AG Executive Board, and Electrical Engineer Ahmet Güzoğlu from the EMU Technical Affairs Directorate. Prior to the commencement of the design process, the project team engaged in extensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders—including local residents, the family of the Founding President, relevant governmental institutions, and municipalities—to exchange ideas and gather input. The final design was subsequently shared with all stakeholders, and their feedback was incorporated into the project before its completion.

Due to the high estimated construction cost following the completion of the overall site design, the project could not be tendered as a single phase. into two stages, with the first phase proceeding to tender. Phase I, comprising the Mausoleum and its immediate surroundings, was tendered in 2023; the tender process was completed that same year, and construction commenced thereafter. Construction site supervision and monitoring were carried out by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevter Zafer Cömert. The project was completed in January 2025 and subsequently entered an 18-month maintenance and monitoring period.

Sustainability was recognized as a key principle and goal of the Phase I project. In this context, the Mausoleum's roof was renovated and turned into a green roof system, supported by a planting scheme that resists island climate conditions. Additionally, pedestrian movement within the site was improved by strengthening pathway connections and designing alternative routes. A linear layout combining skateboarding and seating areas was also included to serve users of various ages. These efforts aimed to ensure the long-term sustainability of a site already actively used by local residents, while encouraging ongoing use and bringing together different social groups.

Along the axis called the "protocol promenade," informational panels with quotes from the Founding President were installed to highlight the symbolic importance of the route. This axis was also enhanced with tree alignments suited for the Mediterranean climate. After detailed soil analysis, a planting plan was created using plant species that are resilient to both the Mediterranean climate and the local environment. Of the total 5-hectare park area, only 3,500 m² was designed as lawn

The main axis leading to the RRD Mausoleum with exhibition panels

Seating elements and other furniture in the park

to highlight the promenade. In the remaining areas, groundcover plants were used to conserve soil moisture. Specifically, the combination of trees and groundcover planting around the Mausoleum and its immediate surroundings, supplemented by shrub groups, has lowered the perceived ambient temperature by approximately 3–5°C. Additionally, evergreen plant species used as a backdrop to the park serve both to visually separate it from its surroundings and to create a sense of enclosure.

Once the vegetation reaches full maturity, the Rauf Raif Denktaş Mausoleum and Republic Park are expected to become a walkable, livable environment with temperatures approximately 3–5°C lower than the general climate of Nicosia. In this way, the park will both address the city's need for green open space and mitigate the urban heat island effect, enhancing its usability and environmental performance.

Following the completion of Phase I, preparatory work for the tendering process of Phase II has been initiated. With the completion of Phase II this year, the project aims to enable the integrated, holistic use of the entire park.

Text by Assoc.Prof.Dr. Nevter Zafer Cömert

Urban Research and Development Centre (URDC)'s Mission for the Field of Cultural Heritage in North Cyprus

The Urban Research and Development Centre (URDC) and its members have been actively engaged in the field of cultural heritage in North Cyprus for many years. Over the past decade, raising awareness of cultural heritage has been one of the Centre's primary objectives. Among its most consistent and dedicated activities, the organization of special events on 18 April – the International Day for Monuments and Sites has been particularly significant.

On this occasion, URDC has organized conferences featuring specialist speakers, exhibitions, stakeholder workshops, and television programs, all of which were realized in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other institutions. These activities have played an important role in promoting public awareness and encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue on cultural heritage conservation.

URDC members have also been highly active in supporting public authorities and governmental institutions during the preparation and implementation phases of cultural heritage projects. One of URDC's executive members, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ege Uluca Tümer has served on the Advisory Board of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH) in Cyprus for the past ten years. During this period, she has acted as the focal point for all restoration works completed in Famagusta through the collaboration of UNDP Cyprus and the TCCH.

Design Visualization by Amirhossein Karimizadeh (Research Assistant at EMU-URDC)

In addition, she served as the project coordinator for "A Day in the Walled City of Famagusta" tours for secondary school students, carried out under the umbrella of the Famagusta Walled City Association between 2016 and 2018. Since 2019, she has also been one of the project leaders of the "Bastions of Famagusta Fortifications: Scientific Documentation" project. Furthermore, she served as the team leader for the "Walled City of Famagusta" report within the Famagusta Master Plan, completed in 2019, which introduced regulations for the conservation of cultural heritage sites and historic buildings in the city.

Additionally, a team from URDC prepared the Urban Design Guidelines for the Alsancak Menekşe Region to conserve the traditional texture of the village. This was a research-based project carried out by Prof.Dr. Şebnem Hoşkara, Assoc.Prof.Dr. Nevter Zafer Comert and Architect Cem Kara, under EMU-URDC, based on the protocol signed by the EMU Rectorate and Alsancak Municipality.

Design Visualization by Amirhossein Karimizadeh

Through its collaborations with various non-governmental organizations, governmental institutions, and municipalities, URDC has become an influential actor in cultural heritage–related decision-making processes. One notable example is Europa Nostra Cyprus, of which several members of the URDC Executive Committee were founding members in 2015. The Evkaf Administration of Cyprus and the Chamber of Architects have also been key institutional partners, with whom URDC has collaborated on numerous initiatives in the field of cultural heritage.

Text by Assoc.Prof.Dr. Ege Uluca Tümer

Viewpoint: Sustainable Urban Wetlands for a Sustainable City

Urban wetlands are among the most valuable but ignored ecosystems in our cities today. Although they are providing a wide range of ecological, social, and climatic benefits- supporting resilient and sustainable cities- they are under threat.

Ayluga Lake, Famagusta

As cities continue to grow and the effects of climate change intensify, the role of wetlands has become even more essential, but also more critical. On the one hand, rapid urbanization and the expansion of settlement areas; on the other, pollution and neglect are key factors in the loss of wetlands.

Only recently have discussions on sustainability and resilience recognized urban wetlands as key elements of healthy, sustainable cities that support the quality of Life of citizens.

From an ecological perspective, urban wetlands perform many functions that are often undervalued. They act as reservoirs for biodiversity, offering habitat for a wide range of plants and animal species between the built environment and city life. In addition, wetlands play an important role in climate adaptation, flood control, and in helping cool surrounding areas and reduce the Urban Heat Island effect in dense urban areas. They are natural pollution regulators, making them practical nature-based solutions for resilient cities. Beyond ecological and climatic benefits, urban wetlands offer meaningful social and cultural values, contributing to urban identity.

They can become accessible public spaces that support recreation and social activities, as well as support hands-on environmental education. However, there is a need for an integrated planning approach that balances usage and protection of the natural environment.

A protective and thoughtful Urban Design approach and strategy will not only enhance the coexistence of urban life and nature, but also benefit the local economy through eco-tourism by creating nature parks, bird-watching activities, etc.

Polluted urban wetland, India (Souce: WOTR)

The Ayluga Wetland in Famagusta is a strong example of an urban wetland with both ecological importance and recreational potential. Situated within the expanding urban fabric of Famagusta, it provides a natural habitat for local and migratory birds, but also faces significant pressures from surrounding urban development. Protecting Ayluga Wetland and integrating it into the city context through controlled access and ecologically sensitive design are the main aims of the Ayluga Natural Park project, initiated by a collaboration among the Famagusta Municipality, MAKAMER, and Eastern Mediterranean University. The project aims to implement interventions with minimal ecological impact, such as walking and cycling decks around the lake, bird observation decks, and facilities for educational and recreational purposes, to raise awareness and public stewardship in protecting the wetland region.

URDC contributed to developing the core design ideas and the project's visual presentation, with direct involvement from the Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muge Riza and the consultancy of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevter Zafer Comert, Executive Board Members of URDC, along with Research Assistant Amirhossein Karimizadeh. EMU Urban Research and Development Center is supporting this project, which will, upon completion, contribute to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable;

WWT London Wetland Centre (Source: tourismforall.co.uk)

Design Visualizations by Amirhossein Karimizadeh (Research Assistant at EMU-URDC)

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; SDG 13: Climate Action, which calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; SDG 14: Life Below Water, which aims to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources; and SDG 15: Life on Land, which aims to protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems in the city of Famagusta.

Ayluga Natural Park demonstrates how wetlands can be integrated into an urban context without compromising the need to protect the existing natural environment, showcasing that wetlands are not just leftover natural space but essential parts of a thriving, sustainable city.

Text by Assoc.Prof.Dr. Müge Riza

Social Media Awareness Posts

International Day of Clean Energy

26 January 2026

On 26 January, the International Day of Clean Energy, URDC, SDG Club, and Department of Architecture of Eastern Mediterranean University highlight clean energy as a cornerstone of sustainability, climate action, and an equitable future. This PSA was prepared by our student Ahmet Can Dursun as part of the course Arch320; The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet in the Department of Architecture program.

It reflects the vital role of renewable and clean energy systems in building resilient communities and responsible environmental practices. Clean energy is not only a technological shift but a social and spatial imperative.
For people, planet, and future generations.

International Day of Education

24 January 2026

On 24 January, URDC , SDG Club, and Department of Architecture of Eastern Mediterranean University celebrate education as a fundamental human right. This PSA was prepared by Mark Morobane as part of the course Arch320; The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet in the department of architecture program It reflects how powerful education is when it comes to sustainable, inclusive, and equitable scocieties. For people, progress, and the future.

YouTube

The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

03 December 2025

Proudly presented by EMU URDC & EMU SDGs Club- Every city, every campus, every public space should be designed for everyone.
Our new PSA reminds us that accessibility is not a favor—it is a right, a design principle, and a commitment to equity.

At Eastern Mediterranean University, we continue to advocate for:
- Inclusive and barrier-free environments
-Equalacademic life
- SDG 10 & SDG 11: Reducing inequalities and building inclusive communities
Let's work together to create spaces where everyone belongs, moves, learns, and thrives.

World Town Planning Day

08 November 2025

This year, our recent alumnus, Abdel Rahman Abu-Zannad, from the EMU Department of Architecture, prepared a powerful Public Service Announcement (PSA) video, as a part of the course Arch320-The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, highlighting the vital role of urban planning in creating better futures for our communities.
Let's rethink how we design, plan, and live together for people, planet, and progress.

YouTube

The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :

International Day for Disaster Reduction

13 October 2025

URDC Celebrated International Day for Disaster Reduction on 13th of October. On the International Day for Disaster Reduction 2025, we pause to recognize the importance of preparedness, resilience, and community action in the face of natural and human-made disasters.
This year's global theme, "Fighting Inequality for a Resilient Future," reminds us that reducing disaster risk begins with inclusive planning and empowering every member of society.

The EMU Urban Research and Development Center (URDC) proudly joined this global call for awareness and action. Let's build together a future where resilience is shared, equity is prioritized, and no one is left behind. A future where pre-paredness today saves lives tomorrow.

World Cities Day

31 October 2025

In World Cities Day 2025, a moment to reflect on how our cities shape who we are and how we live together.
This year's theme, "People-centered Smart Cities," calls for urban environments where technology serves humanity, not the other way around.
Our beloved student, Aziz Hasan Gül, prepared this PSA video as a part of the course 'Arch 320 The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet' at the EMU Department of Architecture, while supporting the efforts of EMU URDC and EMU SDGs Club for achieving SDGs on the EMU Campus. Let's continue building cities that value community, equity, and sustainability. Cities that are smart but also compassionate, inclusive, and human-centered.

YouTube

The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :

World Architecture Day

31 October 2025

On the occasion of World Architecture Day 2025, we are proud to share a special Public Service Announcement (PSA) video prepared by our recent graduate, Sıla Haciarif, from the Department of Architecture, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU).
Sıla prepared this PSA video as a part of the course 'Arch 320 The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet', while supporting the efforts of EMU URDC and EMU SDGs Club for achieving SDGs on the EMU Campus. This video celebrates the power of architecture to shape a better future, one that is sustainable, inclusive, and deeply connected to our shared humanity. We honor architects, educators, and students around the world who continue to design with purpose, resilience, and equity in mind. Together, let us imagine, design, and build a future that is stronger, more inclusive, and sustainable for generations to come.

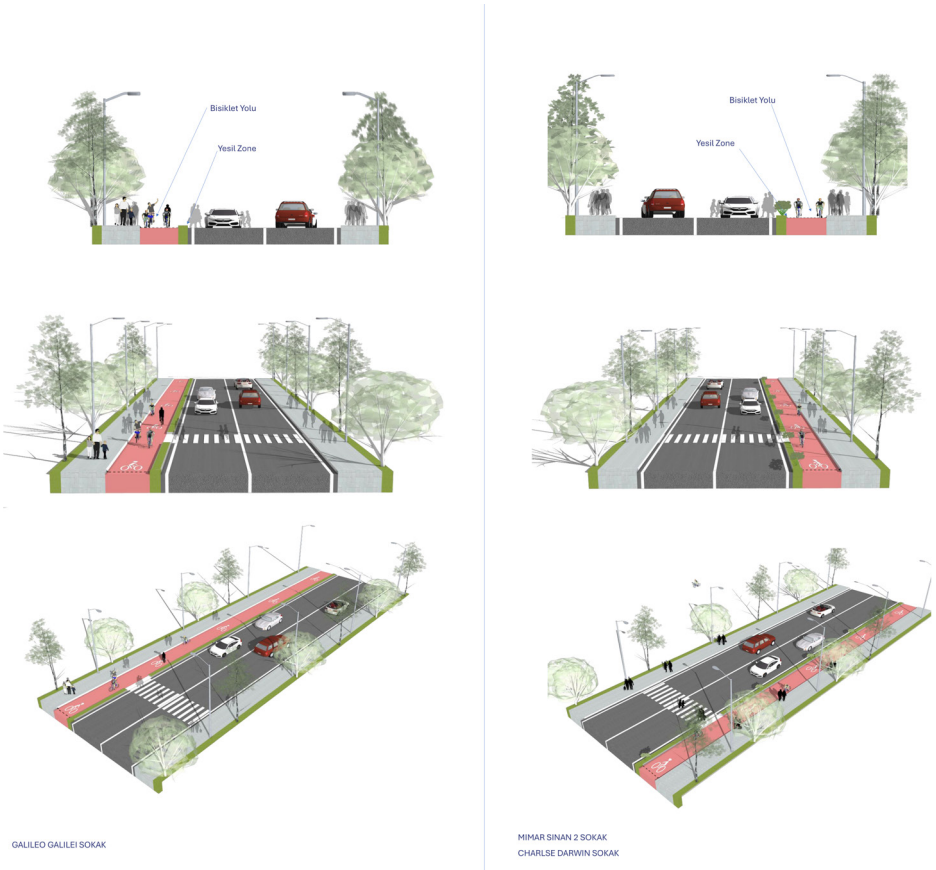
YouTube

The video is available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

EMU Campus Master Planning 2025

Based on the never-legalised Master Plan of the EMU, a new team under URDC is currently working on improvements and updates to the EMU Campus planning. The vision of the EMU Campus Master Plan is:

A campus where users can walk and cycle freely without traffic interference; where public open spaces and pedestrian zones are actively used without being affected by climatic conditions; where modern transportation systems are available; and where campus environments are pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly, inclusive, accessible, and safe. This vision promotes a sustainable, people-oriented campus that enhances student mobility, active transportation, social interaction, and overall well-being.



Design Proposal for Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Master Plan Vision for the EMU Campus

Eastern Mediterranean University

URDC
Urban Research and Development Center

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THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development