



A Brief History.

1578: The walls, constructed by the Venetians, had 3 gates, Famagusta, Pafos and Kyrenia.

1882: During the British rule, 7 more entry points open up.

1972: An architectural competition is announced by the Municipal Council for the square. At that time it was called Hadjisavva square. The process was interrupted at 1974 due to the war. It is interesting to note that **NO CARS** were planned at the scope of the competition.

1975: The square gets renamed as Liberty Square.

September 2003: A new design competition is announced, based on the scope of the 1972 competition. **No Vehicular Access** was to be allowed on the square.

December 2005: Zaha Hadid Architectural Office wins the competition. They get assigned the project.

Mayor 2007 – 2012 and change of the scope of the project

July 2008: the archaeological digs begin. After a hidden part of the wall is discovered, the works stop until all is documented and the plans modified to include the hidden part of the walls.

During that time, the Municipal Council changes the scope of the project and demands from the Architects to add 2 lanes of cars on the square.

December 2011: Construction works begin.

Mayor 2012 – 12/2016

February 2012: Liberty square closes due to construction works

February 2014: Construction stops. For 11 months the construction site is deserted.

January 2015: Construction resumes with new Contractor.

December 2016: 13 small buses are purchased to connect the cultural center to the business center.

Mayor, new term 2017 – today

March 2017: The Municipal Council has to finalize the decision for the use of the square. This meeting is postponed month after month. Now it is rescheduled for June 2017. **In the meantime the construction works continue, with a promised Date of Completion December 2017.**

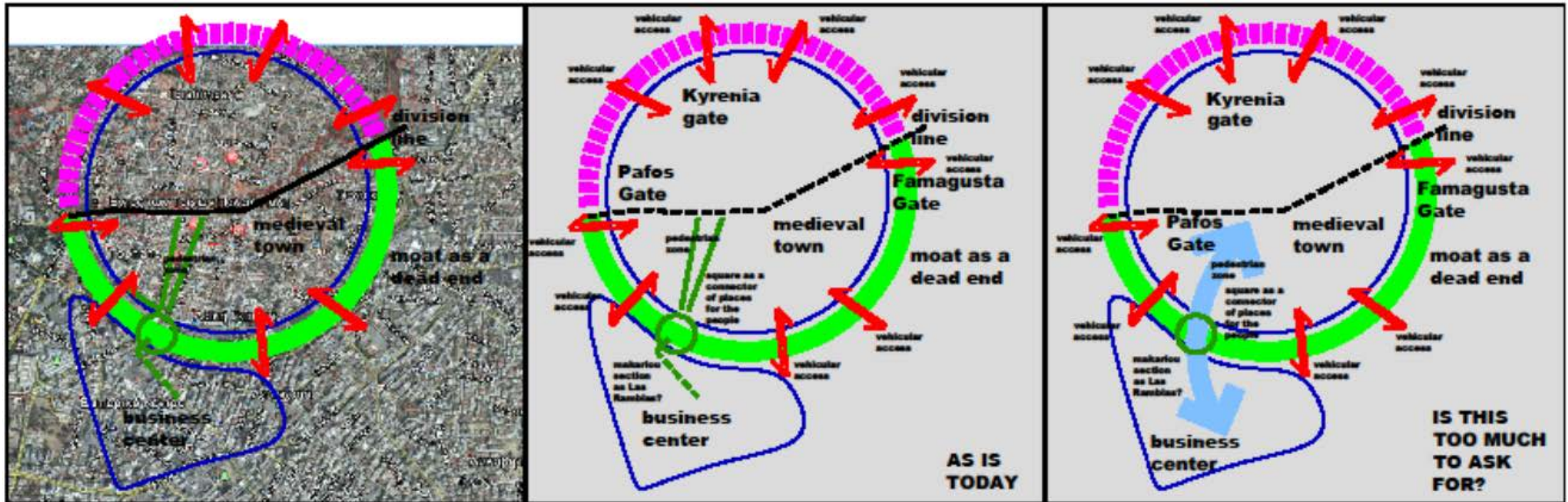
No change of plans has been considered as yet.

The walled city of Nicosia

The original design in 1578 had 3 Gates, leading to the 3 major at that time townships

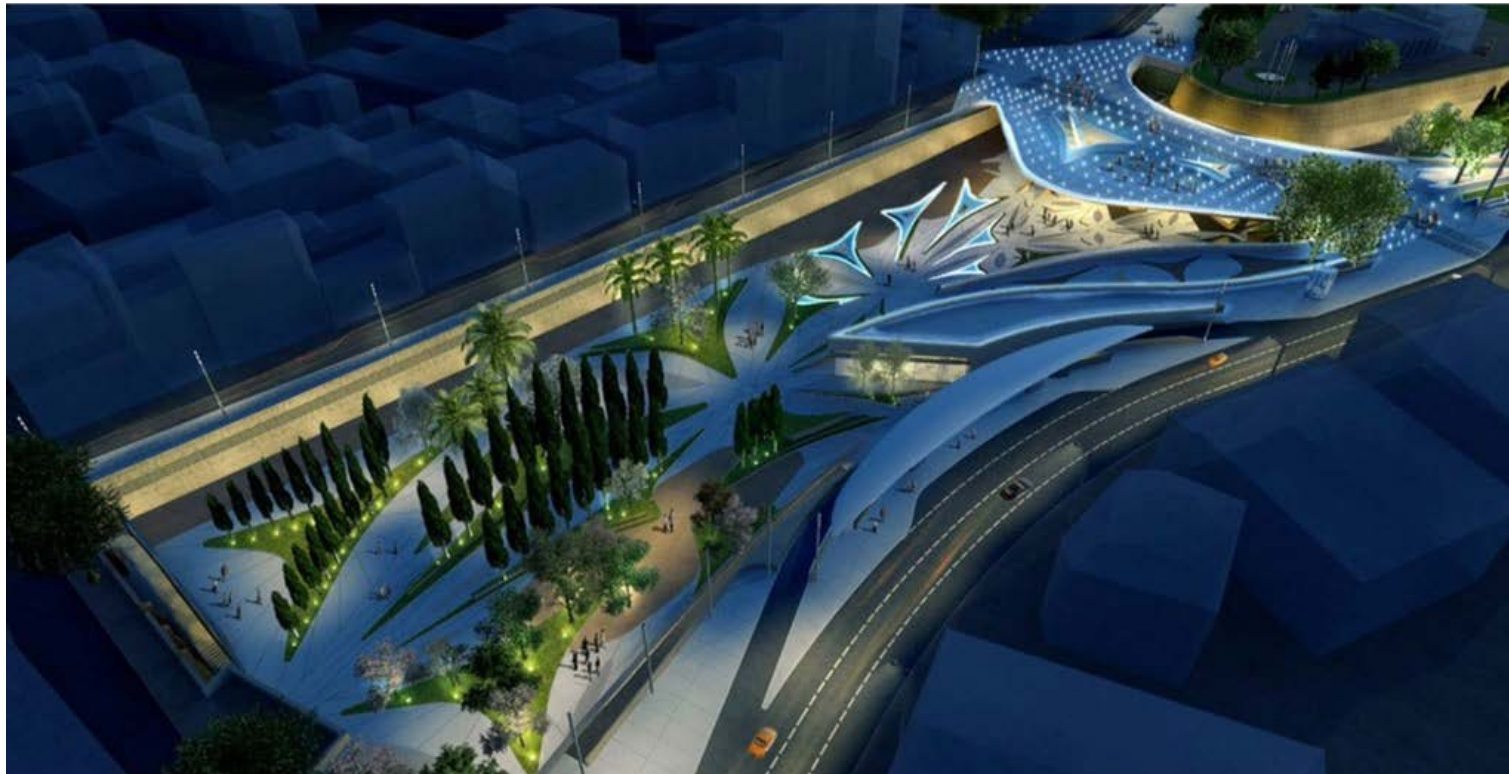
- the Pafos Gate
- The Famagusta Gate
- The Kyrenia Gate

In the 20th century, 7 additional entry points were created through the medieval walls, all for cars.



Where are we now?

As conceived when awarded.



In the process

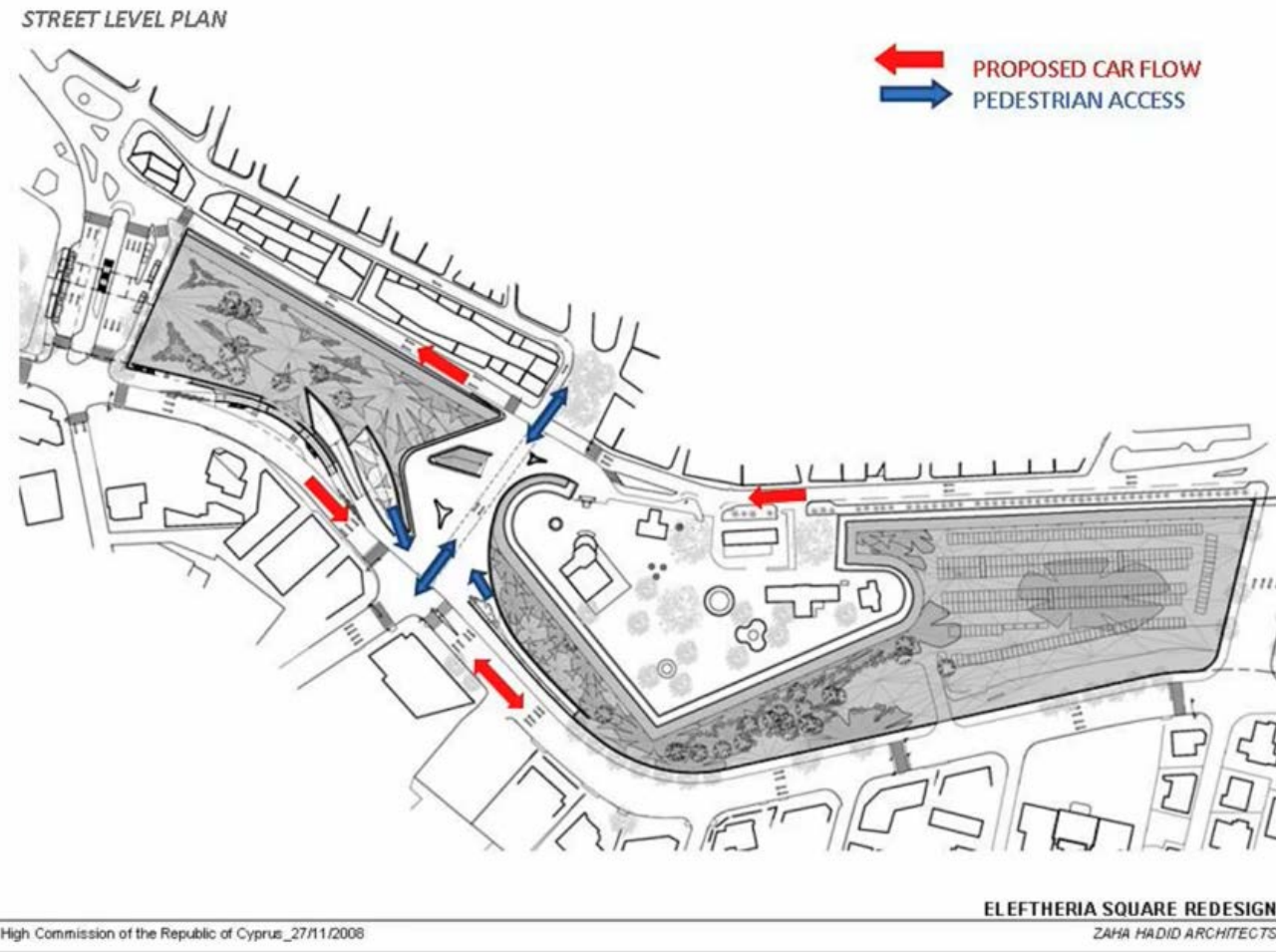


Who Pays:

- The European Regional Development Fund.
- The Cyprus Government through the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works.
- The Nicosia Taxpayer via Nicosia Municipality.

What is the Problem?

The original 2005 pedestrian design was modified in 2008 to accommodate cars, as per the Municipal Council's decision and without a Public Hearing. Uninformed, the public has been left to believe that the square is planned for the pedestrians.



The promotional 3D images today, do not convey the real use to the Public. Finding data was very hard.

Nobody would admit that the Square has been structurally redesigned to accommodate vehicular traffic, at a cost.



Why it happened: Definition of a Square.

We have a lot of squares as the ones in the image, good for cars.



ELEFThERIAS SQUARE



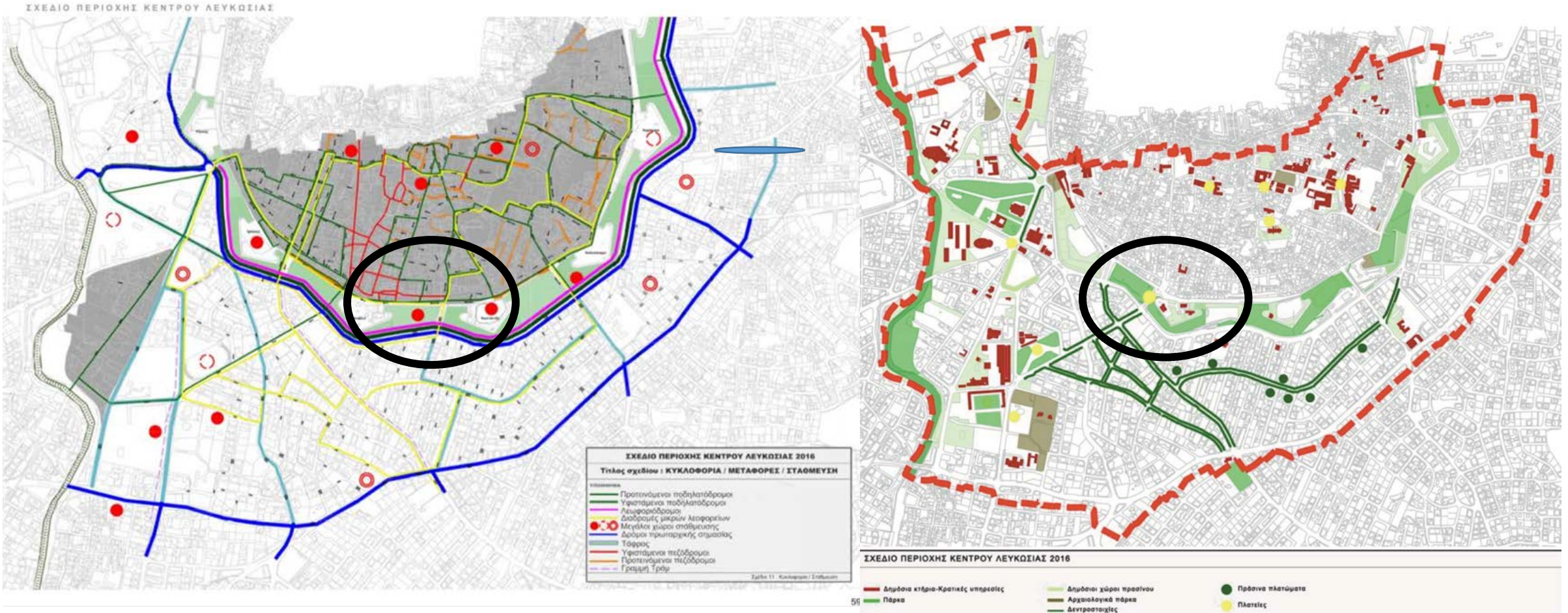
MARKOS DRAKOS SQUARE

Why it Happened: Car is King and Police is not around.



Why do we object:

Local Area Plan of Nicosia downtown (approved and made into Planning Law in 2016) shows NO ROAD.



Why do we object:

- Pedestrians and cars can not coexist **in** a public square.
- We dedicate **none** out of the six vehicular entry points to the walled city to be dedicated to the pedestrians.
- The square is the social and physical link from the cultural hub of the Medieval Town to the Business District.
- The radius of the medieval city is 600 meters. To cross it, one needs only 8-10 minutes.
- Cyprus weather is ideal for walking. Medieval city roads are narrow and not ideal for driving, causing many accidents.
- Peripheral parking places are planned outside the walls and 13 mini buses will distribute the visitors in and around the old town.
- The pedestrians will be able to enjoy the two levels of the square without Health and Safety concerns.

Why do we object:

Eleftheria Square was funded not with car in mind.

“Funding was strongly focused on the Environment, urban development, tourism and enterprise support. Over the period, funding was shifted away from RTD and innovation and Culture and Social infrastructure to urban development, tourism and support of enterprise investment. By the end of March 2016, payments had been claimed for 93% of available funding, implying that all of the latter will probably be absorbed”.

Excerpt from: Country Report Cyprus - Work Package 1 Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF).

Why do we object:

Do cars on a square conform to the funding priorities as established by the European Regional Policy Fund? They don't.

Competitiveness and sustainable development

Cyprus

Programme description

Programme description:

The Programme aims to boost competitiveness and growth and help Cyprus exit the crisis. It contributes to achieving the Europe 2020 targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It should create jobs and help SMEs to become more competitive and innovation-driven. EU funding will also help Cyprus meet the requirements of the Union's *acquis*, in particular as regards solid waste treatment, and increase **energy efficiency**.

Funding priorities

The OP support will substantially contribute to promoting the key EU and national development priorities:

- "Reinforcement of the competitiveness of the economy" (ERDF – 25.8% of the EU allocation): increasing of national research potential and private investments in research and innovation, promotion of entrepreneurship and increase of SMEs' competitiveness, in particular in the tourist sector, as well as promotion of energy efficiency and SMEs' use of renewable energy.
- "Promotion of ICT use" (ERDF – 13.1% of the EU allocation): modernisation of the ICT infrastructure, reinforcement of digital entrepreneurship and e-governance for businesses and citizens.
- "Reduction of CO2 emissions and climate change adaptation" (Cohesion Fund – 7.5% of the EU allocation): increase of energy efficiency in public and private buildings as well as investments for preventing and mitigating risks resulting from climate change.
- "Management of solid waste and water resources" (Cohesion Fund – 22.6% of the EU allocation): increasing waste recycling and promoting waste prevention, improvement of waste water treatment and water supply.

- **"Management of natural and cultural resources" (ERDF – 1.2 % of the EU allocation): protection and promotion of the cultural and natural (in particular for NATURA areas) heritage of Cyprus.**
- **"Promotion of sustainable transport" (Cohesion Fund – 15.1% of the EU allocation): investments in the TEN-T port and road infrastructure and improvement of environmentally-friendly transport system in Nicosia.**
- **"Sustainable urban development" (ERDF – 10.7% of the EU allocation): promotion of integrated actions for tackling the economic, environmental and social problems of the urban historical centres.**
- "Technical Assistance" (ERDF – 1.2% of the EU allocation): provision of technical assistance.
- Priority axis 7B "Technical Assistance" (Cohesion Fund – 2.8% of the EU allocation): provision of technical assistance.

Funds

- **Cohesion Fund (CF): 269,541,702.00 €**
- **Regional Development Fund (ERDF): 292,099,018.00 €**

Thematic priorities

- TA - Technical Assistance
- TO1 - Research and innovation
- TO2 - Information and communication technologies
- TO3 - SMEs competitiveness
- **TO4 - Low-carbon economy**
- **TO5 - Climate change and risk prevention**
- **TO6 - Environment and resource efficiency**
- **TO7 - Transport and energy networks**
- **TO9 - Social inclusion**

Financial information

Total OP budget: 660,753,792.00 €

Total EU contribution: 561,640,720.00 €

Who else wants a Square?

The following Public and Private institutions and individuals support the position that the particular Square should be used by the pedestrians:

- The Public Works Department
- The Municipality City Planner and Transport expert
- The Central Planning Agency
- The Planning department of the University of Cyprus
- The Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber
- The Nicosia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Architects and Civil Engineers (various)



Civic Action:

A letter was sent to all 26 Municipal Counselors asking for their stand on the issue” *Vehicular or pedestrian use of the square*”

12 out of 26 replied. Most stated that they were not in a position to express an opinion until after they examine the issue.

The criticism is that Counselors should have been aware of the issue, about which both the Public and the Building Contractor require knowing about well in advance.

One said that although (s)he realizes our knowledge on the issue, (s)he will decide based on his/her personal experience as a counselor for many terms.... Indirectly, comes the admission that the square is planned for vehicular access. See quote below:

Μπορεί να μην κατέχω τα δικά σας προσόντα που έχετε λόγω επαγγέλματος, αλλά τουλάχιστόν η πολύχρονη μου πείρα στα του Δήμου Λευκωσίας μου δίνει την πίστη ότι για τόσο σοβαρό θέμα είμαι βέβαιος ότι θα πάρω την σωστή απόφαση.

Civic Action:

Petition through the electronic social networks received 1518 votes (by 14/5/2017)

The screenshot shows the Avaaz.org website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'SIGN UP', 'LOGIN', 'ABOUT US', and 'HELP'. Below that, a blue banner reads 'The world's largest and most effective online campaigning community for change' with a 'START A PETITION' button. The main content area features the petition title in Greek: 'Προς Δήμαρχο και Δημοτικό Συμβούλιο Λευκωσίας: Πλατεία Ελευθερίας ΧΩΡΙΣ οχήματα'. It includes a 'SIGN THIS PETITION' button and a progress bar showing 1,518 signatures out of a goal of 2,000. A sign-up form is visible on the right, with fields for Name, Email, Country, and City, and a 'SIGN' button. A small image on the left shows a 3D rendering of a public square with the text 'SIGN & SHARE THE PETITION!' and 'ΟΧΙ ΑΥΤΟΚΙΝΗΤΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑΣ'.

“Please support our petition and give us your vote of confidence towards a successful outcome for the Liberty Square in Nicosia, the Capital city of Cyprus, which is, a Public Square without vehicles crossing and segmenting it. A Public Square by definition, is the place of people gathering for **socializing**. The Public Square is an essential part of the urban fabric of a city. It is the place where the citizen will escape from his/her everyday routine, it is the place where the **artist** will exhibit Street Art, it is the place where the **elderly**, the people with **limited mobility**, will socialize. It is the place where each and every one of us will **relax**, where we will participate in **events, festivals, celebrations**. It is the place where our **children** will express their energy, in a **safe and secure** environment without vehicles, fumes, noise, danger. It is the space where each and every one of us will enjoy a cup of coffee with friends. It is the space where each and every one may **exercise**, and **stroll around**. The Public Square by definition provides safety, security, relaxation, rest. It is not designed to be for vehicular access. Then it should had been called a “street”, or an “avenue”.

Concern:

Letter regarding the situation was sent to:

The Minister of Transport, Communications and Works.
The Commissioner of Administration and Human Rights.

Unanswered to date.

Concern:

Who will decide for the future of the square?

The Municipal Committee of Traffic and Parking will advise the Municipal Council on the future use of the Square. The Committee is comprised of 7 Municipal Counselors, Municipal Traffic Warden representative, a Municipal representative of the Health and Safety Sector, and a representative of the Police.

A Public Square is not a Traffic and Parking issue alone.

A number of issues are equally if not more important, and are **not** represented in the decision making.

- The environment.
- Urban Planning.
- Cultural and social issues.
- Atmospheric and sound Pollution.
- Antiquities.
- Sustainable Mobility.

Completion Date is 7 months away. We believe that the Contractor should be aware of pending modifications. Changes of the last minutes cost more in time and money.

Concern:

Can you spot the change other than the design?

- Reduction of numbers of cars
- Reduction of noise and fumes
- Increase of the pedestrian routes
- Implementation of sustainable mobility
- Enhancement of the environment

Prior to the design competition



— Pedestrian traffic node
— Vehicular traffic node

**The design award
What planners & people want**



--- Pedestrian traffic node
--- Vehicular traffic node

The design as modified in 2008



— Pedestrian traffic node
— Vehicular traffic node