



Theme 1: Urban growth and peri-urban sprawl: Walkability in the everyday landscape of Pafos

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean region, and is located in the southeast of the basin. On the island there are two climates: the Mediterranean climate and the hot semi-arid climate. Pafos, a European town of the 21st Century at the crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa, is a town with monuments of unique value from every period of its rich cultural tradition. The town of Pafos attracts a significant number of visitors every year, mainly as a result of its unique cultural heritage, and its location close to the unique Mediterranean seashore and the sensitive natural ecosystem of the Akamas peninsula. Pafos, as European Capital of Culture for 2017, aims at implementing an extensive urban landscape design intervention plan, with the ultimate goal of enhancing its open public spaces, creating links between important sites and archaeological spaces, and recovering the lost connection with the natural environment, the land and the sea, based on a richly connected path network able to provide better access to the attractive and engaging everyday places.

Urban and peri-urban landscapes of Pafos interlock in complex ways affecting the quality of life of the population concerned. An important aspect of enhancing this connectivity is the concept of 'walkability' as a way of exploring the landscape and the built environment through a path network of visual interest that provides comfort and safety, connecting people with varied attractive destinations within a reasonable amount of time and effort. Such a walkable environment fits into the contemporary approach of designing urban landscapes as more sustainable places which are healthy places both physically and mentally to live in. Pafos has the potential to become a dynamic town where citizens and tourists can walk more often than in other more segregated and spread out urban types, ameliorating, therefore, their everyday experience of the built environment.

The workshop will explore how landscape design, planning and management can contribute to reinforcing the concept of walkability in the everyday landscape of Pafos. What influence has urban landscape design already had and what ought to be the future strategy for the town to ensure that the lost connection with the cultural and the natural environment is recovered. Does walking matter in the landscape planning of urban areas and how does place/landscape matter for those who walk? What is the role of landscape in:

- Promoting a well articulated network of walkable paths?
- Promoting green infrastructure of visual interest within urban areas?

- Creating links between important sites and archaeological spaces, while recovering the lost connection with the natural environment?
- Designing public space as a strategy for stimulating high quality urban development?
- Public participation to help prevent/manage urban sprawl?
- Designing a healthy environment for walking that addresses various focus groups?
- Designing walking routes that add to the general well-being and satisfaction?
- Designing to reinforce the ecosystemic efficiency of the town as an attractive quality?
- Research approaches for studying the urban landscape in growing cities?
- Understanding urban region as a teaching resource for landscape planning and design?
- Mitigating the negative impacts of climate change?

Stakeholders to be involved include:

- Local administrations
- NGOs
- Cycling and walking associations

Working methods:

- Literature review
- Field trips
- Stakeholder interviews
- Design Workshops during the landscape forum
- Moderated online meetings

Output:

- Joint report with reflections and best-practices from international research
- Education and professional practice relating the Pafos context to comparable European and Mediterranean situations.

Photo by Christos Constantinides