

## **AL QUSAIR**

### **ACTION PLAN FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF THE OLDER URBAN FABRIC**

The proposed action plan for the revitalization of the older urban fabric of Al Qusair is structured around six different zones that differ in terms of intervention strategies,

Six zones have been delineated for different intervention strategies:

#### **1. Rehabilitation zone:**

The historic center, labeled Zone A, has been subdivided into three sub-zones, which differ in terms of rehabilitation strategies and priority for receiving public investment.

It is recommended to designate as a historic district Zone A2, which consists of the 1931 urban fabric as well as a one block deep building envelope surrounding the fort. Development within the historic district is to be subjected to special regulations governing the overall buildable area, heights, and volumes. Special design guidelines will ensure that new developments and modifications within the historic district take into account the area's historic character. A zoning map complements the proposed regulations and guidelines to ensure that new and/or modified land uses blend with the historic center's tourist, commercial, and residential character.

Two interlinked priorities should guide strategies to rehabilitate the historic center's urban fabric and revitalize the area spanning from the fort to the waterfront. The first is to structure a framework to facilitate and enable the rehabilitation of old buildings through the collaboration of public authorities and the Association for the Preservation of Qusair's Cultural Heritage. The second is to strategically direct public investments in a way that encourages property owners to invest in the rehabilitation of their structures and dwellings.

Public sector investment should be directed to the treatment of public and semi-private open spaces within the historic area, especially the fort area and the footpath network

linking the fort with the waterfront. The urban design and landscape plan for public spaces within the historic district is intended to reinforce the area's historic character and includes the pavement of the pedestrian network using cobblestones or other appropriate materials, the provision of street furniture such as street lights and benches, etc. The public spaces plan should also articulate the activity nodes that are interspersed along the corniche and main streets.

In addition, the development of commercial activities along the spine delimitating the eastern edge of Zone A and of tourist uses along the corniche street and the spine linking the fort to the waterfront should be encouraged. It is recommended to anchor the public space and tourist spines along the corniche street with a public beach to the south.

## **2. Urban improvement zone:**

The delivery of infrastructure services is the most important priority to spur the improvement of Zone B. Public investment should also concentrate on articulating the main commercial spines in all sub-zones and the institutional core (Zone B1), as well as paving and providing streetlights in the primary vehicular road network servicing the residential area. The possibility of relocating the military zone within the institutional core should be pursued as well. The land to be reclaimed should the military zone be relocated can be used to provide public facilities and spaces, as well as to link with the proposed desert park in zone E. Finally, it is expected that the provision of infrastructure will also catalyze the upgrading and consolidation of the southern areas of sub-zones B1 and B2.

## **3. Upgrading zone:**

Zone C stretches along the proposed the connection with the planned Qeft highway and constitutes the southern façade of old Qusayr city. This zone is bound between the two proposed gateways along the highway connection. The first southern entrance gateway services the old from the east and leads to the new public housing developments to the

north. The second gateway intersects with the Marsa Alam highway and connects with Corniche Street. Two strategies are proposed to upgrade this zone: 1) the delivery of infrastructure services and 2) the encouragement of infill housing with the possibility of converting the ground floor spaces into commercial uses.

#### **4. Informal housing zone:**

It is recommended that land tenure in this zone be legalized through the provision of secure land titles to squatter families. Despite its informality, Zone D developed in a way that makes feasible future regularization and infrastructure delivery at no additional unit cost and without having to resort to any demolitions. Structures are laid out following a grid that provides allowances for a road network and for the delivery of infrastructure services. The densification of this zone should be encouraged, which is the expected outcome following the provision of secure land titles and strategic infrastructure investments.

#### **5. Replanning zone:**

It is recommended overall that this zone be replanned. Two typologies of informal development occurred within this zone. The first typology is found in the southern fringe that abuts the Wadi, referred to as Zone E2. The area consists of a low-rise densely built fabric that can be described as chaotic and that is expected to increase the cost of providing infrastructure services in the future. This zone should be replanned in a way that creates easements within the fabric to enable pedestrian and vehicular access, especially for emergency vehicles. The second zone, referred to as E1, consists of interspersed structures that have been erected in an environmentally and ecologically sensitive area. It is recommended that the yet undeveloped areas within Zone E1 be declared as a non-buildable zone. Such spaces could eventually be developed as a Red Sea desert park, in which the flora and fauna of the area are displayed within a desert landscape that minimizes water consumption. It is expected that the development of a desert park would reinforce the city's historic assets and constitute an important tourist

destination. The Red Sea desert park will not only capitalize on the city's current and expected future visitors but also on the cruise ship industry that uses Qusayr as an entry port towards Luxor via the Qeft highway.

#### **6. New housing zone:**

It is recommended that this zone be earmarked for new housing development. The suggested scheme would consist of a terraced housing typology with building heights ranging between two to three stories. This zone abuts the proposed connection to the planned Qeft highway as well as one of two proposed intersections to be articulated as entrance gateways to the city from the south.

MATRIX ACTEURS ET PHASES: