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THE EFFECTS OF REGIONAL PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS OVER THE METROPOLITAN AREA LIFE

(ISTANBUL KAGITHANE REGIONAL PARK PLANNING STUDY)

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INTRODUCTION

Istanbul has become one of oldest and most important culture centers among the settlement areas of all over the world with its historical past and also the largest metropolis of Turkey and one of the world with its geographical location and political and geo-cultural structure. Further to the metropolitan city features, Istanbul also displays the rural settlement features with its living style, social order and physical space features.

The vanishing of open areas is the number one amongst the troubles deriving from rapid population increase in the developing countries and resultant rapidly enlarging metropolitan cities. The effects of rapid developments apparent in the production activities after the World War II, have also been felt in overall Turkey and Istanbul. The serial production units have started to take place in Istanbul by the effects of developments in the world, where until that time only small production units existed. Having selected location at the downtown section of the metropolis, these units have developed and spread in time by benefiting from the advantages given by the metropolitan city. Having caused the visual pollution one hand by proving negative effects upon the physical space of close environment, these developments have also led to the deterioration of the living standards and quality, on the other hand, in association with the decreasing facilities and open areas.

The Istanbul Metropolitan Area Sub Region Master Plan was approved by the City Council in March 1995 in order to find solutions to the troubles of Istanbul and to set out vision for the next 15 years and to cause the cultural heritage to be inherited by the future generations in a healthy manner. Some regional parks and other recreation area functions were suggested in various regions in line with the decisions taken within the framework of the Master Plan.

The first part of this paper provides some general information in relation with the concept of regional park and the planning principles of these parks. The second part examines the condition of recreation areas within the development process of Istanbul. The third part gives the targets and goals taken into consideration in the planning of study area and the final part shows the results of these targets as reflected on the project.

1. REGIONAL PARK CONCEPT AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Regional Parks may be an important tool for evaluation of leisure time by individuals, protection of resources, development of society and people. The following basic factors are essential for the attempts and programs to be made by corporations and other bodies in the regional parks that will ensure the evaluation of leisure time and for the realization of other activities and the organizations aimed at people and the planning principles.

SERVICES TOWARDS PEOPLE

1. The development of human beings, social welfare and social integrity must be given priority and the services must be defined in words expressing human experiences rather than actions, programs and structures.
2. The requirements of special user groups must be met and they must be integrated with other services.
3. The service approaches must be aimed at the improvement of environment and the open field planning and the other subjects related with living environment.
4. The planning must be carried on not for human beings, but in association with human beings.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The recreation planning has some basic principles applicable in the ordinary and extreme conditions. Any planning action may be based on these principles and the character of planning process may be observed by using these principles.

1. Everybody must benefit from the actions and facilities in disregard of hobbies, age, gender, income level, culture or disability.
2. The recreation of people must be coordinated with other recreation facilities of the society in order to prevent repetitions and to increase benefits.
3. The recreation of people must be integrated with public services such as education, health and transportation.
4. The facilities ensured for recreation must be adaptable to future requirements.
5. The facilities and programs must be feasible in terms of finance at all stages of development. The point which should never be forgotten is that the operating and maintenance costs may be higher than the investment costs.
6. The participation of citizens in all stages of the planning process must be ensured.
7. The planning is a process that requires to make retrospection and to evaluate developments.
8. The planning study must be integrated with the decisions of upper level.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF ISTANBUL AND THE DIFFERENTIATION APPARENT IN RECREATION AREAS

The vanishing of open areas is the number one amongst the troubles deriving from rapid population increase in the developing countries and resultant rapidly enlarging metropolitan cities. The effects of rapid developments apparent in the production activities after the World War II, have also been felt in overall Turkey and Istanbul. The serial production units have started to take place in Istanbul by the effects of developments in the world, where until that time only small production units existed. Having selected location at the downtown section of the metropolis, these units have developed and spread in time by benefiting from the advantages given by the metropolitan city. Having selected location at the Historical Peninsula and the coasts of Golden Horn, these units have developed and spread in time by benefiting from the advantages given by the metropolitan city and the areas nearer to the downtown section of the city (like the brooks of Kagthane and Alibeyköy) have been affected so badly therefrom.

Those units, which use especially the waters of existing brooks, have started to display polluting character for the close environment of brooks and Istanbul in association with the increase in the production potential. Moreover some negative conditions have emerged in the

healthy living conditions of the city due to the immigration movements that started in 1950's and preserve its momentum in our day. The population resulting from the immigration started initially to settle at locations nearer to the production units and have maintained their rural life qualities. The decisions of the unplanned industry to select locations on one side and the intensive housing on the other have caused the excessive pollution of water basins, the heart of metropolitan city and of brooks and brook beds feeding said basins and also the decreasing and even the vanishing of both the recreation areas taking place at the downtown section of the city and the forestry areas.

It is apparent on the basis of the results of census in 1975 that 200.000 people Per annum came in Istanbul by immigration and Istanbul had a population of 4.5 millions at that time. In those years, the rate of open areas was calculated to be 6.44 sqm Per capita. This rate fell to 1.13 sqm Per capita according to the data obtained as of the year 1994. The data given in Table may be examined in order to further explain the negative developments apparent in the recreation areas throughout Istanbul on the basis of the year 1994.

Table: Active Recreation Areas of Istanbul in 1994

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Park | 4.432.666m ² | % 29.57 |
| Traffic Island | 926.018 m ² | % 6.18 |
| Squares | 450.139 m ² | % 3.00 |
| Forestry Areas | 9.184.000 m ² | % 61.25 |
| Total | 14.992.823 m² | % 100.00 |

(Istanbul Metropolitan Area Sub Region Master Plan Report, 1995)

If examined carefully, it is readily seen that the open areas divide to various regions on the European and Asian sides of Istanbul. European Side includes Istanbul Region, Blue Mosque Region, Gulhane Region, Golden Horn Region, Florya Region, Beyoglu Region and Sariyer Region. According to the information made available by the departments of this region, the open areas were grouped and handled in the form of park + meadow, park + meadow + square and visual open areas by going to area and type divisions such as meadows, square parks and traffic island sites. It is observed that 35% of the overall open area (excepting special meadows) in Istanbul takes place in the Asian side (2.596.196 sqm, 0.86 sqm Per capita) and 65% thereof takes place in the European side (6.396.827 sqm, 1.20 sqm Per capita). The total open area throughout Istanbul is 8.986.823 sqm and the open area Per capita is 1.13 sqm. (The open area Per capita in the Construction Law is set minimally 7 sqm).

Istanbul Metropolitan Area Sub Region Master Plan was prepared in March 1995 in order to minimize those unwanted conditions which are apparent in the natural, artificial and human aspects of Istanbul through planned development and to cause the cultural heritage to be inherited by the future generations in a healthy manner. The present natural structure of the metropolitan area was diligently attempted to be preserved in line with the targets designed within the framework of said plan. In this context, the regional parks have been suggested at 4 different points in the Asian side of Istanbul and at 2 different points in the European side and further to aforesaid functions Nature Parks, Fair Festivity Sites, City and Environment Parks, Zoos and Sports Fields covering large areas directed at recreation requirements throughout Istanbul have been allocated and the rate of open areas Per capita has been increased.

In view of the fact that the project and implementation steps required to realize these functions contemplated by decisions under the plan are unavoidable, the different regions were designed as project areas within overall Istanbul. Either the meeting of recreation area requirements of the region and Istanbul and the setting up of healthy living conditions for the region were targeted by the decision to carry out Regional Park and open area functions as

provided for in the Master Plan of 1/50.000 scale for the project area covered by the Auxiliary Project on the Green Belt of Kucukkoy, Alibeykoy and Kagithane Brooks of the Kagithane Regional Park.

3. THE PLANNING STUDY FOR THE WOODEN BELT OF ISTANBUL AL BEYKÖY BROOK AND THE KAGITHANE REGIONAL PARK

The goal and targets of the project were designed at first step under the Auxiliary Project on the Green Belt of Kucukkoy, Alibeykoy and Kagithane Brooks of the Kagithane Regional Park and the physical and social data were gathered by making analysis studies directed at such goals. The data so gathered were evaluated systematically and their synthesis was concluded. Some optional planning studies were carried out by making plan decisions in line with aforesaid synthesis and the Master Plan of 1/5000 and Application Plan of 1/1000 scale, the Urban Design and Landscaping Plans of 1/500 scale and the special arrangement areas surrounding the Building at a scale of 1/200 were put into project for the area in parallel to the option selected and other details were given in required scale. The overall project surface is 6.500.000 sqm. The active open space area in Istanbul will rise to 1.95 from 1.13 sqm Per capita.

Goal of Project: The goal is to prepare the design projects of the region, which would contribute to the enlivenment of historical, spatial and cultural architecture of Istanbul and the establishment of natural and artificial environmental conditions fit for living and the occurrence of social integration and the spreading of consciousness on urban living conditions and urbanization and make up prestigious regions. The explanations about the targets and details of the project prepared in order to provide wide, various, safe and accessible open area and recreation areas to people with different ages and hobbies in the settlement units located especially in the European side of Istanbul and close environment of the arrangement area and to prepare an environment of mingling for different age groups, families, communities and society take part below.

Targets of Project: It is a fact that improvement and development in time are unavoidable. The determination of tools effecting the goals set out and the general targets for the establishment of planning principles play an important role in the protection of historical and natural heritage and the inheritance thereof by future generations. The targets designated abiding by this principle are as follows:

- Targets aimed at ensuring social and cultural integration,
- Targets aimed at improvement of health and comfort conditions,
- Targets aimed at spreading urban life and urbanization consciousness and,
- Targets aimed at ensuring functional competence.

Targets Aimed at Ensuring Social and Cultural Integration

The arrangement of joint recreational spaces aimed at gathering people from different age groups and causing them to mingle and the ensuring of user participation as much as possible and the taking of expectations into consideration during the planning process.

Targets Aimed at Improvement of Health and Comfort Conditions

The ensuring of healthy living conditions by improving brook beds and brooks and the planning of various facilities in order to establish a clean and healthy environment and the making of site allocation for the functions which may direct aforesaid conditions.

Targets Aimed at Spreading Urban Life and Urbanization Consciousness

The planning of recreation areas within the framework of urban living conditions and the contemplation of functions which establish bonds between the past and the future for the recognition of historical and cultural heritage and the carrying over thereof to future generations and the creating of conditions which meet the requirements of working-taking shelter-resting as basic components of urban living.

Targets Aimed at Ensuring Functional Competence

The determination of suggested new functions in direction to the close environment and overall Istanbul and the establishment of pedestrian and vehicle relation and the ensuring of functional integrity among suggested functions and the planning for the relation between main pedestrian flows coming from close environment and basic functions and the ensuring of consistence between upper level decisions and other plans concerning the planning field.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal

Provide ample, diverse, safe, affordable and accessible parks, open spaces and recreation facilities and programs to meet the current and future needs.

Policy 1

Use systematic and comprehensive planning to guide the development, operations and allocations of resources for all city parks, facilities, and recreation programs.

Actions

- Emphasise joint planning and co-operation with all public agencies as the preferred approach to meeting the parks, open space and program needs.
- Develop and implement a parks and recreation facilities master plan.
- Establish design guidelines for the physical development of parks and open space areas.
- Develop standards for night-time activities and facility uses in parks and recreation areas.

Policy 2

Provide informal areas for people of all ages to interact with natural landscapes and preserve open space between urban and agricultural uses to provide a visual edge to the City.

Standards

- The City's park and open space system should include opportunities for active and passive recreation where appropriate.

Actions

- Incorporate existing habitat areas into the open space network while maintaining the emphasis on wildlife and habitat preservation in these areas.
- Within urban open space areas, provide habitat elements (e.g. roosting trees, nesting trees, etc.) for birds, such as songbirds, and for other wildlife as appropriate.
- Develop criteria regarding the types of locations where the city would like to establish new resource preservation, education and recreation areas and programs.
- Establish criteria for location and design of natural areas accessible to the public. Include in the design criteria natural areas that can complement and accommodate other open space uses such as viable wildlife habitat or active recreation.
- Set policies and criteria for the establishment of trails and picnic areas in natural open space areas.

Policy 3

Involve individuals and citizen groups reflecting a cross section of Davis citizens (including youth and adults) in the planning, design and maintenance of parks, recreation facilities and recreation programs.

Actions

- Maintain a recreation and park commission appointed by the municipality to advise on all matters related to parks and recreation,
- Appoint neighbourhood park planning committees, which include neighbourhood representatives, city-wide user representatives, and representatives from other ad-hoc groups, to help plan and design neighbourhood parks and other facilities.
- Summarise the parks and recreation facilities master plan and distribute it widely.
- Conduct a survey to solicit community input on existing and planned recreation programs periodically,
- Develop methods to include children in planning for local parks,
- Where possible, include residents especially youths, in the construction of parks and recreation sites. Involve citizens, especially youths, in maintaining parks areas through participation in park watches, citizen based graffiti watch and cleanup and repair.

Policy 4

Make all parks, greenbelts, open space areas and recreation facilities attractive, safe, and easy to maintain.

Standards

- Park design and planning should incorporate short and long-distance views as appropriate.
- Parks, greenbelts and recreation facilities should be designed to eliminate hidden and difficult access areas where security problems would be likely to occur.
- Parks, greenbelts, open space areas and recreation facilities should allow emergency and police vehicles access for routine patrol or medical response.
- Children's play areas and other appropriate park areas should have adequate shade and wind protection provided through landscaping and constructed elements.
- Parks and recreation facilities should include appropriate lighting to maximise safety and use.
- Parks should include multi-functional spaces and facilities to facilitate cultural events.
- New parks should be designed and located to minimise noise and activity conflicts with residential areas.
- Open space areas should be acquired and developed in large blocks as a means to maximise management advantages relative to small non-contiguous parcels or linear corridors.

Actions

- Include art features designed by local artists in parks where possible.
- Require the review of all projects constructed as part of the open space system by appropriate city departments to ensure that public safety concerns are met.

Policy 5

Attempt to provide all city residents with convenient access to parks and recreation programs and facilities.

Standards

- Parks, recreation facilities and open space areas (where feasible) should be located to be easily accessible by various transportation modes including car, bus and bicycle.
- Recreation programs and access to facilities should be provided at reasonable costs.

Actions

- Develop community park facilities for night-time recreation as needed.

Policy 7

- Use all available mechanisms for preservation of open space.

Actions

- Use regulatory means to the extent feasible to preserve targeted open space areas within the city's jurisdiction
- Identify additional funding sources for implementation of identified open space preservation projects.

4. CONCLUSION: FROM TARGETS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Green Belt Planning Study for Alibeykoy Brook

The plan decisions were devised by taking into consideration the demographic, economic, social and cultural features of Istanbul for the whole project area. The joint recreational facilities were arranged in order to meet various recreation requirements and at the same time, to ensure social communication among these people. If handled in this direction, the project area was arranged in the Master Plan of 1/50.000 scale for two separate usage alongside Alibeykoy Brook in direction to determine recreation areas serving to the close environment and overall Istanbul. The field remaining between the south border of the project area and the beginning point of the Regional Park at northern side of this area was designed so as to meet the daily recreation requirements inside the city by taking into consideration the intensity of housing area within the close environment. The function fields such as children game fields, sports fields, picnic fields were designed in order to bring together users of various age groups in this area and furthermore, open display fields, amphitheater, resort gardens, picnic fields, flower gardens with pergolas, fields for sitting under trees, sunbathing meadow, cafe decorated with palms and Turkish garden were planned in order to ensure social integration and to strengthen communication among people.

Some functions addressing to overall Istanbul in terms of weekend pastime were identified for the area located at the northern side of Alibeykoy brook, which makes borders at the beginning point of the Regional Park and Trans European Motorway at the northwest by taking into consideration the general topographic usage of the close environment. Inside this area, natural elements and usage were heavily designed and festivity meadow and picnic fields were suggested to enable people coming from different parts of Istanbul to make culture exchange. Various fields were allocated for sitting sites, show terraces and functions inside the area. Moreover the existing field of rushes that takes place in the northwest of the area was protected and evaluated as a function addressing to whole Istanbul. The main pedestrian axis will, at the same time, be evaluated as walking path in response to the walking needs of weekend users. The sitting corners and terraces for panorama were designed for such walking people to enable them to rest during long walks.

Inside the planning area, a Literature Park in which inscriptions displaying the works of people who wrote artistic writings either in prose or verse form in the past in relation with this area took place was designed in addition to the display fields in order to recognize the Historical and Cultural heritage and to carry over such heritage to future generations. Some function areas such as small lakes, display fields for water and water edge plants and water world were planned in various fields in order to emphasize the importance of Alibeykoy Brook for Istanbul and to enable users to be integrated with nature in parallel to the relation of

human beings and water. Moreover a waterfall was planned so as to ensure ventilation of brook waters and to enrich visual aspects of the area.

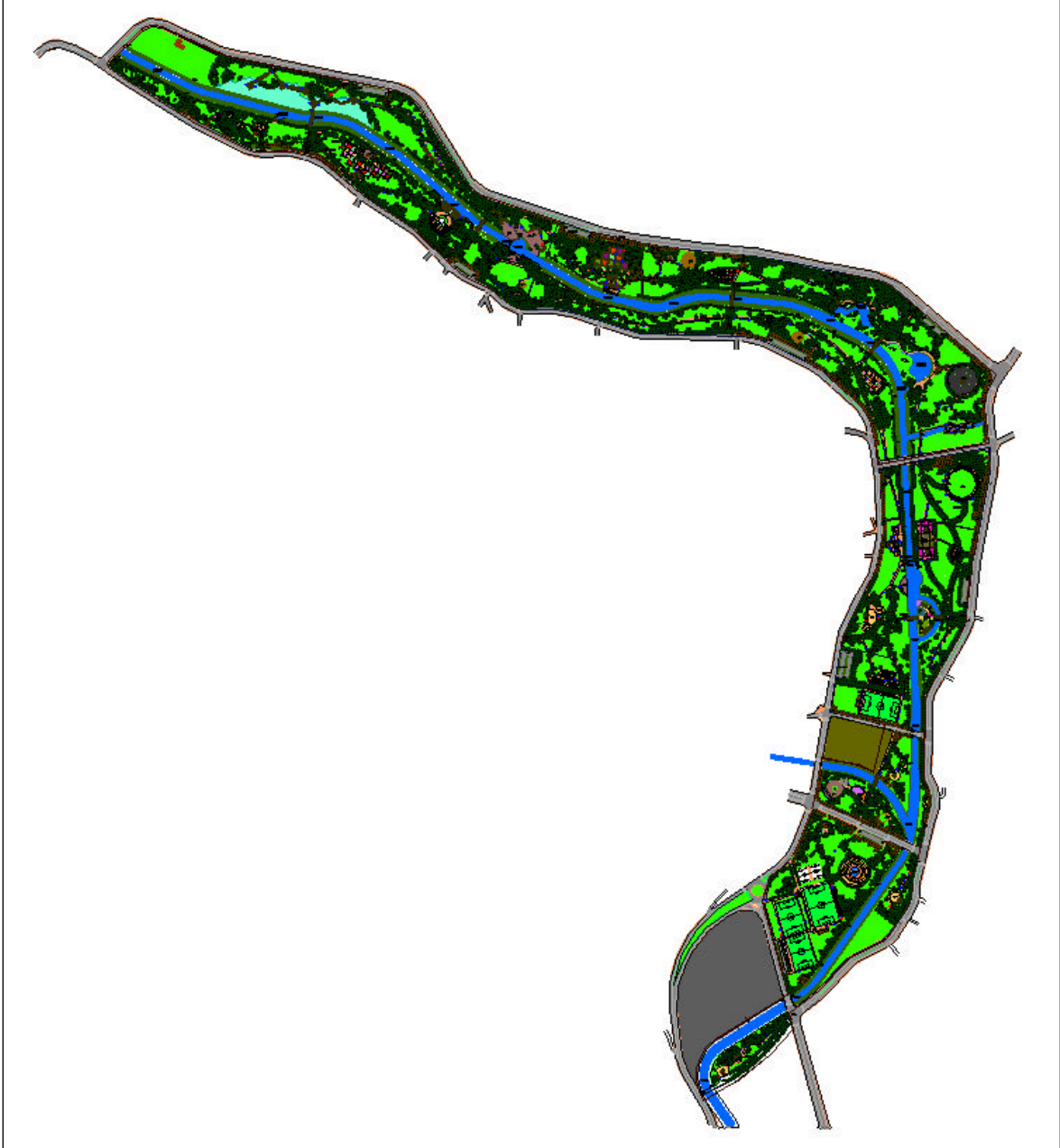


Figure 1: Green Belt Planning Study for Alibeykoy Brook

Green Belt Planning Study for Regional Park

The project area located between Trans European Motorway and Alibeykoy Brook was planned in parallel to the weekend usage of overall Istanbul in general. The whole field remaining at western side of the area was allocated to the function of subforest rush types protection and improvement valley in direction to the integration of functions which may take place in the regional park, with the nature. The walking paths and the sitting sites with pergola

also take place in this area which may contain samples of plants and trees growing under different climate conditions. The paths planned inside the regional park were especially for pedestrians in general and arranged in accordance with natural slopes. The sitting sites, resting corners and watching terraces were designed at some points of the area in which various paths were arranged for walking and scrolling purposes. Moreover a scooting camp harmonious with nature, display field of water edge plants, resort gardens and sitting sites with waterfall were arranged in the project area in which the picnic fields disperse homogeneously. Also youth center, music corner, open air display field, countries garden, sports fields, fine arts and handicraft working and displaying field functions aiming youngsters were suggested for this area. The other part of the Regional Park falling to the eastern side of Fevzi Cakmak Street was allocated to the weekend recreation areas, which are open to the usage of overall Istanbul. The NATO Military Field, Alibeykoy Energy Transformer Center and an area of Water Administration of Istanbul which exist in this area have been protected in their older condition. Sports fields, picnic fields, children amusement center, children's world, thematic park and watching terraces were designed in other areas.

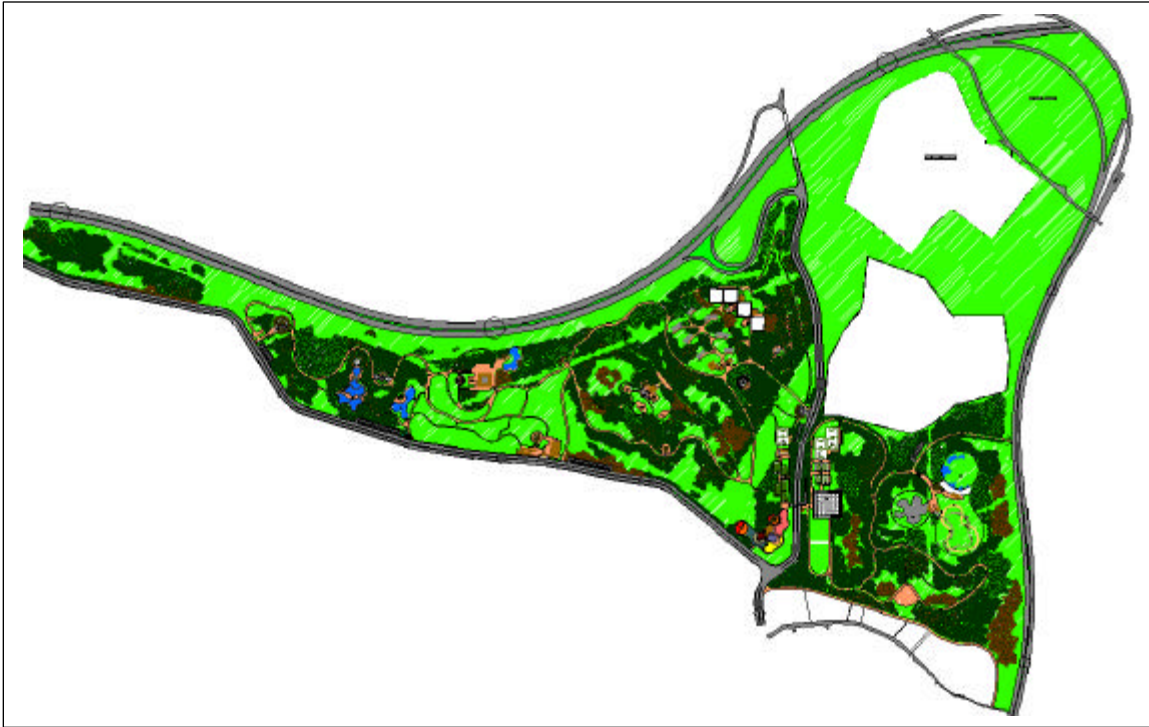


Figure 2: Green Belt Planning Study for Regional Park

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