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Urban Sea Transportation in Greece, The case of Skiathos

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Abstract

The need for urban connectivity in the cities of northern Europe has put forward the use of any means of transport. Cities like Hamburg, Stockholm and Venice that traditionally were industrial and commercial centers have developed a significant network of metro, trains, trams and buses for the wellbeing of the local residents and visitors. The essence of the interchange of these networks of transportation is beneficial for the cities themselves for workers' needs as well as for locals and visitors, for day to day living and recreation. What makes the reference to these large cities interesting by definition is the similarities that they have with respect to the landscape, land, sea and islets, and the need for a water based means of transportation as well as the interchange with the already established network of urban transportation. Another bond between these three cities is that all of them have large ports so one might take it for granted that any place on earth having these similarities a) large city with port, b) specific landscape with rivers and c) given needs for connectivity, has established an urban transportation network that includes a water based transportation (river and sea). Despite the fact that Greece has the most extensive coast line in Europe with a network of maritime transportation from the shore to and between the islands, adequate systems of urban transportation has not been developed yet i.e. in Piraeus, Volos or have just started like in Thessaloniki. One of the main reasons, despite the need, is the difficulty in state legislation for a sea urban transportation connecting a) main cities like Volos and smaller cities inside the Pagasetic Gulf or b) an island's centre such as Skiathos Town with touristically developed coastal areas in the same way that urban transportation operates in a) the aforementioned large cities, as well as, b) the network of small towns along the coastline of Lake Como in Italy. The purpose of this article is to show that the creation of a water based urban transportation network, despite the difference in scale, compared to the other European cities is, a) necessary with respect to town and local residents' interests, b) visitors' needs, c) beneficial to the sustainability of the local economy and the local environment and it is not only evitable but a large number of best practices forms of equivalent networks already exist.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Cities history

Numerous civilizations from the beginning of human history till today have significant examples of cities that started as inter-crossing points of reference between open sea trade and inland cultivation and production, with vicinity to rivers and their deltas and/or even covered from the hot sun carved in rocks as Petra once was. General influence of typical - out of local range of control - parameters, have led many powerful cities to decline as well as others to last along hundreds and thousands of years with continuous human presence and economic activity

until today.

Cities like London, Hamburg, Antwerp, Stockholm, Venice, Constantinople, Alexandria, Amsterdam and Hong Kong are a few examples of cities belonging in this category irrespectively of the accurate city's age.

1.2 Cities and economy

Along this analysis between cities' rise and fall emerge a vital relation among the city's willingness and capability of staying alive as a unique homogeneous entity and the necessity of meeting the continuous threats of change by creating new, diversified competitive and strategic advantages.

The growth of cities in terms of increases in citizens' total number, expansion of local economy' GDP, improvement on citizens' quality of life and the city's welfare in general is totally related not only to the isochronous improvements on the means of humans and goods transportation but also to the creation of an advanced system of efficient interchange among these means as parts of the unique and unified grid of a city's transportation system.

In a global economy, where cities compete for investment and talent, it is not only the quantity, but the quality of transport that matters.

1.3 Cities and transportation

As these cities expand the essence of urban planning and the necessity of taking many parameters into consideration at an urban decision makers' level, is more and more identifiable.

Therefore, as an outcome of this complicated coexistence of stakeholders wills that constitute the essence of the city, an adequate complicated system of urban transportation has risen along in order to (or at least was meant to) meet this need for urban connectivity, putting forward the use of any means of transport.

Always under the prism of local economic development cities like Hamburg, Stockholm and Venice that traditionally were industrial and commercial centres have developed a significant network of metros, trains, trams, and buses for the wellbeing of the local residents and visitors.

The essence of the interchange of these networks of transportation is beneficial for the cities themselves for workers' needs as well as for locals and visitors, for day to day living and recreation.

What makes the reference to these large cities interesting by definition is the similarities that they have with respect to the landscape, land, sea and islets. As an outcome of this they have integrated the available water corridors in their transportation systems so water buses and water taxi operate offering a value adding parameter on their existed system.

Another bond between these three cities is that all of them have large ports so one might take it for granted that any place on earth having these similarities a) large city with port, b) specific landscape with rivers and c) given needs for connectivity, has established an urban transportation network that includes a water based transportation (river and sea), which is not necessarily the case.

As a result of its importance to further local economic development, a large number of academics have contacted research on the relation between cities' wellbeing and the efficiency of its own system of urban transportation for the cities of the developed world.

1.4 Transportation in the EU member states

The importance of mobility is a basic need for societies and a fundamental issue towards the very creation of the EU. Characteristic is the EU's transportation policy according to which "Public authorities are responsible for providing the infrastructure needed and defining and enforcing the rules on its use, so as to maximise the positive impact on economic development and welfare. And this must be done in ways that minimise pressure on the environment and prevent accidents. Some of these responsibilities are met at the European level."

Nevertheless, the EEC Treaty sought a **common policy for inland transport**, namely roads, rail and inland waterways, but not for maritime and air transport (Article 84 EEC, Article 100 TFEU)." Urban transportation constitutes a vital role towards EU target of sustainable development of the cities. Land transportation can be divided to two categories a) individual and b) mass.

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