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Urban Waterfront Revitalization Pursuit in İzmir Port District

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İzmir as a coastal metropolitan city, adjacent to Aegean (Ege) Sea, is opening up the western world through its port region, which is close to the city centre. This strategically important region covers an area of 550 ha. consisting of the harbour precinct, industrial and commercial zones, build-up zones and open spaces along the bay.

İzmir Metropolitan Municipality launched an international ideas competition in 2001, for the redevelopment of İzmir Port District that might allow introducing a wide variety of **creative scenarios** with the aim of **establishing new city centre** as well as **enhancing waterfront revitalization** concept.

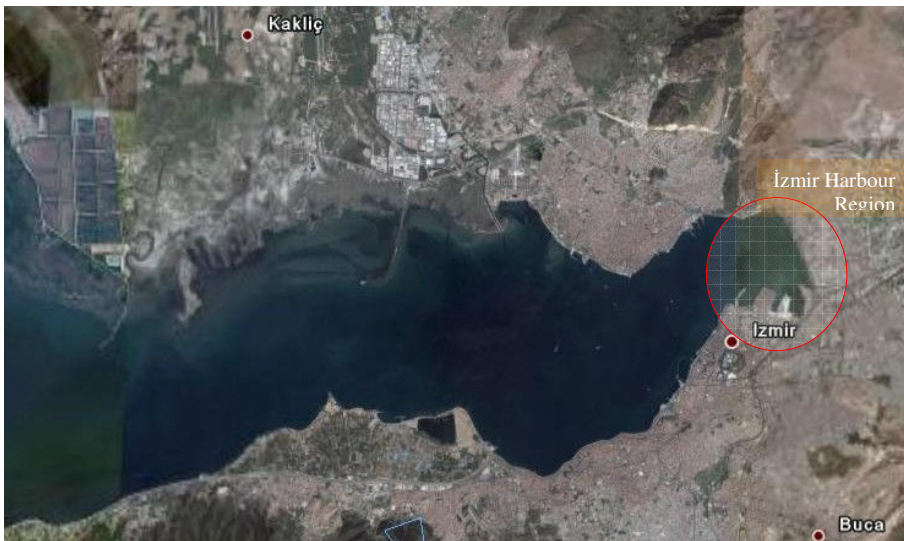
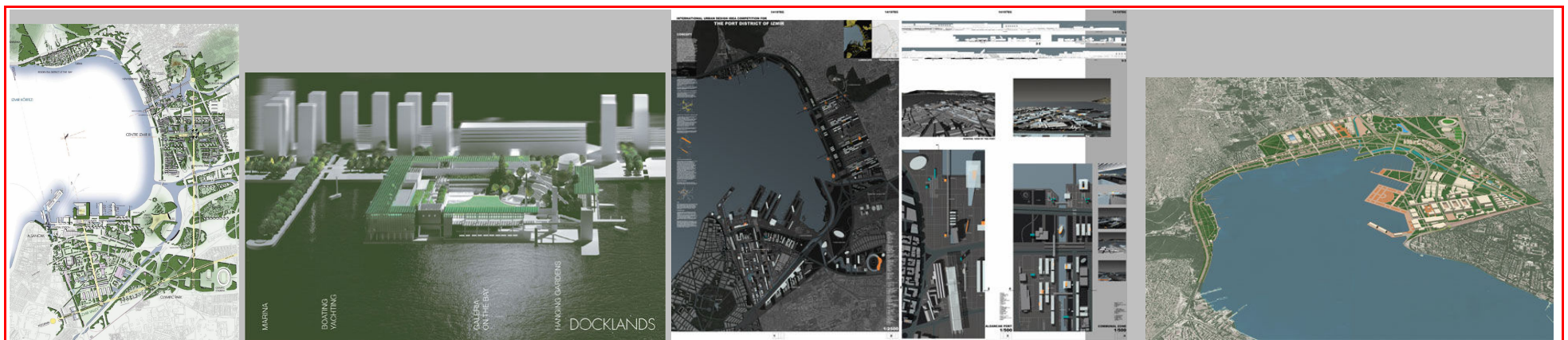


Figure 1. İzmir Bay and the port district

Planning and management of coastal landscapes have considerably stepped up their involvement in GI-based projects since traditional or ad hoc (urban) planning outputs are unable to address some complicated but often competing challenges over coastal environments.

Some projects regarding conservation and management of natural and cultural landscape features and evaluating GI data accurately have been mostly welcomed and awarded in the screening period of the competition.

The competition has conceptually provoked radical planning and design interventions in and around the region, among which urban physical structure including transportation mode, urban identity, historic references and open space network along the bay, and socio-economic dynamics could be regenerated as well.



First Prize

Second Prize

Third Prize

Figure 2. The awarded projects of the international urban design project competition

Following the screening process, the international jury emphasized that;

- the importance of the vision of İzmir as an internationally competitive commercial, cultural, technological and tourism center not only in Turkey, but also in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The port area and its surroundings offer great potential for urban transformation and development on this score, besides providing for the more immediate social and economic needs of the metropolitan area.
- the results of the international competition should not be taken as the "solution", but interpreted as the suggested framework of visions, goals, strategies (both social/economic and spatial) and priorities; i.e., ideas for the project area.
- the results do not mark the end, but signal the beginning of a new process: formulating and implementing projects that would shape the port area and its surroundings in line with the results of the international competition. Indeed, the management of this process requires particular emphasis, in and of itself.
- the Metropolitan Municipality should appoint and authorize a "project management unit", and this unit could begin public negotiations on pressing issues in the light of the framework of visions, goals, strategies and priorities suggested in the international competition, in order to prepare the planning documents necessary for implementation.

In conclusion, though some awarded projects were able to use properly GI of the district, and thus laid out corporate, creative scenarios and visions that might constitute new city centre with reference to the existing historical and ecological niches, evaluating somewhat inadequate geographic insights and integrating these potentials with urban landscape-based urban design phenomenon are increasingly needed to consider ecological as well as socio-economic aspects, and to achieve socially vibrant and multi-functional waterfront districts.