

## **Stop the Jerusalem Cable Car**

It has come to our attention that the government of Israel is advancing a plan to build a cable car from West Jerusalem to the Old City. The plan will completely alter the ancient city skyline and the character and landscape of the Old City walls.

According to the plan, the cable car will consist of four massive stations, at least two of which will be situated in front of the Old City Walls. In addition, the project will require the construction of 15 towering columns along the Old City walls and through the Ben Hinnom Valley, the last of the ancient valleys in the area to be untouched by modern construction. When working to capacity, the cable car line will feature 73 cars an hour.

The project is being promoted by powerful interest groups who put tourism and political agendas above responsibility for safeguarding Jerusalem's cultural treasures. No other important historic city has a cable car. It is a matter of international consensus that the choice of a cable car is not appropriate for ancient cities with a skyline preserved for hundreds or thousands of years. Cities like Rome and Athens with millions of visitors a year did not build a cable car. Jerusalem's ancient landscape is precious heritage to all of humankind. Its religious and cultural values must not be overruled by short-term interests.

We join the protest by our colleagues in Israel<sup>i</sup> and call on the government to cancel this project. The Israeli government, as the custodian of the city, must do the utmost to keep a long-term historical and cultural perspective and to safeguard the historic skyline from economic or ideological agendas that threaten to compromise irreplaceable cultural assets.

We strongly urge the government to withdraw the plan to build a cable car, and instead promote a plan to safeguard and protect Jerusalem's ancient sites and monuments in accordance with contemporary standards for the preservation of historic cities.

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<sup>i</sup> The Association of Architects and Town Planners in Israel and the Council for the Conservation of Heritage Sites unequivocally opposed to the plan. In October, a public letter against the cable car plan signed by seventy prominent academics, artists and heritage professionals was published.

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Singnatories include:

- Prof. Avermaete Tom, Chair for the History and Theory of Urban Design, ETH Zurich
- Prof. Aureli Pier Vittorio, The AA School of Architecture, London
- Arad Ron, designer and architect
- Bandarin Francesco, Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO, Former Director, UNESCO World Heritage Centre (2000-2010)
- Barbera Lucio, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at Sapienza, University of Rome
- Prof. Bressani Martin - Director of McGill's School of Architecture,
- Santiago Calatrava, Architect
- Prof. Ceccarelli Paolo - UNESCO Chair in Urban and Regional Planning for Sustainable Local Development.
- Cohen Jean-Louis - Architect and Architectural Historian, Professor in the History of Architecture at New York University Institute of Fine Arts.
- Prof. Croset Pierre-Alain, Politecnico di Torino, Department of Architecture and Design
- Dallari Fiorella – Professor of Political Economy and Tourism, Studiorum University of Bologna, Editor-in- Chief of Almatourism
- Prof. Delbeke Maarten, Professor of Architecture History, Eth Zurich
- Diller Elizabeth, Architect
- Eisenman Peter, Architect
- Filler Martin, Architecture Critic, The New York Review of Books
- Prof. Foster Hal, Art Critic and Historian, Princeton University
- Frampton Kenneth, Professor of Architecture, Columbia University
- Herreros Juan, Architect, Chair Professor at ETSAM-Madrid and GSAPP-Columbia University.
- Prof. Heynen Hilde, Head of Architecture and Society, Faculty of Engineering and Science, University KU Leuven
- Prof. Jarzombek Mark, Professor of Architecture History, M.I.T
- Leatherbarrow, David - Professor of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania School of Design

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- Prof. Lepik Andres - History of Architecture and Curatorial Practice, Technische Universität München
  - Prof. Magnago Villorio Lampugnani, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich
  - Mayne Thom, Architect
  - Mcleod Mary, Professor of Architecture, Columbia University
  - Moss Eric, Architect
  - Prof. Occhialini Etra University of Ferrara
  - Olmo Carlo, professor Emeritus in History of Architecture, Politecnico di Torino
  - Picon Antoine, Professor of the History of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design
  - Safdie Moshe, Architect
  - Treib Marc, Professor Emeritus of Architecture, University of California, Berkeley