

Gyumri Smart Zone (GSZ) Square Area Restoration and Improvement Concept

by Deem Communications

Project duration 2018 – 2023

The GSZ Square Restoration Program is the starting point of the Gyumri Smart Zone Project, which had been developed by DEEM as part of the Gyumri brand implementation strategy¹. GSZ is a multi-component project focused on the social, economic and cultural revival of Tigran Mets Street – a 1 km long neighborhood connecting the Railway station (a significant gateway to the city) with the Independence Square area accommodating such important landmarks, as the Drama Theater, Academy of Fine Arts, government buildings, and business centers. Although the area is part of the Kumayri historical district, it has its own distinctive style - different in shape and color – with wide sidewalks and oriental style two floor buildings. The idea is to build a Smart Zone using smart sustainable solutions and approaches in all the program activities – social, cultural, and economic - from the usage of specific construction materials to integrating ethical and community-centered business models.

For the next 2 years, DEEM will focus on the revival of the GSZ Square and surroundings. One significant project in the area is already being implemented by our partners; Ballet 2021 Foundation is reconstructing one of Gyumri's iconic cultural landmarks – Sevan Club, destroyed during the earthquake to be transformed into an inclusive performing arts center. DEEM has started with the GSZ Square where we have identified 4 key significant landmarks to be restored or built to shape a new meaning and functionality for the area. All of them are located around the Railway Station square and the beginning of Tigran Mets Street.

Sports Museum

Armenia doesn't have a sports museum yet, and Gyumri is the right place to fill this gap, since a huge number of the country's Europe, World, Olympic champions in a variety of categories (from weightlifting to skiing) come from Gyumri. We are designing a smart museum – which will combine interactive elements, AR/VR solutions, sustainable energy infrastructure etc. It will be a living community center, event venue, a meeting point for all sports lovers of Armenian and international athletes. The museum will host its own café and shop. We have chosen the historical building formerly used as a police station (375 sqm), which will be restored and an extra modern part of approximately 300 sqm will be built on top of it to accommodate an event area, interactive exhibition halls, and sports games zone.

Square with inclusive playground and skateboard area

The projects aims at the modernizing of the playground located in the middle of the Railway station square. Our idea is to apply the smart approach here as well by adding a sports element (resonating with the sports museum next to it) - skating platforms (that will be adjustable for winter sports) and outdoor workout equipment. The playground will be equipped with inclusivity hardware (ramps, swing boxes for wheelchairs); the green area will be adjusted for the elderly (gazebos for board game playing area with decorative garden on the roof and solar powered lighting).

Nikoghayos Tigranyan (1856, Gyumri – 1951, Yerevan) memorable installation

We intent to create a landmark in memory of Nikoghayos Tigranyan, a Gyumri born Armenian composer, pianist and ethno-musicologist, blind at age 9, the first to bring and implement Braille System in Armenia. The installation part will be implemented as a contest by inviting architects and landscape designers from Armenia and Diaspora to come up with the concepts.

Experimental Cooperative Guest House

Among other important landmarks DEEM has identified a two-floor historical residential building at the beginning of Tigran Mets Street, which requires major restoration. Our plan is to transform it into an experimental guest-house set up as a cooperative business to be managed and initially (partly) funded by the residents. The building will be equipped with solar panels and possible smart solution; its community will be trained in business and marketing, as well as introduced to community gardening and other models of shared economies.

Infrastructure improvement

The entire Tigran Mets Street is currently under construction: the sidewalks paved, borders reconstructed and the road asphalted. The construction plan, however doesn't include the square renovation. So the idea is to include the square ground renovation into the general plan and apply the paving method that uses slices of tuff stone traditionally practiced on this street. Solar powered street lights on the GSZ square will be placed within this project.

The estimated budget for the realization of the entire project is **EUR 4.9 mln**. The investment plan includes DEEM own investment, solar power infrastructure grant from the EU; Creative Europe grant for the museum setup, training and curation grants from GIZ and US Embassy; private sector donation and investment.

¹ DEEM has initiated and implemented the full branding of the Gyumri city as part of its CSR in 2017.

Independence Square



Railway Station



driving ideas to the top