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The New Administrative Capital's Central Park – A Park for the People and for all of Egypt

New Capital Central Park, one of the world's largest new parks and the first of its kind in Egypt and Africa, runs like a spine through Egypt's New Administrative Capital. Covering an area twice the size of New York City's Central Park, it serves as the cultural, social, and environmental heart of this new, smart, and sustainable city in the desert.



New Capital Central Park, a sprawling 10 km long urban oasis spanning 440 hectares, stands as the main city park and the vibrant green lung of Egypt's New Administrative Capital. Designed with a diverse array of amenities and destinations, this park offers a wide range of experiences, making it a haven for all.

Dar prepared the landscape master plan for this award-winning park with the aim of building resilient infrastructure, combating desertification, and promoting the well-being of the new city's communities in line with the ambitious vision set by the Egyptian Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities and the Administrative Capital For Urban Development.



Pathway to Sustainability: The Park's Development Principles

In pursuit of a sustainable and functional new park, Dar's teams in London and Cairo collaborated to prepare a comprehensive landscape masterplan, from concept design to site supervision. It was important to assess the impacts of the new park on the existing landscape and deliver a design that enhances the environmental quality of the New Administrative Capital's green space.

Engaging extensively with all stakeholders through workshops and feedback loops, the teams set out to design a park that aligns with the needs and desires of the local community. A comprehensive feasibility study at the planning stages ensured the designs were both environmentally sustainable and economically robust.

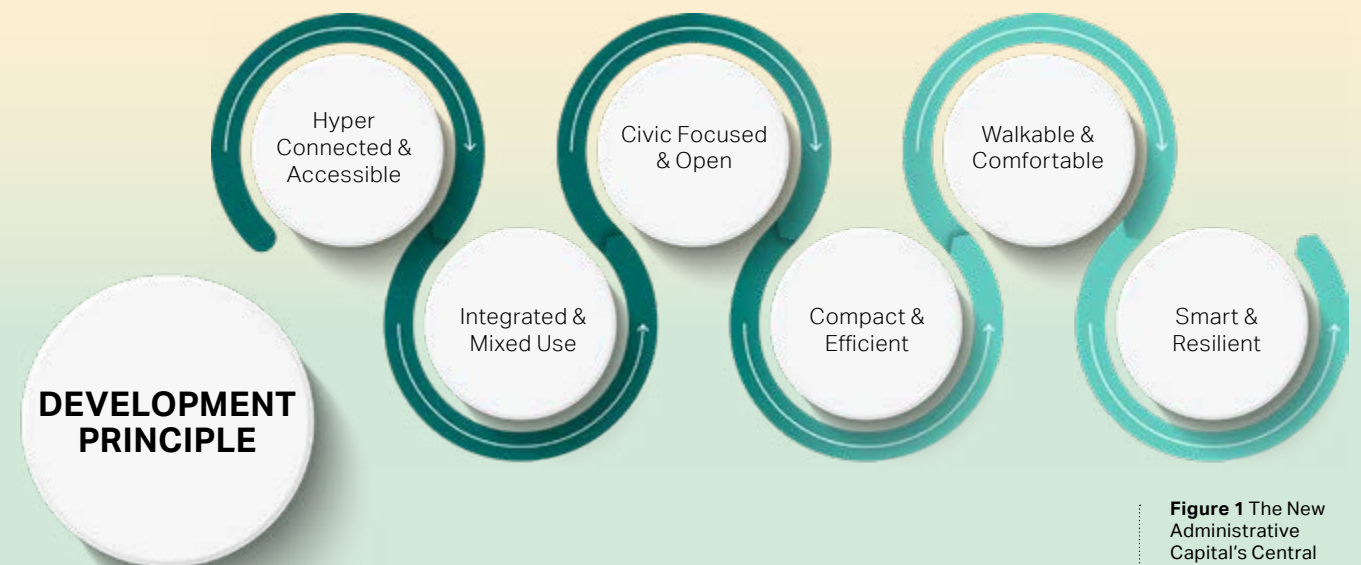
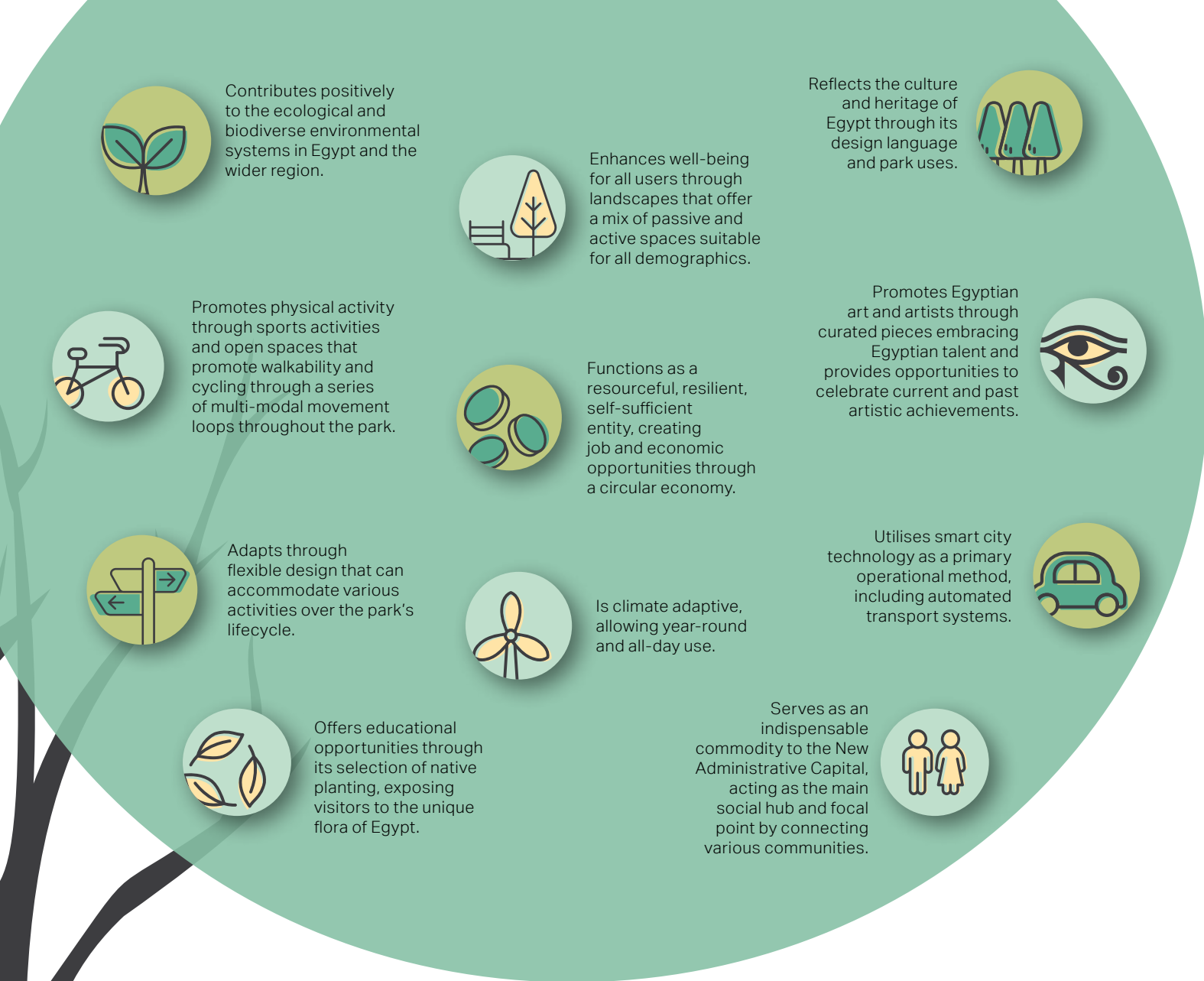


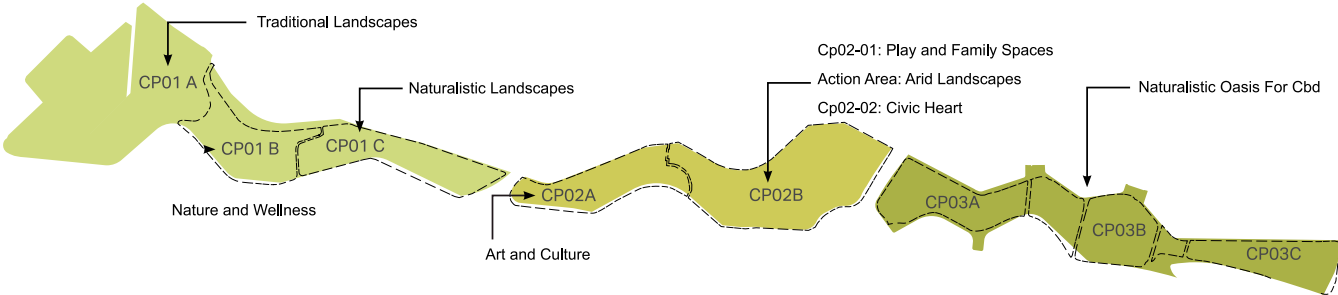
Figure 1 The New Administrative Capital's Central Park.

Figure 2 The project site.



A Central Park for All

New Capital Central Park is divided into three distinct zones, each offering a unique ambiance: CP01 for a natural setting, CP02 for cultural identity, and CP03 for a civic environment.



These zones are interconnected through a well-designed network of pathways, featuring a hierarchy of main entrances and paths. The park's main 15m boulevard and secondary 8m path traverse the entire length, sharing consistent hardscape materials and furniture styles. Strategically placed trees along the pedestrian networks provide shade, fragrance, and character to the paths.

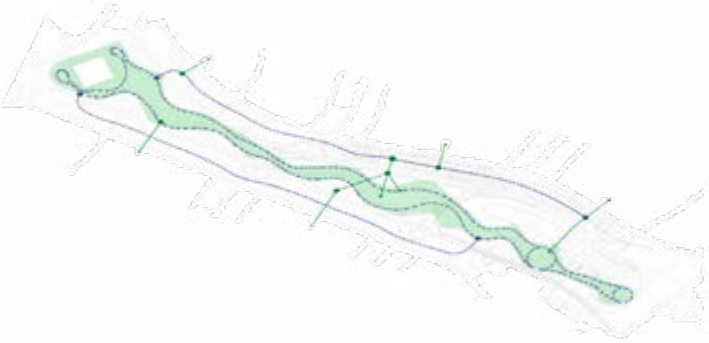
The park seamlessly blends natural and man-made elements. It offers serene natural spaces like garden areas, lakes, and open lawns for a tranquil escape. On the flip side, man-made spaces include plazas, sports fields, play areas, open-air restaurants, and culturally inspired spots, infusing the park with vibrancy. Within its 10km long stretch, the park offers diverse attractions, including event spaces, cultural and sporting destinations, and family-friendly areas that cater to all age groups.

Nestled within an expansive landscape, Central Park features various gardens, each representing three distinct eras of Egyptian history (Pharaonic, Classical, and Islamic). It also hosts an indoor arboretum, a country club, a wellness complex, a boating lake with a waterside restaurant, a sculpture garden, and an art pavilion.

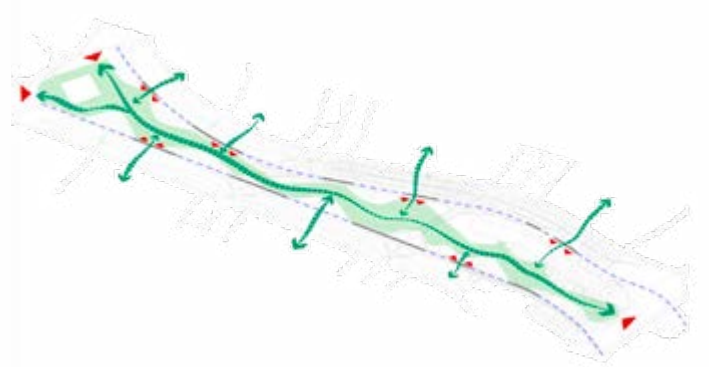
The park also caters to leisure and recreation with a fishing pond, picnic areas, and engaging options for sports enthusiasts, including an urban games complex and a vibrant box park. Additionally, it offers an event lawn, an outdoor cinema, children's learning gardens, and a play centre. The library and reading gardens provide spaces for cultural enrichment and knowledge celebration.

PARK: MOUVEMENT STRATEGY

Major Pedestrian/ Cycle Routes

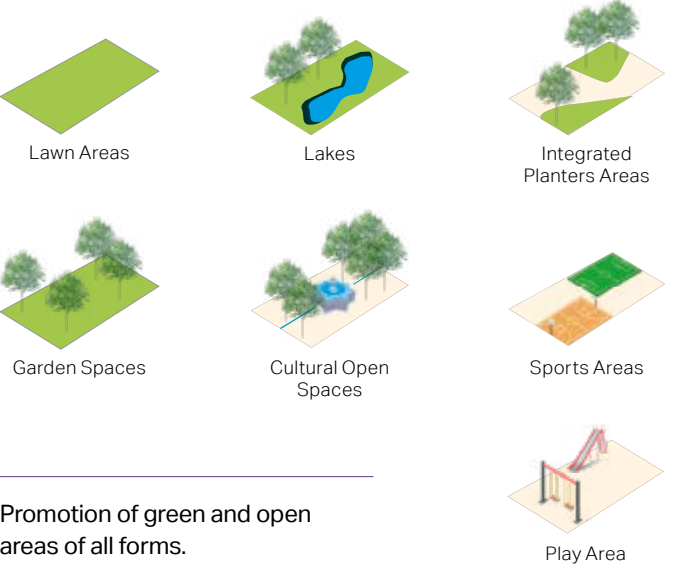


Park Entrances & Green Links



Inclusive and Accessible Spaces

In the design of the park, inclusivity and accessibility are key priorities. The park offers a range of inclusive gathering spaces where people can come together for social interaction, civic engagement, recreation, and a sense of belonging. The park's design is tailored to be inclusive and accessible to individuals with diverse abilities, allowing visitors to choose how they want to experience the park.



Promotion of green and open areas of all forms.



By employing integrated design approaches, the park actively addresses spatial segregation and fosters a sense of belonging by enhancing the quality of life and economic opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their background or social standing.



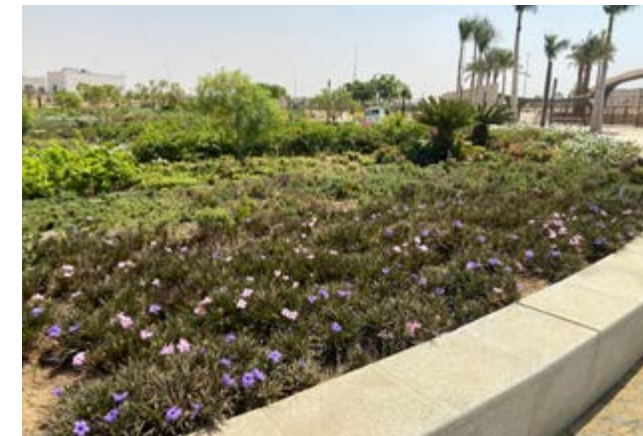
Accessibility is also addressed in terms of location. The park is easily accessible by foot, and transit stops are conveniently located nearby, all while avoiding the hazards of fast-moving traffic. The user experience is a central focus in the park's design, ensuring that information is communicated in various ways, including visually, verbally, and tactically. Efficiency and comfort are paramount, with an emphasis on minimising fatigue and hazards by providing ample space in terms of size, approach, line of sight, and functionality.

To help visitors maintain their sense of place in the park, especially given its expansive length, the design incorporates five colossal Red Towers. These towers serve as both meeting points and landmarks, aiding orientation, particularly during night-time when they come alive with light. In a nod to the Parc de la Villette in Paris, where Bernard Tschumi introduced a grid of pavilions that marked a new era of landscape urbanism in the 20th century, these towers also pay tribute to that rich history.



An Environmentally Conscious Planting Strategy

The park's primary planting strategy emphasised environmentally conscious xeriscaping, integrating plants with low water consumption categorised by their water needs and including landscapes suitable for arid, semi-arid, grassy areas, and distinctive features.



The site boundaries and entrances showcase a desert-themed landscape with arid planting, subdued colours, and striking sand dunes and boulders. This theme gradually transitions from arid to feature planting at the centre of the park, characterised by more vibrant colours.

A strategic tree-planting scheme was implemented to delineate pedestrian pathways, giving each a distinct character and much-needed shade. This approach not only encourages pedestrian movement but also adds fragrance and colour to specific routes, emphasising their significance, allowing visitors to choose how they want to experience the park.



IRRIGATION STRATEGY

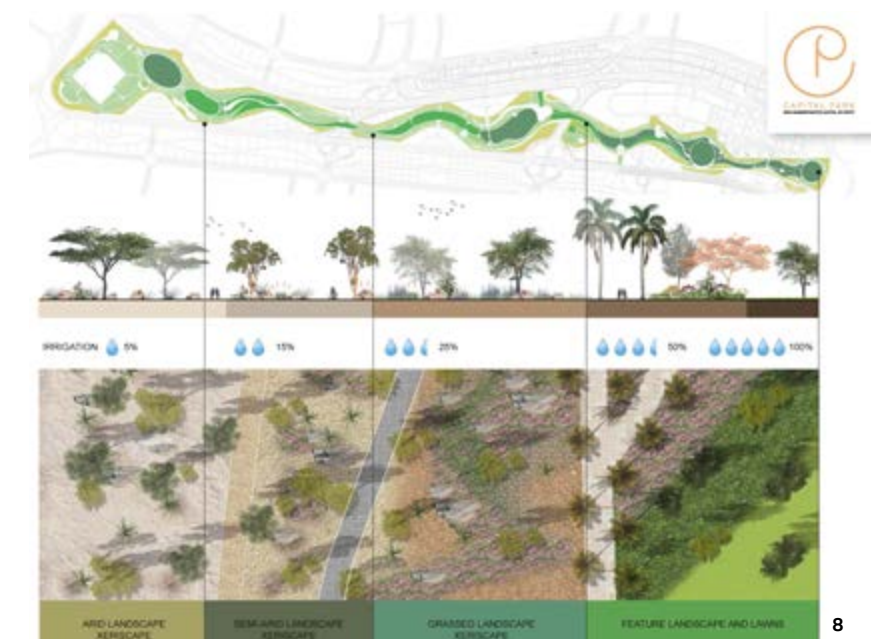


Figure 3 View of Central Business District from central lawn .

Figure 4 An aerial view of the park.

Figure 5 Pedestrian pathways and visual cues help visitors maintain their sense of place in the park.

Figure 6 Events at the New Capital Central Park.

Figure 7 Xeriscaping allows the park to preserve scarce water resources.

Figure 8 The park's irrigation strategy.

Sustainability in Action

A wide variety of species means a healthy ecosystem that's better equipped to cope with threats such as climate change. The Central Park contributes to the ecological value of the surrounding landscape and towards the Strategic Goals and Targets of Egypt's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2030) including: conservation, rehabilitation, sustainable management programmes, and developing environmental education and awareness campaigns about desert conservation, ecotourism, and encouraging support.

New Capital Central Park's masterplan integrates sustainability principles across all dimensions:



Local ecosystems were protected on site while developing the park's softscape by creating supportive habitats for native flora and fauna and using xeriscape landscaping to reduce or eliminate the need for watering.



Effective and safe recycling and composting measures include segregated waste bins across all areas frequented by visitors to avoid any health hazards on site or at off-site disposal facilities.



A resilient stormwater management network (including pipes and culverts) protects against local flooding – particularly important given the park's location within the New Administrative Capital.



There are very few grassed areas, which reduces overall demand for irrigation, regardless of its sources, and supports water security and water efficiency.



Buildings and planting are positioned in such a way as to make the most of favourable wind and air movement, discourage airborne dust, and improve outdoor thermal comfort.



Providing drinking water, shaded areas, frequent resting areas, and appropriate walking surfaces throughout encourages active mobility via walking, cycling, pedal-assisted e-bikes, kick-scooters, etc., with their associated health, social, and commercial benefits.



Efficient outdoor lighting reduces the park's overall energy demand.



An Award-Winning Park for the Whole of Egypt

Following practical completion in June 2022, the New Administrative Capital's Central Park has already won the Middle East Landscape Sustainability Award 2023 in the "Parks and Recreation" category. This award celebrates excellence in the design of sustainable parks and recreational developments, with special emphasis on inclusive and sustainable spaces that enrich the lifestyles and well-being of individuals from diverse backgrounds and age groups. The new park not only contributes to Egypt's ecology by transforming arid desert landscapes into a usable and sustainable environment, but also enhances biodiversity, functionality, and meaningful social interaction in an urban setting.

Through the combined efforts of city planners, stakeholders and Dar's landscape design teams, the park sets a new benchmark in public parks, showcasing the profound impact community-centric design can have on people. The park serves as a haven for relaxation and recreation, a vital sanctuary for various plant and animal species, and a natural legacy for future generations. It is brought to life by its people and will be safeguarded by them.

Ultimately, Central Park in the New Administrative Capital stands as a multi-faceted gem, making significant contributions to Egypt's ecological systems, offering a diverse range of well-being options for all, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the country, and promoting physical activity and economic opportunities. It celebrates Egyptian art and adaptability, serves as a year-round climate-adaptive space, fosters education and smart city technology, and above all, unites communities as the vibrant social heart of the New Administrative Capital.

Project Team

Client: Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities & Administrative Capital For Urban Development.

Design Lead: Dar. ♦

