Planning for a Liveable and Resilient Southern Waterfront in Athens _ The Role of Coastal Municipalities in Setting Priorities and Addressing Dilemmas for Local Development

Yiota Theodora and Eleni Spanogianni(✉)

Dept. of Urban and Regional Planning, Spatial Planning & GIS Laboratory, School of Architectural Engineering, National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece
ptheodora@arch.ntua.gr, eleni.spanog@gmail.com

Abstract. Waterfront management plays an important role in spatial planning and is a key driver of urban development. To address the complex challenges facing waterfronts, mostly resulting from the ongoing climate, energy and socio-economic crises, participatory planning strategies involving local government and stakeholders are essential for long-term sustainability and resilience. The international literature provides relevant examples of approaches to developing waterfronts, while the Greek context seems to have many unresolved issues. This article examines the role of coastal municipalities in setting priorities and managing dilemmas for sustainable local development to achieve liveable and resilient waterfronts for all. It takes Faliro Bay (i.e. one of the two supra-local poles of Athens' southern waterfront, the other being Ellinikon) as a pilot study area. Its focus is on the municipalities of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros because of their critical involvement in the waterfront transformation, especially over the last two decades. The question arises as to whether and to what extent the coastal municipalities are involved in discussing, planning and managing their waterfronts or whether this is ultimately the exclusive responsibility of the regional unit to which they belong or the central administration. The key issue is whether planning decisions/priorities are made with a view to meeting local needs or wider investment interests. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the governance structures, the research relied on interviews with local authorities and mayors. These were conducted in parallel with the fieldwork. This will enable high quality planning that maintains the spatial continuity of the waterfront and its integration into the urban environment. The next stage will be to take a holistic approach to coastal planning, by surveying local communities.

Keywords: coastal cities · sustainable urban development · waterfront planning · resilient cities and communities · local government (NUTS3) · governance structures · participatory planning

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1 Introduction

Waterfront planning has long been a focus of urban development, playing a critical role in strengthening the spatio-functional dynamics and economic growth of coastal cities. In recent decades, the combined effects of the climate-energy and socio-economic crises have made the need for sustainable and resilient waterfronts even more urgent. In this context, coastal policy formulation at both local and supralocal levels has been profoundly affected by these phenomena, leading to significant changes in planning approaches. At the same time, the current debate shows that ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience in coastal management requires a shift from top-down decision-making to more inclusive, adaptive and participatory strategies that actively involve local authorities, stakeholders and local communities [1–3].

Undoubtedly, contemporary trends in sustainable waterfront development extend physical planning to include crucial dimensions such as environmental protection, disaster risk management, cultural heritage and landscape use, as well as socioeconomic cohesion [4–7]. Current literature has shown that ensuring sustainability and local identity requires an approach that recognises the specific characteristics of each area and integrates waterfronts into comprehensive urban planning frameworks. In Greece, however, the lack of effective governance structures and planning inefficiencies often hampers the effective transformation of coastal areas.

In this context, the involvement of coastal communities and local authorities is crucial, as they have a deep understanding of the local conditions, unique characteristics and development trends of each area [8, 9]. Their knowledge allows them to provide place-based solutions and ensure the necessary prioritisation, enabling planning decisions to meet the real needs of each community while achieving sustainability and development goals. In this sense, a key issue regarding the influence of coastal communities in the development of their waterfronts is the extent of their involvement in decision-making and the degree of control exercised by regional or central authorities in the planning - development process. The key questions at the local level are therefore whether: a) there is a coherent vision for coastal development that links planning to development priorities and challenges, and b) planning decisions are primarily a response to local needs or are driven by supra-local investments. A clear vision is essential in waterfront planning. It guides the development process and ensures that all stakeholders share a common goal, balancing environmental, economic and social factors. This vision must embody the distinctive characteristics and opportunities of the waterfront, while promoting sustainability objectives. Conversely, an emphasis on significant spending beyond local needs may neglect social and environmental issues in adjacent areas. Achieving a fair balance requires open governance structures that ensure that waterfront development benefits local residents.

The aim of this paper is to examine the role of local municipalities and decision-making processes in the development of the Athens waterfront. It focuses on one of the most challenging waterfronts, the southern urban coastal front (Faliron-Ellinikon), and more specifically on the case of Faliro Bay. Along with Ellinikon, Faliron Bay is one of the two supra-local poles of the southern Athens seafront. It is a fragile, but also a dynamic coastal area that serves as the main opening of Athens to the Saronic Gulf. Its centrality and strong local identity have been analysed in detail in a recent study [10]. Based on a

multi-criteria typological classification assessing the vulnerability and dynamics of the coastal urban front from Faliro to Ellinikon, this study has identified three main areas with different development potentials and planning needs for their organic integration into the urban fabric. One of the three enclaves is Faliro Bay (Pocket A: *Cultural and Recreational Centre of Faliro*) and the other two are Palaio Faliro-Alimos (Pocket B: *Coastal Zone of Local/Supralocal Character in Transition*) and Ellinikon - Agios Kosmas (Pocket C: *Metropolitan Pole - Recreational Park of Ellinikon- Agios Kosmas*). At this stage, based on the results of the above evaluation, the research focuses on the municipalities of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros (to which Faliro Bay administratively belongs). These two municipalities have played a crucial role in the transformation of the Athens waterfront and its relationship with the historic city centre, especially in the last two decades. Having identified as a key question whether planning decisions/priorities are made according to local needs or supra-local investment interests, we aim to assess how the two municipalities approach waterfront development (Sect. 3.1.).

In order to approach the issue, a multifactorial methodology has been organised, focusing on the study of the local authorities' perspective on coastal development. The aim is to organise the first steps for a fruitful communication with the local authorities (key respondents) and the mayors. At this stage, two semi-structured interviews were conducted: one with the Deputy Mayor of Kallithea and one with the Special Advisor to the Mayor of Moschato-Tavros (former Director of Technical Services and Urban Planning). The selection of these interviewees was based on their direct and significant involvement in coastal planning, as well as their ability to provide strategic insights into local governance challenges. The interviews were conducted in parallel with the necessary fieldwork, which included recording the characteristics of the area. At this stage, the focus is on highlighting the perspective of local authorities as a key input to be used at a later stage. This process was carried out in stages, starting with the identification of basic concerns, which were then used as input for structuring the thematic areas of the interviews, with a particular focus on the spatial dimension. The collected responses were transcribed and systematically coded to extract the key findings. This allowed for an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of governance that influence the outcomes of waterfront planning (Sects. 3.2 and 3.3.). The authors emphasise that this study is part of a wider research effort that will involve additional key stakeholders from other local government departments, regional authorities, central government and members of the local community in subsequent stages. This will provide a new multi-level and coherent perspective.

The main themes discussed and assessed during the interviews were: a) the spatiofunctional changes of the coastal zone, and b) the spatial continuity and organic integration of the waterfront into the city (i.e. development patterns, planning practices, ownership, legal frameworks) [11, 12]. These themes are subdivided into questions that help to understand the key issues and highlight the opportunities and risks for a sustainable waterfront. Within the broader context of the two themes, issues of local government collaboration with the region and central government and participatory planning were explored. The research was organised to ensure both ongoing communication with key stakeholders and the possibility of later involvement of other interested parties (e.g. neighbouring municipalities, local organisations, citizens, etc.).

The article is divided into six sections to address the research topic. Section 1 outlines the scope of the research and its key dimensions. Section 2 highlights the crucial role of local governance in promoting sustainable coastal development. Section 3 describes the research context, detailing the spatial reference, methodological approach, and interview themes. Section 4 presents a comparative analysis of the perspectives of the municipalities of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros on urban coastal planning structures. Section 5 evaluates the responses of the two municipalities to the questions posed in the questionnaire and identifies key findings, particularly with regard to the constraints that local authorities face in influencing coastal development and the priorities they set within these constraints. The findings pave the way for the search for new, flexible governance frameworks and the adoption of participatory processes in the management of urban coastal fronts. Section 6 concludes with recommendations along these lines. The aim is to promote more sustainable and resilient seafronts that effectively balance local needs with broader development goals.

2 3Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront Development: The Role of Local Government

The role of local governments in sustainable waterfront development is essential, as they have a deep understanding of local challenges. They can also promote community-based planning approaches. In this way, decisions can be made more effectively. Deficiencies in administrative structures, limited funding, difficulties in intergovernmental coordination and barriers to policy implementation require local insights. In order to build sustainable and resilient, inclusive and liveable waterfronts, the active involvement of local governments should definitely be a key concern. The contribution of local authorities can be crucial in: a) ensuring the integration of local perspectives in planning processes: Local authorities have direct knowledge of the environmental, socio-economic and spatial parameters that affect the sustainability and resilience of urban coastal fronts. By involving them in the planning process, initiatives are more likely to meet the real needs and interests of the local community; b) avoiding centralised intervention without local participation. Often, centralised planning initiatives are undertaken without adequate input from local authorities;, and c) addressing local needs through participatory approaches: Sustainable planning requires governance structures that engage local communities in decision making.

In several cities, significant progress has been made in strengthening the role of local government in waterfront planning. In this context, the case of Lisbon has been studied in direct relation to Athens. The aim was to draw comparative conclusions within the broader multi-factorial approach proposed by the authors, based on spatial criteria [13]. The same methodology is currently being applied to the case of Baltimore to identify similarities and differences with Athens and Lisbon. These interrelated studies have demonstrated the relevance of coastal issues and the need to develop new, more flexible forms of spatial governance to address them. In particular, Lisbon has strengthened integrated coastal governance through collaborative planning strategies to ensure that waterfront development is consistent with sustainability and resilience goals. The city has also implemented participatory mechanisms that actively involve citizens and local

stakeholders in the decision-making process. This reduces conflict and promotes a shared vision for coastal management. Similarly, Baltimore has created a coastal management agency to facilitate strategic planning and public engagement in waterfront development [14]. This approach has positively influenced stakeholders to work together on sustainable, community-centred plans. Conversely, despite its coastal character, Greece lacks a comprehensive coastal plan based on flexible governance structures. Greece also suffers from a fragmented administrative framework and a lack of consistent management techniques. The lack of a participatory decision-making process leads to conflicts between local and central authorities, making it difficult to implement sustainable water-related projects.

A more integrated approach to decision-making, especially at larger spatial scales (i.e., supralocal and supra-regional levels), is needed to address the critical governance challenges outlined above. In addition, a well-structured multi-level governance framework is essential for effective coastal management [15–17]. Planning issues cross administrative boundaries. Participatory approaches that integrate local insights into higher-level planning processes can bridge the local-central divide and ensure that policy frameworks remain responsive to community needs. At the same time, decisions made at the local level need to be consistent with policies set by higher (regional and central) authorities [18–22]. Current literature/practice also suggests that the more directly an issue affects stakeholders, the more likely they are to participate in planning. Thus, local issues tend to mobilise the public more effectively, whereas regional/national issues tend to attract fewer stakeholders. This highlights the importance of local planning and governance for inclusive coastal development.

In light of the above, promoting strong local participation in coastal governance is essential to achieving sustainable coasts. Strengthening participatory mechanisms, improving intergovernmental coordination and learning from best practices will make coastal development more effective. Clearly, by addressing fragmented governance and ensuring community participation, local governments can play a key role in shaping the future of coastal sustainability [23–26].

3 Research Framework: Spatial Reference, Methodology and Thematic Areas

This section briefly outlines the pilot area of research (the municipalities of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros), the proposed methodology and the interview themes.

3.1 Place of Reference: Municipalities of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros

Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros constitute the pilot study area. They are the administrative unit to which Faliro Bay belongs. Located between Piraeus and Ellinikon, it is connected to the historical center of Athens and enjoys a high degree of centrality. Faliro Bay has always been a center of culture and recreation. In the coming years, the planned development of the Coastal Park will reinforce its centrality and transform the seascape. Unlike Ellinikon, which is regenerating more autonomously, the revival of Faliro Bay is an urgent priority. It will open Athens to the sea (Figs. 1 and 2).

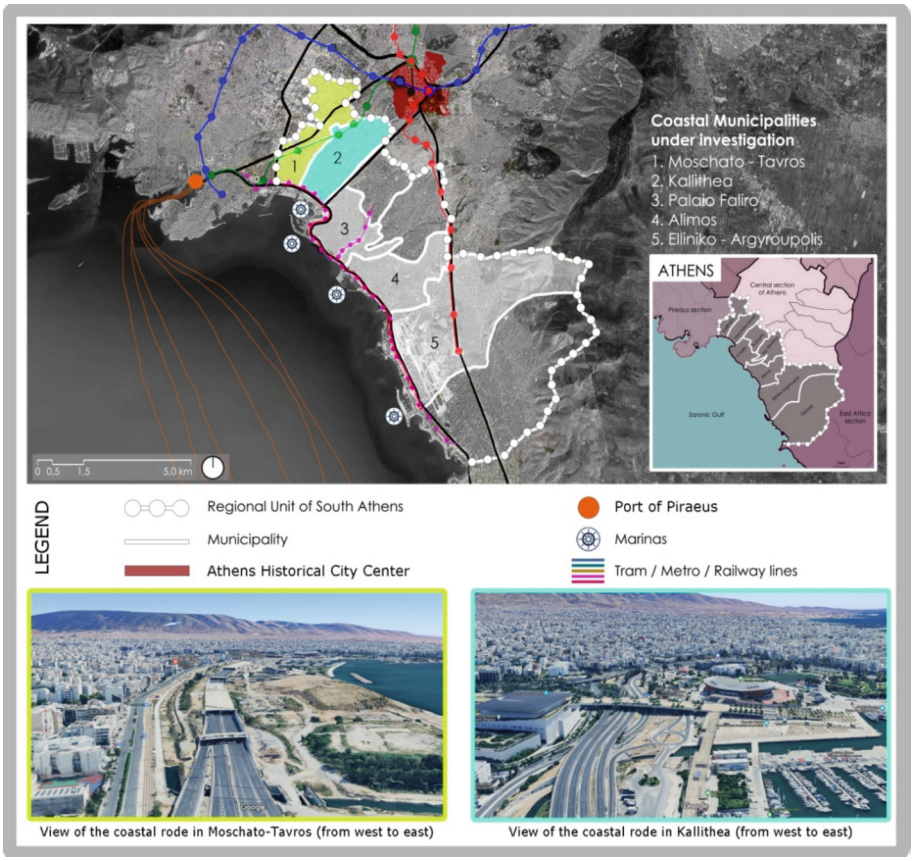


Fig. 1. Faliron Bay (Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros) [own elaboration]

The Municipalities of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros have always been a dynamic and complex coastal landscape that has historically attracted the interest of investors and been the focus of several planning projects, sometimes with conflicting responses. However, it is only in the last sixty years that the centrality of the area has been reinforced by supralocal plans. These plans include completed projects [e.g. marinas, Olympic venues, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre (SNFCC)] and ongoing projects [the Faliron Bay Coastal Park]. These plans have exacerbated local environmental risks and spatial impacts that are critical to coastal resilience and quality. It should be noted that despite their proximity and similar challenges, there are significant differences between Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros. One of the most critical is the relationship between the urban fabric and the sea. Kallithea, in particular, benefits from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation promenade, which serves as a link between the city and the sea. The seascape of Moschato-Tavros, on the other hand, presents a different reality, with no visual or physical access to the sea.

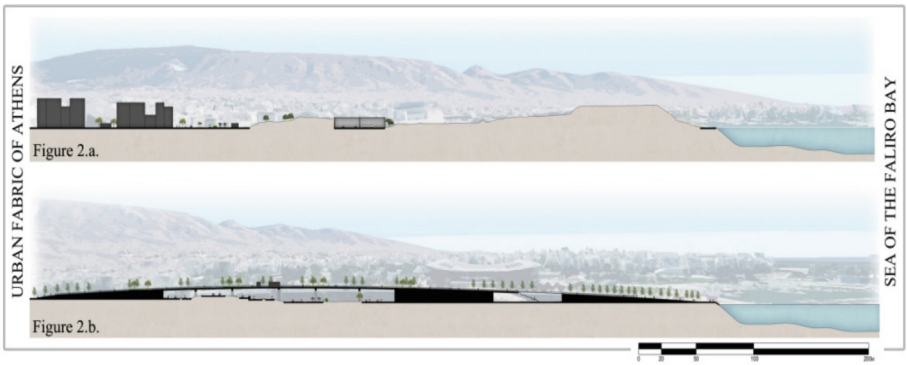


Fig. 2. North-South cross-sections perpendicular to Poseidonos Avenue (Athens urban fabric - Faliro Bay waterfront / Saronic Gulf) in: (a) Moschato-Tavros and (b) Kallithea (Esplanade, Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC) [own elaboration]

Overall, Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros serve as an ideal case study to examine the role of coastal municipalities in prioritising / addressing local development challenges. The two cases offer important lessons that can contribute to the debate on how to build resilient waterfronts while ensuring quality planning that preserves their spatial continuity and integrates with the city.

3.2 Research Methodology

The proposed methodology serves as an exploratory tool to identify critical spatio-functional factors to be considered for sustainable waterfront development. The focus of this phase is the analysis of the interviews conducted. The goal is to take a qualitative rather than quantitative approach to identifying problems and their impacts on the seascape. Therefore, this research is based more on spatial parameters to serve as a working basis. The aim is to involve the local governments (Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros) as consultants to confirm or revise the previous findings of the initial literature review and field study, and to enrich them with new insights. The interviewees were selected on the basis of their institutional role / involvement in coastal planning.

In particular, the research was based on semi-structured interviews. This method allows for flexibility in the formulation of questions and gives participants the freedom to express their views. The proposed approach ensures the collection of valuable qualitative data by balancing a structured thematic framework with an open dialogue. It follows a dynamic process, starting with a data collection phase where findings are recorded and analysed. The next step is to strengthen the participatory dimension of the study by presenting these findings to local authorities for validation and further insight. The aim is to make the best use of the findings and to identify open questions that deserve further investigation in the future.

The research is challenging in terms of: (a) selecting appropriate participants; (b) structuring discussion topics to extract the necessary information relevant to urban coastal planning objectives; and (c) processing and coding responses, a critical step

in analysing the qualitative data collected. To address these challenges, the research process was structured to encourage dialogue and exchange. The aim was to explore how local governments are involved in decision-making on urban coastal planning. The steps were: (1) Initial engagement with key stakeholders through open discussions supported by research materials (timelines, charts, mapping data, previous publications). This allowed the concerns of local governments to be integrated into the research themes. It also helped to align with the ongoing field research; (2) organising the research topics into themes within the broader research framework to ensure a structured discussion; (3) sending the research topics to participants and scheduling interviews; (4) conducting discussions on the explored themes; (5) collecting, organising and coding responses based on the explored themes; and (6) synthesising the findings to extract interesting insights. This information serves as a valuable filter to refine research directions, providing both qualitative and quantitative results.

The scope of the methodology is to ensure that local governments can play an active role in the development of urban coastal planning strategies. Thus, the organisation of the questionnaire, with sections for pre-selected answers and for written expression, provides an opportunity for non-specialists to participate. Namely, people who work in local government but do not necessarily have the knowledge to answer a technical questionnaire. The aim is to gather the opinions of people who know the place and its needs.

3.3 Questionnaire Themes

The selection of interview themes was guided by the broader research framework and further subdivided into sub-themes for more in-depth exploration of the information. This ensures that the interviews remain focused on the critical aspects of coastal planning. Another critical element is that the thematic structure of the questionnaire is based on the same research parameters that the authors followed in previous studies of the southern Athens waterfront. This is important as it allows comparison and monitoring of changes over time.

Specifically, the parameters that have already been used in the authors' previous work and now structure the context of this research, which focuses on local government opinion for coastal planning, are as follows: (a) *coastline* (i.e. geomorphological features, natural/cultural wealth, degree of change); (b) *coastal urbanisation* (form, structure, intensity, type, dynamics, rate of change); (c) *transport networks* [e.g. category (e.g. roads, public transportation, etc.), organisation/interrelationships (i.e. hubs - flows, range of services), organisation/interrelationships (hubs - flows, range of services)]; (d) *technical infrastructure projects* (type, location, extent); (e) *infrastructure projects* [type, location, extent (hubs-flows, range of services), organisation/ correlations (hubs-flows), range of services]; (d) *technical infrastructure projects* (i.e. type, location, extent, range); and (e) *human activities and functions* (i.e. type, intensity, compatibility, range), focusing on those that have determined the supra-locality of the area (i.e. services, trade, culture, sport, leisure, tourism) [10, 13]. These parameters allow the monitoring and evaluation of the spatio-functional organisation and development dynamics of the

research area. They have therefore played a key role in selecting the themes (I, II and III) which structure the proposed questionnaire as follows:

I. Waterfront Transformation: Assessing the Current State and Trends
I.1. *Spatial-functional and landscape transformations*: (a) current state: identification of areas of growth or underdevelopment; (b) major spatial-functional changes: assessment/simulation; (c) threats and opportunities: coastalisation and overtourism.

I.2. *Urban coastal stressors*: (a) environmental and spatial (climate crisis, land use, density, connectivity, etc.); (b) demographic / socio-economic parameters; (c) the role of local governments and policy-making bodies.

I.3. *Opportunities and challenges*: (a) environmental resilience and disaster risk reduction, (b) accessibility issues, urban density and competing land uses of supralocal reach; (c) development opportunities and conflicting interests.

II: Waterfront Sustainable Development and Planning
II.1. *Development model, management strategies and planning practices*: (a) municipal vision for waterfront development; cooperation with regional/central government; (b) proposed urban planning strategies and their integration into municipal policies; (c) coastal planning within urban and regional planning.

II.2. *Legal framework, land ownership and stakeholder involvement*: (a) legislation on coastal planning/land ownership; (b) stakeholders / role in planning and decision-making; (c) participatory planning and local governments.

III: Waterfront Continuity and Urban Integration
III.1 *Spatial continuity and integration: Current state and trends*: (a) physical and functional links between the seafront and the urban core; (b) pedestrian/transport networks that facilitate access to the coast; (c) barriers that prevent spatial continuity.

III.2 *Faliro Bay: waterfront regeneration*: (a) plans: past, present and future; (b) impact of plans on physical, cultural and man-made coastal ecosystems; (c) best practices for sustainable coastal development according to local government priorities.

The above thematic areas can ensure a multi-factorial approach that can help local authorities to better understand and assess the complexity of urban coastal planning. This place-based approach can reopen the debate on resilient and liveable waterfronts in the age of the climate crisis by allowing an in-depth analysis of the challenges, strategies and opportunities for sustainable coastal development.

4 Resilient Waterfronts _ A Comparative Presentation

This section presents a comparative analysis of the perspectives of the municipalities of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros on the urban coastal planning structures. The approach is based on the three themes described above. The analysis highlights both the similarities and the differences in their priorities and challenges. More specifically:

I. Waterfront Transformation: Assessing the Current State and Trends
I.1. *Spatial-functional and landscape transformations*: Both communities highlight the

major changes that have occurred as a result of land reclamation, particularly the embankments of the 1970s. The 2004 Olympic Games brought further changes to these regions, including the installation of major infrastructure that disrupted the sustainable integration between the city and the sea. In contrast to Moschato-Tavros, which suffers from complete segregation and lacks infrastructure to facilitate access, Kallithea can benefit from the promenade, which provides a good connection to the seafront. Both municipalities agree on the need to integrate the seafront into the city. However, Kallithea is more concerned with maximising the use of existing infrastructure, while Moschato-Tavros is more concerned with overcoming spatial isolation in order to restore access to the sea.

I.2. *Urban coastal stressors*: In examining the factors influencing change, both municipalities acknowledge the significant role of private interests in driving urban coastal development, often prioritising profit over public accessibility and environmental sustainability. In particular, Kallithea highlights the problems associated with governance and regulation, such as the limited influence of local authorities in decision-making due to the outsized role of external investors and state-owned entities in development projects. Moschato-Tavros, on the other hand, points to the historical fragmentation of planning policy, which has resulted in uneven development and a lack of a unified vision for the waterfront. Both municipalities face economic constraints and bureaucratic inefficiencies that call for a more transparent, participatory and locally driven planning process to ensure equitable and sustainable coastal development. These dynamics highlight the broader struggle between municipal autonomy and top-down investment priorities in shaping the urban waterfront.

I.3. *Opportunities and challenges*: The seafronts of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros face significant challenges from extensive land reclamation and the physical barrier of Poseidonos Avenue, which separates the city from the sea. Kallithea, on the other hand, has managed to mitigate this separation through pedestrian access points along the promenade. Moschato-Tavros, on the other hand, still struggles with a complete physical and visual separation from the sea. Concerns about climate change, privatisation of coastal land and bureaucratic delays are common themes. However, the impact of these challenges varies. For example, while Moschato-Tavros faces the more fundamental problem of complete exclusion from its waterfront, Kallithea struggles to balance economic demands with public access. Despite these challenges, both cases recognise the unrealised potential of their waterfronts for public benefit. Kallithea's focus is on improving the public spaces that already exist. It's using the reconstruction of Faliro Bay to improve what already seems to be working in some parts of the seafront. This is the only way for Moschato-Tavros to regain its lost coastline. The area is currently inaccessible to the public. This stark contrast underlines the need for the regeneration of the seafront to be adapted to the local context: In Kallithea, it means refining the connectivity (along the sea and with the city) and the quality of the public spaces, while in Moschato-Tavros it means rebirthing the waterfront.

II: Waterfront Sustainable Development and Planning

II.1. *Development model, management strategies and planning practices*: There is a consensus on the need for a unified coastal development strategy with an emphasis on public accessibility and sustainable urban planning. However, broader interests beyond their

sphere of influence seem to be shaping the development model affecting both municipalities. The basis of these priorities appears to be the same. However, there are notable differences in specific areas. In both areas, the focus is on ensuring the environmental and social sustainability of interventions, while connecting the city to Faliro Bay through soft redevelopment. Kallithea sees the seafront as an opportunity to highlight the city's cultural and tourist identity. The aim is to connect the area to the SNFCC and create an urban promenade that will increase visitor engagement. Moschato-Tavros, on the other hand, is concerned with maintaining the environmental balance and creating a public, open recreational space. The possible privatisation of parts of the coastline and its impact on local residents is also a concern. The lack of an integrated management strategy for the waterfront is a common problem, as it is not only the responsibility of the local government, but also of the regional and state government. In terms of planning proposals, numerous efforts have been made in the past, but none have been implemented due to complex institutional and ownership issues. The ongoing restoration project, if properly implemented with the active participation of local governments, is expected to have a positive impact, improving both the quality of life of residents and the sustainability of the coast. While the local authorities have responded positively to the project, they remain cautious about the extent of their role in the planning, implementation and maintenance of the project.

II.2. *Legal framework, land ownership and stakeholder involvement*: Both municipalities have pointed out that the seafront is not included in their general urban plans, as these plans have historically referred to the urban fabric up to Poseidonos Av. Although the coastal zone is administratively part of the municipalities, it is planned and managed by the regional unit to which they belong and the central government. This gap in urban planning, arguing that previous official plans did not explicitly designate the coastal zone as urban land, has allowed the central government, along with outside interests, to assert control over the area. In addition, both communities have expressed concern about special planning initiatives that have consistently isolated Faliro Bay from the southern waterfront and inland. This fragmented approach has created bureaucratic challenges, with responsibilities spread across multiple agencies and stakeholders, often leading to inefficiencies and conflicting priorities. The lack of a clear governance framework has contributed to delays and disputes. As a result, both municipalities are advocating for a more streamlined and transparent decision-making process. While both municipalities stress the need for greater public participation in coastal planning, Moschato-Tavros is particularly vocal about the need for greater municipal control over land-use decisions, especially given its current lack of direct access to the waterfront.

III: Waterfront Continuity and Urban Integration

III.1. *Spatial continuity and integration: Current state and trends*: The part of Faliron Bay that administratively belongs to the Municipality of Kallithea has a more advanced urban-waterfront integration. This is due to the promenade, which serves as an effective pedestrian corridor, naturally connecting the city to the sea and significantly improving public access to the waterfront. Moschato-Tavros, on the other hand, suffers from a complete spatial disconnection. Poseidonos Avenue acts as an impermeable barrier separating the urban fabric from the coast. It is expected that these connectivity issues will be addressed through the forthcoming redevelopment of the Faliro Bay waterfront. Within

the broader context of sustainable mobility, another issue that can affect the integration of the waterfront with the city is its accessibility/connectivity to public transport networks. Both municipalities have recognised the critical importance of improving public transport links to their waterfronts. In particular, Kallithea emphasises the importance of implementing the planned extension of the metro (especially near the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre), as this will help to improve access to the seafront. On the other hand, Moschato-Tavros stresses the importance of the proposal for a unified cycle path along the seafront from Piraeus to Glyfada. The above priorities reflect the specific accessibility challenges of each municipality. Kallithea relies on existing and planned transport infrastructure, while Moschato-Tavros needs to focus on more basic connectivity solutions. Finally, equally important parameters for ensuring the spatial continuity of the waterfront and its integration into the urban fabric are the type of functions (land uses), their spatial distribution and degree of connectivity, and the planning of sustainable public spaces along the sea. Unfortunately, the hyper-locality of the uses concentrated in Faliro Bay and the wider area has a negative impact on the local scale due to the strains caused by the over-concentration of activities and visitors. The challenge, according to the local authorities, is to connect the seafront with other public spaces in the urban fabric and with cultural, sports, educational and recreational infrastructures.

III.2. *Faliro Bay: waterfront regeneration*: According to the local authorities, the regeneration of Faliro Bay is based on the implementation of the Coastal Ecological Park, located in front of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre. Both municipalities recognise the redevelopment of Faliro Bay as a key project that could redefine coastal urbanism in the region. However, their perspectives/priorities differ, based on their existing urban fabric and relationship to the coast. On the one hand, Kallithea, which has already benefited from improved accessibility, focuses on ensuring that the redevelopment complements the existing urban fabric. The local government of Kallithea supports the project as long as there is no excessive commercialisation or change in the public character of the coastal access. There is strong opposition to the idea of creating a 'city within a city', similar to the redevelopment of Hellinikon. There is also concern that the project lacks a holistic approach to integrating the redevelopment into the urban fabric. Planning efforts only extend to the bridging of Poseidonos Avenue. However, Kallithea argues that the project will blend into the landscape if it retains its gentle and public-oriented character. Moschato-Tavros, on the other hand, sees the redevelopment as a much-needed opportunity to finally create a direct link to the waterfront. The mayor is actively pursuing the project, recognising public frustration with the city's long separation from the coast. The redevelopment is expected to be a positive change. But its success depends on good management. The local community insists on a role in managing the project (not total control), given the financial burden. But there is a shared responsibility to prevent uncontrolled development. Cooperation between local and central government is welcomed. However, the municipality of Moschato-Tavros stresses that this should be a partnership and that the state should not have exclusive control. It also remains to be seen whether the regional government, which is overseeing the construction, will implement the project properly, taking into account the municipality's recommendations. Although there have been several public consultations and the plan has been presented to municipal councils, Moschato-Tavros remains cautious

about whether the final implementation will match the agreed vision. On the other hand, both communities share concerns about the potential privatisation of public spaces. They therefore emphasise the need to maintain public access to the coast and to prevent the over-commercialisation of the waterfront. So while Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros recognise the potential benefits of the project, they remain vigilant that its implementation respects local needs and preserves the coastline as a space for all. For this reason, both municipalities are committed to ensuring a sustainable relationship between the city and the sea, with promenades as the connecting element, but also by creating a vibrant network of public spaces that will run through both municipalities.

5 Waterfront Development _ The Local Government Perspective

In this session, a further step will be taken to examine the responses of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros to the questionnaire questions regarding their role in the planning of the seafront. The aim is to show their different approaches to the regeneration of the Faliron Bay and the priorities they have given to each theme in order to achieve its integration into the city and the daily lives of residents/visitors. To this end, a table has been prepared showing the weight given by the municipalities to each theme. The table summarises the planning priorities and the gaps that need to be filled in order to achieve sustainable coastal development according to the municipalities. In particular, theme I outlines the main reasons (pros / cons) that have played a key role over time in shaping the character of the Faliron Bay and its spatio-functional transformation process; theme II presents the existence of a development vision and the role of planning in its realisation, which is inextricably linked to issues of legislation, property rights, governance structures and participatory planning; and theme III focuses on the seafront, assessing its spatial continuity and urban integration (synthetic view of characteristics and planning choices). Municipalities' interest/ priority is rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (i.e. none, limited, medium, high and intensive).This approach provides an at-a-glance understanding of the planning issues that Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros consider critical to a sustainable Faliron Bay waterfront for all (Table 1).

In this sense, the critical issues that have been identified and prioritised to ensure a resilient development of the seafront through the simultaneous monitoring of the responses to the questionnaire of the two municipalities are briefly described below.

I. Waterfront Transformation: Assessing the Current State and Trends

I.1. Spatial-Functional and Landscape Transformation:

Kallithea: benefits from a more structured waterfront, largely through SNFCC and Esplanade, but urban barriers (Poseidonos Avenue) limit full accessibility.

Moschato-Tavros: faces greater fragmentation, with limited public access to the waterfront. Waterfront redevelopment is a necessity.

I.2. *Urban coastal stressors.*

Kallithea: efforts to connect public spaces and integrate cultural uses have led to gradual improvement of the waterfront.

Moschato-Tavros: aims to reclaim the waterfront and integrate it into everyday urban life, with stronger ambitions for radical transformation.

Table 1. Building Sustainable Waterfront Development _ The Local Government Perspective

THEMES		Municipality of Kallithea					Municipality of Moschato-Tavros				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I. Waterfront transformation: Assessing the current state and trends											
I.1	(a)				√						√
		(+)good accessibility, local identity *(-)intensive spatial fragmentation*					*(+)natural assets* *(-)proximity issues, limited coastal access*				
	(b)			√						√	
		(+)quality of public space, cultural assets *(-)conflicting land & maritime uses*					*(+)supra-locality of the waterfront* *(-)technical infrastructure as a barrier*				
	(c)			√						√	
		(+) high connectivity (mass transit) *(-)overtourism, coastalisation*					*(+)potential for waterfront regeneration* *(-)density issues, local identity loss*				
I.2	(a)				√						√
		(+)sufficient open green spaces *(-)insufficient sustainable mobility*					*(+)interest in ecological restoration* *(-)inadequate public transport network*				
	(b)		√						√		
		(+)balanced economic growth *(-)privatisation trends of the waterfront*					*(+)seafront regeneration* *(-)privatisation trends of the waterfront*				
	(c)					√					√
		(+)municipal vision for seafront regeneration *(-)limited public participation*					*(+)vision for seafront and city integration* *(-)absence of governance structures*				
I.3	(a)					√					√
		(+)high potential of green infrastructure *(-)lack of climate adaptation strategies*					*(+)circular economy initiatives* *(-)high vulnerability to environmental risks*				
	(b)				√						√
		(+)good accessibility, quality of public space *(-)high density, land use conflicts*					*(+)potential for access to the sea* *(-)limited waterfront/city integration*				
	(c)				√						√

(*continued*)

Table 1. (*continued*)

THEMES		Municipality of Kallithea					Municipality of Moschato-Tavros				
		(+)sufficient public space network *(-)privatisation trends of the waterfront*					*(+)quality of public space* *(-)conflicting land & maritime uses*				
II: Waterfront sustainable development and planning											
II.1	(a)					√					√
		(+)municipal vision for seafront regeneration *(-)limited public participation*					*(+)vision for seafront and city integration* *(-)absence of governance structures*				
	(b)				√						√
		(+)existence of spatial/sectoral policies *(-)lack of implementation of planning*					*(+)efforts for protection policies* *(-)fragmented planning efforts*				
	(c)				√						√
		(+)interest for seafront redevelopment plans *(-)absence of an integrated coastal strategy*					*(+)interest for seafront redevelopment* *(-)no connection of coastal-city planning*				
II.2	(a)			√							√
		(+)existence of municipal legal framework *(-)fragmented planning efforts*					*(+)existence of municipal legal framework* *(-)legal ambiguities in ownership*				
	(b)				√						√
		(+)municipal drive for cooperation *(-)lack of coordination between administrative levels*					*(+)municipal drive for transparency* *(-)different visions between municipal and regional/central authorities*				
	(c)				√						√
		(+)municipal drive for coastal planning *(-)absence of governance structures*					*(+)municipal drive for inclusive planning* *(-)limited public participation*				
III: Waterfront continuity and urban integration											
III.1	(a)				√						√
		(+)good accessibility, quality of public space *(-)lack of sustainable mobility along the sea*					*(+)public space as a key element* *(-)limited coastal access*				

(*continued*)

Table 1. (*continued*)

THEMES		Municipality of Kallithea					Municipality of Moschato-Tavros				
	(b)			√						√	
		(+)mass transit network *(-)inadequate public transport network*					*(+)transit-oriented possibilities* *(-)intensive spatial fragmentation*				
	(c)			√						√	
		(+)green infrastructure *(-)conflicting land & maritime uses*					*(+)vision for seafront and city integration* *(-)technical infrastructure as a barriers*				
III.2	(a)				√						√
		(+)existence of Faliron Bay Masterplan *(-)habitat loss, overtourism, coastalisation*					*(+)ongoing coastal interventions* *(-)challenges in planning implementation*				
	(b)					√			√		
		(+)revitalisation of cultural assets *(-)conflicting land & maritime uses*					*(+)coastal landscape reconfiguration* *(-)local identity loss*				
	(c)					√					√
		(+)mixed-use waterfront strategy *(-)absence of governance structures*					*(+)sufficient urban-coastal interaction* *(-)overtourism, coastalisation*				

I.3. *Opportunities and challenges.*

Kallithea: Risks of over-commercialisation and tourism-led gentrification; trends that may reduce accessibility for local residents.

Moschato-Tavros: intensive coastalisation and competing land uses threaten natural and cultural ecosystems.

II: Waterfront Sustainable Development and Planning

II.1. *Development model, management strategies and planning practices.*

Kallithea: Emphasis on green infrastructure and public green spaces.

Moschato-Tavros: Emphasis on social and environmental sustainability, maintaining public access and reducing the risks of privatisation of the seafront.

II.2. *Legal framework, land ownership and stakeholder involvement.*

Kallithea: Leverage existing high-profile projects (e.g., SNFCC) to improve the waterfront, although regional governance constraints limit full planning autonomy.

Moschato-Tavros: urgent need to resolve land use conflicts, particularly between private interests, community objectives and regional planning authorities.

III: Waterfront Continuity and Urban Integration

III.1. *Spatial continuity and integration: Current state and trends.*

Kallithea: benefits from the promenade in SNFCC, which provides partial continuity, although Poseidonos Avenue remains a significant physical barrier. The municipality is moderately accessible, with efforts to improve pedestrian mobility, but lacks direct, large-scale transport integration.

Moschato-Tavros: struggling with increasing fragmentation, the spatial reintegration of the seafront into urban life is a top priority. The municipality faces many challenges in terms of pedestrian and transit connectivity, which requires a greater effort in urban planning.

III.2. *Faliro Bay: waterfront regeneration.*

Kallithea: Views the redevelopment of Faliro Bay as an opportunity for sustainable coastal urbanism in line with its cultural and environmental vision.

Moschato-Tavros: prioritises public access over other considerations and sees the redevelopment of Faliro Bay as a key step in reclaiming the waterfront.

6 Concluding Remarks

The simultaneous study of the research themes (I, II and III) in the two municipalities described above highlights the different priorities of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros in terms of coastal planning. On the one hand, Kallithea integrates the development of the waterfront with culture and sustainability, making use of existing assets such as the SNFCC and the esplanade. However, Kallithea's limited co-operation with neighbouring municipalities in the development of coastal public spaces and in the management of sustainable mobility issues exacerbates the problems of sustainable use of its waterfront. On the other hand, Moschato-Tavros' priorities are to reconnect with the sea, address the risks of privatisation and advocate for greater community control over waterfront development. The main reason for this is that Moschato-Tavros faces severe spatial fragmentation in the implementation of its waterfront regeneration. This makes the realisation of the community's vision more difficult than that of Kallithea. Both municipalities support the regeneration of Faliro Bay, but their approaches differ. Kallithea's strategy is more structured and sustainable, focusing on long-term environmental and cultural integration, while Moschato-Tavros sees change as an immediate necessity, emphasising immediate public access and land reclamation.

Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros advocate greater involvement of local government in policy-making and more inclusive planning processes that involve local communities. The study shows that in shaping coastal development strategies, the priorities of the local governments of Kallithea and Moschato-Tavros play an important role. However, their intentions are not always supported by the higher levels of government for a variety of reasons. The most important of these are investment interests, which focus on exploiting the coastal area through activities of a supra-local nature, mainly in the tourism, leisure and recreation sectors. Thus, while local governments develop visions for change based on socio-spatial needs, their ability to implement large-scale change is limited by regional coordination challenges, regulatory constraints and stakeholder negotiations. Ultimately, the effectiveness of urban coastal transformation depends not only on local government priorities, but also on the degree of governance coordination, regulatory clarity and stakeholder engagement. This is confirmed by the study areas, where both Kallithea and

Moschato-Tavros have different visions for their seafronts, but their ability to implement transformative projects still depends on overcoming fragmented governance.

For Faliro Bay in particular, the research demonstrates in practice that successful coastal planning requires an integrated, multi-scale approach that balances local needs with regional and national planning objectives. It also assesses how the two communities view their coastal development. In particular, while both municipalities are committed to a more liveable and accessible seafront, their ability to fully implement their vision depends on higher levels of government (regional / national) and requires new forms of urban governance, policy integration and participatory planning.

In summary, a key finding of the study is that both local governments acknowledge that their influence on coastal planning remains limited. This is largely due to fragmented decision-making at regional and national levels. Equally important is the recognition by both municipalities that they need to ensure more inclusive participatory mechanisms and promote inter-municipal cooperation in order to achieve sustainable and coherent waterfront regeneration. Finally, both communities agree that the ability of local governments to effectively shape their coastal futures depends on whether existing governance structures ensure community participation in decision making. Undoubtedly, coastal planning needs to be approached within a broader logic that is inseparable from urban and maritime spatial planning [27]. It is therefore necessary to unite municipalities and create new inter-municipal governance structures, in close cooperation with the higher levels of government (regional and central) and local communities.

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