

New masterplan for Economic City after huge expansion

A new masterplan has been unveiled for the King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC) near Jeddah following the expansion of the project by four-fold to cover an area of over 168 million sq. m.

The Tadawul-listed Emaar the Economic City (Emaar.E.C), the developer of the project, has modified the KAEC masterplan to make substantial additions to its six major components – the port, industrial district, central business district (including commercial, mixed-use, retail and financial island), resort, educational zone and residential (including corniche and souks).

The Emaar.E.C board of directors met in October in Jeddah and approved the ambitious growth programme in addition to outlining the scope of expansion of the various zones within the project.

2,700 industrial tenants. The Industrial District will have specific initiatives to encourage local entrepreneurs through incubator-like modules. International experts have been consulted to ensure that the Industrial Zone development is in line with best environmental practices.

The Central Business District (CBD) will offer 3.8 million sq m of office space, hotels and mixed-use commercial space. The Financial District, within the CBD, has now been doubled in area to cover 14 hectares of land, which will be the largest regional financial nerve centre for the world's leading banks, investment houses and insurance groups.

The retail component of KAEC takes a quantum jump following the expansion of the project. From an area of 3.3 million sq m, the total retail facilities will now spread to cover 8.7 million sq m and house over 50,000 shops, nearly three times the earlier estimate. The retail components include shopping malls, town centers, neighbourhood malls and street shops.

The Hospitality Zone will be another strategic



RSP Architects, master planners of King Abdullah Economic City, has revised the overall masterplan of the project. Additional detailed masterplanning was provided by WATG for resorts and residential zones, SOM for the city centre and Parsons International for the Industrial Zone.

Following the expansion, the Industrial District will cover 40 million sq m – five times more than previously envisaged. The 4,000 hectares of land will be dedicated to industrial and light manufacturing facilities - identified as key growth drivers for the Saudi economy - and can now host

component of the new expansion with the number of hotel rooms and suites being increased from 12,000 rooms in 60 hotels to 25,000 hotel rooms in more than 120 hotels. An ideal place to work and live, the KAEC will now have 250,000 apartments and 25,000 villas – a leap from 110,000 apartments and 16,000 villas.

The project has added 4.5 million sq m of parks and wadis that will enhance the aesthetic appeal provided by 4.9 million sq m of new water canals, which are very wide through its entire course thus creating additional waterfront. The canals are inspired by the waterways of Amsterdam and will offer 75 km of pedestrian promenade. With the introduction of the canals, more than 42 linear kilometres of waterfront has been added on to the project. Residents can thus enjoy beach boardwalks, sea water lagoons and the natural beaches fronting the Red Sea. For marine enthusiasts, the project will have five yacht clubs that can berth more than 3,000 vessels.

The seaport will cover 13.8 million sq m and will be the largest in the region with a capacity of over

