
Urban Planning in Kenya, Nairobi

Urban planning is the process involved with the planning of land use and the built environment in urban areas. The built environment involves; water, air, buildings or roads present within or close to the urban area.

In general, urban planning is very important in order to achieve significant development. It involves balancing demands of the population so that they may live cordially. It is a means to bring about a difference by checking on infrastructure and services investment.

In Kenya currently, it is estimated that that 23.3% of the total population live in urban areas with 67.7% living in the rural areas (population and housing census, 2009). It is also estimated that 60 – 80% of residents of Kenya's largest urban centers like Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu reportedly live in informal settlements.

In our case Nairobi being a major city, its urban plan has got much impact to a number of factor including; the economy, environment, housing. Housing on itself does not only provide shelter to the population but also accommodates the family life cycle over a large generation.

The entire functioning of the city is contributed by urban objects. Urban objects include; retail and commercial services, Industry, Office, Public services and facilities, residential, Utilities, Transportations.

The sole reason behind urban plan of Nairobi city was to enable functionalism. Nairobi was classified into zones which included; Kenya center, Official buildings, business and commerce, residential, official housing. The urban plan was designed to establish neighborhood units for the working class, and also zones for surveillance and dominance within the city.

Decentralization and development of alternative service centers within the districts of the city was introduced. This was to reduce the high employee density in the Central area of Nairobi. However, this has seemingly becoming an arising problem in Nairobi city today.

Secondary areas were set to develop as major settlements independent of the city center services. They have got their own industrial, residential, commercial and administrative sub zones. Service centers would be located in relation to their potential catchment areas and near main roads and bus routes, which would also allow for the attraction of passing trade.

A comprehensive network of roads and public transport routes has been proposed in and out of Nairobi to major towns, e.g. Thika, Nakuru.

The road network provides maximum accessibility between residential, industrial and commercial areas.

The major areas for development and residential construction for the larger population would be, Dagoretti, Karen-Langata, the Eastern Area, Western Area and the areas outside the north-eastern city boundary bordering Kiambu.

Industrial areas and major commercial zones would be located nearby the main roads and next to the railway where possible. This is so as to offer a good accessibility to transport service.

The regional strategy involves the expansion of Nairobi to the west and to the north-east along the axis of the Thika road and the encouragement of growth of Thika town.

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