



Public Participation in Urban Planning – Case of Lilongwe, Malawi

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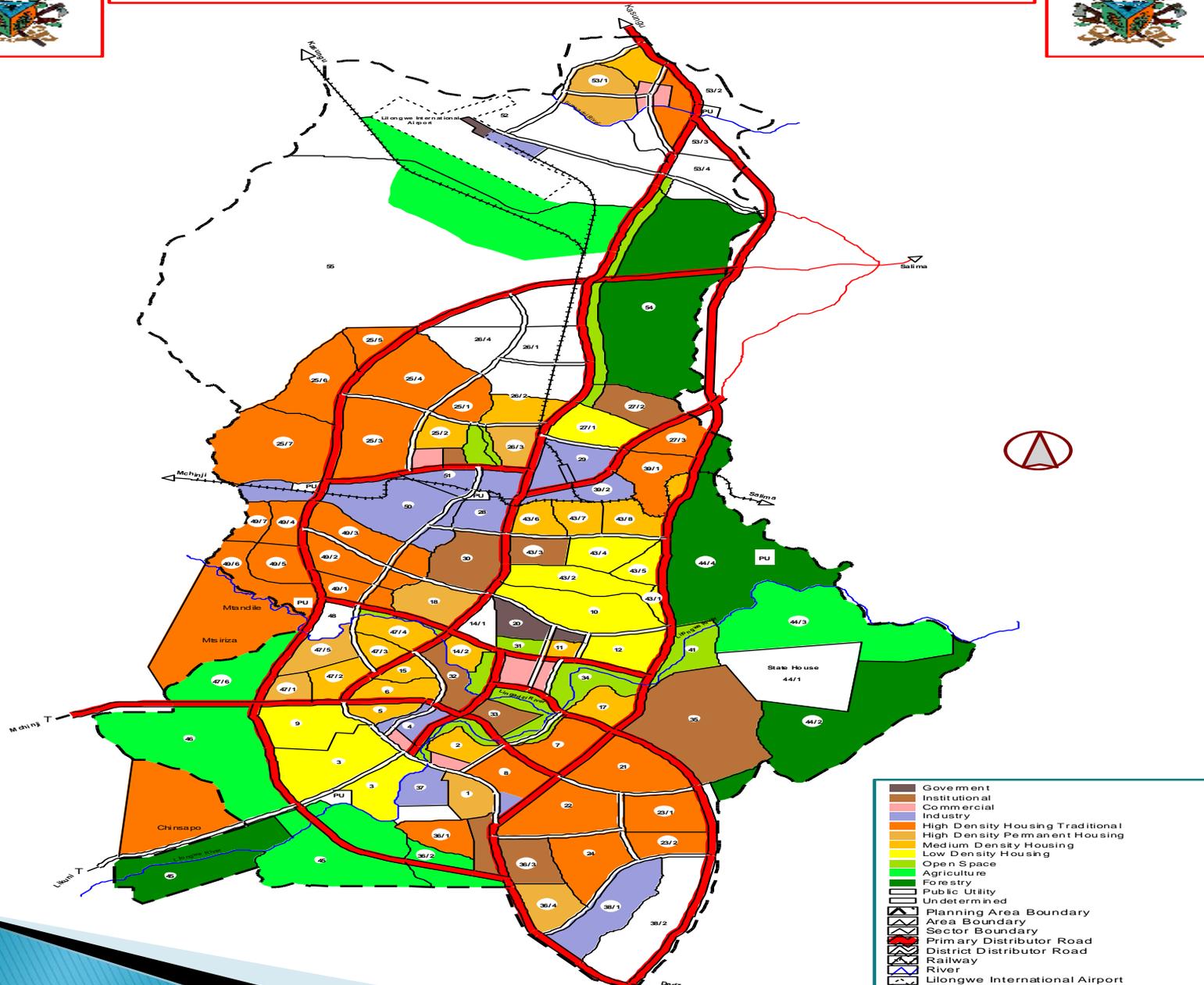
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Mayor of City of Lilongwe**

Background





LILONGWE CITY MAP



Background – Locating Lilongwe City.

- The City of Lilongwe is the largest and capital City of the Republic of Malawi.
 - Named after Lilongwe river that runs across, from the West to the Eastern side of the city, Lilongwe City is located on a plateau in Central Malawi forming part of the East African Rift valley that is situated at an altitude of 1050m above the sea level. It lies on the Latitude of 13.59 degree South and Longitude of 33.47 degrees to the East.
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Background – Population & Size.

- Lilongwe city has a population of 1,068,448 and is estimated to be at 1,500,000 by 2030.
 - Poor social indicators - 76% of the city's population lives in unplanned settlements (with poor water and sanitation, electricity, education, health services and road network)
 - The City covers an area of 393 square kilometers.
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Background – Opportunities.

- Lilongwe offers numerous economic opportunities .
Retail trade, construction, manufacturing of food products, transport, Tobacco processing etc
 - 34.7% employed in private sector
 - 23% in public sector
 - 29% in agricultural sector
 - 13% Self employed
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Vision Statement

Lilongwe is expected to be the model of Malawi Vision 2020 as it will be environmentally sustainable, self-reliant with equal opportunities for active participation by all, and a technologically-driven middle-income economy.

Strategic Objectives

The Lilongwe City Council (the Council) has the following Key Strategic Objectives among others:

- ▶ **To ensure a well-governed, transparent and accountable Council with clear decentralised powers and functions, where participatory decision-making is systematically strengthened and adherence to the rule of law is cultivated.**
- ▶ Ensure a well-planned, managed and regulated land use system that facilitates development and growth where land and shelter is accessible to all, meeting minimum standards, offering sustainable services and tenure security.

Strategic Objectives

- ▶ Ensuring access to quality and reliable water, sanitation, electricity, waste management and a safe transport infrastructure, ensuring sustainable utilisation and management of resources.
 - ▶ Ensure a city that is in harmony with nature and has capacity to address issues of climate change, especially pollution, and protects and expands environmental assets.
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Our Approach to urban Planning

- ▶ Although our urban planning procedures are governed by the Town Planning Act 2008, they have been crafted in such a way that they allow for public scrutiny and this is in line with our first Key strategic objective.
 - ▶ The procedures provides space for citizens to provide their input in the plans.
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Approach conti'd...

- ▶ The citizens are given an opportunity to participate in discussions of their Urban plans mainly at three levels as follows:
 1. At Policy level
 2. Informal Settlement Planning level
 3. Prime (Key City) Areas planning level
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Policy Level.

- ▶ In Malawi, citizens are consulted in the course of formulating policies including Urban Planning related policies.
- ▶ This is done at both national and city levels.
- ▶ In the formulation of National Land policy in 2002 for example, the Government undertook a series of consultative meetings at all levels to get views from ordinary Malawians including city dwellers.
- ▶ Similarly, citizens of Lilongwe were widely consulted in the formulation of Lilongwe City Strategy, 2010, Lilongwe Urban profile, LL Urban Master plan etc.

Planning for Informal Settlements.

- ▶ The city of Lilongwe has for decades been championing participatory planning in its Informal Settlements.
- ▶ This approach has specially been intergrated in all slum upgrading programs in the city.
- ▶ This allows the Council to work directly with citizens and other key partners to define the plans for the areas to be upgraded. Planning is community driven
- ▶ While others are involved in community mobilisation, some help to undertake profiling of structures and enumeration.

Planning in the Prime Areas of the city.

- ▶ Although, the pre-liminary planning concepts and designs are done by technocrats in their respective fields, the products for example Layout plans, structural plans are subjected to public scrutiny before they get implemented on the ground.
- ▶ Ideally, after the plans have been designed by Architects, Engineers, Surveyors or Urban/Physical planners, they are brought before relevant Council Committees for further scrutiny. These Committees comprise Councillors who actually represent the views of the people in their wards.
- ▶ Their contribution is based on what they feel is in the best interest of the people they represent.

Benefits of Public Participation.

- ▶ Engages more people and hence more views on a particular issue are gathered.
 - ▶ Promotes a more mature debate on national or City priorities
 - This is also helpful in reshaping relationships between City technocrats, Councillors or politicians and citizens.
 - ▶ Ensures that planned Services are better targeted and cost-effective.
 - ▶ Enhance social cohesion among citizens.
 - ▶ There is Local ownership of City projects which are implemented based on the input of citizens.
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Challenges.

- ▶ Lilongwe City does not have policy framework nor plays a role towards public transport
- ▶ An effective institutionalized public transport system that catered to 70 percent of residents collapsed 18 years ago after privatization
- ▶ The informal transport sector serves the mobility needs of most people and has led to the proliferation of informal operators, such as private motorbus and minibus services

Challenge conti'd...

- ▶ “Kabaza” (bicycle Taxi services) has become the most popular means of transport for the poorest who cannot afford the informal public Transport.

Public Feedback on Sustainable Transport

- ▶ Lilongwe City Council needs to regulate and formalize the public transport sector
 - ▶ Ban the “Kabaza” within the city roads
 - ▶ Involvement of the people sometimes tend to raise false expectations which if they are not corrected may cause problems during implementation.
 - ▶ Need for political will in the transportation sector
 - ▶ Serous investment on the transportation sector on a Public-Private Partnership by 2020
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