

CITY PLANNING - TEMA METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY

TEMA CITY



Image above:
Mr. Ali Amadu and Mrs. Francisca Okyere.

We meet Mrs. Francisca Okyere, Spatial Planning Officer and Mr. Ali Amadu, Development Planning Officer, at the offices of the Tema Metropolitan Assembly.

What is your task?

The Assembly, under the Local Governance Act, 2016 ACT 936, is the highest political, planning and administrative Authority in its area of jurisdiction. Thus, the Assembly is responsible for the overall planning, development and management of all development activities within its area of jurisdiction.

The exclusive development and management functions of the Assembly as mentioned above have been further set out in the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, 2016 (Act 925). The Act further emphasizes, in Section 34

of Act 925, the purposes of establishment of a District Planning Authority, that:

A District Assembly or a spatial planning authority is for the purpose of this Act the spatial, human settlement and planning authority for its area of authority.

This mandate, in practice, includes development and building permitting, which is a requirement for all physical developments undertaken within the Metropolis.

Relative to the Tema Port the Assembly's development management authority covers all ancillary activities within the Port area; that means those activities which are not core port infrastructure.

How do your responsibilities relate to national level planning?

Ghana's decentralisation process is designed to ensure that policies and programmes at the National level informs planning, decision making and implementation at the local Assembly level to facilitate the achievement of overall national goals. Meanwhile, the planning and policy formation at the National level, which translates into projects that are eventually executed at the Assembly, is informed by comments, proposals and feedback gathered from consultative and participatory processes and structures at the local Assembly level. There is a forward and backward linkage in the national and local level planning.

In regard to spatial planning, there is also the adoption of the three-tier planning system, which requires the preparation of a National Spatial Development Framework (upper

tier/National level), that translates into the preparation of a Structure Plan (middle tier/Sub-national or Regional level), which finally informs the preparation of Local Plans (lower tier/Local level) at the Assembly. By implication, whatever spatial plan is prepared at the Assembly to facilitate the discharge of its responsibilities must have emanated from a higher level plan, to ensure better coordination, harmonisation and or integration of plans and projects.

What does the port expansion mean to you and your organization?

The Tema Port expansion obviously comes with some positive and negative effects. Currently, a new well equipped hospital has been built by the Port Authority, which will provide improved access to healthcare for the community. In addition, road improvements are being done to some major road corridors in the Metropolis; a proposed construction of a new container and track parking terminal, which we envisage will help decongest the existing situation in and outside the port area, amongst others. All of these support the Assembly's development agenda.

However, there is also the attendant negative effects that we envisage to come with the port expansion including, a greater incidence of floating population which come in and out to do business with the port and its related activities; increased waste generation and management challenges; increased damage to the city's inner road corridors by heavy duty trucks which often divert onto these roads to avoid traffic on the main roads, and also park indiscriminately along the shoulders of the roads and cause damage to the drains; invasion of open spaces and

slum developments by additional squatter population which are likely to migrate into the city to seek job opportunities, etcetera.

The inner city of Tema, for instance, was built to complement the port activities, then. Presently, the city on all fronts has grown beyond what it was planned for. One of the very affected sectors of the inner city is the housing situation - requiring critical interventions like redevelopments and making a conscious effort to provide for the urban poor; given that the expansion will most likely drive more activities and attract even more people to the city.

All these will call for well coordinated, integrated, intersectoral and participatory approaches to managing or resolving the emerging issues; which means it can not be done by the Assembly alone.

How do you include stakeholders in your planning for Tema?

Nowadays, we use more consultative and participatory methods in our planning and decision making processes. In planning for what programmes and projects to be done in a given period the Assembly consults with focused groups including representatives of Civil Society and Community Based Organisations, NGOs, Residents Associations, relevant public and private institutions, etcetera, to solicit for their comments and proposals, to inform the plan.

The Assembly engages these groups - either separately or together at public hearings or town hall meetings as may be necessary- for the identification of problems or issues confronting the city, proposal of relevant strategies, and prioritization of interventions and actions to resolve the issues, amongst others.

What do you think Tema would look like in 20 years?

Tema, as it is now, is virtually fully built. A significant proportion of the developments, especially as can be seen in the inner city and its surrounding residential enclaves, are

low rise buildings. As a result, there is a lot of pressure on the limited land space for increased housing and other socio-economic amenities to support the city's growth.

In order for the city to remain relevant, in 20 years time, it would more likely experience renewal; like increased densities - with high rise developments of some strategic parts of the city, especially in and around the core business district (CBD). For example, the Tema Development Company Limited (TDC) has even started developing high rise residential apartments of 8 storeys in some selected old areas of the town.

Besides, most of the residential areas beyond the CBD would most likely transit into mixed used zones. It is worthy of note that, given the trend in our development setting, these changes would most likely be individual

private sector led, which often pay little attention to the necessary improvements in the supporting infrastructure like roads, utilities etcetera, because of the high costs involved. Thus, is it important that a conscious effort is made to provide the necessary supporting infrastructure to complement the growth that the city is looking forward to attract, or else it would have a negative effect on the expected growth.

*Image below:
Tema Metropolitan Assembly Shield.*

