



ZAKA RURAL DISTRICT MASTER PLAN 2024

Executive Summary

Submitted to

Zaka Rural District Council



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Zaka District Master Plan

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1.0 Introduction

Zaka District Master Plan has been developed in accordance with the requirements of Part IV, Section 14 of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act (Chapter 29:12) of 1996, as well as the Master and Local Plans Regulations (1977). This process is mandated by the Act, which requires local authorities to prepare and submit a Master Plan to the Minister of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development for the areas they are responsible for planning.

The Master Plan includes four main documents, namely Inception Report, Report of Study, Written Statement, Executive Summary. The documents are accompanied by annexures and maps.

1.1 The Legislative Framework

The legal framework governing the preparation, implementation and operations of development plans includes Acts of Parliament, Statutory Instruments, Government policy documents and Ministerial directives. Most of these policies are geared towards achieving sustainable development in urban and rural areas through the equal distribution of resources.

1.2 Scope

The master plan encompasses the entirety of Zaka District, which comprises three constituencies and thirty-four wards. This district is geographically delineated by its borders with Bikita District, Masvingo Rural District, and Chiredzi Rural District.

1.3 Defining Master Plan

A master plan is a document that outlines a long-term vision for the development of a particular area, like a city, town, or district. It is essentially a roadmap that guides decision-making about how that place will grow and thrive over a set period, often 10 to 20 years. It is a method for defining clear strategies for the physical, economic and social transformation of places. Master Plans are vital tools that provide a long-term overview for communities to guide their growth and or redevelopment.



1.4 Back ground and Problem Statement

Zaka Rural District Council does not have a master plan to guide the land use, infrastructure and the physical, economic and social transformation of the district. This leads to problems like unplanned development (urban sprawl) disrupting the environment, traffic congestion due to inadequate transportation system, and creating settlements that lack access to essential services like healthcare and education.

The Blue Print on “A call to Action” was officially launched by His Excellency President Emmerson Mnangagwa to Modernize the Operations of Local Authorities towards a 2030 Vision for Zimbabwe to be an Upper Middle-income economy. The first stage of interventions being, “No Compromise to Service delivery.” It is in accordance to this background that Zaka Rural District Council recognizes the need of a master plan to have a physical planning document and spatial layout to use in order to achieve acceptable service delivery levels and observe all applicable laws, being in a state to develop a road map towards a 2030 vision status. This document, therefore sets a direction for development and provide a legal framework to manage it effectively.

1.5 Aim and Objectives

The Master Plan aims to transform Zaka Rural District into a vibrant community that supports human well-being and a sustainable environment, catalyzing economic growth through a detailed Spatial Master Plan. Key objectives include addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges, prioritizing health and safety in development, promoting economic progress and resource efficiency, enhancing environmental sustainability, improving connectivity, and empowering residents through job creation and infrastructure development. Specific goals focus on increasing per capita income, identifying land for expansion, proposing land use structures, ensuring efficient coordination in land and resource management, complying with relevant planning regulations, involving various government and community stakeholders, and aligning with lower-tier statutory plans.



1.6 Justification

The lack of a master plan for Zaka Rural District Council leads to inefficient, uncoordinated development, environmental harm, and difficulty in attracting investment. A transformative Master Plan would serve as a comprehensive blueprint covering public health, education, agriculture, and land management, guiding the district towards achieving a 2030 vision. The plan would analyze existing landscapes, propose policies for land use, modernize the district in line with the Smart City Concept, and integrate global trends to create a sustainable, adaptable, and resilient future for all residents. By creating a Zaka District Master Plan, there is a chance to shape the district's future and development path for the next 10-20 years.

1.7 Data Collection Methods

The research employed a multifaceted methodology grounded in three key principles: participatory engagement, sustainable development, and adherence to scientific standards. This approach ensured inclusivity, allowing all stakeholders to contribute to data collection and solution development, fostering a sense of ownership of the findings.

1. Key Informant Interviews with government representatives and local business leaders for insights on challenges and opportunities.
2. Ward Profiling and Consultations involving structured interviews across all thirty-four wards to capture local issues and aspirations.
3. Land Use and Household Surveys to assess living conditions and land use patterns.
4. Focus Group Discussions to delve into business challenges and opportunities.
5. Literature Reviews to contextualize findings within urban and sustainable development trends.
6. Observations and Site Visits for first hand insights into the district's social and physical conditions.



7. Transport and Site Surveys to analyse traffic patterns and infrastructure conditions.

Thematic Assessments focused on areas such as the biophysical environment, agricultural practices, socio-cultural dynamics, and energy infrastructure through interviews, observations, and secondary data.

1.8 Methods of Analysis

The development of the master plan for Zaka Rural District utilized a comprehensive analysis to ensure it is sustainable and meets local needs. Key methods include:

1. SWOT Analysis: Identifies district Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to understand resources and challenges.
2. Public Participation: Engaged the community through meetings and surveys to incorporate residents' feedback into the plan.
3. Stakeholder Analysis: Assessed interests of various stakeholders to ensure diverse perspectives influence the plan.
4. Land Use Analysis: Reviews current land use patterns to inform sustainable development decisions.
5. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): Evaluates the environmental implications of proposed projects and suggests mitigation measures.
6. Economic Feasibility Analysis: Analysed financial viability by estimating costs and potential revenue.
7. Socioeconomic Analysis: Utilizes demographic and economic data to guide housing and service decisions.
8. GIS Mapping: Visualizes spatial data for informed land-use and infrastructure planning.
9. Regulatory Analysis: Ensures compliance with relevant laws regarding land use and environmental protection.
10. Scenario Planning: Explores different future scenarios to adapt to changing circumstances.



These methods collectively promote a holistic approach, addressing the unique challenges of Zaka Rural District and enhancing residents' quality of life.

1.9 Tools and Techniques

The following tools and techniques were used throughout the research process:

- GIS software (e.g., ArcGIS) for spatial analysis and mapping.
- Statistical software (e.g., EPI Info or SPSS) for data analysis.
- Microsoft Office or Google Suite for data collection and report writing.
- Survey software (e.g., Google Forms or Survey Monkey) for online surveys.
- Qualitative data analysis software (e.g., NVivo) for thematic analysis.
- AutoCAD software for plan drawing and designing
- Archi CAD software for 3D modelling
- Atlantis software for 3D modelling
- KOBO Toolbox

This methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the current state of the district and developing a master plan for its sustainable and inclusive development. The methodology is iterative and adaptive, allowing for flexibility and refinement throughout the research process.

2.0 Key Findings

Zaka district faces significant challenges across various sectors impacting residents' quality of life. The agricultural sector is mainly subsistence-based, suffering from limited irrigation, soil degradation, climate change, and poor market access. Housing shortages due to rapid urbanization lead to substandard living conditions. While cemeteries maintain national heritage, commercial centres struggle with outdated infrastructure and informal competition.

Tourism potential is hindered by inadequate investment and infrastructure, while mining suffers from insufficient investment and illegal activities. The education system is limited by a lack of secondary schools and teacher shortages. Health care is impacted by uneven access to



facilities and staffing issues, and infrastructure services, such as telecommunications and transportation, are compromised by poor maintenance.

The economy is primarily reliant on agriculture and the informal sector, constrained by climate vulnerabilities and outdated practices. Recreational opportunities are minimal, and cultural heritage faces threats from rapid development. Socio-economic disparities persist, exacerbated by food insecurity and resource inequalities, particularly affecting marginalized groups.

Population growth necessitates expanded housing and infrastructure, while environmental degradation raises risks linked to reliance on natural resources. Law enforcement faces challenges due to resource constraints. Overall, Zaka district requires coordinated interventions in multiple sectors to enhance the quality of life and promote economic growth.

3.0 Key Recommendations

To ensure the successful preparation of the Zaka District Master Plan, the following recommendations have been put forward.

Land Use and Ownership

The strategy emphasizes sustainable land use planning and management, promoting balance between community needs and environmental conservation.

Agricultural Development

Efforts should be made to enhance agricultural productivity through support for farmers and initiatives that improve household well-being.

Housing

The provision of adequate, safe, and affordable housing is a priority, addressing the existing challenges in housing infrastructure.



Cemeteries

Cemetery management will honour cultural and communal values, ensuring respect for the deceased and a sense of national pride.

Economic Growth

Revitalization of commercial and industrial centres will foster economic viability and community engagement. The mining sector will be empowered to spur job creation and entrepreneurship, particularly for the local youth.

Tourism Development

Unlocking tourism potential through sustainable practices will enhance local economies and preserve the district's cultural and natural heritage.

Education and Health

Access to quality education will be improved, especially in marginalized areas, alongside equitable healthcare provisions, ensuring that all residents have access to necessary services.

Infrastructure Improvement

Investments should focus on enhancing telecommunications, transportation, energy, water supply, and sanitation services, promoting reliable and sustainable infrastructure.

Environmental Sustainability

The framework addresses environmental challenges and promotes practices that safeguard natural resources while restoring environmental integrity.

Community Engagement

Efforts will prioritize community involvement in decision-making and strategic partnerships to drive sustainable growth, alongside inclusive measures addressing socio-economic disparities.



Financial and Administrative Efficiency

Improvements in financial management and administrative processes will ensure transparent governance, enhanced service delivery, and optimized resource use, guided by effective budgeting and strategic planning.

Implementing this comprehensive plan will promote sustainable development in Zaka District, fostering community resilience and ensuring a prosperous future.

Department of Spatial Planning and Land Management

Establish a comprehensive Spatial Planning and Land Management Department, led by a qualified Planner(Urban Designer), and staffed with a GIS assistant, planning assistant, and technician. This will enable the department to function effectively.

Conclusion

Zaka Rural District Master Plan is a crucial initiative aimed at addressing community challenges while promoting sustainable growth. It emphasizes the need for coordinated interventions across sectors like agriculture, housing, health, education, and infrastructure to enhance residents' quality of life and foster a growth-conducive environment. Key recommendations focus on increasing agricultural productivity, improving housing availability, modernizing infrastructure, environmental protection and promoting economic diversification, with an emphasis on community engagement in the planning process.

Aligned with Zimbabwe's Vision 2030, the plan seeks to establish a vibrant, resilient community that balances economic viability with cultural and environmental preservation. It proposes the creation of a Spatial Planning and Land Management Department to ensure effective implementation and continuous improvement of development practices. Ultimately, the Master Plan serves as a roadmap for collaboration among stakeholders, aiming for a prosperous and inclusive Zaka District where no one is left behind in the pursuit of progress.