

Executive Summary:

The World Bank appointed Cadre Plan (Pty) Ltd to develop a diagnostics report, strategy, and action plan as well as policy notes for the cities of Lilongwe and Blantyre in Malawi. This consultancy aimed to carry out an urban diagnostic for Lilongwe and Blantyre cities and outline a set of policy reforms and interventions aimed at enhancing the cities' productivity and competitiveness, climate and financial sustainability and resilience, and to promote social inclusion.

CLIENT FEEDBACK



I would recommend the Cadre team for similar assignments, particularly around strategic urban investment prioritization and planning exercises in African cities.

- David Mason,
Urban Specialist
The World Bank

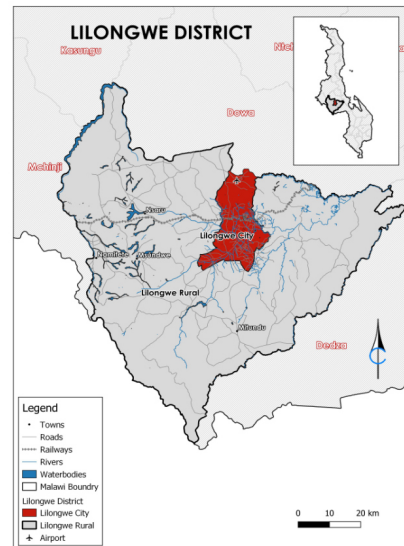
The purpose of this report is therefore to re-prioritise the findings of the previous report and to highlight low-hanging fruit that could be addressed with the aim of having a positive impact on the local economy.

Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, has the potential to become a connected, clustered, and green urban centre with the ability to attract investment and stimulate local economic development. To achieve this will, however, require strategic interventions which will contribute towards greater spatial justice, improved spatial sustainability, higher levels of efficiency, good administration and spatial resilience.

Through the implementation of sustainable development principles, Lilongwe has the potential to develop as one of Africa's significant emerging cities. Named as the capital of Malawi in 1975, Lilongwe is a disconnected city characterised by urban sprawl, weak public transport, lack of security of tenure and insufficient financial resources to implement far-reaching development plans. A number of city development strategies were drafted more than a decade ago but never fully implemented.

The city lacks the necessary financial and human resources to implement a comprehensive development plan and provide the basic infrastructure and urban services needed for economic development to take place.

However, its status as capital and its position within Malawi's economic and administrative environments require the drafting of a credible development framework which guide investment choices that promote resilient urban development in the future.



The vision for Lilongwe is proposed to be connected, clustered, and green. Lilongwe's spatial characteristics can be described as linear with sprawl detected in the south. There are numerous economic nodes, starting in the north, and taking on a linear pattern towards the south. These nodes are mostly connected via the M1 carriageway.

The urban sprawl is threatening the protection of the green belt surrounding the city. The green belt represents agricultural land and natural vegetation.

The proposed ring road will curb urban sprawl and protect the green belt and at the same time connect the nodes in the south with economic nodes in the north. This principal arterial route will be able to contain the physical development of Lilongwe whilst also providing a fast and reliable route from the industrial nodes in the south (where a significant increase in population densities have been detected) to the industrial nodes in the north, as well as the airport.

In support of the ring road, major arterials are proposed to connect through the city and provide other important nodes with access to the principal arterial/ring road. These major arterials will act as activity spines; economic activities should be supported along these routes. Traffic will be guided from residential nodes along these routes, onto the principal arterial/ring road. The principal ring road will allow for large traffic volumes, travelling at high speeds (100km/h to 120km/h). The major arterials/activity spines will also allow for moderate to high traffic volumes at a slightly reduced speed (80km/h – 100km/h). Combined, these roads will create pockets within which residential developments can be contained; supporting and incorporating existing activity nodes within the design framework of the city.

Improvements to the physical connection between various economic and industrial nodes will ensure increases in productivity and efficiency, which leads to improved economic performance. Moreover, ease of access will lower transport costs as well as the price for basic goods and services consumed by households.

The proposed Presidential Way could concentrate development along this spine, and sprawl can be contained. Capitol Hill is situated north of the city centre and is flanked by the Presidential Complex to its right and Bingu stadium to its left. Unfortunately, these two developments are unintentionally contributing to urban sprawl, as they are big enough to act as catalysts for development.

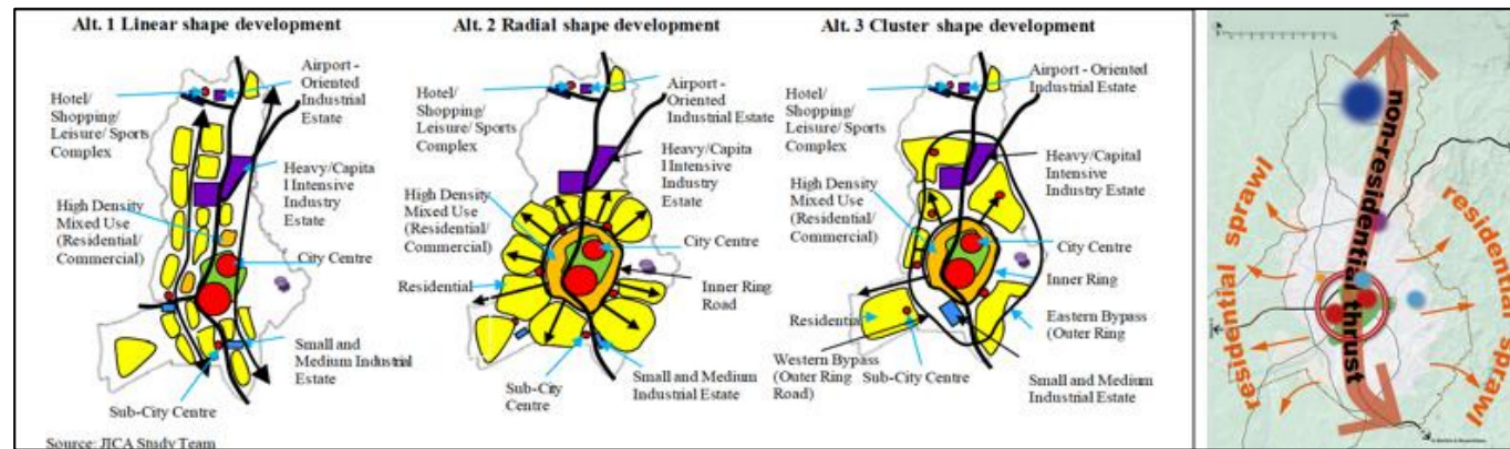


Figure 3: Development structure

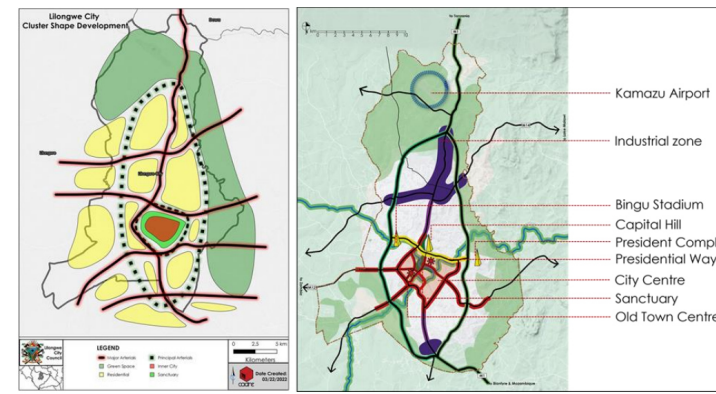


Figure 18: Proposed spatial structure

Lilongwe displays a wide range of social and economic opportunities that the city seeks to realise through an economic strategy of radical transformation, modernisation and re-industrialisation to create decent work, economic inclusion and equity. Based on this, and with the implementation of sustainable development principles, the city has the potential to develop as one of Africa's significant

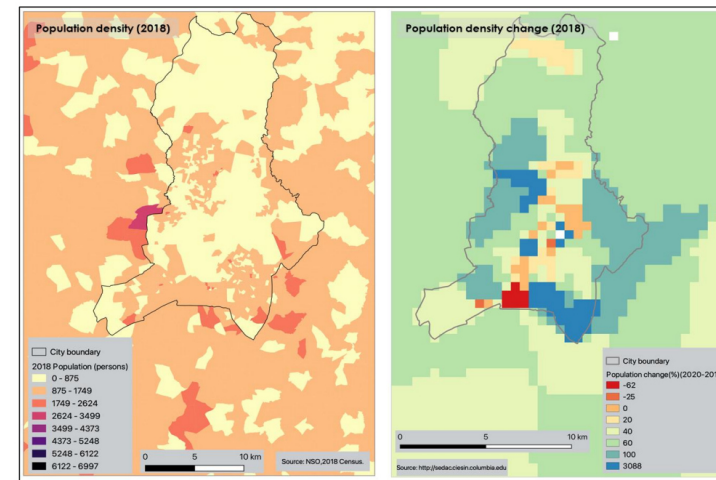


Figure 4: Population density

The majority of people reside in the south and also in the centre of Lilongwe. The image above indicates high density areas. It is important to note that there is a high-density node outside Lilongwe (dark pink), on the western border.

Evidently many people are relocating to the south-east. The image to the right above depicts the changes in population density between 2010 and 2020 with dark blue in the south-east. The red area signifies a significant decrease. Another node with a significant increase in population is in the centre, around the city centre and west of the Kanengo industrial node. Lilongwe's development structure/pattern represents a linear shape which is gradually converting into a radial shape as a result of urban sprawl as seen in figure 3 below.

Creating a connected, clustered and green Lilongwe, Malawi

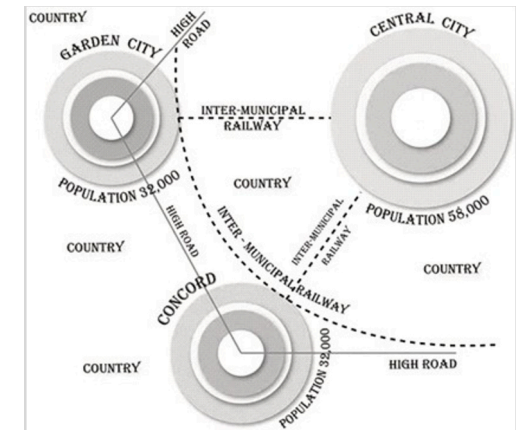
August 2022

Key Information:

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Malawi has introduced significant economic and structural reforms to sustain economic growth but, remains one of the poorest countries in the world.

Rural to urban migration results from both push and pull factors – limited economic prospects in rural areas, where small landholdings severely constrain agrarian growth and alternative income generation opportunities are lacking; as compared to expanding economic opportunities and greater access to public services in towns and cities, whether actual or perceived (Manda, 2013).



Project Details:

- Location:** Lilongwe, Malawi
- Time-frame:** 5,5 months
- Project lead:** Reinier Minny, Dr Johnny Coetzee
- Key Support:** Ayrrion Appels, Moloko Raphalelo
- Core Consulting:** The Cadre Group
- Team:** 081 265 0800
- Team:** reinier@cadreplan.co.za



- Project Sponsor:** The World Bank
- Client:** National Planning Commission | David Mason
- Beneficiary:** Lilongwe District

