

# Rwamagana Satellite City Masterplan Revision 2050



## Understanding community engagement and participation in view of Urban planning and Development.

For some years now, Rwanda has been known as a country deep rooted in best practices in accountability and good governance, a thing that has earned it a strong economic outlook in the region and worldwide at large. This achievement has majorly been as a result of public inclusiveness on national matters that have a bearing on their socio-economic status.

Rwamagana District, through Rwanda Housing Authority and development partners ENABEL, a Belgian government funded development agency have in the spirit of improving socio-economic domain of the people of Rwamagana embarked on a long term urban infrastructure development and wholesome urban planning and management of the city boundaries to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic development.

For this undertaking to gain the

needed momentum, the public, specifically people who work and live in Rwamagana must fully be involved in decision making on issues that have a bearing on their day to day works in what is commonly known as Community engagement and participation.

Community engagement seeks to better involve the public to achieve long-term and sustainable outcomes, processes, relationships, discourse, decision-making and implementation of the revised Rwamagana Masterplan.

The Rwamagana Satellite City Masterplan revision process which is

already on-going has so far made great strides in identifying key stakeholders from the public and the district administration for wider consultations and negotiations on what are realistically better ideas for an all-inclusive thriving city.

These include groups of people drawn from specific fields such as local leaders, market vendor associations, commercial trade and industrialists, motorcycle and taxi driver associations, Faith based organization (FBO) and Community Based Organizations (CBO) leaders and other operators from crosscutting sectors such as Energy,





## Rwamagana District Executive Secretary

Environmental protection and green growth, Education and health centers, culture/heritage patrons and heads of security organs.

In one of the consultative meetings held with heads of different departments at the district headquarters led by the District Executive Secretary Mr. Henry Kakooza, it was emphasized and established that a good Masterplan must take into account what attracts people of all kinds to stay, work, invest and enjoy what the city offers.

Joshua Ashimwe, the project director of the joint venture Geosurveys- AJ+Partners Ltd contracted to carry out the Rwamagana Masterplan review assignment asserts the same as he stressed the importance of community engagement in the planning process, calling on each and every stakeholder's active involvement.

During the course of stage-1, Existing Land use mapping and analysis stage, local leaders representing the interests of the public who are the primary stakeholders in this process enthusiastically welcomed the idea and committed to cooperating in any way possible for a successful and inclusive planning document.

### To what extent do people of Rwamagana District need to be involved in planning of their city

The first impression you get on the entry to Rwamagana District from its borders with Kigali and later on to its city center portrays a well geographically located area one can hope for as far as city life is concerned.

Rwamagana district is located

just a few miles from the Kigali capital city and along a route that opens the country to two major international trade routes; the East African northern and central corridors. Its topography and climate creates a conducive environment for social setups supported by the economic activities that are a characteristic feature of the District such as Agriculture, manufacturing, and hospitality industries.

However with all these advantages, the District is yet to attract activities associated with the satellite city status it has been recently elevated to.

The reasons for this scenario seem to reside within socio-economic factors and the availability of supporting services. However it only remains speculative until studies are made and all stakeholders are brought on board to establish what urban planning features need to be invoked for a thriving Rwamagana Satellite City.

So far this has been demonstrated through the meetings the consultant has had including one with the district heads of department.

It was amazing to see the involvement of the local leaders of all ages and gender representing public interests providing inputs such as suggestions for sports facilities, cultural centers, open green spaces and other services including education facility proposals, health centers and market places and cemeteries in order to protect and make an attractive habitable city they call home.

But while the passion was there, there was a gap in understanding master planning process.

There are therefore other approaches that will be employed for a wider community engagement and participation such as Radio programs, the use of media both electronic and print, roadside/ drive awareness campaigns and focus group discussions for evidence based studies that will put Rwamagana on a trajectory of a budding satellite city it seeks to be. These approaches will mainly be designed on two major elements; educational and timing.

### Educating the public about the planning process:

As the saying goes, knowledge is power. For a community member to form a sound opinion about a proposed development scenario, they at least need a basic understanding of the planning principles, challenges and strategies that go into urban planning and development.

The public should have a better understanding of what makes good planning tool in the first place, what the current policies are and what factors and/or challenges impact the urban planning process that they might not have otherwise known.

### Timing of community engagement and participation:

What's also clear is that the public needs to be engaged and educated much earlier. Holding open house events when the design and planning are already well underway is not the right time to be engaging with communities who generally have no prior understanding of how urban planning works.

When the project is already in the pipeline and the city or a developer justify their plan to the public, there is much less chance for productive public input.



District officials and other stakeholders at a meeting.





## Representatives from Police Training School and other various stakeholders from Gishari sector.

### Descriptive highlights on what the experience has been like so far with community engagements

Mid-March is precisely when the actors on the both sides of Rwamagana District on one hand and the consultant rolled their sleeves up to a long process of the Rwamagana satellite city master plan review.

This was a few days after the consultant JV-Geosurveys-A+J Partners, a joint venture at the midst of the master plan review had successfully presented the inception report that was then validated. The report clearly lays out the road map to a master plan that suits all the stakeholders in Rwamagana but also attractive to the Investors, Tourists, and local residents and in line with government's programs such as National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II and NLUIMP 2020 to mention but a few.

### The Kigabiro Sector meeting

The very first community engagement was held at Kigabiro Sector (Umurenge) located within a few meters away from the District one stop center(OSC) that coordinates all activities that concern land usage in Rwamagana District.

Accompanied by the OSC Director

Mr. Theogene Gahunzire and his counterpart Mr. Hategekimana Eugene, the consultant was ushered into a well-attended meeting of local leaders. The local leaders included the Sector Executive Secretary, Sector Land Manager, Sector Agronomist, Forestry officer, all Cell Socio-Economic Development Officers, opinion leaders, and village heads. With no time lost, Mr. Gahunzire, having been given a platform to address the members in attendance, introduced the concept of reviewing the Rwamagana City MasterPlan with an appeal for full cooperation from the public and the local leaders in particular.

When it was time for the consultant to engage with the local leaders, he well-articulated the role played by the local leadership in the planning process. Mr. Joshua (Consultant) kicked-off with a presentation of the team and the actual assignment underway.

The brief background provided gave an overview of what is expected from the consultant and the support expected from the participants. The consultant solicited for vigilance and free speech in regards to opportunities and constraints available in the sector.

In an interactive approach to create an environment to freely and easily share information and with the digital map of the Sector, each leader came forward to identify and map existing important features in his/her cell. Features

such as schools, sports facilities, trading centers, health centers, cemeteries, religious facilities and other projected developmental projects were mapped. Others were the identification and mapping of natural features such as water bodies, forests and mining fields.

Some issues and suggestions were raised, the most prominent being the need to streamline the operations of commercial businesses such as trade which seem to be the Sector's main activity. Other concerns such as improving infrastructure facilities such as access roads and sports facilities to improve the viability of the city were mentioned.

The local leaders also pointed out lack of alternative fresh food market places, unauthorized use and settlement on land otherwise meant and suitable for other activities such as agriculture as raised by Nyagasenyi cell representative.

### Muhazi sector

At Muhazi sector, local leaders were much more interested in taking part in the planning processes but also called for wider consultations with other groups of interest which in itself forms part of the activities that are planned to be carried out.

They mostly exchanged ideas around improved infrastructure such as access roads to the Kabare market, mapping and demarcating of government forests to avoid encroachment, gazetting and securing a buffer for the existing land-fill, regulating of construction at the shores of lake Muhazi, and improved tourist sites in addition to establishing physical boundaries separating different uses of land most especially agriculture and settlements.

### The other 12 more sectors;

In the course of the last part of March the team travelled through all the remaining Sectors that make up Rwamagana District with similar approach towards having full participation of the local leaders.

However one Sector stood out from the rest given its strategic features and projects. Gishali Sector local leadership requested that all stakeholders with large-scale facilities are represented. In this meeting, representatives from the RNP in charge of the Police Training School (PTS) led by David Kabuye and the principal of Gishali IPRC(TVET) Mr. Bahizi Venuste were given an opportunity to elaborate on the expansion plan of their respective facilities.

This was an added advantage in capturing data for some of the already visible facilities that have made Gishali a budding sector among others.

Mr. David Kabuye presented the police's concerns based on the current settlements around the Police Training School. His concerns are settlements that are too close to the school and continue to crop-up in the immediate vicinity of the training ground thus inconveniencing the facilities daily operation. He added that it's equally inconveniencing for the residents as well and therefore need an urgent intervention.

He also requested the consultant to consider and incorporate the police training school and IPRC Gishali master plans that are already in place in the revised Rwamagana Satellite City master plan. More consultations are planned on how this and other



ideas gathered can be reflected in the revised final Masterplan.

### Way forward

There is still a long way to go in capturing data from all stakeholders in the planning of the city boundary. Focus groups have been identified and other stakeholders to share their inputs in form of information and generating new ideas.

These include but not limited to industrialists, commercial traders, cooperatives of different groups such as taxi operators and other road users, fresh food market vendors, real estate developers, tour and travel operators. Others will be from crosscutting sectors such as health center operators, head of education and patrons of cultural/ heritage centers, heads of security organs, FBO, CBO, and other NGOs.

These activities, coupled with other scientific methods that have been deployed will inform a well-planned city that reflects the will and aspirations of its citizens.

### Rwamagana Satellite City master plan major highlights

- ▣ Rw amagana Satellite City Master plan review Inception report presentation and validation
- ▣ All District Sectors Existing situations analysis and mapping
- ▣ Approving Urban design and Land sub-division boundaries
- ▣ Consultations with district heads of departments for their valued inputs for a suitable Rwamagana Satellite City master plan review.
- ▣ Street interviews and analysis of the street life
- ▣ Rwamagana City walk-through with teams from the District headquarters and the consultancy
- ▣ Municipal/infrastructure Engineer analysis (traffic counts, infrastructure and utility assessment etc
- ▣ Land requirement analysis

