

# Managing Expansion of Commercial Districts for Sustainable Development:

**A Case Study of Upper Hill Area in  
Nairobi, Kenya**

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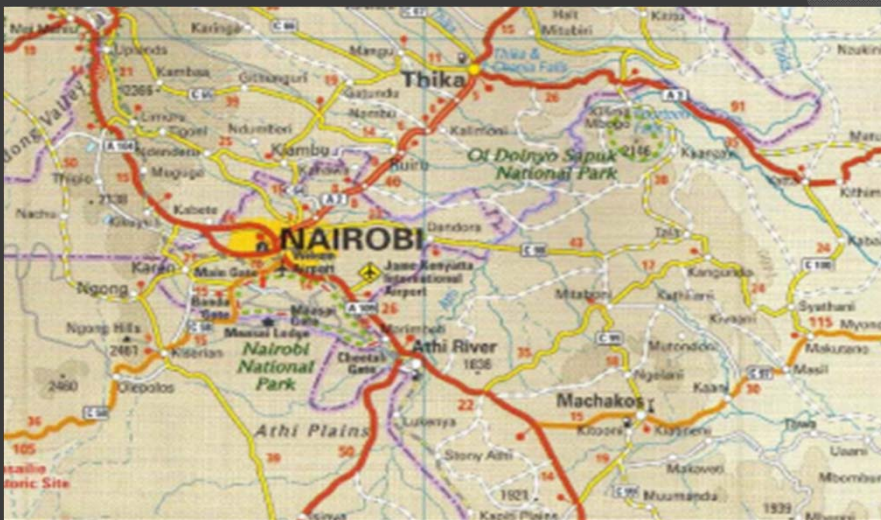
## Introduction

- ◉ Cities play a major role to a country's global and regional competitiveness due to their commercial and industrial activities
- ◉ Need to sustain ever increasing urban population
- ◉ In order to support the three pillars of development i.e. social, economic and environment
- ◉ This will ensure that the current generation meets its needs without compromising the ability of the future generations to do the same.

## Objectives and Case study

- This paper examines the current environment evolving around the rapid urban environment and in particular, the case of Upper Hill Centre in Nairobi, Kenya as it evolves from a low density residential area to home of ultra – modern multi – stored commercial district

## Map of Nairobi



## Upper Hill Area



## Methodology

- This report is based on a primarily qualitative study. The findings presented in this study are informed by primary data gathered during field work.
- Sampling for the study followed the non-probability sampling techniques of convenience and judgment sampling.
- Primary data for the study was collected by use of a self-administered questionnaire

## Key Development Elements

- **Transportation:** public transport system, road networks integration and adequacy, road maintenance
- **Parking:** adequacy of parking spaces; the distribution of parking lots; quality and quantity of parking spaces and; taxi and bus stops
- **Water and sanitation Services:** efficiency and adequacy of water provision and delivery; effluent discharge into natural water courses within the area; management of storm and flood waters;
- **Waste Management:** Waste collection and disposal.
- **Energy:** The cost of energy; access to energy; the efficiency of energy transmission
- **Information Communication Technology:** infrastructure installation services and quality of service delivery.
- **Security Systems:** Security provisions and their adequacy
- **Disaster Risk Management:** General disaster preparedness

## Case of Upper Hill, Nairobi

Development of offices for;

- multinational companies like Coca Cola;
- Missions like the Japan Embassy, British High Commission and the European Union;
- International financial institutions like the World Bank and International Finance Corporation;
- Insurance companies like the British American Insurance Company;
- High end, 5 star hotels like Crowne Plaza;
- Major banks' headquarters e.g. Commercial Bank of Africa, CITI Bank and Equity Bank.

## Upper Hill – Previous development



## Upper Hill - Birds View





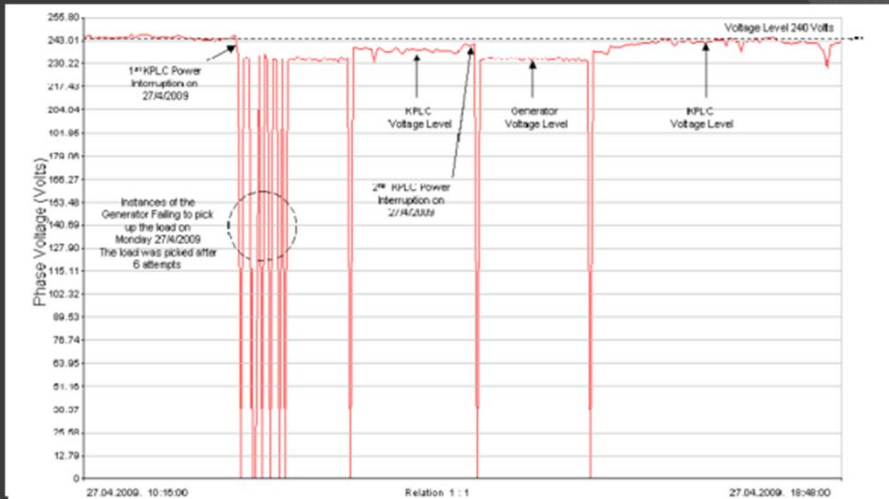
## Planning policies & plans

- ◉ As a neighborhood of Nairobi's CBD, Upperhill came up as a result of a strategic development plan/master plan contained in the 1948 Nairobi Master Plan
- ◉ 1973 Nairobi Metropolitan Growth Strategy.  
The plan addressed population issues, economic activities, land use, transportation, housing, revenue and expenditure patterns of the city
- ◉ Local Government Act Cap 265
- ◉ National Urban Development Policy, 2011
- ◉ Urban Areas and Cities Act of 2011 that provides for the classification, governance principles criteria of establishing as well as the management of urban areas, cities and towns.

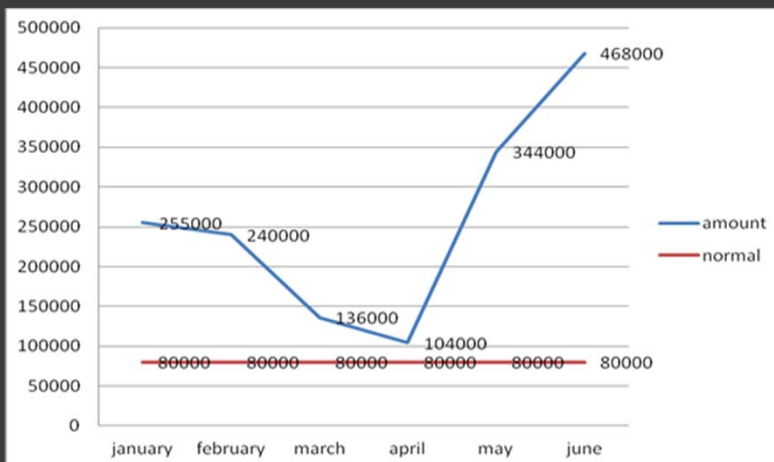
## Findings

- ◉ **Transportation** – availability of private transport but no government transport
- ◉ **Parking** - There are no open parking available, only within private development and no designated parking for taxis and bus stops
- ◉ **Roads**- narrow roads, poorly maintained. Effort to expand but inefficient and ineffective
- ◉ **Water and sewerage disposal** - poor and erratic water supply – private supply and boreholes
- ◉ **Waste Management** - Private contractors – no organized waste disposal by authorities
- ◉ Energy – Unreliable , poor quality power supply
- ◉ **Information Communication technology** - available mainly from private suppliers
- ◉ **Security**- inadequate government security leading to hire and installation of private security guards and systems
- ◉ **Disaster preparedness** - no local system. Reliance on central NCC fire brigades. Lack of open grounds for fire assembly

## Power Interruption – 8 Hour Period



## Water Supply – Private Versus Public



## Conclusion

- From the above analysis, we find that although the Upper Hill area of Nairobi presents an attractive growth area for the Central Business District, there are no concrete development plans from most of the service providers and where they exist, they are poorly documented, uncoordinated with other agencies and poorly implemented. For example, the Nairobi Metropolitan Strategy of 1973 which is the last plan that was done for Nairobi elapsed in the year 2000. The Kenya Roads Board has roads maintenance and upgrading plans but these are poorly executed in terms of quality and efficiency and the zoning plan for the area is not being implemented on the ground. This kind of development approach is not sustainable.

## Recommendations

- Orderly development ensured through the development of a master plan that lays out the goals, objectives and strategies for the region followed by an effective and efficient implementation and monitoring process.
- This will ensure provision of basic facilities and public utilities and amenities in Upper Hill are upgraded with the government funding of projects in Upper Hill to ensure that the existing infrastructure promotes private investment and business support.
- Participatory planning by all service providers, developers, residents and other interested parties should be integrated into the overall planning of Upper Hill to ensure a comprehensive, relevant and enduring plan and guarantee environmental sustainability.