
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING WITHIN INNER REGION OF AKURE METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Akure's inner region comprises Akure metropolis as the dominant central city which is certainly the largest single settlement in the entire region. There are a number of small and medium-sized towns, many villages and numerous hamlets and farmsteads. No doubt, Akure metropolis dominates both the physical and socio-economic life of the region. Indeed, the primacy and supremacy of Akure metropolis in the region is not challenged. Certainly all the settlements in the region hamlets, farmsteads, villages, small and medium towns, depend upon Akure metropolis for the procurement of essential services and the supply of important goods. Physical development is concerned with the ways and means of allocating land among the various competing uses or functions in any designated area in an urban or rural environment. The primary objective of physical planning is the enhancement of the beautification of the built up environments. A simple questionnaire was adopted for the study. The study utilized both primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire as well as interview was used to obtain the relevant data from a sample of twenty respondents. The discussion of Findings show that Akure metropolis has twenty neighbourhoods which can be adopted in classifying Akure metropolis into major residential areas of the level of density of both population per unit area and per room. These are low density, medium density and high density residential areas. Conclusively, it is appropriate to assert that physical development planning has been embraced in the region with enviable results. Akure metropolis has benefited substantially from effective modern planned physical development. The small and medium towns have also gained from the planning process.

Keywords: *Physical, Development, Planning, Metropolis, Akure*

Introduction

Akure's inner region comprises Akure metropolis as the dominant central city which is certainly the largest single settlement in the entire region. There are a number of small and medium-sized towns, many villages and numerous hamlets and farmsteads. Along with Akure metropolis, four small towns-oba-Ile, ogbese, Ilara-mokin and Iju, two medium towns include Igbara-oke and Idanre as well as four village- Aponmu, Eleyowo, Ibule and odudu are selected for in-depth investigation. We therefore consider the level of physical development in these eleven settlement. (Umar and Ugwu, 2018).

No doubt, Akure metropolis dominate both the physical and socio-economic life of the region. Indeed, the primacy and supremacy of Akure metropolis in the region is not challenged. Certainly all the settlements in the region hamlets, farmsteads, villages, small and medium towns, depend upon Akure metropolis for the procurement of essential services and the supply of important goods. This assertion underpins the undisputed primacy of Akure metropolis among all the settlements in the region- a situation that is most likely to remain so for a greater part if not for all of the present century (Akinbode, 1999).

Physical development is concerned with the ways and means of allocating land among the various competing uses or functions in any designated area in an urban or rural environment. Indeed physical development involves essentially the development of the built environment in terms of the spatial arrangement of the different types of buildings- residential, industrial, commercial, recreational and institutional (Umar, 2017).

To make the spatial arrangement of the structures that are listed above effectively functional, provision must be made for an efficient transport network, markets shopping centres, postal services, banking services and parks among others. These services are capable of effectively integrating the built-up environment into feasible functional and unified spatial entities called settlements. (Umar, 2017).

Virtually, all the villages, small and medium towns and even Akure metropolis originated as traditional unplanned settlement at various times in the past. These settlements were characterised with unplanned core areas where the Oba's palace and the oldest markets are located. Also, commercial activities are remarkable in the core areas. These areas are surrounded today by semi- planned peripheral areas. Even Akure metropolis conforms with this general pattern. However Akure metropolis has had then unique advantage of replanning to enhance its beauty and functionality as a state capital. (Akinbode,1999).

Immediately Akure metropolis became the capital city of the old Ondo state in February 1970, the then military Government embarked upon the replanning of the city. Specifically replanning has been imposed on the core areas of the city while the outskirts are built up largely in conformity with the approved modern physical planning guidelines. For instance, the major roads in the city- the Oba Adesida road and Oyemekun road had to BE dualised in order to enable this longest road in the metropolis which runs from the east to the west cope effectively with the heavy traffic of the city. Till today this road constitutes the major trunk road in the city with the other major roads either running parallel to it or linking up with it. (Akinbode, 1999).

Today, traffic flows smoothly on the road, if it is possible to similarly widen some other roads in the city such as Arakale, Ondo road, Oke-Aro Hospital, Oshinle, Ijomu-Oke-Ijebu road, most of the traffic problems in Akure metropolis would be solved. The latest road always experience traffic hold ups. If an account of heavy social costs of widening each of these roads which the people may not be willing to bear some of them like Arakale and Isikan roads should be one-way traffic roads since they are too narrow as two-way traffic roads. (Akinbode,1999).

Physical Planning of Akure Metropolis

In term of physical planning the first military administration of the old Ondo State shortly after assumption of office in 1976 prepared a master plan of the Akure metropolitan to pave way for

the development of Akure as a befitting capital city of Ondo State. Also, the master plan made adequate provisions for the constant expansion of the city in terms of residential, commercial, recreational, institutional and industrial areas. For instance residential estate like Ijapo and Alagbaka were laid out. Today these two estate have been well developed and made functional. Also there is a private residential estate, Oluwatuyi estate in the eastern part of the metropolis south of Alagbaka estate. Furthermore, there is the federal Government Housing estate which is on the northern side of the Owo-Ilesha highway. Indeed this estate which the Local people call Shagari village after the nation's president who developed the estate and Obele area of Akure are the only two quarters of Akure metropolis that lie on the northern part of the Owo-Ilesha Highway. To facilitate the discussion and enhance appreciation of the physical development that had taken place in Akure metropolis up-to-date and the possible direction of future expansion in the metropolis. The author adopts the twenty zones, into which Akure metropolis has been divided by Okoko (2000). The author calls these twenty zones neighbourhoods. Thus the twenty neighbourhoods are listed in Table 1.0 below in an alphabetical order. A critical observation and analysis of the map of Akure metropolis shows that the twenty neighbourhoods which can be adopted in classifying Akure metropolis into major residential areas of the level of density of both population per unit area and per room. These are low density, medium density and high density residential areas. The following eight neighbourhoods Ilesha Road, Okuta Elerinla, Akure High School, Ijapo Estate, Alagbaka Estate, Ala River, Shagari Village and Oba-Ile constitute low density residential areas. The seven neighbourhoods- Fanibi-Lafe, Okegan-Eruoba Oke-Aro/Oke Arotitun, Ayedun, Isikan/Ondo Road, Oshinle and Ijoka- Sijuwade constitute the medium density residential areas.

Lastly, the remaining Five neighbourhoods Araromi/Isolo, Oke-Ijebu, Idiagba-Ijemikin, Erekesan-Erekefa and Ijomu-Illisa fall into the high density residential areas. Generally, the high income people live in the low density residential areas. Lastly, the low income people predominate in the high density residential areas.

The implication of the zonation of Akure metropolis for intra-urban transportation are also clear. The largest numbers of trips are generated within the medium density residential areas. The high density residential areas comes next in the generation of intra-urban trips while the low density residential areas rank last in terms of the number of trips generated and the frequencies of such trips.

Both the medium and high density residential areas are the most likely destinations of intra-regional migrants from the villages, small and medium towns into Akure metropolis an areas. This is true to both temporary and permanent migrants. The type and nature of housing accommodation in these neighbourhoods such as rooms and flatlets makes it possible for accommodation to be found fairly easily following some search for it. Thus, migrants who initially put up with their relations of friends may soon get some accommodation of their choice especially after employment has been secured.

While the majority of the private and public sector workers live in the medium and high density residential areas their working places are mostly in the Alagbaka administrative area. The Erekesan-Erekefa and Arakale, commercial areas and the major industrial area along Ilesha road, the neighbourhood in which FUTA which employs a large number of workers is located. Also, the secretariat of Akure South Local Government Area is here. Each of the twenty neighbourhoods into which Akure metropolis has been divided is indeed real neighbourhood on the basis of their continuity, easy access, and other factors such as the type of development which each area has



had. Thus each neighbourhood ought to have many neighbourhood amenities that would make such areas become more integrated both physically and socially. But this is not so owing to skeletal transportation linkages and the dire absence of some vital neighbourhood amenities such as recreational, health, postal facilities and even water.

The main deficiencies of the various neighbourhoods are indicated in the last column of Table 1.0 below. We try to proffer feasible solutions to these deficiencies here. The first neighbourhoods, Akure High School, needs to be linked up with the rest of the city through a good road. Also, a large and well planned commodity market with modern amenities is recommended for the area. Ala River neighbourhood and indeed the entire Ala River basin throughout the sprawling city should be channelized to keep the river securely in its valley while the adjoining lands on both banks are prevented from being flooded annually. This is the only way life and property can be safe along the course of the river in the metropolis. Although Alagbaka neighbourhood is certainly one of the best neighbourhoods in the city in terms of distinct land use differentiation and provision of neighbourhood amenities such as water and electricity yet in still needs more recreational and marketing facilities. Both Araromi isolo and Ayedun neighbourhoods and functional commodity markets to reduce the distance and time the residents travel to markets in the others parts of the city.

Table 1.0 The Distinctive Land Use Zones (Neighbourhoods) in Akure Metropolis

S/N	Land use Zones (neighbourhoods)	Dominant Land Use	Main Zonal characteristic features	Major land use problem
1	Akure High Sch	Commercial	Mixed land use	Distance from commercial area
2	Ala River	R,C&T	..	Floodable area
3	Alagbaka	T.C.AD	Mixed land use	Best place in terms of amenities
4	Araromi-Isolo	R,T,C	Predominantly Residential	Lack of recreational and commercial facilities
5	Ayedun	R,C,T and R	..	Lack recreational facilities
6	Erekesan- Erekefa	R,C&T	Congestion	Congestion
7	Fanibi-Lafe	R,C&T	Predominantly Residential	recreational facilities needed
8	Idiagba-Ije- Mikin	R,C&T
9	Ijapo	R,C&I	..	Another good Zone
10	Ilesha	R,C,I&Rn	Mixed land use	recreational facilities needed
11	Ijoka-Sijuwade	R,&T	Predominantly Residential	..
12	Ijomu-Illisa	R,C&T
13	Isikan-Ondo-Road	R,C&T
14	Oba-Ile	R,T,R	Mixed land use	Another zone in terms of amenities



15	Oke-Aro-Oke-Aro Titu	R,T,C&I	Predominantly Residential	Recreational facilities needed
16	Okegan-Eruoba	R,C&T	"	"
17	Okuta Elerinla	R,T	"	Awaiting real development
18	Oka-ljebu	R,T,C	"	recreational facilities needed
19	Oshinle	R.T.C	"	"
20	Shagari Village	R,T,C	"	Isolated from the rest of the metropolis
Total	20			

Sources:1. Reviewed Okoko(2000) 2. Researcher's field survey, 2018

Ad=Administration, C= Commercial, Id= Industrial, R=Recreation, T=Transportation

Not this alone, recreational facilities that are provided for these neighbourhoods will certainly make the areas more livable than the case at present. Erekesan-Erekefa neighbourhood is certainly congested with marketing activities. Indeed the oldest and perhaps the largest commodity market in the city is located in this neighbourhood. The market had encroached upon many residential buildings rendering the flow of traffic on many occasions extremely difficult if not possible. Indeed, the demotorisation of the city centre from cash-hold petrol station in the west through the palace to the first Bank market Branch in the east with Arakale street and Oba Adesida road in the southern and northern is necessary. The successful completion of the proposed multi-storey market complex to replace the old market that was burnt sometimes ago will enhance both the beauty, functionality and modernity of the city centre. No doubt fanibi-Lafe and Idiagba-Ijemikin neighbourhoods need recreational facilities such as play grounds, theatres, restaurants or parks to make the residents live comfortably. Furthermore, Ijapo is another neighbourhood that has a full complement of neighbourhood amenities. Indeed Ijapo and Alagbaka and a few other neighbourhoods represent typical neighbourhoods that many people like to live in. Ilesha Road neighbourhood is a large area that is fast developing. Federal university of Technology, Akure is located in this area. In order that traffic may flow smoothly along the Ilesha road at Ilesha garage, there is a need for a fly-over into and out of Akure road. At present it is an ordeal for vehicles to enter into or come out of Akure Road at the garage from and into Ilesha Road.

Also the following neighbourhoods Ijoka-Sijuwade, Ijomu-Ilisa, and Isikan-Ondo Road need recreational facilities such as parks, cinema houses and theatres for the relaxation of the residents

of these areas. Oba-Ile neighbourhood is certainly a good neighbourhood with the state housing estate, the state radio station and free flow of traffic always. For an improved traffic situation within the metropolis generally a ring road is proposed to be constructed between the airport and oba-Ile running southward from owo-Ilesha, highway to intersect Idanre and Ondo roads to the southern outskirts of the city. See fig(2.0) below

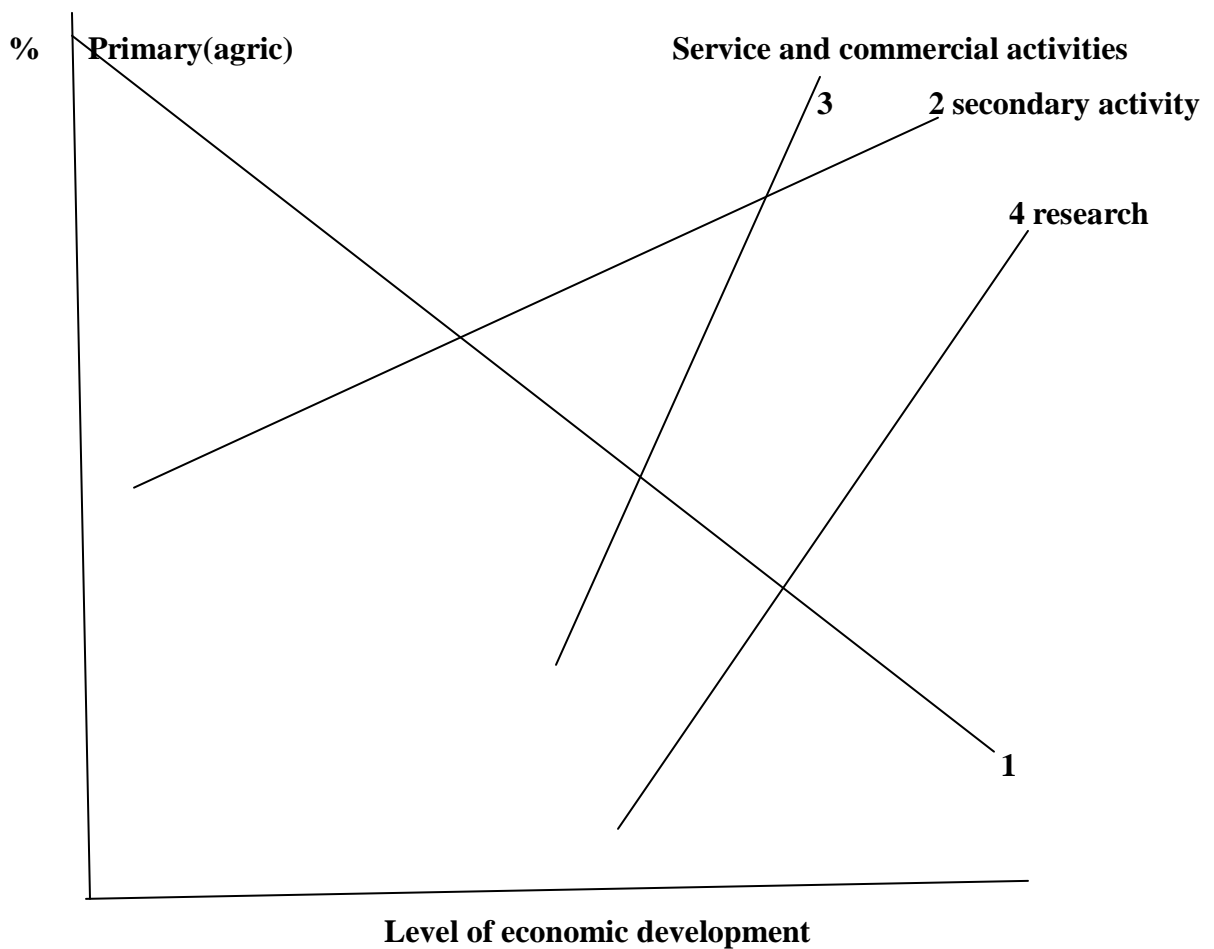


Fig 2.0: Relationship Between Economic Activities and the level of Economic Development.

Source: **Researcher's field survey, 2018**

Many vehicles especially heavy vehicles which are travelling to Idanre and ondo towns from Edo,Delta, the eastern states and Abuja need not pass through the city. The most pressing needs of the remaining five neighbourhoods viz Oke-Aro/Oke Arotitum,Okegan Eruoba, Okuta Elerinla, Oke-ljebu, Oshinle and Shagari village are modern recreational facilities such as parks, play grounds, gymnasium and theatres. Certainly, if the changes and development projects and programmes that have been proposed here are affected. Akure city will be much more liveable and effectively more functional than has been the case hitherto. The primary objective of physical planning is the enhancement of the beautification of the built up environments. Thus physical planning integrates and unifies settlements into effectively functional spatial centres.

Physical development in the region outside Akure metropolis is of recent origin. The two local government headquarters Igbara-oke and Iju have local planning authorities with powers to embark upon planning and orderly physical development of their respective areas of jurisdiction. The core areas of the two medium towns were not planned initially. Neither were they planned following the creation of both the local Government Councils and their local planning authorities. This is mainly because the local people are not wealthy enough to be able to bear the heavy cost of the planning of their towns. The situation in the local Government headquarters is also true in the other small and medium towns in the region.viz Ilara Mokin,Ogbese,Idanre and Oba-Ile all of which have unplanned core areas. In case of Oba-Ile the core area is a linear settlement which does not present a serious planning problem.

However, the new local planning authorities do encourage and enforce physical development planning regulation and bye-laws in each of the six small and medium towns to ensure both the beautification and functionality of the small urban centres. Thus, property developers in the outskirts of these towns must comply with modern planning regulations.

Indeed, these towns now exhibit a duality of unplanned core areas side by side with planned peripheral areas. However, no planning for physical development has been enforced in any of the four villages examined in this study. This may be because the settlements are too small or the residents who are mostly farmers cannot afford the high cost of modern physical development planning or both.



Conclusion

Conclusively, it is appropriate to assert that physical development planning has been embraced in the region with enviable results. Akure metropolis has benefited substantially from effective modern planned physical development. The small and medium towns have also gained from the planning process.

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