

CHIREDDZI TOWN MASTER PLAN



REPORT OF STUDY

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Prepared For: CHIREDDZI TOWN COUNCIL

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe (GoZ), under the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, has instructed all councils and municipalities to develop Master Plans. Given the transformative initiatives like Vision 2030 and President ED Mnangagwa's directive for efficient service delivery, Chiredzi Town Council urgently requires a Master Plans since has been operating without one even a Local Development Plan (LDP). President Mnangagwa's call for action mandates all local authorities to complete their master plans by 30 June 2024, aiming to guide and regulate urban development. The government envisions that these master plans will offer urban, rural and town councils an opportunity to design home-grown strategies for coordinated development. This approach can address various challenges including access to basic services, unemployment, economic opportunities, housing shortages, and environmental degradation. The master plan will outline a vision for future development, set goals, and objectives for the next fifteen to twenty years. For town councils, it will focus on enhancing access to services, creating economic opportunities, and improving citizens' quality of life. By aligning development with community needs, the plans ensure efficient resource utilization and community-driven progress.

The initiation of master plans across all councils in Zimbabwe marks a crucial step towards tackling prevalent challenges. By articulating a comprehensive vision and setting clear goals for the next fifteen to twenty years, these plans promise coordinated development. They aim to enhance access to essential services like education, healthcare, and water while addressing issues such as unemployment, economic limitations, housing deficits, and environmental concerns. Prioritizing community needs ensures effective resource utilization and meaningful improvements in citizens' lives. Moreover, these plans lay the groundwork for sustainable growth by integrating economic strategies and infrastructure improvements. By fostering investment and entrepreneurship, they stimulate job creation and economic empowerment. Additionally, prioritizing environmental sustainability mitigates adverse development impacts, ensuring a resilient and equitable future.

The Regional Town and Country Planning Act (RTCPA), Chapter 29:12 of 1996, mandates all Local Authorities to draft and submit Master Plans. These plans articulate policies and proposals for coordinated development, as required by the Act. It's crucial for local planning authorities to comply with this legislation, ensuring harmonious development and redevelopment within their respective areas.

1.2 Objectives

The primary aim of this Report of Study is to comprehend and record the present and potential biophysical and socio-economic conditions, land use patterns, and essential infrastructure within the Chiredzi Town planning area boundary, facilitating well-informed policy formulation and development recommendations. Additionally, this effort serves to meet specific statutory obligations necessary for the formulation of a Master Plan. The Report of Study specifically aims to:

- 1.2.1 Evaluate the biophysical landscape of the planning area (Chiredzi Town), examining land utilisation practices and the spatial distribution of various land uses.
- 1.2.2 Analyse socio-cultural and economic undertakings within the planning area and its surroundings, encompassing the provision of fundamental infrastructure services.
- 1.2.3 Examine demographic changes and their implications for the development of Chiredzi, the promotion of employment opportunities, and the generation of wealth at large.
- 1.2.4 Evaluate and document issues related to bulk infrastructure within the planning area.
- 1.2.5 Present a concise overview of challenges, prospects, and limitations.
- 1.2.6 Provide a regional analysis facilitating an understanding of the interconnections between Chiredzi and its surroundings, as well as other regions of the country.
- 1.2.7 Analyse policy and legal frameworks influencing proposed developments within the Chiredzi planning area.

1.3 Scope and Methodology for the Master Plan

The formulation of the Chiredzi Master Plan adheres to the provisions outlined in Part IV of the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act, Chapter 29:12, Revised Edition, 1996, in conjunction with the relevant RGN Regulation 248 (Master and Local Plans) 1977 Regulations.

As per both the Act and the Terms of Reference (TOR) provided by the Chiredzi Town Council, the Report of Study Section of the Master Plan Review must encompass, among other crucial aspects, the following key issues:

- a) Population Dynamics,
- b) Socio-Economic Analyses,
- c) Land Utilization Studies,
- d) Infrastructure Challenges,
- e) Traffic Management and Transportation,
- f) Environmental Concerns.

Addressing these issues is vital for guiding urban development efforts, including activities such as land banking, growth direction determination, land use zoning, development corridor identification and traffic forecasting.

Given the complexity of the Master Plan Preparation, a single methodology was not employed. Instead, a variety of approaches and methodologies were utilised to gather data. Secondary data sources encompassed publications, governmental policies, council reports, committee resolutions, and inputs from various committees at the district and provincial levels. NGOs, civic organizations, farmer associations, and local leadership also contributed valuable primary and secondary data.

Primary data collection techniques included the use of drone imagery, field surveys, key informant interviews, transect walks, geotechnical testing, smart power mapping, water quality testing, infrastructure mapping, remote sensing, GIS, mapping, partner engagement, stakeholder workshops, face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussions.

The selection of diverse methodologies was guided by fundamental principles such as:

- Promoting a participatory approach to ensure stakeholder ownership of the final proposals.
- Fostering sustainable development by building capacity and deriving a shared vision throughout the planning process.
- Adhering to established scientific norms in research and policy formulation.

1.4 Location of Chiredzi in Regional Context

Chiredzi district (Figure 1), a vast, semi-arid and drought prone area is downstream of the Save and Runde Catchments with altitude generally below 500m above mean sea level. The District borders Mozambique to the east and South Africa to the south - extending over an area of 17, 629 square kilometres. The key features of this district include the Save Conservancy, the Gonarezhou National Park and the Manjinji Pan.

Chiredzi Town is well connected with other towns and cities within and outside Zimbabwe. The surrounding rural places and plantations are all mutually connected to Chiredzi town. Pamushana resort for instance is a Zimbabwe's only Five Star hotel that is a tourist attraction which is about 21km away from Chiredzi town and is one of the activities that are highly connected to the urban centre. From the project perspective, the resort centre creates opportunities to market the town regionally and internationally as tourists will visit the town and enjoy the uniqueness of Chiredzi town.

Chiredzi town is connected to the rest of Zimbabwe's cities as it is the hub of sugar production. Most cities get their sugar supplies from Chiredzi. Mussina and Johannesburg are also well connected to Chiredzi although the connection has a one-way bias towards Mussina and Johannesburg. Footwear, groceries, and clothes that are sold in retail shops and flea markets are mostly imported from South Africa, mainly from Mussina and Johannesburg. On the other hand, Chiredzi has many people who work in Mussina and Johannesburg. These people remit their earnings to Chiredzi town, thus, contributing to the growth of the town. This is a clear indication of the influence of the two cities to Chiredzi town and how it is dependent on them. The presence of the Buffalo Range Airport is also evidence to show the linkages between the town and other international cities and provides opportunities for marketing the town internationally. To cement this position, most of the goods that are sold by informal traders in Chiredzi CBD are priced in the South African Rand indicating the strength of the synergies.

At a local level, Checheche and Chipinge are well mutually connected to Chiredzi. This is through labour exchange, where some people from Chiredzi are employed in Chipinge and Checheche and vice versa. This has the advantage of knowledge transmission between the two regions leading to improved ways of doing things and effectively leading to the growth of the towns. Masvingo, Triangle and Hippo Valley, Mkwazine and many other surrounding rural

places are connected to Chiredzi in several simple and complex ways. There is the migration of the rural population to the town. This is accompanied by pressure for various urban land-use activities particularly housing. Beyond labour, most of the fruits and vegetables that are consumed in Chiredzi town come from Chipinge indicating the existence of daily movements between the two places.

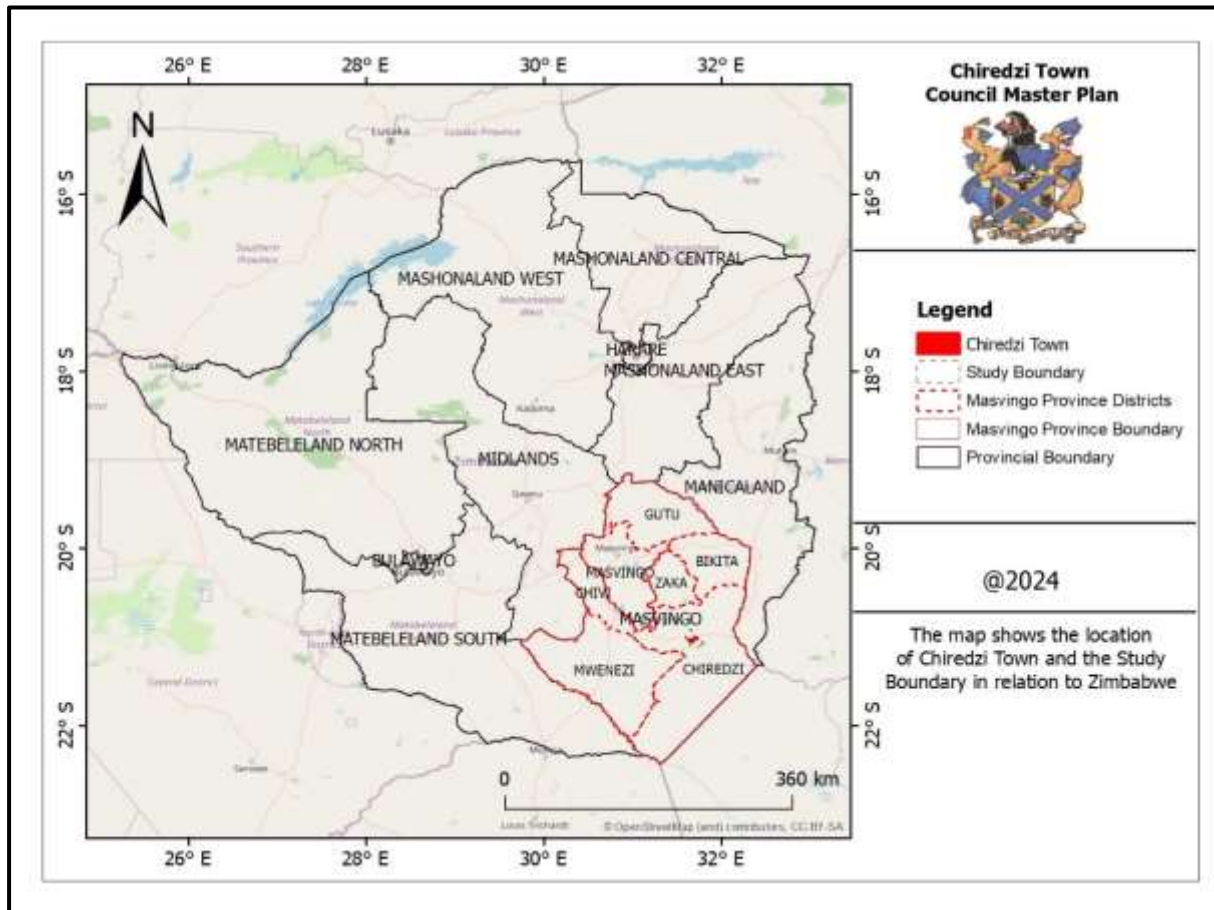


Figure 1: Location of Chiredzi in Regional Context (Survey, 2024).

1.5 Geographic Location of Chiredzi and its Brief History

Chiredzi Town situated in the heart of the Lowveld region of Masvingo province in the southeast of Zimbabwe lies the natural spectacle of Chiredzi District. Chiredzi Town Council is agro-based, and it is the second largest town in Masvingo province. Sugar production is one of the pillars of the Chiredzi town's economy, producing enough sugar for both domestic and international markets. The town is generally warm throughout the year. The Chiredzi District is in the semi-arid Natural Region V, which is the driest of Zimbabwe's Agro-Ecological Zones with highly variable rainfall patterns (Chikodzi and Mutowo, 2012; Mugandani et al., 2012) and is among the regions in Zimbabwe that are most vulnerable to climate variability and

change. Chiredzi receives mean annual rainfall of less than 450 mm. The annual average temperature is 22°C and is characterized by low and erratic rainfall (Unganai, 2008).

Chiredzi town was, established in 1957 as Crown Township for the sugar and citrus estates and granted town status in 2002 with 8 wards. The town is small and has one major industry, Cotto, Delta Chibuku Breweries, Dairy Board Zimbabwe and is surrounded by sugar cane producing estates, which include Triangle, Hippo Valley, Mkwesine and smallholder farmers.

Chiredzi Township's formation is characterized by a notable absence of formal statutory or subject plans. The town was initially established as Chiredzi Township Pvt Ltd, a subsidiary of Hippo Valley, the town's origins were deeply intertwined with corporate enterprise. Under the ownership of Hippo Valley, Chiredzi Town emerged as a product of private investment and initiative. However, the Rural Council played a significant role in shaping the town's landscape, birthing both the urban and rural components.

The town of Chiredzi is landlocked thereby faces a significant challenge with limited space for expansion. To support future growth, efforts are underway to apply for expansion, which involves negotiating to secure an additional 925 hectares of land.

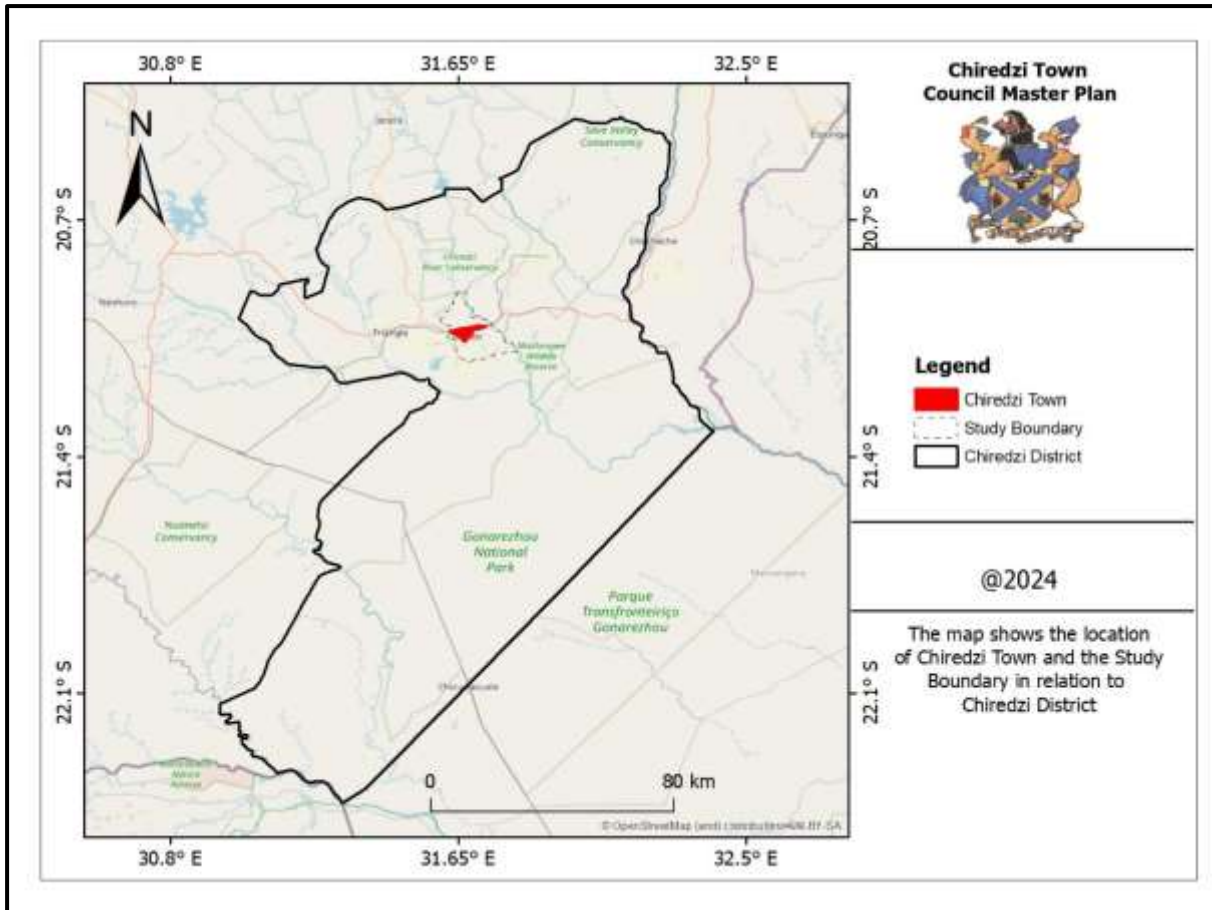


Figure 2: Location of Chiredzi District (Survey, 2024).

1.6 Planning Area Boundary

Chiredzi Town is situated in the middle of the Lowveld region of Masvingo Province in south east Zimbabwe, between latitudes 21°54 'S and 21°05 'S and longitudes 31°35 'E and 31°45 'E. It is an agricultural town and the second largest in the province of Masvingo. Its capacity to produce enough sugar for both domestic and international markets is one of the key factors driving their economy. Chiredzi Town is in zone 5 of Zimbabwe's agro-ecological regions and has mean annual rainfall of less than 450mm and usually peak temperatures throughout the year.

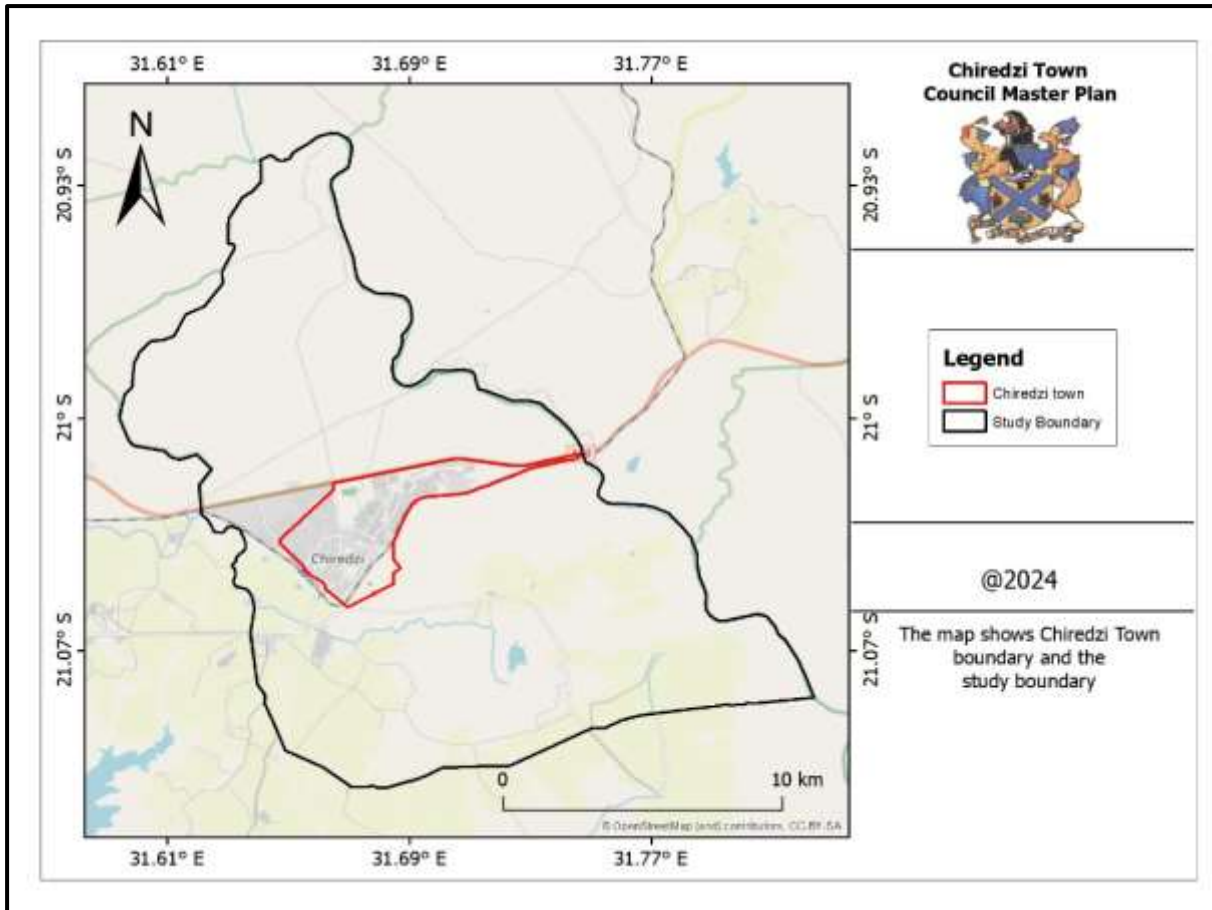


Figure 3: The Master Plan Study Area

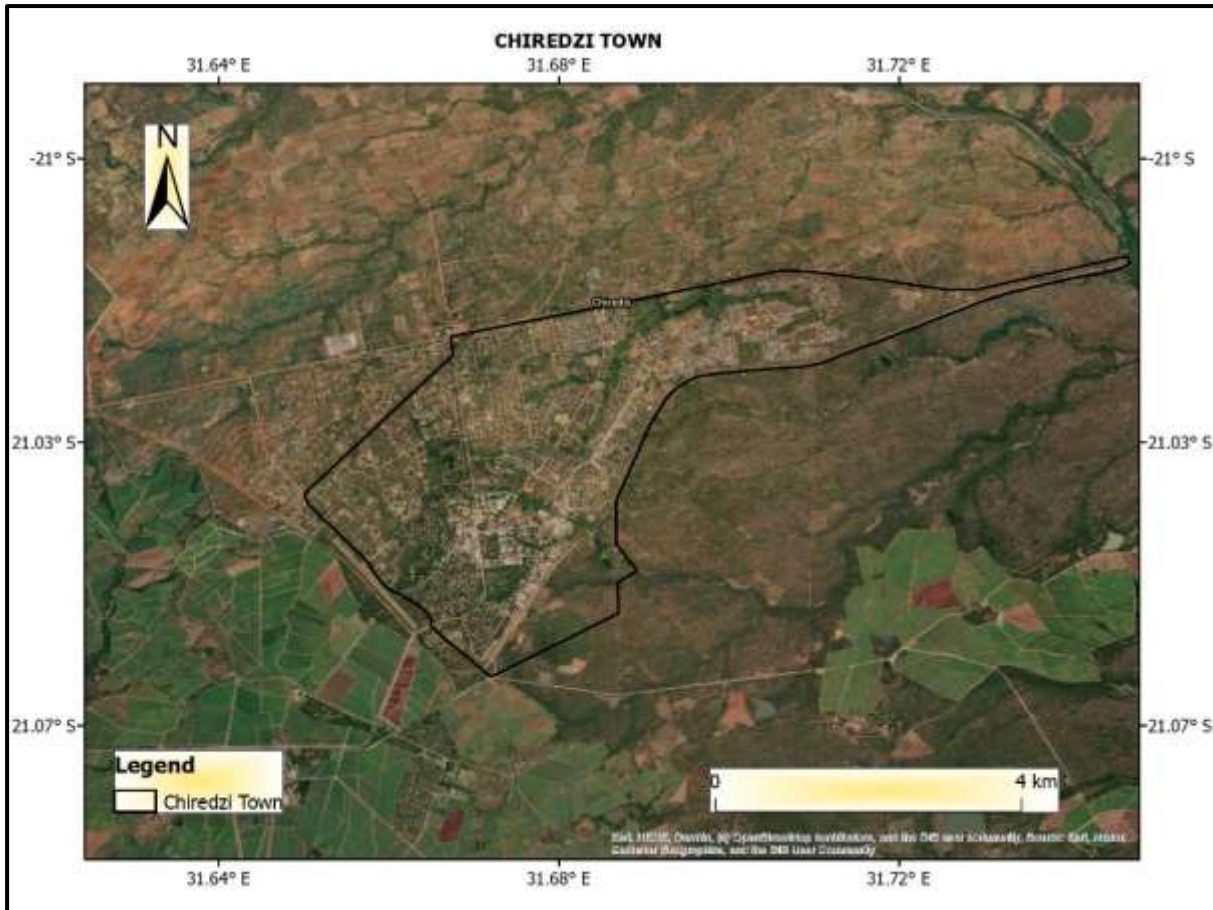


Figure 4: Chiredzi Town current boundary with google image (Survey, 2024).

1.7 Structure of the Report of Study

This report is organized into eight (8) main chapters, each addressing critical thematic issues. At times, these issues overlap, particularly concerning their impact on activities in Chiredzi Town. For instance, broader economic factors affecting Zimbabwe's economy also influence housing, employment, infrastructure provision, tourism, and education.

Chapter One serves as an introduction to Chiredzi Town, outlining the study's scope, objectives, methodologies used in master plan preparation, planning boundaries, and a brief historical overview of the area.

Chapter Two explores global, regional, and national urbanization trends and issues, offering insights that could benefit Chiredzi Town in its development efforts.

Chapter Three examines the physical characteristics of Chiredzi Town, including climate, geology, soils, vegetation, and relevant environmental concerns resulting from human interventions.

Chapter Four delves into population matters such as population growth, composition, distribution, incomes, and general employment issues within Chiredzi Town.

Chapter Five addresses land use and development issues, including ownership, development status, major uses, development nodes, and identifies potentially developable land both within and outside Chiredzi.

Chapter Six analyses housing issues in Chiredzi Town, exploring the broader fundamentals impacting housing demand and supply, trends in housing stock delivery, spatial distribution, and includes case studies on housing delivery.

Chapter Seven focuses on socio-economic conditions, covering aspects such as human population, age-sex structure, education, health, and other socio-economic activities.

Chapter Eight deals with bulk infrastructure, encompassing water, sewerage, solid waste management, energy, communication, roads, rail, and public transport. The summary of issues is presented in the First Part of the Written Statement.

CHAPTER 2: URBANISATION POLICIES AND ACTS OF PARLIAMENT

2.1 Global Urbanisation Issues and Trends

Urban development and urbanisation in Chiredzi district are not isolated phenomena. They are influenced by events and trends at the international, regional, and national levels. Understanding these developments is crucial for contextualizing the situation in Chiredzi. The insights from global and regional trends in urbanization are used to either reinforce or challenge issues and trends in Chiredzi. Urbanisation has a wide-ranging and complex impact, varying significantly by country, region, and city. It often accompanies changes in industrial structure and resident lifestyles and is closely tied to economic development. There is generally a strong correlation between urbanisation and economic growth. Given that Chiredzi encompasses both rural and urban areas, there is a need for a comprehensive approach to planning and development. Urbanisation poses challenges for both rural and urban areas. In urban areas, there are challenges in service provision, necessitating local planning authorities to focus on addressing these negative impacts.

Urbanisation and urban growth are defining global phenomena of this century. The rapid pace and scale of urbanisation, particularly in the developing world, are well-documented. The global urban population is increasing by 65 million annually. Literature suggests that the Earth is becoming increasingly urbanized. As of 2018, 55% of the world's population resides in urban areas, a figure projected to rise to 68% by 2050¹. Projections indicate that urbanisation, coupled with overall population growth, could add another 2.5 billion people to urban areas by 2050, with nearly 90% of this increase occurring in Asia and Africa². While many developed countries are already predominantly urban, Africa, Asia, and South America are experiencing the highest growth rates, averaging 2.5% per annum. For instance, the developing world is projected to surpass the 50% urbanization mark by 2050, with over half of Sub-Saharan Africa's population living in urban areas by then.

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2019). *World urbanization prospects 2018: Highlights*. UN.

² <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>

The level of urbanisation in Sub-Saharan Africa is progressing at a remarkable rate of 4.5% per annum, approximately four times higher than other continents³. Research indicates that urbanization, along with the provision of associated infrastructure, is poorly planned in this region. Around 46% of Sub-Saharan Africa's urban population resides in slums or informal settlements, lacking access to basic services and infrastructure⁴. This situation raises concerns about the potential exacerbation of epidemics due to continued urbanization. Despite these negative trends, it is evident that the urban landscape in Africa is undergoing significant transformation. Economic efficiencies inherent in cities are a key driver of this rapid urbanization. Currently, cities generate around 80% of the Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and future growth is expected to stem from urban economies, particularly in rapidly urbanizing regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia⁵.

2.2 Regional Trends: Sub-Saharan Africa

In Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa boasts the highest annual growth rate of 4%, surpassing Northern Africa, which is anticipated to have an annual urban population growth rate of 2.5%. Consequently, rapid urbanization is forecasted for Sub-Saharan Africa in the next three decades. In Africa, 60% of urban residents live in slums, and nearly 63% of urban areas in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to basic water and sanitation⁶. Less than 25% of the urban population has access to safely managed water, and only 42% have access to safely managed sanitation services⁶. The gap between the provision of water services and the expanding urban population is widening. The swift pace of urbanization underscores the urgency for Urban Local Authorities in Sub-Saharan Africa to reassess the current urbanization paradigm. It is crucial to devise land management and development strategies that promote sustainable growth and efficient service delivery.

2.3 An Overview of Urbanization Trends in Zimbabwe

The population in Zimbabwean cities is experiencing rapid growth. Consequently, local planning authorities are confronted with the formidable challenge of ensuring adequate urban

³ Hommann, K., & Lall, S. V. (2019). *Which Way to Livable and Productive Cities? A Road Map for Sub-Saharan Africa*. World Bank Publications

⁴ United Nations. Economic Commission for Africa. (2008). *The state of African cities 2008: a framework for addressing urban challenges in Africa*. UN-HABITAT.

⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview>

⁶ <https://www.wri.org/insights/cities-grow-across-africa-they-must-plan-water-security>

services while harmonizing and coordinating socio-economic development within the built environment. The urgency to provide urban services and implement responsive planning measures is particularly evident during the preparation and revision of master and local plans. The primary challenge of urbanization lies not only in managing urban growth but also in promoting responsive land use zoning and mobilizing human, financial, and technical resources to meet the evolving needs of urban expansion across time and space. In Chiredzi, this challenge is equally pressing.

In Zimbabwe, there is a prevailing belief that cities must prepare for future expansion by accurately projecting their built-up areas and allocating land for residential development, open spaces, and rights-of-way for arterial road networks and other necessary infrastructure to accommodate urban growth. Therefore, there is a need to consider adopting hybrid policies that incorporate elements of containment and urban expansion.

According to the 2022 census report, most of the country's population resides in rural areas, comprising 61.4%⁷. This demographic distribution underscores the importance of strategic planning for urbanization, including in regions like Chiredzi, where urban growth may pose unique challenges and opportunities.

2.4 National Policies and Legal Framework Affecting Planning Area

2.4.1 Key Acts of Parliament guiding Master Plan Preparation in Zimbabwe

In addition to the policies that have been examined, the Master Plan also considered the legal instruments and legislation that are outlined in Table 2.

Table 1: Key Acts of Parliament

Act of Law	Relevance
Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013)	Provides for the establishment of the local authorities and confers them authority to manage their areas of jurisdiction. It covers administration, finance, heritage, devolution, governance, etc.
Regional Town and Country Planning Act [Chapter 29:12 Revised	Provides a legal guideline for the preparation of a Master Plan and undertaking of development control activities in the planning area.

⁷ https://www.zimstat.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/Demography/Census/2022_PHC_Report_27012023_Final.pdf

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Edition, 1996 as read with the relevant RGN Regulation 248 (Master and Local Plans) 1977.	
Rural District Councils Act [Chapter 29:14]	Provides for the planning, development, regulatory and administrative functions of rural district councils in their areas of jurisdiction. The planning area is currently governed by this Act.
Public Health Act [CHAPTER 15:17]	Provides for local authorities to maintain environmental cleanliness and prevent nuisances in urban and rural areas.
Environmental Management Act [Chapter 20:27]	Provides for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and protection of the environment. It also provides for the preparation of plans for the management and protection of the environment. It also prescribes projects that should undergo an EIA process prior to their implementation.
Water Act [Chapter 20:24]	Covers declaration of rivers systems and catchment councils and preparation of outline plans. It also governs the sustainable utilisation of water resources.
Mines and Minerals Act [Chapter 21:05]	Established to control the siting and development of mine sites including registering mine claims.
Urban Councils Act [Chapter 29:15]	Provides for the establishment of urban settlements that is towns and cities. Provides for the planning, development, regulatory and administrative functions of urban councils in their areas of jurisdiction.
Roads Act [Chapter 13:18]	Provides for the planning, development, construction, rehabilitation, and management of the roads network of Zimbabwe; the regulation of the standards applicable in the planning, design, construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of roads and for the road authorities and their functions.
Land Acquisition Act [Chapter 20:10]	Empower the President and other authorities to acquire land and other immovable property compulsorily; to make special provision for the compensation payable

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	for agricultural land required for resettlement purposes; to provide for the establishment of the Derelict Land Board; to provide for the declaration and acquisition of derelict land; and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing.
ZINWA Act [Chapter 20:25]	Establishes the Zimbabwe National Water Authority and to provide for its functions; to provide for the appointment and functions of aboard of the Authority; to provide for the raising of charges for the provision of water and other services by the Authority; to provide for the imposition and collection of a water levy; to repeal the Regional Water Authority Act (Chapter 20:16) and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing.
Land Survey Act [Chapter 20:12]	Consolidates and amend the laws relating to the survey of land.
Civil Aviation Act (Chapter 13:16)	Provides for the promotion and regulation of civil aviation safety and security and the development of air transport and establishment and maintenance of air navigation facilities.

2.4.2 National Policies guiding Master Plan Preparation

Table 2: National Policies

Policy	Relevance
Vision 2030	The assessment of the planning area was informed by the aspirations of the Government of Zimbabwe’s Vision 2030 that seek to transform the country to an upper middle-income status through rapid economic growth and development. The study therefore should consider how the Master Plan as a higher order spatial plan could unlock economic development opportunities and promote investment in the country thereby contributing to the realisation of the Vision’s socio-economic aspirations. The Chiredzi town, should be a smart, sustainable, liveable, safe, resilient and a vibrant settlement that supports high production and productivity levels and improve health and social life for its

CHIREZDI TOWN MASTER PLAN REPORT OF STUDY

	inhabitants in line with this supreme policy’s socio-economic goals.
National Tourism Master Plan	The national tourism development policies, as spelt out in the National Tourism Master Plan, have to be taken into account since tourism is one of the key sectors in Zimbabwe for generating foreign currency, creating employment and wealth, and alleviating poverty. The Master Plan complements the tourism policies in unlocking tourism opportunities in Chiredzi through connecting the many tourist attractions in its hinterland and designing of marketing models. This policy is important in guiding the development of tourism ventures that foster sustenance of the city. Chiredzi must through its nature be planned such that it is a tourist attraction on its own, based on its novelty and innovativeness.
Devolution and Decentralisation Policy (2020)	This relates to issues pertaining to promotion of industrialisation, tourism and the sustainable management and extraction of natural resources. The study should also seek to examine a suitable organisational structure for managing this new settlement in line with principles of this Policy.
Zimbabwe National Industrial Development Policy (2019-2023)	The continued existence of any town or growth centre is partly dependent on vibrant economic sector buttressed by industry. Chiredzi town and its nodal or growth centres needs to be anchored on a sound industrial base. To support the establishment of industries, the study of the planning area also must consider aspects of the Zimbabwe National Industrial Development Policy (2019-2023) that seeks to facilitate the sustainable growth of industry, development of new industries and the transformation and diversification of the Zimbabwean industry. Of particular importance, the study of the planning area should consider principles of this Policy with respect to value addition and beneficiation and promotion of sustainable industrial development (green industry).

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<p>National Climate Policy (2017)</p>	<p>Urban environment in Zimbabwe, as in many other countries in Africa, is increasingly being threatened by the impacts of climate change and increased climate variability. The planning area is not immune to these catastrophes afflicting urban settlements and therefore the proposed developments in Chiredzi should be climate-proof. To achieve this climate proofing, the study of the planning area should be guided by the National Climate Policy particularly its aim of building a climate resilient and low carbon Zimbabwe. More specifically the plan should consider the Policy’s thrust to reduce vulnerability of human settlements to the changing climate and climate-related disasters through enhancing climate change adaptive capacity and scaling up of mitigation actions.</p>
<p>Zimbabwe National Water Policy (2013)</p>	<p>Water is one of the key resources for the sustainable development of cities. The development and management of water sector is important to ensure the availability of good quality and affordable water in adequate quantity for all at all times. The availability of and accessibility to quality water will be guided by the National Water Policy, particularly its specific facets that relate to the sustainable provision of water in both rural and urban settlements. The sources of adequate and sustainable water supply and the water systems for the planning area need to be identified and considered.</p>
<p>National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025)</p>	<p>The Strategy aims at strengthening macroeconomic stability, characterised by low and stable inflation, as well as exchange rate stability; achieving and sustaining inclusive and equitable Real GDP growth; promoting new enterprise development, employment and job creation; strengthening Social Infrastructure and Social Safety nets; ensuring sustainable environmental protection and resilience; promoting Good Governance and Corporate Social investment; and modernising the economy through use of ICT and digital technology.</p>

Zimbabwe	National	Human Settlement Policy	The policy aims at governing all settlements where people live, work and play. The policy highlights issues on land access and tenure where title is only issued for fully serviced or developed stands and on agro-plots. Off-site infrastructure provision is the responsibility of Government and/or local authorities. All productive agricultural land shall be preserved as such. At least 40% of land for human settlements development shall be reserved for development of high-rise apartments.
	National	Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan	The aim is to utilise traditional knowledge, research, technology, innovations and best practices to protect the environment, conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems to benefit present and future generations.

2.5 Regional and international policies and conventions

There are key regional and international policies and conventions that were considered in guiding the preparation of the Chiredzi Master Plan. These included the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 11, which promotes inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements. The African Union Agenda 2063, a blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future, promotes inclusive and sustainable development and democratic governance. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with the goal of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous climate change to enable sustainable economic development. Given that Zimbabwe is vulnerable to climate change, the proposed Chiredzi master plan should be designed in such a way that it will be resilient to the impacts of the changing climate.

CHAPTER 3: PHYSICAL FEATURES AND LAND COVERAGE

3.1 Elevation

The Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of 30 m resolution was used to construct the elevation maps of the project area after the Fill Sink operation in Integrated Land and Water Information Systems (ILWIS) was used to remove artificial depressions (sinks)⁸. Generally, low lying areas are prone to flooding which means planning should mainly focus on constructing flood resilient infrastructure. Roads with a perfect drainage system as well as elevated buildings and flood resistant materials can help minimize destruction of property during flood events to ensure public safety. The nature of Chiredzi elevation also helps urban planners to prioritize the preservation and restoration of wetlands in low lying areas to improve water quality and reduce flood risk which can be enhanced by incorporating green spaces and parks into urban designs to help protect these natural areas. Also, the nature of Chiredzi town elevation helps the planning in a way that it should be done paying attention to climate change and should be ready to adapt. Climate changes such as sea level rising and extreme weather events means planners should integrate climate change adaptation strategies into urban planning in low elevation areas. This may involve elevating buildings above flood levels and enhancing and enhancing public awareness and emergency preparedness to reduce vulnerability to climate related risks.

⁸ Maathuis, B. H. P., & Wang, L. (2006). Digital elevation model based hydro-processing. *Geocarto International*, 21(1), 21-26.

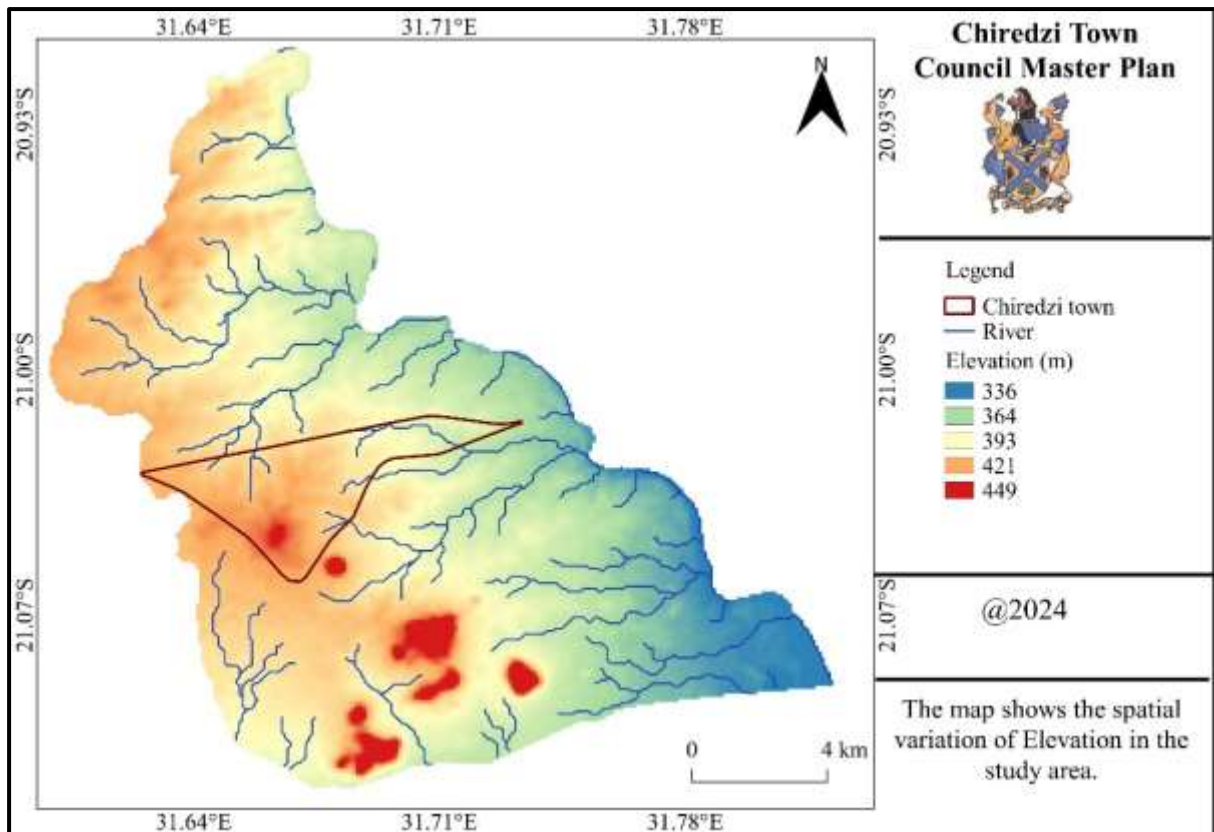


Figure 5: Spatial variation of elevation in the study area (Survey, 2024).

3.2 Slope

The slope of an area plays a significant role in urban planning and development for example, land use and development suitability. Steep slopes are typically not suitable for residential, commercial, or industrial development as compared to low lying areas due to stability issues, potential erosion, more construction costs and vice-versa. Steepness of the slope also helps in drainage and storm water management as steep slopes lead to rapid runoff, erosion and flooding especially in urban areas with impervious surfaces therefore designers need to slope and mitigation strategies to minimise water related disasters. Slope is also a significant consideration when designing transport infrastructure such as roads, highways, and railways. Steep slopes usually require additional engineering solutions retaining walls to accommodate safe and efficient transport routes which is costly and requires more materials. In addition, slope of the area should be considered when planning green infrastructure and open spaces. Steep slopes may limit the availability of gentle land for parks and open spaces within urban areas but may also provide opportunities for terraced gardens, pedestrian paths and natural landscapes that enhance the aesthetic value of the urban area

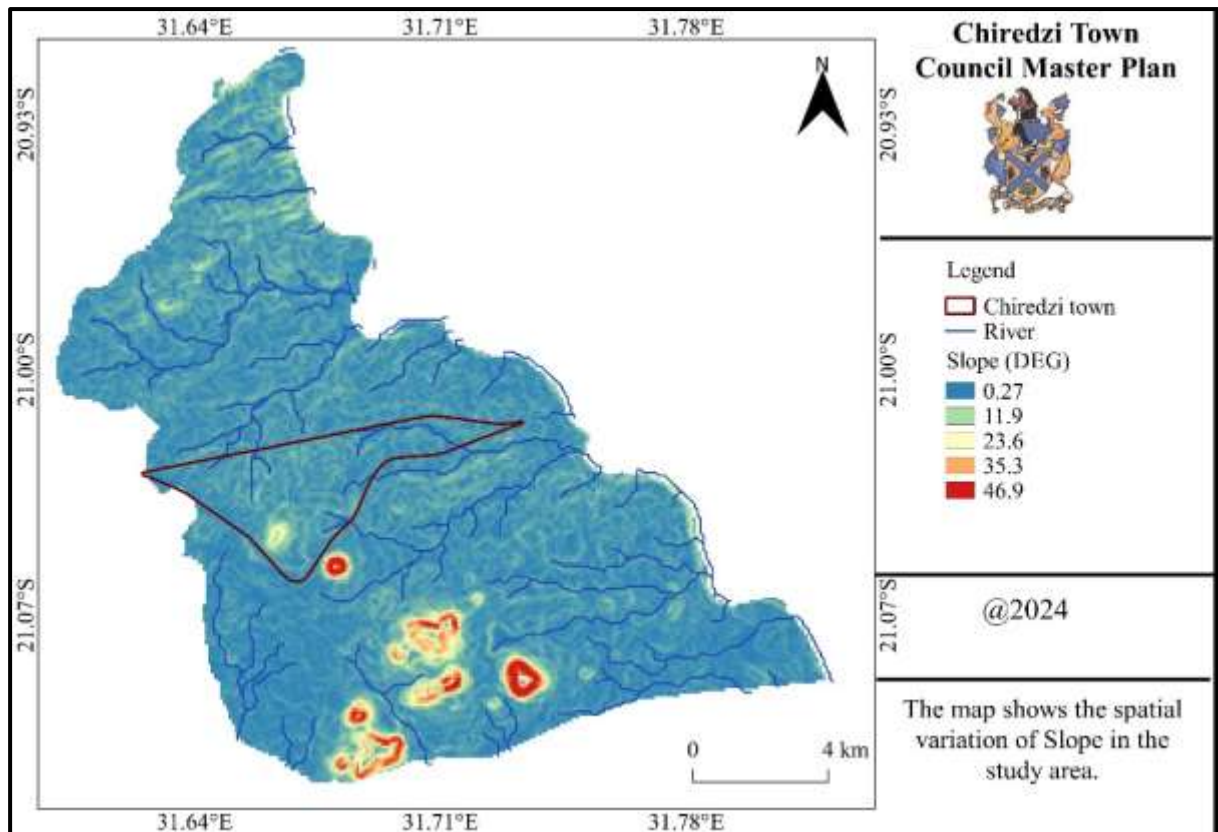


Figure 6: Spatial variation of slope in the study area (Survey, 2024).

3.3 Vegetation

The vegetation of the Chiredzi area typically consists of dryland savanna, falling within Natural Region V. Flat and low-lying areas are predominantly characterized by acacia species, with frequent appearances of *Colophospermum* (Mopane) species, as well as *Terminalia* and *Combretum* species. Notably, the area features the iconic *Adansonia digitata* (baobab) trees. On higher ground, more mature Miombo woodland can be found, with *Brachystagia* (Musasa) species being predominant. Other species present include *Eragrostis* (*Muswewehongi*), *Pterocarpus angiogenesis*, *Strychnos spinosa*, and *Bauhinia galpinii* (Fomwe/Mubondo). Fruit-bearing species such as *Vangueria infausta* (Munzviro), *Vangueriopsis lanciflora*, and *Flacourtia indica* (Munhunguru) contribute to the biodiversity.

The landscape is also dotted with grass species, including *Hyperthelia dissolute*, *Hyparrhenia filipendula*, *Pogonarthria squarrosa*, and *Craspedorachis rhodesiana*, especially in areas with elevated water tables. The presence of sugar cane plantations adds an annual green hue to the region.

Among the dominant woody species in Chiredzi, mopane trees stand out, occupying approximately sixty percent of the area. Other notable trees include baobabs and musawu. Baobab trees are particularly utilized for making beer, while acacia trees, though present in smaller percentages, also contribute to the local ecosystem. Mopani trees, in particular, are essential for charcoal production and household construction, as depicted in Figure 4.1, illustrating their dominance in the Chiredzi area.

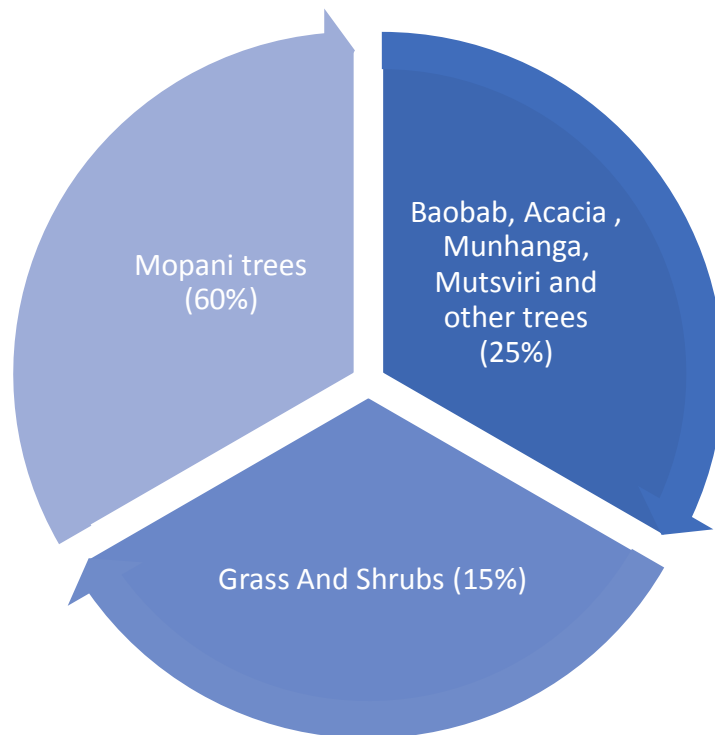


Figure 7: Distribution of the main vegetation types.



Plate 1: Mopane woodland.



Plate 2: Baobab trees (Survey, 2024).

It is indicated that sixty percent of the Mopani trees are located near the Croco motor area, Chiredzi River and Rushangarumwe River. From the study it was observed that Mopani trees

are located from about two to three per square kilometre. Within the community acacia trees are found near the Chiredzi heroes' acre area mostly and the ZESA line area. Only a small percentage of about two to three percent of the baobab trees are found near the residents living places. Trees of special uses found within the area also include the amarula trees used to make amarula beer.

3.4 Hydrology

The area falls under the Runde Catchment zone and forms the southeastern corner of the Mutirikwi sub-catchment area. Four major rivers, the Save, Runde, Chiredzi and Mwenezi flow through the region from the wetter northern and western Catchment areas. Chiredzi River is the main river and drains into the Runde which joins the Save. Rushangarumwe River as the only seasonal river which residents use during the rainy season. The Chiredzi River marks the western boundary of the project area.

There are a few other natural water courses within the area which are seasonal but have no names. These have been seriously affected by soil erosion and deforestation within the area. The only river near the Buffalo Range is the Chiredzi River in which resettlement farm residents depend on for their livelihoods in terms of water supply for cooking, bathing and other water related issues. This indicates that the water in the river systems is still clean for domestic use. However, there is already some pollution in these rivers from fertilizers used by the resettled farmers. It is hoped that the project will not result in massive pollution of the rivers and water ways. From the study, the Chiredzi River is of great use when development is partaken.

The water tables in the area are very low. They are estimated to be in the range of about 25-50 meters. Most hand dug wells have failed to yield any meaningful water resources due to the depth of the water table. However, the quality of groundwater in the basalts of Chiredzi is good, with Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) concentrations normally below 1000 mg/l. There is no identified fluoride hazard, although it may pose a mild encrustation hazard in places.

3.5 Wildlife

The variety and density of animal species in the Chiredzi area is generally very low as this area has been taken over by resettled farmers for a very long time. The larger mammals are

particularly rare as they have been persistently hunted or simply lost their habitats to human activity. The number of smaller wild animals in the area is generally low and includes hares, wild pigs, squirrels, bush bucks, snakes, and snails.

Chiredzi Town has a wide variety of birds which include eagles, kites, doves, robins, guinea fowls, weavers, crows, grey herons, *matendera*, stocks, swallows, and owls. The following birds were also seen within the project area; doves, crows, eagles, robins, weavers, and many other small bird species was also noticed that the wildlife population is both very large and the variety is large. The kwela birds are notorious for destroying wheat crop. The farmers must spray their crop to keep them off their irrigated crops.

Domestic Animals

Domesticated animals comprise of donkeys, cattle, goats, sheep, dogs, and cats. These animals determine the position (wealth), of a black man in a village. Livestock production is very prominent as supported by dotted abattoirs including Keola Meats.

3.6 Geology and soils

The geology composition of an area plays a crucial role in urban planning as it influences land use, infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, and disaster risk management. Chiredzi is dominated by parageneses and sedimentary rocks which is indicative of a complex geological history involving both metamorphic and sedimentary processes. Parageneses are metamorphic rocks that have undergone intense heat and pressure, resulting in the re-crystallization and alteration of their mineral composition, and thus resulting from high temperatures. Sedimentary rocks, on the other hand, are formed from the accumulation and lithification of sediment particles, such as sand, mud, and organic material. Chiredzi's low lying nature means sediment particles get eroded and are deposited in basins (low lying areas).

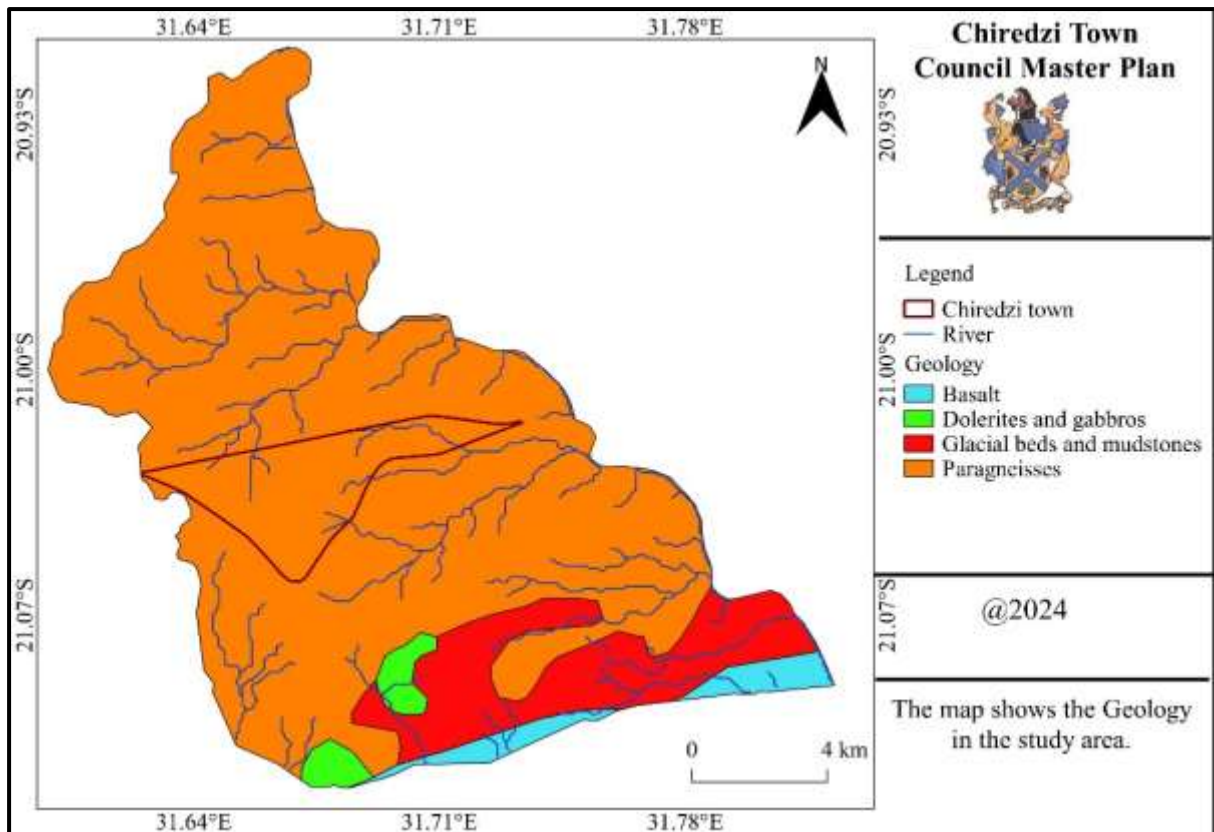


Figure 8: The geological classifications in the study area (Survey, 2024).

3.6.1 Soil composition

Soil composition of an area is in many ways a significant consideration in urban planning. Soil composition determines the stability of the ground on which buildings and infrastructure are constructed. Chromic luvisols in Chiredzi provide good load bearing capacity and stability for building foundations. They are also characterised by good structural properties that contribute to slope stability and erosion resistance making them suitable for infrastructure development. In addition, chromic luvisols have moderate to high water holding capacity which can affect drainage conditions therefore there is need to consider the soil's permeability and infiltration rates when designing storm water management. Last but not least, chromic luvisols also pose environmental considerations as they may be susceptible to erosion, compaction or degradation if improperly managed during infrastructure development activities thus the need for soil conservation practices to protect these soils and minimise their environmental impact.

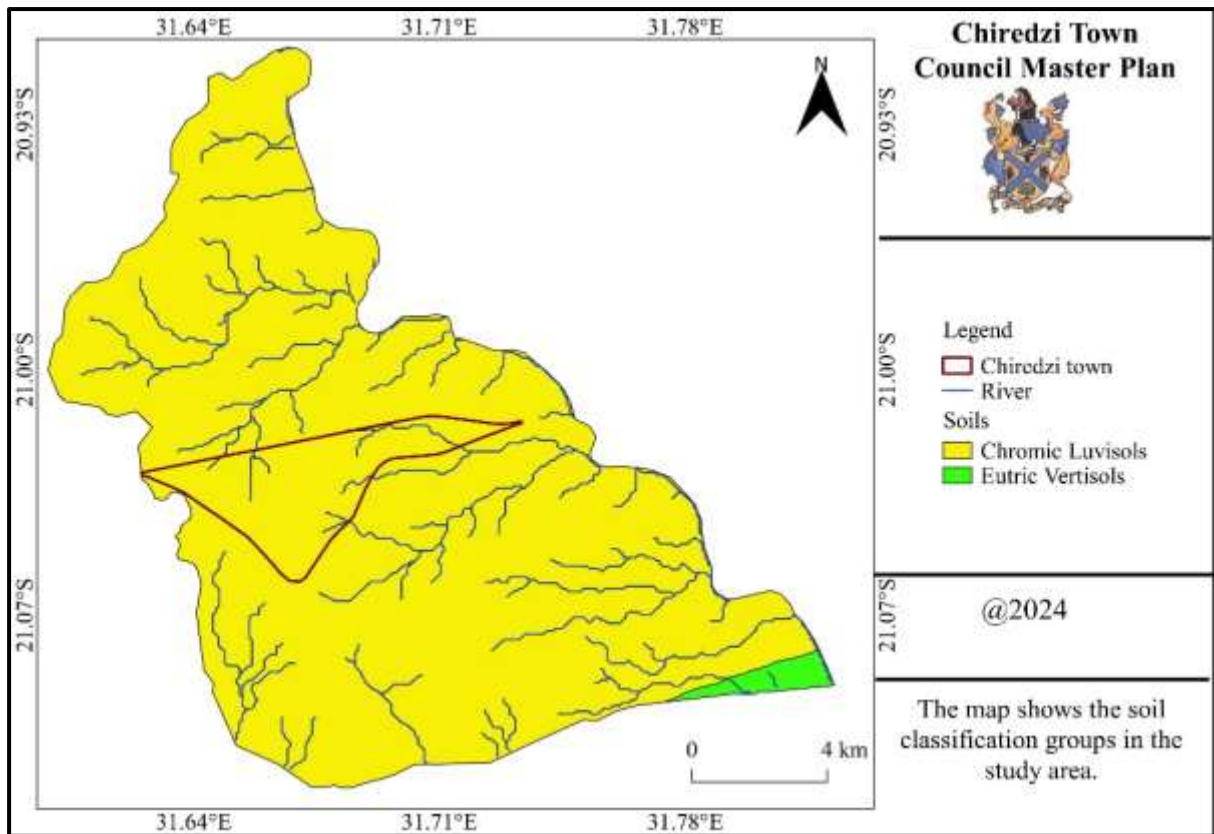


Figure 9: Soil formations of the study area (Survey, 2024).

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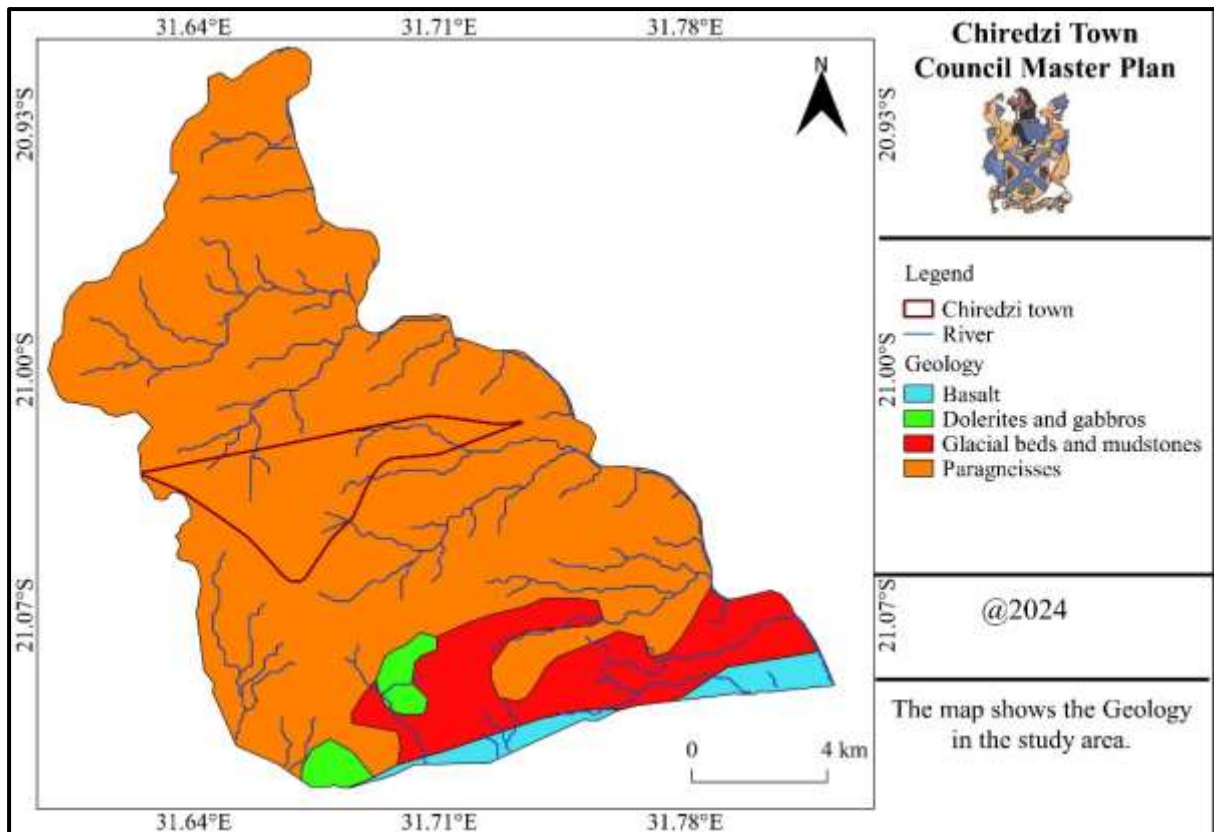


Figure 10: The geological classifications in the study area (Survey, 2024).

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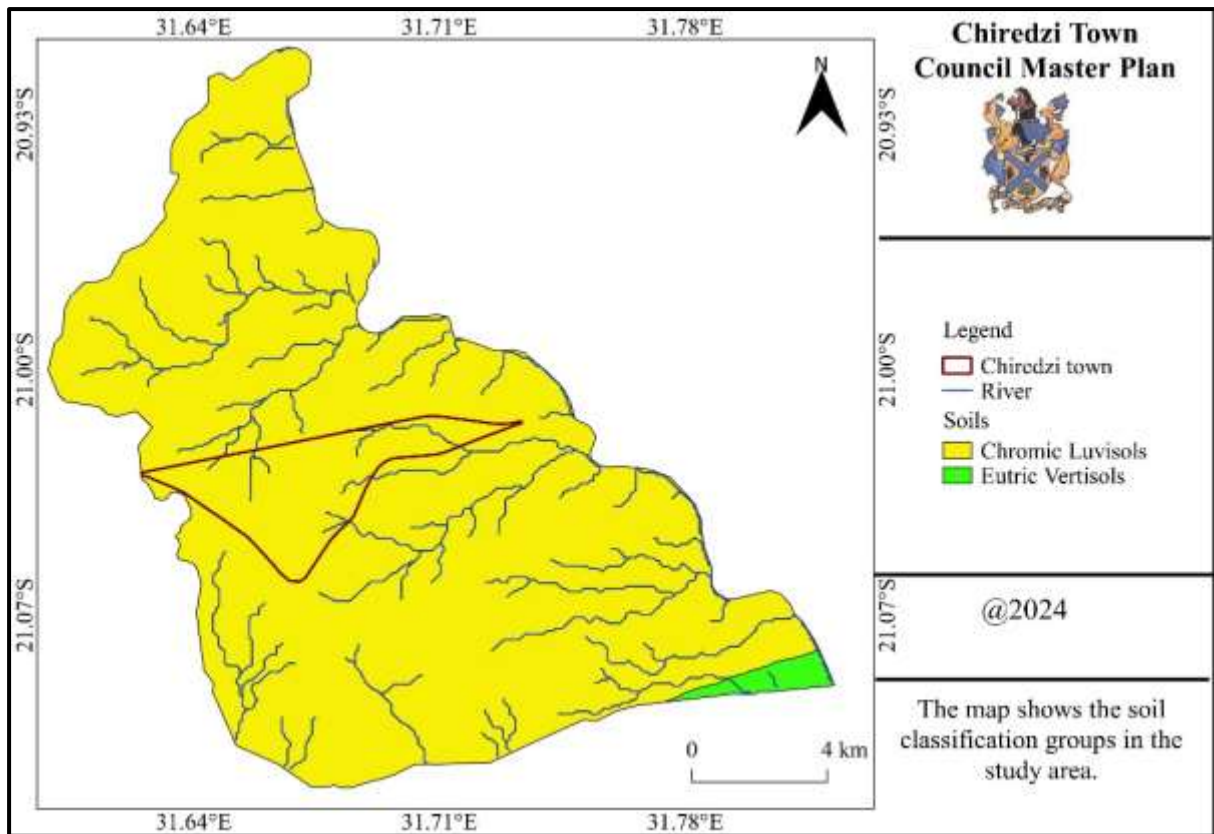


Figure 11: Soil formations of the study area (Survey, 2024).

3.7 Land use/Land cover.

Land use and land cover are fundamental components of urban planning as they shape, function and character of urban areas. Land use refers to the activities or functions that occur on a piece of land for example residential, commercial, industrial, recreation or agricultural uses. Land cover, on the other hand refers to the physical characteristics of the land surface such as buildings, roads, open spaces, vegetation, and water bodies. Understanding and managing land use and land cover are essential for sustainable urban development and effective urban planning as they help managing land use patterns, promoting mixed land use development, integrating green infrastructure, and addressing land use change and urban sprawl issues. It also aids urban planners to create more resilient, equitable and vibrant urban environments that meet diverse needs of residents, businesses, and ecosystems thus a strategic approach to land use and land cover planning should be done to shape the future of urban areas and fostering sustainable and inclusive communities. Chiredzi mainly dominated by shrubs and tree cover which can be removed therefore that means most of its areas are feasible for planning of residential, commercial, industrial transportation and recreational infrastructure development.

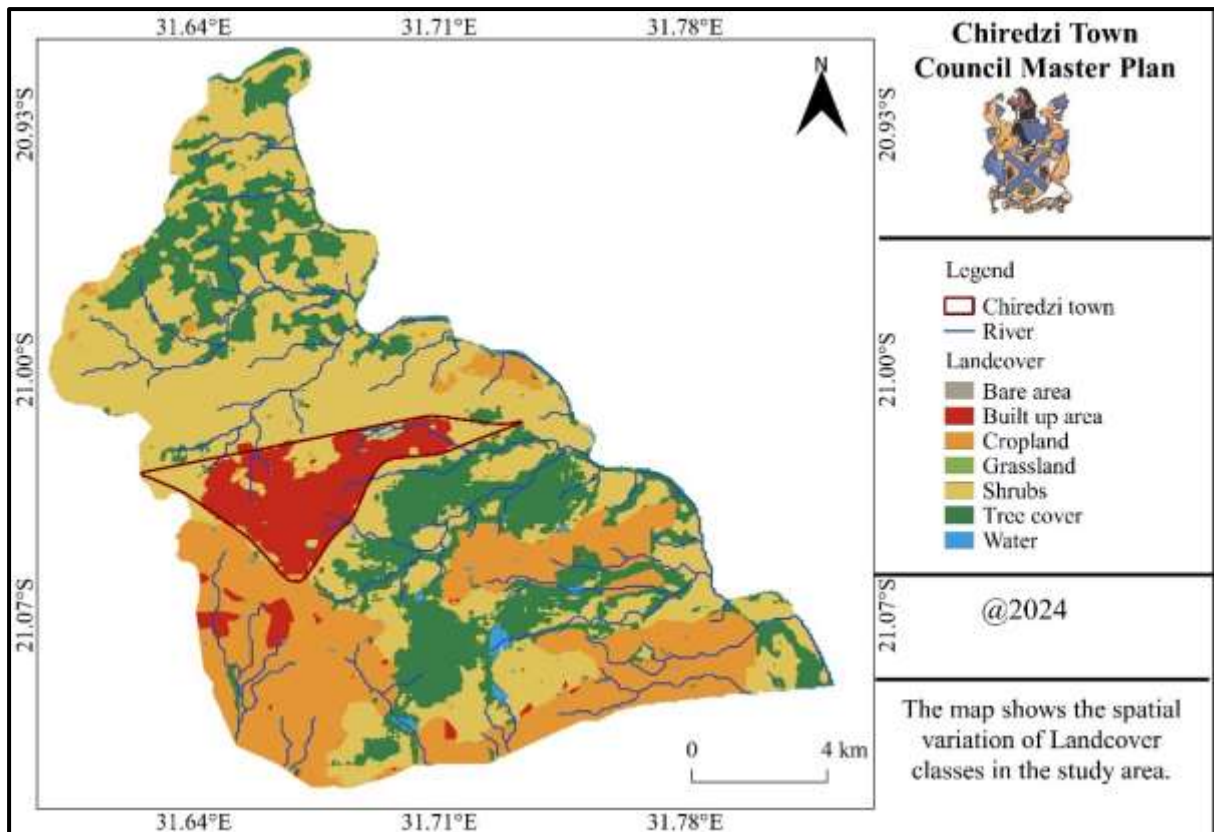


Figure 12: Land use/Land cover classes of the study area (Survey, 2024).

3.8 Climate

The project area lies within Agro-ecological region V. Rainfall here is very low and erratic and even affects the production of drought-resistant fodder crops. Zone V offers the possibility of introducing some agroforestry systems integrated with livestock production especially as these are areas of extremely high temperatures for most of the year. High temperatures are known to have adverse effects on animal metabolism and therefore, on the productivity of the animals. Although rainfall is low, it would be necessary to ensure an adequate supply of water for the trees only in the first year or two because most of the area covered by Zone V has extensive reserves of ground water. Trees would be able to exploit this ground water better than most crops. In time, the change in vegetation could result in desirable micro-climatic effects.

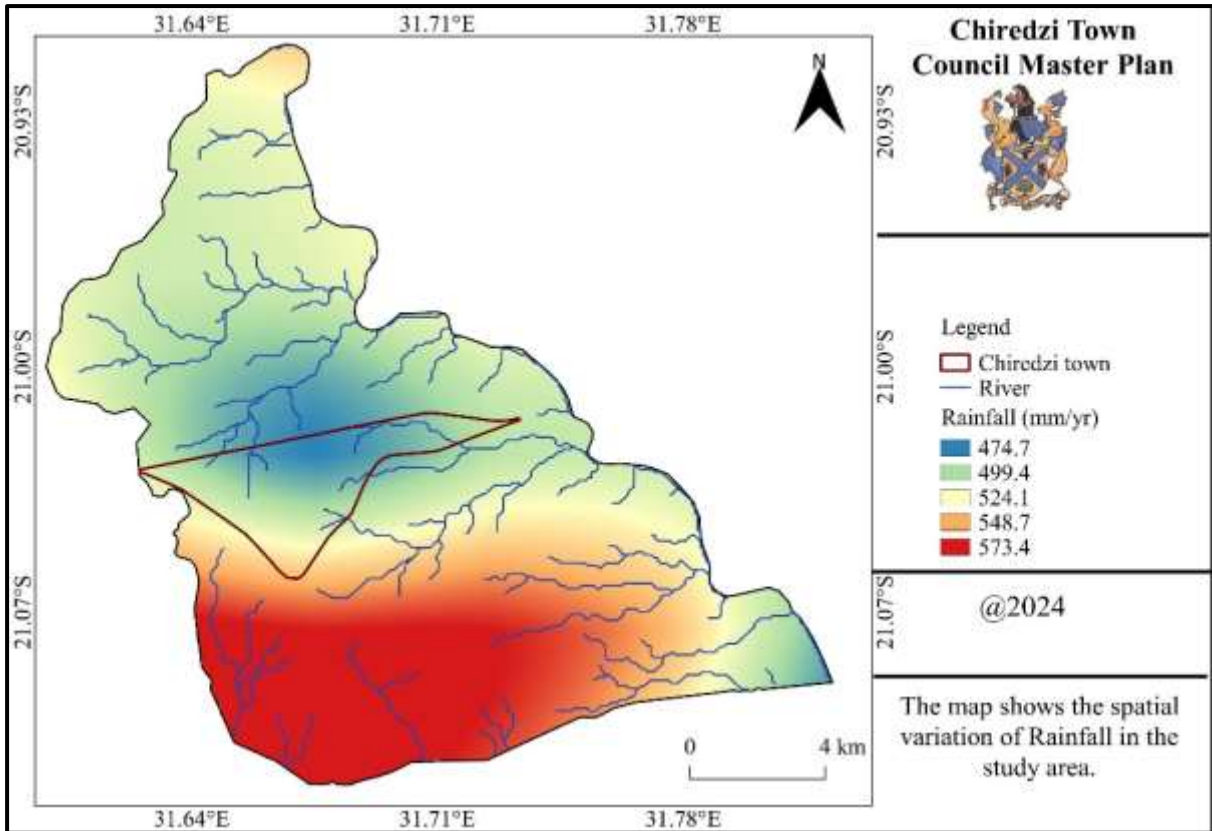


Figure 13: Rainfall Variation (Survey, 2024).

The possibility also exists to introduce commercial tree crops in the area. For example, some of the local people have successfully grown cashew nuts for their own consumption. However, the possibility of larger scale, organised production on scientific lines has not been investigated seriously.

Ecological systems are functional units that result from the interaction of abiotic, biotic, and cultural (anthropogenic) components. Ecozones on the other hand are these systems described in a geographical or spatial context. Ecozones are natural units respecting no political boundaries. The town has an ecozone, is described as a dry savanna system, a fragile ecosystem characterized by low rainfall, semi-fertile soils, and sparse vegetation.

3.9 Environmental Issues

From the study, the area around Chiredzi Town is not greenfield. The environment has already been affected by human activities like cultivation. Sand extraction is the livelihood of about 65% of the men in the resettlement areas. They supply sand to Chiredzi town. However, this

activity has not been very sustainable as it has resulted in serious problems of land degradation and potential siltation of the Chiredzi and Rushangarumwe rivers.

Deforestation is also the major problem faced within the town as is shown in Figure 4.6. Most trees are found being cut down early morning because the residents living within the area said that they use firewood for cooking day and night. From the study survey, deforestation has the highest percent with 4.3% of the total being cut down trees every month and 3.5 percent is the second highest number represented by the bar graph below due to residents taking river sand near the Chiredzi River. One resident responded that “... the river sand is taken by the residents, boys namely “*dhamba* boys” usually using tractors from the Chiredzi River to make a living supplying the household in Chiredzi low density for construction purposes...”.

The major environmental problems

Table 3: Environmental problems

Environmental Problem	Description
Deforestation	The clearing or thinning of forests by humans, leading to habitat loss, climate change, and biodiversity reduction.
Sand poaching	Illegal extraction of sand from rivers, causing erosion, habitat destruction, and water pollution.
Inadequate sewage systems	Poor or insufficient sewage infrastructure, leading to water contamination and public health hazards.
Poor solid waste management	Ineffective handling and disposal of solid waste, causing pollution, disease spread, and environmental degradation.
Agricultural practices	Farming methods that lead to soil degradation, water pollution, and loss of biodiversity.
Air Pollution resulting from sugarcane burning	Emission of pollutants from burning sugarcane fields, contributing to air quality degradation and respiratory issues.
Growth of Lantana Camara along Chiredzi river	Invasive species spreading along the river, outcompeting native plants and disrupting local ecosystems.

Chiredzi, a town known for sugarcane farming, is facing serious environmental problems. Wetlands, essential for wildlife and water regulation, are being destroyed. Trees are being cut down for firewood, leading to deforestation, which harms the air we breathe and the beauty of the land. There's also a big problem with sand poaching, where people take sand illegally, causing damage to the land.

The town's sewage systems are not working well, leading to waste being dumped in the wrong places. Farms around Chiredzi burn sugarcane, which releases harmful gases into the air, contributing to climate change. These environmental issues are a big concern for the community, as they affect everyone's health and the well-being of the town.

In Chiredzi, as in many rapidly developing areas, housing infrastructural development poses a significant environmental challenge in the form of land degradation. The process of constructing housing infrastructure often results in the alteration and scarring of the natural landscape, leading to a loss of aesthetic value in the affected areas. This degradation is exacerbated by the removal of vegetation cover and subsequent site clearance activities, which disrupt the delicate balance of the ecosystem. The alteration of the landscape can also impact existing drainage patterns, potentially leading to issues such as increased surface runoff and soil erosion. One of the primary concerns associated with land degradation in Chiredzi is the loss of topsoil due to soil erosion, particularly in areas where vegetation has been removed or disturbed. This loss of fertile topsoil not only diminishes the productivity of the land but also contributes to sedimentation in nearby water bodies, further exacerbating environmental degradation. Additionally, excessive runoff, especially during heavy rains, poses a risk of gully development, which can further degrade the landscape and compromise its stability.

Urban agriculture along streams in Chiredzi serves as a critical source of sustenance for many residents, relying on subsistence farming practices. However, this form of agriculture also brings about significant environmental challenges and requires innovative survival strategies. One prominent issue is the risk of soil erosion due to the proximity of farming activities to waterways, leading to the loss of fertile soil and degradation of land. Moreover, the use of chemical fertilizers, though limited, can contribute to water pollution, harming both aquatic ecosystems and human health. To address these challenges, there is need to prioritise organic farming methods, minimising the use of synthetic chemicals and instead relying on composting

and natural fertilizers to maintain soil fertility. Additionally, implementing soil conservation techniques such as contour ploughing and cover cropping helps mitigate erosion risks along stream banks. Furthermore, community-led initiatives focusing on environmental education and sustainable land management practices foster a collective understanding of the importance of preserving both agricultural productivity and the health of local ecosystems.

Lantana camara growing along the Chiredzi River presents a significant environmental concern due to its invasive nature. Despite its charming appearance, this non-native plant poses a serious threat to the local ecosystem. Its rapid spread along the riverbanks can outcompete native vegetation, leading to a loss of biodiversity. As it takes over the area, it disrupts the natural balance of the ecosystem, affecting the habitat for native plants and animals. Additionally, Lantana camara's dense growth can alter soil moisture levels and contribute to soil erosion, further impacting the health of the riparian environment.

The pollution resulting from sugar burning and the spraying of pesticides in Chiredzi's sugar cane cultivation is a pressing environmental issue. Sugar burning, often employed to aid in the harvesting process, emits significant amounts of smoke, particulate matter, and harmful gases into the air. This pollution not only poses health risks to nearby communities but also contributes to broader atmospheric pollution, impacting air quality and potentially exacerbating respiratory problems. Moreover, the use of pesticides and other agrochemicals in sugar cane fields can lead to soil and water contamination, affecting local ecosystems and wildlife. Implementing sustainable agricultural practices and exploring alternative harvesting and pest control methods are essential steps to address these pollution concerns and safeguard the environment and public health in Chiredzi.

CHAPTER 4: POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT

4.1 Past Growth Trends

Population growth is a critical consideration in urban planning as it shapes the spatial, socio-economic, and environmental dynamics of urban areas. Planning plays a key role in managing population growth, creating liveable urban environments, and fostering inclusive and resilient communities through strategic planning, designing and policy interventions. By anticipating the challenges and opportunities of population increase, urban planners can guide sustainable development of urban areas and improve quality of life for present and future generations through planning for more residential areas, more infrastructure. Such infrastructure includes roads and industries, more public transportation systems like railways, more social services and amenities for example recreational facilities, healthcare facilities, more cultural services to meet diverse needs and finally, policies that address environmental impacts such as pressure on natural resources, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation.

The graphs figure 14 show population data for Chiredzi Town and the changes in population at every 10-year interval since year 2002. Figure 14 in 2002 the population data was 25849 and in 2012 it was 30448. The data shows an increase in population this could be a result of rural to urban migration and increased birth rate. Figure 15 in 2022 the population was 40457 so from 2012 to 2022 there was an increase of 10009. So, the general trend of population for Chiredzi Town shows that there is an increase and the population projection for the 2032 population shows that there is likely to be an increase again in the population of Chiredzi Town as shown in the Figure16.

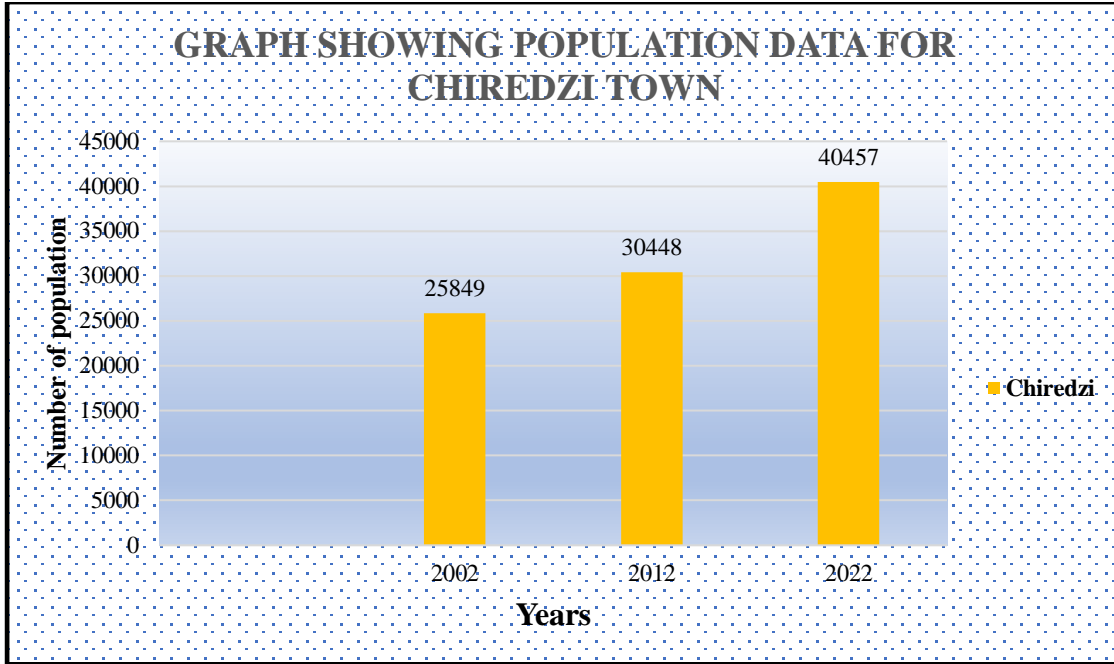


Figure 14: Population data at a 10-year interval for the study area

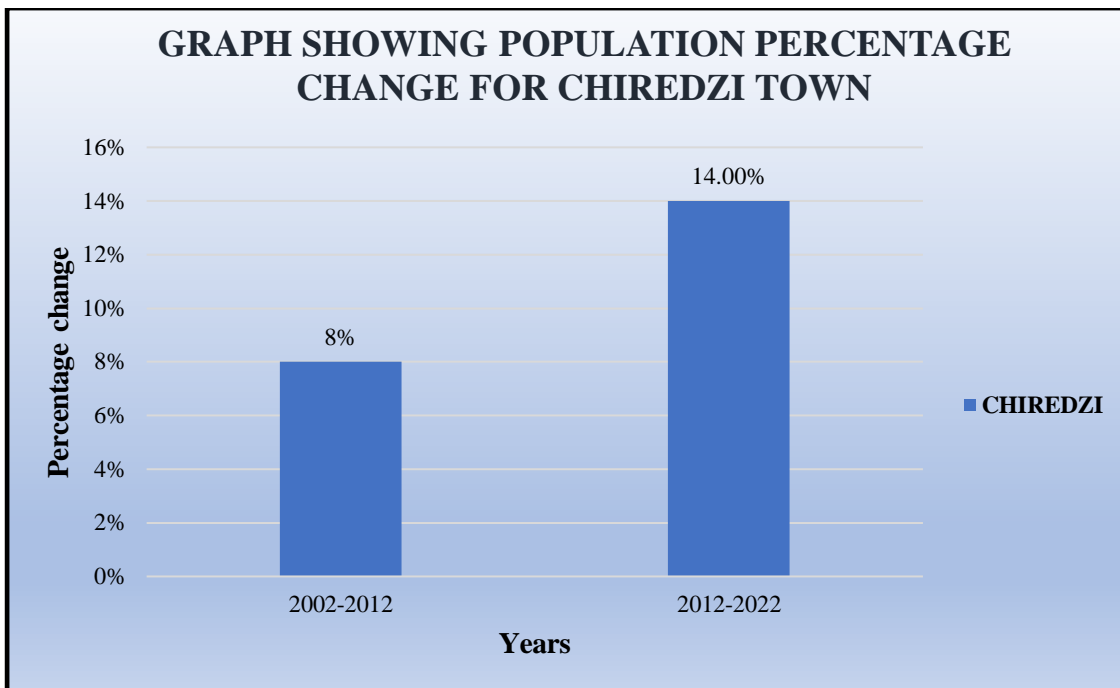


Figure 15: Study area population percentage changes from 2002 to 2022.

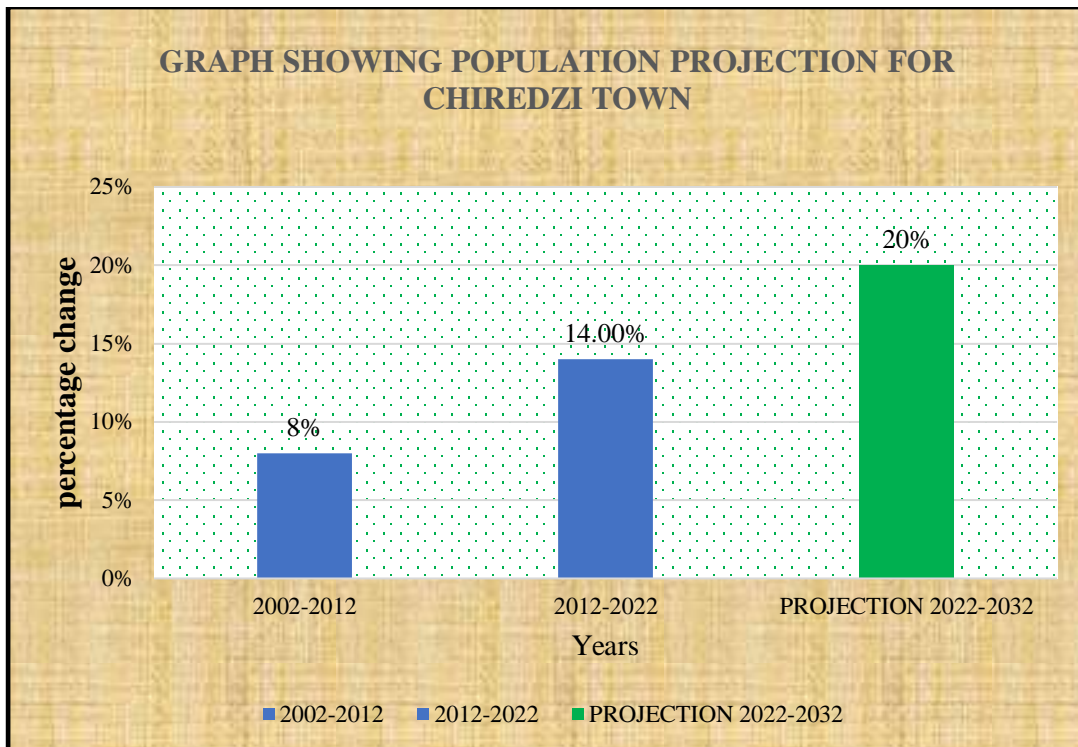


Figure 16: Study area population projection for year 2032.

Analysis and Implications

Educational Infrastructure Needs

The current educational infrastructure in Chiredzi includes 6 primary schools and 3 secondary schools. However, these facilities are already operating at or near capacity. To accommodate the growing number of school-age children, it is imperative to expand educational facilities. This expansion should involve both building new schools in areas with expanding populations and expanding existing schools by adding more classrooms and facilities. Additionally, efforts should be made to ensure that these schools have adequate resources, including well-trained teachers and sufficient educational materials, to maintain high-quality education standards.

Healthcare Infrastructure Needs

Chiredzi currently has one public clinic and one general hospital to serve its population. Given the rapid population growth, these healthcare facilities are likely strained and may struggle to meet the increasing demand for medical services. To address this, there is a critical need to build new clinics and health centres in various parts of the town to improve accessibility. Furthermore, the general hospital should be expanded to increase its capacity to handle more patients and provide specialized medical services. It is also essential to enhance healthcare

services by ensuring that these facilities are adequately staffed, equipped with necessary medical supplies, and capable of delivering quality healthcare to residents.

Infrastructure Planning and Investment

To effectively address these infrastructure challenges, it is crucial for the local authority and stakeholders to engage in comprehensive infrastructure planning and investment. This includes collaborating with educational institutions, healthcare providers, and community stakeholders to identify needs and develop sustainable solutions. Long-term planning should be employed to anticipate future population growth and to plan infrastructure development accordingly. Adequate resources should be allocated for the construction, expansion, and maintenance of schools and healthcare facilities. Community engagement is essential to understanding the needs and preferences of residents regarding education and healthcare services.

4.2 Population Distribution

4.2.1 Population Structure

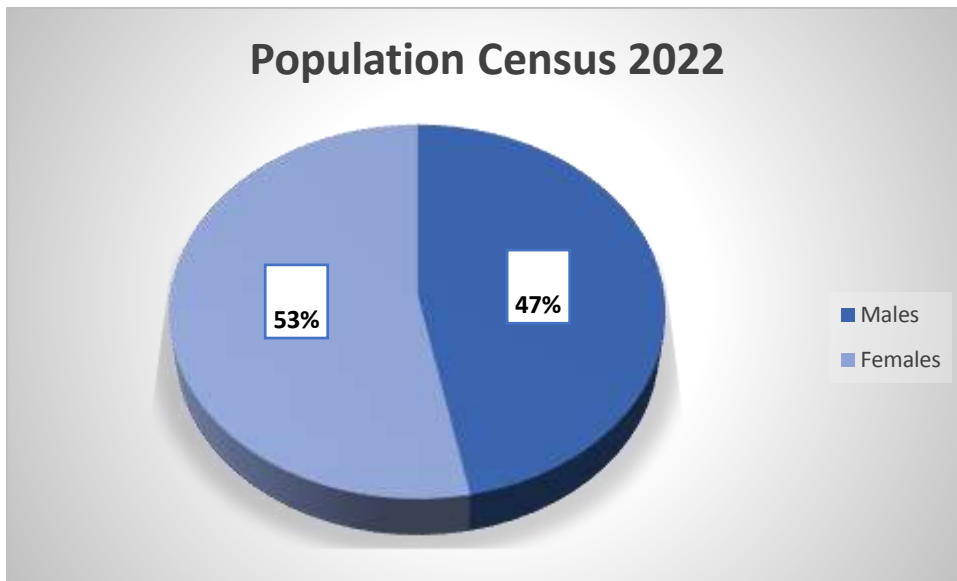


Figure 17: Population Structure

In Chiredzi Urban, the average household size is 3.5 members. This has impact on housing demands, infrastructure needs, and resource allocation within the urban area, impacting local governance and planning strategies. Moreover, such household sizes have implications for education, healthcare, and social services provision, highlighting the importance of tailored policies to address the diverse needs of households in Chiredzi Urban.

4.3 The Local Economy

The manufacturing and tourism sectors hold significant potential as major economic drivers for Chiredzi town, offering opportunities for job creation, revenue generation, and overall economic growth. The growing efforts in processing sugar, cotton, transportation, beef production small grains, and horticultural produce represent key pillars of the local economy, each contributing to the town's economic diversification and resilience. Major Sugar cane production in Chiredzi spans approximately 14,000 hectares in Hippo Valley, 8,000 hectares in Triangle, and 15,000 hectares in Mkwesine. The processing of sugar is a longstanding economic activity in Chiredzi, given the presence of sugar cane plantations in the region. The expansion of sugar processing facilities not only adds value to the agricultural produce but also creates employment opportunities along the production chain, from farming to processing and distribution. The two major cane to sugar production industrial plants are situated at Hippo Valley and Triangle. Additionally, the development of sugar-related industries, such as ethanol production, can further stimulate economic activity and attract investment to the area.

Beyond sugar, Chiredzi's agricultural landscape encompasses a diverse array of crops, including cotton, small grains, and horticultural produce. The processing of these agricultural commodities represents a pivotal juncture in the value chain, where raw materials are transformed into higher-value goods ready for market consumption. By investing in modern processing facilities and adopting advanced technologies, Chiredzi can unlock the full potential of its agricultural bounty, fostering increased productivity, quality assurance, and market competitiveness. Furthermore, the establishment of agro-processing hubs can serve as focal points for innovation and knowledge transfer, empowering local farmers and entrepreneurs to capitalize on emerging market trends and value-added opportunities. From cotton ginning and grain milling to fruit and vegetable processing, Chiredzi's agro-industrial sector holds the promise of sustained economic growth and rural development, enriching both livelihoods and food security within the community.

Livestock production holds a prominent position in Chiredzi town, evidenced by the presence of several abattoirs such as Koala dedicated to beef production. Koala keeps 2800 cattle in the feedlot and slaughter 120 cattle per day. The company has 160 permanent employees and the farm employs 40 people. Koala supply beef all over Zimbabwe. These abattoirs play a crucial role in the local economy by facilitating the processing and distribution of meat products,

supporting livelihoods for both producers and workers in the industry. Additionally, they contribute to food security by providing a steady supply of meat to the local community and potentially beyond. Moreover, the presence of multiple abattoirs suggests a thriving livestock sector in Chiredzi, indicating favourable conditions for agricultural activity and economic growth in the region.

In tandem with manufacturing, tourism represents a promising economic driver for Chiredzi town. The region's natural attractions, including wildlife reserves such as Gonarezhou National Park and the scenic Runde River, offer immense potential for tourism development. Efforts to promote ecotourism, safari experiences, and cultural tourism can attract visitors from both domestic and international markets, generating revenue for local businesses and supporting livelihoods in the hospitality sector. Additionally, cultural tourism initiatives, such as heritage tours and traditional craft markets, provide opportunities for cultural exchange and economic empowerment among indigenous communities. Through strategic investment in tourism infrastructure, promotion, and capacity enhancement Chiredzi can unlock the transformative potential of tourism as a catalyst for inclusive growth, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation.

However, to fully recognise the economic potential of manufacturing and tourism in Chiredzi town, several challenges must be addressed. These include infrastructural limitations, such as inadequate transportation networks and energy supply, which can impede the efficient functioning of manufacturing activities and hinder tourism development. Additionally, investment in human capital, including skills training and capacity enhancement, is crucial to enhance productivity and competitiveness in both sectors. Moreover, sustainable management of natural resources is paramount to ensure the long-term viability of tourism and agriculture-based industries in Chiredzi. Conservation efforts and responsible environmental practices are essential to preserve the region's biodiversity and ecosystems, which are central to its appeal as a tourist destination.

4.4 Employment Issues

The availability of employment serves as a crucial gauge of the local economic landscape, indicating levels of prosperity or poverty. When paid work is scarce, households often resort to relying on remittances from family members or state-provided pensions and social grants.

In this section, we delve into employment dynamics in Chiredzi across various sectors and major employment zones, encompassing the informal sector. Understanding the informal economy involves recognizing its interconnections with other economic facets and governmental influences, rather than viewing it in isolation. Both economic factors and the actions of the Local Planning Authority can impede the growth of informal enterprises, such as through cost-cutting measures or physical exclusion from traditional marketplaces.

The informal economy contributes to urban resilience by offering livelihood opportunities to those unable to secure formal employment and by addressing unmet demands for specific goods and services. Policymakers must acknowledge that this sector is likely to persist due to ongoing high unemployment rates. The dominance of informal economy in Chiredzi is a reality.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations faced in obtaining consistent time-series employment data, making it challenging to compare sectoral performance in employment generation. Additionally, incomplete employment data from various institutions necessitates caution. The information presented here is drawn from field surveys and secondary data sources, aiming to provide a fair representation of the employment landscape in Chiredzi.

In Chiredzi town, informal trading thrives as a significant source of self-employment, with vending and flea markets serving as major centres for entrepreneurial activity. These informal markets provide opportunities for individuals to generate income and sustain their livelihoods through small-scale commerce. Moreover, the Banana Market stands out as a hub for informal trade, particularly for farm produce wholesalers. Here, local farmers and traders converge to buy and sell a variety of agricultural products, fostering economic exchange and supporting the local agricultural sector.

At Banana market a variety of goods, including bananas, tomatoes, avocados and vegetables, are sold by vendors. These vendors utilize personal tables for their businesses, which are not provided by the council. However, in exchange for using the market space, vendors pay a fee of \$2 per day to the council. In terms of water supply, vendors rely on borehole water, which is primarily used for various purposes but is deemed unsuitable for bathing. Sanitation facilities pose another challenge as the existing toilets are often full and blocked, leading to the utilization of bush toilets. Furthermore, there is a lack of refuse collection services, resulting in cleanliness issues within the market area. Additionally, vendors express the need for more

space to accommodate their businesses adequately. Proper lighting during the night is also identified as a requirement for ensuring safety and security within the market premises. Moreover, a significant number of vendors, particularly those from Chimanimani, require accommodation as they operate in the market for several days at a time.

4.5 A Broad Overview of the Employment Situation in Chiredzi

Chiredzi's employment landscape centres predominantly on agriculture, with farming activities forming a primary source of livelihood for many residents. However, despite this reliance on agriculture, there is a notable absence of facilities dedicated to educating individuals on modern farming practices. One significant challenge in Chiredzi is the absence of tertiary education institutions. The lack of access to higher education limits residents' opportunities for skills development and specialized training programs, hindering their ability to access higher-paying jobs or pursue careers outside of agriculture.

The employment landscape in Chiredzi is heavily dependent on two major operations, Triangle and Hippo Valley, both falling under the jurisdiction of the rural district council. Despite the presence of approximately 7,000 employees for Hippo Valley Estates and approximately 9000 employees for Triangle, encompassing both permanent and temporary positions, this reliance on a limited number of industries poses significant challenges. Firstly, such concentrated employment creates vulnerability within the local economy, as any fluctuations or downturns in the sugar industry, upon which Triangle and Hippo Valley are reliant, could lead to widespread job losses and economic instability. Moreover, the dominance of these operations may hinder diversification efforts, limiting opportunities for alternative employment sectors to flourish. Additionally, issues surrounding job security, working conditions, and labour rights may arise, particularly for temporary employees who may lack stable employment arrangements and adequate benefits. Hippo Valley is approximately 5km from Chiredzi town centre, while Triangle is 20km away.

Chiredzi faces a shortage of industries, which hampers economic diversification and job creation in the region. The absence of industries that utilize locally produced sugar presents a missed opportunity for value addition and downstream processing, which could generate additional employment opportunities and stimulate economic growth.

The informal sector, particularly activities such as welding and flea markets, dominates Chiredzi's employment landscape. While this sector provides livelihoods for many residents, it also reflects a reliance on small-scale entrepreneurship and informal employment.

Shopping centres in Chiredzi are hubs of economic activity, encompassing a variety of businesses including grocery shops, bars, informal vending stalls, clothing sales, motor mechanics, and informal food outlets. The presence of these diverse businesses in shopping centres reflects the dynamic informal economy of Chiredzi. Informal vending stalls, clothing sales, and informal food outlets provide opportunities for employment to individuals who may otherwise struggle to find formal employment. These ventures often require minimal startup costs and offer flexible working arrangements, making them accessible to a wide range of people, including those with limited education or resources.

The informal nature of these businesses also means that they may not contribute directly to formal employment statistics, as they often operate outside of formal employment structures and may not be captured in official employment data. However, they play a significant role in providing livelihoods for many individuals in Chiredzi.

On the other hand, the lack of regulation from the local council can present challenges. Unregulated businesses may face issues such as inconsistent access to resources, lack of legal protection, and vulnerability to eviction or displacement. Additionally, the presence of unregulated businesses can impact the overall aesthetics and functionality of shopping centres, potentially affecting the attractiveness of these areas to residents and visitors.



Plate 3: Flea Market in Chiredzi (*Survey, 2024*).

To address employment challenges and unlock economic potential, there is a pressing need to develop cluster industries in Chiredzi. These industries would create synergies between related businesses, foster innovation, and attract investment, ultimately contributing to job creation and economic development in the area.

With strategic development initiatives, Chiredzi has the potential to become the economic hub of Masvingo Province. By fostering a conducive environment for industrial growth and diversification, the town can attract investment, create sustainable employment opportunities, and drive socio-economic development within the region.



Plate 4: Chiredzi SME Centre (*Survey, 2024*).

Chiredzi's SMEs and informal sector play a vital role in driving local economic activity and employment. However, the lack of support from the council inhibits their growth and development potential. Formalizing the informal sector and providing support to SMEs could unlock their full economic potential, stimulate job creation, and foster entrepreneurship. By facilitating access to resources and creating an enabling environment for business growth, the council can harness the economic contributions of SMEs and the informal sector for the benefit of Chiredzi's economy and its residents.

In Chiredzi, the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) holds significant potential for bringing in new infrastructure and fostering overall development. However, the current landscape suggests that SMEs in Chiredzi are not yet fully developed, partly due to challenges related to land allocation and infrastructure provision by the council. The council's inability to provide land for SMEs is a critical barrier to their growth. It's important to note that this limitation may stem from the lack of available land within the existing town boundaries.

One noteworthy initiative in Chiredzi is the construction of the Chiredzi SME modern Workspace, which was built at a total cost of USD 1 million. Council provided land and the association provided the finances for construction. This workspace has a capacity to accommodate at least 350 SMEs. Most of the SMEs currently operating from this centre are engaged in various sectors such as clothing, fruit and green produce supply, hardware, and cosmetics. Additionally, there are training programs provided to SMEs in Chiredzi West, covering fields such as detergents making, hotel and catering, nurse aids, and hairdressing.

4.6 Performance of the Employment Sector by Major Employment Zones

Sector	Employment figures
Hippo Valley	7000
Triangle	9000
COTCO	500
Chiredzi Town Council	240
Delta Chibuku	170
Weto Transport	85
Swift	33
Security Companies	300
Banking Sector	95
Koala	200
Chiredzi RDC	55

Survey (2024)

Big employers in Chiredzi, including Tongaat's Hippo Valley, and Triangle, play a pivotal role in driving the local economy. These sugar industry giants provide employment opportunities to a significant portion of Chiredzi's population, contributing to livelihoods and economic

stability in the region. With operations spanning from sugarcane cultivation to processing and distribution, these companies form the backbone of Chiredzi's agricultural sector and are key drivers of rural development. Furthermore, their presence fosters ancillary industries and businesses, creating a multiplier effect that stimulates economic growth and prosperity within the community.

Cottco, a major cotton company, also holds substantial influence in Chiredzi's employment landscape. With its activities encompassing cotton production, processing, and marketing, Cottco provides employment opportunities across various stages of the cotton value chain. As one of the leading agribusiness entities in the region, Cottco contributes to income generation and poverty alleviation among rural communities, empowering small-scale farmers and promoting agricultural sustainability. Cotton has byproducts of lint and cotton seeds for cooking oil making and animal feeds respectively industries can be set up for processing these. Cotton cultivation in Chiredzi presents significant opportunities for economic development through the utilization of its by-products, namely lint and cotton seeds. By setting up industries to process these by-products, the region can benefit from added value, job creation, and economic diversification.

Lint, the fibrous part of the cotton plant, is primarily used in the textile industry. Establishing textile mills in Chiredzi to process lint into yarn and fabric can have multiple benefits. Firstly, it offers economic value addition by transforming raw cotton into finished textile products, significantly increasing profitability for farmers and local businesses. Secondly, textile mills can provide numerous employment opportunities, from factory workers to skilled technicians and management positions, thereby contributing to the reduction of unemployment rates in the area. Lastly, locally produced high-quality textiles can be marketed for both domestic consumption and export, boosting Chiredzi's economic profile and bringing in foreign exchange.

Cotton seeds, another valuable by-product, can be processed into cooking oil and animal feeds. Setting up oil extraction plants can help produce cottonseed oil, a popular cooking oil that can meet local demand and reduce dependency on imported oils. The production of cottonseed oil also generates by-products such as cottonseed meal, which is a high-protein ingredient suitable for animal feeds. Establishing facilities to produce animal feed can support the local livestock industry, providing farmers with a reliable and nutritious feed source. Additionally, these

processing plants can create jobs and stimulate economic activities related to agriculture and food production.

Setting up industries for processing cotton by-products can lead to significant industrial development in Chiredzi. The establishment of these industries requires infrastructure development, such as improved roads, energy supply, and water management systems, which can further stimulate economic growth. Moreover, the presence of processing industries can attract ancillary businesses, such as packaging, logistics, and retail, creating a more vibrant and diverse local economy.

The Chiredzi Town Council serves as both a governmental authority and an employer within the town. Responsible for providing essential services such as water supply, waste management, and urban planning, the council plays a crucial role in maintaining infrastructure and facilitating socio-economic development. As an employer, the council offers job opportunities in various departments, ranging from administration and engineering to public services and urban management, thereby contributing to local employment and public service delivery.

Government departments operating in Chiredzi, including those overseeing agriculture, education, health, and public administration, also serve as significant employers in the region. These departments provide essential public services and administrative functions, employing a diverse workforce to address the needs of the local population. Through their activities, government departments contribute to socio-economic development, service provision, and governance, enhancing the overall well-being and prosperity of Chiredzi's residents.

Employers in Chiredzi have voiced several grievances to the council, including the lack of reliable water supply, inadequate road maintenance, and the necessity for space for housing development. The inconsistency in water supply poses a significant challenge for businesses, impacting their operations and productivity. Moreover, poor road maintenance not only affects employee commutes but also disrupts the transportation of goods and services, potentially hampering business activities. Additionally, some companies, such as Koala, have taken matters into their own hands by conducting refuse collection independently, highlighting gaps in municipal services. Furthermore, major employers like Koala are facing constraints in providing adequate housing for their employees due to limited space availability.

Results from interviews with banks and financial institutions underscore the potential for fruitful partnerships with the council in Chiredzi. The expressed interest in collaboration highlights a shared recognition of the pressing need for infrastructure development and the role that such partnerships can play in addressing these challenges. The proposal for the council to provide land while financial institutions offer financing signifies a pragmatic approach to overcoming funding constraints and expediting the implementation of critical projects. Moreover, the willingness of financial institutions to invest in Chiredzi reflects confidence in the town's economic prospects and underscores the potential for collaborative efforts to stimulate further investment, job creation, and economic growth.

Furthermore, the proposed partnerships have broader implications for the socio-economic development of Chiredzi. By leveraging the expertise and resources of financial institutions, the council can not only accelerate infrastructure projects but also enhance the overall quality of life for residents. Improved infrastructure, such as housing developments and upgraded utilities, can attract additional private investment, bolster local businesses, and create a more vibrant and sustainable community. Thus, these partnerships have the potential to catalyse positive transformation and position Chiredzi as a desirable destination for investment, business, and living.

CHAPTER 5: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Land Use

This chapter deals with broad land use issues (land ownership, development status) as well as detailed land use issues like land utilization in already developed areas, as well as identification of developable areas outside the current Chiredzi Town Boundary.

Table 4: Housing Units⁹

Land use	Units	Suburbs
Low density		Chiredzi Township, Westwood, Melbourne, Shine plus
High Density		Tshovani, Tshovani Extension (Makondo extension,
Commercial		CBD
Industrial	157	Buffalo Range Industrial
Institutional	69	
Total	5715	

In Chiredzi, land use encompasses various categories such as residential, commercial, industrial, and public amenities. Each serves a distinct purpose, contributing to the overall functionality and development of the town.

Residential areas form the backbone of Chiredzi's urban landscape, providing housing for its inhabitants. These areas cater to diverse socio-economic groups, ranging from high density residential to more affluent neighbourhoods. Residential areas cover --hectares.

Commercial zones, including the Central Business District (CBD) and shopping centres in residential suburbs, serve as commercial hubs where economic activities thrive. These areas are characterized by a vibrant mix of businesses, including retail stores, restaurants, banks, and offices. The CBD acts as a focal point for trade and commerce, attracting both residents and visitors. Commercial area cover --hectares.

⁹ <https://ucaz.org.zw/members/chiredzi-town-council/>

Industrial land use in Chiredzi is geared towards supporting manufacturing and industrial activities. This includes areas designated for factories, warehouses, and industrial parks. These zones play a vital role in driving economic growth, providing employment opportunities, and contributing to the local economy. Industrial area cover hectares.

Public amenities are integral components of Chiredzi's infrastructure, enhancing the quality of life for its residents. These amenities encompass facilities such as schools, clinics, hospitals, police stations, and recreational areas like the stadium. They serve the community by meeting essential needs such as education, healthcare, safety, and leisure, thereby promoting social well-being and cohesion.

5.2 Land Ownership

Chiredzi's inception traces back to its establishment by Chiredzi Township Pvt Ltd, a subsidiary of Hippo Valley. Under the ownership of this company, Chiredzi Town's development was methodically overseen, marking a unique approach to urban planning and management. With the company's ownership extending over the town, its growth and infrastructure were closely tied to the interests and strategies of the corporate entity. This corporate-led model of development underscores the influence of private sector actors in shaping the town's urban landscape and governance structure, setting it apart from traditional municipal administrations.

5.3 Development Control

The issue of development control in Chiredzi mainly involves practice of creating stands without adequate servicing. This means that land is allocated for residential or commercial purposes without essential infrastructure such as surfaced road network, water supply, sewerage systems, and electricity being in place. Consequently, residents who occupy these stands face numerous challenges, including limited access to basic services, poor waste management, and environmental hazards. The lack of proper servicing compromises the quality of life for residents, unsustainable urban development and strains existing infrastructure.

Another significant concern regarding development control in Chiredzi is the unauthorized change of land use, particularly towards the establishment of lodges. Without proper zoning regulations and environmental impact assessments, the conversion of land for lodge development has effects on the community and the environment. It may result in increased

traffic congestion and strain on local resources. There is therefore need for stricter enforcement of zoning laws and comprehensive planning measures to ensure that land use changes are carried out responsibly and in accordance with the town's development goals and environmental sustainability objectives.

There is also a concerning trend of schools emerging in industrial areas in Chiredzi without undergoing formal procedures for change of use. This situation highlights a regulatory gap in land use management and urban planning. As a result, these schools are established within industrial infrastructure lacking essential facilities such as ablution blocks, parking, and reliable water supply. This poses significant challenges to the safety and well-being of students and staff. Additionally, the co-location of schools in industrial zones raises concerns about potential conflicts between educational activities and industrial operations, further exacerbating infrastructure deficiencies. Addressing these issues necessitates the implementation of formal procedures for land use change and improved coordination between relevant authorities to ensure that educational facilities are appropriately equipped and located in suitable environments conducive to learning.

In Chiredzi town, business leakages are a significant concern, where informal activities and mismanagement have led to financial losses for the local council. Many residents who faithfully pay their dues to the council have expressed frustration over the inadequate service delivery and maintenance of essential infrastructure. Informal businesses, such as unlicensed vendors and informal transport operators, often operate without contributing to municipal revenue through taxes. This lack of financial support hampers the council's ability to fund crucial services like road repairs, waste management, and community infrastructure development. As a result, there is a growing disillusionment among loyal residents who perceive their contributions as being mismanaged or insufficiently utilised.

Chiredzi town has seen the proliferation of tuckshops in almost every household, which operate informally without proper licenses. These informal businesses provide essential goods and services to residents but often do so without contributing to local revenue or adhering to health and safety regulations. Introducing a licensing system for these tuckshops could bring them into the formal economy. It would ensure that these businesses contribute to municipal revenue through taxes and fees, while also ensuring they meet health, safety, and zoning regulations. Formalizing these businesses could enhance economic growth by providing a framework for sustainable development and improving the quality of services available to residents.

5.4 Burial Sites



Plate 5: New Cemetery (*Survey, 2024*).

The cemetery in Melbourne Park requires decommissioning due to various factors that has render its continued operation untenable. Over time, cemeteries can become overcrowded, posing logistical challenges for maintenance, and affecting the dignity of the deceased. Additionally, with limited space available, there may be concerns about environmental impacts, such as groundwater contamination or habitat disruption. Decommissioning Melbourne Park Cemetery is a necessary step to address capacity issues and uphold standards of dignity, sustainability, and environmental responsibility in end-of-life practices.



Plate 6: Old Melbourne Burial Site (*Survey, 2024*).

5.5 Service delivery and rates payments.

The council faces various challenges and dynamics regarding its finances and revenue collection. With approximately 5,000 rate payers, property capture has become increasingly difficult despite the conventional process occurring during layout approval. While Housing and Community Services department is noting approximately 17 000 housing stands in Chiredzi Town. This discrepancy between the number of ratepayers and the abundance of housing stands suggests potential issues with revenue generation and collection mechanisms, indicating a need for more effective strategies to capture property and ensure sustainable financial stability for the council. The average rates vary, with high-density areas averaging around \$22 and low-density areas around \$35, while commercial rates depend on land use and size.

However, collection efficiency stands at a mere 30%, mainly due to resistance stemming from perceived high fees and political factors. Efforts to encourage payment involve notices and consolidated billing for water, refuse collection, and other services, although disconnection isn't feasible everywhere. The prevalent use of USD complicates matters, as its availability is limited, and many businesses resist it. Moreover, with most of the expenditure allocated to salaries, little is left for capital investment, and partnerships with strong entities are lacking. The absence of significant income-generating investments further strains the town council's financial stability, with most rate payers being residents and industries struggling to pay substantial rates. The municipality's financial outlook calls for improved transparency, communication, and the attraction of large companies capable of providing significant revenue streams. Despite a budget of approximately \$9 million USD, the municipality only receives 30%-40% of that, highlighting the urgent need for financial reform and sustainable revenue collection and generation strategies.

Residents' reluctance to pay council rates stems from a perceived lack of service provision. The discrepancy in property valuations, with some properties paying disproportionately high rates, exacerbates this issue. The failure to align rates with the level of service delivery erodes trust in the council and undermines its ability to generate revenue for essential services. Addressing these concerns requires a reassessment of property valuations and a transparent approach to council rate structures to ensure fairness and equity for all residents.

The commercial and industrial sectors have varying contributions to the town's revenue streams. Industrial rates exhibit a similar pattern. However, the municipality faces significant expenditure challenges, with a substantial portion of the budget allocated to salaries. In 2023,

68% of expenditures went towards salaries, leaving limited resources for essential capital investments. Additionally, the absence of strong partnerships and investments that generate substantial income exacerbates the town's financial fragility. Urgent measures are needed to attract larger companies capable of contributing significant rates, while enhancing transparency and communication within the town council is essential for fostering financial resilience and sustainable development.

Table 5: Key Revenue Streams for Chiredzi Town (*Survey, 2024*).

Sector	Company	Approximate Amount per month (US\$)
Commercial	NSSA,	\$4900
	OK	\$1000
	CBZ	\$170
Industrial	Palm Tree Place	\$5060
	DELTA	\$953
	Chigarapasi Beerhall	\$1500
	Komanani Beerhall	\$100
	Weto	\$100
	Others	\$90
Residential	Majaradha	\$10
	High density	\$22
	Low density	\$35

The lack of engagement with partners and the absence of strong partnerships since 2022 highlight a concerning aspect of Chiredzi's business landscape, with only SMEs playing a role in the town's economic ecosystem. The town council's financial instability is accentuated by the absence of substantial income-generating investments, relying primarily on Majarada (\$10pm), Chigarapasi Beerhall (\$1500pm), and Komanani Beerhall (\$100pm) for revenue. However, these figures are insufficient to offset broader financial challenges, illustrated by the closure of businesses like Nesbitt Arms Hotel due to declining business activity. With most rate payers being residents, and local businesses struggling, Chiredzi Town Council grapples with

financial unsoundness, necessitating immediate intervention and strategic planning to stimulate economic growth and ensure the community's sustainable development.

5.6 Industry, Agro-industrial and Commerce

5.6.1 Commercial Development



Plate 7: Shopping Centre in Residential area (Survey, 2024).

Commercial development in Chiredzi is predominantly concentrated within the city centre. This concentration is evidenced by the presence of a diverse array of businesses, services, and amenities in this area, making it the primary commercial hub of the town. The town centre attracts a significant amount of foot traffic and serves as a vibrant marketplace, contributing substantially to the local economy.

Additionally, the data highlights the presence of several suburban shopping centres distributed throughout residential areas in Chiredzi. These shopping centres cater to the needs of residents, offering convenience and accessibility to everyday goods and services within proximity to residential neighbourhoods. This decentralization of commercial activity ensures that residents have access to essential amenities without the need to travel to the town centre, promoting local commerce and enhancing the overall quality of life in Chiredzi.



Plate 8: Part of CBD (Survey, 2024).

5.6.2 Industrial Development

Chiredzi's industrial sector, though diverse, faces significant hurdles, particularly in terms of growth and formalization. Despite the presence of key players like Marirangwe, Hippo Valley, and Triangle, as well as industries such as Delta Beverages, Koala Meats and motor mechanics, the overall industrial environment struggles to thrive. Predominantly consisting of light industry, the town sees limited progress, with informal sectors like welding stagnating for decades without substantial growth or formalization.

The situation is exacerbated by the persistence of informal operations, which hinder businesses' ability to expand and contribute meaningfully to the economy. Even with established players and essential industries, Chiredzi's industrial landscape remains constrained by a lack of formalization and growth opportunities. This stagnation underscores the need for concerted efforts to address barriers to growth, foster a conducive business environment, and promote sustainable industrial practices.

Moving forward, Chiredzi must confront these challenges head-on, prioritizing strategies to spur industrial growth, encourage formalization, and enhance economic resilience. By addressing the underlying issues stifling industrial development and fostering an environment

conducive to business growth, the town can unlock its economic potential and improve the livelihoods of its residents.

The industrial sector in Chiredzi boasts a significant presence, anchored by a complete factory situated at Hippo Valley with approximately 14,000 hectares under cultivation. With an impressive production capacity ranging from 250,000 to 300,000 tonnes per year, this facility serves as a cornerstone of the local economy, generating employment opportunities and contributing to economic growth. One notable aspect of the industrial activities in Chiredzi is the role of Hippo Valley in the production and processing of molasses. Molasses, a byproduct of sugar production, holds significance in various industries, including the production of ethanol. In this context, Hippo Valley's operations likely involve the extraction and refinement of molasses, which are then transferred to other facilities, such as Triangle, for further processing.

5.7 Potentially Developable Land Outside the Current Boundary

The Chiredzi Town Council faces a critical stage as it contends with the depletion of available land for development within its current boundaries. With no open spaces left for expansion, the council must consider the prospect of extending the town into the Chiredzi Rural District Council (RDC) area. This necessitates a strategic approach, involving a comprehensive assessment of the surrounding landscape within a 30km radius from the Central Business District (CBD), while considering natural features such as rivers and significant infrastructure like railways, roads, and canals to demarcate suitable boundaries.

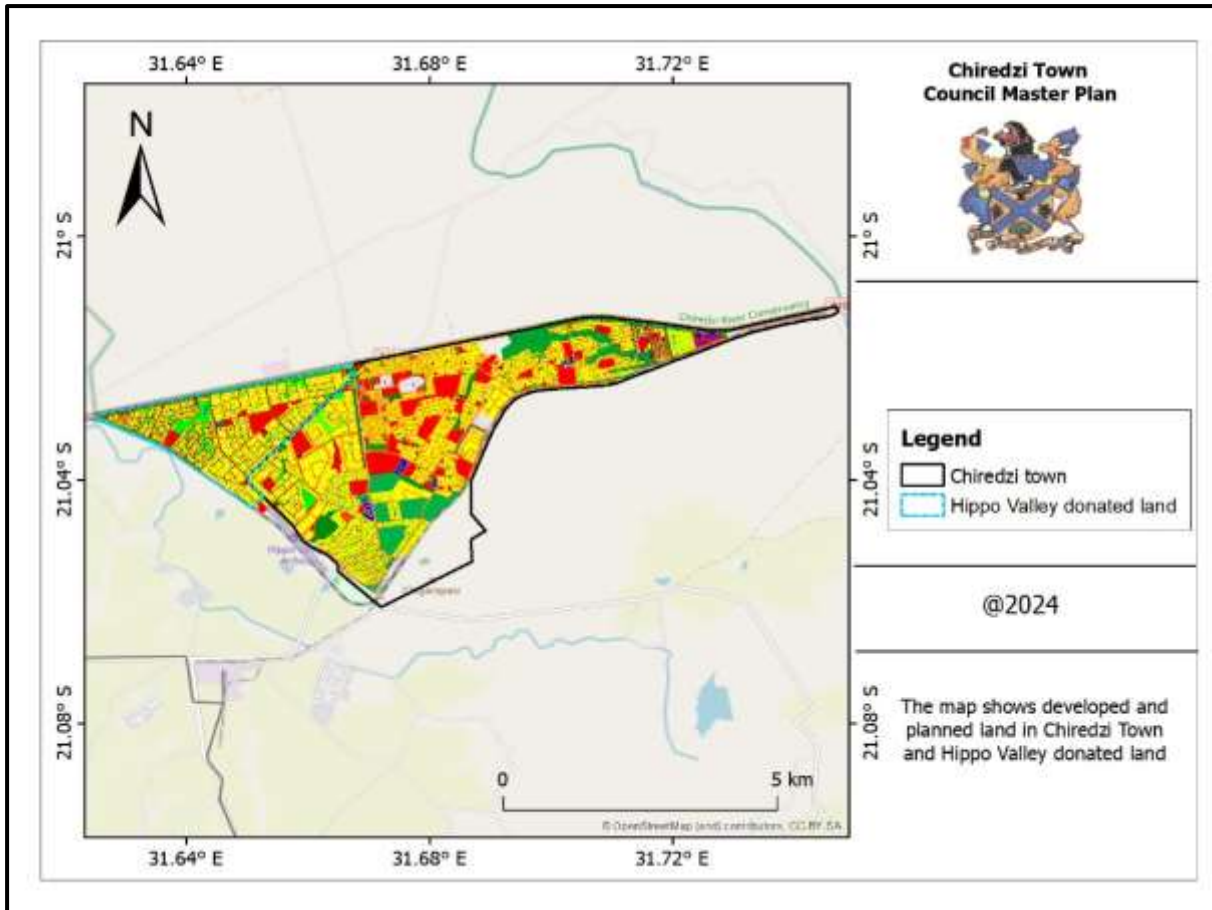


Figure 18: Map with Town boundary and Study Boundary (Survey, 2024).

CHAPTER 6: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

6.1 An Overview of Housing Conditions

The Chiredzi Town Council has grappled with the daunting task of fulfilling the housing needs of its burgeoning population. As of 2010, the Council's Statistics Office reported that since 2007, merely 1300 high-density stands had been allotted, while the waiting list has total of 40 000 individuals currently. In efforts to alleviate the housing backlog, by 2019, the Council had initiated the servicing of 1000 medium-density residential stands. A significant challenge lies in the manual management of this waiting list, which can lead to inefficiencies and lack of transparency in the allocation process. To address this issue, there is a pressing need for the implementation of an electronic waiting list system, which would not only streamline the management of applications but also enhance transparency and accountability in the allocation process. Moreover, establishing an allocations committee would further improve the efficiency and fairness of the allocation process by ensuring that decisions are made based on established criteria and principles, ultimately facilitating more equitable access to housing opportunities for residents in Chiredzi.

The functioning of urban land markets and the provision of housing in Zimbabwe are significantly influenced by the performance of the national economy, employment trends, and individuals' saving capacities. Consequently, the construction and real estate sectors, integral components of urban land markets, are primarily shaped by the overall performance of the economy. Additionally, the effectiveness of financial institutions, particularly commercial banks, and Building Societies, plays a crucial role in financing housing development and infrastructure projects within Zimbabwe's urban land markets. Therefore, the performance of the housing sector heavily relies on the stability and efficiency of these financial entities.

6.1.1 Department of Housing and Community Services

As the Housing Director of the Department of Housing and Community Services, the scope of responsibilities is extensive, encompassing various aspects of housing management and community welfare. The department oversees approximately 17,000 stands, both developed and undeveloped. Traditionally focused on housing issues, the department has recently expanded to include a community service component, necessitating the addition of roles such as a Community Service Officer. The department addresses a range of issues, including health, education, cemetery services, and environmental health.

They are primarily responsible for stand allocation and managing a waiting list of approximately 40 000 individuals, with an annual servicing rate of about 10-15%. Allocation decisions are based on stand availability, constrained by the limited land supply. A joint venture between the Chiredzi Town Council and Chiredzi Rural District Council that encompasses 750 hectares to address is expected to partially address the issue. Operational processes involve initiating housing projects before forwarding them to the finance department for billing. However, the waiting list management system relies on a paper-based or Excel system lacking electronic backing, posing challenges in transparency and data management.

Despite their broad mandate, the department faces several challenges, notably in resource allocation and service delivery. With only one vehicle at their disposal, they encounter difficulties in effectively providing services such as refuse collection and environmental health management. The shortage of refuse compactors, with only two available, further exacerbates this issue, leading to occasional reliance on a tractor for waste collection. Additionally, fuel shortages hinder the operation of trucks, while the lack of a landfill poses significant challenges in waste management. Furthermore, clashes with regulatory bodies like EMA result in occasional fines, impacting the department's operational efficiency.

6.2 Financing Opportunities in Zimbabwe's Urban Land and Housing Markets

6.2.1 Central Government Funding

The Government of Zimbabwe has long been committed to supporting land and housing development since gaining independence. However, budget constraints have limited allocations for housing projects, typically ranging between 2% to 5% of the total budget since 2000. The main avenues for these allocations have been the National Housing Fund (NHF) and the National Housing Guarantee Fund (NHGF). Nevertheless, the functionality of these instruments has declined over the past decade due to economic challenges facing the country. Notable example is the Majaradha settlements in Chiredzi were established by the central government on state-owned land.

6.2.2 Local Authority Initiatives

In response to the pressing housing needs in Chiredzi, local authorities have embarked on initiatives such as the development of new residential layouts like Melbourne and Makondo. These endeavours signify a proactive approach to mitigating housing shortages and enhancing the quality of life for residents. By creating these new residential areas, local authorities aim to

expand housing options and accommodate the growing population in the region. However, the success of these initiatives hinges greatly on effective revenue collection mechanisms to sustainably finance infrastructure development and service provision within these new layouts. Revenue generation is crucial for ensuring the long-term viability and maintenance of housing projects, including the provision of essential amenities such as water, electricity, and sanitation services.

6.2.3 Self-Financing of Land Purchases and Property Development

Developed and developing countries alike are using self-financing schemes for urban land and housing markets. The following options could be pursued:

- **Rent to own scheme.**

Given the stabilized macroeconomic environment, the Rent-to-own scheme emerges as a viable solution, offering tenants the opportunity to lease a property with the added benefit of an option to purchase it at a predetermined price and time in the future. This option typically outlines the property's purchase price and the duration within which the tenant can exercise their right to buy. Sellers may incentivize tenants by allocating a portion of the rent towards a down payment on the property or by receiving an upfront payment for the option, allowing tenants to rebuild their credit if necessary. This approach may involve financial institutions supporting private investors who meet specific collateral and loan criteria, enabling them to invest in properties located on subsidized land provided by local authorities.

- **Use of individuals' own savings for property development**

Under this scheme, urban residents seeking land for home construction would enrol with their local authorities to secure land allocation and be added to the housing waiting list. The key benefit of this initiative was the highly subsidized nature of land obtained through the local authority, rendering it affordable for aspiring homeowners.

6.2.4 Availability of mortgage loans to individuals

Financial Institutions involved in housing finance include Building Societies, the Infrastructure bank of Zimbabwe and pension funds e.g. Old Mutual and the National Social Security Authority (NSSA). However, the Zimbabwe economy had very few strong institutions to support robust and sustainable housing finance, efficient land delivery and building materials

production. Notable is the acute shortage of mortgage finance, as hyperinflation dislocated Building Societies from their core business of providing housing finance.

Low-income groups are hardest hit by this situation, as they could not access the little financing that was available due to high interest costs and the inability to meet the requirements of collateral that came with the loans. The Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe has not been able to make a significant contribution to housing development due to severe undercapitalisation. Pension Funds such as Old Mutual and NSSA have capacity to provide significant assistance to low-cost housing initiatives due to their sheer sizes. This option can be pursued in the outlook to ensure greater coverage of housing loan finance schemes.

6.2.5 Employer assisted housing.

In Chiredzi, local authorities and government initiatives aimed at persuading employers to participate in low-cost housing schemes have yielded positive results. However, participation is hindered by the insufficient servicing of the stands by the local authority.

Despite these challenges, the financing scheme has seen success in smaller towns, particularly in the industrial town of the Masvingo province especially Tongaat Hulett's a major sugar cane producer that acquired both Triangle and Hippo Valley estates in Chiredzi and Triangle. In Chiredzi specifically, the employer-aided housing scheme presents an opportunity for companies to provide affordable housing options for their employees. By collaborating with local authorities and government initiatives, employers can contribute to addressing the housing needs of their workforce while also benefiting from the scheme's financial incentives.

6.3 Existing Housing Areas in Chiredzi Town

The residential areas in Chiredzi fall into three broad categories: high density, medium density, and low-density areas. The level of services in residential areas presents a number of challenges that significantly impact quality of life. Roads within these neighbourhoods are characterised by narrowness, potholes, and inconsistent surfacing, with some lacking gravel or any form of paving. There is also absence of stormwater drainage exacerbating flooding issues during heavy rainfall. Moreover, residents experience irregular water supply, the council relies solely on direct lines without the backup of stored water in reservoirs. This inconsistency in water access disrupts daily activities and highlights the vulnerability of the water supply infrastructure. Sewerage systems frequently suffer bursts, leading to health and environmental

concerns. Electricity supply is marred by load shedding, further disrupting household routines and economic activities.

Furthermore, waste collection services are irregular in residential areas, particularly those with inadequate road infrastructure, where refuse often remains uncollected. The absence of public amenities compounds residents' difficulties, depriving them of essential facilities for recreation and social gatherings. These deficiencies underscore the urgent need for comprehensive infrastructure improvements and enhanced service delivery strategies in residential areas of Chiredzi.

6.3.1 High Density Residential Areas



Plate 9: Tshovani Majaradha (*Survey, 2024*).

Tshovani High Density suburb was erected by Hippo Valley Estates as a settlement for its workers in the sugarcane estates. The suburb was commonly known as a “*komboni*” meaning a settlement that is not properly planned and usually constructed for farm workers. According to Hippo Valley’s plan the settlement was supposed to accommodate its workers only. The company constructed a small capacity of waterworks to cater for a small number of people. Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, there was a sudden increase in population due to natural increase, the influx of A2 farmers due to the post-independence land reform as well as the growth of Chiredzi into Central Business District (CBD) which provided more facilities like banking, retailing among others.

Majaradha houses show evidence of lack of accommodation. Lack of adequate accommodation and overcrowding has led to an increase in crime, particularly in crimes such as theft, assault and rape, child abuse, baby dumping and infanticide. According to residents interviewed, overcrowding is rampant, with as many as 15 people sharing a single room. This overcrowding has raised fears of a potential health crisis, as the living conditions in *Majaradha* are described as dire and likened to a "death trap." Originally designated as single men's quarters, the *Majaradha* houses now accommodate families, including children. The resulting overcrowding poses significant health risks to residents. Despite the dire situation, many residents are unable to afford alternative housing options or pay for essential services.

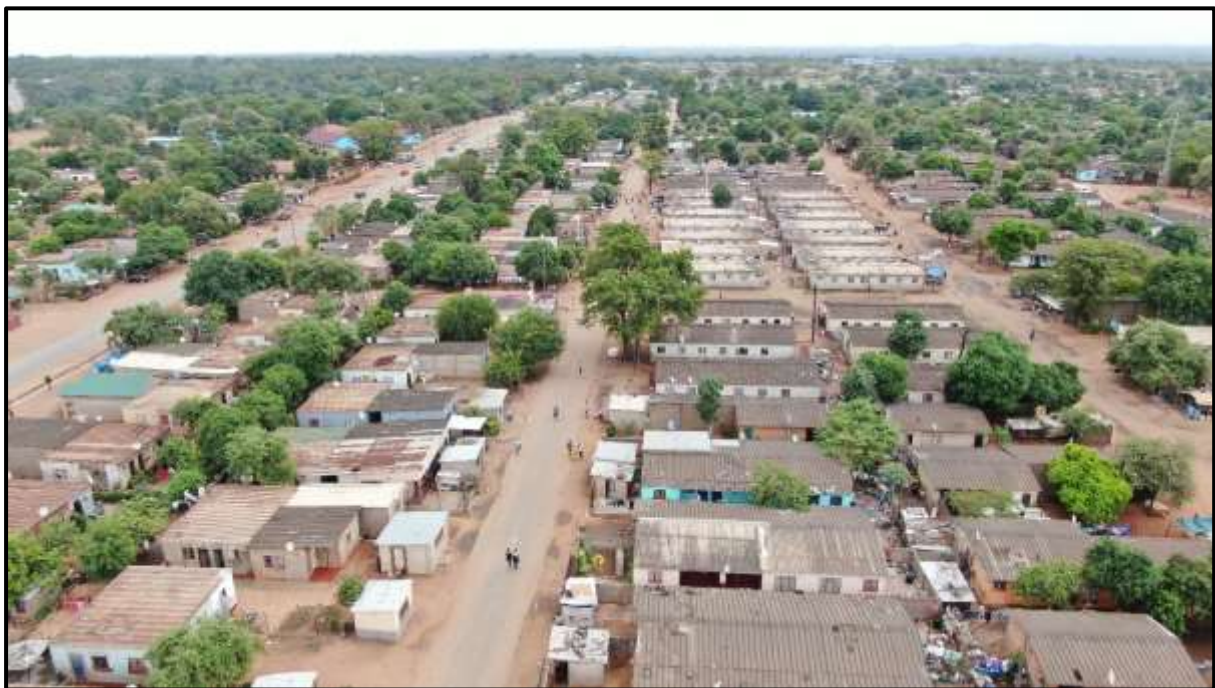


Plate 10: *Majaradha*.



Plate 11: Majaradha in Tshovani (*Survey, 2024*).

The construction of housing developments without adequate infrastructure services like water, roadways, and sewerage poses significant challenges and risks for both residents and the broader community. Without proper water supply, residents may face difficulties accessing clean water for daily use, leading to health hazards and sanitation issues. Inadequate road infrastructure can impede transportation and emergency services, increasing response times and hindering access to essential facilities such as schools and healthcare centres. Additionally, the absence of proper sewerage systems can result in environmental pollution and health hazards due to the improper disposal of waste.



Plate 12: Unsurfaced Road in residential area in New Makondo (*Survey, 2024*).

6.3.2 Medium Density Housing



Plate 13: Medium density housing near Melbourne Academy (*Survey, 2024*).

In Chiredzi, medium-sized housing stands are generally defined as parcels of land ranging from 400 square meters to 600 square meters in size. These stands are suitable for constructing

residential properties such as single-family homes or semi-detached houses. With dimensions spanning within this range, these housing stands offer sufficient space for comfortable living while still being manageable in terms of maintenance and upkeep. Medium-sized housing stands in Chiredzi cater to the needs of individuals or families looking to build modest-sized homes within urban or suburban areas. They provide enough room for essential amenities such as a dwelling structure, outdoor spaces, and possibly a small garden or yard. Additionally, the size range of 400 to 600 square meters strikes a balance between affordability and functionality, making these stands attractive options for prospective homeowners in Chiredzi.

6.3.3 Low Density Residential

In low-density residential areas, houses are spread out over larger plots of land, typically ranging from 800 to 2000 square meters. This means that each home has more space around it, offering residents a sense of privacy. These areas often feature single-family homes with yards or gardens, providing ample room for outdoor activities and landscaping. Ultra-low density residential suburbs take this concept even further, with properties sometimes spanning up to an acre in size. In these neighbourhoods, residents enjoy even more space and seclusion, with larger properties offering opportunities for expansive gardens, recreational areas, or even small-scale farming.

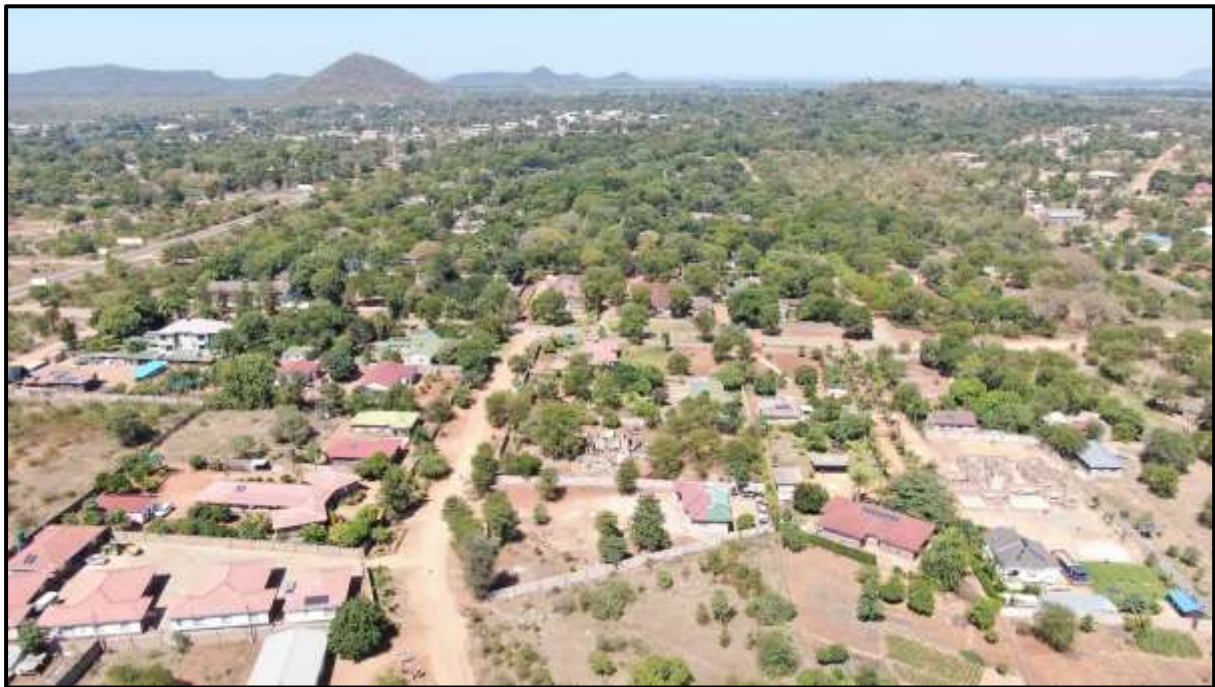


Plate 14: Low Density Residential-Westwood

6.4 Special Case Studies on Housing provision in Chiredzi

6.4.1 Shineplus Residential Scheme.

The Project is one of the devolution projects done as a Public Private Partnership between Chiredzi Town Council and Shineplus Housing Development Trust.



Plate 15: Shineplus Park Signage (Survey, 2024).

In Shineplus, the major road benefits from well-maintained road infrastructure and stormwater drainage, extending access to the CBD and the Tanganda-Ngundu road, access roads often lack basic infrastructure, leaving residents in these areas underserved. Water supply relies on boreholes, but concerns persist regarding water quality, with residents reporting salty water. Sewerage management utilises septic tanks. Stand sizes ranging from 800 to 2000 square meters indicate a low-density residential area. Waste collection services are limited to accessible areas, leaving outlying regions lacking in this essential service. Public lighting is scarce, with only one light at the junction between the Tanganda-Ngundu highway and the major road, posing safety concerns, particularly at night. Despite these challenges, Shineplus

benefits from amenities like the Royal Garden events venue and lodge, as well as Paradise Park lodge, which contribute to the community's social and economic fabric.



Plate 16: Royal Gardens (*Survey, 2024*).

6.4.2 Molly Street in Majarada Tshovani

Since the 1950s, sex workers have played a significant role in the development and expansion of both Chiredzi and its sugar industry. Acting as seasonal migrants, many male workers would leave their rural wives and families behind, with some originating as long-distance labour migrants from colonial Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique, similarly leaving their families in their home regions. This migration pattern created a demand for sex work, challenging the prevailing criminalization of such activities in Chiredzi. Consequently, sex workers played a crucial role in stabilizing the labour supply for the sugar estates. By providing readily available services, they incentivized workers to remain on the estates for extended periods, foregoing trips back to their rural homes. The enduring legend of Molly serves as a testament to how sex workers established themselves as integral figures in the development of new towns. While the migrant labour force remained transient, sex workers invested in permanent residences, notably around areas like the beerhall, thereby contributing to the sustained growth of Chiredzi. Molly Street is based on the real life of, a sex worker Molly in the 1960s who came to a harrowing arson death at the hands of one of her jealous boyfriends.

The water supply is contingent on electricity availability, often accessible during the night. However, the infrastructure remains inadequate, with one sink serving four families, and residents' resort to fetching water from Chigarapasi due to the absence of boreholes. While refuse collection occurs twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays, the growing population exacerbates sewer bursts, posing health and environmental concerns. Residents pay \$10 per month for rent, while socio-economic activities receive support from organizations like PLAN International, supplementing livelihoods through snack, tomato, and firewood sales. The presence of a vendors association facilitates community organization, yet social issues persist, including prostitution and the use of foul language. Moreover, tensions arise as the council confiscates goods, even from vendors operating in designated areas, while the limited provision of amenities like a single bathroom underscores the need for comprehensive infrastructure improvements to enhance residents' quality of life.



Figure 19: Molly Street (*Survey, 2024*).

In Molly Street there are housing apartments known as Majaradha. The houses were initially designated for unmarried individuals. Over time, however, due to various vulnerabilities, including economic hardship and family circumstances, residents have expanded to include families with children. Consequently, the housing situation has become overcrowded, with at least 10 people residing in a single room, creating a significant health hazard. The current situation in Majaradha underscores the challenges faced by its residents, who express fears of a potential health crisis due to overcrowding. Despite efforts by the local council to address the situation, including budget allocations for service provision, residents continue to struggle financially, making it difficult to afford essential services.

Chapter 7: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

7.1 Social and Economic Issues

In Chiredzi, the absence of recreational facilities and cultural events exacerbates social issues like drug abuse and prostitution. With limited options for leisure activities, particularly for young people, some have turned to substance abuse and risky behaviours for excitement. This not only harms individuals but also contributes to the breakdown of social cohesion and community well-being. Additionally, the lack of alternative opportunities has pushed certain individuals, especially women, into prostitution as a means of survival, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and vulnerability.

There is a practice of catch and release by the police in Chiredzi highlighting systemic issues within the criminal justice system. Limited resources and capacity constraints has resulted in a revolving door of offenders without addressing the root causes of crime. This perpetuates a sense of freedom and undermines trust in law enforcement. A more comprehensive approach, including community policing strategies and collaboration with social services, is needed to break this cycle and promote accountability and rehabilitation.

Some residential properties are being used for prostitution. Economic hardships have forced individuals to exploit their living spaces for illicit activities, further destabilising neighbourhoods. Moreover, the presence of brothels can pose significant safety concerns for residents, especially women and children.

There is prevalence of school dropouts and the adoption of foul language by children. Economic hardships and lack of educational resources may contribute to high dropout rates, depriving children of opportunities for future success. Moreover, exposure to inappropriate language and behaviours at a young age can perpetuate cycles of violence and social dysfunction. Investing in quality education, mentorship programs, and positive youth development initiatives is critical to addressing these issues and empowering the next generation.

Burglaries and thefts are often noticed in Chiredzi reflecting underlying socio-economic inequalities and law enforcement challenges. Limited employment opportunities and income disparities may drive individuals to resort to property crime as a means of survival.

Additionally, inadequate policing and community vigilance encourage criminal activities, further eroding trust and safety within the community.

In Chiredzi, there is scarcity of formal employment opportunities posing significant challenge to the economic well-being of residents. With few job prospects available, many individuals struggle to secure stable sources of income to support themselves and their families. This lack of employment perpetuates poverty and exacerbates other social issues such as crime and substance abuse, as individuals may turn to illicit activities out of desperation. Organizations like Plan International have been providing valuable assistance to select individuals in Chiredzi. However, the reliance on external aid highlights the underlying socio-economic challenges facing the community. While such interventions offer short-term relief and support, they may not address the systemic issues that perpetuate poverty and inequality in the long run. Sustainable solutions require a holistic approach that focuses on empowering communities, building local capacity, and fostering economic self-reliance.

Informal trading, particularly in agricultural produce like tomatoes, vegetables, and fruits, and also selling of firewood serves as a vital source of income for many residents in Chiredzi. However, reliance on informal markets presents challenges such as lack of regulation, market instability, and limited access to financial services. Additionally, dependence on natural resources for livelihoods without sustainable management practices can lead to environmental degradation and resource depletion. To support informal traders and promote sustainable livelihoods, there is a need for initiatives that enhance market access, provide business training, and encourage environmentally-friendly practices.

7.2 Education

There is absence of adequate educational infrastructure in Chiredzi town presents significant challenges for the community's development and well-being. The lack of municipal schools, particularly boarding facilities for both primary and secondary education, hampers access to quality education for many children, especially those from remote areas or disadvantaged backgrounds. This deficiency not only perpetuates educational inequality but also places strain on existing schools, leading to overcrowding and substandard learning environments. There are also concerns of hot sitting particularly at Tshovani Primary school which shows shortage of learning centres leading to cropping of informal schools.

Table 6: Primary and Secondary Schools in Chiredzi (Survey, 2024).

Primary schools	Secondary schools
Chiredzi Government	Chiredzi Government
Tshovani	Melbourne
Shingai	Chiredzi Christian College
Lowveld Adventist	
Melbourne	
Hippo Valley	

Some schools are yet to be constructed particularly in new residential areas. Land has already been set aside for the construction of schools.

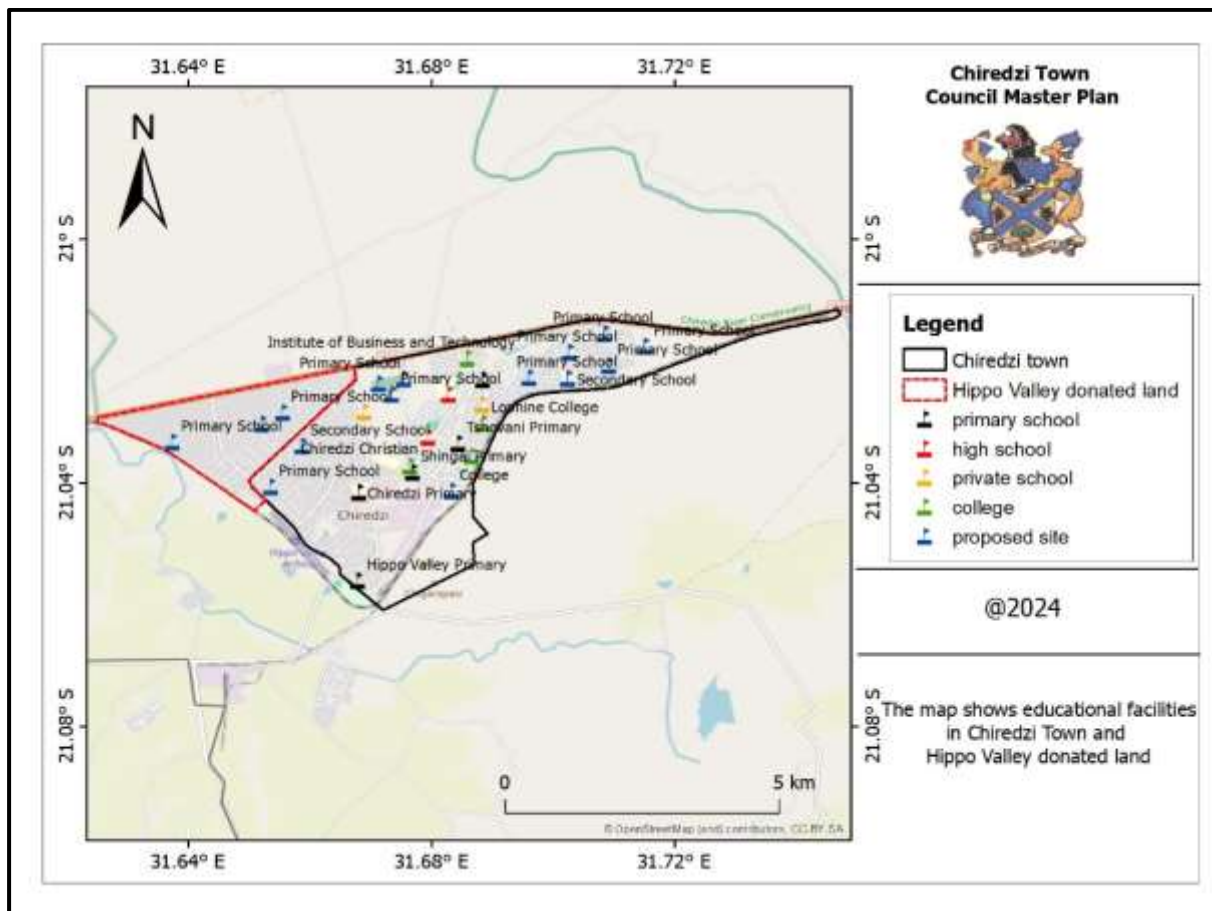


Figure 20: Distribution of Educational facilities (Survey, 2024).

There is one vocational training centre in Chiredzi. Life Sowing Ministries Vocational Training Centre is a private vocational training centre established and registered in 1992 under the Ministry of Higher & Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science & Technology Development. The centre offers HEXCO examined courses from National Foundation Certificate level to

National Diploma level as well as other international professional courses from different institutes.

Additionally, there is lack of adequate public Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and play facilities hinders the holistic development of young children in Chiredzi. Early childhood education plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and socio-emotional well-being. The absence of dedicated ECD centres deprives children of essential learning experiences during their formative years, limiting their potential for future academic success and overall development.

Furthermore, the absence of a civic centre for creative arts, shows, and films deprives Chiredzi of a vital cultural hub and platform for artistic expression. Such a centre could serve as a focal point for community events, cultural performances, and educational programs, enriching the social fabric of the town and fostering a sense of identity and belonging among residents. Without a dedicated space for creative endeavours, local artists and performers are deprived of opportunities to showcase their talents and contribute to the cultural vibrancy of Chiredzi.



Plate 17: Chiredzi Christian College (*Survey, 2024*).

7.3 Health Services

There is limited public healthcare infrastructure, comprising only one hospital and one poly clinic, is insufficient to meet the healthcare needs of Chiredzi's population. This shortage of healthcare facilities not only compromises access to essential medical services but also contributes to overcrowding and delays in treatment. With healthcare being a fundamental aspect of community well-being, there is an urgent need for investment in healthcare infrastructure to improve access and quality of care for residents. The town also relies on help from police clinic.

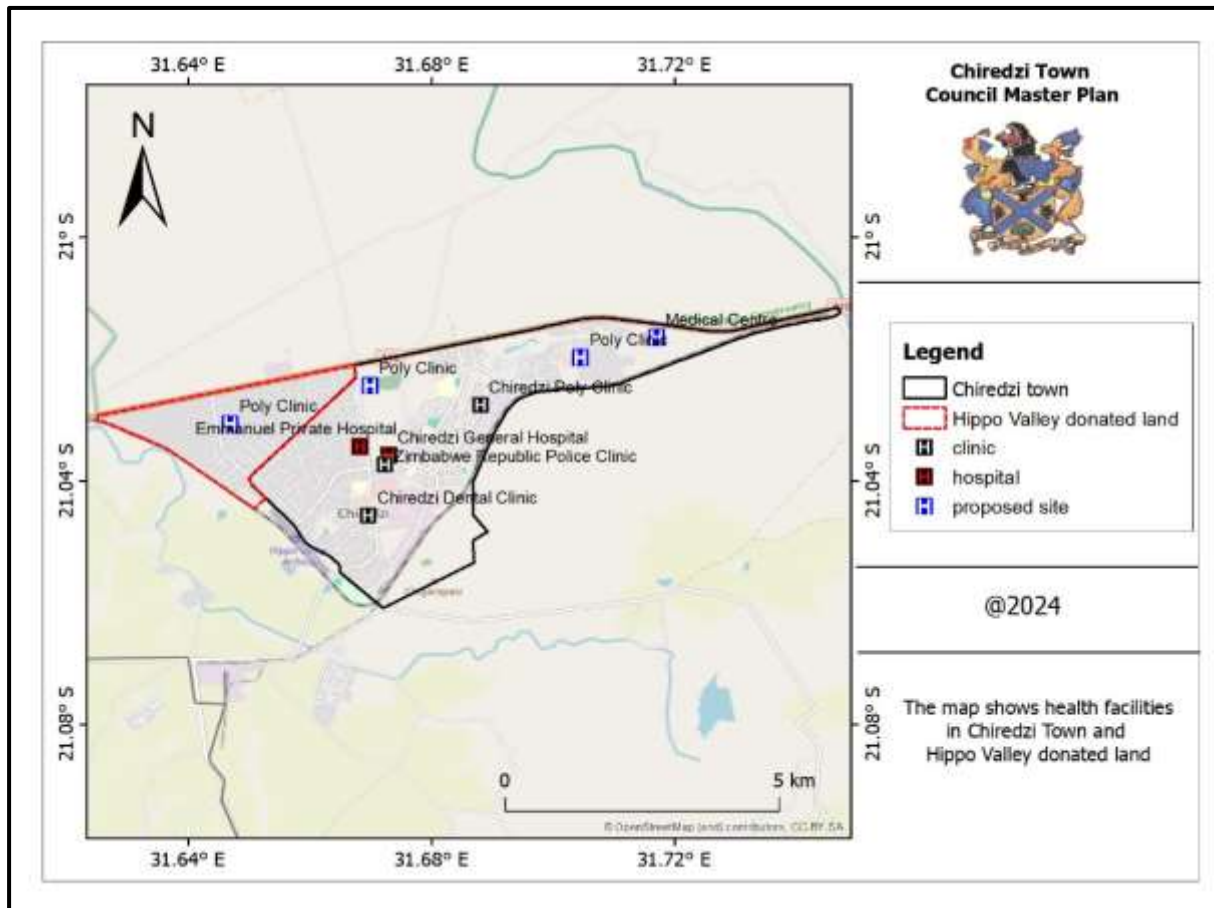


Figure 21: Distribution of major health facilities (Survey, 2024).

While these facilities provide essential medical care and access to medications, the reliance solely on private healthcare providers may present challenges for residents, particularly those with limited financial resources. Access to affordable healthcare services is crucial for promoting the well-being of the community and addressing the diverse healthcare needs of its residents. Therefore, there is a pressing need to explore avenues for expanding healthcare access, potentially through partnerships with public healthcare providers or initiatives aimed at increasing affordability and accessibility to ensure that all residents of Ward 5 can receive the medical attention and medications they require. Some clinics are yet to be constructed

particularly in new residential areas. Land has already been set aside for the construction of clinics.

In Chiredzi town, several critical health infrastructure deficiencies contribute to public health challenges and environmental concerns. One pressing issue is the lack of accessible public toilets both in the town centre and residential areas. Without adequate restroom facilities, residents and visitors may resort to open defecation, increasing the risk of water and food contamination, as well as the spread of waterborne diseases. Moreover, the absence of toilets in shopping centres and residential areas poses inconvenience and discomfort for individuals, particularly those with limited mobility or special needs.

Inadequate waste and refuse collection worsen environmental health hazards in Chiredzi town. The lack of a comprehensive waste management system results in litter accumulation, which not only detracts from the town's aesthetics but also provides breeding grounds for pests and vectors of disease. Improper disposal of waste can contaminate water sources and contribute to air and soil pollution, posing risks to both human health and the environment.

Moreover, the absence of sewer systems in residential areas leads to sanitation challenges, including frequent blockages and overflows. Without proper sewage infrastructure, residents may resort to unsafe disposal methods, such as dumping waste into open drains or water bodies, further compromising water quality and public health. The prevalence of blockages in residential areas not only disrupts daily life but also poses risks of waterborne diseases and environmental contamination.

In Zimbabwe, particularly in relation to ZINATHA (Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association), there is untapped potential in traditional sources of treatment, such as medicinal plants and traditional healing methods. These traditional practices hold promise as complementary or alternative forms of healthcare, offering culturally relevant treatments that are often more accessible and affordable to local communities. However, one of the challenges faced in Chiredzi is the absence of well-designated sites to locate traditional healers, which could provide a formal platform for their practice. Establishing such sites would not only promote the preservation and use of traditional healing knowledge but also ensure that these practices are conducted in a regulated and safe manner, benefiting both healers and patients alike in accessing reliable and effective healthcare options.

7.4 Social services

The Chiredzi Christian Children's Village (CCCV) was established in 2000 in response to the fallout of the HIV epidemic which ravaged Sub-Saharan Africa and left so many families and children at risk. Over the past 21 years, CCCV has lovingly raised more than 100 children into productive adulthood with more than 50 children currently in our care. Along with the Village, this wonderful Christian orphan ministry provides housing, care and guidance for our children 18 and over as they are furthering their education or serving job apprenticeships.

There is also Chambuta Children's Home in Chiredzi has been renamed Dr Auxilia Mngangwa Children's Home, following the request by the Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ) to honour the First Lady's efforts to ensure that the home best reflects its mission of providing a safe and nurturing environment for children in need.

In Chiredzi town, addressing the needs of its disadvantaged and disabled communities is fraught with challenges. These groups, which include the poor, elderly, and disabled individuals, often face significant barriers to accessing essential services. Healthcare facilities are scarce and often lack the specialized equipment and staff needed to cater to the specific needs of disabled and elderly individuals. This deficit in healthcare exacerbates health disparities, leaving many without adequate medical care and rehabilitation services.

Similarly, the educational system in Chiredzi struggles to accommodate students with disabilities. Schools lack the resources and trained personnel necessary to provide inclusive education, limiting opportunities for these students to receive quality learning experiences. This educational gap perpetuates inequality and hinders the long-term prospects of disadvantaged youth.

Social services in Chiredzi are also insufficient to meet the needs of the community's most vulnerable members. There is a notable absence of counselling services, financial assistance programs, and social work support. This lack of social infrastructure leaves many individuals and families without the necessary support networks to navigate economic hardships and social isolation.

Economically, disadvantaged and disabled individuals in Chiredzi face high rates of unemployment and underemployment. Inclusive hiring practices and vocational training

programs are limited, resulting in economic marginalization and income inequality. Many struggle to secure stable employment that pays a living wage, exacerbating the cycle of poverty and economic vulnerability.

7.5 Sports and Recreation and Entertainment

The absence of functional recreational facilities in Chiredzi deprives residents of leisure and social gathering spaces. Defunct recreational amenities not only diminish the quality of life for residents but also hinder community cohesion and engagement. Revitalizing recreational facilities can promote physical and mental well-being, foster social connections, and enhance the overall liveability of Chiredzi. Investment in recreational infrastructure is crucial for creating vibrant and healthy communities.



Plate 18: Tshovani Stadium (*Survey, 2024*).

Stadium not maintained, no public toilets, now turned into people's bedroom.

Passive open spaces, such as parks and green areas, are essential for promoting community well-being, relaxation, and environmental health. However, in Chiredzi, these spaces are limited in availability and accessibility. There is a scarcity of well-maintained parks and green spaces accessible to residents, particularly in densely populated areas. This lack of accessibility limits opportunities for outdoor recreation and relaxation, which are crucial for physical and mental health. Existing passive open spaces often suffer from inadequate maintenance, lacking

amenities like benches, lighting, and pathways. This discourages their use and diminishes their potential as community gathering spots. Moreover, the environmental benefits of passive open spaces, such as improving air quality and reducing urban heat island effects, are diminished due to their limited availability and quality in Chiredzi.

On the other hand, active open spaces, such as sports fields, playgrounds, and recreational facilities, play a crucial role in promoting physical activity, social interaction, and community cohesion. However, these spaces also face specific challenges in Chiredzi. Existing sports fields, playgrounds, and recreational facilities are often inadequate in number and quality. This results in overcrowding, limited access, and subpar conditions that undermine the effectiveness of these spaces in promoting physical activity and community engagement.



Plate 19: Chigarapasi Beerhall (*Survey, 2024*).

The Chigarapasi Beer Garden, spanning over an impressive 16,273 square meters, stands as a notable asset under the ownership and management of the Chiredzi Town Council. Its considerable size positions it as arguably Zimbabwe's largest beer garden, representing a significant landmark within the region.

The abandoned council pool in Chiredzi represents a concerning issue regarding urban amenities. Once a vital recreational asset for the community, its current state of neglect raises

several challenges. Firstly, the pool's abandonment reflects a lack of maintenance and investment by local authorities, leading to its deterioration over time. This deprives residents of a valuable leisure facility. Additionally, the pool's neglect contributes to the overall decline in the quality of urban infrastructure, potentially impacting the town's attractiveness to residents and visitors alike. Addressing the problem requires concerted efforts from local authorities to prioritize maintenance and restoration initiatives, ensuring that such key urban amenities are revitalised for the benefit of the community.

The issues surrounding Club 28, including noise pollution and exploitative activities involving minors, highlight significant challenges within the entertainment sector in Chiredzi. Firstly, the club's contribution to noise pollution disrupts the peace and tranquillity of the surrounding area, impacting residents' quality of life and potentially leading to conflicts with neighbouring businesses or residents. Additionally, the presence of exploitative activities involving minors within the club raises serious ethical and legal concerns. It not only exposes these vulnerable individuals to exploitation and harm but also reflects a broader issue of inadequate regulation and oversight in the entertainment industry. Moreover, the prevalence of such activities tarnishes the reputation of Chiredzi as a safe and family-friendly destination, potentially deterring visitors and impacting the local economy.

Chiredzi has ordinary shopping centres that include Zava, Vhurumuku, Makondo, Miye, Lyonais and Shineplus. The absence of state-of-the-art shopping mall comparable to those in Harare, such as Madokero and Sam Levi's Village, underscores significant disparities in infrastructure development between urban centres. This deficiency not only reflects a lack of investment in commercial and retail spaces but also limits residents' access to a variety of goods and services. As a result, the local economy may suffer, with potential implications for employment opportunities and economic growth within the town. Moreover, the absence of a modern shopping mall may contribute to residents' inconvenience and dissatisfaction, as they are compelled to travel to other areas to fulfil their shopping needs, thereby exacerbating transportation challenges and draining resources from the local economy.

Similarly, the dearth of recreational facilities, community halls, and public pools in Chiredzi highlights broader issues regarding urban planning and public infrastructure investment. The absence of these amenities not only deprives residents of opportunities for leisure and social interaction but also diminishes the town's appeal as a desirable place to live. Moreover, the lack of recreational spaces may contribute to a sense of social isolation and disconnection among

community members, negatively impacting their overall well-being and quality of life. Additionally, the absence of community halls hampers residents' ability to host events, meetings, and gatherings, limiting opportunities for civic engagement and community development initiatives within Chiredzi.

In Hippo Valley, several key sporting and entertainment facilities are available, including a golf course, a soccer stadium located at Chishamiso, and swimming pools. These amenities serve as important recreational hubs for residents within the vicinity. However, the town of Chiredzi itself lacks its own dedicated sporting and entertainment facilities. Consequently, residents of Chiredzi town often rely on these facilities in Hippo Valley for their entertainment purposes. Despite being situated outside the administrative boundary of Chiredzi town, these amenities attract residents from the town and surrounding areas due to their proximity and the limited availability of similar facilities within Chiredzi itself.

CHAPTER 8: BULK INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL AMENITIES

8.1 Water and Sanitation

8.1.1 Water Supply

About 92% of properties are connected to the water supply network in Chiredzi town. Residents not connected to the water supply system rely on shallow wells for their water needs. The Water Reticulation Network comprises pipes ranging from 250mm to as small as 20mm. The pumping capacity is 10ML/d against a demand of 15ML/d.

Water is supplied directly to consumers for 8 hours/day due to the decommissioning of the Chitsanga Reservoir. Additionally, water is pumped to Chigarapasi Reservoirs for 6 hours daily. This intermittent supply deprives Chiredzi town residents of continuous access to water, impacting domestic and personal use. It also leads to supply pressure losses, sewer system blockages, and inequitable water distribution. The water treatment plant is overwhelmed with increased water demand in Chiredzi.

Tongaat Huletts currently oversees the management of water works in Chiredzi Township on a cost recovery basis. Discussions are underway regarding the potential transfer of these responsibilities to the council. To ensure a smooth transition, stakeholders are considering requesting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to outline the terms of transfer.



Plate 20: Water works (*Survey, 2024*).

Water supply in Chiredzi presents a significant challenge, with residents relying on limited access to water that typically arrives during the night, starting from 3 pm, and ceases by 8 am. The study recommends the establishment of multiple treatment plants serving specific locations like Makondo, Tshovani, and Westwood and Shineplus areas. This approach would enhance resilience to breakdowns, ensuring continuous water supply even in the event of infrastructure failures in one area.

The existing water infrastructure, initially designed for a population of 9,000, now serves over 40,000 residents. This population increase underscores the urgent need for infrastructure upgrades and expansion to meet growing water demands. To address the growing demand for water, solar-powered boreholes have been installed across the township, providing supplementary water sources to ease pressure on the existing system.



Plate 21: Vhurumuku shops with Solar powered borehole (Survey, 2024).

The current water treatment plant, operated by Hippo Valley Estates, produces 10 megalitres (ML) per day, insufficient for Chiredzi's estimated population of 32,000. Consequently, plans for an independent water treatment plant are necessary. The proposed plant will utilize raw water from the ZINWA canal sourced from Lake Mutirikwi, as flows in the Chiredzi River are unsustainable. Siting, designing, and constructing the new plant will leverage the area's slope for cost-efficient distribution design.

8.1.2 Wastewater Treatment and Reticulation

It was observed that about 72% properties were connected to sewage network. Other common sanitary facilities include VIPs and pit latrines (21.4%) as well as septic tanks and soakage pits (6.0%). From the survey, 27.4% households use on-site sanitary facilities, and this constitutes the low-density suburbs and illegal settlement properties. This reflects that the town is lagging in terms of sewage services coverage which was targeted to reach 82% by year 2015 (Water Operators Partnership, 2009).

Wastewater analysis results show that the measured parameters are within Environmental Management (Effluent and Solid waste Disposal) Regulation, 2007 limits. Arth (2012) emphasized the need for effluent quality to be of World Health Organization Standards to

prevent environmental pollution and spread of diseases. Reports from the authorities show that examination of domestic wastewater is done for all parameters on monthly basis.

Chiredzi Township faces critical challenges with its sewer system, characterized by daily bursts that disrupt normal functioning and pose significant health and sanitation risks to residents. Compounding these issues is the lack of upgrades, particularly in older locations, exacerbating the frequency and severity of sewer-related incidents. The absence of infrastructure improvements in these areas not only perpetuates the problem but also underscores the pressing need for urgent intervention and investment in modernizing and maintaining Chiredzi's sewer network. Addressing these challenges is paramount to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of the township's population and preserving the environment for future generations.



Plate 21a: Ariel view of Chiredzi Sewer Ponds (*Survey, 2024*).

8.1.3 Solid waste

The issue of waste collection in Chiredzi presents a significant challenge, primarily due to the town's reliance solely on two refuse cars to manage waste collection for the entire area. With limited resources and capacity, these vehicles are often insufficient to adequately address the volume of waste generated by the community. As a result, waste collection services may be

irregular or incomplete, leading to accumulation of garbage in residential areas, public spaces, and along roadways.

Compounding the problem is the absence of a designated landfill in Chiredzi. Without a proper facility for waste disposal and leachate control, authorities struggle to find viable solutions for the management and disposal of refuse. This lack of infrastructure exacerbates the waste management crisis, as authorities are left with few options for handling and disposing of collected waste. In some cases, waste may be improperly disposed of in open areas or burned, posing environmental and health hazards to the community.

These challenges underscore the urgent need for comprehensive infrastructure upgrades and strategic interventions to address Chiredzi's sanitation and waste management issues effectively. Investing in additional waste collection vehicles, establishing a designated landfill site, and implementing recycling and waste reduction initiatives are essential steps towards improving waste management practices and promoting a cleaner, healthier environment for residents. Additionally, community engagement and awareness campaigns can help foster a culture of responsible waste disposal and environmental stewardship, further contributing to sustainable waste management in Chiredzi.



Plate 22: Existing solid waste dumpsite in Chiredzi (*Survey, 2024*).



Plate 23: Dumping of solid waste along railway line (*Survey, 2024*).

Chiredzi's solid waste management system falls short of environmental standards set by regulatory authorities like the Environmental Management Agency (EMA). Inadequate dumpsites and waste disposal practices result in environmental degradation and pose health hazards to residents. The council's failure to meet EMA standards not only incurs penalties but also reflects a broader neglect of environmental stewardship. Improving waste management practices and investing in modern waste disposal facilities are essential steps to mitigate environmental risks and ensure the health and well-being of Chiredzi residents.

8.2 Energy and Power

In terms of electricity supply, ZETDC's funding has historically come from institutions like the World Bank or IMF, which facilitated the networking process. However, the emergence of land barons purchasing land and building their own power lines has led to complications and compromised the quality of electricity supply. These land barons often prioritize developed clusters of land, neglecting open spaces in between, resulting in increased costs and inefficiencies in the distribution network. While ZETDC is working on building backbone infrastructure, funding challenges persist, with the cost of constructing one kilometre of power lines ranging between \$12,000 to \$16,000 for both small and big lines.

Chiredzi ZETDC has provided a 15MVA transporter to Hippo, although this capacity remains insufficient, with neighbouring areas like Triangle receiving 22.5 MVA, which still falls short of demand. Chiredzi typically consumes around 14 megawatts at any given time, with Hippo generating electricity primarily from May to December when the mill operates. However, ZETDC cannot solely rely on Hippo's electricity due to ownership and capacity limitations. These factors highlight the complex dynamics and challenges facing electricity supply in Chiredzi, necessitating strategic planning and investment to ensure reliable and sustainable energy provision for the community.

Despite Tongaat's energy contribution to the national grid through its operations, Chiredzi continues to grapple with severe load shedding, indicating a disconnect between energy production and local consumption. This discrepancy underscores the need for more efficient energy distribution systems to ensure equitable access to power within the region. Furthermore, the prevalence of high temperatures and abundant sunshine presents a valuable opportunity for harnessing solar energy on a larger scale. Establishing major solar farming plants in Chiredzi could not only alleviate the strain on the national grid but also provide a sustainable solution to the town's energy needs. By tapping into this renewable energy source, Chiredzi can mitigate the impacts of load shedding and reduce its reliance on conventional power sources, thereby enhancing energy resilience and promoting environmental sustainability.

In addition to solar energy, the implementation of biodigesters for the sewerage system represents another innovative approach to augmenting energy supply in Chiredzi. Biodigesters utilize organic waste, such as sewage, to produce biogas, a renewable energy source that can be used for heating, cooking, and electricity generation. By adopting biodigesters, Chiredzi can leverage its existing infrastructure to generate clean and renewable energy while simultaneously addressing waste management challenges. This dual-purpose solution not only enhances energy sustainability but also promotes environmental stewardship by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimizing reliance on fossil fuels. Through the integration of solar farming and biodigesters, Chiredzi can unlock its potential for sustainable energy development, paving the way for a more resilient and environmentally conscious future.

8.3 Communication

There are four main networks in the district, namely Econet, Telcel, Netone and TelOne. Econet has the strongest signal and widest coverage and as a result it is used by a greater percentage

of the population. TelOne is not very common in the communal areas except on some institutions. Wi-Fi usage is increasing in urban areas especially with the introduction of hotspots.



Plate 24: Telecommunication booster in the CBD (*Survey, 2024*).

8.4 Transportation and Traffic Management

Traffic management poses a significant challenge in Chiredzi, particularly at the old and new ranks where long-distance buses and local commuter vehicles often load along streets, causing congestion and safety hazards. Moreover, heavy trucks frequently traverse residential areas and pass through the Central Business District (CBD), exacerbating traffic congestion and posing risks to pedestrians and other road users. To address these issues, there is a pressing need for the development of ring roads and bypass routes to divert heavy traffic away from residential and commercial areas. Implementing tonnage restrictions on feeder roads can also help alleviate pressure on infrastructure and improve road safety. Additionally, the installation of solar-powered traffic lights at junctions and streetlights can enhance visibility and regulate traffic flow, contributing to safer and more efficient transportation systems in Chiredzi. These measures, combined with proactive urban planning and infrastructure development, are essential for effectively managing traffic and promoting sustainable urban mobility in the town.

8.4.1 Rail

The rail system infrastructure is characterised by dilapidated station wagons. Under normal circumstances the rail system must be of great functionality by providing service on the linkage between Chiredzi and Rutenga as well as sugarcane production areas such as Hippo valley and Triangle. Currently, the rail transport section which is operating at minimum level is that of goods train in transport products to and from sugarcane industries (See plate 9.1). The passenger locomotives are not operating due to poor state of locomotives and the railway lines as well as low ridership demand.



Plate 25: Railway line in Chiredzi (*Survey, 2024*).

8.4.2 Road

The current approach of regular grading no longer addresses the underlying issues plaguing the road infrastructure. Residents are experiencing persistent problems such as potholes, erosion, and uneven surfaces, which compromise road safety and accessibility. Refilling the roads is essential to provide a more lasting solution that ensures smoother, more durable surfaces, thereby improving the overall quality of transportation within the ward. This urgent action is necessary to alleviate the inconvenience and hazards posed by deteriorating road conditions for residents and commuters alike.

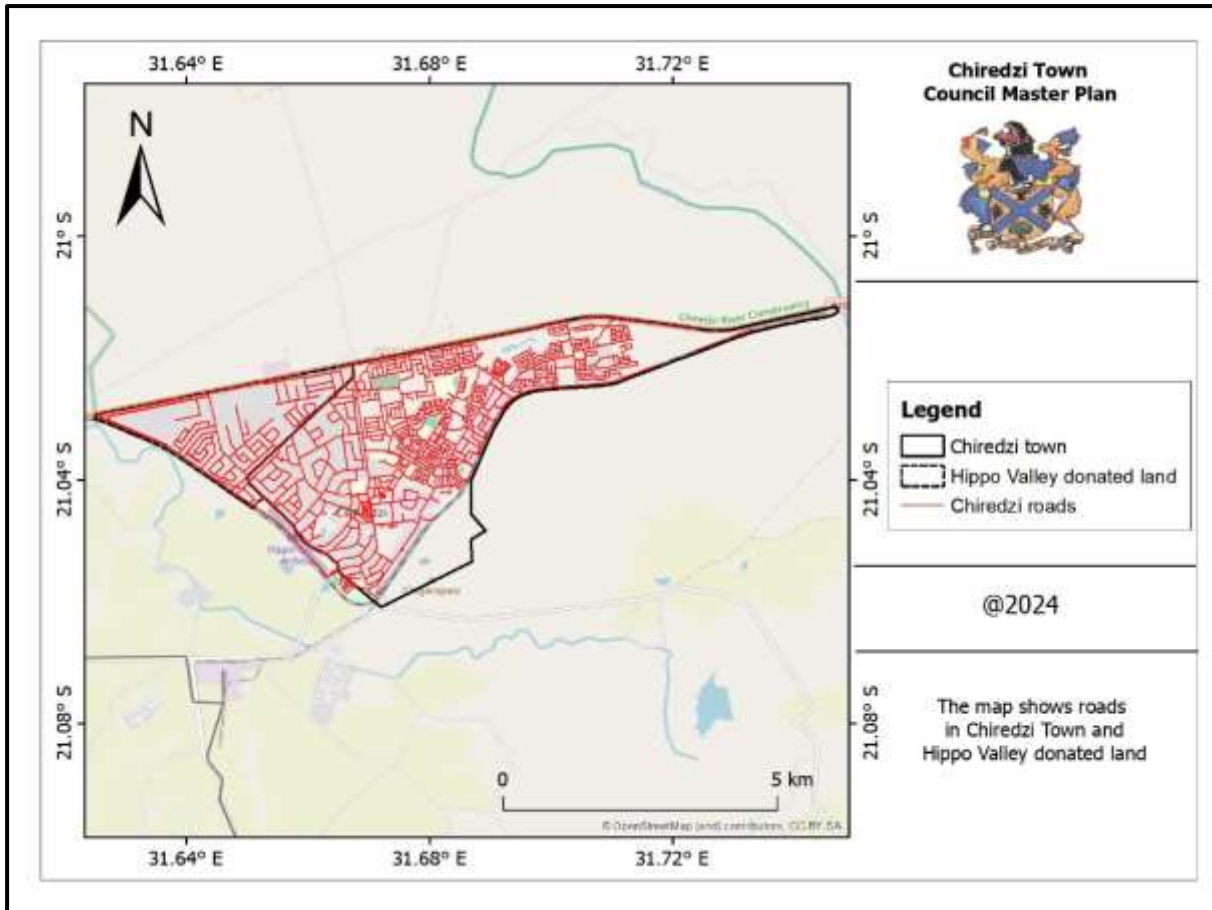


Figure 22: Road Network

In Chiredzi town, the lack of provision for service roads linking major thoroughfares has led to the proliferation of illegal access roads, creating eyesores and safety hazards for residents. These unauthorized pathways, often hastily carved out by residents seeking shortcuts or alternate routes, not only disrupt the planned urban layout but also pose risks of accidents and environmental degradation.

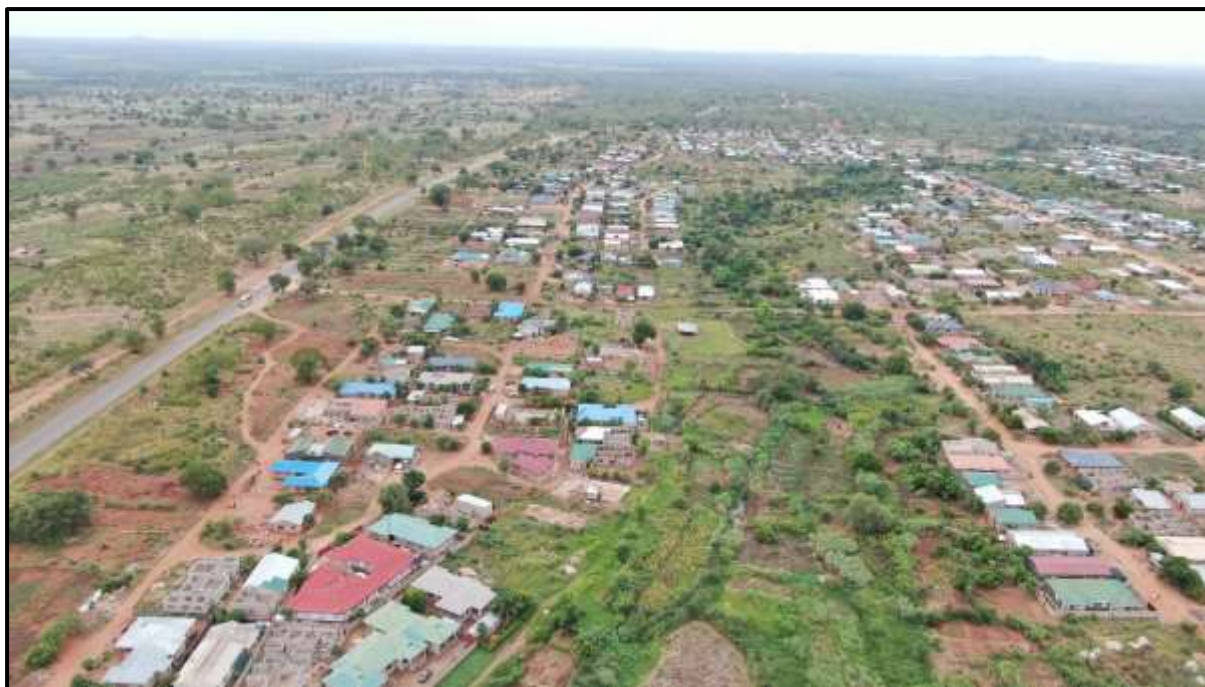


Plate 26: State of roads: Major Road vis a vis access road (Survey, 2024).

The absence of a systematic approach to regulate these access roads exacerbates the problem, as they remain outside the purview of relevant road authorities. Without proper oversight and maintenance, these makeshift routes can deteriorate rapidly, further diminishing the aesthetic appeal of the town while impeding efficient traffic flow. Additionally, the ad-hoc nature of these access roads makes future urban planning and development efforts challenging, as they may necessitate costly realignment projects to integrate them into the town's infrastructure network effectively.

The deterioration of infrastructure, particularly roads, has become a significant concern for residents, impacting traffic flow and public safety. Once well-maintained hard-surfaced roads have now degraded into gravel paths, creating discomfort for commuters and hindering the smooth movement of vehicles. This transformation not only reflects a failure in ongoing maintenance efforts but also signifies a broader neglect of infrastructure development within the town. Furthermore, the inadequacy of drainage systems compounds the challenges faced by Chiredzi's road network. What were once effective drainage channels have now become clogged with silt and debris, rendering them ineffective during periods of heavy rainfall. Consequently, water accumulates on the roads, exacerbating erosion and increasing the risk of accidents for motorists and pedestrians alike. The failure to address these drainage issues not

only undermines public safety but also contributes to the accelerated degradation of the road surfaces.

Moreover, the abandonment of the railway system for passenger transport further exacerbates Chiredzi's transportation woes. While the railway still serves as a vital link for the transportation of goods, its disuse for passenger travel represents a missed opportunity to alleviate road congestion and provide residents with a reliable alternative mode of transportation for short as well as long distance routes. This neglect of the railway system underscores a broader pattern of neglect and underinvestment in Chiredzi's transportation infrastructure, perpetuating the town's reliance on increasingly inadequate road networks.

The absence of clear and visible traffic signage poses significant challenges for road safety and efficient traffic management. The lack of prohibition notices, such as "no stopping," "one way," "no hitchhiking," "no parking," and indicators for children crossings and zebra crossings, contributes to confusion among motorists and pedestrians alike. Without these essential signs, drivers may inadvertently violate traffic regulations, leading to congestion, accidents, and increased risks for both road users and pedestrians.

Moreover, the absence of street names further exacerbates navigation challenges within Chiredzi town. Without clear identifiers for streets and roads, residents, visitors, and emergency services may struggle to locate specific destinations, leading to delays and inefficiencies in travel. Additionally, the lack of street names hinders effective emergency response efforts, as accurate location information is crucial for timely assistance during emergencies. The absence of adequate traffic signage and street names reflects a broader lack of infrastructure planning and investment in Chiredzi town. Effective traffic management requires comprehensive signage systems that guide road users and enforce traffic regulations. Similarly, the provision of street names is essential for efficient navigation and emergency response.

In Chiredzi town, the lack of adequate street lighting presents significant challenges for both public safety and urban development. The absence of sufficient streetlights creates dark and potentially hazardous conditions, particularly during the night, in various parts of the town. This lack of illumination not only poses risks to pedestrians and motorists but also contributes to an increased sense of insecurity and fear of crime among residents. The absence of

streetlights in certain areas also contributes to environmental concerns, as it may facilitate illegal dumping and criminal activities under the cover of darkness. Without adequate lighting, dark corners and alleys may become hotspots for antisocial behaviour, vandalism, and other illicit activities, further undermining the overall safety and liability of the town.

In Chiredzi town, even where streetlights are installed, functionality remains a persistent issue. The reliability of electricity-powered lights is often compromised by irregular power supply and subscription issues, leading to prolonged periods of darkness in areas that depend on them for illumination. These streetlights can remain non-functional for weeks or even longer, leaving residents and road users navigating through poorly lit streets and compromising their safety. The lack of consistent maintenance and recharging of these lights exacerbates the problem, as they may remain inoperable even when power is available. Consequently, the intended benefits of street lighting, such as improved road safety and enhanced urban aesthetics, are negated

8.4.2.1 Public transport provision and infrastructure conditions

Local public transport is predominated by both formal and informal commuter omnibus (Kombi's), taxis and intermediate transport (IMT's). Intermediate means of transport (IMTs) range from simple wheelbarrows and handcarts to bicycle based, motorcycle and include 2-wheel carts pulled by donkeys. These IMTs are providing local transport, carrying people and goods around nearby villages and town suburbs which include Tshovani high-density connecting to the markets in the Central Business District.

Table 7: Road network

ITEM DESCRIPTION	COVERAGE IN KM
GRAVELLED	33
TARRED	43.46
UNSERVICED	80.37
TOTAL	156.83

Table 8: Road condition

ITEM DESCRIPTION	COVERAGE IN KM	CONDITION	CULTURE OF MAINTENANCE
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TARRED	1,47 41,99	IN GOOD CONDITION BAD CONDITION	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE PERIODIC MAINTENANCE
TOTAL	43,46		
GRAVEL	33	ERODED AND POTHOLED	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE
EARTH	80,37	ERODED AND POTHOLED	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE
STORM WATER DRAINAGE	12 35,4	DRAIN CLEANED SILTED	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE
TOTAL	47,4		

Formal commuter omnibuses are ZUPCO kombi's which operate on designated terminus, routes, and fixed fare whilst informal operators (*mishikashika*) have no dedicated places and their fares depend on the prevailing market conditions. The bus termini for long distance and cross border buses are in a deplorable state characterised by vandalised bus shelters, damaged kerbsides, and unmarked parking bus bays. There is also poor drainage system and dysfunctional public toilets at the terminus.



Plate 27: Two termini in Chiredzi Town (*Survey, 2024*).

The Transporters Association of Chiredzi voices frustration over the Chiredzi Town Council's sluggish response to their concerns, highlighting a backlog of unresolved issues spanning up to 14 years. They emphasize the urgent need for modernized ranks akin to those seen in other cities like Gweru, aligning with the vision for Chiredzi to achieve upper-middle-class status by 2030. One of their primary concerns is the state of the current rank surfaces, advocating for tar surfacing to mitigate health risks posed by dust pollution, which can contribute to the spread of diseases like tuberculosis.

Additionally, the association calls for a comprehensive restructuring of all ranks, citing the absence of toilets in the old rank and the unsanitary conditions caused by the presence of Magwangwata plants along the stream between the old and new ranks. They highlight the potential health risks, including the threat of cholera outbreaks, associated with using this area as open defecation grounds.

Despite multiple applications, the association expresses disappointment over the lack of response regarding the allocation of an office stand for Transporters Association Services. They also propose practical solutions for rank expansion to alleviate congestion, such as extending the new rank by 15 meters from Masa Road and expanding the old rank by a similar distance towards the stream, which would benefit both commuters and the council's revenue stream.

The Transporters Association of Chiredzi raises several pressing concerns regarding the state of infrastructure and public services in the community. They emphasise the urgent need for CCTV monitors to deter crime, particularly instances of fighting among rank marshals and vendors, which disrupt public order. Additionally, the installation of CCTV systems would help monitor the activities of council workers, reducing the risk of internal losses and improving accountability.

Furthermore, the association highlights the environmental impact of local commuters using dusty roads, which leads to pollution and erosion. They advocate for the tarring of these roads to mitigate environmental damage and enhance road safety. Moreover, they call for improved road servicing, including the placement of clear road signs and designated pick-up points for commuters to prevent accidents and facilitate smoother traffic flow.

The concerns regarding public health and sanitation are paramount, particularly concerning rank areas where inadequate facilities pose significant risks. Insufficient infrastructure in these areas can lead to contamination of drinking water sources and contribute to the spread of diseases such as diarrhoea. Without proper facilities for waste disposal and sanitation, rank areas become breeding grounds for bacteria and pathogens, contaminating nearby water sources used for drinking and cooking. As a result, residents and commuters are at heightened risk of contracting waterborne illnesses, exacerbating public health challenges in the community.

Moreover, the lack of adequate lighting in rank areas compounds safety issues, especially during nighttime hours. Poor visibility increases the likelihood of accidents and incidents, posing risks to pedestrians, motorists, and commuters alike. The absence of adequate lighting also creates opportunities for criminal activities, further jeopardizing the safety and well-being of individuals in these areas. To address these challenges, the association proposes the installation of traffic barriers and the servicing of solar lights. Implementing these measures would not only enhance safety and visibility during nighttime hours but also mitigate the risks associated with poor sanitation and inadequate infrastructure, promoting the overall health and well-being of the community.

In terms of public amenities, there is a demand for improved toilet and bath facilities at rank areas, with the suggestion of modernizing infrastructure and implementing solar-powered lighting for cleanliness and security purposes. Additionally, the lack of toilets in bars and bottle

stores poses health hazards to the community, necessitating urgent action from local authorities.

The association underscores the pressing need for infrastructure expansion, particularly advocating for the expansion of the Chigarapasi intersection. This initiative aims to address the growing issue of traffic congestion, especially during peak hours, which not only disrupts the flow of vehicles but also poses risks to road safety. By widening the intersection, traffic congestion can be alleviated, allowing for smoother traffic flow and reducing the likelihood of accidents. Additionally, an expanded intersection enhances overall road safety by providing more space for vehicles to manoeuvre and reducing the likelihood of collisions.

Furthermore, the association emphasizes the importance of swiftly implementing storage bay and towing bylaws to ensure compliance with traffic regulations and promote road safety. These measures involve the establishment of designated storage bays for vehicles that violate parking regulations, along with the implementation of towing procedures to remove illegally parked vehicles from roadways. By enforcing these bylaws, the local council can not only maintain order on the roads but also generate revenue through fines and fees associated with towing and storage. Moreover, these measures serve as deterrents against illegal parking, thereby promoting adherence to traffic regulations and contributing to overall road safety.

There are challenges of illegal parking and the lack of adherence to traffic regulations, which pose significant risks to road safety and traffic flow in the area. The absence of designated storage bays for vehicles violating parking regulations exacerbates congestion and obstruction on roadways, potentially leading to accidents and delays for motorists and pedestrians alike. Additionally, the lack of effective enforcement measures, such as towing procedures, allows illegal parking behaviour to persist unchecked, further compromising road safety and hindering the smooth flow of traffic. These issues not only contribute to a chaotic road environment but also reflect a disregard for established traffic laws and regulations. Thus, the swift implementation of storage bay and towing bylaws is crucial to addressing these challenges, promoting compliance with traffic regulations, enhancing road safety, and ensuring efficient traffic management in the locality. Moreover, the potential revenue generation through fines and fees associated with towing and storage serves as an additional incentive for the local council to enforce these measures effectively, further emphasizing the importance of their implementation.



Plate 28: Long distance buses loading along street (*Survey, 2024*).

Informal and formal transport in Chiredzi and termini conditions



Plate 29: Mushika-shika taxi transport (*Survey, 2024*).

Results from a road condition assessment were conducted for both surfaced and gravel roads revealed that Chiredzi Town is covered with 55km of tarred roads and 95km of earth and gravel roads as per council statistics. However, the quality of the roads for both surfaced and gravel is poor as characterised by potholes, run down shoulders and lack of both regular and periodic maintenance. It was revealed that the Zimbabwe National Road Authority has not been allocating enough financial resources to the Urban Council for road maintenance and rehabilitation as espoused by the Roads Act Chapter (13:18).

The functional road hierarchy in the vicinity is dominated by secondary distributor roads. A functional road hierarchy is a grading of roads according to their increasing or decreasing importance in traffic carrying or other functions. It is used for the planning, design, and operation of roads. The urban road classifications adopted in Zimbabwe are Central Business District Road, arterial, collector and local. The national road linking Masvingo and Tanganda is the one which demarcates the existing town and the proposed site. There is a primary distributor road which branches off the national road to the central business district (CBD). There is also a rail system and a small airport (Buffalo Range). In terms of the road sector the town is still to have signalised intersections hence, the intersections operate using stop signs.

Heavy Vehicle Transport Operators

The necessity for ring roads in Chiredzi stems from several pressing issues associated with heavy trucks passing through the town's Central Business District (CBD) and residential areas. Firstly, the current route taken by heavy trucks often leads to congestion and traffic jams within the CBD, as these vehicles navigate narrow streets that are not designed to accommodate their size and volume. This congestion not only disrupts the flow of traffic but also poses safety hazards for pedestrians and other road users. the current route taken by heavy trucks may result in wear and tear on road infrastructure, leading to higher maintenance costs for local authorities.

The lack of ring roads in Chiredzi forces heavy trucks to pass through the CBD and residential areas, leading to congestion, safety hazards, environmental concerns, and increased maintenance costs. Addressing this issue through the construction of ring roads would not only alleviate these problems but also improve overall traffic management in the town.



Plate 30: Weto Transport (*Survey, 2024*).

Weto Transport operates independently and has a contractual agreement with Triangle, functioning as an association alongside other individuals such as Lyonais Investments, Fairline, and WMS. Their operations are consistent throughout the year, primarily focused on transporting either sugar cane or sugar. However, their efficiency is hindered by the condition of the road network in Chiredzi. The roads are plagued by potholes and are too narrow, posing challenges for truck transportation. Moreover, trucks sometimes inadvertently enter residential areas due to the lack of proper road infrastructure or signage. Therefore, Weto Transport and its affiliated associations would greatly benefit from the construction of a bypass road to alleviate congestion and ensure safer and more efficient transportation routes.

8.4.3 Air

Buffalo Range Airport in Chiredzi town. Buffalo Range Airport is an international airport that has seen new improvements and renovations to help increase tourism in the province. It can now service direct flights from around the world.

Situated in the Southeastern Lowveld of Zimbabwe, Buffalo Range Airport always gives its guests a warm welcome in terms of natural hospitality and climatic conditions. The airport is centrally located between the two sugar towns, Triangle and Chiredzi which are thirty kilometres (30km) apart. Buffalo Range Airport is the gateway to the three main conservancies that are located in the Southeastern Lowveld namely Save Valley, Malilangwe and Bubiana. The airport also provides access to the Great Limpopo Trans Frontier Park which brings together some of the richest and most established wildlife areas in Zimbabwe (Gonarezhou), Mozambique (Limpopo National Park) and South Africa (Kruger National Park). In addition, the airport provides access to Green Fuels production at Chisumbanje and the recently commissioned giant Tugwi Murkosi Dam.

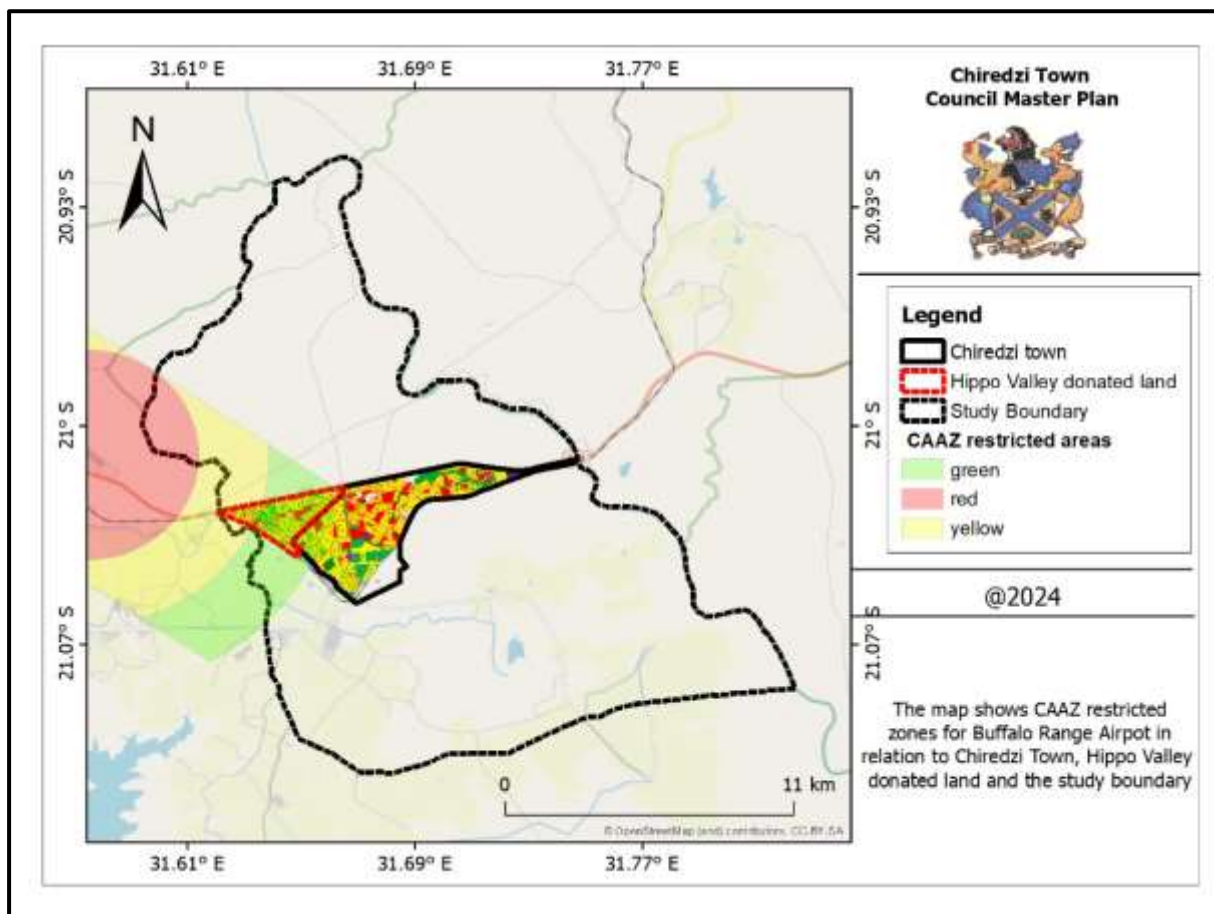


Figure 23: Buffalo Range Airport showing restriction zones

Buffalo Range International Airport is designed to handle commercial scheduled traffic, commercial non-scheduled traffic, private and general aviation traffic. Currently commercial scheduled traffic is not available. The airport expansion programme is still on though it has been on the cards for some time since the ground breaking ceremony conducted by the late Vice President Cde Muzenda in October 2002.

Plans were made and approved for the terminal building and completely new 4 000m runway for the airport to accommodate all types of aircraft without limitations. This calls for more land and or relocations of some settlements close to the airport as guided by the national and international laws, regulations and recommended standards and procedures on aviation activities and related developments.

There is need for a coordinated approach on any developments in areas within defined airport critical zones and airport crash zones in order to maintain minimum safe and secure aviation activities as we craft our plans for development. Annex 1 and 2 are the Airport crash Zone and Airport Critical Zones for Buffalo Range Airport as a guide even for any other airstrip within the district. There is need to raise more awareness campaigns on the dangers of interfering with the airport operations.

Tourist attraction sights located in the vicinity of Buffalo Range Airport:

- Chilojo Cliffs
- Gonarezhou National Park
- Singita Pamushana (Malilangwe Trust)

In addition to Buffalo Range there is also an aerodrome within Chiredzi town. The presence of an aerodrome represents a valuable asset with untapped potential for expansion into a fully functioning airport. Although currently limited to servicing private flights, the aerodrome maintained, laying a strong foundation for future development. With proper investment and strategic planning, this aerodrome could evolve into a regional airport, serving both commercial and private aviation needs. Such expansion would not only enhance local connectivity but also stimulate economic growth by facilitating tourism, trade, and investment opportunities in the region. Unlocking the full potential of the aerodrome as an airport holds promise for Chiredzi's development trajectory and its integration into broader transportation networks.



Plate 31: Chiredzi town Aerodrome (*Survey, 2024*).

8.5 Service delivery by ward.

8.5.1 Ward 1

Aspect	Description
Water Supply	About 75% of residents in Ward 1 have access to water supply. However, the side where there are light industries faces water challenges. The industrial area covers about 25% of the total area, and water is received through direct pumping. The discrepancy in water access highlights an infrastructure disparity between residential and industrial zones, requiring attention for equitable distribution.
Sewerage System	The sewerage system in Ward 1 requires significant revamping as many pipes were installed before independence, some dating back to 1965 and 1978. Attempts to revamp have been made, but only 2.2km of pipes were covered over the last decade, leaving substantial portions outdated. Additionally, overpopulation in the Majaradha area has led to cases of burst sewers, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive upgrades to ensure public health and sanitation.

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<p>Refuse Collection</p>	<p>Refuse collection occurs twice a week in Ward 1, but the community also practices dumping at open spaces, contributing to environmental degradation and health hazards. Efforts to address this issue should include increased waste management infrastructure and public awareness campaigns to promote responsible disposal practices.</p>
<p>Roads</p>	<p>Ward 1 faces a lack of adequate machinery for road servicing, resulting in predominantly gravel roads that require attention. The state of the roads not only affects transportation efficiency but also poses safety risks to residents. Investments in road maintenance equipment and infrastructure are necessary to improve accessibility and ensure the safety of commuters</p>
<p>Public Lighting</p>	<p>Public lighting poses a challenge in Ward 1, leading to increased crime such as robbery and thefts, especially in poorly lit areas. Public lighting is limited to critical areas with high foot traffic, leaving many parts of the ward vulnerable to criminal activities. Addressing this issue requires strategic placement of lighting infrastructure and community engagement initiatives to enhance safety and security.</p>
<p>Education</p>	<p>Education in Ward 1 is primarily served by one primary school, which is performing well, but there is a need for additional educational facilities to cater to the growing population. While private preschools offer some alternatives, ensuring access to quality education for all residents remains a priority for community development.</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>Ward 1 lacks a government or council health facility, relying instead on three surgeries and a pharmacy. This limited healthcare infrastructure underscores the need for expanded medical services to address the diverse health needs of the community effectively. There is need to mainstream development towards accessible and comprehensive health facilities so as to promote overall well-being and healthcare equity.</p>
<p>Entertainment</p>	<p>Entertainment options in Ward 1 are predominantly limited to more than 10 bars, with few alternative forms of leisure activities available. Diversifying Entertainment options in Ward 1 are predominantly limited to more than 10 bars, with few alternative forms of leisure activities available. Diversifying entertainment offerings can contribute to community cohesion and quality</p>

	of life, highlighting the importance of investing in recreational facilities and cultural events to meet the diverse interests of residents.
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8.5.2 Ward 2

Aspect	Description
Water	Recent water challenges have been reported in Ward 2, particularly affecting areas near Westwood Lodge, Shineplus residential area, and around COTCO since the implementation of the direct water line. Some areas have never received water, exacerbating the situation.
Sewerage System	Blair toilets and septic tanks are commonly used in Ward 2 due to the lack of water supply for proper sewerage systems. Reticulated sewer is only found in old suburbs and new suburbs where owners have the capacity to drill boreholes. While residential areas experience limited sewer bursts, frequent burst pipes occur around Chisa Industries. Septic tanks are found on residential stands of 800 to 3000 square meters of space.
Roads	Ward 2 lacks basic road infrastructure, with many new settlements lacking graded roads. Residents often resort to creating shortcuts, leading to challenges for refuse trucks. Addressing road infrastructure is crucial for improving accessibility and waste management services in the ward.
Public Lighting	The absence of public lighting in Ward 2 poses safety concerns for residents, contributing to incidents of theft and insecurity. Residents are vulnerable to criminal activities due to poorly lit streets, emphasizing the need for investment in lighting infrastructure to enhance community safety and security.
Education	Ward 2 is served by two schools, with Hippo Valley School experiencing overwhelming demand. Ensuring adequate resources and infrastructure for both schools is essential to provide quality education to all students in the ward. Efforts to expand educational facilities should be prioritized to accommodate the growing population and promote equitable access to education.
Entertainment	Limited entertainment options are available in Ward 2, with only the Showgrounds Bar providing recreational opportunities. The absence of diverse entertainment facilities underscores the need for additional

	recreational spaces and cultural activities to enhance the quality of life for residents in the ward.
Health	Ward 2 lacks a clinic, posing challenges for residents in accessing healthcare services. Establishing a healthcare facility is essential to address the healthcare needs of the community and promote wellness. Efforts to improve healthcare infrastructure and services should be prioritized to ensure the well-being of all residents in the ward.

8.5.3 Ward 3

Aspect	Description
Water Provision	The provision of water in the ward is at 90%. There are 5 boreholes in the ward, providing backup in case of any issues with the main water supply.
Sewerage reticulation	Areas like Elephant, Hilda, and Chademana experience sewer bursts almost daily, indicating significant infrastructure challenges.
Roads	Out of 18 roads in the ward, only 3 are functional, suggesting a dire need for maintenance and repair of road infrastructure.
Solid waste management	Garbage collection occurs once per week, leading to the dumping of waste in the railway, highlighting inefficiencies in waste management practices.
Education	There is only one primary school, Shingai, in the ward, indicating potential challenges in access to education for children residing in the area. Additionally, there is a council crèche, suggesting limited educational facilities available for younger children in the ward.
Health Facilities	The ward has only one hospital, Chiredzi General Hospital, and a ZRP clinic, which seem inadequate in providing adequate healthcare services to residents.
Entertainment	There are 5 beerhalls in the ward, but the presence of Club 28 has been reported to disturb residents, especially due to the admission of underage girls.
Public Lighting	Most public lights in the ward have stopped working, indicating a need for maintenance and repair to ensure adequate lighting for public safety.

8.5.4 Ward 4

Aspect	Description
Water Provision	The provision of water is reported at 85%. Additionally, Molly Street faces challenges regarding water supply, indicating localized issues within the ward's water distribution network.
Sewer	Sewer bursts occur on Chademana Roaden, highlighting broader infrastructure issues affecting sanitation within the ward.
Solid waste management	Refuse collection is limited to once per week, potentially leading to overflow and environmental concerns within the community.
Public Lighting	Only one tower light was operational, but it is no longer working. Moreover, the lack of lighting at the back of Chigarapasi contributes to security concerns, leading to increased incidents of robbery in the area.
Education	There are no educational facilities available within the ward, which may pose significant challenges for residents seeking access to schooling for their children.
Health	The absence of hospitals or clinics within the ward suggests limited access to healthcare services for residents, potentially requiring them to seek medical attention outside the ward's boundaries.
Entertainment	Chigarapasi serves as the primary source of entertainment within the ward, implying that residents may have limited options for recreational activities within their immediate vicinity.

8.5.5 Ward 5

Aspect	Description
Water	Ward 5 is currently grappling with a severe water crisis, with access to this essential resource becoming increasingly scarce. The situation is dire, as residents in proximity to Zava are the sole beneficiaries of a reliable water supply, leaving many others in the ward without access for years. Particularly troubling is the plight of those in Magwaza, who have endured around 16-years without water. The

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	absence of water not only poses immediate challenges to daily life but also threatens the long-term health and well-being of the community.
Road Infrastructure	Approximately 80% of the roads remain untarred. The roads are in an extremely poor state, riddled with potholes and uneven surfaces that make transportation difficult and dangerous.
Sanitation	The council's neglect of the drainage system in Ward 5 has resulted in significant problems for residents. Failure to maintain these crucial channels has led to the dumping of waste, causing stagnant water and emitting foul odours that permeate the area. Additionally, the lack of proper waste management infrastructure has prompted residents to resort to dumping refuse in areas like Melbourne residential area, which has yet to be fully developed.
Public Lighting	In Ward 5, the situation regarding street lighting is dire, with only two tower lights remaining functional. This scarcity of operational lights poses significant safety concerns for residents, particularly during nighttime hours. Compounding the issue is the council's failure to ensure timely subscription payments for the electricity that powers these tower lights. As a result, residents often endure weeks without adequate street lighting, exposing them to increased risks of accidents and criminal activity in the darkness.
Education	In Ward 5, educational opportunities are limited, with only two formal schools available: Melbourne and Christian College. While these institutions serve as important pillars of the community, their capacity may not be sufficient to accommodate all the educational needs of the ward's residents.
Health Care	In terms of healthcare services, Ward 5 is served by two private surgeries and three private pharmacies.
Entertainment	Ward 5 is devoid of playing centres or halls for community gatherings, contributing to a lack of recreational spaces. Entertainment options are scarce, with residents facing limited access to leisure activities. While three bars exist within the ward, they may not adequately address the diverse recreational needs of the community

8.5.6 Ward 6

Aspect	Description
Water	In Ward 6, households situated at higher elevations are grappling with water shortages, while those at lower elevations are experiencing the opposite issue.
Road Infrastructure	In Ward 6, there is an urgent need for the refilling of tarred roads. On the other hand, continuous grading is proving to be an ineffective solution.
Solid waste management	Waste collection in Ward 6 is conducted once per week, which can be deemed somewhat fair, there remains an issue with some residents resorting to illegal dumping.
Sewerage Reticulation	While Ward 6 experiences very few sewer bursts, which is a positive development, there are still significant challenges with drainage infrastructure. Blockages originating from neighbouring Ward 2 and passing through Ward 6 highlight the urgent need for drainage repairs and improvements.
Public Lighting	Ward 6 faces challenges with poor public lighting, as there is only one tower light and three streetlights throughout the area. This limited infrastructure contributes to safety concerns, especially during the night, as poorly lit areas can attract criminal activity and pose risks to pedestrians.
Education	Ward 6 has only one primary school, indicating a significant gap in educational infrastructure for the community.
Health Care	With only one council clinic, Khimanani, serving not only the entire Ward 6 but also other wards, residents face significant challenges in accessing healthcare services. The limited availability of healthcare facilities results in overcrowding, longer waiting times, and difficulties in receiving timely medical attention
Entertainment	Entertainment options in Ward 6 are notably limited, with only one community beer hall available for residents.

8.5.7 Ward 7

Aspect	Description
Water Supply	In Vhurumuku suburb of Ward 7, approximately 80% of households have access to running water, primarily due to the lower and gentle terrain. However, 3 out of 8 houses, especially those built on higher ground, have not had running water for about 15 years. Solar-powered boreholes supplement water provision, but the water piping network requires improvement for better supply reliability.
Road	Ward 7 suffers from poor road conditions, with roads that have not been graded in a long time and now require gravel filling. Additionally, there is a need for street signs to facilitate easy and better navigation for residents and visitors alike.
Sanitation	Reticulated sewer systems are limited in Ward 7, leading to more than 200 houses (300 plus square meters) relying on septic tanks. This reliance on septic tanks contributes to increased sewer bursts experienced in the area, highlighting the need for improved sanitation infrastructure.
Solid Waste Management	Refuse collection occurs twice a week in Ward 7, but some residents with small litter bins resort to illegal waste dumping on undeveloped stands. Effective solid waste management strategies are essential to mitigate environmental hazards and maintain cleanliness within the ward.
Education	Chiredzi Government School is the sole educational institution in Ward 7, with no primary school available. However, there are several pre-schools serving the community. Efforts to expand educational facilities should be prioritized to ensure accessible and quality education for all.
Public Lighting	Ward 7 lacks public lighting, with only 6 street lights installed, two of which are not functioning due to theft. The absence of adequate lighting has contributed to a rise in crimes such as theft, mugging, and robbery, resulting in the establishment of a mini police base near the Tanganda highway for enhanced security.
Healthcare	Public health facilities are absent in Ward 7, leaving residents reliant on pharmacies and a private surgery, which many cannot afford. Access to affordable healthcare services is crucial for the well-being of the

	community, underscoring the need for the establishment of public health facilities in the ward.
Entertainment Facilities	Ward 7 offers limited entertainment options, mainly beer halls, with a notable absence of facilities catering to children such as playgrounds and community halls. Diversifying entertainment offerings can enhance community engagement and quality of life, highlighting the need for additional recreational facilities in the ward.

8.5.8 Ward 8

Aspect	Description
Water Supply	Approximately 70% of Ward 8 consists of new settlements, extending from Lyonais to the new cemetery. While water reticulation is complete, areas like "The Palm Tree" do not receive running water due to higher ground. Community boreholes supplement water provision in the ward, but access remains a challenge in some areas.
Road	Ward 8 primarily relies on gravel roads, with many of them recently opened. However, there is a pressing need to open more roads, including access roads, to ensure accessibility for refuse collection and enhance overall transportation within the ward.
Sanitation	Ward 8 lacks a reticulated sewer system, posing challenges for proper sanitation management. Residents must rely on alternative methods for sewage disposal, highlighting the need for infrastructure improvements to address sanitation concerns effectively.
Solid Waste Management	Refuse collection occurs once a week in Ward 8, but areas without access roads suffer from a lack of collection services, leading to illegal dumping of waste. Effective solid waste management strategies, including improved access and frequency of collection, are essential to maintain cleanliness and mitigate environmental hazards within the ward.
Education	Only one functional school, serves the residents of Ward 8. Ensuring access to quality education for all residents, especially children, is crucial for community development and future opportunities. Efforts to expand educational infrastructure should be prioritized to accommodate the growing population and promote educational equity.

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Public Lighting	Ward 8 lacks public lighting, contributing to a rise in crime rates, as evidenced by recent incidents such as robbery. The absence of adequate lighting poses significant safety concerns for residents, necessitating urgent measures to improve lighting infrastructure and enhance security within the ward.
Healthcare	While there is one public health institution in Ward 8, it is still under construction, leaving residents with limited access to healthcare services. Completing the construction and ensuring operational efficiency of the health facility are essential steps to address the healthcare needs of the community effectively.

CHAPTER 9: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Tourism in Chiredzi

Tourism being a major contributor to the economy's gross domestic product has an immense contribution to make to the development of a community. As an emerging industry, it has a multidimensional impact on destinations. Tourism is best validated by the existence of five vital components of tourism development, which are Attractions, Accessibility, Accommodation, Amenities and Activities. These five components of tourism constitute the best visitor experience for a tourist visiting a place for leisure, interest or business. Chiredzi District is earmarked for tourism development as it is situated in one of the identified Tourist Development Zones. The district requires further product development for it to fully constitute a competitive tourism destination that can attract further business development. It is pivotal to document attractions and activities that can increase a visitor's bed nights as these are focal areas of interest that can attract tourist traffic movement to a destination.

The town area is the one that introduces the whole tourism product, it has more influence in encouraging or discouraging tourism movement into a district. There is currently no viable tourism attraction suited for marketing purposes in the town area as they way below marketing standards for example The Famous Chigarapasi Beerhall, Sika Lodge (former Prime Minister House) which can be turned into a viewing point together with Chitsanga Mountain, the railway station which services sugarcane transportation and there is no building that can be identified to suit as an iconic attraction and there is no town council park. As for activities the night life requires attention possibly the development of state of the art bars, upgrade and maintenance of existing night clubs (Labamba Night Club amongst other night life facilities), there is no amusement park, town hall, museum, well serviced swimming pool, no proper restaurant service except for Chicken Inn fast food outlet, no proper shopping mall, no water borne activities given the heat temperatures that identify the area to mention amongst various activities to expect to constitute a tourism destination. The product is densely populated.

Chiredzi Town, situated approximately 60 kilometres from Gonarezhou National Park and 20 kilometres from Malilangwe Conservancy, boasts proximity to renowned natural attractions that draw tourists from across the globe, including some of the world's wealthiest and most famous individuals. Gonarezhou National Park shares borders with South Africa's Kruger

National Park and Mozambique's Limpopo National Park, collectively forming The Great Limpopo Trans-frontier Park. Within this picturesque setting, opportunities abound for investment in the construction of hotels and lodges within designated tourism zones.

Malilangwe Private Wildlife Reserve (near the Gonarezhou National Park) is one of the most pristine and remote areas in Southern Africa. A private game reserve teeming with wildlife ('Big 5'), birdlife and amazing African bushveld views. Malilangwe Wildlife Reserve boasts an unusual habitat with scenic rocky outcrops, dams and baobab trees, and as a result, it attracts vast amounts of unique animals and birdlife. A photographer's playground. A world-renowned safari lodge competes with the very best South Africa, Botswana, and Tanzania have to offer in terms of service, luxury, wildlife and location. There is only a handful of lodges that come even close to what Singita Pamushana has to offer. Pamushana Singita is nested in Chiredzi, and has welcomed high profile guests like Bill Gates, Shakira, and many more foreign guests.

Moreover, there is immense potential for the development of safari tour operators, charter airlines, and other ancillary tourism activities to cater to the needs of visitors exploring these natural wonders. Additionally, investors can tap into water-based activities such as fishing and boat cruises at Mteri Dam, enhancing the diversity of experiences available to tourists in the region. Mteri Safari Lodge is a 10,000-hectare game park on the Hippo Valley Sugar Estates only 25kms from Chiredzi town. Lake Mteri is roughly 975 hectares with an abundance of lay down and stand-up timber, as well as thickets of reeds, grass beds and beds of lily pads. Mteri is home to an array of different game. Drives through the park are an option where species such as giraffe, buffalo, leopard, and others can be found. Game viewing from the boat is a given as many animals come to the water's edge to drink.

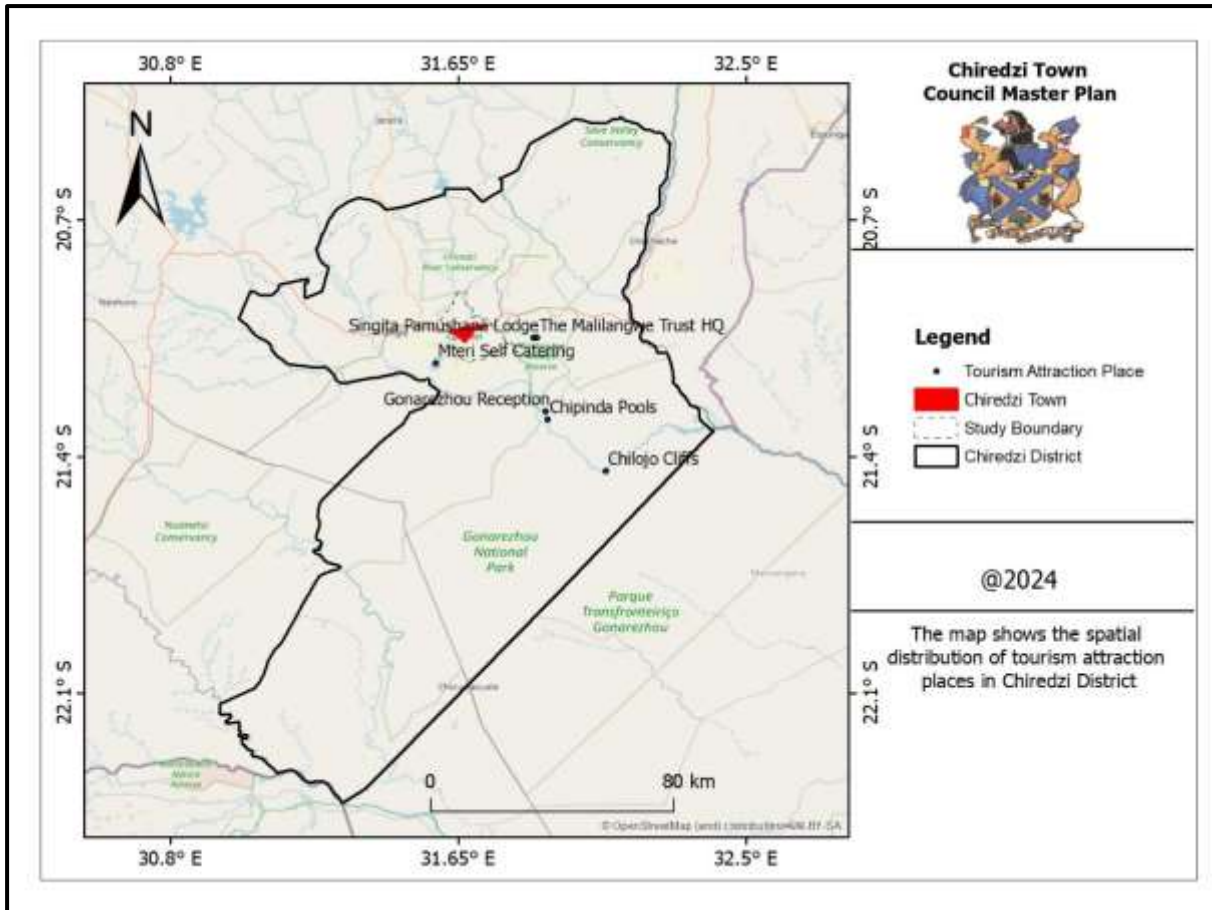


Figure 24: Tourists Attraction Places (Survey, 2024).

Furthermore, Chiredzi's rich cultural heritage as the traditional home of the Tsonga People presents opportunities for investors to develop cultural villages and souvenir gift shops. The vibrant lifestyles, cultural events, and arts and crafts of the Tsonga People serve as compelling attractions for tourists seeking immersive cultural experiences, thus providing fertile ground for investment in cultural tourism initiatives.

Chiredzi's tourism potential, particularly in relation to lodges like Palm Tree Lodge, is significant, with the town serving as a gateway to renowned natural attractions such as Gonarezhou National Park and Malilangwe Conservancy. However, the absence of conference facilities poses a challenge for the town's tourism sector, as it limits its capacity to attract corporate events and large group bookings. Despite being designated as a tourism development zone, Chiredzi lacks essential infrastructure and amenities that are critical for enhancing the visitor experience and maximizing tourism revenue.

Lodges in Chiredzi include Chilo Gorge Safari Lodge, Clevers Hotel, and Chiredzi River Lodge, among others. These establishments offer accommodation options for tourists exploring the region's natural beauty and wildlife. However, the overall tourism experience in Chiredzi is marred by the lack of essential infrastructure, such as proper road networks, adequate lighting, and landscaping, which are essential for creating a welcoming environment for visitors.

Moreover, the condition of the road leading to major attractions like Gonarezhou National Park and Malilangwe Conservancy is subpar, characterized by gravel roads with potholes, detracting from the overall tourist experience. Improving infrastructure, including road networks and signage, is crucial for enhancing accessibility and safety for tourists visiting Chiredzi. Additionally, investing in landscaping and beautification efforts can further enhance the town's appeal as a tourism destination.

The absence of a conference facility to accommodate large gatherings is a notable gap that contradicts the town's designation as a tourism development zone. A lack of conference facilities limits the town's ability to host conferences, conventions, and other events that attract significant numbers of participants, hindering its potential to become a thriving tourism destination. Conference facilities play a crucial role in attracting business travellers, event organizers, and industry professionals, who contribute to tourism revenues through their spending on accommodations, dining, and other services. Additionally, hosting conferences and events provides opportunities to showcase Chiredzi's attractions, amenities, and tourism offerings to a diverse audience, fostering interest and generating positive publicity for the destination.

9.2 Agritourism

There are potential and challenges associated with fostering sustainable agritourism within the southeastern lowveld region of Zimbabwe. Agritourism initiatives centred around commercial agro-sugar enterprises in the southeast lowveld could offer a viable avenue for tourism expansion in Chiredzi and its surrounding areas. Despite the region's rich potential for agritourism and the significant socio-economic benefits it could bring, there remains a notable underutilization of resources for tourism purposes in Chiredzi and its environs. No prior empirical research has exclusively explored into the sustainable development of agritourism

within this context, thus warranting a comprehensive investigation into the sector's prospects and challenges within the local tourism landscape.

Major sites encompassing Chiredzi and its neighbouring areas, including Hippo Valley, Mkwazine, Mwenezana, Mpapa, and Triangle, the study reveals a wealth of farmland resources ripe for agritourism development. Citrus plantations, sugarcane farms, milling plants, lucerne fields, and cattle-ranching farms emerge as potential attractions capable of enhancing Chiredzi's tourism offerings. Moreover, farm owners demonstrate a willingness to integrate agritourism into their agricultural ventures, suggesting a promising avenue for tourism diversification and economic growth in the region.

However, amidst these opportunities, significant challenges loom large, posing obstacles to the realization of agritourism's full potential in Chiredzi. Accessibility issues and inadequate overnight accommodations emerge as notable constraints hindering the sector's development. These challenges underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions and policy frameworks to address the systemic issues impeding agritourism growth in Chiredzi and its environs. By shedding light on these barriers and advocating for sustainable agritourism development tailored to the local context, policymakers and stakeholders can untapped potential of agritourism as a catalyst for tourism expansion in Chiredzi.

CHAPTER 10: SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The master plan preparation for Chiredzi Town was necessitated by the call to action by the President of Zimbabwe for all local authorities to develop Master Plans. The dynamics of urbanisation in Chiredzi district are deeply intertwined with global, regional, and national trends. Understanding these broader developments is essential for contextualizing the local situation and addressing its challenges effectively. Urbanisation brings about significant changes in industrial structures, resident lifestyles, and economic development, with a strong correlation between urbanisation and economic growth. However, the process poses challenges for both rural and urban areas, with issues like service provision, infrastructure development, and neglect in rural areas emerging as key concerns.

Globally, urbanisation is accelerating, particularly in the developing world, with projections indicating a substantial increase in the urban population by 2050, mostly concentrated in Africa and Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, experiences rapid urbanisation, albeit with challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and a high proportion of urban residents living in slums. Despite these challenges, urban areas are significant drivers of economic growth, contributing substantially to the global GDP.

In Zimbabwe, rapid urban growth presents local planning authorities with the task of ensuring adequate urban services while promoting sustainable development. This entails strategic planning for urban expansion, including the allocation of land for residential development and necessary infrastructure. Additionally, there is a need to adopt hybrid policies that balance containment and urban expansion to accommodate future growth effectively. These insights underscore the urgency for Chiredzi and similar regions to reassess their urbanisation strategies and prioritise responsive planning measures to address the evolving needs of urban expansion.

10.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS

Elevation and Flooding: Chiredzi's low-lying areas are prone to flooding, necessitating the focus on constructing flood-resilient infrastructure, including well-drained roads and elevated buildings.

Urban Planning and Climate Change: Spatial Planners must integrate climate change adaptation strategies into urban planning, such as elevating buildings above flood levels and enhancing emergency preparedness. Chiredzi experiences low and erratic rainfall, impacting agriculture and requiring water management strategies to support urban and agricultural activities.

Slope and Drainage: The steepness of slopes affects land use suitability, drainage, and stormwater management, requiring mitigation strategies to minimize water-related disasters.

Vegetation: Chiredzi's vegetation, including savanna and woodland, influences biodiversity, ecosystem services, and land cover, highlighting the importance of preserving and managing natural habitats.

Hydrology: The region's rivers and watercourses, including the Chiredzi River and Runde River, are crucial for water supply and agriculture but are vulnerable to pollution and erosion, necessitating sustainable water management practices.

Wildlife: Despite human activity, the area still supports diverse wildlife, including endangered species like lions and buffalo, indicating the need for conservation efforts.

Geology and Soils: The geological composition, including parageneses and sedimentary rocks, affects land stability, soil quality, and infrastructure development, requiring consideration in urban planning.

Land Use/Land Cover: Understanding and managing land use and cover are essential for sustainable urban development, addressing issues like deforestation, sand extraction, and agricultural expansion.

Environmental Issues: Deforestation, sand poaching, inadequate sewage systems, poor solid waste management and agricultural practices contribute to environmental degradation, affecting air and water quality, wildlife habitats, and community health.

10.3 POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Population Growth and Urban Planning: The town is experiencing population growth, leading to increased demands for housing, infrastructure, and services. Urban planners need to anticipate these challenges and plan strategically to ensure sustainable development.

Local Economy: The manufacturing and tourism sectors are identified as major economic drivers. However, there are challenges such as infrastructural limitations, inadequate transportation networks, and energy supply, which need to be addressed to fully harness the economic potential of these sectors. Residents also rely on informal economic activities.

Employment Dynamics: The employment landscape in Chiredzi is characterized by a heavy reliance on agriculture, particularly sugar production. The informal sector also plays a significant role in providing livelihoods, but there are challenges related to regulation, infrastructure, and access to resources.

Challenges and Opportunities: While there are opportunities for economic growth and job creation, there are also challenges as the town lacks any vocational training centre or tertiary institutions particularly those related to its major economies that is tourism, livestock production and sugarcane farming. Collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as investment in skills development and infrastructure, is essential to address these challenges and unlock the town's economic potential.

10.4 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The town's land use encompasses residential, commercial, industrial, and public amenities. Residential areas provide housing, commercial zones support economic activities, industrial areas drive manufacturing, and public amenities enhance quality of life. Chiredzi's development was overseen by a private company, Hippo Valley. There is need to emphasise public interests over private interests.

Development Control and creation of standalone of Spatial Planning and Land Management department: Challenges in development control include inadequate servicing of stands, unauthorized land use changes, and co-location of schools in industrial zones without proper procedures and support services. There is need to create stand-alone Spatial Planning and Land Management department. The department should be resourced with furnished offices and off-road vehicles for easy access to illegal developments.

Service Delivery and Rates Payments: The council faces challenges in revenue collection due to a discrepancy between the number of ratepayers and housing stands. Low collection efficiency, resistance to fees, and reliance on USD further strain finances. Strategies to improve transparency, communication, and attract large companies for revenue generation are needed.

Commercial and Industrial Development: Commercial activity is concentrated in the town centre, with suburban shopping centres providing convenience. However, the industrial sector faces hurdles such as informal operations and limited formalization, hindering growth and economic contribution.

Potentially Developable Land Outside Current Boundary: There is absence of available land within current boundaries, the council must consider extending into surrounding areas. Preparation of at least two Local Development Plans (LDPs) is critical for Chiredzi Town.

10.5 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Housing Backlog: The Council faces a significant backlog in housing, with a waiting list of over 40,000 individuals. Efforts to alleviate this backlog include the initiation of servicing medium-density residential stands.

Management of Waiting Lists: Manual management of waiting lists used by council leads to inefficiencies and lack transparency. Implementing an electronic waiting list system and establishing an allocations committee are suggested to improve the process.

Challenges in Housing Department: The Housing Department faces challenges in resource allocation, service delivery, and infrastructure, including limited vehicles, fuel shortages, and waste management issues.

Existing Housing Areas: Residential areas in Chiredzi face challenges such as inadequate road infrastructure, irregular water supply, sewerage system bursts, irregular waste collection, and absence of public amenities.

10.6 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Education Infrastructure: Absence of adequate municipal schools and boarding facilities hampers access to quality education, perpetuating inequality and straining existing schools. Lack of vocational training centres contributes to youth unemployment and underemployment, hindering economic growth and perpetuating cycles of poverty. Insufficient ECD centres hinder children's holistic development and limit future academic success.

Civic Centre for Creative Arts: Lack of a dedicated space for artistic expression deprives the community of cultural enrichment and opportunities for social cohesion.

Healthcare Infrastructure: Limited public healthcare facilities compromise access to essential medical services, leading to overcrowding and delays in treatment.

Sanitation: Absence of accessible public toilets at shopping centres, recreational grounds and inadequate waste management contribute to environmental health hazards and sanitation challenges. There is need for new sewer ponds further way from the residential area and abandoning the disposal of unprocessed and untested wastewater into Chiredzi river. Adoption of new technologies like sewer biodigesters is vital.

Sports and Recreation: There is lack of a variety of functional recreational facilities like stadium, public pools, public places, and parks. These facilities enhance quality of life for urban residents and create memorable Chiredzi Town.

Entertainment Sector: Issues such as noise pollution, exploitative activities, and lack of regulation in entertainment venues impact residents' safety and the town's reputation.

Commercial Infrastructure: There is absence of modern shopping malls.

10.7 BULK INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL AMENITIES

Water Supply Challenges:

- Insufficient coverage of the water supply network, falling short of the target set.
- Intermittent water supply causing inconvenience and pressure losses, with reliance on shallow wells for those not connected to the network.
- Inadequate pumping capacity compared to demand, leading to water scarcity issues.

Wastewater Treatment and Reticulation Issues:

- Low coverage of sewage network, lagging the targeted percentage.
- Frequent bursts in the sewer system, posing health and sanitation risks.
- Lack of upgrades in older areas exacerbating sewer-related incidents.

Solid Waste Management:

- Limited waste collection resources, leading to irregular or incomplete waste collection services.

- Absence of a designated landfill, resulting in improper waste disposal practices and environmental hazards.

Energy and Power Supply Problems:

- Dependence on industrial activity from Hippo Valley for electricity supply, leading to interruptions in power supply when the mill is not operational.
- Insufficient electricity supply capacity, contributing to load shedding issues.
- Challenges in energy distribution and funding, hindering infrastructure development and maintenance.

Traffic Congestion and Safety Hazards:

- Loading of long-distance buses and local commuter vehicles along streets causing congestion and traffic conflict.
- Heavy trucks traversing residential areas and the Central Business District (CBD) worsening congestion and posing risks.
- Lack of ring roads and bypass routes diverting heavy traffic away from residential and commercial areas.
- Implementation of tonnage restrictions on feeder roads and installation of solar-powered traffic lights to regulate traffic flow and enhance safety.

Rail System Issues:

- Dilapidated rail station wagons affecting functionality and service quality.
- Disuse of passenger locomotives due to poor state of infrastructure and low demand.
- Minimal operation of goods train between Chiredzi, Rutenga, Hippo Valley, and Triangle.

Road Infrastructure Challenges:

- Deteriorating road conditions including potholes, erosion, and uneven surfaces impacting road safety and accessibility.
- Lack of drainage systems leading to water accumulation on roads during heavy rainfall.

Public Transport and Infrastructure Conditions:

- Predominance of formal and informal public transport including commuter omnibuses, taxis, and intermediate transport.
- Deplorable state of bus termini, characterised by damaged shelters, kerbsides, and poor drainage systems.
- Lack of clear traffic signage and street names contributing to confusion among road users.
- Absence of adequate street lighting posing safety risks, particularly during nighttime.

Demand for Improved Amenities and Services:

- Need for modernized rank surfaces and expanded infrastructure to mitigate health risks and alleviate congestion.
- Importance of CCTV monitors to deter crime and improve accountability.
- Demand for improved toilet and bath facilities at rank areas and bars/bottle stores.
- Calls for expansion of intersections and implementation of storage bay and towing bylaws to enhance road safety and traffic management.

Heavy Transport Operators:

- Current route taken by heavy trucks leads to congestion, traffic jams, and safety hazards within the Central Business District (CBD) and residential areas.
- Lack of ring roads forces heavy trucks to navigate narrow streets, resulting in wear and tear on road infrastructure and higher maintenance costs.
- Weto Transport and affiliated associations face challenges such as road conditions with potholes, narrow roads, and insufficient signage, hindering efficiency and safety.
- Construction of a bypass road is needed to alleviate congestion and ensure safer and more efficient transportation routes for heavy transport operators.

Air Transport at Buffalo Range Airport:

- Buffalo Range Airport serves as an international gateway, facilitating tourism and economic activities in the region. The airport needs some sprucing to meet state of art standards.
- Tourist attractions near Buffalo Range Airport include Chilojo Cliffs, Gonarezhou National Park, and Singita Pamushana.

SERVICE DELIVERY IN WARDS

Water Supply:

- Unequal access to water supply, with some areas experiencing shortages or complete lack of access.
- Reliance on outdated infrastructure and alternative sources like boreholes, leading to inconsistent water provision.

Sewerage System:

- Outdated sewerage systems leading to frequent bursts, posing health hazards and environmental concerns.
- Reliance on septic tanks due to limited sewer reticulation, especially in newer settlements.

Refuse Collection and Waste Management:

- Inadequate refuse collection frequencies leading to illegal dumping and environmental degradation.
- Insufficient infrastructure for proper waste management, exacerbating sanitation issues.

Road Infrastructure:

- Lack of graded or tarred roads, hindering transportation efficiency and posing safety risks.
- Need for additional roads to facilitate refuse collection and improve accessibility within wards.

Public Lighting:

- Limited public lighting contributing to safety concerns and increased criminal activities, especially during nighttime.
- Urgent need for maintenance and expansion of lighting infrastructure to enhance community safety.

Education:

- Limited educational facilities, especially in newer settlements, leading to challenges in access to quality education.
- Need for additional schools and resources to accommodate growing populations and ensure educational equity.

Healthcare:

- Insufficient healthcare facilities, with some wards lacking government or council health institutions.
- Limited access to medical services, leading to overcrowding and longer waiting times in existing facilities.

Entertainment:

- Limited recreational options, with few entertainment facilities available, such as bars, and a lack of community gathering spaces.
- Need for diversification of entertainment offerings to enhance community cohesion and quality of life.

10.8 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism Attractions:

- Proximity to renowned natural attractions like Gonarezhou National Park and Malilangwe Conservancy.
- Unique wildlife, scenic landscapes, and cultural heritage appeal to tourists seeking immersive experiences.
- Lodges like Singita Pamushana and Palm Tree Lodge offer luxury accommodations and attract high-profile guests.

Investment Opportunities:

- Potential for investment in hotels, lodges, and safari tour operators to cater to the growing tourism demand.
- Opportunities for water-based activities like fishing and boat cruises at Mteri Dam.

- Development of cultural villages and souvenir shops to showcase the Tsonga People's vibrant lifestyle and arts.

Infrastructure Challenges:

- Lack of conference facilities hinders the town's ability to host corporate events and large group bookings.
- Poor road infrastructure leading to major attractions detracts from the tourist experience and safety.
- Absence of essential amenities like proper lighting and landscaping diminishes the town's appeal as a tourism destination.

Agritourism Potential:

- Rich farmland resources in areas like Hippo Valley and Triangle offer opportunities for agritourism development.
- Citrus plantations, sugarcane farms, and cattle-ranching farms can serve as attractions for tourists interested in agricultural experiences.
- Challenges include accessibility issues and inadequate overnight accommodations, requiring targeted interventions and policy frameworks to foster sustainable agritourism growth.