

Appendix 8: Phases of Amman 2025

In 2006, under the directives of King Abdullah II (Meaton and Alnsour, 2012), GAM embarked on comprehensive multidimensional spatial planning for Amman (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2011). The key aim was to eliminate the haphazard, amorphous urban sprawl, car-dependent travel and encroachment on rainfed agricultural land and to protect Amman's cultural identity. For city planners, the aim is to accommodate the projected four million residents in Amman by 2025 in an efficient, balanced and sustainable way (GAM, 2008). The strategic spatial plan of Amman 2025 was carried out in six planning phases before the official announcement of the master plans and then its presentation to the public. Each of the phases depicted in figure A8, below, represents a distinct functional issue (Aljafari, 2014). Appendix 8 will provide a brief description of these phases.



Figure A8: The six phases of Amman 2025, source: GAM, 2008, pp.24–25

The Interim Growth Strategy (IGS)

The IGS was the first phase of Amman 2025. The IGS came about as a response to attempts to control large-scale developments in Amman that erupted due the influx of surplus petrodollars from the GCC nations. There are a variety of very real pressures behind these investments. Tall buildings in Amman first emerged to reflect the buoyant property market and the influx of petrodollar investment (Mango, 2014). Interlinked with these issues is the neoliberal urban transformation in Amman that aspires to pump petrodollars and accommodate investment in the real estate sector (Abu Hamdi, 2017; Daher, 2011b, p.277).

Planners have taken into account the historical context of the wider area and balance in development between the northern, central and southern areas of Amman. To support Amman's future as a regional hub for investment, the IGS contains the overarching policies to give a robust and cohesive view for tall and large building land-use strategy for Amman. The aim of these assessments is to find appropriate and economically viable locations with proper access and appropriate infrastructure, and identify any environmental considerations.

The allocation process of tall buildings is based on a transparent, accessible and accountable planning system. Following a thorough technical and geographical analysis, the study would determine where tall buildings would and would not be acceptable. Transport capacity and public transport access are major considerations in determining HDMU locations.

The IGS encompasses supplementary planning documents to promote the pursuit of sustainable development and principles of smart growth. HDMU should be more permeable to the public, with minimal detrimental effect on the environment, accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. As part of this, policy framework outlines a number of design considerations for enhancing quality in building siting and design. The provisions applies to locations of tall or large buildings, their alignment, spacing, height, bulk, massing and design quality, promoting a high standard of architectural and design quality. Other matters dealt with in this policy include car parking, quality of public space, adaptability and diversity, and responsiveness to the cultural context of Amman. A second policy, known as the Robin Hood Policy,¹⁵³ was formulated to finance community development projects

¹⁵³ The Robin Hood tax policy is an approach in the tax collection system of a state where there are higher taxes on the wealthy, on large-scale investment firms, and on the buying and selling of shares and bonds. The aim is to address income inequality and achieve fairer redistribution of resources to provide money for public services and infrastructure development, protecting the environment and alleviating poverty (Franko et al., 2013).

(Ababsa, 2011b, p.230). Landowners who benefited from the increase in value aimed to purchase planning licences for HDMU projects at 25% of the increase in land or property value (Ai, 2010).

This study has resulted in the identification of four locations for the development of tall buildings: the Al Abdali Business District in Shmisani, the Central Parkway between the Abdoun Bridge and Prince Ali Bin Al Hussain intersections; the Al-Jubayhah Business Gateway along the Jordan Road, north of Al-Shaheed Ring Road and east of the Queen Rania Road; and the Amman Southern Gateway (Ai, 2010). In these locations, tall buildings would accommodate a variety of business activity in a relatively confined areas, attracting the investment of large companies and organisations.

The Corridor Intensification Strategy (CIS)

One of the most important components adopted by Amman 2025 is the concept of intensification and densification. It refers to increasing the scale of development of an area within an already urbanised zone through infill and expansion or conversion of existing buildings (Frey and Bagaen, 2010, p.167). The CIS was released in 2006 as the second phase of Amman 2025. The changing demographics of Amman, land economics and the pressure of providing additional employment were among the main drivers for intensification. Accordingly, GAM published various zoning by-laws to promote intensification. These zoning by-laws addressed issues of building heights and densities. Also, the plan addressed regulation and minimum and maximum lot areas for more compact and intensified built environments.

The CIS outlines a policy framework and regional structure to meet intensification objectives. As a result, part of the future growth of Amman will be within existing built-up areas to support the efficient use of existing urban infrastructure while reducing the pressure of urban development on rainfed agricultural land on the outskirts of Amman. CIS provides policies that promote intensification and revitalisation, and confine growth to built-up areas through a comprehensive long-term vision designed to:

- encourage a variety of densities to create a self-sufficient, highly diverse and complete community
- reduce traffic gridlock and densities by implementing strict guidelines to ensure access to adequate and diverse transportation options, thus reducing the ecological footprint (air pollution) of the city

- adopting principles of sustainable urban design; this includes incorporating green features, creating a pedestrian-friendly and green city to encourage walking and cycling. Also, it addresses sustainable urban forms by placing roads and buildings according to the path of the sun to mitigate energy consumption
- curb urban sprawl and protect farmland and green spaces by limiting urban expansion to the north, west and south of Amman (see concept of the Green Belt in Parsons and Schuyler, 2004; Howard, 1965, p.31); make wise use of resources such as land, buildings and infrastructure through intensification to infill the 40% of land within Amman's built-up areas (Greater Amman Survey, 2008, cited in Ai, 2010), which would limit urban expansion, thus reducing the cost of infrastructure
- support complete communities and protect stable residential neighbourhoods from potentially incompatible development by identifying suitable areas to accommodate intensification away from existing stable residential neighbourhoods
- make efficient use of existing infrastructure and land – more compact forms of development make better use of existing land and infrastructure, including roads, municipal services and community services and facilities, and avoid the need for costly extensions of infrastructure and services
- diversify choices of housing by providing different types of housing, ranges of housing tenures and unit sizes, to meet the different requirements of young families, the elderly and those on a variety of income levels
- facilitate different policies and approaches to enhance community identity and public participation in the planning process.

Interim Industrial Land Policy

After the CIS, GAM launched the third phase of the Amman Plan, the Interim Industrial Land Policy. The GoJ published significant policies to reinvigorate the industrial sector in Jordan to reinvigorate the drastic economic situation in Jordan and alleviate GAM's budget deficit. It is believed that industrial regulation systems have a strong and positive influence on business and enterprise development (Acs and Szerb, 2007). Since the middle of the 20th century, cities in Europe have been adopting this approach for reasons of socio-economic development of a region (Galarza et al., 2012).

The Interim Industrial Land Policy is a milestone in the socio-economic development that Jordan seeks to achieve. GAM recognised the need to broaden and strengthen Amman's industrial base and the expansion of existing industries. The lack of an appropriate and updated industrial land policy has always been a major barrier in pioneering contemporary

industry and service businesses in Amman. GAM's existing planning and economic development regulations were devoid of the principles needed to promote healthy and sustainable economic development. Accordingly, the overall intent of the Interim Industrial Land Policy is to regulate and meet market demands of serviced industrial land.

GAM utilises its main statutory influence to offer a competitive environment for industrial development and strengthen the attractions of major industrial areas. A fundamental aspect to future industrial development is a certain balance between economic development and managing industrial parks in a sustainable manner. For instance, the industrial areas were located in areas buffered from surrounding communities and natural heritage, offering protection for themselves and the environment (Ai, 2010). GAM recognised the need to seek sustainable socio-economic development through wise use of land resources, creating a balanced territorial development between the urbanisation and industrialisation processes.

A wide range of uses is planned, including offices, industry, residential and retail. The zoning strategy for industrial land in the City of Amman includes light and medium industrial zoning categories. Areas included in the Interim Industrial Land Policy are as follows:

- Sahab – Ngeera–Al Mouwaqer Corridor: medium and light industrial uses
- Qastal Industrial Area: the area is planned to accommodate light-to-medium industry, along with offices and research and development agglomerations, to take advantage of future economic trends and to provide skilled employment
- Al Jeezah Industrial Area: the planned area provides residential units for the southern industrial land of Amman, along with light and medium industrial uses.

Outlying Settlements Policy (OSP)

The OSP was the fourth phase of Amman 2025. The OSP came about as a response to demands for residential housing in rural areas of Amman. The policy includes a set of planning principles to ensure that large-scale compounds and gated community developments are constructed within smart growth principles (Bagaeen, 2010, p.25).

The principles strongly encourage compact urban growth, by designating new greenfield communities, increased transit use and improved pedestrian accessibility (Ai, 2010). The principles direct future growth of existing built-up areas and designate new greenfield communities located close to the urban Airport Corridor Plan and Interim Rural Residential Policy core. The policy takes into consideration the protection of valuable agricultural land;

maintenance of traditional lifestyles; the mixing of residential and employment uses; and protection of natural heritage systems.

The three designated rural growth areas are close to the urban Airport Corridor Plan, with an estimated total population of 30,000 inhabitants (Ai, 2010). The villages are

- Um Rumana
- Manja
- Al Kutayfa.

Airport Corridor Plan

In September 2007, GAM completed the fifth phase of Amman 2025: the Airport Corridor Plan. The corridor is one of the city's key corridor developments, linking it with the Queen Alia Airport, the largest and busiest transportation hub in Jordan, and the other development corridors in Amman. The plan is part of the long-term vision for the city to respond to enormous development pressure underway in Jordan. It consists of mixed-use development to accommodate residential, commercial, cultural development and major clusters for institutional uses.

Also, the corridor is intended to provide a primary traffic and transit corridor with smart public transport meeting international standards to connect major cities in the northern and southern governorates. Above all, the Airport Road Corridor Plan is focused on retaining Amman's green character and natural heritage system by designating more open spaces to preserve Amman's 'meagre' green areas. The Airport Corridor consists of five nodes that will be developed progressively in a phased fashion, and which function as a major gateway to Amman's Airport Corridor:

- Arafat Southern Gateway
- Southern Park
- Al-Yadouda
- Metro Gateway
- Queen Alia International Airport.

The Metropolitan Growth Strategy (MGS)

The MGS involves eliminating the time and effort allocated for analysis, while enlarging the space for stakeholders engagement in the planning decision-making, and thus plans are created from community engagement following four main phases as follows (Ai, 2010):

- **Phase 1** – Situation analysis report: this includes gathering data and identifying problems, issues and concerns at the community planning level
- **Phase 2** – Developing a “vision” for the plan: following the identification of community concerns and issues, the plan moves into the creation of a vision statement representing the community’s intentions or wishes and determining the preferred development concept
- **Phase 3** – Preparation of a draft master plan: this includes disclosing spatial and physical plans and policy for public review and comments. The plan includes each aspect of town planning: housing, heritage and tourism, sociocultural, etc.
- **Phase 4** – Disclosing the final master plan: after taking into account feedback from the previous phase, a final version of land-use and policy will be endorsed and published by the city council. Documents include detailed design, policy, guidelines and zoning regulations at the finer scale of development.

In the autumn of 2008, GAM finished the sixth stage of the overall Amman 2025 plan: the master plan of all growth areas. The MGS is a milestone achievement for Amman’s smart growth. It provides an overall framework that integrates and coordinates all other previous efforts and component phases of Amman 2025. MGP is not merely spatial and structural in a strict sense, but is also a platform for reform of planning policy and practice. MGS covers 1,680 square kilometres (Ai, 2010).