

A TALE OF TWO PLANS

Jabal Hassanali
Land Management Division
Ministry of Food Production,
Land and Marine Affairs.

Abstract: This paper investigates the process of physical development planning in Trinidad and Tobago; in particular, the current set up to facilitate plan formulation and the consequences of this institutionalised framework. During the last decade, there has been a lot of upheaval within the planning system in Trinidad and Tobago, and the relevant agencies are facing difficulties defining their roles within the process. This paper focused on two of these agencies; The Town and Country Planning Division (T&CPD) who has traditionally been responsible for producing development plans and the Ministry of Local Government (MLG) who were recently mandated to deliver regional Spatial Development Plans to all fourteen (14) regional corporations under its purview. As a result, both agencies concurrently produced plans for the Borough of Arima and these were subject to a case study. The research's primary objective was to determine whether duplication/overlap had in fact occurred and to investigate the reasons why. Interviews were sought with relevant planning officials at both agencies as well as an independent planning consultant to help fulfill this objective and also elaborate on some of the raw data found in the case study. A secondary objective was to compare and analyse the two plans within the context of a plan formulation framework. The results indicated that duplication had in fact occurred due to a lack of collaboration between agencies. Also, the MLG Plan was judged to be the better plan overall, largely due to its holistic approach and spatial underpinnings. Finally, a number of recommendations were outlined for the T&CPD in order for it to maintain its relevance, both in the short and long term.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Context

This dissertation investigates the process of physical development planning in Trinidad and Tobago; in particular, the current set up to facilitate plan formulation and the consequences of this institutionalised framework. It builds on works done by other academic practitioners, most notably that of Derek Outridge (2006) who published a thesis covering physical development planning in Trinidad and Tobago from 1960 to 2000 as well as analysing issues surrounding the gap between plan preparation and plan implementation. For the last decade however, there has been a lot of upheaval within the planning system in Trinidad and Tobago, and the relevant agencies are facing difficulties defining their roles within the process. This has coincided with increased strain on the system caused by the boom in construction activity that has also occurred during this period. All this development activity peaked in the period 2008-09 and only now seems to be waning due to the current economic climate. Against a politically charged backdrop and with a public perception of wanton corruption there is an air of uncertainty and confusion surrounding the planning environment that is ripe for clarification through new research.

After meeting with Mr. Stephen Boodhram, a senior planning practitioner within the Ministry of Local Government (MLG), many of the current issues facing the planning system came to light. At present, the MLG have contracted private planning consultants to deliver development plans for the fourteen (14) regional corporations under its purview (S Boodhram 2010, pers. comm., 5 Jan.). This has been done in anticipation for planned Local Government reforms that will deliver among other aims, devolved planning powers to the aforementioned regional corporations. Traditionally however, plan making has been the responsibility of the Town and Country Planning Division (T&CPD), which historically has operated under several ministerial portfolios but now finds itself attached to the newly amalgamated

Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment. It must be noted that the T&CPD itself has no planning powers per se, that lies with the Minister responsible for planning alone. However, he can delegate this responsibility to any administrative body he chooses, and this has usually been the T&CPD; the administrative mechanism which arose out of the Town and country Planning Act of 1960 (Carter, 2004; Outridge, 2006). Concurrently with the MLG, the T&CPD have also been updating and creating new development plans for statutory approval. To further confuse matters, they have traditionally delineated the country along different boundary lines to the ones that demarcate the jurisdictions of the regional corporations (S Boodhram 2010, pers. comm., 5 Jan.). In addition to this, there has so far been one clear cut case where duplication has occurred as both Bodies have produced a development plan for the **Borough of Arima** (S Boodhram 2010, pers. comm., 5 Jan.).

The issues identified above, raise a number of pertinent questions. How has duplication been allowed to occur in the system in the first place? Where duplication/overlap has occurred, how do these plans differ in form, scope and content? To what extent do planners across the various Ministries and State Enterprises synergise and collaborate in their efforts? Is the T&CPD still relevant? By investigating the plan formulation process, it is the aim of this research to find answers to some of these questions.

1.2 Objectives

The main emphasis of this research is to address the issue of duplication/overlap in the plan making process in Trinidad and Tobago. Its specific objectives are:

1. To determine the sequence of the plan preparation process.
2. To investigate alleged duplication/ overlap in the planning system.
3. To compare and analyse differences in the scope, form and content of plans produced due to ‘planners’ being of different backgrounds and working within different institutions.
4. To verify how fragmented the system is and assess the level of coordination among planners across the various state agencies.
5. To determine the relevance of the T&CPD within the overall planning system.

2. DATA COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS

2.1 The Plan Rationales

The decision by the T&CPD to do a plan for any given area is driven by both demand and a pre-programmed work-set determined for each financial year. The Development Control Units of the various regional offices of the Division are asked to submit areas within their jurisdictions that warrant a review of existing policy. These are then forwarded to the Development Planning Unit where it is cross referenced with areas targeted within the T&CPD’s work programme (M. Hinds 2010, pers. comm., 01 Jul.). The selection process is also influenced by Ministerial Directive. All applicants who have been refused planning permission have the right to appeal that decision to the Minister. Several requests for review from one particular area can be a signal for the need to review the existing policy for the area and the Minister with responsibility for planning can request such of the T&CPD (M. Hinds 2010, pers. comm., 01 Jul.).

As it were the T&CPD, upon invitation by the Borough of Arima, began to review the Greater Arima Local Area Plan (1990) to ascertain its continuing feasibility and to determine whether the Plan needed to

be updated or if an entirely new plan was required. Although a review of the standards of the Central Business District was done in 1997, ten years later they felt it necessary to examine the Plan again in its entirety. Moreover, the simultaneous downturn of the global economic environment that occurred during the T&CPD's plan preparation process further underscored the review's necessity. During this volatile period, the price of oil, the economic backbone of national development plans peaked at \$120.00 per barrel in July 2008 only to slump to \$50.00 by November of the same year. The national budget however was based on a price of \$75.00 per barrel and it was expected that the depressed prices and double figure inflation rates will affect implementation proposals across the twin island state. Thus, the need to plan to ensure the most efficient use of resources became for them, even more relevant than ever with the proposals suggested therein appropriately reflecting this scenario. The previous 1990 plan was heavily influenced by the National Physical Development Plan (1984) which referred to Arima as one of the sub regional centres in Trinidad. Other centres of similar hierarchy at that time were Tunapuna and San Juan along the east west corridor. However by 2007 the National Spatial Strategy envisioned Arima as the core to a growing metropolitan district and elevated it to city status. This review of the Greater Arima Local Area Plan therefore takes into consideration both Arima's role as a regional centre for government services as well as the town's increasing sphere of influence beyond that (see Fig. 4.2).

Meanwhile, Trinidad and Tobago also embarked on national physical planning and local area planning against the backdrop of Local Government Reform, inspired by the then administration's 'Vision 2020' manifesto. Effective and participatory governance being one of the five development priorities of Vision 2020, the White Paper on Local Government Reform (2009: p. iii) articulated this as the mission statement:

To facilitate the transformation and modernisation of local communities by empowering citizens to participate in the decision-making process.

Thus, spatial planning for the Borough of Arima for the next ten years had to be underpinned by the five development priorities of Vision 2020, contextualized in the White Paper, and elaborated in the deliberations that had taken place thereon in the respective Municipal Corporations. In the devolved governance structure which is the fundamental thrust of the White Paper, regional corporations were envisioned as playing a major role in the achievement of the other priorities. In that regard, the Arima Borough Council (ABC) had a vested interest in the promotion of innovativeness among the burgesses, since this is the base, in the final analysis, for the town's economic security. Much of the potential that existed remained unexploited in the absence of careful physical planning (not much unlike the conclusions drawn from the T&CPD when undertaking their review of the 1990 Arima Plan). Hence, in anticipation of the reforms being passed, a decision was taken by the MLG to have a Spatial Development Plan (SDP) formulated for the Borough of Arima as part of a programme to cover the landscape of Trinidad with physical development plans. These would help the various Corporations in treating the issues they need to handle in the discharge of what would be their newly acquired functions. To achieve this mandate, consultants (KAIRI Consultants Ltd. in this particular case) were hired to develop the plans assisted by regional planners attached to the MLG (S. Boodhram 2010, pers. comm., 29 Jun.). The plan is being prepared within the context of a number of plans and policy instruments, the most significant of which are:

- The National Physical Development Plan (1984); which is the only statutory guide to land use and development at the national level, and which as previously stated, designated Arima as a Sub-Regional Centre.
- Vision 2020 Draft National Strategic Plan (2005); which is based upon an overarching vision for Trinidad and Tobago for "successful national development resulting in a high quality of life for all our citizens"

- National Spatial Strategy; a strategy for the spatial development of the country to 2020 based upon the then administration's plans to achieve developed country status by that year.

2.2 The Planners

As mentioned before to develop the various SDPs the MLG hired consultant firms who were kept under close supervision by the Ministry's regional planners. According to Mr. Boodhram (2010, pers. comm., 29 Jun.), the technical backgrounds of the consulting firms solicited in the preparation of these plans were diverse and included the following technical expertise:

1. Land Use Planning
2. Drainage Specialist
3. GIS Specialist/Technicians
4. Communication
5. Environmental Management
6. Transportation Planner/ Specialist
7. Socio-Economist Personnel

In the case of the T&CPD however, their Development Planning Unit (DPU) is more traditional, staffed only by Planners who have at least a Bachelors or Masters Degrees in Planning from recognised Universities. This is not to say that they are one dimensional; some of these planners began their careers in other units within the Division such as Development Control or Research, and then obtained additional qualifications before joining the DPU. In addition all planners received on the job training in the areas of spatial analysis utilising GIS and Project Management tools.

Furthermore, the DPU also consists of a Research Unit that does all the background research including surveys before a plan is prepared. Finally the process is supported by GIS personnel, responsible for all the mapping with regards to the plan. Thus, the 'Planning Team' consists of many professionals other than planners and overall is almost as multi-faceted as the MLG Consultant teams (M. Hinds 2010, pers. comm., 01 Jul).

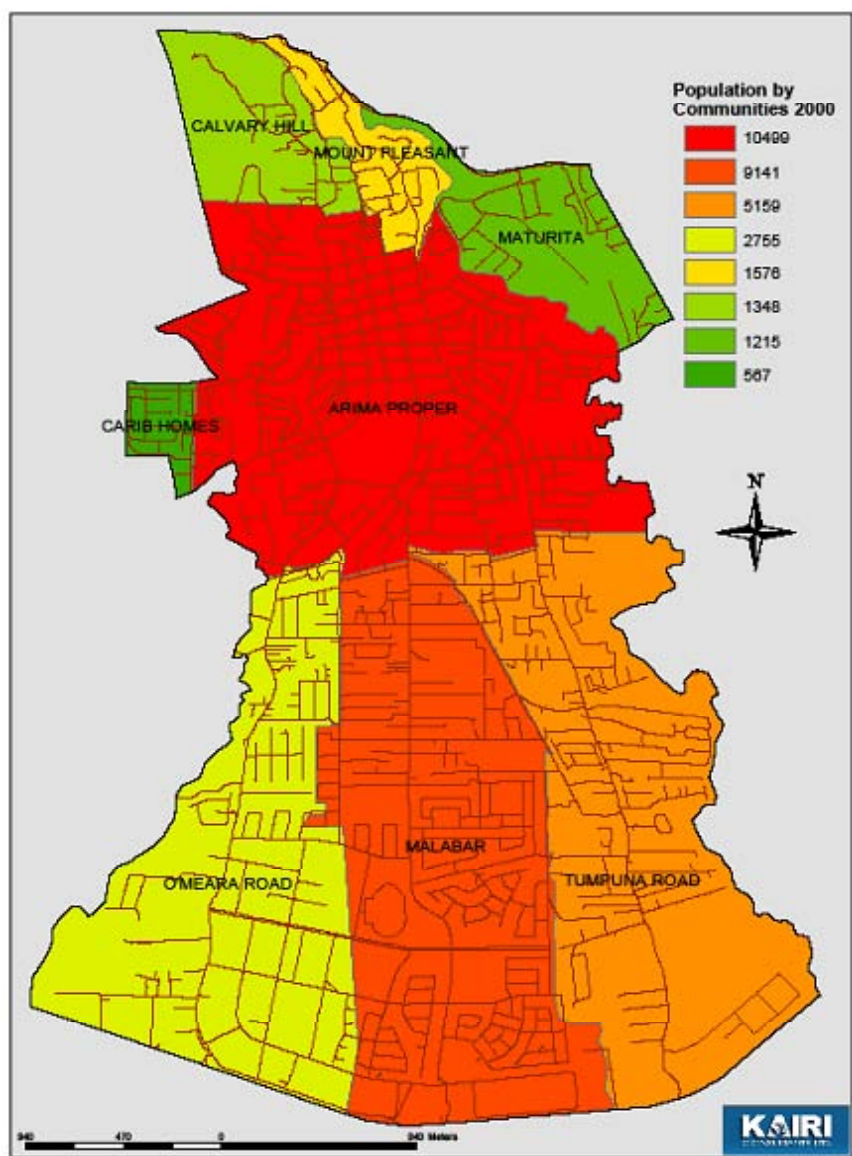
2.3 The Location

Before delving into comparing the content of these two plans, it is essential to understand firstly where the boundaries of their respective study areas lie and as such to identify if there are any discrepancies between them. The Borough of Arima is situated in north-central Trinidad and is surrounded by the Tunapuna/Piarco Municipality. It is situated 26 kilometres from the capital city of Port of Spain and just eight kilometres from the Piarco International Airport. Furthermore, it covers approximately 1115.4 hectares and holds a roughly rectangular shape with an average north-south length of five kilometres and an average east-west width of 2.2 kilometres. This puts it at roughly the same size as Port of Spain (twelve square kilometers) and indeed it faces many similar challenges in its spatial development. It extends towards Calvary Hill in the North, the Churchill Roosevelt Highway to the south and is bounded by the Arima River to the east and the Mausica River to the west. The region is also drained by these aforementioned rivers. The topography of the area is generally flat to gently sloping and by far most of the land lies between 30 metres and 90 metres above mean sea level. With regards to the hierarchy of settlements in Trinidad and Tobago, a town with Borough status falls just below that of a city as it relates

to population size and the quantity, level and type of services provided. According to the 2000 Housing and Population Census the population of the Borough grew by 12.8 percent, from 28,612 in 1990 to 32,278, in 2000, due mainly to migration. This population was contained in 8,400 households and of the three boroughs in Trinidad, Arima ranked second in population size; 2.7 percent of the national population. Chaguanas and Point Fortin, the other two Boroughs have captured 5.6 percent and 1.6 percent of the total population, respectively.

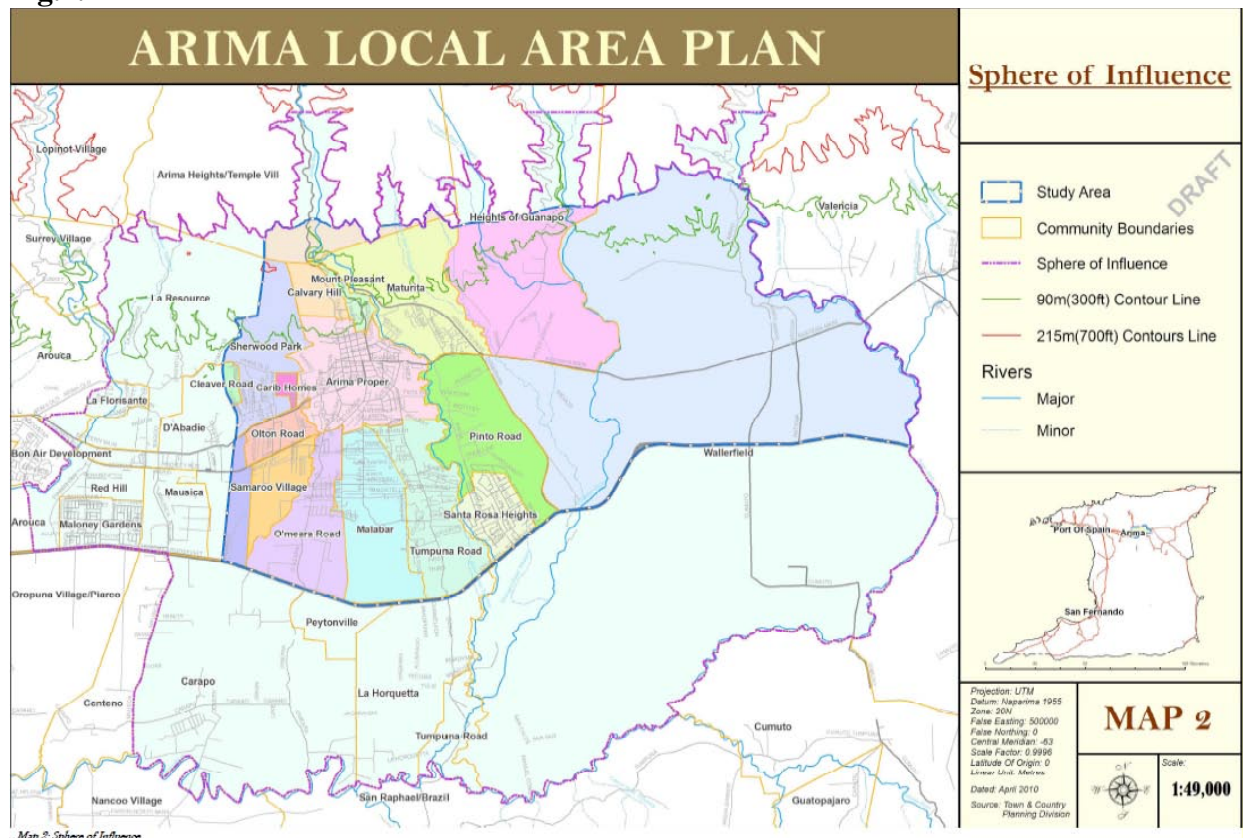
Though small in spatial dimensions the Borough's influence stretches deep into the communities around it, as far east as Wallerfield, beyond the Churchill Roosevelt Highway into areas such as Brazil to the south east and Centeno to the southwest, Maloney to the east and Arima Heights to the north. For these purposes an area defined as Greater Arima has been used. This includes to the north everything below the 700ft contour line, the Churchill Roosevelt Highway to the south, Wallerfield to the east and Cleaver Road to the west with an imaginary line that extends south to Andrews Lane just off the CR Highway. Both plans accurately utilised the borough boundaries as their primary study area yet still recognised the importance of the Greater Arima area which they appropriately distinguished and referenced when needed. They contained almost identical descriptions of what they perceived to be this Greater Arima area. This was not always the case however as it was only in conducting this review exercise that the T&CPD engaged in discussions with the MLG regarding these new boundaries so as to officially expand the Borough to all of Greater Arima (T&CPD, 2009). Figure 2.1 referenced from the MLG plan shows the borough boundaries and its population distribution by communities (2000) whilst Fig. 2.2 referenced from the T&CPD plan illustrates this borough area within the context of its so called 'sphere of influence' i.e. the Greater Arima area;

Fig. 2.1: Distribution of Population in Communities, 2000



Source: Draft Spatial Development Plan of the Arima Borough (2011 – 2020), 2010.

Fig.2.2



Source: Draft Arima Local Area Plan, 2009.

2.4 Overall Visions and Objectives

Both plans are guided by overall visions from which the strategic objectives flow. It is interesting to note that to capture their respective visions for the Borough, both the MLG and the T&CPD relied on similar processes. The T&CPD depended on several consultations with the Borough as well as from statements derived from the SWOT analysis that the Borough completed as part of the local government reform process. They were also mindful to ensure that the vision embraced the five development pillars as from Vision 2020. Likewise for the MLG, stakeholder participation was an integral part of the process and in their first of three public consultations, fittingly dubbed the 'Visioning Exercise', the manner in which the stakeholders saw the Region developing in the future was determined. Key challenges were identified and possible strategies to address these issues were discussed. The consultation was attended by 52 persons included representatives of business enterprises, faith-based organisations, community organisations, women's groups, youth and sport associations, educational institutions, Councillors and staff of the ABC. Also participating was the then Member of Parliament (MP) for Arima, Ms Penelope Beckles and a representative of the MP for D'abadie/O'Meara.

Thus it is of no surprise that the resultant Vision statements produced espouse the same core values and for the most part are interchangeable. They are as follows;

1. The T&CPD's Local Area Plan (2009):

Arima: A unique space within which the innovative, caring capacity of Arimians is further enhanced within an environment that is economically viable, service centered, environmentally sustainable and that embraces the vastness of its multi-cultural heritage.

2. MLG's 2010 Draft Spatial Development Plan of the Arima Borough, 2011 – 2020:

Arima is a city with a special identity and image, based on its status as the remaining official home of the First Peoples of Trinidad, and its status as a Royal Borough, built on a sustainable economy in an ecologically sensitive and culturally rich environment, and supported by the commitment of all of its burgesses to leave a fitting bequest to 'Gens Arime' of tomorrow.

This, therefore cites the first example of where overlap has occurred across the two plans, the biggest distinction being the T&CPD specifying that the economy should be tertiary based i.e. 'service centred'.

But what of the supposed strategic objectives that are meant to flow from these overall visions? The MLG plan is intended to provide a regional development framework for the development of land in the Borough of Arima over the next ten years, accommodating and guiding the spatial distribution of social, economic, and cultural activities of the burgesses of the Municipality. It will set the framework for the formulation of detailed policies and local area plans for areas that require more detailed treatment. The plan is to be utilised as a strategic planning tool to channel resources into addressing identified development challenges and emerging socioeconomic issues in the region. It therefore, presents concrete projects that should be included in the annual budgetary allocations of the ABC and the implementing agencies established under the MLG including the Community Improvement Services Limited (CISL), and in the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP). The plan also indicates the estimated population distribution over the Borough in 2020, as well as social and economic activities to be undertaken in the Municipality. Mechanisms through which the plan is to be implemented are also included.

The main development objectives for Arima contained therein for the next ten years are as follows:

1. Environmental and cultural sustainability.
2. Meaningful and secure jobs.
3. Functional efficiency and aesthetic appeal.
4. Accessibility and permeability.
5. Equitable distribution of social and physical infrastructure.
6. Housing adequate to meet the needs of all.
7. Effective municipal management.

The T&CPD's local area plan review on the other hand, has only a five year life span and unlike MLG's plan which has no precedent, the general implementation of objectives from these type plans have been poor or haphazard at best (hence the need for review). Of course, the responsibility for this poor track record does not lie wholly with the T&CPD alone; the Division maintains that it consults with and obtains agreement from all relevant stakeholders in the planning process since it is these agencies that have the mandate and budgetary allocations to actually implement the proposals of the plans prepared by the Division (M. Hinds 2010, pers. comm., 01 Jul.). Still, some measure of blame can be attributed to the T&CPD since the likelihood of achieving stated goals are directly related to the realism of the parameters envisioned and the accuracy of the forecasting methods used. For instance, at the time the Arima 1990 plan was being prepared population growth and expansion of the Arima urban area had occurred at a tremendous rate of four percent in the period 1980-87 compared to two percent for the country as a whole. The Plan therefore projected population growth for Greater Arima from 51,305 (1987) to 66,396

persons or 15, 433 households by the year 2000. The actual population data as of the Census done in 2000, for Greater Arima however is **51,000**. A further break down of these figures saw the population of the Borough of Arima in 1987 as 32,474 and the projection of population increase to be 41,507 by the year 2000. However, the actual census figures released by Central Statistical Office (CSO) for 2000 documents the actual population in the Borough to stand at **32, 278** a little less than the 1987 figures. Moreover, the 1987 figures used as a basis seem even more flawed given that the 1990 Census estimated the Borough population to be merely 28,612 suggesting there was an unexplained decline in population from the three years prior. The ‘boom’ as it were did not continue and population growth in this area stabilized.

Thus, during the five year life of this plan, T&CPD have worked under the assumption that the population of Greater Arima is not expected to grow to the figures of 66,396 which was catered for in the 1990 plan and in fact have concluded that the level, type and quantity of services and land use recommended in the 1990 plan are still applicable. This Plan’s objectives are as follows:

1. To improve the quality of the physical environment and enhance the image of the town.
2. To upgrade the provision of services in the town centre and improve its attractiveness as a centre for business.
3. To promote a healthy, green, environmentally friendly space that is functional and serves the needs of residents.
4. To encourage a transportation network that provides ease of movement, convenience and safety.

Again, like the vision statements, the objectives of the two plans as can be expected are similarly worded. However one can argue that the MLG Plan’s objectives, however clichéd, is more encompassing and spatially minded as evidenced by the inclusion of the need for more ‘Effective municipal management’ which the T&CPD Plan does not consider.

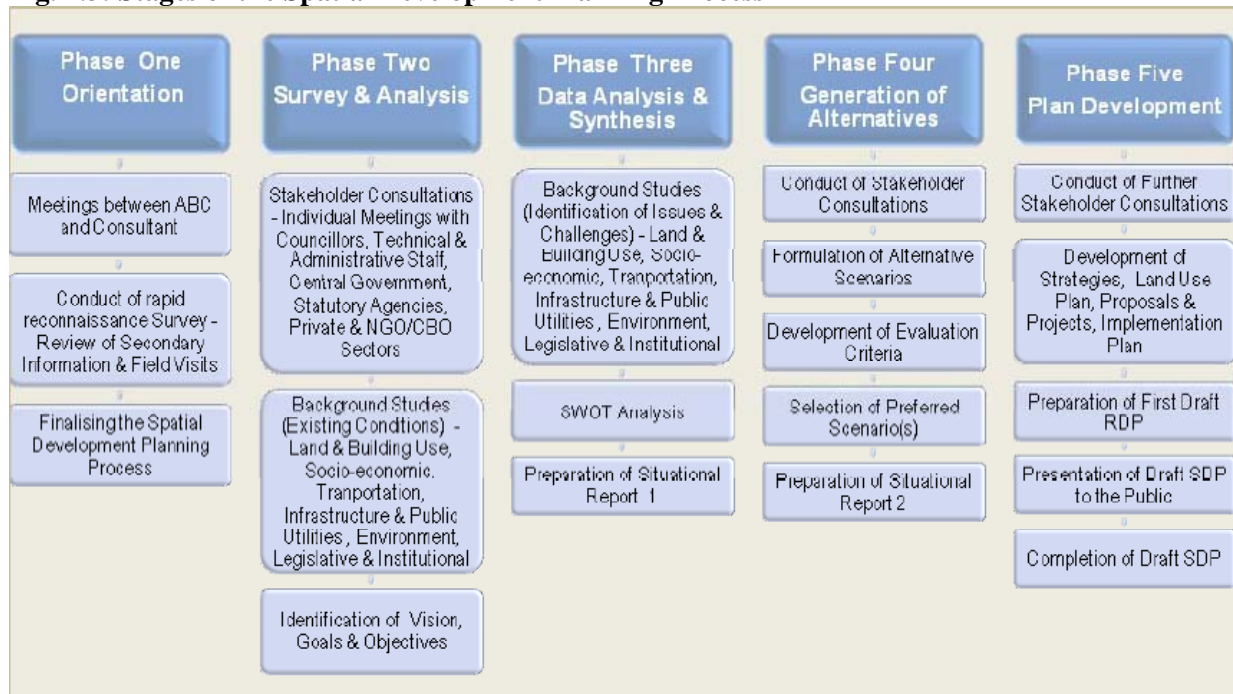
2.5 The Plan Preparation Process

The methodology followed to date for the preparation of MLG’s Plan involved these five phases summarised in Figure 4.3:

1. ***Orientation*** which consisted of discussions between the ABC and the Regional Planning Consultant, a rapid reconnaissance survey of the Arima Borough (including the review of relevant secondary information and field visits), and finalisation of the spatial development planning process.
2. ***Data Collection and Survey*** which involved an extensive review of information and data; the conduct of several studies, including a limited ‘windscreen’ land and building use survey; and consultations with public sector agencies.
3. ***Analysis and synthesis of data***, at the end of which key development planning issues and problems were identified.
4. ***Generation of alternative development scenarios*** with potential to address the issues, and selection of the preferred option.

5. **Preparation of the draft SDP** based upon the scenario preferred by the stakeholders. A public consultation is to be held to present and review the plan and to gain feedback on its contents. The results of this review process will be used to finalise the Draft Final Plan.

Fig. 2.3: Stages of the Spatial Development Planning Process

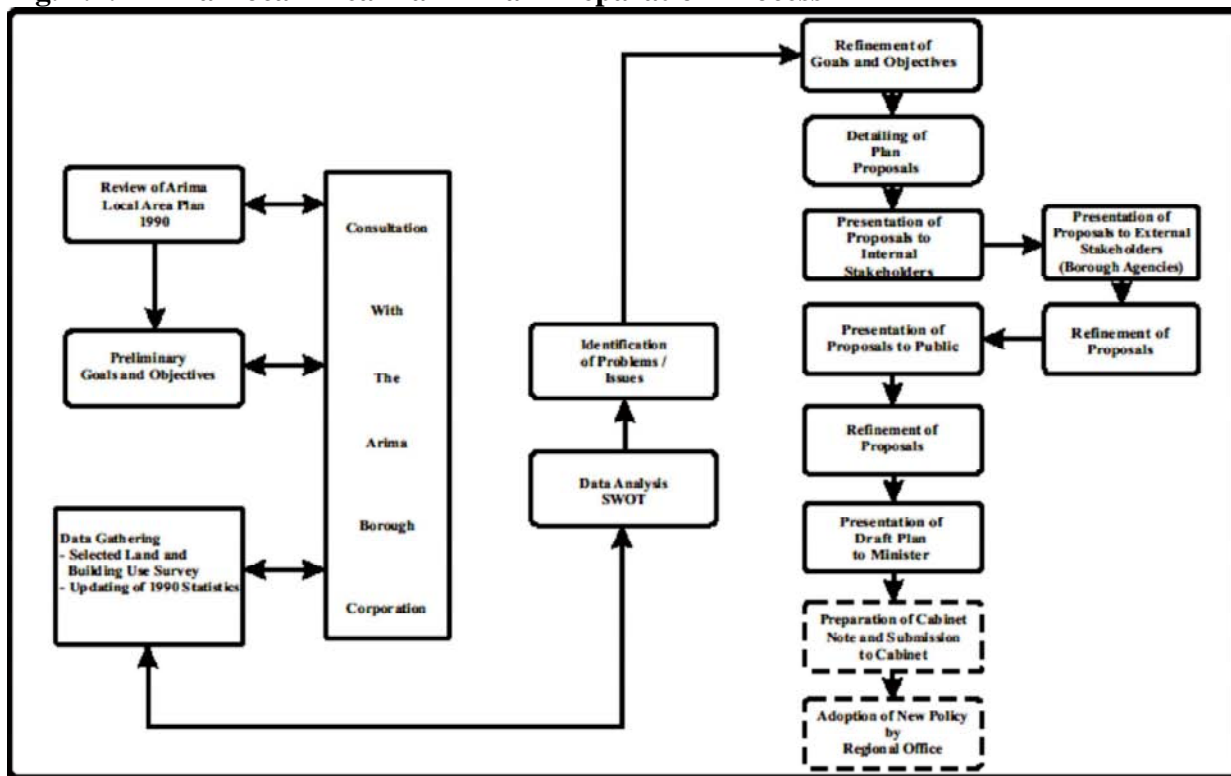


Source: Draft Spatial Development Plan of the Arima Borough (2011 – 2020), 2010.

Not surprisingly, this process is in close alignment to the standard international model for development plan formulation as explained by Inskeep (1984) and is in keeping with the plan preparation process followed by most of the other development plans reviewed in researching this paper; particularly those from the UK. The latter steps of Inskeep's framework, i.e. implementation and monitoring, although not explicitly referred to in the steps mentioned above, are addressed within the plan itself and will be discussed further later in this chapter.

The T&CPD, more or less, also relies on this 'tried and true' formula as espoused by Inskeep but is most closely aligned to the methodology used by the New Fredericton strategic plan (Robertson, 1993). Like the MLG plan, great emphasis is also placed on ensuring that there is sufficient public participation at all levels of the process; an essential assessment requisite for those hailing from Healey's school of planning thought. Thus, in that regard, the core of the plan formulation process has been stakeholder consultation and continuous participation and feedback at the level of the Borough, inclusive of the Mayor, Councillors and Heads of Units. All relevant agencies such as the Drainage and Highways Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of National Security through the Police Division and the Fire Services Division, the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), National Agricultural Marketing Development Company (NAMDEVCO), the Sporting Company of Trinidad and Tobago, the Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited (e TecK) and the Arima Businessmen Association, to name a few, were also consulted to help guide the plan formulation process. In addition, T&CPD also conducted two public consultations with the residents of Arima, and created an email account so that stakeholders can continue to contribute to the development of the area. Figure 2.4 itemises the process used to produce the plan and is in fact the same blueprint followed to produce all their plans (M. Hinds 2010, pers. comm., 01 Jul.).

Fig. 2.4: Arima Local Area Plan – Plan Preparation Process



Source: Draft Arima Local Area Plan, 2009.

2.6 The Policies/Proposals

Although ambitious in scope, the MLG plan is extremely legible and well structured in layout. As it were, these qualities are particularly important when attempting to deliver a product that is geared toward achieving the goals of ‘spatial planning’ i.e. a more inclusive role for planning that involves bringing together strategic perspectives on land development, environmental issues, resource use, transport, economic development and a host of other similar concerns. (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2007; Robertson, 1993). In their second official public consultation, attended by the major stakeholders and hosted by the ABC, three options generated (phase 4 of the plan preparation process) were compared in terms of social, economic, environmental and traffic/transportation impacts as well as the ease of implementation; they were each assigned a numerical weighting by the stakeholders and the weighted scores summed. At the end of the process the Eco-Cultural City Concept was found to have scored highest and was determined to be the option based on which the plan would be drafted. This option assumed that Arima’s share of the national population of 1,400,000 persons would increase to 5 percent by 2020 based on past in-migration trends, ongoing housing developments, and expected increase in business and employment opportunities under this scenario. A population of 70,000 persons was therefore projected for the town by 2020 (60,000 of which would be located within the confines of the existing borough boundaries). To suitably accommodate and plan for this influx, the strategy proposals were organised under the seven plan objectives i.e. each objective was supplemented by policy directives that were specifically geared toward meeting them. Still, that does not mean these policy directives existed within a void; planned infrastructure works and other projects often overlapped into more than one theme and by doing this it demonstrated more clearly to the reader the need for generating networks across and beyond the public sector (Raco, 2002; Durose, 2007). These proposals were subsequently cross-referenced by location (the Borough was divided into its various districts) so as to give the reader a general idea as to the potential siting of planned works. There are many examples that can be drawn from

the plan to exhibit its superior spatial awareness; the most obvious of these (wherein the formation of thematic partnerships to tackle these cross cutting issues can be palpably shown) are highlighted here:

1. **Policy A1- part b)** calls for the establishment of a more balanced spatial system by developing a district centre and other community facilities in the southern section of town at Malabar to meet the basic needs of residents in the area and to complement the Downtown District. This proposal in particular manifests itself several times throughout the plan under different themes.
2. **Policy B1-** The Smart Living Project to be championed and implemented by the ABC and in keeping with a wider National programme called LEAP, is a long-term project geared toward ‘fostering positive environmental change among burgesses’. It will involve the ABC working closely with the Ministries of Local Government; Planning, Housing and the Environment; Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources; and Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs in addition to the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) and the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). The project would consist of a number of public sensitisation and training programmes including a website that would be geared toward providing information on a number of important lifestyle topics for both homes and businesses.
3. **Policy B2-** The ABC in collaboration with the Solid Waste Management Company Ltd. (SWMCOL) and the MLG is to adopt an integrated municipal waste management system that in short would reduce the amount of waste reaching the disposal facilities whilst simultaneously improving waste collection and disposal systems.
4. **Policy B5-** The ABC will coordinate the effort to develop a disaster management plan for the Borough which will be guided by the national disaster management plan and system. Including in this will also be an evacuation plan for downtown Arima, an early warning system for floods and other relevant disasters, community emergency responses, and a communication strategy for informing burgesses during upset times. Besides this, the ABC holds existing responsibility for shelter management and will take a proactive approach to ensuring that these facilities meet international standards. Effective collaboration will be required between the ABC and the MLG, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) and disaster response agencies such as the Red Cross, Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service among others.
5. **Policy C1-** Although historically the O’Meara Industrial Estate (managed by e TecK) was developed in the context of the earlier industrialisation strategy of import-substitution and is classed as a light manufacturing industrial site, the presence of a campus of the UTT contiguous to it presents Arima with a major opportunity to become involved in the knowledge industries of the future, once the right policy framework is put into place. In particular, the UTT and e TecK can collaborate to introduce structured research activities to the estate. The ABC is also in a position to facilitate close links between the firms on the industrial estate and the Airports Authority, given that the estate is likely to rely on ease of transport for inputs from abroad and exports to the rest of the world. The O’Meara Industrial estate is also referenced in *policy B2* wherein it is envisioned that it be transformed into an Eco- Industrial Park.
6. **Policy E2-** The Plan endorses the Caroni River Basin Study which has been developed and is being procured through the National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO). The study is expected to provide flood mitigation and prevention solutions, recommendations for watershed management and best management practices for flood prone areas in the Caroni Basin, and more so in the Borough. This in conjunction with the planned retention pond in Maturita as well as the Ministry of Works and Transport’s Drainage Division proposal to undertake river improvement works in the Mausica and Arima Rivers should reduce flooding considerably in the Borough.

7. Finally, **Policy GI** in its entirety which reiterates the need for effective municipal management by the ABC and outlines strategies as to how this can be achieved.

So far in this chapter, the MLG plan has been discussed both in terms of how democratic/ accountable it is as well as its progressiveness; and for all purposes, based on the evidence presented, it has fulfilled these criteria very well. But how does it fare in terms of the third important tenet of the plan formulation framework developed i.e. technical proficiency (Shepard *et al*, 2006; Birket *et al*, 1996)? The answer in short, is that the plan seems to have performed inconsistently on these fronts. For example, the transport policies are largely informed by data from a scientifically sound, albeit outdated 2004 Comprehensive National Transportation Study (CNTS). However at least in this case, the data has been supplemented by more current road capacity studies where necessary and detailed parking analysis for the downtown area. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said with regard to the evidence used to support the housing policies. For while the policy rhetoric hits the right notes, recommending mixed use development and insisting on a varied housing stock in terms of type, accommodation and density, the housing projections, or more specifically the assumptions on which they were based, are at odds with these ideals. Here, the admittedly rough estimate assumes a 1:1 household to dwelling unit ratio and the average household size of 3.8 is assumed to hold constant till 2020. In the plan's defence however, it is formulated in the same mould of what would be say a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in the UK and as such is not expected to provide too precise a specification as to how the area should look (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006; Healey, 2004). Rather, it is expected that with devolution of planning powers, more detailed local area action plans would be commissioned by the ABC and these, guided by the principles of this plan, would be in a position to verify the feasibility of some of the proposals. This is alluded to several times in the document, most notably with regard to need for a more detailed assessment of the housing sector as well as a probe into the traffic implications of placing the main Malabar District Centre facility at its proposed site. Thus, until these local area action plans come on stream, to some extent the plan's potency has been nullified; resembling more a wish-list as long as the feasibility of major proposals like the Cultural Complex, Eco Industrial Park and the aforementioned Malabar District Centre remain under scrutiny.

Many of the proposals contained within the MLG plan, both major and minor alike, are echoed almost identically by the T&CPD plan. These include the proposed pedestrianisation of Queen Street, the Malabar District Centre, the Amerindian Village, the Administrative Complex, the establishment of riverside parks and the redevelopment of the Public Market among others. Others are worded differently, and differ slightly in terms of the overall vision, but carry the same basic gist. An example of this is with regard to the redevelopment of the 'old Textile Mills' site. The T&CPD recommends building a Civic Centre for cultural events there complemented by possibly a museum to house some of Arima's historical artefacts as well as a library. The MLG plan on the other hand imagines the site as a sprawling Cultural Complex complete with a library, a museum of living culture, a biological museum and a cultural centre for the arts. Lastly, although a rarity, there are times however where the two plans diverge from one another in terms of policy. In the following case in question, the problem stems not from a divergence in values or beliefs, which would be difficult to reconcile, but rather from a much less drastic situation; the two agencies simply seemed to have interpreted the same data differently and thus drew different conclusions. Both plans agree that to reduce congestion a new transit hub is necessary so as to relocate the taxis and maxi taxis (a type of private mini-bus) away from their current on-street sites. Furthermore both plans are aware that the Public Service Transport Commission (PTSC) has expressed commitment to redevelop lands at the corner of the Priority Bus Route and O'Meara Road. However, the MLG plan assumes that this hub would be exclusively used for buses and thus a different, possibly multi-storied, *paratransit* hub is needed at a suitable location still to be determined. The plan reasons that 'compared with bus termini, paratransit hubs require much more planning in their design and location since arrival rates and holding capacities are stochastic.' (MLG, 2010: p. 82) and thus surmised that the PTSC site could not possibly hold all of these functions in one place. The T&CPD plan on the other hand, assumes that this is indeed the PTSC's intention, much in the same vein as the City Gate transit hub in Port of

Spain which accommodates both maxi taxis and buses. Furthermore, the T&CPD plan identified a second site best suited for taxis, based on traffic studies conducted by the Ministry of Works and Transport; a proposal which is never mentioned in the MLG plan.

There is however, another striking inconsistency between the two plans in terms of their transport proposals that should be noted. This time, the T&CPD plan recommended a multi-storey car park for a site located within the town centre. The MLG plan however, based on the occupancy data derived from their own parking studies, concluded that there was no pressing need for such a structure and most of the traffic congestion in the downtown area could in fact be solved through the reorganisation of the urban space, the introduction and rigid enforcement of wrecking or clamping, and the provision of proper accommodation for public transport vehicles. Unlike the first example, the root cause of the conflict here typified the T&CPD plan's biggest failing; its myopic perspective and relative lack of 'spatial awareness', especially when compared to the MLG plan. Whereas the MLG plan would actively attempt to synergise, and foster collaboration between stakeholders so as to achieve workable solutions to the common problems they usually face independently, the T&CPD plan is much more passive in that aspect. Instead, for this plan, it is sufficient to just obtain data from as many stakeholders (mostly centralised government agencies) as possible with regard to their individual programme/ project proposals and attempt to represent them all together in one place.

Thus, despite having the same *quantity* of public participation/ stakeholder involvement as the MLG plan, crucially there must be other factors at play that prevents it from performing optimally as a 'spatial vision' (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2002; Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006; Healey, 2004). Firstly, one must recognise that the MLG planning teams were put together for a singular purpose and benefitted from a clear mandate that specifically called for the delivery of spatial strategies. The T&CPD on the other hand is an established planning body tasked with both development control as well as development plan formulation and thus has to work through a number of positions. As Nillson (2007) suggested, differing work modes are often done in a parallel manner and thus it is not surprising that an entire section of the T&CPD plan is reserved for denoting the development standards for prospective developers of the area to heed. Moreover, the plan's status as a review acts as a further constraint given the land use format used by the original 1990 plan (G. Frontin 2010, pers. comm., 07 Jul.). Thus, much like the Chelmsford case study (Hall, 2008) the T&CPD planners had to adapt it into a form that served as a workable compromise. Sketches outlining the physical form of a number of the key downtown proposals were graphically presented and then supplemented by maps illustrating the land use designations (see Appendix B for examples of such sketches). With that said it must be noted that the visual quality of the maps presented in the T&CPD plan was of a much higher standard to those in the MLG plan which were blurry and only used sparingly. This suggests that the T&CPD planning team was more proficient in the use of GIS and other related tools. Appendix C summarises this section containing the maps that indicate the siting of the main proposals for the MLG and the T&CPD plans respectively

2.7 Implementation Strategies

The MLG plan contains a separate implementation chapter that outlines what must be done in order for the plan to be successful although it does concede that some of the programmes/proposals may not be completed within the 10 year time frame. These mechanisms for the most part are discussed in general terms, and can be condensed into three necessary criteria;

1. The establishment of a Coordinating Committee to assist the management of the entire development through facilitating and supervising the collaboration between relevant agencies needed for specific proposals.
2. Public-Private Sector Partnerships are integral for funding many of the proposals

3. Sustained and meaningful community participation when preparing the local area action plans.

The T&CPD plan on the other hand contains no such section but it does go into some detail about the tools at the agency's disposal specifically that can be used to help achieve the plan's stated objectives. In this regard, it plans to facilitate the growth of the CBD through the intensification of commercial use to C4 standards for the area immediately east of the CBD. Furthermore, the areas outside the CBD and this intensified commercial zone are to be rezoned as (Mixed Use, 60 percent Residential, 40 percent commercial) with a view to intensifying the ratio in favour of commercial development as the demand arises. Outside of its own resources, the only implementation recommendation the plan makes is that the ABC adopt the Business Improvement District (BID) model in the town centre; as has been embraced by cities worldwide. A BID scheme basically involves encouraging businesses, through tax relief, to take ownership of the streetscape (Justice and Skelcher, 2009).

Finally, both plans contain development schedules, samples of which can be viewed in Appendix D. In keeping with the overall narrative so far, the MLG's schedule is well structured and suitably summarises the policy content with a reasoned time-table cueing the reader as to how the proposals can be realistically achieved. On the other hand the T&CPD's schedule reads more as a summary of what each stakeholder plans to do and their reported progress so far on these developments.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Objective 1: To determine the sequence of the plan preparation process.

Both plans feature similar plan preparation methodologies as reviewed in section 2.5 and in fact are in keeping with the general model followed internationally. Despite some negligible differences at times in terms of sequencing, common stages found between the two plans include a preliminary visioning exercise/ stakeholder consultation; data gathering through land and other types of surveys/studies; the SWOT analysis; the development of proposals; and some measure of public evaluation which was used to feedback into the finalised plan.

Objective 2: To investigate alleged duplication/ overlap in the planning system

After evaluating the two 'Arima' plans of the case study, it is concluded that this is indeed an example of duplication/overlap in the planning system. The study area under review is essentially the same as are the majority of the proposals put forward in each. Whether one plan does a better job of it than the other is beside the point because in actuality both agencies have failed to capitalise on an excellent opportunity for collaboration. Numerous times throughout the MLG Plan, it cites the need for local area action plans to further assess the feasibility of some of the broader proposals envisioned; a role the T&CPD planning team were fully qualified to undertake. This would have resulted in the production of two far more complementary plans. Another option is, given the T&CPD plan's superior GIS mapping output in the face of the MLG plan's overall depth, both agencies could have pooled their resources to produce a more polished end product. At the very least, some form of collaboration between the two bodies could have potentially resolved any of the inconsistencies found between the two plans.

Objective 3: To compare and analyse differences in the scope, form and content of plans produced due to 'planners' being of different backgrounds and working within different institutions.

Although of a high quality for both, the skill sets of the respective planning teams involved were decidedly more diverse for the MLG than for the T&CPD. The planners of the DPU are trained to think across different fields yet still the MLG's strategy of bringing together highly specialised personnel such as the socio economist could have resulted in a more holistic final plan. Overall however, the distinctions between the two plans were primarily due to institutions within which the planners worked and the

mandate behind the two plans. Table 3.1 summarises the results of the plan evaluation with regard to the framework developed.

Table 3.1: Plan Evaluation Results

The Plan	Level of Participation/ Transparency	Technical Proficiency	Progressiveness	Comments
MLG	Good	Adequate	Good	Technical proficiency of the plan deemed adequate due to the broad remit of the spatial strategy. In the absence of follow up studies and local area action plans however, it is insufficient. It is a Spatial Strategy therefore the format is highly progressive. Three public consultations, well attended and well organised to produce tangible results that genuinely informed the plan.
T&CPD	Good	Adequate	Less than adequate	Technical proficiency of the plan was deemed to be inconsistent. On the one hand, the GIS mapping and the land survey work was excellent however there are doubts surrounding the accuracy of the forecasting methods used especially considering how far off estimates from the 1990 plan were. Although there was some attempt to update from its previous 1990 land-use format, still not sufficient in terms of 'spatial awareness'. Public participation at all levels of the process through a variety of media including e-mail. All relevant stakeholder bodies were consulted.

Objective 4: To verify how fragmented the system is and assess the level of coordination among planners across the various state agencies.

Based on the evidence of duplication, the system is obviously fragmented. Furthermore, at least formally, planners attached to the T&CPD seemed reluctant to share information with those at the MLG or coordinate in their efforts. An official at the MLG (2010, pers. comm., 05 Jan.) insinuated that the reasons for this are political; The then Minister for Planning, Housing and the Environment deemed the mandate given to the MLG as a direct threat to the continued practicality of the T&CPD which is under his purview. On the record however he stated, that while at first information was easily solicited from the T&CPD, due to an unexplained 'breakdown in communication'; it resulted in the two agencies developing a plan for the Borough of Arima simultaneously (2010, pers. comm., 29 Jun). Although I was allowed to examine the T&CPD plan for academic purposes, despite several official requests, planners attached to the MLG still have not been able to have access to it.

Ms. Marie Hinds (2010, pers. comm., 01 Jul.) for her part argues that the T&CPD plan is still in the process of being drafted and thus is not ready to be shared. She conceded that duplication may have occurred but reiterated that the T&CPD has an excellent track record regarding consultation/collaboration with the relevant Local Government Bodies. Moreover, she insisted that despite the mandate of the MLG, the T&CPD functions are mandated by legislation and therefore until the law is changed it is required to

keep on producing plans in accordance with its own internal process. Therefore ultimately, the Division cannot be held responsible for any occurrences of duplication/overlap.

Objective 5: To determine the relevance of the T&CPD within the overall planning system.

Informed somewhat by all the research methods employed in the production of this dissertation, the following are a number of recommendations for the T&CPD; to maintain its relevance both in the short and long term:

1) Short term recommendations

- a) Assisting the corporations in establishing their planning programmes, including the possible secondment or transfer of staff to the corporations.
- b) Assisting the corporations in the preparation of local area and action area plans and ensuring compatibility with the RSSs produced by the MLG.
- c) Assisting the corporations in formulating development standards and guidelines for development control purposes.

2) Long term recommendations

- a) Formulating and reviewing national and regional planning policies. In *the Planning and Development of Land Bill* (2001) which is high on the agenda to be passed by the newly elected government, the body to be created responsible for these functions is referred to as the 'The National Physical Planning Commission'. The T&CPD should be co-opted into this new body.
- b) Assessment of major and complex development applications for planning permission.
- c) The planning appeal system in Trinidad and Tobago is legally inoperative. Perhaps the most experienced planners within the division can be used to form an independent planning inspectorate that rules on planning appeals in a quasi-judiciary fashion.

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Appendix A

A1. Interview Schedule

Name	Position	Interview Date (dd/mm/yyyy)
Mr. Stephen Boodhram	Senior Regional Planner, MLG	29/06/2010
Ms. Marie Hinds	Senior Land Use Planner, T&CPD	01/07/2010
Mr. Gerry Frontin	Urban Planning Consultant	07/07/2010

A2. Questionnaires

A2.1. Questions for Mr. Stephen Boodhram

1. What is your position and responsibilities within the Ministry?
2. Can you briefly outline the process followed in producing the spatial plans for the regional corporations
3. Who are the 'planners' involved in producing these plans? What are their technical backgrounds?
4. How would you characterise the Ministry's relationships with other relevant agencies in producing these plans, particularly the Town and Country Planning Division? Please comment on the level of collaboration generally that has taken place so far and the reasons for this.
5. Are you confident these plans will be adopted and if so, when do you expect this to be done?
6. What is the adoption process for these plans given the current legal framework planning operates within?
7. In light of the recent push for local government reform, and the proposed granting of more autonomy for Regional Corporations in directing their own future through increased planning powers, what do you see as the role of the T&CPD in:
 - i) The short to medium term during this period of transition
 - ii) The long term
8. Some argue that the Town and Country Planning Act 1960 Chapter 35:01, which in itself is based on England's 1947 Act is antiquated. As such, they believe there is urgent need for reform, much in the same vein as England's 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Do you share these sentiments and if so, what are the key reforms you believe need to be put into place?
9. Finally, are there any further comments you may wish to add that the above questions might not have touched on, with regard to the research objectives I outlined to you earlier? Also,

would you be able to recommend any other person I can talk to who may be able to give a fresh yet informed perspective on the above issues?

A2.2. Questions for Ms. Marie Hinds

1. What is your position and responsibilities within the Town and Country Planning Division?
2. Can you briefly outline the process followed in producing plans? How are areas prioritised?
3. Who are the 'planners' involved in producing these plans? What are their technical backgrounds?
4. How would you characterise the T&CPD's relationships with other relevant agencies in producing plans? Please comment specifically on the level of collaboration generally that has taken place with the Ministry of Local Government in their drive to produce spatial plans for all the regional corporations, cities and boroughs.
5. Can you outline how the two 'Arima' plans complement each other, and whether there are conflicts or overlaps between them? If so, why do you think this situation occurred?
6. What is the adoption process for plans given the current legal framework planning operates within?
7. In light of the recent push for local government reform, and the proposed granting of more autonomy for Regional Corporations in directing their own future through increased planning powers, what do you see as the role of the T&CPD in:
 - i) The short to medium term during this period of transition
 - ii) The long term
8. Some argue that the Town and Country Planning Act 1960 Chapter 35:01, which in itself is based on England's 1947 Act is antiquated. As such, they believe there is urgent need for reform, much in the same vein as England's 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Do you share these sentiments and if so, what are the key reforms you believe needs to be put into place?
9. Finally, are there any further comments you may wish to add that the above questions might not have touched on, with regard to the research objectives I outlined to you earlier? Also, would you be able to recommend any other person I can talk to who may be able to give a fresh yet informed perspective on the above issues?

A2.3. Questions for Mr. Gerry Frontin

1. What was your position and responsibilities within the T&CPD?
2. What do you do currently?

3. Can you briefly outline the process followed in producing plans? How are areas prioritised?
4. How would you characterise the T&CPD's relationships with other relevant agencies in producing plans?
5. In light of the recent push for local government reform, and the proposed granting of more autonomy for Regional Corporations in directing their own future through increased planning powers, what do you see as the role of the T&CPD in:
 - i) The short to medium term during this period of transition
 - ii) The long term
6. Some argue that the Town and Country Planning Act 1960 Chapter 35:01, which in itself is based on England's 1947 Act is antiquated. As such, they believe there is urgent need for reform, much in the same vein as England's 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Do you share these sentiments and if so, what are the key reforms you believe need to be put into place?
7. Finally, are there any further comments you may wish to add that the above questions might not have touched on, with regard to the research objectives I outlined earlier?

Appendix B

All sketches courtesy of the T&CPD's Draft Arima Local Area Plan, 2009:

Fig. B1: Sketch of the new Queen Street, pedestrianised



Fig. B2: Artist impression of the Arima Government Administrative Complex

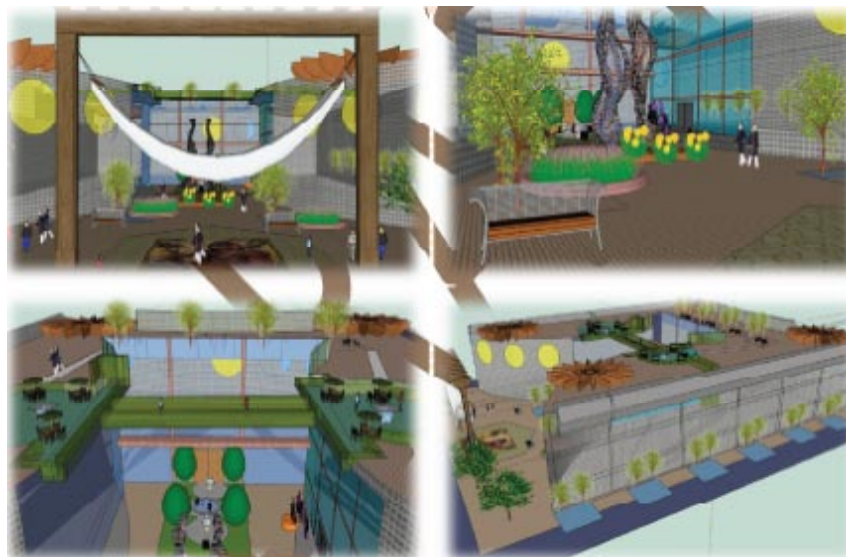
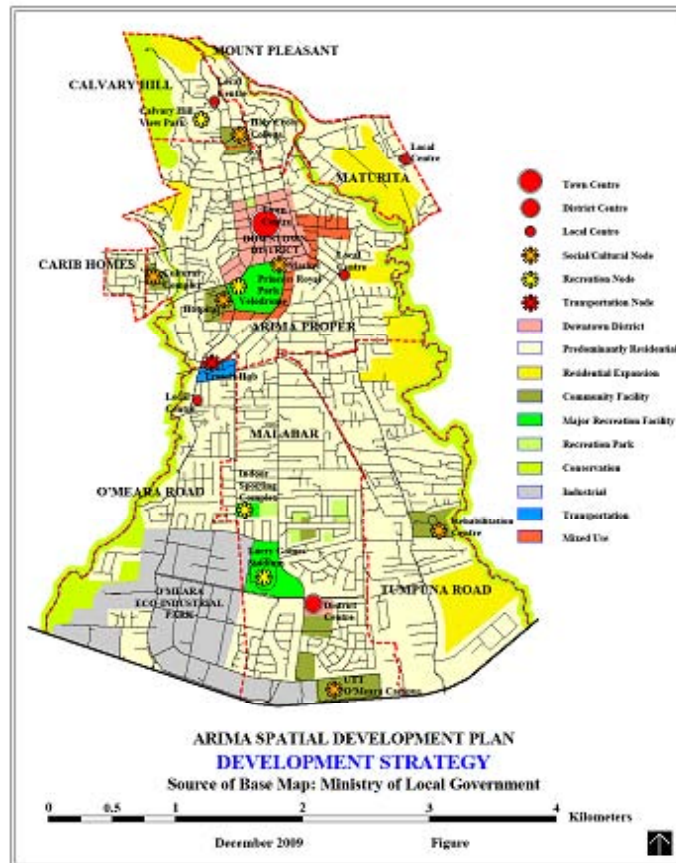


Fig. B3: Sketch of the Redeveloped Market Site

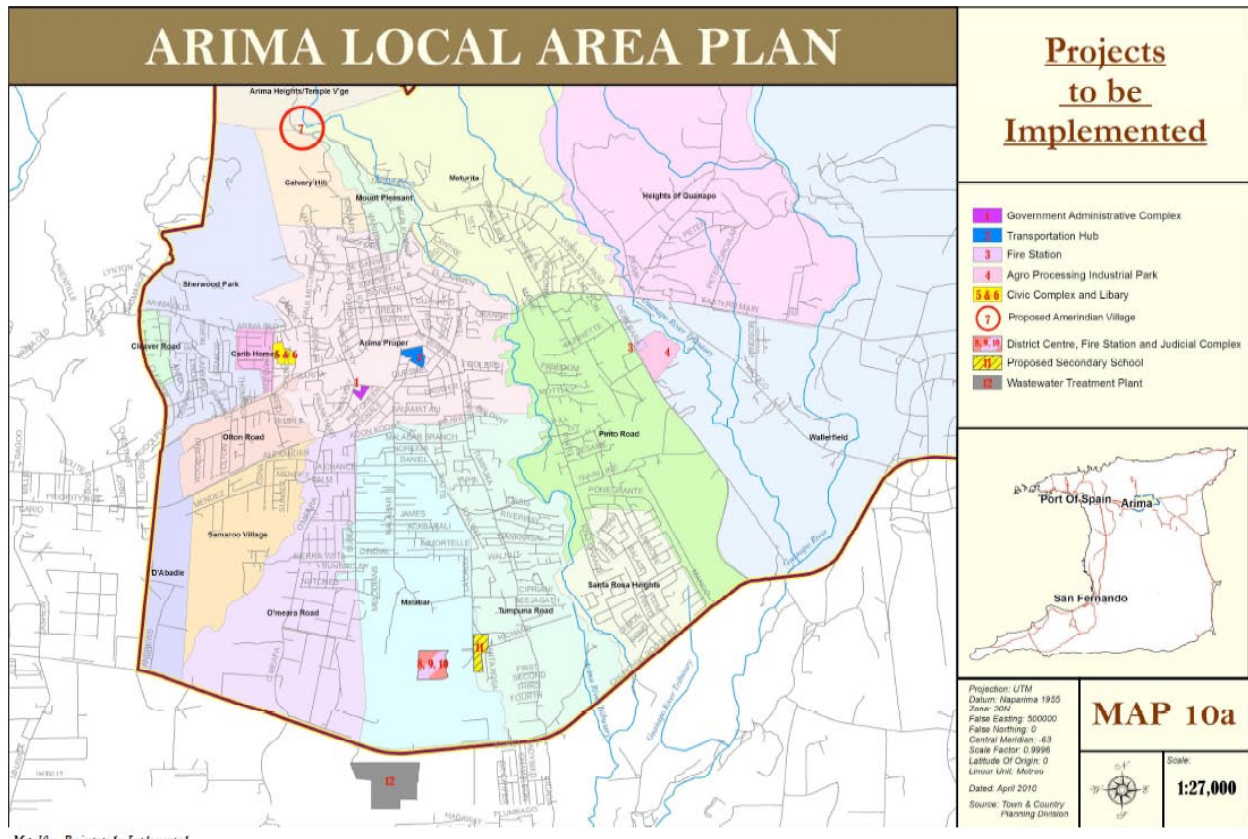


Appendix C

Fig. C1: Arima Borough Development Strategy, MLG Plan



Source: Draft Spatial Development Plan of the Arima Borough (2011 – 2020), 2010.



Appendix D

Table D1: Section of the ‘Action Programme – Major Development Projects’, MLG Plan

NO	PROJECT	DEVELOPMENT STAGES			ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY		PROJECT PRIORITY	COMMENTS
		2010 /12	2013 /15	2016 /20	Main Implementing Agency/Agencies	Collaborating Agency/Agencies		
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS								
01.	Preparation of a local area plan for Borough of Arima, as defined by proposed new boundaries.	■ ■			ABC	MLG and TCPD		
02.	Preparation of an Action Area Plan for the Downtown District, as the primary focal point in the town.	■ ■			ABC	MLG and TCPD		
03.	Formulation and implementation of a pedestrianisation scheme for Queen Street between the Dial and the Market.	■ ■			ABC	TCPD, TMB, MOWT		
04.	Preparation of a development plan for the establishment of a District Centre on a site earmarked by the HDC for commercial development in Malabar.	■ ■			HDC	ABC, TCPD		Consultancy services required to assess the traffic implications of placing the facility at the earmarked site and for the design of the development.
05.	Conduct of watershed management study to address the issue of flooding and other environmental issues.	■ ■			ABC	MLG, TCPD, MOWT		Consultancy service

Source: Draft Spatial Development Plan of the Arima Borough (2011 – 2020), 2010.

Table D2: Section of the ‘Development Projects Appendix’, T&CPD Plan

Project Title	Agencies/Stakeholders	Comments/Time Frame
Government Administrative Complex	Ministry of Public Administration	Ministry of Public Administration has agreed in principle and is awaiting instructions re acquisition
Urban Form pedestrianization of streets, lighting, landscaping	Arima Borough Corporation Arima Businessmen Association	The Arima Businessmen Association have requested further discussions and presentations on the Business Improvement District model
Multi- Storey Carpark	Private Sector The Anglican Church	
Transportation Hub Buses, Maxi Taxis, Taxis	Private Sector/ PTSC	PTSC site is to be released by the Ministry of Community Development. Agreement in principle. Site to be annexed to existing Licensing Division. They have agreed to move. Two potential sites exist for the Maxis and taxis. Both are privately owned and acquisition will be required
Extension of the PBR	Ministry of Works and Transport Highways Division	To be placed again on their budget
Construction of bridges across the Arima River	Ministry of Works and Transport Highways Division	Feasibility studies to be done

Source: Draft Arima Local Area Plan, 2009.