

Impact of community engagement on urban planning: case study



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Case Study: Johor Bahru (Iskandar, Malaysia)

Essay Topic: How do the social, environmental, economic and political processes observed within your chosen case-study city interplay with each other, producing distinct spatial outcomes and giving rise to specific planning policy issues and responses?

INTRODUCTION

Johor Bahru (Iskandar Malaysia), is the main development corridor in the State of Johor, Malaysia which has been established on 30 July 2006 and administered by Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA). The location of Iskandar Malaysia is perfect as South Johor has always been a strategic and important area in the history and development of Malaysia and its surroundings. Today, this well diversified economy, built around Johor's capital, Johor Bahru, and its surrounding areas, has made South Johor Malaysia's the second most important metropolitan.

Johor Bahru is well connected with its outlying urban centres and residential townships, in particular Pasir Gudang, Tebrau, Tampoi, Skudai and Kempas, as it is surrounded by Jalan Lingkar Tengah (Inner-Ring Road). It is also a major employment and financial service centre serving its hinterland.

This essay will first look into the definition of community engagement in urban planning and subsequently it will examine the effectiveness of community engagement regarding the approaches in urban planning and development process, specially looking at the development of Johor Bahru (Iskandar Malaysia) Transformation Programs, as the case study.

Southern Johor has been able to leverage on its proximity to an international hub and the large markets of Singapore and Indonesia, as well as China and India. It has developed successful clusters around electronics, logistics, food and agriculture, tourism, as well as oil and petrochemicals industries. Moreover, Johor has a rich supply of natural resources and human capital, which will continue to underscore its future prospects.

THE INTERACTION

The purpose of this integrated synthesis essay is to demonstrate an understanding of the interplay between the four types of processes you studied in the Pillars of Planning module within the same city. Which processes seem to have been dominant in shaping the development trajectory of the city over the past decades and at present? What linkages, tensions and contradictions exist between the four different types of dynamics?

The state of Johor is our country's second most important conurbation thanks to its strategic location that is close to the thriving markets of Singapore and Indonesia, and in the centre of some of the world's busiest routes. On top of that, it is rich with natural and human resources.

In recent years, however, Johor has been facing increasing competition for capital, human resources and ideas, proliferated by globalisation and advancement of technology. In 2005, the Federal Government and the Johor State Government decided to adopt a more focused and developmental approach to the South Johor region. The aim was to leverage on the region's strengths, including competitively priced land, strategic geographic location, <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-community-engagement-on-urban-planning-case-study/>

industrial base and connectivity as well as its cost structure, while ensuring that Johoreans continue to enjoy its social cohesion.

Based on the key objectives set up for the region, Iskandar Malaysia will:

â- Be international – the centre of transportation, information, quality living, culture, shopping and tourism;

â- Have sustainability – environmental objectives are, and will be, given equal consideration to economic and social objectives;

â- Focus on promoting development within the identified growth boundary, development corridors and the existing urban footprint;

â- Have economic growth driven by identified key economic clusters concentrated at identified growth nodes.

Based on these principles, the Comprehensive Development Plan for South Johor Economic Region 2006-2025 (CDP) will have the following features:

â- Ensure the rights of the Federal and State Governments under the Federal Constitution are preserved, specifically Johor’s constitutional rights on land matters.

â- Emphasise on sustainable development, conservation of the environment and equitable distribution of the benefits of growth among the local population.

â- The creation of a “ one-stop fast track mechanism agency” where Federal and State Government agencies will work seamlessly to provide a facilitative environment for investors and consumers.

â- The creation of an investor-friendly environment by facilitation of matters related to immigration, education, tax and land as well as close liaison with local authorities.

The masterplan will also address some of the key risks that have hampered regional development in the past, including uncoordinated and duplicative development, excessive speculation of value of private assets and potential marginalisation of the local population.

ISKANDAR MALAYSIA: COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Secondly, the synthesis essay should briefly consider how this interplay between these processes produces distinct spatial outcomes or policy issues, which are dealt by particular policy responses (planning or otherwise). A spatial ‘ outcome’ can be a specific spatial issue or problem: housing shortage, transport congestion, socio-spatial segregation, environmental degradation, urban violence etc... Examples of policy responses should focus on spatial planning, urban and territorial development policies. How do planning interventions and policies try to address those spatial problems, or mediate between the tensions which arise from the four types of dynamics?

Try to stand back from your previous work, and look at the bigger picture: think of the four ‘ pillars’ as a whole and what they have taught you about your case-study city. A good way to get started about the essay is to imagine

you have a guest who comes to visit your city and who knows a bit about planning and spatial development, but knows absolutely nothing about the city in question. How would you summarize to him/her in 5 minutes what are the key factors, processes and actors which have shaped the urban development of that city? What are the most important problems and issues which planners have to deal with at present? How has government responded to that?

In the past, Johor has often times played second fiddle to its more prominent neighbour, Singapore but this is expected to change with Iskandar Malaysia and the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). Johor Bahru City Centre (JBCC) to play an important role and has been identified as one of the five catalyst development areas in the Regional Land Use Framework Plan.

Under the Iskandar Malaysia development plans, the administrative centre for Johor state has been moved to Kota Iskandar from Johor Bahru, allowing the capital city to focus on its role as a transportation hub and the major gateway into Johor from Singapore.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, even though the community engagement has an overwhelming response in the western countries such as the United Kingdom, but the response in Malaysia, especially in Johor Bahru is very low. Simultaneously, the government should create more awareness to the local community to raise their interest to participate in urban planning and development processes. Apart from that, the government also needs to explore a much easier approach facilitate the local community to indirectly

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involve in the planning process in Malaysia. The community engagement approach should be seen in a wider context, and must not only involve the existing approach that has been set in the planning guidelines, but the government also needs to explore new approaches to spread the awareness among the local community.

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