Conference Poster

Urban Oman Exhibition Panel 12 - Driving Forces 3

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LAND-ALLOCATION SYSTEM

Land for residential settlements in Oman is granted to Omani Citizens according to the Land Law (Royal Decree 308). Land dedicated to residential development is divided into plots of 500 sqm. Upon the completion of the project a plot is delivered to the owner. Plots are distributed by lottery to eligible persons. This procedure was established in the early 1970s to implement a social warfare system of land granting to Omani Citizens in a way to avoid the problems of speculation and illegal rent seeking. As land in only given to Omani Nationals and Non Nationals are not allowed to possess land (except in ITCs).

The system of land-allocation by lottery is socially unfair. Poor and middle income Omani Citizens are given the same demand while those in the country, except in so called Integrated Tourism Complexes (ITCs), are allocated smaller plots. The land-allocation by lottery deposits the non-wage male labor, leads to mass land speculation and creates an ever larger demand for new land. The country’s housing policy should demand with the current demographic development trends into consideration when designing future housing structures and plots.

The guidelines for future urban development patterns have been identified the Municipal Development Law (Royal Decree 7/80). The law provides a comprehensive framework for the implementation of the Omani housing policy. It provides for construction of new houses or the purchase of already built houses. The law provides for the implementation of the Omani housing policy as follows:

- The law establishes a housing committee made up of housing experts, social representatives, and government officials.
- The law provides for the setting aside of 50% of the total population in Muscat Governorate for Omani Citizens in need for.
- The Non Nationals are not allowed to possess land (except in ITCs).

Development and housing policy

Physical urban planning and infrastructure

The guidelines for future urban development patterns have been identified in the Municipal Development Law (Royal Decree 7/80). The law provides a comprehensive framework for the implementation of the Omani housing policy as follows:

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Public sector activities however are essential for the implementation of the Omani housing policy. In detail housing policy guidelines have been established in 1997 within the Ministry of Housing. Study based on community needs.

A main goal of the Omani Government is to allow Omani Citizens to build their own houses. Thus land is granted to these forming part of a public or private investment. Most of these land plots have been assigned to grant long term loans for constructions of new homes or the purchase of existing ones. Social housing is provided to those Omani Citizens in need for. The Non Omani nationals (considerable 30%) more than 1970 are not provided social housing. Only families earning a lower income are given plots of land and a 20 years wide mortgage to pay the plot.

Private sector activities however are essential for the implementation of the Omani housing policy. The land allocation system allows the plot owners to either build on his or her land right after allocation or to wait two years before he or she may sell the plot on a later private estate market. Land price rapidly goes in the market as soon as the land is a saleable plot and other infra structure. The policy has led to a dual land market, on one hand sale land is demanded particularly for free and on the other hand land is sold on a highly speculative market.

Land-use

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If it has been decided to follow a functional sepa-
ration, where areas are dedicated to residential-
use only, as in residential, industrial, administra-
tion and commercial land use.

This generates a need for defining long dist-
tances between residential plots and workplace,
shopping, leisure and healthcare facilities, to
avoid commuting distances between residential place and workplace, this means decision when micrarea are closed when workplace and the resulting shut down.

The basic plot for the residential schemes is
the individual family house covering 50% of the
private plot. Less residential densities are re-
quired.

Urban Planning and technical services planning

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In many cases, demand with the current demographic development trends into consideration when designing future housing structures and plots.

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