

ABSTRACT

Globally there has been the introduction of sustainable urbanism or the green city movements which focuses to develop cities into ore eco-friendly towns with reduced automobile systems. The world is currently experiencing uncontrolled increase in population, this population explosion has greatly affected development in most urban areas within the past years. This study will aim at trying to settle population pressure by use of densification to provide housing options and increase number of job and thus reducing urban sprawl. The research examined the level the sustainability of Westlands, in relation to social, economic, physical, environmental and institutional indicators.

The study relied on both secondary data and primary data for data collection. Secondary data used in the determination of indicators that defined a place as sustainable. These indicators were categorized as social, economic, physical, environmental and institutional. This information forms the literature review which in in turn helped in coming up with a conceptual framework for the field study. The primary data was collected through social and physical field survey which involved interaction of the area residents, business people and offer key informants. The field survey was done by use of data collection instruments such as questionnaires, interview guide, photographs and observation checklist. The process of data collection is then followed by the data analysis Most residents of the area were male and the age distribution was concentrated above 35 years with fewer people between 20-30 years. Most of the respondents questioned during the field study, lived within the study area with a few who lived out of the study area.

Findings revealed that the study area lacked a communal playground for the social engagement and interaction of children living in the neighborhood. There were insufficient health services at the present clinic. The area lacked a secondary school and the present institutions faced challenges like inadequate infrastructure, poor designs ,,,,,,, and had high school fee ,,,,,, due to services such as transportation fee. Education institutions and St. Mark's church had designated play areas The statistics on the respondents' place of work showed that a higher number of them worked in the Nairobi CBD, others working around Westlands neighborhood and a few within the study area. A greater percentage of the respondents used private transport to their places of work while a smaller number walked. Distances to the area of work varied due to the difference in place of work and residence. Those working in areas above 5km had the highest representation. The neighborhood retail of the study area was pleasing as it had numerous shopping centers and malls. All these were within walking distances and provided ease of access to the residents. Few informal business persons complained of having to travel long distance i.e. Nairobi CBD to acquire raw materials and stocks for their businesses. There were also high rental charges imposed on the housing which only made it possible for the high income earners to reside in the area Infrastructural findings included poor drainages and sewer condition which contributed to unsustainability. There was only mismanagement of solid waste as there were cases of unsustainable dumping in various places in the area. Garbage collection was the most used method of solid waste management. Most houses were built using blocks, few using stones and glass as wall materials. Most residential homes had tiles as the dominant roofing materials though the tiles were worn out. The unbuilt spaces on the plots were mostly used as parking lots with few designed for recreational purposes and lawns. The study area had ease of accessibility with integration of transport system but was faced with a number of challenges, one being most roads were in poor conditions hence needed improvements. The area had good integration of transit corridors since most respondents travelled a short distance to reach their bus stops.

The environment around the study area experienced pollution which was mainly from air and land. Air pollution was in form of toxic gas fumes emitted by motor vehicles and industries whereas land pollution was in form of solid waste materials that were dumped by the residents of the area. The study lacked a designated communal open space.

Statistics from the findings of institutional indicators of the study area, revealed that the area experienced poor management from concerned institutions i.e. Nairobi County Government and The Ministry of Physical Planning. This was because the response on project assessment and transparency of project had negative outcomes. More than half of the respondents said that there was no assessment of projects as well as lack of community participation.