



# Achieving Sustainable Urban Development in Freetown with Planning and Building Controls

Presentation for the National Urban Breakfast and Dialogue  
June 2019



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## **Introduction**

Roadmap to issuing building permits



# Freetown has experienced rapid urbanization

## Urbanization by the numbers

**10x**

**Population growth in Freetown in the last 50 years;** for similarly sized European cities, it took 150 years to achieve this increase<sup>2</sup>

**75km<sup>2</sup>**

**Built-up area expansion in Freetown in 50 years, equivalent to 50 times the area of Aberdeen<sup>3</sup>**

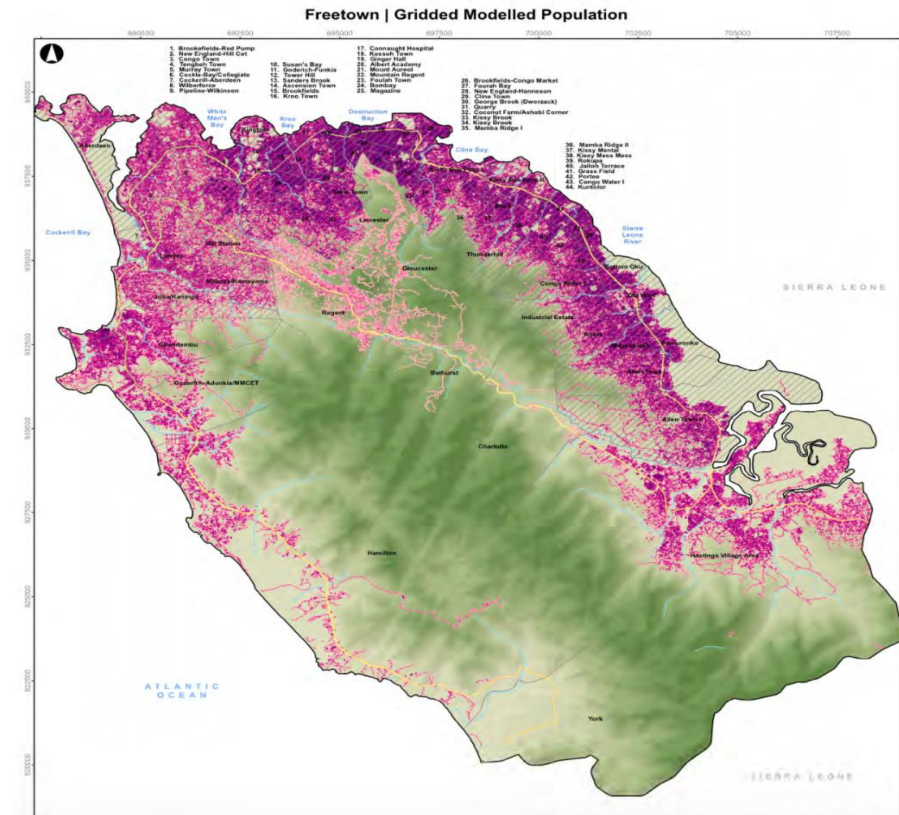
**8,450**

**People per square km;** similar to Varanasi, India and **one of the most crowded cities in the world<sup>2</sup>**

**535k**

**Number of new residents expected in the next decade<sup>2</sup>**

## Population of Freetown, mapped<sup>1</sup>



1 Map showing modeled population density, from Vol. 2 of Sierra Leone Multi-City Hazard Review and Risk Assessment (2018)

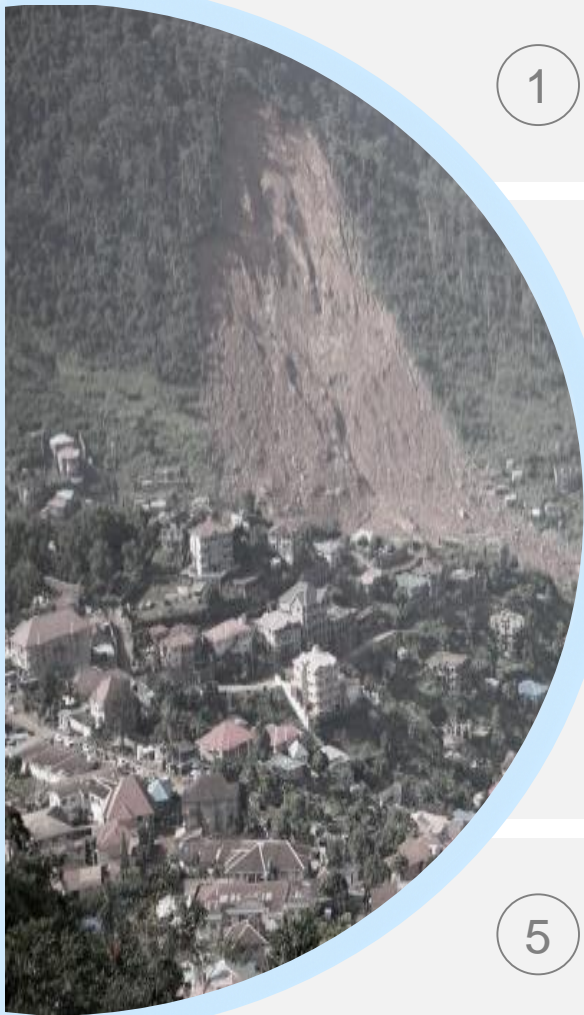
<sup>2</sup> Freetown: Options for Growth and Resilience, Urban Sector Review (2017-8)

<sup>3</sup> Vol. 2 of Sierra Leone Multi-City Hazard Review and Risk Assessment (2018)



# As Freetown has urbanized, it has faced major challenges

## Challenges related to urbanization



- 1 **Development in dangerous and unplanned locations** due to a lack of cheap or available options elsewhere in the city and no government control over development
- 2 **Growing demand for government services** as the population increases (e.g., water, sewer, emergency services, waste collection)
- 3 **Burdens on existing networks** like roads, drainage, and telecommunications
- 4 **Pressure on the natural environment** from human activities like cutting down trees, waste generation, and encroachment in waterways
- 5 **Reduction of natural control measures in the soil** which contributes to a destabilization of land and increases hazards for residents



# FCC can respond to these challenges by implementing development and building controls

## Challenges

## How FCC can respond with development and building controls

1

Development in dangerous, unplanned locations

- **Prohibit building in hazardous areas** that leads to tragic losses and high remediation costs
- **Create and enforce land-use plans** that guide development to accomplish Freetown's goals

2

Growing demand for services

- **Encourage density and in-fill development** to maximize the impact of services and allow delivery at scale
- **Prevent construction in hard-to-reach areas** where costs to provide services are high (e.g., steep slopes)
- **Strategically plan infrastructure improvements** to maximize benefits for the city (e.g., catchment-focused drainage)

3

Burdens on existing networks

4

Pressure on the natural environment

- **Restrict development in environmentally-sensitive areas** like waterways or mangroves

5

Reduction of natural control measures

- **Require adequate connections to drainage** for new buildings
- **Encourage reductions in impervious surfaces** to promote natural disaster control measures



# The power to implement these development and building controls has been devolved to FCC by the central government

## Government has devolved key functions to FCC

**Freetown March 7, 2019:** Pursuant to the Local Government (assumption of functions) Regulation, No.13 of 2004, seventy-nine (79) functions were slated by various Ministries, Agencies and Departments (MDAs) to be devolved to local councils. Between 2004 and 2007, fifty-four (54) functions were devolved. Some of these devolved functions were withdrawn during the last administration. To date, fifteen years after the enactment of the Local Government Act in 2004, only forty-three (43) of the 79 functions are devolved and thirty-six (36) of the scheduled functions continue to be implemented by central authority.

Consistent with the commitment of the SLPP to decentralisation as emphasised in his New Direction Manifesto, President Julius Maada Bio made a strong pledge to deepen decentralisation by devolving all outstanding functions. It is against this backdrop that the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) meeting on decentralisation Chaired by the Hon. Vice President was held on the 7<sup>th</sup>. March, 2019, and agreed that the following 28 of the 36 outstanding functions are devolved to local councils with immediate effect:

1. Registration of Births and Deaths
2. Maintenance of primary feeder roads
3. Maintenance of chiefdom roads/tracks
4. Information services
5. Establishment and management of Community Development funds
6. Rehabilitation of mined out areas
7. Licensing of small canoes and attendant fishing gear
8. Celebration and registration of civil marriages
9. Maintenance of Council buildings
10. Land surveying
11. Strategic local plans
12. Issuance of building permits
13. Sand dues
14. Preparation of land use plans
15. Education and sensitisation on Environmental issues
16. District Education Schools
17. Local sports
18. Youth Affairs
19. Primary to Mid Secondary Schools (JSS 1-3)
20. Local museums
21. Cultural Villages
22. Enterprise development

## Devolution recognizes that FCC will be in a better position to control development

- **FCC is on the ground** in the city and has a deep understanding of Freetown's processes and realities
- **The Council can better coordinate with local stakeholders** and community groups in the planning process
- **A city planning function is more nimble**, helping to avoid bureaucracy and increasing the ability to act quickly





# FCC is setting up both planning and building control capabilities to execute on these devolved functions

■ Focus for today

## Planning/ development control (land use plans)

### FCC's execution plan

- **The World Bank** is assisting FCC in establishing a planning function
- **Project support includes:**
  - **Assets:** developing planning documents
  - **Capacity:** training and equipping FCC to perform planning function

## Building Control (building permits)

- **FCC is setting up a building permits function**, leveraging the World Bank's technical assistance
- FCC also plans to fund the function with own-source revenues

FCC will use building permits to accomplish some "quick wins" in development control, even before the land use plan is developed

### Proposed project sequencing

#### Happening now





## With control over building permits, FCC will pursue “quick wins” as well as longer-term changes

PRELIMINARY

### Current proposal for development control “quick wins”

- **Use “Combined Hazard Zones” data to inform Development Control and Planning** as identified by the World Bank in its Multi-City Hazard Review and Risk Assessment (i.e., prone to landslide or flood risk)
- **Restrict development on land above 25% in grade**, or for properties that will require access roads >25% in grade
- **Prohibit any new development in waterway rights-of-way** or areas prohibited by provisions of the National Environmental Protection Act, such as along the coast, in creeks, rivers, and close to water bodies





# Better control over building and development is critical for Freetown

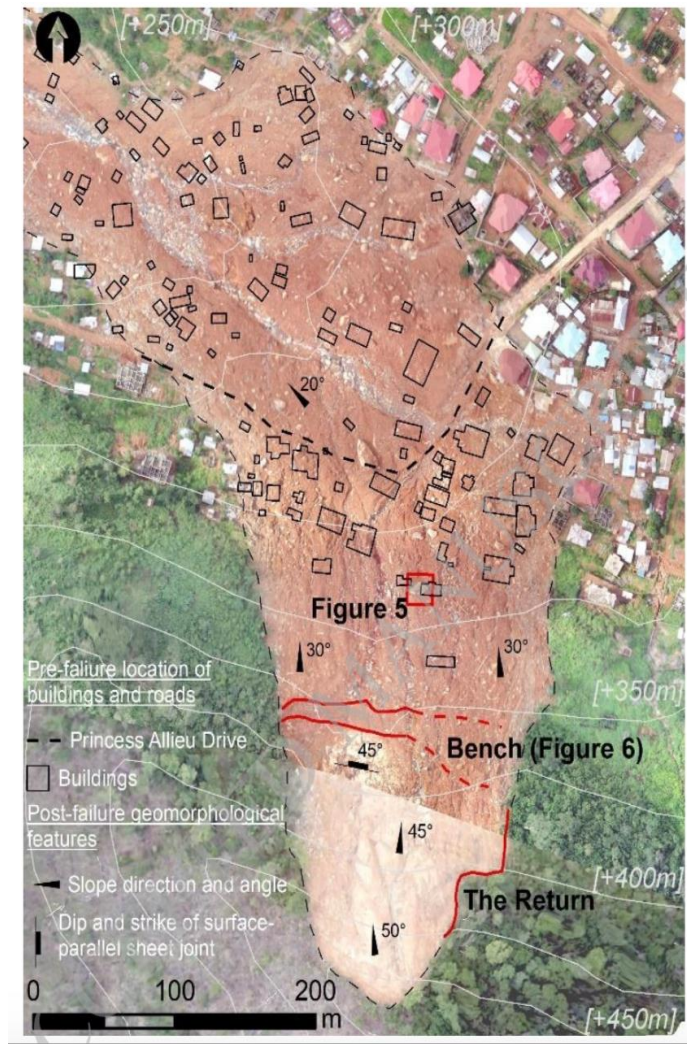
## To prevent unsafe building



## To control sprawl



## To prevent disaster





# Contents

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Introduction

**Roadmap to issuing building permits**



# FCC is following a clear roadmap to issuing building permits

In preparation for issuing building permits, FCC is...

**1**

**Developing the technical standards and regulations** for issuing permits

**2**

**Designing the permit review and administration processes**

**3**

**Preparing the FCC organization to deliver**

**4**

**Planning for the transition from Ministry of Lands**



# FCC is following a roadmap to issuing building permits

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# FCC is developing technical regulations by leveraging the draft Building Control Act

**The draft Building Control Act** outlines regulations for buildings and for issuing permits

**FCC will advocate** for any required changes to the national Act to reflect FCC's version

**FCC is adding** additional development controls and steps

## **Additions will include:**

- The “quick wins” (hazard zones, land grade, waterways)
- Road access
- Land use planning (*end-state*)
- Touchpoints with FCC revenue function (property tax registration, address referencing)

**FCC is refining** the Act to make it work for Freetown

**FCC is performing a legal and technical review of the act** to understand what changes will be required

**FCC will enact** the refined Act locally



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# FCC is designing the permit review and administration process across 4 main workstreams

Workstreams	Progress to date	Ongoing work
<b>1 Process flow</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Mapped existing workflow</b> at Ministry of Lands (for reference)</li><li>✓ <b>Researched best practices</b> for permit review</li><li>✓ <b>Drafted a proposed workflow</b> showing key touchpoints (e.g., with FCC revenue team)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Finalizing workflow</b> including inspection and enforcement regimes</li><li>▪ <b>Publishing the process online</b> with helpful materials (e.g., templates, checklists, GIS data)</li></ul>
<b>2 Tools and data</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Identified potential tools to support the process</b> (e.g., Google drive, property tax database workflow manager, open source GIS software)</li><li>✓ <b>Obtained GIS data on hazard zones</b> for the “quick wins” from the World Bank</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Collecting remaining data</b> needed for review process</li><li>▪ <b>Setting up tools</b> and testing before launch</li></ul>
<b>3 Fees</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Collected data on existing fees</b> from end-users for a sample of buildings (for reference)</li><li>✓ <b>Researched expected permit volumes</b> to develop a “business case” for FCC</li><li>✓ <b>Engaged the revenue team</b> at FCC</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Determining final fee structure</b> based on business case and discussions with revenue team</li></ul>
<b>4 Record-keeping</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Convened the property tax and revenue teams</b> to discuss their systems and potential synergies (“one database” for all property data)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Selecting a system</b> for recordkeeping</li><li>▪ <b>Finalizing data storage and sharing needs</b></li></ul>



# FCC is following a roadmap to issuing building permits

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**Preparing the FCC organization to deliver**

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# Organizational preparation for delivering building permits at FCC is taking place across 5 workstreams

Workstreams	Progress to date	Ongoing work
<b>1 Leadership and org structure</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Dedicated 3 MDU resources full-time</b> to setting up the organization, plus a point person from FCC</li><li>✓ <b>Drafted options for org structures</b> for FCC, pending final decisions on talent sourcing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ <b>Finalizing the org structure</b> once it is clear what talent will be in place, including oversight of any contractors</li><li>❑ <b>Appointing an FCC leader</b> for the building permit function</li></ul>
<b>2 Technical talent</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Began engaging the private sector</b> to gauge interest and feasibility of outsourcing</li><li>✓ <b>Identified a potential planning resource</b> who can support development control review</li><li>✓ <b>Worked with the World Bank</b> on the feasibility of technical assistance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ <b>Finalizing talent plan</b>, including hiring technical talent, procuring outsourced help as needed, or absorbing capacity from MOL</li></ul>
<b>3 Administrative talent</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Identified potential resources</b> within FCC today (i.e., within the revenue team)</li><li>✓ <b>Developed mitigation strategies</b> (e.g., encouraging electronic applications to reduce admin work)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ <b>Validating</b> the option of using existing resources at FCC</li><li>❑ <b>Exploring additional options</b> (including hiring additional staff, or absorbing capacity from MOL)</li></ul>
<b>4 Office space</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Identified potential space at FCC</b> for further exploration (2 offices on upper floor of council)</li><li>✓ <b>Developed mitigation strategies</b> (e.g., using offsite technical labor, encouraging electronic applications, prohibiting waiting on site)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ <b>Confirming availability of space at FCC</b> and outfitting it for a team</li><li>❑ <b>Implementing mitigation strategies</b> to reduce need for space</li></ul>
<b>5 Seed funding</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Discussed potential for assistance from the World Bank</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ <b>Identifying start-up funds</b> either from a partner or from own-source revenue</li></ul>



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**Planning for the transition from Ministry of Lands**



# FCC is planning for a smooth transition from Ministry of Lands

## Steps in the transition process

### Setting a start date in Q3 of 2019

- **Determining an exact date** when FCC will be prepared to begin issuing building permits
  - All relevant legal groundwork complete
  - Staff hired and/or trained
  - Space identified and ready
  - Equipment in place
  - Process and technology tested

### Announcing the change

- **Pursuing a public information campaign** to inform people about the coming changes and the roll-out plan, including
  - Legal background of the change
  - Rules and requirements of the new process, including applicability

### Educating stakeholders

- **Leveraging FCC's website** to publish clear rules and explanations of the new process
- **Planning visits with stakeholders** like trade organizations to explain new rules
- **Developing trainings** in how to use new systems or processes

### Issuing permits

- **On the start date, begin accepting applications for permits**



Questions?

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