



National Environment & Planning Agency

10 & 11 Caledonia Avenue, Kingston 5, Jamaica W.I. Tel: (876) 754-7540 Fax: (876) 754-7595-6, toll free help-line: 1-888-991-5005
Website: <http://www.nepa.gov.jm>

Attention: All News Editors
(1 May 2014):

KINGSTON, Jamaica

TCPA WELCOMES FEEDBACK ON PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT

ORDER

The Editor Sir;

In a Sunday Gleaner article dated Sunday, April 20, 2014 and titled, '*Rejected- Portland stakeholders say no to provisional plan to govern development of the parish*', some issues were raised of which the Authority would like to address.

The Town and Country Planning Authority (TCPA) welcomes feedback and comments received for the Portland Provisional Development Order.

The Provisional Order was gazetted last year and provides a guide for sustainable development decisions to be made in the areas it covers. The document was prepared after extensive consultation with the Portland Parish Council, the Portland Parish Development Committee and other stakeholders.

It must be noted the difference between a Development Order and a Development Plan.

While the latter will usually provide specifics of investment proposals and projects, governance structures, etc; a Development Order is made up of zoning maps, policy



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statements and standards outlining general policies on how land can be used in a rational and sustainable way.

Prior to the completion of the Portland Provisional Development Order, a Sustainable Development Profile (2000) was prepared by the Parish Council and the PDC from which a Development Plan was to be eventually prepared.

As noted in your article, the desire of stakeholders to have an expansive tourism sector in the parish is understandable. The Provisional Development Order takes this into consideration and has included several policies that facilitate tourism development. These could include bed- and- breakfast facilities. Reference to the Titchfield Hotel in the Order was not a suggested proposal from the Authority but rather an indication that if such a development proposal was made, then the Planning Authority would have no objection facilitating same, providing that all the required planning and environmental standards are met.

Agricultural lands are given careful consideration in all Development Orders. The process of identifying lands for agricultural use includes the assessment of several factors including agricultural land capacity and a land needs analysis for each urban centre. Long term protection will be given to the areas of significance for agriculture which have been defined on the proposal maps. The policies in the Order deal with the proper use and appropriate conversion of agricultural lands to ensure that agricultural activity remains viable. It should be mentioned that at the time of preparing the Portland Provisional



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Development Order, the Government had not indicated an intention to establish Agro Parks in the parish. Nevertheless, the rural areas policies in the Provisional Order promote and facilitate the development of agriculture.

Note is made of concerns that growth areas are limited in terms of their spatial distribution, with a distinct coastal focus. The identification of growth centres in the Provisional Order is guided by several factors including topography, geology and environmental issues as well as the National Settlement Strategy that provides criteria for the ranking of urban centres across the island. It is intended that development should be concentrated in these urban nodes or growth centres to enable the efficient provision of services and infrastructure within the Parish. Although there is a coastal focus in the distribution of growth centres in the Parish, there are centres identified inland in the Buff Bay and Rio Grande River Valleys namely Spring Hill and Windsor respectively.

Based on previous discussions and consultations regarding port development in Portland there has been a general consensus that cruise ships 650 feet, with 400 passengers or less, represents the maximum size vessels that can be accommodated to avoid the need for continual costly and environmentally damaging dredging of the harbour. This was supported by the Sustainable Development Profile for Portland December 2000. Whilst the concern of the Mayor in respect of the allocation of the Tourism Enhancement Fund is noted, the Order is unable to make provision for the distribution of the said Fund.



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The TCPA has received and is currently reviewing a number of comments on the Portland Parish Provisional Development Order. The Town and Country Planning Act allows for interested parties such as landowners, persons who have a leasehold agreement or have water rights in the specified areas to provide feedback. A consultation was held on Thursday, April 24 at Hotel Tim Bamboo Eveleigh Park Road, Port Antonio where stakeholders aired their views about the Provisional Development Order.

I am, John Junor

Chairman, TCPA

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