

Urbanization in Ho Chi Minh City

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SUMMARY

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is the largest urban area of Vietnam in terms of population and economic power, playing a central role in the economic and social development of the southern part of the country. The city's economic growth, industrial productivity, revenue, foreign investment have been always significant and played an important role in the overall achievement of the country's economy. This leading role has recently become threatened by fast urbanization, population concentration, the inadequate growth of urban infrastructure, housing issues, low living standards, prices escalation, expenses acceleration; residents' income frequently stood after prices and social evils are arising, etc... , all of which suggest an unsustainable pathway characterized by increasing levels of environmental pollution; traffic jam; water-submerged roads when raining; and lack of low-pricing houses for low income and rather-good income citizens as well as for middle-class people and lower-social-class citizens.

During the last few decades, many new urban development areas (NUA) in Ho Chi Minh City have been formed, changing the appearance of the city, and serving as an implicit solution to these challenges. While they have contributed positively to housing developments, urban service improvement, pressure reduction for metropolitan land etc., in general, NUAs have only solved immediate needs for housing rather than creating healthy living environments or overall improvements in infrastructure and urban services quality for the city. At the same time, they also offer no significant urban identities for new residents.

Using real estate maps of the city during the post-Doi Moi period, this chapter will document the most recent spurt of urbanization process in the HCMC metropolitan region, outline the ways in which NUA's have contributed to these development trends, and suggest guidelines for meeting the range of planning challenges facing the region through 2030.