

LUSAKA URBAN LAB

A Charter Cities Institute Initiative





What is Lusaka Urban Lab

The Lusaka Urban Lab (LUL) is an initiative of the Charter Cities Institute Zambia office to generate new research and facilitate knowledge sharing on urban issues in Lusaka.

The Lusaka Urban Lab is a multidisciplinary research hub that bridges the gaps between urban scholars, communities, and policymakers by engaging these stakeholders in research projects about the many urban issues facing Lusaka and its residents.



Goals

- LUL will become the leading multidisciplinary urban research center in sub-Saharan Africa.
- LUL will serve as the principal point of contact for CCI-Zambia's local community sensitization and engagement activities.
- LUL will drive the conversation about urban challenges in Lusaka, bridging the gap between communities and policymakers in furtherance of identifying and implementing solutions. .



Research Partners

Department of Planning, Ministry of Local Government
Department of Geography, University of Zambia
Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research
Zambia institute of Architects
Zambia Institute of Planners

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Why Lusaka?

What makes Lusaka an interesting case study?

Lusaka's History, Urbanism, Economics and Future

Lusaka was originally planned based on Garden City principles
Lusaka typifies colonial-era greenfield development
Lusaka is a city shaped by colonial, postcolonial, and modern influences)

Zambia's dependence on copper exports is reflected in the city's economy
Nearly 60% of Lusakans work in unproductive informal sector

Lusaka is a classic African "pancake city" where development sprawls outwards, rather than upwards
Lusaka lacks usable public spaces, efficient transportation systems, and affordable housing

Within the next 15 years, Lusaka's population is expected to grow by over 1.5 million people
Without improved infrastructure, public services, and economic growth, Lusaka will continue to expand outwards

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Projects

Cairo Road: Architecture and Urbanism

A two-phase project that explores the architecture and urbanism of Cairo Road, one of the oldest streets in Lusaka, focusing on the history, present, and future of this street as a heart of the city.

Phase One: An in-person community tour and accompanying research publication to be published by October 15 for Urban October highlighting the history of the street and its current status. Partners: Ministry of Local Government, Zambia Institute of Architects, University of Zambia. Phase One will also include media appearances, ideally radio and TV.

Phase Two: Convening the stakeholders gathered in Phase One to reimagine the future of Cairo Road, and public space in Lusaka generally, and to develop an actionable plan to implement this new future.

Why Lusaka Builds Out, Not Up

A research project exploring the “pancakes and pyramids” development pattern in Lusaka, seeking to understand why Lusaka continues to sprawl outwards and what prevents it from building upwards.

Walking the Unwalkable

In the French tradition of *flâneur* (strolling through the city), LUL will engage local youth and university students in walks throughout Lusaka to identify opportunities to improve walkability, working in coordination with the Lusaka City Council to implement changes. This project will also offer tours of new urban developments like Nkwashi as a comparative experience.

MIT Fellowship

CCI’s 2023 Summer Fellowship targets graduate students and young professionals working on Southern African urbanism. The fellowship will be hosted at CCI’s Zambia office and will focus on envisioning the future of new cities, charter cities, and special economic zones in Southern Africa. The Fellows will apply their expertise to assist in the redevelopment planning of the Lusaka South Multi-Facility Economic Zone as a potential charter city.

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