



# 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

KINGSTON, Jamaica

(13 December 2024):

## NEPA updating development order for Clarendon

**The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) is embarking on several activities towards the updating of the Town and Country Planning (Clarendon Parish) Confirmed Development Order, 2019. An important component of the process is the collection of existing land-use data in all major urban areas within the parish. Consequently, eleven individuals have undergone training as land use survey technicians (LUSTs) to map critical data in major urban areas in Clarendon on behalf of NEPA.**

The three-day in-house LUST training saw persons being taught to use ArcGIS Field Maps software to capture and manipulate land-use data that will be used to generate existing land-use maps and proposed land-use zoning maps. The technicians will embark on a five-week assignment to survey Clarendon's urban areas.

The aim of the exercise is to provide pertinent information as it relates to the use, demand and management of land within the area. The existing Order governing the parish was created in 2019. However, the new Development Order will take into account changes in land usage and will seek to provide guidelines for the orderly, resilient and sustainable development of communities within its boundaries.

Manager of Local Area Planning Branch at NEPA, Mrs. Stephanie Linton-Shields said that the comprehensive land-use data collected through these surveys, will shape NEPA's development strategies for the region, ensuring that each intended development project meets community standards, respects environmental guidelines, and aligns with the United Nation's sustainable development goals.

"Land-use surveys are integral to understanding and planning for the future of an area", Mrs. Linton-Shields said. She added that the survey will provide critical data on current land use, including the types of services available or lacking in the area, the presence of sensitive ecosystems, and the general development trends and character of the area.

"This data is crucial for creating development plans that cater to community needs, protect the environment, and promote economic growth", she emphasized.

Mrs. Linton-Shields further revealed that updating the Clarendon Development Order is part of a bigger plan by NEPA to have up-to-date Development Orders for all fourteen parishes across the island. The exercise was undertaken in St. Catherine and is now being done in Clarendon and will follow suit in the remaining parishes, she said.



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But what is a development order?

## Development Order Explained

According to the planning expert, a Development Order is a legal document prepared under the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act 1957 that guides the land-use activities in a particular area – whether they be residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, or sensitive ecosystems. It informs NEPA’s approval process in the granting of permits and licences for certain activities within a given space. As such, the Development Order guides development projects within the location to which it applies. Whether it’s a new apartment building, a shopping centre, or a park, a Development Order ensures that the project meets all the required standards and that the community benefits from it in a sustainable manner. Consequently, before a property is being developed, developers must submit detailed plans and proposals to local authorities. These plans outline how the project will be built, what its impact will be on the environment, traffic, and neighbouring properties, and how it will improve the community. The plans are assessed against the zoning policies and standards outlined in the Development Order and if they align, then the requisite approvals/permits are granted.

## How Do Communities Benefit from Development Orders?

In the absence of the aforementioned arrangements, Mrs. Linton-Shields said that unplanned developments can lead to overcrowding, traffic problems, environmental damage, infrastructure strain and loss of vital natural resources. However, with a Development Order in place, developers are required to meet the local planning standards, ensuring the development is well-organized, resilient, safe, and beneficial to the community.

Development Orders are therefore beneficial to communities in the following ways:

- **Improved Infrastructure** – Development orders often lead to the construction of new roads, parks, and public spaces that improve quality of life. They may also encourage infrastructure planning and development to bring in vital utilities, such as electricity and water systems to underserved areas.
- **Economic Growth** – The creation of new businesses, housing projects, and commercial centres can create jobs, attract investments and improve the local economy. Development Orders can also result in a boost to property values with organized and planned growth enhancing the area's overall attractiveness and property market.
- **Better Planning & Organization** – Development Orders help avoid random, uncoordinated growth, ensuring a more planned and organized community where resources are used effectively and efficiently.



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- **Enhanced Property Values** – Properly planned developments that enhance the community’s infrastructure and amenities can lead to higher property values and a better overall living environment.
- **Amenity Development & Improvement** – The Development Order makes provision for the identification of lands to create parks, recreational facilities and open/green spaces.
- **Smart Resilient communities** – The Development Order outlines strategies and policies to manage the risks associated with natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods and mitigate against climate change impacts. They are useful when undertaking programmes to make communities smart, adaptable, resilient and sustainable. They are also important in enabling the use of renewable energy and facilitating green and blue technological development.
- **Inclusivity** – The Development Order facilitates inclusive planning, promotes access to public amenities and green spaces for all socioeconomic groups thereby reducing disparities which helps to balance development within the planning area.

All in all, the Development Order, as a tool, is integral in ensuring that urbanization within a planning area benefits everyone, minimizes negative impacts and creates a holistic and cohesive community vision.

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