

**A STRATEGY FOR THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND
PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION OF EAST PORT OF SPAIN**

EAST PORT OF SPAIN STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT



September 2007

Part 2



East Port of Spain
Development Company Limited





PART 2

Situational Assessment

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DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

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I. Development Perspective



I.1 Overview

East of the Dry River (St. Ann's River) lies the cultural capital of Trinidad and Tobago – the birthplace of the steelpan, calypso and carnival. East Port of Spain has produced icons in the fields of culture, education, law, business, sport and the arts. The area is rich in history and cultural traditions and boasts of a number of sites of national significance.

East Port-of-Spain is a network of diverse communities in terms of physical size, population, layout and appearance. Some communities of East Port of Spain have developed a reputation for poverty,

crime and violence and their residents do not benefit from the economic growth experienced nationally.

Discrimination in employment and social stigmatisation exist on the basis of address and further disadvantage residents of these communities. Conditions in the area today are likely a result of these physical, social and economic factors.

I.2 Geographical Extent

The Central Statistical Office identified sixteen (16) communities that comprise East Port of Spain (see Map 1) The area extends from Charlotte Street and Sea Lots in the west to Caledonia #2 and Coconut Drive in the East..The northern boundary is formed by the communities north and east of the Lady Young Road - Marie Road, Romain Lands, Mon Repos and Never Dirty. The southern boundary is formed by the landfill and swamp south of the Beetham Highway. The area comprises approximately 2,700 ha (6,700 acres).

I.3 Historical Evolution

East Port of Spain has a long and rich history. The oldest part of the City was established on Nelson and Duncan Streets and the home of the Governor in Trinidad was located in Port of Spain, even though the capital was officially located at San Jose (St Joseph). The Cabildo was moved to the corner of Piccadilly Street in 1783/84 before the arrival of Chacon as Governor of the territory. Similarly, The Royal Jail was originally located at the corner of George and Queen Streets up to 1812 when it was relocated to its present site on Frederick Street. The Observatory was built in 1783 and the Masonic Lodge constructed at Mt. Moriah in 1804.

From as early as the 1860s it was reported that “a large, insanitary and overcrowded slum” was developing ‘behind the bridge’. Some of the earliest residential settlements in Port of Spain are located in the area. Early settlements in East Port of Spain included Rose Hill created by Edward Jackson in the 1820s opposite Park Street. Freed slaves settled in the area after emancipation in 1838 and other settlements developed around Belle Eau Road, Belmont, Mango Rose, Escalier Hill and Clifton Hill. The first public housing project in Port of Spain was built at Gonzales and much of it remains today.

East Port of Spain is also home to two forts (Fort Picton and Fort Chacon), and numerous sites and buildings of historic significance. Several slave cemeteries have been recorded in the area, although some have since been built upon. (see map 2)



1.4 Background and Justification

In the 2005 Budget Speech to the Parliament, the Honourable Prime Minister acknowledged that Laventille and its environs were among the most depressed areas in the country characterized by high rates of crime and unemployment and with many of its residents living in sub-standard conditions. East Port-of-Spain was therefore declared a Special Development Zone, in which special attention was to be paid to the economic and social challenges faced by its residents. The ultimate goal is the achievement of the reduction of regional disparities and the creation of sustainable communities as prescribed in the Vision 2020 philosophy.

Cabinet Minute No. 2384 of September 15, 2005 agreed to the incorporation of the East Port-of-Spain Development Company as a Limited Liability Company, wholly owned by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The company's mandate is:

To develop and redevelop a zone in East Port-of-Spain, bounded by Charlotte Street, Lady Young Road and the Eastern Main Road and including Morvant, Never Dirty and Caledonia, to improve the economic, social and physical environment of those areas.

The boundaries of the area under the purview of the company were subsequently expanded to include the communities of Beetham Gardens, Sea Lots and Katanga. The area henceforth referred to as the Metropolitan District of East Port of Spain is shown in Map 1.

1.5 Methodology

The East Port of Spain Strategic Development Plan was informed by stakeholder consultations, field/landuse surveys, secondary data collection, data analysis and review of earlier plans and their relevant policies and strategies.

Secondary data was obtained from the 2000 Population and Housing Census published by the Ministry of Planning and Development (Central Statistical Office), the only official source of Census data for Trinidad and Tobago. While the data is somewhat dated (seven years old) it remains the only comprehensive source of socio-economic data that is disaggregated for all communities in East Port of Spain and represents the entire population rather than a sample survey. The sixteen (16) communities identified by the CSO formed the basis for preliminary data collection analysis. However, more detailed spatial analyses resulted in a regrouping of communities into nineteen (19) urban villages which were used as the basis for further analyses and data presentation.

The methodology employed in preparing the Plan reflects the simple and traditional approach which involved:

- Conducting demographic, socio-economic physical and land use surveys using primary sources, document review and interviews to determine existing conditions, needs and challenges in East Port of Spain;
- Establishing models of community structure and service provision based on national development goals and the expressed wishes of the residents and stakeholders of East Port of Spain;
- Conducting Gap Analyses to determine deficiencies between ideal and existing conditions; and
- Formulating appropriate strategies for achieving desired changes and identifying development actions/projects to improve local conditions and circumstances.

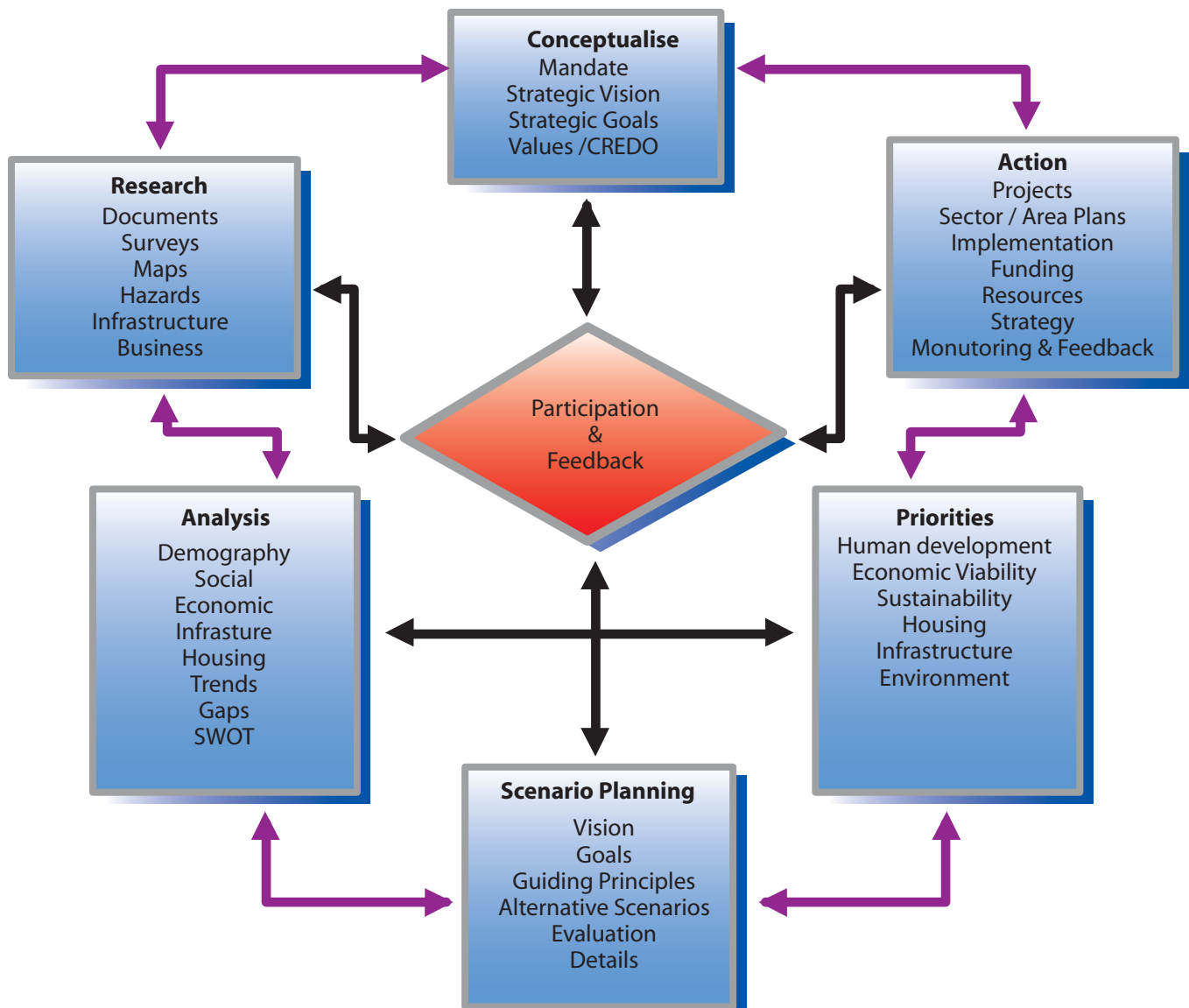
Figure 1.1 illustrates the Strategic Development Planning Process.

1.5.1 Data Constraints

Several constraints exist in the use of secondary data from the 2000 Population and Housing Census for analysis. However, despite these constraints, other data sources are not as comprehensive, do not cover the entire East Port of Spain area and their methodologies cannot be validated. Some data limitations include:

- Information from the census is now seven years old;
- More recent data from the Continuous Sample Survey of Population and other sources of economic data are obtained from sample surveys which do not include sample points from within the Plan area;
- There tends to be a high rate of unresponsiveness and inaccurate responses to certain questions, especially those relating to income and employment status;
- Undocumented/illegal immigrants may not have responded to the Census and may not be included in the total population count.

Figure I.1: Strategic Development Planning Process

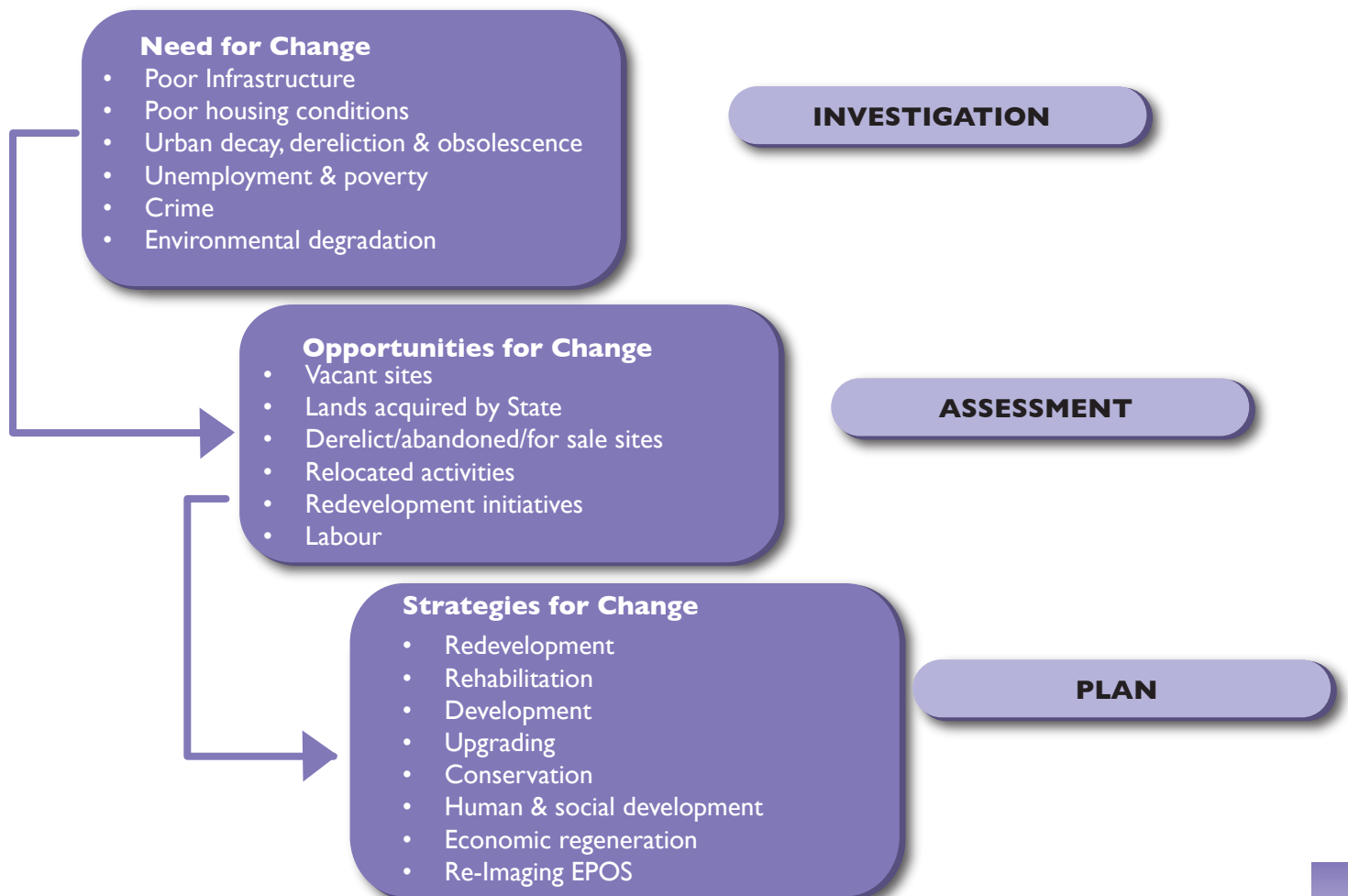


1.6 Plan Objectives

The objectives of this East Port of Spain Strategic Development Plan (2007) are to:

- Formulate a comprehensive and integrated approach to planning, development and regeneration of East Port of Spain;
- Articulate a spatial development strategy to guide the location of social, economic and physical development projects in East Port of Spain; (see Figure 1.2)
- Identify priority action plans and development programmes; and
- Create a framework for sustainable development and creation of sustainable communities in East Port of Spain.

Figure 1.2: Strategic Planning Approach



2. Situation Assessment

2.1 Physical Characteristics

East Port-of-Spain covers an area of 2,748.6 ha (6,791.8 acres). The area straddles the St. Ann's watershed through which the St. Ann's river drains from the rugged Laventille hills to the swamps south of the Beetham Highway into the Gulf of Paria. Due to its steep terrain, East Port of Spain affords spectacular views of the city, the Gulf of Paria, the Chaguaramas peninsula and the central plains.

Geologically, East Port of Spain comprises mainly metamorphic rock with limestone outcrops in the south and west. The quarries of East Port of Spain reflect its geological characteristics.

Steep slopes (>1:3) are restricted to the hillsides of Mon Repos, Never Dirty and Upper Belmont where due to geology and gradient some slopes are vulnerable to erosion and landslips.

2.2 Governance

The metropolitan district of East Port-of-Spain (EPOSMD) falls under the jurisdiction of both the Port of Spain City Corporation and the San Juan Laventille Regional Corporation (see map 1). Approximately 25% of the area is within the City of Port-of-Spain, including the communities of Belmont, Southern Port of Spain, East Dry River and parts of Gonzales.

Four (4) electoral districts comprise East Port of Spain, namely; Port of Spain South, Laventille East / Morvant, Laventille West and Port of Spain North/St Anns South. A number of smaller Village Councils and community groups are organized around several interests such as sport, culture, development and women's issues. (see Map 3)

2.3 Existing Land Use

Land use in the East Port of Spain Metropolitan District is mainly residential in a mix of single family and multi-family duplex buildings interspersed throughout the area. Several high density State residential developments abut the Central Business District of Port of Spain in the vicinity of Nelson, Duncan, Piccadilly, Observatory and Oxford streets. There is industrial development consisting mainly of light manufacturing and warehousing along the main east-west arterial – the Eastern Main Road (eg Fernandes Industrial Estate, Angostura Limited, Citrus Growers Association, Coconut Growers Association and TSTT). Light industrial development, including vehicle assembly, exists along Lady Young Road and smaller industrial establishments are found at dispersed locations throughout the area. Map 4 shows the existing land use in East Port of Spain.

2.4 Economic Characteristics

There are over 5,000 businesses in East Port of Spain. The area between Charlotte Street and Piccadilly Street includes a number of retail outlets and small business establishments and is a natural extension to the central business district. Other commercial areas are located in Belmont along Norfolk Street and Belmont Circular Road; and along the Eastern Main Road, the major east-west arterial connecting East Port of Spain to the City. Commercial strips also exist along other major arterial routes and many neighbourhood shops are dispersed throughout the area.

There are many successful businesses throughout East Port of Spain which challenge the popular notion of the area as economically depressed. In addition to the steel pan factory located on the Eastern Main Road, a similar establishment on Pashley Street exports approximately 200 tenor pans monthly. Small cottage industries are located throughout East Port of Spain, some operating out of homes and others out of purpose built multi-producer units.

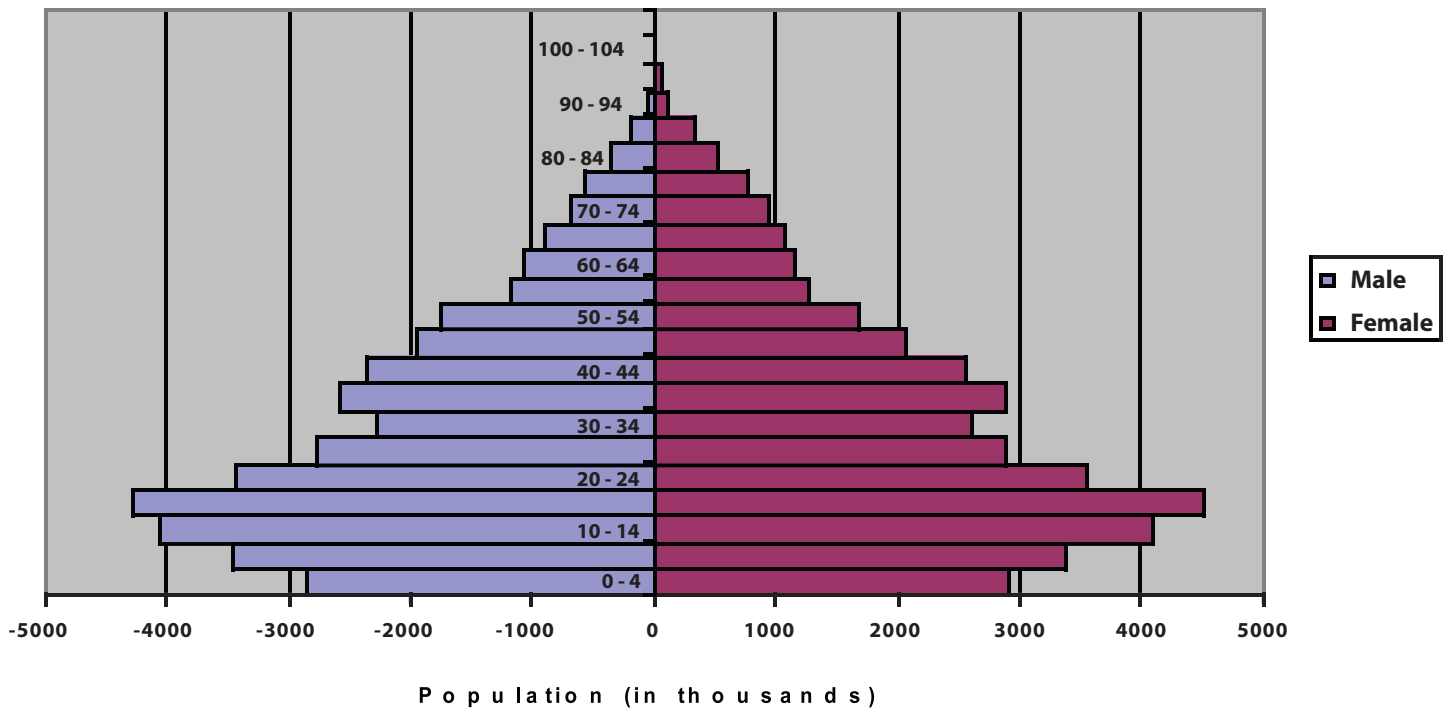
Major steelband organisations such as WITCO Desperadoes, BP Renegades, and Neal and Massy Trinidad All Stars are multi-million dollar organisations which provide employment and generate economic activity in the area. Nevertheless, East Port of Spain exhibits many characteristics of an economically depressed area with pockets of high unemployment above the national average, comparatively low incomes and few middle class professionals. There are limited formal financial institutions or services east of Piccadilly Street.

2.5 Demographic Characteristics

Data from the 2000 Population and Housing Census (CSO, 2000) show that East Port of Spain has a population of 92,782 persons in over 27,000 households. Just over half of the population (51.2% or 47,564 persons) is female and approximately 70% of households are headed by women with particular needs for child care and accessibility to employment opportunities and social and community facilities/services. The average household size is 3.4 persons, compared with the national average of 4 persons per household.

East Port of Spain is characterised by a youthful population. Approximately 46% of the population is below the age of thirty (30) years, with 23% under the age of 15 years. The age structure of the population is shown in **Figure 2.1**.

Figure 2.1: Age/Sex Structure



Source Population & Housing Census 2000

Table 2.1: Selected Demographic Indicators

No.	Community Name	Total Population	Male	Female	Households	Dwelling Units	Businesses	Area (Hectare)	Population Density (pop/ ha)	Dwelling Unit Density (DU/ ha)
1	Beetham Gardens	3508	1776	1732	958	933	99	70.33	50	13
2	Belmont	11627	5296	6331	3516	3592	346	158.64	73	22
3	East Port of Spain	11681	5696	5985	3558	3723	470	87.56	133	42
4	Eastern Quarry	5095	2491	2604	1550	1583	99	54.08	94	29
5	Gonzales	2811	1347	1464	799	819	53	31.85	88	25
6	Laventille	12906	6251	6655	3822	3829	387	117.90	109	32
7	Marie Road / Romains Lands	1396	675	721	392	394	15	140.48	10	2
8	Mon Repos	3444	1673	1771	1005	1021	50	175.83	20	5
9	Morvant	18292	8954	9338	5359	5483	377	137.47	133	3
10	Never Dirty	1560	775	785	461	480	33	70.50	22	6
11	Picton	4118	2100	2018	1224	1252	66	41.35	100	30
12	Sea Lots	1859	940	919	515	514	122	46.03	40	11
13	St. Barbs	5610	2754	2856	1491	1488	80	82.91	68	17
14	Upper Belmont	4559	2264	2295	1294	1328	79	112.68	40	11
15	Port of Spain	4316	2226	2090	1169	1181	2887	58.50	74	20
	TOTAL	92782	45218	47564	27113	27620	5163	2748.60	34	10

2.5.1 Population Growth and Change

While its share of the national population has remained at just over 7%, the population of East Port of Spain increased by 12% from 81,478 persons to 92,782 persons between 1990 and 2000. However, significant variations exist among communities. The suburban communities of Eastern Quarry and Upper Belmont are experiencing population decline as land use changes from residential to commercial. Conversely, the population of Morvant increased significantly by 39% in the same period, while communities such as Beetham Gardens, Belmont, East Port of Spain, Laventille, Mon Repos, Picton, Port of Spain Proper, Sea Lots and St. Barbs, experienced a steady growth rate of approximately 9%.

2.5.2 Population Distribution

Population distribution within East Port of Spain is skewed towards the western half of the area with the most densely populated areas concentrated around Belmont, Gonzales, Picton, and Port of Spain East – the oldest parts of the area. The communities of Belmont, Morvant and Laventille contain the largest populations. Population density is illustrated in **Table 2.1** and **Map 5**.

2.5.3 Employment and Income

The labour force in East Port of Spain comprises 32,895 persons or 35.4% of the total population. Of these, 88.4% are employed (29,067 persons) and 11.6% are unemployed according to data from the 2000 Population and Housing Census. Approximately 22% of the population is economically inactive and excluded from the labour force since they are either students in full-time education, retired, unable to work due to disability, persons on 'home duties' or those who did not want to work.

Pockets of higher unemployment exist in the communities of Marie Road/Romain Lands (33%); Mon Repos (20%); Beetham (19%); and Port of Spain East, Laventille and Picton (12 – 14%).

The data show that just over 50% of the unemployed were female at the time of the Census which suggests the need for gender sensitivity in the creation of employment opportunities. The CEPEP programme introduced in 2002 has provided a number of employment opportunities for women.

Figure 2.2: Employment Status

Levels of female unemployment are slightly higher in the communities of Mon Repos, Eastern Quarry, Laventille and Upper Belmont and may also have implications for the provision of child care facilities that could enable women to take advantage of available employment opportunities.

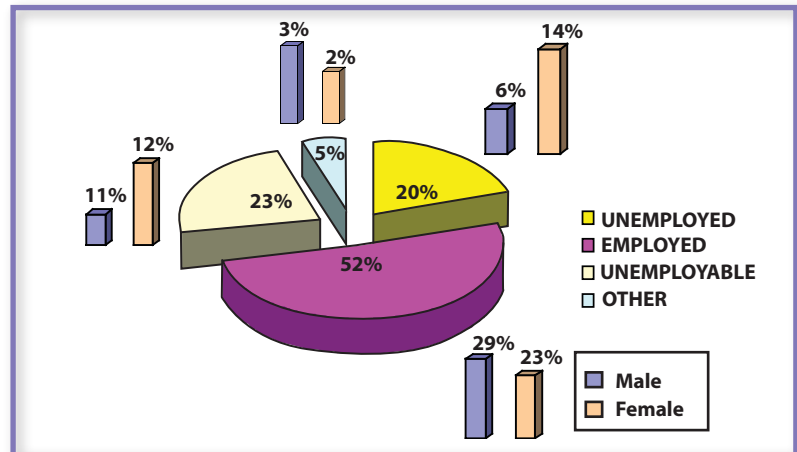
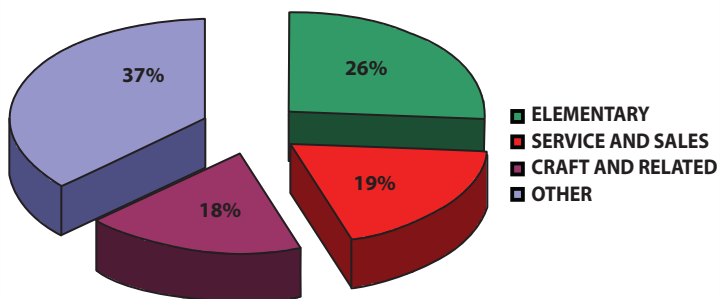


Figure 2.3: Employment by Occupation Group



Other represents Legislator 6%, Professional 1%, Technicians 2%, Clerical 4% Agriculture 10%, Plant & Machinery Operators 4%.

Twenty-three percent (23%) of the labour force are unskilled and employed in the elementary sector, 16% are employed in the service and sales industry.

Thirty-two percent (32%) of employees in East Port of Spain reportedly earn less than \$500 per month and 46% state that they earn less than \$1,000. Under 5% earn more than \$4,000 per month.

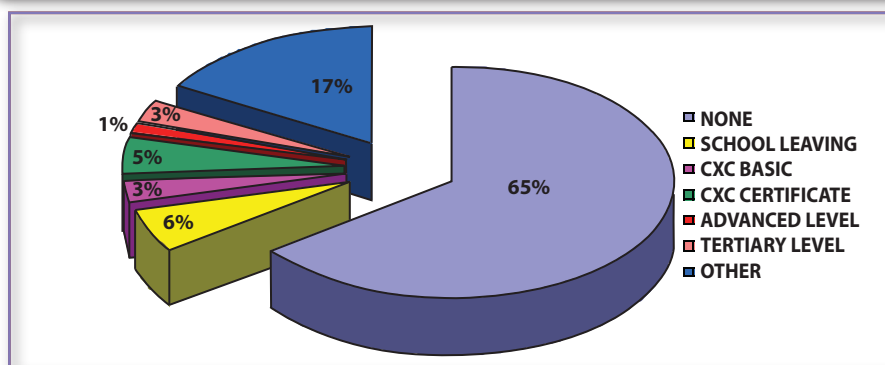
Table 2.2: East Port of Spain Income Groups

Income Groups TT\$	No. of Persons	Percentage of Heads (%)
Less than 500	17796	32.00
500-999	7525	14.00
1000-1999	8964	16.00
2000-2999	4782	9.00
3000-3999	1637	3.00
4000-4999	1280	2.00
5000-5999	417	1.00
6000-6999	425	1.00
7000-7999	79	0.14
8000-8999	152	0.27
9000-9999	24	0.04
10000-10999	31	0.05
11000-11999	73	0.13
12000-12999	19	0.03
13 and Over	212	0.38

2.5.4 Education

There are thirty-seven (37) elementary schools and fourteen (14) secondary schools within the study area. There are sixty-six (66) documented nursery / kindergarten schools in the area, of which 12 are Government owned and 46 are registered private institutions. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the population completed elementary school education and an equal number completed secondary school.

Figure 2.4: Educational Status



2.6 Housing Conditions

2.6.1 Appearance and Layout

Some communities in East Port of Spain are well laid out and orderly in appearance. Belmont, one of the City's oldest suburbs, displays a planned and organized physical layout of formal housing, despite its narrow streets and lanes, pockets of under-development and infrastructure deficiencies.

Some parts of Morvant, Coconut Drive, Beetham Gardens, Lower Gonzales and Success Village display similar characteristics. Many areas within Eastern Quarry, Picton, St. Barbs, Laventille, Never Dirty, Mon Repos, Sea Lots and the East Port of Spain sub districts are characterized by poor housing stock, informal settlements, haphazard development, poor physical and social infrastructure and a poor quality of life.

2.6.2 Structural Conditions

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the sub-region's homes are constructed of brick and concrete and many are in good physical condition. However, pockets of informal/spontaneous settlements and sub-standard housing are found in many communities. Their condition is considered to be of such poor quality as to require demolition and replacement rather than refurbishment.

The worst housing conditions exist in Sea Lots where 31% of the buildings are constructed from wood/galvanise and 12% are entirely wooden. The structural integrity of housing in certain parts of East Port of Spain is compromised by a combination of age of buildings, the material of construction and the steep and sometimes unstable slopes on which they are located.



2.6.3 Infrastructure and Services

While 63% of residents receive a piped supply of water to their homes, 20% rely on stand pipes to access potable water and 28% still use pit latrines or have no toilet facilities. Significant variations exist in infrastructure provision and adequacy throughout the area with up to 86% of households in Sea Lots using pit latrines for sewage disposal (St. Barbs 43%, Upper Belmont 41%) while only 4% of households received a piped supply of water in Sea Lots (St. Barbs 45%; Picton 37%). Areas of compound deficiencies are identified in the communities of Sea Lots, St. Barbs, Picton and Never Dirty. (see map 6 and 7)

While households in many communities receive a supply of electricity, in parts of Beetham and some other communities the connections are unauthorised and the supply is illegal and unsafe.

2.7 Social and Community Conditions

East Port of Spain is poorly serviced by social and community facilities in relation to its population size, location and community structure. The informal, spontaneous settlement at Sea Lots is the most deficient in the provision of social and community facilities, with only one preschool and a recently refurbished basketball court serving more than 500 households. The urban villages of Marie Road/Romain Lands, Never Dirty and Mon Repos are also inadequately serviced. (Maps 8 and 9 show existing community and recreation facilities)



2.8 Crime

East Port-of-Spain is disproportionately affected by some categories of serious crimes. Data available for 2003 show that of a total of 65 police stations in the country, the number of murders, woundings and shootings reported at the Belmont, Besson Street and Morvant Police Stations (4.6% of stations) - which cover the East Port of Spain Metropolitan District - accounted for 27% of the total number of such crimes reported in Trinidad and Tobago. In the same period the East Port of Spain Metropolitan District also reported 11% of the country's burglaries and robberies.

During the period January to October 2004, the situation worsened. In both the Besson Street and Morvant police stations, the number of murders reported exceeded the 2003 figure. In 2005, 9,174 serious crimes were reported in Trinidad and Tobago, of which 552 were murders and woundings/ shootings. Twenty-five percent (25%) of these took place in East Port-of-Spain. For the period to July 2006, the number of serious crimes increased by 16% (1429) to 10,603. Of these, 577 were murders and woundings/ shootings, 43% of which were reported in the Besson Street, Morvant and Belmont police stations. In addition, the Besson Street station accounted for between 22% and 40% of the serious crimes reported in the Northern Police Division between 1999 and 2003.

2.9 Access and Connectivity

A network of roads connects the urban villages of East Port of Spain to each other and to the remainder of the Greater Port of Spain Metropolitan Area. The Eastern Main Road and the Beetham Highway are the two major east-west arterials that connect East Port of Spain to the remainder of the country. The Lady Young Road provides a by-pass route north of the City and skirts the eastern boundary of the plan area. Within the plan area several roads provide north-south connectivity while the Laventille Road extends in an east-west direction throughout most of the plan area, from Piccadilly Street in the west to beyond the Lady Young Road in the east.

Steep slopes, vulnerability to landslides and erosion and distribution of spontaneous settlements and unauthorised development compromise the condition, capacity, safety and efficiency of roads in the area. Several small communities are still accessed only via steps. Inadequate roadside drainage also results in poor surface condition of many roads.

Narrow roads and steep terrain contribute to conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian traffic and limit accessibility by large vehicles, including garbage removal trucks and emergency vehicles.

Map 10 illustrates the existing road network in East Port of Spain.

2.10 Summary of Development Issues

East Port of Spain faces several development constraints and challenges. These are:

1. Urban decay
2. Poor housing and living conditions in some communities
3. Inadequate physical and social infrastructure
4. Unequal access to employment and services
5. Pervasive Gang culture
6. Environmental degradation, especially on hillsides, watercourses and wetlands
7. Flooding
8. Landslides and landslips
9. Improper disposal of solid waste/garbage
10. High rates of unemployment which exceed the national average
11. High levels of dependence on government programmes and patronage for employment
12. High levels of poverty
13. Low levels of economic activity
14. High rates of crime
15. Disproportionate impact of poverty, unemployment and crime on youth, especially males
16. Squatting and tenure insecurity
17. Negative public image
18. Social, cultural and economic alienation/isolation of area

Map 11 highlights some of the development challenges experienced in East Port of Spain.

