

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO URBAN REGENERATION  
AND REVITALIZATION PROGRAMME (TT-L1056)**

***RENOVATION OF EASTSIDE PLAZA IN PORT OF SPAIN***

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ASSESSMENT (ESA)**

**Temporary Relocation and Livelihood Restoration Plan  
~~(draft)~~**

**September 16, 2019**

## Introduction

The Urban Regeneration and Revitalization Program intends to improve the quality of life of low-income households and to increase the vitality of urban areas by improving habitability and land tenure security in informal settlements on State-owned lands; enhance housing conditions for low-income households and improving the use of urban public spaces.

Designed as a “multiple works” operation, the urban revitalization of the Eastside Plaza market was selected as a project sample of the Program. Specific ESA and ESMP have been prepared for this urban regeneration project. As identified during ESA preparation, the works proposed for improving the Plaza might cause temporary relocation and potential loss of income of current tenants. To address these impacts, following guidelines of OP 710, Involuntary Resettlement.

As established in this policy a Temporary Relocation and Livelihood Restoration (TRLR) has been prepared considering information from ESA and consultation conducted with affected population.

## Legal and administrative framework

The TRLR will also consider national regulations, summarized next, to guide renovation and construction to be conducted in Eastside Plaza.

Summary of licensing and approval process

AUTHORITIES	PERMIT/LICENSE	DESCRIPTION
Environmental Management Authority	Certificate of Environmental Clearance	Required by Eastside Plaza before work can begin on the renovation, and by TCPD for issuing final planning permission.
Town & Country Planning Division	Final Planning Permission	Project planning approval
Highways Division, Ministry of Works and Transport	Consultation/ Approval	Transportation of heavy equipment and material on the roadways/ highways
Traffic Management Branch, Ministry of Works and Transport	Consultation/ Approval	Rerouting of traffic (including construction vehicles) during construction
Trinidad and Tobago Fire Services	Fire Certificate and elevator safety	Issued after inspection of the premises and renewable every two

AUTHORITIES	PERMIT/LICENSE	DESCRIPTION
		years or when there are structural changes to the building.
Public Health Inspectors (Ministry of Health and Port of Spain City Corporation)	Approval of Food Premises and issuing of Food Badges	Approval is required for facilities which prepare and serve food, and food badges are required for workers at these premises.

### Urban Revitalization: Eastside plaza

The Plaza is in downtown Port of Spain in a block surrounded by George Street, Queen Janelle Commissioning Street, Charlotte Street and Prince Street (presented next)



Location map

The plaza, originally developed as a business incubator facility for a mix of micro and traditional businesses intended to expand entrepreneurship, is currently functioning as a commercial mall

with permanent tenants (some with workshops and storefronts in the same tenant space) with an average stay of 20 years.

Eastside Plaza presently houses approximately 146 tenants, 70% of them women and most of them older than 50 years. The majority is engaged in small businesses of various types such as local craft, spices and confectionery items; service type businesses such as hairdressers, nail technicians, tailors/seamstresses; bookstores, travel agency services; sale of electronic goods, optic repair shops, retail clothing, beauty products, market produce, food court and herbal shops.



Charlotte street façade

The Plaza built circa 1926, has not been renovated since 1991 and it is in disrepair and lacking modern facilities. Although the original steel structure appears to be in good condition with no signs of yielding or corrosion, the building faces several problems: leaking roof, fluctuations in electricity supply, inoperable air conditioning system, unreliable mechanical services, no elevators or escalators, and overall inadequate accessibility for persons with disabilities.



Roof trusses

## Social Setting

Although the crowding with transient population and traffic could indicate otherwise, Port of Spain has experienced a decline in resident population in the latest decade. According with census data, between 2000-2011, while population in the rest of the country increased 5.2%, Port of Spain experienced a substantial decline of 24.4 percent reduction in population from 49,031 to 37,074 inhabitants.

It is likely that in the period since the last census (2011), the trend observed in the period 2000-2011 has continued and Port of Spain population will further decline. There is little evidence of new significant residential construction. Except for Woodbrook Place that was constructed in the last decade and View Fort, there has not been large housing developments in Port of Spain in the present decade. Meanwhile, the commercialization of much of the west of the city has been accompanied by a decline in residential accommodation.

Another significant feature of demography of the city has been the decline in density which fell from 4086 persons to 3090 persons per square meter. However, the density of Port of Spain remains ten times above the national average, even as the latter has increased over the period.

Nevertheless, Port of Spain is still the dominant city in business and commerce in the country. Within Port of Spain itself, there has been some migration of business from the east of the city to the west, as some sections of the east has suffered urban blight.

Charlotte Street, where Eastside Plaza is located, is one of the longest roadways in the nation's capital. It is considered one of the busiest streets in the urban sector of East Port of Spain. The middle and lower portions of the street are populated with commercial activities, which include business establishments providing goods and services. It is also a location in which there is considerable street vending. The upper portion of Charlotte Street has access to housing and other public institutions, including the General Hospital which was the main hospital providing secondary care in the country in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Expected Benefits

The improvements to Eastside Plaza will contribute to revitalize a poor area of Por of Spain that has been suffering economic decline. The upgrade will also seek to preserve the historical significance of the building, including its early-century architecture character. For the tenants, the proposed upgrade will enhance the environment for entrepreneurial activities, contribute to business expansion, encourage clientele growth and increase revenue generation.

Additionally, is expected that the works will create business opportunities and employment during the construction phase; business opportunities will also be available for suppliers of material and equipment, as well as food vendors to serve workers on the site. Employment opportunities will relate to workers hired by the prime contractor and subcontractors and will last for the duration of the contract period.

Moreover, the upgraded building is expected to accommodate a larger number of vendors / tenants than the present number, as well as a larger clientele which is expected to visit an upgraded Plaza. As a result, there will be increased opportunities for entrepreneurship and more permanent employment from the demand for specialists to service the new facilities and services and maintenance.

## Expected impacts

While the improvements will have mostly positive impacts, it is expected that the works will cause temporary relocation and economic displacement of current tenant. Options to reduce these impacts and propose mitigation measures are discussed in this TRLR.

- **Census of Tenants**

A census of tenants was conducted during preparation of the ESA to gather information of persons potentially to be affected by the works. This process was also a first consultation phase intended to elicit tenants pot of view regarding the project and its impacts. Individual meetings were conducted with each tenant using a structured questionnaire to gather basic information an to elicit their views about the program. Of 153 tenants that were approached, 139 agreed to be interviewed. Of these, the gender distribution was 106 (76%) women and 33 (24%) men. Age distribution among interviews is as follows:

AGE GROUP	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Under 40	7	5
40-44	12	8.7

45-49	19	13.8
50-54	32	22.5
55-59	27	19.6
60+	42	30.4

The main categories of business activities encountered at the Eastside Plaza consisted of:

- Retail Sales (35.3%);
- Manufacturing (33.8%);
- Services (26%); and
- Other (4.3%).

Information on the number of years in business of the present tenants at the Eastside Plaza was as follows:

YEARS IN BUSINESS	PERCENTAGE
Under 5	9
5 - 10	7
10 - 14	9
15 - 19	15
20+	57

As the table indicates, tenancy is mostly long consolidated which, in turn, indicates stable revenue to current tenants from sales of goods and services.

## Alternatives Analysis

Displacement or disruption of tenant services is inevitable to facilitate construction work, and this can result in the need to temporary relocation and direct income loss during the period of the renovation. To reduce such impacts three renovation options were considered:

- Full Closure of the building; and
- Phased Execution of the Construction Work.
- Phased Approach with Tenants Relocating within the building

### a. Full closure

With full closure, tenants will be displaced from the Plaza during the construction period. Tenants are concerned about loss of earnings during this period, as well as loss of regular customers who will develop other sources of goods and services during the hiatus.

- **Mitigation Measures**

Two mitigation measures may be considered to alleviate the financial losses due to temporary removal of all tenants from the Plaza during full Closure:

- < Provision of Alternative Accommodation, and
- < Compensation for Loss of Earnings.

Both these approaches will address the concern related to direct loss of earnings, but neither will properly address the concern related to loss of regular customers.

Discussions with stakeholders failed to identify any suitable and available alternative locations in Port of Spain to which the Tenants can be temporarily relocated. Both the burnt-out facility at 43 Independence Square (“Drag Brothers Mall”) and New City Mall were discussed by the Tenants, but the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has indicated that neither is available. There are few other options in the same area.

Because tenants were reluctant to provide information about income, there is no base to estimate compensations. Instead, the financial package can be set at what an employee with some training and experience at the supervisory level in Commerce and Distribution might earn, which reflects the opportunity cost of owning and running a small business at the Plaza. It should be equitable to provide support for one person only since many tenants operated without full-time employees, and it is under discussion with the Executing Agency.

#### **b. Phased Approach with Tenants Vacating the Plaza**

In this option, tenants will be asked to vacate the part of the Plaza where construction work is in progress but will be allowed to return to their booths while work is in progress in other parts of the Plaza. Like full closure, tenants are concerned about loss of earnings during the shorter period that each tenant will be displaced, as well as loss of regular customers who will develop other sources of goods and services during the hiatus. However, this latter concern is less significant since each tenant will be asked to vacate the Plaza for a shorter period (an estimated four months per tenant rather than 18 months for all tenants with full closure).

An adequate program to phase relocation according to construction needs should be discussed and agreed with tenants under this option. Compensation will be estimated as above described for a period of four months in average for each tenant.

#### **c. Phased Approach with Tenants Relocating within the Plaza**

In this option, tenants will be asked to relocate to temporary booths within the Plaza while construction work is in progress in the area of their present booths; they will be allowed to return to their original booths while work is in progress in other parts of the Plaza. This is the preferred option among tenants consulted. The design team (Urbasys) considers it to be a technically feasible approach. In this case, tenants are concerned about inconvenience costs, but the concern about loss of regular customers is significantly reduced (almost eliminated). The estimated period of temporary relocation within the Plaza is the same as for the option above; that is an average of four months per tenant.

- **Mitigation Measures**



Even though tenants will remain within the Plaza throughout the construction period, the move to temporary booths will involve some inconvenience cost. The direct cost to the project of providing temporary booths cannot be estimated at this time, since the size and type of the temporary booths has not yet been decided, and it under discussion with the Executing Agency.

This is the proposed option to reduce impacts and gain tenants support.

## **Other expected impacts**

The magnitude of the Eastside Plaza is anticipated to cause some disruption to the population in the neighborhood:

- Impaired Air Quality (dust and emissions) (see Section 6.3.1.1);
- Noise (see Section 6.3.1.2);
- Vibration (see Section 6.3.1.3);
- Improper Disposal of Solid Waste (see Section 6.3.1.4);
- Impaired Water Quality (see Section 6.3.1.5);
- Traffic Congestion (see Section 6.4.1.1).

Mitigation measures for each of these impacts and a rating of the residual impact are provided in the respective sections in the ESMP. Therefore, there would be no need for compensation payments to neighbours.

## **Cultural heritage**

Preservation of the site's historical and architectural significance is of utmost importance, as several features on this building cannot be found on any other building in Port of Spain. The nature of upgrades should not erode the historical aesthetics of the building. Guidelines for protection are included in the ESMP that will be incorporated in bidding documents for works in the Plaza.

## **Consultation**

On September 04, 2019, a general meeting was held with the tenants of the Eastside Plaza. The objective of this consultation exercise was to inform the tenants about the proposed renovation to the Plaza, seek information for use in this ESA Report, and obtain their views on the proposed upgrade and how it may affect them.

A total of 80 tenants attended the meeting which was held in the open space on the second floor of the Eastside Plaza. The meeting began with Words of Welcome and an Introduction of the ESA Team, followed by information on the Current Status of the project, the Need for the Project, and the Proposed Works. The tenants were then split up into seven groups of approximately 10-12 persons per group, each group having a Moderator / Note-Taker.

Each group was given five guidance questions to discuss, of which four were the same for all seven groups:

1. What is your general impression of the upgrade project?  
Do you consider it necessary?
2. What do you consider to be the items that require the most critical upgrading or repair?  
Please provide the type of upgrade or repair that you consider necessary in each case.
3. Do you expect any inconvenience during the renovation work?  
What would you suggest to be done to lessen this inconvenience?
4. If it is necessary to ask some tenants to temporarily vacate the premises to facilitate construction, what measures would you suggest to minimize hardship to those tenants?

The other guidance questions which were discussed by different groups were as follows:

5. Are safety and security a challenge at this mall?  
Please suggest ways that this can be improved during construction and then at the renovated mall.
6. Do any of the following groups experience particular difficulties as tenants or customers at this mall?
  - Women,
  - Men,
  - Family Groups.Please explain the types of difficulties experienced.
7. Do any of the following groups experience particular difficulties as tenants or customers at this mall?
  - Persons with disabilities,
  - Elderly Persons,
  - Young PersonsPlease explain the types of difficulties experienced.
8. What is your relationship with other surrounding businesses?  
If there are problems, please explain.  
Can the mall benefit from the large number of customers visiting other businesses on Charlotte and George Street in particular?

## **Consultation outcomes**

All groups agreed that the upgrade to the Eastside Plaza was very necessary. Two groups indicated that they were dissatisfied with the lack of information on exactly what is proposed (i.e.: detailed designs). It was explained that these detailed designs were not yet available.

### **a. Priorities**

According to tenants the most critical items that needed upgrading/ repair included:

- Non-functional Central Air Conditioning system,
- Leaking Roof,

- Security (suggestions included armed guards, functional security cameras covering more areas of the Plaza, more security patrols, emergency/panic button in booths), and
- Electrical Supply needs to be more reliable (avoiding fluctuations).

Other items that were cited as priorities were:

- Access for the Elderly to the second floor (escalator preferred),
- Upgrading of Toilets (plumbing, shower facilities for females, separate for tenants and pay system for the public),
- Food Court to attract customers,
- Loading and Off-loading Area with reserved space including to protect tenants from bandits that prey on them when goods are being loaded or off-loaded,
- Car Park (possibly at a close-by location, but pan yard should not be removed),
- Maintain the Entrances Clear (particularly from street vendors) in case of an emergency (fire, etc.),
- Pest Control
- Space for a Nursery/ Children after school hours
- Improved External Appearance
- Billboard to Advise Products sold in Plaza

#### **b. Inconveniencies during renovation**

All groups agreed that they expect inconveniences during renovation works. These included: loss of customers, noise, dust, obstructed entrances, and increased heat inside the building. Suggestions included:

- Provide Temporary Storage for Tenants,
- Minimize Inconvenience by undertaking Works during the hours of 6 pm and 6 am, and on Sundays (but not on Saturdays since this is a prime business day for hairdressers),
- Contractor to keep their Work Areas clean, and generally clean the building at the end of each work shift, and
- Reduce Rents paid by the tenants temporarily.

#### ***Temporary Relocation of Tenants***

Tenants were generally not in favour of closing the Plaza entirely to facilitate construction work, and they suggested that the work be done in phases so that tenants in the area being worked on can be relocated to other open areas of the Plaza. They felt that there was enough space within the Plaza to provide kiosks, or erect temporary booths which may just be tents rather than more permanent structures. One group even offered to share booths with other tenants if it was only for a limited time.

If it was necessary to temporarily relocate some tenants, consideration must be given to providing compensation or a stipend for the time they were not at the Plaza. They also suggested relocation to another building in Port of Spain (such as the Drag Brothers Mall at 43 Independence Square or New City Mall) but insisted that they be charged the same rent at the new building as at the present building.

Tenants sought a guarantee that any tenant who had to move (either to another location in the Plaza or to another location outside the Plaza) would be allowed to return to their original location within the Plaza and given the same size booth as they relocated. It was explained to them that re-organization of the floor layout of the Plaza may not allow tenants to return to the exact location from which they were moved. Tenants accepted this but expected to be returned to generally the same area.

### ***Safety and Security***

It was generally agreed that safety and security were a challenge at the Plaza and in surrounding areas. Suggestions included:

- Increase Security during Construction by having workers sign in and out,
- Install additional Cameras, and maintain them in working order,
- Increase Security Patrols within the Plaza, and
- Deploy more Armed Guards (presently there is only one)

### ***Difficulties for Women, Men and Family Groups***

The general feeling was that the Plaza was not “family friendly”. For example, sanitary facilities do not provide space for mothers with infants or family restrooms. Women are also subjected to unwanted attention by males within the Plaza. These issues were discussed, but few clear suggestions were made beyond increased policing.

### ***Difficulties for Persons with Disabilities, the Elderly and the Young***

It was generally agreed that these three groups face special challenges at the Plaza, and the following specific suggestions were made:

- Provide better access to upstairs, in the form of Elevators, Escalators or Ramps,
- Provide Toilets accessible to persons with disabilities,
- Provide proper Guard Rails on Ramps and Stairs, and
- Provide Parking specifically for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

### ***Problems and Benefits at this Locale***

Problems encountered at this locale include:

- No loading/ off-loading zone,
- Street Vendors hamper loading/off-loading of goods and access to the Plaza,
- Snatch-and-Run Bandits run through the Plaza to avoid the police, and
- Robberies during off-loading of goods.

These comments and recommendations were conveyed to the Executing Agency to incorporate main recommendations in final project design. As a result, option C has been agreed to reduce impacts on tenants both regarding relocation and economic displacement.

## **Eligibility and Compensation Criteria**

All tenants registered as occupants of the Plaza (153) will be eligible to receive support and compensations provided in this resettlement plan and received compensations stated in option C:

- Temporary booths according to business requirements within available space; the cost of these booths is yet to be defined;
- A compensation amount under definition by the Executing Agency;
- All tenant will return to original or nearby location to similar or improved booths;

An agreement for the use of temporary booths and payment mechanisms are yet to be defined; these agreements are expected to reach during TRLR consultation.

An accompaniment program will support these efforts specifically during temporary relocation and to ensure that older tenants and women receive required support.

## **Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Grievances Redress mechanism**

The successful implementation of this TRLR will require a careful planning of temporary relocation and coordination works implementation. Tenants should be aware of critical works that might affect their operation. Periodical information and special meeting will be conducted to this aim.

An option to present grievances and prompt solution should be established in an accessible place.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- **Monitoring**

The implementing agency will define monitoring indicators to ensure adequate progress of TRLR implementation such as:

- < Programming relocation phasing;
- < Allocation in temporary booths;
- < Provision of adequate services;
- < Conflict resolution of emerging conflicts.

- **Evaluation**

Evaluation indicators are related to ensure adequate reestablishment such as:

- < Tenants returning to their original booths;
- < Business operation in progress;

- < Improved business networks
- < Services and new facilities in place.

## **Institutional arrangements, program and budget**

The executing agency will appoint a TRLR Coordinator and support staff to oversee:

- Phase programming and agreements with tenants
- Communication programme;
- Grievances redress mechanism
- Monitoring and evaluation;
- Progress reporting.

## **Conditionality**

This TRLR will be updated and consulted before works began in order to update participating tenant; define temporary resettlement program and compensation payments processing and beneficiaries' responsibilities.