

FOREWORD

Samtse, is the administrative seat of the Samtse Dzongkhag. It has been gifted with a strategic location and the availability of a relatively large area of flat land makes Samtse one of the most potent towns for future development. The abundance of water in the region, and the availability of relatively flat land, creates a high opportunity for developing Samtse in an environment friendly way.

The Structure Plan for Samtse presents the salient features of this important urban planning project. It reviews the existing scenario of Samtse and the potentials and constraints from which future possibilities emerge. It explains the proposals for action from which the Structure Plan of Samtse will be composed. These are then illustrated through maps and diagrams. The Plan also includes implementation and management strategies, investment plan and development control regulations for coherent growth of the town. The Development Control Regulations have been included as a part of the Structure Plan to support the proposals of the plan through the introduction of regulations and procedures. The Jurisdiction of these regulations includes the area under the Samtse Municipal Corporation and the 'Urban Control Zone'.

This Structure Plan lays down the precinct plan, road network, open space system and amenities system. It was prepared with an objective to make Samtse a vibrant and environmentally sensitive town which is loved by every stakeholder. The preparation of this plan has involved numerous consultations with the land owners and other stakeholders and their comments and feedback have been integrated into the plan.

The '**Samtse Structure Plan**' lays out the basic themes upon which the strategy of Samtse's development is based. It proposes to create a new image for Samtse as a **Service Center** for the southern part of Bhutan, as well as for the western region. The establishment of Dry Port and even a Free Trade Zone is of utmost importance in Samtse with the industrial estate being envisaged in the area.

The plan proposes a system of **efficient circulation network**. The Samtse - Phuentsholing road which is a part of Sipsoo - Diapham National Highway will allow Samtse to become another '**Gateway**' to the Kingdom of Bhutan. It envisions an impressive entrance into the city of Samtse through a portal from India - One for passenger vehicles such as buses and automobiles; and another for cargo vehicles.

With the Samtse - Phuentsholing and Sipsoo - Diapham road, a major **urban corridor** will be established. This urban corridor will serve as the backbone for a Special Economic Zone.

We would like to express our indebtedness to the members of the National Consultative Committee on Human Settlement (NCCHS) for reading the document, sitting through the presentation of the planners and for providing valuable and critical comments and approving the plan on the 6th NCCHS meeting held on 2nd February, 2006.



We would also like to specially thank Dasho Tashi Gyeltshen, Dzongdag, Samtse Dzongkhag, for extending his considered ideas, valuable support and encouragement in the preparation of this plan.

The MoWHS would also like to put on record the contributions made by Mr. Tshering Dorji, Former Secretary, Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, for being instrumental in the preparation of the Structure Plan with his continuous source of guidance and constructive criticism, Mr. Rinchen Dorji, Director, DUCES, who has extended his support and guidance and promoted a cohesive team spirit between the Consultants, the Ministry and the Dzongkhag Authorities, the Chief Town Planner, Mr. Meghraj Adhikari, DUCES, who has been a consistent guiding force in helping the team with the preparation of this plan by providing his insight into the local context and sharing his views and other related information. The Senior Urban Planners from UPDD, DUCES, Mr. Thukten Choeda, Ms. Tashi Wangmo, Mr. Geley Norbu, Ugyen M Tenzin and Ms. Latha Chhetri and Mr. Tashi Penjor, Urban Planner have worked and provided their valuable support, ideas and enthusiastic participation at various stages in the preparation and finalization of this plan. We are also thankful to other staffs of UPDD, UISD and ESD who have assisted the planning team in many ways.

We would like to place on record an appreciation of DANIDA for their support to Samtse's enhancement, and in particular Mr. Erik Junge Madsen, the than Senior Adviser, DANIDA, who shared his views and ideas with the planning team.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the sector heads, officers of Dzongkhag Administration, Tsirang, Department of Survey and Land Records, National Statistical Bureau, United Nations Development Programme and Ministry of Trade and Industry for giving their time in providing valuable information and support to the planning team.

We would also like to thank Dasho Meghraj Gurung, Ex-Managing Director, Bhutan Post and Mr. Sangay Tashi, Ex-Dungpa, Dorokha Dzongkhag for their support and their views to the planning team.

The Samtse Structure Plan has been prepared by Professor Christopher Charles Benninger of Benninger Architectonics USA Ltd. and he was supported by a team of Urban Planners, Architects and Investment Planner: Kamesh S, Harshad Rajadhyax, Ashish Lahoti, Rahul Sathe, Balasaheb Alange, Akkiseti Ramprasad Naidu, Jagadeesh Taluri, Navin Pradhan and Mr. Ashok Labade, has supported their work at all times. Mr. Ranjit Wagh, Mr. Deepak Kaw, and Mr. Sonam Geley, have been a source of constant encouragement to the team. Prof. Ravi Anand, School of Planning and Architecture, JNTU, Hyderabad has aided the team in the preparation of this plan.

This Structure Plan is a facilitative document and it facilitates discussions amongst various stakeholders and at various levels of the government regarding the growth, future of the town, quality of life and livability, funds for development, infrastructure, implementation etc.

This Structure Plan for Samtse is not a static legal document, but a living plan. The plan lays down the basic structure and guidelines for the future development of the town. These guidelines need to be detailed out in the Local Area Plans, which are prepared for the proposed Urban Villages respecting the local needs and determinants. Any changes to the Structure Plan should be done by the NCCHS / the ministry concerned and no other agency or person has the authority to alter or change the plan.

In conclusion, the MoWHS would like to urge all the stakeholders and all those concerned to extend their wholehearted cooperation and support in realizing the plan. Samtse's picturesque landscape can be best preserved and even promoted only if all the stakeholders make a concerted effort. The implementation of the plan is a big challenge but can be achieved if there is co-operation and continuous dialogue between the people and the government. Therefore, the municipality should include the proposals in the annual and five year planning process and prioritize the activities on a continuous basis. Let us all join our hands and ensure a planned development of Samtse.



Kurzang Dorji,
Minister,
Ministry of Works & Human Settlement,
Royal Government of Bhutan.

