In Rwanda, the strategic use of land is critical to economic and social growth. To support effective land use planning, recent research recommends: 1) strengthening the legal/policy framework and coordination mechanisms, 2) improving the development and implementation of land use plans, and 3) increasing the capacity of institutions, officials and citizens to manage the process.

“The development planning shall be integrated, participatory, evidence-based, and focused on addressing the priority needs of citizens, taking into consideration the overall national development vision and constraints of the resource envelope. As much as possible, national plans shall be composites of local development plans that are regularly prepared.”

National Decentralization Policy (Revised)

The greatest risk to the effective adoption of land use planning system in Rwanda is the lack of capacity at the district level to operate and implement the system.

An Assessment of Land Use Planning in Rwanda, August 2015
Land use planning has had a significant influence on the market trends in Rwanda’s urban areas. Zoned areas are associated with better safety, property title registration, value/price per m² of properties, more desirable types of property, shorter distances to primary and secondary schools and all weather roads, and higher education levels. Since 1998, property sales have been highest in zoned areas. However, zoned areas typically exclude the poor. To provide for their needs, zoning and master plans need to include affordable housing and subsidy schemes.

Ownership & Price Trends

In urban areas, 69% own homes; 28% rent. Due to perceived financial benefits, 74% of buyers chose undeveloped land over developed properties. 85% of urban dwellers who own properties did not use mortgages to buy them. Urban areas with the most expensive properties, in order:

- Kigali City
- Rubavu
- Rusizi
- Musanze
- Muhanga

Substandard materials used in nearly one-third of urban buildings

- Burned bricks: 26%
- Mud bricks: 26%
- Mud bricks with cement: 24%
- Tree trunks with mud: 8%
- Tree trunks with mud & cement: 7%
- Stones: 6%