

The Effects of Zoning Regulations and Land Use Planning on Property Values in Sultanate of Oman

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ABSTRACT

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This research seeks to analyse the impact of zoning regulations and land use planning on property values in the Sultanate of Oman. Zoning is a significant legal tool for regulating land use, building densities, and environmental standards. While zoning can boost house prices by limiting supply and curtailing the development of inappropriate land use, too rigid policies could hamper land use efficiency. This study is about how zoning affects property values by supply, amenity, scarcity, and external impacts. For example, the limitation of the population density increases prices because of the decline of the stock of housing and the increase in demand. Preserving green space and neighbourhood appeal and, thereby, property values is another area in which zoning can also be used. Real estate costs are compared across Muscat, Sohar, and Sur, all of which are characterized by different urban, industrial, and rural attributes, before examining how infrastructure development determines the zoning outcome. The objective of the study is to find out if zoning laws in three districts may decreasing real estate value. Solving these would attract investment, balance property prices, and promote good growth from an economic and financial perspective. The research is based on the use and analysis of academic literature and combines data collection, case studies, and interviews to identify how effective zoning strategies can be developed within Oman to promote urban comfort and investment potential in real estate development in line with Oman's Vision 2040.

Keywords: Urban Planning, Valuation, Oman, Development, Zoning.

INTRODUCTION

The main concern of this research is to compare and analyse the effects of zoning regulations and land use planning on property values in the Sultanate of Oman. The research will establish the actual cost of real estate in industrial zones, urban, and rural areas by investigating the effect of infrastructure construction on property values and zoning. The main purpose is to increase the efficiency of zoning regulations to support sustainable development objectives and enhance/develop property values in Muscat, Sohar, and Sur.

The research will examine the effects of land use planning and zoning laws on property prices in several areas, including Muscat, Sohar, and Sur, where significant development projects are underway. The paper will evaluate data from real estate transactions, land use regulations, and zoning maps based on interviews and surveys with people who have knowledge and experience in the fields to look at how these laws impact the rise and fall in property values across different zoning classifications. This research will help organize the effects of zoning and land use on property value in Oman by 2040 based on the classification of settlement [1].

Basically, the paper explores the impact of zoning regulations and land use planning on property values in Oman, focusing on 3 districts like Muscat, Sohar, and Sur. Zoning and land use are some of the most important levels in the goals of the 2040 Oman Vision under the National Planning Level, which is part of the Local Planning (Structural and Details Plans) [1]. Zoning and land use regulations have significant effects on property values because they

restrict land use and protect properties from unsuitable development. Limited zoning can increase property values, but highly restrictive zoning can result in inefficient land use and reduced land-use density [2].

• **Application of the Paper.**

This research directly concerns urban planning, real estate development, and policymaking. The outcomes aim to:

1. Communicate the zoning and land-use policies that align with sustainable urban growth.
2. Improve the market value of properties through the resolutions of conflicts as well as optimization of the land use.
3. Ideas and recommendations will be offered to enhance infrastructure planning in certain areas in Muscat, Sohar, and Sur.
4. Maintaining cultural identity and preserving the cultural heritage while promoting the concept of city development in the cultural sector, particularly in the areas of Sur.

• **Problem Statement.**

This research focuses on three out of 61 districts in Muscat, Sohar, and Sur because each of them has a significant problem that could negatively affect real estate value. Based on what was discussed above, the best solution to solve these issues is by using mixed-mode methodology. Solving and addressing these problems is expected to increase the demand for real estate, attract investment, and create comfortable urban environments and balanced property values for citizens and residents. The issues are:

1. Muscat:

Main Issue: Challenges/difficulties of Mixed-use Development in Busy Urban Area.

Clarification of the Issue: Based on the interview conducted with Ahmed Abdulaziz Khamis - Assistant Real Estate Valuation Manager - mentioned that Muscat is facing certain challenges and difficulties in adopting the right mixed-use zoning regulations, which incorporate commercial, residential, and office in highly dense areas. Once mixed-use zoning is poorly implemented, it significantly results in congestion, which leads to a decrease in property values.

This problem will become a major issue in coming years because of 2040 vision. [3] mentioned “The current population of Muscat is 1.5 million, and by 2040, that figure will double to 2.7 million. For people to live and work in a place like this, we must bring excellent residential, mixed-use hospitality, office, and retail items/commercial products.”

2. Sur:

Main Issue: Balancing between Cultural Heritage and Urban Development.

Clarification of the Issue: Based on the interview conducted with Hamed Al Habsi - Real Estate Valuer - mentioned that achieving a balance between conservation and development of new structures in the case of Sur – an ancient city with traditional house designs and a rich history of being a seaside city – is challenging. While strict zoning ensures that cultural heritage structures are protected, it limits commercial development, which affects property values.

3. Sohar:

Main Issue: Conflicts over Residential Land Use and Industrial Expansion.

Clarification of the Issue: Conflicts between residential and industrial areas have arisen/increased because of Sohar's development as an industrial centre. Providing residential zones are necessary for labour housing, high industrial activity can influence residential property values due to noise and pollution.

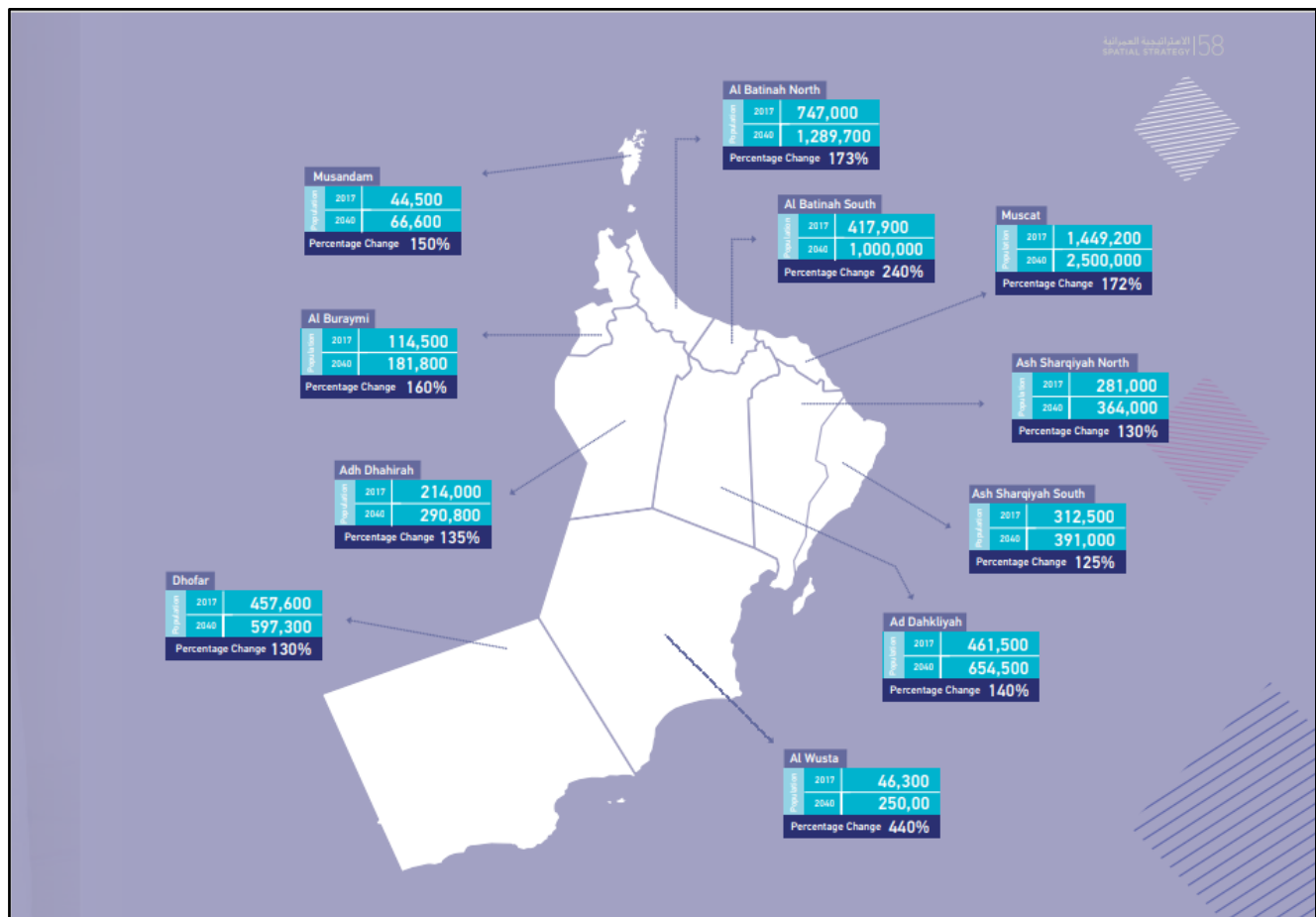


Figure 1: Population Growth up to 2040 [1].

• Scope of Work.

The study will concentrate on major urban, suburban, and rural districts in Oman, such as Muscat, Sohar, and Sur, which are planned around their Special Economic Zones (SEZ). The paper evaluates zoning uses such as residential, commercial, and industrial sites. The research paper will use a mixed-mode technique to examine the impact of zoning changes and land use planning on real estate values. The Gantt Chart states that the research began in November with the literature review and data collection and will end in June with the review, finalization, and submission of the thesis.

• Limitation and Depth of the Paper.

The paper focuses on 3 cities, suffers from time constraints of no more than 8 months from the start of the literature review, limited access to the required data, limited in-depth analysis, and political challenges associated with the valuable information that may be provided by the experts who will be interviewed.

The study focuses on the effects of zoning in Oman and consists of sample quantitative trends and qualitative suggestions and advice from the supervisor. Experts' interviews and questionnaires improve the research's quality and reliability, helping the government and private sector, as the paper research aligns with Oman's Vision 2040.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study was done in San Francisco Bay, California, America mentioned by [4]: Land use is the human transformation of natural surroundings into developed environments, regulated by zoning restrictions and including communities, agricultural, and recreational spaces. Land use regulations may have a wide range of complicated effects on property

values. In the context of legislation like Oregon's Measure 37, landowners must be paid if restrictions affect their property values. Land-use restrictions can have various consequences on property prices, but their economic influence is frequently misunderstood. Land-use regulations may increase property values by providing amenity benefits such as public services and environmental protection, as well as scarcity impacts such as limiting supply and increasing demand. These rules are said to enhance the value of properties in most cases while opposing the widely held perception that rules only hurt value. The market value of houses was 17% to 38% higher in growth control areas for land use regulation in the San Francisco Bay area compared to uncontrolled areas. Likewise, restriction on the zoning of Lakefront to enhance the facility was estimated to enable the average price to be raised by 21.5% to 31%.

[5], [4], and [6] figured out the most common effects of zoning regulations and land use on the values of property around the world:

- **Supply Constraints.**

Zoning makes the amount of land available for development limited, this causes property prices to go up since the amount of space available for development will restrict high-density housing in the cities.

- **External Effects.**

Zoning creates neighbourhood effects, enhancing property value by guaranteeing suitable land uses, such as residential, which is the only zone that must be without any industrial problems.

- **Amenity Effects.**

Maintaining green spaces, establishing places, or maintaining certain standards of beauty through land use regulation may increase property prices in the surrounding areas.

- **Scarcity Effects.**

Limiting land use for specified objectives (e.g., agricultural preservation) decreases available land for other uses, deriving increasing property values in places where development is allowed.

The following figures illustrate the effects of zoning regulations and land-use on different property values based on timeline and price per acre [4].

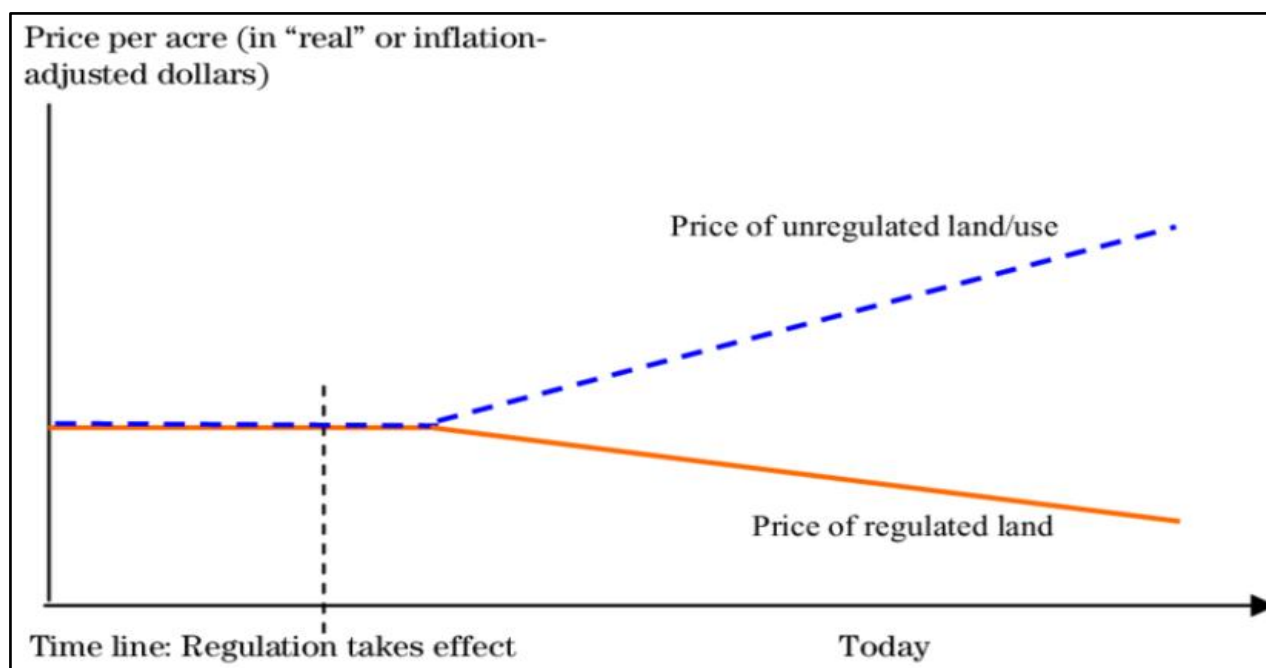


Figure 2: Illustrating Price Change with Land-use Regulations.

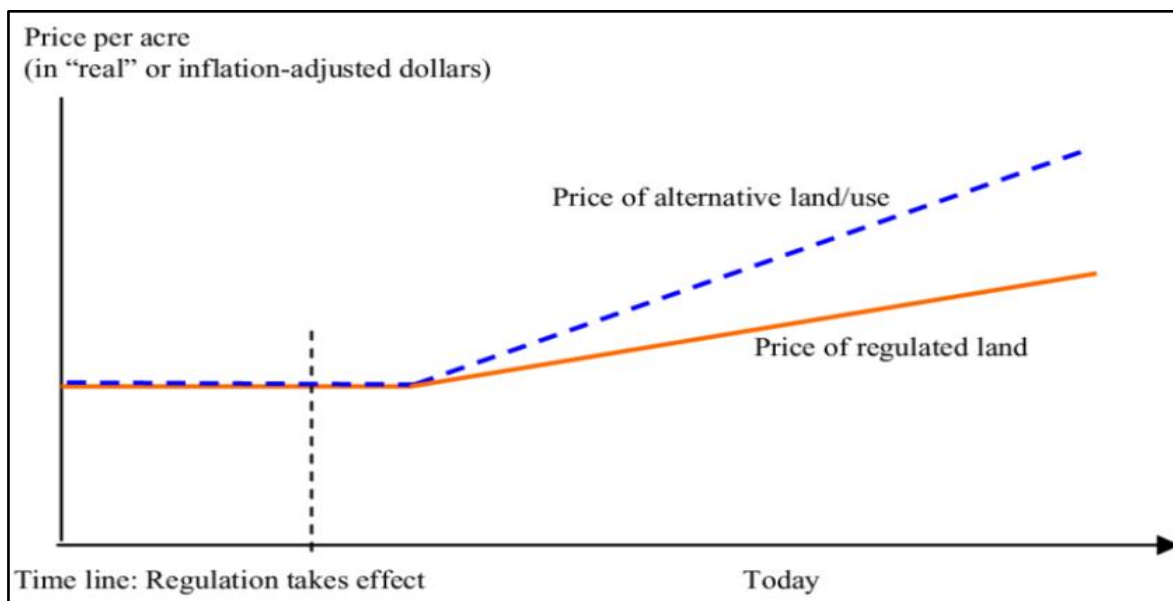


Figure 3: Land Price Changes When Land-use Regulations have "Neighborhood" Effects

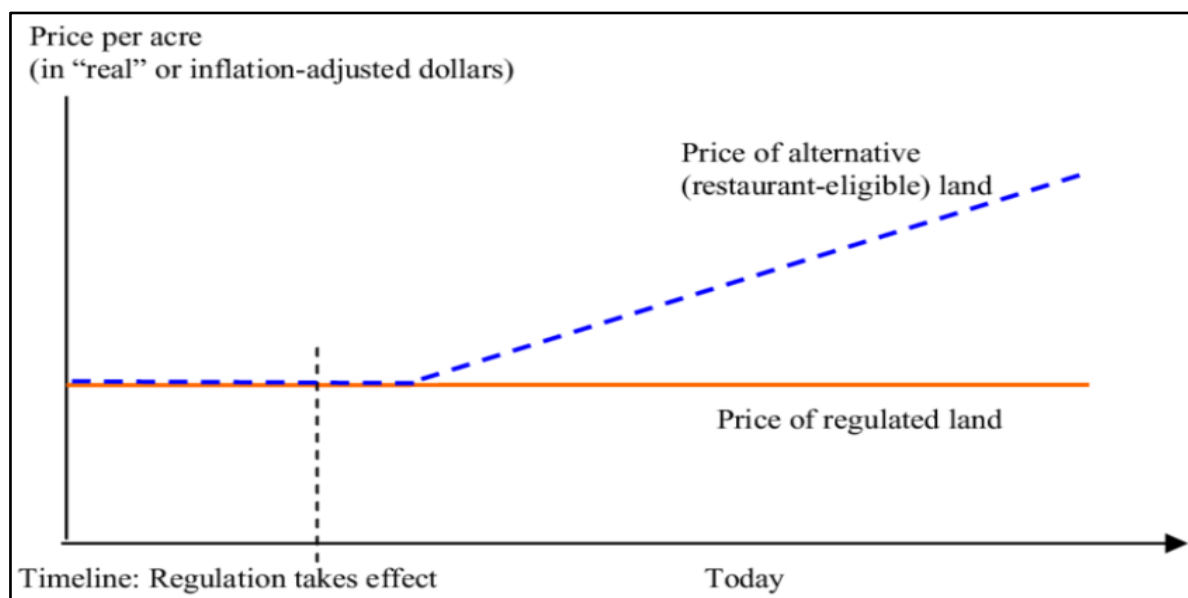


Figure 4: Hypothetical Example of Land-use Regulation Restricting Use as Restaurant

Zoning in Oman seeks to avoid conflicting land use within a community that might disturb/disarrange its unique character or intended purpose. As the government focuses on sustainable real estate development, zoning may become a significant tool in Oman. This enables government officials and developers to examine both the relevant zoning for specific properties and the surrounding lands [7].

- **According to [8].**

Oman has established zoning legislation to help govern the usage of its land for better urban planning, safety, order, and the stability of the environment. Current trends are focusing on smart city development, sustainability of green buildings, renewable energy, and integrated city & urban development. Zoning regulations and land use planning have significantly impacted the property values among various sectors in Oman. Below is an analysis of their impact on commercial, industrial, and residential properties:

1. Impacted on Commercial Property Values.

Land-use regulations for commercial zones influence property value. demand for commercial spaces increases as areas with laws delineating defined areas may restrict development possibilities that lower property values.

2. Impacted on Industrial Property Values.

Manufacturing zones are governed by industrial zoning regulations and have been seen to affect property prices. Areas that have been zoned properly can attract businesses, hence increasing demand and the value of the properties; however, issues such as locating close to residential areas or being surrounded by environmental restrictions reduce value.

3. Impacted on Residential Property Values.

Zoning and land use planning plays an essential role in residential property values; more precisely, regulations concerning housing density, building heights, and the type of land use affect market value.

METHODOLOGY

Table 1 shows the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies that have been used for previous studies that are like the concept of the paper. The focus of these studies included one of them in the GCC and the rest were done in Oman. Based on the research and investigation, each of them adopted one method for research and work on its study; for example, the study that focused on the urbanization in GCC [9] used qualitative analysis through literature review, while the study that focused on growth patterns in Oman [10] used historical review through literature review, and the last research focused on Oman's Cities [11] used programs such as GIS and CA-Markov modelling.

Table 1: Comparison Between Strengths and Weaknesses Methodologies for Previous Studies

Study/Research	Focus Area	Methodology Used	Strengths	Weaknesses
Cities within Cities: An Urbanization in the Gulf Countries [9]	Urbanization in Gulf cities	Qualitative analysis of urban urbanization and zoning implications in GCC capitals.	Focuses on zoning and its effects on the growth of towns and urban enhancement.	Did not cover property values directly and largely focused on secondary data.
Urban Development in Oman [10]	Growth patterns in Oman	Historical review and analysis of urbanization trends, using GIS and planning regulations.	Comprehensive overview of urbanization in Oman.	Limited available direct data on property values; did not contain primary data.
GIS Land-use Change Study [11]	Monitoring land-use in cities of Oman	Used GIS and CA-Markov modelling to analyse the land use and to observe the following trends of urban growth.	Elevated level of modelling for spatial and temporal dimensions.	Did not link findings to property values directly.

The paper will be managed and conducted by using **mix-mode methodology**. This type of methodology is using various aspects of methods starting from literature review, data collection, case studies, and interview/surveys. Since no one has used this methodology in Oman and in GCC, choosing it is the best option to achieve effective and accurate results, which contributes to raising the level of importance of this paper. As noted in Table 1, studies based on one method may lack accuracy because they did not achieve research equality through other methods such as a case study, interviewing experts, or conducting a questionnaire to collect opinions that could support their research.

RESULTS

1. Interviews

Six of the most Omani experts in the field have been interviewed by me about certain facts and issues based on The Effects of Zoning Regulations and Land use Planning on Property Values in Sultanate of Oman. Their names, positions, and years of expertise as following:

Table 2: Information of The Experts

Full Name	Job Title/Position	Company/ Organization Name	Department/ Division	Years of Experience	Current Location (City, Country)	Contact Information
Hamad Al Habsi	Real estate valuer / real estate broker	Trust Valuation	Real Estate Valuer	15	Ominvest Business Centre, Muscat, Oman	+968 2420 000 or hamed.alhabsi@trustvaluation.co
Ahmed Khamis	Assistant Real Estate Valuation Manager	Trust Valuation	Real Estate Valuer	9	Ominvest Business Centre, Muscat, Oman	+968 2420 000 or Ahmed.Khamis@trustvaluation.co
Hussain Al Lawati	Operations Manager	Al Qandeel Real Estate Services	Real Estate	8	Al Sarooj, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman	+968 9981221
Ahmed Al Shebli	Director of the Department of Laws and Legislation	Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning	Department of Laws and Legislation	16	Muscat, Oman	+968 93231896
Qasim Al Harrasi	Head Greater, Muscat Planning	Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning	Department of Laws and Legislation	16	Muscat, Oman	Qasim.alharrasi@housing.gov.om
Nouf Al Gharibi	Urban Planner and Architect	Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning	ONSS/Oman national spatial strategy	3	Muscat, Oman	+968 79134900 or noufalgharibi@gmail.com

Based on interviews conducted with these experts, they presented the most important positive and negative impacts of zoning laws and regulations and land use planning on property values such as commercial, residential, and industrial areas between the three cities (Muscat, Sohar, and Sur) and the rest of the surrounding areas in Oman.

Hamad Al Habsi and **Ahmed Khamis** mentioned the most positive and negative impacts of Commercial, Residential, and Industrial areas on property values in (Muscat, Sohar, and Sur) and the rest of the surrounding areas in Oman based on years of experience as following.

Positive impacts of the Commercial areas in Muscat: The commercial area in Muscat has increased demand for commercial services, which is a very positive thing for the Sultanate of Oman, especially in the main centre of the commercial economy in the Sultanate, which is the capital of Muscat without any other exceptions. Muscat is one of the largest commercial areas in Oman.

Negative impacts of the Commercial areas in Muscat: The main problem in the state of Muscat, which has a huge commercial market, is (parking), as is noted in the (Airport Heights) area, which has large commercial and economic centres, but it lacks sufficient parking spaces. Most companies in this area complain about the lack of parking spaces, for example, "Muscat Hills" commercial buildings in this area do not exceed five years of operation, but we notice huge congestion during official working hours, so that most employees do not find parking spaces close to their workplace. Compared to other companies in other areas in Muscat.

Positive impacts of the Residential areas in Muscat: Strength in infrastructure, as it provides all the housing requirements and integrated services for both residents and investors, and there is often no rural area in Muscat - the newly developed areas can be called rural areas - otherwise Muscat enjoys advanced urban areas, in terms of the availability of infrastructure in terms of schools, hospitals, universities and entertainment services.

Maabela area: All thanks and appreciation to Muscat Municipality, especially the "Occidental Oil Company", which worked on a giant project in the **Maabela** area, 3-4 km, which is a green area and entertainment things. This initially created a good reputation for the company, and secondly, raised the value of the area, which was a remote area of urbanization and green life.

Negative impacts of the Residential areas in Muscat: Congestion is the biggest obstacle in the interior areas of Muscat. In **Maabela**, congestion is an obstacle to the resident, as there are commercial areas and few industrial areas near the residential area.

Positive impacts of the Industrial areas in Muscat: The industrial area is completely isolated from the residential area in Muscat Governorate, which is the **Rusayl** Industrial Area, so that all emissions and industrial works are carried out in this area.

Negative impacts of the Industrial areas in Muscat: There are no negative things that may negatively affect Muscat Governorate through industrial works.

Positive impacts of the Commercial areas in Sohar: in the past, commercial areas were easily divided before the ministerial decision to stop all transfers was issued. Because it is simply possible to convert an agricultural area into a commercial area and divide it into buildings so that it can be used for commercial purposes such as small shops and others.

Negative impacts of the Commercial areas in Sohar: The ministerial decision to stop converting agricultural lands into commercial lands has led to a setback in business and a huge congestion in terms of the number of farms that have become barren, and no one irrigates them for several reasons, including the high cost of living and high-water prices. Both parties lost. The agricultural area was not used for agriculture or trade, and it became dormant.

Positive impacts of the Residential areas in Sohar: There is a high demand for residential properties in the heart of Sohar Governorate due to the presence and availability of all infrastructure services. The increasing demand leads to an increase in the value of the property, which may have a positive effect on the seller and a negative effect on the investor.

Negative impacts of the Residential areas in Sohar: There are no clear negative things that may affect, in one way or another, the values of properties in residential areas in Sohar Governorate have increased since the government started to think about the port emission issues.

Positive impacts of the Industrial areas in Sohar: The positive thing about industrial areas in Sohar is that they are "never divisible" and industrial lands range from 1000 meters and above by considering Sohar Port one of the global ports that attracts many international companies. The infrastructure is available and effective in the industrial areas, as well as the availability of residential buildings for workers.

Negative impacts of the Industrial areas in Sohar: Sohar Port has a negative impact on the residential areas adjacent to the industrial area, as these factories emit huge emissions accompanied by malignant diseases that may lead to those living near them suffering from incurable diseases. Through the arguments raised regarding these emissions, the government itself has tried to reduce these emissions and compensate those affected.

Positive impacts of the Commercial areas in Sur: As we know, Sur enjoys the manufacture of traditional sailing ships that enjoy the spirit of ancient industry. The zoning laws did not affect it negatively because it is considered a heritage area, and no urban work can negatively affect it.

Negative impacts of the Commercial areas in Sur: **Lack of tourism** is one of the biggest obstacles that makes it difficult for an investor to start a large commercial project that may contribute to raising property values and improving land use in Sur, so that Sur enjoys heritage works and objects that may contribute to raising the market value of the property. This may come from the lack of promotion and support for owners of small projects such as (the floating chalet) which enjoys its unique status away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Positive impacts of the Residential areas in Sur: Most of the infrastructure services that may contribute to raising the level of the property are available in flat and urban areas.

Negative impacts of the Residential areas in Sur: There is an obstacle in mountainous areas, so that all services and requirements for infrastructure are not available as they are available in other areas of the state which could affect negatively the price of these lands and on people who are living out there.

Positive impacts of the Industrial areas in Sur: The industrial area isolated from urban residential areas such as **Qalhat** and others, so that the industrial area is characterized by the availability of all infrastructure services and labour services in the area. Considering that Sur is a coastal area close to the sea, it is famous for the manufacture of traditional sailing ships that enjoy the absence of any toxic emissions into the atmosphere.

Negative impacts of the Industrial areas in Sur: There are no negative things through the industry that may affect the values of real estate in one way or another in residential and commercial areas in Sur.

Hussain Al Lawati mentioned the most positive and negative impacts of Commercial, Residential, and Industrial areas on property values in (Muscat, Sohar, and Sur) and the rest of the surrounding areas in Oman based on years of experience as following.

The main change that happened in **Muscat** was that the areas did not change from residential to commercial, there were residential properties for commercial use, the last decision issued by the Municipal Council was to convert residential villas from commercial use to residential. Before 2015, how did these residential villas move to commercial use as is observed in several areas in the Sultanate such as **Qurum, Al Khuwair** and others. The reason is that during a period the commercial market was very booming, from 2012 to 2016, and the demand was high. New companies came wanting to rent commercial offices in order to exploit them for their commercial interests and the interest of the country as well, but at that time it was difficult for these offices to find places to rent due to the boom in the commercial market, the large number of investors and the small number of commercial offices. Muscat Municipality met with several real estate companies, including **Qandeel Company**, and they proposed what are the appropriate solutions to solve this crisis. Among the solutions proposed is that the residential villas on the first lines would be used for commercial use, and at that time this idea was positive and a solution to a problem. This idea has of course worked and is still being adopted by some countries as an alternative plan. The first lines have recovered economically and there has been a large commercial movement due to this positive solution.

Now, after 2020, things have become a little different, due to the conversions that occurred in the past from residential to commercial, there has been a congestion of commercial offices, and on the other hand, many investors have declined. Among the solutions proposed to solve this crisis is that commercial offices return to their original commercial location and residential villas that have been converted into commercial offices return to their original purpose, which is residential. Of course, the municipality took advice from experts after issuing this decision and it was amended so that whoever was renting in these residential commercial villas renews and resumes his work so that there are no losses on the part of the investor and so that it is fair to everyone. This has brought positive benefits to the first lines, especially the **Sarooj area**, and has benefited areas that have a mix of residential and commercial, and it has also benefited commercial offices that were not mixed with residential, as demand for them has increased and congestion on residential roads has decreased. This law has also provided parking spaces instead of congestion in residential commercial buildings. The negative aspect behind adopting this law is that the commercial aspect has

decreased in areas that used to contain residential and commercial villas, and some tenants have been harmed by the return of these residential and commercial buildings to purely residential, while his neighbours are commercial tenants, so he cannot live in this building because the buildings next to it are mostly commercial, and he also cannot rent this residential building to commercial due to the lack of investors in this area, such as **Al-Sarooj**.

As for the industrial aspect, an area of "Ghala Industrial" has been transformed from an industrial area to a residential and commercial area, and a large part of this "block" is still industrial, and this is a positive action taken by the municipality, as these areas may be vital and vibrant areas, as introducing the commercial and residential factor adds a vital and refreshing character, including providing housing for citizens and residents, and also raising the economy of that area. This has led to a significant increase in real estate values.

The negative aspect behind this decision: The "blocks"/"groups" next to this residential-commercial "block" are all industrial, so the amount of expatriate workers in that area is large, which causes concern for those living in the residential-commercial "block" and may also cause security problems. The other aspect is that the weights of vehicles in the "blocks" on the industrial side may cause discomfort for those living in the residential-commercial block, and the roads may also be damaged, and because of these obstacles, this area may not be suitable for families, and these "industrial blocks" may cause noise, visual and environmental pollution.

The same applies to **Sohar** in the industrial area, such as Sohar Port, which is close to the residential-commercial areas that are on the front lines. As for Sur, the industrial areas are far from the residential area, so this is an incredibly positive thing that has served the people of the **Wilayat of Sur**, as it is located at the entrance to Sur. There is no doubt that industrial areas need residential areas for workers and commercial areas to facilitate services for those working in them. However, industrial areas are not suitable for families at all due to the substantial number of foreign workers in them, as well as the danger of the facilities, vehicles and gases that may harm the residents there. They are also not suitable for large commercial centres because they may not meet the needs of these centres in terms of purchasing power as if they were in residential and commercial areas.

Ahmed Al Shabli as a Director of the Laws and Legislation Department at the Ministry of Housing mentioned that the regulation of zoning in Oman is carried out according to a well-thought-out plan that consider sustainable development, economic development, and the welfare of citizens. Ministry of Housing keen to achieve a balance between urban, industrial, and residential areas, in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Qasim Al Harrasi mentioned the most positive and negative impacts of Commercial, Residential, and Industrial areas on property values in (Muscat, Sohar, and Sur) and the rest of the surrounding areas in Oman based on years of experience as following.

The method of distributing industrial, residential, and commercial areas is as required for each of these three cities (Muscat, Sohar, Sur) in a way that preserves the values of these areas and the value of the land and its use. For example, the industrial area cannot be divided randomly, but rather in a thoughtful manner that serves industrial, logistical, and other matters and does not have a negative impact on the residential and commercial areas. One of the negative things that we are currently seeing in Muscat and Sohar is the creeping urban residential growth towards the industrial areas. Previously, the (Rusayl Industrial) area in Muscat was designated as a purely industrial area, but it is now noticeable that the residential areas have begun to creep towards this area. The same thing is also in the (Maabela) area, there was an industrial area, but it was surrounded by the residential area, and from time to time the residential areas increase in proximity to these industrial areas. This negatively affects the residents of the residential areas in terms of visual, auditory and health pollution. As for the commercial areas, one of their positives is that they have been divided in the required manner so that they serve the residential and industrial areas separately, so that the person knows where to go for trade and shopping in a way that suits his purpose. Among the negative things are the lack of parking spaces in commercial areas and the lack of organization of entrances and exits to these commercial markets.

The most famous negative in industrial, residential, and commercial areas:

Also, the accumulation of unskilled expatriate labour, which is more of a consumer than a benefit to society, which poses a threat to residential areas. Also, these unskilled workers live alone, so they spend less than required, and the rest of the money is transferred abroad, which does not benefit the shops located in the industrial areas, and this leads to a decline in the economy of the region. However, if there are skilled workers, they may bring their families, which requires providing a living for them, which leads to an increase in the economy of these industrial and commercial areas and may also reduce the danger resulting from the worker living alone.

Through the urban strategy, Muscat, Sohar, Nizwa, Salalah are major cities except Sur. For several reasons, including major gateways, major economic zones, which gave a special advantage in the field of dividing these major cities. As for Sur, it has its own character as a regional coastal area as the capital of the South Al Sharqiyah Governorate. All urban considerations and developments were considered to achieve a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability, including five goals:

- 1- Green cities
- 2- Sustainable cities
- 3- Connected cities
- 4- Liveable cities with adaptability to the quality of life
- 5- Growth in the domestic product.

For each of these cities, strategic structural plans were made, then a regional plan, and then a structural plan.

The structural plan is concerned with distributing the areas and centres of economic growth in each city.

Nouf Al Gharibi clarified that the Wilayat of Barka was integrated into the Greater Muscat Plan, planning-wise, not administratively, due to the population sprawl towards the Wilayat of Barka and the economic engine in Barka, which is (Khazaen). The integration of the Wilayat of Barka into the Greater Muscat Plan was to increase economic output. The Greater Muscat Plan was created to fix the existing random works, not only planning-wise, but also environmentally.

The current randomness is that there are a lot of lands where no one lives, while most of the population is concentrated in areas where there are services that meet their needs. With the passage of time and the crowding of the population in these areas, this randomness may lead to the loss of the community's needs for services and infrastructure that are supposed to be available to them.

Also she recommends to solve the issues regarding to industrial, residential, and commercial areas is by applying **15 minutes city** which states of, Urban planning now focuses on 15-minute cities, which must deliver essential goods such as shopping locations and medical services to citizens who can reach them by walking or cycling within 15 minutes [12]. Residential areas should allow people to reach everyday requirements without needing more than 15 minutes of walking from their front door according to the '15-minute city' model. The '15-minute city' approach seeks to cut down transportation emissions in addition to building neighbourhood ties through locating essential daily needs nearby residential zones. The actual implementation of this approach together with its planet-friendly effects on city redesigns for accessible walking distance needs extensive study [13]. Also, she recommends applying the **Soft Mobility System**; Soft mobility introduces a modern lifestyle that supports the use of pedestrian, bicycle, roller skate, and skateboard transportation without reliance on vehicles. The sustainable transportation system enhances residential quality standards by preserving personal mobility rights and delivers environmental advantages that improve cities' wellness [14].

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Five objective questions were presented to the interviewees, which are relevant to the title of the research paper. These questions are useful in protecting property values effectively while achieving a balance between economic

growth and environmental sustainability between the three cities (Muscat, Sohar, and Sur) and the rest of the surrounding areas. Under each question there are answers and views for each of the interviewees as follows:

1. The first question clarified that a study is conducted to assess the role zoning regulations play to achieve economic growth balance with environmental sustainability within the cities of Sohar, Sur, and Muscat. Experts need to evaluate zoning as a sustainable development instrument and its economic goal challenges through this inquiry.

Hamad Al Habsi and Ahmed Khamis: In Muscat, Sultan Haitham City achieves great economic development in Muscat. The population density in Muscat is much higher than any other region in the Sultanate, so with the urban planning conducted by the government, it may contribute to the development in terms of real estate values in the region. The government has established popular residential areas that contain a strong and sustainable infrastructure that makes it easier for the citizen whose income does not match the average or below average income to buy a residential property.

The popular area is not, as is commonly believed, a remote area that does not have infrastructure services, but rather the opposite, it may provide what the individual and resident of this area needs from all services and with precise standards.

For example, you have the "Hay Al Naseem" area, which makes it easy for someone with an average or below income to buy a residential home in this area based on his financial salary through the availability of a strong infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and universities nearby and also its proximity to the commercial area. In this matter, the government has worked to achieve environmental balance in terms of providing the necessary living for the citizen based on his income.

Regarding the Wilayat of Sur, the economic growth is noticeably developing, and in terms of environmental sustainability, it emits fewer toxic gases than any other region. 6- Regarding Sohar, the demand is high in the heart of the Wilayat, so the zoning works to achieve an environmental balance between the tremendous economic growth and environmental sustainability, but the emissions of toxic gases may pose a threat to the residents around the area and may also pose a threat to the lives of animals. This is something that the government must consider carefully because the population density is increasing in that area.

Hussain Al Lawati: Each "zone" has its own infrastructure and uses, for example (sewage) for the infrastructure of the commercial area is different from (sewage) for the infrastructure of the residential area. For example, restaurants and cafes have special standards for placing sewage pipes to drain oils and the like. Also, the road standards for the industrial area differ from the road standards for the residential area in terms of size and density. In one of the areas of Salalah, there were many complaints about residential areas that have industrial areas next to them. In terms of disturbance, anxiety, and toxic emissions from large vehicles such as trucks, tankers, etc.

Ahmed Al Shebli: The Omani government has already succeeded in achieving environmental balance, as advanced systems have been implemented to regulate zoning to ensure that the environment is not harmed while achieving economic development goals. There are no challenges facing the government in implementing these systems, as all environmental and economic components are available to implement zoning efficiently and easily. What distinguishes Oman from other countries is the availability of large areas of land, which allows industrial, residential, and commercial areas to be organized in a thoughtful manner without causing congestion or negative impacts on the environment.

Qasim Al Harrasi: As I am responsible for the Muscat region, Muscat has five (zones):

(Zone 1) contains the Wilayat of Muscat, Muttrah, and part of the Wilayat of Bawshar.

(Zone 2) contains the rest of the parts of the Wilayat of Bawshar,

(Zone 3) Al Amerat,

(Zone 4) the Wilayat of Seeb in its entirety

(Zone 5) the Wilayat of Barka.

Each (zone) has a specific distribution, division, and organization, each according to the advantages of the region in terms of economic, tourism, environmental, and infrastructure matters. So (zone 1) is distinguished in the traditional historical aspect, so developing the tourism aspect in it will be a catalyst for the region. As for (zone 2), it is known for its economic and practical activity, and most of the investing companies are concentrated in it in terms of economic matters as well as the ministries area. As for (zone 3), it was distributed in terms of youth and sports growth, and economic growth was also distributed in it alongside some hospitals.

The rest of the (zones) have their own characteristics and cultural character that distinguishes them from others to support the citizen and the country.

Nouf Al Gharibi: Current urban planning represents significant economic growth and considers environmental sustainability in terms of providing a suitable and liveable infrastructure. For example, (Al Khuwair Downtown) will be a (mixed use building) and will be a city for global investment, which represents a significant economic return for the region and the country itself, while considering environmental sustainability. We also have in the urban plan what is called economic clusters. For example, in Al Amerat, we have ((education, innovation, and skill). These economic clusters represent the secondary return for the country instead of having one return, which is oil and gas. Rather, there will be industrial areas that contain innovations, knowledge, learning, and new experience, whether from students or others, which contributes to raising economic growth and reducing the risk of relying on an only source of income.

2. The second question explain what are the main challenges in the enforcement of zoning regulations that guarantees that real value of a property is well provided but at the same time is not diminished in unintended or unplanned negative impacts of inefficiency or reduced accessibility of area? The purpose of this question is to explore practical difficulties in zoning and its influence on property valuation.

Hamad Al Habsi and Ahmed Khamis: Infrastructure and movement between areas is the main challenge in implementing zoning regulations that effectively protect property values without causing unintended or unplanned negative impacts, such as inefficiency or reduced accessibility. Also, industrial areas should be isolated from residential and commercial areas. In terms of industrial areas, it is preferable to have smooth movement so that transportation is provided for comfortable movement to avoid causing traffic congestion in industrial areas, which may increase carbon emissions.

As an industrial area, it is preferable for companies or the government to work on including technology in organizing work and increasing its efficiency to reduce toxic emissions. There must be a well-thought-out plan for how to move from one area to another in general, especially in Muscat and Sohar, because they represent the highest percentage of population. For example, the "Al-Maabela" area, the old urban planning may negatively affect the residents of the area and the values of the properties in it, as noted, the residential area is in the middle of the area, and to the right of the residential area is the industrial area, and to the left is the commercial area. The industrial area must be completely isolated from the residential area. The presence of the commercial area near the residential area enhances the property values, but the presence of the industrial area near the residential area may lead to a loss in property values.

Hussain Al Lawati: Compensation: This is one of the challenges that the government has faced and continues to face in implementing zoning regulations that effectively protect property values. The government does not have the financial capacity to compensate citizens, so the government takes simple payments, which has led to stagnation in property values in that area and takes longer for the situation to develop or the plan to be implemented in that area. On the other hand, if there is a single decision in the area that needs development, it will compensate those affected in a noticeably brief period, as happened with compensation for people who lived near Sohar Port.

One of the challenges is the human aspect: The municipality wanted to establish an industrial zone in one of the residential areas in Salalah, and this area would be of complete benefit to the citizens at that time, as well as of economic benefit to the state, but the idea was rejected by the residents of that area because of their attachment and love for it. Although the government can compensate them, they insisted on not leaving it.

The (Yiti) project: The government also worked hard and spent a lot of money on planning to implement this project, but the fishers of that area rejected the idea because this project might pile up their trade and make them lose. Another challenge facing the government is providing balanced infrastructure for residential areas remarkably close to the industrial area where workers live. Perhaps mixing of one group from one community with another may cause anxiety and crimes. The Oman-based sustainable city Yiti seeks to establish itself as the biggest operational community and first climate-neutral city before 2040. The sustainable objectives centre on lowering emissions for each resident, along with clean energy implementation, waste management, and food sustainability [15]

Ahmed Al Shebli: The government does not face major challenges in implementing zoning due to the availability of resources and proper planning. However, some aspects are considered to achieve the best results, such as: Current economic activity requires the government to maintain flexible legal frameworks. The fair distribution of land must be achieved to stop price surges and monopolies from forming. The government should improve access to facilities and services to create integration between residential zones and commercial and industrial developments.

Qasim Al Harrasi: There was no previous centralization, there was no clarity about the role of each of these cities. Planning was previously random. The role of the ministry currently is to organize these slums, and the planning chaos that occurred previously. This is a major challenge to address these slums. The main challenge facing the state currently is "how development can be in the place designated for it", for example, development in ports: how to make Sohar Port have its own development that is different from the development of the port in Muscat, as well as the development of the port in Sur and vice versa.

For example, Sur is a coastal tourist area, so it must focus on the hotel aspect and the natural and environmental aspect because it has areas rich in the environment and nature. It also has its own gas port. As for Muscat, it has history and civilization and is the capital in itself due to the high density compared to the rest of the regions, so it must be preserved in terms of interest in its ports and coast so that it serves its nature, without delving into the industrial and logistical aspect as is the case in Sohar Port.

As for Sohar, it has the largest port in Oman that attracts logistical movement and large investing companies. It also has unique metal factories. Making each region have its own development is a somewhat big challenge because Muscat needs to be a comprehensive region with its developments in the industrial, commercial and residential fields, but if the industrial field is delved into and becomes like Sohar here, it will create a problem in Sohar Port as it may lose its investors. We must also focus on the Sur region so that we do not make all our focus be on Muscat's interests, because Sur enjoys the traditional coastal tourism aspect of sailing ship building and others.

Nouf Al Gharibi: One of the challenges facing the urban planning system currently is the lack of clarity in some of the laws included in the zoning and regulating laws according to the planning prepared for it. For example, there was a period when an investor wanted to work on a project in Muscat, Muttrah, and the project name stated (MATRAH HIGHETS). This investor wanted to know what the limit was for the number of floors allowed for each building, but unfortunately there are no clear laws and standards for the number of floors allowed so far. The question here is why are high-rise buildings only allowed in Al Khuwair Downtown, Ruwi, and Ghala, instead of there being clear standards for heights for each region in Oman?

3. Third question emphasizes how have property values changed because of land-use planning in Oman as the country develops quickly in both urban and industrial areas? The purpose of this question is to gather insights into the real-world effects of land-use planning on property markets in Oman.

Hamad Al Habsi and Ahmed Khamis: Areas witnessing urban development: Sohar may not witness effective urban development as Muscat does, while the industrial area is witnessing remarkable development.

The land use plans that the government has addressed have led to a significant increase in land values in urban areas much more than rural areas in the event of high demand for the area with all services such as infrastructure, schools, hospitals, universities, etc.

Duqm: Duqm is currently witnessing remarkable development in the vehicle industry such as school buses that enhance economic growth. The Duqm area may witness over time an increase in land values that will allow investors

to conduct the necessary projects for development in that area. This industrial development is an exceptionally large development and reflects positively on the state and on the role of land use and how this area is divided so that it has become a focus for investors.

Hussain Al Lawati: Land use plans have affected property value trends, such that Greater Muscat, which is now considered a part of Barka, agricultural lands have become residential and commercial, which has led to an increase in property values. These areas are the areas that have been affected by sea salinity, which are in the north, while those in the south that are not affected by salinity are the ones that have been set boundaries not to be converted into residential or commercial.

Ahmed Al Shebli: The Sultan Haitham City project's development has driven up surrounding land values because this region faces substantial upcoming urban expansion. The vast nature of Oman's geography spanning thousands of kilometres enables citizens to find affordable land of their choice regardless of increased property values. Developed urban properties typically cost more than rural or undeveloped land because urban residents benefit from location advantages so they must accept the associated higher pricing.

Qasim Al Harrasi: In my experience in Muscat, there was a developmental lapse, as Muscat was considered the fastest city in the world in terms of horizontal urban development, but unfortunately negatively. The beginning of this development began in the Wilayat of Muscat and Muttrah until it currently reaches Barka and Bidbid and Al Amerat near the Al Qurayyat area. Muscat Governorate witnessed a terrible urban development and expansion. This rapid development negatively led to Muscat losing many areas to provide land for citizens. Because the previous approach was to provide land for every citizen, without considering the components of each area. It was possible to go vertically and solve the current problem, which is the lack of control over the horizontal urban sprawl and the inability to provide land for every citizen as previously planned. This led to the distribution of urban density, dispersion in the services provided to citizens such as electricity, water, and roads, which led to a waste of money and water in an uncontrollable way. Therefore, this structural plan was found to organize this process again. The existing urban strategy now has a significant role in directing this growth and returning it to its proper place and true role.

Nouf Al Gharibi: The metro that will be built in the coming stages and which extends for about 55 km starts from the Wilayat of Seeb to the Ruwi area. The price of the lands that will be on the corridor of this metro is going to be expensive compared to the rest of the areas because the lands on the metro corridor will be invested so that they will be ((mixed use building), which contributes to urbanization and urbanization on the 55 km corridor in a big way, and this attracts investors to this area.

4. The fourth question recommended strategies that would help minimize the unfavorable side effects (such as pollution and traffic congestion) of industrial planning on nearby residential and commercial real estate values. The question aims to discover methods that will integrate industrial growth with community health and stable real estate market values.

Hamad Al Habsi and Ahmed Khamis: Completely isolating the industrial area from the residential area. As we see, Occidental Petroleum Company has implemented an industrial project near the residential area, but at the same time, it has created green spaces at large distances, and this is a very positive thing compared to other companies that may implement their industrial projects without considering the consequences that may cause environmental and human health destruction. In line with the strategic plan for 2040, we hope to see a noticeable development in the industrial area in Sohar, which is witnessing population congestion, by reducing toxic emissions into the atmosphere.

Hussain Al Lawati: (Master Plan) Working on this strategy will create excellent organizations for the region, and as is now noted, this strategy has begun to be used in land planning and division in Greater Muscat, Greater Sohar, Nizwa, Dhofar, and the Wilayat of Sur. Each city must contain a clear (Master Plan) that benefits the citizen and the country. "Master plans that are designed and conceptualized as a comprehensive strategy and integrated with different aspects of urban development can play a key role in enforcing sustainable urban development for the city" [16]

Ahmed Al Shebli:

1. Update laws and legislation:

The government must create flexible laws that facilitate investment procedures. The infrastructure supporting sustainable urban planning requires stronger development. Geographic information systems technologies and artificial intelligence systems should be used in land planning management processes.

2. Achieving sustainable development:

The project should support both smart city development and the creation of green spaces. The support of integrated housing projects enables housing complexes that unite residential properties with service centres and commercial spaces. A modern transportation system should be developed to assist land resource optimization.

3. The system should maintain equal values throughout the real estate sector:

A set of policies should stop unreasonable price hikes in fast-developing areas where rapid development occurs. The government should establish facilities that enable citizens to obtain land at reasonable prices through its housing construction initiatives.

Qasim Al Harrasi: The first strategy adopted in the Muscat Master Plan and an order from His Majesty is to make Muscat green. This includes increasing the green area and increasing the per capita share of public spaces, increasing parks, exploiting valleys to create gardens, and exploiting beaches for optimal public use. Also, one of the strategies recommended to work on is to move towards using public transportation such as feeder buses of various types, the metro for rapid transportation, and electric cars to reduce the use of petrol-powered cars so that the percentage of carbon dioxide emissions is much lower than in previous years. The percentage of public transportation use in Muscat will reach approximately 25% in 2040.

Nouf Al Gharibi: The recommended strategy now is for the worker to be close to his workplace. But at the same time, he should be far from the source of pollution resulting from factories (High industrial) that requires to work hardly in applying the Master Plan strategy.

5. The fifth question established that both zoning regulations and land-use planning systems in Oman require analysis for integration into Vision 2040 targets about sustainable development and equitable property worth distribution. The goal of this question focuses on linking discussion points to Oman's strategic vision through the identification of ways to improve current policies.

Hamad Al Habsi and Ahmed Khamis: Usually, organizing or re-adjusting the division of residential areas to be consistent with the infrastructure standards of the Sultanate.

We also see that tourism in Oman is low compared to neighbouring countries, and despite that, Oman has a traditional sense that is prevalent in most areas of the Sultanate, such as Nizwa and Muttrah, most notably the Wilayat of Sur. The thing that needs to be improved within the division of areas is to do something unique that may attract tourists, especially in the Wilayat of Sur because it is famous for the manufacture of traditional sailing ships, and this is considered a stimulating heritage facade for tourists. In improving such heritage areas, large commercial centres and cities and entertainment cities with a heritage character are created to contribute to harmony with the heritage aspect present in these states.

The Sultanate is also currently witnessing an era of urban development, such as the city of Sultan Haitham. Such cities may create economic growth in the country, which contributes to facilitating the development of laws for dividing areas and using land in this area in which this city is built. If work is done on the rest of the states that are witnessing urban development such as Sohar and Nizwa, this will constitute a great era of economic growth that contributes to improving the effective use of land and investment in those areas. As we know, the largest shopping centres in the Sultanate are Mall of Oman and Muscat Mall. The positive touch in Mall of Oman is "Snow Oman", creating a unique experience for the Omani cultural character whose areas are characterized by hot weather. Such excellent ideas that create excellent uniqueness should be in every state that has a heritage character.

Hussain Al Lawati: Activating the (Master plan)

Clear laws must be put in place for each (zone) and its uses so that this (zone) is compatible with the life that is managed around it. For example, issuing laws for free zones that are free of taxes, and setting laws and policies for areas where expatriate workers live. These laws and others may preserve the social structure and achieve security in these areas. It is preferable for each area that can be developed to have its own (code) so that its completion can be speedy, and its shortcomings and future needs can be identified.

Ahmed Al Shebli:

1. Organize the distribution of industrial and residential areas in a balanced manner; Appropriate distances are determined between industrial and residential areas, so that they are not too far away to cause hardship to citizens, and not too close to affect the quality of life due to pollution or noise. Industrial areas should be distributed among the different governorates so that all the pressure is not on a specific governorate, which facilitates the management of the resources and infrastructure of these areas.
2. Reducing environmental impacts on neighbouring areas; There are some light industrial activities that may not be compatible with the nature of some areas, which may cause environmental or engineering damage. Therefore, any industrial project is evaluated to ensure that it is compatible with the nature of the area in terms of infrastructure and urban planning. Strict environmental standards are imposed on industrial areas to reduce emissions and negative impacts on nearby residential areas.
3. Finding flexible solutions that achieve balance; If industrial areas are moved too far, this will affect citizens in terms of increased transportation costs and increased hardship.

Qasim Al Harrasi: The Master Plan is currently the best solution in Muscat to organize and divide industrial, residential, and commercial areas until it reaches the level of competition with other countries and reaches the global title of “the smart and human-friendly capital.” This urban planning targets only humans by being friendly to them and not to inanimate objects such as cars and smart development that supports itself.

Nouf Al Gharibi: The zoning regulations and land use planning policies can be modified to support the vision 2040 by starting work on (Planning Application and Planning Law). The strategy of Planning Application is like Master Plan, and the planning Law has a team working on it based on certain regulations from government.

The Ministry is now solving the random planning that is currently taking place in most areas. The Planning Law is at the end of the road, awaiting approval from the Minister of Housing so that it can begin improving and amending some regulations in most of the Sultanate’s governorates. A global consultant made these requirements so that they are in line with the biology of the land in the country and each region and the current situation as well.

INTERVIEWEES SUGGESTION

In this section, the interviewees added some suggestions and problems that, if modified and worked on, might add a unique and positive character to the achievement of Vision 2040.

Hamad Al Habsi and Ahmed Khamis mentioned that the isolation that countries have done regarding the isolation of border or security residential areas from foreign or Gulf ownership may be considered a positive point due to political security matters that the state is taking. What the government has done by imposing a law prohibiting the conversion of agricultural lands into residential or commercial areas for several areas has contributed to the growth and prosperity of green areas, which help in the environmental and economic balance of the country.

As for the Sultan Haitham City project, it is a phenomenally successful project as it targets investors to look at and develop this area, which also targets the class with a high income. Due to its strategic location and high services in it. And for those with an average income and less, the government has undertaken to build popular residential areas as well, in which all infrastructure services are available.

Also, the zoning systems have affected real estate values, as real estate values have risen significantly over previous years. With the progress in urban areas, these areas may witness a high population density of expatriate workers, which may pose a threat to the residents of that area, as we have heard recently, so this problem must be solved to achieve security and stability for citizens and residents.

Hussain Al Lawati clarified that perhaps transferring commercial contracts from the municipality to the investment platform in Oman was positive at the time, but the system was not working, or there was not enough experience to manage these contracts on this platform, which led to returning these commercial contracts to the old system, which is the municipality. Therefore, any system that is to be implemented should first be evaluated and used before starting to work on it because such an obstacle causes disruption instead of improvement.

Ahmed Al Shebli as Director of the Department of Laws and Legislation at the Ministry of Housing, I believe that regulating zoning and urban planning are essential elements in achieving sustainable development in Oman. Therefore, constantly updating laws, involving the private sector, and promoting environmental and technological sustainability will ensure a more balanced future and achieve Vision 2040. I confirm that urban development in Oman is going to achieve an excellent balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and the well-being of citizens by applying advanced regulations of zoning.

Qasim Al Harrasi and Nouf Al Gharibi: Mentioned that the foreign ownership law must be amended and re-studied in a way that benefits the citizens and the country. If ownership is found and ownership is facilitated, even by raising the market value by setting conditions, controls, and laws that serve the interests of the citizen and the country, this allows the expatriate and foreigner to easily work and move around the country. One of the controls and laws for foreign ownership, for example, is that all investments of this foreign owner be inside the country in a way that raises the market value and benefits the continuity of the money spent inside the country and not the migration of money as most unskilled expatriate workers do. This depresses the citizen as he is unable to open a large project due to the economic recession, the main cause of which is the migration of money abroad. The return of the foreign ownership law with certain controls, conditions and laws leads to the economic recovery of the country, as this foreigner will pay the monthly bills and also his monthly purchase of food and meals as well as repairs and also develops coexistence between neighbours, but preventing it may stagnate these things that are supposed to be done by the foreigner and reduce the economic value of the country and slow down coexistence between the community because he will simply rent a villa or apartment so that he pays the agreed upon amount of rent to the owner of this apartment for the agreed period

CASE STUDY

As mentioned by real estate expert Hamad Al Habsi, this project entailed an extensive case study of the area, which was previously a remote area of urbanization and green living. As a case study of an exemplary collaboration between Muscat Municipality and Occidental Oman to develop the Green Walkway in South Al Maabela, Seeb, the Green Walkway serves to justify the positive implication of the residential area development on the property values of Muscat, Oman. In May 2021, the Muscat Municipality and Occidental Oman signed a memorandum of cooperation to formulate a 152,400 square meter linear park in South Al Maabela, Seeb. The project aimed to offer sustainable services to the local community for a healthy lifestyle and better living. The 3.4-kilometer walkway, bicycle paths, children's play areas, outdoor fitness equipment, green landscaping, cafés, and restrooms are some of the facilities in the park [17], [18], and [19].



Figure 5: Green Walkway Project in South Al Maabelah, Seeb [18] and [19]

Positive Impacts on Property Values:

According to [20], [18], and [19].

- 1. Enhanced Infrastructure and Amenities:** The built infrastructure and recreational facilities enhanced by the development project made the location more appealing to potential residents and investors. The combination of real estate improvements drives property market demand, which results in upward property value trends.
- 2. Improved Community Well-being:** The park achieves community wellness by creating locations for physical exercise and social bonding, which bring about improved well-being. A healthier community engaged in social interactions creates an area with greater market value through property valuations.
- 3. Aesthetic and Environmental Benefits:** The landscape features in the neighborhood include green spaces that improve the general ambiance of the area. Furthermore, green areas contribute to better air quality and offer the benefits of the environment in urban residential settings, which are becoming more important.

Urban development requires public-private partnerships to achieve their implementation goals successfully. According to Stephen L. Lover, who leads Occidental Oman as President and General Manager, the project exemplifies current development standards for environmentally friendly urban development. The sustainable facilities Muscat Municipality builds support the municipal effort to create a superior quality living environment throughout Muscat. The Green Walkway project presents a qualitative urban addition to Muscat that benefits diverse population sectors through its sustainable and recreational features and wellness promotion elements. Property values improved when South Al Maabela received the Green Walkway recreational development project, combined

with green spaces at strategic locations for residential growth. The implementation of these initiatives creates both functional neighborhood improvements and strengthens regional social-economic growth.

The Green Walkway project can be relevance to Zoning Regulations and Land Use Planning in certain ways:

- 1. Land use Transformation:** Planners transformed unused land into the public Green Walkway through redevelopment. The area underwent this transformation because officials made usage decisions to improve the quality of urban living. Zoning regulations function effectively through such initiatives, which develop community-focused projects that improve the real estate value of adjacent properties.
- 2. Regulatory Framework:** The project follows current standards of land management practice in Oman. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, through Ministerial Decision 220/2023, issued the Governance Regulation of Land Planning Controls to establish optimized planning procedures and sustainable urban development. These legal foundations from regulations provide support to the Green Walkway, which ensures beneficial outcomes for both city environments and real estate assessments [21].
- 3. Impact on Property Values:** However, the introduction of well-planned public amenities, such as the Green Walkway, can help to create a demand for a property nearer to it, which means its market value will increase. Specifically, this case shows how proper land use planning and zoning regulations lead to environments that appeal to residents and investors, which help to improve property values.

Previous studies have demonstrated that the presence of green spaces within urban environments can enhance sustainable development and has a property value effect. For example, the research on housing typologies and land management in Muscat reveals the need for proper planning in the making of a desirable living environment [22]. The Green Walkway project is a case study in the real-life effects zoning regulations and land-use planning have on property values in Oman. It shows the consequences of planning decisions in urban strategic planning and how to promote the sustainable development of urban areas as well as to keep the high economic value of urban areas. Residents of Sohar can access essential facilities within walking distance of less than five minutes using the Smart City master plan [23]. Adding a Green Walkway to this plan improves neighborhood connectivity and makes green spaces accessible to residents for better health benefits. The Structure Plan in Sur specifically focuses on sustainable development together with cultural preservation [24]. A Green Walkway implementation would help realize these plans because it delivers recreational areas that both respect cultural heritage and natural ecosystems.

DISCUSSION

Two key points where all the interviewees could agree would benefit Oman concerned (1) separating industrial districts from residential neighbourhoods for protecting property value and health and (2) the need for robust infrastructure developments in new cities like Sultan Haitham City and Hay Al Naseem, which boost real estate value while aiding lower-income citizens. The participants disagreed about two key points: first, they differed on the extent of challenges facing Oman in zoning enforcement, where Ahmed Al Shebli saw no significant obstacles while Hussain Al Lawati noted serious compensation problems; second, the interviewees varied in their assessment of residential and commercial conversions of mixed-use properties regarding their economic value. Nouf Al Gharibi proposed the adoption of the "15-minute city" model alongside Soft Mobility Systems as solutions for modern zoning development that incorporate climate-friendly principles. The author discusses the impact of zoning and land use on real estate values in Oman, focusing on foreign ownership. Experts Hamad Al Habsi and Hussein Al Lawati disagreed on the ban on foreign ownership. Still, the author believes that prohibiting foreign ownership could negatively affect the country's economy and real estate value over time. Foreign investors help build better business opportunities and encourage people to work harder toward an improved economy. When money goes abroad instead of staying inside the country, it reduces economic activity. The author suggests that a system allowing foreign ownership must be compatible with the country's environmental character and suit the country's conditions, ensuring that foreign ownership conditions are different from those of a citizen and, at the same time, suitably reflecting the interests of foreigners. The paper conducts a critical study of zoning laws together with land-use planning effects on property

values across Muscat, Sohar, and Sur while combining mixed-mode methodology, such as literature review, interview evidence, and legal documents, with case studies that support Oman Vision 2040 goals through proposed zoning system revisions for sustainable balanced urban growth.

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