

THE JORDAN TIMES

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Mastering the master plan

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The Greater Amman Municipality has just announced the fourth phase of the Amman Master Plan that was launched in June of 2006. The aim of the master plan is to “guide” the unprecedented growth of the capital city and attain a sustainable expansion process.

The reason is obvious: Amman’s area is fast expanding. From the 700 square kilometres it covered in 2006, it is projected to spread over 1,700 square kilometres by the year 2025. In the process, the population of the capital is expected to increase from 2.2 million in 2006 to over 6 million by the 2025.

This is indeed a phenomenal growth that will prove difficult to manage and control, notwithstanding the master plan. Knowing that an additional 1.2 million housing units will be needed over the next 19 years already gives a feel of how daunting the task ahead is.

While appreciating what GAM is coping with and its determination to execute the master plan come what may, there is a concern that such endeavour is simply too much for one municipality.

Looking around at other mega-cities across the globe, it can be noted that the trend is to govern such metropolises not by one municipality but rather by several complementary administrations.

As Amman starts expanding, instead of having GAM grow with it endlessly, stretching out too thin and out of central control, maybe authorities can start considering setting up satellite municipalities to manage this rapid growth.

That is how London, New York, Paris, Los Angeles, Chicago, Montreal, Toronto, to name some, are being administered.

One can deservedly praise and admire GAM’s achievements, but there will come a time when it will have to branch out, enabling similar administrative entities to run the districts sprawling in the greater Amman area.

True, having all Amman affairs dealt with under one roof can ensure more coordination in steering the city’s growth. But there will come a point when diminished returns will frustrate the ultimate objective of making Amman’s expansion manageable by a central administration.

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