

DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE SYSTEM IN METROPOLITAN LAGOS

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Abstract

Livability in cities is enhanced by the availability of basic social amenities including planned recreational open spaces. Public open spaces system is a major yardstick used in measuring environmental success of cities. At the 2001 United Nation's estimated population of 12,100,000 people in metropolitan Lagos, the ratio of planned open spaces to the population is 81,000 people per hectare. In comparison, the international average is 600 people per hectare. Past Lagos State Governments failed to recognize the role of parks in enhancing the quality of urban life. The government's indifference and the informal role of various communities in meeting the recreational needs of the people, especially the youths, call for a local agenda. This paper explores the application of developmental strategy that could lead to sustainable public park system in metropolitan Lagos.

Keywords: Livability, Urban aesthetics, Urban Open Spaces, Strategy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 1996 Habitat II global agenda focused on improving the quality of life in human settlements. Livability in cities is enhanced by the availability of social amenities including planned open spaces. Urban aesthetics, visual order and cultural characters are reflected in these spaces. The ability of such spaces to express community feelings distinguishes them as important factor for measuring quality of urban life. Planned open spaces are outdoor libraries to read the people, feel the community and identify the socio cultural values of city people.

They include private, rear, side and front yards; right of ways; parks, pocket parks, parkways, plazas; outdoor recreational centers; and urban wilds. When these planned spaces are physically or visually connected a ring of city open space system is developed. It is the goal of an urban designer to evolve a well-coordinated open space system that responds to the social, political, economic and physical needs of the city. This gives credence to city open space system as important structural element beside urban nodes, activity corridors and urban edge. (Cape Metropolitan Council 1996)

On a metropolitan scale, open space system form the hub of natural resources that enhances social life, provides recreational needs, promotes environmental consciousness and protects the city's ecozone biodiversity. They represent essential precondition for climatic and hydrological stabilization in human settlements. This paper evaluates metropolitan Lagos Open Space System and explores necessary developmental strategy for its execution. For the purpose of the paper public open spaces and public parks will be inter changeably used.

2.0 URBAN OPEN SPACES PLANNING CONCEPT

The evolutionary trend of western city development attached much importance to the provision of open spaces in human settlements. From medieval agora to renaissance city squares and baroque avenues each civilization evolved urban open space system in response to the prevailing socio cultural needs. One of the dominant issues in formal city planning is planning for beauty, which is rooted in urban open spaces development. A

classical example is the City Park Movement made popular by 1865 Fredrick Law Olstead design of city of New York Central Park. (Mumford 1961) The City Park Movement was conceived as an environmental solution to the decadence and social ill of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries industrial revolution characterized by urban congestion, depressed slums, pollution and embarrassing plagues. The concept introduced nature to the crowded cities and sub urban township of America. Planned open spaces and natural recreational areas were conceived as escape valves for urban dwellers in search of relief from the social, physical and psychological oppression of the vices of industrial centres.

While the city park movement continued to sharpen the form of American cities, Ebenezer Howard in 1902 introduced the “Garden City Concept” in England on the same philosophy of living with nature (Gallion et la 1980). Conceived on a city scale, the proposed nature oriented human settlements were to be equipped with sufficient number of public parks, private gardens and physically defined by green belts as a two dimensional moat that keep man and nature in perfect harmony. The aim of Garden City Concept was to deal with the formative forces of industrial revolution. As a solution to the prevailing environmental shortcomings typical of industrial Europe of the nineteenth century, the city was planned to be related to ecological zones for natural aesthetics and environmental cleanliness meant to enhance the health of urban dwellers.

The two concepts, City Park and Garden City Movement, globally influenced urban renewal programmes and new town development programmes of the twentieth century inspite of the advance technological breakthrough and the foundation for the forthcoming information technology dispensation. New town development and urban renewal projects are conceived to accommodate public open spaces based on demographic parameters. The population per planned open spaces depends on a number of factors including the city’s landscape, culture, socio economic development and political inclination. While the 1985 ratio of planned open space per population in Munich Germany was 300 people per planned hectare, it was 2,000 people/hectare in Mexico City (Contreras 1985).

The influence of the two concepts on Nigerian cities is minimal probably due to commercial goal of colonial governance and the late drafting of natural open space development policy. The earliest influence of “City Park Movement” was the establishment of plant nursery in 1886 at the site of Old Debtors Prison at Kokomaiko by Governor Alfred Moloney. The objective for the experimental growth of selected cash crops including Cocoa and Coffee was to search for alternative sources that will meet the demand for non-alcoholic beverages food industry in Europe. The nearest to national open space development concept is as documented in the cultural policy for Nigeria (Aig-Imokhuede 1991). The concept is rooted in the philosophy that the nation’s urban open spaces should display the cultural elements of Nigerian nationhood. Section 9.7 (Environmental Planning) of the policy summarized the philosophy as follows: that “the State shall encourage environmental design that promote Nigerian values and the aspiration of the people in a manner compatible with environmental aesthetics”. The state is equally encouraged to plan, preserve and manage open spaces and recreational facilities in any community. The term state refers to the geographical influence of the three-tier government viz Federal, State and Local Government Councils.

3.0 STUDY AREA – METROPOLITAN LAGOS

Metropolitan Lagos occupies the heart of the state with Atlantic seaboard as the southern boundary. The 30 kilometers broad southern base along the Bight of Benin tappers northward and terminates at Agege at a distance of about 26 Kilometers. The remaining portion is Ikorodu urban center detached by Ogun and Owuru rivers flood plain. The study area is made up of eleven Local Government Councils including Lagos Island, Eti Osa, Lagos Mainland, Surulere, Ajeromi, Ikeja, Somolu, Kosofe, Mushin, Isolo-Oshodi and Ikorodu.

Metropolitan Lagos is the most urbanized area of the nation with an average of 9% population growth rate (Lagos State Government Diary 1992). The presence of over 60% Nigeria’s industrial and commercial establishments, International sea and airport, 70% of the nation’s banking institutions, 90% of foreign trade and corporate headquarters located within the geographical area attracts migrants from other parts of Nigeria. In the year

2001 United Nations estimated a population of 13,400,000 for Lagos State. 90% (12,100,000) of this is concentrated in the metropolis giving an average 500 people per hectare population density.

4.0 METHODOLOGY.

The goal of this paper is to identify the reasons for the dearth of open spaces in metropolitan Lagos and to proffer a developmental solution. The research demands an understanding of history of open spaces development since 1900, previous developmental pattern and strategy, hectareage of planned recreational spaces per unit of the population, existing implementation mechanism, political influences and the physical state of the metropolis. This research relied on secondary planning information that relate to urban open spaces planning in the last 100 years, and physical observation of the various Local Government Councils that make up the metropolis.

Urban Open Spaces in Metropolitan Lagos Historic Overview Metropolitan Lagos is a cluster of many townships with indigenous core (Kadiri 1998). With the exception of European Quarters (now known as Government Reservation Areas) various conglomerates of cities and townships that make up the metropolis grew without a plan. The neglect of urban recreational spaces development is historical. Since the 1887 2.4 hectares Lagos Botanical Station at Iddo give way to the erection of Iddo Railway terminal in 1902, public recreational spaces had always been given minimal attention (Falade 1988). The developmental pattern adhered strictly to the inherited colonial pattern namely: high emphasis on private commercial open spaces, private institutional recreational centers and few public open spaces restricted to the European quarters. There has never been a defined public open space system in the metropolis.

In 1976, 467 hectares urban land was identified as recreation areas in the city (Wilbur Smith Associates 1980). Bulk of these 467 hectares fall within the private commercial group including Lagos Island Club, Race Course, Yoruba Tennis Club, Obalende Polo Club, Ikoyi Club 38, Railway Club 1919, Ikeja Country Club, Isheri Horse Bridle Lagos Yatch Club, Luna Amusement Park and Biney Zoo. Identified private institutional open

spaces include Nigeria Police, Navy, Air force and Army play fields and Missionary schools play fields, which are not opened to the general public.

Inadequacy of public recreation open spaces in Lagos State was a testimony to the little attention successive governments gave to this urban sector. The few public spaces including Ikoyi Park, Bar Beach, and Tarqua Bay Beach covered a total area of 104 hectares. This was 2% of the 1976 496 hectares identified for leisure and recreation. The ratio was one hectare per 40,000 of the state population where as international average is one hectare per 600 of the population. The shortcoming portrays the inhabitants of the city as having no culture of recreation. This is contrary to the 1997 Messers Arbitrage Consulting Group Study on socio-economic problems of Lagos State including the state of recreation and recreational facilities. A base line study of Oshodi/Isolo Local Government revealed the lack of public recreational facilities forcing the residents especially children and adolescents to convert any available space including unbuilt residential plots, streets and school sports ground for active leisure activities. The result typified the scenario in all the Local Government Councils.

A further baseline study of Lagos Island Local Government area high lighted the revolving problems of immense pressure on the very few public spaces. The high population growth rate in the last 50 years put a demand on any land that is not budgeted for housing. The dual effect of infrastructural degradation and poor maintenance culture encourage encroachment on such land areas including recreational grounds. Today Evans square - Ebute Metta, Onikan open space, Ajele playground and Orija lane playground Ikeja are in a state of total disrepair. These four facilities were first built in 1978 and improved upon by the mid eighties. Ikoyi Park was the premier public park in Nigeria inherited from the colonial masters. By the early eighties Ikoyi Park had been subdivided into residential plots now called Park View estate. Coastal erosion have completely washed off bar beach. The same fate befell the remains of Kuramo Waters youth campground at Victoria Island and racecourse. Biney zoo - a private initiative and Love Garden Pleasure Park at the Lagos Island have all ceased to exist.

The fact is that public open spaces and recreational facilities development had not improved from the level it was in 1976 inspite of the over 100% increase in the metropolitan population. The growth have actually been static in the last 32 years. (Wilbur Smith Associates 1980). An interesting observation is that all the private commercial and private institutional recreational spaces including Ikoyi golf club, Ikeja country club and Obalende Polo ground are well kept and continue to enjoy patronage. So much lip service had been paid to the development of public park system since 1960. In 1985 Lagos State Parks Commission was introduced and backed up with legislation referred to as Lagos State Parks Commission edict (Lagos State Government 1985). It was saddled with the responsibility of acquiring land, developing parks and recreational facilities. This corporate body was not constituted and never handled a single open space. In 1987 the Lagos State Ministry of Youths, Sports and Social Development was empowered to write a metropolitan policy on the development of public open spaces. The submitted write up was not implemented.

In the year 2000, the Executive Governor of Lagos State constituted another committee called Lagos State Landscaping and Beautification Committee, under the Chairmanship of the State Commissioner of Agriculture and Cooperative. The mandate was to find a solution to the recreational and urban aesthetic failures of the past. The Committee's report emphasized the need for a state agency in the mode of 1985 Lagos State Park Commission. A similar all embracing corporation to be called Lagos State Parks and Amenities Development Authority was recommended to midwife production of Metropolitan Open Spaces Master Plan. The report of the committee is yet to be discussed by both the executive and State House of Assembly. The private participation initiative of the present Lagos State administration was extended to the development of parklets and wood lots in the metropolis in year 2001. The State Ministry of Environment and Physical Development reached out to corporate bodies and organized private sectors soliciting for financial help to develop selected spaces and presidential routes that will enhance the aesthetics of the state.

Street trees constitute the connecting elements of city green resources. The situation of street trees programme did not differ from that of the public open spaces. The metropolis had no history of streetscape development. The closest was the 1988 Department of Forest introduction of urban forestry as manifested by the row of Azadirachta indica and Delomix reiga on the Secretariat Road and upper Awolowo street respectively. There was a renewed interest in urban aesthetics championed by Lagos Horticultural Society in 1988. The interest triggered the involvement of organized private sectors in landscape improvement of some streets, traffic inter changes (loops), round-about and the median of major highways. Prominent is the 1998 Non Governmental Organisation palm project on the Bank Anthony way median African International Bank garden on Alakija loop Victoria Island. The quality and quantity of executed jobs is yet to alter the blighted perception of Lagos open spaces.

Metropolitan Lagos Open Space System: 2002 Reality. The recommendation of Lagos State Regional Plan (Doxiades 1978) LSRP towards open spaces development must be commended. But the non-execution of 1985 Lagos State Parks Commission (LSPC) and the 1986 preference of Lagos State Ministry of Youths Sports and Social Development to draft open spaces policy, which is the second most important role of LSDC, worsen the already bad public parks situation. Less than 10% of the 72 hectares of open spaces identified for development by the Ministry in 1986 remained by 2002 (Ashiyanbi 2002 – interim). In comparison, the LSRP projected a hierarchy of 5292 hectares urban open spaces for the year 2000. This was in addition to the pre 1976, 467 hectares giving a total of 5759 hectares. Table 1 highlights the confirmed open spaces neglect by year 2002.

Table 1
Urban Open spaces Position in 2000

| <u>Item Description</u> | <u>LMMP 1976</u> | <u>LSRP Projection 2000</u> | <u>Existing 2002</u> |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Total Area coverage | 467 Ha. | 5759 Ha. | 513 Ha. |
| Private ownership | 363 Ha. | N.A. | 370 Ha |
| Public ownership | 104 Ha | 5758 Ha | 150 Ha |
| Population | 3,250,000 | 8,300,000 | 12,100,000 |
| Area/Population | 40,000 Pop/Ha. | 14,400 Pop/Ha | 81,000 Pop/Ha |

Source

1976: Lagos Metropolitan Master Plan (LMMP) – Wilbur Smith (1980)
2000: Lagos State Regional Plan (LSRP) – Messers Doxiades (1978)
2002: Lagos State Regional Plan Review J.A. Ashiyanbi Associates – interim (2002)

As shown in Table 1, the L.S.R.P. proposed one-hectare recreational area per 14,000 populations for the year 2000. This was meant to increase the number of public open spaces in Lagos State by 40% of the pre 1980 State of 40,000 populations per hectare. But the actual year 2002 one-hectare recreation area was for 81,000 people. The inference is that 81,000 Lagosians crowd in one hectare of planned open space by year 2002 whereas 40,000 did so in 1980. The international average for any human settlement is one hectare per 600 of the population. That is 600 people are expected to use planned, designed and managed one hectare of public park system. We can now appreciate the low quality of life in urban Lagos as expressed in the United Nations 2000 Human Development Index of .51. At the current year 2001 population of 12.1 million people, metropolitan Lagos needs to plan and build 24,200 hectares of recreational open spaces to be at par with other mega cities.

Parkways, avenue trees and landscape boulevards complete the network of any urban open space system. As stated earlier, only five kilometers of the 3,000 kilometers of streets networks in the metropolis are planted with trees. They include upper Awolowo way, Seven Up/Secretariat road and Bank Anthony way at Ikeja. At an average 20 meters spacing, the metropolis streets need be planted with about a million shade tree seedlings to ameliorate the hot and humid tropical climate.

5.0 DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGIEY

Developmental Philosophy: Accelerated population growth rate, none provision of annual statutory allocation and lack of political will constitute the foundation for the present situation. Since there is no open space component in the present metropolitan structure, the city government needs to set up a viable concept for public park system. It should be a concept that bears in mind the social, economic, cultural and political parameters of the metropolitan. The nineteenth century city park movement in America that gave birth to

the central parks of her cities “were the products of deeply held social and economic beliefs” (Heckscher 1977). Whereas the philosophy of European park movement in the 19th centuries was provision of urban amenities for the blue collars industrial workers (Morris 1979) America sees the parks movement as a vessel to sharpen the character of disillusioned immigrants.

Since the movement of the nation’s administrative capital to Abuja, Lagos has been suffering from identity crisis. Sudden denial of over 70 years Federal funding, seven years (1993 – 2000) of political agitation and subsequent social disturbances left the city famished. Ethnic militia gangs, armed robbery, juvenile delinquency, unemployment, high inflation rate and a large concentration of urban poor collectively degrade the psychic and physical environment of the metropolitan. There is need for a metropolitan open space system philosophy that will lift up the spirit of the city. It is a philosophy that respects the needs of indigenous Lagosians, that accommodates other city people, allow for cultural dynamism and protects the sporting needs of the youths that constitute over 60% of the population.

Developmental Foundation: the role of state government: It is often a political decision to embark on a city plan that allows for a well-ordered civic life (Cape Metropolitan Council 1996). Two of such decisions are the 1978 Lagos State Regional Plan and 1980 Metropolitan Master Plan. While the Messers Doxiades (1978) Regional Plan suggested a semi autonomous governmental agency to oversee open space system development on a regional scale, Messers Wilbur Smith’s Metropolitan Plan (1983) recommends the establishment of an operating agency in each Local Government Council. A State Agency in the mode of 1985 Lagos State Park commission will be an ideal starting point in the city’s public park development. The same body should also be established on the Local Government Level.

Natural drainage basin. Undeveloped buildable land is a scarce commodity in the metropolis. Realising the estimated 24,200 hectares will have to rely on the symbiotic relationship between recreation and natural areas. This was the goal of Wilbur Smith

(1980) that a “park system should be established which would provide for active and passive recreation at town level, a sports stadium as a part of district park supplemented by metropolitan or regional park designed to preserve natural flora in the immediate valleys of the river system as well as wetlands”. This should be extended to foreshores of the lagoons, creeks and rivers as waterfronts parks. As part of the long term proposal (projection for year 2000) a system of recreation area was to be established with one park of 10 hectares per Local Government Council and four-community centre/park of an average of 2 hectare in each district. Though the recommendations were not realized, the proposal on the remains of the flood plains is as relevant as when it was recommended 22 years ago.

Land Acquisition for Park System. The natural drainage ways and associated wetlands are the dominant features that have sharpened the wider Lagos urban area. The latest encroachment on these areas by land speculators and urban squatters must be checked to stop the final denial of the metropolis of open spaces network. This is the time for the State Government to enforce the provision in Town and Country Planning Act of 1946 to compulsorily acquire land for open spaces, cemeteries development and preservation of scenic landscapes that characterize the shoreline (Government of Nigeria 1946). An ideal acquisition programme involves taking all the borders of the different water bodies and enlarging them at convenient points for reclamation as sites for water front parks.

Urban Fringe. In Lagos State development is far ahead of planning activities (Kadiri 1998). Unplanned developmental activities continue to alter the metropolitan fringes. The depressed national economy encouraged fringe communities to sell landed properties giving room for the growth of slums. The suggested acquisition must extend to the fringes to acquire land as green belts serving as buffers that will contain the sprawl on one hand and delineate the urban edge on the other.

State Role – Summary. It is the initiative of the metropolitan Government (in this case State Government) to establish Metropolitan Open Space System. Such initiatives include:

- Establishment of a semi autonomous park agency that will midwife production of open space master plan and its execute on
- Formulation of goals, objectives and necessary policies.
- Acquisition of land for public parks and delineation of urban edge.
- At the metropolitan scale, the State Park Agency in collaboration with appropriate ministry and benefiting Local Government areas should undertake State road and official ceremonial tree programme.

Local Government Role: The 1999 Federal Republic of Nigeria constitution is explicit on the role of the third tier. The Local Government is charged with the responsibility of establishing cemeteries, public recreational facilities and parks. (Federal Government of Nigeria Constitution 1999). The suggested functions include:

- Establishment of Local Park Agency in the mode of State Park Agency.
- Initiates aesthetic improvement of local streets through street tree programme
- Determine choice of specific sites for public parks.
- Design, planning and execution of parks and recreational projects for the people
- Establishment of public participation mechanism as stated in the 1992. National Urban Development Policy.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.

The derelictic state of urban open spaces within the city of Lagos is a manifestation of the un-sustainable approach to planning adopted by the city fathers. It is apparent that the State government will need the input of the people to achieve the desired result that will place wider Lagos at par with other cities in this sector. It is a desirable environmental goal for this city to establish an efficient open space network. This goal need to accommodate community participatory mechanism that seek to benefit from purposeful symbiotic relationship between the state, local governments, organized private sector, traditional institution and the people in the various cities and township that make up the metropolis. Community participation frame work should be preceded by metropolitan open spaces master plan showing the proposed sites for park ways, parks and public

water front recreational facilities. Such sites must be legally acquired, reclaimed and defined for a specific community in a Local Government Area.

Lagos State Community Development (Advisory) Council. Community involvement in environmental management is not new in Lagos State. Resident associations or neighborhood groups form local initiatives to organize the disposal of domestic waste at the failure of government agencies. Cases of neighborhood road rehabilitation through similar group abound in the metropolis. The market association gathers every thursday morning in each of the Local Government area, to clean the market premises. Neighbourhood security in the last few years depends on the organisation of vigilante group by the concerned citizens. The potential of **environmental planning and management process** had been unduly neglected in most Lagos State policies inspite of a well-established statewide community development framework referred to as Lagos State Community Development (Advisory) Council (LSCDC 1999). LSCDC coordinates Community Development Committee at the Local Government level. At the grassroot is the Community Development Association (C.D.A.) that initiates most of the community improvement projects. A group of C.D.A. Constitute a “ward” which is the smallest political entity represented by a Counselor at the local assembly. Super imposing the metropolitan open spaces master plan on the political “Ward” Plan will highlight the area of influence. The metropolis and its Local government councils are already socially prepared for grass root mobilization.

Environmental Planning and Management Process (EPM) & Public opens space Development: Application of environmental planning and management approach to sustainable open space planning in the city will not only allow for community participation but will in addition enhance commitment to the development and maintenance of the city infrastructures. Each identified public park site within the metropolitan open space system will be subjected to the typical four stages of environmental planning and management process including *problem identification and awareness creation; environmental management strategies formulation; implementation*

of environmental action plan; and Institutionalization of the planning process (Wahab 1998)

Problem identification and awareness creation. It is an established fact that the metropolis is devoid of greenery. Two tasks need be accomplished in the first element of EPM, namely definition of stakeholders interested in open space development and awareness creation. The most prominent stakeholders are state and local government. Others are traditional institution, property owners, educational institutions, organised private sector, urban transportation services and market institution. The long-term strategy for the aesthetic improvement of metropolitan Lagos is hinged on transformation of the society's behaviour towards a decent cityscape (Carter 1985). There is an urgent need to enhance the perception of the people through a well-coordinated environmental education. This type of social engineering should emphasize the mental, social, recreational and cultural benefits of functional public parks and streetscapes.

Formulating Urban Open Spaces Management Strategies. This stage focused on the decision of relevant stakeholders to evolve feasible strategies to tackle the dearth of open spaces in the city. It is necessary at this stage to break the broad metropolitan open spaces system into manageable units such as nodal public open space and planned natural corridor. Parks of different hierarchy including district parks, neighbourhood school park, playgrounds, pocket parks and cemeteries, constitute nodal open spaces. Parkways and tree lined streets, avenues, boulevards, bicycle routes and central business districts promenades are addressed in the urban natural corridors. Each of these sub units requires the financial, professional and material resources of all the stakeholders to evolve a function strategy.

Formulating and Implementing Open Spaces Action Plan. The third phase is designed to itemize operational requirements for metropolitan open space system sub units and create specific framework to achieve them. It is necessary that the facilitating agency understand the detail of the metropolitan open space system sub units. Employing environmental planning and management process for the development of a neighborhood

park for example, require the following operations: land acquisition; land reclamation; consultancy works involving design and cost estimate; financial sourcing; construction options; administrative and maintenance mechanism; and integration to the central city system.

Institutionalizing Open Space Planning and Management One of the observed reasons for the planned public open space inadequacy is the absence of defined public park legacy. The activities of the forth and final step is meant to entrenched the culture of public recreational spaces in the planning process at metropolitan, city, township and neighborhood scale. It is necessary here to fully comprehend the nodal structural elements of the metropolis including the traditional core of the cities, the central business district, industrial estates, institutional core, new town, planned units development and the urban edge that serve as buffers. Open space as inherent city planning element require encompassing policy statements that respect every aspect of city sector and meets the socio economic needs of the people. There is a need for open space policy for traditional core areas, urban renewal, historic preservation, planned units developments, educational centres, scenic landscape, tourism and leisure services land use. Such policies will on the long term be adapted to environmental education curriculum as a social engineering tool at the grass root.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Suffice it to mention the place of pragmatic political decisions for the development of urban open space system as a means of naturalizing the built up environment (Gallion & Eisner 1980). Public parks system is often the political expression of the concerned metropolitan city rulers to respond to the socio- cultural needs of the electorates especially the lower economic class. Lagos has grown without adequate planning for too long. The emerging environmental failure needs quick intervention at the executive and legislative level. The task ahead is enormous and requires private and public cooperation. In the absence of metropolitan city authority the State Government should consider the following:

- Constitution of 1985 Lagos State Park Commission as the sole government agency in charge of urban parks, rural parks, recreation centers and related natural areas.
- Production of Metropolitan Open Space System Master Plan.
- Acquisition of land along the waterways foreshore and reclamation of selected section of various flood plains and wetland for parks and recreational purposes in the absence of buildable land area
- Provision of annual budget for public park system. Establish demonstrative standard public parks and open spaces of various hierarchy in Lagos State
- A clear definition of the role of Local Government in the sector as written in the constitution.
- Establish parks and recreational spaces legislation that will compel new developers at the wider Lagos to establish standard open spaces.
- Introduction of sidewalks, bicycle trail in urban Lagos to accommodate jogging and mass recreation.
- Liase with the various private schools with the possibility of establishing standard neighborhood school parks opened to the people after school hours.
- Agency in charge of development approval should remind environmental consultants in charge of planned units developments of urban park standards
- Provide modalities that will entrench environmental planning and management process in public open spaces development using the Lagos State Community Development (Advisory) Council. This will lay a foundation for a well-documented public participation in open spaces development.

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Citation:

Adejumo O.T. (2002). *Developmental Strategy for Sustainable Public Open Space System in Metropolitan Lagos.* Chapter in the Book: *The City in Nigeria: Perspectives, Issues, Challenges & Strategies.* Amole, D., Ajayi, A. and Okewole, A. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife. Nigeria. Vol I Pp 112-120.