

AVERT COSTLY AND PAINFUL DEMOLITIONS ON KANGUNDO ROAD

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Kangundo Road Corridor promoting business

I drove along Kangundo Road recently.....from Umoja to Kamulu. This road, which connects Nairobi to Tala and Kangundo, is a key transport corridor. It'll be even more so once tarmacked to connect to Machakos. While Mombasa and Thika Roads are in a class of their own in opening up businesses and enhancing property values, this too is a corridor to watch. Those who live in the sprawling Embakasi Ranching farm and Kamulu know just how fast property prices have gone up. But two aspects important to business struck me.

One, right from the Umoja junction all the way to Kamulu, one can hardly find a rest house picturesque enough with convenient parking, children play section and a variety of fresh food. The kind of place that would inclusively cater for children and adults! There just aren't any. What you find are the hard choices best suited to the Kenyan male where 'nyama choma' and alcoholic drinks flow. Children are a no no in all unless parents don't mind over-exposing them. Most are also unsuitable for ladies particularly owing to the kind of sitting and comfort areas available. It's like most were erected for some short-term quick buck from the guy who pops in for some quick 'nyama choma' over a drink and off he goes. But with the many families that have recently settled along this zone, all-inclusive hospitality outlets, some with decent overnight accommodation, have become necessary. Families will then be able to find places to spend their Saturday and Sunday afternoons without having to drive all the way to Thika Road and the City. Good opportunity here for aspiring industry entrepreneurs before property prices go burst.

Encroachments of road and power way leave reserves

The second aspect is most worrying. Nairobi City Planning Department, the Highways Authority and Kenya Power and Lighting Company must handle this expeditiously. It appears that the developments progressively coming up, particularly on the right hand side of the road just after Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital, are encroaching either on the road reserve or the high-voltage power way leaves or both. For the developments coming up right on the power way leaves, disaster is just waiting to happen and may. For the developments coming up on the road reserve, this is the first phase of what we all know. The structures will come up and tenants will move in for business or residence. They will then make these their homes for a while but come the time to expand this road, surveyors will move along it marking out offending structures. Bulldozers will then as usual move in and demolish them all. We shall then be in shock and anger about the associated human suffering.

The enforcement officers in the Highways Authority, Kenya Power and the Nairobi City Planning Department should therefore check this out and act on any offences early enough to avert any likely future material or human loss. As always, it is quite likely that those involved do so innocently and out of ignorance. Preventive action taken at this early moment will save the concerned agencies the public perception of callousness should they come later demolishing full blown businesses and residences which come up as they watch.

But one is at pains to reiterate the advise that developers must get surveyors to point out widths of road reserves, way leaves and perimeter boundaries to public facilities. We cannot continue losing high value properties to avoidable demolitions as happened next to JKIA and during the expansion of Thika Road a while back. We should therefore keep our developments clear of these reserves.

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