

THIKA ROAD AND BYPASSES LAND MARKET ATTRACT SUAVE CON AGENTS IN RUIRU

Posted on Aug 22, Posted by [Mwathane](#) Category [Land Purchase](#)

Ruiru experiencing a property price run

The land market in Ruiru has been stirred thanks to the construction of Thika Super Highway and the bypasses. The Eastern bypass connecting Ruiru to Embakasi in the South passes through vast sections of land prime for residential and commercial development. This bypass has sent land prices along it in a spin. The nearer the bypass, the higher the prices. The Northern bypass connecting Ruiru to Kahawa West and Thome to the West has had a similar effect on prices. Thika Road too has pushed up prices of land in the immediate hinterland of Ruiru particularly between Kenyatta University and Juja to near unaffordable levels. Again, the nearer the property lies to the Super Highway, the dearer the asking price. The Tatu City development to the North West of Ruiru is also expected to stir another price run of the surrounding properties. In sum, Ruiru is experiencing a high noon in property prices. This is a boon which property owners and the Municipal Council of Ruiru should exploit wisely for economic development and planning. But there is a problem that may have the exact opposite unless well and expeditiously addressed.

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Con land agents on the increase

Con property agents seem to have increased with the attractive prices. They roam large and free within Ruiru. They know the vacant plots in Ruiru and appear to run a well woven syndicate which will easily dupe buyers easily. Once they identify a vacant property, it is easy to prepare a false title by pretending to be the rightful owners. All they need is to get an Identity Card purporting to be the true owners. The ID card will reflect the right names of the owners as in the land registry but the photo on it will be the con agents. So both the title and the ID card will give the impression that the con agent is the legitimate owner while they aren't.

Disputes and court cases will undermine land market in Ruiru

The true owner may be far away in Kiambaa, Gatundu or Githunguri where the original share holders to Githunguri Ranch, which years back was subdivided into the many two, three, four and five acre parcels towards Embakasi and quarter and one eighth acre plots on the zone towards Kiambu reside. The con agents know that. And they are aware that unless a neighbour or resident of Ruiru forewarns a new buyer, they will never get to know the truth. Buyers will finalize a purchase and even develop. But the true owners, who know the positions of their plots quite well, show up with time. There is also a section where titles were allegedly erroneously issued within a road reserve. So for all practical purposes, such titles are bad. But some agents continue to use them to con unsuspecting buyers. For a while now, disputes and court cases are piling for property purchases around Ruiru. This will progressively dampen enthusiasm on the land market in Ruiru.

I have for instance tried investors obtain land for development within the zone with little luck. It has been very difficult to get the original owners. What's interesting is that most of these con agents are well known around Ruiru. Others are very well known by some officers in Thika

Lands office. But they continue to operate, hurt and destroy the land market. But the cartel can easily be neutered through the cooperation and joint efforts of the provincial administration, the local police, Ruiru Municipal Council (which collects rates to such properties), the management of Githunguri Ranching Company (or those with historical memory on the ownership) and the Thika Lands office which oversees the relevant registers. And unless this is quickly done, the opportunity heralded by the new developments around Ruiru will be lost and turn into a “security curse” that will long bother the provincial administration and the police as buyers seek revenge for lost money while original land owners sue and fight to retrieve their irregularly sold land.

What buyers may do

Meanwhile, buyer beware. To buy land within this Ruiru belt, please be patient and seek out a person very conversant with the original land ownership within Githunguri Ranch. In addition, one could try to seek neighbours who may have settled for long and enquire about the original owners. Some officers who have worked for long in the Municipal Council of Ruiru may also be able to point out some of the true plot owners. One would also be lucky to get to know an official of the previous land buying company to guide them. Then some of the senior officers in the Thika Lands office may be able to point out some of the plots to avoid. Some already have multiple court cases and should be strictly avoided. The District Survey office will be able to help in indicating which plots may have been affected by road reserves yet are regularly floated in the market for sale. Some of the officers in the Survey Office may also have helped some of the true land owners with subdivisions hence know them fairly well and can direct interested buyers.

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