

Identification of Suitable Lands for Economic Investment Projects in District Three of Mashhad Municipality

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mashhad, despite its widespread economic, cultural, and civil characteristics confronts with issues such as informal settlements, old texture and unbalanced development of the city. However, in terms of attracting investment in the public and private sector, significant measures have been taken. In the second term of the Council, the management of macroeconomic partnership was established in the city of Mashhad. In line with the policies and programs of the Council of Mashhad with the aim of attracting investment and undertaking various projects with the participation of public and private sectors in different areas of the municipality, this council was established. To date, two major exhibitions were organized in Mashhad municipality in 2010 and 2011. The unsuccessful results of these exhibitions with more than 300 investment projects in 2010 and 2011 coupled with weak implementation of 20 projects by Mashhad Municipality highlight the need for an appropriate method to identify themes and patterns for component investment projects. This study seeks to determine the priorities of investment in the District 3 of Mashhad Municipality. The study area consists of three municipalities of Mashhad in an area of 2597 hectares with a population of 322,018 people (with a population density of 123.9 people per ha) located in the northeast of Mashhad. Historically, this region was treated as a rural area and

therefore the texture of urban neighborhoods is highly disorganized. This region is characterized by important service facilities, several areas with urban, regional and trans-regional functions, high population growth and vast vacant lands in the urban context, which makes it important in various aspects. The approach to regional development is based on tourism development.

2. METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive - analytical research in which data are collected through document analysis and field work. This study is composed of three parts: 1- Description of AHP; 2- Description of the study area and spatial characteristics of investment and management in the region, and 3- The application of "AHP" model and GIS and ultimately determining the areas with potential for economic investment and tourism in the District 3 of Mashhad Municipality. The criteria for selection of priority areas include distance from the subway station, distance from tourist attractions, property, land use, distance from the railway, distance from the highway belt and distance from the shrine of Imam Reza.

3. DISCUSSION

In 2010, 24 investment projects were proposed in District 3 of Mashhad municipality by advisors of the detailed plan of the district municipality. The factors affecting the proposed investment opportunities in the region were the development

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plans approved by the local authority, development projects in progress, the prospects and model of development proposed by the drafter of detailed plan of the region, traffic reduction in the center of Mashhad, potential investor and a predilection to contribute to the local investment, increased per capita of services applications with regard to the physical expansion of the area and organization of disturbing jobs in the city. In 2010, the total investment in projects and job opportunities in the city of Mashhad amounted to 117,019,460 Rials, including the inflation rate, which was defined in 172 projects in thirteen Districts of Mashhad. The current model of investment in District 3, is project oriented and this process would not be able to aid local development. Thus, it seems that reconstruction and economic, social and environmental renovation of the region requires an independent project so that it can attract domestic and foreign investments in form of projects associated with the intended functions, based on an experts' view about the real potential of the area. To this end, multi-criteria analysis methods should be incorporated into planning. According to the integrated model used in the study area, 97 pieces of land with development potentials were identified. These lands cover a total area of 191 hectares.

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4. CONCLUSION

Finally, multiple layers were formed based on geographic information databases and AHP multi-criteria decision method in GIS software. The proper positioning of an investment project requires the inclusion of 5 indicators, such as key urban and tourism elements, the area of lands, land use, ownership and distance from stations as well as 15 sub-criteria. According to these criteria, 972 plots were identified out of which 66 plots in an area of 187 hectares were found to hold promising investment prospect. According to the results of the study, the following suggestions for the future development of District 3 of Mashhad are presented:

- Identifying appropriate locations for investment in marginalized areas of this district to eliminate physical and social problems and provide essential urban facilities.
- Identifying the lands with investment potentials based on all social, economic and physical criteria to be presented in the exhibition of investment opportunities in Mashhad.
- Determining the weight of appropriate locations for investment with the aim of increasing the added value of the area.

• **Keywords:** Prioritization, Multi-criteria decision-making, Investment, GIS, Mashhad

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