Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2025): 8.619 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 12 | Issue: 4 | April 2025 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

MAIN PROBLEMS OF URBANIZATION PROCESSES IN UZBEKISTAN AND WAYS TO SOLVE THEM

Zokirov Sayidfozil Sayidakbarovich,
Professor at the Department of "State and Corporate Strategy" National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek

ABSTRACT
In the article, This examines the challenges of urbanization in Uzbekistan, including inefficient governance, outdated infrastructure, and weak regulatory frameworks, and proposes strategic solutions. It emphasizes the need for long-term planning, institutional reforms, and smart city initiatives to enhance urban development. By integrating digital technologies, sustainable policies, and public-private partnerships, Uzbekistan can achieve a more balanced and efficient urbanization model.
KEYWORDS: *Urbanization, Governance, Infrastructure, Smart City, Sustainable Development, Uzbekistan*

1. INTRODUCTION

The analysis of Uzbekistan's urbanization management practices has revealed key factors that obstruct the effective governance of cities' socio-economic development.

The root cause of the identified urban problems is an inefficient governance system. At the national level, various ministries and agencies oversee urban development based on their departmental interests. At the local level, regional and district khokimiyats are responsible for administration. The current urban management system has several shortcomings:

In the field of urban planning and land management of city territories

a) The absence of a general and regional development scheme, a master plan, and a settlement plan in many localities across the country negatively affects the quality of other urban planning documents. Additionally, the fragmented operation of organizations responsible for urban development hinders effective management. This, in turn, leads to unregulated construction, prevents the planning of business expansion, and hampers the proactive socio-economic development of cities by limiting the integrated placement of social infrastructure and the expansion of engineering and communication networks. Urban planning documentation required the development of master plans for 27 cities and 994 urban settlements, including 244 cities and urban settlements in the short term. Additionally, the master plans of 96 cities and 87 urban settlements needed to be upgraded to meet international standards.

In 2023, it was planned to develop master plans for 9 cities, 43 urban settlements, and 94 rural settlements. However, due to the partial allocation of funds - only 13.9 billion soums, which is just 8% of the planned 170 billion soums - the plan was not implemented.[1]. To date, work has begun on developing master plans for seven major cities (Tashkent, Namangan, Samarkand, Andijan, Bukhara, Nukus, and Karshi), with only one (Tashkent) officially approved.

The failure to complete the development of master plans was caused by:

- Changes in city boundaries (Namangan, Samarkand, Andijan).
- Negligence of local authorities, particularly in Karshi and Nukus.

b) The lack of a competitive environment among urban planning project developers, leading to low-quality and incomplete urban planning documentation. Despite the presence of 65 organizations in the country specializing in the development of rural settlement planning schemes and holding licenses to operate, most of these documents are still primarily developed by LLC "Kishlokkurilishloyiha."

The Urban Planning Code does not define a system of sanctions or fines for violations of the conditions and requirements for implementing city master plans, detailed planning projects, and other design documentation.

[1] *https://lex.uz/docs/3546751*

Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2025): 8.619 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 12 | Issue: 4 | April 2025 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

In the field of housing and Communal Services

a) Outdated and weak management system:

From 2020 to 2022, the state inspection for urban planning identified 1,195 violations of master plan regulations. Among them:

- 90 structures were built in areas designated for utilities,
- 233 structures were located in public improvement zones,
- 545 structures were built in areas with changed land use specialization,
- 111 structures were outside the designated street expansion boundaries.

For example, in the Kurgantepa district, a permit was issued for the construction of a shopping complex in an area designated in the master plan for an overpass and a road bridge. Similarly, in the city of Gulistan, a three-story non-residential building was constructed on the site of a D - 100 mm gas pipeline.

b) Outdated management system with weak adoption of innovative and digital technologies, leading to illegal activities, misappropriation of funds, and corruption. From 2018 to 2023, 32 criminal cases were initiated, and 36 individuals were held accountable.

c) Insufficient financial resources for the maintenance and modernization of social infrastructure.

In the field of infrastructure development: The lack of coordination among organizations within the urban system, including the district department of architecture and construction, “Rayelektroset”, “Raygaz”, district divisions for landscaping and beautification, and the district utilities department.

“Suvokova” and JSC (“Heat Source), leading to issues in the operation and development of existing urban infrastructure. There is also a lack of territorial coordination in infrastructure development strategies, including transportation, energy, communications, and capital construction projects[2].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Uzbekistan, a specific practice has developed for creating regional development programs tailored to individual regions. However, not all regional programs address urbanization issues. For example, the regional programs of Bukhara, Jizzakh, Navoi regions, and the city of Tashkent for 2023–2024 do not include measures to increase the level of urbanization.

Thus, Russian scientists put forward their different opinions in this regard

V.M. Lopatenko (2004) describes urbanization as a historical stage in societal development, characterized by the intensive formation of urban settlements. Its key feature is the concentration of a large population within a limited area.

Uzbekistan is developing in two directions: on one hand, priority is given to rural development, while on the other, urbanization is being actively promoted. This creates challenges in supporting the growth of small and medium-sized cities, implementing various financial instruments for urban development, and formulating a dedicated investment policy for their advancement. Thus, Uzbekistan lacks a strategic vision for long-term urbanization development aligned with regional growth.

Additionally, I.A. Litvenenkova (2005) highlights urbanization through the growth in the number of cities, the increasing share of the urban population, the concentration of economic activities, and the complexity of urban networks.

Thus, the author provides the following definition “Urbanization is the process of economic development in which urban settlements, characterized by high population density in small areas, undergo functional changes. In this process, cities hold a leading socio-economic position compared to rural areas, with the majority of the working population engaged in industry and services.”[3]

The analysis of regulatory and legal documents governing regional development and related urbanization processes has revealed several shortcomings in urban planning, land management, housing, and infrastructure governance, including:

[2] *https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5307955; https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5580337*

[3] *Author's description*

Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2025): 8.619 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 12 | Issue: 4 | April 2025 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

a) The absence of fundamental terms regulating urban planning, land, and housing activities - such as "urban centers," "central (core) city," "satellite cities," "agglomeration," "urban and regional agglomeration," "urbanized and agglomeration territory," "urban clusters," "renovation," "renovation zones," "master plan," and "urbanization and agglomeration program." These terms are widely used in global practice and are essential for managing urbanization. Additionally, there is a lack of legal provisions specifically addressing the regulation of urbanization and agglomeration processes.[4];

b) The absence of a unified, scientifically grounded, and government-approved document on urban development, including a law, a concept, or a strategy for urbanization that is integrated with the regional development strategy. The country lacks clearly defined criteria for urbanization policy, roles of government bodies in this area, definitions of key urbanization indicators, and specific objectives for achieving them.

c) The lack of a solid legal framework for regulating urban planning, land management, and housing activities. For example, there is no Renovation Law, no established criteria for developing renovation programs, no procedures for their approval and implementation, and no financing mechanisms for renovation projects, including compensation payments and the responsibilities of program participants. Additionally, the Law "On Administrative-Territorial Structure" lacks provisions addressing these critical aspects.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, there are no articles that contain components of cities or rural settlements. For example, in the cities of Gulistan (Syrdarya region), Khanabad (Andijan region), and Kuvasay (Fergana region), both urban and rural populations are included. Furthermore, cities may include several rural settlements or multiple mahallas, some of which may be classified as rural settlements.

d) The need for further improvement of the regulatory framework for urban planning, land management, and housing activities. Although reforms are underway, significant work remains to be done in developing the cadastral system, various information systems, property rights registration for land and buildings, land valuation, urban land privatization, and establishing market-based mechanisms in the housing sector.

Thus, regulatory and legal documents in land management, urban planning, housing, and infrastructure are outdated and do not meet modern international standards. These findings highlight the urgent need for reforms in the urbanization management system of the country.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study is Main problems of urbanization processes in Uzbekistan and ways to solve them. In addition, synthesis, generalization, analysis, parallelization and other methods were used.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULT

The analysis of identified factors influencing urbanization has led to the following management recommendations for this process.

1. Define a strategic vision for the country's long-term urbanization development in alignment with regional growth, considering evolutionary, historical, raw material and resource, natural and climatic, political, cultural, and moral factors. Additionally, enhance institutional transformations by establishing a coordinating body for urbanization regulation, including the creation of an investment company and an Urban Development Fund.

2. Introduce key changes and additions to existing legislation across various sectors related to the urbanization process.

a) In the Urban Planning Code, it is necessary to:

Introduce urbanization-related concepts and develop precise criteria for distinguishing between urban and rural settlements, ensuring a structured and comprehensive approach to the development of cities of various categories. These criteria should account for demographic trends, economic potential, infrastructure capacity, and social dynamics to facilitate balanced regional development.

Additionally, incorporate legislative provisions that clearly define the role and responsibilities of government authorities in overseeing urbanization processes. Strengthen regulatory frameworks for managing renovation, urbanization, and agglomeration by integrating innovative solutions, smart city technologies, and digital infrastructure to enhance sustainability, efficiency, and connectivity. Furthermore, establish mechanisms for public-private partnerships and community engagement to ensure inclusive and adaptive urban growth while addressing environmental, economic, and social challenges associated with rapid urban expansion.

[4] *Urban Development Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 22, 2021; Housing Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Land Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Law "On the procedures for the seizure of land plots for public needs with compensation"*

Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2025): 8.619 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 12 | Issue: 4 | April 2025 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

Table 1
Problems and solutions of urbanization in Uzbekistan and its classification[5]

Problem	Description	Possible Solutions
Uncontrolled Urban Growth	Rapid expansion of cities without proper planning.	Implement strict urban planning regulations.
Infrastructure Deficiency	Roads, water supply, and utilities struggle to keep up.	Increase investment in smart and sustainable infrastructure.
Housing Shortages	Insufficient affordable housing for the growing population.	Develop large-scale housing projects and support mortgage programs.
Environmental Issues	Air pollution, waste management problems, water shortages.	Promote green initiatives, strict pollution control, and efficient waste management.
Traffic Congestion	Increased vehicle numbers cause severe traffic jams.	Improve public transport, introduce smart traffic systems.
Unemployment in Urban Areas	Rural migration creates high competition for jobs.	Support entrepreneurship and develop industrial zones.
Social Inequality	Gap between rich and poor in urban areas.	Implement inclusive policies and provide equal access to services.
Lack of Green Spaces	Overcrowding reduces parks and recreational areas.	Require urban greening projects in city planning.

The main urbanization challenges in Uzbekistan include uncontrolled city expansion, infrastructure deficiencies, housing shortages, environmental issues, traffic congestion, unemployment, social inequality, and the reduction of green spaces. The rapid influx of rural migrants has put significant pressure on urban infrastructure and housing, leading to rising costs and inadequate living conditions. Increasing vehicle numbers contribute to severe traffic congestion, while pollution and inefficient waste management exacerbate environmental problems.

High unemployment rates and social disparities further hinder sustainable urban development. To address these issues, strategic urban planning, increased investment in smart infrastructure, improved public transport, affordable housing projects, and environmental initiatives are essential. Additionally, fostering industrial zones and inclusive policies can help mitigate economic disparities and create more balanced urban growth.

Develop urbanization programs that include urban planning, socio-economic, environmental, and other project solutions aimed at addressing specific problems in urban areas. Implement strict control over the development of master and regional settlement plans, ensuring their timely funding allocation Improve the process of developing master plans and general plans in a simplified format based on the integration of cities (towns) and suburban areas, as well as urban planning schemes for rural settlements, including considerations for the formation of agglomerations.

[5] *By Made Author*

Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2025): 8.619 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 12 | Issue: 4 | April 2025 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

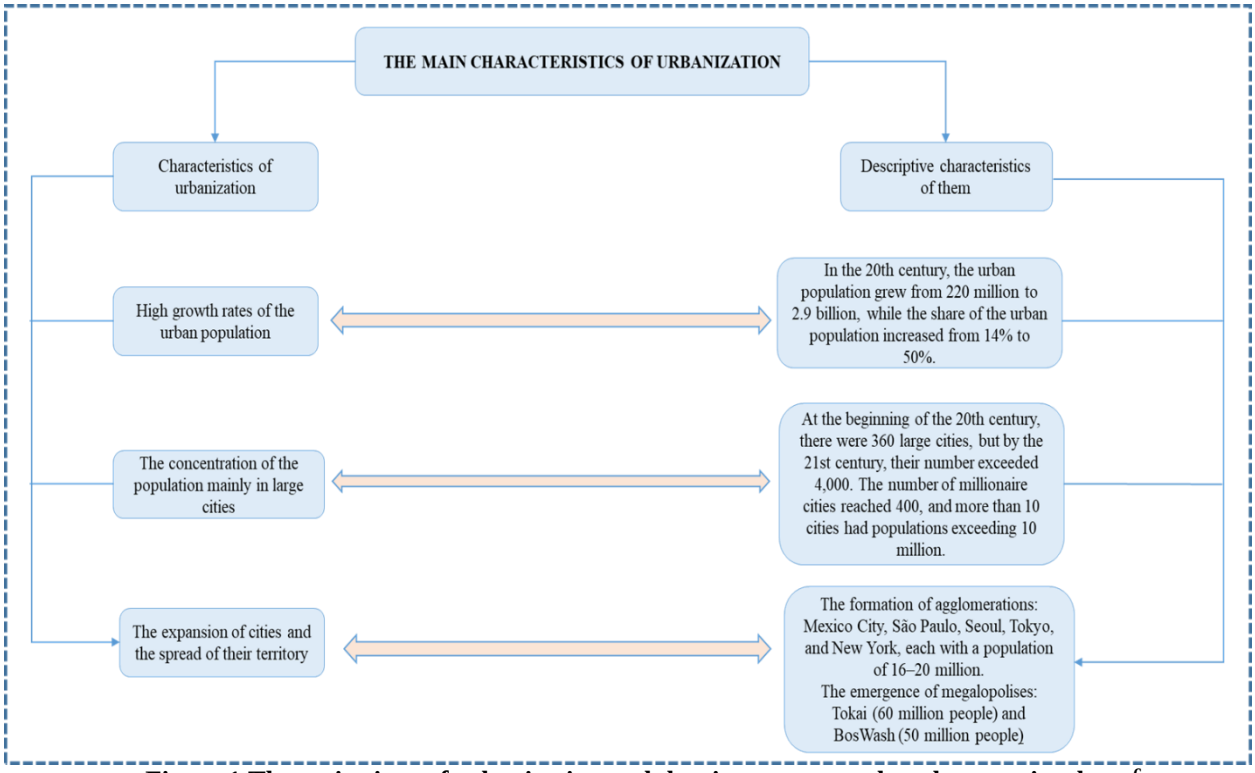


Figure 1 The main signs of urbanization and the circumstances that characterize them [6]

The process of urbanization is characterized by rapid population growth in cities, the concentration of people in large urban centers, and the territorial expansion of cities. In the 20th century, the urban population grew from 220 million to 2.9 billion, increasing its share of the total population from 14% to 50%. As a result, the number of large cities increased from 360 to over 4,000 by the 21st century, with the number of cities exceeding one million residents reaching 400, and more than 10 cities surpassing 10 million inhabitants.

The expansion of cities has led to the formation of urban agglomerations and megalopolises, with notable examples including Mexico City, São Paulo, Seoul, Tokyo, and New York (each with 16 - 20 million people), as well as the Tokai (60 million) and BosWash (50 million) megalopolises. This transformation has driven urban infrastructure development, economic opportunities, and social change, but it has also introduced environmental and spatial challenges.

Improve the territorial zoning process by designating not only conservation, reconstruction, and renovation zones but also urbanization zones. Improve the legal framework for the technical regulation mechanism, including the development and review process of urban planning documentation, as well as monitoring its implementation. Establish a system of sanctions and fines for violations of urban planning and project documentation requirements.

b) In the Housing Code, it is necessary to:
Update the legal framework for the management and operation of the housing stock based on market mechanisms;

Implement a mechanism for continuous monitoring of key forecast parameters of state programs for comprehensive housing construction;

Clarify and delineate the powers of state authorities in the housing and utilities sector;
Establish rules for the provision of all utility services, including quality standards, parameters, rights and obligations of service providers and consumers, and their responsibilities;

Define a mechanism for possible price adjustments;
Enshrine regulatory principles ensuring that demolition of properties occurs only after full compensation for land and property rights of legal and physical entities;
Improve the mortgage subsidy mechanism;

[6] *Developed by the author based on various internet information*

Integrate innovative and digital technologies into the management of the housing and utilities sector;

c) In the Land Code, implement:
A mechanism for the privatization of non-agricultural and agricultural land within settlements across all regions of the country;

A procedure for land reorganization, including the purchase, sale, and lease of property rights under market conditions;

Regulations for land expropriation and compensation under renovation programs, ensuring compensation is based on market value instead of cadastral value, along with land redistribution for vulnerable populations;

d) In the Tax Code:
Improve the tax collection mechanism by integrating property and land taxes;
Implement a unified system for real estate assessment and registration based on an automated accounting system and the creation of a comprehensive real estate cadastre;

Develop and incorporate methodological tools, including principles for assessing cadastral land value and market value of residential properties;

Introduce a tax collection system based on urban zoning;
e) In the Law "On the Administrative-Territorial Structure of the Republic of Uzbekistan," it is necessary to improve the components of the administrative-territorial system, specifically the classification of cities, rural settlements, and associated mahallas, with a clear delineation of boundaries.[7]

This, in turn, will help regulate urbanization in the country, ensuring a balanced and systematic urbanization process, driving qualitative shifts in the economic structure, and maximizing the utilization of existing factors for city growth.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, we summarize the conclusions and the achieved results:
Uzbekistan's urbanization process faces several critical challenges, including inefficient governance, lack of strategic planning, outdated infrastructure, and weak regulatory frameworks. The absence of comprehensive master plans, inadequate financial resources, and poor coordination among urban development agencies further hinder sustainable urban growth. Additionally, environmental concerns, housing shortages, and increasing social inequality exacerbate urbanization issues.

To address these challenges, Uzbekistan must establish a clear strategic vision for long-term urban development, strengthen institutional frameworks, and introduce necessary legislative reforms. Implementing innovative digital solutions, fostering public-private partnerships, and ensuring sustainable infrastructure investment are crucial for effective urbanization. Enhancing zoning regulations, improving housing policies, and integrating smart city technologies will contribute to a more balanced, efficient, and environmentally friendly urban growth model.

REFERENCES

1. *Lopatenko V.M. Urbanization as a global process of modernity: specificity and forms // Lomonosov readings-2004: collection of articles. - Moscow, 2004. - P. 54-60.*
2. *Litvenkova I.A. Ecology of the urban environment: urban ecology. - Vitebsk: Publishing house of the Vitebsk State University named after P. M. Masherov, 2005. - 163 p.*
3. *Urban Development Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 22, 2021; Housing Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Land Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Law "On the procedures for the seizure of land plots for public needs with compensation"*
4. *Housing Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan;Land Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan;Urban Planning Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan;Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan;Law "On the Administrative-Territorial Structure of the Republic of Uzbekistan."*
5. *Zokirov S.S. Improving the system of regulating urbanization processes in Uzbekistan // Monograph. − Tashkent: Tafakkur Publishing House, 2020. – P.368.*

[7] *Housing Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan;Land Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan;Urban Planning Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan;Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan;Law "On the Administrative-Territorial Structure of the Republic of Uzbekistan."*

6. *Hall, P. (2014). Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century. Wiley-Blackwell.*
7. *UN-Habitat. (2020). World Cities Report 2020: The Value of Sustainable Urbanization. United Nations Human Settlements Programme.*
8. *Paddison, R. (Ed.). (2001). Handbook of Urban Studies. SAGE Publications.*
9. *Batty, M. (2018). Inventing Future Cities. The MIT Press.*
10. *https://lex.uz/docs/3546751*