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Master’s degree in Urban Management and Valuation

Thesis
Base Plan for Ecotourism Development in Intermediate Cities
Case Study: Damavand, Iran
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Introduction

- Base plan is a strategy of planning for Intermediate cities which is in proof with UN Habitat. Preparing a Base plan and assessment of its capacity for intermediate cities in the field of tourism is the main aim of this study. Believing this fact that Intermediate cities should not form part metropolitan conurbation, the main question is to define how a base plan could act in urban planning process for developing ecotourism in an intermediate city.

- Tourism as an industry is known because of its high effect on societies and its role in socio-economic growth in the world. The economic role of tourism is the main aspect of that. Considering the value of growth in a region or city, made a motivation for hundreds researches and projects about urban and regional planning and tourism development.

- Ecotourism development in Iran, as one of the countries of high biodiversity in the world, can act as a central and essential industry for development and economic-social growth. Each activity in the context of nature, must regards environmental regulations, standards and be in line with the principles of sustainable development.
Aim

The main aim of this study is **preparing the base plan for an intermediate city towards ecotourism development.**

Ecotourism is a type of tourism industry based on natural attractions could be a promoter for socio-economic growth for intermediate cities. The use of base plan towards ecotourism development could be a model for planning for this type of cities towards ecotourism development. Therefore capacity and potential of base plan with this purpose will be evaluated.

Objectives

- Definition the main abilities of base plan towards the local development
- Showing that how base plan could act as a tool for short to Medium-term urban planning
- Analytical evaluating of base plan as a model for ecotourism development which shows how an object like tourism development could be involved in Base plan.
Methodology

- Literature review is used to define theoretical structure of the project. References in the subjects of **Tourism planning**, management and development, also development strategies for **Intermediate cities** and Base plan make basic structure.
- Review of existing plan of Damavand which is known as “General Urban plan” and study on its characteristics, its potential for Ecotourism, Agro-tourism and other aspects of tourism for this city which are necessary for planning.
- Collecting necessary information about case study, map of base plan and its documents
- Strategic planning approach with SWOT matrix
- Providing the Base Plan (**by its special methodology**)
- Analysis the methodology in relation with tourism and ecotourism
Methodology of Base Plan

- Definition of city size and form
- City size and density
- City and its urban hinterland
- Network of services and infrastructure
- Network of free spaces and green areas
- Level of urban factors
- Government or territorial administration
- Annual municipal budget
- Type of intermediate city
- Economic activities
- Housing
- Definition of monuments or elements which are or make symbol for the city

- Defining the Urban zones and boundary
- Suggesting the high priority urban projects
Executive Summary of the National Planning System

1. National Comprehensive/Master Plan
3. Development strategic plan (Prepared by Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)
   - Territorial Plan
   - Regional Plan
   - Local Plan:
     1- General Urban Plan (GUP) and Comprehensive Urban Plan
     2- Spatial Urban Plan
Policies and Urban Planning Process
Current planning process in Iran is common for all provinces and intermediate cities. This process is summarized below:

- Ordering the General Urban Plan by governor of the province
- Providing the Plan by an architectural Consulting Engineers (Private sector)
- Review the Plan is done by the Urban and architectural workshop in province.
- Urban General Plan: is supervised and approved by “Iran's Supreme Council for Planning and Architecture”
- Municipality as implementing body acts and city council as supervisor of municipality has a role in the phase of implementing of Urban General Plan.
Tourism potential and status quo in Iran

The Role of Tourism on Economy of Iran

**WORLD RANKING (OUT OF 184 COUNTRIES):**
Relative importance of Travel & Tourism's total contribution to GDP

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**Total Contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP**
2012 IRRbn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>International tourism, arrivals ('000)</th>
<th>International tourism, receipts (US$ m)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1,656</td>
<td>917</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>971</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,769</td>
<td>1,022</td>
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**Breakdown of Travel & Tourism’s Total Contribution to GDP and Employment 2012 GDP (2012 IRRbn)**

- Total contribution of Travel & Tourism

**% of whole economy GDP**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
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<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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Direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP (World travel and tourism council, 2012)
A. Tourism and Ecotourism planning and Development

Ecotourism principles are:
- Minimize impact on the environment
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Increase sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate. "(TIES, 1990)

Donohue and Needham (2006) recognized six “key tenets” of ecotourism: “(1) nature-based; (2) preservation and conservation; (3) education; (4) sustainability; (5) distribution of benefits; and (6) ethics/responsibility/awareness.” Higham (2007) sees eight defining “principles and characteristics” of ecotourism; Cater (2001, p. 4166) reduces these to three: ecotourism should be “green,” it should be “responsible” and “must recognize the interests of all stakeholders.”

Lindberg and Hawkins in 1993 summarized initial planning process to help parks prepare for tourism. The strategy has three phases: to assess the current tourism situation and potential; to determine a desirable tourism situation and identify steps to reach this situation; to write an ecotourism strategy document. The process described is intended as a reference for the planning process.

Lew in 2007 by review on tourism planning and traditional urban planning theory described the planner as “an agent of social change” and represented the subfield of urban and regional planning as the more narrow area of tourism planning. He states that there is an apparent lack of attention to the standard issues of (1) how planners should plan and (2) issues should be focused by planners in their planning efforts. These questions show planners deal with a complex of data and issues, including questions of what data or information is collected, how it is organized, and how the information will be used for decision making.
A. Tourism and Ecotourism planning and Development

Weaver and Lawton (2007) maintain that ecotourism satisfies three “core criteria;” namely, “(1) nature-based attractions as the main core; (2) visitor interactions with learning and educational activities, and (3) sustainability which explain that experience and product management should follow principles associated with socio-cultural, ecological, and economic sustainability.

- In a development process, “local community” is a key factor whilst little attention has been paid to the role of community, in particular to the usability and accessibility of an environmental plan for local community and the role of local community in a planning process and other processes of local and regional development.
- In discussion of ecotourism, environment is the pattern, visitors by non-consumptive use of the resources make benefit and on the other side, local community is known as third entity involved in. A symbiotic relationship among the three entities is shown below.

Regarding to public participation, some demographic researches pursued many different socioeconomic elements to determine which ones might have an influencing effect on developing process. For example, using segmentation analysis in a study of Scotland, Brougham and Butler (1981)
A. Tourism and Ecotourism planning and Development

Sheldon and Var (1984) discovered evidence suggesting that “residents’ attitudes toward tourism development are culturally bound, finding that natives and Welsh speakers were more sensitive to tourism’s social and cultural impacts than were nonnatives and non-Welsh speakers”. In this fashion, in a study of New Braunfels, Texas, Um and Crompton (1987) found German ethnicity was a factor in policies toward tourism development, discovering that the more attached a resident was to the community regarding birthplace, heritage, and length of residence, the less positively he or she perceived impacts, with the exception of perceived adverse impacts on environmental quality.

Although finding significant variations in attitudes toward tourism development by demographic subgroup, Liu and Var’s (1986) study of Hawaiian residents did not find significant differences in attitudes based on ethnicity and length of residence. In reviewed studies the rate of motivation and solicitude of local people did not considered. In the field of tourism potential, Multi-criteria decision making tools (MCDM) are widely accepted to the researchers and decision makers. In this regard a variety of tools are used like: Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), Multi-attribute Utility Theory (MAUT), Superiority and Inferiority Ranking Method (SIR), Weighted Product Model (WPM), Weighted Sum Model (WSM) and Value Analysis (VA). (Malczewski, 1999; Jankowski, 1995; etc.)
A. Tourism and Ecotourism planning and Development

Multi criteria decision making (MCDM) is a Technique for analyzing decision problems, **generate useful alternative solutions**, and to evaluate the alternatives based on decision maker’s values and priorities. “The general objective of these methods is to assist the decision-maker in selecting the best alternative from the number of feasible alternatives under the presence of multiple choice criteria and diverse criterion priorities (Jankowski, 1995).

A basic **planning process** should be adopted that includes at least the **following seven steps:**

- study preparation
- determination of objectives
- survey
- analysis and synthesis
- policy and plan formulation
- recommendations

In tourism planning **Michael Hall** found “in the mid-term, we see people staying on working holidays, short-term contracts, vacation or second home stays, medical tourism or for educational purposes. **in the long term the short and mid-term visitors may be encouraged to move 'permanently' and be categorized as migrants**, therefore further contributing their bundle of economic, social and intellectual capital to the original destination, although their own mobility to other places will likely remain integral to their lifestyle and their relation to their new 'home', The attraction of 'temporary mobility' therefore lies at the heart of tourism policy.” (Hall, 2008)

In a study in China, Several essential traits of this communal approach have been summarized as follows:

- Village, or rural community, acting as the basic unit of destination, is “enclosed” and “sold” to the tourists as a single tourism product by charging an entrance fee;
- A special corporation is formed to take charge of the integral business of cultural tourism in rural community, regardless of the diversities in capital structures;
- besides the negotiated payments to those contracted households opening to tourists, a certain proportion of the revenue from ticket sales is shared by the whole community, through a capitalism cash distribution and a better community welfare system supported by the revenue;
- The locals still have the right to run their own small tourism business, but should be under the coordination of the special corporation.
B. Intermediate cities and urban planning

Considering the most population of the world live medium size cities, Josep Llop discussed that “At the end of the 20th century, concern for the social implications of architecture and town planning should influence the way we analyze the rapid growth of intermediate cities and how we deal with the professional challenges that they pose.” and “Intermediate cities should not form part metropolitan conurbation but they have to have their own place in the region or territory”. Focusing on capacity and potential of intermediate cities could able us to make a plan for increasing their own role.

Bellet and Llop discussed that “at the same time, small and medium-sized centers have been presented with an opportunity to re-situate themselves within the global network, because city size and scale are relatively unimportant within a context of globalization.” The dynamics and success of these settlements depend on some factors and the definition of intermediate cities is always considered in the pattern of globalization and global network which made it different with medium-sized city.

In relation with current project, they discussed that “the ecological design, planning and development of intermediate cities calls for a very wide definition of sustainability, which may be understood as a philosophy for developing intermediate cities.

**Principles of sustainable development for intermediate cities.** The development of intermediate cities should be:

- locally conceived and not imposed from outside.
- based on the sustainable use of their resources.
- provide for basic necessities, ensure secure living conditions and promote equity
- foster empowerment, encourage greater local control over resources, and promote the participation of the marginalized and under-represented)
C. Eco city and sustainable urban forms

Concerning the fact that most part of tourism development depends on attractions and activities that are related to natural environments, historical traditions and cultural models of counties, in this case if these resources get abused or destroyed, then touristy places would not be able to attract tourists, and tourism industry would not be successful. (Jamieson and Sunalai, 2002)

Kenworthy discussed that making existing cities and new urban development more ecologically based and livable is an urgent priority in the global push for sustainability. He found “ten critical responses to this issue and summarizes them in a simple conceptual model that places the nexus between transport and urban form at the heart of developing an eco-city. This involves compact, mixed-use urban form, well-defined higher-density, human-oriented centers, priority to the development of superior public transport systems and conditions for non-motorized modes, with minimal road capacity increases, protection of the city's natural areas and food-producing capacity.”
C. Eco city and sustainable urban forms
Jabareen in 2006 made an analysis and identified seven design concepts related to sustainable urban forms: compactness, sustainable transport, density, mixed land uses, diversity, passive solar design, and greening. Moreover, it identifies four types of sustainable urban forms: the neo-traditional development, the urban containment, the compact city, and the eco-city. Cities are as complex as a living organism. Simply stated, one strategy on its own is simply not enough to make an entire city sustainable, rather what's needed is a series of strategies.

- Beatley in 1999 defined eight overarching systems that need to work together to make a city sustainable:
  - Sustainable land use planning and urban form
  - Innovative housing strategies
  - Sustainable transportation and mobility
  - Urban ecology and strategies for greening the urban environment.
  - Recycling, up cycling and closing the loop of “stuff”.
  - Energy conservation and renewable energy
  - Sustainable building practices
  - Green governance and economy
Summary of current General Urban Plan (GUP)

In 2008 the general urban plan of Damavand was prepared by order of municipality of Damavand and supervision of Deputy of Minister and secretary of Iran's Supreme Council for Planning and Architecture. A study on its important recommendation for current condition and future plan are summarized below:

- Total predicted population for 2017 is 63,800.
- Total surrounded area in the boundary is 2188 ha, including defined land use and undefined areas (Area of reservation). Proposed gross density is 1.29 person/ha.
- Economic sustainable resources for the city, based on master plan studies the found that But what matters is effective January stable income source for municipalities and administered by the City and its developments.
- Something that can lead to new and sustainable income generation and measurement capability Feasibility of the project profitable for defining the characteristics of the city and its surrounding environment will be provided by the possibility of participatory activities and use of People's capacity to achieve the goals of urban development plans.
- Proximity of Damavand to Tehran, made a strong desire to construction in the city, possibility of the definition of tourism projects for the city and its surrounding environment capabilities etc. all of these items provide a suitable atmosphere for the application of this approach to obtain a new and sustainable revenue sources for the city of Damavand.

Evaluation of the quality of total urban buildings (Census Organization of Iran)

As graph shows, considering the high percentage of buildings type C (Old), the tax of reconstruction, In GUB (General Urban Plan) predicted as a part of municipal budgets.
Tourism Potential of Damavand

The most attractive sites are:

- Mount Damavand
- Shebeli Tower and Tomb
- Jame mosque (15th century)
- Ancient castle of Golkhandan
- Cheshmeh Ala spring
- Lake Tar
- Ahmadabad Cave
- Village of Ureh
- Ab’ali ski resort
- The possibility of paragliding
- Agriculture and Agro-Tourism

Based on statistics, attractive places are including 38 holy shrines, 27 castles, 16 historic homes, 18 ancient bathes, 4 natural caves, 7 shrines, 6 mosques, 4 Historical Monument, 7 Old Bridges, a historic cemetery.
Case Study: Damavand

Base Plan for Ecotourism Development in Intermediate Cities

Case Study: Damavand, Iran

Map of Natural-Historic Attractions
Damavand, Iran

1. Mount Damavand
2. Dam of Lar
3. Dam
4. Lake Tar
5. Lake Havir
6. City center
7. Jame' Mosque
8. Shebeli Tower
9. To Tehran
10. Tehran-Haraz Road
11. Tehran-Firouzabadi Road
12. Cheshme Asa mineral spring
13. Cave
14. Castle
15. Ab'ali Ski Resort
16. Zarin kouh Mountain
17. Mine of Sills
18. Ancient Cemetery

Map Tehran Province, Iran
Basic Characteristics of Damavand

a. City size and form

- The radios (R) measured in kilometers which circumference inscribes approximately 70% of municipal population is shown below in order to determine the scale and the distance to the urban center.
- The straight line (L) between the most extreme points of consolidated urban nucleus of the city is plotted and measured in kilometers.
- Topographic bench marks at one kilometer interval, in the “L”.

Figure: Length and radios of the city

b. City size and density

- Damavand County includes Damavand city, Rudehen city and rural areas. The total area of Damavand County is 188,000 ha, but more than 83% is known as natural resources and 16% belongs to rural areas by the usage of rural buildings, farms, etc. Rural surface area (RU) of the city is about 31,960 ha. Finally the legal urban surface area of Damavand (SU) including 17 neighborhoods which is limited by urban boundary is 2,442 ha.
- Considering the large amount of gardens and farms inside the urban area of Damavand, calculating the net density should be done with subtracting them. Gross Urban land per capita based on 2011 population survey is 530 m².
- The total population of Damavand County in 2011 was 100,700 which 27,445 people lives in city of Roudehen. So, the population of urban area of Damavand (Pu) in 2011 was 46,052 in 10,679 families.
- Population of rural area (Pr) is 27,200.
- Gross Density of urban area is (Du) 19 (Hb/Ha) it seems high but the reason is high ratio of gardens inside urban area.
- Gross Density of Rural area (Dr) is 0.8 (Hb/Ha).
c. The city and its urban “hinterland”
- The radius of influence of Damavand is approximately 28 kilometers.

Figure. Damavand in transport network

- Municipalities within its area are: Damavand (as center the Damavand County and Roudehen).
- Total population of the county of Damavand is 100,700.
- The distance between Damavand and 2 nearest big cities:
  - Damavand- Tehran: 65 kilometers. Population of Tehran is about 8,300,000 and the population of metropolitan area is about 14 million.
  - Damavand- Firouzkouh: 81 km. the population of Firouzkouh is 37,416.
- There is a fact that the location of Damavand in vicinity of the metropolitan of Tehran is an important factor which should be considered in all planning processes.

d. Network of services and its infrastructure
- The percentage of the urban surface covered by networks of drinkable water is approximately 100% which purified from underground water resources and the local river.
- There is not an artificial urban sewage system. Private waste wells are obligatory in all residential buildings for wastewater and sewage.
- There are two rivers which join together inside the city and make Damavand River. This river acts as a main natural canal for flow and drainage. Also there are nine floodways with their standard boundaries (4-6 meters each side). Surface water and drainage is conducted by the river, canals and streams along the streets and go in the direction of south and finally leading out of the city to the dam Mamlou.
- Public lighting and electrical grids cover approximately all the urban surface area.
- Frequency of street cleaning is daily.
- Refuse collection is daily.
- Selective refuse collection in Damavand started in 2008 and it's doing weekly.
- Refuse treatment and recycling in Damavand is almost new and it's in the process by participation of two private companies, but it's not performed yet.
e. Territorial infrastructure
- Nearest airports located in Tehran. Domestic airport located in the west of Tehran with about 75 km distance. International airport is in the south of Tehran more than 100 km far from Damavand.
- There is not a rail station in Damavand. Nearest active station located in Firouzkouh which located in the railway of Tehran to the North of Iran. In this railway pass 1-3 trains daily. This station could potentially use by a domestic train with the destination of Damavand.
- The Distance between Damavand and nearest Metro station of Tehran is 63 Km.
- Public transportation in Damavand includes bus and minibus mainly to the direction of Tehran and also to other destinations.
- Public transportation inside the city is done by bus and minibus. Also there is public taxi with a specified origin and destination with 4 passenger capacity.

f. Network of free spaces and green areas
To identify the percentage of the urban surface that is not destined for construction, boundaries for nine different Watercourses and the river could be calculated as free spaces which are not allowed to build. Approximately 70% of urban area (1712 ha) belong to private gardens and farms; obviously it’s a high amount. Urban land per capita (total net and gross), based on 2011 population estimates is 530 m², while the per capita net is 213 m².

Public Green and open spaces areas including parks around and inside the city is 10.5 ha (2.2 m² per capita) which is so lower than standards.

g. Levels of urban equipment
   Socio-cultural structure:
   Number of university students and graduated of universities in total is 5087 which the number of women in this group is 2603 it means more than 55% of students are women.
   Number of public libraries: 3
   Number of secondary education institutes: 24
   Number of indoor public sports pavilion: 12
   Health care: A general hospital with 46 active beds and 2 other polyclinics. The number of Primary health clinics and first aids centers is 6.
   Other public equipment: there are 4 malls and hundreds stores for retail. Also there is an amusement park and one indoor amusement park.
h. Government
The type of government of Iran is central. There is 31 provinces and each province has a governor also each county has one local governor. The county of Damavand has a governor who works as responsible body for management of territory including the urban and rural areas. There is a City Council with 5 councilors who elected by citizens. It chooses the Mayor of the city and approves developing projects for the city and supervises the Municipality’s activities. Municipality of Damavand as a part of Damavand County’ government is responsible to manage urban problems and development.

i. Annual municipal budget
The budget of municipality comes from government to the mayor of the city. It is separated in 2 parts: projects and current management costs. In 2012 the annual Budget of municipality of Damavand in 2012 was 200,000,000,000 Rials. ($ 16.3 million)
In the municipal budget law, 60 percent is defined for civil and development projects and 40 percent of that is predicted for the current issues including maintenance and municipal issues. The annual budget per capita is $ 354. A comparison between this factor in other cities in the province didn’t show a significant difference. But in comparison with the cities in the other provinces, Damavand is a richer city. It could be defined as a city with more budgets.

j. Type of intermediate city
Considering the great effect of Tehran on its surrounding cities, and relations between it and Damavand could be said that Damavand is a medium-sized city on the periphery of the metropolis of Tehran. But on the other hand, Damavand has its own economic activities especially in agriculture.
**k. Economic activities**

Based on the results of national census in 2011, “commerce and services” has the highest employment but it’s for county of Damavand including urban and rural population. There is not an independent census result for the city but the documentation of general plan of Damavand shows that, the largest number of employment in the city is in the sector of commerce and services.

**Employment structure**

- **Commerce and Services**: 5214 employees
- **Industry**: 3744 employees
- **Agriculture, forestry and fishing**: 20532 employees

Based on the census, there are 367 employees in direct relation with Tourism which means 1% of total population.

**Rate of unemployment**

Based on the census in 2011, the rate of unemployment except housewives and students is approximately 3%.

The major economic problems that have emerged in cities with high and low intensity are input high unemployment, low income families, focusing deprivation, Reduction of Public services, infrastructure services and environmental degradation is decreased.

About Unemployment rate of active population in General urban plan of Damavand is described that “Despite a considerable part of the population of Damavand doesn't enter the labor market, nearly one third of potential active population work and take a role in labor supplied to the economy of the city. However, employment opportunities and the economic system are not sufficient to be able to provide a job for a considerable part of the active population which are studying or stay at home as a housewife and there is not the possibility of achieving job for jobseekers in close future”.

I. Housing
The total number of housing units in the county of Damavand is 29700 which based on the population of City of Damavand; in 2013 it could be 11500 to 12500 units in the urban area.

Figure 17. Ratio of Single-family house and flats of Damavand, (National census Organization, 2012)
In Damavand County approximately 44% of housing units are flats and 56% of them are single family houses. 3% of buildings are worn outs and older than 45 years. There is not a significant and obvious slum in the city also there is not a considerable number of homeless people.
All the urban area covered by electricity network.

m. Monuments or building that most clearly symbolize the city
The most important object which the name of the city is comes from that, is mount Damavand. It’s an active volcano and the highest peak in Iran and the whole of Middle East. It has a special place in Persian mythology and folklore. City of Damavand is one of starting stations for mountaineers in direction to the Damavand peak. However it could prepare more facilities for this type of tourists.
- Jame mosque (15th century)
- Shebeli Tower is a monument has been built in 12th century, located in city center.
- Cheshmeh A’la is a famous spring of mineral water located about 4 km in north of the city of Damavand.

n. Most important urban projects carried out the last 10 years
Construction of social housing called Project of Mahak containing 3000 units.
Construction of social housing (3000 units) in Roudehen, Absard and Ab’ali Urban areas out of the city of Damavand
Repair and covering Roudehen- Damavand road
Establishment and development of Islamic Azad University from 2002. It’s still developing more.
Covering and repairing two main boulevards of the city (Gilavand and Be’sat)
Astronomical Observatory in city center
Reconstruction of Sevom Shaban Hospital in city center
Construction of industrial Cold storage for protein
o. Observations concerning the contents of the General Urban Plan (GUP)
Current plan for Damavand is a general urban plan which is done during 7 recent years and its results entered into force from 2011.
In the general urban plan, the main issues are bolded are:
- Study and suggestions for future Infrastructure including a sport complex, hospital, some changes in transportation network
- Some methods for increasing income of municipality via construction taxes
- Definition of urban boundary

p. Most important projects currently being undertaken (or planned for the immediate future based on General Urban Plan)
Continuing the construction of social housing in the project of Mahak
(2000 more units are constructing)
Developing some buildings and laboratories in Islamic Azad university of Damavand
Reparing the pathways
Recreational park in front of Shebeli historic tower (This project is selected in base plan)
Construction of park Kowsar with the area of 25000 m² in the east of the city
Construction of Park Farhangian with an area of about 5 hectares in south of the city
Construction of main public library in city center
Project of separation drinking water and urban water supplying system
Construction of theme park in south of the city (This project is selected in base plan)
### Strategic Planning approach in Damavand

#### SWOT matrix

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<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<td>Easy access and position in the area</td>
<td>Negative increase of the population and young people’s migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positioned in the south of Alborz mountain, on the priority axis of the Tehran-Mazandaran transport network</td>
<td>Absence direct access of railroad to the city</td>
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<td>Positioned on the proximity of Tehran capital and access to its high quality infrastructure</td>
<td>Lack of sufficient public parking areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to highways in north and south of the city</td>
<td>Economic development/tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic development/tourism</td>
<td>Lack of investments/sustainable economic activities and jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and historical attractive sites inside the county</td>
<td>Absence of constant revenue sources for municipality to implement its development projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non Seasonal character of tourist activities</td>
<td>Lack of licensed tourist activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of Tehran as the main tourism market for Damavand</td>
<td>Lack of active tourism promoting measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing infrastructure and services</td>
<td>Lack of managed leisure activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of a water and sewage system</td>
<td>Poaching activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paving/rehabilitating the main roads</td>
<td>Lack of regulated economic activities related to tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational infrastructure</td>
<td>Opportunity to conservation of natural environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Number of university graduates</td>
<td>Local public administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure systems (water, sewage, heating, roads, waste management) cover the entire urban area</td>
<td>Governmental financial assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of standard Hotels and other tourism facilities</td>
<td>Developing the capacity of municipality in implementing the integrated plan for urban development (the general urban plan (GUB), regulation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure systems (specially sewage, heating and waste management) do not cover the entire rural areas</td>
<td>Diminishing of financial resources available for implementing the projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of train station (indirect access to railroad network)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Ease of access and position in the area
- Increase of access and mobility by public transportation in the area
- Ease of Access of tourists from capital
- Economic/Tourism development
- Developing of tourist activities based on the existing built and natural potential
- Implementing a tourism licensing system
- Development of the local tourism market
- Creation of Job opportunities specially for young educated people
- Reducing labour migration
- Providing infrastructure and services
- Using renewable (alternative) energy – for public lighting, heating and public transport (electric cars, electric leisure ships), to obtain the ECO status for the town
- Development of transport system due to a high tourist income and solicitation
- Natural and built environment
- Built environment that can be rehabilitated – offers venues for trade and leisure activities
- More attention to conservation of natural environment
- Local public administration
- Governmental financial assistance
- Developing the capacity of municipality in implementing the integrated plan for urban development (the general urban plan (GUB), regulation)

#### THREATS

- Increase of population/immigration from other cities
- Increase of road Traffic problems
- Competition with other tourist destinations in the province
- Lack of tourism infrastructure such as hotels
- Increase of immigration to Damavand
- Decrease of tourist attraction due to the poor provision of public utilities and service
- Freezing of Rural roads in winter
- Decrease of tourist attraction due to the poor state of some historic sites
- Increase of pollution in the nature due to a weak environmental management
- Destruction of fisheries and hunting fund due to poaching
- Complete degradation of built heritage
- Diminishing of financial resources available for implementing the projects
Most important projects for next 10 years in Base Plan

Based on methodology, the map of base plan is prepared. Zones that are considered probable and/or necessary to urbanise in the short or medium term are also zones of urban extension. As possible zones of urban reserve, in other words, those that could be urbanised would be or should be in the medium to long term.

Regarding to current urban condition, priorities in GUP (General Urban Plan of Damavand, 2007) and the aim of Tourism, most important projects for next 10 years are suggested in following proposal.

Suggested Urban Projects for next 10 years

Focusing on results of SWOT analysis, the most urban projects are suggested in the Base plan.

1. Hotel and Restaurant
2. Museum (it’s effective on education and conservation of local cultural and historic values)
3. Restoration of Shebeli Tower
4. Theme Park  
   - Having a good connection with Main Street of the city
   - Locating in a new residential zone without the limitations of city center

5. Camping Area
6. Local products Market
   Some agricultural products of this city are famous because of its high quality, being organic and special flavors. These products are:
   - Golden apple of Damavand
   - Mineral water
   - Cherries
   - Yoghourt and buttermilk

7. Handicrafts Market
   A handicraft market brings benefits to local people and tourists.
   - As a market, clearly it improves local economy.
   - It will provide an exhibition of local and traditional arts
   - It will make some job vacancies directly and indirectly

8. Transport Terminal
9. Visitor Parking Lots
10. Linear Urban Park
Base Plan of Damavand
Urban Sustainability and Tourism Development

The sustainability and sustainable development is known as an ultimate issue in urban planning projects. New sustainable urban developments or re-developments should provide a variety of commercial, institutional, educational uses as well as housing styles, sizes and prices. Regarding to Tourism and specially Eco-tourism development, urban planning and sustainability is faced with several debates.

- **Sustainability and Energy**
  
  One particular part of this debate concerns the role of cities as major consumers of energy and generators of pollution. Some others are focusing on the prospects for using changes to transport and urban form to reduce energy consumption. In this debate, some intermediate cities like Damavand had to be planned in some way more energy efficient by empowering public transport and train station.

- **Sustainability and Transportation**

  **Most weight on transportation system in Damavand is on personal vehicles** but the personal automobile is not part of sustainable transportation and mobility. A sustainable approach provides mobility options and helps reduce pollution by reducing vehicle trips. Walking, bicycling, and other mobility options should be encouraged throughout the urban mixed-use core and mixed-use neighborhoods with easily accessed and well-defined. Instead, sustainable transportation options place an emphasis on fast, comfortable and reliable public transportation; some combination of rail and bus could be considered in short and medium time planning. In this regard, in the Base plan, developing a terminal is suggested.

  **In the Base plan of Damavand, a Transport Terminal is suggested but it’s a short step towards sustainability in transport.**

- **Sustainability and Environment**

  Iran is an early achiever of the phase out milestones set by the [Montreal protocol](#). Based on UNDP’s report, the Iran’s 5th National Development Programme has adopted the environmental assessment of strategic level plans policies as well as a countrywide “ecosystem-based approach” to the management of wetlands and biodiversity.

  In the part of Environmental issues, there are many objectives and consideration in wild life reservation, Waste disposal and protection of natural environment which will be faced with tourism activities.

- **Sustainability and Economic Resources**

  Municipality by depending to national budget is not self funded but there are some articles in the law which conducts cities to be independent and to have their own income. In this issue, Tourism can act by attracting capital and economic activities and would empower the municipality concluding to be self-funded.

  - Sustainability and cultural heritage

    A Conceptual Planning by empowering the identity of the City benefits on conserving the local cultural characteristics such as accent, traditions and conservation the historic monuments.

    Tourism by its dependence and emphasizing on historic and cultural heritages could be helpful in taking attention to conservation and supporting activities.
The problem of Tourism and Ecotourism in current condition

- Lack of Job opportunities and immigration
- Train access
- Investment and funding
- Lack of a local organization in Tourism
- Environmental Risks
- Lack of related infrastructure

Specific Problems about Eco-tourism:
- Infrastructure systems (especially sewage, heating and waste management) do not cover the entire rural areas, which this matter could have environmental pollution.
- Increase of pollution in the nature due to a weak environmental management
- Destruction of fisheries and hunting fund due to poaching may occur during a weak tourism management.
- The lack of camping areas and other temporary settlements and the lack of internet access in some rural areas are considerable.
A practical research on the case study of Damavand concluded to following conclusions:

The Base Plan which academically made in present thesis, -even may contain some errors in quantities and details-was an academic experience which focused on the context of an intermediate city in Iran. Different characteristics of the location and policies were studied towards tourism development.

- **Base plan** as the first step for urban planning, which could be prepared before complicated process of making General Urban Plan, *would sum up the planning process in total* and would be useful in short-medium term. Also, **Base plan, as a basic process could be involved in current urban planning in Iran** –which is General Urban Plan following by Comprehensive Plan- and it could have specific advantages.

- The presented plan *could be an alternative method for urban planning process toward an object like tourism development* so that it showed how an object like ecotourism development could be involved in providing a Base plan. In other cities, other objects could be focused on; for example eco city, could be an objective for providing the base plan focusing on. It could be suggested that in the current planning system, base plan *could be a model for other cities in Iran with similar capacity in tourism*. Nevertheless this planning model and its feasibility in Iran could be studied in detail and in depth.

- In documentation process of Base Plan, it’s considerable that *by definition the plan as a Local project and focusing on the local characteristics and potential, final plan would be more in accordance with real local needs and potential*.

- Even this research is mostly focused on Urban Planning, *a review on current urban planning policies (Diagram 1.5), showed the absolute ignorance of people and local government in planning process so that in the approval process, local authorities like city council and mayor of the city have no right to vote*. So the matter is not just “planning model” in the case that the approval process is faced with a hierarchy in national and provincial level.

- About the planning process in Iran there is a lack of participations in decision-making and benefit-sharing which is practiced in some research based development projects. *However this questions rise up: which policies could facilitate and promote participation in decision-making and benefit-sharing? Or how benefit sharing could be a promoter in tourism projects and in community participations?* This question becomes important when the participatory approach is to be applied in developing countries.
• Analytical evaluating of urban capacity in line with ecotourism development which showed in SWOT matrix, finally conclude to definition and suggestion of more important projects. **The SWOT analysis could be a joint method for definition of high priorities projects in providing the base plan in strategic planning approach.**

• In the case of Damavand, by emphasize on tourism, the necessary infrastructure and facilities like hotels and public transport are listed in the “10 most important projects” of the city. **It’s found that the methodology of base plan by focusing on urban monuments and historic buildings, finally could promote the planners to consider specific characteristics of the city towards Tourism development.** Nevertheless it depends on where and in which pattern we are working on this methodology.

• In the field of participation, involving the community is a critically important and complex subject for successful community-based ecotourism.

• In the field of tourism, **ensuring market realism and effective promotion** should be studied in urban economy. **Ecotourism projects must be based on an understanding of market demand and consumer expectations and how to place the product offer effectively in the market place.** In some studies on market demand, it proved that many visitors are looking for a combination in activities and the mix of natural and cultural experiences. This mixture is suggested in the case of Damavand by tourism and ecotourism activities but it needs more study on local market demand.

• In the field of Tourism Development, Damavand is an intermediate city with some tourist attractions and without a current considerable attention in this field. **In methodology of Base plan, important monuments of the city are remarked also by listing the most important projects which could be tourism related infrastructure; it facilitated taking attention on tourism**
There are results that prove the importance of participation for visitors. For example, some visitors value the opportunity to participate in activities (WWF, 2001). In this field, Conservation participation programs are a specific sub-sector of ecotourism and could be community-based. General experience of village life, including folklore which can prove an experience highly valued by visitors is mentioned in some researches on demand. An incentive could be provided to keep local culture and continue on local values and knowledge. Despite this fact, working with private sector operators – model involving private sector operators- provides some components to more participation.

Leading to an ever-growing tourist number and tourism income in Damavand, a unique responsible organization is necessary to manage and assessment all developing projects. Existing information and promotional mechanisms regarding to tourism development could improve and accelerate this process.

Sustainability of an urban plan is a complex of numerous elements in planning and management depends on its attention to the local people and their needs. So in the process of making the plan and decision making in Damavand and other cities in Iran, city council as an elected team of people in current legal structure, has the capacity to involve in providing and approval phase of the plan even at the moment it doesn’t have right to vote in approval of the urban plan.

In addition, the rapid development of ecotourism in Damavand would likely intensify existing pressures on the landscape and local institutions that are unprepared to deal with these challenges.

In total it could be said that this study demonstrates the advantage of strategic planning specially in local state over the central planning (comprehensive/General plan approaches) and central decision making processes.
References:


Thank you for your attention