

Title: National Land Use Policy and Physical Development Plan for the Commonwealth of Dominica

Subtheme: Green energy

Names of authors: Rory Baksh, RPP MCIP, Associate, Dillon Consulting; Annie Edwards, Physical Planner, Dominica Physical Planning Division; Michel Frojmovic, RPP MCIP PMP, Director, Acacia Consulting & Research

ABSTRACT

Dominica is a small volcanic island known as the “Nature Island” of the Caribbean. Over 20% of the island is protected through National Parks, Marine Reserves, and Forest Reserves, including Morne Trois Piton National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. These protected areas help to safeguard the island’s biodiversity. The island’s hilly topography, volcanic activity and location in the hurricane belt mean that Dominica is vulnerable to multiple natural hazards. The intensity and frequency of natural disasters are expected to increase due to climate change.

The Physical Planning Division of the Commonwealth of Dominica over a period of three years to establish a National Land Use Policy and Physical Development Plan. In a demonstration of political will, the document was formally adopted as a policy to help Dominica address competing land use pressures from agriculture, tourism, settlement, and infrastructure, as well as climate change impacts.

This regionally-significant planning achievement featured an extensive stakeholder engagement process through each phase of the project. Citizens from all parts of the nation helped shaped the vision through direct input based on an innovative “assets” approach, and our desire for the vision to accurately represent the values and aspirations of the people of Dominica.

The National Land Use Policy and Physical Development Plan:

- Reinforces protection for conservation areas and proposes a new reserve area and buffer zones to further protect natural features;
- Provides long-term protection for agricultural lands;
- Directs development towards areas that are at lower risk of natural hazards;
- Encourages tourism development from the perspective of low-volume, high value tourists who will value the natural environment that is being protected in Dominica;
- Identifies and prioritizes the investments that are key to implementing the framework; and,
- Recommends strategies for institutional strengthening and capacity building.