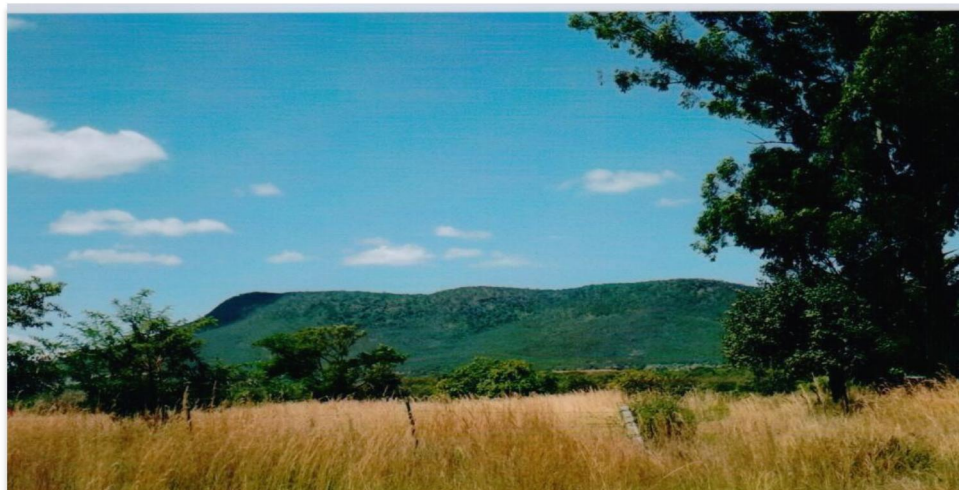


HWEDZA RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL MASTER PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HWEDZA RURAL DISTRICT SPATIAL MASTER PLAN



2025 to 2035

PREPARED BY NHEWA TOWN PLANNERS & DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANCY

ON BEHALF OF

**HWEDZA RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL & DEPARTMENT OF
SPATIAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT - MASHONALAND
EAST PROVINCE**

JUNE 2024

INTRODUCTION:

Wedza (or **Hwedza**) is a district in the province of Mashonaland East Province, of Zimbabwe. It is located about **50**km kilometers South of Marondera, and **137**km kilometers South of Harare. The area was sparsely inhabited by the Mbire people of the Soko Clan as early inhabitants who mined *iron* in the Hwedza hills during the 9th-12th centuries which means "*a place of wealth*". A village of Hwedza (Wedza) was established in 1910 by Cecil John Rhodes and his Colonial administration. *Gold, beryl, nickel, tungsten and granite* were mined in the hills around the village but deposits were too small to make further commercial mining viable.

The word Hwedza (Wedza) literally translates to "*the lighting of the sun*", or "*twilight*", and myth has it that the word is derived from the location of the ancient town, which was found on the other side of a deep forest. Pre-Colonial era Hwedza (Wedza) was called Mbire. It

was a very important area because of the iron which was mined in the Hwedza (Wedza) mountains. The iron was important for both wealth and ceremonial purposes. The iron was fashioned into *hoes*, *axes* and other *farming implements* which people especially *young man in need of a wife* required. A **hoe** especially was central part of the marriage ceremony. A young man could not obtain a wife if he could not present his future mother-in-law with one during the roora ceremony.

AIMS OF THE HWEDZA RURAL DISTRICT MASTER PLAN 2025-2035

The Hwedza District Rural Master Plan 2025-2035, aims to:

- ✓ Ensure that there is sufficient land to meet the needs of the people in Hwedza over a 10-year period in terms of agriculture, housing, employment, social, cultural, recreational and sporting activities,
- ✓ Provide the Rural District Council and other development agencies with a set of policies designed to assist in the orderly, attractive and harmonious development of the district,
- ✓ Provided the basis for stimulating the local economy and thus help create jobs and employment opportunities,
- ✓ Protect and enhance the natural environment of the district.

FORM AND CONTENT OF THE RURAL MASTER PLAN

The Hwedza RDC Rural Master Plan 2025-2035 has been prepared under the RTCP, ACT 2019, part IV and its associated Regulations

(Master and Local Plans) 1977. Under these statutory provisions the Master Plan has been prepared as a comprehensive statutory plan in two parts. Stage 1 consisted of the Report of Study of the district, analyzing the existing situation, problems and potentials in terms of Report of Study also aimed at understanding and analyzing trends to that the future issues could be identified. The Report of Study provides a basis to and leads into the second stage, the Written Statement. This sets out a set of strategies and policies for the future development and growth of the district. Master Plans have traditionally been concerned with allocating sufficient land in appropriate locations to enable the district to develop in an efficient and harmonious way and setting down detailed proposals to control development. However, the Hwedza Rural Master Plan in addition to providing that basic spatial dimension, considerable stress on the need for sustainable development. This involved measures designed to promote the district/local economy within a framework of environmental protection.

THE REPORT OF STUDY

The Report of Study has been produced and should be read in conjunction with the Written Statement. The study examined the district and its hinterland in terms of its regional and historic setting, natural resources and environment, land ownership and use, population, housing, the agricultural practices/economy, social framework and services, transport, infrastructure, finance and management. These various issues were considered both in

terms of the existing situation and future possibilities taking into account needs and trends. In conclusion, the Study arrived at a set of key issues affecting the future development of Hwedza district and it is these issues, that provide the basis for the Written Statement.

THE WRITTEN STATEMENT

The Written Statement consists of a policy document, which establishes the framework for the development of Hwedza RDC master plan for the next (10) ten years. Based upon projections and estimates for population, land needs and other factors the written statement identifies key issues and sets out the vision for Hwedza RDC through a series of goals and objectives and then establishes strategies for achieving these goals and objectives. The document consists of a number of justified policies and proposals, that are also indicated, the Proposals Map No. 9 and 10.

GEOGRAPHY

Hwedza is under Chief Svosve and Chief Ruzane is well connected to other towns by tarred roads. Rusunzwe and Gandamasango, the famous Hwedza mountain range, are some of the most outstanding geographical features in the district. Hwedza District boundaries are the Save River on the west; and Ruzawe (Ruzawi) river on the east. Other rivers include Nyamidzi, Mhare, Nyamhembe and Chineyi.

Hwedza is climatically divided into two halves, upper Hwedza from St. Barnabas Chisasike to Hwedza Growth Point, onwards which is cooler and has average to high rainfall; and lower Hwedza which is from Mukamba through Goneso and Zviyambe East and West small scale farming area (*formerly known as {APL} African Purchase Land*) which experiences warm to hot temperatures and low rainfall. Even the crops grown in the two parts differ significantly, *cotton* and *sorghum/millet* do better in lower Hwedza, while in upper Hwedza *maize, winter-wheat, tobacco crops* and *exotic timber* (gum trees) would yield much commercial value.

Hwedza is also known for *mazhanje/mashuku*; a wild fruit harvested between late October into early December. In the Makwarimba area there is plenty wild *guava trees*, mainly along streams and rivers.

SERVICES AND TRANSPORTATION

Hwedza District is accessible by road from Harare but the roads have depreciated in quality as a result of the 'Land Reform Policy' which saw industry severely disrupted. Bus companies have stopped servicing the remote parts such as the areas of Chigondo, St. Leoba, and Zana Resettlement. However, daily services are run by several minibus operators to the city of Harare and Marondera, usually terminating at Murambinda Growth Point in Buhera District of Manicaland Province.

The service centre (growth point) consists of a Spar supermarket, a post office, a filling station, several drinking places and is served by

reliable bus services by Chawasarira, Manica, Matemba, Mushandira/Matemai as well as several minibus operators. An airstrip capable of landing small aircraft is also present.

There is a clinic as well as a Hospital at Mt. St. Marys. Hwedza is also on the national electricity grid. The main crop grown is maize for both subsistence and sale.

ECONOMY

The core business of Hwedza district was farming with its aligned service industries until disruptions to commercial agriculture and ranching in the area. Land Reform Project 2000, of Zimbabwe saw white Zimbabwean farmers who had bought the land after 1980 in the time of Zimbabwe Independence, with only a few who had inherited from their parents during colonial times were violently thrown off the land by ZANU PF stalwarts. The farms were soon in rack and ruin producing absolutely nothing this in turn meant vast amounts of locally employed people lost jobs and livelihoods.

AGRICULTURE

Hwedza's unique location offers a vast array of agricultural opportunity. Areas along Watershed Road leading into Wedza from Harare were known for *tobacco*, *maize* and *paprika* production during the warm wet season (October to March). The more southerly part of the district encompassing areas of Makarara, Zviyambe and leading into Dorowa were once a bastion of *cotton* farming and *cattle ranching* before 2000. The more central part of the district has a

history of erratic rain and as such, villages located in this part of the district are often in need of food aid as they often fail to reap meaningful harvests with the unpredictable rainfall patterns.

Currently tobacco is the most dominant field crop grown, followed by groundnuts which is grown in every homestead especially in Zviyambe area. The tobacco production has expanded significantly in Zviyambe and resettlement areas giving an average output of **1300kg** per hectare. The 2013 to 2015 tobacco selling seasons has shown that most farmers had improved in terms of output and quality. However due persistent drought years and poor inputs of implements and required chemicals and irrigation; the 2021 to 2024 witnessed reduced cropping Hectarage, and quality of tobacco. Some farmers did not even plant the crop or reduced Hectarage.

2023/one of the communal land farmer in (Ward 10) Chigondo area with his 1.5ha of tobacco crop as taken in April 2024 during tour of Hwedza district



POLITICS

Upper Hwedza (Wedza) (*Hwedza North Constituency*) which mainly consists of Old Resettlement, Model A1 and A2 Resettlement and some Commercial farms, has good rainfall, a Hospital and at least 3 good boarding schools namely Chemhanza, Mt. St. Marys Rusunzwe and St. Annes Goto. The area was seized from the Mbire people by the original white settler farmers most of whom had been gold panners and fortune hunters tricked by Cecil John Rhodes and Rudd into settling as farmers under the promise of finding gold. Failing to find the gold they had been promised they were encouraged to take whatever land they needed in what areas suited them and become farmers. Through this exercise they drove away the local Mbire people into villages in lower Hwedza (Wedza) where the rain is erratic and the soil significantly poor. Through this exercise many were driven off their ancestral lands living behind *family shrines and graves through the Tribal Trust Lands Act*. The first Chimurenga which was won by the Rhodesian forces paved way to this exercise. The SECOND CHIMURENGA and its aftermath has for years inclined the popular vote from the district towards **ZANU PF**. However, despite the socio-economic challenges Hwedza District has continued to be a stronghold of ZANU-PF.

EDUCATION

Notable schools from the Hwedza district are St Annes Goto (Anglican), Mt St Marys (Catholic), Chemhanza (Methodist) and

Hwedza High School (government). Other institutions include Matsine, Chigwedere, Gumbonzvanda, St Margaret's Chigondo, Nhumwa, St Leoba's, Holy Spirit Ruzane, St Anderson Mutiweshiri, Makanda, Barnabas, St Augustine Chitida and Rambanapasi to name but a few.

Several schools are funded by RDC, Missionaries, Private Individuals and the Donor Community within the district and Zimbabwe.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The following are some of the primary schools in the district; however, the majority need rehabilitation and additional teachers' accommodation and energized electrical lines and transformers.

St Johns Maninga Primary School, St Barnabas Primary School, Chimimba Primary School, Chinyonga primary school, Makurumure primary school, St Thomas Aquinas Primary School, St Margaret's Chigondo Primary School, St Matthias Ruswa Primary School, St Joseph's Primary School, Gumbonzvanda Primary School, St Paul's Primary School, St Stephen's Makurumure primary school, St John's Matsvai Primary School, Chemhanza Primary School, Mt St Mary's

(Rusunzwe) Primary School, Payarira Primary School, Sengezi Primary School, Magamba Primary School, Mukondwa Primary School, Gandamasungu Primary School, Rambanapasi Primary School, St Johns Matsvai Primary School, Mutupwizana Primary School, Holy Spirit Ruzane School, St Mark's Goneso Primary School, St Mark's Musavadye Primary School, St Augustine Chitida.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Like already stated above, the Secondary Schools need more appropriate school infrastructure, such as libraries, laboratories, home-economics buildings. There is need for more Boarding Schools with “**A Levels**” and at least four **(4)**.

There is **NOT** a single VTC Vocational Training College in the whole some distinctive people who hail from Hwedza district. Some of the of Hwedza district, **Annexure 4** of the **WRITTEN STATEMENT** has Secondary Schools are:

St Barnabas (Madzimbabwe) Secondary School. St Mathias Ruswa Secondary School, Hwedza High School, Mt St Mary's High School, St Augustine Chitida, Saint Thomas Aquinas Secondary, Mukondwa Secondary School, St Annes Goto High School, Chemhanza High School, Zana Secondary School, Rambanapasi Secondary School, Magamba Secondary School, Matsine Secondary School, Holy Spirit Ruzane School, St Mary's

Makanda Secondary School, Gumbonzvanda High School, St Paul's Sango Secondary School.

Tourism

The location of **IMIRE GAME PARK** within the district makes it a somehow good location for a *safari* trip. The game park has for years taken part in the Rhinoceros breeding programme. However, of late poachers have killed several of the animals including breeding cows. However, more tourists' areas could be exploited as a package of Imire Game Park safari and leisure trips and these need to benefit and have communities having some 'share equity'.

NOTABLE PEOPLE:

Rtd. General Constantino **Chiwenga**, Rev. Nolbert **Kunonga** of the Harare Anglican Church dioceses, and Tinashe **Mutarisi**.

FAMOUS RESIDENTS

Several people of prominence in civil society and government have emerged from Wedza.

- Retired General Constantino Chiwenga – Zimbabwe's **1st Vice President** of Second Republic.
- George Tawengwa - Nationalist, Businessman
- Paul Tangi Mhova Mkondo - Nationalist, part of the first group of Gonakudzingwa restriction camp political prisoners, Pioneer Indigenous Businessman & Entrepreneur, Pioneer Indigenous Commercial Farmer, Philanthropist and Conservationist.

- Sunday Chidzambwa A former Metal Box FC and Dynamos FC, also a former Zimbabwe Warriors football coach, and ZIFA Chairman.

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