



Beautification Strategy

The Royal Borough of Arima

23rd November 2015

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Introduction

The Borough of Arima strives to set itself apart from surrounding towns and carve its unique niche along the East-West corridor. This preliminary Beautification Concept Plan for the Borough attempts to document ideas to improve the overall appeal of Arima’s town centre from the perspectives of residents, the business community and visitors and improve its outlook for development. The benefits of documenting the plan include:

- Consistency in decision-making
- Ability to make informed decisions
- Achieve predictability so stakeholders can plan accordingly
- Prudent use of resources
- Preservation of natural beauty

Branding a city is not just about the logo but the intricate details — as small as clean streets and as deep as getting a city's residents to feel proud to be brand ambassadors. When citizens are proud, visitors are encouraged to find out what the fuss is all about and then tell the world. (Salman, 2008)



To remain viable, the Beautification Plan should be dynamic, responsive to changes in the environment and should also be evaluated and amended periodically.

In keeping with the objectives outlined in the 2013 PNM Local Government Elections Manifesto, it is hoped that this Beautification Plan will inspire pride and loyalty, attract business and visitors and improve the way the community is viewed and experienced by all citizens. Community involvement and ownership is therefore critical to the realization of this project and it is strongly suggested that a “bottom-up” approach from the users’ perspectives be considered.

In acknowledgement of the Arima Borough Corporation’s role (See Appendix I) and in noting the need for improved parallel support mechanisms for beautification and maintenance, it is proposed that key collaborators be identified (eg. CISL, URP) and clearly delineated responsibility be delegated where necessary. This will provide a framework for accountability and will minimize duplication of activities, wastage of resources and confusion.

This proposal has identified a number of beautification opportunities with proposed implementation timeframes which vary depending on the scale of the project, ability to attain approvals, materials, labour and weather conditions. Priority should be given to those projects which have high visibility and which are located near to high traffic corridors. Possible interventions are listed in **Table I Proposed Interventions** below.

Table I Proposed Interventions

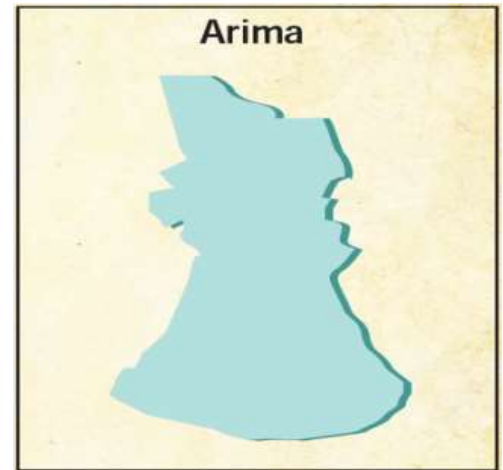
<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Medium Term</i>	<i>Long Term</i>
Public Art Programme	Entry Sign Installation	Maxi-Taxi Hub Overhaul
Social Media Photography Competition	Greening the Town Centre	Grants for Façade Upgrades in Town Centre/ Tax Breaks for Architectural Preservation
School Recycling Programme		



Background

About Arima

The Borough of Arima is home to approximately 34,000 individuals from roughly 10,000 households. It is widely known as the home of the country's First Peoples and has been considered the national capital of parang, horse racing and cycling for decades. Arima is the first town in the Western Hemisphere to be granted the status of a Royal Chartered Borough, attaining this honour in 1888 from Queen Victoria. It remains a major transit hub along the East-West Corridor, facilitating the passage of hundreds of persons daily onward their homes, places of work and school.



The Borough is enclosed by the following borders:

- On the **North** by the Arima Bye Pass Road and the Blanchisseuse Road;
- On the **East** by the Arima River
- On the **South** by the Churchill Roosevelt Highway; and
- On the **West** by the Mausica River, Part of Victory Gardens & Calvary Branch Trace.



The Problem

Whilst Arima is a humble town with a rich cultural history, the town centre is increasingly beset by heavy traffic congestion, untidiness, vagrancy, scarce urban greenery, obstructed sidewalks and unappealing building facades.

There is noticeable need for clearly identified parking facilities, public conveniences and wayfinding signage for visitors. The re-paving of road arteries and modification of sidewalks to facilitate easy usage by the young, differently abled and elderly will undoubtedly complement the Council's beautification drive.

Additionally, it appears that many are not conscientious of litter legislation. Coupled with poor enforcement, a culture of littering continues to be nurtured in Arima with little consequence to those in breach. Valuable manpower from the Arima Borough Corporation and other State Agencies continues to be assigned to correct this recurring yet preventable problem. Financial limitations and ineffective oversight of maintenance also compounds the challenges faced in implementing corrective strategies.

Size of Borough	1115.4 hectares
Population (2010) :	33,606 (CSO, 2012)
Population of Arima in relation to National Population	2.5%
Population Density	2,801 persons per sq. km.
Average Household Size	3.4 persons; 2 children or more
Number of Households	9,875
Median age of persons living in Borough	33 years
Out-Migration; In-Migration	17%; 13%
Household Income per capita	\$5,994.6
Municipal Budget	
Strategic Approach:	Town Centre Beautification
Time-frame:	2015-2017

The above-mentioned issues could dissuade persons from visiting the town centre and weaken the overall attractiveness of the Borough to residents, businesses and visitors. This in turn can impact upon the value of residential real estate, the vibrancy of business activity and the overall well-being of all users.

Local Example – Cleanup Campaign

The San Fernando City Corporation recently launched a widely publicized week-long Cleanup Campaign, calling upon residents and the business community to volunteer their resources to improve their neighbourhoods (See **Figure 1**).

Figure 1: San Fernando City Corporation's Social Media Campaign



The poster features a large green recycling symbol in the center. Inside the symbol, there is a silhouette of a tree, a person walking, and a person pushing a cart. Below the symbol, the text reads "San Fernando City Clean-up Campaign VOLUNTEER" in blue and black. At the bottom, the dates "31Oct - 6Nov" are written in red. The background is white with a blue top section and a yellow bottom section.

To volunteer to be part of the San Fernando Clean-up Campaign from Oct. 31 - Nov. 6, please register via our online form here <http://bit.ly/1W4sBhV>

JOIN US IN CLEANING UP:

- All Residences
- Our City's Schools
- Government Buildings
- Police Stations
- Fire Stations
- Our Hospitals and Health Centres
- Dilapidated Structures
- Senior Citizens' Homes
- Children's Homes
- Parks & Play-fields
- Vacant Lots & Open Spaces
- Removal of Derelict Vehicles
- Removal of Stray Dogs

This exercise is part of the San Fernando Cleanup Campaign launched by His Worship the Mayor Alderman Haji Kazim Hosein, The Aldermen, Councillors, CEO and Administration of the San Fernando City Corporation.



Description

The strategic vision for the development of the Borough of Arima is managed by the Arima Borough Council. Ideas for the aesthetic enhancement of the Borough of Arima are collated and articulated by the Beautification Sub-Committee of the Council and set before the Council for ratification.

“Branding” Arima







Branding isn't just a logo or a tagline; it is about coordinated activities which create a strong, specific persona which can even be identified and captured in photographs.

The strategic vision for the community *should* inform the brand and scope of development and consequently, the beautification projects undertaken. Themed development unifies beautification efforts and can aid in the formation of a strong community identity. **Figure 2** illustrates examples of themed features which can aid Arima’s branding.

“Think about the way that people treat you when you travel abroad. Probably, without exception they want to know where you are from. You can literally see how your answer triggers images in their mind: if you say “I am from Berlin”, the word will conjure particular qualities they associate in their mind with your city, and which they then project to you. Their automatic reaction to your person may depend on the image they have of your country or city of origin.” (Kalandides, 2012)¹



Figure 2: Examples of Themed Developmental Features for the Royal Chartered Borough of Arima

<p>Brand Identity</p>	 <p>Ancestry/1st Peoples</p>	 <p>Time-Keeper/Royalty</p>	 <p>Green/Cycling Culture</p>
<p>Design Features which can Complement Brand</p>			

Branding Approach

- Identification of native resources and assets
- Conduct of surveys to establish basis for evaluation
- Public solicitation of ideas for slogan/themes related to the town's inherent resources and assets (Figure 3)
- Conduct of risk assessment and identification of proactive maintenance measures
- Selection of strategy and commissioning of a test model (where applicable)
- Documentation of community feedback and evaluation of responses
- Implementation of initiatives based on feedback
- Continued monitoring and evaluation of success

Figure 3: Incorporating the Ideas of the Community into the Conversation



Goals

The proposed goals of this Beautification Plan are as follows:

1. To improve the aesthetic appeal of the Borough
2. To foster community pride and build a positive identity
3. To craft a spirit of collaboration by acquiring public opinion on improvement ideas
4. To educate and encourage buy-in from the public
5. To designate responsibility for the management of initiatives
6. To promote Arima as a viable tourist/cultural attraction
7. To attract business.

Opportunities to Beautify the Borough of Arima

1.0 Short-term Initiatives

1.1 Public Art Programme

The commissioning of a Public Art Programme will showcase the talents of the burgesses via a designated display area in public buildings and in designated outdoor spaces in Arima. It is an opportunity for town beautification which incorporates the abilities of residents. Schools, community groups and the general public will be invited to submit art pieces to the Council for consideration and timely feedback.

Artwork may take many forms, including but not limited to paintings, photos and sculptures for both indoor and outdoor exhibition. A parallel display with a description of each piece will be made available on the Borough's website and social media pages for further reference. Artwork should ideally be interchanged annually to maintain the vibrancy of the programme.

Figure 4: Local Artwork Displayed at the Annual Arima Art Exhibition



Figure 5: Public Offices, Arima



Budget (Project 1.1)

<u>Promotional Activities</u>	<u>Est. Unit Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Total (TT)</u>
Graphic Design	\$600	1	\$600
Sponsored Facebook Ads	\$40/wk	3 weeks	\$120
Newspaper Advertisement	\$100	4 days	\$400
<u>Painting/Photography</u>			
Photo/Canvas Framing (20"x24")	\$500	5	\$2,500
Hooks to affix to wall	\$20	5	\$100
Descriptive Signage	\$200	5	\$1,000
<u>Sculptures</u>			
Installation	\$1000	5	\$5,000
Descriptive Signage	\$200	5	\$1,000
Total			\$10,720



1.2 Social Media Photography/Art Competition

A simple way to encourage the community to see the beauty in the Borough and simultaneously collect valuable photo footage may be to host an Arima-based photography competition on social media. A catchy social media hashtag like #ArtinArima or #BeautyInTheBorough can be iterated in the promotional campaign. This will provide high visibility and easy digital referencing of the beautification effort on social media (see <http://goo.gl/dJE9uu> for tips).

Figure 6: Example of Photo Contest Promotion



The composition of photos/artwork as well as judging criteria may be guided by pre-determined themes. Entrants may for instance, be required to incorporate a recognizable “Arima” component/pastime or the Borough colours in their composition. Consideration to age and/or skill level may also be given when crafting competition guidelines and the judging criteria.

The competition may be advertised on various Arima-based social media platforms, in the printed media and with flyers at local schools, supermarkets and community centres. Prizes offered should be age-appropriate and attractive enough to arouse public interest and participation. Submitted artwork may later be displayed in the above-mentioned Public Art Programme, with the permission of entrants.

Budget (Project 1.2)

<u>Promotional Activities</u>	<u>Est. Unit Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Total (TT)</u>
Graphic Design	\$600	1	\$600
Sponsored Facebook Ads	\$40/wk	3 weeks	\$120
Flyer Prints (Colour)	\$3.50	500	\$1,750
Newspaper Advertisement	\$100	4 days	\$400
<u>Prizes</u>			
A ceiling of \$1,200 is suggested for prizes from Arima businesses (which may also be donated). Possible options are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pennywise or Supermarket Spree • Unit Trust Corporation units • Christmas Hampers and Vouchers 			\$1,200
Total			\$4,070

1.3 School Recycling Programme

The Maracas/St. Joseph Rotary Club, in collaboration with SWMCOL, Tetra-pak and the Maracas/St. Joseph community successfully completed a recycling initiative over the period April 24th to July 25th 2015 (14 weeks). The targeted recyclables included plastic bottles, glass bottles and aluminum cans which could be repurposed by SWMCOL and Tetra-pak’s recycling facilities.



This project can easily be replicated in the Arima community with an aim to encourage Arima youth to be mindful of their waste and to adopt more environmentally-friendly behaviours. An invitation letter to the principals/project leaders of Arima-based primary and secondary schools can be dispatched to ascertain interest in setting up school recycling programmes. A Powerpoint presentation outlining the project objectives and the types of refuse to be collected can be shown at participating schools, a function usually facilitated by SWMCOL’s public education team.

Figure 7: Flyers utilized in Maracas/St. Joseph's Recycling Programme



Bins should be clearly labeled, lined with clear plastic bags and set up at participating schools. The Borough Corporation may collect these recyclables weekly from all schools and deliver to SWMCOL’s recycling facility located just off the highway in Sea Lots. The project may later be extended and replicated in neighbourhoods, and managed by various community groups.

Budget (Project 1.3) – 14 weeks

<u>Supplies</u>	<u>Est. Unit Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Total (TT)</u>
Recycle Bins (3 bins each in 4 primary schools)	\$250	12	\$3,000
Large clear plastic bags	\$1.25	1,000	\$1,250
Signage and Labels	\$200	4	\$800
Transport	\$400	14 trips	\$5,600
Total			\$10,100



2.0 Medium-term Initiatives

2.1 *Entry Sign Installation*

The objective of this proposed initiative is to create a beautiful visual landmark that visitors can identify when navigating the Borough, and of which residents can feel proud.

The Borough of Arima has 8 main access roads. The main entryways are denoted by the numbered stars in **Figure 8**:

1. Blanchisseuse Road (North)
2. Arima Old Road (West)
3. Eastern Main Road (West)
4. Priority Bus Route (West)
5. O'Meara Road (South)
6. Tumpuna Road (South)
7. Pinto Road (East)
8. Maturita Village (East)

Only one of these entryways has a sign to alert motorists/visitors that they have entered the Borough of Arima (See **Figure 9**). Moreover, the sponsored entry sign is poorly maintained - surrounded by high bushes and blocked by a tree, and though the sign is made of reflective material, it is not visible without an external source of light.

The theme/brand selected will again inform the style and design features incorporated into the Borough's new signage and will give character to the town. The towns of Tunapuna and St. James for instance, have had stately arches installed across their entryways which are easily identifiable and are now recognised as landmarks (See **Figure 10**). This strategy could be tailored to suit the Borough.

The signage materials should be low-cost and low-maintenance and lighting should also be considered for night visibility.

Figure 8: Map of Arima Pinpointing Major Entryways

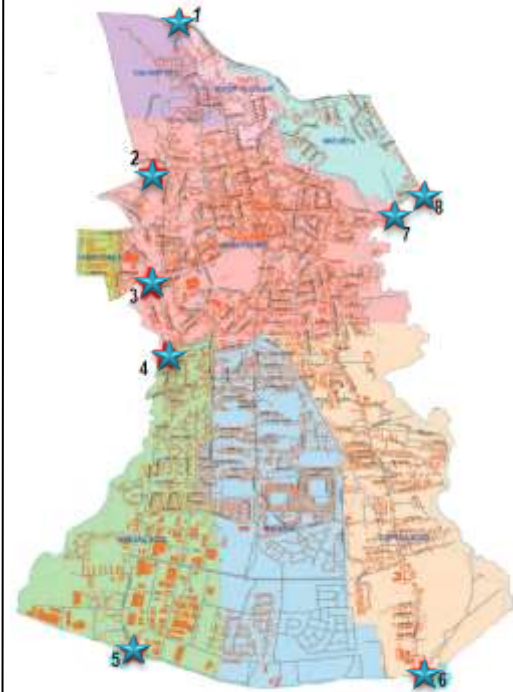


Figure 9: Sponsored Entry Sign for the Borough of Arima on the E.M.R.



Figure 10: Local Examples of Town Signage



Should funding permit, more innovative, themed signage may be installed to notify and visually welcome visitors to the Borough, as depicted with examples in Figure 11 below.

Figure 11: Innovative, Themed Town Signage



The public’s input in the selection of design will also assist in obtaining the buy-in of the beautification efforts by the community and demonstrate that the Council cares about residents’ views on how their communities should be decorated. Innovative strategies for example - displaying print-outs of four short-listed designs for the consideration and vote of residents in a location with high foot traffic, will offer greater visibility and will engage more residents than a focus group meeting.

The Council may also consider creating standardizing guidelines for signage aligned to the overall town theme at each entryway.

Required Elements on all Official Signage in the Royal Chartered Borough of Arima

- Borough Logo and Name
- Slogan
- Town population count
- Blue background, yellow text
- Font style and size
- Height and width specifications

Budget (Project 2.1) – Dependent on Materials and Design Selected

<u>Sign Building</u>	<u>Est. Unit Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Total (TT)</u>
General Design	\$3,000	1	\$3,000
Manufacture	\$5,000	8	\$40,000
<u>Installation</u>			
Sign Installation	\$1,500	8	\$12,000
Landscaping Materials	\$2,000	8	\$16,000
Total			\$71,000



2.2 “Greening” the Town Centre

There have been efforts to “green” the town centre by installing recycling bins and potted plants as well as landscaping projects with varying degrees of success (See Figure 12). There is still much potential for these interventions, synchronized with a community education programme and wider promotion of the beautification strategy.

Figure 12: Greening the Town Centre



The advantages of greening the town centre include:

- Reduced storm-water runoff
- Improved urban aesthetics
- Improved air quality
- Shading and cooler temperatures
- Reduced volume of pollutants carried to storm drains and waterways
- Creates a green space which is ideal for increased biodiversity

A few progressive changes can be made to make the Borough of Arima more environmentally-friendly and pleasing to the eye. Possible strategies include:

- Permeable paving of parking areas, parking lots and sidewalks
- Curb-greening
- Sidewalk trees and tree boxes (using silva cells)
- Solar lighting
- Rain-harvested public sink/bathroom facilities

Sidewalk repair and standardization could certainly ease pedestrian flow around planted/potted trees and shrubs, direct surface water underground and could also open up possible spaces for seating areas in Arima’s town centre (See Figure 15, Figure 15, Figure 14 and Figure 16).

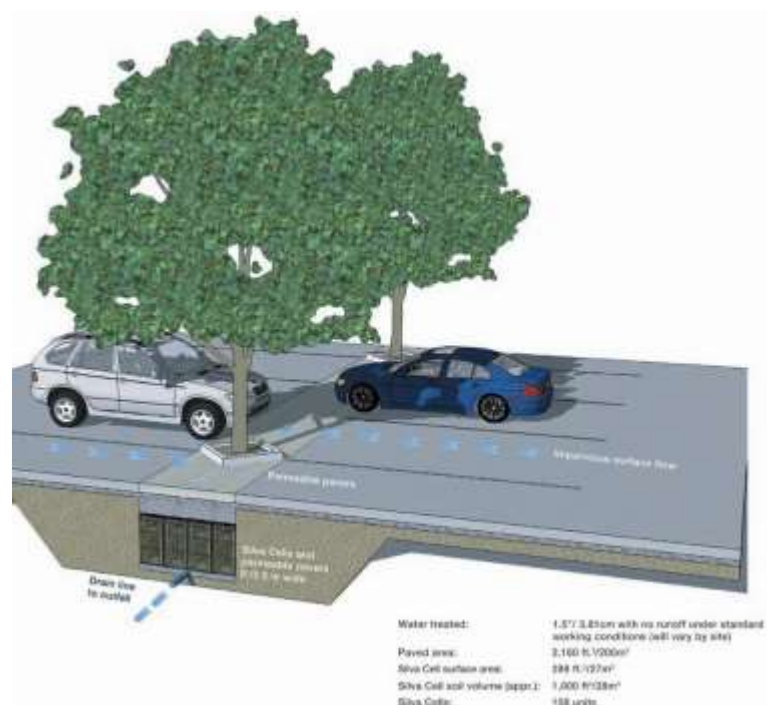




Figure 14: Broadway Street, Arima



Figure 15: Planning considerations for Beautification of Arima streets



Figure 16: Examples of "Greening" Narrow Town Pavements





3.0 Long-Term Initiatives

3.1 Maxi Hub Overhaul

Commuters board maxi-taxis at 4 different locations in Arima as shown by blue stars in Figure 17. These hubs can be spruced up inexpensively to meet the basic needs of this varied itinerant demographic. The hubs serve the following routes:

1. Eastern Main Road (to Port of Spain)
2. Port of Spain Priority Bus Route (to Port of Spain)
3. Southern Main Road (to Chaguanas)
4. Eastern Main Road (to Sangre Grande)

A total of five (5) Maxi drivers at the #1 and # 2 locations were randomly interviewed for their opinion on possible improvements to the hub. Their responses are as follows:

- Bathroom and sink facilities
- Signage identifying route
- Improved lighting and security
- Painted lines on road to outline the maxi-stand perimeter
- Side barriers to thwart “line-cutting”.

Figure 17: Map Showing Location of Maxi-Taxi Stands in Arima

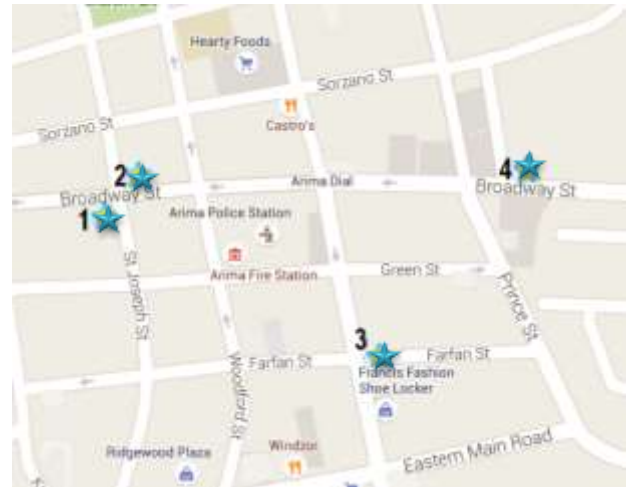


Figure 18: Priority Bus Route Maxi-Taxi Stand





According to the Pedestrian Facilities Guidebook¹, the basic facilities required for an effective pedestrian hub are:

- Overhead awnings or shelters for protection from sun/rain
- Clear and easy to read signage
- Well lighted and secure facility
- Adequate seating
- Convenient drop-off zones and parking facilities
- Easily accessible public facilities (such as restrooms, payphones and water fountains)

These elements can be implemented affordably and with minimal disruption with good planning and forethought. Renewed communication and collaboration with the business community is crucial to the advancement of this project as most of these hubs are located near or on private commercial property where the proposed structures may be erected. The benefits of a new façade on the value of the private real estate and the potential for improved customer inflows to the businesses should be communicated early to encourage buy-in.

Obtaining easements and maintenance agreements will also protect both the Borough and private interests and may spawn greater trust. The Borough may consider purchasing the planting or structural material and require the owner to install or maintain these items. The Committee may also consider developing a reference list of qualified landscape contractors to install and maintain landscaped areas in keeping with the Borough’s beautification vision and oversight requirements.

Figure 19: Externally sourced images showing ideas for maxi taxi hub improvement



¹ Wash



3.2 Grants for Façade Upgrades in Town Centre/ Tax Breaks for Architectural Preservation

Internationally, town councils have made concessions to owners of historical and commercial buildings to encourage and facilitate façade rehabilitation. These concessions may take the form of tax credits or grants for building upgrades aligned to the city or town's overall development strategy.

The objectives of an Arima-based Façade Upgrade programme may include the following:

- To aid in the coordinated rehabilitation and preservation of commercial and residential building façades in Arima;
- To provide incentive to private sector business collaborators to comply with guidelines that are compatible with Arima's existing or proposed character; and
- Retain and attract businesses in town centre

Important physical and visual characteristics to consider are:

1. A commercial façade that is closely aligned to its neighbours to create a sense of containment to the street.
2. Expresses individuality, as well as unity, when it is part of an identifiable commercial area;
3. Supports sidewalk activities such as window shopping and walking;
4. Is well proportioned oriented to the pedestrian sidewalk; and,
5. Is composed of good materials of quality and fine detailing.

Conclusion

The beautification of the Royal Chartered Borough of Arima should ideally be linked to a documented strategic developmental plan which takes into consideration the town's existing and potential character, as well as its impact on users.

This draft proposal contains ideas for beautification and community participation which may be incorporated into a regular community engagement exercise. It is anticipated that the implementation of these initiatives will improve conditions for residents, businesses, visitors and the Borough's administration and will positively reshape the way the town is perceived by all.

Project Proposal Outline

Title	Beautify the Royal Chartered Borough of Arima
Origin	Borough of Arima, St. George - East
Beneficiaries	Residents Visitors Neighbouring Communities Businesses
Partners	Arima Borough Corporation Government Ministries/Agencies Arima Community/Village Councils Business Community Arima Vibes General Public
Duration	6-8months for short-term projects
Budget	
Theme	“Royal Arima” – historic, majestic and esteemed
Priority Issue	Clear, consistent and clutter-free town organisation. Free flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, visually appealing and safe for all ages.
Goal	Creating aesthetic appeal in public spaces in the Borough of Arima
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Synchronised and clear implementation strategy for the beautification of Arima’s town centre – 70% improvement in user perceptions of town based on pre- and post-beautification surveys – New greenery and shaded areas – New seating areas – New informational themed signage – Increased community involvement and participation
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Competitions and exhibitions – Public education via promo booths, direct mail, social media, flyers – Public consultation and focus groups meetings – Community clean-up day – Community planting/greening day – Regular social media updates/ Installation of bulletin board to keep public informed
Actions Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Written commitment from project partners – Budget and resource allocation commitment – Community involvement



Appendices

Functions

In accordance with the Municipal Corporation's Act No. 21 of 1990, the general functions of the Corporation are as follows:

- The construction and maintenance of all drains and water-courses except main water-courses and highway water-courses;
- The provision, maintenance and control of all Corporation buildings;
- The provision, maintenance and control of such parks, recreation grounds and other public places as the President may from time to time by Order prescribe;
- The promotion of development within the Municipality in accordance with plans prepared by the Minister with responsibility for physical planning;
- The disposal of garbage from public and private property, abatement of public nuisances and dissemination of information for primary health care;
- The co-ordination of local and regional trade fairs, athletic events and cultural displays and entertainment;
- The provision, maintenance and management of the Market and Abattoir;
- The collection and distribution of forms issued by Departments of Government; and
- Such other functions as the President may from time to time by Order prescribe.

Other Services provided by the Corporation include:

- Issuance of Construction Permits;
- Issuance of Removal of House/Building Certificates;
- Issuance of Food Badges;
- Inspection, Registration and Issuance of Certificates for Cinemas;
- Inspection, Registration and Issuance of Certificates for Food Premises;
- Processing of Water Applications;
- Assessment of Properties for payment of Rates and Taxes;
- Issuance of Certificates of Assessment;
- Transfer of Properties; and
- Rental of the Corporation's Facilities and Advertising Space.