

Ontulili Meru County

Our Town: Well- planned, Managed and Economically Sustainable

Ontulili – 'Sodom apples' in Massi

A multi-cultural town 210 km north of Nairobi City, and gateway to the great Meru County.

Located on the highway connecting Kenya to Ethiopia, on the border with Laikipia County and Nanyuki town, and adjacent to Mount Kenya, it is strategically placed to benefit from the economic regional drivers of agribusiness and tourism.



20 years from now, we want Ontulili to be well planned, managed and economically sustainable.

A range of stakeholders – including residents, county and national government officials, Faith and Community Based Organizations, political representatives, and service providers – have come together to formulate this vision. We identified Ontulili’s main sustainability challenges, their solutions, and our own priorities, in an Urban Sustainability Review.

Some of the questions that arose were:

1. Our population is growing – why are there no public parks or recreational spaces for us to spend leisure time in?
2. There is stagnant, dirty water near our homes – what can we do about it?
3. There are economic opportunities such as tourism that we could pursue – what do we need to do to tap our potential?
4. Waste is randomly dumped throughout Ontulili – why do we allow this to happen and what are we going to do to change this?
5. Many of our residents travel to Nanyuki for work every day – why do we not have a bus stopping area for them to use?
6. Our residents walk to their places of work but we have no pedestrian walkways for them use – we need to change this now!
7. Ontulili residents live and work in shanties – what can be done to improve the quality of life for everyone?
8. Our residents need to access County Government services – why do we not have a facility in our town to allow residents to do this?



Our needs are many. Our town is in its infancy and there are no basic urban services to speak of. The Urban Sustainability Review is our manifesto for Ontulili and under the SymbioCity programme we will begin implementing change on the ground. Stakeholders recognize that the process towards development will be a long journey, but each step we take will help us realize our aspirations.

Together we identified three priorities for action:

1. **Development of a modern integrated market** that showcases sustainable solutions and acts as a centerpiece for Ontulili as it grows and develops
2. **Pursuit of a diversified approach to water supply** in response to the growing demand for and sensitivity of, our current supply options
3. **A full spectrum response to our environmental issues** (such as solid and liquid waste) and opportunities (presented by greening Ontulili and providing recreational spaces)

We agreed that we would pursue the first of these (a modern integrated market) under SymbioCity. But we will introduce elements of the other priorities into our project development. As a starter we will install floodlights in the Makutano and Katheri markets and green the surrounds of both markets.



A well planned, managed and economically sustainable town

Objective 1

Create a green town: a) Protect conserve and enhance our natural resources (forest, water, land) b) Develop a livable urban environment

Objective 4

Ensure safe and efficient mobility in Ontulili for all road users (pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles) to enhance access to services and markets.

Objective 7

Promote affordable, safe and decent low-cost housing

Objective 2

An efficient and hygienic waste management system (solid and liquid) for a clean town

Objective 5

Create more commercial and employment opportunities in diversified sectors (agriculture, hospitality, transport)

Objective 8

Provide better sustainable urban spatial planning leading to a well managed town and enforced development

Objective 3

Improve water supply and ensure a resilient water supply system

Objective 6

Ensure accessible and affordable social (education and health) service delivery

Objective 9

Provide accessible administrative and urban management services within Ontulili

The objectives provide us with a sense of **direction** on how we can achieve our vision. They are **reasonable**, and capable of being taken seriously by all. They provide an **integrated** approach to the development of Ontulili so everyone can benefit. These objectives are **visible**, understood and can be shared. They are **encouraging**, to motivate commitment by all stakeholders. To achieve each objective we have identified targets and actions. Some actions need to happen soon, while some are more complex and costly and will need to be dealt with later. You can find all the targets in our Urban Sustainability Review on: www.symbiocitykenya.org and www.meru.go.ke.

