

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, is situated on the low flat plain of Chao Phraya river which extends to the Gulf of Thailand. Bangkok urban population is four times larger than the population of Thailand's second largest city, Nakon Ratcharima. Compared to other cities in South East Asian region, Bangkok has the highest primacy level. With a population of 10 million and total area of 1,568 sq km, BMA creates Bangkok Metropolitan Region (BMR) with five other adjacent provinces namely Samut Prakarn, Nonthaburi, Pathumthani, Nakhon Pathom and Samut Sakhon with total covering of 7,758 sq km.



Figure 1: Thailand map and Figure 2: Map of Bangkok Metropolitan Region location of BMR.

• Administrative arrangement and planning fabric

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) was established in 1972 after the merging of two provinces, Bangkok and Thonburi. The metropolitan authority of Bangkok comprises of two branches: the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration headed by the elected Governor and the Bangkok Metropolitan Council made up of 57 members elected to a four year term from constituencies based around Bangkok and a secretariat as an executive agency. The administration's roles are to formulate and implement policies regarding the management of Bangkok, these include: transport services, urban planning, waste management, housing, roads and highways, security services and the environment. The BMA's revenues are derived from its regular income and a central government supporting fund. Sources of regular revenues comprises of local taxes, fees, fines, permits, service charges, asset rentals, utilities, and enterprises. According to the Town and Rural Planning Act of 1979 issued by Ministry of Interior, the Urban Development Planning Division pays the responsibility on planning and designing for the Bangkok Comprehensive Plan, updated every five years and used for development planning, maintenance as well as resource allocation and consists of three plans: land use plan, transportation plan, and open space plan.

▶ Urban identity and some critical issues

Bangkok is a rapidly expanding city, with the population growing from approximately 5 million in the early 1990s to more than 10 million at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The annual population growth rate was higher than 3% during 1960-1970 and decreased to approximately 2.7% during 1970-1980. However, it declined to 0.66% during 1990-2000. Urban Bangkok has been classified into three zones; the inner city, the urban fringe and the suburb. The inner city is the main concentration area for governmental offices, commercial

activities, educational establishments, historical conservation areas and living quarters. The urban fringe is the new central business district accommodating outward increase in the numbers of business and commercial activities. Suburban is the outer part of Bangkok link to the inner city by radial roads. Bangkok and its surrounding is Thailand's economic engine. In 2009, BMA produced a GDP of about 3,770 billions of Baht (42% of the country's total GDP). It benefits from agglomeration and scale economies and the scope for further diversification inherent in a broad base of industry and services.

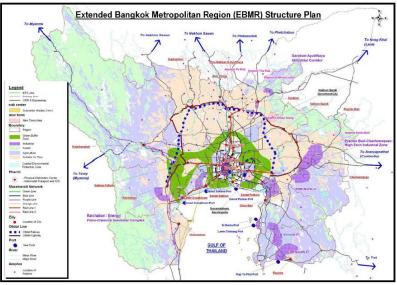


Figure 3: Transportation network and the structure plan of extended BMR.

Bangkok has experienced a prolific growth of slums and squatters since 1971. From a mere 10 settlements location in 1976, the number increased to 3,007 settlements with a population of 1.1 million in 1996. Slums and squatter are not distributed uniformly throughout the city but are concentrated mostly on the fringes. In recent years, it has been observed that slums are expected to keep expanding into suburban areas and adjacent provinces of Bangkok. Although government has put efforts in removing some settlements from the city core areas, new settlements have appeared in the outer zone of metropolitan areas as well as in the adjacent provinces.

▶ Urban evolution and growth story

Since 1960 Bangkok has been undergoing rapid urbanization and industrialization for five decades. The increasing population is due to the development of infrastructures such as road networks, real estate developments, land value, as well as advancing economy which resulted in urban agglomeration into the surrounding areas. The 2006 Bangkok Comprehensive Plan is targeted to accommodate a population of: 9.3 million in 2002, 10.2 million in 2017, and 11 million in 2022, marked for about 54.5 % growth expected during 1995-2015 with urban area estimated on basis of agglomeration instead of administrative boundaries. Additionally BMA has worked out on an Agenda 21 addressing development has to be done in the next 20 years in order to improve the city, the environment and the quality of living for the Bangkok citizen. In 2011 the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the Ministry of Interior have set up a committee that will work closely with six neighbouring provinces to integrate their development with Greater Bangkok regional plan.





Picture above was taken from wordpress.mmreid.org

