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SNAPSHOT

## Mapping a Future for Jalalabad

**A municipality learns how to better serve the people**



Photo: USAID/LARA

*Local engineers and city planners create the map “Who Does What, Where” in Jalalabad City.*

**Jalalabad City benefits from bringing people together with a common vision for the development of the city.**

As is common throughout Afghanistan, the city of Jalalabad does not have an updated urban plan, and until the city approves a new one, the existing 50-year old plan remains the official city blueprint. For both the municipality and citizens alike, this means that community needs and municipal goals cannot be achieved, services are not adequately provided, and land use goes unchecked.

One of the main problems is the inability of the local authorities to guide urban growth and control land use. Land is widely grabbed or seized by powerful individuals for their own profit, or spontaneously occupied by economic migrants. It is common practice for developers to bypass zoning laws and then presume future approval from either the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs or the Municipality.

USAID is supporting Jalalabad’s efforts to resolve this issue, and recently assembled twenty one participants for a mapping exercise, including municipality leaders and engineers, ministry officials, utility departments, and international donors to share information and map “Who Does What, Where.”

Creating an updated land use map and mapping government and non-governmental organization activity across Jalalabad give municipal leaders a better understanding of their city and the needs of the people.

Engineer Zakhil, head of the Directorate of Urban Development Affairs Eastern Region commented, “This was a vital activity for Jalalabad and I am happy to participate in this event for the first time in the city’s history.”

This mapping exercise brought national and local land reform agencies together for the first time, building relationships between the donor community and their Afghan colleagues, and provides a valuable tool for investment coordination.

USAID hopes these mapping clinics will improve stakeholder cooperation and lead to an updated master plan for Jalalabad’s future.