

Law No. (16) of 2023  
Concerning  
Urban Planning in the Emirate of Dubai<sup>1</sup>

---

**We, Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai,**

After perusal of:

Law No. (3) of 2003 Establishing the Executive Council of the Emirate of Dubai;

Law No. (11) of 2003 Establishing Nature Reserves in the Emirate of Dubai;

Law No. (17) of 2005 Establishing the Roads and Transport Authority and its amendments;

Law No. (2) of 2012 Establishing the Dubai Aviation Engineering Projects Corporation;

Law No. (10) of 2015 Concerning the Dubai Aviation City Corporation;

Law No. (1) of 2016 Concerning the Financial Regulations of the Government of Dubai, and its Implementing Bylaw and its amendments;

Law No. (5) of 2021 Concerning the Dubai International Financial Centre;

Decree No. (22) of 2009 Concerning Special Development Zones in the Emirate of Dubai;

Decree No. (34) of 2022 Establishing the Agencies Affiliated to the Dubai Municipality and Determining their Functions;

Decree No. (1) of 2023 Concerning Governance of the Councils/ Boards and Committees Affiliated to the Government of Dubai;

The Order of 1961 Establishing the Dubai Municipality;

Regulation No. (10) of 2006 Concerning Applications for Exemption from Compliance with Planning and Construction Regulations in the Emirate of Dubai;

---

©2023 The Supreme Legislation Committee in the Emirate of Dubai

*<sup>1</sup>Every effort has been made to produce an accurate and complete English version of this legislation. However, for the purpose of its interpretation and application, reference must be made to the original Arabic text. In case of conflict, the Arabic text will prevail.*

Regulation No. (3) of 2007 Concerning Applications for Modifying the Permitted Use of Land and Buildings in the Emirate of Dubai;

Executive Council Resolution No. (18) of 2013 Approving Dubai Municipality Fees for Planning Applications and Advertising Billboard Permits;

Executive Council Resolution No. (18) of 2021 Forming the Supreme Urban Planning Committee in the Emirate of Dubai;

Local Order No. (2) of 1999 Concerning Classification and Regulation of Land Use in the Emirate of Dubai and its amendments;

Local Order No. (3) of 1999 Regulating Construction Works in the Emirate of Dubai and its amendments;

The legislation establishing and regulating Free Zones in the Emirate of Dubai; and

The Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan approved on 13 March 2021,

**Do hereby issue this Law.**

#### **Title of the Law**

##### **Article (1)**

This Law will be cited as "Law No. (16) of 2023 Concerning Urban Planning in the Emirate of Dubai".

#### **Definitions**

##### **Article (2)**

The following words and expressions, wherever mentioned in this Law, will have the meaning indicated opposite each of them unless the context implies otherwise:

Emirate: The Emirate of Dubai.

Ruler: His Highness the Ruler of Dubai.

Executive Council: The Executive Council of the Emirate of Dubai.

SUPC: The Supreme Urban Planning Committee formed pursuant to this Law.

DM:	The Dubai Municipality.
Director General:	The director general of the DM.
Concerned Entity:	Any Government Entity assigned by a resolution of the Chairman of the Executive Council to implement the provisions of this Law.
Free Zone:	A free zone established and regulated pursuant to legislation issued by the Ruler. This includes the Dubai International Financial Centre.
Special Development Zone:	A zone regulated pursuant to the above-mentioned Decree No. (22) of 2009, or any zone established pursuant to legislation issued by the Ruler as a Special Development Zone.
Urban Planning:	Planning measures that have urban impacts and that reflect the short-, medium-, and long-term economic, social, cultural, and environmental objectives and policies of the community, within the scope of the strategic planning for urban development at the Emirate's level or the detailed planning for development of specific zones, areas, or land plots. These measures may cover all or some Urban Planning sectors, such as land use, housing, transportation systems, infrastructure and environmental structures, green and open areas, and community services.
Urban Planning Scheme:	A set of approved plans and tools aimed at managing, regulating, and controlling Urban Planning in the Emirate. This includes the Structure Plan, Framework Plans, and Guidelines; as well as Master Plan Permits, Planning Permits, Master Planning Permits, and any other planning tools stipulated in this Law, the resolutions issued in pursuance hereof, and the circulars and manuals issued by the DM.
Structure Plan:	The basic document of the Urban Planning Scheme, which serves as a long-term comprehensive strategic plan outlining the visions, objectives, and general policies related to the development and use of land and to the Urban Planning sectors, such as housing, transportation systems, infrastructure, environmental structures,

green and open areas, community services, energy, and economic development zones. In addition, the plan outlines the implementation phases, limits, and priorities of future urban development.

**Framework Plan:** A plan prepared, in coordination with the authorities supervising Special Development Zones or Free Zones, as the case may be, by the DM or a Concerned Entity as per its functions under the legislation in force, with a view to establishing the detailed implementing policies, programmes, and procedures for the Structure Plan in respect of:

1. any of the Urban Planning sectors, such as housing, infrastructure, transportation systems, etc.;
2. specific places, such as centres and specialised development zones; or
3. a specific field, matter, or issue that requires the development of a Framework Plan, as determined at the discretion of the DM or the Concerned Entity, as the case may be.

**Master Plan Permit:** A permit issued by the DM or by an authority supervising a Special Development Zone or a Free Zone, as the case may be, authorising the implementation of development works, the Subdivision of Land and determination of its use, the establishment of Planning Requirements for certain zones for which no Master Plan Permit has been issued; or the implementation of major changes to an approved Master Plan, in accordance with the relevant standards and procedures adopted by the DM.

**Planning Permit:** A permit issued by the DM or by an authority supervising a Special Development Zone or a Free Zone, as the case may be, authorising the implementation of development works, the modification of the Subdivision of Land and its use, or the Planning Requirements for certain zones for which a Master Plan Permit has been issued, provided that these works or modifications do not substantially affect the approved Master Plan.

Master Planning Permit:	A permit issued by the DM authorising the implementation of specific types of development works for all or certain land plots, in accordance with the requirements prescribed by the DM and without the need for applying for a Planning Permit.
Planning Requirements:	The requirements and rules governing the types of land use, setbacks, floor area, permitted number of floors, and car parks; and other planning requirements and rules.
Strategic Environmental Assessment:	Assessment of the environmental impact of proposed policies, plans, strategies, and programmes; and determination of the cumulative impacts of these policies, plans, strategies, and programmes and the methods of addressing them.
Geospatial Database:	A database used for storing, processing, and analysing data on all characteristics, attributes, and elements of an overground or underground geographical site, including demographic, environmental, and geological data layers; data layers of buildings, land use, and various public services and utilities; and other primary and secondary data layers describing the built-up and natural environments in detail.
Guidelines:	The guidelines adopted or issued by the DM in coordination with the Concerned Entities or the authorities supervising Special Development Zones and Free Zones, as the case may be, to be observed when devising plans, at different levels, and when issuing the Planning Permits to which this Law applies.
Communal Facilities:	Facilities that serve individuals and the community; and that are aimed at fulfilling their health, social, educational, religious, recreational, and cultural needs and providing them with care and other services.
Public Spaces:	The areas that are freely accessible to the public, including without limitation, parks, beaches, roads, squares, and other public places.

Subdivision of Land: Any modification to the boundaries and area of a land plot. This includes subdividing the land into two or more parcels, or merging two or more parcels into one land plot.

Person: A natural person or a public or private legal person.

### **Scope of Application**

#### **Article (3)**

The provisions of this Law apply to:

1. all areas within the Emirate, including Special Development Zones and Free Zones, such as the Dubai International Financial Centre; and
2. all individuals and public and private entities performing development works in the Emirate.

### **Objectives of the Law**

#### **Article (4)**

This Law aims to:

1. develop an integrated and effective Urban Planning Scheme that encourages investment and sustainable development, with a view to achieving prosperity, improving the quality of life and living conditions, and ensuring the safety and security of the community in the Emirate;
2. establish the governance of the Urban Planning sector; determine the functions of involved entities; develop cooperation, coordination, and integration between these entities on all matter related to Urban Planning; and encourage them to exchange data and information;
3. improve the efficiency of preparing and implementing Urban Planning plans and strategies; and follow up their implementation and assess their outcomes, with a view to upholding the principles of fairness, equality, transparency, and accountability;
4. regulate and follow up the Urban Planning work and ensure that it is performed in line with the adopted plans, strategies, and policies;
5. preserve all elements of the environment, the biodiversity, and the natural resources in the Emirate for present and future generations;

6. contribute to the development of a system for the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Strategic Environmental Assessment within the Emirate.

### Formation and Functions of the SUPC

#### Article (5)

- a. Pursuant to this Law, a permanent committee named the "Supreme Urban Planning Committee" is formed. The SUPC will be comprised of a Chairman, a vice chairman, and a number of Members representing the entities in charge of Urban Planning in the Emirate. These Members will be appointed pursuant to a resolution of the Chairman of the Executive Council.
- b. The SUPC will have the duties and powers to:
  1. develop the general policy of Urban Planning, and determine the objectives of urban development, in the Emirate in line with the adopted visions, objectives, and strategies;
  2. approve the Structure Plan of the Emirate, and submit the same to the Executive Council for final approval;
  3. supervise the implementation of the approved Structure Plan, and ensure that the plans of Government Entities in the Emirate are in line with that plan;
  4. follow up the implementation of the Structure Plan; monitor its progress and completion phases as per the adopted plans; ensure that the Structure Plan is in line with the Government priorities; and issue the necessary directives in respect of any obstacles or difficulties that may be encountered in the completion of these phases;
  5. review the outcomes of the strategic performance indicators related to the implementation of the Structure Plan, and advise on the measures and solutions required for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of its implementation;
  6. approve the relevant recommendations on the strategic plans and studies, Framework Plans, and infrastructure projects related to the Structure Plan; and submit the same to the Executive Council for final approval;
  7. approve the relevant recommendations on the major urban development projects presented by the DM, and submit the same to the Executive Council for final approval;

8. issue the necessary directives on any major amendments to the approved Structure Plan based on the relevant developments and the orientation of the Government of Dubai;
  9. propose the policies and legislation that ensure the achievement of the objectives of the Structure Plan, and enable the entities in charge of implementing that plan to perform their functions;
  10. ensure coordination between the entities concerned with the Urban Planning in the Emirate and integration of their roles;
  11. make the necessary decisions on any issues or conflicts that may arise among the entities concerned with Urban Planning, where no compromise solutions are reached; and refer, where required, unresolved issues or conflicts with its recommendations to the Executive Council;
  12. form sub-committees and work teams to assist it in performing its functions under this Law, the resolutions issued in pursuance hereof, and other legislation in force in the Emirate; and determine the duties, powers, and terms of reference of these sub-committees and work teams and any other matters related to them;
  13. seek assistance from experts and specialists, as it deems appropriate, whether or not they are employees of the entities concerned with Urban Planning in the Emirate; and invite them to attend its meetings without having the right to vote in its deliberations;
  14. determine the Concerned Entities in charge of implementing this Law, and present the same to the Chairman of the Executive Council for approval; and
  15. exercise any other duties or powers required for the achievement of the objectives of this Law, as assigned to it by the Ruler or the Chairman of the Executive Council.
- c. The provisions of the above-mentioned Decree No. (1) of 2023 and the resolutions issued in pursuance thereof apply to all matters related to regulating the conduct and validity of the SUPC meetings, the issuance of its resolutions and recommendations, and the duties of its Chairman and Members; as well as all other matters related to the governance of the SUPC.



## Functions of the DM

### Article (6)

For the purposes of this Law, the DM will be exclusively in charge of regulating the Urban Planning sector in the Emirate. To this end, the DM will, in coordination with the Concerned Entities in the Emirate and the authorities supervising Special Development Zones and Free Zones where required, have the duties and powers to:

1. prepare the Structure Plan and any amendments thereto and submit the same to the SUPC for approval;
2. prepare the Framework Plans and detailed policies pertaining to its functions, and any amendments thereto; and submit the same to the SUPC for approval;
3. ensure that the Framework Plans prepared by the Concerned Entities are in line with the Structure Plan before submitting the same to the SUPC for approval;
4. ensure that urban development in the Emirate is progressing in line with the adopted visions, policies, strategies, and objectives; follow up the implementation of the Structure Plan and Framework Plans, and the associated programs, projects, and indicators; prepare an annual audit report on the implementation of these plans, the relevant challenges and obstacles, and the necessary action to address such challenges and obstacles; and submit that report to the SUPC to take the necessary action in respect thereof;
5. prepare comprehensive sectoral planning research and studies to identify the future development issues, policies, and orientations of the Emirate;
6. conduct studies on urban designing and detailed area planning; and devise plans for the rehabilitation, beautification, and development of existing areas;
7. review the applications for Master Plan Permits and Planning Permits for all areas in the Emirate to ensure that they are in line with the Structure Plan and Framework Plans, and to identify any substantial contravention in respect of these applications and submit the same to the SUPC to make appropriate decisions in respect thereof;
8. issue all types of Planning Permits, including Master Plan Permits, Planning Permits, and Master Planning Permits;

9. issue the bylaws, circulars, and Guidelines related to the DM's functions. This includes but is not limited to:
  - a. the criteria for conducting the Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment required to be conducted before the approval or modification of any plans or programmes that would affect the environment, including the Structure Plan or any Framework Plans; and
  - b. the unified criteria and procedures for receiving and reviewing applications for Master Plan Permits and Planning Permits for all areas in the Emirate, including Special Development Zones and Free Zones;
10. provide the right-of-way areas required for the services, infrastructure, roads, and transportation based on the outcomes and requirements of the approved Framework Plans and studies, in accordance with the relevant procedures and standards adopted by the DM;
11. regulate and monitor Urban Planning activities, and verify that Persons comply with the Planning Requirements and with the terms of the issued permits;
12. create and update a comprehensive, detailed, and unified Geospatial Database in the Emirate and make the database accessible to the Concerned Entities, in accordance with the rules and procedures agreed upon between the DM and these entities;
13. undertake all matters related to the protection of the environment, beaches, water, and the public parks, and their development in the Emirate, in accordance with the applicable legislation;
14. undertake all duties related to the maintenance and restoration of heritage sites and historical areas, with a view to ensuring preservation of the same; and
15. exercise any other duties or powers required for the achievement of the objectives of this Law, as assigned to it by the SUPC.

## **Functions of the Concerned Entities**

### **Article (7)**

For the purposes of this Law, the Concerned Entities will, each within its own jurisdiction, have the duties and powers to:

1. coordinate with the DM to prepare the Structure Plan, and provide the DM with the information related to the Urban Planning functions vested in them pursuant to the legislation in force in the Emirate;
2. prepare, modify, and update the Framework Plans that fall within their jurisdiction in coordination with the DM and other entities; and submit the same to the SUPC for approval;
3. prepare, modify, and update, in coordination with the DM and other entities, the guidelines that falls within their jurisdiction and that are relevant to the implementation of this Law;
4. measure the performance indicators of the implementation of the Structure Plan and the Framework Plans as relevant to their functions; and provide the DM with the resulting outcomes, and with the information and data requested by the DM to enable it to follow up the implementation of the Structure Plan and to prepare the relevant reports;
5. provide the DM with all the information and data it requests to create and update a unified Geospatial Database, in accordance with the relevant procedures, criteria, and specifications prescribed by the DM; and
6. exercise any other duties or powers required for the achievement of the objectives of this Law, as assigned to them by the SUPC.

**Functions of the Authorities Supervising Special  
Development Zones and Free Zones  
Article (8)**

Without prejudice to the provisions of this Law, an authority supervising a Special Development Zone or a Free Zone will:

1. refer any applications for Master Plan Permits to the DM to ensure that they are in line with the Structure Plan and Framework Plan; and refer to it any applications for Planning Permits that substantially affect the approved Master Plan of the DM to ensure that they are in line with that plan;
2. issue Master Plan Permits and Planning Permits for the land it supervises, subject to compliance with the Structure Plan and Framework Plans of the Emirate and in accordance with the procedures, standards, and Guidelines adopted by the authority. In case of any conflict, the authority will coordinate with the DM to resolve that conflict or to reach compromise solutions; and

3. provide the DM with all the data and information of the Master Plan Permits, Planning Permits, and Construction Works Permits issued by the authority, together with any other data or information requested by the DM, in accordance with the procedures and within the time frames agreed upon between the DM and the authority.

### **Dubai Aviation City Article (9)**

The provisions of this Law apply without prejudice to the functions of the entities in charge of planning, designing, implementing, and constructing Airports at the Dubai Aviation City pursuant to the legislation applicable to these entities. When preparing and approving their development plans, these entities must ensure that the plans are in line with the Structure Plan.

### **Structure Plan Article (10)**

The Structure Plan is deemed the comprehensive strategic document governing the Urban Planning sector in the Emirate, and the key basis for:

1. preparing the Framework Plans, which must be in line with the Structure Plan, and develop the mechanisms required for their implementation;
2. guiding the process of preparing the Guidelines; and
3. establishing the basic principles for:
  - a. determining applications for Master Plan Permits and Planning Permits; and
  - b. issuing Master Plan Permits.

### **Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan Article (11)**

As of the effective date of this Law, the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan approved on 13 March 2021 will be deemed the Structure Plan of the Emirate. The procedures and rules pertaining to Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan will be governed by the provisions of this Law, the resolutions issued in pursuance hereof, and other legislation in force in the Emirate.

**Conflict with the Structure Plan  
Article (12)**

In case of any conflict between the policies, strategies, and objectives of the Structure Plan and the Framework Plans or Guidelines, the Structure Plan will prevail.

**Reviewing the Structure Plan and Framework Plans  
Article (13)**

- a. The DM will review the Structure Plan at least once every ten (10) years as of the date on which it is approved; prepare a report on the outcomes of the review, including its recommendations in respect of any proposed amendments; and submit that report to the SUPC to take the necessary action in respect thereof.
- b. The DM and the Concerned Entities will review the Frameworks Plans that fall within their respective jurisdictions at least once every five (5) years as of the date on which they are approved; will prepare a report on the outcomes of that review, including their recommendations in respect of any proposed amendments; and will submit this report to the SUPC to take the necessary action in respect thereof.
- c. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this Article, the DM may propose any amendments to the Structure Plan; and the DM or Concerned Entities may propose any amendments to the Framework Plans, at any time where these amendments are deemed essential and fundamental.

**Approving Amendments to the Structure  
Plan and Framework Plans  
Article (14)**

No amendment to the Structure Plan or Framework Plans will take effect unless it is approved by the SUPC and ratified by the Chairman of the Executive Council.

## Procedures and Rules for Preparing and Amending the Structure Plan and Framework Plans

### Article (15)

The procedures and rules for preparing and amending the Structure Plan and the Framework Plans, and the procedures for approving and ratifying these plans, will be determined pursuant to a resolution to be issued by the Chairman of the Executive Council in this respect. This resolution must provide for:

1. the procedures and rules for consultation and coordination between the DM, the Concerned Entities, and the authorities supervising Special Development Zones and Free Zones when preparing and amending the Structure Plan or the Framework Plans;
2. the procedures and rules for consultation and coordination with the real property developers, land Owners, and community members, where required; and
3. any other matters determined by the Chairman of the Executive Council as necessary for the achievement of the objectives of this Law.

### Guidelines

#### Article (16)

- a. The Concerned Entities must present the guidelines adopted by them in respect of Urban Planning to the DM in order to mutually agree with it on the contents of the same before adopting them as Guidelines for planning and for directing development works.
- b. The Guidelines adopted by the DM and the Concerned Entities may apply, provided that they do not conflict with the Structure Plan and the provisions of this Law.

## Performing Development Works

### Article (17)

No Person may perform, or allow others to perform, any development works in the Emirate without first obtaining a Master Plan Permit, Planning Permit, or Master Planning Permit. In performing the development works, that Person must comply with the legislation in force in the Emirate and with the terms of the permit issued to him.

## **Additional Requirements**

### **Article (18)**

The DM may, in coordination with the authorities supervising Special Development Zones and Free Zones, include additional requirements in the Master Plan Permit or the Planning Permit issued by the DM or these authorities to ensure alignment with the Structure Plan and the Framework Plan. These requirements may govern the method of coordination of the development works performed in adjacent sites; the provision of Public Spaces and common services and the conditions and schemes for using the same; the conservation of Natural Reserves; compliance with the Guidelines; or any other matters deemed necessary by the DM. The technical details of these requirements will be determined pursuant to a resolution to be issued by the Director General in this respect.

## **Grievances Committee**

### **Article (19)**

Pursuant to a resolution of the SUPC, a sub-committee named the "Urban Planning Grievances Committee" will be formed. This sub-committee will be responsible for considering and determining any grievances filed with it in respect of the decisions and measures issued by the DM or the Concerned Entities under this Law and the resolutions issued in pursuance hereof. The SUPC resolution will provide for the time frames and procedures for submitting and determining grievances, the terms of reference of the sub-committee, the procedures for holding its meetings and passing its resolutions, and all other relevant matters.

## **Fees, Fines, and Penalties**

### **Article (20)**

- a. In return for issuing permits and providing other services under this Law and the resolutions issued in pursuance hereof, the DM and the authorities supervising Special Development Zones and Free Zones, as the case may be, will collect their applicable fees in accordance with the legislation in force in the Emirate.
- b. The Chairman of the Executive Council will issue a resolution determining the acts that constitute violations of this Law and the resolutions issued in pursuance hereof, and the relevant penalties and measures to be imposed on violators.

## **Law Enforcement**

### **Article (21)**

- a. The employees of the DM, and the authorities supervising Special Development Zones and Free Zones, nominated pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the Director General and the officials in charge of these authorities will, each within his own powers, have the capacity of law enforcement officers to record the acts committed in breach of the provisions of this Law and the resolutions issued in pursuance hereof.
- b. The employees referred to in paragraph (a) of this Article may enter and inspect Establishments and all their facilities, and review their records. They may record violations using traditional or electronic means, issue the relevant violation reports, and seek assistance from the police personnel where necessary.

## **Issuing Implementing Resolutions**

### **Article (22)**

With the exception of the resolutions which the SUPC or the Director General is exclusively authorised to issue, the Chairman of the Executive Council will issue the resolutions required for the implementation of the provisions of this Law. These resolutions will be published in the Official Gazette.

## **Repeals**

### **Article (23)**

- a. Any provision in any other legislation is hereby repealed to the extent that it contradicts the provisions of this Law.
- b. The resolutions, bylaws, and regulations applicable to Urban Planning prior to the effective date of this Law will continue in force to the extent that they do not contradict the provisions hereof, until new superseding resolutions, bylaws, and regulations are issued.
- c. The SUPC formed pursuant to the above-mentioned Executive Council Resolution No. (18) of 2021 will continue to exercise its functions and powers under that resolution, and the functions assigned to it under this Law and the resolutions issued in pursuance hereof, until the SUPC is reconstituted pursuant to a resolution of the Chairman of the Executive Council in accordance with the provisions of this Law.



Publication and Commencement  
Article (24)

This Law will be published in the Official Gazette and will come into force ninety (90) days after the date of its publication.

Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Ruler of Dubai

Issued in Dubai on 7 July 2023

Corresponding to 19 Thu al-Hijjah 1444 A.H.