

Abstract

In accordance with Thailand's national economic and social plan and policy, the Thai government's concern about the physical development, especially land use development, is shown by its contribution of a plan to develop each region. Songkhla Province, the most important strategy area of Low Southern sub-region, is an area that the government aims to be a center of development. Amphor Muang Songkhla is going to be the transition area of development of every kind of land use.

This research aims to study the causes and effects of the physical development of Amphor Muang Songkhla. Thus, this research has the objective to find the development factors and the change of land use, study the physical, economic and social changes, find the relation between physical change and economic and social changes between the years 1993-2007 and finally to suggest a suitable Amphor Muang Songkhla land use plan. This research is "survey research" which analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data. The result reveals that Amphor Muang Songkhla has many factors of land development. First, Amphor Muang Songkhla has geographical advantages, sea side and mountains, which support many economic activities. Second, Amphor Muang Songkhla has good infrastructure such as a big sea port and three main highways. Third, various economic activities, including industrial, commercial, agricultural and fishing sectors, and supporting policies from the government, among which are the cooperative project with many countries and technological support, encourage development. As for land development factors, Amphor Muang Songkhla has faced many changes such as the land development of the south and southwest, especially housing developments that spread to the west next to Songkhla lake that destroy the wetland area. Also, industry has spread to areas that used to have just fishing related businesses and warehouses, but nowadays, has such activities as petroleum platforms in the Thai gulf. The central business district (CBD) is still Tombon Bor Yang district, the traditional CBD surrounded by government offices. The result of land development causes economic and social changes. The economy is concentrated

more on the manufacturing sector that provides numerous local and provincial benefits. The population density of Tambon Bor Yang district is increased by the development of transition areas. Some of the population has migrated to Tambon Pawong and Tambon Khao Roop Chang that used to be suburban areas. In terms of employment, Amphor Muang Songkhla has increased employment opportunities that the result from the CBD potential to increase opportunity for residents to be business owners. Finally, the most serious problem is rise in crime, related to the terrorism in the southern border provinces, that affect the safety of Songkhla's residents as well as tourists.

Although Amphor Muang Songkhla has been developed, it still has many problems from land development: for example, illegal land development such as housing projects that do not ask for the correct land development permission and do not abide by land use law, the wrong type of land use development in zoning, and the pollution caused by industry. Those problems cause short and long-term social problems that need to be seriously dealt with soon as well. These problems can be solved by an urban planning act and strong urban development policy which concentrate on action planning in the policy plan and which re-evaluate the role and importance of Amphor Muang Songkhla in making the relevant government organizations generate a suitable development plan.