

MINUTES OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

Ngoliba Grounds • 27th May 2025 • 10:00 AM – End



Date	: 27th May 2025
Time	: 10:00 AM
Venue	: Ngoliba Grounds, Thika Municipality
Chairperson	: Municipal Manager, Thika Municipality (Mr. Gathii Kanyi)
Minute Taker	: Secretary, Thika Municipality
Reference	: Business Community Engagement Meeting – Thika Municipality, Ngoliba Grounds, 2025

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This meeting constitutes part of the ongoing series of Business Community Engagement forums being conducted by Thika Municipality across its wards in 2025. The engagement at Ngoliba Ward was convened pursuant to the County Government of Kiambu’s commitment to strengthening collaboration with the private sector across all municipalities, and in response to growing concerns raised by traders, entrepreneurs, and business operators within Thika regarding the business environment, market infrastructure, service delivery, licensing, and regulatory challenges.

The Municipal Manager, Mr. Gathii Kanyi, chairing the meeting, welcomed all attendees and reaffirmed the commitment of Thika Municipality and the Kiambu County Government, under the leadership of H.E. Governor Kimani Wamatangi, to support micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through improved service delivery, efficient licensing, sustained infrastructure investment, and the creation of a conducive trading environment.

He noted that Thika Municipality, as one of Kiambu County’s most significant economic and industrial hubs — home to a large trading community, diverse markets including the iconic Madaraka Market, and a rich base of small and large enterprises — presents immense opportunities for investment and economic growth. The Municipality is also at the centre of a landmark national conversation regarding its proposed elevation to city status, which carries significant implications for the business community, infrastructure development, and long-term investment planning. He called upon all stakeholders to engage constructively and to channel their concerns through structured and lawful dialogue.

2. ATTENDANCE

2.1 Thika Municipality and County Government Officials

- Office of the Municipal Manager – Thika Municipality

- Department of Municipal Administration and Urban Development – Staff
- Department of Municipal Trade and Licensing – Licensing Officers
- Department of Trade and Industrialization – Representatives
- Department of Finance – Representatives
- Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources – Representatives
- Department of Roads, Transport and Public Works – Representatives
- Department of Public Health – Representatives
- Security and Enforcement Officials
- Thika Municipal Board – Members
- Ngoliba Ward Administrator and Ward Office Representatives

2.2 Business Community Representatives

- Matatu Welfare Association – Chairperson and Members
- Ngoliba Ward Market Traders – Chairperson and Local Traders
- Thika District Business Association (TDBA) – Representatives
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Representatives
- Bodaboda Riders and Tuk Tuk Operators Associations – Representatives and Members
- Madaraka Market Traders – Representatives
- Kiandutu Market Traders – Representatives
- Small-Scale Traders and Street Hawkers
- Informal Sector Operators
- Garage Mechanics and Auto-Repair Operators
- Investors and Entrepreneurs
- Members of the Public Interested in Local Economic Development

3. OPENING REMARKS

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by the Chairperson, Municipal Manager Mr. Gathii Kanyi, who welcomed all attendees and thanked them for responding to the invitation. He emphasised the importance of open, respectful, and constructive dialogue between the business community and the municipal leadership, noting that the County Government of Kiambu remains firmly committed to creating a conducive environment for business and investment across all its municipalities.

The Chairperson acknowledged the legitimate concerns of the business community regarding levy charges, infrastructure deficits, service delivery gaps, market management, and regulatory enforcement. He reaffirmed that the Kiambu County Government, under H.E. Governor Kimani Wamatangi's administration, is actively pursuing a range of initiatives to improve the quality of life for all residents and the viability of businesses within Thika Municipality. Key among these are:

- The construction of the ultra-modern Madaraka Market funded jointly by the National Government (Kshs 400 million) and County Government (Kshs 150 million)
- The planned development of modern kiosks around Thika Stadium to benefit traders previously operating along the perimeter wall
- The ongoing construction works at Makongeni Bus Park
- The planned enumeration of traders in Kiandutu and stakeholder consultations for a new modern market
- The implementation of the Unified Business Permit system, consolidating multiple fees into a single streamlined payment
- Public participation processes for the proposed elevation of Thika to city status
- The “Buy Local, Build Africa” initiative in partnership with the World Fair Trade Organisation – Africa & Middle East and the Thika District Business Association

4. AGENDA

1. Discussion of challenges facing local businesses in Ngoliba Ward and Thika Municipality
2. Madaraka Market construction, trader relocation, and infrastructure updates
3. Levy and licensing fees – review, relief measures, and the Unified Business Permit
4. Road conditions and infrastructure within Ngoliba Ward and the wider CBD
5. Solid waste management and cleanliness of trading areas
6. Street hawkers and informal traders – formalisation and designated vending zones
7. Street lighting and public security within business corridors
8. Any other business

5. ISSUES RAISED, DISCUSSION, AND RESOLUTIONS

Issue 1 | Madaraka Market Construction and Trader Relocation

Discussion

This was one of the most keenly discussed issues at the meeting. Representatives of Madaraka Market traders and members of the wider business community raised concerns and sought clarity on the timeline, process, and management of the planned construction of the new ultra-modern Madaraka Market facility in Makongeni. The Municipal Manager confirmed that funding has been secured: the National Government has allocated Kshs 400 million and the County Government has earmarked Kshs 150 million for the project. Designs for the new facility are ready and the project is poised to commence.

Traders raised significant concern about where they will operate during the construction period, noting that the loss of their current trading spaces, even temporarily, would have severe financial

consequences for their livelihoods. There was also a call for full transparency in the allocation of spaces within the new market, with traders urging that genuine, long-standing traders be given priority and that a fair, verifiable process be put in place to prevent politically motivated or opaque allocation of stalls.

Agreed Actions

- The County Government, through the Department of Trade and Municipal Administration, to finalise and communicate the trader relocation plan, specifying the temporary trading site, relocation timeline, and conditions of occupation, within 30 days.
- A transparent and independently verifiable stall allocation committee to be established for the new Madaraka Market, with representation from trader associations, the Municipal Board, and independent observers.
- The designs for the new market to be shared with trader representative bodies for review and input prior to construction commencement, to ensure layouts do not hinder business operations (including addressing concerns around main entrances and pedestrian flow).
- A dedicated communication channel to be established between the Municipal Trade Department and Madaraka Market trader associations for ongoing updates throughout the construction period.
- Construction timelines and project milestones to be communicated to all stakeholders and updated regularly.
- A follow-up stakeholder meeting on the Madaraka Market project to be scheduled within 60 days.

Issue 2 | High Levy Fees and Business Permits

Discussion

Business operators across all sectors represented at the meeting, including market traders, bodaboda riders, tuk tuk operators, and small-scale traders, expressed strong dissatisfaction with the current levy and fee structure. Charges were described as disproportionately high relative to daily earnings and business volumes, particularly in the prevailing difficult economic environment. Traders noted that levies had been increased without adequate prior consultation and that enforcement had proceeded before any structured engagement had taken place.

Members called on the County Government to be more considerate in the allocation of levies given the current economic situation, and urged meaningful participation in the Finance Bill and budget processes for FY 2025/2026. The Unified Business Permit, which consolidates the Single Business Permit, public health, solid waste, and fire fees into a single streamlined payment, was noted as a positive development. Still, many traders indicated they were unaware of its full benefits. Attendees called for wider communication and sensitisation.

The Municipal Manager noted that the Finance Bill 2025 introduced a 50% reduction in public health fees for non-food businesses and a 12-month licence validity from the date of issue, which represents meaningful relief for traders. He urged all traders to take advantage of these provisions and to engage actively in the public participation process for the FY 2025/2026 fiscal policy.

Agreed Actions

- Finance Bill 2025 relief measures — including the 50% reduction in public health fees for non-food businesses and the 12-month licence validity from date of issue — to be formally and widely communicated to all traders in Ngoliba Ward and Thika Municipality.
- The Unified Business Permit system to be actively promoted, with outreach to traders across all wards of Thika Municipality to explain its benefits and simplify the registration process.
- Public participation forums to be held in advance of the 2026/2027 budget cycle to ensure meaningful business community input into levy and fee-setting processes.
- A formal levy review process to be initiated with representation from business community associations.
- No punitive enforcement action to be taken against businesses during the ongoing levy review period.
- Single Business Permits for driving schools, private schools, hospitals, clinics, carwashes, hostels, and similar regulated businesses to be captured and updated in the permit database.

Issue 3 | Road Conditions and Infrastructure within Ngoliba Ward

Discussion

Business operators and residents of Thika Municipality highlighted the poor state of roads within and around the ward's trading areas. Numerous access routes serving markets, business premises, and transport nodes are characterised by potholes, poor drainage at road edges, and general deterioration of road surface conditions that worsen significantly during rainy seasons. Poor roads were cited as directly affecting the cost of doing business, increasing vehicle wear and tear for transporters and bodaboda operators, reducing customer access to businesses, and creating safety hazards.

Road encroachment by vibandas and informal structures along key routes was also raised as an impediment to smooth traffic flow. Representatives of bodaboda riders noted that poorly maintained access roads increase accident risk and impose additional operational costs on their members.

Agreed Actions

- Department of Roads, Transport and Public Works to conduct a comprehensive roads condition assessment within Ngoliba Ward and key routes connecting it to the Thika CBD within 30 days.
- Priority pothole repair and road surface rehabilitation to be included in the next public works programme and capital expenditure plan.

- Road encroachment by vibandas and informal structures to be addressed by enforcement officials in coordination with the Department of Trade.
- Bodaboda and tuk tuk operators to comply with designated operating zones to reduce congestion and improve road safety.
- Regular road maintenance schedules to be established and updates shared with business community stakeholders.

Issue 4 | Solid Waste Management and Cleanliness of Trading Areas

Discussion

Business operators and market traders raised persistent concerns about the inadequacy of solid waste management within the Municipality trading areas and the Thika CBD. Waste generated by businesses, market stalls, and transport nodes was reported to accumulate uncollected for extended periods, creating unsanitary conditions, a negative business environment image, and potential public health risks. Specific concern was raised about illegal dumping along business corridors and markets perimeters.

Representatives of the business community noted that they are required to pay waste-related levies as part of the Unified Business Permit, yet the quality and frequency of waste collection services does not match the charges imposed. This disconnect between fees paid and services rendered was a source of significant frustration.

Agreed Actions

- Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources to review and improve waste collection schedules within Ngoliba Ward trading areas, with increased frequency during peak business days.
- Designated waste collection points to be clearly marked, maintained, and communicated to all traders in Ngoliba Ward to reduce illegal dumping.
- Enforcement officials to issue notices and take action against businesses and individuals found illegally dumping waste.
- A community clean-up initiative to be organised within 30 days in collaboration with business associations and the Department of Environment.
- The correlation between waste levies collected and service delivery standards to be reviewed, with a commitment to demonstrate measurable service improvement.

Issue 5 | Street Hawkers and Informal Traders

Discussion

Licensed business owners and traders raised concern over the proliferation of street hawkers and informal traders who occupy pavements, walkways, and open spaces within and around Ward's

trading zones without the requisite licences or formal designation. These operators were noted to obstruct pedestrian movement, create unfair competition for licensed traders, and contribute to congestion and disorder.

Representatives of hawkers acknowledged their presence but cited the lack of affordable, designated vending spaces as the primary reason for operating informally. The Municipal Manager noted that Thika Municipality has adopted a progressive approach to informal trader management, allowing hawkers and informal traders to operate within the CBD after 6:00 PM, while formal businesses operate during the day, as a transitional measure while permanent solutions are developed. The planned development of formal trading stalls around Thika Stadium and structured kiosks at Makongeni Bus Park were cited as models for the kind of structured integration the Municipality intends to roll out.

Agreed Actions

- Department of Municipal Trade and Licensing to conduct a census of all street hawkers and informal traders operating within wards and adjoining trading zones within 30 days.
- Suitable designated vending zones to be identified within or adjacent the Ward's trading areas to accommodate informal traders in an organised and legitimate manner.
- A structured formalisation pathway to be developed, enabling qualifying informal traders to obtain licences and operate within designated zones.
- The progressive evening trading arrangement currently in place in the CBD to be extended and monitored to ensure orderly conduct.
- Enforcement to be applied consistently and fairly after the formalisation process has been given adequate time to take effect.
- Reshuffling of market officers to be considered to ensure accountability and fair coverage across all trading zones in Thika Municipality.

Issue 6 | Street Lighting and Public Security

Discussion

Business operators, particularly those who trade in the evening or store goods overnight, raised concerns about inadequate street lighting in several parts of Thika Municipality and surrounding business corridors. Poor lighting was linked to increased incidents of theft, robbery, and vandalism targeting business premises after dark. It was noted that while the Kiambu County Government's Angaza Kiambu solar streetlighting programme has seen installations across several wards, coverage remains incomplete in key business corridors and market areas within Thika Municipality.

Bodaboda and tuk tuk operators noted that poorly lit access roads increase road accident risk, particularly along routes used for late-evening trade and transport. The business community called for an accelerated rollout of functional, well-maintained street lighting as a matter of both economic and public safety priority.

Agreed Actions

- Department of Roads, Municipal Administration and Urban Development to conduct a street lighting audit within Thika Municipality and key business corridors of Thika Municipality, identifying all non-functional and inadequately lit areas within 30 days.
- Rehabilitation and expansion of solar-powered streetlights to be prioritised in the next capital expenditure cycle under the Angaza Kiambu programme.
- Security and Enforcement Officials to coordinate with relevant security agencies to increase patrols in poorly lit business areas as an interim measure.
- Community policing initiatives to be strengthened in collaboration with business associations to enhance security awareness and incident reporting.
- A clear maintenance responsibility and fault-reporting mechanism for street lighting to be established and communicated to all stakeholders.

6. SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

#	Action	Responsible Department	Timeline
1	Finalise and communicate trader relocation plan for Madaraka Market; establish transparent stall allocation committee; share market designs for stakeholder input; register and support fire-affected traders; communicate construction milestones	Trade / Municipal Administration	30–60 days
2	Communicate Finance Bill 2025 reliefs (50% PHF reduction, 12-month licence validity); promote Unified Business Permit; initiate formal levy review with business community representation; hold public participation forums before 2026/2027 budget	Finance & Trade/Licensing	Ongoing
3	Roads condition assessment within Ngoliba Ward; priority pothole repair and road surface rehabilitation; enforce road encroachment removal; establish regular maintenance schedules	Roads, Transport & Public Works	30 days
4	Review and improve waste collection schedules; designate and mark collection points; organise CBD clean-up initiative; enforce anti-dumping by-laws; review waste levy vs. service delivery correlation	Environment & Natural Resources	30 days
5	Census of street hawkers in Thika; identify and gazette designated vending zones; develop a formalisation pathway; monitor evening trading arrangements; and reshuffle market officers	Trade/Licensing & Municipal Admin	30 days

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#	Action	Responsible Department	Timeline
6	Street lighting audit across Thika wards and key business corridors; prioritise solar streetlight rehabilitation/expansion under Angaza Kiambu; increase enforcement patrols; establish fault-reporting mechanism	Municipal Admin & Urban Dev / Enforcement	30 days

7. CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairperson, Municipal Manager Mr. Gathii Kanyi, thanked all stakeholders for their attendance and for the constructive and spirited manner in which concerns were raised, discussed, and resolved. He reiterated Thika Municipality’s commitment to following up on all agreed action points with urgency, transparency, and full accountability to the business community.

Business community representatives were encouraged to remain actively engaged with municipal and county officials, to participate in future public participation processes — including those related to the FY 2025/2026 fiscal policy — and to continue to channel their concerns through formal and structured dialogue mechanisms rather than informal or disruptive means.

All stakeholders were urged to work collaboratively with Thika Municipality and the Kiambu County Government to build a conducive, inclusive, and thriving business environment across all wards of Thika Municipality. The Municipal Manager expressed confidence that the partnerships being forged, including with the World Fair Trade Organisation and the Thika District Business Association under the “Buy Local, Build Africa” banner — will continue to bear fruit for the business community and the wider Thika economy.

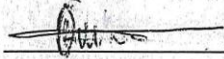
The meeting was duly adjourned. A follow-up engagement to review progress on all agreed action points shall be scheduled by the Secretary and communicated to all stakeholders in due course.

8. CONFIRMATION AND SIGNATURES

These minutes are a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the Business Community Engagement Meeting held on 27th May 2025 at Ngoliba Ward, Thika Municipality.

CHAIRPERSON

Municipal Manager, Thika Municipality

Signature: 

Date: 30/05/2025

MINUTE TAKER

Secretary, Thika Municipality

Signature: 

Date: 30-5-2025

~ End of Minutes ~