

## Brima Attouga Stadium - Bai Bureh Road, Freetown

*Bai Bureh Road / Cline Town*

Brima Attouga Mini Stadium is located in Freetown, between Ross Road, Cline Town, and Bai Bureh Road. The area is historically significant as it is the site of the original Granville Town, the second settlement of freed slaves in Freetown. Bai Bureh Road is one of two main roads linking the Central Business District (CBD) of Freetown to the east of the city. The site was considered as it is based in the east of Freetown, an area typically overlooked for development. Additionally, the stadium is the only location in the east that is available for large public gatherings and sports events. With Freetown's rapid population growth, there's increasing pressure on the existing transport services and infrastructure. For instance, poorly-maintained and restricted roads and an increase in private and informal public transit operations have resulted in high levels of congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution in the city. In addition, there are challenges with accessibility and connectivity particularly for the most vulnerable as well as

competitiveness regarding the usage of road space. Currently, the secondary access road, Bai Bureh Road, is being used as a garage for abandoned vehicles. The project should address this by proposing improvements to the road as well as proposing strategies to make the site more accessible for primary and secondary school children with accessibility needs. Furthermore, enhance the space and reduce overcrowding and congestion. The site should also address the lack of suitable and modern recreational facilities in the east end of Freetown and introduce indoor flexible, adaptable and multi-use spaces for recreational activities. In addition, proposals should integrate urban greening strategies and nature-based solutions on site. Students should also consider vertical structures to make good use of the limited land available and the historical nature of the Railway Museum and Old Fourah Bay College buildings, and consider how the project can complement these spaces.



### **Approx. site area:**

8080m<sup>2</sup>, with a football pitch of 90m x 45m, and the surrounding secondary access road.

### **Key Information:**

Eastern Freetown has two-thirds of the city's population (over 500k) and Attouga is the only stadium in the area. Its diverse use ensures wide demographic usage.

### **Priority areas & main expectations:**

Proposals should look at redeveloping the stadium and surrounding areas. The key priorities for the site include:

- Making the space more accessible, especially for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities.
- Proposing measures to the secondary access road to enhance the space and reduce congestion.
- Introducing indoor multi-use, flexible and adaptable spaces for recreational activities, including temporary activities fit for changing community needs.
- Integrating urban greening strategies and nature-based solutions.

## Presentation of the site and development expectations

Brima Attouga Mini Stadium, also commonly known as the Community Field, is named after a famous Eastern Lions Football Club goalkeeper, Brima Attouga. The stadium is currently owned by the state and is operated by Freetown City Council. The stadium is the largest open space available to residents living in the east end of Freetown and is well served by public transport with no dedicated parking for private vehicles, leading to traffic congestion in the area.

The stadium is predominantly used for football matches, as well as a number of athletics events. It is part of the former railway compound carriage body workshop, now known as the Railway Museum of Sierra Leone and is located on the old railway sports ground. The stadium is one of the largest playing facilities found in the eastern part of Freetown and has a capacity of 1,000. It is occasionally used by several Freetown based professional football clubs as a training facility as well as a venue for social, cultural, religious, political, and musical entertainment events. The National Stadium in the west of the city is currently closed for major rehabilitation (Oct 21 – Dec 23) and Attouga Stadium is the only public space available for national football league matches in the whole of Freetown. This additional requirement to use the stadium has further highlighted the important role the stadium plays within the east end of the city.



**Figure 1: Brima Attouga Mini Stadium**

Less than a mile from the stadium towards QE11 Quays is a slum community at risk of flooding due to proximity to a major culvert. The surrounding community can be classed as working class and live in overcrowded conditions. The area is served by local transportation including minibuses as well as two and three wheelers. The first university in West Africa, the former Fourah Bay College building is located further down the road. The building became the railway headquarters when the university moved to Mount Aureol. As a result, there is a strong railway link between the stadium and the Railway Museum. Another element to consider is that the area is surrounded by several primary and secondary schools, including one named Cheshire Home that is specifically for disabled children, many of whom are orphans and victims of polio. Secondary school



children frequently attend community day school whilst the younger children are schooled at home. Cheshire Home organises annual sports day events for children with accessibility needs however due to the lack of accessibility facilities i.e., poor access route, uneven grounds etc, the site is currently not fit for purpose. Proposals should consider strategies to make the site, specifically the stadium a more accessible space for those with accessibility needs.



**Figure 2: Site with surrounding historical buildings map**

The city would like to improve the site and make it fit for multi-functional purposes to address the lack of suitable and modern recreational facilities in the east end of Freetown and therefore propose indoor multi-use spaces for activities i.e., meeting rooms for youth as well as indoor sports to enable nearby public schools to use the facilities especially during major school events.

Considering the age of the stadium, incremental site modifications over the years, changes in the demographic of visitors and changing recreational needs, the site requires a holistic plan with flexible and adaptable spaces, temporary activities suitable for changing needs. Surrounding historical sites should be taken into consideration for future improvements and redevelopment. For instance, although the stadium and Railway Museum are separately owned, students should consider innovative solutions on how to link both sites two together i.e., through joint green spaces, overbridge connection, shared facilities etc. In addition, the Railway Museum provides a large covered public space that can be used for large scale events, such as public ceremonies, workshops, training programmes as well as a focal point for the community, which can be made available for research, consultation etc if required. As there is limited municipal recreation land available, and the stadium has little or no room for expansion without additional land purchase. The proposal should be innovative in the use of the existing limited space, taking into consideration local community needs.

Finally, the city is also looking for innovative and sustainable parking strategies for a small number of vehicles for people with disabilities and high-level dignitaries.



Figure 3: Stadium Development Area

## City climate priorities and specific environmental challenges

The *#TransformFreetown* Programme was launched by Mayor Aki-Sawyer in January 2019, soon after taking office following lengthy consultations with residents and businesses in the capital city. Eleven (11) priority sectors were selected using an inclusive approach, underpinned by innovation and data-driven performance management. The priorities are grouped within the following four [clusters](#):

- **Resilience** - environmental management, and urban planning;
- **Human development** - job creation and support for people with disabilities;
- **Healthy cities** – health through sport activities;
- **Urban mobility** – improving access to public transport to vulnerable groups.

A key consideration in the city's draft CAP is the "[Climate Risk and Hazard Assessment](#)" which has shown that Freetown is at high risk for heat stress compared to other parts of Sierra Leone due to the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. The effects of the UHI can be severe in a city like Freetown. Particularly in informal settlements, exposure to high temperatures is even more severe as the majority of the houses are built from zinc and many residents can't afford the use of appropriate building materials and cooling systems, such as ACs to mitigate the risk of overheating. Therefore, the city sees these two sectors (i.e., resilience and healthy cities) as priority considerations.

The project will focus on developing the priority areas using the following objectives:

- Use a climate-friendly approach to develop the Brima Attouga Mini Stadium;
- Develop a stakeholder engagement, re-energization and activation plan with owners of other sites/facilities nearby as well as the community for the expansion of the Stadium. This will be done by the council in conjunction with responsible institutions and individuals.

Currently, the stadium has many challenges that can serve or lead to adverse climatic issues and these need to be addressed in the proposal. Examples of these are (but not limited to): no access to public toilet facilities, no water supply, exposure to poor air quality, little or no sitting accommodation, limited shading from heat, etc.

Finally, tree planting in and around the stadium should be considered within the design as it will contribute to the current [#FreetowntheTreetown](#) program and will help reduce climate related risks.

## Specific planning rules and regulations

The Cline Town area is historically significant because it is the site of the original Granville Town, the second settlement of freed slaves. The stadium is part of the railway compound, and is based on the old railway sports ground. The railway museum building is also part of the same railway compound, and was the former carriage body works.

Other sites of interest in the area include:

- Upgun – One of the largest cemeteries;
- QETI Seaport locally called Water Quay;
- Bishop Crowther Church and School (first black bishop, trained at FBC);
- Many famous Sierra Leonean personalities are buried at Racecourse Road Cemetery, e.g., Edward Blyden, Andrew Juxon Smith, etc.; and,
- Oku Mohamedan Cemetery (1st Muslim cemetery in Sierra Leone) is located on Kennedy Street.

Given the rich heritage in this largely forgotten area of Freetown, a growth in tourism within this area could yield significant economic benefits, providing the area with a sustainable future.

## Language requirements

Proposals must be submitted in English.

## City-specific awards

The city of Freetown will award the winning project and special mentions a photo opportunity and a 30-minute interview with the Mayor of Freetown for developing solutions that will improve the area whilst being sensitive to the local environment.