

Freetown Cable Car Project, Eastern Police

Sanni Abacha Street, Freetown

The Eastern Police area is a prominent section of the bustling Sanni Abacha Street, located on the Clock Tower Junction on the eastern boundary of Freetown's Central Business District (CBD).

The area is named after the nearby Eastern Police Station, a key landmark and administrative hub. The area is characterised by its high levels of activity, serving as a convergence point for trade, transportation, and social interactions.

Eastern Police neighbourhood has been chosen as a location for a cable car station as part of Freetown's pilot cable car project. This location has been selected due to its dense population of traders and shoppers, making it one of the busiest areas in Freetown.

The area serves as a major economic engine for the city, providing livelihoods for countless small business owners and traders. However, it also faces challenges such as overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and poor sanitation. These issues can hinder the area's potential and affect the quality of life for those who work and shop there.

The aim of this challenge is for students to develop a preliminary design concept for the Eastern Police cable car station, harnessing this new development as an opportunity to regenerate the surrounding area.

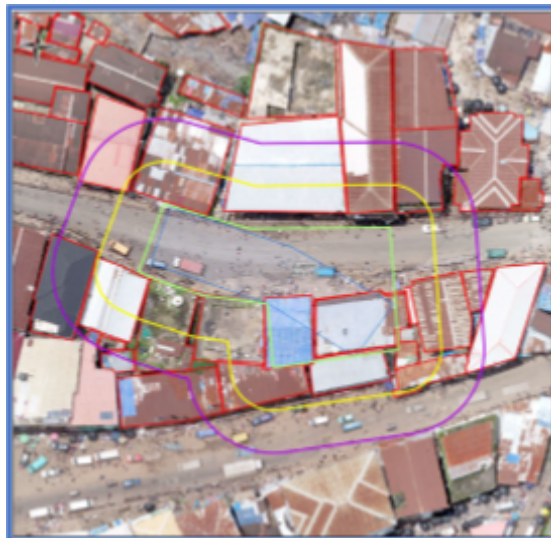


Figure 1) Site Area - Eastern Police cable-car station & surroundings

Approx. site area:

The land area of the station is approx. 1.410 m².

Key Information: The project area sees tens of thousands daily, employs thousands of informal traders (majority aged 18–45, many women), and faces traffic congestion and waste disposal issues.

Priority areas & main expectations:

Through this challenge, students are invited to develop a design for the new Eastern

Police cable car station whilst improving its surroundings on Sanni Abacha Street. Designs should prioritise pedestrian access to the station, waste management and drainage to prevent flooding, as well as introducing green spaces.

These efforts are expected to boost economic activities, improve living conditions, ensure equal access to the cable car station, and make the area more attractive to both locals and visitors.

Presentation of the Site & Development Expectations

Eastern Police neighbourhood

Located on Sanni Abacha Street on the Clock Tower Junction, the Eastern Police neighbourhood is a bustling commercial hub known for its vibrant street markets and diverse economic activities. Located in the heart of Freetown, the street was named after the former Nigerian president who supported Sierra Leone during its civil war and is a key artery in the city's central business district.

The neighbourhood hosts a variety of businesses, from formal retail outlets to informal street vendors. Popular goods include clothing, electronics, fresh produce, and household items. It is also a transportation nexus, with taxis, minibuses, and motorbikes transporting goods and people. The informal economy is especially significant, as many traders rely on this area for daily income, contributing substantially to Freetown's economic vibrancy.

The area has a diverse demographic profile. It attracts a mix of people, including traders, commuters, and local residents. The majority are low- to middle-income individuals who rely on the area for their livelihoods or daily needs. Street vendors and small business owners dominate the population, many of whom are women (about 60–70%) engaged in informal markets. Youth (ages 18–35) are also heavily represented, with many working as hawkers, apprentices, or shop assistants.

This area is a melting pot of economic and social interactions, cultures and ethnicities, reflecting the dynamic and entrepreneurial spirit of the local population. It serves as a meeting place for people from different parts of the city and beyond, fostering cultural exchange.

However, the area faces significant challenges. Overcrowding is a persistent issue, with dense pedestrian and vehicular traffic causing congestion and pollution. Poor waste management results in environmental degradation, while inadequate sanitation facilities add to public health concerns. Petty crime, such as pickpocketing, is a common issue due to the high density of people. Whilst community interactions are lively, the high density often creates competition for space and resources, which are limited.

Eastern Police Cable Car Station

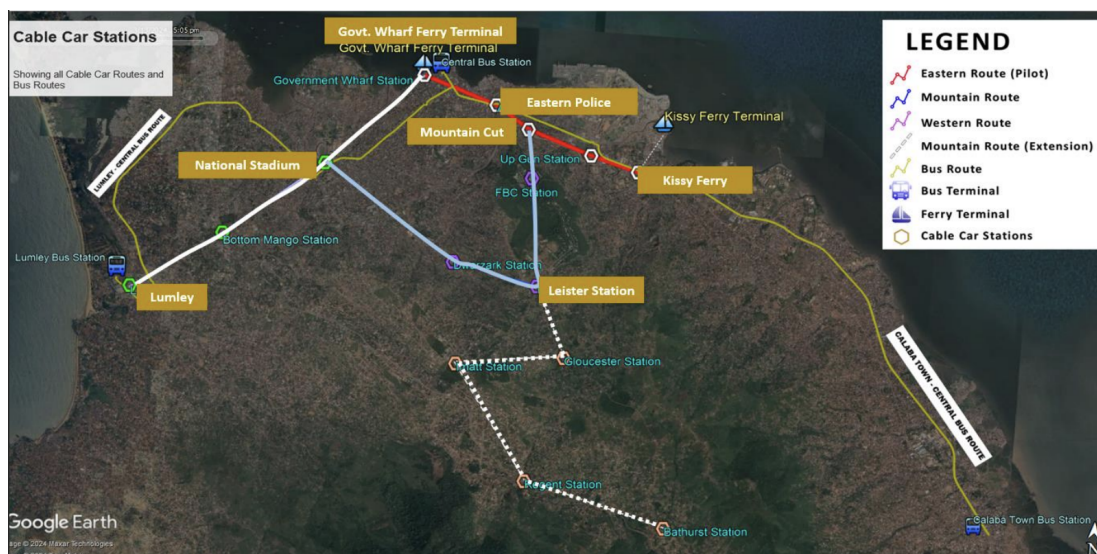


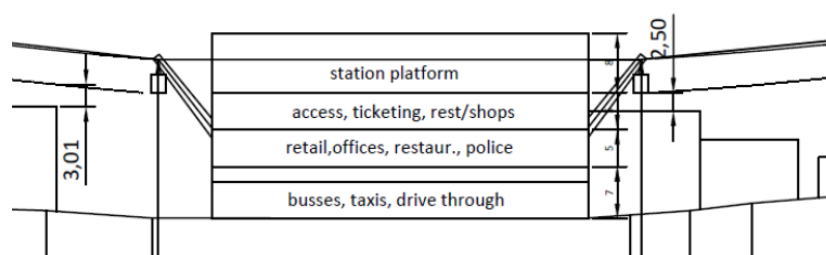
Figure 2) Cable Car Stations | Google Earth

Freetown, working in partnership with the [C40 Cities Finance Facility](#), will develop its first cable car route, with four stations, a total length of 3.6km, and the capacity to serve 6,000 people per hour in both directions. This will transform the public transport sector in Freetown, allowing under-served hillside communities access to the central business district through quick, safe, and inexpensive public transport.

Eastern Police has been identified as a station for Freetown's pilot cable car project due to its strategic location and densely populated demographic. The station will be part of the cable car "East Route", the central axis through the Central Business District. The station needs to be constructed as an entirely new development, which will begin when funding becomes available.

The Eastern Police Station (EP) will be constructed on Sanni Abacha Street (SA); this has been identified as the most appropriate location for the station due to its minimal expected impact on existing infrastructure.

The preliminary design concept is for the station to stand at an overall height of 47 metres above sea level and consist of 4 floors. The platform, located on the third floor and serving as the departure and arrival point for the cable car, is approximately 17 metres above ground level. The height of the station platform and attached towers is determined by the neighbouring infrastructures. A minimum vertical distance of 2.5 metres should be maintained, especially for the buildings to the south and north.



Floor	Height	Utilisation
3. floor	8 m	cable car platform level (loading and unloading)
2. floor	5 m	retail and restaurants, access, ticketing
1. floor	5 m	retail and restaurants
Ground floor	7 m	ground level, ticketing, bus, taxis

Figure 3) EP Station (Sanni Abacha Street) levels and their utilisation - CFF Freetown Feasibility Study, p.116

Challenge Expectations

Despite its challenges, the Eastern Police neighbourhood is vital to Freetown's economy and social fabric. Planned redevelopment efforts and the construction of the new cable car station will transform the area into a more organised and sustainable space while preserving its vibrant economic and cultural character.

Through this competition, teams are invited to:

- Develop a design for the cable car station that considers [feasibility](#), sustainability and the surrounding buildings.
- Integrate sustainable construction practices, including energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy, and the use of local materials. Utilise this process to create green employment opportunities, training residents in new skills.

- Improve pedestrian access in the area, ensuring that access into and from the Cable Car station is safe. Particular consideration should be given to queueing areas to minimise the potential conflict between the traffic and pedestrian flows along Sanni Abacha Street.
- Improve public facilities, wastewater management and drainage systems. For example, replacing paved areas with permeable pavement, adding stormwater planters or infiltration trenches and implementing a wastewater system.
- Incorporate urban greening strategies, such as pocket parks.

City Climate Priorities & Environmental Challenges

The city, guided by its [Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#), emphasises environmental sustainability and resilience in the development of this station. The city's existing climate priorities revolve around reducing carbon emissions, enhancing energy efficiency, and promoting green initiatives.

Specific risks related to climate change, such as floods, heat waves, and water scarcity, must be addressed in the project design. Freetown is at a higher risk for heat stress than other parts of Sierra Leone due to the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. 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.

Sustainable water management strategies, flood-resistant infrastructure, and heat-resistant building materials are crucial components of this project.

Specific Planning Rules & Regulations

Please consult the [Feasibility Study](#) for potential cable car sites, developed by the American Institute of Architects for the City of Freetown. In addition, please consider the [Technical Feasibility Study](#) developed by C40 Cities Finance Facility, which outlines requirements to take into account when developing a preliminary design for the Eastern Police Station and details of a SWOT assessment.

Language Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in English.

City-specific Awards

Subject to resources, the winning team may receive the opportunity to attend a climate conference and present their project to the mayor.