

Degahbur Urban Profile



Introduction

Degahbur is the administrative and commercial hub of Jarar zone in the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia, and a city council in itself. Located roughly 785 km southeast of Addis Ababa and about 165 km southeast of Jijiga, the town covers about 15 km² at an elevation of 1,044 m above sea level. Established in 1920 as a settlement and upgraded in 2012 as a third-grade urban center, Degahbur city anchors services for a large pastoral-agro-pastoral hinterland, concentrates government offices, markets (including livestock markets), and transport nodes. The town is rapidly expanding in population, housing, and small industry. Recent public and private investments, notably water distribution expansion and a fecal-sludge management (FSM) project under the Second Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Project, and various constructions of industries and hotels, recreational centers, and other investments are improving service delivery while creating local jobs and enabling safer sanitation practices.

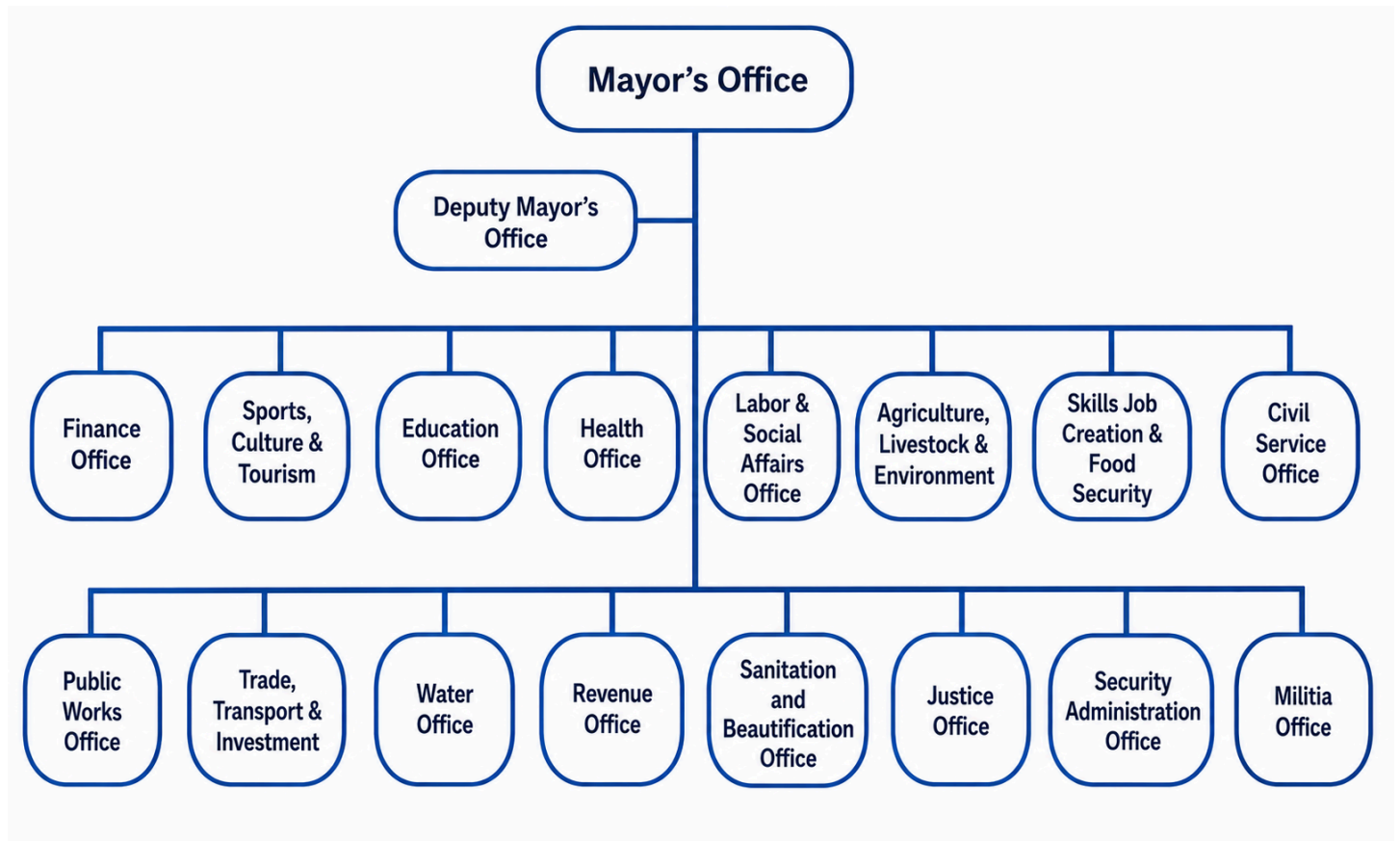


Administrative structure

City Administration offices

The Mayor's Office oversees 16 functional offices responsible for core municipal services and development. These offices are: Public Works; Trade, Transport & Investment; Revenue; Finance; Water; Health; Education; Skills; Job Creation & Food Security; Agriculture, Livestock & Environment;

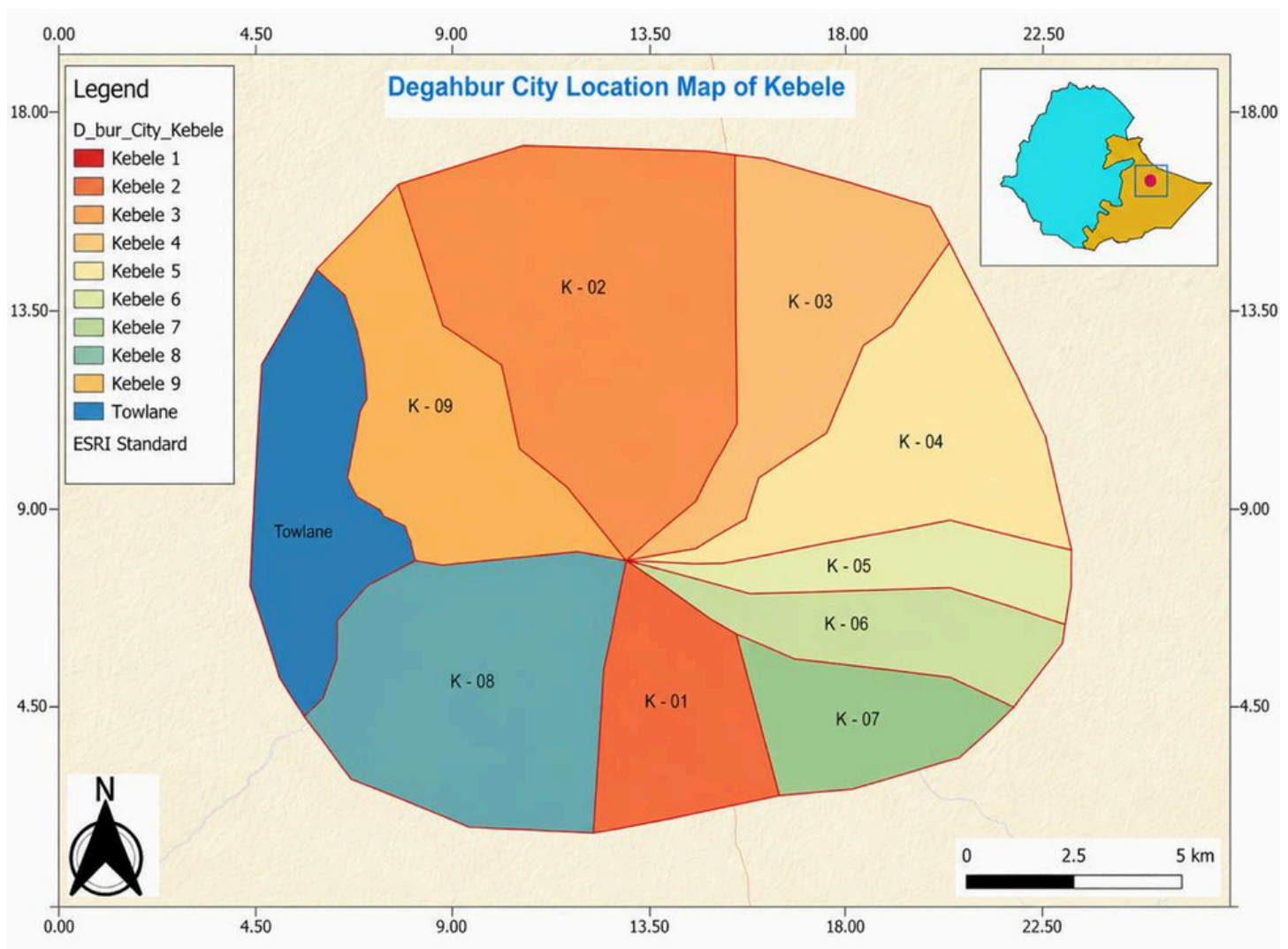
Labor & Social Affairs; Civil Service; Justice; Sports, Culture & Tourism; Security; Militia; and Sanitation & Beautification.



Organogram of Degahbur city administration

Kebeles under the city

Degahbur currently comprises 10 kebeles (Kebeles 01 – 10) under the Mayor's office's supervision. The city has received approval to add 5 kebeles (for a total of 15) and plans to organize kebeles into three districts for management efficiency. Kebeles 02, 03, 04, 07, and 08 are identified as the largest and most densely populated, which the city administration plans to divide each into two Kebeles.



Policies and legal framework

Legal basis

The City operates under the national and regional city-council proclamations (Somali Region Proc. No. 90/2003) and the general city-administration legal framework that governs urban councils in Ethiopia. Some of these relevant proclamations to the day-to-day operations of the city administration include the Property Tax Proclamation No. 1365/2005; Urban Lands Lease Proclamation No. 721/2011; Urban Planning Proclamation No. 574/2008; and the Building Proclamation No. 624/2009

Planning frameworks

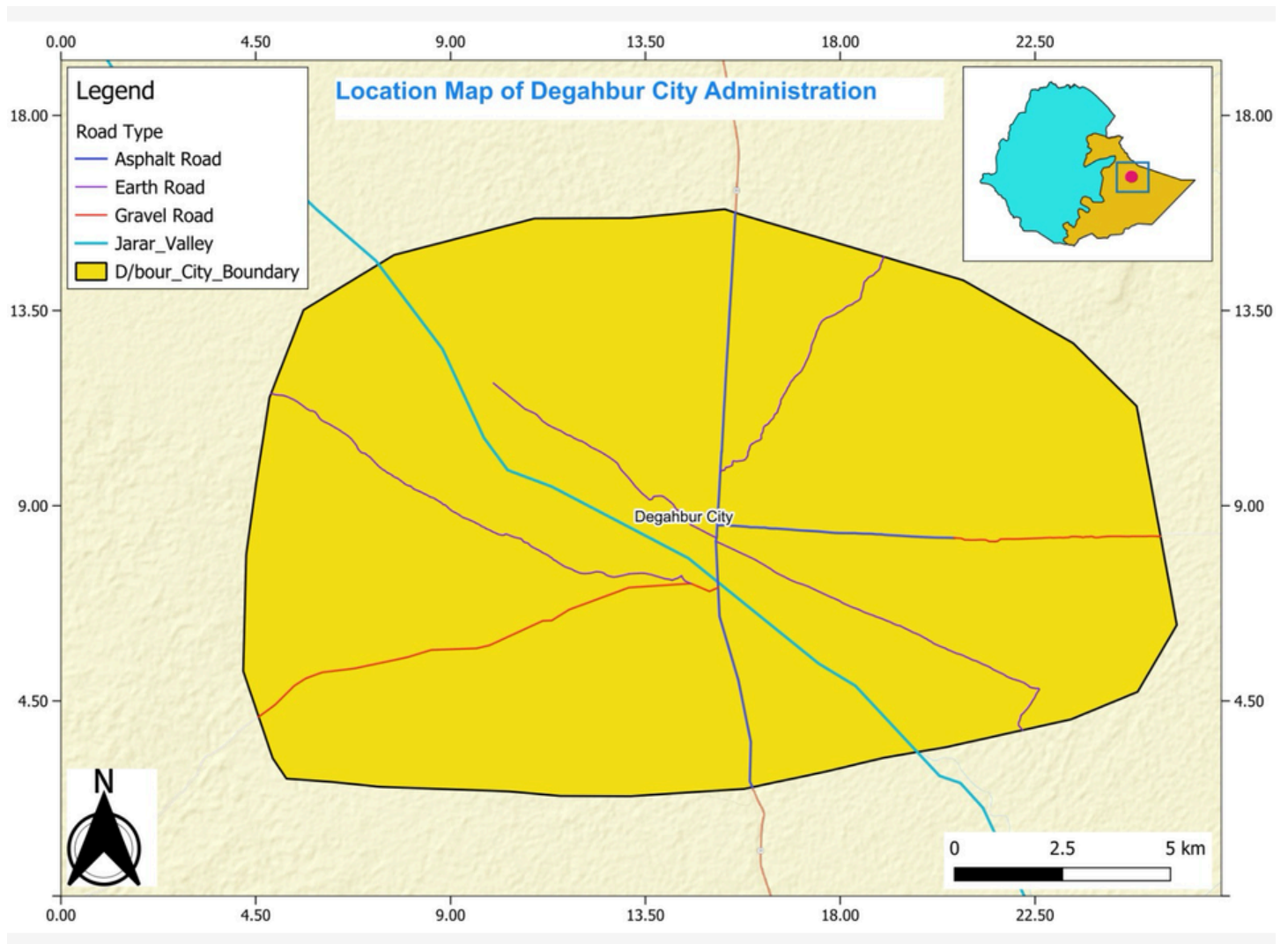
Degahbur follows the Regional Urban Development & Construction Bureau's 10-year development plan (aligned with the regional 10-year perspective plan). The city maintains a master plan revised every ten years; the current master plan was approved in 2015 EC and remains the operational reference.

Institutional gaps

The city reports no standalone municipal policy documents (e.g., city-specific strategy or KIP) beyond the regional and national instruments and intends to develop stronger local policies and

strategies in the coming years to guide implementation and donor coordination.

Geography



Physical setting

Degahbur sits in the Jarar valley system; the Jarar valleys cross the town, while Jarar and Fafan valleys join further east around Birqod, and proceed all the way to Kebridahar, spreading in Dhoobawayn. Historic wells (Horayasuf, Horadini) mark traditional water points that supported settlement. The town's terrain is generally flat to gently undulating with low hills.

Degahbur was established as a settlement in 1920 GC by Arab traders. The original name of the city was *Xidh-Libaax*. The name Degahbur (Dhagaxbuur) comes from a huge rocks that lie in the Jarar valley, and the city was named after these rocks. In October 2003 E.C., it was approved to become a city council, and it started its operations in 2004 E.C. or 2012 G.C.

Area & connectivity

Coverage roughly 15 km² with strategic road links (Jijiga–Kebridehar highway) connecting Degahbur to regional markets and neighboring zones. The city also has 7 Km asphalt road, 7 km of cobblestone road, and 5.6 km of road that is under construction and waiting for asphalt to be laid on it, which connects many Kebeles, including 04, 05, 06, 07, and 01

Climate

The town lies at the start of the Ogaden lowlands. It features low and erratic precipitation with high temperatures throughout the year. Average annual rainfall measures about 321 mm, concentrated in two short seasons: a primary period from March to May influenced by Indian Ocean moisture, and a secondary one from October to November linked to the southward retreat of the Intertropical Convergence Zone, with negligible rain from June to September in this southeastern lowland area. Temperatures remain elevated year-round, with monthly average maxima ranging from 28°C to 34.1°C and minima from 11.4°C to 20.2°C, contributing to high evapotranspiration rates that intensify aridity.

Social fabric

Population

Official/local estimate of the city administration uses an estimated population of ~100,000 (derived from 13,000–15,000 registered households and a regional average household size of 6.6) for planning purposes. Kebele-level disaggregation is not available, though Kebeles such as 02, 04, and 07 are known to host larger populations.

Demography

Residents in the city administration are predominantly Somalis and overwhelmingly Muslim. Somali language is the administrative working language of the city. The population consists of a mix of settled urban residents and families with pastoral and agro-pastoral links.



Basic services

Health facilities

The city's health system comprises one general hospital (located in Kebele 03), one health center (in Kebele 06), two comprehensive facilities (in Garbataxan, Kebele 09, and Dulcad in Kebele 08), and three health posts (one in Towlane, Kebele 10, and two in Kebele 02).

Core services across these facilities include maternal and child health (MCH) services such as antenatal care, delivery support, and immunization for children and pregnant women, as well as child nutrition interventions, including management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM); however, the health posts do not provide diagnostic services. Garbataxan and Dulcad comprehensives deliver outpatient (OPD), delivery, and MCH services. The health center in Kebele 06 offers the full range of services and is equipped with laboratory and diagnostic equipment, including CBC, microscope, and basic chemistry analyzers. There is a planned expansion to construct an operating room at the health center to perform emergency and minor surgeries, such as cesarean sections, appendectomies, and hernia repairs, while cases with complications beyond the health center's surgical capacity will be referred to the general hospital.

Top diseases reported in the last five years (2021-2025) include malaria, UTI, TB, and pneumonia.

The city provides both routine Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) services and campaign-based immunization activities. According to the latest report (as of May 2026), antenatal care (ANC) utilization ANC1–ANC4 attendance was planned for 1,200 women, but reached 848 (approximately 70%), with cross-facility attendance within the region cited as a contributing factor. Institutional delivery at the health center achieved 522 births against a target of 606 (86% coverage). Newborn prophylaxis (vitamin K and PCG at birth) reached 989 of 1,216 targeted neonates (~80%). Childhood vaccine dropout between Beta1 and Beta3 was observed: out of 1,216 children planned, 849 received Beta3. Full immunization coverage met roughly 82% of the 1,200 targets

In addition, campaign activities are conducted in the city. The large-scale campaign target of 12,915 individuals was fully achieved, and the measles campaign reached 9,385 children (99% of the target). Targeted catch-up activities reached approximately 485 children who had previously missed scheduled vaccinations.

Service access across the city is generally strong, with all 10 kebeles in proximity to health facilities and no major geographic access barriers reported. Emergency transport capacity includes four ambulances (three assigned to hospitals and one to the health office), supporting referral and outreach activities.

Table 1: health facilities and services

Facility type	Name / location (kebele)	Services provided
General hospital	General Hospital (Kebele 03)	Inpatient/outpatient; emergency; maternity; basic surgery referrals
Health center	Health Center (Kebele 06)	OPD, MCH, ANC, immunization, laboratory (CBC, microscope, basic chemistry); planned OR for minor surgeries
Comprehensive clinic	Garbataxan (Kebele 09)	OPD, delivery, birand full MCH services
Comprehensive clinic	Dulcad facility (Kebele 08)	OPD, delivery, MCH services
Health posts	Kebele 10 (Tawlane) / Kebele 02 (two posts)	Basic outreach, immunization, referrals
Private clinics	Multiple clinics across town	OPD, pharmacy, maternal and minor services
Ambulance fleet	Health office & hospital	4 ambulances (3 hospital, 1 health office)

Degahbur also hosts one of the region’s first and largest dedicated mental health facilities, established to fill a major service gap in Degahbur and the wider Somali region. Funded and constructed by a group of Degahbur (and Jarar zone) women in the diaspora, the facility was completed in 2024 and began operations in 2025. It represents a significant local advancement in mental health services and community-led investment, providing specialized care previously unavailable in the area



Education

The city has 14 public schools in total: five standalone primary schools, seven combined primary intermediate schools, and two secondary schools. There is currently no operational kindergarten; however, one public KG facility is under construction. In addition, four private schools operate in the city; one private school offers the full cycle (primary, intermediate, and secondary), while the other three provide primary and secondary education. As of the 2026 academic year, student enrollment and staff numbers for these schools are shown in the table below.

Higher and vocational education provision includes one public TVET college and two private colleges offering diploma-level programs. Jigjiga University delivers non-regular (weekend) graduate and undergraduate programs in Degahbur city offerings across various fields.

School Name	Level	category	Teaching Staff (Total)	Student Enrollment (Total)	Enrollment: Male	Enrollment: female
Singub Secondary School	Secondary	Public	30	1114	570	534
Mahamud Ali Secondary School	Secondary	Public	31	1030	513	517
Omer Binu Katab B	Primary, intermidiate & Secondary	Private	34	1059	548	511
Ugas Mahamud	Primary and intermidiate	Public	40	1012	488	524
Shekh Mumin	Primary and intermidiate	Public	35	717	362	355
Haji Ali Haydar	Primary and intermidiate	Public	33	907	468	439
Garaad Maktal	Primary and intermidiate	Public	42	1223	590	633
Sayid Ali	Primary and intermidiate	Public	41	1305	704	331
Dul,ad	Primary and intermidiate	Public	21	479	249	230
Shekh Ahmed gole	Primary and intermidiate	Public	14	263	127	136
Omer Binu Katab A	Primary and intermidiate	Private	25	631	345	286
Unity	Primary and intermidiate	Private	12	448	237	251
Waaberi	Primary and intermidiate	Private	32	1136	561	575
Gilingil	Primary	Public	12	188	91	95
Horawabley	Primary	Public	13	421	215	206
Garbo taxan	Primary	Public	9	70	29	41
Dulcad 2	Primary	Public	5	124	59	75
Tawlane	Primary	Public	3	199	90	109

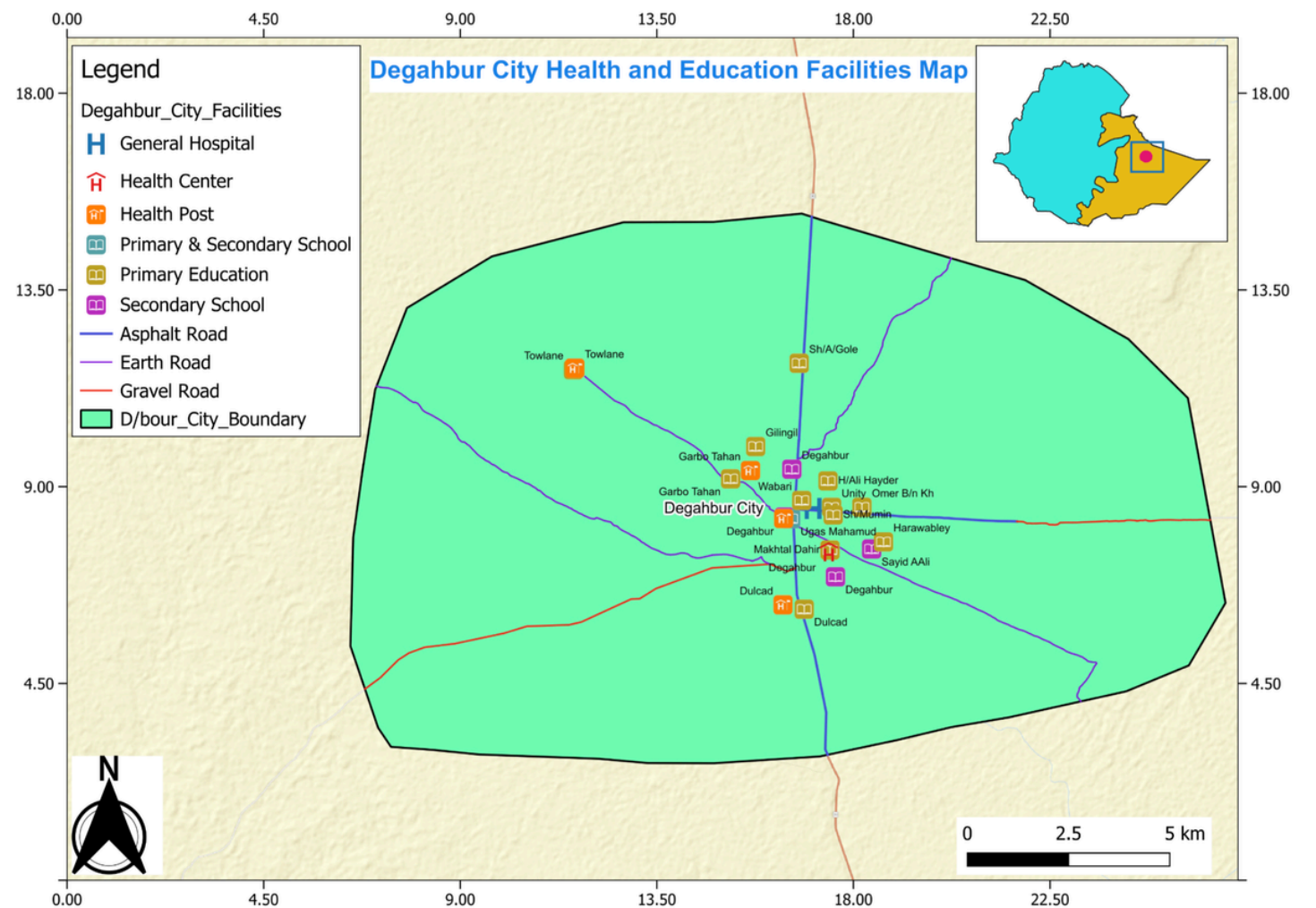
Water services

The city's water supply and sanitation has been expanded through a two-phased infrastructure project: a World Bank funded phase that installed distribution mains (16 km) and supplied pumping and generator equipment for boreholes, and a regional government-funded phase implemented by a Chinese contractor that constructed major storage and distribution assets (a 500 m³ storage at the service pumping house, an additional 4,000 m³ storage, and 109 km of distribution mains).

Boreholes supplying the system were drilled in 2012 and are maintained as part of the service pumping house operations. The utility currently serves approximately 4,200 connected customer households via household piped connections across the city's kebeles. Distribution pipelines reportedly cover the entire urban footprint (125 km combined), enabling household connections even in newly developing areas.

Service access and system management show strong recent gains but remain a work in progress. Coverage is estimated at 35% of the city's approximately 12,000 – 13,000 households. However, the installation is an ongoing campaign, and the planned installations for 2026, according to the water office, are approximately 1,700 household pipeline installations

The utility operates four to six staff per kebele for metering, billing, and maintenance. It also recently transitioned from manual to an online billing and notification system with mobile payment (Helocash), and maintains social protection measures, including bill exemptions and free water points for poor and vulnerable households.



Economy, Market, and Access to Finance

Economy

The city's economy is largely trade-oriented with limited primary production and manufacturing. Trade divides into two dominant streams: cross-border imports (mainly food items and consumer goods from Somaliland) and livestock trading, which together drive most economic activity. The livestock market is a major economic engine that is active year-round but peaks during the Hajj (pilgrimage) season, and supports an extended value chain (owners, brokers, shippers, truckers, traders, and ancillary service providers). Livestock revenues circulate locally through purchases and services, generating seasonal spikes in demand across retail, hospitality, transport, and other service sectors. Smaller but consistent contributors include petty commerce (milk and vegetable micro-enterprises significantly dominated by women), retail and hospitality services, and a growing set of small and medium industrial activities



New livestock market inaugurated in 2026

Market infrastructure

Local market infrastructure consists of open markets, kiosks, supermarkets, and specialty retailers (electronics, consumer goods, khat markets). A designated industrial investment zone is prepared with land leases and planned utility delivery, offering a comparative advantage for industrial expansion. Nevertheless, market functioning is constrained by weak municipal services and physical infrastructure: solid-waste management is limited (few collection trucks, no segregation or

recycling), and market upgrades are needed for drainage, paved stalls, and dedicated loading/unloading areas. While these are gaps that exist, they are also one of the areas where the city administration is planning to engage the private sector investments for collective gains.

Employment, skills, and demand

Public sector employment is the town's major employer; many educated youths obtain work in government or NGOs, while private-sector job opportunities remain limited. TVET and other training programs provide regular skills development, but local industries and firms currently absorb only a small share of graduates. Market demand indicates opportunities in value-added agro-processing, cold-chain for perishable goods, formalized logistics for livestock exports, and light manufacturing that leverages the prepared investment zone and available power capacity.

Access to finance and utilization

Financial infrastructure is well represented for a town of this size: several banks (Commercial Bank, Abyssinia, Wegagen, Dashen, Awash, Shabeele, and others) and microfinance institutions (Kaafi, Rays, Sahal) operate locally. However, uptake of formal credit among micro and small enterprises is low. Two interlinked issues that reduce utilization and need to be addressed are: (1) Religious objections to conventional interest-based lending; and (2) Limited, higher-cost Islamic banking-compliant options (Shabeele's Murabaha products are reported as relatively expensive and constrained/limited in supply).

As a result, many enterprises rely on informal credit networks such as *Hagbad*, other informal loans from friends and family members, and trade credits rather than bank loans, which limits business expansion and formal sector job creation.

Business and investment opportunities

The city offers a favorable investment climate anchored by strategic assets and ready infrastructure. Competitive advantages include abundant electric capacity (planned 160 MW supply with current use ~25 MW), a designated industrial land parcel with prepared leases, widespread water distribution, relatively low labor costs, and proximity to regional markets and cross-border trade routes (notably Somaliland).

Priority investment opportunities are concentrated in light manufacturing and processing: nail, steel/iron-sheet, soap, gypsum, and egg-tray factories within the industrial cluster; agro-processing and cold-chain facilities to capture value from regional agricultural and livestock production; construction materials and related services; entertainment centers specially for the youth (such as stadiums, gamezones, parks, etc), and hospitality (hotels) to serve trade and seasonal market flows. Small business prospects exist in retail (supermarkets, kiosks), food service and cafes, health and education services, and logistics for livestock exports.

Facilitation measures for the potential investors are in place. The city grants lease land, assists with documentation, and is preparing core utilities (electricity, water) to attract investors, including

diaspora (yellow-card holders) who are treated the same as local investors. Local TVET and skills offices provide targeted training to align workforce skills with industry needs.

The city administration, in close collaboration with the relevant financial institutions, is working on improving the limited access to affordable Sharia-compliant finance, the existing small private sector (with public employment dominant), and gaps in market infrastructure. Addressing these issues for the investors would accelerate private investment and support the conversion of the city's seasonal trade flows into durable industrial and service jobs.

Development priorities

The city's development agenda emphasizes industrialization, infrastructure upgrades, and social inclusion to convert its trade advantages into sustained local growth. Industry development is prioritized through the establishment of the industrial zone/cluster with ready land, reliable power and water, and targeted support for emerging industries/factories (nail, soap, iron-sheet, gypsum, egg-tray).

Priority infrastructure interventions planned include expansion and rehabilitation of the main road network over the next three years, improved drainage, enhanced solid-waste collection and street lighting, and market infrastructure upgrades (paved stalls, drainage, loading zones).

Services such as water, sanitation, education, and health remain central development priorities for the city administration. Priorities are consolidating gains in water distribution and household connections, upgrading health services (notably constructing an OR at the health center and maintaining emergency referral capacity) while sustaining immunization and MCH programs. In education and skills, the focus is on completing additional kindergarten facilities, improving school infrastructure, and expanding TVET offerings to meet labor demand in the investment zone.

To stimulate private capital and investment, the city administration is engaged in infrastructure delivery, such as electricity, water, and other basic services to selected investment areas or industry zones, streamlining legal and administrative investor support (including for diaspora), strengthening governance and planning (city-level strategies, KPIs, and improved kebele-level data), and scaling support for women's micro-enterprises and youth employment programs.

