

# **DAG's Municipal-wide Planning Programme**

## **May 2007**

### **Introduction**

Cities will account for virtually all future world population growth which is expected to peak at about 10 billion in 2050. In addition, global poverty is moving to cities which has been described by many 'the urbanisation of poverty'. The explosive growth of cities in the developing world presents the greatest challenges for planners and governments; this reality requires a fundamental shift toward viewing urbanization as an opportunity to reduce poverty. Global trends show that city growth is not driven by State plans and policies, but on the basis of market forces and the necessity to meet basic needs; if left to market forces, the number of slum dwellers worldwide is projected to rise over the next 30 years to about two billion people. It is critical that urban centres be planned and managed so they can exist in balance with the natural environment while supporting and sustaining their human populations and economic base.

Typically, patterns of decision making around urban form, infrastructure, and community services are characterized by short term driving forces, including annual budgeting, responses to natural or man-made crises, media reports, public opinion and lobbying by special interest groups. Decisions about one-off community or urban projects, involving small or vast sums of money are usually made outside of a long-term vision or plan. In light of growing demands and limited resources, there is a need for integrated municipal-wide planning interventions which address, specifically in the South African context, the needs of a variety of income groups and which embrace inclusivity, development and sustainability.

### **Background**

South Africa's urban policy context is complex, with a wide range of sometimes contradictory national and provincial policies and strategies, and the separation of responsibilities between various levels of government frequently unclear. In addition, there is a remarkable lack of understanding of urban development issues in the major metropolitan areas and an absence of shared long-term visions for urban development.

The South African Cities Network notes that 'The urban visions that have been crafted by municipalities so far still remain the exclusive property of local government. They are not owned by all city stakeholders. A future challenge for cities will be to ensure that all stakeholders direct their efforts to achieving a shared vision of urban progress.'<sup>1</sup> Cities need a vision to provide the framework for how existing urban areas are to grow and change; where new urban development should take place, and what the nature of urban development should be. More importantly, the vision should address the many problems faced by the city.

The City of Cape Town produces 11.23% of the national Geographic Value Added (GVA), second only to Johannesburg, and is thus a major urban economic engine and a useful case study. Cape Town's Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF) was developed through an extensive participatory process in the 1990s but was widely ignored; it is loosely estimated that 65% of public and private investment in Cape Town has occurred outside the urban corridors (located along public transport routes) identified in the MSDF as priority zones for investment. Similarly, the Cape Town 2004/2005 Integrated Development Plan acknowledges that 'existing spatial inefficiencies have been reinforced as investment has taken place in areas that are not situated along existing public transport routes.' Across the country, low-income housing is a consistent example of misdirected investment; typically low-income housing is provided on the periphery away from a range of other opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> South African Cities Network (2006) "State of the Cities Report".

such as employment, health and recreation. This has also resulted in increased public spending on transport subsidies and in increased costs to the affected households.

One of the ways to overcome the institutional and political constraints resulting in inadequate service delivery is the development and implementation of long-term visions and strategies that tackle the many problems faced by the urban poor to reduce inequity and inefficiency in the city. For example, a long-term view of housing and urban development issues can help overcome the increasing separation of housing and planning functions at local government level and improve co-ordination between different departments and also between different spheres of government. The need for this is recognised in the national housing policy framework, *Breaking New Ground*, which calls for increased inter- and intra-governmental co-ordination to develop sustainable settlements.

Co-operation between different spheres of government has been absent in the formulation of integrated development plans (IDPs) and the participation of civil society has been equally weak. The participation of national and provincial government departments in the reviews of municipal IDPs is central to integrated planning as municipalities are dependent on information about sector expenditure plans that have implications at a local level, and also because they often require technical assistance from provincial and national departments.

According to the Department of Local Government and Planning (DPLG) *“the underlying principle of integrated development planning across spheres is that it must be a dialogue between spheres. National priorities are influenced and shaped by the articulation by communities of their needs through the municipal integrated planning process. A Cabinet Lekgotla in July 2001 resolved that national and provincial government should plan and budget around local needs as a matter of principle. In December 2001 the PCC<sup>2</sup> articulated this principle as follows: in a system of state-wide planning, municipal integrated development plans (IDPs) must serve as the basis for aligning the policies, planning and budgeting of all three spheres. IDPs are thus seen as an intergovernmental planning instrument for the whole of government.”*<sup>3</sup>

Civil society participation in the development of IDPs is also essential to ensure that citizens and civil society organisations can play an effective role in helping to ensure that politicians and officials are held accountable with regards to the implementation of plans.

### **DAG’s Municipal-wide Planning Programme**

DAG’s Municipal-wide Planning programme aims to promote integrated planning processes at the municipal and regional level. Its overall objective is to influence State policy and practice to become more developmental and pro-poor.

Municipal-wide planning, a new programme in DAG, integrates the DAG’s other programmes as it can, for example, promote the development of medium density housing on well-located land, encourage the introduction of measures for value capture (such as inclusionary zoning) and contribute to the integration of informal settlements into the city. Adopting a municipal-wide planning approach will also encourage more effective engagement of citizens in development processes.

The adoption of a Municipal-wide Planning approach which result in the attainment of the following outcomes:

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<sup>2</sup> The President’s Co-ordinating Council (PCC), chaired by President Thabo Mbeki and constituted of the Ministry of Provincial and Local Government, and the Premiers of the nine provinces

<sup>3</sup> Department of Provincial and Local Government (2003): IGR and Service Delivery in SA: A Ten Year Review

- Improvement in municipal governance and management so that municipalities become more efficient and responsive to the needs of the people, especially poor people;
- Improvement to the environmental infrastructure for poor people in a sustainable way;
- Identification and undertaking of poverty reduction measures;
- Active participation of poor people and civil society in urban planning;
- Development of social capital and meaningful participation of all stakeholders in decision making processes;
- Introduction of mechanisms to capture and create additional revenue to finance housing and infrastructure needs.

In order to support its objective DAG plans to:

- Partner with a municipality to develop and implement a participatory, integrated, long-term approach to municipal planning. Experiences in such a partnership will be used in the future as a South African good practice case study of how to successfully develop and implement a long-term municipal-wide plan which appropriately and adequately addresses a variety of development issues including the use of participatory processes that facilitate the integration of people from all income groups in the city.
- Gather relevant research, information and case studies regarding practice and approaches to integrated planning in South Africa and abroad.
- Through involvement in the Hangberg *in situ* upgrade, promote the development of precinct level plans for the greater Hout Bay area.

## **Conclusion**

By virtue of its nature, long-term municipal-wide planning requires high level buy-in from political leaders and a relatively stable political environment. In addition, to undertake municipal-wide planning in an integrated and participatory manner requires high levels of participation and commitment from all sectors of society and well-orchestrated planning across the spheres of government. This poses a number of challenges to successfully adopting this approach in South Africa but, at the same time, offers tremendous opportunities to build citizenship, improve urban form and governance and promote more inclusive and equitable cities. DAG will continue to work with these challenges to advocate for planning frameworks which are more comprehensive, inclusive and long term.