



Development Action Group
in partnership with the
South Road Family Association

A RESPONSE TO:
MyCiti CONCEPT PLANS FOR PHASE 2A:
LANSDOWNE-WETTON CORRIDOR

Date: 13 July 2015

ABOUT DEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP

The Development Action Group (DAG), established in 1986, is a leading non-profit, non-governmental organisation working throughout South Africa to fight poverty and inequality, and promote integrated urban environments.

DAG supports communities in need of adequate housing to lead, and engage with, their own development by enhancing their capacity and resourcefulness. DAG's strategies support pro-poor urban development practice using community-based development to foster social cohesion and strengthen citizenship and democracy.

DAG influences state policy and practice through four functional areas: - research, advocacy and lobbying, partnerships and demonstration (projects). Critical partnerships with government, through a combination of policy advocacy and demonstration projects are central to DAG's strategies.

OUR VISION

The creation of human settlements through development processes which enable human rights, dignity and equity.

OUR MISSION

To create, implement and support opportunities for community-centred settlement development and to advocate for and foster a pro-poor policy environment which addresses economic, social and spatial imbalances.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To demonstrate how working in partnership with citizens and other groups who share a pro-poor agenda can lead to creative and sustainable solutions that redress social, economic and spatial inequalities.

ABOUT SOUTH ROAD FAMILY ASSOCIATION (SRFA)

The South Road Family Association (SRFA) is a community-based organisation that was established in 2014 in response to the eviction notices issued by the City of Cape Town (CoCT). Residents of the council houses situated in South Road, Plumstead were issued with eviction notices (later retracted), in order to make way for the second phase of the MyCiti bus route.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out DAG and SFRA's comments in response to the Lansdowne/Wetton Corridor and Wynberg proposed conceptual plans for Phase 2A of the MyCiti Bus service.

Our views are informed by a vision shared with the City of Cape Town for *"A city that works for every resident, especially the poor, children, the disabled and the elderly, is more likely to be an equitable city"*.

2. WE KINDLY REQUEST THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO BE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW:

- I. Full suite of conceptual plans including all proposed 'feeder' routes.

3. WE MAKE THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC COMMENTS IN THE FIRST INSTANCE:

- The series of public participation events that have been held throughout June 2015 were experienced more as 'information sessions' than public participation sessions. Engagement about technical questions surrounding the route were encouraged and answered, while political questions and remarks were discouraged. Participation and engagement with the effected communities should have been entered into earlier in the design process.
- There is a lack of supporting plans for adjacent land-use, both existing and proposed. While 'transit orientated development' was made mention of in the meeting(s), there are no plans to demonstrate how this is going to be achieved through land use, re-zoning or other public infrastructure.
- There is little to no evidence of consultation with other City departments such as The Department of Human Settlements or The Department of Spatial Planning and Urban Design. The plans are presented in isolation as technical transport routes and there are no corresponding plans or schemes for commercial nodes, station precincts, public open space, affordable housing or other public amenities that are understood to be needed to support such transport orientated development.
- The proposed design is another iteration of the 1960's apartheid plan for the area and is not in alignment with the City's vision to create integrated urban environments.
- The plans to demolish X houses in South Road, which constitute part of the rental housing stock, contradicts what Human Settlements' MEC Bonginkosi Madikizela recently stated regarding the need to keep rental stock in well located areas of the city (in reference to the De Waal Drive Flats.)

4. DETAILED COMMENTS

- The professionals present at the particular meeting (17 June 2015, Church on Main, Wynberg) make mention of ‘Transport Orientated Development’ however there are no corresponding plans/detailed actions/strategic or integrated plans for how this may be achieved. There are no corresponding proposals for affordable housing or public amenities to support the densities required to ensure a sustainable public transport system. The opportunity exists to consider affordable housing options at a medium density along the transport routes, especially where the proposal intends to demolish existing affordable housing stock. This would work against the spatial legacy of apartheid planning and toward a more integrated city. The current proposal merely enables the further development of 2 socially and economically divided cities.
- There has been little investigation into, and evaluation of the social and environmental impacts of creating ‘cul de sacs’, and subsequent ‘decimation’ of communities. How will these changes to the roads effect traffic flows, community networks or crime? This further division of communities could have adverse social impacts. Have these even been considered? The ‘top-down’ and technical nature of these proposed plans ignores these social aspects of the community and neighbourhood.

5. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- To date, the public participation processes initiated by the City, while informative, have not been constructive.
- The scheme is purely focussed on the transport routes of the plan. However without fully designing or planning for supporting population densities and amenities, the MyCiti will not be sustainable. That is why it is our recommendation that the current plan is redesigned in conjunction with other departments to ensure an integrated urban development strategy is achieved. The following Transit orientated strategy is outlined below and focusses on the fundamental features and benefits of a TOD.

5.1 Transit Orientated Development Strategy

In South Africa, where there are historically “dualistic patterns” of development reinforcing spatial segregation and social polarisation, the implementation of Transit Orientated Development in conjunction with the new IRT and BRT systems could serve to “enhance the effectiveness of these urban public transport systems”, whilst also addressing the overall goal of restructuring our cities socio-spatial form (Wilkinson, 2006).

In both developed and developing countries there is an increasing trend towards the adoption of Transit orientated development (TOD). Transit orientated developments (TODs), also known as TOD neighbourhoods are characterised by moderate to high density and mixed use development located

around station precincts and along corridors and because of their transport accessibility serve to have a direct impact on travel demand (Dill, 2008).

TODs have a number of defining features, including:

- **Transit station is at the heart of the TOD precinct and integrates with the surrounding land uses** (CoJ, 2010). In a TOD the station is not designed only with the primary function of travel or as a transit node, but as the “centre for community life”. The current plans for the MyCiti Phase 2A focus solely on the conceptual design of the ‘trunk routes’ or ‘red roads’.
- TODs aim for a **moderate to high density development around the station precinct**, progressively reducing in density as it moves out from the station centre (van Wyk, 2011). In the City of Cape Town’s draft *Densification Strategy* (2007), it is recommended that mixed use areas located on public transport routes target a Nett density of 50 - 375 du/hectare (CoCT, 2007). In TODs this can be achieved through a combination of medium and high density buildings, green public open spaces as opposed to private gardens, more space dedicated to mass transit, walking and cycling as opposed to parking, and more space converted for mixed use (Salter, 2011).
- The **diversity of land uses within a TOD**, including **residential, employment, retail activities and public services**, particularly in the immediate station precinct enables people to take care of their needs within the 500 - 800 walking radius (TRB 2002, pp.5-6 cited Wilkinson, 2006). With attention to ‘place making’ these 18 hour multi use station precinct developments can become socially and economically vibrant spaces (Salazar Ferro, 2012 and Salter, 2011). These mixed uses can be organised either horizontally or vertically, with the most active uses, such as retail, located on the ground floor with access to the pedestrian (CoJ, 2010).
- With TODs there is an implicit focus on a **compact and pedestrian orientated urban design to encourage walking and cycling**.
- Within a TOD there is a significant opportunity to include a **mix of housing typologies and affordability options**. In South Africa where there is a high differentiation between household incomes, the implementation of different housing options with mixed incomes would need to

be considered, especially if the overall goal of socio-spatial restructuring is to be achieved. For instance housing requirements for lower income households in TODs could be orientated towards rental through medium density community residential units or higher density gap housing – a more preferential option considering that these income groups are less likely to own a motor vehicle and so doing create a captive public transport user (Wilkinson, 2006).

- **Parking is managed to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking compared with conventional development.**

5.2 Strategic Advantages of TOD

TODs and the combination of mixed uses; higher densities and innovative urban design serve to have a direct impact on travel demand, through increased ridership of public transit and within the precinct, through walking and cycling (Dill, 2008). Research in the USA is now indicating that residents living in a TOD are half as likely to own a car (Bachels and Newman, 2011). The overall reduction in vehicle trips significantly contributes towards reducing congestion, with the beneficial advantage of reduced fuel consumption and exhaust emissions, in turn creating more low carbon localities (Salter, 2011. 91 and VTPI 2005; TRB 2002, p.43 cited in Wilkinson, 2006).

TODs because of the moderate to high density development also provide a ready demand for transit services, resulting in improved “efficiency, optimising performance and (enhancing) the cost effectiveness of the services” (van Wyk, 2011). Higher user thresholds present economic advantages for the economic sustainability of the BRT and IRT, which currently require subsidies for costs not covered by fare revenues. In 2010, it was estimated that the Cape Town BRT would require R115 million a year in operating subsidies and in Johannesburg approximately R100 million, excluding vehicle operations (van Ryneveld, 2010.80).

The redevelopment of land around stations, through infill or the redevelopment of old buildings can also significantly relieve pressures to build on the urban fringes through the more efficient use of urban land and in turn contribute towards city compaction (Bachels and Newman, 2011).

This has a further advantage in terms urban renewal as a result of the potentially higher property values and increased commercial activity within the TOD, contributing towards job creation and poverty reduction. This also presents an opportunity for improving tax

revenue and potentially capturing increased land values to finance the operational and maintenance costs of either the TOD or transit service (VTPI 2010 cited in van Wyk, 2011 and Bachels and Newman, 2011). However, potential gentrification or market displacement of lower income tenants needs to be mitigated (Salter, 2011). It is therefore critical that increasing properties prices do not make it unaffordable for lower income groups (Salter, 2011).

TODs also present significant economic advantages to “transport disadvantaged households” by reducing transport costs and improving residual income and household affordability through improved travel options and accessibility. According to Graham (2012) the advantages for the urban poor are significant in terms of city compaction and improved location, with a 24% reduction in recurrent household costs. Lastly, TODs contribute towards a more vibrant and liveable community resulting in neighbourhoods that are more desirable to live in physically and socially because of their accessibility advantages and the mixed uses (VTPI 2010 cited in van Wyk, 2011).

6. CONCLUSION

DAG and the SRFA are not opposed to the MyCiti bus and believe the BRT to be an important part of the successful development of the City of Cape Town. However the transport plan has been presented in isolation, in a technical manner and is currently seen as a ‘high-way’ that will further divide the community of Wynberg and Plumstead. The process needs to be slowed and layered with meaningful public engagement and a series of environmental, heritage and social impact assessments. The plan needs to be reconsidered, with a focus on transport orientated development and all the surrounding land use and amenities that that entails, as outlined in this response.