
Development Action Group (DAG)



SUBMISSION TO THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN (COCT) ON THE DRAFTING OF THE NEW FIVE-YEAR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP) 2022-2027

13 JANUARY 2022

The Development Action Group (DAG) is a leading non-profit, nongovernmental organisation working throughout South Africa to fight poverty and inequality and promote integrated urban environments. Established in 1986, DAG works with dispossessed communities towards empowering active citizenry to realise integrated, inclusive, and equitable cities.

This submission includes our comments/inputs on the Mayoral Priorities, as outlined by Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis during the City of Cape Town's (CoCT/City) meeting with non-government organisations and non-profit organisations on 11 January 2022, towards drafting of the new five-Year Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2022-2027:

- ❖ During the public engagement (noted above), Mayor Hill-Lewis explicated eight (8) key themes which the municipality intends on prioritising for the next five years. These included:
 - Energy security – ending load-shedding over time
 - Basic services – improving water, sanitation, and waste services
 - Safety – making our city safer
 - Inclusive economic growth – making it easier to do business and create jobs
 - Ensuring accessible and safe transport
 - Increasing access to housing – releasing City-owned land so the private sector can deliver more affordable housing; Upgrading informal settlements; supporting micro-developers and housing entrepreneurs; Supporting homeownership and title deed regularisation; Investing in safe and accessible public housing; addressing homelessness
 - Providing quality public spaces and recreation facilities
 - Ensuring excellent customer experience

- ❖ We would like to commend the City for its apt identification of the Mayoral Priorities selected from amongst many other issues and concerns that will demand attention and commitment over the next five years. Similarly, we have noted and indeed welcome the mayor's comments regarding viewing civil society organisations (CSOs) and communities as partners and allies working alongside the municipality in co-creating appropriate solutions to challenges faced by the city. We further welcome the mayor's stated intention to work towards a more open, transparent, and accessible working relationship and linked to this, an efficient governance system that is supportive of more collaborative efforts between the City and those it exist to serve. Towards achieving this goal, we propose a section in the draft IDP that speaks to governance issues and more specifically, innovative mechanisms driven by the municipality to allow for meaningful engagement and greater collaboration and transparency. As DAG, we confirm our commitment to continuing to work alongside the City,

communities and others to addressing these and other priorities supporting the creation of an inclusive, integrated, and spatially just city.

- ❖ Secondly, we support the comments in relation to the importance of appropriately contextualising and offering a problem statement outlining exactly what the perceived challenges are, how this has led to identification of the issue as a priority area, along with concomitant proposed responses/solutions to the issue at hand, made by others during the public engagement. In the absence of such context, it becomes rather challenging to assess exactly what the specific issues are in relation to the priority that the City seeks to address and how best to contribute towards co-creating appropriate responses, specific to the problem related to the priority identified.

For the remainder of this submission, we direct our inputs to Mayoral Priority six (6): *Increasing access to housing – releasing City-owned land so the private sector can deliver more affordable housing*:

- ❖ DAG's response to the question "From the list below, choose the **MOST important** priority you believe will **make Cape Town a better city**" – as presented in the public engagement – is unequivocally Priority 6. DAG believes that it is impossible to build viable, integrated human settlements without comprehensively addressing the issue of land. To not do so means that the core factor of Cape Town's low-income housing crisis will remain largely unaddressed. DAG, for decades have and continue to advocate for the release of state-owned vacant and under-utilised well-located land for affordable housing. National government have an important role to play in supporting municipalities to implement the housing programme, in our view, first and foremost by unlocking public land for human settlements developments. Equally, municipalities have a key obligation in terms of this requirement, also having a responsibility to strengthen efforts aimed at utilising vacant land and buildings they own in implementing the programme.
- ❖ We posit that it is paramount that whatever land the CoCT does own is used to the maximum benefit of as many people as possible. The extent to which the CoCT can ensure that vacant underutilised land and buildings across the city are put to its best and most productive use is therefore crucial, much more so when the municipality is faced with many urban residents in dire need of affordable housing and accommodation. Moreover, the sad reality of rising homelessness and proliferation of informal settlements in and around the City attest to the crisis of housing and accommodation. Without access to decent housing and accommodation, this growing mass of excluded residents are unable to enjoy the fruits of the remaining Mayoral Priorities in any material way, e.g., safety, economic inclusion, excellent customer experience, etc. On the other hand, if the City prioritises inclusion through spatially accommodating excluded residents, it can extend the fruits of the other priorities to everyone who is properly accommodated.
- ❖ In relation to the wording of Priority 6, we propose rephrasing as follows: "*affordable housing and accommodation*". This Priority speaks to land release for not only subsidised housing / bonded properties but also developing a more structured "*continuum of accommodation*" options for residents who do not qualify for either subsidised or mortgage financed housing e.g., homeless communities. We offer this recommendation so that this do not only focus on the narrow accommodation option of housing (affordable or otherwise). Perhaps the last part of the Priority should read "build/facilitate affordable accommodation options". The reason for this wording is simply because there are indeed other accommodation options, aside from Breaking New Ground (BNG) housing, for instance Social Housing, etc. These housing options provide a multitude of Cape Town residents with shelter. As a result, the mayor should rather plan to focus on a continuum of sheltering/accommodation typologies that can be directly supported by City resources. An example is the Informal Settlement Upgrading Policy that has site-and-service as one of its phases, with Minister Lindiwe Sisulu in

December 2020¹ announcing a new rapid land release strategy. As a result, we do think that the wording of Priority 6 needs to accommodate these possibilities.

- ❖ Another consideration is the wording “so that the private sector can build”; here a reference to the abovementioned “rapid land release strategy” is again needed. In this context private citizens will do the building, perhaps with resource support from state agencies. Although the word “affordable housing” is used, it should be made clearer if Social Housing (which is an existing programme of the City) is also covered under this Priority. Although social housing can be built by private developers, the actual management of it is by non-profit Social Housing companies. Another accommodation typology not covered are City Rental Units (CRU's). At present, the City is in the process of either selling off or transferring ownership of some of these units to private citizens. The release of CRU's to Cape Town residents should perhaps also be reflected in the wording of this Priority.
- ❖ Finally, without due consideration of the continuing occurrence of land occupations as a core driver that is shaping the urban environment – one which requires comprehensive responses at that – we have not fully addressed the city's key housing issues. This may provide a firmer basis on which the City and its partners could explore ways in which to be more pro-active in terms of land occupations. This could include, for example, identifying initiatives in managed land settlements and other ideas to broaden the possibilities for providing transitional housing. Although we recognise the significant financial and capacity burden upon the City in fulfilling their constitutional obligations arising from land occupations, we reiterate that a comprehensive approach to the city's housing crisis must speak to land occupations and pro-active measures to address this challenge.

¹ [The recent shift in housing focus creates an opportunity to build better cities - CAHF | Centre for Affordable Housing Finance Africa.](#)