

# **Sustainable Community Planning**

## **GUIDE**



**JUNE 2007**





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### EDITORIAL NOTES

This Planning Guide is produced by the Land Planning and Management Division of the Housing and Land Directorate of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, in partnership with other departments, SIPU International and SSPA

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### FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

Dawn McCarthy  
Director: Land Planning & Management  
Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality  
Tel +27 (41) 506 2352  
Cel +27 (82) 827 7744  
E-mail: [dmccarth@mandelametro.gov.za](mailto:dmccarth@mandelametro.gov.za)

### PRODUCTION TEAM

|                                  |                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AUTHORS                          | Sixten Larsson, Olov Tyrstrup, SSPA Sweden<br>Dawn McCarthy, Sibulele Dyodo, Schalk Potgieter, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality |
| ILLUSTRATIONS AND GRAPHIC DESIGN | Viera Larsson, SIPU International                                                                                              |
| EDITOR                           | John Roux, SIPU International                                                                                                  |

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# Foreword

**T**his planning guide presents an approach that aims to address and improve conditions in our cities and towns. Though all municipalities have undertaken many projects since our new era of democracy began in 1994, it has become clear that we need a comprehensive new approach to re-planning entire cities. Integrated Development Planning has been the guiding concept for municipal planning in general, and this guide takes this approach further in three important ways.

*Firstly* it applies integrated development planning to urban spatial and structure planning, taking account of social, economic and environmental considerations. To achieve this, it identifies Sustainable Community Units as distinct planning units at an intermediate level between the city or town level Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and the local neighbourhood level. This has hitherto been a significant gap in our planning approach that has made it difficult to link and integrate SDF and detailed planning.

*Secondly* the guide places Sustainability alongside Integration as a second great guiding principle that is increasingly recognized as essential in all development thinking, given the increasing environmental problems that we face alongside our social and economic challenges. It shows how sustainability is essential in all these aspects.

*Thirdly* the guide elaborates urban spatial planning principles that will lead to more integrated and sustainable cities, and most importantly, it gives many practical examples of how these are applied in practice. It doesn't only deal with the question of what is desirable, but also how to achieve it, in that it describes how to organize the planning process as a complex process involving many stakeholders, and how to achieve community participation in planning.

We thank all those within the municipality who have contributed their valuable time to this project in spite of very busy schedules, the Swedish consultants and South African consultants, Sida as project sponsor, and all others who have contributed.

Hopefully this guide will prove to be most useful to ourselves and other municipalities in planning the integrated and sustainable cities and towns that we need in order to provide a good quality of life for all our communities.

## Acknowledgements

Staff of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in the Land Planning and Management Division and other units, as well as many others who contributed with information for text-boxes and participated in workshops and meetings

### CORE GROUP

Dawn McCarthy, *Director, Land Planning and Management, Project Leader*  
Schalk Potgieter, *Assistant Director, Strategic Planning*  
Sibulele Dyodo, *Town Planner*

### PARTICIPANTS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Stuart Beattie, *Assistant Director Spatial Development Framework*, Schalk Potgieter, *Assistant Director, Strategic Planning*, Sihle Ndaba, *Town Planner*, Andile Cekiso, *Town Planner*, S'busiso Dlamini, *Town Planner*, Debbie Hendricks, *Town Planner*, Nadia Wessels, *Town Planner*, Alan de Vries, *Town Planner*, Claire Holderness, *Transportation Planner*, Anton Snyders, *Director Special Projects, Infrastructure and Engineering*, John Pitout, *Director Parks*, Rob Howlet, *Parks*, Melinda Labuscagne, *Waste Management*, Nkosana Dunjana, *IDP office*, Calvin Brummer, *Director Development and Support*, Ntsikie Ngqebe, *Assistant Planner Urban Dynamics EC*, Ndaba Ndzombane, *Director Metroplan EC*, David Toyis, *Assistant Director Housing Delivery*, Mvuleni Mapu, *Director Housing Delivery*, Matsepo Xaluva, *Assistant Director Social Housing*, Councillor Ngcolomba, Misiwe Mpahlwa, *Motherwell Urban Renewal Project*, Ncediswa Ntshanyana, *Social Development, Education and Administration*, Thembakazi Hlela, *Social Development, Education and Administration*, Amelia Büchner, *Director Strategic Projects, Economic Development Unit*, Joram Mkosana, *Director Environmental Services*, Henning Borch Hansen, *Motherwell Urban Renewal Project, EU*, Gustaf Asplund, *SIPU International, Sida Urban Advisor to Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Ndaba*

### CONSULTANTS

Ndaba Ndzombane, *Director, Metroplan, Port Elizabeth*  
Ntsikie Ngqebe, *Assistant Planner, Urban Dynamics EC*  
Urban Dynamics EC  
Set Plan EC  
The Matrix

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### PHOTOGRAPHS FROM

Gustaf Asplund, Peter Engström, Inge Carlsson, Heather Dodd-Savage, Viera Larsson, Sixten Larsson, Schalk Potgieter, Metroplan, PE Express

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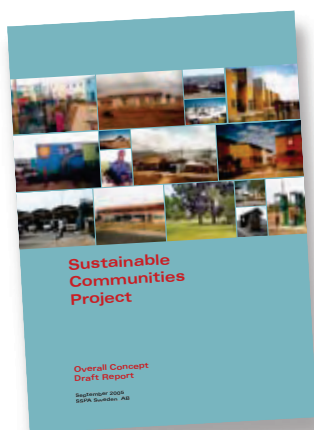
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# Introduction

This book is intended as a practical guide and resource to help planners, professionals, community representatives and politicians understand and apply sustainable community principles in planning processes, in order to achieve more integrated and sustainable towns and cities with a better urban environment and quality of life.

The planning guide introduces new development and planning principles and a participative planning process that is particularly relevant in South Africa, given:

- the legacy of divided apartheid cities, with townships as strategically isolated 'labour dormitories' with minimal facilities and services
- low-cost areas with rows of standardised houses on square grid layouts
- urban sprawl with its high transport and environmental costs
- widespread poverty and high levels of unemployment in vast peripheral informal settlements



This planning guide is the culmination of a long process that began with the development of a Comprehensive Urban Plan for Port Elizabeth, which included Sustainable Community Units (SCUs) as a basis for intermediate level planning and as the building blocks for the city (metro). The SCU concept was later elaborated in a concept report on which this guide is based (Sustainable Communities Project, September 2005, published by NMBM). The concept was then tested in actual planning for the Bloemendal area, as a delineated SCU, which resulted in the Bloemendal Pilot Report.

## The aim of this planning guide

The planning guide aims to share the principles and methods developed, as a basis for a new approach to urban planning that will result in integrated

### GLOSSARY

### NMBM

Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

and sustainable cities and towns. It is intended for use by all stakeholders involved in urban planning, including planners and other professionals in municipalities, other government departments and the private sector, as well as community representatives.

### How to use this planning guide

The guide as a whole articulates a new and comprehensive approach to urban planning at the intermediate or Sustainable Community Unit level. As such it deserves reading and study from beginning to end, and is intended to stimulate thinking about and discussion of what is presented and suggested. The intention is to contribute to developing the capacity of planners and other stakeholders, which is the only way in which a new approach will become recognised and sustained. Learning in this sense requires some effort, and is greatly enhanced where undertaken by teams working together in real planning processes.

It could also be a useful text in the education of new planners, both in universities and as part of induction and orientation in the workplace. At best the planning guide may be adopted by municipalities or planning departments as a guide to their preferred approach, which they require staff, consultants and other stakeholders to understand and follow.

While clear on principles, the guide does not provide a simplistic recipe or a set of standard solutions, but rather an approach for others to understand and adapt to their own particular situations. Innovation and creativity in developing better and varied design solutions in different contexts is fully endorsed. Many and varied examples are included to illustrate the approach, give a sense of practical results and benefits, and inspire others to get seriously involved in further developing what is suggested in their own practice.

It will also be fruitful to share and give feedback on any projects that follow this or similar approaches – we need more examples of good urban planning from which to learn.

The guide is also designed to be used on an ongoing basis as a practical reference and guide on specific matters and in relation to practical questions such as:

- How do we organise stakeholder participation in the planning process?
- How do we involve other departments and agencies?
- What are the phases of the process?
- What are the options for types and layouts of housing?
- How is transport planning to be done?
- What should a baseline study cover?

To enable this type of use, the contents and overall layout are designed to facilitate the finding of particular sections and themes. As with any useful tool, its actual usefulness will depend on how well it is used. Hopefully it will often be at hand on desks, at team meetings, lively discussions and presentations to stakeholders, and be shared with and lent to others, who will then want their own copies. Further ideas on using the guide for capacity building and for strengthening learning in the planning process are included in *chapter 5*.

### This guide covers:

- Key development and planning principles
- How the principles are applied in practice to the six functional elements of housing, work, services, transport, community and character and identity, and to spatial planning in general
- The planning process and the organisation, management and co-ordination of stakeholders in the process
- How to achieve stakeholder and community participation and effective communication as an essential component of the process

### GLOSSARY

#### **Sustainable Community Units – SCUs**

planning areas of a size defined by accessibility of services within a maximum walking distance of 2 km or 30 minutes. Intermediate level urban planning units.

#### **intermediate level planning**

planning at a level between that of the whole town or city and the local neighbourhood, i.e. planning a suburb or SCU

#### **integrated**

combining and harmonising different functions and/or groups

#### **sustainable**

able to continue indefinitely without system-threatening harmful environmental, social or economic effects

#### **stakeholders**

different groups or role players that are involved in or have a direct interest in a process, project or organisation

**Integration and sustainability are essential for efficient development, balanced urban structures and equal opportunities for different groups in society.**

# 1 Sustainable Community Planning

**S**ustainable Community Unit Planning is a planning methodology devised in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) which fills the planning gap that existed between Spatial Development Framework Planning (SDF) which deals with the broad level metropolitan or city wide planning and more detailed layout planning. In this way the spatial planning at sustainable community planning level, also called a Local Area Spatial Development Framework (LASDF), translates the overall vision and principles into more concrete and implementation related guidelines. It also provides a basis for detailed planning, sector planning and project identification. In this way the different levels of spatial planning will be appropriately interlinked.

The Sustainable Community Unit concept involves defining planning areas in terms of a reasonable walking distance i.e. 2 km or 30 minutes from a central area. Fundamental to the concept is the notion that the majority of local daily needs for any inhabitant should be within a reasonable walking distance of the home.

The concept is not only for application in new planning areas but also in revisiting existing planning and development in established areas, to increase compliance with the concept.

The basis for sustainable community planning is found in the development principles that have been adopted at national, provincial and at local government level, and which are supported by legislation and government policies. The development goals and principles of particular importance for spatial planning in Sustainable Community Units are:

## GLOSSARY

### **efficient development**

urban development that maximizes development goals such as sustainability, integration, accessibility, affordability and quality of living, relative to financial, environmental and social costs, including ongoing and future costs.

### **balanced urban structures**

areas that have a balance of different uses (residential, services, economic activities and recreation) and of built and green environments

### **Spatial Development Framework – SDF**

an overall plan for the physical structuring and development of a municipal area.

### **special needs groups**

HIV/AIDS affected persons, children, the aged and people with disabilities

### Integration & Sustainability

### DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Poverty alleviation and the satisfaction of basic needs
- Focus on special needs groups – HIV/AIDS affected persons, children, the aged and people with disabilities
- Gender equality and equity
- The environment – physical, social and economic
- Participation and democratic processes
- Local economic development
- Accessibility – public transport and pedestrian focus
- Mixed use development
- Corridor development
- Safety and security
- Variation and flexibility
- Densification
- Reducing urban sprawl

### PLANNING PRINCIPLES

These development principles should be reflected in spatial plans and urban development in different ways. The spatial structure of a Sustainable Community Unit will have certain characteristics related to a combination of functional elements. The following elements have been identified:

- Housing
- Work
- Services
- Transport
- Community
- Character and Identity

### FUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS

Each of these elements will be incorporated in the spatial planning and provide a focus for the realisation of the development principles. The spatial form will contain the elements, and can be assessed according to the extent to which the principles have been achieved. The Sustainable Community Unit will have different urban structures depending upon the type of area and its location within the municipality, but the overall structure and elements should manifest the principles.



Example of the Sustainable Community Unit plan from the Bloemendal Pilot Project

#### GLOSSARY

##### **compliance**

acting in accordance with a law, regulation or condition

##### **spatial planning**

planning of physical space, incorporating economic, social and environmental aspects

##### **corridor development**

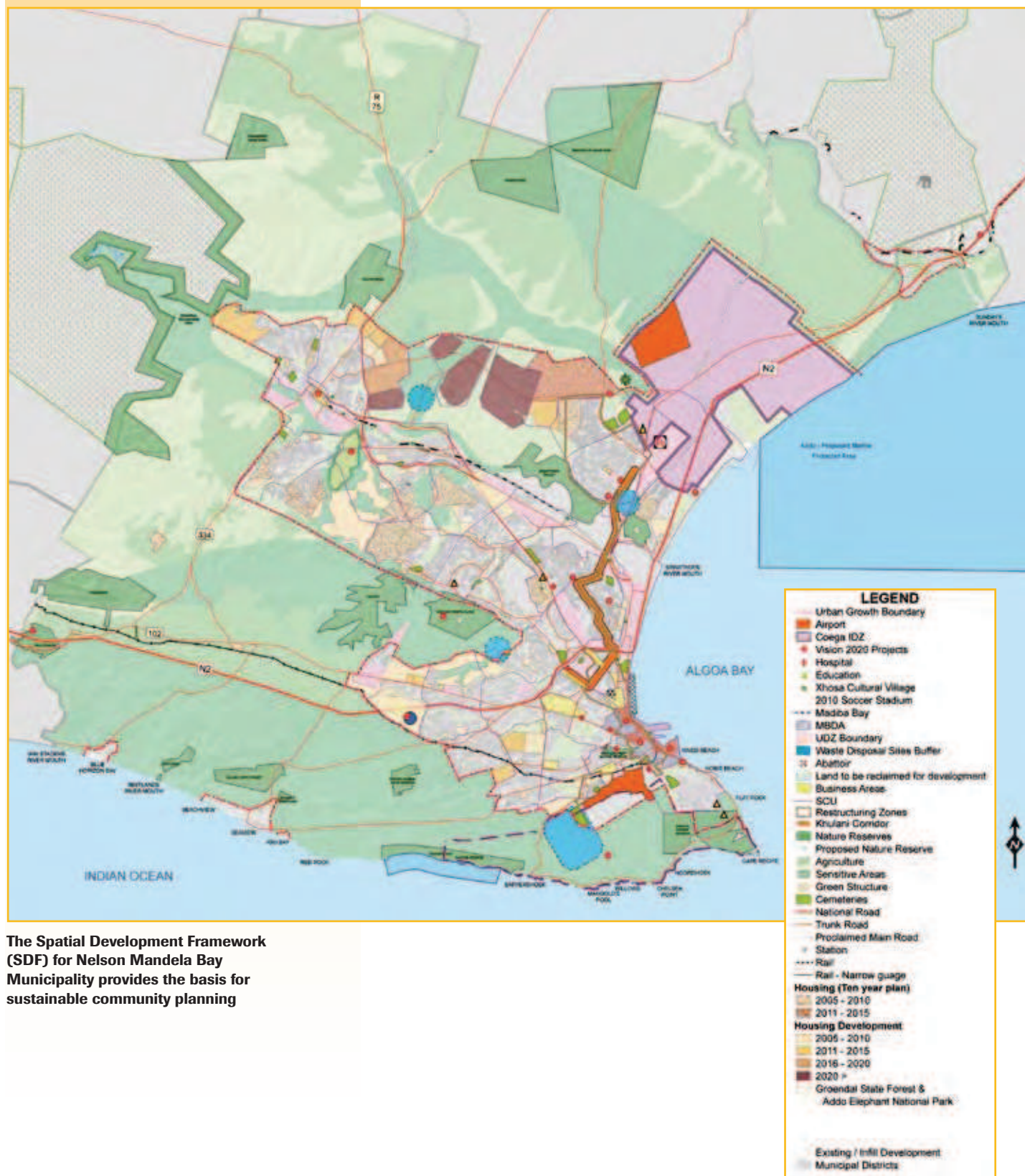
densified development along major routes where mobility, accessibility and the provision of public transport concur

##### **densification**

increasing the number of residential or other units per specified area, e.g. by building adjoining units, multi-storey buildings and having smaller plots

##### **urban sprawl**

low density, inefficient land use that extends the urban edge unnecessarily



The Spatial Development Framework (SDF) for Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality provides the basis for sustainable community planning

This will result in sustainable urban development and integrated, safe, dynamic and vibrant environments based on community participation.

### **The Spatial Development Framework (SDF) is a part of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process**

The Municipal Systems Act requires that all municipalities develop in IDP and SDF. After adoption of the IDP by a Municipal Council, the SDF is binding on the local authority for a period of 5 years. Newly elected Councils may adopt the IDP of the preceding council or develop a new IDP, taking into account the existing IDP.

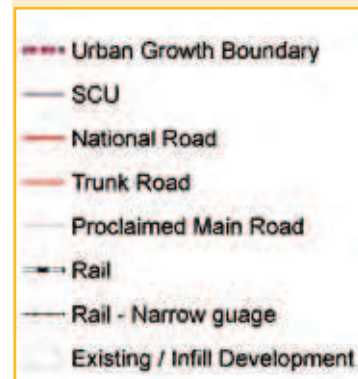
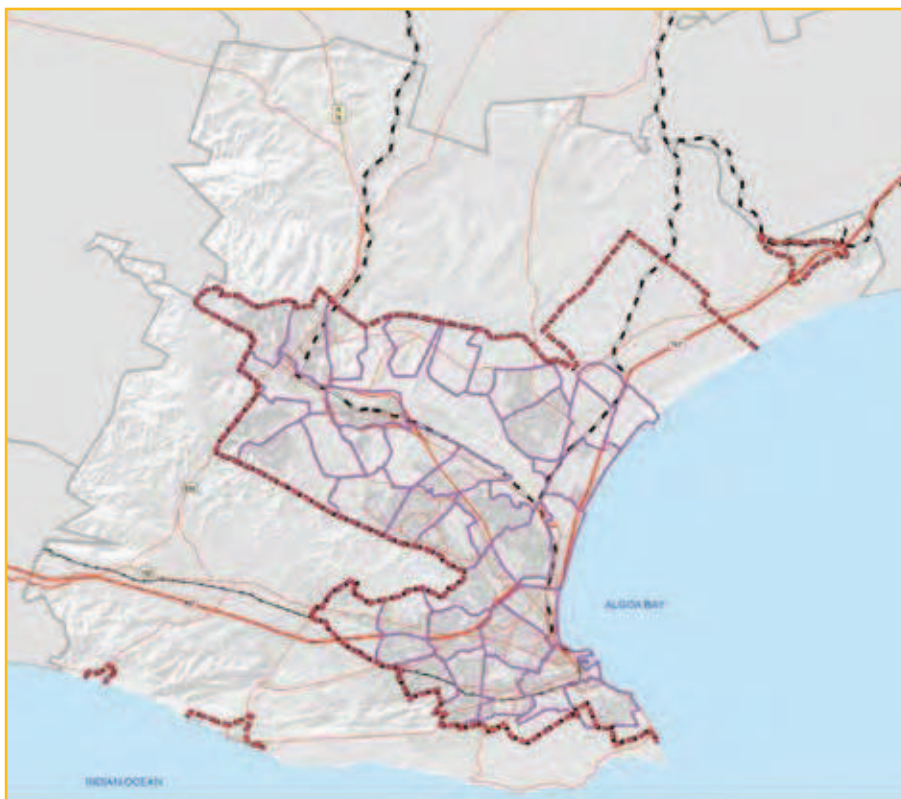
The SDF must be reviewed annually, which could result in amendments that can only be effected by following a statutory process. The SDF covers the entire municipal area and provides the basis for all other levels of spatial planning, including Sustainable Community Unit planning.

### **Integrated Development Plans**

IDPs are comprehensive five year plans for all areas of municipal responsibility including:

- Land and housing delivery
- Basic service provision
- Infrastructure development and maintenance
- Local economic development
- Care of the environment
- Poverty alleviation
- Local democracy, public participation and accountable governance

*Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*

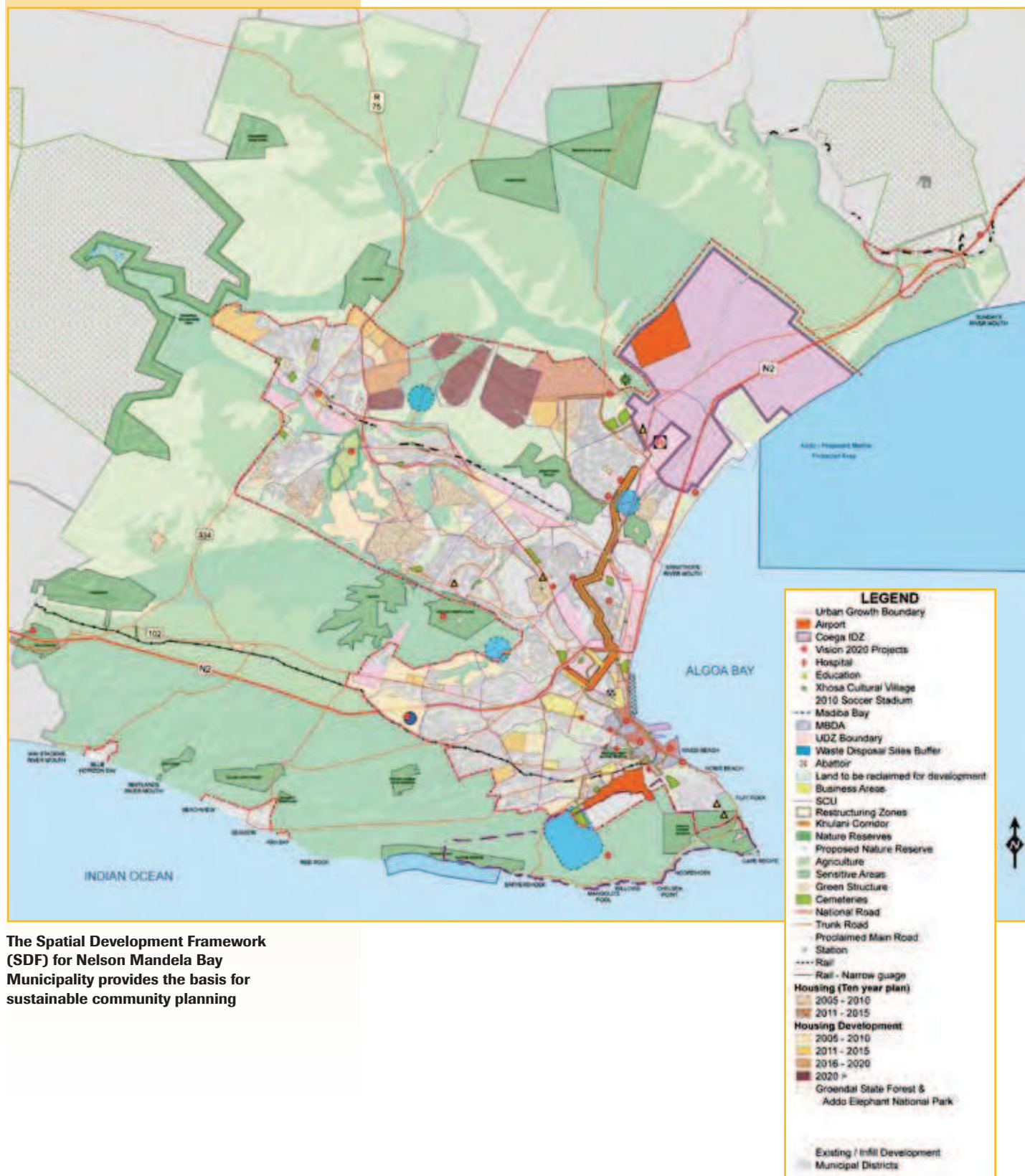


**Sustainable Community Units were delineated during preparation of the SDF for NMBM**

### **GLOSSARY**

#### **IDP**

Integrated Development Plan



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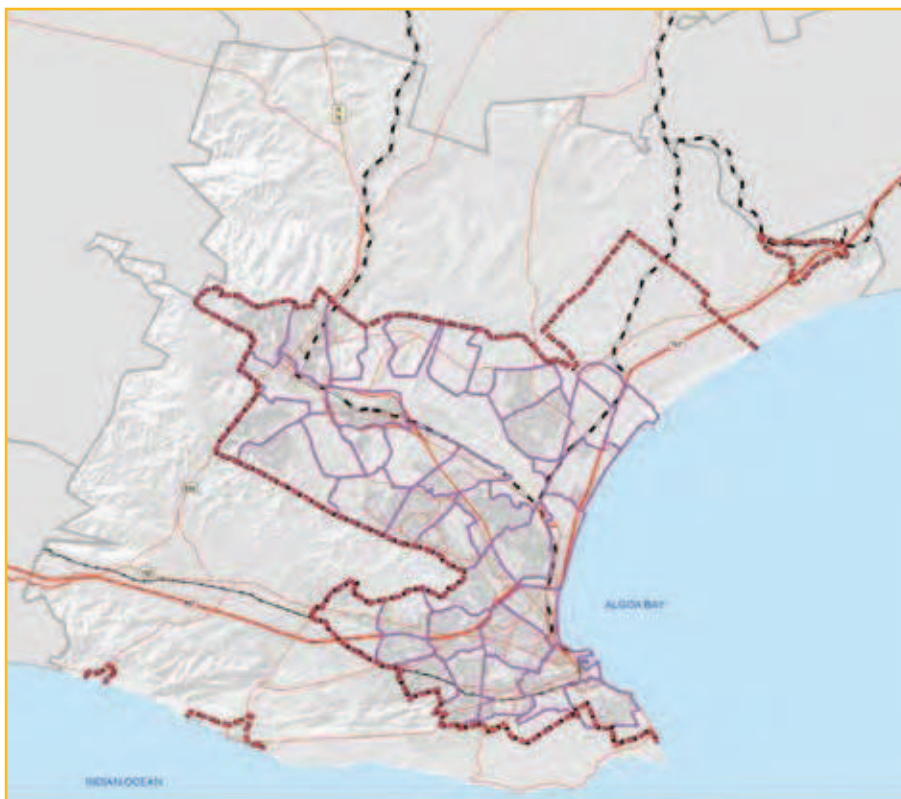
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- Local democracy, public participation and accountable governance

*Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*



**Sustainable Community Units were delineated during preparation of the SDF for NMBM**

### **GLOSSARY**

#### **IDP**

Integrated Development Plan

**The sustainable communities concept defines the critical planning principles that promote the various aspects of integration and sustainability.**

# 2

## Development Principles

### CHAPTER CONTENTS

**The Sustainability and  
Integration Imperatives**

**Integration**

**Sustainability**

**Filling the Gap**

**Planning Principles**

**I**n working with spatial planning in Sustainable Community Units the methods, processes and content are guided by the development principles that are formulated at national level and covered by legislation and Government policies. These principles are also incorporated in the vision and policies of the NMBM.

The overarching goals for development are integration and sustainability. These goals are achieved through application of the development planning principles that have been identified as fundamental for sustainable communities.



### The Sustainability and Integration Imperatives

It is generally recognised that current and past planning methodologies and practice have not resulted in sustainable and integrated cities.

Whilst it is internationally recognized that cities need to strive towards greater sustainability in all dimensions of the concept, the integration imperative is particularly relevant to South African cities and towns due to the apartheid legacy that has to be overcome.

Both sustainability and integration have a number of dimensions which are relevant to planning and development. These overarching goals of the SCU concept can be achieved by applying planning principles that promote and reflect the different dimensions of sustainability and integration. How this can be done is described in the following pages.

#### Guidelines for defining Sustainable Community Units

- Based on walking distance from centre to periphery  $\pm 30$  minutes or  $\pm 2$  km
- Focus on pedestrian movement and cycling
- A variety of housing types and tenure options
- Social facilities – schools, clinics, crèches, community centres, libraries, cultural centres, recreational and open space
- Services and job opportunities closer to places of residence
- Mixed use development
- Flexible – adapted to existing local conditions
- Linked by public transport to other parts of the city

#### GLOSSARY

##### **development principles**

key values that guide development

##### **imperatives**

things that must be done

##### **pedestrian movement**

walking

##### **integrate**

combine and harmonize different functions and/or groups





**Economic integration**



**Social integration**

**INTEGRATION**



**Functional integration**

## 2.1 Integration

Integration includes the following dimensions:

- functional – mixed use areas with good infrastructure and services
- social – different social and cultural groups
- economic – a mix of different income groups and economic activities

### Functional integration

Functional or physical integration involves creating development that is not mono-functional or sterile. The aim is to create lively and interactive living and working areas where all dimensions of activity including cultural, educational, economic and others are catered for.

The result of functional integration is the availability and accessibility of a range of services and amenities required for daily life. Functional integration can be achieved through the implementation of mixed use, higher densities, infilling, and the co-location of living, working, service and recreational opportunities.

Benefits include local income generation, accessibility of goods and services, reduced need to travel and transport goods, lower financial and environmental costs, a diverse and dynamic urban environment and a more efficient provision of infrastructure and other services.

### Social integration

Social integration involves facilitating a diverse and vibrant population mix in a community where all population groups are catered for. This includes catering for different cultural, age, ability and income groups.

Social integration can be achieved through the provision of mixed housing, different land tenure and financing options and variations in available erven and dwellings. It can also be achieved through multi-purpose community centres and through the strategic location of business centres, markets and institutions.

The benefits of social integration include social interaction, co-operation, understanding and tolerance, people from different backgrounds enriching one another, cross-cutting interest groups, overcoming differences and enhanced human resources and capacities available in communities.

### Economic integration

Economic integration results in a community that reflects a diversity of income groups. It will also have a range of different scales of economic activities and possibilities and opportunities.

This can be achieved through the conscious provision of spaces and opportunities for the full range of economic requirements for a community, such as urban agriculture, small-scale selling, markets, entrepreneurial centres, business support and the more traditional opportunities such as commercial activity areas.

The benefits include increased employment opportunities, local buying power and ultimately a more economically successful community.

### Integrated Development Planning (IDP) principles

- Integration of social, environmental and economic planning
- A five year planning and review cycle
- Prioritisation of projects to meet basic needs and alleviate poverty
- Local Economic Development
- Co-ordination of departmental and sector plans and budgets
- Co-ordination of development efforts of different levels of government
- Capacity building
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Public participation

*Municipal Systems Act 32, 2000*

#### GLOSSARY

##### mono-functional

single function

##### prioritisation

deciding which items or issues are more important than others

##### sector plans

plans for different functions, e.g. housing, transport, water services, economic development and the environment. Sectors in this context are the responsibility of different municipal departments

##### social integration

integration of minority groups, ethnic minorities, refugees, underprivileged or disadvantaged groups into the mainstream of the society, enabling their access to opportunities, rights and services available to others

##### capacity building

developing the skills and abilities of people, groups or organisations

##### economic integration

integrating marginalised groups into the mainstream economy

##### entrepreneur

person who starts and develops a business or organisation

##### erven

plural of erf – a demarcated site or stand

##### residential densities

the number of household units per hectare



**Environmental sustainability**



**Social sustainability**

**SUSTAINABILITY**



**Economic sustainability**

## 2.2 Sustainability

Sustainability, like integration has a number of dimensions. These relate to the environment (green), social aspects and economic viability and sustainability which are essential considerations when planning and developing urban communities.

### Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability involves the protection and conservation of non-renewable natural resources. Greater sustainability is achieved through:

- Ensuring sufficient open spaces
- Limiting pollution
- Protecting sensitive environments
- Ecological construction methods
- Use of renewable energy sources such as solar or wind power
- Protecting agricultural land
- Ecological sanitation systems
- Recycling and minimisation of solid waste

**Environmentally sustainable**, in relation to the provision of a municipal service, means the provision of a municipal service in a manner aimed at ensuring that:

- The risk of harm to the environment and to human health and safety is minimised to the extent reasonably possible under the circumstances
- The potential benefits to the environment and to human health and safety are maximised to the extent reasonably possible under the circumstances
- Legislation intended to protect the environment and human health and safety is complied with

*Source: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32/2000)*

**Sustainable development** means the integration of social, economic and environmental factors into planning, implementation and decision-making so as to ensure that development serves the present and future generations;

*Source: National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107/1998) commonly referred to as NEMA*

**Environment** means the surroundings in which human beings live and that consists of:

- the land, water and atmosphere of the earth
- micro-organisms, plant and animal life
- interrelationships among and between the above
- the physical, chemical, aesthetic and cultural properties and conditions of the foregoing that influence human health and well-being;

*Source: National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107/1998) commonly referred to as NEMA*

### Social sustainability

Social sustainability involves meeting the basic social needs of all communities. This includes ensuring diversity in communities as well as democracy and participation in planning processes.

It can be facilitated through community participation in planning and development, creating democratic institutions, gender sensitivity and equality, transparent and fair planning and allocation processes and prioritizing the needs of the poor and disadvantaged groups.

### Economic sustainability

This means adequate employment and livelihood opportunities in a community as well as economic growth and increasing general and individual prosperity. Economic sustainability can be assisted by adequate access to education at all levels, redistribution of wealth via subsidies and social grants, ownership of assets, affordability, creation of work opportunities via public programmes, financial and technical support to businesses and by encouraging local production, trading and service provision.

#### GLOSSARY

##### economic sustainability

the ability of an area or community to earn income in order to cover its costs on an ongoing basis

##### non-renewable resources

natural resources that cannot be replaced once used, e.g. oil, coal, natural gas, natural forests

##### ecological

in harmony with nature and the environment

##### livelihood

the means whereby people live or make a living

##### solar power

the heat of the sun used to heat water or generate electricity

##### wind power

electricity generated by wind-driven generators or turbines

##### assets

things owned that have significant economic value

**DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

**PLANNING  
PRINCIPLES**

**FUNCTIONAL  
ELEMENTS**

**RESULTS**

**INTEGRATION & SUSTAINABILITY**

**PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

- Poverty alleviation – meeting basic needs
- Focus on special needs groups – HIV/AIDS affected persons, children, the aged and people with disabilities
- Gender equality and equity
- The environment – physical, social and economic
- Participation and democratic processes
- Local economic development
- Accessibility – public transport and pedestrian focus
- Mixed use development
- Corridor development
- Safety and security
- Variation and flexibility
- Densification
- Reducing urban sprawl

housing

work

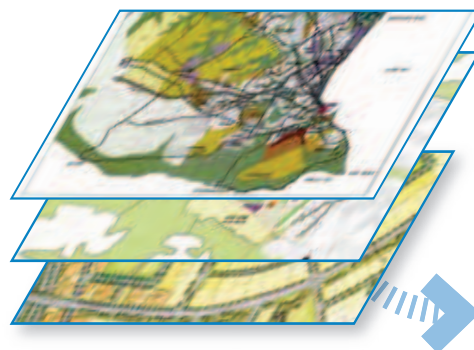
services

transport

community

character and  
identity

**Plans**



**Implementation**



## 2.3 Planning Principles

The SCU concept relies on defining the critical planning principles that promote the various aspects of integration and sustainability and applying them in the planning and re-planning of defined Sustainable Community Units.

The principles defined exist in the international planning arena as good practice, but are also embodied in the legislation and policy relating to development in South Africa. These principles are interrelated, and when applied as a ‘package’ in planning processes, they will enhance the overall sustainability and integration of towns and cities. The principles are described below.

### Poverty alleviation and the satisfaction of basic needs

It is necessary in any planning intervention to focus on poverty alleviation and satisfying at least the basic needs of communities such as water and sanitation. This is more important in poor communities where even basic needs are not satisfied, as is the case in many places in South Africa and throughout the world. This may also involve moving people from areas and situations that are life threatening and dangerous such as flood plains, tip sites etc.

The aim of the planning intervention must therefore be to ensure that basic services are provided such as water and sanitation so that at a minimum everyone has access to facilities that do not compromise their health and safety.

In addition to this there must be realistic and practical mechanisms such as LED to overcome poverty. This can include home-based agriculture to satisfy nutritional needs and small-scale sale as well as higher order economic activities. The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and its principles of labour based construction methods and accredited on-site training should be implemented wherever possible.

Education and access to education at all levels is also important with regard to this principle.

### Focus on special needs groups

In all societies there are special needs groups that must be catered for. Solutions will vary according to the particular situation.

In the South African context the high incidence of HIV/AIDS and the consequent high number of orphans and street children must be reflected in planning solutions.

Other special needs groups that need to be catered for would include the disabled, aged and children. Identifying the special needs groups and their requirements in any community must be done prior to identifying any planning solutions with those groups. Communities will more readily be able to identify their special needs groups.

### Gender equality and equity

Gender equality and equity promote social integration and are fundamental to both social and economic sustainability. This is a basic principle for development generally in South Africa and is embedded in the Constitution. Achieving gender balance will have a positive impact in terms of social and economic aspects of the society.



**It is necessary for any planning intervention to focus on poverty alleviation and satisfying basic needs. Upgrading of informal settlements is an important component.**

”

**HIV is not just a disease.  
It is a human rights issue.**

**Nelson Mandela**

#### GLOSSARY

##### **poverty alleviation**

creates opportunities for people to earn money and take care of themselves

##### **gender equality**

equal treatment of women and men

##### **gender equity**

equal representation of women and men in terms of numbers

##### **built environment**

the urban environment including buildings, open spaces and infrastructure

##### **local economic development (LED)**

developing local production, service provision, trade and consumption

##### **spheres of life**

cultural, political, social, economic and private

**Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21**

Agenda 21 is the multinational United Nations programme for sustainable development in the 21st century. Local Agenda 21 (LA21) involves municipalities directly in commitment to:

- provision of water and sanitation
- improving health and health care
- energy conservation and clean, renewable energy sources
- urban design for traffic reduction, improved public transport, alternative fuels, increased bicycle use and walking
- minimisation and recycling of waste
- conservation of water and arable land
- enhanced food security via ecological and local food production, including urban agriculture
- biodiversity and resource conservation

Sustainable communities planning is fully aligned with LA21.

Due to the inequalities in the present situation, gender equality requires a specific focus on women empowerment, which includes preferential treatment, encouragement and promotion of women in all spheres of life. Sustainable communities planning with gender sensitivity is closely related to community participation. Emphasis on the community and household perspective incorporates gender equality. In the participatory planning process the involvement of women is important and the means for participation must be promoted through appropriate location and timing of consultation.

A gender balanced planning approach would be apparent in improvements in housing provision, outdoor play facilities, safety and security and accessibility to services. Opportunities for home-based work, small scale businesses and access to markets are essential to promote women in economic activities and development.

**The environment – physical, social and economic**

The emphasis on the environment as a planning principle involves incorporation of environmental aspects in all urban development. The environment includes physical, social and economic concerns and implies protection as well as sustainable utilisation and management of resources.

At the sustainable communities planning level the environment as a planning principle will be apparent in the provision of green areas, public open spaces and linkages between natural and built environment. Social concerns in terms of cooperation between different groups of people, sense of togetherness, stability and security will be provided for in the planning process and in the urban structure. The economic environment within community units will be promoted by informal business, small-scale economic activities and self-help development. Technical infrastructure that promotes environmentally friendly methods and renewable resource use should be developed, together with pollution control, waste management, energy saving and protection of biodiversity.

*Local Agenda 21* provides a framework for an environmental focus at the community area level of planning. It promotes holistic approaches to development based on community involvement, awareness building, self-help and environmental protection.

**Participation and democratic processes**

Public participation is a general principle in planning that has specific significance at the Sustainable Community Unit level. While the Spatial Development Framework deals with vision, long-term strategies and metro-level planning, Sustainable Community Planning enables communities to participate in and influence planning for development in their area in concrete ways.

Community participation is an integral part of transparent and accountable democratic processes and it is important that the political and administrative systems provide for participatory approaches at all levels. The structure of municipal committees, planning teams, task teams, steering committees, ward committees and community development forums should encourage participation and involvement and should be actively used in the planning process.



Participation includes access to information and opportunities to submit comments and views

Participation includes access to information, opportunities to submit comments and views, involvement in the planning, decision-making and implementation processes and mobilisation of people to take on responsibilities in the building and maintenance of community areas.

Participation promotes a sense of togetherness, identity, common vision and goals and sharing of responsibilities. It helps communities to take an active part in planning and development and use their own initiative to solve problems and address community needs.

### **Local economic development**

Local economic development (LED) is crucial to achieve improved living conditions and promote sustainability. At the sustainable communities level, local economic development is particularly important as it contributes to local income earning, local markets and improvement of informal businesses.

LED includes provision for informal businesses, urban agriculture, small scale business support, employment creation and enterprise development. In the sustainable community context it will provide access to work within convenient distances for the inhabitants and markets for goods and services for the business sector.

LED will be part of the planning and implementation process and the required facilities will be integrated in the urban structure. Within the Sustainable Community Unit, economic activities and support will include home-based and communal food gardens, informal business sites, local markets, mixed land use, business support centres and business parks.

LED is important for the promotion of sustainability in general and it has a particular impact on the role of women and poverty reduction.

### **Accessibility – public transport and pedestrian focus**

Accessibility must be a primary consideration in planning any city or town. All parts of a city must be well connected and accessible through public transport as well as for the movement of goods and people in order to allow the city to function economically as well as socially and to enable greater integration. No part of the city should be inaccessible to any of its inhabitants due to poor roads or lack of public transport.

At a Sustainable Community Unit level the connection of the Unit to other parts of the city is vital, especially by public transport. This is particularly necessary for poor communities that have fewer private vehicles. Accessibility to other parts of the city will increase the range of social, recreational, cultural and work opportunities available to a community. This will enrich society and enhance integration and sustainability.

A pedestrian focus in planning is important as most people do not own vehicles and other transport options are costly. It is for this reason that the concept of Sustainable Community Units emphasises the need to provide the requirements for daily life within walking distance of households. Safety from a technical as well as crime perspective is an important aspect of the pedestrian focus as people need to feel safe while using the pedestrian network and it should be able to be used at all times of the day and night.

Within the Sustainable Community Units provision should also be made for cycling.



**In our cities, we need all kinds of diversity**

Jane Jacobs



**At the sustainable communities level, local economic development is particularly important as it contributes to local incomes**

**GLOSSARY**  
**accessible**  
easy to get to



## Mixed uses promote functional and socio-economic integration



Appropriate street lights placed in front of the houses increase safety and security

### Mixed use development

Mixed use development is a planning principle that directly provides for functional and social integration. The location of different uses in proximity to each other facilitates access, and promotes efficient urban development. It promotes sustainability through more efficient use of resources and infrastructure, reduction of transport and travel needs, accessibility to services, efficient public transport and interaction between different groups in the society. Mixed use development will have a positive impact on the character of areas, providing for a more dynamic and lively environment and greater variation in the urban structure.

Mixed use can entail combinations of housing, businesses, commercial, social, recreational and educational services and work places. It will provide for more efficient use of land through co-location and institutional co-operation. Mixed use development in most cases results in higher densities and can be located along activity corridors and public transport routes, and adjacent to central service nodes and commercial centres.

### Corridor development

The concept of corridor development has been adopted in national legislation and policy to promote activity corridors with higher residential densities, mixed use and public transport viability. Corridors also allow for land use and transportation to reinforce each other. The interaction between the transport corridor and land uses alongside is important as it is in these areas that higher scale development, more people and activities will be concentrated. These corridors will also be the areas where higher levels of economic activity will occur.

### Safety and security

Safety and security as a planning principle involves both technical and social aspects of development. It not only addresses violence, crime, fear of crime and vulnerability, but also traffic and occupational accidents.

Sustainable communities planning aims to create an environment in which inhabitants can move freely without fear of crime and where pedestrians are given priority.

An urban structure based on mixed development and higher densities in combination with design based on surveillance and social control contributes to safety and security. Attention to the convenience and safety along prioritised pedestrian routes is important. Creating character and identity, promoting a sense of togetherness and encouraging community cooperation also improve security in urban areas. Housing associations, street committees and tenants associations can play a vital role in promoting safety and security.

Traffic safety and prevention of accidents at work places require good design, regulations and effective enforcement.

### Variation and flexibility

Variation and flexibility involve urban design aspects in the form of different types of housing, heights, densities and land uses, and provision for different land tenure options within a community area. Furthermore the principle allows for changes over time to accommodate growing or shrinking households and alternative economic activities.

#### GLOSSARY

##### urban edge

defined boundary of a town or city

##### urban living environment

the environment in which people live in towns and cities

The aim is to create attractive, diverse, pleasant and well-functioning urban areas that can accommodate different socio-economic groups and the need for a variety of household types.

To achieve variation, different solutions and flexibility in terms of land use rights are necessary. Phasing of development and reduction of the size of development projects allows for different designs and thereby creates character and identity.

### **Densification**

Densification creates more compact structures that improve access to work, services and public transport. It also provides for a more efficient use of infrastructure.

Densification will be achieved through reduced erf-size, alternative housing types and mixed development. Within existing areas densification will include infilling and redesign.

There is a need to promote awareness of the costs of low densities and the benefits of lower development and service costs in more compact urban environments.

### **Reducing urban sprawl**

Limiting urban sprawl is closely linked to densification and creation of compact urban structures. It is therefore an important aspect of integration and sustainability and crucial for efficient infrastructure provision.

The other aspect of this spatial principle is the protection of farming land and the possibility of providing agricultural products to the urban areas from the immediate surroundings. Enabling local agricultural production is important from a sustainability perspective.

The establishment of the urban edge, which limits the growth of the urban area, was part the SDF planning process. The main purpose of the urban edge is to control urban sprawl and to avoid intrusion of urban activities into agricultural land and natural environmental areas.

The encouragement of agricultural production outside the urban edge is part of the sustainable communities planning approach. Viable local agricultural production will in turn depend on efficient market facilities.

### **Assessing the suitability of land for low-income housing**

The CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) has developed and applied a sustainable housing locality cost-benefit assessment model in eight subsidized housing locations (Alexandra and Diepsloot in Johannesburg, and six localities in Ethekewini, KwaZulu-Natal). The model aims to test the assumption that peripheral localities are more costly and less beneficial in terms of transportation costs, accessibility to employment opportunities and greater energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

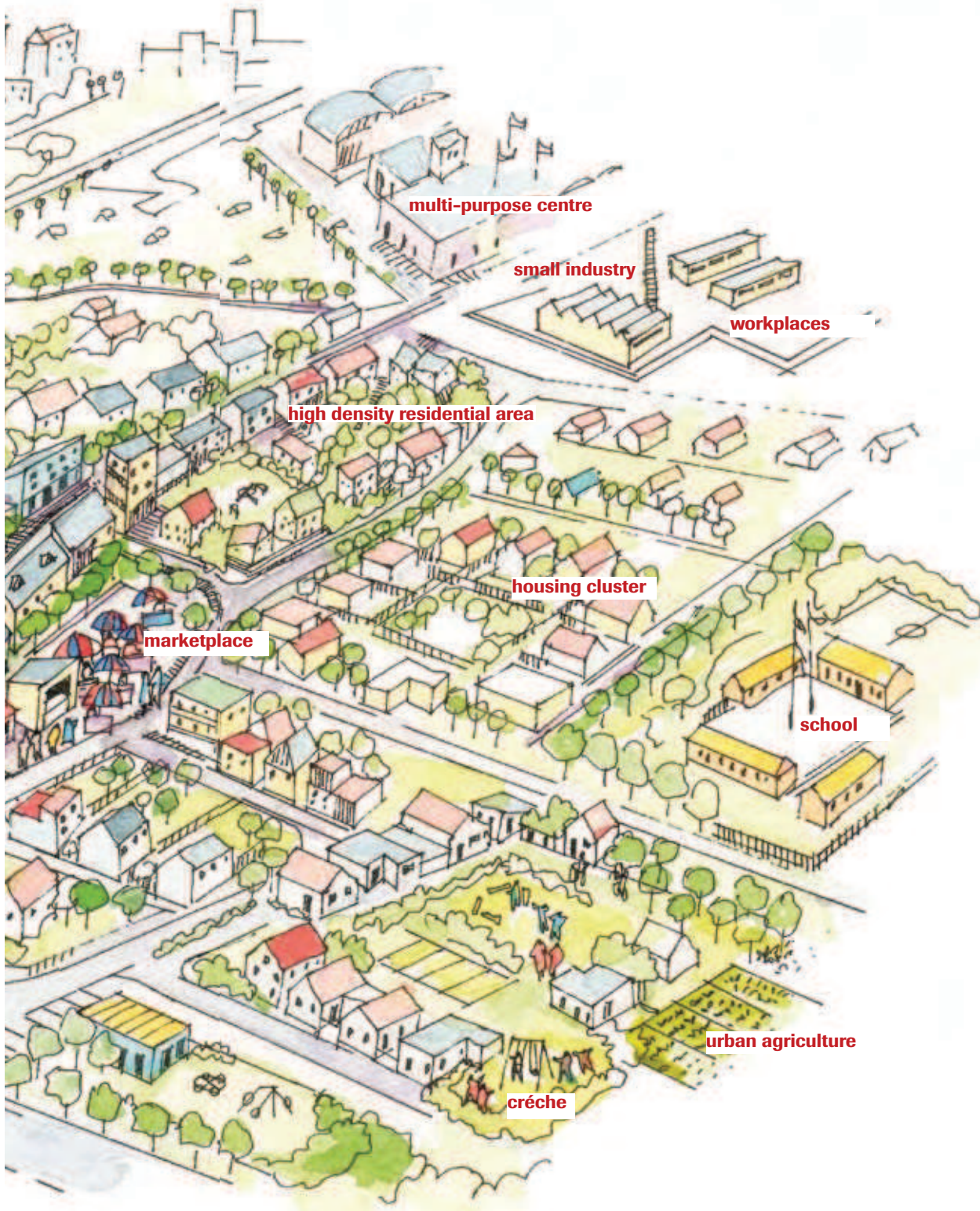
The model has been developed to guide decision-makers to direct low-income housing delivery to localities which are least costly to develop, maintain and operate over the longer term, but which at the same time yield the greatest benefit. The multi-disciplinary model incorporates engineering services, transport, social amenities, retail goods and services, environmental resources, land and housing costs and benefits, including capital and recurrent costs, to both government and households.

This model enables the critical sustainability factor of affordability to be measured, not only for the different spheres of government but also for households, in both the shorter and longer term.

*CSIR Annual Report, 2006*

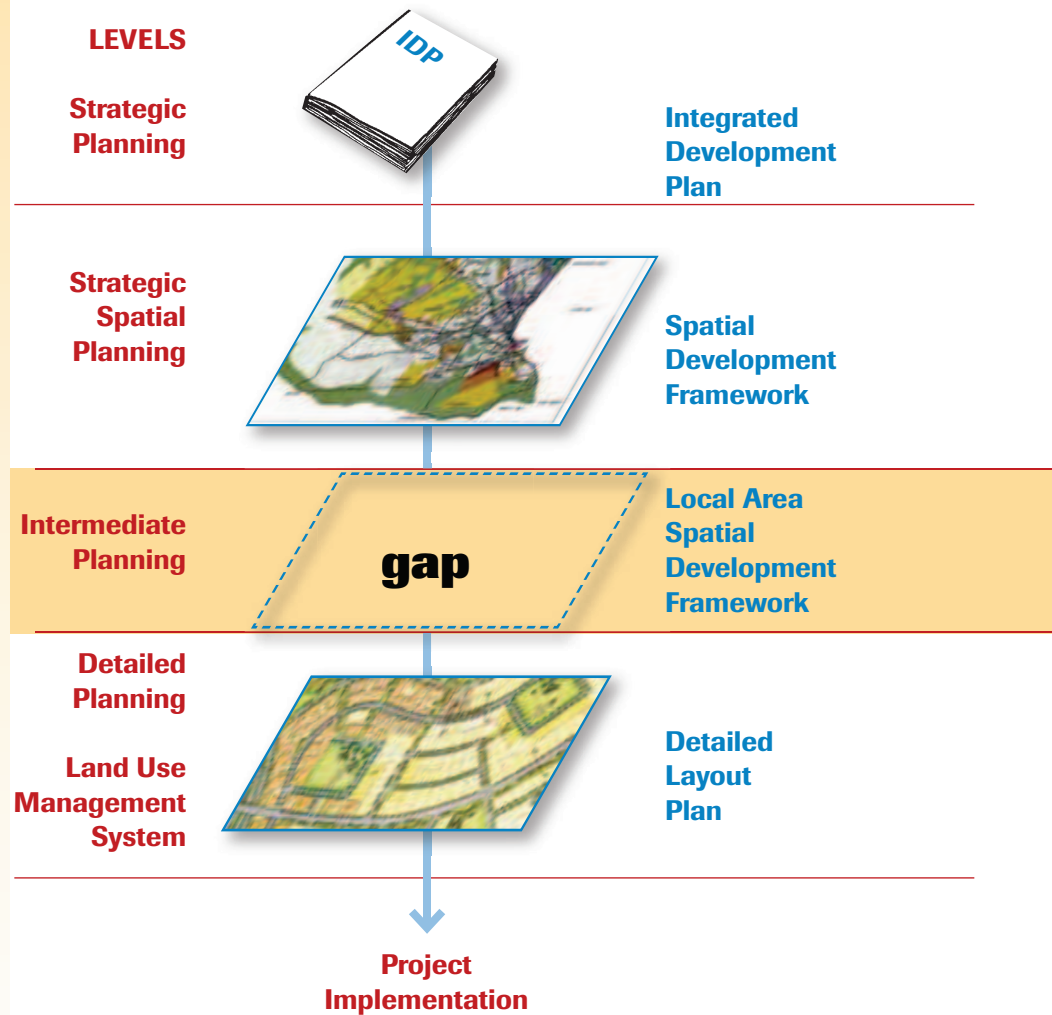
### Central area in a Sustainable Community Unit

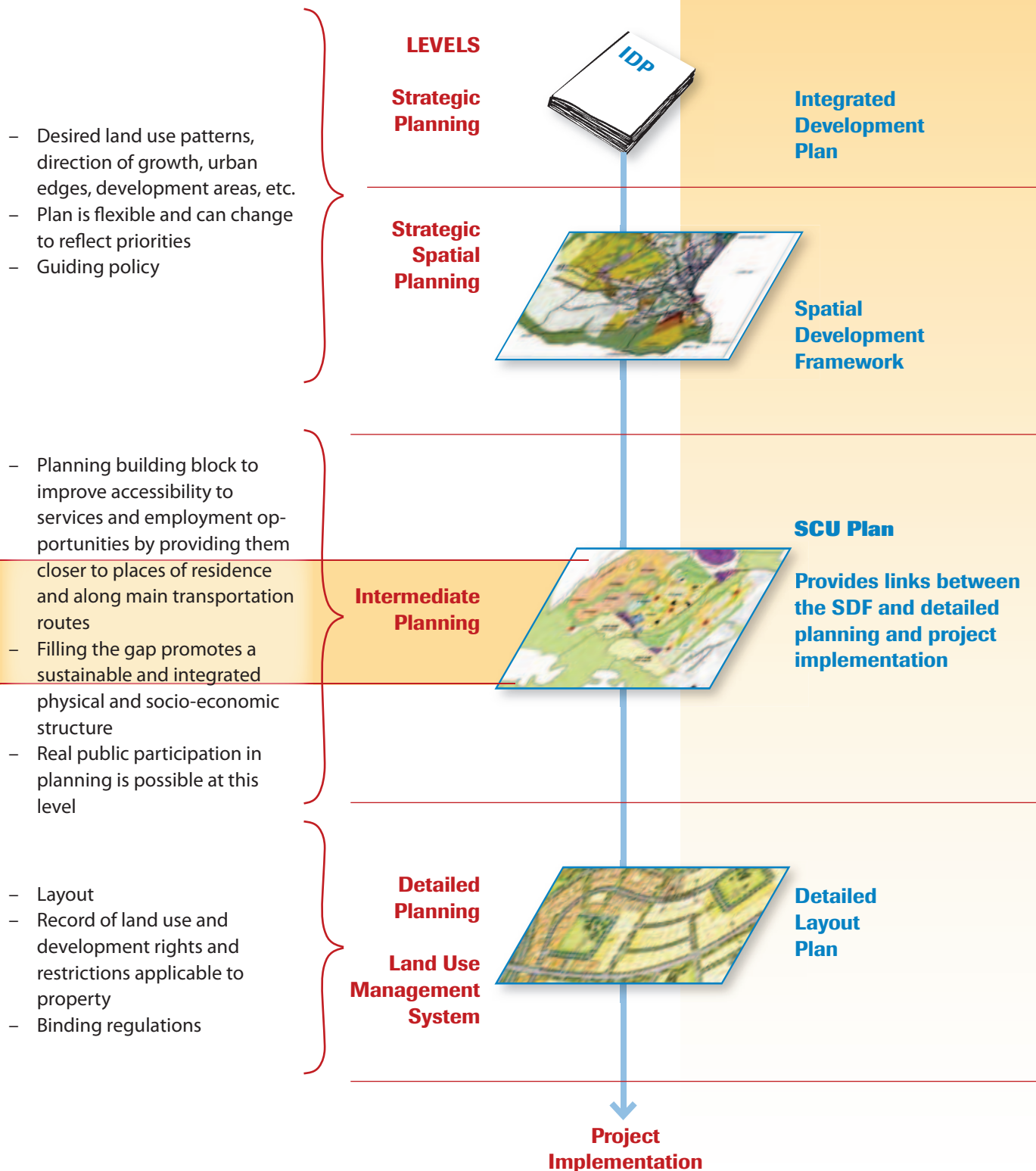




## Filling the gap

Spatial planning at community area level links and fills the gap between municipal level IDP and SDF planning and detailed neighbourhood and sector planning.





### Comprehensive Plan for Sustainable Human Settlement Development

This policy, known as **Breaking New Ground**, focuses on responsive and effective housing delivery and the promotion of a non-racial, integrated society through developing sustainable human settlements and quality housing. Objectives are:

- Accelerated housing delivery as a strategy for poverty alleviation
- Housing provision as a strategy for job creation and economic growth
- Property access by all as an asset for wealth creation and empowerment
- Crime reduction, social cohesion and improved quality of life for the poor
- A single residential property market to reduce the duality between the first economy property boom and the second economy slump
- Housing as an instrument to develop sustainable human settlements and support spatial restructuring

#### Sustainable human settlements are

well-managed entities in which economic growth and social development are in balance with the carrying capacity of the natural systems on which they depend, resulting in sustainable development, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and equity.

The **Breaking New Ground** policy focuses on spatial restructuring through:

- Progressive eradication of informal settlements
- Densification and integration
- Enhanced spatial planning within a broader spatial restructuring framework
- New housing projects on well-located state, para-statal and private land, with funding for land acquisition and other fiscal incentives
- Urban renewal and inner city regeneration through social housing in urban restructuring areas and demand-driven subsidies
- Development of social and economic infrastructure
- Improved housing through alternative housing options, housing design and quality

It also focuses on implementing new housing delivery instruments, inter-governmental cooperation in settlement development, institution and capacity building at various levels, job creation and improved systems for monitoring and evaluation. These areas are detailed in seven Business Plans in the Comprehensive Plan.

*Comprehensive Plan for  
the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements,  
Department of Housing 2004*



### Legislation, policies, guidelines and Sector Plans relevant to Sustainable Community Planning

| Legislation & Policy/Guidelines                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Sustainable Communities Principles                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda 21 (UN)</li> <li>• Millennium Development Goals (UN Habitat)</li> <li>• National Government's Accelerated Growth Initiative (ASGISA)</li> <li>• Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (No. 32 of 2000)</li> <li>• Development Facilitation Act, 1995 (No. 67 of 1995)</li> <li>• Land Use Management Bill (2001)</li> <li>• White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management (2001)</li> <li>• Environmental Conservation Act, 1989 (No. 73 of 1989)</li> <li>• National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (No. 107 of 1998)</li> <li>• Less Formal Township Establishment Act</li> <li>• Breaking New Ground: a comprehensive plan for the development of sustainable human settlements</li> <li>• Social Housing Policy</li> <li>• Land Transportation Act, 1998 (No. 4 of 1998)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty alleviation and satisfaction of basic needs</li> <li>• Focus on special needs groups- HIV/AIDS, children and the aged</li> <li>• Gender Equality</li> <li>• The Environment – physical, social and economic</li> <li>• Participation and democratic processes</li> <li>• Local Economic Development</li> <li>• Accessibility – public transport and pedestrian focus</li> <li>• Mixed use development</li> <li>• Corridor development</li> <li>• Safety and security</li> <li>• Variation and flexibility</li> <li>• Densification</li> <li>• Reducing urban sprawl</li> </ul> |



**Integrated Development Planning for  
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A user-friendly Guide**

*Department of Constitutional Development*