

Re-imagining Woodstock and Salt River

A community-
centred approach
to neighbourhood
regeneration





Development Action Group

Development Action Group (DAG), a leading non-profit organisation, deepens democracy by working as a facilitator of change in South Africa's urban development arena. DAG supports communities in need of adequate housing to lead their own development by enhancing their capacity and resourcefulness. DAG influences State policy and practice through partnerships, research, training and lobbying activities.

Re-imagining Woodstock and Salt River

A Community-centred approach to neighbourhood regeneration

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01

The Good Neighbour

Woodstock-Salt River was one of only two areas that escaped forced removals of coloured and black families from central Cape Town under apartheid, making it a very rare thing: an integrated and centrally located neighbourhood.

It is midday at the Woodstock Exchange, a cavernous ex-industrial warehouse, now home to cafes where hipsters, tourists, and workers from the design and tech businesses upstairs fuel up on flat whites and peruse items like artisanal organic chocolate and leather laptop sleeves.

In the quiet of a spacious storeroom tucked behind a stairwell, Quintin Moos takes his lunch surrounded by neatly stacked cans of paint, stepladders, and the tools of this maintenance man's trade.

"We are still hanging in the air, we don't know where our future lies," Quintin says of development plans for the Pine Road informal settlement, which he has called home for over 20 years. Just 500 metres from the sleek lines of the Woodstock Exchange, settlements like Pine Road, though rare, exist in part because of the lack of a comprehensive programme of affordable housing in the inner city of increasingly urbane Cape Town. But this could finally be changing.

In September 2017, Mayoral committee member for the Transport and Urban Development Authority, Brett Herron, announced the City's "release" of 11 well-located plots of city-owned land, expected to provide affordable and social housing for some 4 000 families⁰¹. Nine of the sites are in Woodstock and the adjacent Salt River neighbourhoods, both under five kilometres from downtown Cape Town, South Africa's second largest city.

Like all of post-apartheid South Africa, Cape Town inherited a legacy of socioeconomic and spatial segregation that it has been attempting to dismantle while simultaneously absorbing a population that has been rapidly urbanizing since 1994⁰². Unlike other South African cities, Cape Town's picturesque position on a peninsula ringed by sea and mountains limits space to grow while attracting flocks of international tourists and external investors.

One of Cape Town's oldest neighbourhoods, Woodstock-Salt River was one of only two areas⁰³ that escaped the forced removals of coloured and black families from central Cape Town under apartheid, making it a very rare thing today: an integrated and centrally located neighbourhood. For well over a decade, though, vigorous urban regeneration efforts have flooded the area with

new residents and businesses. With these have come skyrocketing property prices, evictions of long-time residents unable to afford the rent and rate hikes, and headline-grabbing protests decrying the overall trend.

Against this backdrop, plans to create affordable housing on prime property in one of the world's most unequal cities⁰⁴ struck many locals as a somewhat out-of-the-blue defensive reflex. "Outside [people] thought, 'Wow, the City! Wow, Brett Herron!'" says Pogiso Molapo, manager for social housing and land restitution in

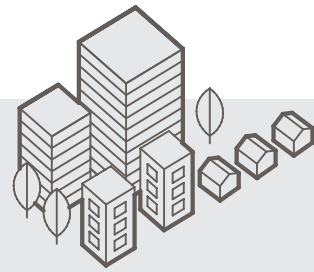
the City of Cape Town's Spatial Planning & Urban Development Department, recalling the media flurry attending the ground-breaking news.

But what appeared to some as a salvo from the Mayor's office to appease anti-eviction protestors was in fact the result of years of methodical groundwork, shrewd strategizing, and a tenacious commitment to leveraging city-owned land to build a different kind of city: a city where integration, opportunity, and harmony are linked, prized, and protected.

For well over a decade, vigorous urban regeneration efforts have resulted in skyrocketing property prices and evictions of long-time residents unable to afford the rent and rate hikes.

Below: Children play outside the Saint Agnes Church in Woodstock between the English and French services on Sunday morning (the first is in Portuguese). The church's three services reflect the area's rich cultural history (the French service caters mainly to the area's Congolese community).





Social Housing: A primer

Passed in 2008 under the National Human Settlements Programme, the Social Housing Act (No. 16 of 2008) recognises the “dire need for affordable rental housing for low to medium income households which cannot access rental housing in the open market”.⁰⁵ With a stated primary intention of achieving spatial, economic, and social integration of the urban environments in South Africa, the Social Housing programme in South Africa delivers well-located, affordable rental accommodation for low to moderate income groups (qualifying households earn between R1 500 and R15 000 per month).

Key Players:

- Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA): Created under the Social Housing Act, this public entity’s mandate is “to capacitate, invest in and regulate the social housing sector.”⁰⁶ It regulates all social housing stock, and is the body that manages accreditation of prospective social housing institutions (SHI) and social housing projects.
- Social Housing Institutions (SHI): accredited non-profit companies that develop and manage South African Social Housing. As accredited institutions, SHIs receive the majority of RCG funding.⁰⁷
- National Association of Social Housing Organisations (NASHO): independent member-based association of 19 social housing institutions (SHIs) across South Africa. Its membership owns and/or manages approximately 30 000 social housing units, providing subsidised rental accommodation for over 115 000 low-to middle income people.⁰⁸

Funding:

State funding comes primarily from the national government’s Restructuring Capital Grant (RCG) programme, created to “address structural, economic, social and spatial dysfunctionalities”.⁰⁹ Given these explicit spatial goals, RCG-funded social housing must be developed in formally identified “restructuring zones”, which are proposed by councils, endorsed by province, approved by the National Department of Human Settlements, and gazetted by Government. Developers usually finance the balance of each unit’s cost, mostly through private loans.

Who qualifies?:

- Households with regular monthly incomes of R1 500 – R15 000
- South African citizens or permanent residents, with a dependent, and the ability and willingness to pay rent.
- Those who have not benefitted previously from a Government Housing Programme or previously owned property.
- People registered on the Municipal Housing Demand Database (this last is a City of Cape Town requirement)

Scaling up:

To date, about 33 000 units exist in South Africa. The programme is currently undergoing expansion. With new SHIs being accredited and the RCG income bands having been adjusted for inflation after years of stasis, NASHO hopes to expand the number of social housing units to 170 000 by 2030.

What social housing is NOT:

- Houses for ownership or sale: these units are not available for purchase or rent-to-own schemes
- Housing for unemployed people, or people whose incomes are unstable or below the threshold

02

When regeneration becomes gentrification

It became clear that this area – in many ways a poster child of South Africa’s aspirations for integrated urban spaces – was at risk of being culturally if not literally razed to the ground.

“It was something we worked on for years,” Molapo says, referring to his participation since 2013 in what started as a series of informal meetings with like-minded individuals from the National Association of Social Housing Organisations (NASHO); the Cape Town Partnership (a non-profit organisation founded in 1999 to regenerate the inner city); and the Development Action Group (DAG), a local NGO with a long and respected urban land rights track record.

By 2016 the group’s synergy coalesced into a formalized if still under-the-radar steering committee. In that same year, the committee’s quiet commitment to using city land for social transformation gained the political will it needed with the City’s adoption of a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) strategy. Though by no

means South Africa’s first stab at using land and housing policy to fix socioeconomic inequality (see infobox 2), the TOD represented a critical and practical step forward. But to appreciate the significance of arriving at this point, some historical perspective is in order.

Originally a fishing hamlet surrounded by farmland, the routing of railway lines through Woodstock-Salt River in the 1860s turned the area into a hub of heavy industry, a process that peaked by the mid 20th century when the Woodstock beach was destroyed for land reclamation and the creation of the foreshore. Throughout these spatial changes, this bustling and historically working-class neighbourhood remained home to a diverse racial, religious, and economic mix of people residing in the Victorian dwellings for which the area is still known.

Although Woodstock-Salt River residents escaped the forced removals that devastated so many other communities under apartheid’s notorious Group Areas Act, general investment in these so-called “grey area” neighbourhoods steadily decreased from the late 1970s onwards. Meanwhile the area’s primary industrial focus had shifted to textile production, an industry that was hobbled by the increasingly aggressive global market of the late 80s, and which finally collapsed under the new South Africa’s embrace of economic policies to “open up”.

With the change in government, Woodstock-Salt River also experienced a last bout of white flight, during which time numerous white businesses and residents vacated the area while retaining ownership of vacated buildings. By the late 1990s, many of Woodstock-Salt River’s once buzzing industrial spaces and charming row-houses were victims of abandonment and neglect.

This state of late 90s inner-city decline was by no means unique to Woodstock-Salt River or Cape town, for that matter. Countrywide, the early 2000s saw South African municipalities adopting various urban regeneration strategies to bring businesses and residents back to inner-city areas abandoned in the latter days of apartheid.

The Cape Town Partnership (CTP) was the Mother-City’s answer. Founded in 1999, this public-private partnership (PPP) between the City of Cape Town, the private sector, and the



Policy Context: National & Local

Though Cape Town's spatial disparities are extreme, they are by no means unique. Highly aware of the need to rectify the devastating spatial disparities inherited from the apartheid regime, all levels of government have adopted and revised numerous policies that use land and housing to redress inequality. Some key policies here:

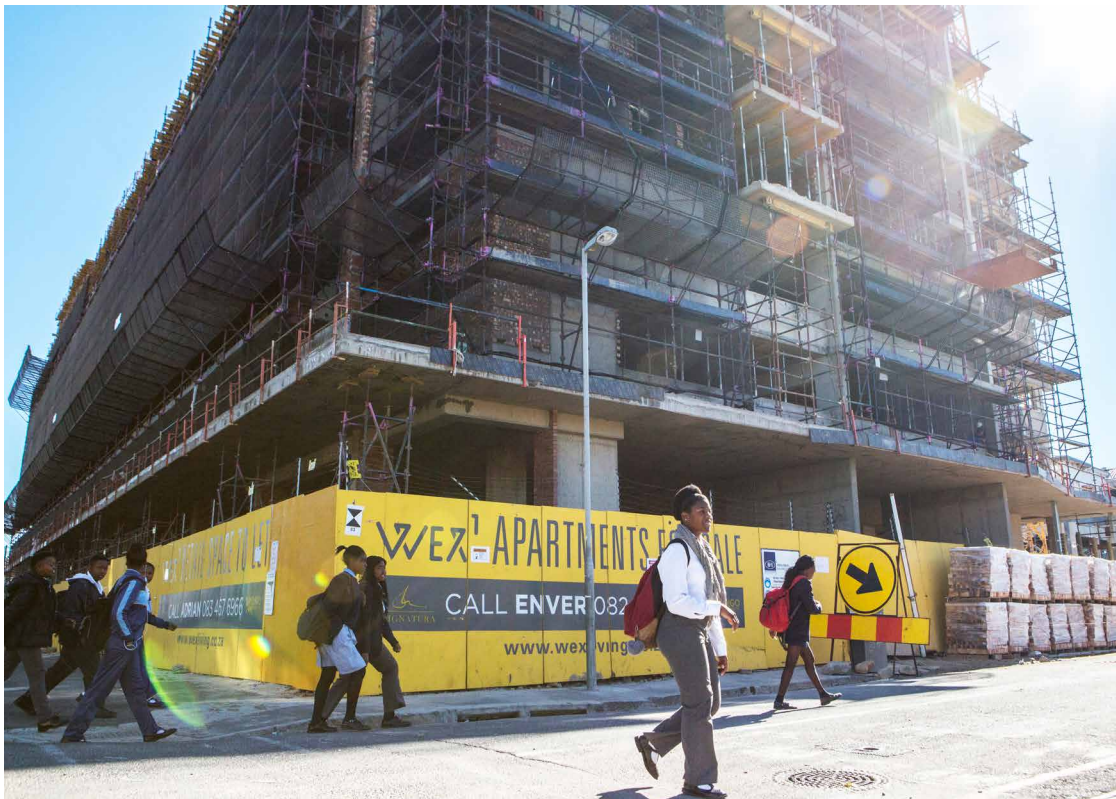
- 1994: Constitution: enshrines right to "adequate housing opportunities" for all
- 1994: New Housing Policy (aka, Housing White Paper): reflects Constitution's spirit, but broad scope of intention quickly narrows into a single-minded focus on delivery of "free houses". The resulting "RDP" houses remain almost exclusively located in historically black areas, i.e., townships and city peripheries, far from amenities and resources.
- 2004: Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy: Acknowledging numerous problems around RDP housing, this new policy advocates for a greater range of tenure, location, and affordability¹⁰ options. Unfortunately, the location of housing opportunities under BNG policy continues to be sub-par, and, as cities swell, so too does the need for well-located and affordable urban housing.
- 2008: Social Housing Act (No. 16): [see infobox 1](#).
- 2012: National Development Plan: vision to eradicate poverty and inequality by 2030, includes Outcome 8: "Sustainable human settlements and improved quality of household life", which focuses on breaking "the terrible spatial legacy of apartheid". This provides basis for densification mandate and increased need to focus on *location* when planning additional housing opportunities.
- 2012: Cape Town's first Integrated Development Plan to specifically mention social housing in Woodstock-Salt River.
- 2016: Transport Oriented Development Strategy (TOD): CoCT adopts an integrated strategy based on spatial integration of transport, housing, and services, strengthening densification mandate and providing political support for an integrated approach to bringing affordable housing into well-located inner-city areas.

South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) aimed to promote the inner city as a "destination for global business, investment, retail, entertainment and leisure", and held as a longer term goal the creation of a "world class city" capable of attracting corresponding levels of global and national investments¹¹.

By the mid-2000s, the CTP's impressive efforts to create optimal conditions for investment – most notably a major focus on crime reduction – succeeded in halting capital flight from the inner city, significantly increasing investment by both the state and private sector¹². The success of CTP-led regeneration efforts was best reflected in the booming property market, with inner city property values tripling between 2000-2007¹³. This market-led urban regeneration was further bolstered in 2003 with the introduction of the "Urban Development Zone" (UDZ), a

national urban renewal strategy of tax breaks for developers willing to invest in key inner-city areas.

In the case of Woodstock-Salt River, these regeneration efforts ([See infobox 3](#)) materialized in the form of cleaner streets, a profusion of new businesses, and a mass renovation of those charming Victorian houses. But there was a dark side to this success. With property prices skyrocketing (2011-2014 saw increases of 40-60%¹⁴), families who had rented in Woodstock-Salt River for generations suddenly faced untenable hikes from landlords catering to this influx of new – mostly white and/or foreign – middle- and upper-class renters. In many cases, owners saw lucrative opportunities in selling properties off to larger developers attracted by UDZ incentives. And so the evictions began¹⁵.



On any given Saturday morning, Albert Road thrums with people and traffic. A major commuter artery starting at Spencer Road in lower Salt River and passing through lower Woodstock before delivering one at the Cape Town Central train station, this vital weekday thoroughfare, like much of inner city Cape Town prior to 2010 (see infobox 3), used to go relatively dormant on the weekends.

That changed with the massive 2007 renovation of a long-shuttered flour factory along Albert Road, and the introduction of the resulting complex's weekly "Neighbourgoods Market" – the market that arguably launched Cape Town's foodie-design market trend, and a potent symbol of the area's gentrification.

Albert Road's transformation initially took the transient form of the Saturday morning appearance of young hip market-goers. In recent years the change has become far more concrete. Once lined with factories and populated by vendors selling fresh produce to droves of pedestrian commuters¹⁶, Albert Road today is a stretch of vintage and designer boutiques, art galleries, and trendy eateries, including The Test Kitchen, the nation's top-ranked restaurant, for whose tables concierges trade favours to get VIP clients bookings. Running parallel to this new high-end commerce is a 1.89-kilometre bicycle lane.

Constructed in 2013, to this day the lane sees scant bicycle traffic, largely because Cape Town remains a generally unfriendly cycling environment. Although some residents viewed the lane as visionary, most locals withheld support.

"We vehemently disagreed, there were a million reasons we didn't want it. We said we want pedestrian crossings for our children, speed humps where schools are, but they said there was no money for that. Then they went ahead and spent millions on it," says Salt River local and secretary of the Salt River Residents Association (SRRA), Nadia Agherdine, adding that the lane has been an economic blow to small businesses in Salt River whose customers now struggle to find convenient parking.

The bike lane presaged the type of development now consuming Woodstock-Salt River, and for some, it symbolized the way the historic community felt sidelined from its own neighbourhood's future.

"Development in Woodstock-Salt River only caters to a particular market — upmarket, professional, the yuppies moving in," explains Naeemah Sadien, DAG's community development facilitator dedicated to the area.

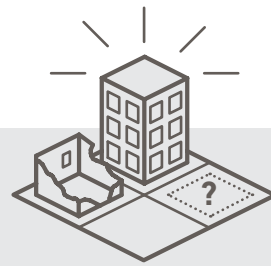
In fact it was exclusion of the area's historical residents – from the development process, from participation in the property and land market, and increasingly from their homes in the case of evictees – that caused DAG to join forces with the steering committee whose efforts ultimately would lead to South Africa's first and largest affordable housing programme on prime inner-city property.

Could affordable housing – and therefore an entire community and culture – be protected from the market forces dominating Woodstock-Salt River's regeneration?

The inner city was not DAG's traditional stomping ground. Established in 1986, DAG's focus is on pro-poor urban development. Looking to redress social, economic, and spatial inequalities, the organisation naturally gravitated to the townships of Cape Town's southeast periphery, where these issues are most salient. Well-located neighbourhoods like Woodstock-Salt River, with their mixed income, mixed-race, and mixed-use profiles, were not on DAG's radar. However, somewhere around 2012 it became clear that this area – in many ways a poster child of South Africa's aspirations for integrated urban spaces – was at risk of being culturally if not literally razed to the ground.

DAG's concern was around both protecting the area's affordable housing mix and ensuring that the rapid transformation these neighbourhoods were experiencing did not systematically annihilate their unique social and cultural heritage. The question was: could affordable housing – and therefore an entire community and culture – be protected from the market forces dominating Woodstock-Salt River's regeneration?

Urban Regeneration Context



While urban regeneration is vital to the positive growth of the city, there is a general lack of understanding on how urban regeneration incentives reinforce spatial inequities, and therefore hamper efforts to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the urban poor. Urban regeneration strategies that include marginalised communities in development processes, such that the outcomes resonate with these communities' aspirations and needs are sorely needed. Following are some of the key urban regeneration strategies influencing development in Cape Town's inner city.

- 1999: Cape Town Partnership (CTP) established to stem capital flight by actively stabilising Cape Town's inner city.
- 2000-2010: CTP-led activities to restore business and retail confidence in the inner city focused on reducing "crime and grime":
 - A Central Improvement District (CID) model was used, whereby property owners in CID areas pay annual CID levies in addition to municipal rates and taxes, which funds are then applied to safety, aesthetics, etc.
 - Crime reduction was a major part of the strategy. In 2001 alone, the CTP spent 49% of its R14.6 million budget on security. "Cleansing and precinct management" were also important components.¹⁷

- CID levies were further supplemented with property rate receipts that the CTP persuaded City Council to ring fence for local application.¹⁸
- As the inner city began to become more attractive, old office blocks were converted into luxury residential apartments, further changing the nature of the inner city.

- 2003: The National Treasury's Urban Development Zone (UDZ) gives developers tax incentives of up to 20% to write off certain expenses incurred while constructing, renovating, or purchasing a building within a demarcated UDZ.
- 2017: The City of Cape Town (Metro) and national government (Treasury) in an attempt to restructure Cape Town have identified, through the Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP), two key corridors for urban regeneration – southeast Metro and the Voortrekker Corridor (beginning in Woodstock), as key areas for urban regeneration. BEPP focuses on using infrastructure to integrate historically poor and densely populated areas into the city as a whole, using Transport-Orientated Development as a key driver of urban transformation, coupled with a tax incentive model through the Urban Development Zone.



Left: – A man pulls a garbage bag full of recycling along the controversial bike lane built by the City.

Previous spread, top: The Woodstock Exchange, established in 2011 on Albert Road: home to offices, tech and digital companies, and boutique retail spaces.

Previous spread, bottom: A massive new development catering to the middle and upper-middle classes, WEX1 is a 10-storey, mixed-use building opposite the Woodstock Exchange, and planned restaurants, shops and offices on its double-volume ground-floor.

03

Location, location, location: why social housing?

Social housing gives low to mid-income renters access to the opportunities and amenities – jobs, transport, schools, healthcare, etc. These things allow them to take control of their own development.

“We came late, the regeneration and gentrification were [already] happening. Social housing was the only way to keep lower to mid income groups in the city,” recalls Molapo of the committee’s focus on social housing.

The Social Housing programme in South Africa provides well-located, affordable rental accommodation to low- and mid-income households. Created with the specific intention of altering the country’s social fabric ([see infobox 1](#)), it is primarily funded by the national government’s Restructuring Capital Grant (RCG) programme, also created to “address structural, economic, social and spatial dysfunctionalities”.¹⁹

“These terms are nebulous. But it all comes down to people’s access being improved in terms of spatially being able to live in areas where pricing of the housing market would have excluded them,” says Heather Maxwell, CEO of SOHCO, one of the country’s largest, oldest, and most successful Social Housing Institutions (SHIs). SHIs are the accredited non-profit companies that develop and manage South African Social Housing, and as accredited institutions, they receive the majority of RCG funding.²⁰

Malcolm McCarthy, general manager of the National Association of Social Housing Organisations (NASHO), elaborates on the importance of location: “Cities are where we put immense socioeconomic resources. If you push people to the periphery, you’re making their transactional costs to access those [resources] extremely expensive.”

In other words, social housing gives low to mid-income renters access to the opportunities and amenities – jobs, transport, schools, healthcare, etc. – that allow them to take control of their own development.

With its proximity to the city centre, Woodstock-Salt River fit all of the social housing criteria perfectly. It was also one of the few areas left in Cape Town with a decent amount of municipal land that stood vacant or could be considered “underutilized”. That said, with other City departments selling City land to private developers to raise money, there was no telling how long this situation would hold. With a keen sense of urgency, the steering committee

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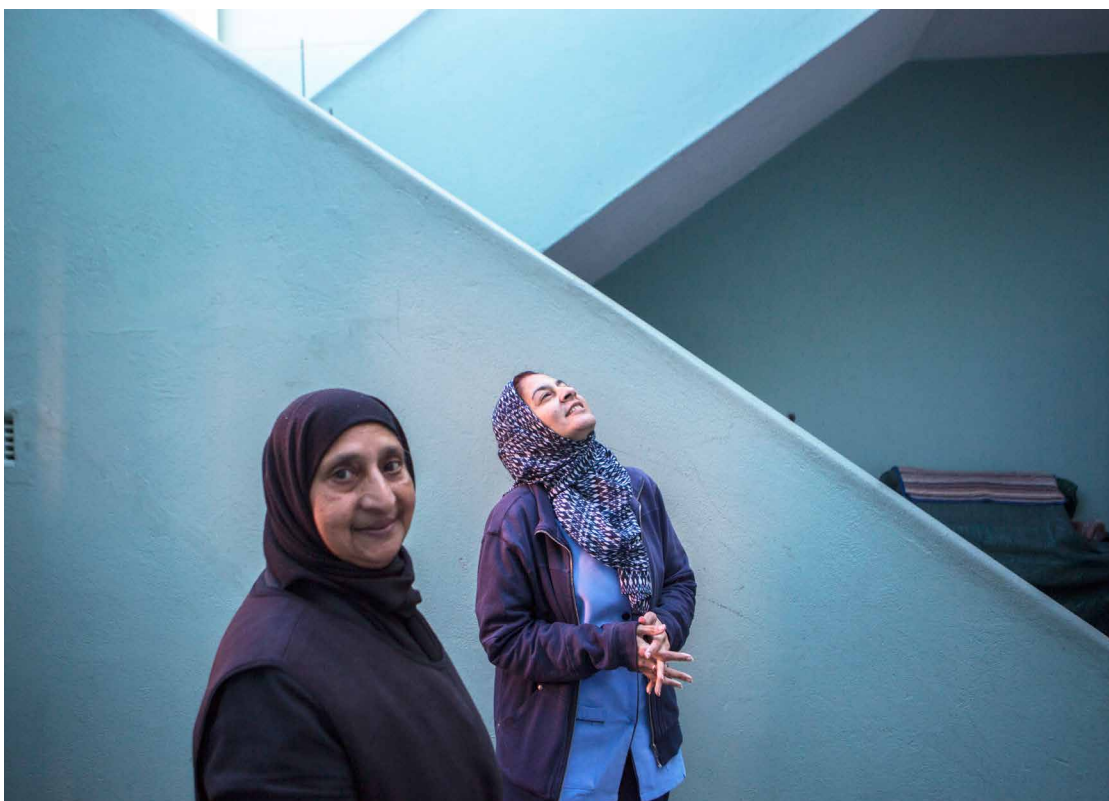


Far Left: Quintin Moos (seated) and his wife Janine (in the doorway) outside their home, discuss their upcoming move to transitional housing with fellow Pine Rd residents.

Far Left Bottom: The Saint Agnes Catholic Church service in Woodstock on a Sunday morning, English service (one of three languages) .

Left: Salt River community organiser and local Nadia Agherdine in her family's Salt River home, where she grew up and currently lives with her 90-year-old mother.

Below: Salt River Health Committee Foot Care Clinic volunteers Ghaironissa Daniels and Nadia Cassim work twice a week to provide care to diabetic and elderly community members.



members set out to identify, map, and secure as much city-owned land as possible. “We needed to intervene,” Molapo says.

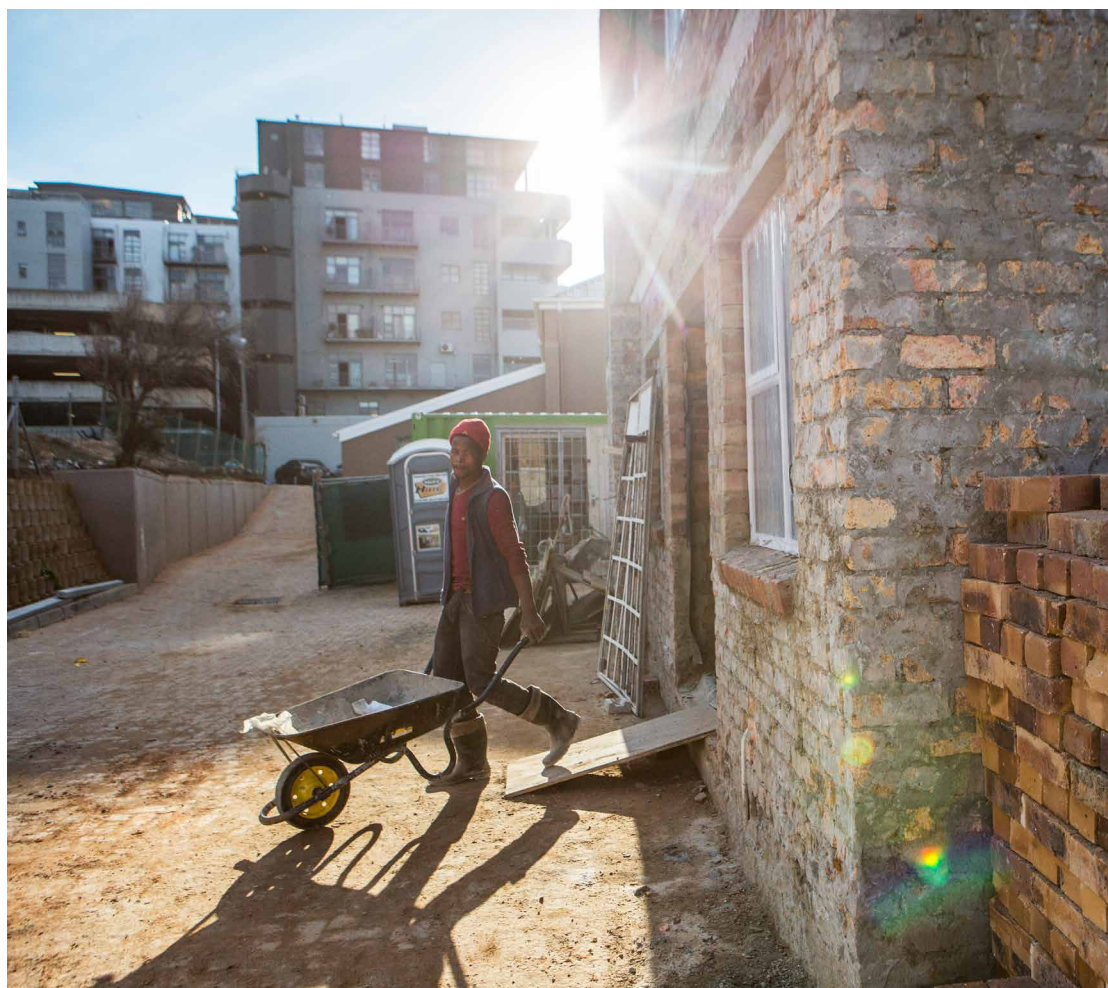
The committee’s interest in amassing a sizable parcel of plots had to do both with stemming the flow of low-income households bleeding out to the city periphery, but also supporting what they call a “precinct-based planning” approach. That is, looking not just at isolated building projects, but “developing an integrated neighbourhood with a long-term vision of urban management,” as Lizette Zuniga, a technical advisor on social housing from the Canadian NGO Rooftops Canada - Equal Spaces, describes it.²¹

This view sees social housing as a strategic tool in a bigger vision of how public space can be deployed to improve relationships. “Public space is the streets, sidewalks, parks, anything outside

your house. And that is a major issue in inner cities, where the safety of people walking, taking public transport, and enjoying public streets, is huge,” Zuniga explains.

But choosing sites that would meet social housing requirements while also having the potential to positively influence the dynamics of public space required an in-depth understanding of the *existing* neighbourhood dynamics and space. And so another task was added to the committee’s portfolio: mapping the neighbourhood in order to understand who were the players, where was the power, and what were the problems.

Below: Constructing the new transitional housing on Pickwick Road, Woodstock.



04

Foundations of trust

Nadia Agherdine's tidy two-bedroom Salt River home envelops one with the warmth of a space that has been in the same family for 75 years. Framed Quranic verses in Arabic calligraphy grace the walls, and a silver tea service takes pride of place in the lounge.

"DAG resuscitated the SRRA," asserts Nadia. "They guided us in how to steer meetings and bring more residents on board. We learned how to bring up things that people are interested in," the soft-spoken secretary of the Salt River Resident's Association says, referring to DAG's "issues-based" organizing approach.

Initially entering the neighbourhood in 2015 to work with vulnerable residents in places like the Pine Road informal settlement, DAG extended its reach in 2016. As a first step to understanding the area's players, dynamics, and issues, the NGO embarked on a mapping exercise, identifying 55 community-based and civil-society organisations (CBOs and CSOs) operating in the area. Dedicating a facilitator to the area, DAG developed one-on-one relationships with 35 of those organisations, helping them to identify their key issues, and showing them how to use those issues to mobilize the community.

By walking through this process together, DAG not only mapped the neighbourhood, but perhaps more importantly, built real relationships with the area's active organisations. DAG was

also able to introduce CBOs and CSOs both to relevant City officials and to one another, as many were unaware of one another's role or function in the community.

This process of addressing issues that people cared about, engaging in dialogue around those issues, and then building relationships between sectors slowly constructed a foundation of trust between DAG, the neighbourhood's leaders, members of different organisations, and even some City officials.

According to DAG's local facilitator, Naeemah Sadien, these relationships and the trust developed within them are the foundation for a more inclusive – and therefore successful – kind of regeneration in Woodstock-Salt River. The stability of this foundation will also influence the success of the new social housing development.

In part this is because there are so many concerns around the coming development, which, by design, is meant to change the neighbourhood.

In this context, the ability of local community organizations to engage with the processes that will play out in the months to come will be key to success, if success is defined as building a harmonious and better integrated community.

"I'm not clear on everything," Nadia admits when asked about her understanding of the social housing development. "We had a big workshop with... a group from America..." she trails off, trying to recall the US-based organisation, EcoDistricts, which the City invited to Cape Town in November for a workshop on community participation in neighbourhood development.²²

Nadia goes on to speculate if social housing is gentrification in disguise; if it will mean gated communities; and whether or not Salt River residents will get first dibs in the allocation process. She is not alone in her uncertainty about what is to come, or in her need for assistance in getting answers.

Quintin Moos is walking from the Woodstock Exchange back to his home at the Pine Road informal settlement, one of two sites earmarked for social housing where people currently reside.²³ After months of trying to meet a City official to get an update, Quintin says that it was DAG's assistance that finally made the difference. "They

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A changing neighbourhood

A Woodstock resident outside his home on Cornwall Street as construction cranes on nearby Gympie Street fill the sky, harbingers of the kind of large developments that have raised local property prices.

made that effort to bring him. They asked me to get a venue, so I did, and [then] we could ask direct questions [to the City]," Quintin recalls.

Continuing to play an instrumental role in brokering and facilitating the relationship between the Pine Road residents and the City of Cape Town, DAG coordinated a participatory household survey with the Pine Road residents in 2017. In anticipation of the residents' relocation to transitional housing when the social housing development begins, DAG captured detailed information for each household: knowledge that will be invaluable to making the move as smooth as possible when the time comes. (See infobox 4)

"It's amazing. It allows us to organize the relevant services that are needed to assist the families. It's not one size fits all – we won't just take you all to transitional housing, put you there and forget about you and tick the box," says the City's Molapo of the DAG household survey.

This kind of information is critical in part because only a few of the households will be eligible to return to the finished social housing (remember, social housing is rental housing and requires a steady minimum income). Plans for more permanent housing are being made for those who are ineligible, but the City's ability to provide the support required – e.g., appropriate job training, ensuring that children enrolled in local schools can stay in those schools, etc. – is predicated on having a personalized understanding of each family's situation.

DAG is the first to admit that things are by no means settled, but it is important to acknowledge what is happening in Pine Road, because it conveys the complexity of this project. It also underscores why residents must possess the knowledge and confidence to question and hold decision-makers accountable, and to participate in the processes that will affect their futures.

The ability of local community organizations to engage with the processes that will play out in the months to come will be key to success.

Meanwhile just two blocks away, Lee van den Berg, a Woodstock resident of 14 years and member of the Woodstock Aesthetics Advisory Committee, has a very different concern about the social housing. "The thing that sparked [my] objection is that they want to take public open space," says this City employee, who a few years back, took the initiative to revitalize the park around the corner from his home, part of which is now slated for social housing.

While Lee supports social housing, he balks at the notion that this park – frequented by dog-walkers, nannies, and kids with balls – would be labelled "underutilized".²⁴ He suggests that the City should rather have used nearby Trafalgar Park, the dangers of which he details with a dog-owner's acute awareness of proximate green spaces.

"The point I'm trying to make is talk to the community: we live here, we know where there are problems. We can tell you, leave this park, redevelop Trafalgar, or look at another proposal. But don't just come and say this and this is going to happen, come hell or high water," Lee says.

INFOBOX 4



What is Transitional Housing in Woodstock-Salt River?

There are some households living informally in the area who cannot afford or do not qualify for Social Housing units being developed. Often they have no alternatives in the area. The City has allocated two sites in the area for Transitional Housing (St James and part of Pickwick Road). This will provide rooms with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities under good management for very low-income households. The occupants will pay rentals in accordance with their income and affordability. Before moving into transitional housing, a household will be assisted with a plan to move on to more permanent accommodation and, as far as possible, supported to do this while staying in the transitional accommodation.

Below: DAG facilitator Naeemah Sadien with Salt River community organiser and resident Nadia Agherdine, opposite a recently painted street art mural in Salt River.

Bottom: Community Organiser Nadia Agherdine (left) chats with the Salt River Health Committee Foot Care Clinic volunteers Ghaironissa Daniels, Saedia Jenkins and Rukeyah Gamiet who help diabetic and elderly community members with foot issues.





05

Putting the public in public participation

The City of Cape Town, like all South African municipalities, has a mandate to densify, and faces a massive challenge in increasing housing opportunities for lower income residents in well-located parts of the city that the market makes totally inaccessible. In this context, it is understandable that with limited human and financial resources, the administration might struggle to keep up with communications.

Despite the City's best efforts – which included fielding hundreds of emails and dozens of phone calls, and inviting every civic representative and organisation they could identify to open-day events following the social housing announcement – many residents still feel in the dark.

Perhaps the problem, as Jared Roussouw, co-director at activist organisation Ndifuna Ukwazi, suggests, is systemic.

“The system doesn't allow for meaningful participation. Ward councillors and ward committees whose role it is [to engage] have no teeth within the administration,” he submits. He also stresses the necessity of prioritising working class people's participation in projects that are meant to benefit them, saying: “Projects fail because of insufficient participation. You see this in affordable housing and informal settlement upgrading where there's no understanding of what the communities' needs are, and the state rolls ahead with its idea, and things fail because there's no connection to reality on the ground.”

DAG agrees that there's too much tick-boxing and rubber-stamping masquerading as public participation on all sides, and sees the delivery of social housing in Woodstock-Salt River as an opportunity for the City to develop a whole new way of engaging with residents and businesses alike.

“[This development process] could define a new way of way of engaging in a participatory process towards not only the delivery of social housing, but participatory neighbourhood development,” says Helen Rourke, DAG's programme manager.

This development process could define a new way of engaging in a participatory process.

DAG doesn't claim to have a map to this “new way” but does believe that it will require novel partnerships between residents and the state; partnerships predicated on a deep respect for citizens as the base of democracy, and animated by a belief that the state and citizens share responsibility for the future. It will also demand innovative participatory processes that move beyond big public meetings, and towards a collaborative place where the community and city plan, design, and manage the neighbourhood together. Finally, it will require decentralised forms of local governance that put people at the centre of the neighbourhood development process.

Left Top: Salt River community organiser and resident Nadia Agherdine, greets a neighbour.

Left Bottom: DAG facilitators Naeemah Sadien & Akhona Siswana, listen as Pine Road resident Quinton Moos explains concerns of fellow residents who will be moved to transitional housing.



06

(Re)imagining Woodstock-Salt River: a new kind of integration

How do you balance
the power so the
vision doesn't get
dominated by a small
elite? Because all these
voices have credibility
and weight.

Left Top: Salt River community organiser and resident Nadia Agherdine guiding a Salt River Street Art tour.

Left Bottom: Pine Road resident Quinton Moos in the street opposite the Pine Road informal Settlement where he lives.

“How do we deal with the critical but exciting problem of making sure people from different income groups can actually live together?” asks NASHO’s McCarthy of the social housing to come.

McCarthy’s comment returns us to a vital point that must not be forgotten in all of this: the social housing slated for Woodstock-Salt River is a bold first stab at using prime property to build an integrated city in one of the most unequal societies on earth.

Using prime city land to drive integration; building community in increasingly dense cities; forging trust between new and diverse neighbours – this is not easy stuff. But if Cape Town can get it even partly right, the pay-off would be unprecedented.

“I don’t see any other sphere of government doing anything similar on well-located land,” NU’s Rossouw acknowledges. “The intention and drive are profoundly different and could have a major impact, it’s implementation where things fall down.” And implementation – taking the time to get the details right – is where public participation can make the difference.

Highly aware of just that, DAG plans to focus on two areas going forward. The first involves supporting Woodstock-Salt River’s diverse community – from the Quintins to the Nadies to the Lees – in productive engagement around the social housing roll-out.

“It’s quite a critical moment, and it will be difficult,” DAG’s Rourke acknowledges, contemplating the tremendous mix of interests and levels of preparedness involved. “How do you balance the power so the vision doesn’t get dominated by a small elite? Because all these voices have credibility and weight.”

DAG believes the answer is, at least in part, in creating the right enabling environment, one that is less about “fancy workshops” and more about building on the type of relational organizing that DAG has undertaken in the area for the last 18 months. That is, the kind of space where “neighbours can galvanize relationships, and not necessarily get into conflict,” as Rourke puts it.

In other words, getting the right mix of people together in a space where trust has been built in order to have tangible conversations that can move away from “the ideas and pretty

pictures” to concretely grappling with design and development options.

In a best-case scenario, this kind of public participation, where people engage productively around tangible issues – managing traffic and densities, preserving parks and green spaces, who will qualify, what the units will look like – will contribute to social housing delivering on its potential. That is, creating a situation in which original residents feel connected to the neighbourhood’s development and can welcome new neighbours, who in turn can improve their circumstances and add value as proactive members of the community.

The second need and focus that DAG and other partners have discussed at length relates to the outcome above. It is about building a longer-term vision for a new type of local urban governance that creates inclusive spaces – both literal and mental – for residents to proactively participate in their development versus only surfacing to react to problems.

Both projects come down to agency – getting people to embrace their own power to improve their lives and their communities, and to realize that the answers do not all sit with government. On the contrary, the answers are within the people, waiting to be unlocked. Fortunately, some people have not been waiting on anyone else to open those doors.

It is 5pm on Pine Road and Quintin sits with his wife Janine, who is doing homework with their three kids. The wind is whipping down the mountain, blowing smoke from their neighbour’s cooking fire through their open door. Though

it is hard to imagine at the moment, this will likely be the site where the first social housing development will break ground. Although there are still many hurdles to jump, Quintin is ready to go the distance.

“We have to prepare ourselves,” says the 57-year-old of the effort he knows it will take to ensure that the Pine Road residents all end up somewhere stable.

For his part, Quintin’s steady job means his family will qualify for the social housing. But he remains deeply concerned for his neighbours who will not qualify. This concern is a thing born of decades living side-by-side, raising families together, and struggling for their rights with different City administrations over the years.

It is a concern that has transformed him into a community leader who plans to see things through to the end, because he sees his neighbours’ stability as important to his own sense of wellbeing. “We’ve lived together so long – more than 23 years – it’s important to help them. So that’s my heart’s desire to see [them] get a proper place to stay,” he says, adding “God is great -- He’s testing us to see if you’re willing to do something for yourself.”



07 Conclusions & points to consider going forward

ORGANISING

Knowing your issue and how to articulate it

- Agency is required within the community: active citizenry and an understanding of a citizen's role in a democracy must be nurtured and built
- Civil society organisations need to be able to provide the necessary support to the community, i.e. capacity building around public participation processes, how government works, etc.
- The city needs to adopt an open-minded practice that reflects a willingness to allow their decisions to be influenced and challenged by the public.

SHARED GOVERNANCE

Creating participatory governance structures

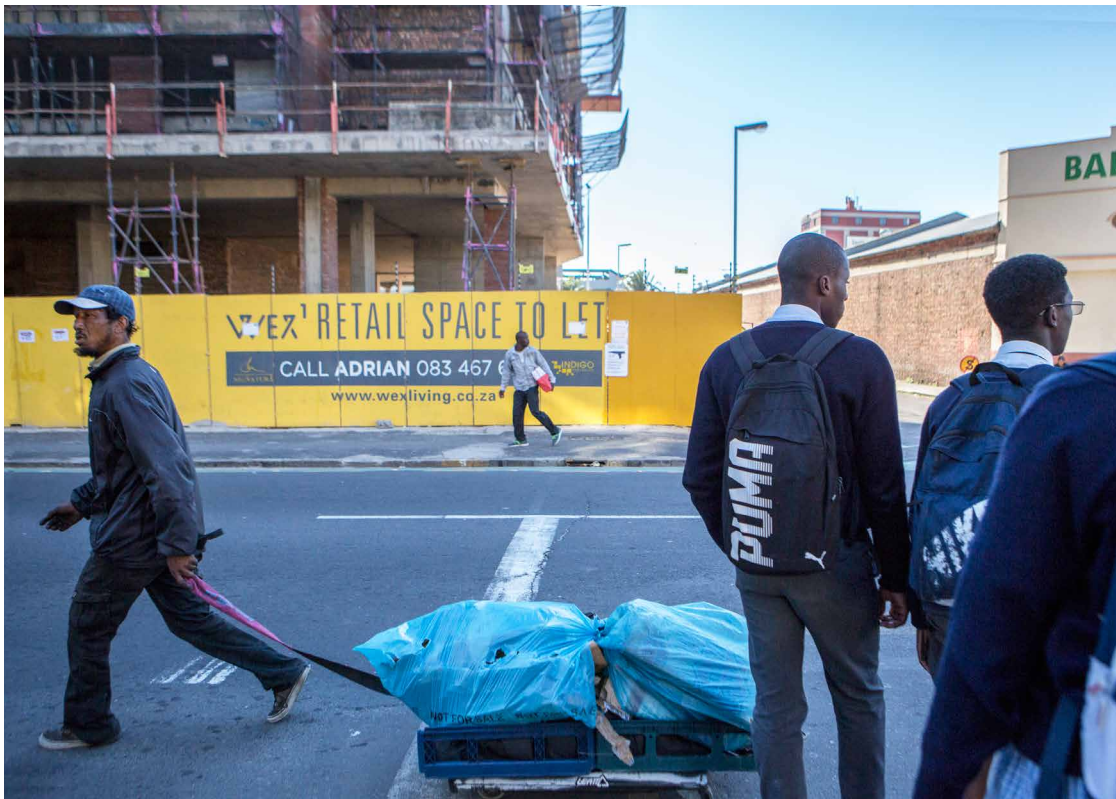
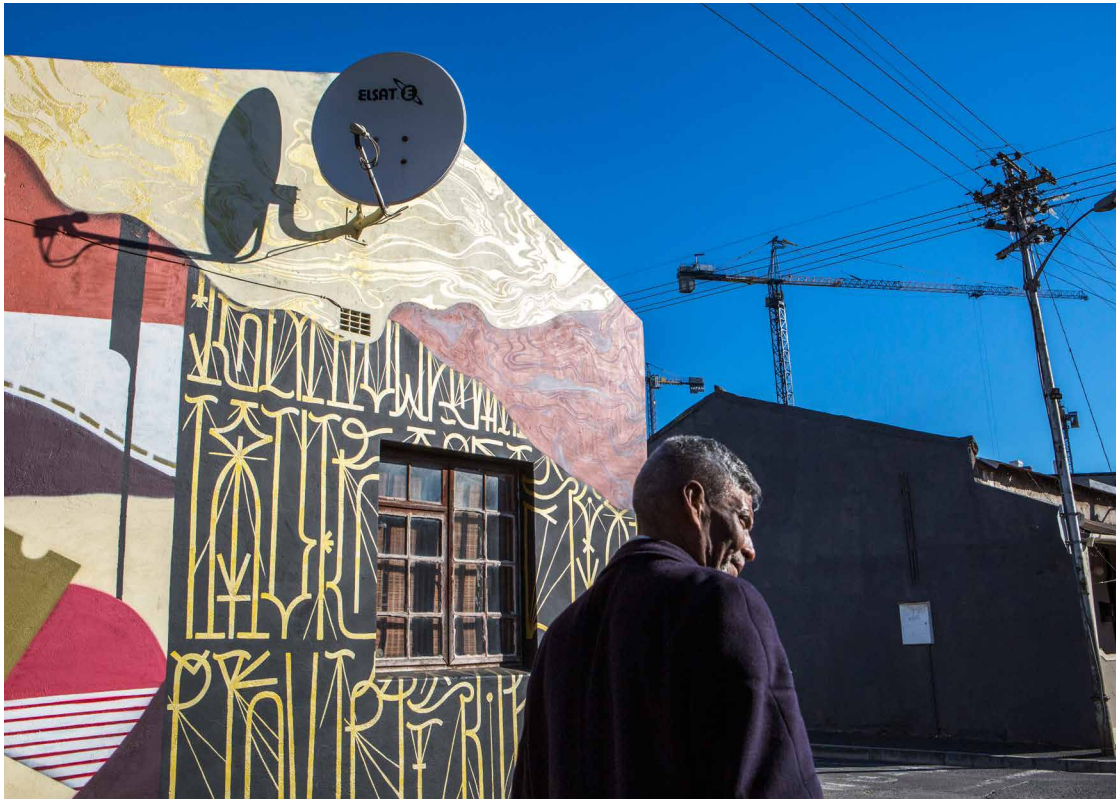
- Community needs to be part of project-level initiatives led by Councillors and council committee
- Community needs to be able to hold councillors accountable and vice versa
- Civil society organisations should be brought in to provide socio-technical support to project-level public initiatives, including coordinating community interest
- Interdepartmental coordination and communication between city political and administrative arms is vital.

VISION

Nurturing integration

- Long-term thinking and scenario-building exercises about the new communities that will evolve should take place now. This includes social housing tenants, transitional housing tenants, and original tenants – how relationships may unfold between these neighbours and how new relationships may affect the use of public space (streets, sidewalks, parks, etc.)
- Target community-based connections to keep neighbourhoods safe, developing a new truly owned civic behaviour with neighbourhood pride for Woodstock-Salt River
- Acknowledge the need to partner with support services agencies – complementary like-minded organisations that can align with DAG, SHIs, and others to support low-income residents in social and affordable housing.

Left: Pine Road resident Quinton Moos walks home through Pine Road Informal Settlement after a day's work at the Woodstock Exchange.





Far Left: Woodstock Resident Essop Dave Lund walks past a mural outside the William Street Mosque and behind the Woodstock Exchange.

Far Left Bottom: A man pulling recycling walks past the new high-end WEX1 apartment complex being built opposite the Woodstock Exchange.

Left: A view through the window of the Starling & Hero Bicycle cafe in the Woodstock Exchange.

Below: A young resident of the Pine Road Informal Settlement stands on the road opposite her home.





Fighting for effective change

DAG facilitator Naeemah Sadien stands with Salt River community organiser and resident Nadia Agherdine during a Salt River Street Art tour run by Nadia.



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2



3



4



End Notes:

- 01** The plots are: Woodstock: New Market Street, Woodstock Hospital, Woodstock Hospital Park, Upper Coventry Street, Pine Road, Dillon Lane; Salt River: Salt River Market, Pickwick Road, James Street; Cape Town Central: Canterbury St, Upper Canterbury St. The City released a prospectus to private developers and social housing institutions (by themselves or in partnership) to bid on five of the sites in October 2017. Three sites were allocated to Social Housing Institutions (SHIs) (Pine Rd, Dillon Lane & Salt River Market), and two were identified for "transitional housing" (Pickwick St & James St). Proposals (submitted by 6 March 2018) were pre-screened for compliance by the Bid Evaluation Committee, and those that meet the conditions will be open for public viewing and voting in 2018. SOURCE: www.iol.co.za/capeargus/this-is-where-cape-towns-inner-city-social-housing-will-be-built-11201820
- 02** 63% of South Africa's population growth from 2001-2011 occurred in just eight cities (HSRC: 1)
- 03** The Bo-Kaap was the other
- 04** According to Gini co-efficient, Cape Town scores better than other South African cities, however, South African cities on the whole are among the world's worst. Furthermore, researchers have pointed to the inadequacy of Gini co-efficient alone to measure inequality, as it only measures income, as opposed to wealth and assets, not to mention gender, race, and class issues. SOURCE: www.news24.com/Analysis/sa-needs-fresh-approach-to-stubbornly-high-inequality-20171212
- 05** Social Housing Act (No. 16 of 2008): www.gov.za/sites/default/files/31577_1199.pdf
- 06** www.shra.org.za
- 07** Private for-profit developers can receive RCG funding as Other Delivery Agents (ODAs) only for SHRA accredited projects. RCG funding is a capital grant and as such is invested in the building of a development only, and not the institution.

Left:

- 1:** Car guard, Trevor Kelly, was born on Gympie Street but his family was evicted and he now lives on the street, watching cars for visitors at the Woodstock Exchange.
- 2:** Pine Street Informal Settlement resident Janine Raquel Jafthas.
- 3:** French Sunday Service at Saint Agnes Catholic Church in Woodstock.
- 4:** Residents from Salt River pray during Ifthar at the Salt River mosque during Ramadan.

- 08 www.nasho.org.za
 - 09 www.shra.org.za/investment/about
 - 10 Urban Land Mark: 9
 - 11 MacGregor: 3
 - 12 Boraine 2009
 - 13 Visser 2008
 - 14 ASF-UK & DAG: 11
 - 15 Additionally, rent control legislation, in place since the 1920s, expired in 2003. Intended to protect white tenants from rent increases and eviction, the legislation mostly applied to buildings built and occupied before 1949; it also had the unintended consequence of protecting Woodstock-Salt River's majority non-white population until it fell away in 2003 (Pillay, S. 2016).
 - 16 "Regeneration is Creating Uncertainty in Suburbs", quoted in Sadien 2017
 - 17 Miraftab 2007
 - 18 Pirie 2007
 - 19 www.shra.org.za/investment/about
 - 20 Private for-profit developers can receive RCG funding only for accredited projects.
 - 21 Equal Spaces: Social Housing to End Spatial Apartheid in South Africa is a bilateral program between the governments of South Africa and Canada, and has been a key advisor to the CoCT for the process described in this article (Rooftops Canada is the executing agency). The program provides assistance to selected large Metros in South Africa to revitalize inner-city communities utilizing social housing as a catalyst to leverage urban regeneration.
 - 22 www.ecodistricts.org/rewiring-urban-planning-cape-town/
 - 23 The City has allocated St James and a portion of the Pickwick Road sites to develop 'transitional housing' for the people currently residing on sites where social housing will be built.
 - 24 Of the 11 sites, this is the only one designated as 'public open space'; it is already partially used as a children's facility, with the remaining space being the open space referred to. The call for proposals for this site includes keeping some space for a public park on this site, but there is uncertainty around how much public use the site gets throughout the entire day, all of which underscores the need for a proper public participation process.
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