

**SPEECH BY CLLR BRETT HERRON, MAYORAL COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR
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DEVELOPMENT FORUM**

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Good afternoon to you all. It is a great pleasure to be speaking to you today.

I have been asked to speak about to the topic:

“Pro-Development: A cultural change in local government”

It is an interesting topic from my perspective.

I have served on the City of Cape Town’s Council for eight years and in that time I have seen and experienced the tension between development and protection.

I assume that this question was posed to me by the Forum because in the Forum’s eyes our government can do a whole lot more to encourage and support private development.

On the other hand, this government is increasingly accused by civic associations of pursuing a property development agenda at all or any cost.

I guess if the developers are complaining that we are not *pro development* and civic organisations are accusing us of driving a pro-development agenda, at all costs, then we must be getting the balance somewhat right.

Nevertheless, as a government we do recognise the role that property development has played, and must still play to an even greater extent, in our economic growth strategy and in building a city that is economically and socially sustainable.

I should not have to tell anyone in this room that we are working against the clock and with a time-bomb of social volatility ticking and that we need to be working with a greater sense of urgency.

Understandably, patience and tolerance for the economic, spatial and social inequalities in our city and in our country is fast evaporating.

Cape Town's urban form and structure is characterised by dispersed development patterns and inequitable access for many of its users.

In part, this can be attributed to segregated apartheid planning, but more recently has become a trend exacerbated by socio-economic reality.

Population and residential densities in many of the formally developed areas of the City remain extremely low by international standards and access is further constrained by mountain and sea.

This has led to the development of poorer residential communities in locations far away from employment and opportunities, making the cost of providing and using a high quality public transport unsustainable.

The City of Cape Town has attempted to address many of these factors through sound development policy and key projects targeted at achieving a sustainable form of development and to address past injustices through improved urban, environmental and socio-economic efficiencies.

Whilst significant progress has been made since 1994, the pace of improvement has been slow.

Furthermore in some instances inappropriate public-led investment projects and development regulations have worsened the City's urban form with financial, social and environmental consequences.

South Africa's income disparity is among the highest in the world and whilst Cape Town is seen as one of the least unequal cities in South Africa, its coefficient remains significantly high and has, in fact, risen in recent years.

This developmental indicator suggests that the City requires stronger initiatives to redress past injustices and promote inclusivity.

Furthermore public led investment decisions that support social polarization, such as housing located in dormitory locations where access to economic and social opportunities is constrained, need to be reconsidered.

As new developments are located on the outskirts of the city, urban sprawl contributes to the loss of valuable land for Cape Town's future growth potential, and also drives up the cost of services provision to outlying areas (i.e. services, such as electricity, water and waste removal, which must be supplied to increasingly outlying and peripheral areas).

Urban sprawl has created long travel distances with fragmented and dispersed urban activity patterns, which make it difficult to develop a viable public transport system.

This has a negative impact on the mobility of poorer people, who are dependent on public transport (travel and fuel costs), and is unsustainable in an oil-constrained world.

To a large extent the City's inability to restructure its urban form sustainably can be attributed to a number of key inefficiencies:

- There appears to be a disconnect between the policy directives which pertain to sustainable development and some of the decisions made by local, provincial and national government.

The City is often under immense pressure to act swiftly on development decisions, such as housing, in order to address the short term needs of the

poor, which tends to conflict with the principles of sustainable development and TOD.

- Legislation and policy - at a local, provincial and national scale - sometimes hinder the City's ability to effectively manage the growth of Cape Town's urban form sustainably (for example road classification standards/requirements which impede incremental densification and undermine the use of public transport services).
- Spatial planning policy directives have not been matched with changes in the zoning scheme and other regulations. Thus following planning policy has not made the process significantly easier for the developer.
- Historically private sector led development have largely ignored the City's proposed spatial restructuring planning policy directives. This is due, largely, to our lack of understanding of the market and particularly the motives that drive private sector led development.

It is thus against this background that we must consider the question of developing a new local government culture of encouraging development.

It cannot be a culture of *pro development* in the absence of a clear vision for what we need to achieve together.

In March 2016 we approved our Transit Orientated Development Strategic Framework.

The vision for Transit Oriented Development for Cape Town is:

To progressively move toward a compact, well connected, efficient, resilient urban form and movement system that is conducive to economic and social efficiency and equality whilst providing cost effective access and mobility, with the least possible negative impact on the environment.

The objectives of TOD in Cape Town are defined as follows:

1) Maximise “location efficiency” so that people can walk, cycle and use public transport.

This can be achieved through a comprehensive approach to land use density, mix and intensity, as well as a focus on prioritised public transport at a metro, corridor, nodal and precinct scale.

2) Boost ridership and minimize congestion thereby ensuring that the public transport system becomes more viable

3) Provide a rich mix of housing, shopping, recreational and transportation choices

4) Enable cost and operational efficiencies in the provision and design of urban infrastructure

5) Drive down the cost of the User Access Priority for both new and existing residents

6) Create a sense of place.

Cape Town’s current population is approximately 4 million people. Anticipated population growth suggests that by 2030 that would have increased to 4.5 million people.

To manage this growth we expect to need:

500 000 new dwelling units

1 000 000 sqm of new office space

3 500 000 sqm of new retail space

and

4 500 000 sqm of new industrial space.

Where this development is to be located, and what the impact of this growth in those locations will be, are the questions we are grappling with.

We are required, by national treasury, to prepare a Built Environment Performance Plan. This plan is intended to manage growth and development in a sustainable way and in pursuit of a more efficient city form.

We will take our new Plan to Council for approval at the end of May.

In that plan we have identified 3 transport corridors which create a triangle that bounds a central urban core.

These corridors are:

- Voortrekker Road Corridor – from Bellville to the City Centre
- Metro-South East – from MSE to City Centre
- Blue Downs/Symphony Way Corridor – from MSE to Bellville.

Our objective is to lead with public sector investment in these corridors – through 6 TOD Catalytic Projects – that we have identified.

We are also working to put in place the planning tools and measures that will encourage private sector development within these corridors and at or near public transport nodes within the urban core that these corridors create.

Some of the measures we are looking at include:

- A dedicated team of planning professionals, with the requisite delegations, to deal with TOD aligned development proposals and applications to fast-track the decision-making process.
- Pro-active rezoning.
- Pro-active title-deed restriction removals
- Overlay zones for increased densities, bulk etc.

In conclusion, we are committed to a government that is pro development – more especially where that development is aligned to our spatial restructuring objectives and in pursuit of a more equitable city that is increasingly efficient and compact.

As we re-engineer our planning tools and levers in the coming months we ask that you work with us so that we put in place the measures that private developers are able to respond to and use.

I thank you.