

PART C: IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER 12: FORWARD PLANNING

- 12.1 Anticipating urbanisation
- 12.2 Researching demand
- 12.3 Pro-active strategies

12.1 Anticipating urbanisation.

Urbanisation takes place when people living in rural areas decide to seek their fortune in urban places, or are obliged to migrate to urban places. Why do people migrate? By and large, they migrate in search of income and jobs; more accurately, in search of more income and better jobs. This is the primary engine of migration, pushing people out of poorer regions and pulling them toward better-off regions. This engine driving people from one place to another operates on the basis of a migrant's experience in the sending area and the migrant's knowledge of the receiving area. Good knowledge about possible receiving areas, in other words, is crucial and may be obtained - incomplete though it surely will be - from family and friends in these areas, from return migrants or from other institutional sources such as the workplace or the mass media.

What, however, happens when poor households get to know that, by moving, their chances of landing a permanent job and receiving a predictable income are minimal? Under these conditions, such households often migrate, as a second-best option, in search of superior infrastructure - land and improved housing, water and sanitation, electricity, and better transport as well as better school and health facilities. This second engine of migration operates for many poor South African households at the moment.

There are two things about this second engine worth mentioning. The first is that the first engine never shuts down completely. Thus, if a poor household migrates to a town and settles in a new state-subsidised housing scheme, for instance, this household may well up and leave this town and the new house if household members remain unemployed and hear about job opportunities elsewhere. The second thing is that, for poor households driven by this second engine, the positioning of state subsidized housing schemes and their associated infrastructure will influence the direction of migration flows, for this infrastructure often acts as an attractor for households who are forced to leave impoverished regions.

Municipal officials can anticipate the urbanization challenges flowing from such migration flows in three ways

- they need to monitor changing economic circumstances in sending and receiving areas, both in terms of perceived as well as real conditions;
- they need to monitor migration flows into as well as out of their areas of jurisdiction; and
- they need to plan for new residential areas and their associated infrastructural needs in terms of the economic potential of these areas.

12.2 Researching demand

12.2.1 What Information is Important?

Ideally one wants to be able to predict the number of 'informal settlers' who will be moving into a particular area in order to make the necessary arrangements in advance to accommodate them. It will mostly only be possible to make estimates based on trends that can be derived from different sources. Types of information that may help to build a picture of what may be expected in the future include the following:

- Actual numbers of informal settlements that took place in the past. If this aspect is monitored over a number of years it may help to establish trends for the future.
- Population projections broken down into income groups. This will give an indication of the number of households that will not be able to afford conventional housing.
- Numbers of in-migrants. This represents an important component of the people who tend to form part of informal settlements.
- Urbanisation of farm-workers. An increasing trend has been detected in this regard in recent years, particularly in relation to small towns.
- The extent of overcrowding in existing residential areas. Experience shows that many informal settlers have their origin in local conditions of overcrowding.
- The adequacy of existing housing conditions. Some people may choose the informal settlement option in order to escape from unacceptable services or other conditions in existing areas.

12.2.2 Sources of Information

Most of the above categories of information are contained in official census statistics. However, censuses are conducted every five years at best. In addition, because of the magnitude of the whole census exercise, it usually takes a long time before information becomes available, particularly for local areas. It is therefore usually necessary to supplement census information with more recent local data or with projections that are based on census results. Such other

sources of information may include the following:

- Other survey results from Statistics South Africa (SSA), such as the regular October Household Surveys. The nearest office of SSA should be contacted to find out what information is available.
- Survey results from other organisations such as universities, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, local NGO's, the local Police Service etc.
- The co-ordination of various bits of information that may be available from different departments within local authorities.
- Various departments of the Western Cape Provincial Administration gather certain information, on a regular basis or from time to time, that may be very valuable, e.g. the Departments of Housing, Education, Planning and Health.

12.2.3 Special Surveys

Special surveys or research may be necessary into specific aspects. For this purpose research organisations at universities or consultants may be employed or it could be undertaken internally should the necessary capacity be available. It may also be possible to 'piggy-back' on larger surveys by asking (and paying) for a few extra questions to be included. This may cost substantially less than independent surveys. An example may be where one department appoints a consultant to undertake a task such as the preparation of a spatial framework. Another department may then ask (and offer to pay) for the brief of the consultant to be expanded in some respects in order to meet its own information needs at the same time.

12.3 PRO-ACTIVE STRATEGIES

Once the necessary information is available that enables one to establish the likely demand for the future, steps have to be taken to accommodate that demand. Three important aspects of such pro-active steps are discussed below.

12.3.1 Land Identification

The identification of adequate and suitable land is essential. It should be realised that this will in most cases not be an easy task. Past experiences show that low-income and informal settlements are perceived by many as unwelcome neighbours. It will therefore be necessary to follow a properly structured process of land identification that may have to include the following steps:

- A survey and the mapping of all existing land uses in order to establish more compatible and less compatible 'neighbours' for informal settlements. Such a land use map can also be used as a basis for the evaluation of potential sites for development in terms of access to work

opportunities and other facilities.

A survey of the ownership of all land that is presently vacant, distinguishing between publicly- and privately-owned land in particular. The ideal would be to find publicly-owned land that is suitable for the purpose.

An evaluation of the availability and condition of both municipal and social services, including spare capacities that might be available.

An evaluation of the natural environment and the possible impact of settlement on such environments will be very important.

The identification of alternative locations with a proper analysis of each using the information that has been gathered, as suggested above, as a basis for evaluation.

Proper consultation with adjacent owners and role-players as well as with the wider community in order to get additional information and opinions.

12.3.2 Linking Housing and Planning Principles

Any proposed settlements should be linked to, and should as far as possible be compatible with, accepted planning principles that are applicable in the area under investigation. The most important elements that will have to be considered will be embodied in existing planning, in the IDP of the local authority and in time frames that were set in terms of those.

12.3.2.1 Existing Spatial Planning

The financial limitations of the national Housing Policy cannot always be matched with planning objectives. The difficulties in creating high-density low-cost housing are a typical example. However, every effort must be made, especially in forward planning, to provide not only infrastructure and housing but a quality environment. To this end attention should be given to providing:

- **Corridors** to support public transport systems
- **Open Spaces** to create and maintain a certain quality of living environment
- **Node** development to maximise benefits of businesses grouped together
- **Urban Edge** demarcation to prevent urban sprawl

Obviously planning principles function on all levels and more focussed principles are applicable when addressing specific precincts.

The vision should be to eventually design and implement all low cost housing projects in line with planning principles and to actually use these projects to give effect to planning principles.

However, it can also be argued that planning principles should also be modified to accommodate the dynamic nature of low-cost housing. A typical example

would be the realisation by all people involved in housing that the site-and-service option is something that can no longer be ignored as a solution to the housing crisis due to limited resources. Acceptance of this scenario will on the other hand require new innovative thinking by planners to address this vexed issue.

In conclusion, both housing and planning disciplines should make an urgent and constructive effort to combine and co-ordinate their energy to find new approaches to low-cost housing.

12.3.2.2 **The IDP**

The IDP, if correctly formulated and managed should be the ultimate tool to implement a pro-active approach to providing low-cost housing. The applicable elements of the IDP in this instance where housing and planning principles are to be linked, are:

- Budget Linkage and prioritisation
- Spatial Plan (Conceptual Depiction)
- Housing Plan (Contains more detail spatial proposals)

Starting with the latter, it should be noted that not all Local Authorities have a comprehensive Housing Plan. However, if a Housing Plan does exist, one of its core elements will certainly be a spatial component. Up to a certain level of detail it should indicate all housing opportunities. On a more conceptual level, this should be included in the Overall Spatial Plan of the area as part of the IDP. Even more important is the linkage that is then established with the multi-year Capital Budget. This spatial provision for low-cost housing will then manifest itself via future housing projects on the Capital Budget. The Operating Budget will follow the Capital Budget ensuring that provision is made for maintenance, staff, etc to support the Capital Budget. In addition different departmental Capital Budgets should be integrated on this level to ensure a proper integrated Housing Project.

12.3.2.3 **Time Frames**

The previous section leads inevitably to the question: What are the delivery time frames? To answer this question all Local Authorities that are serious about providing low-cost housing should create a Housing Plan/Strategy. Not only will this enable proper input into the IDP, but also indicate the expected & required time frames. After dealing with issues such as land availability, access to land, designation and re-zoning of land and the housing projects a clear distinction can be made between the housing opportunities that can be provided for the short-, medium- and long term. However, needs and political decision making also strongly influence these time frames. Only by identifying each element can a true picture be obtained of the housing challenge and proper linkages established between housing and planning functions.

12.3.2.4 **The Role of Politics**

Low cost housing provision inevitably involves politics. The challenge is to try and direct the political energy of the various stakeholders towards the effective implementation of appropriate projects and programmes.

There is no recipe to guarantee success, but the following will be of assistance:

- Get to know your Councillors and other community leaders, and their political affiliations. It is essential to be familiar with the political dynamics within an area or community.
- Maintain a map that clearly indicates the Wards & Sub Councils - and any other areas that have political characteristics.

The political challenge obviously becomes even more complicated when a Housing Project reaches over two wards incorporating opposing political affiliations. Hence, prior to embarking upon a Housing Project, assessment of the political situation is essential and should be followed with an innovative strategy to manage the situation from a housing point of view.