

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OTHER EXISTING SITUATIONS

LABOUR RELATED ISSUES

Tourism is the Province's primary growth force and recent trends suggest considerable scope for further growth with significant employment and potential spillover effects. Western Cape tourism is taking 30% of the national market.

Agriculture is an ideal vehicle for job-creation as it is labour intensive by nature. The Western Cape agricultural sector is responsible for 22% of the total value of agricultural production in the country and for 60% of all exports. Its strength lies in the balanced spread of products across the agricultural regions. If all the different industries and sectors of the Western Cape are listed according to their developmental impacts the top fourteen are all agricultural industries, with the deciduous fruit industry rated as number one.

The continual expansion of SMME type businesses is currently regarded as part of the solution to both unemployment and equity problems. The development of these enterprises is a high priority in all sectors of the economy and requires a co-ordinated approach.

CRIME RELATED ISSUES

The Western Cape has the highest incident of murder and burglary in SA, with a steady increase during the last five years, and the third highest reported rape. The CMA has become renowned for murder, gangsterism and urban terrorism. Property-related crime has generally increased since 1996. Although not quantifiable, the impact of crime on investor sentiment must be real. High incidents of crime and resultant negative perceptions on safety have been a determining factor on particularly the tourism sector in the Western Cape.

The National Crime Prevention Strategy is designed and aimed to empower both communities and the state to deal with crime in an efficient and multi-sectoral manner. It is based on four strategies, of which the environmental design strategy to minimise crime is of particular relevance to housing delivery. The National Crime Prevention Strategy defines the concept of crime prevention through environmental design as "reducing the causes of and the opportunities for crime by changing the environment in which it occurs".

The following patterns of crime were identified nationally:

- The poorer inhabitants of a city are generally most at risk of violent crimes and also experience a significant proportion of property crime. Not only do they suffer the most from many types of crime; they also do not have the financial means to protect themselves against victimisation.
- Conditions that contribute to poor living conditions and susceptibility to crime are lack of facilities, absence of appropriate lighting and large vacant or unused open spaces and buffer strips.
- Suburban residents are more likely to be victims of property crime and experience comparatively low levels of violence.
- In inner city areas, violent crimes targeting property predominate.
- Crime is more common in areas where unemployment, poverty and overcrowding prevail. This raises the question whether the current provision of subsidised housing areas is a real improvement on the type of environment that aggravates crime.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN:

Given this situation, environmental design to reduce the opportunities for crime should play a critical role in improving the environments the poor live in. The intentions of these strategies are to reduce fear of crime, by either altering the environment in which crime occurs or by intervening more broadly

to change the conditions that have causal significance. Environmental design as currently practised in South Africa is however often indistinguishable from target hardening.

The form of South African cities play a role in the level of criminality within urban areas as well as in facilitating the effectiveness of policing. The cities were shaped by apartheid planning principles, which make crime prevention through environmental design a challenge in addressing the causes of, and the settings for crime. In the past, design interventions have largely focussed on the wealthier parts of cities, where they are easier to implement. State interventions in the built environment should, however, rather prioritise the areas where existing features are conducive to criminal victimisation.

A proactive integrated planning approach is necessary. Crime prevention through environmental design should be locally driven with community participation in all aspects. Crime prevention measures will have the greatest effect when applied in the initial stages of new developments.

The following interventions are proposed:

- To improve surveillance opportunities, the distance between the front façade of residential buildings and the road should be kept to a minimum, but still provide a small transitional space indicating the passage from public to private.
- Communal open space should be designed in such a way that residents are encouraged to take responsibility for as much of the open space around their units as possible. If residents feel responsible for a space they will use it more often and provide extra surveillance.
- Among the more dangerous areas in group housing are the circulation spaces. The design of group housing must provide for surveillance into corridors, stairwells and entrance halls.
- Features like bay windows and small verandahs enable and encourage passive surveillance.
- Barriers such as garden fences and security walls should allow for surveillance and be visually attractive. High walls are not necessarily safe. The use of razor wire and electric fences can make a relatively safe neighbourhood appear unsafe and add to people's fear of crime.

The principles and recommendations dealing with crime prevention are, in most cases, no different from basic design principles for well-performing urban environments. Unfortunately many of the planning practises of the past that led to the problems in our cities have not changed. Settlements for the poor are still being designed in ways that promote sprawl and leave tracts of open space that promote criminal activity. Schools, clinics, sporting and other community activities are not provided in a co-ordinated manner, although it may form part of the physical planning of new developments. This results in living environments that are unsafe and unsustainable.

It is clear that our cities and towns will continue to be unsafe unless there is a fundamental change in our approach to town planning and urban design.

To a large degree the key to successful implementation of environmental design initiatives as part of any crime prevention strategy lies in effective co-operation. Government departments at all levels need to work together to ensure that development projects are not merely "housing projects", but that they meet all the needs of the community that they are intended to benefit.