



BRIEFING TO THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Monitoring of spatial planning and land use management (inclusive of spatial transformation) across all municipalities in South Africa –
SALGA Spatial Transformation Barometer program

05 MARCH 2024



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- The Committee invited SALGA to present a report on its programmes/projects to monitor spatial planning and land use management (incl. spatial transformation) across all municipalities in South Africa.
- SALGA's strategy 2022 -2027 identified the need to enable municipalities for the promotion of spatial inclusion and related economic transformation.
- SALGA annual performance plans that support the realization of its five (5) year strategy provide for the implementation of a Spatial Transformation Barometer program as one of the mechanisms to achieve the above strategic objective.
- **SALGA recognizes** that SA has a vast history of social and economic disruptions that was underpinned by systematic spatial planning policies and programmes
- **Consequently**, the inherited and currently dominant spatial form in many SA municipalities undermines their ability to progressively realize spatial transformation that ensures shared development opportunity, inclusive growth and a just transition. **Instead**, we observe undesirable patterns of spatial development that continue to:
 - Produce inequitable access to services, economic opportunities and development,
 - Expand growth of the inefficient development sprawl that disproportionately discriminate and heavily taxes the poor in our cities and towns
 - Prevent the optimal utilization of available and limited land and economic development resources
 - Reproduce patterns of undesirable segregated spatial form and development that entrenches spatial inequality and class divisions in our society

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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- To share with the Committee the key highlights of the SALGA Spatial Transformation Barometer report findings.
- To enhance the Committee's oversight on the implementation of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA).
- To share SALGA's perspective on what and how South African municipalities are doing in promoting spatial transformation that seeks to move away from the country's inherited segregated, unequal, unjust, fragmented, and unsustainable settlement patterns.
- To also share the highlights on positive work that some municipalities are pursuing to achieve spatial integration and economic transformation within their respective areas of jurisdiction.
- To reflect to the committee on the following:
 - Spatial planning and land use management actions and outcomes and how SPLUMA has assisted (or hindered) progress in spatial transformation and improved land use management in municipal domain;
 - b. Spatial planning and land use management challenges in municipal domain; and how these have been addressed;
 - c. Reflection on intergovernmental cooperation and coordination towards the improvement of spatial planning and land use management; and
 - d. Proposed solutions to the existing challenges and recommendations to attain desired spatial transformation

SALGA PERSPECTIVES ON SPLUMA IMPLEMENTATION



OUR PREMISE ON SPLUMA IMPLEMENTATION

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- SALGA views SPLUMA as a relevant and critical piece of legislation to assist municipalities in administering and managing their affairs in respect of Land Use Management and Regulation
- SALGA has engaged municipalities, Traditional Leadership and other government spheres on improving cooperative governance and resolving land-based conflicts that impact on SPLUMA. In September 2023, we concluded an MOA with the DTA, NHTKL and SALGA, which serves as a framework for cooperation and resolution of local conflicts in land governance, development and regulation of land uses.
- We regard SPLUMA as a huge historic victory of LG authority on planning and land use management to be affirmed by the highest Court in the land.
- We however, support the call for the amendment of certain aspects of the SPLUMA regulation to effect and strengthen areas of cooperation between municipalities and Traditional Leadership in the management and regulation of land use management and development.
- We are aware of the gaps in capacity from some of our members and constantly collaborate with DALRRD for the building of lacking technical capacity (eg. GIS Skills, Access to Professionally registered and Qualified Planners etc) in certain municipalities

SPLUMA AS A TOOL TO ACHIEVE SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION

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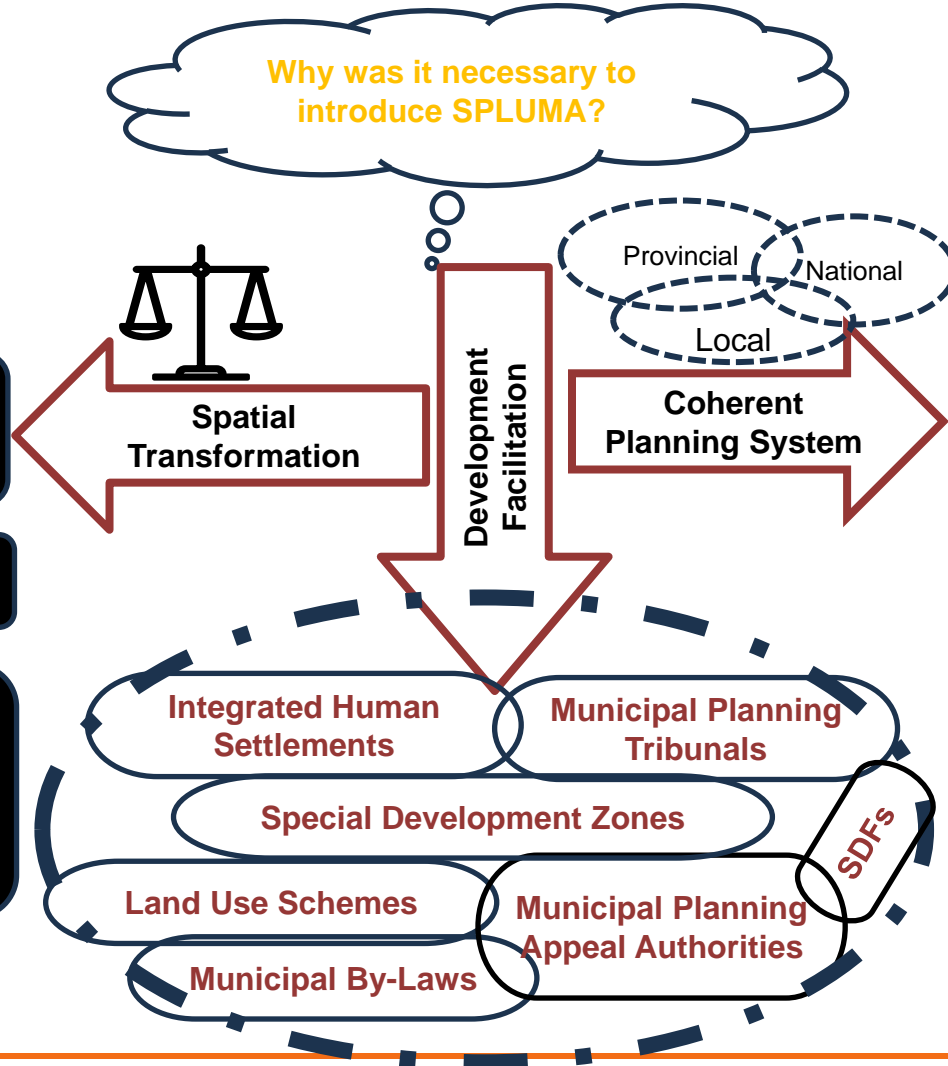
Spatial Justice

Spatial & Economic development inclusion

Facilitate achievement of spatial & economic transformation

Address spatial segregation

Affirm status of LG authority in administering the function of municipal planning



Norms & standards

Provide for procedures to better the Constitutionally provided desire for cooperation in land development and rural governance matters

Singular land use planning & management regulatory system

Ensure wall-to-wall land use planning and development management system that cover both urban & rural parts of SA

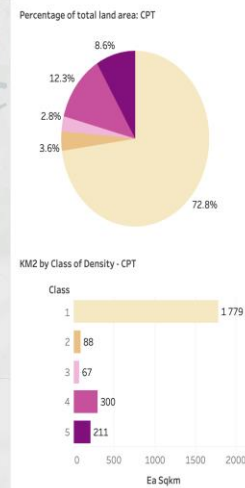
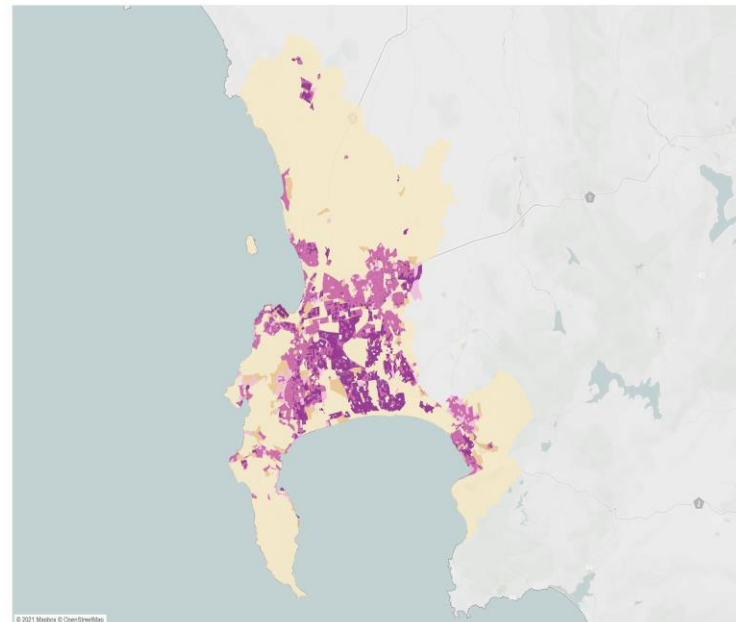
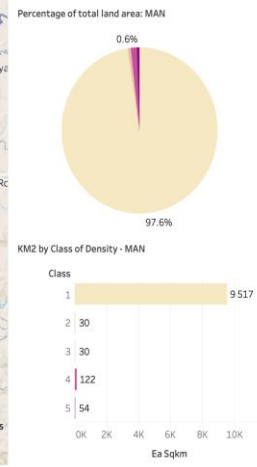
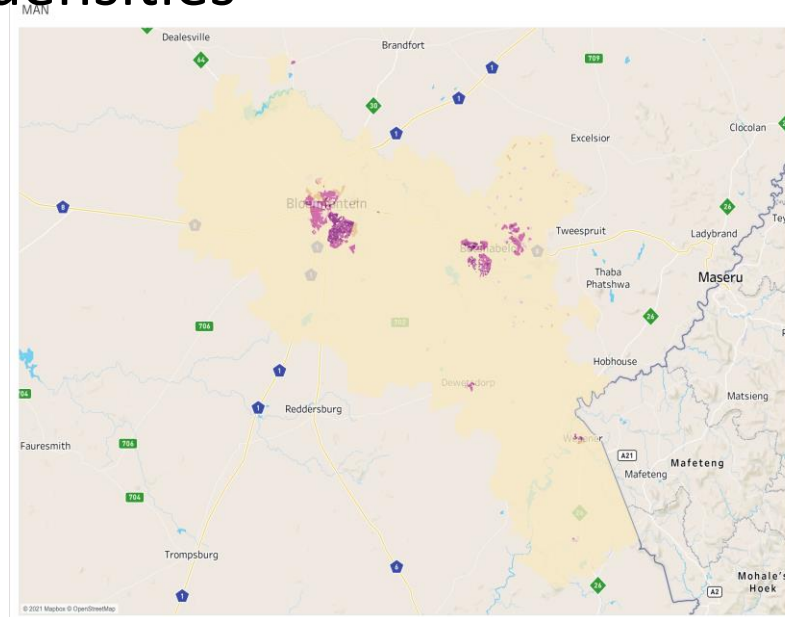
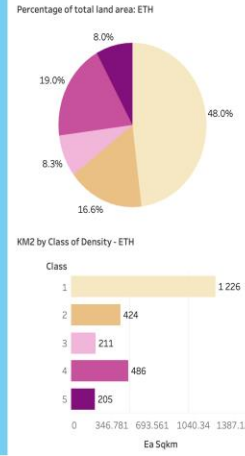
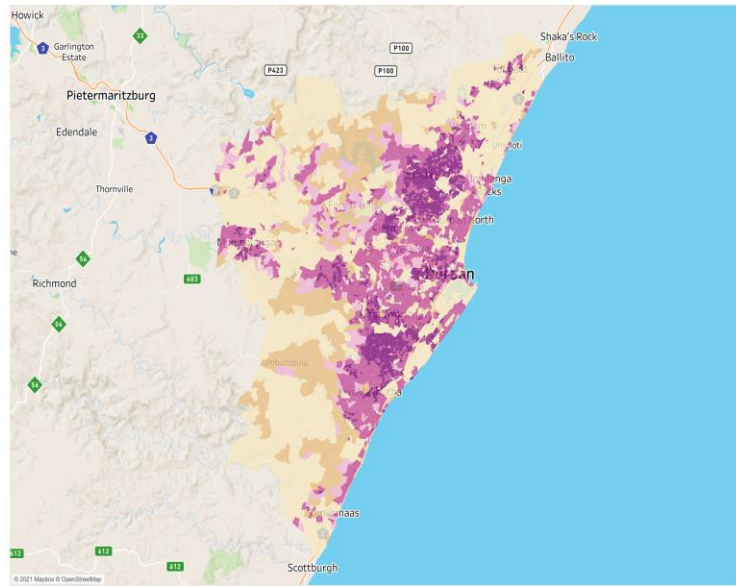
Repeal certain old planning legislations and align or synchronize to achieve coherence

SPLUMA IS A KEY LEGAL FRAMEWORK THAT CAN DELIVER SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION OBJECTIVES SUCH AS



- **Proximity and Access** – to have ease of access to employment opportunities, social amenities and the like. This has a spatial element – short distances allow for easy access, but also a time element – some distances are easily traversed, through for example access roads and transport, whilst others can impose severe financial and time costs where roads are in bad condition, or public transport is not available.
- **Housing and Basic services** – the provision of reliable quality housing and basic services (electricity, water, sanitation and refuse removal) is a vital factor impacting on the health, social welfare and economic development of a residential community.
- **Integration and inequality** – apartheid specifically and purposely divided people based on their race. Therefore, an important measure of spatial transformation is to assess the extent to which this has changed. It is also necessary to assess transformation through levels of integration along class and educational attainment lines.
- **Safety and Amenity** – as discussed above, the quality and safety of living environments can be remarkably different. In some areas people are overly exposed to crime, environmental and other risks, whereas in others they are not. This is particularly concerning for lower income households where residential structures may not be sufficiently robust to stand up to rain or flooding. Under apartheid, residential neighbourhoods for black people were purposely neglected, and many of these neighbourhoods do not have recreational areas or other amenities.
- **Agency and Governance** – an important feature of quality living environments is the ability of individuals and households to participate in planning, operational and other issues through meaningful participatory processes. In addition, the way in which an area is governed can have a profound impact on its liveability.
- **Employment, Economic empowerment and Skills** – at the core of inequality is the lack of financial resources and the ability to change socio-economic status. This is a central issue that must be addressed in addition to the above.

Current delivery trends perpetuate poor locations spatial targeting, fragmentation and inefficient low densities



EXAMPLE WHERE SPLUMA PROVISIONS CAN BE USED TO ADDRESS SPATIAL SEGREGATION

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Mixed development zones made a condition of property development approval



CAUTION: Municipal MPTs should be alert to potential tricks where major infrastructure like roads or railway lines may be used as separators of different tenure classes.

ISSUE: “Segregation can be caused by unregulated property development markets”. If municipalities fail to implement SPLUMA provisions for the adoption of Spatial Development Frameworks, Land Use Schemes and relevant Town Planning By-laws that promote integration and just transition principles they may risk promoting “segmented” housing development, where tenure-groups are **poorly integrated** in the approved development plans and resulting in less or weaker benefits for marginalized/ poor residents. These conditions cannot be left to market to self correct where historic and unjustified “NIMBY (*not in my backyard*) syndrome” is disguised with statements like – tenure mixing result the difficult to sell or rent properties to the market.

SALGA SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION BAROMETER REPORT: KEY FINDINGS

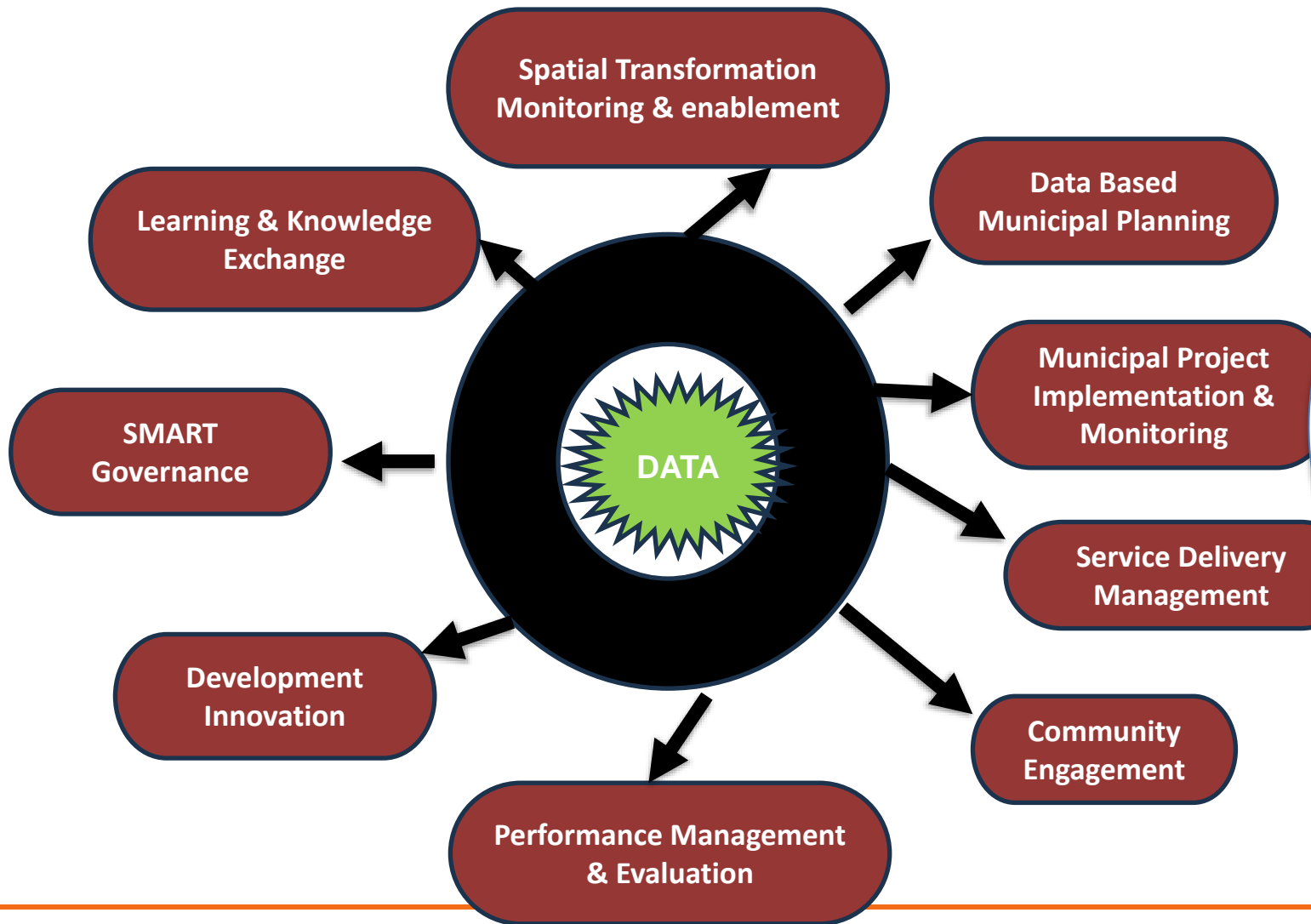


THE SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION BAROMETER PROVIDES:

- A **standardised mechanism** to (1) assess progress in realizing the goal of inclusive and integrated spatial transformation, and (2) identify gaps, problems, and constraints in this regard;
- A **database** to store and record real-time data with which to model predictions on the prospects of such change;
- A **tool** to enable **periodic monitoring and publication of progress** with spatial transformation actions and outcomes;
- A **vehicle for strategic intergovernmental engagement and continuous dialogue** on key planning interventions and policy issues impacting on the (1) actioning, and (2) realisation of spatial transformation imperatives;
- A **suite of ingredients for the establishment of a database** of measurable planning data and information to (1) disseminate, and (2) support municipal planning, plans and programmes aimed at ensuring effective spatial development and integration;
- An **instrument** with which to produce **evidence-based solutions** to spatial transformation challenges in the municipal domain; and
- A **vehicle for peer-learning and engagement** between and across municipalities on spatial transformation actions and outcomes.

SALGA SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION BAROMETER PROGRAM

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“Spatial transformation entails the overhaul of an inherited segregated spatial dispensation and preventing it from re-establishing itself in new forms of post-apartheid class and income-based spatial segregation and spatial inequality.”
SALGA: 2022

In accordance with the approach and focus on both the qualitative ('not-so-spatial') and quantitative dimensions of spatial transformation, the following data-sources were used in the study:



Municipal documentation

including Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), municipal and regional Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs), Local Economic Development (LED) strategies and plans, Housing Plans, Built Environment Performance Plans (BEPPs), District Development Model (DDM) 'One Plans', Annual Performance Reports, municipal budgets and bylaws.



Stats-SA data, newspaper articles and published and unpublished research reports

with a focus on population figures, service provision, settlement development, employment, and economic indicators.



Engagements with municipal officials

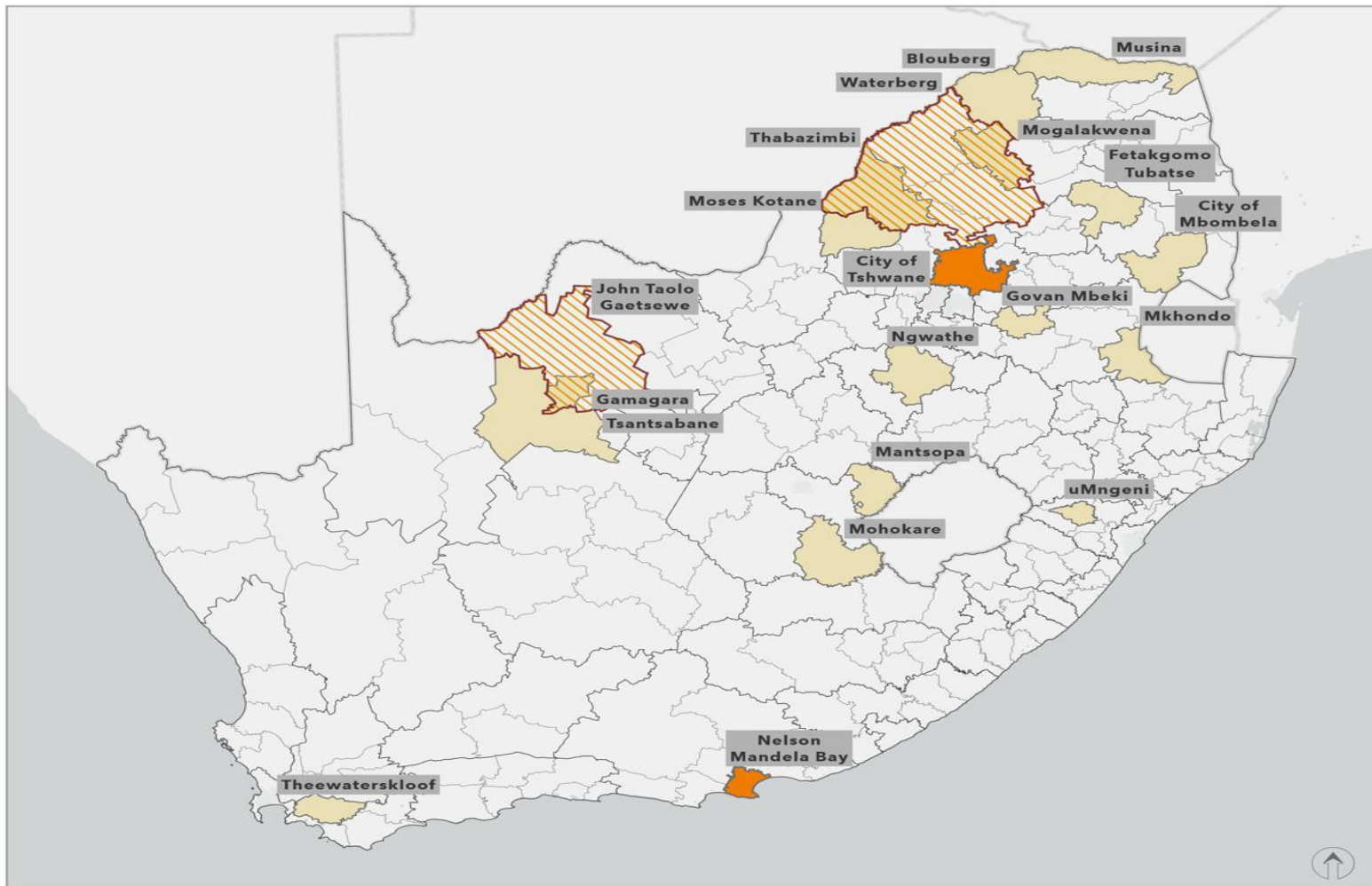
including Municipal Managers and officials tasked with spatial planning, land-use management, integrated development planning, local economic development and engineering services.



Geospatial data

including time-series data on housing development, land-use, land-cover and housing projects. SALGA is currently pursuing relationships with technology partners to acquire access to data gathering tools like ArcGIS, Drones and research networks

Spatial Transformation Barometer: Study Areas



SALGA
SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
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Legend

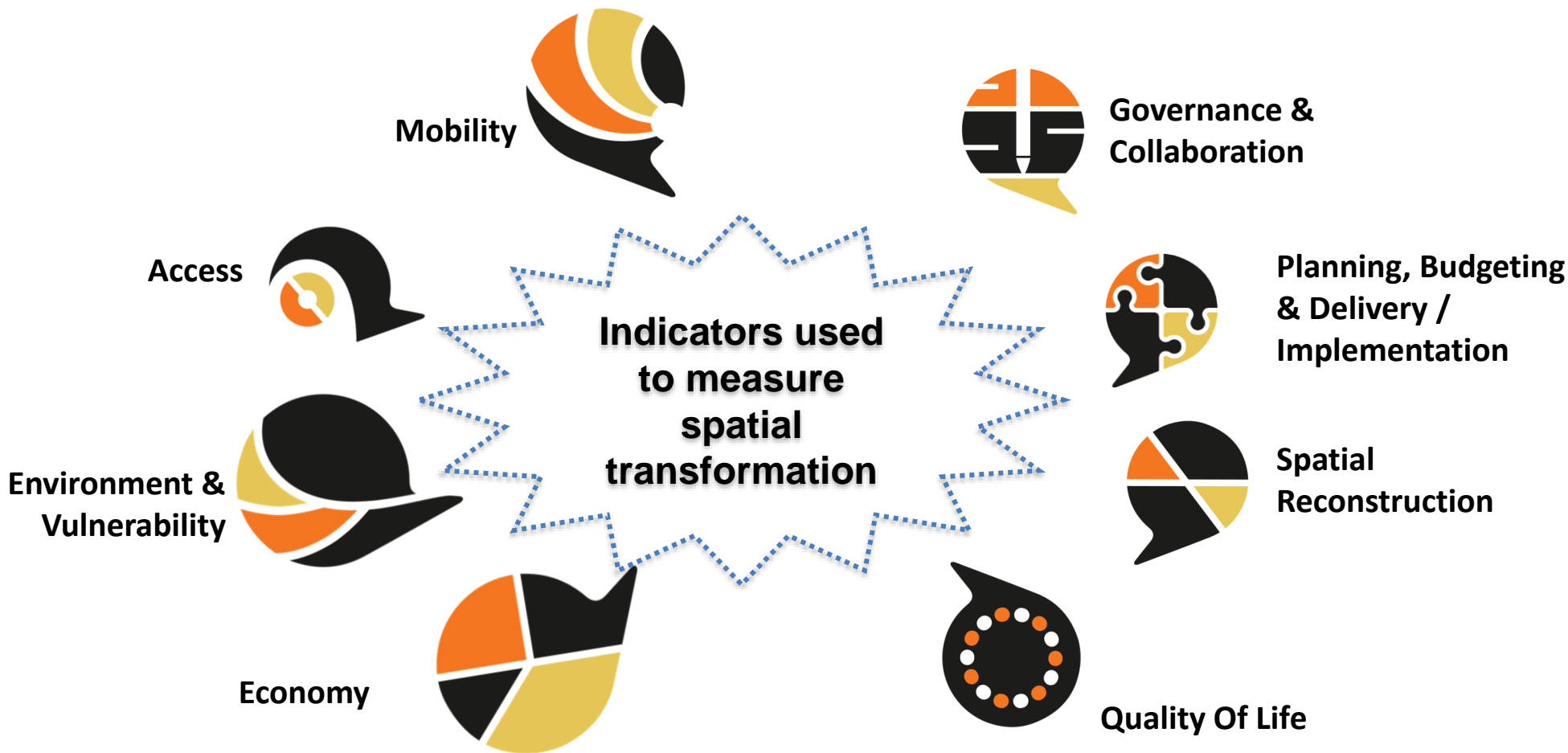
- LocalMunicipalities2018_Final alb
- Metropolitan Municipality
- District Council
- Local Municipality

Sources:
EUP 2023
SALGA 2023

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Kilometers

Coordinate System:
South Africa Albers Equal Area Conic
Date created:
Wednesday, 31 May 2023
Author: willem@mandalagis.co.za

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FINDINGS RELATED TO THE MANIFESTATION OF SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION ON THE GROUND

1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences
2. Persistence of Colonial / Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms
3. Limited Improvement in the Quality of Township and informal Settlement-Life
4. Limited Positive Economic Transition/Change in Townships
5. High Levels of Vulnerability to Crime, Environmental & Economic Shocks
6. Persisting Challenges with Access and Mobility for Township and Informal Area-Residents

EXPLANATIONS/REASONS FOR THE SPATIAL PHENOMENA

7. Inadequate Focus on Spatial Transformation as Priority / Focus Area
8. Lack of Knowledge as to the Meaning/Definition of the Construct of 'Spatial Transformation' and How it is to be Accomplished in Practice
9. Status and Shortages of Professional Planners and GIS Professionals, Huge Workloads and a Lack of 'Complete GIS-Systems'
10. Lack of Funds, Coupled with Dire Economic Times for People and Places

1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences

The historical hunger for land as **(1)** a place to settle, live one's life and 'do as one wishes' on that land – i.e., *to be free*, and/or **(2)** start or run a business to earn a living, or supplement an income, **emerged as one of the most dominant themes in post-Apartheid settlement development and change.** This hunger is playing out in the following ways on the ground:

- In the focus municipalities, it is generally **not playing out** in (1) a **plan-led fashion**, or (2) **in accordance with a classic conception** of densification in 'former white towns', in-fill development in colonial and Apartheid-created 'buffer zones/strips', or the tying/stitching together of 'former white towns/suburbs' and 'former black townships'.
- While it is taking place on land and in space, **it is not about 'spatial justice' per se**, but rather about **'justice' in a much broader sense** – i.e., **the justice of, after/post colonialism and Apartheid**, having the freedom to settle, live and have a place to call one's own.
- This results in the following **trends**:
 1. Settlement on traditional lands where inhabitants can get a Permission to Occupy (TTO) through a once-off payment;
 2. Focussing on assisting people to get access to land rather than pursuing 'spatial transformation of the Apartheid/colonial town'; and
 3. Using land invasion as a faster and more certain lever to access land.

1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences (continued)

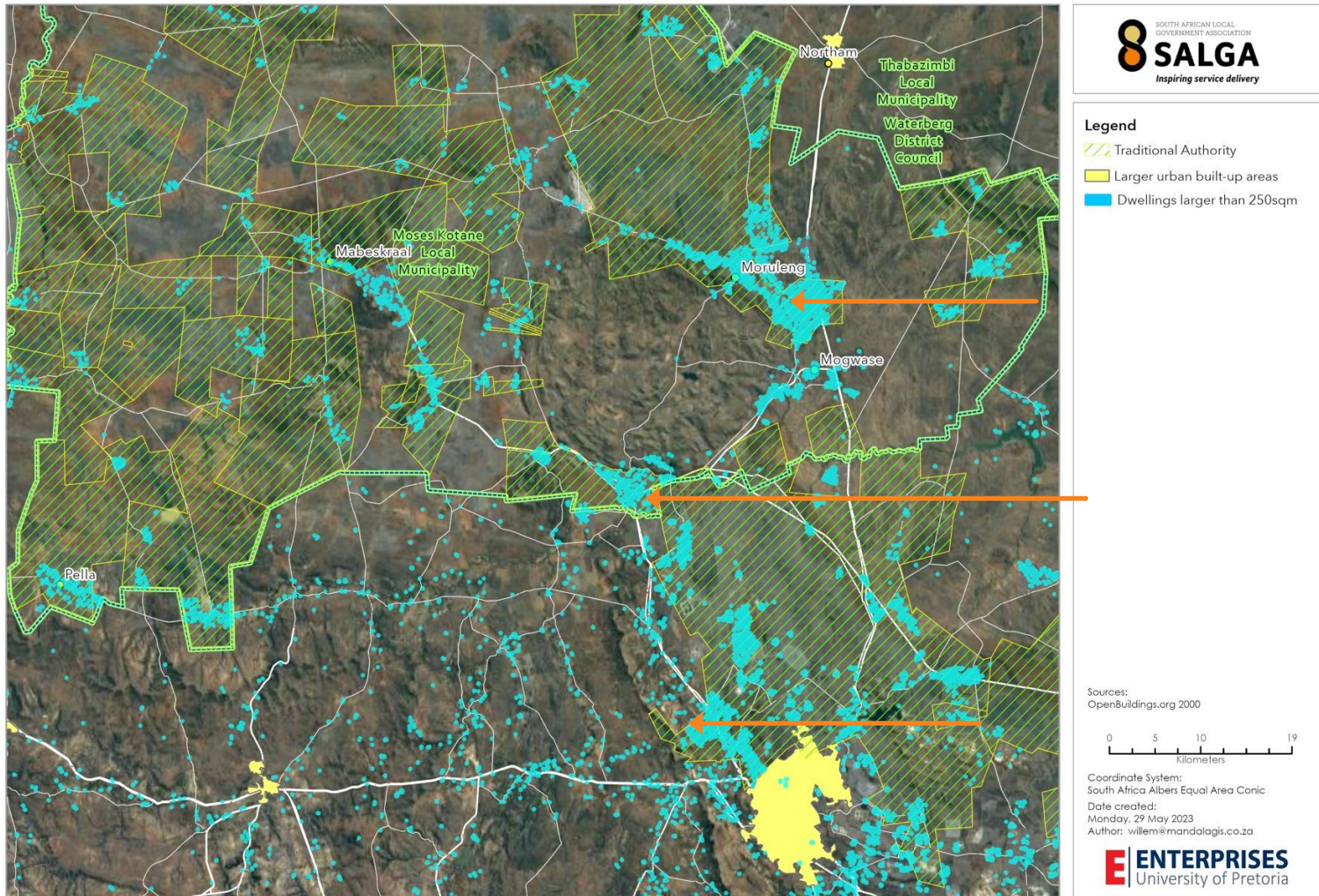
1. Settlement on Traditional Lands:

- A significant number of people are **building sizeable dwellings (larger than 250 m²) on traditional authority lands** where they can get a PTO through a once-off payment, and not on freehold stands where they (1) are bound by zoning and building regulations/codes, and (2) must pay monthly municipal rates and taxes.



1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences (continued)

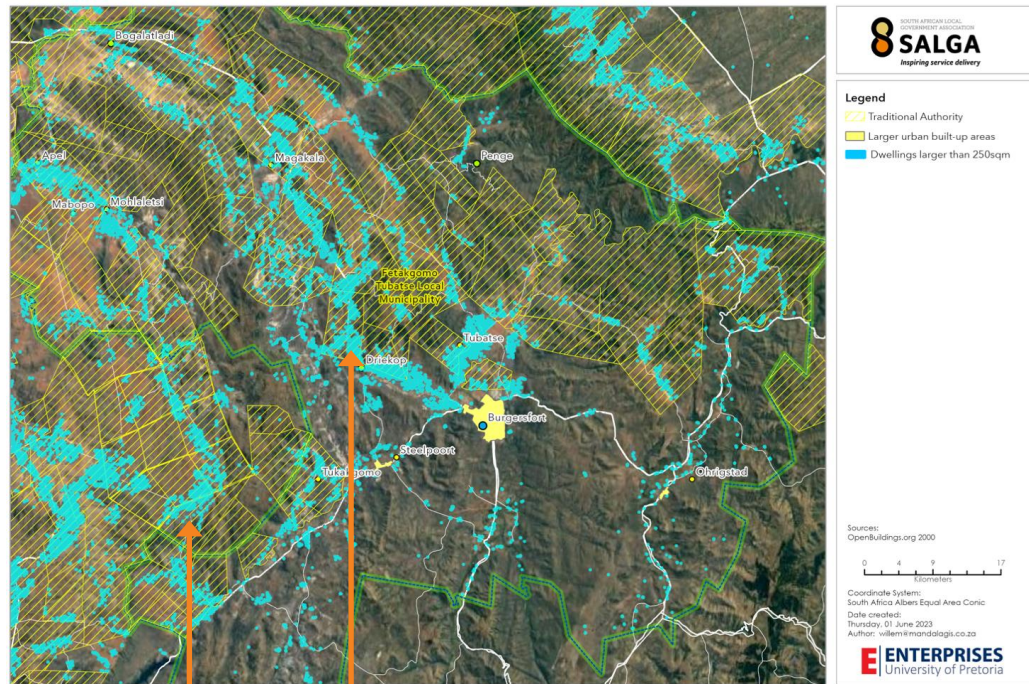
Spatial Transformation Barometer: Large dwellings in Traditional Authority and Rural Areas - Moses Kotane LM



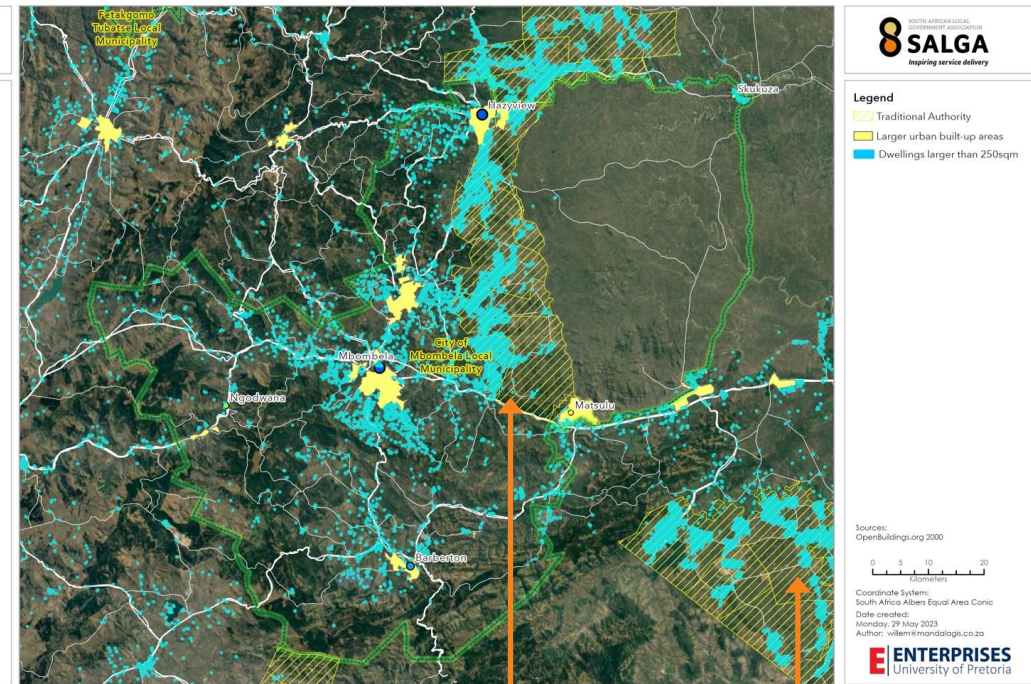
The image to the left clearly shows the overlap of dwellings larger than 250m² and Traditional Authority land in the Moses Kotane LM.

1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences (continued)

Spatial Transformation Barometer: Large dwellings in Traditional Authority and Rural Areas - Fetakgomo-Tubatse LM



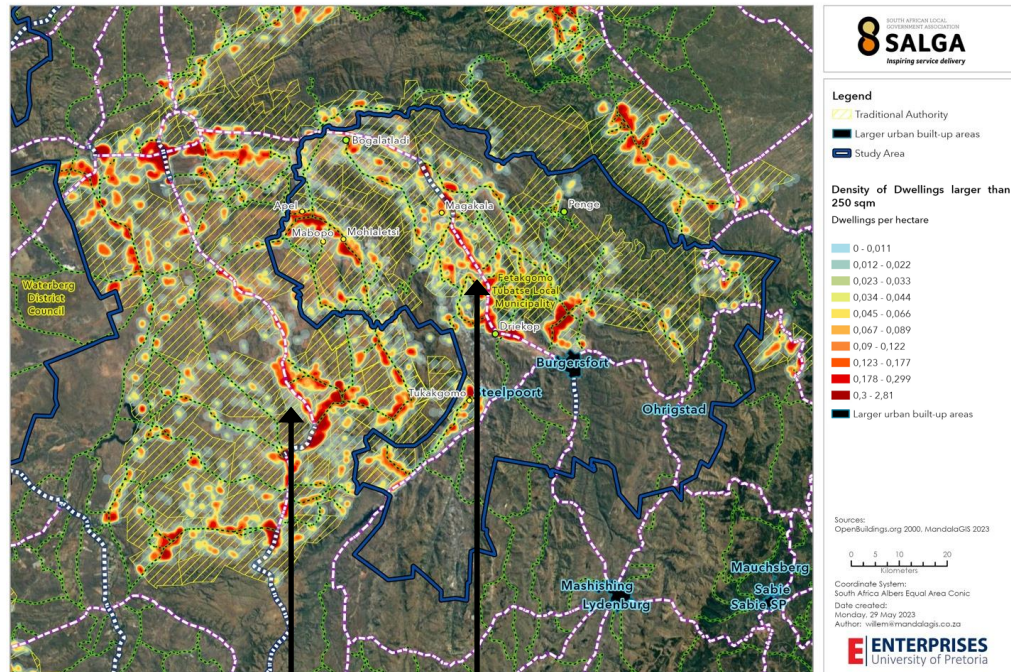
Spatial Transformation Barometer: Large dwellings in Traditional Authority and Rural Areas - City of Mbombela LM



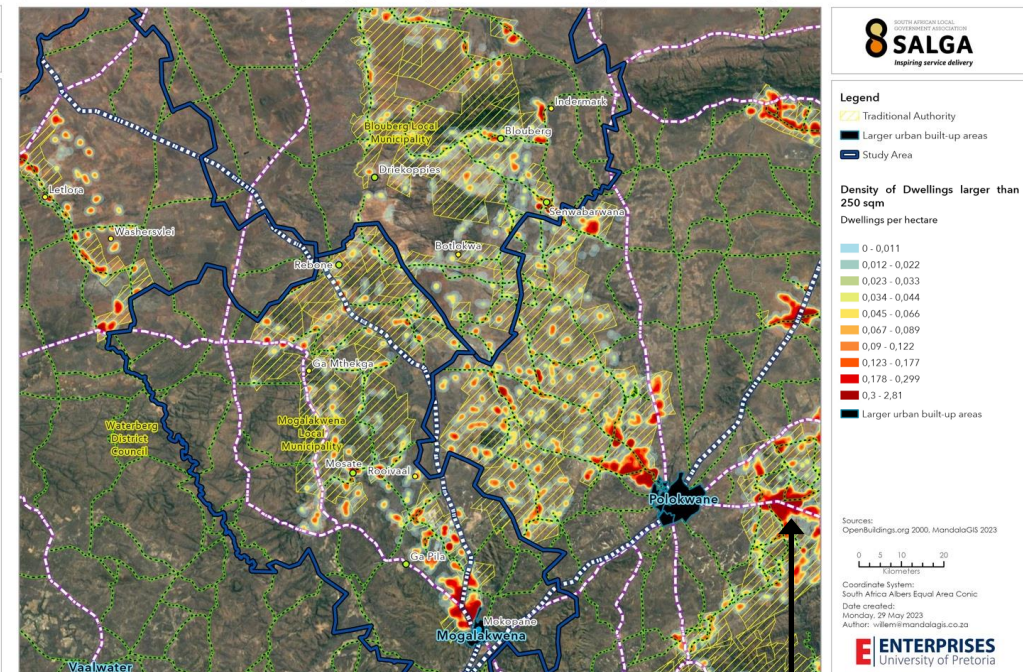
Overlap of dwellings larger than 250m² and Traditional Authority land in the City of Mbombela LM.

1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences (continued)

Spatial Transformation Barometer: Density of large dwellings in Traditional Authority and Rural Areas - Fetakgomo Tubatse LM



Spatial Transformation Barometer: Density of large dwellings in Traditional Authority and Rural Areas - Mogalakwena LM



Clear higher density of dwellings larger than 250m² on Traditional Authority land, generally along the main road systems.

1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences (continued)

2. Tendency is to focus on Access to Land, without clear strategy for Spatial Transformation:

- Focus on pushing for people **in getting access to land** than try to pursue ‘spatial transformation of the Apartheid city/colonial town’.
- **NIMBYism** renders spatial transformation, in particular on brownfield sites, a difficult and drawn-out process, and **makes new settlement development/expansion** – including that of middle-income housing – on greenfield sites, typically **further away from town centres, more attractive**.
- Any land will do, although better/well-located land would be preferred, but getting and keeping such better/well-located land is much harder and time-consuming.
- As such, the **unplanned, incremental ‘allocation’ of state/municipal land** to communities, often also **works against longer-term, comprehensive planned and serviced spatial transformation**.

1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences (continued)

3. Use of Land Invasion has grown Faster and more prevalent mechanisms to access land albeit unlawful:

- In the **absence of land audits**, their publication, and/or their use in undertaking proactive planning, land that is better/well-located in terms of access and amenity, is also not identified for settlement.
- Instead, **communities are seeing first-hand that land invasion is a much faster and more certain** lever of access to land in many municipalities **than to wait for the their turn in the que.**
- Given the **sheer scale of movement of people into** larger cities and towns and the lack of proactive land-identification, allocation and planning, land invasion becomes an attractive recourse available to new urban dwellers.
- According to interviewees in the pilot municipalities, the **slow progress with the redistribution of land in South Africa**, coupled with socio-economic factors such as poverty, high unemployment, rapid urbanisation, lack of housing, local politicking, and population growth have also fuelled this phenomenon.

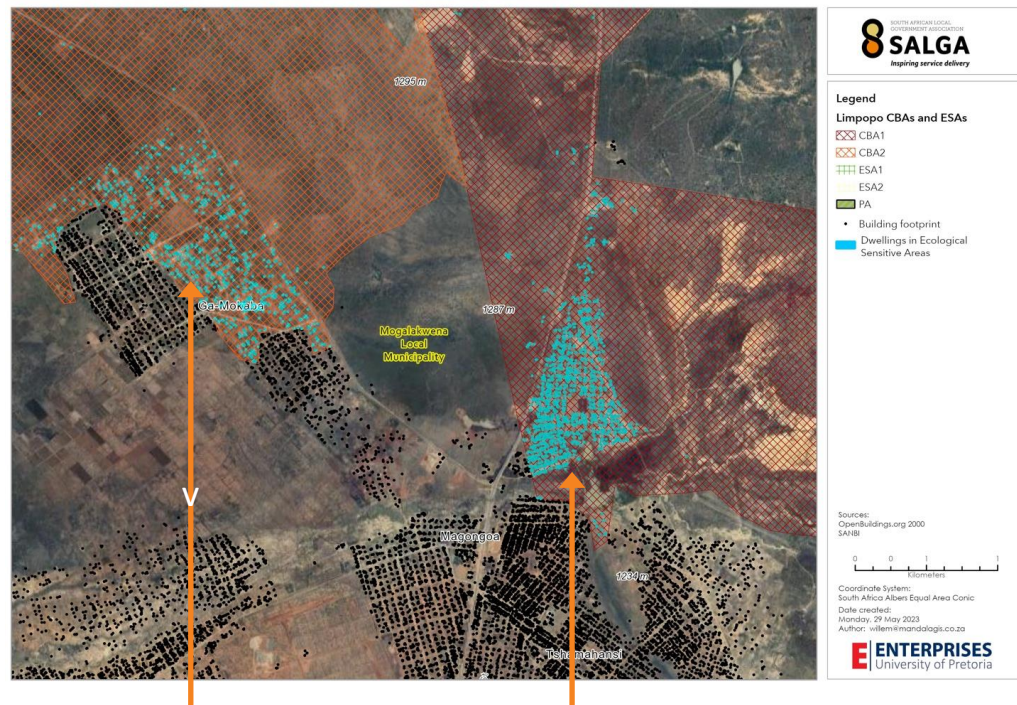
1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences (continued)

Consequences of Settlement on Traditional Land and Unauthorised Land Occupations

- The phenomena have led to serious concerns about:
 1. The provision of water, sanitation/sewerage, stormwater and refuse-removal services and electricity to the dwellings built on these lands;
 2. A number of issues, ranging from (1) public health, (2) infrastructure provision, maintenance and upgrading, and (3) municipal financial viability, to emergency services and disaster management and mediation-planning; and
 3. Settlement on land that is environmentally sensitive, or where such lands provide key ecosystem services, such as surface water generation, or where such settlement threatens groundwater sources.
- Engagements in several of the focus municipalities indicated that they are seeking to manage these trends, with some faring better than others. Examples were given of where municipalities had been engaging with Traditional Authorities and (1) agreements were reached as to where settlement should take place and where not on traditional lands, and (2) spatial development plans for settlement on such lands (i.e., a 'Traditional Area Settlement Master Plans'), including the identification of nodes, were jointly prepared and adopted.

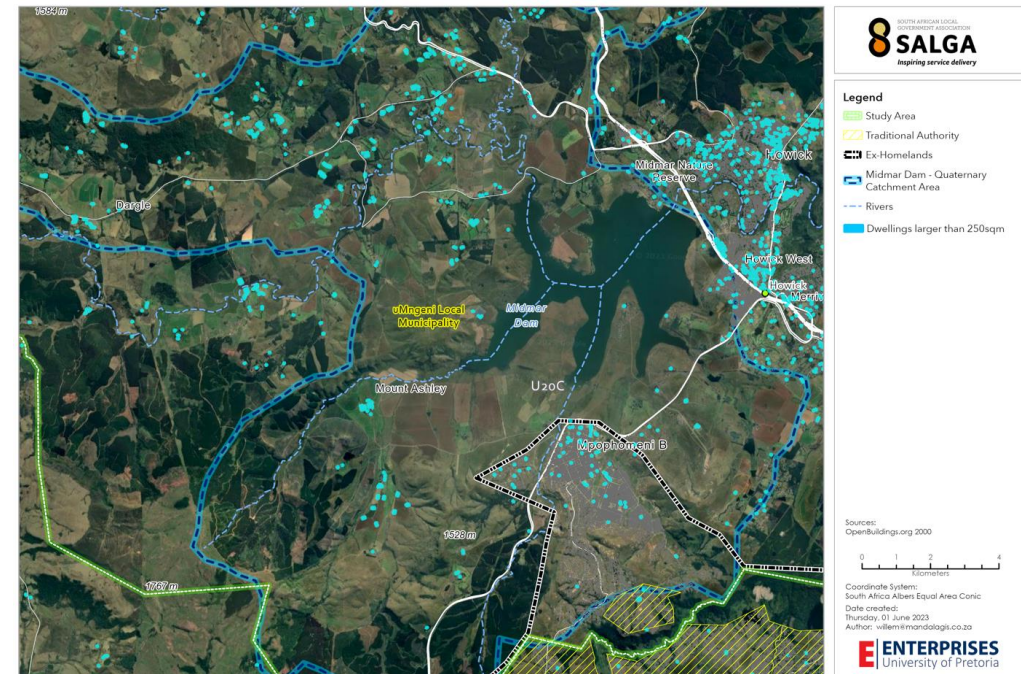
1. Hunger for Land, Responses and Consequences (continued)

Spatial Transformation Barometer: Settlements in Ecological Sensitive Areas - Mogalakwena LM - Ga-Mokaba



Settlements in **Critical Biodiversity** and **Ecological Support Areas** in Mogalakwena LM. These areas perform important ecological services and should ideally be left in their natural state to function optimally.

Spatial Transformation Barometer: Large dwellings in Midmar Dam Quaternary Catchment - uMngeni LM



Settlement **without connection to the municipal water and sewerage system** around the Midmar dam that is a crucial source of water in the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

2. Persistence of Colonial and Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms

Although integration is steadily happening in all municipalities engaged with, Apartheid settlement patterns tend to persist due to:



Income inequalities;



Human-made and natural buffers limiting integration of settlements; and



A focus on immediate needs rather than longer term spatial reconstruction.

2. Persistence of Colonial and Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms (continued)

1. Income Inequalities and Racial Segregation:

- Significant racial integration has **taken place in 'town/the suburbs'**, but **not in the 'townships'**.
- **New housing development** – whether formal or informal – in the lower to lower-middle income brackets is, **taking place further from town centres** instead of drawing closer.
- Segregation and separation in **terms of income** is still observed to be a dominant feature of most municipalities. In many cases, the **huge income inequalities between white and black residents** meant that racial segregation is persisting.
 - In some cases, notably municipalities with larger settlements, **densification, especially along pre-determined corridors** has taken place within **the 'former white town/suburban' parts** of municipalities.
 - This was generally targeted at **middle to higher income development**, and as such did not really provide avenues for lower-income communities into these spaces.
 - Some municipalities **encountered NIMBY-driven challenges** in their pursuit of 'middle-to-higher-income densification' from surrounding communities and rate-payers' associations. This resistance was **more of a class/income than a racial nature**, suggesting that the racial integration in 'former white town/suburban areas' was no guarantee for an easier route for spatial transformation endeavours targeting lower-income communities in such areas in future.

2. Persistence of Colonial and Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms (continued)

2. Human-made and Natural Buffers Limiting Integration of Settlements

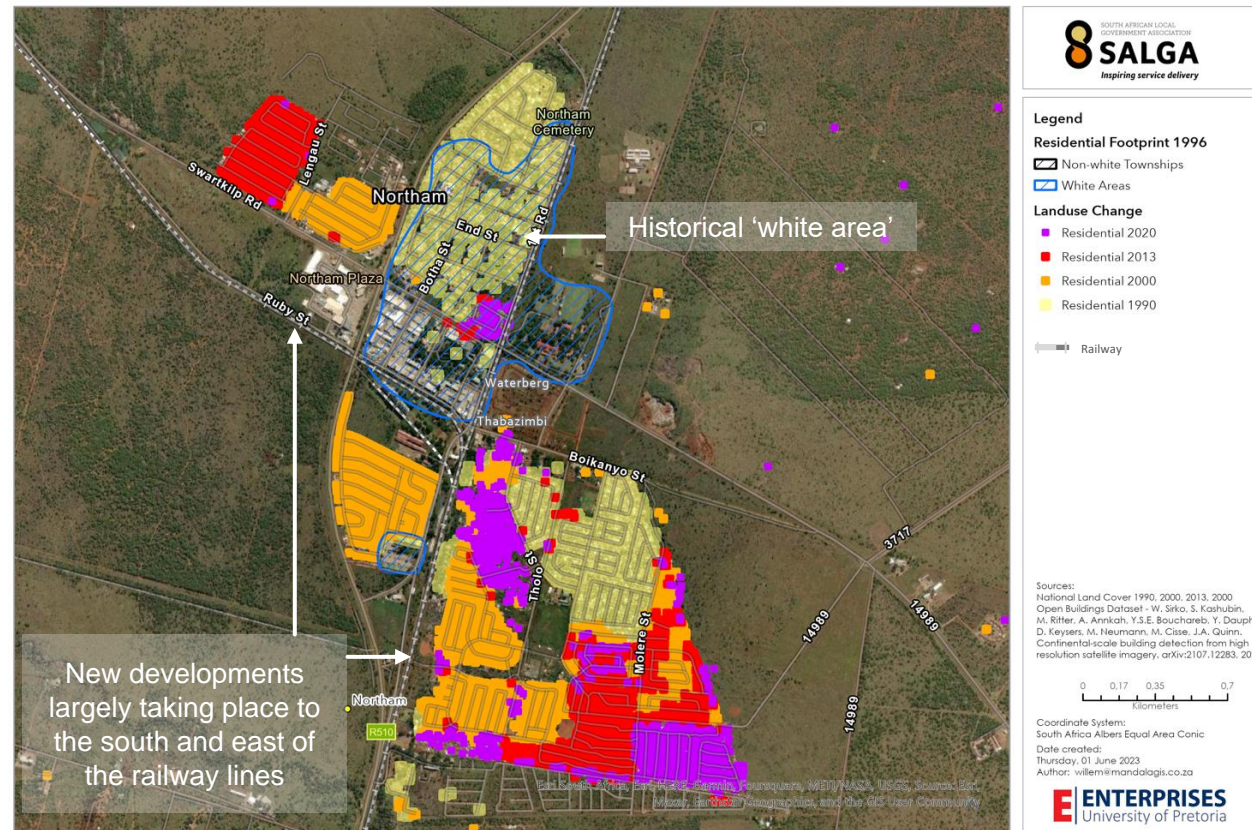
- In many cases **the 'practical stitching together of segregated spaces'**, i.e., the 'townships' and 'town/the suburbs' is difficult and expensive due to their **separation** by:
 1. **Human-made features**, such as highways, railways, shunting yards and derelict industrial sites; and
 2. **Natural buffers** such as dongas, riverbeds and wetlands.

3. Tendency to focus on Immediate Needs Rather than Spatial Reconstruction

- Officials in the pilot municipalities observed **that the immediate needs** of informal area-upgrading, poverty alleviation and job growth **received far more attention** than the pursuit of spatial reconstruction.
- Despite the emphasis on these matters, **officials expressed their reservations** about the ability of their municipalities to change the economic fortunes of communities within their areas of jurisdiction.

2. Persistence of Colonial and Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms (continued)

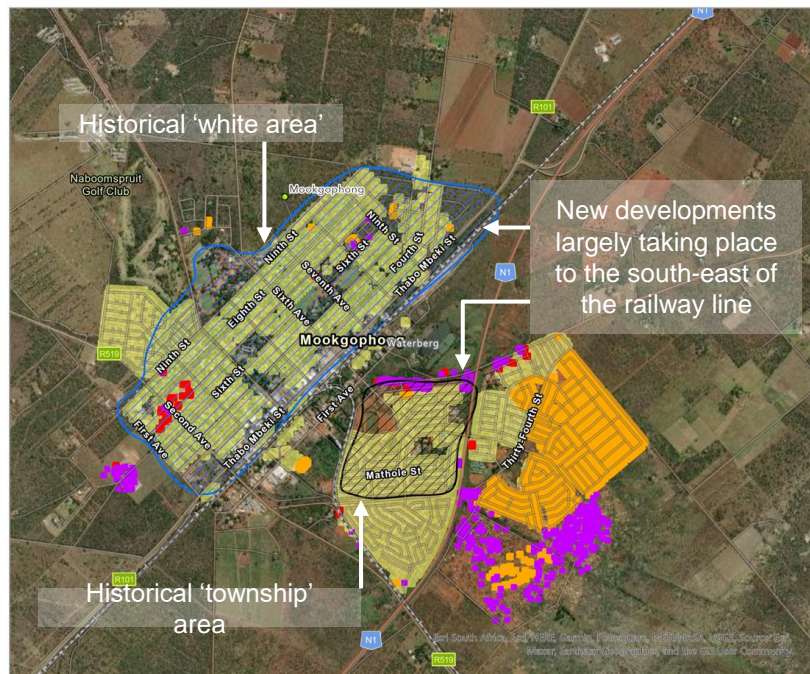
Spatial Transformation Barometer: **Northam**



In Northam, the railway lines break the settlement in four sections, and creates a huge barrier to spatial integration.

2. Persistence of Colonial and Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms (continued)

Spatial Transformation Barometer: **Mookgophong**



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Residential Footprint 1996

- Non-white Townships
- White Areas

Landuse Change

- Residential 2020
- Residential 2013
- Residential 2000
- Residential 1990

Railway

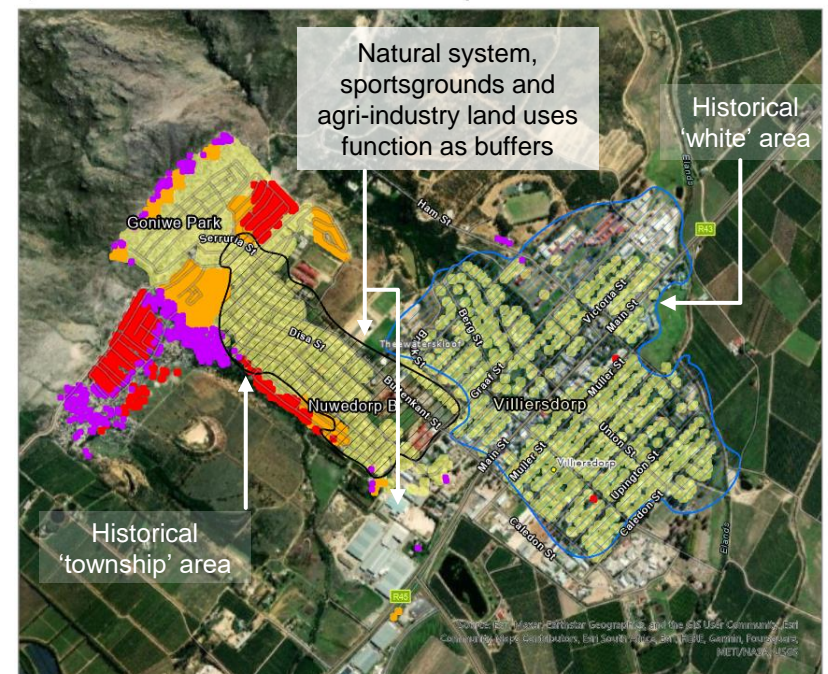
Sources:
National Land Cover 1990, 2000, 2013, 2020
Open Buildings Dataset - W. Sika, S. Kopolu, M. Riller, A. Amriakh, Y.S.E. Bouchareb, Y. Dauphin, D. Keyers, M. Neumann, H. Clae, J.A. Quinn, Continental-scale building detection from high resolution satellite imagery. arXiv:2107.12283, 2021.

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Kilometers

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Date created:
Thursday, 01 June 2023
Author: willem@mondagi.co.za

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Spatial Transformation Barometer: **Villiersdorp**



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Legend

Residential Footprint 1996

- Non-white Townships
- White Areas

Landuse Change

- Residential 2020
- Residential 2013
- Residential 2000
- Residential 1990

Sources:
National Land Cover 1990, 2000, 2013, 2020
Open Buildings Dataset - W. Sika, S. Kopolu, M. Riller, A. Amriakh, Y.S.E. Bouchareb, Y. Dauphin, D. Keyers, M. Neumann, H. Clae, J.A. Quinn, Continental-scale building detection from high resolution satellite imagery. arXiv:2107.12283, 2021.

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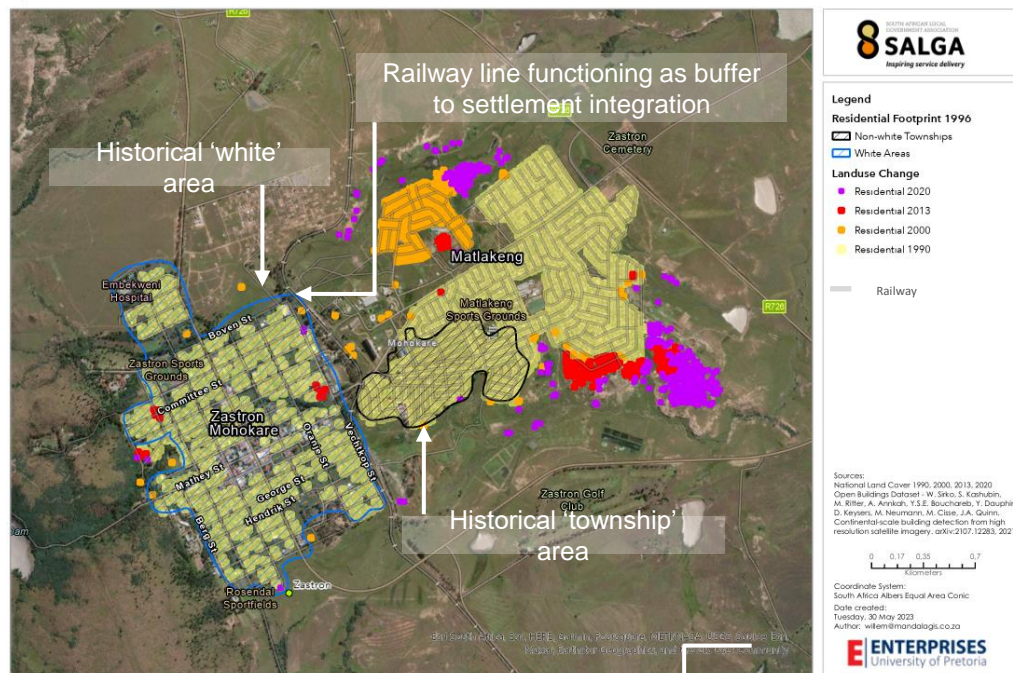
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Date created:
Tuesday, 30 May 2023
Author: willem@mondagi.co.za

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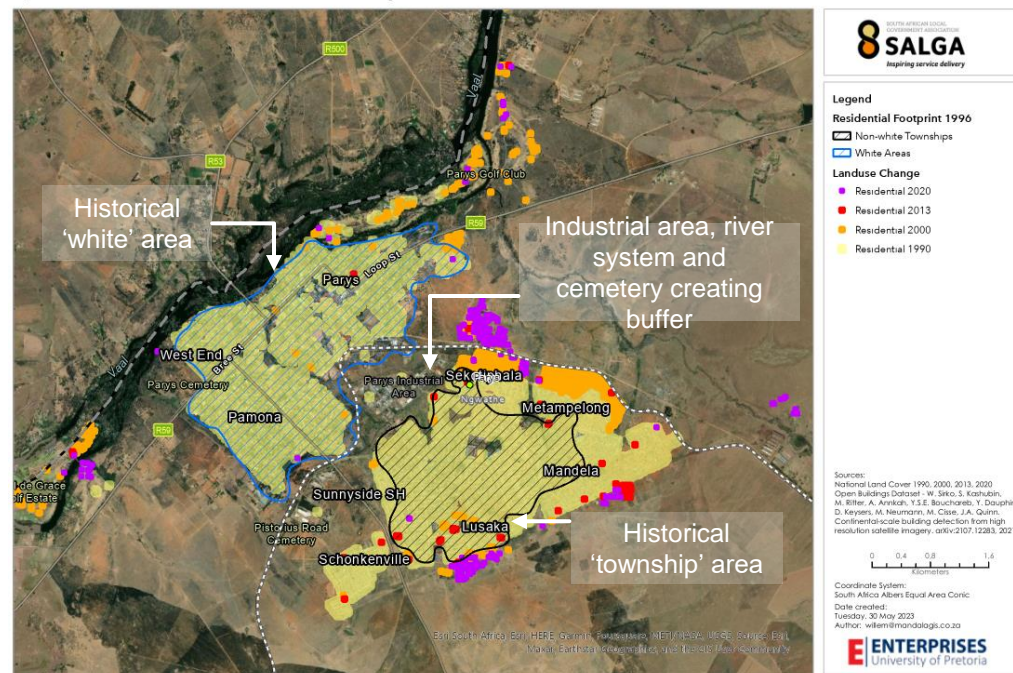
Natural and human-made buffers posing serious challenges to the integration of settlements.

2. Persistence of Colonial and Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms (continued)

Spatial Transformation Barometer: **Zastron-Mohokare**



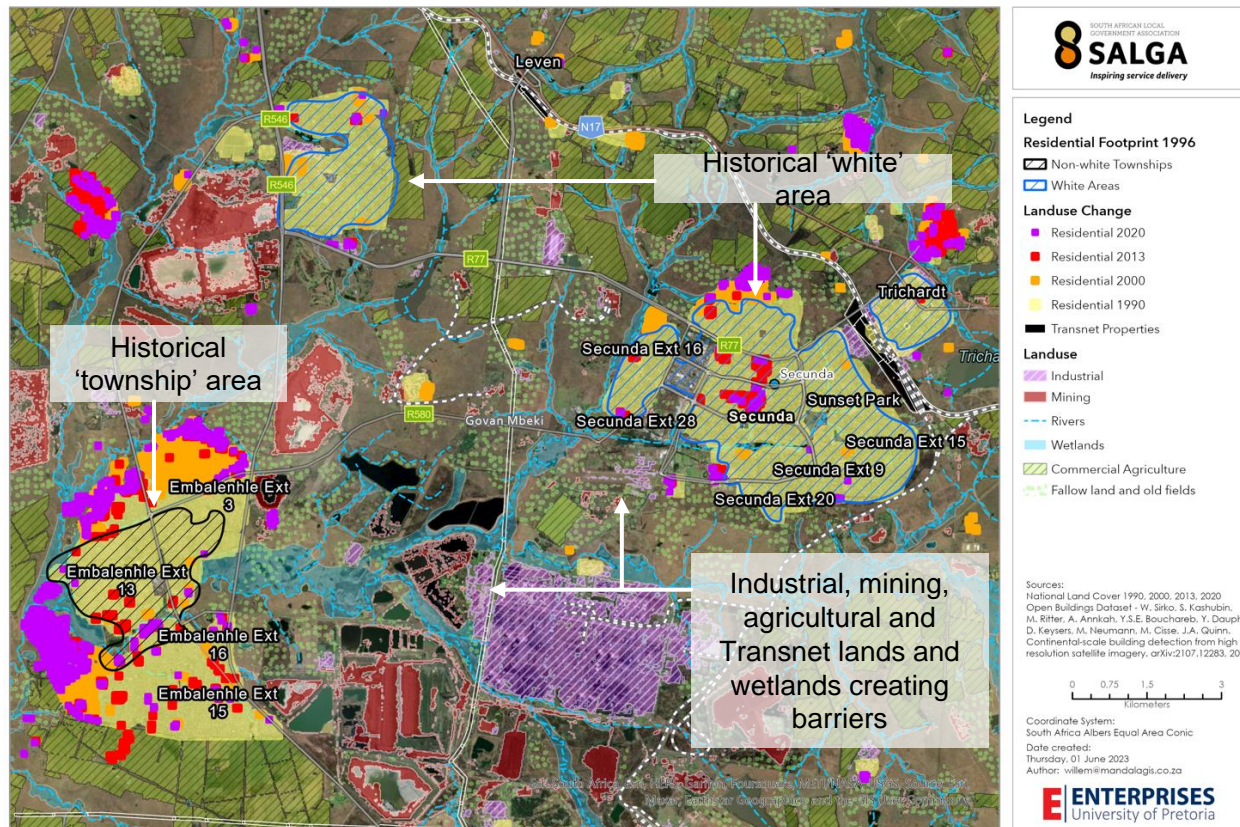
Spatial Transformation Barometer: **Parys**



Natural and human-made buffers posing serious challenges to the integration of settlements.

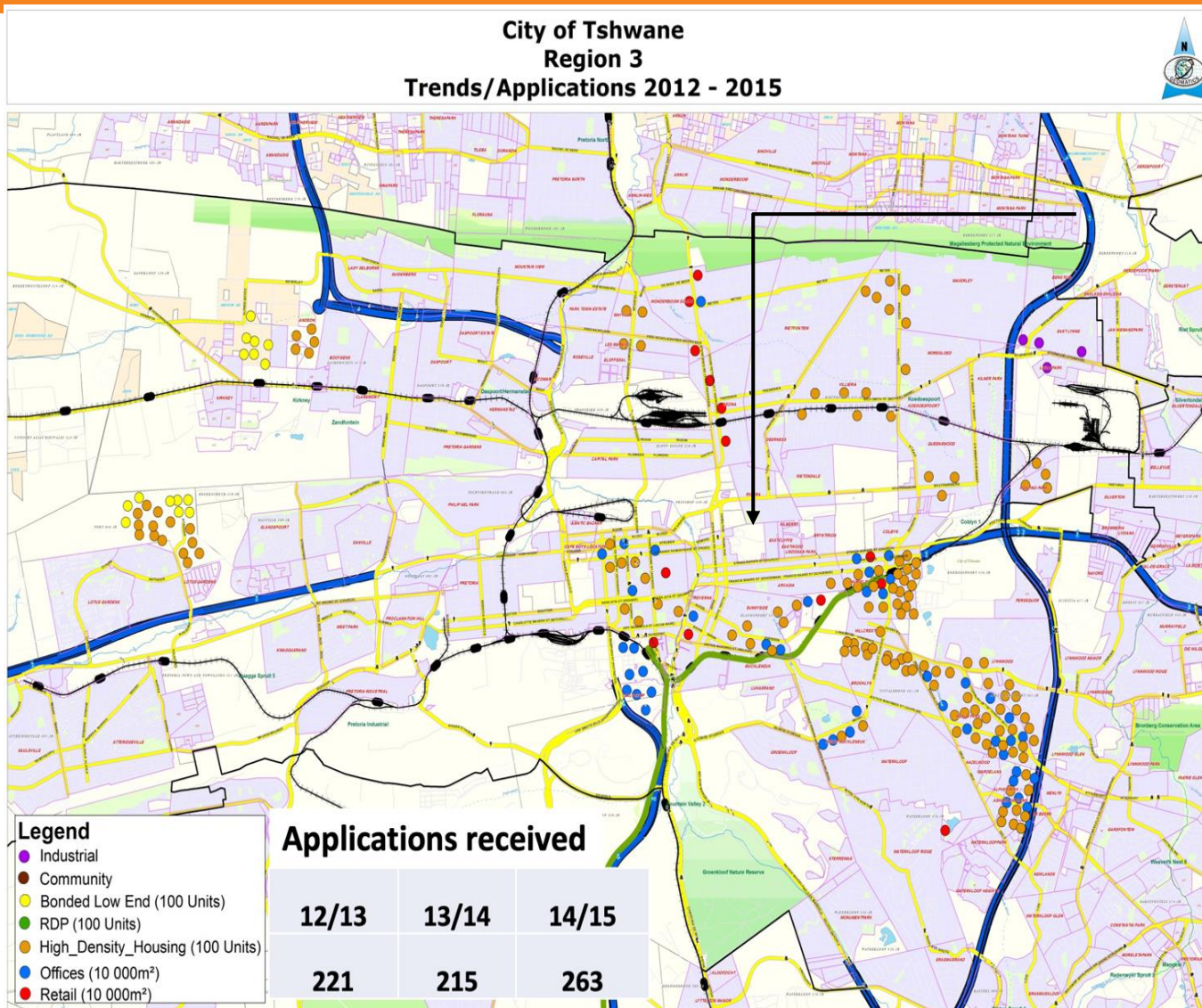
2. Persistence of Colonial and Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms (continued)

Spatial Transformation Barometer: **Secunda**



The town of Secunda has a large range of land uses and natural features which makes integration of the historically 'white' and 'township' areas near impossible: Commercial agriculture, wetlands, mining, industrial land uses, and Transnet land can be found between the two areas.

2. Persistence of Colonial and Apartheid Settlement Patterns and Forms (continued)



- In municipalities with larger settlements, **densification, especially along pre-determined corridors** has taken place within the ‘former white town/suburban’ parts of municipalities.
- This was generally **targeted at middle to higher-income development**, and as such did not really provide avenues for lower-income communities into these spaces. Part of this problem can be attributed to under-regulated Property Development Markets

3. Limited Improvement in the Quality of Township and Informal Settlement Life

Limited Improvement in the Quality of Life in Townships and Informal Settlements on Several Levels:



Basic Services: Townships by and large still suffer from inadequate and unreliable basic service provision in the areas of electricity/energy, water, sanitation/sewerage and stormwater services and roads.



Entertainment: Most townships are still far behind town/the suburbs in terms of the kind of amenities they have, with taverns still the most common form of entertainment in townships.



Public Spaces: Parks and sporting grounds, are generally still not provided in townships, and where they are, they are in most cases not well maintained and often derelict and dangerous, which renders their use limited.



Streetlights: As is increasingly also the case in town/the suburbs, streetlights are not a common sight in townships, with the high-mast lighting of the Apartheid era still the most dominant form of public light at night.

3. Limited Improvement in the Quality of Township and Informal Settlement Life (continued)

Limited improvement in the Quality of Life in Townships and Informal Settlements on Several Levels:

Security of Tenure: As measured by the issuing of title deeds, this has also not shown much improvement, and is in most municipalities **still lagging far behind** the formalisation/provision of erven/properties.



This backlog persists, despite several municipalities having involved private companies and Nonprofit Organisations (NPOs) to assist them in this pursuit. Officials indicated that although public-private partnerships exist in areas such as social housing, whereby the quantity and quality of housing in townships can be improved, **there seems to be a lack of consideration or incentives for creating ‘quality neighbourhoods’** by providing places of entertainment and leisure which would enable a move away from the historic character of townships as monotonous, one-size-fits-all, dormitory settlements.

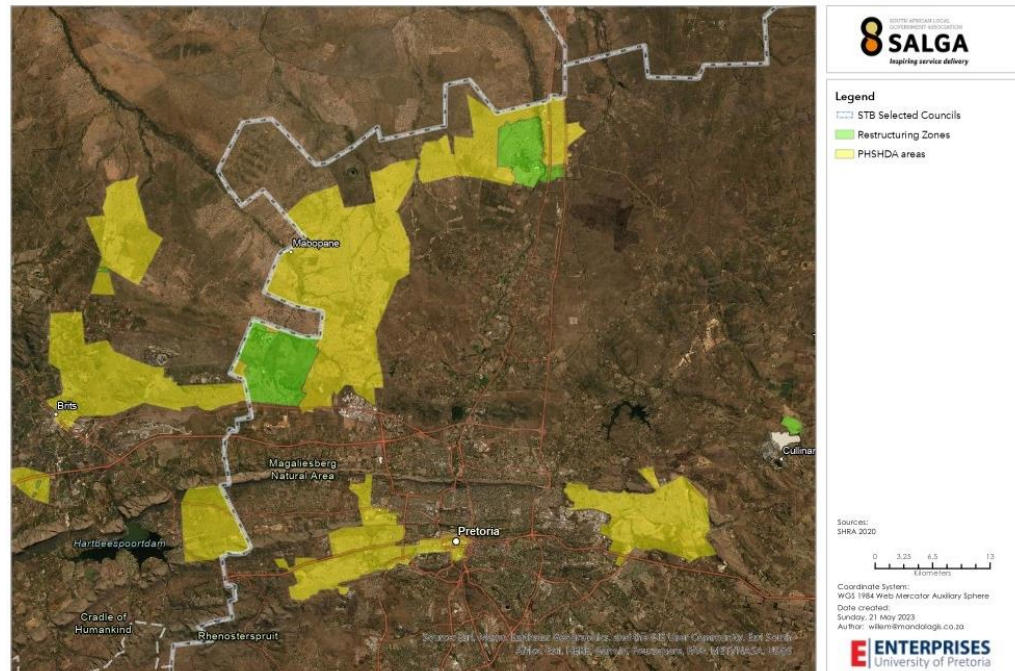
3. Limited Improvement in the Quality of Township and Informal Settlement Life (continued)

State Activities and Functions:

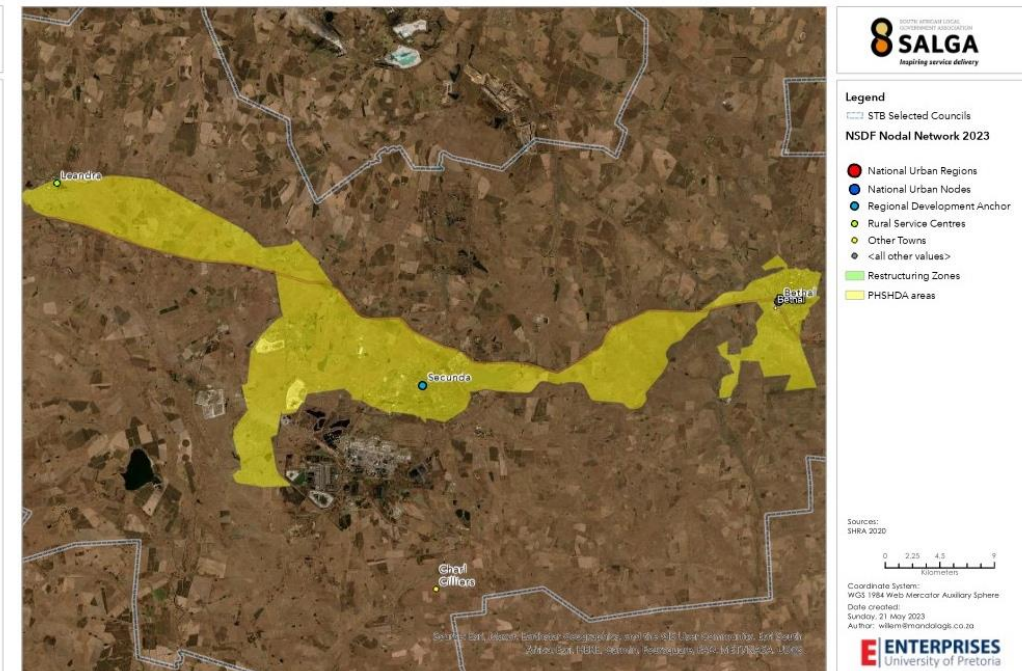
- Even though **provincial sector departments** seldomly participate in municipal planning exercises (i.e., in the preparation and review of IDPs and SDFs) despite the legal requirements to this effect, they generally do provide facilities and services **in accordance with SDFs (in nodes)** where they have the funds to do so, and in the process improve the quality of life in townships. However, lack of funds means that **far less facilities are built, and fewer services provided** than are needed by communities.
- In the case of **housing provision**, it was observed that while the **spatial targeting** introduced through initiatives like the **Priority Human Settlements and Housing Development Areas (PHSHDAs) and the Restructuring Zones** was welcomed, as were the plots/erven and housing units that were formalised/provided in them, their large zonal size/'spatial footprint' vis-à-vis the often relatively small number of units allocated within them, meant that **housing was not always provided at the more localised/ precinct level in the areas that the municipalities would like them to be.**
- **Size of erven** turned out to be an **interesting matter of contestation**: In some municipalities **the 'small size of erven/plots'** in provincial housing schemes were seen by spatial planners as (1) an indignity to communities, and (2) an important driver in the pursuit of 'house-building in traditional areas'. Accordingly, these officials wanted to see the small plot/erf sizes in 'post-Apartheid RDP housing schemes' increased. In others, the prevailing erf/plot sizes were seen as (1) **too large** and leading to unserviceable and unsustainable settlement forms, and (2) limiting the proximity and access to scarce public services (e.g., health care, education, and policy services). Attempts at subdivision of such plots/erven, it was pointed out, were however (1) not welcomed by councillors, and (2) met with resistance from communities.

3. Limited Improvement in the Quality of Township and Informal Settlement Life (continued)

Spatial Transformation Barometer: PSHDA Areas and Restructuring Zones - City of Tshwane



Spatial Transformation Barometer: PSHDA Areas and Restructuring Zones - Secunda



The large zonal size/‘spatial footprint’ of PSHDAs and Restructuring Zones vis-à-vis the often relatively small number of units allocated within them, meant that housing was not always provided at the more localised/ precinct level in the areas that the municipalities would like them to be.

3. Limited Improvement in the Quality of Township and Informal Settlement Life (continued)

Mining Regions:

- In **municipalities with strong mining economies**, it was noted that **large mining companies**, whether through their Social and Labour Plans (SLPs) or their Corporate Social Investments (CSIs) were **making a huge contribution** in improving/enhancing the quality of life in these towns.
- Officials in such municipalities **generally spoke highly** of (1) the ease with which mining companies could procure crucial services and materials, (2) their ability to work throughout municipalities, and not only in areas specified in for instance government grants, and (3) their willingness to assist, including through the provision of hands-on professional services in areas such as planning, engineering and finances.
- These positive attributes/qualities were **in many cases contrasted** with those provided or offered by municipalities, as well as the provincial and national spheres of government.
- Despite all the good that was done, this was, however, (1) **in most cases not seen as nearly enough** to address the enormous challenges these municipalities are facing, and (2) not as doing enough in **the eyes of local communities** in terms of jobs and service provision and supplier-contracts for local enterprises at the mines.

3. Limited Improvement in the Quality of Township and Informal Settlement Life (continued)

Mining Regions:

- Reservations were expressed about **the contribution that small(er) mining companies should be making but often were not**, and therefore, were seen by some as contributing less than they were consuming in mining towns and regions.
- Serious concerns were expressed about **the 'life after mining'**, especially so given the **uncertainties around the future intensions and expansion and closure plans of mining companies**. In many interviews the ability of 'mining municipalities' to survive once the larger mines had gone, or mining had stopped altogether, was questioned.
- As for **planning by municipalities for this 'after-life'**, **very few examples** could be found.

4. Limited Positive Economic Transition / Change in Townships

ECONOMIC CHANGE IN TOWNSHIPS

In most of the municipalities, officials observed that:

1. They did not see the economic conditions of **township residents** as having experienced significant change since 1994; and
2. **Township economies** have shown very little change in terms of growth/expansion, or a diversification of opportunities.

The only significant changes that were highlighted with regards to townships economies were:

1. The **rental market**, primarily in the form of backyard shack development;
2. **Mall** developments; and
3. The introduction of **foreign-owned spaza shops and small supermarkets**.

LIMITATIONS TO ECONOMIC CHANGE

The main contributors to job losses and economic despair were flagged as:

- The COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Load-shedding

Investors, whether from the townships or elsewhere, by and large still opt for development in the ‘former white town’, which limits the establishment and expansion of businesses in townships. Officials highlighted the following as contributing to this historical spatial development trend:

- A scarcity of large enough plots/erven in townships; and
- The lack of adequate and reliable water and electrical services in townships to service non-residential activities/developments.

4. Limited Positive Economic Transition / Change in Townships (continued)

Challenges Experienced by Municipal Officials:

- Municipal officials by and large indicated that **they wanted to** (1) **address the huge unemployment challenges** township-communities face, and (2) **contribute to healing the glaring historical inequalities** in their municipalities but **lacked the budget/funds** to do so.
- The hard economic times that most township residents still face has also contributed to **moving spatial transformation ever lower down the priority ladder**, despite it offering **huge potential for structurally and systemically attending** to many of the economic challenges that township residents face.
- **Indigent registers** solicited interesting discussions, with many officials indicating that these registers did not reflect the true levels of poverty in their municipalities and were **out of sync** with the number of grant recipients in their areas of jurisdiction. **Administrative burdens, lack of transport money and high levels of in-migration** – many of which is perceived to be undocumented – were seen as **key contributors** to this mismatch.

5. High Levels of Vulnerability to Crime and Environmental and Economic Shocks

Municipalities generally do not do well in assisting vulnerable groups, with communities living in townships and villages, and especially the ones furthest away from the 'main town', suffering from the highest levels of vulnerability to environmental and economic stresses:



Crime: Which is a major concern in municipalities and has become ever more prevalent as the economy has entered a difficult period, is especially detrimental to already vulnerable communities. This, it emerged in the engagements, was particularly prevalent in municipalities bordering on neighbouring countries where cross-border crime has become a huge problem.



Disasters: While officials noted that municipalities are mindful of the disasters their areas are prone to, and plans have been prepared to mitigate these, they also raised concerns as to their ability to implement them, given funding constraints from provinces and national government, particularly in cases of drought. A lack of Disaster Management Units, vehicles, equipment and staff were also mentioned as huge challenges in giving effect to the principle of 'spatial justice' insofar as attending to disasters in township areas and far-off, rural settlements was concerned.



Disability: With regards to persons with disabilities and the pursuit of 'universal access' in spatial planning and design, officials expressed an appreciation for the need of it, but highlighted that it was a difficult issue for them to pursue given the huge needs and backlogs confronting their municipalities. In several cases, it was indicated that 'persons with disabilities' fell under 'Special Programmes of the Mayor' and were, given the 'silo-nature of work in municipalities', not sufficiently dealt with in spatial planning.

6. Persisting Challenges with Access and Mobility in Townships and Informal Area-Residents

Challenges with Transport:



- The **spatial legacy of colonialism and Apartheid** makes transport a **key importance transformational tool** in connecting residents of townships and informal areas to opportunities in town/the suburbs.
- **Public transport** is a key contributor towards **realising several societal goals**, such as employment, education, improved environmental conditions and accessibility. Despite the dire need for it, it is a **major shortcoming**, and most townships are **still badly served by public transport**. Many rural municipalities only have **long-distance, but not internal taxi services**.
- **Roads are also a major concern** for both public and private transport, with very few township roads being tarred or paved, rendering them of **little to no use during and after heavy rains**. The weak state of the road network in most municipalities also **threatens economies and livelihoods**.

6. Persisting Challenges with Access and Mobility in Townships and Informal Area-Residents (continued)

Limited Wi-fi/Broadband and Cellular Services:



- Improvements in **access to wi-fi/broadband and cellular services** are a **mixed bag**.
- In some municipalities, this has improved and is improving, with several private investors showing a keen interest, including in **the roll-out of fibre in townships**. In others, **cellular services**, largely due to (1) theft of batteries from cellular towers, and (2) stalled expansion projects, attributed to loadshedding having resulted in a **redirection of funds to grid-maintenance**, are **becoming a huge area of concern**.



Limited Attention to the Needs of Persons with Disabilities:

- In most municipalities, **lack of funds** means that **far from enough is done** to adequately attend to the needs of these persons/groups with regards to access and mobility.

7. Inadequate Focus on Spatial Transformation as Priority / Focus Area

While spatial transformation (1) as a rule is mentioned in municipal policy documents (IDPs and SDFs), (2) municipalities follow the legal requirements, policy prescripts and strategic guidance offered in national and provincial SDFs with regards to spatial transformation in their plans, and (3) municipal officials viewed it as very important, it is in most cases not prioritised or actively driven by municipalities.

Need and Available Resources



- It was highlighted that it is **not necessarily a case of it not being seen as important**, but rather that it **'lost out' to a myriad of other more important, more pressing matters** that communities demanded attention to, and councillors had promised to attend to, notably in the area of municipal service provision and jobs.
- Reference was also made to the fact that **funding for spatial transformation, and all that it entailed from housing to bulk infrastructure, was an issue**, and given the high costs associated with it, **in relation to the huge needs for the provision, upgrading and maintenance of basic services where people currently lived** – even if this was not necessarily in an ideal location – it was **not pursued**.
- On the issue of **making municipal land available in support of spatial transformation**, municipal officials pointed out that the Municipal Finance Management Act, Act No 56 of 2003 (MFMA) rules this out. It does, however, not prevent making municipal land **available for 'use'**, which **some municipalities are doing**.

7. Inadequate Focus on Spatial Transformation as Priority / Focus Area (continued)

Spatial Development Frameworks:



- SDFs **play**, according to several municipal officials, a **‘passive painting-by-numbers role’**, **waiting for investment** and spending by others to fill-in/complete the spatial puzzle. Officials, it was observed, as a rule, **‘follow the instructions in their SDFs’** and make recommendations on land development applications to Municipal Planning Tribunals (MPTs) based on these planning instruments.
- As for the use of **SDFs in playing a more proactive, driving role**, of actively chasing investment and then allocating it in planned, desired spaces, **very little evidence** was found. (In a study of eight South African cities, Du Plessis (2019) observed that SDFs had only limited impact relative to their intended objectives. He also listed several deficiencies in SDFs, amongst others the absence of proper linkages to the municipalities’ Capital Investment Frameworks and their IDPs.)



An Absence of Focused Municipal Programmes on Spatial Transformation:

- Dedicated municipal programmes or specially funded spatial transformation-strategies, projects or programmes were **far and few between**.

7. Inadequate Focus on Spatial Transformation as Priority / Focus

Limited Incentives:



- **Few examples were found** of municipalities, or other spheres of government, actively (1) **incentivising** spatial transformation **by use of financial levers**, or (2) **driving it**, through for instances of land identification and acquisition, special-purpose projects, housing development in buffer zones/strips and mixed income-infill development in suburbs.

Limited Collaboration:



- **While it does not mean that such examples do not exist, officials could not recall** cases where (1) municipalities had **collaborated** with other spheres of government or non-State actors **to jointly plan for and pursue and ensure spatial transformation**, or (2) **national or provincial sector departments had approached** municipalities with an offer to collaborate on or support spatial transformation planning and implementation in their municipal area.
- **Instead, references were made in the interviews** to instances where other spheres of government had negatively impacted on municipal attempts at spatial transformation through for instance their **announcement** of national priority housing areas/zones and housing developments and/or their settlement/housing developments, **without** (1) **adequate consultation with municipalities**, or (2) **prior consideration of municipal plans** that set out the municipalities' spatial transformation objectives.

7. Inadequate Focus on Spatial Transformation as Priority / Focus Area (continued)

Municipal Role-Player Motivations



- In several cases, municipal officials indicated that ‘the focus on spatial transformation’ was **not so much related to the political party in charge, but rather one of the importance attached to it by a particular Mayor or Municipal Manager**. In such instances, spatial transformation would enjoy support during the tenure of the individual concerned, but not result in longer-term organisational/structural or systemic change in the municipality in relation to its pursuit.
- In a number of the interviews, the **slow speed at which spatial transformation proceeded in relation to the five-year term of a councillor** was highlighted as an important reason why it was not something that a councillor could take on and successfully complete, even under favourable conditions. In addition to this, the question was raised as to what a ward councillor would stand to gain from ‘**planning for the movement of his/her/their constituency to another ward**’?
- In several of the municipalities, officials indicated that the prevalence of **factions within parties**, the advent of ‘**coalitions**’, and **increasing political instability** had led to **continuous changes in priorities and budget commitments**. These never-ending changes/shifts (1) presented **serious challenges to prioritisation** and **sustained pursuit** of any municipal matter, including that of spatial transformation, and (2) led to a **continuous need for capacity-building** of councillors dealing with spatial planning, land development and settlement growth/expansion
- What **was striking in most of the engagements was the persistence and tenacity of officials**, and notably so (1) **spatial planners** and (2) **planners tasked with integrated development planning**. Despite finding themselves in often extremely complicated working environments, with very small budgets and huge workloads, they endured and continued their mission of ‘making a better life for all’ in their municipalities.

8. Lack of Knowledge as to the Meaning/Definition of the Construct of 'Spatial Transformation' & How it is to be Accomplished in Practice

Several Questions arose in the Interviews about the Meaning/Definition of 'Spatial Transformation', i.e.:

- **What exactly** do you/we understand 'spatial transformation' to **be/mean/entail?**
- What does the abstract term 'spatial transformation' **mean in practice?**
- Is spatial transformation **only about fixing the colonial and Apartheid past?**
- Is spatial transformation about **'creating a better future'** in which settlements are more compact, housing for all income groups are provided, land-uses are mixed, pedestrian and bicycle ways are built, public transport is the norm, etc.?
- Is spatial transformation **only about urban areas**, and if so, **what about the vast tracts of rural settlements that many municipalities have?**
- Following on from it, it was in some cases also asked **how spatial transformation was perceived to be brought about by municipalities**, especially so given their **limited power and means** (in terms of both funding/financial resources and human capacity).

8. Lack of Knowledge as to the Meaning/Definition of the Construct of 'Spatial Transformation' & How it is to be Accomplished in Practice (continued)

Councillors:



- In several of the interviews it was observed that (1) **councillors do not understand** what spatial transformation means, or (2) may have an idea of what it means, but **do not understand how to bring it about**, or enable/facilitate bringing it about.
- A number of planners indicated that after every municipal election they **had to capacitate their councillors** as to (1) the **meaning and importance** of spatial transformation, and (2) **the requirements**, including from their side, for bringing it about. In this regard, officials also argued that **while capacity building on spatial transformation was done – by themselves, SALGA and others – more needed to be done** by all parties concerned, to (1) make it **more tangible**, and (2) **ensure that its pursuit and realisation was 'made more practical'** for councillors.
- In some instances, it was suggested that **councillors, unwittingly, are working directly against what spatial planners are trying to achieve in the area of spatial transformation** through their participation in, or blessing of, actions by which 'land is allocated' to communities.
- Likewise, it was highlighted that **the pursuit of 'high-profile property developments' by councillors**, in many instances **without consideration** of their wider impacts, in the belief that these would generate significant local economic growth, jobs and rates taxes, **but do little to ensure spatial transformation, such as shopping malls**, was also of concern. Where such developments did not materialise, which was often the case, **they often 'held up/prevented' development** on very well-located land for other crucial land-uses, such as housing.

8. Lack of Knowledge as to the Meaning/Definition of the Construct of 'Spatial Transformation' & How it is to be Accomplished in Practice (continued)

Planning Profession/Professionals in Relation to other Role-Players:



- Spatial planners indicated that spatial transformation was **not something that officials from other disciplines** would be as **familiar with**, or necessarily **as concerned about/with**, as they were.
- Given the **much lower status that spatial planning enjoyed in the municipal pecking order in relation to notably engineering services** (as also borne out by the very small budget that spatial planning received in most municipalities, especially so in relation to engineering services), spatial transformation, being perceived as a 'spatial planning matter' **would by association not get the attention** (spatial planners thought) it deserves.
- The **gap between spatial planners and other professionals** was aggravated by the **continued practice of working in silos**, often with regards to closely-related matters such as housing, settlement development, land-use management integrated development planning, which did not facilitate (1) **the sharing of information or the cross-pollination of ideas and constructs, such as spatial transformation**, (2) or **the building of cross-professional-boundary coalitions** on matters such spatial transformation.
- Finally, on the same issue, it was highlighted that **communities generally do not know what 'spatial transformation' means or understand its importance in potentially addressing many of the spatial, access and economic challenges they face**, and hence would not raise it in public consultation/participation sessions, meaning that it also **did not make in it into the IDP or SDF as a priority issue/concern**.

8. Lack of Knowledge as to the Meaning/Definition of the Construct of 'Spatial Transformation' & How it is to be Accomplished in Practice (continued)

Planning Professionals' and Members of MPTs' Capacities:



- Of key importance is **whether spatial planners are all familiar with the construct**, 'what it looks like' and how it could be pursued and brought about. This matters, given that officials by and large indicated that their **MPTs approve applications** if they are in **line** with the provisions of their SDFs, **yet spatial reconstruction is not seen to be taking place on the larger, more macro-scale in municipalities, which raises the question – do SDFs provide adequate direction and guidance regarding spatial transformation for MPTs to decide applications on?**
- **This also raises questions regarding MPTs:** In the engagements with municipal officials, **MPTs emerged as a 'mixed bag'**. In some cases, it was observed that these entities are composed of **highly competent persons** who (1) can interpret the spatial transformation objectives in the SDF, and (2) follow the recommendations by municipal officials based on their SDFs and the SPLUMA-principles. However, **where this is not the case**, it is not guaranteed that decisions will pursue spatial transformation objectives as set out in the SDF.
- In one of the larger municipalities, it was mentioned that **the spatial planners' ideals and endeavours aimed at densification along transport corridors were facilitated by their ability to do the necessary calculations** to provide prospective private sector developers with detailed information as to what their costs and contributions in relation to especially engineering services would be. In doing so, they had also provided prospective developers with **clear, comparable spreadsheets** specifying what these costs would be on **greenfield vis-à-vis brownfield sites** in the municipality.

9. Status and Shortages of Professional Planners and GIS Professionals, Huge Workloads & a Lack of 'Complete GIS-Systems'


Lack of Qualified Professionals:



- While the interviews suggested that there is a **general recognition in municipalities of the importance of qualified and registered professional planners and Geospatial/GIS professionals** for (1) municipal planning, (2) prioritisation, (3) budgeting, and (4) infrastructure provision, upgrading and maintenance (and by implication also spatial transformation), and municipalities support and actively pursue professionalisation, **many municipalities do not have these officials in their employ.**
- In several cases, it was mentioned that **municipalities do not have 'senior, seasoned planners'**, and that **not much is done to attract such planners or develop planners** in the municipality into such experienced planners and **ensure that they get registered** with the South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN).
- Frequent references were made to the **positive impact** that (1) the **support provided by the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA)** in many municipalities, and (2) the **drive by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs for professionalisation** in the local government sphere have had. However, officials indicated that **the still far too limited number** of spatial planners, engineers and GIS professionals is of concern and is **impacting negatively** on municipalities' attempts at (1) conceptualising, (2) planning for, (3) popularising, and (4) undertaking spatial transformation.
- **Aggravating** this situation, it was argued, is **the high turnover of planners**, which also leads to **'stop-start spatial transformation endeavours'**, and, coupled with the **already lower status** that spatial planning generally enjoys in municipalities, to spatial planning (and hence spatial transformation) **'not getting a foothold in the municipal prioritisation ladder'**. The **lack of information/knowledge management** in their municipalities, coupled **with the continuous loss of institutional memory**, also impeded the development of such a **core 'spatial transformation-thrust'** in the municipality **that could outlive the municipal terms of councillors.**

9. Status and Shortages of Professional Planners and GIS Professionals, Huge

Planning Practice

-  – Further aggravating the shortage of spatial planners in municipalities was **what the planners (had to) ‘spend their time on’**.
- In many of the engagements, planners indicated that they not only have **huge workloads**, often having to be attended to by **one or a small handful of planners**, but (1) **often get side-tracked** into resolving difficult matters regarding land and settlement wittingly or unwittingly caused by councillors, and/or (2) **spend a large part of their day** in (increasingly, and ever-more frequently so, online) **meetings, completing templates and preparing progress reports** on matters that their municipality has great difficulty in complying with, and in any case has very little to show for/report on.
- All of this **leaves them with very hardly any time** to focus on, **work on** and **prepare (credible) plans** for spatial transformation and **solicit, lobby for**, and **secure funds** to implement them.

9. Status and Shortages of Professional Planners and GIS Professionals, Huge

GIS Professionals



- An even larger problem than the shortage of spatial planners is **the shortage of GIS professionals and ‘complete GIS systems’** (including hardware, suitable programmes/software and up-to-date data) in municipalities.
- **Without such GIS-support**, it was stated in all the engagements, **spatial planning**, let alone ‘spatial transformation planning’, **becomes very difficult**, and is **close to impossible to undertake and accomplish**.
- In several of the municipalities it was noted that **recording/book-keeping** on land development applications received and processed was **done by hand** in books – some more than 80-years old – and on faded paper maps. (It was highlighted in one municipality that they do not even have a printer.) The **ability to identify land and spatial development trends and accurately calculate service delivery charges** was, except for the metropolitan municipalities and a few larger local municipalities, **non-existent**.

10. Lack of Funds, Coupled with Dire Economic Times for People and Places

- In most of the engagements it was observed that **municipalities simply do not have the tax bases, income streams and hence the funds** to undertake all that is constitutionally mandated and legally required of them to do.
- Continuing along this line it was argued that, **irrespective of what they, their councillors or the communities in their municipalities thought or not about spatial transformation**, (1) the **national funding model** for municipalities, and (2) the **downturn** in the South African economy and the hard/difficult times people were finding themselves in, meant that **their municipalities just did not have the funds** to undertake anything that is **not of a 'absolutely imperative/immediate nature'**, or **perceived not to be as such**, i.e. spatial transformation.
- Even though spatial transformation **could potentially play a major role in addressing the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality**, it is in most municipalities **not perceived and/or used as such**. The high levels of poverty and deprivation simply meant that, should there be any money, it will **be used on projects and programmes directed** at (1) **formalising** informal settlements and/or (2) **alleviating the hardship** people were experiencing through poverty alleviation and basic service provision.

10. Lack of Funds, Couples with Dire Economic Times for People

- Officials also observed that Councillors would **also not (dare to) raise the idea of spending the little money** that there is **on something as abstract and distant as spatial transformation**.
- Several officials also argued that their municipalities **did not have the kind of money required to undertake the detailed planning and design, acquisition of land, and investment in infrastructure** that densification and/or land redevelopment that **‘proper spatial transformation’ would require**. Related to this, it was consistently mentioned that most municipalities in the country simply did not have the funds to invest in **the kind of infrastructure upgrading that spatial transformation would require**, let alone any other costs.
- The **high levels of grant-dependency** also mean that, while most municipalities regard spatial transformation as important, it is **perceived as a luxury** that they **cannot attend to at the present juncture in time**. This is, however, **not the case everywhere**, as references were made to instances where nodal development, economic growth, public transport use and spatial transformation have been, and are all being **successfully pursued in an integrated and interrelated manner**.

CONCLUSION



- Addressing Land Hunger: Participated in the Land IMC and used the findings to lobby for improved interventions in the Human Settlements and Land Assembly programs
- Promoted and supported municipalities to develop capacity to effectively undertake roles assigned to them by SPLUMA including Training of Municipal Planning Tribunals and Appeals Authorities
- Supported planning processes to formulate and revise Spatial Development Frameworks (Local and Regional) and improvements in LUMS.
- Developed tools and shared with municipalities and Traditional Leadership to promote improved cooperation in managing Land Assembly, Disposal, Unlawful Occupation
- Established sound cooperation with DALRRD, DTA and DCOG for continuous support to municipalities in various areas identified as challenges by the study.

To transform the inherited Apartheid Spatial Form, SA will require not only the legislative reforms, but also practical mechanisms/tools to

(1) Define progress,

(2) Measure and assess impact, and

(3) Hold government institutions and their partners ‘on their toes’ and accountable. As such, there is a need to:

- Agree on indicators to be used to benchmark and monitor spatial transformation in all geographic areas.
- Continuously evaluate and monitor the impact of spatial interventions geared towards spatial transformation;
- Understand and unpack the current status quo – both in terms of constraints and opportunities;
- Explore sought-after spatial outcomes, guided and informed by SPLUMA;

- Mobilizing resources and partnerships for innovation and technology support for municipal planning programs. Eg Acquiring critical capacity in services like GIS and flying of drones to update spatial and project monitoring capabilities of our members.
- Professionalization in the context of SPLUMA and municipal planning; SALGA has an MoU with SACPLAN, firstly to persuade municipalities to recruit registered planners to sign off on planning work and providing continuous professional development support to planners working with or for municipalities.
- On the lack of funds, there is an advanced process of lobbying for the review of the LG funding framework and SALGA has just concluded its own study to inform its positions in this IGR process.



Thank You



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