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## **ADDRESSING INNER-CITY DECLINE THROUGH URBAN REGENERATION – THE CASE OF DURBAN POINT PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT**

**By Z. Mnikathi and L. Chipungu**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Most inner cities and big towns have in one way or other experienced urban decline. So many reasons can be attributed to urban decline and these include, property abandonment, crime, high unemployment and the rundown of inner-city services thereby leading to the failure to attract new investments. This study focused on exploring the extent to which inner city urban regeneration strategies impact on socio-economic issues in order to create a sustainable inner-city urban environment. This was achieved by exploring applicable inner-city planning principles and examining the role of institutions in the regeneration process. The focus was on the Durban Point Precinct which is a waterfront environment – an area which falls under the eThekweni Municipality Central Municipal Planning Region. This paper is based on empirical research whose data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative research methods such as face-to-face interviews, direct observation and household questionnaires. More so, the study was governed by the competitive city theory and neoliberalism which both speak to the emerging nature of regeneration intervention measures (as typified by mixed developments). The study concluded by noting that inner city urban regeneration strategies are an ideal approach in dealing with declining areas since they resuscitate economic and social life. In the process, such intervention measures do not only redevelop the city, but they rebrand the inner city.

**KEY WORDS** Inner City, Regeneration, Sustainability, Precinct, Zones, Integration

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The concerning urban problem faced with inner cities is the notion of urban decline. Drawing from this, a number of researchers have reported that urban decline is a result of the deterioration of the inner city and is often caused by lack of investment and maintenance, alongside a decline in population numbers, decreasing economic performance and unemployment (Doucet, 2010). The Institution of Civil Engineers (1988) provides an in-depth analysis of how inner cities decline, depicted by facets of poverty, pollution, crime, overcrowding, poor housing conditions and unemployment. On the basis of the above, inner city decline stems from a decline in the local economy, that affects both private and public enterprises in the area. This decline then causes despair for the residents; the visual and physical effects of living daily life among empty lots, abandoned buildings and condemned houses.

In the process, poverty becomes part of the puzzle as it is associated with the notion of structural economic shifts that reflect the inadequate human capital of the labour force. The decline of inner cities sprouts inner-city poverty, where the economic breakdown causes businesses to fail since cities grow because of momentary economic booms (Chapple and Teitz, 1998). Pacione (2009) identifies economic decline of the inner city as associated with unemployment that speaks to the contracting industrial base due to recession in the economy, de-industrialisation and the rundown of traditional inner-city services and industries. This is characterised by the ripple effects on the local economy which results in the failure of small dependent firms, the failure to attract new industries and resulting labour constraints.

Unemployment is highly influenced by the economic changes in declining inner cities and creates an added social disadvantage affecting the residents in the inner-city declining. Acioly (1999) characterizes this social disadvantage resulting from the high levels of

unemployment and low-wage jobs available as a “diminished community spirit”, leading to anti-social activities of crime and vandalism. It is therefore not surprising that the resulting impoverishment of the population leads to social unrest social and economic segregation, alongside with violence and criminality (Doucet, 2010).

The aim of this chapter is to explore the socio-economic impacts of the inner-city urban regeneration as a result of the Durban Point Precinct development. This chapter therefore also seeks to reinforce how urban regeneration, in an attempt to redevelop an area, proves to be the best strategy for overcoming further urban decline. In unpacking how urban regeneration as a strategy contributes to a sustainable environment for urban areas within the city, the chapter seeks to explore the social aspects relating to safety, crime, unemployment, social segregation and housing of the Durban Point Area.

# 2. THE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

There are a number of competing theories that contribute to the understanding of inner city decline and regeneration. However, this paper focuses on the competitive city theory and the modernisation theory.

## 2.1. Competitive Cities Theory

According to Healey et al. (1992) the evolution of the competitive city theory is located within the extensive globalisation discourse which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s as the new control of political and intellectual thought. The competitive cities theory is also said to have evolved following the emergence of the neoliberal approaches which dictated the principles of managing a post-industrial city (Healey et al., 1992). Choe and Roberts (2011) discuss how the competitive cities theory refers mainly to the attraction of cities through investments and job creation. Bongwa et al. (2009) support Choe and Roberts (2011) by further sharing insight on the notion of the competitiveness of cities, referring to an attractive economic environment for employment and investments.

Healey et al. (1992) deduce that the competitive cities theory’s main principle is the enhancement of economic activities, which is the root of a competitive advantage for inner cities, however much criticism is focused on the major impact of this theory on the spatial and social relationships in many cities. This alludes to how a city’s attractive image is believed to have the ability to appropriately position it in the face of global competition. Choe and Roberts (2011) emphasise that the competitive advantage for inner cities is achieved through the opening up of their economies to competition and the growing dominance of cities as drivers of economic development.

The competitive cities theory advocates for making cities more competitive, in an attempt to reduce poverty and unemployment through the creation of a good living environment (Healey et al., 1992). These city dynamics are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Dynamic forces at work within cities**

Factor	Brief Description
<b>Provision of infrastructure</b>	Through aspects of public transportation accessibility and social infrastructure improvement,
<b>Economic change</b>	Where cities provide citizens with the capacity to develop their economic potential and attract businesses and capital,
<b>Poverty reduction</b>	Through city development strategies,
<b>The environment</b>	Through upgrading and development of public spaces.

Source: Extracted by Author from various sources (2020)

These goals are achieved by municipal governments through preparation of strategic policies that seek to restructure the economy and upgrade the infrastructure (Bongwa et al., 2009). Attention is also drawn to the idea of a City Cluster Economic Development Approach, which contributes to making cities competitive through a new paradigm for urban economic development (Choe and Roberts, 2011).

In accordance with the main principle of the competitive cities theory, South Africa has enforced measures through the various strategic planning documents such as the National Development Plan (NDP), Development Strategy Plans and the Integrated Development Planning (IDP). All indicate an orientation to the futuristic growth of urban areas, both spatially and institutionally, with a glaring emphasis on motivating competitiveness (South African Cities Network, 2012).

Thus, the regeneration of the declining inner cities incorporates ideas about achieving competitiveness through urban regeneration and urban planning. For the purpose of this study, the principle of the enhancement of economic activities is used to analyse increasing economic activities within the Durban Point Precinct Development. It will further help to discuss the increased success of economic activities and determine how urban regeneration has created an environment that enhances the city's investment prospects and enables it to compete more effectively for investment.

## 2.2. Modernisation Theory

According to Yeh (1989), the emergence of the modernisation theory came about during the late 1950s and the early 1960s. This theory stemmed from America's new position of international supremacy and its concern to solve the problems of the poor communities. Armer and Katsills (2001) emphasise that the modernisation theory underlies the evolution of traditional or undeveloped societies into modern societies. Its process was transfigured through the development of change towards social,

economic and political systems that have industrialised in Western Europe and North America from the 17th Century to the 19th Century, which have transcended to other European countries. It then spread further to the continents of South America, Asia and Africa.

Research has shown how the modernisation theory is concerned with economic growth within societies, as indicated by measures of the Gross National Product (GNP). Armer and Katsills (2001) state that modernisation theory studies the social, political and cultural consequences of economic growth and the conditions that are important for industrialisation and economic growth to occur. Giddens (1991) reinforces that the modernisation theory advocates social and institutional change to facilitate economic transformation.

To expand further, Huntington (1971) provides insight into how the modernisation theory is underlined by components that conclude: industrialisation, urbanisation, social mobilisation, differentiation, media expansion, expansion of political participation and increasing literacy and education. Armer and Katsills (2001) provide in-depth information on how the modernisation theory suggests that advanced industrial technology produces not only economic growth in developing societies, but other structural and cultural changes as well. With modernisation as a recognised process of development, Agbaje (2013) states that urban renewal strategies are encouraged in modern society.

In relation to the modernisation theory, Donaldson (2001) highlights how South African cities and towns entered the 1990s with an apartheid-based urban planning strategy, and urban planners, managers, and politicians were responsible for urban development. These role players had the responsibility of reconstructing the spatially segregated, highly fragmented and dispersed urban societies through the

Urban Development Framework (UDF) that was aimed at integrating cities. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the Integrated Planning Framework shaped the modernity of South African cities.

In this paper, the researchers use the modernisation theory components of industrialisation, urbanisation and the notion of economic growth to explore how the historical Durban Point area has been transformed into the Durban Point Precinct Development, becoming a more appealing urban development within inner city Durban. The researchers refer to how inner-city urban decline has been aggravated by lack of investment and slow economic growth and explored the involvement of institutions in the facilitation of the Durban Point Precinct project's socio-economic improvement.

In drawing knowledge from the theories mentioned for their applicability to this paper, the authors noted that these theories present a common denominator. Drawing from the issue of deregulation from government intervention, the neoliberal theory expresses the intended attributes of interactive planning extracted from both communicative and collaborative theory. This is deduced from the principle of participation and involvement of stakeholders in development issues. With reference to the issues of poverty reduction and enhancing employment, the competitive city and modernisation theory advocate for economic growth and the enhancement of economic activities for the modern society. The authors noted that these theories allow for the exploration of the socio-economic dimension of the Durban Point Precinct Development project.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study made use of both secondary and primary data sources. Secondary sources of data that were utilised in the study in order to obtain the necessary information included: books, scholarly journal articles, online publications; technical reports, the Integrated Development Plan of the eThekweni Municipality (2011-2016), a Geographical Information System, newspaper articles and Durban Point Precinct Development document publications such as the Development Framework.

This study obtained information from key informants who are municipal officials, developers and managers involved in the implementation of regeneration projects. These were identified through the use of purposive sampling and the snowball approach whereby the authors contacted people they were familiar with who in turn gave them other contacts. The selection of the above-mentioned respondents was intended specifically for the purpose of gathering data about the project's socio-economic impact since its implementation, and these respondents provided valuable data about the measures of the Durban Point Development regeneration project.

Observation proved to be an important tool which assisted in the identification of the physical aspects of the area. Drawing from this knowledge, Kitchen and Tate (1999 cited in Marshall and Rossman, 1995) highlight that straight observation is a method which entails the researcher being a detached observer of a situation. This process of straight observation can range from a highly structured, detailed notation of behaviour guided by checklists (coded schedules), to a more holistic description of events (narratives). This is inclusive of visuals (photographs) to indicate some of the findings from the observation within the Point Precinct Development. Observational data is considered to be very useful in overcoming discrepancies between what people say and what they actually do, and might uncover behaviour

of which the participants themselves may not be aware (Patten and Cochran, 2002). Gardner (1978) also makes note of how unsystematic observation can provide useful insights as a method of discovery.

The study also made use of face-to-face interviews which demonstrated an element of validity and reliability. Patten and Cochran (2002) define interviews as a resemblance of everyday conversations which are much focused on the researcher's needs for data. For the purpose of this study, face-to-face interviews were used in semi-structured interviews with key informants during data collection. Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews provided more flexibility during interviews thereby reducing undue pressure on respondents.

Primary data sources came from a variety of sources some of which were identified through sampling from the six properties that comprised of the residential properties selected for the study. The residential properties are in a 22-storey building. In this building, there are 166 units, of which 45 units are currently occupied. For the consideration for the study, 10 per cent of the 45 units were sampled. The residents of the Durban Point Precinct Development sample were selected on the basis of age; (i.e. were supposed to be above 18 years of age) and be heads of their households. This assisted the researcher to understand how the project has enhanced their social and economic lifestyle. On the other hand, information from business enterprises was collected from selected respondents in offices, restaurants and retail outlets using a questionnaire. Here the respondents were ideally the Managers of the six properties selected. The business enterprises sample only comprised of active businesses in the precinct.

Despite challenges encountered during fieldwork (such as unavailability of respondents and delays involved to get appointments from key informants, mitigation measures were put in place to avoid compromising the quality of

data expected from the field. Hence triangulation was adopted as one of the key strategies to counter unnecessary gaps arising out of missing some field informants. A variety of methods used coupled with a variety of sources of information made it easy to cover any gaps.

### 4. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR REGENERATION OF INNER CITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The regeneration of inner cities is mostly a mandate undertaken by municipalities but with support from the central government. It is a complex web of activities whose intentions are not only exclusive to municipal visions but also responsive to national policy initiatives. In that regard, the institutional framework (i.e. policies, legislations and organisations) that supports regeneration initiatives is diverse as shown in the subsequent sections below.

**The Urban Development Framework** is primarily the legislative framework which advocates the development of urban areas within South Africa. The Urban Development Framework has enhanced the vision for urban areas that have been negatively impacted by apartheid planning that resulted in denying the majority of South Africans access to urban opportunities and amenities (The Department of Housing, 1997). In addition to the Urban Development Framework, the Department of Housing (1997) emphasises that the Reconstruction and Development Programme recognises the need for a coherent approach to urban and rural development, and the Urban Development Strategy is aimed at ensuring sustainable development of the cities and towns (The South African Government, 1997).

According to the South African Government (1997), the basic tenets of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) guide the purpose of the Urban Development Framework. It explains and analyses the current reality

of South African cities; proposes an urban vision; explains the major dilemmas affecting policy choices at all levels and proposes a programme to monitor and evaluate the key elements of the framework. The Urban Development Framework states that the national and local governments should provide guidelines and programmes for the envisioning of sustainable urban settlements as shown in Table 2 (The Department of Housing, 1997).

**Table 2: Key Programmes of the UDF**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Brief Explanation</b>
<b>Integrating the city</b>	Aims at integrated planning, rebuilding and upgrading. The UDF alludes to how urban regeneration for the inner city contributes to the upgrading of declined urban areas within the inner city.
<b>Improving housing and infrastructure.</b>	This involves the upgrading and construction of housing, the restoration and extension of infrastructure, encouraging investment, building habitable and safe communities, maintaining safety and security and designing habitable urban communities.
<b>Urban economic development,</b>	This is aimed at enhancing the capacity of urban areas to build on local strengths in order to generate local economic activity, to achieve sustainability and to alleviate urban poverty.
<b>Creating institutions for delivery,</b>	The focus is on significant transformation and capacity building of the government at all levels, and cooperating with a range of institutions from civil society and the private sector.

*Source: Adopted from UDF (1997)*

The South African Government (1997) further explains that the UDF will bring about recognition of the current and future importance of South Africa’s cities and towns in meeting the needs of the growing population in terms of shelter and economic, social and environmental development. It can therefore be seen that urban regeneration to halt and correct inner-city decline allows for the governance of the UDF and highlights the extent to which inner city development aims to integrate social, economic, political and environmental attributes for sustainable city regeneration.

**Box 1: The Urban Development Zones**

These emerged out of the recognition that many of South Africa’s inner cities were facing rapid degeneration as a result of capital flight into newer and better facilities in other parts of the cities (Wilson, 2004). In light of this, it was keenly felt that if there was to be any hope of revitalising the inner cities, then the government would need to intervene. As such, by the end of 2003 the National Treasury had developed an amendment to the Income Tax Act No. 58 of 1962, which would allow tax breaks and tax incentives within very specific areas the metros and larger municipalities in South Africa (Wilson, 2004). The legislation was further amended in 2005 (Revenue Laws Amendment Act 31 of 2005) to accommodate taxpayers who purchased buildings or parts thereof, for example sectional title units, directly from developers. According to the Housing Development Agency (2013) the UDZ legislation aims to encourage inner city regeneration through a tax incentive that takes the form of a tax allowance, covering an accelerated depreciation of investment made either in the refurbishment of the existing property or the creation of new developments within the inner city over a period of time. The Housing Development Agency (2013) adds that the UDZs can be considered as the only piece of policy related to urban regeneration, established at a national level.

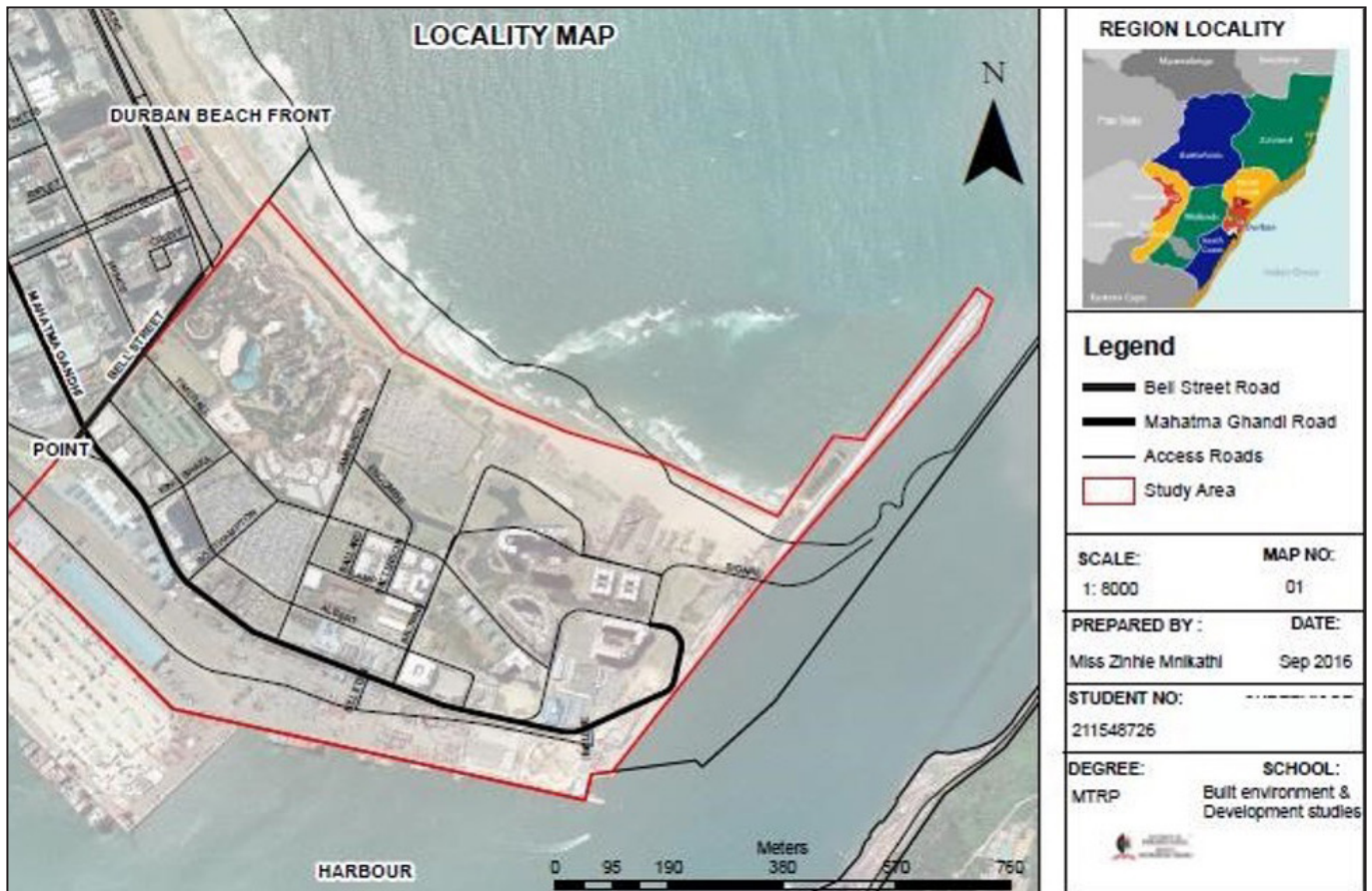
*Source: Extracted from various sources by author (2020).*

The abovementioned legislation and frameworks underpin the rationale for the urban regeneration of declined inner cities and assist in the drive towards economically sustainable urban centres and environmentally viable cities as a form of urban development. However, it should be noted that these policies are not exclusive in the sense that there is a plethora of other similar policies which indirectly impinge of regeneration of inner cities. The BNG (of 2004) for instance, does mention the need to build sustainable housing by making use of degenerated areas within urban areas. This is further amplified in the Social Housing Policy (of 2008) where “restructuring zones” are targeted as either brown or green fields for housing development. This in turn diversified organisations involved in urban regeneration by including social housing institutions as key actors too in urban regeneration.

## 5. THE STUDY AREA

The study area is located at the entrance of the busiest port in South Africa, on a 55-hectare site, south of the Durban CBD, along the Durban beachfront to the harbour access channel (**Refer to Locality Map: Map 1**). The Durban Point is well used by a small group of people relative to the extent that the rest of the beachfront is used. Ten hectares of the site area accommodates the Ushaka Marine World that is bounded by the ocean on the east, the harbour mouth and Mahatma Gandhi Road on the south and west, with Ushaka Marine World marking the northern area (Durban Point Development Company, 2009). The development falls within the eThekweni Municipality's central municipal planning region.

**Map 1: Locality Map of the Durban Point Development Precinct**



Source: Author (2016)

### 5.1. Historical Overview of the Durban Point Precinct Development

The Durban Point Precinct Development is named after Point Road. The Point historically represented the gateway to the country and a safe haven for many early travellers by providing, together with the Bluff, a safe refuge off the ocean. Entry into the bay was continually under threat from a build-up of sand, forming a sandbar. This hampered the growth of the port and the city and led to the sandbar being removed by dredging of the entrance channel into the harbour. Continued

dredging ensured continued access into the bay, resulting in an increase in trade as merchant ships could enter and leave the harbour more easily (Cottrell, 2010). Cottrell (2010) shares that British settlers settled around the Bay of Natal (Port Natal) mainly because of the benefits that the traders provided. A fort was built on the sandy beach bar known as Point Fynn, or the Point to the early settlers, upon instruction by Major Charters of the British army Harber (2002 cited in Wightman, 2007) emphasised that: *“the Point is what Durban is all about - it is a harbour city”*.

The eThekweni Municipality (2011) refers to how the first railroad within Durban emanated from the Point, which was located at the entrance to the bustling harbour and where most of the trade in the area occurred. During the late 1970s and 1980s, however, urban decline set in as most of the port related activities relocated from the Point area with the beginning of the port expansion. Much of the harbor activity and trade moved away from the Point area as the port expanded, resulting in the steady decline of the Point area. The Point then went on to become synonymous with the many social ills of that time and the area became stigmatized accordingly.

Wightman (2007) adds that the urban decline continued in the Point area into the 1990s, and the area became deserted and quite derelict.

Post -1990 brought about the catalyst for redeveloping the declined Point. According to Wightman, (2007) a proposal to purchase all the pockets of land in and around the Point precinct and invest in the urban regeneration of the Point was made by a Malaysian owned company. This led to the waterfront development of the Point precinct development, which the Durban municipality, the national government and the Malaysian company invested in. The Durban Point Development Company (2009) highlighted the need for regeneration as the area had historically been neglected and seen as a semi-industrial area. The fact that the area had largely been run down created a bad impression of the Point as a whole.

## 6. INTERROGATING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DURBAN POINT PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT

According to Wightman (2007), the intention to regenerate the area had been mooted for several decades. The main intention driving the regeneration of the Point was embedded in creating a waterfront development on prime real estate at the harbour entrance. It is also noted that much of the Point Precinct Development was dogged by controversy for more than a decade before the initiative became a reality. According to the Durban Point Development Company (2009), the regeneration of the Point was identified as one of the projects that had the potential to create significant economic growth and create employment in line with successful dockland redevelopments around the world.

The Durban Point Precinct Development urban regeneration initiative was driven by the need to create a unique and vibrant area that offers commercial, retail and tourism opportunities in order to

achieve sensible social, urban, community, cultural and environmental, sustainability (Durban Point Development Company, 2009). The development of the Point Precinct was driven by a public-private partnership of the Malaysian company - Rocpoint and the eThekweni Municipality.

Wightman (2007) states that the securing of the Durban Point Precinct Development reflected the sincerity with which the eThekweni Municipality committed to regenerate and upgrade the Point area. The development began with the Ushaka Marine theme park, which put the Point Waterfront area on the map internationally as well as locally. The vision for the waterfront development included enhancing the beach environment by linking the beach in front of the marine park with the rest of the beachfront by means of a continuous beach promenade. To achieve this, the existing promenade was upgraded and extended along the beachfront. A sub-tropical landscape was created with the appropriate signature landscaping, promoting Durban's identity as an 'African City' and by creating a built environment that integrated into the rest of the CBD. The vision further extended into creating a transportation node that linked users of the Ushaka Marine park and the Point Precinct with the rest of the beachfront and CBD by providing transport and regulating the flow of traffic. Retail, commercial and hotel opportunities were expanded, as were additional residential opportunities with the creation of new living opportunities in a range of accommodation typologies within the precinct development (Durban Point Development Company, 2009).

### 6.1. The current state of the Durban Point Precinct

The development of the Durban Point Precinct into the 'Point Waterfront' has gradually changed the Durban Point's reputation as a whole. The physical attributes of the current state of the Precinct Development are characterised by unique **urban furniture** combined with **residential units** with modern and historical buildings that have been refurbished in line with the conservation of the historical aspect of the area. The Durban Point Precinct regeneration is transforming the area into a 'property market paradise' (Mkhize, 2015).

The study area is accessible by public transportation like buses (called People Movers), private vehicles and taxis which provide access into the precinct in order to accommodate for the variety of people. Kirby (2014) adds that a key feature in the northern section of the Point precinct, which has an effect on the entire site, is the limited access where one-way roads provide the main movement routes in and out of the Point (Mahatma Gandhi Road – see Fig 1).

Figure 1: One-way access road entering the precinct area



Source: Google Maps Images (2016)

The physical transformation of the Point Precinct has epitomised a world-class standard, deserving of developments of this nature. Wightman (2007) elaborates further by emphasising that the Point Precinct development has ensured people's safety without creating a gated community that hinders public access, and is secured

by means of a highly sophisticated electronic surveillance system with closed circuit television cameras installed at strategic locations to maximise coverage. Waste management and cleaning, roadways, traffic signals and sidewalks, canal management, electrical infrastructure and the landscaping are all privately serviced and maintained within the precinct (Durban Point Development Company, 2009).

The study area currently comprises of mixed-use land use activities within the particular zone areas (see *existing zone and land use Map 2 and 3*). The Precinct area has mixed use developments of commercial properties, warehousing, sports facilities, shipping offices, a Maritime College and residences. The current utilisation of the mixed-use developments is enhanced with the lower levels of the properties being utilised for commercial or business purposes and the upper levels as residential space. These commercial activities include a

variety of activities such as a hair and nail salon, a formal small tuck-shop, restaurants and dry cleaners (among others).

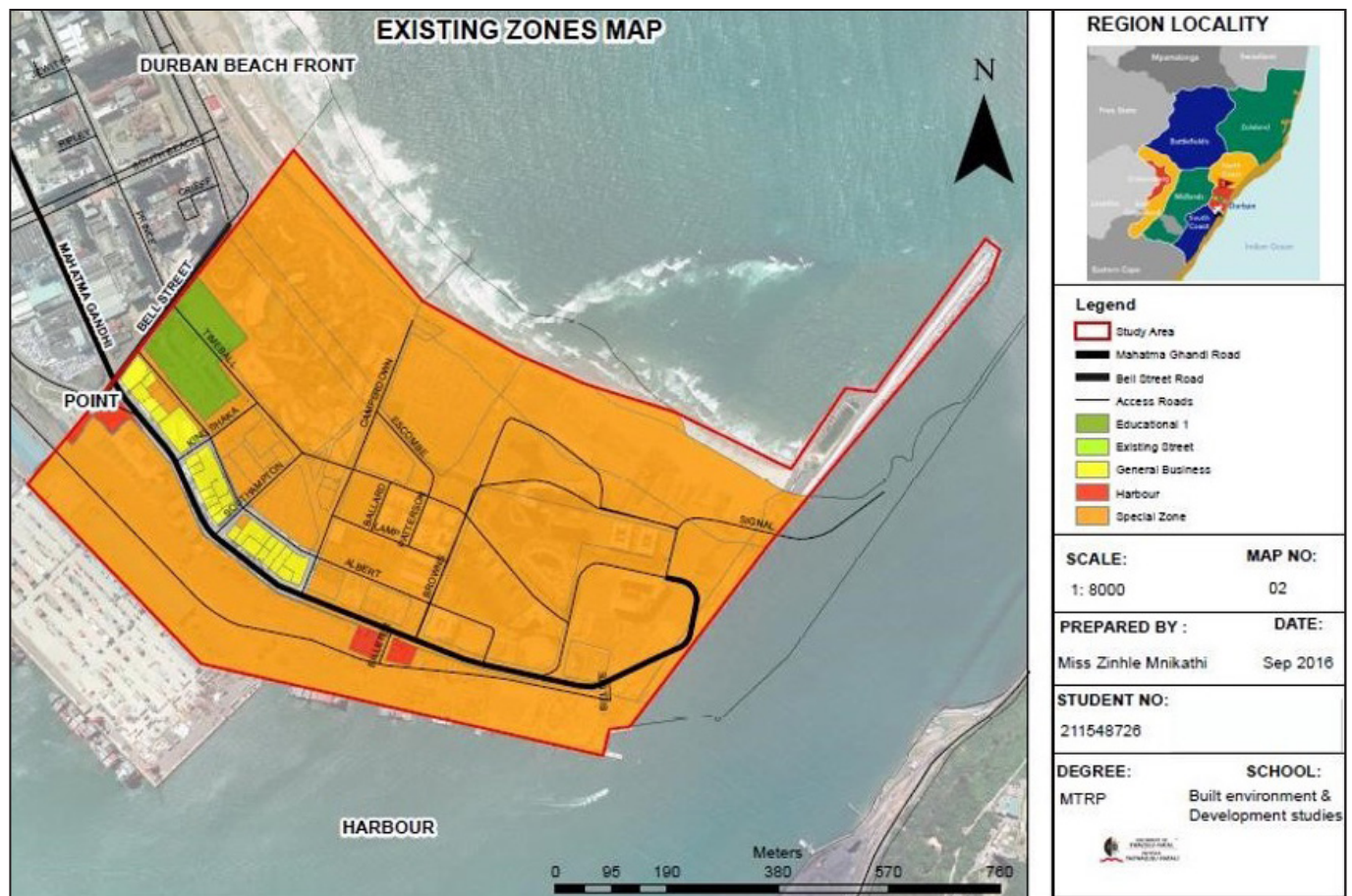
According to the existing zone map (*Map 2*), there is a special zone in the Point Precinct (Point Waterfront) dedicated for the accommodation of a wide range of recreational, entertainment, residential, shopping, business, commercial, community, service industrial and related activities that would ordinarily be accommodated within a city environment (eThekweni Municipality, 2011). This zone is aimed at contributing towards the creation of a dynamic, harmonious and well-balanced city precinct that is comprised of the highest aesthetic, landscaping and urban design quality and promotes the impression of African urbanism.

The current land users surrounding the area of the study include Transnet, and this land is used for the operation of the

port and comprises of offices, storage space and a car terminal situated south and south-west of the study area. The north and north-west of the study area comprises of a mixed-use area that includes the Addington Primary School, high-rise flats, light industry (warehousing, logistics, and boat repair companies), entertainment and hospitality uses (eThekweni Municipality, 2011).

The Point Precinct currently contains social and public facilities, namely: The South African Maritime School and Transport College that is housed in two old buildings and the access to the uShaka Marine theme park. Kirby (2014) describes the theme park as a large recreational facility that boasts an aquarium, a water park and a variety of restaurants and curio shops, and which has been used as the catalyst for development in the Point.

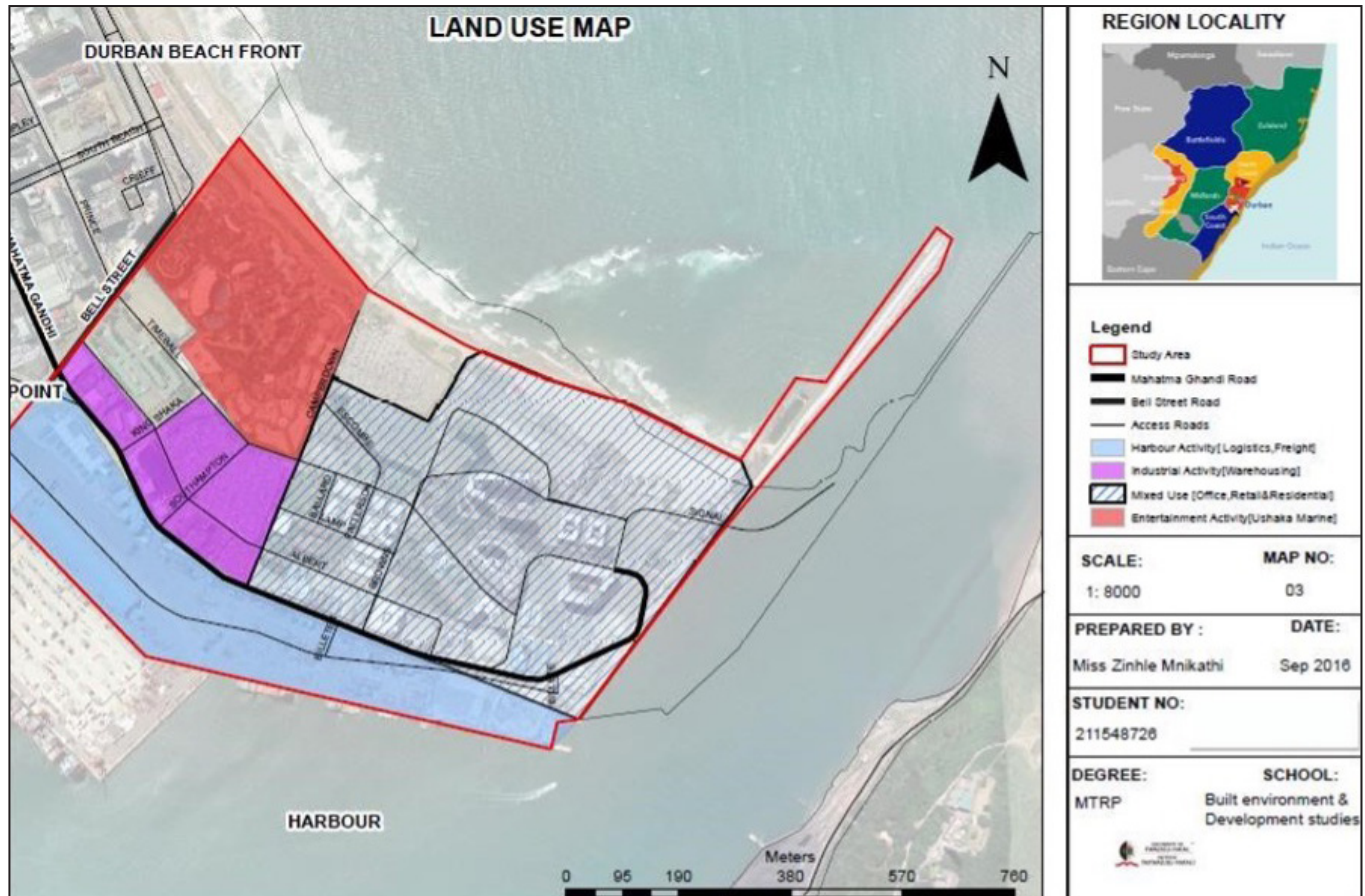
**Map 2: Existing Zones within the Durban Point Precinct Development**



Source: Author (2016)



Map 3: Land Use within the Durban Point Precinct Development



Source: Author (2016)

## 6.2. Integration and Sustainability

Drawing from planning design principles underpinning the location of the study area, much can be drawn from Lynch's (1960) principles. Lynch (1960) investigated how individuals perceive and navigate the urban landscape, through the analysis of the approach to the city. In light of this, the concepts measured in determining the sustainability of the Point Precinct are adopted from Lynch's (1960) concepts of legibility, and imageability and identity.

The concept of **legibility** indicates how 'easily identifiable' the area is through its landmarks, pathways or nodes. Stemming from this, the Point Precinct Development is identifiable by its notable port (harbour) expansion, with the surrounding land users incorporating industrial activities in support of the expansion.

Next is the uShaka Marine theme park that is compatible with the beachfront and in close proximity to the CBD.

The concept of **imageability and identity** indicates how the physical attributes of the area create a sense of identity and image of the environment. The Point Precinct Development's identity is captured through its historically refurbished buildings and the 'waterfront development' environment. In terms of **sustainability**, the area draws a diverse range of people and activities. Kirby (2014) further asserts that **continuity** is central to the concept of integration and that it needs to be unlocked in order for the Point Precinct Development to be integrated into the rest of the CBD. Mahatma Gandhi Road (previously known as Point Road) remains the main access route leading from the city centre into the Point. The fact that it only provides access into the Point, as it is a one-way road is, however, highly problematic, yet

the road is such a prominent feature in Durban's movement systems (Kirby, 2014). The Point Precinct Development therefore does not have a continuous access route into and out of the CBD so it cannot really be regarded as fully integrated into the inner city (CBD). This is evidenced by the fact that the urban fabric of the new developments does not follow the common city grid patterns prominent in both the CBD and the entrance of the Point.

### 6.3. Revisiting Sustainable Inner-city Principles for the Urban Regeneration Strategy through the lenses of eThekweni Municipality.

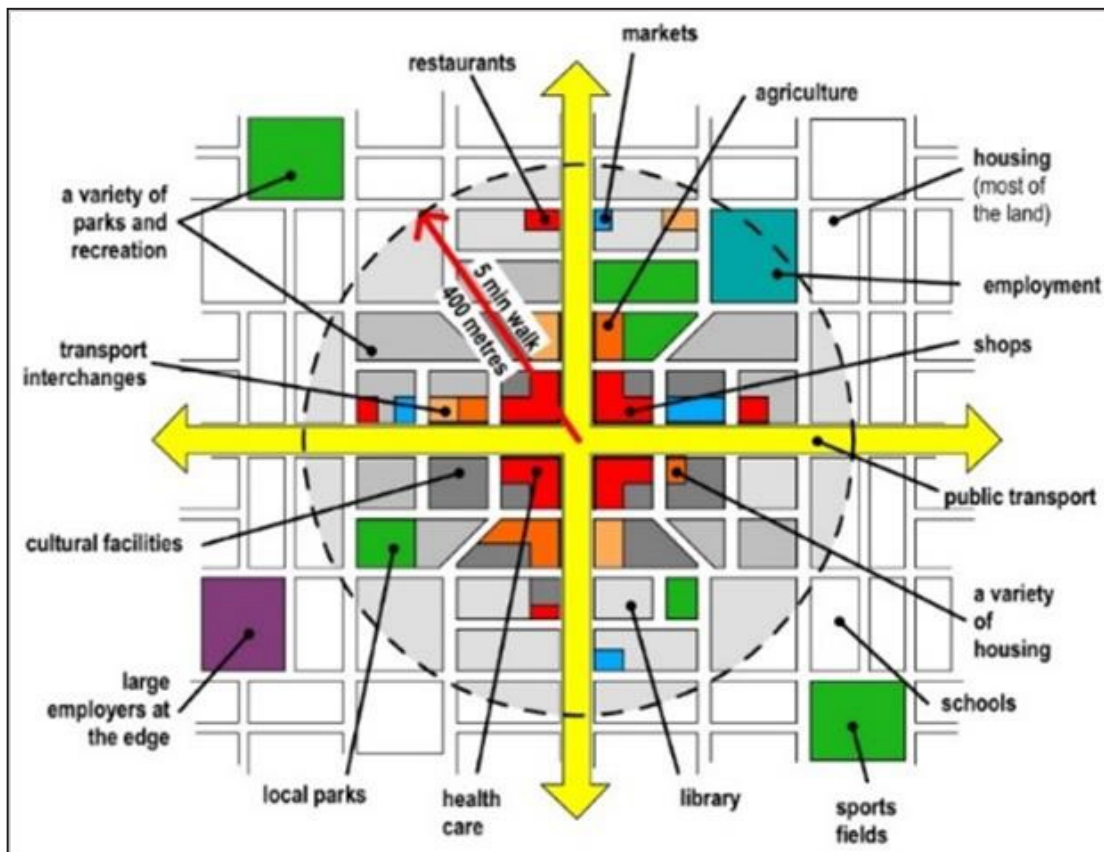
The rationale for development was sparked by the extensive reputation of Durban as the biggest port city in the country, together with the desire to seize the economic potential for the inner city. This in turn has seen the municipality investing in infrastructure services such as sewer, storm water and water mains operation systems for the Point Precinct. Hence:

*“There is the regeneration strategy plan that is underway, but other initiatives include the beachfront upgrade currently taking place through the extension of the promenade to the precinct area, and the ‘back of beach’ initiative to address the issue of old dilapidated buildings within the precinct” (Key Informant from eThekweni Municipality).*

The municipal official further responded that the mentioned ‘back of beach’ initiative would be implemented by allowing land use in the inner city to be for high-density developments to accommodate the anticipated additional 430, 000 population intakes by 2040. The intention of these initiatives is the eradication of the inner-city urban decline, cohesively improving and placing the Durban Point’s reputation on the map again using four spatial principles, namely; Walkable City, Integrated and Inclusive City, Connected City and Realising the Potential.

**The Walkable City** principle refers to the introduction of high-density mixed-use developments and high-rise buildings, with enough social facilities and services every five kilometre distance to accommodate the high-density population. The walkable city principle also focuses on pedestrian and cycling designed streets for a pleasant and safe area (see Figure 2).

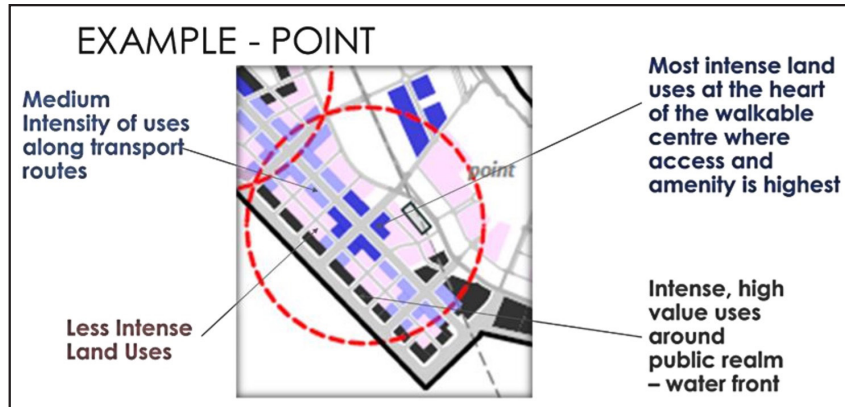
Figure 2: The Walkable City Guided Model



Source: eThekweni Municipality (2016)

The second principle is the **‘Integrated and Inclusive City’** that indicates the decrease in car usage and an increase in public transportation through the creation of a high-density urban core. Within the precinct, provision for public transportation access is made irrespective of the high usage of privately-owned vehicles. It mainly depicts land use intensity to introduce walkable, connected neighbourhoods and also aims to create open space areas with a high number of public amenities, all of which contribute to property values (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: The Integrated and Inclusive City Principle Model Applicable to the Durban Point Precinct.**



Source: eThekweni Municipality (2016)

The third principle is the '**Connected City**' which alludes to connecting different modes of transportation and the creation of safe pathways - thus contributing towards:

*"the creation of safe pathways paves the way for crime prevention and upgrading the public realm" (eThekweni Municipality key informant).*

The fourth principle which is '**Realising the Potential**', depicted the area as a catalyst for future development. A higher 'Floor Area Ratio' (F.A.R) as a regeneration initiative provides the potential for high-density mixed-use developments for the Point precinct. Above all, the Central Durban property values are likely to increase by 5%, through the so-called 'snowballing effect' of the Point Precinct.

#### 6.4. Watching development from the terraces

According to Rashid and Rosly (2013), urban regeneration depicts land re-development in areas of moderate to high density urban land use to reinvigorate a run-down urban area such as the inner city. One of the main findings regarded the active economic activities i.e. office spaces, restaurants and retail outlets (among others), that were present, most of which were situated on the first floor of the residential buildings. This depicted the notion of mixed-use developments. There was, however, also a predominance of inactive economic activities, i.e. vacant office and retail spaces

**Figure 4: Active Business Operations Situated on the First Floor of the Residential Property.**



Source: Author (2016)

**Figure 5: The water canal development between the residential space and business units**



Source: Author (2016)

Minimal signs of physical urban decline, with some dilapidated and abandoned buildings in the area were also observed. This proved that the development was transforming the area and creating an appealing inner-city urban environment. In conjunction with the planning principles applicable to the regeneration strategy, the observed urban regeneration's physical attributes analysed were; walkability, liveability and accessibility. The urban furniture allows for the liveability and walkability within the area. In terms of accessibility, the area is in a grid-like form and has roundabouts for easy traffic flow within the precinct. There is, however, only one main entrance into the Point Precinct area via Mahatma Gandhi Road. With respect to the urban furniture, the bad reputation associated with the Point area led to increased security within the development, evidenced by the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras installed within the streetlights.

**Figure 6: Physical decline evidenced by dilapidated buildings.**



Source: Author (2016)

The Point Precinct development has extensively implemented and encouraged mixed-use integrated developments - thus creating an enabling physical attribute which helps curb any further urban decline thereby contributing towards the beautification of the area.

**Figure 7: Extensive upgrading of the public realm.**



Source: Author (2016)

### **6.5. Can the urban regeneration strategy contribute towards socio-economic sustainability?**

Lorens (2008) draws on extensive knowledge as to how urban regeneration coordinates actions that lead to the improvement of the material state of the structures, combined with the improvement of the economic and social situation.

Among the respondents living in the Point precinct development ranged between the ages of 26-30 years, of which three out of the five sampled (60 per cent) were male and two out of the five (40%) were female. Most of them had been residing in the area for a relatively long period (over one year). The majority of the respondents indicated that they resided with family members. All the residents interviewed earned above R10 000 with 60% earning above R20 000 per month. This implies that the regeneration process increased property values and attracted a particular income group. It is interesting to note that all respondents use their own vehicles for transportation. In addition, 60% of the respondents residents indicated that it only took them approximately 15-20 minutes to travel to their work destination, thus substantiating the use of private vehicles.

Residents indicated that the area was secure and safe. A negative aspect reported centred around the fact that although the majority of the respondents resided as family units, there were no playgrounds nearby besides the uShaka Marine Park, which is considered as the main social amenity within the precinct. However, most of them showed a positive perception about their new and improved Point Precinct. First was the conviction that the property values in the area would rise, providing a good return on their investment in the near future. Second, it proved to be a convenient area considering the close amenities and the social and economic activities provided in the area. The area offered numerous socialising activities and the residents indicated that they frequented the well-known 'Chairman Lounge' and the uShaka Marine theme park on a regular basis.

However, residents indicated that they were not happy with the construction noise, the taxi noise levels and were particularly displeased with the poorly managed buildings at the entrance to the precinct. Irrespective of the negative social impact identified, there have been no criminal incidents within the precinct.

### **6.6. Institutional Collaboration**

On the aspect of the institutional involvement, three informants were interviewed viz - the Project Manager of the Durban Point Development Company; the Project Coordinator of the eThekweni Municipality and the Durban Waterfront Properties Manager. The discussion revolved around cooperation and collaboration between public and private entities as discussed by Rashid and Rosly (2013). During the discussion, it was noted that there was a 50/50 share of the equity between the two entities; the Durban Point Development Company was the main developer and the Municipality maintained the infrastructure services i.e. sewer, storm water and water-mains operation systems for the Point Precinct. The Durban Point Development Company was a joint venture between RocPoint and the eThekweni Municipality, with a sharing 50/50 share of the equity. Under RocPoint was a company called UemSunrise, owned by the Malaysian government. RocPoint were appointed by the Durban Point Development Company to be the drivers of the development and to project manage the Point Precinct development. This theme speaks to the level of institutional involvement required for this regeneration project.

### 6.7. Achieving integration through regeneration – an official perspective.

The discussion in this section was championed by the Durban Point Development Company (DPDC) which provided insight into the regeneration aim and the current status of the Point Precinct Development area. According to the Project Manager;

*“The aim is to complete the project, be a tourism destination, a live, work and play environment and for the project to achieve its own sustainability”.*

The rationale for the development was sparked by the area’s neglect and the objections to the proposed development from the existing users who feared loss of access to a leisure resource. It was important to note that the R35 billion

regeneration project was projected to have a 10 to 20-year lifespan. This finding thus resulted in the understanding that the Point Precinct Development was an ongoing, long-term development project and regeneration process.

The birth of the Point Waterfront Development as part and parcel of the Durban Point Precinct Development, and the development’s positive prospects for socio-economic sustainability could thus be seen as positive outcomes of the regeneration strategy. The development created job opportunities which included 11,000 temporary construction jobs and approximately 6750 more permanent jobs. Parallel to this, the eThekweni Municipality would benefit from the increased municipal rates revenue and there would be an estimated 10 per cent increase in property values. The

Point was considered a top priority in the eThekweni municipality as it was part of the IDP’s strategic priority area. Additionally, the development of a complete mixed-use node that would stimulate economic activity and increase tourism in the area.

Development control in the area was in the hands of a private company. There is a management company, Durban Point Waterfront Management Association (DPWMA), which maintains security (implementing CCTV and 24/7 security patrol), health and sanitation within the precinct area. Plans were in place to avoid any further decline within the precinct area through aggressive and continuous developments control mechanisms.

Map 4: Revised Development Framework Plan



Investments in the Point area is taking the form of private ownership of the residential units. The area is well known for private accommodation i.e. holiday rentals simply because it is located close to the coast. It was therefore established that the return on the investments was high for the properties as a result of long-term rentals. To live here you must earn at least R45 000 income, through the FISCA Act as a law requirement within the precinct. In respect to this the minimum rent starts at R12 000 per month. Most black business owners are the predominates occupants.

### 6.8. Challenges and Constraints

With the implementation of the inner-city urban regeneration strategy within the Durban Point precinct, the key informants experienced various challenges. According to the Durban Point Development precinct residents, some of the challenges revolved around the location of the precinct development. Respondents indicated that their workplace was further away from the precinct and the CBD, thus proving that the urban regeneration strategy catered for high private vehicle usage. Some of the disadvantages associated with residing at the Point Waterfront were the constant construction noise levels due to the ongoing refurbishment of buildings and infrastructure works. The notable urban decline of the dilapidated buildings located at the entry to the Point Precinct did not put the residents at ease and the majority of the respondents indicated the inadequacy of the economic activities at benefiting their living environment.

According to the business operations within the precinct, the major challenge experienced since the regeneration of the point precinct was the issue of theft and crime. This theft and crime was associated with the festive holiday seasons, despite of the 24-hour security system in place.

According to the eThekweni Municipal official, the challenges since the implementation of the inner-city regeneration project of the Point were

centered on the incomplete stage of the project. When the researcher asked about the challenges regarding the implementation of the project, the municipal official stated how the development of the Durban Point Waterfront had upset the nearby residents of Bell Street, who were aggrieved at the loss of their beach access. Other issues were centered on the matter of high-rise buildings that could potentially interfere with the coastal water temperature because the buildings' shadows could have a cooling effect on the water.

The Project Coordinator also referred to how the infrastructure of the inner city was declining. The official stated: "Durban's *inner-city F.A.R (Floor area ratio) was changing at an average of six, which depicted that the infrastructures' capacity was decaying and that the streets needed to be configured and investment (directed) towards the public realm*".

Drawing from this, the researcher was able to deduce that Durban's inner city required regeneration to curb any further decline.

Some of the challenges experienced during the regeneration strategy implementation, according to the Durban Point Development Company Project Manager, were centered primarily on the hindrances to the project's success. The common challenge/concern pointed out by the residents staying around the Point was that the proposed buildings would block their view resulted and they were thus not totally supportive of the development. There were approximately 45 objections raised in this regard. In dealing with this, the official from the DPDC stated that public participation was requested and all of the Body Corporates representing the residents were involved in the process to make amendments to the scheme concerning the building control restrictions. Despite the numerous challenges, social issues were highlighted and eased through the regeneration process. The findings pointed to the fact that the social issues

were related to the issues of immigrants (foreigners) illegally occupying some of the dilapidated buildings required for regeneration.

For the purpose of the study, strong evidence of the socio-economic impact of the inner-city urban regeneration strategy was evident in the four main themes from the analysis: socioeconomic impact, sustainable inner-city principles, institutional involvement and inner-city outcomes, which recurred throughout the dataset. These results suggested that the agreed neoliberalism principle of deregulation in improving the social well-being and economic benefits gained from investments allowed for no direct government intervention in the Durban Point Precinct development. The shared equity between the main developer and the Municipality advocated for the notion of privatisation through private investments in property, allowing for the increase in property value in the previously declined urban environment. Further analysis showed that the Point Precinct proved to have economic potential in bettering the status quo of the Point area further, contributing towards 'Durban's biggest port city'.

Adding to the concept of privatisation through investment, the findings agreed that the competitive theory principle of enhancing economic activities within the Point Precinct was applicable for the study. Strong evidence of economic activities was found through the use of a mixed-use development and inner-city principles that advocated for commercial activities within the precinct. The success of the economic activities depicted the social benefit of residing within the precinct area i.e. the uShaka Marine Theme Park and the numerous business operations. A common view of the interviewees was that the success of the regeneration of the Point Precinct was aimed at creating a mixed-use node that would stimulate economic activity through a 'live, work and play' urban environment, to enhance the city's investment prospects. It was, however, noted that the development primarily benefited those who could afford to live

in the Point Waterfront development. In light of this, the regeneration strategy for the Point Precinct was driven towards a physical facelift of the area, contributing towards beautifying and putting Durban's inner city back on the map.

The theme of institutional involvement suggested that the results of the regeneration strategy agreed with the notion of the principle of participation and open discussion between the stakeholders. Further analysis indicated the extent of the participation by both the Municipality and the developer through open discussions regarding the objective of regenerating the Durban Point. Collectively, initiatives throughout the implementation indicated the measures taken in curbing any further urban decline for the precinct development. The theory of communicative and collaborative planning provided information as to how the urban regeneration could not be achieved through government intervention alone. Evidence of this was found when the interviewees shared that the sustainability of the Durban Point Precinct as a shared task was with the municipality's role in infrastructure maintenance and the developer's role in creating a vibrant urban environment within the inner city.

The aspect of the social and institutional change in facilitating the economic transformation of the Point Precinct presented findings that were driven more towards 'economic and institutional change', a minor disagreement with the modernisation theory. A common view among the interviewees was that the regeneration development of the Point Precinct presented economic transformation through the prospect of property value increases (leading to a good return on investment for the area) and investment potential. Minimal social change for the development was aimed at mainly the increase in job creation and opportunities during the long lifespan of the development.

The overall results suggested that the hypothesis tested for the study seemingly revealed one question that needed to be asked: whether inner city urban regeneration should be more driven towards economic elements for a development? In light of this, the study proved the hypothesis correct in the applicability of the urban regeneration strategy to re-establish the declined urban centers and/or areas within the city.

## 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been proposed, which respond to the challenges, gaps and areas where improvement has been envisaged.

On the aspect of the abandoned buildings within the Point Precinct, the study found the challenge associated with dealing with these properties was that they were dilapidated and illegally occupied by non-paying tenants. This discouraged further property investments and it was the responsibility of the Municipality to deal with landowners so that further development could be fast-tracked. In light of this, it is therefore recommended that the municipality should charge tax on dilapidated buildings that will deter the owners from holding onto the buildings unnecessarily. In support of this, Brebbia (2000) makes reference to how, in order for urban regeneration to succeed, urban land needs to be properly and profitably developed, administered and managed. An additional recommendation is for tax incentives for developers and property owners. This is supported by the UDZ initiative of encouraging inner city regeneration through a tax incentive initiative, taking the form of tax allowance to cover the depreciation of investment made over a period of time for the refurbishment of the existing properties (The Housing Development Agency, 2013). This will result in the fast tracking of regeneration developments to avoid a distasteful inner-city image.

To decrease late-stage objections to future developments within the inner city by the public, local government and private developers should encourage earlier public participation before the development of any plans. On this aspect, the study found that public participation was only sought after the development plans had been completed and approved, with no intense engagement with the interested and affected community in and around the Point Precinct area. This lack of prior engagement resulted in 45 objections being lodged at such a late stage of the planning. It is essential that local people be given a stake in the decision-making process and involvement in the urban planning process. This is supported by Paddison's (1993) observation that the inclusion of agencies outside of the local authorities proved successful for regeneration projects by delivering partnerships with the groups and organisations. In this regard, an 'enabling approach' aimed at dealing with the decline of inner cities is required and should be responsive to housing, employment and transportation aspects.

In line with the above argument, Gibson and Langstaff (1982) indicated that urban regeneration was considered an important public issue, seemingly because it was associated with the urban society. With this in mind regarding the socio-economic aspect, the study found that the project only catered for the more affluent class bracket. As a public issue, the local authorities, i.e. the main developer and the Municipality, should prevent an increase in gentrification initiatives within the inner city that only cater for the elite. This is supported by Green (2014), who stated that the prevention of gentrification could be achieved by including mixed tenure neighbourhoods when developing areas and by making sure that developers had less scope to buy their way out of their obligations. Green (2014) expanded on this argument by noting that regeneration without gentrification could bring both residents and the community together at the beginning of the urban planning process. This in turn explains



why inner cities have to form diverse, inclusive partnerships, foster openness and collaborate on outcomes for future developments.

It has also been observed that on the socio-economic aspect of the regeneration initiative, social negligence was evidenced by the exclusion of middle and low-income earners. This was depicted by the focus placed on the image of the development and the subsequent rebranding of the Precinct as a desirable 'property-led regeneration' aimed at the more affluent members of society who could afford to stay there. The study revealed how the precinct was mostly used as private accommodation or as holiday homes during particular seasons. This calls for a more practical and integrated approach whose focus is on a regeneration strategy that accommodates different income levels. According to Colantonio and Dixon (2009), an integrated approach to regeneration should be maintained by diversified and continuing funding to deliver sustainable communities. This can be achieved by municipal plans meant to minimise the displacement effect that higher income earners may have on low income communities in regard to housing, economic activities and services. More so, social displacement induced by targeted property-led regeneration, could be minimised by the introduction of a 'socially-led regeneration' approach. This in essence could comprise of a movement towards prioritising social integration (through income levels and race groups among others), rebuilding local enterprises and social interaction and equity.

Above all, there is need to improve social amenities within the Precinct. The study revealed that there was one educational facility, namely the S.A Maritime School and Transport College, and one major social facility, namely the uShaka Marine Theme Park. This strengthens the call for inner-city urban regeneration projects to provide more social facilities (such as schools), in order to accommodate future population increases. Alpopi

(2013) substantiates this point by emphasising that urban regeneration involves the improvement of the quality of life and investing in the future by solving problems such as lack of public spaces and lack of identity of residential areas.

Thus, inner-city regeneration is a complex and complicated intervention whose impact always falls short of societal expectations especially the middle- and lower-income groups. The exclusion of others creates unnecessary gaps in the city's spatial intervention measures that perpetuates exclusion as new clusters and pockets of incompatible communities emerge. Until such a time that political will anchors such inner-city intervention measures, there will always be insatiable gaps that will mirror the city's inability to design inclusive and holistic development plans.

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