

**PRESS STATEMENT**  
**24 August 2020**

**CITY OF CAPE TOWN ABANDONS PUBLIC  
PARTICIPATION PROCESS FOR KING DAVID MOWBRAY  
GOLF COURSE LEASE RENEWAL**

On Monday 24 August 2020, the City of Cape Town (the City) confirmed that it has withdrawn the [notice](#) inviting the public to comment on plans to renew the King David Mowbray Golf Club lease and has abandoned the public participation process it embarked on in terms of that notice. The City said that the public participation process had been opened up “prematurely”. The City had come under fire from housing activists for its plans to renew the lease to King David Mowbray Golf Course rather than use this well-located public land for the development of social or affordable housing.

On 24 July 2020, the City invited interested parties to submit comments or objections to their plans to renew the lease of 49.5 hectares of public land (the equivalent of a small suburb or 49 rugby fields) to the King David Mowbray Golf Club for a period of ten years at a rental of R11 500 per year – that’s just over R950 per month or R19 *per hectare per month*. The land is also directly across the road from the Rondebosch Golf Course - a similarly sized golf course that is also situated on public land. Ndifuna Ukwazi and Reclaim the City believe that the land is perfect for the development of social or affordable housing – it’s close to hospitals, good schools and public transport routes (including two train stations and taxi routes).

The City’s acknowledgment that it failed to follow the legal processes outlined in the Municipal Asset Transfer Regulations (MATR) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) again raises serious questions about its ability to effectively manage public land. In 2019, Ndifuna Ukwazi released a [research report](#) that exposed how the City is disposing of the public land it owns by leasing it to private organisations at massively discounted rentals. This land includes parking lots (some of which are empty for up to 18 hours a day), bowling greens with waning and/or tiny memberships, and massive golf courses that provide enjoyment to a few wealthy residents on the weekends. This is an inefficient, exclusive and unjust way to deal with prime public land.

A key finding of the report is that the City has failed to develop a coherent, overall plan on how to manage prime public land in a manner that prioritises that acute social needs. As Ndifuna Ukwazi’s report notes (p. 5):

“The City has no coherent approach to mismanaging public land and is not effectively reviewing, rationalising and preparing land for redistribution to transform spatial inequality. Those in charge of asset management are the custodians, but have no strategic forward planning function when it comes to land management. Those responsible for spatial planning, land use management and

housing are not the custodians of public land and have limited power to influence how it is used.”

If the City is serious about addressing spatial inequality, it needs to reform its approach to public land management and ensure that public land is used to address pressing social needs.

The City confirmed that all comments and objections received to date will be considered and placed before the council and sub council during the final decision-making process. We hope that the over [1 500 objections](#) already received will make the City reconsider how this public land can be better utilised to benefit all Capetonians.

Michael Clark, Ndifuna Ukwazi researcher, commented:

*“The end of King David Mowbray Golf Club’s current lease offers the City a vital opportunity to act on a new vision for a just and more equal Cape Town – an opportunity that the City cannot afford to ignore. If the COVID-19 crisis has taught us anything, it is that we need to radically re-imagine our society and our cities – this piece of land offers the perfect opportunity for the City to demonstrate a break with the business as usual approach to the inefficient, inequitable and exclusive use of well-located public land.”*

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