

PRESS STATEMENT
30 October 2020

RECLAIM THE CITY
**LAND FOR
PEOPLE**
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NDIFUNA
UKWAZI
DARE TO KNOW

RONDEBOSCH LEASE RENEWAL A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO REDRESS SPATIAL APARTHEID



Today, the City of Cape Town Council (Council) approved City's Mayoral Committee (MayCo) recommendation to in-principle renew the lease of 45.99 hectares of prime public land (the equivalent of a small suburb) to the Rondebosch Golf Club for a period of ten years. While the City has amended the rental tariff it charges golf courses by increasing the tariff to R10 000 a year - that's just over R833 a month or R18 per hectare of land per month - this masks the City's failure to redistribute public land. The renewal is a significant missed opportunity to leverage well-located public land to directly address entrenched spatial inequality and contribute to the reimagining of a more just and equal city.

MayCo's recommendation comes on the back of fierce objections from activists, landless people, civil society organisations, and experts in the fields of economics, history, law, and spatial planning. In fact, the City received 1827 objections urging it not to renew the lease but to use this public land to promote a spatial transformation.

Rondebosch could offer affordable homes to 2 400 people

The Rondebosch Golf Club land is situated is close to the best hospitals, top performing schools in the province, a police station and transport nodes (including two train stations and taxi routes) - making it [perfect for the development of affordable housing](#). It even falls into one of the City's [Urban Inner Core](#) and [Integration Zones](#), where spatial restructuring, spatial transformation, public and private investment, integration and densification are prioritised in terms of the City's own housing policies and strategic plans. While some of the site falls under a flood line, a [research report](#) published by Ndifuna Ukwazi last year shows that two thirds of the site could still be developed in a sensitive way that would minimise the environmental impact of the development, would be respectful of the flood line and would prioritise density through for example a water sensitive urban design approach. The schematic plans in the report show that over 2 500 housing units could be developed on the site, in spite of the technical constraints of the site (of these units, one model could see 1 433 affordable homes cross subsidised by the remaining units, providing the opportunity for roughly 2 400 people who could otherwise not afford to live close to decent social amenities).

What makes the City's plans even more repugnant is that the golf course virtually borders another massive golf course - the King David Mowbray Golf Course, which also sits on City-owned land and over which the City also plans to renew a ten year lease.

Years of broken promises

In 2016, Deputy Mayor Ian Nielson, [said](#) that there were too many golf courses in Cape Town and that the City had to explore how it could "rationalise" the use of public land:

"As patterns of favourability towards particular sports change, so do the need for facilities. We have, for example, already seen considerable consolidation of bowling clubs across the city, as membership for that sport has declined ... It is essential that more intensive land use takes place within the urban core area, rather than ongoing expansion of the city footprint due to expansion at the edges of the city. Thus we are looking with greater focus at all of the City-owned land within the core area as to its potential for redevelopment."

But four years later the City hasn't released a single golf course or bowling green for the development of social and/or affordable housing. Cape Town has [24 golf courses, 10 of which are on public land](#). And it's not just golf courses, the City owns more than [87 000 pieces of land](#), but continues to lease out well-located public land for the exclusive use by a few at the expense of hundreds of thousands of Capetonians that desperately need housing.

In its announcement of the in-principle lease renewal, the City claims that it included a two year cancellation clause into the lease contract in case "the City contemplate[s] a different usage" for the land (cancellation clauses are common in these types of leases) and again claims that "all municipal land is being assessed for its human settlements potential, including golf courses".

But talk is cheap. For years Ndifuna Ukwazi and Reclaim the City have advocated for the City to release well-located public land to address the shameful and divisive legacy of spatial apartheid by developing social and/or affordable housing. In each case, the City argues that the constraints of an individual site renders affordable housing impractical while reciting vague platitudes about their commitment to spatial transformation. How are poor and working-class families supposed to trust the City's unsubstantiated promises, when its actions have proven time and time again that it does not, in fact, take spatial transformation

seriously? Or are the City's empty promises just a diversion tactic designed to insulate itself from criticism until the lease renewal is signed and cannot be challenged for another 10 years?

We challenge the City to put its money where its mouth is. Rather than renewing these inequitable, inefficient and unjust leases that only benefit a wealthy few, we call on the City to urgently prioritise this and other well-located public land for the delivery of well-located affordable housing as a means of tackling Cape Town's enduring legacy of spatial apartheid.

#RedistributeThisLand
#StopTheLease

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