

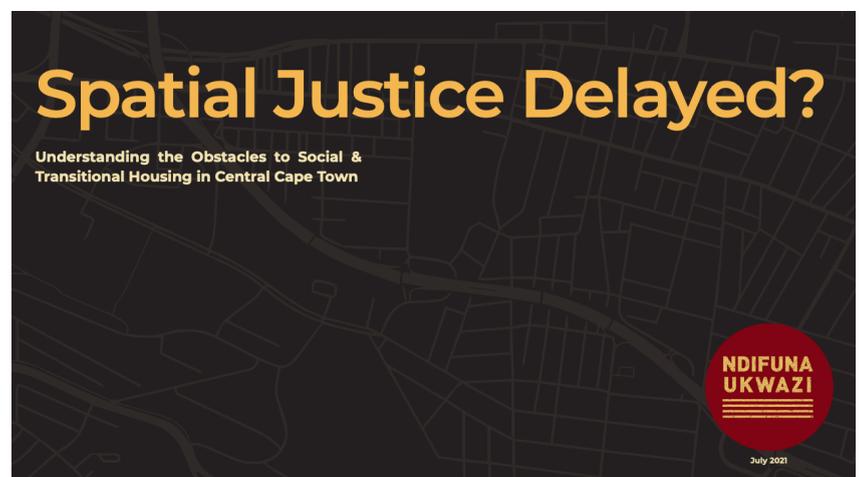


PRESS RELEASE
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NDIFUNA UKWAZI'S NEW RESEARCH REPORT REVEALS AN ONGOING LACK OF POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CENTRAL CAPE TOWN

Four years after the City of Cape Town committed to building affordable housing in central Cape Town, progress has been slow. A new research report asks why?

On 11 August 2021 Ndifuna Ukwazi launched a new research report, entitled *Spatial Justice Delayed? Understanding the Obstacles to Social & Transitional Housing in Central Cape Town*, during a virtual public meeting that was attended by over 120 land and housing activists, social movements, civil society organisations, academics, social housing institutions (SHIs) and politicians from around the country.



The research report and public meeting, which was hosted in partnership with social movement Reclaim the City, comes four years after the City of Cape Town promised to release 11 pieces of well-located public land in the inner-city, Woodstock and Salt River for the development of social and transitional housing in its *affordable housing prospectus*. However, four years after these commitments, not enough progress has been made in the context of the housing crisis Cape Town faces. Only one of the projects - the Pickwick Road transitional housing project, which offers temporary housing to just 19 families - has been completed. Over the last four years, the City has not been unable to break ground on the remaining 10 sites. While a few of the projects have shown signs of progress (including the Pine Road, Dillon Lane and Pickwick Road projects), many have stalled or made no apparent headway. In some cases, it is unclear how long it will take for the projects to be completed or if they will be completed at all.

Well-located affordable housing is one of our most powerful tools in the struggle to overcome the legacy of spatial apartheid and promote social, racial and economic inclusion. Given the urgent and escalating affordable housing crisis, many are frustrated by the slow progress on these promises.

It is in this light that the *Spatial Justice Delayed?* report documents the progress that has been made on each of the 11 sites earmarked for the development of affordable housing and tries to understand the political and technical obstacles that have hindered or slowed the delivery of the social and transitional housing projects on these sites. The report reveals that key obstacles include a lack of clarity about the release of public land, financial viability, time-consuming development processes, inadequate government resources and capacity, conflicting incentives for government officials and an overall lack of drive and hunger for affordable housing from local government and politicians.

In response to these findings, the *Spatial Justice Delayed?* report, recommends that:

- The state - at all levels - urgently release well-located public land for the development of affordable housing;
- the City develop a clear and standardised land release process for the development of affordable housing;
- the state review the financial mechanisms associated with the social housing programme by linking the income bands and subsidy amounts to inflation and regularly adjusting the subsidy amount to ensure financial sustainability;
- the City utilise its planning and regulatory powers to encourage and fast-track the development of public sector housing development (including considering financial incentives for the development of affordable housing, simplifying administrative procedures and streamlining approval processes);
- the City use its powers to reduce red-tape in land and planning approvals and assist Social Housing Institutions (SHIs) to access funding;
- the City prioritise the development of well-located affordable housing by offering sustained and active support for affordable housing projects earmarked in well-located areas;
- the City dedicate more capacity and resources to the development of affordable housing projects, in particular for the planning and land packaging processes; and
- the City review its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for officials working in housing, in particular to amend the current KPIs that overemphasise the *number* of houses delivered over other factors like the *affordability* and *location* of the houses delivered.

A key finding of the report is the acute lack of sustained support from local government and political leaders in the City of Cape Town to overcome the barriers to the development of well-located affordable housing. While the City has a number of important tools at its disposal which could assist SHIs in developing well-located affordable housing projects, like making public land available at discounted prices, providing financial incentives for the development of affordable housing, simplifying administrative procedures, and stream-lining approvals to reduce delays and costs, the City has not done so.

Mandisa Shandu, Ndifuna Ukwazi director, said: *“The state resources and planning strategies employed by the apartheid government to entrench its policy of racial and spatial segregation and economic exclusion have not been met with the requisite resources, will and action to undo the legacy of apartheid era spatial planning. We need to fully understand the nature of the obstacles preventing the realisation of a more just, equal city. NU’s Spatial Justice Delayed? report hopes to add to the public discourse on this question by articulating the barriers to affordable housing in well-located areas.”*

Political support to champion affordable housing has been largely absent since the City's former Mayoral Committee Member for Housing and Transport Brett Herron departed from office in November 2018.

While several members of the City were invited to attend yesterday's public meeting and launch of the report, it was unfortunate that none could attend to engage directly with several interested parties. The City did, however, acknowledge the public meeting hosted by NU and RTC by issuing a press statement just prior to the event, broadly outlining the status of various housing developments.

The possibility of a just outcome in an unequal society requires a willingness to reflect on the obstacles and challenges that have slowed the development of affordable housing, and the courage to drive projects that will ultimately break with past and current conceptions of how, where, and for whom homes can be accessed in this city.

Robyn Park-Ross, Ndifuna Ukwazi researcher and co-author of the report, said: *"In line with the City's original commitment, Ndifuna Ukwazi and Reclaim the City want to see affordable homes built on these sites. After four years of not seeing the urgency needed in the delivery of this commitment, we intend for this public conversation and publication to support collective solutions to unblocking the barriers identified through this research."*

- Download the research report here: <https://jumpshare.com/v/ePjrXQuVHNIv01QIFdCz>
- Download a user-friendly pamphlet on the progress on the 11 affordable housing projects here: <https://jumpshare.com/v/30Q9cQbmNEJYa7OxY5BO>
- Watch a video on the progress on the 11 affordable housing projects here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CSY32bHKZJ6/>

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