ETHEKWINI INTERGRATED INNER CITY LOCAL AREA AND REGENERATION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

EThekwini residents can have their say on the proposed eThekwini Integrated Inner City Local Area Plan and Regeneration Programme which is set to revolutionise the Inner-City restoring it back to its former glory by attracting business and economic growth back to the area.

A website has been established to keep the public abreast of all developments relating to the plan where they can also comment about the project.

Further engagements to keep residents informed will be held with an open day planned for early next year where an information session and public display will be held. The date and venue will be communicated in due course.

Progress made with the regeneration plan was presented to eThekwini senior management at a high-level meeting chaired by the City Manager, Sibusiso Sithole this week.

It was explained that the purpose of the project is to prepare an Inner-City Local Area Plan (LAP), a high level plan to inform the detail precinct plans, Inner-City Regeneration Strategy and Implementation Plan. Ultimately the plan aims to ensure the Inner-City of Durban will be a vibrant, connected, walkable and integrated city centre to provide suitable environments for economic, residential, sporting and leisure opportunities for all.

The presentation to management provided progress made to date on the plan and detailed the process of preparing the Inner-City LAP and Regeneration Programme. There have been intense stakeholder engagement and communications with over 34 meetings and workshops held. Further engagements are planned before the plan is finalised.

Rejuvenating the inner-City is vital as the United Nations estimates that 71.3 percent of our population will live in urban areas by 2030. By 2050, 80 percent of cities will be urbanised. Also the urban centres, especially the metros, dominate the Country’s economy and offer the best employment opportunities.

The regeneration of Durban Inner-Cities has the potential for access to employment, reduced transport costs and a range of housing opportunities.

The Inner City spatial framework looked at three cross cutting themes which includes basing the proposal on understanding the past and how the city currently functions, by ensuring that all development is resilient and based on a solid understanding of the economy and drivers of regeneration to achieve functioning property market; efficient capital market to attracting investment; and growing centric labour market.

The Inner-City Spatial Framework introduced four spatial principles to respond to regeneration imperatives;

•Making connections, to overcome segregation and making the city more accessible. The focus of this principle is to develop a complete street to all different modes of transport to support a growing city,

•A walkable City, to make Inner-City more pedestrian friendly, designing streets with wider pavements to encourage pedestrian movement , public access open spaces, allow street activation, security and interactive environments,

•An integrated, inclusive City by providing amenities and opportunities for all and,

•Realising and unlocking the potential, regeneration and expansion on both a large and small scale.

The total developed potential for the Inner-City when established could include an increase in residential by 60 percent, retail increasing by five percent, commercial/industrial by 20 percent and other amenities by 15 percent. This could see the addition of 450 000 people accommodated in the inner city compared to the 60 000 currently living in the Central Business District.

The LAP, when finalised will be presented to the relevant steering committee and departments. Further workshops and consultations are planned.

Continued communication will take place to inform the public about progress made on the plan.

Residents can visit this link to find out more about the project and leave their comments;

<http://www.durban.gov.za/Resource_Centre/Current%20Projects%20and%20Programmes/Inner%20City%20LAP/Pages/default.aspx>