



Town Planning Consultants

082 337 5901
crog76@gmail.com
Craig Pretorius Nd(Trp) BTech(Trp)

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

Mr Dylan Weakley
Department City Transformation and Spatial Planning
City of Johannesburg

By e-mail: dylanw@joburg.org.za

Dear Dylan,

SAXONWOLD AND PARKWOOD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION COMMENT ON THE DRAFT NODAL REVIEW OF THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

I refer to your e-mail of 28 February 2018 in which comment was requested to the abovementioned draft policy.

I act for the Saxonwold and Parkwood Residents' Association (SAPRA) and herewith provide a summary of comment on the matter.

SAPRA has an ongoing relationship with your department, which over the years has included a full precinct planning process, which led to the approval of thereof in 2007 and subsequent constructive participation relating to the BRT Land Use Guidelines and the Rosebank Urban Development Framework, 2008.

In 2015 we obtained permission from your department to embark on a review of the 2007 precinct plan. This review was subsequently delayed by the local authority due to the formulation of the Spatial Development Framework 2040 and the current Nodal Review process.

The above is relevant as SAPRA will once again request permission to review the precinct plan, which I believe will be both necessary and beneficial to the ongoing transformation of the area.

DRAFT NODAL REVIEW

SAPRA supports the general intent of the Draft Nodal Review.

An additional public meeting (to those of the local authority) was held on 3 April 2018, to explain both the Draft Nodal Review and Inclusionary Housing Policies to the community. The draft documents and your notice were provided for individuals to comment.

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There were clear and obvious concerns from the community, which need to be taken into account in the ongoing execution of the Nodal Review, should the local authority adopt it.

I believe the most difficult mind shift for a resident who invested heavily into an area such as Saxonwold and Parkwood would be the probable change of the area from a sub-urban to an urban environment.

Why change the area, which “works” from a local perspective. An investment to live in the area was made on the basis of its character and location. It is difficult to perceive the change from a low density, low noise, low traffic, mono-use, well treed area to a robust bustling urban environment.

The Nodal Review takes an aggressive leap from previous policies to implement a desired outcome, which will most probably make the city a better place for all in the future. However taking the previous statements into account it will be very important for the local authority to manage the transitional period effectively to avoid disinvestment.

Concerns raised relate to this transitional period, which include functional issues such as:

- Ad hoc uses across the area, without proper thought into their location
- Ongoing management of non-residential uses relating to noise and health
- The impact of these uses on an existing resident
- Implementing sound urban design and architecture
- Planning, provision and maintenance of:
 - the pedestrian and cycling environment
 - public transport
 - private transport routes
 - engineering services provision
 - public social amenities
 - and public open space.

In view of the above and to attempt to achieve a vision for the area which will continue to ensure a quality well planned living and working environment SAPRA wishes to build on its working relationship with your department through finer detailed planning beyond the Nodal Review. Preliminary discussions have already been held with your department relating to a possible precinct plan/urban design framework for the area. A formal application is due to follow once clarification is received on the eventual outcomes of the Nodal Review.

From a personal planning perspective I wish to raise the following, which are relevant to Saxonwold and Parkwood:

- The transition between the Principle Metropolitan Sub-Centre and the General Urban Zone should be further detailed to ensure correct application of the Transect Approach. This can be achieved via a precinct plan including urban design guidelines.
- The policy is not 100% clear on the mixture of uses within a specific development in the General Urban Zone or even in the Principle Metropolitan Sub-Centre. The concern is that the smaller erven of Parkwood will be used primarily in their current form for non-residential uses. Parkwood may then become a dwelling house office/non residential environment only, which may lead to urban decay. A mix should be required or areas should be defined, where only non-residential will be permitted.

- The wording of the height requirements is likely to create confusion during the land use application process. The difference between 4 and 5 Storeys in the General Urban Zone is negligible and will not achieve any additional protection of privacy or scale concerns.

I trust this will assist the local authority in the formulation of this policy and look forward to the further detailed planning/working relationship with your department relating to Saxonwold and Parkwood.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Pretorius', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Pretorius
URBAN TERRAIN