

WE DEMAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Residents' Response to the Western Cape Government's
Financial Model for Social Housing on the Tafelberg Site**

Written by Sea Point Residents: Angela Adonisi, Annie Bezuidenhout, Nava Derakhshani, Dr. Lucy Valerie Graham, Elizabeth Gqoboka, Isa-Lee Jacobson, Joane Louw, Sheila Madikana, Khanyisa Magabela, Karen Terera, Greer Valley, & Delia van Rensburg.

30 January 2017

WE THE RESIDENTS of the Western Cape and the City of Cape Town, who come from across the race and class divide, demand that Social Housing is built on the Tafelberg site in Sea Point.

WE RECOGNISE THAT

- Sea Point, like neighbourhoods across South Africa, carries the scars of apartheid spatial planning that leads to divided and unequal cities;
- Sea Point; a safe neighbourhood, with its quality public facilities, the seaside promenade, good public schools and close to work opportunities; has been reserved for a few;
- Furthermore, evictions of poor and working-class black and coloured people are also not just a feature of the past, but a present reality across the inner city and suburbs like Sea Point;
- Our Province and our Government have failed to provide affordable housing in well-located former white areas since the end of apartheid. This cannot continue;
- Furthermore, we recognise that our deeply divided and unequal society has profound social consequences.

WE BELIEVE

- That good affordable rental housing in well located areas builds safe and inclusive communities;
- Social Housing on the Tafelberg site is an unprecedented opportunity to begin to provide affordable and dignified rental housing for poor and working-class people in well-located inner city areas.

WE DEMAND that the Western Cape Government

- Stop the Sale of Tafelberg & other well-located public land
- Build affordable housing on well-located public land
- Act to prevent unjust evictions and displacement
- Use the Tafelberg site effectively and efficiently
- Cross-subsidise Social Housing without Compromising Social Housing
- Keep Social Housing Affordable & Accessible
- Ensure that community members can be employed in the development
- Be Efficient, Transparent, and Accountable
- Address the housing and shelter needs of street people

WE THE RESIDENTS of the Western Cape and the City of Cape Town, who come from across the race and class divide, demand that Social Housing is built on the Tafelberg site in Sea Point.

WE RECOGNISE THAT

Sea Point, like neighbourhoods across South Africa, carries the scars of apartheid spatial planning. Like most inner city suburbs in Cape Town under apartheid, it was the site of forced removals along the lines of race, with black and coloured working-class and poor families forcibly evicted. The most infamous of these was the removal of Tramway Road residents from Sea Point to the Cape Flats between 1957 and 1961.

Sea Point; a safe neighbourhood, with its quality public facilities, the seaside promenade, good public schools and close to work opportunities; has been reserved for a few. The only working-class black and coloured people historically allowed to live in Sea Point were cramped into domestic-worker quarters in the basements of buildings, or in the backyards of employer's homes. This legacy is still alive today. Poor and working-class people face undignified living conditions. Many people are not allowed to live with their families, cannot cook in their buildings, and struggle in rooms that do not have proper ablution facilities and are not maintained by landlords. This has an impact on health, family life, dignity and security.

Furthermore, evictions of poor and working-class black and coloured people are also not just a feature of the past, but a present reality across the inner city and suburbs like Sea Point. Everyday, we see our friends, neighbours and employees unable to afford expensive rents, pushed out by landlords who are developing luxury apartments, evicted from small "maid's rooms" they have lived in for many years. When evicted, there is nowhere to go. Many people have been forced to live on the streets, others are forced to move to the townships and commute long hours daily to work while incurring an additional expense. Living in Sea Point is only for those who have a lot of money. The government has not built any affordable housing in the inner city since the end of apartheid. As residents, we say this cannot continue. To overcome the spatial divisions of apartheid, mixed housing in the inner city is essential.

Furthermore, we recognise that our deeply divided and unequal society has profound social consequences. These include crime, violence, gangsterism and insecurity. The active effort of government to redress such inequalities are crucial for social cohesion and the benefits that accompany a more inclusive society. As such social housing not only benefits the historically financially excluded, but also has tremendous benefits in a larger social agenda for safe and inclusive cities and communities. This is identified as a key Sustainable Development Goal by the United Nations (SDG 11), and the development of Tafelberg for social housing will be an opportunity for South Africa to demonstrate its commitments to the SDGs.

WE BELIEVE

Social Housing on the Tafelberg site is an unprecedented opportunity to begin to provide affordable and dignified rental housing for poor and working-class people in well-located inner city areas. It is an opportunity to break with a history that pushes poor people to the edge of the city. It is an opportunity to begin to address a spatially divided city. It is an opportunity to build safe and well-maintained housing for poor and working-class people near places of work, good schools and hospitals. It is an opportunity to make our well-resourced and beautiful neighbourhood a neighbourhood for all. Social Housing on the Tafelberg site must set the tone for how affordable housing can happen in well-located and resourced neighbourhoods across the City, and country.

We have read the financial model released by the Western Cape Government. It is important to note that at first the model was not easily accessible or understandable to all of us. As members of the community, many of us have had to spend some time to make sure we understand what the numbers mean. We have hosted meetings and discussed this amongst each other in small groups. We had many questions and concerns related to the model. In response, we have put together the following demands:

WE DEMAND that the Western Cape Government

Stop the Sale of Tafelberg & other well-located public land

- We believe the The Western Cape Provincial Government's Financial Model shows that it is possible for government to build Social Housing on the Tafelberg site.
- The model can be improved to make Social Housing even more viable on the Tafelberg site.
- The first step to realising Social Housing on this site is to stop the sale. We demand that the Province Stop The Sale of the Tafelberg site.
- This demand also applies to the many pieces of public land the Western Cape Provincial Government intends to sell such as the Helen Bowden Nurses' Home, Top Yard and Alfred Street Complex.
- We demand that government stops the sale of well-located public land.

Build affordable housing on well-located public land

- We welcome the Province's decision to conduct a financial model on the Tafelberg site. However, Tafelberg is just the starting point. Well-located, affordable housing in the inner city is long overdue.
- Displacement and evictions of working-class and poor people are a daily phenomenon in this city. Government's failure to build affordable housing in the inner-city has exacerbated this. Affordable housing needs to be protected and expanded by government.

- We demand that a feasibility study for Social Housing is conducted on other well-located provincially owned land, especially the sites of Helen Bowden Nurses' Home, the Alfred Street Complex, and Top Yard.
- We demand that affordable housing is built on publicly-owned land in the inner city and surrounding well-located areas.

Acts to prevent unjust evictions and displacement

- The Province has a crucial role to play to in preventing unjust evictions and displacement of working-class and poor people in the Province, and in the City. This relates specifically to protecting the rights of tenants and existing government-owned affordable rental stock.
- We demand a more proactive Rental Housing Tribunal that deals with the concerns of working-class and poor tenants and addresses exploitation and unfair practices by landlords that lead to unjust evictions.
- We demand that the Province protect and maintain existing provincial affordable rental housing stock.

Use the Tafelberg site effectively and efficiently

- The Province's financial model for the Tafelberg site is based on 270 flats. We demand that at the very least, 270 flats be built on the site.
- We understand that if the land is used better on the development, the number of flats might increase. We demand that the Province properly consider whether there are other options that could increase the number of flats.

- The model works with 108 parking bays on-site. We do not think that this many parking bays will be needed. As most of the residents will earn in low-income brackets, many will not have cars. The site is also located right along a MyCiti bus route and a main taxi route. We think that space used for parking on the site could be used in other ways, for housing or for community space. We demand that parking should be reduced.
- We demand that the Tafelberg site is used as effectively and intelligently as possible to support the building of Social Housing and to maximise its long-term social value.
- We demand that Government does the same on other well-located public land to build affordable housing, to make the best use of the land over time and to maximise its social value.

Cross-subsidise Social Housing without Compromising Social Housing

- Linked to the above, we understand and accept that it makes sense for parts of the Tafelberg site to be used to generate money to help build the Social Housing component.
- We understand that Province's Feasibility Model proposes selling part of the site for shops, and selling the heritage building. However, we know there are other ways to help pay for the Social Housing that need to be considered.
- Province must consider options like: a multi-storey mixed-use building (which already exist in Sea Point), adding more floors to the shop space, including apartments, and/or renting underground parking.

- Renting, rather than selling off, areas of the site for shops and/or the community building, and/or the sale of the market-rate flats might make more sense for cross-subsidisation of social housing on the site over time.
- We demand that Province consider all options and choose the most appropriate ways to cross-subsidise Social Housing.
- We demand that when cross-subsidisation is proposed to build Social Housing on the Tafelberg site, and other public land, that this does not compromise or sideline affordable housing but firmly supports it.

Keep Social Housing Affordable & Accessible

- Social Housing policy states that rent be 30% of a household's income.
- The Province's financial model uses rent prices from R1,000 to R2,300. Although this is affordable to many working class people, we are concerned that rent starting at R1,000 will exclude households earning in the lower income bands who should still qualify for social housing according to national policy.
- We demand that Social Housing on Tafelberg prioritises and is accessible to working class and poor people, particularly those who have lived and worked in this community for many years.
- We demand that rent for Social Housing on Tafelberg, and elsewhere, is kept affordable for poor and working class people and that some flats are available to rent for households earning R1,500 and below R3,000.

Be Efficient, Transparent, and Accountable

- The Province's model uses a timeline where procurement processes start in 2017, and construction starts in 2019.
- Many people in the City and in Sea Point have lived in poor housing for decades. Families are being evicted everyday and do not have affordable options in the city. The Tafelberg site has been unused for many years. Many promises have been made about housing before. Time matters and this is an urgent matter.
- We demand that the procurement and construction processes on the Tafelberg site start as soon as they can, that they are transparent, that there is meaningful public participation, and that government is accountable to the people for its decisions and actions.
- We demand that these principles of efficiency, transparency, participation and accountability apply to all decisions to build affordable housing on publicly-owned land.

Ensure that community members can be employed in the development

- The construction and maintenance of the Social Housing on Tafelberg will require construction workers, cleaners, caretakers, gardeners, and administrators.
- There are many members of the community who do not have employment and do not qualify for Social Housing.
- We demand that there are opportunities for people in the community to be employed in the development.

Address the housing and other needs of street people

- Many of our neighbours, friends and family live on the sidewalks and streets of this neighbourhood.
- Many were evicted from housing in Sea Point and many are not employed. We know that they are not catered for by Social Housing. There is not enough space at the Haven in Green Point. Street people must not be forgotten in Sea Point and elsewhere in the City. They must be cared for with decency.
- We demand that the Province and City engage sincerely with the street community and commit to address their housing and other social support needs.

In light of these demands, we appeal to Cabinet and the Western Cape Government to stop the sale of the Tafelberg site, to approve the building of Social Housing and to begin to undo apartheid's spatial legacy.

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As a resident of the Western Cape, and Cape Town, I add my support and voice to the Sea Point residents demands for Social Housing on the Tafelberg site in response to the Financial Model by the Western Cape Government.

Endorse these demands at:
www.stopthesale.net/tafelberg270