

**CITY OF JOHANNESBURG
REGIONAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
(RSDF)**

**SUBMISSION OF THE
PARKTOWN NORTH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

M E M O R A N D U M

FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CITY COUNCIL IN THE REVIEW OF THE RSDF, 2006

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In its annual review of its Integrated Development Plan for the City of Johannesburg, the Council invites communities to submit comments and proposals for consideration in formulating and revising the development policies of the Municipality. As a municipal authority the City of Johannesburg is required to prepare an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the city and in doing so must provide its citizens or community groups with the opportunity to participate in the process and contribute towards determining the development policies of the city.
- 1.2 The major element of the IDP which is of interest to residential communities is known as the Spatial Development Framework (SDF). The SDF is mainly concerned with physical land development and related policies which, when adopted by the City Council, provides the framework in which the Council administers the management of land development. Like most communities, especially those representing a residential area such as Parktown North, the representative community association is concerned with the present and future well-being of its local area. For this reason the Parktown North Residents' Association (PNRA) is actively involved in, inter alia, monitoring the spatial development of the neighbourhood.

- 1.3 For these reasons and after active involvement of the members of the community, the PNRA has prepared these submissions to the City Council for incorporation in the SDF for Region 3 which includes Parktown North.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The past 10 years has seen the introduction of a new planning and land development system in South Africa. One of the most significant aspects of this new system is the SDF component of the IDP. In Johannesburg the SDF is a general statement of development policy which has a more detailed Regional Spatial Development Framework (RSDF) for each of the 11 regions into which the city is divided. It is the RSDF which most directly relates to the development strategy of interest to local residents.
- 2.2 The SDF and the RSDF which are integral parts of the IDP are planning and spatial development documents which are created in terms of the Local Government : Municipal Systems Act. The provisions of the Act regarding the purpose of the SDF are often misunderstood, even sometimes by municipalities themselves. The Act states that the purpose of an SDF is to **guide and inform** the planning and development decisions of the City Council. The contents of a SDF is to provide guidelines for the City Council when it considers and makes decisions relating to land development. This would include matters such as the rezoning of property, the subdivision of land, consent to use land for different purposes, the provision of essential services, management and development of roads and public transport.
- 2.3 The matters dealt with in a SDF do not create legal obligations or rights to land development. Those aspects of the control and regulation of land use are created by the Town Planning and Townships Ordinance and by town planning schemes and bye-laws. No change of land use or development can take place unless the City Council amends the town planning scheme (rezoning) or formally approves an application to amend the conditions for land use development.
- 2.4 The function of the SDF is to provide norms and guidelines for the City Council in making development decisions. The development policies which

are set out in the SDF are, as in the nature of planning policy, not legally binding rules. What the SDF (and the RSDF) does and should be used to do is to identify the issues and the factors which should be given consideration when the City Council decides on a development application. As the SDF does not and cannot possibly detail the conditions and requirements for the development of every single property in the city, there will be exceptions when some RSDF policies are not rigidly applied either to restrict or to encourage development in certain circumstances. The RSDF is however an important guiding **framework** to achieve coordinated and well-managed land development. Communities should not expect the policies of the RSDF to be fixed and rigid but at the same time the City Council should not approve development which is significantly inconsistent with its RSDF guidelines.

3.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

3.1 Although in effect the Municipal Systems Act and its provisions relating to the SDF have effectively superseded the earlier policy planning instrument of the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) which provided for similar policy plans in the form of Land Development Objectives (LDO's) there are development principles in the DFA which still have effect. In general terms the most notable of these with reference to planning and spatial development are the following:

- (1) To promote residential and employment opportunities in close proximity or integrated with each other.
- (2) To optimize the use of resources including engineering services infrastructure, roads and transportation.
- (3) To promote a diverse combination of land uses even at a local level.
- (4) To discourage urban sprawl and create more compact urban areas.

These principles are generally applicable in all areas or localities but are also relevant related to local circumstances. For an area such as Parktown North the more significant official objectives which these principles establish are:

- * The importance of providing for higher residential densities; and
- * A more liberal approach to allowing variations of different land uses, both residential and non-residential in a particular area.

These principles however are tempered by other DFA principles such as:

- * Being calculated to promote trust and acceptance by those most likely to be affected; and
- * Generally to foster viable and sustainable development.

3.2 While there is a need to accommodate growth and change in the city and to recognize the general principles for development, it is also important to maintain and conserve existing development of value and environmental quality. With this in mind and on the basis of the characteristics of Parktown North outlined in Section 4.0, the following general criteria for the development policy of the area have been adopted.

3.2.1 The existing general density of 8 dwelling units per hectare to be retained.

3.2.2 Higher residential density should be considered along the main traffic routes of Jan Smuts Avenue and Seventh Avenue.

3.2.3 There should be no expansion of the existing business or non-residential nodes.

3.2.4 Non-residential use should be considered on main roads where residential amenity has been impaired and is developed at a low intensity.

3.3 These criteria are a general statement of objectives. More detailed policy proposals are set out in Section 7.0.

4.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

4.1 BACKGROUND

- 4.1.1 Parktown North was laid out in 1903 and the General Plan of the township was approved in June 1904. It consisted of 594 erven of which 496 erven have long rectangular dimensions of 81 metres by 31,5 metres. Therefore 84% of the original properties had an area of 2 552m².
- 4.1.2 The other 16% of erven in the original township had different shapes or dimensions and, with a few exceptions, ranged in size between about 1 750m² and 3 500m².
- 4.1.3 The township lies across two moderate ridges which cross the area from east to west. These are roughly along 7th Avenue, through the centre of the township, and along 13th Avenue at the northern boundary of the area.
- 4.1.4 The topography results in there being two drainage valleys. The first is parallel to the southern boundary of the township on Chester Road in Parkwood and the second generally along 10th Avenue. These valleys drain from the higher lying area of Rosebank in the east down towards Parkhurst in the west.
- 4.1.5 Although the two ridges and two valleys are not particularly prominent, the land slopes on most erven are relatively steep, most notably to the south of 6th Avenue.
- 4.1.6 For many years the properties in Parktown North have been zoned in the Town Planning Scheme to permit a density of 1 dwelling house per 1 250m². This has enabled the majority of erven to be subdivided into two portions. Currently more than 95% of the properties have been subdivided. Although by far the majority of subdivided portions have an area of 1 250m², there are a very limited number of smaller properties with areas such as 530m², 625m² and less than 750m².

4.1.7 Excluding business properties and erven developed with residential flats, apartments or townhouses, there are now approximately 1 080 individual dwelling house properties in Parktown North. In total there are approximately 30 properties used for business purposes so that not more than 2,5% of the erven are developed for non-residential purposes.

4.2 ROADS

4.2.1 The eastern boundary of Parktown North is along Jan Smuts Avenue. This road is one of the major arterial routes in the city and is classified as a “mobility spine” in the Regional Spatial Development Framework (RSDF).

4.2.2 Seventh Avenue is an important traffic link through the township which links the Rosebank development node on the eastern side of Parktown North with the extensive residential areas of the city to the west. It is classified as a “mobility road”.

4.2.3 On the southern side of the area is Chester Road in Parkwood which is an important traffic route from Greenside to the west and continues along Bolton Road and Glenhove Road to the M1 motorway and Louis Botha Avenue in the east. Chester Road is also a “mobility road”.

4.2.4 Along the western boundary of Parktown North adjoining Parkhurst is First Avenue West which is a link or connector road but is not a main traffic route.

4.2.5 It is primarily Jan Smuts Avenue and Seventh Avenue which influence the development of Parktown North and which affect land use.

4.3 LAND USE

4.3.1 There is very little non-residential land use in Parktown North. Business development and office use is almost exclusively confined to

areas along Jan Smuts Avenue and Seventh Avenue. More specifically the non-residential areas are as follows:

- * A node of mixed business and office use at the intersection of Seventh Avenue and Jan Smuts Avenue. This is a peripheral part of the lower Rosebank business node.
- * Significant office development along the western side of Jan Smuts Avenue between Seventh Avenue and Chester Road.
- * A local shopping and business node including offices at the intersection of Seventh and Third Avenues.
- * A small shop and residential complex at the south-western corner of Seventh and Fourth Avenues .
- * Along most of Seventh Avenue other than the areas already described is a strip of low intensity office and similar uses.

4.3.2 Other than the above a few isolated erven are developed with churches, nursery schools and other non-residential uses.

4.3.3 The greater part of the area is a residential suburb of high quality and environmental amenity. Despite its age of more than 100 years, the area has experienced a long and continuous renewal and improvement of its residential dwellings. This has been effected by:

- * The extensive subdivision of residential erven.
- * The centrality and accessibility of the township with the northern suburbs of Johannesburg.
- * A high level of capital investment in residential property.

As a result, Parktown North is notable for its high property values, stability and very limited land use change.

5.0 POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The general development policy of the City Council contains three objectives which are relevant to Parktown North:
- * The promotion of higher residential density in order to create a more compact city and to counter urban sprawl.
 - * The support of increased public transport on major traffic routes.
 - * The limitation of business and non-residential development to or within existing nodes.
- 5.2 The general residential density objective for residential suburbs such as Parktown North is 10 units per hectare. This represents an average erf size of 1 000m². The prevailing density of 8 units per hectare in Parktown North cannot, except in a very few isolated instances, be increased to 10 units per hectare. In an insignificant number of cases, 12 units per hectare might be achieved. In total the number of properties where 10 or 12 units per hectare is possible by subdivision is estimated to be less than 20 except properties on Jan Smuts and Seventh Avenues where redevelopment of multiple units can be contemplated.
- 5.3 In the case of 95% or more of the residential erven, an increase of existing density by subdivision can only be achieved where the existing dwelling on the property is demolished. In situations such as this the very high residential property values means that such development is not viable or practical.
- 5.4 In the draft Spatial Development Framework (SDF) recently prepared for 2006/2007, the Council has put forward a revised approach to residential density. The strategy for densification is now more focused on the major transport routes, public transport network and major activity and development nodes. The range of potential densities has also been modified and is less focused on simplistic formulae.

- 5.5 The current density strategy appears to give greater recognition to preserving the existing characteristics of residential areas and to be more selective in the location of significant density increases. This supports the approach adopted by the residents of Parktown North.
- 5.6 In the draft SDF now under consideration, residential densities for mobility spines such as Jan Smuts Avenue are generally aimed at 50 to 70 units per hectare. In the case of mobility roads such as Seventh Avenue, the density range is between 30 and 50 units per hectare. These densities can be seen as generally appropriate for the Parktown North area. However, the peculiar local circumstances of erf sizes and existing development suggest that densities for Parktown North along these two major traffic routes can be more specifically identified.
- 5.7 Taking into account the need to retain mobility and traffic movement along major routes, topography and the character of existing development, it is proposed that a target density of 50 units per hectare on Jan Smuts Avenue and 40 units per hectare on Seventh Avenue would best satisfy the Council's development strategy and the interests of the local community.

6.0 EVALUATION

- 6.1 The existing land use and development characteristics of Parktown North limit the extent to which the general development strategies of the City Council can be applied in this area. Land use change and increased residential density has already taken place throughout the suburb over a long period of time. As a result Parktown North has experienced a continuous renewal with substantial capital investment in land improvement. Generally the resultant high land and improvement values do not make it practical to consider the introduction of any significant new development policy.
- 6.2 In the greater part of the area the general strategy of increasing residential density to achieve a more compact city is not possible. This strategy which is aimed at a general density of 10 units per hectare has in effect already been achieved although at the slightly lower level of 8 units per hectare. A further increase in density in the future could only be achieved by creating

substantially higher densities of 20 or more units per hectare. Clearly, this is not economically feasible and would not be practical with the existing infrastructure of essential services.

- 6.3 The possibility of non-residential development is also extremely limited. It is only along Jan Smuts Avenue and Seventh Avenue that office or other business use could be contemplated on the basis of accessibility, amenity and established land use characteristics. However, such development along these two important traffic routes would tend to contradict the general strategy of mobility routes and of limiting non-residential land use development to existing development nodes.
- 6.4 In the case of Jan Smuts Avenue there are two distinct existing land use zones. The first zone is along the southern section of the road south of its intersection with Jellicoe Avenue in Rosebank. This part of Jan Smuts Avenue has already been developed with substantial relatively new offices and other business purposes. It is effectively a peripheral part of the major regional node of Rosebank.
- 6.5 To the north of Jellicoe Avenue or at least north of Eighth Avenue the properties in Jan Smuts Avenue are predominantly residential dwelling houses of which some are being used for non-residential purposes such as small scale offices. Here the possibilities for land use change are reasonably practical. General policy dictates that this northern section of Jan Smuts Avenue would be appropriate for higher residential density development. Such a strategy would however need to be compatible with the quality and character of the existing residential development to the west along First Avenue. Considering the factors such as access to properties along Jan Smuts Avenue and the reduced amenity along this major traffic route, it would also be appropriate to consider the development of low intensity office use for which there is a substantial demand. The conversion of these properties to low intensity office use in the existing dwelling house buildings would limit traffic generation, retain the physical character of the area and would limit the need to improve services infrastructure.

- 6.6 The second zone in which land use change and more intense development can be considered is along Seventh Avenue. A large number of these properties has already been developed with non-residential uses. Other than the long established retail and business development at the intersections of Third and Fourth Avenues, a large number of the properties on Seventh Avenue have been converted to office use and other similar business purposes. Because this non-residential development is at a low intensity and as the older dwelling houses have been replaced by more appropriate land use, the change along Seventh Avenue has been successful and is a general improvement to the area.
- 6.7 Very few of the original dwelling houses still remain along Seventh Avenue which limits the possibility for redevelopment with higher residential densities. Although higher residential density along Seventh Avenue would be consistent with broader council development objectives it would also need to be limited to protect the quality and amenity of the existing dwelling houses further to the north and south. Similar to the northern part of Jan Smuts Avenue, Seventh Avenue could appropriately become a low intensity business and office zone as already exists along a large section of this traffic route.
- 6.8 Beyond the limited zones on the northern part of Jan Smuts Avenue and on Seventh Avenue, there are no strategic development objectives which should give reason to change the land use pattern of Parktown North. New development should be confined to the erven which have frontage onto these two main roads. This would mean that areas of increased residential density or non-residential development should be confined to the original mid-block boundary of the respective street blocks. This would mean that the properties along First Avenue, Sixth Avenue and Eighth Avenue should not be affected by any new development policy. Some argument could be made for the properties on either side of Third Avenue to the south of Sixth Avenue to be developed for more intensive residential use or possibly low intensity offices. However this should not be a general policy as it would create an intrusion into parts of the core residential area.

- 6.9 Both practically and strategically the possibility of any significant policy for land use change in Parktown North is extremely limited. At the same time the considerations of maintaining the extensive high quality and valuable residential area which has already increased in density should be maintained.

7.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT POLICY

- 7.1 The existing residential area developed with individual dwelling houses should remain unchanged. Marginal increases in density by the subdivision of erven can be permitted to a density of 12 units per hectare. The minimum erf size should be 750m² and second dwelling units should not be permitted on erven smaller than 1 250m².

- 7.2 On Jan Smuts Avenue south of the Jellicoe intersection, the existing development should be retained.

- 7.3 On Jan Smuts Avenue north of the Jellicoe Avenue intersection, redevelopment could take place in the form of:

- 7.3.1 Residential use at a maximum density of 50 units per hectare; and

- * limited to 3 storeys on Jan Smuts Avenue
- * limited to 2 storeys along the mid-block boundary
- * at a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0,5

- 7.4 On Seventh Avenue between Second Avenue and First Avenue West, redevelopment could take place in the form of:

- 7.4.1 Residential use at a maximum density of 40 units per hectare and 3 storeys within 40 metres of Seventh Avenue.

- 7.4.2 Residential use at a maximum density of 30 dwelling units per hectare and 2 storeys within 40 metres of the mid-block boundary.

OR

7.4.3 Offices and other similar business purposes (excluding retail); and

- * limited to within 40 metres of Seventh Avenue
- * limited to existing buildings or a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0,2.

7.5 Existing retail, office, business and other non-residential zoning on Jan Smuts and Seventh Avenues should not be increased or extended.

7.6 The proposed policy and zoning criteria are summarized in the following Table 1.

TABLE 1PARKTOWN NORTH

DEVELOPMENT POLICY CRITERIA

OBJECTIVE	CRITERIA
1. Increased density of all erven to not more than 12 units per hectare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum area of subdivided portions – 750m². • No second dwelling house on subdivided portions less than 1250m²
2. Increased density of erven on Jan Smuts Avenue to not more than 50 units per hectare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) – 0,5. • Maximum height of 2 storeys within 25 metres of the mid-block boundary including parking basements more than 1,5 metres above ground level. • Site Development Plans to be submitted to owners of adjoining erven for comment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building lines of 15 metres from the mid-block boundary.
3. Increased density of erven on Seventh Avenue to not more than 40 dwelling units per hectare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) – 0,4. • Not more than 4 dwelling units within 25 metres of the mid-block boundary. • Maximum height of 2 storeys within 25 metres of the mid-block boundary including parking basements more than 1,5 metres above ground level. • Building line of 15 metres from the mid-block boundary. • Site Development Plans to be submitted to owners of adjoining erven for comment.
4. Small scale office and business use (excluding retail) along Seventh Avenue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum floor area of existing buildings or FAR = 0,25. • Office and business use restricted to within 40 metres of Seventh Avenue.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The land development policy for any area in the city should be based on a combination of the broader development objectives of the city, existing land use and development characteristics, the availability of engineering services and practical considerations. These factors as they are relevant to Parktown North have been discussed in earlier sections of this report. They provide the basis on which to put forward a development policy for the area to provide for both change and the conservation of what is predominantly a stable and highly valuable residential area.

8.2 Because of the high quality of land use, physical environment and stable development, future change in the area should be primarily aimed at new development which enhances and protects its existing character. As the only parts of the suburb where the potential for renewal and improvement are

along Jan Smuts Avenue and Seventh Avenue, any policy proposals should be restricted to these zones.

- 8.3 On this basis and with regard to the general development objectives of the city, the policy described in this section is proposed for Parktown North. While this will give further detail to the RSDF as it applies to this area it is not intended to include detailed criteria for each and every property. It is also not proposed as a blueprint plan to be used as a rigid determinant in considering future development proposals which should always be considered on merit.