

Planact supports the campaign to #StopTheSale of Tafelberg!

Planact is a Johannesburg based non-profit organisation with a mission to make towns and cities work for people! With a special place of over 30 years in the history of community development and democratisation in South Africa, Planact continues to promote active citizenship, not only in Johannesburg but also in the rest of the country. Therefore, Tafelberg (or parts of it), if used for affordable housing, could set a precedent on housing delivery in SA. A victory for Tafelberg will be a victory for the marginalised residents of the Johannesburg inner city that are being forced out of the city through private sector led developments that inflate rentals.

The failure of government to adhere to progressive public participation, specifically in the sale of Tafelberg, is a major concern as it deprived many disadvantaged communities of the opportunity to make comments on the proposed sale. Information on the Tafelberg sale by the Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works reflects that there was poor and inadequate public participation. The government has clear legislation, regulations and policies that govern the disposal of publicly owned buildings. However, there are serious deficiencies in the implementation of meaningful and inclusive public participation process. This results in situations like the Tafelberg case where citizens that need affordable housing are not afforded chances to meaningfully engage and participate in the process. Planact supports the halt on the sale until meaningful public participation is adhered to by the City of Cape Town.

The city of Cape Town has a well-documented history of spatial, racial and income inequality. An article in The Guardian (30 April 2014) described Cape Town in the following way,

“Apartheid may have ended 20 years ago, but here in Cape Town the sense of apartness remains as strong as ever. After decades of enforced segregation, the feeling of division is permanently carved into the city's urban form, the physical legacy of a plan that was calculatedly designed to separate poor blacks from rich whites”.

Over the past 20 years, there has been negligible investment into the provision of affordable housing in well located areas in the City of Cape Town. Housing development has largely mirrored pre-1994 spatial planning, with RDP houses being built in the townships and the Cape Flats.

Very few towns and cities have successfully implemented affordable housing projects in areas that can be described as well located, convenient and high value. Exceptional instances of poor people living in well located areas are the informal settlements such as those found in Innesfree Park (Sandton), Msawawa (Fourways) and Kya Sands (Randburg). However, these are characterised by acute lack of basic services, lack of housing and unsafe environments. Residents in these settlements are constantly harassed and various attempts have been made to displace them by both the state and private sectors. It is due to poor



public participation that there are frequent service delivery protests and litigations against government projects.

Similar to Tafelberg, in Johannesburg, the expansion of Maboneng has been questioned for its benefit to the urban poor. Such developments continue to push the urban poor out of well-located areas and similarly, Tafelberg will set a precedent that will compel cities to develop affordable housing on well-located areas.

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