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PEOPLE'S PLAN

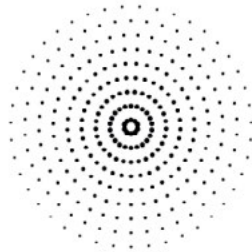
for the right to

HOUSING

in the age of

CLIMATE CHANGE

ETHEKWINI 2024



THE DURBAN COALITION

Civil Society Working Together

**PEOPLE'S
PLAN**
for the right to
HOUSING
in the age of
**CLIMATE
CHANGE**
2024

This People's Plan is dedicated to everyone who lost their lives and their loved ones during the April 2022 floods, and to all the people who have struggled, and continue to struggle for justice, dignity and their right to housing in a healthy, safe environment in South Africa.

By the Durban Coalition
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1.0 WHY WE NEED A PEOPLE'S PLAN NOW

The consequences of climate change are no longer an abstract future event. Increasingly, people in our city of eThekweni are experiencing severe weather events related to climate change. These events (including floods, storms, heatwaves and drought) pose significant threats to all life in the city, including to animals and plants. Scientists have stressed that a lack of political will to meet climate targets from all nation states means refocusing efforts toward finding ways to survive on a planet that overshoots a 1.5° Celsius increase in global temperature.

Over the last few years, floods experienced by eThekweni Municipality as a direct result of climate change have resulted in lost lives and extensive damage to urban infrastructure. In June 2024, a tornado in Tongaat resulted in widespread devastation to homes. In April 2022, 461 people lost their lives over three days due to extreme flooding. The resultant damage to sewerage and water infrastructure rendered our rivers and ocean unfit for human use. Two years on, slow infrastructure repair continues to impact on people across the city. These impacts are especially marked among the marginalised. In both these crises, neighbours, community organisations and civil society were first responders. The absence of a coordinated local government response to these crises has revealed a lack of planning and capacity within the city to respond to climate change disasters.

Our government's most critical step must be to protect and care for our people and the environment on which we depend, by ending fossil fuel production and ensuring rapid decarbonisation. Any actions to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change without an urgent and substantial reduction of harmful emissions and toxic pollutants would continue to threaten our lives and the stability of our environment. We take this urgent government action as a given, and as one which must underpin this proposed People's Plan.

A Just Transition in South Africa must also include participatory resilience planning

premised on environmental justice principles that address historical imbalances, marginalisation, and inequality in the city. It is against this backdrop that a coalition of civil society formed in eThekweni in May 2022. The Durban Coalition is a growing collective of NGOs, CBOs, university academics, and social movements, as well as civic structures such as ratepayers and residents' associations in the municipality. This non-politically aligned coalition has committed to a long-term assemblage to work in solidarity with each other. The coalition works collectively to build a united and co-ordinated participatory civil society movement designed to strengthen civil structures on the ground. It also engages constructively with local and other spheres of government to respond to social and environmental justice issues. This People's Plan was born in the spirit of mutual support and cooperation which strengthens both civil society and local government.

Responding to climate change requires integrated and holistic planning through participatory and democratic methods. Currently, our Integrated Development Plan (IDP) has a generic chapter on housing that does not integrate any Just Transition planning. The chapter makes no mention of floods or of the consistently increasing temperatures and the consequences these factors hold for the right to housing in our city. The current housing situation in the municipality is untenable, suffering from consistent under-delivery and placing thousands of people at risk from the next severe weather event. To address this, in 2023, the Durban Coalition initiated a participatory and grounded planning process across different urban sectors and class positions. The objective was to collectively develop a bottom-up, shared development plan for the Right to Housing in the Age of Climate Change. The People's Plan is the culmination of this ground-up process to co-develop the governance arrangements and programmes required to protect the people's right to housing in an age of climate change. This plan offers an alternative and comparative implementation guide for the municipality and activist partners.

This plan was developed through an 18-month participatory methodology, starting with the

lived experiences of people with diverse housing needs across the city. These experiences include life in informal settlements, life for refugees in the city, life in hostels and social housing flats, and further includes the frustrations of rates-payers in middle-class suburbs. Appendix A shows the participatory process designed by the Durban Coalition for the People's Plan. This participatory process offers a useful methodology for municipalities to design and budget future planning with people in the city.

2.0 EMBRACING A NEW APPROACH TO HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: REVISIONS TO THE 2025/2026 IDP

At a November 2023 "listening gathering" dedicated to understanding the challenges articulated by grassroots movements representing shack and poor flat dwellers, hostel residents, refugees, residents' associations, and environmental and other civil society organisations, a clear consensus emerged:

- o Too many people are currently living in unhygienic, unsafe and undignified environments.
- o The current housing situation is untenable and unsustainable.
- o The current plan by the municipality does not reflect the lived reality of the poor and marginalised.
- o A new plan is desperately required—one that is informed by the needs of people.

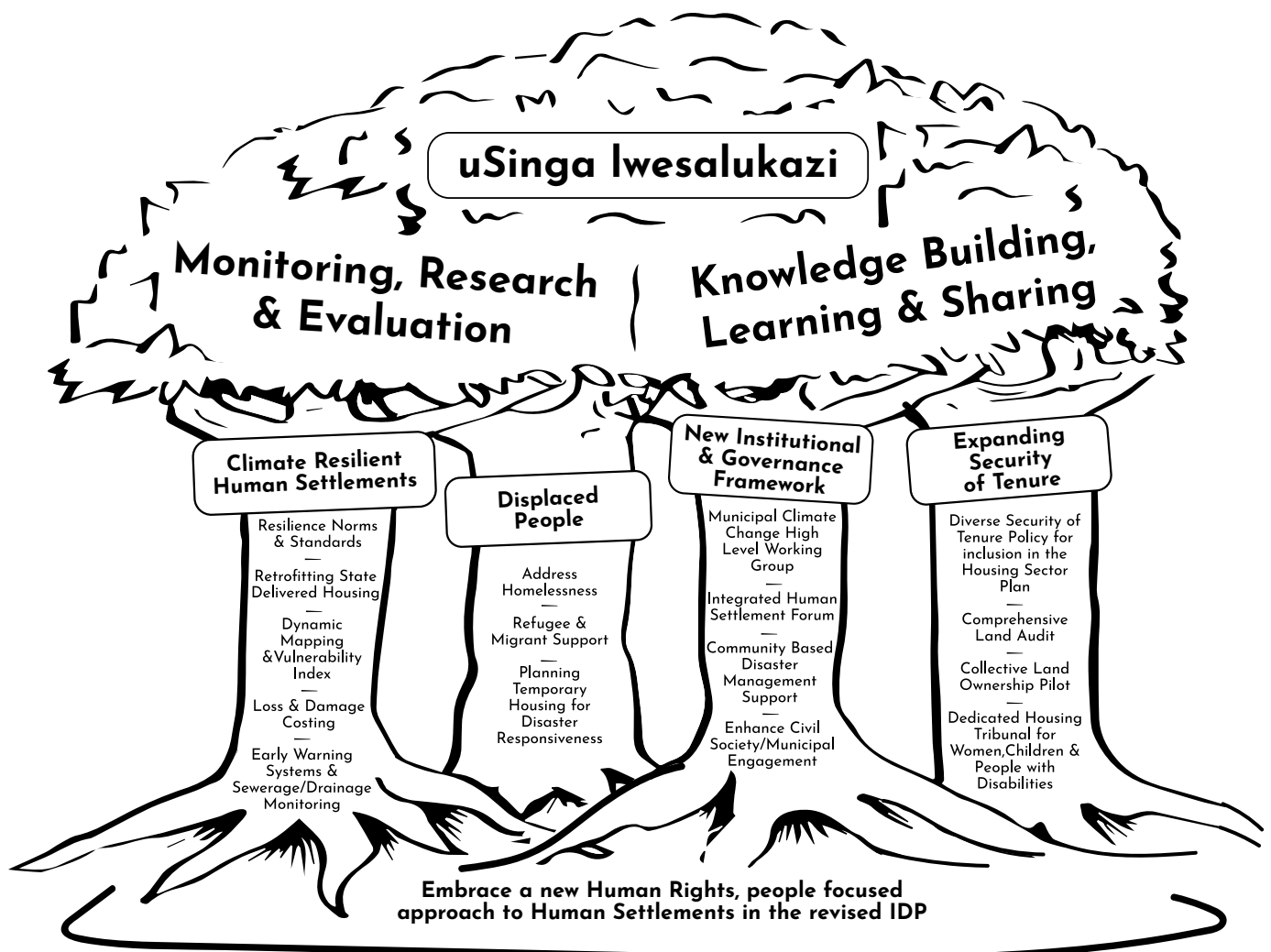
Emerging from the People's Planning process comes the clarion call for a new approach to human settlements. The current IDP Program 3.4 "New Integrated Housing Development" presents a unique opportunity to embed such an approach through the Housing Sector Plan (HSP) that is currently in preparation. The call for all stakeholders involved in the human settlements space to be actively included in the crafting of the revised HSP is strong and unanimous.

Based on engagements with civil society and key stakeholders to date, the following inputs must inform the new Human Settlements Sector Plan/Revised IDP:

1. First and foremost is that a Human Rights Approach should be the fundamental driver of the HSP.
2. People must be placed at the centre of planning and implementation, and most critically, must have a say in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all housing programmes.
3. Foundational principles of all housing programmes must be based on the establishment of decent, healthy and safe residential spaces that allow for social interaction and integration and societal growth.
4. The quality of life for Durban residents can be significantly improved by merely getting the basics right. The revised IDP would do well, for example, to acknowledge the challenges in establishing basic water supply in many parts of the city, and the need to expedite an effective municipal asset management system which ensures basic service delivery.
5. The creation of better settlements must be acknowledged as an important municipal priority. To this end, staff capacity within the Human Settlements Department must be urgently augmented for the implementation of housing programmes. Vacant positions should be filled with experienced professionals who are able to respond effectively to the housing crisis.
6. There are many sound municipal plans in place currently (e.g. Climate Change Implementation Strategy, 2020) yet ironically these implementation plans are not being implemented. While the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) is in place, it is clearly ineffectual. The reasons behind the non-implementation of plans and solutions crafted to ensure urgent implementation action require examination. Here, there is a renewed call for civil society and academia to work closely as partners, rebuilding trust and taking action to revive our city.

7. To assist in this regard, it is strongly recommended that an increase in the capital and operating budget for housing over the next three years must be lobbied for at Full Council. The current backlogs to decent shelter are unacceptable, and new creative approaches to increase appropriate delivery coupled with increased financial commitment is urgently required.
8. The HSP and revised IDP must have a dedicated focus on well-located, affordable, inner-city social housing. As an urgent priority, this will assist in addressing the plight of many in the city.
9. The current narrative which describes rental housing as a burden to the municipality must change. Engagements with social movements involved in this sector must urgently be convened to co-design and better frame interventions with the hostel/CRU communities, and with residents living in other state rental units.
10. The silos between housing and climate change responses must be addressed. IDP responses to climate change and to the housing crisis are in separate plans under separate units, with separate budgets and reporting lines. This, we believe, perpetuates the lack of integration between “brown” and “green” responses.
11. A new culture of experimentation and innovation must be entrenched in the municipality, allowing more creative responses to human settlement challenges.
12. The proposed New Programmes outlined below in this People’s Plan must be included in the 2025/2026 IDP.

Arising from a joint workshop with municipal officials, academics, and civil society organisations, a set of four new programmes are proposed for inclusion in the 2025/2026 Integrated Development Plan. These are summarised below:



3.1 PROGRAMME

ONE: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The current 2024/2025 draft IDP acknowledges that “a new approach to informal settlements incorporating greater resilience, given the complexities inherent in providing shelter (particular given the scale of informal settlements) a much more coordinated, aligned and integrated approach is urgently required within the municipality and between spheres of government in order for truly liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods”. While this is indeed important, the first additional programme suggested in the 2025/26 IDP is to build on this cooperative governance framework by including important partners from civil society. To facilitate better governance, four related institutional projects are proposed.

Project 1 Establishment of the Municipal Climate Change High-Level Working Group

As per the new Climate Change Act (17.1 through to 17.5), each municipality, under the mayor, must develop a climate change response implementation plan which forms a component of the relevant IDP. However, the Climate Change Act offers limited guidance on the implementation mechanism for such a process. In 2015, the eThekweni Municipality first discussed the “Durban Climate Change Strategy (DCCS)”. Lacking much institutional drive, in 2022, the updated DCCS was prepared. The mission statement of this government plan was that “(T)he people of Durban will collectively build governance, social, environmental and economic adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change while achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050”. To the best of our understanding, this DCCS remains under-resourced. To add the necessary weight and resources to address the urgent climate mandate, it is strongly recommended that the eThekweni Municipality establish a High-Level Climate Change Working Group. This working

group should comprise key stakeholders from civil society, business and academia, climate scientists, critical municipal departments, and other governments spheres working in the eThekweni municipal area. This will bring technical capacity and a strong partnership approach to the area of climate resilience planning and implementation into the IDP. This working group will be established by the DCM: Planning and Development and will report directly to the mayor. In order to ground this group in the resilience planning issues already impacting people living in the city, the working group will lead the workstreams outlined in Programme Two of the People’s Plan. These workstreams include the new resilience norms and standards which address the need for housing structures to protect against heat exposure and flooding through appropriate design and materials, using the dynamic vulnerability mapping and loss and damage frameworks. This working group will also ensure that strategic documents such as the Durban Climate Resilience Strategy (last developed in 2017) are revisited and updated with new research and understandings of climate change impacts.

Two representatives of this working group must be active participants in the Multi-Stakeholder Forum for Integrated Human Settlements (Project 2) outlined below. This will ensure that these climate-resilient learnings are fed into this forum in a consistent and engaged manner. In addition, the High-level Climate Change Working Group will, in partnership with the Multi-Stakeholder Forum for Integrated Human Settlements, identify and implement the Resilience Retrofitting pilots outlined in Programme Two. Creating strong linkages between this working group and the multi-stakeholder forum nurtures a learning and knowledge-sharing culture for the whole of society around Climate Resilience Planning. These linkages actively support and feed municipal learning into the Climate Change Act governance structures across the three spheres of government, ultimately reaching the Presidential Climate Commission.

Project 2 Institutionalisation of a Multi-Stakeholder Forum for Integrated Human Settlements (IHS-MSF)

The IDP housing programmes have seen limited implementation since 2015. Given this implementation deficit, the municipality requires a dedicated institutional mechanism that includes all key role players from municipal departments, civil society, business, etc., to champion the goal of creating and ensuring integrated human settlements. It is proposed that a Multi-Stakeholder Forum for Integrated Human Settlements is established. The forum should include sectoral representation from all relevant NGOs, CBOs, social movements, ratepayers, trade unions, informal worker associations, and residential associations, supported by university and research organisations committed to developing integrated human settlements.

The design of the detailed terms of reference, membership and work programme should be led by the Human Settlements Department, include councillors from the Human Settlements Committee, and be supported by the Speaker's Office. An operating budget should be set aside for its functioning and for the commissioning of research and pilot projects. Such a structure should provide oversight for the implementation of all the integrated human settlement programmes, serving as the conduit to promote knowledge-sharing and learning between all stakeholders working in the built environment. Such a forum can also explore new social compacts and partnerships around ways for private developers to contribute to building high-quality, low-cost housing as part of new private developments in the municipalities. Importantly, this forum will also produce monitoring and evaluation reports for the public at the end of each year on the human settlement related IDP programmes. An important task for this forum is to ensure that communities are themselves engaged in mapping data in the areas where they live. This ensures community participation and better needs-based planning of human settlements developments. Data collection and mapping by communities can also be feed into

contextualised data management planning and the High-Level Climate Change Working Group.

Project 3 Establishment of an effective community-level disaster management support system

One of the key lessons highlighted during the April 2022 flooding disaster in the municipality was the need for communities to be at the forefront of disaster management support. During climate-induced disasters and other detrimental environmental impacts, government agencies were unable to physically access affected communities due to damaged road infrastructure. This means that communities themselves are often their own first responders, and therefore need to be equipped to manage local disasters. Addressing this issue of decentralised disaster response requires adequate preparation on behalf of communities and the local government. The municipality will need to lead a process of developing Local Disaster Committees and linking these to a functional portfolio within the existing council. There are many examples of such Community Development Foundations (CDF), e.g. Merewent CDF, which can serve as a good practice and learning hub for other communities. The municipality should host an annual learning festival which gathers disaster committees from across the municipality for training and to encourage school children and residents to engage in resilience planning in the home, capacitating people to provide neighbourhood support during disasters.

This project will involve many strategic interventions including:

- o Community-led disaster stakeholder mapping and community database building
- o Training and capacity-building, including community advocacy, with a focus on low-cost high impact training such as sand-buckets for fire emergencies, and on local first responder responses including trauma counselling
- o Community disaster management preparation and planning
- o Preparation of detailed community disaster management toolkits

- o Community disaster leadership training for selected community individuals assigned with key tasks in the event of emergencies
- o Designing community early warning systems
- o Promoting local community knowledge
- o Compiling a list of churches, mosques, temples and schools which volunteer as safe havens during flooding and other weather events
- o Planning emergency drills and evacuations
- o Documenting and sharing good practices
- o Higher-level, medium-term strategic interventions around alternatives to building design improvements and temporary housing for displaced people
- o Seeking community partnerships with government departments such as Home Affairs to expedite the reissuing of documents after disasters
- o Researching good practice into effective mechanisms for mass communication

Project 4 **Build capacity for more effective engagement between municipality and civil society to meet climate-induced human settlement challenges**

The rationale of this programme is to enhance the skills, technical capacity, and knowledge base of civil society and local government so that they are equipped to meet climate-induced human settlement challenges.

The eThekweni Municipality will enter a partnership with local universities and experienced NGOs to deliver tailor-made training programmes delivering relevant and practical content. These modules will cover a range of key topics, deepening understanding on the fundamentals of climate change; housing rights; basic technical training on stormwater management, building design and infrastructure systems; healthy housing design; effective participation and governance; and disaster management.

The target audience of the training will be three-fold. The primary beneficiaries of the training will be drawn from community-based organisations across all wards, including NGOs,

CBOs, FBOs, community development workers, and traditional leaders. A selection of modules will also be offered to municipal officials, better equipping them to engage as partners with communities. The third target audience is ward and PR councillors, who will benefit from modules aimed to augment the SALGA induction programme, empowering them to manage contemporary human settlement challenges. Training will include areas around governance, sustainability, resilience, and climate change. Rather than reinvent the wheel, the programme should incorporate and build on existing resilience training offered, for example, by the UCLG Learning Team.

3.2 PROGRAMME TWO: BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

As residents and neighbours, we urgently require our municipal government to work with us to create dedicated and evidence-led strategic planning mechanisms and engagement forums. The cooperation will unlock the necessary resources to ensure that humans, ecosystems, and urban infrastructure related to human settlements are sufficiently protected, adapted, and retrofitted for greater resilience against the impacts of climate change. While all people living in our city are negatively impacted by the climate crisis and a lack of adequate planning for its outcomes, we are not all equally resilient to these threats. Those who hold more economic and social resources are usually better able to respond to and recuperate from sudden severe weather events.

Mounting evidence from across the world indicates that children are most vulnerable to severe weather events, and this is shown to be especially true of children living in informal settlements and other forms of precarious housing. The impact of food shortages; losing homes and caregivers; and broken water, sewerage and electricity infrastructure related to climate change can have lasting mental health and development impacts on young people. Similarly, exposure to higher temperatures results

in adverse health outcomes, both acute (e.g. heat strain and heat stroke) and chronic (e.g. kidney, cardiovascular, respiratory and neurocognitive damage). Other vulnerable groups include the elderly, pregnant females, those with chronic diseases, and those who are disabled. In each People's Plan programme, issues of inequality are addressed as a central principle. To this end, it is crucial that an environmentally just lens is practised throughout these projects. For human settlements to thrive in the age of climate change, the vulnerable, marginalised and socially and economically oppressed must receive urgent additional support and protection measures in resilience planning and implementation.

The projects outlined below aim to generate evidence-based responses and resources, and to build resilience mechanisms for our city. These projects have relevance for the eThekweni Municipality's Housing Sector Plan (HSP) 2024-2029 currently under development, and for updates to the City-Wide Incremental Upgrading Strategy adopted in June 2022. The projects below indicate how housing and human settlements, as key infrastructure in the city, should be included in the next iteration of Durban's Climate Change Strategy (2022).

Project 1 Drafting expanded norms and standards for climate-resilient human settlements

Given what we now know about the extent of flooding and other severe weather patterns such as rising temperatures, we require a detailed review of current norms and standards related to housing, water, waste and sewerage infrastructure. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that all new builds for housing delivery adhere to best practice, such as using green materials to prevent further harm to the environment; using renewable energy systems for energy efficiency; and building structures which protect against potential severe weather (floods, heatwaves, droughts), and which can hold against daily heat stress experienced in the hot months. New norms and standards are urgently needed to ensure climate-resilient human settlements. These would set the parameters for all new state-delivered housing developments, set standards for private

developments in the metro, and assist in auditing existing state-delivered human settlements to develop adequate safeguarding and resilience retrofitting plans (see Project 2).

A Norms and Standards in the Age of Climate Change development team should be established. This development team should consist of high-level technical experts from the built environment (architects, planners and urban designers), engineers (housing, wastewater, water and electrical), ecosystems scientists, social scientists with an urban focus, health scientists and environmental epidemiologists, and representatives from community-based organisations, non-government organisations, and ratepayers and residents associations. Including civil society in this development team ensures that new norms and standards are appropriate and responsive to the people's context on the ground. Including these groups also builds capacity within civil society in the housing sector for climate resilience, human settlements planning, and implementation.

Norms and standards for human settlements in the age of climate change must consider the following areas:

Building materials

- o To avoid placing additional strain on planetary limits in terms of mining and chemical processes, all new human settlement infrastructure must use environmentally-friendly materials.
- o New housing design is needed to ensure that, as far as possible, build materials are flood-resistant (for example, improving flood resistance in foundations, etc.), damp and mould-resistant, and use innovative design features to keep houses cool in summer and warm in winter with the minimal amount of additional energy requirements.
- o Buildings need to be designed and constructed considering the geographic typology. Currently, RDP houses do not take this factor into account, instead assuming a one-size-fits-all approach.

Creating local efficiency and decentralising basic services

After the 2022 floods, many households across the city were cut off from the central water and electricity supply, and had limited or no road access to central hubs to purchase food and other supplies. One of the biggest lessons from extreme flooding and the resulting infrastructure damage concerns how local governments can support local-level efficiency, specifically through decentralising basic services and by growing the technical capacity of residents within state-delivered human settlements for maintenance and repair of vital local level infrastructure. New norms and standards should consider how smaller geographies of people access energy, water and food if temporarily isolated due to storm damage, as well as how to create the residential environment for ubuntu: social integration and interaction in urban life. Among the possible solutions are these examples:

- o Create an environment for socially-owned renewable energy in human settlements. Well-designed embedded mini-grids enable a faster response time in smaller geographic areas, rapidly restoring access to solar energy for households after disasters.
- o Explore innovations in rainwater harvesting and options around decentralised water purification stations, using renewable energy to ensure clean drinking water at human settlement scale.
- o Explore decentralised waste management systems that work on zero-waste and circular economies at human settlement scale. The People's Plan supports the end of fossil fuels, which produce much of the single-use plastics that pollute our water sources and clog up the drainage systems, exacerbating flooding. Human settlements need localised, zero-waste plans and micro-infrastructure for waste pickers to sort recyclable waste, and require dedicated support for composting local organic waste which can in turn be used in community food gardens. Supporting the growth of plants and trees in the area further strengthens soil against flooding.
- o Consider food security at a local neighbourhood scale. Local government should actively, through its Parks and

Recreation Department, support local community-led food gardens and should plan for and provide green and urban farming spaces within human settlements. Local government should further provide equipment and dedicated urban farming jobs in marginalised communities.

- o Consider informal work areas: more than 20% of South Africa's workforce is engaged in informal work, and the number is rising. Creative planning to incorporate informal work within zoned residential areas stimulates local informal employment. These informal markets can help meet the needs of their immediate communities, and supporting them would further provide necessary work activity resources (transport, water-supply, drainage, sanitation, etc.) within a closed zone in the community.
- o Develop safe, integrated social and recreational spaces, including sporting zones (running, walking and cycling tracks for example) and parks and green areas. The maintenance and protection of all parks is critical to assist in draining flood waters and for offering children a safe space to play and develop physically.

Planning for resilience to floods, extreme heat and heat stress

The current RDP human settlement rollout seriously lacks in ecosystem services design, with scant attention paid to how waterways flow through settlements during floods. There is limited strategic planting of indigenous trees to stabilise soils and few green spaces to absorb flood water. In addition, there is little evidence of a holistic human settlement strategic plan that considers urban heat islands and their impact for urban residents.

It is critical that new norms and standards research existing literature and practices (such as the Sponge City and other initiatives) and apply these lessons when legislating and implementing integrated urban water management and water sensitive design and stormwater control measures into human settlement policy. This is critical to ensure that our metropole is more resilient to floods and able to absorb excess

water in ways that reduce potential damage to infrastructure and people.

Maintenance of ecosystems services (trees, wetlands, open grasslands and others) that mitigate flooding must be designed in, valued and legislate into human settlement development. Ecosystems must be protected, rehabilitated and restored in ways that involve and include communities so that these become viewed as community assets that safeguard us from severe flooding and heatwaves.

District cooling systems need to be explored to address heating issues, especially in informal settlements or high-density housing. Green roofs and other natural cooling mechanisms should also be explored for this, particularly in high-density areas such as the inner-city, state-supported blocks for the aged, informal settlements, and large hostel (CRU) blocks.

Project 2 Retrofitting state-delivered housing for resilience from floods and other adverse weather for knowledge development

We learn most through doing things together. To address the sense of urgency regarding people's lives and homes, the People's Plan advocates for the immediate identification of four human settlements at high-risk from flooding. These settlements should comprise one from each of these housing typologies: informal settlement, hostel (CRU) block, current provincial or municipal rental stock housing block, and an RDP settlement. Each of these pilot sites undergo municipal-led participatory planning with the residents to develop and then implement a Climate Resilience Plan. These human settlements would be retrofitted over a period of two years in terms of the built environment and ecosystem services to ensure that more people, ecosystems, and infrastructure are safe during extreme weather events. These pilot sites would form learning communities of practice and monitoring and evaluation for the High-Level Climate Change Working Group. They would also be important sites of learning for the Norms and Standards Development Team to work with

communities, learning how resilience planning and materials work in practice. These pilot sites must retrofit not just the built environment; the pilots must embrace the notion of active place-making. Each pilot settlement must develop and protect its ecosystem services, in particular the use of green spaces, trees, grasslands and wetlands, making it a viable and vibrant place to live.

Project 3 Dynamic spatial mapping of climate change vulnerability to create a vulnerability index for diverse severe weather events in eThekweni

This project entails consolidating existing spatial data on climate vulnerability, and setting up an online public eThekweni vulnerability, adaptation and resilience map that tracks risks, offers relevant and evidence-based ways to protect and build resilience, and which shows progress in retrofitting the urban form to address the climate crisis. The map, resources and vulnerability index must be updated according to the latest data on weather patterns, learnings from elsewhere, and technological innovations. Dynamic mapping can also enable focused spatial support for future loss and damage frameworks (see Project 4). Creating an updated online map and resource portal allows the following:

- o Private residents can take mitigation and adaptation measures themselves to protect their homes and families. This frees the municipality to focus on supporting resilience measures for critical infrastructure, vulnerable ecosystems, at-risk areas, and economically marginalised households.
- o Local, provincial and national governments can focus adaptation and resilient support programmes spatially for the most vulnerable in the city.
- o International bodies and other stakeholders can identify potential sites for supporting resilience planning and programmes.

Project 4 Develop a loss and damage costing for eThekweni to support the city's most marginalised and vulnerable

Planning for, retrofitting, and implementing resilience mechanisms to protect homes and related human settlement infrastructure requires significant finances and resources. Noting the loss and damages negotiations internationally, as well as the disaster funding that the national government makes available, the People's Plan requires our municipality to develop a clear and comprehensive loss and damage framework with costing for the city so that we can claim for this reparation as soon as possible. The funds from this loss and damage claim should in part be used to support and bolster future iterations of the kinds of strategic planning, legislation development, and implementation of climate justice projects such as those outlined in this programme. The loss and damage framework must focus on how finance from these claims will prioritise support for marginalised groups who do not have the means to protect and rebuild their land and regroup their assets through private insurance.

Project 5 Institute preventative measures for at-risk settlements through early warning systems and drainage monitoring and clearing

The IDP must budget in the operational costs to scale-up existing community early warning systems which have already proved their ability to save the lives of informal settlement residents during floods. Quarry Road's early warning system is an excellent example of how community members, municipal officials, and university researchers work together to give community members adequate warning on upstream rainfall and river patterns. This allows residents to vacate low lying houses before flood waters arrive at the informal settlement, and saves lives. The eThekweni Municipality has frequently presented this system as a best practice example, yet over nine years since it was first developed, this early warning system still has not replicated in other

communities living on or near the flood plains. It is vital that budget and operational costs are allocated to the existing Quarry Road system. In the next year, this system must be rolled out to at least another three at-risk communities to start institutionalising preventative measures for flooding. The Quarry Road community could be invited to participate in this step, empowering them in the training of community members in the new sites.

The second recommended preventative sub-project is a stormwater and sewer drainage monitoring and clearing project. More and more cities globally are recognising the impact of blocked stormwater and sewerage drains on severe flooding events. Whilst heavy rain combined with strong winds is often a key culprit, fallen leaves, mud and other debris also cause drain blockages. This is a particular problem in areas where drains are not regularly cleaned and maintained. However, blocked drains can also be caused or exacerbated by the actions of residents themselves. It is recommended that the municipality lead a stormwater and sewerage monitoring and clearing campaign that will involve setting aside a limited budget for educational awareness as well as community monitors who will be actively responsible for not only reporting blocked road drainage systems, but who will also ensure that drains are kept clear of litter and waste. Ideally, waste should be channelled into community recycling projects that support waste picker integration to prevent added strain on existing landfill sites. The details of the project can be developed between the Solid Waste Unit and the Drainage and Coastal Engineering Unit. To date, there have also been good case practices of local businesses privately employing such monitors, opening the possibility of local partnerships between community, business, and the municipality.

3.3 PROGRAMME THREE: DISPLACED PEOPLE AND HOUSING IN THE CITY

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), of which eThekweni Municipality is an active member (and current co-chair of

the Urban Planning Committee), has been an increasingly strong proponent for migrant, refugee and displaced-inclusive approaches to local climate adaptation. They have accepted that whether through displacement or migration, the impacts of climate change are already being felt globally. They emphasise that it is low-income households or people living near or below the poverty line who are most vulnerable, and who face these threats without the resources to escape their precarious environments. An important part of the People's Plan is the incorporation of a new IDP programme in the housing section of Chapter 3 to give effect to the UCLG's call for action.

It is important to recognise that in addition to people displaced through climate change disasters, an estimated 16,000 persons sleep rough each day in our city. In pursuit of actualising the vision of a caring and liveable city, it is important to accelerate a programme that dedicates energy and resources to displaced persons. The People's Plan focuses on three such projects: (i) moving towards a harm reduction approach to homelessness (through the efforts of City People—an eThekweni SPV); (ii) a clear action plan to provide refugee and migrant support for shelter, and; (iii) planning temporary shelter for those displaced through climate change.

Project 1 A harm reduction approach to homelessness in eThekweni

The issue of homelessness in eThekweni presents a multifaceted challenge, capturing a significant population of individuals who experience housing insecurity and displacement. Recent studies have highlighted the complexity of this issue, emphasising how economic factors, substance abuse, social conflicts, and environmental challenges interlink to exacerbate homelessness. A study conducted in 2022 revealed sobering statistics: over 16,000 homeless individuals are dispersed throughout eThekweni, with a majority of 67% enduring the harsh realities of street life, while the remaining third seek refuge in temporary shelters.

The municipality has historically taken a responsive approach to homelessness. The COVID-19 pandemic became an important catalyst for municipal leadership to take a more proactive stance, leading the country in a harm-reduction approach to homelessness. Unfortunately, the momentum created has not been sustained and civil society partners are calling for more urgent action.

The municipality should immediately develop an IDP programme which can be adopted in the 2025/2026 IDP, and which actively addresses harm reduction for homelessness in the short, medium, and long-term. Existing work in this area can be built on and further developed, such as the 10-Step Housing Action Plan procured by City People, amongst others. As an additional programme in Chapter 3 of the IDP housing programme, issues of homelessness will receive the necessary capital and operating budget to effectively deal with the issue.

One of the major institutional issues to be addressed by the proposed Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Integrated Housing is the issue of local government mandates to address homelessness—which currently lies with the KZN provincial government. Given that eThekweni has an agency agreement with Provincial Human Settlements, the delivery for shelter and supportive infrastructure (showers, toilets, cooking facilities, etc.) for the homeless should fall within this delegated mandate. The adopted municipal plan could therefore be actioned through the IDP.

It is also worth noting that important precedents have been set by other municipalities such as Cape Town where, through the lobbying from NGOs and social movements, innovative action on homelessness is now underway. It is recommended that as part of the knowledge-sharing and learning role of the MSF, collaboration between cities around homelessness is expedited.

Project 2 Providing refugee and migration housing support

Responding to the call for migrant, refugee and displaced-inclusive approaches to local climate adaptation, it is important for the eThekweni Municipality to craft a clear plan around refugee and migration housing support. To date, there has been little or no formal engagement by the municipality with refugee communities. Whilst it is accepted that this issue does not fall within the direct mandate of local government, the municipality must play a facilitating role by bringing together affected stakeholder communities, NGOs, and the relevant national and provincial departments.

Based on initial consultative processes with NGOs which represent refugees, the plight of refugees and migrant workers is not actively considered. The conditions under which people are living in the inner city require urgent attention. The reality of bad buildings controlled by slumlords are not confronted, and a new approach will require engaging these players to find creative solutions. Similarly, it must be accepted that people working in informal economies in the inner city do not always have documentation, as many have fled war-ravaged countries. As such, the new housing plan must adopt a people-centred approach which recognises this. The housing support plan of action must include:

- o the provision of well-managed, safe, inner-city accommodation
- o the creation of short-stay, cheap, and safe transitional housing new arrivals in the city
- o a process to commence with the immediate renovation of empty inner-city office spaces for cheap rental accommodation
- o It is important that the municipality's inner-city regeneration plan considers the plight of refugees and other displaced people.

Project 3 Planning (temporary) shelter options for those displaced due to disasters

In April 2022 and again in June 2024, climate change induced severe weather conditions

which were experienced in eThongati and eMagwaveni, and which caused significant damage and the tragic loss of lives. To date, residents from informal settlements in Umlazi and other areas remain in temporary housing far away from their original homes, threatening both their livelihoods and causing social challenges. This prompts the urgent need to devise a clear and workable plan for providing shelter for those displaced due to disasters. This plan must include steps where people are supported to return and reintegrate, if possible, to the houses and homes that were damaged. Temporary shelter needs to be well planned, and must provide social-psychological support for people after experiencing displacement. This is especially the case for children, as they often miss substantial periods of schooling or are moved to new schools closer to temporary shelter. It is critical that this plan be developed with the input of people who were displaced during the April 2022 floods, as the contribution of their experiences will guide the way to better planning. The plan should also be mapped out with the respective KZN provincial departments that have been providing support, and be led jointly by the eThekweni Disaster Management Team and Housing Unit.

3.4 PROGRAMME FOUR: EXPANDED SECURITY OF LAND AND HOUSING TENURE OPTIONS WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY

Security of tenure for people living in eThekweni depends on the social and economic context, and on the kinds of housing in which they live. Private ownership in some cases provides for tenure security, whilst in others, ownership can lead to of land and home dispossession. For low-income families and those reliant on welfare programmes to maintain food and housing security, ownership can be a burden that leads to dispossession of homes. Many families can only afford ownership in urban areas through subsidised support for water, rates, electricity, and other welfare means. This is particularly true for owners within ex-municipal social housing blocks who have been beneficiaries of

the Discounted Benefit Scheme, and who now possess units in Sectional Title schemes. It is important for local government to understand that ownership alone through title deeds is not the holy grail for security of tenure. Given the inequality in our city, local government needs to see itself as providing a plural approach to security of tenure.

Project 1 **Research and develop a policy to inform diverse security of tenure options in the city, and include a detailed programme on alternative tenure arrangements in the Housing Sector Plan**

Currently there is insufficient planning at a local government level on the various ways in which people hold secure tenure in forms outside of ownership. The community residential units (hostels) and remaining municipal-owned rental stock are another form in which residents have security of tenure akin to ownership. While strictly speaking these residents are tenants who rent from the state, recognising the constitutional Right to Housing means the state cannot evict tenants without providing adequate alternative housing. Currently, the lack of care and maintenance of municipal and provincial-owned housing places these tenants in a derelict environment. The People's Plan urges the local municipality to take a more holistic view of human settlements, in which they leverage this housing stock to uplift residents and reduce state expenditure in treating mental, physical, and social illnesses associated with living in neglected environments. Here we find opportunities to initiate training and skills programmes which enable tenants in CRUs and municipal rental stock to participate in the upkeep of the built and natural environment in and around their units.

The municipality needs to undertake scoping research exploring the diverse forms of security of tenure that people hold across the city and understanding how these fit into an integrated human settlements approach. An enabling local government provides options for people in different social and economic contexts to build a dignified life for themselves and their families

without threat of eviction and homelessness. Shaping policies that provide diverse forms of securing tenure, including mechanisms for rent-controlled accommodation, and the ability to move across these as circumstances change, ensures that more people are guaranteed the right to housing and able to gain social and economic benefits by accessing housing in the way that best suits their needs. This research should be used to develop a policy on diverse tenure arrangements that best supports marginalised and at-risk people to ensure their Right to Housing.

The Housing Sector Plan (HSP) currently under development should recognise and explore alternative and expanded forms of tenure in the city. Providing a variety of security of tenure options for residents and families in eThekweni offers more flexibility that can respond to changes in contexts within the city. To do so, the Housing Sector Plan requires a good understanding of the existing literature that shows how and when ownership can become a burden and when it risks families' tenure security. The scoping research and policy development under this programme will be useful in this area. Form and context are key variables in understanding whether or not ownership provides security of tenure in the medium to long-term. For example, sectional title blocks that house low-income families and previous social housing beneficiaries often put owners at risk individually and collectively. An inability to afford levies and rates can place the block under administration and open it to transfer to wealthy property developers who wish to utilise the land or the building itself for profit-seeking agendas. In these cases, ownership schemes can turn municipal-owned housing assets into lucrative property development schemes for the private sector. These negative consequences of ownership schemes must be avoided and rectified where in process.

We support the issuing of Certificates of Occupation to people living in long-term informal settlements and recognise that backyarding can lead to responsible urban densification. We are pleased to see that Certificates of Occupation and recognition of backyarding are included in the current IDP. Both these important initiatives

require implementation pathways within the HSP that have been developed with communities directly impacted. Participation is critical for these support mechanisms to be responsive to needs on the ground, and to ensure a respectful dialogue between communities and local government that we may learn and monitor the effect of these programmes. To this end, any consultant employed to develop and update the HSP must present the municipality with an engagement and participation plan for affected stakeholders (including residents in informal settlements, CRUs, and forms of social housing), and show how meaningful participation and engagement feed into the updated HSP. Providing a more flexible and expanded policy for securing tenure in eThekweni will reduce the number of evictions currently taking place in informal settlements and in former rental stock units. These evictions, conducted by both the municipality and private landowners, are often brutal in that they destroy not only people's homes but also their documentation and possessions, leaving pensioners and families at severe risk. A dedicated commitment to a more humane tenure policy and implementation plan offers people the support they need to keep a roof over their heads regardless of their socio-economic circumstances.

Project 2 Conduct a public independent comprehensive land audit of municipal, provincial and national government-owned land for the entire municipal area

Whilst this project is an important informant of the policy on tenure options, it is a critical strategic intervention that will enable targeted future planning for sustainable housing. Mapping all land parcels to identify those under public ownership can assist in determining optimal land uses and also in assessing development potential for human settlement and climate mitigation. It further ensures that decisions take into account the spatial dynamics of existing housing units owned by the municipality.

It is critical that up-to-date information on which land in the city is owned by local, provincial, and

national government is publicly available online. This ensures that civil society and community-based organisations can better engage with the municipality around urban planning, land-use rights and decisions. Due to the Protection of Personal Information Act, currently the online GIS public viewer does not allow the public to see land ownership. However, information on publicly-owned land should be made transparent and available to all.

Project 3 Pilot a collective land ownership model in the city for informal dwellers who are already organised and working communally

The People's Plan sees security of tenure beyond the narrow confines of individual ownership. We require bold experimental pilots that explore how local government support for communal ownership of land could build healthy, safe, and more climate-resilient communities within dense urban areas. Communal food security and support networks that grow food on urban land already exist in a number of urban geographies across the cities, both in informal settlements and in low-income housing developments, as well as in vacant plots and parks. Securing land tenure to small collectives with existing community structures can provide important climate resilience, as well as resilience against economic and social shocks. Developing a support for these communal pilots offers the city an opportunity to learn with people, exploring how we may build a patchwork of resilience networks that are not reliant on property and commercial markets, thereby keeping people safe and food secure.

Project 4 Set-up a housing tribunal for women and children, people with disabilities who have been dispossessed of their homes

During the development of this People's Plan, we heard repeatedly how women, children and those living with various forms of disability frequently lost their homes when title deeds were linked to individuals who no longer chose to support them. The gendered dimensions of

how women and children were removed from their family homes if the male head of the home died or left them place these vulnerable groupings at increased risk. The municipality should set up a dedicated unit within the housing tribunal to assist in clear cases of gender and other forms of discrimination, ensuring that these vulnerable groups receive immediate support in securing new housing as quickly as possible. This housing tribunal should not distinguish between those who are citizens and those who are not. Vulnerability in relation to gender and other forms of discrimination, especially when children are involved, should be promptly addressed regardless.

4.0 MAKING THE PEOPLE'S PLAN HAPPEN: IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, EVALUATION, LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

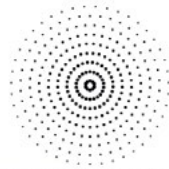
What sets the People's Housing Plan apart from other initiatives is that it is not only uniquely driven from the bottom up by civil society grassroots organisations and supported by academia and other technical experts, but also that it involves close collaboration with municipal human settlements officials as workshop participants and advisors to ensure ease of implementation.

Most importantly, the entire participatory process is geared to action through, (i) ensuring the revision of the relevant programmes in Chapter 3 of the IDP and the emerging Housing Sector Plan, and (ii) the inclusion of the four new programmes detailed above in the IDP. Inclusion in the IDP ensures budget allocation and SDBIP monitoring by the municipality.

As captured in our Usinga Llwesalukazi forest graphic, however, the four new programmes will require more than SDBIP monitoring. It is now well established that without ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the best-intentioned programmes, the risk of implementation failure is significantly increased. It is therefore proposed that a simple but effective M&E framework be developed to incorporate current mechanisms such as the SDBIP, which is a useful tool to monitor quarterly progress.

It is also proposed that a simple but clear learning and knowledge management framework be developed so that good practices become embedded within the municipality. This will enable eThekweni to once again offer examples of good governance to other cities in southern Africa which are also grappling with the challenge of climate-induced disasters and how these impact human settlements.

Finally, the Plan requires implementation by more than just the municipality. It requires hard work from all spheres of government, civil society, business leaders, faith-based organisations, community groupings, and city residents. Living through climate change requires all hands on deck. This plan offers a hopeful short to medium-term guide on what must collectively be prepared and planned for, ensuring a safer and more equitable future for our city. It is both a thoughtful and considered document, and an urgent call to action. Join us—together, we can do better for the Right to Housing in an Age of Climate Change.



THE DURBAN COALITION

Civil Society Working Together

Members:

Abahlali basemjondolo
Ubunye BamaHostela
groundWork
South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
Refugee Social Services
Project Empower
Poor Flat Dwellers Movement
South African Shack-Dwellers International Alliance
Active Citizen's Movement
Wentworth Development Forum
Wentworth Organisation of Women and Durban South Women in Business Association
The Denis Hurley Centre
Gandhi Development Trust
Phoenix Settlement Trust
Queensburgh Ratepayers Association
Springfield Disaster Management
New Dawn Park Residents Association
GOLDCo
#sharp ecosocialist collective
City People EtheKwini NPC
Freedoms South Africa NPO
Coming Home Organization
Bellair, Rossburgh and Sea View Ratepayers and Residents Organisation
Harinagar Residents Association
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**PEOPLE'S
PLAN**

for the right to

HOUSING

in the age of

**CLIMATE
CHANGE**

2024