

1. Building Buffalo City's future

1.1 Introduction

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hat will Buffalo City offer a child born today in Mdantsane or in rural Matatiele in 20 years time? How can we be sure that such a child will have access to a dignified quality of life, be equipped with the right skills and have access to quality employment?

The truth is that we cannot presume that anything will be better in the future unless we act today. Meeting the needs of future generations requires careful planning with a sufficient long-term horizon that allows institutions to respond appropriately now with a 20 year or more mindset. It is only with concerted action by the Municipality and all its social partners that we can assure a future that is sustainable, productive, inclusive and well governed.

The mechanism through which Buffalo City is preparing to meet the needs of the next decades is the Buffalo City Development Strategy (BCDS). The need for the creation of a City Development Strategy (CDS) is borne from a growing appreciation of the limitations of current development priorities and scope of municipal resources to appropriately impact on the long-term economic, environmental and social challenges faced by Buffalo City.

Should current trends be allowed to become the future reality Buffalo City may be faced with a growing population of urbanised poor, failing municipal service infrastructure and risks becoming marginalised in the spatial economy of South Africa and the World. According to existing trends the City can expect to experience slow economic decline, job losses and increased dependence on grants and subsidies to meet the needs of an increasingly poor community; unless it intervenes to find a development alternative. The CDS is a mechanism to changing these trends and ensuring a successful Buffalo City-region

The BCDS holds several advantages:²

- ***The BCDS is a potential trend breaker:-*** motivating key decision-makers to think and operate differently so as to break the negative trends faced by a city region;
- ***Guiding short-term implementation within a long term logic:-*** The BCDS informs the 5-year integrated development planning (IDP) process and shape term-of-office delivery objectives;

² Also see Cities Alliance, 2006: Guide to City Development Strategies: Improving Urban Performance, for a comparative approach.

- ***Pulling in the same direction:-*** It allows multiple government agencies, communities and business to rally, act and invest along a similar logic; creating a common focus;
- ***Identifying interventions with the highest leverage potential:-*** A CDS serve to prioritise and direct resources effectively into those identified interventions that holds the best potential;
- ***Anticipating future shocks and contextual changes:-*** Through a CDS anticipated long term future changes can be identified and anticipated;
- ***Assist in guiding growth:-*** A CDS can influence how a city approaches infrastructure creation and physical growth; and
- ***(Re)Positioning:-*** A CDS serve to reposition the city in terms of national policies and public funding, place-marketing and also the confidence with which ordinary people view the potential of their city.

What should a City Development Strategy achieve? According to the World Bank a CDS should provide the framework to achieve the following:

- **"Livable"**- providing a framework committed to ensuring that the poor achieve a healthy and dignified living standard; that provides systems for adequate housing, secure land tenure, credit, transportation, health care, education, and other services for households; and that addresses environmental degradation, public safety and cultural heritage preservation for the benefit of all residents. And to be livable, cities must also become:
- **"Competitive"**- providing a supportive framework for productive firms, to promote buoyant, broad-based growth of employment, incomes and investment.
- **"Well governed and managed"**- with representation and inclusion of all groups in the urban society; with accountability, integrity, and transparency of government actions in pursuit of shared goals; and with strong capacity of local government to fulfill public responsibilities based on knowledge, skills, resources and procedures that draw on partnerships.
- **"Bankable"**- that is, financially sound and creditworthy. Financial health of municipalities requires the adoption of clear and internally consistent systems of local revenues and expenditures, transparent and predictable intergovernmental transfers, generally accepted financial accounting, asset management, and procurement practices, and prudent conditions for municipal borrowing.

www.unhabitat.org/programmes/ump/cds.asp

<http://wbIn0018.worldbank.org/External/Urban/UrbanDev.nsf/Urban+Development/6F8D329C20CF7AFD85256B18007BA52D>

1.2 Document structure

In order to make this Consolidation Report more accessible this section sets out the document structure.

This 1st chapter provides an introduction on the BCDS. Section 1.1 introduces the CDS concept and explains how the City plans to use it as a mechanism to determine its future.

Chapter 2 is important in establishing a set of policy underpinnings for the BCDS that informs the rest of the document.

Chapter 2 outlines the strategy. It frames the BCDS strategic intent and identifies strategic focus areas. Chapter 3 builds on the strategic basis of Chapter 2 and starts deepening the strategic focus areas. Chapter 4 provides even more detail to the various elements of the strategy by adding more detail to each of the strategic focus areas.

The Annexures have been taken out of the main text of the report to facilitate easier reading. Annexure A provides a brief overview of the process of developing the BCDS. Annexure B provides a shortened version of the analysis work underpinning the development of the strategy. Finally, Annexure C provides an overview of comparative work done in linking the Buffalo City experience to other cities across the world.

1.3 Purpose

The BCDS should inform a process of intensive engagement with key local, regional, provincial and national stakeholders.

The end point of this process aims to be a CDS which sets out:

- A 20-year growth developmental path for the region;
- An integrated programme of action informed by the agreed developmental path; and
- Provide guidance on what each social partner (government, business, labour and communities) should contribute to the implementation of the long term growth path.