

The Office of the City Manager
Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
10th floor, trust building centre

30 September 2016

Dear sir/ madam

Submission of development needs and priorities to inform the IDP review – Afesis-corplan

We hereby take the opportunity to make a submission in response to the advert found in the Daily Dispatch of 9 September 2016 where the municipality invited stakeholders to submit their development needs and priorities so as to inform the municipal review of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM) Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2016 – 2021 in preparation for adopting a revised IDP for the 2017/8 period.

This submission is made on behalf of Afesis-corplan (www.afesis.org.za), a development NGO based in East London whose work in good governance and sustainable human settlements has a national footprint. Our submission is broken up into the following categories, each of which is explained in more detail in the pages that follow:

1. Managed Land Settlement
2. Upgrading of Informal Settlements
3. Integrated Agriculture and Rural Development
4. Housing Allocation
5. Community Participation

We trust that you will take our recommendations into account when you revise the IDP.

If you have any comments and questions relating to our submission please contact me at:

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Yours sincerely



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1. Managed land settlement

At the present average rate of building about 1 400 low cost houses a year in Buffalo City it will take more than 50 years to get rid of the housing backlog and address the new housing needs in the city over this period.¹

If as a municipality (and country) we are to seriously address the housing challenge we cannot continue with similar strategies and programmes that we have been using up to now. We have to try new approaches. Managed Land Settlement (MLS) is one such new approach where people are allowed to settle on land in an organised manner, with access to at least basic tenure and basic services.² Over time, and with support from government and others, using instruments such as the upgrading of informal settlements and other programmes, they can upgrade their neighbourhoods and houses.

Afesis-corplan has identified a possible portion of land on the West Bank where a MLS pilot project could be implemented.³ This is in line with the municipalities identification of the West Bank as a priority development area within the city. The BCMM MGDS vision 2013 states:

“The West Bank area has been identified as having the best potential for large-scale urbanisation in the Greater East London area. ... The West Bank area has been identified to be having sufficient well-located land for integrated, higher density and mixed land use development closer to the ELIDZ.”

We therefore call on the BCM in its revised 2017/8 IDP to:

- 1) Increase the funding for bulk sanitation on the West Bank so as to speed up the process of improving readiness for large scale development on the West bank.
- 2) Increase funding for the development of a new bridge(s) across the Buffalo river above and/or below the Bridal Drift dam.
- 3) Increase engagement with the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) and others in relation to the development of a new ring road around the city centre, including the construction of a new bridge across the Buffalo River.
- 4) Allocate funds for the purchase of the identified land on the West Bank.
- 5) Provide funding for a feasibility study for the development of identified land on the West Bank for A MLS pilot project.
- 6) Require the municipal town planning department (working with the human settlements department) to develop a MLS policy and strategy for the municipality, and as part of this strategy identify further possible areas of land within the BCMM area where such a strategy can be implemented; outlining the steps that would need to be followed to acquire and develop the land concerned. The Housing Development Agency should be drawn in to support this study.

¹ See Policy and Strategy for Upgrading Informal Settlements in Buffalo City – main report (2015) (page 20) available at: <http://goo.gl/jshIMZ>

² For more information on MLS see: <http://www.incrementalsettlement.org.za/> and see: Annexure 3 on Managed Land Settlement for the report on ‘Managing and Curbing Unauthorised Land Occupation’ (2016) available at: <http://goo.gl/l6wNRV>

³ The potential land is farm 858 and surrounding properties that is presently privately owned. The land falls within the urban edge.

2. Upgrading of informal settlements

There are more than 150 informal settlements within the Buffalo City municipality.⁴

The 2016-21 BCMM IDP does not draw on the recommendations made in the National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP) supported project that was completed in 2015 which 1) developed an upgrading policy and strategy for the BCMM (which has been adopted by council); 2) developed basic plans for the upgrading of 32 informal settlements, and 3) completed a 10% random sample socio-economic survey of residents in these informal settlements.

The upgrading policy and strategy calls on the municipality to 1) implement the upgrading plans for the first round of 32 informal settlements, and 2) roll out additional basic planning exercises for the next round of about 30 informal settlements. The basic upgrading plans for the 32 informal settlements categorised the informal settlements into those that needed to be relocated, and those that could remain. For both categories of settlements it is proposed that basic services be provided and that the occupation of the residents be recognised.

We call on the municipality, in the revision of the IDP to:

- 1) Prioritise the filling of the position of an upgrading of informal settlement manager as per the BCMM organisational organogram.
- 2) Task the Local Economic Development (LED) department, as one of its priority interventions, to negotiate with the unit within the (provincial and/or national) Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) responsible for the implementation of the Community Works Programme (CWP) to allocate additional funds and/or redirect funding earmarked for the CWP in the BCMM to the upgrading of informal settlements identified in round one of the upgrading strategy.
- 3) Task the BCMM human settlement department to develop funding motivations to the Provincial Department of Human Settlements for the 22 informal settlements (of the total of 32) that have been identified in the 'stay/shift' or 'two-step' category within the BCMM upgrading of informal settlement plans.⁵
- 4) Task the BCMM planning department, in consultation with the human settlement department, to commission a more detailed planning exercise for the upgrading of the Cambridge location as this requires a more elaborate high density upgrading strategy on steeper land.
- 5) Task the town planning department to identify round 2 informal settlements and apply to the NDHS for planning for upgrading of round 2 upgrading of informal settlements.
- 6) Task the BCMM human settlement department to pilot a land recording programme in round 1 informal settlements. Such a programme is basically an extension of the existing strategy of the BCMM to conduct a housing needs survey by capturing household data of people living in informal settlements.⁶
- 7) Task the various engineering departments to use the budgets calculated in the plans for the basic planning of the 32 informal settlements to include these budgets, drawing on the Urban Settlement Development Grant (USDG) funding, into their sector plans.⁷

⁴ This set of recommendations is based on the Policy and Strategy for Upgrading Informal Settlements in Buffalo City – main report (2015) (page 20) available at: <http://goo.gl/jshIMZ>

⁵ To see the list of informal settlements that fall into this category, see annexure “10.1 Annexure: Summary of Upgrading Paths” of the Close Out Report for the Upgrading of Informal Settlements, that can be found at: <http://goo.gl/jshIMZ>

⁶ For more detail on this see section 2 on “basic tenure” on page 47 of the main report on BCMM policy and strategy for upgrading of informal settlements (2015) that can be found at: <http://goo.gl/jshIMZ>. And see the row relating to Human settlements in “figure 11: roles and responsibilities per department” on page 57 of the above mentioned report.

⁷ Contact the BCMM planning department for copy of this budget. Find a draft copy of this budget at http://afesis-corplan.org.za/participatorydemocracy/wiki/images/7/7f/Clusters_Table_with_Estimates.xlsx

3. Integrated Agricultural and Rural Development

Poverty, unemployment and inequality are serious problems found in the BCMM. Agricultural activity only accounts for a small portion of the economic activity in the metro area. Agricultural land is being lost on a regular basis as a result of allowing new settlement developed into good agricultural areas and as a result of unmanaged settlement development. Many of the agricultural producers claim that marketing is a serious challenge for them to make a living from agricultural activity.

On the positive side, the BCMM has good climatic and soil conditions for various types of agricultural activity. There is significant potential for the BCMM region to increase the proportion of its economic activity coming from agricultural and agricultural related industries and services if the agricultural sector is properly supported and incentivised. The agricultural sector is also a more labour absorbing sector than many other sectors.

In 2012/ 3 the BCMM commissioned consultants to develop an Integrated Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy (IARDS).⁸ A series of three workshops were held around the metro to obtain inputs from the public to help inform this strategy. The strategy was also presented on at least three occasions to a committee established by the BCMM where comments and feedback was received. As far as we know this strategy has not yet been presented to and approved by the BCMM council. This strategy, if adopted, will provide a strong enabling environment for the development of the agricultural sector.

In order to approve and implement this IARDS, we call on the municipality, in its revision of the IDP to:

- 1) Task the BCMM Local Economic Development Department (LED) to submit the IARDS to council for consideration for approval. Consideration could also be given to tasking the LED department to conduct a rapid and basic review of the IARDS prior to re-submitting the strategy to council for adoption.
- 2) Budget for an agri-conference to present the IARDS and discuss with invited stakeholders how to implement the strategy within the BCMM.
- 3) Budget for undertaking feasibility plans to identify suitable locations for catalytic project A on Agri-park and catalytic project F on Periodic market, and outline the basic steps that would be required to plan for and implement these projects (as well as the upgrading of the central municipal market – catalytic project E).
- 4) Task the LED department to implement three pilot household demonstration gardens (in a sites to be identified in Mdantsane and Duncan Village, and one of the other suburbs of Buffalo City), where the LED department collaborates with other municipal service departments as well as other provincial and national departments (like health and agriculture, for example). The Municipality should allocate funds that can be used to prepare these sites for community gardens. Publicise this initiative so as to get the NGO, church and business sectors that are already involved in household and community gardens to collaborate with the municipality in identifying, managing and implementing these demonstration gardens. (See catalytic project B on household demonstration garden).
- 5) Task the LED department, when they engage the Department of CoGTA around the CWP (as described in section 2.b. above) to expand the CWP into an identified communal area, as a pilot project, to demonstrate how the CWP can be used to improve security and conditions in communal areas for agricultural development as per the Rural Rangers catalytic project H.

⁸ A copy of this draft strategy can be found at:

http://www.incrementalsettlement.org.za/wiki/index.php?title=Buffalo_City_Integrated_Agricultural_and_Rural_Development_Strategy

4. Housing allocation

The BCMM has a housing allocation policy but this policy has not been well advertised.⁹ It would appear that the policy has also not been adequately implemented, with for example, as far as we are aware, the housing allocation committee not being established. This erodes the public's trust on the ability of the municipality and government to undertake housing allocation in a fair a transparent manner.

The existing housing allocation policy also focuses on the identification of beneficiaries to receive housing subsidies as per governments housing subsidy system, and does not address the question of, for example, the allocation of land to households in contexts where housing subsidies are not yet being used. This can occur, for example, in instances where the municipality undertakes Managed Land Settlement (MLS), or MLS-like projects where they allocate households to planned (basic) serviced land for settlement purposes but where the housing top structure will only be provided to subsidy qualifying households at a later date.

The national Department of Human Settlements, and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and others apparently have been and are reviewing and revisiting various housing subsidy allocation policies and frameworks. This provides and opportunity for the municipality to reflect on its own housing allocation policy, drawing on this national research, and revise and update its allocation policies, while at the same time using this process to give the public an opportunity to also comment on the allocation systems and procedures and make recommendations on how they feel these procedures can be improved.

We call on the municipality, in the revision of the IDP to:

- 1) Undertake an awareness campaign drawing the public's attention to the presently approved BCMM housing subsidy allocation policy, highlighting what role the public can play in such allocation, as per the approved housing subsidy allocation policy, thereby ensuring that allocation is done in a fair and transparent manner.
- 2) Review and update the BCMM land and housing allocation policy and strategy, through a process that takes into account 1) the new insights gained at national level around housing allocation, and 2) the views and recommendations of members of the public. Make sure that such a review and update also takes into account the allocation of land to households and other entities (e.g. businesses) in situations where land is being allocated for incremental settlement development (see point 1.6 above under section on managed Land Settlement for situations where this may be applicable). Submit the updated land and housing subsidy allocation policy to council for adoption.

⁹ For copy of this policy see http://www.incrementalsettlement.org.za/wiki/index.php?title=BCMM_Allocation_Policy

5. Community participation

Many of the problems associated with 'service delivery protests' are as a result of poor communication between the municipality and the citizens. Government's own back to basic programme noted that *"social distance by our public representatives is a major cause for concern. This reflects inadequate public participation and poorly functioning ward councillors and committees."* The Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) and petitions policies of the municipality are not adequately effective in promoting community participation in the affairs of the BCMM.

The municipality (and country as a whole) has indicated that they are open to engaging with their citizens to find procedures and techniques that improve community participation and government accountability.

We call on the municipality, in the revision of the IDP, to:

- 1) Commission a study to explore the challenges facing the existing community participation process of the BCMM, and make recommendations for how these challenges can be addressed. This study should take a holistic view looking at PAIA, petitions, gatherings, ward committees, Integrated Development Planning (IDP) processes, budget committees, performance reviews, perception surveys, etc. This study needs to include a strong consultation process where the views and experiences of members of the public are obtained in relation to what challenges they experience in engaging with the municipality, and what recommendations they have for how participation can be improved.
- 2) Budget for the municipality to conduct a civic education programme targeting the youth, so that they better understand how they can become more affective active citizens.
- 3) Commit the communication department of the BCMM to increase its presence on community radio, and other community media channels, and ensure that these broadcast events (and engagements) involve opportunities for the public to engage the BCMM over issues being discussed and is not just a one way flow of information from the municipality to the public.
- 4) Develop memorandums of understanding with at least five organisations (NGO's, business chambers, property and ratepayers associations etc.) outlining how the municipality and the organisations concerned will collaborate around improving opportunities for meaningful dialogue and consultation between the municipality and the public.
- 5) Set aside funds for the municipality to undertake a pilot project for ward based planning