

DRAFT FOR COMMENT



CAPE TOWN DENSIFICATION STRATEGY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



CITY OF CAPE TOWN | ISIXEKO SASEKAPA | STAD KAAPSTAD

THIS CITY WORKS FOR YOU



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Tell us what you think about the ideas in the draft **Densification Strategy** by writing to:

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VISIT:

To keep up to date with **CitySpace** news, go to:
www.capetown.gov.za/en/sdf

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Cape Town's central city

INTRODUCTION

Cape Town is constantly changing and growing. To ensure that it remains a quality place in which to live, work and invest, as well as to visit, it needs plans and policies to guide this growth and change in the best possible way.

This plan is known as the Spatial Development Framework (SDF). One of the key strategies in the SDF is to direct urban growth, and to promote a compact, integrated city. This it proposes to do through, amongst other things, the appropriate densification of Cape Town.

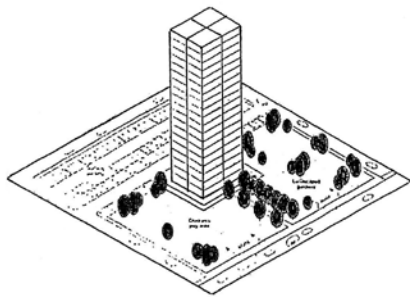
This document presents the details of Cape Town's draft Densification Strategy. The City of Cape Town invites you, as a resident, to read and comment on these proposals.

The formal definition of densification is ...

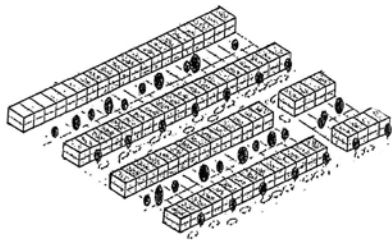
“the increased use of space, both horizontally and vertically, within existing areas/properties and new developments, accompanied by an increased number of units and/or population thresholds”.

Building form and design

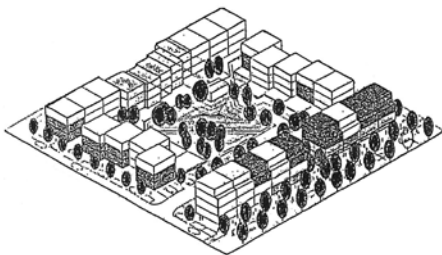
There are numerous ways in which densification can take place: The terrace and perimeter block designs are better suited to Cape Town.



Tower block



Terrace



Perimeter block

WHAT IS DENSIFICATION?

Densification simply means making more efficient use of our limited urban space – in other words, finding place for more people to live and work. We can do this in Cape Town by building townhouses, second dwellings (sometimes called ‘granny flats’), semi-detached houses, double storeys, low-rise apartments, and where appropriate, higher-rise flats.

WHY DO WE NEED TO DENSIFY?

We all want a city that is efficient, safe and sustainable, and that offers high-quality public spaces, and access to good public transport, services and recreation opportunities.

This is only possible in a city that is dense and compact. At the moment, Cape Town is quite the opposite – it has undergone fast and continuous low-density development, better known as urban sprawl.

Urban sprawl is a threat to the long-term sustainability of Cape Town. As a city grows outwards, good agricultural land is destroyed, along with valuable biodiversity, natural areas and scenic views.

A sprawling city also means long travel distances to work as well as places of education, recreation and other services. Public transport is not viable in spread-out cities, as the population densities are too low, and there are not enough potential passengers. Because spread-out cities therefore rely on private vehicles, they will always have traffic congestion and poor air quality.

Cities like Cape Town, where a large proportion of the city is designed on a ‘one-house-on-a-plot’ model, do not offer many housing type or living environment choices. Low-density cities seldom have a vibrant sense of neighbourhood and community; they are also less safe.

To top it all, low-density cities are more expensive and inefficient when it comes to delivering services and providing infrastructure; they waste resources, and limit access to opportunities and facilities.

DENSITY HELPS MAKE BETTER NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Density offers more housing choices, and accommodates different kinds of lifestyles.
- Density makes better use of the City's limited resources, and cuts infrastructure costs.
- Density helps protect the environment; by concentrating people in the urban environment, natural spaces and habitats are conserved.
- Density makes neighbourhoods more safe, as there are more 'eyes and ears' on the streets; criminals prefer quiet, desolate places.
- Density supports more transport options, because there are enough people to make public transport viable.
- Density offers a better lifestyle for people who cannot drive, such as elderly, very young, or disabled people.
- Density builds communities with better access to schools, work, parks and services.

HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR CITY MORE DENSE?

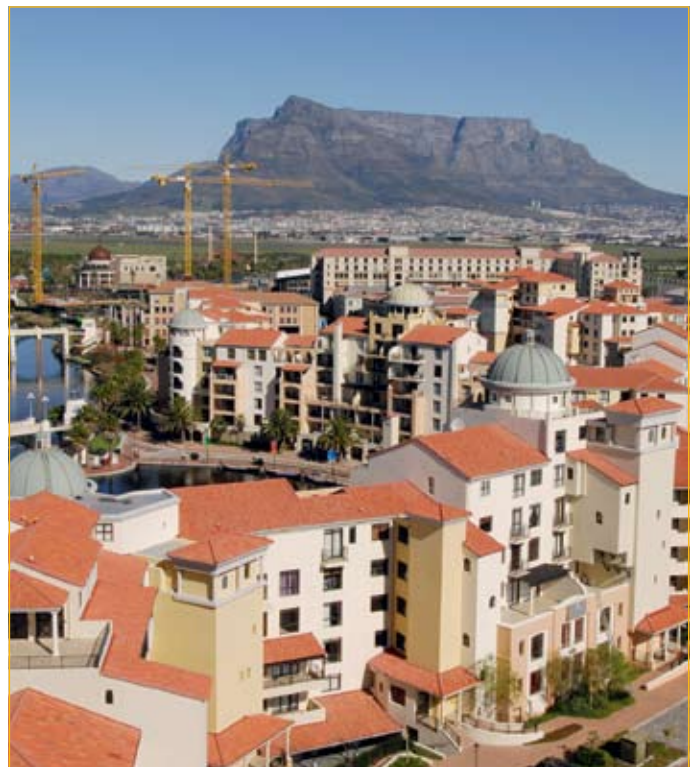
Densification can be achieved through:

- constructing attached or detached second dwellings;
- increasing the number of units by building extra floors, or increasing the size of the building;
- consolidating vacant or developed properties, and then redeveloping them at higher densities;
- subdividing land; and
- building on vacant or underused land.

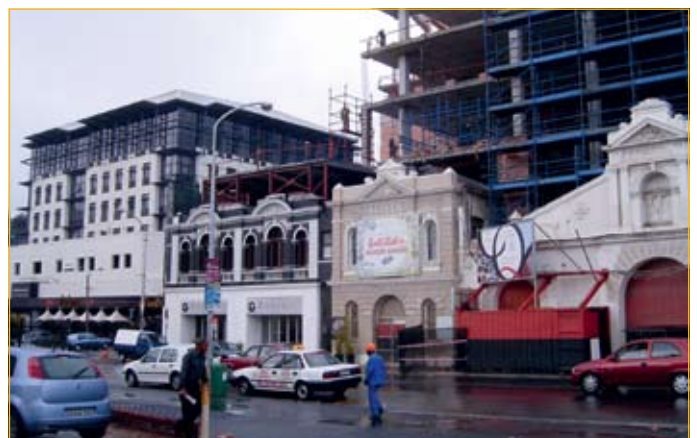
| Urban densities in Cape Town | |
|---|---|
| Mountain Rd, Woodstock (attached single storeys): | 100 dwelling units per hectare (nett) |
| Rustenberg Square, Rondebosch (four to five storeys): | 107 dwelling units per hectare (nett) |
| Marine Circle, Table View beachfront: | 250 dwelling units per hectare (nett) |
| Springfield Terrace, Woodstock (three storeys) | 166 dwelling units per hectare (nett) |
| Urban densities in other cities | |
| London (Warwick Square): | 125–200 dwelling units per hectare (nett) |
| Amsterdam (Old Quarter): | 75–100 dwelling units per hectare (nett) |
| Mykonos (Greece): | 200 dwelling units per hectare (nett) |



Netreg Housing Development, Bonteheuwel



Century City



Main Road, Greenpoint



CAPE TOWN'S DENSIFICATION STRATEGY

High-rise buildings everywhere? Cramped, crammed slums? Strange-looking tall buildings in the middle of residential areas?

This is not what urban planners mean when they talk about higher-density living.

The City of Cape Town's Densification Strategy aims to offer more choices for different income groups and a range of lifestyles. Not everyone can afford a suburban house on a big piece of land – and not everyone wants to live in such a dwelling, either!

In some areas, three-storey to five-storey buildings will fit in well with a neighbourhood's character; in other areas, higher-rise flats are already common, so another similar building would not look out of place. In many suburban areas, subdivisions and second dwellings are almost 'invisible' and do not change the feel of the neighbourhood at all.

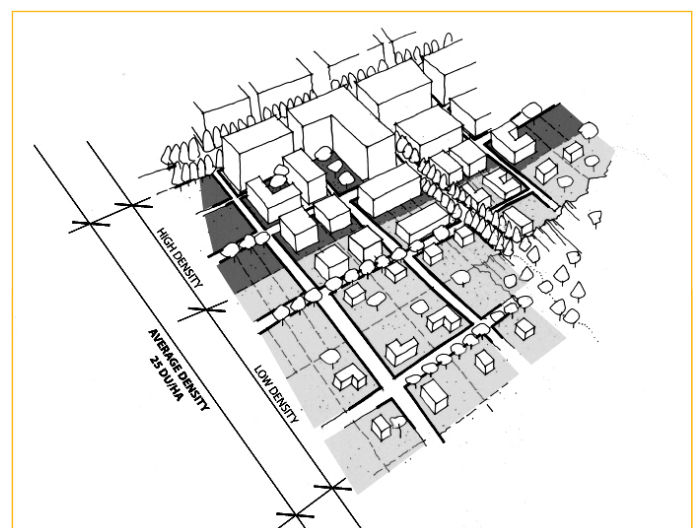
Cape Town's Densification Strategy aims to make the city more efficient and more sustainable – as well as offer a broader range of living environments – by following a 'middle path'. The idea is not to create a city as dense as New York City, London, Cairo or Mumbai, or to propose a 'one-size-fits-all' plan. Instead, the idea is to create a more compact city that operates well for everyone.

In some areas, high-rise development is appropriate; in others, incremental (small-scale) densification is more in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.

Overall, the strategy aims to increase the average density of the city as a whole, and to identify those locations that are more suited to higher-density development.

One size does not fit all ...

A 'middle path' strategy is based on the understanding that different parts of the city are suited to different residential densities, as well as different approaches to densification.



'Middle path' densification strategy

POLICY 1

To encourage an average density of 25 dwelling units per hectare across Cape Town in the short to medium term

The City suggests an average of 25 dwelling units per hectare gross density across the city, because this is the internationally accepted minimum density at which public transport is efficient and sustainable. It is also the guideline set by the Provincial Spatial Development Strategy.

This does not mean that all areas will be developed at this density. Some areas will be developed at a lower density, and others will be developed at a higher density. Slowly but surely the City will aim for higher average densities.

POLICY 2

To draw up guidelines to assist planners in deciding development applications

City officials will make decisions about the size, scale, form and height of higher-density developments and incremental densification based on clear planning guidelines. These guidelines are particularly important in higher-density areas, or when the size of the property (erf) is smaller than 200 m².

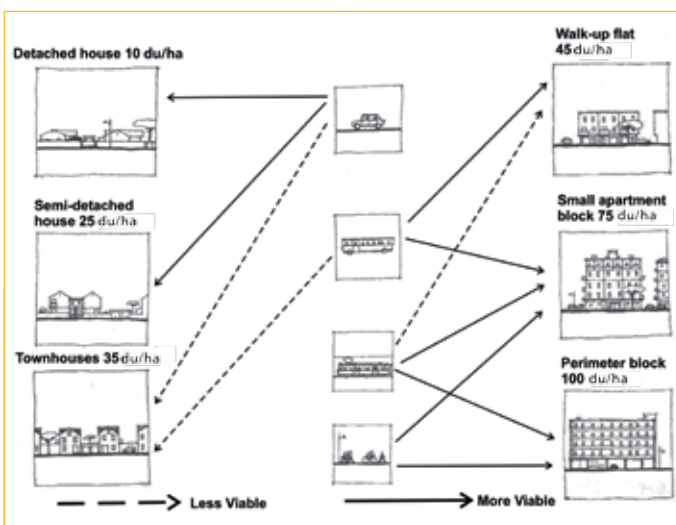
POLICY 3

To introduce incentives that encourage higher densities, and disincentives to prevent low-density sprawl

At the moment, plans, rates/tariffs and other regulations do not always encourage densification. Densification therefore needs to be supported through regulations, legislation and zoning measures, as well as tax, rates and tariff incentives, and design controls.

POLICY 4

To make densification a priority in certain areas targeted by the strategy.



Gross density thresholds for public transport viability

The value of natural resources

We need to protect and enhance our natural resources, not only to conserve them for future generations, but because natural areas offer many benefits to us not least of which is an improved quality of life and health.

Well-managed natural areas offer recreational and educational as well as sustainable harvesting and nature-based tourism opportunities, and are known to enhance adjacent property values. In Cape Town, tourism is one of the most important industries in promoting employment opportunities.



What is 'incremental densification'?

Incremental – or small-scale – densification is almost invisible. Often, it is not possible to see that a house has a second dwelling (such as a 'granny flat'), or that the property has been subdivided, or even that a different family lives in the upstairs or attached section of the house. This form of densification is possible without changing the character of the neighbourhood at all.

These are the features of successful incremental densification:

- Dwellings are attached, so they look like one house.
- New buildings are the same height and size as other houses in the area.
- Two houses share a driveway or street access.
- New dwellings do not invade the privacy of neighbours.
- Trees screen the house from the street.

WHAT AREAS ARE TARGETED FOR DENSIFICATION?

Residential areas

All residential areas are suitable for incremental densification through second dwellings (such as 'granny flats') or subdivisions, as long as they do not damage the character of the area, and the City's engineers are satisfied that the infrastructure will cope with the increased densities.

Development and activity routes

Development routes, such as Jan Smuts Drive, Klipfontein Road, Durban Road, and activity routes such as Koeberg Road, Main Road and Voortrekker Road, are suitable for higher-density development (up to 15-storey buildings).

The areas most suited to this densification are near transport intersections, intense mixed-use areas, and commercial complexes.

Activity streets

An activity street is a local street section of concentrated activity, such as Newlands Main Street and Halt Road. Townhouses and small four-storey buildings usually fit in well in these areas, which are usually near public transport stops, stations, and public institutions and facilities.

Major economic opportunity zones

Cape Town, Bellville and Claremont/Wynberg Central Business Districts are major urban centres, and are suitable for four-storey to 15-storey developments. These areas are usually near to public transport routes, as well as social facilities and public open spaces.



Densify existing residential areas

District economic opportunity zones

Fish Hoek, Kenilworth, Mitchells Plain, Milnerton, Century City, Kuils River and Durbanville are good examples of district economic opportunity zones, where there are clusters of shops, restaurants, offices, banks, hospitals and clinics, parking, and public transport interchanges. Three-storey to seven-storey developments are appropriate for these types of busy economic opportunity zones.

Places of amenity and attraction

A place of 'amenity' or 'attraction' is a significant urban place that attracts people, such as public spaces, heritage areas, and places with good views and recreational attraction. Examples include Kalk Bay, the Cape Quarter, De Waterkant, Simon's Town and Tyger Valley Quarry. Included in this category are coastal nodes, such as Gordon's Bay, Table View, Mnandi and Monwabisi.

These areas are suitable for higher-density developments, as long as they do not have a negative impact on valuable built, heritage or natural environments, and follow the urban and coastal edge management guidelines.



Densify in areas with amenity value



Densify in new development areas around public places



Densify around existing public spaces



Densification of existing residential areas can take many forms...

Double dwellings, townhouses on larger plots and granny flats adjoining or on top of an existing house are different options available to achieve this.

CASE STUDY: CLAREMONT

Application for residential densification:

A developer wanted to subdivide a 1 400 m² residential property into eight portions (ranging from 150 to 200 m² each), and build townhouses.

Concerns raised by the application:

- Traffic and parking problems would get worse.
- The area would lose some of its trees and garden space.
- There would be an increase in crime because of the extra parked cars.
- Townhouses will degrade the area.
- Properties in the area will become less valuable.
- Municipal infrastructure and services will not be able to cope.

Decision: Yes, because ...

- the development will not change the character of the area;
- the buildings are attractive and typical of suburban development – they do not look out of place; in fact, from the street, the development looks like two houses, not eight townhouses;
- the developer will create enough parking bays, onsite as well as on the street;
- there will still be a great many trees planted on the site;
- the townhouses are double-storey – although zoning does permit taller buildings;
- there is usually less crime in busier suburban areas;
- there was sufficient infrastructure capacity, and the engineers were happy that existing municipal infrastructure will be used more efficiently;
- more high-value land will be used more efficiently; and
- this development will allow more people to benefit from this well-located area with good amenities.

STEP 1

Check whether the location is suited to densification

Considerations

- ✓ Access to public transport
- ✓ Proximity to places of employment, services and facilities
- ✓ Proximity to open space
- ✓ Infrastructure capacity

STEP 2

Consult density guides

Areas targeted for densification, and their associated density parameters

City-wide SDF & District Plans

Local/density plans

Urban design and built form guidelines

Contextual informants

- ✓ Natural environment
 - ✓ Land use
- ✓ Built and heritage character
 - ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Transport impact assessment

STEP 3

Density decision

Determine the density (height, form and orientation) appropriate to the location, and prepare conditions of approval (if appropriate)



Increased densities along Voortrekker Road

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