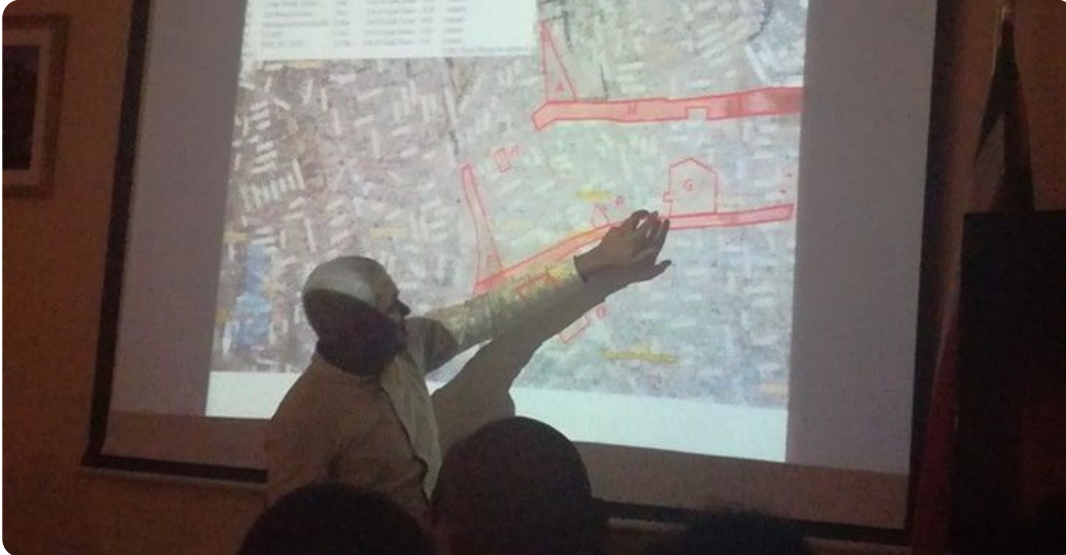


Western Cape government identifies seven possible housing sites

At least seven vacant plots have been identified as "possible sites for social and affordable housing" in Cape Town's southern suburbs, including Parkwood, Lotus River and Retreat.

By [Barbara Maregele](#) ^{21 Jun 2018}



City and provincial officials met with Parkwood community leaders on Tuesday to discuss potential sites for social and affordable housing. Photo: Barbara Maregele

The announcement was made by Thando Mguli, head of the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements. He was speaking at a joint meeting with officials from the City of Cape Town to update Parkwood community leaders on the state's plan to address their call for housing.

In May, hundreds of [Parkwood backyarders](#) protested over the lack of housing in the area that has resulted in overcrowding in the area. Backyarders have also complained that living in the city's rental flats often demand high fees for rent, electricity and water.

The protest [erupted in violence](#) when the group, erecting shacks on vacant land in the area, clashed with police. During a visit to Parkwood the same week, Human Settlements Minister Bonginkosi Madikizela assured residents that he would return with a "lasting solution" to end the housing problems in the area.

Map of possible sites

On Tuesday evening, 19 June, Parkwood community leaders were shown a map with the seven plots marked A to G. Bernie Wentzel, project manager in the city's Human Settlements department, said four of the seven erfs are city-owned land.

"None of these portions are ready to be developed for housing," he said. "All of these portions will still have to be rezoned because they are not residential at the moment." He added that while some of the sites are affected by flood lines and road reserve issues, they "are feasible sites".

Wentzel said plot A is 6.4 hectares (ha); B is the smallest site at 0.8ha; C is 11ha; D is 4.2ha; E is 1ha; F is 1.2ha; and G is 10.9ha. "It's not to say that all of these sites will be developed," he said.

Mguli said a team consisting of engineers, planners and designers would be appointed by the end of the week to assess the seven sites. “Those professionals will look into what options we can have in these parcels of land and determine which of those would have the maximum yield,” he said.

Phila Mayisela, chief director of implementation in the provincial department, said that R48bn was needed to tackle the city’s housing backlog of over 300,000. “The City of Cape Town only gets R700m. In fact, this year they [are] only getting R300m. If you work it out, we will never be able to build enough homes if we do not follow fairness and equity,” she said.

Mayisela said they could not yet commit to a timeline until the sites have been assessed. She asked that the group return in a month when more details could be given.

Community support

In order for the development of the sites to work, Mguli said they also needed the support of residents living in formal houses in the surrounding areas.

Asked whether Parkwood had been included in this year’s city budget, officials said “no”. Mguli then responded, saying that the provincial government would manage the project with assistance from the city to ensure that funds are made available to fast track the process.

When asked for more details on the exact locations of the plots, Mguli told Parkwood community leaders to give their assurances that residents would not occupy the sites.

“We are trying to operate truthfully with people but then we say too much and thereafter we see the properties invaded,” said Mguli. “We don’t want to have a situation where these very same land parcels are invaded tomorrow. We need you to help us protect that land.”

Community leader Paul Phillips said, “We can only speak for Parkwood. It would be unfair to ask us to commit on areas we have no control over.”

Phillips said leaders would be meeting with Parkwood residents and backyarders on Wednesday night. “We need to give them feedback on their demands for land and concerns around the needs of backyarders. From what I hear, this is being looked at. We now have an idea of the available land,” he said.

Mguli also confirmed to Phillips that land in Ottery, which was not included in the province’s list, was also being considered for development.

Parkwood resident Abdul Gamiel Frans said people in Parkwood have been “cramped into a fish tin” because of the lack of development and housing in the area for more than two decades.

“This is a cry as a community worker. Our people have been neglected for so long. I was on the waiting list for 29 years. How does someone on the list for five years benefit before me?” said Frans.

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