Chapter 1

SUSTAINABLE STELLENBOSCH – OPENING DIALOGUES

SPATIAL PLANNING

Planning a sustainable Stellenbosch

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This chapter examines the effect of spatial planning on the development of the area currently known as Stellenbosch Municipality. It describes the typically contrasting social, economic and physical aspects of Stellenbosch Municipality today. It then tracks how the forces of environmental coexistence, social engineering and economic and financial gain have shaped various planning initiatives, beginning over three centuries ago around this former island in the Eerste River.

It will be seen that the municipality as a construct has been extraordinarily unstable for a local government body, which one might expect to represent the secure bedrock of a community’s economic and social affairs. For this reason, the tension that has always existed between political change on the one hand and spatial management on the other, between which the pendulum has been swinging with increasing violence in recent years, constitutes one of the key sub-themes of this chapter. The history of the municipality over this period highlights the challenges faced by spatial management planners who, within this extremely fluid political and public management regime, seek to:

- conserve important ecosystem services;
- achieve a radical restructuring of land ownership and urban morphology patterns; and
- promote economic growth and employment.

Stellenbosch now

The central business district (CBD) of South Africa’s ‘first town’ continues to delight visitors with its oak tree-lined streets fringed with classically proportioned urban Cape Dutch buildings abutting kloompie-bricked stoeps fronted by leiwat earrowes often flowing with river water. It offers an urban experience of a quality and intensity unique among South African towns, with the possible exception of some sections of Main Road in Paarl and Church Street in Tulbagh.

In stark contrast most South African town centres present themselves as a melange of ad hoc buildings - some old, some new, some poorly renovated - with main streets often devoid of trees and randomly widened in places according to some road engineer’s requirements for parking and access. They are challenging to drive through, never mind walk along.

But as one moves away from the town’s urban core – either to the richer areas, with their ubiquitous low-density suburban houses (increasingly behind high walls), or into the townships – it becomes clear that Stellenbosch town has not escaped the dead hand of the South African suburban dream of apartheid planning and low-income housing policies.

1 Due to the Demarcation Board’s insistence on giving the municipality (WCO24) the same name as its main town, reference will be made to ‘Stellenbosch Municipality’ and ‘Stellenbosch town’ throughout in order to differentiate between the settlement and the municipality.

In the townships, the dwellings reflect each decade’s changing housing subsidy policy. Built to accommodate the victims of forced removal from convenient urban streets, such as Van Rynneweld Street in the CBD, they begin with the NE 51/6 and NE 51/9 houses2 of the 1960s (Calderwood & Connell 1952), followed by the rental flat complexes of the early 1970s. The more generous 60 m² freestanding houses and maisonettes of the House of Representatives subsidy scheme came next, followed in turn by the smaller 24 m² Administration Board houses of the 1980s and early 1990s. Finally, one comes to the 40 m² RDP houses of the early 2000s – the precursors to the houses of the ‘Breaking New Ground’ housing policy, which seeks to transform housing from an industrialised, mono-functional production process to the creation of ‘integrated human settlements’.

The townships are interesting in this regard. There were a number of innovative double-storey row and semi-detached housing projects in Cootesville (Cootesville Steps and Ourlange) and in Kayamandi, inspired by the Weltevrede Valley and Missionvale housing projects in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, respectively. However, for reasons including changes in housing policy, financial affordability and party politics, both at local and national level, none of these housing efforts have been sustained.

The only permanent process that has proved continually capable of delivering basic shelter (but seldom services) has been the construction of shack housing, with informal housing built by residents themselves proving to be the only delivery process able to keep up with the scale of the need for shelter. This is most evident in the vibrant streets of Kayamandi, where there is dense infilling of shacks among formal dwellings, as well as in ‘the Zones’ on the higher slopes. This has created activity that is similar in intensity to – but very different in character from – that in the southern CBD. Interestingly, the dwelling unit densities in the southern CBD are closer to those of Kayamandi than anywhere else in Stellenbosch, although obviously existing in a very different socio-economic context (see Figure 1.1).

The lesson here is that when urban population densities exceed 100 people per hectare, things start to happen – no matter who the people are. Whether this intensity of activity is negative or positive depends entirely on how it is managed and on the perspective of the onlookers: some people love informal markets; others hate them.

The rest of Stellenbosch town, outside of the CBD, comprises upmarket suburbs, their layout and appearance again reflecting the trends of the time. Suburbs developed during the decades of the 1960s through to the 1980s reflect a ubiquitous low-density American-style ‘one house one plot’ aesthetic, which for some reason was seized on as the suburban dream by the South African middle classes of the time. Possibly this was because the dominant South African urban populations of the 1930s to the 1950s – like their American counterparts – were also ‘incomers’ from the rural areas. This trend continued into the 1990s and 2000s, with gated security estates such as De Zalze, a large estate on the southern outskirts of Stellenbosch town, featuring spacious, gabled houses with black, double-pitched roofs clustered among green belts around a golf course. A large neighbourhood shopping centre, Stellenbosch Square, across the road from the estate, is the latest addition to those suburban extensions. The prevailing transport mode of almost all residents and shoppers who frequent it is the private car.

As a result, the urban fabric of Stellenbosch town as a whole does not have a coherent, unifying theme provided by local building materials and inspired by styles and/or colours, with buildings differentiated only by size. Rather, it gives the impression of badly put together pieces from very different jigsaw puzzles. These bits of urban fabric are tenuously held together by tarred access roads, along which minibus taxis and private cars speed when they are not slowed down by peak hour traffic congestion, often endangering pedestrians and small children.

Equally tenuously, the settlement is held together below ground by a network of water, sewerage and storm water pipes whose capillaries and bronchiholes generally deteriorate as they serve the poorer parts of town and whose bulk plants are in need of large and expensive upgrades. They often fail to reach the furthest limits of the informal settlements, which are served by communal ablution blocks and stand-alone toilets or, in some cases, the bucket system.

2 NE 51/6 and NE 51/9 refer to a set of low-income housing types developed by the National Building Research Institute (NBR) based on their guidelines completed in 1951.
There have been innovative efforts to promote a housing form rooted in the town – for example, the double-storey, 40-m² row and semi-detached housing schemes of the late 1990s and 2000s in Kayamandi and Cloetesville – but if one took away the vineyards and the mountain backdrops, there would be little to distinguish most of suburban Stellenbosch town from Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal, Rustenburg in Gauteng, or Polokwane in Limpopo. In some cases, tall buildings in the town are even obstructing the views of the mountains and vineyards.

The natural systems of the town – fertile land, rivers and indigenous vegetation – are being increasingly obscured – physically, visually and ecologically. The town’s carbon footprint is being increased by energy-intensive materials in pipes, cables and road materials, as well as pump stations, water treatment plants and the solid waste transportation system – the result of prevailing civil engineering paradigms for water supply, waste water treatment and storm water drainage. Due to declining urban management capacity, there is continuous pressure to raise the specifications of capital infrastructure, so that, hopefully, less maintenance will be required.

When coupled with formulaic layout and zoning conditions, these trends have resulted in a settlement pattern, form and use of materials that have largely undermined Stellenbosch town’s former closely dependent relationship with its ecosystem services, i.e. the water, arable land, and building materials necessary for survival and economic activity.

In respect of the rural areas, Stellenbosch Municipality largely comprises either agriculture – mainly intense belts of vineyards and wine farms, often with wineries; restaurants and tourist accommodation; or wilderness areas encompassing the surrounding mountains. In addition to their role as an impressive scenic backdrop to the municipality, the mountains offer a myriad of mountain biking and hiking opportunities for tourists or those residents able to indulge in these activities.
Stellenbosch Municipality’s rural areas provide the inputs – arable land, water and scenic landscapes – for four of its most important, and mutually reinforcing, economic and employment sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, financial services and tourism. Although some of the most scenic wine farming areas in the world are located here, currently largely uncluttered by the kind of massive agro-industrial complexes found in California and in some of the European wine areas, there are nevertheless growing signs of industrialisation as farming becomes more corporate and owners seek to maximise their returns. The quality of this environment is highly sought after by wealthy South African and international business people and retirees as a place to live.

This happy convergence of environmental resources, scenic quality and business opportunities has two other mutually reinforcing spin-offs: the largest number of JSE-listed companies based in any small South African town are headquartered in Stellenbosch, and the town is home to a disproportionately high number of corporate CEOs and executives, which in turn means that it is able to sustain a comparatively high level of economic activity and consumer services for a town of its size. This results in other benefits throughout the value-add chain and for employment, with domestic work, agriculture, and tourism and other service industries constituting the main sources of employment for Stellenbosch’s relatively unskilled working poor.

But cracks are appearing in the bucolic landscapes surrounding the urban settlements, and the tipping points may not be far off. Most visually obvious is the urbanisation-by-stealth of the countryside: packing sheds are growing into distribution centres; shiny plastic is covering more and more agricultural land; wineries are becoming large bottling plants; and labourers’ cottages are being transformed into holiday chalet compounds, in places even morphing into small, upmarket residential security estates.

Less obvious, unless experienced during rush hour, are growing traffic volumes. The landfill site outside Stellenbosch town – now legally full, yet still accepting waste while other affordable and acceptable alternatives are investigated – continues to tower upwards. The water quality in the main rivers is extremely poor – so much so that it might pose a threat to the export of produce to overseas markets that insist on acceptable standards of irrigation water. And, lurking in overcrowded rooms and informal shacks is the housing challenge. Stellenbosch Municipality’s current waiting list is about the same as the current number of formal dwelling units in the municipality – around 20 000; in other words, about the same number of dwelling units as have been built in Stellenbosch Municipality during the entire past 300 years are needed. Where will they be built? And how did this untenable situation arrive?

A history of planning in Stellenbosch

It certainly didn’t start like this …

Planning in the first 250 years

Stellenbosch prides itself on being South Africa’s first town (Cape Town is regarded as the first [mother] city). It was established in December 1680 by the Governor of the Cape, 28 years after Cape Town was first established. While there was undoubtedly pre-colonial settlement of the land along the Eerste River before the arrival of the settlers, today’s town has its roots in the original settlement pattern, whose main elements were in place by 1710 (see Figure 1.2).

Long streets were aligned at right angles to the contours and provided with furrows, so that water for irrigation and drinking could gravitate to each property. Buildings were built along the edges of the blocks so as to minimise their impact on land for cultivation.

This pattern reflected a very close relationship with the natural environment on which the town depended for its water, food and fibre and building material needs. Figure 1.3, W.F. Hertzog’s famous map of Stellenbosch town in 1817, clearly illustrates the settlement’s close relationships with the natural systems:

- the source of the water drawn from a tributary of the Eerste River at a suitably elevated point;
- Dorp Street laid out some 150 m to 200 m away from the river, so as to keep it out of the flood lines; and
- optimal and equitable use of good agricultural land on ‘water erven’ (long, thin plots leading down to the river banks) – a pattern also seen in Jamestown and Franschhoek.

Figure 1.2 The growth of Stellenbosch town: 1710, 1770, 1817, 1905 (all drawings at same scale) [Oude Meester Groep 1979]
The energy requirements of such a settlement were very small. Water moved by gravity. Transport was supplied by animal traction, the animals deriving their energy from the same nearby food gardens that fed the residents. Water heating and cooking requirements were supplied by renewable energy, i.e. wood, which was chopped either in the natural forests in the kloofs of Jonkershoek and Blaauwklippen Valley or in the plantations and woodlots already in evidence on Herzog’s map. Space heating relied on the passive insulation resulting from the prevailing approaches to building construction, material and orientation. All these features may still be seen and experienced at the Stellenbosch Town Museum.

There were no cars and trucks, pumps, generators, pipelines, cables or refrigerators. The main energy source was gravity, which meant that the need to travel and transport goods had to be minimised. Thus, the least fertile land was chosen for the location of buildings, while aligning the streets perpendicularly to the contours allowed water to be abstracted from the higher reaches of the main river via weirs above the town and distributed via kerb-side furrows to irrigate garden plots and provide drinking and washing water – a system that is still found in some rural towns and villages today (e.g. Prince Albert or Nieu Bethesda).

As people mostly moved on foot, the settlement remained compact even as retail and commerce developed; indeed, walking distance was a key constraint to the outward growth of towns and villages.

Important public activities dominated the main spaces of the town: a market place for periodic trading and a site of worship, with the church building of the most popular denomination by far the largest structure in the town.

In this way a large religious, administrative and agricultural service centre developed in the municipality of Stellenbosch town, while smaller villages emerged at Pniel, in the Dwarsriver Valley, and Franschhoek, in the Franschhoek Valley.

Then, in the 1870s, with the onset of a modern economy driven by the discovery of diamonds and gold, things began to change fundamentally in South Africa – changes that resulted in the emergence of new shape shifters acting on spatial development, such as:

- the arrival of an industrial economy;
- improvements in regional transport, starting with the railways, which facilitated urbanisation;
- the development of urban engineering to cope with health challenges, which required improved water supplies and sewage services and led to the development of reticulated service networks and bulk infrastructure plants; and
- the onset of modern methods of energy generation (thermal power stations, the internal combustion engine, and massive increases in the efficiency of steam traction).

These developments not only led to extended working hours and enabled greater specialisation; they also resulted in greater mobility of commuters and freight.

By the early 1900s Stellenbosch Municipality was still relatively unaffected by these shape shifters. Spatial constraints remained significant and the valleys of the municipality largely retained their closed economies. However, from the 1920s onwards these factors began to result in elemental changes, including:

- the arrival of affordable motor cars for the few who could afford them;
- the Post-Union transformation of local government and the emergence of scientific town planning;
- the impact of modernism on town planning (separation of functions as an antidote to unhealthy overcrowding and proximity to pollution; the concept of house and city as a machine, promoted by le Corbusier; and the garden city movement, with its promotion of the ideal urban lifestyle);
- improvements in urban engineering technology (including better pump performance; bigger and longer service networks; decreasing dependence on locally available energy; and new waste water treatment technologies); and
- improvements in hydraulic engineering, which enabled rivers to be canalised and piped and wetlands drained, thus increasing the amount of land that could be developed.

At this point, Stellenbosch town began to spread into the surrounding countryside as walking distance no longer imposed a spatial constraint (see Figure 1.4). Service industries and value-added manufacturing grew...
rapidly. Raw materials, water, building materials and electricity from coal were cheap and abundant. It appeared as though the urban economy could be more and more divorced from the local natural environment. The result of all this was an urban metabolism that had apparently thrown off environmental shackles and could begin to consume resources at an exponential rate.

Figure 1.4  Urban growth of Stellenbosch [CNdV Africa, Urban Dynamics & GLS 2004]

Planning under Apartheid

The next major change in Stellenbosch Municipality’s spatial planning history occurred during the apartheid era. The Group Areas Act was passed in 1950 and began to be implemented in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Stellenbosch was no exception to this process, with Franschhoek North (Groendal), Cloetesville, Idas Valley and Kayamandi emerging during this time.

Stellenbosch Divisional Council Regional Development Scheme, 1967

During this period, the area demarcated today as Stellenbosch Municipality fell under three jurisdictions: Stellenbosch (town) Municipality, Franschhoek Municipality and the Stellenbosch Divisional Council (SDC).

The Stellenbosch Divisional Council covered a vast area – particularly to the west, where Kuilsriver formed its boundary – and included part of present-day Delft, Blue Downs, Eerste River, Gaylee, Kleinvlei, Scottsden, and all of the Helderberg basin, including Gordon’s Bay, Macassar and Sir Lowry’s Pass Village – all settlements which it initially developed.

As the Divisional Council too became involved in implementing the Group Areas Act, people were moved from Stellenbosch town to these peripheral settlements, their numbers compounded by migration from the farms, which began in earnest in the 1970s.

Although the Divisional Council’s Regional Development Scheme (SDC 1967) – a spatial plan similar to a present day spatial development framework (SDF) – explicitly earmarked land for the three main race groups, it was far ahead of its time with regard to environmental conservation and management. The scheme was underpinned by an analysis of heritage, geology and soils, topography, climate, vegetation (JP Acocks3 was an important contributor here), demographics, transport, and the land use pattern. The conclusion of this study – informed partly by the fact that South Africa only had 14 million hectares of arable land, of which 3% is high value, and that the Stellenbosch division was relatively richly endowed in this regard (Adendorf 1984) – led to the policy that there should be no urban development east of the proposed N7 route corridor, which ran through the middle of the division at the time. (In fact, this line still largely forms the City of Cape Town’s eastern urban edge to this day.)

This policy was supported throughout this period by a united front constituted of officials led by Johan Adendorf,4 chief town planner, and the council, particularly in the person of Stevie Smit, chairman of the Divisional Council for much of this period. It is likely that if the council had not enforced their policy, the western part of the municipality, between Kuilsriver and Stellenbosch town, would have been completely developed at present – at the time, the Cape Division took a very different position on land of a similar context between Bellville and Durbanville, and this area was completely built out from the 1960s to 1990s (see Figure 1.5).
A comparison of these two policy trajectories – the one promoting large lot urban development; the other consolidating agriculture – over the past 40 years starkly raises key questions about sustainable development with respect to spatial planning:

- Which had the most benefit to society?
- Which had the most benefit to the environment?
- Are benefits to society and the environment mutually exclusive, or can they be mutually beneficial?
- How should these benefits and costs be measured?
  - In terms of randy? – Development and huge construction expenditure creates jobs, appreciates property, increases rates to the local authority, and mobilises against the loss of productive agricultural land and low-skilled jobs; and/or
  - In terms of environmental sustainability? – The conservation of nearby agricultural land (vegetable and animal protein close at hand) and the preservation and creation of jobs (low-skilled in agriculture and tourism).
- Is there a third way? Adendorf believed not. His experience suggested that the kind of finely detailed and sensitive response to upmarket rural development found in Europe and the UK – where development could be confined to small, carefully designed, isolated hamlets or the renewal of existing buildings – was not possible in the South African context, where the prevailing development mode was large lot subdivisions of entire farms, connected to bulk infrastructure services requiring large economies of scale to be viable. It could only be all or nothing. The debate continues to rage between developers, municipalities and the Provincial Government to this day.

Stellenbosch Guide Plan, 1988

Guide plans – high level strategic planning documents – first began to be formulated in the Cape in 1980. They were approved in terms of the Physical Planning Act (Act 88 of 1967), and because they were under the jurisdiction of an Act, they could trump the provincial planning ordinances. They were also approved by government, unlike many of the other structural plans of the time. This gave them a legal standing that still endures today. The guide plans were intended to ensure compliance with the broad spatial planning policy of the National Government, which initially meant the spatial implementation of apartheid. They are currently administered by the Provincial Government.

Stellenbosch’s 1988 Guide Plan covered the town and nearby agricultural areas to the north and south. It broadly delineated land uses and recommended preservation of agricultural and scenic land. A possible concern, although not explicitly stated, was to control the growth of Kayamandi, the only suburb of Stellenbosch town mentioned by name in the text. Although the planning policies from the late 1980s onwards did feature any of the racist terminology that characterised plans from the 1960s and 1970s, their physical legacy had become solidly entrenched by this time.

Planning under the new democracy

Meanwhile, events on the political front were changing quickly. Influx control as a formal policy was abolished in 1986; Nelson Mandela was released from jail in 1991; and the first democratic elections were held in 1994. Clearly, there was a need – and an opportunity – for a more progressive approach to planning.

Stellenbosch Municipality at this time formed part of the Cape Metropolitan Area under the Western Cape Regional Services Council (WCRSC) and, at a conference in Caledon in 1991, it was agreed that an overall metropolitan development framework was needed. Somehow, instead of preparing a single framework, the WCRSC officials charged with this task partially disaggregated the metropolitan area into eight planning sub-regions, of which ‘Stellenbosch and Environs’ was one. A new planning lexicon arrived on the scene – ‘activity corridors’, ‘spines and streets’, ‘nodes’, ‘open space systems’ and ‘densification’ – to describe new approaches to restructuring the apartheid landscape.

Stellenbosch and Environs Sub-Regional Plan, 1995

The Stellenbosch and Environs Sub-Regional Plan covered much of the area in the present-day municipality. Two main swings in planning policy were proposed in this document:

- The racist nomenclature for urban residential areas previously identified as ‘white’, ‘coloured’ and ‘black’ group areas was replaced with ‘low-’, ‘medium-’ and ‘high-intensity’ areas, respectively.
- The previously clear line between urban and rural areas, which had been maintained by the Divisional Council up to this time, was to be blurred with large ‘rural development’ areas around the existing rural nodes, where smallholdings and small farms were to be permitted (see Figure 1.6).

The plan also contained an interesting definition of sustainability – “a characteristic of a process or state that can be maintained indefinitely” (WCRSC 1995:6) – and expressed concerns about the need to promote tourism, conserve the rural ambience and visual quality of the area, protect agriculture and promote densification, so as to minimise the need for lateral expansion of the towns and villages, and put forward proposals to address them.

On a philosophical level, the plan relied on the (chauvinistically-named) Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which promoted a very clear approach to land use management, i.e. ‘biosphere zoning’ (see Figure 1.7).
This clear and simple approach to regional land use management – in terms of which protected wilderness areas and biodiversity hot spots are zoned as ‘core areas’ (where very little intervention should take place), through a series of more and more intense ‘transition’ zones culminating in urban settlements – has come to underpin broad land use management throughout the country, albeit with some important modifications, particularly as regards transition zones.

Early interpretations of transition zones gave rise to ambiguous situations, with little of the necessary clarity and consistency for effective policy planning and guidance. Thus, Transition Zone 4 could accommodate “small-scale market gardening, and space-extensive recreational activities such as golf courses”, while urban development could be accommodated in Transition Zone 5, providing that areas of ecological, aesthetic and/or cultural value were preserved (WCORC, 1995:25). (At present, ‘Transition Zone 1 is known as ‘Buffer’, Transition Zone 3 as ‘Intensive Agriculture’, and Transition Zone 4 as ‘Urban Development’, and so on; see the Winelands Integrated Development Framework.)

Meanwhile, the reorganisation of local government was in full swing. The former Divisional Council and Stellenbosch and Franschhoek Municipalities had become Transitional Local Councils in the urban areas, with the Winelands District Council (WDC) governing the rural ones. Towards the end of this period, the Democratic Front Board drew its final local municipal boundaries and Stellenbosch Municipality (WC024), which has prevailed to this day with only minor changes, was born. However, in 2000, before these boundaries were finally proclaimed, the WDC produced a new plan, namely the Winelands Integrated Development Framework (WIDF).

Winelands Integrated Development Framework (WIDF), 2000

Although the commissioning agent for this plan, the WDC, became defunct over this period, it approved the WIDF. Many of the principles and proposals of the plan are contained in the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve Framework Plan (Cape Winelands District 2009) currently in process with the Cape Winelands District Municipality.

The WIDF was a large and comprehensive plan, based on the philosophies of a number of theorists, including Norberg-Schulz, Heindegger, Trancibl, Kellaub, Lynch, Alexander and Sharp. The Biosphere Reserve strategy was refined by replacing ‘Transition Zone 1’ (see Stellenbosch and Environ Sub-Regional Plan above) with the term ‘Buffer’, which continued to be a largely constrained area protecting the ‘Core’ areas. However, it contained a ‘Rehabilitation’ category to describe land that was severely degraded. The plan proposed that limited development rights could be considered within these previously disturbed areas in return for entrenching social or environmental benefits. This model has been proposed and implemented – although the extent of the treatment management investigations, traffic calming measures, and a wide variety of other issues that required implementation requires clarification – on large out-of-town projects such as De Zalze and Boschendal.

In effect, it would comprise a kind of planning gain scheme to compensate for the development and create social or environmental benefits. This model has been proposed and implemented – although the extent of the treatment management investigations, traffic calming measures, and a wide variety of other issues that required implementation requires clarification – on large out-of-town projects such as De Zalze and Boschendal.

Proposals were also made for conservancies, the protection of scenic views, tourism promotion, waste water treatment management investigations, traffic calming measures, and a wide variety of other issues that required attention in the district.
of the Development Facilitation Act and National Environmental Management Act (see Appendices 1 and 2) could be implemented. It revised some of the bioregional planning categories, in particular replacing the term ‘Transition’ with ‘Agriculture’ and referring to ‘Intensive Agriculture’, i.e. cultivation. Considering the potentially positive impact that proper veld management of grazing regimes could have on biodiversity, ‘Extensive Agriculture’ was moved to the ‘Buffer’ spatial planning category.

In an effort to develop a meaningful approach to sustainable spatial development, the PSDF also developed the Ecological Socio-Economic Relationship framework, which represented an attempt to understand, in an integrated and holistic way, a municipality or any other spatial or building entity as a metabolism with inputs and outputs with both spatial and aspatial constraints and opportunities.

The PSDF was adopted by the ANC provincial cabinet in 2005 and passed into law by the new DA provincial government in 2009.

Stellenbosch Municipality (WC024) Spatial Development Framework, 2005

Formulation of this plan began in 2002. Public participation was a much bigger feature of the post-2000 SDFs and this SDF went through three rounds over a period of four years. These were relatively well-attended compared to the average turnout for public participation in high-level policy plans, but the interest continued to emanate mainly from largely retired, white middle-class stakeholders, although there were efforts to access existing institutional structures, such as ministers’ fraternals, in formerly black areas.

Project planners sought to break away from the previous spatial trajectory of limited internal change within settlements and ad hoc expansion of both high- and low-income housing on the urban periphery. Scenario planning was chosen as a vehicle to explore how the municipality might develop differently in order to accommodate its growing urban settlements.

Five scenarios were posited:

- **Scenario 1:** Implement existing SDFs:
  - SDFs had been prepared for all the small settlements in the municipality during the previous five years – should these form the basis of accommodating new growth?

- **Scenario 2:** Locate development near employment growth nodes:
  - In terms of this scenario, an estimation was made about what employment generation was likely to be and where it would be located (Stellenbosch Municipality enjoyed stellar economic growth over this period); it then assumed that 50% of these workers should be able to walk to work, which has implications for finding land and housing very close to the employment centre.

- **Scenario 3:** Focus development at nodes on road transport corridors:
  - This scenario was based on the assumption that there would be a continuing need to commute and that this would be road-based public or private transport, therefore settlements on the road routes should enjoy development priority.
Scenario 4: Focus development at nodes on rail corridors:

Scenario 4 was based on the assumption that commuting demand should be accommodated on the much higher-capacity, less environmentally-impactful rail system; settlements on rail routes should therefore enjoy priority (assuming also that a private or public operator runs a rail car service). The Franschhoek branch line could be brought back into service if correct operation, sufficient demand and safe protocol for level crossings were established.

Scenario 5: Focus development at the three growth nodes:

This scenario was based on the assumption that all new housing and jobs would be located in the nodes of Franschhoek, Klapmuts and Stellenbosch town, with no development anywhere else.

In addition to these scenarios, twenty implementation proposals and their required actions were identified, one of the most pressing being to assess the likely extent of the movement of farm labour to the nearest hamlet or village. This intra-migration was one of the most critical issues facing the municipality.

However, by 2006, when the political balance in council shifted and some of the senior line managers were replaced, few of these implementation proposals had been actioned.

**Stellenbosch Town Spatial Development Framework, 2006**

After an 18-month hiatus, another important planning initiative, which had started in 2004, was nearly brought to conclusion. This focused on Stellenbosch town and sought to prepare it for absorbing considerable urban growth with only limited lateral expansion, while at the same time ensuring that the essential character of the town be retained and strengthened. The initiative therefore emphasised urban restructuring and densification.

However, because of the natural conservatism of middle-class civic groupings – anxious about structural changes to the urban environment with which they are so familiar and whose positive elements they wish to retain – scenario planning was also used as a tool. Four scenarios were developed (see Figure 1.8).

An important aspect of these scenarios was that the interdisciplinary team of planners and civil and transport engineers who produced them also interrogated them with regard to their associated costs and benefits.

The scenarios were intensely workshopped and published in the media. In addition, a number of case studies of actual projects in Stellenbosch town demonstrating aspects of the ‘Urban Restructuring and Integration’ scenario were written up.

The outcome of the exercise was to be a large, integrated workshop in the town hall. One hundred key representatives from all communities in Stellenbosch were to be invited to debate the possibilities and choose
a scenario, or to choose elements from each of the scenarios in order to make up a composite scenario. Clearly, for such a high-stake exercise to be successful, a stable, cohesive council and top management was essential. Unfortunately, this was not to be. Around the time of the critical workshop to bring closure to this stage of the project, there was another council change and the project was put on hold.

Finally, two years later, a technical in-house team put together what they considered to be the scenario most capable of addressing Stellenbosch town’s future development pressures. Shortly after this, seven key sites were put out to tender for redevelopment (see Figure 1.9). This would have been a great opportunity to illustrate a new growth trajectory for the town using the projects as demonstrations. Although a few of the sites were controversial at the time, it was hoped that, if they were sensitively developed, many fears might be allayed. Unfortunately, there were a number of procedural issues with the tender process, including some grossly over-bulked proposals, and the programme was put on hold until the next council change, at which stage the whole process was shelved.

**Figure 1.9 Stellenbosch Town: Tender sites in 2006 (CNdV Africa 2006)**

**Lessons for a Future Spatial Plan for Stellenbosch**

Urban reform in South Africa needs to achieve multiple objectives:
- move away from the apartheid spatial pattern;
- reduce carbon emissions;
- take climate change into account; and
- alleviate poverty.

Achieving these multiple objectives requires that a number of success factors be in place, including:
- courageous and strong political leadership that does not flinch from arguing key points against the support of its constituency – this requires a firmly entrenched and stable government;
- executive municipal management that can work in concert to develop a progressive vision from the departure point of each manager’s key performance area;
- a supportive culture that welcomes carefully planned pilot policy projects as learning opportunities;
- continuous public participation and ventilating of new ideas through a range of platforms, from established IDP representative forums to the local mass media;
- a deepening of the systems approach to spatial planning, integrating it as fully as possible with the functions of different line departments and stakeholder groups; it cannot, and should not, be confined to the line activity of one particular department;
- mediate the necessary spatial compromises to facilitate short-term development needs with long term environmental, social and fiscal sustainability priorities; and,
- in particular, there must be a greater integration of the economic imperatives of growth and employment into the planning process, using techniques such as input/output models to achieve a deep, rather than shallow, understanding of the necessary preconditions and the way in which they may effectively be planned for.

However, due to the political and institutional flip-flopping that Stellenbosch Municipality has endured over the past decade, it has not been possible to embed these success factors.

To date, the two preconditions for successful urban and rural reform clearly have not been met: firstly, embracing a new urban and rural vision; and secondly, creating a sufficiently stable and courageous political platform to provide necessary, but sometimes non-populist, reforms. Only time will tell whether they will be satisfied.

**REFERENCES**


