

University of Cape Town, South Africa City and Regional Planning Programme

Vanessa Watson

This paper will first consider the context within which the University of Cape Town Master of City and Regional Planning (UCT MCRP) programme operates, focusing on the metropolitan area of Cape Town and the current planning system in South Africa. The paper then moves on to explain the MCRP programme at UCT and how graduating students are equipped to deal with both the urban and legislative contexts.

1. Metropolitan Cape Town: Planning issues

Cape Town, with a population of approximately 3 million (2.89 million in the 2001 census), is one of the 9 metropolitan areas in South Africa, and is the only metropolitan node in the Western Cape Province.¹ The population is growing at about 2.6% per annum and growth has slowed over the last decade. Projections to 2021 suggest a high of 4.2 million and a low of 3.3 million, with the latter a response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and slowed natural population growth. Cape Town does not, therefore, fit into the general pattern of rapidly growing African cities, and even within the South African context its growth is slower than that of the economic hub of Gauteng.

1.1 Demographic trends

Most of Cape Town's population growth comes from the natural increase of the population already in the city. The Gauteng and Western Cape Provinces are the only two in South Africa to experience net immigration: the rest indicate out-migration. But much in-migration into the Western Cape is targeted at smaller and middle-sized towns rather than at the metropole. This is a common feature in South Africa and is a result of the difficulties of securing land and services in the main metropolitan areas. Both in-migration and out-migration in Cape Town have been increasing. It is estimated that in 2001 there were 43 600 in-migrants and 26 000 out-migrants. In-migrants are not all poor – close to half are from the wealthier white population group, attracted by better quality of life in Cape Town and its natural resources. All figures on migration should be read with caution, however, as processes of circulatory migration of poorer groups between Cape Town and more rural areas (particularly the Eastern Cape Province) have persisted over time. It is very difficult, therefore, to make accurate assessments of in- and out-migration when large sections of the population are highly mobile.

Cape Town holds some 75% of the population of the Western Cape Province. The metropolitan area itself has little in the way of informal urban peripheral settlement (unlike some other South African towns) due to the high value and intensive commercial use of the agricultural land around the city. But smaller towns in the province have been showing rapid economic growth due to in-migration, as they offer easier access to land and services than does the metro.

The population of Cape Town is highly diverse in terms of race and culture. In 2001, 50% of the population was classified as coloured (mixed-race), 31.7% as African and 19% as white. Both white and coloured totals are decreasing with fertility rate decline, while the African component is increasing. These figures influence home language composition, with 29% of people speaking isiXhosa, 41% Afrikaans and 27.9% English. Seventy-six per cent of the population is Christian and 9.7% Islam.

¹ Main sources for this section are City of Cape Town 2005, 2006a.

Figure 1: Cape Town – 3 million people, 45 km E-W



Source: Google Earth, accessed July 2008

Spatially, Cape Town was segregated under apartheid into white, coloured, Indian and African residential areas. These divisions tend to persist (largely due to continuing income inequalities reflecting apartheid-era racial classifications, and due to big differences in property prices between the previously white areas and other areas of the city), although certain areas are reflecting a degree of racial integration. Some wealthier African and coloured households are moving into affluent white areas, but most of the integration is taking place in suburbs where housing stock is cheaper and available for rental. Generally, racial/cultural conflict has not been a public issue in Cape Town, and where it has occurred it has tended to focus on the school system, which integrated far more quickly after the first democratic government came to power in 1994. Schools, like residential areas, are still largely populated by pupils from one racially designated group, but there has been an influx of African and coloured pupils into public schools previously designated white, due to the great shortage of school places in what remain *de facto* African and coloured areas. Children travel long distances across the metro to access schools with better facilities and standards.

Crime levels in Cape Town are very high, as they are in all the larger towns and cities in South Africa. Statistics are constantly being disputed. The murder rate was reportedly 66.2/100 000 per annum in the 1994/95 period and climbed to 86.7/100 000 in 2002/04. Rape and child abuse rates are also

alarming. Inequality, poverty and well-organised drug and gang organisations are all factors.

1.2 Service provision in the metropole

Cape Town's population has relatively good access to basic public infrastructure such as water, sanitation and energy. One reason for the drop in the proportion of households served over the last decade is due to the rapid increase in the number of households (far more rapid than overall population growth) arising from household splitting (as a result of young people leaving home, divorce etc.). It has therefore been difficult for the rollout of services to keep up with demand. Table 1 indicates changes in the scale of service provision over the period 1996–2001.

Table 1: Service levels in Cape Town, 1996–2001

	1996	2001	1996–2001
Demography			
Number of households	651 972	759 765	
Annual average rate of household growth			3.3%
Population	2 563 095	2 893 251	
Annual average rate of population growth			2.5%
Refuse removal			
Households with weekly refuse removal	% 89.8	94.2	
	N 578 862	732 362	
Water supply			
Households with piped water on site	% 89.8	84.4	
	N 584 568	656 135	
Toilet facilities			
Households with flush toilet	% 89.6	87.5	
	N 583 044	680 594	
Electricity supply			
Households with electricity supply	% 87.2	88.8	
	N 566 808	690 369	

Source: City of Cape Town 2006a

1.3 Housing, informal settlement and land tenure issues

The backlog in housing is a more serious problem. The number of informal shacks in Cape Town has grown steadily since 1994 (from 28 300 in 1993 to over 100 000 in 2004). But the overall backlog of housing is much larger, as many households are in overcrowded conditions. The total backlog is currently estimated at 265 000–300 000 units, with the annual supply of new housing at around only 30 000 units. Part of the problem here lies in the nature of South Africa's housing policy, which focuses on the provision (via an income-linked capital subsidy) of individual housing units for ownership, and has disregarded the need to consider approaches such as *in-situ* upgrade of informal settlements or the facilitation of back-yard informal rental. A major problem with the provision of new subsidised housing is the lack of well located urban land: most affordable land is on the urban periphery and far from work or public facilities. One recent project (the N2 Gateway) aimed at providing new housing for informal families on well located land only succeeded in delivering units which were far too expensive for shack dwellers. Subsequently the shack dwellers were removed to an isolated and peripheral site in the metro, which has seriously impacted on their living conditions.

Informal settlement is a serious problem in Cape Town, as most of these settlements are sited on the area known as the Cape Flats which is environmentally very poor. The water table is high and there is

frequent winter flooding. Hot windy summers frequently result in fires which destroy homes and lives. Shelters are often poorly made, using plastic and tin, and consolidation has not been rapid. There is often an expectation (raised by national Department of Housing billboards proclaiming the government's commitment to 'Housing for All') that all households will be provided with housing, and hence people are reluctant to invest in the housing process themselves.

In terms of tenure issues, land is held under private freehold or by the public sector (to a far smaller degree). Current low-income housing policy aims to deliver housing units under freehold, and there has been a resistance at state level to providing rentals. Sixty per cent of properties are in private ownership, 24% under rental and 14% listed as rent-free (i.e. informal settlement or sharing with relatives).

Generally, 30% of households (about 1 million people) live in inadequate housing and poor physical environments, characterised by poverty, unemployment, low levels of education, alcoholism, crime and deviant behaviour.

1.4 Transport and spatial planning concerns

Cape Town relies on rail, bus and taxi as means of public transport and 30% of the population use these to access school and work. But a significant 33% report that they travel daily on foot, largely due to the unaffordability of both public and private transport options. Thirty-eight per cent travel daily by car, and the planning of Cape Town has given priority to the private vehicle. Investment in commuter rail has not been maintained, and numbers of passengers have fallen due to security worries and the poor quality of the service.

Spatially, Cape Town is a highly inefficient city in terms of the distribution of activities (as are most South African cities), and this generates huge amounts of daily movement for work and school purposes. Apartheid planning resulted in a spatially divided city, in which most work opportunities and public facilities were concentrated within the wealthier white areas in the north and west of the city. New apartheid townships, built on the sandy Cape Flats in the south-east of the city, were planned as purely residential areas with almost no work opportunities and only local facilities. The large and mostly poor population on the Cape Flats has historically had to travel long distances across the city to work, with the cost of transport absorbing over 25% of monthly income. While there has been some redistribution of jobs in the post-apartheid era, the broad spatial divide remains and continues to generate large daily volumes of movement. Planning attempts to spatially restructure Cape Town and redistribute jobs and residents have not been successful.

1.5 Economic activity

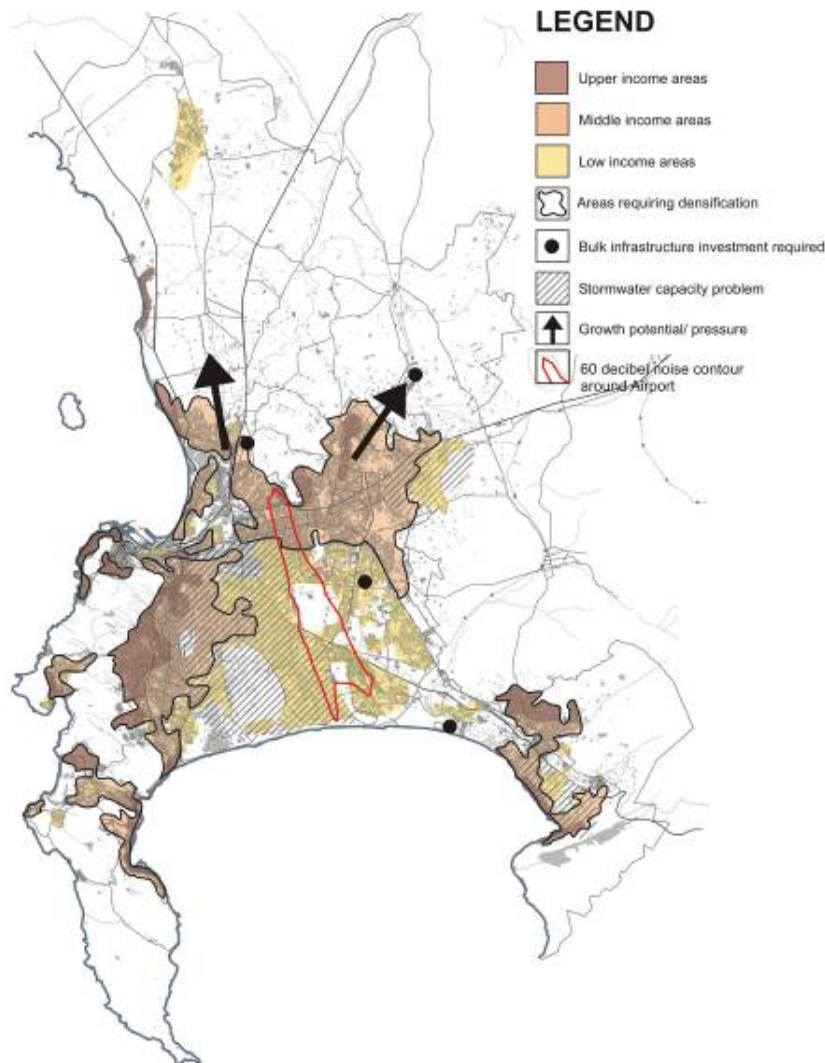
Economically, the country as a whole has experienced a shift from primary- and secondary-sector activities to the tertiary and services sector, and Cape Town has followed this trend. The Western Cape has grown well in recent times (at 4–5% per annum), with much of this growth concentrated in Cape Town, although rates have fallen significantly in the last year. This growth has expressed itself in a major property boom. The value of residential building plans passed for January–August 2004 increased by 45.6% relative to the same period in 2003. For the same period, the value of non-residential building plans increased by 103.4%. Cape Town has the highest land and housing prices relative to other major cities in South Africa.

In 2004, key sectors of employment were community, social and personal services (21%), wholesale and retail trade (20%) and manufacturing (19%). The financial and business services sector (15%), construction (8%) and private households (7%) were also significant sectors of employment. Employment has increased in the commercial and financial sector, and has declined in manufacturing. One reason for this has been the opening of the South African economy to global

markets. The clothing and textile industry used to be a major employer, particularly of women, in Cape Town, but this industry all but collapsed with the rise in imports of cheap Asian products.

These shifts in employment have important implications for the skills requirements of the economy. Generally the jobs available to less skilled people have declined, and the new job markets require high levels of skill. The skill levels in the city improved between 1996 and 2001 but remain very low. The proportion of adults (aged 20+) with the highest educational level below matric (the qualification achieved at the end of 12 years of secondary schooling) dropped from 67.8% in 1996 to 62% in 2001. The proportion with a matric qualification increased from 20.7% to 25.4%, while there was only a slight increase in the proportion of adults (aged 20+) having a post-matric diploma or degree. These factors in turn have influenced unemployment levels, which have risen from 16.5% in 1999 to 23.2% in 2003. Inevitably, more people have turned to the informal sector and it is now estimated that 22% of the workforce is in this sector, contributing 12% to economic output.

Figure 2: Spatial patterns of development in Cape Town



Source: City of Cape Town 2006b

Economic shifts and continuing low skill levels are behind the serious poverty figures in Cape Town.

The proportion of households living below and just above the official poverty datum line (R20 000 per annum in 2001) increased from 25% to 38% between 1996 and 2005. The poorest households are mostly African and are found mostly in informal settlements and townships on the Cape Flats. Moreover, inequality in income has increased significantly, with South Africa now one of the most unequal countries in the world. Inequalities still largely reflect racial categories, with average white household income at some seven times greater than African household income. The Gini coefficient for Cape Town is 0.69, which is high.

1.6 Health indicators

High levels of unemployment and poverty, as well as poor shelter conditions, result in worryingly high indicators of ill-health, many of which are environmentally related. Thus the high infant mortality rates (IMR) and tuberculosis (TB) rates, both a reflection of high levels of poverty, also contribute to poverty. In one of the poorest areas, Khayelitsha, the IMR is 44 : 1000. The main causes of high IMRs are HIV/AIDS, pneumonia and diarrhoeal diseases. Both pneumonia and diarrhoeal diseases are linked to poor environmental health factors – diarrhoeal diseases being linked to inadequacy of services such as water and sanitation, and pneumonia related to overcrowding and malnutrition. There is increasing HIV prevalence amongst women visiting public health clinics (rising from 1.2% in 1994 to 15% in 2005). TB is at epidemic proportions in Cape Town, with incidence rates increasing from 577 to 800 per 100 000 people between 2001 and 2004.

1.7 Environmental concerns

Finally, environmental issues are a cause of concern in Cape Town. The large amount of vehicle traffic generated by the spatial structure of Cape Town contributes to air pollution and brown haze which negatively affect lung disease. Water bodies and coastlines are often severely polluted – guidelines for attaining coastal water quality are infrequently met and certain rivers are in a poor state. The region has global recognition in terms of its unique biodiversity, yet valuable sites in the metro are frequently targeted for informal settlement. One of the most significant income generators for Cape Town is the tourist industry, with visitors attracted by its natural beauty and environment, yet this does not enjoy priority in terms of protection and investment.

Urban sprawl has been a serious concern in Cape Town: over the last 25 years average land consumption has been 900 hectares (ha) per annum (or 3 600 soccer fields). This is a result of up-market residential sprawl as well as new public housing on cheaper land at the urban edge. Cape Town's footprint has therefore grown at an alarming rate.

1.8 Main planning issues

The main issues for planning in Cape Town have to do with spatially restructuring the city to overcome the inefficiencies entrenched by apartheid planning. This would imply encouraging the better integration of work and residence across the city –in terms of both opening up well-located land for lower-income housing, and encouraging the decentralisation of work opportunities to areas outside of the historically wealthier and better resourced part of the city. Currently market forces are driving economic growth to the north of the city, and even further away from lower-income populations. Much of this growth is, however, in the higher-skilled services sector, so spatial proximity is not the only consideration. Skills upgrading needs to accompany spatial planning efforts.

A second important area of concern for planning has to do with the protection of important environmental areas, both within the city and on the urban edge, where some of the most valuable agricultural land in the country is being eroded by sprawl. At the local level, encouraging higher-density, mixed-use areas with good public space qualities is important both to increase urban

efficiency and to improve the nature of living environments.

Important issues such as climate change and oil depletion would imply planning for a future Cape Flats which will be far more susceptible to flooding, and planning for a city with a more effective and energy-efficient public transport system.

2. The planning system in South Africa

South Africa's planning system is the last area of policy in which apartheid laws need to be repealed and replaced. Interim planning legislation put in place in 1995 (the Development Facilitation Act (No. 67 of 1995)) set out a process which should have culminated in a new legal framework for planning, but the national department charged with this task (the Department of Land Affairs) has not been able to do this. As a result, efforts to produce parts of a new planning framework have emerged from other national government departments (the Department of Provincial and Local Government, the President's Office) and from certain provinces. Some municipalities have made efforts to put new directive and regulatory planning systems in place. New environmental and other legislation also conflicts with planning processes in a variety of ways. But apartheid planning legislation remains in place until such time as the Department of Land Affairs can produce an acceptable law, and in the meantime the planning system is confused, fragmented, internally conflictual and inefficient.

There is also a lack of clarity in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which sets out the fundamental legislative framework of the country, as to where the responsibility for planning lies. 'Land' is an area of exclusive national legislative competence, raising doubts about the competence of other spheres (tiers) of government (provincial, local) to legislate at all on planning.

2.1 Current legislation

Key pieces of national post-apartheid planning legislation are:

- The Development Facilitation Act: Chapter 1 of this Act sets out normative principles to guide the form of all urban settlements (they should be compact, mixed-use, sustainable etc.) and these apply to all municipalities. It also allows for tribunals to be set up to speed up decision-making – some provinces have implemented these.
- The Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000): This sets out the provision for Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) at municipal and provincial level, as part of an Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Every IDP is required by law to include an SDF, and this has to include at least basic guidelines for land use management by the municipality.
- The Land Use Management Bill: The most recent version is a revised draft prepared in 2008, which has not yet accepted.

Provincial planning legislation includes the following:

- The Land Use Planning Ordinance (No. 15 of 1985): This is the main law affecting rezonings, subdivisions and departures.
- The Provincial Planning Bill: This is currently in the drafting process.

In terms of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (which set in place new systems of local government) each municipality was required to produce an IDP every five years. This is a municipal plan involving all departments, and linking plans and priorities to the budget. One of the elements of the IDP is an SDF, which is seen to play an integrating role in relation to other plans. The law states that an IDP must contain:

- a vision (external and internal);
- assessment of existing levels of development;
- development priorities;
- development objectives;

- development strategies;
- projects;
- a spatial development framework;
- operational strategies;
- a disaster management plan;
- a financial plan (including a three-year budget) covering capex and opex;
- key performance indicators and performance targets.

The SDF must provide a visual representation of desired spatial form showing:

- land development and infrastructure development;
- desired or undesired use of space;
- optionally, an urban edge;
- places for strategic intervention (i.e. projects);
- places where priority spending is required.

2.2 Current planning products

At the city-wide level the term 'structure plan', used until 1994, has been replaced by the term 'spatial development framework' (SDF). This suggests a 'forward' plan which is more strategic, flexible and implementation-oriented than a structure plan. These plans are specifically spatial, but are supposed to link to environmental, economic and infrastructural aspects of planning through the IDP. Given the lack of new national legislation on planning, cities tend to have developed their own 'bottom-up' ideas about these plans, and often copy ideas from each other.

In Cape Town the first post-apartheid spatial plan (the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework 1996) was aimed at countering apartheid spatial planning, by achieving spatial redistribution and equity, as well as environmental sustainability. It had much in common with the Compact City idea: urban edge, nodes, corridors, densification, mixed use, public transport-based. But it had little understanding of the Cape Town space economy, and little detail on implementation. There had been little contact with other line function departments in the making of the plan. It had also tried to be participatory in its early stages, but those efforts faltered after the plan was published.

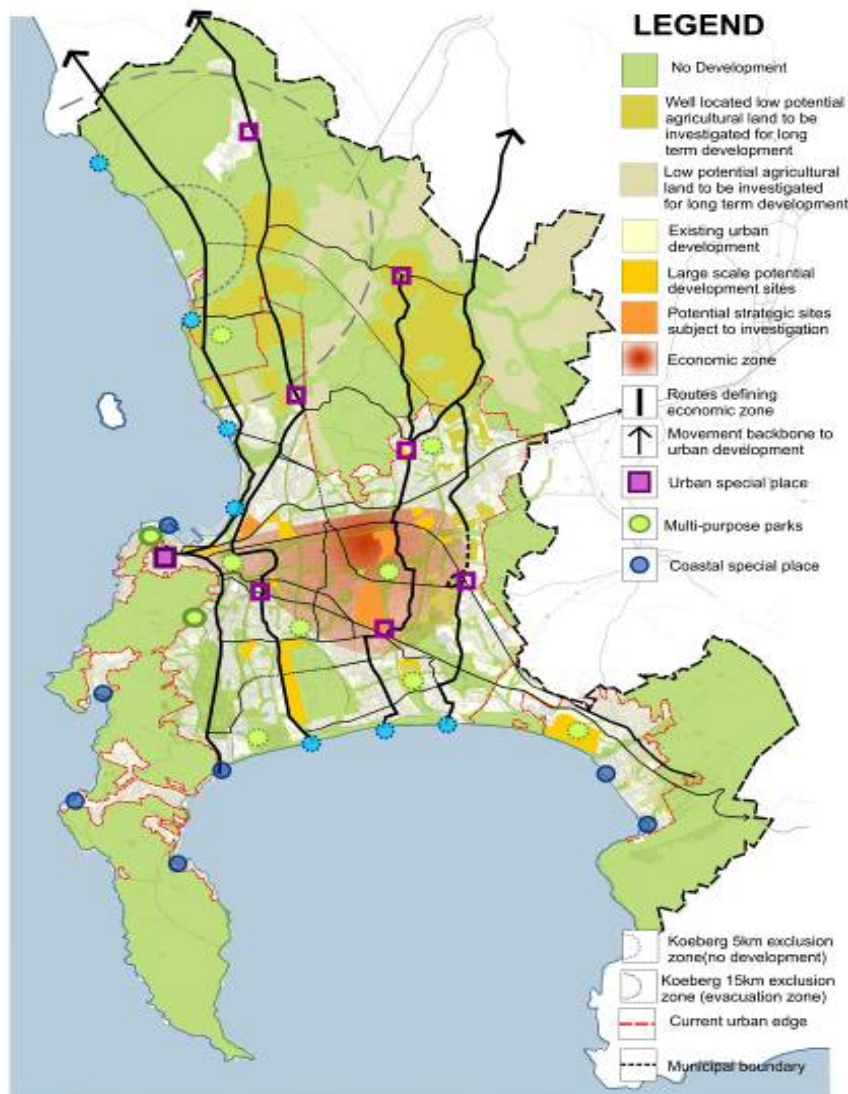
Ten years later, Cape Town had changed very little spatially, and post-apartheid planning had had very little influence on urban form in Cape Town. The demarcation of the urban edge and MOSS (metropolitan open space system) in the 1996 plan has had some effect in terms of protective actions, but directive actions – attempts to change locations of work, residences and commerce – have been largely ignored by private developers. This is largely because planners wish private sector developers to locate in areas where they would provide jobs and income to the poor (i.e. on the Cape Flats), but private investors avoid such areas (for reasons of 'crime and grime', poor services, poor image etc.) and tend to locate in historically wealthy and well resourced areas of Cape Town, especially to the north. At the same time, new public sector low-income housing projects have continued to be implemented on the Cape Flats as this is where land costs are lowest. This in turn worsens the spatial inequality of Cape Town (now driven by market forces rather than by apartheid ideology) and adds to the volume of travel across the city every day. In terms of the densification and promotion of mixed use, this is gradually happening but it is not clear if this is a result of planning. Rising property rates have encouraged subdivision, and the threat of crime has encouraged higher-density 'gated villages'. More people are working from home in the previously residential suburbs, and commercial

activity has been decentralising to form a more dispersed pattern of centres.

Currently a new city-wide plan is being prepared by the municipality. There is more contact between the spatial planners and the other line function departments, but almost no participation by the general public. There is still little understanding of the Cape Town space economy, but a recognition that it is necessary to identify implementable projects. There is greater activity at the sub-metropolitan scale of planning, where the city has been divided into eight planning districts, and more detailed plans are being prepared for these areas. These more detailed plans are aimed at giving guidance to infrastructural investment and have come in response to complaints from the engineering departments within the Cape Town Municipality that the SDFs are too vague and conceptual to be helpful.

In terms of the land use management aspect of the planning system, there is still little in place to ensure that there is linkage to the SDF. The Municipal Systems Act states that this linkage should occur. But this Act only deals with SDFs, and the regulatory side of planning has been left up to a different national department (Land Affairs) to deal with in its new Bill – which has to date not made it through Parliament. In the meantime most municipalities, including Cape Town, have gone ahead to merge the various regulatory systems which applied to the racially divided municipal system under apartheid.

Figure 3: Twenty-year Spatial Development Framework for Cape Town, 2006



Source: City of Cape Town 2006b

This the City has done under the still-existing 1985 provincial legislation (the Land Use Planning Ordinance). The approach to land use regulation contained in this ordinance followed the UK zoning system, and this approach has largely continued in the merging of previously separate zoning schemes across the metro. A final and consolidated zoning scheme for the whole metro is still being finalised.

A central problem with the 1996 Metropolitan SDF (MSDF) is that it was not supported by the regulatory system, and often the two worked to contradict each other (e.g. the MSDF advocated high-density corridors while the zoning scheme reflected low-density residential activity). At the present time there is an intention to link the two aspects of planning but it is not yet clear if this will be achieved.

2.3 Levels of government

Government in South Africa, in terms of the 1996 Constitution, is organised into 'spheres', not tiers (as under apartheid), with a supposed degree of autonomy for each sphere of national, provincial and local government. Each sphere of government has specific powers conferred upon it by Schedules in the Constitution. The significance of this is that power is no longer centrally held by a national government which then delegates powers to provincial government.

- *Legislative authority*, the power to make laws, is vested in national, provincial and local spheres of government. Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution determine which sphere of government creates the law.
- *Executive authority*, which is the power to carry out the laws and to take decisions in terms of laws, is also vested in national, provincial and local government.
- *Judicial authority* is vested in the courts.

The relationship between the various spheres of government is dealt with in several sections of the Constitution, which provides that the spheres of government are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated. All spheres are enjoined to work together in a spirit of cooperative government. The principles of cooperative government are set out in section 41 of the Constitution, which *inter alia* provides that all spheres of government must:

cooperate with each other in mutual trust and good faith by –

...

(ii) assisting and supporting each other

(iii) informing and consulting with one another on matters of common interest

(iv) coordinating their actions and legislation with one another, avoiding legal proceedings against one another.

Spheres are also not entitled to encroach on each other's functions, although this has happened a number of times in the spatial planning arena. Hence national and provincial projects have on occasions taken place in the municipal area in ways which do not align with or recognise the spatial plan, and often with very little consultation with the municipality.

Municipal IDPs are approved at the municipal level, then submitted to the provincial level of government, not for approval, but for checking that they do not contradict national or provincial policy, and that there is alignment between the SDFs of neighbouring municipalities. Provinces can also draw up SDFs and these also need to align with municipal SDFs.

Municipalities are responsible for implementation of the spatial plan, but may have to try and lobby

national and provincial levels to fund certain elements of the plan. Linking the SDF to the IDP can potentially support the implementation of the spatial plan, but one problem is that IDPs have a five-year life-span, and SDFs need to be long-term plans.

2.4 Ability of the spatial plan to manage growth in an equitable and sustainable way

While the goals of the various Cape Town spatial plans have been to achieve equitable and sustainable development, it is not possible to argue that the planning system in Cape Town is achieving this. This is due to the following:

- Spatial planning is a weak instrument relative to the ability of private developers and investors to gain council approval for projects, and the ability of other levels of government to use their land within the metro for their own purposes.
- Spatial planning has also been a weak instrument relative to the spatial plans of other line function departments in the municipality (e.g. the Departments of Transport and of Housing).
- Until recently spatial planners have not had access to instruments to implement their plans. Potentially the IDP could change this, but spatial planning is still not playing the necessary integrating role in local government, and still tends to function as a separate line department.

3. The University of Cape Town's approach to planning education

A Department of Urban and Regional Planning was founded at the University of Cape Town in 1965. Until 1973 it offered a three-year, part-time course of study, but thereafter a two-year, full-time programme was introduced with the title of Master of City and Regional Planning (MCRP). This programme, together with a closely related programme (Master of City Planning and Urban Design), was granted recognition by the South African Institute of Town and Regional Planners in November 1977.

Currently the City and Regional Planning Programme falls within the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment. The School has an undergraduate and a BArch Architecture degree, and the MCRP programme is linked closely with two other master's degrees: Master of City Planning and Urban Design and Master of Landscape Architecture. A number of courses and studios are shared among the three master's programmes.

3.1 Aim of the curriculum

The programme promotes a strongly held philosophy of planning and its role in society: that planning is concerned with the management of the relationship between society and the environment, to the ends of fostering positive human development and improving the quality of life of all people, but particularly of the poor and disadvantaged. Planning is thus supported by two ethical pillars.

The first is humanist. Planning is primarily concerned with the making and management of human settlements. Within the contemporary context, the discipline is charged with monitoring existing trends relating to human settlement, drawing attention to the implications for people's living conditions, and enlarging society's sense of possibilities in relation to living options. The second ethical pillar relates to the natural conditions which provide the setting within which, and the basic resources with which, human life is played out. Sustainability is a central planning consideration in this regard.

The programme believes that plan-making is qualitative, and is concerned with the whole rather than the parts. It is not technologically or scientifically derived, but is informed by how people over time have addressed the making of place to meet their needs. An understanding of spatial structure and

'place' is central to this position, with a focus on the role of public space as social space.

Regarding educational philosophy, the programme adopts a problem-based and conceptual learning model. Practical planning projects (at a range of scales) are the focus of each semester, and lecture-based (theory) courses are designed to inform the project. Theory and practice are thus closely connected. The overall purpose of the programme is:

- to equip qualifiers with values, knowledge and skills to enable them to engage in continued personal intellectual growth, gainful economic activity and rewarding contributions to society;
- to provide South Africa with professionals and researchers who are able to lead in dealing creatively with the developmental and environmental challenges associated with human settlements;
- to provide South Africa with innovators in the discipline.

The programme very specifically attempts to produce critical thinkers who will be capable of changing and improving the planning system within which they work, rather than simply implementing the system within which they find themselves.

3.2 Educational outcomes

General outcomes of the programme (contextually demonstrated general values, knowledge and skills) are the following:

- Values

The MCRP graduate is able to identify, assess, formulate and solve complex spatial planning problems integrally, from first principles based on humanist - and environment-centred values.

- Knowledge

The MCRP graduate is able to:

- ♦ identify core issues relating to urban and regional development in complex contexts through theoretically- and precedent-derived insights;
- ♦ design methods to tackle complex planning tasks, integrate information from a wide variety of disciplines and direct the energies and activity of multidisciplinary teams;
- ♦ apply clear method to creating spatial frameworks and site layouts which integrate spatial, environmental, social, economic, cultural and institutional insights at a variety of scales;
- ♦ draft public policy in arenas relating to urban and regional planning and development;
- ♦ design implementational strategies for complex land development projects;
- ♦ communicate ideas and strategies verbally, in text and in graphic form, to a range of possible audiences;
- ♦ interact effectively with other professionals and officials, politicians, business interests and communities;
- ♦ engage in the measuring and monitoring of environmental impacts.

- Skills

The MCRP graduate has a sound basis for the following skills:

- ♦ understanding of method;

- ♦ spatial design;
- ♦ research design;
- ♦ map-reading and interpretation;
- ♦ data analysis and research methods;
- ♦ graphic presentation and geographic information systems (GIS);
- ♦ report-writing and writing skills;
- ♦ oral communication to large and small audiences;
- ♦ interaction with various stakeholders in a planning process.

3.3 Courses and time allocations

1 credit (cr) = 10 hours of students' time (i.e. contact time, plus time allocated to reading, writing etc.)

Semester One

The focus in this semester is on planning at the local scale, with the lecture-based courses dealing with aspects of urban theory. The following courses are taught:

- Planning Theory and Practice – an introduction to planning, answering the question: what do planners do? The course deals with shifts in planning theory and practice over time and current areas of focus. (8 cr)
- Urban Systems – processes of settlement formation and growth, forces affecting the distribution of urban activities, the urban land market, public structure and private sector response. (12 cr)
- Natural Systems – the relationship between nature and settlement; knowledge relating to land, water, air, life; systems and related planning implications. (12 cr)
- Aspects of City Design – concepts of urban structure and performance at the local scale, design approach to planning, case studies. (12 cr)
- Planning Techniques 1 – map work and cartographic interpretation, graphic techniques, communication, writing papers, GIS. (12 cr)
- Planning Project A – urban planning at the local scale, developing analytical, evaluative and intervention skills and ideas. Usually focused on a local 'greenfield' site for which a spatial plan must be produced. (32 cr)

Semester Two

This semester builds on the first semester to introduce aspects of plan implementation and institutional context, and planning at the larger scale of a metropolitan or sub-metropolitan area. The project deals with a settled area rather than a greenfield site. The following courses are taught:

- Urban Development Processes – dynamics of contemporary urban development processes, land development models, land economics, the social, political and economic context of urban development. (12 cr)
- Planning and Governmental Systems – the political and institutional context of planning: systems of representation and administration, local government and finance, integrated development planning, participation, partnerships, plan evaluation, case studies of professional practice. (12 cr)
- Regulatory and Legal Frameworks – planning law, administrative law, environmental law. (12 cr)

- Planning Techniques 2 – data and information systems acquisition, presentation of quantitative data, introduction to statistical methods. (12 cr)
- Planning Project B – planning and plan implementation within the larger metropolitan context. (32 cr)

Semester Three

The focus in the first part of this semester (ten weeks) is on regional planning. Full-time work on dissertations starts thereafter.

- Regional Planning Theory – 20th-century regional planning experience, landscape framework, economic development framework, settlement and services framework. (20 cr)
- Regional Planning Project – preparation of a regional development framework as input to the municipalities’ integrated development plan. (32 cr)
- Planning Techniques 3 – environmental assessment and management. (8 cr)

Semester Four

- Starting in Semester Three – individual student dissertations on an area of the student’s choice. (120 cr)

3.4 Admission requirements

Students can apply to enter the MCRP programme from 3- or 4-year undergraduate programmes, in any discipline, if their marks in their final year are at or above 65%. They can also enter from a 4-year BTech in planning from a university of technology. Entrance directly from an undergraduate programme is possible because the first year of the MCRP contains ‘level 4’ courses (honours level) and the second year contains ‘level 5’ courses, usually considered to be the master’s level.

3.5 Assessment

Project work is assessed through an oral presentation process and through a submitted project document. Ten per cent of the overall project mark is allocated to presentation skills, and students have inputs from Professional Communications staff covering presentation skills, how to do an effective Powerpoint presentation, etc.

Theory courses are assessed through written essays. Formal exams are written for the Planning Law and Statistics courses.

All work is sent to external examiners for verification. In the case of project work the external examiners are invited to participate in the final presentations.

3.6 Student numbers

There are four full-time staff members responsible for the MCRP programme. Student numbers for the period 2000–2008 are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Student numbers 2000–2008

	Master of City & Regional Planning			Total	Graduates
	First Year	Second Year (full-time)	Second Year (part-time)		
2008	18	9	0	27	
2007	11	9	3	20	9

2006	13	16	2	31	14 (3 dist)
2005	20	9	5	34	9
2004	12	10	2	24	7
2003	12	9	3	24	6 (1 dist)
2002	15	5		20	2
2001	5	7		12	5
2000	6	7		13	7
			PhD students		
2000–2008					5

3.7 Literature and ideas

In the project work (spatial planning at local, metropolitan and regional scales) students are exposed to current theoretical ideas and case studies. Much of this material originates from the USA and Europe, however, and its applicability to South Africa needs to be treated with caution.

In the theoretical work, most courses draw on up-to-date ideas and literature. There are some elements, however, which need to be updated.

3.8 Library and IT resources

Library resources are generally good. The library subscribes to most (but not all) important planning journals, but it is difficult to get permission to subscribe to new ones due to budget constraints. Books are easily obtainable. The planning programme uses a branch Built Environment Library housed in the same building as the department which is secure and well-managed.

Information technology (IT) resources are good. Staff get new personal computers every four years and their existing ones are rotated to student computer labs. Internet connection is usually always available, although sometimes slow. Students have study cubicles with computers, as well as access to a general computer laboratory.

3.9 Curriculum revision

The curriculum was reviewed about eight years ago and subsequently restructured. Prior to this, first- and second-year master's students were taught together. The changes separated the two years into a graduated curriculum, starting with local area planning, then progressing to metropolitan planning, then to regional planning and finally to work on the dissertation. At the same time the dissertation was increased in scope and credit weighting so that it became a more important element in the curriculum.

In 2010 two current members of staff will retire. The intention, therefore, is to take this opportunity to do a fundamental review of the curriculum.

4. Links with the planning profession

The programme was last accredited by the South African Council for Planning in 2002, and is due for a further accreditation visit as soon as the Council is able to work its way through the list of schools awaiting accreditation. In 2007 the UK Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) conducted a 'benchmarking' visit to UCT and has indicated that we can take the next step in terms of applying for their accreditation.

UCT undertakes five-yearly assessments of programmes, and a Programme Governance Committee

(involving staff, students and outside stakeholders) meets annually to review the programme.

5. Preparing students for 21st-century environments

The UCT planning school is partially successful in preparing students for the demands of 21st-century environments, but there is significantly more that can be done and this will be a central element of the next round of review of the curriculum in 2009–2010. While the overall aim and values of the curriculum will probably remain as they are now, further thought needs to be given to the set of competencies which graduating students take away with them. In terms of the existing competencies (educational outcomes), theory and project work can be better structured to deliver these more effectively.

5.1 Current strengths of the curriculum

Current strengths of the curriculum are as follows:

Values

Planning as a value-driven (and frequently political) activity, rather than a technical, neutral activity, is strongly emphasised. The programme emphasises that planning should promote human development and equity, sustainability and recognition of social diversity.

Knowledge

Coverage of substantive areas of knowledge in the fields of local, metropolitan and regional planning is good, although not always sufficiently in-depth due to time constraints. Theory courses on natural systems, environmental assessment, urban development processes and forms, institutions, planning theory, planning law and regional planning are sound. Semester-long studios in local, city-wide and regional planning, as well as the dissertation, allow the synthesis of theoretical material in real-life contexts. There is emphasis on the understanding of planning methods which can be used to guide planning processes.

The programme regards an understanding of spatial patterns, processes and ideas as central to the task of planning, and this is promoted in all project-based courses.

Skills

Skills in spatial interpretation and the translating of economic, social, environmental and other related goals or ideas into spatial forms, are well developed.

Students get some training in GIS, in professional communication and in statistics. Group work in projects helps them to develop team-building skills.

The view held by the staff who run the MCRP is that many skills can be acquired in an employment situation, and that the limited time spent in a university setting should be devoted to encouraging conceptual and intellectual development which will stand students in good stead for the rest of their professional lives. Teaching students to think is probably more important than teaching skills, which tend to change with time anyway.

5.2 Current weaknesses of the programme

Current weaknesses of the programme (in terms of meeting 21st-century urban requirements) are as follows:

Knowledge

Some of the more important areas which need to be given a stronger presence in the curriculum are:

- How to plan for and with informality. This would include issues of service provision, the making of public spaces, tenure, land use management approaches, environmental issues and community engagement.
- Planning and climate change. This includes consideration of how planning can contribute to addressing this issue and to dealing with the effects of associated threats.
- Planning in the context of the peri-urban areas, where these are largely informal and unserved.
- Linking spatial plans more closely to infrastructure plans, particularly in city-wide planning. The link to public transport and the switch to this and non-motorised transport (NMT) is particularly important.
- Linking planning to urban agriculture and food security.
- Plan implementation.

The curriculum also deals very briefly with rural planning and this aspect could be strengthened.

Skills

Many students lack the following skills, although it is often difficult to develop these adequately at the postgraduate level:

- writing;
- numeracy (and statistics);
- professional preparation of reports;
- conducting a literature review and library search;
- research methods.

6. Conclusion

The metropolitan area of Cape Town, while it is rather different from most other South African and African cities in terms of population composition, nonetheless displays many of the planning problems and issues faced by these other cities. It is possible, therefore, to expose planning students to these realities through simulated projects and field work. This is also very necessary as many UCT graduates go on to work in other parts of South Africa and internationally.

Currently the UCT master's planning programme has a curriculum which is well structured and balanced between practical and theoretical elements. It is driven by values which respond to the issues of context as well as to the more global ones such as environmental sustainability. However, within the curriculum there is certainly room for streamlining and updating material, and there is a need to incorporate more strongly some of the key issues affecting 21st-century cities.

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