
Abstract:

What constitutes 'value' for cities today? More importantly, how is it used to serve people, and how is it harnessed toward inclusive, sustainable urban development? These questions motivate an investigation of today's social, spatial and economic divisions, perpetuated by post-industrial responses for market-driven urban development^[9]. This research report examines major-infrastructure engineering projects, with a focus on transit and planning principles of land use segregation, motivated through the rise of the private automobile industry^[9].

The study focuses on the Foreshore of the City of Cape Town, its under-utilisation, its role in severing the connection between the city and port, and a potential programme for its future. The normative position of the report, underpinned by an investigation into the city's changing value systems^[9], calls for a shift toward a radically social approach to address spatial inequity while reconnecting the inner city to its port.

Topography, ecological protection and the ocean, geospatially defines the inner city's edges^[9]. This limitation on inner city expansion increases urban land value and motivates a careful negotiation of how underdeveloped land is programmed, densified and accessed. At the same time, needs for spatial transformation raise the expectation on how the city, state and private sector will respond in balancing the needs of the greater metropolitan area and equitable urban access for the poor^[9].

Two economic and politically negotiated programs dominate the Foreshore; inaccessible, parastatal, mono-use docklands and the elevated highway systems which embody a planned purpose of spatial, racial divides and forced removals^[9]. While these edifices of division remain untouched, global economic inequality is rapidly contributing to further entrenched segregation and extreme, concentrated poverty across the metropolitan area.

The normative position orientates a design methodology for equity, inclusivity and opportunity. The essay unpacks social, political and economic influences on public space, and therefore proposes the onus be placed on governance and serious political-will, if transformation is a real goal for the City^[9]. It highlights the fine balancing of economic and social values in changing Cape Town into a more equitable city^[9].

Re-addressing the segregating effects of modernist transit-infrastructure and planning unlocks immense developable bulk for the City of Cape Town's urban core, while spatially re-connecting the city with its harbour.

The proposed framework supports the implementation of large scale, public infrastructure as paramount for urban development frameworks and precinct plans to respond to. This primary framework – an enabling framework – values the implementation of elements of public structure that govern city space toward equitable land uses. Furthermore, the report does not aim to merely indicate a massive expanse of developable land for commercial use. Instead, it highlights a potential strategy for tempering commercial growth and considering land uses that could support a more sustainable future for the City.

These ideas for a sustainable future for Cape Town is explored by responding to the proposed enabling framework (primary objective of the report) at a precinct scale. It is merely indicative of one potential outcome. Designing at various scales does not intend to dictate a complete vision for the City. Instead, it serves to inform the large-scale, spatial and infrastructure decisions while highlighting the quality of urban spatial structures that could be achieved within the finer grain.