

Warwick development plans

The bustling Warwick Triangle Precinct, situated at the heart of Durban's Central Business District (CBD), is a hive of economic activity to hundreds of formal and informal traders. The eThekweni Municipality has approved a plan to develop the area, writes City Manager, **Sibusiso Sithole**.

WARWICK Triangle is a major transport node bringing thousands of commuters in and out of the City each day. This is the primary reason why hundreds of informal traders are found in this part of the City. The Warwick Triangle area comprises residential apartments, formal businesses and informal traders ranging from those selling different varieties of natural remedies, livestock, meals, fruits and vegetables.

The Municipality has identified the area as one of the fastest growing economic hubs in the CBD and wants to ensure that it is sustainable and attractive to investors.

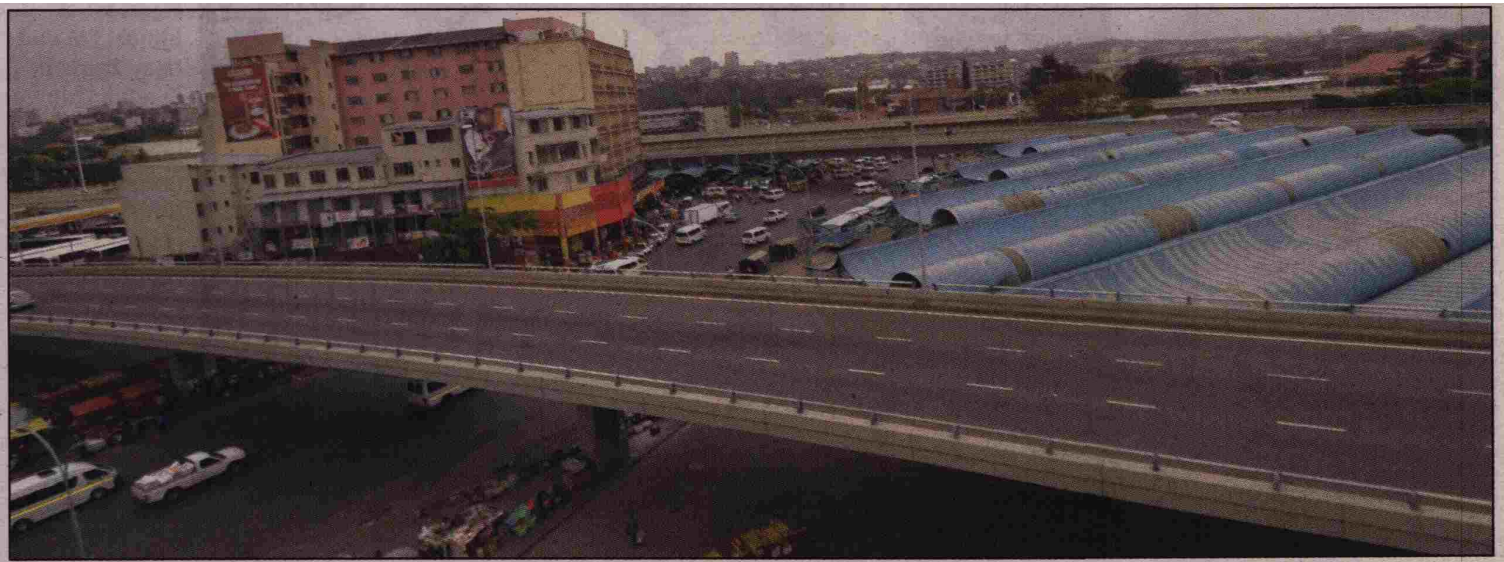
The City of Durban like all major cities in South Africa is still in transition to a post-apartheid City and is faced with many developmental and social challenges.

Racial segregation policies like the Group Areas Act enforced separation among the races of South Africa, including Durban. These policies promoted development and gave more citizenship rights and benefits to the whites and, only late to the Indians and Coloureds. The blacks were largely marginalised and had minimal rights until the changes brought about by the new political dispensation of the 1990s.

In Durban there were many spatial and development segregation policies based on race.

These are just some of the imbalances the City leadership aims to address through developing areas such as Warwick Triangle by integrating the informal economy into the City's Urban Renewal plans.

The multimillion rand Warwick Triangle re-development project has recently been given the green light by Council and is set to change the face of the City. The project is in line with the Municipality's broader



ON THE RISE: The Warwick development is not an ordinary investment but an economically viable partnership. Right is an artistic impression of the new plans for Warwick Triangle.

Picture: GUGU MQADI



development plan for the area, which entails refurbishing the infrastructure at the market, the construction of a retail centre, new taxi ranks and ablution facilities.

In the first phase of the development, the municipality will invest about R122 million for the construction of pedestrian links, building hawkers trading platforms and a sheltered taxi rank at the precinct.

Berea Station Mall (Pty) Ltd and the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA), being the developer of the train station have invested R500 million in the upgrade which includes a commercial development.

The aim of the project is centred around the following:

- To improve safety and security in the area;
- To enhance public transport facilities and improve their efficiency;
- To increase trading and employment opportunities;
- To create opportunities for private companies to invest in the area;

- To improve the cleanliness and quality of the environment;
- To expand the range of services and facilities available in the area.

The Municipality will also consult with all stakeholders including formal and informal businesses to ensure that the project is a success.

As a City we believe that development in the Warwick area was long overdue and will benefit the informal sector, public transport operators, commuters, the private sector and the public.

This multimillion rand development will help ease traffic congestion and improve cleanliness in that part of the City. In 2010 the project was delayed due to the possible and proposed relocation of informal traders at the Early Morning Market. The traders would not be negatively affected by the development.

Both Warwick Triangle and Bridge City are critical intermodal transport facilities that will contribute significantly to connecting various

destinations and locations of the entire Municipality through the Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network (IRPTN).

According to the Planning Advisory Service report published in 1959, a number of CBD reports emphasise how the co-operation of private business is essential to success. Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for example, observes that the preservation of the downtown is a problem which must be of concern to City government, downtown businessmen, and the community as a whole.

It is important that all stakeholders realise that the central business district provides approximately 20 percent of the entire assessed valuation of most cities for

tax purposes. If this district is allowed to deteriorate, property value will decrease and the subsequent effects, including tax increases, will be felt throughout the community.

The project will see more jobs being created for informal businesses, which is one sector that plays a major role in boosting the City's economy.

The area is also a very important draw card for tourism, and it is critical that the basic infrastructure for small businesses and informal traders be provided.

There has to be partnerships between local business and investors. The City will assist by working with small businesses and informal traders in order

to promote local economic empowerment.

Formal and informal business establishments in the Warwick Triangle area are elated about the proposed changes saying the development would attract more customers into the area.

The Warwick development is not an ordinary investment but an economically viable partnership amongst the private, public and non-government sectors.

As we celebrate 20 years of freedom and democracy, we not only look back at the achievements but we also focus our resources in areas that require improvement, for the sustainability of our City.

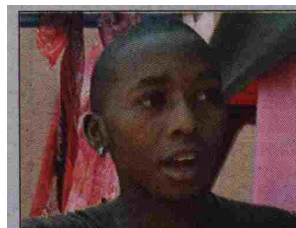
What traders say about Warwick development



Mr Hoosen Patel

"I feel good and positive about the proposed

development and I hope it will address issues facing businesses in the area. As businesses we believe that any new developments will attract more people because as it is now, most people are reluctant to shop in this area due to congestion and issues of safety and security. The development will attract investors and tourists; it will also restore the dignity of the City."



Anele Ntozakhe

"There are lots of challenges facing businesses, especially

street traders.

We hope that the new developments will address the needs of street traders. We appeal to the Municipality to provide us with stalls so that we can have descent areas to trade from.

As we speak, some of the traders trade on pavements. This is not good, because we lose more customers because of the unhygienic conditions we face."



Jane Mthethwa

"I welcome the proposed development and I hope it

will cater for everyone especially street traders.

Trading is the only way we support our families therefore we would like the Municipality to improve our trading conditions.

We are unable to trade on rainy days and this kills our businesses because we do not have stalls. Safety and security are some of the things we request the Municipality to address."