

Dear Premier Zille,

We, the members of the Master of City and Regional Planning and Honours in City Planning class at the University of Cape Town, are writing to you to voice our objection regarding the sale of the Tafelberg site in Sea Point by the Western Cape Government. This issue is important to us due to the site's potential role in creating a more just and inclusive city - a potential which would be largely undermined through its sale to private developers. As future planners concerned with the high levels of socio-economic and spatial disparities in our city, we see spatial planning as a vital way of addressing these issues, so as to create a just, and inclusive city for all residents. Well located state-owned land in areas of opportunity is one of the fundamental resources at our disposal to address these issues. The Tafelberg site is an example of such land which is why we, as residents and future planners in this city, cannot be silent regarding the way forward for this site. The recent halting of the sale is a tremendous victory for the people of Cape Town; however, there is much more to be won.

The legacy of apartheid spatial planning in Cape Town has resulted in low income residents being forced to live on the periphery of the city, far away from economic and social opportunities which the city provides. Post-apartheid social housing developments have perpetuated this issue due to their poor location - generally on the periphery of the city without access to appropriate and integrated public transport. This approach demonstrates a severe lack of understanding that people require more than a roof over their head in order to improve their quality of life. This unsustainable pattern can be expected to continue should current housing developments in these areas persist in this way.

Well-located land for housing, close to socio-economic opportunities, is limited in our city. It is imperative that both the local and provincial governments proactively and rigorously designate the few remaining tracts of well-located publically owned land for housing projects which contribute to the building of a more inclusive city - a city which seeks to integrate people and opportunities, rather than perpetuate the fragmentation and exclusion of the past. Therefore, remaining tracts of public-owned land are catalytic to the building of an inclusive city and have the potential to bridge the increasing socio-economic and spatial inequalities within the city. In its current form, the city cannot afford for well-located publically owned land to be lost to private developers, and wealthy individuals.

The city has shown theoretical commitment to achieving the goals of socio-economic and spatial inclusivity through the current Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and Integrated Development Plan (IDP), yet little action from government towards the achievement of these goals has been seen. There needs to be a shift away from the use of "inclusivity" as a tool of planning and political jargon, and a move towards action and the implementation of these values. The Tafelberg site has the potential to bring about this transition if developed appropriately.

The Tafelberg site in Sea Point is situated in an area of economic opportunity and is serviced by well-connected public transport routes. It has the potential to provide low-income residents with well-located low cost social housing in the City of Cape Town. This should be seen as a positive move towards the creation of an integrated, inclusive and sustainable city. Through this catalytic site, the socio-economic disparities within the city can be directly addressed.

It is time for leadership in the city to take a firm stance on the long-term goals that we need to achieve in order to create urban integration and inclusivity. These long-term objectives have, in the past, been warped by the appeal of short-term profitable private developments catering to the financial elite. The Tafelberg site has the

potential to be one of the catalysts for achieving a greater alignment of long-term planning objectives with those of private developers and challenging the currently exclusionary property market in the city. To make a trade-off in favour of the marginalised urban population is a powerful and overdue statement which has the potential to shift how we perceive “development” in the city. This approach will improve quality of life more equitably than in areas such as Woodstock where private-lead development has resulted in processes of gentrification and the exclusion of multi-generational residents from the benefits of development in the area.

The potential for the Tafelberg site as a place of future socio-economic and spatial integration is one which needs thorough investigation before selling the land to private developers. This, we believe, is a non-negotiable aspect within the decision making process for the future use of this land. Therefore, we ask you, Premier Zille, to stand by your government’s theoretical goals and policy mandate of inclusivity, and permanently stop the sale of the Tafelberg site. If you and your government are serious about creating a just and inclusive city, and finally repairing the legacies of our painful segregated past, the decision to permanently stop the sale of the Tafelberg site is simple.

Sincerely*,

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*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this letter are the views of the undersigned members of the MCRP and BCP classes of 2016. This letter does not represent the official view of the UCT Engineering and Built Environment Faculty, the UCT School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics nor does it represent the official views of the University of Cape Town as a whole.