Central SRA

Workshop Memorandum

Strategy Workshop

13 January 2020

Contents

1 Terms of Reference

These notes summarise the outcome of the strategy workshop held with stakeholders of the Central SRA, held at the MBDA offices in Port Elizabeth on 13 January 2020.   An attendance Register was kept.

The workshop notes have been prepared by Chris Elfick of Learning Strategies, who facilitated the workshop.

2 Workshop Objectives

The primary objective of the workshop was to develop a clear vision and pathway for the Central SRA now that it has received official notification of its legal establishment from 1 July 2020.

A business plan was developed as part of the approval process for the SRA and this workshop should expand the vision of the SRA for full implementation.

The workshop should also achieve alignment between the various stakeholders to strive for a common vision and a clear pathway of collaboration.

Finally, the workshop should identify the stakeholders and who needs to be involved to ensure the success of the SRA including compliance with regulations, by-laws and governance requirements.

3 Vision for the SRA – Defining Success

The workshop considered what success would look like in ten years for Central, highlighting the following:

- Children playing in the gardens and parks;
- Able to walk to buy milk, feeling safe;
- A visually beautiful and clean environment;
- A bohemian and vibrant suburb;
- A tourist precinct and the number one tourist attraction in the municipality;
- An integrated and engaged community;
- Focus on our heritage and effective use of heritage assets;
- Integrated with the waterfront to be developed in the harbour.

While the above issues present a picture of success, the ultimate objective is to ensure value for homeowners and investors, creating a sustainable growth on investment through increased rental returns and values of properties.

The summarised vision for the future can be described as follows:

A bohemian integrated and vibrant suburb, where its cleanliness and safety attracts tourists and creates a safe and desirable living environment for permanent and transient residence.

4 Advantages and Disadvantages

The advantages and disadvantages of the area were highlighted as follows:

Advantages	Disadvantages
• All the elements are in place, • Heritage and history, particularly the history of Central area, • Proximity to the harbour, • Position in the centre of Port Elizabeth, • Strong sense of community, • Stakeholder involvement, • Arts and culture, • Attractive architecture, • Buy-in from the municipality and MBDA, • Excellent value for investors, • A manageable problem that can be addressed.	• Dysfunctional local government, • Limited income (small budget for the SRA), • Poor perception of Central, • Recent failures such as Parliament Street, • Overall economic climate, • Decaying and abandoned buildings which are an eyesore (but also and advantage and opportunity for future investors), • Insufficient secure parking (opportunity for parking marshals as has been done in Cape Town), • Uninformed residents, • Transient residents, including both students who stay for a short time as well as underemployed and displaced persons.

5 Rationale for the SRA

The SRA is primarily needed to act as a coordinator of improved service levels and guide development and renewal, so as to strive towards the achievement of the overall vision for the SRA.

While ideally the SRA should coordinate the services provided by the local authority, police and others, it will be necessary that the SRA be involved at least initially and probably for the medium to longer term in certain service delivery to supplement existing service levels.

The SRA can play a significant role in motivating and activating the community to take responsibility for improvements in cleanliness, security and community environment. This activation of the community resources and efforts will be critical to the success of the SRA.

The SRA should coordinate both service delivery and development and should avoid allowing either one of these to dominate.

The SRA must both do and be seen to be doing what is needed to improve the Central area.

6 Specific Issues for Consideration

6.1 Students

There are currently some 10 000 students living in the broader Central area but there is also a shortfall of some 3000 student beds in the city presenting further opportunity.

The main issue and concern is safety and security and the university is already engaged in creating safer spaces and transportation mechanism including a "green route".

A precinct plan should be developed which should identify the actual number of students accommodated in the area and determine an appropriate level in relation to the rest of the area which may mean the opportunity to attract further student residences and even student digs which could be extended into accommodation for young professionals.

6.2 Crime

Crime is a major issue in the area and there is a significant perception and reality of a high crime rate in the area.

Crime is both opportunistic and organised. Organised is largely focused in specific areas.

It was agreed that the SRA needs to first understand the causes and driving forces behind the crime and then should use specialists through a public request for quotation process to procure services and undertake various interventions to reduce and control the crime rate.

The SRA would need to play a proactive role in adding additional levels of security to the public security offerings. These, however, should not be done in isolation and should be a combination of lighting, cameras, engagement with police and other security interventions.

The SRA will need to be actively engaged in both security improvements and marketing to address the negative perceptions. The SRA should strive to develop the perception (and reality) that Central is progressively becoming a safe place to live and visit.

It was agreed that the SRA should work with other areas where existing models are in place such as in Summerstrand, where the community crime forum has made significant progress with the common objective of reducing crime and creating safe routes and areas.

6.3 Homeless and Vagrants

A significant problem appears to be the unoccupied and abandoned buildings, which attract and provide accommodation for an increased population of the homeless and vagrants. Addressing the homeless problem can primarily be focused on only after getting an understanding of the abandoned and unoccupied buildings and resolving issues which are preventing the improvement and redevelopment of these buildings.

It was also noted that it is likely that there will be a certain number of homeless people who are able to derive a meagre living out of the area. Ideally, these people should be integrated into the community and provided some sort of homeless accommodation / shelter. This would require working with social development.

It was further noted that churches and other charities are involved and that working with them can create an integrated solution.

The following action should be taken:

- Audit of existing properties, identifying abandoned and problem buildings;

- Engagement with authorities to enforce by-laws and remove illegal structures;

- Investigate the opportunity for homeless shelters, together with charities and feeding schemes, which may enable the integration of the homeless into the community.

The opportunity for the use of coupons for work done and rubbish collected for the collection of meals and other assistance can be considered in the area.

6.4 Waste Management

The problem of waste in the area appears to be largely a result of uncoordinated and badly planned waste collection activities and lack of knowledge and understanding of the processes by the community. Collections take place on different days for different types of activities, creating confusion and resulting in rubbish being left of the street which is then opened and spread around by vagrants.

There is low hanging fruit in terms of improved management and planning of waste collection and better communication with residents.

There is also an opportunity for waste depots including recycling centres which could start to involve the community in addressing the waste problem. In particular, the use of transparent plastic bags for recyclable waste was noted.

The SRA must ensure that there are visible results in terms of improved cleanliness in the short-term. This would be one of the most tangible results of the effective implementation of the SRA.

> The CEO of the MBDA joined the meeting at lunchtime and highlighted the fact that the development agency had applied to the City to enable it to take over the waste collection in the Central area as one of its projects. This would significantly address this issue from 1 July onwards.

6.5 Attracting Legal Professionals

There are a number of precincts including the Bird Street precinct (legal professionals) and the Donkin Street (creative precinct), with opportunities around Rink Street and Russell Road.

The key issue in regard to attracting business activities and offices is to identify a clear precinct plan where the opportunity for offices and suitable precincts is identified and promoted.

6.6 Tourism

Tourism should be a significant contributor to the Central area, and this requires the development of tourism activities but at the same time, addressing issues such as crime and litter. Central should be the primary tourist location in the city but the SRA needs to make the area conducive for tourism.

The SRA should try to avoid being directly involved in tourism businesses and activities, but should work with entities such as the MBDA, the municipality and even the university to support the development of tourism businesses.

6.7 Sectional Title / Absentee Owners

It was noted that the Central area has many absentee owners / investors. While this is not in itself a problem, what needs to be avoided is abuse of zoning and overcrowding of buildings. The Sectional Title Act and the Body Corporate rules should be used to manage these transgressions.

The university representatives indicated that the Office of Off-campus Accommodation should be engaged where student accommodation is not at the appropriate level.

The SRA should seek to engage with and communicate with all property owners including absentee landlords.

6.8 MBDA Collaboration

The CEO of the development agency addressed the workshop at lunchtime, highlighting the following:

- The development agency is committed to the SRA and has committed R1 million in funding;
- A service level agreement should be put in place to secure this funding;
- The development agency has put in a proposal to take over the cleansing in the Central area, effective from 1 July 2020;
- The development agency is in the process of appointing an urban renewal specialist who will work closely with the SRA.

Specific projects in the area include:

- Fort Frederick fencing and zipline
- Constitutional Court and High Court Education;
- Redesign and redevelopment of Govan Mbeki Avenue;
- Supporting the development of affordable and social housing.

7 Get Rights for the SRA

The following specific items were identified as key get rights for the SRA:

- A unified and common vision;
- A well-manged transition from the interim committee to the formal board, ensuring that the board has the appropriate skills. This will involve also inviting and attracting appropriate board members to form part of the new board;
- Ongoing governance at the highest level. All decisions and actions should be beyond reproach;
- An appropriate combination of leadership and community involvement utilising voluntary services as far as possible;
- Performance measurement and reporting on the impact of the SRA to residents and owners;
- Effective communication at multiple levels to property owners, residents and occupants, partners such as the university, development agency, municipality and other businesses;
- Delivery in terms of both the low hanging fruit as immediate delivery actions as well as long-term and ongoing delivery improvements.

8   Structure

The structure of the SRA is acknowledged to be made up of the following components:

• All owners of properties and rate payers in good standing have the opportunity to become members of the SRA;

• On application, an owner in good standing becomes a member of the SRA and is entitled to vote for the appointment of the directors.

• The board of the SRA will be made up of between five and seven persons;

• The board will make use of both an advisory forum (largely the group that attended the strategy session), as well as volunteer portfolio managers made up of a combination of board members and co-opted volunteers.

• The activities of the SRA will be administered by an administrator and a limited number of support staff.

9   Budget of the SRA

The SRA will have a budget made up of both recurring income (from rate payers) as well as ad hoc income from donations and other sources for specific projects.

The workshop proposed that the recurring income should be carefully utilised including:

• Limiting the administration and running costs of the SRA to between 10% and 15% of recurring ncome;

• Splitting the balance of recurring income between

• 50% on day to day recurring expenses on issues such as security, cleaning and

• 50% on other non recurring (ad hoc / short term project based) development and improvement activities This non-recurring project-based delivery will include expenditure such as signage, development promotion and specific projects

It was acknowledged that initially, the SRA may need to spend more on day-to-day delivery but this should be for a limited time only.

The allocation of the budget between the primary activities of the institution raised the following:

• **Basic Service Delivery** – This is the responsibility of the local authority and the SRA should be involved through its administrators and board to lobby and engage with the local authority and other service providers (police, etc) to ensure these services are delivered appropriately.

• **Cleaning** – The SRA originally envisaged that it may need to subvent the existing cleaning activities. This may not be required if appropriate cleaning and litter collection is in place from the development agency including the involvement of extended public works programme (EPWP) employees for litter collection.

• **Safety and Security** – This is the area where the SRA is likely to spend most of its recurring income on issues such as cameras and patrolling (ideally cameras should be rented and not bought). Other security investments should be made in terms of gaining insights into the crime and security issues and developing appropriate solutions.

• **Urban Renewal** – This is the area where the SRA should spend most of its ad hoc expenditure on issues such as signs, information technology, precinct plans, lighting upgrades and the beautification of the area including trees and other improvements.

Communication by the SRA should be via social media and website as well as above the line through media exposure.

The database of owners and residents should be maintained by the administrator of the SRA.

It was proposed that the primary mechanism for communication to residents should be WhatsApp groups at a street and building level with a coordination structure. These do not need to be created by the SRA as they are often self-generating (group goes viral if it is deem to add value).

10   SRA Branding

It was agreed that the SRA needs some sort of strapline or rallying call. Examples suggested include the following:

- Suburb of choice;
- Central to you / Central for you;
- Heartbeat of the city
- Take back the city

It was also noted that multiple languages may be required.

A proposed strapline for the SRA was identified as

"#Own Central"

This may be an opportunity to play on both the expectations and objectives of both owners and residents who should act as owners and take responsibility for the development and improvements of the area.

11   Action Plan

The following specific actions arose out of the workshop:

1. Immediate activation of the formal establishment of the formal board of the SRA, following rigorous process and governance requirements;

2. Application for tax exemption of the Non-Profit Company, including potentially section 18A status.

3. Engagement with the MBDA to ensure the signing of the MOU and securing the funding for the transitional phase.

4. Preparation of a precinct plan, which includes:

    a. Identification of bad, abandoned and other buildings for development,

    b. Identification of target numbers for students, offices, restaurants, and other activities,

    c. Identification of appropriate precincts for attraction of activities such as creative, legal, and other precincts,

    d. Identification of areas of improvement where effort will commence and how it is expected that these areas will progressively grow out to cover the entire Central area over time.

5. Thorough investigation into the crime levels, types and contribution factors so as to develop a comprehensive security response

6. Establishment of communication structures for Residents (WhatsApp) and Owners (email database)

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