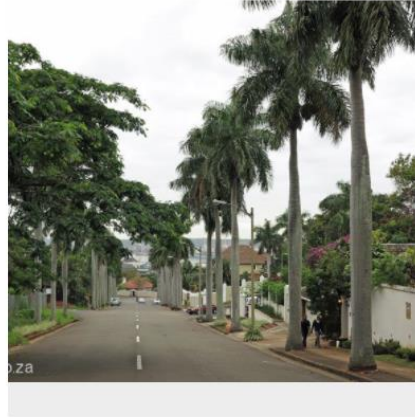
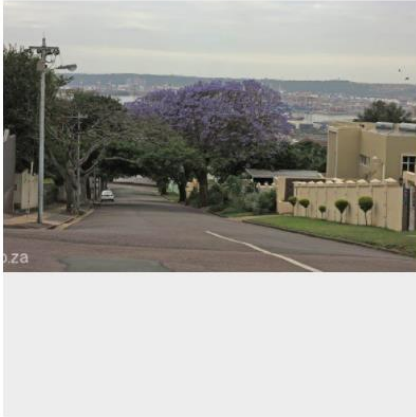


Understanding the Glenwood Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP)

June 11, 2019



In March 2019, eThekweni Municipality's executive committee approved the establishment of the Glenwood Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP), which is expected to become fully operational in August 2019. A UIP is defined as a 'Special Rating Area' (SRA) and establishment of a UIP is governed by the Local Government Municipal Property Rates Act (2004) and supported by eThekweni's Municipal Property Rates Policy (2018/2019). While the Act permits the establishment of commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and residential SRAs, the Glenwood UIP will be limited to commercial/industrial property owners, with over 51% of these property owners within the proposed UIP boundary

having agreed to the establishment of the UIP.

A UIP effectively allows property owners to invest in the management of a demarcated precinct to improve its safety, appearance, ambience, social cohesion and general livability. Property owners are involved in a UIP by providing additional contributions to their municipal property rates, which then contribute to the UIPs budget and allows a non-profit company to provide 'top-up' services to supplement the minimum standards of service provided by the Municipality. Generally, UIPs provide additional security and cleaning services, ensure that the Municipality is providing the required services to the precinct (cleaning, repairs and maintenance, etc), markets and promotes the area, and drives beautification, placemaking and social development initiatives – all with the ultimate goal of making the precinct more attractive to stimulate growth.

A common misconception of UIPs is that they are funded by the Municipality – as noted, it is the property owners who pay an additional rate contribution. In the case of the Glenwood UIP, only commercial property owners will be required to pay an additional rate contribution, while residential property owners can, by their own choice, contribute voluntarily. People also raise concerns about the provision of UIPs to improve already relatively-well serviced areas, particularly within the South African landscape, where many households in township areas still do not have access to basic services. Although these concerns may be justified, the lack of services within other areas should not deter property owners from contributing to the further improvement of their area. In most cases, these areas contribute significantly to the commercial rates base of the City, promote business activity and job creation and play an important role as recreational and public spaces. For example, the Florida Road UIP has been successful in reducing crime, facilitating Municipal service delivery, and making general improvements to the area, which have, in turn, improved the appeal of the area for both investors and the public. As such, they are a useful mechanism through which to ensure that further urban decay does not occur, causing businesses to close down.

There are other concerns relating to UIPs, specifically the approaches which may be taken towards security and sex workers, drug abuse and the homeless. Budgets of UIPs are often mostly allocated towards security, this being the fundamental expectation of the additional rate-payers. This is not necessarily bad, given the importance of crime-prevention in ensuring the desirability of these areas. However, overzealousness in this can overshadow the other important roles that UIPs need to play: the promotion of inclusivity, the attractiveness and use of public spaces and the development of a cohesive spirit of community, which is already quite characteristic of Glenwood. This can lead to serious social issues such as sex work, drug abuse and homelessness being dealt with through the use of force rather than

through more appropriate methods. As such, the business plan for the Glenwood UIP emphasises the importance of partnering with community stakeholders (eThekweni Municipality, universities, civil society organisations, and the police) to create a forum to identify the social challenges that exist and to implement initiatives in partnership with organisations and stakeholders that focus on such issues. For example, rather than chase homeless people out of the area, the UIP must work closely with City and organisations such as the Denis Hurly Centre to identify initiatives to address homelessness within Glenwood. The same must apply for all other social challenges experienced.

In closing, as residents of the Glenwood area, we are excited about the potential that the UIP has of creating a safer and cleaner environment for both residents and visitors to the area, and we welcome the support of the City in establishing this SRA. We will keep a close eye on the implementation of the UIP, however, to ensure that the suggestions of the business plan, particularly in relation to a community/partnership-driven approach towards placemaking and addressing social issues, is being followed. We also urge all property owners, businesses, residents, and visitors to the area to come together towards assisting the UIP to drive change in the area – we can only achieve this if we work together.

Should you want more information, the detailed business plan for the Glenwood UIP can be found at [this link](#). Otherwise, you are welcome to contact us at info@lumec.co.za and we'd be happy to chat about this more.