



The South African
Council *for* Planners
SACPLAN

NEWSLETTER

June 2026

Issue

17

Reinventing
Planning,
Changing Lives

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The South African
Council *for* Planners
S A C P L A N

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

On the 30th April 2026, SACPLAN 6 held its first plenary meeting mandated by the Minister. While the work started late this term, Council members have enthusiastically rallied all their efforts and determination to drive the objectives of SACPLAN. It was heartwarming to witness the commitment and passion of the new council members with such an energising impulse for diligence. The Department of Land Reform and Rural Development also reassured its support for the Council towards fulfilling its mandate.

In the first Strategic Business Plan workshop on 8th and 9th May, Council reiterated the significance of Reengineering SACPLAN Business and identified key principles for taking the Council forward such as cost containment, ethics, value add, to ensure financial sustainability. A new budget has been passed which reflects these parameters. Projects have been prioritised and systems are in place to facilitate service delivery.

Right from the start, the new Council is making sure that its activities are aligned with the national calendar of events as well as international events.

On 27th April, Council sent a message to urge planners to commemorate Reconciliation Day



Prof. Mfaniseni Fana Sihlongonyane
SACPLAN Chairperson

but most importantly to remind planners of the obligations we have towards our democracy. On Workers Day, 1st May, a message was sent to remind planners of the significance of driving positive change and shaping inclusive and sustainable communities. On the World Environment Day, 5th June, Council reminded planners to take care of nature, reduce pollution and take steps to restore the planet. On the 16th June, planners were also urged to remember the sacrifices made by youth in 1976, and most importantly to think about the challenges that are currently faced by the youth e.g. unemployment, teenage pregnancy, social media addiction, crime, etc.

Partly due to high levels of unemployment amongst youth, the country is witnessing the saga of March and March which affects all of us and has ramifications for international relations and social cohesion. Some of the videos we are witnessing have disturbing resonances with the impunity of apartheid — kwaze kwanzima! This raises deep lines of worry.



CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



Prof. Mfaniseni Fana Sihlongonyane
SACPLAN Chairperson

As planners, we must act with stern moral conviction dutifully affirming human rights and justice and their emancipatory potential.

In this Issue 17, the newsletter presents the new Council members for SACPLAN 6; reflects on the Strategic Business Plan Workshop and some highlights; provides a note on media partnership; presents a summary of the engagements on the Revised White Paper on Local Government held between SACPLAN, South African Cities Network and COGTA on 3rd June 2026; sends a reminder about the Planning Africa Conference 2026; discusses Mzansi Planners Connect as a national digital directory of town planning professionals; presents articles by Vernon Moonsamy on Interpreting Spatial Change in Cape Town, by Selaelo Ramohlale and Matsubu Ragoasha on findings from a CSIR Study on Institutionalising Innovation in Local Government, and by Simon Webster on The next phase of spatial transformation: building economies, not just services; as well as Council upcoming events.

I urge you to read the newsletter but also submit articles to share your thoughts, reflections, and experiences in the profession to inform, inspire and elevate planners. The newsletter offers a chance to connect with other planners and reflect on the people and moments that continue to shape the profession. I sincerely hope that you enjoy reading it and hearing from some of the amazing members of our profession.

I wish you a wonderful winter season.

Ndo livhuwa!!

Prof Mfaniseni Fana Sihlongonyane
SACPLAN Chairperson



MEET YOUR COUNCIL MEMBERS



Prof Mfaniseni Fana Sihlongonyane
Chairperson of Council



Dr Subhatri Moonsammy
Alternate Chairperson of Council



Ms Nosipho Hlatshwayo
Deputy Chairperson of Council



Ms Fezeka Mabusela
Chairperson of Finance &
Administration Committee



Ms Angela Mahopo
Chairperson of
Registration Committee



Dr Martin Lewis
Chairperson of Education &
Training Committee



Dr Kgomotso Sebola - Samanyanga
Chairperson of Transformation,
Communication and Liaison Committee



Mr Tshisamphiri Madima
Chairperson of Disciplinary &
Rules Committee



Ms Dakalo Sinthumule
Council Member



Mr Gerhard De Bruin
Council Member



Ms Penelope Beck
Council Member



Ms Constance Mapholi
Council Member



Mr Peter Ahmad
Council Member

More information on the Council Members, including full biographies, is available on the SACPLAN website. We encourage members to visit the website to learn more about the individuals who will be steering this term of council.





SACPLAN STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION 2026!

REENGINEERING SACPLAN

Written by **Ayanda Jack**

Transformation, Communications and Liaison Unit

On 7 and 8 May 2026, the South African Council for Planners convened a two-day strategic planning session in collaboration with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The session marked an important milestone for the newly inaugurated Sixth Council, providing a structured opportunity to establish the strategic direction that will guide SACPLAN through the current financial year and the full Council term.

Council Chairperson Prof Sihlongonyane opened proceedings by referencing the Council Handover Session held on 30 March 2026 and the priorities that emerged from it. He emphasised that meaningful engagement with the planning profession requires consistent, accessible communication, not periodic or ceremonial interaction, and that registered planners must be able to see and feel the Council's active presence in the sector.

The central focus of the session was the consolidation of SACPLAN's strategic framework, including the interrogation of the Council's vision, mission, and strategic priorities.

Council Members engaged with the State of the Planning Profession Report, a document that provides an accurate account of the current challenges facing the profession and grounded the strategic discussion in the realities practitioners experience on the ground and when interfacing with the Council.

The Report will be shared with registered planners in due course.



The session then proceeded through five committee breakaway sessions: Finance and Administration; Education and Training; Transformation, Communication and Liaison; Registration; and Disciplinary and Rules.



SACPLAN STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION 2026! REENGINEERING SACPLAN

Written by **Ayanda Jack**
Transformation, Communications and Liaison Unit



Each committee examined the implications of the strategic framework for its specific mandate and identified priority projects for the year ahead.

The two-day session concluded with a shared understanding of the agreed priorities for the financial year 2026/27, and the office undertook an alignment exercise between committee work programmes, strategic priorities, and budget allocations — a critical step in ensuring that stated priorities are matched by the resources required to deliver on them.

SACPLAN is committed to a process of operational re-engineering, and the outcomes of this session represent the foundation on which that work will proceed.

The strategic priorities guiding the Sixth Council's term are:

- Improve the financial sustainability of Council to enable proper functioning, and strengthen and support good governance and administration
- Transformation of planning education and practice (RPL, CPD, transformation plans)
- Strengthening marketing, public relations and communication of the planning profession, including broadening networking, forging partnerships, effective stakeholder engagement, and project management
- Maintaining identification of work for planners
- SACPLAN business re-engineering to enhance operations and service delivery
- Improvement of planning capacity through research, skills development, training, placement and support of candidates and registered planners
- Improve the implementation of statutory requirements (accreditation, registration, compliance and disciplinary).

AMALGAMATION OF SACPLAN FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

YOUNG PLANNERS FORUM AND AWARDS, WOMEN IN PLANNING SEMINAR AND AWARDS, AND NATIONAL PLANNING INDABA

The South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN) would like to inform its registered planners and stakeholders of a decision taken by Council to combine its three flagship programmes; namely the Young Planners Forum and Awards, the Women in Planning Seminar and Awards, and the National Planning Indaba into one programme, the 3rd National Planning Indaba and Awards.



This decision follows a series of exercises undertaken by Council since the beginning of the new term, during which Council engaged in a thorough process of repositioning its priorities for the term of Council, guided by the pressing issues facing the profession. The amalgamation of these activities reflects SACPLAN's commitment to delivering a more coherent, and high-impact platform for the planning profession in South Africa. Rather than hosting these initiatives as separate events, SACPLAN will bring together young planners, women in the profession, and the broader planning community under one banner, ensuring that transformation, knowledge-sharing, and professional recognition are addressed collectively. Importantly, the mandates of the Young Planners Forum and the Women in Planning Seminar will continue to be carried out through the National Planning Indaba, with their key issues finding expression and articulation within this consolidated platform. The programme will further incorporate the awards session recognising outstanding contributions across the profession, including the awarding of fellow and honorary member awards.

Stay tuned to our communication channels for updates and further information as we build up to what promises to be a landmark event.

We look forward to seeing you there!

A promotional poster for the 2026 National Planning Indaba and Awards. It features a dark brown background with a vertical banner on the left that reads 'SAVE THE DATE' in white, with a calendar icon showing 'NOV'. The main text reads '2026 NATIONAL PLANNING INDABA AND AWARDS' in large, bold, white and gold letters. Below this, the dates '5 - 6 NOVEMBER 2026' are displayed in gold. A gold banner at the bottom says 'MORE INFORMATION COMING OUT SOON!'. The SACPLAN logo is in the bottom left. On the right, there is a collage of images including a map, a person sitting at a desk, and a person standing. At the bottom right, there are social media icons and the hashtag '#ReinventingPlanningChangingLives'.

Media Partnership: SACPLAN and Media Xpose



MEDIA XPOSE
Excellence in Exposure

The Council recognises the ongoing need to raise awareness of the planning profession and to communicate its significance to society at large. This imperative is directly linked to the Planning Profession Act, which provides for

the promotion of the profession, and is further reinforced by the Council's strategic positioning of planning as one of the key professional disciplines contributing to the development of South Africa. Despite the profession's centrality in the overall development of our communities, planning remains broadly underrepresented in mainstream public discourse. This gap has direct consequences for public understanding of the profession, for the pipeline of young people entering the field, and for the credibility and influence that registered planners are able to exercise in development initiatives.

In pursuit of this objective, the Council has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with Media Xpose (Pty) Ltd. Media Xpose is a publishing house, specialising in magazine publishing, corporate branding, digital advertising, graphic design, print and sponsorships. The company publishes a range of titles inclusive of To Build and SA Building Review, giving it an es-

to build
PLAN | DESIGN | BUILD | INTERIOR & EXTERIOR DÉCOR



tablished footprint across professional, and built environment audiences that are directly relevant to the planning profession and its stakeholders.

The partnership is mutually beneficial. For Media Xpose, the agreement provides access to a specialised professional community and the opportunity to deepen its footprint in the built environment sector, complementing titles such as To Build and SA Building Review which already serve adjacent industries. For SACPLAN, the partnership unlocks a credible, widely distributed media platform through which the planning profession can be profiled, celebrated, and brought into broader public conversation.

Critically, the agreement will also include the featuring of registered planners and their innovative ideas and contributions to the profession. This means that practitioners across the country will have the opportunity to be recognised and profiled in a nationally distributed publication, a significant step in elevating the visibility of individual planners and demonstrating the profession's real-world impact.

The Council views this agreement as a meaningful and strategic step towards ensuring that the planning profession receives the visibility, recognition, and public standing it deserves.

SACPLAN, South African Cities Network and COGTA Engage the Planning Profession on the Revised White Paper on Local Government



The South African
Council *for* Planners
SACPLAN

On 3 June 2026, the South African Council for Planners, in partnership with the South African Cities Network (SACN) and Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs convened a webinar to engage registered planners on the Revised White Paper on Local Government, a landmark policy document that carries significant implications for the planning profession and the broader built environment sector, in the local government sphere.



The partnership between SACPLAN and SACN for this webinar was a deliberate intention in the implementation of the MOU between the two organisations. Together, the two organisations provided a platform that was both technically informed and professionally grounded.

The webinar formed part of SACPLAN's ongoing commitment to facilitating meaningful participation between the profession and government policy processes. It provided a structured platform for planners across the country to interrogate the contents of the

White Paper, raise concerns, and contribute their expertise to a process that will shape the future of local government in South Africa.

A highlight of the webinar was a presentation by Mr Themba Fosi of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), who provided a detailed dissection of the Draft White Paper. Mr Fosi's presentation walked participants through the substance and intent of the document, unpacking its key proposals and the policy thinking underpinning them. Registered planners interrogated the content from a planning profession aspect raising areas of concern, and offering professional perspectives.

Participants engaged with issues relating to the role of planners in local governance, the implications of proposed institutional reforms, and the need for the White Paper to more explicitly recognise and position the planning profession within the local government system.

SACPLAN regards this process as an important exercise in demonstrating the profession's relevance and responsiveness to national policy development. The Council, together with SACN, is committed to ensuring that the profession's voice is heard where it matters most.



cooperative governance
& traditional affairs

Department:
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



The South African
Council *for* Planners
SACPLAN

SAPI Planning Africa Conference 2026

Shaping Sustainable Futures Through Planning Partnerships

The South African Planning Institute (SAPI) is preparing to host the 2026 edition of the Planning Africa Conference (PAC) in Cape Town under the theme ***“Digital Technologies & Sustainable Futures: Pathways for Urban & Regional Planning in Africa.”***



Dr Johannes Dovhi Mulaudzi
SAPI President

As the flagship gathering of the planning profession in South Africa, the conference brings together practitioners, academics, government representatives, students, and development partners from across Africa and beyond. African cities and regions are facing increasing pressure. Urbanisation, inequality, climate change, infrastructure demands, and rapid technological change continue to reshape the planning landscape. PAC 2026 responds directly to these challenges. The conference will create space for critical discussion on how planning can support more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient futures. The conference theme recognises the growing role of digital technologies in planning practice.

Digital tools, data systems, artificial intelligence, and smart governance platforms are increasingly influencing how cities and regions are planned and managed. PAC 2026 will explore how these technologies can support spatial transformation, improve decision-making, and contribute towards more equitable development outcomes across Africa. PAC 2026 will also provide an important platform for professional engagement and collaboration. Through keynote presentations, technical sessions, research discussions, project showcases, and networking opportunities, the conference aims to strengthen dialogue between sectors and disciplines. These engagements are essential in supporting innovation, knowledge exchange, and professional growth within the planning profession.

The successful hosting of the conference is made possible through strong partnerships and collaboration. SAPI would like to acknowledge the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development as the main sponsor of PAC 2026, as well as the Western Cape Government as the conference host. Their support contributes significantly towards advancing planning dialogue and professional engagement in South Africa. Integral to the success of PAC 2026 is the continued support and collaboration of the South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN). The relationship between SAPI and SACPLAN reflects a shared commitment to strengthening the planning profession, supporting professional standards, and advancing planning practice nationally. SAPI's recognition by SACPLAN as a voluntary association in terms of the Planning Profession Act continues to reinforce collaboration between the two organisations.

SAPI Planning Africa Conference 2026

Shaping Sustainable Futures Through Planning Partnerships

The relationship between SAPI and SACPLAN reflects a shared commitment to strengthening the planning profession, supporting professional standards, and advancing planning practice nationally. SAPI's recognition by SACPLAN as a voluntary association in terms of the Planning Profession Act continues to reinforce collaboration between the two organisations. This partnership remains important in supporting Continuing Professional Development (CPD), mentorship, professional recognition, and broader engagement on matters affecting planners in South Africa.

PAC 2026 represents more than a conference. It reflects a collective commitment to the future of planning in Africa. It highlights the importance of collaboration, innovation, and professional leadership in shaping sustainable and inclusive urban and regional futures. Further information regarding the conference programme, sponsorships, awards, and participation opportunities is available on the official Planning Africa Conference website: [Planning Africa Conference 2026](#).

Planning Africa Conference 2026

**SAVE
— THE —
DATE**

29 September 2026 - 02 October 2026



Century City Conference Centre, Cape Town

watch this space for more details!



LGSETA EASTERN CAPE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FORUM

SACPLAN Pathways to Professional Registration



Building on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recently signed between SACPLAN and the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA), as highlighted in our

previous bulletin, SACPLAN participated in the LGSETA Eastern Cape Skills Development Forum, marking an important milestone in the two organisations' growing collaboration.

The forum provided SACPLAN with a valuable platform to engage directly with the local government sector on matters of professional registration. The Registrar, Ms Nontsundu Ndonga delivered a detailed presentation covering the planning competencies, registration process, and as well as the code of conduct for registered planner. Clarity was given on the cost of maintaining registration and the applicable fee structure. The Registrar also provided clarity on SACPLAN's alignment of the accreditation of planning programmes and the criteria set by the Council on Higher Education (CHE), ensuring that the profession's academic foundations meet the required quality standards.

A key highlight of the session was the Registrar's comprehensive outline of the pathways to registration, with a particular focus on the distinction between SACPLAN-Candidacy Programme and registration as a Candidate Planner. This was well received by attendees who sought greater understanding of the registration process.

The forum's facilitator further underscored the importance of municipalities employing registered planners, and posed direct questions to municipal representatives regarding their current compliance in this regard, reinforcing SACPLAN's mandate to promote and protect the planning profession within local government. The session was conducted in a hybrid format, with SACPLAN participating virtually alongside in-person attendees.

It proved to be an informative and productive engagement, providing the clarity that the audience needed and strengthening SACPLAN's presence and voice within the local government sector.

YOUTH MONTH 2026



Written by **Mzansi Connect Team**

Mzansi Planners Connect is a national digital directory of town planning professionals' contacts across South Africa, aiming to cover all 257 municipalities, provincial governments, national departments, private consulting firms and supporting entities, including the IDT, SANRAL, Eskom, water boards, traditional councils, and others. Anyone can search the directory, town planners can add their own profile, and planners can send direct messages to one another through an in-app messaging feature. The aim is simple: eliminate the "missing contact" problem that stalls projects. The vision behind it is bigger: to create a national planning ecosystem, a place where planners find each other, share knowledge, and deliver better communities faster. The idea was initiated within a 24-month town planning internship at a national government department, where the founder was managing state-owned land and properties on behalf of multiple client departments including Justice, the Border Management Authority, SAPS, Labour, and Defence. A single project would require input from a municipal planner, a provincial official, a private consultant, and sometimes traditional councils or environmental specialists. There was almost always a missing contact, a planner who had resigned without the

new contact being shared, a consultant who had moved firms, an official on extended leave. The entire application would stall. There was no central directory of who does what, where, and how to reach them. The team relied on old email chains, WhatsApp forwards, and silent switchboards. That frustration became a blueprint.

Beyond solving the contact problem, the founders recognised a broader opportunity. Town planning affects every citizen, zoning, housing, transport, and the environment, yet most people do not know how to access planning information or who to contact. Mzansi Planners Connect envisions eventually including public-facing content that bridges the gap between professionals and communities, explaining planning processes in accessible language and empowering citizens to meaningfully participate in decisions that shape their environments.

The platform is run entirely voluntarily by four candidate planners:

- **Khumbulani Thobani (C/10107/2024), founder and technical lead**
- **Sibusisiwe Zulu (C/10198/2025), contact sourcing and client liaison**
- **Nonhlanhla Msowa, database management**
- **Success Molatudi (C/10201/2025), partnerships and growth**

Each balancing platform development alongside job searching and other professional commitments. The founder built the initial concept from scratch, personally covering hosting costs and hiring a web developer to get the platform off the ground. Within one month of launch, over 400 planners had signed up without a single rand spent on advertising.

YOUTH MONTH 2026



On launch day alone, the site recorded over 1 000 visits.

From there, the team expanded the directory to include multiple entity types, added a WhatsApp group for users to request missing contacts, introduced in-app messaging, redesigned the search function based on user feedback, and implemented privacy controls all driven by the needs of the community using the platform. The roadmap ahead includes a job board, mentorship matching, a CPD hub, public educational content, and verified SACPLAN registration badges, with a long-term vision of full integration with SACPLAN, SAPI, and SALGA a single, trusted ecosystem for the entire planning profession. The team is candid about the road ahead. Keeping contact data current is a continuous manual task. Building trust with a profession that has seen platforms come and go takes time. There is no funding every hour invested is voluntary. And a directory is only as valuable as its adoption: planners tend to wait to see who else is on before joining. But the opportunities are just as real. Official endorsement from planning organisations would dramatically boost credibility.

A job board could connect unemployed planners with municipalities and firms in need of staff. Mentorship matching could link candidate

planners with experienced practitioners. And the model itself could eventually be replicated across other built environment professions.





MZANSI PLANNERS CONNECT

THE CITY IS YOUR CANVAS

HOW TO SIGN UP

IT'S QUICK & EASY!

-  **1 VISIT OUR WEBSITE**
Go to mzansiplannersconnect.com
-  **2 CLICK SIGN UP**
Click on the "Sign Up" button on the top right corner.
-  **3 CREATE YOUR PROFILE**
Fill in your details and professional information.
-  **4 VERIFY YOUR EMAIL**
Check your email and verify your account.
-  **5 COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE**
Add your experience, skills, projects and profile photo.
-  **6 CONNECT & EXPLORE**
Start connecting, sharing documents and discovering opportunities.

SIGN UP TODAY!

mzansiplannersconnect.com

WHY SIGN UP?

Mzansi Planners Connect is a dedicated platform for town planners to connect, collaborate and grow. By signing up, you become part of a network that strengthens our profession and opens doors to opportunities.



STRONGER CONNECTIONS

Connect with planners, firms, municipalities and stakeholders across South Africa.



ACCESS INFORMATION

Access and share key planning documents like SDFs, LUS, IDPs and more.



OPPORTUNITIES

Discover jobs, internships and projects that grow your career.



GROW YOUR VISIBILITY

Showcase your expertise and get discovered by others in the industry.

WHAT YOU STAND TO GAIN



CROSS-SECTOR
NETWORKING



DOCUMENT
HUB (SDF & MORE)



DIRECT INDUSTRY
CONTACTS



INCREASED
VISIBILITY



CAREER & PROJECT
OPPORTUNITIES



RUN/WALK
NETWORKING
ACTIVATIONS



VISIT US
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CONNECT. COLLABORATE. DELIVER.

YOUTH MONTH 2026

Success Stories from the SACPLAN Candidacy Programme: Meet the First Two Candidates to Achieve Professional Registration

FROM DETERMINATION TO PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION: MY SACPLAN JOURNEY By Nqabenhle Hadebe



As a proud alumnus of the University of Johannesburg and the Durban University of Technology, I am honoured to have recently attained registration as a Professional Planner with SACPLAN.

My planning journey began many years ago with a simple aspiration: to create a better future for myself while contributing meaningfully to the development of communities. Over the years, I have had the privilege of working across various sectors within the planning and development field, including a non-profit organisation, private companies, professional bodies, and local government. Each of these experiences contributed uniquely to my professional growth.

Each of these experiences contributed uniquely to my professional growth understanding of the planning profession.

Development planning is an evolving profession, and the traditional employment opportunities are often highly competitive. Early in my career, I recognised the importance of being proactive, adaptable and most importantly, resilient. Rather than focusing solely on traditional employment opportunities, I sought ways to apply my skills through project-based work and diverse professional experiences. This approach enabled me to continuously develop my competencies while gaining exposure and experience in different aspects of planning practice.

When I joined the SACPLAN Candidacy Programme in 2024, I immediately recognised the value of the opportunity. I committed myself to making the most of the programme and working towards professional registration. The programme provided a structured pathway for achieving the goal of registering as Professional Planner, while exposing me to areas of planning practice that complemented my previous experience. This opportunity helped me broaden and balance my professional skills across different planning disciplines, strengthening my overall competency as a planner.

YOUTH MONTH 2026

Success Stories from the SACPLAN Candidacy Programme: Meet the First Two Candidates to Achieve Professional Registration

FROM DETERMINATION TO PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION: MY SACPLAN JOURNEY By Nqabenhle Hadebe

Throughout the programme, I received tremendous support from the SACPLAN team. From the onboarding process and provision of working tools to regular engagements regarding my progress as a Candidate Planner, the support was invaluable. Their commitment to developing future professionals played a significant role in helping me successfully navigate the registration process.

The candidacy programme also reinforced the importance of mentorship and continuous learning. Through practical exposure and guidance from experienced professionals, I gained a deeper understanding of the responsibilities associated with professional planning practice. I learned that professional registration is not simply about meeting technical requirements; it is about demonstrating competence, professionalism, ethical conduct, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

For aspiring Planners and Candidate Planners, my advice is to remain persistent and open to opportunities, even when they may not appear in conventional forms. Every project, workplace, and challenge presents an opportunity to learn and grow. Professional growth often comes from stepping outside one's comfort zone and embracing new experiences. I would encourage candidates to maintain accurate records of their work, projects, and achievements

throughout the candidacy period. Doing so makes the preparation of the Practical Training Report significantly easier and helps demonstrate the breadth of experience gained over time. Keeping detailed records not only support the registration process but also provide an opportunity for reflection on professional growth and competency development.

Achieving professional registration with SACPLAN is one of the most significant milestones of my career. It represents years of hard work, perseverance, learning, and support from mentors, colleagues, and the SACPLAN team. While I am proud of this achievement, I view it not as the end of the journey, but as the beginning of a new chapter of professional responsibility and contribution to the planning profession.

I am grateful to everyone who supported me along the way and look forward to continuing to serve the profession while contributing to the creation of sustainable, inclusive, and wellplanned communities throughout South Africa.

YOUTH MONTH 2026

Success Stories from the SACPLAN Candidacy Programme: Meet the First Two Candidates to Achieve Professional Registration

From Candidate to Professional Planner: A Journey Rooted in Purpose

By Anthonia Machuene Mokgokong



My journey to professional registration has been one of resilience, growth, and opportunity. Today, I am proud to be registered with SACPLAN and employed as a Junior Town Planner at Polokwane Municipality. At a time when I was unemployed and uncertain about how I would complete my candidacy, SACPLAN stepped in and provided me with an opportunity that ultimately changed the course of my career. Through its candidacy programme, SACPLAN employed me and placed me at Polokwane Municipality as my host employer, enabling me to continue my professional development and work towards registration. What began as a requirement for professional registration soon became one of the most formative chapters of my life.

Educational Foundation

I obtained my Bachelor in Town and Regional Planning from the University of Pretoria in 2019 and subsequently pursued my Master of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria, which I completed in 2024. During my Masters research, I participated in the research that aimed to investigate the potential of green infrastructure in Germany and South Africa, an opportunity that led to a two-week DAAD-sponsored study exchange to Berlin for site visits and field research. Completing the Master's degree also contributed towards my professional registration journey, as a Masters qualification completed within two years is recognised as equivalent to a three-month candidacy training period.

The Candidacy Experience:

Learning by Doing

My candidacy journey began at Nhlatse Planning Consultants in Polokwane, where I gained experience in various planning processes, including rezoning applications, land rights matters, township establishments, and community facilitation. The most significant part of my journey, however, was my placement at Polokwane Municipality through SACPLAN's candidacy programme.

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By Anthonia Machuene Mokgokong

That intervention meant everything, providing the stability, mentorship, and platform I needed to complete my candidacy with purpose. The impact of this opportunity became evident before my SACPLAN contract had even concluded. In March 2026, Polokwane Municipality appointed me as a permanent Junior Town Planner, one month before the end of my placement. This appointment also enabled me to achieve professional registration with SACPLAN, the very goal the programme had set out to help me accomplish. I am proud to have reached this milestone before parting ways with SACPLAN, a fitting conclusion to a journey that equipped me with valuable practical skills, professional confidence, and lifelong lessons.

Key Achievements and Highlights

Throughout my candidacy and professional journey, I have had the opportunity to contribute to several projects that strengthened both my technical expertise and professional growth. One of the highlights of my time at Nhlatse Planning Consultants was serving as a project manager and managing the demarcation of more than 200 residential sites as part of a township establishment project within Thulamela Local Municipality, which involved stakeholder coordination, community engagement, and land use rights processes. Since joining Polokwane Municipality as a Junior Town Planner, I have assessed and pro-

cessed rezoning and major development applications, including the Waste Transfer Station projects in Ga-Maja and Ga-Chuene. These projects required multidisciplinary coordination and a sound understanding of the municipality's spatial planning priorities. Achieving professional registration with SACPLAN marked a significant milestone in my career, and my recent registration as a Corporate Member of the South African Planning Institute (SAPI) further reflects my commitment to the planning profession and continued professional development.

A Word to Fellow Candidates

If there is one thing I would like to share with fellow candidates, it is that the candidacy programme can open doors you never expected. Through this journey, I gained more than professional experience; I built valuable networks, developed confidence, and discovered opportunities that were never part of the original plan. My advice is to approach every task with dedication and purpose, because every application, engagement, and project contributes to your growth. When the journey feels challenging, remember why you chose this profession. Planning has the power to shape communities and improve lives, and that purpose makes the journey WORTHWHILE.

Interpreting Spatial Change in Cape Town

Insights from the City of Cape Town spatial Trends Reporting System

Written by **Vernon Moonsamy**

In an era of accelerating urban change, spatial planning requires more than static policy instruments; it demands continuous, evidence driven insight into how cities evolve over time. In Cape Town, this imperative has been addressed through the development of a highly complex, comprehensive, and innovative spatial reporting system by the [City's Urban Planning and Design Department](#). This system underpins the annual [Spatial Trends and Implementation Tracking Report](#) and has become central to strengthening evidence based metropolitan planning practice. The spatial reporting system was developed as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the [Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework \(MSDF\)](#) and the eight District [Spatial Development Frameworks \(DSDFs\)](#). Its primary purpose is to monitor land development trends, patterns, and land use change across Cape Town over space and time, allowing planners to objectively assess whether spatial policy intent is translating into desired urban outcomes. In doing so, the system helps bridge the historic gap between spatial policy formulation and implementation monitoring. The Spatial Trends and Implementation Tracking Report is structured in three complementary parts. **Part A** focuses on large-scale metropolitan trends, including land use intensification, diversification, and changes in urban extent.

Part B evaluates the extent to which spatial policy intent is realised by assessing the “theory of change” embedded in the MSDF and DSDFs at both metropolitan and district levels.

A multi year investment in spatial intelligence

The reporting system took approximately three years to conceptualise and construct and was completed in 2023, with the first full report published on 8 November 2023. It has since been updated annually, reflecting a deliberate institutional shift toward strengthening the analytical foundations of spatial planning. At its core is a suite of 57 indicators spanning the built and natural environment, supported by spatially enabled datasets used to measure development trends and policy impact. Central to this capability is the system's ability to transform large volumes of data into actionable planning intelligence.



Figure 1: Cover Page of the Spatial Trends Report

Transforming big data into planning intelligence

A defining strength of the system lies in transforming complex datasets into actionable insights. Significant advances were achieved through longitudinal analysis of General Valuation Rolls, enabling land use change and development patterns to be tracked over time. These are complemented by building plan approvals (DAMS) and Environmental Impact Assessment applications. Outputs are structured at both metropolitan and district scales, allowing trends to be understood citywide and within the eight planning districts. This strengthens relevance for both strategic and local planning. Extensive work was required to clean, standardise, and integrate datasets to ensure consistency. This enables automated reporting and robust spatial-temporal analysis, shifting the City's capability from static reporting toward continuous monitoring and evidence-based decision-making.

Integrating external data and strengthening partnerships

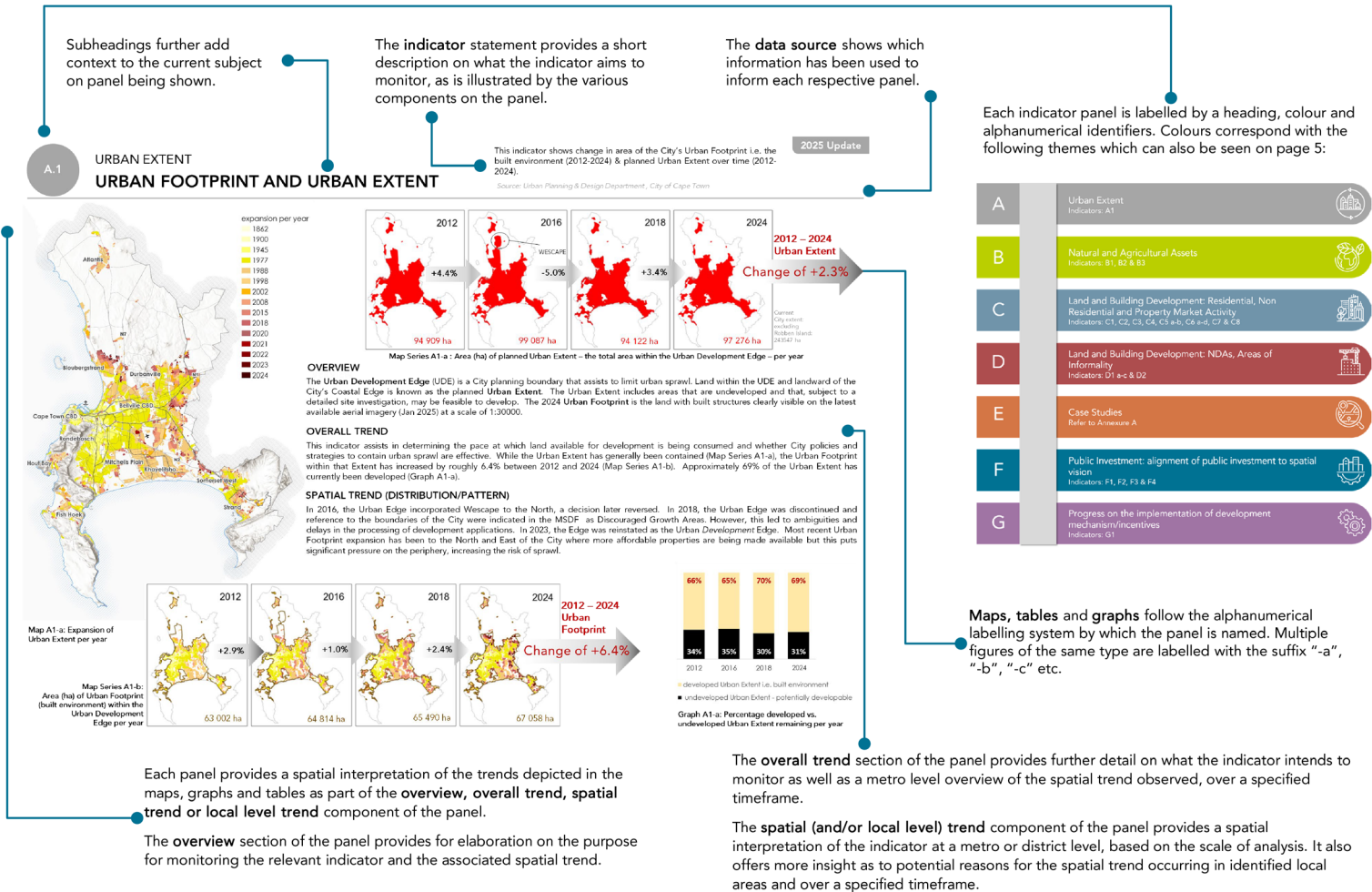
The system is strengthened through integration of external datasets not previously consolidated within the City's spatial environment. These include agricultural land data, property transactions from the Deeds Office, provincial investment data, and environmental application records. These integrations reflect growing inter-governmental collaboration and a coordinated approach to spatial intelligence.

Aligning datasets across institutions enhances analytical depth while supporting shared evidence base for planning and decision-making. Understanding how indicators are interpreted The effectiveness of the reporting system is not only dependent on the data itself, but also on how it is presented and interpreted. Each indicator panel is carefully structured to enable planners and decision makers to quickly understand complex spatial trends. and DSDFs at both metropolitan and district levels.

Figure 2 below illustrates the standardised layout and components of an indicator panel within the Spatial Trends Report.

USER GUIDE

HOW TO INTERPRET THE COMPONENTS OF INFORMATION FOR EACH INDICATOR PANEL



As shown in figure 2, such as “overview”, “overall trend”, and “spatial (local) trend”—guide interpretation at multiple scales. Colour-coded themes align with key planning domains such as urban extent, natural assets, land development, and public investment, while data sources are explicitly referenced to ensure transparency.

This consistent format enables comparison across indicators and reporting periods, enhancing usability for both technical analysis and policy application. Together, these features reinforce the report's role as both an analytical and communication tool. Enhancing communication and navigation beyond technical robustness, strong emphasis was placed on usability.

The report is designed as an interactive, navigable document, allowing users to move seamlessly between chapters and sections. Clickable icons and embedded links enable readers to jump between themes, indicators, and specific sections. This focus on accessibility ensures the report serves not only analysts, but also planners, policymakers, and a broader stakeholder audience, strengthening its value as a practical decision-support tool. From snapshots to trends: informing policy and practice. While each annual report represents a snapshot in time, consistent measurement across years enables composite trends to emerge.

Over time, these trends will establish a robust evidence base to inform policy review cycles and guide spatial planning decisions.

For the first time, enriched spatial data is being systematically analysed across disciplines at a metropolitan scale. This marks a shift toward a more integrated, transparent, and accountable approach to spatial governance, demonstrating how investment in data systems and analytical capacity can support more inclusive and resilient urban development outcomes.

Useful links:

Cape Town Spatial Trends

See: <https://www.capetown.gov.za/work%20and%20business/planning-portal/spatial-analysis-and-research/spatial-trends-report>

Cape Town Municipal Spatial Development Framework

See : <https://www.capetown.gov.za/work%20and%20business/planning-portal/Plans-policies-frameworks-and-guidelines/cape-town-spatial-development-framework>

District Spatial Development Frameworks

See: <https://www.capetown.gov.za/work%20and%20business/planning-portal/Plans-policies-frameworks-and-guidelines/district-plans>

Institutionalising Innovation in Local Government: Findings from the CSIR Study

Written By **Selaelo Ramohlale and Matsubu Ragoasha**



South African municipalities play a central role in delivering basic services. Municipalities perform this role facing various challenges such as high unemployment, poverty, inequality, infrastructure backlogs, financial constraints, increased demand for services, in-migration and complex governance requirements amongst others. These challenges are compounded by the increase in natural disasters due to climate change and growing informality.

The National Development Plan has identified science, technology and innovation as a primary driver to address socio-economic challenges in the country. This has been supported by various policies and frameworks by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, including the 2007 Ten-Year Innovation Plan, the White Paper on Science Technology and Innovation and the Decadal Plan amongst others.

While the relevance and value of innovation for improving service delivery and addressing socio-economic challenges is widely recognised, service delivery challenges persist, raising questions about how innovation is in-institutionalised and integrated within municipi-

palities. Evidence from South Africa shows that many innovations and interventions fail to be sustained or scaled, reflected in failing wastewater treatment works, incomplete infrastructure projects, and limited transition of pilot technologies into implementation. In addition, numerous infrastructure projects remain incomplete or delayed due to governance and funding constraints. This points to a systemic challenge not in initiating innovation, but in embedding and sustaining it within municipal systems.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), through the DSTI's Viability and Validation of Innovation for Service Delivery Programme (VVISDP), supported the integration and institutionalisation of innovation in municipal service delivery by promoting enabling policies and good practices for the adoption and scaling successful technologies. As part of this effort, the CSIR conducted research to better understand innovation practices in municipalities, largely through desktop analysis and stakeholder engagement (See the list of CSIR's research reports on the integration innovation in South African municipalities: <https://www.ukesa.info/library/view/viability-and-validation-of-innovation-for-service-delivery-programme-vvisdp-project-4>)

The findings revealed important patterns in how innovation is currently approached within South African municipalities. In many cases, municipalities do not have dedicated policies or frameworks to guide innovation, and where innovation is referenced, it is often reflected only at a high-level in vision or mission state-

Institutionalising Innovation in Local Government: Findings from the CSIR Study

ments within Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). However, these intentions are seldom translated into clearly defined programmes, projects, or implementation pathways. The study further highlights disparities across municipalities, with metropolitan municipalities demonstrating more advanced integration of innovation into service delivery. In these cases, innovation has been more formally institutionalised, with clear articulation of priorities and outcomes within the IDP, supported by dedicated innovation strategies. These municipalities have also established enabling institutional arrangements, including dedicated innovation units, appointed personnel, and internal champions to drive initiatives. In addition, they actively leverage partnerships with research institutions, academia, the private sector, and other stakeholders to support implementation. The variation across municipalities underscores the need for differentiated targeted support rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to strengthening innovation in local government.

These practices in metropolitan municipalities demonstrate that where innovation is embedded within the IDP process, it is more likely to move beyond isolated initiatives towards coordinated, sustained implementation.

The IDP provides a statutory platform and a central strategic planning tool through which municipalities can align long-term development priorities, resource allocation, and implementation programmes. As a legally mandated, participatory process, the IDP integrates sector plans, budgets, and institutional arrangements into a single, coherent framework. For those municipalities that are yet to integrate innovation into their municipal environment, the IDP process is recommended as an ideal approach. Embedding innovation within this process not only legitimises it as a core municipal priority, but also enables coordination across departments, aligns innovation with service delivery objectives, and ensures that solutions are responsive to local contexts.

**Acknowledgements (municipalities that were engaged in the research): City of Tshwane, City of Cape Town, Chris Hani District Municipality, Waterberg District Municipality, uMhlathuze Local Municipality and Drakenstein Local Municipality.*

For more information see:

1. Municipal Innovation Collection: <https://www.ukesa.info/library/view/municipal-innovation-collection>
2. List of CSIR's research reports on the integration of innovation in South African municipalities: <https://www.ukesa.info/library/view/viability-and-validation-of-innovation-for-service-delivery-programme-vvisdp-project-4>
3. Integrating Innovation into Municipal Service Delivery-Policy Note: <https://www.ukesa.info/library/view/integrating-innovation-into-municipal-service-delivery>

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The next phase of spatial transformation: building economies, not just services

Written By **Simon Webster**

South Africa is on course to fall well short of the transformation ambitions set out in the [National Development Plan](#). The NDP envisaged average annual growth of 5% and unemployment reduced to 6% by 2030. By 2026, South Africa remains far from that trajectory, with growth closer to 1% and unemployment around 32%.

This shortfall is widely recognised, but it is not only a macroeconomic problem. It is deeply spatial. Where people live, where jobs are located, and how investment flows across places continue to shape the prospects for inclusive growth.

Two recent government reports point to this same challenge. The [30-Year Review of Democracy](#) shows that access to basic services has expanded substantially since 1994. Far more households now have electricity, piped water, schools and clinics than at the start of democracy. But it is also clear that slow growth, high unemployment, persistent poverty and inequality, and weak coordination across government remain unresolved.

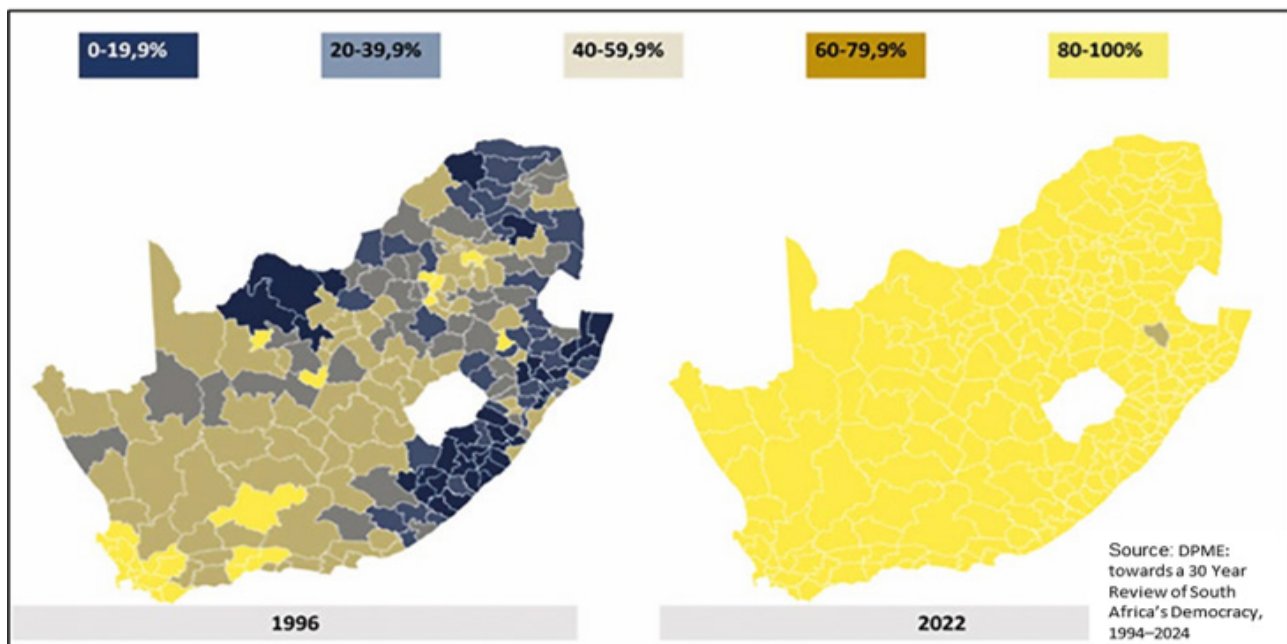


Figure 1: Proportion of households with access to electricity for lighting by municipality

The [draft review](#) of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government tells a similar story from the municipal end. Local government has expanded democratic participation and delivered services that did not exist before 1994. Yet many municipalities are financially unstable, service delivery is uneven, and spatial inequality remains a post-apartheid challenge.

The common message is simple: services have increased, but poverty, inequality and unemployment remain stubbornly high. The next phase of spatial transformation needs to ask: have historically excluded places become working local economies, or mainly better-served places with too few jobs?

The next phase of spatial transformation: building economies, not just services

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This is the question the [National Strategic Hub](#) is beginning to explore. The NSH is bringing together government datasets on population, formal employment, education, land values and other indicators to build a more integrated picture of how South Africa's spatial economy is performing, where the weak points are, and why they persist. The work is still in progress, but it is already producing findings that matter for planning.

One early finding concerns Former Homeland Area Municipalities, or FHAMs. These are local municipalities whose boundaries overlap with former apartheid homeland geographies. The term helps us ask a simple question: have the places most deliberately excluded from South Africa's economic system been placed on a different development path since 1994?

The emerging data suggests an uncomfortable answer. In 2025, roughly 26 million people, or about 40% of South Africa's population, are estimated to live in FHAMs. Yet these municipalities account for only 19% of the country's formal jobs. This data comes from [SEAD spatial tax data](#), which captures formal FTE employment and excludes the informal economy. But it shows where formal, tax-registered employment is concentrated.

The gap is even clearer when employment is measured against population. Rural FHAM municipalities have about 46 formal jobs per 1,000 residents, compared with 140 in non-FHAM small towns. At that level, formal markets are extremely thin: few employers, limited wage income, weak municipal revenue potential and little demand to draw in investment.

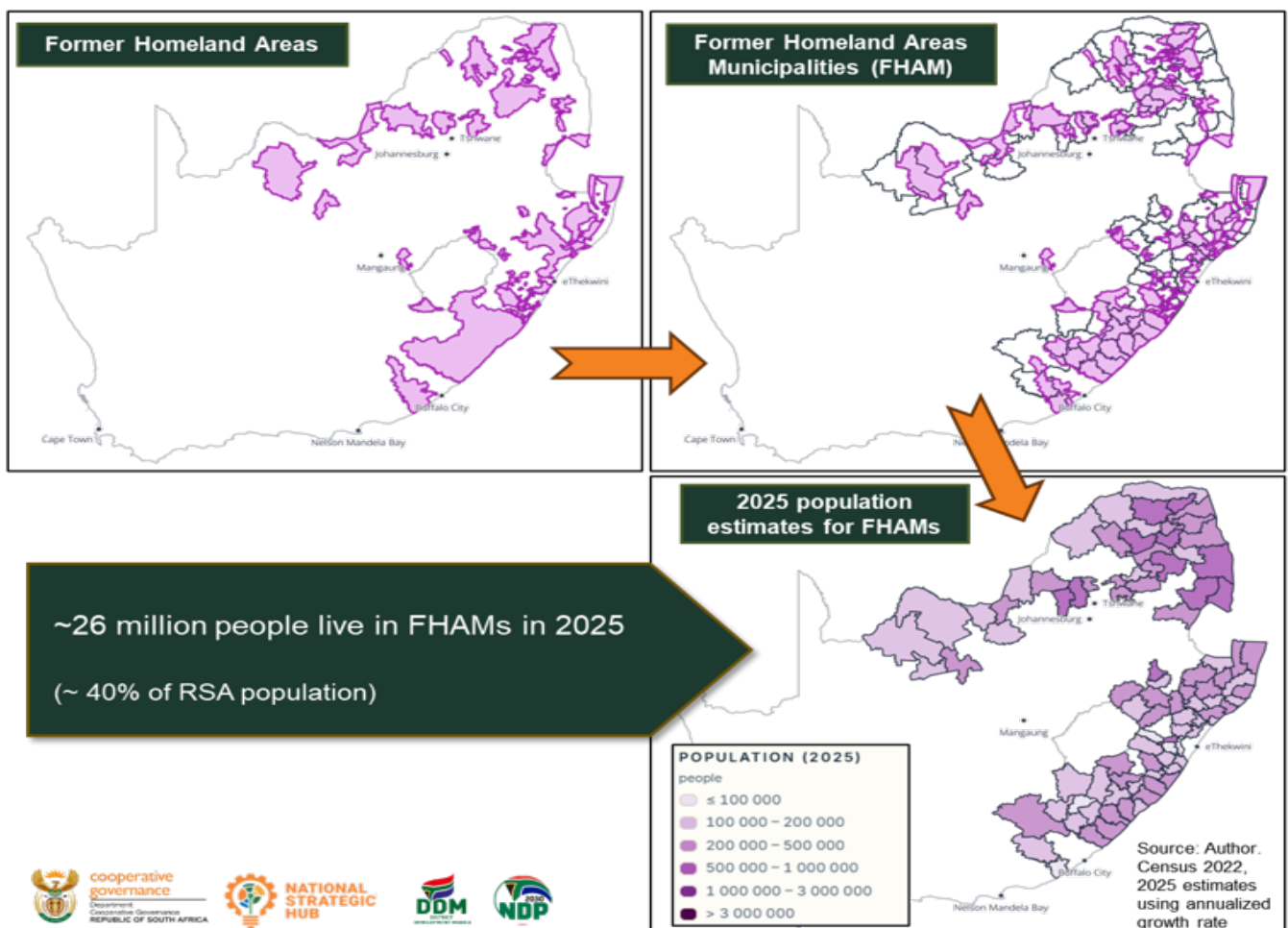


Figure 2: Population in former homeland areas is significant in 2025/2026

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This is the “so what” for planning. Spatial transformation cannot only mean that services have reached historically excluded places. Services matter, and they have improved living conditions. But services do not automatically create a local economy. A municipality can have more houses, roads, clinics and schools than it had in 1994, while still lacking the firms, markets, skills, land conditions, infrastructure reliability and governance needed to support employment and investment.

For planners, this creates a practical responsibility. Planning cannot only be about land use regulation, settlement layouts or long-term spatial visions. It must help answer a harder economic question: what would make this place work?

That means using integrated data to identify where constraints overlap, coordinating public investment across sectors, and helping government assemble the preconditions for local enterprise and private

investment. The next phase of spatial transformation is therefore not only about building services in places. It is about building inclusive local economies that will uplift the overall wellbeing of South African citizens.

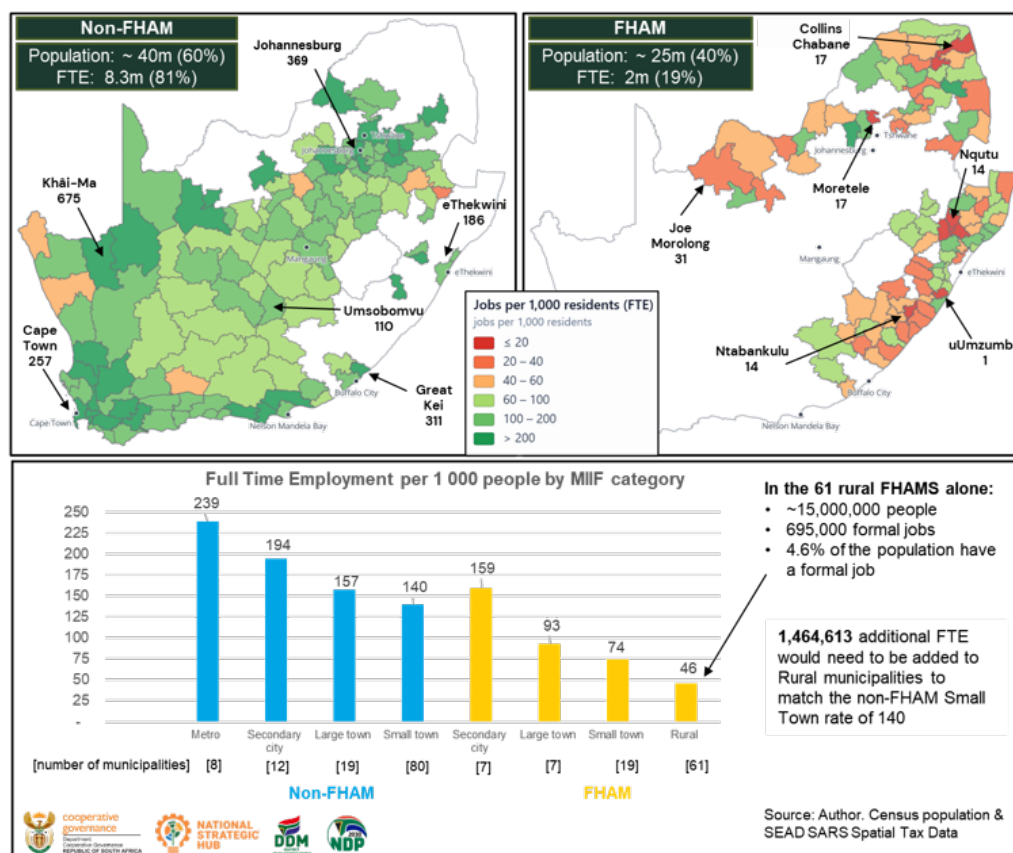


Figure 3: Former homeland areas hold 40% of the population but only 19% of formal jobs (2025)

That is the deeper challenge. The apartheid homeland system did not only deny services. It denied places the building blocks of a functioning economy. If the post-1994 state extends services but does not also help build the conditions for investment, then the geography of economic exclusion remains largely intact.



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JUL	REGISTRATION ROADSHOW WEBINAR
JUL	ADVANCING ADEQUATE HOUSING WEBINAR
AUG	CODE OF CONDUCT WEBINAR
SEPT	SAPI PLANNING AFRICA CONFERENCE 2026
OCT	SA CITIES NETWORK & SACPLAN 2026 URBAN FESTIVAL
OCT	FUTURE MINDS OF PLANNING WEBINAR
NOV	SACPLAN 3RD NATIONAL PLANNING INDABA AND AWARDS



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