



LEARNING NOTE

URBAN STRATEGIC MASTER CLASS 2016

Moses Mabhida Stadium, GBC 10

07 March to 09 March 2016

1. Introduction and background

Globally, cities strive for Innovative and sustainable urban strategic solutions and planning to effect urban development, city management and long term solutions. EThekwini Municipality in partnership with Cities Alliance and the United Cities and Local Governments hosted an Urban Strategic Planning Master Class. Attending were forty practitioners from twenty-eight municipalities across South Africa and nine municipalities from neighboring Botswana and Zimbabwe. Applying a presentation and facilitated discussion methodology, experts from eThekwini Municipality, KwaZulu Natal Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs as well as local academics.

2. Presentation Schedule

Day One 23 March 2016	
Vhutshilo Gelebe	KZN COGTA
Municipal Strategic Planning	
Mbali Ndumo	eThekwini Municipality
What do we mean by Urban Strategic Planning?	
Puven Akkiah	eThekwini Municipality
Case Study: The IDP experiences of the eThekwini Municipality	
Sogen Moodley	eThekwini Municipality MILE
Lessons Learnt: Lessons learned from eThekwini Municipality’s long term planning process	
Peter Robinson	Independent Planning Consultant
Why Vision is Critical in Strategic Planning?	
Day Two 24 March 2016	
Kisa Dlamini	KZN COGTA
Strategic Planning and Organizational Alignment	
Glen Robbins	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Citizen Engagement in Planning and Budgeting Processes	
Bharthie Ranchoddas	eThekwini Municipality
Developing Sustainable Budgets through Public Participation	
Day Three 25 March 2016	
Nirmala Govender	eThekwini Municipality
Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan	
Genevieve Hartley	eThekwini Municipality MILE
Municipal Technical Support	

3. Participants

City of Harare	City of Johannesburg
Umdoni Municipality	UMshwathi Municipality
Umzumbe Municipality	Msunduzi Municipality
UMhlathuze Municipality	Richmond Municipality
Umngeni Municipality	Uthukela District Municipality
Mandeni Local Municipality	Monrovia City Corporation
Hibiscus Coast Municipality	BALA: Chobe District Council
BALA: Botswana Local Government	BALA: Kgalagadi District Council
Nongoma Local Municipality	Amathole District Municipality
Umzinyathi District Municipality	Emalangen Local Municipality
Umnambithi/Ladysmith Municipality	Umfoloz Local Municipality
City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality	Abaqulusi Local Municipality
BALA: North West District Council	KZN COGTA
SALGA	COGTA
BALA: Gaborone City Council	Matatiele Local Municipality
BALA: Central District Council; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development	

4. Importance of Strategy

Strategic planning is important when it comes to development. Outlining the importance of planning in his welcoming session, Dr Mpilo Ngubane pointed out three important areas being 1. Understanding of strategic planning, 2. Planning should be integrated (encompass all elements of a municipality), 3. Must be sustainable. Acknowledging that South African cities are characterized by challenges of informal and rural settlements, Ngubane highlighted visioning, innovation and having a well strategic and planned game plan as key to address such challenges. Taking the argument of the importance of strategy it was emphasized that for a strategy to be effective it must be aligned with the IDPs as well as aligned with all spheres of government planning, Eric Apelgren. Revisiting and reviewing strategies for the purposes of mapping performance should not be neglected.

Participants were encouraged to identify CATALYTIC projects in their cities in order to maximize growth. The inclusion of all stakeholders when developing strategies/plans should always be at the center of strategic planning. Also, participants were urged to find ways to eradicate ethical issues like corruption, in order to ensure strategies remain in order/progression. Taking into consideration that municipalities are newly established, they still face common challenges of increasing demands for services in African cities, Puven Akkiah advised against approaching IDPs in isolation, rather ensure that the IDP is aligned with other various visions and missions within the sectors in the city making an example of the 2013 city vision of eThekweni and the National Development Plan. Also, practitioners need to make IDPs accessible to public and allow the public to engage. Responding to the question of whether IDPs work, Puven elaborated that IDPs must be mutually owned, also, long and short term planning, National, Provincial and local strategies must be integrated for them to be effective. Strong leadership was seen as the driver of strategic planning in the city, involvement of stakeholders, local government competence to perform their duties this goes hand in hand with skills development, knowledge sharing and integration.

A robust discussion on who owns the IDP? Are we winning with the IDP, if not where are we going wrong? Resulted in participants pointing out the lack of political will, perception of metropolitan municipalities doing better than local ones, lack of leadership, and lack of understanding the budget systems. Discussing further, it was mentioned that IDPs should not be for compliance rather they should be for development. A need for visionary leadership, and doing away with silo within departments was amongst the suggestions to correct.

Flagging the importance of inclusive planning, Vhutshilo Gelebe advised that Ward Based Plans must inform municipal IDPs; also, sector departments must review their plans. Look at your IDP as a pencil and the performance monitoring and evaluation process as a sharpener. Budgeting and alignment, coordination and management of plans is crucial, need for proper coordination.

5. Planning and Visioning

Long term planning focusing on visioning within the IDP context is important. It should always be accompanied by an understanding of where visioning fit in as a basic ingredient of planning which will enable practitioners to make the right choices, Peter Robinson. Furthermore, visions need to be translated into goals which can be broken into objectives...to mission statements. Visioning is a way of making sense of complex situations. Characteristics of a good vision statement are: the vision must be logical, it must have roots in its present yet reach out into the medium/long term future. The format of how you carryout visioning, must reflect analysis of the area, vision must provide clear picture. Decisions taken in the present will shape the future, how well formulated is your vision, key elements for visioning.

Prior to planning, one must have a full idea/understanding of a respective municipality so that the planning can represent existing nature therefore objectives can be met, Kisa Dlamini. Explaining further, it was emphasized that a strategic plan cannot be separated from other organizational management processes. Management framework/ operations must be designed in order to allow effectiveness. Without proper design, challenges will emanate. All stakeholders must participate in one seamless process (inclusiveness).

Making a practical application example Kisa spoke of the importance of communicating to stakeholders: *Language must be inclusive, be clear on what is going to be spent in each ward, how many people's lives will be changed, localize the context, adapt as so it can talk to the local people (different language to talk to different stakeholders, worried by different things, do away with big terms) do not use one size meet all plans, not for compliance purposes, talk to their needs using their language.* Existence of the municipality is service delivery. Citizens exist in spaces: they Work, Live, Play and Pray in these spaces. For them to have convenient Places, they must have services which makes these Places conducive...then they can make better lives for themselves through taking advantage of services NOTE that Municipalities are contributors to development THEY DO NOT

MAKE PEOPLES LIVES BETTER rather they contribute through provision and people use services to their advantage, Kisa Dlamini.

6. Planning, Participation and Performance

Public participation is an approach of delivery, it is about allowing the sharing of objectives and it also eradicates conflict, Glen Robbins. Citing an observe local challenge, Robbins made reference of public participation 'dead ends' referring to lots of consultation done but what happens after that 'who attends to the needs and suggestions made by the public? *Violence directed at elected councilors indicates loopholes in relationships not working, research indicates people lack trust in local government. 'Public participation is not about milk and cookies' therefore as planners you should expect tensions and be open for dialogue. Consultation is not a way of avoiding conflict rather it opens up channels for discussions/concerns, Robbins.*

It was raised as important to measuring what is important. Indicator must measure strategy, trends analysis (are these indicators repeatable and quantifiable, reliable). Participants were advised to look at monitoring as a tool that will deepen the culture of high performance through proper and strategic management of performance.

7. Key lessons learned

- Importance of understanding strategic planning and ensuring that planning is integrated and sustainable.
- Importance of visioning, key being that a vision is inclusive, clear and realizable.
- Need for visionary leadership as visioning is a way of making sense of complex situations.
- Need for eradicating the 'SILO' mentality and increase integration.
- IDP linkages/alignment to Budgeting, PME, Public Participation.
- Public participation is mandatory and it resembles good governance.
- Role clarification for all stakeholders which will directly affect Accountability.
- Compliance Vs. Reality.
- PME importance as it enables tracking of trends of performance/delivery.

In conclusion, it was shared with participants that strategic planning is a continuous and iterative process that enables sustainable development, a holistic and innovative approach to urban strategic planning is key.