



## LEARNING NOTES

# URBAN STRATEGIC PLANNING (USP) AND THE ART OF FACILITATING USP WORKSHOPS

23-25 AUGUST 2017

MOSES MABHIDA STADIUM GBC 10  
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Hosted by eThekweni Municipality, Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE)



## **1. Introduction and Background**

Urban Strategic Planning provides strategic direction for municipalities to improve service delivery. The developed vision is used to guide and direct the municipalities planning, budgeting, resource allocation, sustainable development, stakeholder consultation and policies. This process is critical for municipalities in determining their strategic opportunities, challenges and develop a strategic action plan.

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in partnership with the Western Cape SALGA collaborated to host another Strategic Planning and Technical Support workshop. The workshop was conceptualised to blend urban strategic planning with the art of facilitation. It focused on empowering SALGA officials from the Economic Development and Planning Directorate with the necessary tools to effectively facilitate urban strategic planning in respective municipalities.

It is important for practitioners to grapple first with the processes of urban strategic planning towards the development of the town/ city economic regeneration strategies. The urban strategic planning and facilitation tools acquired will assist SALGA practitioners in the processes of developing the Town Regeneration and Regional Economic Development programme.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

On completion of the workshop, it was aimed that participants would:

- Have a sound understanding of the key components of city/ town development strategies (including unpacking key development challenges, visions and purpose statements, formulating road maps (goals, strategies, timeframes, budgets, responsibilities, etc.)
- Have a renewed appreciation of the importance of Outcomes Based Planning and how it relates to urban strategic planning
- Be capacitated to lead stakeholder engagement processes in their respective municipalities
- Be empowered to facilitate urban strategic planning in municipalities
- Develop a Draft Action Plan for the Karoo Town Regeneration and Regional Economic Development Programme

## **3. Understanding Urban Strategic Planning**

The Senior Programme Manager: IDP set the scene with his presentation on understanding Urban Strategic Planning. His presentation highlighted the global context of planning and the importance of how the city influences the regions. The Addis Abba agreement was mentioned in the African context of urban strategic planning and local governments generating their own income. The following key areas were discussed; global challenges, the advantages of long term and strategic planning, characteristics of a successful urban strategic plan and what the UCLG is doing.

The emphasis of placing performance management along the strategic planning process adds more value in terms of identifying challenges at a local community level but also the ability to respond to those challenges. Strategic planning was highlighted as an important tool for change and decision making responses at a local government level.

Vibrant comments and questions with participants elicited thought provoking discussions. The role of traditional leadership was raised in terms of land usage from traditional authorities and the response was that inclusive and meaningful engagement at eThekweni was critical in spatial planning and creating opportunities for urban development. Credible data was also raised as an issue and the eThekweni response was the project of creating a common credible data source as a solution. The internal and external silo's in municipalities was raised as an impediment to achieving IDP's. The response to this comment was the importance of cross bordering planning in the spatial planning process. The Port City Planning Process set the nexus for the project based approach to integration. Traversal management is a key aspect that the city leadership is involved in. The comment of municipalities completing the IDP as a mandatory process as opposed to engaging in a credible process was raised. The response was that although the IDP was mandatory it has to have a credible process that achieves its deliverables with limited resources. Building capacity by engaging in learning exchanges and brown bag sessions creates knowledge and creates opportunities.

### **3.1. The eThekweni Story**

The participants were presented with the eThekweni Municipality story that was documented in a book in 2001. The story took the form of relating the events that lead to eThekweni developing its own strategic plan in an effort to radically transform Durban. Approaches to City Strategy that were adopted were done through developing a Strategic Framework, Long Term Planning and Medium Term Planning (IDP). Following the presentation, the participants expressed sentiments of gratitude for the sacrifices that were made by the team that were involved in the transformation exercise. However some participants expressed a concern for the slow pace at which change was being affected. The eThekweni story was seen as encouraging but the complexity of implementing long term development plans with change of political leadership was a raised as an impediment to effecting change. Strategic visionary leadership was raised as a nexus for radical economic transformation. Leaders that constantly reflected on strategy and its relevance was a consensus view from participants. The eThekweni Municipality made a lasting impression by displaying transparency in the process of public participation however some of the learning's were that were highlighted were the following

- In order for public participation to be successful there should be sufficient capacity with a passion to drive the public participation process
- An inclusive strategy of all stakeholders should be adopted in the public participation process
- The convenience of timing the meetings for the community participation is important for an effective consultation process
- The localised ward based participation model was seen as effective however alternative and diversified ways must be explored to fit the situation.

The drafting of integrated plans should encompass simple methodology that that excludes silo mentality and results in good communication systems with an appropriate budgeting strategy was also a view expressed by participants.

The eThekweni Municipality Long Term Plan that shifted from 2020 to 2030 was a clear indication of strategy evolving with changing times.

### **3.2. Contextualising Local Economic Development in Relation to Urban Strategic Planning**

The Programme Manager: Economic Development presented the above session. His presentation commenced with a discussion on the preamble to strategic planning which focused on goal setting. Some of the key considerations in goal setting is responding to a future that is uncertain and unpredictable. The importance of adopting a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach was proposed as a good planning strategy.

He explained how system's thinking (how can we make sense of the world around us) helps strategic planning shape the future. It is a tool that aids in conceptualising the problem, identifying the root cause and exploring various alternatives to arrive at a possible solution. The smart thinking approach as opposed to the conventional thinking was discussed in the context of SMART GOAL setting. The comments from this presentation was that priorities were taking too long to achieve and was often hindered by political heads that have their own agenda. The leadership also changes as the political landscape changes. There was a consensus view that thinking needs to be out of the comfort zone and there needs to be more aggressive action. Participants embraced the use of a systems thinking tool but emphasised that the proverbial "goal post" is always changing and plans have to evolve.

### **3.3. An Introduction to Outcomes Based Thinking**

In this session reference was made to the eThekweni story where a cadre of outcomes based thinkers were trained in 2001. A fundamental principle of outcomes based thinking was seeing the end result. It must involve a holistic approach where a good understanding of the community is required. Lessons learnt from the eThekweni story was that extensive consultation at various levels was required and the methodology must be clear. The facilitator emphasised that the City Planning Commission that worked in eThekweni example may not necessarily work in the Karoo. It is not a one size fits all. The Mayor in eThekweni at that time required a simple document that everybody understood proved to be a success for eThekweni. Investing time in planning ensured that the execution of the plans were smooth. At eThekweni teams made changes and were not afraid to experiment and take risks.

### **3.4. Components of a Good City /Town Development Strategy**

During the session participants were presented with theoretical guide lines on a City/Town Development Strategy. There was in-depth reference to what the UCLG Paper suggested and what the SACN suggest for a good strategic plan. Participants were given a group exercises to list components of a Town Development Strategy. The groups identified strategic assessment of both competitive advantage and challenges, having a developmental vision, good leadership, a passion to change people's lives, available resources and appropriate capacity, have a strategic action plan, stakeholder consultation, Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) as components of a Town Development strategy. Robust discussion around the issue of using consultants in developing strategies provided dynamic views from the different municipalities. Participants concurred that consultants would have to have explicit knowledge of the local environment in order to develop a meaningful strategy.

## **4. Developing a Strategic Framework**

The objective of this session was to create an understanding of the key elements of the strategic planning process and how they relate to one another. The process would involve articulating a set of key challenges that are faced in the respective municipalities and to reflect on a set of opportunities that can built on when crafting visions

### **4.1 Creating Effective Vision and Purpose Statements**

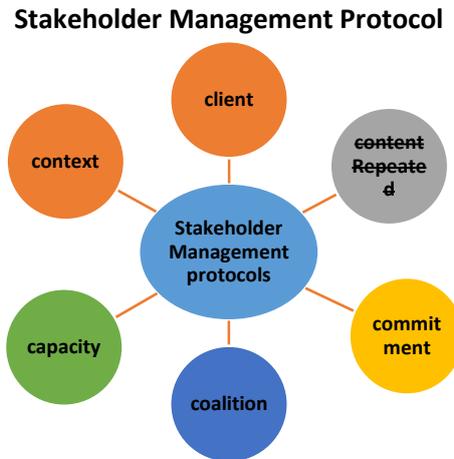
The importance of Town and City visioning lies in the clear specification of the direction to be taken in order to inform strategies and implementation. Effective visions are also time-bound, and clearly stipulate the means in which they are to be achieved. In crafting them, context, pitfalls, weaknesses and opportunities must be taken into cognisance prior to moving forward.

In this regard, participants embarked on the “City Illustration” exercise whereby in groups they depicted a City or Town of their choice in their current state. This was an opportunity for them to maximise on creativity and work together under time constraints. Thereafter, they undertook a similar exercise, whereby envisioned Towns and Cities in 30 years were depicted. From this dynamic and interactive exercise, participants identified the following as crucial success factors of visioning:

- The process of decision-making is pertinent to visioning. Thus, lack of buy-in from political leadership would lead to its demise!
- A vision is a guiding statement that informs strategy and implementation.
- Mission statements are applicable to an internally operational department whereas a vision statement guides the entire municipality.
- On the other hand, tag-lines are a marketing strategy that promote the strategic advantage of a town or city.
- It is important to refrain from decentralising visions in order to avoid confusion.
- Cadre deployment is a big challenge for government and municipalities as there is constantly changing leadership and programs.
- Internal capacitating should be intensified to decrease the reliance on consultants!
- Accountability is too complex! If duties are not specified in job descriptions then it would be difficult to implement programs.

## 4.2. Stakeholder Management

Participants were exposed to international benchmarks around stakeholder engagement



The six protocols for stakeholder engagement is depicted above

## 5. The Role of Facilitators

The purpose of this session was to highlight the role of a facilitator. A short video depicting the facilitator's role as an architect, pilot and guide was shown. Participants related many examples in their respective municipalities where political meetings failed due to the facilitator's lack of understanding of issues and the absence of preparatory meetings.

Discussions around what a facilitator was resulted in participants drawing comparisons between a teacher and chairperson and between a programme director and strategic facilitator. A programme director was viewed as someone with a pre-determined agenda that did not need to prompt discussion. A strategic facilitator was defined as someone that had a particular outcome to achieve and one that had to prompt discussion and direct debates. A strategic facilitator had to have background knowledge depending on the situation.

The importance of a pre meeting was discussed in detail. A needs analysis that identifies the issues that should be prioritised should happen before the pre-meeting. The value of a pre-meeting to meet the relevant stakeholders and also to suss out the contentious issues that a facilitators could be faced with was emphasised. It was also highlighted as an important prelude to interacting with political leadership and providing clarity on the purpose and outcome to be achieved. It is a meeting to clarify roles and responsibilities.

The characteristics of a good facilitator were discussed in detail and participants provided enriching details of their experiences. The common characteristics of a good facilitator were listed as follows;

- Creating a space to build rapport and trust
- Speaking with confidence on the subject matter meant that facilitators need to be knowledgeable
- The demeanour that should be displayed should be one of a calm and composed individual that can control discussions and emotions.
- The ability to speak clearly and know how to project one's voice into a microphone is vital.
- Being sensitive and understanding to different points of view
- Being conscientious about time and the effective use of time.

## 5.1 Unpacking Strategic Facilitation

- It is important to remain **NEUTRAL** in order to gain rapport and trust with participants
- **EMPOWER** participants to compile action plans and strategies themselves.
- **DEVELOP CASE STUDIES** for any context to get people to stimulate conversations
- Make use of **PARTICI-PLAN METHODOLOGY** as it is a good starting point to develop frameworks.
- It is crucial to have a **DEVELOPMENTAL BACKGROUND** in order to understand and be able to relate the various terminologies specific to the field.

## 4.2 Facilitation Role Play

Participants were presented with the opportunity to simulate a workshop scenario whereby all the key stakeholders were actively participating in the proceedings. The simulation enabled them to practically apply the techniques they were equipped with and provide feedback on what worked well and what didn't work well. The lessons learnt from the role play was the need to be flexible, as there were anomalies that presented themselves. Simple issues such as not addressing people by their names could be seen as a facilitation blunder. The pre-meeting which facilitators omitted in the role play was seen as a critical factor in the preamble to facilitating a workshop. The understanding of the different role players in the community was underestimated and time needed to be allocated for people to vent .so that the workshop could then proceed with minimal interruptions.

## 5. Moving from Learning to Implementation: The Strategic Way Forward

After deliberations and thorough engagements, the participants reflected on the discussions and agreed that there were crucial areas that required attention to advance the progress towards facilitation and urban strategic planning. Each Municipality had its own internal and external environment that would play a critical role in facilitating workshops for urban strategic planning.

Relevance of areas of the workshop	Translation of learning into action			Technical Support Required
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	
The art of facilitating urban strategic Planning	Training of Municipalities	Develop a Strategic Framework	Monitoring and Evaluation of Strategy	Facilitation and Review of Strategy
The importance of outcomes based thinking	Stakeholder Mapping Councillor Programs	Develop Programs that meet needs	Monitoring and Evaluation of support roles	Mapping Approach and Consultation
Partnership Strategy for STR's	Develop a partnership plan	Stakeholder Engagement	Conference in 2018	Content for Training Manual Assistance with indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation plan
Stakeholder Facilitation and Management	Stakeholder identification and engagement with Municipalities	Develop intervention plans	Implementation	MILE skills transfer
Contextualising LED	Bi-lateral engagement and stakeholder consultation	Workshops, Benchmarking, performance plans	Seminars, monitoring and evaluation	None
STR and RED Strategic plans	Engagement on Outcomes based thinking	Workshop Municipalities on Urban Strategic Planning	Implementation and Support	Capacity in different economic development subjects

## Annexure

### Programme

## Urban Strategic Planning and the Art of Facilitating Urban Strategic Planning Workshops

23-25 August 2017

Moses Mabhida Stadium, GBC 10

Day One : Wednesday 23 August 2017				
08:30 – 09:00	Registration, Tea and Coffee			
	Official Opening & Welcome			
09:00 - 09:05	Official Welcome & Opening	Dr Sogen Moodley	Senior Manager: MILE	eThekwini Municipality
09:05 - 09:10	Opening Remarks	???	????	SALGA
<b>MODULE 1</b>	<b>GETTING STARTED: PROTOCOL</b> Ms Genevieve Hartley - Programme Manager: MILE			
09:10 – 10:00	<b>Module 1A : Protocol</b> <b>Module 1B : Introduction (facilitators and participants) and Ice Breaker</b> <b>Module 1C : Purpose of the Session</b> <b>Video: What do Facilitators Do?</b> <b>Module 1D : Ground Rules</b> <b>Module 1E : Determining Expectations</b> <b>Module 1F : Entry Point</b>			
<b>MODULE 2</b>	<b>SETTING THE SCENE</b>			
10:00 - 10:30	<b>Module 2A</b> Understanding Urban Strategic Planning	Dr Sogen Moodley	Senior Manager: MILE	eThekwini Municipality
10:30 – 11:00	<b>TEA &amp; COFFEE</b>			
<b>MODULE 2 (continued)</b>	<b>SETTING THE SCENE (continued)</b>			
11:00–12:10	<b>Module 2B</b> Case Study: The eThekwini Story	Ms Genevieve Hartley	Programme Manager: MILE	eThekwini Municipality
12:10 – 12:30	<b>Module 2C</b> Contextualising Local Economic Development in Relation to Urban Strategic Planning	???????	??????	eThekwini Municipality
12:30 – 13:30	<b>LUNCH</b>			

	<b>SETTING THE SCENE (continued)</b>			
<b>MODULE 2</b> (continued)				
13:30 – 14:30	<b>Module 2D</b> An Introduction to Outcomes Based Thinking	Ms Genevieve Hartley	Programme Manager: MILE	eThekweni Municipality
<b>MODULE 3</b>	<b>COMPONENTS OF A GOOD CITY/ TOWN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b> Ms Genevieve Hartley & Mr Fezile Njokweni - Programme Managers: MILE			
14:30 – 15:30	Participants are exposed to essential elements of developing a town/city development strategies.			
15:30	<b>WRAP UP AND END OF DAY 1</b>			

<b>Day Two : Thursday 24 August 2017</b>	
08:30 – 08:45	<b>Check In &amp; Learning Circle:</b> Reflections from Day One Ms Genevieve Hartley – Programme Manager: MILE
<b>MODULE 4</b>	<b>DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK</b> Ms Genevieve Hartley & Mr Fezile Njokweni - Programme Managers: MILE
08:45 – 10:00	<p><b>Module 4A : Defining Municipal Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are able to articulate a set of KEY CHALLENGES that they are faced within their municipality through the use of case studies and group work</li> </ul> <p><b>Module 4B : Crafting Effective Visions and Purpose Statements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants understand the essence of DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT</li> <li>Participants are able to understand who their CUSTOMERS are</li> <li>Participants are able to identify what makes a good Vision and Mission / Purpose Statement</li> </ul>
10:00 – 10:30	<b>TEA &amp; COFFEE</b>
<b>MODULE 4</b> (continued)	<b>DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK(continued)</b>
10:30 – 12:00	<p><b>Module 4C: Developing a Strategic Roadmap / Action Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are able to differentiate between INTERNAL and EXTERNAL challenges, and the roles that the municipality can play in addressing these challenges</li> <li>Participants are able to PRIORITISE challenges in order of strategic importance</li> <li>Participants are able to articulate a set of STRATEGIC GOALS for their municipality and develop templates with detailed STRATEGIES, TIMEFRAMES, BUDGETS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</li> <li>Participants are able to select interventions which would yield the best development outcomes</li> <li>Participants are able to explore some solutions for breaking down silo's between line departments</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:00	<b>LUNCH</b>

<b>MODULE 5</b>	<b>STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT</b> Ms Genevieve Hartley & Mr Fezile Njokweni - Programme Managers: MILE
13:00 – 14:30	<p><b>Module 5A : Stakeholder Mapping</b> Participants share their stakeholder mapping processes including challenges and successes</p> <p><b>Module 5B : Sharing Participatory Processes to Date</b> Participants share their participatory processes including challenges and successes</p> <p><b>Module 5C : Unpacking Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants contribute in an interactive discussion on the nature and need for participation</li> <li>• Participants highlight the current methodologies used for participation and discuss opportunities for further public participation</li> </ul> <p><b>Module 5D : Making Stakeholder Participation Happen</b> An interactive session</p>
<b>MODULE 6</b>	<b>DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN</b> Mr Charles Parkerson – Director EDP: SALGA
14:30 – 15:30	Developing an Action Plan for the Karoo Small Town Regeneration and Regional Economic Development Programme
15:30	<b>WRAP UP AND END OF DAY 2</b>
<b>Day Three : Friday 25 August 2017</b>	
08:30 – 08:45	<b>Check In &amp; Learning Circle:</b> Reflections from Day Two Ms Genevieve Hartley – Programme Manager: MILE
<b>MODULE 7</b>	<b>BUILDING A CADRE OF URBAN STRATEGIC PLANNING FACILITATORS</b> <b>THE ART OF FACILITATING URBAN STRATEGIC PLANNING</b> Ms Genevieve Hartley - Programme Manager: MILE
08:45 – 10:30	<p><b>Module 7A : Unpacking Facilitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants explore and share some of the facilitation skills and methodologies that they have found to be successful and those that have had an undesirable effect</li> <li>• Participants look at the importance of having a facilitation plan</li> </ul>
10:30 – 11:00	<b>TEA &amp; COFFEE</b>
<b>MODULE 7 (continued)</b>	<b>IMPROVING FACILITATION SKILLS(continued)</b>
11:00 – 12:00	<p><b>Module 7B : Facilitation Role Play</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants have an opportunity to practical learning by role playing a session scenario</li> </ul>

	Participants are able to provide feedback on what worked well and what didn't work in the role play
<b>MODULE 8</b>	<b>MOVING FROM LEARNING TO IMPLEMENTATION</b>
12:00 – 12:30	Finalising the Action Plan for Karoo Small Town Regeneration and Regional Economic Development Programme Mr Charles Parkerson – Director EDP: SALGA
12:30 – 13:00	Moving from learning to implementation in the short (6 months), medium (6-12 months) & long term  Participants have an opportunity to reflect and share how they will use what they have learnt back at their workplaces
	<b>STRATEGIC WAY FORWARD &amp; CLOSURE</b>
13:00 – 13:15	Strategic Way Forward (SALGA)
13:15 – 13:25	Evaluation (MILE)
13:25 – 13:30	Closing Remarks (SALGA & MILE)
13:30	<b>LUNCH</b>
	<b>END OF URBAN STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION</b>