

# Retreat residents want city to dump rubbish site plan

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In 2015, the City of Cape Town moved a municipal “dump” from Constantia to Tenth Avenue, Retreat. The Constantia facility had to close because of a successful land claim.



A person takes recyclable material to the drop-off waste site in Retreat visible on the left. Photo: Ashraf Hendricks

The city now intends to expand the Retreat site, making it an “enclosed area for recyclable materials and a separate enclosed green waste” facility. It says the expansion will provide “better security and access control”.

But residents in Retreat say they were not consulted and are strongly opposed to the city’s 2,280m<sup>2</sup> expansion of the dump. They are concerned about an increase in noise, traffic, the risk to children crossing the road from surrounding schools, a decrease in property values, and they fear possible health risks.

Resident Alfrieda Sirmongpong says, “This should have been workshopped with the community. They can’t just put pamphlets in our postboxes. Some people in our community are illiterate, some might think it’s another Shoprite pamphlet, and others don’t even check their mailboxes.”

But mayoral committee member for area south Eddie Andrews says the Western Cape government approved the submission to rezone the area after “extensive public consultation”. Residents were given the choice to appeal against the proposal to rezone but did not do so. The city says, “Presentations and progress reports were given at more than one

meeting of sub councils 18 and 20”.

Sirmongpong says that when the city flattened the vacant land a few years ago, she thought it would be for something that would benefit the community, such as a school or playground or for housing.

She says local residents can't even dispose of their garbage at the current dump. “If we miss the rubbish truck that comes at 6am once a week, we have to sit with the rubbish for two weeks. When we want to throw our rubbish away at the dump, they tell us that they don't take that kind of rubbish,” she says.

The city explained that “the site in Retreat is not considered a dump, but a drop-off facility where residents can drop off their bulky waste and recyclables free of charge”.

Francis Zutphen, who has lived most of her life in Retreat, says, “I had no idea about this plan until she [Sirmongpong] told me today. We've already had to adjust to life with a dump in our neighbourhood. Now they [the city] want to extend it. It's not fair.”

Isaac Jansen's house is situated 50m from the site. He says, “They plan to bring a chipper onto the site as well, which will add to the noise in this area. I have a daughter who needs to do her homework and study for exams. With all the trucks and [waste pickers pushing] trolleys, going up and down at all hours of the day, she has to wake up at 12am to study when it's quiet.”

Jansen, who received a flyer from the city in his postbox, says he immediately wrote a letter to the city objecting. He also called the ward councillor Shanen Rossouw, who promised to arrange a meeting with the community. Rossouw told GroundUp that a meeting is being arranged but would not comment further.

The residents of Retreat are now waiting to hear back from the councillor on when they can meet to address their concerns.

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