

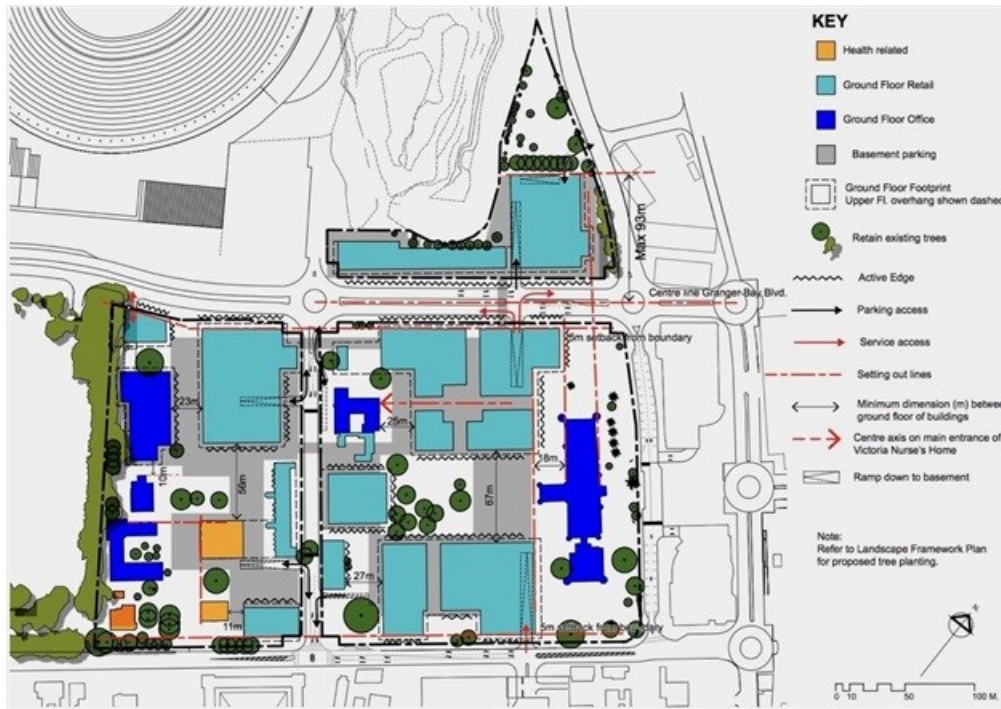
# Western Cape proposes affordable houses near Waterfront

By [Natalie Pertsovsky](#)

27 Jul 2017

The Western Cape government has proposed to rezone the Somerset Hospital Precinct. It will be used for both businesses and homes.

Situated between the V&A Waterfront and the Cape Town Stadium, it includes Somerset Hospital (which will become a clinic under the new proposal), the Old City Hospital and the Helen Bowden Nurses Home.



The Western Cape government's proposal for the Somerset Hospital Precinct.

The proposal by the provincial Department of Transport and Public Works (DTPW) aims to change the “character of the area from an underutilised largely inaccessible, institutional precinct containing redundant and dilapidated buildings to a more intensive mixed-use precinct with public access and a pedestrian-friendly environment at street level”.

It also includes 300 affordable homes, or social housing. This would be for low-income earners, such as workers in the area.

However, Ndifuna Ukwazi has taken issue with the amount of social housing in the proposal. In a press statement it says the proposed 300 units would account for only 4% of the land.

In response, Siphesihle Dube, spokesperson for MEC for Transport and Public Works Donald Grant, said this number “only relates to the Helen Bowden portion of this precinct”.

The nurses home has been renamed Ahmed Kathrada House by activists from Reclaim the City who have been occupying it since March. The protest, supported by Ndifuna Ukwazi, started after the province chose not to build affordable housing on the Tafelberg property in Sea Point.

“As it stands, the proposal is not aligned with the province’s obligations to redress spatial apartheid,” read a statement by Ndifuna Ukwazi. “The vast majority of the site could potentially be owned, occupied and used by wealthy corporations and an elite few which would entrench unequal and segregated access to land and opportunities.”

But Dube said that the proposal has four phases and “detailed development planning is still required for each precinct”. This suggests the province may set aside more affordable housing.

Ndifuna Ukwazi has lodged a complaint against the proposal: “Unfortunately, much like we saw in the process leading up to the disposal of the Tafelberg site, the department seems to be acting unilaterally, furthering an agenda to strip public land for maximum profit.”

Dube said the period for public comment on the proposal is until 28 July.

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