

## CHAPTER 6

### HOW A CITY PLANNING FUNCTION FOR THE CITY OF TSHWANE METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY CAME ABOUT

#### 6.1 The end of an era

The story of what happened to City Planning in the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area (later referred to as the Tshwane area) during the unicity transformation process is an intriguing one, and it was remarked more than once, especially at times when a new and unexpected turn of events became apparent, that “*someone should record it*”. In essence, this study attempts to, in the words of Gunder & Mouat (2002:127) “*accord textual voice*” to the story of Tshwane’s planning function. I have attempted to do this objectively, knowing that, as a character in the story, it is impossible to do so without a measure of bias (see also Watson 2001 and Chapters 1 and 2 of this study document). Furthermore, I do not purport to know or tell “*the full story*”, as I am constrained both by my own limited experience of the described events, as well as by the degree to which other sources of information on the events exist.

One could be forgiven for assuming that the story begins on 6 December 2000, as this was the date of the establishment of the new unicity structure known as the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM). As such, it was indeed a date that heralded a new era for local government in the greater Pretoria area<sup>23</sup>. The truth, however, is that the real transformation of City Planning started on different dates for different people.

#### *Mike Yates celebrates an ending*

One such beginning came a week earlier, on 30 November 2000. On that day, the then Executive Director of City Planning and Development of the City Council of Pretoria, Mike Yates, did something that surprised most of the town

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<sup>23</sup> A milestone for the legislative process was 1 October 2000, when the establishment of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality was gazetted by way of Government Notice 6770 of 2000 in the Gauteng provincial Gazette Extraordinary No 141 and Notice 330 of 2000 in the North West Extraordinary Gazette No 5580.

planners. Mike, who was painfully shy and perceived by many of the staff members to be a bit of a religious zealot – certainly not a public speaker or a performer – organized what he called an “*End-of-an-Era*” function in the Sammy Marks Library Hall to which all the staff members of the City Planning and Development Department were invited (Tindall, 2000). The function was the culmination of a series of informal visits that Mike had paid to each division within the department “*talking about the significance of the present time and sharing the latest information concerning transformation*” (Yates in Tindall, 2000). In the speech he delivered on that occasion, Mike summarised the history of the Department. He also gave a brief glimpse of what was to be expected in the near future, referring to the inaugural meeting of the new council, which was to take place on 12 December 2000, and at which point, according to Mike, the executive mayor would be appointed. He warned his staff that they could expect a new leadership style, a new focus regarding the core business of the Council and a “*new way of doing things*”. He also said that a new organizational structure would be designed and the first posts filled by June 2001. Little did Mike know then that the posts would indeed only be filled in December 2003, more than two full years later than expected. He could not have foreseen the levels to which the “*uncertainty*”, “*fear of the unknown*” and “*unanswered questions*” that he referred to in his speech would have escalated by that time.

Mike closed his speech by urging everyone to remain positive, and honouring all the staff members for their contribution. He singled out a few staff members who had been in the service of the Department for a particularly long time (ranging from 37 to 20 years). Lastly, he proposed a toast to the “*department and the new council – to the end of an era and the start of something new and exciting*”. This is the first incident in a pattern of actively cultivating goodwill and avoiding conflict that will be apparent throughout the restructuring process. This is a strong parallel between the Tshwane case and the story of the Aalborg Project, of which Flyvbjerg (1998:22) states that “As we shall see repeatedly in this study, however, confrontation is actively

avoided in the Aalborg Project”. This “stroking strategy”<sup>24</sup> is viewed by Flyvbjerg (1998:74) as “central to an understanding of the relationship between rationality and power”.

Much of what Mike said was inaudible and most of those present were extremely surprised that he, who was not perceived as a people’s person and a notoriously poor communicator, had initiated such a function. Nonetheless, comments made afterwards by those present indicated a large degree of appreciation for the gesture. Indeed, Mike Yates was, to my knowledge, the only person in the entire City Council of Pretoria who had deemed it necessary to “*celebrate the ending*”, something which scholars such as Bridges (1991) view as indispensable to effective change management.

#### *Administrative Units and Divisions*

When the new municipality, the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM) came into being on 6 December 2000, it replaced the following structures:

- the Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Substructure (NPMSS) (Akasia and Soshanguve areas),
- the Centurion Town Council (CTC) (Laudium, Centurion and Olievenhoutbosch),
- the City Council of Pretoria (CCP) (Atteridgeville, Pretoria and Mamelodi); and
- the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council.

Its municipal area also included the areas of Temba, Mabopane/Winterveld and Garankuwa.

From 6 December 2000 on, these areas had the status of Administrative Units (AUs). At the first meeting of the new Council, which was held on 12 December 2000, seven acting Administrative Unit Managers (AUMs) were appointed (CTMM 2000). They were:

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<sup>24</sup> A strategy employing actions and/or words to appease the other party in order to avert possible conflict.

- Marelize Fourie (City Council of Pretoria);
- Nick Hamman (Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Substructure);
- Len de Kock (Town Council of Centurion);
- Chris Opperman (Temba);
- Patrick Sokhela (Ga-Rankuwa);
- Piet Venter (Mabopane/Winterveldt); and
- Kenny Rosenberg (Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council).

The acting Administrative Unit Managers had all been first or second level managers (Directors or Deputy Directors) in the four former municipal structures mentioned above. As from May 2001, Nava Pillay<sup>25</sup> was appointed as the Divisional Manager: Operations in the office of the Municipal Manager. He was also responsible for convening and chairing meetings of the Administrative Unit Managers (CTMM, 2001n).

In addition to this, eleven divisions were established, each headed by a Divisional Manager. The Divisional Managers were each responsible for managing a specific function, or “*Division*”, across all the Administrative Units. “*City Planning*” did not feature on the list of the new Divisions; neither did any of the names of the departments of the former City Council of Pretoria (CTMM, 2000).

The Division under which City Planning resorted was that of Economic Development, and the Divisional Manager was **Nomgqibelo Mdlalose**, seconded from her position as Manager: Local Economic Development in the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council.

The other functions of the Economic Development Division were Transport Planning and Management; Fresh Produce Market; Local Economic Development; and later the Wonderboom Airport. There was general consensus that the placement of Transport Planning, City Planning and Local Economic Development within one division was a sound decision and would

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<sup>25</sup> Nava Pillay actively participated in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. He joined the then City Council of Pretoria as a Councillor in 1995, following which he was appointed Executive Director of Community Upliftment Programmes.

enhance the integration of these functions, as had been called for by the planners of the former City Council of Pretoria, as well as by the planning fraternity in general, for a long time.

*The Amund Beneke process*

Soon after the new municipality came into being on 6 December 2000, **Amund Beneke**, Chief Planner at the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council, initiated a process to restructure the City Planning Function (CTMM, 2001f). He established a working group called the “*Restructuring of the City Planning Function Working Group*”. The Working Group consisted of eight teams, namely:

- Organizational Design
- Budget 2001/02
- Delineation of Planning Units (Regions)
- Land-use Strategy
- Planning Data
- Building Control
- Land-Use Applications, and
- Outdoor Advertising.

It was later decided to add another task team, namely one for Urban Design.

Two interesting features of the “*Amund Beneke process*” can be deduced from a progress report he submitted to Nomgqibelo at her request at the beginning of April 2001 (CTMM, 2001f). Firstly, it is clear that the task teams consisted almost exclusively of existing managers. Secondly, the structuring of the task teams and the terminology used in the progress report confirmed earlier indications of a strong bias towards land use planning as the primary tool and activity of the City Planning Function. This is in stark contrast to the slant towards strategic planning that was to emerge later.

Although Amund Beneke insisted that the working group had been established with the blessing of the Divisional Manager, Nomgqibelo, this claim was later strongly refuted by her and by several of Amund’s colleagues.

Over the years that Amund had spent at the GPMC, he had built up a reputation as a domineering person due to his forthright and sometimes aggressive manner. Physically large and intimidating, Amund was referred to as the “*Groot Krokodil*” (Big Crocodile)<sup>26</sup> by some of his former colleagues (pers comm Ngonyama, 2001 & pers comm Van der Merwe, 2001). According to them, it was apparent from the beginning that Amund did not recognise Nomgqibelo’s authority. Subsequently, he did not involve her in the process, nor consult with her on it.

In February 2001 Nomgqibelo compiled a Purpose Structure for the newly formed Division (CTMM, 2001a). The document mentioned City Planning and Management as one of the goals of the Division along with Local Economic Development, Transport Planning and Management, Fresh Produce Market and Wonderboom Airport. In this document, City Planning and Management was described as “*to facilitate and promote an integrated spatial plan in order to attain urban growth management by means of balancing economic, physical, social and institutional development*”. The emphasis that she put on the spatial plan, without any reference to land use management, was refreshing in the light of the fact that, in the former City Council of Pretoria, the largest of the disestablished municipal structures, the emphasis was always on land use planning. It was also a significant departure from the approach followed by the Amund Beneke-group, who listed “*Land-use Strategy*” and “*Land-use Applications*” as two of the main planning functions.

In the Purpose Structure compiled by Nomgqibelo, the objectives of City Planning and Management were listed as:

- Town and Regional Planning;
- Urban Design;
- Building Control;
- Services Infrastructure Planning;
- Determining mechanisms to enhance and promote desired spatial patterns (e.g. incentive programmes);

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<sup>26</sup> “Groot Krokodil” was the colloquial term used to refer to PW Botha, the last State President of South Africa under the Apartheid regime. The name denotes something of the brutal “kragdadigheid” (forcefulness) which was commonly associated with the Apartheid leadership.

- Integrated Spatial Plans;
- Strategic Development Initiatives (SDIs); and
- Strategic Development Areas as well as Metropolitan Activity Nodes.

This list could certainly be criticised for the fact that it mixed functions (Building Control), with actions (determining mechanisms etc.) with objects stated as nouns (Integrated Spatial Plans, SDIs, Strategic Development Areas and Metropolitan Activity Nodes). It is further interesting that the inclusion of “*Services Infrastructure Planning*” and “*Metropolitan Activity Nodes*” placed the City Planning and Management function in a central position with regard to both services planning (previously mainly the function of the City Engineers) and economic development planning, which was also dealt with by a different department in the past. This approach to the function was welcomed by some planners who had felt that spatial planning should be the point of integration between the different municipal planning functions (pers comm Barbir, 2001; pers comm Ludik 2001)<sup>27</sup>.

In the proposed organogram, the name of the function was “*Town Planning and Management*”, rather than “*City Planning and Management*”. The confusion regarding the names of functions and structures became a recurring theme during the transformation process and was indicative of the general confusion that characterized the study period. It would not seem that the alternative use of “City Planning” and “Town Planning” was merely the result of general confusion or uncertainty<sup>28</sup> and did not denote any distinction on the basis of the scope, approach or content of the function.

At the end of the Purpose Structure compiled by Nomngqibelo (CTMM 2001a), under the heading of “*Actions initiated for the new financial year*”, the only action for the new year pertaining to City Planning simply read as follows: “*The Town Planning processes need to be analysed and re-engineered.*”

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<sup>27</sup> This view is also supported by the Green Paper on Development and Planning, 1999.

<sup>28</sup> The name of the planning department of the former City Council of Pretoria was “City Planning and Development, while the department in the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council was referred to as “Land Use and Transportation Planning”. The relevant academic department at the University of Pretoria was called “Town and Regional Planning”. In most of the recent literature on planning theory studied, qualifiers such as “city”, “town” or “land-use” are dropped and the discipline referred to merely as “planning”, while the qualifier “spatial” is implicit (see also Hillier (2002) and Yiftachel and Huxley (2000)).

Although this placed the necessary emphasis on the need for restructuring, it did not reflect anything of the normal operation of the function, or of projects/programmes that were already under way in the respective municipal structures. Already at this early stage, the document compiled by Nomngqibelo seemed, therefore, to convey the notion that “*everything would stop while transformation was taking place*”. This sense of discontinuity would later be enforced by a number of factors.

It is hardly surprising, in the light of the incoherent nature of the so-called “*Purpose Structure Document*”, that a group referring to themselves as the “*city planners and local economic development practitioners, which (sic) are committed to transformation*” expressed their dissatisfaction with the document in an undated memo addressed to Mr PNS Makgathe (Acting City Manager), Ms N Mdlalose (Divisional Manager: Economic Development) and the Administrative Unit Managers (CTMM, 2001b).

The group consisted of representatives (mostly relatively senior officials) from the former CCP, TCC, GPMC, Mabopane, Temba (Eastern Gauteng Services Council), and the NPMSS, and was convened by Amund Beneke who had led the transformation of City Planning up to that point. They based their criticism on the document on three factors: Firstly, they argued that the document was biased towards Local Economic Development; secondly, that it was not consulted on and, thirdly, that it ignored certain statutory requirements with regard to City Planning.

The group continued to explain the nature of a city and its spatial elements. Flyvbjerg (1998:80) states that “rationality is part of the power of the weak”. This argument is supported by the manner in which the Amund Beneke group (a group with a weak power position) attempted to attack Nomngqibelo’s purpose structure through rationally superior arguments. The Beneke group proposed that the Economic Development Division be renamed to the “*City Planning and Economic Division*”. This marked the beginning of a long struggle to get “*City Planning*” acknowledged at the highest level of the structure of the new metropolitan municipality.



The group proposed an alternative purpose structure for City Planning and Economic Development. The following sub-functions were envisaged:

- Support Services (registry/archives, messengering service, decentralised human resource and finance services, typists etc)
- Land-use and Planning (note the sequence, which gives prominence to land-use)
- Urban Design
- Environmental Planning
- Infrastructure Planning
- Law Enforcement
- Building Control (City Development Control)
- Outdoor Advertising
- Transport Planning and Management
- Local Economic Development, and
- Strategic Projects.

Each of these sub-functions was expanded upon through a definition of its goal and a list of objectives. The goal proposed for the Land-Use and Planning function was formulated as follows: *“To ensure functional, economical, orderly and sustainable use of land in Tshwane by promoting harmonious land-use patterns and by managing land-use rights.”* This very traditional definition, with its strong land-use orientation, was not in any discernable way aligned with the new legislative imperatives of developmental local government and a more facilitative approach to planning. No mention was made of the role that planning had to play in restructuring the city.

The role of City Planning in Nomngqibelo’s purpose structure was worded in terms that emphasised a holistic, integrated approach with a slant towards growth and development. The focus was on spatial planning rather than on land-use management. In the response prepared by Amund Beneke and his colleagues, however, land-use planning was seen as dominating the planning function.

Although the group criticized the purpose structure proposed by Nomgqibelo Mdlalose on the basis that it did not take into account statutory requirements, the counterproposal seemed oblivious to the spirit of developmental local government. No mention was made of concepts such as restitution, addressing spatial distortion, achieving equity, or any other term indicating the changing political context. It would seem from this document that, at that stage, the perception of planners was still very much that of the strong, controlling, “*big planner*”, rather than the facilitative, enabling, collaborating planner, which is presented as the ideal by planning theorists proposing a communicative action approach, such as Healey (1995 & 1997), Innes (1999, 2002, 2003), Campbell (2002) and those in favour of a more ethical approach to planning, such as Fainstein (1999) and Gunder (2000).

On 11 April 2001 (CTMM, 2001f) a slightly altered version of the Amund Beneke counterproposal for a purpose structure was submitted to Nomgqibelo. This time, a schematic representation of the proposed city planning function was included. In this scheme (*figure i*) City Planning (excluding Building Control etc) was divided into a Unit for Metropolitan Land-use Planning and a Unit for Sub-Regional /Local Land Use Planning and Management. Yet again, the names given to the functions seemed to favour land-use management, or zoning, as the primary mechanism of City Planning.

As could be deduced from the tone of this correspondence shortly after the dawn of the new dispensation for local government in the Greater Pretoria Area, conflict was developing between the group that compiled this document on the one hand, and the newly appointed acting Divisional Manager, Nomgqibelo Mdlalose, on the other.



one of the more persistent rumours about Nomgqibelo was that she was very young. Many people insisted that she was “*in her early twenties*” and used this “*fact*” to point out how ridiculous the new management structure was<sup>29</sup>.

## 6.2 Belinda and the Core Team

By April 2001, the schism that had emerged between Amund and Nomgqibelo had widened beyond repair. At the same time, a strong bond of friendship had developed between Nomgqibelo and Belinda van der Merwe, a Senior Town Planner in Amund’s team. The two had met in the course of work before Nomgqibelo was nominated as Divisional Manager. However, after the appointment, Belinda’s frustration with Amund Beneke’s authoritarian management style (which was vehemently denied by Amund in his interview, 2004) and Nomgqibelo’s frustration at his failure to acknowledge her authority or consult with her on the restructuring process led to the formation of an opposing force to Amund. It was on Belinda’s insistence that Nomgqibelo finally took action. On 9 April 2001, she issued a memorandum (CTMM, 2001e) addressed to all personnel of the Division ordering “*All existing (restructuring) initiatives and discussions within the Division*”(my parenthesis) to “*be terminated with immediate effect*”, thus causing what came to be known as the “Amund Beneke-process” to come to an abrupt end.

In the Memorandum, Nomgqibelo proposed an alternative structure in the form of a new set of working groups to “*facilitate the restructuring process within the division*”. The reasons she cited for this decision were the following:

- Inadequate participation;
- Inadequate communication;
- A lack of sufficient coordination with other functions and disciplines;  
and
- A lack of a clearly defined mandate and terms of reference to guide the restructuring initiatives.

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<sup>29</sup> Nomgqibelo developed a real interest in City Planning. An arrangement was made with the University of Pretoria whereby she received weekly tutorials on different aspects of town planning from Prof Mark Oranje and colleagues at the Department of Town and Regional Planning.

Amund (interview Beneke, 2004) later expressed outrage at the accusation that the restructuring process he led was regarded as exclusionary. According to him, the managers who were on the team should have given feedback to their respective constituencies and consulted with them regarding the proposals formulated by the team. As part of the same process, any inputs from the planners under the respective managers could have been fed back to the restructuring team. He furthermore claimed that he saw to it that his own team was continually kept informed.

Apart from a working group for City Planning, Nomgqibelo also indicated (CTMM, 2001e) that working groups were to be established for Local Economic Development, Transport Planning and Management, Tourism, the Fresh Produce Market, Strategic Development and Administrative Support Services.

Nomgqibelo furthermore indicated in the memorandum that a Convenor would be nominated for each working group. Such a convenor would be “*responsible for administrative and logistical arrangements and support related to the activities of the working groups*”.

In terms of the memorandum, one of the first tasks of the convenor would be to, in conjunction with the working group members, compile a “*work plan*”. The work plan had to address a work program (including dates and frequency of meetings), the goals, objectives and deliverables of the working group, the establishment of sub-working groups or task teams, a communication strategy or plan to ensure that officials were involved and informed, and the modus operandi of the working group and task teams.

Shortly afterwards, Nomgqibelo issued another memorandum, naming **Belinda van der Merwe** as the Convenor for City Planning (CTMM, 2001g). Up to that point, Belinda was a planner working under Amund Beneke at the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council. Victor Baloyi, a transportation planner in the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council, was nominated

as the Convenor for Transport Planning and Management, Verna Nel, the Chief Townplanner of Centurion who had a doctorate degree in Geography, for Local Economic Development, and Christo Groenewald, the existing manager of the market, for the Fresh Produce Market.

Belinda co-opted **Henry Bezuidenhout** and **Nikki Ludik**, who worked as her colleagues under Amund Beneke in the planning function of the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council, to assist her with the task of restructuring the City Planning function and so a process was started to source other members for what was to be known as the “**Core Team**”. Belinda often used the expression “*scraping the bottom of the barrel*” to indicate how difficult it was to find suitable people to manage the restructuring process. (“*Restructuring*” now became the fashionable term, instead of “*transformation*”, which was the prevalent term used to refer to the change process in the City Council of Pretoria before 5 December 2000. It was as if the new term was part of that which defined the new era.)

Amund later conceded that the betrayal by his team members Belinda, Henry and Nikki, whom he had held in the highest esteem, was a bitter pill to swallow (interview Beneke, 2004). Although Henry said that Amund posed a “*huge obstacle*” to the growth of those who worked under him (interview Bezuidenhout, 2002), Amund said that he had always “*put his people first*” (sic). He was particularly disappointed that Nikki, whom he had recruited for his team from the former City Council of Pretoria several years before, had joined in the mutiny. He cited this turn of events as the direct cause of his resignation from the CTMM at the end of July 2001<sup>30</sup>. In the interview (Beneke, 2004) he stated that he would return to planning only if “*politics could be taken out of it*”. There is a striking similarity between these words of Amund and the exclamation by Aalborg’s Social Democratic Deputy Mayor when he retires: “*I don’t like politics, I really don’t...*” (Flyvbjerg 1998:167).

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<sup>30</sup> Amund Beneke resigned on 31 July 2001 after buying an ice-cream franchise at the Hartebeespoort Dam. He has not been involved in City Planning since (interview Beneke, 2004).

Henry Bezuidenhout had been involved with the Pretoria Inner City Partnership (PICP) as a representative of the GPMC since the inception of the Partnership in 1996. He identified **Johnny Coetzee**, who was then the Inner City Programme Manager, and I (**Desirée Homann**), as additional members of the Core Team. Henry motivated Johnny's inclusion on the basis of his strategic thinking skills, and I, who managed the Marketing and Communication portfolio at the Partnership, was included because of the high priority that Nomngqibelo placed on communication, particularly in the light of the criticism she raised against the Amund Beneke-process. I had been working at the City Council of Pretoria for seven years and had an honours degree in Journalism.

A very positive relationship had formed between Henry and Johnny through Henry's cooperation with the Pretoria Inner City Partnership. Henry facilitated funding from the GPMC for a number of Pretoria Inner City Partnership projects and was therefore a valued associate. Johnny and I, on the other hand, had witnessed the steady decline of political support for the Pretoria Inner City Partnership over the course of the preceding months and had been toying with the idea of establishing a new career as partners in a private consultancy to municipalities. It was on the grounds of the bond that had formed between us, that Johnny championed my inclusion in the core team, which seemed to promise exciting new career prospects. The power of (old) acquaintances also features clearly in the Aalborg case (Flyvbjerg, 1998:16 in the form of the charismatic mayor, "Bus-Marius" who was allied to the Aalborg Bus Company on the grounds that he used to work for the Company as a young man. The confirmation of our inclusion in the Core Team came in the form of a formal letter from Nomngqibelo on 2 May 2001 (CTMM, 2001g).

*A "transparent and participative" process*

It almost became a mantra in the core team discussions that this was a "*transparent and participative*" process, and just as often, this was placed in juxtaposition to Amund Beneke's process, which was said to have been "*exclusive and top-down*". The commitment to communication seemed real

enough. Already at the beginning of the week following the co-option of Johnny and I on the core team, a road-show was held by Nomngqibelo (on 14 and 15 May 2001) at the Pretoria, Akasia, Ga-Rankuwa and Centurion Council offices to introduce her and her convenors to the officials, to explain the structure of the new division and to encourage officials to participate positively in the “*restructuring*” process.

I had compiled a newsletter for distribution at the road show meetings (CTMM, 2001k), which reiterated the commitment of the Divisional Manager to a participative approach and again explained the arrangement with regard to the convenors and working groups. Contact numbers of all the convenors were provided and a special effort was made to word the document in such a manner so as to foster enthusiasm for the process. The first heading, for example, read “*Become part of a positive process*”.

The rationalization or “positivization” of the restructuring process of the Tshwane planning function in the Core Team’s newsletters and circulars is similar to the reporting of the Aalborg Stiftstidende on the Aalborg Project. Both are instances of propaganda, although the reporting of the Stiftstidende aims to achieve the opposite, namely to project a negative image of and muster opposition to the Aalborg project (Flyvbjerg, 1998:58; 59; 82; 95; 113; 123; 129; 159; 215). Ironically, the Aalborg City Council member from the Socialist People’s party later writes an article in the Stiftstidende in an attempt to mobilize support for the Aalborg Project (Flyvbjerg, 1998:159).





## RESTRUCTURING OF FUNCTIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

### Become part of a positive process

A positive process is under way to restructure the individual functions of the Economic Development Division. The process will be driven by working groups, each of which will be coordinated by a convenor. Convenors have already been nominated for the Local Economic Development, Transport Planning and Management, Fresh Produce Market and City Planning working groups. Working groups for which convenors are still to be nominated are Tourism, Strategic Development, and Administrative Support Services.

A coordinator has also been nominated to coordinate the activities of all the working groups. The coordinator reports to the Divisional Manager, who in turn liaises with the Municipal Manager, the Transformation Manager and other Divisional Managers.

The convenors and the coordinator have been nominated to do important work during the transformation process. These functions should in no way be confused with appointments, promotions, or any other permanent change to the personnel structure. All the nominees retain their current job levels, etc.

### What happened to the 'old' processes?

Since the establishment of the Division in December last year, there have been a number of ad hoc restructuring processes. Various discussions have taken place, and working groups were established related to some of these ad hoc processes. Some very valuable work was done by way of these processes. However, the manner in which it was done proved counter productive, mainly because of the following reasons:

- Restricted participation and involvement by officials.
- Inadequate communication.
- Lack of coordination within the Division and with other Divisions.
- No clearly defined mandate and terms of reference to structure the process.

### A committed Divisional Manager

It is, however, the commitment of the Divisional Manager: Economic Development, Ms. Nomgqibelo Mdlalose, that the new restructuring process will be inclusive of all officials, that communication will enjoy a high priority, that there will be proper coordination of restructuring processes within the Division, as well as coordination with processes of other Divisions, and that a clear structure and terms of reference will be established to guide the process.

All Administrative Unit Managers have been asked to grant their officials permission to participate freely in the working groups.

### What will the convenors do?

The task of the convenors will be two-fold. While they will focus on the restructuring of the functions, they will also manage the operational tasks within their function. The convenors will also be responsible for administrative and logistical support related to the activities of the working groups.

In conjunction with the working group members, the convenors have to compile a work plan which will contain information regarding a work program (including dates and frequency of meetings); goals, objectives and deliverables of working groups; establishment of sub-working groups or task teams if and when applicable, a communication strategy/plan to ensure participation and informed officials, as well as a modus operandi of the working group and task teams.

### Let's respect the protocol

Uncertainty about correct protocol has caused a good measure of delay, misunderstanding, and embarrassment since the establishment of the Division. All officials are asked to take note that, from now on, the convenors will be the central point of reference for each function. You are kindly requested not to contact the Divisional Manager directly with requests (especially not requests for interviews) as this places undue strain on an already full portfolio. All enquiries, reports etc should be directed to the Divisional Manager via the relevant convenor.

The following is a list of the convenors and their contact numbers.

FUNCTION	CONVENOR	PHYSICAL ADDRESS	TEL. NO.	FAX	E-MAIL
Coordinator	Pieter Vosloo	Room 227, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, Old Raadsaal	337 4186	323 5824	Pvosloo@gpmc.org.za
City Planning	Belinda van der Merwe	Room 411, HB Phillips	337 4075	328 5137	BVDMERWE@gpmc.org.za
Fresh Produce Market	Christo Groenewald	Market, DF Malan Drive	328 3010	323 2855	Groenewald.Christo@pretoria.gov.za
Local Economic Development	Verna Nel		671 7252	671 7865	Nelv@etc.co.za
Transport Planning and Management	Victor Baloyi	Room 501, HB Phillips	337 4068	328 5137	Vbaloyi@gpmc.co.za

Remember that your comments are important to us. Please do not hesitate to send us your comments/queries, preferably by fax or e-mail. You can count on a response!

While the Core Team members often discussed amongst themselves the future prospects that had opened up as a result of them being elevated to the position of managing the restructuring process for the City Planning function<sup>31</sup>, it was emphasized in the newsletter that the Convenors only had temporary appointments and had not been “*promoted*”. This was done specifically to avoid possible conflict that could arise around unfair “*promotion*”. From the outset, the Core Team instinctively employed a strategy of avoiding open confrontation, the same strategy used by the Technical Department in Flyvbjerg’s Aalborg study (Flyvbjerg, 1998). The strategy is also apparent in the rest of the newsletter, when the question was put “*What happened to the ‘old’ (restructuring) processes?*” (my parenthesis) and it was acknowledged that some “*valuable work*” had been done in those processes. The criticisms against the “*old processes*” (a euphemistic reference mainly to Amund Beneke’s restructuring effort) are listed as restricted participation by and involvement of officials, inadequate communication, lack of coordination and no clearly defined mandate or terms of reference – a repetition of the list cited in Nomgqibelo’s letter of 9 April 2001 (CTMM, 2001e).

This is a prime example of rationalization, as one of the contributing factors that led to the decision to terminate the “*old restructuring process*”, namely the personality clash between Amund and Nomgqibelo on the one hand and Amund and his former team members Belinda, Henry and Nikki, on the other (interview Beneke, 2004), was never overtly stated.

The commitment of the Divisional Manager that the new restructuring process would be inclusive, that communication would enjoy a high priority, that restructuring processes would be properly coordinated and that clear terms of reference would be established to guide the process, followed.

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<sup>31</sup> Ironically, only two of the Core Team members later achieved a higher status in the new organizational structure. Belinda van der Merwe was appointed as General Manager: IDP and Henry Bezuidenhout was later appointed as Manager: Land Use Management. Three of the other Core Team members resigned to pursue other opportunities. They were: Marietjie van Zyl (who resigned at the end of 2001), Desirée Homann (who resigned at the end of May 2002), and Nikki Ludik (who resigned at the end of 2003). Johnny Coetzee was unsuccessful in his application for the post of Manager: Metropolitan Spatial Planning, and has since been working as a planner in the same function under Kestell Serfontein.

In the newsletter, the role of the Convenors with regard to compiling a restructuring work plan and establishing working groups and task teams was carefully set out. Making sure that everyone knew how the process would unfold and what the deliverables were, was another conscious effort on the side of the Core Team. In this way, the officials were prepared for what was to come and conflict later in the process was avoided. This would be heralded as “*sound change management practice*” according to, among others, Myers & Myers (1982), Skopec (1990), Puth (1994) and Gellerman (1995). However, it was also a wise strategy on the part of the Core Team to ensure that later decisions/actions would not be challenged by other officials, as the Core Team “*had informed them beforehand*” of what was going to happen.

Lastly, the officials were asked to “*respect the protocol*”. This meant that the Divisional Manager was not to be contacted directly and that all enquiries, reports etc, had to be directed to the Divisional Manager via the appropriate convenor. Although the reason for this arrangement was given as avoiding undue strain on the Divisional Manager’s full portfolio, the real motivation, as discussed within the Core Team, was to secure the Convenor’s (Belinda’s) position as the only one with direct access to the Divisional Manager – the source from which the convenors derived their newfound power.

The fact that there was no real relationship between the new top management and the officials was highlighted as a problem by all of the interviewees (interviews Beneke, 2004; Coetzee, 2004; Bezuidenhout, 2002; Serfontein, 2002; Nel, 2002; Yates, 2002). Yet, in their effort to strengthen their position of power, the Core Team also actively limited the possibility of any of the “*old*” managers or the other officials forming a relationship with Nomgqibelo. As Nomgqibelo was a newcomer to the Tshwane City Planning scene and none of the planning officials knew her, there was no chance of anyone bypassing the Core Team to get close to Nomgqibelo and, in so doing, weaken their “*exclusive rights*” to interaction with her. To the Core Team members, this was yet another way of attempting to secure future positions of power in the new municipal structure.

For the Tshwane officials, particularly the majority who were formerly employed by the City Council of Pretoria, being addressed in person by a member of top management was a rare occurrence. As a matter of fact, the only time this had happened in the six years that I was employed by the municipality, was Mike Yate's "end-of-an-era" function. Nomgqibelo's decision to address the officials, as well as the Core Team's implementation of the commitment to communication articulated by their Divisional Manager was therefore much appreciated. The effort invested in the road show paid off handsomely: Following the event, many officials made positive remarks regarding Nomgqibelo. A number of planners said that she seemed intelligent as well as in control of the new function (pers comm Herholdt, 2001; pers comm Erasmus, 2001). The fact that she gave people the opportunity to voice their concerns was particularly well received (pers comm Herholdt, 2001; pers comm Erasmus, 2001).

Despite the radical changes in the City Planning leadership, the existing management went about their business unperturbed by the latest developments around the function. This is clear from documentation for a management meeting of Amund Beneke's Land Use and Planning Function in the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Administrative Unit shortly after the road show by Nomgqibelo (CTMM, 2001o). It is telling that Belinda was not invited to the meeting, but that it was attended by all the existing managers of the City Planning function at the GPMC. They were Victor Baloyi (Chairperson), G Strydom, Dan Baloyi, Amund Beneke, Marius Nadel and Mike Krynauw. The meeting took cognizance that the road show took place and was well attended, but made no further comment on the content of the presentations made (CTMM, 2001o).

#### *Belinda's Work Plan*

On 8 May 2001, less than a month after the memorandum ordering the termination of the Amund Beneke process, Belinda completed the required "*Work plan for the Restructuring of the City Planning Component*" (Van der Merwe, 2001). The document was characterised by a strong project

management approach, which was characteristic of the *modus operandi* followed by the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council (GPMC). It set out the terms of reference, purpose and objectives, process and approach, risk management and time frames. Henry Bezuidenhout even drew up an elaborate and sophisticated project plan (using MS Project software) as an annexure to the work plan. The plan was thorough and rational in its approach and it was clear that Belinda had made an effort to give the plan the advantage of what Habermas refers to as “*the power of the better argument*” (in Flyvbjerg, 1998). Belinda’s effort in compiling the plan, which was nothing other than a change strategy, was particularly laudable in the light of the fact that, on a corporate level, no such strategy existed to guide the transformation of the Municipality as a whole.

In the work plan Belinda defined the purpose of the restructuring process as “*developing a purpose structure for the City Planning Component while taking into account legislation*” (the MSA, the Structures Act, the DFA and applicable ordinances), as well as so-called “*policy and strategic directives*”. These directives included the Tshwane strategic indicators, the interim IDP (or corporate strategy for Tshwane), service delivery needs, customer service, organizational culture and leadership that promotes good governance, effective and efficient management and sustainable local government. This certainly seemed to be a very thorough and sensible approach. In subsequent discussions during the restructuring process, however, neither the legislation, nor the “*policy and strategic directives*” (regarding which there was very little clarity at that stage) featured to a significant extent. Apart from Nikki and Johnny, who had a particularly good grasp on the legislation pertaining to the IDP, it was my impression that most of the Tshwane planners were not at all *au fait* with the new legislation, let alone what the “*service delivery needs*” were, or what was really meant by “*sustainable local government*”. Furthermore, the need to change the organizational culture was a vague and undefined concept and there simply was no capacity within the Core Team (and possibly within the entire Municipality) to address such issues.

The fact that these supposed drivers featured so little in the actual restructuring of the City Planning function adds proof to the suspicion that something else lay at the heart of the restructuring – something which was never overtly stated. Simply put, the actual drivers were such common vices as the lust for power (by the members of the Core Team and the new Top Management and political leadership, for instance), personal gain (for those who aspired to management positions in the new structure) and even revenge (eg revenge of the new management or Core Team for perceived suppression by the outgoing management, such as Amund Beneke).

Although the Core Team claimed to be a consultative body, it is obvious that it operated in a vacuum when it came to the structuring of the new planning function. There were no discussions with the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the nearby University, no bouncing off of ideas with the municipality's many consulting town and regional planners and no scouting for best practice examples elsewhere in Africa or in the world. These factors seem to indicate that, as was the case in Flyvbjerg's (1998:68) account of the Aalborg case, "*tactical considerations clearly dominate any desire to reach some form of rationally informed consensus*".

Belinda's Work Plan (Van der Merwe, 2001) indicated that the Core Team (led by the Convenor, Belinda) would oversee the activities of task teams that were to be established to execute specific tasks derived from the identified objectives. These objectives were listed as the following: to formulate a vision for the City Planning Component; to define and structure the City Planning Functions; to define Key Performance Areas that needed to be measured in terms of City Planning; to develop a code of conduct to guide performance of City Planning Functions; to develop an implementation plan and strategy, and to gain the positive participation of all applicable role-players in terms of the process.

The process which was to be followed in order to achieve the above objectives, was summarised in the following steps:

- Defining the legislative and strategic requirements;



- Formulating the vision;
- Defining the purpose structure; addressing the organisational structure;
- Defining business processes;
- Formulating an operational plan; drafting an implementation plan, and
- Drafting and implementing a communication strategy and a training programme.

An organogram (*figure iii*), was attached to the work plan. It was stated repeatedly in meetings of the core team that this organogram should only serve as a point of departure for the restructuring process. Nonetheless, it had some interesting features that merit discussion here.

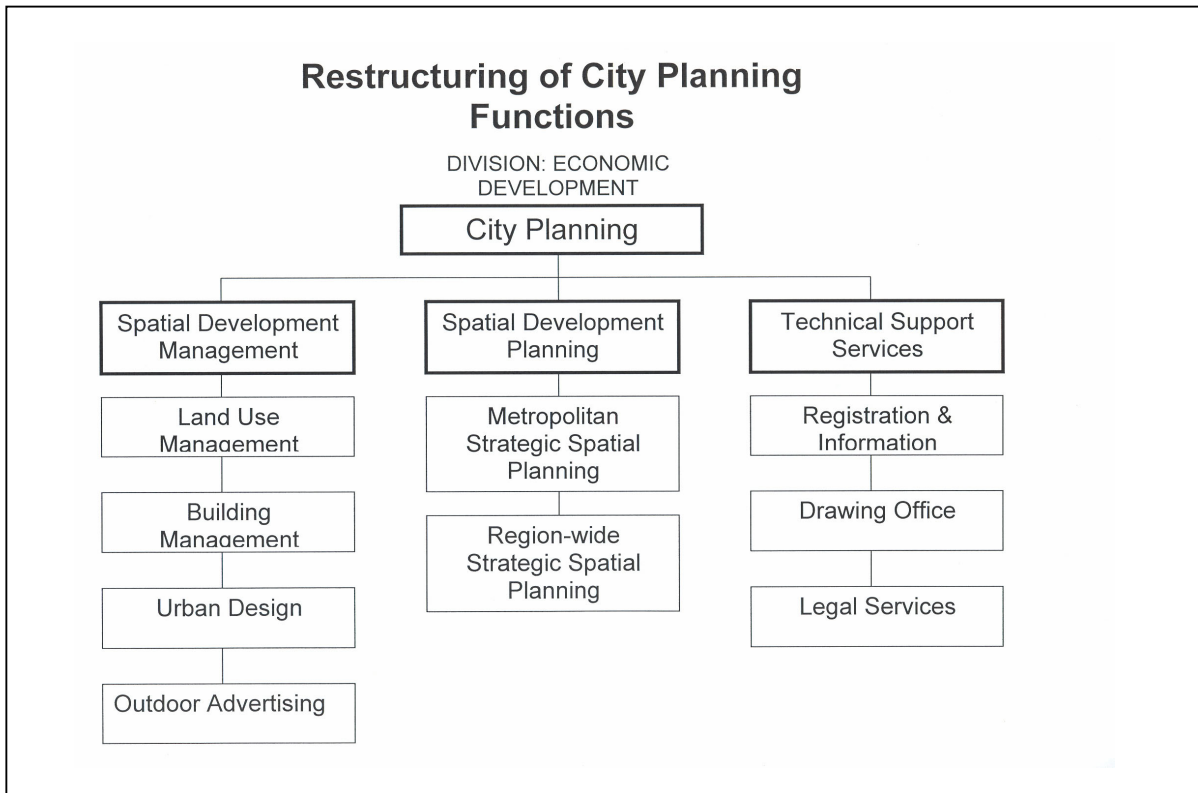


Figure iii: City Planning functions from the work plan compiled by Belinda van der Merwe, 8 May 2001

According to the organogram the City Planning function would be broken down into only three main components: Spatial Development Management, Spatial Development Planning and Technical Support Services.

Land use management, building management, urban design and outdoor advertising were all grouped under Spatial Development Management, while Spatial Development Planning comprised a metropolitan spatial planning and region-wide spatial planning. The integration of the “*management*” functions was innovative, as these functions had been operating in relative isolation from each other in the past. In the discussions around these functions, it was always emphasised that words such as “*control*” should be avoided in favour of “*management*”, as this was more in line with the facilitative approach proposed by the post-1994 legislation.

In this organogram there was a marked shift away from the over-emphasis on land use that characterised the Beneke-proposal. What is of concern, however, is that the organogram indicated in the Work plan re-enforced the pre-existing division between so-called “*planning*” and “*management*” functions, a division seen by scholars such as McClendon and Quay (1988), Virtanen (1992), Swanepoel (1997) and Baer (1997) as the main reason for spatial plans not being implemented.

Throughout the Core Team process, and beyond, the difference between a “*purpose structure*” as a list of functions and an “*organizational structure*” as a structure indicating the hierarchical relationship between those functions was emphasized. This was also part of the Core Team’s covert “*conflict avoidance strategy*”, which the Core Team employed specifically to allay people’s fears regarding their career prospects and job security. In this way, concerns that were raised regarding the emerging structure could be labeled as invalid because of the fact that the organogram was “*only the purpose structure*”. (This approach was later sustained by Verna Nel in the second phase of the restructuring project, as can be seen in her letter to staff dated 1 August 2001 (CTMM, 2001mm)

The entrenched managerialism of the municipality, with its strong focus on structural aspects is exploited by the Core Team in its rationalized use of the terms “*purpose structure*” and “*organizational structure*”. The planning officials saw a new “*organizational structure*”, i.e. a new municipal and departmental



hierarchy with new posts, as the main outcome of the restructuring process. At the point that such a new “organizational structure” was available, it would be clear what opportunities existed for the individual planners in terms of promotion within the municipal structure, and promotion was the ultimate motivator for the “will to power” within the organization. The Core Team, and its successors throughout the life of the restructuring process, used the term “purpose structure” to denote a preliminary division of the work into functional categories and it was repeatedly stressed that there was no obvious relation between the “purpose structure” and the “organizational structure”. The translation, as it were, of the “purpose structure” into an “organizational structure” was always something that would follow later, at some undetermined time in the future. The rationality behind this indefinite and artificial postponement of the development of the “organizational structure” was the avoidance of the heightened levels of anxiety and interest as the “organizational structure” became a reality and the accompanying potential for conflict. This rationality is founded, in all probability, on the experience that, as is reflected in Flyvbjerg’s (1998:118-122) Aalborg case study, the potential for conflict is greatest at that point where a project or idea becomes a “tangible reality” (Flyvbjerg, 1998:122).

Within the Core Team, however, there was an awareness that all of this was mere “*smoke screening*”. These rationalizations by the Core Team were premeditated and carefully planned, which, as in the case of Aalborg’s Technical Department (Flyvbjerg, 1998:98), certainly raises questions of integrity and “professional ethics”<sup>32</sup>. There was no reason why the so-called “*purpose structure*” would not, for the most part, become the organizational structure, as indeed it did. Towards the end of the study period, the “*purpose structure*” did in fact become the “*organizational structure*” by default.

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<sup>32</sup> Forester (1982) points to the need for a focus on the ethics of “misinforming actions by planners”, and adds that such actions may be “systemically encouraged by the structure of the bureaucratic organizations in which the planners work”.

### 6.3 Indications of turbulence and uncertainty

The time of the establishment of the Core Team was, in many respects, turbulent and was marked by many of the classic responses to organizational change, namely denial, fear and apathy (see Puth, 1994, and McClendon & Quay, 1988). The minutes of a meeting of the top management of the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council Administrative Unit held on 21 May 2001 (CTMM, 2001n) clearly shows how the different Administrative Units still functioned in isolation. There was no sense yet within the different Administrative Units that they now formed part of a new structure, nor had the new management made any effort to promote a spirit of solidarity between the staff members of the different disestablished structures. As was apparent from the meeting by Amund Beneke's Land Use and Planning function referred to earlier (CTMM, 2001o) see page 83), it was still business as usual to a large degree. The minutes of that meeting also seemed to indicate some dissatisfaction with the support provided to the Administrative Units by the Municipal Manager. According to the minutes, the uncontrolled secondment of staff (often referred to as "*poaching*") between Departments continued despite an appeal to the contrary that was made by the Administrative Unit Managers to the Municipal Manager. Such secondments took place in a haphazard manner and were often sanctioned by managers who had not been mandated to do so in an attempt to build capacity in their functions. Nonetheless, once such a "*secondment*" had been implemented, it was extremely difficult to reverse and the opportunistic "*poacher*" usually got away with it. The phenomenon of poaching occurred throughout the study period and was a symptom of the breakdown in established procedures and structures that characterised the Tshwane restructuring process.

#### *Rumours of a crack in the top structure*

At the meeting of Amund Beneke's function referred to above (CTMM 2001o) the problem of politicians bypassing the office of the Municipal Manager and giving direct instructions to officials was raised. An point was raised regarding conflicting information communicated by the Acting Municipal Manager,

**Wonder Nkosi** (later appointed as Chief Operational Officer) and by **Dr TE Thoahlane** (nicknamed “*Dr T*” by the officials) regarding a possible moratorium on disciplinary hearings. This was an early indication of the uneasy relationship that was developing between two of the most prominent members of the new CTMM top management.

These details convey something of the effect that a disruption of old, established power relations had on the municipality. Apart from the uneasy relationship (or the lack of a relationship) between the new top management and the officials, the members of the new political and executive leadership were also “*sizing each other up*”. Furthermore, members of the executive management were jostling among each other to secure their positions of power. The emerging conflict between Dr T and Wonder was apparent to all and it was even rumoured that there was a “*Wonder camp*” and a “*Dr T camp*” in the municipality. The implication was that, should one be seen to align oneself with the one, one would make an enemy out of the other. It was thought by some that the conflict between the two was not a matter of a personality clash only, but was informed by a division within the ANC on a national level. Dr T was thought to represent the “*far left*” of the ANC and Wonder the “*more moderate group*”. This was possibly the reason why Wonder was generally well-liked by the white officials, while Dr T remained rather unpopular. Rumours were rife that he was an ego-maniac (this was motivated mainly by the fact that his white Mercedes bore “*Dr T*” number plates!) and that he had left his previous post at a large corporation amidst allegations of mismanagement<sup>33</sup>.

Having experienced the Tshwane restructuring, there is no doubt that Wonder’s charismatic personality was a source of strong personal power which enabled him to become an opposing force to the Municipal Manager in spite of the fact that the Municipal Manager held the highest office in the municipal administration. Flyvbjerg (1998:16) identifies individual factors as one of the reasons behind the inordinate degree of power wielded by the

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<sup>33</sup> During 2003, Dr T left the CTMM in disgrace after it was found that he had contravened the Municipality’s financial regulations by extending the contract of Yarona Creative Management Solutions by several million rand without obtaining permission from Council to do so. Yarona was commissioned by Council to compile a new organizational structure for the Municipality.

Aalborg Bus Company in the form of the city's "*charismatic, social democratic mayor*".

The crack in Tshwane's top structure is reminiscent of the division that develops in the ranks of the Aalborg's Chamber of Industry and Commerce regarding the Aalborg Project. As in the Aalborg case, there can be no doubt that such a division tainted the image of the Tshwane top management and weakened the perception of its power. In the words of the Chairman of the Aalborg Chamber's City Centre Committee: "*Unity is very, very important, collective action is absolutely decisive*" (Flyvbjerg, 1998:63). In the Aalborg case, the Chamber actively withdraws from the co-operation with the Technical Department in order to preserve its "*image of a unified business community*" (Flyvbjerg, 1998:67). In Tshwane, however, there is no eyeblind measures to project unity in the top structure, adding to the general experience of confusion and uncertainty experienced throughout the first months of the restructuring process. Fortunately, unlike the disagreement between Aalborg's mayor and county supervisor, who are both Social Democrats (Flyvbjerg, 1998:96), the uneasiness between Wonder and Dr T never evolves to the level of open confrontation.

### *Regions all up in the air*

The matter of possible management regions within the larger Tshwane Area was a source of much uncertainty for most Departments. Already in the Amund Beneke-process "*Delineation of Planning Units (Regions)*" was listed as one of the topics to be considered during the restructuring process (CTMM 2001f). In the Planning Function it was particularly land use management that would be affected by a decision in this regard. The matter was also discussed at the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council Administrative Unit (GPMC AU) Top Management meeting of 21 May 2001 where two permutations of such a division of the city were presented. The Core Team anxiously awaited a corporate decision on so-called management regions (manageable groupings of wards) for the City. The old Planning Zone Forums and other existing Community Forums were, in terms of a Mayoral Committee decision of 19

June 2001, all disestablished with effect from 30 June 2001. At the same meeting the Mayoral Committee decided that the Ward Committees, which were to replace these structures, had to be established by 31 August 2001. Had this deadline been reached, there would still have been a window of two months during which no formal community liaison structures existed. The reality was that, by that date, very few of the Ward Committees had been established – a fact that caused considerable concern with regard to the public participation and consultation required for compiling the Tshwane IDP. It would seem that the *laissez faire* approach that characterised the municipality's internal organization at that time extended to organizing the structures necessary for the municipality's interaction with its community.

Nikki Ludik, later joined by Masego Kodisang from Themba when the Core Team made an effort to increase its representivity, was the Core Team member tasked with monitoring the corporate process of determining management regions. However, the feedback that was given by them to the Core Team always indicated that the Top Management had not yet reached any clarity in this regard. The Core Team felt that the new structure for City Planning could not be decided on without clarity on the regions.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Backlog in applications tackled*

Although the core team initially focussed strongly on strategic restructuring issues, a number of serious operational concerns were emerging. The most pressing of these was the approval of land-use applications. With the establishment of the CTMM, the delegated authority to approve applications was withdrawn from the city planners. Such powers now resided with Nomgqibelo. The uncertainty regarding town planning delegations in the time

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<sup>34</sup> Towards the end of 2001, no significant process in this regard had been made and the planners decided to take matters into their own hands. The City was then divided into eight regions, each with a dedicated team of land-use planners. Although finalization of the demarcation of so-called management regions for the metropolitan area was seen by many as a pre-requisite for most aspects of the transformation process, the Council did not manage to reach consensus on the issue within the study period. When Dr Hein Wiese, SEO of the Economic Development Department, was requested in February 2002 to establish a regional management model for the Municipality. Henry was particularly concerned that a model of three regions would be adopted, which would necessitate changes to the model of eight regions implemented by the Regional Spatial Planning Function (CTMM, 7 February 2002).

that had lapsed between the withdrawal of the delegations and awarding them to Nomgqibelo, had caused a huge backlog in land-use applications.

Nikki suggested that **Marietjie van Zyl**, a planner working under Tony Walker on the notorious “*fourth floor*” in Munitoria<sup>35</sup>, join the Core Team specifically with the aim of dealing with land use applications. Whenever the question was asked why Marietjie, who was a close personal friend of Nikki, had been singled out for this task, the response was that she had “*private sector experience*”<sup>36</sup>. Marietjie’s task was to make sure that the applications were in the correct format (the format of applications was not the same in each of the Administrative Units. A new, uniform format was now prescribed, and it was Marietjie’s role to enforce this). She also had to summarise the applications and comments for Nomgqibelo so that the latter could make an “*informed decision*”. Some of the planners mistakenly perceived Marietjie’s role as another level of evaluation of the applications, which was not well received. Before long, however, the system was working well and significant inroads were being made into the backlog.

From shortly after the establishment of the new unicity structure, delegations in terms of Town Planning issues were a burning issue. The Mayoral Committee resolved on 6 March 2001 to rescind all existing delegations and to delegate all such authorities to the Section 79 City Planning Committee (CTMM, 2001c). On 4 May 2001 a report, compiled by Alex de Beer, requesting that such delegated powers be given by the Section 79 Committee to the Head: Legal Services and the Divisional Managers/Officials, was approved by the Committee (De Beer, 2001; CTMM, 2001j).

The fact that the Mayoral Committee initially rescinded the delegations was clearly a power-driven action by the politicians. As referred to earlier, it was apparent from the outset that there was a good measure of distrust between

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<sup>35</sup> Among the Pretoria City Planners, the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Munitoria was seen as a most unpleasant working environment with a very negative climate. Staff members were required to sign in and out and there were strict and elaborate procedures for taking short time leave (e.g. for a visit to the doctor). Arriving at work a few minutes late was a serious contravention and there was no flexibility with regard to, for example, when lunchtime and tea times were taken.

<sup>36</sup> Marietjie had indeed worked in a private planning consultancy before joining the City Council of Pretoria.

the new political leadership and top management and the officials. When communication did take place, the white officials, in particular, often perceived the tone as threatening and the content as alienating. When the Chief Operating Officer, Wonder Nkosi, who was perceived as politically moderate, addressed officials in March 2001, he indicated that the white officials had to “*align (themselves) with the ruling class*” if they wanted to survive. In November 2001, the Municipal Manager, Dr Thoahlane (Dr T) addressed the officials of the Housing Department for the first time. He rationalized Management’s failure to engage with officials in discussions on the transformation process by stating that it was Management’s expectation that the Unions would have kept officials abreast of the latest developments. In terms of current best management practice it was completely unacceptable for the new Tshwane top structure to abdicate their responsibility to communicate with the officials for almost a whole year following the establishment of the new municipality. A further problematic aspect of Dr T’s approach was the fact that it assumed an “*us vs them*” situation where the Top Management saw themselves as one party and the officials and Unions as the other. This was clearly not conducive to the promotion of a sense of unity among the different role players brought together in the new municipality.

The role of formal party politics, alongside the daily maneuvering of “*Realpolitik*” is apparent from the Aalborg story (e.g the link between the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Conservative Party (Flyvbjerg, 1998:87), the “*Dream Plan*” presented by the Social Democratic City Council Group (Flyvbjerg, 1998:165)). Although such an interpretation is bound to meet with disapproval, the manner in which events unfolded, as well as more subtle remarks and indications gleaned from my experience of the Tshwane restructuring, seem to point toward the fact that the planners and the new top management were also opposed along political lines. The planners, who were mostly white, male and politically conservative, stood in opposition of the new top management which was mostly black and members of the ruling African National Congress. Formal party politics is therefore another factor that plays



a role in the formation of alliances and divisions along which power dynamics develop.

Another reason for the perceived distance between the new municipal leadership and the officials could merely have been that they were still “*finding their feet*” in a new environment. Many of the new councillors (and even top level officials) had no background in city governance or any other aspect of municipal management. Nava Pillay<sup>37</sup> was one of the few “*old*” officials that the new management took into their confidence. As Divisional Manager: Operations in the office of the Municipal Manager, he was also instrumental in arranging a variety of briefing and information sessions to educate and empower the leadership with regard to municipal management. At a Mayoral Committee Meeting held on 19 June 2001, for example, the Executive Mayor requested the chairperson of the City Planning Committee to attend the next Mayoral Committee Meeting in order to brief the members on the functioning of the Committee (CTMM, 2001u). It may be assumed that this lack of technical expertise, which is taken to be the foundation of power in a bureaucracy (see Bennis, 1993), must have caused a measure of *angst* on their part and fuelled actions, such as one-sided decisions regarding the corporate structure (for an example of this, see page 113, section 6.5 “*A new organizational structure upsets the Task Team applecart*”), office space and parking (for an example of this, see page 168 “*A bitter complaint and a frank assessment*”), to strengthen their power base. This, along with the conflict that was developing within top management, notably between the Municipal Manager and his predecessor, Wonder Nkosi, as referred to earlier, was probably partly responsible for the Mayoral Committee deciding later that year that all contracts for procurement of goods and services had to be signed by the Municipal Manager or his nominee (CTMM 2001eee). In this way, the power of the Municipal Manager was increased and that of other role players, such as the COO, Wonder Nkosi, and members of the “*old management*” reduced.

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<sup>37</sup> For more about Nava Pillay, see [footnote on 25 on page 67](#).



*An ambitious synergy*

In the mean time, on a level far below all of this, the Core Team was working with great enthusiasm towards a new City Planning function for Tshwane. Possibly because of the careful selection of its members, there was instant synergy within the team. Soon after its establishment, the Core Team members drew up a cryptic Code of Conduct for themselves (Core Team, undated), which included points such as their “*loyalty to the Core Team Manager*” (Belinda)<sup>38</sup>; their commitment to being role models and champions for the officials; professionalism; respect for the responsibility or status they were given; openness and acceptance that they should have realistic expectations; as well as a declaration that their participation in the Core Team was “*not for personal gain*” (Core Team, undated). As mentioned earlier, this was not the full truth behind the enthusiastic support of the Core Team demonstrated by its members. This shows, however, how deeply rooted the commitment was to avoid exposure of their own (selfish) aspirations and any conflict with the “*old*” management or other planners that could result from such exposure. Even in the Code of Conduct, which was an “*internal*” document of the Core Team they did not risk articulating their expectation to gain from their status as Core Team members, although they frequently did so verbally among themselves. However, despite the prevalence of rationalisation in the Core Team’s conduct, the team worked very well as a unit. The power wielded by small groups is highlighted by McClendon and Quay (1992). According to them, effective teams have a high level of trust and give each other the necessary latitude to take decisions within their own fields of expertise, while at the same time coming together to seriously address issues of common concern. According to McClendon and Quay (1992) such groups also have self-correcting mechanisms, are constantly taking stock of their progress and are willing to take action where there are problems. These were indeed the characteristics of the Core Team. A specific portfolio (in some cases more than one) was entrusted to each Core Team member (see *figure iv*), while events or issues that affected the group as a whole were

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<sup>38</sup> Through her friendship with Nomgqibelo, Belinda was the Core Team’s vital link to power. Furthermore, had it not been for Belinda, none of the other members would have had the opportunity to serve on the Core Team. This was probably what lay behind the “oath of allegiance” that the members swore to Belinda.

collaboratively planned. Furthermore, the team spent time regularly reflecting on progress and adjusting their strategy where weaknesses were detected. One example of this was to introduce a weekly meeting with the existing managers when it became apparent that the antipathy from the existing managers was becoming a threat to the Core Team's power base (see page 111: "*An uneasy relationship with the existing managers*").

The enthusiasm of the Core Team at the start of the Tshwane restructuring process and the willingness of the Core Team members to "go the extra mile" without receiving any additional remuneration or formal recognition, as well as the unique synergy that developed within the team, is echoed in the Aalborg story. Flyvbjerg (1998:10) quotes a member of the Task Force for the Aalborg Project as saying that the Task Force members had "*the desire to make a contribution and the desire to work far beyond normal working hours*" and that a certain "*unity of spirit*" existed in the group. The Task Force member furthermore remarks that "*A good start and good cooperation, which is something we definitely had, is something very, very powerful and difficult to stop.*" This power, which I refer to as the power of the small group, is evident not only in the Core Team, but much later also in the team that establishes a new strategic planning function for Tshwane. Flyvbjerg (1998:112) calls such small groups "hidden juntas".

The Core Team took up offices on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the HB Phillips building on the Corner of Bosman and Pretorius Streets. Committee Room 501, which was one floor above their offices on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor was the scene for the intense strategic discussions that characterised the team's short existence from the beginning of May to the middle of July 2001. Some structure was usually given to the discussions through an agenda compiled by Henry. (He displayed a special aptitude for producing impressive agendas on short notice.) Unfortunately, the core team lacked someone with the same passion for taking minutes, and most of the discussions therefore went undocumented. Of course, had minutes been kept of the Core Team discussions, they would have been a damning record of the systematic scheming and rationalization undertaken by the Team in order to entrench their own position. As Flyvbjerg

(1998: 31) states: “The documentation **not** produced is just as interesting as that which is produced”.

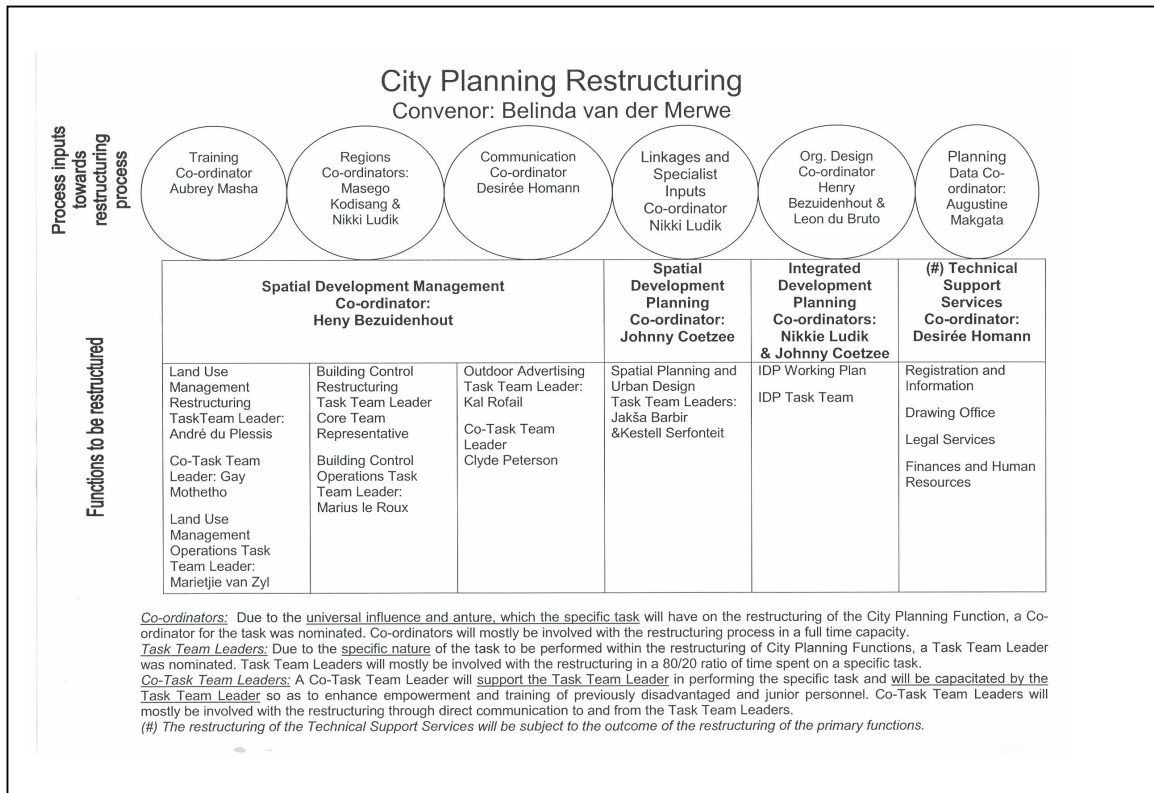


Figure iv: Structure of Core Team and Task Teams

#### 6.4 Establishing the Task Teams

The Core Team now faced the challenge to extend the team and to nominate people to establish task teams that would deal with specific process inputs (such as training and planning data) or functions of city planning (such as Spatial Development Management, Spatial Development Planning, etc). A dedicated functional task team was also established to deal with the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The general perception within the Core Team was that “*although the IDP is now a corporate function (according to the guidelines provided by the Department of Local Government and Development Planning), the work will still be done by the Planners*” (my parenthesis) (pers comm Ludik 2001 and pers comm Van der Merwe, 2001). To equip themselves for this task, Nikki and Belinda attended an IDP training course presented in Vereeniging from 17 to 22 June 2001 by the IDASA-Plan Associates Consortium on behalf of the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) (RSA ,2001). Even before that, in May 2001, Nikki, Belinda and Johnny compiled an IDP progress report (CTMM, 2001m), and shortly after the course, on 25 June 2001, Nikki completed the plan for the IDP preparation phase (CTMM, 2001v) as required by the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000). It should be noted that all of this was done on the initiative of the Core Team in the absence of any guidance or instruction from the Top Management.

##### *Identifying the Task Team leaders*

The Core Team spent several hours discussing the identification of the Task Team leaders (see *figure iv* on page 98 for the structure of the Core Team and Task Teams). Although it was never put in writing, they developed a number of pertinent criteria to guide them in this process. The criteria were strictly adhered to. These included that no existing managers would be considered as task team leaders (or members, for that matter) and that the people identified would have to be able to produce the identified deliverables within strict timeframes. It was agreed that special attention had to be given to the race and gender profile of the group. As indicated earlier, much of the

communication by the Core Team served to stress their commitment to the principles of inclusivity, participation and transparency. This was motivated in part by the fact that a lack of participation was the main criticism against the “*Amund Beneke process*”. Yet, in spite of this, the Task Team leaders were chosen by the Core Team in an autocratic fashion that reeked of favouritism. When the Aalborg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, known for opposing any form of restriction on business, moves in favour of restrictions on banks, the “*difference between what [they say] and what they actually do is so obvious that the Chamber itself is painfully aware that its image could be construed as one of inconsistency and hypocrisy*” (Flyvbjerg, 1998:103). The Core Team runs the same risk when it preaches participation and inclusivity, but hand-picks additional Core Team members and Task Team Leaders in a top down fashion and does not live up to its promise of black empowerment.

It was not easy to find people that met the Core Team’s criteria. Furthermore, there was no-one left that they had close ties with and that they knew with certainty would support the Core Team effort rather than detract from it. It was mainly the impression that the Core Team got of the planners in the respective Administrative Unites during the road shows and other encounters that decided who was nominated as Task Team leaders. It was those people who “*seemed like the right kind of person*” that were chosen. During this time, Belinda would often lament on the difficulty of finding suitable people by using the expression that the Core Team was “*scraping the bottom of the barrel*” (pers comm Van der Merwe, 2001).

André du Plessis, a planner from the former Centurion Town Council, was chosen to lead the task team on Land Use Management Restructuring and Marietjie van Zyl for that of Land Use Management Operations. Alf Vorster, who was second in charge of the former City Council of Pretoria Building Office, would lead the team on Building Control Restructuring and Marius le Roux, from the Akasia (NPMSS) Building Office, on Building Control Operations. Kestell Serfontein, who also hailed from Centurion, and Jakša Barbir, head of the Urban Design at the former City Council of Pretoria, were made jointly responsible for the Spatial Planning and Urban Design Task

Team. It was communicated that the restructuring of the Technical Support Services, which I would lead, would be subject to the outcome of the restructuring of the primary functions.

### *Racial equity*

It became increasingly apparent that the Core Team needed to give urgent attention to racial equity within its structure. Two strategies were employed to reach this objective. Firstly, two of the task teams that had been established by the Core Team earlier, namely that of Training and Planning Data, were elevated to the level of so-called “*process inputs*” (see *figure iv*) and their nominated leaders, Aubrey Masha and Augustine Makgata, two black planners from the former City Council of Pretoria, therefore received the title of “*Coordinator*” and were introduced as members of the Core Team. At the same time, Masego Kodisang was nominated as joint Coordinator to share Nikki’s responsibility of monitoring progress and making inputs with regard to possible management regions within the metropolitan area. In this way, it was ensured that three of the Core Team members were black. Secondly, it was decided to introduce so-called “*Co-Task Team Leaders*” who would work with the Task Team Leaders and “*be empowered*” in the process. In effect, every single black official in the city planning function was made part of the wider Core Team structure. While this certainly looked very impressive and seemingly achieved the Core Team’s stated objective of racial equity, there was very little authenticity to it. Most of the intense discussions I referred to earlier, took place without the black members. They were isolated due to the fact that they did not share the Core Team’s offices in the HB Phillips building (they remained in their existing offices in Munitoria) and were often “*forgotten*” when informal or impromptu meetings were called. It would seem that the initial members of the Core Team had an alliance that was not shared by the extended group and that the efforts to promote racial equity did not amount to much more than window-dressing.

*City Planning Restructuring (CPR) employee audit*

The City Planning Restructuring (CPR)<sup>39</sup> Employee Audit (CTMM, 2001cc) was the brainchild of Nikki Ludik. In consultation with the other Core Team members, Nikki designed an audit form that was distributed to all City Planning personnel to be completed and returned to the office of the Divisional Manager by 4 June 2001. In the introductory paragraph Nikki wrote that the audit form aimed to collect information, which was “*now crucial for a successful restructuring process*”. The form requested personal (eg name, ID number, gender) and job related (eg designation, total years at current Administrative Unit) information. Staff members also had to indicate their expertise and fields of interest respectively. The fields listed were land use management, development control, IDP/LDO, environment, urban design, housing, communication, marketing, local economic development (LED), project management, management, spatial planning, outdoor advertising, registration and general information, planning data, legal services, finance and human resources, training and drawing office. Space was also allowed for staff members to add other fields.

Lastly, staff members were asked to indicate which of the restructuring task teams they were involved in or wanted to be involved in as a task team member or on an occasional basis.

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<sup>39</sup> The Core Team members were at first perplexed by the abbreviation “CPR”. However, Nikki explained that it stood for City Planning Restructuring. She added that it was also appropriate as the abbreviation for cardiopulmonary resuscitation, which was what the City Planning Function needed at that point (perscomm Ludik 2001).



CPR	CITY PLANNING EMPLOYEE AUDIT	CPR			
<p>All employees of the current City Planning Functions at all the Administrative Units are here-by requested to complete the Audit Form comprehensively and to submit it to the Office of the Divisional Manager: Economic Development on or before 4 June 2001 at 16:00. The forms may be submitted via fax for the attention of Nikki Ludik at (012) 3285137 or may be sent electronically via email to <a href="mailto:nludik@ppmc.org.za">nludik@ppmc.org.za</a>. It has come under the attention of the Divisional Manager that there is no universal employee audit containing all the necessary information for restructuring purposes. Although it is accepted that employees had to submit similar audit forms in the past, those forms did not contain all the important information, which is now crucial for a successful restructuring process. Please accept the completion of this form in a positive light as it is envisaged that these forms may assist the Divisional Manager to utilise personnel where most appropriate by taking into account, not only the employee's experience and qualifications, but also the respective fields of expertise and interests. If you have any questions please contact Nikki Ludik at (012) 3374073 / 0824671812.</p>					
First Names		Last Name			
Gender		Home Language			
Race		Nationality			
Job Designation		Current Post Level			
Id nr.		Administrative Unit			
Previous Dispensation Department / Division		Office Location / Physical Address			
Office Phone nr.		Office Fax nr.			
Email Address		Cell Phone nr.			
Postal Address		Residential Location / suburb			
Total number of years at current Admin Unit		Highest Qualifications			
Where was qualifications obtained		Other completed courses, training programs etc.			
<i>Your fields of expertise (Please tick the appropriate box/es)</i>					
Land use management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication			
Development Control	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing			
IDP / LDO	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Economic Development			
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: Please list			
Urban Design	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:33%;">                 Project management                  Management                  Spatial planning                  Outdoor Advertising                  Registration &amp; General Information                  Planning Data                  Legal Services                  Finances &amp; Human resources                  Training                  Drawing Office             </td> <td style="width:33%;"></td> <td style="width:34%;"><i>Your specific fields of interest:</i></td> </tr> </table>			Project management Management Spatial planning Outdoor Advertising Registration & General Information Planning Data Legal Services Finances & Human resources Training Drawing Office		<i>Your specific fields of interest:</i>
Project management Management Spatial planning Outdoor Advertising Registration & General Information Planning Data Legal Services Finances & Human resources Training Drawing Office		<i>Your specific fields of interest:</i>			
<i>City Planning Restructuring Task Teams</i>					
Would you like to be involved in the CPR Task Teams, or are you already involved with the Task Teams? YES NO					
If yes, in which Task Teams would you like to be involved with / are you involved with and on what basis?					
<i>TASK TEAMS (please tick the appropriate box/es)</i>	<i>INVOLVEMENT AS A TASK TEAM MEMBER</i>	<i>INVOLVEMENT OCCASIONALLY FOR FEEDBACK ON RESTRUCTURING</i>			
Registration and Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Building Management Restructuring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Building Management Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Outdoor Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Drawing Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Urban Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Spatial Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
IDP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Legal Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Regions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Finances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Planning Data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Land Use Management Restructuring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Land Use Management Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:33%;">SIGNED:</td> <td style="width:33%;">CAPACITY:</td> <td style="width:34%;">DATE:</td> </tr> </table>			SIGNED:	CAPACITY:	DATE:
SIGNED:	CAPACITY:	DATE:			
<p><b><i>IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TASK TEAM MEMBER OR IF YOU ARE ALREADY A TASK TEAM MEMBER, READ THIS:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Task Team is a consultative body.</li> <li>• Task Team Members may be nominated by the Task Team Leader to assist with specific problems, tasks and functions.</li> <li>• Task Teams will meet on a regular basis as, when and where most appropriate for the majority of the Task Team Members.</li> <li>• The Task Team Leader will communicate meeting arrangements to the Task Team Members.</li> <li>• If you have any questions related to your specific Task Team, please contact your Task Team Leader directly. In the instance where a Task Team Leader has not been nominated, please contact the Function Co-ordinator directly.</li> <li>• If you have any <b>other</b> questions related to the <b>restructuring process</b> please contact Desiree Homann at 0829284394.</li> <li>• If you are unhappy about any issue or problem related to your specific Task Team which you feel you can not openly discuss within your Task Team or with your Task Team Leader, please contact Nikki Ludik at 0824671812.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>IF YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TASK TEAM MEMBER, READ THIS:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are not a member of a Task Team and you have any questions related to a specific Task Team, please contact the Task Team Leader directly.</li> <li>• In the instance where a Task Team Leader has not been nominated, please contact the Function Co-ordinator directly.</li> <li>• If you have any other questions related to the restructuring process please contact Desiree Homann at 0829284394.</li> <li>• If you are unhappy about any issue or problem related to a specific Task Team, which you feel you can not openly discuss with the Task Team Leader, please contact Nikki Ludik at 0824671812.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align:center;"><b>THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!</b>  <b>YOU ARE A VERY IMPORTANT PERSON IN THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE CITY PLANNING FUNCTION AND AS SUCH YOUR POSITIVE INPUT ARE HIGHLY APPRECIATED!</b></p>					

Figure v: City Planning Restructuring (CPR) Employee Audit Form



At the bottom of the form the Core Team provided information regarding contact persons for queries, comments or complaints. The Core Team seemed, superficially, to place people at the centre of the restructuring process with their emphasis on communication and participation. Yet the CPR employee audit represented a very dehumanizing approach – suggesting that the placement of staff would take place on the basis of faceless forms. This is typical of the approach advocated by management theorists promoting an empirical, natural science, approach to decisions regarding organizational design, such as Kaplan and Norton (1996; 2004). The questionnaire ended with the following message in capital letters in a large font size and bold typeface: “*THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME! YOU ARE A VERY IMPORTANT PERSON IN THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE CITY PLANNING FUNCTION AND AS SUCH YOUR POSITIVE INPUT ARE (sic) HIGHLY APPRECIATED!*”. Minutiae such as the use of capital letters or specific words are also deemed significant by Flyvbjerg (1998). The use of capital letters in documents is remarked upon twice in the Aalborg story, once with reference to the Chamber of Industry and Commerce’s counterplan report (Flyvbjerg 1998:72) and the other time in the minutes of the final meeting of the Aalborg Project’s Executive Committee (Flyvbjerg, 1998:204). The use of these words in such a prominent fashion was one example among many of the Core Team consciously employing what Flyvbjerg (1998) refers to as a “*stroking strategy*” to avoid conflict in order to ensure that their position of power was not threatened. The rather contrived tone of this message could have contributed to the fact that the CPR Audit was not at all well received by some of the planners. A small number of the forms (less than 10) were returned with the word “*human*” written where the respondent’s race had to be indicated. The CPR forms created the impression that someone (Nomgqibelo) was going to allocate officials to sections or tasks on the basis of the information supplied on the form. Despite sugar-coating the form with stroking words, many officials found the idea of being redeployed in such a mechanistic fashion without their own preferences being taken into account hard to swallow (pers comm Du Plessis, 2001).

In the Aalborg study, Flyvbjerg (1998:21) exposes how the Task Force for the Aalborg Project decides on the location of the bus stop at Nytorv-Østeraagade before the report motivating the location has been prepared by the consultant firm. The same disregard for rationality is shown by the Core Team when they select additional members and Task Team Coordinators about a month before conducting a “CPR Employee Audit” ostensibly aimed at ensuring that *“the right person is selected for the right job”*.

#### *Task teams given orders*

On 30 May 2001, after meeting with the nominated Task Team Leaders, I compiled a letter, with the heading of *“Circular 1 of 2001”*, for Nomngqibelo’s signature (CTMM, 2001p). Little did she know then that only a month later another *“Circular 1 of 2001”* issued by the Municipal Manager, Dr Thoahlane Thoahlane (Dr T) (see page 116) would herald a new organizational structure and would bring the reign of the acting Divisional Managers to an abrupt end. The letter I wrote was addressed to all officials of the Economic Development Division and confirmed the structure of the Core Team consisting of the Convenor and Coordinators. It furthermore referred to the Task Teams, each with a Task Team Leader and Co-Task Team Leader. The letter explained the role of the Core Team as that of coordinating and managing the restructuring process, specific operational matters related to the restructuring and the IDP. The Task Teams were responsible for coordinating the restructuring of specific aspects of the function and for specific operational tasks related to restructuring.

According to the letter, the Task Teams had to identify tasks in their function related to restructuring, operations and the IDP. Furthermore, they had to identify obstacles and enablers and allocate responsibilities. They were also required to compile a Restructuring Work Plan for their function in the same format as the Work Plan that Belinda had compiled for the function as a whole at the beginning of that month.

Also, in the letter I wrote, a point was made of the fact that the members of the Core Team and the Task Team leaders “*have been nominated for the interim to manage the restructuring process*” and that they “*retain their current job levels, salaries etc. No formal appointments, promotions etc have been made*”. Two aspects of this paragraph warrant further discussion here.

Firstly, there is the choice of the words “*have been nominated*”. As stated earlier, the appointment of the Core Team members came about on the basis of relationships between the members and Belinda, or the members and other members already appointed by the Convenor. For example, Johnny was co-opted on the Core Team because of his relationship with Henry and I was co-opted because of my relationship with Johnny. Marietjie had a long-standing friendship with Nikki. Of course, at the time, a number of other reasons (which were seemingly all valid) were given for choosing specific people to serve on the Core Team (such as special expertise or experience). When it came to choosing the Task Team Leaders, and specifically the Co-Task Team leaders, other considerations prevailed. It was important to choose people who would be loyal to the task team, and those who would deliver outcomes of a high standard so as to guarantee the Core Team’s success. The Co-Task Team leaders were also chosen in order to increase representivity in terms of race and gender, so that Core Team would be politically above reproach. The manner in which people were chosen to serve as members of the Core Team and as Task Team Leaders and Co-Task Team Leaders was autocratic and self-serving, which stood in stark juxtaposition to the Core Team’s stated commitment to transparency and inclusivity. Assurances that all affected officials would be involved in the process ring rather hollow in the light of the fact that it was only at the very bottom of the process structure, namely on the level of “*Task Team Member*”, that officials could participate by their own choice.

Secondly, reassurances that the Core Team members and Task Team Leaders had a temporary role only and that they had not been “*promoted*” were in conflict with our own expectations of what these positions would mean in terms of our status in a future organizational structure. When Henry

championed the inclusion of Johnny and me in the Core Team, he made no secret of it that this was our (and his) “*big break*” and that it virtually guaranteed that we would be in line for managerial positions in the new structure. All the Core Team members had career histories that made them very susceptible for such expectations. Johnny had been managing a budget much larger than that of any of the managers on the level directly above him and I had been hoping for formal promotion to managerial level as I had been acting in a managerial capacity at the Pretoria Inner City Partnership for a number of years, but could not progress owing to the moratorium on job evaluations. Belinda, Nikki and Henry had been working under a strong and dominating leader in the person of Amund Beneke and relished the opportunity to get out from under his wing in order to assume positions of leadership (Interview Bezuidenhout, 2002).

To further drive home the point of the so-called open and transparent nature of the process, the letter of 30 May 2001 gave particular emphasis to the fact that everyone in the Division would be given the opportunity to make inputs into the documents compiled by the Task Teams at “*open forums*” which were to be held during the first week of June 2001 (this referred to the Purpose Structure Workshop, which took place on 14 June 2001).

Four different options were provided for officials who wished to become involved in the process. Firstly, they could either submit proposals to the Task Team Leaders; secondly, they could become “*a Member of a Task Team*”; thirdly, they could comment on the deliverables produced in terms of the process, and lastly, they could give once-off inputs through participation in the open forums or workshops.

The circular furthermore briefly referred to the “*New Corporate Structure*” in the last paragraph. The first sentence of this paragraph is a good example of those in power (the Core Team) using language to *define* reality, rather than *describe* it (a phenomenon highlighted by Flyvbjerg (1998) in his Aalborg study). It reads: “*It has come to my [Nomgqibelo’s] attention that there is widespread apprehension about the possible changes to the corporate*

*structure*". In fact, the only apprehension we were aware of, was our own. The subtle indications that we got from the existing managers seemed to hint at a careful optimism regarding the possible appointment of a new Divisional Manager, which would possibly topple the Core Team from its perch. Nomngqibelo went on to give the "assurance" that "*the outcome of the current restructuring process will serve as a blueprint that will be presented to the relevant Divisional Managers, after the posts have been filled*". It was furthermore stated that the restructuring process would not be stopped or delayed, but would "*continue as before*". This statement was, of course, pure rationalization, seeing that we did not know who the new Divisional Manager would be and had no guarantee whatsoever that he/she would be in favour of retaining the Core Team.

#### *Core Team visits and the Purpose Structure workshop*

At my instigation, seven small group meetings, which we referred to as "*Core Team visits*", were scheduled for 11 and 12 June 2001. As I explained in a fax to Masego Kodisang (Homann, 2001), the purpose of the visits were "*simply for the people to get to know us (the Core Team) better and share their feelings (fears and expectations)*" (parenthesis in original), and not to share any technical information. My aim was to use the visits to establish a personal relationship between us and the City Planning officials as a strategy for ensuring the success of the crucial "*Purpose Structure Workshop*" that was planned for 14 June 2001. The visits were held with a number of groups, including the support service staff members from all three the larger former municipal structures and the Centurion town planners. The messengers working in the Support Service Section of the City Planning and Development function of the former City Council of Pretoria were addressed separately, as they were a group with special communication needs<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> A day before Nomngqibelo addressed staff at the roadshow meeting of 14 May, an anonymous letter was delivered to her complaining about City Planning being a "*devil department*" where racism was rife. When Nomngqibelo gave the opportunity for comments and questions after her address, Shadrack Molelekwa, the most senior of the messengers of the City Planning Department of the former City Council of Pretoria, stood up and gave a passionate speech about the "*devil department*", City Planning. This led the Core Team to believe that a special effort was necessary to instill a sense of loyalty and enthusiasm about the restructuring process with Shadrack and his team of messengers.

As it turned out, the strategy paid off handsomely. Belinda admitted at an informal meeting at Huckleberry's in Magnolia Dell after our last Core Team Visit (pers comm Van der Merwe, 2001) that, although she was at first sceptical about investing so much time in the visits, she had come to realise that it was a good tactical move. Although the officials expressed certain concerns and even criticisms<sup>41</sup> against the Core Team, the visits built support for the Team - the workshop was attended by more than 100 of the roughly 150 City Planning officials (CTMM, 2001t), most of whom participated in a positive spirit.

The Core Team invested much effort in planning the workshop. The challenge was to structure the workshop in such a way that the entire city planning function could be discussed meaningfully in a single day. The program that was eventually decided on, consisted of a general session for all officials followed by two sets of three concurrent sessions covering all the component functions i.e. Land Use Management, Outdoor Advertising, Planning Data, Building Control, Spatial Planning and Training.

To further facilitate the process and save time, a framework program for each session was provided: The Task Team leader would briefly describe the work done to date and introduce the work plan, the identified tasks, obstacles and enablers. This would be followed by a brainstorming session, which everyone could participate in. Those attending were allowed to migrate between sessions in order to give input into more than one function.

### *The Task Teams meet the challenge*

The task team leaders responded with amazing alacrity to the challenge put to them by the Core Team and by the end of June 2001 most of them had

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<sup>41</sup> At the small group discussion held in Centurion on 12 June 2001, one of the Centurion planners, Liana Strydom, took offence to Belinda's use of the term "*scraping the bottom of the barrel*" to indicate how difficult it was to identify suitable task team leaders. Liana felt that many planners who could make a significant contribution to the restructuring process chose not to become involved because they had to see to it that the day-to-day work continued.

progressed to the point where the requested information and proposed organograms for the different functions were available.

In the work plan for the restructuring of Land Use Management, prepared under the leadership of André du Plessis, Gay Mothetho<sup>42</sup> and Marietjie van Zyl, a number of guidelines for restructuring the function, derived from the Purpose Structure Workshop held on 14 June 2001, were identified. The first guideline, identified by those attending the workshop as the first priority, was that spatial planning and land use management should be integrated. This preference was voiced throughout the restructuring process.

The purpose structure that was developed for the Spatial Development Function (consisting of Spatial Planning and Urban Design) by the Task Team led by Kestell Serfontein and Jakša Barbir had two main components, namely one for Metropolitan Spatial Planning and another comprising a number of teams doing Regional Spatial Planning. Metropolitan Spatial Planning would entail the compilation of a position statement on spatial development planning; metropolitan spatial development planning; metropolitan urban development projects and the coordination of regional spatial development planning. Regional Spatial Planning had three subcomponents, namely: Regional spatial development planning, local spatial development planning and urban development projects.

The task team for training, under the leadership of Aubrey Masha, stated its purpose as developing and implementing a training programme for the City Planning and Management function with the aim of ensuring high performance by employees, effective service delivery and employment equity. This was very well aligned with the requirements for building capacity of municipal officials set out in the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000).

Aubrey and his Task Team members presented a rather unflattering view of the staff members of the city planning function. In their work plan, they listed the following problems relating to the performance standards of the staff

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<sup>42</sup> Gay was a planner who worked under Tony Walker in the Land Use Control Section of the former City Council of Pretoria

members: Performance ineffectiveness; low technical skills; the fact that existing skills were not applicable to assigned duties and, lastly, inexperience.

The Training Task Team also drew up an implementation framework linking actions to target dates. According to this matrix, 1 October 2001 would have been the start date for implementation of the training programme. However, owing to difficulties in securing the necessary funds, the project never materialised. Much later, after the Core Team had been disbanded, I received a call from Masego Kodisang from the Winterveldt office, enquiring about the training programme that Amund Beneke had planned and for which candidates had already been nominated. I knew nothing of the programme and referred her to the Core Team's Training Coordinator, Aubrey Masha.

Another couple of months later, at a meeting of the City Planning Management Team on 14 February 2002, it transpired that there had still not been any progress with regard to training for city planning staff. This time, it was Johnny who enquired about the work of the Task Team that had been established for that purpose. He argued that expectations had been created that planners in the previously disadvantaged areas would receive training, but that the promised funds never materialised. At that meeting, the Managers who attended were asked to forward training requirements in their sections to the Acting Manager of the Departmental Support Services for follow-up. Sadly, that was again where the matter ended. It was apparent that with training, as with so many other themes of the transformation process, there had been more than one false start and a lack of political will to live up to the legislative requirements regarding skills development within the municipality.

#### *An uneasy relationship with the existing managers*

The relationship between the Core Team and the existing City Planning Managers<sup>43</sup> at the different Administrative Units was strained from the start. The managers took offence to the fact that they had not been involved in any of the task teams. They felt uncomfortable with Belinda's unanticipated

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<sup>43</sup> The existing City Planning Managers were Amund Beneke (GPMC), Mike Yates (CCP), Pieter de Haas (NPMSS) and Leon du Bruto (CTC).



authority over them and were cut off from the seat of authority as all communication with the Acting Divisional Manager, Nomngqibelo, had to take place via Belinda. At the same time, the Core Team was disconcerted by indications that some of the existing city planning managers (notably Amund Beneke) were continuing to work on large development projects without informing or involving the Core Team in any way. On 6 June 2001, Belinda sent a memorandum to all City Planning managers “*laying down the law*” in this regard (CTMM, 2001r).

The memorandum instructed the existing managers to give regular feedback to the Core Team Convenor, Belinda, on all operational projects they were involved with. The purpose of the arrangement, as stated in the memorandum, was ostensibly to “*contribute towards effective communication and add value to the restructuring process, to the benefit of all involved parties*”. Of course the real reason was that the Core Team members were feeling uneasy about managers carrying on with large strategic projects without their knowledge or involvement, as this was seen to erode their power base. While they were quite happy to ignore and sideline the existing management, it was uncomfortable when they were, in turn, the ignored party.

We had become aware of some of the managers, notably Pieter de Haas from the Akasia Administrative Unit (NPMSS), experiencing intense irritation as a result of having to travel to the HB Phillips building to attend meetings whenever they were summoned to do so by the Core Team. In order to defuse the situation an expression of gratitude for the “*positive manner in which (they) have responded to recent requests for attending meetings on short notice*” was also made in the memorandum. Yet again the Core Team consciously employed what Flyvbjerg (1998) refers to as a “*stroking strategy*” (very similar to the “*peacekeeping ritual*” performed by the planners in Forester (1996) in his study of a transcript of a meeting between municipal planners and a developer) to ward off conflict.

In order to facilitate feedback on projects to the Core Team, a weekly meeting between the Core Team and the existing managers was instituted from

Wednesday, 30 May 2001. These meetings continued to take place every Wednesday at 14:00 until Verna Nel was nominated at the Convenor for City Planning early in July 2004.

### **6.5 A new organizational structure upsets the Task Team applectart**

Towards the end of June 2001, merely two tumultuous months after the inception of the Core Team, it came to our knowledge that the political level (the Mayor and his committee) had decided to fundamentally change the new organizational structure without consulting any of the officials. The structure is not open to debate when it is first introduced. It is clear that this is not a proposed structure – it is presented as a decision already taken, a fait accompli. While the initial lack of alternative locations for the bus stop in the Aalborg case (or of alternative uses for the Nytorv site) was indicative of the power of the “*strong position of public transportation in the Aalborg Project and in Aalborg*” (Flyvbjerg, 1998:25;29), the lack of alternative organizational structures was a symptom of the strong power position held by the new Tshwane Top Management. In the Tshwane case, also, this kind of one-sided change is made possible by the new Tshwane Top Management’s “*political and organizational dominance*”, which is also the factor to which Flyvbjerg (1998: 30) ascribes the Aalborg Bus Company “*winning out*” on the issue of the location of the bus stop at Nytorv. Flyvbjerg (1998:104) furthermore tells how the Aalborg Chamber of Industry and Commerce later “*objects to the very plan they themselves had helped to propose and implement just one year before*”. As was the case with the Tshwane organizational structure, this is another example of how those with power have the luxury of taking decisions without having to offer any explanation.

The lack of documentation of the necessity of locating the bus stop at Nytorv in the Aalborg case (Flyvbjerg 1998:33) indicates that, where actors have strong and unchallenged positions of power, the need for rationalization diminishes. This argument applies very well to the Tshwane top management, whose positions of power could not be threatened by the officials and who therefore did not see the need for communicating or engaging with them.

Flyvbjerg (1998:37) says that “*a party’s unwillingness to present rational argument or documentation may quite simply indicate the freedom to define reality*”. More succinctly put, “*Why concern oneself with how reality really is when one has the privilege of defining it? Why use the force of the better argument when force alone will suffice?*” (Flyvbjerg, 1998:80). It therefore seems that Flyvbjerg’s (1998:2) statement, after Foucault, that “*the greater the power, the less the rationality*”, can be read in its extreme application to imply that where there is absolute power (i.e. power that cannot be challenged by resistance as in the case of the Tshwane top management), there need for rationality is obviated. Seen in this light, efforts by the Core Team to communicate may *seem* laudable, but in reality merely indicate that the Team *needed* communication to enforce their position of power.

Just as the so-called “summit meetings” between the Technical Department and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce exclude the experts that can ensure the “technical-functional linkages” necessary to ensure the functional coherence of the project (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 81) the expertise of the planners and other officials are ignored when the new organizational structure for Tshwane is developed. A more pertinent example of this is when the executive mayor’s office “forgets” to invite the staff of its own strategic planning function to the conference on the “Rebirth and Restructuring of Tshwane” a few months later. As is also clear from the Aalborg example, the inclusion and exclusion of people by those in power in the Tshwane municipality is a manner in which to entrench power relations. The exclusion of the planners from key decision making processes made them keenly aware of their relative lack of power within the new organizational structure.

The design of the new Tshwane organizational structure was not developed by the members of top management themselves, but was outsourced to a Midrand-based consultant, Yarona Creative Management Solutions. While Flyvbjerg (1998:21) shows that transferring the task of compiling the report motivating the location of the Aalborg Project bus stop to consultants was a strategy for increasing the credibility of the report, the decision by the Tshwane Top management to make use of external consultants to develop a

new organizational structure, achieved the opposite. The general feeling among the officials was that an external firm could not possibly understand the intricacies underlying the structuring of a municipality.

The new structure was not immediately communicated to all officials, but only distributed to the Administrative Unit Managers, again entrenching the disparate distribution of power within the municipal hierarchy. Henry Bezuidenhout got hold of the document through the office of Kenny Rosenberg, who was the Administrative Unit Manager for the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Administrative Unit. The new structure consisted of 8 Strategic Units (later called “Divisions”, then “Departments” and finally “Directorates”), headed by Strategic Executives (later called Strategic Executive Officers or SEO’s). With this arrangement, the Administrative Units ceased to exist and the structure of the new unified City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality came into being.

The new Departments were the following:

- Service Delivery
- Finances
- Safety and Security
- Corporate Services
- Marketing and Tourism
- Social Development
- Housing; and
- Economic Development.

The new Economic Development Department consisted of two components, namely Public Transport and Local Economic Development. It was clear that City Planning was no longer part of this function. On the face of it, it was also not part of any other function.

*An anxious Core Team*

There were a number of reasons why the announcement of the new organizational structure led to a significant measure of anxiety within the Core Team and among members of the Task Teams. One of these was that we had hoped that our Champion, Nomngqibelo, would be permanently appointed as Divisional Manager: Economic Development. This would have ensured the continuance of the Core Team and their restructuring process. With the announcement of the new structure, however, it seemed clear that City Planning would no longer resort under Economic Planning. Furthermore, there were no assurances that Nomngqibelo would be appointed in any of the new top management posts.

The Core Team's suspicion that Nomngqibelo would no longer have the executive responsibility for City Planning in the new structure was confirmed by a document distributed by the Municipal Manager, Dr Thoahlane Thoahlane on 2 July 2001 in which all acting Divisional Managers were ordered to return to their previous posts with immediate effect (CTMM 2001 bb). The tone of this document, titled *Circular 1 of 2001*, was again characteristic of the confrontational and unsympathetic manner in which Top Management communicated with officials. Even though the acting Divisional Managers had gone to great lengths to aid the restructuring process without receiving any additional remuneration for their efforts, they were now ordered to return to their previous positions without as much as a word of appreciation. The indignance of the people affected by the circular was exacerbated by the fact that, apart from this general circular, no personal communication with them had taken place. Soon after his appointment to the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO), Wonder Nkosi referred to *Circular 1 of 2001* as "*the most inhumane document I had ever seen*" (pers comm Nkosi 2001) because of the unfeeling manner in which it dismissed the acting Divisional Managers and the lack of acknowledgement that it gave for their contribution. The harsh tone of this document reminds of the unexpected use of the term "demands" by the bus company in Flyvbjerg's (1998:13) story. Dr T's letter created even more distance between the officials and the top management, proving that, as

argued by Forester (Argument, Power and Passion), that talk (or written communication) is action and that *words matter*.

The Core Team had been dedicated to Nomgqibelo and the members did everything in their power to support her and boost her image as Divisional Manager. However, now that there were indications that she would no longer be in a position to guarantee the continuation of the Core Team, our loyalty was quickly dissipated. We feverishly followed up every available lead in an attempt to find out under whose management City Planning (and therefore the Core Team) would operate in the new organizational structure. The argument was that, the moment this was known, the Core Team could start building an alliance with the new manager and start selling their restructuring process to him/her.

Another reason for the Core Team's unease about the new structure was that it perpetuated the disregard for the status or importance of the City Planning function. In fact, where City Planning was at least mentioned as one of the components of Nomgqibelo's Economic Development Division, there was now no mention whatsoever of it in the new structure.

It would seem, however, that the functions of City Planning, Economic Development and Transport Planning and Management would no longer be grouped together under one Department. This raised concerns in the Core Team that the promise of better integration between these functions which the Nomgqibelo structure held, would come to nought.

The Core Team was also very concerned that the announcement of another new structure, and especially the fact that the officials were not consulted about it at all, would be another blow to staff morale that was already rock bottom. This concern proved valid, as some of the Task Team leaders that had been invaluable in the process up to that point, indicated that they no longer saw a role for themselves in the new structure. (When I requested the City Planning personnel to indicate how many of them were feeling "*gatvol*"<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> A widely used Afrikaans colloquialism meaning "fed-up".

by a show of hands by way of breaking the ice at the workshop of 3 August that year, there was no-one who didn't raise a hand – in fact, some raised both hands...)

*Survival instinct – the Core Team's continuation plan*

The concerns regarding their position in a new organizational structure spurred the Core Team into action. Firstly, we set about compiling a comprehensive report and covering letter (CTMM, 2001v) explaining the progress made with the restructuring of City Planning and arguing for the continuation of the Core Team and Task Teams. The covering letter made a strong case for continuing the process that was underway, citing as the main reason the legislative imperatives with regard to the approval of land-use applications, building plans etc. Much deliberation went into deciding whom the report and letter should be addressed to. One option was to send it to the Municipal Manager (later referred to as the Chief Executive Officer), Dr Thoahlane Thoahlane (Dr T). In the end, however, we agreed that the report should go to Wonder Nkosi, who had at that stage just been appointed as the Chief Operating Officer (COO).

The cover letter to the report submitted to Wonder Nkosi listed three functions, which Belinda and the Core Team were appointed to coordinate. These were the “*daily operational City Planning responsibilities*”<sup>45</sup>, the restructuring of the City Planning function, and the compilation of an Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Each of these three aspects were dealt with in detail in the report.

As far as the IDP was concerned, there had still been no communication from the Top Management. In the Core Team we held the attitude that, although in terms of legislation the City Manager would also be the IDP Officer, the planners would be the people actually compiling the plan as was the case with the previous IDP cycle. In the light of the importance placed on the IDP by

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<sup>45</sup> While at its inception the Core Team was focused on restructuring rather than the day-to-day management of the function, they purposefully expanded their role to also include the operational aspect of the function, usually citing “legislative requirements” as the reason.

legislation, this was seen as a vehicle for further entrenching the Core Team's position of power. In the report, Belinda stated that "*Although a corporate responsibility, the IDP is being dealt with by the City Planning Component as an integral part of the City Planning Function for the interim, including the 2001/2 IDP*".

In essence the report provided, in glowing terms, an overview of the work done by the Core Team up to that stage. It ended with a number of recommendations which came down to a request that cognizance be taken of the progress made by the Core Team regarding the three issues listed in the cover letter and that the Core Team be allowed to continue its work in that regard. It furthermore referred to an attached report in terms of which the Mayoral Committee had approved that all City Planning delegations be given to the Convenor: City Planning or her successor in title from 1 July 2001. Lastly, it was recommended that cognizance be taken of another attached report, which had not yet been approved, relating to the appointment of an Acting Building Control Officer for Tshwane, an appointment that the Municipality was required to make in terms of the law.

Belinda signed the report as acting Divisional Manager: Economic Development and as Convenor: City Planning. Space was also provided for the Chief Operating Officer to sign the report. We hoped that if Wonder Nkosi had signed the report, it would entrench the Core Team's position regardless of who was appointed as the function's new Top Manager.

On the morning of 27 June 2001 Johnny set out to meet Wonder Nkosi at the BJ's Bistro built across the N1 highway at Midrand to give him the Core Team's report. Johnny was tasked with trying to convince Wonder of the importance of supporting the Core Team. He would particularly highlight the urgency of starting with the compilation of the IDP, which, by law, had to be completed by March 2002. Johnny was seen off by all the Core Team members and wished well with his task. It was a mission of mythological proportions – the dragon that had to be slain in order to ensure the Core Team's survival. We waited anxiously for Johnny's return to hear what



Wonder's response was. Unfortunately, it turned out that Wonder would not commit to signing the document right away. Neither Belinda nor Johnny ever received a response from Wonder on that report, in which we had invested so much time and effort.

Despite the anxiety experienced by the Core Team in the face of the new organizational structure, I suggested that they project an image of confidence and even excitement about the changes. At the meeting held between the Core Team and the existing managers on Wednesday 27 June 2001 the Core Team stated that we were very happy about the new organizational structure as it was a sign that the Top Management wished to progress from the interim phase to a more permanent situation. Flyvbjerg (2001:94) argues that communication is typically characterised by rhetoric, which has as its aim to maintain interests. In rhetoric, the mode of communication (for example charisma and the use of dependency relations between role players) determines "validity", and not rational arguments about the matter under discussion. He furthermore argues that "*success in rhetoric is associated precisely with distortion*".

This mock-optimism, an excellent example of using communication to *define* reality rather than merely *describe* it, a strategy which, according to Flyvbjerg (1998: 35) can be employed by entities that are "politically, organizationally and structurally" strong, and a strategy that is used by several players in the Aalborg story. Even though the Tshwane Core Team has limited power, within the planning function it employs this strategy with a significant measure of success, repeatedly using communication (often rationalization or propaganda) as the tool by which reality is defined. As Flyvbjerg (1998:36) puts it: "Power, quite simply, produces that knowledge and that rationality which is conducive to the reality it wants." He adds that the ability to suppress or facilitate knowledge is to a significant extent what makes certain parties more powerful than others in modern societies.

The Core Team's use of language to define reality was echoed in a circular to all staff members in the City Planning function issued by Belinda on 28 June

2001 (CTMM, 2001y). In the circular, *Circular 3 of 2001*, Belinda briefly referred to the success of the purpose structure workshops held on 14 June 2001 and thanked the officials for attending in such large numbers. She furthermore stated that “*Although no formal communication had been received in this regard, it is clear that the City Planning function will be located within the Housing Strategic Unit*”.

Belinda continued to give assurances that the appointment of a Strategic Executive for Housing would not affect the pace of restructuring or cause any disruption. Furthermore, in the circular, Belinda’s position as Convenor for the City Planning restructuring, IDP coordinator and contact person for all Tshwane-wide City Planning issues was confirmed. It was also stated that the Core Team remained in place despite the changes to the corporate structure.

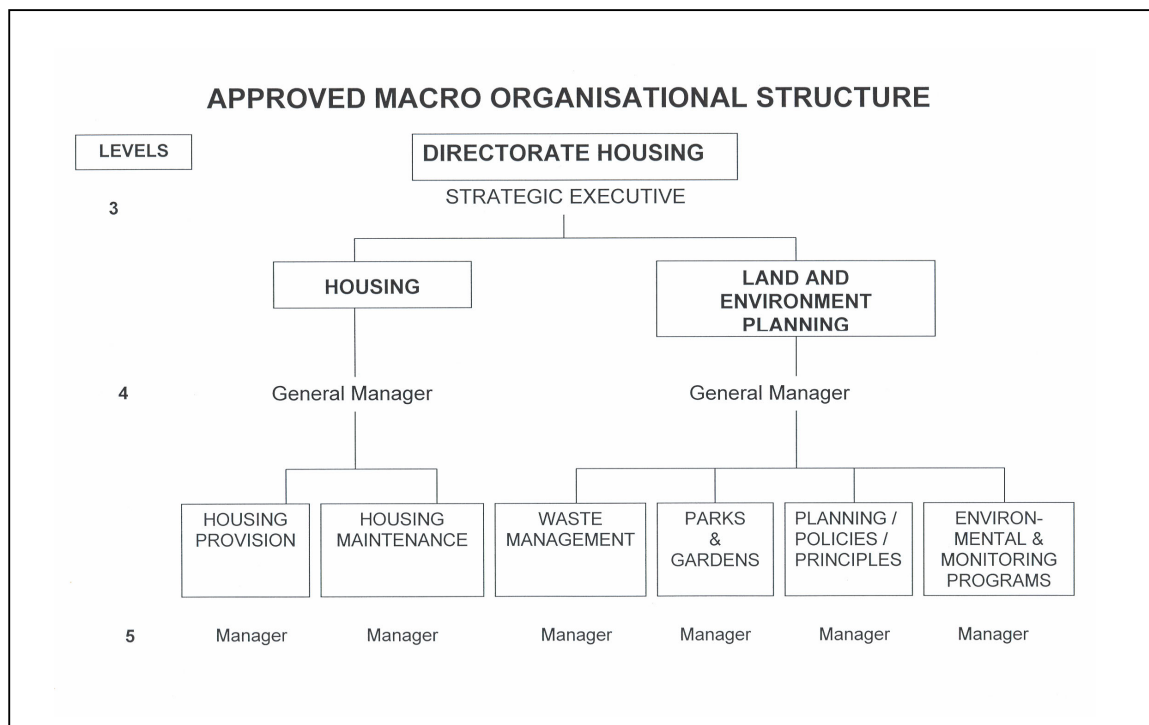
In the circular, Belinda also shared the Core Team’s “*continuation strategy*”, which was to compile a report for the to be appointed Strategic Executive and the newly appointed Chief Operations Officer, Wonder Nkosi. The report contained information on the progress made with the restructuring and listed critical operational issues that needed urgent attention.

The confidence with which the assurances to both the existing managers and the rest of the officials were given belied the *angst* the Core Team was experiencing at that stage. Nomngqibelo was on leave (Belinda acted in her place as Divisional Manager) and seemed to know as little as the Core Team members did about who City Planning would report to from 2 July 2001. The plan to give Wonder Nkosi the Core Team report was a desperate one – the Team knew that he and Nomngqibelo got along well and hoped that, in his new position of power as Chief Operating Officer, he could intervene to ensure the Core Team’s continued existence if that proved necessary.

In line with the Core Team’s established stroking strategy, the letter ended with an expression of praise and thanks for the Task Team leaders and members for their contribution to the restructuring process.

### *Mike Yates' brief stint as General Manager*

The most distinctive indication of where City Planning lay on the new structure was the advertisements for the Strategic Executive Officers and the General Managers. It was clear from the advertisements for the Strategic Executive Officer (SEO) for Housing (CTMM, 2001z) that City Planning was seen as part of the Housing Directorate, of which an organogram appears in *figure vi*. It was, however, not clear whether it would resort under the General Manager: Housing or the General Manager: Land and Environmental Planning, which were the two legs of the new Department. At this time, **Si Bogopa**, from the former Centurion Town Council, was asked to act as Strategic Executive Officer for the Department. Mike Yates, who was the then Executive Director of City Planning and Development in the former City Council of Pretoria, was appointed as Acting General Manager for Land and Environmental Planning and Ria van Rensburg, who had been working in the Legal Department at the Centurion Town Council, as Acting General Manager for Housing.



*Figure vi: Approved macro organizational structure for the Housing Directorate as on 1 July 2001*

Although, as I stated earlier, the Core Team was confused regarding where exactly City Planning was supposed to be situated within the new

Department, Mike Yates was convinced that it resorted under Housing rather than under Land and Environmental Planning.

However, because of Mike' long-standing involvement with the City Planning Function and because Ria van Rensburg had indicated that she was not keen on managing the City Planning Function along with the other Housing functions, it was agreed that Mike would manage the function for the time being.

When Mike communicated this decision to the Core Team at the beginning of July 2001, their hearts sank. They were convinced that, following the power struggle and simmering conflict between the Core Team and the existing management (of which Mike was a prominent member), he would disband the Core Team and revert back to the existing managers.

It came as a very big surprise therefore, when Mike indicated at a workshop held by the Core Team on 4 July 2001 (CTMM, 2001dd) to which we invited him, that he was satisfied with the work we had done up to that point and that he intended to retain the Core Team unchanged. Looking back, I now realise that it would have been a serious tactical error of Mike not to support the Core Team at that point. We had clearly performed in terms of the deliverables we undertook to produce and, more importantly, through our policy of openness and regular communication, we had rallied the support of the City Planning officials for the Core Team efforts to restructure the function. If Mike had chosen to disband the Core Team, as he could have done, he would in all probability have had to face the antagonism of the officials.

The workshop where Mike gave his unexpected commitment to the Core Team process, was held at "*Ben se Den*" (Ben's Den), the recreational facility of the City Engineers in the Magaliesberg to the North of the City<sup>46</sup>. The

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<sup>46</sup> This facility, and the one next door to it, "*Jack se Plek*" (Jack's Place) were the setting for many a social function of the City Planning and Development Department of the former City Council of Pretoria. It was therefore an appropriate venue for building team spirit, as well as enthusiasm for the restructuring process. At the same time, however, it was an example of how old traditions persisted in the face of change. The workshop could be seen as an initiation of the planners from the other structures into this tradition.

workshop was attended by the Core Team, as well as the Task Team leaders, each of whom invited two members of their Task Team to join them. The workshop was facilitated by Johnny and I, while Henry, as had become customary, compiled the agenda. This had as its main points a presentation on progress with restructuring by the Core Team, and a discussion of the proposed purpose structure, which would consist of defining the functions of City Planning and defining the relationships or links between the functions. At the workshop, we also gave the Task Teams the terms of reference for the Resource Plans. A proforma (CTMM, 2001ee) was prepared on which the Task Teams had to list the primary functions of their components with an indication of the Administrative, Technical and Professional Support required. They had to qualify whether such support was “*collective*” (i.e. shared by the entire City Planning function) or “*function specific*” in nature.

The primary aim of the workshop was to reach consensus on a purpose structure for the City Planning function. However, the ideas from the different breakaway groups were too divergent and abstract to enable the Core Team to come to a commonly accepted solution within the available time. What did come out of the workshop was a strong common concern for the apparent lack of recognition for the City Planning Function from Top Management. It was decided to take action and make a presentation to the Executive Mayor to explain the benefits of a strong City Planning function. This struggle to get City Planning recognized at an appropriate level within the Housing Department would also become a recurring theme throughout the restructuring process.

The Resource Plans submitted by the Task Team leaders following the workshop, bore testimony to the optimism that characterised this phase of the restructuring of the City Planning Function. The Spatial Planning Task Team, listed, among other things, a Legal Advisor, Analysts (Urban Geographer, Urban Economist, Sociologist), a Marketer, a Facilitator for Public Participation and Project Managers as the human resources that would be required for the function (CTMM, 2001hh). The Outdoor Advertising Section also requested, among other things, “*Dedicated Legal Support, Training, and*

*Back-up Typing Support*” (Petersen, 2001). The Land Use Management Task Team proposed a hierarchical system of which the lowest level would be nine Geographical Planning Areas (GPAs) of eight wards each (Du Plessis et al, 2001). As far as staffing was concerned, the Land Use Management Task Team envisaged a Head, four Town Planners, one Assistant Town Planner and three administrative support staff for each GPA – a scenario that was ridiculously far removed from the then current reality. In most departments, staff shortages were the order of the day owing to the moratorium that had been placed on the filling of vacancies since the beginning of 2001, on the one hand, and the fact that a much larger geographical area now had to be serviced, on the other. Although the staff of the former municipal structures of Garankuwa, Winterveldt and Themba had become part of the new municipality, this did not contribute significantly towards alleviating staff shortages, especially in the light of the fact that no professional staff (planners, engineers etc) were gained in this manner.

On 6 July 2001, Belinda issued another “*Circular 1 of 2001*”<sup>47</sup> (CTMM, 2001ff) to all City Planning Officials. The letter, only a page long, in brief terms communicated the fact that, owing to the uncertainty with regard to the position of city planning in the new corporate structure, it would as an interim arrangement be accommodated in the Strategic Unit: Housing under the Acting General Manager for Environmental Planning, Mike Yates.

The letter also stated that the Core Team was pro-actively liaising with the Strategic Executive: Economic Development in order to ensure that the necessary linkages with Local Economic Development and Transportation Management were established. In fact, the Core Team’s liaison with the newly appointed Strategic Executive for Economic Development, Hein Wiese, had less to do with establishing the necessary planning links than it had to do with the Core Team trying to ensure their sustained existence in a position of

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<sup>47</sup> This is the third “Circular 1 of 2001” to be quoted in this study. The first was the circular issued by Nomgqibelo on 30 May 2001 in which she confirmed the Core Team structure. The second was the circular issued by Dr T on 2 July 2001 in which he dismissed the Acting divisional Managers (see [page 116](#)). Although Belinda had issued a number of memoranda before this date, this was the first “circular” to appear under her signature – hence the heading “Circular 1 of 2001”.

power. Henry knew Hein well and felt that, if the Core Team could successfully make a case for locating the City Planning function under Economic Development, their position would be more secure than it would be under Si Bogopa or his successor in the position of Strategic Executive: Housing, who was yet to be appointed. Of course, in the light of the calls that had been made by the planning fraternity over the years for better integration between city planning and transportation planning, this “*rationalization*” was watertight.

Belinda’s letter of 6 July 2001 also stated that the acting Strategic Executive: Housing (Si Bogopa) as well as the Acting General Manager: Land and Environmental Planning (Mike Yates) approved that the Core Team and Task Teams remain in place to take the restructuring process further. However, it would later be proved that the confidence with which Belinda made this statement, was unfounded. It soon transpired that Si did not support Mike’s position with regard to retaining the Core Team. Unbeknown to the Core Team, Si had requested that **Verna Nel** take over the operational management, as well as the restructuring of the function, leaving Belinda out in the cold.

Si Bogopa’s intention to change the arrangement Mike had made with regard to the Core Team continuing as before became apparent when, soon after the workshop, Mike received an organogram by fax indicating an interim structure for the City Planning function and was asked to nominate coordinators for the various components. From the point of view of the Core Team, there were two major problems with the organogram: Firstly, the proposed organogram was not the same as the one arrived at through the consultative process driven by the Core Team. Secondly, while all the other blocks were blank, Verna Nel’s name was written in the block provided for “*Convenor: City Planning*”. Apparently, Si Bogopa had already asked Verna, the former Chief Town Planner at Centurion, to take up that position.



*Verna Nel usurps the throne*

The Core Team urged Mike to enquire telephonically from Thys Barnard, an official from the former Centurion Town Council who was trained in organizational design, who had been tasked with compiling the new organograms, whether Belinda could continue to act in the position of convenor/coordinator for City Planning. Thys, however, assured Mike that Si Bogopa had insisted that the position be filled by Verna. Verna later indicated during an interview (interview Nel, 2002) that she had worked with Si in the past and that he personally requested her to manage the function. Yet again, as was the case with the establishment of the Core Team, someone was being given a position of power on the basis of a good relationship with another role player who was already in a position of power.

Verna's personality and approach was completely different to that of Belinda, who was authoritarian and businesslike. Verna's management style was very feminine. She gave people Christmas cards and little tokens with Bible verses. She also had a very intimate and people-oriented style of communication. This was clear from two "*informal*" memoranda that she wrote to her staff – one at the beginning of 2001 while she was still Chief Planner at the then Town Council of Centurion (Nel, 2001) and the other just before the Christmas holidays that year in her capacity as Acting General Manager: City Planning in the new municipality (CTMM 2001fff). She included cartoons in the newsletter and congratulated staff members on getting married or on the birth of their babies. Verna elicited a lot of criticism for not being a "*strong leader*"<sup>48</sup>. Nonetheless, the fact that there was now a woman in charge of City Planning, which was unheard of up to that point in the former City Council of Pretoria, indicated progress towards a more inclusive demographic profile of the function.

The slight to Belinda, as well as the fact that Nikki had not been accommodated in the new structure, was a blow to the Core Team and shook

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<sup>48</sup> Verna was also not physically strong. She was often away from work due to ill health caused by the stress associated with her position as Coordinator of the City Planning function (interview Nel 2001).

our confidence. Again, within a very short space of time, as was the case when the Core Team was first established, the power had shifted completely. Although bureaucracies are generally characterised by stable power relations (Flyvbjerg, 1998), the restructuring process of the CTMM created space for more dynamic power relations to evolve. The failure by the Top Management to communicate clearly on the “*rules of the game*” further contributed to the instability of the power relations on the lower levels.

Henry went back to the office immediately after our meeting with Mike and drafted a report for Wonder Nkosi’s signature nominating Belinda as the IDP Coordinator. The report was approved by the Mayoral Committee without hitches. Soon afterwards, Nikki and Belinda moved to the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Wonder Nkosi, to work on the IDP. They compiled the IDP process plan (CTMM, 2001vv) in September 2001 and Belinda was eventually (early in 2003) appointed to the position of General Manager: IDP, a higher position than that achieved by any other member of the initial Core Team. The manner in which Belinda became IDP coordinator is another example of officials restructuring the municipality “*from the bottom up*” in the face of indecisiveness and a lack of guidance from the Top Management.

Mike Yates placed former Core Team members in all the other coordinator positions. At this stage, the City Planning function consisted of the following components: Strategic Spatial Planning (coordinated by Johnny Coetzee); Regional Spatial Planning (coordinated by Henry Bezuidenhout); Building Management (coordinated by Alf Vorster); Outdoor Advertising (later changed to Streetscape Management and coordinated by Kal Rofail, who was later replaced by Hugo de Wet); and City Planning Support (which I briefly coordinated before being replaced by Valerie Steyn on 3 August 2001).

All of the above functions were faced with the challenge of finalising a new structure that would be able to serve the newly demarcated metropolitan area. Owing to the fact that Henry, Johnny and I still had our offices in the HB Phillips building, we were now geographically isolated from the rest of the interim management team and from Mike. This made us feel isolated on other

levels as well. They put pressure on Mike to arrange that offices be made available for them in Munitoria, where Mike's office and that of all the other Functional Coordinators were. Not only had the power relations changed with Verna's appointment, its physical locus within the municipality had changed too. After an intense struggle to find accommodation in Munitoria, the three former Core Team members left the HB Phillips building at the end of July 2001 to take up offices there. Henry was accommodated on the fourth floor and Johnny and I on the seventh.

Even once the problem of office accommodation had been resolved, the task of the Functional Coordinators remained a difficult one. This was particularly so due to the fact that no political decision had as yet been reached on the division of the municipal area into regions or zones. Yet, even in the absence of clarity regarding the regions and, for that matter, any strategic leadership for the spatial development of the new sprawling municipal area of the CTMM, city planning officials continued preparing and submitting reports with regard to the many significant development projects that were initiated before the establishment of the unicity structure. These included projects such as the Eerste Fabrieken Project (a project to stimulate retail activity in Mamelodi), the Ring Rail Development (a project aimed at developing a circular rail route that would significantly improve the accessibility of large parts of Tshwane by rail), and the redevelopment of Winterveldt (a presidential lead project aimed at upgrading the township towards the North of the city) (CTMM, 2001x).

For the most part, however, the actual implementation of these projects had stood still for a period of seven months since December 2000 (CTMM, 2001II). The reasons were that there was no clarity with regard to the budget that was available to each Directorate; that there were sometimes long delays before reports were considered; and that reports were referred back owing to the fact that they were not in the correct format, or had not been approved by all the parties indicated in the report-flow process.

Flyvbjerg (1998:205) generalizes that municipalities show low levels of activity during the period following an election and argues that this could be due to

“*changes in the City Council’s political composition*”. In the Aalborg case, the Aalborg Project is dormant for almost two years following the election. It would seem, therefore, that the apparent apathy from Tshwane’s new political leadership and the lull in activities following the election of 5 December 2000 was not a phenomenon unique to Tshwane. Yet more cases will be necessary to see whether generalizations regarding internal power relations and the role of communication in establishing and maintaining such relations could be made.

One project with which significant progress was made in terms of actual implementation was a huge investment by the Department of Trade and Industry towards the development of their new campus in Trevenna (CTMM, 2001x, Jacobs 2001). This was one project that enjoyed the full support from top management in the person of the COO, Wonder Nkosi, and from the political level in the person of the Executive Mayor. From the municipality’s side, the project was driven by the Inner City Team, which consisted mostly of planners working directly under the Chief Operating Officer, Wonder Nkosi. The fact that officials continued working on these significant projects without decisive guidance or support from the Executive Mayor and his Committee or from the Municipal Manager (CEO), seem to point to an innate “*momentum*” of the organization – a tendency to continue with “*business as usual*” despite the fact that the institutional environment had undergone sudden and radical change. Furthermore, it strengthens the impression that, from just after the establishment of the new structure in December 2000, it was the officials, rather than the new Top Management, that was the driving force behind the municipality.

In July 2001 the Top Management for the first time requested a list of all the existing projects that were being planned or implemented in each function (CTMM, 2001II). This request from Top Management is at the same time an indication of their lack of active management up to that point (six months after the establishment of the new Municipality) and of a move toward empowering themselves with knowledge of the main activities and projects of the respective Departments up to that stage.

The neutral, official demands for documentation from officials made by the new Tshwane top management was an effective way of de-politicising the restructuring process. Flyvbjerg (1998:20) describes a similar strategy used by the Aalborg Bus Company through their “ostensibly neutral” demands regarding the location of the bus strategy. Flyvbjerg (1998:20) shows that presenting seemingly value-neutral, rational arguments or requests (instructions in the Tshwane case), could be a strategy for defusing resistance and avoiding conflict, while furthering political (in the sense of *Realpolitik*) aims.

The operational environment was still in a state of disarray when Verna appeared on the scene. Aspects such as the availability of leave forms bearing the name of the new municipality, signing powers, letterheads, a filing system and the budget had to be attended to (CTMM, 2001II)<sup>49</sup>. At that stage the City Planning Division functioned “*unofficially*” under the Housing Department (CTMM, 2001II). It was a thorn in the side of the planning Co-ordinators that there was no reference to “*Planning*” in the name of the Department. By 12 October 2001, Nava officially requested that the name Housing, Land and Environmental Planning be used for the Department and City Planning for the Division (CTMM, 2001ww & 2001xx). The acronym “*HOLEP*” was first introduced by Mike Yates and was eventually taken up by the other officials.

For little more than a month after Verna had been nominated to manage the City Planning function, Mike Yates remained closely involved with the function. The working relationship with the existing managers, most of whom were once again not part of the interim management team (or Co-ordinators) was something that bothered Mike. The matter was discussed at a Coordinator’s Meeting held on 6 August 2001 (the last such meeting to be chaired by Mike before Verna took over the responsibility). It was decided that

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<sup>49</sup> Week after week, these issues remained on the agenda of the Coordinators’ meeting. By October 2001, there was still uncertainty regarding Support Services for the function (CTMM, 5 October 2001). Most of the Co-ordinators did not have secretaries and none of the officials were sure where to apply for stationery to be ordered, or how the filing system had operated since December 2000.

Mike would investigate the matter and try to find a place for each of the existing managers. Subsequently, Skaap Mouton, who had been responsible for the old “*Guideline Planning*” (formerly called “*Forward Planning*”) function in Pretoria, was asked to assist with the management of correspondence, as well as queries from the office of the SEO (Strategic Executive Officer), Nava Pillay, the Executive Mayor and the CEO. Tony Walker, previously responsible for the Land Use Management function at Pretoria, was asked to attend to the City Planning support services and Pieter de Haas, Chief Town Planner of the Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Substructure (Akasia) worked under Henry to co-ordinate all land-use applications in the Northern area (CTMM, 2001oo). Leon du Bruto from Centurion had joined Johnny’s Strategic Metropolitan Spatial Planning team. This was a conscious effort by Mike to accommodate the existing managers, all of whom worked either directly under or closely with him in the previous dispensation. This was another example of the power of personal relationships. Mike was “*looking after*” the colleagues with whom he had built a relationship over many years.

On 1 August 2001, Verna sent out a memorandum, which I had prepared for Verna’s signature, to the staff members of the City Planning, Building Control and related administrative functions (CTMM, 2001mm). On the letterhead the function was referred to as “*City Planning and Zoning*”. Again, a new permutation to denote the City Planning function was used, building on the pattern of confusion that emerged from the beginning of the restructuring process. The name “*City Planning and Zoning*” furthermore indicated that a conceptual split existed between the two components of the function at that stage. This went directly against the stated intention of the officials as expressed at the workshop of 14 June 2001 that land-use management and spatial planning should be integrated.

This split was reinforced by the list of Functional Coordinators for the City Planning Function given later on in the memorandum, which indicated that Henry Bezuidenhout would be responsible for Land Use Management and Johnny Coetzee for Spatial Planning. Although it was explicitly stated in the letter that the functions did not represent a new structure for City Planning and

that it was merely an arrangement to ensure that service delivery could continue, it could be seen to represent a reversion to the old structure as it existed at the City Council of Pretoria where Land Use Management and Spatial Planning were two distinct functions operating, for the most part, in isolation.

A remarkable aspect of the memorandum I prepared for Verna, however, was that in terms of it, the power of the coordinators was increased. It was stated that “*the Coordinators will have the full operational responsibility of the functions Tshwane-wide*”. The existing line managers were to act as “*Regional Coordinators*” who would report to the Functional Coordinators. This meant that the coordinators were no longer merely responsible for restructuring (although that responsibility remained), but that they now also had to manage the day-to-day operations of their functions. With the memorandum Verna brought the coordinators into the mainstream of management of the function, albeit merely in an acting capacity. As such, it signalled a milestone in the restructuring process.

Verna closed the memorandum to staff of 1 August 2001 (CTMM, 2001mm) by acknowledging that the “*protracted nature*” of the restructuring process and lack of information on aspects of the corporate restructuring process caused “*uncertainty and negativity*” among officials. She added, however, that “*all indications are that it will not be long before a permanent structure is in place for Tshwane City Planning*”. This echoed an earlier paragraph of the memorandum, which stated that the arrangement with regard to the Functional Coordinators was not expected to remain in place longer than a month. It also echoed similar optimistic statements that had been made since the inception of the Core Team, and even before that, when Mike Yates presented his “*End-of-an-era*” function. Little did Verna or I, who compiled the letter on her behalf, know at that stage that it would be more than two years before the final structure would be approved and the posts filled.

In the Aalborg case (Flyvbjerg, 1998), also, longer delays than the Technical Department could ever have foreseen characterise the implementation of the



Aalborg plan. Finishing the north-south bicycle route takes almost a decade and a half (Flyvbjerg, 1998:196). The reduced-speed zone on Danmarksgade is implemented five years later than planned (Flyvbjerg, 1998:200) and the work on John F. Kennedy Square is delayed a decade before implementation (Flyvbjerg, 1998:200). The division of the Aalborg Project into stages and the later extension of the project timeframe to twenty years by the alderman for the Technical Department (Flyvbjerg, 1998:59) was a strategy for “pacifying” opposing parties, particularly the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. In Tshwane, however, resistance was managed in the opposite manner, namely by continually assuring officials that the permanent filling of posts, which the officials so anxiously awaited, was imminent.

It is also telling that, apart from a few minor tweaks, the list of functions presented by Verna did, after all, come to represent the structure of the “new” City Planning function as approved by the Mayoral Committee in May 2002 (CTMM, 2002o).

When Verna communicated to her staff in her new capacity of Coordinator for City Planning (CTMM 2001mm) she also cited the advertisement for the position of General Manager: Housing as proof that the City Planning function resorted under the General Manager: Housing, which in turn was a division of the Housing Strategic Unit (see *figure vii* for an organogram of the Housing Strategic Unit). Even on Verna’s level (the third tier of management in the municipality) external clues such as the job advertisements for the General Manager positions, had to be followed up for information that one would have expected to have been provided to the officials directly from the Top Management. It was therefore not a case of middle management not conveying to their teams messages that they were given by Top Management, but rather that of a complete failure by Top Management to communicate with, or provide strategic leadership to the officials who reported to them. It furthermore caused confusion that the Division: Housing, had the same name as that of the Strategic Unit/Department: Housing, of which it was a part. The terms “Directorate”, “Department”, “Division” and “Strategic Unit” were all at some stage used to refer to the larger “*Housing*” structure. The

confusion that emerged regarding names of functions and structures could be seen as a reflection or symptom of the general lack of stability that characterised the restructuring process. As far as the names were concerned, at least, such stability could have been established with ease through proper communication by Top Management.

In the absence of any communication from the Tshwane Top Management, planning officials had nothing to “respond to”. In effect, their ability to resist the new organizational changes or to influence them in any way, was greatly diminished by the deafening silence experienced from the top. This contrasts sharply with the effective resistance to the Aalborg Project mustered by the “troika” of powers in the Aalborg case (Flyvbjerg, 1998:46), which is constituted of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the local newspaper, the *Aalborg Stiftstidende*, and the police. According to Gunder and Mouat (2002:129) the consequence of power when one lacks the ability to resist is symbolic violence and victimization. They (2002:129) state that *“If there is no scope for resistance, then only domination and oppression may occur resulting in violence and victimization on those acted against”*.

Just as it was strange that, during a time of discussion on citizen participation and alternatives in planning in Aalborg (Flyvbjerg, 1998:51) no alternatives were entertained in the Aalborg Project, it is strange that, during a time when democracy was such a topical issue in South Africa, the restructuring of the CTMM was done in such an undemocratic manner. The conflict that exists between the prominent metanarratives and the local realities are clear in both cases.

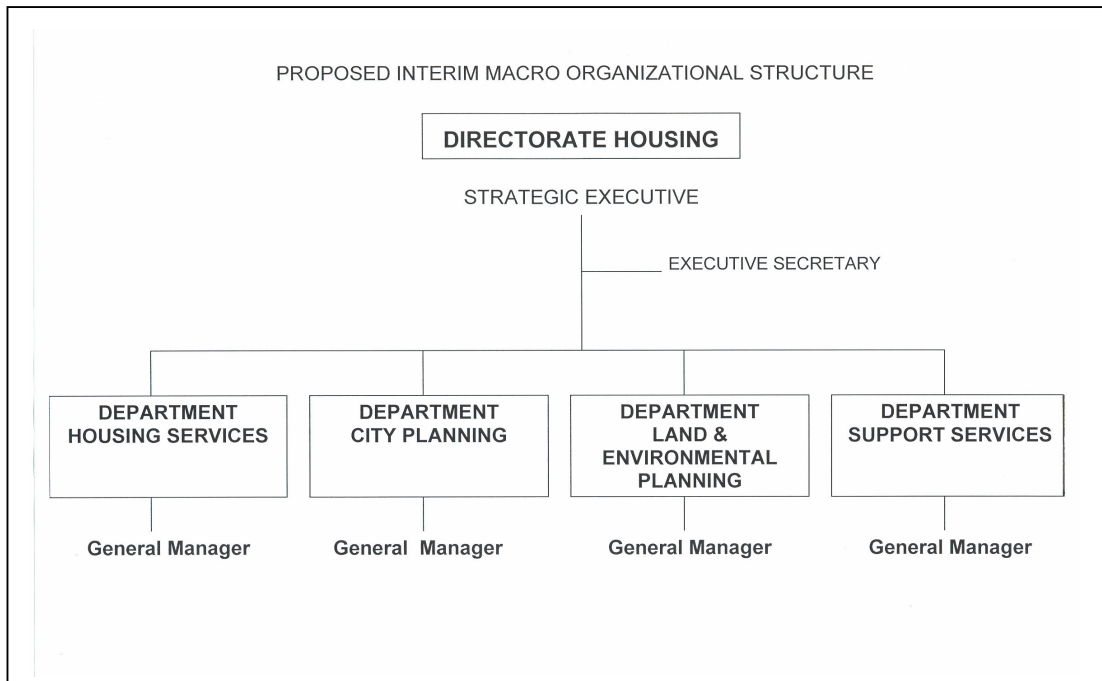


Figure vii: Proposed new macro organizational structure: Housing Directorate, as on 7 August 2001

Verna and the Functional Coordinators had to work to meet the deadline for presenting a new purpose structure of the city planning function to the Acting Strategic Executive: Housing (Si Bogopa), which had been set as Monday, 6 August 2001. Time proves to be a deciding factor in the decision regarding a new organizational structure for the planning function. In the interest of meeting the stringent deadlines put to Verna, the interim management team of the planning function agrees to accept the status quo model. Time is also a factor in Flyvbjerg's Aalborg case. The Task Force for the Aalborg Project foregoes an analysis of the effects the implementation of the "frequency model" would have on the buses in practice because of time constraints: "We came to the conclusion that in reality the time schedule [for the Aalborg Project] would collapse if we were to carry out a systematic analysis of this." The irony, of course, is that the implementation of the Aalborg Project would eventually be protracted over more than a decade. The same irony applies to Tshwane, where the approval of the final organizational structure, and the permanent filling of posts (which was actually what the officials chased after) would occur several years later than originally envisaged. Gunder and Mouat (2002:135) show how "the power of time", which includes, for example, the tactical use of short windows of time for objections, is used as a strategic tool to exclude resistance by the public under the New Zealand Resource

Management Act. As was the case with the division of the Aalborg Project in phases by the Technical Department, the rationality behind the use of time in the Tshwane case was *“the rationality of power, ..., not the rationality of technical or economic argument”* (Flyvbjerg, 1998:53).

In order to reach the deadline for presenting the new purpose structure to Si Bogopa, a workshop to discuss the purpose structure was arranged for Friday, 3 August 2001 (CTMM, 2001kk) for all officials working in the city planning function. Verna requested all the regional line function managers (ie the existing managers) to attend and to allow their staff to attend the workshop as well. The Purpose Structure Workshop held in the Premos Auditorium, the same venue that was used for the Core Team’s Purpose Structure Workshop held on 14 June that year. It was Verna’s first opportunity to address the planners face-to-face. After I had welcomed the members, Verna introduced the coordinators and showed the officials the proposed new purpose structure. The roughly 100 officials from the City Planning functions of all the former Administrative Units who attended accepted the structure, as well as Verna’s first appearance as the new Coordinator: City Planning, without remonstrations or, for that matter, discussion. At the workshop it was also announced that I would no longer coordinate the City Planning Support functions, although I would continue to assist Verna with the communication portfolio. Johnny used the workshop as an opportunity to request an indication from the planners as to who would like to join the Strategic Metropolitan Spatial Planning Function (SMSP) (later referred to only as Metropolitan Spatial Planning) of which he was the Functional Coordinator.

A few weeks after the Purpose Structure Workshop, in September 2001, Nava Pillay, who up to that stage was the Divisional Manager: Operations in the office of the Municipal Manager, was appointed as the Strategic Executive Officer: Housing, without the post having been advertised. He replaced Si Bogopa who had acted in the position since July 2001. Nava was known as an excellent strategist and a strong leader, and had positioned himself as an informal confidante and advisor to the Municipal Manager. It was clear from his comments at management meetings that the focus of the Department would be *“housing provision”*, as this was perceived to be what the success of

the municipality would be judged on at the end of its current five-year term (CTMM, 2001uu).

In the course of their co-operation following the so-called “*life-and-death*” meeting, the relationship between the Aalborg Technical Department and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce develops into what Flyvbjerg (1998:82) describes as “a prototypical example of a stable power relation.” Following the nomination of Verna as the manager of the planning function, the relationship between the Tshwane officials and the new top management gradually move to a stable one. This process is facilitated by the permanent appointment of a Strategic Executive Officer to manage the Housing, Land and Environmental Planning Division within which the planning function finds itself in the person of Nava Pillay. It is apparent that the normalization of the new organizational structure, with all its managerialist trappings, is a key factor in stabilising the power relations between the officials and the top management. Unlike the Aalborg example, however, where this relation develops between two parties of equal strength, the Tshwane power relation remains a very unequal one, with the balance of power unquestionably on the side of those occupying the very top of Tshwane’s hierarchical pyramid.

#### *A new strategic planning function*

It is probably not surprising that the officials who indicated their willingness to become part of the new SMSP function at the workshop that was held on 3 August 2001, all turned out to be friends of Johnny, or colleagues who had worked closely with him in the past. Once again, it was not primarily merit or expertise that shaped the new function (although all the members probably qualified in both respects), but rather the power of personal relationships. I was involved in the team almost by default, as I no longer had the role of coordinator and was uncomfortable returning to the Pretoria Inner City Partnership where I had been working before joining the Core Team in May 2001. Furthermore, my role of assisting Verna with communication concerning the City Planning function was not a full time one. Jan Roode, who had a strong land-use orientation, had been a personal friend and a colleague of

Johnny of several years. Marius Nadel was formerly with the GPMC and also knew Johnny on a personal level. He had very strong project management experience and was thought to be a valuable addition to the team on the grounds of his interest in urban economics. Jakša Barbir, who had immigrated from Croatia eight years earlier, was the former head of the former City Council of Pretoria's Urban Design section and had served on a number of working groups of the Pretoria Inner City Partnership while Johnny was the Programme Manager of the Partnership. He was also a Co-Task Team Leader in the Core Team structure. He was strongly critical of the bureaucratic system within which he worked, but was generally regarded as a very skilled and thorough planner<sup>50</sup>. Colin Hattingh, who had also worked with the Pretoria Inner City Partnership in the past, formerly worked as a planner in Jakša's team. The only members from outside of the old City Council of Pretoria were Kestell Serfontein, who led the Task Team for Spatial Planning under the Core Team and Leon du Bruto, who acted as the Head of Town Planning in Centurion in Verna Nel's absence. (Kestell involved Leon, his erstwhile supervisor, in the team shortly after its inception). Both Leon and Kestell were predisposed to the "new" approach to planning, i.e. moving away from "statistics-based" planning to a more intuitive approach, making use of the insight/foresight technique and comfortable with concepts such as chaos theory. Kestell handed out copies of Chapter 6 "The new planning paradigm" of TI Sanders' (1998) book "Strategic thinking and the new science" to all the members of the team. In the former City Council of Pretoria, for one, it never happened that reading material from an external source (ie other than Council documents) was introduced or discussed at meetings. This was one aspect that contributed to the sense of "newness" within the SMSP team.

Despite the fact that all the members of the initial SMSP team were strong individuals, with very divergent views on planning, the members developed a positive and productive working relationship that was reminiscent of the way in which the Core Team "clicked". For the second time in the restructuring of the city planning function, an effective small group, as described by

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<sup>50</sup> Jakša was also an outspoken atheist, which juxtaposed him to Mike Yates, the Executive Director he worked under in the former City Council of Pretoria, as Mike was an equally outspoken Christian, who quoted Bible verses and invited officials into his office to pray for them.

McClendon and Quay (1992) emerged (the first was the Core Team). The creation of the SMSP function was a chance for planners to dream again, to once more think about the city (and by this I mean the vast expanse of the new Tshwane Metropolitan Area) on a grand scale. There was a pervasive pioneering spirit in the team, a sense of adventure at entering territory previously uncharted in the municipality.

The strategic thinking/strategic planning approach adopted by the SMSP team was a radical move away from the integrated development planning of the previous couple of years. As expressed by Jan Roode (pers com Roode, 2002) integrated planning had turned the planners into “*administrators*”, arranging meetings for the planning zone forums, answering queries from the public and receiving and responding to written inputs. It was also an approach very different to that of the so-called “*land-use planners*”, who followed a control-oriented rather than a facilitative approach.

During the second half of 2002, the initiating members of the SMSP function spent many hours in the “*Operations Room*” that had been allocated to them on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of Munitoria in lengthy and intense discussions on the shape and content of the future function. Once again, as was the case with the Core Team more than a year before, a stimulating synergy developed in the small group that initiated the SMSP function. Once again, also people were placed in positions of relative power<sup>51</sup> on the grounds of “*who they knew*” rather than “*what they knew*”. The difference in this case was that the actors were given an opportunity to indicate their willingness to participate in the new function and were not “*chosen*” in an autocratic manner, as was the case with the Core Team members and Task Team Leaders.

From the start, the emphasis of the SMSP function was on strategic planning. Mainly as a result of arguments put forward by Kestell and Leon the SMSP team adopted the principle that the strategic planning process should not be a rigid, scientific process, but should allow for a certain degree of “*gut feel*” or intuition.

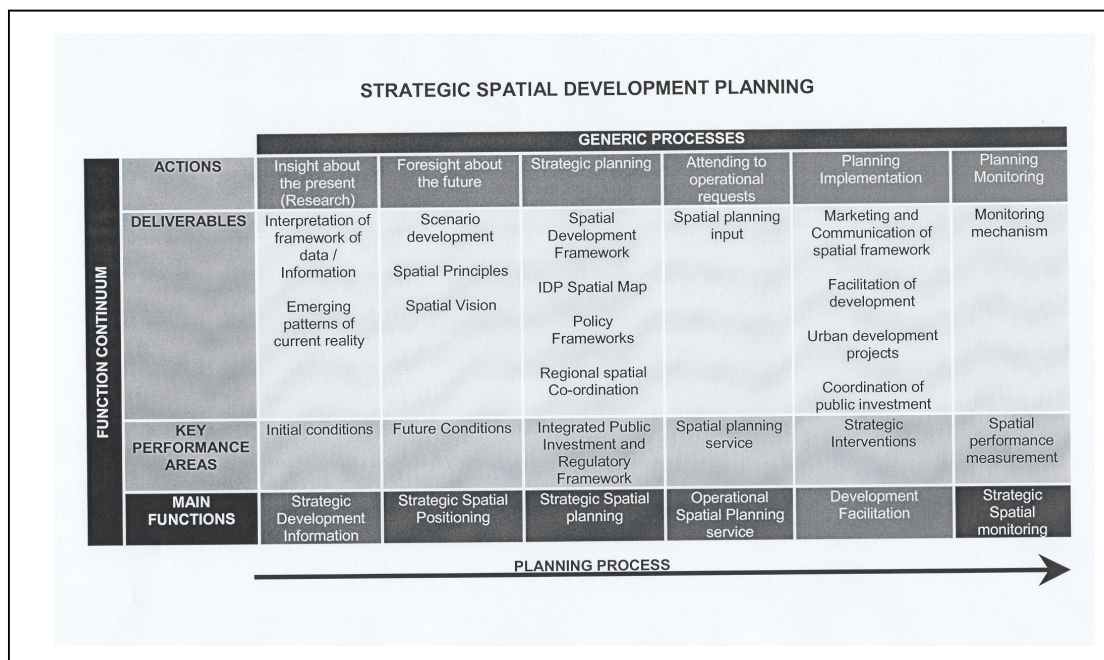
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<sup>51</sup> There was, from the outset, no doubt that the initiating members would eventually form the management of the new strategic planning function.



Against this backdrop, the team used generic strategic planning processes (once again supplied by Kestell, see *figure viii*) as the point of departure for the structure of the function. The generic processes were the following:

- Insight about the present (research);
- Foresight about the future;
- Strategic planning;
- Attending to operational requests;
- Planning implementation; and
- Planning monitoring.



*Figure viii: Table indicating how the strategic spatial planning process was derived from generic strategic planning processes*

The SMSP initiating team also spent time considering the type of people that would be required to work in each component of the function. As far as could be ascertained, this was the first time in the history of the local authority that a function was not designed merely in clinical OD (organizational design) terms, but that attention was also given to the characteristics of the people who would ideally be appointed to staff the function. Of course, this was no different from what was done by the Core Team several months before when criteria were developed for nominating the Task Team leaders. In the light of the constraints referred to earlier, however, it was not possible to fill existing

vacancies with external candidates who met the SMSP initiators' ambitious requirements, let alone create and fill additional new posts. Ultimately, planners who were already working in related functions (eg the research function of the City Planning and Development Department of the former City Council, headed by Johann Steyn) slotted in under Johnny “*by default*”. Again, despite efforts to establish a new function *de novo*, much of the existing structure had to be retained. The persistence of the “*old*” structure was emerging as one of many themes that seemed to run like a golden thread<sup>52</sup> through the story of Tshwane’s restructuring process. The main reason for this was probably that no new appointments could be made. By appointing existing staff members who were used to the old way of doing things in what was supposed to be “new” structures, the object was defeated.

A technically sophisticated and informative digital presentation on the function was prepared by Jakša and shown to all the planners (Barbir, 2001). An open invitation was again extended to those who wished to do so to join the function. This resulted in some of the land-use planners “*crossing the floor*” to join the SMSP function, much to the aggravation of Henry, who was facing an ever-increasing workload in the newly established Regional Spatial Planning function. This was a continuance of the “*poaching*” phenomenon that had developed early in the restructuring process and persisted throughout the study period. This was symptomatic of the state of flux the municipality was in during the study period. Moving staff from one function to another without proper prior authorisation or due process would have been unthinkable, for example, in the former City Council of Pretoria.

The first meeting of the SMSP management team was held on 17 October 2001 (Strategic Spatial Planning, 2001). At that stage, the function consisted of the following components: Strategic Development Information, Spatial Positioning, Strategic Spatial Planning, Operational Spatial Planning Service, Development Facilitation and Strategic Spatial Monitoring. As envisaged, a manager from among the ranks of the initiating team was nominated for each of these functions, which had evolved from the generic strategic planning

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<sup>52</sup> A number of these “golden threads”, or emerging truths, are discussed in Chapter 7.

model introduced by Kestell (see *figure viii*). The Managers were given the task to assess, develop and implement their functions, while liaising with each other and concerned parties. In essence, this was the same instruction as that given to the Task Team leaders by the Core Team half a year before. Furthermore, just as the Task Teams had been given a “*frame of reference*” by the Core Team, a framework was also provided to the Acting Managers of the SMSP function. The framework consisted of the following steps:

1. describing the function, its purpose and objectives;
2. developing a strategy to achieve those objectives;
3. drawing up an inventory of the work that has been done and existing documentation and integrating it into the new function;
4. determining shortcomings;
5. identifying strategic actions, and
6. prioritising and programming the implementation of the function’s operations.

This meeting represented a significant milestone in the life of the new strategic planning function, and it was agreed to have such meetings in the “*Operations Room*” on a weekly basis.

In discussions by the SMSP Management Team the point of City Planning not having been given its rightful place in the organizational structure, which was first formally raised at the Core Team workshop held on 4 July 2001, was often discussed. There was general consensus that the only explanation for top management and the political leadership not giving the function a higher status in the structure was ignorance as to its actual importance. It was therefore decided, soon after the first meeting, to draw up a document under the title of “*City Planning – a rough guide*” setting out in very basic terms what City Planning was all about (CTMM, 2001ss). The guide consisted of 10 pages with ample illustrations and text in a large font size with headings such as “*What is a city?*”, “*Why do cities have to be planned?*”, “*What is the city planning function?*”, etc. It was thought that the sparse, simple text, large font and use of graphic elements would effectively convey the importance of City Planning to the Councillors, who had no background in town and regional

planning. What was not articulated, though, was the implicit condescension that could be inferred from the overly simplified manner in which the document was presented. The tone and format was that which one would have employed to convey a message to children. It bore testimony to the officials' deep-seated distrust of the competence of the new leadership. Nonetheless, the document was copied and distributed at the next meeting of the Mayoral Committee and was apparently well received. It did not, however, result in any change with regard to the status of the City Planning function.

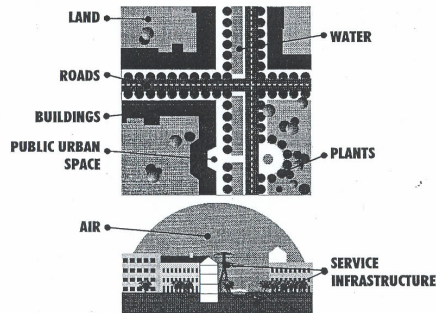
Flyvbjerg (1998:160) states that "*One can attempt to use rationality as power when one has no other power.*" Just as the Aalborg Technical Department attempts to use rationality as a tool to counter the plan proposed by the Social Democratic City Council Group, the planners use rationality in an attempt to convince the Tshwane top management of the importance of the planning function. The decisions of top management, however, were probably based on political considerations rather than on rational arguments around the importance of a strong planning function.

From the inception of the Strategic Metropolitan Spatial Planning function, there was tension between the concepts of Strategic Spatial Planning, Strategic Corporate Planning and Integrated Development Planning. Johnny's SMSP team felt that the municipality's strategic *corporate* planning, which had at its core the future of the municipality as an organization, was the responsibility of the Mayor and his committee, as well as that of the Municipal Manager. They were unambiguous about their own focus, which was strategic *spatial* planning. *Part* of this function was the preparation of spatial planning input into the municipality's Integrated Development Plan in the form of a Spatial Development Framework (SDF).

### 1. What is a city?

A city is a place where many people come together to live, socialise, work and trade.

For this purpose they occupy space and use various natural resources, such as land, water, air, minerals and plants. They build buildings, public urban spaces (such as streets, squares and parks), roads and other structures. These structures are serviced by service infrastructure (such as networks of pipes and cables).



### 2. Why do cities have to be planned?

All these resources, structures and infrastructure co-exist within the same space and are therefore called spatial elements. Apart from sharing the same space, all spatial elements depend on and affect each other.

Because of this and in order to ensure that resources are used wisely and people's needs met in a coordinated manner, all spatial elements have to be developed and used in accordance with a well thought-out plan or spatial development framework.

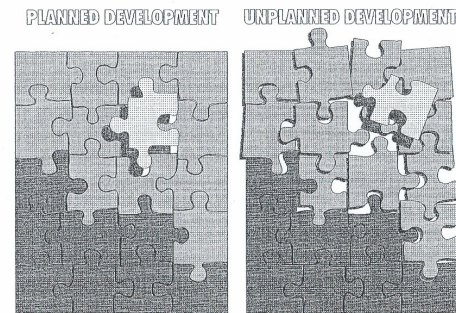


Figure ix: Extract from *City Planning – a rough guide* (CTMM2001ss)

The SMSP management team members were therefore exasperated when they heard of a symposium on “*The Restructuring and Rebirth of the City of Tshwane*” which was a joint effort between the CTMM, the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the University of Pretoria to be held on 22 and 23 November 2001.

The SMSP team became aware of the workshop through Bernard Hanekom who now acted in Johnny's place as head of the Inner City Team. According to the faxed invitation received by Bernard, the symposium has as its purpose to “*discuss issues of urban restructuring, urban growth and the apartheid City's impact on human development*”. It was therefore apparent that the focus of the symposium was *spatial* restructuring, which placed it clearly within the ambit of the core focus the SMSP function.

Yet the SMSP team was neither informed of nor consulted on the symposium. Which people are invited to key meetings is an indication of the ruling power relations. This is also clear from the Aalborg story (Flyvbjerg, 1998), where



the attendance of meetings by certain parties (e.g. the Chamber of Industry and Commerce) and the exclusion of others (e.g. the secretary of the Task Force for the Aalborg Project, and the Kayerød Neighbourhood Association) follow the contours along which opposing powers are aligned.

As far as the SMSP team could ascertain, the workshop was initiated by Noviwe Qegu, a former planning official of the Centurion Town Council and at that stage an advisor in the office of the Executive Mayor. Some enquiries followed, and eventually the SMSP management team was invited to attend the first day of the workshop. Only one of the team members, Kestell Serfontein, was invited to the second day, which would focus on a more exclusive programme. The workshop was very well presented and the speakers that had been invited to it were excellent. It was a relevant and inspiring event. Of course, this only served to increase the uncertainty the SMSP team felt regarding their place in the municipality. They felt that their expertise was being disregarded and their capacity to make a positive contribution ignored. This was yet another indication of the fragmentation of the new structure and the lack of communication and co-ordination that prevailed.

The SMSP management team was convinced that the Strategic Spatial Planning function should be in a position to advise top management and it was often mooted within the team that the function should rightfully have been situated in the office of the Executive Mayor<sup>53</sup>. Yet, despite this conviction, the team did not feel close to the Top Management at all – rather, the members had a creeping suspicion that the Mayor and his Committee, as well as the Municipal Manager/CEO, were blissfully unaware of the existence of the SMSP function. The frustration of the SMSP team with the lack of recognition for their function mirrored the struggle for recognition by the city planning function as a whole.

Another factor that made the SMSP team very uncomfortable, was the fact that Mike Yates, now part of Nava Pillay's "*Strategic Unit*", had been given the

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<sup>53</sup> This approach tallies with Wilson's (1994) findings that strategic planning should ultimately be an executive and not a staff function in order to be effective.

mandate to convene a “*Strategic Task Team (STT)*” to gather and collate strategic inputs in order to “*advise the Mayor and his team on strategic issues*” (Yates, 2001). The working group, which comprised representatives from City Planning (Kestell Serfontein, Johnny Coetzee, Jakša Barbir and Hendrik Kleynhans), Environmental Planning (Michelle Wheeler), Transportation Planning (Herman van Zyl) and Economic Development (Hein Wiese) was established by Nava Pillay to the outrage of the Strategic Spatial Planning team, who viewed the compilation of any form of strategic spatial plan for the city as their task and felt disempowered and undermined by the establishment of yet another “*strategic team*”. This was compounded by the fact that the SMSPP team had repeatedly attempted to show Nava the digital presentation on the function that was prepared by Jakša earlier. Verna eventually took Johnny and me along to a meeting she had with Nava on other issues, in order to give them the opportunity to deliver the presentation to him. However, Nava indicated that he did not have time to view the presentation, but assured Verna and Johnny that they were “*preaching to the converted*”, as he was already convinced of the importance of the strategic spatial planning function.

The management team of the Strategic Spatial Planning (SSP) team, as it was now called, discussed the matter and considered whether they should take a confrontational approach and demand that Nava acknowledge their role as the custodians of strategic spatial planning. However, it was decided to rather avoid confrontation and adopt a collaborative approach, just as the Core Team had done earlier in respect of the existing city planning managers. Therefore, the SSP religiously attended the meetings called by Mike Yates, participated actively in the discussions there and offered to do work for the group whenever the opportunity arose. As proven in the earlier stages of the restructuring process and as supported by Flyvbjerg’s (1998) account of the Aalborg case, the approach of avoiding confrontation was again greatly beneficial to the SSP team. Eventually, Kestell Serfontein and his colleagues in the Spatial Positioning sub-section compiled the document and presentation on behalf of Mike’s Strategic Task Team (STT) and in so doing



earned the respect, acknowledgement and even open admiration of the other members of the STT (later known as the City Strategic Working Group).

The reaction of Johnny and his team in this instance echoes that of the Technical Department in Flyvbjerg's (1998) case study of Aalborg, when they are presented with the "*counterplan*" to the Aalborg Project by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. At first, the Aalborg Department were "*tempted to make a devastating criticism*" of the counterplan (Flyvbjerg, 1998:73), but the alderman and section heads realise that getting the plan approved is about "*strategies and tactics*" rather than "*producing better arguments*" and eventually decide to "*maintain an air of being receptive and constructive*" (Flyvbjerg, 1998:74) towards the chamber.

As indicated earlier, active avoidance of conflict characterised both the Aalborg and the Tshwane case studies. At the close of the so-called "*life-and-death*" meeting between the Technical Department and the Aalborg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the alderman for the Technical Department surprises his staff when he offers to assist the Chambers committee for formulating proposals to change the Aalborg Project. As in the Aalborg case, employing the "*stroking strategy*" proved to be a prudent decision by Johnny's SMSP team.

Despite their initial struggle for recognition, Johnny (interview Coetzee 2004) was convinced that the Metropolitan Spatial Planning function was making a difference. According to him, the Urban Edge<sup>54</sup> that had been proposed by the function, for instance, was being respected and enforced by Councillors when considering applications for development. Although this was encouraging, it was clear that more time would have to be allowed before it would have been possible to determine with any measure of certainty whether the efforts of the Strategic Metropolitan Spatial Planning function would have a significant impact on the city form in the long run. Nonetheless, all indications are that

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<sup>54</sup> In the Tshwane context, the urban edge was an imaginary boundary outside of which development was to be discouraged in order to increase density inside the edge and in so doing combat expensive urban sprawl. On a provincial level, an urban edge was also proposed for the Gauteng province to denote the area within which development should be concentrated.

towards the end of 2001, a year after the establishment of the new municipality, Johnny and his team had succeeded in establishing a new strategic spatial planning function for Tshwane.

### *Regional spatial planning at the coalface*

While Johnny and his team at first dwelt mainly on the philosophical aspects of the SMSP function, the activities of the Regional Spatial Planning function (often referred to by Henry Bezuidenhout in meetings as the “*Land-use Planning Function*”) had a strong operational focus. The issue of regions had not been finalized. Henry and his team were very concerned by the absence of corporate guidance or finality with regard to the division of the municipal area into so-called “*management regions*”. It was felt that, without finality on the regions, a decision could not be taken on the interim structure of the Regional Spatial Planning function. This problem was compounded when it was rumoured (CTMM, 2001ww) that the engineering services would be centralised. The planners in Henry’s team did not view a centralised model of service delivery as a viable one, and feared that, if the engineering services adopted such a model, it might be enforced on the other municipal functions, including land use management. In an attempt to avoid such a scenario, the Regional Spatial Planning team decided to take matters into their own hands. Lettie Steyn, a planner who had worked under Tony Walker in the former City Council of Pretoria and was now in Henry’s Regional Spatial Planning team, proposed a model of eight management regions. The proposal was accepted, not only by the planners, but also, to the surprise of the planners, by the Transportation Engineers. This was another example of planning officials taking the initiative on important issues in the absence of leadership from the new Top Management<sup>55</sup>. Henry put in place a team of planners for each region and each planning team was headed by an acting Deputy Manager. The new teams set to work immediately to deal with the backlog that had built up as a result of the delay in restoring the delegated authority of the town planners, which had initially been revoked with the establishment of the new

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<sup>55</sup> Another example of this was the initiative taken by the Core Team to “get the ball rolling” with regard to the process for the compilation of an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality.

municipal structure and which was again in question following termination of Nomgqibelo's role as manager of the City Planning function (interview Bezuidenhout, 2001).

The backlog was not the only factor that placed Henry's team at the coalface during the 2001/2002 financial year (i.e. July 2001 to June 2002). Another factor that placed enormous pressure on the land-use planners was the fact that, under instruction from the Executive Mayor, there was a clampdown on property developers who proceeded with developments without obtaining the necessary approval from the municipality. Again Nava Pillay requested his trusted advisor, Mike Yates<sup>56</sup> to drive the campaign. This process later gained new momentum after the collapse of a part of the roof structure of Brooklyn Mall in March 2002. The collapse eventually proved to have been due to the fact that a shopkeeper had removed a load-bearing wall and not to any fault of the Municipality. However, the incident brought to light that the centre had been operating without a valid occupation certificate. This put renewed pressure on the Municipality to enforce land-use and building controls. For the first time in history, the Municipality enforced regulations with regard to the approval of building plans and concomitant matters to such an extent the building was stopped on premises where the necessary approvals had not yet been obtained.

This time, it was not Johnny and his team that experienced discomfort because of Mike's involvement, but Henry and his. Developers (for instance those of the Cherry Lane Centre in Brooklyn) were losing tens of thousands of rands every day they could not proceed with building. They spent many hours in heated discussion with Henry and planners from his team, as well as with the acting Manager of the Building Control function, Alf Vorster, trying to resolve the matter and expedite approvals. Henry adopted a facilitative approach in the light of the substantial investment made in the city by the developers in question and was frustrated by Mike's rigid and heavy-handed approach (interview Bezuidenhout 2001).

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<sup>56</sup> Mike described himself as Nava's "arms bearer" (interview, Yates, 2002).

Matters were often complicated by the fact that, in spite of the Mayor's instruction, some private developers approached Councillors and even members of the Mayoral Committee directly for approval for projects. Where a developer was sympathetically received by the Councillor or Member of the Mayoral Committee, the formal application procedures became no more than rubberstamping. These issues brought to the fore the difficulties of reconciling the municipality's regulatory duty and the challenges of a more facilitative approach in the new paradigm of developmental local government (CTMM, 2001aaa). There had still been no discourse on a corporate level regarding the role, place or approach of City Planning in the new municipal structure.

In October 2001, Henry took the initiative to address an issue that had been a bone of contention in the City Planning and Development Department of the former City Council of Pretoria for a number of years (CTMM, 2001yy). There had for a very long time been bitter frustration with the Planning Technicians because of the fact that many of them did essentially the same work as the Planners, but received neither equal recognition, nor equal remuneration. On the other hand, the planners were bitterly upset when, on one or two occasions in the past, a Technician was appointed in a vacant Planner's post, as they felt that this eroded the base of the Planning profession. Henry started a discussion forum and cited the National Qualifications Framework and the new legislation on Planning Professions to address the problem. The initiative, which eventually led to an adjustment of the remuneration of the Planning Technicians, while retaining a job title that was distinct from that of the City Planners, was received very well by his team and by all accounts improved his popularity as a manager. Within the scope of his authority, Henry had done what the new Top Management had failed so miserably to do. He had made it a priority to attend to so-called "*soft issues*" or "*people issues*" and in so doing greatly improved his team's sense of commitment and belonging.

Henry also facilitated that establishment of a new function within the City Planning Department, namely Land Use Legislation and Administration (LULA). This function, which was formalised in March 2002, contained the functions foreseen by the Core Team under the heading of Land Use

Information. The function was, for the interim, headed by Tony Walker, who was formerly the Head of Development Control, the land use section of the City Council of Pretoria and later placed in charge of City Planning support services by Mike Yates (see page 132). LULA depended heavily on a computerised management system for processing land use applications, the APS (Application Processing System). The creation of this function, on the level of Manager, seemed to lend additional weight to land use planning (now officially called Regional Spatial Planning) and to contribute towards diminishing the prominence of strategic spatial planning. This view was strongly confirmed by Johnny in an interview (interview Coetzee, 2004).

### *City Planning all at sea*

While Johnny was establishing a new function and Henry was struggling to keep up with operational demands, the issue of the finalization of the organizational structure, and the staffing thereof, was a constant concern. Since her nomination as Coordinator: City Planning in July 2001, Verna very often had to compile and submit documentation regarding, among other things, the purpose, objectives and structure of the City Planning function. These inputs were used to develop a consolidated organizational strategy for the Housing Strategic Unit, or, as it was called by August 2001, the Directorate: Housing. Whenever such documentation had to be submitted, it was viewed as a chance to obtain the appropriate recognition for City Planning in terms of the level upon which it appeared in the organizational structure. In the draft consolidated organizational strategy of the Housing Directorate which appeared in August 2001, (CTMM 2001pp) the approved macro organizational structure (the structure developed by Yarona Creative Management Consultants) (*figure vi*) was given, as well as a proposed structure where City Planning appeared as a Department alongside Housing Services and Land and Environmental Planning (*figure vii*).

In the body of the draft consolidated organizational strategy of the Housing Directorate (CTMM 2001pp), it was stated that City Planning was one of the key responsibilities of the Directorate, which "*implies that there should be a*

*separate division within the Department Housing Services, to execute the **city planning and zoning** (another example of the confusion that arose regarding the names of functions and sections) function” (my emphasis and added parenthesis). The document stated that the Top Management of the Directorate felt that City Planning should be a separate Department under a General Manager “due to the key responsibilities and size of the city planning responsibility within the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality”.*

It is clear that, while the overriding consideration for resistance by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Aalborg is *retail earnings* (Flyvbjerg, 1998:71), in the Tshwane case the main rationale for the actions by the planning officials is *the will to advancement within the bureaucratic structure*. In both cases, however, the advancement of personal interests dominate. In Aalborg, Flyvbjerg (1998:83) finds that “it is the preliminary, backstage power play, not the plan’s rubber-stamping by the City Council, which is the real politics of planning in Aalborg”. In Tshwane, this “Realpolitik” consists of the jostling of planners to secure both their own positions and that of their function in the new organizational structure. Flyvbjerg (1998:36) views the will to survival as the “most fundamental aspect of a will to power”. In the Tshwane bureaucracy, to survive meant to scramble for a position as high as possible in the organizational hierarchy. The managerialist nature of the municipality meant that success could be defined, for the most part, in structural terms.

However, notwithstanding the strong, rational arguments put forward by the planners, it would be almost another year before City Planning was recognized as a function on the level of General Manager in the organizational structure. Not only were the planners powerless in changing the status of their function (however strongly they believed that it should be done), but they were also powerless in eliciting any response from Top Management on their submission. It seemed that the fate of the City Planning function, and by association that of the staff members working in the function, was simply ignored by Top Management.

It was therefore clear to all that City Planning, which was still not officially recognised as a function at the level of General Manager, would not enjoy the status in the new structure that it had in the past. At the first management meeting of the Department of Housing, Land Use and Environmental Planning (HOLEP), which was the new name given to the Housing Directorate, Verna's position as acting General Manager for the City Planning function was confirmed "*while the status of the function was being formalised*" (CTMM, 2001uu).

Verna chaired the first of her weekly Co-ordinator's Meetings on 5 October 2001 (CTMM, 2001ww). At this stage one of her concerns was that the Top Management had requested that reports be submitted by all Divisions on the period from July 2000 to the end of September 2001 for a management report to the Mayoral Committee, as well as for the envisaged Tshwane Annual Report. However, by the time the Co-ordinators again met on 19 October 2001, the deadline had lapsed and none of them had submitted the requested information. This could probably be ascribed to the fact that there were such stark differences between the environment in which the Planning functions operated before December 2000 and that within which the officials found themselves thereafter. Furthermore, it was not the same management team that led the function for the whole report period. The Co-ordinator for Support Services, Valerie Steyn, was asked to enquire whether the information requested for the management report to the Mayoral Committee, as well as for the envisaged Tshwane Annual Report, was "*still necessary*" (CTMM, 19 October 2001), no doubt in the silent hope that it would no longer have been necessary to submit the requested reports. Despite these difficulties, the request for information from the Top Management, which echoed the earlier request for information regarding City Planning projects, confirmed the slow shift towards more involvement and tighter management by the leadership of the municipality.

The lasting nature of allegiances and established power relations is clear in the Aalborg "troika" of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the local paper and the police (Flyvbjerg, 1998:210). In the Tswane story, the stable



and unequal power relation between the political top management and the officials is also an example of such an established power relation. Flyvbjerg (1998:141) states that stable power relations are constituted of a symbiotic interplay between rationality and power. This is a form of power relation that is very familiar within the municipality, with the officials preparing reports (rationality) and the councillors debating these reports and passing resolutions on them (power). It is clear, therefore, that rationality really forms the basis of the role of the officials within municipal governance. This explains the utter confusion and helplessness experienced by the Tshwane officials when they felt that the new top management did not recognize, much less value, their technical expertise or rationality. The two planning sections (land use planning and strategic planning) also fall into the old folds despite efforts by the Core Team to “shake things up”.

#### *An old division prevails*

The subordinate divisions of City Planning were listed in the draft consolidated organizational strategy of the Housing Directorate (CTMM 2001pp) as Development Information; Spatial Planning and Land Use Management; Building Control Management; Streetscape Management (essentially the old Urban Design function), and Finance and Administrative Support (see *figure x*). “*Spatial Planning and Land Use Management*” was proposed as a single function under one manager. The Core Team’s attempts to integrate Spatial Planning and Land Use Management based on the argument that the functions were fundamentally both spatial planning, but focused on different levels (hence the proposed names *Metropolitan* Spatial Planning and *Regional* Spatial Planning for the respective functions) had clearly been taken into account in the compilation of the proposed structure.

The proposed interim structure for City Planning was submitted to the Chief Operating Officer, tasked with the finalisation of the organisational structure, in November 2001. In May of the following year, the interim structure was supplemented by so-called ‘pencil placements’ which were to give an indication of who would be accommodated where.

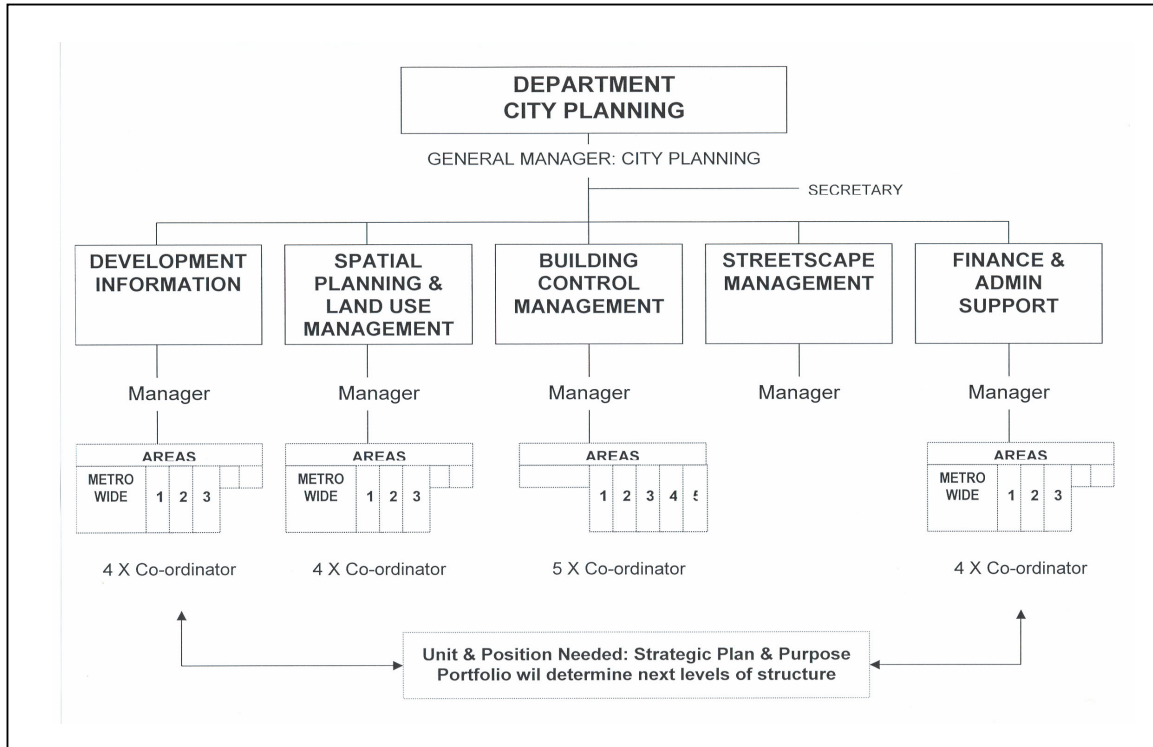


Figure x: Proposed structure for the City Planning Department, August 2001

Early in October 2001, a workshop was held under guidance of Nava Pillay with the management of all the functions of the Housing Strategic Unit to discuss the vision of each function and the contents of each of its sub-functions. Verna asked me to facilitate the discussion on the City Planning function. However, the managers did not participate in the discussion with much enthusiasm. This was possibly owing to the fact that the proposed structure of the function (see figure vii) did not meet with much resistance and was perceived by most as a continuation of the *status quo*. The structure was part of a Purpose Portfolio for City Planning prepared by Verna (CTMM, 2001tt).

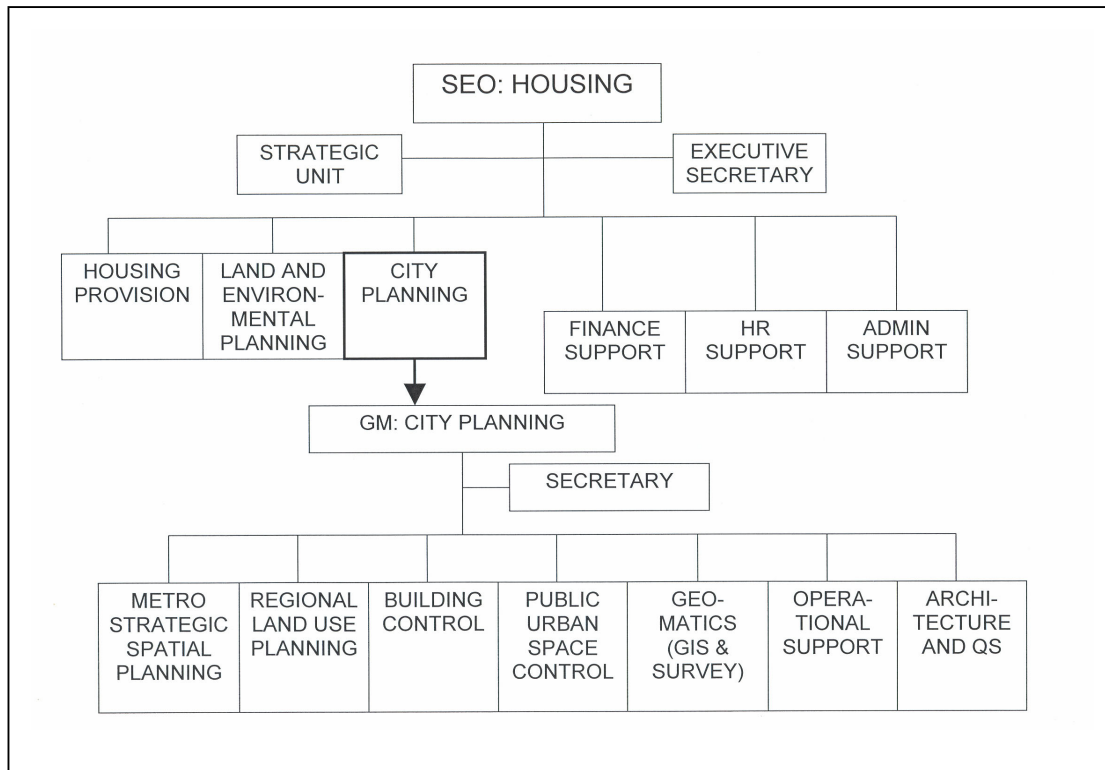


Figure xi: Proposed interim structure for the City Planning function, October 2001

It was the intention, all through the deliberations in the Core Team, to integrate the old “*Forward Planning*” and “*Land Use Control*” functions, referring rather to “*Strategic Spatial Planning*” and “*Regional Spatial Planning*”<sup>57</sup>. As mentioned earlier, it would seem that, up to August 2001, this dream was still pursued, as the proposed structure for the City Planning Department indicated a single manager for Spatial Planning and Land Use Management (*figure x*). In the organogram of the proposed structure for City Planning that appeared in the Purpose Portfolio discussed at the workshop in October 2001 (*figure xi*), however, the structure had developed to indicate two functions on the level of manager called “*Metropolitan Strategic Spatial Planning*” and “*Regional Land Use Planning*” respectively.

<sup>57</sup> In March 2001, Leon du Bruto, Acting Chief Town Planner of the Centurion Administrative Unit sent an email to Belinda Bruto complimenting her Work Plan, to which he attached a document titled: “The Development of a Planning Paradigm for Land Use Management” (my translation). In this document he, too, argued for bringing the two primary city planning functions closer together when he said: “Yet there is a close relationship and it should at least be systemically linked so that a constant process of interlinking between the two functions would take place” (my translation).

At first glance, this might seem to be even closer to the original Core Team proposal than the purpose structure proposed in August 2001 (*figure x*). However, the proposal by the Core Team was for two functions distinguished solely on the basis of the geographical scope of their function, namely **Metropolitan Spatial Planning** and **Regional Spatial Planning**. The fact that the regional function was qualified as “*Regional Land Use Planning*” enforced the old distinction between the two functions that the Core Team attempted to do away with. Yet, in the text of the Purpose Portfolio, Verna strongly argued that the proposal was indeed aimed at integration. She stated that “*spatial planning and land use management are two sides of the same coin*” and added that “*the proposed structure (figure xi) combines these functions at all levels of planning.*” She furthermore argued that the distinction between the Strategic Metropolitan Spatial Planning function and the Regional Planning function was based on a hierarchy of plans. This meant that the SMSP function would deal with the inputs into the IDP, specifically the Spatial Development Framework, and generic policies, while the Regional Planning function would focus on a “*more detailed level of planning*”, which included local spatial development frameworks, as well as dealing with land use applications.

Although communication between the two planning components had certainly improved in the new structure (CTMM, 2002k and CTMM, 2002q), to a significant extent the old distinction between two planning teams working, for the most part, in isolation, remained. Probably as a result of the fact that this presented a minimal disruption of the status quo (in the Pretoria Administrative unit, at least) and allowed for the day-to-day operational work with regard to processing land-use applications to proceed, the planners accepted this proposal accepted without much remonstrations<sup>58</sup>. In an interview (Nel, 2002), Verna explicitly stated that her intention with the transformation of the function was “*not to rock the boat*” in order to allow for service delivery to continue.

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<sup>58</sup> Of course, the new organogram (*figure xi*) made provision for two posts of Manager, while the previous proposal (*figure x*) made provision for only one. In terms of the new proposal, there were therefore more opportunities for aspiring managers. This could also have contributed to the proposal being so readily accepted by the planners.

Verna's appearance at the helm of the planning function marked a turning point in the process, much as did the abandonment of the integrated bus stop by Aalborg's Technical Department (Flyvbjerg, 1998:179). Just as the initial rationality behind the Aalborg project was turned around at this point (from reducing automobile traffic to an avoidance of such a reduction), the initial "pioneering spirit" of the Core Team captured in Belinda's plea for "new solutions for old problems" is reversed by Verna's attitude "not to rock the boat".

Despite the dawn of an entirely new approach and structure for local government in Tshwane, it would therefore appear that the old power relation between the strategic planning and land use planning functions has reproduced itself once again. As is the case with the relation between the Aalborg Technical Department and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and with all power relations, for that matter, this relation, too, proves to be "*not static, but ...constantly ... reproduced*" (Flyvbjerg, 1998:85).

## **6.6 From leaderless chaos to a semblance of normality**

At the end of 2001, the MEC for Development Planning and Local Government, Trevor Fowler, requested the Municipality to prepare a report on the progress with the establishment of the new municipality in a prescribed format<sup>59</sup> that was to be submitted to Mr Fowler during a two-day Transformation Conference held on 10 and 11 December 2001 (CTMM, 2001ggg). Wonder Nkosi requested my assistance<sup>60</sup> with the compilation of the report, which he had been instructed to manage. He presented me with a variety of inputs that had to be consolidated into the format prescribed by the MEC. When it came to change management, however, no change management plan existed. Wonder admitted to me that this was a problem and undertook to "*come up with something*". What was eventually captured in

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<sup>59</sup> The report consisted of four parts. The first part addressed cross-border issues, the second organizational structure, placement of staff and change management, the third part the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the fourth and final part the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Program (CMIP).

<sup>60</sup> Wonder was referred to Desirée by Bernard Hanekom, her former colleague from the Pretoria Inner City Partnership, who now worked closely with Wonder.

the document was a plan for formulating a change management strategy. It was a real blow to my confidence to realise that, almost a full year since the establishment of the new unicity municipality, no change management strategy had been drawn up. Up to that stage I simply believed that the Top Management was keeping the change management plan to themselves as part of a larger strategic or political agenda. I could never have imagined that anyone would attempt a transformation process of that magnitude without a well thought out change management plan.

Yet it would seem that, in practice, such “oversights” occur more often than one would think. In the Aalborg case, for example, the “*Technical Department had originally not even considered including a phase where the project was to meet the public. No public hearings and no citizen participation was planned at first*” (Flyvbjerg, 1998:54). Of this, the Aalborg city engineer remarks that “*For me ... it is astounding to hear that ... we simply did not consider it obvious that there was to be citizen participation*” (Flyvbjerg, 1998:55).

A possible cause of the observed lack of strategic direction at the corporate level was the uncertainty within the Top Management regarding roles and responsibilities. At a meeting of Nava Pillay’s so-called “*Strategic Unit*” (CTMM, 2002), consisting of the (acting) General Managers, and his two advisors, Mike Yates and Si Bogopa, held on 23 April 2002, he gave feedback on a “*disastrous*” workshop on the organizational structure held on 10 and 11 April 2002. Nava told the meeting that the Councillors who attended the workshop were not satisfied with the format in which information on the proposed organizational structure was presented and refused to participate. The Councillors furthermore wanted to know what informed the proposed organizational structure, what the core business of the Council was, and whether a strategy existed for Tshwane. This incident clearly indicated a muddling of roles and a lack of political leadership.

The Councillors, who could reasonably be expected to provide leadership and strategic guidance, were, almost a year and a half after the new local government came into being, asking the officials what the core business and strategy of the municipality was. At that stage, the pressure on the

municipality to come up with a clear transformation strategy was compounded by the fact that the National Treasury had made available R10 million as seed capital towards an eventual restructuring grant of R500 million, which the CTMM could obtain if it complied with all the requirements set for utilizing the R10 million. The requirements included that a city strategy be compiled, which addressed issues such as organizational design, revenue collection, economic growth and service delivery (CTMM 2002I).

Apart from grave concerns about the strategic direction (or lack thereof) of the municipality on a corporate level, persistent staff-related problems, of which the most prominent was the delay in finalising the organizational structures and making permanent appointments in the structure, were hampering performance and were contributing to the low morale of the officials. Towards the end of 2001, the so-called “*poaching*” of staff, which had been a problem from the start of the restructuring process, continued unabated despite instructions issued by the Municipal Manager in May of that year that all such practices should be stopped. The Acting Managers were actively seeking staff to assist in building their functions, and Managers from other Departments, such as Economic Development, were also approaching some of the planners to take up interim positions in those Departments. It was only after a letter strictly prohibiting any such practices was issued by the SEO: Corporate Services, Adv Ben Shai (CTMM, 2001aaa) that the poaching came to a halt.

#### *White negativity*

In the midst of the confusion about the corporate structure and the uncertainty experienced by officials regarding their future at the municipality, widespread negativity and absenteeism was the order of the day. In a memorandum addressed to all staff members on 28 November 2001, the Strategic Executive: Corporate Services, Adv Ben Shai, wrote the following: “*It has been brought to our attention that since the disestablishment of the various Municipalities within the City of Tshwane, office hours are being **totally** disregarded by **most** officials...*” (my emphasis). In order to encourage adherence to the official working hours, Verna requested all City Planning Co-



coordinators to keep an attendance register, as well as a register for signing in and out when attending meetings out of the office. A format for both registers was distributed to the Co-coordinators on 12 October 2001 (CTMM, 2001xx).

During the entire first year of the restructuring process, the Top Management only communicated directly with the officials twice: Once when Wonder Nkosi addressed them, and much later when Dr T addressed them in the Library Hall. This contributed significantly to feelings of uncertainty and alienation with particularly the white officials, who realised that they were no longer in a position of power. On the few occasions that the top structure did communicate with the officials, it only served to fuel this uncertainty. In the September 2001 edition of the staff newsletter (CTMM, 2001qq), it was reported that the CTMM has submitted "*migration principles*" to the trade unions, which provided for relocation of officials to other areas within the municipal border. Dr Thoahlane Thoahlane (Dr T) was quoted as having said that "*If white officials are transferred to previously disadvantaged areas, it will be because their skills are needed there.*" Despite this assurance, most white officials viewed the prospect of being transferred to a formerly disadvantaged area with fear. Furthermore, it was reported that the placement of staff in the new organizational structure "*may result in officials from previously disadvantaged groups being promoted*". This was echoed in the following month's edition of the newsletter (CTMM, 2001rr), in which Dr T stated that "*one of the main aims of the migration process will be to ensure that previously disadvantaged groups will be empowered and placed in leadership positions*". This contributed to feelings among the white officials, most of whom had conservative political views. Although the negative reaction from the side of the white officials was unfounded in the light of the broader political context of the country, it could be argued that the new Top Management should have devised a strategy to address problematic perceptions, which could have unlocked positive energy to the benefit of the restructuring process and the municipal operations in general.

### *Frustrated gatekeepers*

By November 2001 there was still much uncertainty regarding the migration of staff to the new structure, and, although certain principles had been agreed on, the matter was still being discussed with the unions (CTMM, 2001zz). The fact that, almost a year after the elections on 5 December 2000, there was still no permanent structure and no certainty with regard to the placement of staff was definitely a demoralizing factor. The delay in finalizing the new structure and the staffing thereof was cited by most of the interviewees as the single largest frustration of the restructuring process. Johnny (interview Coetzee 2004) stated that it was very difficult for the Acting Managers to perform optimally or initiate new projects while they were only gate keeping. This is confirmed in the minutes of the Coordinators/Managers Meeting of 2 November 2001, where it was noted that: *“The issue regarding placement and migration has a negative effect on service delivery”*. A quote from the draft minutes of the Coordinators/Managers Meeting of 16 November 2001 (CTMM, 2001aaa) captures the mood of the planners and their suspicions towards the Top Management somewhat less diplomatically (unedited): *“Problems regarding the unhappiness of people city wide as a result of uncertainty. Frustrating strategy by the top brass to let you pack up and leave the workforce”*. In the same document, the following is also noted from the discussion (unedited): *“Communication internally is very important. Corporate decisions should be communicated to the staff via the managers. Communication from corporate level is very bad, virtually non-existent. We are fortunate that we have Nava as SEO [(Strategic Executive Officer)] who at least communicates information to his (sic) managerial staff”* (my parenthesis added).

### *A glimmer of light around Christmas*

Given the lack of communication up to that point, it came as a surprise when officials received a short letter addressed to all CTMM employees dated 18 December 2001 (CTMM, 2001hhh) in which Dr T thanked the employees who helped make 2001 a successful year and wished them a joyous time with their

loved ones over the festive season. He ended the letter by saying “*I trust that when you return to your workplace in 2002, I may again rely on your efforts and expertise to render effective and affordable services to residents in the City of Tshwane*”.

When another very personal “*stroking*” letter (CTMM, 2002, see also Flyvbjerg, 1998 for a definition of “*stroking*”) was sent to the General Managers (addressed to each in person) by the Executive Mayor early in January 2002, it seemed that the top management had realised something of the value of personal communication and staff motivation. The letter had four aspects, namely welcoming staff back from a “*well deserved*” rest, thanking them “*sincerely*” for the work they have done the previous year, reminding them that they would have to “*hit the ground running*” in 2002 and informing them that he (the Mayor) expected “*nothing less than excellence*” from them. In the letter, the Mayor states that “*It is common cause that 2001 was a learning curve for everybody. We all worked together for the first time in a new political dispensation. I personally appreciate your contribution in assisting the political leadership to fulfill its mission. I thank you also for your patience and understanding while we are setting up new systems in our organization.*” The letter contained inspiring quotes and a poem and ended with the phrase “*God bless and take good care*”. The difference in tone between this letter and the infamous “*Circular 1 of 2001*” issued by Dr T six months ago (see page 116), could not have been greater. One can only deduce that, at that stage, the (political) top management realised that they had to win the favour of the officials if they were to succeed at achieving their objectives, and, one might add, if they were to retain their positions of power.

#### *Yet problems persist*

The rhetoric did not do much to allay the fears of the officials though, and the pervasive atmosphere was one of confusion and distrust. Most of the planners interviewed<sup>61</sup> expressed a lack of confidence in the top management as well as the political leadership. They complained that the Municipal Manager as

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<sup>61</sup> Names withheld for ethical reasons

well as the Mayor and Councillors were inaccessible and that they had had very limited contact with them. There were also complaints that the top management did not function as a team. As stated earlier, perceptions of a division in the ranks of the Top Management originated very soon after the new municipality came into being. Officials generally perceived the political and top management as both ignorant on issues of municipal management and arrogant, and a wide variety of operational problems were being experienced on the ground. Most disconcerting, however, was the fact that even more than a year after the new structure officially came into existence, many of the operational problems had still not been addressed. Such problems included problems with office space, concerns regarding asset control (CTMM, 2001jj) and staff shortages (CTMM 2002l). During a meeting of the Strategic Unit of the Department of Housing, Land and Environmental Planning (HOLEP) held on 23 April 2002 (CTMM 2002l), it was reported that the Mayoral Committee had confirmed that only 40% of *critical* vacancies throughout the municipality would be filled in the 2002/2003 financial year and that the rest would be frozen until further notice.

Almost from the start of the transformation process, numerous circulars were prepared to propose the format and procedure for submitting reports (CTMM 2000, CTMM 2001, CTMM 2001e, CTMM, 2001ii; Thoahlane, 2001). In November 2001 (CTMM, 2001zz), yet another format for reports and an amended process to be followed when submitting reports was distributed to all the City Planning Co-ordinators. In the minutes of the Co-ordinator's Meeting where this took place (2 November 2001), it was noted, that "*this process will probably change in future*". This was indeed the case. On 4 April 2002, the City Planning Co-ordinators received another letter from Nava Pillay yet again prescribing a new report flow process.

The constant changes to the process and format for submitting reports to the Mayoral Committee caused confusion and officials were generally very frustrated by the length of time it took for their reports to be considered by the Mayoral Committee, resulting in severe pressure in terms of implementing projects before the end of the financial year, among other things. A report on

uniform tariffs for building plans, which was prepared by Marius le Roux, from the NPMSS (Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Substructure) Building Office in June 2001 only served before Council in May 2002.

A rumour that there had been a corporate decision to rescind all standalone computers and supply staff with terminals functioning from a central server elicited a severe reaction from the planners and caused the matter of computers to become a standing point on the agenda of the City Planning Co-ordinators/Managers meeting from January 2002. According to the decision, all computer files would apparently in future be stored in a central location. It was also said that staff members would no longer have printers in their offices for their exclusive use, but that hardware such as printers would be centrally positioned and shared by all staff members in a section (CTMM 2002a,b,c,d). The planners felt threatened by the possibility of such an arrangement. They raised a number of arguments against the proposal, namely that the new computers would be sub-standard, that the network would not be reliable, that Eskom (the national electricity provider) had adopted a similar system but later reverted to individual computers again. The arguments thus raised seemed rational enough and also seemed to have as their basis concerns regarding productivity and efficiency. However, in the light of the history of the restructuring process and the antipathy between the (predominantly white) officials and the Top Management, it is not improbable that the real reasons for the resistance voiced by the planners had more to do with the fear of, for example, losing their independence and fear that their activities could be more closely scrutinised and their privacy invaded. Stated differently, the issue had at its core the concern of the planners that what little power or autonomy they had was being further eroded by the proposal from the Top Management.

### *Conspiracy theory*

On Wednesday, 16 January 2002, I had a chance meeting with Joshua Ngonyama, Chairperson of the Pretoria Inner City Partnership. He made the statement that there was a deliberate political agenda to lower the status of

the city planning function and to bring the planners “*back down to earth*” (“*grond toe te bring*” in Joshua’s original Afrikaans). Joshua was an active member of the ANC and was known to have had regular meetings with the Executive Mayor, Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa. He was regarded by the officials on the Inner City Project Team as someone with “*inside information*”. However, when I put Joshua’s theory to Nava Pillay a short while later, he strongly denied that there was any truth to it.

The status of the City Planning function was once again raised as a point of concern at the meeting of the City Planning Coordinators Meeting held on 2 May 2002 – the only such meeting Nava Pillay ever attended. Here, too, Nava gave the Planners the assurance that there was no agenda behind the fact that City Planning had not formally been confirmed as a function on the level of General Manager. However, somewhat contradictory, he added that “*he has fought and is still fighting to have City Planning placed on a General Manager level*” (CTMM, 2002n). However, if it was true that no agenda existed on a higher level to suppress the City Planning function, the question remains what the forces were that Nava had to “*fight*” to obtain recognition for the function at an appropriate level.

The matter of the status of the City Planning Function was not finalized in the study period. This was the case despite months of enquiries, both written and verbal, to Nava Pillay, who continued to indicate that he was attending to the matter and gave assurances on more than one occasion that he would take it up with the Municipal Manager.

#### *Pencil placements and prejudice*

During January 2002 it became clear that the long awaited “*pencil placements*” of staff on the interim organizational structure would be no more than a reflection of the status quo that had been in place for more than six months. The pencil placements furthermore only dealt with the levels of General Manager and Manager (CTMM, 2002j).

When discussing the issue of affirmative action in respect of the pencil placements at the Co-managers/Managers Meeting of 7 February 2002 Verna remarked that it was not fair to place someone in a position for which they did not have the necessary experience, which would, as it were, set them up for failure. She added that it was *“also unfair to the community to place inexperienced personnel in top positions”*. She referred to a bursary scheme for affirmative candidates initiated by the Engineers and proposed that City Planning consider doing the same. About a month later, on 14 March 2002, the Acting Managers were informed that Nava had requested that special consideration be given to the placement of affirmative candidates on the levels of Deputy Manager and Assistant Manager. Again, the statement was recorded that: *“Both Mr Nava Pillay and Dr Verna Nel cannot perform if competent people are not appointed”*. Although these statements may be taken to be innocent statements of fact, they would seem to indicate a certain racial bias on the side of the City Planning Managers, particularly as there seemed to have been an underlying assumption that *“there are no competent affirmative staff members”*.

#### *A bitter complaint and a frank assessment*

The fact that the pencil placements did not represent any real progress towards a final post structure for the Municipality was not the only frustration experienced by the planners at the beginning of 2002. On 28 February 2002 Verna wrote to Nava complaining bitterly about the proposed *“creation of luxury offices”* in the eastern wing of Munitoria for Mayoral Committee members. She argued that finding alternative accommodation for the City Planning personnel affected by the proposal (between 15 and 25 people) within their sections would be very difficult and that the new offices would mean that whole sections of the City Planning Division would have to be relocated. She also complained about the closure of the public parking space at Munitoria to create parking space for the Mayoral Committee Members. It was expected that this would create severe problems for members of the public who came to Munitoria wishing to make use of services offered by the City Planning Division (CTMM, 2002f) This was another example of the lack of



communication by Top Management and the lack of consultation on issues that directly affected the officials. Also, it provided a good example of the use of rationality by Verna in the face of the power exerted by the Mayoral Committee. As time would tell, in this case, also, rationality had to yield to power – the Mayoral Committee had its way and Verna's complaints fell on deaf ears.

Faced by demands from the new Tshwane top management to vacate their offices, or give up their parking spaces, or by the complete lack of consultation in deciding on a new organizational structure, planners often remarked in exasperation that *"they can't just do that!"*. This is echoed in the words of a member of the Task Force for the Aalborg Project when the alderman decides, without consultation, to reopen Algade: *"This is disgusting, he can't do that"*. Of course, as it turns out, the alderman can (i.e. has the power to), and does – as did the Tshwane top management.

A refreshing and frank assessment of the state of the Tshwane transformation process, from a corporate perspective, came from Wonder Nkosi, the Chief Operating Officer (COO), when he held the first of a series of *"Operations Meetings"* with all the Strategic Executive Officers (SEOs) on 7 March 2002. Wonder was known as an excellent orator and, on this occasion too, he delivered a gripping speech regarding his observations of the Municipality from December 2000 to February 2002. He argued that the municipality was neither at the exciting beginning or the dramatic end of the transformation process, but in the middle, where perseverance and persistence were called for. He added that the managers had forgotten the basics of management and were seeking for *"silver bullets"*. The officials felt that their employers were losing trust and confidence in their capabilities and the general citizenry would soon follow suit. The lack of communication was aptly captured when he said that: *"There is a lack of a coherent message of what need (sic) to be done, by whom and when."* He furthermore stated that *"no vision will succeed unless it is evoked through the participation of those you lead"*. He ended his address with eight principles that he felt should be embraced. These included *"Communicate the vision"* and *"Empower others to act"* (CTMM, 2002h). It

was this kind of charismatic openness that made Wonder popular with the officials, yet it would seem that his commitment to communication and participative management was not shared by the rest of the Tshwane top structure.

Although there was still no attempt at direct communication with the officials on the ground by the Municipal Manager/CEO, Nava Pillay wrote in a letter to all officials in his Department on 11 March 2002, that the Municipal Manager had indicated that he would meet with the SEO's on a bi-weekly basis to discuss strategic issues. He added that "*I believe that this initiative will greatly improve communication between the different levels of management*".

In his letter, Nava wrote that he was well aware that the protracted nature of the restructuring was taking its toll on staff morale. He gave assurances that, despite the slow progress, the Department was moving in the right direction. He closed by thanking officials for their diligence "*despite the strain of the restructuring process*". He said he was proud to encounter officials who put Tshwane first and that their efforts were greatly appreciated. These words were reminiscent of the stroking that was employed by the Core Team little under a year before. It cannot be said with certainty whether these utterances were sincere, or whether Nava, too, was using the strategy to ensure that officials in his Department kept performing despite difficult circumstances.

On the whole, it did not seem that Nava had a strong commitment to regular communication with the staff of his Department. He initially made some effort towards establishing a communication forum within the Department when he instituted the monthly HOLEP (Housing, Land and Environmental Planning) meeting with all the General Managers and Managers in the Department. At these meetings issues such as the budget, staff placement and shortages, the process for submitting reports to the Mayoral Committee, as well as the name of the Department, were discussed. The HOLEP meetings were the only chance for many of the managers to see Nava in person and to feel some sense of belonging to the larger Department, which was scattered over a number of different buildings. Regrettably, however, from the beginning of

2002, the HOLEP meetings were frequently postponed or cancelled and eventually stopped taking place altogether.

In the absence of other fora on which to voice their frustrations to Nava, the City Planning Coordinators invited him to their meeting held on 2 May 2002, “so that he can get an idea of the frustrations experienced” (CTMM, 2002n). The Co-ordinators made full use of the opportunity and bombarded him with a number of issues. This included the top-down management style that characterized the manner in which Top Management operated. It was said that decisions were “forced on employees” and that some things were implemented without even informing employees beforehand.

#### *An impressive performance*

Yet despite the frustrations and the continued uncertainty regarding the status of the City Planning function and the posts of the officials within the function, as well as the fact that the distrust and lack of communication between the Top Management/Political Level and the officials remained, some measure of stability did indeed emerge in the two core functions of City Planning, which were now officially called Regional Spatial Planning and Strategic Spatial Planning.

In the quarterly management reports submitted to Council for the last part of the study period, from 1 January 2002 to 30 June 2002, Regional Spatial Planning (managed by Henry Bezuidenhout) appeared before Strategic Spatial Planning (managed by Johnny Coetzee) and had a very long and impressive list of functions and achievements. Under the heading of Spatial Planning, Local Policies and Project Management, no fewer than 38 “policy issues” that were being worked on, were listed. These included matters such as the formulation of policies for gated communities, spaza shops, guesthouses etc.

Apart from policy formulation, officials from the Regional Spatial Planning function also worked on three large-scale capital projects and managed the

budget for them, namely the Olievenhoutbosch Urban Renewal Project in Centurion, the Solomon Mahlangu Square in Mamelodi and the Hatfield Streetscape Project.

The atmosphere that existed in Henry's Regional Spatial Planning function during this time was one of serious activity. A fast pace was maintained and some of the planners in his team complained of being overworked (pers comm Swanepoel 2002; pers comm Van der Vyver 2002). The statistics bear testimony to the team's productivity: From January to June 2002, no less than 1608 land use applications<sup>62</sup> had been finalized by the function.

In contrast to this, the volume of work done in this period by Johnny's Strategic Spatial Planning team was apparently significantly smaller. This was a conscious decision by Johnny, who felt (pers comm Coetzee, 2002) that a lower workload would to a certain extent compensate for the uncertainties experienced by the officials. The two main sources of uncertainty remained the fact that posts in the Division had not been filled on a permanent basis and that the position of City Planning in the larger organizational structure had not yet been sorted out. Furthermore, the lack of contact between the planners and Top Management persisted. Johnny agreed with his team that, although he would expect of them to produce the necessary outcomes, he would not closely manage working hours and encouraged pleasant staff activities such as "*working*" lunches.

Despite the more relaxed management approach, the Strategic Spatial Planning function produced a number of significant outputs during the first half of 2002. The function conducted a spatial analysis of the composition and characteristics of Tshwane, the results of which were included in the draft Integrated Development Plan, which was being compiled by the former convenor for City Planning and Core Team member, Belinda van der Merwe in the office of the Chief Operating Officer, Wonder Nkosi.

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<sup>62</sup> These included consent uses, consolidation, subdivision, removal of restrictive conditions, rezoning, division of land, administrator's consent, comments on other Local Authority applications, township establishment, applications in respect of Council property, site development plans, building line relaxations and general queries.

During the first quarter of 2002, a small group under the leadership of Jakša Barbir furthermore compiled an Integrated Spatial Development Framework (ISDF). The Plan contained spatial development key issues and trends emerging from the spatial analysis, the spatial concept and strategic guidelines for spatial restructuring and spatial integration of Tshwane and a number of basic guidelines for land use management, local spatial development planning and streetscape management.

A particular breakthrough achieved by Strategic Spatial Planning during the same period was that of compiling a report and presentation on Strategic Spatial Directions for the City of Tshwane in close collaboration with Mike Yates' City Strategic Working Group, previously referred to as the Strategic Task Team (STT) (see page 147).

Although the Strategic Spatial Planning team did not manage any capital projects, it was involved in an advisory or coordinating capacity in the Freedom Park, Eerste Fabrieken, Gautrain, Dinokeng, Ring Rail and Winterveldt Reconstruction and Development Projects.

From the progress reports of the two components of City Planning, it is clear that, as far as service rendering and operational activities within the function was concerned, matters had stabilised to a large extent from the beginning of 2002. While issues regarding the transformation of the function predominated until the end of 2001, there was now a stronger focus on operational efficiency.

Apart from two issues, namely the permanent filling of posts and clarity on the position of the City Planning function in the organizational structure, it would seem that City Planning had weathered the storm and was entering calmer waters once again.

Towards the end of May 2002, a team building workshop and social function, facilitated by Dr Louise Niemeyer, an acquaintance of Verna Nel, was held by the City Planning Co-ordinators. The workshop was a huge success and was

felt to have contributed significantly to a positive team spirit among the interim management team (CTMM 2002p).

## 6.7 Conclusion

It is true that, in a certain sense, the story of the transformation of Tshwane's City Planning Function has many endings or, in a different sense, that it will never end. For purposes of this study, however, it ends with an integrated City Planning function, comprising staff from the city planning functions of the former Centurion Town Council, Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Substructure, Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council and City Council of Pretoria, having been established. The systems, policies, procedures and information of the various former structures had been integrated to some extent. The functions had been carefully structured into sub-sections that were captured on the "*Interim Organizational Structure*" approved by the Mayoral Committee in May 2002 and are being led by Acting Managers who have been indicated in the "*pencil placements*" that appeared on the interim structure. Logistical problems related to stationery, secretarial and administrative support, office accommodation and parking had to a large extent been addressed and the staff shortage in the Regional Spatial Planning function had been alleviated to a certain degree through the appointment of four temporary staff members. Some measure of cohesion had developed between the acting management team of the function.

However, despite the measure of stabilisation that had been achieved, certain important issues remained unresolved. The most significant of these was probably the lack of clarity with regard to the status of the City Planning Function in the organizational structure. At the end of the study period, City Planning still carried the proviso "*status to be confirmed*" on the interim organizational structure and, although General Managers had been appointed for all the other Divisions within the Department of Housing, Land and Environmental Planning (HOLEP), Verna Nel was still only appointed in an acting capacity to manage the City Planning functions. The fact that the officials had not yet been permanently appointed more than a year and a half

after the new municipality had come into being remained a constant source of frustration.

Although the initial fears of retrenchments had been allayed, the fact that the managers were only working in an acting capacity and were not receiving any financial recognition for the additional responsibility they were carrying, had an effect not only on the morale of those staff members, but also on the authority with which they could take decisions and their willingness to initiate long term projects. Their frustration was exacerbated by the fact that they had expected the appointments to have already been made a year before in July 2001. Seen in the light of the fact that an agreement had been reached between the CTMM Top Management and IMATU, the most prominent labour union, that no external appointments would be made below the level of General Manager, no legitimate explanation could be found for the fact that appointments had not been made sooner.

The lack of communication that existed between the officials and Top Management and the fact that no relationship had been established between them remained a problem. There was a strong perception among the planners that Top Management as well as the Executive Mayor and the members of his Committee were inaccessible to the officials. This extended, to a large degree, to the Strategic Executive, Nava Pillay. Towards the end of the study period, corporate communication was normalised to the extent that a network of regular management meetings at all levels of the Municipality was in place. The CEO met with the Strategic Executives, the Strategic Executives with the General Managers, the General Managers with the Managers, and so on. However, the window of opportunity that had existed at the beginning of the restructuring process for the Mayor and the CEO to create a sense of belonging to and enthusiasm for the new municipality through frequent, direct interaction with the officials had closed.

There can be no doubt, however, that the unplanned and uncaring manner in which the Tshwane restructuring was managed, damaged relations between the officials and the political as well as administrative leadership of the



Municipality. Most of the officials interviewed remarked that their loyalty towards the Municipality had diminished as a result of the restructuring process. It is furthermore clear that the delay in finalising key aspects of the process resulted in uncertainty and low staff morale.

As in the case of the Aalborg Project, “the actual situation stands in sharp contrast to what was envisioned” (Flyvbjerg, 1998:222) by the Core Team at the start of the restructuring process. Following the establishment of the Strategic Metropolitan Spatial Planning Function (SMSP), the restructuring lost its momentum and the planners driving the process their pioneering spirit. Flyvbjerg (1998) experiences the same problem in his account of the Aalborg Project. He (Flyvbjerg, 1998:217) states that, “*In the last few chapters we have allowed the story of the project to become repetitious and even dull because such is the reality of the project. The project is not implemented as planned, nor does it burn out. It just gradually dissolves into an impasse*”. He later adds (Flyvbjerg, 1998:218) that “there is no grand finale to the story of the Aalborg Project”.

Similarly, there is certainly no grand finale to the story of Tshwane’s planning function. In Aalborg, Flyvbjerg (1998:78) describes a “*gradual but significant reduction of the [Aalborg] project’s level of ambition*”. This reduction process culminates in a severely watered-down eleventh version of the project being formally approved by the City Council more than a decade after its initial conception. Similarly, the grand ideal of a brand new planning function for Tshwane is seen to dwindle to little more than a slightly enriched version of what went before.

The open confrontation that develops between the Technical Department and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in the Aalborg case study, is possible only because of the friction between to parties with equal, or comparable, power. Because of the unequal distribution of power between the officials and the top management in Tshwane open confrontation does not take place. The situation therefore never evolves into one where metaphors of war are appropriate as is the case in Flyvbjerg’s (1998) Aalborg study. Rather, the

Tshwane situation never moves from an uneasy, unarticulated animosity to a sense of resignation on the side of the planners. In the face of the silence from the top management, and given their position of relative powerlessness in the organizational hierarchy, the planners have no means to resist decisions that affect them. In Tshwane, it is perhaps not communication that turns out to be the most powerful tool of those in power after all, but rather the decision *not* to communicate. “*Nonactivity*” it seems, can sometimes also be indicative of a party’s relative power (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 67). It would furthermore seem, both from the Aalborg case and from the Tshwane study, that rationality as power is only effective when the two parties involved have relatively equal powers. In Aalborg, the Technical Department succeeds in their rational response to the Social Democrats’ “*Dream Plan*” (Flyvbjerg, 1998:165) because of the comparable power of the two parties. In the Tswane case, however, the rationality presented by the planners fail because of their position of relative powerlessness within the municipal hierarchy.

Furthermore, the resistance of Aalborg’s Chamber of Industry and Commerce to the proposals of the Technical Department develops through a series of contacts, some of them written and others face-to-face as “equals” around a table, to a situation of acceptance and reconciliation (albeit temporary) between the two parties. The Chairman of the Chamber eventually reaches a point where he can state that: “*the more you delve into it, the more you really discover that [the Aalborg Project] is not so crazy*”. In Tshwane, however, similar contact between the planning officials and the new top management is, for the most part, absent. This greatly diminishes the ability of the officials to offer resistance to the institutional restructuring process and also precludes any possibility of reconciliation of the kind that developed in Aalborg.

As Flyvbjerg (1998:150) remarks and logic dictates, one way of bringing a confrontation to a close is “*giving up in the face of the opponent*”. Flyvbjerg (1998:161) calls this the “*strategy of surrender*” that is employed as a last resort to prevent confrontation. In the Tshwane case, however, surrender is not a strategy employed by the planners. Rather, it is the only option left to them in the face of the unchallenged, and unchallengeable power of the new

Top Management. In the Aalborg story (Flyvbjerg, 1998:173), the Technical Department “*must rely on reason and luck to win out over the Social Democrats*” and does so with a significant measure of success. For the Tshwane planners, however, neither luck nor reason is sufficient to achieve the prominence they believe their function should be accorded in the organizational structure.

## 6.8 ALLOW ME TO BE WHIMSICAL – TWO ALTERNATIVE ENDINGS

Although the Tshwane story does not, I hope, leave the reader asking “so *what?*” (see Forester 1982), it certainly leaves ample room for questions such as “*what if...?*” and “*if only*”. This section is an indulgent flight of fancy entertaining two possible (and possibly extreme) alternative endings opened up by the text. The endings were specifically written in such a manner as to allow the reader room for interpretation.

### I

#### **Things could have been better**

It has been another clear, mild day so characteristic of autumn in Tshwane. The traffic is not as bad as she expected. It will probably be only another twenty minutes or so until she reaches the function venue – right on time. Then again, it is customary for the guest of honour to arrive a little late. She chuckles to herself. That line of thought was admittedly a little conceited, but, damn it, they owed themselves that much. The SAPOA award she was about to receive was well-earned. It was the result of consistent hard work by an excellent team.

She looked forward to seeing the rest of the guys there. Her team of planning staff had shaped excellently since the establishment of the new municipality. Of course they were empowered by the new municipal structure, but credit was still due to them for making the most of the opportunities posed by a department in which they could work in an integrated fashion with the transportation planners, the green team (the environmental planners) and the local economic development division. It was probably not only the structure of the department that was responsible for the planners coming into their own so brilliantly, though. She suspected that the innovative new structure of the function itself was also a factor. When the core team responsible for the restructuring of the planning function initially proposed a structure where all planners would do land use management *and* strategic spatial planning there had been a few sceptics. But now, almost a year and a half after the new

municipality came into being, it was clear that the new approach was yielding dividends. It not only ensured integration between the ideals of the spatial framework and the management of land uses on the ground, but has also resulted in a new unity among the planners. Although everyone was working hard, the work was diverse and satisfying – she could see that in the enthusiasm with which they approached their tasks and their willingness to put in extra hours when necessary.

Of course it wouldn't be fair to say that there hadn't been problems in the beginning. After those planners who had wished to do so took voluntary severance packages and left the municipality, those who stayed behind and the newly employed (mostly young, black and talented) planners had a lot to get used to. She would always be grateful for their MMC who had pulled some strings to make available funding for the series of short courses and team building sessions facilitated by the nearby university. In fact, the MMC may just have been the X-factor that made *all* of this possible. Over the past eighteen months he had become a true champion for the planning function. More than that, he had become a friend. She recalled with gratification the standing ovation at the Council meeting after their presentation of the spatial development framework. She was certain that that would not have happened without the MMC's tireless lobbying in their favour.

As she turned the corner into the function venue, the sun set spectacularly towards the west.

## II

### **Things could have been worse**

He woke up to a quiet house. His wife had taken the children to school and left for work a while ago. She no longer tried to motivate him to get up in the morning. He knew he probably should get dressed, but he simply couldn't get himself to do so. What for, anyway? Since the case made by him and some of his colleagues had first gone to the labour court, he no longer went to work. His lawyer advised that it could not be held against him if he stayed away.

Constructive dismissal. There was nothing constructive about it. Over the past eighteen months he gradually saw his job being fragmented, his tasks being assigned to other sections responsible for housing provision and transportation planning. Hell, even the economic development people now seemed to be city planners. The planners tried to create awareness of the importance of their function, the value that they could add to the city – but such attempts were futile and, it now seemed, foolish. They were hardly ever given the chance to state their case and when they were, well, no-one listened.

A couple of months ago he and a number of other planners decided that they had had enough. Without finality on their delegations to deal with land use applications, a backlog of cataclysmic proportions had developed. They had prepared a number of reports on the matter for approval by the mayoral committee, but time and again there was some excuse and the reports were referred back. Two large property developments had gone bust as a result of the zoning not being finalized in time. A street block of half built walls and muddy puddles strewn with litter now graced one of the city's up-market suburbs.

He stared blankly at the ceiling. A small grey moth was circling the light fitting as if longing for the intoxicating glow that was there the night before. The psychologist had said that he should focus on what he was feeling. He wasn't really feeling anything. Maybe loneliness. He was losing everything that he had taken pride in and nobody cared. In the last six months only, four people had acted as general managers for the planning function. Each of them grabbed the first opportunity to be redeployed with both hands. There was no "boss" that he could talk to, no-one that he could go to for sound advice. The current general manager was a political appointment placed to avoid further embarrassment about the state of the planning function. And the people at the top, well, those bastards didn't give a damn.

He wasn't surprised when he read that the municipal manager's car had been vandalized by a racist with a can of spray paint recently. He had never seen the man in person, but he had felt on more than one occasion that he wanted to march into his office and shake him till he came to his senses. Not that that would make any difference – it would only be another juicy story for the newspapers who were having a field day with Tshwane becoming a “banana republic”.

He looked up at the ceiling again. The little moth had gone.



## 6.9 OUT TAKES

This section takes its cue from the latest developments in DVD (Digital Video Disk), the most technologically advanced medium through which stories are told and understood in our time. As it happens in the making of a film, there were also snippets in this study that fell by the wayside in the final editing process, or that were, for some or other reason, not included in the study from the start. These so-called “out takes” are, for the most part, anecdotal and some could even be interpreted as shocking gossip not suitable for inclusion in a construct of scientific investigation. However, it is the aim of *phronesis*, which is the type of social study undertaken here, to present a richly textured and multi-layered reality. It is with this in mind that the following collection of snippets was compiled. In some cases names and other specifics were left out for ethical reasons.

I

**The Tshwane planners were mostly white and Afrikaans speaking. Another, though less obvious, aspect of the planners’ group identity was their Christianity, a Christianity that could, in some instances, be described as fundamentalist.**

A member of the team that lead the inquisition against staff in the building office that were suspected of taking bribes, doing unauthorized private work and other irregularities, who was also a prominent member of the management of one of the former municipal structures, told me an interesting story. He said that he and other members of the team had received a vision from God regarding the forces of evil that were at work in the municipality. The agents of these sinister forces were members of the new top management. The team (known by the other officials as the “Doberman” team for its persistence in sniffing out irregularities) took it upon themselves to sprinkle salt in the offices of the municipal manager, the executive mayor and the strategic executive officer for Housing, Land and Environmental Planning as a measure to counter the evil spirits at work through them. The official

smugly told me that the salt had been smuggled into the relevant offices and disposed of during meetings without anyone noticing, which he regarded as a triumph for good.

II

**Players of the power game who use rational arguments to promote the reality they prefer often use the tactic of making other parties seem less knowledgeable, even stupid. In the course of the Tshwane restructuring process, however, such perceptions were in some cases well founded.**

There were repeated instances of an embarrassing lack of insight from senior officials in the new municipality. Wonder Nkosi said at the meeting where Nava Pillay was introduced as the new strategic executive officer for Housing, Land and Environmental Planning, that one senior official, closely related to the planning function, had indicated that he was willing to accept a five year contract appointment in one of the new top management positions on the condition that he wanted his old position back upon expiry of the five-year term. Wonder named the person in question repeatedly and laughed raucously as he told the story. This was not the only time that the official in question was made a fool of in the company of others. At a meeting of Nava Pillay's strategic unit, he made a long argument that, while the IDP was good and well, Tshwane should set to work compiling a Local Agenda 21 for the metropolitan area. It took a good measure of explaining that the IDP was an evolution of, among other things, the Agenda 21 process and that environmental sustainability was a key principle underpinning integrated planning. The official in question had quite a number of tertiary qualifications in a variety of fields. He was known within the core team by the nickname of "Ayam" for starting every sentence with "ayam" ("I...um"?, "Ahem"?).

III

**Unfortunately, the embarrassment of high-ranking municipal officials who had not yet come to grips with the workings of the municipality**

**almost a year after they were appointed, was not kept within the inner circle of the municipality but was, at least on one occasion, glaringly made public.**

Ayam's was not the only stupidity that was evident in the municipality during the study period. A telling incident occurred at the two-day Transformation Conference held on 10 and 11 December 2001 at the request of the then MEC for Development Planning and Local Government, Mr Trevor Fowler. I had helped Wonder prepare a report for the MEC, as well as a summary of the report in the form of a digital presentation. Wonder also asked me to assist in setting up the technology for showing the presentation before the meeting. I had assumed that Wonder would be making the presentation, but that was not the case. As the meeting was about to start, Wonder said that I should ask the Municipal Manager whether I should present the presentation or whether he wished to do it. I approached the Municipal Manager, whom I had not met before, and was told brusquely that he would do the presentation. He had not read the report nor seen the presentation before that day and I tried, in the five minutes that were available, to page through the presentation explaining its structure and content. What followed was possibly the most excruciating twenty minutes of my life. The Municipal Manager blundered through the presentation misreading most of it and making gross errors of interpretation that caused me to squirm in my chair. The Municipal Manager neither looked at me nor thanked me for compiling the presentation afterwards. But then again, I was happy to get out of there as quickly as possible.

IV

**During the study period, some officials displayed an overly helpful and servile attitude towards the new top management, often assisting with menial tasks far below the level of responsibility they had previously been assigned. This phenomenon could probably be interpreted in terms of the so-called "iniquity theory of motivation" according to which**

**the officials believed that it was through their own fault that they were not recognized and that they simply “had to try harder”.**

At the Transformation Conference mentioned above, I was present only to plug in the wires of the laptop computer and the digital projector, while Bernard Hanekom, the acting manager of the Pretoria Inner City Partnership (where I had worked before joining the core team for the restructuring of the planning function) came with Wonder mainly to switch the lights on and off at the correct moment. It became a pattern for some white officials to go more than the extra mile for members of the top management following the establishment of the new municipality. Bernard and I were examples of this, and so was Gerda Potgieter, who had assisted Wonder in compiling a coffee table publication on Tshwane, much to the ire of the general manager of the marketing and communication function, who had not been consulted on the matter. The worst example, however, was Paul Thiede, who had worked as an architect in the former City Council of Pretoria. Paul was requested by the executive mayor to assist with the refurbishment of his new offices. Paul literally worked day and night for months on end neglecting his family and health in the hope, as he confided in me, that the fact that he had been “noticed” by the mayor would assist his career. There had been talk about the possibility of a position for Paul in the mayor’s office, but during the study period, these promises did not materialise.

V

**Despite the fact that a new democratic dispensation for South Africa was formally established in 1994, six years before the beginning of the study period, extreme racial bias persisted among some Tshwane officials.**

The phone rings and the secretary, also known as the “Pitbull” for the fierce manner in which she screens calls and protects her boss from unwanted intrusions, puts the call through. “Who is it?” he shouts from the adjacent office. “It is the [derogatory term for a black woman],” she shouts back,

indicating his direct line manager. The use of this derogatory term became an anathema with the dawn of South Africa's new democracy. Yet it was still widely used in some circles, always as a marker of strong racial bias against blacks. A more extreme form of the term was also more frequently used among white municipal staff than one would expect. It was even used in my presence by a white official who was also a card-carrying member of the ANC.

## VI

**In telling a story such as that of the restructuring of the Tshwane planning function, one attempts to convey to the reader as richly detailed as possible an account of events. Yet it is often not possible when writing an academic document to include well-rounded descriptions of the characters involved. However, such descriptions could add to the reader's experience of the narrative. By identifying with specific characters, the reader could also more easily keep track of complicated twists and turns in the story.**

Johnny and Henry did not only have different work ethics. They also had different personalities that were mirrored in their very different physiques, not unlike Laurel and Hardy. Johnny was short and portly and had an easy-going, jovial personality to match. Henry, on the other hand, was extraordinarily tall and thin, and was reserved and serious by nature. Johnny once remarked that, while the stress of the position of acting manager was making him fatter, it was making Henry even thinner and that it was only a matter of time before Henry would be able to use his (Johnny's) watchstrap as a belt.

## VII

**One might be tempted to view the characters portrayed in the narrative as serious professionals always focussed on the task at hand. This was, of course, not the case. Interactions were often playful and informal, sometimes even degenerating to the level of obscenity.**

Thanks to one member of the core team, no meeting took place without a lewd joke or two and an inordinate measure of sexual innuendo. A vibrating cell phone clipped to the side of her pants would laughingly be moved to the front; when a male colleague mimicked how expressively she used her hands when she talked, she in turn mimicked (male) masturbation and watched him blush. Furious with the negativity experienced from the side of the existing managers of the planning function, she warned that, if one of them approached her again, she would “*pull his foreskin over his head and tell him to ‘fuck off’*”. All of these incidents, and many others that I cannot recall exactly, took place with colleagues present. Once, when I looked shocked at one such utterance, she shouted at me in exasperation “*Oh, can’t you let your fucking hair down for once?!*”

## VIII

**The fundamentalist Christian convictions held by many of the planning staff, led them, for example, to reject homosexuality. There was generally very little tolerance for other religions and different cultures were even viewed with suspicion.**

Some planners frequently used the expression “*een van ons kerk se mense*” (a person of our church) when referring to a white person. In 2000 a German student, Steffen Brandt, an outspoken atheist, visited the then City Council of Pretoria as part of his study in municipal administration. Steffen was taken aback at the many attempts to convert him and said he experienced the municipality as a kind of sect. Jakša Barbir, the only person among the Pretoria planners who was openly atheist, argued that the reason planners were not making significant interventions with regard to the city form was because some of the planners “*were waiting for Jesus to come and save the city*”.