CHAPTER 6

REFLECTING ON THE TRANS[FORMATION], THE TRANS[FORMED] AND TRANS[FORMING] URBAN PLANNING SYSTEM IN THE CITY OF TSHWANE

This chapter mainly deals with the overall impact of the transformation process and the transforming urban planning system, while the specific relationship between the transformation, and power structures and power relations is discussed in Chapter 7.

Although the Tshwane transformation process has much in common with other international and national experiences (as discussed in Chapter 4), this transformation was very unique and should not be seen as a typical example of these types of transformation. However, when viewing the transformation of urban planning in the City of Tshwane (Chapter 5) within the context of international planning theory and practice, and within the South African (national) societal and policy frameworks (Chapter 4), there can be little doubt that the *nature and focus of urban planning* in the City of Tshwane (like many other South African cities) has changed radical - from a rigid, autocratic, scientific, control-oriented system to a broader integrated, entrepreneurial, democratic, developmental and strategic planning system.

During the period 1992 to 2002, planners, managers and politicians in the City of Pretoria/Tshwane made various efforts to establish and promote the emerging international planning trends that had become the basis of the post-1994 South African planning system: the principles of community participation, a new social awareness amongst planners and within the local authority, a new strategic approach to planning and developing the city as a whole, the principles of sustainable development, and the important link and relationship between urban planning and municipal (urban) management.

When viewing the contents of the current planning system and the way in which planning processes (more specifically the IDP processes) are structured and conducted, it is evident that little progress has been made in establishing this 'package of new planning methodology' as part of the urban planning and local government systems; and effectively implementing it in practice - despite the perception that exists amongst some planners and politicians that these aspects are being addressed and applied successfully. In some cases, certain components (sustainable development, for example) were only addressed at a policy level and never really implemented,

while other components (strategic planning, for example) were more easily accepted, understood and implemented.

In spite of efforts to establish *community participation* as part of the urban planning process and the local authority, it did not always spawn the benefits and outcomes the planners and politicians had expected - as is evident by the critique of these processes (as discussed in Chapter 4). It is also evident that the rationale, objectives and benefits of meaningful community participation were not properly defined and understood by the various role players. Some planners and politicians actively promoted and advocated the notion of participation, but when it came to the application of these processes, their commitment in many cases subsided. Unfortunately some planners and politicians were under the (wrong) impression that informing and communicating with the communities was participation enough. They had obviously not yet accepted that effective and meaningful democracy is more than just 'lip service'. It involves a radical new way of constantly working with all the communities of the city. Many planners were found to experience difficulty in effectively applying the democratic planning principles in practice - probably because they did not have the communication and facilitation skills (and community aptitude) that was needed; and also because they did not want to get involved with a process that they did not regard as being 'part of normal town planning'. This aspect firmly underlines the rigid and autocratic style of planning and urban management that existed in the municipalities of the Greater Pretoria region, even during the late-1990s.

These problems and dilemmas, however, are not unique to the City of Tshwane. Based on a study of the relevant literature and other case studies (Chapter 4), it seems that these problems are reminiscent of other cases experienced in the USA, UK and Western Europe during the 1960s. They are also similar to the problems experienced in many other South African cities. The fact that so many planners and managers experienced difficulty adapting to the democratic way of planning and management and applying it in practice, is a clear indication that the government and local authorities were not doing enough to promote and establish this basic principle of urban democracy, and to develop experience-based guidelines and policies that could facilitate the effective implementation of community participation - specifically in South Africa with its new democracy.

In spite of all the critique and dilemmas, and the rather 'slow development' of community participation, some progress was made, however, to create a new community awareness amongst planners and politicians, specifically when considering that 'nothing like this' had existed prior to the 1990s. Notwithstanding the progress made (amongst other things, through the Inner City

Process and the IDP processes) to align planning and municipal efforts to focus on community needs and priorities and to promote a *new social awareness*, it is doubtful whether the transformation efforts in the City of Pretoria/Tshwane succeeded in structuring a social and people-oriented style of urban planning that focuses effectively on the broader spectrum of social issues as discussed in Chapter 2.

The majority of planners and managers were so entrenched in the patriarchal planning system that it was difficult for them to change their rigid, scientific style of planning to focus on social issues (and people) as well. Irrespective of the new government's focus and commitment to social development, many local authority managers and politicians were unclear and uninformed as to exactly what their responsibilities entailed with regard to addressing social problems and social development in the city, specifically within the context of urban planning and management.

Unlike the concepts of community participation and social planning that had difficulty entering the urban planning arena, the concept of *strategic planning* developed with relatively little resistance in the City of Tshwane, probably because planners could more easily relate to this linear 'scientific' type of planning that did not seem so different to the old type of planning. Although urban strategic planning ultimately modified the contents and focus of planning in the City of Pretoria /Tshwane and made it more relevant within the new local authority dispensation (with its strong integrated and developmental focus), a number of concerns were raised by most of the planners involved with strategic planning or IDPs, namely that: there was a lack of focus on the real strategic issues; the process was comprehensive and rigid in nature; (which hampered innovative thinking and flexibility); there was a lack of strategy implementation and monitoring; and there was a poor linkage between strategic plans, projects and the budget.

Although the recent transformation of urban planning in the City of Tshwane largely included an extended holistic and integrated focus on environmental issues, the broader definition of *sustainable development* (as discussed in Chapter 4) was grossly neglected. As the transformation of urban planning progressed through the 1990s, much was written and said about sustainable development. This concept was freely used by planners, communities and even politicians (almost to please or impress certain audiences) - in many cases without them really understanding the meaning of the concept. Although much reference was made to the concept of sustainability in some planning endeavours and documents, the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality did very little to unpack the concept, promote its aims and contents, implement it in practice and integrate and align local authority planning and development efforts towards achieving the common goal of sustainable development.

Despite the progress made by planners to promote *the link between urban planning and municipal management* (through, amongst other things, the IDP), the former City Council of Pretoria, as well as the CTMM, could never really succeed in effectively aligning the organisational structures and functions with the City vision or 'the plan'. Many managers, specifically those in the Treasury Department, were so entrenched in their old, rigid ways of management and budgeting, that it was difficult for them to engage with the planning domain and to trust 'the plan' as the framework for the budget and public expenditure. The new integrated and participatory budget process also made it difficult for managers and politicians to manipulate and control the budget (from the top). When considering the urban management problems within the context of 'the plan' (as discussed in Chapter 4), it is obvious that the various Pretoria/Tshwane local authorities and their top managements did not make enough effort to promote the 'new public management' principles and the relationship between urban planning and management.

Unlike the former urban planning system that was largely dominated by *the* Structure Plan with its supporting land use management (control) systems, the new spatial planning system is more concerned with the *broader aspects of spatial planning*, specifically within the context of the integrated, developmental and democratic planning system. The emphasis on spatial planning also shifted from *the plan,* with its graphical/map image, to *planning frameworks* with an extended emphasis on strategies, policies and guidelines. Dissimilar to the former descriptive, control-oriented nature of the structure/land use plans, the new generation of spatial planning frameworks is more oriented towards (sustainable) spatial, social and economic development and the spatial restructuring of the fragmented city. It is, however, ironic to note that there are still planners today who believe that the structure planning approach was a better (or the best) planning system, and that planning and development should have been guided and 'controlled' by this rigid, detailed land use plan - yet another indication of the imprints left by the modernist planning system of the apartheid years.

As the new urban planning system developed, the old planning system and planning methodologies in the former City of Pretoria also had to make way for *a new package of planning methodology*. As discussed in Chapter 4, planners in the City of Tshwane had to learn to apply a new planning methodology that would capacitate them to work and plan with and for the communities; to engage with the political systems; to become involved with urban and municipal management; to become more involved with (sustainable) development processes; and to engage with a new type of strategic planning and management (within the developmental and democratic local government system). The integrated and extended nature of the new urban planning

methodology ultimately resulted in the emergence of a number of new planning processes and methods and a variety of new planning techniques and tools.

This new planning methodology required planners to acquire a number of new skills such as communication, negotiation, conflict management, facilitation and managerial skills, to name but a few. For those older conservative planners who were molded in the apartheid/modernist/technical domain, it was very hard to adapt to this new planning methodology, specifically in view of the rapid changes and the radical transformations at the time. The most difficult part for the planners was to leave their comfortable, protected offices and familiar processes, and to engage with community processes, political agendas, visioning processes, budget processes, negotiations with developers, and a number of new tasks that they (apparently) had not been trained for, or tasks they did not want to do.

The new planning methodology also resulted in additional work for the planners - an aspect that was often raised by 'overworked' planners. The younger, more progressive planners, who were schooled and trained in the post-apartheid era and the new urban planning paradigm, on the other hand, had less difficulty adapting to the new systems. The lack of skills, and also the reluctance of some planners to acquire the necessary skills, often led to poor planning practices. Within the context of the above, it can be argued that the Council and the planning managers should have made a greater effort to ensure that all planners (or at least those planners involved with the new planning processes) were sufficiently capacitated to apply the new planning methodology.

As the new democratic, strategic and developmental urban planning system developed during the 1990s, *the planners' roles* shifted from a plan-making and development control domain to a broader developmental domain with specific reference to physical, social, economic and institutional development. For planners to fulfill their new multi-dimensional role, they had to become strategists, educators, developers, urban managers, community workers, process facilitators, communicators, negotiators, mediators and entrepreneurs. As a result of the extended socio-political nature of the new planning system and the new community role of the planner, it was inevitable that planners had to encroach on the fields of the elected councilors. As discussed in Chapter 2, the political role of planners often resulted in conflict between planners and politicians - and thus a conflict between 'power and rationality' as defined by Flyvbjerg. It is evident, however, that planners were very cautious of the political arena as they deliberately tried to avoid any forms of community and political conflict. Politicians, on the other hand, always interfered (and probably always will) with planning matters - even more so within the context of the new participatory planning system. The extended roles of planners, not only made planners more relevant and

important, but also created numerous new opportunities for planners in all sectors - as is evident by the way in which planners are employed in various other Council departments[1] and sectors in the city.

The new 'hybridised' planning approach, however, resulted in considerable confusion and conflict, specifically amongst many planners who were entrenched in their traditional old-fashioned ways of doing things. It also made it extremely difficult for ordinary planners to effectively deal with all these different roles effectively. In the City of Tshwane and in other planning circles, it was often argued and suggested that the planning profession and planning schools should pay (more) attention to developing and presenting refresher courses for planners in new fields such as urban management; to revising the existing curricula to focus more attention on the new roles of planners; and to developing and introducing a variety of specialised courses at postgraduate level, for example, specialising in strategic planning, community-based planning, IDP, urban management, etc.

Apart from the impact that the new planning system had on the planners, as discussed earlier, it also radically affected *the roles (and responsibilities) of urban managers, officials and politicians*. The local authority managers (and officials) increasingly had to 'talk to and listen to' communities; facilitate, manage and involve other Council departments and sectors outside the local authority in their planning and development endeavours; and play a more strategic role in the overall planning, development and management of the city (from the perspective of their specific departmental functions).

Just as in the case of the planners, these new roles were never easy to fulfil as many local authority managers were also stuck in the old, rigid, autocratic style of management (and nestled in their comfort zones). Although many managers and officials initially experienced problems adapting to these new roles, they increasingly acquired and accepted the new roles and responsibilities. Some of them adapted because they had to; others adapted more freely. The elected politicians, on the other hand, by and large welcomed the new urban planning system and the new community roles, as this provided new opportunities for them to interact with the community they represented. However, when looking at the reluctant and haphazard way in which some councillors interacted and communicated with the community, it is doubtful whether these councillors really adapted to these community roles.

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[1] In the City of Tshwane, planners and planning sections are found in many Council Departments, for example the Environmental Management Division, the Economic Development Division, the Housing Division, the Transport Planning Division, the Office of the Chief Operating Officer where planners are dedicated to the IDP, a Special Projects Team and the Inner City Initiative.

Some interviewees argued that the democratic planning system had become a mechanism that elected politicians could (ab)use to gain more political support in the communities they represented (thus more 'power' for the politicians and less 'rationality' for the planners). Many political and decision-making processes are still characterised by a rigid, top-down approach, as is evident by the autocratic way in which so many development applications and processes are dealt with, without proper consultation.

Although the transformation of the Tshwane local authority was largely shaped by the national government's policies on (amongst others) democratic and developmental local government, the *'transforming' Tshwane local authority* was also informed by the new democratic, strategic and developmental style of urban planning that had developed during the past decade. Unlike the former Pretoria local authorities, which mainly focused on 'primary service delivery', the newly established CTMM focused on a number of new urban challenges, such as integrated and equitable land planning and development, community needs and priorities, local economic development, economic growth, poverty alleviation, transparent decision-making and more effective and accountable urban management.

In support of these challenges, the newly established CTMM attempted to introduce many new organisational structures and processes to support and facilitate integrated spatial, economic and social development - as is evident in the strategic focus areas and organisational structure of the CTMM. However, as pointed out in Chapter 4, the current organisational structure and processes still have many shortcomings in terms of the new local authority planning environment: among other things, the fragmented silo structure; the lack of inter-departmental communication; the poor link between the budget and the IDP; the lack of meaningful participation in municipal affairs; and the lack of 'appropriate', dynamic, entrepreneurial and strategic leadership, specifically within the top management of the local authority.

Although remnants of the old culture are still visible in the City of Tshwane, some progress has been made through the Council's various training and information efforts, to establish *a new developmental and people-oriented culture* and a social awareness amongst many planners, managers, officials and politicians in the City of Pretoria/Tshwane. Unlike the situation in the past, planners now freely talk about how to fight poverty; how to involve communities in the planning process; how to deal with HIV/Aids; how to make the city internationally competitive through strategic economic interventions; how to restructure the fragmented city; and how to make the city

more equitable and sustainable. One of the planners who was interviewed for this study, referred to "the liberation of planners" and the "new breed of planners" in the City of Tshwane.

When viewed within the context of the patriarchal planning system in the former City of Pretoria, there is little doubt that *a new more appropriate and acceptable urban planning system* has developed in the City of Tshwane since the beginning of the 1990s. Although the new urban planning system still has a number of problems (as discussed earlier), it became more in line with the current international best practices. This new system is also in line with (and supportive of) the new legislation and government directions in South Africa. Unlike the rigid, control-oriented nature of the old planning system, the new transformed [forming] planning system in the City of Tshwane, in view of its integrated and developmental nature, also developed the potential to facilitate the spatial restructuring, reconstruction, development and integration of the City of Tshwane and its communities, *provided* that it is implemented and monitored effectively. Although some planning efforts - for example in the Regional Spatial Planning section of the City of Tshwane still focus on the fragmented components of the city and the development *within* the city, the emerging planning system (in view of its strategic and holistic focus) generally presents a new focus on the overall planning, management and development of *the city itself.*

However, although progress has been made (on a theoretical and ideological level) to develop and transform the urban planning system and to introduce new urban planning policies and methodologies, *the municipalities of the Greater Pretoria region have not done enough to implement these policies.* As discussed in Chapter 5, planners experienced much difficulty implementing the plans and policies that they compiled, whilst the municipalities in general experienced difficulty implementing the integrated and developmental local government system. In spite of all the efforts to promote and understand the new policies (which looked fairly simple on paper), it was still difficult, even for a large metropolitan municipality such as Tshwane, to effectively translate the theoretical principles and policies into practice. Throughout the transformation process it was noticed that there was a difference between planners who supported (or created the impression that they supported) a planning ideology on the one hand, and the actual, real commitment of these planners to implement it on the other.

The abovementioned again highlights the need to ensure that sufficient efforts are made to bridge the gap between theory and practice - even if old practices have to be amended or terminated. Although it has often been stated that more could have been done (by such a large metropolitan council with so much capacity) to implement the principles, some interviewees argued that too

much energy was directed at the learning phase (training, promotion, learning, research and experimentation), and that not enough energy could be directed to the actual implementation.

Unlike other cities in the world where the new planning methodology was phased in over a period of time (between the 1950s and the 1980s), the planners (and managers) in the City of Tshwane had to learn the new methodology with its wide variety of new tools in a relatively short period of time (during the 1990s), and within a time of turmoil, organisational restructuring and uncertainty. This *rapid transformation* made it difficult for planners, managers, officials and politicians to effectively acquaint themselves with the new principles, specifically in the absence of proper guidelines.

In spite of the abovementioned, it is doubtful whether the planners (and other officials) of the Pretoria/Tshwane municipalities had done enough to adapt to the changing environment, and whether there was sufficient management and leadership (and support) to effectively guide the transformation (and the people). It is somewhat unfortunate that the new urban planning system in the City of Tshwane is mainly applied by a small sector of planners, namely the IDP team and the planners in the Metropolitan Planning section. As discussed at the end of Chapter 5, the remainder (and largest portion of the current planning department) is still mostly involved with the rigid, typical land-use planning and control functions - perhaps now even more control-oriented, as is evident by the extended and supporting administrative and control functions in the department.

Unfortunately many of the older officials, who were molded in the modernist/apartheid tradition and nestled in their comfort zones, had difficulty changing their rigid practices and attitudes and accepting and applying the new liberated forms of planning and urban management. It is ironic to note that some of these people still believe that the old system was the best, or at least better than the current system. These officials argue that the transformation created confusion, uncertainty and instability. The fatalistic attitude of these officials ultimately made it difficult to implement the new planning principles in the city.

Fortunately, some of the hindering forces, as discussed above, were countered by another group of officials and a new generation of planners who supported the transformation. For these people the transformation created challenges, opportunities, certainty and stability in the continuous changing local authority/urban environment. Although much can be said about the transformation of the urban planning system in the City of Tshwane during the period 1992 to 2002 and its impact, problems and milestones, the trans(formation) of urban planning and local government in this city has just begun...