

# **INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION AND REORGANISATION OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT: An Opportunity to Effect a Sustainable Urban System**

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## ABSTRACT

The author outlines the principal considerations that gave rise to local government transformation and reorganisation in Johannesburg. The author describes certain initiatives embarked upon in the process and then considers the development of a structure for the Planning Division. His contention is that the clustering of particular functions would assist and facilitate giving effect to a sustainable urban system for and in the metropolitan region. This is reflected in the nature of projects and initiatives that would be undertaken. It is also reflected in the remit of the political structure that would oversee the Planning Division. These matters are also considered briefly in the presentation. The author also concedes that there are other players in the administration whose activities and behaviour need to be managed and monitored to ensure area wide and cross-functional sustainability.

## INTRODUCTION

In industry and commerce, organisational changes generally occur in response to changes in the operating environment, and particularly in the market place. Change is also initiated in order to effect or improve efficiency. In such cases the process is generally initiated when problems, (and sometimes) crises become evident. Change, on the other hand, may also be in response to new opportunities. Thus in the commercial environment clients' needs change and economic conditions are less than stable, and new markets may develop which in turn create new opportunities.

With such changes prevalent, a business may become unsynchronised with its operating environment: profits decline, assets may become liabilities, and tried and tested strategies no longer show positive results. It is evident that there are both internal factors and external developments (that is internal and external to the organisation or enterprise) that may necessitate change. Inappropriate and ineffective management styles and techniques are internal factors, and technological change (particularly innovation) and social and human factors are generally externally induced.

It is interesting to note that generally social factors, as reflected in and affected by economic and political developments, give rise to governmental reorganisation. Thus government and the body politic may, in response to political adjustment, social need and economic downturn, issue or initiate legislative diktats to effect realignment.

It is often the latter group that gives rise to organisational reviews and redevelopment in administrative machinery – at all levels.

Organisational change, then, is rarely spontaneous. It is brought about by direct, focussed and purposeful intervention by a higher level of government or the upper echelons of business. Changes so initiated may be painful or otherwise, often it is viewed with misgiving by organised labour. It is thus necessary for the reasons for change to be clear and readily understood. Such change, obviously, needs to be orderly and the process needs to be transparent and public.

### FORCES OF CHANGE

There are particular external influences on local government that give cause for introspection. Interventions may be required because of the provisions of (new) legislation, or the need for higher level of government to interfere in the affairs of the lower level in order to rectify shortcomings or address particular problem areas. Both of these groups of influence have impacted on the administration of Greater Johannesburg.

The impact of new legislation is not a new phenomenon – that which gave rise to Regional Services Councils and the (more recent) Municipal Structures Act are just two that immediately come to mind. The interference by higher levels of government is less commonplace – but such an initiative has had considerable implications for the administration of Greater Johannesburg.

### PROBLEMS AND INITIATIVES

It is common knowledge that the administration of Greater Johannesburg was characterised by financial disarray in recent years. The principal cause of a totally unsatisfactory situation was largely non-payment for rates and services; and the situation was serious enough for the Provincial Administration to intervene and issue focussed directives to address the problems.

In order to do so a number of initiatives or plans were embarked upon. Two of these initiatives, known as iGoli 2002 and iGoli 2010 have their roots, in the most part, in the Province's directives. The implementation of the Unicity legislation in 1999 also required that Johannesburg's administration, organisation and political and functional structures be revisited and addressed to affect economy and enhance performance.

iGoli 2001 in particular sought to rationalise the said administration and functions. Six administrations were amalgamated into one, and the functions, in turn, were characterised as core and non-core – and specially focussed structures were created to perform the relevant and applicable functions. In so doing, agencies were created for, amongst others, roads and stormwater. Other functions and operations e.g. Metro Gas, Rand Airport, and others, were privatised and yet others e.g. the zoo, Council-owned farms, were corporatised.

A companion paper in this session (Dlamini MAV, Froneman ZJ, and Clarke WSD, 2001) will deal in depth with one of the agencies created in the transformation process.

The remainder of this section of the submission will dwell on the principal considerations that accounted for and gave effect to the development of a structure for the Planning Division in the City Council of Johannesburg.

### CORE ADMINISTRATION

The core administration performs the functions and services that were not privatised, corporatised, transformed into agencies and utilities. It is noteworthy that the Council's core administration will be divided between a central and regional administration.

The central administration performs a client function by regulation, policy development and the management of contractual arrangements. As a “client” it defines and sets its needs which in turn will be met by the outputs and services of each of the utilities, agencies, corporatised entities and the regional administrations.

In essence the core (or central) administration will be headed by a City Manager who will be senior to a set of Executive Directors each of whom will head a Division – one of which is Planning. At the time of writing (March 2001) the other Divisions were to consist of Community Services, Corporate Services and Finance, Contract Management and Metropolitan Police Services. If it were to be created and established a Metropolitan Transport Authority or MTA would have been a separate Division. For a number of reasons however, the establishment of an MTA (at this juncture at least) is not priority for the administration.

Reference was made to regional administrations. These structures will number eleven and they will have a remit that relates to public interface and localised implementation. As such these structures will broadly perform contractor functions and be responsible for the delivery of specialised services including libraries, basic health services and housing.

#### THE PLANNING FUNCTION AND DIVISION

As indicated the Planning Division will be situated at the central administration level. As such it would consist of a grouping of relevant staff from six former different and autonomous administrations – the Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern Metropolitan Local Councils, the Metropolitan Council and the Midrand MLC. Just more than 400 officials were required to be accommodated in the new structure. The Municipal Structures Act, it will be recalled, provides for the disestablishment of local authority structures and their (subsequent) consolidation to form the now well-known Unicity and other structures.

The consolidation of structures with essentially the same or similar functions would, under normal circumstances, be a routine exercise. The Johannesburg process was rendered complicated in that officials who operated under vastly different management styles and who emanated from differing work environments and circumstances, needed to be amalgamated. The physical relocation exercise was also rendered less than routine in view of the logistics associated with different time frames, effort and the physical bulk of material and items involved between the structures in the former administrations.

There was also the matter of expectations by officials that needed to be contended with in the staff migration process (as it was termed) to the Unicity administration. It was made clear to officials that the process of amalgamation was not to be perceived as an opportunity for personal advancement. Existing benefits and conditions of service, particularly pension fund benefits, were in no way affected by the amalgamation.

It was unfortunate, but not totally unexpected, that some co-ordinators and “drivers” of the migration process met with resistance. Some of the co-ordinators and “drivers” themselves offered resistance – even though the reasons for and the mechanisms to be employed had been debated and explained in formal and informal information sessions. Incomprehension and misunderstanding, as well as obstinacy and obtuseness, can deter progress in any well-meaning exercise.

#### THE CLUSTERING OF FUNCTIONS

Functions and tasks traditionally associated with planning departments include development planning, development control (or, to render it a more positive endeavour: development management and facilitation) and building control. In many instances a research and/or forward planning section is also provided for. The designation of “forward” also has particular connotations

and its use is somewhat unfortunate, since the actions and intent that constitute and is associated with planning can logically only be imbued with a forward aspect and futurist stance!

In Johannesburg's case the clustering of functions that will collectively constitute the Planning Division are:

- development management,
- spatial planning,
- environmental management,
- project facilitation and management,
- transportation planning, and
- building control.

The normal finance and administration services will also be provided and be located in a sub-Division or separate department.

The process that was followed in deriving this structure was iterative and interactive – but largely politically driven. Elected representatives and political stakeholders had the advantage of a priori briefing on the advantages and drawbacks of alternative structures and organisational configurations. Input by officials then largely focussed on details and task description that were in return referred back to the political structures for comment. This process repeated itself a number of times in respect of the transportation planning sub-Division.

The political office bearers had a clear remit for the Division and, quite logically, expected a staffing structure that would best give effect to politically derived social and economic objectives. It was regrettable that certain co-ordinators saw the exercise as an opportunity for empire building – an endeavour rendered fruitless by a fundamental lack of support or evidence based on a clear relationship between function, performance and staffing requirements. Rule of thumb, and less so for thumb-suck exercises, are clearly inappropriate methodologies under conditions where cost control and expenditure management needs to be reconciled and co-ordinated with focussed service delivery.

### GENERATING SUSTAINABLE URBAN SYSTEMS

The author has been made aware of almost 200 definitions of sustainability. The term “sustainable development” may also be defined with difficulty, but the fact of the matter is that making it happen appears to be even more problematical. It is evident that a complex but integrated set of policies that can readily be translated into actions are required. There is another problem: sustainable development, (like balanced transportation and integrated development and planning - and a host of other noble intentions), like beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. Clichés are notoriously difficult to undo.

Sustainable development, for the purposes of this submission, is not a product but a process where, over time, sustainability can be achieved. Sustainability in turn can be taken to mean the capacity and propensity for endurance and continuance in a manner that is characterised by economy. It is about people and the way in which they execute tasks and undertake activities with due regard to efficiency and minimum side effects.

These sentiments are unlikely to generate controversy. But that cannot be said of the manner or modus operandi of producing sustainable development.

British thoughts on the matter are worthy of pursuit. Just over two years ago a Command Paper observed that sustainable development requires that four objectives need to be met – in concert with each other:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone – as far as that is possible,
- effective protection of the environment,
- prudent use of natural resources, and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

It is evident from these considerations that sustainable development can be seen to have a three dimensional aspect:

- (a) it considers the environment,
- (b) economic development and progress is integral to it, and
- (c) social well being is in the forefront of the processes employed.

These aspects and the four goals already mentioned can readily be regarded as being applicable to the vision derived for the City of Johannesburg.

Various strategies have been developed in the first world economies that, if implemented, would render development sustainable. It is unfortunate that, often, short term expediencies negate longer term objectives in the process, but strategies such as:

- (a) comprehensive land use and transportation planning – in concert,
- (b) the development of supportive regulations and by-laws,
- (c) metropolitan governance and cross border co-operation,
- (d) urban growth restrictions,
- (e) pedestrian and other non-motorised and public transport links to major activity centres,
- (f) non-motorised and public transport orientation of new developments and re-development of brown-field sites,
- (g) encouragement of mixed use developments,
- (h) corridor preservation,
- (i) the requirement of environmental impact assessments,
- (j) transportation systems management,
- (k) implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems,
- (l) incentives and disincentives like additional bulk or surcharges (property taxes),
- (m) “user pays” policies,
- (n) designation of priority investment and action areas,
- (o) information dissemination and education on sustainable practices.

.....and so on, all will contribute towards effecting sustainable urban development. The Planning Division of the City Council of Johannesburg, by its clustering of functions, can devise, refine and facilitate the implementation of these (and other) strategies that would give effect to a sustainable urban system. Co-operation with other Divisions would be a pre-requisite but the opportunity for procrastination for fear of turf invasion would be limited.

The transformation and re-organisation of Johannesburg’s administration can thus have this important benefit – but the process needs to be pursued with vigour.

#### THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE OVERSEEING POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The activities and initiatives of the Planning Division are, to a large extent, reflected in the remit of the Section 80 Committee. This is the structure established under the provisions, most particularly Section 80, of the Municipal Structures Act.

Thus, in relation to the powers and functions pertaining to urban planning, environmental management and transportation entrusted to the Council, the Committee (designated the Development Planning, Transportation and Environment Committee) has been authorised to exercise particular powers and discharge specific duties. These are:

1. To consider and make recommendations on all matters vesting in the Council and the Mayoral Committee relating to the development planning, environmental management and transportation functions.
2. Monitor and evaluate all projects and programmes to ensure integrated and sustainable development.
3. To monitor and review action plans and evaluate progress on all strategic thrusts and projects of the Planning Division and to make recommendations in respect of any amendment or realignment required from time to time.
4. To monitor and evaluate service delivery as well as strategies for efficient and equitable service delivery in the areas of responsibility of the Division.
5. To foster co-operative governance between various departments with relation to functions performed by the Planning Division.
6. To facilitate and monitor the strategic planning processes in respect of planning, transportation planning and environmental planning.
7. To consider and formulate responses for submission to Council on all draft legislation, draft regulations, directives and questionnaires issued by other statutory authorities in respect of the urban planning, environmental management and transportation functions.  
To monitor the implementation of By-Laws and Regulations of the City of Johannesburg, any Acts, Ordinances, Proclamations and Regulations of National or Provincial Government relating to any matter falling within the area of responsibility of the urban planning, environmental management and transportation functions.
8. To monitor and evaluate all matters where the environment is threatened by the operations or activities of the City of Johannesburg, and give direction on such matters, within the environmental policy framework of the City of Johannesburg.
9. To monitor the execution of all Committee resolutions relating to the area of responsibility of the Planning Division.
10. To monitor and evaluate the procedures of planning of development.
11. To ratify activities undertaken by the head of the Division falling outside his/her delegated powers to meet emergency and contingency situations.
12. To monitor the development and implementation of comprehensive information system for the urban planning, environmental management and transportation functions, in line with Council's policy.
13. To monitor the implementation of the approved transportation and planning frameworks for the City of Johannesburg.
14. To monitor the establishment of mechanisms, structures, procedures and processes, on partnerships with the business sector and labour, for the promotion of development in the City of Johannesburg.
15. To consider and recommend the acquisition of land required in the Planning Division subject to the necessary budget provision.

The Development Planning, Transportation and Environment Committee will also have final decision-making powers on the following matter:

“To appoint consultants for the urban planning, environmental management and transportation functions at a cost from R250 000 to R1m with due regard to the Council's procurement policy, budgetary constraints, financial regulations and legal statutory requirements”.

It is thus clear that the framework has substantially been provided, at the political level at least, to give effect to a sustainable urban system.

#### A CONCLUDING NOTE – INTERAGENCY CO-OPERATION

While the Planning Division would be well positioned to give effect to developmental sustainable practices, there is a need to consider the activities of the other structures. At this juncture the author would appeal for the establishment of a unit that would monitor the plans and programmes developed by, for example, the solid waste management company, the Roads Agency, and the other utilities and corporatised entities to assess their impact on the environment; use of resources; methods and materials utilised to perform their functions; and so on.

Clearly a voluntary adherence to policies, principles and practices that enhance sustainability would be preferable to coercion. The theory of holism, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, would be particularly relevant.

#### FURTHER READING:

Dlamini, M.A.V., Froneman, Z.J., and Clarke, W.S.D.- “Transformation of the Roads Delivery Process and System – The Johannesburg Initiative”. South African Transport Conference, Pretoria, July 2001.

Froneman, Z.J. and de Sousa Pereira, C. – “Local Government Reorganisation – Elements of Greater Johannesburg Initiatives” Government Digest – March 2001, Vol. 20, No. 3.

Tomlinson, R. – “Ten Years in the Making – A History of the Evolution of Metropolitan Government in Johannesburg”. Urban Forum – 1999, Vol. 10, No. 1

Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions – “A Better Quality of Life : a strategy for sustainable development for the U.K.” May 1999, CM 4345, The Stationery Office, London.

Bochner, B.S. – “Smart Growth Tools for Transportation” ITE Journal: November 2000, Vol.70, No.11.

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Presented on behalf Z J Froneman by:

**C A HOEHLER**

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## **PERSONAL DETAILS**

Current employer                      Johannesburg Roads Agency (Pty) Ltd (Jan 2001 to date)  
City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (December 2000)  
Greater Johannesburg - S M L C (Technical Services - Roads and  
Stormwater) (Jan 1997 to Nov 2000)  
G J T M C (Johannesburg Administration - Roads Directorate) (Jan  
1996 to Dec 1996)  
Johannesburg City Council (Roads Directorate) (Jul 1992 to Dec  
1995)  
Johannesburg City Council (City Engineer's Department) (Oct 1977  
to Jun 1992)

Marital status                              Married with two sons (born 1984 and 1981)

## **EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Last school attended                      Boksburg High School 1962  
Tertiary Institution attended              Witwatersrand Technikon 1968

## **CURRENT POSITION**

Present Position                              Manager : Road Surfacing Depot and Asphalt Plant (July 2001)

Main job function                              Function as a contractor to implement of the road-resurfacing  
programme within the area of jurisdiction of the City of Johannesburg

## **BACKGROUND**

Design, construction and maintenance of railway lines (1963 to 1977)  
City of Johannesburg (1977 to date)  
Pavement Management Systems  
Maintenance management of a roads and stormwater network  
Road resurfacing (departmental and by contract)  
Utilities management  
Engineering support  
- developing, implementing and providing information systems  
- internal technical support to line management  
- quality control services