



IN LIMBO: Lena van Wyk and Eric Kani, both 67, in front of the structure they have been staying in for seven months.

PICTURE: CINDY WAXA/ANA PICTURES

# Right sites for housing plan

## City to identify land for optimal development

Rusana Philander

**T**HE CITY of Cape Town has announced it had embarked "on an exercise to identify well-located City-owned land which can be developed into social and affordable housing".

Mayoral committee member for transport and urban development, Brett Heron said building houses is a massive and urgent task.

"We have already embarked on an exercise to identify well-located City-owned land which can be developed optimally in terms of access to public transport, density and mixed use (commercial and residential). In these areas, residential developments will have to consist of a combination of social housing, affordable housing and middle- and upper-income housing (thus housing for those who can afford to pay). The other reality is we must find additional and alternative funding resources. Going forward, it means the delivery of new housing opportunities will not happen in isolation, but in con-

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junction with access to work opportunities and access to public transport. It means affordable housing will be provided on well-located land, close to work opportunities, schools, social amenities and social services. Our task is massive and urgent. We are in the process of taking steps to accelerate change. First of all, we need well-located affordable housing in our inner cities and around transport corridors. Secondly we will leverage City-owned assets such as land and property to achieve spatial transformation."

Liza Rose Cirolia, housing researcher for the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town, said the current housing delivery model is not working.

"It is necessary for the state to develop an approach so people have a choice where they want to live and in what type of housing. Some would want a flat where others would like a house." While

the human settlements department is interested in building affordable housing, other departments may not have these objectives. For example, the department of transport and public works does not have housing targets to meet and thus is not willing to release their land or buildings to meet these goals.

"The 'waiting list' is a database where people register their housing needs and requests. This list is not 'first come first serve', so it is possible to have people waiting a long time and others who get subsidies quickly," Cirolia said.

The housing crisis in Cape Town has left people like those facing eviction in Albert Road, Woodstock, in limbo as they have nowhere else to go.

Elderly couple Lena van Wyk and Eric Kani, both 67, have been staying in a small structure for the past seven months. The wooden structure, which only fits a bed, is next to the building where their house burnt down. Kani said: "We lost all our stuff in the fire. We have been staying in this shack, which only fits a small bed, for seven months. It is very cold out here and we do not have anywhere else to go."