

Inner City regeneration continues to make progress

Every day, a team of committed officials take to the streets of Durban enforcing bylaws, fixing infrastructure and ensuring that the City is clean and safe. Led by the Inner City Area Based Management Unit (ITRUMP), they quietly and efficiently demonstrate their commitment to creating a central business district (CBD) that is conducive to working, and living by tackling illegal trading, illegal businesses, illegal dumping and other contraventions. **Sohana Singh** reports about this intensified joint enforcement operation which is part of an effort to regenerate and renew the CBD area as a key economic hub.

MONTHS of combined operations and enforcement to rejuvenate the CBD areas is beginning to take shape with dedicated teams out on the streets every day, committed to creating a City that residents can be proud of.

More than 1000 fines were issued for various offences between July and October. Communicating via a WhatsApp group, faults and areas of concern are raised and addressed immediately by the relevant department. This approach has seen problems being addressed speedily and efficiently.

Head of the Development Planning, Environment and Management Unit Musa Mbhele said: "The Inner City regeneration programme offers eThekweni Municipality an exciting yet challenging opportunity for regeneration of its main economic hubs. This follows an extended period of urban decline caused by processes of decentralisation, further intensified by crime, grime, congestion, and unregulated trading. Consequently, urban decay manifests among others in bad buildings, illegal conversions, over-crowding, and poorly serviced, maintained and managed public spaces."

He added: "In line with the City's vision to create the most liveable and caring City by 2030, multi-disciplinary teams conduct massive clean-ups and enforcement of Municipal by-laws. A special focus on bad buildings has also commenced with officials targeting poorly maintained and dilapidated buildings in the hope of encouraging property owners to fix up their buildings or face court action. As a long term regeneration strategy, the Municipality will deal with issues of security; crime and grime and will address bad buildings which is causing the key economic nodes to appear dilapidated and unsafe."

PROBLEM BUILDING SUCCESS

Hoosen Moolla, Senior Manager for ITRUMP said



Expanded Public Works Programme employees conduct a clean-up as part of the inner city regeneration programme.

Pictures: SUPPLIED



Metro Police Officers issuing fines to store owners in the Central Business District for contravening Municipal by-laws.

the Municipality has over the past year managed to ensure the rehabilitation of six dilapidated buildings in the inner city. "Through serving notices and changing the rates code of the property, we were able to apply pressure property

owners to rehabilitate their buildings. While most prevented court action, the City is not shy to turn to the justice system to shut problem buildings down and ensure that owners take responsibility for their properties," he said.

The joint operations on bad buildings have enjoyed other successes too. Seventy six undocumented foreigners were arrested and deported through the Home Affairs Immigration Department and 76 other arrests were made for

various offences, including possession of drugs. While the City will continue to conduct intensified operations to deter illegal activity in the effort to clean up the CDB area, reclaim public spaces and bring law and order to

the public realm, it calls on communities to play their part in ensuring that we live in a clean and safe environment.

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A City official issuing a fine to a store owner during a raid for selling counterfeit goods.