

MATATIELE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

DENSIFICATION POLICY



MATATIELE

LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

2022-23 financial year

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBD	Central Business District
MSDF	Matatiele Spatial Development Framework
DPZ	Density Priority Zones
DU/HA	Dwelling units per hectare
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IRT	Integrated rapid transit
LUMS-	Land Use Management Scheme
LUPO	Land Use Planning Ordinance (Ordinance 15 of 1985)
MSA	Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000)
Province	Provincial Government of the Eastern Cape
PSDF	Provincial Spatial Development Framework
SPLUMA-	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act,2013
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SDP	(district-level) Spatial Development Plan
PLANNING	Development Planning Unit

Activity route Significant and/or metro-wide to district route characterised by strip and/or nodal urban development along sections of the route. Activity routes are generally supported by a mix of land uses and higher-density urban development. Activity routes are characterised by direct access and interrupted movement flows, especially at bus and taxi stops and traffic lights.

Activity street Local routes characterised by continuous development, including centres or nodes, mixed land use, linear commercial and business developments, light industry, institutions and social facilities. Activity streets are characterised by direct access and interrupted movement flows, especially at bus and taxi stops and traffic lights.

Amenity/ attraction areas (urban, natural Significant urban places that are attractive to people across the town, including certain urban nodes and business complexes, public space precincts, social and institutional facility areas and heritage areas; coastal nodes that include a range of functions, from businesses (shops, services and restaurants) and social facilities (including recreation and resorts) to residential development.

Densification Increased use of space, both horizontally and vertically, within existing areas/properties and new developments, accompanied by an increased number of units and/or population threshold.

Green field areas undeveloped land in a city or rural area, either used for agriculture or landscape design or left to evolve naturally. These areas of land are usually agricultural or amenity properties being considered for urban development

Perimeter block- buildings located along the block, with entrances facing the street and semi-private courtyards in the rear of the buildings. This is intended to provide good social interaction among people

Population density Number of people per hectare (calculated by multiplying the number of units by an appropriate average household size).

Subsidised housing Housing supplied in terms of the National Department of Housing's housing subsidy scheme

Building density Ratio of total building floor area (FAR) to the corresponding site.

Civic precinct Concentration of public facilities (e.g. schools, clinics, hospitals) located in close proximity.

Urban edge A demarcated edge line defining the outer limits of urban development for a determined period of time.

Urban fabric The existing built area of the town.

Urban nodes Urban nodes are characterised by the intensity, mix and clustering of urban activities or land use at points of high accessibility, exposure, convenience and urban opportunity. The role and function of nodes are differentiated in terms of scale (metropolitan, sub- metropolitan, district and local).

Zoning scheme Determines development rights and land uses permitted within each category.

Terrace houses exhibit a style of medium-density housing where a row of identical or mirror-image houses share side walls. They are also known in some areas as row houses

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1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of urban densification is definitely a hot one these days and there certainly is no lack of opinions on the matter. Previously our habitat was built around roads and automobile makers prospered. Fast forward to the 21st century and urban planner are singing a different tune. With the impact that long commute to the suburbs has on, not only on our environment, but on our physical and mental wellbeing, the idea of living and working in one space has evolved.

On the other hand, the concept of low-density, which is found in most urban areas, it is threatening the long-term sustainability of our cities and has created the following challenges:

- Urban sprawl that has resulted in long travel distances with fragmented and dispersed urban activity patterns, which make it difficult to develop a viable public transport system. This has a negative impact on the mobility of poorer people, who are dependent on public transport (travel and fuel costs), and is unsustainable in an oil-constrained world.
- Road-based transport (including private transport) with increased traffic congestion and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions has significant environmental pollution consequences.
- The place-making qualities and urban vibrancy of neighborhoods, districts and the town as a whole are being threatened.
- Good agricultural land on the urban edge and elsewhere is rapidly being consumed by urban development, and valuable biodiversity resources and areas of scenic and amenity value are being threatened.
- The unit cost of providing the necessary infrastructure required to service low-density forms of urban development is far greater than the unit and operating cost of servicing medium to higher-density forms of urban development.
- Lastly, the inefficiency caused by this fragmented and low-density form of development has serious economic implications, limiting access to opportunities and causing operational inefficiencies and a wastage of supporting economic resources (both natural and built).

2. WHAT IS DENSIFICATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Densification is defined as follows:

The increased use of space, both horizontally and vertically, within existing areas/properties and new developments, accompanied by an increased number of units and/or population threshold

Incremental densification, in turn, denotes the following:

Small-scale densification that has a relatively low impact on the character of an area, e.g. the subdivision of a residential property or construction of a second dwelling

Densification is not an end in itself, but a means of improving the sustainability of the town as well as the vitality of urban precincts. It is a relative indicator of the intensity of development and the population thresholds that could support economic activity, public transport services and the like.

3. FORMS OF DENSIFICATION

Generally, there are three generic building forms that support higher densities and they can be applied in many different ways such as

- Single, detached tower block buildings (on an erf), surrounded by open space;
- A traditional street layout with attached row/terrace housing and
- A perimeter block enclosing an open space or courtyard.

Terrace houses and perimeter block are most preferable in Matatiele

Picture1: terrace houses



Photo 2: Example of perimeter block



Picture 2: terrace houses

4. MOTIVATION FOR DENSIFICATION

Densification can contribute to the creation of good-quality, efficient and sustainable urban environments in a number of ways, including the following:

- Reduction of the consumption of valuable/non- renewable resources
- encouraging development upwards rather than outwards. It helps to reduce the consumption of valuable resources such as agricultural land, areas of mineral potential, aquifer recharge areas and valuable biodiversity areas. It can also
- reduce the consumption of non-renewable fuels by lessening car dependence. Densification supports the development of a viable public transport system
- Higher densities, accompanied by increased population thresholds and mixed-use development, support the efficient functioning and viable provision of public transport services, especially on major line-haul routes for mass and rapid transit.
- makes the town more equitable
- Higher densities in appropriate locations, especially those close to urban opportunities (services, facilities, jobs) and public transport, help rationalise the housing pattern in the town, and improve access to the town's amenities and facilities. They help reduce travel distances and times, as well as the associated costs
- It facilitates economic opportunities and supports service provision
- Higher densities, accompanied by increased population thresholds, create sufficient consumers to generate the development of economic opportunities, social facilities and services, and enable the cost-effective provision and optimal use of infrastructure, especially where there is excess service town or where increased thresholds are required to provide services and infrastructure.
- it improves housing patterns and choice of house type
- A mix of residential densities ensures diversification and choice of housing types and tenure options.

- Densification contributes to urban place-making and improves safety i.e. appropriately designed and located higher densities (in terms of form, scale, height, orientation) can provide an opportunity for place-making and the creation of attractive and safe urban environments, particularly those in proximity to public spaces (both natural and built).
- Where possible, allow a variety of erf and dwelling sizes within any one area
- Higher densities are not a guarantee of quality urban environments, appropriate built form or good urban design. However, the extremes of either very high or low densities often result in negative urban environments. Appropriate regulations, local development policies and urban design policies can be used to help prevent negative built environments.

5. LEGISLATION FOR DENSIFICATION

A number of strategy and policy documents, prepared by different spheres of government, promote densification within urban settlements throughout South Africa.

- i. **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)** supports densification to develop the built environment for the efficient provision of services, social and economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Section 21: Everyone has the right to choose their trade, occupation and profession freely. The practise of trade, occupation or profession may be regulated by law

Section 24: everyone has the right to the environment that is not harmful to the health and well-being- to have environment protected for the benefit of the present and future generations through reasonable legislative and other measures that prevent pollution, promote conservation and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable and economic and social development.

Section 157- objects of Local Government:

- b) ensure provision of services to community in a sustainable manner
- c) promote social and economic development
- d) promote a safe and healthy environment

section 195: people's needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making (Public Administration)

- ii. **Section 10 A of Municipal Systems Act (MSA), 32 of 2000**– a municipality exercises its legislative or executive authority by developing and adopting policies, plans, strategies and programmes including setting targets for service delivery
 - **J-** Monitoring the impact and effectiveness of any services, policies, programmes and plans in accordance with rules and orders of the Council
- iii. **Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act(SPLUMA),16 of 2013-** chapter 6 -The general principles set out in this chapter apply to all organs of state and other authorities responsible for the implementation of legislation regulating the use, development of land and guide:
 - a) **Preparation, adoption and implementation of any SDF, policy or by-law** concerning spatial planning and the development or use of land

c)Sustainable use and development of land

chapter 7- the following principles apply to the spatial planning, land development land use management:

- iv) preparation and amendment of spatial plans, policies land use schemes as well as procedures for development applications- including transparent processes of public participation that afford all parties the opportunity to provide inputs on matters affecting them
- v) policies, legislation and procedures must be clearly set in order to inform and empower members of the public

section 8 (2) the norms and standards must-

promote social inclusion, spatial equity, desirable settlement patterns, rural revitalisation, urban re-generation and land development

iv. **The Eastern Cape Provincial Spatial Development Plan, 2010 (ECPSDP)**

The spatial vision of the ECPSDP is:

The future spatial perspective would comprise a spatial development framework of –

- Managed urban and rural human settlements clustered in settlement regions and corridors, alongside productive precincts,
- Managed ecological natural resource areas;
- Connected to a network of strategic transportation corridors open to the global, national and provincial economy.

The core values relating to the ECPSDP are as follows:

- Environmental integrity and sustainability
- Safeguarding all natural resources
- **Densification**
- **Integrated Land Use**
- Economy and efficiency of development
- Achieving synergy and linkages between urban and rural areas
- Participatory community based planning as a basis of going forward

- v. The *MATATIELE Spatial Development Framework (MSDF) (2014)* – which was endorsed by Council, forwarded to the Provincial Government of the Eastern Cape(the Province) for approval as a structure plan (in terms of section 4(6) of the Land Use Planning Ordinance, Ordinance 15 of 1985), and incorporated into the Integrated Development Plan (in terms of section 34 of the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000) – promotes the development of a more sustainable, compact town. The MSDF supports contextually appropriate densification across the town. It proposes higher densities in specific locations, such as along activity and development routes and in urban nodes and development that socially integrates communities

6. HOW THE MUNICIPALITY WILL ACHIEVE THE DENSIFICATION

Densification can take place in the developed areas of the town, on vacant infill sites within the developed areas, and on greenfield sites that coincide with the town's planned growth direction. The general process of densification takes place in a number of ways and is facilitated and managed by a range of zoning and land use regulations. Therefore, where appropriate and in line with the existing legislation (LUMS,SDF,SPLUMA etc) and appropriate range of measure, the Municipality will allow development and increased density on the following:

1. Construction of attached / detached second dwellings, including the changing of non-residential buildings, or parts of buildings, to residential buildings;
2. The increase of existing bulk rights through the extension of the building or adding-on of floors to accommodate an increased number of units;
3. Block consolidation of erven with redevelopment at higher densities;
4. Subdivision of land, and redevelopment at higher densities;
5. Consolidation with redevelopment at higher densities, including the demolition and integration of existing structures;
6. Higher-density infill on vacant and underutilized land throughout the built area of the towns. The most desirable infill areas should be those located close to economic opportunities, social amenities and IRT routes.
7. Consolidation of sites within a street block to create a single, larger parcel for redevelopment into multi-storey units;
8. Creative redesigning of already densely populated areas to make them more attractive
9. Prohibition of high-rise building in some areas to maintain natural (mountainous) view of Matatiele
10. Allowing maximum parking standards related to the accessibility of public transport in certain areas such as in major commercial areas and along development routes, activity routes and activity streets—should be considered.
11. Where circumstances permit, there will be a provision of on- street parking, especially for a proportion of the visitor parking required by group housing/flats. Also vehicular access to the new units created should be minimised and should ideally be shared (e.g. a single access point).
12. Higher levels of densification will be encouraged at specific spatial locations, particularly in areas with good public transport accessibility, at concentrations of employment, commercial development and/or social amenities, and in areas of high amenity. Small-scale incremental densification should be permitted across the town, where appropriate and feasible in terms of infrastructure availability.
13. proactively encouraging densification in density priority zones (DPZs) and urban civic upgrade areas, Different types of incentives may be applied where possible. Such incentives include the relaxation of building lines, reduced parking (to encourage walking, use of public transport etc and public open space provisions), financial mechanisms (e.g. adjustments to developer contributions, property rates and/or planning application fees), and procedural improvements (e.g. streamlining application procedures)

14. promotion of spatial integration and intensification of land uses to avoid or minimize mono-functional developments on municipal land and also to promote and support financial mechanisms that support multi-storey buildings where it is suitable- this will concentrate more in the central business districts (core areas of the urban areas); i.e the intensification of all types of land uses, not just residential land uses, will be encouraged
15. the provision of and access to open space and community facilities such as libraries, clinics, schools especially in higher-density minimal densification on greenfield areas and on urban edge, and more specifically .
16. Upgrading of urban civic area-upgrade locations within the DPZs that are the focus of a broad range of public interventions (e.g. getting rid of crime and grime, landscaping, and public transport enhancements) and investments, and where private investment will be proactively encouraged

Therefore, for densification to be effective, it has to be guided by the following:

Table 1: factors to consider for densification

Area for densification	Factors to consider
Access to public transport, Proximity to places of employment, services and facilities, Proximity to open space	Areas targeted for densification, and their associated density parameters

	Features: ➤ Natural environment ➤ Land use ➤ Built environment ➤ Infrastructure ➤ Transport facilities ➤ Social Facilities ➤ Socio Economic issues
Medium to high levels of densification	- Access to public transport system (existing or planned): Medium to high levels of densification should be aligned with existing/proposed public transport routes. This is essential for housing development targeted at lower-income earners, who are unable to afford the costs of private transport. It should not be an overriding consideration for middle and upper-income townhouse/ group housing developments, as the residents are likely to make greater use of private transport. - Land use integration: Preferably medium to high levels of densification should be located near places of employment, social services and community facilities. - Access and proximity to public open spaces

	Medium to high-density development should have access to urban open spaces (such as parks, walkways, parks and sports fields and nature reserves etc to provide physical and psychological relief from higher-density living environments.
infrastructure	- Infrastructure Densification should not be supported where water, wastewater and stormwater are reaching points of absolute constraint, but where there is still potential for infrastructure to be increased

These will currently be done in three towns of Matatiele; Matatiele, Maluti and Cedarville and there will be a development or setting of guidelines for minimum height and/or maximum height and density parameters when local/density plans are prepared, although this will be done gradually and as integration between rural and urban areas intensifies (in terms of development and planning, densification will spin-off to the rural areas as well. Higher-density forms of development will be carefully evaluated in order to ensure that proposals fit in with the surrounding environment. The form and design of the development must be compatible with the area's built/natural character. If it is compromising the surrounding built environment, the development should not be supported. Most important, the municipality has to ensure that there is cross-sector planning, budgeting and implementation of projects that will ensure that necessary infrastructure and social facilities are in place;

Table 2: Areas/ locations targeted for densification

Target area	Description of spatial area	Targeted location	Density guideline
Townwide	All single, residential- zoned areas	All locations as permitted by the zoning scheme or applications for new rights	Second dwellings as well as other forms of development, provided

Specific residential areas or parts thereof	Within areas of focused public-sector investment, e.g. subsidised housing	Informed by spatial structure locations	1 du/ha (net) Single to 4 storeys, informed by spatial structure
Development Route	Major townwide or district movement routes, including line-haul public transport or IRT. Mixed land uses and higher density development tend to be nodal, with access provided at intersections,	Particularly near points of direct access, transport intersections and interchanges, places of intense mixed-use and nodal activity ('activity route' character) and next to or part of commercial complexes	2 du/ha (net) 5 storeys
Activity route	Significant and/or metro-wide to district route, characterised by strip and/or nodal urban development along sections of the route. Activity routes	Generally near the activity route, but particularly near public transport interchanges	2 du/ha (net) 4- 6 storeys
Activity street	Local routes characterised by continuous development, including centres or nodes, mixed land use, linear commercial and business developments, light industry, institutions and social facilities. Activity streets are characterised by direct access and interrupted movement flows, especially at bus and taxi stops and traffic lights.	Generally near the activity street, but particularly near public transport stops, stations and route intersections, in mixed-use areas and concentrated activity, local business/ commercial nodes, and at public institutions and facilities including open space	1 du/ ha (net) 4 storeys

7. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS FOR DENSIFICATION

Step 1: Check for appropriate density intensity and form

Step 2: Consult density guides such as Zoning scheme, density plans (if available), target areas for densification, policies(relating to densification) etc and taking into consideration the following factors: Natural and built up environment, Land use, social facilities and socio-economic factors and infrastructure

Step 3- distribution to relevant stakeholders for comments

Step 4: decision making – (approval/rejection)- Determine the density in terms of height, form and orientation appropriate to the location, and set conditions of approval

Policy number

Council Resolution (CR) Number

CR



MR. L. MATIWANE
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

28/07/2022

DATE



CLLR. S. MNGENELA
MAYOR

28/07/2022

DATE



CLLR. N. NGWANYA
SPEAKER OF COUNCIL

28/07/2022

DATE