

THE VISION FOR HOUT BAY

The Challenge

Hout Bay is one of the most beautiful places on earth. In the beginning it was the home of strandlopers, whose middens have been found in Hout Bay's coastal zone. Then came the Dutch East India Company's farmers and their workers, who cut down the forests that covered the valley and tilled the land for generations, followed by fishing companies and their employees. However farming petered out many years ago and the fishing industry is declining. These changes have created social tensions which must be addressed.

The development of Hout Bay as a dormitory suburb for greater Cape Town with the accompanying growth of retail shops and supporting services has alleviated the employment challenge to some extent but far more needs to be done, as the influx of people into the area in the hope of finding jobs far outweighs the opportunities available.

The Potential

Tourism is the future source of jobs and prosperity for Hout Bay.

The valley enjoys a magnificent range of unique natural and cultural heritage assets and has the potential to provide the citizens of Cape Town, as well as local and international tourists, an unrivalled opportunity for leisure pursuits and holiday activities. Hout Bay is already involved in world class events. The 'Dungeons' super-wave rates as one of the biggest in the World and attracts worldwide interest. The Argus Cycle Tour and the Two Oceans Marathon traverse Chapman's Peak Drive and East Fort has the oldest battery of original working guns in the world. It is one of South Africa's few harbour towns

For tourism to succeed future development must be coordinated and controlled within a holistic vision, so that the assets which the community has inherited can be conserved and their socio-economic value unlocked, as well as present infrastructural constraints overcome. If coordinated planning is not achieved, the potential value and benefits for all will be lost through continuing piecemeal development which will destroy the tourism potential and benefit only a privileged few.

South Africa's Commitment to Future Sustainability

In 2002, South Africa hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The resolutions and aims that were agreed outlined world opinion on the vital importance of sustainable conservation and development. Hout Bay has massive potential for sustainable development but this will only be secured by coordinated planning. Although it is likely that one or more public private participation partnerships will be needed for the effective implementation of major developments, an agreed holistic 'vision' and the associated planning frameworks will provide for coordinated planning and effectively integrated sustainable development.

The Way Forward to realise The Vision

Development of Hout Bay's Social Environment

- Promotion and development of responsible tourism to establish Hout Bay as a tourist destination of choice and thus create jobs, upliftment and social harmony.
- Protection and conservation of traditional industries such as fishing and boat repairing to ensure continuation of existing employment and to provide an additional focus for tourism.
- Unlocking potential areas of new work, eg in nature conservation, guiding and small tourism enterprises, to provide additional employment and opportunities for upliftment.

Development of Hout Bay's Natural Environment Assets

- Recognition and promotion of Hout Bay's unique location as an enclave completely surrounded by a World Heritage site, for the benefit of the community, the inhabitants of Cape Town and tourists, in collaboration with the Table Mountain National Park.



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A Community Initiative of The Hout Bay & Llandudno Heritage Trust

- Creation of well-signed access to hiking trails in the surrounding mountains, to coastal walks and to the beaches.
- Restoration and conservation of the river, which is the only river rising on Table Mountain capable of rehabilitation, together with its entire ecosystem of wetlands, estuary and beach, including the establishment of an 'ecological reserve' for the Hout Bay River and adoption of a sustainable water management policy
- Development of economically sustainable uses of the river and wetlands as tourism experiences, with hiking trail access to Table Mountain, walking and equestrian trails around the wetlands and a birding and education facility with overnight accommodation.
- Working towards the establishment of "Blue Flag" status for Hout Bay, Sandy Bay and Llandudno beaches without the introduction of elements which would detract from their sustainability and at the same time accommodating the ecologically sensitive Hout Bay river estuarine lagoon, with its wildlife and interactive marine and freshwater ecosystem.
- Protection and conservation of the rural valley floor and river flood plain as an important heritage landscape, which constitutes one of Hout Bay's especially attractive features.
- Adoption of an effective policy for the control of alien vegetation which threatens the bio-diversity aims of the TMNP and UNESCO World Heritage Site, together with strict enforcement of the associated laws and regulations.

Development of Hout Bay's Built Environment to Conserve its Heritage Assets

- Acceptance of the fundamental constraints and assets of Hout Bay and inclusion of these in spatial planning strategies, ie: limited space, only three access roads, surrounding World Heritage Site and mountains, environmentally important dune fields and beach, unique river and wetland system, socially vital working harbour, boat repair facilities and marinas.
- Development of the Harbour area in a coordinated holistic way so that it becomes an integrated component of the whole of Hout Bay and realises its full potential as a unique tourism attraction for the benefit of the entire community.
- Establishment of sustainable carrying capacities of Hout Bay for permanent residents, overnight visitors and day visitors with at least a 30 year horizon to ensure that development does not outstrip the roads, services and infrastructure in such a way as to prejudice responsible tourism activity.
- Official adoption of planning overlays and a structural plan to provide a clear unambiguous planning framework, with strict adherence to the planning restrictions for every application..
- Formal adoption of a planning ethos which encourages the expansion of conservation and tourism and promotion of this ethos within the whole community to generate public support for such a vision.

Development of Hout Bay's Cultural Heritage Assets

- Identification and adoption of planning overlays and formulation of conservation plans for all heritage assets in Hout Bay, with systematic updating of planning overlays on a sustained basis.
- Formulation of business plans wherever possible, whereby heritage assets can be restored and maintained in an economically sustainable way and thus conserved for future generations, for the benefit of the community and visitors and for the encouragement of tourism.
- Promotion of community pride in our cultural heritage and encouragement of monitoring of heritage sites and objects by community organisations to ensure that heritage assets are not threatened, damaged or destroyed.
- Establishment of events and traditions associated with Hout Bay's unique cultural history and their responsible exploitation to enhance tourism, education and cultural exchange.

Hout Bay & Llandudno Heritage Trust
P O Box 27091, HOUT BAY 7872
e-mail: hb.heritage@zsd.co.za

Fax: 021-790 5078

March 2007
Tel: 021-790 2008

