

Resilient Claremont CBD poised for further investment and growth

Situated just 10km from Cape Town's city centre, the vibrant Claremont CBD has proven its resilience as a thriving mixed-use node that represents the economic heart of the city's sought-after Southern Suburbs.



Source: Supplied. Abdul Kerbelker, executive manager of the Claremont Improvement District Company (CIDC).

Well positioned relative to major arterials and home to a diverse array of businesses including the retail and office sector, as well as a wide range of residential apartments, Claremont CBD has not only rebounded from the impacts of Covid, but is continuing to attract new businesses and increased investment and growth, says Abdul Kerbelker, executive manager of the Claremont Improvement District Company (CIDC).

In its 2023 report, it is evident that the CIDC has played a major role in the sustainability, growth and development of this node, in close co-operation with its partners in law enforcement, property and business owners, and the local community.

The CIDC aims to protect and enhance the node's existing asset base while simultaneously attracting new investment, tenants and customers.

As noted by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), resilience entails far more than just sustainability – it requires transparent and community-inclusive leadership and clear and financially viable co-ordination in order to succeed.

Says Kerbelker: “Throughout Covid and the lockdowns, the CIDC was able to provide uninterrupted urban management and social services while co-ordinating the efforts of local partners to address issues raised during that period, and providing a stable environment from which the business and residential sector was able to recover.

“We express appreciation to business owners who play a critical role in the resilience of Claremont CBD, having responded successfully to Day Zero during the drought - prior to Covid, and who are now proactively tackling load shedding issues.

“Positively, business activity is back to pre-pandemic levels, with a recovery in demand for both office and retail space, and with a desire for maximum flexibility reinforcing the trend towards eco-living and co-working spaces.

“The demand for office space has been primarily driven by business process outsourcing and e-commerce companies, including call centres, while the node remains the preferred hub for financial services companies given the area’s lifestyle offering and access to top-notch schooling and high-end residential areas.”

Claremont CBD: A thriving hub

The CIDC report, at the time of writing, states that seven call-centre operations employ more than 2,100 people in the Claremont CBD, while a vibrant, well-managed, night-time economy contributes to the social and cultural life of Claremont’s community.

As Professor Francois Viruly, head of UCT Urban Real Estate Research Unit points out: “There are very few nodes in South Africa that successfully offer the Claremont mix of residential and non-residential uses. I envisage that Claremont will continue to strengthen its dominant position in the Cape Town metropolitan area.”

Highlighting the resilience of Claremont CBD is the increase in property valuation – with the total value of both residential and commercial property almost doubling over the past decade, rising from R4.49bn in 2012/13 to R8.85bn in 2022/23 – an increase of 97.1%, compared to a total valuation of just R1.4bn in 2004/05.



Cape Town's Southern Suburbs defies market slowdown

16 Oct 2023



Says David Stoll, CIDC Board chairman: “Furthermore, with office vacancy rates back in line with pre-Covid levels, office rentals increasing and residential apartment sales rebounding strongly, development activity in and around this node is expected to gather momentum during the next few years, with a number of major new developments currently planned or proposed anticipated to bring new businesses, residents and visitors to the area.”

Adds Kerbelker: “Importantly, the proposed expansion of the MyCiTi bus service to Claremont CBD will see a significant further investment in Claremont’s public transport interchange (PTI), which will improve accessibility to the node, thereby boosting retail and business activity.

“Extending the MyCiTi service to the metro southeast, linking Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain with Wynberg and Claremont will not only provide much-needed, affordable and reliable access for employees, students and visitors, it will also benefit businesses along the route.

“Coupled with this, the potential release of several City-owned vacant plots in the vicinity of the new PTI is likely to provide the impetus for increased commercial developments in the area.”

The new MyCiTi station will be in the heart of Claremont, in walking distance of student accommodation, shopping malls and

other amenities, and only a block away from Main Road – the main artery connecting this area with Cape Town CBD.

Once the new MyCiTi station is operational, commuters will have a choice of five different modes of public transport – MyCiTi, Golden Arrow Buses, the UCT Shuttle, passenger rail and minibus taxis, all within a radius of less than 120 metres.

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