

Upwardly mobile people want to live and work in eco-mobile cities

 By [Elaine Jack](#)

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"A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It's where the rich use public transport." These are the paraphrased words uttered by Enrique Penalosa, the former Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, and they ring equally true in South Africa.



Sandton City Mall

New York City is distinguished by its low ownership of personal vehicles and the [highest rate of public transport use](#) in the United States. It is the only city in which over half of all households do not own a car, and in Manhattan this figure even reaches 75%. A large part of this advantage comes from its complex public transport network, including the largest subway system in the world, as measured by stations and track.

Focus on sustainability

More and more developed countries are sharpening their focus on sustainability, and the use of public transport brings environmental and economic benefits from the increased energy efficiency.

City Improvement Districts (CIDs) are about creating exceptional places. A city's character is defined by its public space, not its private space. Globally, the ability for attractive, active, well-functioning public space can jumpstart economic development in a community – from a small rural town to a big city – is increasingly recognised.

[Place making](#) promotes a simple principle: when you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. When you plan for people and places, you get people and places.

With the right balance, streets can accommodate vehicles and become destinations worth visiting.

Commercial nodes like Sandton Central can be designed as grand spaces where it is safe to walk and cycle, allowing for both through and local traffic. Streets that are planned for people, and that are not completely auto-centric, contribute positively to social cohesion in communities. They achieve this by fostering human interaction and providing safe public spaces that promote the identity of the area.

Investment in eco-mobility

Sandton Central hosted the second World Eco Mobility Festival in 2015. Its concept is to introduce everything to do with eco-mobility in a neighbourhood for one whole month. Because of the successful event, the City of Johannesburg stepped up to invest in improving the public space.

Together with the city, Sandton Central officially opened and launched the R120m Complete Street Project and introduced the Public Transport Loop in September 2017. It creates easy and convenient access for passengers to connect to public transport and enjoy shorter travel times. Sandton Central is now stepping ahead when it comes to being more people friendly in keeping with the [principle of place making](#).

Rea Vaya (Joburg's public rapid bus transport system) is planned to link into Sandton in 2018/2019, better connecting it with the rest of the city, including neighbouring Alexandra.

Creating spaces of hope

Cities must create spaces of hope for the poor because they both create and take advantage of the economic benefits that cities generate. To support this, we should be lowering transport costs, shortening travel distances, reducing the cost of housing, and encouraging as much market-based interface as possible.

Progressively more people and communities around the world are beginning to recognise, and to fight for, the power of place in transforming cities and the everyday lives of their residents. Across the world, both governments and citizens are working together around the common goal of "place" to create safer, healthier, and more inclusive communities.

CIDs can pull communities together to address the challenges in an area. When a district is managed with the people who visit, work and live in it, it improves the quality of the space and creates business opportunities in the area. It sets that district apart from the rest.

Sandton Central Management District (SCMD) is home to three business improvement districts. It provides distinct advantages for property investors by creating and sustaining an excellent property investment location. Funded by Sandton Central's commercial property owners, SCMD was founded to ensure an exceptional experience of this key node of Johannesburg.

ABOUT ELAINE JACK

Elaine Jack is City Improvement District (CID) manager of Sandton Central Management District.

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