

Housing for informal settlement near Cape Town airport on hold

By [Nombulelo Damba-Hendrik](#)

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Residents of Thabo Mbeki informal settlement in Philippi, Cape Town, are demanding that the provincial human settlements department fulfil a promise made three years ago to build them houses.



Thabo Mbeki informal settlement in Cape Town. Source: Nombulelo Damba-Hendrik

In June 2018, GroundUp reported on the department's plans for the Southern Corridor housing development which was to provide over 50,000 houses to people in informal settlements along the N2, including Barcelona, Thabo Mbeki, Lotus and Kanana.

Resident Nosizwe Sikeyi said that they were informed that the construction company refused to build the houses because of its proximity to the airport.

"They said because flights pass over here, it might affect the houses and the noise will affect our ears," said Sikeyi. "But we have been living here since 1992 and we are not deaf. We live in shacks that have not fallen. We are losing hope because their excuse does not make any sense," she said.

Community leader Zola Mnuka said the fight for houses began in 2004. Following protests for services, the informal settlement received water and electricity. Mnuka said that in 2015 the department moved 75 older people from the area to RDP houses in Forest Village near Delft.

Provincial human settlements department spokesperson Muneera Allie told GroundUp that in 2017 a professional team was appointed to redevelop the area. The department's application to have the area rezoned was approved by the City of Cape Town late in 2019.

She said the development proposed for Thabo Mbeki included the construction of a mixture of simplex, duplex and multi-storey residential units, totalling about 1,380 homes to residents of Thabo Mbeki who met the criteria.



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Impact of aircraft noise

Allie said the city's approval of the rezoning was challenged during the public participation process and taken on appeal. "The Cape Town International Airport is located to the immediate north of the site, so Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) opposed the development," she said.

In response to this objection, the department commissioned a noise study by a specialist acoustic engineer who investigated the impact of aircraft noise on the proposed development. "They were also tasked with proposing mitigating measures to be implemented to alleviate the impact on residents. The final decision regarding this matter is still ongoing," she said.

Allie said a contractor will be appointed and construction can start only once the final land use rights approval has been obtained from the city.

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