

Submission on the City of Cape Town's Draft Waste Strategy

Submission Date: Friday 18 October 2024

The Asivikelane Campaign would like to make a submission on the Draft Strategy with a specific focus on waste services and management in informal settlements.

[Asivikelane](#) is an advocacy campaign for basic service delivery in informal settlements, initiated by IBP South Africa and grassroots non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 2020. In the City of Cape Town, we partner with [Developmental Action Group](#) (DAG) and the [Community Organisation Resource Centre](#) (CORC). Asivikelane builds meaningful collaborations and relationships between informal settlement communities and municipalities for targeted service delivery improvements. Since its inception. Since its launch, Asivikelane has impacted the lives over 7,6 million informal settlement residents nationwide by enhancing access to communal services through community-led engagement with metro governments¹.

We welcome the City's efforts to develop a waste strategy, and the call for public participation – an important step in encouraging meaningful engagements between the residents and other stakeholders such as the private sector.

We are encouraged by the City's acknowledgement of the challenges of managing solid waste in informal settlements. The draft strategy indicates that 21% of households in the City of Cape Town live in informal settlements. These households generate a significant amount the City's waste, including domestic, organic, recyclables and building rubble. The draft strategy identifies “waste generators” or “customers” as one of three main sets of actors in the business of waste management, but does not define waste generators to explicitly include residents of informal settlements. We propose that City adopt a clearer and more inclusive definition in its revised

¹ <https://asivikelane.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024-Jan-Jun-Asivikelane-Impacts-Final-1.pdf>



strategy. Any proposed municipal waste strategy should include informal settlement residents as *active partners* in reducing waste and participants in the circular economy.

Residents of informal settlements are Asivikelane’s most critical partners. Their voices and experiences are at the forefront of the following recommendations to be considered in the revision of the City of Cape Town’s draft Waste Strategy. Additionally, we propose that the City ensures informal settlements are included in its commitments to optimise existing services, minimise waste to landfills and maximise the basket of service offerings.

1. **Recommendation for building informal settlement and service delivery evidence data**

An absence of data lies at the core of most informal settlement service delivery problems. Without data, government cannot determine which services to provide, the number of people that need such provision or where they are needed. The landscape of each informal settlement differs in population density, geographical challenges, and access. Understanding these challenges and limitations is essential when tailoring waste management solutions that are practical and effective within their local context. We propose the following steps:

- 1.1 Establish and conduct informal settlement profiling which includes household surveys and accessibility mapping to determine the most viable methods of collection and for waste minimisation.
- 1.2 Effective use of technology – cell phones and fault reporting systems – to collect service delivery evidence/data.
- 1.3 Establish a network of informal settlement residents and waste inspectors to collect profiling information.
- 1.4 Strengthen the use of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers to maximise effective service delivery evidence and data collection, and to create awareness and education on waste diversion efforts. Strengthening the relationship between the City’s EPWP and integrated waste management planning could provide an important entry point for additional data and evidence.

2. **Recommendations for financing informal settlements waste management**



Sufficient funding is essential to the long-term sustainability of any strategy to explicitly include adequate waste management in informal settlements. There are options for doing this within existing municipal funding, and funding and in-kind contributions from other stakeholders can also be leveraged. Specific recommendations to consider are:

- 2.1 Identify savings: For example, waste minimisation reduces the costs of clearing illegal dump sites.
- 2.2 Identify trade-offs: Analyse costs and benefits of waste minimisation strategies –, for example, investigating the use of reusable plastic bags over the long term.
- 2.3 Identify external stakeholders: Companies/organisations who could fund plastic bags for recycling, provide bins for waste separation of waste, establish community-based buy-back centres, or provide resources for composting and education on waste management.

3. Recommendations to support the implementation of consistent waste collection in informal settlements

To achieve consistent waste management, collection, and the speedy redress of the most important challenges identified by affected communities, service providers and departments within the City of Cape Town, we recommend the following:

- 3.1 Map informal settlements to ensure access. Collaborate with residents, NGOs and grassroot organisation, the City's waste department, and waste officials to map the layout of informal settlements to identify waste collection points/routes, door-to-door collection feasibility, and accessibility for waste removal vehicles. This data should include population density to determine how frequent waste collection need be to be effective, i.e., more than once a week might be required in more densely populated settlements or areas within settlements.
- 3.2 Identify settlements where roads need to be built for improved access and engage with the appropriate department responsible for road construction. Introduce interim complementary strategies that utilise other categories of vehicles like bakkies or bicycles



in areas with limited access for waste removal vehicles. Manage the access challenges with the relevant departments.

- 3.3 Establish plans to get waste to collection points. Communities and waste officials can map settlements and identify collection points. Collection points should be within a 5-minute walk of dwellings. Larger settlements may need more than one collection point.
- 3.4 Identify and establish community-led programmes (examples can be drawn from the Expanded Public Works Programme and Social Employment Fund) to aid in the collection of waste from homes/ delivery of waste to collection points.
- 3.5 Establish and communicate to residents the schedule for dropping waste at collection points and/or leaving it outside for door-to-door collection.
- 3.6 Establish and communicate to residents instructions for how to prepare waste for collection, for example, household refuse should be put inside the metro supplied bags and/or other types of bags used for waste.
- 3.7 Provision of refuse plastic bags: Undertake a needs assessment of the average number of bags needed per household per week with the community and waste inspectors. Use this assessment to develop a policy on the number of plastic bags and how often they should be provided per household per month.
- 3.8 Develop a clear operational and management plan for waste containers in informal settlements.

4. Support residents to participate in waste minimisation

4.1 Capacity building, education and awareness

The ongoing training of residents, community leaders, and waste management workers is essential to the sustainability of a waste management strategy. Facilitating waste minimisation within communities will assist in reducing pressure on municipal services and the environment, and highlight the economic development opportunities of waste minimisation to residents. To advance this strategy, we recommend the following:



- 4.1.1 Support separation of household waste at source in informal settlements. Provide education on how to separate waste and its importance. Conduct education on recycling practices and develop guidelines.
- 4.1.1 Identify budget for ongoing educational programmes.
- 4.1.2 Identify institutions, such as Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) or other stakeholders, that can host or fund training and opportunities to formalise and accredit trainings.

4.2 Support recycling efforts in informal settlements

Recycling has been identified as a key component in the City's strategy. This can also be achieved in informal settlements by implementing a waste separation system for households. This will encourage residents to separate recyclable materials (e.g., plastic, paper, glass, metal) from non-recyclables and organic waste. This can be done by:

- 4.2.1 Providing infrastructure and practical examples of easily identifiable of waste category sorting mechanisms, i.e., colour-coded bins, plastic bags or containers.
- 4.2.2 Assess the waste department's capacity and resources to support recycling.
- 4.2.3 Convene other recycling role players and identify ways they can help. These include private companies, churches, spaza shops, taverns, registered waste reclaimers, and existing community recycling cooperatives.
- 4.2.4 Establish recycling hubs or centres. Conduct education and training workshops on how to work with recycling centres.
- 4.2.5 Approach external stakeholders to establish and fund community-based recycling hubs or buy-back centres within or nearby the informal settlement.
- 4.2.6 Equip these hubs with facilities for sorting, cleaning, and processing recyclable materials.
- 4.2.7 Support communities to partner with cooperatives to collect, transport, and sell recyclable materials to buy-back centres.



4.3 Promote composting Initiatives in informal settlements

Introduce communities to composting initiatives to divert organic waste from landfills and produce compost for gardening and agriculture. Educate households on what, how and why to compost. In addition, this could provide an economic opportunity for residents, for example residents could garden centres or local farmers to offset such waste.

5. Support local economic development opportunities in waste

Poverty, economic marginalisation and unemployment lie at the source of many of the solid waste challenges in informal settlements. If allowed to persist, these will ultimately erode any improvement gains in informal settlement waste management. For this reason, the proposed strategy's economic development opportunities should specifically include residents living in informal settlements. We recommend that:

5.1 The activities proposed in Section 4 include the identification of various opportunities for residents related to recycling, composting and community programmes that the City and other stakeholders can support.

5.2 For recycling and composting, give specific attention to how these localised efforts can be connected to the formal economy.

6. Recommendations to ensure sustainability of waste management in informal settlements

Engage residents of informal settlements to ensure the success of the waste management strategy. Community involvement informs more appropriate services, fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, and leads to better compliance with waste management practices. Establishing ongoing community engagement builds trust and could potentially aid in addressing the challenges facing both the City and residents. We encourage the waste department to involve other relevant departments in resident engagement, including but not limited to the Environmental Management Department and the Recreation and the Parks Department, to ensure a comprehensive approach to sustainability and community development. Elements of sustaining such engagement should include:



- 6.1 Host a platform for engagement within the City's waste service director's office during its establishment period. This would ideally create a direct link between the City's waste officials and residents.
- 6.2 Identify residents (recipients of the service) and the waste officials (who will implement the service on the ground) who will meet regularly to assess the service and rectify any problems.
- 6.3 Establish a steering committee consisting of residents, municipal officials, NGO partners, and other relevant stakeholders to collect data and review the service delivery on a 6 monthly basis. This allows room to adjust the strategy based on lived evidence.
- 6.4 Connect this process to municipal performance management processes like Standard Operating Procedures, Key Performance Indicators and management of contractors.
- 6.5 Explore options for long term institutionalisation of the platform.

Asivikelane is open for further engagement with the City and other stakeholders to begin addressing a number of the challenges the City faces in providing waste service. At the heart of our work, we address the inequities in waste provision.

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