

Development of Bridge City moving apace

With bulk infrastructure - particularly transport nodes - already operational, the development of the Bridge City town centre north of Durban is moving apace.



Bridge city hospital under construction

piece of the puzzle that builds on the collaboration between the city and Tongaat Hulett to establish Bridge City as a fully functional, mixed use town centre able to meet the region's current and growing needs.

Founded on the existing rail service (rail station located under the Bridge City shopping centre) and the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) routes currently being built between Bridge City and Pinetown and planned for between Bridge City and the Durban CBD and Cornubia/ Umhlanga, the development is attracting increasing interest as a decentralised residential / commercial town centre hub and industrial / business estate, both able to accommodate growing demand.

This demand for mixed use facilities has been demonstrated by the eThekweni Municipality recently acquiring development rights over five town centre sites that have been identified for social housing opportunities. This is one further

Social housing

The social housing plans are an essential component of this vision, building on the 48,000m² Bridge City shopping centre and the regional magistrate's court, which are already operational, and the 500-bed regional state hospital, which is under construction and scheduled to open in 2019. In addition to the state hospital, construction on a 150-bed private hospital and nursing home will commence shortly, while enquiries for further residential, office and destination retail facilities are being processed.

"The whole picture of what we envisioned for Bridge City is now coming together with the development of key sites within the town centre," says Brian Ive, the joint venture's development executive responsible for Bridge City. "Our plans for a functional mixed-use development that combines public sector sites and services and excellent public transport with private sector investment is now almost complete."

Only a third of the town centre site area - equating to around 91,000m² - is still available to developers. The scheduled completion of the BRT infrastructure in March 2017 is further amplifying demand.

Secure, clean urban environment

Ive says the remaining sites available for development include a maximum of 300,000m² of bulk which includes residential use and up to 118,000m² of retail and commercial use.

"We have seen strong interest in the potential for the town centre to attract commuters, consumers and residents in a secure and clean urban environment," he says.

Alongside established developers, the development's potential has been recognised by local KwaMashu-based developers who recently bought the rights to develop a six-storey mixed use building, which also includes a petrol filling station.

"This latest sale epitomises the vision for the town centre. Ideally, we would like to see retail space on the ground floor and then three to six storeys of residential, office or other urban uses above that. Bridge City is attracting a mix of affordable and conventional residential, which could be maximised on those sites that have approval to develop as many as nine storeys."