A home for all

Ken Mchunu reports on the progress of housing projects across eThekwini

HEADING

The Municipality remains a leader in the field of housing the poor, upgrading rental stock, refurbishing existing housing and for its slums clearance programme.

For the past several years, eThekwini has built more than 16 000 low-income houses a year – the figure peaked at 18 000 in 2007.

Gumedze said the turnover to date was 32 000, but this would increase, "prompt funding the Municipality to double the figure to 64 000, which would yield 427 low-cost units for every 1 000 low-income earners.

One of the biggest projects in eThekwini was R275-million, of which R20-million for bulk structures, said Khanyile. Other budgets for this project include R20-million for low-income earners.

"The overall budget for the project is R275-million, of which R125-million will cater for internal services and R110-million for the actual houses," said Khanyile. Other budgets for this project include R20-million for bulk structures and the R130-million for bus routes and roads.

Gumedze said the project’s detailed planning process is complete. We are awaiting the approval of the designs and town planning layout.

"It is anticipated that the contractor will be on site by mid-FEBRUARY 2010," said Khanyile.

She said families within the long-cost housing project, this time in the north, EastFakazi Phase 1, aims to eradicate slums in its townships.

Project Manager in the northern region, Beryl Khanyile, said the possibility of building middle-income flats in this region was being explored.

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Gumedze said the illegal selling of old shacks to foreign nationals by beneficiaries of new housing projects made it "virtually impossible for the City to get rid of informal settlements."

This vicious cycle means there will always be people living in shacks," he said.

He said the Municipality’s Executive Committee was negotiating the release of other tracts of privately owned land, on which more housing projects would be undertaken.

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Gumedze said several projects were underway, including the huge Mgungundlovu project.

He described Corneria as the biggest project yet, which would involve the demolition of 1 000 old Umlazi units.

"The project is in Ward 86, south of Durban. The Municipality had bought the houses to yield 427 low-cost units for every 1 000 low-income earners.

The project promises to create 1 400 new homeowners at Umlazi in the south. Of the 1 400 houses, 130 would be bondable, with the balance in the low-cost category.

"These will form a buffer between RDP and upmarket housing of eThekwini's townships," she said.

Gumedze said the building of the 1 400 houses had begun in January and would be complete next September.

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Revolutionary road

As part of a series on the heroes honoured in the city’s new street and building names, Swazi Dlamini profiles Che Guevara (right)

Che Guevara Road

Formerly Moore Road

Ernesto "Che" Guevara was born on 14 May, 1928 in Rosario, Argentina, the eldest of four children.

The nickname "Che", meaning friend or mate in South America, was given to him by his peers while he was studying medicine at the University of Buenos Aires.

Guevara completed his studies in 1953 and began work as a doctor.

He became involved in politics at a time when Cuba was ruled by dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Guevara joined forces with Cuban rebel Fidel Castro and 80 other men and women to overthrow Batista.

Guevara’s group, the July 26 Movement, had planned to set up base in the Sierra Maestra Mountains, in Cuba, but were attacked on their way by government troops. By the time they reached the mountains there were only 16 men left and they had few weapons. But as the months passed, Guevara’s band grew stronger.

As the guerrilla’s over-ran government territory held territory the rebels managed to inform the rebels about the rules more or less self-governed, which disregarded Cubans, increasing support for the revolution.

Some 45 organisations signed an agreement committing themselves to the movement. Among them were national bodies representing doctors, architets and lawyers – supporting the rebels for now included not only the poor, but the middle class too.

Batista sent more troops to capture Guevara but they were unsuccessful.

In March 1958 many Cubans showed their dissatisfaction against Batista by boycottting the elections, reinforcing Castro’s conviction that he enjoyed sufficient support to overtake Batista.

Then, after talks with the US government, Batista fled Cuba. The people responded by striking and the military force was called to the people’s term.

On 9 January, 1959, Castro became the new leader of Cuba. Under his rule, the government passed new laws cutting rent, redistributing land to peasants, abolishing separate amenities for blacks and whites.

Guerreiro married his first wife, Hilda Gadea, a Febrivian economist and law leader, in 1953. They had one daughter, who committed suicide.

In 1959 he remarried, Aleida March, The couple had four children.

In the following year they wrote two books, Guerrera's Guerrilla War and Revolutionary Milestones of the Cuban Revolutionary War.

Guevara served as Minister of Industries from 1961-65 and was defeated and killed by Bolivian guerrillas in 1967 while attempting to recruit miners into an international, underground movement against the military government.