PIGEON VALLEY URBAN IMPROVEMENT PRECINCT (PV UIP)

SECURITY STRATEGY – SEPT 2022

FROM ATHOL WESSELINK

The notion of security sits at the very core of our collective consciousness. It is, in a sense a metaphoric 'place' of belonging, a point of reference that allows us to venture into, experience and make sense of the world with the knowledge that we have a safe space to venture from and return to.

When our sense of security is shaken, so is the very fabric of our existence.

When we started to investigate the establishment of this UIP one the key drivers was security, and *still is.* We use the term 'security' loosely, by this we mean personal, environmental and financial security etc.

We approached our Security Strategy from the perspective of making security PROACTIVE vs reactive.

The Pigeon Valley UIP steering committee has done significant research into and further visited other well established UIPs in the metro. PVUIP has based its security strategy on the collective experience and best practices of other UIPs.

The logical starting point of this UIP Security Strategy has been to establish and examine what security structures already exist and these include SAPS, Metro Police, private security companies, street level guards and personal home security systems.

The overriding law enforcement entity in the above security network is SAPS, who are unfortunately woefully under resourced. This has happened over a long period of time and is due to the politization of police management, corruption and gross incompetence amongst others. There are also the recent environmental disasters and challenges which have exacerbated the state security management. These include a worldwide economic recession brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Civil Unrest of July 2021, local political insurrection and the April/May 2022 KZN floods . In a land where the economy is being crippled to its knees, there is an ever-growing populace that those who have 'nothing to lose' may be forced into committing various levels of petty to violent crime. This adds chaos and complications to the on an already over burdened police force

Nevertheless, our local Umbilo SAPS Police Station is still operational with numerous dedicated members and civil servants who do their job with diligence and dedication.

To provide insight regards the policing policy - the Police Act mandates that each police station has a Community Policing Forum (CPF) in place. This body has significant powers and can be likened to a School Governing Body (SGB). Regrettably, prior to earlier this year, the Umbilo CPF was fractured and did NOT represent all three sectors that make up the Umbilo Police Station's sphere of operation i.e. Sector 1 (Bulwer Area) Sector 2 (Glenwood Area) and Sector 3 (Umbilo area)

We are delighted to inform you this has now been resolved and the Umbilo CPF has a fully functioning Executive Team which includes operational Sub-Sector Committees who meet monthly and observe due diligence by the taking of minutes etc.

The proposed area to be covered by the Pigeon Valley UIP consists of Umbilo CPF Sub-Sector 2 and a part of Sub-Sector 1. The Umbilo Sector 2 Sub-Sector is primarily made up of members of Glenwood

Community Watch (GCW). The committee was elected by means of a Public Meeting late in 2021, and all the members offer their time on a voluntary basis.

What does this mean for our community security?

Since there is now proper oversight, structure and support of SAPS by virtue of the Umbilo CPF, other issues can be addressed more proactively and formally. In addition, members of the community volunteer their time to do patrols several times per week in conjunction with SAPS, to effectively be additional 'eyes and ears' for SAPS. These operations are supported by the Metro Police and the local private security companies and have had profound and immediate impact on reducing crime.

It is crucial that members of the community report all crime and get a reference number because it is these statistics that are used as a metric to motivate for the allocation of resources to our local Umbilo Police Station.

Interesting to note - in the July 2021 insurrection and associated looting - the community was drawn together by virtue of a common purpose which was collective safety and security.

GCW had a patrol roster of 85 plus members and was able to conduct multi vehicle patrols from 20h00 – 06h00 7 days a week throughout the community. At the time many of the members had the ability and opportunity to work from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic which strengthen the impact of the patrols on the members as they could work and sleep sporadically throughout the day.

Fast forward to 2022, GCW membership has dwindled. GCW did a survey in March 2022 and the overriding reason for the drop in patroller participation was that members could not do a full day's work AND then patrol for 2 hours at night. There are still a handful of dedicated patrollers who selflessly serve the community.

As a result of the post insurrection patroller engagement a number of WhatsApp and Zello groups were formed to improve real-time communication. While these groups served their purpose initially, a consequence is that now there are numerous communication groups, on various platforms, which unfortunately can't and don't engage or disseminate information effectively between each other

Unified panic and information system.

Communication is key! As is establishing a unified communication platform. The primary goal is that security communication is managed in a coherent and proactive way across the precinct. Practically speaking, residents/owners will need to install the IOS/Android app on their mobile devices. This will be vetted by the UIP Operations Manager to ensure that only authorized individuals are able to join the portal. In the event of a security issue, residents will activate the panic function on the app which in turn will trigger the dispatch of the dedicated UIP security patrol vehicle and other security role players.

It is still imperative that residents/owners log and report critical/non-critical related issues to the relevant authorities and obtain a reference/case number. Once this has been done, they will forward the report and it will be electronically referenced to the UIP portal.

When an issue is logged, a UIP reference number is also generated and sent back to the person who logged it, then the UIP Team will also be aware of the issue and be able to inform other role players and keep account on what transpires to keep pressure on the relevant authorities to ensure effective and speedy resolution of the matter. The platform will also have the ability to generate

reports and statistics that will be used to motivate for additional resources etc. The key to this success, is to ensure clear, transparent, and effective communication.

There are many clusters of street guards in our prescient and ensuring that these guards communicate effectively between each other will go a long way to enhancing their collective abilities. The app will also provide the ability for communication between the respective street guards.

The app will also allow the UIP Management to send out general information to all the residents and can even granulize the dissemination to a specific side of a street if needed, this way important information can be sent only to the people who need to receive it.

The UIP communication portal will require that owners/residents register and provide at a minimum their name, address, mobile number. Optional information can be provided as follows:

- Other people residing at their same address
- Car registration details
- Employee details
- Details regarding pets
- Special needs information, like health conditions etc

This system is in use in a number of other UIP areas and conforms to all prevailing privacy legislation.

Using technology - ANPR cameras and associated systems

Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras and the associated software (ANPR) are 'game changers' for the security industry. These devices use Artificial Intelligence to monitor the movement of motor vehicles (MV) through a given area. Practically speaking as soon as a MV whose number plate is flagged (for suspicious/criminal activity) is detected the software sends an alert to all private security companies and related parties. The same holds true for vehicles that have no number plates. Our intention is to cover all the main entrances into our proposed precinct and because our neighboring areas also use these systems it is possible to dynamically monitor the entire area. It should be noted that the primary driver for the use of this type of camera system is to prevent vehicle-based crime like carjackings, home invasions, armed robbery etc also known as Trio crimes by SAPS.

PVUIP intend to install 14 of these ANPR systems in operation within 18 months, thereafter additional CCTV systems will be installed at porous 'hotspots' as required, it is envisaged that there will be an additional 60 – 100 CCTV systems installed within 5 years. All of these systems will be actively monitored.

There are some streets that end in cul-de-sacs and are thus not throughways, some of these may benefit from being boomed off (assuming that the municipality grants the prerequisite permissions) and ANPR systems can be used to automate this process. The cost for the booms etc. will need to be borne by the residents but the access and monitoring can be managed by the camera and communication portal system.

It is also possible for privately owned street facing CCTV systems to be integrated and monitored by the UIP, this depends on the type of camera system and each system will need to be assessed individually.

Patrol vehicles

Umbilo CPF Sub sector 2 (with the Umbilo CPFs support) has already started to engage with private security companies to boost the uptake of home security systems in our precinct – **this initiative is not driven by the PV UIP** (the UIP will only come into existence once the constituents have voted in the affirmative).

The agreement between CPF Sub sect 2 is such, that if a given security company achieves 250 new 'sign ups' then the company will allocate a dedicated patrol vehicle to the precinct – phase 1 of this project is already underway.

The role of the patrol vehicle is to continuously patrol the area providing high visibility security and to respond to any help/panic activations.

There will be a detailed SLA in place and the vehicles patrol patterns will be monitored daily.

Rehabilitation program for vulnerable people

In eThekwini, the nature of our city's population diversity and make up of 3.2 million people includes several thousand vulnerable and homeless people, many of whom survive by collecting and recycling our waste. These ''waste pickers'' are often considered a nuisance and security risk by residents. While they may present a security risk the PV UIP concedes that this attitude may be short sighted because these people are experts at recycling and their role significantly reduces the impact of global warming and if we can work in unity and win their *'hearts and minds'* they can be also be a valuable source of community intelligence.

Further formalizing their efforts could provide a great opportunity to manage a very 'prickly' issue in a much more positive way. If we encourage and assist organizations that support and manage vulnerable people, we can achieve a long-term sustainable solution.

PV UIP will engage organizations to help formulate a guide for residents on how best to engage the marginalized and vulnerable people in a dignified and positive way and provide a list of useful resources for them to access.

-Unity is community-