

Executive Summary:

This report presents research on the impact of the pandemic on urban and regional planning in Gauteng.

It contains an extensive review of relevant literature and draws on the findings of some of South Africa's most prominent scenario planners. It also reflects the opinions of researchers, decision-makers and urban planners who participated in virtual meetings and workshops.

Finally, based on the research and inputs at the workshops, the report makes several recommendations for consideration in future planning processes.

CONTEXT

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on communities can be seen in all aspects of planning. The initial 18 months since the onset of the pandemic saw significant changes in settlement growth patterns, movements out of urban cores and new trends in traffic and mobility.

The current indications assume that many of these trends will become permanent features of a future Gauteng City Region.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the study are to:

- accumulate a body of knowledge on Covid's impact
- to conceptualise approaches for implementation post-Covid

THE IMPACT OF COVID

- A review of relevant literature reflects that urban design, density and urban form influence policies and decisions.
- Mobility and access to transportation have contributed to the rapid global surge of Covid-19 and may also provide solutions for the future of urban conurbations.
- Emergency and healthcare responses have changed work and transport patterns within the space, which will influence Gauteng's progress towards smart city solutions and the rapid roll-out of accessible information communication technology.
- There were broad agreements within the assembled workshops that everything in the planning space is highly interconnected.
- Covid-19 has accelerated long-term – and irreversible – trends towards warehousing and online retail industries while shopping malls and suburban office spaces appear to decline

GAUTENG'S SPATIAL CHARACTER

An increase in informal settlements characterises the spatial character of the Gauteng City Region. Rapid population growth is increasing pressure on local government's ability to manage issues such as overcrowding, food security, urban poverty, environmental degradation and unequal access to resources. The onset of the global pandemic has accelerated these issues.

Therefore, the province is committed to a process to eradicate the spatial legacies of apartheid and to build integrated and inclusive human settlements, whereby the lessons learned from Covid-19 can influence future decision-making.

QUESTION 2

This question used a scale rating between 0 to 5, from poor to excellent to determine what the respondent thinks of the statement: **“Do the various municipalities, or the province, have specific plans and strategies to effectively address pandemics and future disasters?”**.

The weighted average was 1.07, indicating that municipalities and the Gauteng province did not have specific plans or strategies to address pandemics and future disasters, or that planners did not know about these plans and strategies if they did exist.

QUESTION 5

Question 5 asked the respondents to rank four statements, namely:

- Interventions contributed more harm than the virus.
- More bold decisions could have been taken.
- State/government response was adequate.
- Disaster management plans proved to be relevant and user friendly.

The statement about interventions causing more harm was ranked highest, whereby DMP's relevance and user-friendliness and government response were ranked lowest. The graph below illustrates the distribution of ranking for each statement.

QUESTION 18

This option question that was worded as **“Which factor do you think is the biggest contributor to the vulnerability of people during the Covid-19 pandemic?”** only allowed for respondents to choose the option that they believe had the biggest impact on vulnerability and did not allow for multiple entries.

The two major answers to this question were human behaviour and poverty, both extremely complex issues.

The research and literature establish a pre-, current and post-pandemic initial contextualisation to determine what the status quo was before, what was done during, and what the future holds for planning. The temporal layout to the left illustrates the factors which the research takes into consideration.

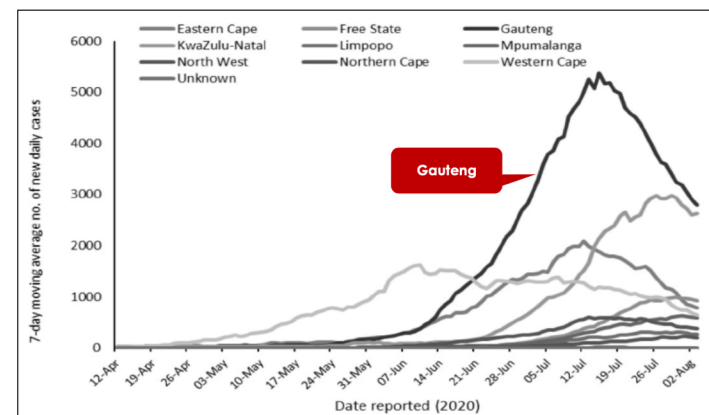
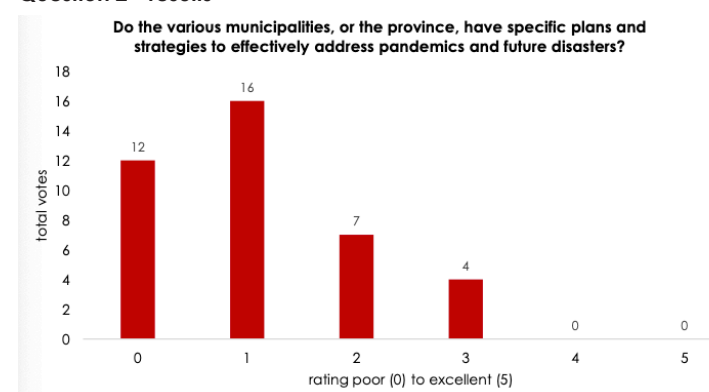


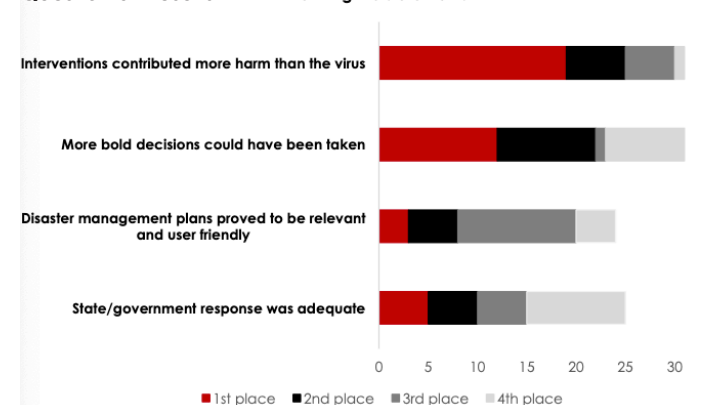
Figure 8: Daily infection rates observed during the early months since the start of the pandemic in South Africa (NDoH, 2020)

As the figure above indicates, Gauteng was disproportionately affected in case numbers and infection rates due to the province's high population and densities.

Question 2 - results



Question 5 - results



Question 18 - results

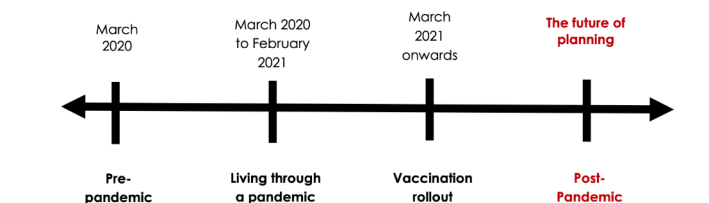
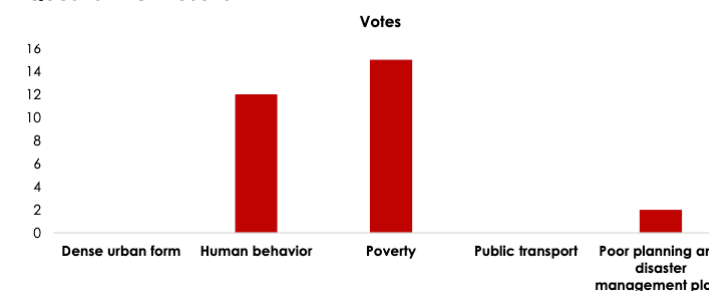


Figure 2: Temporal depiction of the pandemic (Author: 2021)

Impact of Covid-19 on Urban and Regional Planning in Gauteng

August 2021

Key Information:

The report highlights that urban planning should be at the core of provincial responses to the pandemic. It will require a proactive approach to risk management, ensuring that the province is resilient against current – and future – shocks.

Future planning frameworks should reflect the collective opinions of professionals in a wide range of disciplines, from urbanisation to transportation, agriculture, healthcare and risk management.

An innovative approach to planning that could lead to a transformed spatial landscape should include:

- The need to **re-look current planning policies** and legislation to ensure a more pro-active approach to future pandemics.
- **Capacity building in local municipalities** to enable them to adapt and respond to disasters.
- **Ongoing research** on the impact of health-related disasters on the built environment.
- An **increased focus on sustainable development** and household resilience.
- **Greater collaboration** between planners and disaster risk management professionals to raise the province's levels of preparedness and strengthen its ability to respond effectively.

Project Details:

Location: Gauteng
Time-frame: 6 months
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Client: Gauteng Province: Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

