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EMPOWER SHACK: RIGHT OF ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

Posted on November 26, 2018 by martabuges

Categories: expanding design practices, Middle Density, Politics and economics, Project, Territory and mobility, Urban-Think Tank

Tags: Affordable Housing, Cape Town, City living, Comfortable environment, Community, Crisis, Density, development, Digital design, Diversity, Empowering society, Environment, Housing, Housing market, Humanitarian Practices, Inclusive city, Informal settlements, Infrastructure, Low budget, Methodology, Mobility, Participation, Political & Economic Approach, Project, Renewable energy, Smart tool, Social housing, South Africa, Urban planning, Urban policies, Water

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While South Africa's post-apartheid Constitution enshrined a 'right of access to adequate housing', the country continues to experience a housing crisis. Approximately 7.5 million people (including almost one-quarter of the residents of Cape Town) are locked out of the formal property market due to escalating prices, limited access to financing, and inflexible land regulations that create a barrier to low income, private sector development. As a result, an estimated 2,700 informal settlements across South Africa create poverty traps that threaten social mobility due to lack of basic infrastructure and services, inadequate housing quality and personal dangers and environmental risks stemming from ad hoc development patterns.

Current government issue social housing schemes fail to meet increasing demand and do not cater to the diversity of end-user requirements. Additionally, small-scale civil-society-driven informal settlement upgrade schemes fail to address both the scale of the problem and integration into formal planning frameworks. Although alternative schemes have emerged since the official shift in housing provision in 2004, the challenge still lies in developing a scalable, transparent and replicable model that addresses both *real demand*, *market dynamics* and *municipal planning objectives*.

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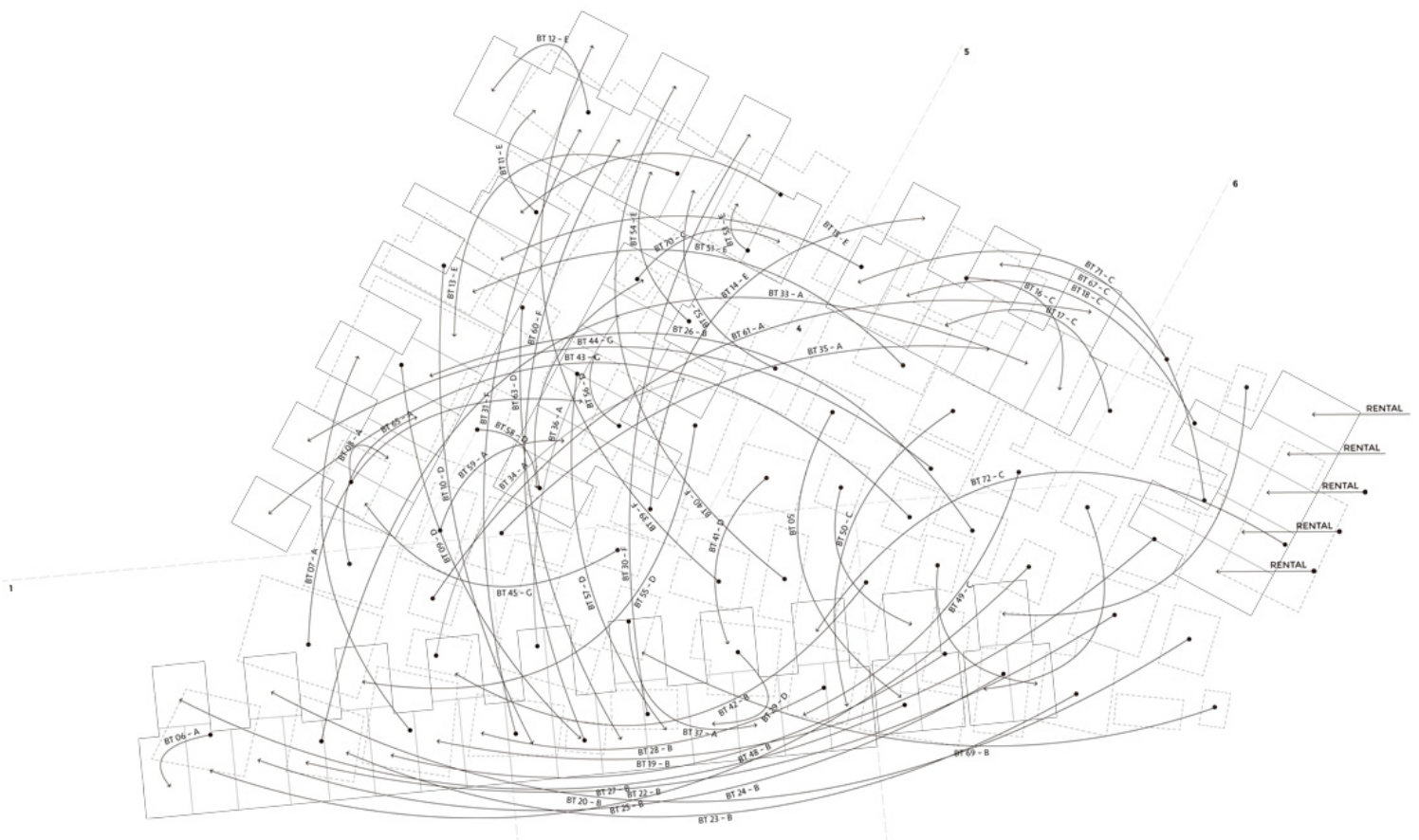
LOCATION PREFERENCES

Computational planning snythesis allows layout scenarios to be
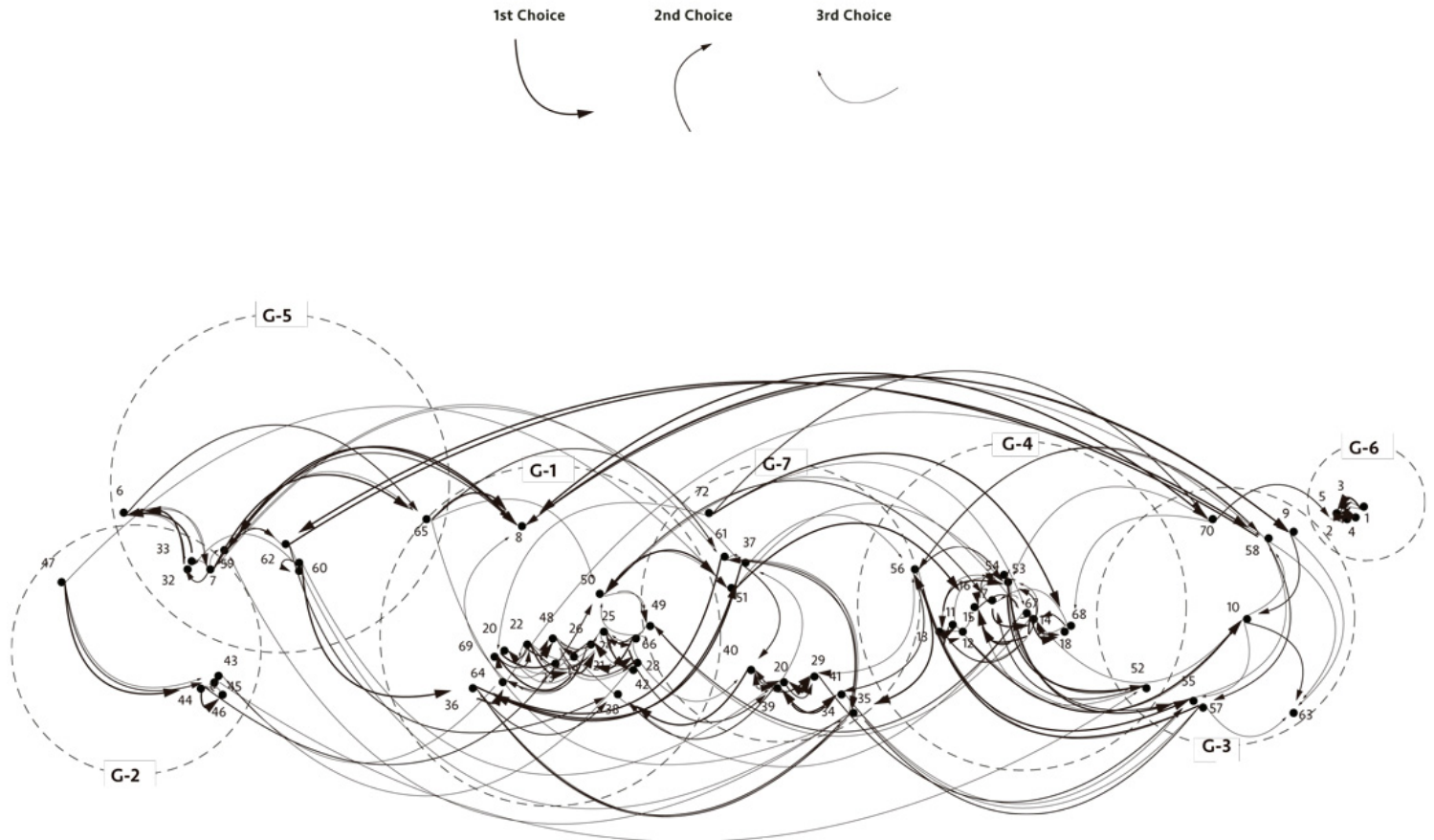generated from individual location and cluster preferences

INDIVIDUAL NEIGHBOUR PREFERENCES

Households are surveyed to determine optimal neighbour allocations.
Computational analysis determines best case positioning and clustering.

This project aims to reshape the approach to informal settlement upgrading by offering an innovative and inclusive methodology for the fair distribution of public space, delivery of basic services, and an urbanization scheme that combines housing upgrades with a safer urban environment and new economic and social possibilities. The approach moves beyond turn-key housing solutions by focusing on the construction of living environments that integrate livelihood programs, encompassing microfinancing, renewable energy, water management, and skills training. Structured community workshops, enumerations, affordability assessments and microfinance

contracts provide the framework for upgrading existing single-storey to double-storey units.

The resulting densification offers efficient land use to infrastructure ratio, provides cross finance possibilities through additional rental and sales stock and, most importantly, fulfils the need to guarantee all residents the right to remain on site. Additionally, the readjusted building stock, new plot sizes and allocation of public space are designed to integrate with municipal planning frameworks. This integrated approach to planning follows principles of land readjustment by which a structured methodology for negotiation allows the interests of all stakeholders to be addressed.
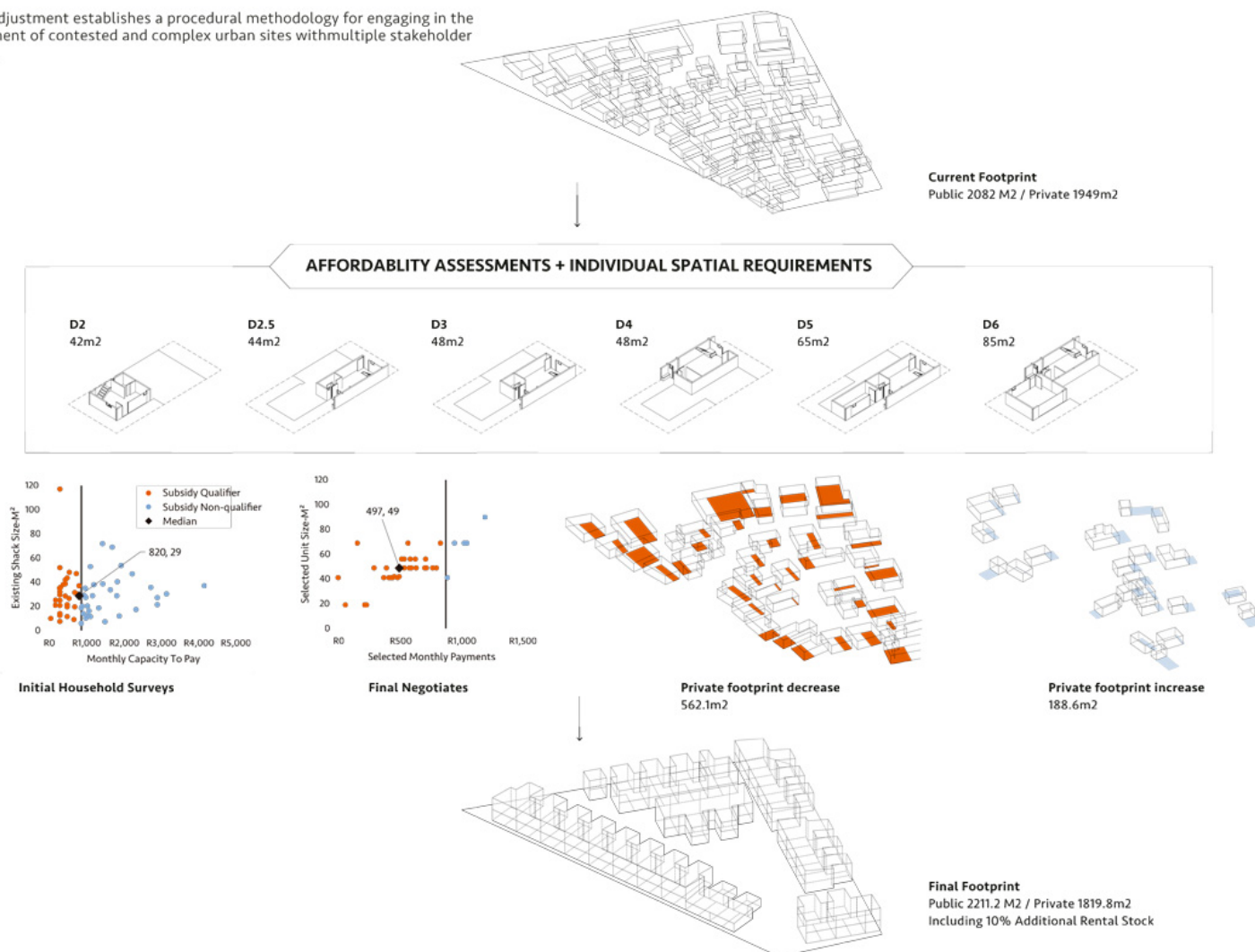
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LAND READJUSTMENT METHODOLOGY

Land Readjustment establishes a procedural methodology for engaging in the development of contested and complex urban sites with multiple stakeholder interests.

Current Footprint
Public 2082 M2 / Private 1949m2

AFFORDABLITY ASSESSMENTS + INDIVIDUAL SPATIAL REQUIREMENTS

D2	D2.5	D3	D4	D5	D6
42m2	44m2	48m2	48m2	65m2	85m2

Initial Household Surveys

- Subsidy Qualifier
- Subsidy Non-qualifier
- Median

820, 29

Final Negotiates

497, 49

Private footprint decrease
562.1m2

Private footprint increase
188.6m2

Final Footprint
Public 2211.2 M2 / Private 1819.8m2
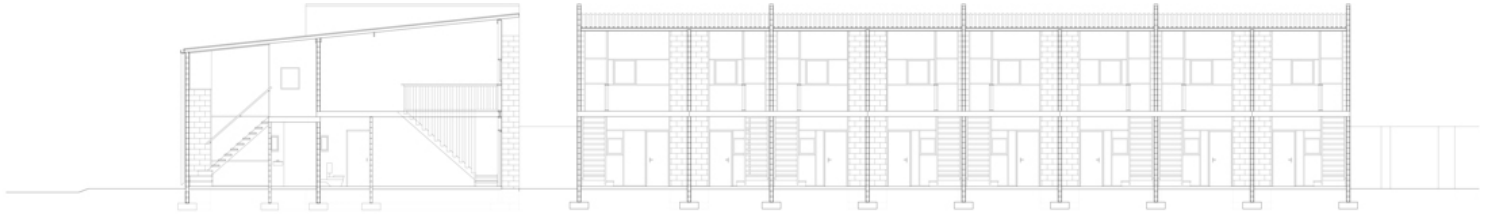Including 10% Additional Rental Stock

Customised digital planning tools have been developed to synthesise user inputs and preferences with microfinance obligations and municipal planning frameworks. The building units are priced to meet meaningful financial contributions from recipients by designing generous but robust living spaces and service cores that meet building code obligations through fit-for-purpose bridge contracts.

The long-term goals are to influence a new direction in housing policy and offer much needed

diversity and access to housing for the gap market.

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