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Ilembe chamber positive about Special Ratings Area approval

A significant milestone that will allow the establishment of a special rating area in high profile public areas of Ballito was given the stamp of approval by the KwaDukuza Municipality last week and the Ilembe Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Tourism is over the moon about the development.

“The Ilembe chamber of commerce would like to take this opportunity to thank and commend KwaDukuza Municipality and its leadership for embracing and supporting a Special Ratings Area (SRA) policy which makes provision for the establishment of an Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP) proposed for Ballito. We are too often quick to criticize but seldom compliment and recognise when people have done well”, said Ilembe Chamber chief executive officer Trenley Tillbrook.

The proposal to have a SRA policy was proposed by the Ilembe chamber in response to rising business concerns of increasing crime, grime and general deterioration of public areas in Ballito – a factor which could negatively impact against investor confidence.

The UIP mechanism is based on the Municipal Property Rates Act of 2004, which makes provision for the establishment of what is technically termed a Special Rating Area (SRA). The SRA is a defined geographic area within which the majority of property owners agree to pay for certain services supplementary to those supplied by the municipality.

“So what does this mean for Ballito? It means that policy is now in place to build on the success story for uMhlanga’s UIP where a structured partnership between the municipality and private sector has resulted in a rejuvenated economic node. In simple, uMhlanga is clean, inviting and safe, this has translated into growing investor confidence driving over a billion rand in investment over the past five years with a further two billion rand to follow,” said project manager for the Ballito UIP Brian Wright.

Wright was appointed by Ballito key property owners in to assist with the process and to conduct a feasibility study which includes a management structure, sustainable business plan and costing to provide supplementary services to public areas.

He said the first partnership was developed in Canada and has now spread far and wide.

“A SRA is referred to by a variety of descriptive names such as an Urban Improvement Precinct, City Improvement Districts (CID), Business Improvement Districts (BID) or Management Districts (MD). One of the biggest UIP success stories is the Cape Town City CID, where this year alone property owners will contribute nearly R40million to supplementing municipal services in Cape Town’s city centre.

Tongaat Hulett developments Dayalan Chetty said the organisation had been part of the stakeholder forum from the inception of the SRA/UIP initiative.

“If the success of the Umhlanga UIP is anything to go by we are confident of the positive impact that the Ballito UIP will have on attracting and retaining business and investor confidence in the area,” said Chetty.

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