

Ankia Bormans

Mike Scurr

Marco Morgan

Naomi Roux

Tarryn Solomon

Olivia Murgatroyd

Jamy Fredericks

Keziah Ruiters

Terraplus

Rennie, Scurr, Adendorff

Independent Sub-contractor

Independent Sub-contractor

Infinity Environmental

Infinity Environmental

Infinity Environmental

Infinity Environmental

1. PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

This workshop was the first structured stakeholder engagement session for the Harrington Square regeneration project, forming part of Stage 2 (Design-Led Concept Development). It provided a facilitated platform for stakeholders to share lived experiences, historical knowledge, and perspectives on the future of the square, to inform the ongoing planning and design process.

The project is a City of Cape Town capital initiative guided by the District Six Public Realm Strategy (2021–2022), the District Six Local Spatial Development Framework (2023), and the CBD Local Spatial Development Framework (2025). Harrington Square has been identified as an important civic space with potential to support inclusive urban regeneration and strengthen connections between surrounding neighbourhoods.

This workshop followed an introductory meeting held on 21 April 2026, where members of the public were provided with an overview of the project and engagement activities to date.

Through guided discussions and interactive activities, the workshop sought to understand how Harrington Square can respond to memory, identity, accessibility, safety, and everyday use, while accommodating diverse users and acknowledging layered histories.

2. WORKSHOP AGENDA

Arrival and Opening

The workshop opened with a facilitated welcome and introductions. Participants were invited to reflect on their personal connection to Harrington Square and District Six, grounding discussion in lived experience.

Reframing the Brief

Facilitators provided an overview of the project context and guided participants to distinguish between what is fixed (site constraints, existing conditions) and what is open for influence, aligning stakeholders on scope and clarifying expectations.

Naming the Tensions

Participants identified key issues, concerns, and priorities through an interactive sticky-note exercise. Inputs were clustered on a shared surface, surfacing themes across memory, history, safety, identity, belonging, inclusivity, and access.

Design Questions

Working in smaller groups, participants developed design questions to guide future thinking, translating broader discussions into focused considerations for the next project phase.

3. DISCUSSION AND KEY THEMES

Discussion centred on the role of Harrington Square within the historical, social, and spatial context of District Six. Participants shared lived experiences of forced removals and displacement, and emphasised the lasting impact of historical zoning decisions on the site's current constraints and opportunities. There was broad agreement that the square should support everyday use while meaningfully acknowledging history and fostering community life.

The following themes and associated considerations emerged from the discussion:

Memory, History and Redress <i>To be developed</i>	The site presents an opportunity to acknowledge District Six alongside deeper pre-colonial, Khoisan, and Griqua histories through landscape, water, naming, and storytelling. Designers are cognisant of these layered histories and to thoughtfully integrate them into the design of Harrington Square. The extent to which earlier histories can be meaningfully incorporated will be explored through the Heritage Impact Assessment process.
Zoning and Land-Use Legacy <i>Addressed</i>	The site is currently zoned 'Utility', this limits permissible uses and indicates that rezoning and land consolidation will be required. A Notice of Intent to Develop has been submitted to Heritage Western Cape and a phased Heritage Impact Assessment is underway. These processes will be progressed in parallel with concept development
Storytelling and Representation <i>To be developed</i>	Tension exists between permanent forms of representation (such as monuments) and more flexible approaches such as murals and programming. How decisions will be made about whose stories are prioritised remain open and will require further exploration.
Healing and Social Function <i>To be developed</i>	The proximity of the District Six Clinic shapes the everyday social role of the square, with large numbers of people waiting on site daily with limited shelter or seating. The square has strong potential to function as a place of pause, care, and connection. The specific needs of clinic users will be incorporated into the design brief.
Inclusivity and Belonging <i>To be developed</i>	There was broad agreement that the square must serve a wide range of users, including children, elderly people, clinic users, and people experiencing homelessness. How inclusive design principles will be implemented and sustained in practice will be addressed through the concept development and design process.

<p>Public Space Quality and Everyday Use <i>To be developed</i></p>	<p>The square must support everyday activity as well as remembrance. Existing pressures between parking, movement, gathering, and commemorative uses present both constraints and opportunities for a layered, multifunctional space. Priorities between competing functions and trade-off decisions will be a focus of Workshop 2.</p>
<p>Safety, Security and Management <i>To be developed</i></p>	<p>Design interventions alone cannot address issues of safety, vandalism, and misuse. This underscores the limitations of relying solely on physical design solutions and highlights the importance of an appropriate governance model. As the site is primarily City-owned, the governance model will need to align with the City's asset and open space management frameworks. Options will be developed taking this into consideration.</p>
<p>Existing Uses and Continuity <i>To be developed</i></p>	<p>Harrington Square is not a blank canvas. Existing uses such as parking, pavements, play areas, and nearby sports facilities carry social and functional value. A site assessment will inform which existing functions should be retained and how they can evolve as part of the concept.</p>
<p>Participation and Governance <i>Addressed</i></p>	<p>Queries were raised regarding City representation at engagements and how technical inputs from line departments feed into the process. It was clarified that technical queries are channelled through the PMT, with departmental input informing design and feasibility considerations. Feedback on how stakeholder input is being incorporated will be provided at each subsequent engagement.</p>
<p>Temporary Activation and Adaptability <i>To be developed</i></p>	<p>Given long planning and implementation timelines, participants supported temporary or pilot interventions to activate the site and test ideas. The project team will explore options for interim activation in consultation with private or interested groups and report back through future notification.</p>

4. QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

The following questions were raised during the workshop. Where questions relate to matters already addressed through the project structure or process, this is noted. Outstanding matters will be progressed and communicated to stakeholders ahead of the next engagement.

#	Question	Response
1	What were the historical zoning changes applied to Harrington Square following forced removals, and how do they affect current development possibilities?	Additional research is required to understand the zoning of the area following forced removals under the Group Areas Act. It is currently zoned as "Utility", which does not permit the full range of public open space uses. A land use process will be required for rezoning and consolidation and will follow the concept development process. See Theme: Zoning and Land-Use Legacy.
2	What is the current zoning and land-use status of the site, and what processes are required for any changes?	The site is currently zoned as 'Utility' and used primarily as parking. A Notice of Intent to Develop has been submitted to Heritage Western Cape. Rezoning, land consolidation, a phased Heritage Impact Assessment, and associated public participation will be required before development can proceed.
3	Why were relevant City officials not present at this workshop, and how will technical questions be addressed?	Technical queries from City line departments (transport, engineering, land-use planning) are channelled through the PMT, with departmental input informing design and feasibility work rather than being addressed directly at engagements. See Theme: Participation and Governance and Section 2.
4	Who is the designated project manager, and how can stakeholders access ongoing updates?	The City's Project Manager is Simone Bergoff (Urban Planning and Design). Contact the project team at harringtonsquare@infinity.capetown . All registered I&APs will receive direct notifications. See Section 2.
5	What is the proposed governance and long-term management model for Harrington Square?	Long-term management is acknowledged as critical and cannot be resolved through design alone. As the site is primarily City-owned, the governance model will need to align with the City's asset management frameworks. Options will be developed and presented for stakeholder input at Workshop 2. See Theme: Safety, Security and Management.

5. PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS

The following actions and engagements are planned for the next phases of the project:

1. Conduct a site walkabout to ground participants in the spatial and historical context of the square, to be incorporated into the Open House programme.
2. Provide clear background information to new participants ahead of each engagement, covering project scope, history, constraints, and timelines.
3. Progress rezoning, land consolidation, and the Phased Heritage Impact Assessment process to follow the concept development.
4. Develop governance and long-term management options for presentation and stakeholder input at Workshop 2.

6. NEXT STEPS

The following engagement milestones have been completed to date:

- Call for Registration: 2–16 April 2026
- Introductory Information Session: 21 April 2026
- Stakeholder Workshop 1: 9 May 2026

The following engagement activities are planned as part of the next phases of the project:

- Open House: 9 June 2026 – sharing Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment findings, with a 30-day public commenting period from 2 June 2026 to 2 July 2026.
- Stakeholder Workshop 2: From July 2026 onwards – focusing on concept development, governance options, and representation.