



# NORWOODOAKLANDS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

INCORPORATING ORCHARDS, THE GARDENS AND CHELTONDALE

## Report for the Year Ending 28 February 2022

This has been another year of various levels of lockdown, yet in spite of all the difficult times, the residents of our Residents' Association have shown incredible spirit. We have managed to keep in contact with each other, initiate projects and keep up general maintenance of the suburbs.

### **Creative communication**

Setting up the system of Street Representatives has been very successful. This is a way for residents to get information about their street issues and most importantly to contribute to the conversation about their street. Each street has a Street Representative who communicates with the NORA committee and so there are open avenues of communication. We've been thrilled that so many people want to be involved and hope to increase our participation this coming year.

### **Town Planning**

NORA is a member of the Joint Plans Committee East of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation. Through this committee NORA is able to draw upon a wide range of expertise, including town planners, architects and heritage practitioners. The committee assesses heritage and neighbourhood planning issues at a monthly meeting.

While the committee does great work, it does so in the context of a dysfunctional city. NORA is as frustrated as other residents' associations by the lack of building control law enforcement in the city, and by the city's inability to progress with committed plans, including those related to Paterson Park and the Grant Avenue Precinct. If the city does not reform its administration to become responsive, transparent and investor friendly, we will no doubt see continued deterioration in the suburbs of Johannesburg, and our neighbourhood is not immune to this.

### **The City's Projects in our neighbourhood**

The Paterson Park Recreation Centre finally opened this year, five years late and who knows how much over budget. NORA had highlighted the broken promises, incompetence and maladministration in this project in 2018 (See the post dated 05 October 2018 on <https://www.lovenorwood.com/news/>) but it took another three years for a journalist to pick up on the mess (read the expose here: <https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/opinion/2021-11-15-shirley-de-villiers-joburgs-r120m-plus-white-elephant/>). But, we can be grateful that our neighbourhood finally has a recreation centre. What we still don't have is a functioning clinic (Orchards Clinic is still not open, 5 years after it was promised), and after continued bungling by Joburg Property Company, the Paterson Park precinct is no closer to breaking ground.

## **Grant Avenue**

Grant Avenue has been abuzz with activity, with a number of new stores that have opened recently resulting in an improvement in the retail mix. Business owners and landlords are also taking more responsibility for the management of the high street, and the funding of street security has noticeably improved its appearance and safety. We continue to provide a cleaning service on Grant Avenue (Wednesdays and Saturdays), The Avenue, and other problem area in the neighbourhood on an as-needed basis.

## **Special Projects**

Our major project this year was the repainting of curbside street names in our suburbs. Not only has this improved safety and legibility of our area, but it also injected an element of pride into suburbs virtually forgotten by the Joburg Roads Agency. Maintenance of street signage has always been on Nora's agenda as there were multiple street names that were totally illegible. The project is on-going and has been split into two phases.

Phase 1 has been repainting only the street names that are totally illegible and phase 2 will focus on the maintenance of the balance of the signage.

To date, 621 Street Names have been repainted throughout the NORA area, at a total cost of R38 657, funded 100% by subscriptions or donations from residents

## **Fun events**

Unfortunately we weren't able to have a Love Norwood Day because of restrictions. Halloween on Grant was a great success. We had a successful Jacaranda photo competition that highlighted our lovely trees and also a couple of successful cleanups of parks and rivers. Thank you to all involved.

## **Our parks**

### **The Gardens Conservancy**

The erosion control work completed by Richard Holden and Thulani Madondo at Hilson Bridge has proved effective. Vetiver and other grasses cover banks which were once fast-eroding dongas, and the area around the Bridge has been attractively landscaped. At the end of 2021 Richard Holden, funded by an anonymous resident, was able to resolve the collapsing storm water drain at African Street. We are immensely grateful for his expertise and time, which he provides to us at no charge.

Louise Marx leads a very active and committed user group, who ensure that the Conservancy is opened on the weekend for the public to enjoy, arrange regular clean ups, and attend to sewage leaks and other council infrastructure issues. An anonymous resident donates the time of a gardener for one day a week, to ensure that this space remains clean and well cared for. Many thanks to Brett McDougall for his continuing interest and support of this project which he so successfully initiated, completed and maintained.

### **Norwood Park**

Thanks to the contributions by residents NORA is able to continue maintenance in the park. Our gardener is currently assisting in the park on Mondays and Wednesdays with ad-hoc clean-ups where needed. We continue to plant low maintenance/water wise plants and trees. The park remains the heart of Norwood and due to its size it will be an on-going project for NORA until city parks increases its man power and resources allocated to the park.

### **Pretoria Street Bridge Park**

This park which was a dumping ground in 2020 was cleared and fenced in 2021. The fencing was funded largely by local residents and businesses and last week gates were erected. There is now a gate on Pretoria Street.

The focus for 2021 has been dealing with issues to the north of Pretoria Street. Committee member Trevor Lundt has worked with the North Res Super Block group (which comprises Associations from our neighboring suburbs) to have this fenced, and is working with the City to deal with illegal activities here.. The re are plans to create a cycling/jogging path and fundraising for this exciting venture will start in the coming year.

### **Cheltondale Park**

There have been continuing problems in maintaining Cheltondale Park. A residents' usergroup has been formed to deal with the issues which arise.

## **Financial Statement Review**

Total Income for the 2021/22 year was 55% lower than the previous year, but this was largely attributable to donations for special projects received in prior year. Subs have increased by 47%, with actual subscriptions received increasing from 152 in prior year to 260 which represents about 9% of all households in the NORA area.

The inability to hold Love Norwood Day for a 2nd year in a row continues to put strain on our finances. Our maintenance activities in the NORA areas resulted in the following expenses:

Norwood Park - R52 950 , Grant Avenue and other street cleaning - R33 446 and Street Name Repainting project - R38 657.

Our cash reserves decreased by R27,000 over the past year, a situation which is likely to continue into the new year as Subs contributions do not match the ongoing work we perform in the neighbourhood, and we are unlikely to be able to hold Love Norwood Day in 2022.

### **Councillors**

Our thanks to our incredibly helpful and competent councillors Eleanor Huggett who yet again solved innumerable problems and Belinda Kayser-Echeozonjoku who joined us this year with her wonderful energy.

## **Committee Members**

Committee members are volunteers who love their neighborhood and generously give of their time and energy. Thanks to Brett McDougall, Brendan Lombard, Trevor Lundt, Nadine Hocter, Pam Tadich, Taryn Rose, Matthew van der Want and Luvoyo Lekwane who all contributed this past year. Special thanks to the Street Reps and to all the people of our neighborhood who participated so energetically in river and park cleanups! We really would love to have more people join us. Please do let us know if you would like to join!

**Cindy Meltzer**

**Chair**

**NORA Committee 2022**