

Corporate solutions to security

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Senior officer Sibusiso Xulu, from the Florida Road Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP). Photograph: JETHRO SNYDERS, JETHRO SNYDERS PHOTOGRAPHY Durban - Business owners in uMhlanga Rocks and Florida Road have successfully come together to create two of KwaZulu- Natal's most successful Urban Improvement Precincts (UIPs) by using a proactive approach to security.

The UIPs attribute their success to following the right model, which was created in Canada and has been successfully applied to public spaces globally.

Cara Reilly, the communication consultant for both UIPs, said the positive working relationship with the municipality, having dedicated management and a collective effort by business and property owners to create better work spaces ensured the success of the project.

She added that while the UIPs were funded by commercial property owners, they had voluntary contributions made on a monthly basis from residents, non-profit organisations and churches.

"These contributions allow the UIPs to deliver a higher level and wider scope of service than what's laid out in the business plan," said Reilly.

She added that the UIPs' proactive approach to security focused on identifying possible criminal intent before it happened. This is achieved with the deployment of a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week well-managed security team in uMhlanga and Florida Road, who support the work of metro police and the SAPS.

“Building partnerships with the SAPS, metro police and the community policing forum’s is critical in ensuring effective management,” said Reilly.

She said the uMhlanga UIP’s monthly security forum was a key component in the integration of the various security entities servicing UIP properties and property managers.

“The aim of the forum is to proactively improve the level of security in the UIP precincts through integration, sharing intelligence, and ensuring operational assistance in emergencies,” said Reilly.

In Florida Road at the weekend, an extra foot-patrol service of two officers take to the street from 6pm-6am on Friday and Saturday nights, and are directly linked to private patrols which manage the residential initiatives in the surrounding areas.

Reilly said the Sidewalk Monitor Programme which was rolled out in 2015 was created to solve the issue of “car guards” and vagrancy, which was one of Florida Road’s biggest challenges, affecting every aspect of the road from perceptions of safety to the quality of the experience when people visit the area.

She said the programme was a carefully planned initiative aimed at ensuring a uniform and well-managed sidewalk monitor service that deploys vetted individuals to the road.

“The team of 14 monitors are identifiable by their distinctive red and black branded uniform as well as the photo-ID name badges they all wear,” said Reilly.

The monitors are also extra eyes and ears on the road.

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