



Fresh-faced Florida Road

An active UIP has contributed to the rejuvenation of Florida Road

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Florida Road, always a hub of retail, restaurants and revelling, has seen a rejuvenation recently after beginning to succumb to urban decay. This renewal is thanks to the efforts of local business owners in setting up and supporting the Florida Road Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP) which aims to ensure that the experience of the public spaces in the area is a positive one.

“The role of the UIP is to optimise municipal service levels and lobby for investment in infrastructure,” says Cara Reilly, head, UrbanPlaces, a division of UrbanMGT, which manages the precinct. “Better service delivery and investment in infrastructure by the municipality means a high standard of public spaces, which in turn creates a sense of business and investor confidence and encourages greater investment into an area by the private sector, which we have seen happening in Florida Road.”

The changes are simple but effective: street monitors to ensure bylaws are adhered to, security guards patrolling at night, and cleaners who maintain the public spaces. The result is a flood of new business into the area including chains like Starbucks and Jack Salmon Fish House, as well as independent establishments like The Charlatan Neighbourhood Cocktail Bar which have taken up residence alongside art galleries, boutiques and speciality stores. The road has become the hub of fabric shopping with the big names in material like Hertex and St Leger and Viney, opening stylish showrooms along the road recently. Public events like Film of Florida have seen more visitors venturing back to the area.

“A sure indicator of growth in any area is a crane,” notes Reilly, “and we’re

seeing several at work on the new KFC, Urban Lime’s initiatives including Florida Fields and the exciting 2six2 mixed-use development.”

Much of the charm of the area is its architectural heritage, including many Edwardian buildings which have been restored and converted into businesses in recent years, but 2six2 will change the face of Florida Road with a contemporary facade providing both retail and residential space on the corner of Florida and Gordon roads.

“Gough Cooper Property Group has strategically focused our attention to being part of the urban regeneration in the Florida Road precinct which we believe to be the heartbeat and soul of Durban,” says Jacques Klynsmith, marketing director, Gough Cooper Property Group. “Florida Road and the surrounding areas are certainly on the upward scale – various stakeholders have in recent years invested in excess of R10bn into buildings in the Durban CBD and surrounding suburbs with the vision of rejuvenating these areas into prime real estate to attract local and international visitors to the province. The Ethekwini Municipality, The Florida Road UIP and private stakeholders engage regularly to discuss implementation plans of transforming the area to attract more local and foreign investment.”

FLORIDA ROAD APP:

The Florida Road UIP has a free app! The app aims to enhance the experience of Florida Road for visitors, businesses, residents and tourists, by providing a single “go-to” point for all local information. Download it from the app store on iOS or Android.

