

## **COUNCIL FOCUSES ON CBD REVIVAL**

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Durban has taken a cue from the French in dealing with the problem of unrestrained responses to the call of nature in the central business district where the lack of public toilets has posed serious health concerns for the council.

Pissoirs, as the public urinals are called in France, could soon become regular features at convenient locations in the CBD as part of a bigger plan to revive the city centre into the thriving commercial sector it once was.

With special focus on key precincts, the plan was to clean up former prosperous zones like Albert Park, the Grey Street area, Warwick Avenue and sections of the beachfront through strict enforcing of by-laws and sustainable and co-ordinated development schemes.

Formal businesses in the greater CBD have taken a knock in recent years because of high levels of crime, inadequate policing and vagrancy, forcing many big names to quit the city centre in favour of suburban shopping centres.

Now major business role players and city officials are tackling the problems by getting down to basics.

Today, the engineering committee of the central councils will consider a proposal to overcome the problem of urinating in the streets of the CBD by erecting pissoirs at strategic points.

The Commercial Road taxi rank and Greenacres Arcade have been identified as the location for two pilot projects.

In the Grey Street area, where business has declined rapidly, the focus will be on unblocking traffic and pedestrian congestion caused largely by uncoordinated taxi ranks, street trading and illegal parking which has been allowed to continue with little intervention by authorities.

Illegally

In the Brook Street area, for example, a parking lane had been illegally created in the middle of the road, said councillor Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed.

However, another vital cog in the area - the Medical Centre - had suffered because their attempts to erect parking bays had allegedly been stopped by police, he said.

He said when landmark institutions, like the Surat Hindoo School, moved out of the Grey Street area it was a sign that urgent action was needed.

Together with long-standing business leaders, the plan was to post two city police officers full-time in the area to enforce by-laws, regulate taxi ranks and create a holistic scheme for the zone.