

# CAPE TOWN CBD ECONOMIC AREA PROFILE

TREND ANALYSIS 2012-2022

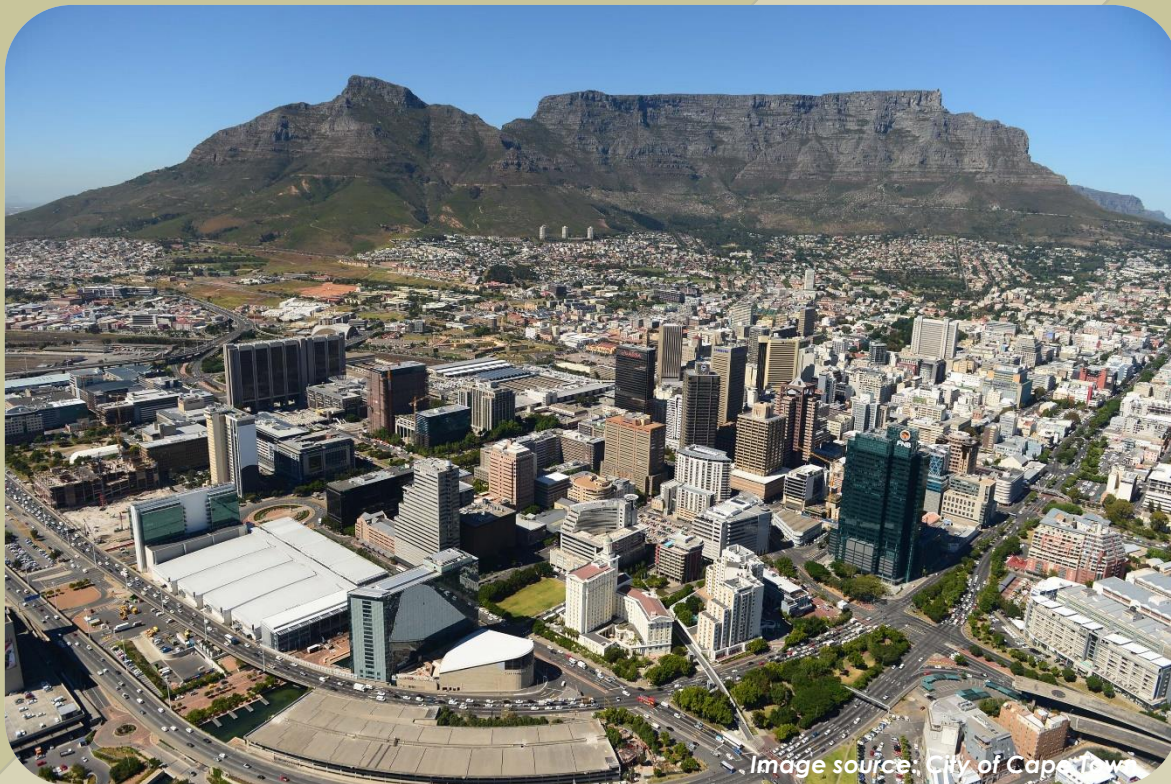
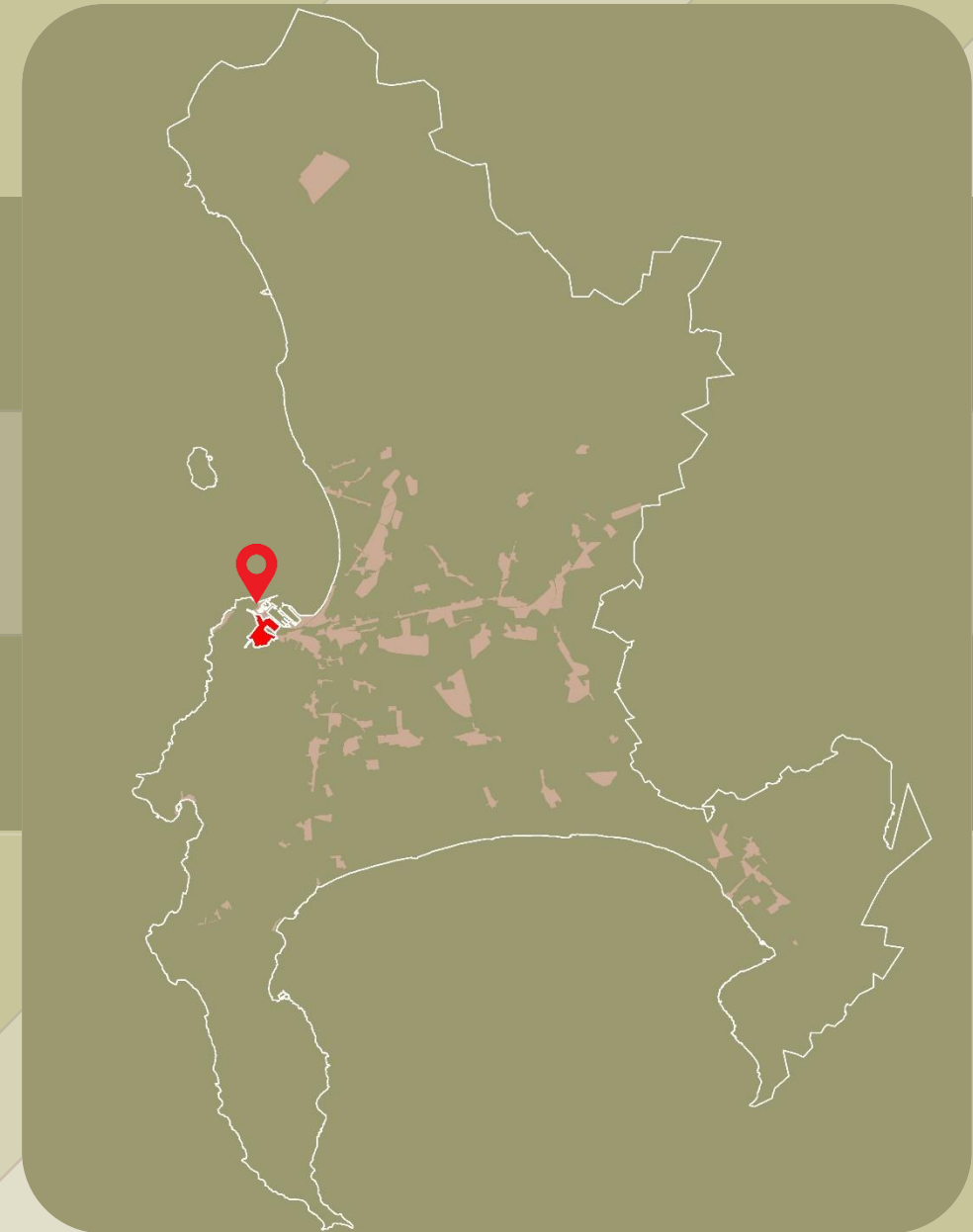


Image source: City of Cape Town



June 2025



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Making progress possible. Together.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The information contained herein is provided for general information only which is not intended to provide definitive answers and as such, is only intended to be used as a guide.

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# POLICY & REGULATORY CONTEXT

For the past decade, the global and national economic context has required regional economies to prioritise their investment decisions in space for greater efficiency. The Economic Areas Management Programme (ECAMP), as it was introduced, has therefore been considered a valuable economic data tool that provides valuable insights into the performance of the space economy at an area-specific level.

This update of ECAMP is further aligned with the Urban Planning & Design Department's business strategy to leverage spatial intelligence to unlock value within Cape Town's space economy by:

- a) Tracking the performance and implementation of its spatial development framework policies
- b) Developing the evidence base to inform and adjust said spatial policy
- c) Supporting spatially targeted investment and decision-making
- d) Providing a spatial lens of economic data within the Cape Town context

The following strategic objectives and programmes support the update of ECAMP:



## INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2027

- [Objective 1](#) (Increased jobs and investment in the Cape Town Economy): Targeted urban development programme
- [Objective 15](#) (A more spatially integrated and inclusive city): Spatial strategy monitoring and evaluation project

## INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY (2021)

- [Applying an economic lens to policy-making by integrating sustainable analysis into City Decision Making in alignment with the MSDF.](#)
- The primary and most immediate scope of work must centre around economic recovery. To this end, implementation of this Strategy will be in the form of a [three-phase recovery approach](#).

## MUNICIPAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (MSDF, 2023) POLICY & STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Table 5.1: Spatial strategy 1: Substrategies and policy guidelines ([Policy 2, 4 and 5](#))
- Table A2: Spatial strategy 1: Policy guidelines, strategic and implementation intent ([Policy 4,2 and 4,3](#))

## DISTRICT SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (DSDF, 2023): SUB DISTRICT GUIDANCE

- Table Bay DSDF - Subdistrict 2: City Bowl, Port and Surrounds:
  - District Development Guidelines ([page 66](#))
  - Subdistrict Development Guidelines ([page 99](#))
  - Consolidated subdistrict SDF ([Figure 23: Subdistrict 2: City Bowl, Port and surrounds](#))

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# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## Intended users

This profile provides a cohesive narrative to determine key trends across several data entry points to help inform decision-making. It also aims to help guide investment in cases where data is not readily available to the public.

## Conceptual Framework

The reporting of updated time series microeconomic analysis on Cape Town's economic areas is informed by a conceptual framework, which aims to create spatial intelligence on *supply & demand factors according to the 5 themes* which have been identified. The 5 themes allow for an integrated narrative across area-based economic trends. The trends being reported throughout this profile are used to classify and assess the overall performance of Cape Town's economic areas.

## Data preparation, sources, assumptions and limitations

The indicators reported in this profile feed off several automated data processes to add intelligence at a land parcel level which is then aggregated into economic areas. This profile draws across various datasets between 2012 and 2022 such as the General Valuation Roll, market reports, building plans, land use applications, property sales and SARS data. While many of the respective datasets are continuously refined over time, this profile will be updated as and when new data is available.

## Contact details

Should you wish to make contact, please direct your feedback to the City of Cape Town's Metropolitan Spatial Planning and Growth Management branch via [Future.CapeTown@capetown.gov.za](mailto:Future.CapeTown@capetown.gov.za).

## MICRO-ECONOMIC DEMAND & SUPPLY FACTORS

This profile examines a range of micro-economic indicators to highlight trends in supply and demand specific to the economic area. The indicators include:

- Property sales per land use sector
- Building work completed
- Types of land use applications approved
- Vacant land per land use sector
- Built-up land and take up rate per land use sector
- Dominant land uses present in an area
- Building vacancy rate overtime
- Capitalisation rate over time
- Rental rate p/m<sup>2</sup> by land use sector
- Jobs per industry

## MACRO-ECONOMIC REPORTS AND INDICATORS

For additional insights into the macro-economic factors affecting the regional economic condition, refer to the following reports for more information on macro-economic indicators related to Cape Town:

- [Economic Performance Indicators for Cape Town](#)
- [Regional Market Analysis and Intelligence 2023/24](#)
- [Provincial Economic Review and Outlook \(PERO\)](#)
- [Municipal Economic Review and Outlook \(MERO\)](#)

WHY

WHAT

HOW

### VALUE PROPOSITION

Promoting economic infrastructure in support of economic growth and job creation.

Supports internal and external collaboration around data and spatial intelligence.

Supports the spatially differentiated investment rationale of the MSDF and DSDFs.

### CHALLENGES /OBJECTIVES TO ADDRESS

**Urban Growth Planning (Non-res growth estimates):**  
Determine where to accommodate non-res growth.

**Spatial intelligence:**  
Location-based supply and demand factors.

**Enhanced spatial policy:**  
Evidence-based analysis on Cape Town's space economy informing a policy framework.

### AREAS OF APPLICATION

Land Use Model 2050 update.

Replacement of the static and dated ECAMP with an updated, automated economic analysis tool.

Support: Business retention & expansion initiatives.

Data foundation behind MSDF Policy Statement 4.

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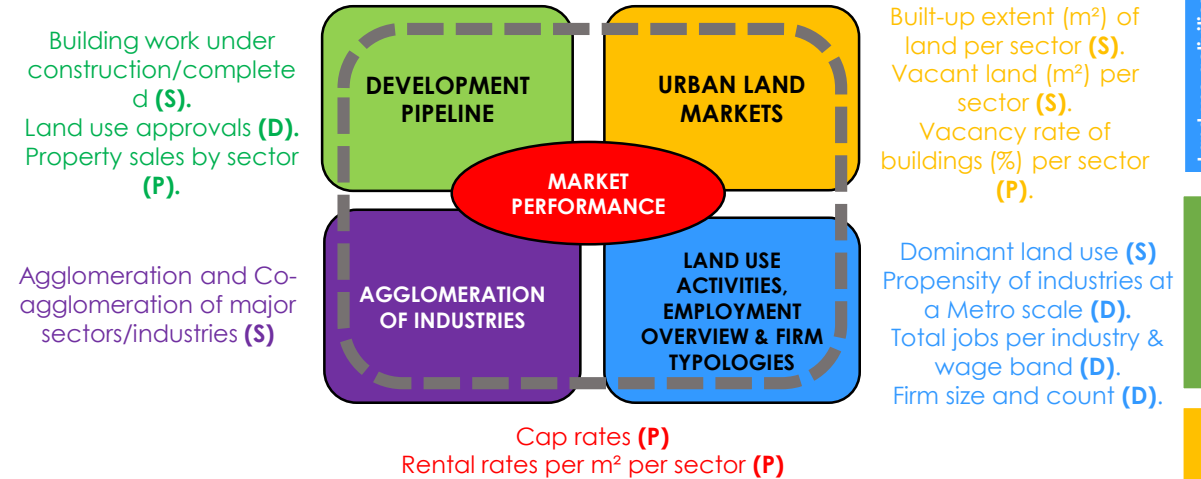
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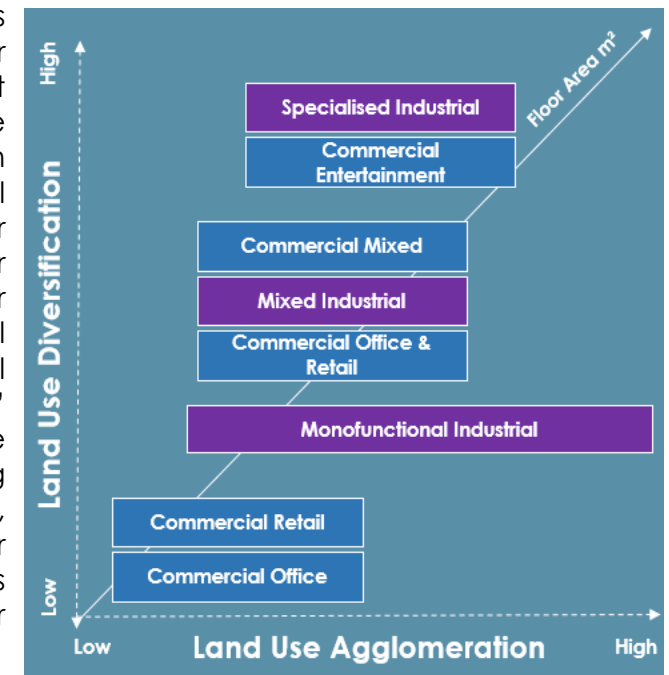
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## Supply, Demand & Performance (S,D & P)

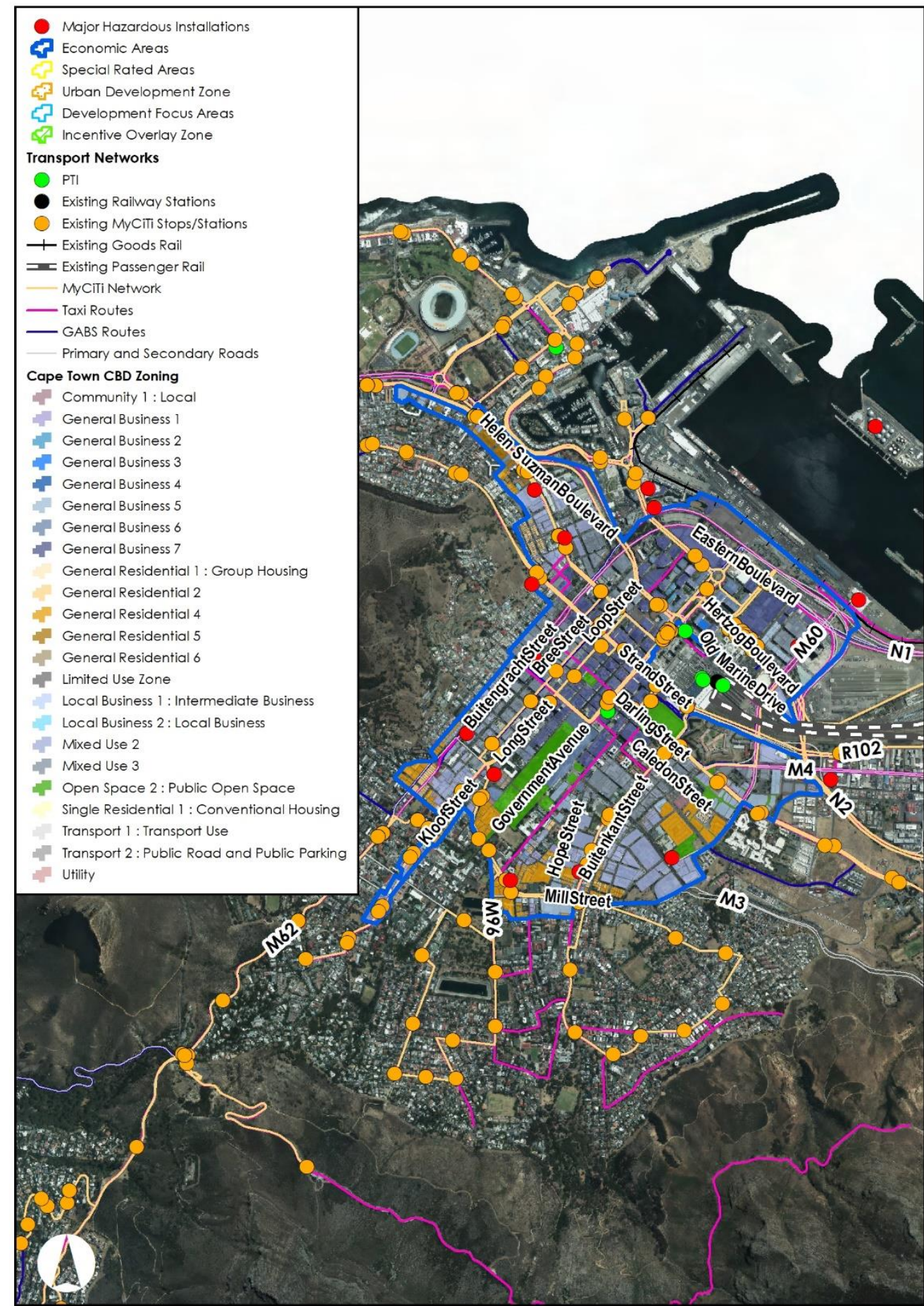


At a metro scale, economic areas are classified as either industrial or commercial nodes. In the context of Cape Town's distinct space economy and the agglomeration patterns of industries, industrial nodes can be further characterised as being either specialised, mixed or Monofunctional. While the general understanding is that commercial nodes presents a more 'mixed use' environment, these nodes can be further characterised as being unique to either retail, office, entertainment, office & retail or mixed (where 3 or more land uses has a significant amount of floor area within an area).





# INTRODUCTION



## CAPE TOWN CBD

### Location

- The area is Cape Town's Central Business District and is located adjacent to the Port of Cape Town. Furthermore, the area is located 12km from Cape Town International Airport.
- The area is a convergence of a multi-modal public transport system linking the CBD to communities across Cape Town.
- Due to its location, the area attracts a skilled workforce from areas across Cape Town.

### Zoning, land use and form

- The area is predominantly zoned for business purposes, with general residential being more prominent along the southern parts of the CBD (i.e. Gardens area).
- The area is mainly characterised by mixed-use functions, which include retail, office, hospitality, public services and has, over recent years, experienced an increase in residential stock across the CBD area in the form of apartments and student housing.
- The average land parcel size in the area mostly varies between 500 – 1,500m<sup>2</sup>, with a limited number of land parcels ranging beyond 3,000m<sup>2</sup>.

### Spatial planning mechanisms

- The area is serviced by a City Improvement District.
- The area has been identified as a Development Focus Area as part of the Table Bay District Spatial Development Framework.
- Parts of Cape Town CBD are also incentivised as part of the National Treasury's tax incentive ([Urban Development Zone](#)).

### Key highlights of the area include:

- The area boasts a rich history dating back to 1652.
- [Cape Town City Improvement District](#) was established in 2000.
- The area improved on its Public Transport Interchange, which included the Cape Town station redevelopment and introduction of the MyCiti BRT service.
- Key surrounding land uses/operations, such as V&A Waterfront and the port, have also allowed for the CBD to flourish over time.
- Continuous infrastructure improvements are conducted to ensure sufficient support for a diverse and intensified economy.
- The CBD also experienced several prominent new developments, such as Harbour Arch and many more, within the hospitality industry.
- Various planning instruments are being put in place to ensure the longevity of the CBD & Surrounds, which includes the preparation of a local spatial development framework.

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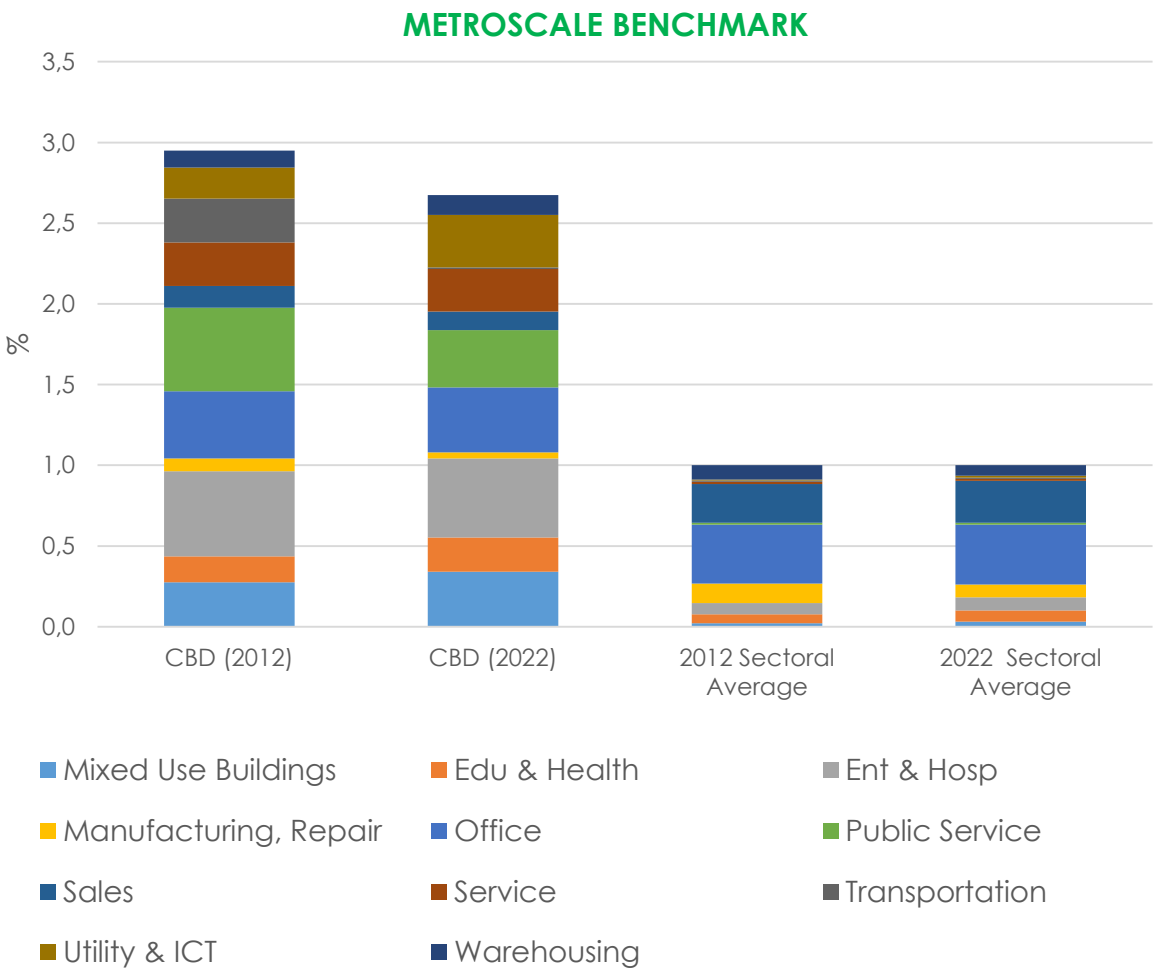
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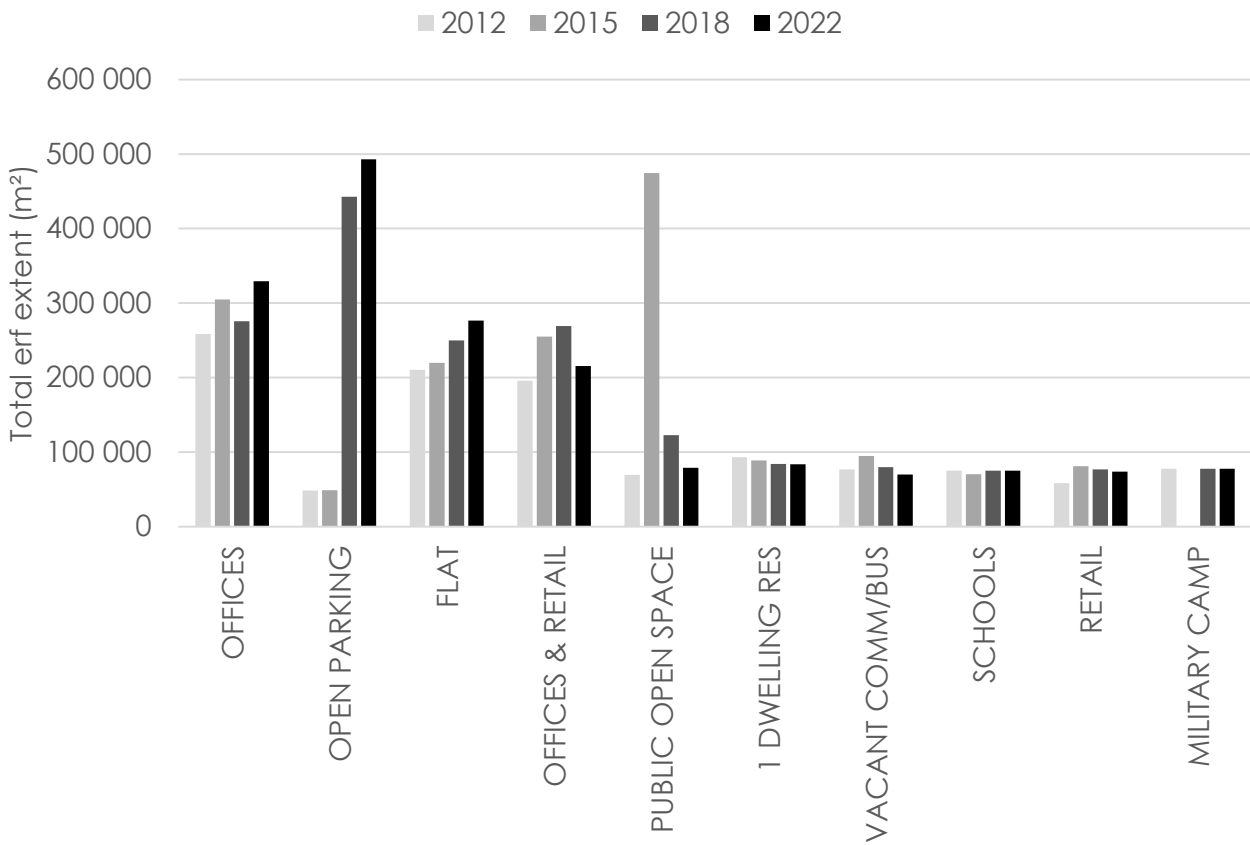
# LAND USE ACTIVITIES

A recent analysis involved the conversion of land use codes contained in the General Valuation Roll (GV Roll) into Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes to determine the propensity of industries operating in areas of similar character. However, for the commercial nodes, the benchmarking and nodal typology have been drawn from the land use codes.

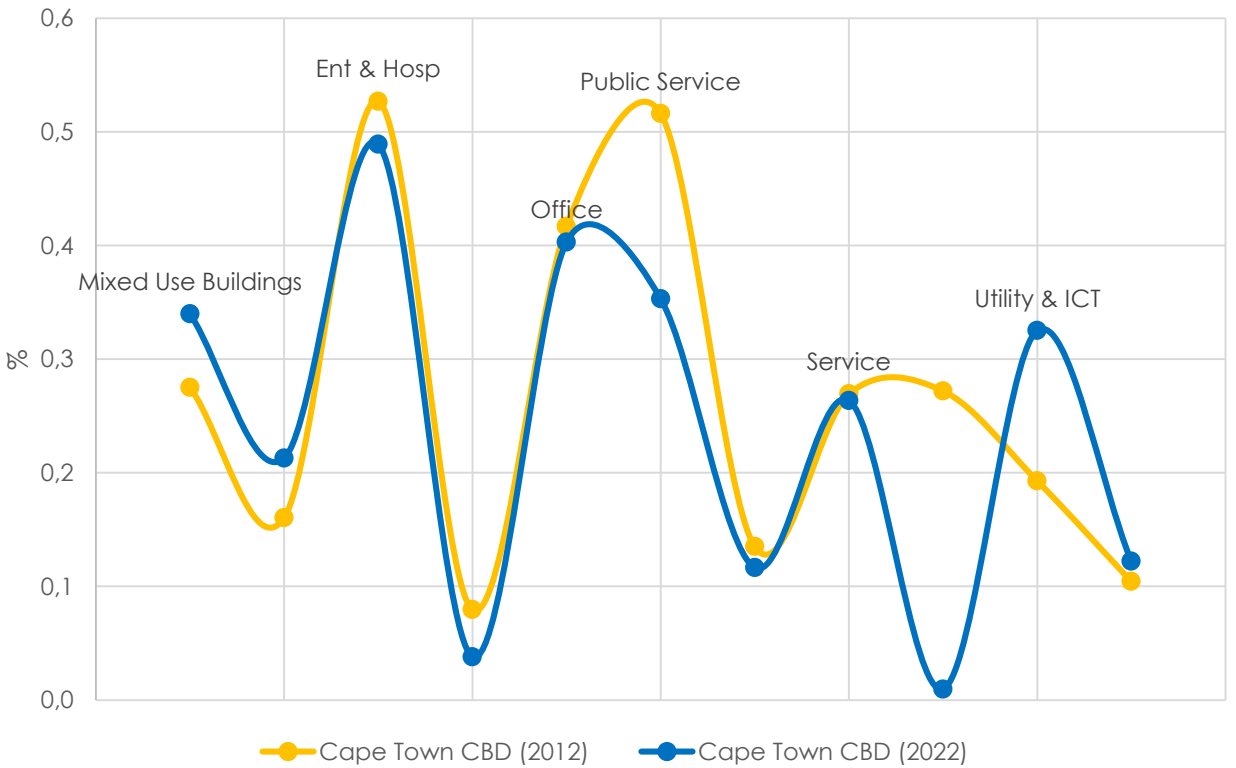
- Between 2012 and 2022, Cape Town CBD was mainly characterised by a greater propensity for mixed-use buildings (office, retail & residential), public service, office and entertainment & hospitality as reflected in the **Nodal Typology**. The nodal typology highlights industries with the most floor area (m²) operating within an economic area.
- The **Metroscale Benchmarking** positions Cape Town CBD as being a contributor of multiple land uses, performing higher than that of the sectoral average across many land uses when measured against commercial areas across Cape Town.
- Additionally, the GV Roll reflects land use data by showing the **dominant land use** over time based on the cumulative extent (m²) of floor area for offices, retail, flats, parking and open space.



## TOP 10 MOST DOMINANT LAND USES BETWEEN 2012 AND 2022

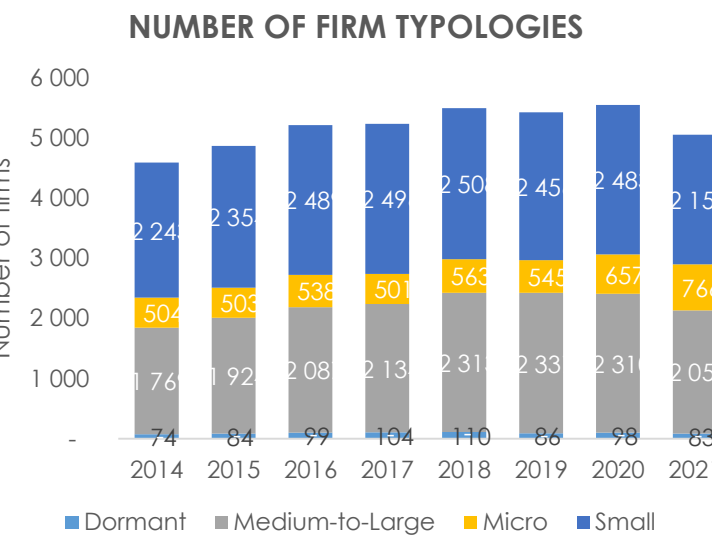
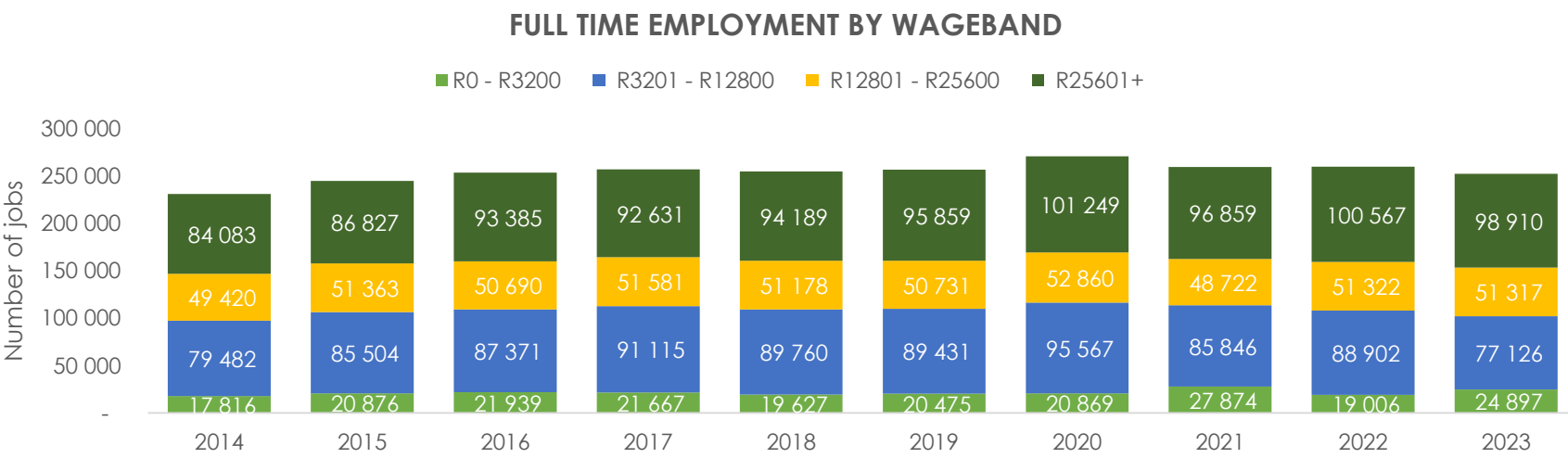
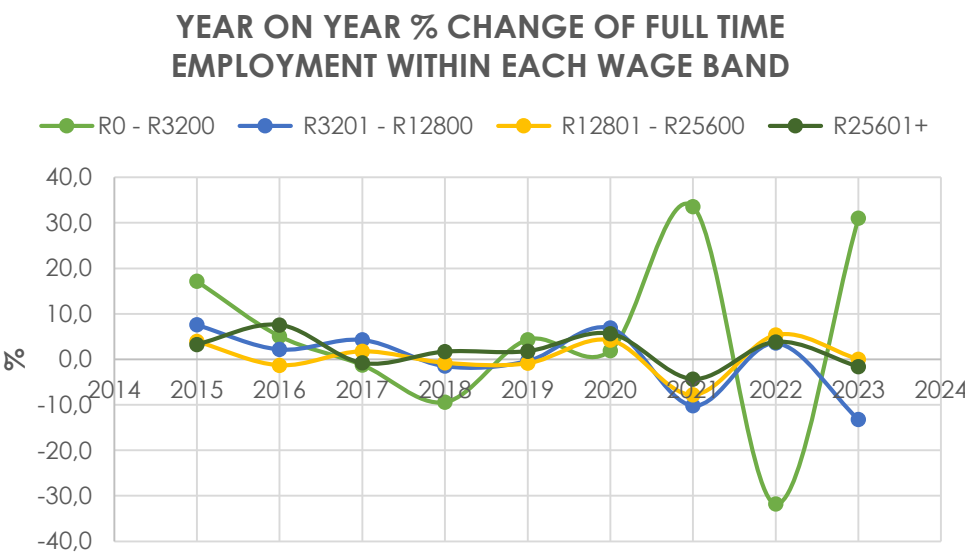
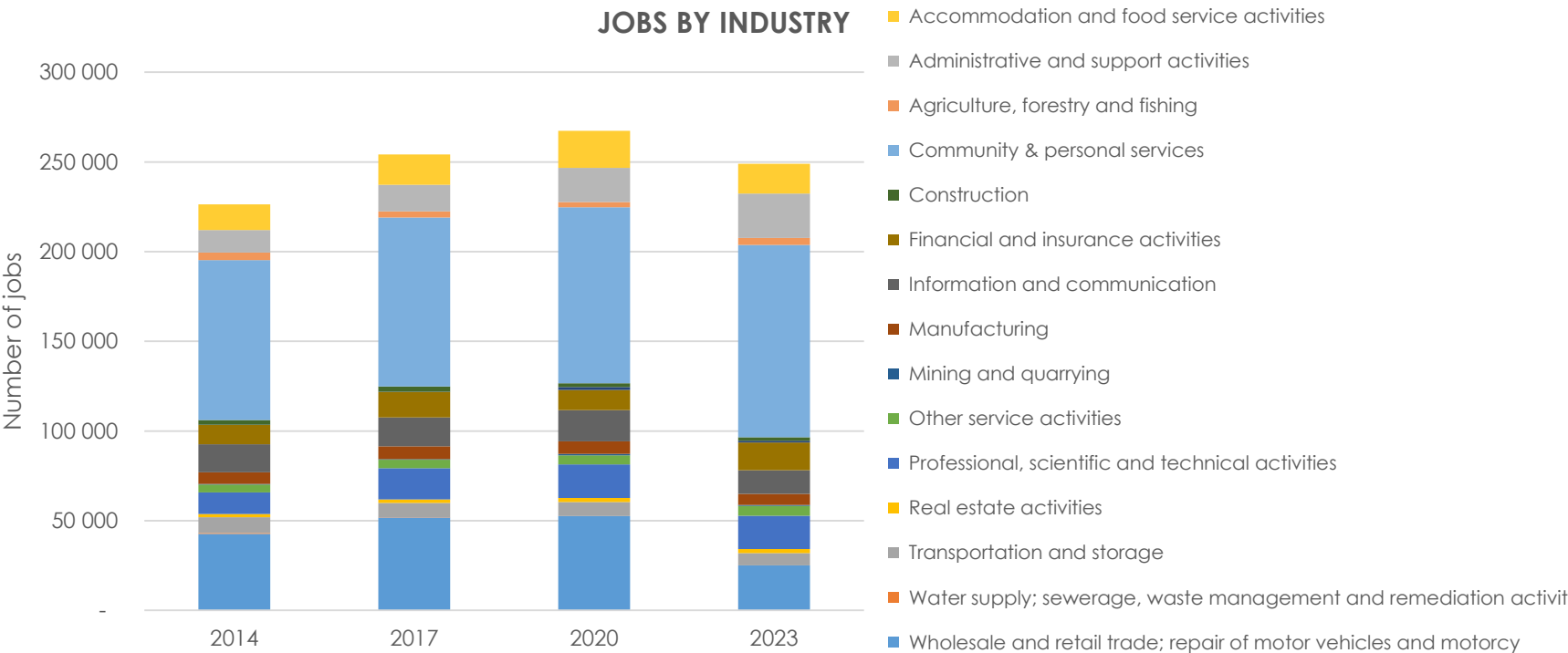


## NODAL TYPOLOGY FOR 2012 AND 2022 (Mixed Commercial)



Source: 2012 – 2022 land use codes converted to SIC codes (May 2024 analysis)

# EMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW & FIRM TYPOLOGIES



### Jobs/Firms

Between 2014 and 2023, the number of job opportunities in the Cape Town CBD area ranged from approximately 220,000 to 250,000. A steady increase in jobs was observed from 2014 to 2020, however, a decrease in jobs occurred in 2023 due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the years, most jobs have been concentrated in the community and personal services, administrative services, wholesale and retail, and professional activities.

The total number of firms increased overall from 4,750 to 5,000. While small firms dominate the landscape, there is also a significant presence of medium-to-large firms, as well as micro and dormant firms.

### Income bands

The income bands reflect the skill levels of employed individuals. The data indicates that a larger proportion of employees earn above R25,600, with a significant number of employees also earning up to R12,800.

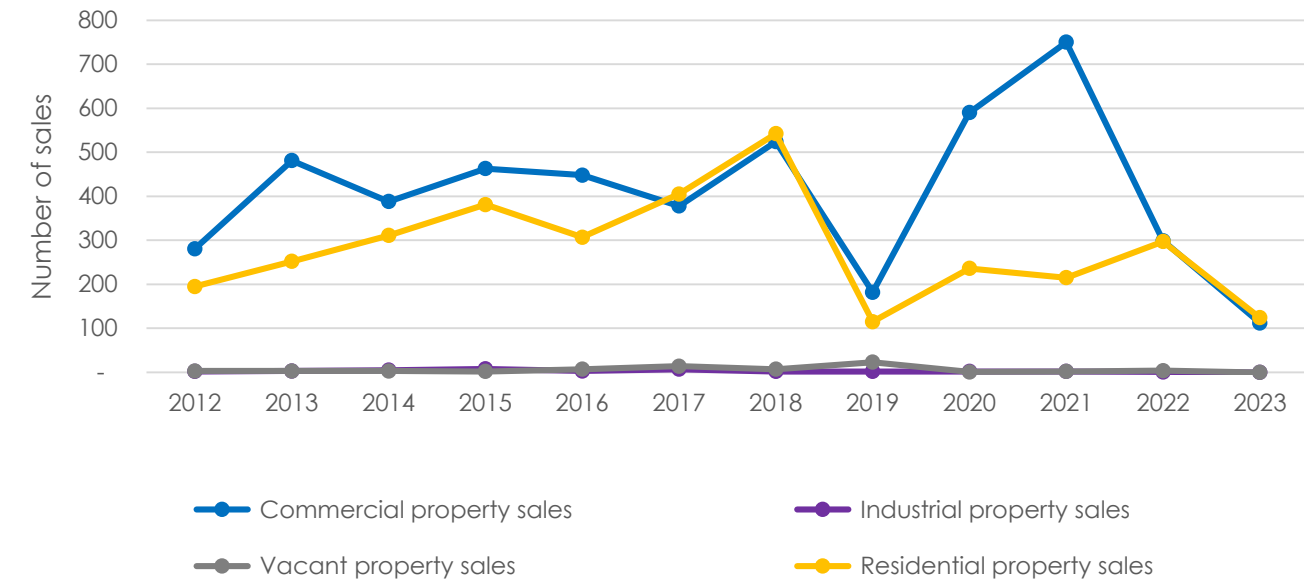


Source: SARS data extract for period between 2014 and 2023. Firm size data only available between 2014 and 2021.

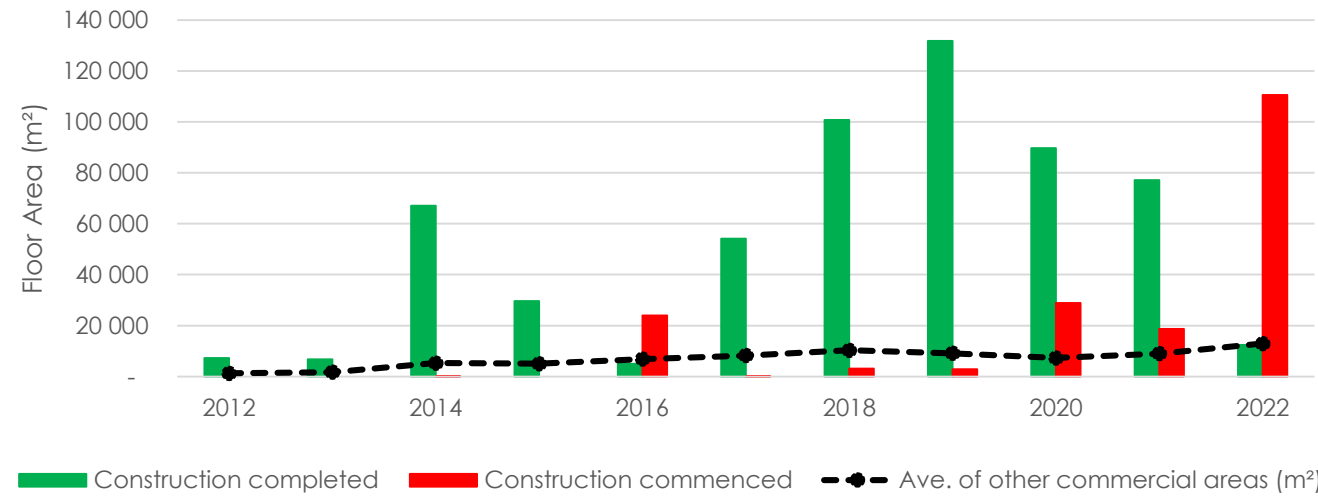
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# DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

PROPERTY SALES BY SECTOR



BUILDING WORK COMPLETED/UNDER CONSTRUCTION RELATIVE TO AVERAGE OF AREAS WITH SIMILAR CHARACTER



## Property Sales

Between 2012 and 2022, property sales for the commercial sector were higher compared to other sectors. The only exception was between 2017 and 2019, when property sales were similar for both the commercial and residential sectors and again between 2022 and 2023. While Cape Town CBD experienced an overall amount of property sales between 2012 and 2023, sales have tapered down in 2023.

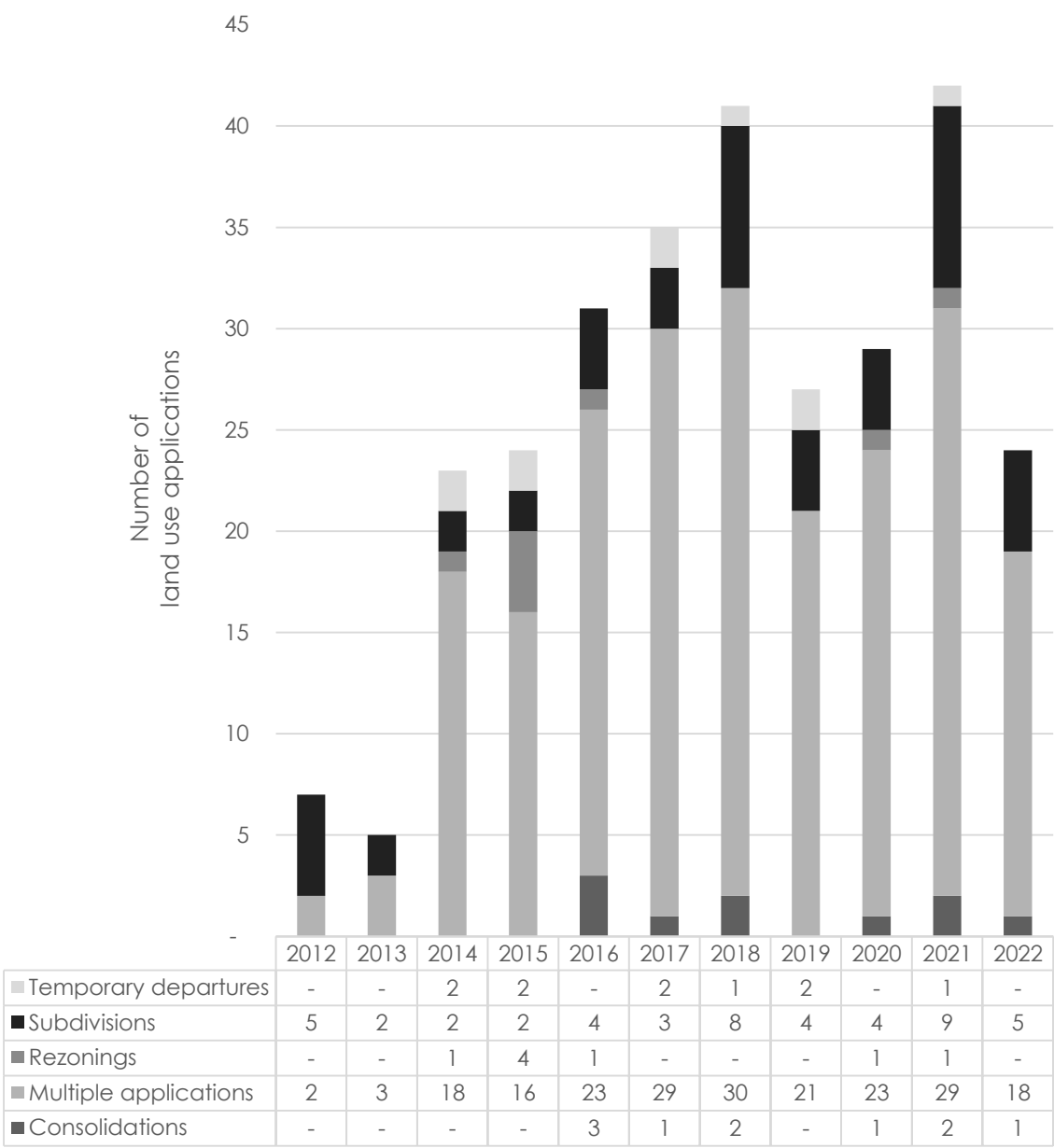
## Land Use Applications

Most approvals granted between 2012 and 2022 were for multiple applications, alongside a notable amount of subdivisions with very few rezonings. The quantum of approvals suggests a dynamic land use landscape with different types of developments or uses being permitted and considered.

## Building Plans

In support of the significant amount of property sales and land use approvals, building work activity has completely outweighed the metro's annual average building work activity when compared to other commercial areas.

APPROVED LAND USE APPLICATIONS



Source: City's DAMS (building plans and land use applications extract), General Valuation Roll.

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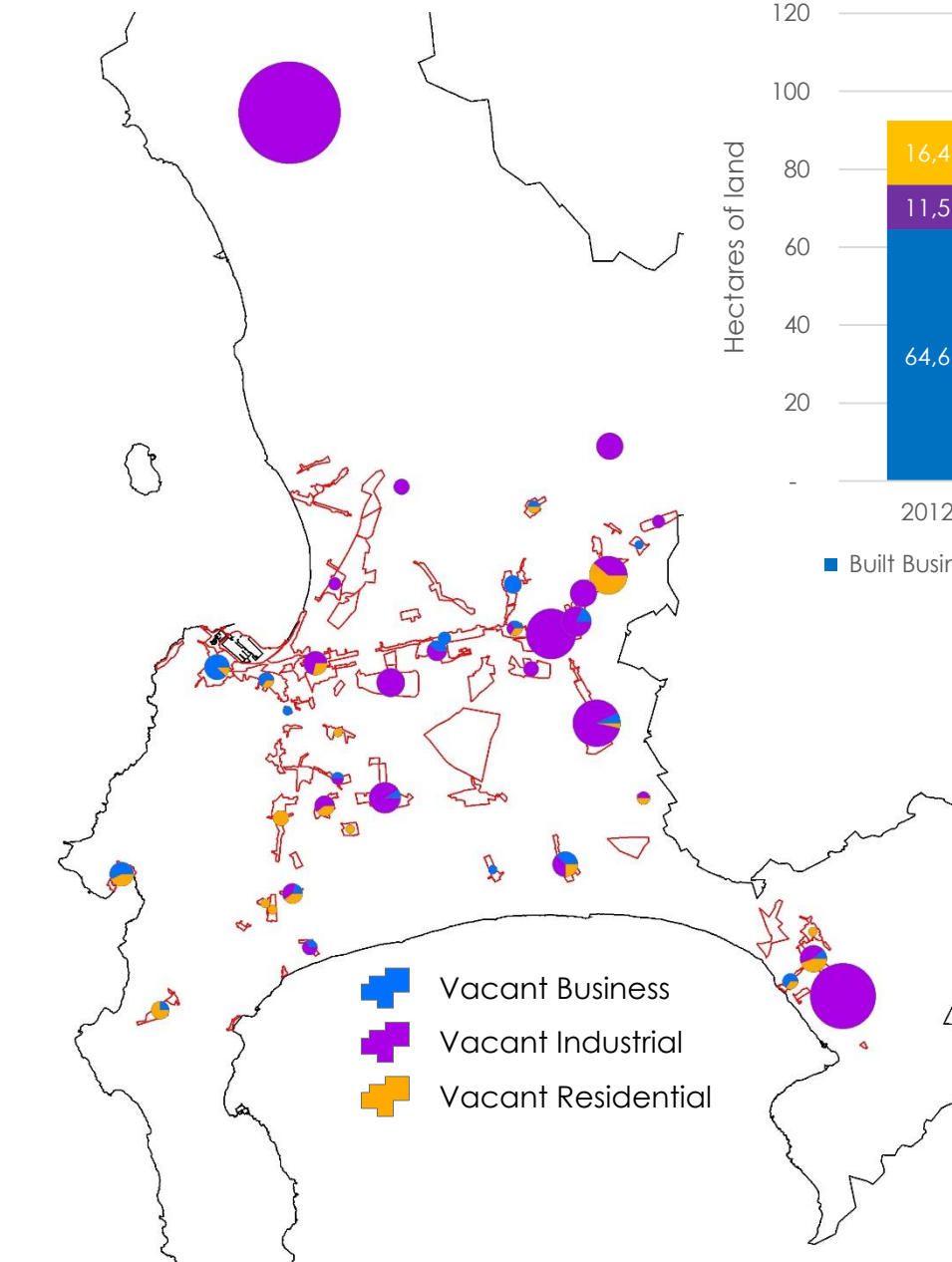
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# LAND USE CHANGE & VACANCY RATES

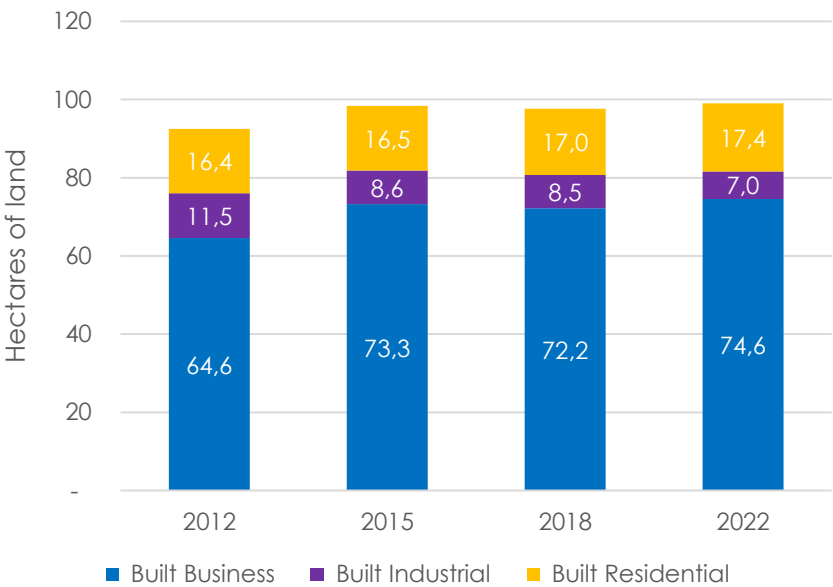
## VACANT LAND ACROSS CAPE TOWN (GV 2022)\*



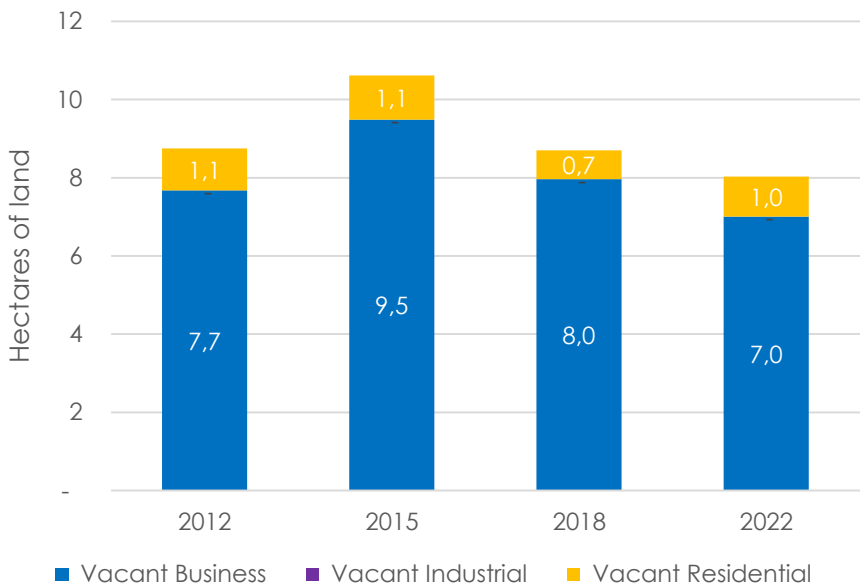
Number of land parcels that are vacant by size			
Erf Size	Commercial	Industrial	Residential
1) 1-250m <sup>2</sup>	17		12
2) 251-500m <sup>2</sup>	9		2
3) 501-1000m <sup>2</sup>	10		1
4) 1001-2500m <sup>2</sup>	11		2
5) 2501-5000m <sup>2</sup>	6		1
6) 5001-10000m <sup>2</sup>	3		
7) >10000m <sup>2</sup>			

Source: City's General Valuation Roll and Market Reports

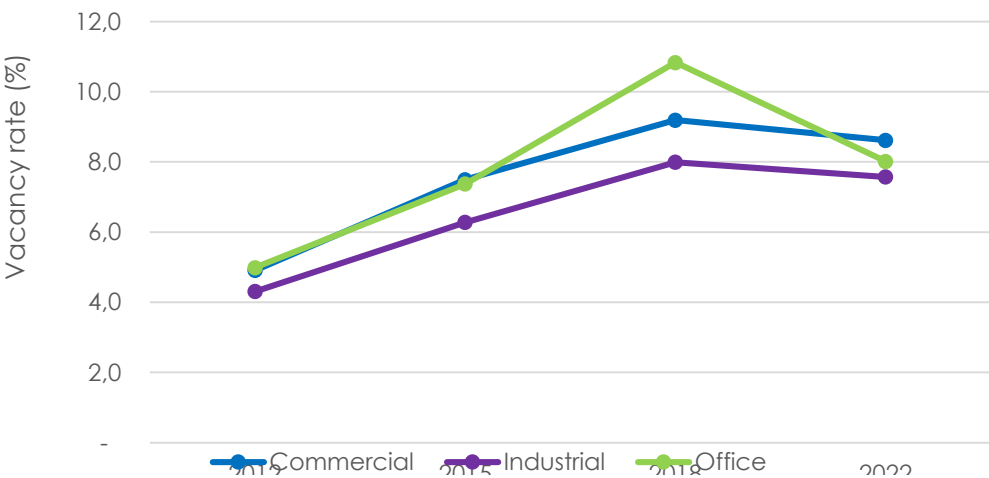
## BUILT-UP LAND EXTENT BY SECTOR (TOTAL ERF EXTENT)



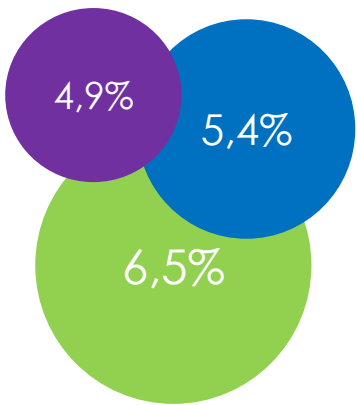
## VACANT LAND EXTENT BY SECTOR (TOTAL ERF EXTENT)



## AVERAGE VACANCY RATE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS



## METRO AVERAGE: VACANCY RATES PER SECTOR FOR 2022\*



### Vacant Land

The map illustrates the latest General Valuation Roll (2022) by showcasing vacant land across the metropolitan area. It complements the 2022 bar graph depicting available vacant land. The region has remained stable regarding built-up land, with minimal vacant land available as of 2022, indicating a well-developed commercial area. Additionally, the remaining vacant land is categorised based on the number and size of the land parcels, as reflected in the accompanying table.

### Vacancy Rates

Alongside vacant land, the vacancy rates for existing buildings in both the commercial and office sectors have increased from 5% in 2012 to 8,6% and 8% in 2022, respectively. The industrial sector also increased from 4,3% in 2012 to 7,6% in 2022.

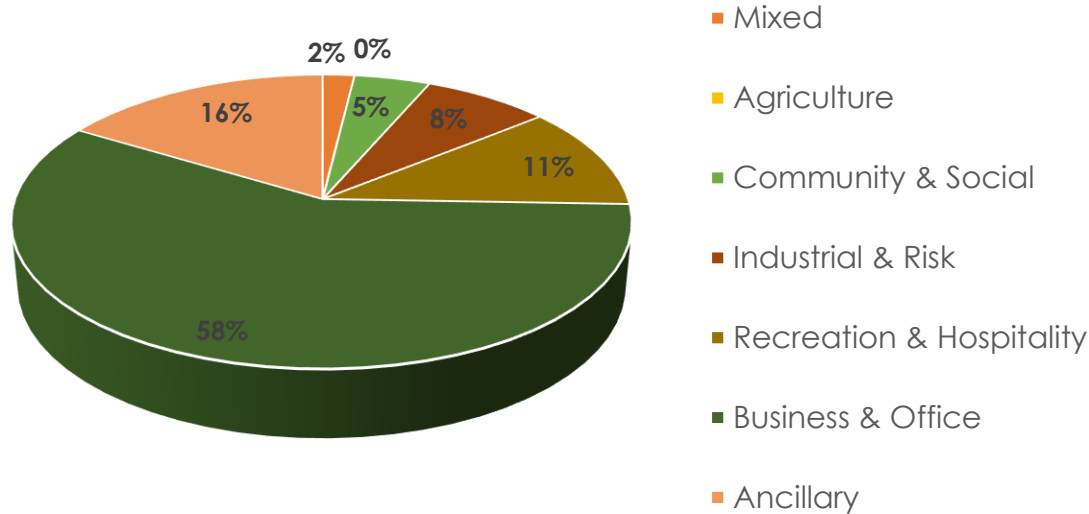
\*A metro view that provides further context relative to this economic area.

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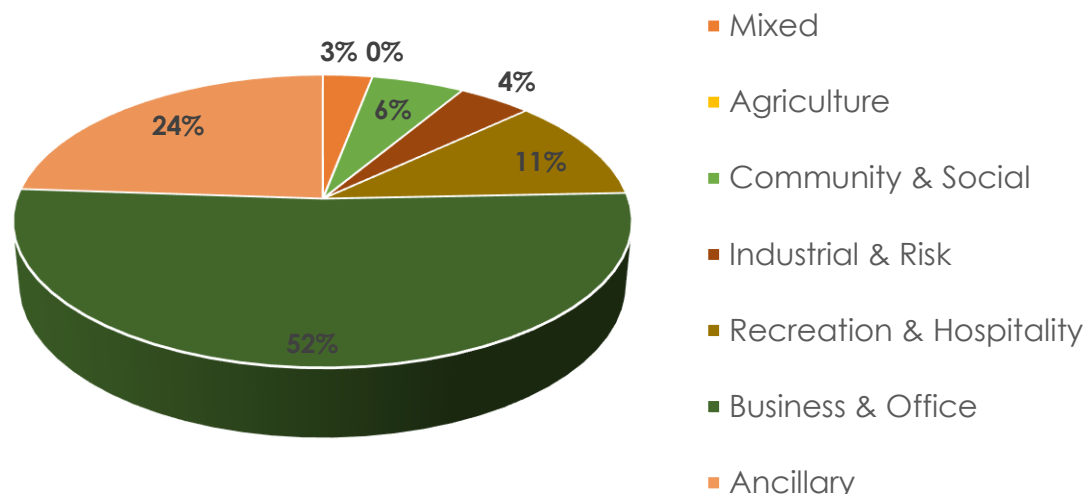
AGGLOMERATION OF INDUSTRIES

SECTORAL AGGLOMERATION AND CO-AGGLOMERATION RELATIONSHIPS

% OF LAND USE GROUPS (2012)



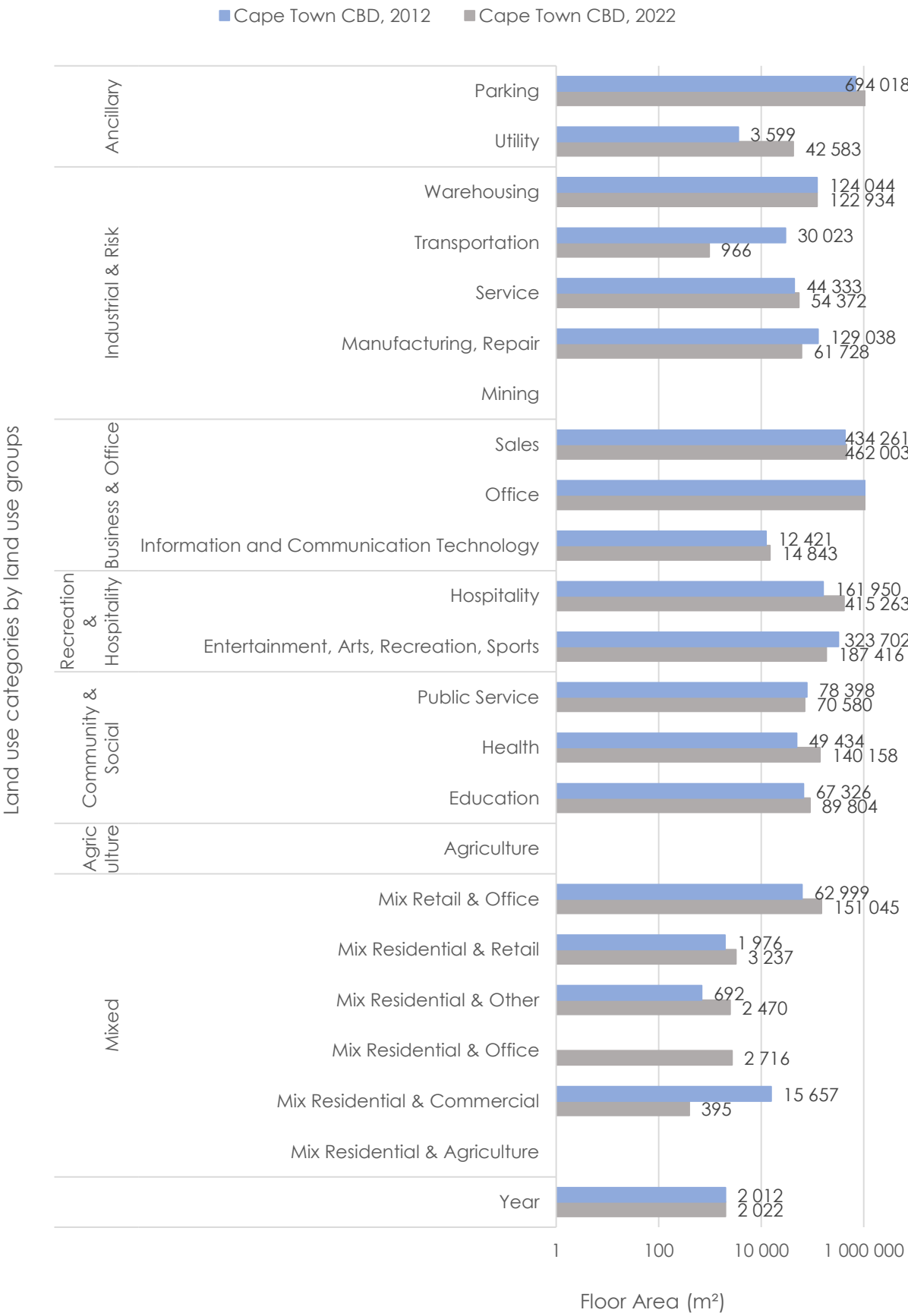
% OF LAND USE GROUPS (2022)



The pie charts illustrate the percentage distribution of land use groups in Cape Town CBD, based on the cumulative floor area (m²) across various land uses. As shown in the charts, the Business & Office group has remained predominant in both 2012 and 2022, though it experienced a slight decline from 58% to 52%.

Additionally, the bar graph provides a comparative view of the co-agglomeration of land use categories between 2012 and 2022 within each land use group. The data indicates that office space has increased beyond the 2 million floor area (m²) mark, with a number of other competitive land uses holding up between 2012 and 2022. These include sales, entertainment, hospitality and mixed retail & office. Other land uses are also present and can be seen to be in support of the most dominant land uses.

FLOOR AREA PER LAND USE CATEGORY FOR 2012 AND 2022



Source: Analysis of GV data (May 2024)

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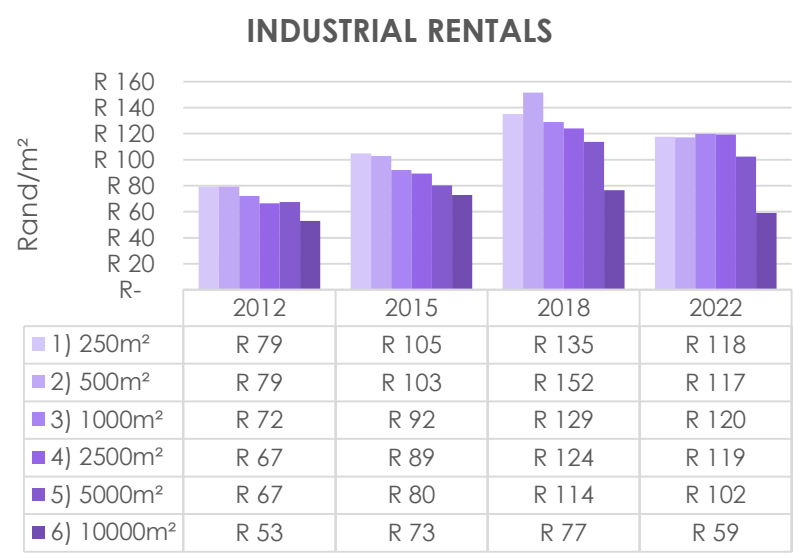
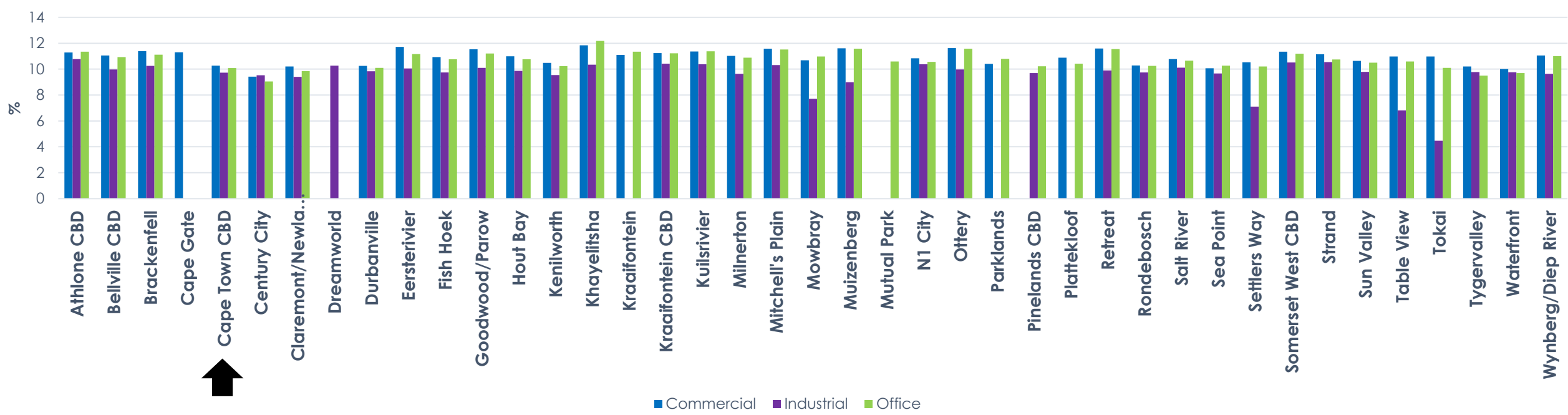
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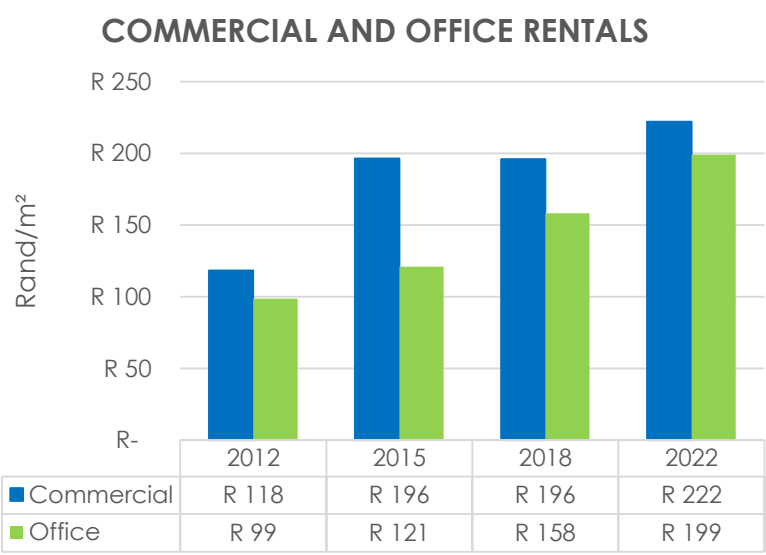
AVERAGE CAPITALISATION RATE OF CAPE TOWN CBD IN RELATION TO OTHER COMMERCIAL AREAS FOR THE PERIOD BETWEEN 2012 AND 2022



**Rental rates**

Rental rates across all industrial space gradually increased between 2012 and 2018, with higher rental prices recorded for smaller spaces. The area also experienced an overall decrease in rentals in 2022.

Both commercial and office rentals have increased significantly from 2012 to 2018, with rental prices being higher for commercial space. Both sectors experienced a decrease in rental rates in 2022.

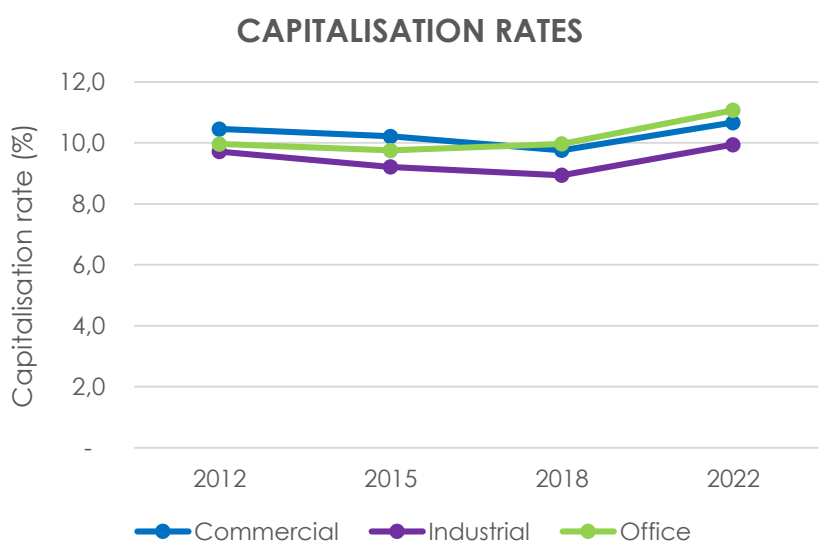


**Comparative view on capitalisation rates**

The average capitalisation rate between 2012 and 2022 for commercial, industrial and office sectors was 10,26%, 9,73% and 10,09%, respectively and further indicates its competitiveness relative to other commercial areas.

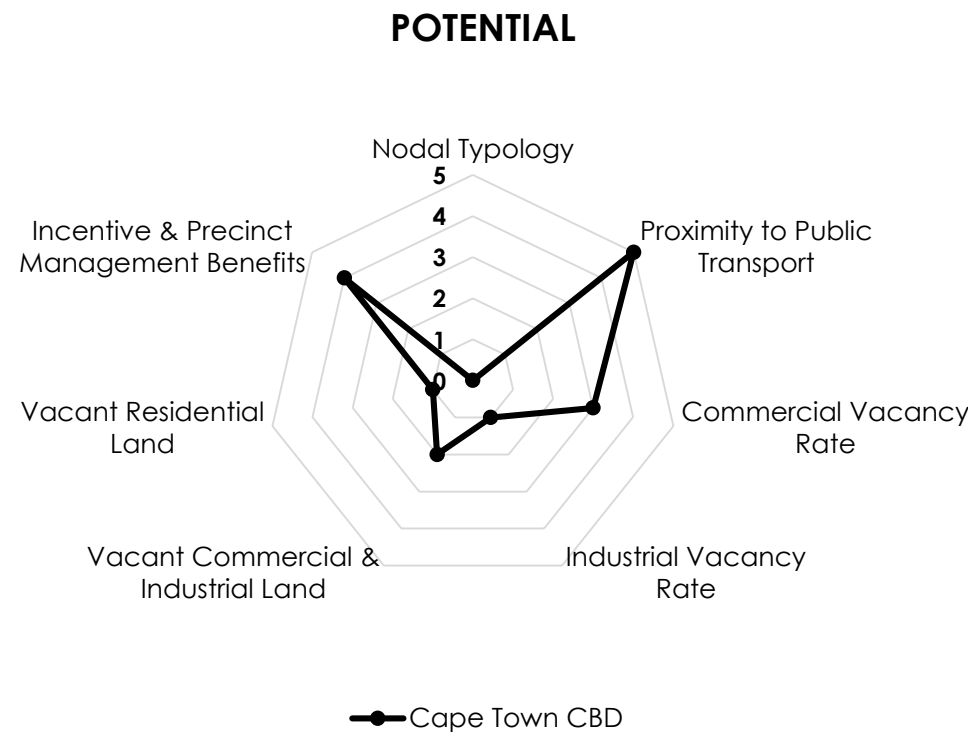
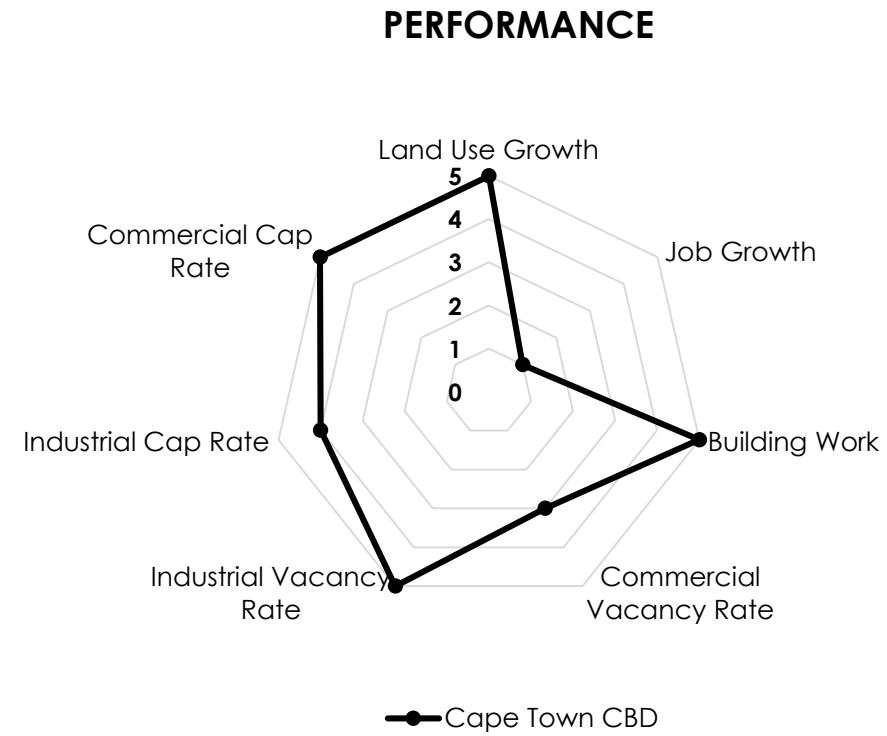
Year on year capitalisation rates for the commercial sector have fluctuated between 10,5% and 10,7% while capitalisation rates for the office sector increased from 10% to 11,1%.

- Higher cap rates = higher investment risk.
- Lower cap rates = lower investment risk.



# PERFORMANCE & POTENTIAL

The scores provided below summarise the detailed information presented throughout this profile. The method used to calculate Performance and Potential is based on several measurable individual indicators. The **scoring system ranges from 0 to 5, where 0 indicates low performance or potential and 5 indicates high performance or potential**. This profile compares either to Cape Town CBD (Commercial) or Montague Gardens (Industrial), depending on the classification of the economic area, as these two areas have attracted the most new floor area between 2012 and 2022 within their respective classifications.



Indicator		Description
Performance	Land Use Growth	Measures the growth of new floor area (m²) from 2012 to 2022 within an economic area, compared to other economic areas of similar classification. More growth indicates better performance. <b>Source: General Valuation Roll.</b>
	Job Growth	Measures the percentage change in jobs within an economic area from 2014 to 2023, comparing this data against other economic areas of similar classification. A higher job prevalence indicates better performance. <b>Source: SARS as of May 2024.</b>
	Building Work	Measures building work activity (new and improved m²) within an economic area from 2012 to 2022, compared to other economic areas of similar classification. Increased building work activity indicates better performance. <b>Source: City's DAMS.</b>
	Vacancy Rate	Measures the average vacancy rates for the commercial and industrial sectors as of 2022, compared to other economic areas of similar classification. Lower vacancy rates indicate better performance. <b>Source: City's Market Reports.</b>
	Capitalisation Rate	Measures the percentage change in capitalisation rates for the commercial and industrial sectors during the years 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2022, comparing them to other economic areas of similar classification. A lower average percentage change between these periods indicates greater maturity and consequently, higher performance. <b>Source: City's Market Reports.</b>
Potential	Proximity to Public Transport	Assess the accessibility of various public transport modes near an economic area. Greater access to multiple transport modes indicates higher potential. <b>Source: City's UPD, spatial analysis.</b>
	Vacant Land	Assess the availability of vacant land in the commercial, industrial and residential sectors. A higher amount of vacant land across these three sectors as of 2022 indicates greater potential. <b>Source: General Valuation Roll.</b>
	Vacancy Rate	Measures the average vacancy rates for the commercial and industrial sectors as of 2022, compared to other economic areas of similar classification. Higher vacancy rates indicate greater potential. <b>Source: City's Market Reports.</b>
	Incentive & Precinct Management Benefits	Evaluate the spatial overlap, whether partial or complete, of incentive areas and established precinct management tools within each economic area. A greater degree of overlap suggests increased potential. <b>Source: City's UPD, spatial analysis.</b>

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