

OVERVIEW OF VORNA VALLEY

As a fully formed suburban area, Vorna Valley is relatively young. It took shape as a suburb along with the burgeoning development of the Midrand area over the last decade or so. Under apartheid, residence in Vorna Valley was limited to whites. In terms of racial change since the end of apartheid, Vorna Valley has become increasingly mixed over the last decade, with many Africans and Indians moving in and now appearing to make up the majority of residents. Despite this diversity, there does not appear to be much interaction and integration between racial groups. However, this is not necessarily due to contention but rather a lack of institutional conditions for interaction to take place, such as active forums, sports clubs, significant retail facilities and so forth. There is a newly rejuvenated residents' association in Vorna Valley, but that is about all there is in terms of community organisations.

Economically, Vorna Valley has experienced limited change over the last decade. Businesses are limited to some run from people's homes, such as hair salons, rather than big businesses moving in or out or any new major economic activities. There are no large issues around informal trading and so forth. In terms of housing, the biggest change has been the burgeoning of townhouse complexes; as such the main types of houses are freestanding homes and complexes of townhouses. In terms of residential turnover rates, the situation is a bit mixed, but it would seem that a lot of people move into Vorna Valley, stay there for about 5 or 6 years and then upgrade. At the same time, there is also a substantial number of stable residents who have lived in the area for a relatively long time.

The main issues raised by residents in terms of services and infrastructure were the maintenance of the roads, the lack of recreational facilities such as parks and sports facilities,

poor quality policing, and most importantly, the shortage of schools in Midrand in general. The ability for public amenities such as recreational facilities to stimulate racial interaction has therefore been limited by their absence.

Interaction with government appears to be virtually non-existent and there is only limited interaction with the ward councillor. Residents other than the ward councillor were unable to provide an example of a project or initiative supported by local government that came in direct response to community demands. The ward councillor mentioned a march she had organized from the Allendale Road off-ramp to the council offices to demand that the off-ramp be upgraded, as in its then current state it used to cause a huge backup both on the freeway and Allendale Road because of its inadequate carrying capacity. She managed to organise 1,500 people, but they were all from Tembisa township rather than Vorna Valley. Otherwise, interaction with local government seems to be limited to the paying of accounts. However, the people in the council offices were very friendly and helpful.

The Community Policing Forum (CPF) seems to have limited support, with some residents indicating that it is politically affiliated, consisting only of African National Congress (ANC) members, and is ineffective. As a result, disgruntled members of the CPF formed the Midrand Community Policing Project (MCP), a Section 21 company which lobbied mainly corporate donors for funds, and to manage those funds to be used by the CPF, emergency services and so forth. This is because they believed that they could not trust the CPF to manage the funds, so they managed them but continued to work closely with the CPF.

Politically, Vorna Valley is rather uneventful. The little political activity that occurs within the community appears to be limited to voting in national and local elections. It is a

Democratic Alliance (DA) stronghold with the main division being between the DA and the ANC. The ward councillor appears to be extremely active however and residents showed a high degree of satisfaction with her.

Photos of Vorna Valley



Home with security wall





Vorna Valley Shopping Centre





Town house development



Local car wash



Housing development



Flats