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FROM TOWNSHIP TO TOWNSCAPE

Urban Renewal in Galeshewe, South Africa

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Diploma work in Spatial Planning
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Preface

This is a diploma work in Spatial Planning made by three students at Blekinge Institute of Technology in Karlskrona, Sweden. The project started in Kimberley, South Africa and was made possible through a trip that was essential for our studies, but it has also been a life experience. Many people have been involved in this project and without their help this project would not have been possible. We want to direct a special thanks to Mr. Gerhard de Bruin, Senior Town Planner at Sol Plaatje Municipality, who shared with us both his professional and personal life and made our stay so wonderful.

We also want to thank Mr. Steve Johnson, Town Planner at Borlänge Municipality, who was a good partner when talking about Swedish thoughts and values when we met in Kimberley. He later gave us the opportunity to present our work in Borlänge and we were received very well.

We also want to thank the employees at the Housing Support Centre, Steward, Gratitude, Tabs and Papi that provided us with a field office and walked many kilometres with us in Galeshewe. The employees at Sol Plaatje Municipality were very helpful and answered all our questions (over and over again) and we were very well received.

Finally we want to thank our supervisor Dr. Anita Larsson, Associate Professor at Blekinge Institute of Technology, who has helped and guided us from the very first contact with Sol Plaatje Municipality to the finalising of this report.

Karlskrona 2003-05-18
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Abstract

Galeshewe is a former township in South Africa that has been neglected for a long time. The economic activity is low and the design of the physical environment poor. The Urban Renewal Programme is an attempt to improve the quality of life in previously disadvantaged areas in South Africa. This diploma work can be seen as one part of that programme.

In South Africa one way of strengthening the economic growth is to work with the development of economic activity clusters connected through different modes of transport. In the Integrated Transport Development Plan for Capetown, eight Activity Corridors were suggested. The Galeshewe Activity Corridor was proposed by the Cape Town Metropolitan Development Corridor Team and developed by the University of Cape Town. The overall aim of our project is to strengthen the physical conditions for economic and social activities in a previously disadvantaged area. This will be done through proposals for physical development which are presented by means of illustrative material to make the proposals more understandable.

The guiding principles together with a SWOT analysis, Kevin Lynch's City Structure Analysis and today's situation in Galeshewe, have ruled the design of the proposals for both the corridor and the nodes.

The overall programme is to improve the quality of life in previously disadvantaged areas in South Africa by improving accessibility, creating new squares, providing green areas, creating new business areas, improving public spaces, improving safety and improving the physical environment.

The guiding principles are:

- Holistic planning (regarding the spatial context for new proposals)
- Better balance between different modes of transport (a switch of focus from car to pedestrians, bicyclists and public transport)
- Improve public spaces (create new squares to support economic and social activities)
- Improve accessibility (by creating new squares)
- Improve safety (create more pedestrian and public transport areas)
- Improve the physical environment (create new squares)
- Improve the quality of life (create new squares)

Along the corridor, upgrading of the streetscape through paving, tree planting and new streetlights has already started. The proposal of the corridor has in focus to create a safe street environment for pedestrians, bicyclists and public transport. The proposal for the nodes focuses on providing new squares and connecting them to existing businesses and new businesses.

The Entrance Node puts emphasis on a proposed new square placed near existing businesses. The square will be surrounded by new businesses and amenities such as a new Galeshewe museum, a new shopping mall, a new sports complex and a new community centre.

The Culture Node puts emphasis on semiformal trading and the development of a cultural village. The node's main focus has moved from existing businesses to the corridor, where the Cultural Centre is situated. Around a new car wash, a small public square in direct contact with the park and new trading is placed.

The Circle Node has a potential of becoming the centre of Galeshewe. The node development is concentrated to the area where five roads meet instead of the business area pointed out as the centre of Galeshewe. Examples of activities that can be built in this node are a cinema, a large grocery store, restaurants and offices.

The three nodes have different points of departure but are designed to work together. The corridor and the nodes together present the corridor and the nodes' potentials. The corridor and the nodes together present the corridor and the nodes' potentials.
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The project Background

The strategy taken is the development of economic activity clusters, connected through different modes of transport. This is called an Economic Activity Corridor and in Sol Plaatje municipality, six Economic Nodes have been identified. Suggestions for development of three of these have been prepaid in this diploma work.

Method

The overall study of the Galeshewe Activity Corridor and analysis of the area have been prepared by the three students. Proposals concerning the design have also been a joint work as well as a proposal for the streetscape along the Corridor.

Fieldwork was conducted for two months in South Africa. Emphasis was laid on gathering information about the situation in Galeshewe. Interviews with municipal officials and attendance at social events have been carried out. By attending social activities and visiting people’s homes we have gathered experience and a feeling of life in Galeshewe.

A study trip was conducted to Cape Town where insights in ongoing work with the corridor concept were given. Practical examples of urban development of public places in previously disadvantaged areas were also shown.

Two methods of analysis were chosen to be able to focus on different characteristics in Galeshewe. The SWOT Analysis highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the area. Kevin Lynch’s City Structure Analysis shows the physical structure of the area and relations between different elements.

The report was finalised in Sweden where inspiration from books and magazines was attained for the proposals of both the economic nodes and the corridor. A midterm seminar was conducted in Kimberley where the urban renewal programme was presented and comments were considered when finalising the report.

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Aim

The overall aim of our project is to strengthen the physical conditions for economic and social activities in a previously disadvantaged area. From Township to Townscape.

This report is intended to serve as inspiration material for Sol Plaatje municipality for further development of the Galeshewe Activity Corridor and surrounding areas. It can also be used to show investors the potential of growth that exists in Galeshewe.

Kimberley
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Galeshewe

General facts about Kimberley and Galeshewe are presented. A short historical background is viewed as well as coming- and ongoing projects in Kimberley. South Africa is divided into nine provinces and Northern Cape is the largest, driest and least populated one. Kimberley is the capital of Northern Cape and the administrative city of Sol Plaatje Municipality. The total population in Sol Plaatje Municipality is approximately 230,000 people and 212,000 of them are living in Kimberley.

The main languages are Tswana, Afrikaans and English. Analysis on the population trends indicate that the population of the municipality is decreasing. The most affected are the low income and semi-skilled people who are forced to move to large urban centres due to declining employment levels in the Municipality.

Fig 1:1. The figure shows the population distribution in Sol Plaatje Municipality.

Galeshewe is the largest residential area in Kimberley and situated in the northwest part of town. It was the major black residential area in Kimberley. Many languages are spoken in Galeshewe, most of the inhabitants speak two or more languages. Tswana and Afrikaans are the most common, but Xhosa and English are also spoken by many inhabitants. Being planned as a township, Galeshewe suffers from lacks of resources. The population income levels are low, unemployment and crime rate are high and the physical environment in the area is poor.

Map 1:3. The relation between Galeshewe and Kimberley

The lack of jobs is illustrated by the large numbers of working trips made. The total number of working trips from the southern suburbs of Kimberley are mainly due to the lack of jobs. The jobs there are mostly minimum salary domestic services such as gardening, washing and cleaning.

4 The household’s income level plays a big role for the possibilities to deliver services, in terms of both what is affordable to the consumers as well as what is sustainable for the municipality. 72% of the households in Kimberley have an income level less than R1,500/month (R1 is in May 2003 approximately 1 SEK) and 60% of the population are unemployed. A large amount of those households are situated in Galeshewe.

Kimberley has a continental climate, which means cold and windy winter with temperatures sometimes below 0°C and hot summers with temperatures over 40°C. The rain falls between 400-500 mm/year and is distributed throughout the year. Due to the small amount of rain the area is dry and the sandy soil is easily eroded. The heat during the summer makes shading important. The vegetation are characterised by different kind of Acacias and a fairly developed grass layer. The wind often comes from the north-west.

Historical background

Kimberley was founded after the discovery of the first diamond in the 1860s. In the beginning the city was called New Rush and in 1871 it was renamed after Kimberley, the home town of Lord Kimberley. The city grew fast due to the discovery of diamonds and was a major diamond producing center during the second half of the 19th century. In 1871 it had 25,000 inhabitants. The first diamond was found in 1869 in the area staked out by John and Joseph Phillips. The town was named after the Duke of London, the second Duke of Connaught.

The concept of industrial compounds, being areas especially for the workers, has its origin in Kimberley. Segregation was a major policy of the apartheid government. So by introducing “villages” for white people and “locations” for the black people the working class was divided.

One such location was the spontaneously grown residential area Greater No 2, the earliest developed part of Galeshewe. The area was named after a Tswana chief who fought the British colonialism at the turn of the nineteenth century.

After the First World War, Galeshewe was extended with new, planned areas. The street structure indicates which parts that spontaneously and which ones were planned. During 1956-1974, Galeshewe expanded rapidly as a result of the Group Areas Act to a township for black people.

Map 1:4. Historical growing pattern of Galeshewe

Two overtly segregationist measures that had impact on the spatial planning during the apartheid period were the Land Act and the Group Areas Act. Under the Land Act, the number of black households that could have access to land rights were limited to 13% of the total land surface. Due to the dependence of black labour, the white population was able to control the majority of the economic activities in the town. The Group Areas Act divided the population into mainly black and mainly white areas. The white areas were the most common, but the black areas were large and widespread.
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Part of the black community was allowed to live in townships outside the towns, in Kimberley's case Galeshewe. As a means to remove black communities living in white areas, to their own...been used in many areas to separate the different races, the Group Areas Act was devastating to a number of communities.

In 1990 the process to reform South Africa from apartheid to democracy started. The ban against ANC was lifted and the...be laid on the task of moving towards integration. In 1992 the municipalities of Galeshewe and Kimberley were amalgamated.

The first general elections in South Africa were held in 1994. After the elections in 2000...were established through fusion of Kimberley, Ritchie, surrounding commercial farms and rural areas.

The Municipality was named after Salomon T. Plaatje, one founder member of the ANC.

Plans and visions for Kimberley

After 1994, different projects have been started by the municipality in order to integrate Galeshewe with the rest of Kimberley and attain a balance in service and resources between the different areas.

The Comprehensive Urban Plan (CUP) of Kimberley, from 1998, was the first plan of its kind in Kimberley and it was conducted in collaboration with the Swedish International Development...were proposals concerning the most appropriate land use and provision of services as well as facilities are presented.

Sol Plaatje Municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) from 2002 is a continuation of the Comprehensive Urban Plan. ...is included in the constitution of South Africa. The basic needs of the community have to be prioritised to promote social and economic development in the interest of the whole population. This will be carried out through structuring and management of the administration, budget and planning process in the municipality.

The Master Plan works as a legal document for implementation of plans and new developments must agree with the plan.

In 2002 the Northern Cape Province started to build a new complex for provincial offices in the southern parts of...of activities. This could form a good base for future public transport routes connecting the different parts of the city.

Map 1: The Kimberley activity triangle.

A large housing project in Kimberley, Hull Street Integrated Housing project, is now being built east of the city centre. ...Village in Galeshewe is built as a pilot project for Hull Street, where eco-block concept is being tested in small scale.

The Corridor and Node Concept

The Activity Corridor

The strategy of Activity Corridors is to promote economic growth by integrating land use, transportation and road networks. The corridor can be a linear zone of development flanking a public transport route. Note: The land use is of a mixed nature and the objective is to get workplace, home and recreation as close together as possible and densify the area and thus optimise public transport. According to The Comprehensive Urban Plan for Sol Plaatje municipality, economic activity nodes and corridors refer to places which are...are affordable access to economic opportunities, especially for those residents outside the mainstream of the formal economy. In other words, the time has come to use the corridor concept in areas like Galeshewe to improve conditions for economic development. This will show that it is not solely the economic aspects that have an impact on nodes and their vitality.

The concept Activity Corridor has been described in the following way: "Activity corridor means a linear zone of development flanking a public transport route. Note: The land use is of a mixed nature and the objective is to get workplace, home and recreation as close together as possible and densify the area and thus optimise public transport." This explanation puts emphasis on the shape (linear) and on the opinion that optimised public transport is needed so is high density with mixed land uses. This is where other elements of the corridor, the economic activity node becomes important.
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The role of the node

The economic activity node is an area where activities are gathered.

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The role of the node

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"First identify those existing spots in the community where action seems to concentrate itself. Then modify the layout of the paths in the community to bring as many of them through the node as possible. The corridor may be small public square, and surround it with a combination of community facilities and shops which are mutually supportive."

This interpretation of the node concept implies that also public spaces play an important role for the survival and development of the node. This is an important view that has influenced us in the development of the Galeshewe Activity Corridor.

Thus we see an economic activity node as a cluster of existing activities believed to have qualities that make it suitable for a specific need. The nodes should be provided with sufficient public transportation in order to be accessible to everyone.

The Galeshewe Activity Corridor is seen as the link between the three nodes we have chosen to work with. This link is one of the major routes for public transports in Galeshewe and it connects the three Economic Nodes.

Our interpretation of the node concept is in our proposal been used to develop community facilities and shops which are mutually supportive.

Map 1: Galeshewe Activity Corridor and the three nodes in relation with the City Centre.

Fig 1: The figure illustrates envisaged development of a node.