URBAN RENEWAL IN KWAZAKHELE
Port Elizabeth, South Africa

A Minor Field Study
Diploma work for Master’s degree
at the programme of Spatial Planning
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Preface

In May 2006 we received a Minor Field Study Scholarship (MFS) from SIDA, the Swedish International Cooperation Agency. We left for Port Elizabeth, South Africa, in early October 2006 for four months of field work, returning from Port Elizabeth and South Africa in mid February 2007.

This project is our diploma work which takes place during the 5th year of our studies at the Spatial Development Program at Blekinge Institute of Technology in Karlskrona, Sweden.

Our goal with the project has been to present two proposals showing how the physical environment of Kwazakhele, a former township along the planned Khulani Corridor, can be improved by increasing density and creating well defined public spaces.

The main challenge has been to use our knowledge, gained from four years as spatial planning students, in a, for us, new context. Getting to know the area and understanding the challenges have been important in order to make proposals which meet the current needs and requirements in the improvement of former townships. We have read municipal documents, interviewed officers at different municipal departments, gotten familiar with ongoing planning projects and spent many hours in the project area. Another source of information have been the informational and inspirational talks with Kwazakhele residents.

We hope that our proposals can serve as an inspirational source for the planners and others taking part in the future development of Kwazakhele and similar areas in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality.

We value what we experienced in Port Elizabeth and what we learned, both as planners and as individuals.

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

We have carried out our projects in Kwakazhele, a former township in the northern part of Port Elizabeth. This residential area was built in the 1950’s for the black population. In line with the policies of the apartheid regime, Kwazakhele was isolated from Port Elizabeth. Today the area is a low- to very low income area and the unemployment rate is high. The area is flat and featureless and many sites are undeveloped. Due to the lack of housing, many of these undeveloped sites are used by squatters. There are few developed public places in the area, such as meeting places and parks.

Information about the project area has been gathered in Port Elizabeth during four months. Methods of analysis have been Kevin Lynch’s City Structure Analysis and a SWOT-analysis.

When moving away from apartheid, one important aspect for the municipality is to improve for various groups. Creating a bus corridor running from Central Port Elizabeth through the former disadvantaged areas in the north up to Motherwell is important for developing both integration and sustainability. The new public transport system is based on trunk busses supported by feeder buses and completed with local buses and taxi services. The main goal is to provide an efficient all day public transport service. The Corridor development focuses on high density and mixed land use as this caters for maximum use of public transport means when travelling.

Implementing the Khulani Corridor will cause changes to the urban landscape of Kwazakhele and therefore, a strategy on how this change will take place is needed to achieve holistic planning. Avoiding uncontrolled development is of great importance to the urban appearance. We want to present proposals of how development can take place in our project areas.

We have used five concepts:
- High density and densification
- Mixed use development
- Public space
- Housing alternatives
- Safety and security

The concepts have resulted in a proposal made at two levels, one overall structure of land use and two detailed proposals.

The area is to a large extent already built up. We have been working with infill housing on vacant land, unused school sites and land that today is used by squatters.

We propose an overall upgrading of the street network, creating pedestrian and bicycle lanes, connecting main attractions in the area. The overall structure of public space is improved through the upgrading of existing space and through adding new ones. New parks for recreational proposes are suggested. They are connected by tree planted streets, green links, with pedestrians and bicycle lanes creating an overall green structure.
INTRODUCTION
Short facts about South Africa

Official name: Republic of South Africa

Head of State: President Thabo Mbeki

Capitals:
Pretoria (administrative capital)
Bloemfontein (seat of high court) and
Cape Town (seat of parliament)

Population:
45 million

Area:
1,233,404 sq km
(About three times bigger than Sweden.)

Exports: Gold and other metals, diamonds, cotton, corn,
sugar, tobacco, wine, car production

Currency: Rand (R) (1 Rand= 0,95 SEK) 2007.07.27.

Official languages: English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, South
Sotho, North Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa
and Zulu

Religions: 75% are Christian. A large part of the population
also practices traditional African religions.

**Introduction to the project area**

Our project is located in the former township Kwazakhele. The area is located 10 km north of central Port Elizabeth, in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. Kwazakhele is a residential area, containing subsidy houses and hostel flats, mainly built in the 1950’s, and informal houses. The area to a large extent lacks public facilities, formal businesses and the physical environment is poor. Black people constitute the majority of the inhabitants. The unemployment rate is high.

The city structure still reflects the ideologies of apartheid planning, where residential areas for people of different races were separated through zoning by undeveloped land, creating an urban sprawl. The physical layout of the city was also segregated with different areas for housing, work and shopping.

With the new era of democracy, planning of cities in South Africa needs a new comprehensive approach. Today the municipality wants to integrate the former townships in the north by developing public facilities, public space, formal shops and other businesses and by improving public transport. The municipality is planning a new bus corridor running through the northern former townships, creating a new link into the city. New development along the corridor will generate possibilities for growth in the areas. Our work in Kwazakhele seeks to inspire the municipality by showing how the area can develop through creating a better living environment for its residents.

**Aim and objectives**

The overall aim of our project has been to propose detailed development plans for two areas in Kwazakhele, located along the planned public transport route called the Khulani Corridor. By looking at the physical structure and relevant planning documents we have made proposals how the urban environment in two areas in Kwazakhele can develop in the next 10 years. The focus has been on increasing density, creating well-defined public spaces and recreational areas. This report is intended to serve as inspiration material for the Nelson Mandela Municipality for forthcoming development of Kwazakhele, along the Khulani Corridor.
Method

The inventory of the Khulani Corridor and the area of Kwazakhele, as well as the basic conceptual ideas, has been prepared by the two of us. For the two nodal proposals detailed development plans have been carried out individually.

Maps and documents
Maps and other information were provided by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. We have studied municipal plans and guidelines as background information when familiarizing ourselves with the project area. We have also researched documents and reports carried out by the consultant firms SWECO, Matrix, NOH and Metro Plan, assigned by the NMMM.

Field Work
Fieldwork was conducted between October 2006 and January 2007 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. In the beginning of our field work, the emphasis was on gathering information about the area and on walking around in Kwazakhele to get an understanding of the area and the complex planning situation. After that an inventory was done where we registered housing conditions, social and commercial facilities, the physical layout and special features in the area. It has been important throughout the fieldwork to capture the qualities in Kwazakhele. Interviews with municipal employees and Ward Chancellors have been made as well as interviews with consultants with specific knowledge about the area. Views and hopes expressed during informal interviews with residents of Kwazakhele have been a great help towards understanding how the area is utilized and how it is looked upon by its inhabitants.

Analysis
To analyse the area we have used the SWOT analysis and Kevin Lynch’s Structure Analysis. The SWOT analysis highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Kwazakhele. It is a result of our time spent in the project area and therefore consists mostly of our own views, but also reflects thoughts and wishes expressed in interviews with the residents. The Structural Analysis puts emphasis on the physical environment and how the citizens experience their surrounding. This analysis is mainly based on our own experiences and informal talks with people living in the area, not based on focus-groups, questionnaires etcetera.

Back in Sweden
The report was finalised in Sweden between March to August 2007. A midterm seminar was conducted in May were the diploma work was discussed with our opponents and our supervisor. A final presentation was held in March 2008.
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BACKGROUND
Port Elizabeth

South Africa is a middle income country. The country has a modern market economy and a well developed infrastructure. But, so far only a minority of the 45 million South Africans can enjoy the living standard found in a developed country. Half of the population is considered poor. (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2006-06-30).

Port Elizabeth is located in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (NMMM) which is a part of Eastern Cape. The NMMM is a diverse and largely undeveloped province and consists of three urban areas, Uitenhage, Despatch and Port Elizabeth. The NMMM area has an estimated population of 1.3 million inhabitants (NMMM, 2006a, p. 11) and Port Elizabeth is the fifth largest city in South Africa. Approximately 35% of the households within the municipality benefit from Assistance to the poor and the employment rate within the NMMM is 41% (NMMM, 2006a, p.12)

Port Elizabeth, which labels itself “the Friendly City” has one of the most important harbours in the country. It is a segregated city with its more affluent communities located in the south while the less affluent communities are found in the northern parts of the city. The private car use is very high for the high and middle income earners in Port Elizabeth. This creates a gap between the private car users and the ones who cannot afford a private car. The improvement of public transport is therefore important for a big part of the population in order to reach work places, shopping and leisure activities.

The class distinctions are obvious when comparing former white areas with former black areas and the differances in standard remains. One of the main challenges for the municipality is to deliver adequate housing. Today there is a housing backlog of over 80.000 houses within the municipality. Townships in Port Elizabeth, like KwaZakhele, aslo have underdeveloped road structure, public and recreational space and lack of social services.
Map 3. Map of Port Elizabeth
Apartheid

Apartheid literally means “the state of being apart”. During the apartheid period every individual was classified by race (White, Indian, Coloured or Black) and mixed marriages were prohibited. The Group Areas Act from 1950 enforced physical separation of residential areas and the Separate Amenities Act created separate public facilities as well as separate beaches, schools, buses and separate park benches. The idea was to separate the races but still keep the black population close enough for them to be used as cheap labour. The “non whites” were moved to newly built locations, so called townships. The physical structure of the townships, with few access roads and surrounding buffer zones, was a way to control the black population.

The Natives Land Act from 1913 set aside 7.5% of South Africa’s land for black occupancy. The blacks, over 70% of the population, could not buy, rent or become a sharecropper outside such areas. Under the second Natives Land Act from 1936 13% of the land’s area was to be the home for 75% of the population. The black areas were called homelands and the idea was for them to become self-sufficient, self-governing states on the traditional land of that particular tribal group. In reality the lack of infrastructure and industry made it impossible for the homelands to produce sufficient food for the growing black population. (Else, D. & Fitzpatrick, M, 2003, p. 406)

When the National Party won the 1948 election, they won on the platform of implementing apartheid. In 1949 the ANC (African National Congress) advocated open resistant in the form of strikes, acts of disobedience and protest marches against the discriminating laws. These protests continued throughout the 50s, resulting in the banning of both ANC and PAC (Pan African Congress) which continued operating underground. It was not until 1990 that the ANC, PAC and the Communist Party were once again legalised. In April 1994 the first free elections was held and ANC has held power in South Africa since. Apartheid was abolished and South Africa presented a new constitution.

South Africa’s urban housing problem

South Africa’s urban housing problem is a consequence of the apartheid Land Act and Groups Area Act, combined with rapid urbanization during the 20th century. This has resulted in the existing housing being insufficient and people settling in shacks. These settlements, or slum, are contiguous settlements where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and lacking basic service. A slum is often not seen as an integrated and equal part of the city by the public authorities (Payne, G. & Majale, M. 2004, p. 11).

The UN-Habitat defines the following attributes for slums:
• Lack of basic services.
• Substandard housing or illegal and inadequate building structure.
• Overcrowding and high density.
• Unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations.
• Insecure tenure; irregular or informal settlements.
• Poverty and social exclusion.

In the 1950’s the South African Government commissioned the National Building Research Institute to design “appropriate” houses for black population. The main housing type proposed was a detached, 40 m², single story and single family unit. The so called Metro House was placed in the centre of a plot of 200 m². The house has two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. The houses were soon build in townships all over South Africa and created large, low density areas with in essence only one housing type.

During the apartheid period, black men often moved into the cities to get a job while the rest of the family remained in the rural area. The employers accommodated the men in hostel areas that mainly consist of single story row houses. Each room was meant for one worker but today whole families live here.

Housing delivery

When ANC won the first democratic election in 1994, they committed themselves to build one million new houses. ANC stressed that providing a home for one’s family is a great personal achievement, a source of self-worth and identity and the most important investment of a person’s life. The commitment of the South African government to subsidize access to housing acknowledges housing a basic human right (NMMM, 2007, p. 36).

“The Reconstruction and Development Programme” was published by ANC 1993-94. This manifest addresses five key problem areas of which adequate housing is one. This later became the foundation for a new founding and subsidy housing system, also known as “RDP-housing”. The RDP-houses are based on the same principle as the metro houses built in the 1950’s.

A long term goal for the NMMM is to provide adequate housing for everyone but this is a slow process with many issues involved to be solved. The subsidy housing program goes under the name Breaking New Ground, “BNG-houses” and allows for the construction cost of R37 000 (approximately 36000 SEK) per unit.

The most common tenure for subsidy houses is freehold, which means that the family gets title to the house with plot and is responsible for its upgrading. Households earning more than R 3000 per month have no access to subsidy housing in South Africa.

Former townships

Even though apartheid is abolished it takes long time to upgrade and change what the apartheid era created. Former townships often struggle with low employment rates, high crime rate and lack of services. The northern part of Port Elizabeth mainly consists of black communities with middle to very low income households. In the development of South Africa, and of Port Elizabeth, it is vital to make these former townships an equal part of the city. Building houses, improving the physical structure and public facilities, as well as creating jobs and developing public transport are key issues.
**Municipal planning documents**

VISION 2020
“The Nelson Mandela metropolitan area practises social justice in a culture of public participation guided by an efficient, accountable non-racial, non-sexist and sustainable municipality that focuses on sustainable environmental, social and economic development, improving the quality of life of its communities in a secured, safe and tourist friendly environment.” (NMMM, 2006a, p. 26)

**Integrated Development Plan 2006 (IDP)**
The Integrated Development Plan identifies the long term, preferred development of the municipality and is used to determine activities and operational plans. It covers areas such as housing, job creation, public safety, environmental issues and economic issues.

**Port Elizabeth Zoning Scheme 1989**
The Zoning Scheme gives detailed information about the land use within the municipality and contains detailed regulations about what the usage allows.

Kwazakhele is mainly zoned as a residential area with components of public service, commerce and public open space.

**Spatial Development Framework 2006 (SDF)**
The SDF is part of the IDP. The SDF has a long-term spatial planning perspective. It focuses on proactive planning and land development and management. The SDF is binding on the local authority for a period of five years. The SDF does not mention Kwazakhele specifically, apart from the redevelopment of Njoli Square (see page 21). The SDF also mentions the need of upgrading Daku Road and Mavuso Road but contains no specific details of what the upgrading includes.

The following ideas are stated in the SDF. They declare what the NMMM strives for and they are applicable in our project area.

- Central nodes. More advanced services would be conveniently found in the local centre or in the main commercial centre of the community. In many cases this would be located at the transport node where public transport, private vehicular traffic and main pedestrian walkways meet.

- Local economic development through urban agriculture and organized market places located near central nodes or along activity corridors.

- Improve public transport and create public transport corridors. Public transport within an activity corridor would move at a speed adjusted to the surrounding environment with frequent stops to achieve convenience and accessibility.

- Activity corridors to promote a more dynamic and flexible use of central areas.

- Densification in order to create a sustainable and efficient city and limit the outer urban development in order to reduce further urban sprawl.

- Improve street network and accessibility with focus on pedestrians.

- Mixed use development to improve functional integration and create better accessibility, variety and flexibility.

- Mixed housing types and tenure options to encourage socio-economic, cultural and ethnic integration. Different housing types and designs cater for different preferences and means, and enhance neighbourhood variety and character.

- Incremental housing; a core house is developed to meet basic needs but with possibilities for extension.

- Housing delivery for people living in informal and inadequate houses.

- Crime prevention through natural surveillance and design.

**Sustainable Community Planning Guide 2007**
The municipality has created an elaborated guide for urban spatial planning principles. It focuses on how to create more integrated and sustainable cities. This is an intermediate level planning instrument which gives many practical examples of how these can be applied in practice. In the sustainable communities model the focus is put on the needs of the household and the local community. The main idea is to create sustainable community units, based on the following principles:

- Based on walking distance from centre to periphery 30 minutes or ± 2 km.

- Mixed use development combining housing, business, services, workplaces and recreational areas.

- Housing clusters. In the cluster area there should be a sequence of open spaces which can be private, semi-private, semi-public and public to promote a sense of identity.
• Public open space. Access to both local public space within the housing cluster as well as on a community level with major sport fields, larger parks and natural open areas.

• Urban agriculture within the housing cluster or on communal plots.

• Flexibility – adapted to existing local conditions.

• Focus on pedestrian movement and cycling. The network of pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths would connect the housing clusters with main service facilities, employment areas and public transport.

National corridor and node concept

In 1999 the National Department of Transport created a national strategic development plan for the transport sector for the next 20 years. In the project called “Moving South Africa” a strategy with high-density and mixed use development along key public transportation routes was introduced and encouraged (NMMM, 2006b, p. 2). The intention is to reduce travel time and costs, to improve access to facilities by using public transport, to increase density along the corridor and to build a more sustainable city. The idea is that by creating a public transport corridor economic growth will be promoted. High-density development corridors are considered to contribute to sustainable public transport and are therefore given a high priority in the Integrated Development Plans and the Integrated Transport Plans of major cities in South Africa (NMMM, 2006b, p. 1).

Today a large part of the white population of South Africa is dependent on private car ownership while many others cannot afford to buy a car. Since South African cities are built for car use, people without car access are limited in their ability to move around. The activity corridor is intended to improve the mobility and accessibility for a lot of people without access to private transport and thereby also increase the activity along the corridor. This will create business opportunities.

Node

The node concept is central in the development of the corridor. A node is an area where activities are gathered. The activities can be of both economic and community purposes. The node can also be an important interchange for transport.

Creating activity nodes along the corridor can improve the community and the life in the area¹.

The Khulani Corridor

Background

In 1997 the South African Roads Board approved a demonstration project, a transport/land use development corridor, to be implemented in Port Elizabeth. The NMMP then identified the Korsten- New Brighton- Motherwell axis as the corridor with the most potential for development (NMMM, 1999, p. 5). The corridor was named the Khulani Corridor, which, in Xhosa, means “to grow and prosper together”. The planning principles adopted for the corridor aim to promote maximum utilization of land at prominent locations along the corridor to encourage development of business and commerce in major junctions to promote the development of existing and new nodes.

Along the Khulani Corridor mainly Korsten and Njoli Square are seen as major nodes due to the formal and informal businesses operating within these areas. Njoli Square will be an important activity node for the northern part of Port Elizabeth.

Current situation along the Khulani Corridor

The Khulani Corridor runs through former townships and low density communities of New Brighton, Kwazakhele and Motherwell. These are significant destinations along the transport axis radiating to the north of Port Elizabeth. The Khulani Corridor also runs through Korsten, a developed industrial area bordering to the commercial area of central Port Elizabeth. Korsten is the focus of commuter travel from the surrounding low/middle income dormitory suburbs. (NMMM, 2006b, p. 7)

Walking is the most common mode of travelling in Motherwell, Kwazakhele and New Brighton. Private cars still play a minor role within the residential areas along the corridor. About 130.000 trips a day are served by public transport, mostly with minibus taxis, within the corridor, this is almost one third of the public transport trips within the municipality. (NMMM, 2006b, pp. 12-14)

¹ Interview with Claire Holderness, Traffic Engineer at NMMM, 1st of December 2006.
Map 4. The Khulani Bus Corridor
Visions and goals

In the Sustainable Development Framework from 2006 the NMMM declares that the vision for the Khulani Corridor is to develop a corridor with vibrant social and economic activity, spanning across the artificial barriers left behind by apartheid, and thereby enhancing the integration and unity of all citizens of Port Elizabeth. The main goal is to provide an efficient all day public transport service. The system should create an interaction where land use and transport system support each other in a way that stimulates the use of public transport and improves access to work, commerce and business. This should encourage business development in the area which will stimulate economic uplift of the area as a whole.

This is in line with the national policy on corridor development, which focuses on high density mixed land use as this caters for maximum use of public transport means when travelling (NMMM, 2006b, p. 1). The intention is to have the Khulani Corridor in place prior to the 2010 Soccer World Cup event, or, if possible, by 2008.

The population along the corridor, located within 500 meters of the supposed trunk bus route stretching from Motherwell to the CBD is approximately 200,000 inhabitants. There are 64,000 work opportunities located within the same area. The hope is that the corridor will develop to accommodate 220,000 inhabitants and 80,000 work places in year 2020. (NMMM, 2006b, p. 13)

The Khulani Development Corridor Report states that the future improved household economy means more people travelling to and from work. People who at present cannot afford to travel will possibly start using public transport when it becomes more accessible and cheaper. The municipality also estimates that the number of travels within the corridor area will increase from the present 130,000 trips a day to approximately 200,000 by the year 2020. In order to provide a good public transport the trunk buses will depart every five minutes during rush hour.

Need for planning within the corridor

The implementation of the Khulani Corridor will cause changes to the urban landscape of Kwazakhele and therefore, a strategy on how this change will take place is needed to achieve holistic planning. To avoid uncontrolled development is of great importance to the urban appearance\(^2\). In our proposals we will show how this development can take place along the new corridor. It is important to design bus stops that are accessible. The bus stops have the potential to become nodes and thereby promote economic activity.

A certain density within the corridor area is needed to support the new public transport system and create a base for new businesses and job opportunities. The NMMM estimates a density of 40-60 units/ha to support the corridor. With more people moving around, it is likely that the inhabitants will take advantage of this and it is important to provide good solutions for how this can be done, this includes providing a good basis for a home based businesses.

\(^2\) Meeting with Gustaf Asplund, Urban Advisor at SIPU International AB Swedish Institute for Public Administration, 2006-10-06.