THE PROJECT AREA
-BLOEMENDAL
Booysen Park was the first part of Bloemendal that emerged. It was planned for coloured people in 1980 when the apartheid system still existed. Today Booysen Park is classified as a low-middle income area in the Metro. Across Chatty River Valley in the south-east part of Bloemendal the area is called KwaNoxolo, which means peace. The name origins from the time it was planned, 1994, after the new constitution. KwaNoxolo is today a low income area. In the year 2000 the municipality started to extend Bloemendal in the north-west direction and a new part that is called Chatty was built. (NMMM, 2005a)

Below we present some of the material we documented about Bloemendal during our visits to the area together with material from documents of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality.

**Topography**

The topography in Bloemendal is shifting. The difference in levels between the lowest point and the highest point is about 40 meters. Chatty River flows through the area and the river valley institutes a physical barrier. KwaNoxolo is situated on one of the hills and Booysen Park is situated on the other.

There are great risks that the low areas in Bloemendal get flooded; according to the hundred-year flood line. The topography therefore makes large parts of Bloemendal unsuitable for development. In the south-west mountains limit the development in that direction.
View over Bloemendal with marked flood line (blue) and main roads (NMMM 2005d)
Traffic

Today there are two arterials feeding the area; Standford Road and MR448. Standford Road goes between Port Elizabeth city centre and Bloemendal where it ends in Booysen Park. The MR448 goes between Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth. This is the main road from Bloemendal to Uitenhage today.

The main roads in KwaNoxolo are Mpuko Street and Lingelihle Road and in Booysen Park the main road is Booysen Park Drive. William Slamert Drive has presently been extended through Chatty River Valley and function as the main connection between KwaNoxolo and Booysen Park. On these roads cars often drive fast even though there are houses right next to the street where children are playing. Some efforts have been done to slow down the traffic; such as speed bumps on Mpuko Street.

The local roads in KwaNoxolo are of different standard, some have asphalt and others have gravel. The developed part of Chatty do not have asphalt just gravel. The reason for this is probably that it is so newly built and that there will be asphalt eventually. The street system in KwaNoxolo is of grid structure. In Booysen Park cul-de-sac streets are common. The cars can not drive through but the pedestrians can walk through, this makes the speed on the local streets low.

Most people in the area do not have access to a car, but the streets are adjusted more for cars than pedestrians. There are hardly any sidewalks or other ways for the pedestrians to get around the area in a safe traffic environment. Cyclists hardly exist. Through Chatty River Valley and other open spaces informal tracks have developed.

Many of the inhabitants in Bloemendal have to depend on a reliable and effective public transportation. Bus stops are found along Booysen Park Drive but there are hardly any buses to be seen. The most used transport is minibus taxis with routes along Booysen Park Drive and in KwaNoxolo along Mpuko Street and Lingelihle Road. The Minibus taxis go to Port Elizabeth with one change on the way. They go during the whole day but the traffic is more concentrated during mornings and afternoons. The minibus taxis are expensive and limits the inhabitants in Bloemendal to go out from the area. A trip to central and back costs as much as some of the lowest paid jobs pays per day. This affects the unemployment in the area because people can not afford to go in to the city for jobs.
THE PROJECT AREA - BLOEMENDAL

TRAFFIC

- Boosyn Park Drive
- Mouko Street
- Linglethle Road
- Standford Road
- cherry River
- MR448
Housing

The overall dwelling quality in Bloemendal is high, over 84% of the households live in formal dwellings of various quality. 16% of the families live in informal houses, so called shacks. (NMMM 2005a)

Booysen Park consists of low and middle income housing. There is a mixture of houses in the area; single family houses and attached houses. The houses give the area character and identity as they are painted and vary in shape.

KwaNoxolo consists mainly of so called RDP-houses provided by the government through The Reconstruction and Development Program. The houses are monotonous; built of grey concrete bricks and very few of them are plastered.

Chatty is built with so called Metro houses and that is produced by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (NMMM). They are an upgraded version of the RDP-houses. There are only single family houses in the area and the houses are painted in different bright colours.

Informal settlements are most common in the outskirts of Bloemendal but there is a small village of shacks in the storm water channel in KwaNoxolo. Along the slope of Chatty River Valley some informal houses have been built. This area could be built with formal houses; there is no risk for flooding according to the hundred year flood line. The reason for it to not be built with formal houses yet are that the existing sewer system is higher up and that it would cost too much to build another one.

It must be a priority to move the families into houses provided by the municipality and take away the shacks. The storm water channels get flooded every time there is a major storm and heavy rain and the shacks risk to be washed away. There have already been accidents in the area with fatal outcome in similar situations.

In the south part of KwaNoxolo some formal shacks can be found. They are called formal as they are built on a piece of land that the family owns and they are waiting for their Metro house to be built.

1 Mr Mark Hogan employed by NMMM
THE PROJECT AREA - BLOEMENDAL

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Chatty

Boylesen Park

KwaNnoxolo

Bethelsdorp

0 500 1000 Meters

Informal settlements
Public Place

There are not many developed public places where people can meet. It is mostly the streets that function as public places. Otherwise people meet in semi-public or private places like the local taverns or their own homes.

There are a lot of undeveloped public places in Bloemendal that are not used for any purpose. Four of them are planned for schools, but in the current situation there are no plans to develop them because of the lack of money. Now people use them for dumping garbage or pasture for livestock that is kept in the area.

There are hardly any arranged playgrounds in Bloemendal. And those few that do exist are poorly equipped; for example there are no swings in the swing sets. The playgrounds are poorly connected to other functions like the dwellings in the area and they can be vandalised without anyone seeing it. There is no place for the adults to sit and watch their children play. The playgrounds are not safe for the children, the equipment is often broken and the ground is hard to fall on. The playgrounds are not used during dark hours because there are no lights and parents do not feel safe having their children outside. Instead of using the playgrounds the streets in KwaNoxolo and Chatty is used. In Booysen Park many of the families own play equipment in their own yards. The schools in Bloemendal have large areas for sport and play but they are not open for the children after school hours.

There are two major public sport fields in Bloemendal; one in Booysen Park and one in KwaNoxolo. These places are well used by the inhabitants in Bloemendal.

Bloemendal is rich of vegetation, especially in Chatty River Valley along the storm water channels. These areas are not utilized for recreational purposes. Mainly people use them for dumping garbage or just as shortcuts through the area. Sometimes during the summer people use Chatty River for swimming this is not risk free, we have been told that one person has drowned there. The storm water channels functions as transportation of rainwater from the residential areas to the river in the valley.
The project area - Bloemendal

Services

A large centre in Booysen Park is under development. Today the centre consists of a community centre, a library, a church, a petrol station and a clinic. The community centre functions as a place for people in the area to get together. KwaNoxolo does not have a community centre but the area is known for the big sport centre that is called Gorge Botha Community Sports Centre. The Sport centre is used by people in Bloemendal but it also hosts sport events like school tournaments. It has the function of a community centre in KwaNoxolo where people can meet and arrange different events; for example weddings, parties and meetings.

A large supermarket is located in central Booysen Park and another one for bulk shopping in KwaNoxolo in the cross section between William Slamert Drive and Mpuko Street. A few small supermarkets and a butcher are to be found in KwaNoxolo. Informal businesses in the area are quite common; people sell goods, mostly fruits and vegetables, in their own houses and from hawker stalls that are put up along the streets.

There are four primary schools in the area; one in KwaNoxolo and three in Booysen Park. In Booysen Park there is also a secondary school located. The children from KwaNoxolo are not attending the secondary school in Booysen Park, they have to go further away to surrounding areas. A Technical college, part of the University of Port Elizabeth is located about 5 kilometres from Bloemendal.

Booysen Park is well known for all the churches in the area. Nine churches are located here. In KwaNoxolo one large church building is to be found but there are a great number of churches in informal buildings.

In KwaNoxolo and Chatty there are no postal service; people living there have to fetch their mail at the nearest post office in Booysen Park.

The nearest fire station and police station is located in Bethelsdorp about 5 kilometres from Bloemendal. The police are also frequently patrolling the area by car.

In Booysen Park we found four surgeries and one clinic. The surgeries are situated along the main street in private residents. People in KwaNoxolo and Chatty go to the clinic in Booysen Park.