High density housing, main centre and activity park in Booysen Park – detailed plan proposal by Sara Eresund

With the overall proposal and with its concepts in consideration I aim to show how high density housing close to a bigger centre can be organised with its benefits of nearness to services and public transport. My suggestion will focus on how to place the houses to create a pleasant and safer environment. Creating exciting public places that can be used for different purposes and in different times of the day. I suggest different types of housing to attract different kinds of people to the area. Focus will also be on pedestrian and cyclists and how to make the area and the new centre easy accessible for them. In the centre there will be a mixture of functions so the area is active also after dark. The activity park will be planned with different functions to attract people of different ages.

Inventory and analysis

The planning area is limited by William Slamert Drive in the north-east, Booysen Park Drive in the south-east, Standford Road in the south-west and a new main road, which is suggested earlier in the plan proposal, in the north-west direction.

The area consist today of an open space with grass and low bushes. Along Booysen Park Drive there are some existing houses that will remain. Booysen Park Community Centre is located in the planning area and which together with a clinic, a library and a petrol station forms a small centre. The centre has possibilities for development to a bigger centre that can serve whole Bloemendal. The part of the planning area that is marked as node for activity in the overall plan proposal consists today of one part that is undeveloped public place and one part that is a football field.

Important public service nearby the planning area are two schools and a church. As can be seen in the earlier analysis informal tracks go through the area marked as node for activity. It shows that this is an important path in the area today.

The area has a strategic location in Bloemendal with nearness to Standford Road which is going to be developed as a main link between Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. A bigger bus station is planned in connection with Booysen Park Centre and gives opportunities for the new housing area to be developed with high density housing.
The project area in Booysen Park
**Green areas**
The green links and the railway reserve that is suggested in the existing plans will be kept and function as a green space in the area and link the big open green spaces in Bloemendal to the activity park. The green areas will be important paths for pedestrian to move towards the centre and the bus station and also for the people in the area to connect to the surrounding recreational areas. A pedestrian and cyclist road will be going through the railway reserve and the area will be arranged with trees and plants along the road and will be well lit so it feels safer during night. Especially important to make safer is the part between the centre and the new bus station that is located along Standford Road.

**The activity park**
The area marked as arranged public place and as a node for activity will function as an activity park for Bloemendal and surrounding areas. The area will generate activities for people of different ages and gender. There will be space for activities like football, volleyball, basket, pools for swimming and activities for smaller children. This will make the area lively the whole day and bring people together. The suggestion is just a principle for how the area could be organized.
Functions and important link through the area
PLAN PROPOSAL

Traffic
The roads in the area will be of a grid structure for an easy orientation and to create meetings among people in the public place. The grid structure provides them alternative ways of moving; which creates a safe feeling. The pedestrian and cyclist roads will be well lit and connected to all goals in and around the area, like the schools, activity park and the new bus station. The streets for cars will also give opportunities for alternative ways but is not as convenient as the pedestrian and cyclist roads. Because the housing blocks will be free from cars and just the pedestrian and cyclist roads will lead through them.

The most important link through the area will be between the new bus station and the activity node and school in the north. That is already an important direction of moving through the area today. This link will be developed as an pedestrians and cyclists path. Along this road multi-family houses will be placed to create a closed traffic enviroment. The road will have different attractions on the way to make it interesting and to make people stop in the public places. In the centre there will be a square and along the street in the housing area there will be two small squares for informal business, where the inhabitants can sell their goods. Then the link will connect to the green link and a park. When crossing car roads the road for pedestrian and cyclist will have precedence. This will be done through a different material in the crossings and the pedestrian and cyclist roads can be on a higher level.

Parking
The small blocks with attached houses and the blocks with multi-family houses will have their parking lots in connection to the street to make the space between the houses free from traffic. It will be easy to control and see the cars from the houses. The semi-detached houses will have parking on their own sites. In the whole housing area there will be approximately 0, 5 parking lot/household. There is almost no need for parking space in this area today but there is likely to be a demand in the future.
Housing and connection to the important link
Housing
In the area there will be both apartments for rental and high-density houses provided through the municipality. There will be a mixture of house types (presented earlier in the report) and dwelling sizes to attract different kinds of people. There will be both attached houses placed in different ways and “Imizi” houses (multi-family houses). The existing single-family houses in the area will be saved as they look today. The empty sites between them will be filled with new houses in the same style.

The new houses will be placed with the entrance facing the street and the facades close to the street to create a narrow street space. Such a street gives a feeling of security. To create good public places and feeling of security in the area, houses are placed in small groups with a semi-private area in the middle. This area will function for play, sport, braai (South African barbeque), cropping and other needs from the people living around it. The use of this space will support the neighbourhood to take care of their yard. In the area there will also be semi-public places for the smaller blocks to share. These places will be easy accessible lying in the pedestrian and cyclist routes. And they will function for large barbeques or meetings.

Along the important link there will be multi-family houses in two or three stories in a block structure with possibilities to have businesses on the ground floors. The houses will consist of apartments of different sizes for rent or to buy. A well functioning public transport is important for the people living here. The benefits will be that they have everything close; for example the bus station, services, parks and schools. The houses will be placed so they form small squares where informal business can take place. This will also make the link through the area more interesting and used by people from the whole Bloemendal.
Detail of the block structure
Booysen Park Centre
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality has plans for an extension of the centre in Booysen Park. My proposal is an idea of how the area can be developed. The Booysen Park Community Centre and the library will be kept as they are today. The clinic will be moved to the part where the community centre is located because of the space the large mall needs. The petrol station, that today lies in the central part of the area, will be moved to a better location along the main transport route Standford Road.

New buildings are placed in connection to the community centre and the library to form a square. Around the square the houses can hold services like post, bank, restaurants, pubs and cafes. The station for the trunk buses will be located along Standford Road and the important pedestrian and cyclist path will connect to the station.

In the central part of the area there will be a mixture of housing and commerce. Along the main roads there will be possibilities to have different kinds of stores, cafes and other services in the bottom floors of the multi-family houses. It is important also after dark that people feel safe in the streets; the ground floors will consist of different facilities that are open different times during the day. In the evenings there can be cafes and restaurants or pubs that will be open.

The mall will have several entrances both from the “railway reserve” and from the parking site. The mall will keep functions as food stores, clothes stores, gym, workshops, cinema and other culture functions. Different functions make it possible to have the mall open more hours a day so the area does not feel empty and unsafe. The parking space for the mall will be located in the north part where it also will be place for a delivery central.
Detail of Booysen Park Centre
3D (Three Dimensional) view over the whole area