Traffic and streets

Traffic
The car is the prioritised mode of transportation in Kimberley but the most common used mode is walking. The car ownership rate is concentrated to the prosperous southern suburbs where the access to cars is several times higher than in the former townships. In these highly populated townships, where most people do not have access to cars, walking combined with bicycling and mini-bus taxis are the main modes of transportation. The relatively short distances, flat landscape as well as the warm and dry climate creates good conditions for walking and bicycling.

Transport by private mini-bus taxis is the main mode of public transport in Kimberley. The mini-bus taxis have fixed routes between the former townships and the CBD which makes it very difficult to go by taxi from one suburb to another. The dependency of cars increases as Kimberley grows and people’s income increase. To prevent this development, more efforts have to be made on improving conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists and also public transport.

Street network
The widespread residential areas and wide carriageways for vehicles in the CBD and the prosperous areas show how the city structure is built on the usage of cars. The situation in Galeshewe and the other former townships is somehow different, with just a few access routes and not as wide carriageways.

The major streets in the city have multiple lanes and are divided by traffic islands. Large parking areas are provided in the CBD and at shopping centres in the suburbs, and in the central part of the city it is also possible to park along the streets.

Walking in Kimberley is difficult and unsafe since the sidewalk system is insufficient. In some streets there are no sidewalks at all and where there are they are often narrow and paving is missing. In some places residents have paved and planted the sidewalks which force the pedestrians to use the car lanes. The wide streets also make it difficult for pedestrians to cross them, and the robots prioritise car traffic.

Bicyclists are also forced to use the car lanes since there are very few bicycle lanes in the city, this also makes bicycling very unsafe and difficult. The existing bicycle lanes can only be found along some of the main routes within Galeshewe. These are planned to be extended in the near future, but only to the outskirt of CBD.
A number of secondary streets pass the Big Hole precinct and connects to the main street network, this gives the project area good accessibility. These secondary streets are amongst the few streets that connect Galeshewe to the CBD and the rest of the city. The streets around the project area are in good condition except for the loose material blowing from the mine-dumps on to the streets.

**Movement**

The major type of movement in Kimberley is work trips from Galeshewe to CBD and the southern suburbs in the mornings and back in the afternoons. According to the Comprehensive Urban Plan (CUP), CBD is the most prominent destination of these two, with approximately 63% of all work trips from Galeshewe. Almost no work trips are made to Galeshewe from the southern suburbs and the CBD due to its limited number of work opportunities. The limited number of attractions in Galeshewe also reduces the number of trips in this direction.

The main movement to and from Galeshewe is concentrated to the few access streets leading in and out of the township. The main access route in and out of Galeshewe is today only a secondary street. The great concentration of traffic on this street can often cause problems with accessibility and safety. In the southern suburbs a larger number of secondary streets connect to the main street network and therefore the traffic is more evenly distributed between the streets.

The project area’s location in between Galeshewe, the CBD and the southern suburbs gives the area a significant role in distributing traffic movement between these three areas. Due to this situation several of the streets surrounding the project area are busy, and further connections are needed in order to make the traffic flow more evenly.

The walkways and bicycle routes to and from Galeshewe are mainly informal and are therefore not as well defined as the street network for vehicles and are more scattered. Pedestrians and bicyclists are more eager to use small streets and pathways to get to their destination as fast as possible but often end up on the connection streets and on the streets passing through the project area. The pedestrian and bicycle movement is therefore also large in the project area.
Open space

The Kimberley Open Space System document (KIMOSS) identifies two types of open spaces; hard open space and soft open space. These terms will also be used in this report. Hard open space can be streets, parking areas, sidewalks, squares, etc while soft open space refers to areas which are green, like parks and sports grounds. The meaning of open space in our report is spaces arranged for and open to the public which can be used for activities and/or recreational purposes. In this report green structure, such as greenery and plantings along streets and on public hard open space, has been added to the term “soft open space”.

Hard open space
Almost no hard open space in Kimberley is arranged for pedestrians or activities. Although a great demand for this type of hard open space can be seen in the city, especially in Galeshewe and CBD where a lot of pedestrian movement and activities takes place. Most of the existing hard open spaces for the public are parking areas outside shopping centers and spaces between the stores inside them, however these indoor spaces are closed for the public during the night.

Many of the public hard open spaces, like sidewalks and open places, are uninteresting and unsafe. In the city center, but also in the southern suburbs high walls and window free façades often face the streets.

Soft open space
Green areas and green structure are in general rare in Kimberley. This is partly due to the warm and dry climate which makes it hard to maintain planted green areas and for vegetation to naturally emerge.

The few existing soft open spaces in the city are often fenced off and not open for the public. The soft open spaces are seldom planned as green areas, and therefore mostly consist of wild grass, gravel and solitaire trees.

The southern suburbs form a green garden town with lots of vegetation both in gardens and along the streets. In CBD and in Galeshewe the lack of soft open space with planted vegetation is obvious, especially in Galeshewe where there is almost no vegetation at all.
Greenery along streets and pedestrian pathways in Kimberley is generally lacking, which means that there is almost no shadow for pedestrians or bicyclists, except for some olive and lemon trees which recently have been planted by the municipality. The lack of shadowing trees is most noticeable in CBD and in Galeshewe since these areas are mostly used by pedestrians. Therefore is the need also at its greatest in these areas.

In the project area the vegetation only consists of solitary trees and plants between and on the mine-dumps.

Housing

The main part of the population in Kimberley lives in single family houses in the suburbs. The houses and gardens in the southern suburbs are large and fenced off for protection unlike in the former townships where the houses and yards are small and have low fences.

The only existing apartment buildings are located in CBD and only houses a small part of Kimberley’s residents. These apartment buildings are often located on their own properties and not on top of commercial buildings.

The population density in Kimberley differs between different areas in the city. Due to smaller plots and more inhabitants the density is higher in Galeshewe and the two other former townships than in the southern more prosperous suburbs. The southern suburbs mainly consist of high to middle cost houses while the housing stock in Galeshewe mostly consist of low to middle cost houses. Informal settlements with shacks are also common in Galeshewe. New housing areas paid by the government have been built to replace the shacks and some are yet to come.

The housing backlog in Kimberley is estimated to approximately 12 000 units, and the demand for new housing is greatest in Galeshewe. About 70% of the housing demanded is for people within the lower income bracket. The gap between low cost houses and middle cost houses is great, which means that houses in this cost bracket are demanded. In the high income bracket there is no backlog and only a very low demand for new houses. According to Mr Peter Engström, Swedish Sida-consultant working for Sol Plaatje Municipality, a new demand for more apartments in central parts of the city has also emerged in the past few years.
Business and trading

Most of the work places, services and shops in Kimberley are located within CBD. The range of cafés, restaurants and culture activities are though limited both in CBD and in the entire city. In CBD informal trading takes place on the narrow sidewalks, at taxi ranks and along main access routes. This informal trading makes the streets crowded which lead to increased crime and are a detriment for formal business and for visitors.21

In the former township of Galeshewe there are just a few small centres providing daily services. Small shops, so called “tuck shops”, are instead the common shops in Galeshewe. Along the streets informal trading takes place both directly on the sidewalks and in permanent trading stands.

Suburban centres provide daily services in the southern suburbs and two new large shopping malls, mainly for retail but also services, are further under construction. The development of suburban centres has started a decentralisation of Kimberley. Although most of the range of services and goods can be found in CBD, the decentralisation towards the southern suburbs has a negative impact on the character and the liveability of the central part of the city. These negative effects, such as vacant premises, plight and crime discourage private business and developers to invest in the area. The decentralisation has a negative impact on the access to daily services for the great number of the population that do not have access to private transportation. This trend will therefore mainly affect the poorer communities of Kimberley, since they heavily rely on services and other facilities available in the CBD.22

Sol Plaatje Spatial Development Framework (SDF) describes the project area, together with development around the Big Hole, as a great possibility for an extension of and a renewed vitality for the CBD and the central areas of the city.23

Tourism attractions close to the Big Hole precinct

The world famous Big Hole has made Kimberley well known for tourists, but according to Comprehensive Urban Plan the city needs more quality attractions and other facilities to develop into an attractive tourist destination. The existing tourism attractions are mainly history
orientated which only attract a certain group of tourists.\textsuperscript{24}

According to the Local Economic Development plan, Kimberley has a great potential to develop the tourism sector.\textsuperscript{25} The city already has good communications for tourists with roads, railway and flights connecting to other major cities in South Africa.

**The Big Hole and the Open Mine Museum**

The Big Hole together with the Open Mine Museum are the largest tourism attractions in the Northern Cape Province according to Mr Brian Harkin, Big Hole Project Manager, De Beers Consolidated Ltd.\textsuperscript{26}

The Big Hole is the world’s largest hand dug hole with a surface area of some 17 hectares, a perimeter of 1.6 km and 800 metres deep. From the museum area a viewing platform offers visitors a close experience to the Big Hole and it is also possible to see across the hole towards CBD. The Open Mine Museum consists of original old buildings from the mining days relocated from their earlier sites.\textsuperscript{27}

**The Tram**

Kimberley is the only town in South Africa with a tram that is still running.\textsuperscript{28} It runs from the market square in CBD to the Open Mine Museum next to the project area. The tramway is a rebuilt section of a previous tramway existing during the diamond rush.

In 1985 the rebuilt tramway was introduced again and one of the old trams started to run tourists from the CBD to the Open Mine Museum. The tram now runs hourly every day and is a major tourism attraction.

**Greater no.2**

The oldest part of Galeshewe, Greater no.2, dating back to the 1870s, has today approximately 800 buildings.\textsuperscript{29} This area is now being restored to preserve this historical part of the city. The environment has been improved by artistic and colourful paving, street furniture and public sculptures designed by local artists. Residential buildings have also been upgraded, lemon trees planted in each garden and general landscaping has been made.\textsuperscript{30} Miss Michelle van der Molen, Programme Manager for Galeshewe Tourism Project tells us that all of this is done by the inhabitants in a unique and innovative way to improve the standard of living and to attract tourists.\textsuperscript{31}

**Star of the West**

The Star of the West is the oldest operating pub in South Africa, also dating back to the 1870s. The pub catered for workers from the Kimberley mine during the diamond rush years. In 1990 the pub was declared a National Monument and the tram stops outside by request.
Today the Star of the West is both a pub and a restaurant.

The De Beers Mine
The other big mine in Kimberley is the De Beers mine which closed down in the 1960s. A viewing platform allows the public a free view of the mine. The mine is machine dug and has an area at surface of 27 hectares, a perimeter of 1.92 km and is about 300 metres deep.

Cultural heritage

In Kimberley there are a number of identified buildings that are to be preserved due to their cultural or historical value. Seven of the listed buildings are situated on the project area or along the links. In addition to this, there are also two buildings proclaimed as National Monuments. The National Monuments are the “Star of the West” pub and a corrugated iron residential house next to the museum.

The mine-dumps are also important for Kimberley’s culture and history. The two large mine-dumps in the north-eastern corner are the oldest dumps still remaining in Kimberley and it is under discussion to proclaim these as National Monuments in the future according to Mr Harkin.32

The irregular street plan in central Kimberley is the result of the early miner’s footpaths.33 This is a unique feature for Kimberley since other South African cities often have distinct squared street patterns.34 Therefore it is considered important to preserve the street pattern.