Plans influencing the project area

This chapter describes plans that influence the development of the project area will be described. The influencing plans origin both from the private sector and from the municipality.

Spatial Development Framework

The Sol Plaatje Municipality has developed a framework for spatial development in the municipality. In the Spatial Development Framework strategies are presented on how to plan for a smart growth development. Strategies for achieving smart growth are to create a compact city with special transport routes and activity nodes. The key objectives for implementing these transport routes and activity nodes in Kimberley are:

- Radial system of transport routes and primary activity node. *This aspect of the framework reflects a strong, highly accessible CBD through routes which support a range of modes of transport*

- Cross cutting transport routes and a hierarchy of decentralised activity nodes. *This reflects accessible local clusters of activity addressing the need to decentralise opportunities especially to so called disadvantaged areas as well as cross cutting routes improving access not only to the CBD but between nodes forming a web of interconnectivity*

- Intensification of land use in and around nodes. *This reflects higher intensity land use (e.g. higher density housing) to support local economic activities and an efficient public transport system*

Two local integrating routes pass by and through the project area. These routes are connected to the CBD which is the primary activity node and to developing nodes in Galeshewe. The location of the project area is therefore strategic to complement CBD and to develop the integrating routes. These issues are important to incorporate in the development of the Big Hole precinct in order to maximise the use of the project area.
Map 26. Spatial Development Framework objectives close to the Big Hole precinct
Break back line

The break back line is not a physical or spatial plan but it is a possible scenario for how the areas surrounding the Big Hole will change in the future and will therefore influence the development of the Big Hole precinct.

Tests done by the land owners, De Beers Consolidated Ltd., shows that the ground in the area surrounding the hole is unstable and will most likely cave and fall into the hole sometime in the future. If and when this will happen is impossible to predict.\(^3^7\) A break back line of 50 metres around the hole has been defined on a map for the upgrading of the Open Mine Museum.\(^3^8\) Parts of CBD, the major through fare in the city and the museum area lies within the break back line, and will therefore most likely be affected.

The project area will not be affected directly by the break back line but will suffer the consequences that it brings when caving, by for example re-localisation of parts of the Open Mine Museum and by changes in the traffic pattern. For instance traffic on Bultfontein Road will have to be redirected to streets west of the hole, probably on, or in close connection to the Big Hole precinct. Waterloo Road is then the most obvious choice for the redirection. After the fall the new edge of the hole will also be close to both North and South Circular Roads and therefore the character in these streets will change and support measures may have to be taken to secure the foundations of the streets. The break back line will also determine how close to the hole it is possible to locate new developments.

Map 27. Break back line
CBD – Revitalisation Strategy

Development of CBD is crucial for Kimberley’s economic situation and for integration of different groups in the society. Developments in any direction in CBD will also naturally influence the surrounding areas including the Big Hole precinct.

The aim of the CBD Revitalisation Strategy, drawn up by Sol Plaatje Municipality, is to counteract the negative effects of the decentralisation and to make CBD a more vibrant and pleasant area that serves all citizens of Kimberley.39

The Revitalisation Strategy will upgrade the CBD into be more pedestrian friendly, especially around economic activities and in areas with a lot of movement. The Revitalisation Strategy also seeks to enhance the historical features of the city, both buildings and places, as well as to clearly mark main streets of the city.40

The location of the project area close to the CBD makes the two areas highly dependent on each other. Development in one area immediately affects the other, therefore it is important to consider the CBD Revitalisation Strategy in the development of the Big Hole precinct. The project area is the only direction for CBD to grow and with the upgrading this extension is a possible scenario. It is important to connect links in and to the project area to the upgraded main streets in the CBD in order to link the areas together.

Map 28. CBD Revitalisation plan. Originating from the CBD Revitalisation Strategy document
The urban renewal tax incentive

A large part of the Big Hole precinct is situated in an urban development zone that is affected by a tax incentive policy in Kimberley. This “urban renewal tax incentive” has been given to Kimberley by the government due to the accelerated depreciation of the inner city. The tax incentives are used to attract business investments and are a mean to increase developments in inner city areas. The incentives reduce cost for doing business and give opportunity to more people and business to make investments.

The tax incentive will give the investors great tax benefits when they build new buildings or revamp old ones within the affected area. This will hopefully create more jobs as well as attract more people to live and work in the city.

The tax incentive will help to attract investors to the project area and push the development forward. It is important to take the incentives into consideration and make the best possible use of this opportunity for development of the Big Hole precinct.

The planned thoroughfare

Sol Plaatje municipality has plans for a new freeway direction west of the project area. Land has been reserved for the thoroughfare’s realisation in the future. This can be seen on the zoning maps and in the city. The thoroughfare will reduce traffic in the CBD and also replace Bultfontein Road if the Big Hole breaks back. According to Mr Gerhard de Bruin, senior town planner, Sol Plaatje Municipality, it has not yet been determined if the plans for the new freeway will be realised and it is not a prioritised project for the municipality. It is most likely that only sections of the northern part of the thoroughfare will be realized since this will create better links in the street network.

A realisation of the thoroughfare will not affect the possibility to develop the Big Hole precinct. It will though create good possibilities for links between different parts of the city. It is therefore important to develop the project area in a way that makes it possible to connect the street network in the new area to the planned thoroughfare in the future.
Upgrading of the Open Mine Museum

De Beers Consolidated Ltd. is making a large investment on upgrading infrastructure and facilities at the Open Mine Museum. The upgrading also includes moving some parts of the museum further west, due to the identified break back line. De Beers plans for the museum is to make it into a world class tourism attraction that will bring tourists from all over the world to Kimberley. The vision is also to create a World Heritage site in the future. The development will create lasting jobs, tourist related business opportunities and recreational facilities.46

Map 31. Plan for the upgraded Open Mine Museum. Originating from BHP presentation
According to Mr Harking the new and upgraded museum area will consist of two parts; one which will be open to the public without charge and the other which will be fenced off and accessed for an entrance fee. The open part of the museum is called “Diamond Rush” and will have restaurants, accommodation, small shops, pubs etc. in an authentic old mining village environment. In the future de Beers plans for an extension of the museum area with among others a theatre, a conference centre, a cinema and just south of the museum a hotel.47

Mr Harkin also describes the large parking area that is now being built for the increased amount of visitors and that will be located on the opposite side of West Circular Road, between the existing mine-dumps. A tunnel from the parking area will lead visitors under West Circular Road and act as an entrance to the Open Mine Museum.48

The upgrading of the Open Mine Museum is a huge investment in the area. In the development of the Big Hole precinct this project needs to be regarded. The museum area should be incorporated in future plans and be a precondition in the further development of the project area.

Galeshewe Tourism Route Project

Galeshewe is identified as one of eight urban renewal nodes in the country, by the South African government. Sol Plaatje municipality therefore works with several renewal projects in the area and Galeshewe Tourism Route project (GTRP) is one of these.

The Tourism Route Project includes 15 tourism related projects, which together will develop the tourism potential in Galeshewe.49 The project also includes designing a visitor route through the township viewing the different places of interests.50 The tourism route and all other different projects will relate to black diamond miners, black history and heritage and political history.51

The project will improve the environment in Galeshewe in general, upgrade already existing tourism facilities52 and create new and innovative attractions.53 According to Mr de Bruin, there are also plans for an extension of the tramline through the township all the way to the Legislature Building. This would be a safe and convenient way of seeing the township attractions.54

The Galeshewe Tourism Route project does not affect the development of the project area, but it is possible to link and connect this route to the project area.
The soccer stadium

The South African government has elected the city of Kimberley to be one of ten cities to receive a brand new sports stadium for the 2010 FIFA World Cup of soccer. The new stadium will replace the existing venue for soccer and athletics entirely, and will seat 40 000 visitors. Next to the arena ticket booths, concession stands and an administrative building will be needed. There is also a need for practice fields and parking in close surroundings.55

According to Mr de Bruin, Sol Plaatje municipality has proposed four locations in the city for the new stadium, one of them being the Big Hole precinct. This is also the proposal that has attracted most immediate interest.56 No site analysis, with pros and cons and alternative usage, for any of the proposed areas for the stadium has yet been compiled.

A soccer stadium at this location would highly influence the development of the Big Hole precinct and the potential usages of the areas surrounding the stadium would be limited.