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Context Study

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Present day Mamelodi has grown far beyond what was envisaged by the Apartheid government. It has become a place with its own memories and structures. Prominent features include Moretele Park, one of the most popular music venues in Pretoria, and the house of Dr. Nico Smith, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and former Chairman of the Pretoria Council of Churches, who had lived in Mamelodi during the 1980's in protest against the apartheid laws of separate development (Hlaha 2003, p. 4).

Geographically Mamelodi is situated on the eastern side of Pretoria. It is separated from Eersterus, a coloured community by a large cemetery.

Services

The apartheid government planned Mamelodi as a storehouse for the black labor force needed for the economy of Pretoria. Thus Mamelodi has very little industry of its own and many commuters still travel far distances to work, for this 'storehouse' was planned to be beyond the city borders, behind a buffer zone, consisting of industrial zones, and the 'coloured' area of Eersterus, Despite 10 years of democracy this situation still causes much disruption. The bus services are overcrowded and irregular, the busses un-roadworthy and prone to breakdowns. This leads to many workers arriving at work late, which have led to a few receiving termination of service notices from their employers. Bus stops have no shelters and the rates are considered high, especially for commuters traveling to Midrand and Ga-Rankuwa, for the government does not subsidize travel towards those areas (Jacobus 2004, p.2).

Before democracy, access to black townships were severely restricted. White people needed passes to enter. A spatial memory of these remain in the layout of Mamelodi today. Mamelodi still has only two entrances and exits; one from the south, which enters over a narrow and curved bridge over the railway line at Denneboom, the other from the west, passing Eersterus (Walker et al 1991. p. 8)

A railway line runs along the southern border of Mamelodi and it is crossed by a north-south line, to the eastern part of Mamelodi, but the line, unlike the main line, has no train stations.

A large part of the need for public transport is serviced by the taxi or minibus industry. Notorious for violence and un-roadworthy vehicles, these services are widely used. Taxi fare from eastern Mamelodi to central Pretoria costs around twenty-five rand for a one way trip. Which makes it rather expensive considering the need of the daily commuters.

Due to historical decisions Mamelodi is very isolated urbanly. This can be combatted in design by reinforcing visual links to the rest of Mamelodi, but also with Pretoria and the surrounding natural landscape. It is important to establish a sense of place, else the current atmosphere of transience will prevail

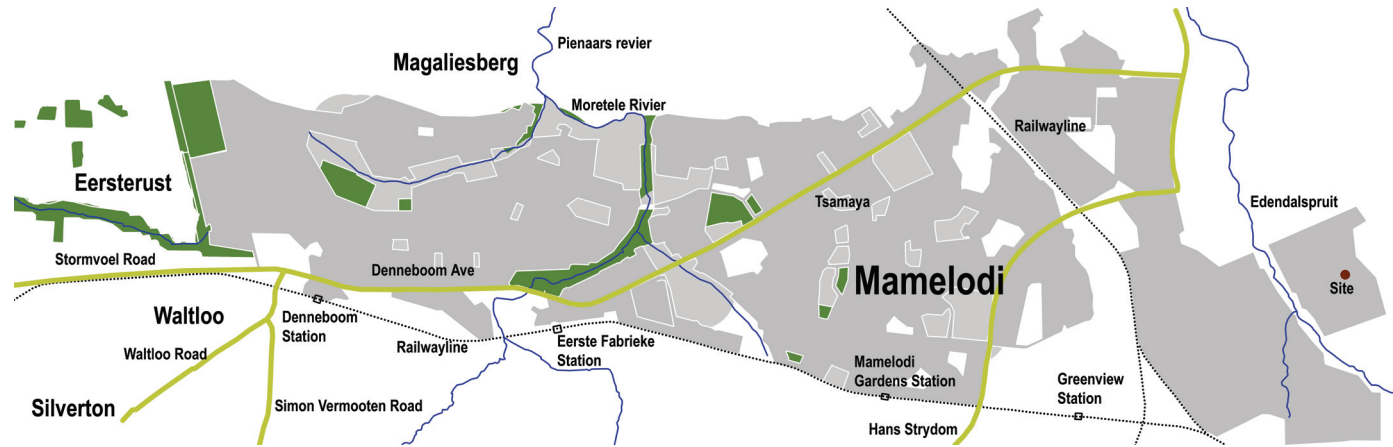


Fig. 10 Transportation dynamics in Mamelodi, road and rail

Crime

Mamelodi's crime situation is perceived as alarming. Late last year the police station of Mamelodi was put on the priority list due to the crime spiraling out of control in the area. The police station Commissioner Director Mokehele Seboloki, described criminal activities in the area as "reign of terror" (Hosken 2003, p. 2)

According to the Police, alcohol is one of the mayor contributors to crimes such as assault, murder and rape. Illegal alcohol and trading practices is a mayor concern in the township. In a recent raid the police seized 2 248 liters of beer at one Shebeen alone (Hosken 2003, p. 2).

Corruption is a prevalent evil that further spokes the wheels of justice. In February this year a detective and two other police officers of the Mamelodi police station was arrested on charges of bribery and corruption (Molema 2004, p. 1).

Fig 11 indicates the distribution of police stations throughout Mamelodi. Although the nearest station is a considerable distance from the project site, a strong police presence has been noted with each site visit.

Safety is extremely important in terms of desing

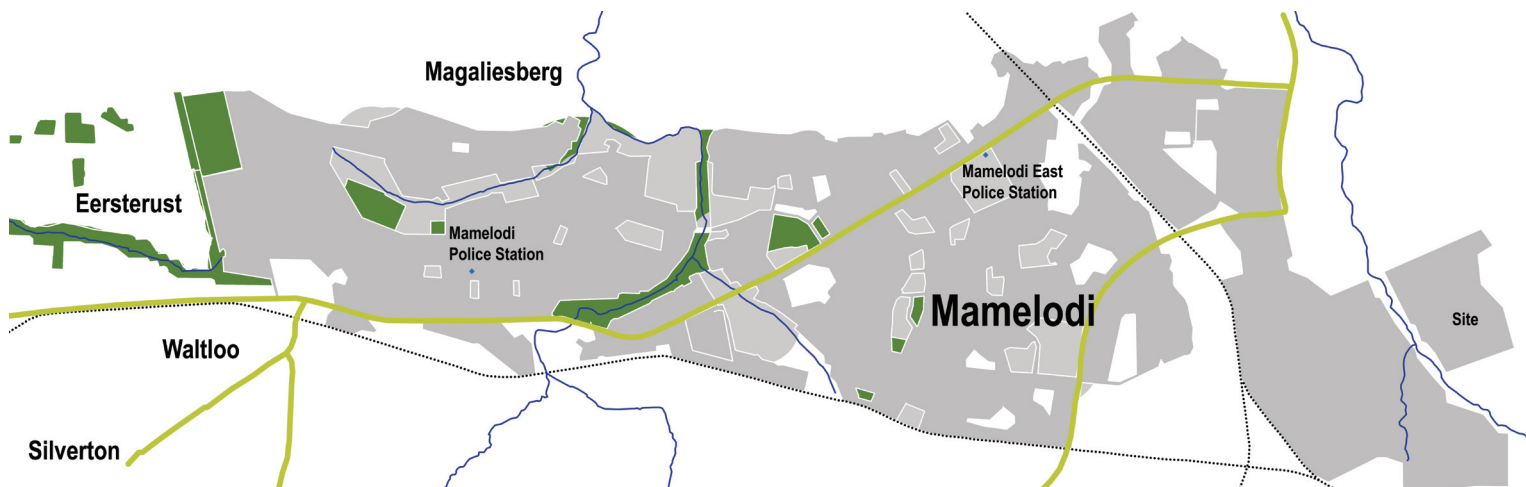


Fig. 11 Police stations in Mamelodi

Mentally ill

The

illness awareness day. This laudable initiative was marred by poor attendance. Only the mentally ill and their families, a few nurses and the SAPD attended. Families say that the mentally ill are treated as outcasts in the community. Nurses from the clinic confirmed that mentally ill patients are often ridiculed and abused by other patients (Mxhalisa 2001, p. 5)

Aids

patients has put an enormous burden on the hospice. Many terminally ill patients do not have the financial ability to pay for medical care, and are thus dependant on non profit organizations and family members.

More t

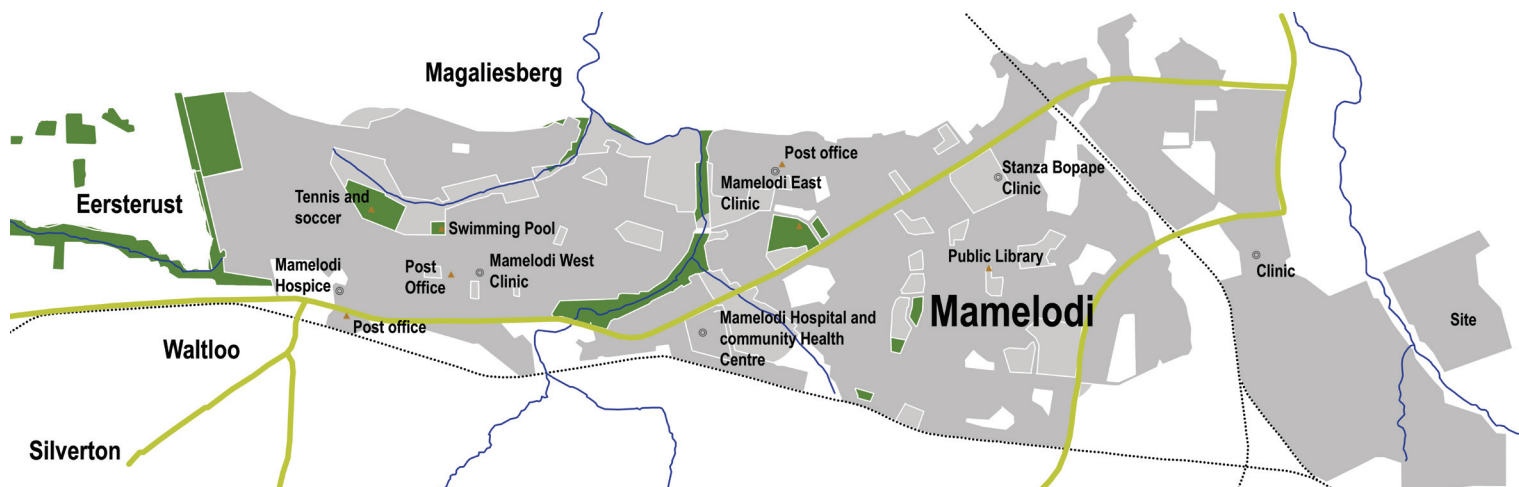
are cared for by family members, normally a grandmother, but some are left to fend for themselves. Under age children sometimes become the heads of families and have to provide and care for younger siblings (Govender 2001, p. 1).

Health Care and Community Facilities.

The lack

event when consulting fig 12. Public parks and sport facilities are absent and it seems as if Mamelodi is served by only one public library, which indicates that access to information is extremely limited.

Fig. 12 Health care and community facilities in Mamelodi

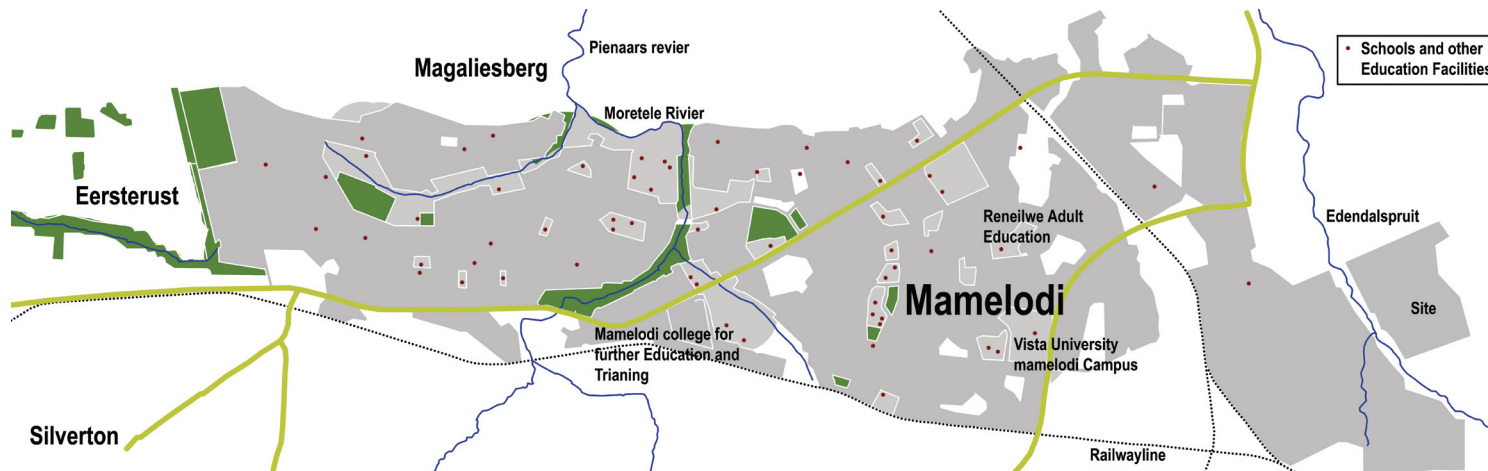


Education

There exist a stark contrast between the schools of Mamelodi West and East. Whilst the schools in the West are generally half-full, the schools in the East are unable to accommodate all the students. Both areas have about 20 primary schools each but, due to the department of education’s policy, students aren’t allowed to travel more than eight kilometers to school. The area of Nellmapius has only one primary school. There are about 1800 pupils enrolled and the school is therefore forced to use the platoon system (Kotlolo 2003, p. 9).

Distribution of schools throughout Mamelodi is unequal at best (Fig 13). Access to tertiary education is limited due to funding, despite the proximity of the Vista Campus. A number of skills training facilities are currently in operation. The Stanza Bopape Community Training Facility is one of the most successful facilities. This facility holds great relevance to this project and is discussed in greater detail under the Community Architecture Section.

Fig. 13 Location of schools and other educational facilities within Mamelodi



Churches

A look at the history of Mamelodi indicates the importance of the church in the community. The church played a role both as a place of gathering, a refuge and as a social node. Looking at the disbursement of churches in Mamelodi, it is evident that there is a significant difference between the concentration of churches in the West and the East.

Housing

Mamelodi contains a number of informal settlements. One of these is situated in Phomolong Ext. 6. A group of about 10 000 squatters have moved onto land owned by the Metro Council and Spoornet. Many of these people have been left out by the RDP process, and now find themselves destitute and without options (Nrhite 2004, p. 3).

Informal settlements do evolve into permanent settlements over time in some instances. One example is Stanza Bopane. These processes can become extremely lengthy and people may live in informal housing for periods exceeding ten years before finally receiving permanent houses from the government's housing program.

Fig. 14 Location of churches in Mamelodi

