



Figure 1-1. Silhouette of Children

“Suppose you could view all the photos taken by amateurs and professionals on one day anywhere in the world. What would they be of? I think: mainly children.”

Eddie Marsman
Van Eyck 2002; 103

CHAPTER 1

introduction

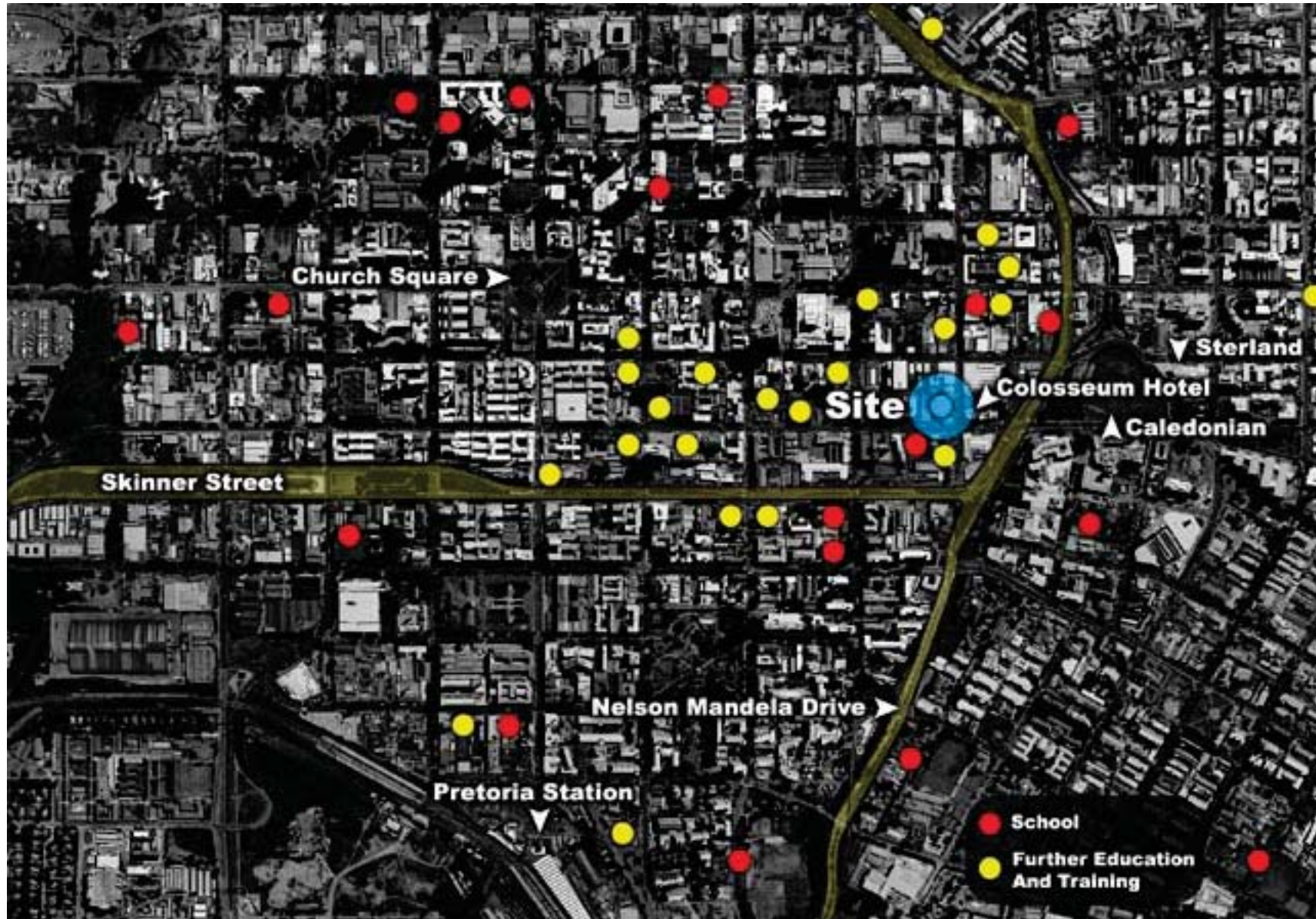


Figure 1-2. Aerial photo showing Schools and FET's in the Pretoria CBD

1-1 Background

May 23, 2007. The start of the 'Urban Millennium.'

According to United Nations research, 51.3% of all people live in urban areas. This implies that more than 3.5 billion people live in towns or cities. Humans are, therefore, currently classified as an urban species (Gizmag; 2007).

South Africa is no exception to this trend of urban densification. The population in Gauteng has grown from 8.8 million people in 2001 to 10.5 million in 2007. Currently Gauteng houses almost 20% of the total South African population. (Community Survey; 2007 and Census; 2001).

Due to the global growth in population, growing up in a city is inevitable for most children. Space is becoming scarcer and more expensive. The most obvious use of open space in built up areas are functions used by cars. The asphalted areas for roads and parking lots have multiplied over the years, forming the main competitor for outdoor areas where kids can play (Van Eyck 2002: 123).

In Gauteng, 23.6% of the population consist of children under 15 years and a further 19.6% of the population are between the ages of 15 to 24 (Community Survey; 2007). According to the census data from 2001 and 2007 there are currently more than 4.54 million people under the age of 34 living in Gauteng. The concentration of young people in the Central Business District of Pretoria may even be higher during business hours since there are currently 13 confirmed schools and more than 20 Further Education and Training facilities (FET's) in the Central Business District of Pretoria [figure 1-2].

The majority of the schools are private schools and have an average of 800 students each. The students attending the FET's vary from 300 to more than a 1000, although, some students do not attend class every day. Most of the children

and students attending these facilities do not live in the city, but on the periphery in areas like Mamelodi, Atteridgeville and Soshanguve [figure 1-3].

The children and students have to commute in and out of the city for education. Public transport consisting of busses and taxies are the predominant forms of transport for longer distances. Unfortunately many of the students have to wait long periods of time after school or class for their transport back home.

If the educational facilities alone are taken into consideration it equates to a vast number of young people in the city that needs to be accommodated, but the reality, according to the 2002 UNESCO study by Chawla, is that in most western cities, spaces are normally designed for use by adults. Very few spaces are designed to accommodate children. Small children are normally catered for in crèches and day-care facilities, but children attending school have almost no place to play, wait and be safe in the city.

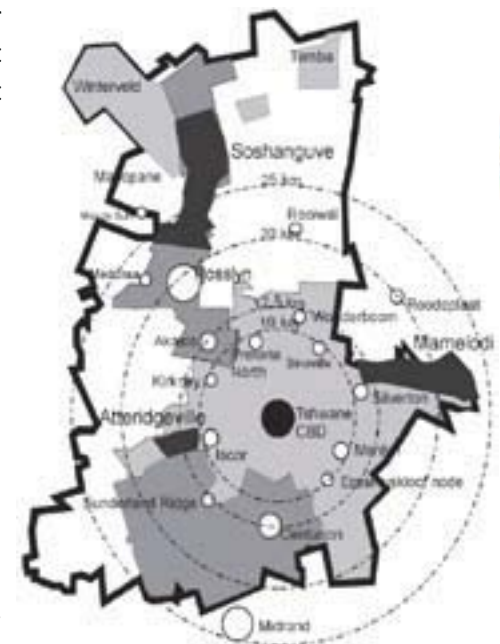


Figure 1-3. Spatial diagram of the Tswane Municipality



Figure 1-4. Aerial photo showing Open areas in the Pretoria CBD

1-2 Current Recreation

Currently entertainment for children in the CBD is limited. The area is predominantly designed for adults, with functions like the State Theatre and adjacent hard open surfaces like Strijdom- and Sammy Marks squares.

The main spaces in the CBD that are used by children for entertainment consist of the pedestrian portion of Church Street, Sancier shopping centre, Sterland and some smaller shopping centers, none of which were designed for children.

Because there are limited spaces designed for children they are often found roaming the streets looking for something to do or a place to entertain themselves. Add small children and busy streets together and it equates to an intimidating environment that is potentially dangerous. Children need a place to be, but the sidewalks are narrow and lined with un-recessed facades and fences. The nooks, crannies and alley ways are often occupied by informal traders or homeless people, this leave children with no place where they can feel safe (Lynch; 1977; 15).

Playgrounds are thought of [by adults] as the solution; places where kids ought to be, off the streets and out of the adults' way. Stereotypical versions of playgrounds are often seen around and normally consist of steel-pipe, wood or sculptured concrete structures. Some experts say that these playgrounds are irrelevant to children's real needs (Moore; 1986; 110).

According to Rissotto (2006; 85) children prefer green open landscapes with trees and private spaces to spend time, play and meet with friends (Lynch; 1977; 54),

Currently the city provides a few green or open areas that are used by children in the CBD. These areas are Church Square, Pretorius Square, Burgers Park and Princess Park [figure 1-4].

Of these green or open spaces only Burgers Park has facilities or the infrastructure to entertain small children, although, limited.

All of the above mentioned spaces have problems. The spaces are too hot due to an abundance of hard surfaces and a lack of shading; alternatively the spaces are overcrowded by people. Unfortunately, planners and investors think of parks as green havens of adult leisure, as places to 'get away from it all'. The spaces are, therefore, designed according to the requirements of Adults not children. The most predominant problem of the open areas are that most are situated towards the southern and western part of the CBD and the schools are too far away from them.

The fact remains that spaces for children in the city are diminishing.

The superficial needs of children have changed in the past, and will continue to evolve. But their basic intrinsic needs have remained constant. The following 7 needs should be met in order for a child to develop into a competent adult:

Children have a need for:

- ongoing nurturing relationships;
- physical protection, safety, and regulation;
- experiences tailored to individual differences;
- developmentally appropriate experiences;
- limit setting, structure, and expectations;
- stable, supportive communities and cultural continuity;
- protection of the future (Brazelton 2000).

The need to have a space allocated where children may run and play filter into several of the above criteria. Aldo van Eyck (2002; 15) concede that spaces for children to play should be created in cities from the planning phase and that cities should not just convert open spaces into parking lots and roads to cater for cars.

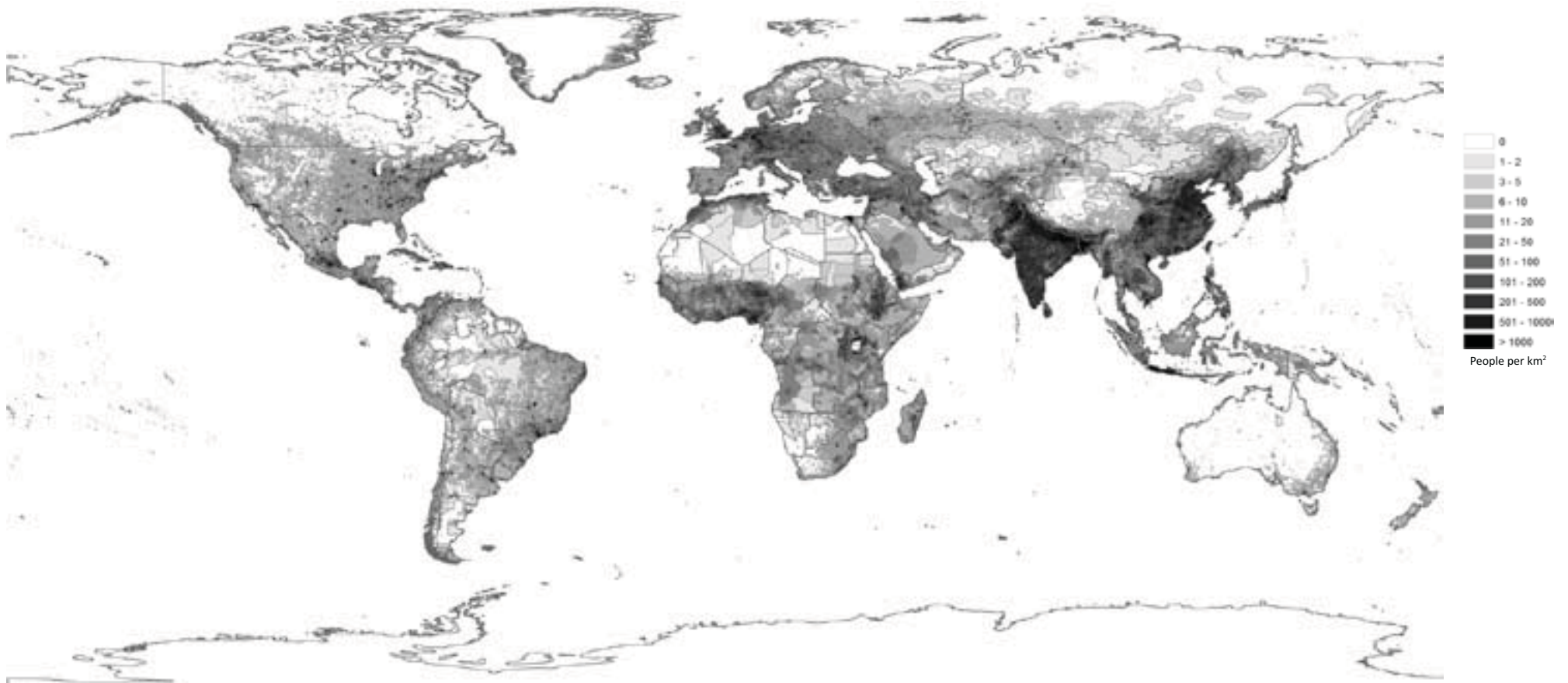


Figure 1-5. Map of projected population in 2015

The problems faced by the youth is not only evident in South Africa, but it is an increasing global problem.

1-3 Problem

Safety is one of the biggest concerns facing parents and children in South Africa (Osofsky; 1997; 3). The unsafe social environment we are confronted with is a reality that is not going to disappear soon.

Open public spaces lose some of their attractiveness amongst children and parents, due to this lack of safety and the inability to control the immediate environment around oneself (Van Eyck; 2002: 123).

According to Robin Moore (1986; 230) the two most important aspects of a child's environment is that it must provide both security and serendipity to stimulate both predictable and unpredictable consequences. Opportunities to interact playfully with the environment are a critical factor in the development of human competence (Moore; 1986; 15).

The root of the problem is a lack of facilities for young people in the city. Projects aimed at young people are normally not considered economically viable.

The base of the problem is enlarged by the layout of Pretoria and the resulting way of life. The city is segregated. Based on Apartheid planning principles the commercial, residential, work and recreation is separated into different zones [figure 1-7]. As a result many people including children have to travel vast distances to get to work or school and back.

This lifestyle of spending hours waiting for public transport enlarges the security problem faced by children. Because there are limited spaces with sufficient supervision where they can wait after school for their transport back home, children either don't do their homework or they do it without the proper resources surrounding them.



Figure 1-6. Barbed wire
Barbed wire fences are a symbol of the need to protect oneself against the dangers of society.

“Fairy tales telling of dark woods, witches and wolves have been updated as urban myths telling of bad neighbourhood, strangers and mean dogs” (Bell; 2006: 37).

Social threats like the fear of strangers and ‘bullies’ are among the most prominent fears of children. Parents also fear strangers near their children. (Moore, 1986: 207).

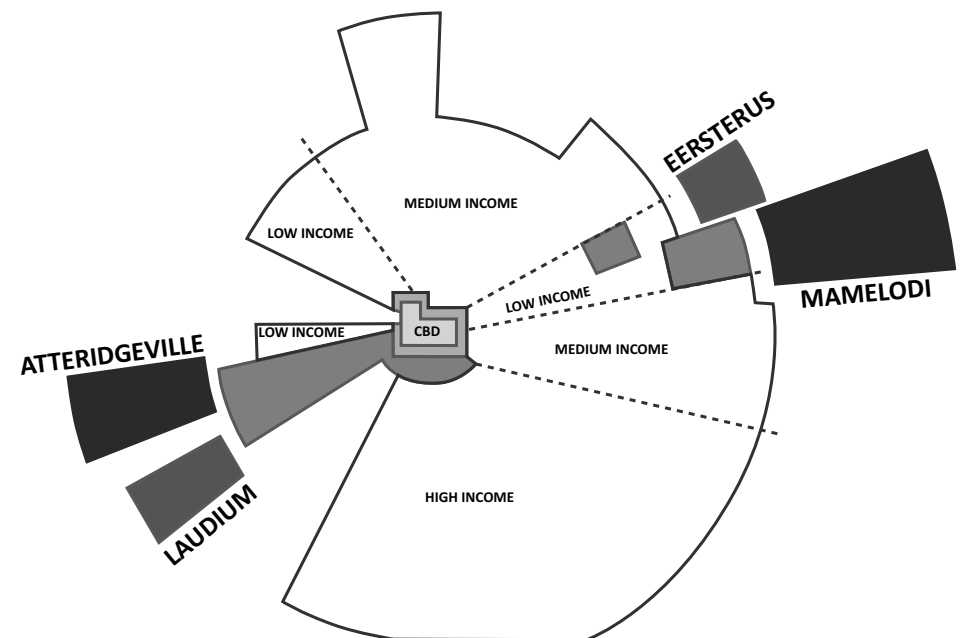


Figure 1-7. Apartheid city planning for Pretoria 1970

1-4 Brief and Goal

The solution could be found in providing a facility in the Central Business District of Pretoria that is designed for these children.

Ideally such a facility would cater for a variety of different age groups and provide spaces where the children can do their homework while the work is still fresh in their memory. The facility should provide areas where the children can be entertained and/or play.

Additional facilities like a cafeteria and commercial enterprises would greatly increase the success of such a facility.

The main purpose would be to provide a safe environment in the city.

A Youth Centre will comply with all the above requirements.

The intention of the project is to highlight the presence of children in the city. An expansion of this is to highlight the need to design spaces for children, because they interact with the world differently than adults. Ways must be found to accommodate the necessity for children to physically manipulate their environment to suit their needs (Moore; 1986; 237).

The focus falls on Space, both real and virtual (video games and imagination) the challenge lies in possible merging of the two realms into one.

The results from studying of the existing environment will be used to design a multipurpose building that will primarily focus on accommodating facilities for children and young adults. The ground floor will be used to generate a commercial income in order to sustain the non-profit part of the building.

All of the built environment aimed for use by children should comply to certain criteria in respect with children's development:

Firstly the building should attempt to foster personal identity;

Secondly it should attempt to encourage the development of competence.

Thirdly the building should provide opportunities for growth and it should promote a sense of security and trust.

Lastly the building should allow both social interaction and privacy. (Weinstein; 1987; 92)

Ideally such a facility should be located close to existing venues in the city that children use like schools, parks and transportation nodes.

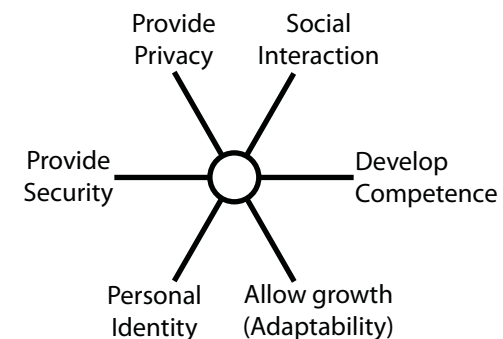


Figure 1-8. Diagram illustrating principals for spaces designed for childhood development.

1-5 User

Child / (plural children):

A young person from the time they are born until they are about 14 years old (Macmillan; 2002: 235).

The above definition is a broad description of the user group which will utilize the different facilities in the building. The definition implies that no age group may be discriminated against. In providing a variety of facilities the building aims not to discriminate. The age group in the facility is not restricted to 14 years but extends also to early adulthood.

Infants and Toddlers:

0-2 years - Infant

2-6 years - Toddler

Generally babies and toddlers are housed at a day-care facility near the parent's resident or at a grandparent. The growing number of young parents living in, or near the Central Business District of Pretoria requires a proper day-care facility in the area. The facility will cater for infants and toddlers. This facility may also be used by visitors to the hospitals and conference venues in the immediate area.

Primary school children:

7 - 12 years

These children are the most affected by the lack of facilities in the CBD. They require constant supervision and assistance with homework. Furthermore, they require space to play and explore, both indoors and outdoors.

High school children:

13 - 18 years

Most High school children are able to take responsibility for them self, but they do need a safe place to wait in the city. Their requirements differ from the younger children and are more focused on indoor activities. Outdoor spaces are mainly used for sport.

Students:

19 - 25 years:

Activities do not differ too much from high school children, although the time of day they will be using the facility may differ from school children.

Adult:

Staff, Parents and Pedestrians in the area:

The facility will contain staff rooms and offices for administrative purposes. The sidewalk on ground floor should contain commercial facilities aimed at the pedestrians in the area.





Figure 1-9. User group

INTENSITY OF USE

None 

Low 

Medium 

Normal 

High 

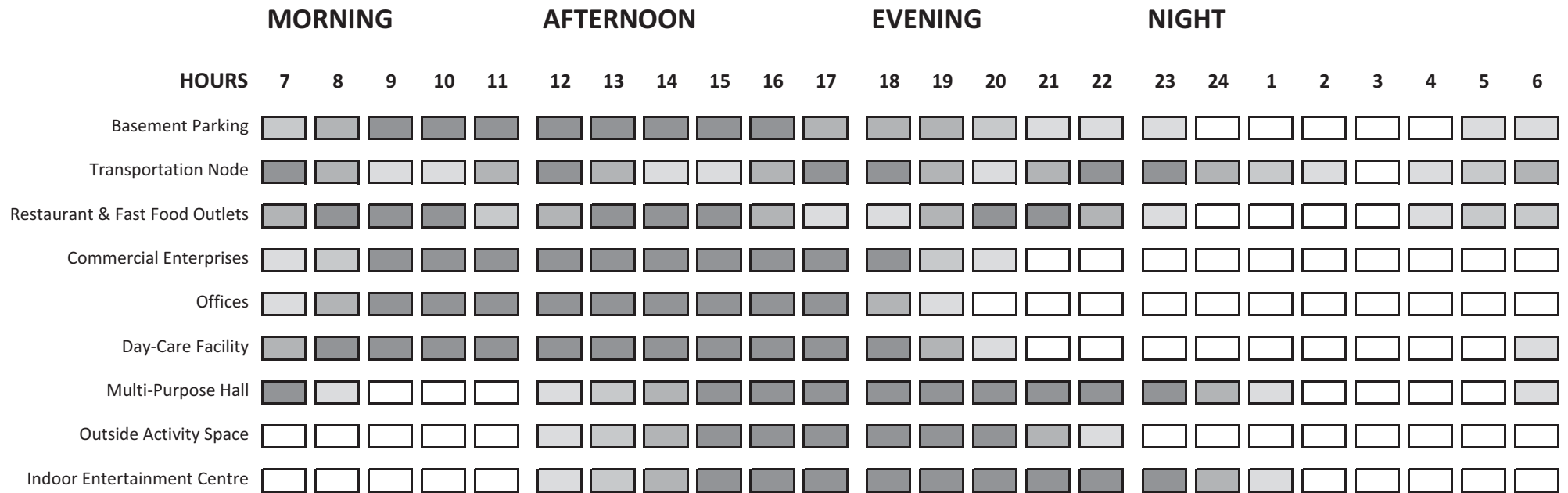


Figure 1-10. Table illustrating the intensity of use of the various functions during the day.

1-6 Programme

The different facilities of the building are defined by the users.

Common facilities everybody will be allowed to use are:

- Transportation Node
- Commercial enterprises
- Restaurants

Infants and Toddlers:

The day-care facility consists of 7 classrooms for ages 1 to 7. The classrooms open up to the outside play spaces. The facility houses indoor play areas, offices and a Baby ward. The indoor play areas would be able to accommodate midday sleeping.

Primary school children:

The children need a place to store their personal items. This will take place in the locker rooms. They also need a place to do their homework. The multi-purpose hall can be divided into smaller zones to house, amongst other functions, completion of the homework. Recreation is an important part of their requirements. The outdoor spaces and indoor entertainment spaces are there to accommodate them.

High school children:

Similar to the Primary school children, with more focus on the indoor entertainment facilities.

Students and Adults:

The students will use the facility for a wider period of time during the day. Their requirements are similar to the older high school children. The Adults are either employees that need offices, or customers that either uses some of the facilities, (like the parking) or walking through.

Accommodation Schedule

Parking / Transportation Node:

- Basement for cars
- Wider on street parking for Taxi's
- Bus Stop

Commercial on ground floor:

- Retail shops
- Restaurants

Offices:

- Administrative offices

Day-Care Facility:

- Creche
- Class Rooms
- Sleeping Hall
- Indoor and Outdoor play area

Multi-Purpose Hall:

- Cafeteria / restaurant for the children
- After school study aid centre

Outdoor Activity Area:

- Basketball Court
- Landscape
- Skate Park
- Climbing Wall

Indoor Entertainment Areas

- Lounges
- Pool Tables
- Video Game facilities
- Bars / restaurant
- Clubs

Locker rooms

- Changing Rooms
- Bath Rooms
- Lounges

1-7 Client

South African Governmental Departments



Figure 1-11. Logo of the Department of Social Development



Figure 1-12. Logo of the National Development Agency



Figure 1-13. Logo of the National Youth Development Agency

Non Governmental Organizations



Figure 1-14. Logo of the IT Schools Africa



Figure 1-15. Logo of New Day Church

Client:

Someone who pays for the services of a professional person such as a Doctor, Lawyer or Architect. In the case of Architecture this includes the person or institution that will fund the construction of the project. (Macmillan; 2002: 252).

According to a study done in 1994 by John Spink (1994; 46) there is a general principle that applies to most new recreational developments all over the world.

“Planning Gain.”

The principal relies on a commercial developer that is eager to construct a profitable facility, the local council or government then partner up with the developer. The developer benefit by not having to pay for re-zoning or bulk services. Some of the construction costs are also carried by the government. The municipal council benefit by having a larger complex that help with generating the critical mass required and not having to purchase new land to provide facilities.

There are various departments located in the South African government that might find it beneficial to help fund the project:

Department: Social Development.

The Department of Social Development is committed to social transformation that is embodied in the principle of social justice and the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution. They are required to create a better life for the poor, vulnerable and excluded people in society.

The department normally work in partnership with non-governmental organizations, faith-based communities, the business sector, organized labour, and other role players. (www.dsd.gov.za)

National Development Agency.

The National Development Agency's primary mandate is to eradicate poverty by granting funds to civil society organizations that implement developmental projects in poor communities. (<http://www.nda.org.za/>)

National Youth Development Agency.

The NYDA aims to mainstream and integrate youth development for sustainable livelihoods. They initiate, facilitate, implement, coordinate and monitor youth development interventions aimed at reducing violence and promote social cohesion. The NYDA's primary target group is young people aged between 14 and 35 years. (www.nyda.gov.za) (<http://www.nda.org.za/>)

Similar project contracted by the Department of Social Services:*Bosasa Dyambu Youth Centre*

The centre is designed to admit Five hundred (500) boys who are in conflict with the law. The centre offers various programmes including education, religion, health, arts and culture. The centre also offer Entertainment and after school care which are aimed at breaking the cycle of crime. (www.gautengonline.gov.za)

There are several non governmental agencies that also provide funding for uplifting in the community:**Religious institutions like New Day Church.**

The New Day Religious community has funded several youth based activities centers in the past. They consist of members of the community that make private donations to fund the construction of youth facilities. Generally their facilities have an admission fee to cover maintenance and staff salaries.

Private companies may also contribute to the centre by utilizing the opportunity as advertising. By sponsoring equipment they will benefit from having people use their product and ultimately acquire their own. Alternatively they benefit from advertisements that will be erected on the outside of the structure.

The IT School of Africa is one such an organization that sponsors computer equipment to disadvantaged communities.

ITSA works with distribution partners in several African countries, who are responsible for selecting schools, distributing computers, training teachers and providing ongoing support. The partners are typically charities or NGOs with specialist knowledge of IT and education. They also receive shipments, test equipment and carry out any necessary repairs.

ITSA's work in Africa is divided between its collaborative Country Programmes with partner charity CFAS (Computers for African Schools) and Other Projects which it runs independently.

