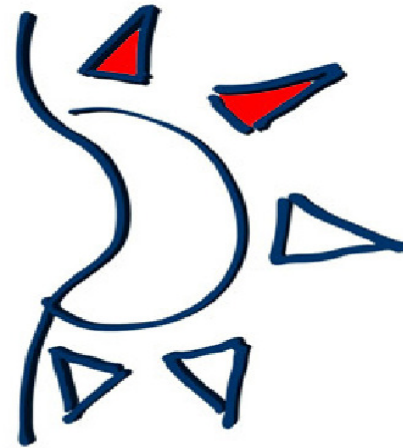


BACKGROUND



Background

It is essential to manage the growth of South African cities so they work well for the lowest common denominator: people who are dependent on pedestrian and public transportation movement and those who are forced to seek a livelihood in small-scale, self-generated employment (Dewar & Uytenbogaardt, 1991:88)



BACKGROUND

Located north-west of central Pretoria, Marabastad was once an integrated 'multi-racial' community. It is Pretoria's counterpart to Cape Town's District Six, Johannesburg's Sophia town and Durban's Cato Manor. During the late 18th century the Ndebele chief Maraba set up his kraal alongside the Apies River and the Steenhovenspruit, just below the Daspoort ridge. This area over time became the city's Indian-occupied Asiatic Bazaar and was a distinctly separated, rectilinearly planned township. Black refugees from the Anglo-Boer war soon followed, later joined by a Coloured community, Malay Muslims and a small influx of Chinese. Racial harmony prevailed until the 1970's when the Apartheid regime forced the mass removal of residents in the area. The diverse, unforced culture of Marabastad disappeared. The once thriving community was reduced to a *memory*.

memory, n. (pl. -ies): 1 a recollection. 2 the faculty by which things are recalled to or kept in the mind (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1995).

On entering the area along Jerusalem and Fifth Streets one encounters the Nawab Mariammen Temple that has graced Bloed Street since 1938. The structure is dedicated to placating Mariammen, the Hindu goddess of infectious diseases, and is a fine example of richly decorated, deep-relief carved figures and abstractions (Lipman, 2009). The richness of the decorations and the skilled craftsmen who created the statuettes on the temple have helped to make it a protected heritage site and one of the tourist destinations of the area.

Independent Research

On the 14th of July 2009 the author travelled through Marabastad with artist and author John Clarke in order to further understand the context and "genius loci" of the area. John Clarke has written a book about Marabastad and plans to write another. He has an understanding of the neighbourhood and it was worthwhile to engage with someone who had studied the area before.

The excursion led to the Daspoort Water Care and sewage treatment plant north of central Marabastad. This area houses a century old church and is possibly the original location of Chief Maraba's Kraal (assumption). Apparently, if Jerusalem Street extended all the way north it would lead right up to the church, making it a significant focal point. Interviews with residents of the area further helped the author engage more deeply with the genius loci. The place cannot be understood just by inspecting it with the eyes of an outsider. By interviewing the people who lived there a story begins to unfold that creates the imagery of the past. The "Marabi Tours" could generate income for the local tour guides and create an awareness of the history of the area.

1 2

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

The current context of Marabastad is reminiscent of a once thriving local community. The author visited the site numerous times (January 2009–September 2009) to find: damaged building structures, littered streets and vacant lots, uncollected garbage, buildings in need of repair and replacement and in need of fresh paintwork. The area is in urgent need of attention and especially funding. Many have reclaimed their land through the Gauteng Land Claims Commission but there are still unresolved claims and areas of which the zoning is still undetermined. The author visited the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality to get zoning information for the chosen sites and learned that the municipality is still unclear about what to do with the site. Now it is up to architects, planners, developers and the inhabitants to come up with a scheme that will benefit the entire community.

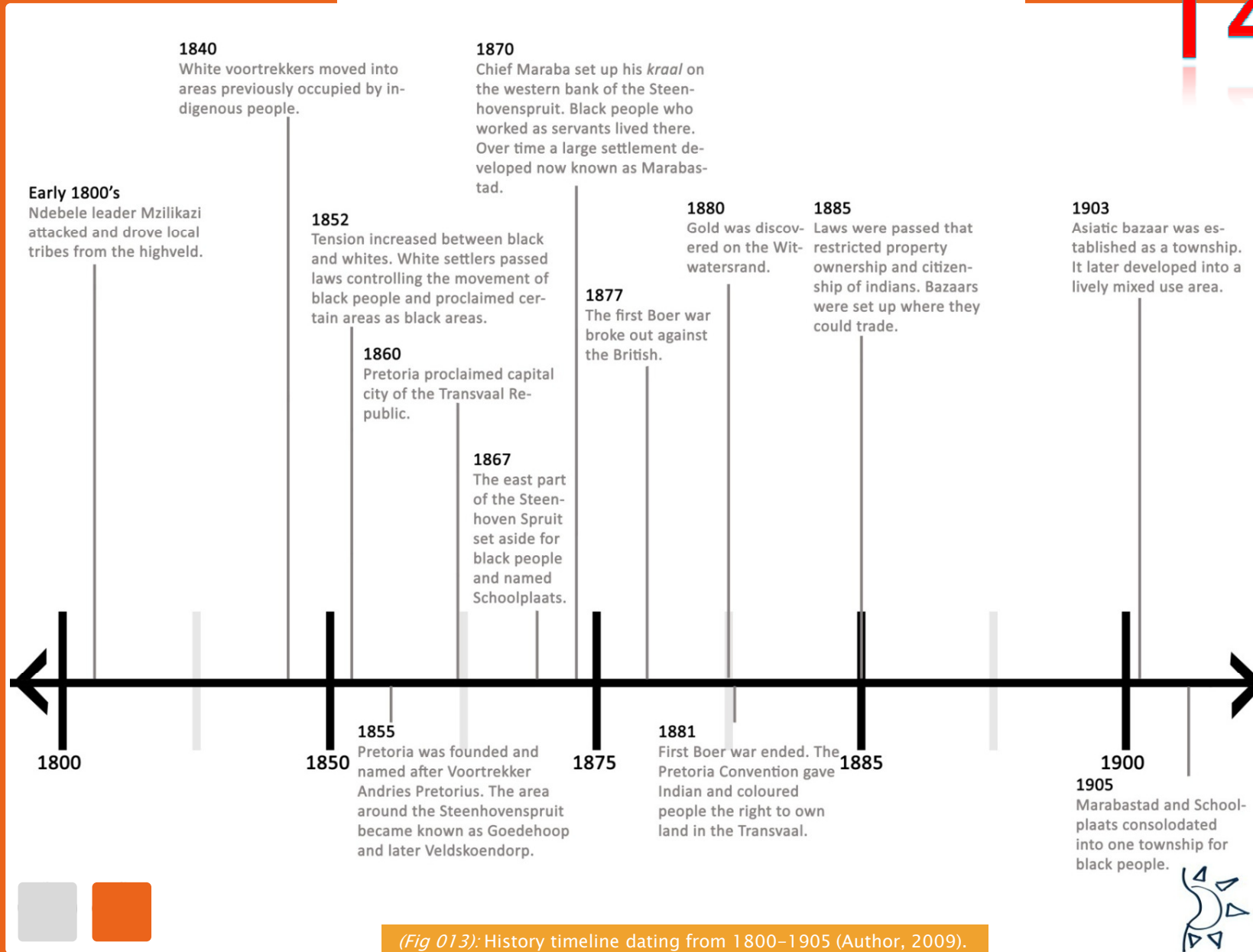
All around Marabastad there are pockets of shopkeepers and traders, but there are few residential areas. The once vibrant residential community of the area is long gone. The author believes that through proper planning this vibrant neighbourhood can be restored.

The neighbourhood is alive during the day with bus and train commuters; with people passing through who shop at the numerous informal food and clothing stalls in the area. There is music emanating from inviting pavement shelters where one can have a meal; there are medical surgeries, motor repair shops and high levels of energy in the area. The community is slowly rebuilding itself.

There is also a history of icons that have originated in the area, including the venerated sage Es'kia Mphahlele, the renowned journalist Can Themba, author Jay Naidoo, the fine artist Thabang Noto Matseke, writers Darryl Accone and Johnny Masilela and the Mamelodi Sundowns soccer club that grew out of the parochial Sundowns of the 1940's.



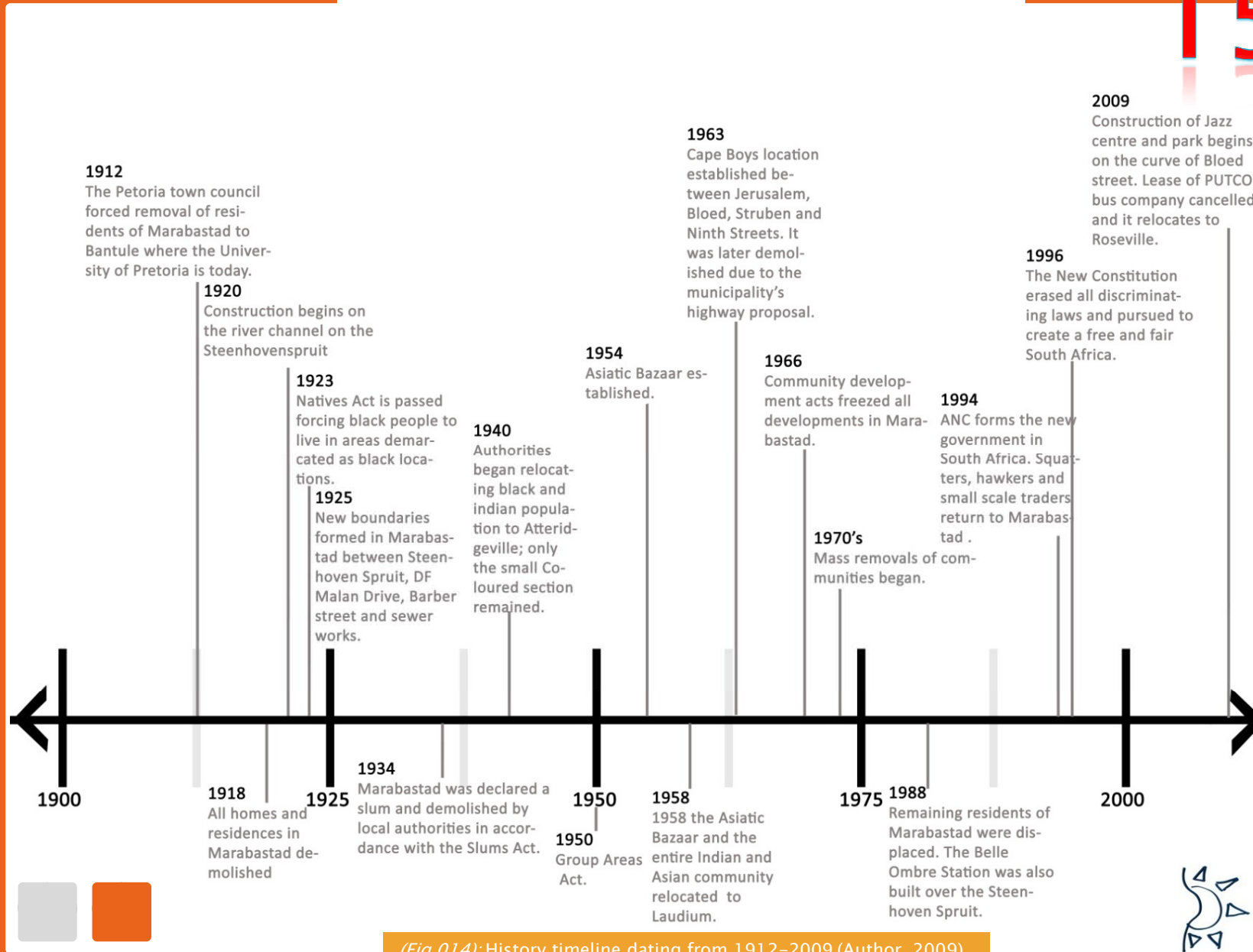
BACKGROUND



(Fig 013): History timeline dating from 1800–1905 (Author, 2009).

BACKGROUND

15



(Fig 014): History timeline dating from 1912–2009 (Author, 2009).

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND



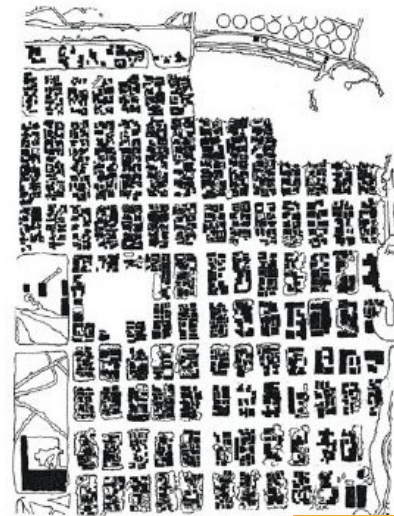
Marabastad - 1934



Marabastad - 1965



Marabastad - 1998

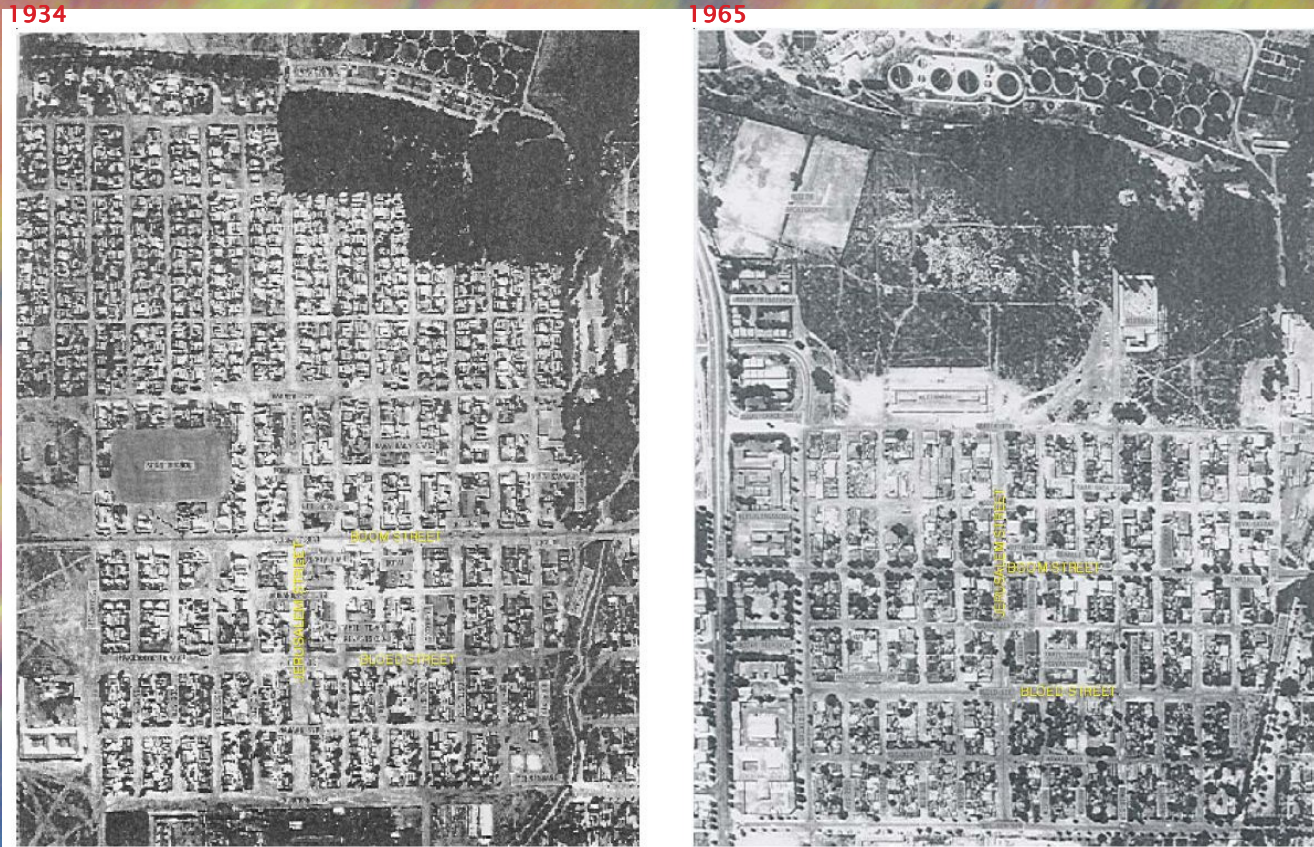


(Fig 015): Figure ground study dating from 1934 to 1998 (Tayob & Malan, 2002).

BACKGROUND



BACKGROUND



(Fig 016 & 017) : Aerial photograph of Marabastad in 1934 and 1965 (Tayob & Malan, 2002).

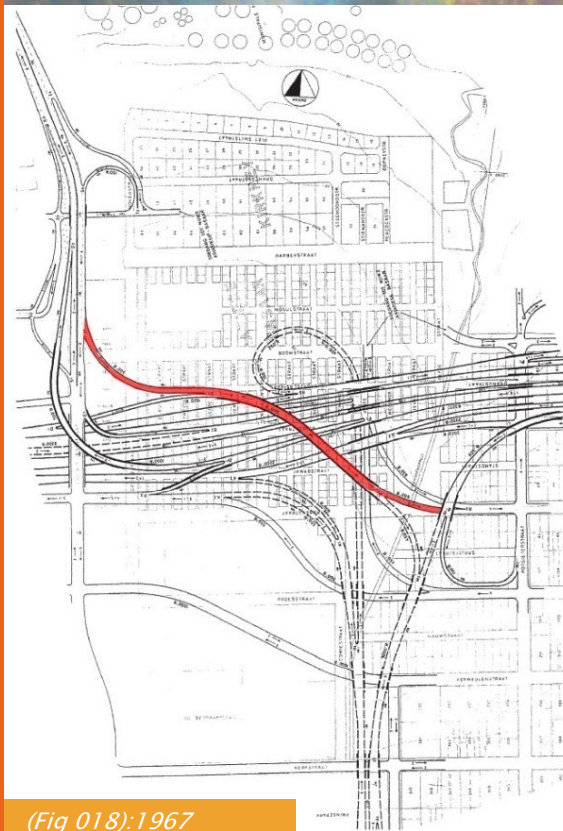
BACKGROUND



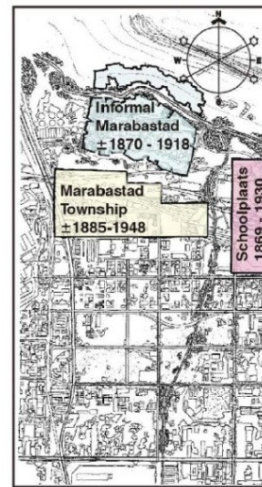
BACKGROUND

18

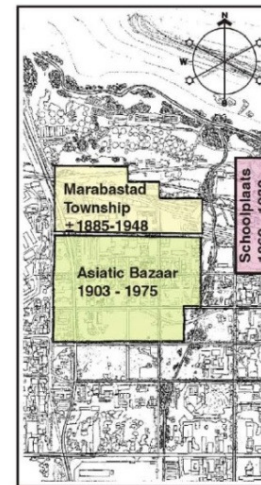
Why Bloed Street curves:



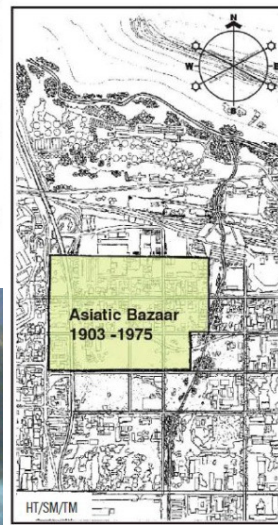
(Fig 018): 1967 freeway proposal for Pretoria: Interchange over the Asiatic Bazaar (Tayob & Malan, 2002).



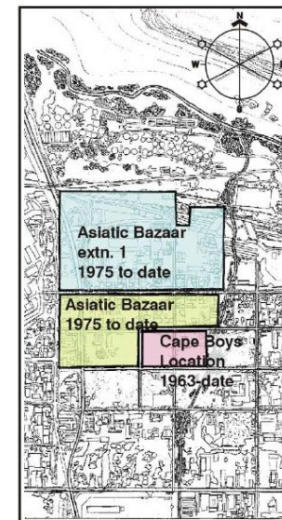
ca 1900



ca 1925

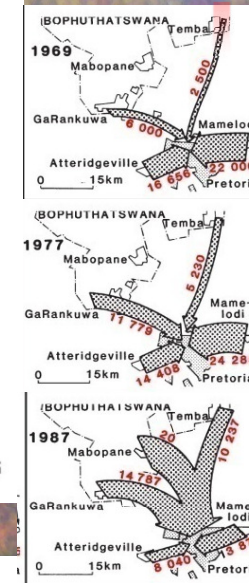


ca 1950



ca 1975

(Fig 019): The changing configuration of Marabastad (Tayob & Malan, 2002).



Train passengers commuting into Pretoria (Source: Christopher, A.J. 1994)

(Fig 020): Diagrams showing the increasing number of train commuting into Pretoria (Tayob & Malan, 2002).



BACKGROUND