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Chapter 2

Problem Statement

2.1 Problem statement

The problem, as identified in Chapter 1 is insufficient provision for the **refreshment and retail wants and needs of users** of the Gautrain Rapid Rail Link. It is believed that there are opportunities for the **formal** retail and refreshment sector in the station environments. Many local and international examples had been examined where retail and refreshment facilities are encountered side by side at station and termini, such as Grand Central terminal in New York . The current GRRL proposals do not include any infrastructure for such facilities. The thesis would suggest a solution to this problem.

The manner in which the *re:refresh** intervention responds to the Gautrain system identity and philosophy would be an important part of the investigation for the design of the system.

As mentioned in the introduction the idea of **refreshment** focuses on the aspects of **bodily** / physiological and **mental** refreshment. This would include both sustenance (food, beverages) and the mental stimulation and expansion of knowledge offered by reading of newspapers, magazines, etc, purchased at the station. This also would not exclude other forms of retailing, such as gifts, clothing, accessories (hats, scarves, gloves) and other impulse buying behaviour (sweets, cool drinks, cigarettes).

2.2 Aims

The aim of the thesis is to formulate the *re:refresh** yment of **refreshment, retail and**

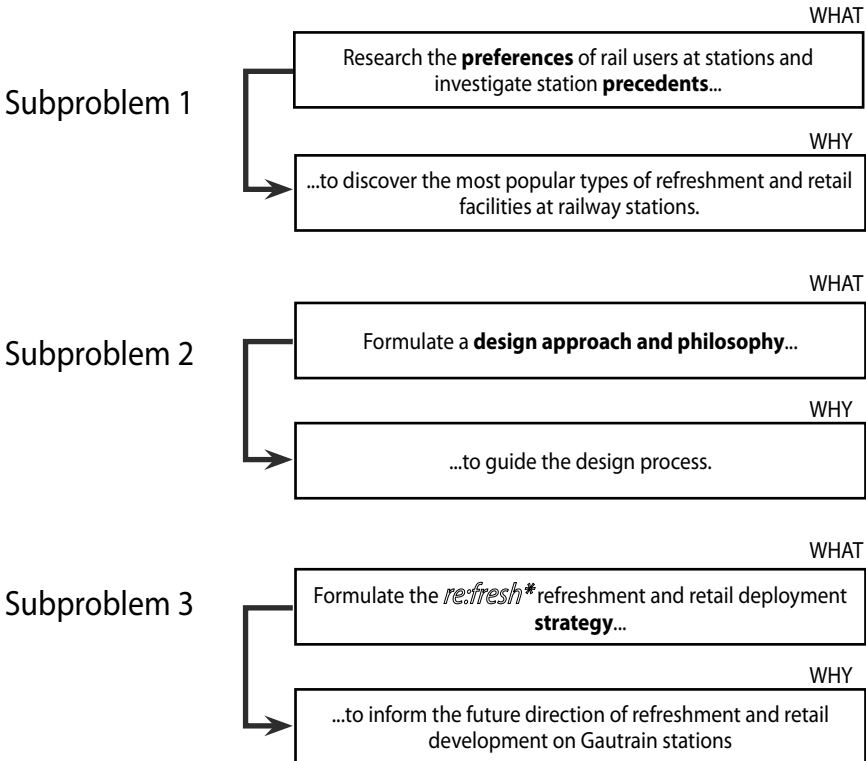


supporting facilities as transition between the current situation and the end result of integrated retail and refreshment facilities that respond to user desires and context.

A part of this strategy should be tested and demonstrated in designed form in the context of the **Hatfield Gautrain station**. This framework will contribute to the study and facilitation of user refreshment and retail preferences at intermodal transport facilities in the field of the environment and cultural landscapes.

2.3 Subproblems

The problem statement could be broken up into three subproblems presented in the diagram.





Precedent // Grand Central Terminal, NY, USA

Grand Central terminal has become a **destination** - not just for transport, but also for the five exquisite restaurants and cocktail bars, including the world famous **Oyster Bar**, twenty casual international eateries, **gourmet foods** from the Grand Central Market and the fifty unique **specialty shops** throughout the concourses

(Grand Central terminal 2009:[sp]).



2.4 Assumptions

For the purpose of this thesis the following is assumed:

- * The Gautrain project, currently in the construction phase, will be completed as per plans available in the first six months of the year.
- * Although the Gautrain stations are currently in the construction phase, they will be **regarded as complete** as per drawings provided by Bombela.
- * The projected usage figures of the Gautrain Rapid Rail will be realised. In other words, the Gautrain project in its entirety will be deemed financially **feasible** with large enough numbers of users to make ancillary refreshment and retail facilities a viable option, at least at first.

2.5 Delimitations

Given the scale of the Gautrain Rapid Rail Link and due to time constraints, the scope of this investigation has been limited to a 300m radius around the Hatfield Gautrain stations. The Hatfield station precinct will form the backdrop of an in-depth design development applying and testing the spatial framework for refreshment facilities.

The focus of the study is mainly the interpretation of qualitative data (as explained in 2.9). Because qualitative studies generally require considerable planning, preparation and time, the qualitative data collection in this study will employ the case study method where the study of one or a few precedents can enhance understanding and inform practice for similar situations (Leedy 2005: 135). The time allocated to the study will not allow for detailed ethnographic or phenomenological research methods.

2.6 Client

The proposed client is the main Gautrain concessionaire, **Bombela Concession Company (Bombela)** (Gautrain Rapid Rail Link 2009: [sp]). The GRRL is operated and run by Bombela. The system and associated properties (stations) is also owned by the company for the first fifteen years of operation. Thereafter the assets will be expropriated by the Gauteng Provincial Government (Otto 2009:[sp]).

Thus far, proposals for small kiosks inside the stations have been postponed for future decision once the rail and stations are complete. They are, however, aware of the potential financial benefits indicated by such a venture, as well as improved Gautrain brand identification and customer satisfaction. Current provision for retail

Gautrain Stakeholders



Gauteng Provincial Government
Client



Bombela Concessions Company
Manage concession
Operate, run, part-finance GRRL



Murray & Roberts
Engineering & construction
Bombela shareholder



Strategic Partners Group (SPG)
BEE shareholder in Bombela



Bombardier UK
Railway design & manufacture
Bombela shareholder



Bouygues Travaux Publics
Civil Engineering & construction
Bombela shareholder
(Gautrain Rapid Rail Link 2009:[sp]).

include:

- * discouragement of intensive cooking activities inside station buildings themselves,
- * potential deployment of small 5m² kiosks e.g. newspaper kiosks inside stations,
- * potentially appropriating a portion of the ground floor parking allocation for the facilitation of refreshment and retail facilities, and
- * future expansion of such facilities.

Since the station buildings are assumed to be complete (see Assumptions 2.4), it is important to preserve the original structure as far as feasible, as the existing structure represents a significant financial investment. It is proposed to only add to the existing structure and only replace or amend where an alternative design option would prove unfeasible or impractical.

2.7 Users

The proposal is aimed at **commuters** using the Gautrain system. The GRRL itself is aimed mainly at commercially active people needing to commute between Johannesburg, Tshwane and OR Tambo Airport. The two most important target market segments are existing private vehicle **commuters** (including public transport users 'upgrading' from the traditional metrorail, taxi's and buses) and **airport passengers** including foreign tourists (Gautrain Rapid Rail Link 2009:[sp]).

The relief of traffic congestion on freeways such as Ben Schoeman between Johannesburg and Tshwane is one of the major objectives of Bombela's Gautrain proposal as well as that of local government development plans, hence the focus on existing motorists (ibid).

Forecasts indicate approximately 100,000 passengers would use the GRRL per day (ibid.). With an expected annual growth of 4.8%, more than **120,000** passengers would be using the GRRL per day by 2010 (ibid.).

It is assumed for the purposes of this thesis that tourists from OR Tambo International Airport would do the bulk of souvenir and arts and crafts purchases at tourist attractions, such as the Union Buildings, and not at stations such as Hatfield. The focus of the investigation is not on the tourist and arts and crafts industry, but rather on provision for commuters.



2.8 Importance of the study

This study investigates the factors influencing the strategy for the implementation of refreshment and retail facilities at the Gautrain stations from an organisational and design viewpoint. This could potentially be extended to other SARCC commuter rail stations, but should be investigated in a different study. During the course of this study, the refreshment and retail facilities associated with train stations would be analysed and applied in a way that will improve the experiential quality of the public context in which it appears.

This proposal presents an opportunity for design interventions in the field of human interaction interior space and the reinforcement of place within the environment of transport facilities.

2.9 Research methodology

The ideal research approach for this thesis is a **mixed-method** design (Leedy 2005: 97). This consists of a combination of **qualitative** and **quantitative** approaches to the research problem (ibid).

The mixed-method approach is holistic, subjective, and emergent, with methods, categories or variables “emerging” as the study proceeds (Leedy 2005: 95). Data collection would consist of personal field **observations**, confirmed by direct questioning or interviews, as well as the extensive use of photographs, drawings and sketches. This data would then be interpreted by searching for common **themes** and categories (Leedy 2005: 96).

A **needs assessment** could also be used employed to draw out information. It would provide a framework to prioritise people’s needs and raise their awareness of related issues (World Bank 2009:10).

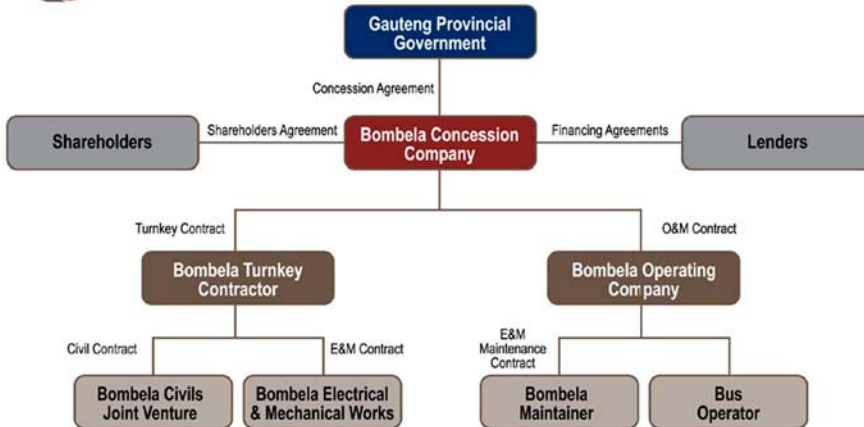
Another method to ascertain people’s preferences is **preference ranking** or direct matrix ranking. This exercise requires participants to list things they do and do not like about a class of objects, e.g. available retail facilities (World Bank 2009:13).

The needs assessment and preference ranking mentioned is a method of surveying that would ideally be conducted as market research. The subjects would have to be Gautrain users. Since the GRRL is not operational yet, these methods could not be used at present.

Quantitative analyses should be applied where possible to increase the universality of the conclusion, since purely qualitative studies are often very context-bound (Leedy 2005: 97).

Where possible, qualitative and quantitative data will be used to reach the same conclusion in order to ensure that the study maintains its internal validity. The internal validity of a study refers to the extent to which the conclusions could be logically drawn from the data presented (ibid).

Bombela Contractual Structure



16. Bombela contractual structure

Due to the time constraints posed by the study time frame, not all of the above research methods would be employed. They are an example of what should be done in an ideal situation. The research for the proposed study would include a limited amount of field observations and semi-structured interviews, photographs and observations. This would be supported by analyses of relevant precedents. Contextual background would be provided by desk review or secondary data review, consisting of information gathered from theses, dissertations, census data, maps, etc (World Bank 2009:16).

2.10 The role of the Interior Architect

There is a growing body of contemporary theorists offering new insights into the role of interior architecture within the built environment. A few themes that are common to the fields of Architecture and interior architecture have been identified:

- * Design as enhancing the quality of life
- * Design as the agent for democracy and design humanism (designing with equity of access and promotion of cultural and social values in mind) (Bonsiepe 2006:30)
- * Design as the agent for social and environmental development

Havenhand (2004: 36) suggests an approach to interior architecture that regards it not as supplemental and inferior to architecture, but a field in its own right. This relates to the distribution of design – of where the discipline of interior architecture fits into the design process along with Architects, Landscape Architects and other design team members. The thinking is that, whereas architects are required to have a broad spectrum of knowledge across the entire design process, interior architects are free to focus on the field of interior space and objects and provide a depth of knowledge in that field (König, R. 2009). In this manner, interior architects could be superficially compared to engineers, who might not be knowledgeable about the entire spectrum of design decisions in a building project, but have great depth of knowledge in the specific focus area of engineering.

The idea of distributed design also asks the question of where the designer relinquishes creative control

and allows the users to inhabit, use and adapt the space to achieve the best fit possible. As described in Chapter 5, the allowance for future adaptation and accommodation of user preferences is highly prioritised as an embodiment of democratic design principles as well as sustainable practice.

A strong common thread in contemporary literature is the discipline's focus on humanism and the importance of designing to human scale and the body as an important interface in informing a person's sense of place. This is especially important in interior architecture. Broadly speaking the discipline of interior architecture is focused on the interaction between user, space and object. Kurtich and Eakin (1992: 3) sum it up: "Interior Architecture is the holistic creation, development, and completion of *space for human use*" [emphasis added].