

DRAFT densification Policy guideline: Discussion document in support of the Structure Plan – for discussion purposes

INTRODUCTION:

What is densification and why is it needed

- Densification not only refers to the increase in intensification of residential activities, but also refers to the intensification of activities within certain identified areas
- *Higher density does not mean low income*
- *Densification does not mean blanket densification of the entire town – it provides for densification in selected areas, to provide different density categories in a town which ultimately gives investors different choices. Do not want homogenous typologies.*

Large properties have been the norm in Namibia for many years. Unfortunately, large properties also means

- higher rates and taxes for the owners, making it unaffordable for large sections of the population
- higher maintenance costs
- higher water costs (if property has large gardens, it means large areas need to be watered and with Namibia being a dry country, this is simply no longer an option)
- Less security – bigger properties tend to mean higher security costs
- cost of engineering services – larger properties lead to urban sprawl and this leads to higher cost to service such neighbourhoods
- Unsustainable – all over the world the norm of having large properties are changing. Urban sprawl also leads to higher personal vehicle usage, which means that the low income person that does not have personal transport must make use of public transport, which are non-existent in Namibian towns. They then have to rely on taxi services which are expensive, not always safe and unreliable
- Longer travel distances between development nodes (places of employment) because of urban sprawl, with fragmented and dispersed urban activity patterns. Such a dispersed pattern makes it difficult for a viable public transport system
- Leads to lower social cohesion.

Urban sprawl is a term that describes the continuous low density development without a clearly defined centre, usually encouraging car dependency and the segregation of land-uses. Urban sprawl is seen not as environmentally sustainable as it increases distances between land-use activities, increase the dependency on cars, it increases the expense of providing a future public transport system and it increases the cost of service delivery to developments further away.

Low density developments are popular with many consumers and these can still be catered for within an urban development.

Densification definitions:

“The increased use of space both horizontally and vertically within existing areas/properties and new development accompanied by an increased number of units and/or population thresholds.

Incremental densification refers to small-scale densification which is almost invisible, e.g. the subdivision of a residential property or the construction of a second dwelling.

Densification is not an end in itself, but a means of improving the sustainability of public transport and improving the vitality of urban precincts” (City of Cape Town, 2012)

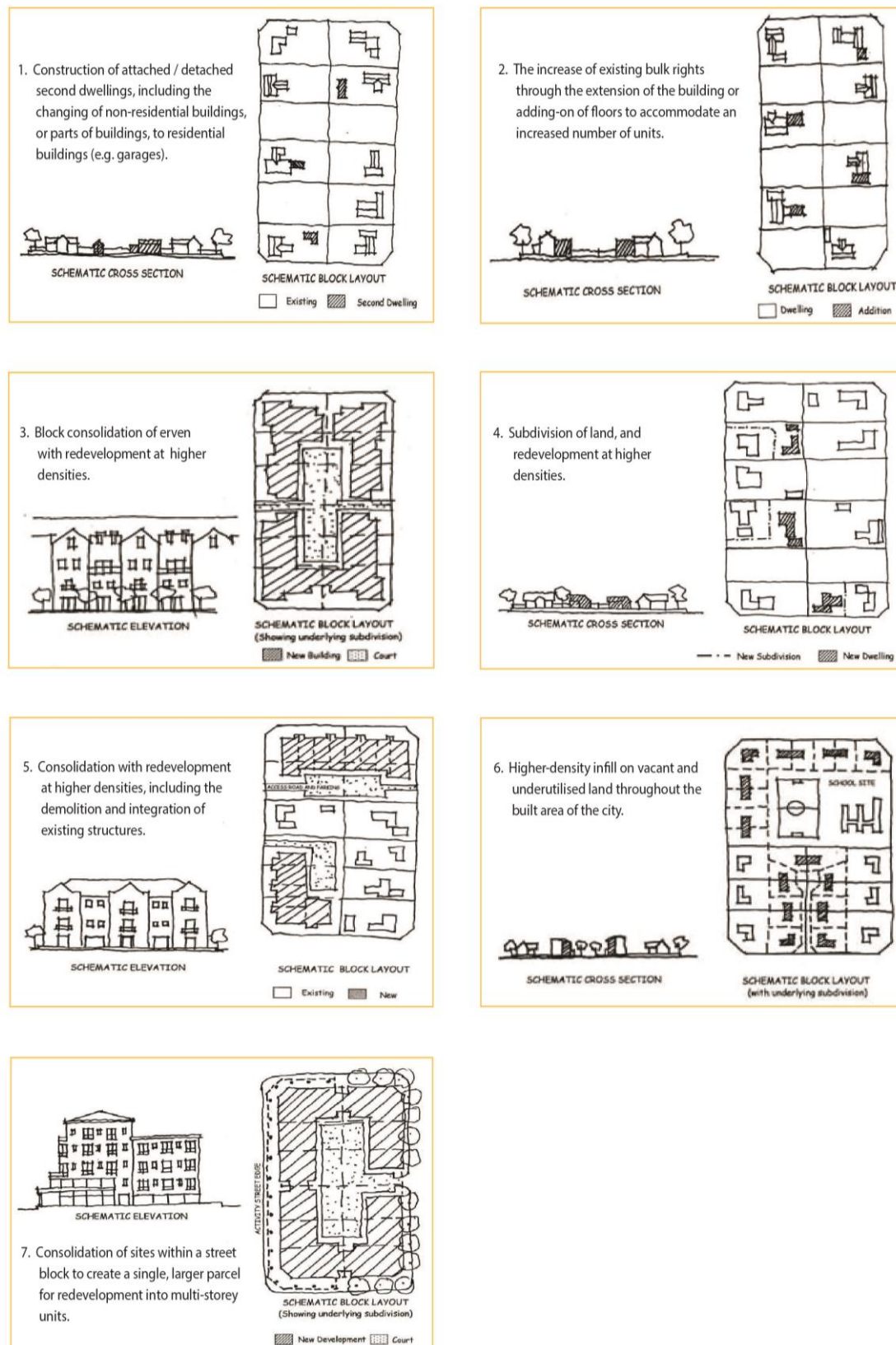
Densification in the Namibian context can refer to many different housing typologies and methods. It can mean:

- Intensification of larger residential properties by permitting a second dwelling on the property
- Intensification of larger residential properties by subdividing into an additional erf (creating attached row/ duplex housing
- Consolidation of properties for higher density developments
- Changing the density of residential properties for townhouse/ flat development

A function of increased density, buildings will need to be allowed to get taller, and to cover a greater bulk and allowed to offer a mixture of uses such as retail, office, institutional and residential uses. “In addition to increasing density, taller buildings have other passive advantages, such as the creation of shade and enclosure that can moderate the environmental conditions at street level, by cooling through shading and by providing a wind barrier” (SPC, 2015 Khorixas Structure Plan).

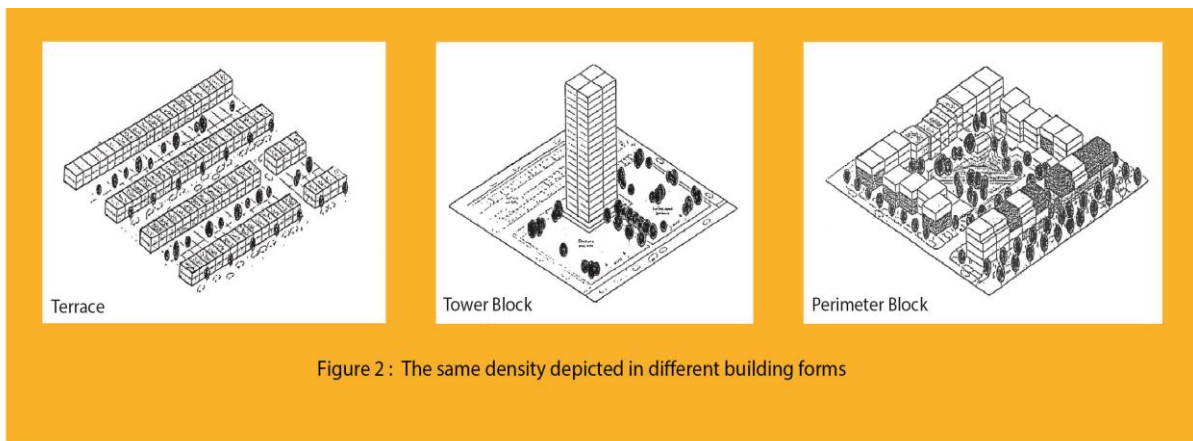
Figure 1 shows the different forms of densification that can be taken up in an urban area.

Figure 1 Examples of different forms of densification



Source: (City of Cape Town, 2012)

Caution: Densification in the Namibian setup does not refer to New York, Dubai or Hong Kong. Each country has to assess their own realities and situations and come up with a strategy that works for the particular situation. Densification in the Namibian context will take on different forms and typologies and will most likely refer to 2 to 4 storey developments and not necessarily to a 10 to 50 storey development. Figure 2 below shows how the same density can be applied, but with different housing typologies. This shows that a building does not necessarily have to be 10 storeys high to allow for higher density. Buildings can also be 2 to 3 storeys in height but spaced differently.



Source: (City of Cape Town, 2012)

Densification is **feared by many** because of the perceived negative impact of density. Many see the unattractive, monotonous buildings being constructed under the auspice of densification. **Densification does not have to be unattractive** and should not be feared. One of the principles of densification is to ensure proper building form, ensuring that such developments makes provision for open spaces; ensure that the architecture and typology of the building is attractive. This is also where a Town Council have the responsibility when approving the building plans.

Densification can be done either through **a) infill** or **b) compaction**. Infill is when open, vacant areas are developed. Compaction refers to the redevelopment of the existing properties to higher densities (densification) and may include subdivision and development of large properties within urban areas.

Densification does not mean blanket densification of the entire town. Densification is to allow for choice and is to allow for the investor the choice of choosing high or low density properties. It is important to allow for variety and choice within an urban context and to take into account aspects of recreation, agriculture, ecological, sensitive areas, conservation and low density and identify areas accordingly.

Densification and intensification Policy for Karibib:

Densification should typically take place in target areas such as

- Town centres; development nodes; activity spines, proximity to major transport roads, areas where higher residential density development should be promoted. Typically higher densities will be placed in proximity to shops, offices and public transport routes.

Densification and intensification should be discouraged in high priority agriculture areas, identified rural areas, conservation and sensitive areas and areas earmarked for low density development.

Density in Namibia is controlled by town planning schemes through the allocation of densities to residential land. Densities can vary from high density 1:100m² to lower densities of 1:900m² or 1 per Erf. Business and office activities are regulated by prescribing a bulk factor/ floor area ratio for each of the properties. This bulk can vary from as low as 0.4 to as high as 3.0. For single residential zoned properties the densities are not allowed to go lower than 1:300m² due to the restrictive government measures put in place that prohibits single residential erven being smaller than 300m². Currently the only way to allow for residential properties to be smaller than 300m² is through rezoning to General Residential and creation of sectional title ownership.

Objectives of densification

Broadly the densification guidelines are to ensure

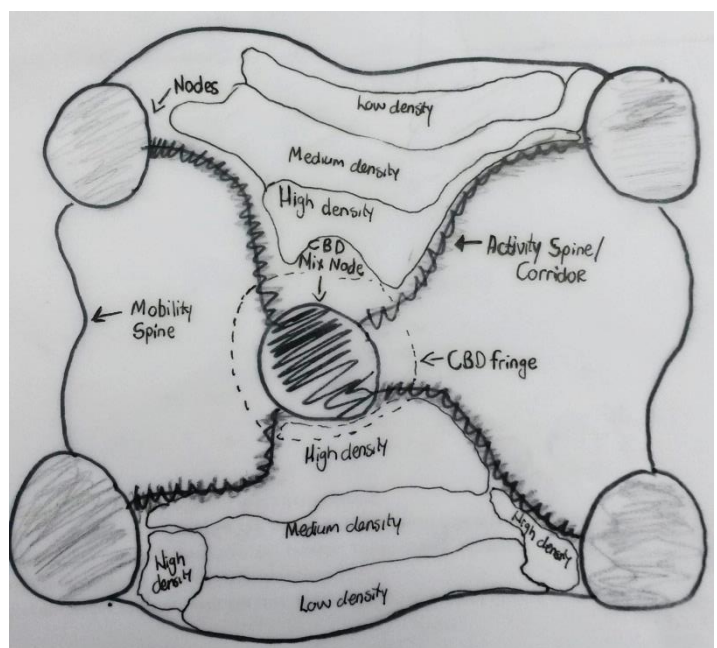
- Higher levels of densification and intensification of different land uses in highly accessible localities, central business areas; commercial nodes
- Higher levels of densification and intensification along activity streets and corridors
- Densification in civic and institutional nodes
- Mobility access roads is to remain for mobility purposes
- Incremental small densification in areas away from these nodes

For clarity purposes the following concepts are defined

CBD – Central business area where the highest intensity of retail activities to be permitted.

Mobility spine (Arterial road) is a road linkage between activity spines and the main function is to ensure mobility. On such a spine office and business activities are to be restricted as this will impact mobility.

Mixed Use Nodes are areas with a unique mixture of land uses having higher intensity of activities and high density. These nodes



are usually situated on major crossings which is well served by pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Nodes will be linked with each other by means of activity streets. Intensity and density should be higher than those of the activity street/corridor.

Speciality nodes are areas with specific functions such as industrial node; institutional node etc

Activity street/ corridor is a mixed use area along a major street. Typically this street should be pedestrian oriented with slow moving traffic. The activities are to incorporate a mixture of retail, offices, and residential uses with higher density than the surrounding area, but lower density and intensity than that of the mixed use nodes. Corridors are to link development nodes/ activity nodes and other areas of activity. Typically an urban area will have higher intensity corridors and lower intensity corridors.

Shop-house: term that refers to a building where the front or lower level is used for a shop and the back area or first floor used for residential purposes. A shop-house ensures that there is a link with the pedestrian world outside and brings vibrancy to a traditional business/ office area that closes down after 5'o'clock.

The corridors must be beautified through creating streetscapes that are attractive, safe, accessible (pedestrians, vehicles and cycling), providing shelter and shade in harsh climates. It is the responsibility of the Town Council to ensure that developments also make provision for amenities such as open spaces, and beautification of streets when applying for approval of building plans on these corridors. Land uses on the ground floor along corridors should be promoting activity and vitality of the area.

Recommendations for Karibib:

Objective:

The objective of the Karibib policy is to bring back life to the central business district of the town; to expand the business area; to allow for more mixed used activities and opportunities.

Table 1 Categories business and office intensification

Area and number on map	Description of the area	Aim	Density and Intensity Guidelines
A	Usab business node	Provide commercial amenities to Usab residents	Mix use area with Bulk of 1.00 and residential densities of 1:100. Residential component ideally to be on first floor with office or business on ground floor. Pavements to be landscaped. Buildings to create shade for pedestrians

Area and number on map	Description of the area	Aim	Density and Intensity Guidelines
B	Usab node	Provide commercial amenities to Usab residents	Mix use area with Bulk of 1.00 and residential densities of 1:100. Residential component ideally to be on first floor with office or business on ground floor. Pavements to be landscaped. Buildings to create shade for pedestrians
C	Mix use corridor	Provide a mixture of activities along the activity street	Business and office components with bulk of 0.5. Shop-house concept be encouraged. Streets to be lively and vibrant. Pavements to be landscaped and buildings to provide shade for pedestrians
D	Usab Business node	Creation of a business area for Usab that is to start creating a link with Karibib	Higher bulk of 2.0 for business and offices. Residential component will have densities of 1:00. Pavements to be landscaped and buildings to provide shade for pedestrians
E	Karibib new extensions business node	The creation of a business node for the extensions 2, 3 and 4 Karibib	Bulk of 2.0. . Residential component will have densities of 1:00. Pavements to be landscaped and buildings to provide shade for pedestrians
F	Local business node	Small local business node to cater for residents of the new extensions	Bulk of 0.5
G	Local business node	Mixed use local node	Bulk of 1.0 and densities of 1:250
H	Extended CBD area	To support the current CBD	Bulk of 2.0 and densities of 1: 100. Shop-house concept be encouraged. Streets to be lively and vibrant. Pavements to be landscaped and buildings to provide shade for pedestrians

Area and number on map	Description of the area	Aim	Density and Intensity Guidelines
I	Historical buildings within the CBD needing conservation	Preserving the character of the historical commercial area	Lower bulk (1.0) and residential densities of 1:250. Historical buildings are to be retained. New buildings to conform to regulations pertaining to historical usage

Table 2 Categories residential densification

NUMBER ON MAP	AREA	Density and Intensity Guidelines
A	Usab	Residential neighbourhood with Densities of up to 1:300 with supplementary dwelling unit for rental (if owners wants to alienate supplementary dwelling –then the owner must rezone).No shebeens within neighbourhood.
B	Higher density	Higher density area. Residential densities of 1:250 This area is close to Usab CBD and intensification and densification to be promoted.
C	Higher density	Residential densities of 1:250 and shop-houses are encouraged. Residential to be preferable above ground floor with office or business on ground floor. Shading on street front to be provided by buildings. This area is close to Usab CBD and intensification and densification to be promoted.
D	Usab Residential extension	Residential neighbourhood with Densities of up to 1:300 with supplementary dwelling unit for rental (if owners wants to alienate supplementary dwelling –then the owner must rezone) no shebeens within neighbourhood.
E	Usab higher densities	Higher densities of 1:100. Sufficient open spaces to be provided within high density development.
F	Karibib	Residential neighbourhood with Densities of up to 1:300 with supplementary dwelling unit for rental (if owners wants to alienate supplementary dwelling –then the owner must rezone) No shebeens/ bars within neighbourhood.
G	Karibib	Medium Density residential neighbourhood. Densities of up to 1:450 with supplementary dwelling unit for rental purposes. Activities such as guesthouses and bed and breakfast to be encouraged. These activities not to change the character of the area
H	Medium density	Medium Density residential neighbourhood. Densities of up to 1:450 with supplementary dwelling unit for rental purposes. Activities such as guesthouses and bed and

NUMBER ON MAP	AREA	Density and Intensity Guidelines
		breakfast to be encouraged. These activities not to change the character of the area
I	Higher density	Higher residential node of 1:100. Sufficient open spaces to be provided within the high density development.
J	Higher Density	Higher residential node of 1:100. Sufficient open spaces to be provided within the high density development.
K	Medium density	Medium Density residential neighbourhood. Densities of up to 1:450 with supplementary dwelling unit for rental purposes. Activities such as guesthouses and bed and breakfast to be encouraged. These activities not to change the character of the area
L	Medium to low density node	Residential neighbourhood with densities of 1:600. Large erven with supplementary dwelling unit for rental purposes. Activities such as guesthouses and bed and breakfast to be encouraged. These activities not to change the character of the area
M	Higher density	Higher densities of 1:100. Close to extended CBD and Mixed use area and higher densities are encouraged. Sufficient open spaces to be provided within high density development
N	Medium density	Residential neighbourhood with densities of 1:450 Supplementary dwelling unit for rental purposes to be encouraged
O	Higher density node	Higher densities of 1:100. Sufficient open spaces to be provided within high density development

Historical CBD

Intensified business activities with activity streets tarred and landscaped pavements are to be encouraged along the Activity Corridor (B1). This is the entrance into town and the first impression visitors will have to the town. This area needs to be clean and welcoming to visitors.

Strengthen the existing business area and provide for growth by identifying an extended business area where the maximum bulk of a business/ office use in this area can be 2.0. Lower bulks can be permitted. The land uses in this section will be mixed use of nature, with predominantly business activities. Residential use in the section is to be encouraged to higher densities of 1:100. It is advised that the activity street in the main business area is to be beautified by tree planting and defined pedestrian and cycle lanes. Higher residential development has to provide open space amenities within the developments as well as undertaking the paving of the pavement on the street front, with tree planting. The area must be clean, well light at night and no donkeys, cattle or goats are to roam this area.

Extended CBD / mixed use area

With the existing business area developed it becomes necessary to support this area rather than creating satellite business areas for a small town. The proposal is to extend the business area into a mix-used area with residential, business and office components. Business and office components will have a bulk of 2.0 and higher densities of 1:150 can be encouraged. Preferable residential ought to be on first floor with office or business component on ground floor. Pavements are to be interlocked or kept clean and landscaped.

Local business nodes

The local business nodes are smaller pockets of business and office activities within residential neighbourhoods. These nodes are to supply the basic amenities to the community and should be attractive to the neighbourhood. Landscaping of these nodes is important to make the area attractive.

Activity Corridor (Trunk Road – B1)

The objective is for the Council to enter into an agreement with Roads Authority, where the trunk road between the two gateways is reduced in status. The road will remain the jurisdiction of Roads Authority but with fewer restrictions on the road, with four way stops and traffic circles to regulate and slow down traffic. With developments taking place on both the eastern and western side of the trunk road there is a need to integrate these developments and the only way to do that is to incorporate the trunk road into the street network of town. Thirdly – there should NOT be a bypass for the town. The aim is to keep the traffic from being diverted – to create opportunities for the traffic to stop and invest in the town.

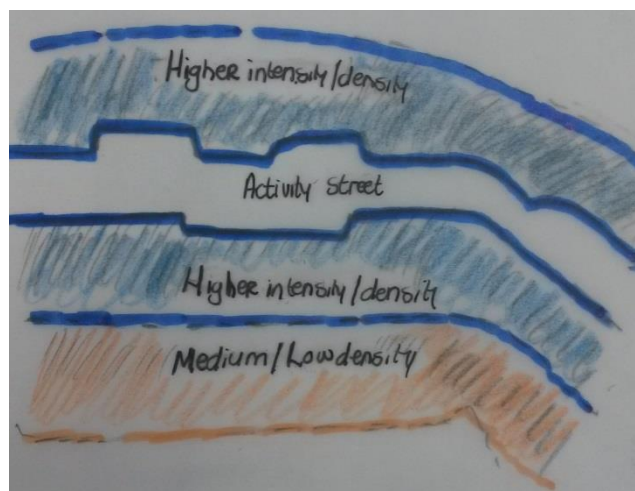
Major Activity Street

The main activity street has the objective to intensify uses. These activity should be paved and beautified with natural gardens and landscaped streets. Activities along these major activity streets will have higher intensity uses such as offices with a bulk of 1; higher densities with a density of 1:100.

Figure 2: Simplified activity street (right)

Secondary Activity streets

The secondary activity streets will have lower intensity uses than the main activity street. Along these streets activities such as shop-houses, offices and higher residential activities are to take place.



The main street concept

Stakeholder consultation with the business community indicated that they are concerned about the planned bypass of Roads Authority. The feeling was that this bypass will “kill” the town and create a satellite town on the outskirts on the bypass. The request from the business community was to investigate alternatives to strengthen the current business area and to find ways to keep traffic continue through town rather than creating a bypass or a situation such as in towns like Otavi.

Some of the proposals from the business community was to utilise the land to the north of the main road for parking, truck port and business activities. As such a proposal was designed on Erf 224, 245 and part of Erf 198. The proposal is as follows:

Creation of a linear park system next to the railway line that is to connect pedestrians with the station building and development. Creation of parking areas for the trucks with a limited standing time (between 30 minutes to 1 hour). These can also be used for mini-bus taxi’s or bus services. These transport entities can then park at these designated areas for a limited time, utilise the business activities on the other side of the street – buy lunch, cool drinks and so forth. The linear open space will be provided with picnic tables, which can be used for lunch times. A line of trees will act as a buffer between the heavier traffic parking area and an area designated for off-street parking for normal traffic. To the east on Erf 245, business activities, shops, small restaurants can be established to cater for passing traffic, with additional on-street parking. Surrounding these hard-spaces will be soft open spaces, with trees planted and picnic tables. Sufficient garbage cans should be provided for these areas. See figure below for a visual explanation of this proposal.

General Conditions

- The town planning scheme remains the statutory document. This means that whether an erf falls within a policy area or not – the applicant/ developer must still undertake the statutory rezoning process. This policy is merely to assist the Council with decision making matters. When applying for a rezoning within the policy area, the Council can give consent for the developer to start construction while the rezoning is in process. As the rezoning process can take up to 2 years, this conditions is included to fast track development. However – no consent is to be given if there are any objections from the neighbours or public. In a case where objections have been received the full statutory process must first be completed before the developer can start with the construction. This is to prevent Council from being held legally responsibly by the public and the developer.
- Higher residential development has to provide open space amenities within the developments as well as undertaking the paving of the pavement on the street front and landscaping of the pavement adjacent to the development.
- The Open spaces included into the policy areas do not mean that these are to be closed down. They have been included but these open spaces are not to be used for infill or densification purposes.

