

5.9 BEAUFORT WEST TOWN (population: ± 34 000)

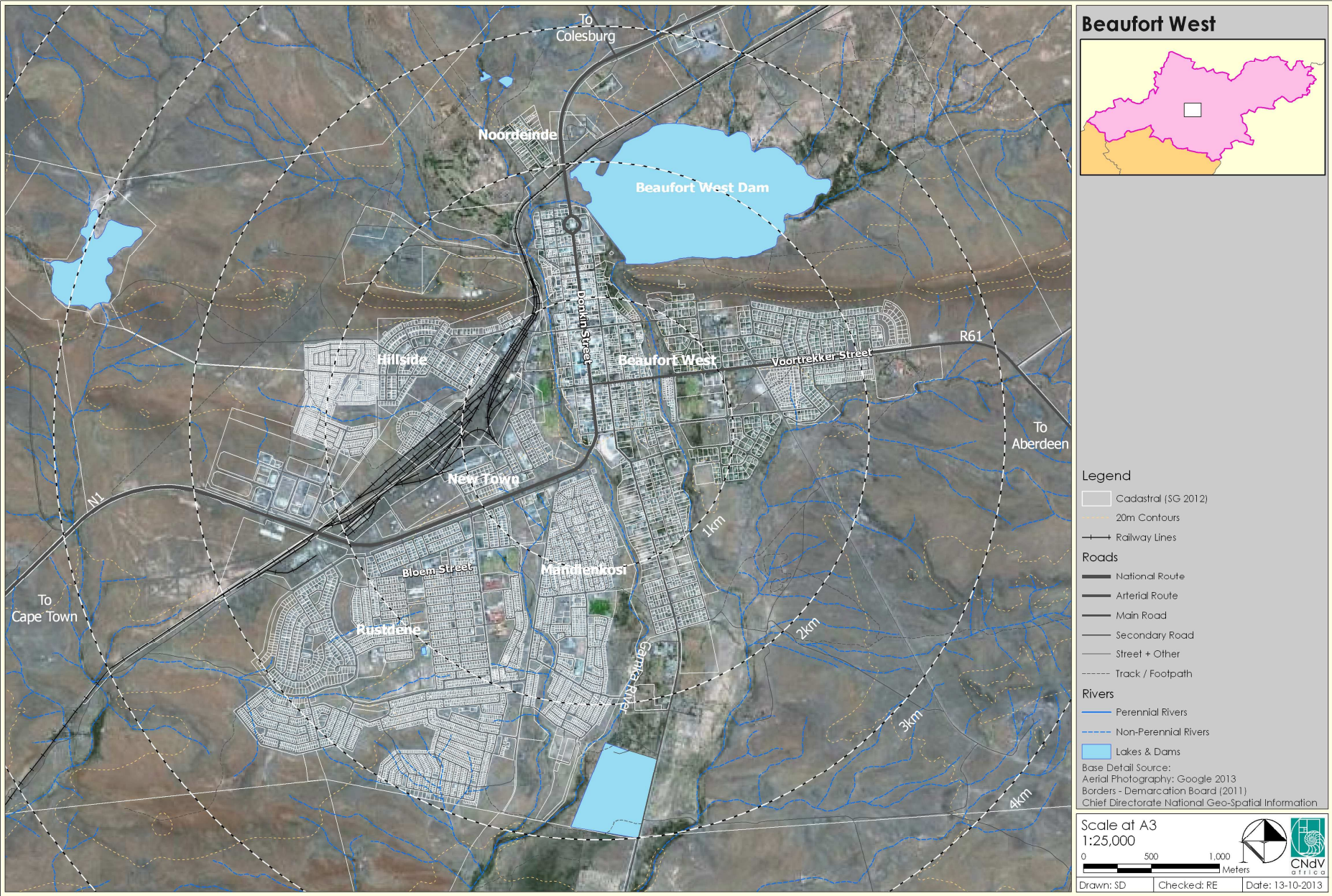


Figure 5.9.1.1 Beaufort West: Aerial photograph

5.9.1 SPATIAL ANALYSIS, see Figures 5.9.1.2

General: Beaufort West town faces severe challenges. Its water resources are stretched to the limit with the current population and ground water abstraction is one of its only solutions. Although the town has successfully implemented a number of water demand strategies would seem that domestic rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling and waterless toilet systems still require attention. Therefore, its protection of ground water resources from shale gas extraction is of paramount importance. Water resources will be brought under further pressure if; 1st supply of the current and future housing need of 6 700 units does not use alternative water supply technologies; and, 2nd, if the town does become a centre for shale gas extraction and uranium mining in the future.

Sub-regional location

- On N1 approximately midway between Cape Town (462km) and Bloemfontein (541km);
- Visible location from over 50kms away where the Nuweberg meets the Gamka River plain;
- Nuweberg forms a beacon from the R61 from Aberdeen and N12 from De Rust which appears as though historically it led straight into Beaufort West along Blyth street but then for some reason was diverted 7kms away to its current intersection on the N1; and,
- Situated next to a large pan, typical of many other Karoo and Kalahari towns, at a break in a long ridge where both the rail and road could pass through.

Layout pattern

- The original settlement comprised a Voortrekker rydorp with long streets laid perpendicularly to the contours along which water was led from the Gamka dam;
- There is a slight turn in this grid near the cemetery and shopping centre as it orientates itself parallel to slight bends in the two rivers abutting its west and east boundaries;
- The arrival of the rail way which had to approach from the west due to alignment requirements led to a loose wedge of development containing ad-hoc pockets of residential (New Town) railway shunting yards and some small industries. A railway village was established across the rail line along Kerk Street, Hillside.
- Large areas of vacant land separate the original railway town from new BNG housing extensions which link southwards to the partially developed industrial area;
- There are also large tracts of vacant land particularly on the west and south sides of the town;
- North facing land north of the long ridge around the golf course could have potential for upmarket housing;
- Some of the peripheral extensions of Rustdene are over 3kms from the centre of town;
- However, Mandlenkosi is only 250m from the centre of town at its closest point;
- The settlement's layout and dispersed pattern requires public transport and there is a proposed NMT network;
- Some of the vacant land identified for future housing is on the periphery and should be avoided;
- In order for more people to access better located land current densities will need to increase; and,
- In any event the 176 ha required for $\pm 6\,700$ units (draft HSP 2013) at ± 35 du/ha gross exceeds the land identified by the municipality (106 ha – BWM 2013?). In this SDF 229.51ha are identified.

Urban quality

- The town's southern entrance, through a partially developed industrial area, and from the north, past a very large weighbridge facility do little to enhance the sense of arrival in the town;
- There are an unexpected number of intact heritage buildings within the historic core among the increasingly dominant strip mall type shop frontages lining Donkin Street which diminish its heritage quality;
- Urban quality decreases in suburbs further from the CBD with street frontages comprising long rows of small buildings with wide side spaces and few trees, interspersed with large tracts of vacant land.
- Currently urban quality is further severely compromised by the large volumes of large freight trucks trundling through the heart of town and insufficient attention paid to the quality of new shop fronts and the intermittent nature of tree planting;
- The historic part of the town is relatively compact and has potential attraction for pedestrians, especially if the sidewalks are well maintained. There have been a number of pedestrian and cycle facilities installed; and,
- As one travels further from the historic core densities decline, houses become more isolated in the centre of their plots and tree planning and landscaping decline. Houses become smaller, there are fewer trees and public open spaces less landscaped. This is probably due not so much to neglect but as a result of the huge resources that necessary to keep such far flung areas green and well maintained.



Potential urban quality along Donkin Street



New Housing in Hillside



Supermarket in Bloem Street, Rustdene

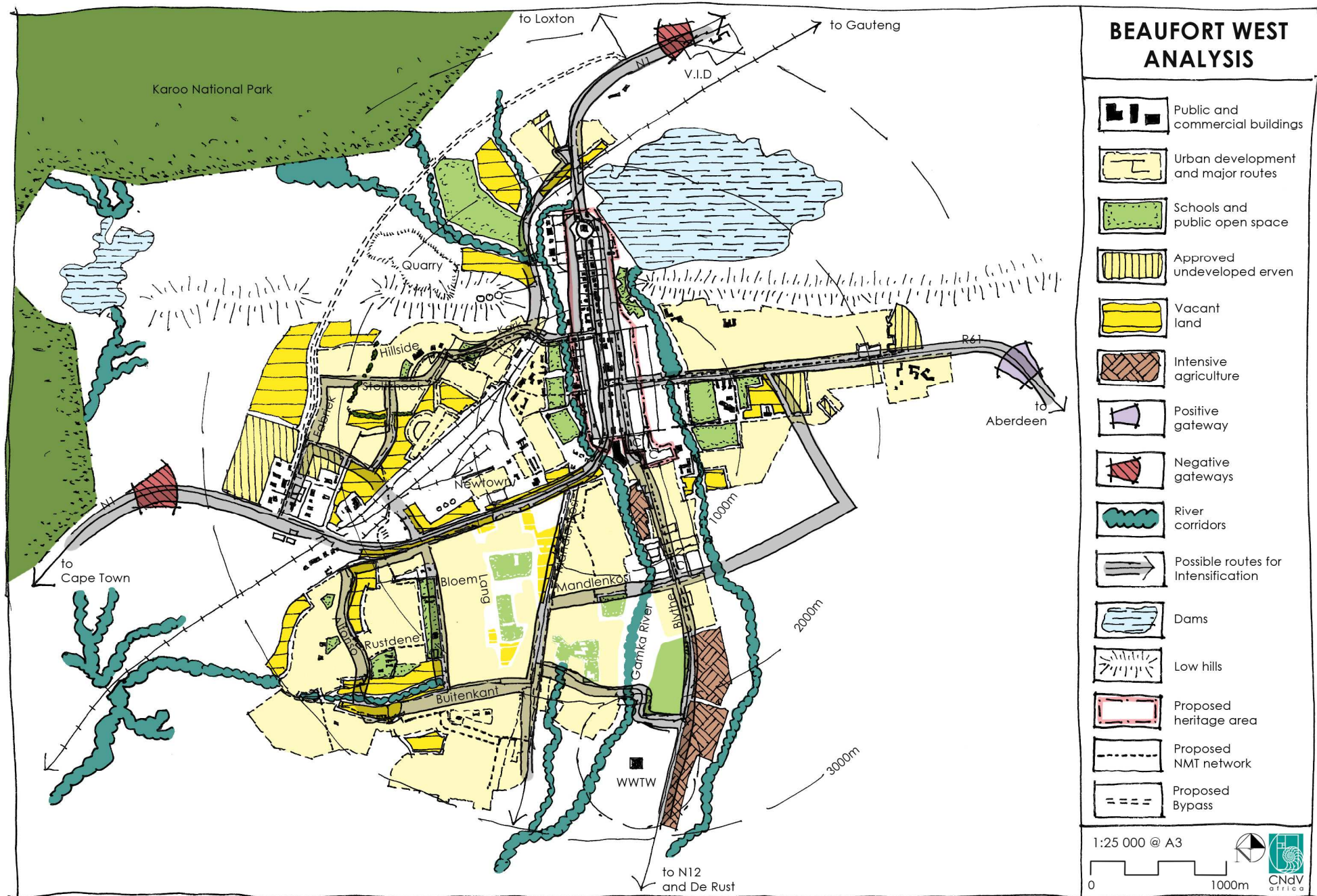


Figure 5.9.1.2 Beaufort West: Analysis

5.9.2 BEAUFORT WEST TOWN: DRAFT SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, see Figure 5.9.2.1

General: In the normal run of events Beaufort West town is unlikely to see much growth other than from its rural hinterland which is already sparsely populated. Formal urban development will occur from housing the 6 200 households on the waiting list but they are already mostly present. However, should it become a uranium mining and shale gas extraction centre the population could increase considerably as miners and roughnecks (drill riggers) will require accommodation in the nearest large centre that offers a wide range of social and economic facilities.

5.9.2.1 Core landscape and agricultural areas

- A continuous boulevard network of activity streets planted with water wise shade trees should integrate the town, see section 5.9.2.4 below;
- Trees are the cheapest way to make the biggest visual improvements on an urban settlement and lend themselves to EPWP programs. These can include in-situ brick paving where necessary a material also suitable for labour based construction;
- River corridors should be protected by setback lines at a standard 32 m from the banks or as determined by a fresh water ecologist must be defined in which there should be no plowing or urban development and the riparian vegetation restored;
- There is little intensive agriculture around the town and production on existing lands to the south must be encouraged and where possible fallow land brought back into production;
- The existing golf course should be retained as an important amenity to existing and future residents but water wise fairway and green management techniques should be employed; and,
- In view of the prevailing water supply issues no further green areas are proposed and existing ones should be managed according to water wise management principles.

5.9.2.2 Urban Development

- A 100 m noise buffer is strongly recommended along the eastern boundary of the proposed bypass in which only industrial activity, warehousing or tree planting and open space activities should occur. There should be no residential activities within;
- As far as possible new development areas should not extend beyond the current urban development periphery and or beyond a 2km radius from the centre of town;
- North facing land around the golf course could be suitable for upmarket residents but there are already a number of undeveloped plots here and the reasons for this should be understood;
- Large areas of infill are proposed in Hillside and Rusdene; and,
- Rather than extending westwards of the proposed N1 bypass a new development area in the eastern quadrant should be investigated bounded approximately by a 2km radius from the town centre.
- New development areas should continue the 'grid style' of the historical lay-out. Retrofitting the settlement in the long term to continue this style is recommended.

5.9.2.3 Heritage Areas

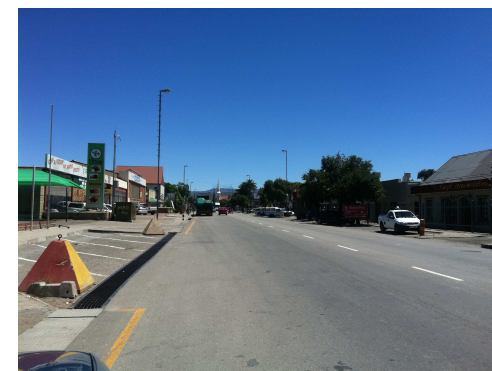
- The historic CBD should be declared a heritage area and land uses and building appearance on old and new buildings managed accordingly.



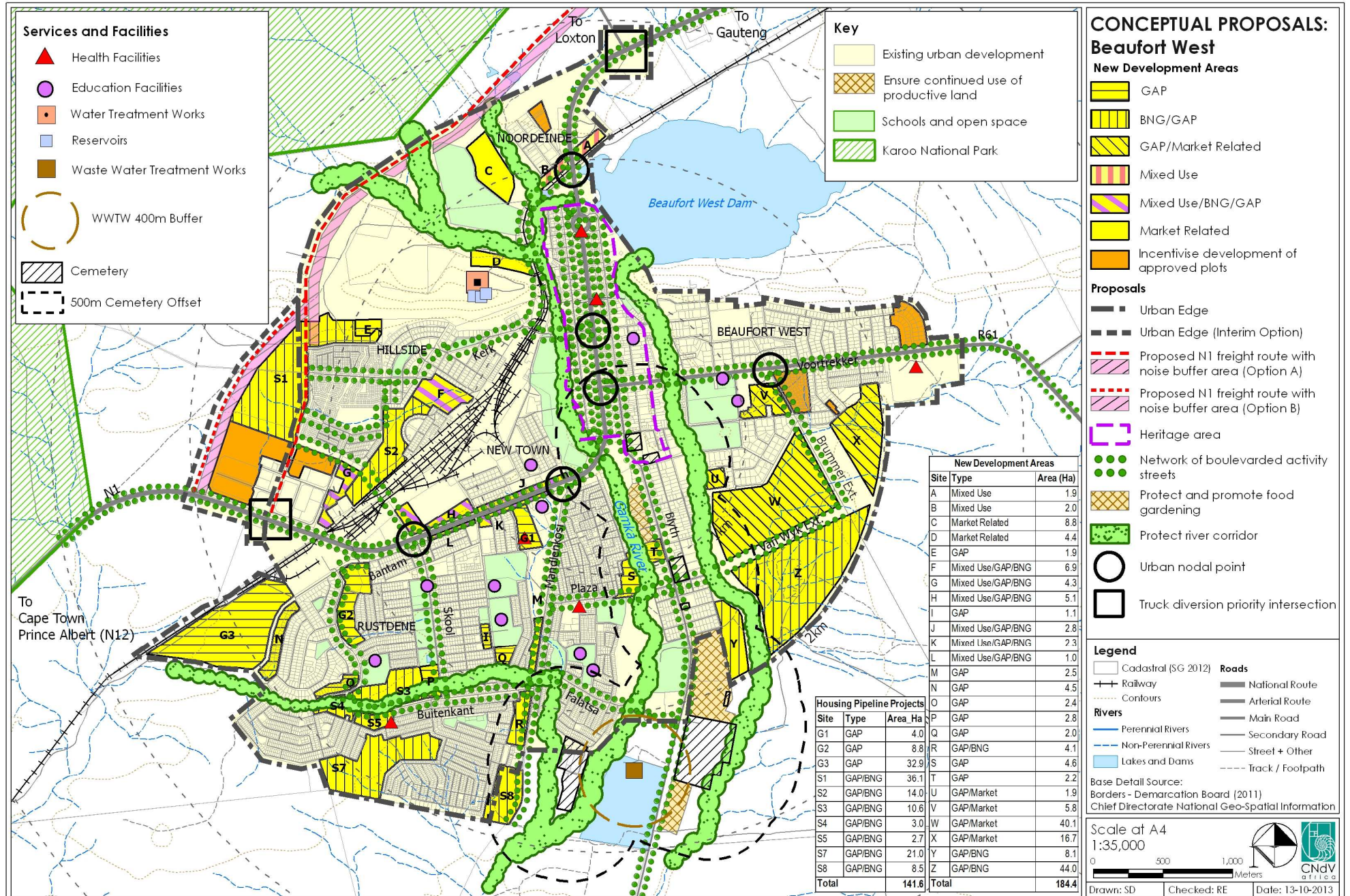
Vacant land and underused service road along southern boundary of N1 by Rustdene



Well located vacant land between industrial area and railway yard



Southern section of Donkin street requiring up grading



5.9.2.4 Urban Restructuring

- Rerouting the N1 around the town for road freight traffic only is seen as the most important action to enable development of other sustainable sectors in the town including retail, tourism and accommodation;
- Freight route Option A is intended to act as the Urban Edge for the town limiting development to the west of it. If the Department of Human Settlements considers the implementation of area S1, it is proposed that freight route Option B be implemented and no further development be permitted to the west of it;
- It is important that as far as possible only freight traffic use this route. Careful signposting of the two intersections as well as significantly upgrading the landscape and urban quality of Donkin Street between the two proposed access points in contrast to the freight bypass route, which should remain "unlandscaped", will help facilitate this priority;
- If the freight route goes ahead, the current N1 route in the town itself should be significantly redesigned to accommodate similar retail development that is occurring within the historical core of Beautiful West, abutting it on each side, between each end of the N1 which crosses the railway line. A slightly higher density, mixed use (including residential) component could be accommodated ensuring that heritage streetscapes are preserved and enhanced;
- All gateways into town should be enhanced to improve its sense of arrival;
- The currently separate sectors of the town should be integrated through a continuous network of activity streets that reinforce the NMT network and link suburbs across buffer strips and vacant ground as well as the large new development area proposed in the south eastern quadrant.
- This network should comprise the following routes:
 - **Hillside:** service road next to proposed N1 bypass along Faktor, Street; Ondermeyer Ext across rail yard to intersect with Oppeld Street (Rustdene) on Donkin Street (former N1 now bypassed), design continuity of Stolzhoek/7th Ave/Plein/Kerk/ link to Donkin Street;
 - **Rustdene:** Alfonso; Bantom; Skool; linking to N1 opposite proposed Ondermeyer Ext N1 intersection; Buitenkant linking to Mandlenkosi Street;
 - **Mandlenkosi:** Plaza Street to link across Gamka river to van Wyk Street (currently informal link to Du Toit Street); Falatsa Street to link across river to Blyth Street (existing);
 - **South west quadrant:** van Wyk Street Ext to intersect with Brummer Street; and,
 - **Town north:** extend golf course access road to Kerk Street.